

## CHAPTER 5: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following 10 principles were developed based on public consultation, planning policy and the background analysis conducted during Phase 1. The Guiding Principles significantly informed all of the Avenue Study's recommendations.



### 5.1. REINFORCE VILLAGE IDENTITY

**Principle:** With every project seek to improve and reinforce the identity and character of Bloor Street West as a “Village”.

The Study Area has a special identity that has formed over a century of urban development alongside some of the City's most valued natural heritage features. As one of Toronto's most beloved neighbourhoods and historic main streets, future redevelopment should carefully consider how to best fit within and reinforce what makes Bloor West Village distinct.

The best urban main streets, like Bloor Street West, are where there are many narrow-fronted shops with transparent display windows and frequent entrances, broad comfortable sidewalks that encourage shopping, outdoor eating and displays,



and are largely owned and operated by small independent retailers. These streets are also home to a range of public gathering spaces such as small parks, squares, and plazas.

Where residential uses meet the ground floor, and street activity is less intense, the condition should become more green and park-like, buffering residents from the noise of traffic and to provide privacy. Buildings should set back from the street with lushly planted and well-maintained yards.



## 5.2. REINFORCE CULTURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE

**Principle:** Important parts of the City's heritage—pre-European contact, late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century built form, and community cultural activities—should be preserved, protected and interpreted.

Bloor Street West within the Study Area largely developed in the early and mid 20th century. By 1947 the vast majority of the Study Area had been built up. While the architectural quality is not entirely consistent, preserving, protecting and interpreting individual examples of historic architecture, the Main Street building typology, intact building rows, and culturally significant landscapes is warranted. The upcoming Heritage Conservation District Study started in late 2017 will provide further direction for how to best reinforce cultural and built heritage.



## 5.3. ENCOURAGE A CONTEXT SENSITIVE BUILT FORM

**Principle:** New buildings should respect, complement and be compatible with adjacent buildings and neighbourhoods and contribute to a strong sense of identity and character within the different segments along Bloor Street West.

The Study Area contains distinct patterns and forms that developed over a long period of time and that contribute to a local area character that is varied but coherent. These forms include modest mixed-use main street row buildings on narrow parcels, and walk-up apartment buildings with varying degrees of grandeur. In most cases the built form of the Study Area is a conscious reaction to Bloor Street West as a busy urban thoroughfare. More recently, new development has increased in scale to include much taller buildings on far larger sites than what has happened in the past.



New development should consider and respect its particular setting within Bloor West Village, and respond to the prevailing built form character and building design. Not all parts of the Study Area are the same, and neither should all future buildings be of the same type, form, or style. New development should avoid disrupting coherent sections of historic fabric, and respond respectfully to the existing built heritage resources around it.





#### 5.4. SUPPORT MAIN STREET ECONOMIC VITALITY

**Principle:** Support activity and intensification that enhances the economic health of the Village Main Street.

Main Streets are the lifeblood for Toronto communities. Bloor West Village has several advantages of being on a high traffic arterial street, serving upper-middle and upper-income neighbourhoods, having several TTC subway stations and bus route service, and a combination of on-street, reserved, and city parking. As a main street, Bloor Street West primarily serves the local



neighbourhood and trade area, is convenience driven, and is an incubator for small independent retailers.

To maintain and strengthen the economic vitality of this important main street, Bloor West Village must be flexible and able to adapt, make use of the latest planning and financial tools, and ensure that efficient and effective infrastructure is in place to support future growth.



#### 5.5. PROTECT ADJACENT NEIGHBOURHOODS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

**Principle:** All new development should be sensitive to surrounding established neighbourhoods, and minimize impacts to Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Spaces.

As the Study Area redevelops, most of the potential sites are adjacent to well-established residential *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, or closely related to natural heritage features including High Park. Therefore, redevelopment should be highly sensitive, transitioning down in scale and providing ample rear setbacks, consistent with Official Plan Policies 3.1.2.3 and 4.5.2 (c).



## 5.6. PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS

**Principle:** Strengthen protection for Natural Heritage in and adjacent to Bloor West Village. Natural Heritage Areas are unique and important ecological resources and shall be preserved and protected from the impacts of intensification.

Bloor West Village is framed by two major natural heritage features— the Humber River Valley and High Park. As part of the larger natural heritage system, these features require careful protection to preserve their environmentally significant qualities. In a city as densely populated as Toronto many high quality natural areas still remain, but are under increasing pressure. The Humber and High Park

contain forests, meadows, wetlands and landforms, support an extraordinary variety of plant and animal life, and provide opportunities for people to experience wilderness in the city.

Policies exist at many levels to preserve and protect Natural Heritage Areas. The City of Toronto Official Plan guides city development through to 2031. It lays out a vision of a city in which nature is thriving, and accessible, public spaces are connected, clean and beautiful, and people are engaged in civic life. The Official Plan has numerous policies to preserve green space, protect natural areas from pollution and impacts from development, address water flow, enhance habitat quality and connectivity. In addition, the City of Toronto Ravine and Natural Feature Protection Bylaw promotes the management, protection and conservation of ravines and associated natural and woodland areas and features, including trees.



## 5.7. BUILD A CLEAR AND CONSISTENT PLANNING POLICY

**Principle:** Develop consistent land use and built form permissions for the area and respect and complement the appropriate zoning of the Study Area and its adjacent Neighbourhoods.

Planning policy for the Study Area is sometimes inconsistent. Bloor West Village includes mostly *Mixed Use Areas* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, with zoning that does not currently reflect the intent of the Official Plan's Avenues overlay (where intensification is expected). There are also a number of site and area specific policies for recent developments that differ substantially from the existing zoning. The logic behind built form and land use recommendations should be consistent and defensible. A simplified planning framework for Bloor West Village will resolve any inconsistencies that have accumulated over time.

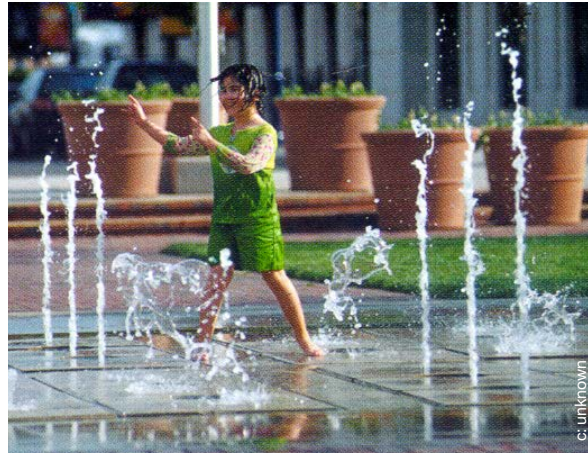




## 5.8. CREATE A GREEN, SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE PLACE

**Principle:** Improve the pedestrian experience along Bloor Street West through new amenities, plantings, wide sidewalks, midblock connections and other placemaking enhancements.

The pedestrian realm is the primary setting for public life in cities. Pedestrian space that is well proportioned, connected, comfortable, safe and attractive contributes to the quality of life of all. Improvements for pedestrians should focus on creating a safe and attractive space between buildings to support social and retail activities, provide physical and visual relief in an urban setting, and elevate environmental quality.



Given its location between the Humber River Valley and High Park and with well-vegetated adjacent Neighbourhoods, Bloor West Village has an overall green character. However, it does lack smaller-scale parks and urban open spaces along the corridor to support social exchange, public life and placemaking crucial to the Village identity. Through redevelopment comes the opportunity to introduce new public parks, urban plazas, and improved streetscape to encourage comfortable promenading, lingering, social gatherings and celebrations.

There are two approaches to treating the transition space between the private and public realms. The first promotes interaction between the ground floor uses and the public sidewalk, which has a primarily paved character to accommodate commercial/ pedestrian activities. The second approach provides privacy for the ground floor uses and usually has a soft planted character for residential activities.



## 5.9. IMPROVE MOBILITY AND BALANCE MOVEMENT PRIORITIES

**Principle:** Enhance safe and convenient movement through Bloor West Village and surrounding areas by providing greater opportunities for walking, cycling and public transit use, addressing traffic and congestion issues, and creating connections as redevelopment occurs.

Bloor West Village is already a transit rich, pedestrian-oriented place, but there remains room for improvement. Bloor Street West was designed with a high priority for vehicle operations, and should in the future consider how to better accommodate active transportation and the most vulnerable users. With redevelopment and future street reconstruction comes the opportunity to provide an expanded and safer pedestrian network, improve intersection design, introduce safe cycling facilities, improve transit access and operations, and introduce measures to manage congestion.



### 5.10. IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

**Principle:** Coordinate the introduction of new development in the Study Area with the provision of community services and facilities, ensure that adequate water and sewage services exist to accommodate new development, and that stormwater is managed in a sustainable way.

One of the aspects most impacted by an increase in population is the provision of community services and facilities. As redevelopment occurs, the City and school boards are required to maintain an adequate level of service provision, as outlined in Section 3.2.2 of the Official Plan. Within the Bloor West Village Avenue Study Area few opportunities exist to introduce new facilities, so improvements will need to take place more broadly in the community.



Another aspect that requires attention is the impact redevelopment has on municipal services such as water supply, sanitary and storm sewer systems. All new projects should contribute to servicing infrastructure improvements that support the existing and future community. The City should adopt on-site, conveyance, and end-of-pipe stormwater management (SWM) techniques to minimize contaminated stormwater runoff into the City's system and improve the quality of stormwater runoff into the receiving system. Further, the City should integrate SWM techniques with streetscape and open space enhancements, where possible, and apply the latest thinking as presented in the City of Toronto Green Street Technical Guidelines (2017).