



18 January 2023

Mr. Dan Fama
Director, Development
RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust

via email: dfama@riocan.com

Re: Planning Opinion Summary re: OPA, ZBA and SPA for 1293 and 1301, 1301A Bloor Street West and 510, 510A, 512, and 514 Lansdowne Avenue

Dear Dan,

At the request of RioCan, we are providing a brief summary of the planning rationale we have authored as part of a combined Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control Application that was submitted to the City of Toronto on July 22, 2022 to permit the development of a 28-storey mixed-use building on the properties municipally known as 1293, 1301 and 1301A Bloor Street West and 510, 510A, 512, and 514 Lansdowne Avenue (“the site”). We understand that RioCan would like this summary in order to contribute to an open commenting period for ERO 019-5936, which includes Official Plan Amendment 540 (OPA 540) by the City of Toronto.

The site is located at the southwest corner of Bloor Street West and Lansdowne Avenue with frontage on Bloor Street West, Lansdowne Avenue and an east-west public lane between St. Helen’s Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue. The site is located within both the Bloor Lansdowne GO Station and Lansdowne Station Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), as delineated by the City of Toronto through OPA 540. OPA 540 identifies minimum densities for properties within these MTSAs.

Bloor-Lansdowne GO Station MTSA and Lansdowne Station MTSA – Prescribed Minimum Densities

As per OPA 540, the Bloor-Lansdowne GO Station MTSA is planned for a minimum population and employment target of 300 residents and jobs combined per hectare and the Lansdowne Station MTSA is planned for a minimum population and employment target of 250 residents and jobs combined per hectare.

The parcels fronting on Bloor Street West (1293 and 1301/1301A Bloor Street West) have a prescribed minimum density of 2.0 times the lot area (2.0 FSI). The



Lansdowne-facing parcels (510/510A, 512 and 514 Lansdowne Avenue) have a prescribed minimum density of 0.5 times the lot area (0.5 FSI).

These minimum densities have been identified to support the City in meeting its intensification targets. However, minimum densities applied across the planning area do not necessarily account for the individual development capacity of specific properties.

A Transit-Rich Neighbourhood Prime for Intensification

The site is situated in a prime location within the city, with easy access to highly desirable west-end neighbourhoods as well as direct connections to the heart of downtown Toronto and the central business district. As previously mentioned, the site is located within an overlapping portion of two proposed MTSAs and within the Dundas West-Bloor Mobility Hub, where bus, streetcar, subway and rail transportation converge. The site is approximately 90 metres south of the Lansdowne subway station serviced by TTC Line 2 Bloor-Danforth (~2 minute walk), approximately 550 metres east of the Bloor GO Station serviced by the UP Express and Kitchener GO line (~5 minute walk away), and approximately 800 metres east of the Dundas West subway station serviced by TTC Line 2 Bloor-Danforth (~10 minute walk).

In addition, the site is located approximately 160 metres east of the future Bloor-Lansdowne GO Station, which will be constructed as part of the SmartTrack Stations program and is expected to be operational by 2026. The SmartTrack program represents a significant investment comprising a total capital contribution of \$1.463 billion, with \$1.195 billion for base station infrastructure and \$268 million for City-initiated station requirements. This investment is expected to bring 110,000 new daily riders to the rail network by 2021, leveraging existing regional transit infrastructure to expand transportation choices for users.

Provincial planning documents provide clear policy direction encouraging intensification around higher-order transit, in order to implement efficient development and land use patterns that make use of public resources and investment. This includes both the Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS”) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“Growth Plan”), which require intensification to be directed to areas with available and planned public infrastructure and facilities, and encourage transit-supportive development around and along transit stations and corridors. In particular, the Growth Plan prioritizes intensification within Strategic Growth Areas targeted for reinvestment; this includes Major Transit Station Areas, generally defined as the lands within 500 to 800m of a higher-order transit station. Within MTSAs, the



Growth Plan actively dissuades development forms which would adversely impact the achievement of transit-supportive densities.

Addressing a Growing Crisis: A Need for More Homes Around Transit

Ontario is in the midst of a housing crisis, with a 2022 report from the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force stating that 1.5 million homes are needed in the next decade to meet the needs of current and future residents. At the municipal level, the City of Toronto's 2023 Housing Action Plan commits to building 285,000 homes over the next 10 years. In-force planning policy speaks to the importance of locating new residential units near transit.

The PPS directs planning authorities to identify appropriate locations and promote opportunities where transit-supportive development can occur, and to accommodate a significant supply and range of housing options through intensification and redevelopment. New housing is directed towards locations where appropriate levels of infrastructure and public services are or will be available to support growth. Similarly, the Growth Plan instructs municipalities to plan for a range of and mix of new housing options, particularly where there is access to transit and active transportation that can support a more compact built form. The City of Toronto's Official Plan identifies the areas of the City which are anticipated to accommodate growth; it states that the *Avenues*, important corridors along major streets, are a key area for future mixed-use growth and are encouraged to accommodate new housing. In addition, lands under the *Mixed Use Areas* land use designation are identified as areas where increased jobs and population will be located to support the Official Plan's growth strategy.

Planning Opinion

In light of the robust existing transit network and ongoing public investment to expand it, as well as provincial and municipal objectives to build more housing, it is our planning opinion that the minimum prescribed densities within OPA 540 do not adequately recognize the intensification potential of the subject site.

We do not believe that the prescribed minimum densities for the site are conducive to the form and scale of transit-supportive development which is encouraged by provincial and municipal planning policy near higher-order transit facilities. It is our opinion that a higher minimum density should be introduced for the subject site, which is just steps (approximately 90 metres) from the Lansdowne Subway station and within two MTSA zones. Higher minimum densities would unlock opportunities to build medium and high-density development forms that we believe are appropriate and compatible with the



interchange of multiple higher-order transit lines. Additionally, this would facilitate the creation of much-needed additional housing units and amenities in a City where housing inventory is challenged.

The planning application for 1293, 1301 and 1301A Bloor Street West and 510, 510A, 512, and 514 Lansdowne Avenue proposes a density of 8.97 FSI, which is supportable in our opinion based on the existing planning framework and contextual conditions. The site falls under both *Avenue* and *Mixed Use Areas* designations, areas slated for growth as per the Official Plan. The site is able to achieve a higher density while largely conforming to the Tall Building Guidelines, including adhering to required tower setbacks, stepbacks and separation distances, as well as implementing appropriate site organization and public realm interface. For more information on the proposed development, please refer to the Planning & Urban Design Rationale submitted as part of the comprehensive application package.

In our planning opinion, a revised minimum density of 6.0 FSI through OPA 540 is defensible and appropriate for this site.

We believe there is significant intensification potential on this site, and we look forward to working together on behalf of RioCan in collaboration with the Province and City and other stakeholders to discuss how the site's redevelopment can help leverage transit investment and contribute to broader city-building objectives. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

Shonda Wang, Principal, MSc, BSW, MCIP, RPP
SvN Architects + Planners