255 Avenue Rd – City Initiated Official Plan Amendment – Final Report

Date: October 18, 2019  
To: Toronto and East York Community Council  
From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District  
Ward: 11 - University-Rosedale

Planning Application Number: 18 156091 STE 27 OZ

SUMMARY

This application proposes an Official Plan Amendment for a portion of 255 Avenue Road, a City owned park known as Jay Macpherson Green, to allow for a permanent easement by Enbridge Gas Distribution for the potential relocation of a natural gas district station ("station box") from the Macpherson Avenue right-of-way into the park.

An Official Plan Amendment is required because locating the station box in the park requires an easement over lands that are designated as Parks and Open Space Areas in the Official Plan. The establishment of a permanent easement is a form of disposition. The sale or disposal of City owned lands in the Green Space System and Parks and Open Space Areas is prohibited by Official Plan policies.

Site and Area Specific Policy No. 265 (SASP No. 265) of the Official Plan identifies certain lands whereby the provisions of the Official Plan prohibiting the disposal of City owned land in the Green Space System and Parks and Open Space Areas do not apply. An Official Plan Amendment would add a portion of 255 Avenue Road to the list of properties in SASP No. 265.

The proposed application is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) and conforms with A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019).

This report reviews and recommends approval of the application to amend the Official Plan for the purpose stated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council amend the Official Plan, to add that part of 255 Avenue Road, shown as Part 1 in Attachment No. 2, (being part of Lot 4 on Registered Plan 166E) to the list of
properties in Site and Area Specific Policy No. 265 substantially in accordance with the
draft Official Plan Amendment attached as Attachment No. 6, both Attachments being to
the report dated October 18, 2019 from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and
East York District.

2. City Council authorizes the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes
to the draft Official Plan Amendment as may be required.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

Given that the relocation of the Enbridge Gas Distribution District Station is at the
request of the City, the cost of the relocation will be at the City's expense. The cost of
the relocation of the will come from previously collected Section 37 funds, and will be
the subject of a future report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council adopted Motion 2018.TE32.96 Jay Macpherson Green and the Relocation
of the Enbridge Gas Distribution District Station on May 2, 2018. City Council directed
the Acting Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, in consultation
with appropriate staff from Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and
any other relevant City staff to determine the appropriate location for the Enbridge Gas
Distribution District Station ("station box") which is to be relocated from the Macpherson
Avenue right-of-way into Jay Macpherson Green Park at 255 Avenue Road and to bring
forward any required Official Plan Amendment to a statutory public meeting under the
Planning Act after holding a community meeting.

PROPOSAL

Enbridge Gas Distribution (Enbridge) currently operates a station box located on the
south side of Macpherson Avenue right-of-way, approximately 13 metres east of
Avenue Road.

In January 2017, Enbridge performed upgrades to their station box, located in the right-
of-way adjacent to Jay Macpherson Green. The station box, which had previously been
buried, was brought above-ground. Enbridge raised the station box to address Ministry
of Labour safety regulations regarding workers in confined spaces. The station box was
also significantly enlarged to account for current and forecasted natural gas usage. The
station box has a footprint measuring approximately 2.0 x 3.0 metres with a height of
1.5 metres. It is surrounded by bollards with cross beams due to its proximity to the
road.
The previous Ward Councillor held meetings with ABC Residents Association (ABC RA), Enbridge, and City staff from the Transportation, Parks, and Planning divisions. These meetings resulted in a request from the ABC RA that the station box be moved to the rear of the green space, where it will be less visible. Enbridge, alongside Transportation staff, has investigated the feasibility of relocation and have found that the station box can be moved successfully into the southwest corner of the Jay Macpherson Green. A gas main from Avenue Road running roughly parallel to the south lot line of the park will be required to connect the relocated station box to the natural gas network.

It is necessary to create a permanent easement within Jay Macpherson Green so that Enbridge would be able to relocate the station box and gas main within the park, and to allow for access to these facilities for maintenance, repair and replacement. An Official Plan Amendment is required to allow for the permanent easement to be established on the City owned lands designated as Parks and Open Space Areas in the Official Plan.

The permanent easement for the station box and the gas main is shown as Part 1 Attachment No. 2, which illustrates the property at 255 Avenue Road which includes Lot 1-4 on Registered Plan 166E.

Refer to Attachment No. 1 for project data.

**Site and Surrounding Area**

The rectangular-shaped site, known as Jay Macpherson Park, is located at the southeast side of Avenue Road and Macpherson Avenue.

Jay Macpherson Green is a park named after Jean "Jay" Macpherson (June 13, 1931 - March 21, 2012) who was a Governor General's Award winning Canadian lyric poet and scholar. She taught at University College for 40 years and was hired at a time when there were not many women professors. Jay Macpherson lived in the Yorkville neighbourhood for over 40 years and was an active member of the ABC RA.

This City owned park is approximately 2,206 square metres in area, and has a frontage of approximately 55 metres along Avenue Road and a depth of 42 metres along Macpherson Avenue.

Uses and structures near the site include:

North: of Macpherson Avenue, there are residential uses, primarily in the form of row houses, and the CPR railway tracks (CP North Toronto Subdivision). On the opposite side of Avenue Road is Sergeant Ryan Russell Parkette at 250 Avenue Road.

South: there is a place of worship (Hare Krishna Temple International Society) along with two to three-storey mixed-use buildings on both sides of Avenue Road, generally consisting of commercial uses with residential uses above.

West: of Avenue Road is a place of worship (Church of the Messiah) and further west, are residential uses along Dupont Street, primarily single or semi-detached houses.
East: is a public lane, accessed from Macpherson Avenue that services the lots on the south side of Macpherson Avenue and the north side Roxborough Street West, and further east, are primarily single detached houses on Macpherson Avenue.

See Attachment No. 3: Location Map

**Reasons for Application**

An Official Plan Amendment is required because the lands comprising the proposed permanent easement are City owned lands designated as *Parks and Open Space Areas* under the City's Official Plan.

The sale or disposal of City owned *Parks and Open Space Areas* is prohibited as per Official Plan Section 4.3, Policy 8. Chapter 213 of the City of Toronto Municipal Code defines a “sale” as including a disposition of land for more than 21 years. The granting of an easement in perpetuity is a disposition of land for greater than 21 years and, accordingly, an Official Plan Amendment is required.

Jay Macpherson Green will maintain the designation of *Parks and Open Space Areas*. A portion of the park will be added to Site and Area Specific Policy 265 so that the provisions of the Official Plan prohibiting the disposal of City owned land in the *Green Space System* and *Parks and Open Space Areas* do not apply.

**Application Submission Requirements**

The following reports/studies were provided by Enbridge in support of the application:

- Survey Plans (Draft R-Plan)
- Easement Location Sketch
- Arborist Report

**Agency Circulation Outcomes**

The application together with the applicable plans and reports noted above, have been circulated to all appropriate agencies and City Divisions. Responses received have been used to assist in evaluating the application and to formulate appropriate Official Plan amendment.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

**Community Consultation Meeting**

City staff hosted a Community Consultation Meeting in the form of an open house on July 11, 2019. Approximately 8 members of the public were in attendance as well as Enbridge staff, City staff from the Planning and Parks, Recreation and Forestry Divisions, and a representative from the Ward Councillor's office. At the open house, the following issues were raised:
• Cost and necessity of relocating the station box;
• Methods to mitigate the appearance of the station box;
• Impact to the trees; and,
• Construction impacts.

These comments have been considered in the review of the application.

Statutory Public Meeting Comments

In making their decision with regard to this application, Council members have the opportunity to view the oral submissions made at the statutory public meeting held by the Toronto and East York Community for this application, as these submissions are broadcast live over the internet and recorded for review.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

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 adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing; the appropriate location of growth and development; the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water; the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems; and the promotion of a built form that is well designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

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 (the "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 requirements.
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 Greater Golden Horseshoe 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, (2019). Comments, submissions, or advice affecting the planning matters that are provided by Council shall also conform with the Growth Plan, (2019).

Staff have reviewed the proposed development for consistency with the PPS (2014) and for conformity with the Growth Plan (2019). The outcome of staff analysis and review are summarized in the Comments section of the report.

**Toronto Official Plan**

This application has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan as follows:
Chapter 4 - Land Use Designations

The site within which the permanent easement is proposed is designated as Parks and Open Space Areas (Parks) on the City of Toronto Official Plan Map 17 – Land Use Plan as shown on Attachment No. 4 to this report. Parks and Open Space Areas include the parks and open spaces, valleys, watercourses and ravines, portions of the waterfront, golf courses and cemeteries that comprise a green open space network in Toronto.

The areas shown on the maps in the Official Plan as Parks will be used primarily to provide public parks and recreational opportunities. Development is generally prohibited within Parks and Open Space Areas except for recreational and cultural facilities, conservation projects, cemetery facilities, public transit and essential public works and utilities where supported by appropriate assessment.

Section 4.3, Policy 8, in the Parks and Open Space Areas of the Official Plan states “The sale or disposal of publicly owned lands in Parks and Open Space Areas is discouraged and no City owned lands in Parks and Open Space Areas will be sold or disposed of. However, City owned land in Parks and Open Space Areas may be exchanged for other nearby land of equivalent or larger area and comparable or superior green space utility.”


The Downtown Plan

Official Plan Amendment 406 (the Downtown Plan) is now in-force and effect. OPA 406 includes amendments to Section 2.2.1 and Map 6 of the Official Plan, as well as a new Downtown Plan. It applies to all applications deemed complete after June 5, 2019. The Plan – in conjunction with the associated infrastructure strategies that address water, energy, mobility, parks and public realm, and community services and facilities – provides a comprehensive and integrated policy framework to shape growth in Toronto’s fast-growing Downtown over the next 25 years. It provides the City with a blueprint to align growth management with the provision of infrastructure, sustain liveability, achieve complete communities and ensure there is space for the economy to grow. The Plan area is generally bounded by Lake Ontario to the south, Bathurst Street to the west, the mid-town rail corridor and Rosedale Valley Road to the north and the Don River to the east.

The in-force Downtown Plan can be found here: https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-135953.pdf

Site and Area Specific Policy No. 211

Site and Area Specific Policy (SASP) No. 211 applies to 255 Avenue Road. The Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Area is composed of a broad mix of districts with differing intensities, scales and heights in a diversity of building forms. The area includes Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods, Areas of Special Identity, Mixed Use Areas, and open space provided by parks and ravines. It forms the north edge of the
Downtown and provides for transition in density and scale towards the boundaries of the area from the more intensive use and development forms to the south and within the Height Peak at Yonge and Bloor Streets. This transition is important to reinforce the diversity of built form and use, to foster the stability of Neighbourhoods, and to minimize conflicts between commercial or mixed use areas and residential neighbourhoods.

The outcome of staff analysis and review of relevant Official Plan policies and designations; the Downtown Plan (OPA 406); and Site and Area Specific Policy 211 are summarized in the Comments section of the report.

**Zoning**

**Former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86**

The site is located in the former municipality of Toronto and is subject to Zoning By-law 438-86, which zones the site as Park Districts, G. The G zone permits a variety of non-residential uses including public parks, public playgrounds, a day nursery or bathing station.

**City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013**

On May 9, 2013, City Council enacted city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013, which is currently under appeal at the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. Both Zoning By-law 569-2013 and former City of Toronto General Zoning By-law 438-86 currently apply to the site.

Under Zoning By-law 569-2013 the site is zoned Open Space - Recreation (OR). The OR zone permits non-residential uses including, but not limited to, parks, recreation uses, libraries, community centres, and public utilities.

See Attachment No. 5: Existing Zoning By-law Map.

**Site Plan Control**

The proposed development is not subject to Site Plan Control.

**COMMENTS**

**Planning Act**

The proposed development has regard for the relevant matters of provincial interest, including: the orderly development of safe and healthy communities; the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing; the appropriate location of growth and development; the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water; the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems; and the promotion of a built form that is well designed, encourages a sense of place, and
provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

These provincial interests are further articulated through the PPS (2014) and the Growth Plan (2019).

**Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans**

The proposal has been reviewed and evaluated against the PPS (2014) and the Growth Plan (2019). The proposal has also been reviewed and evaluated against Policy 5.1 of the Growth Plan as described in the Issue Background section of the Report.

Staff have determined that the proposal is consistent with the PPS and conforms with the Growth Plan as follows:

Policy 1.6 of the PPS includes policies on infrastructure and public service facilities such that they are provided in a coordinated, efficient and cost-effective matter. The addition to this existing municipal shelter optimizes use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities.

Policy 4.7 of the PPS refers to the Official Plan as the most important vehicle for implementing the PPS and as such the development standards in the Toronto Official Plan have particular relevance. The Toronto Official Plan section of this report further evaluates the appropriateness of the subject site for this development.

The proposed development supports Provincial policy objectives to focus growth in existing settlement areas. The proposal would also support efficient land use, reduced land consumption related to efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities, and would be transit supportive. The proposed development is therefore consistent with the PPS.

The Growth Plan provides a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Section 2.2.1.2 of the Growth Plan directs the vast majority of growth to occur within settlement areas that have a delineated built boundary, have existing or planned municipal infrastructure including water and waste water systems, and that can support the achievement of complete communities.

Section 2.2.1.4 of the Growth Plan provides further direction on the achievement of complete communities. It articulates a set of objectives including a diverse mix of land uses, and range and mix of housing options to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes. Convenient access to a range of transportation options, public service facilities, and open spaces and recreational facilities is also highlighted as a key component for complete communities. Furthermore, this section directs complete communities that ensure the development of high quality, compact built form, an attractive and vibrant public realm, including open spaces, through site design and urban design standards. The proposed development conforms to the Growth Plan.
Land Use

This City initiated proposal has been reviewed against the Official Plan policies described in the Policy Considerations Section of the Report as well as the policies of the Toronto Official Plan as a whole.

The station box is a permitted use in the Zoning By-law. However, the permanent easement that is required for the station box would require an Official Plan Amendment.

The Official Plan, Section 4.3 Policy 8 states that, "The sale or disposal of publicly owned lands in Parks and Open Space Areas is discouraged and no City owned lands in Parks and Open Spaces Areas will be sold or disposed of."

SASP No. 265 of the Official Plan identifies certain lands whereby the provisions of the Official Plan prohibiting the disposal of City owned land in the Green Space System and Parks and Open Space Areas do not apply and has been used to permit appropriate disposals which are otherwise in keeping with the intent of the Green Space System policies and Parks and Open Space Areas designation.

The addition of a portion of this site to the list of properties in SASP No. 265 allows for essential public works and utilities to operate at its new location, within lands designated Parks and Open Space Area. Map 28 also requires amendment to identify these lands as being subject to this Site and Area Specific Policy.

Urban Forestry

The proposed relocation of the station box will require the removal of 4 city owned trees. Two trees in the vicinity of the existing station box will require tree protection zones. Two trees in the vicinity of the new gas main to the relocated station will also require tree protection zones.

Applications to remove or injure the trees will be required prior to permits being granted for the relocation of the station box.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Parks, Forestry and Recreation has no objections to the proposed Official Plan Amendment.

Real Estate Services

Real Estate Services advises that additional Council authority will be required for the City lands to be declared surplus for the purposes of granting a permanent easement, in accordance with applicable City procedures.
Conclusion

The proposal has been reviewed against the policies of the PPS (2014), the Growth Plan (2019), and the Toronto Official Plan. Staff are of the opinion that the proposal is consistent with the PPS (2014) and conforms with the Growth Plan (2019).

Furthermore, the proposal is in keeping with the intent of the policies of Toronto’s Official Plan, as they relate to allowing for essential public works and utilities to operate at its new location.

Staff recommend approval of the draft Official Plan Amendment.

Enbridge and City staff will continue to review the design and construction plans for the relocation of the station box.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Lynda H Macdonald, MCIP, RPP, OALA, FCSLA
Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Application Data Sheet
Attachment 2: Proposed Location of Easement
Attachment 3: Location Map
Attachment 4: Official Plan Land Use Map
Attachment 5: Existing Zoning By-law Map
Attachment 6: Draft Official Plan Amendment
Attachment 1: Application Data Sheet

Municipal Address: 255 AVENUE RD Date Received: May 9, 2018
Application Number: 18 156091 STE 27 OZ
Application Type: OPA

Project Description: City Council has directed the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, in consultation with appropriate staff from Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and any other relevant City staff to determine the appropriate location for the Enbridge Gas Distribution District Station Box which is to be relocated from the Macpherson Avenue right-of-way into Jay Macpherson Green Park at 255 Avenue Road.

Applicant Agent Architect Owner
City of Toronto City of Toronto N/A City of Toronto

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

Official Plan Designation: Parks Site Specific Provision: N/A
Zoning: OR Heritage Designation: N/A
Height Limit (m): 12.0 Site Plan Control Area: Yes

PROJECT INFORMATION

Site Area (sq m): 2,206 Frontage (m): 55 Depth (m): 42

Building Data: N/A

CONTACT:
Jason Tsang, Planner
416-392-4237
Jason.Tsang@toronto.ca
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Authority: Toronto and East York Community Council Item ~ as adopted by City of Toronto Council on ~, 20~

Enacted by Council: ~, 20~

CITY OF TORONTO
Bill XXX
BY-LAW XXX

To adopt an amendment to the Official Plan for the City of Toronto respecting the lands known municipally in the year 2018, as 255 Avenue Road

Whereas authority is given to Council under the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, as amended, to pass this By-law;

Whereas Council of the City of Toronto has provided adequate information to the public and has held at least one public meeting in accordance with the Planning Act;

The Council of the City of Toronto enacts:

1. The attached Amendment No. 474 to the Official Plan is hereby adopted pursuant to the Planning Act, as amended.

Enacted and Passed this ~ day of ~, A.D. 20~.

Frances Nunziata, Speaker
ULLI S. WATKISS, City Clerk

(Seal of the City)
The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:

1. Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by adding the following text and map respecting a portion of lands municipally known in 2018 as 255 Avenue Road:

265. Certain lands at 255 Avenue Road

2. Chapter 7, Map 28, Site and Area Specific Policies, is revised by adding a portion of the lands located at 255 Avenue Road, as shown on the map in Section 1.