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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bloor West Village is a well-established and important part of our city. Future change should complement and enhance what makes this place special.

BACKGROUND

The Bloor West Village Study Area is home to an established and vibrant main street, the first Business Improvement Area in the world (1970), residential neighbourhoods of varied building types, and is defined by significant topography and natural features (High Park & Humber River). In recent years, the area has become the focus of redevelopment interest with the scale of individual projects increasing in size.

While some Avenue Studies seek to stimulate pedestrian life where it has yet to take hold, Bloor Street West serves local needs with a variety of small-scale commercial businesses and services in traditional storefronts. Maintaining the character, quality and local scale of retail is vital to the success of this *Avenue's* future development. Future change must further improve this special place in the city, not diminish what makes it great today.

Study Area

The Study Area is approximately 2.7 kilometres in length, stretching from Keele Street in the east to the Humber River in the west. The Study Area includes over 260 properties, with the great majority being both narrow and shallow, and with direct address to Bloor Street West. The Study Area includes *Mixed Use Areas, Apartment Neighbourhoods, Neighbourhoods* and *Open*

Space. Bloor Street West is one of the few Avenues identified in the City's Official Plan that is located along a subway line. There are five TTC Stations within or within walking distance of the Study Area.

Purpose

In recent years, the area has become the focus of redevelopment interest with the scale of individual projects increasing in size. There is a need to establish an area specific planning and design framework to guide change. The section of Bloor Street West from the Humber River to Keele Street was identified by City Council and staff as a priority for an Avenue Study.

This Avenue Study will direct and guide on-stream and future development with clear standards that ensure a comfortable, convenient, safe and high quality public realm. It will also establish the quantitative requirements for the transportation, site servicing and community services infrastructure to support the existing and future population and employment.

This Avenue Study will consider (but not make recommendations for) *Neighbourhoods* or *Apartment Neighbourhoods* adjacent to the Study Area. Different from all previous Avenue Studies, it will also make recommendations for *Parks, Open Spaces Areas*, and *Natural Systems* beyond the Study Area as part of the Natural Heritage and Hydrogeology supplemental desktop studies.

Study Process

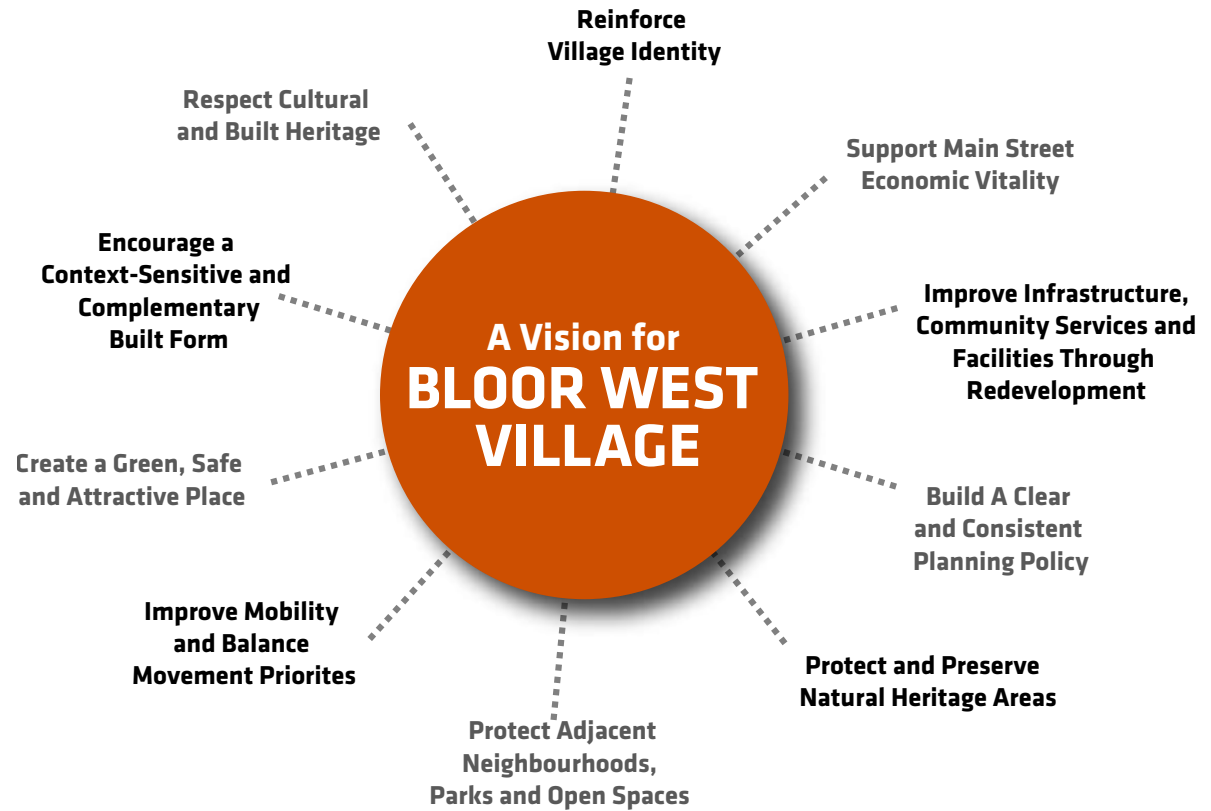
This Study began in December of 2016 and concluded in December 2017. Extensive and well attended public consultation activities were key aspects of this Study. Stakeholders and the community-at-large contributed to the overall vision and helped to inform the outcome.

The overall project was conducted in four phases. The first phase was to introduce the project to the community, understand the local context and issues, and develop a vision for the Study Area. In the second phase, a range of alternative options were explored, tested and confirmed, while in the third and final phase the draft recommendations were presented, and input received through the entire process was synthesized and documented in the final report.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders and the community were involved in all Phases of the Avenue Study process, which included:

- Four Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meetings
- Three public open houses
- A community design charrette
- A community stakeholder meeting
- A landowners meeting
- A heritage focus group meeting
- Two presentations to the Design Review Panel



The vision for the Bloor West Village Avenue Study is best summarized in the guiding principles for the project, developed through consultation with the public which in turn informed the process and recommendations.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Study Team considered a range of existing City and Provincial policy documents in making its recommendations.

The City of Toronto Official Plan provides an *Urban Structure*, in which Bloor Street West from the Humber River to Keele Street is defined as an *Avenue*. The lands within the Study Area are designated as *Mixed Use Areas*, *Apartment Neighbourhoods* and *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan.

There are three zoning by-laws that apply to the Study Area: the city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013, the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86, and the former City of York By-law 1-83. While By-law 569-2013 is approved and in-force, its status before the Ontario Municipal Board means that the underlying by-laws 438-86 and 1-83 still apply. As such, any amendments made to By-law 569-2013 will also need to be made to 438-86 and 1-83.

Under By-law 569-2013, all properties in the Study Area are zoned either the CR ('commercial residential'), R ('residential'), or O ('open space') zones. At the western end of the Study Area, a number of properties fall under either Former City of York By-law No. 1-83 or Former City of Toronto By-law 438-86. Again, these properties are zoned either CR or R under these by-laws. As-of-right height permissions range from 9 metres for the R zones on the western portion of the Study Area

to 14 metres in the CR zone of Bloor West Village and up to 23 meters in the R zones of the eastern portion of the Study Area. The 23 metre R zone corresponds to the *Apartment Neighbourhoods* designation of the Official Plan. A number of site specific zoning by-laws currently exist within the Study Area, to address the more recent developments.

OPTIONS

Informed by an understanding of the existing policy context, public input during Phase 1, and the community design charrette, the Study Team developed a planning and design framework to assist with the development of options. The framework identifies a pattern of built form, parks and open spaces, views and vistas, and special places within each of the character areas.

Following from the Planning and Design Framework, the Study Team explored a range of potential options for the different character areas. The options compared the existing condition to as-of-right zoning permissions, a typical *Avenues* approach applying the Mid-rise Performance Standards, the 2016 Mid-rise Addendum and context-sensitive options specific to Bloor West Village. All of the options were demonstrated with a 3-D digital model.

Each of the initial options was presented to City Staff, the Local Advisory Committee and public for their review and comments. Based on feedback received, the Study Team considered and refined the options to better reflect the community informed vision and guiding principles.

The preferred option was informed by an analysis of existing conditions and policies, public and stakeholder consultations, ongoing reference to the Guiding Principles, the testing, evaluation and iterative development of the options, and the Study Team's professional expertise.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

Character Areas

Five character areas have been identified specifically for the Bloor West Village Avenue Study Area. These character areas are informed by prominent uses/activity, prevailing built form, heritage potential and public realm and help to structure the Avenue Study guidelines and recommendations.

Resilience and Sustainability

Techniques and opportunities are identified to ensure the healthy evolution of the Study Area, and to improve resilient innovation and sustainability. In the long term, issues such as water quality (above and below grade), natural heritage, energy conservation and use of sustainable materials and design are integral to good design and city building. The appropriate care and management of the natural heritage areas present an excellent early opportunity to demonstrate such a commitment to forward thinking design practises to ensure a healthy system for the future.

Structure Plan

The Structure Plan represents the preferred alternative, the result of advanced and detailed development of the options explored. The Structure Plan envisions a range of uses in street related buildings, provides for a walkable environment, identifies placemaking opportunities, and supports an enhanced green character for the Study Area. The Structure Plan aims to build on the fine grained, pedestrian oriented scale of the Study Area to enhance the resident, employee and visitor experience, and to reinforce a unique sense of community and place. This includes supporting an attractive, livable community with a mix of uses, walkable streets, distinctive neighbourhoods and access to a variety of open spaces.

Parks and Open Space

The Parks and Open Space Framework recommends new parks and public spaces as part of the redevelopment of larger sites to provide a civic focus and strengthen the sense of the Village. On-site parkland dedication will be sought on large sites and where opportunities exist to link to or enlarge an existing park and improve pedestrian connections. Smaller privately owned publicly accessible urban plazas are also recommended at key placemaking locations. In the Village character area, mid-block connections are recommended to improve pedestrian movement and offer opportunities for additional activity at street level. In the High Park Frontage character area, broad landscape setbacks and “green fingers” between

buildings will support an improved green character. Streetscape improvements throughout the Study Area will include tree planting to improve the urban forest canopy.

Views and Vistas

View corridors and vistas play an important role in reinforcing a distinct identity for the Study Area and assist with orientation and placemaking. In their building design new development will consider key views and vistas towards special features such as prominent sites, landmarks, parks and heritage features, Lake Ontario and at visual termini along Bloor Street West.

Land Use

No major changes are recommended for the land use designations, although modest refinements are required in some of the character areas to align policy, zoning and property boundaries. *Mixed Use Areas* will include retail at grade, residential, service commercial and office employment uses. *Apartment Neighbourhoods* will include primarily residential uses with some service and retail. *Neighbourhoods* will include primarily residential uses.

Built Form

Mid-rise or low-rise built form is appropriate for all parts of the Study Area. Within the Village Main Street character area, development will respect and relate to the predominant lower scale built form context. In the East and West Villages, development will have taller heights sensitive to the existing and emerging context, and will serve to provide a sense of arrival and transition to the lower

scale Village Main Street character area. In the High Park Frontage character area, development will have a more residential character than other parts of the Study Area.

Setbacks

A range of mandatory building setbacks is proposed for all blocks within the Study Area to permit wider sidewalks, retail amenity space, sufficient space for outdoor seating, landscape improvements, or green space in front or between buildings.

Angular Planes and Transitions

This Study applies front and rear angular planes informed by the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Performance Standards but refined for the Study Area context. Angular planes are one of the tools to manage built form transition, as well as sunlight and shadow. In no instance within the Study Area are angular planes used to define the overall height of buildings. Instead they are used in conjunction with maximum permitted building heights.

Informed by the options developed and tested as part of this Study, each character area has a different front angular plane to define the placement and transition of upper floors above the stated streetwall maximum height. There are also several different rear transition conditions in the Study Area. All properties will require transitions to the public rights-of-way and adjacent uses such as Neighbourhoods, parks, transit stations and corridors, and parking lots.

Height

Height restrictions are informed by an understanding of existing and emerging context and policy direction for the *Avenues*. Midrise buildings in three of the four character areas are limited in height equivalent to the right-of-way onto which they front. In the Village Main Street character area, midrise buildings are limited to a maximum height of six storeys, or 75% of the right-of-way width. The maximum height for any part of the Study Area may be further limited by site conditions, such as lot dimensions or transition requirements.

Stepbacks

Stepbacks are required for all mid-rise buildings above 4 storeys in height. The stepbacks will enhance the pedestrian experience and allow for light penetration and sky view. Additional intermediate stepbacks are also possible to further articulate built form and respond to adjacent context including Heritage properties.

Building Design

Building design guidelines provide further direction for the expression and articulation of projects beyond the mass and bulk of a building. They inform how a building should contribute to the public realm, and provide sufficient design flexibility to allow a project to appropriately respond to its immediate context and the planning policy for the Study Area.

Future development should respect and fit within the prevailing fine grained main street nature of the Study Area. An appropriate fit is determined by

several key elements: the overall scale and design of the building, pedestrian experience at street level, frequency of entrances, transparency at street level and above, vertical rhythm of building elements, horizontal expression of floors and how they relate to adjacent properties, party wall conditions, and the scale of uses at grade.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

A detailed survey of City Divisions and community agencies was conducted with follow-up interviews as necessary. Questionnaires were designed to seek input on priorities for improving existing and future community services and facilities to serve the local area population.

The findings recommend a number of specific improvements to be implemented as development proceeds, including ensuring adequate Parks and Open Spaces, Community Recreation Centres, Libraries, Child Care, Schools, Human Services, and Community Agencies to serve the growing population. Ongoing monitoring of CS&F needs and priorities is also recommended.

STREET DESIGN AND TRANSPORTATION

This Avenue Study provides recommendations for how to transform Bloor Street West to a more complete street that supports the Village as a place. One purpose of the Study was to consider the impact of the preferred land use and built form alternative on the transportation system and to provide direction for initiatives related to balancing access for all modes of transportation. Another

purpose was to test the feasibility to introduce safe cycling infrastructure within the Bloor West Village Avenue Study Area.

The preferred option balances the available right-of-way width among the different users and uses and provide safe space of adequate capacity for each. The preferred option would also have the least adverse traffic and surface transit impacts to Bloor Street West, provide the greatest number of on-street parking spaces (available during off-peak periods only), and provide the safest environment for cyclists.

It is important to note that no change to Bloor Street West is anticipated in the near future (given recent major capital works in 2012), or will likely take place until reconstruction is required. However, the existing road network and transportation system can accommodate the potential intensification of the Study Area as defined in this Study without reconstruction.

We are in a dynamic time for transportation. The rise of autonomous vehicles, declining auto sales in Ontario, and rising proportions of trips made by walking, cycling and transit suggest that what works or doesn't work today will likely change in the coming decades. By the time the street is again reconstructed, transportation demands may be substantially different than at the time of this study. There are many uncertainties and other options could potentially work in the future.

A detailed transportation report is included as an appendix to this Avenue Study report.

SERVICING INFRASTRUCTURE

This Avenue Study includes a high-level hydraulic analysis of the local municipal servicing infrastructure, and characterizes the constraints and opportunities to improve servicing infrastructure through the application of development guidelines and best management practices.

In summary, the local municipal sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water supply systems do not require specific improvements to accommodate the anticipated future growth within the Study Area. The local storm sewer system is currently operating at capacity under the City's design storm event. However, performance is expected to improve over time with the continued adoption of the Mandatory Downspout Disconnection By-Law, further compliance with the Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines, and the introduction of green infrastructure solutions defined within the Toronto Green Street Technical Guidelines.

No specific improvements are required for the local municipal combined sewer system to accommodate the anticipated growth. However, the City should construct a dedicated storm sewer system within Bloor Street West between Clendenan Avenue and Keele Street as a part of future corridor improvements for this segment. Further, the future reconstruction of the Bloor Street West corridor would benefit from an

informed assessment of deficiencies identified through the Basement Flooding Protection Plan Environmental Assessment processes.

Lastly, it is recommended that the corridor improvements for Bloor Street West within the Study Area are coordinated with the infrastructure improvements identified in these reports.

A detailed servicing infrastructure report is included as an appendix to this Avenue Study report.

NATURAL HERITAGE AND WATER

This Avenue Study provides recommendations for mitigating the potential impacts of development on natural heritage features and water, both above and below ground. The recommendations are informed by the Natural Heritage and Hydrogeology desktop supplemental studies, and a surface water review by Toronto Water staff. Overall, the impacts due to new development are limited and understood within the Study Area.

The potential Natural Heritage impacts depend on location and nature of development, and could include: tree canopy loss, slope impacts, increased hazard of buildings to migratory and breeding birds, removal of habitat for Species at Risk, construction impacts to wildlife (i.e. nest removal, mortality), changes in downstream water quality and quantity, light pollution and increased usage and potential impacts on High Park.

The potential groundwater and surface water impacts include: an increase in imperviousness that may inhibit groundwater recharge and/or

result in rapid and increased release of stormwater increasing the risk of water quality degradation and watercourse erosion, and raising urban flooding concerns; the possible extraction and discharge of groundwater to sewers as the result of sub-surface structures (e.g., parking garages); and the potential for deep sub-surface structures to impede groundwater flow.

This Avenue Study provides recommendations for enhancement and mitigation, identifies existing relevant policies and guidelines, and suggests several new policies and guidelines. Recommendations are also provided for mitigation and enhancement outside of the Study Area. Further recommendations provide direction for potential further study following the conclusion of the Avenue Study.

IMPLEMENTATION

The City should undertake the following actions to implement the Avenue Study recommendations:

- Update Official Plan Map 2 Urban Structure to remove the *Avenues* overlay from the Humber Gateway character area and the southside of Bloor Street West along High Park.
- Amend the Official Plan to implement land use policies resulting from the Avenue Study.
- Amend the Official Plan to include set maximum heights, expressed in number of storeys, for each character area based on recommendations of this Study.

- Update the zoning bylaw to allow for as-of-right permissions compatible with the built form recommendations. This allows desired development to proceed as-of-right, moving forward the development approvals process.
- Remove density numbers from the zoning for all properties within the Study Area as building envelopes will be controlled by height, setback and angular plane regulations.
- Update the zoning bylaw to include set maximum heights, expressed in metres and number of storeys, for each character area based on recommendations of this Study.
- Update the zoning bylaw to include angular planes specific to the north and south sides of the Study Area for each character area to address appropriate transitions.
- Establish maximum retail sizes for each individual overall unit and unit at grade.
- Update zoning boundaries to resolve zoning inconsistencies for a number of properties that are currently subject to two or more different zones, and to add to *Mixed Use Areas* two *Neighbourhoods* properties due to their anomalous built form relationships, current use and context within the Village Main Street character area.

- Update and replace applicable sections of the 2010 Mid-Rise Performance Standards and 2016 Addendum to the Mid-rise Performance Standards with Area-Specific Design Guidelines for the Study Area to reflect the recommendations from this Study.
- Continue on-going monitoring of community services and facilities needs as development proceeds within the Study Area.
- City should construct a dedicated storm sewer system within Bloor Street West between Clendenan Avenue and Keele Street as part of future corridor improvements for this segment.
- Incorporate the recommendations from the Main Street Retail Study commenced in November 2017 to support small independent businesses.
- Continue to work with the community to address concerns raised throughout this Avenue Study process regarding High Park’s natural heritage and water resources.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This report loosely follows the chronological format that the Study itself took, and should be read in order. It begins with an outline of the Process, including the key messages received from public consultation. The analysis of Policy Context and Existing Conditions follow. The Guiding Principles broadly describe the Study Team’s vision for Bloor West Village, while Option Development and Evaluation explains how a preferred design concept was reached.

The key design recommendations are described in Recommended Guidelines and Standards. Each individual recommendation is itemized and numbered for reference. Where necessary to explain and communicate the recommendations, diagrams, photographs, and views of the Demonstration Model are included. The Demonstration Model presents an illustration of built form within Bloor West Village, showing one possible outcome of the recommendations. The Guidelines and Standards allow for creative exploration and expression without being too prescriptive. The eventual results may differ yet still follow the intent of the recommendations.

Summaries of the Transportation Report, Servicing Infrastructure Report, Water and Natural Heritage Reports are included for the convenience of readers.

To implement the recommendations, the Study Team has also suggested a series of approaches that are outlined in Implementation, alongside a list of items for future study.

The Appendices of this report include the full Transportation Report, Servicing Infrastructure Report, supplemental studies for Hydrogeology and Natural Heritage, a Toronto Water Staff Technical Memo, and detailed reports on the public consultation events.