

## **Town of Port Credit Association (TOPCA)**

### **Presentation to Council**

**June 20, 2012**

**Re: 'No Frills' Site Redevelopment in Port Credit**

**(File number: OZ 08/009 W1)**

Further to the presentations and discussion of this application at Planning and Development Committee (PDC) on June 11, 2012, we have the following comments pertaining to this mixed-use development going forward.

**1. Grocery Store:** Councillor Jim Tovey stated at PDC last week that he would help Dr. James (the owner) find commercial tenants for the office space. We would suggest that significant focus needs to be on replacing the grocery store, for the healthy functioning of the community.

In the early days of discussing this proposal with the owner, the citizen groups requested a building format to accommodate a ground level, street-front grocery store. We have extra height on the mainstreet as a consequence, but here is a case where built function must trump built form.

Given the socio-economic diversity of Port Credit, the central, affordable grocery store is critical. Whether by foot or bike or bus or boat or car, this grocery store serves the needs of all members of the community. Recent talk of moving it to a further-out location on Lakeshore Road misses the point.

We are fortunate to have a large amount of affordable rental stock in the high-rise and highly-pedestrianized neighbourhood around the GO Station, where 80% of our residents live. But affordable rental accommodation in Port Credit loses its community synergy if tenants need to pay \$6 per round fare on the bus every time they shop; and as they must carry what they buy, they shop more frequently.

In our City's support of affordable housing choices (now including basement apartments), we need to remember the need for a nearby affordable food store.

**2. Site Plan:** Citizen stakeholders should be part of the ongoing Site Plan process. The new development is akin to a heart transplant in the centre of the village, and has three critical public edges:

- a) **Lakeshore Road:** village mainstreet; crucial multi-bus stop; shoppers/pedestrians
- b) **Port Street:** interface to the Harbour Marina lands and the extraordinary waterfront community to be created; pedestrian precinct
- c) **Elizabeth Street:** highly visible ‘festival edge’; pedestrian conduit from the GO Station to the Lake; wrap of storefront retail south from Lakeshore Road

The **South-West corner** of the development in particular is the crossroads of these functions and we have previously deputized as to its significance and the need for public amenity space such as a parkette or resting area.

The fourth edge (on the East) is a private edge, and Councillor Jim Tovey has already expressed a commitment to working out site plan issues there, on behalf of Dr. Edwards, owner of 46 Port Street East.

This development will certainly be the best address in Port Credit, if not Mississauga. We are pioneering ‘urban village’ life, which includes residential use in noisy areas such as this one. The ‘cool’ will come from being integrated into the surrounding community, not walled off from it, and it is at the vibrant edges that the ‘Urban Village Vision’ will be best expressed.

**3. Section 37 (Density Bonusing):** As pointed out at PDC, this development involves Section 37 negotiations. There is significant exceedance of height and density, and there certainly needs to be a tangible benefit to the community in order to earn the sky. What was presented last week by Planner Ben Phillips regarding the status of the negotiation is completely self-referential to the development, with the components certainly of benefit to the owner/applicant but the public benefit less clear.

There needs to be transparency in the negotiation of any community benefit, and at a recent Port Credit Local Advisory Panel meeting (May 15) it was evident that the community stakeholders are prepared to identify what **meaningful** benefits would entail. We are not in a position right now to judge the appropriateness of the listed benefits in this case. We welcome the clearer guidelines which will be included in the new Official Plan along with the associated corporate policies, and hope the spirit of these can guide this particular negotiation.

Comments on the specific components listed:

**a) Courtyard:** We understand this will be publicly accessible because retail use is currently planned to be there. Will the City own this land, or will the right to public access be written on title? Otherwise, what guarantee is there that public access won't be closed with a gate? Another proponent for a block development in Port Credit recently told citizens with the same concern about his proposed courtyard on private land: "Keep using it and over time it will be kept accessible under common law." This is not good enough, and any such courtyard *offered as a community benefit* needs to be legally public.

**b) Art Piece:** Ownership of the Courtyard is a critical question, especially since an Art Piece in the courtyard valued at \$40,000 is also included as part of the Section 37. To be clear: **it is not public art unless it is on public land**. If ownership of the courtyard is to be retained privately, we suggest that a cash payment towards an art piece (for example) in the public realm would be the way to go. Of course, the owner is most welcome to place art on his property as well, which will serve to add to the value of his development.

**c) Montgomery House:** Restoration of the Montgomery House is something we have always expected, from the first meeting with the developer back in 2007. It is great for the Heritage Community when a proponent recognizes the economic benefit that accrues when a heritage building is integrated into a new development, and this one will be that much more successful because of this strong positive. But to suggest that the community should pay for the privilege (by accepting the restoration as a benefit) is surprising.

**d) Heritage Designation:** We didn't know this was something to be offered as a benefit; are we to interpret this as meaning "without a fight"? And is this to be how all future designations are to be negotiated?

**Summary:** It will be another 2-3 years, possibly, before this new development is in place, after considerable physical and social disruption in the community. We are requesting transparency and citizen involvement during the coming years regarding the grocery store element, the site plan process and the Section 37 agreement.

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