

Zoning Study on Local Shops and Services in Residential Neighbourhoods

Submission from the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association (CHNA)

Background / General Description:

The Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association (CHNA) boundaries are Hwy 417 to the north, the O-train track to the east, Carling Avenue to the south, and Island Park Drive to the west.

Primarily a residential neighbourhood, (with two notable exceptions noted under Existing Local section) most of the shops and services within the CHNA boundary are located along Carling Avenue. These shops are an eclectic mixture, including such shops as Marinescapes or Distinctive Audio, which are not neighbourhood-focused but cater to customers across the city.

While there are coffee shops in the neighbourhood (Tim Hortons & Second Cup), these are located in the Civic Hospital complex, so neither of these businesses is neighbourhood focused. Similarly, the flower shop, bookstore and other small stores at the Civic Hospital campus are designed to service the hospital, not the neighbourhood.

The proximity of the Civic Hospital campus to the neighbourhood means that there are two drug stores within the CHNA boundaries. The Medicine Shoppe/Civic Pharmacy at Holland & Carling and McNeil Pharmacy near Carling & Parkdale try to cater to both the neighbourhood and the wider community. However, most residents likely have their prescriptions filled by larger drug stores that offer a wider range of products.

Existing Local Convenience Stores – Very Important, Yet Currently Vulnerable:

There are two grocery stores / sandwich shops that do provide an important service to the Civic Hospital neighbourhood and both are well known Ottawa institutions. These local shops serve an important local function as neighbourhood stores while at the same time catering to customers who travel from their offices or from outside the neighbourhood to purchase their popular sandwiches.

The two shops are:

- **Di Rienzo Grocery and Deli** at 111 Beech Street, located at the eastern edge of the CHNA boundary; and,
- **Sherwood Market and Deli** at 111 Sherwood Drive, also located within the south eastern district of the Civic Hospital neighbourhood.

These two convenience stores are within easy walking distance to residents of the eastern side of the Civic Hospital neighbourhood and easy biking distance of the entire

neighbourhood. Many residents also drop into these stores on their way to and from their homes (for example, while commuting to work by bus or car) to pick up supplies such as bread & milk.

Needless to say, these two convenience stores have become essential to the well being of the community and they would be greatly missed should they either move or no longer be permitted to contribute to the community because of zoning issues.

However, a bigger threat - the city's intensification policy – endangers the existence of at least one of these stores. In the case of the Sherwood Market & Deli, the Preston-Carling CDP has identified the corner lot on which it is located as a potential site for intensification. Sherwood Market is therefore very vulnerable and could disappear. This would be a great loss to the community and would seem to contradict the city's policy re: mobility targets, as the loss of the Sherwood Market would force more residents into cars to purchase supplies that should be available in their neighbourhood.

Possible New Locations:

Within the neighbourhood:

Unfortunately, the configuration of the Civic Hospital neighbourhood leaves little room for new shops and services. Because of the essentially residential character of the neighbourhood, there are few, if any locations for commercial properties. Only one location comes to mind – a small former commercial location at the corner of Breezehill & Beech, which was, at one time, a small corner store, but is no longer used as such. This small store likely closed because of its proximity to both Di Rienzo Grocery and Sherwood Market, as it is unlikely the neighbourhood could support three small convenience stores in the same vicinity. Perhaps another type of service, such as a coffee shop could be more successful.

On the fringes of CHNA:

While Carling Avenue would seem to be a prime location for local stores, the portion of Carling that borders the Civic Hospital neighbourhood offers little opportunity for new shops or stores:

- The north side of Carling heading east from Island Park Drive east to Melrose Avenue is occupied by health-related services such as drugstores, a retirement residence (Duke of Devonshire) and the hospital itself.
- From Melrose heading east to Bayswater Avenue, Carling is residential, with homes or condominiums such as Botanica.
- From Breezehill heading east to the O-train there are office buildings and planned and existing condominiums such as Merrion Square.

Only in the two-block section of Carling Avenue heading east from Bayswater to Loretta offers the potential for neighbourhood-focused stores and services. There is a small strip mall Between Sherwood and Bayswater on Carling that offers a variety of services to the neighbourhood, including a Chinese food takeout, a specialized Eastern European deli and an Edward Jones Office that serve the neighbourhood. However, this small strip mall is under threat from intensification because of the Preston Carling CDP. If the city continues to prefer and approve residential buildings over retail in its intensification plans, it is unlikely that the Civic Hospital neighbourhood will see an increase in local shops and services and may well see a decline of services.

Summary:

In conclusion, CHNA has the following comments on the Zoning Study on Local Shops and Services, as follows:

- CHNA appreciates and cherishes the current local shops (Di Rienzo and Sherwood and retail along Carling) within or at the fringes of its boundaries and would like the city to review existing and proposed zoning (particularly in the Preston-Carling CDP) that would protect these convenience stores and other retail stores over the long term.
- Many CHNA residents walk, bike and bus to school and work and they would support more local-oriented shops and services in their neighbourhood; however, because of the nature of the neighbourhood and the scarcity of retail space, locations for these shops and services are likely to be found in a small two-block section of Carling Avenue (from Bayswater to Loretta).
- As the city moves ahead with intensification, it should demand that developers include retail space at the ground (sidewalk) level of condominium buildings for small local retail enterprises such as coffee shops, fresh fruit and vegetable stores, butchers and fish mongers, small beer and liquor stores.
- Local convenience stores serve an essential service to neighbourhoods. Not only do they offer residents a quick and efficient means of getting necessities such as bread & milk, but they also provide a safe place for neighbourhood kids to learn life skills. Neighbourhood children walk to these stores and shop there; they get to know the proprietor; they gain a sense of independence in a safe place.

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