

Bloor West Village Avenue Study

Meeting Summary — November 2017 Local Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, November 27, 2017

6:00 – 9:00pm

Runnymede United Church

432 Runnymede Road

Overview

On Monday, November 27, the City of Toronto hosted the fourth and final Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting of the Bloor West Village Avenue Study. The LAC is a non-political advisory body with a mandate to provide a forum for feedback, guidance, and advice to the City Project Team and the Consultant Team at key points during the process of the Bloor West Village Avenue Study.

The purpose of the fourth LAC meeting was to present and seek feedback on the draft recommendations for the Avenue Study. 12 members of the LAC attended the meeting, including members of residents' associations, the local BIA, ratepayers' groups, natural environment groups, historical groups, and local property and business owners. City of Toronto staff, members of the Consultant Team and Councillor Sarah Doucette also attended and participated in the meeting (see Appendix A – Participant List).

The meeting began with welcoming remarks from Councillor Doucette and an agenda review by Ian Malczewski, Swerhun Facilitation. Following the agenda review (see Appendix B – Meeting Agenda), the City introduced Heidi Schopf from Stantec, the consultant responsible for the upcoming Heritage Conservation District Study in Bloor West Village. Then, Brent Raymond of DTAH and Shad Hussain of Toronto Water provided an update about the City's ongoing review of issues about natural heritage, hydrogeology, and High Park. Finally, Brent presented the draft built form, land use, and transportation & street design recommendations for the Avenue Study. The remainder of the meeting focused questions and feedback from LAC members about draft recommendations.

Matthew Wheatley, third party facilitator with Swerhun Facilitation, wrote this meeting summary and shared it with participants for review before being finalized. This summary is meant to capture key themes and feedback from the meeting; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

Key messages

The following key messages emerged from the discussion. They are meant to be read along with the more detailed summary of feedback that follows.

The draft recommendations are on the right track, with some refinements. LAC members generally supported the draft recommendations, identifying both specific recommendations they liked and some they thought needed refining. Suggested refinements included changes to building heights, rear transitions, lot lines, and stepbacks.

More work is needed to understand impacts on natural heritage and hydrogeology, especially in High Park. Members of the LAC were pleased to hear the City is considering further study of natural heritage and hydrogeology, beyond the Avenue Study. They also said the information and feedback obtained through the Avenue Study should inform any future work on natural heritage and hydrogeology.

Detailed summary of feedback

Following the presentations, members of the LAC participated in facilitated discussions at their tables, sharing what they liked about the draft recommendations as well as their concerns and suggested refinements. The meeting concluded with a report back from each table and an explanation of next steps in the process.

The detailed summary below organizes participants' feedback within the four topics discussed at the meeting, including: built form; land use; transportation and street design; and natural heritage and hydrogeology. Responses provided by City staff and the study team are included in *italics*.

Feedback about built form

[What LAC members liked about the draft build form recommendations](#)

Specific draft built form recommendations members of the LAC liked were: explicit consideration of and recommendations for soft intensification; the removal of recommendations for 60-degree angular planes, especially on the south side of Bloor St; the fact that mechanical penthouses are being considered and visually represented; inclusion of "green fingers"; the introduction of specific recommendations for building heights; and retail heights of four metres.

[Concerns and suggested refinements to the draft built form recommendations](#)

Mechanical penthouses and rooftop access. Members of the LAC said mechanical penthouses should not include any additional uses (e.g. amenity spaces) because these uses could increase the size and visual impacts of mechanical penthouses. Others suggested allowing patios and other outdoor uses on rooftops. They said this is a fantastic way of providing additional space without adding additional floors.

Soft intensification. LAC members said all built form recommendations should clearly distinguish the different heights, setbacks, etc. being recommended for soft intensification versus new developments. LAC members also reinforced previous suggestions to ensure all intensification is sensitive to existing buildings in the surrounding area.

Rear transitions. Members of the LAC suggested reducing the allowable street wall height and rear transitions for buildings on the south side of Bloor St that do not have rear laneways. They said residents behind buildings without rear laneways already feel boxed in with the as-of-right heights and rear transitions. LAC members also said calculations for rear transitions should take into account the different grades of rear properties. A LAC member said the rise of a building's angular plane should be based on its particular historic measurement, i.e. for a 4 storey rise measurement, the calculation should be 4 metres for the retail storey and 3m for each additional storey. They also suggested considering second and third floor setbacks to alleviate a slab effect.

Building heights. LAC members suggested changing the recommended height of the base building from 14 metres to 13 metres with 4 metres for the first floor and then 3 metres for each of the next 3 floors. Others suggested lowering base buildings, 3 to 4 stories, to create a "lower pedestrian perception area" on the south side of Bloor St, west of Jane St.

Step-backs. Some LAC members raised concerns about the potential loss of "Pedestrian Perception" step-backs in the City's existing Midrise Building Performance Standards for the East and West Village, specifically Performance Standard 4B. There were also suggestions to recommend larger and double step-backs for the High Park Frontage to prevent five or six storey street walls.

Green fingers. A member of the LAC restated their suggestion to inhibit retail uses in the green fingers. They said they should be places for "an oasis of calm." There was also a suggestion to plant and properly maintain black oak, red oak, and/or pine trees in the green fingers to reflect the eco-system in the northern portion of High Park and provide habitat for local animal species. Others suggested additional locations for green fingers, including: to and from ravine areas north of the Odeon property; south of the No Frills site; and North of the Humber Gateway Character Area.

Lot lines and street wall. There was a concern that small store fronts / fine grain retail is being lost to large sections of uninterrupted street walls. It was suggested that the Avenue Study include recommendations to maintain / respect original lot lines to prevent one uniformed street wall on Bloor St. It was also suggested that breaks in the street wall not be limited to the first floor of buildings.

Feedback about land use

[What LAC members liked about the draft land use recommendations](#)

LAC liked the draft land use recommendations to remove the Humber Gateway character area from the Avenue designation to add office retention policies. LAC members also said conversions of office use to residential use should not be allowed anywhere within the Avenue Study area.

[Concerns and suggested refinements to the draft land use recommendations](#)

Neighbourhood to Mixed Use designations. There was strong opposition to converting Neighbourhood to Mixed Use designations since these changes could result in mixed use development encroaching into the neighbourhoods. *The study team clarified it was not planning on changing Neighbourhoods to Mixed Use designations.*

Note added after the meeting: The study team further clarified that the City suggested adding 20 properties to the Study Area to capture and resolve inconsistencies in the current zoning and land use framework. 18 of the properties are in the High Park Frontage Character Area and 2 are in the Village Main Street Character Area.

Note added following participant review: Additional feedback was provided stating ongoing concerns with the two properties in the Main Street Village Character Area and considerations being given to explore if these two properties should be re-designated from Neighbourhoods to Mixed Use Areas.

Office and retail space along the High Park Frontage. There was a mix of opinions about retail space along the High Park Frontage. Some members said they support a limited amount of retail space; others said only residential should be allowed. Some LAC members suggested allowing functional office space on the main floor of buildings along the High Park Frontage, e.g. dentist offices.

Feedback about transportation and street design

Bike lanes. A member of the LAC much preferred redesign options 1 and 3 because, saying the location of the bike lanes in option 2 is the least safe for cyclists. A member of the LAC also said that, while they understand the recommendation to “further study the economic impacts, especially on local business, of cycling infrastructure,” they don’t want to see this recommendation inhibit bike lanes.

Feedback about natural heritage and hydrogeology

Further examinations of natural heritage and hydrogeology. Members of the LAC were pleased to hear the City will be conducting further examinations of natural heritage and hydrogeology related to High Park following the Avenue Study. LAC members said the information and feedback obtained during the Avenue Study should be integrated in future

work / studies. *City staff said the information and feedback will be reviewed and considered in the continued work on Natural Heritage and Hydrogeology.*

Impacts on High Park. Members of the LAC restated their concerns about potential cumulative indirect impacts from future development and intensification on High Park and the data gaps identified in the Natural Heritage and Hydrogeological studies. LAC members also raised concerns about the findings that there will be no negative impacts, given the data gaps.

Timing and level of required hydrogeological studies. Some LAC members said studies required for hydrogeological impacts should be required sooner, at the application stage not the site plan stage, to allow members of the community be a part of the process. LAC members also raised concerns about smaller development applications that may not require hydrogeological studies, i.e. those that are done through the Committee of Adjustment. *The study team said that anytime someone wants to connect to the City's sewer system the City's Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines requires them to submit hydrogeological studies.*

Examination of existing waterways. Members of the LAC suggested examining the entire catchment area of Grenadier Pond, not just Wendigo and Spring Creeks.

Other Feedback

Removing the High Park Frontage. There was a suggestion to remove the High Park Frontage from the Avenue designation. *The study team said the advantage to keeping it in is that it allows for the development of recommendations and policies for the future use of the area.*

Appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Some LAC members raised concerns that recommendations from the Avenue Study would simply be appealed to the OMB. *The study team said undertaking an Avenue Study will help the City develop strong policies that have a better chance of being upheld at Council, the OMB, or other decision-making bodies.*

Granny flats and laneway homes. A member of the LAC was asked if the Avenue Study would encourage granny flats or laneway homes. *The study team said the City is undertaking a separate study to look at laneway homes.*

Next steps

The City and consulting team thanked members of the LAC for their feedback and committed to sharing a draft summary of feedback in the coming weeks. The City and consulting team reminded LAC members of the upcoming public meeting on December 4th and asked that they spread the word and encourage others to attend.

Appendix A. Participant List

Participants

Bloor West Village Residents' Association. Jay Zimmerman
Bloor West Village Residents' Association. Steve Dewdney
High Park Natural Environment Committee. Lenka Holubec
High Park Natural Environment Committee. Leslie Gooding
High Park Residents' Association. Allan Killin
High Park Residents' Association. Lorraine Cramp
Swansea Area Ratepayers' Association. William Roberts
Swansea Historical Society. Susan Zalepa
Swansea Area Ratepayers' Association. Veronica Wynne
Property Owner/BIA. Alexandra Marion
Resident. Tara Christie

City of Toronto and Consulting Team

Councillor Sarah Doucette
Councillor Ward 13 Executive Assistant. Chris Haskim
City of Toronto City Planning. Greg Byrne
City of Toronto City Planning. Jane Weninger
City of Toronto City Planning. Pourya Nazemi
City of Toronto City Planning. Sarah Henstock
City of Toronto City Planning. Allison Reid
City of Toronto Parks Forestry & Recreation. Nick Garisto
City of Toronto Parks Forestry & Recreation. Robert Gibson
City of Toronto Toronto Water. Shad Hussain
DTAH. Brent Raymond
Leah Birnbaum Consulting | Urban Planning. Leah Birnbaum
Millward and Associates. Bob Millward
Stantec (HCD Study). Heidi Schopf
Swerhun Facilitation. Ian Malczewski
Swerhun Facilitation. Matthew Wheatley

Appendix B. Meeting Agenda

Bloor West Village Avenue Study

Local Advisory Committee Meeting 4

Monday, November 27, 2017

6:00 – 9:00 pm

Runnymede United Church

432 Runnymede Road

Meeting Purpose: To present and seek feedback on the draft recommendations for the Avenue Study.

Proposed Agenda

6:00 Welcome & introductions

Councillor Sarah Doucette, Swerhun Facilitation, City of Toronto

6:10 Agenda review

Swerhun Facilitation

6:15 Overview: Study process and natural heritage & hydrogeology Update

DTAH, City of Toronto

Questions of Clarification

6:45 Overview: draft recommendations

DTAH

Questions of Clarification

7:25 Discussion

1. What do you like about the draft proposed recommendations?
2. What concerns do you have, if any, about the draft proposed recommendations?
3. What refinements would you like to see considered?

8:25 Report back

8:55 Wrap up & next steps

9:00 Adjourn

Appendix C. Post meeting feedback

Submission 1

LAC Nov. 27 and Community Consultation Dec. 4, 2017

The Additional Memo received Dec. 18, 2017

Comments from Veronica Wynne, V-P

Swansea Area Ratepayers Association

These comments are based on the details of the actual presentation and the comments & conversations beyond the presentation with City Planning staff and DTAH personnel.

1. Remove the reference to the City Staff revision ‘to resolve minor inconsistencies. 20 new properties added’ as it appears on page 6 of the presentation.

Allison Reid of Urban Design approached me during the discussion portion to indicate that the properties on Kennedy/Runnymede, south side, would be part of a mixed-use or enhancement designation. There appeared to be a difference of opinion between DTAH and the City as Brent Raymond, DTAH Lead Consultant, said to the whole group that they were **not** recommending describing these properties as Mixed-Use.

With the arrival of the Additional Memo re Boundary Adjustments, there appears to have been direction from City Planning to change this descriptor to Mixed-Use contrary to the recommendation and statement of Brent at our meeting. This is a major concern and impacts the objectivity, transparency and authenticity of the Avenue Study process. The understanding at the outset was that the Avenue Study would be at arm’s length from City Planning and independently guided by the expertise of DTAH. This memo leaves me in doubt that we are being well served by City Planning and Urban Design in contradicting the initial recommendations of DTAH.

As these properties currently are situated within the Neighbourhood area of the Swansea Secondary plan, it would be prejudicial to the future calculation of the angular plane and the Neighbourhood zoning definition of the properties to include them as mixed-use or enhancement properties.

It is also prejudicial to amend the Neighbourhood boundaries of a Secondary Plan within the Official Plan with revisions in an Avenue Study describing them as ‘minor inconsistencies’. These are amendments with major implications for the Swansea Secondary Plan and the Bloor West Village within the Official Plan.

2. Calculate the rise of the angular plane based on its historic particular measurement

The current measurement of the Angular Plan rise is 10 metres – 4m for the retail storey and 3m X 2 storeys = 10m. If you are recommending a 4 storey rise measurement, the calculation should be as follows: 4m for retail storey + 9m for 3 further storeys of 3m each. The retention of the 45° angular plane is commendable. To alleviate the slab effect for the Neighbourhood to the south, setbacks at the second or third floor should be considered.

- 3. Embed the requirements of Hydrological Studies as part of every development with the emphasis on testing soil and underground water conditions with the intention of investigating their impact on the adjacent 100 year old neighbourhood homes. This study should prohibit the building of underground parking as per the directives of these studies.**

During the process of approving and appealing the development of the Southport Plaza, 34 Southport Street, we were advised by City's Planning and Legal departments that there were really no absolute guarantees against damages even with Bathtub technology. When asked what the community could do in the event of damages as a result of digging for underground parking under these adverse circumstances, the City lawyer's answer was that we would have to sue both the City and the Developer!

Better to be sure than sorry. Do not allow for underground parking in developments adjacent to neighbourhoods and 100 year old residential homes.

- 4. The City should buy the ESSO gas station on the south-east corner of South Kingsway and Bloor to resolve the traffic nightmare at this intersection with Riverview Gdns – As suggested by Transportation Staff at this particular station during the Community Consultation Meeting.**

When asked what would resolve ultimately the traffic nightmare at the South Kingsway-Riverview Gdns-Bloor-Mossom intersection, the answer from the Transportation personnel was 'Buy up the Esso Station'! As another recommendation of the Avenue Study was to create more Green Space opportunities, this purchase could address both needs to the betterment of the Village and neighbourhood communities.

These amendments and revisions are presented in the interest of the betterment of the Village and adjacent neighbourhood communities and maintaining the integrity of the Avenue Study process.