

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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To: Chair and Councillors Planning and Housing Committee
Re: PH2.1, PH2.2

Feb. 26, 2023

Harbord Village Residents' Association (HVRA) and Annex Residents' Association (ARA) have members in the Downtown Area, immediately north and west of the University of Toronto St. George campus.

Over the past decade, and longer, we have actively participated in a large number of planning processes at the City.

We do not fear the expedited framework for handling planning applications under Bill 109. We know it needs improvement.

When the Chief Planner announced the framework under Bill 109, he acknowledged that the plan did not yet have a clear view of the role the community has to play.

Over the past month, a combined group from ARA and HVRA took on the task of finding the places in that framework where community advice could stand the best chance to influence planning applications, resolve outstanding issues, without adding time to the process.

We reached out to a developer to both understand the difficulties they face, particularly around time and expense, and to get his perspective on where the process could be served by clarity delivered at a time that would best enable him to efficiently respond.

There was a surprising meeting of minds.
The stages identified by the developer were pre-application and pre-resubmission. The stages we identified as community needs were pre-application and post community meeting— again, pre-submission.

The power point that captures our recommendations is attached.

We are already speaking with and encouraging developers and City Planning to apply this model in our neighbourhoods and are sharing it with other interested groups in the City.

What matters is that the community understand applications, have certainty on what developers intend, and what the city's reaction is. It is then in a position to fully respond. For the developer, at each pivotal step, the changes we propose ensure he or she is clear on where the community and all other parties sit.

What also matters is to have community participation formally built into the planning process. These are after all communities of residents. If consultation is left as an afterthought, communities could easily be ignored.

Our submission seeks to avoid that. We ask that you direct City Planning to consider what is being proposed and engage in meaningful discussions with the community to overcome the weakness of the current model.

With respect,

Sue Dexter
Harbord Village

Elizabeth Sisam Henry Wiercinski
Annex Residents Association

cc. Councillor_Saxe
Holli Butrimas

Implementing Bill 109: Process Improvements

Shortened timelines under Bill 109 require modifications to streamline the development approval process, including revisiting how community consultation is undertaken.

Goals are to:

- Ensure meaningful engagement between the community, developer, City Staff and other key stakeholders early in the process
- Ensure improved transparency on all sides
- Identify and resolve outstanding issues expeditiously



Development Application Consultation

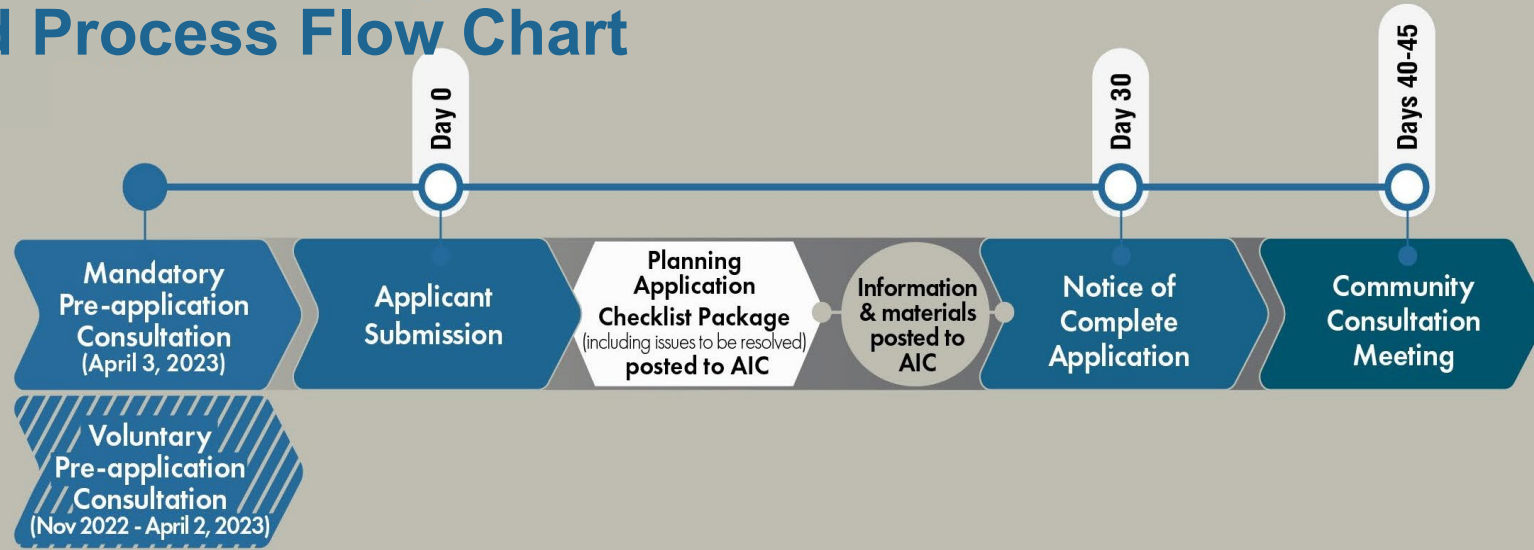
There are two main opportunities for the community and key stakeholders to engage early in the development process:

- 1. Providing preliminary written comments within 15 business days from PAC Meeting; and,**
- 2. Providing written and/or oral comments at or immediately following the community consultation meeting.**

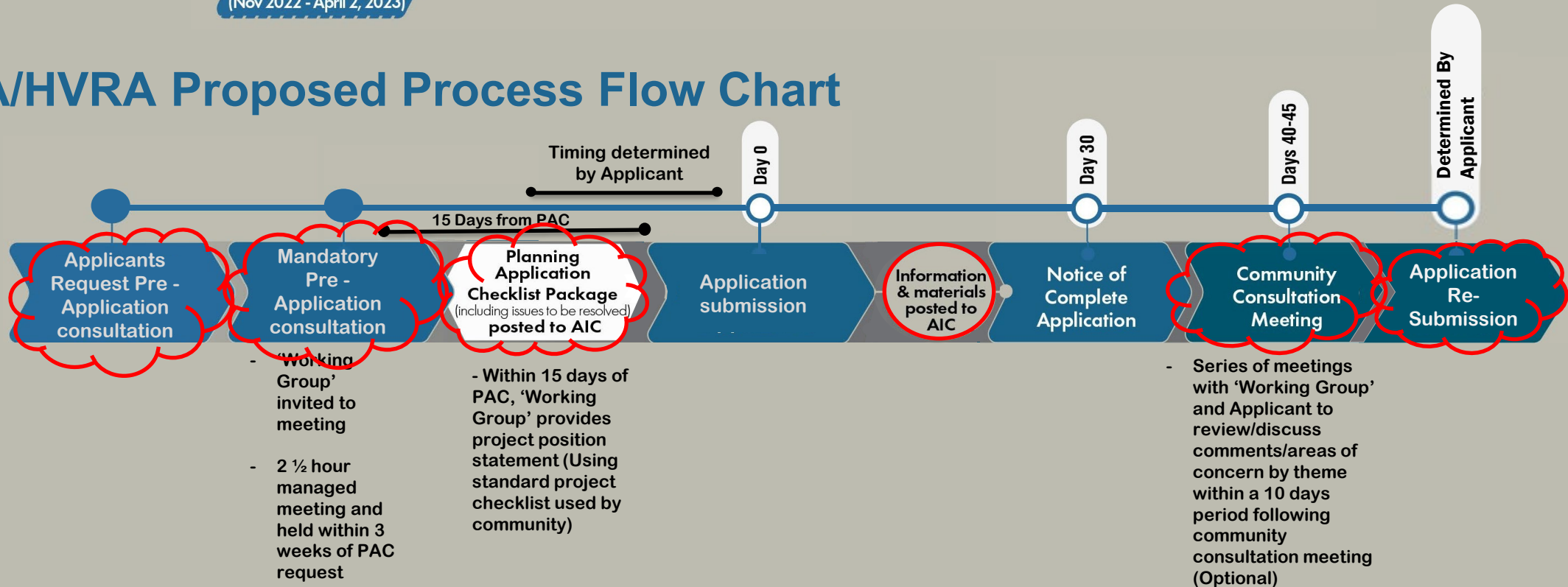
Following the community consultation meeting, the applicant will be encouraged to participate in a series of working meetings with the community and key stakeholders to review any outstanding issues raised and explore potential solutions.



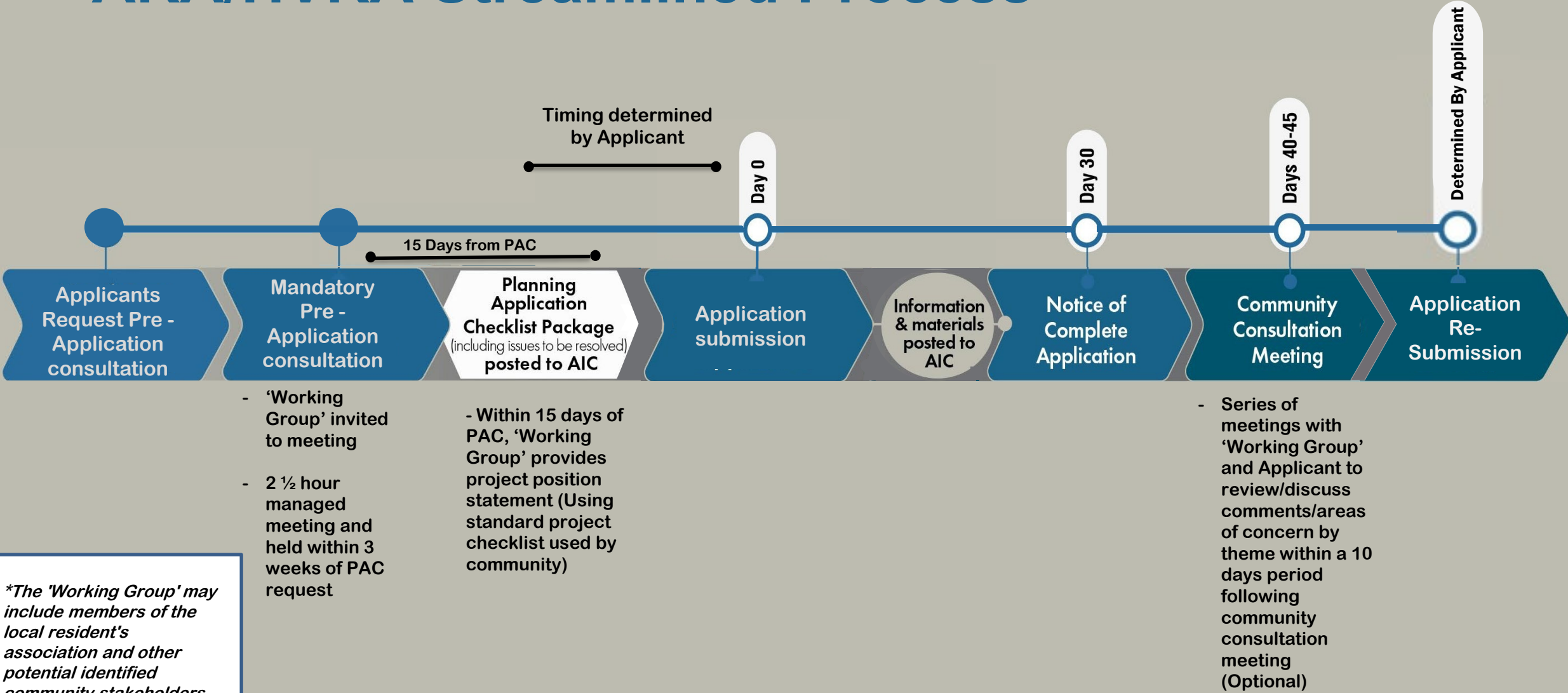
City Proposed Process Flow Chart



ARA/HVRA Proposed Process Flow Chart



ARA/HVRA Streamlined Process



**The 'Working Group' may include members of the local resident's association and other potential identified community stakeholders*

ARA/HVRA Proposed Streamlined Process

1. Pre-Application Consultation (PAC)

- **Initial meeting:** ‘Familiarization’ with project and identify potential early issues
- Community reps invited to attend PAC meeting with City staff and Applicant
- Community reps agree to circulate initial community response using community checklist* to identify potential issues within 15 days

** ARA and HVRA has developed an application checklist to assist in its review of development applications*



ARA/HVRA Proposed Streamlined Process

2. Application Submission

- Application to respond to preliminary feedback received through the PAC process
- Application to include the technical requirements to form a complete application

3. Application Judged Complete

- City to issue Notice of Complete application



ARA/HVRA Proposed Streamlined Process

4. Community Consultation Meeting

- Prior to a resubmission by the applicant, City to host a community consultation meeting
- Following the Community Consultation Meeting, City Staff, Councillor, Applicant, Community and Key Stakeholders participate in series of optional working sessions over 10 business days to review and discuss any outstanding matters requiring further discussion/resolution
- (+/- 4 meetings) focused on such matters as: height and massing, heritage, green infrastructure, sustainability, transportation, servicing, community impacts, etc.

5. Resubmission

- Applicant files resubmission addressing feedback and comments received
- Iterative process – working towards final approval



ARA/HVRA Proposed Streamlined Process

Clear away the mysteries

- ARA and HVRA model was implemented for Mirvish Village, Bloor St. United, 350 Bloor St. W. development application process— no appeals
- For the U of T Planetarium, the working group clarified issues which led to a settlement in two days

This proposed process builds on collaborative evaluation, discussion, resolution early in the process to avoid unnecessary delay or appeals



ARA/HVRA Proposed Streamlined Process

Where communities are less organized, valuable councillor and staff work and the models from other neighbourhoods could be used to enhance and strengthen the role and voices of communities and their understanding of the planning process. It would also highlight the changed planning context.

This proposal acknowledges the proposed changes to respond to Bill 109 but does not weaken the role of communities in managing change.

It gives developers better understanding of the local context, a capacity for productive exchange with community and arguably a better development project at the end of the day.

