



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### 2009 Avenue Studies

<b>Date:</b>	March 20, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Planning and Growth Management Committee
<b>From:</b>	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	Pg090006

### SUMMARY

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This report recommends an Avenue Study be undertaken on Sheppard Avenue East between the former Hydro Corridor lands to Bay Mills Road/Aragon Avenue and that an Avenue Study/Land Use Review be undertaken for St. Clair Avenue West between Scarlett Road and Keele Street.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. The following studies be endorsed by City Council for study in 2009:
  - a. Avenue Study for Sheppard Avenue East between the former Hydro Corridor lands to Bay Mills Road/Aragon Avenue; and
  - b. Avenue Study/Land Use Review for St. Clair Avenue West between Scarlett Road and Keele Street.

### Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the City Planning Division's 2009 Capital budget.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Official Plan identifies selected corridors along major transit routes as “Avenues” where transit-supportive reurbanization is intended to create new jobs and housing while improving local streetscapes, infrastructure and amenities. Section 2.2.3 of the Plan establishes the Avenue study framework.

A list of Avenue studies undertaken to date and their status is included in Attachment 1 of this report.

The Plan contains approximately 160 kilometres of Avenues. Due to limited resources to conduct these studies, priorities have had to be set. The process to date has been for Community Councils to nominate from time to time areas for study; for staff to annually evaluate the best candidates from those identified given the criteria discussed below; and for Planning and Growth Management Committee to make recommendations to Council.

### Generic “Avenue” Typology Study

In 2008, the Division engaged a consultant to undertake a review of all the Avenue Studies completed to date, analyze the results of the Mid-Rise Symposium held in 2005 and review precedents from other cities in Canada and abroad. Using this information the consultants have been asked to identify ways to best promote and encourage mid-rise development on Avenues and to identify “generic” Avenue typologies that could be applied in the future to expedite implementation of the Avenue program. The consultants are in the process of developing their 1<sup>st</sup> Phase Report which will identify a number of Avenue built form typologies, with the results being reported out in 2009.

## **COMMENTS**

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

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

- There is a potential synergy with existing economic development programs and initiatives.

At its November 28, 2007 meeting the Planning and Growth Management Committee asked staff to consider the relationship to Transit City Priorities as another selection criterion. While this is generally captured in the above criteria, the recent announcement of the TTC's three top priority Transit City projects have been incorporated in the assessment of the areas recommended for study in 2009 in this report. The three Transit City priorities are: Sheppard Avenue East, Finch Avenue West, and Eglinton Avenue, across the entire City.

### **Previously Identified Areas for Study**

The following areas have been nominated for consideration as Avenue Studies, through either a Community Council or Standing Committee.

1. Eglinton Avenue West from the Allen Expressway to Dufferin Street
2. Warden Avenue & Sheppard Avenue Segment
3. Yonge Street from Cummer Avenue to Steeles Avenue
4. Jane Street between Lawrence Avenue West and Black Creek Drive
5. Kingston Road between St. Clair Avenue and the Guildwood Go Station
6. Remaining unstudied portions of St. Clair Avenue
7. Weston Road between Ray Avenue and Humber Boulevard and including Eglinton Avenue to Black Creek Drive and Black Creek Drive from Eglinton Avenue to Trethewy Drive (N.B. this latter segment is not identified as an Avenue in the Plan)
8. Lake Shore Boulevard from Kipling Avenue to Royal York Road
9. Midland Avenue and Sheppard Avenue Segment.

### **Assessment of Potential Candidate Areas**

In applying the Council approved criteria to the list of candidate areas, two of the highest priority areas to emerge for 2009 are: Sheppard Avenue East between the former Hydro Corridor lands to Bay Mills Road/Aragon Avenue (identified from the above list as Item 2) and St. Clair Avenue West between Scarlett Road and Keele Street (identified from the above list as Item 6).

#### Avenue Study: Sheppard Avenue East between the former Hydro Corridor lands and Bay Mills Road/Aragon Avenue

The segment of Sheppard Avenue between the former Hydro Corridor lands and Bay Mills Road/Aragon Avenue is primarily characterized by a mix of low rise commercial and auto-related commercial uses. The properties that front onto Sheppard Avenue range in size and configuration which has result in an inconsistent lot pattern within and between blocks. In addition, building placement, setbacks and massing vary from property to property resulting in a poorly defined street edge and pedestrian realm.

This segment of Sheppard Avenue has been the subject of a number of recent initiatives. The Sheppard Corridor Study identified opportunities for redevelopment and transportation-related improvements in the Corridor. In addition, Sheppard Avenue East has been identified as one of the first priorities for the Transit City Light Rail Plan (LRT). The Transit City LRT Plan proposes a network of new light rail transit lines in the City. These transit lines would introduce a broad, interconnected network of rapid transit throughout Toronto by extending light rail transit to areas of the City which presently do not have it. The proposed Sheppard East LRT line extends from Don Mills Station to Morningside Avenue and possibly further east to Meadowvale Road. The required Environmental Assessment is nearing completion and construction is slated to begin in September 2009. Detailed urban design initiatives for the corridor have been and continue to be developed in order to ensure that matters related to the resulting public realm, including streetscape, public art, pedestrian connections and bike lanes, have been adequately addressed.

A number of development applications affecting lands within this segment have been submitted. The Harmony Village development, for example, on the former Shanahan Ford site, proposes a 20-storey seniors retirement complex and community centre use. An Avenues Segment Review conducted by the applicant was submitted in support of this application.

This Avenue Study can draw and build upon the work already completed or underway as a result of the aforementioned Environmental Assessment and Avenues Segment Review and Sheppard East LRT urban design initiatives. The study provides an ideal opportunity to create a new comprehensive vision along this stretch of Sheppard Avenue where substantial private and public investment is proposed and anticipated.

#### Avenue Study/Land Use Review: St. Clair Avenue West between Scarlett Road and Keele Street

The segment of St. Clair Avenue West between Scarlett Road and Keele Street is characterized by a mix of low rise industrial, commercial, residential and retail uses. The properties that front onto St. Clair Avenue West range in size and configuration which has resulted in an inconsistent lot pattern within and between blocks. In addition, building placement, setbacks and massing vary from property to property resulting in a poorly defined street edge and pedestrian realm.

Historically, this area was characterized by industrial and food processing uses. While a number of these uses remain, since the 1990's new residential and commercial/retail uses have been introduced into the area. More recently, development applications have been either received or approved for large scale commercial development on some of the larger properties in the area. These new uses are changing the character of the avenue

from a traditional manufacturing and industrial area to a more mixed use strip with buildings at the street edge.

A class environmental assessment is underway to achieve a consistent four lane cross section between Gunns Road and Runnymede Road. In addition, City Council has approved undertaking an Environmental Assessment west of Gunns Road to extend the St. Clair streetcar to Jane Street. These initiatives will shape future sidewalk and roadway widths, access to local streets, streetscape opportunities and development potential in the area.

This segment represents the last remaining portion of St. Clair Avenue West Avenue Corridor that has not been studied. Conducting a study of this remaining segment of St. Clair Avenue West would complete the vision for the urbanization of this street that was initiated as part of the study for St. Clair Avenue from Bathurst to Keele Streets.

This portion of St. Clair Avenue West, unlike the majority of the Avenue east of Keele Street, has a different pattern of land use designations. Many of the land parcels are designated *Neighbourhoods* or *Employment Areas*. The Official Plan speaks to undertaking Avenue Studies on lands primarily designated as *Mixed Used Areas*. Policy 2.2.3.4 states that “where a portion of an Avenue as shown on Map 2 is designated *Neighbourhoods*, or *Parks and Open Space Areas* the policies of Chapter Four will prevail to ensure that any new development respects and reinforces the general physical character of established neighbourhoods...”.

Given the varied characteristics of this portion of St. Clair Avenue West and the policies of the Plan, a somewhat different approach to studying this area is needed. To facilitate redevelopment of this area Staff would undertake a Land Use Review in conjunction with the Avenue Study. The purpose of the Land Use Review would be to determine whether the existing Land Use designations that apply to St. Clair Avenue West are appropriate and would permit the lands to redevelop in accordance with the vision that may result from the Avenue Study. Lands west of Jane Street to Scarlett Road will be included within the scope of the Land Use of Review, in order to facilitate orderly redevelopment of this area. Of note, only those lands between Jane Street and Keele Street are identified as an Avenue on Map 2, the Urban Structure Map of the Official Plan.

The Avenue Study would address the changing character of the area as well as the varied lot pattern to create a vision and identify opportunities for a comprehensive and consistent approach to redevelopment in the area. It also would assist in creating a coordinated streetscape and pedestrian realm that would support and compliment any prospect for the future extension of the street car to Scarlett Road.

## **Conclusion**

In light of Council's approved Avenue selection criteria, staff recommend that St. Clair Avenue West between Scarlett Road and Keele Street and Sheppard Avenue East between the former Hydro Corridor lands to Bay Mills Road/Aragon Avenue be studied in 2009. The results of the studies will be reported through the respective Community Councils at the conclusion of the studies.

## **CONTACT**

Kerri A. Voumvakis, Manager Official Plan  
Policy and Research  
Tel. No. 416-392-8126  
Fax No. 416-397-4080  
E-mail: [kvoumva@toronto.ca](mailto:kvoumva@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Gary Wright  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Previous Avenue Studies  
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## Attachment 1 – Previous Avenue Studies

As part of the preparation of the new Official Plan, the following four pilot Avenue studies were undertaken:

- Bloor Street between Lansdowne Avenue and Dundas Street West (completed)
- Kingston Road between the Guildwood GO Station and Highland Creek (completed)
- The Queensway between Mimico Creek and Kipling Avenue (completed)
- Finch Avenue in the vicinity of Weston Road (completed)

Avenue Studies approved for study in 2003 were:

- College Street between Spadina Avenue and Ossington Avenue (completed)
- Lake Shore Boulevard West between Fleeceline Road and the Etobicoke Creek (later refined to the area from Kipling Avenue to the Etobicoke Creek) (completed)
- Wilson Avenue between Bathurst and Keele Streets (completed)
- Planning staff reported in 2003 on by-laws to implement a previous design study that had been done for Bloor Street West between Mimico Creek and Prince Edward Drive (completed)

Avenue Studies approved for study in 2004 were:

- Danforth Avenue from Victoria Park Avenue to Warden Avenue (completed)
- Dundas Street West from Royal York Road to the Humber River (completed)

Avenue Studies approved for study in 2005 were:

- St. Clair Avenue West from Bathurst Street to Glenholm Avenue
- St. Clair Avenue West from Glenholme Avenue to Keele Street
- O'Connor Drive between Sandra Road and Victoria Park Avenue

Avenue Studies approved for study in 2006 were:

- Avenue Road from Wilson Avenue to Lawrence Avenue West
- Lawrence Avenue from Victoria Park Avenue to Birchmount Road (completed)

No new Avenue Studies were approved for 2007 due to limited staff resources, and in order to enable staff to complete the previously approved studies.

Avenue Studies approved for study in 2008 were:

- Kingston Road (Cliffside Community) Danforth Avenue to Chine Drive (to be reported in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter)
- Bloor Street between Dundas Street West and Keele Street, and Dundas Street West between Boustead Avenue and Glenlake Avenue (to be reported in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter)