URA DEPUTATION TO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE ON PROPOSED UNIONVILLE MAIN STREET LAND USE POLICY CHANGES, FEBURARY 4, 2014

At a members meeting last night the Unionville Ratepayers Association reviewed the proposed changes to the Unionville Core Secondary Plan and the related Zoning By-law.

We note that the proposed revisions cover two broad changes:

Restaurant Expansion

The first major change eliminates the current restrictions on restaurant and food service outlets on the street.

- We support the UBIA and the Main Street property owners in their desire to have these restrictions lifted, and we agree with the changes recommended by City staff.
- o In supporting these changes, we caution that both the retail consultant and City Staff have indicated that there is a tipping point where the number of restaurants could over-power retail uses on the street,
- Over time this could change the image of the street to that of a "restaurant campus" or "entertainment district" which would detract from the Master Plan vision of a neighbourhood street providing a balanced shopping, dining and cultural experience.
- To ensure that this does not happen, we recommend that the Unionville Main Street Committee remain in place, and be mandated with completing an annual review of restaurant expansion to ensure that it is in balance with the long term plans for the street.

Retail Expansion

The second major change is to broadly expand the types of retail establishments that are allowed to operate on Main Street.

 We support this expanded definition of permitted retail uses as a first step in implementing a longer term vision for the street.

However, we also express concern that both the lifting of restaurant restrictions and the expansion of permitted retail uses are being put forward prior to final consultant recommendations and community input on the Master Plan.

• As the consultants and the community fine tune the vision for what the Unionville Main Street "Brand" is going to be, we have some concern that, if not carefully managed, the

new definition of permitted uses could result in retail expansion which does not fit the final vision of the retail experience that the street is intended to provide.

As the consultants complete their final recommendations, we believe the following three actions are needed:

- Torti Gallas have made it clear that as the Master Plan moves to implementation a strong marketing effort will be needed to attract the right mix of retail to the Heritage District and to sell the Main Street vision and "Brand" to retailers and developers. We would ask for more discussion on this topic as the consultants complete their recommendations
- 2. Once this vision for the desired mix of retailers is understood, we believe the City, the UBIA, and the Consultants need to work together to establish and implement a detailed marketing plan focused on actively working to attract retailers and developers who fit the retail vision we are trying to establish.

We would characterize it this way. The proposed by-law changes indicate what is **allowed**, and this is a very broad definition of retail. The marketing plan needs to determine what is **desired** to meet the future vision of the street. Once this is determined, then we need to actively work to attract the right retail mix.

We believe this marketing effort needs to be led by a highly skilled individual, with strong connections to the retail and developer communities, who can work effectively with property owners and the City.

- 3. We recommend that the Main Street Unionville Committee be kept in place indefinitely with three core functions:
 - o To over-see progress towards the Main Street Master Plan vision
 - To review on an annual basis whether the new Secondary Plan and Zoning by-laws are functioning effectively and are driving short term business improvements that are consistent with the Master Plan Vision.
 - To review the implementation of the detailed marketing plan and ensure it is meeting its stated objectives.

In conclusion, we want to thank Regan Hutcheson and all the members of City Staff for listening to the community and working diligently to create an excellent set of recommendations. We very much appreciate the work and the very thoughtful end product.