

Weston in Gear Planning Study – Status Report

Date: October 7, 2024

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Director, Community Planning, Etobicoke York District

Ward: Ward 5 – York South-Weston

Planning Application Number: 23 231786 WPS 00 TM

SUMMARY

This report provides a status update on the Weston in Gear Planning Study (the study) including area, process, scope, and timing.

The study is engaging with the local community to create a renewed vision and built-form, public realm and community benefits plan for the area. Recognition of properties of cultural heritage in the community will also be included in the scope of the study as well as aligning initiatives to provide an updated municipal servicing plan and improved streetscape design of Weston Road. The study will recommend a policy framework including implementation recommendations to inform future development and public realm improvements in the study area.

A report with final recommendations as a result of the study process is targeted for the fourth quarter of 2025. A revised Site and Area Specific Policy and urban design guidelines will be reported on separately after the study process has been completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The Etobicoke York Community Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are funds allocated towards this study in the City Planning Capital Budget to support the completion of study objectives.

EQUITY STATEMENT

The Weston in Gear Planning Study provides a holistic approach to managing growth and change in the area, while considering potential impacts on equity-seeking groups, Indigenous and vulnerable residents of Toronto. The study will result in a framework for establishing a complete community that supports overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes. This will be achieved through encouraging a range of housing options and creating an accessible and vibrant public realm. Staff will involve diverse voices through the consultation and engagement practices being deployed for

the study as outlined in this report. Input from diverse individuals and groups and the Indigenous community in the development of the recommendations of the study is important.

DECISION HISTORY

On March 10, 2016, City Council directed staff to undertake a planning study for Weston Road to guide future growth and leverage community improvements through the development anticipated to follow public investment in transit infrastructure. See [2016.EY12.31](#). The study was to:

- Undertake a review of the current planning framework for the study area including built-form, density, height, and public realm of the properties on Weston Road between Parke Street and Wilby Crescent/Wright Avenue.
- Consult with the community, including landowners and other stakeholder groups, together with the Ward Councillor, to understand the community's concerns and to develop a vision for future development in the study area.
- Report back on the findings of the review and to provide recommendations for changes, if necessary, to the planning framework for the study area.

The Weston in Gear Planning Study is in response to this Council directed motion.

As raised at past Planning and Housing Committee and Budget Committee related questions and updates on City Planning's Study Work Program, staff advised that this study would commence after the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework Study. Also, due in part to the Covid-19 pandemic, timing and staffing constraints delayed the Weston in Gear Planning Study.

PARALLEL AND ALIGNED INITIATIVES

The Weston neighbourhood has been studied, since the opening of the Weston GO Transit/UP Express station, including City-led initiatives, such as the Heritage Conservation Districts Study by Heritage Planning, and the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel Reports in 2018.

Recently, there has been a surge in development interest in the Weston area as reflected in the number of development applications currently under consideration by Development Review Division in the vicinity of Weston Road and Lawrence Avenue West.

The following current City-led parallel initiatives overlap with the Weston in Gear Study objectives and may inform the study's deliverables:

Weston & Mount Dennis Implementation Plan and Feasibility Assessment

The Weston & Mount Dennis Implementation Plan and Feasibility Assessment jointly led by City Planning and Transportation Services will complement the Weston in Gear Planning Study by addressing mobility and streetscape challenges along Weston Road, from St. Philips Road to Black Creek Drive.

This work will build on part of the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework Study and Mount Dennis Secondary Plan mobility objectives in developing and assessing existing and planned mobility conditions for the stretch of Weston Road located in the Village of Weston area.

Thermal Comfort Study

The City has identified the need to update guidelines, standards, and policies related to thermal comfort in the public realm. The Thermal Comfort Study led by Programs and Strategies, Urban Design, in City Planning will address thermal comfort in the public realm and shared outdoor amenity spaces, taking into consideration future climate projections and the impacts of the surrounding built form. The Weston in Gear Planning Study has been chosen as a pilot project to apply and test the new Thermal Comfort Guidelines.

Weston in Gear Servicing Assessment

Toronto Water has initiated an updated servicing modeling of the Weston area in conjunction with a hired consultant. The growth analysis undertaken through the Weston in Gear Planning Study and its recommended options will inform the modelling and will be an important input to the Final Functional Servicing Assessment Report.

Weston Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) Streetscape Master Plan and Comprehensive Strategic Plan

In 2021, the Weston Village BIA published a Streetscape Master Plan for the Weston Road area with PLANT Architect Inc. inclusive of the stretch of Weston Road bounded by Church Street to the north and Wilby Crescent/Wright Avenue to the south. The study team will consult with the Weston BIA and rely on the Streetscape Master Plan in developing the Parks, Open Space and Public Realm Strategy for the study area.

In June 2023, the Weston Village BIA published a Weston Village BIA Comprehensive Strategic Plan by Gladki Planning Associates Inc., which includes a four-year strategic plan with detailed actions and implementation strategies for the BIA to address the unique opportunities for improvement that exist in the Village of Weston.

Councillor Led Safety Audit

On May 6, 2024, City Planning staff joined Councillor Nunziata, residents, Toronto Police Services, Municipal Licensing and Services staff and Toronto Hydro staff in a Councillor office led safety audit from Little Street to Wilby Crescent. Findings of this safety audit will be incorporated in the study's findings.

The study team will build on the lessons learned from all other initiatives already undertaken in Weston including existing development applications to provide a robust engagement program.

STUDY AREA AND CONTEXT

The Weston in Gear Planning Study Area is bounded to the north by the Kitchener GO rail line, Queenslea Avenue, Walwyn Avenue, Lamont Avenue, Langside Avenue, and Woodward Avenue, to the east by Pine Street, Wright Avenue and Sam Frustaglio Drive, to the south by Clouston Avenue, and to the west by the Humber River. See Attachment 1: Weston in Gear Planning Study Area.

The east and west boundaries of the study area are based on the Weston Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) boundaries, while the southern boundary is the northern boundary of the Mount Dennis Secondary Plan. The northern boundary of the study area follows the northern boundary of SASP 51 for the Weston Area.

POLICY CONTEXT

Provincial Land-use Policies

All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) (PPS (2020)), and shall conform to provincial plans including A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) (Growth Plan (2020)), the Greenbelt Plan and others.

On October 20, 2024, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) comes into effect and combines the PPS (2020) and the Growth Plan (2020) into a single policy document. As of October 20, 2024, all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) (PPS 2024) and shall conform to Provincial plans including the Greenbelt Plan (2017) and others.

Official Plan Policies and Planning Studies

The Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure provides the urban structure for properties within the Study Area. Land uses for properties within the Study area are illustrated on Official Plan Map 14 - Land Use Plan. The study area includes properties identified as Avenues, Employment Areas, and green space system. The study area also includes properties designated as *Mixed Use Areas* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* along Weston Road as well as *Neighbourhoods* and *General Employment Areas* and *Core Employment Areas* surrounding Weston Road. The western boundary of the study area contains lands that are designated Natural Areas and Parks in the land use plan, which correspond to lands along Black Creek. See Attachment 2: Official Plan Land Use Map of this report for the land use designations located within the study area.

The Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making.

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

Major Transit Station Area

Council adopted Site and Area Specific Policy 695 which delineates certain Major Transit Station Areas, including the Weston Major Transit Station Area (MTSA), subject

to approval by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The future Weston Major Transit Station Area plans for a minimum combined population and employment target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare.

Site and Area Specific Policies

The study area includes SASP 45, 46, 47, 48 and 51 in the Official Plan, which are described below.

SASP 45 – Lands Located within the Village of Weston

SASP 45 prescribes a maximum height of eight storeys and 24 metres in the Village of Weston and provides strategies to reinforce the village as the focus of the Weston community through implementation of strategies such as:

- A streetscape design plan to improve pedestrian spaces.
- A façade and signage improvement program using the theme of the history of Weston Village.
- Provision of adequate public parking.
- Relocation of the Farmer's Market to a site with a better connection to surrounding communities.
- Linking Weston Village to other parts of the Weston community and the Humber River Valley through improved pedestrian connections and streetscape improvements.
- Improvement and expansion of the GO Transit station.

SASP 46 – Lawrence Avenue West and Hickory Tree Road

SASP 46 permits a meeting, restaurant, or retail facility on lands within the Weston Lions Park.

SASP 47 – Lands in the Vicinity of Weston Presbyterian Church

SASP 47 provides a site-specific policy for the Weston Presbyterian Church.

SASP 48 – West of Rosemount Avenue, South of Jane Street, and Along Lawrence Avenue West Near Jane Street

SASP 48 provides an area specific policy to limit height to between two and four storeys and limit maximum density to 1.5 times the lot area.

SASP 51 – Weston Area

SASP 51 provides policies to:

- Maintain view corridors to the Humber River Valley from street intersections of Weston Road.
- Improve links between the Weston Community and the Humber River Valley by adding and improving existing pedestrian connections including an expansion of the pedestrian/bicycle trail system north of Cruickshank Park and establishing additional amenities for park users such as a café, retail pavilion and washrooms.

- Provide a significant open space feature in the Lawrence Employment Area.

Zoning By-law

The study area contains a variety of zoning designations under Zoning By-law 569-2013. Along the Weston Road corridor, are properties primarily with Commercial and Residential Apartment zoning. Then properties with Commercial Residential zoning focused around the intersection of Weston Road and Lawrence Avenue West. In the rest of the study area, particularly to the north and east of the rail corridor, Residential Detached zoning predominates. See Attachment 4: Existing Zoning By-law 569-2013 Map of this report for the existing zoning designations within the study area.

Weston Urban Design Guidelines

The existing urban design guidelines for Weston cover an area that is roughly similar to the proposed Study area boundary, extending just slightly beyond. The Study will result in updated urban design guidelines to help achieve desirable built-form and public realm.

Development Activity

The Weston area is experiencing significant growth and development activity since the opening of the new combined Union Pearson (UP) Express and Weston GO Transit station. Since July 2019, there have been 13 active tall building development applications within the proposed study area, primarily along Weston Road.

STUDY SCOPE, PROCESS AND TIMING

Scope of Work

This study is scoped based on the review of current and approved development proposals to provide direction for future growth and change in the study area. The study will focus on the public realm, built-form and community benefits including:

- Cultural heritage, streetscape, public realm and park opportunities.
- Built-form, density and height, based on existing and planned context assessment, including recent approvals.
- Thermal Comfort Study to inform public realm and built-form recommendations.
- Community Services and Facilities Assessment.
- Coordination with the Weston & Mount Dennis Implementation Plan and Feasibility Assessment and Weston in Gear Servicing Study.

Study Process and Timing

The study team will consist of the City staff and an outside consultant. The Weston in Gear Planning Study will include three phases and is targeted to be completed by the end of the fourth Quarter of 2025 as follows:

- Phase 1: Background Review will include a policy and existing conditions review (including re-examining land use designations along Weston Road and Lawrence Avenue West, heritage analysis, development applications under review,

remaining soft sites and sites located along Weston Road and Lawrence Avenue West) in conjunction with local public and stakeholders to identify opportunities and constraints, develop a vision and guiding principles as well as proposed evaluation criteria to assess development options, to be documented in a Background Report.

- Phase 2: Options and Recommendations will include preparing a Land Use Plan and Area Structure Plan to guide the development and evaluation of development options, which will be evaluated by residents and other stakeholders to identify a preferred option. This process will be documented in an Emerging Framework Report along with supporting technical reports.
- Phase 3: Emerging Plan and Policy will include the Final Planning Framework Report which may include the Land Use, Built Form and Cultural Heritage Strategy, Parks, Open Space and Public Realm Strategy, Mobility and Streets and Blocks Strategy, Community Services and Facilities Strategy. In conjunction with the Weston in Gear Planning Study, Toronto Water is undertaking a servicing assessment and Final Functional Servicing Assessment Report will be included in the final framework report for the study. This phase may also include further local public engagement and stakeholder consultation.

See Attachment 5: Study Process and Timeline for more information on the study process.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The study process will include an innovative, robust and inclusive public consultation and communications process that engages and informs the area's diverse spectrum of stakeholders including, but not limited to, indigenous groups, residents, tenants, equity-seeking groups, community organizations, youth, seniors, hard to reach communities, cyclists, pedestrians, transit-users, businesses and business groups (including the BIA), institutions, and not-for profit organizations. This will include a variety of in-person and online-engagements, three community consultations, a local advisory committee, three community focused engagements, indigenous consultation, and engagement with Social Development, Finance and Administration and the Community Cluster – York Weston Pelham and Community Services and Facilities Sector.

Community Consultation Meeting

A community consultation meeting in an open house, resident drop-in format was held on September 24, 2024 at C.R. Marchant Middle School, to introduce the Weston in Gear Planning Study to the community and other key stakeholders in the study area. At the meeting, City staff presented information panels and provided opportunity for the community comments. The main purpose of the meeting was to seek initial feedback on the Study Area boundary, community transportation modes, areas of cultural heritage significance, opportunities and constraints in the study area as well as needed community services and facilities. Staff also provided application forms to community members interested in being part of the local advisory committee for the study. Approximately 110 community members and stakeholders attended the open house in person.

Planners in Public Spaces

A Planners in Public Spaces ("PIPS") consultation event was held on October 5, 2024, at the Weston Farmer's Market. City staff had a tent at the Farmer's Market and raised awareness about the Weston in Gear Planning Study for members of the community, local businesses, and other interested parties. City staff were at the event from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and engaged with approximately 80 residents.

NEXT STEPS

The study team is continuing work in Phase 1 of the study program. This will include developing a Vision and Guiding Principles for the Weston in Gear Planning Study and retaining a private consultant to aid in completing the deliverables in each phase of the study.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Data/Drawings

Attachment 1: Weston in Gear Planning Study Area

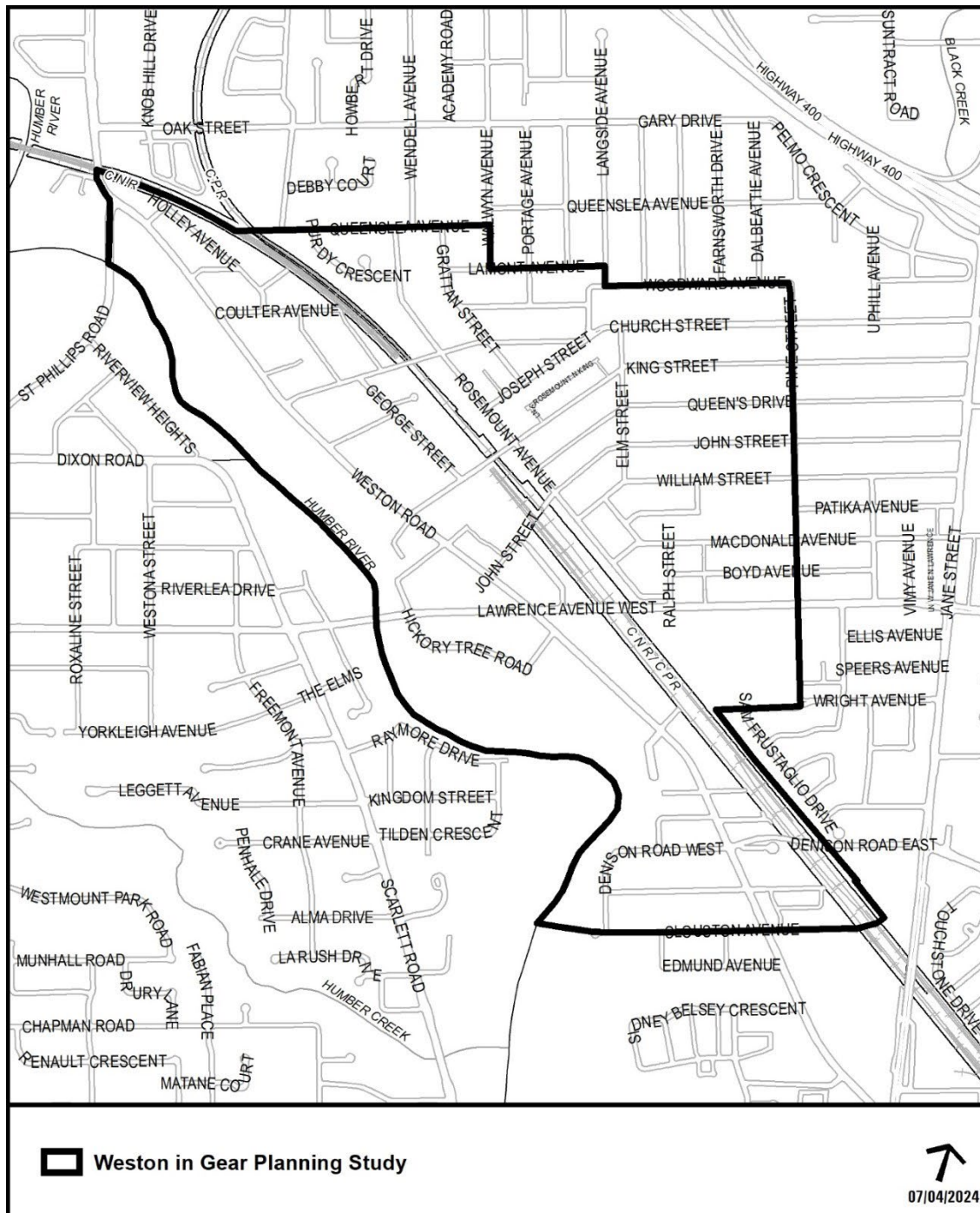
Attachment 2: Official Plan Land Use Map

Attachment 3: Chapter 8 Site and Area Specific Policy No. 695, Major Transit Station Area - Weston Station

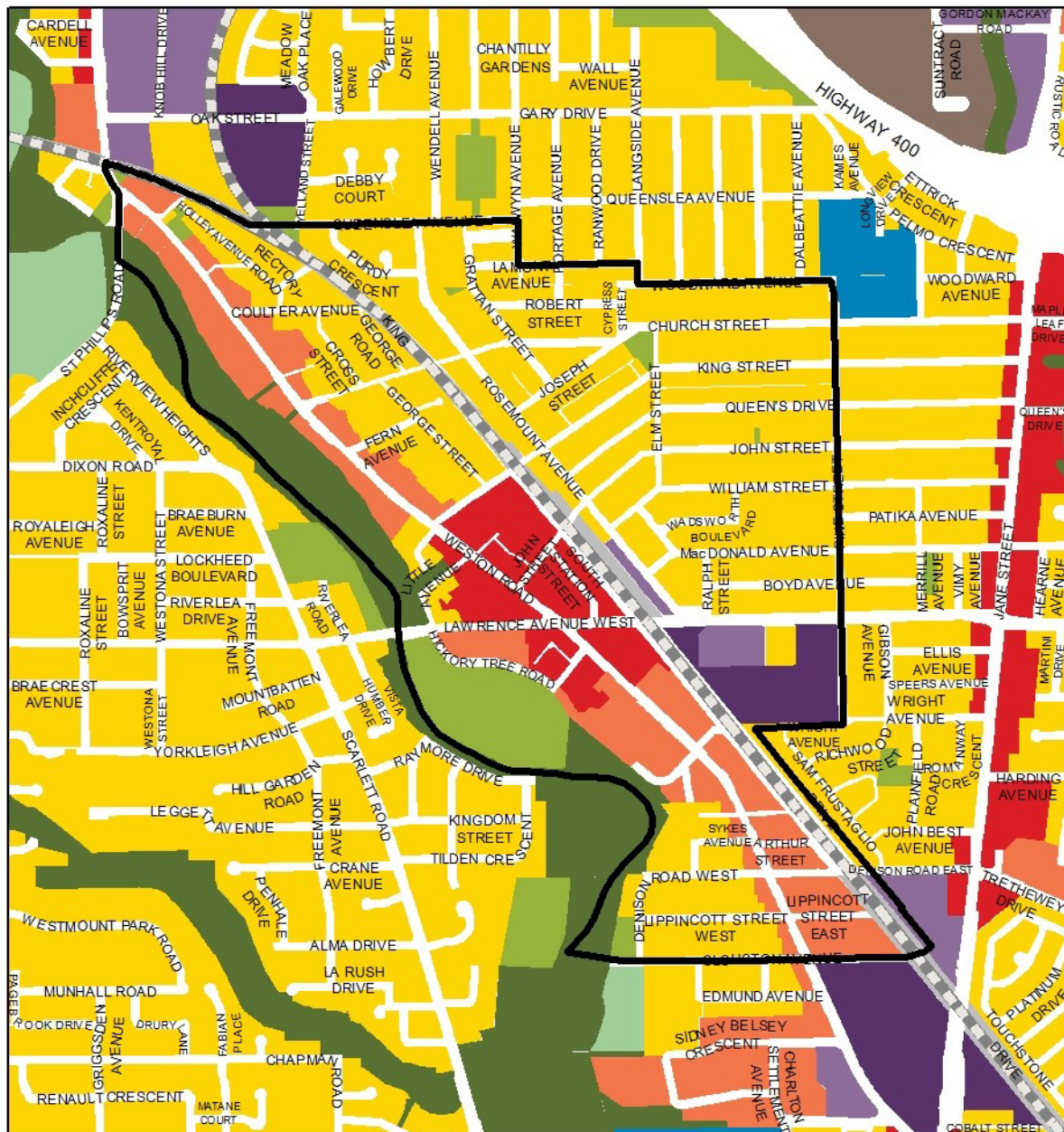
Attachment 4: Existing Zoning By-law 569-2013 Map

Attachment 5: Study Process and Timeline

Attachment 1: Weston in Gear Planning Study Area



Attachment 2: Official Plan Land Use Map



Official Plan Land Use Map

Weston Study Area

File # 23 231786 WPS 00 TM

Location of Study Area

Neighbourhoods

Apartment Neighbourhoods

Mixed Use Areas

Natural Areas

Parks

Other Open Space Areas

Institutional Areas

Regeneration Areas

General Employment Areas

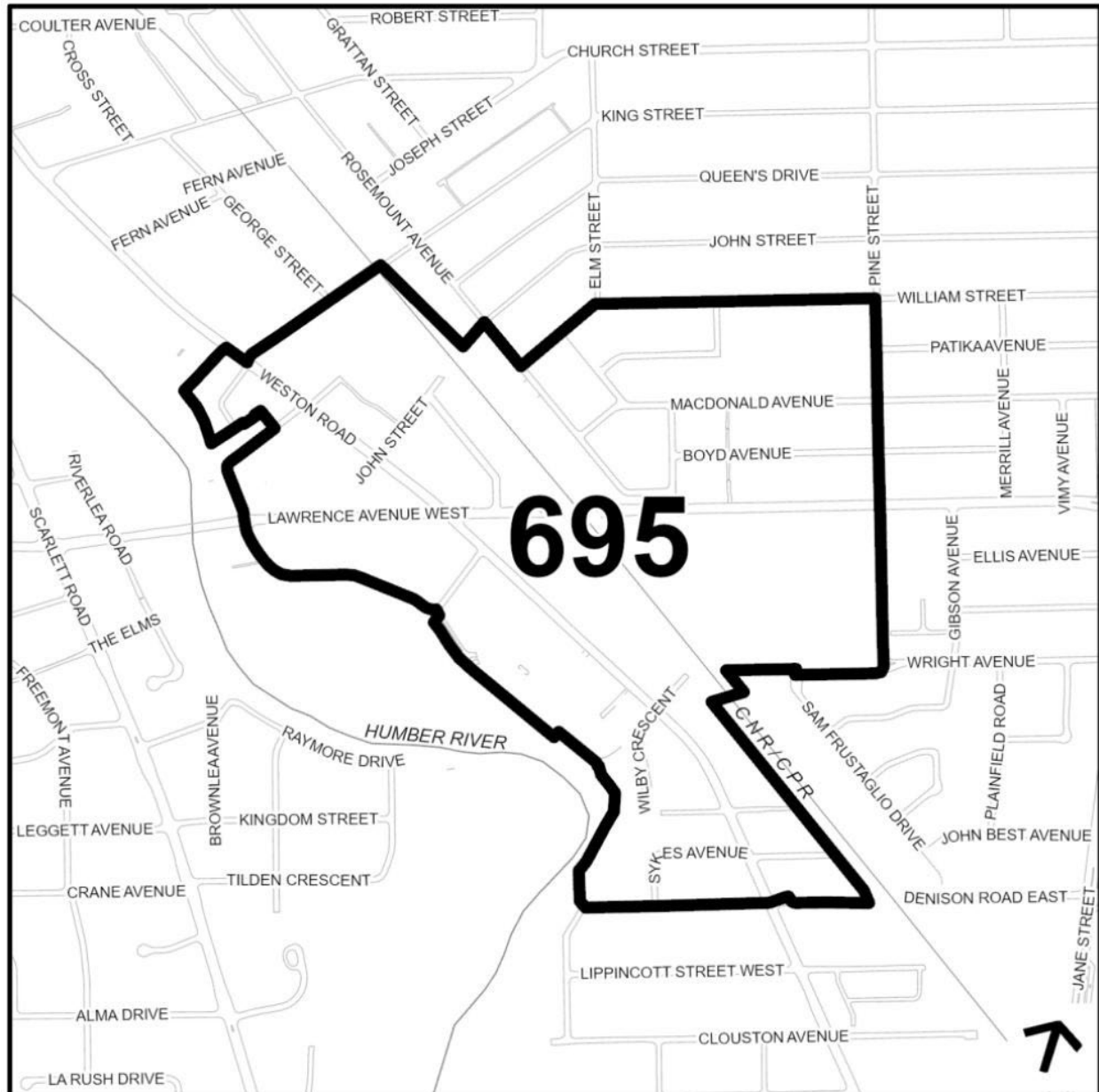
Core Employment Areas

Utility Corridors

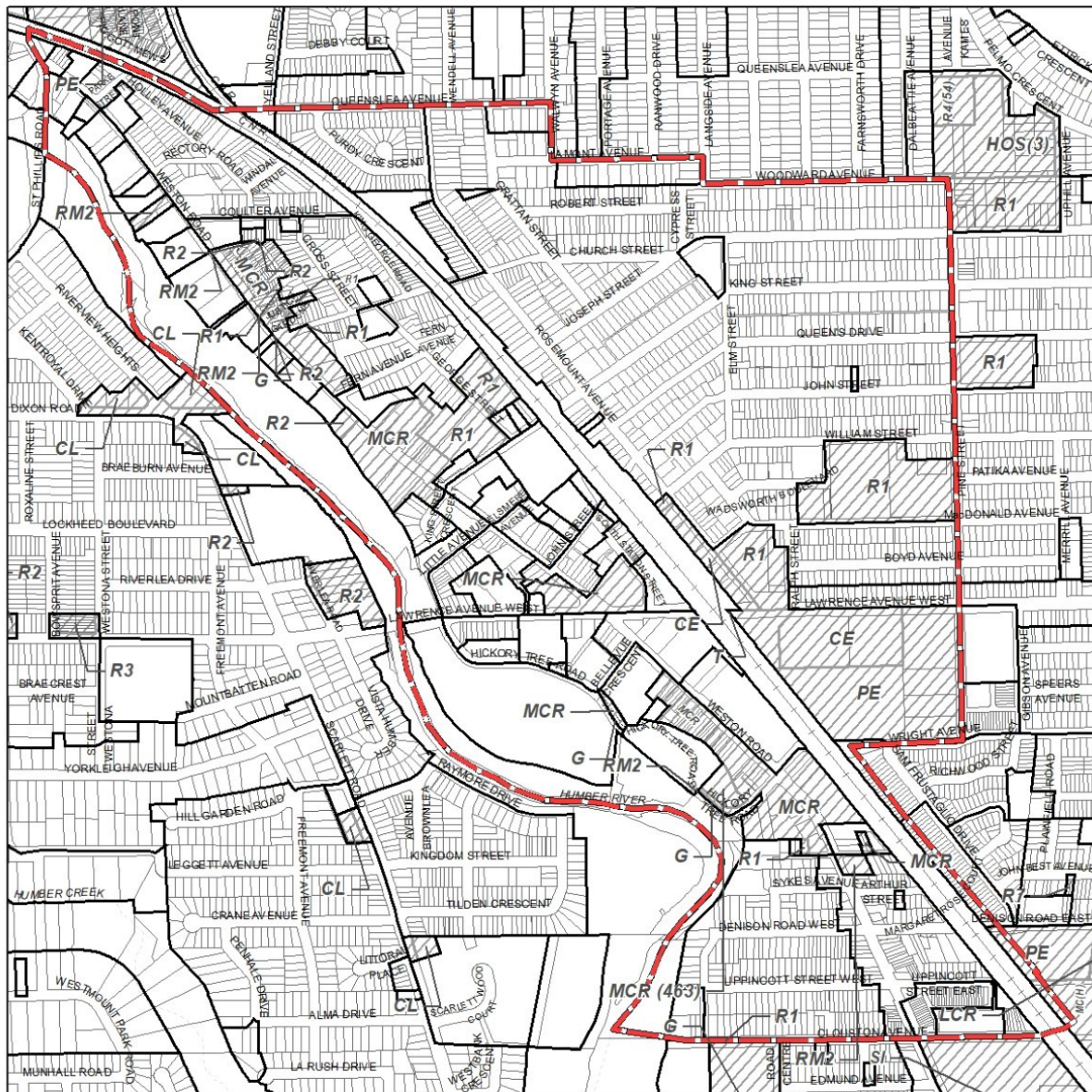


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Attachment 3: Chapter 8 Site and Area Specific Policy No. 695, Major Transit Station Area - Weston Station



Attachment 4: Existing Zoning By-law 569-2013 Map



Zoning By-law 569-2013

Weston Study Area

File # 23 231786 WPS 00 TM

Location of Application

RD Residential Detached
RS Residential Semi-Detached
RT Residential Townhouse
RM Residential Multiple
RA Residential Apartment
RAC Residential Apartment Commercial
CL Commercial Local
CR Commercial Residential

E Employment Industrial
I Institutional
O Open Space
ON Open Space Natural
OR Open Space Recreation
OG Open Space Golf Course
OC Open Space Cemetery
UT Utility and Transportation

See Former City of Etobicoke By-law No. 11,737
R2 Second Density Residential Zone
R3 Third Density Residential Zone
CL Limited Commercial Zone



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