

College Street Built Form Study – Preliminary Report

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| Date: | August 19, 2013 |
| To: | Toronto and East York Community Council |
| From: | Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District |
| Wards: | Ward 20- Trinity-Spadina |
| Reference Number: | File No. 13-177789 SPS 00 TM |

SUMMARY

On February 14, 2012, Toronto and East York Community Council requested the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, to review the policy context for College Street generally from University Avenue to Bathurst Street, and report back to Toronto and East York Community Council on preliminary findings along with recommendations for a community consultation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

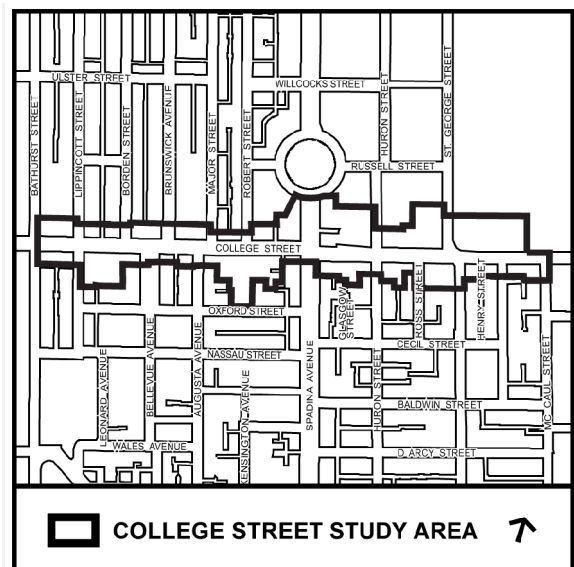
1. Community Council receive for information the report (August 19, 2013) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, respecting the Preliminary Report for the College Street Built Form Study.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

On February 14, 2012, Toronto and East York Community Council requested the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, to review the policy context for College Street generally from University Avenue to Bathurst Street, and report back to Toronto and East York Community Council on



preliminary findings along with recommendations for a community consultation process.

COMMENTS

Study Purpose

The Official Plan includes a growth strategy which identifies the *Downtown* as a place for employment and residential growth. Importantly, the Plan notes that growth will not be spread uniformly across the whole of *Downtown*, as the Downtown is home to a wide range of development types ranging from tall buildings to low scale established *Neighbourhoods* where little change is desired. Other considerations which contribute to the liveability and success of the *Downtown* are guided by the policies that seek to maintain a full range of uses including office, institutional, and housing, respect for the built heritage, and promote contextual and district based planning to ensure distinctive character is balanced with growth promotion.

The study of College Street, between McCaul Street and Bathurst Street, and a portion of Spadina Avenue north of College Street and south of the Spadina Circle, will address:

- land use with particular regard to the significant number of institutional uses in the area;
- building scale and height in relation to the College Street context and transition to adjacent *Neighbourhoods*; and
- public realm, streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

The study will focus on the built form and physical character within the study area and how to accommodate future development. This includes examining building envelopes, height and massing, public realm, streetscape and landscape improvements.

Recent Initiatives within the Study Area

In recent years, a number of studies and initiatives have been undertaken for College Street within the study area.

Between 1995 and 1997, the City undertook a study of land use policies and regulations related to restaurant and related uses on College Street between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue. This study was initiated in response to Councillor and community concerns regarding the impacts of large size restaurants on neighbourhood noise, garbage and traffic. This study resulted in an amendment to the Zoning By-law to limit the size of restaurants and accessory entertainment uses on College Street between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue.

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) completed track reconstruction on College Street in 2004, including that portion of the street within the study area. Road and sidewalk reconstruction and repair on portions of the right-of-way within the study area was completed as part of this reconstruction project, resulting in wider sidewalks, new TTC platforms, new street trees and decorative paving on sections of the street.

The Harbord Village Ratepayers Association (HVRA) retained Brown & Storey Architects to complete a study examining opportunities for revitalization of the public realm on College Street between Spadina Avenue and Bathurst Street in 2002. This study, was presented to City Council in 2002.

City Council, at its meeting of June 24-26, 2003, authorized an *Avenues* study for College Street between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue. A Final Report from City Planning entitled "Avenues Study Zoning Review and Interim Control By-law Study - College Street between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue" was before City Council at its meeting of April 12-15, 2005. That report recommended that City Council receive the College Street Avenues Urban Design Study report by Brook McIlroy Inc (BMI) and the College Street Urban Design Study Transportation Report by Totten Sims Hubicki (TSH). The consultants' studies included the College Street Avenues Urban Design Study, completed by BMI, and the College Street Urban Design Study Transportation report completed by TSH.

The key objective of the consultants work for the study of College Street was to recommend an urban design framework for new development and redevelopment on College Street in consideration of the existing built form, the operational characteristics of the street, and the comments and input of local stakeholders. The consultant's study identified specific sites and locations as appropriate for intensification and provided heights, setback, and step-back recommendations based on surrounding conditions and characteristics, right-of-way width and lot depth. Detailed considerations of amendments to the Zoning By-law and the public realm to support and implement the urban design recommendations did not form part of the consultant's studies.

Preliminary Observations

The majority of the study area is designated *Mixed Use Areas* in the Official Plan. *Mixed Use Areas* are intended to achieve a number of planning objectives by combining a broad array of residential, office, retail and service uses. They are intended to be areas which allow residents to live, work and shop in the same area, even the same building, giving individuals an opportunity to be less dependent upon their automobiles, while creating districts along transit routes that are animated, attractive, and safe.

The Official Plan contains development criteria to guide development in *Mixed Use Areas*. The development criteria in *Mixed Use Areas* includes:

- creating a balance of high quality commercial, residential, institutional and open space uses that reduces automobile dependency and meets the needs of the local community;
- providing for new jobs and homes for Toronto's growing population on underutilized lands;
- locating and massing new buildings to provide a transition between areas of different development intensity and scale;
- locating and massing new buildings to frame the edges of streets and parks;
- providing an attractive, comfortable and safe pedestrian environment;
- providing good site access and circulation and an adequate supply of parking for residents and visitors;
- locating and screening service areas, ramps and garbage storage to minimize the impact on adjacent streets and residences; and
- providing indoor and outdoor recreation space for building residents in every significant multi-residential development.

College Street is a thriving *Mixed Use Area* and desirable community. The portion of College Street east of Spadina Avenue to Bathurst Street, tends to have larger sites, particularly on the south side of the street, as well as some underutilized sites currently being used as privately operated, commercial surface parking lots. The north side of the street is more characteristic of a main street with small lot frontages, ground floor commercial, and residential and office uses on the upper storeys.

College Street between Spadina Avenue and McCaul Street has a slightly different character on the south side of the street where the lot depths are slightly more irregular, with some deep sites with a lane network at the rear, and shallower sites towards McCaul Street. Overall, this portion of College Street has narrow lot frontages, characteristic of a main street with commercial uses at grade, and residential uses above. Some institutional uses exist on the south side of the street, such as the Lillian H. Smith Library and the Institute for Christian Studies. There is a site at the corner of Beverly Street and College Street which consists of 3-storey apartment buildings, which do not take direct access from College Street. This site is designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan.

The north side of the College Street forms part of the University of Toronto Secondary Plan Area. These lands are designated *Institutional Areas* in the Official Plan. *Institutional Areas* are made up of major educational, health and governmental uses with their ancillary uses, cultural, parks and recreational, religious, commercial and institutional residence facilities, as well as utility uses. The lands on the north side of College Street, within the University of Toronto Secondary Plan Area have large institutional buildings with some buildings significantly set back from College Street.

The study will include the lands which front onto Spadina Avenue, north of College Street and south of Spadina Circle. These lands have been included in the College Street Study as they form a context for College Street and the intersection of Spadina Avenue and College Street.

As part of the study, staff will examine lands surrounding the study area boundaries, as these lands may influence the built form and transition recommendations, and any associated guidelines, which may arise from the study.

Overall, the study area is well serviced by transit. There are three streetcar lines in close proximity, or within the study area boundaries: the 506 College/Carlton streetcar, the 510 Spadina streetcar, and 511 Bathurst Street streetcar. The Queens Park Subway Station is located at the corner of University Avenue and College Street, one-block east of the study area boundary.

Since 2010, City Planning has seen an influx of development applications and inquiries around the intersection of College Street and Spadina Avenue. Development applications in this area proposed heights ranging from 15 to 30-storeys. The proposals are generally for mixed-use buildings, containing retail at grade and residential dwelling units above.

To date, only one development application has been approved in this area. In 2012, Council approved a 15-storey mixed use building having an overall building height of approximately 56 metres. The University of Toronto has indicated that they will be making an application to review the Secondary Plan for the St. George Campus. An application has not been made to date.

Community Consultation Process

The College Street Study consultation process will be a three part process starting in fall 2013. City staff, the local councillor, landowners and stakeholders will engage in an open discussion about appropriate Urban Design Guidelines for College Street. Each part of the consultation is designed to provide the City with feedback from the community that will help shape the Guidelines.

Consultation is anticipated to occur as follows:

1. Fall 2013 - Kick-off Community Workshop
2. Late 2013/ early 2014 - Community Workshop Options
3. Early Spring 2014 - Community Workshop Preferences

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SIGNATURE

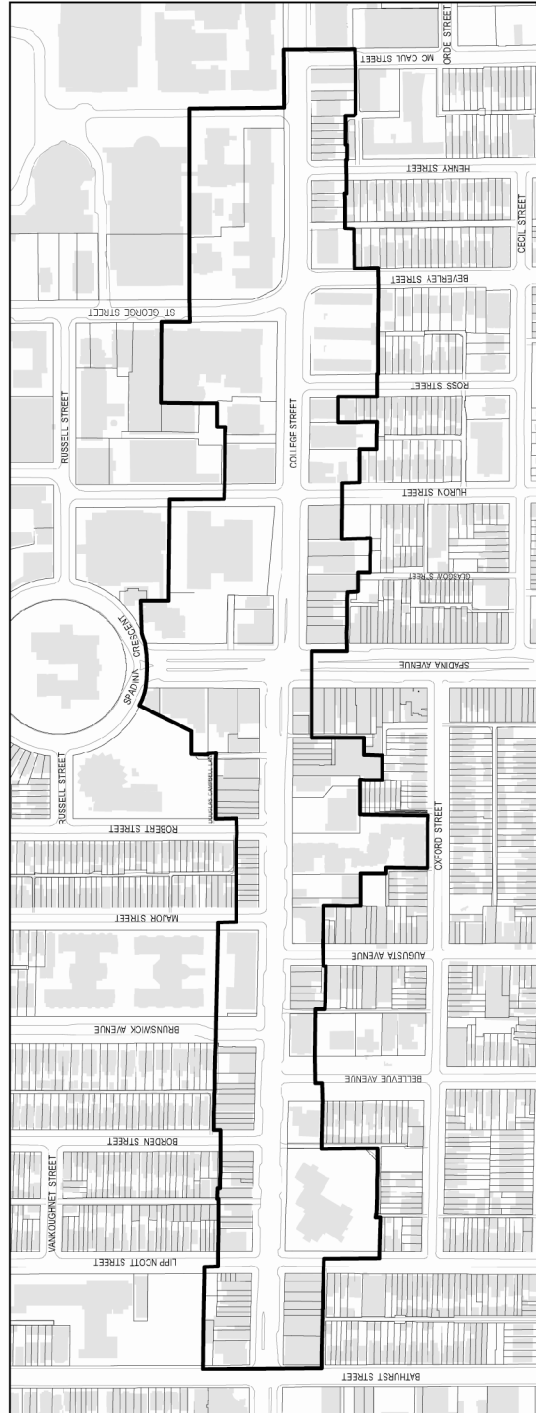
Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Study Area Boundary

Attachment 1: Study Area Boundary



Study Area

College Street

Not to Scale
08/09/2013

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