

Apartment plan for Yonge and Irwin still has outstanding issues: Councillors

Official Plan amendments for a six-storey apartment building at the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Irwin Avenue could move forward this week, but some Council members say there are still too many unanswered questions on the plan.

At issue is a 136-unit apartment complex which has neighbours on Irwin and Machell Avenues concerned not only about construction impacts to their community but traffic issues as well.

These are issues neighbours have voiced to Council and, from the perspectives of Councillors Rachel Gilliland and Wendy Gaertner, they remain largely unaddressed.

'I have to say I am not in favour of this,' said Councillor Gaertner. 'I think there are too many unresolved issues, in particular stormwater management, so I will be voting against this.'

Councillor Gilliland also voiced her objections, but focusing on ongoing traffic issues.

'I realize that one of the issues is you can't have a traffic light on Irwin and Wellington just because it is in such close proximity to Wellington,' she said. 'My suggestion was maybe Machell and Wellington would be a good place to have that light. I just know that right-hand turn is going to be literally impossible and I can foresee that down the road. The [proposal] has good development and such, but I just don't see any change whatsoever from the last time we had a public meeting or any Council input about the traffic concerns.'

'If the Region is the one that's responsible, I really do think we need to advocate for this.'

Director of Planning Marco Ramunno said that municipal engineering staff have reviewed the application, the review indicates 'the proposed development will operate at acceptable levels' and that 'there is capacity on those surrounding roads to accommodate this traffic.'

'No road improvements are required nor are traffic signals warranted at either Irwin or Yonge,' he said. 'There are issues there because of the offset with Catherine Avenue just to the north and the distance between the existing Yonge signalization. There are two routes in and out for full access points to accommodate the development. From a traffic standpoint, there aren't any issues.'

The Region, added Mayor Tom Mrakas, has distance and traffic volume requirements when it comes to signalled intersections.

'We have long-advocated for many signalized intersections,' he said. 'This one in general, especially with the intersection of Yonge and Wellington, we have looked at many different ways and configurations to make the intersection more appealing to traffic flow, but ultimately a lot of things that get put forward, whether it is a signalized intersection at Machell and Yonge, it's one from the experts' opinions, from the engineers and the traffic analyst, it is not warranted at this time and that is a constant thing we're hearing from the Region.'

Barring a signalized intersection, Councillor Gilliland said there were further alternatives that should be considered and once again brought forward her idea to help alleviate traffic in the area by extending Machell Avenue northward through Town-owned land to connect with Aurora Heights Drive.

'I made some comments to look into perhaps extending Machell Avenue up to connect through Aurora Heights' and perhaps this would direct vehicles to an actual light they can utilize,' she said. 'At the time, [the response was], 'We'll look into it and see,' and I am just curious as to whether or not that is something that was considered.'

'Extending to Aurora Heights could be a viable solution to safely exit because I can foresee this going to be an issue. It is

disappointing to me it meets all the traffic requirements for this development; if they are checking all the boxes?it is hard for me to argue not being in favour of the application, but I am disappointed.?

Mr. Ramunno said extending Machell has not been ruled out.

?It informed our recommendation to Council on this application,? he said. ?It is certainly something we can continue to explore in the future, but with respect to the development application, the existing access points are sufficient to accommodate the proposed development.?

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