



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Maximum Floor Plates in Older Commercial Areas – Status Report

Date:	September 17, 2007
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	pg070066

SUMMARY

This report responds to Council's July 2007 direction to 'report to the October meeting of Planning and Growth Committee with a proposed by-law to implement a maximum floor plate by-law to protect older commercial districts and small businesses in older neighbourhoods.'

The work required to address the issues raised by this direction could not be completed for the October Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting. Work is proceeding on the analysis of the issues but it will take some time to complete. It is anticipated that staff could report in early 2008.

Financial Impact

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 16, 2007 Council requested the Executive Director, City Planning to 'report to the October meeting of Planning and Growth Committee with a proposed by-law to

implement a maximum floor plate by-law to protect older commercial districts and small businesses in older neighbourhoods.’

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Council direction originated with a motion from Councillor Vaughan that was adopted by the Toronto and East York Community Council.

Through subsequent discussion with staff, Councillor Vaughan clarified his concerns, as follows:

- Large chain stores are moving into the small stores on some of the strips.
- They combine small stores into one large store.
- They change the character of the strip, diluting its diversity and individuality.
- They bring rising rents that also reduce opportunities for new start-up businesses and small independent businesses.
- The City should protect rental space in older, pedestrian shopping streets for small business.

COMMENTS

Staff have begun the analysis needed to respond to Council’s direction. It includes the following topics and issues:

1. A better understanding of the retail and commercial character of the strips, including:
 - their role in the City’s retailing sector;
 - how they evolve and specialize;
 - the role of chains;
 - the size of stores; and
 - opportunities for small business (e.g. vacancy levels).
2. Existing official plan policy and zoning regulations, and previous policy changes on the strips, particularly relating to limits on establishment size.
3. Identifying the ‘older commercial districts’ and ‘older neighbourhoods’ referred to in the Council direction. Generally these are strips and neighbourhoods developed before 1945 and characterized by many small individual lots.
4. Relating size differences among store types to a possible floor space limit. For example, local neighbourhood supermarkets (e.g. IGA stores) tend to be larger than convenience stores or shoe stores.
5. Recognizing existing larger stores that have long been a part of the retail fabric on the strips, such as the old Woolworths and Kresge’s stores.

6. Other cities' experiences dealing with similar issues.
7. The possible relationship with heritage conservation initiatives.
8. Developing policy and regulatory options to address the problem.

This work will take time to complete. Staff will likely report back to Planning and Growth Management Committee in early 2008.

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SIGNATURE

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