



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Streetscape Study and Implementation Plan for Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street.

Date:	April 22, 2009
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division
Ward:	Ward 20 Trinity - Spadina
Reference Number:	p:\2009\Cluster B\pIn\te090012

SUMMARY

At its February 9, 2009 meeting, the Toronto and East York Community Council requested staff to “scope the work required to prepare a streetscape study and implementation plan for the section of Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street.” This section of Dundas Street is scheduled for watermain replacement, road and sidewalk reconstruction in 2010-2011. There are a number of distinct communities and activities along this stretch of Dundas Street, including Chinatown, Kensington Market, Alexandra Park and the areas around the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Ontario College of Art and Design. Given the significance and complexity of the street, it is recommended that a consultant team be retained to develop a two-phase streetscape design and implementation strategy.

The proposed study comprises a Phase I conceptual design component with extensive public consultation, and a Phase II detailed design exercise to assist with the preparation of construction drawings.

This report scopes the terms of reference for the consultant study and highlights the need for the study to include a comprehensive program of community and stakeholder consultation. Possible funding arrangements for the Phase I component of the consultant study are also discussed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division to prepare the terms of reference and to issue a proposal call for the undertaking of a two-phase streetscape design and implementation strategy for the section of Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street to be undertaken by a team of consultants substantially in accordance with the scope of work and schedule described in this report.
2. That, upon completion, the results of the consultant study be brought forward to the Toronto and East York Community Council for consideration and approval.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The \$200,000 cost of the proposed two-phase study is available in the 2009 Transportation Services Capital Budget as detailed in the following:

Phase I – 2009 - \$150,000

The approved 2009 Transportation Services capital budget includes third party funding contribution of \$100,000 towards Phase I costs of this study contained in the capital account CTP809-01 Various Construction Projects. The remaining funding required of \$50,000 for phase 1 is available in Transportation Services capital account CTP409-02 Neighbourhood Improvements.

Phase II – 2010 - \$50,000

Funds in the amount of \$50,000 required for Phase II are available in Transportation Services capital account CTP809-02 Engineering Studies.

Implementation Phase

Upon completion of the study and the quantification of the costs of potential streetscape improvements, a report will be directed to Budget Committee outlining the financial impact on Transportation Services and City Planning Division's capital budgets. It is expected that additional funding required will include contributions of adjacent landowners and potential Section 37 funding.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

BACKGROUND

Transportation Services had scheduled the resurfacing of the section of Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street for 2007-08 in conjunction with TTC track replacement and associated sidewalk repairs. At that time, City Planning allocated funding of \$350,000 for streetscape and civic improvements in key areas along this section of the street. These improvement areas included:

- South-east corner of Dundas Street West at Bathurst Street fronting Scadding Court Public Library;
- South side of Dundas Street West at Casimir Street fronting Alexandra Park;
- North-west corner of Dundas Street West at Carlyle Street fronting Toronto Western Hospital;
- North-east and north -west corners of Dundas Street West at Casimir Street fronting orphaned spaces;
- South side of Dundas Street West at the parking lot fronting number 571, Alexandra Park; and
- The area within the public right of way on the south side of Dundas Street West between St. Patrick Street and Simcoe Street which fronts the 52 Police Division building.

In 2007-08, only the TTC track replacement was completed with the sidewalk work deferred pending completion of work by Toronto Water. As a result, Planning's budgeted amount of \$350,000 is now included in the 2010 projection for this subsequent phase of reconstruction.

At its meeting of February 9, 2009 the Toronto and East York Community Council requested:

“the Executive Director and Chief Planner, in consultation with the General Manager of Transportation Services, the Executive Director of Technical Services, and the General Manager, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, to report back to the next meeting of the Toronto and East York Community Council on the scope of work for the preparation of a streetscape study, design and implementation plan for Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street, in advance of the forthcoming watermain replacement and road and sidewalk reconstruction; and further the scope should include an outline of the potential approach, cost, timing and process involved, including community and stakeholder consultation.”

As noted above in the recommendation of the Toronto and East York Community Council, now is an opportune time to develop a streetscape design and implementation strategy before the forthcoming watermain replacement and sidewalk reconstruction projects get underway.

The timelines for the Dundas Street West watermain replacement project (contract 10EY 15WS) is currently scheduled to be tendered in December 2009 with a construction start date of March 2010. Given this timeline and the time involved in developing this proposed study, it is imperative that close coordination with Technical Services takes

place to ensure both the timely and efficient delivery of the original project while allowing for the potential improvements to be delivered.

Support for this type of streetscape study approach can be found in a number of recent City directions and priorities. The Mayor's Platform outlined the requirement to prepare "public space beautification plans" that would focus on capturing opportunities to maximize the streetscape quality of highly visible city streets and that would involve extensive public-private funding partnerships. The Agenda for Prosperity (January 2008) speaks to improvement of the business climate through a number of proactive "pillars", including enhancement of the quality of place by encouraging investment in maintenance and beautification of key public spaces across the city. Attention is to be placed on gateways and transit nodes; the Central Business District; tourism venues; and in and around cultural precincts and facilities. Another pillar of this agenda directs improvements to main streets, districts and neighbourhoods by increasing their attractiveness and viability through working with a variety of business partners and associations.

Potential for Dundas St. to be a creative Corridor

The section of Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street has the potential to develop as a creative corridor, similar to the cultural corridor that John Street presents to the south, and warrants extensive streetscape upgrades. There is potential for a number of significant development proposals along this section of Dundas Street West, including the redevelopment of the Alexandra Park housing complex. These development proposals will create further opportunities to improve the street's edge conditions and the quality of the public realm and may offer the opportunity to negotiate potential Section 37 agreements for capital improvements to the street.

An upgraded Dundas Street West streetscape also presents the opportunity to visually and experientially tie together a broad range of vibrant users and neighbourhoods in a more cohesive and interesting urban walking experience.

There are a number of distinct communities, important activity centres and on-going planning initiatives in the areas along this section of Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street such as the following:

Alexandra Park

The local community and students from Ryerson University have recently held a design charrette for the Alexandra Park neighbourhood which includes the local city park and the Toronto Community Housing complex. The Alexandra Park housing complex is being considered for redevelopment by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. Apart from the other benefits of redevelopment, this property offers opportunities for recreating a new street edge condition on this part of the street.

Kensington Market

On November 30, 2006 the Federal Environment Minister announced the designation of Kensington Market as a national historic site. Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and

Monuments Board of Canada are to work with the community to produce a commemorative plaque for the designated area. In 1998-99, City Planning, Urban Design facilitated the installation of the Gateway Art Markers with one located on the north-east corner of Dundas Street West and Augusta Avenue.

Chinatown BIA

This BIA was formed in 2008 to serve a vibrant neighbourhood close to the centre of Toronto's downtown. Home to ethnic Chinese immigrants from places such as Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, and Vietnam, the intersection of Dundas Street West and Spadina Avenue is the focal point of this dynamic community. Street name signs in the area are written in both English and Chinese and building signage is a unique combination of both fascia and overhanging signs.

52 Police Division

There has been interest in improving the front plaza and surroundings of the 52 Police Division building since 2001 when a report to the then Downtown Community Council was requested from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services on the original landscape plan and urban design plan for 52 Division. This comprehensive plan was to include the redesign of the streetscape fronting 52 Division to prevent the parking of vehicles in front of this building, on Dundas Street West, and a "greening" of this high profile corner. There was also a design charette for the site in 2008 facilitated by Project for Public Spaces from New York. However, a detailed urban design plan for the plaza has not yet been developed, but will include the involvement of the City's Facilities and Real Estate Division and the Police Services.

The area around Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)

A recent study of potential improvements to the public spaces surrounding eleven of the City's major cultural institutions included the area around the revitalized Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) on Dundas Street West. The recent \$250M investment in upgrading of the AGO building is bringing a new international prominence to this stretch of the street. The cultural institutions study recommended that the section of Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Beverley Street should be treated as a pedestrian priority zone with emphasis to be given to implementing streetscape improvements based on the Toronto Urban Design Streetscape Manual. The study also recommended incorporating elements such as wayfinding markers, pedestrian lights, banners, wider less cluttered sidewalks, and other unique pedestrian enhancements focused on making an interesting, comfortable and obvious path to the AGO and the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD). The possibility of an art mural program with installations on building exteriors within the area was also mentioned in the study. The public space fronting the 52 Police Division building was identified by the study as a prominent public realm opportunity.

Discovery District Community Improvement Plan Area

The Discovery District Community Improvement Plan Area (also called the College Street/University Avenue Community Improvement Plan Area) was designated by Council in 2002. Dundas Street West is the southern boundary of this community

improvement plan area and the section of Dundas Street West from University Avenue to McCaul Street overlaps with this streetscape initiative. In 2005, a report, *Toronto's Discovery District - Capital Improvement Strategy*, was prepared for Economic Development, Culture and Tourism. While the strategy's focus is College Street and University Avenue, there are recommendations for a kiosk, signs and new crosswalks along Dundas Street West.

Study Approach

The first phase of the study is to include community consultation, coordination, development and the finalization of the design proposal. This is the most creatively and organizationally demanding component of the study and would be led by a team of consultants including urban designers, architects, landscape architects and public consultation facilitators. The first phase of the study is estimated to cost \$150,000 (including all taxes) in consultant services.

The second phase of the study includes the development of detailed design specifications and an implementation strategy that ensures the streetscape improvements are well designed and are undertaken in a timely manner with the least possible disruption. It is estimated that this phase of the study will require \$50,000 in consultant services.

It is vital that the study incorporate a comprehensive public consultation process to ensure that all interested parties and stakeholders are meaningfully involved in developing the study's findings. The study will be guided by a staff steering committee comprising senior representatives from Technical Services, Transportation Services, City Planning Division, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division (BIA's), Parks Forestry and Recreation, Toronto Water, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the Public Realm Unit.

CONCLUSION

With this section of Dundas Street scheduled for resurfacing in 2010-11, now is the opportune time to advance the agenda for upgrading the quality of the public realm in this corridor.

To facilitate the process, it is proposed that a two-phase consultant study be undertaken to develop a streetscape design and implementation strategy. The first phase of the study will develop the overall design proposal or concept and will be based on a coordinated effort that draws from an extensive public consultation process. The second phase of the study is focussed on developing detailed design specifications and addressing issues of implementation.

The final capital costs to implement this enhanced streetscape will be addressed when the final recommendations of the study have been adopted and the project costs are known. It is expected that additional funding will include contributions of adjacent landowners and potential Section 37 funding.

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