

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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



To: Toronto and East York Community Council
Item: TE 23.6

Dear Committee Members:

April 4, 2017.

Harbord Village Residents' Association supports the motion before you to re-zone the Mirvish Village Honest Ed's precinct. We represent the community directly east of the project. For two years, we have worked with our three sister Residents' Associations on the north, west and south to digest, analyze, and shape the Westbank proposal. The project was easily the most complex we have encountered—major new infill, with significant heritage preservation, in the midst of four stable neighbourhoods.

In August 2014, before the formal project was unveiled, PARA did a survey in all four neighbourhoods. If you compare the wishes expressed by respondents to that survey, they bear a striking relationship to the document before you.

Priorities set by the 276 respondents to the survey were greenspace, community cultural centre, family units, live/work, low income, small retail, market, arts, bikes... community priorities that are imbedded in this re-zoning.

Realizing the possible engaged two Councillors, City Planning, Transportation, Urban Design, Heritage, Westbank and what came to be known as the Mirvish Village Task Group with two volunteers from adjacent RAs and four members from the most affected neighbourhood, the Palmerston Area. On board were two architects, concerned residents, neighbourhood activists, a Marxist professor and Roy Sawyer, an engineer who designed cars!

We charted a largely invisible path. Our public face was a fact-based website. Off camera, Graig Uens from City staff hosted working group sessions on the big elements of the project: staff from Urban Design, Heritage, Traffic and City Planning. We worked with students from the University of Toronto Engineering Faculty. At public meetings, we listened to our neighbours.

At the last councillor meeting, we heard two messages: the City's renters are pushed to the limit, and the community needs the new neighbourhood, with the preservation of a heritage street, alongside new, taller, elements, to contribute to, but not overwhelm, the existing community.

In a sense, with this first step, the skeleton is in place. Now to put flesh on the bones. The work plan continues the Task Group consultation process and includes a daunting list of work to be done: traffic management, public realm improvements, park design, all the elements of site plan, the retail plan. The Councillors have been single-minded on bringing home daycare, affordable units and community space.

There will be those who will disagree with the heights of two towers, but we urge them to balance that against the range of benefits that have been secured.

These past two years, leading to the final negotiation helped define not just our understanding of the project, but deepened our understanding of our communities. And that is city building at its best.

With thanks for your consideration,

Best,

Sue Dexter and Carolee Orme
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