

Submission for City of Richmond Hill Council Meeting – March 19, 2025 re: SRPBS.25.023 – Request for Approval, Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan

Submitted by: Michael Theodores

Opening comments:

I wanted to provide my input on the proposed **Dave Barrow Civic Square Park Plan**.

While I congratulate the city in creating a more central gathering place for residents in the city – and naming it after one of the town-city’s great residents – there are concerns about parking and the expected use of transit to allay these concerns.

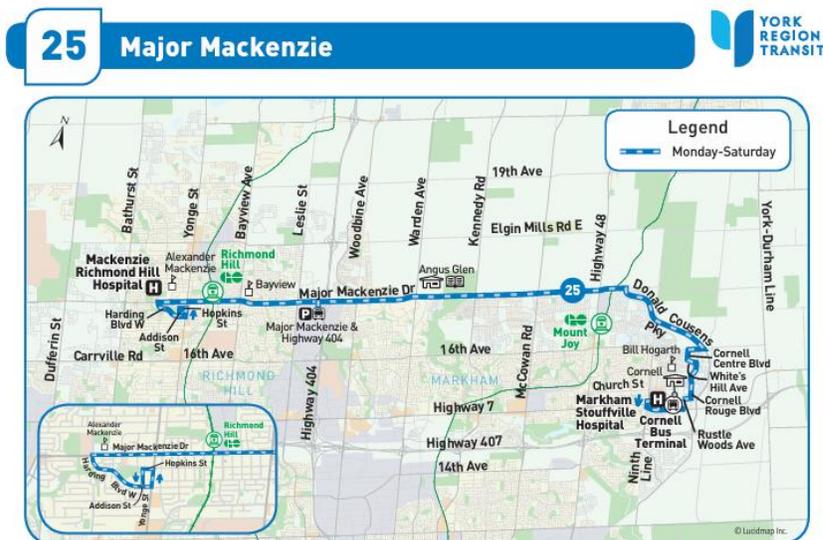
Discussion re: staff report

Page 7 of the staff report indicates there are only **282 parking spaces** in close vicinity of the proposed park which serve the Central Library. That seems very low compared to one of the city’s popular gathering places – Richmond Green.

While there is a reference to other nearby facilities such as Elgin Barrow Arena-Town Park, I would argue that this location is far more than a five-minute walk referenced in the staff report and in the proposal on Page 155 and not likely option for many residents.

Re: transit, it’s clear the consultant that prepared the proposal – and staff who prepared the report for Council – aren’t familiar with local transit.

YRT Bus #25 that is mentioned in both the proposal and staff report **doesn’t operate on Sundays** (see screen cap below). Additionally, it runs very infrequently on Saturday which is a common day for city events.



Bus #4 is more common running East and West on Major Mackenzie Drive but the buses feature less capacity and don’t run as often as the Viva service on Yonge Street.

Noting these concerns, Council may want to request a further look at adding more parking on the two-hectare lot – perhaps near Hopkins St.

Lost residential opportunity

I reached out to the city's planning department late last year to see if a portion of the land could serve as a new low density residential project under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), using some of the available, surplus land. To me, it makes sense to have a residential element in close proximity to a major community hub and it could serve as a nice transition to the higher projects that will lie South.

I was informed by Phoebe Chow on November 25, 2024 that the lands were designated for 'civic uses – not for residential' and not under consideration under the HAF.

I think this represents a lost opportunity if the city is truly focused on creating lively, walkable areas – and also maximizing city-owned properties.