

April 16, 2024 - re: **2024.TE.12.5**

To Mayor Chow and the members of the Toronto Community Council:

I live in one of the townhouses at 190 Lowther, across the street from the proposed 11-storey development at 171-175 Lowther.

I have been a Registered Professional Planner for the last ~25 years, worked as a planner for the City for ~25 years, and spent more than five years as an adjudicator member of the OMB/LPAT. I've also worked in development. Please note, however, that my comments here are based on my personal, not professional, views. I am conveying my personal comments as a 'regular' citizen, albeit with a highly informed background and training that shapes my perspective on the proposed development.

I fully appreciate that we're in a housing crisis and that we need to intensify residential use on a lot of sites, especially close to Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). However, there is no need for a sledgehammer OPA that destroys the stable Neighbourhood designation on the subject lands.

Why?

This site can already be gently densified under the Neighbourhood designation in accordance with the City's 'missing middle' policies. And the density can still contribute appropriately to City targets and the pressures around MTSAs. The current 171-175 Lowther proposal appears to ignore these facts; it's an over-reach, much like the proposed OPA and ZBL.

Accordingly, I agree in full with the Annex Residents Association (ARA) articulated planning position on the proposal, and **I urge you to refuse Motion 2024.TE.12.5 in its entirety.**

More recently, I learned that the Dalton Road Residents' Group and the Planning & Development group of the ARA submitted a briefing document to Council. I received a copy and I read it carefully.

I agree with that brief in full – a positive endorsement that I don't make very often in my professional work – and I believe it should be given serious consideration by members of Council.

Why?

The Dalton Road brief provides missing information that will help you in your decision making. It gives a credible, thoughtful and compelling rationale as to why the proposal should be refused in full.

Refusing the application in full would avoid any amending motions that may result from any last-minute, immaterial collaboration which may occur between the Ward Councillor and the developer. Such dealmaking would not address any of the fundamental planning issues that residents have raised with the Councillor and as set out in the brief.

If the application is not refused in full by Council, there would be negative City-wide policy ramifications of approving it. The brief explains why in compelling detail.

In conclusion, Council must challenge, on an ongoing basis, these specific kinds of precedent-setting applications that seek to erode Neighbourhood boundaries.

Many city residents, and without doubt the City's planners, know that housing densification targets can be achieved without eroding those boundaries; it behooves City Council to act accordingly.

Kind regards,
Anne Milchberg