

Bayview Avenue Design Guidelines Study – Final Report

Date:	October 21, 2015
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, North York District
Wards:	Ward 25
Reference Number:	14 106510 NPS 00 TM

SUMMARY

On December 16, 2013 City Council directed staff to undertake a study of Bayview Avenue between Highway 401 and Lawrence Avenue East "to review the appropriate development framework for the lots abutting Bayview Avenue". Staff have undertaken an extensive review of the area and conducted a number of community meetings to develop design guidelines for townhouse development proposals within the study area.

The report recommends that City Council adopt the attached guidelines for use in the review of development applications for townhouses within the study area.

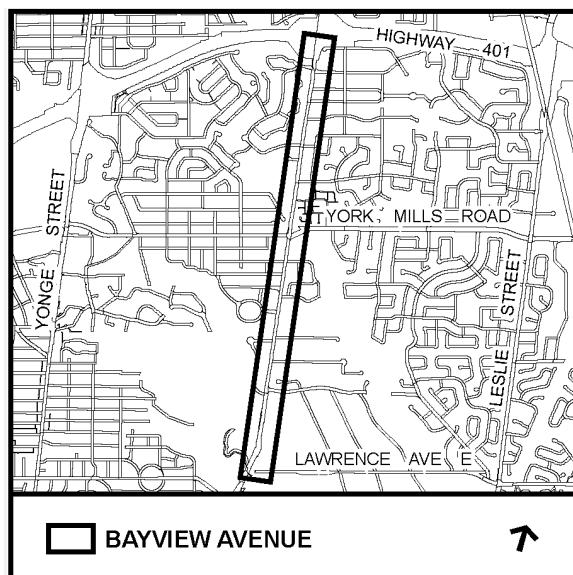
RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the guidelines found at Attachment 2 to be used in the development and review of applications for townhouses along this stretch of Bayview Avenue.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.



DECISION HISTORY

On December 16, 2013 City Council directed staff to undertake a study for Bayview Avenue, from Highway 401 to Lawrence Avenue East, to review the appropriate development framework for the lots abutting Bayview Avenue. City Council's direction can be found at

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.NY28.34>

A Status Report related to the study was adopted by North York Community Council at its meeting of April 8, 2014. The report outlined the Terms of Reference to be used in conducting the study, what had occurred to that point and what the next steps should be to continue the study. The status report can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/ny/bgrd/backgroundfile-67828.pdf>

A second Status Report was adopted by North York Community Council at its meeting of August 12, 2014. The report updated Community Council and work that had occurred and provided a set of draft Guiding Principles and draft guidelines for discussion. Community Council directed staff to use the draft guidelines in the review of active applications while the guidelines were finalized. The report can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2014/ny/bgrd/backgroundfile-72167.pdf>

STUDY BACKGROUND

Study Area

The study area is bounded by: Highway 401 to the north and Lawrence Avenue East to the south. The study area only includes those lots which abut Bayview Avenue. The character of this stretch of Bayview Avenue is unique and differs from the character north and south of the study area. North of Highway 401 the lot pattern is different and lots have a more consistent depth. There is also a different range of zoning along Bayview Avenue north of Highway 401. The south end of the study at Lawrence Avenue East is characterized by several institutional uses creating a break between the study area and residential areas further to the south.

Neighbourhood Context

The stretch of Bayview Avenue between Highway 401 and Lawrence Avenue East has a unique character not found north of Highway 401 or south of Lawrence Avenue East. This stretch is predominantly residential with large detached dwellings on large lots which often exceed the zoning requirements for lot frontage and area. The buildings range from one to three storeys in height. The front yards of these residential lots are heavily landscaped, with landscaping often blocking views of the dwellings from the street. This landscaping is also found in the side yards of corner lots which front onto the side streets. Due to the lot sizes, side yard setbacks are often larger than the minimums required by the zoning by-law. The large setbacks and heavily landscaped yards create a corridor of vegetation interspersed with buildings. This makes for an environment which feels like a landscaped street of significant mature landscaping.

Lot Structure

Lots within the study area have a range of both lot frontage and lot depth. The lot frontages range from 17.7 metres to 195.5 metres while the lot depths range from 21.3 metres to 172.8 metres. Larger lot frontages are not necessarily coupled with larger lot depths and may actually have a shallow lot depth. Corner lots were included in the study area and their lot frontages and lot depths were measured relative to Bayview Avenue rather than at the shortest lot line as defined in the zoning by-law. This variation in lot characteristics resulted in the need for different guidelines for the different lot types.

Setbacks

As previously mentioned, the existing detached dwellings abutting Bayview Avenue vary in building setbacks. Some dwellings have significant setbacks from Bayview Avenue with large front yards; some lots have relatively smaller setbacks while still large. Front yards, especially those on lots with large front yard setbacks, are heavily landscaped often with large mature trees. The rear yard setbacks also range in size, generally related to the size of the front yard setback. This character of large lots with large front yard setbacks which are heavily landscaped is quite different from many other major arterials in the City.

Excluded Sites

The study originally included every lot which abuts Bayview Avenue between Highway 401 and Lawrence Avenue East in accordance with Council's direction. However, in reviewing the area, it became apparent that certain sites should be excluded from the study. They were deemed inappropriate for townhouses and excluded for a number of reasons, including:

- There was an existing townhouse development on the site;
- The site was occupied by an apartment building;
- The site is owned by the City;
- It is a non-residential lot;
- Lots which were rear lotted along Bayview Avenue; and
- Sites which were not designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan such as:
 - Parkland
 - Natural Areas
 - The existing retail mall

Recent Applications

In November, 2006 the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) approved a twenty-unit townhouse development at 2425-2427 Bayview Avenue. City Council and Planning staff were opposed to the application. The OMB decision approving the townhouse development noted that townhouses at 2425-2427 Bayview Avenue were “an appropriate form of intensification” which was sensitive to the residential area. The site was sold and the new owners have filed an application to increase the number of units to 40. An OMB hearing has been scheduled for January 4 to 8, 2016.

Council and City Planning staff also opposed an eight-unit townhouse development at 2500 Bayview Avenue however it too was approved by the OMB in May, 2010. In that decision, the OMB indicated that an appropriate neighbourhood context to review the proposal was along Bayview Avenue from Lawrence Avenue East to Highway 401 and that the context included townhouses. In its decision, the OMB stated that townhouses were appropriate on the site due to its “edge” condition along Bayview Avenue, and that it was not thought that townhouses would occur in the interior of the neighbourhood as a result of the development. This development has been constructed.

Since these two approvals at the OMB, townhouses have become part of the existing and planned context of Bayview Avenue. As a result, a number of applications for townhouse developments have been submitted within the study area. These include the following sites:

- 6 Baytree Crescent
- 103 Bayview Ridge
- 108 Bayview Ridge
- 2655-2659 Bayview Avenue and 15 Old Colony Road
- 2 Wilket Road
- 2425-2427 Bayview Avenue

All of the applications have been appealed to the OMB, either by the applicant or by area residents. The applications at 103 and 108 Bayview Ridge have been settled and Site Plan issues are being addressed. There have been no decisions made by the Board on any of the other applications.

Infill Townhouse Guidelines

City-wide Infill Townhouse Guidelines were approved by City Council in 2003 to address the development impacts of infill townhouses with a focus on “protecting streetscapes and seamlessly integrating new development with existing housing patterns”. The Guidelines consider matters such as building location, built form and location of parking. They also consider the relationship between the infill development and the pedestrian environment with regard to things such as entrances, parking and land use. These guidelines are applicable city-wide and do not deal specifically with the unique characteristics of this stretch of Bayview Avenue.

In response to development pressure for townhouses on Bayview Avenue north of Highway 401, Council directed staff in 2005 to conduct a design guideline study to deal with the unique features of that area. The study reviewed the west side of Bayview Avenue between Highway 401 and Finch Avenue East which is an area of consistent lot depths and block sizes. Those guidelines were adopted by City Council in the fall of 2007. The context of the study area is different from the context south of Highway 401.

The Infill Townhouse Guidelines and Bayview Avenue Guidelines study north of the 401 have been reviewed in the development of the guidelines. However, due to the unique characteristics found within this stretch of Bayview Avenue, these City-wide guidelines and the guidelines for north of Highway 401 do not offer sufficient guidance for this area

to ensure that new development appropriately fits within the existing and planned context.

Official Plan

The Official Plan designates the residential lots included in the study as *Neighbourhoods* which are considered physically stable areas and are made up of low scale residential uses along with parks, schools and local institutions. Small-scale retail, service and office uses are also permitted. These areas are not intended to accommodate significant growth within the City. Development in *Neighbourhoods* is expected to “respect and reinforce” the existing physical character including building typology, size and configuration of lots, heights, massing and scale. Infill developments should have building types with heights, massing and scale that are appropriate for the site and surrounding area.

Bayview Avenue is identified as a *major street* on Map 3 of the Official Plan. Applications for intensification along major streets in *Neighbourhood* designations are not encouraged. When a more intense form of development is proposed it is expected to respect and reinforce the existing physical character. When a more intense form of development along a major street has been approved, this should not be considered when assessing applications in the interior of the *Neighbourhood*.

The Built Form policies in Chapter 3 of the Official Plan state that new development should be located and organized to "fit with the existing and/or planned context", respecting and improving the character of the surrounding area. These policies further state that new development should be designed to frame and support adjacent streets and open spaces, with consistent front yard setbacks and the preservation of existing mature trees. Vehicle access and site servicing should be located and organized to minimize impacts on surrounding properties and adjacent streets, and new development should be articulated and massed to fit into the existing context of the area.

Official Plan policies form the policy framework within which the Guidelines have been developed.

Zoning

The residential lots abutting Bayview Avenue are subject to both former City of North York Zoning By-law 7625 and the new city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013.

The lots within the study area are in one of three residential categories under By-law 7625: R1, R2 and R3 which are all One-Family Detached Dwelling zones. These zones require the largest lot frontage and areas within By-law 7625 and many of the lots in the study area exceed the minimums.

The required yard setbacks also vary between the various zone categories under By-law 7625. The general minimum requirement for front yard setback ranges from twelve metres to 6.5 metres and the minimum side yard ranges between 1.8 metres and three metres. The zones all have a minimum rear yard setback of 9.5 metres. Similar to the lots found in the area, the setbacks also exceed the minimum in many cases. Certain sites and

streets in the study area have specific setback requirements which differ from the general requirements.

By-law 569-2013 designates the sites in the study as RD which is a residential designation which permits only detached dwellings. The requirements for lot frontage and area vary across the study area, however, the requirements are generally similar to the existing requirements as noted above. In the RD designation an average of the abutting front yard setbacks is required at a minimum. The minimum required rear yard setback is either 7.5 metres or 25% of the lot depth, whichever is greater. Similar to the requirements in By-law 7625, certain sites within the study area are subject to site and street specific requirements.

Townhouses are not permitted in any of the residential zones mentioned above and any proposal will still need an application to amend the zoning by-law.

Community Consultation

Staff have had significant consultation with the public, including the use of a working group, to identify Guiding Principles and to create the Guidelines. The ward councillor held a meeting with the community on November 6, 2013 to discuss development pressures on Bayview Avenue. On February 6, 2014 staff held a kick-off meeting with the community to explain the study and outline what the study would aim to accomplish. It was determined that a working group would be established and the work of that group would then be presented to the wider community prior to final guidelines being brought forward to Council for endorsement. A copy of the presentation given at the kick-off meeting, and presentations given at the working group meetings, can be found on the study website at www.toronto.ca/planning/bayviewstudy.

In consultation with the Ward Councillor, staff created a working group consisting of local residents, representatives from area resident associations and representatives of the development community, namely those with active applications for townhouses within the study area. The first meeting of the group was on held February 6, 2014 at which time staff presented background material, including a lot inventory. Staff posed a number of questions intended to get the working group members to begin thinking of Bayview Avenue as a whole rather than focusing solely on the active development applications. These dealt with matters such as site organization, setbacks, massing, built form, transition and parking.

Staff held three additional working group meetings, of which the first two involved breaking into smaller groups to discuss setbacks, transition to the existing neighbourhood, landscaping, and parking, amongst other matters. Draft guidelines for some lot types were also presented for feedback. Residents questioned the appropriateness of developments on corner lots of dead-end streets however the traffic impacts from small townhouse developments do not cause significant impacts to make these sites inappropriate for townhouse development. Residents also suggested that visitor parking be provided and that lighting should be done in a way which does not

negatively impact the abutting properties. Preservation of existing mature landscaping was also an important consideration.

On June 16, 2014 staff presented draft Guiding Principles to the working group derived from the main themes and priorities that emerged through the community engagement and working group processes. The group generally agreed with the Guiding Principles and understood how they would be used to create guidelines. During the conversation it was noted that the Guiding Principles failed to address the storage of garbage and location of other services and utilities. Staff updated the Guiding Principles to include a principle addressing this issue. Draft guidelines for certain lot types which implement the Guiding Principles were also presented to the working group for comment.

On August 12, 2014 North York Community Council considered a Status Report which outlined the Guiding Principles and proposed a set of draft guidelines. Community Council directed staff to use the draft guidelines in the review of active development applications within the study area.

Staff held one final working group meeting on April 13, 2015 to present updated Guiding Principles and draft guidelines for additional feedback. This information was used to further refine the draft guidelines and on October 5, 2015 held a final Community Consultation Meeting to present the final guidelines to the general community for feedback. Approximately 100 members of the public attended the meeting, which included an open house session for attendees to review the proposed standards.

At the final meeting questions were raised with regards to the possibility of lot consolidation, including reversed lots. The Guidelines do not encourage, nor do they discourage, lot consolidation. However, as noted earlier in the report certain lots are excluded from the study, such as lots which are rear lotted along Bayview Avenue, which are not suitable for townhouses. Proposed townhouse developments, regardless of the number of lots involved along Bayview Avenue, should be designed in a manner which respects the standards of the Guidelines. This includes limiting the number of units per block to a maximum of 5 to ensure that a solid wall of townhouse units is not created along Bayview Avenue. This standard means that, if lots are consolidated, a townhouse development should still resemble a number of large detached dwellings in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.

Residents also raised concerns with regards to the amount of visitor parking for townhouses. The guidelines do not make any statement with regards to the number of spaces which should be provided. The guidelines provide direction on where and how to provide visitor parking but the visitor parking requirements are stated in the applicable zoning by-law(s).

COMMENTS

Within the study area there have recently been a number of applications made for townhouses as previously discussed. Staff have received a number of inquires about similar developments for other sites. Staff found that the City-wide Infill Townhouse

Guidelines did not provide appropriate guidance to ensure the "fit" of townhouses into the existing and planned context of the neighbourhood. The specific layout of large lots, large dwellings and mature landscapes in the study area and along Bayview Avenue generated the need for area specific guidelines.

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide clear direction for how new townhouses fronting on Bayview Avenue within the study area can be developed in a way to ensure they fit with the unique existing and planned neighbourhood context. The residential areas are designated as *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan which requires that development respect and reinforce the existing and planned context. In order to achieve these policies, the Guidelines respond to the physical character of the neighbourhood with appropriate setbacks, heights, massing, parking, open space, landscaping and other characteristics of the area.

The standards included in the guidelines are consistent with the overall character of the neighbourhood, respect the underlying zoning by-law requirements and respond to relevant Official Plan policies. Each site should be reviewed in the context of the existing zoning of that site and relevant Official Plan policies.

Guiding Principles

During the study process, fifteen Guiding Principles emerged that address the main themes and priorities identified. Each of these principles is part of the overall vision for how townhouse developments should be designed along this stretch of Bayview Avenue. The principles are consistent across all lot types and are meant to be read in conjunction with each other. They clarify how new townhouse development can fit within the context of the neighbourhood, while balancing the varying issues and concerns identified through the course of the community engagement and working group process. These form the framework upon which the Guidelines are based. The fifteen Guiding Principles are broken into four general themes as follows:

Appropriate Lots and Building Type

1. Townhouses should only be sited on lots fronting on Bayview Avenue
2. Townhouses should have a fronting relationship to Bayview Avenue
3. Townhouse units should be organized in a standard layout

Location and Organization of Buildings and the Site

4. Townhouses should frame and support Bayview Avenue
5. The landscape character of Bayview Avenue should be respected and enhanced by providing appropriate front yard setbacks and landscaping treatments
6. Properly scaled rear yard setbacks should provide an appropriate separation from the townhouse development to the existing neighbourhood
7. Provide appropriate side yard setbacks and breaks in the townhouse blocks to provide landscaping and pedestrian access from the back of the townhouse units to Bayview Avenue

8. Townhouse units should provide active ground floor uses at grade to provide overlook to Bayview Avenue
9. Fit the townhouse development into the neighbourhood context by using the existing natural grade

Parking, Servicing and Utilities

10. Parking should be located at the rear of the townhouse development or underground and visitor parking should be provided on site
11. Minimize the impacts of garbage, servicing and utilities on Bayview Avenue and neighbouring properties

Built Form and Massing

12. Townhouse heights should generally fit the scale of Bayview Avenue and respect the height limits of the existing and planned context of the adjacent neighbourhood
13. Part of an appropriate transition in scale to the existing neighbourhood should be provided by applying an angular plane from the rear property line at grade
14. Where the lot depth permits, neighbourhood house(s) should be provided that meet the minimum standards of the applicable zoning by-law
15. New development should respect and reinforce the built form characteristics of the Bayview Avenue neighbourhood, with appropriate building block sizes, façade treatments and high quality materials

Lot Types

While there are many similarities in terms of landscaping and the general nature of larger dwellings, the lot characteristics along Bayview Avenue range in terms of lot frontage and width. It became apparent that different guidelines would be required based on the differing size and location of lots within the study area to appropriately integrate townhouse development into the existing neighbourhood. Lots within the study area can generally be categorized into one of three lot types:

1. Shallow Lots
2. Medium Lots
3. Deep Lots

Shallow Sites are those which have a lot depth that is sufficient to accommodate a townhouse development which complies with the Guiding Principles, including front and rear yard setbacks as well as rear angular planes. They may be on a corner or located in the middle of the block.

Medium Sites are lots along Bayview Avenue which have a lot depth that is sufficient to accommodate a townhouse development which complies with the Guiding Principles, including front and rear yard setbacks as well as angular planes, but that can also accommodate additional space for individual rear yards for the townhouse units. These

are not sites that are of sufficient size to accommodate a new "neighbourhood house". They may be on a corner or located in the middle of the block.

Deep Sites are lots along Bayview Avenue which are deep enough to accommodate a townhouse development which complies with the Guiding Principles, including front and rear yard setbacks, but that can also accommodate one or more new "neighbourhood house(s)" which comply with the underlying zoning by-law requirements; they may be either mid-block or on a corner. An angular plane would not be required as the "neighbourhood house" would provide the transition to the existing dwelling(s). For mid-block sites a new public or private street (mews) may be required.

Separate guidelines for each lot type have been developed as it was determined that one set of guidelines would not work across all lot types. Each set of guidelines implements the Guiding Principles and should be read in conjunction with them.

Guideline Layout

The Guidelines have been organized into 4 main sections. The first two sections provide background information on the character of the area, the reason the guidelines were created and the process which was undertaken in developing them.

The last two sections provide the guidance and standards of the Guidelines. Section 3 outlines each of the 15 Guiding Principles, explaining each one and providing reference to relevant Official Plan policies. Section 4 is broken into 3 sections, one for each lot type and the standards and diagrams, implementing the Guiding Principles, are provided.

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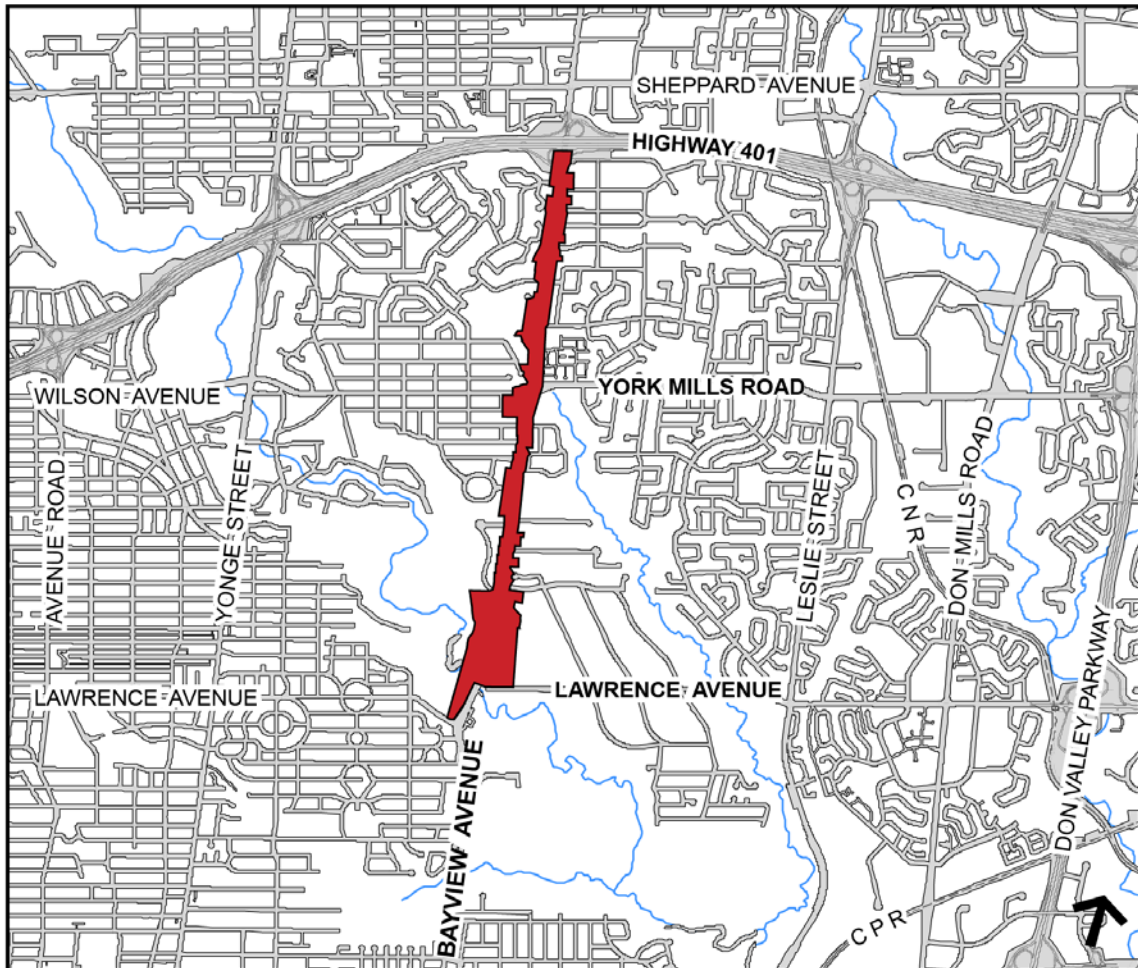
SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Study Boundary
Attachment 2: Bayview Avenue Design Guidelines

Attachment 1: Study Boundary



Attachment 2: Bayview Townhouse Design Guidelines