

West Don Lands | Committee

Citizens for the Old Town
Corktown Residents & Business
Association
Distillery Historic District
Dixon Hall
Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation
Friends of Corktown Common
Goederham & Worts Neighbourhood
Association
Little Trinity Anglican Church
St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BI
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood
Association
Bring Back the Don

April 28, 2021

By email to exc@toronto.ca

Executive Committee
City of Toronto

Dear Mayor Tory and Members:

Re: Ex 23.3 Provincial Transit-Oriented Communities Program

We are writing on behalf of the West Don Lands Committee, a coalition of community-based resident, business, service, environmental and heritage organizations to express support for the direction of the staff report before you today and to urge you to recommend immediate action in several areas.

We are very concerned that the move by Metrolinx to acquire and develop the First Parliament Site as a funding source for the Ontario Line threatens every element of a shared City-community vision developed over more than two decades. We feel there is good reason, including the lack of transparency so far, to fear that the rush to maximize provincial revenues will compromise the long-term community-building and heritage conservation opportunities of this site.

The Process Assumptions set up on page 3 of the staff report include the principles that development should be context-sensitive, reflect the city planning's vision and objectives for the site and should include involvement with the community. With respect to the First Parliament Site, the report states that the planning vision includes completion and implementation of the Master Plan and a commitment to continued public ownership of the site and *in situ* protection of archeological resources.

The WDLC strongly supports this direction but notes that Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario are pushing ahead with an accelerated time frame that suggests significant and future-limiting decisions could be imminent. We urgently ask that Executive Committee direct the following:

1. A community stakeholder process which includes the WDLC should immediately be set up by the City to share and seek input into the development proposal for the First Parliament Lands that has been submitted by Infrastructure Ontario.
2. The Master Planning process for the First Parliament Site must be completed as quickly as possible and used as a basis by City staff for negotiations with Infrastructure Ontario regarding the redevelopment of the First Parliament Site.

3. The City must secure a commitment that the development of the First Parliament site will include provision for a TPL regional library branch.
4. The City must secure a commitment that the development of both the First Parliament Site and the Corktown Station site will balance Ontario Line TOC revenue expectations with the long term need for affordable housing by guaranteeing that, in accordance with City policy for publicly owned land, at least 30% of any new residential development will be affordable rental housing.
5. The City must secure a commitment that the archeological resources of the First Parliament Site will be preserved and the site itself will remain in public ownership.

Committee members will be aware that WDLC members, with the support of local Councillor Pam McConnell and various provincial MPP's, have worked over more than two decades to bring the First Parliament Site into public ownership with a view to developing the site as a public, cultural resource.

The final step in securing the site, involved a swap of two parcels of City-owned land including the Toronto Public Library lands at the corner of Front and Parliament, opposite the First Parliament Site. That land swap was facilitated by the City commitment to reserve space on the First Parliament Site for a new and badly needed regional library to serve the intensifying St. Lawrence Neighbourhood and the 10-15,000 new residents moving into the West Don Lands.

The City-led First Parliament Site Master Planning process is a continuation of these decades of community engagement and provides a vision and guiding principles for redevelopment that includes heritage interpretation, a regional library space, affordable housing and public open space.

WDLC members are strong advocates of public transit and support the current work to improve the city's transit network. At the same time, it is crucially important that the desire to capture value at transit nodes be balanced against the equally important opportunities to meet other needs for the immediate community. It is the community that is most expert in identifying those needs and we need to be at the table now, not after the terms of any transfer or long term use have been negotiated.

We anticipate and look forward to your support.

Yours truly,



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cc Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam