



Confederation of Resident & Ratepayer
Associations in Toronto

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29 October, 2025

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario.M5H 2N2

To: Planning and Housing Committee

Attention To: Clerk phc@toronto.ca

And To: Gord Perks, Chair
and Committee Members

SUBJECT: Item 2025.PH25.3 - Retail in Neighbourhoods

The Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations in Toronto (CORRA) having reviewed the report cannot support the same as it is in breach of the Official Plan, Planning Act and Provincial Policies insofar as it focuses solely on housing to detriment of sustainable communities and sound land use planning principles and ensuring healthy commercial main streets.

Other groups will focus on other issues. This is an analysis of the failure to the City to properly consider the impacts of the proposal.

**LOSS OF MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL IS ONE OF THE CLAIMED CAUSES FOR
NEEDING COMMERCIAL USES WITHIN NEIGHBOURHOODS**

Yet the City is actively not protecting fine grain retail at grade and offices on the second floor of main street commercial area.

Thus the proposal effectively undermines main street commercial areas which are the heart of neighbourhoods, BIAs while destabilizing existing neighbourhoods.

The PPS clearly speaks about jobs as well as housing around major transit stations, yet the City focuses solely on housing. A recent example occurred with a rezoning at Jane and Bloor. Previously, there was a two storey commercial set of buildings which were rarely not occupied with retail at grade and offices, non-profit agencies and other services on the second

floor. The new development has eliminated about 30% of retail at grade with a lobby for the residential units and all the second floor commercial uses.

The proposed guidelines for the Bloor West Village do not speak to maintaining offices and services on the second floor with sufficient force.

As a result The Bloor West Village BIA [the first in North America] is being effectively undermined. Employees and visitors to the second floor operations the shop and dine in the at grade operations.

This also supports an effective subway system by ensuring not all traffic heads downtown or uptown in the morning and returning to their residences at night.

Why would a business pay BIA fees when they can simply locate a block south and have all the benefits of the BIA but not the economic burden. This will undermine the BIAs.

MUCH OF THE PLANNING IN THE 60S AND 70S FOCUSED NEIGHBOURHOODS AROUND AREA PLAZAS OR STRIP PLAZAS

It speaks to the failure of the City to maintain previously planned neighbourhoods which centred around small neighbourhood plazas.

For example the Stonegate Plaza (in Etobicoke Parklawn area north of the Queensway) had apartments clustered around it, so residents had a 15 minutes walk to shop and eat. When the plaza was redeveloped the commercial component was not maintained in an effective manner, now residents are forced to drive to the Queensway or Parklawn.

Conversely at the Southport Plaza (in south Swansea) which was governed by a secondary plan that required that commercial viability studies be done and that an equivalent amount of commercial be maintained. When a proposal to make it primarily residential with effectively a convenience store replacing the bank, pharmacy, grocery store and other uses.

The City was not planning to protect the uses despite the official plan policy. The local residents retained a commercial planning analyst who provided proof that commercial remained viable. As a result a large amount of retail was retained.

The City refuses to develop policies to protect such plazas and instead focuses on moving the lost commercial into neighbourhoods scattering them, so that to get to different services will make a push towards continued car use within neighbourhoods rather than diminishing it.

THE CITY IS REPEATING THE EARLIER MISTAKES WHEN IT UNDERMINED INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

This follows the prior failure to maintain Industrial union jobs and class C and D commercial office buildings all in the name of providing urgently needed housing first in the late 70s and then in the 90s.

The irony was prior to the massive rezoning of industrial and commercial offices many workers where no more than half an hour commute from where they lived to where they worked.

There is no drive to ensure job creation beyond retail and community service providers at hubs.

Effectively rather than a forward thinking policy, these proposals are not driven by commercial consideration and represent an abandonment of existing commercial areas..

No analysis has been done to see whether these uses are economically viable or to consider impacts on the immediate neighbors.

It appears to be ideological rather than based on a careful commercial based analysis.

As such the City should focus on ensuring the existing commercial plazas and main streets are not extricated.

CORRA THEREFORE RECOMMENDS:

- 1. THAT COUNCIL NOT APPROVE THE CHANGES BUT SEND THE MATTER BACK FOR A PROPER COMMERCIAL ANALYSIS; AND,**
- 2. THAT THE CITY RETAIN COMMERCIAL PLANNING ANALYSTS TO LOOK AT POLICIES TO PROTECT THE EXISTING VIABLE COMMERCIAL USES AND DEVELOP OFFICIAL PLAN POLICIES TO PROTECT THE SAME.**

The writer intends to attend virtually. Please advise the writer of your decision. Given the number of deputants, someone other than myself may have to attend to speak on behalf of CORRA.

Yours truly

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