

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Hotline

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Metro

NETWORK 2011 TRANSIT PLAN GETS MIXED REACTION. [Joint meeting, Transportation Com'tee-Economic Dev't and Planning Com'tee, May 29] A presentation by Rob Wanless, Marshall Macklin Monaghan Ltd., didn't get a particularly warm reception from Metro politicians. Toronto Alderman Jack Layton wanted to know how intelligent discussion could take place on a report just put into the 2 Committees' hands while fellow Toronto Alderman Ying Hope couldn't see the logic of a November 15 deadline for municipal comments on the transit proposals (2 days after the municipal election). The credibility of the proposals was further weakened, when Alf Savage, Chief General Manager of the Toronto Transit Commission, along with Dr. Juri Pill, Chief Planner for the TTC, both said that the proposals for phasing really shouldn't be taken seriously beyond the first ten years (i.e., Sheppard subway line and Downtown Relief Line). York Controller Phil White asked that the Eglinton West busway/subway be moved ahead; "If we [York] have to wait twenty years, York might fade away", said White. York Mayor Alan Tonks coined a new term [passively latent, i.e., left out] when he asked whether the transit proposals reflected the office deconcentration policies of metroplan. Planning Commissioner John Bower said that deconcentration was a critical concern of the proposals. In an oblique reference to the proposal that the Province press ahead with upgrading convention GO Transit facilities, Toronto Alderman Ying Hope suggested that the Downtown Relief Line might turn out to be unnecessary. One of the largest unknowns is whether the Province will continue to pay 75% of the capital costs of the proposed \$2.7 billion (current dollars) capital program. One of the most interesting maps in the report shows the possible extensions beyond network 2011. One of the missing links in the post 2011 additions is the Malvern extension to the Scarborough RT line. The program package won't return to Metro for any decisions until February 1986.

DON VALLEY CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES RECOMMENDED. [Transportation Com'tee, May 27] 3 consultants have been recommended to carry out studies on the Don Valley Corridor. McCormick, Rankin & Associates Ltd. will study the Leslie St. Extension and Bayview Extension Widening; Fenco Engineers Inc. will study the Don Mills Road Widening (from York Mills to O'Connor Drive); Totten Sims Hubicki Associates will study the widening of Victoria Park Ave. The contracts range from \$43,000 to \$193,500. A fourth study of the Lesmill extension and Leslie Street widening will be carried out by Metro and North York staffs.

NEW PUBLICATION RELEASED BY METRO PLANNING. [Economic Dev't and Planning Com'tee, May 29] The Research Division of the Metro Planning Department has issued 'Metro Facts', 01, 'Office Space Characteristics' under date of May 1985. The glossy, 12 page publication is replete with text, maps, and graphs on office space information for both Metro Toronto and the surrounding regions of Peel, York, and Durham. Other headings of interest include Head Office Characteristics and Future Office Development Potential. The Conclusions are "1. With the large amount of new office space construction presently taking place in Metropolitan Toronto, it is expected that the vacancy rates in the entire Region will continue to edge upwards in the current year and, therefore, the market will be a tenants' market for the next three or four years. 2. The Central Area (PD1) will continue to be the focal point for major office development with strong sub-centres developing at North York Centre, Scarborough Centre and Islington/Kipling/Bloor. 3. The growth of office space in the Regions will continue, but at a slower pace than over the last ten years due to the existing high vacancy rates. 4. The existence of a large 'frictional vacancy' in today's office space market, and the fact that this space could accommodate employment of 30,000, is one area which should be considered with future office development proposals".

Toronto

ALL TORONTO COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS CANCELLED FOR WEEK OF JUNE 3.

Etobicoke

ADDITIONS TO MORE THAN DOUBLE AREA OF COMMERCIAL BUILDING. [Development Com'tee, June 5] A 651.4 m² commercial building at 96 Rexdale Boulevard will be increased to 1 532.4 m² by the addition of 2 wings to the original 1964, 2-storey structure. The western addition will be rectangular, while the eastern addition will be triangular in plan, to conform to the trapezoidal lot configuration. The staff building permit approval recommendations include additional plantings "on Hydro lands to help screen the parking areas", also solid fencing to screen the parking lot from residential uses. The site is east of Kipling Ave.

DAY CARE TO BE PERMITTED IN INDUSTRIAL AREAS. [Development Com'tee, June 5] Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff have proposed the following text for an Official Plan amendment to permit day care in industrial areas: 1.4.1.C. Licensed day nurseries and nursery schools and similar uses are permitted provided that such uses are situated in industrial areas which provide adequate environment for the care of children. Such facilities shall not be permitted in areas where industries by virtue of their operation could emit dust, odour, noise or particulate or which could have an adverse impact on such land uses. Planning staff have recommended that the Provincial text be endorsed.

TEMPORARY APPROVAL SUGGESTED FOR MARGINAL APPLICATION. [Development Com'tee, June 5] "In the event the Committee agrees to the applicant's request, and provided site improvements are guaranteed by a substantial financial guarantee, the Committee may wish to consider this application on a temporary basis only". Thus did Planning staff suggest a 2 year term for approval, against staff's better judgement, of a partial conversion to public garage of a portion of an industrial building at 52 Clairville Drive. The applicant is Treeline Development Ltd., who have failed (twice) to achieve the conversion through the Committee of Adjustment, who in turn were sustained on appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. The garage is intended to service construction vehicles owned by the other tenant in the building. Previous staff reports had maintained that the construction firm's high parking and outside storage needs shouldn't be increased by a public garage. As well, vehicles were stored illegally on adjacent property, and the construction site itself was allegedly untidy. At least one nearby development has objected to the application, because it causes problems in a prestige industrial area. Finally, the site will be visible from the proposed extension of Highway 427.

VIEWPOINT

ON THE EGLINTON WEST TRANSIT FACILITY

by Alan Demb

The Network 2011 mass transit report calls for a busway in the Eglinton West Corridor from the Eglinton West station on the Spadina subway to the Metro boundary between Etobicoke and Mississauga. There, the busway would connect with a busway from Mississauga Square One. Depending on the number of users, the report says that the busway could be upgraded "to a full transit line...by the turn of the century". This approach may be in tune with Metroplan and certainly makes a gesture toward interregional traffic flows. Unfortunately, it does little or nothing for the City of York. Summary Report 4.03 shows 6 station locations within the City of York. Three of these, Weston Road, Keele St., and Dufferin St., have the theoretical potential to become area subcentres. One might possibly grow to the Yonge-Eglinton scale in the fullness of time. This could happen with a subway route, but the likelihood of redevelopment at medium to high density on a busway is probably nil. The City of York's tax base is not growing, a matter which should be of concern throughout Metro, not just within the City of York. Serious consideration should be given not just to moving up the priority for the Eglinton West Transit facility but also for making it a true subway, or at least an LRT. Despite the initially greater expense, the midterm and longterm benefits could be considerable. Remember, midway between Mississauga and York is a major growth node known as Pearson International Airport with its Airport Corporate Centre. Building a subway first time through could be one of the smartest moves Metro ever made, for local, regional, and interregional reasons.

North York

BALANCE OF CITY CENTRE RECOMMENDED FOR BUILDING PLAN APPROVAL. [Planning Advisory Com'tee, May 29] Rather than proceeding with several phases, Rampart Enterprises Ltd., through architects Moriyama and Teshima, have applied for building plan approval of: 2 office towers (18 and 23 storeys); hotel (250 suites approx.); 234,000 sq. ft. commercial retail; central public library and community hall; below grade parking structure (min. 1,650 spaces). The report expresses the floor area figures in ranges. According to the report, "If, for example, the hotel is ultimately built at the low end of the range, the North Office Tower will be built at the high end of the range". Also, the current design and location of the hotel is said to be a major improvement over the original proposal. A massive appendix section to the staff report includes: the development agreement; the [Provincial] order-in-council, which overturned the Ontario Municipal Board decision on height and angular plane exemptions from the Official Plan; original design submission; approved development plan.

TAX SALE PRODUCES PARKLAND. [Planning Advisory Com'tee, May 29] Official Plan and zoning amendments have been recommended for a 0.1 hectare parcel of vacant property on the northeast corner of Don Mills Road and Lawrence Ave "to permit its development as a public park". The zoning will change from RM5 to O1. The site was acquired "by way of a tax certificate" way back in 1968, with the decision to use the land for a parkette coming earlier this year. According to the report, "It is considered that the use of this property as a public parkette would be an asset to the surrounding community and would aesthetically enhance the intersection of Don Mills Road and Lawrence Avenue".

MULTIPLE COMMERCIAL-INDUSTRIAL USES PROPOSED ON FINCH AVE. WEST. [Planning Advisory Com'tee, May 29] Planning staff have recommended in favour of Official Plan and zoning amendments to permit Humboldt Properties Ltd. to use a 3.95 hectare site on the north side of Finch Ave., west of Alness, for "office, commercial, retail warehouse, and industrial uses". The site is close to oil tank farms owned by Imperial Oil, Texaco Canada, and Ultramar Liquifuels; and the Humboldt site was formerly owned by Shell Canada Ltd. According to the report, "The proposal is for a mixed used development of two separate buildings....A one-storey, 9313 m² building on the rear portion of the site would contain multiple industrial units. A U-shaped building fronting on Finch Avenue is [to be] a multi-level mixed use complex. The east and west wings...would contain retail commercial and retail warehouse uses. The central wing would contain retail warehouse and/or retail commercial uses on the ground floor and office uses on the upper six floors". Official Plan Amendment 261, which limits offices to secondary uses in industrial parks, has yet to receive Ministerial approval. The Elia Episcopal Methodist Church, which abuts the southwest corner of the development proposal, is a listed historic building, and no signage will be permitted on the walls closest to the church.

REZONING PROPOSED FROM M2 (SPECIFIC) TO M2 SPECIFIC. [Planning Advisory Com'tee, May 29] In order that the Mayfair Tennis Courts Ltd. operation at 3855 Chesswood Drive be permitted "to include within the existing building a fitness club (gymnasium)", also to clarify the meaning of 'tennis club' in the Zoning By-law, the current M2 zoning will be amended "a racquet club, including a fitness club and accessory snack bar, lounge, dining area and proshop". Squash courts had previously been allowed to receive a building permit without any rezoning "on the basis that squash is a tennis-like sport and not distinguishable in zoning terms from tennis unless specifically stated". The snack bar and dining area were considered to be accessory uses. The fitness club, however, will have separate membership from the tennis club and is therefore not an accessory use.

ANOTHER PROPOSAL TURNED DOWN OVER IMPENDING YONGE STREET AREA PLAN. [Planning Advisory Com'tee, May 29] An application to redesignate 10 detached dwellings in the southwest quadrant of Bishop Ave. and Kenneth Ave. from Residential Density One to Towntown Mixed Use (maximum f.s.l. of 4.5) has been recommended for refusal "on the basis that the question of the appropriate Official Plan designation for these lands will be addressed in the review of the Yonge Street Area Plan". No "specific development proposal" has been submitted, nor has an application been made to amend the existing R4 zoning. The public hearing on the Yonge Street Area Plan is scheduled for the evening of June 12.

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Scarborough

PROPOSALS REPORT, UPPER ROUGE COMMUNITY SECONDARY PLAN RELEASED. The preliminary proposals arising from the Northeast Scarborough Land Use Study are available to the public, written responses being requested by July 31. According to Senior Planner Michael Manett, some of the most important proposals involve the following changes to the road network: the East Metro Freeway, connecting Highways 401 and 407, would be relocated east of Scarborough, outside of Metro; Finch Ave. would be routed to the north of the railway right-of-way, crossing the Rouge River valley at its narrowest point, where it would serve a prestige residential area; Meadowvale Road would be swung westward to connect to Reesor Road, then connected with Markham's 10th Line; Morningside Ave. would be connected to Markham's 9th Line, the latter 2 roads serving as north-south connectors. The plan itself leaves most of the river valley in its natural state, provides for 2 executive residential neighbourhoods along with a small village centre at the intersection of Finch and Meadowvale, shows locations for a ski hill, golf course, and major cemetery, and preserves a number of working farms located close to Scarborough's eastern boundary. Provincial Ministries whose policies are going to be affected include Transportation and Communications and Agriculture and Food, also the Ontario Land Corporation.

INDUSTRIAL REZONING, SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED. [Planning Com'tee, June 6] Derek Willis and Associates Ltd. have applied to delete the 'holding' suffix on industrial lands on the north side of Sheppard, east of Morningside as well as a draft plan of subdivision to create 12 industrial blocks. Each block will be at least 0.68 ha (1.7 ac.). According to the report, "The proposed subdivision of 12 lots is not considered a major industrial project and it is questionable whether it alone warrants the suggested roadway improvements". The property is controlled by E. Goldstein and L. Hurwitz (Trustees).

BOARD OF EDUCATION MAINTENANCE- WAREHOUSE FACILITY RECOMMENDED. [Planning Com'tee, June 6] A 9.3 acre site on Shorting Road, north of Sheppard, has been recommended in concept for site plan approval to provide 2 buildings, an administrative/film library/audio-visual workshop/school bus and equipment repair shop, plus a book and supplies depository building. The site is part of an industrial and warehousing area. 360 auto parking and 44 school bus parking spaces will be provided.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL TO REPLACE BUILDING DESTROYED BY FIRE. [Planning Com'tee, June 6] An 8,800 sq. ft. addition will be made to a 3,400 sq. ft. building supply warehouse on the east side of Kennedy Road, south of the Kennedy TTC station, replacing a building destroyed by fire. In order to protect the abutting residences, "the applicant has agreed to provide a 2.4 m (8 ft.) non-combustible fence (concrete or metal) along that portion of the southerly boundary adjacent to residential uses". The residences are located on the north side of Kenmark Blvd., the building supply operation being located behind a cemetery, which occupies the Kennedy Road frontage.

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