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DUNDAS STREET WEST AVENUES STUDY

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List of Abbreviations

CG	Commercial General zoning
CMA	Toronto Census Metropolitan Area
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
LAC	Local Advisory Committee
OMB	Ontario Municipal Board
OP	Official Plan
TDSB	Toronto District School Board
TRCA	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
TTC	Toronto Transit Commission

Executive Summary

Introduction

The subject area for the study is the mixed-use corridor along Dundas Street West between Royal York Road and the Humber River, which has been designated in the new City of Toronto Official Plan as an Avenue – an area identified for reurbanization. This is a term to describe a planned process for improving the look, function, and quality of the street. The City’s vision for this Avenue, as outlined in the new Official Plan, emphasizes the need to create new housing and jobs here. The area is already experiencing significant development pressures.

The existing Etobicoke Official Plan and the new Toronto Official Plan are inconsistent with the existing zoning by-law, which is outdated. This leads to a situation where most developments proceed to either the Committee of Adjustment or Re-Zoning and

sometimes to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to obtain approvals. The study’s recommendations for a six storey height limit along Dundas Street West, and other built-form controls to protect adjacent low density neighbourhoods, are consistent with the existing Etobicoke Official Plan.

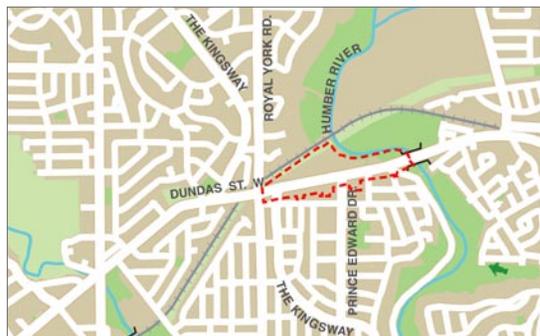
A primary purpose of the study was to establish a framework for future development while providing a level of certainty to the community about the character and form of development. The study employed a collaborative process between the consulting team, City staff and the community living in and near the study area. Community consultation was integral to the process at all stages, from identifying existing issues and opportunities, to informing the vision and guiding principles, through to developing the study’s recommendations. Site development,

transportation, and demographic analyses were undertaken to a preliminary level to inform the study findings. A physical model and 3D computer modelling enabled the project team and the public to visualize the effects of streetscape changes and the visual impact of future development scenarios, as shown in image at right.

Existing Character

The existing urban environment is a largely commercial strip with a poorly defined street edge, buildings often set well back from the street, broad areas of asphalt paving and surface parking, few trees, numerous driveways interrupting the sidewalks and high traffic volumes. This car-dominated environment, the product of an outdated zoning by-law from 1949, is in striking contrast to the leafy character and English garden suburb heritage of the adjacent Kingsway neighbourhood.

Existing constraints to redevelopment include the adjacent low-rise neighbourhood to the south; limits to development within the Humber River ravine in order to protect the natural heritage system and slope stability, as regulated by the City and TRCA; the lack of access roads; and the narrowness of lots and the fragmentation of land ownership.



Study Area Location Map



View showing potential west gateway at Royal York.

The Vision

The main messages that emerged from the community consultation were:

- The community is not against development, but they want it to be controlled.
- It is very important to manage density, traffic impacts and impacts on schools.
- Improve pedestrian safety in the context of high vehicular traffic volume along Dundas Street.
- Focus on making a positive pedestrian and retail environment along Dundas Street West and improve the general lack of character.

While there was considerable debate on appropriate heights and density for the area, consensus was found in the wish to improve the pedestrian environment. This vision can be summarized as follows:

The Vision:

A tree-lined street in keeping with the character of the Kingsway neighbourhood, where people can walk safely, shop conveniently, and easily access the Humber River.

Key Recommendations

A series of guiding principles for achieving the vision were identified and refined with community input. The principles are presented here along with a summary of the report's key recommendations pertaining to each.

1. Create a safe and enjoyable pedestrian environment.
 - Provide a minimum 5 metre wide pedestrian zone at the curb to accommodate a continuous sidewalk and distinctive streetscape treatment.
 - Plant regularly placed street trees in the sidewalk zone, with trees and/or other planting initiatives encouraged at the back of the sidewalk zone on private property.

- Provide a consistent vocabulary of other streetscape furniture elements such as light poles, benches, bicycle rings, waste receptacles, transit shelters, etc.
 - Utilize planting to screen views of existing front yard parking areas from Dundas Street.
 - Create a façade zone to help define the public space of the street and help animate the pedestrian zone of the sidewalk.
2. Encourage a diversity of uses.
 - Encourage a minimum percentage of commercial uses in identified areas which already support a considerable amount of this activity. At least 50% of the building's Dundas Street West Street frontage at the ground floor level should be allocated



to non-residential uses that promote pedestrian activity at the street edge, such as retail, live-work, office or personal services.

3. Select an appropriate building scale and density for the street width and neighbourhood context.
 - Maximum building height 6 storeys (or 20 metres), minimum building height 2 storeys and 7.5 metres.
 - In order to encourage a street wall of built-form along Dundas Street West, front yard setbacks are generally recommended to be a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 3 metres from grade up to a height of 4 storeys (or 13 m), except for one area on the north side of Dundas.
 - In order to visually reduce the impact of the height of the building on the pedestrian environment, a further 1.5 m setback from the building face is recommended above a height of 4 storeys (or 13 m).
 - The south side of Dundas Street West is characterized by a mix of residential and commercial uses which back onto a low-rise residential neighbourhood.

Key recommendations: 45 degree angular plane perpendicular to the rear property line of each Dundas Street West lot; Minimum

7.5 metre rear yard setback incorporating a 3 metre planting strip adjacent to the existing low density residential zoning.

- The “Rona” lot on the north side of Dundas Street West, west of Prince Edward Drive is a special case in the study area due to its large size and location deep within the block, adjacent to the railway corridor, away from existing neighbourhoods, and with no frontage onto Dundas Street.
Key recommendations: This property may be suitable for additional height and density, subject to further study and community consultations. Portions of this area are regulated by the Ravine By-law and TRCA.
- A small portion of the north side of Dundas Street West, within a specific zone to the west and east of Prince Edward Drive, is



characterized by a mix of commercial and residential buildings set back approximately 8 metres from the property line with landscaped front yards, often with mature trees that should be preserved.

Key recommendations: Establish an 8 metre front yard build-to line, with appropriate front yard greening and landscaping treatments; Encourage a public plaza at the westerly extent of this area adjoining the new road access to the north to provide a new urban open space for the community.

- The north side of Dundas Street West at its eastern extent is characterized by heritage buildings and street-related retail.
Key recommendation: Architectural responses for new development in this area should demonstrate respect for the heritage context.



4. Encourage high quality architecture and diversity of building form.
 - Encourage high standards of architecture utilizing high quality, durable materials, in keeping with the Kingsway neighbourhood, without preference for a particular style.
 - Encourage building elements that provide shelter, shade and/or visual interest for pedestrians at street level, such as storefront awnings, recessed entries, sidewalk patios, integrated planters, etc.

5. Enable efficient vehicle movement and ease of transit and cyclist access.
 - Encourage secondary road and laneway networks.
 - Encourage driveways which provide access across several lots in one location.
 - Encourage underground parking for new residential developments. Surface parking should be limited to the rear or side of new developments with pedestrian access through to Dundas Street West. Prohibit vehicular access aisles and surface parking lots within the front yard setback, between the sidewalk and the building face.
 - Improve pedestrian access to transit in areas with problem access.

- Along Dundas Street West east of Prince Edward Drive (as well as over the Humber bridge), prioritize the allocation of curbside dedicated bicycle lanes within the right-of-way.
- 6. Encourage opportunities for new open space and improve access to existing open space.
 - Encourage provision of a new recreational pathway along the Hydro corridor.
 - Encourage through-block pedestrian connections to this new pathway.
 - Encourage provision of a new pedestrian connection from the study area down to the west bank of the Humber River by means of a stair system. Consideration should be given to the provision of universal access.



7. Protect the natural environment and enhance its enjoyment.

- Prioritize the protection of the ravine edge, improve resistance to surficial erosion, and ensure long term slope stability along the rear of lots on the north side of Dundas Street West at its east end.
- Improve access and signage to the recreational trails in the Humber ravine.

8. Transform the area with a new, distinctive identity.

- Implement planting of street trees and encourage greening opportunities on private property beside the sidewalk to make the street generally “greener”.
- At the west and east entries to the study area, provide landscaped median gateway features to clearly signal arrival in a distinctive character area.
- Consider murals near each end of the study area to reinforce the “Kingsway identity”.

- Consider opportunities for introducing distinctive and consistently designed streetscape elements such as pedestrian scaled lighting with integrated area identification signage, banners, and the capacity to incorporate hanging planters.
- Encourage the formation of a Business Improvement Association to define and implement specific identity objectives.



Managing Potential Impacts of Redevelopment

Impacts of future redevelopment on the area's traffic and schools, both identified as critical issues by the community throughout the study, are anticipated to be manageable. Analysis of potential redevelopment yields on likely development sites within the study area over the next 25 years, based on realistic site constraints and allowable built-form controls, revealed a mid-range estimate of an increase between 600 and 850 new residential units, including 202 units which are already approved. Actual build-out could be higher or lower, depending on a number of factors, although a range of calculation methods confirmed numbers generally in line with this estimate.



Lambton-Kingsway Junior-Middle School

Traffic

Preliminary findings (detailed analysis was beyond the scope of this study) on traffic impacts include:

- Traffic on Dundas Street West will experience a minor increase with demand for redevelopment.
- Over the next 25 years, new mixed-use development could result in up to a 5 to 10% increase in traffic on Prince Edward Drive based on estimated unit counts.
- Future transit improvements along Dundas Street West, based on increased demand, will help to mitigate traffic impacts.
- We anticipate that while some additional retail and commercial development will occur, that most of the redevelopment along this corridor will be residential in nature. Traffic impacts from residential redevelopment of the area will be significantly less than impacts that might result from significant commercial and retail redevelopment of the area.
- More detailed traffic studies would be required to clarify the specific nature and location of traffic impacts that would be generated from future development.

Schools

According to the Toronto District School Board, children generated from residential development within the study area could be accommodated at the two local schools; however there is the possibility of redirecting children to other schools if the local schools are full. In this case, warnings (to be written into purchase and rental agreements and posted on building sites) would serve to inform prospective purchasers, as well as the existing community, of the inadequacy of local school accommodation and the resulting option to redirect children to alternative school sites where sufficient capacity exists. This practice has been possible given the decline in the enrolment system-wide.

Next Steps

Following this study, and in consultation with the community, City Planning staff will prepare an area-specific zoning by-law that sets out the specific mix of uses, heights, densities, setbacks and other standards allowable along Dundas Street West.