

2.2.3 AVENUES: REURBANIZING ARTERIAL CORRIDORS

The *Avenues* are important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents. Such reurbanization is subject to the policies contained in this Plan, including in particular the neighbourhood protection policies.

Not all lands that fall within *Avenues* are designated for growth. These *Avenues* have been identified at a broad scale to help assess urban design, transit and service delivery issues. However, where a portion of an *Avenue* is designated as a neighbourhood, the neighbourhood protection policies of Chapter 4.1 will prevail to ensure that any new development respects and reinforces the general physical character of established neighbourhoods.

Each *Avenue* is different in terms of lot sizes and configuration, street width, existing uses, neighbouring uses, transit service and streetscape potential. There is no “one size fits all” program for reurbanizing the *Avenues*. A framework for change will be tailored to the situation of each *Avenue* through a local *Avenue Study* that will involve local residents, businesses and other stakeholders for each *Avenue*, or sections of longer *Avenues*. Each *Avenue Study* will contain a vision and an implementation plan to show:

- how the streetscape and pedestrian environment can be improved;
- where public open space can be created and existing parks improved;
- where trees should be planted; and
- how use of the road allowance can be optimized and transit service enhanced.

These changes to benefit new and established community residents may be gradually implemented as funding and opportunities present themselves and development proceeds.

The *Avenues* will be transformed incrementally. They will change building-by-building over a number of years. The framework for new development on each *Avenue* will be established by a new zoning by-law and design guidelines created in consultation with the local community. The zoning by-law will set out the mix of uses, heights, densities, setbacks and other zoning standards.

The growth and redevelopment of the *Avenues* should be supported by high quality transit services, including priority measures for buses and streetcars, combined with urban design and traffic engineering practices that promote a street that is safe, comfortable and attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

The grid of Toronto's early concession roads is one of the most important legacies of the original settlement of Toronto. These roads were Toronto's first real plan, and continue to define Toronto's main arteries of movement, drawing together disparate parts of the City and linking us with the larger region. They have provided the City with the ability to put in place a comprehensive network of bus and streetcar lines which will be key to meeting the goal of reducing our reliance on the automobile. The opportunities for reurbanization through the *Avenues* are greatest in the post-war city: areas that were urbanized for the first time during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Achieving appropriate, high quality development on the *Avenues* that significantly increases the range of housing choices in the City is one of the key challenges of this Official Plan.



From car lots to housing: reurbanizing the *Avenues*



The *Avenues* are corridors of opportunity

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Retailing and housing – together on the Avenues

Avenue Studies and Development Applications

Avenue Studies will involve extensive public and stakeholder consultation in order to determine the appropriate scale and intensity of development to be reflected in the zoning for the Mixed Use Areas along the Avenues. In the course of an Avenue Study there will be a comprehensive assessment of local conditions, including: the detailed pattern of land use and urban design; built densities; transit; roads; parking; public utilities; quality of streetscape; character and viability of commercial activities; adequacy of parks, open space and recreational facilities; natural features and conservation opportunities; local heritage resources; unique local natural or built features; and the physical character of adjacent Neighbourhoods and Apartment Neighbourhoods. Development can proceed where zoning is in place to permit it, but where zoning is not in place and/or the Avenue Study is not yet completed, development applications may be received and under the Planning Act will have to be considered. If this occurs, the process for considering an Application will be similar to the process for the Avenue Study since it will involve a rezoning. Any rezoning application involves community consultation and rights of appeal. Also, and significantly, the Plan calls for any application to be evaluated against the Avenue criteria, the detailed performance criteria on pages 4–10 to 4–11 that apply to lands in Mixed Use Areas, and the Urban Design policies on pages 3–5 to 3–7, among others. In order to respond to all these performance criteria, the process for evaluating the application will require that a broader area context be examined, and not just the specific application site. The result will be a process that mirrors that for the Avenue Study.

Not all of the Avenues can be studied at once, and some, which function well and already have appropriate zoning in place, may not need further study at all. Some of the Avenues already serve as “main streets” that are focal points for the local community with attractive and bustling sidewalks. These traditional “main street” Avenues already have zoning in place to guide mixed use development in a way that fits with the neighbourhood, and will be a low priority for Avenue reurbanization studies. Ultimately, all Avenues should perform this “main street” role and become meeting places for local neighbours and the wider community. Avenues that are characterized by one or two storey commercial buildings, vacant and underutilized lands and large areas of surface parking will be the priorities for future Avenue Studies.

Policies

1. Reurbanizing the Avenues will be achieved through the preparation of Avenue Studies for strategic mixed use segments of the corridors shown on Map 2.
2. To facilitate and shape growth, each Avenue Study will engage local residents, businesses, the TTC and other local stakeholders and will set out:
 - a) investments in community improvements by public agencies or public/private partnerships that are needed to support city living and make the area attractive for residents and businesses including:
 - i) streetscape improvements;
 - ii) transportation improvements such as transit priority measures, improved connections to rapid transit stations, bikeways and walkways;
 - iii) parks and open space, community and rooftop gardens and community services and facilities; and
 - iv) upgraded water or sewer infrastructure;
 - b) contextually appropriate as-of-right zoning and other regulations designed to achieve high quality development along the Avenue which establishes:
 - i) permitted uses and maximum density and height limits;
 - ii) appropriate massing, scale, siting and organization of buildings;
 - iii) appropriate scale transitions to adjacent areas;
 - iv) restrictions on parking at-grade and driveways in front of buildings; and
 - v) transit-supportive measures such as:
 - (1) minimum development densities;
 - (2) maximum and minimum parking standards; and
 - (3) restrictions on auto-oriented retailing and services.
3. a) Development may be permitted on the Avenues prior to an Avenue Study and will be considered on the basis of all of the policies of this Plan. Development on the Avenues prior to an Avenue Study will implement the policies of the Plan for the relevant designation area(s).

- b) Development in *Mixed Use Areas* on *Avenues*, prior to an *Avenue Study* has the potential to set a precedent for the form and scale of reurbanization along the *Avenue*. In addition to the policies of the Plan for *Mixed Use Areas*, proponents of such proposals will also address the larger context and examine the implications for the segment of the *Avenue* in which the proposed development is located. This review will:
- i) include an assessment of the impacts of the incremental development of the entire *Avenue* segment at a similar form, scale and intensity, appropriately allowing for distinguishing circumstances;
 - ii) consider whether incremental development of the entire *Avenue* segment as identified in the above assessment would adversely impact any adjacent *Neighbourhoods* or *Apartment Neighbourhoods*;
 - iii) consider whether the proposed development is supportable by available infrastructure; and
 - iv) be considered together with any amendment to the Official Plan or Zoning By-law at the statutory public meeting for the proposed development.

Development requiring a rezoning will not be allowed to proceed prior to completion of an *Avenue Study* unless the review demonstrates to Council's satisfaction that subsequent development of the entire *Avenue* segment will have no adverse impacts within the context and parameters of the review.

- c) In addition to satisfying all other policies of this Plan, including in particular the neighbourhood protection policies, development in *Mixed Use Areas* on an *Avenue* that precedes the completion of an *Avenue Study* will:
- i) support and promote the use of transit;
 - ii) contribute to the creation of a range of housing options in the community;
 - iii) contribute to an attractive, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment that encourages walking and strengthens local retailing;
 - iv) provide universal physical access to all publicly accessible spaces and buildings;
 - v) conserve heritage properties;
 - vi) be served by adequate parks, community services, water and sewers, and transportation facilities;
 - vii) be encouraged to incorporate environmentally sustainable building design and construction practices that:
 - (1) reduce stormwater flows;
 - (2) reduce the use of water;
 - (3) reduce waste and promote recycling;
 - (4) use renewable energy systems and energy efficient technologies; and
 - (5) create innovative green spaces such as green roofs and designs that reduce the urban heat island effect.
4. The land use designation policies in Chapter Four of this Plan apply to and prevail on lands broadly shown on Map 2 as *Avenues*. Where a portion of an *Avenue* as shown on Map 2 is designated *Neighbourhoods*, or *Parks and Open Space Areas* the policies of Chapter Four will prevail to ensure



One piece at a time – transforming the *Avenues*

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that any new development respects and reinforces the general physical character of established neighbourhoods, and that parks and open spaces are protected and enhanced.

2.2.4 EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS: SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

The *Employment Districts* play an important role in the Plan's growth management strategy. They are large districts comprised exclusively of lands where the *Employment Areas* land use designation applies. These lands can accommodate substantial growth in jobs and meet the needs of some of the key economic clusters that are the focus of the City's *Economic Development Strategy*.

Most of these districts are characterized by manufacturing, warehousing and product assembly activities, while some are exclusively commercial office parks. As large *Employment Districts*, they will be protected from the encroachment of non-economic functions. Some districts may need to become the focus of marketing and infrastructure investment to make them more competitive in the regional economy.

The *Employment Districts* will be improved for economic purposes in order to:

- ensure a stable environment for investment;
- maintain and grow the City's tax base;
- offer suitable locations for a variety of employment uses, including those that require separation and/or buffering; and
- nurture key clusters of producers, suppliers, customers and services that benefit from these strategic locations and ensure a supply of accessible locations for firms that are part of region-wide clusters.

In the *Employment Districts*, the needs of business will take priority in city-building decisions. The Plan will provide a climate of stability and certainty in which businesses can make major investments. The lands and buildings in the *Employment Districts* are important economic assets for new and expanding businesses. Once lands are lost to economic activity through, for example, conversion to residential use, it is almost impossible to return them to commercial or industrial uses.

The Zoning By-law will help organize the location of specific business activities within these *Employment Districts* by recognizing the varying impacts that businesses can have on one another and on adjacent non-employment areas.