



# Bloor-Dundas 'Avenue' Study

**Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects**

**in association with Poulos & Chung Limited**

**September 2009**



**Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design / Pace Architects**

51 Camden Street, Suite 300  
Toronto, ON M5V 1V2  
Tel.: 416.504.5997  
Fax: 416.504.7712  
[www.brookmcilroy.com](http://www.brookmcilroy.com)

**Poulos & Chung Limited**

535 Bur Oak Avenue  
Markham, ON L6C 2S5  
Tel.: 905.479.7942  
Fax: 905.479.1266

Produced for:

**City of Toronto**

Metro Hall, 23rd Floor, 55 John Street  
Toronto, ON M5V 3C6  
Tel.: 416.397.0244  
Fax: 416.397.4080  
[www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction &amp; Context</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Study Purpose	
	1.2 What is an Avenue?	
	1.3 Work Program	
	1.4 Project Team	
	1.5 Local Advisory Committee (LAC)	
	1.6 Consultation Process	
	1.7 Document Structure	
<b>2</b>	<b>Planning Framework</b>	<b>7</b>
	2.1 Policy Framework	
	2.2 Recent City-led Area Planning Work	
<b>3</b>	<b>Study Area Analysis</b>	<b>15</b>
	3.1 Study Area	
<b>4</b>	<b>Consultation Process</b>	<b>27</b>
	4.1 Avenue Study Public Meetings	
<b>5</b>	<b>Community Framework</b>	<b>33</b>
	5.1 Introduction	
	5.2 Built Form Recommendations	
	5.3 Opportunity Sites	
	5.4 Transit & Street Improvements	
	5.5 Open & Green Space	
	5.6 Community Services & Facilities	
	5.7 Sustainability	
<b>6</b>	<b>Design Guidelines</b>	<b>77</b>
	6.1 Public Realm	
	6.2 Private Realm	
	6.3 Vehicular Movement	
<b>7</b>	<b>Implementation Recommendations</b>	<b>94</b>
	7.1 Implementation Recommendations	
	7.2 Community Involvement	
	7.3 Ongoing Monitoring & Evaluation	

## APPENDICES

A – Workshop Summary

B – Feedback from Community Meetings

C – Transportation Report

# Executive Summary

The Bloor-Dundas 'Avenue' Study was prepared by Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects (BMI/Pace) in association with Poulos + Chung Limited, for the City of Toronto as part of the Avenue Studies policy identified in the City's Official Plan.

Over the next two decades, Toronto is expected to see significant growth. To ensure stable neighbourhoods are not subject to inappropriate growth, the City has identified the Avenues in the Official Plan as one of four places to accommodate the growth - Downtown, Centres, Avenues and Employment Districts. Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West are identified as Avenues. In 2008, the Bloor-Dundas 'Avenue' Study was selected by Council as one of two Avenues to be studied.

The Bloor-Dundas 'Avenue' Study addresses the area of Bloor Street West between the CN tracks to Keele Street and Dundas Street West between Boustead Avenue and Glenlake Avenue. The Study will provide a long-term plan for the area that integrates a community vision. It should also create an updated and defensible policy framework for assessing future development applications.

The Avenue Study process included public meetings, Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meetings, a half-day Design Workshop, a walking tour with the LAC as well as consultation with other area stakeholders and representatives. Many of the recommendations contained in this document stem from the consultation process, although not all of the recommendations in this report represent full public consensus.

The following provides a brief summary of the key Study findings, recommendations and associated implementation strategies. For additional analysis and background information please refer to the appropriate Sections:

- Section 1: Introduction and Context
- Section 2: Planning Framework
- Section 3: Study Area Analysis
- Section 4: Consultation Process
- Section 5: Community Framework
- Section 6: Design Guidelines
- Section 7: Implementation Recommendations

## Study Findings

While the Study Area has not seen significant development activity for many years, two development applications have been submitted for properties fronting on Bloor Street West in the last two years. Further development interest in the area is likely given the number of underdeveloped sites, increased demand for city living, existing neighbourhood amenities and services, excellent public transit and proximity to the downtown.

Building on the Bloor Street Visioning Initiative (undertaken in early 2008) and its seven guiding principles, this Study provides a community framework and urban design guidelines to direct redevelopment that strengthens the existing context and contributes to a vibrant, mixed-use community.

## Community Framework

The Study's framework consists of built form recommendations, opportunity sites analysis, transit and street improvements, open and green space improvements, community facilities and services recommendations, and sustainability opportunities. The majority of the recommendations and improvements fall under the following categories: enhancing the pedestrian and cyclist experience including short-term and long-term options for the Bloor Street West right-of-way, encouraging high-quality built form, increasing the number of meaningful public open spaces and promoting a mix of compatible uses. The framework supports Bloor Street West as a retail-oriented street and recommends that existing at-grade retail commercial uses be maintained in new developments. New development on Dundas Street West, south of Bloor Street West, should also include retail commercial uses at-grade to complement the existing uses on Roncesvalles Avenue. North of Bloor Street West, development on Dundas Street West could include retail or office uses.

## Urban Design Guidelines

The Study's Urban Design Guidelines provide recommendations for both the public and private realms. Public realm guidelines address boulevard treatments, parks and open space, public art, signage and accessibility. Private realm guidelines address building orientation, built form, façade articulation and sustainability, all focused on encouraging high-quality and context-appropriate development. Implementing these design guidelines will help to improve the appearance and functionality of Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West for local residents, visitors, business owners and patrons.

## Implementation Recommendations

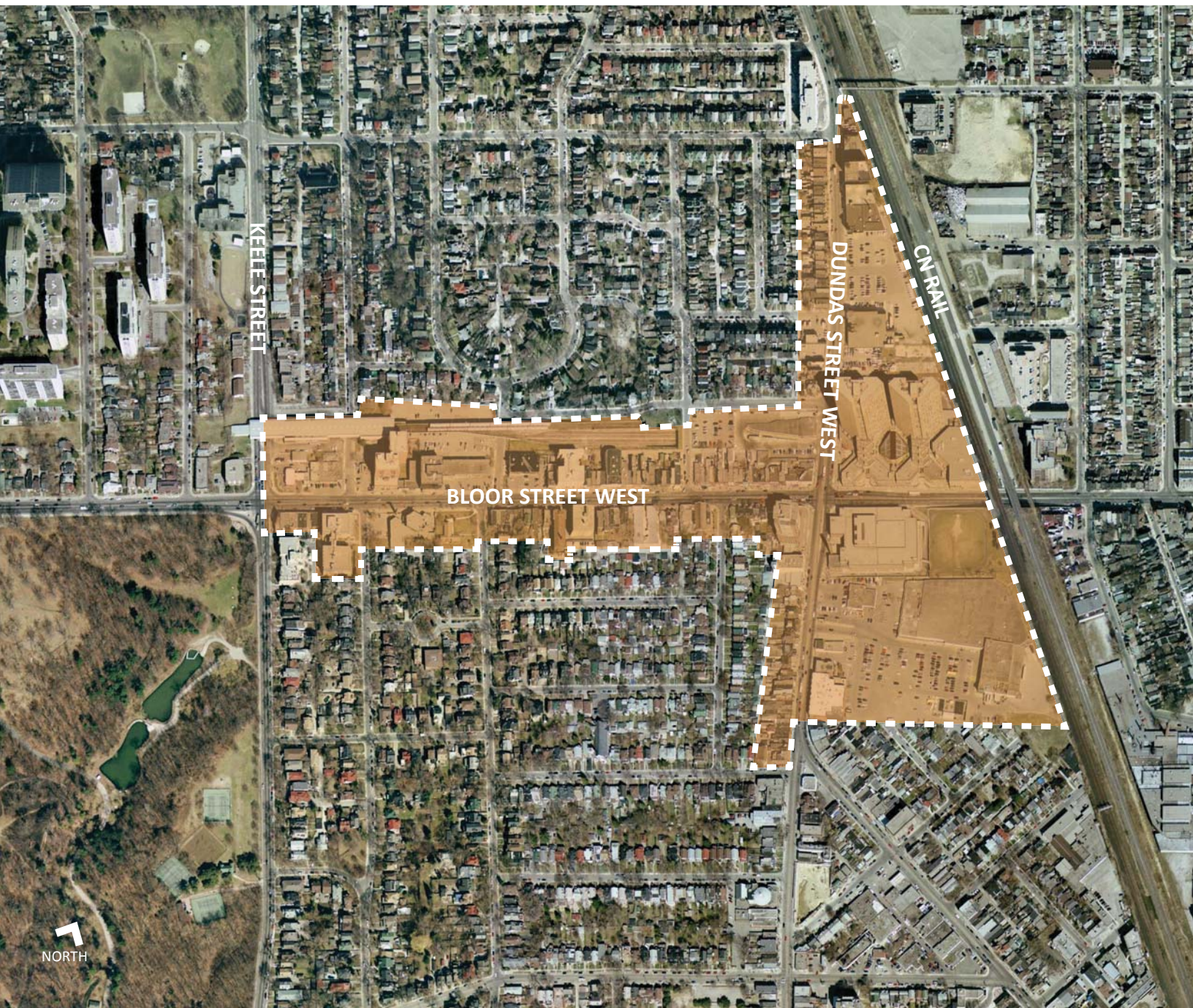
The City should consider the following implementation strategies to move forward with the recommendations of this Study:

- Increase the maximum allowable height to six-storeys (20 metres) for properties fronting Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West in the Study Area (Section 5.2.1).
- Implement a minimum building height of three-storeys (10.5 metres) on Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West (Section 5.2.1).
- Require commercial retail uses on the ground floor of buildings on Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West, south of Bloor Street West. The ground floor use of buildings on Dundas Street West, north of Bloor Street West, should be retail/office use (Section 5.2.5).
- Require a minimum ground floor height of 4.5 metres for buildings on Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West (Section 5.2.5)
- Require buildings to be built to the front property line (or setback line where sidewalk widening is necessary) along Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West (Section 5.2.8).
- Implement buildings step-backs and setbacks (Sections 5.2.2 - 5.2.4, 5.2.6, 5.2.8).
- Incorporate the principles for development identified for Opportunity Site 8 into a site and area specific policy in the Official Plan to guide the future redevelopment of these lands through a comprehensive planning process (Section 5.3.4).
- Increase allowable heights for Opportunity Sites 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Section 5.3.3) subject to built form criteria (Section 5.2).
- Require a minimum 4.8 metre sidewalk for Bloor Street West and Dundas Street West (to be achieved through new building setbacks from the property line or boulevard widening) (Section 5.2.8).

- Improve pedestrian access to the Dundas West subway station through widening of sidewalks and intersection crosswalks, and improved signage for both the Dundas West and Keele subway stations (Section 5.4.1)
- Request the Toronto Transit Commission to investigate the feasibility of an additional entrance/exit to the Dundas West Station on the east side of Dundas Street West (Section 5.4.1)
- Provide the preferred short-term and long-term options for the Bloor Street West R.O.W. to the Transportation Services Division for consideration as part of its work program. (Section 5.4.2)
- Provide the recommended pedestrian improvements for the Dundas –Roncesvalles intersection to Transportation Services for incorporation into the on-going work on the Roncesvalles streetscape renewal (Section 5.4.3)
- Investigate the possibility for greater public recreational use of the playing field at Bishop Marrocco High School (Section 5.5.2)
- Provide the pedestrian crossing recommendation on Bloor Street West towards Dorval Road to Transportation Services for analysis (Section 5.4.4)
- Consult with the Church of the Redeemer about providing publicly-accessible green space at the southwest corner of Bloor Street West and Indian Road (Section 5.5.2)
- Secure space in new developments for non-profit daycare facilities, multi -purpose / recreation facilities and additional public parkland (Section 5.6)
- Adopt the Urban Design Guidelines contained in this Study (Section 6.0).

## Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

The transformation of Bloor-Dundas to a more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Avenue will be gradual as sites are redeveloped and new investment occurs in the public realm. This Study's ability to direct future growth in the area will depend on a number of factors, including the effectiveness of the above-noted implementation strategies. To assist with implementation over the longer term, there should be a monitoring process to review the success of each new development project upon its completion. This review should inform the implementation of the next project to ensure that new buildings are contributing to responsible intensification that strengthens the Bloor-Dundas area.



*Aerial photograph of the Study Area boundary and neighbouring communities*