

2500 Bloor Street West

Prepared by OU October 17th, 2008

Working Group Meeting Three – October 16, 2008: Meeting Notes

Working Group Meeting Three, concerning the lands at 2500 Bloor Street West was held at The Old Mill Inn & Spa in Toronto, Thursday the 16th of October, 2008, at 7:00 pm.

Opening Remarks and Introduction

Toronto City Councillor Bill Saundercook of Ward 13 chaired the meeting, with Jennifer Keesmaat of Office for Urbanism facilitating.

Councillor Saundercook welcomed those in attendance and introduced Jennifer Keesmaat, who began the evening by asking the group if there were any outstanding issues that needed to be addressed at the end of the meeting. No issues were raised.

Meeting Format and Goals

The format of the meeting was such that Office for Urbanism could present the proposed site scenarios and public realm opportunities to Working Group Members, who could then take the Evaluative Toolkit provided by Office for Urbanism back to their respective constituencies to present the scenarios and obtain feedback.

Working Group members were encouraged to ask questions or clarify issues that were unclear to them throughout the meeting, and it was emphasized to the group that the scenarios presented were not architectural renderings or detailed site plans; rather, a set of scenarios that suggest what is possible on site.

Consultation to Date

The Working Group process was reviewed in the powerpoint presentation, and it was noted that a fourth Working Group meeting is to be held on Thursday, November 6th at the Old Mill, so that Working Group members may provide feedback and present back to the consultant team.

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Emerging Principles & Implications

Materials from Meeting Two were consolidated by Office for Urbanism and used to create a set of Guiding Principles and their Implications for Design. They were outlined in the Meeting Two Discussion Summary, and reviewed in the presentation in detail.

During the presentation, one Working Group member asked for clarification in regards to the use of the term “podium” -- there was a question as to whether or not the term applied specifically to tall buildings. Jennifer Keesmaat responded by indicating that in this situation, podium has been used in reference to both mid-rise and tall buildings, and that the term “step back” may also be used.

It was noted that while Pedestrian Vehicular Conflict was one of the ten principles defined, traffic analysis has not been a significant part of the exercise. A traffic engineer is working with Tridel and investigating the issue surrounding traffic and congestion concerns. Traffic is not addressed in detail in the context of the massing scenarios; however, it has been flagged and captured as pertinent.

The negotiation of open space in relation to building massing was presented, in relation to both density and public realm opportunities. As the building mass is shifted around, opportunities arise with respect to the public realm. In the last meeting, it was indicated that there was a greater interest in active green spaces, as opposed to passive green spaces.

The assumption that all parking will be accommodated underground was coupled with a discussion about pedestrian priority and servicing. The back of the building will be experienced by residents to the north, and frontages onto the park have been addressed in massing scenarios.

Massing typologies were also reviewed.

Public Realm Opportunities

Proposed public realm opportunities were presented in greater detail by Antonio Gomez-Palacio. The proposed scenarios were created with the intent that each site is in keeping with the principles outlined. The principles, massing, and public realm are all interrelated and would not thrive individually. It was noted that the public realm opportunities were generated with the purpose of receiving some input -- Working Group members were encouraged to provide feedback on the location of the building masses on the site, as well as their interface on the public realm.

Opportunities outside of the site property lines were not explored; however, existing context and the proposed Humber Odeon site were shown in the proposed scenario as contextual renderings.

Four Proposed Scenarios

The four proposed scenarios were presented to the Working Group. Each of the scenarios is outlined and annotated in the Evaluative Toolkit. In all scenarios, it was anticipated that servicing would happen interior to and at the back of the building, as opposed to consuming frontage onto Bloor.

Scenario 1 demonstrated a concentration of building mass closer to Bloor Street. Public realm opportunities included a widened sidewalk, and a terraced step-down into the adjacent neighbourhoods.

The second scenario focused on activity. The proposed East Plaza would open up to Bloor, framing it with a focused environment, activity at grade level, and would act as a gateway to Bloor West Village, with a view terminus on South Kingsway. The mid block connection serves to improve the existing park to the north, liberating the hour glass shape that currently exists, and making it a usable space.

The building mass in Scenario 3 was articulated in a slightly different way, with a focal point of the building mass that was very much parallel to the open space. The massing was terraced down in a transition of height towards the neighbourhoods, and the scenario featured both the West Plaza and mid block connection as public realm opportunities.

The fourth scenario featured a contrast of building heights. A podium with a concentrated area of height was located on Bloor, step backed, and transitioned at a key spot where architecture and presence could function as a gateway. A mid block linkage was illustrated, and there is opportunity for private terraced amenity space.

Evaluative Toolkit

Evaluative Toolkits were passed out to each Working Group member and reviewed. The objective of the booklet was to compare various scenarios, stimulate discussion, and provide a tool that could be used as a means of communicating feedback within the constituencies of respective Working Group members. It is hoped that exercise will provide feedback to Tridel in an interesting, useful, and tangible way that will help them as they move forward with their traffic, technical and architectural analysis, due diligence, and application.

Realizing that the exercise is qualitative as opposed to quantitative, Office for Urbanism acknowledged that each participant will view the exercise through their own lens. Participants were encouraged to add up the checkmarks and tally up a response once they have completed the booklet, and to provide comments on the page provided.

Questions and Clarifications

One participant addressed a concern about the height of each massing. Jennifer Keesmaat responded by saying that in the scenarios, Office for Urbanism addressed height ranges, but no specifics. The

configurations that were proposed by Office for Urbanism accommodated a density of approximately 6.0x.

It was decided by the Working Group that height ranges should be labeled on any material provided on the website. The ranges were discussed, and are as follows:

podium increment:	0-4 storeys
first increment:	4-8 storeys
second increment:	8-12 storeys
third increment:	12-18 storeys

An observer commented on the traffic congestion on both Traymore Crescent and Old Mill Drive, both blind intersections. It was noted so that it may be addressed by a traffic engineer in the future.

A Working Group member cautioned against having a building frontage with zero setback on Bloor Street West, with the concern that it would impair drivers from seeing around the corner and turning safely onto Bloor. A second Working Group member proposed the idea of re-aligning the streets so that the traffic flow would be smoother.

Councillor Saundercook spoke about the danger of the Jane and Bloor intersection for pedestrians, and offered to bring information from an upcoming conference back to the next Working Group meeting.

A Working Group member asked about at-grade uses fronting onto Traymore Park. It was indicated by Working Group members in a previous meeting that residential at grade was not preferred. Servicing also needs to be accommodated. The Working Group member suggested that town homes could also front onto the park.

Next Steps and Closing

Jennifer Keesmaat encouraged Working Group members to set up meetings prior to the fourth Working Group Meeting, scheduled for November 6th, 2008. Working Group members were asked to present for 10 minutes on behalf of their constituencies, based on the feedback from the Evaluative Toolkits.

Councillor Saundercook closed the meeting by thanking all in attendance, and expressed a commitment to the public and a continued relationship with Tridel and Office for Urbanism to move the Working Group process forward into its final stages, as Tridel prepares to submit their application. He encouraged Working Group members to participate (on a voluntary basis) in the future public meeting to be held with the broader community, so that community members may see how much volunteer time has gone into the process since July.

A Tridel representative thanked the Working Group for providing greater insight into the issues that are coming out of the community, and for giving a better sense of direction for the application, to be submitted in November or December 2008.