

Danforth Avenue Planning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue) – Urban Design Guidelines – Final Report

Date: June 7, 2019

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

Ward: Ward 19 Beaches-East York

Planning Study File Number: 16 129539 SPS 00 OZ

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Danforth Avenue Planning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue) and submits the completed Urban Design Guidelines ("Guidelines") that will be used as a tool to help evaluate development applications and other forms of change, including streetscape improvements, within the study area.

On July 23, 2018, City Council adopted Item #TE34.22, which included By-law 1136-2018 that implemented Official Plan Amendment #420 (OPA 420). OPA 420 represents the planned policy direction for the future growth of the study area. Included within OPA 420 is a policy direction on how to apply the associated Guidelines when evaluating development applications. OPA 420 is currently under appeal at the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT).

As part of Council's decision, City Planning staff were directed to complete the Guidelines, post them online for public review, and submit them to a future Council meeting in 2019.

This report reviews the Guidelines, in brief, and recommends that Council adopt them for future use by City staff as a tool to evaluate development applications and other forms of change within the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the Urban Design Guidelines attached as Attachment 1 to the report (June 7, 2019) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District and direct City Planning and other appropriate City staff to use them as a tool in the review of development applications and other initiatives on Danforth Avenue (between Coxwell Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On July 8, 2014, through item TE33.15, City Council adopted a motion to request the Chief Planner and the Executive Director, City Planning to undertake a planning study of Danforth Avenue in two segments, from the Don River to Coxwell Avenue and from Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue, and to report on the funds necessary to complete these studies. The motion was the result of Council's review of a rezoning application at 2359 Danforth Avenue and with the intent of taking a proactive approach to managing change on Danforth Avenue.

The minutes from this Council meeting and item can be viewed at the following link:
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.TE33.15>

On May 10, 2016, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted a staff report and recommendations from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District to begin the Danforth Avenue Planning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue) and consult on the Terms of Reference.

The minutes from this Community Council meeting can be viewed at the following link:
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.TE16.39>

On February 22, 2017, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted a staff report and recommendations from Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District to finalize the Terms of Reference and complete the Danforth Avenue Planning Study per the finalized Terms of Reference.

The minutes from this Community Council meeting can be viewed at the following link:
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.TE22.44>

On November 7, 2017, City Council adopted a motion to request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to initiate and undertake a study focussing on development potential, built form, and public realm within the proximity of the Main Street TTC station and the Danforth GO station.

The minutes from this Council meeting can be viewed at the following link:
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.TE27.42>

On July 23, 2018, City Council adopted a staff report and recommendations from City Planning to amend the Official Plan for the lands fronting Danforth Avenue between Coxwell Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue in accordance with By-law 1136-2018 (OPA 420). The final staff report, available at the link below, provides more detailed information on the study process. In addition, City Council directed staff to bring forward the completed Urban Design Guidelines in 2019.

The minutes from this Council meeting can be viewed at the following link:
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.TE34.22>

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Land-Use Policies: Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

Provincial Policy Statements and geographically specific Provincial Plans, along with municipal Official Plans, provide a policy framework for planning and development in the Province. This framework is implemented through a range of land use controls such as zoning by-laws, plans of subdivision and site plans.

The Provincial Policy Statement (2014)

The Provincial Policy Statement (2014) (the "PPS") 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 provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS recognizes and acknowledges the Official Plan as an important document for implementing the policies within the PPS. Policy 4.7 of the PPS states that, "The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans."

Provincial Plans

Provincial Plans are intended to be read in their entirety and relevant policies are to be applied to each situation. The policies of the Plans represent minimum standards. Council may go beyond these minimum standards to address matters of local importance, unless doing so would conflict with any policies of the Plans.

All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS and shall conform with Provincial Plans. All comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS and conform with Provincial Plans.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) (the "Growth Plan (2019)") came into effect on May 16, 2019. This new plan replaces the previous Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. The Growth Plan (2019) continues to provide a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, of which the City forms an integral part.

The Growth Plan, 2019 establishes policies that require implementation through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), which is a requirement pursuant to Section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of the Growth Plan (2019), including the establishment of minimum density targets for and the delineation of strategic growth areas, the conversion of provincially significant employment zones, and others.

Policies not expressly linked to a MCR can be applied as part of the review process for development applications, in advance of the next MCR. These policies include:

- Directing municipalities to make more efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure to reduce sprawl, contribute to environmental sustainability and provide for a more compact built form and a vibrant public realm;
- Directing municipalities to engage in an integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment optimization as part of the land use planning process;
- Achieving complete communities with access to a diverse range of housing options, protected employment zones, public service facilities, recreation and green space that better connect transit to where people live and work;
- Retaining viable lands designated as employment areas and ensuring redevelopment of lands outside of employment areas retain space for jobs to be accommodated on site;
- 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.

The Growth Plan (2019) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan (2019) take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Planning Act all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform with the Growth Plan. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also conform with the Growth Plan.

Planning for Major Transit Station Areas

The Growth Plan (2019) contains policies pertaining to population and employment densities that should be planned for in major transit station areas (MTSAs) along priority transit corridors or subway lines. MTSAs are generally defined as the area within an approximately 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk. The Growth Plan (2019) requires that, at the time of the next municipal comprehensive review (MCR), the City update its Official Plan to delineate MTSA boundaries and demonstrate how the MTSAs achieve appropriate densities.

While there are transit stations located within the study area, the Danforth Avenue Planning Study was not the required conformity exercise as dictated by the Growth Plan (2019), which is the next MCR. As such, no MTSAs were delineated and none of the

policies and density targets within the Growth Plan (2019) currently apply to any sites along Danforth Avenue.

The City's OPA 420, and the associated Urban Design Guidelines, were prepared to be consistent with the PPS (2014) and to conform with the Growth Plan (2019).

Toronto Official Plan

The existing policies of the Official Plan and the Council-adopted OPA 420 (Danforth Avenue Planning Study) were considered during the preparation of the Urban Design Guidelines, as found in Attachment 1 to this report. In particular, the Urban Design Guidelines align with direction from the Official Plan and relevant policies, as follows:

Chapter 2 - Shaping the City

- Section 2.2.3 - Avenues: Reurbanizing Arterial Corridors;
- Section 2.3.1 - Healthy Neighbourhoods;
- Section 2.4 - Bringing the City Together: A Progressive Agenda of Transportation Change.

Chapter 3 - Building a Successful City

- Section 3.1.1 - The Public Realm;
- Section 3.1.2 - Built Form;
- Section 3.1.4 - Public Art;
- Section 3.1.5 - Heritage Conservation;
- Section 3.2.2 - Community Services and Facilities;
- Section 3.5.1 - Supporting the Foundations of Competitiveness;
- Section 3.5.2 - Creating a Cultural Capital.

Chapter 4 - Land Use Designations

- Section 4.1 - Neighbourhoods;
- Section 4.5 - Mixed Use Areas.

The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>.

Danforth Avenue Planning Study and Official Plan Amendment 420

In July 2014, City Council requested the City Planning Division to undertake a study of Danforth Avenue between the Don River and Victoria Park Avenue. Given the size of the study area, City Planning segmented the study into two phases, phase one being from Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue and phase two being from the Don River to Coxwell Avenue.

The Danforth Avenue Planning Study is a multi-disciplinary review conducted as a comprehensive and integrated planning study. Phase one of the study is complete, while phase two of the study is getting underway. The studies included a review of the character, placemaking, built form, public realm, retail vitality, community services and facilities, heritage and historic character of Danforth Avenue in the context of the various surrounding neighbourhoods.

The policy document (OPA 420) adopted by City Council as part of the phase one study provides high-level policy direction for the future development and evolution of the study area (Danforth Avenue between Coxwell Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue) and provides policy direction on the use of the associated Urban Design Guidelines, found in Attachment 1 to this report.

Zoning

The majority of the Study Area is zoned MCR T3.0 C2.5 R2.5 and MCR T3.0 C2.0 R2.5 under the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86. This zone permits a wide range of commercial and residential uses with a maximum density of 3.0 times the area of the lot. The maximum permitted height is between 14 and 16 metres.

The majority of the Study Area is zoned CR3.0 (c2.5; r2.5) SS2 and CR3.0 (c2.0; r2.5) SS2 under City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013, which is currently under appeal at the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), formerly the Ontario Municipal Board and is not in-force and in-effect. The zoning permissions are consistent with those outlined in Zoning By-law 438-86.

There are some properties within the Study Area that are zoned G and Gr (Parks Zone), Tr (Industrial Zone) and R2 (Residential Zone) under the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86.

There are some properties within the Study Area that are zoned ON and OR (Open Spaces Zone) and R (Residential Zone) under City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013.

Avenues and Mid-rise Buildings Study and Performance Standards

City Council adopted the Avenues and Mid-rise Buildings Study and an addendum containing performance standards for mid-rise buildings. They identify a list of best practices and establish a set of performance standards for new mid-rise buildings. Key issues addressed include maximum allowable building heights, setbacks and step backs, sunlight and skyview, pedestrian realm conditions, transition to Neighbourhoods and Parks and Open Space Areas and corner sites. The guidelines can be found at: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/mid-rise-buildings/>.

City Council also adopted a revised Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards Addendum, for staff to use together with the 2010 approved Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards in the preparation of area studies or during the evaluation of development applications, where mid-rise buildings are proposed and Performance Standards are applicable until such time as City Council adopts updated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines. Council's decision can be found here: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PG12.7> and <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-92537.pdf>.

COMMENTS

Final Study Deliverables

To initiate the Danforth Avenue Planning Study, Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue (the Study), City Planning staff prepared and finalized a Terms of Reference, including a detailed scope of work and outlined the final deliverables. The final deliverables for the study include:

- An Area Profile Report (available on the study website at www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy);
- A final staff report to City Council (adopted by Council on July 23, 2018, and available on the study website at www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy);
- An Official Plan Amendment, in the form of a Site and Area Specific Policy (adopted by Council on July 23, 2018 as OPA #420 and SASP #552, and appealed to the LPAT, and available on the study website at www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy); and
- Urban Design Guidelines (found as Attachment 1 to this report).

Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines ("Guidelines") will be an important tool to implement OPA 420. The draft Guidelines were made available to the public in May, 2019 for further review and opportunity to comment, prior to finalizing, as they are shown in Attachment 1 to this report. The Guidelines provide additional direction on the topic areas discussed below, and will act as a tool to implement the policies contained within OPA 420. The Guidelines provide clear direction to potential developers, applicants, community members, and other key stakeholders, on expectations for new development within the Study Area. They will inform how development should be designed and massed appropriately to fit within the planned context of the Study Area and provide a good public realm, all based on the vision of the Study Area established with the community.

The final Guidelines provide additional direction under the following topic areas:

- vision;
- public realm;
- land use;
- built form;
- character areas and place-making;
- heritage; and
- transportation and complete streets.

In particular, the Guidelines provide design direction for an intensifying and evolving important main street in the City of Toronto. The Guidelines emphasize that the Study Area should continue evolving as a mixed-use desitnation that will be home to new mixed-income housing units and various employment opportunities. The Guidelines provide direction on how the public realm can evolve to provide greater identity and

active transportation opportunities. The Guidelines identify potential built heritage resources and how they should be conserved within future development. The Guidelines also provide direction on how Danforth Avenue can grow as a complete street, as outlined in the City's Complete Streets Guidelines specifically as an "Avenue and Neighbourhood Main Street" typology.

Community Consultation

The Guidelines were distributed digitally to all members of the public that requested a copy through correspondence with City staff. Staff provided a comment period of approximately 3 weeks. Comments were received by various stakeholders (members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee established through the Study process, land owners, and members of the public).

In general, comments were positive and supportive of the draft Guidelines. Most comments received stated that the Guidelines were a comprehensive document that are reflective of the discussions had with the community and will be used to implement positive development and city-building opportunities within the Study Area.

Minor changes to the Guidelines were made to reflect the correspondence received. The version of the Guidelines attached to this report reflects the document as amended by this correspondence.

The Guidelines have been developed in consultation with the community and build on the vision developed through the comprehensive consultation process that was part of the Phase 1 study process.

Conclusion

The Guidelines represent the final deliverable to complete the first phase of the Danforth Avenue Planning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue). The Guidelines were prepared and reviewed against the policies of the PPS (2014), the Growth Plan (2019), the Toronto Official Plan, and Official Plan Amendment 420. Staff are of the opinion that Council's adoption of the Guidelines is consistent with the PPS (2014) and conform with the Growth Plan (2019). Furthermore, the Guidelines are in keeping with the intent of the Toronto Official Plan, and Official Plan Amendment 420 (the planning policy framework adopted by Council to guide development within the Study Area). Staff worked with the community and other key stakeholders to prepare and finalize the Guidelines. Staff recommend that Council adopt the Guidelines to be used as a tool to evaluate future development applications and other initiatives within the Study Area.

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ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Data/Drawings

Attachment 1: Danforth Avenue Planning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue) Urban Design Guidelines

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Draft Urban Design Guidelines will be available prior to the Toronto and East York Community Council meeting on June 25, 2019.