

Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative – A Public Space Plan for the Carlaw–Dundas Area

Date:	July 22, 2014
To:	Toronto & East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto & East York District
Wards:	Ward 30 – Toronto-Danforth
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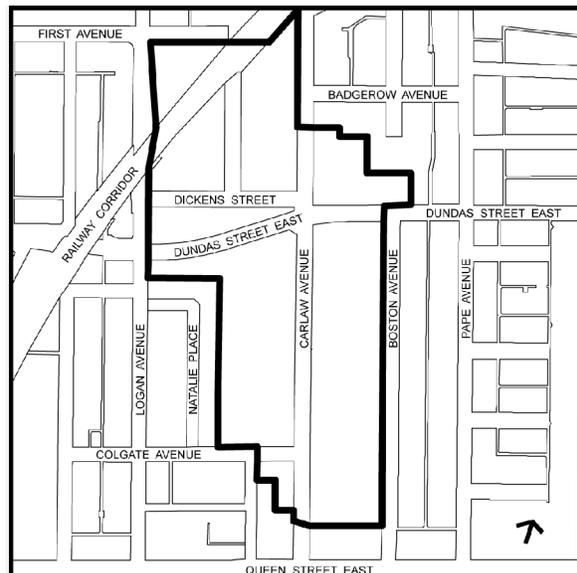
SUMMARY

This report presents the recommendations of the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative. Carlaw-Dundas is a former industrial area in the City's East End that has been undergoing a transformation, emerging as a mixed-use creative and cultural hub of workers and residents. This transformation began in the late 1990's where live/work units were permitted based on site-specific zoning provisions. The area was subject to several studies in the early 2000's that considered neighbourhood improvements.

Working with the community and a staff team, the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative is a plan that establishes a vision for the Carlaw-Dundas community and identifies priority projects and strategies to implement improvements to public spaces.

The key items that are addressed in this Public Space Plan include:

- Strengthening the Carlaw-Dundas area as a hub for small business and cultural activities.
- Improvements to streetscapes and other public spaces.
- A strategy to execute the improvements



This Public Space Plan updates previous studies and guides public realm improvements, beginning with five projects that are underway. These five projects act as a catalyst for public space improvements in Carlaw-Dundas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative and support its implementation based on the principles, strategies and initiatives identified in this plan.
2. City Council require that future development applications within the Carlaw-Dundas area contribute towards public space improvements outlined in the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative.
3. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to co-ordinate the implementation of the plan through an interdivisional team including City Planning, Economic Development, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Transportation Services.
4. City Council endorse the establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Committee consisting of members from the community to provide input as implementation of the plan proceeds.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

In October 2012 City Council adopted a recommendation that directed staff to report on potential development guidelines and public space improvements for the Dundas and Carlaw community.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE19.6>

In February 2013 Toronto and East York Community Council adopted a further motion by Councillor Fletcher that directed that the study include:

- Recommendations for safe pedestrian crossings on Carlaw Avenue;
- Public Realm and community benefits that are desirable for the neighbourhood and a plan to implement these benefits;
- A review of the feasibility of allowing condo-owners to construct loft space within their units;
- Recommendations for transit provisions that promote economic development and quality of life in the neighbourhood;
- Relationship of Carlaw & Dundas to surrounding residential community;
- Incorporation of City Planning's ongoing condo consultations.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.TE22.84>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Study Area

The Carlaw-Dundas area is a former industrial area that is located within the larger community of Leslieville and has been undergoing a transformation from an industrial area to an emerging hub of cultural and creative workers and residents in the City's east end. The study area is roughly bounded by Logan Street to the west, the CNR rail line to the north, Boston Avenue to the east, and Colgate and the properties north of Queen Street East to the south.

Surrounding uses include:

North: CNR rail track is located at the north border of the study area. Further north is Gerrard Street East that contains commercial uses including Gerrard Square, and the Gerrard Carlaw Parkette that contains an enclosed dog off-leash area. The intersection of Gerrard Street East and Carlaw Avenue has a 506 Carlton streetcar transit stop.

South: Queen Street East is located on the south side of the study area. Queen Street East contains commercial and residential uses. 501 Queen streetcar transit stops are located at Queen and Carlaw.

East: The east side of Boston Avenue contains low-density residential uses and is designated as "Neighbourhoods" in the Toronto Official Plan.

West: The west side of the study area is bordered by Logan Street and contains stable low-density residential uses designated as "Neighbourhoods" in the Toronto Official Plan, along with Jimmie Simpson Park, a 2.6 hectare park that also contains the Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre.

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

The Official Plan provides the policy vision that manages and directs physical change in the City. The City of Toronto Official Plan designates most of the Carlaw/Dundas study area as "Employment Areas", which are areas that have been targeted for growth and where the primary function is that of business and economic activity. The majority of the surrounding area is designated as "Neighbourhoods" which are areas that are not projected for growth. Adjacent land uses must transition to these residential areas. The surround area also contains areas that are designated as "Parks", which are also areas where growth has not been targeted. "Mixed Use Areas" are indicated in red, and are adjacent to the Carlaw-Dundas Employment Areas to the south, along Queen Street East. Gerrard and Queen Street East form part of the grid of Toronto's early concession roads and are part of the important arteries of movement that link the City together. These arteries also provide vital commercial and residential uses and are targeted for lower scale growth that works within the existing context.

Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP 154 and 247)

The Carlaw + Dundas area was originally part of the South Riverdale Part II Official Plan policies that were adopted in 1986. Illegal live-work studios and applications to permit residential uses in industrial buildings on Carlaw Avenue initiated a review of policies for the area where they considered the potential impact of permitting non-industrial uses within the study area.

The original South Riverdale Part II Official Plan policies have been updated and are now included in the Toronto Official Plan as Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP). Site SASP policies are provided within the Official Plan for sites and areas that require more detailed policies and generally reflect unique historic conditions for approval in an area.

Site and Area Specific Policy 154 allows for a mix of employment and residential uses provided the employment uses are compatible with residential uses. An updated site and area specific policy (SASP 247) was adopted by Council on December 18, 2013, and updates SASP 154, including relevant provisions which require that:

- "iii) the height, density and massing of new development respects and reinforces the existing and planned physical character of the adjacent area;*
- iv) residential, live/work and places of worship uses are located a minimum of 30 metres from the nearest rail corridor; and*
- v) non-residential gross floor area existing on December 16, 2013 or developed subsequently is replaced with any new development. "*

These new provisions help to strengthen the area as a hub for business and also work towards providing a policy framework to require transition of new development to surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

SASP 247 is part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (OPA 231). The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued its Decision which approved the majority of OPA

231 with minor modifications. The Decision is subject to a 20-day appeal period, with a last date of appeal on July 29, 2014.

Zoning

The City of Toronto's Zoning By-laws implement the vision of the Official Plan by defining permitted uses, densities, minimum and maximum standards including such things as height, parking and open space requirements.

Most of the properties in the study area are zoned for industrial uses under I1 or I2 zoning designations. Overall the permitted density is 3X. The height limits are 18 metres within the study area, with site specific exceptions. The lower-scale surrounding residential area permits a 12 metre height.

Although the site and area specific policy allows for residential uses, the zoning by-law does not permit residential uses. Proposals for live/work and residential uses are required to go through a rezoning process that includes community consultation and Council approval. Site specific zoning amendments have been necessary throughout the area for new developments over the last 15 years.

Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (2000)

A previous plan for the community, the *Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan* was prepared by Paul Young and Lewis Poplak in 2000 and provided an overview of the area with recommendations for public realm improvements. The *Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan* was not formally adopted by City Council, but has been serving as a guide for the area's growth and desired improvements.

Reasons for the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative

The purpose of the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative is to plan for improved public spaces to provide amenities for a growing number of residents, workers and visitors. Since 2000, the Carlaw-Dundas area has seen considerable growth and change with significant approvals and construction taking place in the last 5 years. Census data indicates that the number of dwelling units in the Carlaw-Dundas area increased by 446 units between 2006 and 2011. Since the 2011 census, approximately 800 units have been constructed or have been approved (345 Carlaw and 1220 Dundas Street East) for a total of approximately 1,250 units constructed or approved since 2006. In addition, the recently approved 345 Carlaw application includes a Section 37 community benefit of the Crow's Theatre, a live theatre company that is locating in the area. The Crow's Theatre will be a significant addition to the community's creative presence and will attract more visitors to the area who will attend plays and events in the theatre space.

Community Consultation

On October 24th 2013, approximately 80 people participated in the Carlaw-Dundas Community Workshop. In the first half hour of the meeting staff gave a presentation about the study. There was a question and answer session followed by the participants breaking into groups to answer questions about Carlaw - Dundas likes/dislikes, previous plans and public space priorities.

Following the breakout session, each group presented their findings and provided City staff with their comments. Workshop attendees like and value the industrial heritage character of the area and the proximity to the downtown, public transit and highways. They also like how the area is part of an established area, but contains mixed-uses with small businesses, adding interest and character to the Leslieville area. They expressed concerns with new development and its scale and impact on the surrounding area. The workshop attendees agreed that pedestrian, cycling and transit improvements are important and that the principles in the 2000 plan were good and should be implemented.

The staff team took the workshop findings and continued their analysis of the area. On May 12, 2014, the City staff team met with the community at the Morse Street Public School to present their analysis and recommended directions. Items covered in the presentation included feedback from the workshop with focus being on heritage, cycling, parks and public space improvements. The meeting was well attended with approximately 50 attendees who generally indicated their support with the directions that City staff recommended.

In addition to community meetings, information on the Dundas + Carlaw Community Initiative has been available in the City's website at:
<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=299bc6dc6bdf3410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

COMMENTS

Working with the community, stakeholders and the local councillor, a staff team developed the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative, to establish a vision for the Carlaw - Dundas community and identify priority projects and strategies to implement improvements to public spaces.

The key items that are addressed in this public space plan include:

- Strengthening the Carlaw - Dundas area as a hub for small business and cultural activities.
- Updating and refreshing earlier plans.
- Improvements to streetscapes and other public spaces.
- A strategy to execute the improvements

The Carlaw - Dundas area is experiencing revitalization and growth in accordance with the Official Plan vision for the area. With growth, the importance of public spaces in creating a vibrant and livable urban environment where businesses and people will want to work and live becomes more and more apparent. Official Plan policy 3.1.1 The Public Realm, recognizes the importance of a well-designed, high quality network of public spaces as an essential part of city-building:

Beautiful, comfortable, safe and accessible streets, parks, open spaces and public buildings are a key shared asset. These public spaces draw people together,

creating strong social bonds at the neighbourhood, city and regional level. They convey our public image to the world and unite us as a city. They set the stage for our festivals, parades and civic life as well as for daily casual contact. Public space creates communities.

Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative – A Public Space Plan for the Carlaw-Dundas Area

The attached Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative updates previous studies of the area and provides a course of action to implement community improvements. This Public Space Plan provides a vision that is supported by strategies and initiatives, including five projects that are currently underway. This plan also provides a framework for future projects to proceed when the funding and conditions allow for them to happen.

The vision for the Carlaw - Dundas area is:

A community where people live, work, play and learn; adapting and changing while respecting the area's unique character and industrial heritage.

The key principles are:

1. Maintain the historic industrial character of Carlaw + Dundas.
2. Re-use existing buildings and preserve heritage features.
3. Strengthen Carlaw + Dundas as a hub for small businesses and cultural activities.
4. Improve streetscapes and public spaces.
5. Create green streets and pedestrian networks.
6. Promote active uses at street level along Carlaw and Dundas.
7. Improve bicycle parking and cycling routes.
8. Ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods.
9. Support the use of public transit in the area.

Five Actions to Initiate Improvements to the Public Realm

To initiate the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative, a team consisting of City Planning, Economic Development, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services staff have initiated five projects to provide a catalyst in shaping future public space initiatives in the Carlaw-Dundas community. The five projects are as follows:

1. Carlaw + Dundas Triangle

The Carlaw + Dundas Triangle is an urban parkette that will serve as a focal point for the community. The City has acquired the property from Toronto Hydro, and is working on site remediation, community input/consultation, design and construction, to be completed in 2016. The Carlaw + Dundas Triangle has the potential to be expanded in the future if adjacent properties are redeveloped.

2. Boston Avenue Walk

South of Dundas, the west side of Boston Avenue has a former rail spur that is now a treed boulevard within the public right-of-way that does not have sidewalks. In consultation with the community, Transportation Services (Public Realm Unit) staff are proposing a pedestrian walkway with potential woodland plantings to better utilize this informal green space and prevent damage to the existing trees.

3. Colgate Avenue Green Street

Colgate Avenue is a short, wide street that runs east-west and connects Carlaw Avenue to Jimmy Simpson Park. Working with the developers, City Planning staff have been consulting with Toronto Water and Transportation Services to implement a pilot project - storm water bump-outs that will widen the boulevard adjacent to 64 Colgate Avenue and improve the streetscape, safety, pedestrian experience, and stormwater management on Colgate Avenue.

4. Carlaw Pedestrian Crosswalk

Transportation Services staff are recommending a pedestrian crosswalk on Carlaw Avenue in a separate report to Toronto and East York Community Council in August 2014, subject to the availability of funding in the Transportation Services Capital program. As part of the crosswalk, the location and number of TTC bus stop locations is also being assessed with the potential for improved safety by locating a transit stop on the southeast corner of Carlaw Avenue and Dundas Street East. Installation is anticipated in 2015.

5. Dundas + Carlaw Industrial Heritage Tour

Celebrating the industrial past of Carlaw - Dundas area adds to the layers richness of the community as a place with an important industrial history. City staff are working with Heritage Toronto to initiate the research the industrial heritage of the Carlaw + Dundas area and conduct tours of the area.

Other Strategies and Initiatives

Further improvements and initiatives are further outlined in the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative (Attachment 3). Some of these improvements are dependent on other infrastructure work happening in tandem (ie. Carlaw watermain replacement) or private development sites where opportunities for publicly accessible private open space may become available (ie. Rail Spur Greenway). As such, they may have a time horizon for implementation longer than the five noted above.

Parks/Urban Squares

- Badgerow Avenue Green Space
- Rail Spur Greenway
- Carlaw + Dundas Triangle additional park space
- Improvements to local parks

Streetscape/Public Space

- Carlaw Avenue Streetscape Improvements

- Cycling Infrastructure Improvements
- Colgate Green Street
- Dickens Stairway
- Dickens Street
- Logan Underpass
- Green Laneways
- Boston Avenue Landscaping

Economic Development Initiatives

- Potential BIA
- Message Board (electronic or traditional)

Heritage

- Review further potential heritage listings at 181, 235 and 245 Carlaw Avenue.

Implementation Plan

The Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative outlines five projects that are underway that will provide action for public space improvements in the Carlaw + Dundas area. These five projects are the catalyst to continued improvements that will be incremental and implemented when the funding/opportunities are available or can be associated with development.

The five projects have been secured through various means, including Section 37 funding, parks levies, Urban Design capital improvements funds, Transportation Services and Public Realm Unit capital funding. City staff are also pursuing creative means to secure additional funding for green street and park improvements through public and private funding sources (such as grants) that may be available. The Carlaw + Dundas Implementation Plan is attached as Attachment 2, and outlines the proposed projects and lead departments.

Loft Space

In July 1998, Toronto Community Council approved By-law No. 530-1998 to allow for 76 live-work units at 245 Carlaw Avenue, with a maximum gross-floor area in the building not to exceed 10,953 square metres.

The February 2013 TEYCC motion requested that staff review the feasibility of allowing condo-owners to construct loft space within their units. The Wrigley Building, in particular, located at 245 Carlaw Avenue has had approximately 45 applications to the Toronto and East York Committee of Adjustment since the live-work uses were permitted in 1998.

The 45 applications for minor variances to permit mezzanines have resulted in approximately 1,000 square metres of additional gfa. This additional gfa has not been opposed by City Planning staff; the unique conditions within this building of high floor to ceiling heights, make it feasible to add this loft space within the building at 245 Carlaw

Avenue. If the condominium board at 245 Carlaw Avenue believes that it is necessary to amend the zoning by-law for the remainder of the units within 245 Carlaw Avenue, it is recommended that they initiate an application for a site specific zoning by-law amendment for their building. Otherwise individual units have the option to seek minor variances on a site-by-site basis.

City Planning staff are not aware of other buildings in the Carlaw-Dundas study area where this is an issue and do not see the need for general zoning permission to allow for mezzanines within the entire area, especially given the specific circumstances at 245 Carlaw Avenue.

Condominium Consultation

The February 2013 TEYCC motion requested that the Carlaw-Dundas study incorporate the City Planning's ongoing Condominium Consultation. City Council adopted the report on the Condo Consultation on July 8, 2014.

The key issues that were identified as being of importance for condominium living included:

- Coordinating new development with services and infrastructure and associated concerns regarding traffic congestion, transit crowding and lack of green spaces;
- Amenities for dogs (and other pets);
- Parking for visitors;
- Community building;
- Information sharing.

Through the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative, similar issues were raised including; traffic congestion, lack of park spaces, and parking concerns. Some of the recommendations to address these issues include:

- The potential for short term leases or use of ground floor retail space in condo buildings by arts and culture groups while the owners of the space seek to lease the space to a long term tenants.
- Requesting the Province to amend the Condominium Act to provide for greater flexibility to address changing parking circumstances and needs in a condominium (ie. more visitor parking if needed).
- The need to ensure neighbourhood planning is done at the neighbourhood scale, not condo by condo, and that infrastructure can handle the increased density.
- The need to provide services and infrastructure with new development, particularly those related to transportation, green space and the public realm.
- Privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS) were featured as an additional means of providing open space.
- The role of streets as 'open spaces' and 'people places' as an important element in the design of complete streets.

These matters are important considerations in community building. Many, including the public space, POPS, street improvements as people places and neighbourhood planning have been an inherent part of the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative. Other matters that are still under review and should be part of future Carlaw + Dundas improvements include: the potential initiative for short term leases of ground floor retail spaces to arts and culture groups; and potentially allowing for flexibility with parking in order to allow for additional visitor parking spaces.

CONCLUSION

The Carlaw - Dundas community has had a vision for this area that began before the year 2000 with the community based *Carlaw/Dundas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan*. The vision for this area is taking shape and it is emerging as a creative and cultural hub that provides a healthy mix of employment and residential uses, where people want to visit, work or live. Staff recommends that City Council endorse the Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative and that the implementation of improvements of this Public Space Plan for the Carlaw–Dundas Area continue through a co-ordinated inter-divisional approach.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Carlaw + Dundas Principles
Attachment 2: Carlaw + Dundas Implementation Plan
Attachment 3: Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative

Attachment 1: Carlaw + Dundas Principles

CARLAW + DUNDAS PRINCIPLES

1. Maintain the historic industrial character of the Carlaw-Dundas area.
2. Re-use the existing buildings and preserve heritage features.
3. Strengthen the Carlaw-Dundas area as a hub for small businesses and cultural activities.
4. Improve Streetscapes and public spaces.
5. Create green streets and pedestrian networks.
6. Promote active uses at street level along Carlaw and Dundas.
7. Improve bicycle parking and cycling routes.
8. Ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods.
9. Support the use of public transit in the area.

Attachment 2: Carlaw + Dundas Implementation Plan

Carlaw + Dundas Implementation Plan			
Strategic Directions	Actions	Timing	Divisional Lead
Co-ordination	Form an interdivisional implementation team	Immediate	City Planning
Strengthen area as a hub for small business and culture	Require Replacement of Non-Residential Area (strengthen SASP policy)	Immediate	City Planning (SIPA)
	Consider forming a BIA	Medium	Economic Development
	Create a message board / blog	Future Opportunity	Business Community
Maintain the heritage industrial character of the area	Industrial Heritage Tour	Immediate	Heritage Preservation Services
	Heritage Preservation / Interpretation Plan	Future Opportunity (funding)	Heritage Preservation Services
Improve Public Spaces	Triangle Park at Carlaw-Dundas	Immediate	Parks
	Boston Avenue Walk	Immediate	Public Realm
	Colgate Green Street	Immediate/ Future Opportunity	Urban Design
	Hydro Green Space on Badgerow Ave	Immediate	Toronto Hydro
	Increase Triangle Park	Future Opportunity	City Planning
	Improve Boston Avenue / Rail Spur Green Space (with planning applications -private/publicly accessible open space)	Future Opportunity	City Planning
Improve Pedestrian/ Cycling/ Transit Infrastructure	Location of Transit Stops	Immediate	TTC
	Crosswalk on Carlaw at Colgate	Immediate	Traffic Operations
	Carlaw Road Resurfacing	Future Opportunity	Transportation Services
	Develop Capital Improvement Plan (bike rings, paving, trees, landscaping, benches),	Medium	Urban Design
	Potential Logan Bike Corridor and North/South Bike Lanes	Medium	Cycling Infrastructure (TS)
	Streetscape Improvements (Capital Improvement Plan)	Future Opportunity	Urban Design
	Bicycle Parking	Medium	Cycling Infrastructure
	Logan Underpass/Dickens Staircase	Future Opportunity	Urban Design

**Attachment 3: Carlaw + Dundas Community Initiative
A Public Space Plan for the Carlaw – Dundas Area**

(to be inserted on the supplementary agenda)