

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

10. "Our Move Forward" London's Downtown Plan (O-8385)

- Sarah Merritt, Manager, Old East Village Business Improvement Area – indicating that they are like the young cousins of Downtown renewal; noting that she and Janette MacDonald have worked together for many, many years; indicating that they are really thrilled to see what is happening with the Downtown Plan, but what she is particularly thrilled about, given the work that they are doing, is that they are seeing, built into this Plan, the connectivity of Downtown redevelopment to other urban and commercial corridors and neighbourhoods; and, indicating that, in the next phase of what they are doing, they are really looking forward to working with the Manager, Urban Regeneration and what that will actually mean and how they are going to do that.
- Maureen Zunti, Sifton Properties Limited – advising that there are a lot of really great, creative ideas in the Plan and a lot of them are contingent upon the Downtown Transportation Assessment; noting that it will be interesting to see what comes up; indicating that there is one policy that she noticed this afternoon as she was doing a final review of the Plan, Policy 5.2, which states “encourage the redevelopment of vacant sites to increase the resident and worker population Downtown by discontinuing temporary use zoning on these sites”; expressing concern with that because there are approximately seven temporary use zones that have temporary parking Downtown; noting that she believes that Sifton owns only one of these; advising that temporary use zones are only in place for about three years, typically, and if this Policy, depending on how it is interpreted, was strictly adhered to and all of those temporary use zones were not renewed or considered for future parking or whatever, you could potentially have those seven sites not having any use and she does not think that it is economically feasible to expect that all seven of them would be able to be redeveloped with other employment or residential uses within a short time span; suggesting that instead of saying “discontinued” that the language be softened and have it be “discouraged” or something like that; and, asking for the minor change as she thinks that would it would imply a little more flexibility in terms of interpretation over time.
- Mary Lou Albanese, Middlesex-London Health Unit – thanking everyone who worked on the Plan; indicating that, in terms of the document and the proposed Plan, there are a lot of health enhancing benefits to the Plan, not just in terms of physical health, but in mental and social well-being, which we know is an important factor when we are looking at the City’s prosperity and economic benefits; indicating that people working, living and playing in the area is so important to overall health; and, requesting that that be recognized for this Plan.
- Janette MacDonald, CEO and General Manager, Downtown London – indicating that, at the risk of repeating everything that has been said by Mr. Fleming and Mr. Yanchula, they have J. Malkin attending from their Board of Directors, as well as her staff, and she is so excited about the Plan because they have enjoyed so much success in the Millennium Plan and the growth in Downtown and they have really left a wonderful legacy and they must continue to do that because the investments in the rest of the City are dependent on a healthy Downtown; advising that a healthy Downtown is dependent on inextricably, whether they like it or not, the health of Dundas Street; indicating that she really loves that this Plan has Dundas Street front and centre and it is really what they have to focus on; reiterating that a strong Downtown means a strong London and anything that they can do to forward that; also reiterating that, like Mr. Yanchula said, a Plan does not do that, implementation and investment do that and they have proven that Downtown gives them a great return on investment; and, hoping that they can continue to do that.
- Mohamed Moussa, 155 Thornton Avenue – advising that he thinks that the Plan is great and he likes seeing the forward vision that staff have gone through; indicating that his biggest concern with what is going on with Downtown is infrastructure; pointing out that there are a lot of pages to go through, this has been on the Agenda for a few years and it has been a work in progress for a few years; expressing concern with the City looking for private investment, looking for more buildings, looking for more residential and our

infrastructure; noting that when he is referring to infrastructure, he is not referring to transportation, he is not referring to the soft infrastructure, he is referring to hard infrastructure; indicating that we have sewer mains that are over one hundred years old that feed a lot of these buildings in these pretty pictures; indicating that we need to somehow marry that with this Plan; meaning no slight to staff, he does not know if it was part of their mandate, but there have been a lot of sinkholes in the last seven years and it is going to continue to happen; wanting to bring this to the Committees attention, he would like people to know that the pretty stuff above ground is great but we need a lot more money spent on infrastructure; talking about the River, we dump a whole lot of raw sewage into the River because our Downtown still does not have storm sewers and sanitary sewers that are separated; indicating that he owns a Downtown property and it is hard to put a business in there when you are walking down the sidewalk and you walk by a storm sewer, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, there is a stench; apologizing for being so blunt about it but it is something that has to be considered; advising that we spend money on other things but these are the foundations that any new development in any new residential and commercial needs to rely upon; and, reiterating that there is no slight on staff, he does not know whether part of the mandate of the report was that but somehow we need to put more money into that and some sort of schedule with that or else this is all just pretty window dressing.

- Greg Priamo, Zelinka Priamo Ltd., on behalf of Ayerswood Development Corporation – advising that they have had the opportunity, recently, to analyze the substance of the Plan as it relates to evolving project that their client is currently proposing and has initiated the planning process for; pointing out that it is important to know that Ayerswood only acquired this property late last year and so we are in the very early stages; advising that, without a direct land interest, we were not advised to pursue it on that matter and certainly they did not but now that they do, and now that we have had an opportunity to reflect on the implications of the Plan, we are here this afternoon to ask the Committee to consider the impacts of a particular component of the Downtown Plan; indicating that they are not here to undermine the Plan; advising that it is certainly an ambitious plan and something that is appropriate for London to undertake; advising that, in the absence of specific development applications, often times, when they are brainstorming and coming up with ideas to include in plans like this, they do not have the benefit of the details that they presented in their correspondence today; noting that they do now and perhaps that is an opportunity to revisit that and assess the likelihood of that transformative project and its viability in comparison with what the development has proposed; stating that what they are specifically talking about as transformative project number nine which contemplates a broad pedestrian mall that would run effectively from the Via Station to Dundas Street and for the most part, except for grade crossings over York Street and King Street, would be effected on private lands; speaking, in particular, about the northern half of that, which would be the walkway as it runs from King Street through to Dundas Street and the implications that it has for the project; outlining that, as they indicated in their correspondence, the current plan contemplates one hundred percent coverage of the subject property and includes several land use components including a commercial office building, about twelve thousand square feet of street level retail and three residential towers and associated parking garage; advising that the scale of this project is consistent with the interest and demand for this type of housing in the Downtown and is also reflective of the land values that are associated with the Downtown; indicating that, if we look at a plan view, we can see the green that is shown on this plan shows the implications of the introduction of the walkway; understanding that this is a conceptual plan and there has been no detailed implementation of the City gateway but, nonetheless, this is reflective of what is shown in the draft document; pointing out that you can see that its implementation would have a significant impact on the commercial office building that would front onto Dundas Street, it would eliminate one of the three towers and possibly a second; noting that it would also compromise the parking facility, which is a system that is based on the ground floor; indicating that, as many of you are aware, in Downtown London, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to go down with parking because of hydrogeological characteristics, there is a lot of groundwater in the Downtown area and so typically, you can get down about one floor before you run into, essentially, flowing water; advising that, in order to provide the

parking, you need to provide a parking structure and it has to be constructed at a scale that is consistent with the needs of the development itself; pointing out that, in this particular instance, you can see that it has a significant impact; stating that, on that basis, we are concerned with the viability of the project and we would like the Committee to consider the merits of, not their project in its final form, but a comparative analysis; noting that sometimes these projects result in a kind of conflict and we now have the benefit of an evolving project to assess the merits of that particular transformative project; noting that many of the transformative projects involve public lands and so you have control over those lands; stating that, in this particular instance, obviously, to create this feature, there would have to be some kind of acquisition of land and even, in partnership, the impact on the developable area of the land; advising that there is not enough bonusing to offset the loss in develop ability; asking that the Committee instruct staff to look at removing this project from the policies such that they can proceed with this project; indicating that this is not to say that they will not continue to work with staff to make this the best project possible; and, noting that they have only done pre-consultation and they were provided with a number of ideas and input from staff that they will certainly have regard for to make this an even more exciting project but in the meantime, they have to have some comfort that they are moving forward with a development footprint that will make sense for them. (*Secretary's Note: The Chair asks the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner for advice on the presentation.*) (see attached communication.)

- Richard Zelinka, Zelinka Priamo Ltd., on behalf of Southside Group - speaking about a site that is similarly impacted by this; stating that he will not be speaking of this in terms of an application; however, he believes that it is important to consider, before adopting something that has certain implications for development within the area, he believes that it is very important for this Committee and Council to be aware of what those implications are; advising that the site that he is referring to is a site between York Street and King Street, which is owned by the Southside Group; pointing out that the Via Rail Station is to the south and the Ayerswood property is to the north; advising that, between these two sites, they constitute the entirety of the pedestrian mall component of the gateway; indicating that he is not speaking with regard to the public square element of the gateway, which is a discreet component in front of the railway station; however, the pedestrian mall aspect of this, a broad pedestrian mall, looked at as a major pedestrian corridor through mid-block is something which he wishes to advise the Committee is seen as having a dramatic negative impact on the develop ability of a major site within this area; indicating that, based on the concept that was provided in the Downtown Plan, they are looking at approximately fifty percent of the develop ability of the site removed in pursuing this type of mid-block major pedestrian corridor; advising that this is something which is, by its nature, intended to be a major corridor so he thinks that Council, in approaching this, has to recognize the negative effect that this can have; believing that it is also important to note that this is not one of the major inspirational projects that Mr. Yanchula mentioned; noting that this is one of the projects which develop from a broad process of identifying; advising that he does not know if you would call them "cool" projects, but they are outside the box type projects, which why not, why not try this, and, in this case, my advice to the Committee is, there are reasons why not to try this; stating that, not only are they related to the develop ability of major projects in this part of the Downtown, but they are also related to the fact that this mid-block corridor is an unnecessary corridor and is potentially counterproductive to the success of the Downtown Plan; reiterating that it is not just because of its effect on the develop ability next to it, but because of its effect on other elements of the Downtown Plan; indicating that, if you go to Transitional Project number eight, for example, which is the Clarence Street connector, what we see here is an attempt to enhance the pedestrian environment on Clarence Street to make it part of an enhanced corridor with a strong pedestrian element and, also, in fact, connect it south of the CNR; indicating that, now Clarence Street is an important connecting corridor; stating that Clarence Street actually leads, not just from the Station right now, and, through this Plan, potentially to the SoHo district, it also leads up to Victoria Park, Dundas Street first of all, which is the only connector for the mid-block; using the terminology of Dundas Place, then Victoria Park and then also Richmond Row, it is an important connector from north to south within the

Downtown and it can be one that can be enhanced to be a very important pedestrian connection; enquiring as to what then is the value of diverting pedestrians off of that into an expensive pedestrians only corridor that only goes two blocks; advising that, immediately to the west, Clarence Street has its connection right now; pointing out that Clarence Street, outside of the station, one walks out of the station fifteen metres, twenty metres to the east, you are on to Clarence Street and you can walk straight up, go to the west and you can go up Richmond Street, but Clarence Street is the closest one; stating that, in his opinion, this project for the mid-block pedestrian connection is one that will dilute the effect of any investment on Clarence Street and dilute the potential for Clarence Street to become a vibrant pedestrian corridor; advising that, in theory, it takes pedestrians away from the businesses that are on Clarence Street, a corridor where we want to enhance the businesses; enquiring as to why take them over through the middle of a block; indicating that those old enough to remember will recognize the fact that one of the things that was a real detriment to many of the Downtown businesses was the time when the London Arcade or Smugglers Alley came into being, where it diverted pedestrians away from the main business streets down through the middle of the block; indicating that that is another thing that he thinks should be considered when looking at the desirability or undesirability of the mid-block connection from York Street to Dundas Street; raising a related item, this was not directly part of the Transformational Project number nine, but it relates to it and that is found in Transformational Project number four, which is the laneway connections; advising that, because this is intended to be a document that would be adopted by Council and have some meaning, and thrust, the wording of this section is quite important; referring to page 52, the laneway connections and this is said to be important to preserve the historical laneways of the Downtown; looking at the map that is shown on that page, we will find that most of these are not historical laneways, most of these are not even laneways in normal parlance, most are on private lands, some are walkways within private developments and many are simply routes that can be negotiated through private parking lots; noting that that is the case for a laneway that is shown on the Southside lands between York Street and King Street, it is also the case for what is shown on the Ayerswood lands between King Street and Dundas Street; reiterating that these are shown as laneways; putting them in that category gives them a status which they do not actually have and, in his opinion, distorts the understanding of what these really are; recognizing the intent in this section and in this Transformational Project, is to recognize that for some of these there is potential to do something special; however, if we look at the description of the project, it says that the existing, mostly service focused laneways, in the Downtown are to be preserved; stating that “are to be preserved”, that is a pretty definite and inflexible approach to these things given that most of them are on private lands; suggesting that wording such as “existing public laneways”, “public laneways to be preserved” is fine or that private laneways and pedestrian routes may be considered for their realistic potential to serve a broader function; noting that that is also fine; however, we ask that this Committee to direct staff to adjust the wording in that section so that private lands are not treated as public laneways and are not required to be preserved as they are here; reiterating that between the two things, that one change and even more importantly, the project number nine, mid-block, we ask that this Committee direct staff to revise the Plan to remove that development. (see attached communication.)

- Alan Patton, Patton Cormier & Associates, on behalf of Ayerswood Development Corporation – advising that Ayerswood Development Corporation, now the owner of the block of land that Mr. G. Priamo described in his presentation; stating that, for those of you that do not have the length of involvement in the Downtown that he does, and some of the rest of them do, in the 1980’s, it was the London Arcade, which was thought to be innovative and exciting when it was first built but is no longer there and has been a parking lot; indicating that Ayerswood, which is a large developer throughout Southwestern Ontario, but centered in London, bought it; stating that, for nine, going on twelve years, through a series of temporary use parking lot, temporary use zoning by-laws, it was a parking lot; advising that the most important thing that happened on it for a while was the Blues Festival, which has not been there for a while; advising that, because you can only have temporary zoning by-laws for a certain period of time, it is not even being used as a temporary parking lot now; noting that it has been vacant for

the last number of years; indicating that there was a group of prominent Londoners that came together, six of them, when the arcade was vacant and said that this is a critical site to the Downtown, critical, so they bought it; noting that it was people like Vito Frijia of Southside and five other very prominent Londoners and they held on to it, hoping to have a development project come to fruition; further noting that some of the members of that syndicate company have since dropped out, some have passed away; advising that Ayerswood bought it; stating that Ayerswood has a strong history of building in this City; indicating that they filed an application for pre-consultation with City planning staff and that pre-consultation was held last week; advising that he was at the pre-consultation meeting with Mr. Priamo, a principle of Ayerswood and another employee of Zelinka Priamo Ltd., and this is what we were told, what was handed to us, prepared before we walked into the meeting; advising that, under Urban Design, “urban design staff have reviewed the proposal summary”, which is what Mr. Priamo showed you with the thirty storey building, the nineteen storey building, the office and the retail component on Dundas Street, “at the above-noted address and provide the following urban design principles for the site consistent with the Official Plan, the draft Downtown Plan, applicable by-laws and guidelines”; outlining that, even if you do not adopt this as a Secondary Plan, but adopt it as a guideline, staff says this is what they want on the Ayerswood site; “include a mid-block connection linking Dundas Street to King Street, in accordance with the draft Downtown Plan”; pointing out that they are already treating it as in force and effect, not a Guideline document in accordance with this; reading that “this connection should be designed as a hard surface plaza with the ground floors of the proposed development oriented towards the space with an active frontage in order to keep the proposed building c”); noting that that was the 19 storey building, “in its current location”; asking the Committee to imagine this, “explore opportunities to include an open air passage through or under a portion of the building”; advising that that is not on, for any development, in London, Toronto, New York City, it is just not viable, it is cost prohibitive; stating that that is the implication why we are here, Mr. Priamo and myself, are here on behalf of Ayerswood; advising that this project is ready to be filed, a Zoning Amendment application with bonusing; bonusing based on the two thirty-two storey apartment buildings, buildings designed by a prominent Toronto architectural firm, Russell Flicher; outlining that this is a serious matter and even if it is a guideline, it is in the Official Plan and staff is prepared to treat it as virtually enforceable.

- Jim Kennedy, President, London Development Institute – advising that he has reviewed the Plan and it is a very grand vision for the Downtown, which is something that the City needs, you need to have a vision, if you do not plan, you do not accomplish that; indicating that he would like to speak to the fact that, with a number of the new Council Members that are here, and you are currently in the Budget process, one thing that he thinks is important to consider is that this is a Plan that is presenting ten future change of projects in the city, along with a bunch of other projects that have been done in the past, things like the Thames River Corridor Study, the Bus Rapid Transit that is coming up, there are environmental assessments for that; reiterating that, as Councillor Hubert mentioned, there is an item coming up at the Civic Works Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 3, 2015, relating to the scoping of the Dundas Street study; noting that, in that report, staff have put a dollar value of approximately \$16,000,000 to do the works from the capital perspective, which is the City’s dollars, into Dundas Street; indicating that there is another \$8,000,000 to \$10,000,000 that London Hydro have to put in and the London Transit Commission has numbers that they have to put in; noting that if you look at the numbers and you add them up approximately, you are looking at almost \$30,000,000 for that one project over a ten year period when you bring in future enhanced maintenance and that type of thing; advising that that is just one of the ten projects; noting that those are just the ten outlined in this Plan, but then you have all of the other projects; providing the caution that, when you approve something like this, it is interconnected; indicating that, within the report, it talks on page 104 about public sector investments through the Millennium Plan, with the Covent Garden Market, with Budweiser Gardens, the Library, and those were all great projects that led to a lot of the redevelopment that you see Downtown and another part of that was the exemption of the Development Charges for residential in the Downtown core; advising that, if you look at today’s Agenda, Item number four is talking about converting that to a Community

Improvement Plan; noting that that is fine, they are going to have time to review that, they are going to have time to come back; speaking to that interconnectedness of this Plan to those Development Charge exemptions, the work that was done through the Millennium Plan; advising that it did bring on a lot of development; indicating that he does not think that they have hit the target that they need to look at removing that at this point; pointing out that there are a number of things to consider if we take this on, again, this is a twenty year plan is what the term is defined in it; noting that it is going to take a lot of time, it is going to take public-private partnership; indicating that we have heard some issues today on a couple of the items that need to be looked at; indicating that Mr. Fleming is always referring to the peanut butter approach to monies and how you have to spread that around; indicating that he has developed one that is more like a sunscreen model, and with that, you only have so much sunscreen so you have to cover your assets or you are going to get burned and then you have to start peeling back on a lot of these projects; bringing that out so that you do understand the connectedness; reiterating that there are a lot of dollars here, that is \$30,000,000 just for Dundas Street and when you start adding in the other ten, like a performing arts centre, that could be \$40,000,000 or \$50,000,000; reiterating that it is the taxpayers, there will be money coming in from other areas, there is Federal and Provincial funding that is mentioned that is required; reading the paper today, it does not look like there is going to be a lot of that coming forward and we need to adjust for that; and, thinking that the Plan allows for that flexibility, but just remember the interconnectedness for the rest of the City, it is not just Downtown.

- Joseph Liberatore, 18 Greenfield Court – commenting on two of the biggest initiatives as part of the new Downtown Plan; indicating that the first one being the Dundas Street portion of it and converting it into a pedestrian street; advising that he is studying City Planning so he realizes how much it can fundamentally change a city; indicating that one of the examples that he can relate to is Dundas Street becoming is actually the main street in Strøget, which is in Copenhagen; advising that, in the 1960's Copenhagen had the idea of turning its most major area in the Downtown into a pedestrian oriented place, like London is trying to get to; noting that, at that time, it was a parking lot; further noting that a lot of people said, when they wanted to pedestrianize it, that we are not Italians, it is not part of our culture, it is useless to us because we are so fundamentally different; indicating that, since they implemented this plan in Copenhagen, as part of new development, the economic benefits to that city have been into the billions with local businesses; realizing, with the future of this city and how it is going towards smaller, local scale business, instead of the globalization of large commercial development, it benefits not just what is going on today, but also his generation, the Millennials, because that is what they most likely want to get into, starting their own businesses and those types of opportunities; pointing out that, in essence of it being part of the future London, the 2030, it is fantastic regardless of what the investment currently is, the long term value will definitely outweigh that; advising that, another point of this plan that he would like to touch on, is how this area of Dundas Street would connect with the city from a cycling and public transit perspective because a lot of the people that would be using the street are going to be pedestrians, which means public transit users or cyclists; noting that active transportation will be a magnet attracting people; advising that it would have to have convenient attractive types of connections to it, whether it is dedicated bike lanes separated from the street, not just being a six inch painted white line because really that is not going to protect an eight year old kid riding with their parents or seniors that are riding because they cannot drive; and, indicating that it is essentially looking at the future of it being a city that is good for eight year olds and it is going to be good for eighty year olds.