

# **BLOOR ANNEX CORRIDOR VISIONING STUDY**

## **Background**

The Bloor Annex Corridor refers to the area along Bloor Street West, between Avenue Road and Christie/Grace Streets. This area, especially between Walmer Road and Avenue Road, has become the subject of intense development interest in recent years. The neighbouring community of Bloor-Yorkville to the east has already experienced a surge in condominium and hotel development, and that focus has been shifting westward to development parcels in the Bloor Annex Corridor. There are several active development applications within the study area that seek intensification of residential uses with retail at grade. Most notably, the development known as 1 Bedford Road, which would house 308 units in a 32-storey tower with retail at grade and underground parking, has recently been approved by Toronto City Council and awaits final approval at the Ontario Municipal Board.

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, funding for consultant fees for a community-based "Visioning Study" for the Annex. In particular, as described in the Planning Staff report dated July 18, 2005, the study would look at Bloor Street West between Avenue Road and Christie Street, including the business communities of Koreatown BIA and Mirvish Village BIA.

Following further Council direction, consultation with area organizations and the Ward Councillors, the Visioning Study will be pursued in two phases: Phase I examining Bloor Street between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street; and Phase II, Bathurst Street to Christie/Grace Streets. The Terms of Reference for Phase I of the Bloor Annex Corridor Visioning Study follow.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE – PHASE I**  
**Avenue Road to Bathurst Street**  
**December 1, 2005**

**1.0 STUDY OUTLINE**

**1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to develop a shared vision for the Bloor Street West corridor between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street (Phase I of the “Bloor Annex Corridor”) for the next ten years, through consultation with area stakeholders including residents, businesses and landowners.

**1.2 Study Area & Neighbourhood Impact Area**

The Bloor Annex Corridor is the main street of various residential neighbourhoods and home to the Bloor-Annex Business Improvement Area as well as several cultural, educational and institutional facilities including the University of Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Bata Shoe Museum and the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. It is an established neighbourhood, retail destination and transportation thoroughfare that serves the needs of residents at the local, city-wide and regional level. In this area, Bloor Street links together several specialized shopping areas, commercial and institutional uses and stable, low-rise residential neighbourhoods.

The Phase I Study Area (shown in Appendix A) will include properties fronting on the north and south sides of Bloor Street between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street. East of Walmer Road, this strip is currently characterized by a range of building types and uses, including low- to mid-rise commercial retail, high-rise hotel and residential, and landmark institutional buildings. West of Walmer Road, this area is more consistently low-rise in scale, comprising typical main street retail/commercial uses with some residential above.

Impacts of development within this study area on the broader communities bounded by Harbord Street/Hoskin Avenue, the Canadian Pacific Railway, Christie/Grace Streets and Avenue Road will also be considered (see the Neighbourhood Impact Area shown in Appendix B). These are typically low-rise, stable residential neighbourhoods consisting mainly of single and semi-detached homes. Many of these dwellings are of historical significance individually, and collectively it is an area of special historical identity. Along Spadina Road/Spadina Avenue, St. George Street and Walmer Road, the building forms are more reflective of a mid- to high-rise apartment neighbourhood. Parts of this area are also proposed to be reviewed in concurrent Heritage Conservation District studies, to be considered in tandem with the Bloor Annex Corridor Visioning Study.

### **1.3 Objectives**

- To consult with local residents and stakeholders;
- To develop a vision for the nature and use of the Bloor Annex Corridor and establish principles for future development;
- To set reasonable expectations for “responsible intensification” along the Bloor Annex corridor by examining appropriate areas for development;
- To develop an urban design concept for the Bloor Annex Corridor;
- To establish performance criteria for issues such as heights, densities, built form and separation distances;
- To determine potential impacts on local community services & facilities, parking, traffic, bicycle circulation and transit;
- To protect stable low-rise residential neighbourhoods; and
- To identify opportunities for potential public realm improvements.

## **2.0 PROJECT PHASING**

Once a consultant team has been hired and the project has been initiated, it is targeted for completion within 9 months. The study should be completed according to the following phases:

### **2.1 Phase I (2 months)**

- general analysis of existing conditions
- identification of viable potential development sites
- review of planning documents and relevant studies
- meeting with City staff and relevant agencies
- “kick-off” public information meeting

### **2.2 Phase II (3 months)**

- charette / “visioning” workshop
- consultation with Local Advisory Committee, broader community
- development and submission of concept plan
- presentation of draft vision to community

### **2.3 Phase III (4 months)**

- further meetings with staff as necessary
- recommendations and implementation plan

## **3.0 RELEVANT DOCUMENTS & STUDIES**

Phase I of the Bloor Annex Corridor Study should include the review of existing planning policies, as well as recent studies and initiatives that have taken place, or are taking place, both within the study area and in the broader context. These include, but may not be limited to:

### **3.1 Planning Documents**

- Former City of Toronto Official Plan (1991), including:
  - Annex Part II Plan
  - University of Toronto Area Part II Plan
  - Seaton Village Part II Plan
- Official Plan of Metropolitan Toronto (1994)
- Provincial Policy Statement (2005)
- New City of Toronto Official Plan (2003 – not in force)
- Former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended
- City of Toronto Bike Plan (2001)

### **3.2 Completed Studies and Initiatives**

- Former City of Toronto Urban Design Handbook (1997)
- Toronto Urban Design Guidelines: Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown (2004)
- Bloor-Yorkville Urban Design Guidelines (Brook McIlroy, 2002)
- East Annex Heritage Conservation District Study (1993)
- City of Toronto Planning Studies and Avenues Studies (<http://www.toronto.ca/planning/newtoronto.htm>)

### **3.3 Concurrent Studies and Initiatives**

- Proposed Annex Heritage Conservation District Studies – Heritage Preservation Services
- Harbord Village Heritage Conservation District Studies – Heritage Preservation Services
- Demographic profile, Community Needs Assessment for current and future neighbourhood population – City Planning Department (Policy)
- Planning Analysis of Harbord Village (area bounded by Bloor Street, College Street, Bathurst Street and Spadina Avenue) – City Planning Department
- Traffic and Parking Impact Study of Bloor Street West, between Bathurst Street and Avenue Road/Queen’s Park Crescent – City Transportation Services, Works & Emergency Services Department
- Relevant University of Toronto documents, resources and studies

### **3.4 Other**

The consultant is encouraged to draw upon knowledge and experience with other City of Toronto Avenue Studies and with jurisdictions outside of Toronto to lend a broader perspective to the Visioning Study.

A series of reports on Bloor Street intensification prepared by University of Toronto students in 2002 may also provide useful background information (<http://www.cquest.utoronto.ca/env/env421h/BloorStreet/BloorStreet.pdf>).

## **4.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

During the course of the study the consultant will hold consultation meetings with the Local Advisory Committee (see below) and the community at large. The consultation process should consist of at least three and not more than five meetings, one of which takes the form of an urban design charette or “visioning” workshop.

### **4.1 Local Advisory Committee**

A focused Local Advisory Committee (LAC) will be established to facilitate consultation with the Annex and neighbouring communities. The LAC will consist of representatives of local residents’ associations, Business Improvement Areas, the University of Toronto, area cultural and religious institutions and the local development industry. While the LAC will strive to achieve consensus among its stakeholder representatives and the local community at large, that is not its goal. Rather, it shall create a forum for ideas on how the corridor may evolve.

In order for the LAC to function as an active resource group for the broader community, membership may be limited and members will be asked to consistently attend all LAC meetings. Each stakeholder group will have one designated representative on the LAC and may select an alternate to be present at meetings that the designate cannot attend.

The proposed membership may include the following:

- City staff
- Annex Residents’ Association
- Harbord Village Residents’ Association
- Huron-Sussex Residents’ Association
- Bloor-Annex Business Improvement Area
- Harbord Street Business Improvement Area
- University of Toronto
- Cultural Institutions
- Religious Institutions
- Development Interests

Other organizations bordering the study area will be invited to observe the process, and kept advised as the study progresses. These include, but are not limited to:

- Seaton Village Residents’ Association
- Palmerston Area Residents’ Association
- Mirvish Village Business Improvement Area
- Koreatown Business Improvement Area
- Bloor-Yorkville Business Improvement Area

## **4.2 Area-Wide Consultation**

Consultation will also include larger meetings with the broader community. Residents' groups and other stakeholders throughout the Neighbourhood Impact Area will receive notification regarding public meetings and will be invited to comment in that forum.

## **4.3 Website**

City staff will establish and maintain a website to facilitate access to information throughout the course of the study. Public documents including staff reports, meeting notices and minutes will be posted to the website on a regular basis.

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# Appendix A: Bloor Annex Corridor Visioning Study Area –Phases I and II

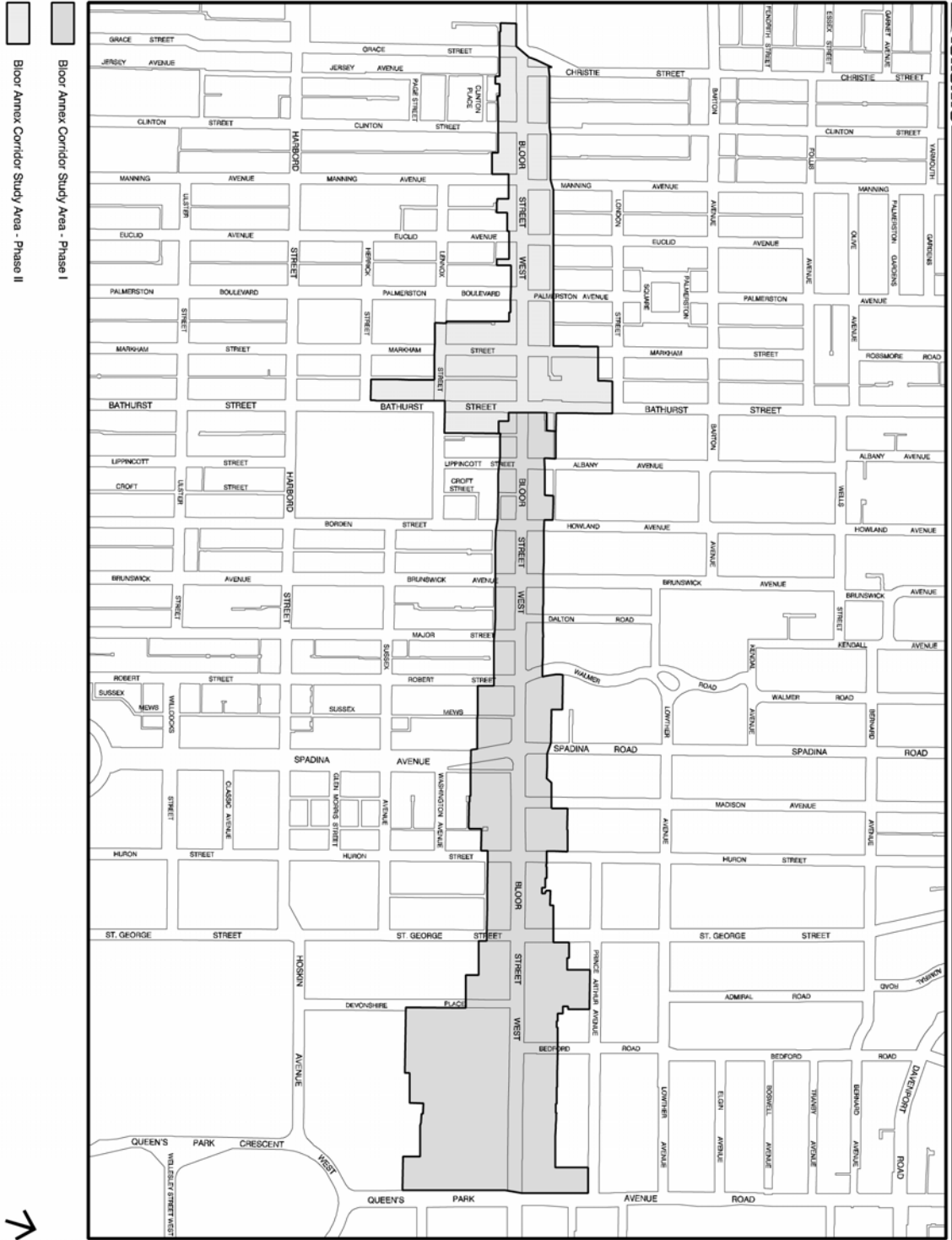


FIG. 12 (PLAN) BRAMBURTON SQUARES (PHASE I) SPECIAL STUDIES 2005 (PRELIMINARY SECONDARY NUMBERING) STREET AND/OR BLOCKS (A)

Not to Scale  
 Extracted 12/01/05 - TA

# Appendix B: Neighbourhood Impact Area



Neighbourhood Impact Area

Fig. B-1: Neighbourhood Impact Area. Source: City of Toronto, Planning and Economic Development Department, 2008. Primary Secondary Neighbourhood Study Area Map.

Not to Scale  
 Extracted 10/27/05 - 1A

