

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Toronto and East York Community Council
City Hall, Committee Room 1
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Committee Members,

RE: Accommodating Affordable Housing and Retail Space at 1 Sumach St

I am writing to request your support in advancing discussions around the use Sumach Street in Ward 13 to accommodate an ongoing development application for 1, 2-16 Sumach Street (application #21204556STE13OZ). By allowing the developer, Block Developments, to either cantilever over or build on Sumach Street, the site would become feasible for new affordable housing and potentially a much needed retail use in the Corktown neighbourhood.

This portion of Sumach Street, sometimes colloquially referred to as "Old Sumach Street," is a dead-end street that runs north of Eastern Avenue. The proposed development would include properties on both sides of Sumach Street, and the inclusion of the City's right-of-way would create a large enough floor plate and potential value to Block Developments to create significant community benefits, specifically affordable housing. The community has also long been a "food desert" without a major grocery store in close proximity to many homes. A larger floor plate accommodated the inclusion of Sumach Street would make a grocery use potentially feasible here.

Despite the positives, City staff have noted some issues with Block Development's proposal. There is existing infrastructure under this portion of Sumach Street that would necessitate long-term City access, which would require resolving how tall the strata would need to be to allow a cantilever over the road. In addition, this section of Sumach Street does currently allow access to two underpasses to the north of the site, and staff have asked that that be retained. Alternatively, the applicant has been asked to explore the relocation of infrastructure under Sumach Street to allow for the full closure of the road.

There are also issues around access and loading for a potential retail space that need to be resolved. In the event the road remains a City-owned asset, there will necessarily be individuals who will require the ability to pick-up/drop-off at the new building. Staff have also expressed a desire to understand if and how parking could be accommodated. Importantly, they have raised issues with accommodating deliveries to the site to service any retail uses. These are all issues that are proper to resolve before proceeding with this development application.

This request therefore has two parts that seek to move this discussion forward in a timely manner. One set of recommendations is intended to have City staff work directly with the applicant to try and

resolve the outstanding concerns related to cantilevering over Sumach Street and accommodating a retail use. Recognizing that work may result in a preferred option to instead close the road, the second part of these recommendations is intended to provide clarity to the City as to how that can proceed. By reporting back on these two options, Toronto and East York Community Council can provide further direction to City staff as to how to proceed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council no later than the June 11, 2024 meeting about a plan for a stratified stop-up and closure of a portion of the Sumach Street related to proposed development at 1, 2-16 Sumach Street (application #21204556STE13OZ), and to engage with the applicant and report back on the following issues:
 - a. Adequate loading for commercial purposes;
 - b. A parking study to demonstrate whether parking and ridesharing is required for commercial uses and how any such need will be accommodated, as well as visitor and accessible parking; and
 - c. Access for the City to maintain the elevated structures for Adelaide Street East and Richmond Street East from Sumach Street.
2. Toronto and East York Community Council direct the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services in consultation with the General Manager, Transportation Services, to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council no later than the June 11, 2024 meeting detailing the alternate sequential steps and approvals, inclusive of relevant timelines, that would be required to effect a full stop-up and closure of the Sumach Street right-of-way with the intention of relocating the underground utilities under Sumach Street.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Moise
City Councillor
Ward 13 - Toronto Centre