



Annex Residents' Association



HARBORD VILLAGE
RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION
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28 November 2018

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Municipal Services Division
Municipal Services Office - Central Ontario
777 Bay Street
Floor 13
Toronto ON
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Attention: Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Re: TOcore Downtown Plan – Joint Letter from Annex Residents' Association, Harbord Village Residents' Association, Huron-Sussex Residents' Organization, Grange Community Association, ABC Residents' Association on: **The City of Toronto Official Plan Amendment No. 406 (OPA 406) by By-law 1111-2018**

Dear Minister,

We are writing to encourage your approval, pursuant to Section 26 of the Planning Act, of the City of Toronto's Official Plan Amendment 406, submitted for your review in August, 2018.

Our residents' associations (RAs) have actively participated throughout the preparation of the City's 'Downtown Plan' and associated infrastructure strategies, contained in OPA 406. We met with City Planning staff even before the first stakeholder meeting in June, 2015 and then in subsequent consultations and meetings up to the tabling of the Plan at Council in May of this year. We have invested significant time and effort in this initiative as we believe that it is of generational importance to Toronto, to the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and to Ontario.

OPA 406 will fill a major gap in planning that is beginning to undermine Toronto's global competitiveness and quality of life. Toronto's Official Plan was adopted by Council in 2002 and finally approved by OMB in 2006. Limited amendments in the Downtown were made since then, despite major changes to the economy and significant population and employment growth. Without a current, comprehensive, and focused plan, development

Downtown has become haphazard, incremental, opportunistic, and based largely on legal precedent (what did the last appellant get at OMB?) rather than on good planning. Other global cities have recognized the importance of effective Downtown plans: New York's PlanNYC (2007) was updated in 2015 (OneNYC) and is again being updated in 2019 with a focus on resiliency; Boston is launching its latest PLAN: Downtown initiative with a first public consultation next month; Portland adopted its Central City 2035 plan in 2017; the City of London (UK) is currently updating its Local Plan with approval expected in 2019.

City Council's direction to staff in 2015 – to prepare a leading-edge Downtown Plan for Toronto – was long overdue.

We believe that OPA 406:

- defines a clear vision of how Downtown and its neighbourhoods should continue to grow and evolve; it seeks to improve the city's livability while protecting and allocating land to support economic growth;
- is an effective instrument for directing and managing growth in pursuit of this vision; and
- finally enables the City to strategically target infrastructure investments to meet emerging needs arising from growth and change, as directed by the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) and The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Downtown Plan supports efficient land use through graduated mixed use areas that provide for compact, high-density growth in better-serviced areas. It effectively consolidates special areas (Financial District, Health Sciences District, Cultural areas) and explicitly accommodates community services and facilities with far greater precision than the current OP. The Plan achieves a balance in land uses and built form by maintaining the physical character of most neighbourhoods and cultural spaces while directing intensification to strategic locations. It explicitly addresses residents' needs for family-size units in a more balanced mix of residential development. Greater predictability is provided by the Plan which clearly shows where growth should occur, and at what intensities. Flexibility is achieved in defining four types of mixed use areas that allow a range of built forms and densities, providing for better responsiveness to market demands. Unlike previous plans in Toronto, the Plan effectively integrates land use, transport, infrastructure, and community and environmental assets. It effectively addresses the need for low-carbon development and a greater reliance in the Downtown area on walking, cycling and transit.

The City's preparation of the Downtown Plan and associated infrastructure strategies was transparent, inclusive, and fair. Our contributions were encouraged, heard, discussed, and largely incorporated by City staff and Council, as were those of developers, institutions, and employers. To us, this was one of the most participatory planning processes followed in Toronto, certainly since amalgamation.

We wish to emphasize that, after three years of preparation, the Downtown Plan is a compromise. There are aspects that, as associations of neighbourhoods, we would have preferred were more restrained and less intrusive on our communities. However, we recognize that development Downtown is necessary to ensure Toronto's global competitiveness and the City's ability to meet diverse and changing needs. It is likely not

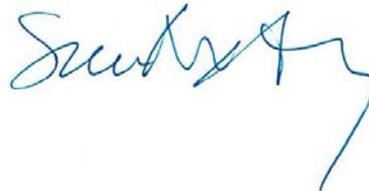
a 'perfect' plan for any type of stakeholder: residents, developers, firms, institutions, students, or visitors. On balance however, it is a strong way forward and a common basis for change.

Along with other stakeholders our RAs look forward to supporting the implementation of the Downtown Plan through constructive and collaborative city-building in coming years. We encourage you to approve OPA 406 so that this process can begin.

Yours sincerely,



David Harrison
Chair
Annex Residents' Association



Susan Dexter
Director
Harbord Village Residents' Association

per 

Ian Carmichael, John Caliendo
Co- Presidents
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Ralph Daley
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[signed by]
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