



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Bloor West Village Urban Design Study

Date:	May 22, 2008
To:	Etobicoke York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District
Wards:	Parkdale - High Park, Ward 13
Reference Number:	08 150846 WET 13 TM

SUMMARY

This report reviews the Bloor West Village Urban Design Study and outlines how it is being used in the review of development applications in the area.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At its meeting of February 12, 2008, Etobicoke York Community Council directed the Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District to report back to Etobicoke York Community Council at the earliest opportunity on the “Bloor West Village Urban Design Study” and review how the study may be applied by City staff to redevelopment projects in the area, including the car dealership site west of Jane Street on Bloor Street West.

The “Bloor West Village Urban Design Study” was undertaken, in 2005, by the Office for Urbanism, on behalf of the Bloor West Village BIA, and in collaboration with the Bloor West Village Residents Association, the Swansea Area Ratepayers Association, World 19, and the Old Millside Ratepayers Association. The proposal to redevelop the site of the Humber Odeon Theatre at 2442 Bloor Street West, with a ten-storey, mixed use building, acted as a catalyst to having this Study commissioned. The Study provided an analysis of existing conditions; identified potential redevelopment sites; and, provided suggested design guidelines for future development of properties fronting on Bloor Street West between the Humber River and High Park/Clendenan Avenue.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications.

COMMENTS

Bloor West Village currently functions as a very successful “main street” within the City. It serves as a focal point for the local residents and has a successful Business Improvement Area business association.

Bloor Street West is designated Mixed Use in the Official Plan and identified as an “Avenue”. Most of it is subject to existing mixed-use zoning that would permit up to five storeys of mixed commercial/residential development. Presently, much of the street consists of two-storey mixed commercial/residential uses with commercial at grade and residential or commercial above.

The framework for reviewing redevelopment proposals in the City is provided through the Provincial Policy Statement, which encourages urban intensification, among other policies, and the City’s Official Plan. As noted, Bloor Street West is identified, in the Official Plan as an “Avenue”. 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.” The Plan calls for Avenue Studies to be done so that a “-- framework for change will be tailored to the situation of each Avenue”. While the City does not have the resources to study all of the Avenues at the same time, some function well and already have appropriate zoning in place and may not need immediate review.

Bloor West Village already serves as a “main street”, a focal point for the local community with attractive and bustling sidewalks. As such, the existing zoning appropriately guides mixed use development in a way that fits with the neighbourhood. Therefore it has been a low priority for a comprehensive Avenue Study.

Should a redevelopment proposal come forward within the area, in the absence of an approved Avenue Study, the Official Plan calls for the completion of a “Segment Study” which would examine the implications for the segment of the Avenue in which the proposed development is located based on considerations outlined in the Official Plan.

In addition to requiring a Segment Study, the 2005 Bloor West Village Urban Design Study provides a useful assessment tool to be used, along with the Official Plan and the Zoning By-law, by the community and City staff. It provides an overall design vision for the street and, though it is not determinative of what will happen on specific sites, it provides some guidance for specific sites.

For example, when assessing the redevelopment application on the Humber Odeon Theatre site, staff consulted the Bloor West Village Urban Design Study and referred to its conclusions relating to that site in the final report to Council. Similarly, staff have continued to use the Bloor West Village Urban Design Study as a tool when reviewing redevelopment proposals in the area. As redevelopment applications are submitted, the City will also continue to request Avenue Segment Studies as required by the Official Plan to assess “the impacts of the incremental development of the Avenue Segment at a

similar form, scale and intensity”, and will do that assessment with reference to the Bloor West Village Urban Design Study.

Staff are aware that the car dealership west of Jane Street is relocating to St Clair Avenue and Jane Street within a few years. A redevelopment of that site would trigger a requirement for an Avenue Segment Study for the area between Jane Street and the Humber River. For the car dealership site or any other site in the vicinity along Bloor Street, staff will work with the local Councillor and the community for an appropriate public consultation process at that time, including the potential for a public charrette.

Related Initiatives

In addition to the policies and tools currently available for evaluating change, City Planning is undertaking a city wide Avenues/Mid-Rise Building Typology Study which, when completed will inform and assist City staff, communities, developers and designers in areas such as Bloor West Village.

With respect to the public realm within Bloor West Village, Planning staff observe that improvements to the public realm appear to be required due to the length of time since the last comprehensive sidewalk work was undertaken in the area and the condition of sidewalks, street trees and public amenities. Recent construction and service connection work has also had an impact on the road surface. Should consideration be given to capital improvements in the area, Planning staff would encourage community consultation and participation with the BIA, consideration of public realm improvements suggested within the 2005 Urban Design Study and other opportunities to revitalize the area.

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SIGNATURE

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