

From: Aldo Dolcetti

Sent: Monday, April 20, 2020 10:04 PM

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Re: Yonge and Bernard KDA

For The Record:

CC following planning staff:

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Re: Yonge and Bernard KDA – Councillor West' Motion

Dear Mayor and Richmond Hill Council,

I support David West's motion to have the KDA plan postponed until the COVID-19 pandemic has gone. Yonge-Bernard KDA is not an area that is capable of supporting record-breaking density and a 41 storey tower.

Firstly, to jump the number of stories from 15 to 41 is a slap in the face, especially to those residents who live next to the Yonge/Bernard KDA and who were told that the height limit was established following extensive planning. What happened in the meantime that suddenly it is a matter of great urgency to almost triple the height

proposal. It is worrisome that the 37 Storey motion was passed in the first place with no public input and very little justification for approving it in the first place.

With regard to the upcoming meetings, I read that Council might go ahead with virtual meetings for this project because of the Covid 19 pandemic. That would be wrong. Not only would it be undemocratic but shamelessly disrespectful to the residents of Richmond Hill to even consider having a virtual meeting that could decide the fate of

Yonge/Bernard KDA. It has to be a live face- to- face meeting where the public can express their opposition.. To have a virtual meeting would be to undermine the validity of any decision. For certain, it would not pass the smell test. Few people have the equipment and the know how to participate. Richmond Hill's policy statement about "Building a New Kind of Urban" has to include active citizen participation or those words will ring hollow.

It is important to acknowledge that the proposed density change to 41 stories is completely out of whack for the Yonge/Bernard KDA.

High rises need to be near a major artery and major commercial hubs. Bernard Avenue is not like Highway 7 and Weston Road in Woodbridge with strong access to arterial roads and highways. Bernard Avenue is not like Highway 7 and Yonge that will eventually have access to a subway which is a rigid requirement for high density buildings and has ready access to Highway 7 and Highway 407. Bernard Avenue is not like Yonge Street and Carrville which has proximity to Highway 7 and Highway 407 and easy direct access to Highway 404 and a good road to Highway 400. There is just no comparison to these.

Bernard Avenue is basically a suburban residential enclave. But a bus route alone is not sufficient for a high density site. If you go west of Yonge St. from Bernard Avenue, you have to either go through narrow residential streets such as Canyon Trail or narrow Elgin Mills and you wind up on Bathurst Street and at best Dufferin Street where Elgin Mills ends abruptly. If you go east from Bernard Avenue you need to go on Elgin Mills which is a busy road and Highway 404 is about 5 kilometres away.

And the residents close to Bernard Avenue will live in the shadow of buildings that are 410 to 500 feet high. And finally, what happens when you go south down Yonge Street? If this project becomes high density, the impact will be severely felt further down Yonge Street all the way to highway 7. We already see what the impact of densification on Yonge Street has been on adjoining streets like between Major Mackenzie and Highway 7 between Major Mackenzie and Highway 7. Check out the long lines of traffic along Avenue Rd that runs to the west and parallel to Yonge St. during traffic hour as drivers heading north try to avoid the congestion on Yonge St. Check out Kersey Drive that continues from Avenue Road and Carville northward and be aware of the never-ending cortege of cars snaking their way northward from stop sign to stop sign every 100 yards to avoid Yonge Street traffic. Count the number of underground spaces under a 37 storey building and you know that when those cars emerge every work day en masse when people go to work, they will have a long wait just to clear the area before encountering the other traffic challenges that await them along Yonge Street. It is

unrealistic to believe that residents in that overly densified area would abandon their cars to wait for a bus because the majority will be driving their car.

Why would Council members even consider ignoring all the extensive work, analysis and detailed reports that supported a 15 storey height limit in 2017 and then spring a very flawed proposal for 41 stories instead of 15. This makes no sense whatsoever.

We do understand the direction from the Province of Ontario for Densification! But Densification without carefully assessing its accompanying negative impacts on neighbourhoods that are nearby is a bad idea. But I am sure that Council appreciates that overly high density where it is not warranted is also a bad idea. Bernard Avenue is not the right fit for the disproportionate high density that is being proposed.

Congestion You will be increasing not decreasing the traffic congestion in the Yonge/Bernard KDA . You will not be able to wean people off their cars just because you have a Yonge Street bus available. Most residents will be driving out of their parking spaces onto Yonge Street in big numbers between 8 and 10 a.m. Incidentally, a bridge over the rail line on Elgin Mills will make little difference in reducing congestion.

Parking With the 41 storey proposed density. When residents in the 4 towers emerge from their parking spots in the morning onto Yonge Street, the congestion from all the units (that have underground or above ground parking) will cause a bottleneck on that part of Yonge Street as all these cars emerge from their parking spaces

Keeping up with other cities. Is this a race to the bottom to increase density by decree that will adversely affect the quality of life of those residents who need to live with the undesirable consequences of this latest decision? Densification means quantity but only to a point after which livability suffers. Other cities have inserted high density where transportation arteries and roads that can carry heavy traffic are nearby. That is not the case with Bernard Avenue.

Affordable Housing. Really? There is no evidence for that. The congestion in the area for local residents will be awful as drivers try to get out of the area because Yonge Street will be jammed.

In short, the newest 41 storey proposal is indefensible and thoughtless. It should be scrapped.

Sincerely,

Aldo Dolcetti