



GOODERHAM & WORTS

NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

March 30, 2022

SUBMISSION TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF TORONTO CITY COUNCIL RE: EX31.2 ONTARIO LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES

TO Mayor John Tory and Members of the Executive Committee, Toronto City Council:

On behalf of the Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association representing the residents in and around the Distillery Historic Site, we wish to thank the City, both Councillors and Staff, for its support through the passage of First Parliament Master Plan and a subsequent motion to ensure that funds realised through the expropriation of this civic site are to be allocated to the realisation of the goals of the Master Plan. The on-going engagement of City Staff, the dedication of Councillors Wong-Tam and Cressy and the support of City Council throughout this difficult process have been deeply appreciated by the citizens of our community.

We recognise that the Province of Ontario has created an impossible situation for all of us with respect to its planned Transit Oriented Communities; it has made decisions that are autocratic and not in the public interest despite community efforts to engage with Provincial Ministers and Infrastructure Ontario and Metrolinx Staff. Infrastructure Ontario's community consultation process was inadequate and ineffective. The use of eMZOs by the Province is abhorrent and will be addressed with the Province directly.

However, we ask the City and all City Staff to continue to negotiate with the Province rigorously. If necessary, let the Province publicly demonstrate its refusal to negotiate in good faith with the needs of our community at heart. 'All we can get' or 'good enough' is not good enough. Let any negative impacts fall on the shoulders of the Province rather than trying to assuage them. We have already seen the impact of insufficient resolve in the loss of needed parkland at the First Parliament Site.

Re EX31.2 Staff Recommendations:

The GWNA is in full support of the Staff Recommendations to Executive Committee and City Council with respect to issues around the Ontario Line and the Transit Oriented Communities attached thereto. The following comments are specific to the development of the Corktown/First Parliament TOC which is in the unique situation of having been planned as a civic site with important Heritage and Cultural resonances.

#1. Value Allocation framework – With respect to parkland allocations in the Corktown/First Parliament Site Transit Oriented Community, we do not support cash payment for missing parkland. The Province owns lands directly to the East of the TOC development which it should be asked to assign as the parkland allocation which has been denied to our community. No amount of money will compensate the community for open space needed by our residents. Children cannot play on dollar bills.

We also support the development of an agreement regarding Community Benefits on both blocks of the Corktown/First Parliament TOC. Such an agreement must, however, not be completed without community advice and discussion. If we are looking at ‘complete communities’, the City and Province must both listen to the residents of the surrounding community who can identify the needs of the community.

#4. First Parliament Site TOC – We absolutely support the City in ensuring that the civic spaces in this development (originally assigned to a library and heritage interpretation centre) must be defined and confirmed with the Province prior to finalising any agreements. These spaces must be dedicated to the fulfillment of the First Parliament Master Plan. We also encourage the City to acquire all remaining ground floor space (approx. 8,000 sq feet) on the First Parliament Site to ensure the goals and aims of the First Parliament Master Plan can be at more completely attained.

#5. Affordable rental housing must be a given. We fully support the inclusion of 30% affordable housing in perpetuity in this development. The Downtown core requires housing for residents at all income levels, particularly for families with children.

#7. A full resourcing agreement, as with any other development in the City of Toronto, is absolutely essential. City staff has worked with the community for months to ensure the Province honour our needs and goals; they will be required to go beyond that in the coming years and months as they undertake the impossible task of trying to carry out the needed oversight of huge developments coming online at the same time, without the formal structure of the Site Planning process. Lack of City planning staff bandwidth has unfortunately undermined the City and community positions in recent Ontario Land Tribunal hearings; we would hate to see planning failures caused in the future by having to divert valuable City expert staff time to unpaid work on the Province’s TOCs.

Further Comments

The stated goals of a Transit Oriented Community include the development of ‘complete communities’. We rebut this definition in the case of the Corktown/ First Parliament Transit Oriented Community. We state categorically that the Corktown/First Parliament Transit Oriented Community as planned is in no way a complete community nor does it contribute to the surrounding communities. In fact, it will impact them negatively

- through a massive increase in density out of proportion with the surrounding residential community,
- through the potential (but very real) re-definitions of standard density and height for future developments (we noted with deep concern in the background report that City staff have cited developers already using densities and heights proposed by the Province through this TOC as a rationale to similarly exceed densities and heights in other developments nearby)
- through the 37% reduction of parkland on this site, urgently needed by a community which currently has less than 10% of the recommended City parkland allocations
- through the elimination of a unique National Heritage site and the loss of the economic benefits from culture, tourism and heritage which could have been part of that celebration
- through the lack of schools, and community facilities required to service a planned demographic that includes families (note that Metrolinx will also occupy the planned Mill St. School site intended for our current and future children which further reduces the social infrastructure the development needs)

We support the City in fighting to ensure that this development does not become another burden on the existing community. Density is not an evil in itself but, without social infrastructure to ensure that residents can lead healthy and productive lives, it creates social and economic issues that impact us all in the end.

The GWNA supports the City in ensuring that all agreements made with the Province and IO are secured on title to ensure that future developers are required to work with the City as the development proceeds, and to ensure that hard fought for zoning mitigations and VAF Community Benefits are not jettisoned at will by developers.

The GWNA supports the City's proposal that design review must include the City and community as would occur in the current City planning process. A project of this size and importance must include the best of social and environmental design, not recreate the worst of Soviet-era social housing.

Further Proposals

1. The GWNA recommends that the City take the lead in bringing municipal, provincial and federal partners together through Waterfront Toronto to ensure that the proposed civic spaces at the Corktown/First Parliament Transit Oriented Community are developed with reference to the First Parliament Master Plan to ensure that they celebrate the long heritage embodied by the site;

2. The GWNA demands that the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and other Indigenous Peoples be consulted in the full spirit of Reconciliation to ensure that the Indigenous history of the First Parliament Site is recognised and honoured, and that the results of such consultations be shared with the community;
3. The GWNA requests that the City and the Province ensure that the Corktown transit station is connected to the surrounding community and to the Waterfront through appropriate transit expansion. Currently there is no link in place, nor planned, to connect transit riders to the many waterfront developments in process: Parliament Slip, Harbour ferries, Quayside, etcetera. The investment of our three levels of government through Waterfront Toronto should be better served.

The GWNA believes that the First Parliament Site should be a major heritage and cultural attraction to bring massive economic benefits to the Lower East Side of Downtown Toronto. Without sensitive intelligent development, the Corktown/First Parliament Transit Oriented Community will simply be an over-developed subway stop instead of the world-class attraction it deserves to be. We support the City in its efforts to ensure that our citizens are served by the TOC developments along the Ontario Line.

Thank you for your attention and hard work on our behalf.



Diana Belshaw

President, Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association