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City Seeking Lower
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Some MTSAs

■ ADVOCATES URGE PROVINCE TO RESET ONTARIO PLACE REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

REVITALIZING THE WATER'S EDGE

Marc Mitanis

Heritage preservation advocates and city-builders are among a growing chorus of voices calling upon the provincial government to reset its plans to modernize Ontario Place and to develop a heritage conservation plan first that would inform a master planned approach to the revitalization of the 155-acre waterfront property.

On July 30, 2021, the **Province of Ontario** announced its selection of three private development partners to modernize Ontario Place following a 2019 call for development process seeking redevelopment concepts that would align with the province's vision for the site as a world-class, year-round destination.

Several major attractions at the provincially-owned Ontario Place were closed in 2012, including its waterpark, amusement rides, and the Cinesphere, after years of neglect. Some elements of the waterfront destination, like the Cinesphere, have since been revived, and the 2017 opening of the 7.5-acre Trillium

Park reinvigorated public conversations about the need to develop a comprehensive vision for Ontario Place.

The province hosted virtual information sessions on October 13 and October 27 to provide an overview of the planned redevelopment and offer members of the public an opportunity to learn and to ask questions about the plan. The province's multi-partner approach to the revitalization of Ontario Place would see Vienna-based **Therme Group** repurposing its West Island into an all-season health and wellness complex, to be surrounded by over eight acres of free and publicly-

CONTINUED PAGE 12 ■



Photo of the suspended "pods" and Cinesphere at Ontario Place. Designed by architect Eberhard Zeidler, these signature elements of the modernist architectural landscape of Ontario Place would be preserved under redevelopment plans announced in July 2021 for the 155-acre site.

SOURCE: MARC MITANIS

UPCOMING DATES

NOVEMBER

- 3 Budget Committee (2022 Rate Supported Budget Launch), 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 4 Design Review Panel, time TBC, (video conference)
- 5 CreateTO (Special), 9:00 a.m. (video conference)
- 9-10 Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 17 Toronto Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
TTC Board, time tbc (video conference)
- 19 Budget Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 22 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
CreateTO, 1:30 p.m. (video conference)
- 23 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 24 Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 25 Planning & Housing Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
Design Review Panel, time TBC, (video conference)
- 26 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 30 General Government & Licensing Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)

DECEMBER

- 1 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 2 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)



CITY CONSIDERS SMALL BUSINESS PROPERTY TAX SUBCLASS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC RELIEF



Rob Jowett

The city is looking to reduce the tax burden on small businesses to help them recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing a small business property tax subclass. However, some small business owners and small business community representatives feel that the plan currently being proposed by the city needs to be modified to ensure that small businesses are the direct beneficiaries of this support.

At its meeting November 9-10, **City of Toronto** council will consider a staff proposal for creating a new property tax subclass for small businesses. The subclass would give small businesses within the commercial tax class a 15 per cent reduction in taxes, which would apply to around 25,000 businesses. This would cost the city \$26.87-million in lost revenue, which would be made up by a 0.85-per cent increase in taxes for all other businesses in the commercial tax class.

“Supporting small

businesses is key to Toronto’s economic success,” City of Toronto revenue services director **Casey Brendon** told *NRU*. “This new tax class... will support new and existing small businesses located on Toronto’s main streets, helping them to thrive in a post-pandemic environment and well into the future... This will allow for a more targeted approach to provide tax relief that reflects the diversity and geographic influences of property values across the city.”

In order to be eligible for the tax break, businesses must be classified within the commercial or new commercial tax class. Along avenues, on the central waterfront, downtown, or in designated growth centres, businesses must have a lot size smaller than 7,500-square feet, or 2,500-square feet for commercial condominiums, and must have a current value assessment of the property of \$7-million or less. In the rest of the city, businesses must have a current value assessment of \$1-million or less.

Businesses located within shopping centres, strip malls, and within other large properties where the tax burden cannot be easily separated into individual businesses will not be eligible. Businesses in gross leases that will not experience the result of reduced property taxes are also ineligible, unless the property owner agrees to pass on the reduction to the small business in the form of a rent reduction.

Any plan that will provide financial relief for business is welcome, **Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association** (ORHMA) president and CEO **Tony Elenis** told *NRU*. Elenis says small businesses, especially in the hospitality sector that he represents, have struggled for the last year-and-a-half as public health restrictions have led to the temporary closure of businesses or have imposed capacity requirements on them, and kept customers home even when businesses were open. He says the next year-and-a-half will also be very challenging as

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PROVIDING ECONOMIC RELIEF

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the costs of various products and labour costs increase due to supply chain issues and with many potential restaurant, hotel and motel customers having their own financial struggles to deal with. He says operating costs in the hospitality sector are up around 80 per cent compared to pre-pandemic levels and that many businesses are unable to raise prices significantly to cover expenses.

“That 15 per cent of the [tax] rate coming down—at this point, it’s looked upon—and I’ve talked to other business groups—it’s looked upon as a start,” says Elenis. “And although many small business owners are not going to be impacted in the criteria they set up, I believe the appetite is there to look at 2023 and grow the package that the city is coming up with at this point. So, it’s a good start, I guess I would say, at this point.”

Downtown Yonge BIA chief operating officer and executive director **Mark Garner** told *NRU* that he agrees with

Elenis’s assessment of the proposal and the challenges businesses are experiencing currently. He says the office workers that a lot of downtown businesses rely on have not returned to work yet and he believes it will be a long time before the area reaches pre-pandemic occupancy levels. He says that crafting the perfect policy will take some time but that he supports the city going through the process and introducing a tax subclass that can be a starting point for small businesses.

“If [we] don’t get the employment cluster back, then those people that would normally go out for lunch

or linger after work or go to a show are not there, the tourism dollars are not there yet,” says Garner. “So, we’re still a long way away from generating the economics that we need. So, obviously, tax relief and subsidies are big for our organization and for membership.”

The small business tax subclass is possible due to changes made in the November 2020 provincial budget, which allows municipalities to create a new tax subclass for small businesses. The province allows municipalities to reduce taxes by up to 35 per cent—much more than the city is currently considering. In a letter submitted to the city, **Toronto Region Board of Trade** (TRBOT) is recommending that the city increase the tax break to the maximum amount of 35 per cent in order to provide as much relief as

possible to business, and also to not “de-incentivise the province from maintaining such a generous offer.”

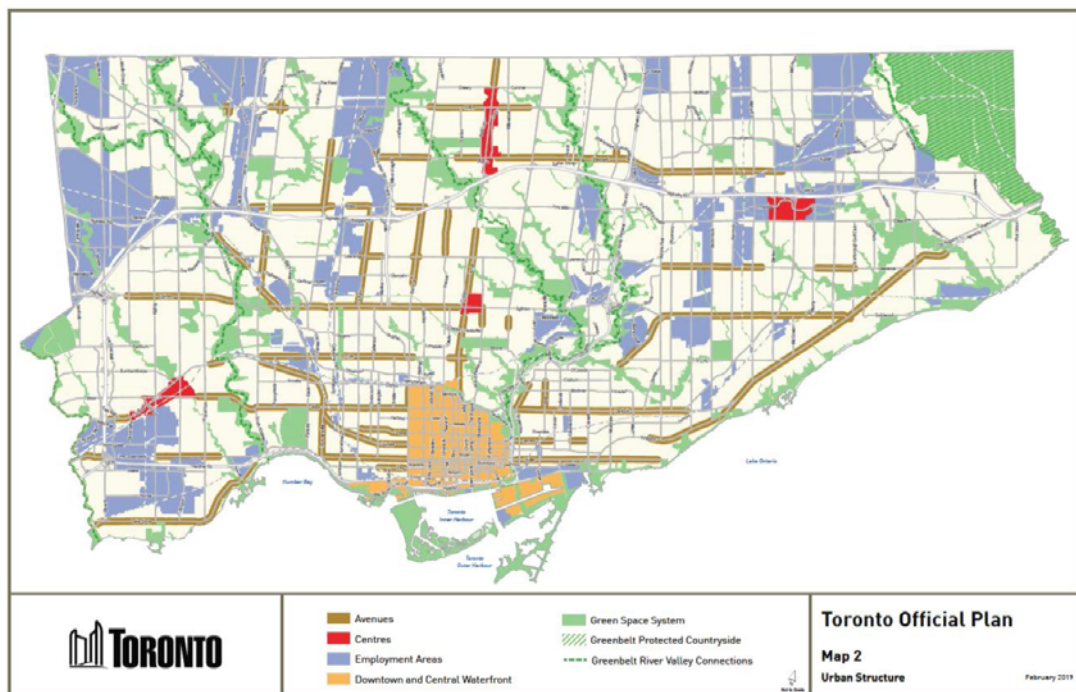
“We are thrilled to see that the city is looking to take action on utilizing this great policy lever that the province has offered them,” TRBOT policy innovation and fiscal policy director **Reid McKay** told *NRU*. “The allowances made by the small business tax class was a really great step in the direction of allowing cities greater autonomy on how they might decide to affirm their future.”

However, **REALPAC** government relations and policy director **Brooks Barnett** told *NRU* that he believes the 15 per cent reduction will be a substantial help to businesses and is a good starting point for the city. He says the city should start with that rate

CONTINUED PAGE 4 ■

Map of Toronto highlighting avenues, the central waterfront, downtown, and areas in designated growth centres. Businesses in these areas are subject to different eligibility requirements for the city’s proposed small business tax class than small businesses in the rest of the city.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO



PROVIDING ECONOMIC RELIEF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and make adjustments later if they are needed based on how businesses fare during that time.

“We’ll see that... [15 per cent rate] be addressed at some point in the future, when we know what the economic conditions are,” says Barnett. “But for where we are at now and where the economy is right now, we think it’s a pretty fair approach and that it should give enough support to those businesses that are affected.”

Both McKay and Elenis say

a major issue with the proposed tax subclass is that it reduces property taxes specifically, and that many small businesses do not own the building they are in. Generally, landlords are not required to pass on savings on in the form of rent reductions and so many businesses may not be able realize savings they are not eligible for.

“Is this going to go to two landlords that continually—are probably going to start driving up higher rent? Or not even bringing it down?” says Elenis

“It would [work] only if the landlord somehow flows it down to the tenant.”

Barnett says that while he agrees that this is a challenge, the city does not have the authority to interfere in landlord-tenant relations and cannot compel landlords to pass along any savings. He says the city could consider cost offsets or rebates to encourage landlords to pass on savings. He adds that he is unsure of whether the province could compel landlords to pass on savings but says that he doubts they would do so even they could.

“The city will use an educational and directed communications approach to enlist the cooperation of property owners, landlords and tenants to ensure that tenants share in the tax relief provided,” says the city’s revenue services director Brendon. “However, the provincial regulation that sets out the requirements for a small business subclass does not provide any mechanisms that would require a property owner or landlord to pass on all or any portion of the tax reduction. It is expected that property owners/landlords will voluntarily pass on tax savings to tenants, in the form of reduced rents, in situations where tenants do not pay the property tax directly.”

Barnett is also concerned about the proposal to shift the property tax burden onto larger commercial properties. He says businesses already pay a disproportionate amount

of taxes to the city and that it would be better to shift the burden onto residents, where the costs can be diffused across a much broader tax base. He says the current arrangement increases the discrepancy between ‘small’ businesses and the others, which does not help the city’s economy in the long run. McKay says TRBOT shares this concern.

“I live in the city of Toronto and, I use a dry cleaner, I pick up groceries from an independent guy down the street,” says Barnett. “They service my needs as a resident. I should be able to, as a resident, pick up some of the burden that now they are shouldered with, i.e. taxes.”

The city is recommending the small business property tax subclass be implemented as soon as possible and that it be in place by 2022 at the latest.



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PRIORITIZING SAFER MOBILITY



Marc Mitanis

University of Toronto researchers suggest that Scarborough's suburban built form and wide arterial rights-of-way present invaluable opportunities to develop an active transportation network that would improve road safety while supporting the creation of healthier and more livable neighbourhoods.

[‘The Scarborough Opportunity’ report](#) offers insights into how Scarborough's mid-century, automobile-centric urban form can be leveraged to create an active transportation network with improved cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. The report was released earlier this month and was written by University of Toronto Scarborough's Department of Human Geography students and professor **Andre Sorensen**.

Sorensen told *NRU* the driving practices of motorists' respond much more to road design than to speed limits, and since Scarborough's wide arterial roadways are designed to accommodate high volumes of traffic and to move cars as quickly as possible, speeding is an issue on many Scarborough roads. Fast-moving traffic and a lack of on-street cycling infrastructure makes cycling inhospitable for

many Scarborough residents. The report notes that over a quarter of Scarborough households lack full-time access to an automobile, and that existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure does not adequately serve these households.

“The current infrastructure in Scarborough actively discourages walking and cycling,” Sorensen told *NRU*.

“For safety reasons, we need to start redesigning the arterial road network in the suburbs to encourage slower driving, but also to encourage multi-modal mobility.”

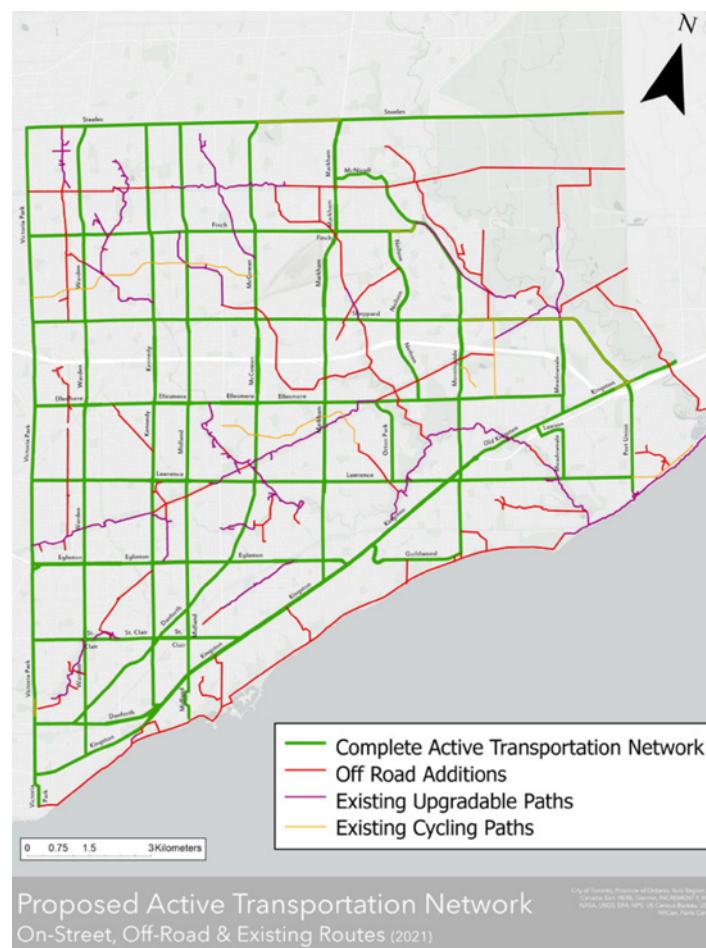
The opportunity report suggests that Scarborough's wide arterial rights-of-way—many of which are 36-metres-wide with traffic lanes flanked by unused grass strips—can accommodate improved

infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists without the removal of traffic lanes.

“The opportunity has multiple dimensions. It's not just the wide rights-of-way, it's also that Scarborough has a lot of density, and the density is also located on those arterial roads,” Sorensen told *NRU*. “There are a lot of jobs, restaurants, grocery stores, and community services that provide the kind of destinations that if you make walking and cycling convenient and attractive and safe, we could see a really significant shift towards walking and cycling as utilitarian modes of mobility.”

Cycle Toronto campaigns manager **Kevin Rupasinghe** provided advice and feedback

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Map showing a comprehensive active transportation network in Scarborough with on-road pedestrian and cycling facilities (green lines) and off-road additions (red lines), as envisioned by University of Toronto Department of Human Geography students. The ‘Scarborough Opportunity’ report recommends that the City of Toronto develop an active transportation network with new and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to ensure a safer experience for all road users, to encourage healthy modes of transportation, and to improve the public realm.

SOURCE: ISAAC BORTOLUSSI/UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

PRIORITIZING SAFER MOBILITY

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

to the authors of the report. Rupasinghe said protected bike lanes are needed along arterial roads, where Scarborough's community amenities are primarily located. Cycle Toronto's '[Connect Scarborough](#)' campaign imagines a network of protected bike lanes in Scarborough, including along Danforth Road, Eglinton Avenue East, and Kingston Road.

"Protected bike lanes are what make people feel comfortable enough to go from not riding a bike to riding a bike," Rupasinghe told *NRU*. "Whether it's a library, a community centre, a restaurant, a grocery store, a pharmacy, or

even your apartment building, the challenge is that all of those are built off of our arterial roads. If people want to use a bike for any of those trips, they have to be on an arterial roadway."

The report authors contend that the "piecemeal approach" to active transportation currently offered by the **City of Toronto's** Cycling Network Plan is inadequate, and will produce scattered and disconnected cycling spaces in Scarborough. The Cycling Network Plan was adopted by city council in 2016. It promises a \$153.5 million investment to build 525 kilometres of new cycling infrastructure

throughout Toronto over ten years, including 138 kilometres of new cycling infrastructure in Scarborough.

In 2019, the city released an update to its Cycling Network Plan, evaluating current progress and outlining future phases of the plan. The Scarborough Opportunity report notes that at the time of the update, none of the bicycle lanes proposed under the plan for arterial roads such as Sheppard Avenue East, Eglinton Avenue East, and Steeles Avenue East, had been installed. Further, of the approximately 60 kilometres of new cycling infrastructure introduced across the city from 2016 to 2018, none was located in Scarborough, with the exception of the "renewal" of two pre-existing cycling routes along Sylvan Avenue and the Guildwood Parkway.

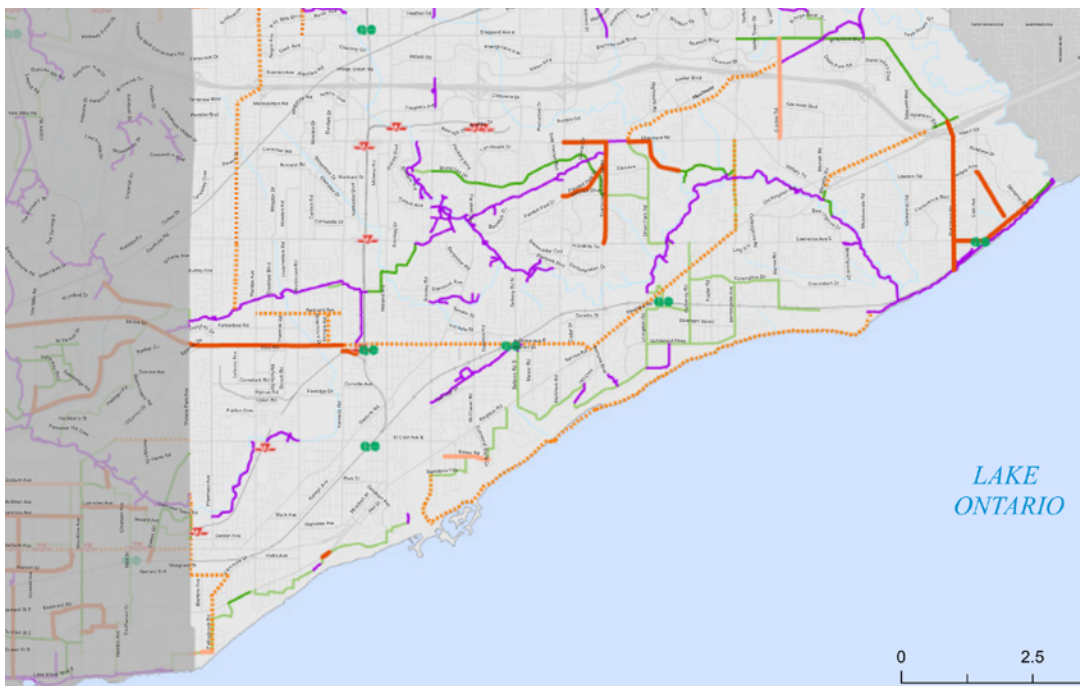
"At this rate of construction,

it will take about 70 years to complete the Scarborough part of the 10-year Cycling Network Plan, which itself does not come close to a comprehensive cycle network for Scarborough," the report says.

The city's 2019-2021 Near-Term Cycling Network Plan implementation program identifies recent and upcoming improvements to cycling infrastructure in Scarborough, including recently-installed bicycle lanes along Huntingwood Drive, and bicycle lanes to be installed along Port Union Road next year.

"The city council-adopted Cycling Network Plan identifies a number of significant routes that would create a grid of high-quality cycling routes in Scarborough called the Major City-Wide Cycling Corridors," **City of Toronto** director of transportation project design and management **Jacquelyn Hayward** told *NRU*. "These identified routes are programmed for study to determine if and what type of cycling infrastructure can be installed and the trade-offs

CONTINUED PAGE 7 ■



Map showing the location of planned cycling infrastructure in Scarborough as indicated within the City of Toronto's 2019-2021 Near-Term Capital Implementation Program. Recent improvements to cycling infrastructure in Scarborough include new bicycle lanes along Huntingwood Drive, and planned infrastructure improvements include bicycle lane additions and sidewalk improvements along Port Union Road.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO

PRIORITIZING SAFER MOBILITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

required to construct new bikeways.”

But the authors of the opportunity report say the city’s plan still falls short of a comprehensive active transportation network that would meet the Official Plan objective of ensuring all Toronto residents live within one kilometre of a designated cycling route.

However, the U of T report is already inspiring action at city hall. At the October 26 meeting of the infrastructure and environment committee, ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood councillor **Paul Ainslie** put forward a motion requesting that the city develop a long-term plan for a comprehensive pedestrian and cycling network and to include an expansion of **Bike Share** stations throughout Toronto’s suburban areas. The item, as amended by ward 25 Scarborough-Rouge Park councillor **Jennifer McKelvie** was adopted by the committee, requesting that the city’s transportation services staff report to the December 2 meeting of the infrastructure and environment committee on the near-term plan for Scarborough’s pedestrian and cycle network. The motion also requests that city staff outline the long-term plan for a Scarborough cycling network,

as well as the next steps for planning public consultation opportunities. The committee’s recommendation will be considered by city council at its November 9 meeting.

Sorensen, who has been invited to give a presentation on the Scarborough Opportunity report to the November 26 meeting of Scarborough community council, is optimistic that there is sufficient political will to invest in active transportation infrastructure in Scarborough.

“For this to be really useful for people, you need to have a network to connect it all together. Little bits and pieces don’t help that much in terms of making streets safer or encouraging walking and cycling as everyday mobility,” Sorensen told *NRU*. “And it also means there have been political battles over every little bit of cycling infrastructure. I think having a discussion and a debate over what the long-term work will look like helps it make more sense, and if it’s part of an overall network, hopefully that will also mobilize more support. I think the time is right and people now realize that this is actually really important. It’s not a luxury to have good, safe sidewalks and cycling infrastructure.” 🌱



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SITING SPECIFIC CONCERNS



Rob Jowett

The City of Toronto is seeking lower density targets around some of its proposed major transit station areas due to site-specific challenges with intensifying the areas. And while some housing advocates say the city could achieve higher densities at some of these 11 sites, some local residents contend that even the lower density targets being proposed by the city are too high and will undermine the existing character of local neighbourhoods.

At its meeting November 9-10, City of Toronto council will consider draft delineations for 11 of the city's potential major transit station areas

(MTSAs). The provincial government requires that the city designate areas 500-800 metres around transit stations like subway and LRT stops for significant growth, and currently, the city is determining boundaries for its MTSAs as part of its municipal comprehensive review. City staff are recommending that the 11 MTSAs to be reviewed at council target lower density than what the Growth Plan calls for. The city has over 180 potential MTSAs, so these 11 areas represent around six per cent of all possible MTSAs. The city is beginning public consultation on both the proposed boundaries and the

densities for the 11 MTSAs and the city's current proposals are not necessarily the final form the delineations will take.

"These 11, to us, reflect site-specific conditions that don't allow for the province's density targets to be met," City of Toronto official plan project manager Jeffrey Cantos told *NRU*. "The preliminary analysis [elements] that we took into consideration were as-of-right zoning, development pipeline applications, existing local area studies, and site-and-area-specific policies [and secondary plans] ... We took all these existing factors that culminate into potential permissions. And what it added up to was not

being able to meet the target [for these 11 MTSAs]."

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* requires that MTSAs achieve at least 200 people and jobs per hectare around subway stations, 160 people and jobs per hectare around light rail stations, and 150 people and jobs per hectare around GO train stations. The MTSAs that the city is recommending lower target densities than called for in the Growth Plan include the areas around Old Mill, York Mills, York University, and Pioneer Village subway stations, the areas around the coming Finch West LRT stops at: Humber College, Rowntree Mills, Martin

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Left: Proposed boundary for the Humber College LRT station MTSa, for which the city is proposing a minimum density of 115 people and jobs per hectare. As the location of a post-secondary institution, the area has a significant number of transit riders going to and from the school and a large number of students living on campus who are not captured by the provincial method for calculating people and jobs per hectare.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO

Right: Proposed boundary for the Sunnybrook Park LRT station MTSa, for which the city is proposing a minimum density of 65 people and jobs per hectare. Much of the area is part of Sunnybrook Park, a natural area the city intends to protect.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO

SITING SPECIFIC CONCERNS

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Grove, and Tobermory, the Sunnybrook Park LRT station area around the coming Eglinton LRT, and the areas around the existing Rouge Hill and Long Branch GO stations.

Seven of the MTSA—Old Mill, York Mills, York University, Pioneer Village, Rowntree Mills, Tobermory, and Long Branch—are potentially Protected MTSA (PMTSAs) where council can adopt delineations and densities prior to the completion of the MCR, whereas typically, MTSA delineations are only completed with the rest of the MCR. PMTSAs are subject to their own implementing zoning by-laws that provide a detailed

planning framework of permitted uses and site-specific minimum densities. The city can also apply inclusionary zoning within PMTSAs, requiring developers to include a specific percentage of affordable housing units within new builds.

Cantos says that while the city is seeking to meet provincial targets in most MTSA, the provincially-prescribed density is not possible at these 11 stations due to their immediate physical context. Several stations, like Old Mill and Sunnybrook Park, have significant greenspaces around them, that the parkland-starved city wants to preserve. Other areas, Cantos

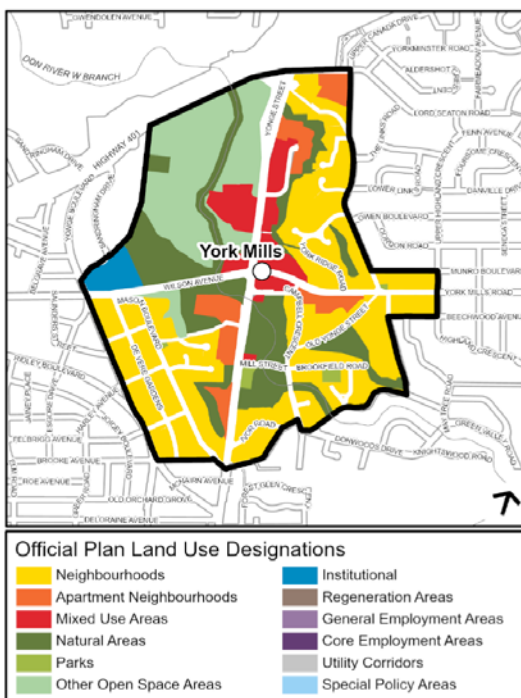
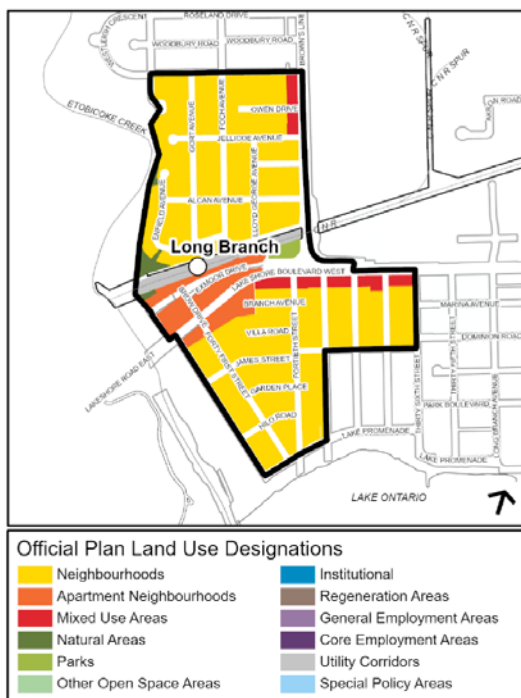
notes, like Long Branch, have high transit ridership but lack a built form context that is conducive to significant intensification. Two of the MTSA, Long Branch and Pioneer Village, are near the city's borders with adjacent municipalities, and some of the MTSA planning work involved will have to be undertaken by the **City of Mississauga** and the **City of Vaughan** respectively. Humber College LRT and York University subway stations are both located at post-secondary institutions, giving them high transit ridership numbers and large student resident populations that do not count towards the persons and jobs counts targeted within the MTSA. Much of the area within 500 metres of Rouge Hill GO Station is part of Lake Ontario, and therefore not suitable for intensification.

“The 50,000 students [enrolled] in York [University]

aren't counted,” says Cantos. “So therefore, the density is low, but the ridership is really high, because they're [using] the new subway stations. And same for the future Humber College LRT station. It's a [transit] line that terminates at the college. But the province's method does not calculate those students when it outlines people and jobs per hectare.”

Cantos says he does not expect that having lower minimum densities at these 11 stations will affect the city's ability to meet its Growth Plan targets nor that this will hamper growth generally in the city, noting that many of the city's other MTSA, especially those downtown, vastly exceed their minimum densities, with some MTSA having over 2,000 people and jobs per hectare. He adds that because MTSA have minimum densities rather than maximums, it will still

CONTINUED PAGE 10 ■



Left: Proposed boundary for the Long Branch GO Station MTSA, for which the city is proposing a minimum density of 80 people and jobs per hectare. Long Branch is a stable residential area, and much of land within 500-800 metres of the station is part of the City of Mississauga. Residents in the area are concerned that even the city's proposed density is too high for the area to accommodate.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO

Right: Proposed boundary for the York Mills subway station MTSA, for which the city is proposing a minimum density of 85 people and jobs per hectare. Housing advocates say the area has several large parking lots and other sites that can accommodate more development than the city is considering.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO

SITING SPECIFIC CONCERNS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

be possible for landowners to exceed prescribed densities in some of these areas if they can find a way within the local context.

“If every station area was to achieve their target density, I don’t know if there would be any population and employment growth left for the rest of the GTA urban area to 2051. That’s something that the province, I don’t think, did the math on,” **Sean Hertel + Associates Urban Planning** principal **Sean Hertel** told *NRU*. “We have to understand the enormity of our policies and the cumulative effect of our policies since... under the Growth Plan, you have to achieve those density targets.”

Hertel says that while it is important to add density around transit stations, he agrees with the city that the local context for most of these

stations makes development challenging there. He notes that local planning context is still important and suggests that the city should consider the local context around transit stations rather than just planning with a “paint by numbers” approach. Hertel adds that sometimes the provincial MTSA policies can be overly prescriptive and that the province should allow municipalities more flexibility to do on-the-ground planning work.

“There is a local context that needs to be looked at... transit stations, by definition, aren’t just holes to put density in,” says Hertel. “We can’t forget about their primary function as transit stations. So, the transit service, the station environment, the customer service experience, safety, comfort, conductivity across the station, conductivity

between the station and the neighbourhood, walking, cycling, washrooms. We have to create good stations. And you don’t have to intensify at every single transit station.”

While city planning staff may be correct about the lower density targets warranted around some of the 11 sites—like the post-secondary institutions—some of the MTSAAs can support more density than the city is calling for, **Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON)** president **Richard Lyall** told *NRU*. Lyall says that some of the proposed MTSAAs, especially at York Mills, have ample room for development and the city should not be reducing them there. Within the York Mills MTSA are multiple surface parking lots, both publicly and privately owned, and the existing low-density uses along Yonge Street that Lyall says could easily support more development.

“There are surface parking spaces around there that can be built on, you’ve got the golf course north of there where

there’s a big, huge parking space where you can build on that, you’ve got single-family housing like in other areas not far from there... some of them could be redeveloped into triplexes or quads,” says Lyall. “You can build there, you can have the densities there, you can hit the targets. It all smacks of just pure politics to me.”

Several MTSAAs, including York Mills, consist of large residential areas with the *Neighbourhoods* zoning designation, otherwise known as ‘the Yellowbelt’, that have been challenging to redevelop due to the restrictiveness of what housing forms are permitted in these areas. Within the PMTSAAs, the city is proposing to give developers the option either to build to a minimum floor space index

CONTINUED PAGE 11

Table showing the lower densities proposed by the city for 11 of its MTSAAs in comparison to the minimum densities mandated by the provincial Growth Plan. The city is seeking lower densities in these MTSAAs due to site-specific challenges.

SOURCE: *NRU*

| Station | Growth Plan Minimum Density (persons and jobs per hectare) | City-Proposed Density (people and jobs per hectare) |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Old Mill | 200 | 50 |
| York Mills | 200 | 85 |
| York University | 200 | 80 |
| Pioneer Village | 200 | 55 |
| Humber College | 160 | 115 |
| Rowntree Mills | 160 | 80 |
| Martin Grove | 160 | 100 |
| Tobermory | 160 | 85 |
| Sunnybrook Park | 150 | 65 |
| Rouge Hill | 150 | 80 |
| Long Branch | 150 | 80 |

SITING SPECIFIC CONCERNS

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

(FSI) within *Neighbourhoods* or to achieve a maximum of at least three residential units in new buildings. Cantos says these requirements do not include extensions of existing homes, so homeowners renovating their properties would not be required to add new units.

“Allowing a minimum of three units per lot in *Neighbourhoods* in some of these areas [is] quite impressive,” **Smart Density** architect and urban planner **Naama Blonder** told *NRU*. “There’s a conflict between the Yellowbelt and how restrictive it is and the need to put density near expensive infrastructure like transit. Perhaps one of the policy changes we should call for should be conversion [of *Neighbourhoods*] to mixed-use, when appropriate.”

Long Branch Neighbourhood Association

chair **Christine Mercado** told *NRU* that the Long Branch area already has an “aggressive” growth plan and a lot of intensification is expected along the avenues in the area. She says that while the neighbourhood expected to see intensification around the Long Branch GO Station, the city’s proposed density of 80 people and jobs per hectare is too high and will incentivize overdevelopment of a lot of residential properties, while there are still a lot of properties on avenues like Lake Shore Road that have not realized their as-of-right development potential of four to six storeys.

“Going in so deeply into a stable neighbourhood—we just don’t get how this is on the radar of the planning department,” says Mercado. “We do have much gentler forms of intensification that are already permitted as of right.

We have basement apartments, we have granny suites. That’s all as-of-right. When you’re looking at building so close to a building so close to a transit station, why is there still a requirement for parking?”

Like York Mills, much of the area around the Long Branch GO Station is designated *Neighbourhoods*. Due to the city’s restrictive *Neighbourhoods* policies, Mercado says a lot of redevelopment in the area is likely to be larger single-detached family dwellings that do not necessarily provide new housing forms to people. She adds that a lot of properties within the existing neighbourhood have large mature trees that would be lost during construction, which would go against the city’s goal of increasing the tree canopy across the city.

“When we’re looking at developing Long Branch and [at developing] inside an urban forest, large houses and large FSIs aren’t going to preserve your large canopy trees,” says Mercado. “We do have a diverse amount of kinds of housing. So, we have low-income housing, as well as higher income housing, and we share that same tree canopy, that same benefit. So, when you start removing those large trees for the benefit of large houses, it ends up being an unequal application of city policy.”

Mercado says a lot of people in the Long Branch community are concerned that allowing significant intensification in the area will take away a

lot of positive attributes of the neighbourhood while not making housing more affordable or accessible.

Cantos says planning staff are currently working on a public consultation strategy for determining the delineations of these MTSAs. He says staff are currently aiming to present a final report for the 11 MTSAs to council in the spring of 2022.



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TORONTO • GREATER TORONTO & HAMILTON AREA

REVITALIZING THE WATER'S EDGE

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

accessible parkland, beaches, and gardens. American global entertainment company **Live Nation** would redevelop the existing **Budweiser Stage** into an indoor-outdoor live music and performance venue, and Montreal-based **Écorécro Group** will build an all-seasons adventure park on Ontario Place's East Island.

But the information sessions left some local heritage advocates, architects, and urban designers who attended with more questions than answers, and some have expressed discomfort around the province's lack of detail about three significant matters: how the heritage attributes of the site would be preserved, how public access to the water's edge would be maintained and enhanced, and how the three separate development concepts would work together to contribute to a cohesive vision for this landmark site. Several attendees told *NRU* they believe the province is "putting the cart before the horse" by selecting private development partners to redevelop the property before a heritage conservation plan has been completed, and before a fulsome master plan for the site has been developed. **Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO)** board of directors' chair **Diane**

Chin called the province's redevelopment sequencing process "backwards planning."

"We have no idea of how much of the site is going to be pay-per-use and how much will be free [to the public]," Chin told *NRU*. "We want to see the site as public space, because that was what it was originally intended for."

In 2014, Ontario Place was recognized by the province as a cultural heritage landscape of provincial significance.

As set out in the provincial

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Heritage Properties of Provincial Importance, a strategic conservation plan is required to "provide guidance on conserving, maintaining, using, and disposing" of identified provincial heritage properties. While the provincial government has committed to preparing a strategic conservation plan, an adaptive reuse study, a heritage impact assessment, and an environmental assessment for the site, it remains unclear who would be completing the studies, when they would be undertaken, and when the studies would be made publicly available.

In an emailed statement,

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries media relations officer **Denelle Balfour** told *NRU* that key features of the site, including Trillium Park and the **William G. Davis Trail**, will be retained and integrated into the redevelopment. The province is also pursuing potential partnerships with the **Ontario Science Centre** to bring educational programming to the signature suspended pod complex and the Cinesphere.

"Ontario Place is a Provincial Heritage Property

CONTINUED PAGE 13 ■

Rendering of the \$350 million health and wellness resort planned by Therme Group for the West Island of Ontario Place. The glass structure is designed to evoke the architecture of public botanical greenhouses and glazed exhibition halls. Parklands and beaches surrounding the structure are intended to improve public access to the lakefront. Source: Province of Ontario

ARCHITECT: DIAMOND SCHMITT ARCHITECTS

Map showing the three areas of the 155-acre Ontario Place property to be redeveloped by private development partners Therme Group, Écorécro Group, and Live Nation. Under the provincial government's proposed redevelopment plans, Therme Group would transform the West Island of Ontario Place (outlined in blue) into an all-seasons health and wellness destination. Over eight acres of free, publicly-accessible parkland, gardens, and beaches would also be provided. Écorécro Group is proposing an all-season adventure park in the centre of Ontario Place (outlined in yellow), while Live Nation would redevelop the existing Budweiser Stage into an indoor-outdoor live music and performance venue. The existing Trillium Park (outlined in green) would remain.

SOURCE: PROVINCE OF ONTARIO



REVITALIZING THE WATER'S EDGE

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

of Provincial Significance and is recognized for its innovative modern architecture and landscape,” Balfour told *NRU*. “The government and its partners will undertake all necessary heritage consultation and approvals as part of the redevelopment. The Ontario Place Statement of Cultural Heritage Value will be used to support the redevelopment of Ontario Place.”

Bill Greaves is an ACO board member and a member of a local movement called **Ontario Place for All**, which is advocating for the 155-acre waterfront park to be maintained as a free, open, and accessible public space. Greaves notes that Ontario Place was designed by architect **Eberhard Zeidler** as a public place for

people without cottages to be able to access the lakefront and green space at little to no cost.

The **World Monuments Fund** included Ontario Place in its 2020 World Monuments Watch—a selection of 25 international at-risk cultural heritage sites that it spotlights annually. Greaves said the inauspicious designation underscores the importance of the architectural and cultural value of Ontario Place.

“Ontario Place is one of Canada’s most important contributions to 20th century architectural landscapes,” Greaves told *NRU*. “It’s an example of utopian architecture from the 1960s and 70s. A lot of that stuff got drawn, but not a lot got built in a permanent way. This is a precious and

rare example of a particular moment in 20th century architectural history.”

Greaves said the public character of Ontario Place, which opened to widespread fanfare 50 years ago, is integral to its cultural heritage value.

“The *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Heritage Properties of Provincial Importance* says if the use of the site is relevant to its heritage value, then you should endeavour to continue the use of that site in the same way,” Greaves told *NRU*. “It acknowledges that part of what makes places important to people is not only their physical structures, but the kind of values that they hold. It’s pretty clear that the values [of Ontario Place] were about celebrating Ontario, and about [offering] a public place where people could go and experience the water, and an open space.”

Greaves and other concerned heritage advocates are urging the government

to “reset” its modernization plans and conduct a strategic conservation plan that would then inform a master plan for the site. Greaves said these plans should have been completed well before any development partners were selected.

“The strategic conservation plan would then inform decisions about whether it’s appropriate to put a giant spa over 10 acres of the West Island, and I think it’s very unlikely that that would be a coherent part of a proper conservation management plan,” Greaves told *NRU*.

The provincial government says that once redevelopment is completed, over two-thirds of the property will be free and open to the public, including “substantial portions” of the lands that are being redeveloped. But questions remain as to which specific components of the site would be maintained for public use—questions that advocates championing maximizing public access to the site believe can be answered through undertaking a master planning process.

“If the province would recognize Ontario Place as a

CONTINUED PAGE 14 ■



Rendering of the interior of the \$350 million health and wellness resort planned by Therme Group for the West Island of Ontario Place. The resort is expected to include indoor and outdoor pools, waterslides, a wave pool, botanical gardens, and health and wellness programming.

SOURCE: PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
ARCHITECT: DIAMOND SCHMITT ARCHITECTS

REVITALIZING THE WATER'S EDGE

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

public space, present an overall master plan and a conservation management plan, we would start to feel a little more comfortable with what's going on," Chin told *NRU*.

Urban designer and **Greenberg Consultants** principal **Ken Greenberg** said the time is right for the province to take a step back and undertake development of a master plan for the site to better understand how the concepts proposed by the three development partners would fit within the existing cultural heritage landscape of Ontario Place.

"We have these three big trees before we have a forest," Greenberg told *NRU*. "It's really hard to understand where they fit within the overall context or even with each other."

Greenberg and **Ontario Place for All** member **Suzanne Kavanagh** suggests that the revitalization of Ontario Place be integrated with the master planning exercise currently underway for the city-owned Exhibition Place grounds, which is expected to accommodate a new subway station as part of the province's Ontario Line transit project. The first phase of the Exhibition Place master plan study was adopted by city council in September 2020.

Kavanagh said Therme Group's proposed health and wellness complex should be located north of Lake Shore Boulevard on the Exhibition Place lands rather than on prime waterfront property at Ontario Place.

"My mantra is that if any project we look at can fit anywhere in the GTA, it does not belong on the waterfront," Kavanagh told *NRU*. "Therme is taking over prime real estate at the water's edge. If it's about the view [of the lake], they could elevate it and have it on north side of Lake Shore near [the existing] parking lots where they can have valet parking. We should make sure that the water's edge is for the public."

Referring to land uses that would be appropriate for the respective properties, Kavanagh said the province and the city should "keep it brown at Exhibition Place, and keep it green at Ontario Place."

"By that I mean all of the programming and all of the hard infrastructure should be located at Exhibition Place, whereas Ontario Place should be a soft landscape that can be easily programmed for different events," Kavanagh told *NRU*.

Greenberg and Kavanagh posit that there is a natural role that **Waterfront Toronto**

can play in the Ontario Place redevelopment and master planning process. Waterfront Toronto was created in 2001 by the federal, provincial, and municipal government to transform the city's waterfront. Greenberg said Waterfront Toronto has the ability to overcome jurisdictional divides and to bring all three orders of government together to develop a comprehensive vision for Ontario Place.

"Waterfront Toronto's *modus operandi* is to deal with these kinds of situations. The city is involved with Exhibition Place, the province is involved in Ontario Place, and you have federal dollars for much of the infrastructure," Greenberg told *NRU*. "I think the really

critical thing at this juncture is for the province to see this [partnership with Waterfront Toronto] as something that would be helpful to them, as it was [previously] in unlocking the flooding and contamination problems of the West Don Lands."

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries spokesperson Denelle Balfour said the province will conduct additional public consultations on several aspects of the redevelopment project next year, including planned approaches to heritage preservation, public realm design, and landscape design.



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Responsibilities include assisting with the coordination and preparation of development approval applications for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Site Plan Applications, Committee of Adjustment Applications, Draft Plan of Condominium and Final Registration for all projects across various municipalities in the GTA; liaising with municipal staff and other government agencies; assisting with construction permits; preparing for and attending public consultation meetings; and monitoring and reporting on new municipal policy initiatives which may impact development projects.

QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum of 2-3 years of residential and commercial development experience with a basic knowledge of budgeting and scheduling; post-secondary education in Urban Planning or a related field and working towards a full RPP designation with OPPI; and ability to multi-task and work independently in a fast-paced environment.

Interested candidates should submit their resumes with cover letter to iassogna@queenscorp.com. We sincerely thank all candidates for their interest however only selected individuals will be contacted for follow up.



DESIGN REVIEW PANEL AGENDA

The panel will consider the following matters at its meeting Thursday, November 4 at 1:45 p.m. in a virtual meeting hosted on Webex.

1:50 P.M.

55 Yonge Street—Panel will undertake its first review

of **H&R REIT's** rezoning application. Presentations will be made by **City of Toronto** senior planner **Kevin Friedrich** and senior urban designer **Nasim Adab**, as well as **BDP Quadrangle** principal **Les Klein** and **PARTISANS** co-founder **Alex Josephson**.

3:30 P.M.

Yorkdale Block Master Plan—

Panel will undertake its second review of **Oxford Properties Group's** official plan amendment and rezoning application. Presentations will be made by **City of Toronto** senior planner **Guy Matthew** and urban design program manager **Dawn**

Hamilton, as well as **Hariri Pontarini Architects** partner **David Pontarini** and **Urban Strategies** partner **Michel Trocmé**. 🌱

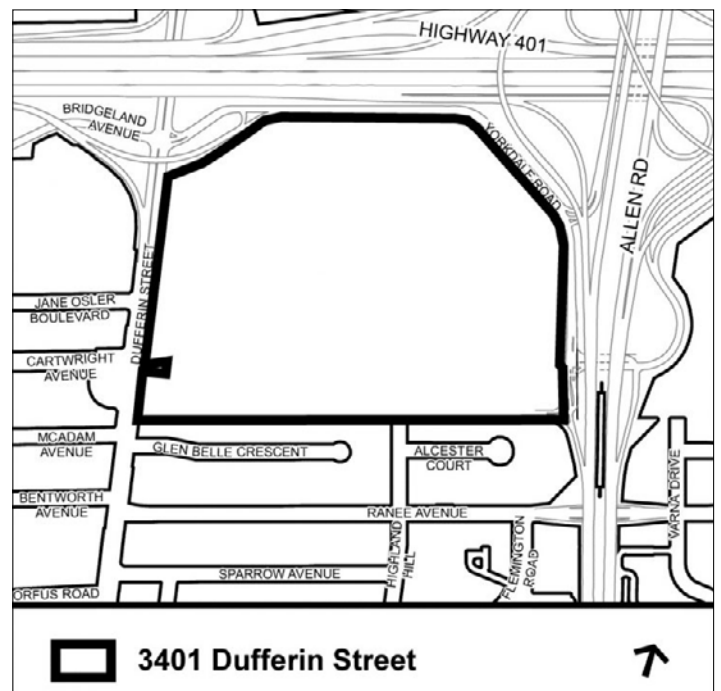


Left: Rendering of H&R REIT's proposed mixed-use development for 55 Yonge Street.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO
ARCHITECT: BDP QUADRANGLE

Below: Map of the area subject to the Yorkdale Block Master Plan, which is being prepared by Oxford Properties Group to guide development in the area.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO



OLT NEWS

GARDEN DISTRICT HCD APPROVED

In an October 18 decision, OTL member **Jatinder Bhullar** allowed appeals, in part, by multiple appellants against the **City of Toronto's** adoption of By-law 232-2017 to designate the Garden District Heritage Conservation District ("HCD") and to adopt the Garden District HCD Plan.

The Garden District HCD is located in east-Downtown Toronto and applies to an area generally bounded by Carlton Street in the north, Sherbourne Street in the east,

Queen Street East in the south, and George Street in the west. The HCD Plan identifies policies and guidelines for properties identified as being 'contributing' or 'non-contributing' to the cultural heritage value of the District, among other matters.

The Tribunal's order brings into effect a version of the HCD Plan that has been amended from the previous council-adopted version to provide greater clarity and precision as to how the HCD Plan is to be applied to future development within the District.

City planner **Derek Waltho** and heritage planner **Pourya Nazemi** provided evidence to the Tribunal in support of the revised HCD Plan, describing how it supports and fits within the city's land use planning and heritage planning frameworks.

The Tribunal adopted Waltho and Nazemi's uncontradicted evidence and allowed the appeals, in part, approving the revised HCD Plan.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Chris Barnett (Osler)** and **Matthew Longo** representing the City of Toronto, **Annik Forristal**

(**McMillan**) representing **Amexon Development Corporation**, **Ian Andres (Goodmans)** representing **Bhushan and Rekha Taneja, AVSR Holdings Inc.** and **Jarvis Residents LP, Michael Cook (Devine Park)** representing **Jarvis Carlton LP** and **Kyle Gossen (Davies Howe)** representing **Menfor Dundas Developments Inc.** [See OLT Case No. [MM170028](#).] 🌸

2257 & 2261-2263

Dundas St W

TORONTO, ON

| 2257 DUNDAS ST W | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Asking Price: | \$2,500,000 \$2,000,000 |
| Property Type | Inline Streetfront Commercial |
| Lot Size | 2,637 sq. ft. |
| Frontage/Depth | 23 ft. x 115 ft. |
| Building Size | 2,200 sq. ft. |
| Commercial Component | 950 sq. ft. |
| Residential Component | Three 2-Br Apts |
| Official Plan | Mixed Use Areas |
| Zoning | CR |
| Property Taxes (2021) | \$10,440 |
| Notes | Commercial component is 100% occupied by a retail oriented tenant |

| 2261-2263 DUNDAS ST W | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Asking Price: | \$4,500,000 \$4,000,000 |
| Property Type | Inline Streetfront Commercial |
| Lot Size | 5,285 sq. ft. |
| Frontage/Depth | 46 ft. x 115 ft. |
| Building Size | 6,300 sq. ft. |
| Commercial Component | 4,308 sq. ft. |
| Residential Component | Two 2-Br Apts |
| Official Plan | Mixed Use Areas |
| Zoning | CR |
| Property Taxes (2021) | \$45,646 |
| Notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial component is fully vacant Residential component has 1 unit occupied (1 vacancy) Backyard and 2 car garage toward the rear Property line |

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PROPERTIES CAN BE PURCHASED TOGETHER OR SEPARATELY

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TLAB NEWS

POCKET INFILL VARIANCES APPROVED

In an October 7 decision, TLAB member **Ana Bassios** dismissed an appeal by **Dylan Gerard** against the **City of Toronto** Committee of Adjustment's approval of a minor variance application by **Alexander Robert Sharpe** for 17 Boothroyd Avenue, in the "Pocket" neighbourhood, located south of Jones Avenue & Danforth Avenue.

Sharpe seeks variances to permit the expansion of an existing two-storey triplex into a six-unit apartment building by adding a third floor and rear three-storey addition. Gerard, a neighbour of Sharpe's, appealed the Committee's approval of the variances.

Planner **Sean Galbraith** (**Sean Galbraith & Associates**) provided evidence on behalf

of Sharpe, in support of the minor variances. Gerard testified on his own behalf, along with several other neighbours who appeared in opposition to the application.

Galbraith testified that an apartment building is permitted under the applicable "R" zone. No variances for height are required, and the proposal exceeds the minimum required side yard setbacks considerably. Consequently, Galbraith opined, the proposal is an improvement over what could be constructed as-of-right without variances, and the alterations to the building will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the adjacent properties.

The neighbours objected to the proposal, primarily on the grounds that the modifications will make the building too big, causing shadowing and loss of

privacy on adjacent properties, and that if altered, the building will be out of character with the existing streetscape.

The Tribunal agreed with Galbraith that the requested variances satisfy the applicable *Planning Act* tests and dismissed the appeal, upholding the Committee's decision to approve the variances, subject to a minor technical revision to correct the building depth variance.

Solicitor **Meaghan McDermid** (**Davies Howe**) represented minor variance applicant Alexander Robert Sharpe. 🌸

PEOPLE

The following Toronto Members of Parliament were appointed to Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** cabinet Tuesday. University-Rosedale MP **Chrystia Freeland**

remains Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Toronto-St. Paul's MP **Carolyn Bennett** becomes Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and

Associate Minister of Health. Scarborough Southwest MP **Bill Blair** becomes President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency

Preparedness. York South-Weston MP **Ahmed Hussen** becomes Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion. Toronto-Centre MP **Marci Ien** becomes Minister

for Women and Gender Equality and Youth. Eglinton-Lawrence MP **Marco E. L. Mendicino** becomes Minister of Public Safety.