



November 5, 2019

Diane Silver, Senior Planner
Community Planning
North York District
5100 Yonge Street, Ground Floor
Toronto, ON M2N 5V7

Dear Ms. Silver:

Re: Laird In Focus Planning Study – DRAFT Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP)

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Toronto District School Board and the constituents in Ward 11 to express concerns regarding the draft Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP) for the Laird in Focus Planning Study.

As you are likely aware, The Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC) oversees all land use planning on behalf of the TDSB and, as such, TLC members have been involved in many discussions regarding the Laird in Focus SASP. They have registered their concerns through a detailed letter to this committee. I am in complete support of their advocacy on this matter, share the same concerns they raise, and I strongly urge this committee to consider their requests as follows:

- 1) not to allow development to outpace the provision of community services and facilities;
- 2) to ensure that residential development will be phased so as to provide adequate provision and distribution of educational facilities as an integral element of the local community; and
- 3) to include a holding by-law to ensure adequate local community services and facilities have been made before residential development is approved.

The provision of local school spaces is essential in creating complete and full communities. Right now, all neighborhood Leaside schools are full or above capacity. All of them are closed to “optional attendance”. Students emanating from the current new developments in Leaside are not attending their closest TDSB school but are being bused to schools farther away where space is available.

The TDSB uses a variety of techniques to manage pupil accommodation, including boundary changes, grade changes, program relocations, student redirections, and capital enhancements to deal with enrolment pressures. All of these measures require various steps, such as planning studies,

committee work, community consultation, Board approval, and sometimes, Ministry of Education capital priority grants and approvals. As you can imagine, these processes take time. In addition, it should be noted that the once-yearly provincial capital priorities program has been less frequently opened, meaning fewer pressure points are currently being alleviated. It is fair to say that the TDSB is finding it nearly impossible to keep up with the pace of development in areas of intensification.

In recent years, TDSB and City staff worked together on Midtown in Focus. This was a landmark achievement, enshrining language that spoke to the importance of the creation of complete communities – with schools being an integral part of that vision. This crucial element is missing from the Laird in Focus SASP.

My constituents have spoken to me repeatedly about the idea that community schools are essential to their own quality of life and to the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

With this in mind, I strongly urge this committee to reconsider the wording of this current plan to include language that recognizes both schools as part of our essential infrastructure and provides a mechanism to allow for a phased approach to development. With these two provisions included, I believe we can better ensure the creation of a truly complete community.

Yours truly,



Rachel Chernos Lin
TDSB Trustee, Ward 11, Don Valley West

- c. Councillor Robinson, Toronto City Council, Don Valley West
- Daryl Sage, CEO, TLC
- Bianca Bielski, Senior Manager, Land Use Planning, TLC
- Yvonne Choi, Manager, Land Use Planning, TLC
- Dan Castaldo, Senior Manager, Planning, TDSB
- John Andreevski, Manager, City of Toronto