

June 12, 2024

Planning and Housing Committee  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2  
via email to: [phc@toronto.ca](mailto:phc@toronto.ca)

To the Planning and Housing Committee:

**Subject: Support for 2024.PH13.2 - Villiers Island Precinct - City-Initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment - Decision Report - Approval**

Dear Chair Perks and Members of the Planning and Housing Committee:

My name is Michael Bethke, and I am the President of the East Waterfront Community Association. EWCA's coverage area starts from East of Yonge Street to West of Old Cherry Street and from South of Lake Shore Boulevard East to the Water's Edge Promenade. I am writing to express EWCA's enthusiastic support for the proposed amendments to the Villiers Island Precinct Plan.

Since its inception, EWCA has partnered with Waterfront Toronto throughout the redevelopment of the East Bayfront and Villiers Island. We have witnessed firsthand their dedication to comprehensive planning, innovative design, and extensive, meaningful public consultation, which gives us confidence in their ability to successfully implement the Villiers Island development.

As a passionate advocate for sustainable and inclusive communities, we are deeply impressed by the vision laid out in these amendments. Villiers Island has the potential to be a shining example of how we can create vibrant, complete urban neighbourhoods that prioritize people and the environment.

The proposed increase in density, achieved through a mix of mid-rise and tall buildings, is a smart approach to accommodating Toronto's growing population while minimizing sprawl. Committing to a minimum of 30% affordable housing on public lands is crucial to ensuring that Villiers Island is a diverse and inclusive community where people of all income levels can thrive. Carefully considering tower placement, setbacks, and separation distances will ensure ample sunlight reaches public spaces and natural habitats, fostering a comfortable microclimate and promoting biodiversity.

EWCA strongly supports the City's request to the provincial government for approval for city-wide Inclusionary Zoning to secure affordable housing alongside new zoning permissions, including areas outside of PMTSAs such as Villiers Island.

The commitment to a generous public realm, with wide sidewalks, dedicated cycle tracks, and green infrastructure elements, will make Villiers Island a pedestrian and cyclist's paradise. The planned network of parks and open spaces, including the stunning new Don River Valley, will provide residents ample opportunities to connect with nature and enjoy recreational activities.

The thoughtful integration of heritage conservation, focusing on preserving the character of Old Cherry Street, will create a unique sense of place that celebrates the island's rich industrial past. Incorporating public art throughout the precinct will further enrich the cultural landscape and create a vibrant and engaging atmosphere.

We are particularly drawn to the emphasis on creating a pedestrian-friendly environment on the secondary streets. The generous sidewalks, cycle trails, transit, and green infrastructure will make it safe and enjoyable to move around the island. To facilitate this environment, we urge the Council to step up the efforts to ensure that transit, specifically the Waterfront East LRT, has the funding required to fulfill this promise of Villiers Island. The planned network of parks and open spaces, including the stunning new river valley, will provide residents easy access to nature and recreation. We look forward to participating in the future Public Realm and Infrastructure Design Study, with the potential to expand development blocks by reallocating space from the proposed right-of-way.

We are mostly excited about prioritizing pedestrian-friendly secondary streets and including "Meanwhile Uses" to activate undeveloped blocks during development phases. It is of the utmost importance that all residents, especially children and seniors, have safe, walkable connections across the island. These initiatives will create a lively, engaging, and car-free atmosphere from the outset, fostering a strong sense of community among future residents.

The proposed amendments also demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity, with provisions for affordable housing and a range of community services and facilities. This will ensure that Villiers Island is a welcoming and accessible community for people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels.

The commitment to sustainable design, including the goal of achieving climate-positive status, is truly inspiring. Villiers Island can lead environmental stewardship by incorporating innovative low-carbon materials and construction approaches.

We strongly support the Villiers Island development and its potential to deliver affordable housing and create a vibrant new community. This project represents a timely opportunity to leverage existing investments and address our city's housing challenges. We look forward to welcoming new residents to the area. We are confident these amendments will pave the way for a truly exceptional

community on Villiers Island. A place where residents can live, work, and play in a sustainable, inclusive, and beautiful environment.

We urge you to approve these amendments and help realize this vision swiftly.

Thank you.

Michael Bethke  
President  
East Waterfront Community Association  
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cc: Deputy Mayor Malik, Councillors Fletcher, Moise and Perks; Mira Shenker, Waterfront Toronto;  
Anthony Kittel, City of Toronto