

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

In the future, the majority of the City of Toronto's growth will take place on lands that are currently under-developed. This is in keeping with the Province of Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the City of Toronto's Official Plan, and the reality that there is little unencumbered land available for development within the City boundaries. The "Northwest Triangle" is one such precinct within the City's boundary that offers opportunities for appropriate re-urbanization within a bioregional context.

Student groups will mimic the professional services of a qualified consulting team to undertake a Precinct Plan for these lands. The Plan will be undertaken in cooperation with the City of Toronto, landowners and in consultation with the public and other stakeholders.

### 1.2 NW Triangle Location and Area

The NW Triangle is bounded by a railway corridor to the west, Queen Street West to the south, Florence Street and Peel Street to the north, and Northcote Avenue, Gladstone Avenue and Dufferin Street to the east.



Figure 1. Study Area

Land uses in the area include vacant employment lands, small commercial spaces, active industrial, big box retail and low rise residential. To the immediate south is the Queen West Triangle, a regeneration area that will, upon build-out include approximately 3000 residential units and 40,000 square metres of non-residential space including live-work artist studios.<sup>1</sup> The NW Triangle is well served by public transport including the Queen

streetcar and the Dufferin and Landsdowne buses.

The Precinct Planning process is being initiated at this time for a number of reasons. The first is the imminent completion of the Dufferin Jog Elimination Project which is subject to an approved Class EA and currently under construction. Upon completion, the project will result in Dufferin Street being extended south under the railway tracks, thereby providing greater access by all modes of transport. The second reason is the growing development pressures in the immediate area. West Queen West is a desirable place to live and work due to

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/te/te060613/it005.pdf>

its location adjacent to Downtown Toronto, dense mix of private and public uses and excellent low and mid-rise housing stock. The area is populated by a mix of creative class (artists, small business owners) and more established families of European descent. A number of high rise condominium developers have expressed interest in the lands within the NW Triangle.

### **1.3 City of Toronto Official Plan**

In 2006, the Ontario Municipal Board approved the new City of Toronto Official Plan. A significant amount of background and planning work was completed during the preparation of the Official Plan. The Plan contains land use designations and detailed goals, objectives, policies and implementation strategies for future growth of the City. The land use designations within the NW Triangle include Employment Areas, Neighbourhoods, and Mixed Use Areas.

### **1.4 Public Engagement & Consultation**

The City of Toronto is committed to creating opportunities for the public to play a role in shaping a vision for the future and planning change in their neighbourhoods. The public includes the City's residents, business-people, landowners, relevant public agencies, and other interested groups and individuals. Inclusive and meaningful public involvement must be integral to the undertaking of the Precinct Plan.

### **1.5 The Consulting Team**

Students will act as a superior interdisciplinary consulting team to undertake the NW Triangle Precinct Planning program. The teams will coordinate the multidisciplinary project and creatively address competing interests. The team must also have a strong commitment to implementing a bioregional model of sustainable development and will bring expertise in urban planning, sustainable community development, urban design, housing, employment, parks and recreation, transportation, energy planning, communication, community engagement, report writing and drafting policy. The team is capable of extending well beyond "business as usual" and exceeding the current sustainability agenda.

## **2.0 THE PROJECT**

### **2.1 Purpose of the Project**

The primary purpose of the project is to undertake a detailed precinct planning program for the NW Triangle. The Precinct Plan is intended to outline development principles and guidelines at a level of detail not possible within the broader Official Plan. The intent is that these principles and guidelines form the bridge that allows the city to move from Official Plan policies to Zoning By-law provisions. The OP provides the framework for how the area should develop. The consulting team will: 1) build on the OP policies to identify with stakeholders a vision and detailed goals and objectives for the sustainable regeneration of the NW Triangle; 2) prepare a number of land use and urban design alternatives to the sustainable regeneration of the NW Triangle; 3) test those alternatives against the vision, goals and objectives; 4) select the preferred alternative and prepare and present the detailed precinct planning document.

### **2.2 Structure of the Precinct Plan**

The Precinct Plan will provide design concepts and development guidelines for the implementation of public infrastructure (streets, parks and trails, water management, urban forest enhancements and community facilities) as well as the built form of new development. With these concepts and guidelines, the Precinct Plan will direct sustainable and efficient public infrastructure investment and provide the foundation for the preparation of a Zoning By-law for the NW Triangle. The Precinct Plan may be organized, but is not limited to, the following major sections:

- *2.2.1 Context.* The section will lay out the important information the plan must acknowledge and respond to, including the existing provincial and municipal planning (OP, Zoning) context; and basic facts about the study area and the surrounding bioregion including land use, public realm, built form, culture and heritage, housing, community services, natural heritage, transportation and energy. The most valued aspects of NW Triangle are highlighted, as are challenges and opportunities identified and confirmed through consultation with the stakeholders.
- *2.2.2 Vision.* The development of the NW Triangle will be based on a long range vision of what it can become; what should be retained and what should change. The vision will be supported by broad goals to be implemented by detailed, measurable objectives. The alternatives shall be evaluated against the detailed objectives.
- *2.2.3 Preferred Alternative Precinct Plan.* The preferred alternative will be refined and fully developed in written and graphic form. The plan will address, within a bioregional context, private and public development including land use, public realm, built form, culture and heritage, housing, community services, natural heritage, transportation and energy, among others.
- *2.2.4 Implementation.* Implementation measures including Environmental Assessments, Municipal Planning Approvals (ie. Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-Law Amendments) and Land Exchanges, as needed, will be discussed in order to ensure smooth implementation of the plan.

### **2.3 Community Engagement**

Community engagement is an integral part of undertaking the plan. The local community already has very active involvement in planning matters.<sup>2</sup> Community consultation provides an opportunity to explore and test options with the public, agencies, development industry and others. The Consulting Team shall: 1) design and undertake a public charette to develop the vision, goals and objectives for the precinct plan; 2) hold a public information meeting to present and receive feedback on the alternatives; and 3) present the final precinct plan to a panel of planners, urban designers and the public.

### **3.0 DELIVERABLES**

1. Community Engagement Implementation Plan
2. Results of Community Engagement Report
3. Draft Vision, Goals and Objectives Report
4. Evaluation of Alternatives Report
5. Precinct Plan
6. PowerPoint Presentation of Precinct Plan
7. Implementing documents including a Draft Official Plan Amendment (if necessary) and Zoning By-law Amendment.

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<sup>2</sup> See Active 18 at <http://active18.org>.