



November 24, 2023

To: City of London Council
Subject: Development Proposal at 978 Gainsborough Road OZ-9247

Dear London City Council,

The Hyde Park Business Improvement Association (HPBIA) is writing to voice our reservations regarding the proposed development by Highland Communities Ltd. at 978 Gainsborough Road. While acknowledging the potential benefits, such as feet on the street for retail businesses in the area, this development raises many concerns.

The Hyde Park BIA embraces progress and development that enhances our neighbourhood's vibrancy. However, it's crucial to highlight that while growth is welcomed, this specific development, as it stands, will pose an undue strain on our community. The potential effects on infrastructure, traffic, and overall neighbourhood functionality are significant concerns that warrant thorough consideration and resolution. Our aim is not to impede progress but rather to ensure growth aligns with sustainable and well-planned development which benefits the Hyde Park community in the long term.

In the Report to the Planning and Environment Committee, November 14, 2023, staff noted "The site is not located within the Primary Transit Area identified for increased Intensification." The absence of transportation enhancements planned for Hyde Park though the broader London Master Mobility Plan raises concerns regarding the anticipated surge in residents and the strain on our local transportation networks. Without the western connection of the Bus Rapid Transit plan, the proposed density poses traffic and parking concerns.

As has been pointed out by BlueStone Properties INC, the reality is that the current infrastructure in Hyde Park falls short in accommodating the anticipated density, placing substantial strain on essential amenities like sewer systems, roads, and overall neighbourhood functionality.

Earlier this year, the HPBIA received approval from Council for staff to review the feasibility of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for the area. This proposed development highlights the need for a comprehensive Hyde Park CIP, coupled with much needed updates to the 1999 official Hyde Park Community Plan. The plan, incorporating Complete Streets design principles will provide essential tools to support upcoming density, including developments

like this one, while cultivating synergetic neighbourhoods that support designated Main Streets and residential areas.

We stand in support of city staff's refusal, primarily due to the approval of density in an already densely populated area. Recent approvals of two high-density developments, along with several others in progress, have contributed to our area becoming landlocked. The absence of transit support and inadequate walkability within the community raises questions about the suitability of this area for such growth.

As a representative body invested in the well-being and sustainable development of Hyde Park, we urge City Council to reconsider the approval of the current proposal by Highland Communities Ltd.

Furthermore, we respectfully appeal to council to prioritize:

- Development of a Community Improvement Plan, with an updated "Hyde Park Official Community Plan" that aligns with the London Plan to ensure a balanced, sustainable, and growing neighbourhood.
- Upgrading of infrastructure to adequately support increased density, considering the strain on schools, sewer systems, roads, and other essential amenities.
- Inclusion of Hyde Park in the London Master Mobility Plan to address transportation needs, including increased bus services and improved connectivity to accommodate population growth and free movement within the City.

As a high growth neighbourhood in the City of London, we aim to cultivate a neighbourhood that fosters a higher quality of living for a very diverse population. This requires a delicate balance of council's current priorities, and the needs of quickly growing communities. It's necessary to address these concerns to ensure responsible and sustainable development in our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Donna Szpakowski
CEO/General Manager
Hyde Park Business Improvement Association