

# NOVÆ RES URBIS TORONTO

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■ WORKING GROUP ARTICULATES PRIORITIES FOR CANADA SQUARE SITE

## FUTURE OF MIDTOWN

Marc Mitanis

A multi-faceted working group composed of midtown Toronto residents, business owners, and city councillors has developed a series of priorities to guide the proposed redevelopment of the city-owned **Canada Square** site at Yonge and Eglinton to achieve a new town centre that would accommodate a vibrant mix of open spaces, residential and employment uses, and community and cultural facilities.

Located on the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, the Canada Square site currently accommodates a two-level parking garage, commercial office buildings at 2180, 2190, and 2200 Yonge Street, a **Toronto Transit Commission** (TTC) bus terminal, and street and mall access to Eglinton subway station. The 3.7-hectare site is owned by the **City of Toronto** and the TTC, with approximately 2.9 hectares of the existing Canada Square complex currently being leased to **Oxford**

**Properties** and **CT REIT** until 2051 and 2070, respectively. The lease agreements between the city and the leaseholders, which were updated in 2018, permit the leaseholders to pursue redevelopment of the site.

In December 2020, Oxford Properties and CT REIT submitted a zoning by-law amendment application seeking to undertake a multi-phased redevelopment of the Canada Square site with five high-rise towers, 2,700 residential units, 60,000 square metres of office space, and two hectares of open space [See 'Unlocking

Potential' January 8, 2021 *NRU Toronto* edition]. In response

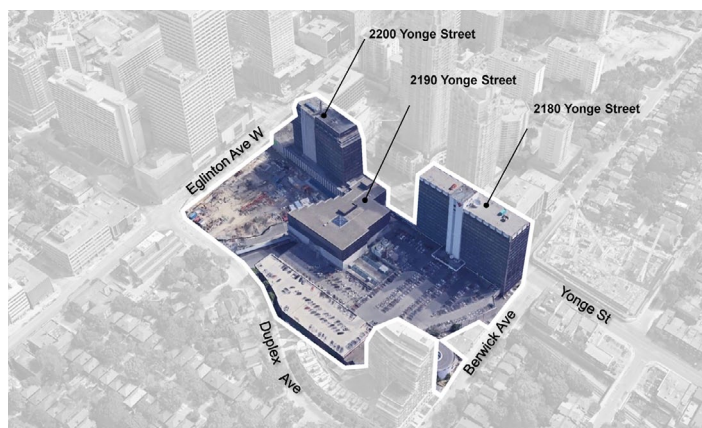
to the application, at its April 7 meeting, city council adopted a motion by ward 12 Toronto-St. Paul's councillor **Josh**

**Matlow** to establish an area working group composed of local residents' associations, tenants' associations, business improvement areas, community organizations, other relevant stakeholders and councillor Matlow, ward 8 Eglinton-Lawrence councillor **Mike Colle**, and ward 15 Don Valley West councillor **Jaye Robinson**. Colle's ward includes the

lands at the northwest corner of Yonge and Eglinton, while Robinson's ward includes lands along the east side of Yonge Street just two blocks north of Yonge and Eglinton.

The Canada Square Special Study Area Working Group (SSAWG) has since prepared a set of principles to guide the redevelopment of the site, contained within a report

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Aerial view of the Canada Square site at the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, where site leaseholder Oxford Properties is proposing to build a five-tower, mixed-use development. The 3.7-hectare city-owned property currently accommodates three commercial office and retail buildings at 2180, 2190, and 2200 Yonge Street, entrances to the Eglinton subway station, and a TTC bus terminal. Since the zoning by-law amendment application for the Oxford-proposed development was submitted to the city in December 2020, a community working group has been formed, and has articulated a set of guiding principles for the future redevelopment of the site.

SOURCE: OXFORD PROPERTIES

## UPCOMING DATES

### JULY

- 5 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 6 Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 7 CreateTO, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- TTC Board, time tbc (video conference)
- 14-15 Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 15 Design Review Panel, time TBC, (video conference)

### SEPTEMBER

- 1 Toronto Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 2 Budget Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 9 Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 10 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 13 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- CreateTO, 1:30 p.m. (video conference)
- 14 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 15 General Government & Licensing Committee 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- 16 Design Review Panel, time TBC (video conference)
- 17 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)
- TTC Board, time TBC (video conference)
- 20 Board of Health, 9:30 a.m. (video conference)

## ■ NET-ZERO EXISTING BUILDINGS STRATEGY HEADS TO COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK

# TARGETING NET-ZERO



**Rob Jowett**

**R**educing the carbon emissions of Toronto's buildings will be a vital step towards lowering the city's overall greenhouse gas emissions and combatting climate change locally and globally.

At its meeting July 5, the **City of Toronto** infrastructure and environment committee will consider a staff-proposed strategy outlining how the city can assist building owners and homeowners in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of existing buildings. The city has a goal of reducing Toronto's carbon emissions by 80 per cent of 2016 levels by 2050. To achieve this goal, most buildings in the city will need major retrofits, and the Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy proposes nine actions for the city to take to assist owners wherever possible.

"It's a fairly comprehensive strategy that really focuses on net-zero emissions by 2050 citywide," City of Toronto public energy initiatives acting manager **Stewart Dutfield** told

**NRU**. "Existing buildings are a major contributor of emissions for the city and they represent about 55 per cent of emissions."

Dramatically reducing the emissions of existing buildings requires deep energy retrofits, which usually necessitates a complex and expensive series of renovations to implement. Most mechanical operations for buildings, like heating and cooling systems and fuel, need to be upgraded, and in many cases, upgrades are needed for building envelopes themselves so they can better retain hot or cold air depending on the season. A particular challenge is that 91 per cent of building emissions generally, and 97 per cent of residential building emissions specifically, come from natural gas, so replacing natural gas-fuelled systems will be one of the most common issues to be faced by property owners undertaking net-zero retrofits.

The plan pertains to both individual homeowners and owners of larger multi-unit residential, commercial, and

industrial buildings, who often face different challenges in retrofitting their properties. Dutfield says that while retrofitting large buildings is much more complex than retrofitting individual homes, the owners of larger buildings tend to be a lot more prepared for and aware of the changes that are needed.

"If you're the owner of a sizeable portfolio of buildings, you have an asset management or capital management plan," says Dutfield. "There's a level of understanding there, and some technical ability to begin to do this work and think about this work. For homeowners, it's a lot more complicated because they're really going to be challenged [to think about] the decisions [they] will need to make to get [themselves] towards net-zero."

The city has several programs and incentives available to encourage deep energy retrofits like financial incentives and awareness programs designed to show Toronto landowners

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# TARGETING NET-ZERO

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the benefits of upgrading their buildings. Dutfield says that while these programs are working well, they are not sufficient to transform every building in the city by 2050.

“If we’re going to hit those targets, we have to move beyond things like education and awareness programs, or voluntary programs such as some of the existing financing programs that the city has,”

**The Atmospheric Fund** policy and programs vice-president **Bryan Purcell** told *NRU*.

“Those are a great start. But you can’t realistically expect to do deep retrofits to every home and building in the city over a generation with those tools. And so, I’m pleased to see the strategy come forward and include explicitly transitioning over time to stronger policy tools.”

The net-zero strategy includes requirements for existing building owners, like annual emissions reporting and public disclosure of emissions for all buildings, establishing emissions performance targets for existing buildings, and making emissions and energy audits and adjustments. It directs the city to support building owners in retrofitting their buildings by providing financial support and by making the process easier by reducing

the complexity, time, and cost involved in retrofits, including by making the city’s permitting and approvals process for retrofits simpler. It also directs the city to support the transition to energy-efficient buildings by raising awareness and building capacity for owners to undertake emissions reduction, by supporting workforce development and training to ensure there are enough workers to undertake the actual retrofit projects, and by working with other levels of government to support building retrofits and make them a worthwhile investment.

By implementing these actions, the city projects that it will reduce emissions from buildings from 7.8-million tonnes of carbon in 2016 to 1.4-tonnes by 2050, representing a reduction of 82 per cent and a total savings of 149-tonnes over that period.

Purcell says he believes creating new emissions targets will be the most impactful part of the plan. He notes that he believes that most of the strategy is designed to support that aspect, such as through mandating performance reporting on how the building emissions targets are being met. City staff are planning to have the performance standards for emissions reduction in

buildings prepared by the second quarter of 2023 and they would take effect in 2025.

“The key features that the city is going to need to work on in more detail as they prepare detailed by-laws are, first of all, where to set those performance targets,” says Purcell. “We’ve got some preliminary ideas, but we need better data from a lot of existing buildings to fine tune that... when the targets should take effect or [the] different building types’ needs to be confirmed. And then... [establishing a] trigger for requiring people to meet the performance target... and then, the compliance mechanism. What we do to ensure existing buildings meet those performance targets, and how do we manage compliance?”

Dutfield says developing the performance targets will be one of the most complex parts of the policy and will involve input from most of the city’s departments, as well as from outside stakeholders like building owners. He says public reporting of buildings’ performance will be based on provincial energy and water reporting benchmarks, and that city is still determining what information on building performance will be available to the public.

Initially, Dutfield says the retrofits will remain voluntary as the city focuses on education about its net-zero programs. He says that further into the development and implementation of the plan, the city could consider enforcement

mechanisms to require that energy retrofits be undertaken, but that will be determined depending on how the plan rolls out.

“This is a long-term thing,” says Dutfield. “And in the building sector, the construction sector, the engineering sector, there’s a lot of learning to be had. So... we want to provide enough lead time to people. We want people to understand that this is a process and [to] start planning now.”

Dutfield says the strategy will have several benefits for the city beyond the energy savings and emissions reduction. The energy retrofits that it will bring are expected to have a major economic impact on the city. The city estimates retrofits will generate \$302-billion in economic activity over the 29 years of the plan, creating 18,100 jobs and leading to 1.1-billion hours of work.

“This isn’t purely around reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It’s around realizing the socio-economic and environmental co-benefits of that, and that was a key consideration that informed the design of this [strategy],” says Dutfield. “Health, comfort, resilience, and economic development are really some of the key benefits that come from this investment in reducing emissions.”

If the strategy is adopted by the committee, it will be considered by city council at its meeting July 14-15. 🌱

# RECONFIGURING THE PUBLIC REALM



Marc Mitanis

In response to growing resident and worker populations in the King-Spadina neighbourhood, city staff have developed a public realm strategy that identifies opportunities to secure new and improved parks, public spaces, and pedestrian connections as new development occurs in the area. But a local neighbourhood association says the strategy is missing key opportunities for public realm enhancements along streets rife with parking attributes that support automotive modes of transport, while neglecting or discouraging pedestrian and cycling activity.

The [King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy](#) will be considered by city council at its July 14 meeting. The strategy builds upon the draft public realm strategy for the King-Spadina east precinct, which was approved by council in 2014, and aligns with the policy framework outlined in the King-Spadina Secondary Plan, which was updated in January 2020. The secondary plan provides a vision to guide development in the King-

Spadina area over the next 20 years.

The strategy identifies the various parks, open spaces, and public realm improvements that have already been achieved in the area through recently approved development projects. It then notes additional opportunities for new parkland dedications, improvements to existing parks, for possible privately owned publicly accessible spaces (POPS),

for creating new mid-block connections for pedestrians and cyclists, for making improvements to existing mid-block connections, and for streetscape improvements.

The city says the King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy will assist in the continued expansion of parks and public spaces in the area, will help determine priorities for future public realm improvements, and will provide planning staff with guidance as to

what types of public spaces should be secured through the

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Map showing existing and planned parks, open spaces, and privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces within the King-Spadina Secondary Area. Currently, King-Spadina has one of the lowest parkland provision rates in the city. On July 14, city council will consider the King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy, which identifies opportunities for new parks, open spaces, pedestrian connections, and public realm improvements in the King-Spadina area.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO





# RECONFIGURING THE PUBLIC REALM

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

development review process.

“The original draft strategy provided a vision which helped city staff understand what opportunities exist for potential sites ahead of time, helping staff secure these through development applications and [through] expanding the area and utility of the public realm network,” **City of Toronto** senior urban designer **Nasim Adab** told *NRU*. “The purpose and intent of the strategy is to provide the vision and framework to achieve an expanded, improved and connected parks and public realm network within the King-Spadina area to serve the growing population of the neighbourhood.”

Adab said that during the development of the strategy, city staff placed emphasis on observing human behaviour in the area by noting pedestrian and cyclist movement and the use of surface parking lots and other vacant sites for temporary events. Staff also recorded the location of neighbourhood desire lines—paths visible on the ground in green space through worn-away grass as a result of pedestrian traffic. Typically, such paths demonstrate the shortest or easiest route

through a particular space.

Despite the new parkland, open spaces, and public realm enhancements that have been and continue to be secured as the area continues to experience sustained development growth, additional public spaces are needed to support the continuing influx of new residents and workers to the neighbourhood. Currently, King-Spadina has one of the lowest parkland provision rates in the city at 5.5 square metres per resident and 1.8 square metres per resident and employee combined, compared to the city-wide average of 28 square metres per resident and 18 square metres per resident and employee combined. **City of Toronto** senior planner **Joanna Kimont** said that dense urban areas like King-Spadina require ample, well-designed open spaces to ensure a high quality of life for

residents and workers.

“Since 2016, the population of the King-Spadina area is estimated to have grown by as much as 40,000 to 44,000 people, based on current development pipeline data,” Kimont told *NRU*. “The parkland provision rates are expected to decline as population continues to grow, unless additional parks and public spaces are secured.”

**Garment District Neighbourhood Association (GDNA)** vice-president **Jeff Ibsen** said that the increase in the area’s population is incredible, and there is an obvious need to provide all types of public spaces to the greatest extent possible.

But Ibsen said not enough attention has been paid to achieving public realm improvements on land currently dedicated for vehicular parking, which Ibsen described one of the biggest misuses of public space in the city. Commercial boulevard parking—which permits car parking on the space between the sidewalk and the property line—is a particularly egregious misuse of public space, says Ibsen.

“Ward 10 Spadina-Fort

York has the highest number of commercial boulevard parking permits in the city,” Ibsen told *NRU*. “For a buck a day, I can park my car in front of my business, and all of the commercial boulevard parking in this area is on city property. Almost every street in the GDNA catchment area has boulevard parking. Camden Street is rife with boulevard parking.”

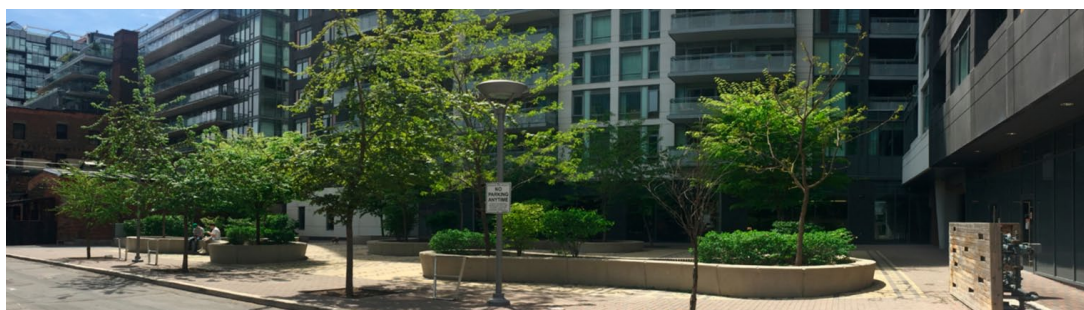
Ibsen said the city needs to look at the “low-hanging fruit” and eliminate commercial boulevard parking. He adds that metered parking and permit parking areas should also be reconsidered.

“The strategy identifies Brant Street and Portland Street as important pedestrian corridors, and both of those streets have on-street and

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Photo showing the 800-square-metre park at 525 Adelaide Street West, which was secured as part of the parkland dedication requirement for the adjacent condominium development. The King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy provides a framework to achieve an expanded and improved parks and public realm network in the King-Spadina area to serve the neighbourhood’s growing population.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO



# RECONFIGURING THE PUBLIC REALM

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

boulevard parking,” Ibsen told *NRU*. “Can we really support increased pedestrian presence and at the same time reserve a whole lane for car parking on these streets? There are a few streets that can probably support metered parking, but I think we should get rid of all permit parking.”

Ibsen said that the GDNA was approached by the city and **Ryerson University** about a year ago to initiate proposals for “greening” Brant and Camden streets. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed much of that work, but discussions have resumed in recent weeks.

The proposed King-Spadina public realm strategy relies

heavily on the creation of new POPS and mid-block connections, says Ibsen. In some cases, he finds the design of these spaces to be deficient. He pointed to an existing privately-owned mid-block connection between King Street West and Adelaide Street West which serves as a public passageway extending south from Morrison Street. The connection is bisected by a curb, which presents an obstacle for cyclists through the passageway and individuals with mobility challenges.

“Why couldn’t the property owners get it together enough to at least put a gradient or a little ramp so that people can actually get through this mid-block connection? That’s where I see [POPS] not working in terms of the city and the private land owners,” Ibsen told *NRU*. “The coordination between the city and the private landowners is not necessarily working that well in the execution and maintenance of POPS. Both the city and the private property owners have to step up and work together, and I don’t see that necessarily happening.”

If adopted by city council on July 14, the King-Spadina Public Realm Strategy will be used to assess current and future development applications in the area. 🌱

Map showing the existing and planned public parks and open spaces, existing and planned formal mid-block connections, and informal mid-block connections in the King-Spadina neighbourhood. Currently, King-Spadina has one of the lowest parkland provision rates in the city. Public realm improvements like mid-block connections provide alternative pathways and shortcuts through neighbourhoods for pedestrians and cyclists. Formal mid-block connections must include amenities such as lighting and unique pavement treatment, while informal mid-block connections may lack these features.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO



# FACTORING IN THE CASTLE BLOCK



**Rob Jowett**

If approved, a proposed office building in Liberty Village would bring much-needed employment space to the area while continuing the village's tradition of adapting historic buildings for modern uses.

**Allied Development** is proposing a mixed-use development at 135 Liberty Street, 8 Pardee Avenue, and 41-53 Fraser Avenue. The proposal would accommodate one 10-storey and one 11-storey building containing 31,455-square metres of office space and 842-square metres of retail space at grade. Currently, the site, referred to as the Castle Block, is home to a number of heritage buildings that would be integrated into the new development. Allied is seeking rezoning approval to allow the project.

**Sweeny&Co** president **Dermot Sweeney** told *NRU* that the project will add much-needed commercial space to the growing Liberty Village community, where residential development on the east side has far exceeded commercial development on the west side. Sweeny&Co is the lead architect for the project.

Sweeney says the space will be valuable to both the community and to the city overall, which has been growing as a centre for technology and innovation and needs to be able to offer suitable research and development space to these kinds of companies to keep up with the kind of office space that is available in other tech centres in North America. Many technology companies have been seeking brick-and-beam buildings for high ceilings and to accommodate the interesting work spaces they

create. Sweeney says buildings proposed for the Castle Block would have higher ceiling heights than normal in the new sections of the building as well as in the adapted heritage parts so that all building tenants can enjoy greater flexibility in how they arrange their work spaces.

"This portion of Liberty Village is within an Employment Area and the proposal for a non-residential office building is in keeping with the City's vision for supporting employment

growth in this area," **City of Toronto** senior planner **Aviva Pelt** told *NRU* in a statement, adding that she does not have specific comments on the proposal as it was submitted recently and planning staff have not yet comprehensively reviewed it.

The site contains the former **E. W. Gillett Company** factory complex, which was founded in 1852 and manufactured baking powder, yeast cakes, and lye. The factory complex includes five brick buildings ranging between one and four storeys in height that were built in 1911-1912, after the company's original buildings on King Street burned down in [The Great Fire of 1904](#). The main building of the complex is the four-storey former factory, which is known as The Castle due to a large turret on the building's north side and the crenellations on the roof.

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Location of Allied Development's proposed mixed-use development at 135 Liberty Street, on the site of the former E. W. Gillett Company factory complex. Allied is seeking rezoning approval to allow the project.

SOURCE: SWEENY&CO



# FACTORING IN THE CASTLE BLOCK

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The factory complex buildings demonstrate both neo-Gothic (on its façade and with the crenellations—a detail extremely uncommon for industrial buildings)

and Streamline Moderne architectural styles. Streamline Moderne is an architectural style that emphasizes curving forms and long horizontal lines. Sweeny says the façade fronting

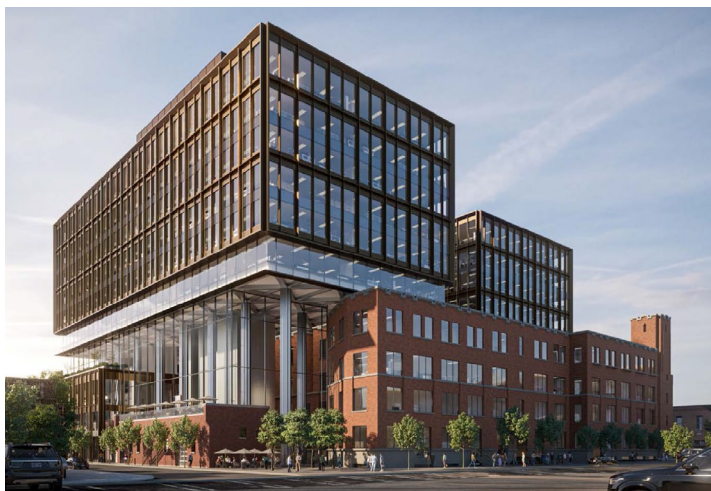
onto Liberty is one of the best examples of Moderne style architecture in Toronto.

“It really is a kind of façade that is Moderne style, which came out of the progression from Art Deco,” says Sweeny.

CONTINUED PAGE 9 ■

Renderings of the proposed development at 135 Liberty, on the site of the former E.W. Gillett Company factory complex. The development, which would accommodate new 10 and 11-storey buildings containing 31,455-square metres of office space and 842-square metres of retail space at grade, would integrate the factory’s heritage buildings into its design.

SOURCE: SWEENEY&CO





# FACTORING IN THE CASTLE BLOCK

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

“There’s almost no good examples in Toronto... of the Moderne style after the [19]20s. Moderne really started at the very end of the 20s. And then of course, we had—The Depression came in, and Toronto never built that many of them.”

The proposed new buildings would be built over top of the factory complex, integrating them into the base of the development. The two new buildings would front onto Fraser and Pardee and would be stepped back from the edge of the heritage buildings to showcase their design, especially the crenellations along the roof.

Liberty Village is well

known for having many old industrial buildings which have been converted for other uses, such as residential, commercial, or retail. Sweeny says that the way the community has been built preserves the buildings well while allowing the area to grow and evolve, rather than simply leaving the buildings in their original form.

“You want to save your past because industrial buildings are pretty amazing,” says Sweeny. “You want to build upon it because we only have so much land. And you want to celebrate the people that have moved there and what they need, and what they need is more space.”

Sweeny&Co has extensive experience integrating heritage buildings into larger developments. The company designed its own offices and Allied’s corporate headquarters at 134 Peter Street by cantilevering an office tower over an existing three-storey brick building and integrating the brick heritage building into the design. The company also designed Portland Commons, a proposed mixed-use development at 530 Front Street that integrates two heritage buildings into its base.

“The big challenge is how you get up and over and retain these heritage buildings,” says Sweeny. “[On the east side of the site] is a beautiful façade of a great old building. And so, we want that façade to be restored and [to] inform the atrium.”

Sweeny says Allied does not have an exact timeline for the project at this time. He says he expects planning staff to recommend that the building height be lowered and anticipates that to be a central issue of consideration in the development.

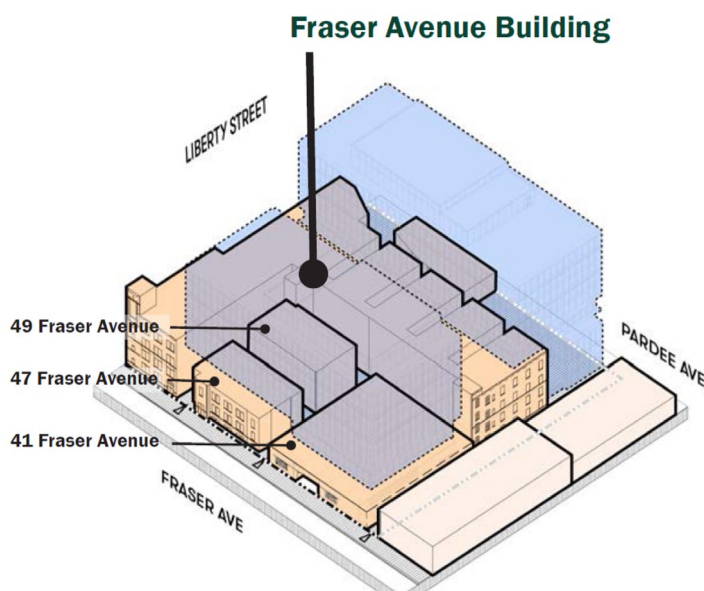
**Urban Strategies** is the lead planner for the project. 🌱

Below left: Massing diagram for the proposed mixed-use development at 135 Liberty, on the site of the former E.W. Gillett Company factory complex. The new buildings at 135 Liberty would be built over top of the factory complex, integrating the five heritage buildings into its base.

SOURCE: SWEENY&CO

Below: Early 20th Century illustration of the E. W. Gillett Company factory complex. The complex, which produced baking powder, yeast cakes and lye, consisted of five brick buildings between one and four storeys high, built in 1911-1912. The heritage buildings remain on the site to this day and would all be retained and integrated into the base of Allied Properties’ proposed mixed-use development.

SOURCE: SWEENY&CO



# FUTURE OF MIDTOWN

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

prepared by **Public Progress** president and SSAWG facilitator **Bruce Davis**. The report ‘[Imagining a New Town Centre for Midtown Toronto](#)’ was received by the planning and housing committee at its meeting on June 28.

Councillor Matlow said because the Canada Square site is city-owned, the community has a remarkable and historic opportunity to shape the future of the property.

“Rather than what typically happens, where the city and community react to a developer’s application, we want to make sure that this working group’s town centre proposal is the basis for what we do at Canada Square,” Matlow told *NRU*. “The development application has to fit into the community’s vision, rather than the community having to fit into the developer’s vision.”

Councillor Colle said the Canada Square site is the most important piece of property at Yonge and Eglinton, an intersection that Colle said will be the second-most important public transportation hub in the city next to Yonge and Bloor once the Eglinton Crosstown Light-Rail Transit project is completed.

“This is a critical piece of property. It’s the future

of midtown, so we’ve got to try and do our best to get it right and make it a legacy project and not just another application,” Colle told *NRU*. “This is really a keystone application, it’s not business-as-usual. We’re building a city within the city here.”

The midtown population is expected to nearly double from over 62,000 residents in 2016 to approximately 123,000 residents in 2051. Official Plan Amendment 405, which was altered in 2019 by the province to permit greater height and density than what was originally approved by the city, provides a framework for future development in the Yonge-Eglinton area. Councillor Colle said that there are 94 active development

applications either approved or currently being reviewed by planning staff for the Yonge-Eglinton area.

Matlow said that while the province designated Yonge and Eglinton as an urban growth centre in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, it failed to provide a mechanism for ensuring that the community’s quality of life would keep up with the rapid pace of growth.

“What’s occurred over the past 20 years is that lots of new residential buildings have been built, but we have a dearth of many social services and infrastructure,” Matlow told *NRU*. “For many of us, the debate isn’t so much about whether there will be growth or not, because of course there will be growth. But I think any reasonable person would agree that the community’s quality of life should keep up with the pace of growth. Whether you have 20 people or 20,000 people in the neighbourhood,

every child should be able to attend a local school that has the capacity for them. These are irrefutable parts of good urban planning and that’s what the community is asking for.”

The working group developed six priorities they would like to see achieved on the site, with an overarching goal of facilitating the creation of a new town centre, with a vibrant mix of uses. The development proposal submitted last December, they argue, tips the scale too far in favour of new residential units. The working group is asking for residential uses on the site to be limited to 20 per cent of the total gross floor area, with affordable housing composing at least 25 per cent of the housing mix. The other priorities identified by the community seek a commitment for development of a new elementary school, a large public park, and

CONTINUED PAGE 11 ■



Rendering of Oxford Properties’ proposed Canada Square redevelopment. The proposed development would accommodate over 2,700 residential units, over 60,000 square metres of office space, and two hectares of open space. A community working group formed to provide input on the development of the site is hoping to attain additional office space, affordable housing, and community services—including a new elementary school—on the property.

SOURCE: OXFORD PROPERTIES  
ARCHITECT: PELLI CLARKE PELLI ARCHITECTS  
AND HARIRI PONTARINI ARCHITECTS



# FUTURE OF MIDTOWN

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

community and cultural spaces.

**Quantum Owners and Residents' Association** president and working group member **David Ticoll** said that the community's priorities are not wishes, but absolute necessities. "Every healthy neighbourhood must have these things if it's going to be a healthy neighbourhood," Ticoll told *NRU*.

Redevelopment of the site should start with core functions related to employment and institutional use, said Ticoll, who referred to ongoing conversations between the city and an unnamed post-secondary institution that is "very keen on coming to this location and making it a focus of innovation.

"Imagine if we had a post-secondary institution that was focused on green innovation. Why don't we make this site an urban proving ground and demonstration site for zero carbon innovation?" asked Ticoll.

**South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Association** president and working group member **Andy Gort** said that the area has already lost large swaths of office space, and the community is looking to secure as much commercial space as

possible on the site.

"We'd have a much better community if we had a balance between employment and residential and community services," Gort told *NRU*. "That's disappearing at Yonge and Eglinton, and it's becoming a bedroom community."

Gort agrees that a post-secondary institution would be an ideal anchor for the redevelopment. He added that the focus of the working group's work has been on the future land use of the property rather than on the height and density of the proposed

buildings, which are currently proposed at heights between 45 and 70 storeys.

"Although these are tall towers, we're used to tall towers," Gort told *NRU*. "This is not about height and density, this is about land use, and what should be on the site."

Councillor Robinson said it's especially important to secure significant park space on the Canada Square site. Robinson noted that the city is frequently being outbid on available land in the Yonge-Eglinton area by developers, making it difficult to acquire new space for much-needed parks in the neighbourhood.

"I've been a part of this process to make sure that there's green space, parks, and trees, because through COVID-19, we have learned

that nothing is more important in the city than that 'place to escape to,'" Robinson told *NRU*. "And parks aren't just important during a pandemic, they're important year-round."

Matlow said that a lot of what is reflected in the working group's vision for the site is work that is actively being pursued by the community and the city, as demonstrated by discussions around a potential post-secondary campus on the site.

"This isn't pie in the sky, this is very real, substantive work that we've initiated with partners who are very serious about being at the table with us," Matlow told *NRU*.

The community working group wants to work proactively with the city to develop a vision for the site, rather than being put in a situation of having to respond to the development application, Ticoll said.

"We want the city to do what it should have done a long time ago, which is to sit down and figure out what is the best and highest use of that site for the city and the community. And secondly, [to

CONTINUED PAGE 12 ■



Map showing the site plan and phased approach to Oxford Properties' proposed Canada Square redevelopment. Oxford is proposing to build a 60-storey, mixed-use tower at the north end of the site as part of the first phase of the redevelopment, with the four-tower residential precinct to be developed to the south in subsequent phases.

SOURCE: OXFORD PROPERTIES  
ARCHITECT: PELLI CLARKE PELLI ARCHITECTS AND HARIRI  
PONTARINI ARCHITECTS



# FUTURE OF MIDTOWN

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

figure out] how to make that happen,” Ticoll told *NRU*.

The lease agreement reached between the city and Oxford Properties in 2018 spans an initial term of 99 years, with an option, if both parties are amenable, to extend the lease for an additional 99 years. As per the terms of the lease, Oxford would contribute towards the costs of a new bus terminal as part of the property’s redevelopment, with the TTC’s designated contribution towards the construction of the terminal capped at \$25 million.

The lease agreement and the city’s ownership of the property on which Oxford Properties and CT REIT are proposing development puts the city in the uncomfortable position of assessing a development application it would directly benefit from, said Ticoll.

“On one hand, the city’s role is to objectively assess the application. On the other hand, the city is the beneficiary of the application,” Ticoll told *NRU*. “The city is in an awkward position of being both the applicant and judge of its own application, or an application it benefits from.”

Ticoll said a governance entity similar to **Waterfront Toronto** could be created

to oversee and execute a development plan for the property.

As a covenant of the lease, Oxford Properties has agreed to not object to or appeal any decisions or non-decisions made by city council, city planning, or city committees with respect to any development applications for the site seeking planning approvals.

“This might be the first development proposal you’ve ever heard of in Toronto that cannot go to the appeals body, which is significant leverage,” Matlow told *NRU*. “That means we’ve got time to actually put together a plan to do this well, and why would we not take advantage of that opportunity?”

City staff will consider the vision and priorities developed by the working group in conjunction with the area planning framework and feedback received through the broader community consultation process—which had been put on hold until the completion of the special study area report—in its evaluation of the zoning by-law amendment application by Oxford and CT REIT.

At its June 28 meeting, the planning and housing committee requested city

staff to report back to the July 14 city council meeting on potential impacts on the future redevelopment of the property if the city or Oxford Properties abandon the terms of the 2018 lease agreement.

*NRU reached out to Oxford Properties for comment but did not receive a response by publication time.* 🌸

## Sajecki→ Planning

Sajecki Planning is an urban and regional planning firm based in Toronto and Mississauga.

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# STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDAS

## INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

*Infrastructure & Environment Committee will consider the following at its meeting Monday, July 5 at 9:30 a.m. via videoconference.*

**Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy**—[Report](#) presents the findings of the Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy, which addresses the challenge of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in existing buildings city-wide, and presents staff recommendations to council, including outlining nine key actions for the city to undertake.

**Taking Action on Tower Renewal**—[Report](#) recommends that council approve changes to the Residential Energy Retrofit Program, including adding the “Taking Action on Tower Renewal Program” as a second Multi-Residential Stream of the program. Taking Action on Tower Renewal advances city priorities including addressing climate change, improving rental housing quality, and maintaining the city’s affordable rental housing stock.

**Park Lawn Lake Shore Transportation Master Plan**—[Report](#) provides an update on

the status of the Park Lawn Lake Shore Transportation Master Plan and identifies a preliminary preferred transportation network, as well as a status update on the Legion Road extension.

**Don Mills Crossing Environmental Assessment**—[Report](#) recommends that council endorse the recommended preferred alternative design for the Don Mills Crossing active grade-separated crossing over the CPR rail corridor.

**Improving Toronto’s Bike Share Program**—[Letter](#) from **Toronto Parking Authority** responds to council’s direction to report back on potential improvements to Toronto’s Bike Share Program, including assessing the feasibility of increasing the overcharge threshold, exploring the possibility of including a program for low-income residents, and developing a strategic plan to align with ActiveTO bike lanes.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Executive Committee will consider the following at its meeting Tuesday, July 6 at 9:30 a.m. via videoconference.*

**Renaming Dundas Street**—[Report](#) recommends that council authorize staff to initiate a public engagement process

to seek input on the draft City of Toronto Principles for Commemoration in the Public Realm, and to convene a Community Advisory Committee made up of Black and Indigenous leaders to develop and seek community input on potential new names for Dundas Street and other city-owned assets bearing the Dundas name.

**Vacant Home Tax implementation**—[Report](#) responds to council direction and presents key tax design principles to be considered as part of a future tax by-law, including annual declaration responsibility of all homeowners, administrative matters, tax rates, and general information regarding audit and enforcement functions, complaints and appeals process, offences and penalties, and annual reporting requirements.

**SafeTO**—[Report](#) recommends council adopt SafeTO: Toronto’s Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. SafeTO reimagines core elements of community safety and well-being in order to shift the city’s safety and well-being paradigms from a reliance on reactive emergency response to danger to developing a culture of proactive harm prevention.



## Clarification

City of Toronto planning staff would like to clarify that while changes made to the process of City-owned land disposal described in the story ‘Streamlining Review’, NRU Toronto Edition, June 18, 2021, may make it simpler and faster for some relatively straightforward applications, the OPA was not prepared to fast-track applications of significant scale, scope and potential impacts on parkland.

# TLAB NEWS

## APPEAL AGAINST TARRAGON VILLAGE CONSENT AND VARIANCES DISMISSED

In a June 17 decision, TLAB member **Ted Yao** dismissed an appeal by **Bradley Sellors** against the **City of Toronto** Committee of Adjustment's (COA) approval of consent and minor variance applications by **367 Howland Avenue Inc.** for 367 Howland Avenue.

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing single-detached dwelling, to sever the lot into two lots with frontages of 5.26 and 5.41 metres, and to construct two semi-detached buildings, each containing four apartments, for a total of eight residential rental units. Four parking spaces will be provided, whereas the by-law requires six.

Sellors, a next-door neighbour, appealed the COA decision and spoke in opposition to the proposal. Five other neighbours appeared in opposition.

Planner **Mike Dror** (**Bousfields**) as well as city planner **Robert Ursini**, under summons, provided evidence in support of the consent and variances.

The TLAB was informed that the decision not to sever the lot into two equal frontages was made in order to preserve an existing horse chestnut tree in the front yard. The parking reduction variance was supported by the site's proximity (450 metres) to the Dupont TTC station, and the planners opined that the proposal will respect and reinforce the physical character of the neighbourhood, while providing desirable new rental housing.

The objectors expressed a range of concerns, including the density (floor space index) of the proposed development, and expressed a general opposition to new multi-residential housing in the neighbourhood.

The TLAB found that the proposal is supported by the

policy context and reflects a scale, density and architectural design that is compatible with the character of the neighbourhood. It dismissed Sellors' appeal and upheld the COA approval, subject to conditions for the consent and minor variances.

Solicitor **Amber Stewart** (**Amber Stewart Law**) represented 367 Howland Avenue Inc. 🌸

HAVE A STORY TIP OR  
IDEA RELATED TO YOUR  
MUNICIPALITY?

Send an email to [pressrelease@nrupublishing.com](mailto:pressrelease@nrupublishing.com)



## PEOPLE

**The Laneway Project** founder and executive director **Michelle Senayah** passed away suddenly on June 29. Senayah was a passionate urbanist who focussed on placemaking and brought out the value in many of the city's underused spaces. Through The Laneway Project, she brought this vision to many of the city's laneways and alleys, helping to transform them into vibrant public spaces. The Laneway Project plans to carry on her legacy and will announce its future plans at a later date.