

September 6, 2002

CAUTION:

NEW OFFICIAL PLAN COULD BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Dear Resident,

The City of Toronto is currently considering a new draft Official Plan that will regulate development across the entire City of Toronto. **Midtown Community Council** will be holding a **Public Meeting** to consider the proposed Official Plan on **Tuesday, September 17, 2002** no earlier than **4:00pm** in the **Council Chambers at the North York Civic Centre at 5100 Yonge Street**. I have concerns about this new Official Plan as do many planners, residents and their neighbourhood associations.

Proposals like **Minto's Skyscrapers** will become **commonplace** as density and height limits are eliminated from the Official Plan. Those behind the new Official Plan claim that the regulations in the Zoning By-law will be re-enforced by the new Plan. Many experts believe however, that developers and their lawyers will argue that the **new Official Plan and the old Zoning By-law are incompatible** and therefore, their aggressive re-development plans are appropriate and contemplated by this new Plan. With the **Ontario Municipal Board** making most of the decisions on controversial development proposals, we cannot leave this question unanswered – Will the new Official Plan, written in plain English, be strong enough as a law to prevent over-development from compromising our communities.

Here are just a few of the features of the proposed Official Plan that would **compromise our ability to protect our neighbourhoods** from greedy developers, power-hungry planners and pro-development politicians.

The new Plan proposes to get rid of 32 land use designations and replaces them with 8 designations. There will be **nothing to distinguish neighbourhoods** from each other and conflicts between the Zoning By-law and the Official Plan will be resolved in favour of the new Official Plan. That means the **new Official Plan will allow certain types of housing** even though they may be **currently prohibited** in your neighbourhood by the Zoning By-law.

A section of the New Plan is titled “**Tall Buildings**” and contemplates **Minto-type development throughout the City**. The new Plan will consider the **demolition of rental housing** if certain criteria are met relative to the vacancy rate in the City. **No distinction** is drawn between **affordable rental housing and luxury rental** where there is a higher vacancy rate and less

demand. This **Plan** could be **devastating** to the already shrinking stock of **affordable rental housing** in the City.

The **New Plan** is also based on **massive investments in Public Transit** that will cost taxpayers billions of dollars and which cannot be accomplished without significant investment from senior levels of government. This is a laudable goal, but you wouldn't plan a \$200,000 addition to your house with an annual income of \$30,000 with the 'expectation' that your revenue would increase by the time it came to pay for the improvements!!! There are **no financial cost estimates** attached to the plan or to the significant infrastructure that will be needed to accommodate an additional 1 million residents in the next 20 years. Urban sprawl must be checked, however it is unreasonable to expect Toronto's residents to suffer the consequences of over-densification or to pay for it through **increased property taxes and transit fares**.

In a hot real estate market such as Toronto, where investors are constantly **speculating** on properties and **block-busting**, **Official Plans must provide** as much **protection** as possible. Maximum densities are used to control the rise of land values. Without numbers enshrined in the Official Plan, **negotiations between Planners and Developers** will continue and continue to exclude you from the process. This City needs a more open Planning process with greater consultation, not more **BACK ROOM DEALS** between Politicians, Planners and Speculators.

I encourage you to attend the meeting of **Midtown Community Council** on **Tuesday, September 17, 2002**, to learn more about the proposed Official Plan. You can also get more information about the Plan at www.city.toronto.on.ca/torontoplan/index.htm however that's mostly propaganda from the people who wrote the plan.

This current **City Government** has degenerated into **backroom deals** and doing major **snowjobs** on its citizens, **packaged here as new Public Policy**. This has to stop. And we can start by coming and telling City Council that we aren't buying this so-called "Official Plan". Don't wait until it's too late to **defend your neighbourhood**.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Walker
Councillor - St. Paul's