

Lower Yonge Precinct Plan – Update

Date:	October 16, 2012
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Ward No. 28– Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number:	File No. 12 253083 STE 28 OZ

SUMMARY

This report provides Toronto and East York Community Council information and an update on the Lower Yonge Precinct Plan initiative. The Lower Yonge Precinct area is bounded by Lake Shore Boulevard East, Lower Jarvis Street, Queens Quay East and Yonge Street. A precinct plan is required for *Regeneration Areas* within the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan area to establish a planning context for comprehensive and orderly development.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications.

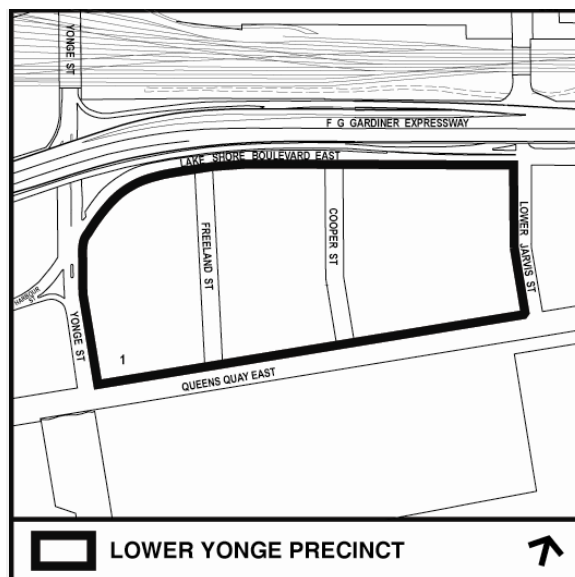
RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council receive this report for information.

DECISION HISTORY

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan (CWSP) was adopted by City Council on April 16, 2003. The purpose of this secondary plan is to identify key public priorities, opportunities and an implementation process.



The Central Waterfront Plan is built on four core principles. These are:

- A. Removing Barriers/Making Connections;
- B. Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces;
- C. Promoting a Clean and Green Environment; and
- D. Creating Dynamic and Diverse New Communities.

The CWSP is subject to various appeals and has been modified by the OMB, but the relevant policies for the development of precincts have not been challenged.

http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/pdf/waterfront_cwp_revised_nov07.pdf

The York-Bay-Yonge Interchange Reconfiguration EA Study examined reconfiguring the Gardiner Expressway's York-Bay-Yonge interchange, which has implications for the transportation analysis in the Lower Yonge Precinct. In July 2012 City Council approved the amendment of the York-Bay-Yonge Interchange Reconfiguration EA Study. The final Environmental Study Report will be published for 30 day review in fall 2012.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PW16.1>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

A precinct implementation strategy is the tool detailed in Section 2.1 of the CWSP to provide for comprehensive and orderly development and to implement the policies of the CWSP. Precinct plans and subsequent implementing zoning by-laws have been developed for the East Bayfront Precinct, West Don Lands Precinct, and the Keating Precinct of the Lower Don Lands.

To achieve the comprehensive development envisioned in the CWSP, the approval of new zoning for lands within the Regeneration Areas will generally take place at a precinct level. The policies require that, prior to the preparation of zoning by-laws or development permit by-laws within the Regeneration Areas, Precinct Implementation Strategies will be prepared in accordance with the policies contained in Section 2.2. As well, the rezoning of individual sites within Regeneration Areas will generally only be entertained once a context has been established for the evaluation of specific rezoning applications, through the Precinct Implementation Strategies. In addition, area-wide infrastructure requirements are required to have been determined, including a fair and equitable means for ensuring appropriate financial contributions for their provision, prior to the approval of rezoning applications.

Section 2.2 of the CWSP defines the elements of Precinct Implementation Strategies, including:

- A streets and blocks structure;
- Minimum and maximum standards for building height and massing;
- Strategies to ensure a balance between residential and employment based development;
- Strategies for achieving affordable housing targets;

- Location and phasing of local and regional parks, open space, public use areas and trails;
- Location and phasing of schools, libraries, community/recreation centres, day care, etc;
- Environmental performance standards;
- Provisions for securing the retention of heritage buildings;
- Urban design and public art provisions;
- Provisions to secure necessary roads, transit, trails and bike paths; and
- Financial mechanisms to ensure the above matters are implemented.

COMMENTS

Study Area

The Lower Yonge Precinct area is bounded by Lake Shore Boulevard East, Lower Jarvis Street, Queens Quay East and Yonge Street. The study will examine the surrounding context, including Harbour Street west to Lower Simcoe Street. The larger study area transportation analysis will address the impacts of changes within the precinct, including whether Harbour Street would remain one-way or become two-way and factor in other elements such as the modification of the Gardiner Expressway York-Bay-Yonge off-ramp.

The CWSP implemented the 2003 *Making Waves* document, which recognized the Central Bayfront/Harbourfront area as one of five identified Precincts. The Lower Yonge Precinct is within the area previously called Central Bayfront. The Central Bayfront/Harbourfront area extends west of the Lower Yonge Precinct. The blocks to the west of Lower Yonge could be redeveloped without a plan of subdivision and new streets, unlike the other Central Waterfront precincts. As well, many of the sites west of the Lower Yonge Precinct have previously approved site specific zoning by-laws.

The study area is within Waterfront Toronto's jurisdiction and subject to the Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panel. The portion of the study area west of Yonge Street is within in the Waterfront BIA.

Site and Area Description

The Lower Yonge Precinct is comprised of three large blocks. The existing uses are as follows:

- a. Yonge Street: The Toronto Star office building and surface parking lot;
- b. Cooper Street and 55 Lake Shore Boulevard East: LCBO retail outlet; LCBO offices and warehouse which are a provincially owned, listed heritage property; City-owned rail spur bisecting the block; and
- c. Cooper Street to Lower Jarvis Street block: Provincially owned vacant land; City-owned rail spur cutting diagonally through the southern end of the western portion of the block; and Loblaws store (10 Lower Jarvis Street) and parking garage (125 Lower Jarvis Street).

The ownership of these lands is consolidated among three major landowners: Loblaws, Pinnacle International and the Province of Ontario. The province recently announced plans to sell the LCBO lands and the Toronto Star site was recently sold to Pinnacle International. Development applications for these properties are expected in the near future.

The surrounding area land uses and designations include the following:

East: East of Lower Jarvis Street is East Bayfront (EBF), a mixed-use district with primarily midrise built form with some with taller building sites, as provided for in the EBF precinct plan and by-law;

South: On the south side of Queens Quay East is the Pier 27 development at 25 Queens Quay East, a seven building residential development with commercial/retail at grade with heights of 39 to 51 metres, with a 105 metre tower, abutting the Yonge Street Slip (File 10 147083 STE 28 OZ). This site has site-specific zoning, Official Plan policies and design guidelines. The foot of Yonge Street adjacent to the Yonge Street Slip is proposed to be a City park. To the southeast is Redpath Sugar at 85 Queens Quay East recognized as an *Existing Use Area*;

West: Sites immediately west of the study area at 33 Bay Street, 12-16 Yonge Street, 10 Yonge Street and 10 Queens Quay West are developed with residential towers ranging from approximately 81 metres to 162 metres. Further west are sites fronting on Harbour Street and Queens Quay West currently undergoing development and redevelopment for residential, mixed use and office developments with proposed taller heights in the range of approximately 134 m to 233 m, including 85 Harbour Street (File No. 11 194925 ST 28 SA), 90 Harbour Street (File No. 11 295626 STE 28 OZ), and 120 and 130 Harbour Street (File No. 11 329885 STE 20 OZ). Many of the developed and un-developed sites in this area have existing site-specific zoning by-laws.

North: To the north are the elevated Gardiner Expressway, with Lake Shore Boulevard below, and the rail corridor. Further north is the St. Lawrence neighbourhood, including a 36 storey tower under a construction (File No. 08231943 STE 28 OZ and File No. 08 223 STE 28 OZ).

Transportation and Road Network

The precinct area is generally bounded by four existing Major Streets (Map 3, Official Plan): Yonge Street, Lake Shore Boulevard East, Jarvis Street and Queens Quay East. Another major street, Harbour Street, west to Simcoe Street, will be included in the analysis. Within the area, Harbour Street and Lake Shore Boulevard operate as a one-way pair (Harbour eastbound, Lake Shore westbound). Yonge Street becomes a minor arterial road south of Harbour Street; Freeland Street and Lower Jarvis are north-south collector roads; and Cooper Street is a local north-south street.

Plans have been developed for the transformation of Queens Quay into a two-lane two-way roadway alongside a two-way dedicated light rail line and a continuous separated multi-use path, plus streetscaping and sidewalks. These plans are being implemented west of Bay Street

beginning in 2012 and the East Bayfront transit segment has been approved as part of the Queens Quay EA. The precinct is currently served by TTC bus routes on Queens Quay and Jarvis Street, looping via Freeland Street and Harbour Street.

Harbour Street west of Yonge Street will also be transformed as a consequence of the planned modification of the elevated eastbound York-Bay-Yonge exit ramp from the Gardiner Expressway. The ramp will be shortened to land at Lower Simcoe Street, allowing Harbour Street between Lower Simcoe and Bay Street to become a four-lane at-grade eastbound roadway. City Council has also endorsed the proposal to limit the use of the Bay Street entry ramp to the eastbound Gardiner Expressway to buses.

The extension of Harbour Street easterly from Yonge Street has been illustrated in the 1 Yonge Urban Design Guidelines and the site specific zoning by-law exception. The current zoning by-law for the Toronto Star site protects for a 20 metre wide public right-of-way to accommodate a mid-block street between Yonge Street and Freeland Street. The blocks east of Freeland Street do not feature a similar right-of-way allowance. A mid-block street extending east from Lower Jarvis Street is a feature of the East Bayfront Precinct Plan.

The PATH Master Plan shows future pedestrian links north and south of the rail corridor extending as far east as Yonge Street. A connection further south along Yonge Street to Queens Quay is shown as a long-term PATH opportunity.

Official Plan and Zoning

The Lower Yonge Precinct area is designated *Regeneration Areas* in the Official Plan (see Attachment 1) and CWSP. *Regeneration Areas* are blocks of land that may be subdivided into smaller areas for a wide variety of mixed-use redevelopment. The precinct implementation strategies will address the scale of future development, range of uses and the relationship between building massing and density and public spaces for these areas. Currently, the zoning of these sites (see Attachment 2) does not permit residential uses.

The western block (1 Yonge Street) is zoned CR T3.0 C3.0 R0 which permits development at a density of 3 times the lot area. The CR zone is a mixed use zone, but residential is not permitted on this site. There are site specific urban design guidelines and zoning by-law for this site which set out concepts for the block including a division of the block with a future street, height and massing which steps down west to east, and seeks to preserve views to the south. The Yonge Street setback, varying in width from 6 to 17 metres, is designated as *Parks and Open Space Area* in the CWSP. The guidelines which illustrate the setback can be found at the following link: http://www.toronto.ca/planning/urbdesign/pdf/44_1yongestreet.pdf.

The eastern blocks between Freeland Street and Lower Jarvis Street are zoned I2 D3 N0.5. This zoning permits a limited variety of industrial uses in buildings with a maximum density of 3 times the lot area with a maximum of 0.5 times the lot area for certain non-residential uses.

The CWSP has specific provisions regarding land use compatibility and noise, vibration, dust, odour, air quality and illumination impacts between the Redpath lands and any development approval applications and public realm initiatives. The objectives of these policies are to:

- (i) prevent undue adverse impacts from the proposed land use on the Redpath lands designated as an *Existing Use Area*; and
- (ii) prevent undue adverse impacts on the new land use from the Redpath lands designated as an *Existing Use Area*.

Sensitive land uses may be prohibited in the implementing zoning or limited (through massing and siting, buffering and design mitigation measures) in proximity to Redpath lands to ensure compatibility. In addition, noise and air emissions reports shall be required, and vibration and illumination reports may be required, in support of development approval requests. Such environmental reports are to specify how compatibility will be achieved and maintained.

Work Program

The work program for the Lower Yonge Precinct Plan addresses the precinct plan requirements in two phases. The first phase will address the larger structural elements of the precinct plan and will be informed and work in tandem with a Transportation Master Plan Environmental Assessment. The second phase will test and determine other aspects of the precinct implementation strategy.

The first phase of the precinct plan will address the major directions that will allow for the comprehensive development of the lands. Phase 1 includes:

- A streets and blocks structure plan;
- Minimum and maximum standards for building height and massing;
- Strategies to ensure a balance between residential and employment based development;
- Location and phasing of local and regional parks, open space, public use areas and trails;
- Provisions for securing the retention of heritage buildings;
- Urban design and public art guidelines; and
- Provisions to secure necessary roads, transit, trails and bike paths.

Waterfront Toronto has engaged an urban design consultant to prepare a Lower Yonge Precinct structure plan with open spaces, streets and blocks, and recommendations regarding building massing, in conjunction with the City of Toronto. The project team is working together to coordinate this structure plan and associated design guidelines with a Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Much of the background work, data and scope have been prepared and defined for the transportation analysis. It is anticipated that City staff will be procuring a transportation consultant and would be ready to begin work in early 2013. The timing for the iterative urban design and transportation work is estimated to be 4-6 months, including finalizing reports.

This urban design and transportation work will provide a tested streets and blocks structure, together with minimum and maximum standards for building height and massing. The guidelines will set out the rationale for the key structural elements and requirements. The resulting Lower Yonge Precinct Plan, informed by the TMP and urban design guidelines, will be a tool to achieve comprehensive planning that will respond appropriately to both existing and planned context.

City Planning will also work with other divisions and Waterfront Toronto to provide the other components of the Phase 1 precinct plan, such as land use mix and park sites. The broader Official Plan policy initiative regarding employment lands and protecting for office sites will also be considered as part of this exercise. Council's emerging directions on these issues can be found at the following link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.PG17.7> .

The TMP for the Lower Yonge Precinct presents an important opportunity to consider the transportation network for this area in a comprehensive manner prior to future further redevelopment. The TMP is proposed to be undertaken in accordance with Phase 1 and Phase 2 requirements of Ontario's Municipal Class EA. This will include access and mobility planning for the Lower Yonge Precinct, and to test the feasibility of a new street pattern in the study area using a Paramics micro-simulation model.

In developing a TMP, the existing and future conditions will be assessed to better understand the current transportation network and its strengths and deficiencies. This will also provide an assessment of opportunities and constraints, including:

- connectivity and circulation for all modes;
- intersection safety and design, roadway capacity; and
- the quality of the public realm, including pedestrian and bicycle environment.

Some of the questions and opportunities the TMP might examine include how to break up large blocks to provide physical connections between the Central Waterfront, the downtown core and adjacent neighbourhoods, including an eastern extension of Harbour Street; options for the intersection at Harbour Street and Yonge Street; and improving the pedestrian environment along Yonge Street, Lake Shore Boulevard, and Harbour Street.

Phase 1 would be followed by a report to Council, TMP reports and directions for Phase 2.

Phase 2 of the precinct plan could be satisfied through supporting materials for more detailed development applications, including how the sites will provide the:

- Strategies for achieving affordable housing targets;
- Location and phasing of schools, libraries, community/recreation centres, day care, etc;
- Environmental performance standards; and
- Financial mechanisms to ensure the above matters are implemented.

It is expected that the implementing zoning by-laws, completed on a site-specific basis, will express the intent of the Phase 1 objectives and address the Phase 2 requirements. This will ensure that the precinct is developed in a manner that realizes the public realm objectives of the CWSP.

Consultation

The consultation for the first phase of the Lower Yonge Precinct Plan will include, together with Waterfront Toronto, meetings with area stakeholders and landowners, as well as two public meetings and the presentation of design guidelines to the Waterfront Design Review Panel. The consultation required for the Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Ontario's Municipal Class EA guidelines is intended to be integrated and met through this consultation process.

Conclusion

A precinct study is required in advance of development to meet the policies of the CWSP. A coordinated and comprehensive precinct study for the Lower Yonge area and its role within the Central Waterfront is timely, given the development pressures within the area and the opportunities to better connect the Lower Yonge Precinct to the downtown core and Central Waterfront, and adjacent neighbourhoods.

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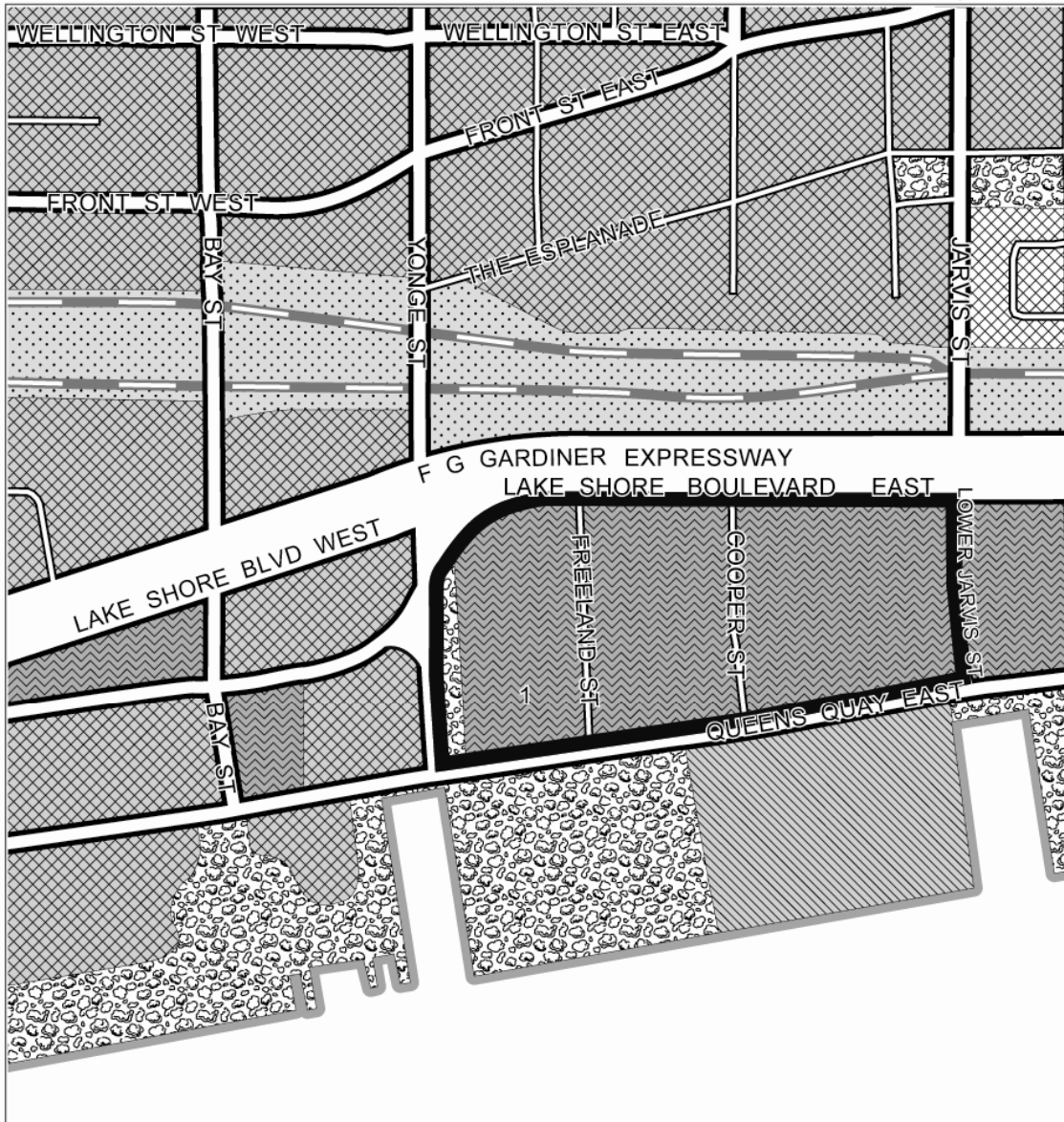
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Official Plan
Attachment 2: Zoning

Attachment 1: Official Plan



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Not to Scale
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