

College Street Built Form Study – Status Report

Date:	July 7, 2014
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, 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.

Staff have commenced the College Street Built Form Study. This report provides a status update on the community consultation that has occurred to date, and next steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

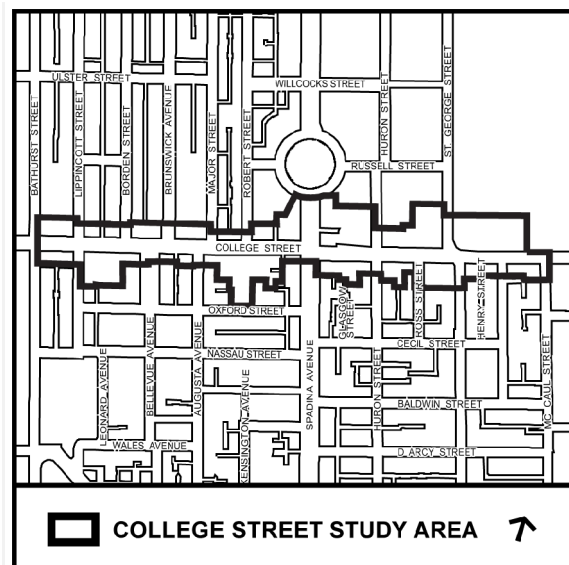
1. Toronto and East York Community Council receive this report for information.

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. The College Street Built Form Study commenced in September 2013, with a Preliminary Report from the Director, Toronto and East York District.

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 any distinctive character is balanced with growth.

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, addresses:

- 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*;
- public realm, streetscape and pedestrian improvements; and
- heritage resources.

In particular, the study will focus on the built form and physical character within the study area and its potential to accommodate future development. This includes examining building envelopes, height and massing, heritage, and opportunities for public realm, streetscape and landscape improvements will also be identified.

Consultation

Since the time of the Preliminary Report, Planning Staff have established an Advisory Committee, held a kick-off meeting, two Community Consultation Meetings, and three Advisory Committee Meetings. All meetings were held at the Lillian H. Smith Library.

Planning Staff hosted a kick-off meeting on February 11, 2014. At that meeting Planning staff introduced the study, presented a draft study timeline, and identified that an Advisory Committee would be established. Staff identified that the Advisory Committee is intended to provide a multi-stakeholder forum for discussion of approaches, concepts and alternatives as part of the study. Planning Staff received responses from

approximately 25 individuals who expressed interest in being a member of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee membership is comprised of representatives of the local community, including residents, business owners, landowners, individuals from local organizations such as resident associations, advisory panels, business groups, the University of Toronto, and the development industry.

The first Advisory Committee meeting was held on March 18, 2014. Approximately 27 individuals attended this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to launch the Advisory Committee, and obtain input, feedback and comment from the Committee on issues relevant to the study. Staff set up maps of the study area with key questions related to: strengths and weaknesses of the area; heights and land use; heritage; retail, employment and institutional uses; and public realm and streetscape. Staff asked members of the advisory committee to provide input on these key questions by placing their comments on the maps.

A second Advisory Committee Meeting was held on April 14, 2014. At the second Advisory Committee Meeting Planning Staff presented a revised study schedule, discussed the feedback summary from the March 18, 2014 Advisory Committee Meeting and how their comments and/or suggestions may be addressed in the College Street Built Form Study, discussed elements of streetscape, and worked through a series of discussion questions related to the vision and character of College Street. Discussion questions focused on:

- the character of College Street, and what makes College Street unique;
- what people like and dislike about the street;
- what should be changed;
- area priorities;
- feedback on new developments in the area; and
- areas for improvement.

A third Advisory Committee Meeting was held on June 10, 2014. At this meeting, discussion was focused on built form of the study area. Discussion questions focused on what new buildings on College Street should look like, how transition should occur to the *Neighbourhoods* north and south of the study area, building setbacks, retail uses at grade, streetscape and public realm within the study area.

A second Community Consultation meeting was held on May 5, 2014. Approximately 50 members of the public were in attendance. Planning staff presented the purpose of the study, the proposed study schedule, the Advisory Committee meeting feedback.

Development Applications

The study area has seen an influx in development applications since 2010.

In 2010, the City received a Rezoning application to permit a 42-storey mixed use building, proposed to be used as an academic residence at 245-255 College Street and 39 & 40 Glasgow Street. The application was later revised to 24-storeys, and appealed to

the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). The OMB issued a decision on June 19 2014, approving a 25-storey mixed use building.

In the fall of 2011, the City received a Rezoning application to permit a 15-storey mixed use building at 297 College Street. City Council approved the application in October 2012. The project is currently under construction.

In the spring of 2013, the City received a Rezoning application to permit a 22-storey mixed use building at 484 Spadina Avenue. City Planning staff recommended refusal of the application. The application has been appealed to the OMB and a hearing has been scheduled for November 24, 2014.

In the spring of 2013, the City received a Rezoning and Official Plan application to permit a 19-storey mixed use building at 231-237 College Street and 177-189 Huron Street. The applicant has revised their application, and reduced the overall building height to 17-storeys. A Final Report and draft Zoning By-law will be before Toronto and East York Community Council for Statutory Public meeting on August 12, 2014.

Community Feedback

As part of the study consultation process, staff asked the Advisory Committee and local community a series of discussion questions which are intended to assist staff in formulating policies and guidelines for the College Street study area.

When asked about the character of College Street, and what makes this portion of College Street unique, the following was identified:

- College Street contains a unique mix of institutional and non-institutional uses;
- College Street feels like a spacious, well balanced street with an interesting mix of uses;
- there are a number of heritage buildings within the study area;
- the study area varies in character; and
- there are four to five distinct character areas along College Street.

The Advisory Committee was asked to identify their likes and dislikes of College Street. The positive attributes of College Street identified by the Committee include:

- the fine grain retail at grade and the inviting environment;
- the diverse yet balanced mix of uses and people;
- the feeling of College Street being, for the most part, a safe street; and
- the large number of heritage buildings located along College Street.

When the Committee was asked what they would like to see changed about College Street, the Committee identified that:

- they would like to see fewer empty storefronts;
- a desire for a healthier mix of retail that is community based;

- elements of street which are unsafe should be examined for redevelopment opportunities;
- opportunities for public spaces and dedicated bike lanes should be examined.

When asked about what should be improved as the area continues to experience change, the Advisory Committee identified that retail sizes should be smaller or limited, and that public realm and green space opportunities should be increased in an effort to help balance the new development in the future.

The June 10, 2014 Advisory Committee meeting was focused on discussing built form. At that meeting, the Advisory Committee identified that that new development should be responsive to the *Neighbourhoods* to the north and south of College Street. The Committee also identified that transition was important; that any new development should relate to the character of each area; that the existing heights currently work, but could be higher at specific areas, such as corners; and suggested that a mid-rise typology may work well on College Street.

Next Steps

Staff will evaluate the existing physical form and character of the study area, and review the existing policy framework for this segment of College Street including the City of Toronto Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and any other applicable policies and guidelines.

The College Street Built Form Study area will be profiled to:

- Identify the location and characteristics of existing land uses;
- Identify lot configuration and characteristics, street and block configuration, and ownership patterns;
- Examine existing densities of development;
- Identify properties with heritage potential;
- Identify recent development trends, and approvals in the area;
- Identify character areas; and
- Identify opportunities for public realm improvements.

The information collected will be analyzed to determine possible build out under existing policies and regulations. Building envelopes, height and massing, public realm, streetscape and landscape improvement options will be reviewed and analyzed, and draft Urban Design Guidelines for College Street and possible Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policies will be created to help implement the vision of the College Street Study.

Planning staff will hold a final meeting with the Advisory Committee in December 2014, or early 2015. At this meeting, Staff will present the draft Urban Design Guidelines for College Street and possible Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policies. These will also be presented at a final community consultation meeting, with the community at large, targeted for early 2015.

A Final Report, which may contain Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policies and/or Urban Design Guidelines is targeted for Toronto and East York Community Council and Toronto City Council for Spring 2015.

CONTACT

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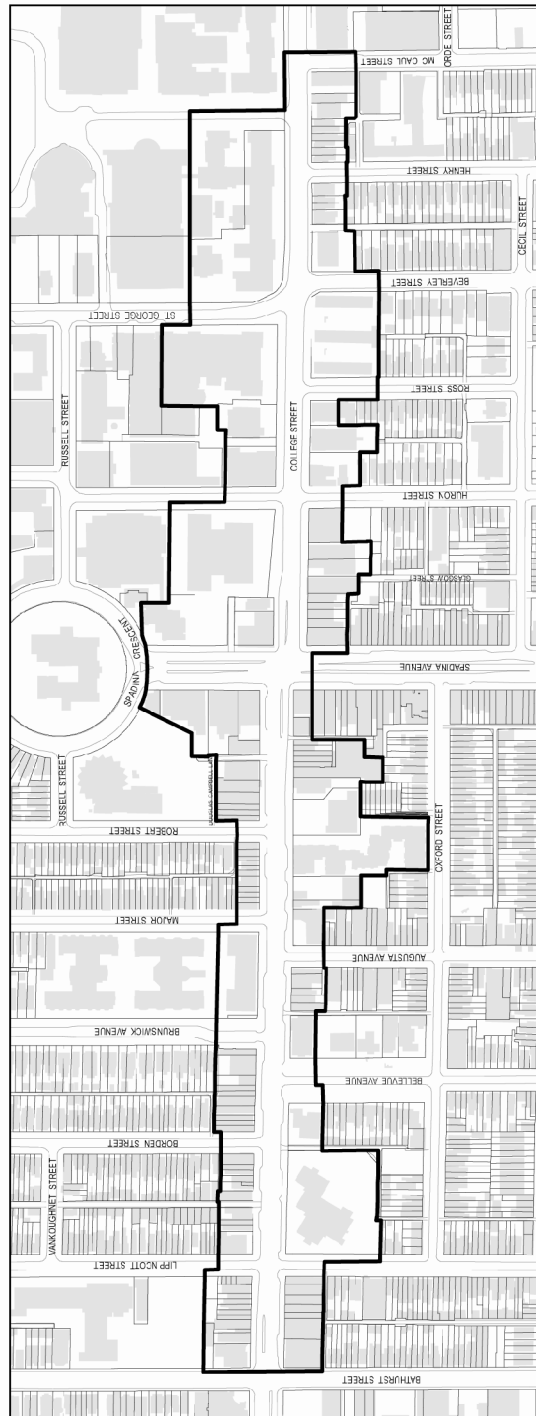
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Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Study Area Boundary
Attachment 2: Study Schedule

Attachment 1: Study Area Boundary



Study Area

College Street

Not to Scale
08/09/2013

File # 13_177789

Attachment 2: Study Schedule

