

Setting precedent on the Danforth

TRANSITION CONCERN

By Edward LaRusic

Striving to meet the mid-rise performance standards while accommodating a shallow lot has one developer pitted against staff concerns about setting a precedent in advance of an avenue study.

Ward 30 Toronto-Danforth councillor **Paula Fletcher** told *NRU* that **1177 Danforth Avenue (Sierra Building Group)**'s application for a nine-storey building is the first mid-rise development on the Danforth in her ward. While she's happy to see the application, she said the proposed building doesn't transition to the neighbourhoods to the south as called for by the city's mid-rise performance standards.

"I think we want it to [achieve the mid-rise performance standards], because it's a signature corner—Greenwood and Danforth—and as the first [mid-rise] development it has to lead the way. We'll be looking for excellent public realm and making it a signature building... It's important that when we're building on tight sites, that these new buildings don't loom over the existing neighbourhood. No looming."

Sierra's proposal is to amend the zoning by-law to permit a 29.75 m. tall building with 104 condominium units and 545.2 m² of retail. The site is currently occupied by a Beer Store and parking lot. Like many lots along the Danforth, the majority of the site has a smaller than ideal lot depth of 41 m., which would allow a 27 m. tall building under

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Realigning foreign direct investments

REGIONAL APPROACH

By Leah Wong

Greater Toronto Area municipalities, including Toronto, are rethinking their approach to attracting new foreign direct investment into the region.

Toronto council will decide later this month whether it will endorse the creation of a new regional foreign direct investment attraction agency and if Invest Toronto should be folded into the new agency. At its meeting Friday the Economic Development Committee will consider recommendations from economic development and culture general manager **Michael Williams** on the city's role in the new agency.

The new agency, currently being referred to as NewCo, will meld Invest Toronto and the **Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance**. While council has yet to decide the future of Invest Toronto, the GTMA has already announced it will close down at the end of the year.

Williams, who is a member of both boards, recommends council fold Invest Toronto into the new agency. He told *NRU* having one large, well-funded agency that represents the region around the world is long overdue.

"We don't need multiple agencies. It's confusing for companies looking at coming here," said Williams. He added that having both Invest Toronto and a regional agency

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UPCOMING DATES

SEPTEMBER 18

Economic Development Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

Parks and Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 2

SEPTEMBER 21

Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

SEPTEMBER 22

Metrolinx Board of Directors, 97 Front Street West

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 2

SEPTEMBER 24

Ryerson Department of Architectural Science lecture by Nasrine Seraji (Atelier Seraji Architectes et Associés), 6:30 p.m., The Pit (ARC 202), 325 Church Street

SEPTEMBER 28

TTC meeting (time and location TBC)

SEPTEMBER 30

Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber

OCTOBER 1

Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber

Design Review Panel, 12:00-5:30 p.m., committee room 2

OCTOBER 2

Budget Committee, 12:30 p.m., committee room 1

OCTOBER 5

Government Management Committee, 9:30 a.m., committee room 1

OCTOBER 6

Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber, Etobicoke Civic Centre

North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m., council chamber, North York Civic Centre

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CITY OF TORONTO EDITION

Improving access

TTC MAKES STRIDES FORWARD

By Monica Silberberg

Challenging Toronto to become the global leader for accessible transit, TTC chair councillor **Josh Colle** told participants at the TTC's annual public forum yesterday that accessibility needs to become the standard for all transit services.

With a target of making the TTC fully accessible by 2025, panel members spoke about the ongoing progress being made and listened to participants concerns and suggestions for enhancing accessibility. Panel members included Wheel-Trans senior manager **Eve Wiggins**, TTC service planning manager **Mitch Stambler**, CEO **Andy Byford**, deputy CEO **Chris Upfold** and Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit chair **Mazin Aribi**.

Upfold responded to concerns raised at last year's public forum, noting the progress that has been made to address them. To make booking Wheel-Trans service easier and faster, he said that seven reservation staff have been added and another six more positions are anticipated. To address issues about ramps not working, the TTC has implemented routine checks before each bus is deployed and the installed a tool to allow drivers to manually lower the bus if the ramp doesn't lower automatically. Upfold



SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

said that in 2016 the TTC will implement a real-time elevator and escalator monitoring system to reduce downtime resulting from unplanned outages. Also subway trains have been lowered to address concerns over the height difference between trains and platforms. He outlined TTC initiatives to ensure priority seating on transit vehicles is available for those who need it, such as changing the colour of the priority seats and introducing educational programs.

In a review of new service initiatives, Upfold said that all TTC buses are now accessible and 97 per cent are low floor with the goal of 100 per cent by the end of 2016. He said the TTC is currently installing external notices on buses, subways and streetcars to advise customers of the vehicle's route and direction prior to boarding. Upfold told participants that 19 of the 41 objectives in the TTC's five-year accessibility plan, 2014-2018, have been achieved to date. **NRU**

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Prioritizing climate change

ENVIRONMENTAL PLATFORM

By Leah Wong

As the economy has quickly become the most talked about issue during the federal election, environmental advocates are working to ensure the next government makes climate change a priority.

Both **GreenPAC** and **350 Canada** have taken a non-partisan approach to advocacy around the federal election. Neither group is endorsing a specific party as they want to see Canadian politicians address climate change regardless of who forms the next government.

“If you try to focus on one party or exclude just one party it’s begging for the environment to become a political football. And, in many ways it has become a political football in Canada,” GreenPAC president and founder **Aaron Freeman** told *NRU*. “We need an approach that builds leadership in all corners.”

For the fall election GreenPAC has endorsed 18 candidates from across the country. All are environmental champions. It has endorsed at least one candidates from each major political party. Endorsements include Wellington-Halton Hills MP Conservative candidate **Michael Chong**, Etobicoke North Liberal candidate **Kristy Duncan** and Guelph Green Party candidate **Gord Miller**, from within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

A GreenPAC panel—comprising non-partisan environmental experts—determined which candidates to endorse. They assessed candidates based on the criteria that candidates must have a reasonable shot at winning and have a record of environmental leadership. Looking back at their record is more important than present platforms to GreenPAC as it shows what they have actually accomplished.

Rather than finding candidates to endorse in all ridings, or support a specific party, the group decided to focus on a small group of environmental leaders.

“Environmental leadership in Canada at the federal level has always been driven by individual MPs and their leadership within their parties and as advocates. Our view is that we need leadership embedded in all major political parties in Canada,” said Freeman.

While 350 Canada is also a non-partisan organization, it’s focusing more on getting candidates to talk about climate

change than focusing on particular races. The group is organizing demonstrations at federal leaders’ campaign events—both attending events to question candidates about environmental policies and having a presence outside. The group is focusing its attention on the Conservative, Liberal and NDP campaigns.

“We want to make sure climate change is on the agenda and get clarity on the parties’ platforms,” 350 Canada energy organizer **Aurore Fauret** told *NRU*. “People across Canada who are part of the climate movement want to make sure the leaders understand that they have to give concrete answers and positions.”

All of the leaders have addressed climate change following these demonstrations. Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** said his government has set a target of 30 per cent reduction over 2005 levels by 2030. Liberal leader **Justin Trudeau** and NDP leader **Tom Mulcair** pledged to overhaul the regulatory process for pipelines in Canada.

Fauret said it is particularly important to have the leaders make commitments during this campaign, and for Canadians to hold them accountable afterwards. As the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21, is happening a month after the election, she said this could be one of the first foreign policy actions of whoever becomes prime minister.

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OMB Task Force

ENHANCED TRAINING FOR WITNESSES

By Geordie Gordon

A proposed “SWAT Team” is aimed at changing the city of Toronto’s success rate at Ontario Municipal Board hearings. The specialized task force will have advanced training to be better equipped when it goes in front of the board.

“This was something that was sort of identified out of the city planning’s strategic plan a while back, and the idea is that both legal and planning report to planning and growth management on the creation of such a team. The idea is it would be a pilot project to begin with...and then determine, with council’s blessing, whether it should be expanded in the future,” planning and administrative tribunal law director **Brian Haley** told *NRU*.

The task force was introduced in a motion by Ward 24 Willowdale councillor **David Shiner** at the Planning and Growth Management Committee September 16. Shiner believes that simply by establishing the task force Toronto will be sending a message to those who are quick to appeal their cases to the OMB.

“I think that the development industry and people out there [should] know that the city is serious and concerned about maintaining the jurisdiction over development applications instead of having the rights of the residents of the City of Toronto, that are represented by the city itself and its planning staff, being usurped by one provincially-appointed individual that adjudicates and makes a decision based on his or her personal findings on it and the evidence in front of them. I’m a believer that it should be a fair and level playing field,” Shiner told *NRU*.

In addressing the Planning and Growth Management Committee about the rationale for establishing the team, chief planner **Jennifer Keesmaat** also touched on the idea of leveling the playing field.

“It became very clear that one of the tensions we face is that frequently we have staff who attend an OMB hearing on a one-off basis and they are in fact up against a team... of “professional witnesses,” people who spend their full time at the board, and it puts us in a significant disadvantage when we’re at the OMB.”

Shiner stressed that increased training in mediation is a critical aspect of the task force’s skill base.

“I want the staff that we have expertly trained in mediation and negotiation, because I do not think that the route for resolution of applications to the city should be the OMB. I think in many cases a resolution can be found if the parties are required to sit down and mediate the differences that they may have and find a reasonable solution,” said Shiner.

Haley also spoke of the need to better prepare planners for OMB appearances.

“Great planners are not always great witnesses, because that’s a defined skill, that’s something developed through doing and training at the OMB. The idea of this team is to have both great planners and great witnesses.”

Great planners are not always great witnesses, because that’s a defined skill, that’s something developed through doing and training at the OMB. The idea of this team is to have both great planners and great witnesses. • Brian Haley

Haley echoed Shiner’s comments about the need for enhanced mediation.

“Both lawyers and planners will receive specialized training in negotiation and mediation skills... [and] those witnesses would receive enhanced training in OMB protocol and in the skill or art of giving evidence. The whole idea is to help resolve appeals without the need for contested OMB hearings, it’s really a time saving exercise.”

Part of the rationale for the task force is to help build an in-house skill set among planners who may not have much experience at the OMB.

“The idea behind the SWAT team was to create a specialized team of our best negotiators, our best witness statement writers, who could in fact both work with local planners to upscale them to be more successful at the OMB, but could also be a repository of best practices,” Keesmaat told the committee. **nru**

Enforcing conditions of approval

CAR SHARING SPOTS GONE MISSING

By Edward LaRusic

Concern that new downtown developments may be violating agreements with the city to provide car sharing parking spaces has a downtown councillor asking staff to audit new developments in his ward.

Ward 19 Trinity-Spadina councillor **Mike Layton** told *NRU* that he recently discovered that a newly-built condo in his ward is not offering the car sharing spaces it had promised to provide in exchange for relief from the city’s parking standard. The agreement was a condition of the city’s approval of the development.

“So [my office] started to question: who checks this? It became clear that nobody does. [Car sharing spaces are] part of a rezoning application or a site plan application, and we don’t have staff that actually check in to see if these spots are being provided or not.”

Layton wouldn’t say which building it is, except to say it is on King Street. But he’s concerned if one building isn’t providing the spaces the developer agreed to, others may not be either.

“[The car sharing spaces] need to be there. They’re typically written in as part of the community benefits package that these would be provided and publically accessible, not just to the people in the building but to the surrounding neighbourhood,” said Layton.

He added that in addition to allowing developers to build less parking, car sharing spaces in buildings decrease the need to find spaces for them on the street, freeing the on-street parking to be used by residents and businesses.

In response to his discovery, Layton is asking council at its September 30 meeting to direct municipal licencing and standards staff to audit recently completed developments in Ward 19. He wants staff to ensure site-specific by-law requirements—such as the provision of car sharing spaces—are being implemented.

Layton suspects that new condo boards may be removing them, not recognizing that they were a condition of getting the building approved.

Municipal licensing and standards investigation services director **Mark Sraga** told *NRU* that normally, the planning and

building staff work together to ensure a building is compliant with the zoning by-law or site plan agreement when it’s being built. Staff should therefore be checking to ensure that car sharing spaces are provided during construction. Enforcement after a building is completed, however, is driven by complaints.

“We don’t do proactive zoning reviews. We don’t have the capacity. A city the size of Toronto cannot go proactively investigating for zoning compliance on properties.”

Sraga said staff will be conducting an investigation of Ward 19 developments as requested by the councillor. If the requirement for car sharing spaces is found in the site plan agreement, the city will enforce its inclusion as the agreement is a contract between the city and the developer and its successors. If it’s a zoning by-law infraction, it would carry up to a maximum penalty of \$5,000 per offence under the *Provincial Offenses Act*.

He added that Layton’s motion was the first time he had heard of a building not having the car sharing spaces it had agreed to provide.

“We’re not aware that it’s been a problem in that building or in other buildings in his ward, or anywhere else in the city for that matter where we had these features installed.”

Sraga said staff expect to report back to Toronto East York Community Council on the matter before the end of the year.

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STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Economic Development Committee will consider the following at its meeting Friday, September 18 at 9:30 a.m. in committee room 1, City Hall.

REPORTS

Foreign Direct Investment Regional Agency—Report recommends establishment of a new regional foreign direct investment attraction agency, which would include functions currently carried out by **Invest Toronto**. A further report addresses the specifics of the proposed organization including its governance, funding and core operating elements, subject to the city's financial contribution being approved in the 2016 budget process.

Green Market Acceleration Program pilot—Report seeks council approval for the Green Market Acceleration Program two-year pilot to allow local businesses in the green economy to apply to the city to use city infrastructure and assets for certain applied research and demonstration pilots. This is intended to accelerate the development of innovative green products for introduction into the market and improve the global competitiveness of Toronto businesses.

Connectivity Advisory Group—Report recommends economic development and culture general manager **Michael Williams** work with the existing Information and Technology Advisory Panel to evaluate the value, and/or need to establish a Connectivity Advisory Group and report back on the role and expectations of such a group if it is required.

Bridging the digital divide—Councillor **Josh Matlow**, seconded by Councillor **Mary-Margaret McMahon**, are requesting economic development and culture general manager **Michael Williams** to report back to the committee on actions council can take to provide free public wireless internet in Toronto's parks, civic squares, Toronto Community Housing Corporation locations, privately-owned public accessible spaces and interested Business Improvement Areas at no cost to the city.

PARKS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Parks and Environment Committee will consider the following at its meeting Friday, September 18 at 9:30 a.m. in committee room 2, City Hall.

REPORTS

City-wide strategy for dealing with cut-throughs—Report recommends parks, forestry and recreation general manager **Janie Romoff** report back to the Parks and Environment Committee on the possibility of creating a coordinated and calendarized program to address the state of good repair of the city's many cut-throughs.

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Board of Health will consider the following at its meeting Tuesday, September 22 at 9:30 a.m. in committee room 1, City Hall.

REPORTS

Green City: Why nature matters to health—Report examines the relationship between green space and human health and highlights the importance of continued investments in Toronto's natural heritage. The presence of green space is associated with reduced mortality, obesity, depression, anxiety, cardiovascular disease and small births. It also provides places for stress reduction, mental restoration and social interactions. The report notes that there is also evidence that vulnerable groups, such as people with low income and children, gain the most benefit from increased access to green spaces.

PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee will consider the following at its meeting Tuesday, September 22 at 9:30 a.m. in committee room 2, City Hall.

REPORTS

Gardiner East EA—Progress report provides an update on the hybrid alternative design concepts that are being considered for the Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard East Reconfiguration Environmental Assessment and Integrated Urban Design Study.

10-year Cycling Network Plan—Report provides an overview of the 10-year Cycling Network Plan and identifies its proposed 2016 implementation, for consideration in the 2016 capital budget process. The implementation program recommends the addition of about 41 km. of lane for on-street cycling network routes to grow, connect and renew, as well

TRANSITION CONCERN

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the performance standards. But the building must also achieve a 7.5 m. setback and use a 45-degree angular plane to achieve an appropriate transition to the adjacent neighbourhoods.

While generally compliant with the city’s mid-rise performance standards, Sierra’s proposed building would be set back only 1.18 m. from the neighbourhood to the southeast, and therefore would substantially encroach into the rear angular plane.

Sierra planner **Craig Hunter** (**Hunter and Associates Ltd.**) told *NRU* that the exception from the rear transition performance standard is warranted. He said the building creates an appropriate transition by having a similar height and length to the low-rise houses to the south. He added that the building has been designed and set-back further into the site to mitigate the impacts on those houses.

“There’s no windows facing [the low-rise buildings]. As [Sierra’s] building then extends to the west on our site, you’re not creating direct overlook conditions. And the building mass does not continue, it’s inset... those two or three homes are not facing adverse shadow impact because they’re to the south. It might be a different condition if you were on the north side of the Danforth where shadow impacts are more significant usually.”

City planner **Daniel Woolfson** said that the issue of how the building transitions to the southern neighbourhood is of “most importance.” As one of the first applications in the area—and with an upcoming avenue study for the Danforth this year—staff needs to ensure the building doesn’t set a negative precedent for other lots along the Danforth, which have similarly shallow lots.

“[Staff will] determine if it’s appropriate on this site, and it might be looked at during the [upcoming] avenue study for the



East elevation of Sierra Building Group proposal



Rendering of Sierra Building Group proposal, looking southwest

IMAGES: KIRKOR ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS

Danforth, to see whether that type of [transition] is appropriate on the avenue or specific sections. That’s an important aspect of this application at this point in time.”

The building would be the second mid-rise proposal on the Danforth west of Coxwell Avenue, the first being for an eight-storey, mixed-use building at 1030 Danforth Avenue. (*See the March 13 edition of NRU.*) [nru](#)

STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS

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as the initiation of three major corridor studies.

Congestion management plan—Report advises on the status of the Congestion Management Plan (2014-2018) and requests council’s endorsement of the updated Congested Management Plan (2016-2020).

Delineating public and private space—Report investigates the use of property line markers to delineate public and private

spaces on sidewalks and other open spaces along major commercial thoroughfares.

Cycling connections east of Sherbourne—Letter of support from councillors **Paula Fletcher** and **Pam McConnell** for east-west cycling connections east of Sherbourne.

Pedestrian and cyclist safety in Toronto—Letter from the Toronto Board of Health on pedestrian and cyclist safety in Toronto. [nru](#)

REGIONAL APPROACH

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also makes it difficult for provincial and federal offices overseas to know who to refer potential investors to. “It’s better to pool all resources and do a good, combined job than it is to have fractious elements running around competing with each other.”

Ward 37 Scarborough Southwest councillor **Michael Thompson**, who chairs the Economic Development Committee and Invest Toronto’s board, told *NRU* he supports staff’s recommendation.

“We’re looking at establishing a regional agency for the Greater Toronto Area to collaborate and to put more resources in and beef up the FDI agency,” said Thompson. As many municipalities in the region have been independently working on attracting foreign direct investment, he said combining resources will have a greater impact.

We’re looking at establishing a regional agency for the Greater Toronto Area to collaborate and to put more resources in and beef up the FDI agency.

• Michael Thompson

There are presently too many local partners working independently on foreign direct investment, which has led to market confusion and missed opportunities for collaboration. There have also been too many local players for federal and provincial governments to support, meaning there has been a lack of funding and limited co-ordination.

Williams admits that every municipality wants to max out its economic development opportunities and have companies locate within its borders. However, he said there’s also a realization that if a company locates in another municipality it will be beneficial for the whole region. For example, while a business may choose Mississauga for its office location, it may use Toronto-based accountants and lawyers, and some of its staff will be Toronto residents.

“It still benefits us and it doesn’t hurt us for a company to move from somewhere else in the world to Mississauga.”

This has long been the approach taken by the GTMA.

“Our approach has always been that a company that locates somewhere in the GTA is good for the whole GTA. It’ll have a positive impact wherever that firm sets up its office or operations,” GTMA president and CEO **George Hanus** told *NRU*.

Invest Toronto

Invest Toronto was created in late 2008 to be the primary contact for the city’s foreign direct investment attraction efforts. Prior to its creation, a small staff team within the economic development and culture division pursued investments. The city was, and continues to be, a partner of the GTMA but the city decided it needed its own agency as the alliance was underfunded.

The organization provides customized client services that simplify the process of establishing businesses in Toronto. In addition to connecting businesses with local service providers, Invest Toronto also provides market intelligence, client-specific benchmarking reports and economic and demographic analyses.

Since 2010 Invest Toronto has served more than 891 clients interested in starting or expanding their businesses in the city. In 2014 it provided support and guidance to 24 companies that were establishing operations

in Toronto. This has resulted in the creation of 170 jobs in 2014—expected to grow to 768 by the end of 2015.

Board members: Councillor **Ana Bailão**, Financial Executives International Canada programs vice-president **Steve Bower**, Freshii founder and CEO **Matthew Corrin**, NHL Players’ Association international affairs director **Tyler Currie**, Red Bull Canada marketing vice-president **Keith DeGrace**, Councillor **Christin Carmichael Greb**, DHL Express Canada president **Gregory Hewitt**, Greater Toronto Airports Authority government affairs and stakeholder relations manager **Aleem Kanji**, Koster Consulting principal **Kim Koster**, Robert H. Lane managing partner **Robert Lane**, business advisor **Jason Leung**, Councillor **Denzil Minnan-Wong**, Brand Matters president and owner **Patricia McQuillan**, PLP Group director **Lida Preyma**, Councillor **Michael Thompson** and Toronto economic development and culture GM **Michael Williams**.

One of the challenges the GTMA has always faced is that it is underfunded and cannot afford the staff needed to be as successful as possible. Three years ago the alliance, under the leadership of Mayor **John Tory**—then head of **CivicAction**—and Pickering mayor **Dave Ryan** initiated a process to secure greater funding.

“For the GTA to be competitive in the international marketplace, against other comparable

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REGIONAL APPROACH

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jurisdictions, it has to have a better funded, better staffed and bigger organization,” said Hanus.

NewCo will be better funded than the GTMA. Ontario’s **Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure** has committed to funding the new organization. In addition to the \$2.5-million required annually the province has also committed the \$700,000 required to start up the agency. The federal government has also been asked to commit \$2.5-million. While there has been no firm commitment with the election ongoing, Williams’ report to committee indicates there has been positive response to the new organization.

The operational model and funding agreements for NewCo are presently being determined. The other partner municipalities—Durham, Halton, Peel and York regions—have indicated that NewCo will be the lead organization for foreign direct investment and they will rely on it to identify and source potential investors.

Through its 2016 budget submission the economic development and culture division is asking council to fund Toronto’s yearly contribution to NewCo. While the funding structure is still being worked out among the partners, Toronto’s annual share is expected to be around \$1-million.

Williams has also asked that the budget for his division be increased next year, as city staff will assume some tasks that were previously the responsibility of Invest Toronto.

“Right now Invest Toronto is responsible for the marketing and collaterals that tell the City of Toronto story. The new regional agency will focus on a broader set of stories around the region,” said Williams. “We still need to make sure Toronto’s story is well heard.”

This includes the collaborative work done with the new agency and funding so that city staff can participate in NewCo trade missions.

While city council still needs to endorse, in principle, the establishment of the new agency and determine the future of Invest Toronto, work on NewCo continues. This includes putting together a business plan, funding mechanisms and board structure. The working groups and consultants that are considering this are also looking at how best to incorporate the staff from Invest Toronto and the GTMA into the new organization. Williams anticipates that council will be asked to approve funding for NewCo before the end of the year. **nru**

Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance

The GTMA was formed in 1997 after public and private sector leaders realized the region needed an organization that would promote the region internationally to foreign investors. Representatives from the alliance identified companies planning to set up shop in North America and connected them with the necessary local partners to show the GTA as being a viable location. The alliance works to get foreign company representatives to travel to the region and introduces them to potential local partners—such as lawyers, accountants, human resources and real estate firms.

“Our strength has been developing a program of going out with intermarket representatives and identifying the [foreign] companies,” president and CEO **George Hanus** told *NRU*. “Once they visit us we have this client servicing process that we’ve been applying with good success in presenting to companies why the GTA is a good place to set up a subsidiary.”

In 2014 the alliance landed 14 companies, which so far have employed around 100 people. Within two years these companies expect to employ around 600 people, collectively. Between 1999 and 2014 the GTMA helped

127 foreign companies start operations in the GTA, which have employed more than 5,000 people. The majority of these companies continue to operate in the region.

This year the alliance’s target was to land 15 companies, which it has already surpassed. Hanus expects that there will be a number of projects the GTMA has in the pipeline when NewCo is operational. NewCo is expected to continue work on these projects.

Board members: Halton Region economic development director **John Davidson**, retired trade commissioner **Jim Feir**, Miller Thompson LLP partner **Eugene Gierczak**, Burlington mayor **Rick Goldring**, GTMA president and CEO **George Hanus**, Brampton mayor **Linda Jeffrey**, Markham regional councillor **Joe Li**, GTAA stakeholder relations and communications acting vice president **Lorrie McKee**, Ian Martin Ltd. vice president **Derek Millar**, GCI Group public affairs senior associate **Michael Ras**, UOIT business dean **Pamela Ritchie**, DTZ president **Colin Ross**, Pickering mayor **David Ryan**, Metrolinx CFO **Robert Siddall**, PWC audit and assurance partner **John Simcoe**, Toronto mayor **John Tory** and Toronto economic development and culture GM **Michael Williams**.

PLANNING & GROWTH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ROUND UP

Considering service level enhancements

Chief planner **Jennifer Keesmaat**'s presentation on the division's service levels generated a lot of discussion. Most of the councillors had something to say about the time it takes to approve development applications and the way that development fees are calculated.

Ward 23 Willowdale councillor **John Filion** tabled two motions asking planning and legal staff to report on the hiring of additional staff to help reduce approval times and the fee increase that would be required to cover the cost of the additional staff. Both motions lost on a tie.

"I've never had an applicant complain about the fees, but I've had 120 applicants complain about the delays and how much time that costs them" said Filion.

Ward 4 Etobicoke Centre councillor **John Campbell** was unmoved, saying that service levels in the planning division are adequate.

After reconsidering his earlier position (a vote in the negative), Ward 5 Etobicoke-Lakeshore councillor **Justin Di Ciano** later reopened the item to vote in support of councillor Filion's motions. This time both passed.

OPA wording deemed vague

Ward 27 Toronto Centre-Rosedale councillor **Kristin Wong Tam** took issue with some of the wording in amendments to the healthy neighbourhoods and apartment neighbourhoods sections of the official plan. Citing past critiques of the Toronto Official Plan as being too vague, Wong Tam sought clarification on a number of sections, including the meaning of "sufficient" space in apartment neighbourhoods for additional buildings while maintaining quality of life. Strategic initiatives, policy and analysis project manager **Paul Bain** replied that it is very site-dependent, and that the criteria have been included due to the increase in infill development applications.

Wong Tam also parsed several other sections, including the use of the term "geographic" to define a neighbourhood

rather than "cultural linkages." Campbell also questioned what constitutes "significant growth" and Filion asked staff about the meaning of the phrase "to protect established neighbourhoods." Responses from Keesmaat and Bain indicated that the terms are "subject to neighbourhood conditions."

Residents and mid-rise

Several residents made submissions to the committee indicating that they are less than thrilled with the mid-rise building performance standards, but for differing reasons. **Teddington Park Residents Association** president **Eileen Denny** said that the changes are anything but minor, as the staff report calls them.

Responding to a newly approved mid-rise building at 2978 Dundas Street West, Junction heritage conservation committee chair **Tina Leslie** raised concerns about the 20 metre right-of-way standard for character areas.

Ward 13 Parkdale-High Park councillor **Sarah Doucette** emphasized the importance of the monitoring mid-rise performance standards, saying "my residents are not anti-development; they just want the right building, in the right place." She expressed support for lowering the building height in character areas.

Section 37 details

Di Ciano asked staff for more details on a *section 37* ward benefits. He wants to know exactly how much additional density was approved in 2013 and 2014, and the average benefit collected across wards. [nru](#)

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TORONTO OMB NEWS

High-rise apartments approved in High Park

In a July 20 decision, board member **Christopher Conti** allowed an appeal by **High Park Bayview** against the City of Toronto’s failure to make a decision regarding a zoning by-law amendment for its property at 51-77 Quebec Avenue and 40-66 High Park Avenue. High Park is proposing to demolish two townhouse blocks and construct two 25-storey apartment buildings containing 538 residential units, 469 parking spaces and 565 spaces for bicycles.

At the outset of the hearing, city solicitor **Ray Kallio** motioned to have the hearing adjourned on the grounds that the parties were in the process of working out a settlement. He said that a settlement had been reached but was rejected by council. High Park argued that the request for an adjournment had been brought at the last minute and would be severely

prejudicial. The board agreed with High Park’s position and the hearing proceeded.

Parkdale-High Park MPP **Cheri DiNovo** made a statement to the board supporting the position of those opposed to the proposal.

Marc Senderowitz, Jean Cormier, Alexander Bernardino and **Rishi Sharma** opposed the proposal and were represented by planner **Michael Manett (MPlan)**. Manett testified that the neighbourhood has a specific character and mix of high-rise and low-rise buildings that creates a sense of space and views that would be disturbed by the proposal if it were to be approved. He maintained that the proposal does not fit within the existing and planned context.

The board heard evidence on behalf of High Park from planners **Robert Glover** and **Antonio**

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Volpentesta (Bousfields), transportation planner **Alun Lloyd (BA Consulting Group)**, environmental planner **Derek Coleman (Ages Consultants)** and geotechnical engineer **Jason Crowder (Terraprobe)**. Glover and Volpentesta said that the proposal appropriately addresses the city’s Tall Building Guidelines and, as the property is adjacent to a subway station, it is an appropriate site for residential intensification. Lloyd’s traffic study found that the proposal would have a relatively small impact on traffic in the area. Coleman and Crowder testified that the proposal would have no significant adverse impacts on natural heritage features or the groundwater table.

The board agreed with the evidence presented on behalf of High Park and allowed the appeal.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Jason Park and Adrian Frank (Devine Park LLP)** representing High Park Bayview Inc., **Ray Kallio** representing the City of Toronto and **Ian Flett (Eric K. Gillespie Professional Corp.)** representing

Marc Senderowitz, Jean Cormier, Alexander Bernardino and Rishi Sharma. (See OMB Case No. PL131341.)

North York severance allowed

In an August 19 decision, board member **Sarah Jacobs** allowed an appeal by **Cosmopolitan Homes** against the City of Toronto committee of adjustment’s refusal to grant consent and minor variances for its North York property. Cosmopolitan sought to sever the property to create three lots and construct a single-detached dwelling on each lot at 82 Carmichael Avenue and 108 Clyde Avenue.

Planner **Janice Robinson (Goldberg Group)** provided evidence on behalf of Cosmopolitan. She said that the proposal represents a modest form of intensification consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement* and conforms to the Growth Plan.

Agreeing with Robinson’s uncontested evidence, the board granted provisional consent and

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authorized the requested variances subject to conditions.

The solicitor involved in this decision was **Amber Stewart (Amber Stewart Law)** representing Cosmopolitan Homes. (See OMB Case No. PL150399.)

Variances approved on Rushton Road

In an August 11 decision, board member **Justin Duncan** allowed an appeal by **Cara Goldberg** against the City of Toronto committee of adjustment's refusal to grant minor variances for her property at 592 Rushton Road. Goldberg is proposing to demolish the existing dilapidated residence that has been vacant for about 30 years and construct a three-storey, single-family dwelling.

The board was informed at the outset of the hearing that Goldberg had amended her application reducing the magnitude of the requested variances. Planner **Amanda Kosloski (Armstrong Planning & Project Management)** provided evidence on behalf of Goldberg. She said that the application represents new investment within the existing housing stock, and intensification and redevelopment in the existing neighbourhood is consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement* and conforms to the Growth Plan.

The board agreed with Kosloski's evidence and authorized the variances subject to a condition.

The solicitor involved in this decision was **Joel Farber (Fogler, Rubinoff LLP)** representing Cara Goldberg. (See OMB Case No. PL150136.)

East York variances settled with city and neighbours

In a September 4 decision, board member **Helen Jackson** allowed an appeal by **Geping Si** against the City of Toronto

committee of adjustment's refusal to grant minor variances for his property at 33 Davies Crescent in East York. Si sought variances to construct a two-storey with an integral garage.

The board was advised at the outset of the hearing that Si, the city and his neighbours had reached a settlement resulting in a revised design of the home which has either reduced or eliminated some of the variances. Planner **Theodore Cieciora (Design Plan Services)** provided evidence on behalf of Si and in support of the settlement. He said that the proposed home is compatible with the existing character of the neighbourhood as it is similar in scale and massing to what has been approved in the area.

Concurring with Cieciora's uncontested evidence, the board allowed the appeal and authorized the variances.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Steven Ferri** and student-at-law **Brendan Ruddick (Loopstra Nixon LLP)** representing Geping Si and **Sarah O'Connor** representing the City of Toronto. (See OMB Case No. PL150468.) **nru**

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TORONTO PEOPLE

Cherise Burda has been appointed **Ryerson University** City Building Institute executive director.

She joins the university after eight years as Pembina Institute's Ontario director.

Metrolinx has appointed **Philippe Bellon** as GO Transit planning manager. Bellow previously served as

transit procurement initiative manager and has been acting as planning manager for the past few months.