

Bloor Street West Planning Study – Guiding Principles

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| Date: | October 27, 2017 |
| To: | Toronto and East York Community Council |
| From: | Acting Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District |
| Wards: | Wards 18, 19 and 20 |
| Reference Number: | 17 166875 SPS 00 TM |

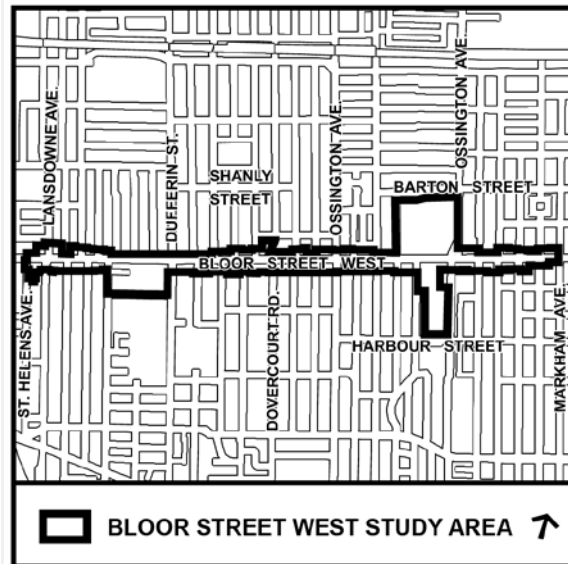
SUMMARY

On October 6, 2015, Toronto and East York Community Council requested City Planning staff to review the land use policy framework for Bloor Street West from Christie Street to Lansdowne Avenue and consider developing urban design and built form guidelines for the area.

On May 2, 2017, Community Council requested City Planning staff to develop guiding principles for new development in the area, and to assess heritage resources along Bloor Street West from Ossington Avenue to Dovercourt Road.

City Planning staff commenced the Bloor Street West Planning Study in 2017 to address these requests from Community Council.

This report includes a status update on the Study, including consultations with residents of Wards 18, 19 and 20, and provides a summary of community comments, and a set of guiding principles prepared by City Planning staff, informed by the consultations.



City Planning staff are recommending that City Council endorse the Bloor Street West Guiding Principles in this report. These principles will inform the review of current and

future development applications within the study area. City Planning staff will report to Planning and Growth Management Committee in early 2018 on the timing of the next phase of the Bloor Street West Planning Study as part of the Division's study work program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council endorse the Bloor Street West Guiding Principles, as contained in the report (October 27, 2017) from the Acting Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District.
2. City Council direct City Planning staff to review all current and future development applications within the Bloor Street West Planning Study Area for consistency with the Bloor Street West Guiding Principles as detailed in the report (October 27, 2017) from the Acting Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District until the Bloor Street West Planning Study is completed.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of October 6, 2015, Toronto and East York Community Council requested the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, to initiate a planning study for Bloor Street West generally from Christie Street to Lansdowne Avenue and report back with the findings (Item No. TE11.81). The study was to include:

- An inventory of current development applications to understand the development pressure along this segment of Bloor Street West;
- A review of the applicable policy framework for the area, including the development of additional urban design and public realm guidelines for streetscape improvements; and,
- An assessment of heritage resources to identify buildings which contribute to the unique historical character of Bloor Street West.

A link to the Community Council decision can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.TE11.81>

At its meeting of May 2, 2017, Toronto and East York Community Council requested the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, to report by the 4th Quarter of 2017 (TE24.90) on the status of its requests from October, 2015 (TE11.81); guiding principles for new development on Bloor Street West between Palmerston

Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue; and, evaluation of properties for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register, prioritizing properties from Ossington Avenue to Dovercourt Road.

A link to the Community Council decision can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.TE24.90>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Study Purpose

The purpose of the study is to clarify and strengthen the existing land use planning framework along Bloor Street West to assist in guiding future growth and development.

Any proposed changes to the planning framework will build upon current policies of the Official Plan, as well as design guidelines and other relevant policy documents, and respond to the unique character and physical attributes of the street. This will guide the form and scale of new development, heritage conservation, improvements and expansion to parks and public spaces, the provision of a range of housing and other matters.

Study Area

Toronto and East York Community Council directed that staff undertake a study of Bloor Street West between Christie Street and Lansdowne Avenue. In order to capture properties on each corner of the Lansdowne Avenue and Bloor Street West intersection, staff have extended the study area to St. Helens Avenue. Staff have also extended the study eastward to Palmerston Avenue to abut the boundary of the recently completed Bathurst-Bloor Four Corners Study. The study area now runs along Bloor Street West from Palmerston Avenue to St. Helens Avenue.

This segment of Bloor Street West is lined by predominantly narrow retail spaces interrupted periodically by larger format retail spaces, parks, parking lots, and institutions such as the Bickford Centre and the Gladstone Library. A variety of retail uses, restaurants, bars, financial institutions and services are situated on the street. There are also several basement storefronts accessed through walkouts. Both apartment units and additional commercial space such as offices are situated above the ground floor retail. Some ground floor residential entrances also front Bloor Street West.

Most buildings fronting Bloor Street West within the study area range from two to three storeys in height. The only significant exception to the prevailing two to three storey scale is the 15-storey New Horizons Tower located on the north side of Bloor Street West, west of Dufferin Street.

Properties within the study area are mostly narrow lots of varying depth, with some larger parcels near major intersections such as Lansdowne Avenue and Dufferin Street. Their rear yards often abut public laneways or the rear yards of low rise residential properties.

A series of laneways serve the study area and surrounding communities. There are east-west laneways that continue for several blocks, at the rear of the mixed use buildings. Areas to the north and south of the study area are primarily comprised of low-rise residential neighbourhoods.

The study area encompasses several prominent green spaces including Christie Pits Park and Bickford Park, as well as several linear parks and parkettes. Numerous community facilities such as Bickford Centre and Bob Abate Community Recreation Centre, Bloor/Gladstone Library, schools, churches and social services such as Sistering, a drop-in centre for women, are located within the study area.

This portion of Bloor Street West is served by the Bloor-Danforth subway line, which has stations at Christie Street, Ossington Avenue, Dufferin Street and Lansdowne Avenue. TTC bus service crosses Bloor Street West at Lansdowne Avenue, Ossington Avenue and Dufferin Street.

The Bloor Street West Bike Lane Pilot Project includes the east portion of the study area, extending from Avenue Road to Shaw Street. The implementation of the pilot project was approved by Council in May 2016. At its meeting on October 18, 2017, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee recommended that City Council approve maintaining the eastbound and westbound cycle tracks on Bloor Street West, from Shaw Street to Avenue Road, as a permanent installation, including changes to the current design to improve safety and operation.

There are a number of active development applications within the study area. Most notably, official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications and a draft plan of subdivision are currently under review for the proposed redevelopment of the surplus Toronto District School Board lands at the southwest corner of Dufferin Street and Bloor Street West (File: 17 237256 STE 18 OZ). The proposed redevelopment includes residential and office uses in six new buildings ranging from 6 to 47 storeys in height, a 0.358 hectare public park, a new public street and a community hub within the retrofitted Kent Senior Public School. In addition, there is a zoning by-law amendment application for a 12-storey mixed-use building at 980-990 Bloor Street West, on the northwest corner of Dovercourt Road and Bloor Street West (File: 17 207556 STE 18 OZ).

Policy Context

City Planning staff have reviewed the following policies, guidelines, studies and other materials in support of the analysis provided in this report.

Planning Act

Section 2 of the Planning Act sets out matters of provincial interest which City Council shall have regard to in carrying out its responsibilities, including: the orderly development of safe and healthy communities; the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural and historical interest; the adequate provision of employment opportunities; and, the appropriate location of growth and development.

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The Provincial Policy Statement (2014) provides policy direction Province wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- The efficient and wise use and management of land and infrastructure over the long term in order to minimize impacts on air, water and other resources;
- Protection of the natural and built environment;
- Building strong, sustainable and resilient communities that enhance health and social well-being by ensuring opportunities exist locally for employment;
- Residential development promoting a mix of housing; recreation, parks and open space; and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit; and
- Encouraging a sense of place in communities, by promoting well-designed built form and by conserving features that help define local character.

The City of Toronto uses the PPS to guide its Official Plan and to inform decisions on other planning and development matters, including land use studies. The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and all decisions of Council affecting land use planning matters "shall be consistent with" the Provincial Policy Statement. Policy 4.7 further states that the Official Plan is the most important vehicle for implementing the PPS.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) provides a strategic framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region including:

- Setting minimum density targets within settlement areas and related policies directing municipalities to make more efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure to reduce sprawl, cultivate a culture of conservation and promote compact built form and better-designed communities with high quality built form and an attractive and vibrant public realm established through site design and urban design standards;
- Directing municipalities to engage in an integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment optimization as part of the land use planning process;
- Building complete communities with a diverse range of housing options, public service facilities, recreation and green space that better connect transit to where people live and work;

- Retaining viable employment lands and encouraging municipalities to develop employment strategies to attract and retain jobs;
- Minimizing the negative impacts of climate change by undertaking stormwater management planning that assesses the impacts of extreme weather events and incorporates green infrastructure; and
- Recognizing the importance of watershed planning for the protection of the quality and quantity of water and hydrologic features and areas.

Like other provincial plans, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

All decisions by Council affecting land use planning matters are required by the Planning Act, to conform, or not conflict, as the case may be, with the Growth Plan.

Official Plan

The City's Official Plan identifies the segment of Bloor Street West within the study area as an *Avenue* on Map 2 (Urban Structure) of the Official Plan. The majority of lands fronting the street are designated as *Mixed Use Areas*, with two portions designated as *Parks and Open Spaces* as shown on Map 18 of the Plan. Planning staff note that the Official Plan is intended to be read as a comprehensive and cohesive whole. The Official Plan is available here:

http://www1.toronto.ca/static_files/CityPlanning/PDF/chapters1_5_dec2010.pdf

The work on this study has had regard for the relevant policies of the Official Plan that apply to this area, which include the policy sections summarized below:

Avenues (2.2.3)

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.

Parks and other Open Spaces (4.3)

Parks and other Open Spaces are the City's green space network which includes parks, open spaces, valleys, watercourses, ravines, portions of the waterfront, golf courses and cemeteries. These areas are intended to provide areas of passive and active recreation. Development is generally prohibited in Parks and other Open Spaces, with the exception of recreational facilities, cultural works, conservation projects, and essential public works and utilities where necessary.

Mixed Use Areas (4.5)

Mixed Use Areas will absorb most of the anticipated increase in retail, office and service employment in Toronto in the coming decades, as well as much of the new housing.

Healthy Neighbourhoods (2.3.1)

The lands north and south of the study area are mostly designated as *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan. The Healthy Neighbourhoods Section of the Official Plan (Section 2.3.1) includes policies for development in *Mixed Use Areas* adjacent to *Neighbourhoods* and directs that intensification of land adjacent to *Neighbourhoods* provide a gradual transition of scale and density.

Public Realm (3.1.1)

Section 3.1.1 contains policies that help guide the development of streets, sidewalks, boulevards, and other aspects of the public realm.

Built Form (3.1.2 and 3.1.3)

Section 3.1.2 of the Official Plan includes policies for the City's Built Form and requires that new development be located and organized to fit within an area's existing and/or planned context. Section 3.1.3 of the Official Plan addresses matters related to tall building design.

Heritage Resources (3.1.5)

Section 3.1.5 of the Official Plan requires that development adjacent to heritage resources respects the scale, character and form of the heritage resource. The Official Plan's Heritage Conservation Policies cover a wide array of heritage properties including: individually significant buildings and structures, properties that are a part of a heritage conservation district, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources and areas of archaeological potential.

The Natural Environment (3.4) and OPA 262

Section 3.1.2 of the Official Plan includes policies which direct that both public and private city-building activities be environmentally friendly and incorporate elements of green design.

The recently approved and in-force Official Plan Amendment 262, which amended the City's Official Plan policies and mapping with respect to climate change and energy, the natural environment, green infrastructure and environmentally significant areas (ESAs), directs that new development provide opportunities for energy conservation, peak demand reduction, resilience to power disruptions and small local integrated energy solutions that incorporate renewable, district energy, combined heat and power or energy storage.

Official Plan Amendment 320

On December 10, 2015 City Council approved Official Plan Amendment 320 to revise the Healthy Neighbourhoods, *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* policies of the Plan. The changes to these policies clarify, strengthen and refine the policies within these sections to support the Plan's goals to protect and enhance existing neighbourhoods.

Mid-rise Building Guidelines

The City's Performance Standards for Mid-rise Buildings are typically applied to proposed mid-rise buildings along *Avenues* identified on Map 2 of the Official Plan. The Performance Standards for Mid-rise Buildings note Bloor Street West as a Character Area. The guidelines state the following regarding the sections of Bloor Street West known as Bloordale, Bloorcourt Village, Christie Pits and Koreatown:

"Bloor Street West encompasses several neighbourhoods yet retains a consistent low scale, fine grain retail character throughout. Neighbourhoods located along Bloor West include Bloordale & Bloorcourt Village, Christie Pits and Koreatown. Bloordale Village is a shopping and arts district located along Bloor Street between Lansdowne Avenue to Dufferin Street. Bloordale Village has experienced significant change in recent years, and is now considered one of Toronto's emerging art districts. Koreatown is composed of the retail businesses between Christie and Bathurst Streets. These areas of Bloor Street is generally made up of low scale, fine grain retail fabric."

Community Consultation

On June 20, 2017, City Planning staff and Councillors Ana Bailao, Mike Layton and Joe Cressy hosted a community consultation meeting at Bloor Collegiate Institute to introduce the study. This meeting included a presentation from City staff and collaborative visioning.

On October 16, 2017, a second community consultation meeting was held at Bob Abate Community Centre. This meeting included a presentation and discussion of the Draft Guiding Principles, informed in part by comments from the first meeting. Approximately 80 to 100 members of the community attended each meeting.

Community Comments

Comments received at both community meetings and in emails varied considerably, and are summarized as follows:

- A range of opinions regarding the potential for new development was expressed. Some suggested that most new height and density should be located near subway stations, while others suggested that Bloor Street West should maintain a low to mid-rise character across the study area. Some noted that mid-rise buildings of 8 to 10 storeys should be the minimum permitted height of any new development on Bloor Street West, while others suggested these heights be the maximum permitted height. It was also suggested that the outcome of the study should include policies

which incentivize mid-rise development. It was suggested that the City consider different building typologies on Bloor Street West.

- Maintaining the small scale, affordability and variety of commercial space and support for the local business community was noted as a key priority for the study outcome.
- Concerns were raised about the nature of heritage review in the study area. It was suggested that both built and contextual heritage value, as well as the character of the broader area must be considered in the review of area heritage attributes. Detailed review of corner buildings was also suggested.
- Some were concerned about impacts on adjacent low scale areas and parks, as well as existing rooftop solar installations in adjacent neighbourhoods.
- A number of comments received suggested that development on Bloor Street West should achieve a greater degree of sustainability. Some comments were critical of the Draft Guiding Principles for lacking in areas of sustainability. Comments suggested incorporation of Transform TO into the principles and study outcome.
- Many comments related to the presence of the Bloor Subway Line and the transit capacity. Support for additional density was noted on condition that transit capacity be improved first.
- Comments were made regarding the general servicing capacity, both regarding piped services and community facilities in the area. It was suggested that no new development permissions should be granted in advance of a detailed assessment of area servicing capacity.
- Limited school capacity was noted as a concern. It was suggested that large scale new development should be required to incorporate new community facilities such as new schools.
- There was general support for a range of affordable housing, family sized units and amenities, and rental accommodations as well as units geared to seniors and vulnerable populations.
- The laneways were noted as a public space opportunity that should be explored further.
- Both support and criticism of exploring changes to the encroachment permissions on Bloor Street West was expressed.
- Concerns about the future of the Bickford Centre were raised.

- Comments on the Bloor Street Bike Lane Pilot Project varied, but the majority of comments were supportive and suggested they continue westward into the study area and beyond. Some comments suggested removal of the lanes, while others suggested alteration to their design to improve safety.
- A number of comments received suggested that the principles, policies and general outcomes of the study must respect and enhance the diversity and character of the community.
- It was noted that principles and study outcome must acknowledge the prominence of Bloor Street West as one of Toronto's most important, iconic main streets.
- Questions were raised about how the Guiding Principles would help inform development applications prior to the conclusion of the study.

Drafting the Guiding Principles

Following the June 20, 2017 community consultation meeting, City Planning staff reviewed the input received through exercises, on comment forms and through email. Informed by this community commentary, general City and Provincial policy directions, current best practices and City initiatives, and through internal review of the local context, City Planning staff prepared a set of Draft Guiding Principles.

The Draft Principles had five general themes: Supporting and Growing the Local Economy; Social Cohesion and a Strong Community; Form and Scale of Development; Heritage and Street Character; and Public Spaces, Connections, and Sustainability. City Planning staff hosted the October 16, 2017 community consultation meeting to discuss the Draft Principles. A number of amendments and refinements to the Draft Guiding Principles were made in response to the comments received.

Response to Community Comments

The Guiding Principles incorporate comments from the community; however, where comments could not be clearly addressed, or clarification on the study methodology is needed, the following responses are provided.

Heritage Review - The City Planning Division intends to review both the individual building and area-wide built and contextual heritage significance of the area as part of the study.

Servicing Review - Area servicing capacity will be reviewed as part of the study to inform recommendations. City Planning notes that individual development applications may be submitted, reviewed and approved while the study is ongoing. These applications will be subject to a detailed review by the City's Engineering and Construction Services Division to assess servicing capacity.

Protection for Residential Solar Installations – At its meeting on October 12, 2017, the Planning and Growth Management Committee requested Planning staff to explore the feasibility of implementing regulations and/or guidelines to protect residential properties with existing solar installations from the impact of new development. The work completed by staff under this request will serve to inform the Bloor Street West study with respect to solar and other environmentally sustainable technology.

Applicability of Principles to New Development – The Guiding Principles are not Official Plan policies or zoning by-laws, however, should Council endorse the Guiding Principles in this report, City Planning staff will review proposed developments against these principles. The principles also provide the development community with direction on the planning objectives for the area when considering redevelopment in the study area.

BLOOR STREET WEST GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles were developed with input from the local community, elected representatives and City staff. The Guiding Principles will inform the review of development applications and further work on the Bloor Street West Planning Study.

Supporting and Growing the Local Economy

- Commercial space in new development will be located primarily at the street level and continue the pattern of commercial frontage widths typically found on Bloor Street West.
- Large format retail will be generally discouraged in the study area, but may be considered on the 2nd floor or basement level of larger developments, subject to review.
- The diversity of small businesses along Bloor Street West will continue to be supported through planning policies.
- The City will engage with local Business Improvement Areas, Residents Associations and other area groups and service providers to explore opportunities to revitalize existing retail space along Bloor Street West.
- The City will consider amending encroachment permissions for the purposes of animating public space while maintaining appropriate sidewalk space for pedestrians and landscaping.
- Opportunities for pop-up retail and service spaces, and "meanwhile uses" will be encouraged where possible.

Social Cohesion and a Strong Community

- New development will include a strong mix of family-sized, three-bedroom and two-bedroom units along with smaller units.
- Affordable residential units will be encouraged in all significant new development.
- The provision of flexible amenity space will be required in all significant new development to support families, facilitate social interaction and promote a strong sense of community in the neighborhood.
- The City will seek the replacement of any rooming house units proposed to be removed as a result of new development.
- The City will inventory and identify capacity in existing community facilities, identify and explore opportunities to better utilize these facilities, and explore opportunities to develop new multi-purpose spaces for community arts, cultural, learning, recreation and social uses.

Form and Scale of Development

- The scale of new development will be primarily low to mid-rise. The height of new buildings and the overall height of buildings with new additions will generally not exceed a height corresponding to the width of Bloor Street West.
- As an exception to the above, greater development potential may exist on sites at the Bloor Street West intersections of Christie Street, Dovercourt Road, Dufferin Street, Ossington Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue, subject to detailed review.
- Sites identified as having greater potential for development will be subject to a greater obligation to address the varied planning objectives of the area and demand for services resulting from higher land use intensity.
- New buildings will frame Bloor Street West and be strongly integrated with public space to form a vibrant, accessible and animated streetscape.
- New development will be designed to provide an appropriate transition to adjacent neighbourhoods, while limiting impacts on privacy, sunlight and sky-view on these areas.

Heritage and Street Character

- Buildings identified as having heritage value will be conserved.
- The City will explore the area-wide heritage character and attributes through the Bloor Street West Planning Study.
- New development may incorporate existing heritage buildings through vertical building additions with appropriate setbacks, scale and materials.
- New buildings and open spaces will be architecturally engaging, well-designed and constructed of high-quality materials to reflect and enhance the character of Bloor Street West.

Public Spaces, Connections, and Sustainability

- An expanded cycling network along Bloor Street West will be supported with additional bike parking and bike share stations at subway entrances and other strategic locations.
- Streetscape improvements will be achieved through public initiatives and private development, and promote an inviting and vibrant pedestrian environment through the use of street furniture, sidewalk patios, bike parking, public art, murals and other installations.
- The existing tree canopy on Bloor Street West and intersecting streets will be protected and expanded.
- Opportunities to expand and create new parks and green space, including space for children and dogs, will be encouraged through redevelopment and City initiatives.
- Rooftop planting and community garden spaces will be encouraged and supported on existing sites and through new development to increase the amount and function of green space on Bloor Street West and the intersecting streets.
- Opportunities to activate and better utilize the area laneway network will be explored and encouraged, while maintaining the functional and servicing role of these laneways.
- New development will be expected to deliver enhanced measures of environmental sustainability informed by the on-going work of the City Planning Division with respect to solar installations and other environmentally sustainable technologies.

NEXT STEPS

City Planning staff will report to Planning and Growth Management Committee in early 2018 on the timing of the next phase of the Bloor Street West Planning Study as part of the Division's study work program.

CONTACT

Graig Uens, Senior Planner
Tel. No. 416-397-4647
E-mail: Graig.Uens@toronto.ca

Carla Tsang, Planner
Tel. No. 416-395-7137
E-mail: Carla.Tsang@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Lynda H. Macdonald
Acting Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Official Plan Excerpt – Map 18 – Land Use
Attachment 2: Zoning By-law Excerpt – By-law 569-2013

Attachment 1: Official Plan Excerpt - Map 18



Bloor Street West Study

File # 17 166875 SPS 00 TM

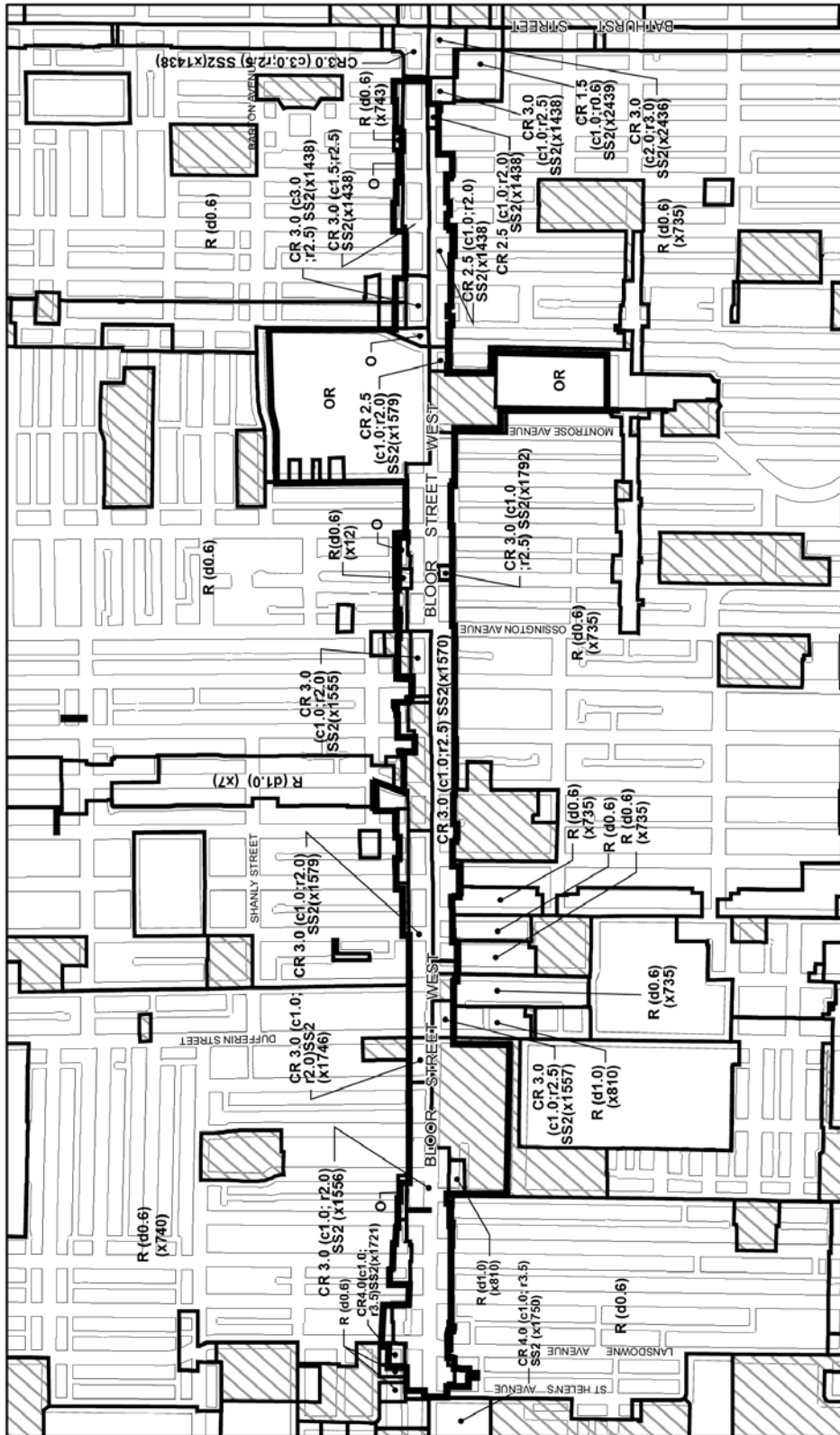


Official Plan

- Site Location
- Neighbourhoods
- Apartment Neighbourhoods
- Mixed Use Areas
- Parks & Open Space Areas
- Parks
- Institutional Areas
- Employment Areas



Attachment 2: Zoning By-law Excerpt – By-law 569-2013



Toronto
Bloor Street West
 File # 17 166875 SPS 00 TM

See Former City of Toronto By-Law No. 438-86



Limit of Bloor Street West Study Area

- R Residential
- CR Commercial Residential
- E Employment Industrial
- O Open Space
- OR Open Space Recreation



Not to Scale
 Extracted: 09/26/2017