

# Growing Responsibly, Organically, and Well

City Clerk, Attention: The Chair and Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council  
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**RE: TE26.31**

23 June 2021

Dear the Chair and Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council,

I am writing to address the Planning Framework for the Bloor Street Study: St. Helen's to Perth Avenue which we understand will be spoken to at the next City Council meeting - June 24, 2021. As neighbours and residents of the area under consideration we want to ensure that our concerns are highlighted in all decisions made by the City on behalf of us, the residents of the South Junction Triangle.

As you are aware, there has been an overwhelming number of developments proposed for this area. These developments come in addition to massive developments in all of the surrounding areas. We are also aware that our current provincial government is encouraging this kind of development particularly in "transit hubs." Although we support responsible development - we must be clear about what that means and how it looks for our little neighbourhood. We consider this framework to be paramount to guiding and supporting our community through this stage of change and development, and as such put our faith in council to revise and reconsider the framework to address our concerns as follows:

- **The Sterling Lofts:** To our knowledge The Sterling Lofts parcel at 221, 225, 227 Sterling road, already meets or exceeds the city's density guidelines and is not a good candidate for re-development, especially in contrast to the other development applications in the area. Additional research and a community survey is necessary to have a true assessment of the diverse use and needs of the tenants and residents at the Sterling Lofts, and to give a true picture of the community, and the current density.

While the study has done due diligence in the historic stature of the Sterling Lofts, it fails to adequately represent the cultural heritage of the lofts and their decades of supporting and representing creative and artistic communities here. The disruption to this community that the potential redevelopment would cause would be irreparable. Not only would the residents here be forced to displace, the businesses and creatives would largely not survive without the benefit of the community support the lofts offer. As such, the framework as written is in direct conflict with both the PPS and the Ontario Grows strategies in their mandate to "promote strong communities" and "Conserve and promote cultural heritage resources".

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Designating the Sterling Lofts as “apartment neighborhoods”: This needs revision in light of the diverse mixed-use of the Lofts, and true unique character and use as one of the last live-work buildings in the city. As such, the proposed rezoning of the Sterling Lofts is also misaligned in its replacement or provision for housing, with no provision for the businesses that currently occupy the space, and with no stated regard for the businesses and employment that will be lost in the area if the buildings are not preserved.

There was direct mention of the Sterling Lofts in the community meeting held on April 12. Comments were made about the Lofts, and yet they are not named specifically to the same points in the planning framework, as they were named in the meeting. We are greatly concerned about the disparity on this point, given the timeliness of the re-zoning application at the Lofts having been submitted between the community meeting and now.

- **Affordability and Livability:** Access to affordable housing and business spaces: The framework makes little mention of affordability for either housing or businesses.
- **Transportation:** The report shows lack of insight in regards to transit and transportation through the area, and the impacts that the number of developments in the area and vicinity would cause. Premier Ford has designated this a transit hub meaning that there are new transit stations in the area. However, this new transit is from outside of the downtown core. There has been no change to the TTC routes in the area. Prior to the pandemic, the TTC was overcrowded at the Dundas Street West station during morning rush hour. UP Express and GO, as yet, do not provide a reasonable alternative to downtown traffic and did not impact the pressure on the TTC. By adding additional GO stops to this region we are not providing alternative routes to downtown. These GO stations should not grant permission for further residential building in the area, without further study. The current transit cannot support more residents in the area. This is critical! We feel the area would be better suited to increased employment and business use, to properly make use of the additional Metrolinx transit coming to the area, and relieve the potential strain on the TTC that residential developments will cause.
- **Vehicular accessibility:** Little mention in the study represents the vehicular accessibility of the area, considering there are two roads in and three roads out of the area (Perth, Sterling), the area in question is at high risk of significant traffic congestion with the number of developments in the area. We do not feel that the extension of Sterling Road along Ruttan Street would provide adequate relief considering the scale of the developments being proposed. The isolated nature of the study area due to its unique rail corridor surroundings is not mentioned in regards to the development impacts in the area and needs to be further addressed before more roads within the area are built, without properly addressing entry and exit roads. Congestion along Bloor Street is already proving an issue since the implementation of bike lanes, and the addition of another intersection at Ruttan Street would surely exacerbate things further. Additionally it doesn't seem that there have been significant enough studies done pre-Covid to have a real picture of what would be needed from infrastructure in the area
- **Traffic:** The intersection at Bloor & Sterling & Symington is a dangerous intersection. It is confusing and not functioning well with the current traffic. The addition of

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thousands of more residents will overwhelm this intersection. Also, note that Sterling Road is a single lane one-way street. Condo building drop-offs and pickups will literally stop the flow of traffic on Sterling Road.

- **Community Services and Facilities:** there is a shortage of community services and facilities in this neighbourhood. Schools are over capacity. There are few daycare services in this area. There are no recreation or community centres. There are no green spaces. Please revise to include planning that will account for any new families and children who may move to the area.
- **Parking:** Street parking is a huge issue for the residents of Sterling Road. The addition of hundreds of more cars will put pressure on the street parking for the residents of Sterling Road and south Perth Avenue who are already struggling to find parking.
- **Built form:** towering condo developments will impact the look and feel of the neighbourhood. Made up of mostly 100-year-old homes - modern glass tall structures do not fit into the neighbourhood.
- **Environmental impact:** Tall buildings in close proximity to each other can create a wind tunnel effect. They also lead to a heat island effect. Residents are concerned about the impact that construction will have on our homes as well as on our lives.
- **Privacy:** Residents are concerned about the impact large multi-story condos will have on our privacy. Our backyards and windows will be open to hundreds of viewers at close range.
- **Cumulative effect:** We have no idea what the impact will be of the developments that have already been approved for this small area and the larger surrounding community. All along Dundas Street West, there are condos being built, a massive development at Dufferin and Dupont, and the development at Perth and Sterling Road. In total the AIC shows 47 development applications in the vicinity of the study area. We must slow down the approval process to allow the neighbourhood to absorb the impact of these developments in all of the above areas. This framework must better take into account the development in the surrounding areas. Please heed our call for restraint.

Although we support the findings of the Bloor Street Study: St.Helen's to Perth Avenue in principle, it is clear that more studying needs to be done on this small area. We call on you the City Council to exercise restraint in approving developments and in approving this framework as presented today. We ask you to consider the cumulative impact of development in this area and the surrounding areas. We ask that guidelines not be seen as a minimum starting point for developers but rather a maximum. In order for this neighbourhood and the city at large to remain livable, we must resist the desire to grow by extinguishing the cultural heritage and community that already exists here.

Additionally, in response to the letters submitted by Bousfields on this agenda item - we ask Council to reject their request for the Official plan to be recognized over this Planning Framework, simply due to the timeline of a yet-unapproved development application. To make this request seems in poor faith of the city's goal of encouraging positive growth within this area by the development of this Framework. As residents, we have taken hours of time away from our families and jobs to support the constructive and supportive development of this framework and to aid in the governance of our

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community and the developments in it. To disregard this framework for unapproved applications would be a waste of all of our time. Please ensure that if a framework is approved, that it applies to all unapproved and future applications in the area. We ask that council take their time in approving any applications that may need revision due to the final points of this framework, and enforce the adherence to its guidelines, whatever they may be.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,  
Cara Sweeney  
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*On behalf of  
South Junction Triangle Grows*

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