

Consolidated Clause in Toronto and East York Community Council Report 6, which was considered by City Council on July 25, 26 and 27, 2006.

12

**South of Eastern Planning Study - Eastern Avenue
to Lake Shore Boulevard, the Don Valley to
Coxwell Avenue (Ward 30 - Toronto-Danforth and
Ward 32 - Beaches-East York)**

City Council on July 25, 26 and 27, 2006, adopted this Clause without amendment.

Council also considered additional material, which is noted at the end of this Clause.

The Toronto and East York Community Council recommends that City Council adopt the staff recommendations in the Recommendations Section of the report (June 27, 2006) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District subject to adding the following Recommendation (5) and renumbering the existing Recommendation (5) accordingly:

“(5) direct the Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, when reporting to Toronto and East York Community Council on a detailed implementation plan for bicycle lanes on Eastern Avenue, between Leslie Street and Carlaw Avenue, to include an assessment of the potential impact of these bicycle lanes on adjacent streets in Ward 32, east of Leslie Street to Victoria Park Avenue; namely Eastern Avenue, Lake Shore Boulevard, Queen Street East, Dundas Street East, Gerrard Street East, and the corresponding internal streets; and”.

Action taken by the Committee

The Toronto and East York Community Council requested the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District to report to City Council on July 25, 2006 on the mechanisms to amend the Official Plan to remove and/or restrict “power centres” from the South of Eastern Employment District.

The Toronto and East York Community Council submits the report (June 27, 2006) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District:

Purpose:

This report outlines the findings of the South of Eastern Study and recommends consideration of amendments to the former City of Toronto Official Plan, the new Official Plan and changes to

the existing zoning for the lands located south of Eastern Avenue between the Don River and Coxwell Avenue, north of Lake Shore Boulevard East.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that City Council:

- (1) endorse expanding the range of employment uses, developing development standards and producing guidelines to enhance the South of Eastern Employment District;
- (2) authorize staff to schedule the Public Meeting under the Planning Act targeting the final Toronto East York Community Council meeting of 2006 or a meeting in the first quarter of 2007 to consider the final Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for the South of Eastern Employment District;
- (3) direct City Planning staff, in consultation with Technical Services and other appropriate staff, to report further on possible improvements to Eastern Avenue and to propose Public Realm Guidelines for the frontage of both sides of the street;
- (4) direct City Planning staff to develop Urban Design Guidelines for development within the South of Eastern Employment District; and
- (5) forward this report to Economic Development and Parks Committee for their information.

Background:

Purpose of the Study

An application was submitted to the City for a proposed Zoning By-law and Official Plan Amendment for 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue, requesting the introduction of non-industrial uses in a Restricted Industrial Area. The Official Plan requires that a planning study be undertaken (Policy 9.18 under the former City of Toronto Official Plan) to determine the impact of any proposed change on the surrounding area. At its meeting on November 16, 2004, Toronto and East York Community Council authorized the request to undertake a review of the planning strategy for the area bounded by Eastern Avenue, Don Valley, Leslie Street and Lake Shore Boulevard East, in consultation with the Ward Councillor and the community.

It is Council's policy to discourage the loss of City Industry/Employment by encouraging the retention and renewal of employment uses in the City's Employment Districts. Ways to do this include; reserving appropriate areas for industrial/employment uses; ensuring that sufficient land is available to accommodate existing, new and relocating firms; reviewing uses classified as

industrial under the City's Zoning By-law; and undertaking promotion initiatives to attract new employment sectors.

This report outlines the findings of the required study.

Application History

The owner of the Eastern Avenue Toronto Film Studio site, Rose Corporation, is the successful bidder under a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by TEDCO to build and operate a new film studio complex in the Port Lands. It is anticipated that Toronto Film Studios located at 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue will be relocating from their present site on Eastern Avenue to the new facility.

The property at 629 Eastern Avenue was formerly an Iron Works factory, which has, over time, been converted into a film studio. The properties known as 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue were purchased from the former A. R. Clarke Ltd. company and are now used for car and truck parking associated with film production. In 2004, a Site Plan application was submitted to the City to expand the existing film and media business on this site by creating a new large studio facility adjacent to the existing film facility at 629 Eastern Avenue. This Site Plan application did not proceed and the file is closed.

In December 2005, the applicant appealed their Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment application to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Subsequently, the applicant indicated that they would like to discuss a possible settlement with staff. Staff reported to the February 2006 Toronto East York Community Council and prepared a further report directly to Council. Council adopted the following recommendations:

- (1) refuse the application for 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue in its current form and authorize the City Solicitor and appropriate City staff to attend the OMB hearing to oppose the subject application;
- (2) authorize staff to enter into discussions with the applicants to work towards a settlement position and direct staff to bring forward any proposed settlement to City Council;
- (3) authorize staff to establish in consultation with the Ward Councillor, a working committee to provide input on the South of Eastern Study;
- (4) requested the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District to report to City Council on February 14, 2006 outlining the Terms of Reference for the Working Committee as outlined in Recommendation (3) of the report (February 1, 2006) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, and include such matters as the composition of the Committee, the time and location of the meetings, and the structure of the individual sessions; and
- (5) requested the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report to the Toronto and East York Community Council on the continuation of affordable studio space in the studio district.

City Council on February 14, 2006, added the following:

That Council adopt the following staff recommendation contained in the Recommendation Section of the supplementary report (February 13, 2006) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning:

“It is recommended that the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District set up a community consultation process that will include up to two evening meetings to discuss the preliminary findings of the South of Eastern Study prior to reporting out to Toronto and East York Community Council.”

Staff did seek and receive direction from Council to enter into discussions with the applicant including exploring significant retail on their site. Since that time, however, the applicant has not submitted revised plans for the site or had further discussions with City Planning staff. In the meantime, staff have completed the South of Eastern Study, held two evening meetings to discuss the preliminary findings with the community and are reporting on the findings.

Directions from Previous Reports

At its meeting on July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, City Council adopted Clause 10 of Toronto and East York Community Council Report 6 without amendment and in so doing requested the following:

- (1) adopt the staff recommendation in the Recommendation Section of the June 21, 2005 report from the Director, Community Planning, South District subject to amending Recommendation (3) to read:
 - (3) direct appropriate staff of the Economic Development and Culture Division and the Director, Waterfront Secretariat to report to Economic Development and Parks Committee for information, and to the Toronto and East York Community Council on the availability of suitable space in Toronto for the film sector and its needs with respect to future expansion and growth, and to consult with appropriate municipal departments, agencies, boards and commissions and the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation, when preparing this report”;
- (2) request the Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District to undertake a traffic study in the area covered by the Community Improvement Plan which would address the outstanding Community Improvement Plan issues as well as the above requests and concerns as identified by the surrounding community. The results of the traffic study would:
 - (a) move commuter traffic off of local streets;
 - (b) address traffic calming on Eastern Avenue from Carlaw to Coxwell and local streets;
 - (c) meet school zone concerns;

- (d) solve pedestrian concerns at the big box centres at Lake Shore and Leslie/Lake Shore and Eastern; and
 - (e) finish implementation of Community Improvement Traffic Projects.
- (3) request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with other appropriate City divisions and agencies, to report to the Toronto and East York Community Council, and to the Economic Development and Parks Committee for information, on the steps to be taken to maintain the current “Studio District” designation in the vicinity of Eastern Avenue, including maintaining street signs;
- (4) as part of the economic study being undertaken in the South of Eastern Study area, request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with Economic Development and Culture Division and the Director, Corporate Finance, to report to Toronto and East York Community Council and to the Economic Development and Parks Committee for information, on:
- (a) the nature of employment, and the number and type of jobs, in the Kings area of the City of Toronto after redevelopment, compared to conditions prior to redevelopment;
 - (b) the applicability of the Kings experience to the South of Eastern Study Area and the proposed rezoning of 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue;
- (5) request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with Economic Development and Culture Division and the Director, Corporate Finance, to report to the Toronto and East York Community Council and to the Economic Development and Parks Committee on incentives for employment uses to promote new investment for employment purposes and to maintain and grow the city’s job base; and
- (6) request the Director, Community Planning, South District to have regard for the leasing of the new studio space in the Port Lands while preparing the Final Report respecting the application for zoning amendments for 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue, and have in mind timing and other issues discussed at the July 5, 2005 Toronto and East York Community Council meeting.

These recommendations have been dealt with in the following ways:

1. The Economic Development Division, working with the Film Commissioner and the Mayor’s Film Board have commenced the development of a strategy for the Film Sector in Toronto. The strategy will incorporate comprehensive research and analysis on the economic and cultural importance of the film industry globally, and in Toronto specifically; it will address changing production trends, linkages to critical and emerging industries, Toronto’s international leadership potential for the sector, as well as the policy and infrastructure requirements to ensure the sustainment and growth of this key economic sector in the City.

The initial findings identify that the industry in Toronto is at a critical junction. Both the foreign service and the domestic industry, which is key to securing long-term competitive advantage for Toronto, are facing severe competitive threats. Among other findings, the strategy will recognize that increasing studio capacity in Toronto is critical. Not only does Toronto currently lack the high-end studio space required to attract big-budget films, but the loss of employment areas threatens the protection of low-cost studio and warehouse space and associated co-located ancillary industry supports and services. These findings regarding the demand for studio space were reported to Council in the summer of 2005, and were further corroborated in an independent analysis by the Ontario Media Development Corporation early in 2006. A preliminary draft of the strategy is expected to be presented to the Film Board in July of 2006.

2. Transportation Services staff are working with the Councillor for Ward 30 and area residents to address the traffic concerns in the area. They have collected road and traffic data in the quadrant bounded by Pape Avenue, Queen Street, Leslie Street and Eastern Avenue as well as traffic speed studies on internal roadways, and turning movement counts at all intersections on Queen Street and Eastern Avenue within the study quadrant noted above. Meetings are continuing with the community.

At the May 2006 City Council meeting, Council resolved that:

1. the provision of bicycle lanes on Eastern Avenue between Leslie Street and Carlaw Avenue, or such other terminus as may be technically viable, be endorsed in principle; and
2. staff of Transportation Services be requested to report to the Toronto and East York Community Council on the detailed implementation plan for the bicycle lanes at the earliest opportunity.

Transportation staff will be reporting back to Toronto and East York Community Council.

3. Maintenance and enhancement of the Studio District south of Eastern Avenue will be an important element addressing industry imperatives. Not only must the City maintain the designation, street signs, etc., but it is expected that the consideration of a Community Improvement Project Area By-law and associated incentive proposals coming before Council in July will further support the use of the area for employment and film businesses.
4. Section 6 of this report entitled “The Kings” explores the history of “The Kings” experience and its applicability here.
5. A report dated June 20, 2006 from the Deputy City Manager is going forward to Planning and Transportation Committee recommending a Community Improvement Project Area By-law for East Bayfront, West Don Lands, Port Lands and the South of Eastern Area.

Comments:

Findings of the Study

The initial area identified for the study area was south of Eastern Avenue to Lake Shore Boulevard East between the Don Valley and Leslie Street. During the course of the study it became apparent that the entire area within the Employment District should be included in the study (expanded to include from Leslie Street to Coxwell Avenue, south of Eastern Avenue). This is the Employment District identified in the City of Toronto's new Official Plan. To understand the surrounding context, the area south of Lake Shore Boulevard was also reviewed. (see Attachment No.1). It is important to understand how any changes proposed for the Employment District could affect the residential area to the north and the employment area to the south.

The South of Eastern Employment District is approximately 135 hectares (255 acres) in size. It is a long and narrow strip of land situated between Eastern Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard that tapers from the Don Valley on the west to Coxwell Avenue on the east. The topography of the entire study area is relatively flat with a gradual and gentle slope southwards towards the lake.

The area is sprinkled with industrial buildings, parking lots and outside storage areas. Some of the older industrial buildings now house other employment uses, others have been replaced with auto related uses, including outdoor parking areas. There are retail uses with large outdoor parking lots and accessory uses, such as, restaurant drive-throughs at the intersection of Lake Shore Boulevard and Leslie Street.

The intersection at Leslie Street/Lake Shore Boulevard, has a concentration of retail uses, including large grocery stores. East of the Leslie Street/Lake Shore Boulevard intersection are public industrial uses including a City Works Yard, Toronto Fire Academy, a Toronto District School Board Works Yard and the Postal Station.

North: a variety of buildings and uses ranging from light industrial, commercial, residential and mixed-use, further to the north of this is the low scale South Riverdale area

South: The Port Lands

West: The Don River Valley system and the Don Valley Parkway

East: Coxwell Avenue is a low scale residential area

The Existing and Emerging Policy Framework

Former City of Toronto Official Plan

The area south of Eastern Avenue is covered by four Official Plan designations, as shown in Attachment 2. Most of the study area is designated a "Restricted Industrial Area". The west portion is designated a "General Industrial Area". Between Booth and Carlaw Avenues is a "Mixed Industrial-Residential Area" containing a small residential pocket surrounding a playground designated as Open Space. The Ashbridges Bay sewage treatment plant is the most easterly site and is designated as an Open Space.

Section 9.18 of Part I of the Official Plan states that Council will not consider a redesignation of any industrially designated land for any non-industrial use without first having considered a study of the area. Amongst other matters, the study shall have regard for:

- (a) the number and types of industrial firms and employees in the areas that would be adversely affected;
- (b) the impact on any surrounding industrial lands that would not be redesignated; and
- (c) the environmental condition of the lands and the need for soil decommissioning.

The requirement for a study has resulted in this report.

In addition, the study area falls within the Special Policy Area Phase I in the former City of Toronto Official Plan with respect to the flood plain lands.

New Toronto Official Plan

At the time of writing this report, the new Official Plan hearing is continuing at the Ontario Municipal Board. The Board has approved most of the Plan and it is anticipated that the approved portions will come into force in July 2006. The Housing and Section 37 policies remain under appeal and will be adjudicated in September and October 2006. As well, the hazard land policies for Special Policy Areas remain under appeal.

The area between Eastern Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard is an Employment District in the City's new Official Plan, as shown on Attachment 3, the Urban Structure Map 2. Employment Districts play an important role in the Plan's growth management strategy. They are large districts comprised exclusively of lands where the Employment Areas land use designation applies, see Attachment 4. These lands can accommodate substantial growth in jobs and meet the needs of some of the key economic clusters that are the focus of the City's Economic Development Strategy.

The Plan states that Employment Districts will be protected from the encroachment of non-economic functions. The Plan therefore contains policies to protect and promote Employment Districts exclusively for economic activity in order to ensure a stable environment for investment, maintain and grow the City's tax base, offer suitable locations for a variety of employment uses and nurture key economic clusters that benefit from these strategic locations.

The Study Area land use designation is an 'Employment Area'. The Employment Area designation permits a range of business and employment activity. Uses that support this function consist of: offices, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, research and development facilities, utilities, media facilities, parks, hotels, retail outlets ancillary to the preceding uses, and restaurants and small scale stores and services that serve area businesses and workers. Within Employment Areas, places of worship, recreation and entertainment facilities, business and trade schools and branches of community colleges or universities may locate only on major streets as shown on Map 3. Eastern Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard are major streets shown on Map 3.

The new Official Plan Policy 4.6.3 states that - Large scale, stand-alone retail stores and “power centres” are not permitted in Employment Areas in the Central Waterfront and are only permitted in other Employment Areas fronting onto major streets as shown on Map 3, that also form the boundary of the Employment Areas, through the enactment of a zoning by-law. Where permitted, new large scale, stand-alone retail stores and ‘power centres’ will ensure that:

- (a) sufficient transportation capacity is available to accommodate the extra traffic generated by the development, resulting in an acceptable level of traffic on adjacent and nearby streets; and
- (b) the functioning of other economic activities within the Employment Areas and the economic health of nearby shopping districts are not adversely affected.

Existing large scale, stand-alone retail stores and “power centres” legally established prior to the approval date of the Plan within Employment Areas are permitted.

For the residential pocket situated within the study area a Site Specific Policy No. 190 permits residential uses existing on November 26, 2002.

The northern section of the Lake Shore boulevard is designated Parks or other Open Spaces through the length of the study area.

The study area also falls within the Special Policy Area No. 7 Lower Don: Don River. Although this section of the Official Plan has yet to be approved by the Ontario Municipal Board, the developments within this area are reviewed and commented on by TRCA.

Provincial Policy Statement

The March, 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The Province has a stated interest in protecting the long-term health and safety of the population, and the financial and economic well-being of the Province and municipalities. Economic prosperity, environmental health and social well-being depend on managing change and promoting transit accessible, cost-efficient, cost-effective development and land use. This includes reducing the potential for public cost or risk to Ontario’s residents by directing development away from areas where there is a risk to public health or safety.

The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning and recognizes linkages among policy areas. A key difference between this version and the previous 1997 version is that planning authorities must now make decisions on planning matters that are “consistent with” the policies of the PPS. The 1997 version stated that planning authorities should make decisions that “have regard to” the policies of the PPS. The new PPS policies support and complement many of the City’s Official Plan’s objectives. The PPS states that planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by:

- (a) providing for appropriate mix and range of employment (including industrial, commercial and institutional uses) to meet long-term needs;

- (b) providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;
- (c) planning for, protecting and preserving employment areas for current and future uses; and
- (d) ensuring the necessary infrastructure is provided to support current and projected needs.

Planning authorities may permit conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses (i.e. residential) through a comprehensive review, only where it has been demonstrated that the land is not required for employment purposes over the long-term and if there is a demonstrated need for the conversion.

Zoning

Within the Employment District there are numerous zoning categories as shown on Attachment Nos. 5 and 6. The area south of Eastern Avenue between the Don Valley and Leslie Street is divided into three main sections. The west portion, between the Don River and west of Booth Avenue, is zoned I3 D5 or I2 D5. These zoning categories permit a variety of industrial uses up to five times the area of the lot. Residential uses or artist live/work studios are not permitted. Only a narrow strip of land within 36.6 metres of the south side of Eastern Avenue has an 18 metre height limit, the remainder of the land has no height limit in place, see Attachment 7. The rail sorting yards on the north of side of Lake Shore Boulevard is zoned Tr D0.6

Between Booth and Carlaw Avenues there is a small residential pocket, the Morse Playground and a mix of light industrial uses along Eastern Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard. This area is zoned either R2 Z0.6 which permits residential development up to 0.6 times the area of the lot with a height limit of 12 metres, or I1 D2 which permits industrial uses up to two times the area of the lot. Where I2 D2 applies the height limit increases to 15 metres. Morse Playground is zoned G.

Further to the east between Carlaw Avenue and Leslie Street, the I2 D5 zone continues with the same standards as noted above. There is a site specific permission for the Price Choppers at Leslie Street.

The area east of Leslie Street is zoned IC D5 N1 which permits commercial uses up to one times the area of the lot and industrial uses up to five times the lot area. East of Loblaws is zoned I2 D5 site. There is an 18 metre height limit for the entire sites east of Leslie Street, see Attachment 8. At the most easterly section is the sewage disposal plant and a small playground zoned Gh.

Section 12 (2) 270 does not permit retail development within an "I" or "IC" district, unless it existed on or before July 20, 1993. This section also limits the amount permitted and the possibility for expansion.

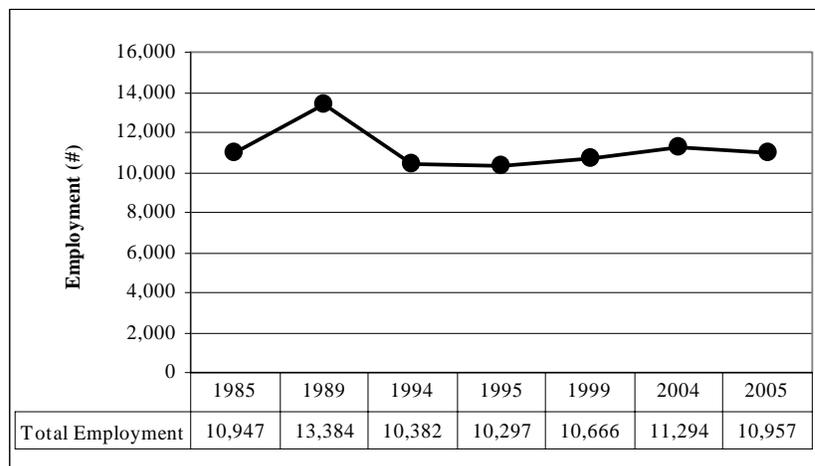
Employment in the South of Eastern Study Area

The Study Area includes the South of Eastern Employment District and the area south of Lake Shore Boulevard, (see Attachment 1: South of Eastern Study Area).

1. Employment in the South of Eastern Study Area

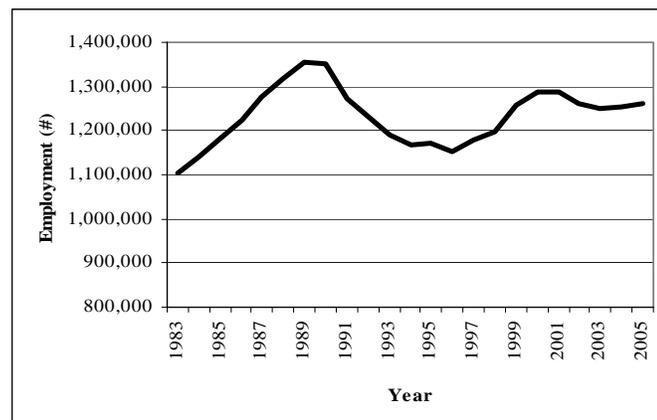
In terms of employment levels, the entire South of Eastern Study Area has remained remarkably stable over the last twenty years. In both 1985 and 2005 there were just under 11,000 jobs. In this twenty year time period, the number of establishments has grown from 192 businesses to 225.

Figure 1: Total Employment in Study Area, 1985 – 2005



The early history of the Study Area largely reflects the employment pattern of the City as a whole. Employment rose through the early part of the decade, peaking around 1989. Employment then declined during the 1989-1993 recession. Unlike the City as a whole, which showed a trough in the early part of the 1990s, growth in the last part of that decade, followed by more recent decline, the Study Area showed consistency and employment stability.

Figure 2: Employment Pattern in the City of Toronto, 1983 – 2005



Both the South of Eastern Employment District and the area south of Lake Shore Boulevard have proven to provide a stable employment environment over the twenty year time period. In 2005, the South of Eastern Employment District supported 7,144 jobs in 128 businesses, while south of Lake Shore Boulevard, there were 3,813 jobs in 97 businesses. These employment levels have remained largely unchanged from 1985.

Table 1: Total Employment and Establishments in the South of Eastern Study Area

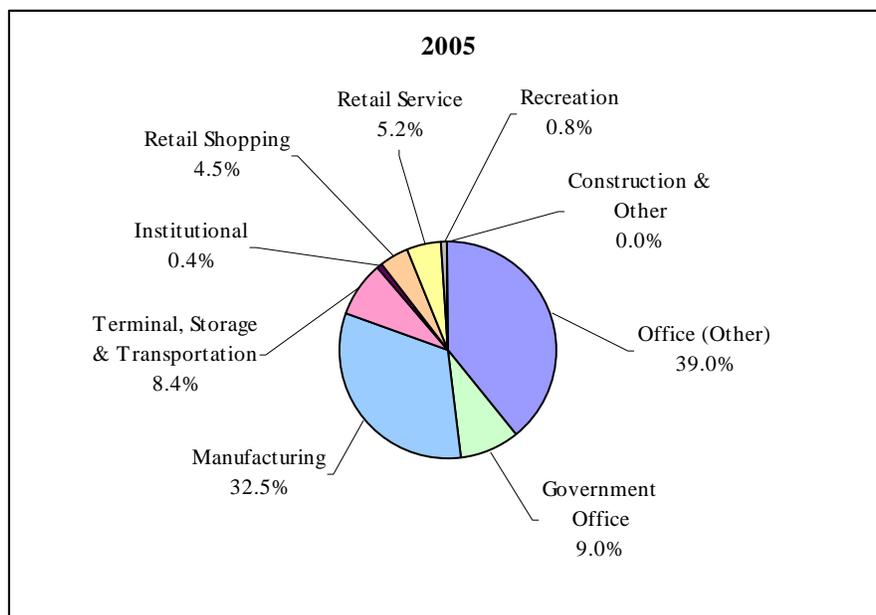
Year	Total Employment			Total Establishments		
	Employment District	South of Lake Shore Area	Whole Study Area	Employment District	South of Lake Shore Area	Whole Study Area
1985	7,413	3,534	10,947	87	105	192
1995	6,572	3,725	10,297	120	94	214
2005	7,144	3,813	10,957	128	97	225

Steady growth in total number of businesses is most notable in the Employment District, growing from 87 firms in 1985 to 128 in 2005.

2. Employment Sectors and Employment Trends

For the purpose of this study, employment statistics have been classified with a 10 sector classification system based on the Land Use Codes from the Toronto Employment Survey, an annual survey of businesses conducted by City Planning, Policy and Research. The number of employees and the percentage of the total employment are outlined in the following chart.

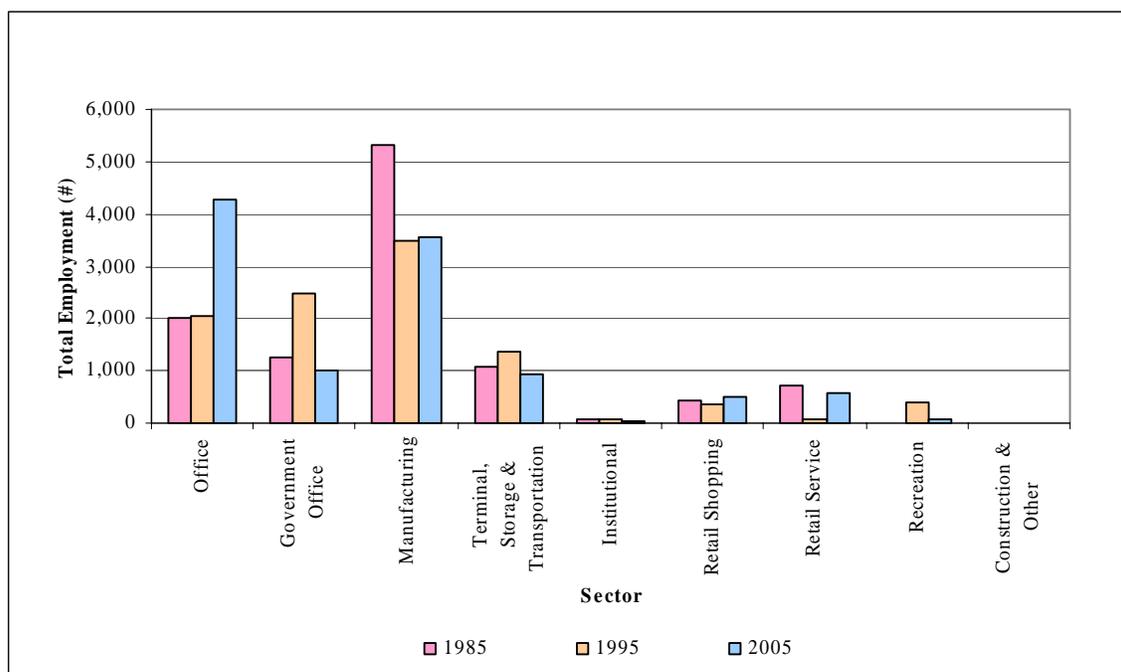
Figure 3: Employment Sectors in South of Eastern Study Area, 2005



Structurally, office type operations employ the greatest number of people, currently over 4,270 employees, which represent 39% of all jobs throughout the Study Area. Employment within the manufacturing sector still remains a viable opportunity in this area, employing 3,559 employees or approximately 33% of all employment in the area. The retail sector employs a small number of employees in the area and has remained unchanged over the 20 year time period, employing about 10% of all employees since 1985.

Similar to the rest of the City, jobs in the manufacturing sector in the Study Area have declined over the last 20 years. However, while jobs in the manufacturing sector have declined, these lost jobs have been steadily replaced by jobs in other sectors, such as office related activities. This reinvention of employment structure within this area illustrates its strong economic endurance as it relates to employment opportunities.

Figure 4: Change in Employment by Sector in the Study Area, 1985 – 2005



In terms of the total number of establishments in the Study Area, although some firms have left, many new firms have replaced them. This is indicative of the continued interest in locating in this area. For example, in the Employment District, while firms like Toby Industries, Link-Belt, Canada Metal, A. R. Clarke, Toronto Iron Works and Grafton Fraser Inc. have left, firms such as Pebble Hut Doc Services, Securicor, BMW and World Journal Chinese Daily have moved in. In the Employment District, several firms have remained throughout the last 20 years, such as, Canada Post, Brinks, Purolator and the Toronto Board of Education (terminal and dispatch activities).

Similarly, south of Lake Shore, firms such as Brewers Warehousing, Gray Coach Lines, Belkin Paperboard and Knob Hill Farms have ceased operation, while firms like Intelligarde International, Turtle Island Recycling and The Docks have located here. A sample of some of the firms that have stayed in the area since 1985 are, Greyhound Lines of Canada, Cimco, Lafarge and Toronto Hydro.

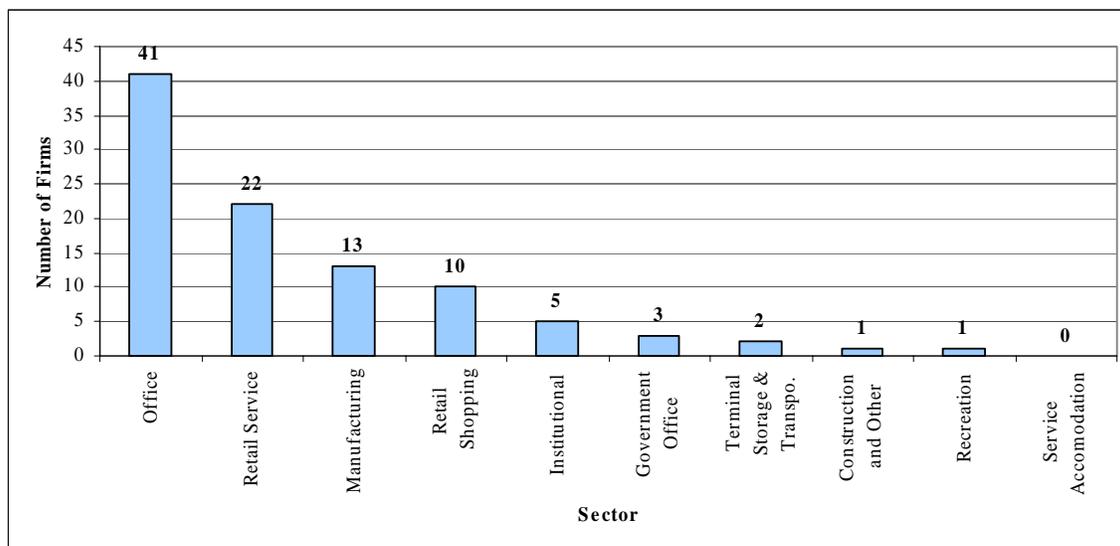
On an annualized basis since 1985, employment levels in the Study Area have not changed considerably. From 1985 – 1995, employment declined by 0.6%, while during the period of 1995-2005, total employment increased by 0.6%. This rather flat line of decline and growth indicates a stable employment environment.

3. Employers in the Study Area

In 2005, three quarters of all workers in the Employment District were employed by the 10 largest firms. South of Lake Shore, about 70% of all employment was found in the 10 largest employers.

In addition to the existence of large employers, small and medium size firms are playing an increasingly important role in this area. These firms, which are typically focused in the office, manufacturing, retail and service sectors, provide important services and linkages to the established firms in the area. The following chart classifies the type of small and medium size firms within the Study Area. Over three quarters of all businesses in the Employment District employ less than 20 workers. Almost half (41) of these firms are classified within the office employment sector. The types of buildings that these office establishments are located in the Employment District are typically one to three storey mixed office and industrial use buildings.

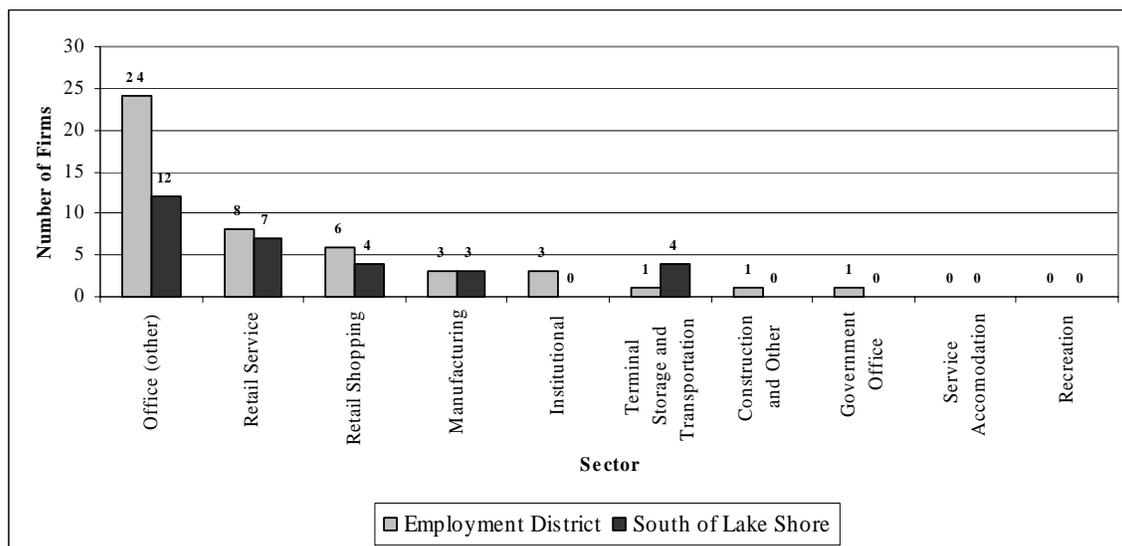
Figure 5: Firms Employing Less Than 20 Employees in the Employment District



4. New Employers in the Study Area

Since 2000, 78 new businesses have located within the Study Area; with 47 of these new businesses in the Employment District.

Figure 6: Number of New Employers since 2000 by Sector in the Study Area



5. Findings of the stakeholder interviews

Between June and September 2005, the City of Toronto’s Economic Development Division and MKI Canada (MKI Canada was engaged by the applicant in April 2005 to conduct an economic assessment of the proposed Film Studios application) collected 17 responses from companies operating in the South of Eastern Employment District and on Queen Street East between Broadview and Leslie Streets. The questionnaires were designed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of operating a business in the area, the factors influencing businesses to locate in the area, and the potential positive and negative impacts on the business community if the Toronto Film Studio Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment applications were approved. The questionnaire is Attachment No. 11.

Economic Development staff identified 11 key business stakeholders in the area. Seven of the business stakeholders agreed to participate. These businesses were selected because of their substantial investment in their facilities, their substantial contribution to Toronto’s economy, and because they are among the largest employers in the area. Interviews were also conducted with smaller businesses in the film, manufacturing and warehousing, and retail sectors.

Whenever possible, the interviews were conducted jointly by Economic Development staff and consultants from MKI Canada. Occasionally the questionnaire was distributed by email or fax to the respondent at their request. All respondents were either business owners or people who held senior positions in their respective companies.

Land Ownership

Eight of the 17 businesses that participated owned the property that their business was located on. Land ownership was distributed relatively evenly between businesses operating in different sectors. Of those businesses reporting land ownership, two are also landlords leasing a portion of their property to film companies. None of the land owners were planning to relocate in the next five years, while four of the nine businesses that lease property stated that they were planning to move.

Reasons for Locating in this Employment Area

Six of the seven companies in the media sector cited proximity to other media related companies as the reason for locating in this area. Proximity to downtown, major transportation routes and the TTC were also important factors. In addition, companies specified the 'industrial' nature of the area, access to skilled labour, and suitable land for expansion as factors influencing their decision to locate in the area. The companies in the manufacturing sector all indicated the location of their business was determined by previous owners or because they bought a pre-existing facility. Retail businesses cited affordability and the demographic projection of younger and wealthier population as the main reasons for locating in this area.

Businesses are Growing

Fifteen of the businesses reported they will be expanding into new markets in the next five years. Eight businesses are planning to begin manufacturing or selling new products in the next five years. In addition, eight of the respondents said they plan to import more products or materials in the next five years while seven said they will be exporting more products or materials. Nine of the eleven businesses in the media and manufacturing sectors felt other businesses would benefit by being located close to their operation while only two of the six retail establishments felt other businesses could benefit by being located closer to them.

There Are Many Advantages to Operating a Business in This Area

The media sector found this area to be the most advantageous to their operations. Six of the seven media companies listed proximity to other media companies as a major advantage of their location. Five reported proximity to downtown and four noted access to the TTC and major highways as strengths of doing business in this community. Three of the seven media companies cited labour as a strength of the area. Two of the three companies in manufacturing listed transportation and labour as the major advantages of their location, while three of the six retail businesses cited proximity to downtown and a favorably changing demographic as the biggest strengths of operating in this area.

There is Room for Improvement

Businesses in all three sectors identified some weaknesses to doing business in the area. Companies in the media sector cited instability in the area due to the possibility of residential development, specifically regarding the Toronto Film Studios application. They also cited the limited amount of land available for expansion as a weakness of the area. Traffic, lack of parking

space, and proximity to residential land uses were concerns raised by those companies in the manufacturing sector, while the retail sector identified poor infrastructure maintenance, inconsistent garbage collection and the appearance of the area as primary concerns.

Barriers to Growth

Respondents also identified a number of barriers to growing their businesses. The main barriers reported by businesses in the media sector were lack of land available for expansion, the insecurity of tenancy due to short-term leases and possible residential development. The businesses in the manufacturing sector also identified the lack of land available for expansion as a barrier to growing their business. Retail businesses specified poor infrastructure maintenance, inconsistent garbage collection, difficulty finding larger retail spaces, and the lack of new residential development as barriers to growing their business.

Businesses Helping Businesses

Businesses in the media cluster reported that other suppliers and services significantly benefit from being located closer to their business. Some of the businesses in the other sectors reported providing minor benefits to other services or suppliers located nearby.

Location of Customers

Almost all companies in the media and manufacturing sectors reported attracting customers from the local, national and international markets. Service and retail respondents reported customers from the immediate area, other areas in Toronto and from various areas in the Greater Toronto Area.

Workforce

Both the media and the manufacturing sector businesses rated the availability, quality, and stability of the workforce in the area high, with most businesses giving the highest score possible in all three of these categories. Service and retail businesses gave much lower scores in these categories.

Residential Development

There was a sharp divide between the media and manufacturing sectors, and the service and retail sectors on the perceived impact of residential development on business. Both the media and manufacturing warehousing sectors believed residential development in the area would negatively impact on the nature of their operation. They cited increases in noise complaints, disruption of transportation routes, reduced freight access and increases in land value, and therefore property taxes. In contrast, retail establishments felt more residential development in the area would benefit their businesses by providing them with more customers. Retail establishments believed residential development would have no impact on their hours of operation, would have no impact on or improve transportation routes and have no impact on freight access. However, all retail businesses believed residential development south of Eastern Avenue would drive up their land value thereby increasing rents and taxes.

Mixed-Use Development

The perceived impacts of mixed-use development were virtually the same from all respondents as those for residential development. The main differences were that companies in the media and manufacturing sectors were more open to commercial development while retail establishments were open to the development of light or clean industry, as well as commercial uses.

Servicing Other Industries

When asked if they provided services to the film, auto-related, transportation, or professional industries, all but four of the businesses stated they provided services to the film industry. While services to the film industry comprised a significant amount of total revenue for those businesses in the media sector, retail businesses cited services to the film industry anywhere from an insignificant amount of business to 40% of total revenues. None of the businesses reported providing services to auto-related, transportation, or professional industries.

Industry Trends Affecting Location

Companies in the media sector reported industry clustering and the necessity to be located near the downtown core as prime motivators affecting their location choice. It was made clear by the respondents that these attributes are crucial to the continued prosperity of the industry. There was no consistency in the responses of the retail businesses. Affordability, availability of space, and proximity to downtown were all mentioned as industry trends affecting location.

Industry Trends Affecting Location of Customers and Suppliers

The response from the media sector was virtually the same as the preceding question. Industry clustering and the necessity to be located close to the downtown core were identified as the main trends affecting customers and suppliers. Firms in the manufacturing and retail sectors found this question not to be applicable to them.

6. The Kings

At its meeting of July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, City Council directed staff to report to Toronto East York Community Council and Economic Development and Parks Committee for information on:

- (a) the nature of employment, and the number and type of jobs, in the Kings area of the City of Toronto after redevelopment, compared to conditions prior to redevelopment;
- (b) the applicability of the Kings experience to the South of Eastern study area and the proposed rezoning of 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue;

Employment in the Kings has followed a similar pattern in both King-Spadina and King-Parliament: rising in the 1996-2001 period, and falling in the 2001-2005 period.

THE KINGS
EMPLOYMENT 1996,
2001, AND 2005

	Year					
	1996	2001	2005	1996-2001 Chg.	2001-2005 Chg.	1996-2005 Chg.
King-Spadina						
No. of Firms	1,997	1,828	1,639	-8%	-10%	-18%
Part Time Employees	2,800	4,736	4,262	69%	-10%	52%
Full Time Employees	19,613	21,462	19,892	9%	-7%	1%
Total Employees	22,413	26,198	24,154	17%	-8%	8%
King-Parliament						
No. of Firms	835	763	747	-9%	-2%	-11%
Part Time Employees	1,799	2,644	1,972	47%	-25%	10%
Full Time Employees	8,049	9,521	7,447	18%	-22%	-7%
Total Employees	9,848	12,165	9,419	24%	-23%	-4%
The Kings Total						
No. of Firms	2,832	2,591	2,386	-9%	-8%	-16%
Part Time Employees	4,599	7,380	6,234	60%	-16%	36%
Full Time Employees	27,662	30,983	27,339	12%	-12%	-1%
Total Employees	32,261	38,363	33,573	19%	-12%	4%

Between 1996-2001, total employment rose in King-Spadina by 17% (in King-Parliament by 24%). In the City as a whole, employment rose by about 11% during the same period. Since 2001, employment has fallen in both areas — by 8% in King-Spadina, and by 23% in King-Parliament. For the City as a whole, employment fell during the same period by just under 2%.

The result is that for the 1996-2005 period, employment in King-Spadina increased by about 8% (about 1,700 employees) and decreased by about 4% in King-Parliament (a loss of about 400 jobs). Taken together, the two areas increased by about 4% between 1996-2005 (about 1,300 jobs).

Interestingly in both areas in all periods, the number of firms declined (even while employment first rose and then decreased). For both areas the number of firms declined by almost 450 employers between 1996-2005.

The largest employment sectors in the Kings are as follows:

2005 Employment

Sector	King-Spadina	King-Parliament
Office (including government)	64%	60%
Retail (shop and service)	22%	17%
Manufacturing	5%	3%

The question has been raised as to whether the South of Eastern Study Area is comparable to the King-Spadina or King-Parliament area. The Study Area is not comparable to King-Spadina or King-Parliament.

King-Spadina and King-Parliament, commonly referred to as the “Kings” are located immediately to the west and east of Toronto’s downtown core. They form a natural progression from the core and are within easy walking distance of the core. By comparison, the South of Eastern Study Area is not within easy walking distance from the downtown core. It is in fact located east of the Don Valley Parkway and continues a significant distance further east from the Don Valley Parkway. The intersection of King/Spadina is 1.2km away from the downtown (the intersection of King and Bay Streets). The Eastern/Carlaw intersection is almost 3 times the distance (at 3.5km away from the King and Bay intersection as a straight line distance).

The “Kings” have a street network very similar to the core, with medium and smaller sites on a denser street grid. The Study Area, on the other hand, has several larger land parcels. For example, the Toronto Film Studio is a site of 7.3 hectares (18 acres).

The retail strip along Queen Street West is well developed in the King-Spadina area, and is an important draw for both residential and employment uses. It serves a retail trading area far larger than the immediate neighbourhood. By comparison, the South of Eastern Study Area is removed from Queen Street East. This section of Queen Street is not comparable to the vibrant Queen Street West area in the “Kings”. The south side of the Queen Street East strip near the South of Eastern Study Area is characterized with institutional uses and large blocks of residential use, not an intense mix of uses. In addition, the strip is not totally surrounded by a residential neighbourhood. The area to the south is a mix of uses including industrial uses.

Employment in the “Kings” is also far denser, taking place in multi-storey buildings. In the study area, most establishments are located in one to three storey mixed use office and industrial use buildings, as reported by the Parcel Code information contained in the Toronto Employment Survey.

The scale of the areas is also different. Employment in the “Kings” today stands at almost 33,600 employees (after having reached a high of almost 38,400 employees in 2001). This number is about 4.7 times larger than the total employment found in the South of Eastern Employment District – and over three times as many employees as are found in the entire South of Eastern Study Area. The firms found in the “Kings” are far smaller than those found in the study area. Though employment in the “Kings” is about three times that found in the study area, there are almost 12 times as many firms found in the “Kings”.

The difference in scale is also found in the amount of development activity found in the “Kings” since 1996. In King-Spadina alone, about 284,000 m² of residential space is in the development pipeline (application submitted, approved and building permits issued), with a further 385,000 m² of additional residential space either under construction or completed. Retail space (both in the pipeline and completed since 1996) adds a further 65,000 m² to the total.

The types of firms found in the “Kings” are also far different from that found in the Study Area. In the “Kings”, office type uses make up between 60% - 64% of the total employment, while in the Study Area this category makes up about 48%. Manufacturing employment makes up only between 3% - 5% of the employment in the “Kings”, while it comprises about 33% of the employment in the Study Area. Finally, retail and retail service is a dominant category in the “Kings”, comprising between 17% - 22% of total employment. In the Study Area this is about 10%.

Most importantly, employment re-use in the “Kings” has taken place in existing buildings. These buildings, many of which are now heavily renovated, can provide space to office and higher end uses at rents that are still significantly below the rents that would be needed to make new construction economically feasible. The Study Area has far fewer buildings that can be adaptively re-used for multi-tenant (particularly office) purposes.

The King’s experience is not applicable to the South of Eastern Employment District because of the location, the existing built form and the City’s goals for the area as captured in the Official Plan. This Employment District functions well and will continue to do so if it is protected and promoted for economic activity. The Employment District should not evolve into a mixed-use area. There are many opportunities elsewhere in the City, for residential/mixed use development. Employment lands particularly inner-City locations, are in limited supply.

The City’s new Official Plan designates the “Kings” Regeneration Areas. Other areas in the City share this designation. The City recognizes that due to shifts in local and global economies there is the need to reintegrate these areas of the City. This is not the case with the South of Eastern Employment District.

Community Consultation

City Council on February 14, 2006 recommended “that the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District set up a community consultation process that will include up to two evening meetings to discuss the preliminary findings of the South of Eastern Study prior to reporting out to Toronto and East York Community Council.” Two evening meetings were held on May 29, 2006 in Ward 30 and on June 14th, 2006 in Ward 32.

Nine written submissions/briefs were received. They range in comments from eliminating the policy permission to consider ‘Big Box’ retail in this area to considering introducing mixed uses to the area.

In addition, the following issues and concerns were raised:

- the speed of the traffic on Eastern Avenue
- the look of Eastern Avenue
- review of the intersection at Leslie/Eastern
- the need for connections through the blocks to get down to the waterfront
- the future of the Canada Metal site
- the need for community greening

Existing Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

The South Riverdale and Lake Shore Boulevard East Community Improvement Plan amended the previous Community Improvement Plan to identify new projects to be undertaken when the elevated Gardiner was dismantled. Over the last few years many of the projects have been implemented including the trail and greening on the north side of Lake Shore Boulevard. It also created an identity for the area now known as the “Studio District”. The CIP imagines the following for the “Studio District”:

- (i) Encouraging the revitalization of the Eastern Avenue Industrial Area to clean modern industrial activity related to cinema, photographic and arts and craft ventures through Municipal recognition of a “Studio District” that supports the unique “studio” character of this economic activity;
- (ii) Incorporating the “studio” theme into capital improvements such as signage, lighting, facades, streetscape, and into other actions such as promotional materials, community events and projects;
- (iii) Assessing the need and desirability of acquiring lands and providing loans and grants to property owners for rehabilitation of land and buildings respecting the Studio District. Implementation will be subject to further reports;
- (iv) Investigating the feasibility of creating a Business Improvement Area for the Studio District and, if feasible, encouraging its development as a means of generating local resources for improvements to the Studio District that can be controlled by the business people to assist with upgrading and marketing of the area and its services;
- (v) Promoting local community connections to Leslieville businesses, community economic development initiatives, local employment and supplier relationships, and the other Community Improvement Themes;
- (vi) Investigating and encouraging ways of humanizing Eastern Avenue including diversion of industrial traffic to Lake Shore Boulevard, increasing the monitoring and control of vehicle speed, and providing amenities for a safe, friendly, healthy and green environment for people.

Originally \$50,000 was allocated to the Eastern Studio District. Some of the improvements the City has undertaken included the erection of street signs to help create the “Studio District” identity. In 1993 \$6,648.82 was spent to manufacture and install 20 street signs in the Eastern Studio District. The project to improve street lighting in the Studio District was cancelled in 1993 (\$16,000 allocated). Members of the community are still interested in pursuing additional projects that will expand upon the Studio District.

Streetscape

Further work is required in order to review the options and opportunities for Eastern Avenue. It is recommended that staff develop Public Realm Guidelines for both the south side and north side of the Eastern Avenue between Broadview and Coxwell Avenues.

The Importance of Film

The Film, Television and Commercial Production industry is a critical industry cluster in Toronto. It directly employs more than 25,000 full-time equivalent workers (many thousands more in related service industries), generates in excess of \$1 billion in economic activity annually, and represents a strategic sector within the information and cultural industries in the City. Toronto has tremendous advantages as the centre of the Canadian media industries, with a full range of production services, related industries and access to capital resources. Not only does the industry bring the obvious economic value to Toronto, but it also represents the opportunity to produce domestic products which are distinctive, culturally significant and which profile Toronto around the world. The benefits of this positive exposure and image building are broad reaching and extend far beyond what can be measured in terms of traditional economic impact. Artists and those who work in, and support the arts are integral to the creation and sustaining of the creative city. Writers, actors, directors, make-up artists and others who are part of the Film and Television industry are critical to the creative fabric of Toronto; they amplify the passion, energy, experience and ingenuity that defines Toronto as a creative place and therefore help to draw and retain the best workers and companies to the City.

However, the film industry in Toronto is facing an increasingly competitive environment as regions within Canada and internationally have targeted the film industry as part of their regional economic development strategies. Toronto must act aggressively to protect our existing physical and financial infrastructure and to generate innovative new approaches in order to remain a leader and to continue to benefit from the significant economic, cultural and creative value that this industry delivers to our City.

Future of the South of Eastern Employment District

(a) Residential

Residential permission should not be considered in the South of Eastern Employment District. This is consistent with the City's position on the Toronto Film Studio application.

(b) The possibility of Big Box (Large Scale Retail)

The new Official Plan will permit consideration of large format retail in the Employment District. Once the new Official Plan comes into effect it is anticipated that the Employment District will experience pressure to redevelop into this form. The community including some of the business community, and City staff are concerned that the Employment District will be jeopardized if large format retail can be considered anywhere within the Employment District. If permitted, it should connect to the larger format retailing that is already focused at the intersection of Leslie Street and Lake Shore Boulevard. There is additional retail permission on

some sites now. Build-outs of existing or new permission would cause some concern for the Leslie/Lake Shore intersection and changes to the traffic network would have to be considered.

If further large format retail is to be considered, the following principles must apply:

- (i) respect the low-scale residential area to the north;
- (ii) urban format with limited grade level parking;
- (iii) buildings framing the new and existing streets;
- (iv) greening of sites;
- (v) links through the sites east/west connection for pedestrians and vehicular;
- (vi) retail permission should be limited, focused and sites should connect;
- (vii) access and egress of each site dealt with comprehensively;
- (viii) improve the traffic situation along Eastern Avenue;
- (ix) intensify what is there (ample growth for the existing retail);
- (x) coordinate the location and link south to Lake Shore;
- (xi) parking must be in a parking structure and appropriately screened from the streets;
- (xii) incorporate green roof and green technology; and
- (xiii) main door access off the street with active uses at grade along public streets.

(c) Expanding the Employment Focus

The South of Eastern Employment District needs to be maintained and enhanced. To do this the City must ensure it remains a friendly environment for economic activity. To do this the City should:

- expand the range of employment uses that are permitted (see attachment 9);
- eliminate future expansion of uses that detract from the employment focus;
- create incentives for the employment area by creating a CIP project area;
- recommend further criteria for considering retail;
- consider additional community improvements (e.g., street improvements, intersection of Eastern and Leslie and Eastern and Mosley, greening of Eastern Avenue and Leslie Street); and
- explore with the Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO) initiatives for employment use.

The Employment District needs to be supported and further enhanced. By undertaking these initiatives it will continue to grow in the future.

Environment

The Study Area contains a number of sites that are Brownfields. Development of these lands could encourage further reinvestment in the area as well as establish a climate for the existing businesses to grow. This is an area with a history of contamination and a community that is aware and sensitive to the environmental issues. The Ministry of the Environment has the responsibility of approval as these sites redevelop into more sensitive uses. Soil decommissioning may be required for these properties within the study area and records of site condition (RSC) acknowledged by the Ministry of Environment, will then be required prior to new development taking place.

The Ministry of the Environment has new requirements (O.Reg 153/04) for introducing more sensitive land uses and the clean-up approach that each site will take as it redevelops.

Next Steps

This report recommends amending the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to expand the range of employment uses permitted in the Employment District. Also to be considered is the introduction of development standards and various guidelines to set the framework for new development in order to enhance the Employment District. The Public Meeting under the Planning Act is targeted for the final Toronto East York Community Council meeting of 2006 or the first quarter of 2007.

The June 20, 2006 report entitled "Community Improvement Project Area By-law" from Deputy City Manager Fareed M. Amin is on the agenda for the July 4th, 2006, Planning and Transportation Committee meeting. The report recommends passing a Community Improvement Project Area By-law for the Employment District in order to use incentives to promote new investment for employment purposes and to maintain and grow the City's jobs base. This could include using incentives to support the rehabilitation of existing properties. When this report is adopted by Council, staff will begin to prepare the Community Improvement Plan.

Conclusions:

The Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications submitted for the property 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue triggered a planning study for the surrounding industrial area. This report outlines the findings of the study. The Employment District functions well and will continue to do so if it is protected and promoted for economic activity. Staff has indicated in a previous report that they are not prepared to support any change in use in this area that would jeopardize the remainder of the Employment District.

Staff from Economic Development, Legal, Transportation Services, Technical Services and the Toronto Film Commissioner have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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(Copies of the following Attachments in the report (June 27, 2006) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, were forwarded to all Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council with the agenda for its meeting on July 11, 2006, and copies are on file in the City Clerk's Office:

- Attachment 1: South of Eastern Study Area;
- Attachment 2: Former City of Toronto Official Plan designations for the Study Area;
- Attachment 3: New Official Plan Urban Structure Map 2;
- Attachment 4: New Official Plan Land Use Designations;
- Attachment 5: Zoning Designations for the Study Area – West Portion;
- Attachment 6: Zoning Designations for the Study Area – East Portion;
- Attachment 7: Height Limits for the West Portion of the Study Area;
- Attachment 8: Height Limits for the East Portion of the Study Area;
- Attachment 9: Land Use Changes to Consider;
- Attachment 10: Outline of the community meeting dates; and
- Attachment 11: Key Informant Business Stakeholder Questions.)

The Toronto and East York Community Council also had before it the communications and copies are on file in the City Clerk's office:

- Communication (July 5, 2006) from Sharmaine Ryan and Jason McCumber and copy is on file in the City Clerk's Office; and
- Communication (July 6, 2006) from Fred Gold.

The following addressed the Toronto and East York Community Council:

- Michael Rosenberg;
 - Milorad Novic;
 - Eliana Bueche; and
 - Suzanne McCormick obo Terri-Lynn Leeking.
-

City Council – July 25, 26 and 27, 2006

Council also considered the following:

- *Report (July 18, 2006) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning [Communication 14(a)].*

*Subject: Supplementary Report
File Number: 04 162466 000 00 TM
Applicant: N/A
Architect: N/A
Eastern Avenue to Lakeshore Boulevard, the Don Valley to Coxwell Avenue
Ward 30 and Ward 32 - Toronto-Danforth and Beaches-East York*

Purpose:

To respond to the July 11, 2006 request from Toronto and East York Community Council that City Planning report to City Council on July 25, 2006 on mechanisms to amend the Official Plan to remove and/or restrict “power centres” from the South of Eastern Employment District.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that City Council:

- (1) *direct staff to schedule a Statutory Public Meeting under the Planning Act at the September 13, 2006 Toronto and East York Community Council Meeting to amend the City of Toronto Official Plan to specify that “power centres” are not permitted in the South of Eastern Employment District as shown on Urban Structure Map (Map 2) in the Official Plan; and*
- (2) *direct staff to notify all interested parties identified thorough the South of Eastern Planning Study, and provide statutory notice through newspaper notice.*

Background:

At its meeting on July 11, 2006, Toronto and East York Community Council had before it the June 27, 2006 report from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District entitled “South of Eastern Planning Study”. Community Council adopted the staff recommendations, added additional recommendations and requested a report directly to City Council.

Comments:

Actions of Toronto and East York Community Council

Toronto and East York Community Council (TEYCC) adopted the staff recommendations that would lead to strengthening and enhancing the employment focus in this District. TEYCC was concerned that the opportunity to consider “power centres” in this area could detract from the employment focus, particularly the focus for media/film.

Generally, a “power centre” is considered a centre dominated by several large format retail stores with a shared parking lot and typically ancillary services. What is considered to be a large format retail store varies widely by location and by the retail sector (i.e., large format drug stores will be smaller than large format hardware stores).

City of Toronto Official Plan

The new City of Toronto Official Plan was approved, in part, with modifications by the Ontario Municipal Board in June, 2006. The new Official Plan Policy 4.6.3 states that – large scale, stand-alone retail stores and “power centres” are not permitted in Employment Areas in the Central Waterfront and are only permitted in other Employment Areas fronting onto major streets as shown on Map 3, that also form the boundary of the Employment Area, through the enactment of a zoning by-law. Where permitted, new large scale, stand-alone retail stores and ‘power centres’ will ensure that:

- (a) sufficient transportation capacity is available to accommodate the extra traffic generated by the development, resulting in an acceptable level of traffic on adjacent and nearby streets; and*
- (b) the functioning of other economic activities within the Employment Areas and the economic health of nearby shopping districts are not adversely affected.*

Existing large scale, stand-alone retail stores and “power centres” legally established prior to the approval date of the plan within Employment Areas are permitted.

This policy would allow for the consideration of “power centres” in the South of Eastern Employment District.

Removing or Restricting the Permission for Power Centres

If Council would like to remove permission, or place further restrictions on the consideration of “power centres” in the South of Eastern Employment District, the Official Plan should be amended. An area specific policy would outline further restrictions for “power centres.” This approach would still allow for the consideration of stand-alone large scale stores. The report dated June 27, 2006, from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, outlines principles if further large scale retail is to be considered.

Conclusions:

Toronto and East York Community Council directed City Planning staff to report to City Council on ways to remove or further restrict permission for “power centres” in the South of Eastern Employment District. Staff recommends bringing forward an area specific policy and scheduling a Public meeting for consideration of the Official Plan Amendment at the September, 2006 Toronto and East York Community Council meeting.

Contact:

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