

Section i

Executive Summary

The Huron Sussex Neighbourhood at the University of Toronto will evolve to meet the needs of the University and community residential needs through attractive, mid-rise intensification along Spadina Avenue and Harbord Street. Low-rise infill within the neighbourhood will front onto active laneways, and an attractive, pedestrian-oriented Living Lane will provide a ‘green-spine’ through the neighbourhood.

Study Purpose

The Huron Sussex Neighbourhood Planning Study builds on the Huron Sussex Working Group Report (2011) to set forth directions for the evolution of the neighbourhood that responds equally to the University’s needs for residential and academic space, community residential needs and other interests. The study serves to guide the design, location and appropriate mix of future development, including residential, commercial and open space, in the Huron Sussex neighbourhood.

The University of Toronto and the Huron Sussex neighbourhood are committed to the Huron Sussex Neighbourhood Planning Study. The Development Plan outlined in the study is the first definitive step towards ensuring that the Huron Sussex Neighbourhood at the University of Toronto will, in the future, be economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable. As the report outlines, full implementation will take time and additional study will be required.

The Development Plan does not represent a fixed or final plan, but instead, provides a physical framework within which future strategic infill and redevelopment can occur. The progressive vision of the Living Lane, laneway housing and mixed-use mid-rise housing set within an enhanced landscaped open space setting should continue to be upheld in the implementation of the plan. As changes to the Development Plan are inevitable, and a variety of development options are possible that maintain the intent of the plan, discussions between the University and the Huron Sussex Neighbourhood will continue as these changes arise.

Study Area

The Huron Sussex neighbourhood is located in the northwest quadrant of the University of Toronto's St. George Campus. The area is bounded by Harbord Street to the south, Spadina Avenue to the west, the properties on the north side of Washington Avenue to the north and Huron Street and bpNichol Lane to the east.

Study Background

This study builds upon relevant planning policies, including: the City of Toronto Official Plan (2010); the City of Toronto Zoning Bylaw; the University of Toronto Secondary Plan (1997); and, the St. George Campus Master Plan: University of Toronto (2011), which will be used as a source document when the University seeks amendments to the Secondary Plan.

The plan augments the findings of the Huron Sussex Working Group Report (2011), which identifies key planning principles related to the short, medium, and long-term development potential within the neighbourhood.

Applicable precedents were used to identify the current best practices in neighbourhood intensification within a downtown urban and institutional setting and in the development of healthy, sustainable university campuses. The precedents focused on:

- **Secondary Suite Design Guidelines** - North American cities are turning to secondary suites to meet growing housing demands. Vancouver, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Edmonton, and Portland have all prepared design guidelines to ensure these units have appropriate scale and massing, façade design, separation distances, setbacks, parking and outdoor amenity space. This study adopts an approach similar to the abovementioned studies, providing a flexible approach that applies to a variety of site-specific lot conditions.
- **Municipal Policies and Plans** - Municipalities looking to encourage secondary suites are providing a variety of incentives, including tax credit programs (Winnipeg) and pilot projects (Regina and Vancouver). The Huron Sussex neighbourhood would be a strong candidate for a laneway housing pilot program as the majority of buildings are under single-ownership (University of Toronto). This approach, as well as incentive programs, are recommended for the Huron Sussex neighbourhood.
- **Architectural Projects** - Sample garden and garage suites have been used throughout this document to demonstrate how unique and attractive designs make the best use of limited space while minimizing impacts on the established neighbourhood character. These precedents represent best practices in infill housing and were evaluated in the preparation of the Performance Guidelines.
- **Brook McIlroy Projects** - Brook McIlroy has extensive experience in the planning and design of residential infill projects. The City of Toronto Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Study was generally applied to determine appropriate building heights and massing on Spadina Avenue and Harbord Street, while past experience in Saskatoon, Kingston and Hanover was applied in the Core Area.

Study Area Analysis

An analysis was undertaken to determine the character of the neighbourhood and to identify opportunities and constraints as they relate to new development. The elements of the analysis included:

- **Built form characteristics**

- Houses are generally single- or semi-detached bay and gable style buildings dating between 1850-1900. A visual review determined that the majority of buildings are generally in fair condition (i.e. structurally sound but requiring significant ongoing maintenance), with a few in poor condition. Some non-residential buildings vary from the neighbourhood character but are well integrated and address the street, including a mix of University and community uses. One exception is The Chiller Plant, located at Spadina Avenue and Sussex Avenue, which has a large blank wall and limited connection to the street.

- **Land uses** - The study area is predominantly a low-density residential neighbourhood housing the University itself, students, faculty, their families and private residents. Along Spadina Avenue and elsewhere, some residential dwellings have been converted to university-related office uses. These should remain, and additional conversions be permitted as required. A few small-scale commercial and community uses exist, primarily along Spadina

Avenue and Huron Street, to serve the immediate neighbourhood.

- **Property ownership** - The University of Toronto owns the majority of properties and open spaces in the Huron Sussex neighbourhood, although a few commercial and community buildings are under private ownership. There are also a number of privately-owned residential dwellings.
- **Heritage buildings** - There are eight listed heritage buildings in the neighbourhood and the conditions of these buildings vary from poor to good.
- **Open space** - The Huron-Washington Parkette is the largest open space in the neighbourhood, with plenty of children's play equipment and shaded seating areas. Also, a number of informal open spaces have been established, with benches, sporadic landscaping and large trees. Some adjacent properties throughout the neighbourhood have created shared rear-yards, which provide semi-private open spaces.
- **Neighbourhood services and facilities** - A number of services and facilities serve the student and local residential population, including Campus Co-Op Daycare, The Wolfond Centre, the University of Toronto's Early Learning

Centre, St Thomas's Anglican Church, Coach House Books and the Studio Theatre of the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies.

- **Pedestrian circulation** - The neighbourhood is very walkable, with continuous streets, lanes and connections. The wide sidewalks on Spadina Avenue and Harbord Street facilitate pedestrian flow. Other, less busy local streets (i.e. Washington Avenue, Sussex Avenue, Glen Morris Street, Huron Street) with more narrow sidewalks and a significant tree canopy also create a comfortable walking environment.
- **Vehicle circulation** - Most traffic is bypassing the neighbourhood on Spadina Avenue and Harbord Street. Internal traffic is served by local roads, such as Huron Street and Sussex Avenue that connect traffic to adjacent streets (Bloor Street and St. George Street) and cul-de-sac streets that minimize through traffic, and a continuous network of laneways that provide rear access and facilitate servicing functions.
- **Parking** - On-street parking is provided throughout the neighbourhood, including some pay and display surface parking spaces in laneways. Underground parking also exists for the University's Graduate House building, with access from Glen Morris Street.



BLOOR STREET WEST

SPADINA AVENUE

WASHINGTON AVENUE

HURON STREET

ST. GEORGE STREET

SUSSEX AVENUE

GLEN MORRIS STREET

HARBORD STREET

HURON-WASHINGTON
PARKETTE

North West
Chiller Plant

Sussex Court

John P. Roberts
Library Building

Graduate
House

Wollond
Centre

LEGEND

- Huron-Sussex Study Area
- Core Huron-Sussex Low-rise Area
- Emergency Access Only
- Living Lane
- Existing/New Lanes
- Enhanced Sidewalks
- Open Space
- Common Yards
- New Trees
- Existing Trees
- Non-University Owned Building
- Low-rise Infill
- Mid-rise Infill
- Potential Retail at Grade Level
- Existing Commercial
- Community Use / University Use

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m



Public Consultation

Community input formed a key element of the plan. Two public consultation meetings were held, including a Vision Workshop (April 10, 2013) and a follow-up meeting (June 24, 2013), and the findings informed a series of Priority Directions:

1. Assist and support economic sustainability in the neighbourhood.
2. Maintain infrastructure and support local business.
3. Maintain and support the neighbourhood character.
4. Provide greater densities on Spadina Avenue and Harbord Street.
5. Ensure there is a mix of housing options.
6. Ensure stability by balancing long-term and short term tenancies.
7. Incorporate new open space and enhance existing open space.
8. Protect and enhance the urban tree canopy.
9. Create better connections through the neighbourhood.
10. Ensure new development is compatible with existing.
11. Encourage eclectic and varied architectural styles.
12. Plan for new commercial and retail opportunities.

The Development Plan

Based on the findings from the Study Area Analysis, as well as from the relevant planning policies, community input and applicable precedent studies, a Development Plan was created to provide detailed directions for new development that is consistent with the vision of the Huron Sussex neighbourhood at the University of Toronto. The key elements of the plan include:

- **The Core Huron Sussex Low-Rise Area (“Core Area”)** - The Core Area includes most of the internal neighbourhood and was identified in order to protect and enhance the existing neighbourhood character.
- **The Living Lane and Neighbourhood Lanes** - The Living Lane will be the central ‘spine’ that connects streets, blocks and open spaces. Extending north-south from Harbord Street to the Huron-Washington Parkette, the Living Lane will accommodate vehicles but will be designed to promote pedestrian-priority. The Living Lane will have flexible public parking spaces at Harbord Street and private parking within the laneway housing. It will be well landscaped, paved with high quality materials and well lit. Public art, signage and seating will enhance the lane. Beneath the Living Lane, a community

energy system will connect neighbourhood buildings to central heating and cooling systems.

- **Open Space, New and Existing Trees** - In addition to Huron-Washington Parkette, a supporting network of open space will be created through enhanced parks, revitalized public streets and lanes, courtyards and gardens. This network will be well-connected, publicly accessible, highly-visible and sustainable.
- **Low-Rise Infill** - Within the Core Area, the new Living Lane and connecting neighbourhood lanes provide opportunities for low-rise infill development. Approximately twenty-one garden suites can be accommodated through rear-yard infill. Five townhouse units can be provided as part of a larger mid-rise development on Spadina Avenue, with an additional twelve units possible on Huron Street and bpNichol Lane. Between Washington Avenue and Sussex Avenue, there is the potential to accommodate an additional twelve townhouses.

- **Mid-Rise Infill** - Outside of the Core Area opportunities exist for more dense mid-rise infill development. The recommended building height maximum for market condos or rentals on Spadina Avenue is 13-storeys. For graduate student housing on Harbord Street, the recommended building height maximum is 8-storeys. These developments should support continuous retail or other active uses within the podium (including University and community uses), and the scale and massing of buildings will provide appropriate transitions to the Core Area and ensure sunlight, views and privacy are not compromised.
- **Community/Joint Facility Uses** - To accommodate the growing neighbourhood population, additional community space is provided on Sussex Avenue to support University and community events.

- **Below-Grade Parking** - Structured below-grade parking will replace some of the parking spaces lost due to infill and intensification in the neighbourhood. These facilities will be incorporated under the new development as part of the mid-rise building on Spadina Avenue at Washington Avenue (the number of possible stalls is subject to further study) and Glen Morris Street (55 stall/level) and on Harbord Street (29 stalls/level). The number of levels of parking required will be subject to further parking and economic feasibility studies.

Below-grade parking areas will be key locations for the community energy system, providing convenient, but non-obtrusive access to infrastructure, and facilitating direct connections between generation equipment and the primary distribution network under the Living Lane.

The Economic Analysis

As part of the consultant team, N. Barry Lyon Consultants tested the viability of the Development Plan from an economic perspective and suggested strategies toward implementation. Considerations included:

- The nature of the existing housing stock;
- The requirements and demand profile of the tenant groups;
- The ability of the private market to service the future needs of the University; and,
- The economic feasibility of introducing new housing into the community.

Within the Huron Sussex Neighbourhood, the University owns the majority of housing. Detached and semi detached homes, apartments and rooming houses provide accommodation for a broad range of tenant groups, including:

- Current Long Term Tenants;
- Student Family Housing;
- New Faculty Housing;
- Visiting Faculty Housing; and,
- Other Residents Affiliated with the University.

Key Conclusions

The housing stock in the Huron Sussex Neighbourhood is old and requires continuous maintenance. Revenue that should be dedicated to a reserve fund for future capital repairs is used to finance debt repayment for the same purpose. Current rental revenues are not seen as a source for funding the inevitable and increasing repairs that will be encountered with these homes as they age further.

In addition to the above, the housing is also not always best suited to all the tenant groups. For example, many of the units are not well designed for families, lacking laundry facilities or separate study areas.

Demand is strong for both graduate and family student housing and there is a need for the University to offer a broader range of housing opportunities for faculty, both visiting and permanent, to assist the school in competing for the best teaching and research personnel. Ensuring the tenure and housing security of the existing long term tenants is also a commitment of the University of Toronto.

The private rental market is extremely tight in terms of vacancies and is very expensive. It is unrealistic to assume that the private housing market could address the needs of the University.

Given the above, the economic analysis evaluated the ability of new residential uses to address the University's needs, while providing opportunities for long-term financial return. As illustrated on the Development Plan, these uses included:

- Mid-rise developments along Harbord Street and Spadina Avenue;
- Townhomes on lane ways; and,
- Garden Suites on lane ways.

The neighbourhood will continue to include rental housing as well as owner occupied housing. This range of options will accommodate all target groups.

A series of proforma generally concluded that they would be viable and return a modest annual surplus to the University.

More specifically, the analysis concludes:

- In new graduate housing, the rental rates required to create a small annual surplus would be higher than the current rates at Graduate House. This is a reality of developing student housing, and through a more detailed design exercise, there may be opportunities to improve this outlook.
- The lower density townhome and garden loft concepts are viable if rents were increased over current lease rates, which could be achievable considering the uniqueness of these design options.
- All of these development opportunities are set within a framework of improved laneways and public open spaces that would serve to improve the overall quality of the neighbourhood. However, these improvements, and possible subsurface servicing requirements have not yet been developed to a point where a cost estimate can be developed in any meaningful way.

Additional and/or optional strategies the University could explore include:

- Consider offering long-term tenants the opportunity to purchase their current homes, or new units as their needs change, with the land component remaining as a lease. In this way, purchasers though assuming the maintenance costs, would be able to benefit from the potential increase in equity. The University would retain ownership and manage future property transfers.
- Some of the target groups, new faculty in particular, could be offered affordable ownership opportunities. We suggest a mechanism where a mid-rise building, or perhaps part of a building, could be designated for affordable ownership. The report offers a proforma analysis that suggests that the underlying land of the condominium is retained by the University. Reduced marketing and sales costs

as well as eliminating a land value payment could reduce values to affordable levels. Apart from the obvious benefits of providing affordable living accommodation, this approach eliminates long term maintenance and management costs.

- The University of Toronto may be able to offer greater affordability by offering first and, in the case of new developments, second mortgages, on favourable terms. These mortgages could create a significant new source of revenue.

At this level of analysis there is good evidence that the plan developed by Brook McIlroy along with the strategies contained within this report could be the basis of an economically viable project worthy of more detailed consideration.

Next Steps

A series of next steps should be framed within a business plan for the future of the Huron Sussex neighbourhood, including:

- A more detailed analysis of the townhomes and garden and garage suites would allow greater accuracy in developing overall project costs.
- If the concept of selling housing on land leases appeals to the University at this preliminary stage, more detailed, specific research should be undertaken. This would include an evaluation of the homes from a market perspective to determine if the properties would be marketable and a survey of tenants to assess the level of current or future interest. A legal review would also be advisable. This would allow a proper assessment of the issues and an estimate of potential revenue that could be built into the plan.

- If the affordable ownership concepts identified in this report are considered worthy of more detailed consideration, a more rigorous review should be undertaken, potentially in concert with a legal review and more detailed designs of the development forms suggested. This work would also identify operating issues and costs as well as revenue streams.
- One of the mid-rise buildings on Spadina Avenue will require the acquisition of private land. An assessment/appraisal of this cost should be determined as it may affect the viability and timing of this development. Any heritage issues associated with these properties and the impacts on development would require assessment.
- The mid-rise building on Harbord Street, identified for graduate student housing and at-grade retail, could move to a more detailed feasibility analysis to allow for a more accurate assessment of revenues and development costs with a view to improve the financial performance through more detailed design.
- The work identified above would allow for the development of a long term cash flow analysis that could be used to assess the flow and timing of development costs and revenues. This analysis could then be used to “stress test” the economics by applying different risk factors.
- Look at full cost of development including parking structures, landscaping, City services, a community energy system, etc.

The business plan would lay out very specific next steps, risk and risk mitigation tactics, monitoring and evaluation procedures and key benchmarks.

The Performance Guidelines

Detailed Performance Guidelines are provided for the public and private realm to ensure that new development supports the vision for an attractive, high-quality neighbourhood. Guidelines include:

- **Public Realm Design** - Nine Performance Guidelines to ensure that new development maintains and enhances safety, connectivity and vibrancy within the neighbourhood.
- **Mid-Rise Infill** - Five Performance Guidelines to ensure that mid-rise infill on Spadina Avenue and Harbord Street is appropriately designed and massed to minimize impacts on the Core Area, while creating a consistent streetwall and a comfortable, yet highly animated pedestrian environment.
- **Low-Rise Infill (Street-Related Sites)** - Five Performance Guidelines to ensure that low-rise infill development at the street edge is consistent with the established character of the Huron Sussex neighbourhood, including opportunities for well-landscaped front yards, and contemporary design that complements, but does not mimic, the bay and gable architectural style.

- **Low-Rise Infill (Garden and Garage Suites)** - Five Performance Guidelines to ensure that garden and garage suites are carefully integrated on their respective lot, minimizing overlook on adjacent properties. The guidelines encourage contemporary architecture that supports a unique character along the Living Lane and neighbourhood lanes, while complementing the associated primary dwellings.

- **Low-Rise Infill (Townhouses)** - Five Performance Guidelines to ensure that townhouses are incorporated as a compatible form of intensification that is consistent with the established character while providing an appropriate transition from mid-rise buildings on Spadina Avenue to low-rise buildings in the neighbourhood core.

In addition to the Performance Guidelines, all new development will be subject to the University's Design Review Committee.

Implementation

To achieve the recommendations of this report and to ensure that new infill development is consistent with the Huron Sussex Neighbourhood Vision identified in this Development Plan, a detailed implementation framework is outlined, including:

Partnership Opportunities -

Explores how the University of Toronto can work with the City of Toronto and the Huron Sussex community to support the Development Plan. Opportunities include:

- Continued consultation with the Huron Sussex Neighbourhood Organization and exploration of new joint committees to oversee community initiatives (i.e. community gardens, open space improvements, etc.).
- Establishing the Huron Sussex neighbourhood as a pilot project for rear-yard infill in the City. This could result in greater buy-in from the City, while providing the City with an educational tool for future garden suite development.

- Work with the City to establish the required amendments to the zoning bylaws.
- Establish development incentives (i.e. Infill Tax Credits, Secondary Suite Grants) to encourage garden and garage suites.
- Develop a plan to augment the existing urban tree canopy.
- Provide additional connections and street crossings in areas of high pedestrian activity.

Future Studies and Projects

- Considers additional work required prior to build out, including:
 - A Living Lane design plan to provide a detailed plan and specifications prior to construction of the Living Lane.
 - A parking strategy to determine the total amount of parking that is required on site and where it can best be accommodated, based on associated constructability and cost studies.

- Additional feasibility studies for each new development type, as well as in-depth analysis for the alternative funding mechanisms suggested in the economic analysis.
- An arborist report to determine, with certainty, which trees will be impacted by new infill development, and where potential additional infill opportunities can be considered.
- A commercial feasibility study to determine the viability of small-scale commercial uses on the Living Lane and laneways to ensure they are active at all times of day.
- An occupancy length study to determine the demand for, and impacts of, extending the occupancy length for new faculty housing in order to minimize turnover in the neighbourhood.
- A Proof of Concept to determine the community energy system model, creation mechanisms, and economic opportunity.

Plan Review Process - As this is a long-term plan, it is important that the recommendations continue to respond to the evolving realities and, where appropriate, changing priorities. It is recommended that the University undergo a periodic review (i.e. 5-years) of the document to ensure that the vision is being achieved as new development occurs, and that the recommendations still reflect the evolving neighbourhood context.