

Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District Study - Final Report

Date: December 1, 2025

To: Toronto Preservation Board

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: Ward 4 – Parkdale-High Park

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the findings of the Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study (the "HCD Study" or "Study") and recommends that the Toronto Preservation Board endorse staff's recommendations that the HCD Study not proceed to the Plan phase and affirm the list of individual properties with cultural heritage or interest within the Study area.

In March 2015, City Council authorized and prioritized the Bloor West Village HCD Study. In November 2017, City staff, with a consultant team (Stantec Consulting Ltd.), initiated a study of this area to determine whether it merited designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (the "OHA"). The HCD Study included the survey, analysis, and evaluation of the Bloor West Village area and solicited feedback from a Community Advisory Group and the community. The HCD Study was initially undertaken concurrently with the Bloor West Village Avenue Study (the "Avenue Study"), which was conducted by a consultant team between 2016 and 2018. Implementation of new planning policy did not move forward at that time.

The HCD Study was delayed by the COVID-19 global pandemic but was completed in 2021. The consultant team did not recommend that a HCD Plan be prepared for the Study Area, but a list of properties was recommended for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register as outlined in Attachment 4. The Study also recommended the preparation of comprehensive, area-specific Urban Design Guidelines to guide context-sensitive growth and change in a way that supports and maintains the historic main street character of Bloor West Village, including its low-rise, fine-grain built form and other character-defining elements, particularly within the Village Main Street character area.

The final report for the Avenue Study, including its recommendations regarding the Urban Design Guidelines, will be considered by Toronto and East York Community Council at its meeting on November 27, 2025. The findings and recommendations from the HCD Study have informed and guided the development of the Urban Design

Guidelines (the "Guidelines"), ensuring that heritage considerations are meaningfully integrated into the planning framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. The Toronto Preservation Board endorse the recommendations of the Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District Study - Final Report dated April 21, 2021 (Attachment 3).
2. The Toronto Preservation Board endorse the list of properties identified as having cultural heritage potential (Attachment 4 – Properties of Potential Cultural Heritage Value).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

On May 13, 2014, Etobicoke York Community Council adopted Item EY33.39, which nominated the Bloor West Village area for study as a potential Heritage Conservation District.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2014.EY33.39>

At its meeting of July 8-11, 2014, City Council adopted Member Motion MM54.16 which directed that a Planning Study be undertaken for the area of Bloor Street West between Keele Street and the Humber River.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2014.MM54.16>

On March 31, 2015, City Council adopted an amended prioritization system for heritage conservation districts, authorized the Bloor West Village area for study as a potential Heritage Conservation District, and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to initiate the study of the Bloor West Village district after application of the prioritization criteria.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG2.8>

At its meeting of June 26, 2018, City Council adopted the Bloor West Village Avenue Study (Status Report) with the final consultant study and recommendations.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.EY31.5>

At its meeting on May 23-24, 2024, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 720, which requires a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report under Schedule 3 of the Official Plan where a property has been identified by City Council through a City-led study as having potential cultural heritage value or interest, but which is not included on the Heritage Register. City Council's decision can be found here:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH12.2>

The Bloor West Village Avenue Study – Urban Design Guidelines – Final Report will be considered by the Toronto and East York Community Council at its meeting on November 27, 2025. The Toronto and East York Community Council item can be accessed here:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.TE27.29>

POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Legislative Framework

Provincial Planning Statement and Planning Act

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place. In Ontario, heritage conservation is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. Cultural heritage resources are considered irreplaceable and valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) ("PPS"). Heritage conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime and provides policies to guide decision-making within the city.

Good planning within the provincial and municipal policy framework has at its foundation an understanding and appreciation for places of historic significance and ensures the conservation of these resources are to be balanced with other provincial interests. Heritage resources may include buildings, structures, monuments, and geographic areas that have cultural heritage value or interest to a community, including an Indigenous community.

The Planning Act establishes the foundation for land use planning in Ontario, describing how land can be controlled and by whom. Section 2 of the Planning Act identifies heritage conservation as a matter of provincial interest and directs that municipalities shall have regard to the conservation of features of significant architectural, historical, archaeological, or scientific interest. Heritage conservation contributes to other matters of provincial interest, including the promotion of built form that is well-designed, and that encourages a sense of place.

The Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters shall be consistent with the PPS (2024) which positions heritage as a key component in supporting key provincial principles and interests.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) provides policy direction on land use planning in Ontario and is to be used by municipalities in the development of their official plans and to guide and inform decisions on planning matters, which shall be consistent with the PPS. The PPS articulates how and why heritage conservation is a component of good planning, explicitly requiring the conservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources, alongside the pursuit of other provincial interests. It provides specific direction for the protection of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources, and areas of archaeological potential, both on development sites and where development is proposed on adjacent properties. The PPS states that cultural heritage and archaeology help provide people with a 'sense of place'.

Policy 4.6.1 of the PPS directs that "Protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, shall be conserved." Policy 4.6.3 specifies that "Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on adjacent lands to protected heritage property unless the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved." Policy 4.6.4 (b) encourages planning authorities to develop and implement proactive strategies for conserving significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. Through the definition of conserved, protected heritage property, built heritage resources, and cultural heritage landscape, the PPS identifies the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage conservation will be implemented.

<https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-10/mmah-provincial-planning-statement-en-2024-10-23.pdf>

Ontario Heritage Act

The Ontario Heritage Act is the key provincial legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources, including archaeology, within municipal boundaries. This is largely achieved through listing on the City's Heritage Register, designation of individual properties under Part IV of the OHA, or designation of districts under Part V of the OHA.

Section 27 of the OHA gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the OHA as well as properties that have not been designated but City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest."

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>

Under Part V of the OHA municipalities are enabled to establish heritage conservation districts where their official plan contains provisions relating to the establishment of such. The City of Toronto's Official Plan supports identification, evaluation, and designation of heritage conservation districts.

Section 41.1 of the OHA describes the requirements for the HCD Plan, including: a statement of objectives; a statement of district significance explaining the cultural

heritage value or interest of the HCD; a description of heritage attributes; policies, guidelines, and procedures for achieving the stated objectives; and a description of alterations that may be undertaken by property owners without obtaining a heritage permit.

Prior to designating an HCD, City Council must undertake an HCD study to determine if the area merits designation. Section 40 (2) of the OHA identifies the scope and required components of an HCD study. These include: an analysis of the character and appearance of the district; recommendations for the district's boundaries; recommendations for the objectives of the HCD plan; and recommended changes to the Official Plan and municipal by-laws, including zoning by-laws where necessary. This report summarizes the recommendations of the HCD study undertaken in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act.

On January 1, 2023, the Province's proposed amendments to the OHA through the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) came into effect. For HCDs, per Regulation 569/22 of the OHA, at least 25 per cent of the properties within the defined area must satisfy two or more of the nine criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest.

Further, the Bill 23 amendments to the OHA regarding Listed properties include provisions stating that properties will be removed from the City's Heritage Register two years after their listing date if no further action is taken by Council to designate them under Parts IV or V of the OHA. The original removal deadline of January 1, 2025, was extended through Bill 200, providing for an additional two years until January 1, 2027, for properties on the Heritage Register on or before January 1, 2023. Properties listed since January 2023 must still be removed on the original two-year timeline. Once removed, Council may not relist any property for a period of five years.

City of Toronto's Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan (the "Official Plan") contains several policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. Indicating the integral role that heritage conservation plays in successful city-building, Section 3.1.6 of the Official Plan states that, "Cultural heritage is an important component of sustainable development and place making. The preservation of our cultural heritage is essential to the character of this urban and liveable City that can contribute to other social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the City."

Official Plan Policy 3.1.6.30 provides for the establishment of HCDs and their designation and conservation. It states, "Potential heritage conservation districts will be identified and evaluated to determine their significance and cultural heritage values, in a Heritage Conservation District study. Heritage Conservation Districts that have been evaluated to be significant for their heritage value will be designated and conserved."

Policy 3.1.6.2 states that properties and HCDs of potential cultural heritage value or interest will be identified and evaluated consistent with provincial regulations and criteria and that the evaluation of HCDs may also consider additional criteria such as social, community, natural and scientific value. Policy 3.1.6.3 directs that HCDs will be

protected by being designated under the OHA and included on the Heritage Register. Policy 3.1.6.4 states that properties on the Heritage Register (including those within HCDs) will be conserved and maintained consistent with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. In addition to the direction of Section 3.1.6, the Official Plan provides support for heritage conservation within the context of accommodating growth and change.

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

Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedure, Policies and Terms of Reference (HCDs in Toronto) was adopted by Toronto City Council in March 2012 to provide a consistent approach for the studying and planning of HCDs in the city. In addition, the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (Standards and Guidelines) is the benchmark for recommending conservation treatments and approaches. The Official Plan references the Standards and Guidelines as a key guidance document, requiring that properties on the Heritage Register be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines.

Bloor West Village Avenue Study

In July 2014, City Council adopted a motion directing a Planning Study for the Bloor Street West corridor between Keele Street and the Humber River, aligning with the HCD Study Area be undertaken. The Avenue Study area is defined by significant topography and natural features, including slopes west of Jane Street, east of Glendonwyne Road, and downward toward Keele Street. Although outside the study area, High Park to the southeast and the Humber River to the west serve as regionally significant natural landmarks that frame Bloor West Village and are both areas with cultural heritage significance to Indigenous communities.

The study area includes lands designated *Mixed Use Areas*, *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan and is well-served by transit, with four TTC stations either within or directly adjacent to it. The Avenue Study was initiated in December 2016, with City Planning retaining DTAH to conduct the study. The consultant's report, completed in 2018, provided recommendations for a policy framework to guide and manage future growth in the area.

Since 2018, the Avenue Study has experienced several delays that have prolonged its completion. Notably, the study was transferred from the Etobicoke-York District to the Toronto and East York District following ward boundary changes in 2018. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 further contributed to delays. In addition, since the initial work undertaken between 2016 and 2018, planning policy has shifted significantly, requiring modifications to the Urban Design Guidelines.

Between 2023 and 2025, City staff developed Urban Design Guidelines that formalized previous studies and provided direction for new development. The key objectives of this planning framework include compatible intensification along a transit line, protection of sunlight in public spaces, celebration of natural and cultural heritage, and enhancement of the public realm.

Bloor Street West serves local needs through small-scale commercial businesses and a fine-grained pattern of storefronts, contributing to its vibrant and historic main street character. Its early 20th-century buildings, narrow retail frontages, unique topography, proximity to transit, and surrounding neighbourhoods all reinforce its distinct sense of place and identity.

The Guidelines prioritize maintaining and enhancing the area's character, quality, and local retail, ensuring that future development enhances pedestrian comfort and reinforces the qualities that make Bloor West Village a unique and cherished part of the city. The Guidelines are intended to support the Official Plan policies by guiding new development, identifying opportunities to improve public realm, protecting the area's natural environment, and conserving its cultural heritage.

COMMENTS

Project Background

In Toronto, HCDs are identified and designated through a phased process, beginning with an HCD Study, followed by the development of an HCD Plan, if warranted. In May 2014, Etobicoke York Community Council adopted Item EY33.39, nominating the Bloor West Village area for study as a potential HCD. The Bloor West Village HCD Study was prioritized by Toronto City Council in March 2015.

In November 2017, the City engaged Stantec Consulting Ltd. to conduct the HCD Study for Bloor West Village. The Study involved surveying, analyzing, and evaluating the area, as well as soliciting community feedback through public engagement and a Community Advisory Group. The process followed the Council-adopted *HCDs in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference*. After a detailed analysis of the Study Area and extensive community consultation, the HCD Study concluded that the area did not warrant proceeding to the HCD Plan phase (see Attachment 3, which includes the consultant's report completed in April 2021). Reporting on the HCD Study was delayed to allow for alignment with the Avenue Study and the development of Urban Design Guidelines that incorporated the HCD Study recommendations.

In Q1 2025, Heritage Planning staff conducted an updated evaluation of the area based on the new criteria outlined in Ontario Regulation 569/22. This assessment determined that the HCD Study Area, consisting of 275 properties, does not meet the provincial threshold, which requires at least 25 percent of properties to meet two or more of the nine criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest. As a result, the Study Area did not meet the provincial criteria for district designation.

Building on the HCD Study's findings, Heritage Planning staff undertook further research and evaluation, and identified a list of properties within the Study Area that have potential cultural heritage value. Additionally, Heritage Planning staff played an active role in the Bloor West Village Avenue Study, ensuring that heritage considerations were effectively integrated into the final recommendations. This includes detailed Urban Design Guidelines that seek to maintain the area's historic main street

character and sense of place, while accommodating context-sensitive growth and intensification.

The list of properties identified as having potential cultural heritage value has been appended to the Avenue Study's final report and is also included in the Heritage Inventory appended to the Guidelines. Where redevelopment involves one or more of these identified properties, a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report will be required in accordance with Official Plan Amendment 720 (OPA 720).

The Guidelines will be considered by the Toronto and East York Community at its meeting on November 27, 2025.

Context

The Bloor West Village HCD Study Area encompasses properties fronting onto Bloor Street West from Keele Street in the east to the Humber River in the west, excluding High Park. The area features a diverse range of building typologies, with apartment buildings concentrated at the eastern and western ends and a cohesive stretch of commercial main street buildings defining the village area core.

Archaeology

The HCD Study Area has small areas of archaeological potential dispersed throughout, with the highest concentration of archaeological potential being located in the western portion of the Study Area, near the Humber River. The central portion of the Study Area shows sparse archaeological potential because of the density of historical and more recent commercial and residential development. The east portion of the Study Area lacks archaeological potential which is due to the density of development caused by the excavation for underground parking and infrastructure for the High Park apartment buildings located on the north side of Bloor Street. The Study Area doesn't include High Park which retains archaeological potential. There are no registered archaeological sites or Archaeologically Sensitive Areas within the HCD Study Area.

Existing Heritage Properties

The Study Area contains six listed properties and one Part IV designated property, the former Runnymede Theatre at 2223 Bloor Street West. The listed properties include the Runnymede Public Library at 2178 Bloor Street West, four apartment buildings on the north side of Bloor Street West between High Park Avenue and Quebec Avenue, located at 1908, 1914, 1920, and 1926 Bloor Street West, and one apartment building at the northeast corner of Bloor Street West and Mountview Avenue, located at 1778 Bloor Street West. These five early-20th century walk-up apartment buildings were constructed between approximately 1927 and 1930.

History and Evolution

As part of the HCD Study process, research into the history and evolution of the Study Area was conducted to establish a foundational understanding of its land use and development pattern. This research informed the subsequent character analysis and heritage evaluation. A detailed review of the Study Area's history and evolution is

provided in Chapter 2.0 of the HCD Study report, included as Attachment 3 to this report, and is briefly summarized below.

The historical development of the Bloor West Village HCD Study Area can be understood through seven key periods: Indigenous Communities (-present), Survey and Settlement (1791-1800), Early 19th-Century Development (1800-1850s), Mid-to-late 19th-Century Development (1850s-1900), Early to mid-20th-Century Development (1900-1949), Mid-to-late 20th-Century Development (1950-1980), Late 20th Century to Present (1980-present).

The Study Area is located within the Iroquois Plain physiographic region of Southern Ontario. The Iroquois Plain is bound along its western extent by the Humber River, which simultaneously forms the western boundary or natural 'bookend' of the Study Area (where High Park marks the corresponding eastern bookend). The river also serves as the southern end of the Toronto Carrying Place Trail, an important trade route for Indigenous peoples and early Western explorers. The Indigenous peoples who lived on this land were mobile groups with large territories, and there is evidence of their presence and land use here since at least 9000 BC.

For time immemorial, the area now known as the City of Toronto has been home to First Indigenous peoples. Following the retreat of glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago, small groups of First Indigenous peoples moved from place to place, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. Long-distance trade moved valuable resources across the land.

After maize and squash were introduced to Southern Ontario, by approximately 500 CE, horticulture began to supplement food sources. By 1300 CE, villages focused on growing food became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge, and Humber Rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. The trail on the Humber River passed through the Study Area.

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s, European diseases decimated First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors, contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat.

Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from

approximately the 1660s to the 1680s. On the Humber, the village of Teiaiagon was located on Baby Point, just northwest of the Study Area. In the late 1680s, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chose to leave their villages in the Toronto area and returned to their homelands in upstate New York, although they did not relinquish their interest in the resources of the area. The 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, the 1701 Nanfan Treaty, and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, demonstrate how the Haudenosaunee continue to identify the north shore of Lake Ontario as part of their traditional territory.

During this same period, the Mississaugas expanded their territory westward and moved into the vast territory which included the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Mississaugas continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish, and gather resources that were available at a specific time, including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, and Scugog Island.

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km², including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, and Scugog Island). For First Nations, treaties were based on the idea of sharing the land. The Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold or owned. Following the Toronto Purchase, however, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of European settlers.

The Study Area is part of the former Township of York, within the former County of York. Surveying for the township began in 1791 under Crown Surveyor Augustus Jones and was completed in 1793. The survey defined township's boundaries, concessions, and lot framework, including Second Concession Road (now Bloor Street), named for its position north of Lot Street (now Queen Street). Due to the heavily forested landscape, sawmills emerged as the area's first industry, preceding agriculture.

The proximity to the Town of York (now Toronto) influenced the township's growth. Immigration trends increased its population, making it the most populous township in the County by 1830. When York became the City of Toronto in 1834, the township played a role in supplying grains and lumber. The Township of York was incorporated in 1850, with Bloor Street renamed in 1855 and subdivision of the area from South Kingsway to Windermere Avenue in the 1860s. However, much of the area remained primarily rural, with small hamlets at crossroads. At this time, the main influences on the Study Area's development were High Park and West Toronto Junction. High Park, historically part of Lot 37, Concession 1 from the Bay, was purchased by John George

Howard and deeded to the City in 1873 by him and his wife, Jemima Howard, for use as parkland.

The City of Toronto expanded through annexations, including West Toronto Junction in 1909 and Bloor Street West in 1920. Between 1901 and 1921, Toronto's population doubled from 208,040 to 521,893, accelerating citywide construction. However, development along Bloor Street West was delayed until improvements could be made to street conditions. These improvements started with the West Toronto Junction annexation that included a portion of the Study Area between Keele and Jane streets. This street section received sewer lines, infill, and grading improvements. Yet the most significant street improvement was the construction of the streetcar line throughout the 1910s. In 1914, the streetcar line became a city-funded project with the aim to foster further development along the future transit route. Once this funding was established, the pace of the construction progress was steady: the line was extended westward from Dundas Street in 1914, made double tracked in 1915, further extended to Runnymede Road in 1917, and then to Jane Street in 1921.

The streetcar line catalyzed the Study Area's first major construction boom, improving accessibility and attracting commercial investment. By the 1920s, residential development north of Bloor was largely complete, pushing new multi-residential buildings onto Bloor Street West, primarily three-to four-storey walk-up apartments. The boom ended in 1929 with the Stock Market Crash, but the 1930s saw a rise in automobile-related businesses, such as gas stations and garages, especially on the south side of Bloor.

Post-World War II, immigration from Eastern European, particularly Ukraine, reshaped the Study Area. Additional transportation was introduced to the Study Area with the approval of the Bloor-Danforth subway line in 1958. In 1966, the line was completed up to Keele Street and extended further west in 1968. Local business owners expressed concern that the subway line gave potential customers the easy, alternate option to travel downtown to shop, or go to the newly built shopping centres instead of staying on Bloor. Between 1953 and 1966, Toronto's shopping centres increased from 5 to 27, leading to commercial decline along Bloor West. By 1970, 57% of the businesses present in 1960 had been replaced or were vacant. In response, local businesses established Toronto's first Business Improvement Area (BIA) in 1970, the first of its kind in Toronto. The BIA began their streetscape improvements to reinforce the sense of place and local business pride.

The remaining portions of the Study Area, the Village of Swansea (south of Bloor, west of High Park) and the City of York (north of Bloor, west of Jane Street), were amalgamated into Toronto in 1967 and 1998, respectively. Over time, built-form density increased, but BIA efforts have ensured that infill projects largely respect the area's fine-grain, low-to-mid-rise character and streetscape.

Built form and Landscape Survey

A built form and landscape survey was undertaken to inventory each property within the Study Area, using the City of Toronto's standardized survey form and completed according to *HCDs in Toronto*. Through December 2017 and spring of 2018, the

consultant team undertook a survey of each property from the public realm. The survey recorded information including each property's height, cladding material, architectural style, and roof types, supplemented with photographs. Survey forms were completed for 275 properties in the Study Area. Information was organized within a database to assist in subsequent analysis, and to serve as a record of the area's built form at the time of the study.

Character Analysis

The HCD Study analyzed the character of Bloor West Village to understand its defining features and assess whether they reflect and support the area's periods of development. This included mapping data from the built form and landscape survey, such as dates of construction, architectural styles, building typologies, and integrity. The analysis helped identify patterns and trends in the Study Area's built form. Bloor West Village was primarily developed between 1900 and 1939. While development slowed in the late 1930s, it resumed post-World War II with the influx of European immigrants and the extension of subway stations north of the Study Area in the 1960s. However, the post-1950 development remained limited compared to the early 20th century boom.

The built form is predominantly low-rise, with 95% of buildings at four storeys or less. Most structures are two to three storeys, with two-storey buildings (59%) dominating the commercial section between Kennedy Avenue to Jane Street. The Study Area features a variety of architectural styles from the early 20th century to today, with the most common being: Contemporary (23%), 20th Century vernacular (22%), Edwardian (22%), and Arts and Crafts (9%).

The urban fabric is classified into three grain types (fine, intermediate, and coarse) each further distinguished as historic or contemporary. Fine-grained properties (4-10 metres in width) are clustered together, typically two to three storeys high, creating pedestrian-friendly blocks. These properties dominate the commercial section of Bloor West Village.

The Study Area contains five main residential typologies: low-rise apartments (1-5 storeys), mid-rise apartments (5-11 storeys), detached/semi-detached residences and townhouses, tall buildings (12+ storeys), and landmarks. Commercial storefront buildings, typically one to three storeys, make up 53% of buildings, with two-storey storefront buildings being the most common.¹

The Study Area's streetscapes feature a variety of street signs, lighting, plantings, and landscape elements. The only consistent treatment is along commercial frontages. These are generally characterized by hardscape comprising materials such as concrete, bricks, or stone. In contrast, residential frontages are characterized by soft landscape elements, including living features such as lawns, trees, or planters. The HCD Study also provided a detailed analysis of views, vistas, and gateways which helps define the area's character and sense of place.

¹ The statistical data referenced herein is taken from the Stantec report, dated April 2021, included as Attachment 3 to this report.

While no public parks or open spaces are within the Study Area, several adjacent ones act as natural boundaries and frame key views within the Study Area. The most visually dominant is High Park, which fronts Bloor Street West between Keele Street and Clendenan Avenue. Though outside the Study area, it serves as a gateway into Bloor West Village and defines east-west views along Bloor. Other parks adjacent to the Study Area on the north side of Bloor Street West include: Traymore Park, George Chater Park, Neil McClellan Park, Kennedy Margdon Parkette, Parkview Gardens Parkette, and Bennett Park. These parks are historically associated with the Study Area. To the west, the Humber River Valley provides a natural backdrop, with tree canopies visible from Riverside Drive. However, the river itself is not visible from within the Study Area.

Bloor Street West, lined with businesses from Ellis Park Road to South Kingsway, offers a pedestrian-friendly, village-like atmosphere, attracting both locals and visitors. The area is known for its walkability, shopping, and dining, with strong community engagement. Several annual events contribute to its vibrant character, including the Bloor West Village Toronto Ukrainian Festival (September), Inside OUT Sidewalk Sale (June), Bloor West Street Fest (July), Halloween Festival (October), and Santa in the Village (November).

The HCD Study Area is divided into six distinct character areas, identified based on consistent built form and landscape elements:

- Humber Residential (Riverside Drive to the Humber River)
- West Gap (Riverview Gardens/Mossom Road to Riverside Drive)
- West Village (Jane Street to Riverview Gardens/South Kingsway)
- Village Main Street (Glendonwynne Road to Jane Street)
- East Village (Clendenan Avenue to Glendonwynne Avenue)
- High Park Frontage (Keele Street to Clendenan Avenue)

A map of character areas is provided in Attachment 2 of this report.

Most early 20th-century buildings in the Study Area reflect the westward city expansion, facilitated by Bloor Street West improvements and the streetcar line. By the mid-to-late 20th century, the Study Area transitioned from a suburban neighbourhood to a local community, with strong ties between businesses and residents. As Toronto continues to grow, Bloor West Village retains its distinctive character, shaped by its historic main street character, fine-grained streetscape, vibrant commercial life, and connections to High Park and the Humber River.

Evaluation

Following an analysis of the Study Area's present-day character, history, and evolution, the HCD Study report evaluated the area against the Criteria for the Determination of Cultural Heritage Value within a Heritage Conservation District, as outlined in *HCDs in Toronto*.

The evaluation determined that a portion of the Village Main Street character area (between Kennedy Avenue and Jane Street) meets some criteria, outlined in *HCDs in*

Toronto, for consideration as an HCD. Village Main Street is a vibrant, dynamic, and evolving area, valued by the local community for its sense of place and historical significance. However, the area's historic character is primarily associated with its historical, associative, contextual, social, and community values rather than its architectural significance and distinctiveness. Architecturally, the area is defined by early 20th-century commercial and mixed-use buildings that contribute to its character. The design and physical values of the area are shaped by its low-rise scale, and fine-grained character, and vernacular early 20th-century architectural styles, though many buildings have undergone alterations to varying degrees.

A detailed heritage evaluation is provided in Chapter 8.0 of the HCD Study report, included as Attachment 3 to this report.

In Q1 2025, Heritage Planning staff conducted a supplementary evaluation of the entire HCD Study Area using the new provincial criteria. This assessment reviewed 275 properties within the Study Area and determined that fewer than 25 percent met the minimum threshold required for HCD designation under Part V of the OHA.

The HCD Study concludes that while a portion of the Village Main Street character area, between Kennedy Avenue and Jane Street, reflects important historical, associative, contextual, and social and community values, it does not exhibit strong architectural significance and distinction. Furthermore, the updated evaluation conducted by Heritage Planning staff confirmed that neither the broader HCD Study Area nor the Village Main Street character area meets the revised provincial criteria for district designation. As a result, the Bloor West Village area is not recommended for designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as a Heritage Conservation District.

Community Consultation

The HCD Study process included two Community Consultation Meetings (CCMs) and three Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings, led by Heritage Planning in collaboration with Stantec. Public engagement was integral in gathering local expertise, perspectives, and insights to inform the Study. The CAG consisted of volunteer community representatives selected through an application process.

The first meeting was held on May 14, 2018, at Runnymede United Church, introducing the HCD Study and its goals. Discussions focused on the area's character, heritage resources, and key influences on development, with participants highlighting community pride, local business support, walkability, and cultural diversity as defining elements. Historic influences such as the TTC station construction, the role of the BIA, and the presence of the Ukrainian community were also identified.

The second CAG meeting took place on June 14, 2018, at Runnymede United Church, with discussions centred on the importance of fine-grain properties and the BIA's role in maintaining them. A mapping exercise was conducted, identifying sidewalk widths, building scale-to-road ratio, parking arrangements, and a concentration of culturally significant buildings.

The final CAG meeting occurred on March 26, 2019, at Runnymede United Church, where key discussions included the potential designation of High Park as a cultural heritage landscape and concerns regarding HCD-related property tax increase. Other discussion points were raised such as further clarification for what constitutes a 'village', identifying Bloor West Village as an area more complex than a commercial strip, and the introduction of urban design guidelines to facilitate the retention of existing built features such as façades, number of bays, and storefront arrangements.

In addition to the CAG meetings, two CCMs were held in an open house format: one on February 15, 2018, at Runnymede United Church, and another on April 3, 2019, at High Park Nature Centre. A separate meeting was also held with the Bloor West Village BIA Board in April 2019.

Materials and summaries from the public engagement and community consultation meetings are available on the project's website:

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/bloor-street-west-heritage-conservation-district-study/meetings-events-bloor-street-west-hcd-study>

Heritage Planning also played an active role in the public engagement process for the Bloor West Village Avenue Study, ensuring that heritage considerations were meaningfully integrated into broader planning discussions. A fourth Community Consultation Meeting, held as part of the Avenue Study, took place on October 15, 2024. The purpose of this meeting was to present updated information on the planning framework for the Avenue Study and to seek community feedback. At this meeting, a map of cultural heritage resources, including properties identified as having potential heritage value, was presented, along with other heritage conservation considerations.

In addition, Heritage Planning actively participated in the Local Advisory Committee meetings for the Avenue Study in May 2024 and September 2025 and took part in a pop-up engagement event at the Toronto Ukrainian Festival in September 2025, where the HCD Study's recommendations were shared and discussed with the public. As part of the Avenue Study process, a draft version of the Guidelines was also circulated to the Huron-Wendat, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for comment. Feedback was received from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and was incorporated into the Guidelines. The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Huron-Wendat have expressed interest in reviewing the Guidelines.

Recommendations

The HCD Study identifies Bloor West Village as an evolved, dynamic area, shaped by continuous use and change throughout its history. While the area has experienced various phases of development, its defining period of growth occurred between 1900 and 1939, which has largely influenced its street layout and built form. Despite subsequent changes, this early 20th-century period remains the most significant in defining the district's historic character. Bloor West Village's main street character is closely tied to its early 20th-century evolution, with three-quarters of its structures

constructed between 1900 and 1939. The Village Main Street emerged as commercial core and main street section of the community.

Through the character analysis, key features defining the Village Main Street character area include: a concentration of early 20th-century architecture, fine-grained historic commercial main street properties, landmark buildings, T-intersections, and corridor views. These elements establish a distinct sense of place, reinforcing the area's historical role as a commercial main street with village-like character. This identity was shaped by transportation improvements, which facilitated the area's growth as a destination for residents, shoppers, and visitors. The character analysis highlights the Village Main Street character area as a core of the Study Area, where historic characteristics are most concentrated. The built form in this character area retains its fine-grained historic property pattern, dominated by two-storey structures that maintain a strong connection to the area's history and evolution.

The HCD Study report (see Attachment 3) determined that a portion of Village Main Street character area (between Kennedy Avenue and Jane Street) meets some heritage evaluation criteria, outlined in *HCDs in Toronto*, for designation as an HCD under Part V of the OHA. This section of the Study Area has functioned as a commercial main street with a village character since the early 20th century, defined by its low-rise commercial form and fine-grained properties. However, the HCD Study report notes that while many second-storey facades retain original design elements, most ground-floor storefronts have been significantly altered.

The HCD Study report highlights that while some second-storey features remain intact (such as original cladding, decorative details, and window openings), over-cladding and the window modifications have altered many buildings. The HCD Study also confirms that the heritage integrity of many commercial main street properties has been compromised due to alterations to commercial storefronts and some second storeys. Given these conditions, the HCD Study report questions whether an HCD Plan would be an effective tool in an area where the architectural character is not the strongest character-defining element.

Extensive discussions with Community Planning and Urban Design staff, the Avenue Study team, and the Community Advisory Group (comprising heritage experts and local historians), along with several site visits, explored whether Part V designation is the most appropriate tool to support and maintain the Village Main Street character area. These discussions focused on two key considerations: the overall strength and integrity of the area's architectural character, and whether alternative tools might better support the protection of the area's character-defining elements.

The HCD Study report concludes that while Part V designation is a valuable tool to conserve an area's cultural heritage value, other tools may be equally effective to support the Village Main Street character area and its defining features. The Village Main Street character area retains a historical context, with a range of physical, spatial, design, and material elements that define its identity. These character-defining elements should be maintained to conserve the area's overall historic main street character and sense of place.

Further, in Q1 2025, Heritage Planning staff conducted a supplementary evaluation of the Study Area, applying the updated provincial criteria in Regulation 569/22. This assessment found that fewer than 25 percent of the 275 properties met two or more of the nine criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest. Since this threshold is the minimum requirement for HCD designation, the Study Area does not meet the revised provincial criteria for district designation.

Properties of Potential Cultural Heritage Value

City Planning Staff concur with the recommendations of the HCD Study and therefore recommend that the Study not proceed to the HCD Plan phase. However, the HCD Study did identify cultural heritage value and attributes within the Study Area, particularly in individual properties, and 37 have been identified as having cultural heritage value or interest, warranting individual inclusion on the City's Heritage Register. Of these, five properties (1778, 1908, 1914, 1920 and 1926 Bloor Street West) were listed on the Heritage Register in February 2025. These properties are in the High Park Frontage character area and contain early-20th century walk-up apartment buildings constructed between circa 1927 and 1930.

Within the Village Main Street character area, the identified heritage potential properties anchor the historic main street character. They serve as representative examples of key building types and architectural styles, and as prominent corner properties at the T-intersections, with distinct entrances and features that reinforce their relationship to the pedestrian realm and overall streetscape. Conserving these buildings, and their relationship to their surrounding context, will maintain the historic character of Bloor West Village. The HCD Study emphasizes that conserving the low-rise commercial presence at key intersections will ensure new development and additions remain compatible with the existing and planned context.

A full list of properties identified as having cultural heritage value or interest is provided in Attachment 4 of this report.

Area-Specific Urban Design Guidelines

Following a comprehensive evaluation of the Study Area's character, history, and evolution, the HCD Study report concluded that, instead of pursuing Part V designation, the character-defining elements and sense of place identified within the Study Area, as outlined in the HCD Study report (Attachment 3), would be better maintained and reinforced through the development of comprehensive, area-specific Urban Design Guidelines as part of the Avenue Study, along with the individual inclusion of identified heritage potential properties on the City's Heritage Register.

Heritage Planning staff played an active role throughout the Avenue Study process, ensuring that heritage conservation principles and recommendations were meaningfully incorporated into the Guidelines. The Guidelines build on the recommendations of both the Avenue Study and the HCD Study, each of which involved extensive public consultation. The vision for Bloor West Village is best reflected in the Avenue Study's nine guiding principles, three of which directly relate to heritage conservation: reinforce

village identity; conserve cultural and built heritage; and ensure a context-sensitive built form.

The Guidelines fully integrate the conservation of heritage resources, the area's historic main street character, and the valued sense of place identified in the HCD Study. New developments or additions within the Guidelines Area are required to conserve the integrity of heritage properties while maintaining and reinforcing the area's historic character and identity. Additionally, the HCD Study's findings have deepened the understanding of the Guidelines Area's distinct character and sense of place. These findings have directly informed the built form and public realm guidelines, ensuring that new development respects and reinforces the historic main street character while accommodating context-sensitive growth and density.

The Guidelines include a range of heritage-related and context-sensitive built form directions, applicable to both across the Guidelines Area and within specific character areas. While streetwall heights and setback requirements have been identified for each character area, new development should ensure appropriate transitions to adjacent heritage properties. This includes providing upper-level setbacks at lower heights, informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment, to conserve the cultural heritage value, heritage attributes, and three-dimensional integrity of heritage buildings, as well as their visual prominence within the historic context.

The properties identified as having potential cultural heritage value are listed in the Heritage Inventory appended to the Guidelines. Where redevelopment involves one or more of these identified properties, a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) will be required in accordance with OPA 720.

Other Recommendations

The HCD Study recognizes High Park as a significant City asset that warrants special consideration. Although outside the Study Area, High Park is integrally connected to Bloor West Village and contributes to the High Park Frontage character area, with notable views from Bloor Street and adjacent side streets. To facilitate its identification, evaluation, and conservation, the HCD Study report recommends that the City undertake a feasibility study to explore recognizing High Park as a cultural heritage landscape (see Attachment 3).

Given its historical significance and importance to both the local community and Indigenous peoples, High Park is a suitable candidate for recognition as a cultural heritage landscape. There is a long history of Indigenous land stewardship in High Park, which is reflected today in ongoing management practices and collaborations with Indigenous partners, related to the annual burn and species protection efforts. Through the ongoing review of the City's Parkland Strategy, Parks and Recreation is deeply engaging with First Nations and urban Indigenous communities to better incorporate Indigenous voices into the guiding principles and directions in the update of the Strategy. Responding to Indigenous needs and interests and acknowledging and celebrating the cultural value that parks (including High Park) have served and continue to serve for Indigenous communities will be an important part of the refreshed Parkland

Strategy, which is planned to be presented to Council in spring 2026.

The HCD Study report also recommends commemorating and interpreting the area's historical themes, cultural groups, and key organizations within the public realm through streetscape improvements. This could include public art installations, plaques or signage, and digital interpretation initiatives. Notably, the HCD Study highlights the historical presence of the Ukrainian community and the Bloor West Village BIA, which was Canada's first BIA, as key elements worthy of commemoration. The Study further suggests that the City identify and promote additional opportunities through the Economic Development and Culture Division to enhance the area's social and cultural significance.

CONCLUSION

City Planning Staff concur with the recommendations of the HCD Study and, following additional staff evaluation, conclude that Bloor West Village does not meet the criteria for designation as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. It is therefore not recommended that the Study proceed to the HCD Plan phase.

As an alternative, City staff have prepared area-specific Bloor West Village Avenue Study Urban Design Guidelines and have identified properties with cultural heritage value or interest. In future, these properties may merit inclusion on the City's Heritage Register and/or evaluation for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

City heritage staff have worked closely with the Avenue Study team to develop the area-specific Urban Design Guidelines, ensuring they support the conservation and enhancement of the area's historic main street character and sense of place. This approach will enable City Council to conserve cultural heritage resources, maintain and reinforce the character of Bloor West Village, and support the integration of contextually sensitive growth.

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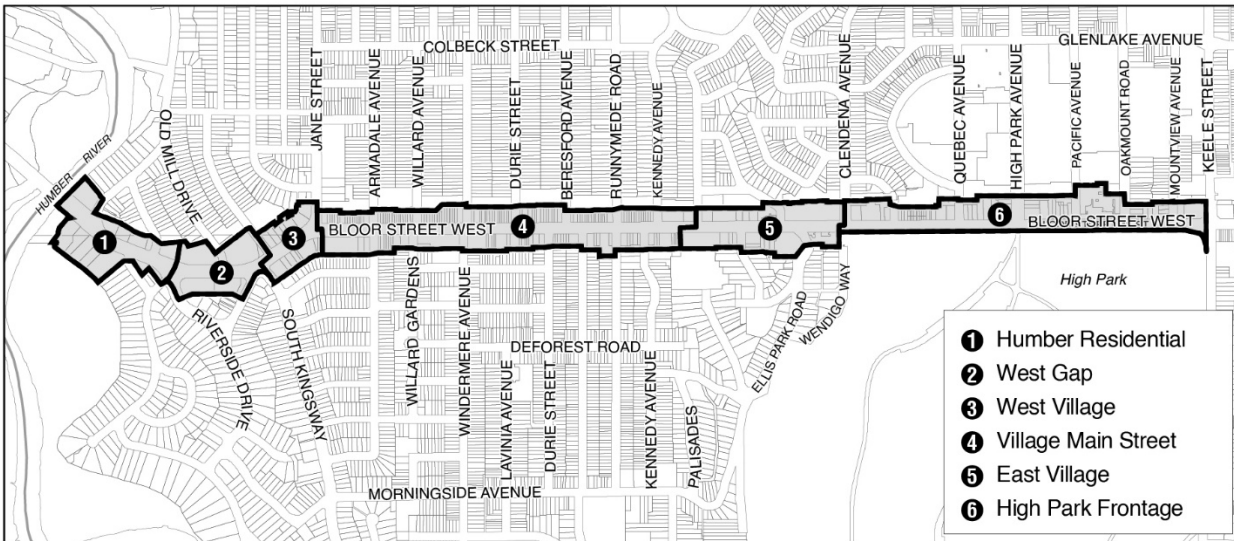
ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Map of Bloor West Village HCD Study Area Boundary
- Attachment 2 – Map of Bloor West Village HCD Study Character Areas
- Attachment 3 – Bloor West Village HCD Study Report
- Attachment 4 – Properties of Potential Cultural Heritage Value



Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District Study

 Bloor West Village HCD Study Area Boundary



Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District Study Character Areas

 Character Area

The Bloor West Village HCD Study Report (consultant's report) is provided under separate cover.



Bloor West Village Heritage Inventory

- Existing Heritage Properties
- Heritage Potential Properties



Not to Scale
04/15/2025

List of properties identified as having potential cultural heritage value or interest:

- 1874 Bloor Street West
- 1942 Bloor Street West (1946 Bloor Street West)
- 1950 Bloor Street West (1954 Bloor Street West)
- 1960 Bloor Street West (1962 Bloor Street West)
- 2001 Bloor Street West
- 2010 Bloor Street West
- 2141 Bloor Street West
- 2199 Bloor Street West
- 2219 Bloor Street West
- 2305 Bloor Street West (2301 Bloor Street West)
- 2326 Bloor Street West
- 2333 Bloor Street West (380 Windermere Avenue)
- 2373 Bloor Street West
- 2394 Bloor Street West
- 2396 Bloor Street West
- 2400 Bloor Street West (259 Armadale Avenue and 2398 Bloor Street West)
- 2401 Bloor Street West
- 2402 Bloor Street West (254 Armadale Avenue, and 2404A and 2404 Bloor Street West)
- 2407 Bloor Street West
- 2438 Bloor Street West (2440 Bloor Street West)
- 2487 Bloor Street West
- 2512 Bloor Street West (2504, 2506, 2508, 2508A, 2510, 2510A, and 2512B Bloor Street West)
- 2520 Bloor Street West
- 2525 Bloor Street West (98 Brule Gardens)
- 2526 Bloor Street West (2528 Bloor Street West)
- 2553 Bloor Street West
- 2555 Bloor Street West
- 2559 Bloor Street West
- 2561 Bloor Street West
- 7 Brule Terrace (2535 Bloor Street West)
- 5 High Park Avenue
- 2 Traymore Crescent (2514 Bloor Street West)