



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Downtown East Revitalization Initiatives – Status Report

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| Date: | December 20, 2012 |
| To: | Toronto and East York Community Council |
| From: | Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District |
| Wards: | Wards 27 and 28, Toronto Centre-Rosedale |
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SUMMARY

This report provides a status update on the Downtown East Revitalization Initiatives within the area bounded by Jarvis Street, Sherbourne Street, Queen Street East, and Carlton Street.

To date, City staff have taken several actions to advance the Revitalization. First, Social Development, Finance and Administration formed an interdivisional table to guide the Revitalization Initiatives. All relevant City Divisions and ABCs are participating as required. Second, the Planning Study, Heritage District Conservation Study and conceptual planning for the potential redevelopment of Seaton House are all underway. Third, working with the Ward Councillor, the North George Street Working Group has been initiated. Finally, a Community Engagement Strategy is currently being developed to engage local businesses, agencies and residents in the Revitalization process.

Financial Impact

The information in this report has no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 6, 2010, City Council directed staff to conduct a full local area review for the lands designated in the Official Plan as Mixed Use and Neighbourhood adjacent to Dundas Street East between George Street and Sherbourne Street, and on Sherbourne Street between Dundas Street East and Shuter Street.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-31729.pdf>

On November 29, 2011, City Council provided a number of directions with respect to a planning study and a revitalization strategy for the Downtown East area. These directions included:

1. Expanding the boundaries of the Downtown East Planning Study to include Carlton Street as the northern boundary and Queen Street East as the southern boundary, and Jarvis Street as the western boundary.
2. Directing City Planning to, upon adoption of Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference, report back to Council seeking authority to initiate a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study under section 40. (1) of the Ontario Heritage Act for the area described in this report and to be paid for through the provision of Section 37 funds.
3. Reporting to Council upon completion of the HCD Study to report on conclusions and recommendations for next steps, including appropriate zoning, and Official Plan amendments required for the implementation of a revitalization strategy for the area of the study, as per Section 40 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
4. Directing City Planning and Social Development, Finance and Administration staff to bring forward by the fourth quarter of 2012 a Final Report and recommendations for the implementation of a revitalization strategy for the Study Area.
5. Continuing community consultation by City Planning staff as part of the study process in co-ordination with the Ward Councillor, including the formation of a George Street Working Group.
6. Forming an interdivisional working group comprised of all necessary City divisions and agencies in consultation with the Ward Councillor.
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2011/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-42006.pdf>

On October 2, 2012, Council directed staff to initiate the Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study of the Garden District, as a result of the application of the prioritization criteria for HCD study areas.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-49674.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

City Planning Division initiated a planning study for the Downtown East in October 2011, within the identified study area. Community consultation during the planning study identified a number of issues and challenges in the area that extend beyond the scope of a conventional land use and development study. Examination of these issues

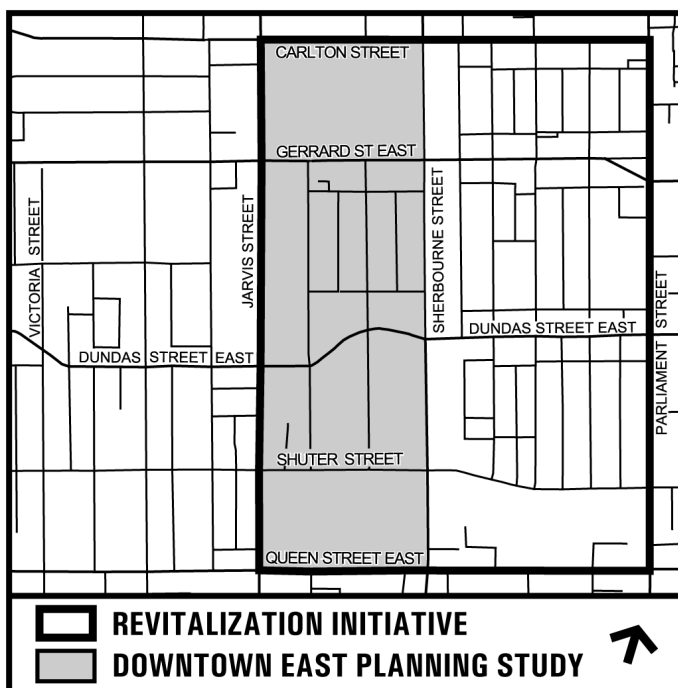
necessitated the creation of an interdivisional team to form a Downtown East Revitalization Initiative with both a broader scope and larger geography.

COMMENTS

Work Undertaken to Date

Project Management Team

In May 2012, Social Development, Finance and Administration formed an interdivisional working group comprised of all City divisions and agencies required to advance the Revitalization Initiatives. The purpose of the Project Management Team (PMT) is to ensure the development of a coordinated Downtown East Revitalization strategy that will maximize existing resources and identify collaborative opportunities that will ensure the success of the Revitalization.



The PMT will identify the deliverables and coordinate the work plan for the Revitalization Initiative, and ensure that its objectives are realistic and measurable. The PMT will work closely with the Ward Councillor to understand priorities for the area. Similar PMT structures are currently being used to coordinate and advance other revitalization initiatives underway across the City.

Downtown East Planning Study

An initial study of the area bordered by Shuter Street, George Street, Sherbourne Street and Dundas Street East concluded that the proposed study area was too small. The study indicated that the original focus on creating an opportunity for higher density development was inappropriate for an area that enjoys a large amount of lower density housing, much of which is rich with heritage built form. Furthermore, the study revealed a need to address the underlying social planning issues and economic development challenges in the area.

A "kick-off" community meeting was held by City Planning Staff on October 19, 2011. At the community meeting, there was a strong desire in the community for a more

comprehensive study that looked at broader community revitalization as well as the built form issues.

On November 2, 2011 staff returned to Toronto and East York Community Council and recommended that the study area be expanded to the new boundaries: Sherbourne Street, Queen Street East, Jarvis Street and Carlton Street. The report also nominated the area for a Heritage Conservation District Study. Toronto and East York Community Council also adopted a motion to direct the creation of a larger study focusing on the social planning and economic development issues in the Downtown East.

City Planning staff have completed an initial review of the area including an analysis of applicable policies, demographics and base mapping. City Planning is finalizing a detailed Area Profile which further documents considerations respecting urban design, transportation, housing, infrastructure, parks, and community services and facilities. This will be available in the first quarter 2013.

Initiation of North George Street Working Group

City Planning convened the North George Street Working Group in November 2012. The Working Group addresses issues on the block of George Street between Dundas Street East and Gerrard Street East. Members of the group include property owners, representatives from a housing co-operatives and a condominium complex on the street, representatives of the local residents association, staff from City Planning, Municipal Licensing and Standards, and Shelter, Support and Housing Divisions, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and representatives from Infrastructure Ontario.

The Working Group is slated to hold a total of six meetings over the upcoming months to address topics that include crime prevention, safety and policing; property standards and enforcement; Seaton House; and planning and heritage issues. Meetings create an opportunity for members to candidly identify and discuss issues on George Street, identify short-term actions and long-term work programs related to these issues, and consider ways that different stakeholders may co-operate to improve conditions on the street.

Heritage Conservation District Study

Funds for the Heritage Conservation District ("HCD") Study have been secured through Section 37 of the *Planning Act* from the development at 155 Dundas Street East at Dundas Street East and Jarvis Street. The study area (known as the Garden District in the Official Plan) has been identified in Official Plan Amendment No. 38 authorising the use of Section 37 resources for the funding of heritage conservation district studies.

At its meeting of September 13, 2012, the Planning and Growth Management Committee designated the Garden District Study Area one of the priority HCD Studies to be conducted by Heritage Preservation Services. A Request for Proposals was issued in October 2012 and the HCD Study is in the process of being awarded with the expectation that it will be awarded by March of 2013. The study is expected to take no more than one year to complete.

Framework for the Downtown East Revitalization Strategy

The PMT will lead the development and implementation of a Downtown East Revitalization Strategy to guide revitalization initiatives in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion. The Revitalization Strategy addresses the area bounded by Jarvis Street, Parliament Street, Carleton Street and Queen Street East. The Revitalization Strategy boundaries were informally expanded to capitalize on the positive developments occurring in the Downtown Core to the west and Regent Park to the east. The intent of the Downtown East Revitalization Strategy is to place community building opportunities alongside development considerations. This will ensure that a coordinated approach to city building and social planning is employed.

The PMT proposes that the Downtown East Revitalization Strategy will be based on six complementary components, to be vetted through community engagement. Each will have their respective initiatives. The Strategy will provide overall strategic direction to each of the components. The Project Management Team will ensure that the work of each component intersects and builds on the others as appropriate. The six components are as follows:

1. Planning and Heritage

City Planning staff are currently undertaking a land use planning study of the Study Area. The Downtown East Planning Study will examine the current built form, policy framework and zoning in the Study Area and will help inform the larger Revitalization Initiative. The study will be complemented by a consultant led review of the Study Area to determine whether it is appropriate for the area to be considered as a Heritage Conservation District. Staff anticipate bringing forward recommendations on potential Official Plan Amendments which may affect land use designations, urban design guidelines and potentially site and/or area specific Official Plan Policies.

This study will be led by Community Planning, Urban Design and Heritage Preservation Services within the City Planning Division.

2. Safety

This component will engage community members to consider ways to address crime prevention, safety and policing issues. Toronto Police Services is a member of the PMT and is supporting this component.

3. Community Services Planning

The purpose of community services planning is to ensure the coordination of local health and social services to more effectively meet the needs of vulnerable residents. This community services planning system stems from the broader understanding that the amount of services in an area does not always translate into successful, holistic support systems. Multi-barriered individuals often use many separate, disconnected services

which often leads to duplication and gaps in service provision and less effective resident outcomes.

Community services planning does not demand new funding. It builds on the existing roles of organizations and maximizes their effectiveness by gathering the organizations together to provide focused coordination for residents. Social Development, Finance and Administration will lead this component of the Revitalization Strategy.

4. Housing Strategy

Downtown East has historically provided housing resources to low-income, single adults and other individuals and households in need of subsidized housing and/or other supports. A substantial portion of the dwelling units in the area are owned and operated by non-profit housing providers, including Toronto Community Housing Corporation. Many rooming houses are located in the area, as well as Seaton House, one of Canada's largest men's shelters, and other emergency shelters.

A Revitalization Strategy for Downtown East will give consideration to housing issues, such as the availability, access to, and quality of affordable housing. The housing component of the Strategy will address actions to ensure the continued presence of affordable housing in Downtown East for residents who rely on it. The strategy will look at the range of different housing options in the area, including social, co-op, and private market housing, rooming houses and shelters.

The potential redevelopment of Seaton House, originally considered by Council in November 2009, will provide more appropriate onsite facilities for the provision of shelter, housing and support services for homeless individuals. The redevelopment may also provide additional housing and contribute to the revitalization and development of a healthier neighbourhood. This initiative is an action identified for implementation by the City in the Housing Opportunities Toronto Action Plan for Affordable Housing, adopted by Council in 2009. Staff are conducting stakeholder consultations and are planning to report to Community Development and Recreation Committee in 2013 with recommendations for redevelopment options.

City divisions and offices including City Planning, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and Municipal Licensing and Standards are expected to play lead roles in developing the housing component of the Revitalization Strategy, along with input from Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

5. Economic Development

This component will explore and define a strategy to create conditions for increased economic opportunity, addressing workforce development, social enterprise, employment opportunities, and business development. Community partners will be engaged to create opportunities for grassroots-led community development initiatives that build on local

identity and culture. Economic Development and Culture will lead this component of the Revitalization Strategy.

6. Public Realm

As part of the larger Downtown East Revitalization Initiative, strategic directions for planning the public realm will be determined. Staff will evaluate the potential for public realm interventions, parks improvements, streetscape improvements and what role they could play as part of the larger revitalization. For example, during the initial kick-off meeting, there was interest expressed by the community for some form of green connection between Moss Park and Allan Gardens.

Community Planning and Urban Design staff will analyze and develop public realm initiatives for the Revitalization Strategy. City Planning will develop these initiatives with support from Transportation Services (Public Realm Unit) and Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Community Engagement

A Community Engagement Strategy is currently being developed by the PMT. The Engagement Strategy uses existing City activities to introduce and talk about the different revitalization components and initiatives and how the City is supporting them. It presents an opportunity to engage with local partners, agencies, and residents to build a common understanding of the revitalization initiatives and receive feedback on proposed ideas.

CONTACT

Leah Ross, Project Manager
Tel. No. 416-397-4494
Fax No. 416-392-4976
E-mail: lross2@toronto.ca

Kyle Knoeck, Senior Planner
Tel. No. 416-392-0871
Fax No. 416-392-1330
E-mail: kknoeck@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Chris Brillinger, Executive Director
Social Development, Finance and
Administration

Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP,
Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District