

To members of the TDSB, members of the staff of Toronto Public Health, members of City Council, and to prospective candidates for Mayor in the upcoming election:

As a long-time resident of "Harbord Village" at College and Bathurst, I am very concerned about the TDSB's plans to allow a private corporation to install a synthetic rubber turf field and sports complex in front of Central Tech, where for eighty years a cinder track and grass playing field have existed, a public space which is enjoyed and utilized by residents and the school in equal measure. The conversion of this natural open field, and the obliteration of views of one of the nicest secondary school buildings in the Toronto area are major concerns, but even more worrisome is the risk to public health and safety which this proposed surface poses to students and the public at large. The well-documented health hazards embodied by this type of surface make this an untenable plan. In the short term it may prove "efficient" fiscally, but I believe it sets a dangerous precedent, and will end up being damaging and ineffective over the long term. We are a modern and forward-thinking city, so the wanton destruction of one of our fast-disappearing natural open spaces, the exclusion of the public from a long-standing public use space, the use of known nonrecyclable and toxic substances, and the blight of a large dome where sky and open space have been the norm seem counter to contemporary practise and commitment, and don't easily fit the image of a people-friendly, modern and sustainable community. The solution posed appears very short sighted and short term. Supporting this type of agenda feels sadly retroactive, especially in a climate of change, of questioning our past behaviour with regard to the environment, our commitments to being more green, more sustainable, more conscious of a larger set of consequences we create in our shared human environment. In light of the strong and focused commitments by communities around the world to rebuild public space, preserve public access to space, increasing parkland and designating public land as permanent public space, all of which make urban centres much more pleasant and liveable, I urge all of you to reconsider this decision and to weigh other options. There is surely a more balanced, more equitable and more sustainable way to preserve this rare and lovely space and make it work for everyone's use and enjoyment while being fiscally responsible.

With optimism, yours sincerely

David Fleury, Toronto