

Memo to Councillor Bailao.

Sent March 24, 2011

Re: 8 – 14 Gladstone and 11 Peel – Streetcar Proposal

The Active 18 Steering Committee met with Streetcar, the developer of 2 Gladstone, who presented plans a building next door at 8 Gladstone that has progressed pretty far and plans for 11 Peel which are just at the formative stages.

The following are thoughts and issues, in no particular order:

- a. Streetcar is one the best regarded developers, sensitive to their communities, etc. and were forthright 'good guys'. We were especially glad they involved us early on regarding 11 Peel.
- b. The Steering Committee was quite concerned – upset – that we are just hearing about 8 Gladstone at this stage. The Planning Department has been meeting with them since November, they tell us, and has more or less approved what they propose.
- c. Our substantive concern is tall – even mid-rise – buildings north of the Queen St frontage. It is a residential neighbourhood. We did not oppose the taller building at 2 Gladstone because it was Queen St. frontage. That does not apply to a building to the north.
- d. We opposed to the piece meal development of the area north of Queen. We hosted the York U. planning exercise run by Steve Heuchert and drafted a Secondary Plan for the 'NW Triangle' which we gave to the Planning Department. We did this because we blame the disaster south of Queen St largely on the failure to have in place a coherent secondary plan before the developers appeared. (See Secondary Plan - <http://www.chascamp.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/tab-030-10.pdf>)
- e. There were explicit discussions with the Planning Department and they refused to move on this. Not only that, we now learn they've meeting with Streetcar and effectively approved the 8 Gladstone project without consulting the community.
- f. The substantive problem is precedent – always a slippery problem but very real. If 2 Gladstone can have eight storeys what about the buildings north on Gladstone? What about the Price Chopper site which already has high commercial density? Yes, there are arguments to distinguish these as they encroach further into the residential neighbourhood. But in our view they are not good arguments before the 'court of last resort' - the OMB – where there is no plan in place indicating the direction of development.
- g. **This is piece meal planning at its worst. We are heading for another mess.**
- h. The general planning exercise getting underway along the rail corridor is necessary and a good idea but it does not address the problem on Gladstone Ave.
- i. That said, if there was a proper plan and rezoning in place along Gladstone as part of the rezoning for 8 Gladstone – what Streetcar proposes is not bad.

- j. See http://www.chascamp.com/blog/?page_id=701
 - i. See NW Triangle
- k. But it should not be approved until the rest of that zoning is done.
- l. The discussion of 11 Peel was excellent and far-sighted. The history of this site is at http://www.chascamp.com/blog/?page_id=699 – see ‘Toylands’ section.
- m. The developer wants to make an exception for this property to the general discussion coming up in the OP review about Employment Areas. See http://www.chascamp.com/blog/?page_id=320
- n. This problem was covered in our proposed Secondary Plan for the NW Triangle mentioned above. And it was discussed with community at the charrette run by the York students. The community view seemed to be – this area is for employment space.
- o. The Steering Committee is not adverse to ‘making deals’ in employment areas where land is released into mixed use with a stress on the provision of affordable employment space.
- p. But we are nowhere with the City on such policies.
- q. At the moment we don’t see a reason to exempt this developer on this site from the general problem around the city unless there is a ‘good deal’ coming out of it for affordable work space. (The developer makes some good point about this particular site as unsuitable for industrial uses, which is the effect of the current zoning. But industrial jobs are not the only sort.
- r. Once again piece meal planning is at the root of the problem – or maybe the road block to a sensible solution. Low rise condos might be ok on the 11 Peel site if cheap work space were guaranteed in the rest of the NW Triangle.
- s. We will continue some discussions with the developer. Our goals are clear.
- t. Finally I note Steve and I warned Planning that they are playing with fire when they think that this area is safe from the OMB forcing a review and re-zoning into condos even though currently designated as an ‘employment area.’ See June 22 2010 - <http://www.chascamp.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/tab-030-10.pdf>