

Dr. Malgosia Askanas - Deputation given at the Public Meeting of the Committee of the Whole on November 26, 2013, 7 pm, regarding Item #2 (file 26.3)

Since the proposed GO Centre features a high-rise condo development and claims a transit-oriented philosophy, I would like to offer some press excerpts which might be quite pertinent.

TorontoLife.com, *Faulty towers: who's to blame for condoland's falling glass, leaky walls and multi-million-dollar lawsuits*

As more and more people move into their brand-new condo units, they are discovering crappy soundproofing, plumbing, drainage, elevators, heating, air conditioning and mechanical equipment; water seeping behind the window walls and not draining properly; interior walls that allow noise, smoke and odours to permeate from suite to suite; insecure exterior cladding and balcony guard plates; glass falling from balconies; water leakage into parking garages; cracking foundations

Developers use cheap materials to keep costs down, and use practices such as skimping on the cement coating over steel rebar or putting less insulation behind the drywall. The result is brand new towers built with junk.

Condo owners don't dare to speak out for fear of losing their investment, and of defamation suits from developers. Developers can get away with just about anything, because they know that even the people who buy from them won't rat them out.

The Star, March 20, 2012: *Are Toronto condo towers slums in the making?*

As residential towers in Toronto grow ever taller, and living units ever smaller, the prospect of a new sort of slum tower looms ever larger.

To keep units affordable, developers have made them smaller and smaller; the result is tiny cell-like

spaces that resemble a 21st-century monastery. By their nature, they attract mostly singles and childless couples. The average stay is less than 2 ½ years.

“The idea that this is a neighbourhood is a joke,” says one resident of City Place. Essential to neighbourhood is a sense of commitment. A typical condo development is no more than a place where people live until something better comes along.

The Star, March 24, 2013: *Growing Up: Are Toronto’s new condos built to last?*

Building experts say resiliency and energy efficiency are going out the window with all those floor-to-ceiling glass walls being installed in the city’s towering condos.

Lloyd Alter, who teaches sustainable design at Ryerson University, says: “The little window that opens is a little slot that’s the size of an ice-cream stand pass-through. There’s no cross-ventilation. The residents are constantly fighting to generate air conditioning, to generate heat, all because they’ve built these incredible dense buildings and they’ve given them these terrible, terrible skins.”

Ted Kesik, a professor of building science at the University of Toronto, says: “I have always maintained that, when you’re looking at those glass towers there, you’re basically looking at the slums of the future. I tell people, this is where your grandchildren are going to come to buy crack.”

Los Angeles Times, July 2007, on LA's Transit-Oriented-Development failure, as quoted in *What can Houston learn from LA's transit-oriented development failure?* by Tory Gattis

A study of buildings in the Los Angeles area showed that transit-based development successfully weaned *relatively few residents* from their cars. It also found that, over time, no more people in the buildings studied were taking transit 10 years after a project opened than when it was first built. ...

The report showed that only a small fraction of residents shunned their cars during morning rush hour.

Most people said that even though they lived close to transit stations, the trains weren't convenient enough, taking too long to arrive at destinations and lacking stops near their workplaces.

The region's transit system was built on two assumptions that have since proved untrue: that most traffic was generated by commuting trips and that most people worked downtown. But the truth is, people are driving so much to take their children to school, run errands and engage in other activities that these trips far outstrip commuting.

Residents were more likely to use transit only if it took less time than driving, if they could walk to their destinations from the transit stop when they arrived, if they had flexible work hours and if they had limited access to a car.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) - Does It Increase Transit Ridership? by
Christopher MacKechnie

Transit usage falls off sharply as distance from the transit station increases - studies show decreases on the order of 0.65% to 0.85% for every 100-foot increase in distance from transit. The TOD potential is further diminished by the fact that most new rapid transit lines have long distances between stops, with one mile being a typical distance .

An important factor is the completeness of a city's rapid transit network Areas where TOD increases transit ridership have *very complete rapid transit networks* that cover the vast majority of all area of high employment density in the respective metropolitan areas.