

VIA EMAIL (teycc@toronto.ca)

City Secretariat, Attention: Ellen Devlin
Toronto and East York Community Council
2nd Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen St. West
Toronto Ontario, M5H 2N2

Re: TE23.51 – 2180-2210 Yonge Street, 15 Eglinton Avenue West, and 20 and 46 Berwick Avenue Zoning Amendment Application – Preliminary Report - Planning application number 20 232714 STE OZ – Canada Square site

February 23, 2021

Dear Chair, Gord Perks and TEYCC Members,

Action requested: In accordance with Official Plan amendment 405 (section 5.5.3), we respectfully request that the Toronto and East York Community Council take the necessary steps to initiate a full-scale comprehensive planning study for the Canada Square site with community representation and consultation throughout.

We are a group of Midtown-based residents associations and their representatives, as follows:

- Eglinton Park Residents Association (EPRA) – Tom Cohen
- Oriole Park Association (OPA) – David McMahon
- Quantum Owners & Residents Association (QuORA) – David Ticoll
- Republic Residents' Association (RRA) – Geri Berholz
- South Eglinton Ratepayers' & Residents' Association (SERRA) – Andy Gort
- Berwick Condominium Corporation – Melissa Phillips

We have all been following the development of the referenced planning application for many years. We were pleased and encouraged by the February 3, 2021 Preliminary Report for Action on this file from Community Planning for the Toronto & East York District. We believe our assessment and recommendations regarding the subject proposal are aligned with the findings and issues raised in this report.

As the City owns the land of Canada Square, it should prioritize uses that are in the public interest and conform to the highest planning principles of complete, socially- and climate-positive communities. Any Canada Square development should earn its name and location by becoming an exemplary leadership site of local, regional and national significance. Sadly, this is not the reality of the subject application.

Our conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- We oppose the premise of the current application as primarily an infill site with 2700 new residences and transit infrastructure, without providing sufficient contributions to advancing a complete community in Midtown.
- In addition to being a transportation hub, this city-owned site should be primarily dedicated to employment, economic development, and community services and facilities.
- Building on its capacity as a transportation at the centre of Toronto, the site should become a local, regional and national hub as an innovation zone and living lab for 21st century carbon-free urbanism.
- We have many concerns about the proposed land use plan and design, but we are not commenting on these matters at this time.

Canada Square is designated as a Special Study Area within the Yonge-Eglinton Crossroads Character Area. We understand that the City is required under OPA 405, which received ministerial approval, to take the necessary actions so that *“a comprehensive study will be undertaken prior to considering any amendments or variances to the Zoning By-law”* for Canada Square. ***We respectfully request that the Toronto and East York Community Council take the necessary steps to initiate a full-scale comprehensive planning study for the Canada Square Site with community representation and consultation throughout.***

For more details on our assessment of the application and our views on priority investments for Canada Square, please review the attached document, *“Canada Square recommendations”*.

Please feel free to contact any or all the area residents’ associations (contact information below) if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Thank you for your attention and assistance in this matter.

Best regards,

Tom Cohen (Eglinton Park Residents Association [REDACTED])
David McMahon (Oriole Park Association [REDACTED])
David Ticoll (Quantum Owners & Residents Association [REDACTED])
Geri Berholz (Republic Residents Association [REDACTED])
Andy Gort (South Eglinton Ratepayers’ & Residents’ Association ([REDACTED])
Melissa Phillips (Berwick Condominium Corporation [REDACTED])

cc. Councillor Josh Matlow, Ward 12
Councillor Jaye Robinson, Ward 15
Councillor Mike Colle, Ward 8
Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner, City of Toronto
Lynda MacDonald, Director, Toronto and East York, Community Planning
Oren Tamir, Manager Midtown Section, Community Planning
Alex Teixeira, Senior Planner, Midtown Section, Community Planning

Attachment: *Canada Square Recommendations (see below)*

Attachment - Canada Square site recommendations

To: Toronto and East York Community Council. February 24, 2021.

Re: 2180-2210 Yonge Street, 15 Eglinton Avenue West, and 20 and 46 Berwick Avenue (i.e., “Canada Square”) Zoning Amendment Application, Planning application number 20 232714 STE OZ

From the following Midtown resident associations and their representatives:

- Eglinton Park Residents Association (EPRA) – Tom Cohen
- Oriole Park Association (OPA) – David McMahon
- Quantum Owners & Residents Association (QuORA) – David Ticoll
- Republic Residents’ Association (RRA) – Geri Berholz
- South Eglinton Ratepayers’ & Residents’ Association (SERRA) – Andy Gort
- Berwick Condominium Corporation – Melissa Phillips

Summary

- **In accordance with Official Plan amendment 405, we respectfully request that the Toronto and East York Community Council take the necessary steps to initiate a full-scale comprehensive planning study for the Canada Square site with community representation and consultation throughout.**
- We oppose the premise of the current application as primarily an infill site with 2700 new residences.
- This city-owned site should be primarily dedicated to employment, economic development, and community services and facilities.
- Building on its capacity as a mobility hub at the centre of Toronto, the site should become a local, regional and national hub as an innovation zone and living lab for 21st century carbon-free urbanism.
- We have many concerns about the proposed land use plan and design, but we are not commenting on these matters at this time.
- We respectfully request that the Toronto and East York Community Council take the necessary steps to initiate a full-scale comprehensive planning study with community representation throughout.

Introduction

We believe the discussion and recommendations herein are aligned with the Preliminary Report for Action (PRA) from Community Planning (Toronto & East York District) to the Toronto and East York Community Council dated February 3, 2021. Where applicable, we have cited from this report in italics and included its cross references to relevant policy documents.

Key observation

- As the City owns the land of Canada Square, it should prioritize uses that are in the public interest and conform to the highest planning principles of complete, climate-positive communities.
- Any Canada Square development should earn its name and location by becoming an exemplary leadership site of local, regional and national significance.

Comprehensive study required by legislation

The subject site is located in an area identified as a Special Study Area within the Yonge-Eglinton Crossroads Character Area. Maximum permitted building heights for sites identified as Special Study Areas will be in accordance with heights established in the Zoning By-law or as may be determined through a comprehensive study. (Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405) - PRA p. 8)

Canada Square (CS) has the long-established status of being a 'Special Study Area'. Being a Special Study Area, CS lands were not addressed during the Midtown in Focus (MiF) exercise. The MiF Report, which City Council adopted unanimously as Official Plan Amendment 405 (subsequently ratified by Ministerial order), states:

- 5.5.3.** *Development in the southwest quadrant of the Yonge-Eglinton Crossroads Character Area will address the following development criteria:*
- a) a **comprehensive study will be undertaken prior to considering any amendments or variances to the Zoning By-law. Any resulting Zoning By-law amendment or variances will meet all applicable policies of this Plan***

It is timely for City Planning to initiate a comprehensive planning study for CS prior to considering any development application for this site. A public planning process is required with full engagement of the community and residents' associations along the lines of the MiF exercise.

Midtown's social, cultural and physical infrastructure does not meet Provincial criteria for a 'complete community' approach to planning. The City-owned land at Canada Square provides an opportunity to rectify Midtown's deficiencies.

Midtown context

The Growth Plan (2020) identifies a portion of Midtown as one of five Urban Growth Centres (UGCs) in Toronto. UGCs are to be planned as focal areas for investment in regional public service facilities, as well as accommodate commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses. They are also required to be planned to support the transit network and to serve as high-density. (A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) - PRA, p5)

As stated above, Midtown is one of Toronto's five Urban Growth Centres. It is also one of the city's three most significant residential, work and transit crossroads (the others being Union Station and Bloor Yonge). Of these three, it contains by far the highest resident population and the lowest workplace density relative to resident population.

Midtown situation:

A population prospect of 90,000 residing within a 1-km radius

- The area is becoming an over-developed bedroom community
- A highly educated workforce, mostly employed outside the area in innovative jobs
- With the opening of the LRT, coming influx of pools of workers, learners, cultural consumers and shoppers

Midtown lacks the attributes of a complete community:

Deficient in schools, daycares, fitness facilities, community spaces, parks and open green spaces, human scale retail and cultural amenities

- Insufficient walkable live/work/play context, especially post-pandemic
- Midtown lacks the physical infrastructure to facilitate a broad spectrum of active mobility: for instance, cycling-transit transfer provision for its transportation hub there

Other issues:

- North-south public transit is over-capacity during peak travel times (pre-Covid condition)
- Potentially insufficient water/hydro infrastructure for any major development on the subject site
- Poor "last mile" delivery infrastructure

What Midtown does not need:

- Thousands more tower infill residences as the area is already over-built

Our vision for Canada Square

[UGCs} are also required to be planned to support the transit network and to serve as high-density major employment centres, attracting provincially, nationally, or internationally significant employment uses, while accommodating significant population and employment growth. (A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) - PRA, p5)

The Yonge-Eglinton Centre will be a major centre of economic activity with a concentration of existing and new office uses and other value-added employment sectors along Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, a civic and cultural hub with a concentration of existing and new community service facilities and entertainment uses, a focal area for retail and service uses that meet the day-to-day needs of residents and workers in Midtown and draw visitors from across the city, and a residential area, with a collection of residential and mixed-use neighbourhoods with varied characters and scales as set out in this Plan that support a diverse population. Mixed Use Areas 'A' are Midtown's premier locations for intensification, including residential, major office and other employment uses. A broad mix of residential, retail and service, office, institutional, entertainment and cultural uses are desired and permitted. Parks and open spaces and community uses are also permitted. (Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405) – PRA p. 6)

Canada Square should teem with abundant outdoor greenery, innovation and education, health and fitness amenities, culture creation, good jobs and economic development. Canada Square should be a transit destination, not just a transit intersection. There is tremendous potential to be unlocked in being an innovation centre and living lab for carbon-free urbanism.

We propose 3 themes for the development of Canada Square:

1) Quality of life – the community hub

Canada Square is central making Midtown a complete live, work and play community.

2) Focus on employment

Define Canada Square's character as a major hub for research, education, innovation (e.g. tech/business incubator) and economic development.

3) Low carbon innovation zone

Define Canada Square as an innovation zone for the low carbon economy. Make it a focus of onsite commercial, educational and innovation activities. For example, vertical farming, green tech engineering, ESG investors. Design its built form, infrastructure and parkland as a proving ground and showcase for green urban development. Overall lifecycle of development, including demolition and construction, should have net negative GHG emissions impact.

What we need: a complete Midtown for a vibrant Toronto

1) Jobs

- Overall development should be 80%+ employment rather than 80% residential, as currently proposed. Employment development has fallen far short of residential development in the area.
 - This can include business, tech/arts incubator, government, education, public services, culture, granular retail/services etc.
- Employers attuned to three themes above: quality of life, employment, and low carbon innovation
- Innovation incubator & start-ups tied in to regional, national and global hubs, attract business & talent to the area
- Shared workspace facilities
- Small specialty shops, not big box stores (e.g. Honest Ed development)

2) Community services and facilities

The City's Official Plan establishes and recognizes that the provision of and investment in community services and facilities supports healthy, safe, liveable, and accessible communities. Providing for a full range of community services and facilities in areas experiencing major or incremental growth, is a responsibility shared by the City, public agencies and the development community.

City Planning completed a CS&F Strategy for the Yonge-Eglinton Area in May 2018. The CS&F strategy identified a variety of existing gaps and increasing demand for a full range of community services and facilities in Midtown resulting from ongoing intensification and demographic change. It prioritizes the provision of social and physical infrastructure in conjunction with development. The integration of new community facilities within mixed-use buildings is a key strategy to address increasing demand. (PRA, p. 10)

- Daycare. Lots of it.
- Public school, either elementary or high school
- Post-secondary satellite campus
- Major community centre with fitness and meeting facilities
- Cultural amenities including multifunctional event spaces
- Extensive, unencumbered green and open outdoor park and gathering spaces

3) Housing

All housing should be truly affordable and family sized to help enhance the creation of a complete community with relevance to all ages.

- We recommend at most, 20% of GFA devoted to housing.
- Incorporate "green" tech and environmentally conscious design and materials.