

Queen Street East Visioning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road) – City Initiated Official Plan Amendment – Final Report

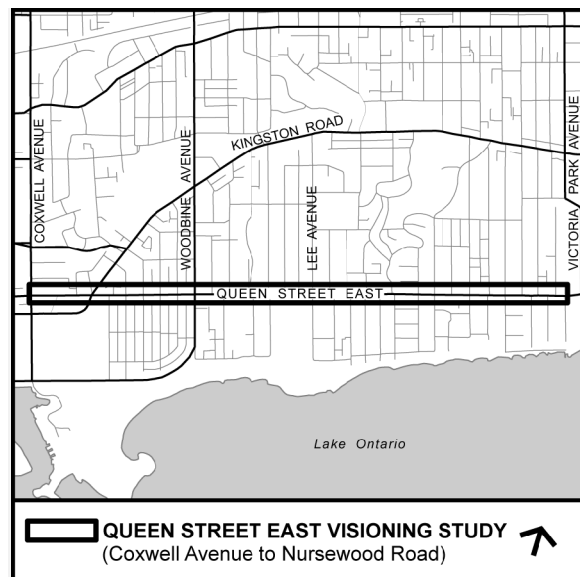
Date:	May 27, 2014
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Ward 32 – Beaches-East York
Reference Number:	12-182735 STE 32 OZ

SUMMARY

In February 2014, City Council directed City Planning staff to report back on the merits of a site and area specific policy for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Avenue, and to recommend an Official Plan Amendment, if appropriate. This report reviews and recommends approval of a City initiated Official Plan Amendment with the creation of Area Specific Official Plan Policy No. 466.

This City-initiated Official Plan Amendment proposes the introduction of an Area Specific Official Plan Amendment for the lands at 1614 to 1702, 1824 to 2362, 1525 to 1535, 1595 to 1661, 1733 to 1989 and 2163 to 2505 Queen Street East and 1 Kingston Road. The area-specific policy would reinforce the existing development permissions for the area and provide guidance for future development to achieve compatibility with the existing character of the area.

In addition, at its meeting of November 27, 2012, City Council adopted a motion requesting four City Divisions (Economic Development, Culture and Tourism,



Transportation Services, the Toronto Parking Authority and Toronto Water) to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council on specific issues relating to this portion of Queen Street East. The responses have been included in the body of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council amend the Official Plan, for the lands at 1614 to 1702, 1824 to 2362, 1525 to 1535, 1595 to 1661, 1733 to 1989 and 2163 to 2505 Queen Street East and 1 Kingston Road, substantially in accordance with the draft Official Plan Amendment attached as Attachment No. 1 to report (May 27, 2014) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District.
2. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Official Plan Amendment as may be required.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of January 10, 2012, Toronto and East York Community Council requested the City Planning Division to undertake a Visioning Study in 2012 for Queen Street East, between Coxwell Avenue and Neville Park Avenue.

At its meeting of November 27, 2012, City Council adopted new Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road. The Guidelines can be found here:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-51604.pdf>

In addition, City Council requested that four City Divisions report back to Toronto and East York Community Council on specific issues relating to the study area. The link to Decision document is here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE20.22>

At its meeting of May 10, 2013, City Council adopted By-law 607-2013 which incorporates into the Zoning Bylaw certain requirements of the City Council adopted Urban Design Guidelines for this portion of Queen Street East, which are more restrictive than the existing provisions of Zoning By-law 438-86, to ensure that as-of-right development complies with the new Guidelines. The by-law is under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. The links to the By-law and report are below:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-56833.pdf>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2013/law0607.pdf>

At its meeting of February 25, 2014, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted staff recommendations directing staff to report back in the second quarter of 2014 to Toronto and East York Community Council on the merits of a site and area specific policy for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Avenue, and recommendations for an Official Plan Amendment, if appropriate. The Preliminary report is available at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-66821.pdf>

Study Area/Affected Properties

The draft Official Plan Amendment includes all properties fronting on both sides of Queen Street East in the Beach between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Avenue designated as mixed-use in the Official Plan, matching the area covered by the Urban Design Guidelines.

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), 2014 provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. These policies support the goal of enhancing the quality of life for all Ontarians. Key policy objectives include: building strong healthy communities; wise use and management of resources and protecting public health and safety. The PPS recognizes that local context and character is important. Policies are outcome-oriented, and some policies provide flexibility in their implementation provided that provincial interests are upheld. 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 to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Official Plan

This portion of Queen Street East is located on an Avenue, as shown on Map 2 – Urban Structure of the Official Plan.

Avenues are “important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities, while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents”, according to Section 2.2.3 of the Plan.

The Avenues will be transformed incrementally. They will change building-by-building over a number of years. As stated in the Official Plan, “Some of the Avenues already serve as “main streets” that are focal points for the local community with attractive and bustling sidewalks. This portion of Queen Street East is such an Avenue.

The Official Plan also notes that not all Avenues are the same. "Each Avenue is different in terms of lot sizes and configurations, street width, existing uses, neighbouring uses, transit service and streetscape potential. There is no "one size fits all" program for reurbanizing the Avenues".

The majority of the properties fronting onto this portion of Queen Street East are designated as *Mixed Use Areas* in the Official Plan. A portion of the area between Brookmount Road and Kingston Road on the north side of Queen Street (specifically between numbers 1736 and 1822) is designated as *Neighbourhoods*. Where a park abuts Queen Street East, the designation is *Parks and Open Space*.

The policies for *Mixed Use Areas* provide for a full range of residential, commercial and institutional uses to be developed near transit to provide new jobs and homes for Toronto’s growing population. The policies and development criteria call for new buildings to be located and massed to provide a transition between areas of differing development intensity and scale. In particular, a step down in height towards lower scale neighbourhoods is required. New buildings in *Mixed Use Areas* are to adequately limit shadow impacts on adjacent low-rise *Neighbourhoods* and be massed to frame the edges of streets and maintain sunlight and provide comfortable pedestrian conditions for pedestrians on adjacent streets, parks and open spaces.

The Official Plan, in Policy 5.3.2.1, anticipates the adoption of urban design guidelines to help implement the Plan's objectives over time by providing a more detailed framework for built form and public improvements. The guidelines will provide for more guidance and precision for the implementation of the policies of the Official Plan.

Summary of Recent OMB Decision

On December 11, 2013, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) issued its decision on an appeal for a rezoning on the property at 1884 Queen Street East. This application was made prior to the adoption of both the Urban Design Guidelines and the area specific Zoning By-law. In the decision greater weight was given to in-force policies and zoning than the more recently adopted area specific Zoning By-law and Urban Design guidelines. Although the Official Plan foresees Urban Design Guidelines as a mechanism for implementing the policies of the Official Plan, the OMB decision stated that "The Board notes the absence of any official plan policy directive to 'maintain the existing character of this portion of Queen Street East'."

Purpose of Amendment

The proposed Official Plan Amendment addresses the key principles and ideas that arose out of the Queen Street East Visioning Study and supports the objectives of the Council adopted Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road.

Queen Street East is designated an Avenue in the Official Plan. The City has typically undertaken Avenue Studies after reviewing certain criteria such as the presence of vacant and underutilized lands with redevelopment potential; significant potential to create new jobs and housing along transit lines; where existing zoning is acting as an impediment to improvement and growth; and where a strong market exists for redevelopment and development pressure, all with a view to encouraging reinvestment and intensification on underdeveloped arterials. Examples of such Avenue Studies include: Dufferin Street from Highway 401 to just south of Lawrence Avenue West, which is ongoing at the current time and two completed studies on different portions of St Clair Avenue West. The local characteristics of Queen Street East, including the fine grain lot patterning, the limited depth of properties, the lack of vacant lots, the existence of rental units, amongst other development constraints, lend less opportunity and potentially more complexity to realizing mid rise development than other City arterials.

The Official Plan acknowledges in its non policy text that "not all of the Avenues can be studied at once, and some, which function well and already have appropriate zoning in place, may not need further study at all. Some of the Avenues already serve as "main streets" that are focal points for the local community with attractive and bustling sidewalks. These traditional "main street" Avenues already have zoning in place to guide mixed use development in a way that fits with the neighbourhood, and will be a low priority for Avenue reurbanization studies. Ultimately, all Avenues should perform this "main street" role and become meeting places for local neighbours and the wider community. Avenues that are characterized by one or two storey commercial buildings, vacant and underutilized lands and large areas of surface parking will be the priorities for future Avenue studies."

Queen Street East is an Avenue that already serves as a "main street" as identified by the Official Plan. Given prevailing local character, the comparatively slow pace of change over many years, and prominent land use pattern and land values associated with retail and services such as restaurants, Queen Street has not been identified by staff as a priority for an Avenue Study. Nonetheless, some study of the area was warranted in order to ensure that all policies and guidelines are up to date and support intensification appropriate for the local context on a go forward basis.

The intent of the Urban Design Guidelines adopted by City Council was to put consideration of mid rise development on Queen Street East through a local character lens with consequent adjustment to the scale taking into account particularities of the context.

Proposed Official Plan Policy No. 466 sets out the general provisions/vision respecting local character, development criteria specific to the area, and instruction on how the Urban Design Guidelines should be utilized. In particular: the policy requires that development respect and reinforce the local character, requires adequate building setbacks to achieve the required sidewalk width, requires the building façade(s) of the streetwall to articulate the prevailing façade characteristics; requires that balconies on the Queen Street East frontage be recessed into the building façade; requires ground floor heights that are generally consistent with the prevailing building characteristics; and requires traditional building materials.

The Mixed Use criteria otherwise applicable as Official Plan policies for the area have been supplemented in this proposed Official Plan Amendment with additional development criteria, appropriate for this area, reflecting key aspects of the Council adopted Urban Design Guidelines.

Community Consultation

Extensive community consultation was undertaken during the Queen Street East Visioning Study that resulted in the new Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road. An independent facilitator held a series of stakeholder and community meetings from June to September 2012.

Link to Consultation Summary Report:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-51605.pdf>

With respect to the proposed Official Plan amendment, an Open House was held on April 23, 2014 and was attended by approximately 70 people. The Open House allowed the community to receive information and gave them the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed Official Plan Amendment.

RESPONSE TO MOTIONS ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL FROM OTHER CITY DIVISIONS

Director of Business Services, Economic Development and Culture

At its meeting on November 27-29, 2012, City Council directed the Director of Business Services, Economic Development and Culture, in consultation with the Director of Urban Design, Acting Director Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District, and the local Councillor to explore and develop a public realm plan for Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road and report back to the Toronto and East York Community Council in the third quarter of 2013. The majority of this section of Queen Street East is within the boundaries of The Beach Business Improvement Area (BIA), which extends from Neville Park Boulevard in the east to Lockwood Road in the west.

It is individual BIAs, rather than the Economic Development and Culture Division, which undertake the development of public realm and streetscape design master plans within BIAs. At present, The Beach BIA has no plans to undertake such a study. Currently, the BIA is engaged with the Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Economic Development and Culture Divisions in the redesign of the north edge of Kew Gardens Park and the adjacent Queen Street East sidewalk and boulevard to create a vibrant new streetscape and parks environment. Due to its significant financial commitment to this project, the BIA will not be in a position to undertake a public realm plan in the near future.

However, this section of Queen Street East has streetscape-related challenges such as the position of street tree planters, and opportunities such as wider flankage sidewalk locations, which should be addressed or realized over the short to mid-term. Therefore, the Director of Business Services will co-ordinate, in consultation with The Beach BIA, an assessment of existing streetscape conditions between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road involving staff from Urban Design, Transportation Services, and Parks, Recreation and Forestry. The Director of Business Services will bring forward recommendations to the local Councillor and The Beach BIA Board of Management for consideration in 2015.

Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District

Traffic Conditions

City Council directed the Director, Transportation Services in consultation with appropriate City staff and the Toronto Transit Commission, to report on the current traffic conditions, capacity constraints and other operational issues along Queen Street East between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road.

Queen Street East, between Coxwell Avenue and Nursewood Road, is a 12.8 metre-wide minor-arterial roadway that consists of two eastbound and two westbound lanes with a 40 km/h speed limit. There are TTC streetcar tracks in the centre lanes of Queen Street East and the 501, 502, 503 and 143 streetcar routes operate on Queen Street East, between Coxwell Avenue and Kingston Road, and the 501 and 143 routes continue east of Kingston Road to Nursewood Road.

Generally, stopping is prohibited on the north side of Queen Street East in the morning peak period and on the south side during the afternoon peak period. Outside these times, during the day, pay-and-display parking is in effect on both sides of Queen Street East. Overnight parking is allowed for up to three hours.

In 2013, Transportation Service completed a traffic analysis of the major signalized intersections along Queen Street East in the study area, including Coxwell Avenue, Kingston Road/Eastern Avenue and Woodbine Avenue. Generally, the analysis revealed that each intersection is operating under capacity during all periods of the day. However, the intersection of Queen Street East and Woodbine Avenue is operating near or at capacity during the weekday peak periods due to high traffic volumes and TTC streetcar

operations. As part of this analysis, traffic counts from 1997 to 2013 were reviewed and it was revealed that traffic volumes over this period have fluctuated but generally not increased at the above noted intersections.

Operational Issues

Currently there are no significant operational issues on Queen Street East in the study area. However, the following is a list of the most common issues on Queen Street East reviewed by Transportation Services:

- Requests for additional pedestrian crossovers and traffic control signals;
- Requests for left-turn priority features at signalized intersections;
- TTC transit priority causing pedestrian delay to cross Queen Street East at signalized intersections;
- TTC transit priority causing side street vehicle delay at signalized intersections;
- Requests for longer pedestrian crossing times at signalized intersections;
- Requests to extend peak period parking restrictions to improve traffic flow; and
- Requests for more parking for businesses.

President, Toronto Parking Authority

City Council requested the President, Toronto Parking Authority, to investigate opportunities for additional parking facilities in the area immediately surrounding Queen Street East from Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road; and to conduct preliminary feasibility studies for any identified sites and to report back to Toronto and East York Community Council in the third quarter of 2013.

The Toronto Parking Authority undertook a parking study examining the present parking supply and demand along Queen St East for both on-street locations and off-street facilities. The study area examined Queen Street East from Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Road, specifically by sub-area (that is, Woodbine Beach Precinct, Kew Beach Precinct and Balmy Beach Precinct), as identified in the Urban Design Guidelines for Queen Street East.

The parking supply at Woodbine Beach Precinct and Balmy Beach Precinct met the parking demand throughout both precincts. For each precinct, the current parking inventory of pay-and-display on-street locations and TPA off-street facilities are adequate, and there is some capacity to meet modest increases in future parking demand needs.

The parking demand in Kew Beach Precinct is higher than the other precincts included in the study area. At times, parking demand considerably exceeds the available supply, particularly concentrated around summer and weekends between Kippendavie Avenue and Lee Avenue. The residential streets in the Kew Beach precinct largely accommodate non-residential parking demand. The usage at the off-street facilities located in and around Kew Beach Precinct supplements the accommodation of any on-street peak demand pressures, but these facilities also experience capacity shortfalls at times.

Preliminary options to increase the parking supply at both on-street locations and potential off-street facilities have been assessed for Kew Beach Precinct, and efforts to increase the parking supply is currently ongoing. Parking demand is continuously monitored for the entire study area, including the usage at TPA off-street parking lots. Further survey work is planned for the on-street parking over the summer of 2014 and a comprehensive on-street rate review is expected to be undertaken 2015.

General Manager, Toronto Water

City Council's requested the General Manager, Toronto Water to prepare a report on the impact that additional development on Queen Street East would have on water and sewage infrastructure in the area surrounding Queen Street East within Ward 32. This assessment was undertaken.

Sewer Infrastructure

The area is primarily serviced by a network of combined sewers ranging from 300 mm to 2100 mm in size that carries both sanitary and stormwater flows along the Queen Street East trunk sewer that ultimately flows to the Ashbridges Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment. From a sanitary flow standpoint, there is sufficient capacity in the sewer system under dry weather conditions to service the projected growth through development activities as prescribed in the City's Official Plan. Stormwater flow is also not a concern as new developments must comply with the City's Wet Weather Flow Guidelines thereby reducing the stormwater flows into the sewer system. By reducing stormwater flows into the combined sewer system, capacity in the sewer system increases, thereby allowing the input of additional sanitary flows generated by development.

In 2012, a basement flooding Environmental Assessment (EA) study was completed for the Eastern Beaches (Area 32), which included this area, to identify infrastructure improvements to reduce the risk of future flooding during severe storms. Several storm and sanitary sewer infrastructure improvements to increase capacity and flow diversions were recommended, some of which are included in the 5-year Toronto Water Capital Plan.

Watermain Infrastructure

The water supply to the area is fed from a 1050 mm diameter trunk watermain running west from the R.C. Harris Water Treatment Plant along Queen Street East and Dundas Avenue East and under the Don River. The area is serviced by a water distribution

network along Queen Street East and in the surrounding area streets with watermains ranging from 150 mm in diameter to 300 mm in diameter. Water supply in this area, including supply pressure and adequacy of available fire flow, is not a concern under existing conditions. New development in the area is also not an issue from a watermain transmission capacity standpoint. However, much of the watermain infrastructure is 100 years old or older, so some renewal work will be undertaken over the next five years and more is expected in future capital works programs.

In summary, there is available capacity in the water and sewer infrastructure to service additional development on Queen Street East within Ward 32.

CONTACT

Leontine Major, Senior Planner
Tel. No. (416) 397-4079
Fax No. (416) 392-1330
E-mail: lmajor@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment

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AMENDMENT NO. 151 TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN

LANDS MUNICIPALLY KNOWN IN THE YEAR 2014 AS 1614 to 1702, 1824 to 2362, 1525 to 1535, 1595 to 1661, 1733 to 1989 and 2163 to 2505 Queen Street East and 1 Kingston Road

The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:

SCHEDULE “A”

The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:

1. Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies is amended by adding the following Site and Area Specific Policy 466:
 - “466. Queen Street East, Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Avenue Area Specific Policy 466, applies to the properties known in the year 2014 as 1614 to 1702, 1824 to 2362, 1525 to 1535, 1595 to 1661, 1733 to 1989 and 2163 to 2505 Queen Street East and 1 Kingston Road.
2. The lands shown on the maps attached to and forming Part of this By-law are subject to the following policies:
 - 2.1 This Queen Street East, Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Avenue Area Specific Policy is intended to guide and shape development/redevelopment within the Queen Street East, Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Avenue Area by establishing compatible development/redevelopment and built form policies that reinforce the existing character of the area as a whole and each of the three precincts, being the Woodbine Beach Precinct, The Kew Beach Precinct and the Balmy Beach Precinct, as show on Maps 1, 2 and 3 to ensure an appropriate building scale in relation to Queen Street East, appropriate transition between new development and adjacent neighbourhoods and appropriate design details for new development.
 - 2.2 Development taller than 12 metres may be appropriate on lots with sufficient width and depth and that have appropriate access for parking and servicing. Proposals for such development will demonstrate that the site is adequate to accommodate the proposal, through a rezoning or minor variance process, as appropriate.

Such development above the existing height limit will be limited to 4, 5 or 6 storeys, in consideration of the lot depth and character of its Precinct.

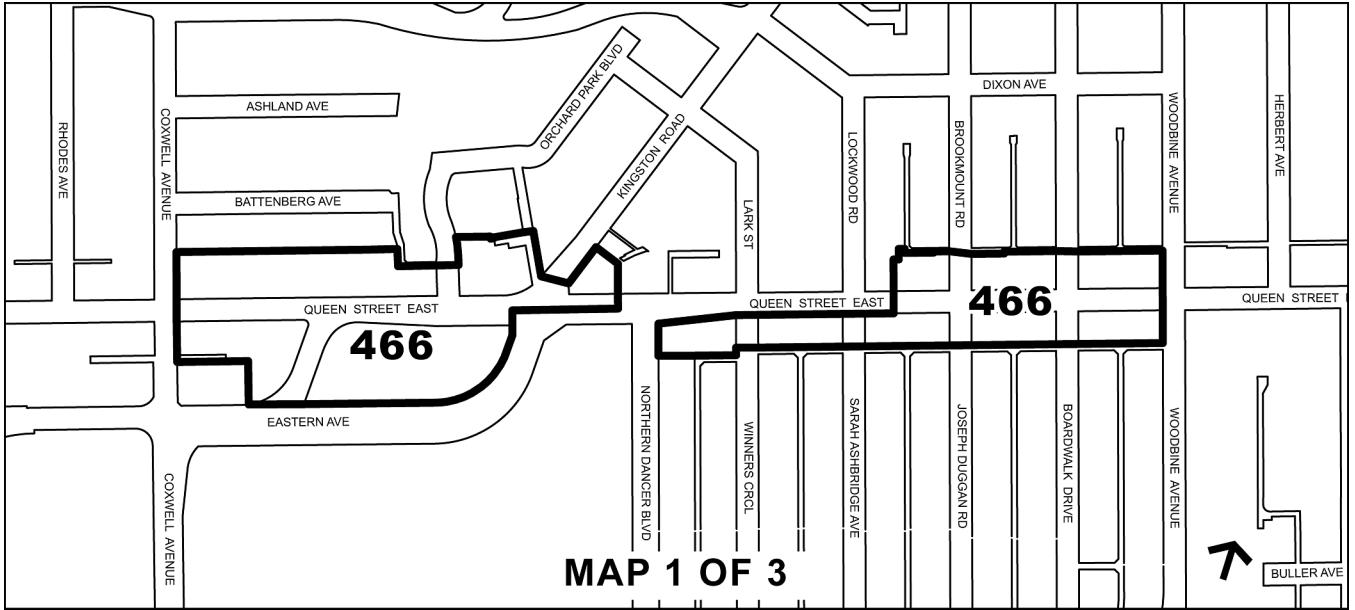
2.3 In addition to Official Plan Policy 4.5.2, all new development in *Mixed Use Areas* along Queen Street East, Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Avenue will:

- a. respect and reinforce the existing character of the area and the individual character of each of the precincts;
- b. provide adequate setback from curb to the entire building face to accommodate wider sidewalks which consist of an edge zone, a furnishing and planting zone, a pedestrian clearway to City standards and an animation zone adjacent to the building;
- c. articulate building facades to reflect existing lot sizes for each precinct;
- d. require ground floor heights that are generally consistent with the prevailing building characteristics, street wall heights and stepbacks appropriate for each Precinct; and
- e. include building materials that are traditionally found in the area to complement the existing streetscape.

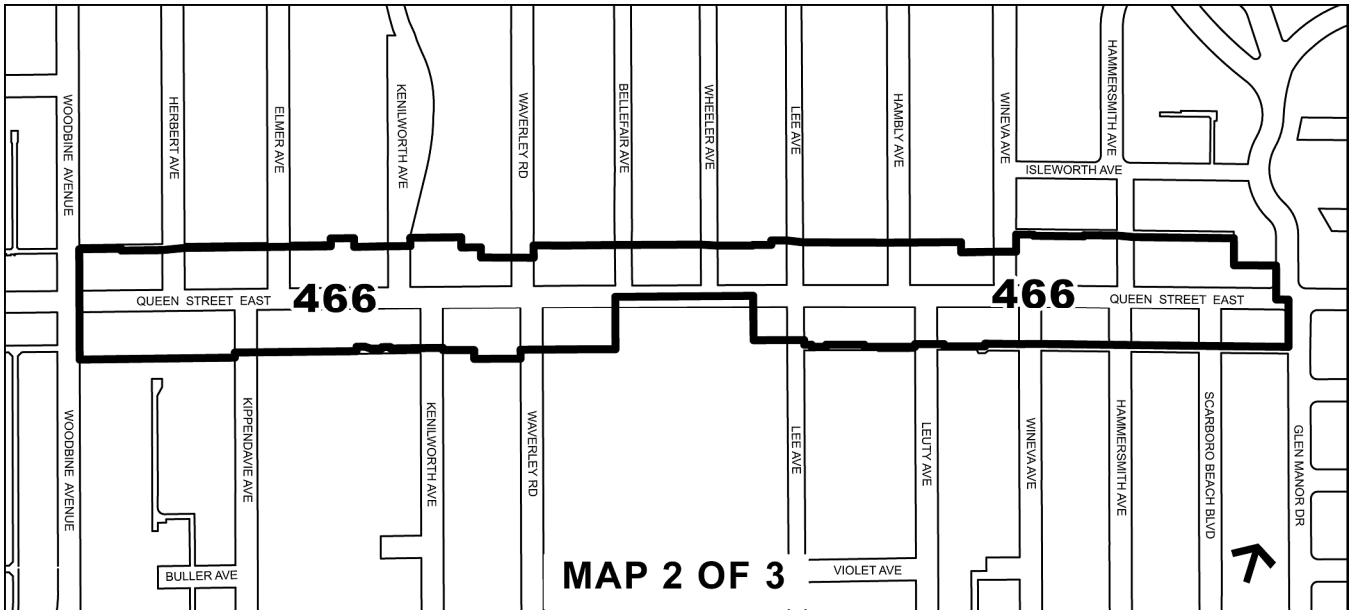
2.4 Urban Design Guidelines adopted by City Council for Queen Street East, Coxwell Avenue to Nursewood Avenue will be used as a tool to evaluate proposed development in the area and ensure that such development is consistent with the Official Plan. To this purpose, Urban Design Guidelines will:

- a. implement Official Plan policies;
- b. provide understanding of the character of the area as a whole and each of the Precincts;
- c. explain how development can respect and reinforce local character for the area as a whole and each of the precincts;
- d. articulate planning priorities for new development in the area;
- e. identify setbacks, stepbacks, height and built form to mass development appropriately within the local context for each precinct; and
- f. describe the prevailing public realm conditions and future public realm goals.

Woodbine Beach Precinct



Kew Beach Precinct



Balmy Beach Precinct

