



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Extension of the Yonge Street Cultural Corridor from Dundas Street north to Davenport Road

<b>Date:</b>	October 30 , 2013
<b>To:</b>	Economic Development Committee
<b>From:</b>	General Manager Economic Development and Culture
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report is to recommend the extension of the Yonge Street Cultural Corridor from Dundas Street north to Davenport Road.

This report is part of finalizing the North Downtown Yonge Planning Framework (NDYPF) and is meant to reinforce an official plan amendment with area specific policies and urban design guidelines as the implementation tools.

Approved by City Council in 2001, the *Waterfront Culture and Heritage Infrastructure Plan* shows the Yonge Street Cultural Corridor terminating at Dundas Street. The goal of the Plan was to create a distinctive framework through which to visualize the cultural landscape of Toronto's central waterfront; to connect it to the larger waterfront and integrate it with important cultural and heritage resources in the city core.

Since 2001, a significant amount of cultural infrastructure along Yonge from Dundas Street north to Davenport Road has been established, reinforcing the concept of extending Yonge Street as a cultural corridor. This portion of Yonge Street north of Dundas Street has undergone multimillion dollars in construction and renovations to cultural facilities with several of the renovations involving adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:**

1. The Yonge Street Cultural Corridor be extended from Dundas Street north to Davenport Road.
2. The extension of the Yonge Street Cultural Corridor be included in the North Downtown Yonge Planning Framework.

### Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts beyond what has already been approved in the 2013 Cultural Services budget as a result of this report,

### DECISION HISTORY

At their meeting of July 17, 18 and 19, 2013 City Council approved the Draft North Downtown Yonge Urban Design Guidelines. The accompanying staff report provided an overview of the study process including the decision history for the North Downtown Yonge Planning Framework and the resulting urban design guidelines and proposed Official Plan Amendment.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.TE25.27>

One of the recommendations in the staff report was that the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture report back to the Economic Development Committee regarding the extension of the Yonge Street Culture Corridor from Dundas Street north to Davenport Road.

The Official Plan Amendment and the Final North Downtown Yonge Urban Design Guidelines was adopted by Council at their meeting of October 8, 9, 10 and 11 2013.

The bills for the Official Plan Amendment are anticipated to be before Council at their meeting of November 13 and 14, 2013.

### ISSUE BACKGROUND

In December of 2001, City Council approved the *Waterfront Cultural and Heritage Infrastructure Plan* with Yonge Street being designated as a Cultural Corridor from Lake Ontario to Dundas Street. Cultural spaces along the original section of the Yonge Street Culture Corridor include the Ed Mirvish Theatre, Massey Hall, the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatres, The St. Lawrence Centres for the Arts, the Hockey Hall of Fame and the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts. The goal of the Plan was to create a distinctive framework through which to visualize the cultural landscape of Toronto's central waterfront; to connect it to the larger waterfront and integrate it with important cultural and heritage resources in the city core.

[http://era.on.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/article\\_31.pdf](http://era.on.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/article_31.pdf)

The idea of the *Waterfront Cultural and Heritage Infrastructure Plan* is for private and public investment to work together to realize the culture and heritage vision for a revitalized waterfront.

The *Waterfront Cultural and Heritage Infrastructure Plan* is built around a grid of seven corridors which link the culture and heritage resources of the city with those of the water's edge. Five of the seven corridors run north-south and two run east-west. The Yonge Street Cultural Corridor is situated in the middle of the grid.

Yonge Street is one of Toronto's most unique public spaces. No other street in the city is as open to public inhabitations as Yonge Street. The "World's Longest Street", is Ontario's and indeed Canada's "Main Street". After rejuvenation initiatives that focused on Yonge and Dundas, culminating in the opening of Yonge-Dundas Square in 2002, Yonge Street has become even more the cultural and civic core of the city.

## COMMENTS

Since the completion of the *Waterfront Culture and Heritage Infrastructure Plan* with a terminus of Dundas Street, significant cultural facilities north of Dundas Street have been constructed / undergone extensive renovations that cohesively define a continuation of the Yonge Street Cultural Corridor. More specifically these cultural places and spaces along Yonge Street from Dundas Street to Davenport Road include (Refer to Attachment 1: Map of Yonge Street Cultural Corridor):

- Yonge-Dundas Square, which hosts numerous public events, performances and art displays and has established itself as a prominent landmark in Toronto and one of the city's prime tourist attractions;
- Ryerson's Image Centre, a renovated and remodeled former warehouse building that includes a gallery, collections, teaching, research and exhibition spaces and shares the building with the School of Image Arts;
- Sam The Record Man's iconic, double-disc, neon sign from Yonge Street currently stored in an undisclosed location with its fate still to be determined;
- 'The Carlu' event venue at College Park, one of Toronto's best examples of Art Moderne architecture;
- Maple Leaf Gardens, a historic arena which has recently been converted into a multi-purpose building that includes retail use and an athletic centre for Ryerson University known collectively as Mattamy Athletic Centre at the Gardens;
- Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, a not for profit professional theatre company dedicated to the promotion of Queer Canadian Culture;
- Panasonic Theatre, a live theatre owned and operated by Mirvish Productions;
- Norman Jewison Park, next to the acclaimed movie producer/director's office building located just east of Yonge, between Isabella and Gloucester and an

integral link in the linear park system that runs between Charles Street to Dundonald Street.

- Masonic Temple with its rich music history, most notably as rented rehearsal space for the Rolling Stones; broadcast home to MTV Canada and host of the Polaris Music Prize now has new owners, Info-Tech Research Group, who recently announced plans for the building which include staging an annual charity rock concert in the auditorium ; and
- Toronto Reference Library, designed by architect Raymond Moriyama, the biggest public library in Canada that has undergone a \$34 M renovation.

The 2.5 kilometre stretch of Yonge Street from Dundas Street to Davenport Road is rich in heritage and culture. Since 2001 when the *Waterfront Culture and Heritage Infrastructure Plan* was prepared with the Yonge Street Cultural Corridor extending from Lake Ontario to Dundas, multi-million dollar construction projects have been completed to buildings used for cultural purposes that extend from Dundas Street north to Davenport Road. The City Planning is currently studying five potential new heritage preservation districts including the Historic Yonge Street strip between Davenport Road to the North and Carlton Street to the south.

The recent adaptive reuse of heritage buildings for unique cultural uses is in keeping with the planning policies and urban design guidelines proposed in the North Downtown Yonge Planning Framework. Therefore, it is recommended that the Yonge Street Cultural Corridor be extended north from Dundas Street to Davenport Road.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Map of Yonge Street Cultural Corridor