



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

2011 - 2012 Avenue Studies – Request for Direction Report

Date:	October 24, 2011
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
Wards:	Wards 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 25, 26, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40
Reference Number:	Pg11047

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the City Planning 2011 and 2012 Avenue Study budget be allocated to the Eglinton – Scarborough Crosstown Planning Study (Jane Street to McCowan Road) to coincide with the Eglinton – Scarborough Crosstown LRT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

City Planning Division recommends that:

1. Eglinton Avenue between Jane Street and McCowan Road be endorsed for study.
2. The City Planning Division's 2011 capital budget funds for Avenue Studies and \$270,000 of the proposed 2012 capital budget funds for Avenue Studies be allocated to the Eglinton-Scarborough Crosstown Planning Study.
3. The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning be directed to report back on one additional Avenue Study for 2012.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the City Planning Division's 2011 capital budget and is being recommended for the 2012 capital budget.

BACKGROUND

In conjunction with the *Centres, Employment Districts and the Downtown and Central Waterfront*, the *Avenues* form part of the City's growth management strategy in the Official Plan. Identified in Map 2 Urban Structure of the Plan (Attachment 1), *Avenues* represent segments of main commercial streets that can accommodate new housing and jobs while improving the public realm.

There are approximately 160 kilometres of *Avenues* identified.

Section 2.2.3 of the Plan directs that growth on the *Avenues* will be achieved through the preparation of Avenue Studies which, in consultation with the local community, sets out a blueprint to facilitate and shape future redevelopment through amendments to the zoning regulations and the creation of urban design guidelines.

Council has made annual recommendations for specific segments of *Avenues* to be studied in detail. Since *Avenues* cannot be studied at one time given limited resources, Committees and Council have selected portions of *Avenues* to be studied each year. Funding levels in the past have generally provided for two or three Avenue studies per year.

On February 4, 5 and 6, 2003 Council adopted a report that identified criteria and a process for selection priority Avenue studies. The criteria identifies for the selection of Avenue studies were:

- The presence of vacant and underutilized lands with redevelopment potential;
- Significant potential to create new jobs and housing along transit lines;
- Existing zoning was acting as an impediment to area improvement and growth;
- A need for streetscape improvements;
- The study would coincide with scheduling of road reconstruction;
- A strong market exists for redevelopment and development pressure;
- Physical infrastructure can accommodate additional growth, or is scheduled to be expanded to do so;
- There is demonstrable community support for an Avenue study;
- A good geographic distribution of studies is achieved across the City;
- Land use and design studies previously have been done for an area but not implemented; and
- There is a potential synergy with existing economic development programs and initiatives.

At its November 28, 2007 meeting the Planning and Growth Management Committee asked staff to consider the relationship to Transit City Priorities as another selection criterion.

To date, 19 Avenue Studies covering approximately 38 of the 160 kilometres of *Avenues* have commenced, 17 have been completed. A list of Avenue Studies can be found in Attachment 2.

Decision History

In July 2010, City Council adopted the Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings which generally address the overall size and shape of mid-rise buildings, the design of the adjacent public realm on the Avenue and the quality of the buildings and landscape. City Planning has been using the Performance Standards in the review of mid-rise proposals on the Avenues and in other mixed use areas where appropriate.

In May 2011, Planning and Growth Management Committee directed that the scope of work for the Five Year Review of the Official Plan and Municipal Comprehensive Review include intensification along Higher Order Public Transit Routes including Eglinton Avenue East and West.

COMMENTS

In March 2011, the Toronto Transit Plan was announced by the Government of Ontario, Metrolinx and the City of Toronto. Under the plan, Metrolinx, Ontario's regional transportation agency, is responsible for building the Eglinton-Scarborough Crosstown light rail transit (LRT) line.

The new Eglinton–Scarborough Crosstown transit line will provide a 25km LRT corridor between Black Creek Drive in the west and McCowan Road and the Scarborough City Centre in the east. The new transit line will include up to 26 stations. The majority of the transit line, 19km, will be underground between Black Creek Drive and Kennedy Road. The remaining 6 km will run along the current route of the Scarborough Rapid Transit line.

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) released by Metrolinx in 2008, and endorsed by Council in 2009, implements the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe by providing a long-term vision for coordinated transportation across the entire Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

The RTP identifies intensification corridors – areas that will have upgraded transit services – as places to accommodate growth and development. The RTP directs municipalities to assess these corridors for their potential for higher density mixed-use development in a transit supportive urban form.

Eglinton Avenue is identified as an intensification corridor in the RTP.

Study Objectives

Studying Eglinton Avenue at this time provides the opportunity to work with the various communities, businesses and neighbourhoods along Eglinton Avenue to create an updated planning framework in light of the substantial transit investment while co-ordinating public sector planning efforts of the City, Metrolinx and the TTC. In addition to the updated planning framework, the study team will review station designs and work with the TTC to expedite the Site Plan Control process.

The proposed study area will extend from Jane Street in the west to McCowan Road in the east. The exact study boundaries will be established at the outset and will be phased to correspond with the site plan applications for the station design as well as construction of the LRT.

In the past, City Planning has used dedicated funds in its capital budget to retain professional consultant teams to conduct Avenue Studies. Through the Avenue Study process consultant teams engage local residents, property and business owners and other stakeholders through open houses, design charrettes and local advisory committees to create a vision for the subject Avenue.

Avenue Study reports prepared by the consultant team generally identify key development opportunities, determine appropriate height and massing for new buildings, introduce transition strategies between new buildings and existing neighbourhoods, identify public realm and streetscape improvements, provide parking strategies and develop urban design guidelines. The recommendations contained in the consultant's study are then reviewed by staff and implemented through area specific zoning, urban design guidelines, Official Plan amendments and other planning tools.

In light of the 19 studies undertaken to date together with Council's adoption of the Avenues and Mid Rise Building Study, it is proposed that this Avenue type planning study be conducted in-house.

The study is estimated to take two years to complete and will be led by a team of six City Planning staff, dedicated solely to the Eglinton-Scarborough Crosstown Planning study, who will work in partnership with Metrolinx and TTC throughout the study process. In addition to the regular City Planning Capital Budget for Avenue Studies, Metrolinx has agreed to contribute \$1,332,000 over a two year period to cover the costs of six staff (salaries plus benefits) who will be dedicated to this study.

The Division's Avenue Studies Capital Budget for 2011 and 2012 will be used to retain consultants with expertise in land value capture economics, public consultation and other areas which will be key to the Eglinton-Scarborough Crosstown Planning Study.

The study deliverables are expected to include implementation of the performance standards for mid-rise buildings through Official Plan amendments, updated zoning and urban design guidelines; a public realm strategy; a community services review; heritage and archaeological analysis and a real estate strategy.

At the beginning of the study, a public consultation strategy will be developed. It is anticipated that the strategy will include, but is not limited to, identifying local stakeholders, briefing the 15 Ward Councillors that are part of the study area and the four Community Councils, establishing Local Advisory Groups, and holding public meetings. Both the TTC and Metrolinx have initiated public consultations within the study area, and efforts will be coordinated.

Conclusion

Avenue Studies are a major implementation strategy for directing the growth envisioned by the Official Plan. Staff resources will be directed to commence this study by the end of 2011 utilizing both the funding provided by Metrolinx and the City Planning Avenue funds to enable the Eglinton-Scarborough Crosstown Planning Study to be completed within 2 years.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Attachment 2: Previous Avenue Studies

Pilot Avenue Studies

The Queensway between Kipling Avenue and Mimico Creek
Finch Avenue West at Weston Road between Milvan Drive and Signet Drive
Bloor Street West between Dundas Street West and Lansdowne Avenue
Kingston Road between Guildwood Go Station and Highland Creek

2003 Avenue Study Areas

College Street between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue
Lake Shore Boulevard West between Etobicoke Creek and Kipling Avenue
Bloor Street West between Mimico Creek and Prince Edward Drive
Wilson Avenue between Bathurst Street and Keele Street

2004 Avenue Study Areas

Danforth Avenue between Victoria Park Avenue and Warden Avenue
Dundas Street West between Royal York Avenue and Humber River

2005 Avenue Study Areas

St. Clair Avenue West between Bathurst Street and Glenholme Avenue
St. Clair Avenue West between Glenholme Avenue and Keele Street
O'Connor Drive between Sandra Road and Victoria Park Avenue*

2006 Avenue Study Areas

Avenue Road between Wilson Avenue and Lawrence Avenue West
Lawrence Avenue between Victoria Park Avenue and Birchmount Road

2008 Avenue Study Areas

Bloor Street West between Dundas Street West and Keele Street
Kingston Road west of Danforth Avenue to east of Chine Drive in the Cliffside
Community

2009 Avenue Study Areas

Sheppard Avenue East between the former Hydro Corridor and Bay Mills Road/Aragon
Avenue*
St. Clair Avenue West between Scarlett Road and Keele Street

*Study not yet completed