

Queen Street East Visioning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road) – Final Report

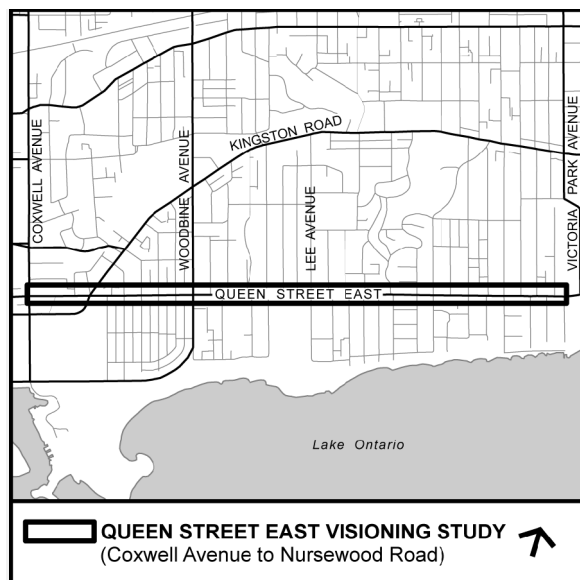
Date:	October 25, 2012
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Ward 32 – Beaches-East York
Reference Number:	12 182735 STE 32 OZ

SUMMARY

This report summarizes and contains recommendations to implement the Queen Street East Visioning Study between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road. City staff, an independent facilitator, the Ward Councillor and members of the local community have worked together to study this area since June 2012. The study contains new design guidelines for this portion of Queen Street East (in the Beach neighbourhood) and recommends future modifications to the Zoning By-law to implement some components of the Design Guidelines.

The scope of the study was to develop Urban Design Guidelines for the built form and physical character of this portion of Queen Street East in order to balance the policies of the Official Plan with the desire of the local community to maintain its existing character.

The proposed Design Guidelines comply with the policies of the Official Plan and will form part of the City's planning framework. They will ensure that new development on Queen Street East in the Beach is carefully designed and shaped to reflect the character of Queen Street East. The Guidelines will be applied to all development applications on this portion of



Queen Street East to ensure that change is managed appropriately as this main street continues to evolve over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the Queen Street East (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road) Urban Design Guidelines attached to this report as Attachment 1 contained in the report (October 25, 2012) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District and advise all staff to use the guidelines in the review of development applications in the area where they apply, including applications to the Committee of Adjustment;
2. City Council rescind the "Queen Street East – The Beaches" Urban Design Guidelines adopted by City Council on July 20, 2004 and that the City of Toronto consolidated Urban Design Guidelines be amended to include the urban design guidelines referenced in Recommendation 1;
3. City Council authorize the Chief Planner to make stylistic and formatting changes to the urban design guidelines referenced in Recommendation 1 prior to incorporation into the consolidated Urban Design Guidelines;
4. City Council request the Chief Planner to report back in early 2013 to Toronto and East York Community Council on proposed amendments to Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86 as amended, to implement specific restrictive portions of the urban design guidelines;
5. Notice for the public meeting under the Planning Act be given according to the regulations under the Planning Act; and
6. City Council request the Chief Planner and City Solicitor to incorporate the content of the draft zoning by-law amendments in Recommendation 4 into the new Citywide Harmonized Zoning By-law for this portion of Queen Street East.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

BACKGROUND

Decision History/Direction to Undertake Study

At its meeting of January 10, 2012, Toronto and East York Community Council requested the City Planning Division to undertake a Visioning Study in 2012 for Queen Street East, between Coxwell Avenue and Neville Park Avenue," to develop appropriate Design Guidelines that balance the policies of the Official Plan with the desire of the local community to maintain the existing character of this portion of Queen Street East".

The Toronto and East York Community Council decision further states, "It is recognized by the Ward Councillor, the community and the City Planning Division that the existing "Queen Street East – The Beaches" Design Guidelines are out-of-date and may not fully reflect the policies of the Official Plan and may not result in development that will contribute to creating vibrant, high quality mixed-use development on this portion of Queen Street East."

The Community Council decision can be found at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE12.123>

"Queen Street East – the Beaches" Existing Design Guidelines

The Queen Street East/Coxwell Part II Plan originated in 1987, and it was amended in 1991 to add Design Guidelines. The Part II Plan (now called Secondary Plans) was not brought forward as part of the Official Plan that was adopted by City Council in 2002, but rather was included in the consolidated Urban Design Guidelines that is a companion piece to the Official Plan adopted by City Council in 2004. The general intent of the guidelines throughout these different iterations has been to encourage new development to be in keeping with the character of this portion of Queen Street East. As stated in the guidelines, "the guidelines provide a framework for re-development in the area and are to be read in conjunction with the urban design policies in the Official Plan".

The existing design guidelines can be found on the City's website at:

http://www.toronto.ca/planning/urbdesign/pdf/26queenest_thebeaches.pdf

Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study

The Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study was adopted by City Council in July 2010. The intent of the study was to further support the Official Plan objective of re-urbanizing Toronto's main streets in a manner that is compatible with neighbourhoods, by developing midrise performance standards that shape building envelopes and guide development review. A motion was adopted by City Council on July 8, 2010 that removed Queen Street East from the study area map.

Scope of the Queen Street East Study

The scope of the visioning study was to look at the built form and physical character of Queen Street East, within the study area, and develop urban design guidelines for future development. Other issues outside of the scope of the study that were raised during the community consultation are noted in this report.

Study Area

The study area initially included all properties fronting onto Queen Street East in the Beach between Coxwell Avenue and Neville Park Avenue. The eastern boundary of the

study area was expanded 1 block to the east to Nursewood Road, which is the eastern boundary of Ward 32.

Community Consultation Process

The community consultation process was undertaken with an independent facilitator. The role of the independent facilitator was to conduct all meetings with the community in an open and fair manner and to create a positive forum for public discussion and seek to resolve issues in a respectful manner.

A series of stakeholder and community workshops were held between June and September of 2012.

An initial community workshop was held on Saturday June 16, 2012, with 2 additional community workshops being held on July 25 and September 19, 2012. Notice of the workshops was sent to approximately 5,200 households, in addition to notices of meetings on the Ward Councillor's website. The local newspaper provided ongoing coverage of the consultation process and identified meeting dates. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) was comprised of 43 representatives of local businesses, residents associations and local professionals. The purpose of the SAC was to test potential elements of the proposed guidelines before presenting them at the community workshops. The SAC met 4 times, on June 13, July 16, August 16 and September 12, 2012.

Information was posted on the City's website following each of the community meetings to allow for those who were unable to attend the meetings to stay informed and to allow for their input. This information can be accessed at:
<http://www.toronto.ca/planning/queen-study.htm>

The Consultation Report is attached in Appendix 2.

Policy Framework

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and, protecting public health and safety. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

On June 16, 2006, the Places to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe came into effect. City Council's planning decisions are required to conform, not conflict, with the Growth Plan.

Official Plan

The majority of the properties fronting onto this portion of Queen Street East are designated as *Mixed Use Areas* in the Official Plan. A portion of the area between Brookmount Road and Kingston Road on the north side of Queen Street (specifically 1736 and 1822) is designated as *Neighbourhoods*. Where a park abuts Queen Street East, the designation is *Parks and Open Space*.

The policies for *Mixed Use Areas* provide for a full range of residential, commercial and institutional uses to be developed near transit to provide new jobs and homes for Toronto's growing population. The policies and development criteria call for new buildings to be located and massed to provide a transition between areas of differing development intensity and scale and particularly step down in height towards lower scale neighbourhoods. New buildings in *Mixed Use Areas* are to adequately limit shadow impacts on adjacent low-rise *Neighbourhoods* and be massed to frame the edges of streets and maintain sunlight and provide comfortable pedestrian conditions for pedestrians on adjacent streets, parks and open spaces.

This portion of Queen Street East is located on an Avenue, as shown on Map 2 – Urban Structure of the Official Plan.

Avenues are “important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities, while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents”, according to Section 2.2.3 of the Plan.

The Avenues will be transformed incrementally. They will change building-by-building over a number of years. As stated in the Official Plan, “Some of the Avenues already serve as “main streets” that are focal points for the local community with attractive and bustling sidewalks. This portion of Queen Street East is such an Avenue.

The Official Plan also notes that not all Avenues are the same. "Each Avenue is different in terms of lot sizes and configurations, street width, existing uses, neighbouring uses, transit service and streetscape potential. There is no "one size fits all" program for reurbanizing the Avenues".

The Official Plan anticipates the adoption of urban design guidelines to help implement the Plan's objectives over time by providing a more detailed framework for built form and public improvements. The guidelines will provide for more guidance and precision for the implementation of the policies of the Official Plan.

Zoning By-law

The applicable Zoning By-law is the former City of Toronto By-law 438-86. The areas of the study area designated *Mixed Use Areas* in the Official Plan have 3 different zonings. The majority of the commercial strip is zoned MCR T2.0 C1.0 R2.0, except for lands on the south side of Queen Street East encompassing the former Greenwood Race track, between Northern Dancer Boulevard and Woodbine Avenue which have a zoning

of MCR T2.5 C1.0 R2.0, and lands on the south side of Queen between Wineva Avenue and Nursewood Road, which are zoned as MCR T2.0 C0.5 R2.0. The portion designated as Neighbourhoods in the Official Plan is zoned R2 Z0.6, and where a park abuts Queen Street East, the zoning is G.

The height limit is 12 metres for all of the properties zoned CR and 10 metres for the properties zoned R.

COMMENTS

Proposed Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road

Structure of the Urban Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are structured to recognize the similarities between all portions of the study area, as well as the uniqueness of certain portions. The Design Guidelines commence with a section of General Guidelines for the entire area and then divide the study area into 3 distinct precincts and provide specific built form guidelines for each of the 3 precincts, being Woodbine Beach, Kew Beach and Balmy Beach.

The General Guidelines speak to matters that new development should achieve in all 3 precincts. Buildings are to be set back 4.8 metres from the Queen Street East curb and have recessed doors to achieve a sidewalk width that will allow for tree planting, a clear sidewalk for pedestrians and additional space for the display of commercial goods or sidewalk cafés. The General Guidelines support the preservation or reuse of intact institutional buildings (such as the library and the fire hall) and the preservation of buildings in their entirety that are listed or designated for their heritage value. The General Guidelines recommend the maintenance of the existing street rhythm with respect to retail bays and speak to the design of the commercial windows. They address the transition of buildings when viewed from the commercial frontage to the adjacent residential neighbourhoods behind them and require that all parking be provided either underground or at the rear of properties.

The Precinct-specific Guidelines speak to the appropriate street wall height for each precinct and the appropriate setback above the street wall for additional floors of buildings. They address the perceived height of buildings when viewed from across the street and the maximum additional height that could be achieved for future development. The Precinct-specific Guidelines also deal with appropriate bay widths and matters such as protected views.

Once adopted by City Council, the Guidelines should be included in the City's consolidated Urban Design Guidelines, adopted by City Council on July 20, 2004, and would be the appropriate guidelines to apply for all development applications within this section of Queen Street East.

Potential Changes to Existing and New Zoning Regulations

The Zoning By-law contains development standards such as setbacks, permitted densities, height limits, permitted uses, etc. In order to ensure that as-of-right development complies with the Urban Design Guidelines, a review of Zoning By-law 438-86 needs to be undertaken to incorporate certain aspects of the Guidelines in the zoning. For example, new development is to be set back 4.8 metres from the curb on Queen Street East to ensure a sufficient sidewalk width. Currently there is no front setback requirement for buildings on a lot with mixed-use zoning on Queen Street East. Another example would be the setback of buildings by 3 metres above the 3rd storey (9.5 metre) height, for the properties covered by the Guidelines east of Woodbine Avenue. The by-law would currently allow buildings to go straight up to the 12 metre height limit.

Similarly, there are aspects of the proposed harmonized zoning by-law that would not conform to the Urban Design Guidelines. An example is the proposed 4.5 metre minimum height for the ground floor of mixed-use buildings. As a 4.5 metre ground floor height would be out of character with the existing character of Queen Street East, the Guidelines recommend a minimum height of 3.5 metres.

Staff will report back to Toronto and East York Community Council early in 2013 with respect to the proposed changes to the zoning by-law.

Matters beyond the Scope of the Study

As noted in the independent facilitators' Consultation Report (Attachment 2), many community participants in the study were concerned that the existing infrastructure in the area could not support additional development. This included, but was not limited to, traffic capacity, stormwater and sewer capacities and parking.

Individual development applications are required to be accompanied by a range of studies, depending on the size of development, in accordance with the City of Toronto Development Guide. In all cases, development applications are required to be accompanied by servicing and stormwater management reports that show that there is sufficient capacity available and that the proposed development will not negatively impact the area.

The Ward Councillor attended all of the public sessions of the Visioning Study and it is anticipated that she will work further with residents and the City Divisions and agencies responsible to address the concerns of the community that are beyond the scope of this visioning study.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Queen Street East Urban Design Guidelines
Attachment 2: Independent Facilitators Consultation Report