



August 20, 2020

### **Statement from Councillor Wong-Tam on Cabbagetown Daycare Approval**

Last week, the Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) approved variances to permit a daycare at 461 Sackville Street on an interim basis. This application proposes to turn the existing heritage building into a daycare for up to 80 children.

I know this application garnered significant commentary when it was first proposed in 2017. The concerns with this application for me, and most of the residents I've spoken to are not its usage. I absolutely support bringing in more child care spaces to Ward 13. The problem with the application is that it doesn't address how day to day operations of a daycare of the size being proposed could safely function given existing conditions.

The last thing we want to do is create potentially unsafe traffic conditions with many young children around. Everyone, including the owner of the property, agreed that vehicular pick-up and drop-off for parents would be needed. As a new parent myself, I understand the time it can take to load and unload a car with baby bags and strollers. Sackville Street and Amelia Street, where this proposed daycare borders, are both narrow one-way streets with permit parking located on the side of the road opposite of the proposed daycare.

The only proper way for this activity to be accommodated would be for the City to amend local parking regulations to specifically create a pick-up/drop-off area, which the TLAB member has asked the applicant to now seek.

The City Solicitor has some concerns about this decision, and is evaluating whether to seek further review, a decision I would support. Regardless of one's opinion about the suitability of a daycare at this modest site, there remains fundamental issues with transportation and safety with a daycare for 80 children and appropriate staff levels, especially post-COVID-19. It is prudent to identify and work with the community to resolve these concerns before a daycare opens here.

I will keep the community informed as more information becomes available.