

November 26, 2004

Members of Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Grimes,

Toronto Redi-Mix, a concrete manufacturer has purchased a vacant industrial brownfield site at 207 New Toronto Street, in South Etobicoke.

Toronto Redi-Mix is the new next-door neighbour to families whose homes and apartments on Fifteenth and Sixteenth Street have yards that are adjacent to the industrial land.

On November 10, 2004, we wrote Toronto Redi-Mix to inquire what they planned for this property. In reply, we received a call from Domenic Suppa. He identified himself as the Chief Financial Officer for Toronto Redi-Mix. Mr. Suppa stated that currently Redi-Mix has plans to develop the site for two uses. This winter they are opening a Draglam Salt de-icing storage/distribution facility. Construction has already begun. In the spring of 2005, they plan on opening a cement production facility.

We asked Mr. Suppa if any of the other Draglam Salt or Toronto Redi-Mix concrete locations shared property lines with residential homes. He said no.

If cement production and salt storage/distribution facilities locate at 207 New Toronto Street, the noise, dust, industrial vehicle and equipment traffic and aesthetics (or lack of), will compromise the quality of life for the neighbours. It will disrupt the use and enjoyment of the residents' yards and gardens, and disturb the tranquility of the neighbourhood. These operations will be detrimental to the New Toronto Community, and raise serious health and environmental issues.

We contacted Mark Grimes, the City Councillor for Ward 6, and expressed our concern that a cement factory is an inappropriate use for lands located in a populous community like New Toronto.

Mark Grimes stated that he supports industry on this site and the zoning permits a cement factory on this land.

We are aware that a cement factory is a permitted use.
That doesn't mean it is the right use.

Councillor Grimes also stated that a plan or proposal had not been submitted to the city by Toronto Redi-Mix. He indicated that our concern was premature.

Construction of a structure has already begun on the land. We contacted the building and planning departments for the City of Toronto, and were told that a plan or proposal has not been submitted and a building permit has not been issued.

On November 12, 2004, a large sign was posted on the 207 New Toronto Street property announcing:

COMING SOON
DRAGLAM SALT
BE NICE DE-ICE
BULK AND BAGGED DE-ICERS
416-798-7050

There are other Draglam Salt facilities in the Toronto area. When it snows, they operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Will the salt and cement businesses be allowed to run twenty-four hours a day? They have already worked through the night on Friday, November 12, and late into the next day. Work on the property has been regularly starting as early as 6:30, or 6:45am. Has Toronto Redi-Mix applied for an exemption to the noise bylaw which confines the operation of heavy equipment to the hours of 7am-7pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-7pm Saturday and Sunday?

The noise pollution created by heavy equipment and trucks operating outside the by-law hours has already resulted in a decrease in the quality of life and hours of sleep for the neighbours.

We visited a Draglam Salt location in Scarborough and a Toronto Redi-Mix location in Brampton. Mr. Suppa said these operations would be similar to the planned New Toronto facilities.

Mr. Suppa is correct. These locations do not share property line with even one home. The Brampton cement production facility has a buffer of a few miles from the nearest home, or residential neighbourhood. Cement production involves extremely loud, continuous abrasive noise, a tall cement tower and huge piles of sand and gravel which create dust and are ugly and unsightly. A cleaner, quieter, more aesthetic and less intrusive industrial use should be located on the 207 New Toronto Street site.

We are concerned about the negative impacts on the environment and health of our community as a direct result of the salt and de-icer storage/distribution and cement production operations.

Have environmental studies been done on the implications to soil, ground water, air quality, vegetation, wildlife, and to the health of people breathing the dust that will be generated?

How will salt losses from the storage piles due to weathering or as a wind-borne powder, during transfers (the loading and unloading of trucks), and discharge of storm water and wash water from the site impact the environment in New Toronto? What are the consequences to surrounding structures and vehicles?

Cement production involves calcium oxide which is highly corrosive to the eyes and respiratory tract and is moderately corrosive to the skin. Allergic dermatitis can occur due to chromium contaminants in cement. The silica in cement is highly toxic when inhaled. Lung problems from inhalation of cement include emphysema, bronchitis, and fibrosis. Portland cement is a suspected carcinogen. How will this impact the community and people living there?

On November 17, vibrations created by equipment operating at 207 New Toronto Street caused nearby buildings to shake significantly. Residents could feel the vibrations inside their homes through the exterior walls and floors and could hear windows and objects in their houses rattle furiously. Will vibrations generated by the daily operation of heavy equipment damage the nearby structures? How will it affect the masonry foundations?

How will you protect the safety of children and families traveling on roads with the convoy of industrial trucks generated by salt distribution and a busy cement production facility? How many industrial vehicle trips will be made to and from the property on a daily basis?

What damage will the road and bridge systems sustain as a result of the increase in cement trucks and industrial vehicles?

Councillor Grimes claims he is committed to revitalizing South Etobicoke. How many new jobs will be generated in this area by the Draglam Salt and Toronto Redi-Mix operations? Draglam Salt and Toronto Redi-Mix may create some jobs, and will generate tax revenue, but at what cost to the community?

When the New Toronto area was originally zoned there were little or no environmental regulations in existence and a lack of awareness of the issues, hazards and stresses created by situating heavy industry and residences together. Today, we are aware of the issues and problems and the environmental impacts. We believe a cleaner, quieter, less intrusive industrial use should be developed on this location in order for residents and industry to co-habitate comfortably and peacefully.

We are relying on the Toronto City Council to ensure any development of the brownfield sites reflect the best interests of all the stakeholders. New developments should not have significant negative impacts on the neighbours and neighbouring land uses.

We have enclosed photos, which are numbered so that you can easily identify them:

1. A photo taken from a resident's back yard of the Toronto Redi-Mix property at 207 New Toronto Street. The chain-link fence indicates the property line.
2. Draglam Salt located at 3663 Midland Avenue
3. Another view of Draglam Salt, 3663 Midland Avenue
4. Toronto Redi-Mix, 98 Wentworth Court, Brampton
5. Another view of Toronto Redi-Mix, located at 98 Wentworth Court, Brampton

In her fall 2004 newsletter, Jean Augustine quotes from an October article in the Toronto Star, which Councillor Grimes has also posted on his website. The article by Royson James highlights South Etobicoke as a "Gem by the lake waiting to shine". It describes our community as "...blessed by natural beauty, abundant parks and naturalized green space, lakefront vistas and a laid-back ambience that belies its near-downtown location, this is a gem of a neighbourhood. Make that series of neighbourhoods."

How does salt storage/distribution and a cement factory fit in the vision for New Toronto, a prosperous, safe and healthy community where people live, work and play?

In his inaugural address Mayor Miller made this commitment:

"I will urge us as a Council to be thinking about our great city in terms of its neighbourhoods and its communities... that it is not roads, monuments, or office towers that are the central building blocks of cities - it is our neighbourhoods."

Today, we ask you, the members of Toronto City Council, the same question Mayor Miller posed to you:

"What will we 45 do together to make Toronto a magnificent place to live?"

Councillors and Mr. Mayor, you would not allow cement production in your backyard. How can you allow it in ours?

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

New Toronto Good Neighbours