

# **The Future of Yonge and Eglinton's Canada Square: Supporting Midtown Existing and Future Residents' Quality of Life - Special Study Area Report**

**Date:** June 10, 2021

**To:** Planning and Housing Committee

**From:** Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

**Wards:** 8 - Eglinton Lawrence, 12 - Toronto-St. Paul's, 15 - Don Valley West

**Related Planning Application Number:** 20 232714 STE 12 OZ

## **SUMMARY**

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On April 7, 2021, City Council requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to provide a Special Study Area Report with Guiding Principles, consistent with the intent of the applicable policy, for the redevelopment of Canada Square and the Yonge Street corridor north of Eglinton Avenue following working group meetings supported by an inter-Divisional staff team.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The City Planning Division recommends that City Council:

1. Request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to consider the vision and priorities identified in Attachment No. 1 to this report, in the review of the Zoning By-law Amendment application for the site at 2180-2210 Yonge Street, 15 Eglinton Avenue West, and 20 and 46 Berwick Avenue, and apply them to the extent the priorities are consistent with existing and emerging policy, and report back with a Final Report and a recommended Zoning By-law Amendment no later than the second quarter of 2022.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in the report in the current budget year or in future years.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On April 7, 2021, City Council passed Members Motion 31.27, as amended. The motion states:

1. City Council request the Chief Planner, Executive Director, and City Planning to:
  - a) establish a Working Group, in consultation with the Ward Councillor, composed of local Residents' Associations, Tenants' Associations, Business Improvement Areas, community organizations, the Councillors for Wards 8 and 15, and other stakeholders;
  - b) establish an Inter-Divisional Team with Staff from City Planning, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Children's Services, Social Development, Finance and Administration, Economic Development and Culture, Engineering and Construction Services, Transportation Services, CreateTO, the Toronto Transit Commission, and others as appropriate;
  - c) in consultation with the Working Group and with the support of the Inter-Divisional Team, comprehensively evaluate the redevelopment of the Canada Square site together with the impacts from future development occurring north of Eglinton along the Yonge Street Corridor in Ward 8 and Ward 12 in consideration of, but not limited to: community services; schools; affordable housing; built form; open space; shadow impacts; sky views; cultural space; economic development; public art; and, transit infrastructure; tall building design guidelines; and,
  - d) following Working Group meetings, provide a Special Study Area Report with Guiding Principles for the redevelopment of the site, consistent with the intent of the applicable policy, to the June 24, 2021 meeting of Toronto and East York Community Council.
2. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to amend the study area to include both sides of the Yonge Street Corridor north of Eglinton Avenue due to the extraordinary development occurring in the area and the unprecedented number of revised development application submissions with greater heights and densities that neglect the concept of Complete Communities.

The Motion can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM31.27>

On May 5, 2021, City Council passed Member Motion 32.5, as amended, to make the lease agreement on the Canada Square site public and refer the development application to the Planning and Housing Committee. The motion states:

1. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the appropriate City Officials, to make the signed agreement with Oxford Properties regarding the Canada Square lands, located at 2200 Yonge Street, and all related documents available to the public immediately, to support a full and transparent process of disclosure of the future development of this vital public asset, and City Council refer the development application at this site to the Planning and Housing Committee for review.

The motion can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM32.5>

## **COMMENTS**

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City Planning retained a facilitator, Public Progress, to facilitate the working group meetings as requested by City Council. The working group met on May 5, 12, 19, June 2 and 7, 2021. The facilitator submitted a report titled "Imagining a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto" dated June 2021, outlining six priorities.

The facilitator report is attached to this report.

## **THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

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The Planning Framework, relating to the Zoning By-law Amendment application at Canada Square is summarized in the February 3, 2021 City Planning Preliminary Report and associated Supplementary Report and in a separate Supplementary Report submitted directly to City Council titled Supporting Canada Square Working Group with Additional Information.

The Planning Framework includes:

- Provincial Policy Statement (2020)
- Growth Plan (2020)
- City of Toronto Official Plan
- Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405)
- Site Specific Zoning By-law 236-2009
- Yonge Eglinton Urban Design Guidelines;
- Tall Building Design Guidelines;
- Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities;
- Retail Design Manual;
- Pet-Friendly Design Guidelines; and
- The Midtown Community Services and Facilities Strategy.

Further detail on the Zoning By-law Amendment Application and the applicable Planning Framework can be found at the following links.

Zoning By-law Amendment Application - Preliminary Report and Supplementary Report:  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.TE24.31>

Supporting Canada Square Working Group with Additional Information – Supplementary Report:  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.TE24.96>

## **CANADA SQUARE SPECIAL STUDY AREA WORKING GROUP (SSAWG)**

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### **SSAWG Composition and Meetings**

City Planning retained a facilitator, Public Progress, to facilitate the SSAWG. Public Progress in collaboration with the working group produced a report titled "Imagining a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto" dated June 2021, outlining six priorities.

The SSAWG was comprised of representatives from local residents associations, tenant and condominium associations, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), community service agencies, local residents and the Councillors for Wards 8, 12 and 15. The inter-Divisional staff team included staff from relevant City Divisions and agencies. A full list of SSAWG and inter-Divisional team members can be found in Attachment 1 of this report.

The SSAWG met on May 5, 12, 19, June 2 and 7, 2021, for two hours each meeting. The SSAWG agreed on a terms of reference at the first meeting, and meeting notes and agendas throughout. Preparation for the meetings included the facilitator providing documents to the SSAWG and inter-Divisional team members in advance of the meetings, including the terms of reference, meeting agendas, meeting notes and presentations.

The facilitator prepared a draft report containing the recommendations of the SSAWG following the third meeting for the group members to review. The working group reviewed and agreed on the content of the final consultant's report at the meetings held on June 2nd and 7th.

### **SSAWG Priorities**

The Canada Square SSAWG agreed on a vision and the following six priorities to guide the redevelopment of the Canada Square site. These six priorities are explained further in the facilitator's report in Attachment No. 1.

- **Priority 1:** The Canada Square site should be a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto and contain a vibrant mix of uses: a public square, park and open space,

residential, learning, employment, community facilities, cultural and performing arts spaces.

- **Priority 2:** Residential uses on the Canada Square site should be limited to 20% of the Gross Floor Area and affordable housing should be a key component of any housing and comprise at least 25% of the housing mix.
- **Priority 3:** Midtown needs a new school to serve students from JK to Grade 8.
- **Priority 4:** Canada Square should feature a large public park.
- **Priority 5:** Canada Square should be a centre for inspiring learning and jobs.
- **Priority 6:** Community and cultural spaces are vital and Canada Square can be a part of that.

Council's motion directed that the "study area" include both sides of the Yonge Street Corridor north of Eglinton Avenue. While the working group discussed the potential for school sites and community services and facilities throughout the study area, the priorities of the working group largely focussed on the Canada Square site. Further consideration of the broader context will be part of staff's ongoing review of the application.

The themes articulated in the vision and principles generally align with the existing Planning Framework. Where the vision and principles specify a quantum or performance standard that exceeds or conflicts with the policy standards and requirements found in the Planning Framework, City Planning will evaluate and consider those priorities as desired outcomes by the SSAWG.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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The Zoning By-law Amendment application for the Canada Square site was submitted to the City on December 21, 2020. The community consultation process with the broader community was put on hold pending the completion of this Special Study Area report.

City Planning will proceed to schedule community consultation meetings to provide further information about the Canada Square Zoning By-law Amendment application to the broader community for their review and comments. Staff will consider the SSAWG vision and priorities in conjunction with the Planning Framework and feedback received from broader community consultation in the evaluation of the application.

Staff will issue a Final Report on the Zoning By-law Amendment application for the Canada Square site no later than the second quarter of 2022 for Council's consideration.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Facilitator's Report

# *Imagining a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto*

Report of the facilitator of the  
Midtown Working Group

Bruce Davis, Public Progress  
June, 2021

The land at Canada Square and in Midtown Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. It is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

Canada Square sits where Yonge Street, Canada's longest road, meets Eglinton, Toronto's longest cross-street. The intersection marks the old village of North Toronto, once a farming settlement, an independent town, and the site of the Montgomery's Tavern rebellion. Far earlier, it was home to an Indigenous Wendat village, with longhouses on the glacial drumlin hill of what is now Eglinton Park and corn fields down the slopes.

# Introduction

“There’s no there there.”

Gertrude Stein’s pejorative description of her home town, Oakland, in 1937 could aptly describe many cities and towns. It could describe bland stretches of many bland cities. It could describe parts of current-day Toronto, suburban and urban.

The phrase describes places without a soul.

What we heard from community members of the Midtown working group in May and June, 2021, is that they want Toronto’s Midtown at Yonge and Eglinton, centred at the Canada Square site, to be *somewhere*.

Somewhere to *go to* and not just somewhere to *pass through*.

A place that recognizes and embraces its past -- Midtown’s legacy as an Indigenous settlement and its role incubating the rebellion of 1837 -- while imagining and determining its future.

Somewhere to live, not just for the few who can invest in Toronto’s overheated real estate market, but a diverse community with a mix of incomes.

Somewhere to work, not just in service-level jobs, but in technology and learning and research and innovation, white collar and knowledge jobs that draw people from across the City and from around the world to the new heart of Toronto.

We heard about Midtown being a learning place for children and adults. With green space as a destination and gathering place, with a focus on sunshine and grass. We heard about the potential for culture and performing arts. Providing sorely needed community and childcare facilities. And also a place for teenagers to be teenagers.

We heard the call for a new town centre. A place with a soul.



#### Midtown Working Group members

**Rachel Baker, Avenue Road Eglinton Community Assn**  
**Jim Baker, Avenue Road Eglinton Community Assn**  
**Gerl Berholz, Republic Residents' Association**  
**Henry Byres, Midtown BIA**  
**John Carey, Central Eglinton Community Centre**  
**Tom Cohen, Eglinton Park Residents' Association**  
**Andy Gort, South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Assn**  
**Barry Gula, Art Shoppe Condominium**  
**Geoff Kettel, Federation of North Toronto Residents Assns**  
**Ann King, Stanley Knowles Housing Co-operative**  
**Cathie Macdonald, Federation of North Toronto Residents Assns**  
**David McMahon, Oriole Park Association**  
**Terry Mills, resident**  
**Melissa Phillips, Berwick Condominium Corporation**  
**David Ticoll, Quantum Owners and Residents Association**

**Rachel Chernos-Lin, TDSB Trustee**  
**Shelley Laskin, TDSB Trustee**

**Mike Colle, City Councillor, Ward 8**  
**Jaye Robinson, City Councillor, Ward 15**  
**Josh Matlow, City Councillor Ward 12**

In April 2021, I was asked by City of Toronto planning officials to facilitate a Midtown working group of community members to prepare a vision and principles that could be considered alongside an application that had been submitted for the Canada Square site at the southwest corner of Yonge and Eglinton Streets in Toronto. The terms of reference for the working group are set out in Appendix A. They were constructed based on a motion passed by Toronto City Council on April 7 (MM 31.27 Appendix B). That motion, among other things, made it clear that our process should look beyond the Canada Square site to the needs and context of the greater Midtown area, which is under unrelenting development pressure.

Our working group process consisted of five meetings and many offline conversations, but it was built on the considerable work that had already been done in the area as part of the Midtown in Focus / Secondary Planning process, as part of a recent community facilities study, school planning by the Toronto District School

Board and visioning work by a Midtown coalition of groups that have been active on development issues for many years. The working group did not start from scratch. It is fair to say that if this body of work did not already exist it would have had to be done and would have stretched the working group process into a year-long endeavour.

In other words, the fact that we could pull this report together in such a compressed timeline is a testament to work that has been done by many individuals and organizations, going back almost twenty years.

This report is my effort to articulate what I have heard from the working group, and any deficiencies are my own. In the next section of this report, I briefly outline the context and relevant studies. The working group's vision and priorities are set out in Section 3. Section 4 – Next Steps – outlines some initial recommendations on how the City can move forward with the ideas in this report.

My assignment facilitating the working group and reporting on its outcome would not have been possible without the assistance of Alex Teixeira and Oren Tamir of City Planning. Robert Ursini, also of City Planning, was instrumental in organizing our online meetings. Many City and school board officials participated in background briefings for the working group. On behalf of the participants, I thank them for their time and dedication and candour.

Councillors Josh Matlow, Jaye Robinson and Mike Colle actively participated in the working group, contributing their suggestions while allowing community members to take the lead. Trustee Shelley Laskin for making a compelling case for the school board. I thank them all for being effective advocates for their communities.

Members of the Midtown working group were generous with their time, thoughts and ideas. In particular, I would like to thank working group members David Ticoll and Andy Gort, who assisted with drafts of this report.

# Understanding Midtown

Canada Square sits where Yonge Street, Canada’s longest road that, meets Eglinton Avenue, Toronto’s longest cross-street, that connects all the pre-amalgamation cities that make up Toronto, from Etobicoke to Scarborough. The intersection marks the old village of North Toronto, once a farming settlement, an independent town, and the site of the Montgomery’s Tavern rebellion in 1837. Far earlier, it was home to a Wendat village, featuring Indigenous long houses on the glacial drumlin hill of Eglinton Park, with corn fields down the slopes.



If there was ever a time to dust off the old “crossroads” metaphor, this is probably it.

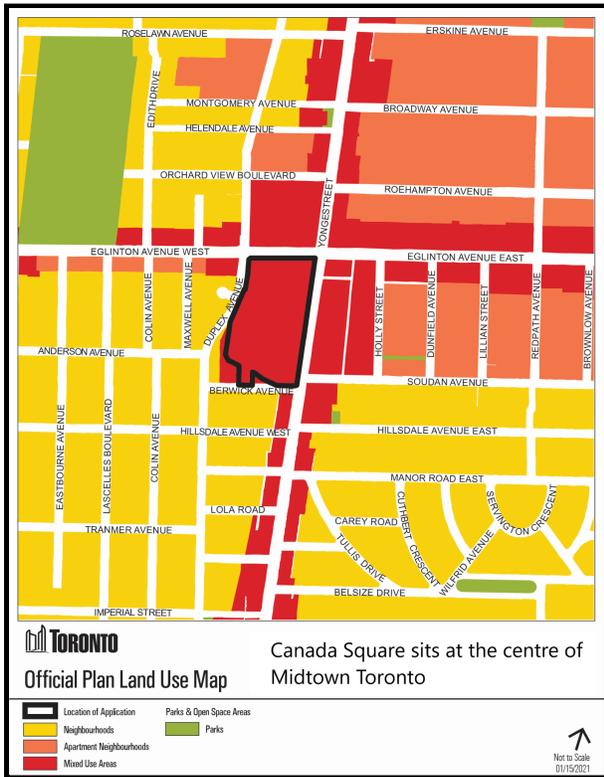
Canada Square sits at the *literal* intersection of two of Toronto’s most vibrant and diverse arteries: Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, and Toronto’s oldest and newest high-capacity transit corridors: the TTC’s Line 1 and the Eglinton LRT.

Canada Square also sits at the *figurative* intersection of public ownership and private interests: the 3.75-hectare site is owned by the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission, but much of it is leased to commercial tenants until 2051 and 2070.



If you haven't visited the corner of Yonge and Eglinton in a while, prepare to be overwhelmed -- by the construction.

The length of Eglinton Avenue, has joined Midtown in traffic chaos while the Eglinton LRT is under construction. But in Midtown itself, transit construction is exacerbated by a gold rush of residential development.



Canada Square sits at the centre of Midtown, an area bounded by Briar Hill Avenue and Blythwood Road to the north, Mount Pleasant Cemetery to the south, Bayview Avenue to the east, and Chaplin Crescent and Latimer Avenue to the west. It is in the “Yonge-Eglinton Centre”, a designated planning area at the heart of Midtown.

In a ten-year period from 2006 to 2016, Midtown’s population grew by 17%, from 51,000 to 60,000 people. This growth has also seen a greater percentage of families moving to the area.

City Planning’s recent growth forecasts for Midtown from 2016 to 2051, based on the City-approved OPA 405 and development applications in the pipeline, anticipate Midtown’s population growing from over 62,000 residents to approximately 123,000 residents. OPA 405 as amended by the provincial government allows even

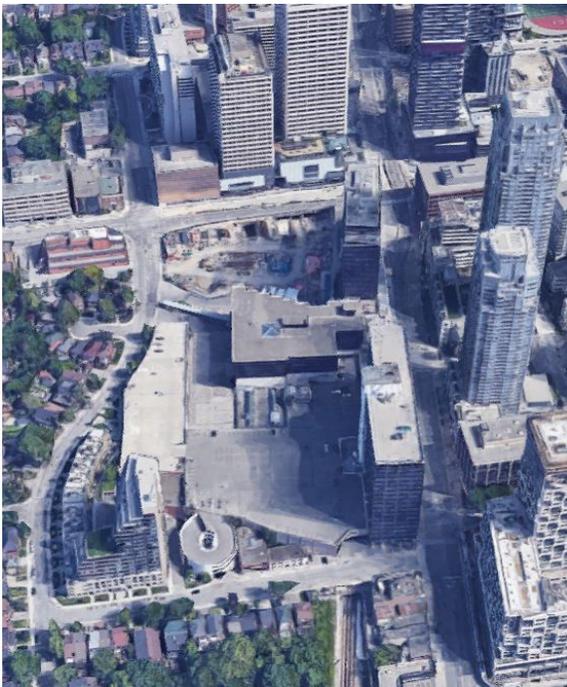
greater height and density in Midtown and we can expect even greater growth as a result

Developers that had submitted tall, mostly condo development applications are *resubmitting* their applications and raising building heights higher. In the 2019 Canada Square contract with the TTC, Oxford Properties described a scheme for the site which included 146,800 sq. m. of residential space only to come back a year later with an actual planning application that included 216,000 sq. m. of residential space -- a 47% increase in residential GFA on the same site just one year later. And this is for a site that currently has no residential uses.



Midtown is one of Toronto's five urban Growth Areas designated in The Growth Plan (2020) set out by the provincial government. Given its proximity to the Yonge Eglinton subway and the Eglinton LRT it was also identified as a Core Transit Station Area in the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan. Provincial Growth Area policies require focused investments in regional public service facilities plus commercial, recreation, entertainment facilities and high density major employment.

In 2018 City Council approved the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405), the culmination of many years of work known as Midtown in Focus. This secondary plan was subsequently adopted with amendments by the provincial government in 2019, the result of which was an *increase* in building heights and residential development potential in the Midtown area.



Regarding the Yonge-Eglinton Centre, the aforementioned high density planning area at the heart of Midtown where Canada Square is situated, OPA 405 states:

*The Yonge-Eglinton Centre will be a major centre of economic activity with a concentration of existing and new office uses and other value-added employment sectors along Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, a civic and cultural hub with a concentration of existing and new community service facilities and entertainment uses, a focal area for retail and service uses that meet the day-to-day needs of residents and workers in Midtown and draw visitors from across the city.*

As part of the Midtown in Focus process the City of Toronto completed a thorough Community Services and Facilities Study which you can [find here](#). The study identified gaps in service across a range of community services and identified strategic directions to address some of these shortfalls.

The zoning rules for the Canada Square site permit a range of uses, including office, residential, retail, transit, parks, and other community uses. Today the site includes Canadian Tire's head office, a cineplex, offices, parking, ten bus bays and the Metrolinx construction staging area. It is ripe for redevelopment.



Our Working Group's discussions were conducted under the backdrop of a confidential lease arrangement, *approved by City Council*, between the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission as landowners, and Oxford Properties and CT REIT as tenants. In May 2021, City Council authorized staff to publish the lease documents, including a conditional lease extension. A summary of these leases is attached as Appendix D.

# A New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto

“Fifty years from now we want people to say that this is the centre of my community.”

That was a comment from a working group participant from our May 12 meeting and it succinctly summarizes the sentiment of the group.

Another working group member foreshadowed the choice in more stark terms: “If we end up with a bunch of condos, we will have failed.”

It was clear from our group that we were *place-making*. We were not creating a generic anyplace or a marketing slogan for developers, but a location that knows and remembers where it is. A place with a soul.

The Midtown Coalition, composed of ratepayers, residents and condo corporations, articulated a comprehensive vision for the Canada Square site and an overall approach to Midtown. Their vision includes park and open space, residential, employment, institutional, recreational and cultural uses, with a clear focus on using Canada Square as an opportunity to showcase green technology innovation, research and city-building. Many of our working group members were also part of the Midtown Coalition, which provided an easy starting point for our conversations.

The Midtown Coalition is comprised of the Art Shoppe Condominium, Avenue Road Eglinton Community Association, Berwick Condominium Corporation, Eglinton Park Residents' Association, Oriole Park Association, Quantum Owners & Residents Association, Republic Residents' Association, South Eglinton Residents' and Ratepayers' Association, Stanley Knowles Housing Cooperative, and Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations.

The vision and priorities outlined here are the culmination of twenty years of conversations. These conversations can and should continue for the next ten years as the Canada Square site and Midtown Toronto evolve, and as each element is operationalized. The elements described here will inform the City of Toronto Chief Planner on the community's priorities and can also inform other civic leaders so that they can take action to support the vision.



The Canada Square site at the heart of Midtown and at the centre of our conversation is currently used for commercial and transportation infrastructure purposes. Offices, a cineplex, bus bays and construction staging for the Eglinton LRT all need to be refreshed. But it was clear from the working group that it is not good enough to carve the site up for residential towers. We can do better.

Given the fact that Canada Square is a large land assembly owned by the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission, it can serve public interests *in addition* to the commercial interests of the leaseholders. This section of the report sets out what the public good looks like from the perspective of the Midtown working group participants.

These priorities agreed by the working group members are not in any particular or ranked order. They set out six important elements that the group felt must all work together. The first priority encapsulates the working group overall vision for the site:

**VISION / Priority 1: The Canada Square site should be a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto and contain a vibrant mix of uses: a public square, park and open space, residential, learning, employment, community facilities, cultural and performing arts spaces.**

The Canada Square site serves the entire Midtown area. As the last large land assembly in the area -- and owned by the City -- it can play a strategic role as the new town centre for Midtown Toronto. There was an appreciation in the working group that uses can be integrated and overlap. For example the community facilities and school and childcare and park

could be woven together in such a way as to optimize the space and also to foster partnerships.

I heard from the working group that one feature of the New Town Centre should be a significant public square that brings people together at the corner of Yonge and Eglinton, featuring a vibrant mix of uses, including art galleries, shops, restaurants and cafes. This aligns with City policy as outlined in the Midtown in Focus report.

We heard that the keystone of education, innovation, job creation, and cultural amenities could be a post-secondary satellite campus, focused on a theme like the green economy.

**Priority 2: Residential uses on the Canada Square site should be limited to 20% of the Gross Floor Area and affordable housing should be a key component of any housing and comprise *at least 25%* of the housing mix.**

The working group discussed the pressure for residential uses on the Canada Square site and felt the need to limit residential uses. At the same time the group wanted to encourage housing affordability and a mix of incomes.

There is already an abundance of housing in Midtown and the area faces an onrush of new options for housing on smaller sites throughout the area. The scale and frenzy of that development activity was touched on in the previous section of this report.

Each new residential planning application will need to be evaluated on their merits and weighed as part of a cumulative effect on the community. On the Canada Square site where there currently are no residential buildings, there was a recognition that a mix of incomes was desirable.

Working group members varied in their aspirations for affordable housing (one member wanted 10% of the housing to be affordable and another wanted 100% of the housing to be affordable and four or five people said they wanted as much as possible) but the preponderance of views was that 25-33% of housing on the Canada Square site should be affordable.

The working group members discussed ways of encouraging affordable housing, including the use of inclusionary zoning tools, which are not applicable in Toronto. In the end members felt that the City should use its leverage as the owner of the property to prioritize affordable housing. As a model, co-op housing was suggested as a preferred way of integrating affordable and market housing.

It is uncommon for neighbourhoods in Toronto to *welcome* affordable housing so that's why this priority is so notable.

**Priority 3: Midtown needs a new school to serve students from JK to Grade 8.**

The Toronto District School Board made a compelling case to integrate a public school into the Canada Square site. Based on projections for growth in the Midtown area, the school board anticipates a shortfall of 800 pupil places in the next ten years. This need has been identified in the TDSB's Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy since 2016/17.

The traditional school model in the city core and surrounding neighbourhoods may not be possible or easy to attain. As a result of key items such as prohibitive land costs, funding challenges and the need for land use efficiencies, the TDSB is considering new schools in mixed-use buildings with both rooftop/terrace and ground level playground areas.

Working group members support the idea of integrating the school into the site, while sharing its facilities – like gyms, childcare spaces and green space – for other community uses. A school was seen as a potential use for the podium of a large building.

The TDSB has built new schools with small footprints in dense urban areas. It believes that a school can be integrated with other community uses at this site to optimize space allocation and share green space. The TDSB has identified potential sources of capital funding to build the school.

The working group discussed the potential for other school sites in Midtown and the conclusion was made that although other sites could be considered, the size of Canada Square, its public ownership, and the potential for integrating with other services made this a high priority for the site.

**Priority 4: Canada Square should feature a large public park.**

Midtown Toronto is parks deficient. We heard from City staff that the southwest quadrant of Midtown has 4-12 sq. m. of park per person versus the City-wide average of 28 sq. m. per person. This per person average will drop further by 10-25% percent based on the anticipated growth in this area if no new parkland is acquired. We heard that the northeast quadrant of Midtown is even more deficient.

Speaking of her experience on another development site in Midtown, one participant said that the community had to “scratch and claw for blades of grass,” so it isn’t realistic to make up this park deficiency based on individual applications in the development pipeline -- a strategic approach needs to occur to serve Midtown. That participant proposed that every inch of the site should be a massive Central Park.

In our fourth meeting working group members spent some time discussing ideas for new park and open spaces at Canada Square, understanding that when a park is designed it will go through a thorough design and community engagement process. Working group members would like to see parks and open spaces that are accessible for all types of users, fun, and interactive. They want to make sure that there are spaces where teenagers are welcome. At the southwest corner of Yonge and Eglinton the group saw a public square at-grade as a public meeting space.

Members discussed park examples and Manhattan’s Bryant Park was cited often. In Toronto the dog fountain at Berczy Park was cited as fun, interactive art that animates the park.

We heard that people in Midtown need park infrastructure to gather and have picnics, outdoor performances, a farmer’s market, and dog walking. We heard that during the pandemic local school grounds and playing fields

have been widely used by Midtown residents as parks and once students return to school, these properties will be off-limits during the school day, which will exacerbate the parks shortage. Highly used parks also require ongoing maintenance.

A suggestion that we heard from a couple of residents in the working group was that the Canada Square Park should be located at the Berwick end of the property so that it will benefit from full day sun, minimize building shadows on adjacent neighbours, and can absorb the remaining hold-out properties in the street. Another suggestion was a broad green promenade the length of the block along Yonge Street.

We heard that publicly owned and managed parks are preferable to privately-owned public spaces.

**Priority 5: Canada Square should be a centre for inspiring learning and jobs.**

With the opening of the Eglinton LRT, Canada Square will be at the centre of one of Canada's busiest transportation intersections. It is ideally located as an advanced education, innovation and employment centre, a magnet for learners and workers from across Toronto and from around the world. We heard that creating a vibrant mix of residential, learning, employment, institutional, cultural and recreational uses will attract a knowledgeable and diverse workforce that will strengthen Toronto's economy.

We heard that Canada Square could become a knowledge-based learning and innovation campus, featuring a post-secondary satellite institution, with synergies and co-op placement opportunities (work-integrated learning) among Class A employers, start-ups, business incubators, and research organizations. A boutique hotel was also suggested for this site.

Canada Square is already the home of one of Canada's most iconic companies, Canadian Tire. Canadian Tire could anchor the new Canada Square.

At our final meeting the working group revisited the issue of employment uses and agreed that any redevelopment at Canada Square should provide

a minimum of twice the statutory 100% replacement of current employment GFA, including institutional, public sector, private sector and not-for-profit employers.

The working group members discussed how the world of work has changed and is changing, especially in light of COVID-19. While it is uncertain how traditional office spaces will evolve post-pandemic, the Canada Square site provides an opportunity to adapt new office and employment uses, with new pandemic-safe design elements.

**Priority 6: Community and cultural spaces are vital and Canada Square can be a part of that.**

Although some new childcare centres have recently been negotiated in Midtown, in our staff briefing we heard that approximately 16 to 23 additional childcare facilities will be required to meet the level of anticipated growth reflected in the Council-approved Secondary Plan. This projected demand could increase due to Provincial changes to the secondary plan permissions, not to mention the increase in demand if \$10/day childcare is implemented by the federal government. Many current childcare operators in Midtown are not under contract with the City and therefore do not deliver subsidized spaces.

We heard that program spaces for community programs are required. We also heard that space is required for teenagers to be teenagers, including informal spaces for congregating and active recreation spaces for community organizations serving teens.

We heard that cultural and performing arts spaces are essential for a vibrant community. Some of these uses can be integrated or shared with other uses, for example with a school or in commercial spaces or in a tall building. Some might potentially be set up in other Midtown locations. But the scale of the Canada Square site offers unique opportunities for significant cultural spaces that draw people to Midtown.

Perhaps not all these community facilities can or should be provided on the Canada Square site but the broader vision for Midtown must include the a realistic, committed plan for the full range of needed amenities that are accessible, available and integrated in the community.



There's an old adage that if everything is a priority then nothing is a priority. That's why we have highlighted the six priorities listed above. We believe these priorities are achievable in Midtown using the Canada Square site as the foundation and a genuine town centre. Making it happen should entail ongoing cooperative work that includes the City as landowner and provider of public amenities and services, the community, and various commercial and not-for-profit interests.

While not identified as priorities, several areas were identified through our working group as being additional important considerations for the Chief Planner and civic officials to consider:

**Creating a green focus:** Every element of the New Town Centre could have a green focus as a proving ground and innovation showcase of net zero urban development. Employment, education, energy, cultural elements, building design and construction, could all have an environmental net-zero focus.

**Creating pandemic protective infrastructure:** the New Town Centre at Canada Square needs to be designed through a pandemic-safe lens. This includes providing significant outdoor spaces, building ventilation and even the use of elevators. The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2021 has made an indelible mark on our economy and workplaces, on schools and community facilities, on healthcare, on family and social structures, and our use of public spaces and these changes need to be reflected as we re-imagine Canada Square.

**Employing tall buildings where it makes sense:** The height of buildings can affect adjacent properties in terms of loss of privacy and sunlight and views, but we also heard that tall buildings provide opportunities for more open space and parks at grade. We heard that we need to consider the

impact of the pandemic on the design of tall buildings, from ventilation to window openings to elevators. The working group did not take a position on tall building design guidelines, but we heard that leaving more open space to the south of the Canada Square site and taller buildings to the north of the site would increase sunlight on a Canada Square park and reduce the impact on neighbours.

**Taking control of the land:** The Canada Square site is owned by the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission. It is the subject of a long-term lease with commercial interests but it has not yet been harnessed as a strategic public asset. A proposed extension to the long-term commercial lease was negotiated with a particular development approach in mind. Lease benefits to the City focus on funding transportation infrastructure and transit operations: seven new bus bays, a stream of revenue to the transit commission, and concourse upgrades to the Yonge-Eglinton subway station.

We heard from working group members that control of the land – and any future lease -- needs to place greater emphasis on broader public priorities, using a model, with community participation, similar to the Harbourfront Corporation or a land trust with a governance board.

# Moving forward together

The Midtown working group and the three Midtown Councillors unanimously endorsed the priorities outlined in this report and the vision of creating a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto. That is significant and we hope that it will be appreciated by Toronto City Council and city officials.

In our final meeting the working group turned its attention to next steps -- and there was a remarkable consensus:

**First, working group members would like City Councillors to endorse the vision of a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto as articulated in this report as worthy of consideration and analysis by the City.**

**Second, the working group would like the City to *defer consideration of any application* on the Canada Square site pending completion of further analysis and review of the options to move the working group's priorities forward.**

**Third, the working group would like City Council to instruct City officials across City Divisions to produce a feasibility review and options analysis for the New Town Centre for Midtown, based on this report, including but not limited to:**

- **Economic development, culture, K-12 and post-secondary education, childcare, parks and recreation, community facilities, market and affordable housing, and relevant planning policies;**

- **Staging, governance and financing of the New Town Centre and its elements; and**
- **Modifying or transitioning current contractual and financial arrangements;**

**In addition, the working group wanted to ensure that consultation with relevant Councillors, community stakeholders and members of the public continued throughout the process of realizing the vision and priorities in this report.**



As I said in our final working group meeting, in many respects Midtown is the birthplace of local democracy in Toronto. That local involvement and constructive activism continues through community members of the working group. I am confident that working group members will continue to articulate their vision for the New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto and to create a remarkable place that is *somewhere*.

A place with a soul.

Bruce Davis  
Facilitator, Midtown Working Group  
June, 2021

## Appendix A: Terms of Reference

### Midtown Working Group pursuant to MM31.27

#### Terms of Reference

**Mandate:** The mandate of the working group, as outlined in MM31.27 and approved as amended by City Council on April 7, 2021, is to provide advice to the Chief Planner, Executive Director of City Planning, on the comprehensive evaluation of the redevelopment of the Canada Square site together with the impacts from future development occurring north of Eglinton along the Yonge Street Corridor in Ward 8 and Ward 12 in consideration of, but not limited to:

- community services;
- schools;
- affordable housing;
- built form;
- open space;
- shadow impacts;
- sky views;
- cultural space;
- economic development;
- public art;
- transit infrastructure;
- tall building design guidelines; and
- land use..

We understand that the Chief Planner, Executive Director of City Planning, will then provide a Special Study Area Report with Guiding Principles for the redevelopment of the site, consistent with the intent of the applicable policy, to the June 24, 2021, Toronto East York Community Council.

The working group serves as an advisory group and as a forum for dialogue, not a decision-making body.

**Members:** The working group is to be established in consultation with the Ward Councillor (Matlow) and to be composed of: local Residents' Associations, Tenants' Associations, Business Improvement Areas, community organizations, the Councillors for Wards 8 and 15, and other stakeholders.

Working group membership is on a volunteer basis and members will not be remunerated for their participation.

**Resources:** The Chief Planner, Executive Director of City Planning, is also tasked with establishing an Inter-Divisional Team with Staff from City Planning, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Children's Services, Social Development, Finance and Administration, Economic Development and Culture, Engineering and Construction Services, Transportation Services, CreateTO, the Toronto Transit Commission, and others as appropriate. This interdivisional team will provide advice to the Chief Planner, Executive Director of City Planning, and will also act as a resource to the working group.

Bruce Davis, of Public Progress (A Division of 2526976 Ontario Ltd), has been appointed as a facilitator for the working group by the Chief Planner, Executive Director of City Planning, and will report the findings of the working group and a summary of the working group meetings.

**Observers:** The meetings of the working group are not confidential; as such the meetings may be observed by members of the public and other interested parties. Observers may not participate in the meetings.

**Facilitation:** The meetings will be facilitated using a process facilitator appointed by the Chief Planner, Executive Director of City Planning, who will guide the process, facilitate respectful dialogue, address difficult situations and behaviours and maintain an environment conducive to sharing information and encouraging all members to contribute. The facilitator is responsible for keeping the working group on time and on task, preparing working group agendas and unbiased and accurate meeting summaries.

**Conduct:** In order to ensure that the working group is maintained as an effective forum, members must:

- agree to operate in accordance to the Terms of Reference;
- participate regularly or arrange alternate representation at scheduled meetings;
- be respectful of the expression of diverse opinions which may be similar or different than those of other members;
- be prepared to work constructively and collaboratively with members of the working group to address areas of mutual interest and concern;
- listen actively to others. Avoid interrupting and one-on-one side conversations while other people are speaking;
- manage personal participation by sharing speaking time, debating ideas not individuals, and actively providing focused input, comments and questions;
- refrain from using language or acting in a way that is threatening, abusive, racist or otherwise disrespectful;
- not act as a spokesperson for the working group.

In the event that a member is unwilling to abide by the Terms of Reference, the facilitator reserves the right to rescind the membership of that person and seek a new member to replace the role.

Meetings of the working group are not confidential, so we would ask members not to disclose information of a personal or confidential nature.

Reports: Meeting notes of each working group meeting will be prepared by the facilitator. These will not be minutes but will summarize the discussions and outcomes. Recordings of the meetings will be taken only for the purposes of preparing meeting notes. The meeting recordings will *not* be made public or posted online.

A penultimate report will be prepared by the facilitator and presented to the working group for amendment or ratification; dissenting reports will be appended to the final report if required.

*Terms of reference prepared by Bruce Davis, Public Progress, tel 416-520-1972 [publicprogressbruce@gmail.com](mailto:publicprogressbruce@gmail.com) and reviewed by the working group on 5 May 2021.*

## Appendix B: Member's Motion MM 31.27

### City Council Decision

City Council on April 7 and 8, 2021, adopted the following:

1. City Council request the Chief Planner, Executive Director, City Planning to:
  - a. establish a Working Group, in consultation with the Ward Councillor, composed of local Residents' Associations, Tenants' Associations, Business Improvement Areas, community organizations, the Councillors for Wards 8 and 15, and other stakeholders;
  - b. establish an Inter-Divisional Team with Staff from City Planning, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Children's Services, Social Development, Finance and Administration, Economic Development and Culture, Engineering and Construction Services, Transportation Services, CreateTO, the Toronto Transit Commission, and others as appropriate;
  - c. in consultation with the Working Group and with the support of the Inter-Divisional Team, comprehensively evaluate the redevelopment of the Canada Square site together with the impacts from future development occurring north of Eglinton along the Yonge Street Corridor in Ward 8 and Ward 12 in consideration of, but not limited to: community services; schools; affordable housing; built form; open space; shadow impacts; sky views; cultural space; economic development; public art; and, transit infrastructure; tall building design guidelines; and
  - d. following Working Group meetings, provide a Special Study Area Report with Guiding Principles for the redevelopment of the site, consistent with the intent of the applicable policy, to the June 24, 2021 meeting of Toronto and East York Community Council.
2. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to amend the study area to include both sides of the Yonge Street Corridor north of Eglinton Avenue due to the extraordinary development occurring in the area and the unprecedented number of revised development application submissions with greater heights and densities that neglect the concept of Complete Communities.

Appendix C. Yonge-Eglinton Lands Consolidated Ground Lease and Commencement Agreement Summary (attached)