

Yorkville - East of Bay Planning Framework

Date:	July 24, 2014
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Ward 27 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number:	13 165905 STE 27 OZ

SUMMARY

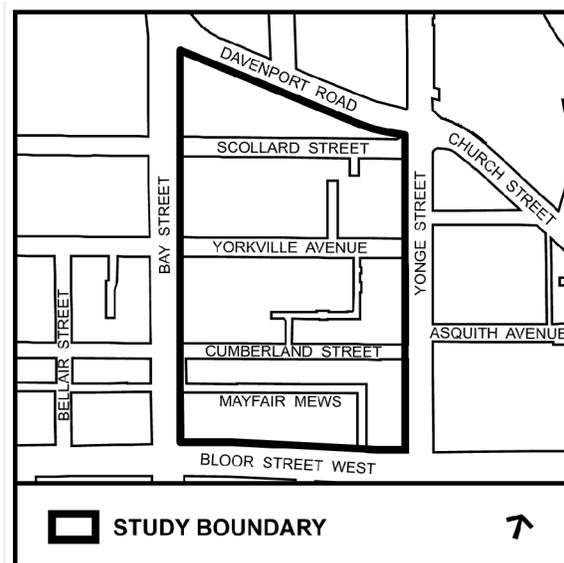
This report introduces and recommends a focussed Planning Framework for the Yorkville - East of Bay area to be used to evaluate current and future development applications.

The Planning Framework will apply to the area of Yorkville located between Bay Street and Yonge Street, from Bloor Street to Davenport Road. It complements and clarifies existing Official Plan policies and design guidelines.

As Yorkville- East of Bay continues to grow and intensify with tall buildings, the Framework will guide development with a vision of well-sited, designed and massed tall buildings with a network of pedestrian mid-block connections and open spaces.

The Framework is intended to provide certainty as to where tall buildings can go and where open space is required to achieve those tall buildings.

Specifically, the Framework identifies opportunities for tall buildings outside of the Height Peak, Height Ridges and Low-rise Areas currently shown in Area Specific Official Plan Policy 211. The Framework also refines and expands the system of pedestrian connections currently outlined in Area Specific Official Plan Policy 225.



Planning staff have consulted extensively with the local resident associations, business associations and current applicants during the preparation of the Framework.

This report also recommends that the Planning Framework study be expanded and include the Greater Yorkville area, which could form the basis for an updated area specific Official Plan policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council endorse the Yorkville - East of Bay Planning Framework (to be provided on the Supplementary Agenda) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, and direct staff to apply the Planning Framework during the review of current and future development applications.
2. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to undertake a policy review including consideration of: the Yorkville – East of Bay Planning Framework endorsed in Recommendation 1 above; built form; land use; heritage; public realm; community services and facilities/infrastructure; and any relevant Official Plan Policies, the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines, the Tall Building Guidelines and other matters, for the Greater Yorkville area bounded by the Canadian Pacific Railway corridor, Avenue Road/Queens Park, Yonge Street/Rosedale Valley Road/Sherbourne Street and Charles Street/Mt. Pleasant Road/Selby Street.
3. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to bring forward any required Official Plan Amendments arising from the policy review to a statutory public meeting under the Planning Act after holding community consultation.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 2, 3 and 4, 2012 City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to review the existing and planned built form context, pedestrian linkages, as well as other policies and guidelines for the Yorkville - East of Bay area bounded by Bloor Street, Davenport Road, Yonge Street and Bay Street, to establish appropriate heights for the areas outside of the Height Peak, Height Ridges and Low-rise areas as illustrated in Site and Area Specific Official Plan Policy 211, and to bring forward any required Official Plan Amendments to a statutory public meeting under the Planning Act after holding a community meeting.

On June 18, 2013, Toronto and East York Community Council received a Status Update Report dated May 30, 2013, and directed staff to initiate consultation with local stakeholders in consultation with the Ward Councillor and report back to Toronto and East York Community Council with a draft policy recommendation in a Preliminary Report in the fourth quarter of 2013. The report is available at: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-59032.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

The Yorkville area is the northern edge of the downtown with a mix of land uses, direct access to two subway lines, low-rise residential neighbourhoods, a heritage conservation district and individually listed heritage buildings, low-rise commercial areas, parks and tall buildings.

As Yorkville will continue to grow and intensify with tall buildings, in particular in the Yorkville – East of Bay area, Planning staff and community stakeholders collaboratively developed a “Planning Framework” to guide development with a vision of well-sited, designed and massed tall buildings with a network of pedestrian mid-block connections and open spaces.

The Province and City have a number of existing planning policies and design guidelines that guide new development in Yorkville - East of Bay including: the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) and Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan; Official Plan Policies for the *Downtown*, Built Form and *Mixed Use Areas*; Official Plan Policy 211; Official Plan Policy 225; Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines; and, the Tall Building Design Guidelines. As well, the Bloor-Yorkville BIA and ABC Residents Association are developing new policies to guide growth in the Bloor-Yorkville Area for the City’s consideration.

More information on Provincial and City policies and guidelines that apply to Yorkville is contained in the Status Update Report dated May 30, 2013, available at the link noted above.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

On June 3, 2013, staff met with the land owners with current and recently approved planning applications at the following sites: 2 Bloor Street West; 27-37 Yorkville Avenue and 26-50 Cumberland Street; 50 Bloor Street West; and, 836-850 Yonge Street and 1-9A Yorkville Avenue. A representative from 19 Yorkville Avenue and from the Ward Councillor’s office were also in attendance.

On July 3, 2013, an urban design workshop was held with the architects and urban design consultants representing the group from the June 3, 2013 meeting. Other City Divisions were represented at the workshop, including Transportation Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Community associations were included in the design workshop – such as the ABC Residents Association, the Bloor-Yorkville BIA, and the Greater Yorkville Residents Association. Resulting from the visioning exercise was a Workshop Summary

Document which identified a vision for the area including new open spaces, mid-block connections and vehicular access routes for the proposals under review.

The summary document is available at:

http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Community%20Planning/Files/pdf/E/east_bay_summary_document.pdf

On October 30, 2013 Planning Staff held a Community Consultation Meeting held at the Stone Church to present the vision resulting from the July 3, 2013 urban design workshop.

On March 18, 2014 the City's Design Review Panel (DRP) commented on the proposals at 2 Bloor Street West; 27-37 Yorkville Avenue and 26-50 Cumberland Street; 50 Bloor Street West; and, 836-850 Yonge Street and 1-9A Yorkville Avenue.

The Minutes of the DRP meeting are available at:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Urban%20Design/Files/pdf/DRP/DRP%20Minutes%20March%202014.pdf>

On March 18, 2014 following the DRP meeting, the local Councillor chaired a community stakeholder meeting where the ABC Residents Association, the Asquith Collier Residents Association, the Bloor-Yonge BIA and the Greater Yorkville Residents Association provided their feedback on the presentations and comments they heard at the Design Review Panel Meeting.

On April 3, 2014 Planning staff met with representatives of the Asquith Collier community to discuss the development applications and emerging vision for Yorkville - East of Bay.

On May 7, 2014 Planning staff met with community representatives from the ABC Residents Association, the Asquith Collier Residents Association, the Bloor-Yonge BIA and the Greater Yorkville Residents Association to update them on Yorkville East of Bay applications. The stakeholders provided comments to staff on the latest proposals by the applicants.

On June 9, 2014 Planning staff presented the most current proposals (at the time) to the Asquith Collier neighbourhood at the invitation of its Residents Association.

Issues raised by the community throughout the consultation process include: pedestrian comfort; sidewalk widths; wind; weather protection for pedestrians; shadow impact on low-rise areas and open spaces; tall towers on narrow streets; the precedent set by the Four Seasons development; traffic and subway congestion; the need to maintain small scale retail; the need for more open space and mid-block connections; the clustering and number of towers proposed; the overall design of towers; the timing of construction; parking in the area; sky view; transitioning of heights to low-rise areas; seating and greening opportunities; and, the need for family sized units and affordable housing.

THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Yorkville – East of Bay Planning Framework

The Planning Framework applies to the area of Yorkville located between Bay Street and Yonge Street, from Bloor Street to Davenport Road. It represents a comprehensive review of aspects of existing policy to provide better guidance for future change. The Framework is founded on a vision, goals and objectives for the pedestrian environment and connectivity, and the location of tall buildings and their built form criteria.

The Planning Framework identifies two key mid-block pedestrian connections to be created by a series of parks, open spaces, linear parks and walkways. These north/south linear park and walkway systems are named by their defining features - Town Hall Walkway and Clock Tower Walkway.

The linear parks are complemented by the east/west cross streets in Yorkville – East of Bay. Cumberland Street is identified as a "Pedestrian Street" that is a pedestrian-friendly shopping street. Yorkville is a "Civic Street" that serves as the area's social arena with opportunities for social interaction. Scollard Street is a "Residential Street" that has the most residential feel with grade related access to many buildings and a treed green streetscape.

The Planning Framework also identifies built form criteria for existing, approved, proposed and possible future tall building sites. It is intended to provide certainty as to where tall buildings can go and where open space is required to achieve those tall buildings.

The Yorkville – East of Bay Planning Framework is found in Attachment No. 1.

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

Planning staff is requesting Council direction to use the Planning Framework as a basis to review all current and future applications in the Yorkville – East of Bay area.

The Yorkville – East of Bay Planning Framework is intended to be an interim document but the vision illustrated and discussed in the Framework represents the first conclusions of a policy review and is intended to be introduced as Official Plan policy. Staff is requesting direction to finalize the policy review for the greater Yorkville area generally bounded by Charles Street to the south, Avenue Road to the West; Yonge Street, Rosedale Valley Road and Church Street to the East and Canadian Pacific Railway to the North.

This further review would use as a starting point the Yorkville – East of Bay Planning Framework completed to date and endorsed by City Council and further address the area's urban structure, built form, land use, heritage, public realm, community services and facilities/infrastructure and any relevant Official Plan Policies, the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines, the Tall Building Guidelines and

other matters. The review will also identify local benefits that could be implemented through Section 37 of the Planning Act.

City Planning would bring forward any required Official Plan Amendments to a statutory public meeting under the Planning Act and any updates to the Bloor-Yorkville/North Midtown Urban Design Guidelines after holding an extensive consultation process with landowners and community stakeholders.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Yorkville – East of Bay Planning Framework

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TO BE PROVIDED ON THE SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA