

1911 Finch Avenue West (Jane Finch Mall) – Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications – Supplementary Report

Date: May 27, 2024

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District

Ward: Ward 7 – Humber River-Black Creek

Planning Application Number: 23 184369 WET 07 OZ and 23 238316 WET 07 OZ

SUMMARY

At its meeting on April 8, 2024, Etobicoke York Community Council held and subsequently adjourned the statutory public meeting for the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments applications for 1911 Finch Avenue West (Jane Finch Mall) (2024.EY12.2). Through a motion advanced by Councillor Perruzza, City Planning was requested to review the draft Official Plan Amendment and draft Zoning By-laws, in particular, the proposed building heights.

The Decision Report from the Director of Community Planning, Etobicoke York District, dated March 19, 2024, recommends approval of new policies that would govern the long-term, multi-phased redevelopment of the entire site and zoning regulations that would permit the development of Phase 1 fronting on Finch Avenue West between Jane Street and Driftwood Avenue. Phase 1 consists of six new towers, with heights ranging from 28 to 47 storeys.

In response to the motion, City Planning staff have reviewed the Official Plan and draft Jane Finch Secondary Plan policies, and design guidelines informing the development of the lands. City Planning staff also assisted in conducting further public consultation through the Jane Finch Initiative (JFI) on recommended built form and building heights at a public event.

This Supplementary Report summarizes the public's feedback from the additional community consultation event and provides a further response on the proposed building heights.

Also, through Recommendation 1, City Planning is also recommending that City Council amend Recommendation 4 of the Decision Report to authorize stylistic and technical amendments that would have the draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA 728) as a Site and Area Specific Policy (SASP) of the Jane Finch Secondary Plan, if approved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District recommends that:

1. The Etobicoke York Community Council amend Recommendation 4 of the report (March 19, 2024) from the Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District by adding “including any changes that would have the effect of incorporating the draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA 728) as a Site and Area Specific Policy of the Jane Finch Secondary Plan (OPA 633), if approved” to the end of the recommendation, so that it now reads:

4. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Official Plan Amendment and draft Zoning By-law Amendment as may be required, including any changes that would have the effect of incorporating the draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA 728) as a Site and Area Specific Policy of the Jane Finch Secondary Plan (OPA 633), if approved.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

COMMENTS

Summary of Additional Community Consultation on Building Heights

In response to Councillor Perruzza's motion, City Planning staff attended a meeting organized by the JFI to consult with the public at an event at Yorkgate Mall. The event, which was held on April 18, 2024, sought feedback on the recommended built form and building heights and maximizing economic opportunities within the plan area.

Many participants were in general agreement that building more housing is necessary and that tall buildings are a positive approach to achieve more new housing units. Some participants stated concerns with the proposed building heights in relation to new population growth and increased density. For the most part, the participants were concerned about gentrification, traffic and mobility impacts, access to the mall during construction and construction management, shadowing, and wind impacts. Aversion to heights did not appear to be specific or related to urban design considerations.

Proposed Building Heights

The proposal has been reviewed against the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) (2020), A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) and the Official Plan. The proposal is consistent with the PPS (2020) and conforms with the A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). Furthermore, the proposal conforms to the Official Plan, particularly as it relates to:

- focusing density and growth around transit in a compact urban form;
- supporting a mix of housing forms with units of varying sizes and types;
- creating an attractive public realm that supports gathering, walking, cycling, and transit;
- creating landmark public spaces and new parks;
- supporting the creation of spaces for businesses and jobs;
- supporting new community service facilities; and,
- supporting community engagement and decision-making within the planning process.

Official Plan policies direct growth to *Centres, Avenues, Employment Areas*, and the *Downtown*. The site is also located within a proposed Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA), with a minimum density of 200 people and jobs per hectare and a recommended planned density of 257 people and jobs per hectare. It is at these locations where the Official Plan contemplates intensification that can leverage transit expansion, cycling infrastructure, servicing, employment opportunities, and social infrastructure to support new development and new residents and jobs in denser forms.

The recommended Jane Finch Secondary Plan recommends a height peak of generally 45 storeys at the intersection of Jane and Finch intended to establish transit-supportive densities around major transit station areas. The Secondary Plan establishes variation in building heights for built form located at the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West, with the height peak for the tallest buildings located closest to the intersection, transitioning down in height and scale towards parks and lower-scaled areas. Supported by built form standards including, among other things, minimum tower separation distances of 30 metres or greater, maximum base building heights to support appropriate pedestrian scale along *Major Streets* and new retail streets, sunlight access and thermal comfort on streets, parks, and open spaces, the Jane Finch community is envisioned to welcome new growth in well-designed, transit-supportive, inclusive forms.

City Planning continues to support the distribution of heights within proposed Phase 1, as outlined in the 1911 Finch Avenue West (Jane Finch Mall) – Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment Applications – Decision Report – Approval, dated March 19, 2024, and generally supports the hierarchy of heights in later phases as it aligns with the emerging policy framework for the area and supports transit-supportive densities.

The proposed towers are varied in height and configuration, and would be massed and located to maximize sunlight on the proposed parks and public spaces while creating visual interest in the skyline. At the corner of Finch Avenue West and Jane Street and flanking the public square, the proposed tall buildings would serve as landmark buildings that provide a view terminus and signal a major transit node in the area. The proposed tower placement would preserve views to and from the surrounding community and maintain access to sunlight and privacy for residents.

Staff recommend that Council support approval of the application.

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SIGNATURE

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