

Open Letter to Our Members

March 19, 2014

The TDSB's plan to lease the Central Tech playing field to Razor Management for the installation of a dome and artificial turf has been under intense study by HVRA and local residents for two months. While everyone accepts the urgency of getting the Central Tech students and local residents a great field to play on, this proposal is not the answer. Regrettably, we are unable to support this change of use.

We base our decision on information provided by the TDSB, Razor Management, and City Transportation staff, which has concluded that the impact of the dome project on street parking in nearby blocks would be "severe".

After four working group meetings, our worries have been amplified, not put to rest. We entered those talks concerned about the loss of green space, public access, and heritage views. We hoped for solutions. We left with offers of possible cosmetic improvements, combined with vague assurances, conflicting documents, and real concerns about the impacts of the field and dome project on our neighbourhood.

Project details as we know them

TDSB would lease the site to Razor Management for 21 years, less a day, with five-year extensions possible. Razor would control the operations of the field and dome and, based on its business plan, anticipates the following:

Financing: A \$6-million Razor Management project backed by Toronto Ultimate (Frisbee) Club and Cherry Beach Soccer club.

Parking and traffic pressures:

The maximum capacity on each of four mini-fields is 30 players. 120 players in total. Plus runners on the track. Plus coaches, family, other supporters and Razor Management staff. That's 100 cars an hour, 700 cars a day, potentially 5,000 a week, arriving at the drop-off site on Borden Street.

City Transportation believes virtually all young players will be driven to the site and the same will hold true for most adult players in the evening, regardless of encouragement by the rental organizations for their members to take public transit to the dome.

Drivers will naturally seek street parking close to the proposed drop-off zone on Borden Street. The closest free parking is in the adjacent neighbourhood — in the area between Bloor, Major, Ulster and Palmerston. City Transportation reports street parking is already at capacity in that zone. Of 301 possible permit parking spaces, 267 are taken, leaving 34 for visitors, trades, health workers, relatives, and patrons of our local businesses.

Inevitably, the dome customers would seek free street parking spaces that our neighbours have parking permits for, meaning neighbourhood permit holders would be displaced from parking until the facility closed at midnight.

The TDSB has repeatedly mentioned cancelling or reducing Central Tech night school classes to free its Borden Street parking lot to customers using the facility.