



## **WARD 2 COMMUNITY UPDATE: CLARKSON VILLAGE STUDY OPA 9**

Since joining the Mississauga City Council last December, one issue has been at the top of my agenda and that is the **future of the Clarkson Village**. The decisions we make now will have an impact on this neighbourhood for generations to come and it is critical that we get it right.

I have listened carefully to concerns of residents in Clarkson and across the entire Ward and nearly everyone I speak with believes that some form of revitalization is needed in the commercial district of Clarkson Village. Unfortunately, the plan is now in front of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) because the land owners in two specific areas of Clarkson Village have appealed a decision by Council to limit density in the Village.

The appeals of the Clarkson Village Study OPA 9 are scheduled to be heard by the OMB on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. This hearing will examine two areas: the RioCan property to the north and east of the railway (the Homesense Plaza) and some properties on the south side, west of Meadowood (currently 1-2 storey commercial). There is also a technical amendment regarding the Satellite site that was already approved by the OMB but needs to be included in this process to finalize that decision. [See attached map.]

The Provincial Government's "Places to Grow Act" and accompanying Growth Plan require that official plans have intensification in certain corridors and, in particular, near transit hubs. The nearby Clarkson GO station is a critical transit hub and Clarkson was identified as a Community Node capable of accepting greater density by professional City planners. That is why, in 2010, City Planning Staff recommended through the Clarkson Village Study that there be up to a six-storey built-form in the area.

In 2014, former Councillor Pat Mullin and the previous Council voted to cap the height of all buildings up to four stories, setting the stage for the appeals by the land owners to the OMB. **The essence of the dispute is whether the OMB will be inclined to support the position of the City Council or whether the OMB will be persuaded by the analysis of Planning Staff who developed recommendations according to planning principles and their interpretation of the Provincial Planning Act.**

In my election campaign and every day since then, I have remained steadfast in my promise to constituents that I will always be honest and forthright, even if the truth is not popular. I have also promised to consult regularly and listen carefully to the opinions of all residents and taxpayers.

I have had a number of meetings and conversations with Residents, the Ratepayer Associations and the Participants on this file. **I will be hosting a Community meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup> at Lorne Park Secondary School from 7-8:30 pm to discuss where we stand today, the draft settlement and the options going forward. This is in advance of a City Council meeting where the matter will be dealt with on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015.**

A few months ago, the City retained outside independent legal counsel to meet with the property owners to attempt to reach a compromise and failing that, to prepare for the hearing in November. This outside Counsel has arrived at a draft settlement with RioCan and has discussed the terms of a settlement with the other Appellants. It is up to City Council now to decide whether to accept its terms and why I need your input.

A key provision will be for a negotiated settlement for the RioCan site. One part of the proposal calls for an eight storey residential building, which would be at the street and support ground-level commercial retail uses.

The building would be stepped back to overcome any shadowing concerns for neighbours to the north. The settlement plan also calls for the development of a community square on the site that would become a hub for the entire Clarkson Village. If this settlement is accepted, RioCan has also agreed to narrow their appeal from the entire study area to their specific site.

It is also important to note that in 2010, the OMB issued a decision approving an eight storey retirement residence containing ground floor commercial uses, an urban square and streetscaping for the RioCan site. This development did not proceed at the time, but from a legal perspective, it is difficult for the City to now argue for 4 storeys on the entire property when 8 had already been approved.

There has been no agreed to settlement regarding the properties on the south side, west of Meadowood Road. Should those parcels proceed to the OMB hearing, the appellants will be arguing for up to 6 storeys. I too have concerns about 6 storey buildings on these properties and the potential negative impacts on the immediate neighbours.

As a general principle, my position has remained consistent throughout this process. I support lower density (as expressed by building height restrictions) in the core Village area and slightly higher in the outer Village area near high-rise condo and apartment towers that are already in place. Such a plan would allow for proper height transitions from the east to the west. This kind of planning would also push residential density closer to the Clarkson GO Station transit hub, encouraging more people to utilize transit and mitigate traffic. Commercial properties, restaurants, shops and small businesses would be developed in the village core, where appropriate parking and traffic flows can be designed into the plan.

I want to get Community feedback and I have also set out my bottom-line of what I want to see. First, I want the immediate neighbours to be respected and issues such as shadowing to be mitigated as much as possible. Second, I want to be in a position to work with property owners to ensure they build high-quality built form with architectural interest. Third, I want a community square built that will become a hub and a destination for public art, events and community spirit. Fourth, I want to see the entire area become more pedestrian friendly. Fifth, I want traffic congestion to be mitigated as much as possible by making transit alternatives more convenient. And sixth, I want Clarkson Village to become a thriving destination featuring great restaurants, shops and services.

My fear right now is that by refusing to compromise and insisting that this matter be taken to the OMB no-matter-what, and should we lose, that we will lose our bargaining position. If the OMB sides with the Appellants, then I fear that the Community will have no leverage to wrest any concessions and we will either see nothing happen for many years or we will see unfettered development without community benefit. Bluntly, we need to be realistic about what we can achieve at these proceedings.

This is the choice before us as a Community: take our chances in legal proceeding where the odds are stacked against us, or work with the property owners to find a common vision that achieves all of our goals.

Your input is welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,  
*Karen Ras, Councillor Ward 2*

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