



# TORONTO STAFF REPORT

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June 30, 2006

To: Administration Committee

From: Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Subject: Parkland Acquisition for West Queen West Triangle  
(Ward 18 - Davenport)

Purpose:

To initiate negotiations for acquiring parkland, and collect cash-in-lieu of parkland for applicable developments within the West Queen West Triangle.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

Funding for the recommended lands for parks purposes has been identified in the local Toronto/East York Parkland Acquisition Reserve Account XR2053. A cost estimate for the acquisition of the parkland has not yet been undertaken. As such, a further report back to Council would be required to approve the funding source and amount if the purchase of one or more of these park sites is to be completed in 2006. Otherwise, the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation will report with the 2007 Capital and Operating Budget submissions on acquisition costs, park development costs, and sources of funding and operating impacts of the new parkland.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Real Estate Services initiate negotiations to acquire parkland in the West Queen West Triangle with the preference being Options 1 and 2 of Attachment 2 and report back to the Administration Committee;
- (2) development applications within the West Queen West Triangle fulfill statutory parkland dedication requirements through cash-in-lieu of parkland payments and that the acquisition portion of those payments be directed to the Toronto/East York Local Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund XR2053;

- (3) the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation report in the 2007 Capital and Operating Budget submissions on the costs to acquire and develop the parklands in the West Queen West Triangle area, including all funding sources and the operating impacts arising from this project;
- (4) the minimum amount of parkland that must be acquired for parkland purposes in the West Queen West Triangle area before the conditions relating to the provision of parkland are met prior to lifting the "H" is approximately 0.4 ha; and
- (5) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting on June 13, 2006, Toronto and East York Community Council recommended approval of a request for direction report from City Planning. The report was to inform City Council on the zoning review and community consultation undertaken by staff with respect to the West Queen West Triangle, as well as to seek direction to finalize the Zoning By-law and Official Plan amendments.

At its meeting on June 27, 28 and 29, 2006, Toronto City Council adopted Toronto and East York Community Council Report 5, Clause 5, and directed the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation report to the Administration Committee meeting on July 4, 2006, regarding the collecting of cash-in-lieu for parkland, as opposed to land, from any development in the West Queen West Triangle, identify the minimum number of hectares of land required to fulfill the condition for lifting the "H" and options for acquisition of such lands.

Comments:

This area of the City has less than 0.20 hectares of local parkland per one thousand persons which is the lowest of five graded provision ranges when compared to local parkland provision in other areas of the City. This provision level will become lower should the population in this area continue to grow without the benefit of new local parkland. The Official Plan indicates that Toronto's system of parks and open space will continue to be a necessary element of city-building as the City grows and changes. Maintaining, enhancing and expanding the system requires the following actions: adding new parks and amenities, particularly in growth areas, and maintaining, improving and expanding existing parks.

Staff have reviewed the option of asking for land from each of the three current applicants and consolidating the five percent parkland dedication in an area where all three properties meet. This results in a parcel of approximately 1,200 square metres fronting on the proposed Sudbury Street extension. Staff did not pursue this option for a number of reasons, including:

- the parcel is a very small parcel of land that would have limited programming opportunities;

- the timing of the Sudbury Street extension to give public frontage to the park is not confirmed;
- taking a parkland dedication of five percent of the total land area of these three applicant sites rather than cash-in-lieu payments would preclude the option of pooling these cash-in-lieu funds with similar funds obtained from all development in the area. The pooling of these funds would enable staff to acquire one larger, more centrally located park site, as there are a number of applications pending which have the potential of significantly increasing the amount of cash-in-lieu revenues to be obtained in this area; and
- while it may be possible to create a more centrally located open space area on these lands, this alternative would necessitate rationalizing ownership in the area and could compromise other longer term park and open space objectives for this neighbourhood, thereby resulting in less than ideal conditions for usable, visible and accessible public parkland.

For these reasons, staff are recommending cash-in-lieu of parkland be obtained from the three proponents, as well as, from current and future development applications in the West Queen West Triangle. Parkland purchases are funded from a series of parkland acquisition reserve funds created with money paid through cash-in-lieu of parkland development payments. The parkland acquisition reserve funds must be used solely for parkland acquisition purposes, in accordance with Council policy.

The parkland in this area will be purchased using money from the reserve fund, and the reserve will be replenished with applicable cash-in-lieu of parkland funds from development in the West Queen West Triangle.

It is also important to note that recommendations by staff, to the Administration Committee, regarding the use of these parkland reserve funds are based on three key principles:

1. Targeted areas that are parkland deficient;
2. Purchase of lands for community recreation centres, sports and trail facilities; and
3. Achievement of city-wide objectives related to the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Strategic Plan, Our Common Grounds.

To date, staff have indicated three preferred locations for parkland in the Triangle. They are shown in Attachment 2. The first location (indicated as Option 1), located at the northwest corner of the Triangle, across from the Gladstone Hotel) is approximately 1,500 square metres (0.15 ha) in size, has high visibility, is bordered on two sides by public streets, and would provide a break in the continuous Queen Street frontage.

The second location (indicated as Option 2) includes the Toronto Parking Authority parking lot at Lisgar Street and Queen Street, adjacent to the Canada Post office and the building and loading area at the north end of the United Food Warehouse site that fronts on Lisgar Street. It has a combined area of approximately 2,500 square metres (0.25 ha), with frontage on three public streets (Queen, Lisgar and Abell). This site would provide a focal point for activity, as it is situated beside the Carnegie Library, adjacent to the non-residential uses proposed for the mews and in line with the proposed bridge over the rail corridor.

Options 1 and 2 total 0.4 hectares.

The third location (indicated as Option 3) is currently occupied by the car wash on Queen Street. This site is approximately 1,100 square metres, has Queen Street frontage, allows for views of the 48 Abell building and would connect with the pedestrian mews.

City Planning staff and Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff are of the opinion that the lands identified as Options 1 and 2 on Attachment 2, (or comparable lands in the vicinity of these sites) should be acquired by the City for use as public parks. To this end, any applicable development in the Triangle will be required to provide cash-in-lieu for their parkland dedication, as opposed to land.

In light of the preferred lands for parks purposes (i.e., Options 1 and 2), 0.4 hectares is the recommended number of hectares of land required to fulfill the condition for lifting the "H". The preferred option for acquisition of such lands is that Real Estate Services initiate negotiations to acquire such lands and report back to the Administration Committee on the results of their negotiations and the next steps necessary (e.g. expropriation) to acquire such lands or comparable lands in the vicinity of these sites.

Given the existing deficiency of parkland in the area and the proposed additional residents on lands in the entire West Queen West Triangle area, new parkland is required. Funds obtained from the local parkland acquisition reserve fund will be used to purchase that parkland. The acquisitions portion of the cash-in-lieu of parkland generated from current and future development applications in the area will be used to replenish the local parkland acquisition reserve fund. Any available Section 37 funds from nearby development could also be allocated toward the acquisition of parkland in this area.

#### Conclusions:

The Parks and Open Spaces policies of the Official Plan note that, "...Toronto's system of parks and open spaces will continue to be a necessary element of city-building as the City grows and changes", and that, "...Maintaining, enhancing and expanding the system requires the following actions: adding new parks and amenities, particularly in growth areas and maintaining, improving and expanding existing parks."

The proposed acquisition of these land parcels will provide much needed public open space in a park deficient area of the City. These acquisitions will help to achieve the goals and objectives of the Council approved Parks, Forestry and Recreation Strategic Plan and the Parkland Acquisition Strategy. Approval of this report will direct staff to initiate negotiations for the purchase of the subject lands, as well as, utilize cash-in-lieu revenues from development to replenish the Toronto/East York Local Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund.

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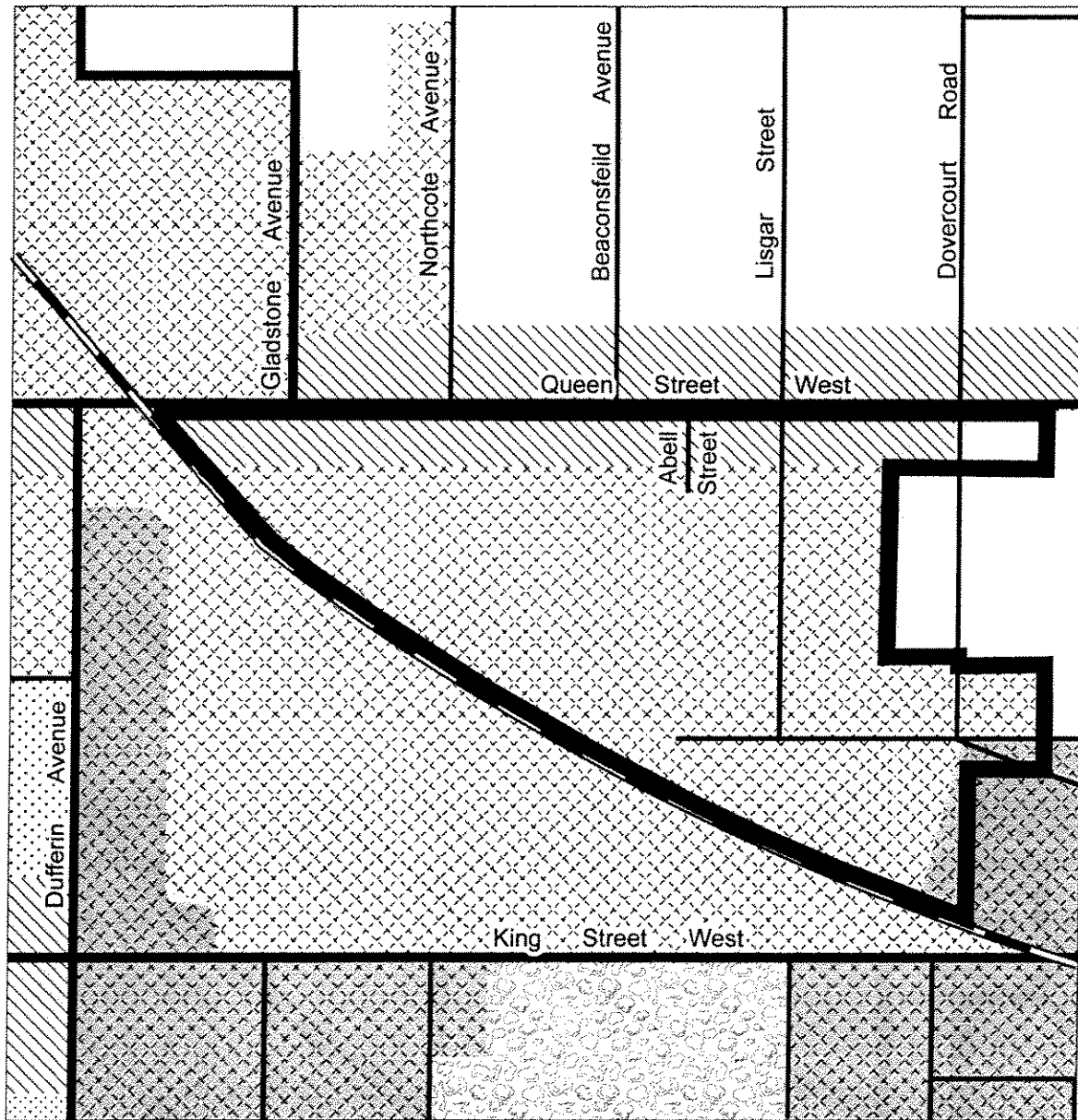
Brenda Librecz  
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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: West Queen West Study Area  
Attachment 2: Proposed Park Locations Map

Attachment 1: West Queen West Study Area



West Queen West Study

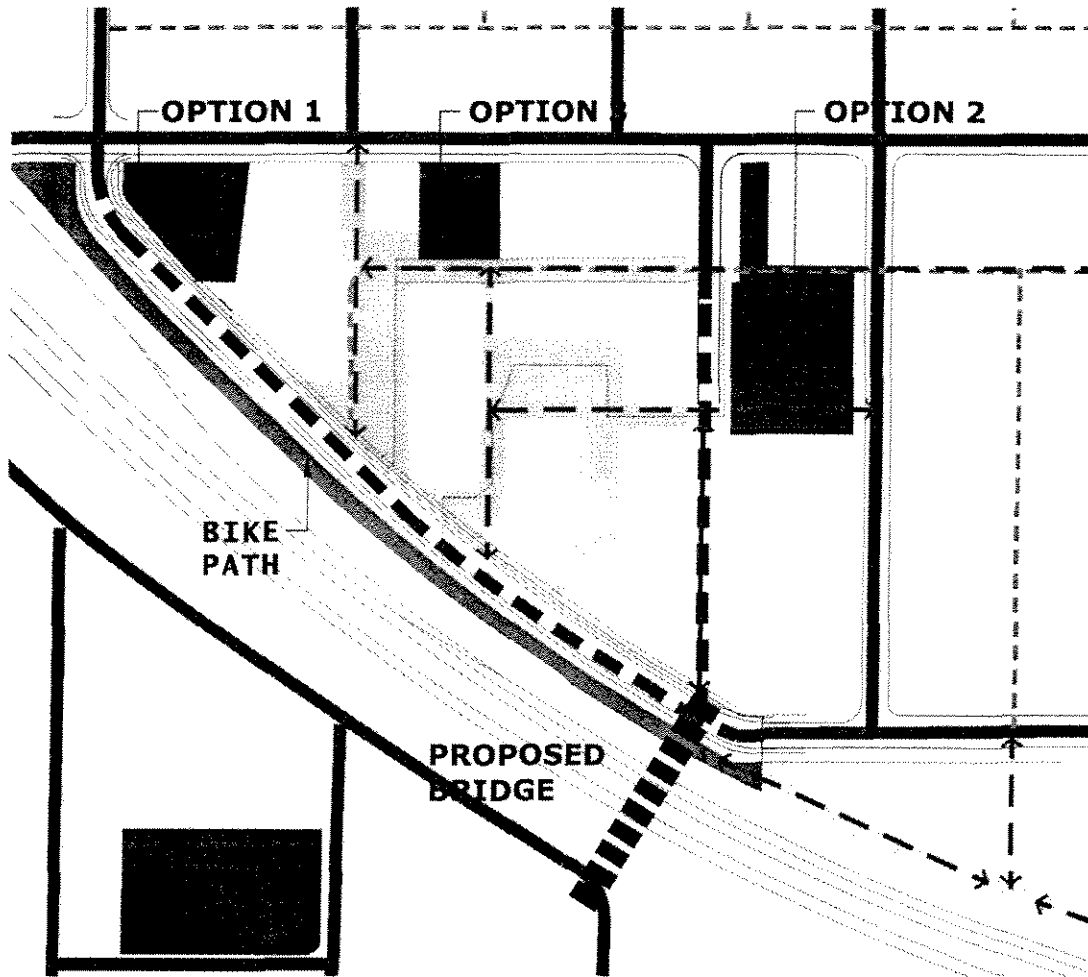
In - Force Official Plan of West Queen West Triangle Area

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|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Site                           | High Density Residence Areas                   | General Use Areas |
| Low Density Residence Areas    | Low Density Mixed Commercial-Residential Areas | Open Space        |
| Medium Density Residence Areas | Mixed Residential-Industrial Areas             |                   |

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Not to Scale  
05/23/06

Attachment 2: Proposed Park Locations Map



- Option 1: Plaza Site
- Option 2: Lisgar Street Site
- Option 3: Carwash Site

- Street Extensions
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Connections
- Parkland
- Landscaped Open Space

Potential Public Park locations

West Queen West Study

Not to Scale  
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