Yorkville: East of Bay Planning Study
Status Update

Date: May 30, 2013
To: Toronto and East York Community Council
From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards: Ward 27 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number: 13 165905 STE 27 OZ

SUMMARY

Planning staff are undertaking a review of the existing and planned built form context for the areas bounded by: Bloor Street, to the south; Davenport Road, to the north; Yonge Street, to the east; and Bay Street, to the west to establish appropriate heights for the areas outside of the Height Peak, Height Ridges and Low-rise areas as illustrated in Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policy 211. The review will also assess the existing and planned pedestrian linkages within the study area boundary as per Area Specific Official Plan Policy 225.

Area Specific Official Plan Policy 211 sets out areas called the Height Peak, Height Ridges and Low-Rise Areas. The intent of this policy is to direct the tallest buildings within the Height Peak and provide a transition in scale within the Height Ridge. The lowest heights are found within the Low-Rise Areas. Planning staff are focusing on the areas within the study area boundary that do not fall within these three categories.

This report provides a status update on the above-noted direction from City Council and seeks direction regarding the community consultation process.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. Staff be directed to initiate consultation with local stakeholders in consultation with the Ward Councillor and report back to Toronto and East York Community Council with a draft policy recommendation in a Preliminary Report in the fourth quarter of 2013.

Financial Impact
The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY
City Council on October 2, 3 and 4, 2012 directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to review the existing and planned built form context, pedestrian linkages, as well as other policies and guidelines for the areas bounded by: Bloor Street, to the south; Davenport Road, to the north; Yonge Street, to the east: and Bay Street, to the west, to establish appropriate heights for the areas outside of the Height Peak, Height Ridges and Low-rise areas as illustrated in Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policy 211 and to bring forward any required Official Plan Amendments to a statutory public meeting under the Planning Act after holding a community meeting. Notice of both meetings will be given via newspaper advertisement.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Study Area
The study area is bounded by: Bloor Street, to the south; Davenport Road, to the north; Yonge Street, to the east: and Bay Street, to the west. Planning staff will include areas surrounding the study boundary to inform the built form context.

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.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe provides a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe including: directions for where and how to grow; the provision of infrastructure to support growth; and protecting natural systems and cultivating a culture of conservation. City Council’s planning decisions are required by the Planning Act, to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan locates the study area within the Downtown and Central Waterfront, as shown on Map 2, of the Official Plan’s Urban Structure map. As part of the Official Plan’s growth strategy, the Downtown is identified, along with Centres and Avenues, as an area of intensification. The Official Plan outlines a growth strategy for the City that highlights the importance of the Downtown as one of a number of locations where growth in employment and residential uses are encouraged.

The majority of the study area is designated as a Mixed Use Areas in the land use maps of the Official Plan. The Mixed Use Areas designation in the Official Plan provides for a broad range of commercial, residential and institutional uses, in single-use or mixed-use buildings, as well as parks and open spaces and utilities.

Development in Mixed Use Areas is subject to a number of development criteria. In Mixed Use Areas developments will: locate and mass new buildings to provide a transition between areas of different development intensity and scale; provide appropriate setbacks and/or stepping down of heights, particularly towards lower scale Neighbourhoods; locate and mass new buildings so as to adequately limit shadow impacts on adjacent Neighbourhoods particularly during the spring and fall equinoxes; provide good site access and circulation and an adequate supply of parking for residents and visitors; provide an attractive, comfortable and safe pedestrian environment; locate and screen service areas, ramps and garbage storage to minimize the impact on adjacent streets and residences; and provide indoor and outdoor recreation space for building residents in every significant multi-unit residential development.

The north-east corner of the study area is designated Parks and Open Space. This Parks and Open Space is made up of the recently renovated Frank Stollery Parkette.

Development is generally prohibited within Parks and Open Space Areas except for recreational and cultural facilities, conservation projects, cemetery facilities, public transit and essential public works and utilities where supported by appropriate assessment.

The Toronto Official Plan is available on the City’s Website at: www.toronto.ca/planning/official_plan/introduction.htm

Official Plan - Area Specific Policy 211 (Bloor Yorkville / North Midtown Area)

Area Specific Policy 211, in the Official Plan, recognizes that the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown area comprises a broad mix of districts with differing intensities, scales and heights in a diversity of building forms. The area includes Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods, Areas of Special Identity, Mixed Use Areas, and open space provided by parks and ravines. It forms the north edge of the Downtown and provides for transition in density and scale. A portion of the study area falls within the Areas of Special Identity within Mixed Use Areas called Yonge/Yorkville (Map 1, Policy 211), namely the area north of Cumberland Street.
With respect to the Built Form Height Peaks & Ridges Map (Map 2, Policy 211), there are areas that fall outside of areas identified on Map 2 as "Height Peak", "Height Ridge", and "Low-Rise Areas". Policy 211 provides further direction to the northern portions of Avenue Road, Yonge Street and Davenport Road. Staff are focusing on clarifying the intent of the policy of the non-categorized area within the study boundary because of its position between the Yonge/Bloor Height Peak, the Yonge Street Height Ridge and the Bay Street Height Ridge.

**Official Plan - Area Specific Policy 225 (Lands North and South of Bloor Street Between Park Road and Avenue Road)**

Area Specific Policy 225, in the Official Plan, encourages pedestrian walkways, at or below grade and new parks in locations illustrated on the map within the Policy.

**Heritage**

Yorkville has a rich history and there are a number of buildings within the study boundary listed on the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties, including: the Yorkville Library and Yorkville Fire Hall on Yorkville Avenue; house-form buildings at 54-58 Scollard Street; and, a row of buildings along Yonge Street between Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue.

The Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Study (HCD) and Plan is about to commence. The HCD study will cover the Yonge Street commercial corridor and adjacent blocks and lanes, located south of Davenport Road, east of Bay Street, west of Church and north of Carleton/College Street.

**Zoning**

Zoning By-law 569-2013 applies to the study area. However, properties subject to current planning applications (which have been considered complete) have been excluded from Zoning By-law 569-2013. In these cases zoning by-law 438-86, as amended, will apply.

The Zoning By-law regulates the built form and use for these sites, including but not limited to restrictions on height and density. Within Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended and Zoning By-law 569-2013 there are area specific provisions, regulating the permitted building envelope based on angular plane provisions for most of the frontages within the study boundary (12(2) 259 and 12(2)160). Also, there are a number of site specific zoning by-laws resulting from previous planning applications with the study boundary.

**Bloor –Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines**

The Bloor –Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines were approved by Council in July 2004 and are intended to give guidance to improve the physical quality of the area and ensure that its special character is respected in terms of new development.

The main planning objectives of the Urban Design Guidelines include:
- Enhancement of Areas of Special Identity and historic buildings;
- Protection of residential areas from adverse impacts of commercial and/or higher density development;
- Improvement of the public realm and publicly accessible areas; and
- Excellence in urban design, architecture, and landscaping.

The Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown area is comprised of a number of precincts and corridors, each defined by its attributes in terms of function, built form and character. The subject site is located within the Avenue Road Corridor and the Village of Yorkville Precinct.

The Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines are available on the City’s website at: http://www.toronto.ca/planning/urbdesign/blooryorkville.htm

**Bloor–Yorkville (BIA) Urban Design Guidelines**

The Bloor-Yorkville (BIA) Urban Design Guidelines shall be considered in concert with the City's Bloor-Yorkville/Midtown Urban Design Guidelines. The City's Bloor–Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines reflect and are supported by the contents of the Bloor-Yorkville Urban Design Guidelines, initiated by the Bloor-Yorkville BIA and other business, resident and community associations. The Bloor-Yorkville Urban Design Guidelines provide additional context and guidance specific to the BIA area.

**Tall Building Design Guidelines**

In May 2013, Toronto City Council adopted the updated city-wide Tall Building Design Guidelines and directed City Planning staff to use these Guidelines in the evaluation of all new and current tall building development applications. The guidelines establish a set of performance measures for the evaluation of tall building proposals to ensure that they fit within their context and minimize their local impacts.

The study area is subject to the Downtown Tall Buildings: Vision and Supplementary Design Guidelines (adopted by City Council in July 2012 and consolidated with the city-wide Tall Building Design Guidelines May 2013). This document identifies where tall buildings belong Downtown, and establishes a framework to regulate their height, form and contextual relationship to their surroundings. The Downtown Vision and Supplementary Design Guidelines should be used together with the city-wide Tall Building Design Guidelines to evaluate new and current Downtown tall building proposals.

The Guidelines includes maps which identify "High Street" and "Secondary High Street" locations, recommended heights and building typologies for these streets; and twenty-three Performance Standards relating to the base conditions or tower portions of tall buildings or to their contextual fit within the Guideline area.

Within the study boundary: Bloor Street is identified as a High Street (77 to 137 metres tall); most of Bay Street are identified as a High Street (62 to 107 metres tall); Yonge Street is identified as a Special Character Street (62 to 107 metres tall); Cumberland Street is identified as a Special Character Street (62 to 107 metres tall).
Street is a Secondary High Street (generally one-third lower than the parallel High Street – ie. 51 to 91 metres); and Yorkville Avenue and Davenport Road are not categorized.

With respect to shadow impacts of tall buildings in the study area, the Guidelines state that Jesse Ketchum Park, School Playground and Open Space and Ramsden Park are local parks that are heavily utilized by the community, including school children and youth, during all hours of the day. Any tall building development proposal in the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Area is therefore required, as part of the development approval process, to demonstrate that best efforts have been made to not cast any new net shadow on these parks and school ground throughout the entire day.

The Tall Building Guidelines are available at:
http://www.toronto.ca/planning/tallbuildingdesign.htm

COMMENTS

Recent Applications
Within the study area there are a number of current applications, recent approved developments, and recently constructed towers described below:

Recently Approved (not built): 2 Bloor Street West
The proposal comprised of two towers, consisting of a tower on the south-west corner of Yonge Street and Cumberland Street at 102.9-metres tall including a 6.3 metre mechanical penthouse and a mid-block tower on the south side of Cumberland Street between Bay Street and Yonge Street at 170 metres tall including a 10 metre mechanical penthouse. A 24.4 metre podium building including grade-related commercial space, four levels of above-grade parking and “rooftop villas” at the corner of Bay and Cumberland Streets (stepped back atop the podium from Cumberland Street with an overall height of 30.6 metres). The heights were carefully assessed to protect the Jesse Ketchum playground, sport field and park from shadow impacts. This site falls within the Yonge/Bloor Height Peak.

Current Application: 27-37 Yorkville Avenue and 26-50 Cumberland Street
This application proposes to amend the Zoning By-law to permit a two tower plus podium development composed of 69- and 55-storey mixed use buildings with an 11-storey podium. The total height of the north tower is 218 metres plus a 19.5 metres mechanical penthouse. The total height of the south tower is 169 metres plus a 13.5 metre mechanical penthouse. The first two storeys of the 11-storey podium consist of retail uses; floors 3 to 9 contain a Toronto Parking Authority parking garage with 802 parking spaces; and the remaining floors are residential uses. Residential parking is located in 3 levels of underground parking. In total there are 1,172 vehicular parking spaces (370 residential parking spaces and 802 Toronto Parking Authority spaces) and 1,205 bicycle parking spaces proposed. A total of 1,166 residential units are proposed. This site is outside of the Height Peak, Height Ridges and Low-rise areas as illustrated in Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policy 211.
Current Application: 50 Bloor Street West
The application proposes to amend the Zoning By-law to permit a new 80 storey mixed-use building at 258 meters plus a 19 metre mechanical penthouse. The base of the proposed tower consists of an 8-storey podium that fills the majority of the site area. The total gross floor area is 111,660 square meters. In total, 600 residential units are proposed. The proposal includes 620 parking spaces (371 for residents, 36 for residential visitors, 189 for retail and 24 spaces for the office use). This site falls within the Yonge/Bloor Height Peak.

RecentlyConstructed: Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residence
This development is composed of two towers. A combined hotel and residential building located at the north-east corner of Yorkville Avenue and Bay Street stands at 52 storeys tall (204 metres including a 9 metre mechanical penthouse). The second Four Seasons tower stands behind the drop-off at 26 storeys tall (94 metres including a 5 metres mechanical penthouse). A vehicular drop-off for the hotel with a mosaic paving feature and fountain, and an open space, known as the "Rose Garden" with a public art feature is located off Yorkville Avenue. A north-south public walkway is located just west of the Rose Garden between Yorkville Avenue and Scollard Street. This site falls within the Height Ridge.

Policy and Built Form Analysis
Staff will review the policy relating to development within the study area and analyze the existing and planned built form context to identify appropriate heights and other built form policy considerations for the areas outside of the Height Peak, Height Ridges and Low-rise areas as illustrated in Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policy 211.

Pedestrian Linkages
As stated in the Bloor –Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines, mid-block pedestrian connections and courtyards are one of the more celebrated urban design factors which contribute to Bloor-Yorkville’s success. This unique quality and network of pedestrian paths and courtyards should be continued as new developments are proposed in the area.

The Bloor –Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines identify five midblock connections in the study area. Two midblock pedestrian connections are identified between Cumberland Street and Yorkville Avenue and another two midblock pedestrian connections between Yorkville Avenue and Scollard Street. One midblock pedestrian connection is shown through Frank Stollery Parkette from Scollard Street to Davenport Road. Most of these connections have been secured and built. No at-grade midblock pedestrian connections are shown from Bloor Street West north to Cumberland Street.

Area Specific Policy 225, in the Official Plan shows the existing underground pedestrian malls system between Bloor Street and Cumberland Street and identifies a proposed pedestrian route from Cumberland Street north to Davenport Road.
Staff will review the policy, and the existing and planned pedestrian network within the study area to identify opportunities for pedestrian connections and publically accessible space, below and at-grade.

**North Downtown Yonge Planning Framework Study**

In June 2011, Toronto and East York Community Council requested City Planning to undertake a North Downtown Yonge Planning Framework process and community consultation. The boundary for the study is Bay Street on the west, Bloor Street to the north, Church Street to the east and College/Carleton Streets to the south. The study is considering mixed use sites in the area with potential for intensification and revitalization and will recommend a framework for future redevelopment that City Council can use as a guide for consideration of individual redevelopment proposals within the area.

**Community Lead Planning Studies**

There are two community lead planning studies currently underway. One study is lead by the Bloor-Yorkville Business Improvement Area (BIA), for the area within the BIA boundary. The second study is lead by the ABC Residents Association within the area abounded by Avenue Road, Yonge Street, Bloor Street and the railway tracks (just north of Marlborough Avenue). These two studies are being conducted both independently and in concert with one another. Planning staff are participating in both community lead studies and will consider any emerging visions or policies and how they may inform Planning staff's Yorkville: East of Bay Planning Study.

**Next Steps**

Staff will initiate consultation with local stakeholders in consultation with the Ward Councillor. Planning staff with bring forward a Preliminary Report to the Toronto and East York Community Council in the fourth quarter of 2013.

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**SIGNATURE**

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Staff report for action – Status Update – Yorkville: East of Bay Planning Study
ATTACHMENTS
Attachment 1: Official Plan – Site and Area Specific Policy 211 – Map 2
Attachment 2: Official Plan – Site and Area Specific Policy 225
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Attachment 2: Official Plan – Site and Area Specific Policy 225

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