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April 29, 2021

Cathrine Regan, Administrator
12th Floor West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Re: Agenda Item 2021EX23.3 Provincial Transit-Oriented Communities Program

Dear Mayor Tory and Committee Members:

The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA) represents the interests of 30,000+ people who live in the neighbourhood. The St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1982. We support the staff report before you today and urge you to recommend immediate action however community consultation must be at the forefront. We are also founding members of the West Don Lands Committee.

We are extremely concerned that the process where Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario is taking, moving at a rate that excludes community consultation. The SLNA has always been at the table with respect to discussions around the First Parliament Site. We have worked for decades with City Councillors and Staff around the Master Plan and the Heritage Interpretation.

In the report the timelines do not provide opportunity for the community to provide input. Offering community consultation at stage 7 out of 8 prior to Council Approval of Zoning is beyond anything we have ever encountered. We have a track record of working with developers as early as the pre-application phase. More than ever it is critical that the community consultation commence immediately. We have a reputation of offering input that provides community focused development and allows for development that is forward thinking. This is an opportunity to build a Transit Oriented Community that is world class, not something that appears to be rushed through in order to supplement revenue for that transit station.

We support the West Don Lands request and urge the City to request that Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario strike a community stakeholder process immediately. We insist that all work to date be incorporated including: Toronto Public Library long-overdue District Library be incorporated on the First Parliament Site; Heritage Interpretation and Master Plan for First Parliament Site be completed; Affordable Housing on the First Parliament Site must include no less than 30% for publicly owned land; and finally, that archeological resources must be preserved and the site itself will remain in public ownership.

Many members of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood have worked for decades with the support of Councillor Pam McConnell and various provincial MPPs and Federal MPs and including Mayor Tory to ensure that this site was back in public hands and to develop the site as a public, cultural resource.

The SLNA are strong advocates of public transit and we support the improvement of public transit in Toronto in general and our community in particular but have concerns about some of the details. This is a neighbourhood that relies on public transit and is pedestrian friendly. We want to ensure that when inviting third-parties to also make investments in transit infrastructure that it is not at the expense of the community. We understand that we need to find ways to offset the capitol costs and to ensure we are future thinking and not “grabbing” for the short term. In the St. Lawrence, as the birthplace of the Town of York, we want to think about what will this look like 100 years from now and what we are doing today will tell the story of how we got there.

We also formally request that we be provided with notice of any meetings of Council, Committees of Council, Community Council or Public Meetings/Community Consultation Meetings where reports related to the Transit Oriented Communities is considered. We also respectfully request that we be forwarded copies of any future reports.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Suzanne Kavanagh Chair,
Development and Heritage Committees
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association
suzkav123@gmail.com 647-309-4365
cc. Councillor Wong-Tam, Ward 13
SLNA Board of Directors
Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Derrick Toigo, Executive Director, Transit Expansion Office