



## TE14.5.3

March 6, 2020

Councillor Gord Perks, Chair  
Toronto and East York Community Council  
City of Toronto, Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2

**Attention: Ms. Ellen Devlin, Secretariat**

Dear Councillor Perks,

I write to convey the opinion of the Ossington Community Association (OCA), by acclamation of its Executive Board, in regard to agenda item number TE14.5, the proposal to adopt Amendment No. 445 to the Official Plan ('the OPA'), adding Site and Area Specific Policy No. 566 ('the SASP') for lands generally fronting Queen Street West between Roncesvalles Avenue and Bathurst Street ('QSW').

This letter does the following:

- (I) Express the OCA's support for Toronto and East York Community Council (TEYCC) adopting the motion to recommend Council to adopt the OPA, subject to several amendments to the SASP to be detailed;
- (II) This support notwithstanding, convey the OCA's disapproval of the SASP's encouragement of 'intensification' in QSW, and support for amending the SASP for greater continuity of heritage conservation with the 2007 Queen Street West HCD (especially by reaffirming the latter's height limit of 16 m);
- (III) This disapproval notwithstanding, convey to City Planning the OCA's congratulation at the conclusion of an extended and complex project, admiration of its sensitive and intelligent work, and gratitude for the broadly respectful process of consultation it has administered; and to the councillors for the area the OCA's appreciation and gratitude for shepherding the process to this point.

The SASP divides QSW at the Dufferin Subway into westerly and easterly segments, (respectively) Parkdale Main Street and West Queen West ('WQW'): we restrict our explicit attention to WQW, as this segment partly overlaps the OCA catchment area, and the OCA's interests in and knowledge of this segment are generally the greater.

(I) The OCA supports TEYCC's adoption of the motion recommending Council to adopt the OPA, subject to the following amendments to the SASP:

- 4.7.2: for consistency with consultation scope characterizations elsewhere, and

**jennifer horvath**  
president

to reflect the broader importance of civil society groups:

Add as boldfaced ‘in partnership and in consultation with **local community associations**, local Business Improvement Areas, the local arts community, and other stakeholders’.

- 4.8: because established trees are superior to freshly planted, retention should be encouraged over replacement:  
Add as boldfaced ‘Where street trees already exist on or in front of a development site, they shall be retained **if possible** or replaced’.
- 6.6.4: although the 9 m setback from policy 6.6.1 is welcome, the proposed 3 m stepback above 16.5 m in height at the rear yard does not provide an adequate transition to adjacent *Neighbourhoods* designated lands:  
Instead, the transition policy should follow the ‘deep lot’ Standard #5A of the *Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study*, and require also a 45 degree rear yard angular plane projecting from the property line of the adjacent residential lands. For that matter, the transition policy is not even in conformity with the *AMRBS* ‘shallow lot’ Standard #5B, requiring a 7.5 m separation from the adjacent residential and a 45 degree angular plane at height 10.5 m.
- 6.8: workgroup sentiment was strongly against rooftop party spaces, because remediation to indiscernibility of their impacts would be prohibitively expensive; apparently restaurant business reps caught the ear of Planning on this one, leading to a business giveaway with serious nuisance potential to residents:  
Amend to restore the proposal advanced at public consultation: ‘Amenity space or other uses located on a rooftop **will not be permitted**’.
- 11.1: relocating arts organizations to Sterling Road or some redeveloped corner of CN lands or Rexdale does not support the cultural preservation ambitions of the SASP:  
Add as boldfaced ‘will be required to identify suitable opportunities for the relocation and/or replacement of this space **in West Queen West or Parkdale Main street, respectively**’.

(II) The OCA expresses its disappointment with Policy 6.3, permitting a ‘maximum overall height’ of ‘6 storeys and 20 metres’, ‘to the top of the roof slab’.

Advocacy by City Planning for this ‘intensification’-driven height limit during community workgroup meetings was a constant; as was community resistance to this increase in height limit over the existing zoning height of 16 m—on the grounds of its inadequacy to heritage conservation objectives and, indeed, tendency toward destabilization of existing heritage resources.

In the view of the OCA, a more appropriate massing would adhere to the maxima established in the 2007 Queen Street West HCD Plan, according to which ‘the existing Zoning By-Law (allowing a 16 metre height with a stepback at 13 metres along a 45 degree angular plane) is affirmed’ (2007 HCD Policy 5.4, p. 63).

Our rationale for this is extensive, and recapitulates that of the 31 March, 2019 letter submitted by the West Side Community Council to City Planning, in the course of the Community Workgroup Discussion (available at [bit.ly/wsc-cc-to-planning](http://bit.ly/wsc-cc-to-planning)). Subsequent discussion by email with City Planning (available at [bit.ly/wsc-cc-planning-exchange](http://bit.ly/wsc-cc-planning-exchange)) did not, in our view, adequately rebut the argumentation in that letter.

In a nutshell, the argument from the community was that re-affirming the Zoning By-Law maximum height of 16 m was necessary for the heritage conservation objective of the Planning Study—principally on the basis that doing so would express continuity with the segment of QSW east of Bathurst, under the 2007 HCD (an objective which, by the Heritage Act, overrides other planning policies, including those calling for intensification). The counter-argument from City Planning ultimately rested on the assertion that doing so was not necessary, but that the proposed policy would suffice (and was moreover required by policies calling for intensification).

This was not persuasive. A member of the community workgroup wrote eloquently (our boldfaced emphasis):

Just imagine for a moment if they'd 'developed' the medieval city of Bruges. **Think of old Montreal or old Quebec City. If we applied preservation principles to Queen Street, it would continue to be a tourist attraction for centuries. It saddens me that the City announced from the beginning that Queen Street is an avenue and avenues will be developed. There was no discussion on this point.** Although we are part of this working group to 'manage change' and many people have worked hard to improve the plans, I'm sorry to say that we've made a mistake if we think that saving a façade is going to maintain the character of Queen Street West. **If we really want to maintain the character of Queen Street West, we would preserve it as an intact village. Future generations would thank us for doing so.**

The OCA agrees. Continuity of heritage resources calls for continuity of heritage protection instruments. While the proposed SASP contains a great many positive innovations with respect to the 2007 HCD, the permission of mid-rise heights is an unfortunately retrograde adjustment.

(III) The OCA has been closely involved in the process by which this OPA has arrived at TEYCC, and expresses its gratitude for what is by any reasonable assessment a sensitive and most intelligently drafted planning instrument. Particularly:

- Our ongoing discussions with Councillor Layton urged his collaboration with Councillor Bailão and Councillor Perks in recommending in a 15 October 2013 letter that TEYCC request that City Planning undertake this project; and also in supporting the prioritization of the HCD component of this effort in Spring 2015. Thanks to Mike, Ana, and Gord; and to TEYCC more generally, in particular to Councillor Cressy.

- City Planning has hosted in excess of a dozen meetings in this process—a pair of walkarounds in 2014; in 2016, a pair of workgroup meetings flanked by a pair of public meetings; over the course of 2018–19, a half dozen workgroup meetings capped off by a public meeting.

The OCA has been involved in all or nearly all of these: through the direct participation of its members, as well as in collaboration with affiliate groups and under the umbrella of the West Side Community Council. We are therefore very well positioned to attest to the respect, intelligence, efficiency, and diligence with which City Planning has conducted these discussions; and in the main to its permeability to community input; and to the ingenuity it has brought to compromise otherwise.

Thanks to City Planning.

More generally, the Ossington Community Association sees the process and product of this planning exercise as exemplary of the careful balancing of interests in our complex and evolving city.

Yours in community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "jhorvath". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style with a large initial 'j'.

Jennifer Horvath  
President