



ZELINKA PRIAMO LTD
A Professional Planning Practice

February 2nd, 2015

Planning and Environment Committee
c/o Heather Lysynski
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON
N6A 4L9

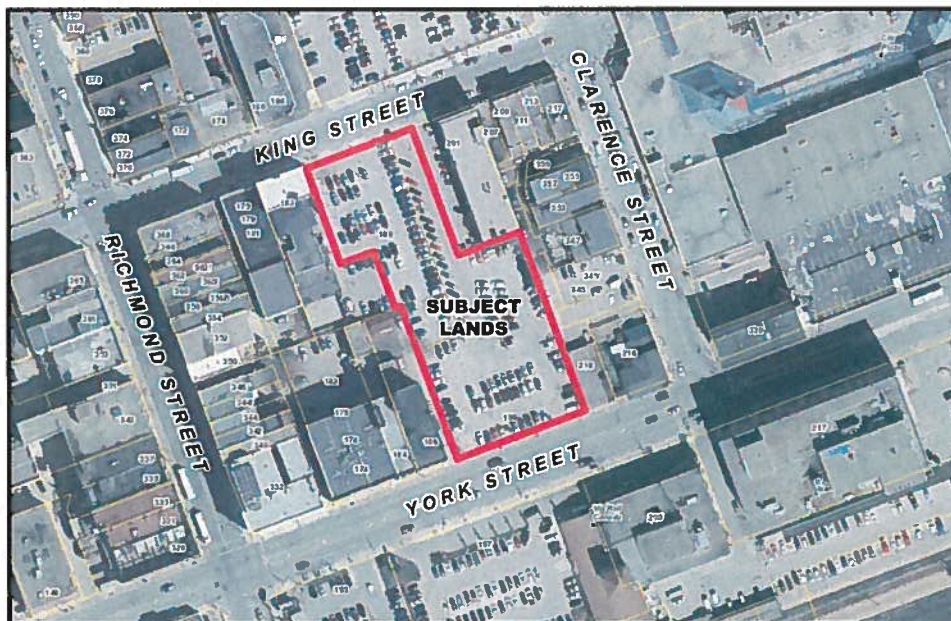
Dear Committee Members,

**Re: Our Move Forward – London’s Downtown Plan
Southside Group
189-195 King Street
London, ON**

Our File: SSD/LON/14-01

We are planning consultants for Southside Group, the owner of lands (the “subject lands” – Figure 1) that are affected by *Our Move Forward – London’s Downtown Plan* (the “Downtown Plan”).

Figure 1: Subject Lands



Any future development on these lands would be adversely affected by *Transformational Project #9: City Gateway* in the proposed Downtown Plan. As such, our client and we strongly oppose this component of the Downtown Plan. We are asking the Planning and Environment Committee and Council to amend the Downtown Plan before any approval, to remove the proposed mid-block pedestrian mall from York Street to Dundas Street.

The subject lands are located mid-block between Richmond Street and Clarence Street, with frontage on York Street and King Street, and are approximately 0.55ha (1.37ac) in area. The lands are currently vacant and are used for a commercial parking lot.

Among initiatives in the Downtown Plan, the *Transformational Project #9: City Gateway* presents significant concerns. This project proposes to create a mid-block, expansive pedestrian-only mall, running two blocks from the Via Rail Station on York Street north to Dundas Street. Approximately 50% of our client's property, from York Street to King Street, is proposed to be used for this pedestrian linkage (Figure 2).

Figure 2: *City Gateway* with the subject lands highlighted



The Downtown Plan provides that the *City Gateway* project will “create a welcoming landmark and memorable arrival for passengers arriving in London and a positive image of the City. It will improve the accessibility to the train station from Dundas and King Streets by providing a mid-block connection linking them.”

While still in the planning stages, it is anticipated that our client's lands will be redeveloped in the near future for a vibrant mixed use development that provides a lasting impression on rail passengers coming to London. A pedestrian mall is not required to achieve this desired effect.

The Downtown Plan provides no justification for requiring such additional pedestrian access, considering Clarence Street, with a signalized pedestrian crossing, is only 20m east of the entrance to the station, while Richmond Street, again with a signalized crossing, is only 115m to the west, representing walking times of 15 seconds and 60 seconds, respectively. The *City Gateway* project also implies that Richmond Street and Clarence Street, with their existing and future businesses, do not have potential as pedestrian corridors and should be replaced by an interior corridor. This is not true. The

City Gateway project detracts from the future role of Richmond and Clarence Streets as vibrant pedestrian spaces.

No detailed discussion of how the *City Gateway* project is to be implemented is found in either the Downtown Plan or the Staff Report (dated February 2, 2015) prepared for the Committee's review. The only references to implementation state that *Transformational Projects* will be factored into to London's budget over the coming years.

As the *City Gateway* project proposes to occupy half the area of the subject lands, there are significant financial implications. The *City Gateway* proposes to remove privately owned, developable land from the site and replace it with a public pedestrian walkway. There is not, in our opinion, an economically feasible option for making these lands available for the proposed uses. There is no amount of bonusing that can replace the economic loss of the lands as proposed.

The Downtown Plan notes that "*given the amount of under-developed property in this project area, there is potential for a mixed-use development*". It is anticipated that these lands will redevelop for a significant and vibrant mixed-use addition to the downtown core, opposite the rail hub for the City of London.

The *City Gateway* proposal creates a detrimental and adverse impact on the potential redevelopment of the land. It does not allow for the efficient use of the site as required by the Provincial Policy Statement and as provided in the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-Law. We urge the members of the Planning and Environment Committee to direct staff to amend the Downtown Plan to remove this component of the Plan before it is approved.

Yours very truly,

ZELINKA PRIAMO LTD.



Richard Zelinka, MES, MCIP, RPP
Principal Planner

cc. Vito Frijia, Southside Group (via e-mail)
Patton Cormier & Associates (via e-mail)