

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Box 68522, 360A Bloor St. W.
Toronto, ON M5S 1X1



Re: Toronto Ward Boundary Consultation Sept. 3, 2016

Harbord Village Residents' Association has deep concerns about the process that has been followed setting up further review of the ward boundary recommendation. The invitation to further consultation appears to be on only two plans. This creates confusion and dismay.

Nowhere does it suggest that the 47-member council proposal is still alive. Rather, the document creates the impression that there are only two choices on the table: federal-provincial boundaries and a 44-member design.

Is this true? We certainly hope not.

Harbord Village remains in favour of the 47-member council solution. In May, we lodged the appended letter with the Executive Committee, but could not depute as the item, which was second on the agenda, was only heard some ten hours after the meeting began.

Both options to be discussed at the September meeting represent boundary definitions that include disparate areas, that breaks historic relationships among residents' associations, and makes little sense to us. We see no advantage in a patchwork ward, comprised of some University area stable neighbourhoods, high rise sections that are in the Downtown, with bits of Rosedale. This

creates a polyglot ward unnecessarily. Being part of University Rosedale, we are well aware of the hazards of representation in ridings where interests and concerns diverge.

A north-south configuration for what is presently the north end of ward 20, respects historic relationships. It permits councillors to become expert in the issues that face residents. It balances the interests of the dominant institution—the University of Toronto—and the pressures of intensification by respecting the strong neighbourhoods that surround it.

It also fosters a better population balance on council. Creating only three more councillors makes a profound difference to the equality of democratic voice of four wards *at the* outset, including our neighbours to the south and west. This imbalance would not be redressed by adding staff.

The 47 ward plan redresses an historic imbalance. We certainly hope it will be brought forward after the end of this consultation. We are appending our May letter to Executive Committee for your consideration.

With respect,
Sue Dexter
Harbord Village Residents' Association

Appended: HVRA letter to Executive Committee

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To Executive Committee:
Ward Boundary Review Recommendations.
EXE 15.2

May 24, 2016.

I am here to talk a little bit about the Downtown and to recommend council adopt the proposed ward boundaries option RW 24. This would run from the tracks north of Davenport, to Queen, and from Bathurst to University/Avenue Road.

I am Sue Dexter. I am on the board of the Harbord Village Residents' Association. Our boundaries are Bloor-College, Spadina to Bathurst. We are in the City's Downtown zoning area.

Does the present system work democratically?
2011 population Ward 20: 76,600
compared to St. Paul's 48,640
Davenport 44,970,
Ward 19 57,240.

And these 2011 numbers do not take into account what has been built since, nor what has been approved, let alone what is in the pipeline. Today's imbalances will get worse. Look at the cranes.

So our question is how to make our votes count as much as residents living outside the downtown. Otherwise, we are discriminated against—or they are advantaged.

Population imbalances create invisible hardships on councillors. The Ward 20 Councillor has a barely sustainable workload. This, too, curtails the access of voters to fairly balanced representation at Council.

Clearly, we have too many people and too little power. What to do?

Adding office staff could solve potholes, general office administration, garbage, streets. It would not address the strength of our voice in council decisions, which at the moment is about two-thirds of our neighbours... a democratic deficit created in part by public planning policy and OMB decisions which funneled development to King-University-Spadina. Boundaries must change, while respecting the local political realities.

There are two distinct worlds in the Downtown. The high-rise world south of Queen, the house-form world north of Queen. Different built-form, different problems.

We are stable neighbourhoods, north of Queen. For the most part, Victorian two and two and-a-half storey houses or walkup apartments. Walkable, often treed, shared porches. Tight. We are communities.

And there is one element that binds us.

There is a single dominant developer in RW24. The University of Toronto, whose decisions determine much in our neighbourhood from rooming houses, to rents, to congestion at nodes, to the kinds of businesses that have grown up along Bloor St., to developments on College, Bloor and Spadina.

The flanking communities sit together on a City committee: the University of Toronto Area Liaison Committee, which is designed to bring the City, the surrounding and communities and the University together at a common table. Over time, the University has become more consultative. Over time, the communities are better represented.

In response to the challenge of the University's expansion in the last twenty years, the surrounding neighbourhoods have become closer.

I need only list the numbers of joint studies we are working on: University of Toronto Secondary Plan, Huron-Sussex, Bloor Block, College, Westbank/Honest Ed's, Spadina to come. The Annex shares its development portal with us. We are regular attendees at its planning committee meeting. We are working with heritage folks in Kensington on their HCD. Our community association donates scholarship money to Scadding Court.

The lines are deep. But they do not extend south of Queen or east of University/Avenue Road. And most important, they include neighbourhoods on both sides of Bloor Street. To draw a line separating south of Bloor from the north would absolutely violate the way we experience and work for a great City.

In sum, although we would regret losing Seaton Village to RW19, we support RW24. It reflects our experience in the City, our local political institutions and rights a democratic wrong.

With thanks
Sue Dexter
Board HVRA