

Condo corps fear HST-driven fee hike

Rosario Marchese

When Linda Pinizzotto steps out of her office to show condos to potential buyers, she knows there's a storm looming on the horizon for her clients.

"The HST will have a huge negative impact on affordability and real estate value. I don't think owners fully understand the ramifications."

Pinizzotto lives in a condo in the area, has sold real estate for 30 years and was recently elected as the chair of the Condo Owners Association of Trinity-Spadina.

The Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) will combine the current Provincial Sales Tax of 8% and the Goods and Services Tax of 5% into a single blended tax. The Provincial Sales Tax was exempt from many purchases like gas, coffee, haircuts,

electricity, vet bills—and the list goes on.

In particular, condo owners will be hit hard. "The 8% increase is going to include utilities, contract services, maintenance contracts, plumbing, landscaping, utilities, legal fees, construction materials, home inspections and renovations," says Rose Demelo, who lives in a condo at 231 Fort York.

"This will affect the condo fees as there will be an impact on reserve funds—boards will have to find a way to make up for the additional costs."

Boards will likely pass the costs onto owners. "If your monthly fee was \$350 this year, it could go up to \$400 or higher," says Pinizzotto.

"Condos built within the last two years will be hit the hardest, as they have to absorb the inflationary increases since pre-con-

struction. These buildings could have up to a 25% fee increase if they need to top up the budget. Owners have to take action."

The new tax will take effect on July 1, 2010. If you are worried about the additional costs, make your voice heard before it's too late. Please contact my office at (416) 603-9664 or visit the website www.unfairtaxgrab.com.

Rosario Marchese is the MPP of Trinity-Spadina.

Entertainment District BIA targets John St. for major makeover

Kimberly Spice

Toronto's Entertainment District Business Improvement Area (BIA) unveiled an ambitious master plan that will transform the raucous club district into a Downtown community complete with a pedestrian promenade.

The proposal developed by the design firm Planning Partnership would centre around transforming John St. into a grand pedestrian boulevard that would run from the waterfront to the



Lorraine Mellon has been an active volunteer on both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border.

Area volunteer elected to serve on international women's group board

Lorraine Mellon, a Rosedale resident and member Junior League of Toronto, was named nominating vice chair of the 2009-2010 board of the Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI).

Mellon joined the Junior League of Toronto in 1981, transferred first to the Junior League of New York and then to the Junior League of Atlanta before moving back to Toronto. She previously

served as AJLI's International Director from 2003-2006. She held numerous leadership positions serving on their board six times including a term as president from 2000-2001.

AJLI President Debbie Brown Robinson said, "She will help guide the Association and inspire and support our members in their efforts to make local communities better places to live." For information visit www.ajli.org.



Art Gallery of Ontario.

The BIA revealed a list of proposed design projects to bring together a cohesive downtown core community and improve neighbourhood safety and aesthetics.

"A great focus is placed on creating this splendid north-south central spine as a pedestrian focused main street for the district," explained Harold Madi of the Planning Partnership.

The Entertainment District—which is routinely flooded by rowdy weekend parties and the scene of gun violence and drug dealings—will benefit from plans to renovate the area.

"I think the idea here is to bring the great operators together to create a vision where the party happens inside the club and on the street but it's safe to come and where you can get home alive," Adam Vaughan told reporters while pointing out the change has already begun.

The Entertainment District makeover calls for the four 1-way lanes of Richmond and Adelaide to have 2-way traffic with larger tree-lined sidewalks.

A number of green spaces in the surrounding area will be upgraded and streets, for the short-term, can be closed to traffic and urban squares used for festival activities.

Upgrades in the neighbourhood have already begun.

Grange Park has an upgrade completion date for 2011 and Clarence Square Park has a working redesign incorporating cobblestone streets lined with cafés.

Much of the funding will fall on condo developments, BIA dues and money from the city.

"All that money arrives simultaneously on the streets to make the transformation for growth to happen and also to make this vision come into existence," stated Vaughan. "It doesn't come in as a dollar amount."

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