

**Bloor Corridor Visioning Study – Draft Official Plan  
Amendment and Urban Design Guidelines**

<b>Date:</b>	October 22, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 20 – Trinity-Spadina
<b>Reference Number:</b>	File No. 05 193137 SPS 00 TM

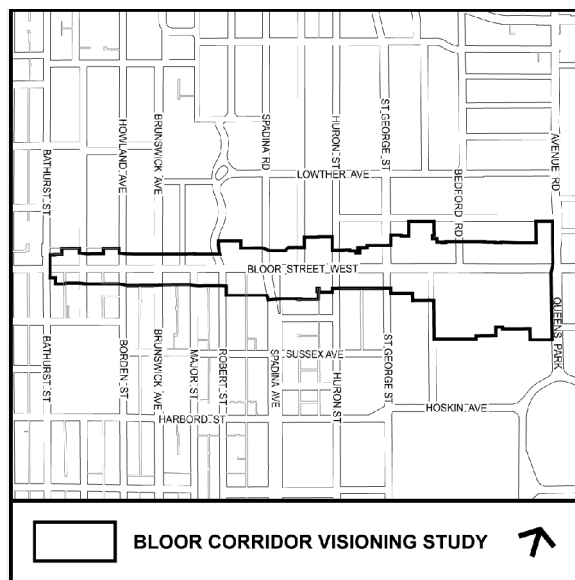
**SUMMARY**

This report presents and recommends approval of a draft Official Plan Amendment to include area-specific policies related to development in the Bloor Corridor, defined as Bloor Street West between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street. The proposed Official Plan policies are supported by draft Urban Design Guidelines that are also the subject of this report. These policy documents represent the culmination of the Bloor Corridor Visioning Study, a public consultation process and area study first initiated in 2005.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. City Council amend the Official Plan substantially in accordance with the draft Official Plan Amendment No. 98 attached as Attachment No. 1;
2. City Council adopt the draft Bloor Corridor Urban Design Guidelines substantially in accordance with Attachment No. 2; and
3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Official



Plan Amendment as may be required; and

4. City Council authorize City officials to take all necessary steps to give effect to the above-noted recommendations.

### **Financial Impact**

The draft Official Plan Amendment for the Bloor Corridor proposes the redesignation of the lands known as Ecology Park, on Madison Avenue north of Bloor Street West, from *Mixed Use Areas* to *Parks and Open Space Areas – Parks*. Though these City-owned lands have been developed and used as a park since 2003, the act of redesignating the lands may have the effect of reducing their property value. Planning staff will provide a supplementary report with further details on the financial impact of the proposed redesignation, in consultation with Parks staff and Facilities and Real Estate staff.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting of July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, Toronto City Council adopted a recommendation to include, among the requirements of settlement with the developers of 1 Bedford Road, \$70,000 in funding for consultant fees for a community-based “Visioning Study” for the Annex. Following consultation with area representatives, at its meeting of December 5, 6 and 7, 2005 Council adopted Terms of Reference and authorized the hiring of consultants to undertake the study. Through a Request For Proposals process, the City selected a team of consultants led by Office for Urbanism, who launched the study in the community in the spring of 2007.

### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the study is to develop a shared vision for the anticipated future growth and enhancement of the Bloor Corridor, while recognizing its unique characteristics and protecting certain area attributes. The City’s consultants, coordinating with staff, led a comprehensive consultation process in the community, including: an opening “Kick-off” meeting in May 2007; visioning forums and workshops in June 2007; and an Open House in December 2007. The consultation also involved a series of Local Advisory Committee meetings including representatives from the Annex Residents’ Association, Harbord Village Residents’ Association, Huron Sussex Residents’ Organization, University of Toronto, Bloor Annex BIA, Harbord Village BIA, Royal Conservatory of Music, Royal Ontario Museum, and other area landowners. City staff are grateful for the ongoing involvement of the Local Advisory Committee members and other members of the public who have contributed time, effort and valued input into the development of the Bloor Corridor Vision.

In May 2008, Office for Urbanism issued its final report, which has been posted on the City’s website, for public review and comment. The final consultants’ report has formed a basis for further discussions regarding the implementation of its principles.

### **COMMENTS**

Planning staff have continued consultations with the Local Advisory Committee October 2008 and February 2009 and June 2009 in the drafting of Official Plan policies and Urban Design Guidelines that further the principles of the Visioning Study recommendations within the City’s policy framework.

## Official Plan Amendment

Attachment No. 1 contains the draft Official Plan Amendment for the Bloor Corridor Area. The policies are intended to be added to Chapter Seven: Site and Area Specific Policies of the City's Official Plan. In summary, the amendment identifies distinct nodes and precincts within the Corridor and outlines a general direction for the future development of each. In particular, as illustrated on Map 1 of the draft Amendment, the policies refer to:

- an Institutional Precinct, generally between Avenue Road and Madison Avenue, which anticipates further development that will contribute towards the creation of a consistent street wall with active at-grade uses and provide visual cohesion through the district;
- the "OISE Block", viewed as a potential development node on the north side of Bloor Street West between St. George Street and Bedford Road;
- a Spadina Node, generally between Madison Avenue and Walmer Road, where redevelopment will take advantage of transit accessibility while addressing its immediate context;
- a Main Street Precinct, between Lippincott Street and Walmer Road, where the existing height permissions and fine-grained retail character would generally be maintained, allowing some modest redevelopment opportunities that would facilitate public realm improvements; and
- a Bathurst Node, at the Bloor/Bathurst intersection, where intensification may be contemplated subject to further detailed study.

Other proposed Official Plan policies specific to this area include:

- the recognition and encouraged continuation of the cultural presence throughout the corridor;
- improvements to the public realm through large and small-scale greening and streetscaping initiatives; and
- encouraging and supporting environmental sustainability initiatives through new development and promoting active transportation to, from and through the corridor.

The draft amendment also proposes to redesignate the lands known as Ecology Park from *Mixed Use Areas* to *Parks and Open Space Areas* on Maps 17 and 18 of the Official Plan. This redesignation is intended to recognize its current use as a park and community focal point, which warrants attention in the review of potential impacts of future redevelopment proposals on adjacent sites.

## Urban Design Guidelines

Supporting the Official Plan policies are draft Urban Design Guidelines, as seen in Attachment No. 2. These Guidelines are intended to provide further illustration of the principles expressed in the draft Official Plan amendment, and emerging from the Visioning Study consultation process. The guidelines contain a series of conceptual maps, graphics and a structure plan indicating

elements to be considered in the review of future development proposals within the corridor. Each node and precinct is discussed in further detail, and as part of the larger area context. The document also contains general built form guidelines which can help to inform specific building design.

## **Parks and Open Spaces**

The Bloor Corridor, as well as the surrounding community, is currently identified on Map 8B of the Official Plan in the lowest category of local parkland provision, ranging from 0.0 to 0.42 hectares of local parkland per 1,000 people. The study process has identified several opportunities for enhancing the system of parks and open spaces in the Corridor, including:

- the enhancement and expansion of a “Bloor Street Green Necklace” linking plazas, forecourts, promenades, green spaces and landscaped areas throughout the corridor;
- a potential new open space on City-owned lands south of Bloor Street, between Lippincott and Borden Streets, through redevelopment of adjacent lands;
- a plaza treatment at the intersection of Bloor Street West with Walmer Road and Robert Street, focused on Trinity-St. Paul’s Church; and
- potential locations for greening the City boulevard on side streets with plantings and streetscaping treatments.

## **Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure**

The draft amendment and guidelines reflect the strong desire expressed by the community to preserve, enhance and improve pedestrian amenity and safety throughout the Bloor Corridor. In addition to design and streetscaping initiatives, the study identified the potential opportunity to widen sidewalks on Bloor Street by removing a traffic lane. Such an initiative may be undertaken at the time that Bloor Street is scheduled for reconstruction, subject to appropriate City staff review and environmental assessment as may be required.

At its meeting of October 22 and 23, 2007, City Council directed the General Manager, Transportation Services, to report on the feasibility of establishing a bikeway on Bloor Street and Danforth Avenue, from Royal York Road to Victoria Park Avenue, including the development of design options and an assessment of the parking and traffic impacts. The Bloor Corridor falls within the bikeway study area. Cycling infrastructure will be considered in the Bloor Corridor in the context of this City-wide study, balanced with the stated objective to improve the pedestrian realm.

## **Significant Views**

Adjacent to the Bloor Corridor are two significant landmark buildings: the Ontario Legislature building at Queen’s Park and the Connaught Laboratories building at Spadina Crescent. Each of these is highly identifiable due to its location at the view terminus of a major roadway. Though neither is within the Bloor Corridor, they both may be subject to the potential impact of significant development in the vicinity of Bloor Street. Specifically, there is the potential for tall buildings in the Institutional Precinct to detract from the Ontario Legislature silhouette and for tall buildings in the Spadina Node to have a visual impact on the Connaught Laboratories spire when viewed from the south. To properly assess these impacts, the draft Official Plan

Amendment proposes that new development in these areas will be subject to a view shed analysis completed to the satisfaction of the City.

## **Conclusion**

The draft Official Plan Amendment and draft Urban Design Guidelines provide a meaningful policy framework to the principles emerging from the Bloor Corridor Visioning Study consultation process. These documents are the culmination of four years' effort by community stakeholders, consultants and City staff and are recommended for Council approval.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Raymond David, Director, Toronto and East York District  
City Planning Division

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment

Attachment 2: Draft Urban Design Guidelines

**Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment**

Authority: Toronto and East York Community Council Item No. ~, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on ~, 20~

Enacted by Council: ~, 20~

**CITY OF TORONTO**

**Bill No. ~**

**BY-LAW No. ~-20~**

**To adopt Amendment No. 98 to the Official Plan of the City of Toronto respecting lands on Bloor Street West, between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street**

WHEREAS authority is given to Council under the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, as amended, to pass this By-law;

WHEREAS the Council for the City of Toronto, at its meeting of ~ 20~, determined to amend the Official Plan for the City of Toronto adopted by By-law No. 1082-2002; and

WHEREAS Council of the City of Toronto has provided adequate information to the public and has held at least one public meeting in accordance with the *Planning Act*;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. Amendment No. 98 to the City of Toronto Official Plan, consisting of the attached text and maps shown on Schedule "A" is hereby adopted pursuant to the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, as amended.

ENACTED AND PASSED this ~ day of ~, A.D. 20~.

DAVID R. MILLER,  
Mayor

ULLI S. WATKISS,  
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

## SCHEDULE “A”

**The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:**

**1.** Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by adding the following Policy 334:

**“334. Bloor Corridor Area, between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street**

a) Diversity of Land Use, Housing Types & Tenures

The Bloor Corridor, between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street, is composed of a variety of land uses including residential, commercial, retail, institutional, cultural, parks and open spaces which contribute to the vibrancy and stability of the neighbourhood.

To support the continued diversity of the Bloor Corridor population, a range of housing types and tenures will be encouraged. New residential development in the Bloor Corridor will be encouraged to include a mix of unit sizes to provide housing opportunities for a range of households, including those with children.

b) Heritage

Development will respect, conserve and reinforce heritage buildings and features throughout the Bloor Corridor. New buildings will provide appropriate transition through setbacks, stepbacks and stepping down of height in order to protect adjacent heritage elements, significant views and the distinctive characteristics of Heritage Conservation Districts.

c) Built Form

Throughout the Bloor Corridor, development will:

- generally provide for a transition in height, density and scale from higher building forms in the east to a low-rise, main street character in the west, with nodes of development concentrated at key intersections adjacent to transit hubs;
- provide appropriate transition in height, density and scale to *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* adjacent to the Bloor Corridor; and
- respect, protect and enhance significant views of key civic and/or historic buildings.

The Bloor Corridor includes various areas of distinct identity, as depicted in Map 1, each of which has unique functions, scale and heights in a diversity of building forms. New development will respond to this function and character with built form that is appropriate to the district in which it is located, as described in the following sections.

## (i) Institutional Precinct

The Institutional Precinct, between Madison Avenue and Avenue Road, includes a significant institutional presence on both the north and south sides, mixed among other uses. Development in the Institutional Precinct will:

- contribute towards the creation of a consistent street wall with active at-grade uses;
- fill gaps in the streetscape;
- provide visual cohesion through the use of massing and architectural elements including ground floor heights, podium heights, cornice lines and materials;
- contribute to a cohesive and pedestrian-oriented public realm; and
- respond to key views and locations, avoiding encroachment into the viewshed of significant buildings. In particular, no building will interrupt or rise above the silhouette of the Ontario Legislature building at Queen's Park, when viewed from University Avenue, subject to a view corridor analysis completed to the satisfaction of the City.

Development on the north side of Bloor Street will be built to the front property line. Development on the south side of Bloor Street will be generously set back from the right of way, consistent with applicable zoning, to align with existing buildings.

## (ii) OISE Block

The OISE Block, bounded by Bloor Street, St. George Street, Prince Arthur Avenue and Bedford Road, is located immediately above the intersection of two subway lines and comprises institutional, office, residential, retail, transit and open space uses. Intensification can be accommodated in this area, and development should consider the block as a whole. Owners of sites located within the OISE Block are encouraged to collaborate in the creation of block or area plans to allow transitions to be considered most meaningfully.

Development within the OISE Block will be brought forward in the context of a comprehensive plan that considers adjacent lands and that, if necessary, can be phased in over time. Generally, such a plan will address:

- the integration of TTC lands within new development, giving visual prominence to subway entrances on Bloor Street;
- maximizing the built street wall on Bloor Street for new buildings while maintaining and enhancing open space within the block;
- the creation of mid-block pedestrian connections north-south and east-west through the block; and
- the establishment of a comprehensive laneway system to provide vehicular service and transit access.



### Bloor-Bedford Open Space

The Bloor-Bedford open space will be improved and maintained in the short term to enhance pedestrian safety and usability. New development that involves the relocation of the open space within the block will provide the same or a greater amount of publicly accessible open space as is existing. The design of the new open space will provide high visibility and accessibility, seek to integrate a new, landmark-quality TTC entrance and create a gateway feature to the adjacent *Neighbourhood*.

### University of Toronto and TTC Sites

Development at 246-252 Bloor Street West and the TTC St. George Station – Bedford Entrance/Bus Loop will provide a transition in height from existing heights on Prince Arthur Avenue towards a peak on or near Bloor Street which does not exceed the height of the building at 1 Bedford Road. Development will seek to integrate access to TTC services within new buildings, and will seek to include highly transparent, active uses at grade.

### York Club Site

Development on the York Club lands at 135 St. George Street will maintain and enhance the historic building and will not diminish or detract from its physical prominence. Accordingly, new buildings will step down in height from the University of Toronto lands to the east, and will be designed to frame views toward the heritage structure.

### (iii) Spadina Node

Development in the Spadina Node, at the intersection of two major streets and a multi-modal transportation hub, will distinguish the Institutional Precinct to the east from the Main Street Precinct to the west. New buildings along the Bloor Street frontage will reflect the fine-grained retail character of the Main Street Precinct in the design of podium elements. New development should seek to integrate TTC lands and give prominence to subway entrances. The height peak of the Spadina Node will be focused at the corners of the intersection, with other buildings providing a downward transition in height from this peak.

Development in the Spadina Node will respect and contribute to the neighbourhood-focused qualities and characteristics of Spadina Road, north of Bloor Street.

The offset between Spadina Avenue and Spadina Road provides an important civic opportunity to create a dramatic view terminus on the northeast corner of Bloor Street and Spadina Road through landmark architecture and design. Any building at the northeast corner of the Bloor/Spadina intersection will adequately

limit shadow impact on Ecology Park, in part by directing taller building elements toward the intersection and lower building heights toward Madison Avenue. No blank walls should face toward Ecology Park nor any adjacent Heritage Conservation District. New development will seek to provide a mid-block pedestrian linkage between Ecology Park and Spadina Road.

Matt Cohen Park will be maintained and enhanced as a neighbourhood focal point. Development in the Spadina Node will seek to create a corridor linking Ecology Park and Matt Cohen Park to provide visual connection between the two open spaces.

Development within the Bloor Corridor will be subject to a view corridor analysis completed to the satisfaction of the City, to preserve and enhance views of the Connaught Laboratories spire at 1 Spadina Crescent, when viewed from the south. Views toward the Connaught Laboratories building from the Bloor Corridor will be preserved and enhanced.

(iv) Main Street Precinct

Development in the Main Street Precinct will respect and reinforce the existing character of:

- a series of attached, low-rise buildings with narrow frontages at the street edge;
- a fine grain of retail at grade serving the surrounding neighbourhoods; and
- office and residential uses in units above grade.

Between Lippincott Street and Walmer Road the prevailing height permissions allowing up to 5 storeys should generally be maintained. Should the opportunity arise, up to 7 storeys in height may be considered:

- on lands, between Lippincott and Borden Streets, where the development will facilitate the dedication of adjacent land for the creation of a new public open space south of the public laneway and significant improvements to the public realm; and
- on lands at the northwest corner of Bloor Street West and Walmer Road, where the development will facilitate the dedication of adjacent land for the creation of a public plaza at the intersection,

New development will preserve and enhance sightlines to the tower of Trinity-St. Paul's Church at the southwest corner of Bloor and Robert Streets through the use of building setbacks and/or widened sidewalks.

(v) Bathurst Node

Development which significantly exceeds existing height and density permissions should not proceed within the Bathurst Node until a planning rationale report,

which addresses the issues outlined in Policy 2.2.3 (3b) of the Official Plan, is completed.

Development in the Bathurst Node, located at the intersection of an arterial street and at a multi-modal transit hub, may be appropriate for higher densities than the Main Street Area and corresponding higher-quality public realm amenities. Development will provide appropriate transition in height, density and scale to *Neighbourhoods* adjacent to the Bloor Corridor. In order to reinforce the continuous main street character of Bloor Street, taller buildings should incorporate a podium element respecting existing cornice lines, with a fine grain of commercial and retail uses at grade.

#### d) Culture

The Bloor Corridor is home to a range of cultural institutions and activities of both local and regional significance including the Royal Ontario Museum, Royal Conservatory of Music, the Bata Shoe Museum, the Al Green Theatre, Trinity St. Paul's Church and the Bloor Cinema. Existing and new uses that support and expand the vitality of cultural activity in the Bloor Corridor will be encouraged.

#### e) Public Realm

Streetscape improvements that promote a healthy and vibrant pedestrian environment will be encouraged in the public rights-of-way and adjacent privately-owned lands. At the time of any future reconstruction of Bloor Street West between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street, consideration will be given to initiatives including, but not limited to:

- the redesign of the street cross-section, including examining the possibility of lane reductions to allow for widened sidewalks and additional street tree planting;
- accommodation of cyclists; and
- the provision of integrated lay-bys for drop-offs and delivery, as necessary.

The network of parks and open spaces will be expanded and improved. A series of “green fingers” extending from Bloor Street along its north-south connecting streets will be provided as opportunities arise to provide parks, plazas, forecourts, additional street tree plantings, hard and soft landscaping, and seating areas throughout the Bloor Corridor. A continuous pedestrian circuit will be implemented with wayfinding elements such as public art, signage and/or a unified landscaping treatment. Existing and potential parks, open spaces and “greening” opportunities are identified on Map 2.

The creation of a new public open space on City-owned lands south of Bloor Street between Borden and Lippincott Streets, as shown on Map 2, may be

considered through new development on adjacent properties and the relocation of the existing parking spaces underground.

f) Sustainability

Development in the Bloor Corridor will exhibit leadership in environmentally sustainable planning and design within an urbanized setting. Compliance with the Toronto Green Standard, and/or any successive performance standard for new development, is required. Advanced performance measures toward environmental sustainability will be encouraged for all new development. Green roofs will also be encouraged and may be required under the Green Roof by-law.

g) Active Transportation

The design of rights-of-way in the Bloor Corridor will recognize and enhance the primacy of pedestrian safety and movement, and will reinforce and support transit use and cycling. Opportunities to provide widened sidewalks, consolidated bicycle parking areas and enhanced pedestrian access to subway stations within the Bloor Corridor will be pursued. Cycling infrastructure will be considered in the Bloor Corridor in the context of a City-wide study as directed by Council.

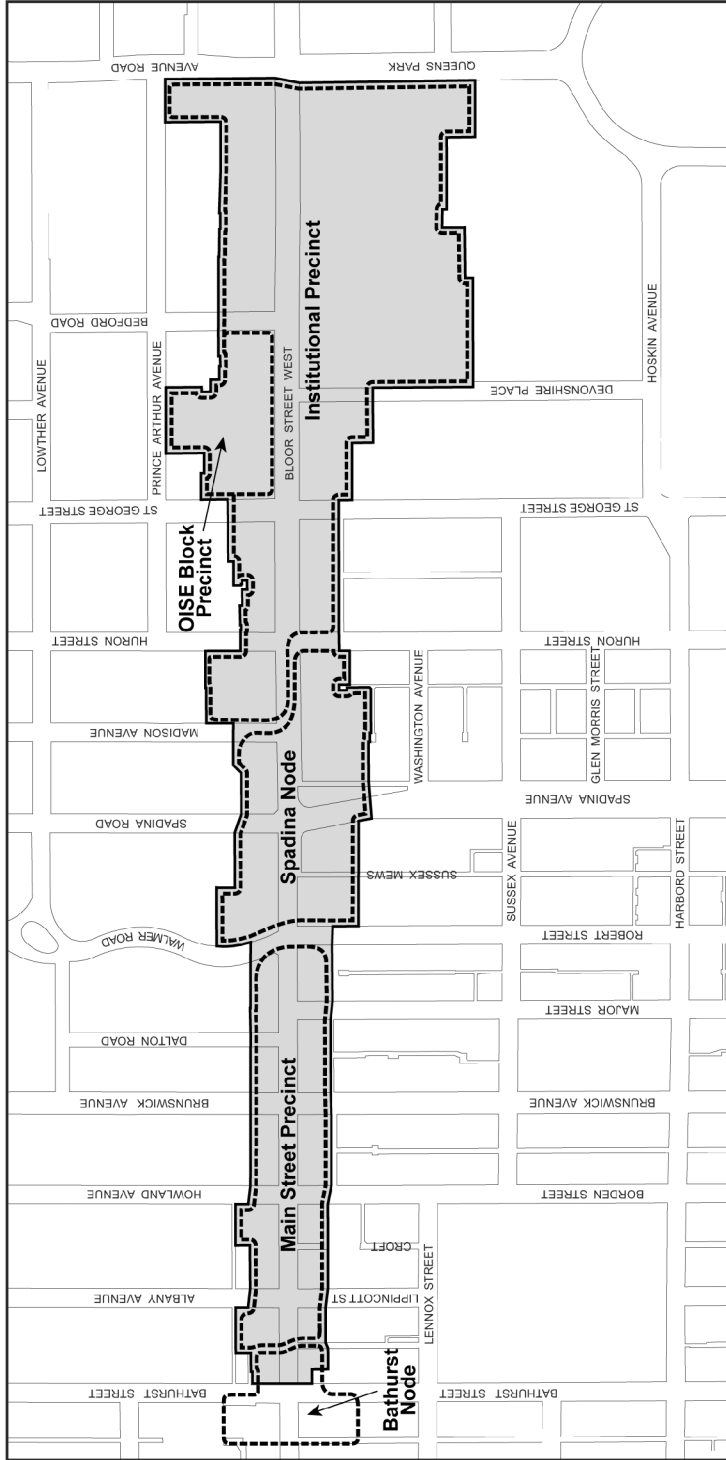
h) Bloor Corridor Urban Design Guidelines

In order to assist in meeting the objectives of this Plan and area specific policies, the Bloor Corridor Urban Design Guidelines will be used to provide direction for reviewing development applications in this area. These guidelines will be read in conjunction with the urban design policies in the Official Plan.

i) University of Toronto Lands

These policies will be considered in conjunction with the prevailing University of Toronto Secondary Plan.”

2. Maps 28 & 29, Site and Area Specific Policies, are amended by adding the lands shown in Appendix 1 to the identified “Areas affected by the Site and Area Specific Policies” as Policy No. 334.
3. Maps 17 & 18, Land Use Plan, are amended by designating the lands shown in Appendix 2 as *Parks and Open Space Areas – Parks*.

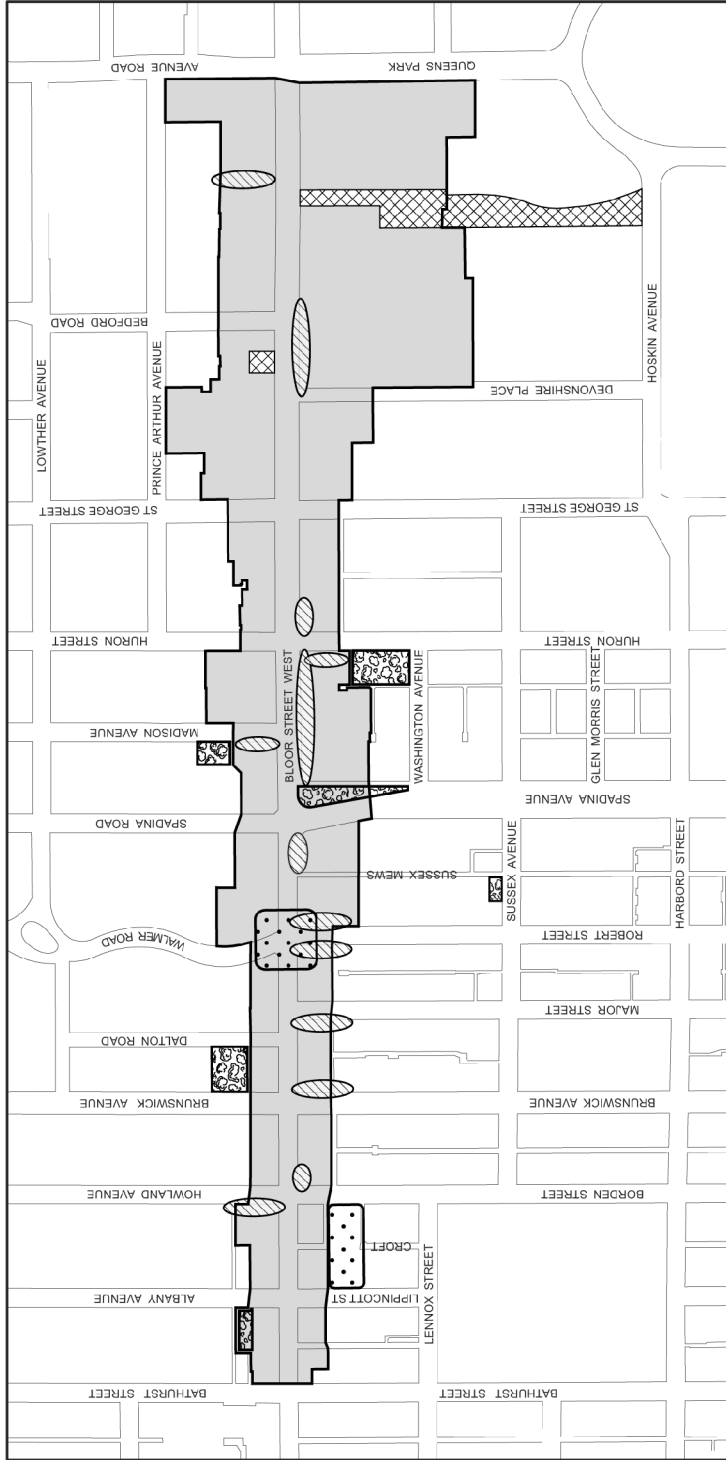


# Bloor Corridor Visioning Study

**TORONTO** City Planning  
**Map 1 - Nodes and Precincts**

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 Note to Scale  
 10/09/2009



**Bloor Corridor Visioning Study**

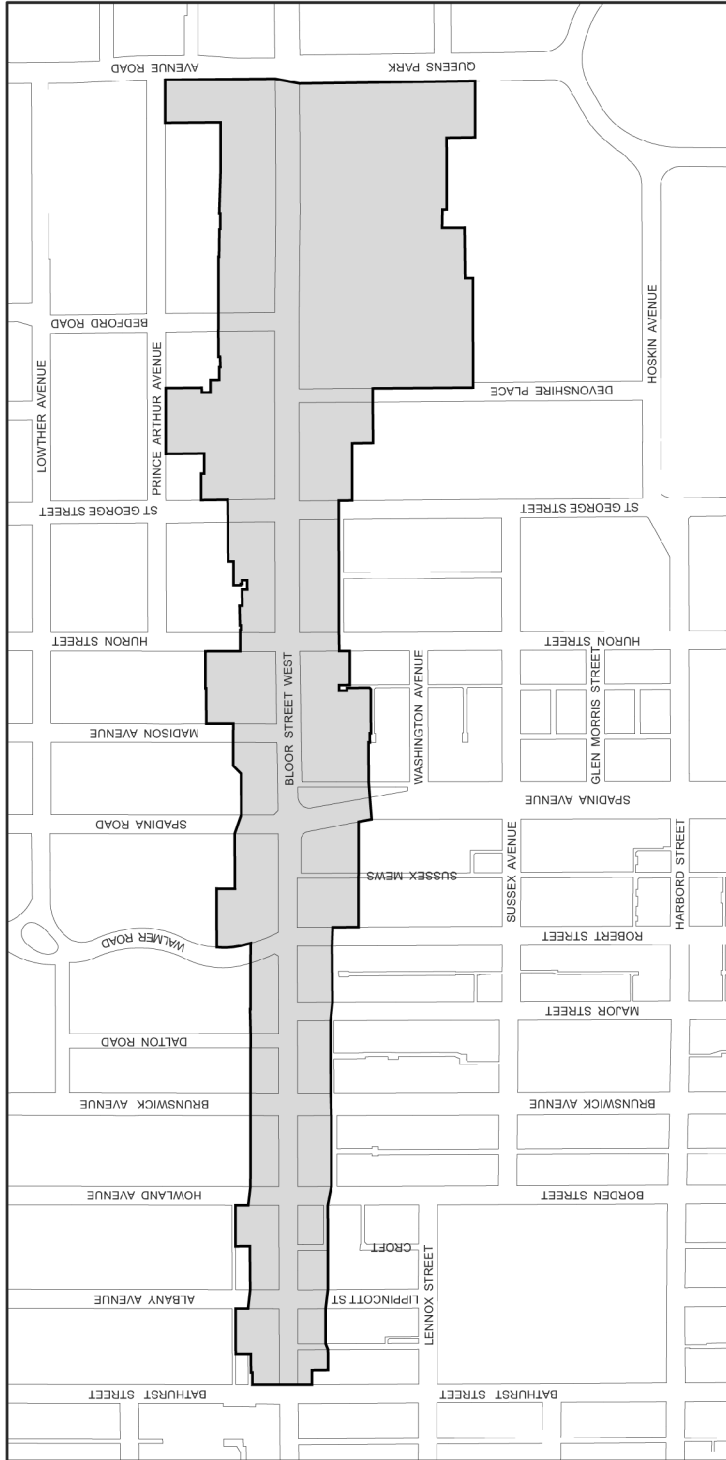
**Toronto City Planning**  
**Map 2 - Parks, Open Spaces and Greening Opportunities**

File # 05\_193137

-  Existing Parks & Open space
-  Potential 'Greening' Opportunity
-  Potential Open Space Opportunity
-  Publicly Accessible Private Open Spaces

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 Note to Scale  
 10/09/2009

APPENDIX 1



**Bloor Corridor Visioning Study**

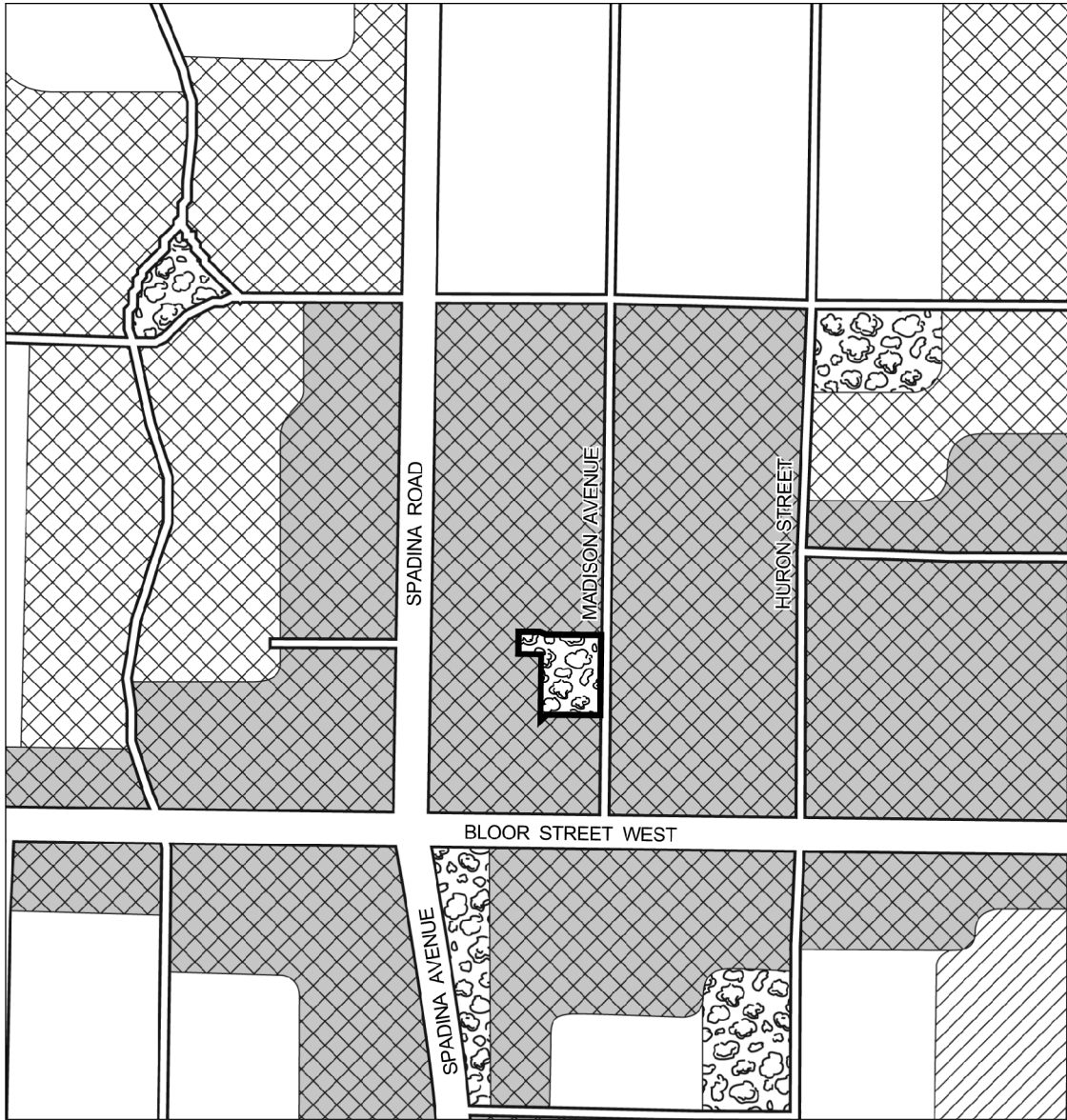
**Toronto** City Planning  
**Official Plan Amendment #98**

Revisions to Map 28 Site and Area Specific Policies to add Bloor Corridor Visioning Study area boundary as Site and Area Specific Policy #334

File # 05\_193137



APPENDIX 2



**Official Plan Amendment #98**

Revisions to Land Use Map 18 to Redesignate lands from Mixed Use Areas to Parks & Open Spaces Areas - Parks

**Bloor Corridor Visioning Study**

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- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Site Location            | Parks & Open Space Areas |
| Neighbourhoods           | Parks                    |
| Apartment Neighbourhoods | Institutional Areas      |
| Mixed Use Areas          |                          |

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Not to Scale  
10/13/2009