

From: [Tony Loparco](#)
To: [Executive Committee](#)
Cc: [Betty Vavougios](#)
Subject: Amalgamation of New Toronto Courthouse-Executive Item # 24.1
Date: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 11:25:13 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[Final New Toronto Courthouse.pptx](#)

Please see the above attached power point about why the New Toronto Courthouse as presently proposed is not a good idea.

To be clear the consolidation of the downtown courts (Old City Hall, College Park and 311 Jarvis) into the New Toronto Courthouse is appropriate as the present downtown courts are well past their best before dates as courthouses. Other government tribunals, family courts or government social services that support court services could also help fill up the space that will be freed up if the suburban courts stay where they are.

Sincerely,

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NEW TORONTO COURTHOUSE

IS IT REALLY SUCH A GOOD IDEA?



FOUR REASONS TO RETHINK THE PLAN

Access to
Justice

Security

Health &
Safety

Cost

COMMUNITY MEMBERS WILL
NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS
JUSTICE. PEOPLE WHO
REQUIRE THESE SERVICES
WHO RESIDE IN THE
BOROUGH ARE
MARGINALIZED AND WILL BE
UNABLE AND UNWILLING TO
COME DOWNTOWN.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE



WHO ARE THESE MARGINALIZED PEOPLE?

Victims of crimes and witnesses (domestics, sexual assaults, home invasions, street robberies, gun crimes, etc)

- Often very reluctant to attend and give evidence.
- Lengthy transportation involving multiple transfers for several hours on public transport leading to non-attendance.
- OR, lengthy drive due to congestion with *scarce* and *expensive* parking (only going to get worse)
- Additional parking was not addressed when building the courthouse. In fact, the courthouse was built on the parking lot that was used by justice participants for the Superior Court.

WHO ARE THESE MARGINALIZED PEOPLE?

Accused

Accused will face the same issues as witnesses and victims.

Impacted accused: First Nations persons, racialized persons, individuals dealing with mental health challenges, the poverty-stricken.

The difficulty in coming downtown will result in many more arrest warrants and needless further hearings.

Bringing youth downtown from across the city will disrupt their schooling due to time and distance AND will increase the likelihood of encountering people that will recruit them into a gang or escalate criminal activities.



LOSS OF COMMUNITY

LOSING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND SOLUTIONS

- Centralization is contrary to the movement to community justice (eg initiatives such as the Community Justice Centres that are opening soon).
- Local community groups will have difficulty and added costs associated with attending the court to support their clientele (victims, witnesses, accused, etc).
- Community policing – officers will be tied up with court downtown and will not be available to service their local communities



VIOLENCE

SECURITY CONCERNS

CONGREGATION OF GANGS

Bringing together all gangs from throughout the city will result in violence at the court, the surrounding area and on the transit system.

With the borough courts in existence, gangs remain separated.

Having multiple court locations allow rival gangs to be separated during their hearings, hence minimizing risk of violence amongst themselves, other users of the courthouse and members of the public near the courthouse (eg local business and people attending them).

POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF THIS VIOLENCE

Members of the public who are not justice participants:

- On transit system
- In surrounding areas

Justice Participants

- In the courthouse
- In the surrounding areas
- On the transit system

The fear of violence will discourage many justice participants who are not employees from attending the courthouse. As a result, cases will be delayed and more costly or thrown out altogether because of lack of witness and victim participation.



VULNERABILITY TO PANDEMICS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Lessons learned from COVID-19, SARS and SWINE FLU (H1N1)

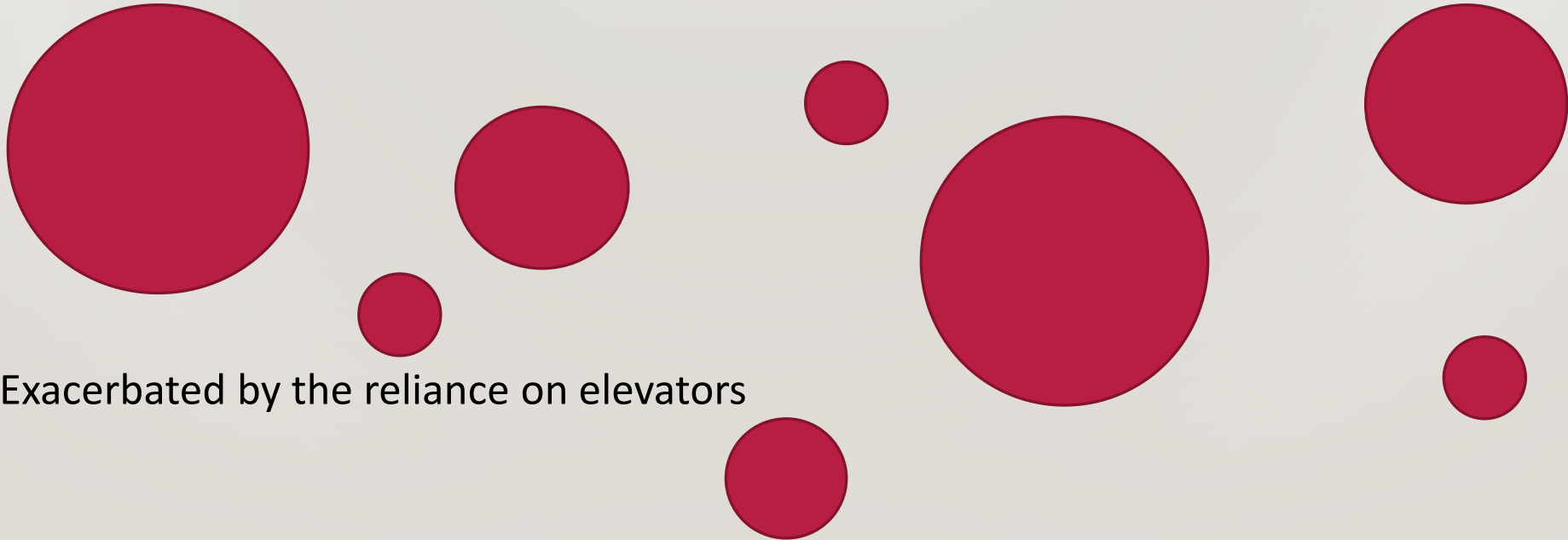
ABILITY TO PHYSICALLY DISTANCE

- An outbreak of any contagion in the NTC will grind the entire criminal justice system to a halt for the city of Toronto.
- NTC has 4 elevators for all justice participants (except judges) and visitors for 63 courtrooms. This will cause delays, security risks and further health exposure due to bottle necking as people wait to access the elevator
- Social distancing not possible with all justice participants for entire city put into one building.
- With every criminal case centralized in one courthouse, we lose the ability to move cases to other locations in the case of an outbreak in one courthouse.

AIRBORNE SPREAD

- Having many people in the same building with a central HVAC system increases the risk of spread for viruses/bacteria which spread throughout the respiratory system

- Exacerbated by the reliance on elevators



ENHANCED RISK ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Increased risk of spread
during a pandemic

Lack of parking/prohibitive cost
of parking near NTC means
more people on public
transportation



- A cost benefit analysis comparing the cost of moving all borough courts to the NTC versus leaving the boroughs where they are and building the NTC for the downtown courts only was cost neutral, ie cost savings for the current plan (FOI is claiming privilege over this report under FIPPA sections 12 – Cabinet Records and section 13 – Advice to Government and 18(1)(d) Economic and Other Interests of Ontario)

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POLICING COSTS WILL INCREASE



“Standby” practise for trials are currently used in the Toronto courts: Police officers remain on their shifts but are “on call” for testimony. This cost efficient practice becomes impossible where all officers scheduled for court will be tied up downtown.

“Critical Call Back” costs will increase exponentially: Police on overtime to cover gaps in staffing due to officers tied up downtown and not being able to be on call in their local community. Without relying on critical call back (at much greater cost to taxpayers) response time in a serious public safety matter (eg mass shooting) will be greatly increased, as all police will be located in the downtown core.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES WILL SUFFER ECONOMIC LOSS

Local businesses (both big and small) will suffer from the removal of the economic engine created by the local courthouses in their communities.

This will be the nail in the coffin for businesses already strained because of COVID-19.

