

Members of the Planning and Environment Committee, Council and City Staff,

On behalf of the SoHo Community Association, I'd like to thank you all for the passion I have seen for SoHo, the hospital lands and the buildings that stand on them. The closing of the hospital and demolition of some of the buildings has left the neighbourhood and community divided. While many of us are excited to see the improvements coming to the area, others fear our voices won't be heard and that the heart of the community would crumble with the hospital walls if demolished.

With this forward thinking council who's ready to make real progress, it's time we started asking more from our developers. Rather than citizens fighting to keep functioning heritage buildings, proving their value... **why not put the responsibility to the developer to prove why they can't use the building.** Personally I'm not sure I'd want to work with one who wouldn't love the creative challenge to marry the odd and new.

When I was researching the hospital land buildings I read so many excellent reports and articles but never found a good list of what features each building held. Gathering from several sources and input from Sandra Miller at ACO London, I came up with an impressive start of an inventory. It occurred to me that perhaps others weren't aware what the facilities held and therefore possibly didn't understand the treasure we have sitting there.

Meanwhile, I have been keeping track of the types of facilities groups in SoHo (or hoping to move here) are looking for. The Duchess of Kent is looking to downsize, a local church's outreach program has outgrown its tiny home, a martial arts group, women's sporting group, and others. Being an under serviced inner city neighbourhood, having a community gathering spot, a centre, is imperative. Separately we are struggling; together we would be awesome.

After being a judge for the Fanshawe Design Charrette, where the students redesigned the OVH Lands, I was eager to do my own. While it's still early in the thought process, I wanted to share an option with you that you may not have thought. I'm not an urban planner but a grass roots cheerleader and that's reflected in my design.

Using more than one developer, community partnerships and funding from creative sources would make this a viable option that syncs beautifully with London's new Strategic Plan.

The Community Improvement Plan for London's SoHo District, or Roadmap SoHo, is clear in its direction. I'd ask that each of you please review it prior to making a decision that will dramatically affect our neighbourhood.

Thank you for your time and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions prior to the PEC meeting on Monday.

Cheri McLeod
SoHo Community Association President