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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Community Statement 345 Sylvan

345 Sylvan street redevelopment, Community Statement

We are writing to voice our opposition of the rezoning of 345 sylvan

RE: 345 sylvan street

File Application number OZ-9297

We would like the council to reconsider the rezoning at the planning and environment committee agenda from March 1, 2021. We are asking the council to include our letter for the March 22, 2021 agenda.

We are opposed to this for a number of reasons.

Traffic is a major concern, the intersections of Baseline and High Street are backed up in the evening and morning rush hours, precovid. There are often other times when it is very difficult to get through eastbound on Baseline due to the vehicles entering/exiting the hospital. Vehicle's speed down side streets attempting to circumvent. With the added traffic and safety concerns associated with such large development projects to this area the community may also require traffic lights at the intersections Commissioner's and High and High and Baseline. And some traffic calming measures at Percy and Balderstone Ave.

Our community is currently enduring a pretty significant impact because of the construction on Baseline at Balderstone Ave. That development won't be complete for likely a year or two, and this is a lot to endure. If the city is to move forward with redevelopment at sylvan, they should consider waiting until this major apartment building project is complete. We are already experiencing excessive parking on the streets and heavy equipment at all hours lining up on and dirtying our streets. In recent years we have also endured the redevelopment of Baseline properties, construction of a parking structure at the hospital and the renewal of the streets on Percy, Balderstone and Baseline to update the infrastructure to support redevelopment of Baseline properties. Residents of this area have endured a lot of construction. Vacant properties have contributed to increased crime in the area, combined with the various construction, proposed drug come down facility and current proposals. This has caused many homes to be sold at a higher than market frequency and then in some cases turned into non owner occupied rentals including illegal duplexes. Translating to an unstable feeling of community.

The proposed Sylvan building will likely cause too much stress to the Neighbourhood, ruin sight lines cause light pollution, density, noise and security concerns during and after construction.

We would ideally like to see the city utilize the current building and not demolish it. We think perhaps it would make a great group home facility again, perhaps a hospice, or Ronald McDonald facility or abused women's facility (being close to hospital). we would encourage affordable housing at a significantly lower resident density. Mainly, we would like a much lower density redevelopment project at Sylvan. Could it not be affordable housing and a park/greenspace. That benefits the residents of this proposed building and the neighbourhood as a whole.

We feel the city should disclose more cost data, comparing demolition vs updating existing structure. If it is deemed that the current structure is unusable/ unfit we would like to see the city turn that area into a park, community garden, playground/recreation facility, or a healthcare or covid memorial garden. We would love to see the many young children and families in the area have a close park to play in especially considering added traffic concerns..

We are asking for and about a park because we objectively believe that the area would be enriched by a park or green space. We imagine a community space where the future elderly residents could come to themselves or with family and watch their grandchildren play when they visit. People can walk their dogs. Kids can play. It would really contribute to the walk ability. Looking at other areas of old south, that work so well and have a similar level of diverse housing. What they have and this area does not, are parks. Already in an obviously informal capacity 345 sylvan does function as a park. When it's hot in the summer people from the apartments to the north and south lay in the grass. often people stop for breaks there walking home with their groceries, killing time waiting for the bus, or walking to work at hospital.

The city was working with developers to plan the retirement residence on baseline before the homes were even sold. How is it not possible to give more time and similar considerations to the public When determining the highest and best use. Especially considering the Covid pandemic and these restrictions. This leaves insufficient room for citizens to talk to their community, form opinions, respond.

When the city is increasing area density, why does the city give's no consideration to green space in existing areas, simply because it's not in the plan. When they are amending the plan in other regards, Seems short sighted. The correlation between access to green spaces and mental health and vibrant communities should not be allowed to be overlooked especially when deciding the highest and best use.

We would also like to encourage the city to look at other potential properties that may be way better suited for this type of density such as the redevelopment of the Wright lithograph building 424 Wellington street that has sat vacant since 2007 and could be ready much sooner or dozens of potential spots that could aid in cleaning up neighbourhoods flanking wellington road north of Grand Street. We should really be fixing and using what we have in these underutilized areas that are truly in need of redevelopment. Perhaps the city could mandate affordable units in all new developments. Support the demand for low income housing in a truly inclusive manner, until goals have been realized.

In summation. We feel this city has not provided enough time to the public, or area residents to form opinions, talk amongst our community, appeal, and respond to provide input to the city considering COVID 19 and other accessibility factors.

We also feel the city may not have exercised proper due diligence when assessing the highest and best use of 345 sylvan? We think the City could maintain the current building zoning and utilize 345 sylvan street to help further a different community use. We feel the city should disclose more cost data related to demolition vs renovation of existing structure or repurposed structure in an existing state. Many residents feel this area has experienced more crime and lack of representation as a result of properties sitting vacant at baseline or sylvan and feel the city should address rising crime in this area before increasing residential density.

The city should look closer at traffic issues and concerns.

The city should consider making 345 sylvan a park. We feel when the city amends existing zoning to increased density, it has a responsibility to assess the areas greenspace representation compared to mandated levels in new developments, or other high functioning exemplar. We feel our area is underrepresented by parks or greenspace compared to other areas in the old south or london in general. There are many ways to add affordable housing to our community, but very limited opportunities to add parks and green space.

Should the city move forward with housing at 345 sylvan it should be significantly lower density and more varied to be truly inclusive.

Thanks for your consideration,
Your Neighbours.