

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

November 9, 2005

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

Subject: Request for Zoning Review for West Queen West Triangle Area
(05 199764 TM Folder)
Ward 18 - Davenport

Purpose:

This report proposes undertaking a zoning review and associated community consultation regarding the lands south of Queen Street West, located generally between Dovercourt Road and Dufferin Street, north of the Canadian National rail corridor.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, be requested:

- (1) to undertake a zoning review of lands generally located west of Dovercourt Road, south of Queen Street West and north of the Canadian National railway corridor as identified on Attachment 1, including;
 - a. a review of heritage resources;
 - b. with the Executive Director of Technical Services, a review of municipal infrastructure;
 - c. a review of community services and facilities;
 - d. with the Executive Director of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, a review of the impact of proposed development on the area's local arts community and other employment in the area; and
 - e. with the Executive Director of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, a review of parks and recreation facilities;
- (2) to initiate a community consultation process as part of this review; and

- (3) be requested to report in the 2nd quarter of 2006 on a comprehensive rezoning for the area generally located south of Queen Street West, west of Dovercourt Road and north of the rail corridor.

Background:

City Council adopted the Garrison Common North Part II Plan in 1998 to encourage revitalization of the Garrison Common North Area, bounded generally by Queen Street West, Bathurst Street, the Gardiner Expressway and Dufferin Street. The area includes a wide variety of uses, including a mixture of residential and industrial uses in close proximity to each other.

Industrial activities have been declining in the Garrison Common North area for several decades. The eastern and southern portions of Garrison Common North, including the Massey Ferguson and Inglis Lands and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, have already been the subject of major planning applications to allow for the conversion of industrial lands to residential lands. These planning applications were made in relation to large sites or to contiguous large sites, often under one ownership or the subject of comprehensive plans. New streets, public parks and community services and facilities were required as part of each of the above.

Many site specific rezoning applications have also been made in relation to smaller sites, particularly for conversion from industrial to residential or live-work uses such as in the Niagara Neighbourhood. The Niagara Neighbourhood is currently the subject of the Niagara Neighbourhood Built Form and Density Study to determine how to implement the policies of the Garrison Common North Part II Plan in an infill context.

The West Queen West Triangle (WQWT) is a large area of contiguous industrially-zoned sites, totaling more than 6.5 hectares. The lot pattern is irregular. Ownership of the properties has not been consolidated.

The West Queen West area has been the subject of 3 significant applications including tall residential buildings over the last year (see Attachment 2). In addition, there has been interest in redevelopment of other sites in this triangle. These applications need to be reviewed in a co-ordinated manner.

All three of the planning applications currently being reviewed are significantly at odds with the planning framework. In addition to specific conflicts with regard to heights and densities, the applications do not comprehensively address issues relating to:

- the extension of the local street network;
- the provision of new parks;
- improvements to community services and facilities; and
- improvements to hard infrastructure.

Comments:

In-force Official Plan

The in-force Official Plan designates the lands as:

- Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Area along Queen Street West; and
- Mixed Industrial-Residential Area on the remainder of the lands stretching south to the railway corridor.

The Plan also identifies this section of Queen Street West as subject to the Plan's Main Streets policies. Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential and Main Streets contain a mix of commercial, residential and institutional uses in low-rise form, generally within the range of 3 to 5 storeys. Mixed Industrial-Residential Areas allow a wide range of residential uses, community services and facilities, street-related retail and service uses, and those industrial uses which are environmentally compatible with adjacent and neighbouring uses.

The in-force Official Plan also includes policies pertaining to the preservation of heritage resources and the provision of neighbourhood amenities such as parks and other community facilities.

Garrison Common North Part II Plan

The Garrison Common North Part II Plan identifies the West Queen West Triangle as mostly Mixed Industrial-Residential Area 'A' with small portions along Queen Street West identified as Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Area.

The Garrison Common North Part II Plan provides more detailed policies with respect to density which prevail over the city-wide Official Plan policies. The Part II Plan identifies the lands as:

- Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Area with permission to pass by-laws for densities of up to 3.0 times the area of the lot for mixed use buildings, provided that residential densities do not exceed 2.5 times the area of the lot and commercial densities do not exceed 1.5 times the area of the lot; and
- Mixed Industrial-Residential Area 'B', re-iterating the in-force Official Plan's permission to pass by-laws for densities of up to 3.0 times the area of the lot for mixed-use buildings of which residential densities are to constitute a density of no more than 2.0 times the area of the lot.

The in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan includes policies which specifically relate to the redevelopment of large areas, identified in the Plan as sites greater than 1 hectare in size. These policies state that such areas should be well integrated with the surrounding neighbourhoods and that Council should seek the provision of good pedestrian, vehicular and visual connections to adjacent neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces.

Additional detail regarding the policies of the in-force Official Plan and the in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan are provided in Attachment 3.

New Official Plan for the City of Toronto

The new Official Plan for the City of Toronto designates the WQWT Area as a Regeneration Area, requiring the Secondary Plan to address:

- urban design guidelines;
- a greening strategy for tree planting, improvements to parks and the acquisition of new parks and open spaces;
- streetscape, park and open space improvements;
- the need for new community services and facilities;
- a heritage strategy identifying important heritage resources and ensuring new buildings are compatible with adjacent heritage buildings;
- environmental policies regarding contaminated lands; and
- transportation policies that encourage transit, walking and cycling over use of the private automobile.

New Garrison Common North Secondary Plan

The New Garrison Common North Secondary Plan re-iterates many of the objectives outlined in the in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan. Map 14-1 in the Secondary Plan re-iterates the planned street extensions outlined in the in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan.

The new Garrison Common North Secondary Plan identifies most of the WQWT Area as part of 'Area 2' and requires an area study to precede significant development which addresses all the issues listed in the New Official Plan as well as policies that deal with the issue of separation and buffering from the rail corridor.

Additional detail regarding the policies of the New Official Plan and the New Garrison Common North Secondary Plan are provided in Attachment 3 to this report.

Zoning

The zoning in the West Queen West Triangle Area includes MCR (Mixed Commercial Residential) along Queen Street West, I1 (light industrial) along the rail corridor, I2 (light industrial) on one site east of Dovercourt Road and an R4 (residential) site on Lisgar Street:

- the MCR zone has a height limit of 16 metres subject to additional limits at the street-edge and angular plane requirements and a density limit of 3.0 times the area of the lot, of which no more than 1.0 times can be used for commercial uses and 2.5 times for residential uses;
- both the I1 and I2 zone have a height limit of 18 m and a density limit for industrial uses of 3.0 times the area of the lot; and

- the R4 zone has a density limit of 4.0 times the area of the lot and a height limit of 18 m.

Status of required area studies

Both the in-force Official Plan and the new Official Plan require a number of studies pertaining to the redevelopment of the WQWT Area.

An area study has been initiated by City Planning staff. In this context, City Planning is reviewing the applications at 1171 and 1171R Queen Street West and at 48 Abell Street and 1199 Queen Street West. City Planning staff have taken the position that the heights being sought (up to 26 storeys) are inappropriate for the area. A new application for 150 Sudbury Street has just been received

City Planning staff have begun a review of the area's street network, open space network and height limits with the intent of creating urban design guidelines as well as a parks and open space plan. A preliminary version of these plans will be presented by City Planning staff to landowners, residents and the public at a local community consultation meeting on November 16, 2005 for review and comment.

Analysis of existing community services and facilities and the projected increase in local demand for these services and facilities is required. Social infrastructure should adequately address the planned level of development in the area.

A community improvement strategy is required to identify improvements to streets, sidewalks, boulevards and open spaces.

Environmental policies to identify any necessary site and building clean-ups are required. The Building Division and Technical Services Division have existing protocols to identify necessary site and building clean-ups.

Policies addressing the issue of separation/buffering from the rail corridor are required. Discussions between City Planning and Canadian National Railway regarding appropriate separation and buffering from the rail corridor are underway. However, these discussions only relate to the development applications which have been received and do not address the issues comprehensively.

Transportation policies to encourage transit, walking and cycling are required. More detailed policy development and plan evaluation is required.

Preliminary technical analysis of hard infrastructure has been undertaken in relation to redevelopment in the area in response to the three planning applications. New roads and upgrades of municipal services will need to be looked at for the entire WQWT Area.

A comprehensive consideration of heritage resources in the West Queen West Triangle Area has not yet been initiated by City Planning staff.

Additionally, the City's Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department and local residents, workers and land owners have expressed concerns regarding the impact of the proposed redevelopment on the existing local economy. Local businesses include some warehousing and food preparation facilities, but also one of Toronto's largest concentrations of arts-related businesses and organizations, including galleries, showrooms, workshops, studios, and performance spaces.

Community consultation

A community consultation meeting was held on June 13, 2005 in relation to the proposed official plan and zoning by-law amendments at 1171 and 1171R Queen Street West. Another community consultation meeting was held on August 2, 2005 in relation to the proposed official plan and zoning by-law amendments at 48 Abell Street and 1199 Queen Street West. Issues raised at the two meetings include:

- fit with existing neighbourhood character, in terms of physical form and mix of uses;
- building heights, massing and shadows;
- preservation of historic buildings;
- the displacement of employment lands and impacts on the local art industry;
- roads, traffic, transit and parking;
- adjacency to the rail corridor;
- parks and landscaping;
- environmental building practices and sustainable development;
- the need for comprehensive planning vs. site-specific planning; and
- additional housing, including affordable housing.

City Planning has scheduled a further community consultation meeting on November 16, 2005 to discuss the planning and development of the West Queen West Triangle as a whole.

Rationale for an area study

The WQWT Area is under significant development pressure, primarily for high density residential uses. The area now permits a mix of residential/commercial and industrial uses on different properties within the area. In order for this area to redevelop the City must study the hard and social infrastructure required and the urban design and planning context of the area.

At this time, amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are premature. Significant development in the West Queen West Triangle Area should not proceed in the absence of the required studies and development framework to support the in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan and the Regeneration Area designation in the new Official Plan for the City of Toronto. City Planning needs to determine how community needs including roads, parks and other neighbourhood facilities will be provided. The ultimate level of residential development in this area must be balanced against the role of this area as a vibrant commercial/retail street and the concentration of arts-related uses.

Approval of significant development should be postponed until all the required studies have been completed.

Conclusions:

The City should review the land use policies in the West Queen West Triangle. Given the impacts associated with significant new development and the extent to which current and anticipated planning applications in the area require comprehensive planning, it is appropriate to allow time for City Planning staff to complete the necessary studies and public consultations.

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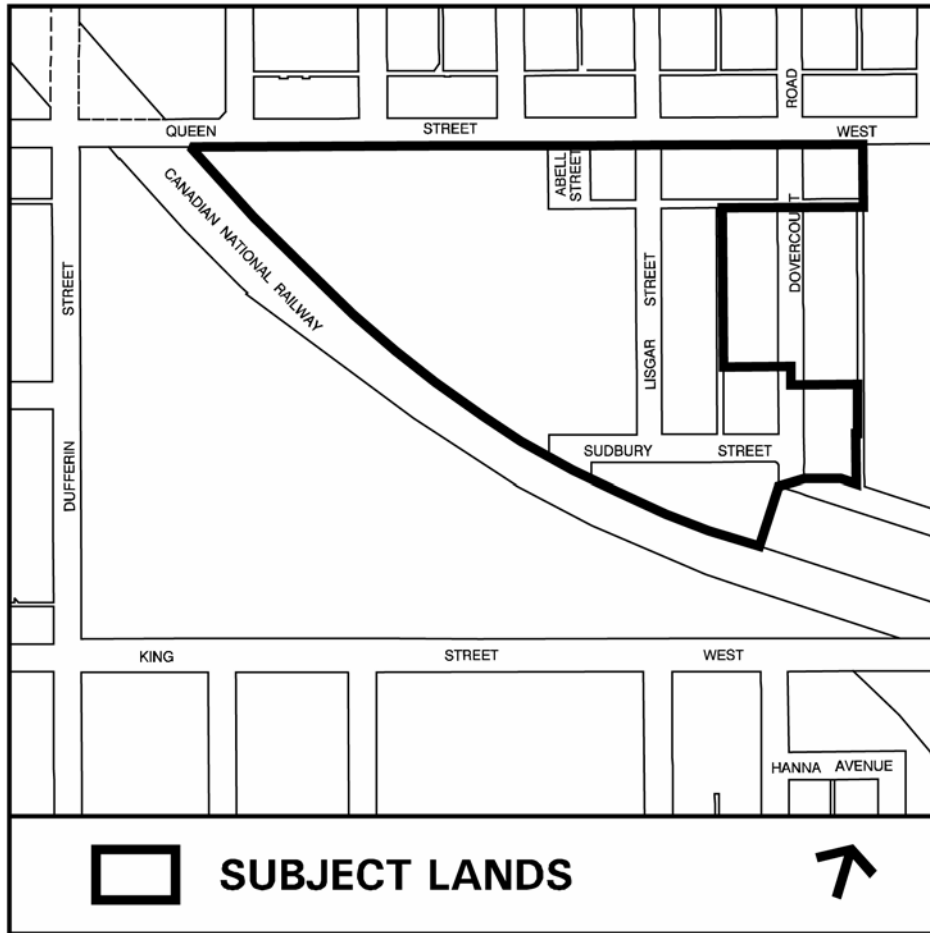
Gary Wright
Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

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List of Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Map of the West Queen West Triangle Area
- Attachment 2: Summary of current planning applications in the WQWT Area
- Attachment 3: Summary of the policies of the in-force Official Plan pertaining to the WQWT Area
- Attachment 4: Summary of the policies of the New Official Plan pertaining to the WQWT Area

Attachment 1: Map of the West Queen West Triangle Area



Attachment 2:

Summary of current planning applications in the WQWT Area

Sites	General Description of Proposed Development	Site Area	Dwelling units	Heights
1171 and 1171R Queen St. W.	A mixed-use building with commercial uses at grade and residential uses above on Queen Street West and a highrise residential condominium building and landscaped open space to the south	0.62 ha	359 units	Building 1: Up to 10 storeys fronting onto Queen Street West Building 2: up to 26 storeys on the southern portion of the lot
48 Abell St. and 1199 Queen St. W.	Three buildings: a low-rise live-work building; a high-rise affordable housing building, a high-rise condominium building and a parking lot.	1.24 ha	618 units	Building 1: 3 storey at the northwest corner Building 2: up to 19 storeys on the southwest portion of the lot Building 3: up to 25 storeys on the east portion of the lot
150 Sudbury St.	Three rows of mid-rise residential stacked townhouses and a highrise residential tower	1.0 ha	308 units	Building 1: 5 ½ storeys on the west and north portions of the lot Building 2: 16 storeys at the southeast portion of the lot
TOTAL		2.86 ha	1275 units	

Attachment 3:

Summary of the policies of the in-force Official Plan pertaining to the WQWT Area

The in-force Official Plan designates the lands as:

- Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Area along Queen Street West; and
- Mixed Industrial-Residential Area on the remainder of the lands stretching south to the railway corridor.

The Plan also identifies this section of Queen Street West as subject to the Plan's Main Streets policies.

Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential and Main Streets contain a mix of commercial, residential and institutional uses in low-rise form, generally within the range of 3 to 5 storeys. The Plan permits Council to pass by-laws allowing buildings with a maximum total gross floor area of 3.0 times the area of the lot.

Mixed Industrial-Residential Areas allow a wide range of residential uses, community services and facilities, street-related retail and service uses, and those industrial uses which are environmentally compatible with adjacent and neighbouring uses. Council may pass by-laws to permit industrial buildings containing environmentally compatible uses with gross floor areas up to 3.0 times the area of the lot and buildings containing only residential uses with gross floor areas up to 2.0 times the area of the lot.

Notwithstanding the above, Council may establish lower maximum densities for Mixed Industrial-Residential Areas on the basis of an appropriate study which has considered area specific objectives for uses, urban design, built form and density.

The in-force Official Plan states that Council should work with the private sector to ensure coordinated investment in the Garrison Common North Area to:

- better integrate this area into the urban fabric;
- improve its environmental conditions and transportation services; and
- promote the realization of the objectives of this Plan, particularly with respect to housing, economic development, cultural and heritage resources, parks and open space and community facilities.

Council may use comprehensive and area-based planning and urban design studies to achieve these objectives.

The Garrison Common North Part II Plan provides more detailed policies for the area which prevail over the city-wide Official Plan policies. The Part II Plan identifies the lands as:

- Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Area with permission to pass by-laws for densities of up to 3.0 times the area of the lot for mixed use buildings, provided that

residential densities do not exceed 2.5 times the area of the lot and commercial densities do not exceed 1.5 times the area of the lot; and

- Mixed Industrial-Residential Area 'B', re-iterating the in-force Official Plan's permission to pass by-laws for densities of up to 3.0 times the area of the lot for mixed-use buildings of which residential densities are to constitute a density of no more than 2.0 times the area of the lot.

The in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan sets out the following principles for development. The Part II Plan states that development should:

- (a) integrate the area into the rest of the City by developing the lands so that they relate to the established city fabric in terms of streets and blocks, uses and density patterns;
- (b) complete the open space system by enhancing and completing the existing north-south public open space system, providing both visual and physical connections to Fort York and the waterfront;
- (c) introduce a variety of land uses and densities and provide a range of housing types in terms of built form, affordability and tenure;
- (d) provide adequate community services and facilities;
- (e) be sensitive to and protect industrial operations and areas; and
- (f) provide a high level of environmental quality."

The in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan also encourages a high quality of urban design as it relates to structure, form and physical amenity, including:

- buildings which define the edges of streets and open spaces, animating their edges and minimizing wind and shadow impacts on them;
- heights and massing which are compatible with adjacent buildings and streets;
- grade-related units suitable for families with children;
- shared servicing and open space within development blocks; and
- enhancing ground level conditions for pedestrians.

Map A of the Garrison Common North Part II Plan identifies which streets should be extended as the area redevelops. Several of these streets go through or are adjacent to sites which are the subject of current planning applications. The street extensions proposed by the Plan are:

- the extension of Sudbury Street along the southern boundary of 'Area 2' up to the intersection of Queen Street West and Gladstone Avenue;
- the extension of Northcote Street southward to intersect with the extension of Sudbury Street; and

- the extension of Abell Street southward to intersect with the extension of Sudbury Street.

In addition, the Part II Plan states that when considering a rezoning, Council shall have regard for:

- the advisability of retaining existing industrial buildings or uses in terms of the retention of industrial jobs;
- the retention of industrial buildings in good structural condition or which may have architectural or historical merit; and
- the extent to which a change in use would adversely affect the continued compatibility of neighbouring uses, particularly in those areas where identifiable pockets of a consistent use exist.

The Garrison Common North Part II Plan policies require Council to consider additional matters as they relate to large redevelopment sites (> 1 hectare). Council shall ensure:

- a) that block size and orientation are similar to those of the surrounding neighbourhoods;
- b) that new streets are extensions of the existing street grid and align with the existing streets, where possible, allowing for street-oriented development;
- c) that north-south views are preserved, enhanced or, where possible, created through physical connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods and the waterfront, in the form of streets, view corridors, pedestrian connections and open spaces;
- d) that consideration is given to utilizing the required safety setback from the rail corridors as open space or roadway or both, particularly in residential areas;
- e) [not applicable]
- f) that, in developing the street network, it has particular regard to the separation of industrial traffic routes from local residential traffic routes;
- g) that access for servicing and parking for any development is from rear lanes, rather than from streets, and that the existing lane system is improved and new lanes introduced where appropriate;
- h) that a high standard of residential amenity is provided on local streets, through efforts directed at alleviating the problems of excessive speed and through traffic calming and improving pedestrian and cyclist safety; and
- i) that existing streetscapes and public and private pedestrian walkways are improved through such means as tree planting, improved lighting and the provision of street furniture giving particular attention to pedestrian intensive areas such as Queen Street West.

Attachment 4:

Summary of the policies of the New Official Plan pertaining to the WQWT Area

At its meeting of November 26, 2002, City Council adopted the new Official Plan for the City of Toronto. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved the new Official Plan, in part, with modifications. The Plan has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. The hearing has begun.

On the new Plan's Map 2: Urban Structure, the lands along the south side of Queen Street are identified as Avenues and the lands between the Avenue and the railway corridor are identified as Employment Districts.

Avenues are "important corridors along major streets where reurbanization can create new housing and jobs while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents", according to Section 2.2.3 of the Plan.

This Employment District has been deleted from Map 2 by a modification by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The new Official Plan for the City of Toronto designates the WQWT Area as a Regeneration Area, requiring the Secondary Plan to address:

- urban design guidelines;
- a greening strategy for tree planting, improvements to parks and the acquisition of new parks and open spaces;
- streetscape, park and open space improvements;
- the need for new community services and facilities;
- a heritage strategy identifying important heritage resources and ensuring new buildings are compatible with adjacent heritage buildings;
- environmental policies regarding contaminated lands; and
- transportation policies that encourage transit, walking and cycling over use of the private automobile.

The Plan includes a requirement that development in Regeneration Areas proceed according to a secondary plan process, including the requirement for an area study as outlined above. Section 4.7 Regeneration Areas states that these areas will provide for a broad mix of commercial, residential, light industrial, parks and open space, institutional, live/work and utility uses in an urban form to:

- revitalize areas of the City that are largely vacant or underused;
- create new jobs and homes that use existing infrastructure;
- restore, re-use and retain existing buildings that are economically adaptable for re-use, particularly heritage buildings and structures;
- achieve streetscape improvements and the extension of the open space network; and

- promote the environmental clean-up and re-use of contaminated lands.

The New Garrison Common North Secondary Plan re-iterates many of the objectives outlined in the in- force Garrison Common North Part II Plan. Map 14-1 in the Secondary Plan re-iterates the planned street extensions outlined in the in-force Garrison Common North Part II Plan.

The new Garrison Common North Secondary Plan identifies most of the WQWT Area as part of 'Area 2' and requires an area study to precede significant development which addresses all the issues listed in the New Official Plan as well as policies that deal with the issue of separation and buffering from the rail corridors.