

6. Action Plan



6.1. Basic Principles



The Action Plan that follows is built upon the following basic principles:

People Make Streets

Great streets are filled with people. Buildings, parking, zoning, businesses, transit are all secondary support systems to allow people to traverse, interact and inhabit the street.

Intensification is Necessary

The Official plan clearly states the desire for increased density along Lake Shore Boulevard West.

In its current form, the study area is the lowest density of any Avenue served by light rail transit. Compared to other neighbourhoods along Lake Shore Boulevard West, the study area has the lowest density of population within a 5-minute walk to the main street. (See Appendix A.2.)

Lake Shore Boulevard West in Long Branch needs more people living on or very near to it. Increasing the density of development along its length is critical to augmenting its current character and continuing to create a vital community.

Intensification Must be in the Appropriate Form

Considering the built form of the area has not changed significantly for the last 100 years, what are the benefits of change and why now?

Density can be achieved in a variety of built forms. The Lake Shore Boulevard West neighbourhood presents a context that frames the density typologies that would be appropriate to fulfil the intentions of the Official Plan.

Change Will be Incremental

The Lake Shore Boulevard West area already has a significant amount of development pressures at both the large and smaller scales. As the area is already developed in a low density form changes will happen incrementally as redevelopment or lot assembly occurs. The regulatory framework and other City led initiatives must allow for development to happen on a project by project basis.

Each individual project must be assessed not only on quality of the proposal but in its achievement of the full intensification potential that is present on the site. This additive form of intensification is crucial to the comprehensive revitalization of Lake Shore Boulevard West.

Public Investment - Private Response: Using quality to attract development

Our research shows that if public investment leads then private development will follow.

The City's Economic Development Strategy (2000), notes that:

Quality of place is a critical factor in determining where people, particularly knowledge workers, choose to locate and invest. Toronto must continue to invest and improve the quality of its built and natural environment in order to stay on equal footing with other cities. The quality of our neighbourhoods, parks, ravines, schools, theatres, museums, galleries and urban design as well as our employment areas, roads, streets, sidewalks and public transit have a direct impact on our quality of life and therefore our competitiveness.



6.2. Priority / Actions

The City, in partnership with the BIA and property owners, will need to make important strategic decisions, and corresponding budget allocations, to facilitate the revitalization. This Action Plan identifies a variety of implementation measures that have direct cost implications to the municipality - streetscape enhancements, infrastructure improvements and a private sector financial incentives package. The key will be to determine which of those activities, or which combination, will provide the greatest revitalization impact in recognition of the long-term nature of the strategy and the limited funds available.

6.2.1 The Public Sector Must Lead by Making Adjustments to the Planning Regime

Ensure that redevelopment supports the policies of the Official Plan and existing Site and Area Specific Policy #21 for the area

The Official Plan is both flexible and precise about urban design. Key issues that the Official Plan already includes are a focus on building form rather than land use, new Community Improvement Plan policies, references to the Urban Design guidelines.

Update the Community Improvement Plan

Through the Community Improvement policies of the Planning Act, a municipality may offer grants and/or loans to private property owners in conformity with an approved Community Improvement Plan. This approach is seen as a key redevelopment stimulator that can provide grants for environmental clean-up, for façade improvements and may also include tax relief. These activities reduce the risks and costs associated with brownfield / grayfield redevelopment strategies.

Update the Zoning By-law

The implementing zoning should, in conjunction with the Official Plan Policies and Urban Design guidelines, encourage re-development within the Lake Shore Boulevard West corridor. Key issues to be reinforced include permission for appropriate building heights and densities, recognition that lot size and frontage are significant elements in the determination of development potential, and reduced parking requirements. Specific Zoning Recommendations (see appendix A.13. for suggested components of a revised Zoning Code.)

Development Standards

Develop a Long Branch AV Zone - similar to that which has been developed for other Avenues areas in Toronto.

Building Heights

Permit building heights up to eight storeys subject to a strictly applied rear yard angular plane - six storeys would be the general condition under the angular planes on lots that are at least 35.0m deep (see appendix A.13.)

Establish a minimum building height of 3 storeys (12.5m) to promote mixed use developments and to discourage small box or stand alone retail structures.

Density

A maximum of 3.0 x lot area is the appropriate density in the Zoning Code. Currently the OP anticipates 3.0 x but the Zoning Code permits 2.0 x.

Build To Zone

Include a minimum 70% lot frontage requirement for all lot frontages abutting Lake Shore Boulevard West similar to that which is part of the Central Western Lakeshore Area Secondary Plan (Ch. 17) and Site and Area Specific Policy #21 .

Parking Standards

An in-depth future parking demand study that includes consideration of on and off street parking resources, as well as, possible future municipal parking lots should be undertaken to determine the specific reductions in parking standards in Long Branch that would be appropriate to reflect the present and future role of public transit in the area.

Components of a reduction in parking standards for the Study Area could include:

- Elimination of the requirement of on site parking for lots facing Lake Shore Boulevard West less than 12.5m in width that are not served by a public lane with Mixed Commercial and Residential or Residential Uses;
- The reduction of the parking requirements to a minimum of 2 parking spaces on lots facing Lake Shore Boulevard West less than 12.5m in width that are served by a public lane with Mixed Commercial and Residential or Residential Uses;
- The development of reduced residential parking standards that reflect the present and future potential of the TTC streetcar line that serves the Long Branch community (similar to those found in the MCR zones in the City of Toronto);
- Development of a reduced maximum parking standard for stand alone retail uses;
- Elimination of parking requirements for a portion of any street related retail uses within mixed use buildings;
- Partnership with Toronto Parking Authority to increase the off-site supply of public parking to alleviate non-residential parking requirements

- Developing an area parking strategy which may include the sharing of parking spaces in a mixed use development between commercial uses and residential visitor needs; and,
- Greater emphasis on payment in Lieu of parking for non-residential uses to help finance new public parking facilities.

Angled Parking

It is the recommendation of this study that planning in the study area not be based upon long term accommodation of angled parking.

Site Plan Control

All development adjacent to Lake Shore Boulevard West is subject to site plan control, with some potential exceptions for projects such as additions etc. All development will be reviewed in the context of achieving the goals of the new Official Plan Policy regime and the appropriate Urban Design guidelines.

Dedicated ROW for Streetcars

It is the recommendation of this study that planning in the study area not be based upon accommodation of streetcars in a dedicated ROW. The main issue with a dedicated ROW for this area is that the ROW to the immediate east of the study area is too narrow to accommodate a dedicated ROW. Discussions with the TTC indicated that there are neither immediate demand nor plans for a dedicated ROW.

6.2.2. The Public Sector should encourage Improvements to the Public Realm

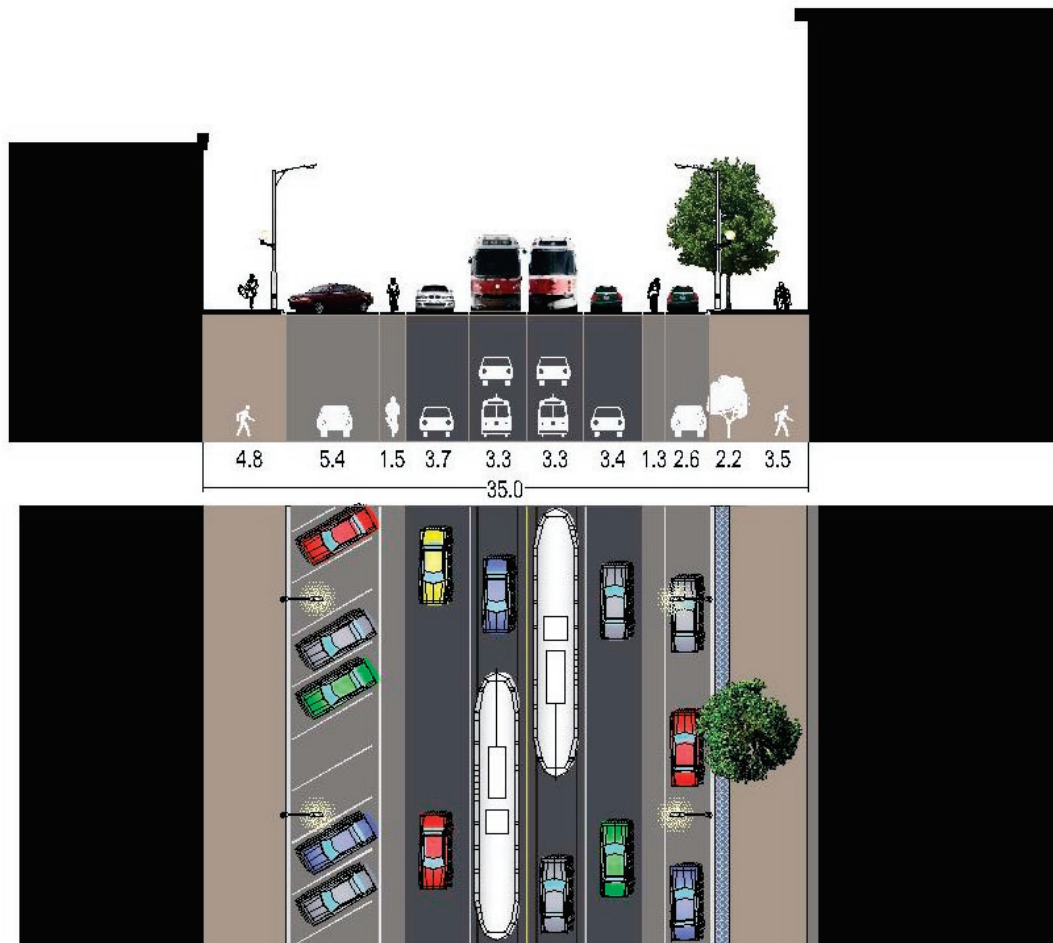
The City should implement improvements to the public realm in the short-term, when capital funds are available and in conjunction with redevelopment as it takes place. Priorities for public realm improvements:

- Plant significant numbers of new street trees in appropriate ground conditions (Section 6.3 and Appendix A.11.);
- Upgrade design, detail and dimension of sidewalks along Lake Shore Boulevard West wherever possible;
- Develop and apply local standards for improved pedestrian scale lighting and public and private signage;
- Where possible, sidewalk paving, tree planting and pedestrian lighting should be implemented to the standards of the (former) City of Toronto Streetscape Standards, and;
- New streetscape improvements should: maximize tree planting opportunities within public boulevards; establish a consistent theme of boulevard tree planting; and provide pedestrian scale lighting. Many of these improvements will be secured as part of development applications and City initiated infrastructure improvements.

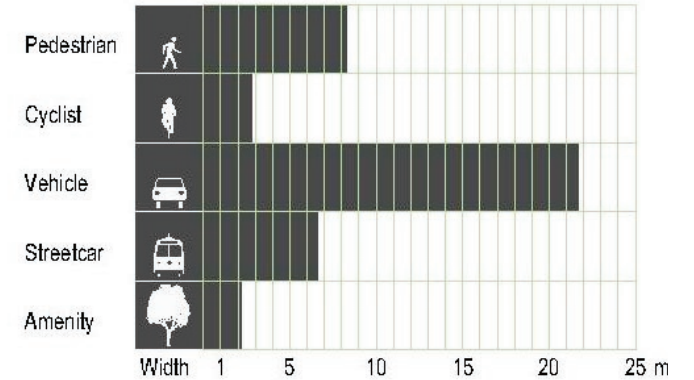
The City should set aside money in the capital works budget each year to implement streetscape improvements on a block-by-block basis. Often, the most efficient way to achieve these improvements is to build upon anticipated maintenance and reconstruction activities i.e. WES work programs.

It is important to support and enhance existing mechanisms to manage change along Lake Shore Boulevard West. The BIA has a key role in the processes of budget management, municipal liaison, special events planning, marketing and construction and maintenance projects.

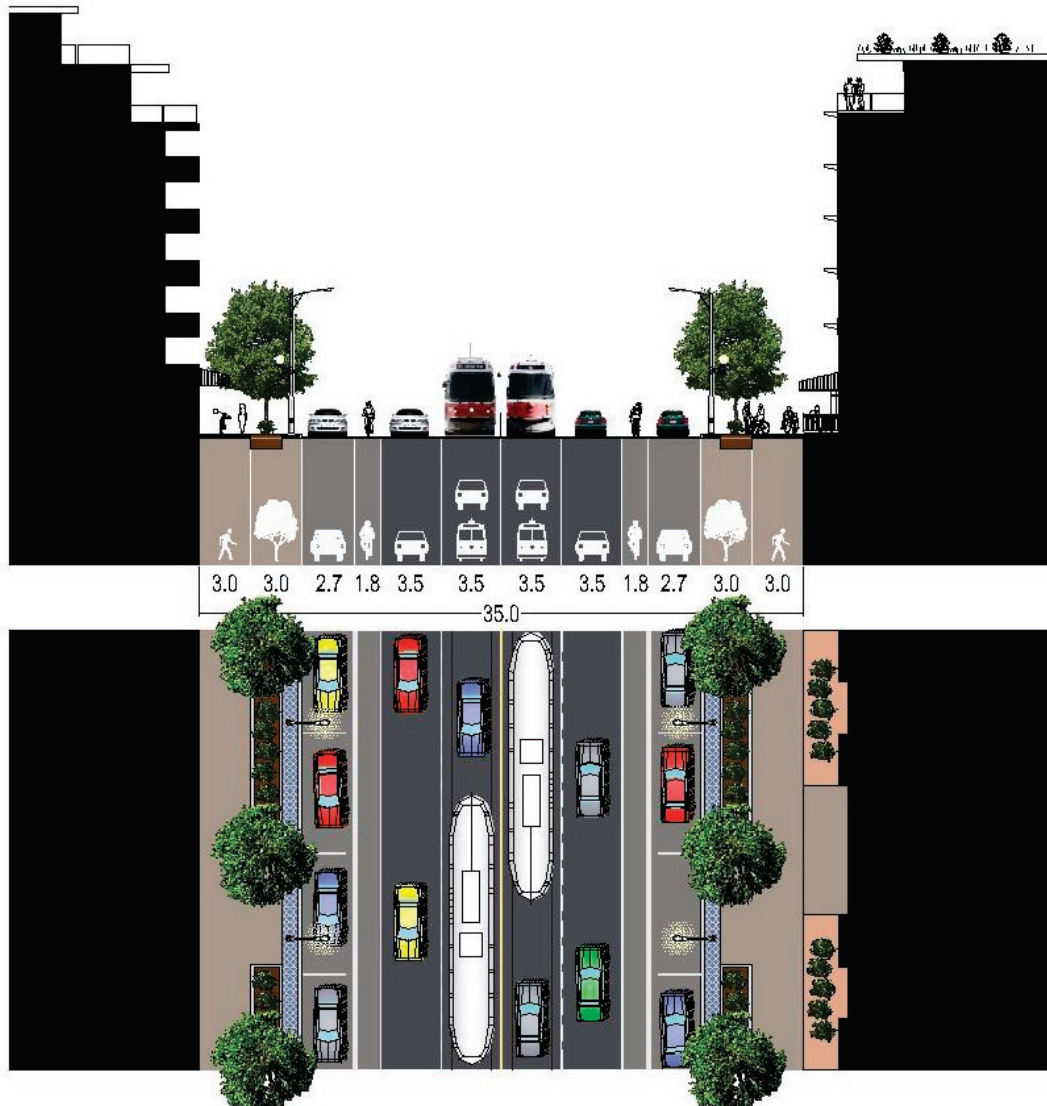
6.3. Street ROW Improvements



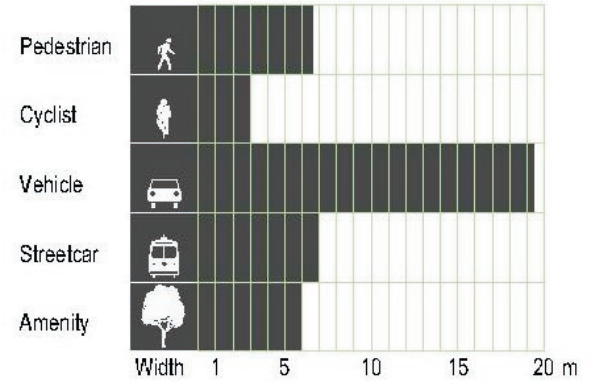
Total Cross Section Width by Category



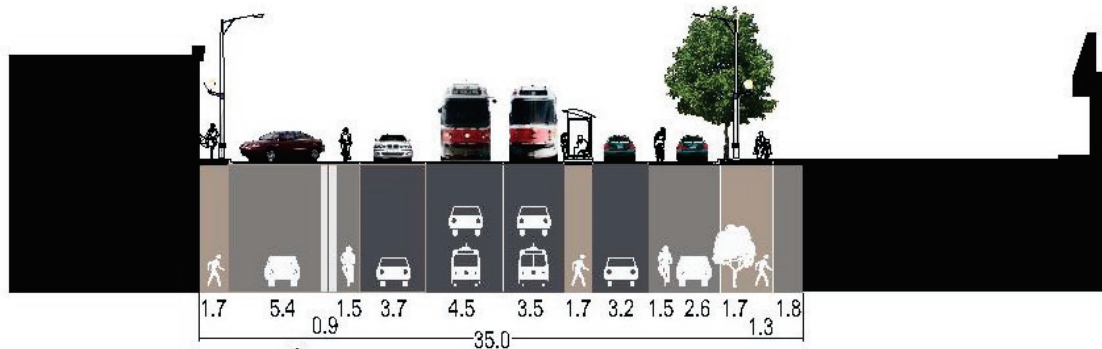
Existing Conditions - Typical Street Section - Commercial / Residential



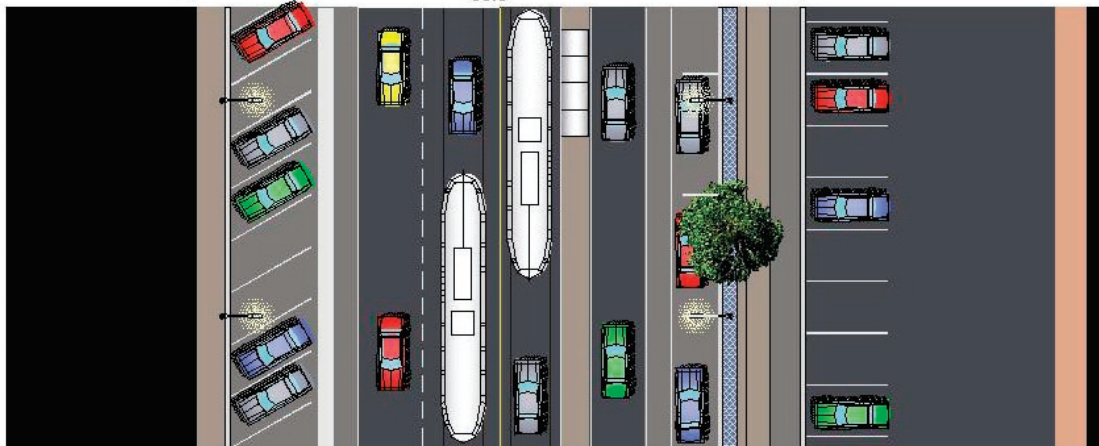
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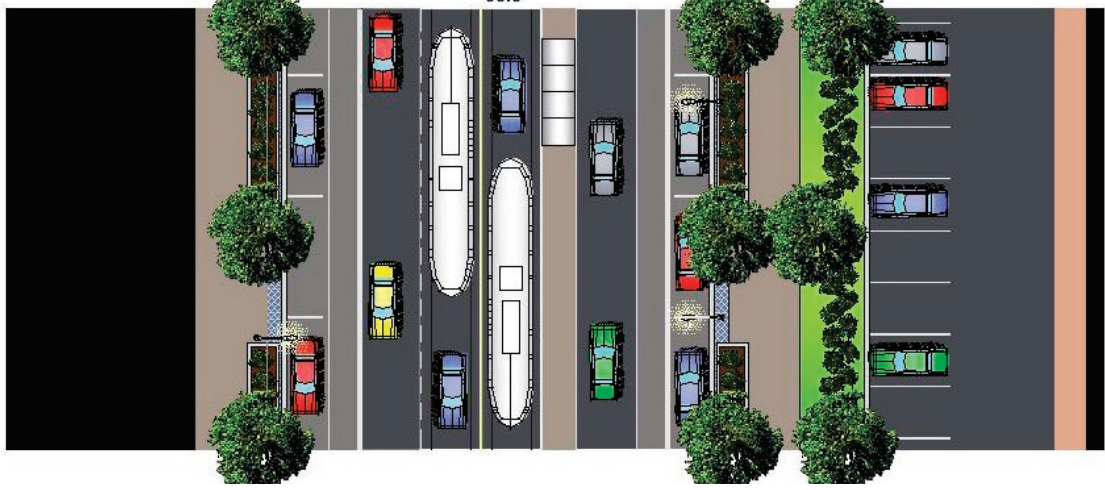
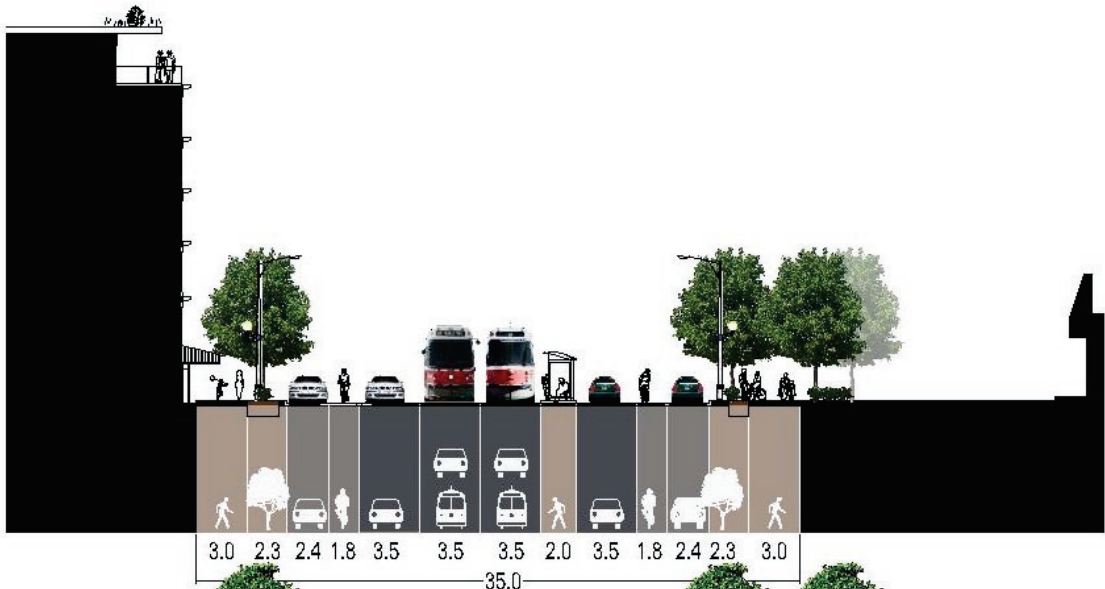
Proposed Ultimate - Typical Street Section - Commercial / Residential



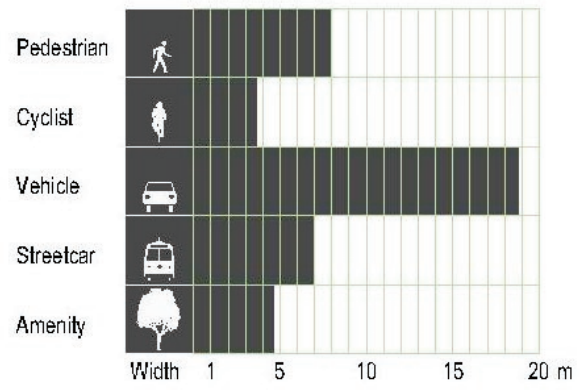
Total Cross Section Width by Category



Existing Conditions - Typical Street Section - Commercial / Industrial



Total Cross Section Width by Category



Note: This section applies to existing industrial uses only. In the event that redevelopment occurs - see section on page 33.

Proposed Ultimate - Typical Street Section - Commercial / Industrial

Support ongoing volunteerism

There is an existing core of dedicated individuals who have a keen interest in the future success of Lake Shore Boulevard West. There is an active BIA, but their mandate is limited, and not specifically related to the improvement of the entire corridor. Further, the BIA has limited funding to carry out an enhanced mandate of physical improvements, ongoing maintenance and marketing.

The City needs to recognize and support these individuals and organizations that are working to improve their community. The revitalization of Lake Shore Boulevard West will continue to rely very heavily on the existing and, hopefully, expanded contingent of dedicated volunteers.

Enlarge the Business Improvement Area

A BIA is an association of business people and property owners within a defined area who join together in order to develop and undertake streetscape beautification, promotional programs and maintenance activities supporting their area. These activities are financed through a special levy, which is applied to all businesses within the improvement area. In general, a BIA is a mechanism for raising funds and the coordination of various activities including physical improvements, joint marketing, event planning, information resource, Council lobby and the investigation of funding sources.

The programs are the responsibility of a voluntary Board of Management, which is largely comprised of members of the area's business community. The City is responsible for establishing and approving BIA budgets and has a designated representative on the Board of Management. The BIA, in partnership with the City, strive to revitalize business districts by beautifying the physical environment in the area and promoting the area as a business and shopping area.

There is an existing BIA, but it deals with a limited area, with a limited mandate. The BIA should be enlarged to include all businesses within the defined Lake Shore Boulevard West area.

The need for the enlarged BIA designation results from the effects or threat of a declining consumer base - as is the case along Lake Shore Boulevard West. Influential factors may include a shift in spending habits, deteriorating vehicular and pedestrian corridors, and/or the absence of an identity and pride in a business community. A BIA can market a community's uniqueness; increase the rate of investment in the area and establish programs to maintain the physical appearance of its streets.

For property owners, the potential for increased property values is the BIA's major appeal. BIA initiated activities and improvements can provide great rewards such as creating a demand for retail and office space and increasing sales and profits for BIA members. A successful and active business environment that attracts visitors and retains local residents is the constant objective of a BIA.

The effective coordination of funds for capital projects is one way BIA's are able to increase cost savings to its membership. It is important to note that a BIA is only as successful as the cooperation among its members. In this respect, BIA's have also improved communications between its membership and different levels of government.

It is recommended that the existing BIA be enlarged to include all of the Lake Shore Boulevard West study area. Establishing a larger BIA has clear advantages for both business members and the City. It has become a mechanism that facilitates cooperation in a changing economic environment where urban decay is a constant threat and reinvestment a constant challenge.



6.2.3. The Private Sector should assist in Preparing a Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy will enhance recognition of Lake Shore Boulevard West as a special destination shoppers, new retail businesses and new residents must be attracted to help sustain the business area. As popularity grows, supporting facilities such as parking and pedestrian amenities will require enhancement.

A typical marketing strategy breaks down into three main topic areas:

- Product development;
- Marketing and promotion, and;
- Implementation.

Product Development

Product development ideas are suggestions regarding ways in which the mix of retail and service businesses, as well as the types of recreational and entertainment activities available, could be enhanced to offer a greater range and variety of reasons to come to Lake Shore Boulevard West. Suggestions include:

- Increase the critical mass of activities available by diversifying the retail and services mix and by developing a substantial resident population, and;
- Promote the availability of development properties to potential investors by working with the City's Economic Development staff to recruit appropriate investment.

Marketing and Promotion

With fundamental improvements in the nature of the product available to residents and businesses alike, the next step (actually undertaken simultaneously with product development initiatives) is to market and promote Lake Shore Boulevard West. Its success as a shopping area relies on a coordinated approach to identifying the entire business area. A number of issues to be considered include the need to develop:

- A brand/theme/identity for Lake Shore Boulevard West;
- An advertising/public relations strategy;
- A signage strategy, and;
- A promotional 'welcome' package for new businesses, developers and residents.

Implementation

Implementation encompasses a number of considerations, including funding, human resources requirements, organization and coordination. In effect, these components represent all of the considerations involved in turning the product development and marketing and promotion ideas into reality.

The implementation of the marketing strategy will require the following actions:

- Establish a budget for the development and promotion of Lake Shore Boulevard West;
- Work with local real estate agents to promote Lake Shore Boulevard West to businesses and developers (they could distribute information packages), and;
- Identify one person to coordinate communications among business operators, organizations and residents.

6.2.4 The Public Sector Should Lead in Offering Financial Incentives

Private sector redevelopment within the Lake Shore Boulevard West corridor is expected to occur incrementally, over a relatively long period of time. Further, an understanding of the market forces indicate that there is a need for some form of “incentive package” to stimulate change. The idea of an incentives package is to stimulate private sector redevelopment by reducing the cost of development, influencing the market for redevelopment and reducing the inherent risks of the approvals processes.

The City should explore several options for the provision of financial incentives to the private sector. The review of all development applications within the Lake Shore Boulevard West corridor shall have regard for the Urban Design guidelines and, further, the eligibility requirements for any financial incentive program offered by the City shall require new development to conform to the guidelines.