

Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guidelines Update and Public Realm Plan - Consultant's Report

Date:	June 18, 2008
To:	Etobicoke York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District
Wards:	Ward 6 – Etobicoke-Lakeshore
Reference Number:	File No.: 08 102146 WPS 00 TM

SUMMARY

As part of the 2007 Work Program, City Planning staff commissioned a review of the Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guidelines. The review was undertaken by Brook McIlroy Planning and Urban Design and Poulos and Chung Limited. The consultant's review included a day-long workshop with affected property owners and interested parties. Their recommendations are appended as Attachment 1 to this report.

This report asks Council to endorse the updated guidelines and recommends that a Land Owner Precinct Plan be developed in consultation with the City to ensure co-ordinated road networks, streets and blocks, servicing and grading for the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that Council:

1. Adopt the Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guideline Update and Public Realm Plan outlined in this report and attached as Attachment 1, to replace those adopted by Council in 2004.
2. Require the completion of a Land Owner's Precinct Plan to be developed in consultation with the City to ensure co-ordinated road networks, streets and blocks, servicing and grading for the study area, prior to the lifting of the Holding Provisions By-law 194-197 currently in place for Humber Bay Shores.

Financial Impact

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

DECISION HISTORY

The Humber Bay Shores Design Guideline Review was part of the City Planning Division's 2007 work program. Staff prepared a Request for Proposals and selected Brook McIlroy Planning and Urban Design and Poulos and Chung Limited to undertake the work. In addition to the analytical work required by the Terms of Reference, the consultants undertook a day-long working session with affected property owners and interested parties on November 8, 2007. The proposed Guidelines were also considered by the City's Design Review Panel on November 22, 2007 and their recommendations incorporated into the report.

The Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guidelines Update and Public Realm Plan Report was received for information by Etobicoke York Community Council on February 12, 2008. Staff undertook to meet with affected property owners and convene a public meeting with the Humber Bay Shores Community which was held on April 28, 2008.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Humber Bay Shores (Motel Strip) Secondary Plan was approved more than a decade ago. The Plan provides comprehensive development policies for the area east of Park Lawn Road, south of Lake Shore Boulevard West, and west of Palace Pier Court. Implementation of the Plan is premised on conformity with Urban Design Guidelines that were developed at the time the Plan was approved.

In the interim, a number of developments have taken place. Although those developments meet the design guidelines, concerns have been expressed about some aspects of the overall development. In particular, concerns have been expressed about the relationships between some of the taller buildings, and the relationship of some buildings to the public realm including the local park and streets or rights-of-way.

Some recent applications for additional height suggest that the existing Guidelines are not in keeping with the recently adopted Design Criteria for Review of Tall Building Proposals. Those applications also highlight the need to consider how the present unconsolidated property ownership patterns will affect future buildings.

In this regard, the existing guidelines and plan anticipated that property consolidation was a prime objective to achieve optimal development and co-ordinated design and acceptable building relationships. In the absence of realizing significant consolidation to

date, one of the prime focuses of the updated design Guidelines was to address appropriate building relationships if property consolidation can not be achieved.

To date more than 1,300 units have been constructed in 12 buildings generally east of the central site. There is the potential for 6 additional developments extending west to Park Lawn Road. The Humber Bay Shores area is being considered through the Design Review Panel pilot project. Given the above, staff believed that it was appropriate to review the existing Guidelines, in order to set the stage for the next phase of development activity.

COMMENTS

The consultant's report and recommendations are appended as Attachment 1. In developing the Guideline update for Humber Bay Shores several guiding principles have emerged through an analysis of the existing conditions and discussions with stakeholders, the community and City staff, which are:

1. Plan vibrant pedestrian-oriented streetscapes;
2. Balance taller and more slender buildings with low-rise buildings facing public streets and sidewalks;
3. Create well articulated transition zones between public and private areas;
4. Encourage at-grade residential uses with multiple front entrances along public streets and private courtyards;
5. Create a connected community framework through public streets, private sidewalks and mid-block connections between Lake Shore Boulevard West and Marine Parade Drive;
6. Support a diversity of building forms and activities;
7. Make energy efficiency and sustainable design a priority;
8. Provide for reasonable access to sunlight and sky views;
9. Optimize opportunities for retail and restaurant uses along critical points of Marine Parade Drive;
10. Provide on-street parking wherever possible to promote retail viability; and,
11. Build on the Humber Bay Shores Area heritage.

Utilizing the above principles, the revised Guidelines provide a Preferred Master Plan based on a revised height pattern, building locations, and open space connections. The Preferred Master Plan is based on the existing lot patterns and the densities currently permitted by the Plan.

The proposed overall updated built form principles now allow for buildings that are taller with smaller, narrower floor plates and with greater separation distances between tall buildings.

This allows views to be opened up to the water and avoid perceived over crowding of the taller building elements which block views from Lake Shore Boulevard West to the water.

To achieve better separation distances between buildings it is recommended that a relative relationship be established between the height of the building and distance separation (as buildings get taller they should be located further apart with a range of 35 to 50 metres of separation distance).

It is possible that the height proposed in future applications will be in excess of those shown. In that case, the potential for additional height will be evaluated in the context of criteria such as lot size, the position of taller elements in relation to nearby buildings, the ability to provide adequate setback and building separation among other planning considerations.

A prime objective of the Guideline update was to provide the best possible development model for the area. However the consultants have stressed that these urban design guidelines will not result in a positive urban form solution in the absence of a high degree of cooperation and design co-ordination amongst property owners. A recommended Master Plan is provided in the guidelines. In addition, a Land Owner's Precinct Plan is required in order to ensure that co-ordinated road networks, servicing and grading is achieved for the balance of the development area and to assist in future development approvals. The required Precinct Plan must reflect the recommendations of the Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guidelines Update.

Staff have met with the affected property owners and have discussed the recommendations in detail. The property owners are satisfied with the updated Guidelines. Staff also convened a community meeting with the area resident's associations who are in agreement with the direction that the guidelines are recommending. Other area stakeholders have not voiced any opposition to the proposed directions of the updated Guidelines.

The revised road network and height pattern represents a departure from the existing plans and guidelines for the area. Staff do anticipate that a number of development applications will be coming forward in the near future and we will review these applications in the context of the new guidelines and recommend site specific amendments as required in the context of the new updated Guidelines.

Implementation

On June 28, 2004, Council adopted Area Based and Site Specific Urban Design Guidelines including those for Humber Bay, as a companion document for the new Official Plan. Urban Design Guidelines are a key tool used to achieve the Motel Strip Secondary Plan policies. The attached updated guidelines replace the 2004 approved Humber Bay Guidelines.

As of the date of this report, staff are continuing to refine, in consultation with the consultants and landowners, final minor refinements to the Guidelines. If changes are necessary, they will be made available directly at Community Council.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Consultant's Report: The Humber Bay Shores Review and Updating of the City of Toronto's Urban Design Guidelines, January 15, 2008