

June 20, 2011

North York Community Council
North York Civic Centre
5100 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON M2N 5V7
Telephone: 416 395-0480
E-mail: nycc@toronto.ca

Dear Community Council:

Re: 4050 Yonge Street Application

Summary

The plans for the proposed building at 4050 Yonge Street do not, but must make allowances for the following.

- 1) The parking requirements must include at least 80 to 105 TTC commuter parking spaces, but do not include any such allowance. Build Toronto's *Urban Transportations Considerations* document shows this was required in 2010. Even more such commuter parking should be allowed for, to allow for the inevitable increase in need in the future.
- 2) There must be on-site provision for TTC commuter pick-up and drop-off, including for cars to turn around. This cannot be accommodated on-street. And the pick-up / drop-off on Old York Mills Road is already over-capacity as cars currently need to park along the north side of the road (that is, the document's proposed "improvements" would not create any additional capacity).

The city's plans for this TTC site should be improving the situation, not making it worse. The city has no obligation to create such private office space, especially when it will result in increased illegal parking on side streets and reduced TTC commuter parking.

This parking lot is owned by the TTC and the city does have an obligation to support public transit. If the proposed building is not viable based on the commuter parking required and the TTC rider pick-up and drop-off requirements, then the proposed building, pretty as it may be drawn, should not be built.

Detail

I have read the *Urban Transportations Considerations* document for 4050 Yonge Street, dated February 22, 2011 and have the following comments:

- 1) While there has been an attempt to address the community's many concerns about weekday parking and rush-hour TTC rider pick-up /drop-off, the plans and justifications presented for them are not adequate. Some examples are below.
 - a) Figure 5 of the document shows that when the York Mills commuter parking lot was temporarily closed in 2010, of the 235 vehicles that were displaced, 80 vehicles parked instead in the Jolly Miller parking lot.
 - This shows that TTC commuters need a parking lot in the area. Note that for many, this isn't just convenience – the elderly, people with packages, and

people with difficulties walking will need to drive to the subway.

- In the future, these 80 vehicles could not all be parked in the Jolly Miller parking lot as it is planned to reduce it to have only 130. Figure 5 shows that 235 spaces were needed in 2010 when the York Mills lot was temporarily closed, so TTC commuters would therefore need $(235 - 130 =)$ 105 parking spaces.
- And yet, the Parking Supply Strategy in Section 3.0 assumes no weekday commuter parking required for the proposed 4050 Yonge Street building. The report offers no solution for such weekday parking load other than the assumption they will “find parking elsewhere”. Illegal commuter parking on side streets is already a problem, and this will just make it worse, as would the doubling in daily cost for commuter parking.

The survey information presented in Section 6.1 confirms the need for commuter parking:

- 100 of the 260 customers surveyed continued to park in the area when the York Mills commuter lot was temporarily closed (Section 6.2).
- 26% said if the York Mills commuter lot was closed they would continue to park in a commercial lot, and another 31% said they would park in another TTC lot (though there aren't any nearby, so it isn't clear what those surveyed understood of this question).

This is completely ridiculous to propose that the plans for a city-owned parking lot on city-owned land and a proposed city-owned building expect that TTC commuters will need to park in private parking lots – some of which close at night before the subway does.

- b) Furthermore, commuter parking demand will certainly increase in the future as populations increase and more elderly have difficulty using buses for part of their trip downtown (note that 70% of those surveyed noted they were on their way downtown).
- c) Proposed solutions involving parking in adjacent buildings are not acceptable as:
 - These buildings could change their policies or be too full to accept commuter parking, especially as their occupancies increase, or tenants change to business which require more weekday parking.
 - It is unreasonable to expect that prospective parkers will visit each such building to determine which have capacity, or are open to the public (note that these other buildings do not in general have signage advertising public parking).
 - Other building's parking lots are designed for tenants in that building, and therefore the confusing route to get to the subway from them would not be acceptable. As many commuters have figured out, it is simpler (and safer and cheaper) to simply park on neighbouring side streets, so it is not a valid assumption that displaced commuters would park in nearby office buildings.
 - Note that weekday parking in the York Mills commuter lot is \$7/day and in the Jolly Miller lot is \$5/day. The fact that on weekdays, more than twice as many people park in the more expensive York Mills commuter lot shows that the proximity to and simplicity of getting into the subway station is important to – or required by – most commuters. Commuters need convenient parking.

- d) The document surveyed local side streets for commuter parkers (Section 6.5 and Figure 9):
- This survey did not look far enough or at the right time. For example, there are at least 4 commuters parking on Lower Links Road every weekday afternoon, yet this was not noted in the report.
 - Furthermore, the report assumes that because there was no increase in side street parking when the York Mills commuter lot was closed that the York Mills commuter lot isn't needed. This is wrong. Cars park on the side streets to save money not because there isn't room in the paid parking lots. And this side street parking would get worse because the price for parking at the proposed 4050 Yonge Street building would at least double (to match the rate at the York Mills Centre).
 - The report assumes that if no cars were parked on a side street there is no demand, rather than noting that such side street parking is illegal (as is on weekdays until noon on Lower Links Road). Such restrictions are in place specifically due to the commuter side street parking problem throughout the area, and such restrictions are continually becoming more widespread (due to both increases in parking rates and the demand for parking), resulting in the absurd situation that we can't even have visitors driving to see us.
- e) The report is written as if the goal is to get commuters to stop parking in the York Mills commuter lot (in Table 5, 25% of those surveyed said they would drive all the way to their destination if this lot was closed). Commuters are not the enemy. This is TTC-owned property and the goal should be to encourage subway use, not discourage it.
- f) The suggested lay-by on the north side of Wilson Avenue would be completely unacceptable as a replacement for the current pick-up / drop-off use of the York Mills commuter parking lot as:
- This would not be accessible to those coming from the west (or south).
 - Most cars on a pick-up / drop-off need to go back where they came from and a U-turn on Wilson Avenue (especially due to the cars travelling at high speed down the hill from the west) is dangerous, and difficult due to east-bound cars waiting to turn left onto Yonge Street north-bound.
 - Cars coming from the east already have a heavily-used lay-by on the north side of York Mills Road just east of Yonge Street, and cars coming from the north can discharge passengers on Yonge Street north of York Mills Road. That is, the proposed Wilson Avenue lay-by would not provide any useful new capability as a pick-up / drop-off with a turn-around capability is needed (and as described below, that on Old York Mills Road is not a solution).
- g) The observations of the pick-up / drop-offs on Yonge Street / Wilson Avenue in Table 8 do not note:
- Many of these would be illegal, as there is No Standing and other traffic restrictions on these sections of street.
 - These are dangerous, as drivers often need to get out of their vehicles to help with luggage and opening the vehicle trunks.
- That is, expecting or encouraging on-street pick-ups / drop-offs is dangerous, disruptive to traffic, and is therefore not any valid indication of demand or alternatives.

Furthermore, such monitoring of pick-ups and drop-offs should graph the total number of cars parked by time-period (as was done for the parking lot occupancy charts in Figure 5) throughout the afternoon rush-hours. Simply showing a total count per rush-hour (Table 8) does not show the mayhem that regularly occurs when there are too many cars waiting for their pick-ups.

Also, the situation is often near-dangerous. For example, on Old York Mills Road, because there are not enough parking spots, cars parking along the north side of the road often do not leave enough room for both directions of traffic, and this is combined with cars backing out while manoeuvring into a parking spot while people walk between cars, and all this while for many months of the year, it is dark.

- h) The “improvements” suggested for the Old York Mills Road pick-up / drop-off obviously were suggested with no on-site examination of what actually happens on a busy evening. There are already cars parked along the full-length of the north side of the road, from the condominium to the gas station. The suggested reconfigurations in Figures 12, 13, and 14 would not materially increase capacity from that already used regularly.

Furthermore, expecting cars to get through (and return back through) the busy rush-hour Yonge Street / York Mills Road / Wilson Avenue intersection for pick-up / drop-offs is unreasonable – the report’s authors should do this a few times at rush-hour themselves to see how time-consuming the various turns are. Again, the goal is to increase TTC ridership, not discourage it.

That is, a pick-up / drop-off location – with turn-around is needed on both sides of Yonge Street, as there is currently.

- i) The lay-by suggested for the south side of Old York Mills Road (in front of the subway exit) is unacceptable as this space is needed for U-turns (often the rest of the area is congested and turn-arounds cannot be done elsewhere).
 - j) Note that the capacity of this Old York Mills Road pick-up / drop-off area was already reduced by the construction of the condominium several years ago, there is no more room for improvements. And before being an acceptable suggestion, any proposed reconfigurations must first be approved by the city to show that such suggestions would even be permitted.
 - k) The suggestion in Section 6.6.2 of cell phone parking doesn’t address the need for pick-ups on the west side of Yonge Street.
- 2) Are the 134 bicycle parking spaces, and change and shower facilities still proposed, given that by-law 1156-2010 has been repealed.
 - 3) The exhausts from the parking garage (especially those on the south side of the building at the west side) appear too close to the proposed outdoor restaurant area.
 - 4) Why does the large table in drawing A0.02 refer to a Sanofi Pasteur Site.

Summary

The *Urban Transportations Considerations* document for 4050 Yonge Street does not address the need for either the current, or future commuter parking or TTC commuter pick-ups and drop-offs as part of the site’s plan. The suggestions for parking elsewhere or

improving the Old York Mills Road pick-up / drop-off are unacceptable, unworkable, and unreasonable – especially considering that the lot is owned by the TTC and the city has an obligation to encourage TTC use.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mitchell Shnier".

Mitchell Shnier