

Re: REVISED NOTICE OF PLANNING APPLICATION & PUBLIC MEETING: Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments.

Transit Village amendments – Oxford-Richmond.

File: OZ-9726

Applicant: City of London

Dear Mr. Filson,

We respond to your “Revised Notice of Planning Application” (hereafter ‘Notice’) invitation for comments on the proposed re-zoning for Oxford-Richmond to include in your report to the City Council. Thank you for the consultation exercise. We attended the zoom information session your office facilitated on July 31, 2024, regarding this application.

Having considered the arguments your office put forward and having read your responses to our questions in the Chat, we urge you to amend your plans so that they stop south of Oxford Street.

We note that you stated at the planning meeting on July 31, that your plan is to produce:

*“proactive as of right zoning for high density developments [up to 30 storeys] encouraging additional dwelling units, promoting infill, encouraging alternative housing construction, making city lands available for affordable housing, improving approval processes to reduce timelines” and that “**Local context** is important”.*

You will understand that we, the residents and business owners in the area that the plan affects, form this **local context** and obviously your plans are important to us.

Pivotal to your plans appears to be high-rise development. Your colleague Nancy Pasato stated, *“there could be high rise developments within these areas”* and within these plans there is the potential that *“buildings will be removed”* in order to *“intensify certain areas rather than across the city...to ensure it [intensification of buildings] is targeted in particular areas.”* We also note that Nancy stated:

*“at this time there is no transit station to be developed at the Richmond-Oxford intersection...the Transit is not supposed to be going North of the downtown at this time. That particular leg has not been supported by the Council at this time. However, the London Plan is a long-term document...we are planning for 20, 30, 40 years from now and **how we want to see London grow**...when we do develop transits to support residents, we know that in these areas there will be that higher concentration of people ...so the transit will follow where the people will be.”*

This is a topsy-turvy way of planning – you build high-density buildings with no transit lines which will leave residents with no appropriate transit resources, which will cause further congestion at the Oxford-Richmond intersection. To our knowledge, the federal grant does not include transit

so Nancy's supposition that transits will somehow 'follow' appears to be more of a hope than a concrete assumption.

We do not know who Nancy was referring to when stating **“this is how we want to see London grow”**. It is presumptuous and obtuse for any planning office, on the one hand, to invite local participation in the decision on how London grows whilst, on the other, asserting the city council has already decided how it should grow. What we can assure you is that as residents and business owners in this locality – we have bought and invested into an already vibrant living area - this set of plans does not align with what, in our view, is the best way for London to grow.

Like us, you know that there has been a huge and hugely negative response from residents and business owners to your plans for the Oxford-Richmond area. We have seen many of the communications sent to you and to other members of the council. As well as challenging the legitimacy of the consultation exercise, those who have written to you have presented diverse yet strong and valid arguments to you for rethinking what you are proposing to do to this area. Among those who have written are significant experts in the fields of planning, engineering, and law, many of whom have worked in the City of London and contributed to its growth for many years.

There is vast opposition to the planned development of high-rise buildings in the area north of Oxford St. You are undoubtedly aware of the immense strength of feeling against the plan for high-rise buildings of any kind that impinge on Bishop Hellmuth heritage district and the area in close proximity to it (including along Oxford and Richmond north of Oxford Street). Your plan – although already amended – needs to go further since as it stands, it will seriously impact on the heritage value and quality of living for people who live in this area and invested in it. For the record, there is no enthusiasm for what you are proposing to do in the area south of Oxford Street either and we residents therefore hope and urge you to reconsider this aspect of the transit too.

You stated in your presentation:

“Collectively these efforts [plans] can contribute to a more livable, sustainable and economically vibrant London”

We urge you and the City of London to share in the pride in the architecturally unique Bishop Helmuth heritage area that its residents feel and amend your plans to protect it from development that will irreparably damage its character.

Kind regards,

Dr. Rachel Forrester-Jones

Susan Agranove

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