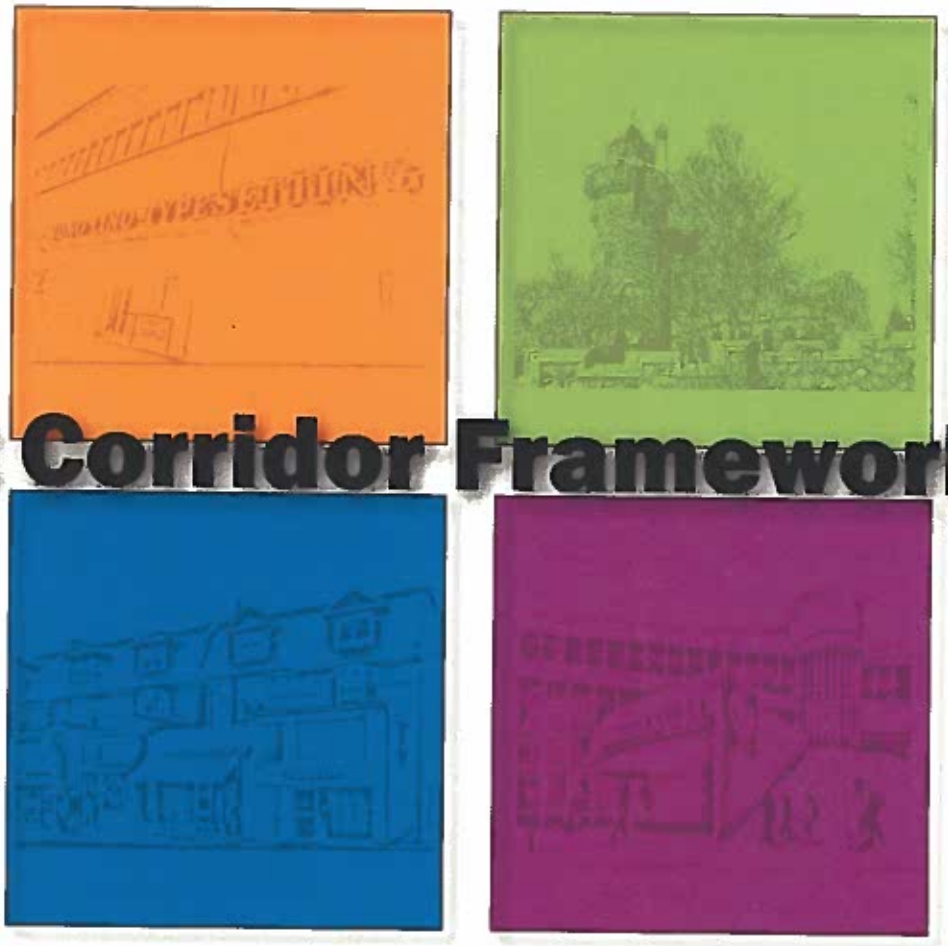


Dupont Corridor Framework Study

Final Report
Thursday, December 6th, 2012

Client: Dupont Corridor Working Group:

Seaton Village Residents' Association, Christie Pits Residents' Association, Rathnelly Residents' Association, Casa Loma Residents' Association, Annex Residents' Association, Neighbours of St. Alban's Park, and Dupont Strip Business Improvement Area

Date: December 6th, 2012

Ryerson Vision

Deanne Barnes
Emma-Lee De Ville
Peter Giampa
Christopher Evan Jones
Tamara Kwast
Crystal Leung
Michael Mauro
Maryann Tran Nguyen
Mike Pettigrew
Alex Savanyu

Table of Contents

7.0 Recommendations (cont.)

8.0 Community Organisation 87

A Appendix 92

1.1 Introduction & Purpose

The Dupont Corridor Framework Study is a comprehensive analysis undertaken by Ryerson Vision for the Dupont Corridor Working Group. The purpose of this report is to provide a functional resource for the Working Group by identifying community issues and providing recommendations to address these issues that can be utilized to facilitate collaboration and engagement between the members of the Working Group. Ryerson Vision has worked extensively with the community in order to identify various issues and opportunities inherent throughout the many diverse neighbourhoods that exist within the Dupont Corridor. These responses have been collected in order to construct an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the area, in what has formed a SWOT analysis.

By actively communicating with local city councillors, Residents' Associations (RA) and interest groups, a set of issues and corresponding recommendations have been compiled by Ryerson Vision, with subsequent case studies that provide contemporary examples of projects that have been successful. Following this empirical and collaborative analysis, the report will set out a framework identifying communicative techniques, hierarchy of priorities and a timeline that can be used by the Working Group to improve the communication and efficiency of Dupont Corridor interest groups.

This Framework Study has utilized both feedback from community members and empirical analysis derived from observations by Ryerson Vision. These resources have been used to complete a report that outlines various aspects and issues in the Dupont Corridor, and the steps and processes that may be applied to address them at a community level.

In This Section...

- Introduction & Purpose

1.2 Location & Context

The impact area of the Dupont Corridor's boundaries are St. Clair Avenue to the north, Yonge Street to the east, Bloor Street to the south and Dovercourt Road to the west (see Image 1.2a). The Dupont Corridor is boundaries area (which is the primary focus of this report) are Davenport Road to the north, Avenue Road to the east, the northern half of communities between Bloor Street and Dupont Street to the south and Ossington Avenue to the west (see Image 1.2a). The study area encompasses several neighbourhoods including the Annex, Casa Loma, Christie Pits, Rathnelly, Seaton Village and St. Alban's Park. Ward 17, Ward 19, Ward 20, Ward 21, Ward 22 and Ward 27 are within the boundaries of the impact area. Dupont Street runs east-west through the study area and is classified as a Major Arterial road under the City of Toronto's Road Classification System map (City of Toronto, 2008). The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) lines is located north of Dupont Street and runs east-west through the study area.

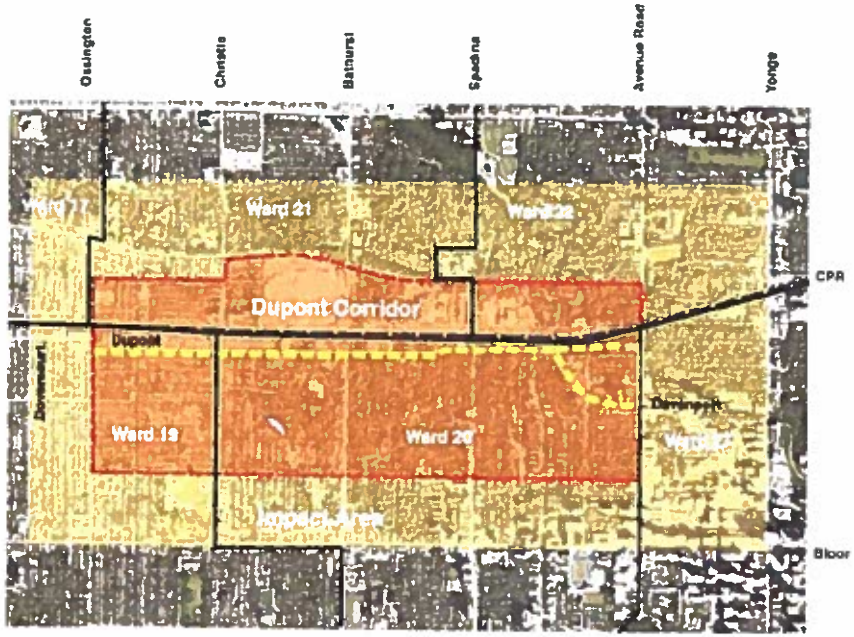


Image 1.2a Dupont Corridor Study Area (Ryerson Vision, 2012)

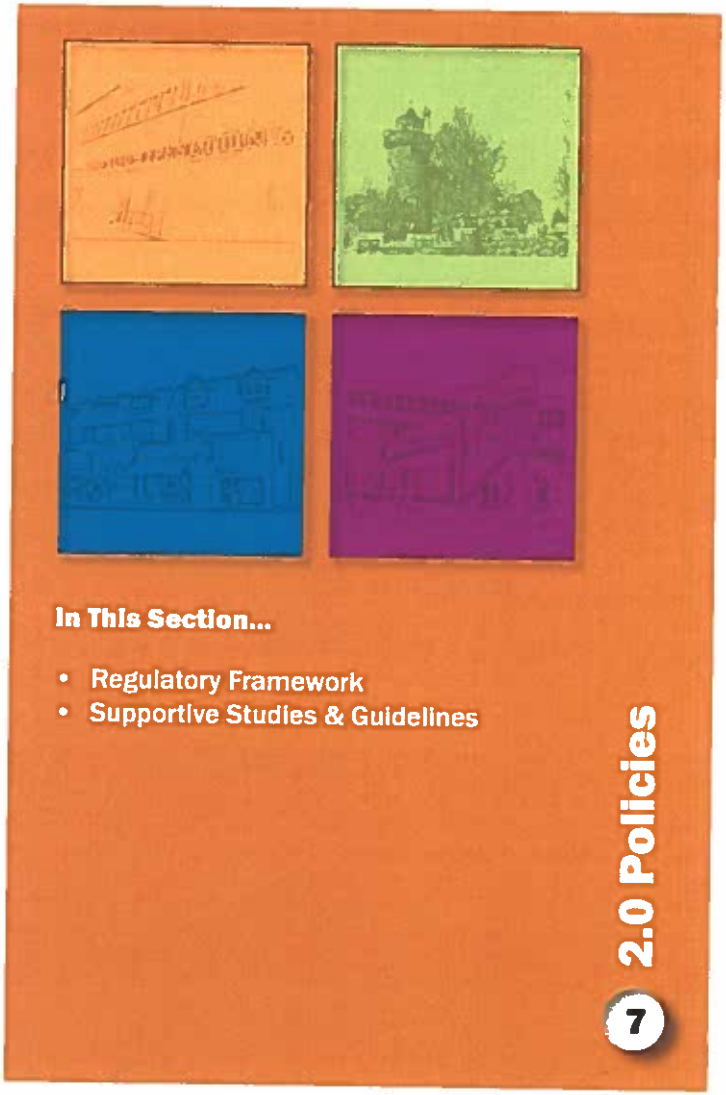
2.1 Regulatory Framework

This section will outline relevant regulatory framework and policies that have guided this study and assisted in forming our recommendations.

2.1.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2005)

The Provincial Policy Statements 2005 (PPS) provides direction for land use and municipal matters at the provincial level. As prescribed under the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, all land use planning decisions must be consistent with the PPS. The goal of the PPS is to manage and direct land use to achieve efficient development and land use patterns and build stronger communities (Province of Ontario, 2005).

Within the PPS, there are two key components that should be taken into consideration for the purposes of this study: Section 1.3 (Employment Lands) promotes economic development and competitiveness by providing an appropriate mix and range of industrial, commercial and institutional uses within Employment Lands; in addition, Section 1.4 (Housing) seeks to provide an appropriate range of housing types and densities to meet the demands of current and future residents (Province of Ontario, 2005).



In This Section...

- Regulatory Framework
- Supportive Studies & Guidelines

2.1.2 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)

The Growth Plan is a 25-year plan that provides a framework to direct where and how to grow, the infrastructure that is necessary to accommodate growth and to protect and conserve natural systems in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Portions of the subject area are designated as Employment Lands and are a key component to the Growth Plan. Section 2.2.6 displays all policies that are deemed necessary to maintain appropriate uses of Employment Lands while accommodating population and employment growth. Specifically, Section 2.2.6.2 sets out the framework for municipalities to promote economic development and competition by:

- providing for an approximate mix of employment uses including commercial and institution uses to meet long-terms needs;
- providing opportunities for diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses; which supports a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses and takes into account the needs of existing and future business
- planning for, protecting and preserving employment areas for current and future uses; and
- ensuring the necessary infrastructure is provided to support current and forecasted employment needs.

(Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, 2006)

2.1.3 City of Toronto Official Plan (2006)

The City's Official Plan sets out the policy framework that providing long-term growth management that accommodates future population and employment growth within the City of Toronto. The Plan must conform to the policies laid out by PPS and the Growth Plan.

The Dupont Corridor is located within the Downtown and Central Waterfront area, as shown on Map 2 of the Official Plan. According to policies within Section 2.2.1, the Downtown will continue to evolve as a healthy and attractive place to live and work as new development that supports the re-urbanization strategy and the goals for Downtown is attracted to the area. The Downtown policies of this Plan will shape the city's future by accommodating development that builds on the strength of Downtown as the premier employment centre in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) (City of Toronto, 2006).

While the Official Plan encourages growth within this area, the specific land use designations must also be taken into consideration when determining the type of use for potential developments. According to Map 17 of the Official Plan, much of the north side of Dupont Street is designated as Employment Lands and the remaining is generally designated as neighbourhood areas. As stated in Policy 4.1.1, neighbourhoods are defined as areas comprised of residential uses in smaller scale buildings such as detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes and townhouses, as well as interspersed walk-up apartments that are no higher than four storeys. Parks, small scale local institutions, home occupations, cultural and recreation facilities and small-scale retail, services and offices are also permitted (City of Toronto, 2006).

Section 4.6 of the Official Plan defines the uses of Employment Areas and development criteria within this land use designation. Policy 4.6.1 states uses that support this function consist of: offices, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, research and development facilities, utilities, media facilities, parks, hotels, retail outlets, restaurants and small scale stores and services (City of Toronto, 2006). It is important to note that residential uses are not permitted in designated Employment Areas; as such lands are designated as places of businesses to promote economic growth. In addition, the development criteria in policy 4.6.6 will help to ensure that developments will contribute to the competitiveness of the global economy, attractiveness for new firms and a highly functional area by:

- supporting the economic function of the Employment Areas and the amenities of adjacent areas;
- encouraging the establishment of key clusters of economic activity with the significant value-added employment and assessment;
- avoiding excessive car and truck traffic on the road system within Employment Areas and adjacent areas;
- providing adequate parking and loading on site;
- sharing driveways and parking areas wherever possible;
- mitigating the effects of noise, vibration, dust, odours or particulate matter that will be detrimental to other businesses or the amenities of neighbouring areas;
- providing landscaping on the front and any flanking yard and adjacent to any public parks and open space to create an attractive streetscape and screening parking, loading and service areas;
- treating the boundary between Employment Areas and residential lands with landscaping, fencing or other measures to minimize nuisance impacts; and

- ensuring that outside storage and outside processing is:
  - limited in extent;
  - generally located at the rear of the property;
  - well screened by fencing and landscaping where viewed from adjacent streets, highways, parks and neighbouring land uses; and
  - not detrimental to neighbouring land uses in terms of dust, noise and odours

The City of Toronto Official Plan 5 Year Review will begin in the spring of 2013 as part of an Ontario Planning Act requirement that all municipalities must review their official plans every five years. The review is of particular concern to the community as it will be open to significant changes to the designations and policies throughout the entire city, which will include the Dupont Corridor. The recommendations proposed in this report aim to assist the Working Group as they create a vision for their community. This vision can then be presented to City Staff as a guiding document as they conduct their review of the neighbourhoods along the Corridor.

2.1.4 Parks and Open Spaces

Policy 3.2.3 of the Official Plan provides guidelines for the expansion, reinvestment and maintenance of Toronto's Green Space System. The Green Space System is comprised of parks and open spaces, the natural heritage system and privately owned spaces that are publicly accessible in the City of Toronto. Policy 3.2.3.2 states the factors influencing the type of parkland acquisition strategy that will be utilized for new developments and provides that new parkland will be provided for developments in areas of low parkland provision wherever possible. Policy 3.2.3.6 states that priority will be given to the creation or improvement of parkland that is accessible to park planning areas with low parkland provision. According to Policy 3.2.3.6, areas of low parkland provision are park planning areas having a per capita parkland provision within the lowest two quintiles as indicated on Map 8B of the Official Plan. According to Map 8B of the Official Plan, the majority of the Dupont Corridor is classified as an area of low parkland provision excluding one park planning area north of Dupont Street between Bathurst Street and Avenue Road. Map 8A of the Official Plan, displays the locations of all City Parkland, Map 8B displays the per capita parkland provision within each of the park planning areas and Map 8C indicates the boundaries of Local Park Planning areas.

Image 2.1.4a Toronto Official Plan : 8. Parkland MAP A (City of Toronto, 2009)

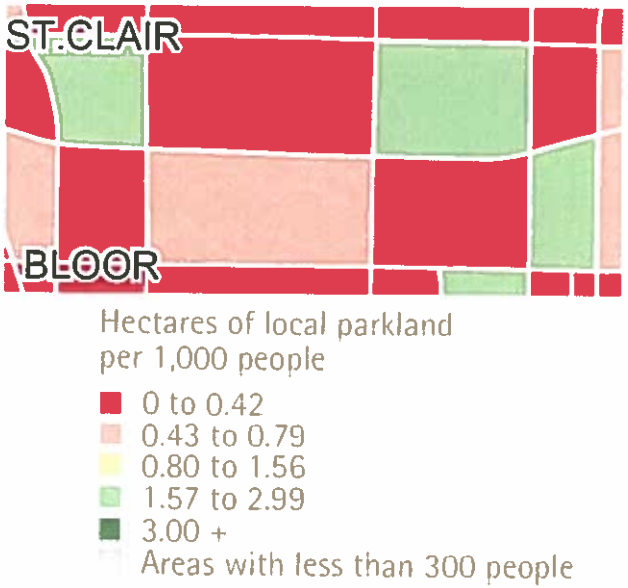


Image 2.1.4b Toronto Official Plan : 8. Parkland Map B (City of Toronto, 2009)

2.1.5 City of Toronto Zoning By-Law

Based on current zoning, lands to the south of the Dupont Corridor are primarily zoned as residential, with the exception of lands located adjacent to the Dupont Street area that are zoned as Employment Lands. Lands to the north of the Corridor are zoned primarily residential with a utility corridor along side of the railway. To the east of the site, there is a mix of commercial-residential and residential zoning along with pockets of open spaces located primarily at the northeastern section (City of Toronto, 2012).

Toronto Planning and Growth Management Committee received a revised version of the Draft City-Wide Zoning Bylaw on November 8, 2012. This document is not yet in effect and there is still an opportunity for members of the public to comment. The Zoning Bylaw presents new definitions, requirements, and interpretations as well as possible changes to zoning designations. The Working Group should be aware of these changes and consult with their Councillor and City Staff to ensure they understand any changes in their neighbourhoods and the potential effects they may have on future development.

2.2 Supportive Studies & Guidelines

Relevant documents and studies are used by the City of Toronto when reviewing proposals for any new development. This section of the interim report will outline guidelines that are relevant to the future development along the Dupont Corridor.

2.2.1 Avenues & Mid-Rise Building Study (2010)

Maximum Height

Based on a 1:1 ratio, where the maximum height of a building is equivalent to the width of the right-of-way, the angular planes applied to the front of the site and the rear of the site respective to the maximum height.

Heritage & Character Areas

Within Character Areas, new buildings recognize and reflect the important elements that define the existing context of the Heritage Conservation Districts.

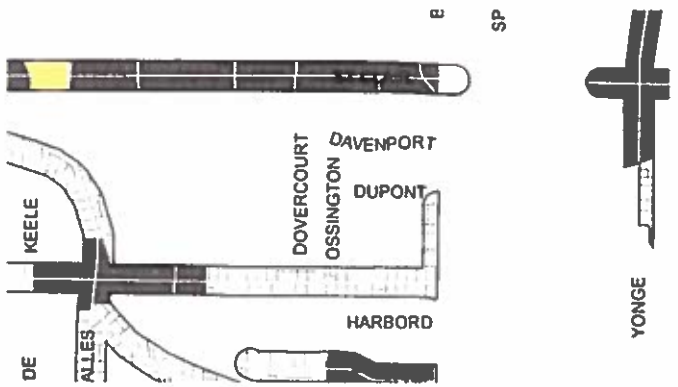


Image 2.2.1a (BMI/ Pace, 2010)

Streetscape

Avenue streetscapes should provide the highest level of urban design treatment to create beautiful pedestrian environments and great places to shop, work and live.

Design Quality

Mid-rise buildings will reflect design excellence and green building innovation, utilizing high-quality materials that acknowledge the public role of the Avenues.

2.2.2 Design Criteria for Review of Tall Building Proposals (2006)

The Tall Building Design Criteria proposal defines where and how intensification should relate to the neighbourhood and to other buildings on the street. The report details how development along main thoroughfares and transit nodes within the downtown core (Such as along Yonge Street, Bloor Avenue, Bay Street and University Avenue) should consider height, setback, form, density and shadowing in relation to the surrounding neighbourhoods. Buildings are subject to a Design Review Panel to ensure the use of quality materials, proper landscaping, wind effects, open space and streetscaping - including the protection of environmental and historic assets (City of Toronto, 2011).

The existence of established neighbourhoods, low-scale shopping streets (such as Bloor and Yonge Street), heritage sites, prominent view corridors and major city parks should be taken into consideration during the proposed development of tall buildings as per these guidelines. However, the proposal also recognizes how these developments can also aid in building communities, increase density and improve streetscapes. Design reviews hope to offer a second, educated critique of built form to better integrate new development into established areas - including the Dupont Corridor, where a number of development applications in Yorkville have raised concerns surrounding implications to future developments in the study area.

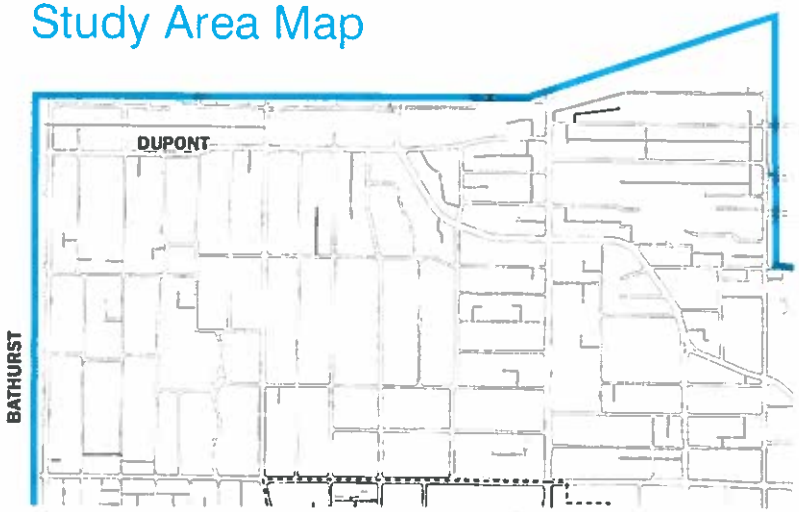


Image 2.2.2a (City of Toronto, 2011)

Maximum Gross Floor Area

750 sq. m. per floor of the full building includes all the built area within the building, excluding balconies.

Minimum Height

The podium of tall buildings will be 3 storeys, and the maximum height will be a 1:1 ratio to the width of the street allowance. To ensure greater sunlight penetration on the sidewalk across the street, the main front wall can be no higher than 80% of the width of the street allowance before applying a 3m setback to the remainder of the base building height. If a tall building site fronts onto more than one street, the podium will be massed to address both frontages, giving prominence to the corner.

Streetscape and Landscaping

Elements such as street trees, street furniture, lighting, soft landscaping, seating and public art should be used to activate building façades, soften building contours, highlight important architectural features, screen less attractive elements, add colour, texture and visual interest and provide shade.

(HOK Architects Corporation, 2006)

3.1 Streets in the Dupont Corridor

3.1.1 Dupont Street

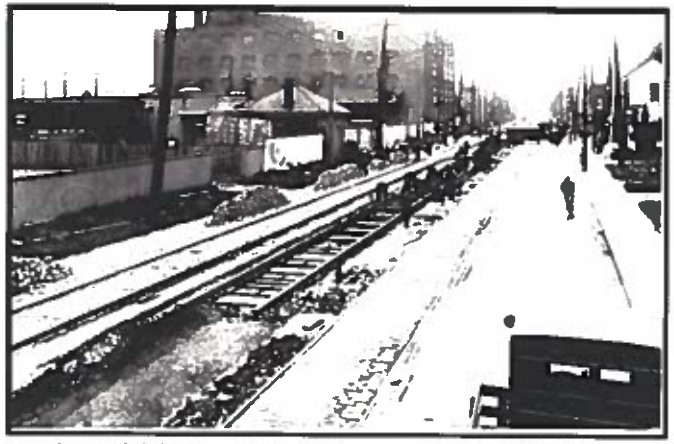


Image 3.1.1a Dupont Street looking east toward Christie Street, 1926 (BlogTO, 2011)

The streets encompassed within the Dupont Corridor reflect the rich history and uniqueness of the area. Dupont Street has been more essential in Toronto's development than it is generally given credit for (Flack, 2011). The street was originally named "Van Horne" and "Royce" prior to the unification of the street. Its close proximity to the Canadian Pacific Railway lines was fundamental in establishing Dupont Street as an industrial manufacturing corridor. Industrial uses once located on Dupont Street include the Ford Model T factory, Evening Telegram building, Hamilton Gear Plant and the Mono Lino Typesetting building. These buildings lined Dupont Street, transforming the street into an important manufacturing area in Toronto (Flack, 2011).

In This Section...

- Streets in the Corridor
- Famous and Historic Buildings

Image 3.1.1b Dupont Street looking west toward Howland Avenue, 2012 (GSV, 2012)

The industrial history of Dupont Street is still evident in the built form from Avenue Road to Dundas Street West (Flack, 2011). A number of the former factories have been redeveloped, but its history is retained within the refurbished industrial buildings that still exist. Dupont Street has experienced a transformation since the early 1900's; today it is a major transportation thoroughfare with a range of uses and a strong industrial history (Flack, 2011).

3.1.2 Christie Street

Christie Street is named after William Mellis Christie, the co-founder of the Christie & Brown Cookie Company. Mr. Christie and Mr. Brown founded the cookie company in 1861 in Downtown Toronto (Bateman, 2012). Christie Pits Park, also named after Mr. Christie, is located on Christie Street, encompassed by Bloor Street, Christie Street, Crawford Street and Barton Avenue. The large park is well used by the community and residents from across Toronto (Bateman, 2012).

Image 3.1.2a Christie Street and Dupont Street, 2012 (GSV, 2012)

3.1.3 Bloor Street

Bloor Street is a Major Arterial road running east west through Toronto. In 1790 Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe created Toronto Park Lots. At this time, Bloor Street was the northern boundary that contributed to the general shape of the Downtown street network. Bloor Street did not become a busy thoroughfare until approximately the 1920's as the density was limited between Sherbourne Street and Bathurst Street (Flack, 2012).

There were two main projects that contributed to the transformation of Bloor Street into the trendy street it is today: completion of the Prince Edward Viaduct in 1918 and the Bloor-Danforth subway line in 1966. The Prince Edward Viaduct, more commonly known as the Bloor Viaduct, is comprised of two structures: the bridge over the Don River, and the smaller western section that runs above Rosedale Valley. These bridges provided a connection between the east and west ends of the city, transforming Bloor Street into the arterial road it is today. The Bloor-Danforth subway line was completed in 1966 and was expanded both east and west in 1968 and again in 1980. These expansions further connected the east and west ends of the city, establishing Bloor Street as a desirable place to live and work due to the ease of mobility provided by the subway system. Bloor Street has always been an important street in the city, however, the completion of the Bloor-Danforth subway line prompted intensification, completely altering the built form of the street (Flack, 2012). Today, Bloor Street is viewed as a destination with a plethora of restaurants, theatres, art galleries, retail stores, bars and concert venues.

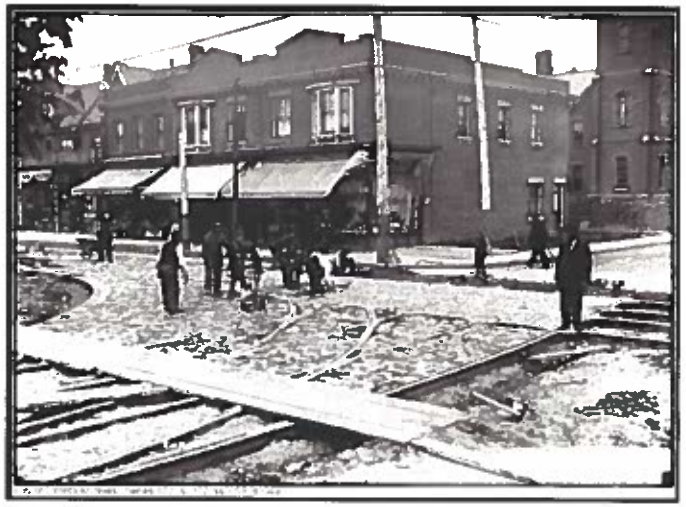


Image 3.1.3a Bloor Street and Ossington Avenue, 1911 (BlogTO, 2012)

The proximity of Bloor Street to the Dupont Corridor provides increased mobility in the form of enhanced connectivity with the rest of the Downtown area. This is partially attributed to the Bloor-Danforth subway line and its connection to the Yonge-University-Spadina subway line. Accessibility to public transit increases desirability to live and work several area and the Dupont Corridor is just a short walk from many Bloor-Danforth subway stations. The importance of Bloor Street to the Dupont Corridor is not limited to the subway connections, but extends to the fact that tourists and Torontonians see Bloor Street as a tourist destination. Fostering a stronger connection between Bloor Street and Dupont Corridor provides opportunity for harnessing more of the pedestrian activity present on Bloor Street.

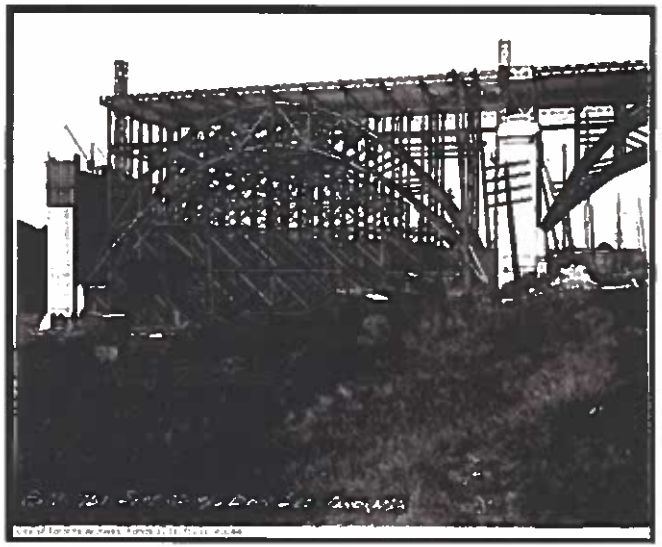


Image 3.1.3b Bloor Viaduct over Don Valley, 1916
(BlogTO, 2012)

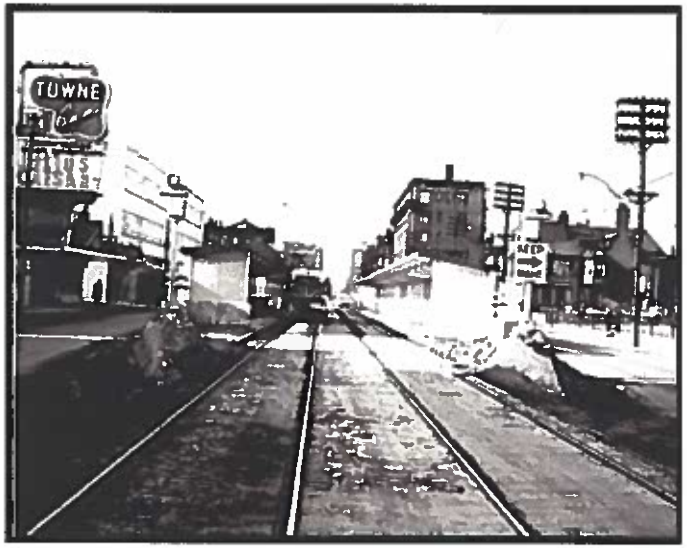


Image 3.1.3c
Bloor Street looking west; east of Yonge Street, 1954
(BlogTO, 2012)

3.2 Famous and Historical Sites

As the Dupont Corridor formed into an affluent and historic neighbourhood, the area saw the development of many famous establishments that are still active today. Below is a timeline of the historic landmarks in the area.

Image 3.2a The Brunswick House
(Lifeashumans, 2012)

1876 : The Brunswick House

Located at Bloor Street and Brunswick Avenue, The Brunswick House is one of the oldest taverns in the city. Today it is popular among University students and is a well-known destination for nightlife in Toronto. (Toronto Life – The Brunswick House History, 2012).

1889 : Trinity Methodist Church

Trinity Methodist Church was constructed in 1889 and partially funded by Timothy Eaton. Today the church is still in use and has been renamed Trinity – St. Paul United Church (Toronto Sanctuaries, 2012).

Image 3.2b Trinity Methodist Church
(TPL, 2012)

1913 : Bloor Cinema

Formerly known as the Madison Picture Place, it was renamed The Bloor Cinema in 1979. In 2011, The Bloor Cinema was renamed The Bloor Cinema Hot Docs Cinema, after being purchased by Blue Ice Group (Bloor Cinema History, 2012).

Image 3.2c
Madison Theatre, 1919
(torontoshome, 2012)

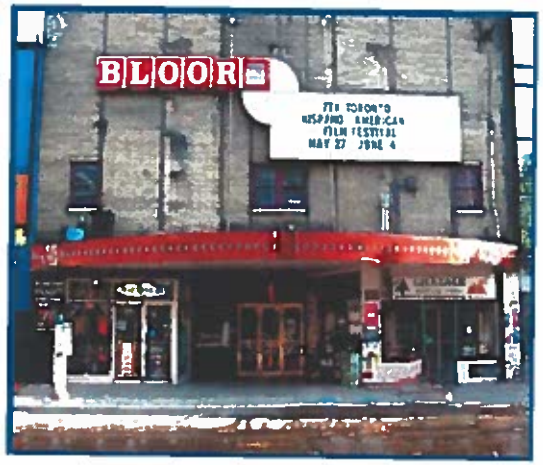


Image 3.2d Bloor Cinema, 2012 (torontoshome, 2012)

1914: Paupers Pub

The building was constructed in 1914 and used as a bank by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (Bloor Annex BIA – History, 2012). In 1986, the building was converted into Paupers Pub, a popular destination for Annex residents.

Image 3.2e
Paupers Pub, 2012
(DWIN, 2012)

1914 : Casa Loma

This building is recognized for being Toronto's "historic castle on the hill". Casa Loma was the home to a notable former resident of the Annex, Sir Henry Mill Pillatt. Today Casa Loma is a tourist destination visited by more than 50,000 tourists a year (Casa Loma History, 2012).

Image 3.2f Casa Loma Under Construction, 1911
(City of Toronto Archives, 2012)

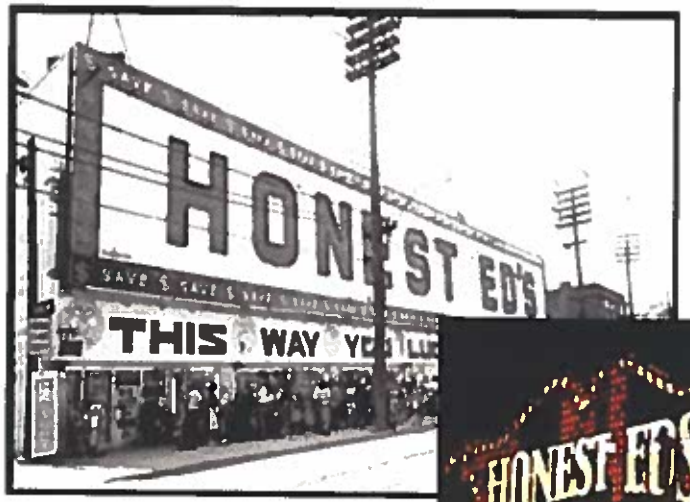


Image 3.2g Honest Ed's, 1965
(City of Toronto, 2012)

Image 3.2h Honest Ed's, 2012
(City of Toronto, 2012)

1948 : Honest Ed's

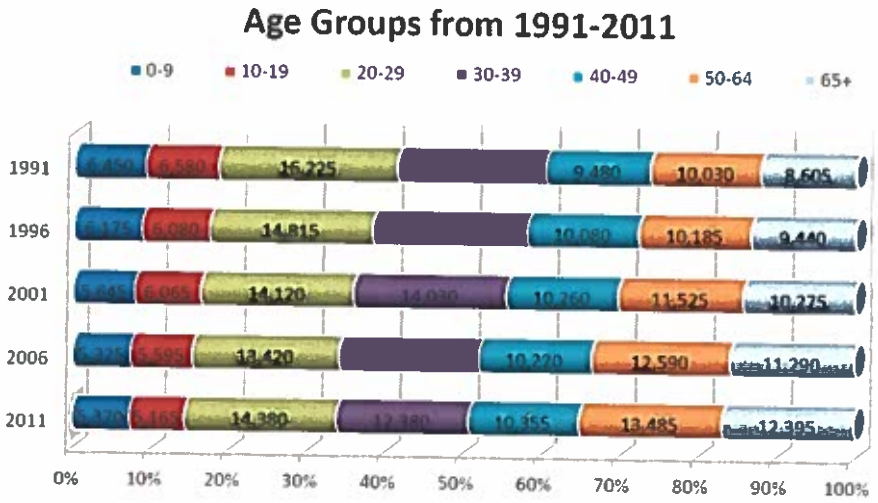
In 1948, Ed Mirvish opened the discount merchandise store, located at the corner of Bloor Street and Bathurst Street. The building resembles a theatre marquee with the façade containing 23,000 light bulbs. Today the landmark is still open and thriving, exceeding profits every year (Toronto Life, Honest Ed's, 2012).

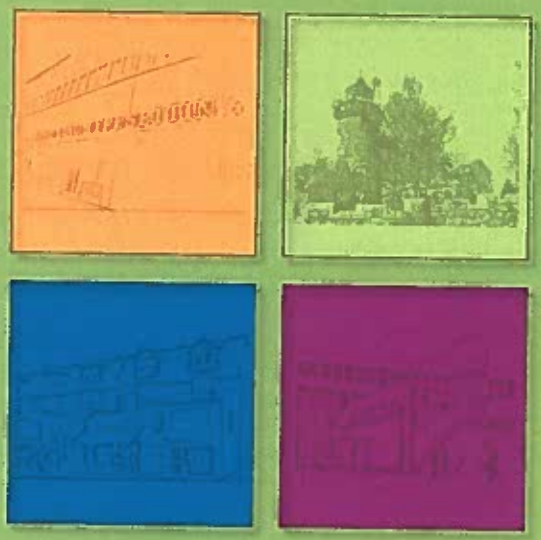
3.0 History

4.1 Age

The age composition of the Dupont Corridor population reflects that of the City of Toronto, with percentages in each age bracket being almost identical. In both the Dupont Corridor and the City of Toronto areas, age brackets from 20 to 65+ comprise similar proportions of their respective populations while the younger 0-9 and 10-19 age brackets comprise a smaller proportion of the population that the other age brackets in the City of Toronto and Dupont Corridor.

Since 1991, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of the population in the age brackets 50-64 and 65+ indicating an aging population. The proportion of the population in the age brackets 0-9 and 10-19 have also decreased.





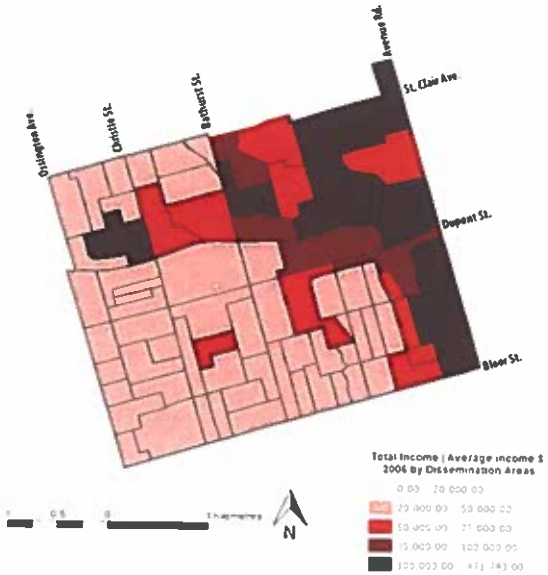
In This Section...

- Age
- Income
- Employment
- Housing
- Transit

4.0 Demographics

4.2 Income

The average household income in the Dupont Corridor ($107,847.17) is significantly higher than the average household income the City of Toronto ($80,343), with a difference of $27,504.17. The median household income for Dupont Corridor ($60,371.78) is $7, 538.78 higher than that of the City of Toronto ($52,833). This supports the higher income levels displayed by the difference in average household income. Although the average household income and median household income the of Dupont Corridor are notably higher than that of the City of Toronto, the difference between the median household income and average household income in the Dupont Corridor is quite large ($47,475.39), indicating a range of income levels.



4.3 Employment

Types of Employment

The highest percentages of the Dupont Corridor population have jobs in sales and service (19.8%) and business, finance and administration (18%). The population of the City of Toronto also has its highest employment rates in sales and service (22.8%) and business, finance and administration (20.7%). A high percentage of the Dupont Corridor population are also employed in social science, education, government services and education (16%), as well as art, culture, recreation and sport (11.9%). These types of occupations employ significantly lower proportions of the City of Toronto population.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate for the Dupont Corridor are slightly higher than those of the City of Toronto. The Dupont Corridor has only a 1% higher unemployment rate and a 2% higher youth unemployment rate than the City of Toronto. The highest unemployment rate in the Dupont Corridor study area exists in the Annex at 9.4%, followed closely by the area east of Ossington Avenue and south of St. Clair Avenue at 9.0%. The lowest

unemployment rate in the Dupont Corridor study area exists at Ossington Avenue, north of Bloor Street at only 4.7%, significantly lower than the City of Toronto and Dupont Corridor as a whole.

Education

73.2% of the Dupont Corridor population have received post-secondary education; slightly higher than the 66.4% of the City of Toronto. This indicates that the population of the Dupont Corridor generally has a higher education than the City of Toronto as a whole.

4.4 Housing

Household Size

Households in the Dupont Corridor are smaller than those in the City of Toronto. The proportion of households with only one person (41.9%) is 11.7% higher than that of the City of Toronto (30.2%). While the proportion living in a household of 2 people is only slightly higher than that of the City of Toronto, larger household sizes in the Dupont Corridor (3 people - 12.7%, 4-5 people - 13%, 6+ people - 1.7%) are all lower than in the City of Toronto (3 people - 16.5%, 4-5 people - 20.5%, 6+ people - 3.9%).

Age of Buildings

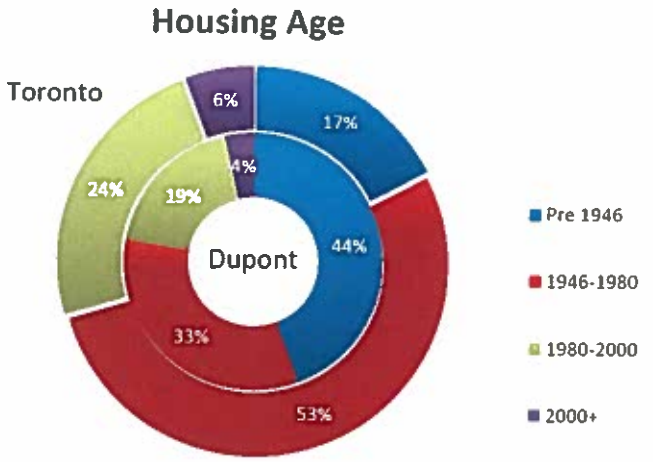
A large proportion of the buildings in the Dupont Corridor are older and built before 1946. This differs from Toronto, which has the largest proportion of its buildings constructed between 1946-1980. The number of buildings constructed between 1980-2000 and 2000+ in the Corridor are significantly lower than older buildings.

Housing Type

The Dupont Corridor has a much smaller proportion of single-detached houses (10.8%) than the rest of the City of Toronto (27.3%), and contains less high-rise apartment buildings (five storeys or more) (31%) than the City of Toronto (38.8%). There is a higher proportion of apartment buildings fewer than 5 storeys in the Dupont Corridor (37.4%) than in the City of Toronto (16.6%). This indicates that the study area has a much larger stock of low-rise housing.

4.5 Transportation

The percentage of the population using a car, truck or van as the primary driver is 15.5% lower in Dupont Corridor (33.9%) than in the City of Toronto (49.4%). As a result, the Dupont Corridor has much higher proportions of the population who use public transit (Dupont - 39.7%, Toronto - 34.4%), walk (Dupont - 13.9%, Toronto - 7.1%) or cycle (Dupont - 6.2%, Toronto - 1.7%) as their primary mode of transportation than the City of Toronto as a whole. This indicates that a high number of the residents in the Dupont Corridor are using alternative modes of transportation as their main mode of transportation.



5.1 Introduction

The SWOT analysis is an expansion of the building survey conducted by Ryerson Vision, which looked at height, use, parking, private landscaping, public streetscapes and heritage value for all the properties in the study area. The next step is to merge this numerical data with supporting spatial data, and use this to produce maps and diagrams that will assist in the formation of the visioning study using the Geographic Imaging System (GIS).

The foucs area are the properties immediately south of Dupont Street between Avenue Road and Ossington Avenue, as well as the streets directly north of the rail line, and the properties between Davenport Road, Dupont Street and Avenue Road (also known as the Dupont Triangle).

The area was split into five sections, which are identified as having their own distinct goals, objectives and concerns. In paired groups, Ryerson Vision walked the streets, observed activities and the interaction of people with their surroundings and recorded written and photographic data. Qualitative data was collected through interviews, attending public meetings, review of planning policy and studies of the historical and demographic trends throughout the study area. Upon completing the analyses of each of the five sections, Ryerson Vision convened and began synthesising findings into one cohesive chart.

Out of this process, a strong narrative for the Corridor emerged. The following will present this narrative through the examination of eight identified key aspects of the neighbourhood and their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats as they relate to the Dupont Corridor.

In This Section...

5.2 SWOT Subcategories

Transit - Transit refers specifically to public transit (TTC and GO) and the issues surrounding use, accessibility and potential links and risks.

Movement - Movement refers to all other forms of mobility within the area. This includes walkability, bicycle infrastructure and vehicular traffic. Moreover, this may include pathways, both physical or visual that exists in the neighbourhoods and wayfinding signage that help direct the flow of residents and visitors to the area.

Economy - Refers to the overall business success in the area, either directly or indirectly influenced by surrounding regions. This topic can deal with existing employment, future trends and even macro concerns that may be prevalent (such as pressures that may threaten the area from further economic slowdown). Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) also play heavily in this discussion.

Environment - Environment typically refers to greenspace and parkland - but can also include other aspects that affect the overall neighbourhood. Issues surrounding air quality, noise pollution, urban tree canopy and industrial remediation can all be discussed in this topic.

Affordable Housing - While not limited to Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) housing, this topic discusses the integration of differing social and economic levels within the community. Affordable housing can also refer to the number of existing private apartments or units (basement, illegal, social, senior) in the area and opportunities and threats that will affect them.

Land Use - Land use and built form can sometimes be interchangeable. This analysis, will refer specifically to the purpose of the land - moreover, Employment Lands and mixed-use lands, which hold a specific status in Toronto's Official Plan (directed by the PPS). This can also refer to empty lots and Hydro Lands to the north of the CPR line and may include Institutional Lands (TTC, George Brown).

Built Form - Built form, unlike Land Use, refers to the placement, size and density pertaining the use on the land. This can also include site situation (how close to the street or other buildings), lot sizes and parking placement, height and shadow effects and effects to view corridors (such as from atop the ridge).

5.3 Initial Impressions

The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) lines is a major element that passes through the study area and forms the boundary of six communities including the Annex, Seaton Village, Casa Loma, Tarragon Village, St. Alban's Park and Rathnelly. Much of the land between Dupont Street and the CPR has been zoned as Employment Areas and in turn creates an obstacle for residential development (Alcock, 2012).

There is increasing pressure from developers to permit mixed-use or high-density residential uses on Dupont Street, specifically high-rise condominium towers. This pressure is evident in the area bound by Avenue Road, Dupont Street and Davenport Road at the east end of the Dupont Corridor, where zoning permits both residential and mixed use developments. Similarly, developers are considering proposing a three-storey, big-box retail development on the existing Grand Touring Auto site between Ossington Avenue and Christie Street on the western side of the Dupont Corridor (Alcock, 2012).

The Ryerson Vision team completed the first site visit on Thursday September 6, 2012 to gain an initial understanding of the Dupont Corridor. Throughout the site visit, each team member documented their initial observations including potential Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the area.

Ryerson Vision began the site visit at the east end of the Dupont Corridor on Avenue Road and Davenport Road, finishing at the western boundary on Ossington Avenue. The eastern sections of the Dupont Corridor mainly consist of residential uses with a few ground level restaurants and offices. Buildings in this area are generally well maintained and feature a streetscape that is pedestrian and cyclist-friendly, with ample amounts of foliage and greenery. Based on observations and sale prices listed for new properties, Ryerson Vision noted that residents who reside in this part of the Dupont Corridor are most likely high-income households. This section of the study area is opportune for development as it is in close proximity to the subway system.

As Ryerson Vision team moved further away from Avenue Road towards Bathurst Street on Dupont Street, the façade changed to a series of low-rise residential units and ground level commercial uses. The amount of traffic flow intensifies travelling west on Dupont Street, particularly at the intersection of Dupont Street and Davenport Road. We observed that automobiles are mainly driving through the Dupont Corridor rather than driving to a destination within it. Sidewalks along Dupont Street are generally narrow, with small planters obstructing pedestrian mobility. Furthermore, there are very limited bus stops located along Dupont Street and very few buses seen servicing the area.

Moving further west along Dupont Street towards Ossington Avenue there is an increase in the number of vacant units and units in need of repair. Many of the commercial uses between Bathurst Street and Ossington Avenue are services such as dry cleaning and car washes, along with several large car dealerships. Also located in this section of Dupont Street is Loblaws Supermarket; a major grocery chain that does not integrate with rest of the Dupont Corridor, as the majority of commercial uses are small businesses.

After this initial visit to the Dupont Corridor, the Ryerson Vision team primarily noted the disjointed range and mix of uses and housing stock. There is an inconsistency to the flow and connectivity of the Dupont Corridor that is apparent to those unfamiliar with the area. The wide range of uses is a defining feature of the Dupont Corridor. Overall, the Dupont Corridor Framework Study will identify issues and recommend solutions to benefit all the community and stakeholders involved in the Dupont Corridor.

5.3.1 Transit

Strengths

- Several subway stations are located within the study area including Dupont Station, Spadina Station, Bathurst Station and Christie Station, providing connections to the Bloor-Danforth line and the Yonge-University-Spadina Line
- There are currently several north-south bus lines including 7 Bathurst, 63 Ossington, 126 Christie, and the 127 Davenport
- Avenue Road bus at Dupont Triangle connects commuters to the Business District
- Bedford Road and Davenport Road provide connections to major north-south and east-west bus routes
- Bus service provided on all Major Arterial roads between Christie Street and Ossington Avenue

Weaknesses

- The 26 Dupont Bus that runs along Dupont Street has low ridership and infrequent service times at approximately 30 min. intervals
- Dupont Subway station ridership is the 6th lowest on the Yonge-University-Spadina Subway Line (City of Toronto, 2010b)
- There are high traffic levels particularly in the west end of Dupont Street as it acts as a feeder street for several large neighbourhoods

Opportunities

- Potential Crosstown GO connection in the area
- Intensifying development in areas surrounding the subway system to increase cost-effective use of the system
- New developments along Dupont Street may increase transit ridership and provide more frequent bus and subway services with increased demand

Threats

- If the 26 Dupont bus line continues to experience low ridership, the route may be put out of service
- Stopping bus services have dramatic impacts for residents as many use the 26 Dupont to travel east-west through the city
- Lack of incentive for TTC to increase transit services and funding in the area due to low ridership

5.3.2 Movement

Strengths

- Dupont Corridor currently accommodates a range of transportation methods including public transit, automobiles, cycling and walking
- Sidewalks on Davenport Road allow for bicycle parking
- Bike lanes are present on St. George Street
- Dupont Street allows for east-west connection for various modes of transportation
- Effective use of speed bumps on side streets between Christie Street and Ossington Avenue

Weaknesses

- Lack of parking availability within the Dupont Corridor
- Congestion along Dupont Street during peak hours; between 7:30 am - 9:30 am and 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, put a strain on traffic flow
- Side streets are often blocked by garbage bins which interrupt pedestrian mobility
- Limited crosswalks on Dupont Street and constant and fast moving. Traffic along the street presents safety concerns for pedestrians crossing Dupont Street
- No bicycle wayfinding signage in areas north of Dupont Street despite the presence of bike lanes on streets west of Dupont Street
- Sidewalks along Dupont Street are narrow, limiting pedestrian movement

Opportunities

- Vacant land immediately north of the CPR can be used as a surface parking lot that can be leased to George Brown College or Casa Loma.
- Sidewalks on Davenport Road and Dupont Street can be widened to improve pedestrian flow and safety
- Provide bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways along the Hydro Corridor
- Install bicycle infrastructure and sharrows (racks, lock rings, lanes and wayfinding signs)
- New developments should include wider sidewalks to accommodate accessibility, as well as spaces for street furniture and planters

Threats

- The CPR generates high noise levels and creates a barrier for pedestrians travelling north-south across the train tracks
- The lack of automobile parking inconveniences residents and limits visitors to the area, negatively impacting local businesses
- George Brown College students and visitors to Casa Loma use on-street parking spaces, putting a strain on the limited parking supply
- Excess cars and buses parked on side streets block traffic and pedestrian flow
- Lack of emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle movement may lead to more car-oriented developments such as big-box retail

5.3.3 Economic

Strengths

- There are strong small businesses located in the Dupont Corridor that are supported by residents
- The turnover rate is low in certain sections of the Dupont Corridor as tenants have signed long-term leases
- A diverse mix of retail and office uses at street level
- Dupont Triangle has low number of vacant units and a hub for businesses related to arts, design and culture

Weaknesses

- Employment areas are underutilized
- Long-term vacant lots in the west end of Dupont Street
- Limited space available for new businesses in the Dupont Triangle
- Big-box retailers on Christie Street and Dupont Street may overpower local businesses in the area

Opportunities

- Some local business owners support higher density residential developments as it will increase the volume of people in the area that use their services
- BIA integration to enhance commercial prospects for small business owners
- Redevelop vacant lots to include a mix of residential and commercial uses where permitted
- New development or redevelopment can increase the number of street level commercial uses and attract new businesses into the area
- Promote commercial clusters along Dupont Street using its proximity to the Yorkville area and Bloor Street
- Employment areas have great development potential for commercial and industrial uses

Threats

- Additional big box retail stores in the area may threaten local businesses
- Heavy traffic flow along Dupont Street limits appeal for shopping
- Lack of on-street parking for businesses without off-street parking may limit business potential

5.3.4 Environment

Strengths

- Landscaping on side streets is well maintained and aesthetically appealing
- Large greenspace available at Ramsden Park across from Avenue Road
- Green landscaping on most residential properties between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street, and between Christie Street and Ossington Avenue
- Open space and greenspace provided adjacent to Loblaws Supermarket

Opportunities

- Improve the existing public realm by increasing the amount of landscaping, planters, public seating, public art and widening sidewalks
- Potential to invoke Section 37 of the Planning Act to allocate funding from new developments towards improving public landscaping
- New developments and redevelopments can include green spaces within their projects
- New developments and redevelopment projects can incorporate green building features following the Green Building Standards Guideline

Weaknesses

- High noise levels due to high traffic volumes and the CPR
- Many residents and visitors are unable to enjoy the public realm due to noise levels and vibration
- Limited landscaping and planters along Major Arterial roads such as Bathurst Street and Dupont Street west of Bathurst Street
- Air and noise pollution from the CPR and high traffic volumes

Threats

- Noise and vibration from CPR and high traffic volumes will inhibit development
- Limited space along sidewalks for planters, bicycle parking and public seating
- Limited space available and suitable for new open spaces and parks

5.3.5 Affordable Housing

Strengths

- Existing units are located in apartments that are well integrated with other private residential units in the area
- Existing units are generally well maintained to a higher degree than average social housing units
- TCHC apartment buildings and townhouses are located in the area at 177 Pendrith Street, 341 Bloor Street West and 1087 Davenport Road
- Existing single family units were converted into multiple dwelling units which provides a mix of housing stock
- St. Clare's Multi-faith Housing, Action for Social Change (TASC) provides affordable housing units
- Affordable housing units available between Christie Street and Ossington Avenue which includes:
  - Frankel Lambert Townhouses
  - Lambert Court Apartments

Weaknesses

- Limited affordable housing units available
- Affordable housing units between Avenue Road and Spadina Avenue, as well as Christie Street and Ossington Avenue are in need of repair
- No social services provided in the area
- Current affordable housing stock is unappealing in built form and landscape design

Opportunities

- New residential developments can incorporate a mix of market units, rent-geared-to-income and affordable housing units
- Potential to allocate capital from new developments from section 37 of the Planning Act to provide recreational facilities and social services
- Existing unit sizes can be retrofitted to accommodate current housing demands

Threats

- Land values in the Dupont Corridor are increasing at a rate higher than the average land prices across the City of Toronto
- High cost to construct and maintain affordable housing units
- Funding sources are limited and difficult to obtain
- Buildings that are beyond repair may potentially lead to displacement of current residents

5.3.6 Built Form

Strengths

- New developments have included stepped-back upper floors, maintaining the pedestrian scale of the street and avoiding large shadows
- Some new residential buildings have incorporated ground level commercial uses that are accessible from the sidewalk.
- Distinctive Industrial-style architecture between Christie Street and Ossington Avenue
- Diverse range of residential housing stock including apartments, single units and semi-detached units between Christie Street and Ossington Avenue
- Some commercial properties between Bathurst Street and Christie Street have well maintained landscaping and bicycle parking available

Weaknesses

- Many existing buildings on the west side of the study area are in need of repair
- Large front yard parking lots at businesses such as the Beer Store, Loblaws and several auto repair lots
- Lack of design standards specific to the Dupont Corridor to regulate built form
- Inconsistency in building types and sizes breaks the flow of the street wall along Dupont Street

Opportunities

- Potential for new developments to focus on architectural design and improving the streetscape
- Providing parking at the rear of the building or underground to increase pedestrian safety, accessibility and create a connection to the street
- Improve the façade of existing buildings to help increase overall attractive of the area
- New developments and redevelopment of existing buildings will be required to meet the standards within the design guidelines

Threats

- Recent development applications within the Dupont Corridor have proposed building heights that are inconsistent with the existing scale of the built form
- Precedent set by nearby developments in the Yorkville area and along Bloor Street may place pressures to increase the height limit for proposed developments in the area
- Risk of larger properties being bought up and redeveloped by big box retailers
- Non-heritage buildings in need of major repair can be seen as nuisance rather than opportunities for revitalization

5.3.7 Land Use

Strengths

- The range of uses within the study area creates a complete community; people have access to services and stores needed on a daily basis
- Stable residential and commercial uses on the south side of Dupont Street
- Mix of land uses between Avenue Road and Bathurst Street which includes residential, commercial and institutional uses
- Parks located to the north of the CPR between Christie Street and Ossington Avenue
- Residential buildings located in Christie Pits Park

Weaknesses

- Employment lands are currently underutilized
- Limited land available for development along Dupont Street
- Properties abutting the CPR are not deep enough to comply with the 30 metre buffer required by Canadian Pacific
- Limited greenspace and public spaces in the area

Opportunities

- Employment lands offer potential for commercial and industrial uses that are permitted which can encourage economic growth and greater employment opportunities
- Properties designated Mixed Use Areas support a mix of residential and commercial uses
- Redevelop underutilized properties to intensify the mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses
- Encourage small retail uses at street level to create a pedestrian scale public realm and promote local businesses

Threats

- CPR is a development barrier due to noise, vibration, and the required 30 metre buffer zone
- Increased height of new developments on the north side of Dupont Street will result in greater vibration and noise levels for residents to the north
- In order to allow for streetscape improvements, existing sidewalks must be widened which can only be achieved through redevelopment

5.0 SWOT Analysis

6.1 Issues and Gap Analysis

Ryerson Vision, along with the Dupont Corridor Working Group held multiple community consultations to identify priority issues within the study area. These issues have been divided into subcategories and will be explained in greater detail in the following section. Establishing the community's priority list has allowed Ryerson Vision to explore potential recommendations that is intended to aid the Working Group in creating a vision for their community. In addition, it will allow the Working Group to create a plan to address each issue based on the order of importance identified in the community consultations.

The issues have been divided into the following subcategories:

6.2 CPR Line
6.3 Development Pressures
6.4 Employment Lands
6.5 Parking
6.6 Public Realm
6.7 Traffic Congestion
6.8 Bicycle Parking & Safety

In This Section...

- Introduction
- Issues and Gaps

6.2 Canadian Pacific Railway Line

Definition:

Part of the Canadian Pacific Rail line (CPR) runs east to west through the Dupont Corridor directly north of Dupont Street from Davenport Road to Dufferin Avenue. The presence of the CPR line is one of the factors that have shaped Dupont Street into the myriad combination of old factories and mixed-uses that currently exist.

Existing Conditions:

Originally constructed in 1881, the CPR line has transported freight train cargo across Canada and northern parts of the USA for over a century. CPR freight trains do not run on schedules like passenger trains – they operate 24 hours per day and every day of the week. On some branch lines you may see one or two trains a week, while busy mainline corridors can service more than 30 trains a day (Canadian Pacific, 2012). This rail line poses many issues for the Dupont Corridor. However, it is important to analyze how these issues provide positive and negative aspects for development, given the personal perception of residents, business owners and developers.

Impacts/Effects:

Buffer Zone

Any structure built abutting the CPR land must meet the buffer requirements of at least 30 metres. This leaves large gaps of underutilized space between the tracks and businesses on the north side of Dupont Street. Both commercial and residential development is restricted and innovated ways of utilizing this space are required to enhance the liveability and walkability of the Dupont Corridor. Some residents see the buffer as a positive aspect because it acts as a hindrance for developers to construct large-scale developments.

Noise & Vibration

The heavy usage of the CPR line creates noise and vibration issues for surrounding businesses and residents. The effects of these nuisances impact several blocks in the north and south directions. This acts as a deterrent factor for certain businesses such as offices and yoga studios to locate their business there because of the difficult working conditions the CPR can often ensue. As a result, the potential for the Corridor's unique, dynamic character and streetscape is decreased. People and businesses are less likely to live or work in a neighbourhood with such difficult conditions.

Safety

Safety pertaining to the CPR line is an issue of high concern to surrounding residents. The contents inside the containers of the trains running along the tracks are unknown. Also, the tracks are outdated and in need of repair – this is not only for safety but for vibration impacts as well. In the event of a crash occurring, consideration must be taken to ensure damage is not inflicted to the contents as well as the containers. Unsafe conditions pose a limited threat to development and steps must be taken to update the CPR tracks and create a safer, more livable environment for the Dupont Corridor.

6.3 Development Pressures

Definition:

Development pressures present a wide range of issues that can have both a positive and negative effect on the community, and have the ability to set new precedents in terms of height, density and use in the area. Particular to the Dupont Corridor, these pressures can be found in the Annex "Triangle," an area bounded by Dupont Street, Davenport Road and Avenue Road. This area has recently experienced pressure from development companies to intensify, a recent trend inherent in north-of-downtown neighbourhoods. This push for new development will result in pressuring the neighbourhood to change and conform to its new surroundings. For this reason, the Working Group has identified these development pressures as the number one issue facing the future of the Dupont Corridor.

Existing Conditions:

The current configuration of parcel sizes throughout the Dupont Corridor has been the primary factor dictating the form and type of development. Presently, the majority of the neighbourhood has been subdivided into small parcels for the accommodation of single-family and compact duplex and triplex buildings. These small parcels restrict the opportunity for redevelopment, as it would require an extensive land-assembly process through the purchasing of several parcels. This process is required in order to facilitate new development (i.e. higher height and density) that is financially and physically feasible. Current areas with large enough parcels for this kind of development exist almost exclusively on the north side of Dupont Street, and south of the CPR lands.

328 Dupont Street

One major development project that is currently under review by the Ontario Municipal Board is a development located at 328 Dupont Street (includes 330, 344, 358 and 374). An Official Plan Amendment has been filed to change the designation of the property from Employment Areas to Mixed-Use Areas to accommodate primarily residential intensification of the property. The Wynn Family Trust owns this property, which currently contains both a one and four storey office building. The proposal will include 3 buildings that will accommodate mixed use commercial-residential.

Image 6.3a: Proposed Development by The Wynn Family Trust (Regional Architects, 2011)

555 Dupont Street

Another development application that is currently under review at the City, is 555 Dupont Street. It is one of the few parcels of land on the south side of Dupont Street that has the capacity to accommodate a building larger than a single-family home. This application is seeking to amend the

current Zoning By-law No. 438-86 on the property, which at present is being used as a builders' supply yard, to permit neighbourhood serving commercial uses. This will allow for a wide range of commercial uses to serve the surrounding neighbourhood. The owner does not intend to change the current size of the building, which stands at one storey high, but to expand the range of uses of the current buildings.

Impacts/Effects:

Development pressures are an ongoing area of concern that affects all residents and business owners in the Dupont Corridor and the surrounding impact area, and have the potential to set a precedent in the area for residential uses and high-rise development. This will have drastic effects of the future of Dupont Street's built form and ultimately alter the character of Dupont Street. Taller buildings also reduce the pedestrian scale by causing shadows and an enclosing effect on the streetscape.

Zoning amendments also have the potential to set a precedence for the Dupont Corridor, as proposals are increasingly focused on changing land uses from employment and commercial/retail to residential, a factor that will also have an effect on the neighbourhood's character. The mix of land uses has been the backbone of the area for many decades. Residential zoning is currently limited by the employment land designation, but is currently being threatened by proposed amendments to remove this designation.

6.4 Employment Lands

A public staff report (October 23, 2012) presented council consideration for the changes to the Official Plan policies as part of the Five Year Review of the Official Plan. The policy directions aim to inform the next phase of the employment policy review. The policy directions arise out of a consultant's study of employment uses across the City of Toronto. In particular, areas along the Dupont Corridor were identified as core employment. New office space construction as well as continued preservation of the land base for industrial employment were identified (manufacturing, warehousing, construction, wholesaling, and utilities).

The key elements are to:

- Stimulate the growth of new office space construction in the Downtown, Centres and within walking distance of existing or approved and funded rapid transit stations in other Mixed Use Areas, Employment Areas and Regeneration Areas;

- Preserve the majority of the City's designated Employment Areas solely for business purposes including the preservation of the Employment Areas for primary employment uses and designating areas, generally on the boundaries for retail commercial and other compatible secondary uses; and
- Provide locations for the retail commercial institutional sectors to meet the needs of Toronto and the Region's growing population.

The Dupont Corridor is affected by the land use designation of core employment and retail employment such that it directly impacts current and future development that can accommodate employment in the area. The core employment designation is identified as the Toronto Transit Commission Hillcrest Complex and various sections of land on the boundaries of Dovercourt Road and Davenport Road are identified as retail employment.

The land use designation of core employment and retail employment creates opportunity for developers. However, for residents this implies development pressures. Core Employment and retail employment land use designations do not encourage residential development. The restriction on residential development can lead to "big box" developments within these designated employment areas. The Dupont Corridor has potential for these "big box" developments due to its proximity to the downtown core. Recommendations to approach the issue concerning employment lands include adjustments to height, density and built form.

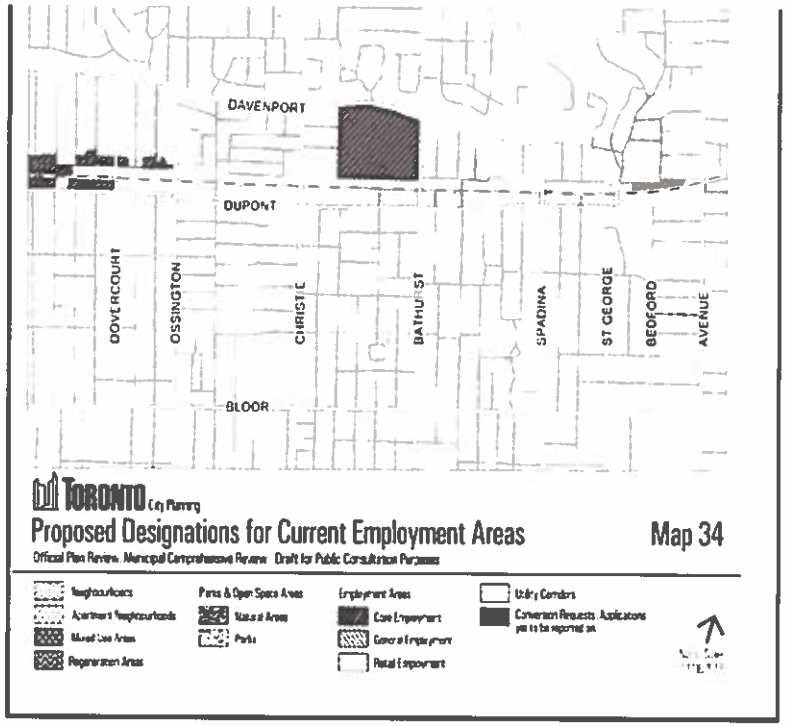


Image 6.4a: Proposed Changes to Dupont Corridor Employment Areas (City of Toronto, 2012a)

6.5 Parking

Definition:

Parking is of particular concern for the movement of cars, buses and cyclists as well as the economic viability of businesses along the Dupont Corridor. The availability, location and spaces required to be provided through zoning by-laws all contribute to the opportunities and the threats for residents and businesses.

Existing Conditions:

Currently, parking is provided in both public and private areas along the Dupont Corridor. On-street parking along Dupont Street is restricted between the morning and evening rush hours while open between rush hours and in the evenings. Off-street parking is primarily provided in private driveways for single and semi-detached residential properties and in rear lot or underground garage for multiple-residential buildings. Private parking lots also exist for some of the large, single user commercial sites, such as the LCBO and Loblaws.

Impacts/Effects:

On-street parking is a concern because it occupies an entire lane for motorists using Dupont Street as an east-west corridor for commuting. Although parking is not permitted during rush hour, the volume of traffic during the day is impeded by the parked vehicles along Dupont Street.

Off-street parking is provided on front yards of single and semi-detached homes occupying a significant portion of the limited area available for landscaping. Removing trees, plantings, and open grass in place of asphalt or other hard materials, detracts from the overall streetscape and curb cuts disrupt the sidewalk to make way for driveways.

Commercial properties with off-street parking lots have a similarly detrimental effect on the streetscape. Large paved parking lots create wide gaps between retail stores on Dupont Street and provide little compensation for landscaping. These parking lots are used by residents for shopping within the corridor despite being restricted for customers of the property they occupy. This shows a need for parking in the area as well as an overage for parking requirements directed towards large, single user occupants.

6.6 Public Realm

Definition:

The public realm includes areas that are legally accessible by all members of the public such as parks, sidewalks, paths and public squares. An effective public realm draws people to an area and fosters community pride, generating economic activity and strengthening ties to the community. A successful public realm promotes conversation and offers a sense of place for pedestrians, allowing them to observe and enjoy their surroundings in a comfortable setting. The public realm of the Dupont Corridor as it currently exists, is lacking in several areas.

Existing Conditions:

Sidewalks

The sidewalks are very narrow along the majority of Dupont Street and surrounding side streets. The width of the sidewalks rarely exceeds 1.5m, the minimum width for City of Toronto sidewalks, and contains several obstructions such as planters and light posts. These are obstacles that impede pedestrian flow, and result in reduced accessibility for people using strollers, wheelchairs and walking aids. The narrow width of the sidewalk creates disincentives for pedestrian activity along Dupont Street, reducing local business activity in the Dupont Corridor.

Parks and Open Space

The majority of the Dupont Corridor lacks parks and open spaces and is considered an area of low parkland provision under the Official Plan (see Policy section of this report). There are a number of small parks and parkettes located throughout the Dupont Corridor; however, the total area of these spaces is not sufficient for the population of the area. The parks and open spaces located on Dupont Street are limited to the green space adjacent to Loblaw's and the area directly surrounding the Dupont Subway Station on the northwest corner of Dupont Street and Spadina Avenue.

Public Seating

The limited public seating currently available in the Dupont Corridor includes benches at Dupont Subway Station, benches directly outside of Loblaw's and a bench in front of a retail store. The current stock of public seating is low for a neighbourhood of this scale, and does not conform with the standards set by Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Program, which promotes public seating as a factor in creating a better environment for residents and visitors (Vibrant Streets, 2006). The lack of public seating reduces desirability and functionality of the public realm and pedestrian activity.

Impacts/Effects:

The poor condition of the public realm can act as a barrier to the economic and social vitality of the Dupont Corridor. The lack of parks and open spaces restricts Dupont Corridor residents' opportunities for recreation, relaxation and experiencing nature in the community. The narrow sidewalks in the Dupont Corridor can easily become overcrowded, with obstructions such as planters and light posts further restricting pedestrian mobility. The lack of seating reduces the attractiveness of the public realm, and does not accommodate people with physical disabilities and the elderly, who may require a rest from long walks. This detracts pedestrian activity from the Dupont Corridor, which is detrimental to residents, local businesses and the economic vitality of the area.

6.7 Traffic Congestion

Definition:

Traffic congestion is the condition in which a road is impeded by excess vehicles causing slower-than-normal speeds. Congestion in the transportation realm generally refers to free-flow traffic that moves at a slower speed as well as stop-and-go traffic.

Existing Conditions:

Transportation in the Dupont Corridor is an issue recognized by most residents who have identified that the 26 Dupont bus route does not run at the frequency of which the residents would prefer. Ridership is highest during peak hours whereas off-peak hours show that buses and the TTC subway stations are underutilized. Dupont Street sees high volumes of private vehicle traffic which leads to congestions and limits mobility within in the area. Dupont Corridor's residents' associations acknowledge the need for more frequent bus service and encouragement to maximize transit use.

Impacts/Effects:

TTC subway stations and bus stops are not being used to maximum efficiency within the Dupont Corridor, resulting in an insufficient bus schedule. TTC ridership demands need to increase in order for TTC services to appropriately respond. Potential options to remediate the transit use in the Dupont Corridor can consider the implementation of a transit oriented development or a crosstown GO Transit plan.

6.8 Bicycle Parking & Safety

Definition:

Dupont Street, between Avenue Road and Ossington Avenue, currently functions as a through-way for automobiles travelling east-west through the city. There are no designated bicycle lines, limited bicycle parking and inadequate priority crossing for cyclists and pedestrians along this portion of Dupont Street. This has led to safety concerns, and requires an analysis of the impacts on the Dupont Corridor.

Existing Conditions:

Bicycle Parking

Dupont Street lacks adequate bicycle parking, with very few facilities present between Avenue Road and Ossington Avenue. When bicycle parking is found, it is mainly provided in the form of the city designated post-and-ring bike stand. This type of bicycle parking is limited as only two cyclists can use a post at one time. As a result, cyclists park their bicycles in places they are not authorized to

such streetlight posts, hydro poles, trees or fences. This presents the risk of the legal removal of bicycles from private property or for sidewalk safety.

Cycling and Pedestrian Safety

The Dupont Corridor is surrounded by city designated bicycle routes. From the north, path #18 traverses Davenport Road then links into path #35 along St. George Street, which then feeds into path #16 on Barton Street. Alternative east-west bicycle paths such as College Street, Harbord Street and the previously mentioned path are increasingly enticing cyclists to avoid Dupont Street. Despite the plethora of east-west bicycle paths, there are few options for cyclists traveling north-south; crossing the busy and often disjointed intersections of Dupont Street is unavoidable. The CPR north of Dupont Street can cause congestion at specific intersections during times when the tracks can not be crossed due to trains passing through.

Image 6.8a: Toronto Bike rings

For both cyclist and pedestrians, the major intersections along Dupont Street present safety risks. Many of the traffic signals prioritize automobiles with advanced green for left turns and delayed walk signals. At certain intersections, cyclists and pedestrians can be difficult to see due to disjointed alignment of the streets.

Impacts/Effects:

The most significant threat to both cyclist and pedestrian is being involved in a collision. The City of Toronto released a study from their Transportation Service Division in 2003 titled "Bicycle/ Motor-Vehicle Collision". The study details the frequency and major causes of collision in the city. The study concluded that the majority of collisions occur at intersections as a result of turning maneuverer utilized by automobile drivers. The next most common circumstance for cyclist-automobile collisions was automobiles overtaking cyclist during high volumes of traffic flow. These circumstances are applicable to the Dupont Corridor due to the number of busy intersections, high traffic volumes and insufficient bicycle pathways.

The City of Vancouver's "Bicycle Network Study" recommended the creation of on-street bicycle routes on quiet, residential streets running parallel to major arterial roads (Government of Canada, 2010). This measure provides alternative methods to safely allow cyclist to traverse the same portion of the neighbourhood with less risk of collision. This could be applied to the Dupont Corridor with the promotion of better linkages between Dupont Street and the current bicycle path on Barton Street. Further consideration could be made for cyclists and pedestrians by creating a multi-use trail along the CPR and Hydro corridor.

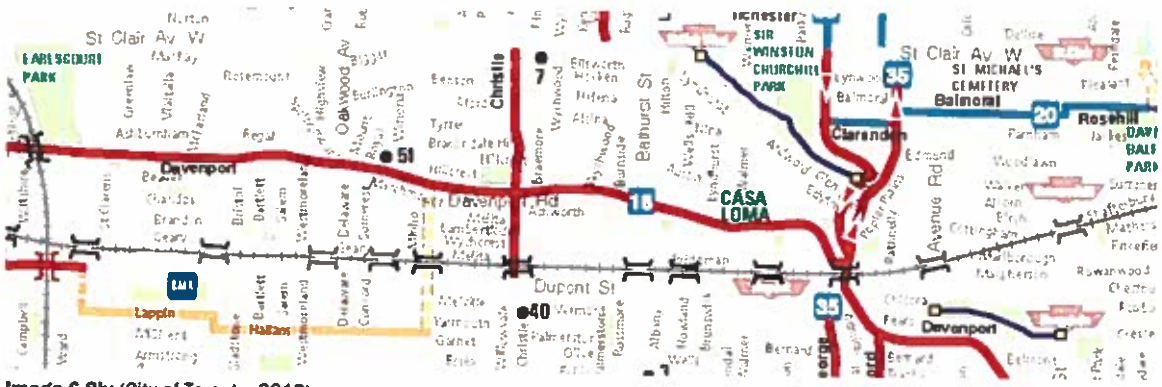
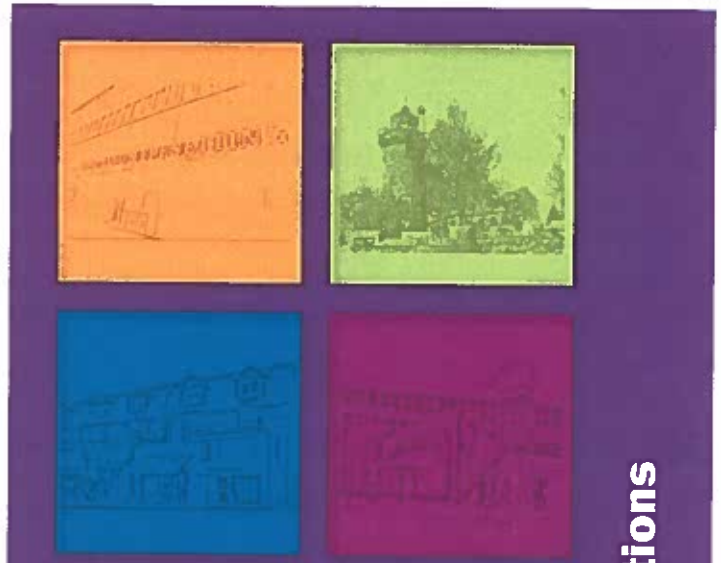


Image 6.8b: (City of Toronto, 2012)

7.1 Recommendations

In this section, Ryerson Vision presents a set of recommendations to address the priority list identified in Section 6, Issues and Gaps. The recommendations are intended to be used as a guide for the Dupont Corridor Working Group as they form their vision for the community. They call for are a mix of future studies, reports, discussions and advocacy. Each recommendation is divided into four parts: What (a definition of the recommendation); Why (its pertinence to the Dupont Corridor); How (methods for implementation); and Precedents (case studies and examples of where and how the recommendation has been used in other areas).



In This Section...

- Recommendations

7.1.1 Subcategories

Below is a list of the demographics (green) and issues (blue), and the recommendations that have been proposed to address each item. Many of the recommendations address several issues as they are, by nature, quite interrelated.

4.1 - Age

- 7.4 AODA Requirement

4.5 - Transportation

- 7.2 Transit-Oriented Development

6.2 - CPR Line

- 7.2 Transit-Oriented Development
- 7.11 Clean Train Coalition
- 7.16 Rail Corridor Redesign

6.3 - Development Pressures

- 7.2 Transit-Oriented Development
- 7.15 Architectural Design Guidelines
- 7.18 Avenues Study

6.4 - Employment Lands

- 7.8 BIA Expansion
- 7.9 Retail Rent Analysis
- 7.10 Commercial Vacancy Penalties
- 7.18 Avenues Study

6.5 - Parking

- 7.2 Transit-Oriented Development
- 7.12 Parking Study

6.6 - Public Realm

- 7.3 Streetscape Master Plan
- 7.4 AODA Requirement
- 7.7 Hydro Corridor Pathway
- 7.13 Landscaping Incentive Program
- 7.14 Community Gardens
- 7.15 Architectural Design Guidelines
- 7.17 Public Art
- 7.18 Avenues Study

6.7 - Traffic Congestion

- 7.5 Traffic Study
- 7.7 Hydro Corridor Pathway

6.8 - Bicycle Parking & Safety

- 7.5 Traffic Study
- 7.6 Cycling Study

7.2 Transit-Oriented Development

4.5 - Transportation
6.2 - CPR Line
6.3 - Development Pressures
6.5 - Parking

What

The Online Transportation Demand Management (TDM) encyclopedia defines Transit Oriented Development (TOD) as a, "residential and commercial centre that is designed to maximize transit and non-motorized transportation with other features that encourage transit ridership." It is designed with a transit station as the core centre with the highest density, spreading out into low-density depending on the ease of access for pedestrians in terms of distance from transit stops (Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2012). Transit provision, movement and connectivity concerns can be addressed through the option of TOD, in which mixed-use residential and commercial areas can be integrated to optimize transit ridership and increase access to public transportation. Benefits of TOD include: pedestrian connectivity, housing opportunities, cycling features, access to transit services and the creation of complete communities.

TOD includes the elements of:

- An attractive streetscape that provides cycling and pedestrian facilities
- A design for connectivity and traffic-controlling measures
- Limited surface parking resulting in reduced automobile use
- Mixed-use buildings and a mix of housing types
- Higher density design for an approximate 10-minute pedestrian commute (Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2012)

Why

TOD can be utilized to connect the businesses in the Dupont Corridor and facilitate easier connections to Dupont station. TOD would improve the Dupont Corridor's existing pedestrian-oriented community while optimizing parking spaces and mixed-use residential areas. Dupont Station could be the central point of TOD in the Dupont Corridor, connecting the neighbourhoods through increased peak-hour transit services and allowing residents to easily commute to where they work, live and go. TOD would focus on improving and encouraging alternative modes of transportation to private automobiles. Residents of the Dupont Corridor have expressed their concerns over traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours in addition to the limited bus service, which travels at approximately 15 to 30-minute intervals.

How

Implementing TOD would require involvement of developers and interested transit stakeholders. The TTC and Metrolinx/GO Transit planners can be approached to create a plan for TOD within the Dupont Corridor. Support from City Councillors and community input will be essential in the design and elements of TOD in the Dupont Corridor. City Planners would compile information to be used in planning for TOD in the Dupont Corridor, which can include:

- Feasibility Analysis;
- TOD vision, goals and strategies;
- A strategic plan; and
- Funding sources

Implementing TOD in the Dupont Corridor would introduce measures to improve existing alternative transportation modes (bus, subway, cycling and walking). In TOD, design initiatives can include streetscape enhancements for pedestrians, sharrows for cyclists, increasing bus service during peak hours based on ridership numbers and demand and provide easier access to subway stations within and surrounding the Dupont Corridor.

Precedent

Case Study: Equinox
Location: Scarborough Centre
Status: Completed

Project Overview

The Equinox is a redevelopment project that introduced two condominium towers of thirty-seven storeys (689 units) and retail use on the ground floor of one of the towers. The site is located across from the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) and GO Bus terminal on industrial lands adjacent to the CPR lineand the Ontario Hydro Corridor. The developer, The Goldman Group, saw this location as an optimal site for new residential development because of the proximity to the Scarborough Town Shopping Centre and of the SRT and GO Transit terminal. A pedestrian staircase and bridge allow commuters to easily access SRT. The developer was granted a density bonus for the development by providing the pedestrian bridge connecting The Equinox to the terminal. The Equinox TOD incorporated pedestrian friendly elements in the streetscape with widened sidewalks and incorporating a public playground. The Equinox includes 771 underground parking spaces for residents. Bicycle parking is not provided at The Equinox, which prompted the City of Toronto to pass a by-law requiring

bicycle parking for future TOD projects. Public consultation for the project led to City Staff requiring that the proposal be revised to include recommendations for zoning performance standards, site plan requirements and further amenities to be secured from the developer under Section 37. The community supported the TOD and comments were provided for pedestrian links and parks to enhance the predominantly urban area. The developer provided and incurred the costs for these public amenities and in return an amendment was made to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law for increased density.

Image 7.2a: Equinox Condo by Monarch (The Condo Blog, 2011)

Image 7.2b: Rapid Transit Connection at Equinox (Val Dodge, 2011)

7.3 Streetscape Master Plan

6.6 - Public Realm

What

A Streetscape Master Plan (SMP) is a policy within the City of the Toronto that guides the location of public seating, bike parking stands and other street furniture. It can dictate the width of sidewalks as well as the materials that should be used. A SMP can also provide guidelines for landscaping, patios and signage.

Why

Creating an SMP will help create a cohesive street pattern for the Dupont Corridor. A cohesive street pattern will encourage more pedestrian movement, especially through connecting difficult or hard to navigate areas. Controlling the design and distribution of space in the public realm will greatly improve the desirability of the area and improve the quality of life for those living, working and visiting the area.

How

Ryerson Vision has started the process of gathering information on the existing conditions in regards to the sidewalk widths amount and location of public seating, bike parking stands and planters throughout the Dupont Corridor. This information was collected as part of the building and property survey conducted at the beginning of the project. These numbers are available in the GIS database that the Ryerson Vision team and the Working Group have established. Data collection for the remaining neighbourhoods of the study area is being undertaken currently and will only add to the present information gathered by the Ryerson Vision team.

The Dupont Corridor Working Group may consider approaching City Staff to have a SMP completed, pending available funding. If funding for this project were not available, requesting an SMP to be completed by a planning or urban design firm would be an effective alternative. There is also an option for conducting a design charette or workshop with members of the community, to form their own vision of an ideal streetscape. This can also be conducted as a student project with any of the several secondary and post-secondary schools in the area.

Precedent

Project: Scarborough Town Centre Public Space and Streetscape Master Plan

Status: In Progress

The firm du Toit Allsopp Hillier was retained by the City of Toronto to create the Scarborough Town Centre Public Space and Streetscape Master Plan. This project provides adequate examples of streetscape alterations which the Working Group can consider. The consultant final report can be found at City of Toronto website. The report provides details on setbacks, hard surface materials,and tree planting details. In particular, the Working Group should review this document for streetscape and planting ideas as opportunities for incorporating into Dupont Streets compact 20m Right-Of-Way.

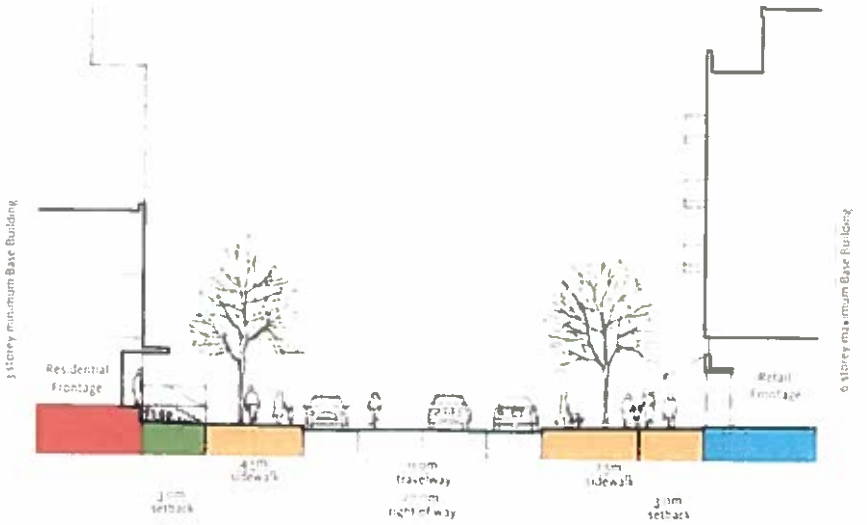


Image 7.3a: Typical Local Street Plan (City of Toronto, 2011)

Project: South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan (Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, and Thornhill)

Status: In Progress

The study area for the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan spans many kilometres and over the municipalities of Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, and Thornhill. Yonge Street (much like Dupont Street) in this particular strip, has a wide variety of uses and serves a multitude of different functions for residents and visitors. This project is a great example of a project that brings together many different groups who have varying opinions, uses, and desires for the same street. The Working Group should review this plan for ways to fulfill common goals while still respecting the different functions of the shared street.

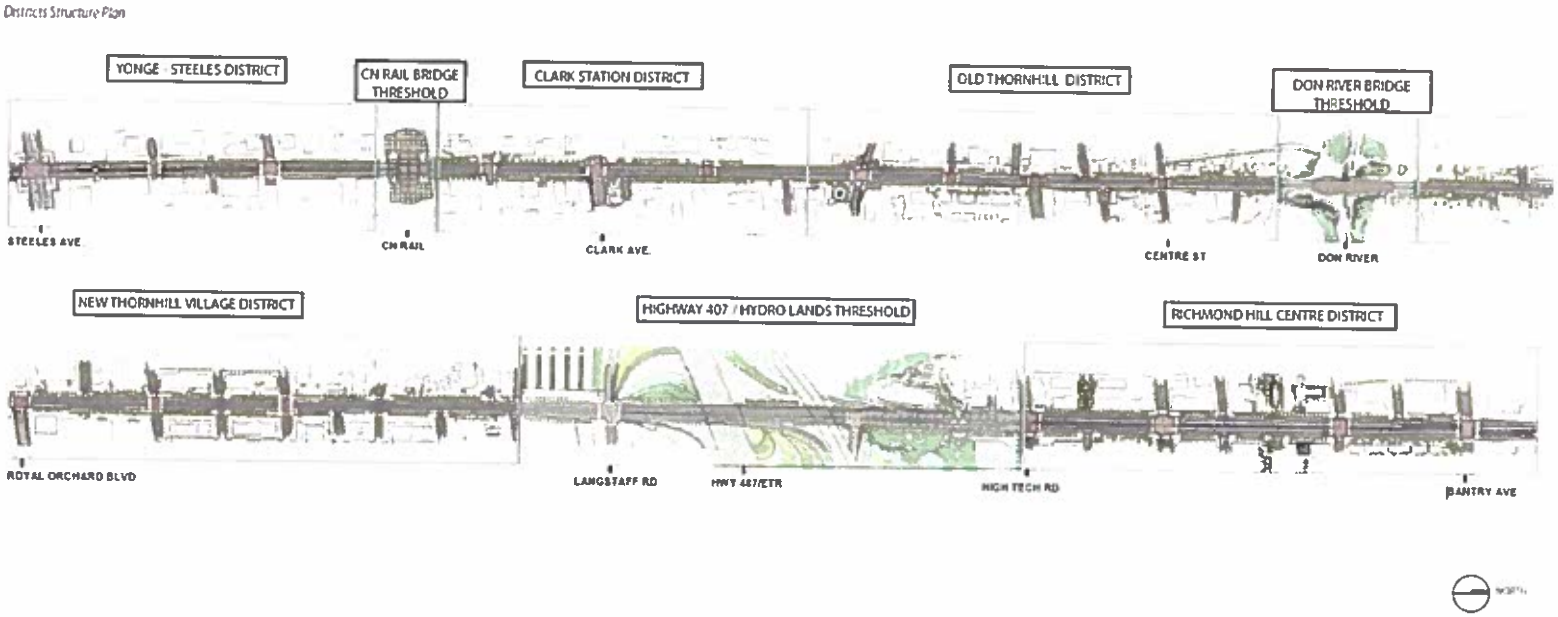


Image 7.3b: : Yonge Street Diversity of Functions. (EDA Collaborative Inc., 2012)

7.4 AODA Requirement

4.1 - Age

6.6 - Public Realm

What

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was legislated in 2005 and established to implement accessibility standards that would help remove and/or prevent barriers for individuals with disabilities. There are five areas of focus within this act including customer service, transportation, information and communication, employment and the built environment (City of Toronto, 2009). Each section within the AODA outlines the standards and regulations that are specific to each focus area.

Why

Approximately 70% of all existing buildings in the Dupont Corridor were built prior to 1946 or constructed between 1946 and 1980, and are not made accessible for individuals with disabilities. It is important to include accessible features to all existing building structures as the population in the Dupont Corridor continues to age. Canada's population within the age brackets between 50- 64 years, as well as 65 years and older has been steadily increasing since 1991 (Statistics Canada, 2006). Compliance to the AODA act of existing structures will help ensure equitable access for all users and may attract additional users currently experiencing difficulties accessing existing structures. It can also allow for a greater range of customers and users to access various services and businesses in the area.

How

It is recommended to follow the guidelines outfitted in the City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines to include accessible features to existing buildings along the Dupont Corridor. The City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines was created in 2004 to address the needs of individuals with disabilities and provide guidelines on specific built forms and exterior areas to a barrier free environment available for all to access (City of Toronto, 2004).

Image 7.4a: Example of buildings in the Corridor with no accessibility ramp (Ryerson Vision, 2012)

Part one of the document outlines all guidelines for exterior areas which includes the following: (City of Toronto, 2004)

- Exterior routes (E.g. Crosswalks, ramps, sidewalks, paths, and walkways)
- Arrive and Departure Areas (E.g. Bus stops, parking, and passenger loading zones)
- Special Areas and Features (E.g. Parks and parkettes, outdoor eating and entertainment spaces)
- Outdoor Amenities (E.g. Bicycle racks, street furniture, benches and seats)
- Outdoor Support Systems (E.g. Traffic signals, signage, and way finding)
- Other (E.g. Construction site protection, gates and openings, and maintenance)

The second part of the document provides all guidelines for all indoor areas and includes: (City of Toronto, 2004)

- Entrances (E.g. Doors, and waiting areas)
- Interior Routes (E.g. Interior ramp, elevators, and hallways)
- Interior Amenities (E.g. Public washrooms, windows, furniture, and information and service counters)
- Interior Systems and Control (E.g. Signage and way finding, fire/ emergency systems and signals)
- Specific Facilities and Areas (E.g. Office buildings, Recreational facilities, transit settings, and community centers)
- Other (E.g. Floor surfaces, materials and finishes, and maintenance)

Precedent

Project: Hart House Student Centre, University of Toronto
Status: Completed

Project Overview: This project demonstrates how accessible features have been incorporated in the Hart House Student Centre which was built nearly a century ago in 1919. Following the standards in the AODA, the building structure was retrofitted to include elevators, ramps, accessible entrance and washrooms for individuals with disabilities to use.

Image 7.4b (SPH Planning and Consulting, 2012)

7.5 Traffic Study

6.7 - Traffic Congestion
6.8 - Bicycle Parking & Safety

What

Following the guidelines provided in the Guidelines for the Preparation of Transportation Impact Studies, the traffic study will assess the transportation system within the impact area. This would provide recommendations to improve the existing transportation system to accommodate demands and impacts generated by new developments or re-developments of existing sites (City of Toronto, 2006). The study will also evaluate and provide suggestions to improve upon the transportation system for transit users, pedestrians and cyclists to ensure equitable access. It is important to note that all traffic studies must be consistent with all relevant policies and guidelines.

Why

Currently, there are heavy traffic volumes especially along Dupont Street and Davenport Avenue. Both Major Arterial roads are unused by transit and auto users as well as pedestrians and cyclist. High traffic flow creates safety concerns for cyclists and pedestrians crossing and accessing the road. Thus, it is recommended that a traffic study should be conducted to improve the current transportation system along the Corridor and other major arterial roads, and provide recommendations that may help ease congestion during peak hours. It will also help identify specific problem areas and be able to provide specific recommendations to improve the target areas.

How

A checklist is provided within the Guidelines for the Preparation of Transportation Impact Studies document which identifies elements that may be included in the study. Each specific element on the checklist is linked to the relevant section in the document to help avoid confusion. The checklist can be found in Appendix A of the Guidelines for the Preparation of Transportation Impact Studies.

Precedent

Project: Traffic Impact Study for 221-245 Wilmington Ave Toronto
Status: Completed, 2010

Overview: The traffic impact study was conducted for the proposed development on Wilmington Avenue. This study includes a summary on the existing and forecasted conditions, as well as an analysis on the amount of traffic that the site will generate. Based on these findings, recommendations were provided to mitigate any potential impact and a conclusion on whether the development will constrain existing road networks (City of Toronto, 2010c). Although this study was used to access the impact of a proposed development, the format of the study should be followed when conducting a traffic study for the Corridor.

7.6 Cycling Study

6.8 - Bicycle Parking & Safety

What

The purpose of a Cycling Study is to provide insight to cycling volumes and route locations in a defined area. Information from the study defines the appropriate cycling routes, dependent on the traffic volume of cyclists and motorists. The information measures how many cyclists are entering and exiting the area, and feedback from the local community for their preferred methods of navigating the street network. The study will indicate cyclist functions and usage patterns of local bicycle parking and intersections.

Why

Implementing a Dupont Corridor Cycling Study, would act in identifying various issues pertaining to bicycle infrastructure, and be used to safely and strategically integrate cycling routes and tools tailored for the cyclist that traverse the neighbourhood and surrounding area. Various aspects of the Dupont Corridor impede safe and efficient bicycle movement. The existence of the CPR line reduces the amount of north-south side streets that cyclists usually favour, due to lower traffic volumes and speed limits. This results in cyclists relying on using busy major arterial roads, which pose a considerable safety concern. A study will identify specific routes that are more appropriate for cyclists, increasing overall safety and efficiency of the bike network. Better labeling of bicycle routes, making signage more visible and understandable, would improve wayfinding for cyclists, and therefore efficiently gauge the flow of bicycle movement.

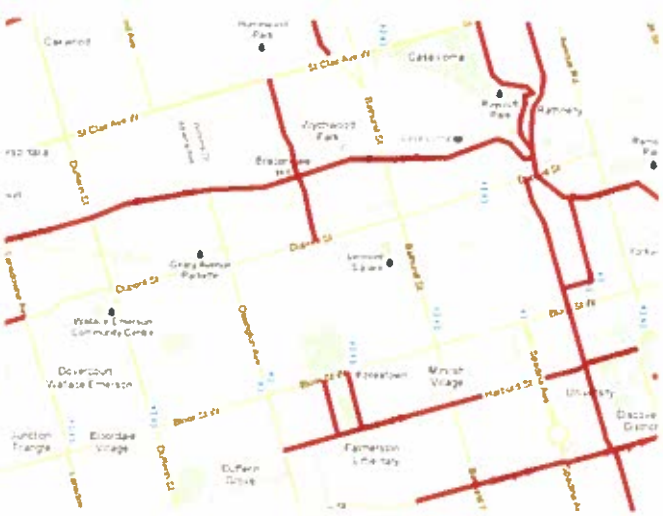
How

The implementation for a Dupont Cycling Study can be done through strategic and collective cooperation with the cyclist community. Creating a Cycling Study Committee will organize the opinions of the community on various cycling-related issues in the Dupont Corridor. After initiating community feedback and consultation sessions, goals and objectives will be established which will then set out the guidelines to direct the Cycling Study. Useful methods of data collection are cyclist counts, collision forecasts and monitoring of current bicycle route usage

Image 7.6a Bike Lanes (BlogTO, 2012)

Precedent

The implementation of a Dupont Cycling Study is an attainable goal that will increase functionally of cycling for resident living along the Dupont Corridor as well as increase safety for daily cyclist traversing the Corridor. The most applicable documentations and precedent that can be utilized for the implementation of the Dupont Cycling Study is the current "Toronto Bike Plan" and The City of Vancouver "Bicycle Network Study". The City of Toronto "Bike Plan" encourages more comprehensive bicycling networks and promotes safety for all users. The Dupont Cycling Study can take keys elements from the Toronto Bike Plan and apply them to the street network surrounding Dupont Street.



Project: Bicycle Network Study
City : Vancouver
Status: Complete

Image 7.6b Biking Toronto: Toronto's Cycling Apps (Joe T., 2011)

The "Bicycle Network Study" for the City of Vancouver outline at a micro-level the importance of urban modes of transportation and the efficiencies cycling can bring to a large city. The study in Vancouver ultimately led to the creation of a bicycle grid and advocacy for the need of a citywide greenway network plan.

Image 7.6c: Cycling Infrastructure and Programs (City of Toronto, 2012)

7.7 Hydro Corridor Pathway

6.6 - Public Realm

6.7 - Traffic Congestion

What

Outlines the possibilities of land located under hydro corridors. Land uses such as greenspace, open space and bike paths are all common uses that are prevalent in numerous hydro corridor locations in urban areas. The uses that are permitted underneath hydro corridors in the province of Ontario are limited. Every hydro corridor has certain uses and policies allocated to the land. For this particular site, no structures on the land below the lines are permitted, and no plants or trees are permitted above 13 feet. Not all hydro corridor sites have these same regulations, but because the lines are situated so low to the ground, they are necessary.

Image 7.7a: Finch Hydro Corridor (Gilbert, 2012)

Why

There is a large hydro corridor that runs east to west, located just north of Dupont Street. Currently, it is occupied by parking lots and largely services the parking needs of the students at George Brown College, TTC and tenant parking for various apartment complexes in the area. These parking lots are on 5 year licenses with Ontario Hydro, a policy that has been in place since the 1960s. Parking in this area is a poor utilization of the large space it provides. Having some form of greenspace in this location would not only be aesthetically pleasing, but enhance the community's public realm and liveability.

How

The City of Toronto owns the land underneath the hydro corridor and has 5 year licences with Ontario Hydro. Due to the Electricity Act, the hydro corridor has priority of this land. In order to implement greenspace or bike lanes, RA groups and residents must advocate the need for this space to the City of Toronto and their respective council members.

Precedent

Project:	Finch Hydro Corridor
City:	Toronto
Status:	Complete

The Finch Hydro Corridor located near the intersection of Bathurst and Finch in Toronto is a prime example of the utilization of the land underneath the hydro polls, refer to image 7.3.5.a. Heavily used soccer fields and community green and open space encompass most of the corridor. An effective utilization of the space under the corridor is a result. The space also creates more of a community feel, connects the community and lessens the impact of the corridor acting as a barrier. The hydro corridor in the Dupont Corridor acts as a barrier, separating the neighbourhood and limiting connectivity. By implementing greenspace, it connects the neighbourhood more effectively and creates much needed open space for residents - an aspect of the

Image 7.7b: Hydro Corridor at Spadina Avenue looking West (RVision, 2012)

Dupont Corridor that is lacking severely.

Eliminating all the parking under the hydro corridor is not feasible; however, allocating a section of the corridor to a bike lane is plausible. A suggested method to integrate the bike lane in the corridor is to dedicate 6 metres to the bike lane on either the north or south side of the parking lot. Situating it on the north side, parallel to the street, would be a more beneficial location because it would create a more visually pleasing streetscape.

Connecting this proposed bike lane back to Dupont Street will be a challenge. Identifying the most effective streets, which cyclists can have access to and from the proposed bike lane would be essential in the success of this initiative. This proposed bike lane would help alleviate traffic on Dupont Street and provide cyclists with a safer and faster commute.

7.8 BIA Expansion

6.4 - Employment Lands

What

A Business Improvement Area (BIA) is an association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area. These BIAs work in partnership with the City to create thriving, competitive and safe business areas that attract consumers and new businesses. The Dupont Corridor recently has implemented a new BIA called the Dupont Strip. This BIA deals with over 60 business in a small and concentrated area of Dupont Street. The Dupont strip BIA deals with all the businesses along Dupont from Davenport Road to just passed Walmer Road. This BIA has only been in existence for a few years now and it has just started operating smoothly. The expansion of this BIA would involve the same process as starting a new BIA in the area. As a result of the recent operation and formation of this Dupont Strip BIA, the thought of expansion would effect the current operation of this organization so much so that it could cause animosity with the current business owners. Creating additional BIAs along Dupont would be a better option as opposed to the expansion of the Dupont Strip BIA. This new BIA will be able to use the Dupont Strip BIA as a case study in order to learn from the process and formation that they organization underwent in the creation of their BIA.

Why

It is important to have a BIA in order to unionize and organize these businesses. It creates a unified voice for all of the local businesses, and organizes policies to improve various aspects of the public realm, and create a visible and inviting neighbourhood. These BIA projects help create a more attractive and marketable image for the area and improve the atmosphere of the surrounding Dupont neighbourhoods. It is important to establish BIA in local commercial

areas in order to create thriving, competitive and safe business areas in the city of Toronto. There currently have been negotiations on establishing a BIA along Bathurst Street, which would intersect with Dupont Street. This recent push for more BIAs should be encouraged and continued on Dupont Street.

How & Precedent

In order to expand or establish a BIA one must refer to City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 19, BY-LAW No. 960-2011. This Chapter 19 outlines the legal parameters of a BIA. Section 4 of this statue goes through the process shall be undertaken in all areas considering the establishment of a new business improvement area or an expansion of an existing business improvement area.

Local business and property owners shall form a steering committee to undertake the following with the assistance of City staff:

- Establish a boundary;
- Develop rational for the expansion or establishment of a new BIA; and
- Develop and implement a strategy to: Communicate its interest, Distribute information, determine the initial degree of local interest, create a report summarizing the local interest to business improvement area office, then from there decide whether to proceed with a public consultation meeting

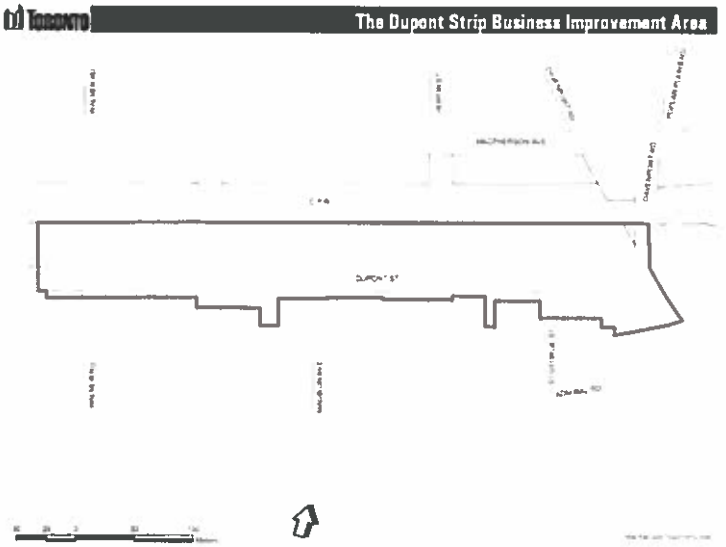


Image 7.8a: Existing BIA on Dupont (City of Toronto, 2011)

After this process has been completed, a formal public consultation meeting must be held. Within this meeting, 50% plus one of those potential business improvement area members in attendance, must agree to proceeding with the notification process. This meeting will also establish recommendations on how this expansion or new BIA is supposed to be carried out. After agreeing on these terms the city will then grant the establishment or expansion of this BIA.

7.9 Retail Rent Analysis

6.4 - Employment Lands

What

A Retail Rent Analysis is an inventory of the current rental rates of retail businesses. If possible, included in the analysis would be both past and present rental rates. With this information, trends can be identified and future trends be predicted.

Why

The location of the Dupont Corridor in the City of Toronto is highly sought after by residents, developers and businesses. Just north of the busy downtown core, the Dupont Corridor it is a prime location that is close to necessary amenities and has a real neighbourhood feel. This highly sought after neighbourhood with such a strong upside increases demand. Space is scarce and limited, so when demand increases, so do property rates. When property rates increase, typically the retail rent value will also increase. If rent is rising at a fast rate, it limits the range of businesses that can afford to locate there. For example, if retail rent rates keep increasing, it will be more difficult for smaller, mom and pop businesses to survive as they do not have the same financial capability as a big box business like Shoppers Drug Mart for example. As a result of this, the neighbourhood may lose some of its identity and its hodgepodge of businesses and uses that make the Dupont Corridor so unique.

What

This is an initiative that can be undertaken by residents and RAs. Participating personnel can go door to door to the businesses along the Dupont Corridor and manually attain the current rental rates. The Dupont Strip BIA may have these records and it would be beneficial to consult with them before doing door-to-door surveys.

Precedent

Case Study: Colaba Rent Analysis
Location: Colaba Causeway - Mumbai, India
Status: Complete

The city of Mumbai, India recently undertook a retail rent analysis in the Colaba Causeway area of the city. Through doing this retail rent analysis, they discovered that this areas retail rent jumped up 75% from the previous year (Indian Express, 2012). Through this, the city was able to identify that this area is a prime location for businesses.

The problem when trying to implementing strategies to cap rent is that cities are in favour of high rent values. This is because the more expensive the property, the more property tax they get from that property. Rent does not directly correllate to property tax but the higher the property value means higher rent. Hence, a retail rent ceiling is impossible and Toronto, along with other cities would not adopt such a policy. However, by having this information, a clear identification of the trends of the area is evident. Problems such as gentrification are identified and strategies to mitigate the effects can start to be analyzed.

7.10 Commercial Vacancy Penalties

6.4 - Employment Lands

What

Commercial Vacancy Penalties ensure that vacant properties remain secure and are properly maintained. The program helps recapture some of the city's costs related to properties that are not being maintained or that have a history of improper maintenance. A monthly or yearly fee to the city is implemented for vacant properties depending on the cities' structure.

Why

Along the Dupont Corridor are pockets of vacant properties that take away from the liveliness and character of the street, refer to image 7.4.4.a. The vacancy penalty is implemented in order to put pressure on these vacant property owners to have more incentive to either sell or lease to a business. This would ensure that these properties could help contribute to the streetscape and economy of the Dupont Corridor, rather than dampening it.

How

Commercial Vacancy Penalties are issued by the City of Toronto. In order to implement a Commercial Vacancy Penalty, an amendment to the City of Toronto's, Toronto Municipal Code Property Standards, Chapter 629-24 must be done. This document outlines various property standards but currently does not have a vacancy penalty section.

Precedent

Case Study: Minneapolis Vacancy Building Penalty
Location: The City of Minneapolis
Status: Ongoing

Many cities across North America have implemented such strategies and have proven to be beneficial, such as Minneapolis and Chicago. In large cities, it is inevitable that certain buildings will become vacant and mitigation methods must be enforced. The Building Vacancy Penalty Program is used as a primary tool for tracking, monitoring and managing nuisance vacant properties in the city. The City of Minneapolis classifies vacant buildings under one or more of the following criteria:

- Condemned requiring a code compliance inspection;
- Unoccupied and unsecured for five days or more;
- Unoccupied and secured by means other than those normally used in the design of the building for 30 days or more;
- Unoccupied with multiple housing maintenance, fire or building code violations existing for 30 days or more;
- Unoccupied more than 365 days with an order having been issued to correct a nuisance condition; and
- A vacant commercial or residential building or structure which is unable to receive a certificate of occupancy due to work stoppage or expired permits

Image 7.10a: Vacant storefront located at Dupont Street and Bathurst Street (Ryerson Vision, 2012)

Vacant property owners are obligated to register and pay an annual fee. The fee levied on the property owner is decided by the city. It all depends on the severity of vacant buildings in the city and how the public perceives the problem. If it is of high concern to citizens, the city may be more apt to increase the price of the yearly fee. Another option is to make the fee payable every month, quarterly or twice a year (the overall fee would be the same but divided in smaller payments throughout the year). Having these shorter pay periods would make property owners have to deal with the city more often and may lead them to be more inclined to sell or lease their building. The City of Toronto can adjust their program as they see fit and develop a program that best suits their needs.

7.11 Clean Train Coalition

6.2 - CPR Line

What

The clean train coalition is a representative organization of the communities that live along the CPR line. The purpose is to advocate for the electrification of all Metrolinx (GO) diesel trains, in order to lessen the negative environmental impacts to the areas abutting the tracks.

Why

The Dupont Corridor residents have all expressed concern over pollution and noise issues relating to the CPR line, and the need for noise-abatement measures. The application of electric-powered CPR trains, which currently run on diesel would ultimately reduce emissions, and improve the air quality for residents along the railway. The long-term environmental effects, coupled with the noise concerns, emphasize electric trains as an effective solution to diesel.

How

The CTC can encourage CPR to adopt the initiative to implement greener fuel solutions, or create a long-term plan for electric trains. The Dupont Corridor residents can support the advocacy for greener fuel solutions and electrification of trains by approaching Metrolinx, GO Transit and CPR with their concerns. This can be achieved through a number of methods:

- Create an advocacy group separate from the CTC;
- Approach or join with the Junction Triangle Rail (Refer to Case Study below); and
- Support the CTC with community input

Advocating and supporting the CTC for electrification of trains is beneficial in the long-term, as it will improve the liveability and quality of life for all neighbourhoods adjacent to the railway.

Precedent

GO Transit Electrification Study

The GO Transit Electrification Study (2010) was conducted to inform GO Transit of future alternatives to diesel trains such as electric, hybrid and other rolling stock technologies and fluids. The study found that many considerations could be identified in terms of environment and health, user benefits, quality of life, social and community, economy, financial and deliver-ability. The study concluded that using electric trains would slightly reduce noise and vibration levels in comparison to diesel but the differences would not be perceivable due to noise levels of coaches which would be similar in both electric and diesel trains.

Junction Triangle Rail Committee

Location: The Junction neighbourhood
Status: On-going

The Junction Triangle Rail Committee is a neighbourhood group that advocates for the electrification of trains, specifically GO Transit, and is pushing Metrolinx to consider the effects of their expansion plans on their neighbourhood. They consider themselves separate from the CTC but remain supportive of the overlapping issue and merits of electrification. This committee is encouraging the idea of implementing electric trains so that people living in the Junction will not feel they are being driven from their homes due to Metrolinx's railway expansion.

7.12 Parking Study

6.5 - Parking

What

A parking study establishes the number of on-street and off-street parking spaces that are available to the general public. It states whether the neighbourhood has adequate parking accommodation or if it is deficient and requires additional spaces. The study may also includes information regarding the parking requirements as provided in the Zoning By-law for each use and whether these requirements create more parking than can be absorbed by the uses. For example, large, single-user retail businesses who are required to have an abundant amount of parking based on the square footage of their operations, may not utilize it to its full capacity, creating extensive private surface parking lots. A parking study may also address alternative locations for parking such as rear lots, which improve the streetscape while still providing an adequate number of parking spaces for patrons.

Why

Conducting a parking study is important as it has been identified as a high priority on the Dupont Corridor Working Group's list of key issues. Parking has a significant effect on traffic congestion, shopping habits (which have economic effects), types of retail uses (i.e. large single uses versus small retail shops with residential units), neighbourhood walkability, aesthetics of the streetscape in terms of the built form, building facades and design and the public realm. The amount and location of parking spaces will have a tremendous impact on the development pattern of the Dupont Corridor in terms of the uses that will choose to locate in the area, as well as the physical distribution of the buildings, sidewalks, street furniture (benches, planters, bus shelters) and road pattern. Having a parking study completed will provide empirical data to the Working Group's proposals regarding future site designs, parking requirements for new uses, location (convenience) and type of parking (surface or underground, private or public).

How

Ryerson Vision and the Dupont Corridor Working Group have initiated the process of gathering parking provision data in regard to the location and quantity of on-street and off-street parking spaces available throughout the Dupont Corridor. This information was collected as part of the building and property survey conducted during the primary stages of the project. This data is available in the GIS database that the Ryerson Vision team and the Working Group have produced. Data collection for the remaining neighbourhoods of the study area is currently being undertaken by the Working Group and will enhance the existing data already compiled.

The Dupont Corridor Working Group may request that City Staff undertake a Parking Study pending funding approval for such reports. If funding is not available for a Parking Study, the Dupont Corridor Working Group may consider consulting a planning firm to conduct the study, whose expertise is in this particular field. If the cost of this approach is not feasible, the Dupont Corridor Working Group may consider requesting student groups and volunteers to continue the work initiated by Ryerson Vision and conduct the analysis themselves using as much empirical data that they can obtain.

Precedent

Project : Green P Parking
Location: Toronto, Chinatown
Status: Complete

An example of incorporating parking into a retail "main street" area can be found at Spadina Avenue and Dundas Street. This area provides parking underground and at the rear of buildings along Dundas Street, while still maintaining a low-rise, human scale built form with a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Image 7.12a: Underground Parking, Dundas Street East of Spadina Avenue (GSV, 2012)

Image 7.12b: An aerial view of 102 to 142 Dupont Street (Google Maps, 2012)

Image 7.12c: Streetscape of 102 to 142 Dupont Street (GSV, 2012)

Another example of desirable parking is already present in the Dupont Corridor. Parking for residents living at 102 to 142 Dupont Street have rear yard parking which is accessed through a common driveway between the buildings. Parking is kept off the street, providing more space for landscaping and an overall more attractive streetscape.

Image 7.12d: Streetscape of 102 to 142 Dupont Street (GSV, 2012)