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January 8, 2015

Mr. Regan Hutcheson
Manager, Heritage Planning and Heritage Districts Development Coordinator
City of Markham
Via email: rhutcheson@markham.ca

Unionville Ratepayers Association
Comments on Main Street Unionville Community Vision Plan

Dear Regan,

Further to submission of our preliminary comments on December 6, 2014, please find attached a final copy of those comments representing the official vision of the URA as approved by an overwhelming majority of members at our January 5 meeting.

Our final comments differ only slightly from our December 6 comments. The changes have been highlighted in yellow.

Of course I understand that your final report to council is complete, but I also understand that our comments align fairly closely with that report. That is good to know.

I also understand that in your report it is recommended that the Vision inform a new secondary plan for the Unionville Heritage Conservation District. Excellent!

However where I think we diverge slightly is that we believe that recommendations for steps to kickstart and sustain implementation of the Vision should be included in your report and recommended to council, along with the recommendations for the Plan itself. There is plenty of "low hanging fruit" in the Vision on which the City can begin to act immediately. There is no need to wait for a final secondary plan in order to begin the long hard task of implementing the Vision. Starting now will build on and enhance the momentum generated by the consultation process to date. It will also help dispel any lingering public cynicism about the City's ability to drive forward ambitious and complex projects involving shared public and private investments.

In that light I would also like to draw your attention to our concern about too much focus in the early stages on the east side parking deck, a large, complex and controversial project. We

fear that any setbacks with that (which are inevitable given the initial reaction from the TRCA) could derail the entire Vision with respect to public enthusiasm and attention and thus support at council. The momentum built by successful implementation of other simpler aspects of the Vision could be used to help drive the parking deck forward at a later date. From a taxpayer's perspective it would be folly to invest in such a project until it is proven that other aspects of the plan will in fact begin to improve the economic health of Main Street and validate the need for more parking, beyond what might be gained by rationalization of the current public and private parking stock.

Equally critical to the implementation process is the early appointment of a "trustee"/ project manager to shepherd the plan forward. Only a dedicated and qualified champion can push the Vision over the many hurdles in its way, including building unity, support and cooperation among the many stakeholders, including members of the UBIA.

In contrast to your report we suggest that funding for this position be shared by the City and the BIA to ensure sufficient compensation for a qualified candidate and to acknowledge that much of the project lies well outside the district covered by the BIA and will have little direct impact on the commercial core of Main Street.

Regan, the URA is enthusiastic about the potential represented in the Vision Plan. We look forward to supporting its implementation beginning this year.

Yours truly,

Peter Miasek

cc. Markham City Council, Bob Fleischaker - UVA, Mary Pan - UBIA, Unionville Main Street Steering Committee, Michael Morrissey, Heritage Markham