



# University of Toronto

Office of the Assistant Vice-President, Campus and Facilities Planning

**TO:** Planning and Budget Committee

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**AGENDA ITEM:** 7

Project Planning Report for the Northeast Sector of the St. George Campus

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Under the Policy on Capital Planning and Capital Projects, the Planning & Budget Committee reviews Project Planning Reports prepared for a capital project and recommends to the Academic Board approval in principle of the project.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1997, the City of Toronto approved a Secondary Plan, for the University of Toronto Area. That plan identified 26 development sites in the Area, almost all University of Toronto properties. Since that time, many of the sites have been developed for academic purposes.

The northeast sector of the St. George campus is the area bound by St. George Street to the west; Devonshire Place to the east; Hoskin Avenue to the south and Bloor Street to the north. Remaining development sites in this sector are: Site 11, Site 12, and Site 24 (Trinity land). Institutions also located within the northeast precinct with the University include Massey College and Trinity College, and have participated in the discussions of the project planning committee.

Expansion plans for Site 11 and Site 12 are already in the preliminary stages. The expansion of the Rotman School of Management has been planned for Site 11, and was approved by Governing Council on October 30, 2007. Consultants have now been selected and detailed planning is about to commence. Several groups may be located on Site 12. During the Governing Council meeting of June 25, 2007, interim reports were approved for the Varsity Centre for High Performance Sport and the Student Commons for their inclusion on Site 12. Work continues to complete these reports. The success of the referendum earlier this year will allow the Student Commons to proceed with implementation. In addition, the expansion of the Rotman Executive program was put forth in the Governing Council meeting on October 30, 2007. Finally a proposal to establish a School for International Studies is also being considered for this site and funds have been earmarked by the province for its creation.

One of the two offices of the Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students (APUS) is temporarily located in 100 Devonshire Place at the south end of Site 12. As part of the on-going commitment to provide suitable space to APUS, the organization will need to be relocated, at least on a temporary basis, in order for

development on the site to take place. Future space allocations to APUS will be dependent upon the development of other capital projects (e.g., the proposed Student Commons) and the administration's continuing discussions with the organization with respect to their space needs.

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

As in the discussions in the late 1990's, which culminated with the approval of the development sites identified in the University Area Plan, guidelines for appropriate development must be established. Some precincts within the University campuses can carry more dense development. Increased density permissions will be sought, with a renewed focus on urban design.

The University has demonstrated leadership in maintaining a high level of excellence in architecture and campus planning on all three campuses throughout the past ten years of significant expansion. Articulating plans for balanced development will enable the University to achieve its goal for necessary physical expansion, fulfilling the academic mission to meet the future objectives identified in *Towards 2030*.

Recent development has occurred both on university land within the sector, with the completion of the first phase of Varsity Centre, and in the areas immediately adjacent on the north side of Bloor Street. The level of redevelopment activity in the area led the City of Toronto to initiate a Visioning Study for the Bloor Corridor in July 2005. The first phase of the study, beginning in March 2007, looked at Bloor Street from Avenue Road to Bathurst and examined issues surrounding land use, built form, community services and facilities, transportation, heritage and urban design. The goal of the Bloor Corridor Visioning Study was to create a development strategy that would protect stable residential neighbourhoods adjacent to Bloor Street and to also accommodate planned intensification identified in the Toronto Official Plan. The main thrust of the study includes: the protection of the low rise neighbourhoods enhancing the pedestrianization of the corridor, and recommending that development will lead to a sustainable district.

In 2000, the University engaged consultants to develop an overall site plan and guidelines to direct future development and landscape design for the University's Bloor/Devonshire Precinct. Although much has changed in terms of program requirements and priorities for the area, the study did, in particular, address issues of precinct connection and pedestrian realm that was of interest and contributed in the overall planning for projects already implemented in the area. The Woodsworth College Residence and Varsity Centre respond to the guidelines introduced in the Bloor Devonshire Precinct Study.

The following guidelines have been identified to guide development in this sector:

#### Massing

Situated along a busy commercial thoroughfare, within the city's institutional precinct, and encompassing a series of cultural heritage landscapes, the northeast sector includes a diverse range of urban conditions. Expansion in the northeast sector must avoid disparities in massing at neighbourhood edges. The form and

scale of future expansion should define and develop appropriate relationships to surrounding landscape.

#### Sustainable Environment

Comprehensive planning for sustainability measures should be implemented. New development should incorporate the latest technological advancements in building and landscape design to help create a positive environmental impact. The physical composition of the northeast sector, and the campus as a whole, should encourage the use of pedestrian and transit-oriented modes of travel. New buildings should achieve LEED status or equal.

#### Public Realm

The northeast sector should support and encourage a vibrant public realm. Additional open space opportunities should be identified, particularly at junctions with adjacent University neighbourhoods. A comprehensive open space system should be considered in order to link and integrate built and landscape features, and enhance pedestrian north-south, east-west, cross-campus connections.

#### Land Uses

The University envisions its properties remaining primarily institutional in use in this sector. Additional uses that contribute to the public realm should be considered on the ground floor level where appropriate.

#### Accessibility

The university's buildings and landscapes must accommodate a diverse population in an open and inclusive campus. Built form development should adhere to the principles of universal design, which generally means the "design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design".

#### Heritage Preservation

University of Toronto seeks to protect and maintain its heritage properties and landscapes. The listed and designated properties within the northeast sector should not be considered in isolation, but as character-defining elements within the overall precinct. Development should respect the contextual value of these heritage elements, while recognizing the dynamic nature of the sector's urban setting.

#### Balanced Intensification

The University should strive to accommodate its existing and long term needs and redevelopment must enhance, not overwhelm, existing university environs.

#### **SCHEDULE:**

Applications for municipal approvals will be submitted as plans are developed.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Planning and Budget Committee recommend to the Academic Board:

That the Project Planning Report for the Northeast Sector be approved in principle.