**Official Plan Amendment & Zoning By-law Amendment**

**1309 & 1335 Carling Avenue**

**D01-01-15-0021**

**Comments from the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association (CHNA)**

**Overview:**

 The Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association (CHNA) supports a Secondary Planning Process as an important step in developing this important site.

 CHNA also supports many of the improvements in re-imagining the existing RioCan developments:

* This development has the potential to contribute to the City of Ottawa’s goal of re-casting Carling Avenue into a more appealing street with active frontages more akin to a traditional mainstreet than an arterial thoroughfare.
* This is an opportunity to turn a paved, inhospitable site into a greener, more welcoming environment.
* There is an opportunity to combine mutually supportive commercial/retail with residential for the benefit of immediate residents and the surrounding communities.
* The increased density on the site might encourage the City to consider light rail along Carling Avenue, something that CHNA would support.
* The development has the potential to envision a less car-centric community, if the developer would consider reducing parking and making a strong commitment to car-sharing (such as Virtucar) as a major feature of the development. Visitors to the commercial/retail might be more inclined to walk, cycle or use transit.

 CHNA has some comments, concerns and questions around this development application in the following areas:

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Consultations:

 While this document indicates that CHNA was involved in “preliminary consultations”, we consider this statement an exaggeration as we do not consider our attendance at one information session, where there was little opportunity for dialogue, as consultations. That being said, CHNA looks forward to meaningful consultations with RioCan on this proposed development.

Height:

 CHNA is concerned that RioCan is looking for additional height of 22 & 36 storeys, up to 4 times the zoning heights envisioned for Carling Avenue. Should the City consider and approve greater heights at this Westgate location, CHNA is concerned that this will set a dangerous precedent and result in up-zoning of other sites along Carling Avenue.

* The city recently completed a detailed zoning study that determined 6-9 storeys (up to 30 metres) as the appropriate heights for buildings along arterial mainstreets such as Carling Avenue.
* There are no rapid transit stations within 600 metres of the site, which is a criteria for intensification (ie: at Preston and Carling).

 This proposed site plan is a perfect example of the tendency of developers to up-zone. With a 21-storey residence across the street, RioCan is asking for 22 & 36 storeys – higher than the tallest building in the district.

 Therefore, CHNA urges the City to carefully study and document why this site is, or is not, suitable for additional height so other sites along Carling are protected from unimpeded up-zoning. In this way, communities abutting Carling Avenue will be afforded more protection from an invasion of inappropriately high buildings adjacent to their homes.

Open Spaces:

 The Neighbourhood & Open Spaces described in the document are not as accessible as the document portrays. For example, Hampton Park is a long and unpleasant walk from Westgate.

Site Visit:

 CHNA strongly suggests that Planning Committee Members undertake a site visit to assess the feasibility of this development before taking decisions on the site.

**Community Transportation Study:**

 Despite the findings of the transportation study, without an ambitious traffic reduction plan initiated by the city, CHNA expects that Merivale, Island Park, Carling and Kirkwood will be much busier roads than the study envisions. Our experience with traffic studies is that they almost always underestimate the impact of the additional vehicular traffic associated with development. CHNA cautions the city to review and revisit the traffic studies and assess whether the road infrastructure will support the level of density proposed in the development.

Section 2.4 (Page 4)

 According to the study, pedestrian traffic is “well accommodated”. CHNA begs to differ, as the pedestrian experience on Carling Avenue is poorly accommodated, despite the fact that there are many homes and neighbourhoods adjacent to the street. The sidewalks on Carling Avenue are immediately adjacent to 6 lanes of speeding traffic, so that the pedestrian experience ranges from unpleasant to frightening. This development has the potential to greatly improve the pedestrian experience at this site, and it may have a positive influence on other sites along the street.

 And, despite the claim that there are cycling lanes along Carling, cycling along Carling is hazardous and CHNA does not recommend it as a practice. Once again, should this development make a serious effort to support cycling along Carling Avenue, this would benefit the community at large.

Section 4.1 (Page 19)

 Parking “will exceed the City’s minimum By-law requirements”, which is counterintuitive to the city’s goal of reducing vehicular traffic. CHNA would prefer that the developer focus greater efforts on transit and cycling in support of the city’s efforts in this area.

Section 5.1 (page 20)

 CHNA is supportive of parking that is primarily underground, with fewer above ground spaces and more green space for the benefit of the future residents of the development.

 For this and all developments, CHNA is strongly supportive of bicycle parking provided at or above the city’s requirements.

Section 5.2 (Page 21)

 Once again, CHNA reiterates that surface parking should be virtually eliminated.

Section 6 (Page 22)

 CHNA is very supportive of the integration of transit as an ideal feature of this development and is also supportive of the pedestrian walkways/lighting. Carpooling is an innovation that other developments should model. Secure cycling storage facilities are a welcome feature of the development.

**Environmental Site Assessments:**

 CHNA is supportive of a cautious approach to the environmental site assessments at this large site.

**Noise Assessments:**

 Noise is becoming more of a concern in downtown developments. For the quality of life of residents of the proposed residential towers on this site, CHNA assumes that RioCan will be using all applicable noise mitigating technologies to reduce the noise for residents and visitors to the site.

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 Chair, Planning & Development

 CHNA

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