

Public Right-of-Way Improvements to Boston Avenue from Queen Street East to Dundas Street East (Rail Spur)

Date:	June 12, 2007
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Ward 30–Toronto-Danforth
Reference Number:	File No.05-204640 STE 30 TM

SUMMARY

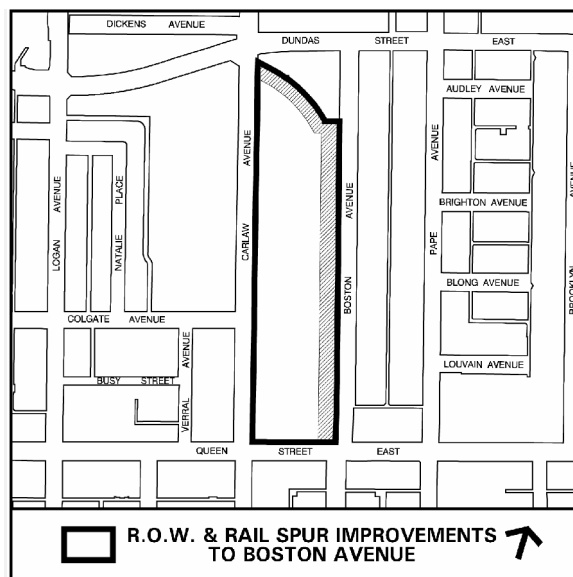
This report reviews and recommends approval of Right-of-Way Improvements for the west side of Boston Avenue and the adjacent Rail Spur between Dundas Street East and Queen Street East consistent with the attached Comprehensive Plan – Shifting Parking from East Side to the West Side of Boston Avenue (Attachments 4a and 4b).

The Comprehensive Plan discussed below provides an opportunity to implement some of the recommendations of the Community Improvement Plan developed by the community, city staff and the local area Councillor in June 2000 (attachment 1). As this area experiences pressures for further conversions of older industrial buildings to live/work permissions, it is important to look at opportunities to improve the existing conditions in terms of parkland and publicly accessible amenity space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council approve the Comprehensive Plan as shown in Attachments 4a and 4b;



2. City Council direct staff to review development applications adjacent to the west side of Boston Avenue consistent with the recommended Comprehensive Plan discussed in the report and shown in Attachments 4a and 4b;
3. City Council direct staff to continue to negotiate a publicly accessible pedestrian easement over the Rail Spur, from Queen to Dundas Street East; and
4. City Council authorize staff to make substantially-in-accordance modifications to the approved Comprehensive Plan as may be required, when reviewing development application abutting the rail spur.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 1998, two applications to permit live/work units in industrial buildings at 233 and 320 Carlaw Avenue triggered a review of the former City of Toronto Official Plan policies for the Carlaw Avenue area. The area was designated as a Restricted Industrial Area. The former City of Toronto Official Plan required that, prior to assessing the merits of a site-specific application which proposed a change in designation from Restricted Industrial to any other non-industrial designation, an area study examining potential economic and planning impacts. During the course of the study, a third application to permit live/work units in the industrial building at 245 Carlaw Avenue was received.

The result of the area study was to remove the Restricted Industrial Area designation and apply a Mixed Industrial-Residential designation and a Low Density Residence area designation.

Development applications:

The first application received included 233 Carlaw Avenue and a rail spur (66 Boston Avenue) from Queen to Dundas Streets West. City staff along with the area Councillor and residents identified that rail spur adjacent to Boston Avenue as an opportunity to provide some amenity space for the area. As a mainly industrial area, the Dundas/Carlaw Neighbourhood lacked parkland and amenity space. Parks staff agreed that the rail spur presented an opportunity to improve the situation. Following discussions with city staff, the application was revised to only include the portion of the rail spur adjacent to the rear of the property. The applicant was also required to landscape it and maintain it as publicly accessible.

As per the Final Report, dated August 20, 2003, staff recommended that, prior to the introduction of the final Bills to Council for enactment, the owner enter into a Section 37 Agreement to, among other things, secure:

- (a) a public access easement over the portion of lands formerly the rail spur now part of the rear of 233 Carlaw Avenue and parallel to Boston Avenue;

- (b) landscaping improvements to the former rail spur and the city boulevard adjacent to Boston Avenue, substantially as shown on the “Site Plan” A003 date stamped July 29, 2003;
- (c) future maintenance of the landscaping improvements contemplated in the above noted plan; and
- (d) agree to pay for highway alterations to Boston Avenue, including the pavement/sidewalk adjustments required to integrate with the projects to the north and south of the project.

Both, the site specific by-law No. 916-2003 and Official Plan Amendment No. 280 were approved by Council on September 24th, 2003, following the execution of the Section 37. The Final Report can be accessed here:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2003/agendas/committees/to/to030909/it003a.pdf>

The portion of the rail spur adjacent to 201 Carlaw Avenue (the property to the south of 233 Carlaw) was later sold to the owner of that property. This property has permission for 274 live/work units and is now pending Site Plan Approval. The application included the portion of 66 Boston Avenue and, like the 233 Carlaw Avenue application, proposes it be publicly accessible landscaped open space.

Commissioner of WES recommendation for comprehensive plan

In order to ensure that the landscaping for 233 Carlaw Avenue, especially along Boston Avenue, was integrated and consistent with future developments to the north and south, the Commissioner of the former “Works and Emergency Services Department” recommended that a Comprehensive Plan be developed by staff, reflective of the Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan with the intent that improvements be negotiated and secured through the site plan approval process.

The Comprehensive Plan was recommended to among other things, ensure that the publicly accessible linear green space was feasible.

Carlaw/Dundas Community Improvement Plan (attachment 1)

Since the late 1990’s, the larger surrounding industrial area has been experiencing the conversion of old industrial buildings to residential and live-work purposes.

The Carlaw/Dundas neighbourhood is a piece of a larger study area known as the “South Riverdale and Lakeshore Boulevard East Community Improvement Area”. The community, in consultation with the area Councillor and City staff, came together to produce the Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Plan which identified opportunities for improving the quality of life while achieving the City’s objective for intensification. This

Plan presents ideas and visions from the community and was approved by Council August 2000.

Part of the recommendations of the plan, included ideas and visions for Right-of-Way improvements to Boston Avenue, including the landscaping of the rail spur and its inclusion into the neighbourhood as green space. The Plan also contemplated perpendicular parking on the west side of Boston Avenue adjacent to the rail spur.

Community Planning, in consultation with Civic Improvement, Technical and Transportation Services staff, have reviewed a number of design options that included the improvement of the rail spur and its relation to Boston Avenue in the context of the Carlaw/Dundas Community Improvement Plan and have developed a Comprehensive Plan.

The review included three scenarios, all of which proposed the landscaping of the rail spur and its inclusion into the neighbourhood as green space, but looked at different options for the provision of on-street parking.

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan was developed in reference to the Community Improvement Plan developed by the community and accepted by Council in June 2000. The Plan was developed to among other things provide clarity to developers and city staff on the contemplated vision developed for the rail spur and its integration within the neighbourhood. There were a number of options that were considered and reviewed as part of this exercise. Those options are discussed below, including the option City Planning staff is recommending.

(A) Maintain Parking on the East Side of Boston Avenue (attachments 2a and 2b)

Under this option, staff considered maintaining on-street parking on the east side of Boston Avenue and the existing mountable curb would be replaced by a full stage curb and gutter.

This option would implement the landscaping and improvement of the rail spur, as contemplated in the Community Improvement Plan but would not increase the supply of parking for the neighbourhood.

(B) Maintain Parking on the East Side of Boston Avenue and Add an Additional Parking Lane on the West Side of Boston Avenue (Attachments 3a and 3b)

Under this option, staff considered the provision of a parking lane on both sides of Boston Avenue. The existing curb on the west side would be maintained. The 7.3 metre-wide street pavement would also be maintained, but a new 2.2 metre parallel parking lane would be introduced at the east side of Boston Avenue creating a new pavement width of 9.5 metres. This new parking lane would reduce the opportunity for increased

landscaping on the rail spur. This option contemplated the provision of parallel parking spaces on both sides of the street.

The Toronto Official Plan encourages the goal of reducing car dependency throughout the City. The residents of Boston Avenue are within walking distances to two streetcar lines (Dundas and Queen Streets streetcars). The intent of this analysis was to increase public amenity space in the area. Given the area's proximity to streetcar lines, the need for additional amenity space, and the provision of sufficient parking spaces within the recently approved developments along Boston Avenue, it is staff's opinion that the provision of parking on both sides is not appropriate at this location.

A car-sharing component is also being considered as part of the development application at 201 Carlaw Avenue. If approved, the said development would, beyond providing a parking ratio for residents and visitors that exceeds the zoning by-law requirement, also provide a vehicle within their parking garage, that could be accessed by both, the residents of the building and residents from the larger neighbourhood who do not have a vehicle of their own. The Final Report for 201 Carlaw Avenue can be accessed here: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/te/te060711/it006.pdf>

Due to the reasons mentioned above, City Planning staff are not recommending parking on both sides of Boston Avenue.

The Final Report for the rezoning application at 201 Carlaw Avenue stated that the applicant would provide approximately 7 additional on-street parking spaces on Boston Avenue, in addition to other improvements to the public right-of-way and former rail spur, should Council approve such an option for Boston Avenue as part of this report. Given that staff do not recommend provision of parking spaces on both sides of the street, the applicant at 201 Carlaw Avenue may not be able to provide that additional on-street parking.

(C) Shifting Parking from the East to the West Side of Boston Avenue (attachments 4a and 4b)

Under this option, staff considered shifting the existing on-street parking from the east to the west side. Shifting the parking from the east to the west side of Boston Avenue would result in a net increase of approximately five or six on-street parking spaces.

The option also allows for the best landscaping alternative of the rail spur property. The travelled portion of Boston Avenue is maintained and no additional rail spur area is required to accommodate on-street parking on both sides of the street. Therefore, most of the rail spur property would be landscaped and even though it will be under private ownership, staff can be directed to continue to negotiate pedestrian access easements over it, so that the greenway can be designed to look and feel like public space.

The location of the sidewalk is proposed to be at eastern edge of the rail spur property and will act as delineation between what is private and public property. The sidewalk is also proposed on public property to simplify maintenance matters.

Staff recommend this option.

All of the reviewed options contemplate approximately 5 metre pavement width for vehicular travel, as that is the existing condition of Boston Avenue. None of the options reduce the curb-to-curb distance.

COMMENTS

Upon assessing a number of options for the improvement of Boston Avenue and the rail spur, staff have determined that shifting the parking from the east side to the west side of Boston Avenue is the preferred option as shown on Attachments 4a and 4b.

This option would make the best use of the rail spur property as a landscaped green space from Queen to Dundas Street west, as contemplated by the Carlaw/Dundas Community Improvement Plan. The end result would also mean that the dimensions of the traveled portion of Boston Avenue would not change and therefore a Highway Alterations report would not be required.

This option is also the recommended option from a maintenance perspective, as it would continue to provide on-street parking on only one side of Boston Avenue and thus simplifying maintenance activities such as street cleaning and snow removal.

The approval of this Comprehensive Plan will ensure that pending and future development applications on this section of Boston Avenue would be consistent with the overall vision for the area, as identified in the Carlaw/Dundas Community Improvement Plan. If approved, this Plan will ensure that the appropriate financial securities are collected from future development applications until developers have completed the contemplated improvements to the Right-of-Way and rail spur on the west side of Boston Avenue. Improvements are to occur on a site by site basis, as development applications are submitted to the City.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan

Attachment 2a: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side of Boston Avenue

Attachment 2b: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side of Boston Avenue (Details and Sections)

Attachment 3a: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side and Add an Additional Parking Lane to the West Side of Boston Avenue

Attachment 3b: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side and Add an Additional Parking Lane to the West Side of Boston Avenue (Details and Sections)

Attachment 4a: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Shifting Parking from the East Side to the West Side of Boston Avenue

Attachment 4b: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Shifting Parking from the East Side to the West Side of Boston Avenue (Details and Sections)

Attachment 1: Carlaw / Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan

Carlaw / Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan

June, 2000

General Principles for Development

1. Maintain existing mixed use character and affordability and improve stability.
2. Create "streetscape" standards.
3. Improve existing parks and create new open space and green streetscapes.
4. Transportation: improve TTC, bicycle and pedestrian systems and coordinate parking.
5. Promote retail uses along street level.
6. Encourage a theme for the district that supports existing uses (film, photography, artisans).
7. Re-use existing buildings and preserve the heritage / historical structures.

Community Proposal ← Now

Carlaw is in the midst of change. This plan represents the community's vision for the neighbourhood; a guideline for developers to follow. For a copy of the complete Plan contact Denise Graham, City Urban Planner tel: (416) 392 0871

The Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges support provided by:

Participants in the Carlaw Neighbourhood Improvement Plan Steering Committee

Sony Lee (Chair: Theatrical Centre), John White (President), Barb Amodeo (President), Pat Colquhoun (President), Don Latta (President / President), Michael Gendron (Pastor: Red Station), Don Todd (Mayor: Resources and Development Council), Jack Lerner (City Councillor), Marlene Long (Jane Lerner's executive assistant), Martin Charney (SPP: Sheraton), John and Rita Loh (Market Properties), Anne Bricker (Flourish Development), Denise Graham (City of Toronto planner), Todd Rector (City of Toronto), Lenny Pappalardo (AEC), Alan Stone (Sheraton: Carlaw), Paul Young (President), Keith Ho (Community Health Centre), and McClelland (President), Mark Stone (President), Adria Weaver (President)

Community Proposal

Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan

Applicant's Submitted Drawing

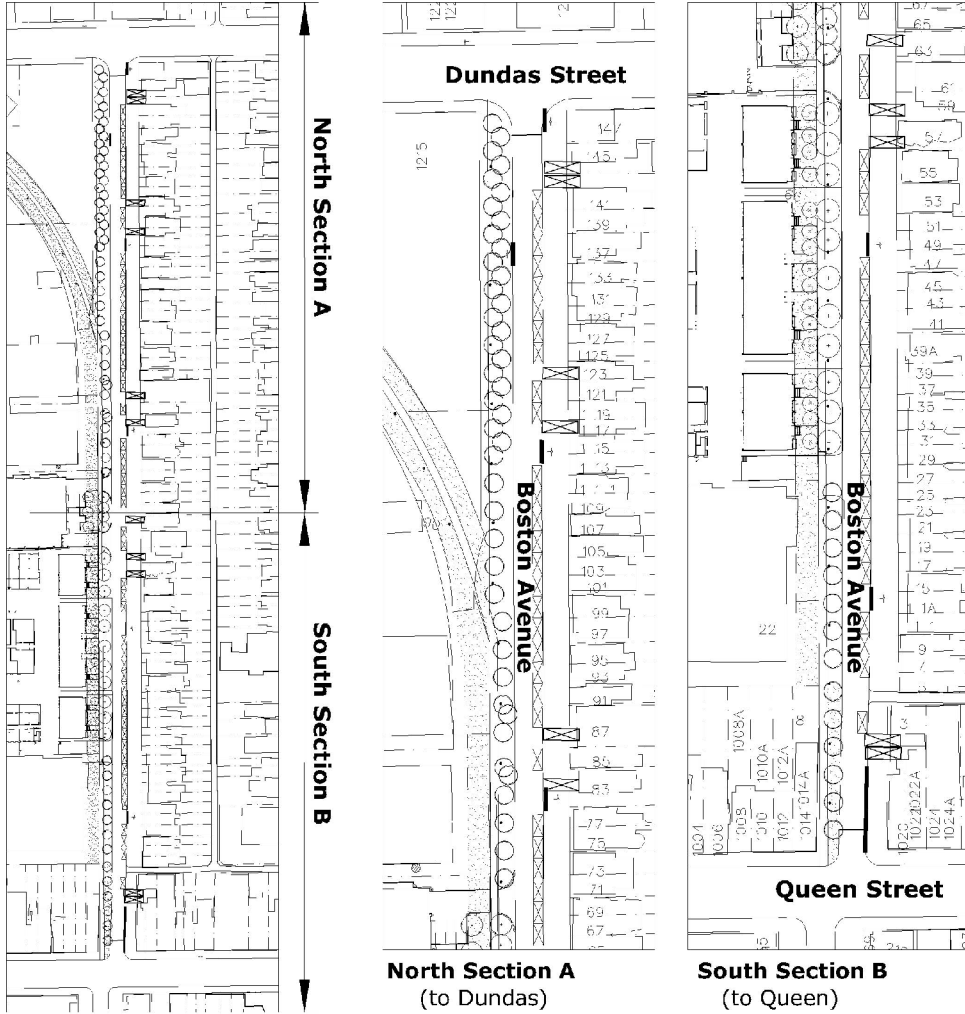
Not to Scale
12/01/05

Right of Way & Rail Spur Improvements to Boston Avenue

File # 05_204640

Attachment 2a: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side of Boston Avenue

Existing conditions : Approx. 53 spaces




Queen to Dundas

Assumptions - Parking Space length of 5.5 m.
 - Proposed Rail Spur - Linear Park

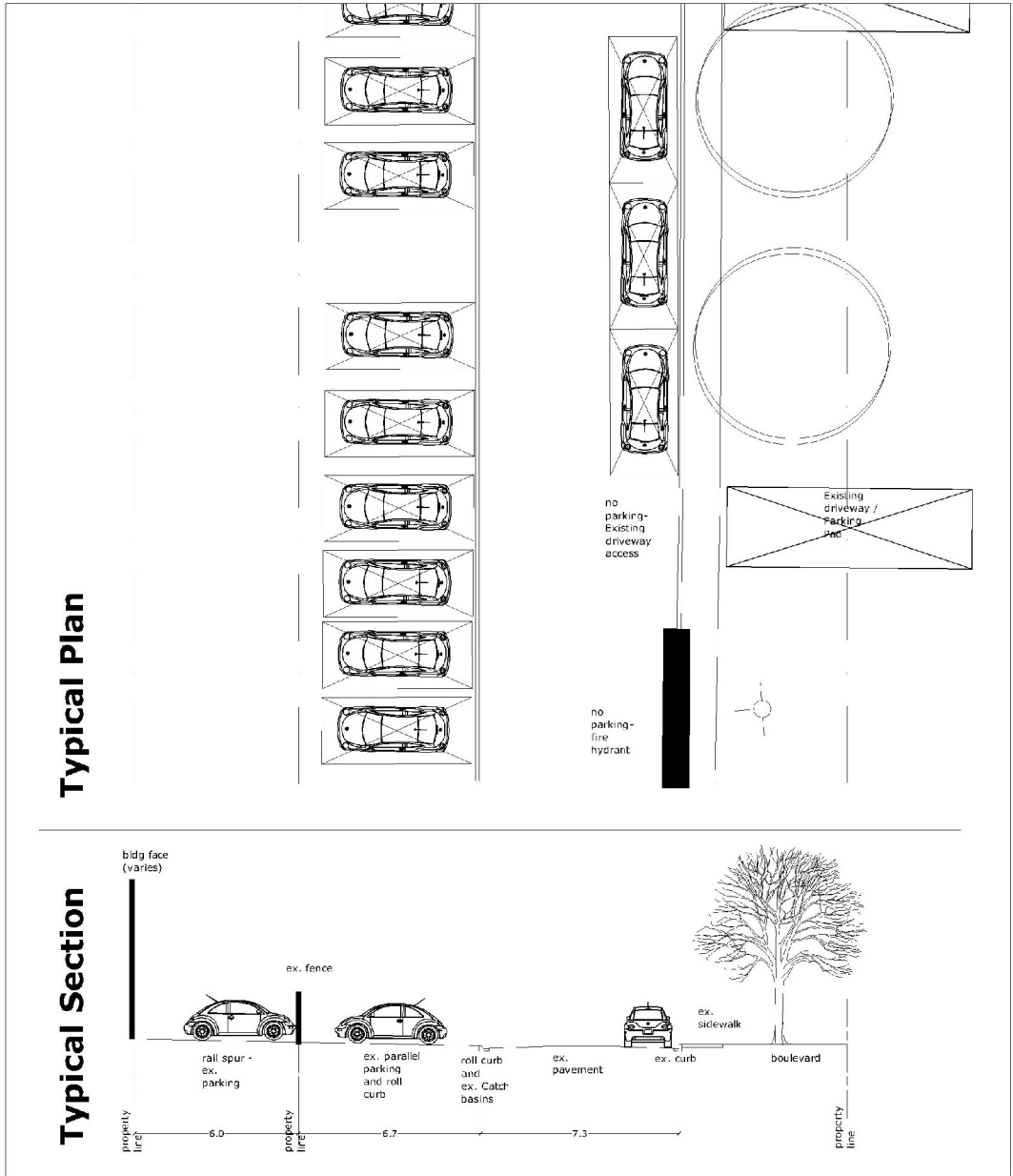
Existing conditions

R.O.W. Improvement to Boston Avenue / Rail Spur Option A

Not to Scale 
 06/11/07 - MVE

File # 05_204640

Attachment 2b: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side of Boston Avenue (Details)



Boston Avenue -Existing Conditions

Existing conditions

R.O.W. Improvement to Boston Avenue / Rail Spur Option A

Not to Scale 

Attachment 3a: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side and Add and Additional Parking Lane to the West Side of Boston Avenue

Parking on both sides : Approx. 84 spaces



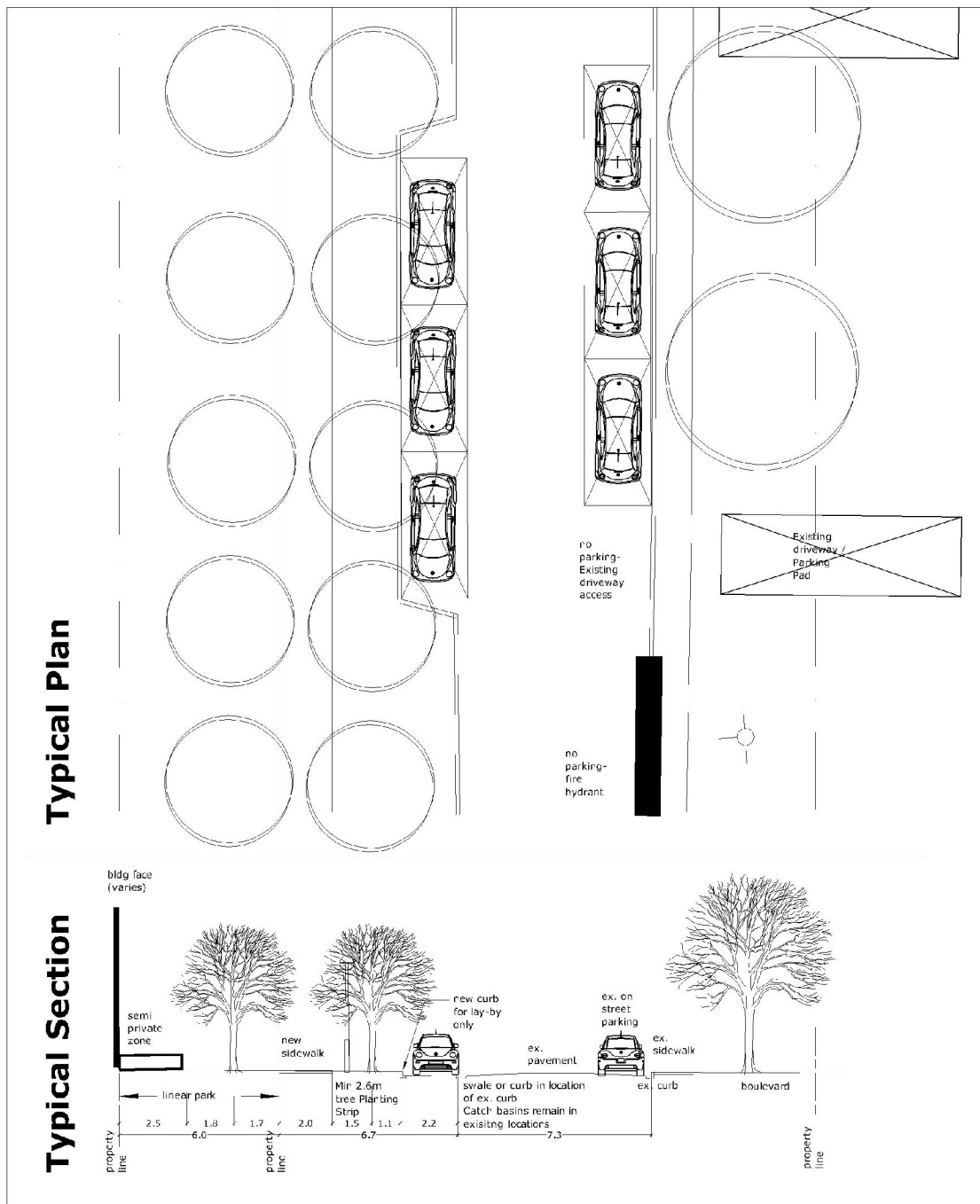
Assumptions - Parking Space length of 5.5 m.
 - Proposed Rail Spur - Linear Park

Existing Parking with
 West Lay-by Option
 Not to Scale
 06/11/07 - MVE

R.O.W. Improvement to Boston Avenue / Rail Spur
 Option B

File # 05_204640

Attachment 3b: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Maintain Parking on the East Side and Add and Additional Parking Lane to the West Side of Boston Avenue



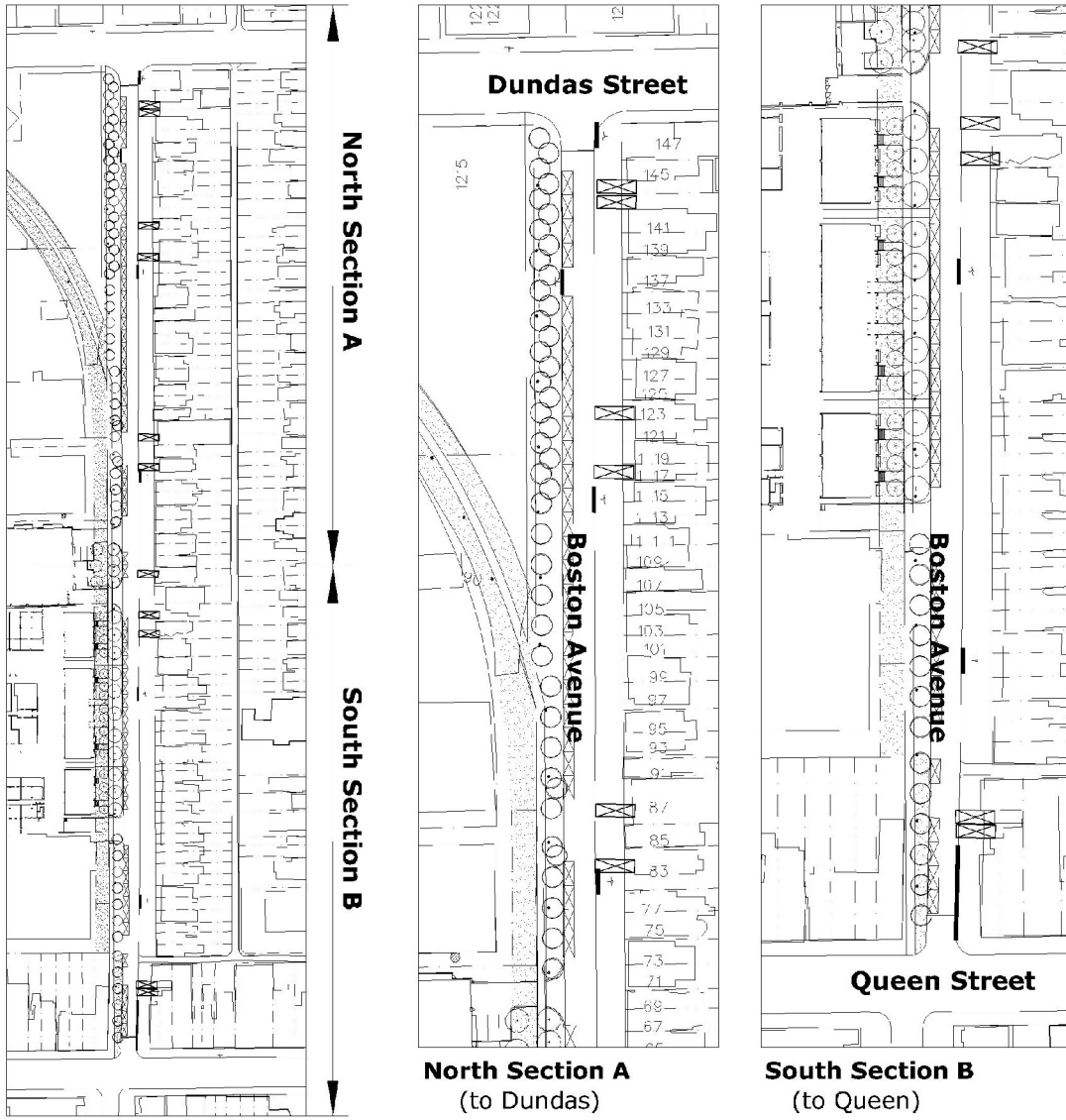
Boston Avenue -Parking both Sides

Existing Parking with
West Lay-by Option
Not to Scale

R.O.W. Improvement to Boston Avenue / Rail Spur
Option B

Attachment 4a: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Shifting Parking from the East Side to the West Side of Boston Avenue

Relocated parking : Approx. 58 spaces



Assumptions - Parking Space length of 5.5 m.

▨ - Proposed Rail Spur - Linear Park

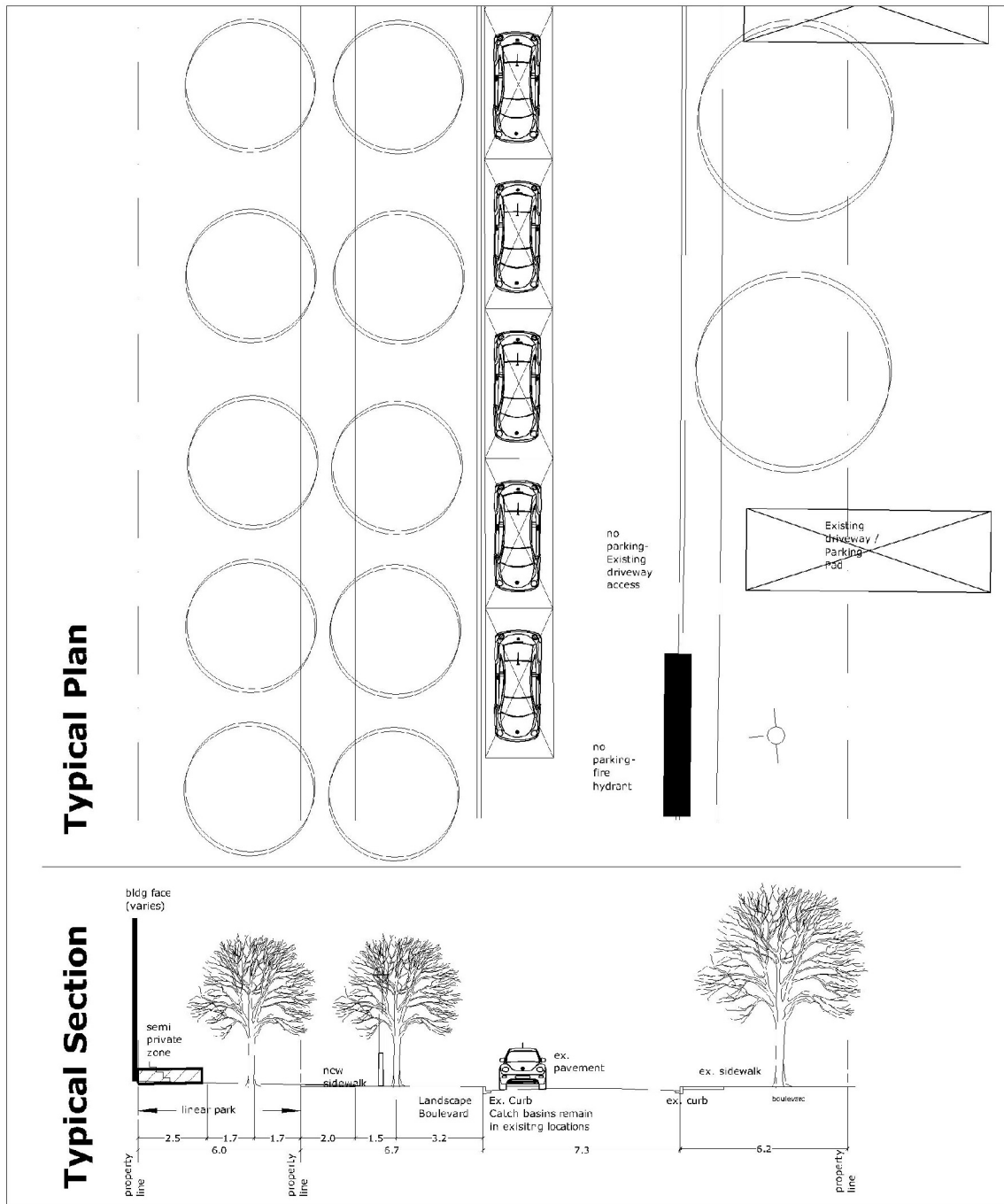
Relocated Parking

R.O.W. Improvement to Boston Avenue / Rail Spur Option C

Not to Scale
06/11/07 - MvE

File # 05_204640

Attachment 4b: Boston Avenue Comprehensive Plan – Shifting Parking from the East Side to the West Side of Boston Avenue (Details)



Boston Avenue -West Parking Option

Relocated Parking

R.O.W. Improvement to Boston Avenue / Rail Spur Option C

Not to Scale

