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File No. 2011

February 18, 2026

By Email to teycc@toronto.ca

Toronto and East York Community Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Committee and Council Members :

**Re: Comments on Item - 2026.TE29.15
St. Clair Avenue West and Bathurst Street Planning Framework and
Forest Hill Village Urban Design Guidelines Review**

We represent the South Forest Hill Residents Association (the “**SFHRA**”), a group of residents who advocate for and support good development in the South Forest Hill Village neighbourhood (the “**Village**”). On behalf of the SFHRA, we write to provide further comments on the St Clair Avenue West and Bathurst Street Area Planning Framework Review (the “**Framework**”) which include the Forest Hill Village Urban Design Guidelines (“**FH Guidelines**”). Copies of our previous submissions are attached for ease of reference.

We and our client have reviewed the draft guidelines that are being presented to the Committee for approval on February 19th. The SFHRA supports the guidelines that promote road safety, speed management, and motor vehicle volume management. However, **it is seriously concerned that the proposed guidelines do not adequately preserve (which is not to say freeze) the existing lower mid-rise built form character of the Village.**

Specifically, the SFHRA is concerned that existing 2015 guidelines for the Village that require the preservation of access to sky view (Section 2.1 in the existing guidelines) and a proper street enclosure (Section 3.1 in the existing guidelines) have been removed in the proposed FH Guidelines. Both of these guidelines are critical in preserving the generous proportion of sky view, and overall general built form, that the Village enjoys today. Likewise, Section 6.5 of the Framework, which speaks to the Forest Hill Village Character Area, fails to include objectives regarding the preservation of the existing generous sky view and built form which is enjoyed as part of the main street character of the Village. Removing these existing guidelines that limit height and massing in the Village signals that high-rise (meaning developments many times higher than the width of Spadina Road) are welcome, which ultimately will overwhelm the Village and threaten its unique character.

This guideline direction is in clear conflict with the City's recent policy direction in OPA 778, the culmination of the City's Avenues Policy Review. While other streets were added as *Avenues* through OPA 778, Spadina Road in this located was not. So while some modest additional height may be warranted if the building can be appropriately sculpted, the fundamental nature of the lower-mid-rise built form is not planned to be significantly altered.

The SFHRA recognizes that the planning context for the Village has evolved since the original guidelines were adopted in 2015. In particular, it acknowledges that the Province's recent modifications and approval of the St. Clair Avenue West Protected Major Transit Station Area ("**PMTSA**") policies now permit additional density in designated *Mixed Use Areas* located within 200–500 metres of an existing or planned transit station. However, the Official Plan explicitly requires that the PMTSA policies be applied together with all other relevant policies of the Official Plan, including with respect to matters such as built form, massing, and transition. In this regard, we note the Minister's amendments to Section 5.6(17) of the Official Plan, which states that:

Despite Policy 7 [which indicates that the PMTSA policies apply], minimum development densities within the delineated area of a Protected Major Transit Station Area are to be applied together with all appropriate policies of the Official Plan, applicable Secondary Plans or Chapter 7 Site and Area Specific Policies, including matters of heritage, built form and public realm, servicing, natural areas, parks and other open spaces, and others. (underline added)

As drafted, the Framework and the FH Guidelines do not reflect that principle.

On behalf of the SFHRA, we respectfully request that Community Council direct staff to add back in guidelines that require the preservation of generous access to sky view within the Village and other guidelines that preserve the unique built form character of the Village.

We urge you to support a planning approach that ensures that growth is balanced with the preservation of what makes the Village special for residents and future generations alike.



Please notify the undersigned and Marcia Gilbert at southforesthilla@gmail.com of any further meetings had in connection with these instruments. Our client welcomes further consultations to ensure the Village is protected during this period of growth.

Yours very truly,

WOOD BULL LLP

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Johanna Shapira
JRS/aa
Enclosure

cc: Councillor Matlow
Client



Johanna Shapira | B.A., J.D.

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October 14, 2025

By Email

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City Clerk
Toronto and East York Community Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Matlow & City Council:

**Re: South Forest Hill Residents Association
Comments on St. Clair Ave West and Bathurst Street Planning Framework
and Forest Hill Village Urban Design Guidelines Review and Update**

We represent the South Forest Hill Residents Association (the “**SFHRA**”), a group of residents who advocate for and support good development in South Forest Hill Village neighbourhood (the “**Forest Hill Village**”). The SFHRA have been actively involved in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultation process for the St Clair Avenue West and Bathurst Street Area Planning Framework Review (the “**Framework**”), which includes an expansion and update of the existing Framework to incorporate the Forest Hill Village, and updates to the Forest Hill Village Urban Design Guidelines (“**Urban Design Guidelines**”).

The SFHRA recognizes that the planning context for the Forest Hill Village has evolved since the Urban Design Guidelines were adopted in 2014. In particular, the Province’s recent modifications and approval of the St. Clair Avenue West Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) policies now permit a minimum of 6.0 FSI for lands designated Apartment Neighbourhoods and Mixed Use Areas, located within 200–500 metres of an existing or planned transit station.

However, PMTSA policies are to be applied together with all other relevant policies of the Official Plan, including with respect to matters such as built form, massing, and transition.

Within this context, the SFHRA supports the preparation of an updated Framework and Urban Design Guidelines that enable growth while protecting the Forest Hill Village’s unique character, context, and heritage. Intensification must be implemented carefully, with policies that respect and protect the Village’s distinct identity.



We enclose a letter sent to the project team further detailing the SFHRA's concerns and requests in connection with the Framework and Urban Design Guidelines. We urge you to support a planning approach that ensures that growth is balanced with the preservation of what makes the Forest Hill Village special for residents and future generations alike.

Please notify the undersigned and Marcia Gilbert at southforesthilla@gmail.com of any further meetings had in connection with these instruments. Our client welcomes further consultations to ensure the Forest Hill Village is protected during this period of growth.

Yours very truly,

WOOD BULL LLP

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Johanna Shapira
JRS/aa
Enclosure

cc: Carolina Vecchiarelli, Chief of Staff
Dylan Dewsbury, Senior Planner
Client



Johanna Shapira | B.A., J.D.

T. 416.203.5631
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August 22, 2025

By Email

Development Review Division
City Hall
100 Queen Street West
12th Floor, East Tower
Toronto, ON
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Attention: Dylan Dewsbury

**Re: The St. Clair Avenue West and Bathurst Street Area Planning Framework and Forest Hill Village Urban Design Guidelines Review
South Forest Hill Residents Association**

We represent the South Forest Hill Residents Association (the “**SFHRA**”), a group of residents who advocate for and support good development in South Forest Hill. We write to provide comments on the above-noted review of guidelines in the St Clair and Bathurst area of the City, including Forest Hill (the “**New Planning Framework**”).

Background

The SFHRA was involved in the creation of the initial Forest Hill Urban Design Guidelines (the “**Guidelines**”) in 2014, which recognize and reinforce the small-town Main Street character and scale of the South Forest Hill Village neighbourhood (the “**Village**”). The existing Guidelines speak to an appropriate street enclosure to maintain the human scale of the Village and reinforce the street edge along Spadina Road, and the importance of maintaining access to sky view to enhance the pedestrian experience along Spadina Road.

The SFHRA attended the Phase 1 Public Meeting hosted by City Staff on June 26, 2025 regarding updates to the Guidelines. The SFHRA has also hosted its own meeting for members to discuss the updates, which has informed the contents of this submission.

As a starting point, the SFHRA acknowledges that the planning context has changed since the creation of the Guidelines in 2014, including the adoption of a Protected Major Transit Station Area in the surrounding area. Within that context, the SFHRA supports the preparation of updated Guidelines to appropriately balance growth with the protection of the Village’s distinct character, context, and heritage. Of primary importance to the



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SFHRA is that policies that support intensification are applied with care such that they do not trump the character of the Village – if that is lost, it cannot be recovered.

The Village is Confirmed to Not be an Avenue and High-Density Growth Should Not be Directed to the Village

The City's recent Avenues Policy Review confirmed that the Village is not an *Avenue* within the City's Urban Structure (Map 2).

Toronto's Official Plan ("OP") directs most new growth to *Downtown*, the *Centres*, *Avenues*, and *Employment Areas*, as shown on Map 2 of the Urban Structure. The Housing Action Plan (HAP) and OPA 778, adopted February 5, 2025, expanded the network of *Avenues* by 283 kilometres, specifically identifying areas such as St. Clair Avenue West and Bathurst Street. The Village, however, was not identified as an *Avenue*. This is consistent with the existing Guidelines.

The New Planning Framework must acknowledge this and not treat the Village as if it were an *Avenue*, which is intended to accommodate higher density development.

The Appropriate Type and Scale of Development in the Village is Mid-rise

As noted earlier, the Village is located within the Council-adopted St. Clair Avenue West Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) — a Strategic Growth Area under the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2024). PPS Policy 2.4.1.3(b) states that planning authorities must identify the appropriate type and scale of development in strategic growth areas, as well as ensure appropriate transitions in built form to adjacent areas. In other words, context matters.

The OP is equally clear about the importance of context. While the Village core is designated *Mixed Use Areas*, which allows for growth, the OP provides that not all *Mixed Use Areas* are intended to accommodate the same scale or intensity of development. Furthermore, Spadina Road has a relatively narrow planned right-of-way (ROW) of just 20 metres.

OP policies that speak to the need to promote sensitive development within the Village include:

- Healthy Neighbourhoods (Section 2.3.1) calls for a gradual transition of scale and density from *Mixed Use Areas* to adjacent *Neighbourhoods*.
- Built Form policies (Section 3.1.2) require that new development be massed to fit harmoniously within its context and limit impacts on neighbouring streets by providing appropriate transitions.
- *Mixed Use Areas* policies (Section 4.5) state that new buildings must relate to the scale and character of their surroundings and enhance adjacent public streets and spaces.

- Policy 3.5.3(2) emphasizes that traditional retail shopping streets should be improved as centres of community activity with development that is compatible in form and character with surrounding uses.

These clear policy directives suggest that an appropriate scale of development for the Village is mid-rise. Based on the City's Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines, a 20-metre ROW supports a maximum building height of six storeys. This aligns with both the City's Major Streets Study and the policies of OPA 727, which permits intensification along Major Streets within *Neighbourhoods* up to six storeys.

The Guidelines Must Balance New Development with the Village's Historic Character and Cultural Heritage

A key reason the Village must be planned differently from other areas is its unique character and cultural heritage. Unlike other growth areas, the Village is not simply a corridor for intensification — it is a historic small-town Main Street with a distinct identity that has long served as the social, cultural, and commercial heart of South Forest Hill.

The OP recognizes that cultural heritage includes both tangible and intangible attributes and requires that growth be balanced with the conservation of these significant resources. Further, similar planning studies—such as the Mount Dennis Planning Framework—have prioritized protecting and celebrating local character while accommodating growth and change.

The City has already acknowledged the Village's heritage value. Through the existing Guidelines, and the subsequent Forest Hill Village Heritage Survey which resulted in the listing of 16 properties within the Village on the Heritage Register, staff have recognized that the Village's form and function are integral to its sense of place. The November 9, 2020 staff report recommending that Council include the 16 properties on the Heritage Register reinforced that:

“Good planning within the provincial and municipal framework has at its foundation an understanding and appreciation for places of historic significance, and ensures the conservation of these resources is balanced with other provincial interests.”

As part of the 2020 Forest Hill Village Heritage Survey, staff developed a Historical Context Statement for the Village which identifies building types that distinguish it from other parts of the city:

- **Main Street Commercial Row** – 1 to 4 storeys; establishes the predominant main street character.
- **Main Street Commercial Block** – 3 to 5 storeys; larger in scale but consistent with the row's rhythm and character.
- **Bank Buildings**

- **Pre-War Apartments** – 2.5 to 5 storeys; reflecting early 20th-century intensification, modest in scale and well-integrated.

In addition to its physical character, the Village has rich intangible cultural heritage. The Guidelines note that it became a welcoming home to Toronto's Jewish community beginning in the 1930s, with Jewish residents comprising nearly half the Village population by 1961 — the highest proportion in any Canadian municipality at that time. This history is integral to the Village's identity and community fabric.

Together, this tangible and intangible heritage sets the Village apart from other areas identified for growth. Allowing development that crowds the street and overwhelms the existing built form would undermine the very attributes that make it unique and valued. The New Planning Framework must prioritize the preservation of this character and heritage, ensuring that any future change respects the Village's identity and continues to reinforce its role as a human-scaled, culturally significant Main Street.

The Public Realm

The preservation and enhancement of the public realm in the Village is of utmost importance to the SFHRA. This includes the preservation of sky view and sidewalks that are comfortable for walking and sitting. It is incredibly important that the New Planning Framework preserves and enhances these aspects of the Village.

Safety and Mobility

Residents in and around the Village have consistently raised concerns about safety, mobility, and comfort, particularly given the transportation challenges already present in the area. With additional density being contemplated nearby, the SFHRA strongly recommends that the City complete a comprehensive Transportation Study as part of the New Planning Framework, to better understand and mitigate safety concerns as between pedestrian, cyclists and vehicles.

Conclusion

The SFHRA supports growth and good planning. Allowing high density development would destabilize the small-town character of the Village, including the public realm, and erode the cultural heritage that defines the community. We therefore urge City Planning to ensure that the New Planning Framework:

- Acknowledges that the Village is not to be treated as an *Avenue* or high-density growth area;
- Limits development to a mid-rise scale that fits harmoniously within the Village's context;
- Prioritizes the protection of the Village's tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- Preserved key aspects of the public realm including sky view and comfortable sidewalks for walking and sitting; and



- Is based upon a comprehensive Transportation Study to address the community's safety and mobility concerns.

We welcome the opportunity to continue working with staff to ensure the New Planning Framework reflects these priorities.

Yours very truly,

WOOD BULL LLP

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