

Midtown Planning Group Meeting #4: Built Form Study Update

MEETING SUMMARY

June 22, 2021: 2:00 – 5:00 PM

Location: Virtual Teleconference (WebEx Meeting)

Introduction and Opening Remarks:

Melanie Melnyk, City Planning, hosted the WebEx session and welcomed the attendees to the MPG meeting. A total of 17 MPG members participated in the meeting.

Councillors Josh Matlow (Ward 12), Jaye Robinson (Ward 15), and Mike Colle (Ward 8) shared their thoughts on development activity in Midtown. The councillors highlighted frustrations of local residents with the Province's modifications to the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405) and the importance of empowering the local community in the planning process. There was also urgency on the need for greater parks and green space in light of continuing growth.

Presentation:

Ms. Melnyk gave an overview presentation including: the Terms of Reference, invited organizations and previous meetings for the Midtown Planning Group; and the purpose of the Built Form Study as a key component among ongoing planning initiatives in Midtown.

Paul Kulig, Perkins & Will, presented the proposed recommendations for the eleven Character Areas under review in the Built Form Study, organized into three groups for discussion purposes. For each Character Area, Mr. Kulig outlined which built form standards were or were not modified by the Province, then presented two to three development scenarios, followed by a summary of recommendations. After the presentation for each group, there was a Q&A discussion before moving onto the next group.

Following the discussion on the Built Form Study, Corinne Fox, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, provided an update on the rolling implementation of the Midtown Parks and Public Realm Plan. She gave an overview on ongoing parks acquisitions and

improvements and future priorities, and upcoming public consultation for parks improvements in Summer and Fall 2021. This was followed by a short Q&A discussion.

Ms. Melnyk, concluded the meeting by thanking MPG members for their participation and feedback. She outlined the next steps for the Midtown Zoning Review and invited emailed comments by July 30, 2021.

A copy of the agenda is provided in **Appendix A**. A list of staff and MPG members who attended the meeting is provided in **Appendix B**.

Questions & Answers:

After each Character Area discussion and the Parks update, attendees had the opportunity to ask City and consultant staff follow-up questions, verbally by using the WebEx “raise hand” function or by typing questions in the chat feature.

Character Areas B1 (Erskine and Keewatin), B2 (Redpath Park Street Loop), B3 (Soudan), E1 (Eglinton Green Line), D3 (Mount Pleasant Station):

Question: As part of your microclimate studies, you mentioned Redpath Parkette. Did you come to a similar analysis for John Fisher Junior Public School or Eglinton Junior Public School? You also mentioned some impacts at the lower end of the height ranges. Have you taken a closer look at this?

- (P. Kulig): I can follow up with details on impacts to the school sites.

Question: From what I understand, the height ranges are given and the floor plates aren't being changed. Are you testing different step-backs, setbacks and tower separation requirements?

- (P. Kulig): Soudan is the only area where we tested a range of setbacks and step-backs as this was specific to the Character Area. We did this here because of the shift to a higher building height and to get feedback on these two large parcels.

Question: Have you looked at the edges of these areas where they are close to low-density neighbourhoods? Some people say there should be 25 metres of separation from tower to lot line.

- (P. Kulig): We looked at this as a reference but they are meant for comparison. We are bound by the Province's guidance and wanted to quantify the impact of this.
- **Follow-up Question:** At Soudan, we successfully used a 60 degree angular plane that was accepted by the development industry. If this is an accepted precedent, would it be reasonable to interpret this as part of the zoning study?
 - (P. Kulig): The new height guidance has pushed this closer to an 80 degree angular plane.
 - (M. Melnyk): We can explore this idea but the development industry will use the Province's height guidance and policies if they can build taller.

Question: Are there any sites other than parks and playgrounds that limit new shadow? Are these policies still there or have they been removed?

- (M. Melnyk): These are policies that we are trying to maintain through this analysis.
- (P. Kulig): The earlier study had a no net new shadow policy including on Redpath Parkette. The Province amended this to an "appropriate level" of shadow, so this study is assessing what is appropriate. This will be implemented through the zoning by-law.

Question: Scenario B seems preferred and stays within the Province's guidance. This still creates a lot of intensification in an area without enough infrastructure. Is there an attempt in the built form context to look at the infrastructure needed to support this?

- (M. Melnyk): Yes, when we have chosen a preferred scenario, we use this as a basis for population estimates. This work was done for the original Secondary Plan.
- (M. Melnyk): We are now calculating this difference and providing divisional partners with these numbers so they can plan for required upgrades.

Question: I understand the Province's constraints but this is difficult. Looking at a Q2 2022 timeline, what happens if we move forward and their position on Midtown changes?

- (M. Melnyk): We can't speculate what a new government might do. If they change the Official Plan, this would be significant and require a new study.
- (P. Kulig): In the meantime, this work will help development planners working on current proposals by updating the zoning.
- **Follow-up Comment:** It seems like we are looking for the best-case scenario in the worst-case scenario.

Character Areas D2 (Davisville Station), B4 (Davisville), E5 (Merton):

Question: We are concerned that shadows will impact the school near Davisville Station. You mentioned that there is shadowing at certain times. How extensive is this?

- (P. Kulig): 10 to 4 PM, which is the standard used by the City. The school will be impacted by the shadows by 2 PM onwards. The schoolyard to the north would be impacted in winter.
- **Follow-up Question:** In the afternoon, would the shadow go into the schoolyard and playground to the north?
 - (P. Kulig): We've looked at this up to 4 PM but yes. After that time, the buildings to the west will create shadow in the evening even if they are low buildings.

Question: The water system was significantly upgraded in Oriole Park years ago. We are now getting complaints about water pressure. Are there planned upgrades as part of this construction?

- (M. Melnyk): Yes, as part of Midtown in Focus, new residents and jobs were calculated to plan for upgrades and approved by Council. With the Province's changes, this work will show us whether further upgrades are required. During the development application review process, it is circulated with other divisions that identify if further upgrades are needed.
- (M. Melnyk): These projections will help us advise whether upgrades are needed and if development should be held.
- **Follow-up Comment:** We already have issues so we are concerned about the impacts of future additional development.
 - (M. Melnyk): We are trying to anticipate these impacts in our planning. It's a matter of getting the work implemented through our capital works stream or through development.

Character Areas C2 (Yonge Street North), C3 (Yonge Street South), D4 (Bayview Focus Area):

Question: In Yonge Street North, there is already an approved 14-storey building. Will this affect other proposals? For example, could they also request 14 storeys?

- (P. Kulig): This building is in a unique condition as it didn't have the neighbourhoods behind it. Not sure if this will impact what is proposed on the other side of the street.
- (M. Melnyk): The conditions here may or may not be replicated on other sites, so this depends on each site's constraints. We could try to model what's most appropriate, but it likely depends on the actual application.
- **Follow-up Comment:** 14 storeys along the entire stretch of this neighbourhood would not be appropriate.

Question: What are the steps to advance the Davisville subway trench park and how can the community support this?

- (M. Melnyk): This is a significant project that can have a positive impact on residents and is a priority. We are working on advancing this with partners such as the TTC. In the Davisville area, we intend to use City-owned sites to create open space there.

Question: At Yonge and Soudan at the southwest corner, how can we design this to be more accessible and welcoming to entering the Davisville subway trench park? It seems hidden from the street behind a building.

- (P. Kulig): This would be worked on at the design stage of the park. The park may not be visible from Yonge Street, but there will likely be access points from the streets perpendicular to Yonge Street.
- (C. Fox): We would have to undertake a feasibility study. Parks entrances may be part of this or it may come later.

Question: Between Manor and Belsize on the east side, there are traditional stores. We have some façade protections but beyond the wall, it seems open. Can a heritage designation be applied here? Would it impact whether a mid-rise will come in this area?

- (P. Kulig): The earlier study included a comprehensive heritage review. The parcel at Manor Road East is the only one that was designated in this area.
- **Follow-up Question:** If this was heritage designated, could it impact whether development would occur?
 - (P. Kulig): It would depend on the specific elements that are designated. We have shown this building as being integrated and expect development. We can work on buildings that are sensitive to their context.

Comment: It isn't sufficient to include the one building at Manor Road East and Yonge as heritage. It should include all the listed buildings as they can be designated.

Question: The building south of Eglinton is shown as a mid-rise. The mixed-use zone on this corner was extended. If there was land assembly, this should be shown as higher than a mid-rise.

- (P. Kulig): We are showing this as mid-rise as we feel the lot is too shallow to accommodate a tall building.

Question: You are showing a park near the northwest corner of Eglinton and Bayview, but OPA 405 doesn't show this. Would you consider pushing this park through to Roehampton to break up the massing?

- (P. Kulig): We do not recommend extending this to the north as this would worsen wind conditions.

Question: Between Manor and Belsize on the east side, there are traditional stores. We have some façade protections but beyond the wall, it seems open. Can a heritage designation be applied here? Would it impact whether a mid-rise will come in this area?

- (P. Kulig): The earlier study included a comprehensive heritage review. The parcel at Manor Road East is the only one that was designated in this area.

Question: At Bayview and Eglinton, I was surprised to see the tall building at the southeast corner. This is next to a school and two baseball diamonds. The park to the east is actually a below-grade ravine which makes a tall building problematic for shadowing.

- (P. Kulig): A mitigating factor is that this is the north edge of the park, so shadows are mostly limited to the opposite side of Eglinton Avenue except in the late afternoon.

Question: At the southeast corner of Bayview and Eglinton, you are showing a tower with a mid-rise. What is the address of this site? The quadraplex to the north is designated as heritage.

- Response from the City post-MPG meeting (July 5, 2021): The address of the soft site is 1787 Bayview Avenue. The model shown on this soft site does not include the designated heritage sites known as 1783-1785 Bayview Avenue.

Parks Planning Update:

Question: If we see opportunities to acquire parks that aren't currently parks but might be in the future, is there a way to bring this forward?

- (C. Fox): You can contact me and Teresa about these opportunities.
- (M. Melnyk): The upcoming Social Pinpoint tool can also be used to drop pins on a map and highlight future opportunities.

Question: Can you elaborate on how park districts are planned and used? I see some dense areas are combined and am wondering about the implications.

- (C. Fox): We look at a few factors such as streets and land use. We grouped these by high growth areas.
- **Follow-up Question:** Are you using metrics to assess these?
 - (C. Fox): Yes. We use a few metrics such as future parkland provision, planned parks, walkability, land and equity factors.
 - **Follow-up Comment:** If so, I think this makes more sense to split the Mount Pleasant and Eglinton Park Districts into four sections due to its high density. Otherwise you might get pockets without enough parkland.

Question: We've been looking to create a green connection that links several small parks, green streets and mid-block connections between Soudan and Mount Pleasant Cemetery. This would support walking and cycling. We haven't gotten much traction and are wondering if this is part of parks or public realm in terms of staffing.

- (C. Fox): Are you proposing a walking route?
- **Follow-up Comment:** Yes, this would connect several small parks and other destinations.
 - (C. Fox): This would be a multi-divisional initiative. We would have to connect with other staff.
 - (S. Lavrentieva): We are working through 11 Public Realm Moves and this is a new bigger move. We'll have to see where this falls in with them to see if we can integrate this.

Question: We are looking at high-rise properties and are including parks there. How about low-rise areas? Are there opportunities to put in parkland here?

- (C. Fox): Through the parkland dedication process, we directed developers to acquire some spaces in lower-density areas.
- **Follow-up Comment:** When walking along Hillsdale, many people have fences to stop dogs from using them. So dog owners don't have green space. We need to look for opportunities within these areas to provide pet-friendly spaces.

Question: There seems to be multiple developments in the area. Are they contributing to the parkland?

- (C. Fox): Since 2012, we have acquired 17 parks for a total of 1.2 hectares. Most of this is through parkland dedication or it can also be funded through cash-in-lieu.

Other Questions:

Question: How will the zoning study come into effect? Will it need to be approved by City Council? Can it be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal?

- (M. Melnyk): Recommendations will be part of a report full zoning by-law which will be brought for consultation, then Council can vote to adopt. The zoning by-law can be appealed.
- (P. Kulig): Everything we are doing is within the Province's guidance. If we're within this guidance, it should be difficult to appeal as it follows with their policies.
- (M. Melnyk): Setbacks, stepbacks and separation distances were taken out of the Secondary Plan as the Province felt they fit more in a zoning by-law. This is also part of our work in this study.

Question: I understand that this report is a necessary step to establish a planning rationale for height and density requirements as the Province requires. What is the rough timeline to completing this and sending it to Council? Will it likely go over a year?

- (M. Melnyk): Our goal is to finish this within a year. We are working on the comprehensive by-law that we want to take out for consultation in Fall 2021. We want to get this to the Planning and Housing Committee by Q2 2022.

Question: How often are water and other services reviewed by the City for the Yonge-Eglinton and Davisville areas?

- (M. Melnyk): Generally any rezoning application must submit a servicing study for review by the City's engineers. If deemed necessary as a result of development, the City can require any needed upgrades as a condition of approval.
- (M. Melnyk): With a more holistic study like the Yonge-Eglinton Area, the City commissioned a servicing study in 2018 to support the proposed Secondary Plan.

Question: Have we gone through the infrastructure implications of these cumulative scenarios? Will we still have water pressure and toilets that flush?

- (M. Melnyk): This study helps us determine how much (additional) development we might expect, so we can then estimate how many more units could be built over the next 25-30 years, and by extension how many people and jobs would need to be serviced.
- (M. Melnyk): We are working with our City partners to determine if there are additional upgrades needed above what was recommended for Midtown in Focus.

Question: The ratio of open space per person is too low. Isn't open space considered key for health and wellness given COVID? How will the proposed parks make up the difference for what it should be?

- (C. Fox): The citywide average is 27 square metres per person. Even if we got all the parks in the Secondary Plan, we likely could not maintain current levels. We are also looking to see how we can improve what existing parks spaces.
- **Follow-up Question:** Could we require development to provide green roofs with parks on top?
 - (C. Fox): This might be challenging due to access. The City is also studying decking the subway trench to add parkland supply.
 - (M. Armstrong): While this isn't parkland, the City does require outdoor amenity space from new developments. This is meant to supplement parkland so that they have space for themselves. Perhaps we can think about increasing the minimum required amenity space for new buildings through zoning.

Appendix A: Agenda

Midtown Planning Group Meeting #4 – Built Form Study Update

Tuesday, June 22, 2021 | 2:00 – 5:00pm | WebEx Meeting

Discussion Item	Lead	Duration
1 Welcome and Introductions	Ward Councillors Melanie Melnyk (City Planning)	2:00-2:25
2 Meeting Purpose & Outcomes	Melanie Melnyk (City Planning)	2:25-2:30
3 Built Form Study Character Areas: B1, B2, B3, E1, D3 Presentation Feedback/Discussion	Paul Kulig (Perkins & Will)	2:30-3:15
4 Break		3:15-3:20
5 Built Form Study Character Areas: D2, B4, E5 Presentation Feedback/Discussion	Paul Kulig (Perkins & Will)	3:20-3:45
6 Built Form Study Character Areas: C2, C3, D4 Presentation Feedback/Discussion	Paul Kulig (Perkins & Will)	3:45-4:15
7 Parks Planning Update	Corinne Fox (Parks, Forestry & Recreation)	4:15-4:30
8 Next Steps	Melanie Melnyk (City Planning)	4:30-4:35

Appendix B: List of Attendees

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Councillors and Staff:

- Councillor Mike Colle, Ward 8
- Linda McCarthy, Ward 8 Councillor Staff
- Councillor Josh Matlow, Ward 12
- Andrew Athanasiu, Ward 12 Councillor Staff
- Slavisa Mijatovic, Ward 12 Councillor Staff
- Councillor Jaye Robinson, Ward 15
- Parker Samuels, Ward 15 Councillor Staff

City Planning Staff:

- Al Rezoski, Community Planning
- Alex Teixeira, Community Planning
- Jason Brander, Community Planning
- Oren Tamir, Community Planning
- Robert Ursini, Community Planning
- Abdullah Diab, Graphics and Visualization
- Anson Ma, SIPA
- Matt Armstrong, SIPA
- Melanie Melnyk, SIPA
- Svetlana Lavrentieva, SIPA
- Dawn Hamilton, Urban Design
- James Parakh, Urban Design
- Setareh Fadaee, Urban Design

Parks, Forestry & Recreation Staff:

- Corinne Fox, Development & Design
- Teresa Liu, Development & Design

Consultant Staff:

- Paul Kulig, Perkins & Will
- Ashita Parekh, Perkins & Will
- Eunice Wong, Perkins & Will

MPG Members in Attendance:

- Diana White, 33 Holly/44 Dunfield Tenants Association
- Michael Black, Cycle Toronto
- John Carey, Central Eglinton Community Centre
- Lancelyn Rayman-Watters, Eglinton Park Residents Association
- Geoff Kettel, Federation of North Toronto Residents' Association and Leaside Residents Association
- Douglas Obright, Leaside Property Owners' Association
- Maureen Kapral, Lytton Park Residents' Association
- Jess Hungate, North Toronto Collegiate Institute
- Daryle Hunt, Oriole Park Association
- Katie Bardyn, Oriole Park Junior Public School
- Tomi Mitrovic, Quantum Owners and Residents Association
- Andy Gort, South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Association
- Al Kivi, South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Association
- Ann King, Stanley Knowles Housing Co-operative
- Demi Aseo, Toronto Lands Corporation
- Matt Bagnall, Toronto Lands Corporation
- Jane Fitzwilliam, West Keewatin Neighbours