

ALEXANDRA PARK

Planning Rationale
for Toronto Community Housing – March 2011

**URBAN
STRATEGIES
INC**



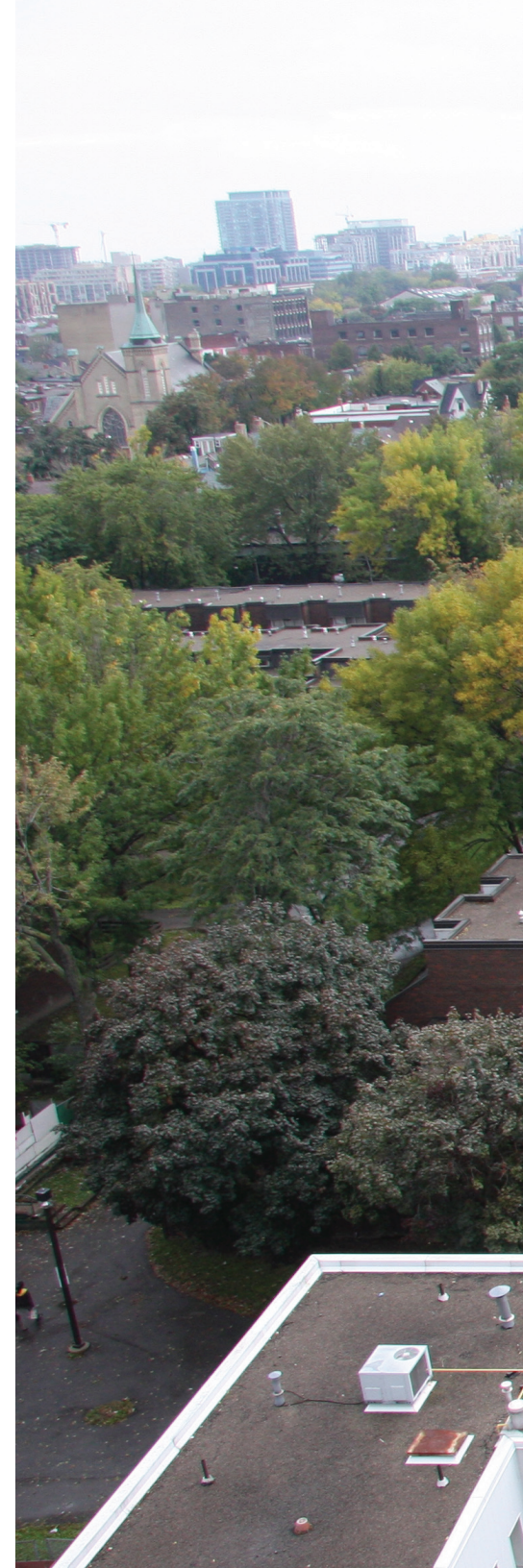
Alexandra Park
Building Great Neighbourhoods



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INTRODUCTION





Aerial view of Alexandra Park looking west from Cameron Street

1.0 Introduction

Situated between the thriving downtown neighbourhoods of Kensington Market and Queen Street West, Alexandra Park is one of the most centrally located properties in Toronto Community Housing’s portfolio, and is amongst the highest in land value. This 18-acre site not only benefits from a prime downtown location, but it is also well-served by public transit, retail and commercial amenities and a variety of recreational and social services.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Location and Profile

Alexandra Park (the ‘Site’) is located in downtown Toronto, adjacent to several of Toronto’s most well-known neighbourhoods, including Kensington Market, Chinatown and Queen West (Figure 1). The Site is within the large City block created by Dundas Street West, Bathurst Street, Queen Street West and Spadina Avenue, and is specifically bounded by Dundas Street West to the North, Denison Avenue and Augusta Avenue to the West, the buildings on the north side of Queen Street to the South, and Cameron Street to the east.

Alexandra Park is approximately 18 acres/7 hectares in size and has a population of more than 2,500 people, with over 30% under the age of 19. The majority of residents over the age of 15 (80%) are first generation Canadians. Most residents also identify as visible minorities, with the most prominent ethno-racial groups being Chinese, African-Canadian and South Asian (all data from 2006 Statscan Census).

1.1.2 Site History

Prior to the development of Alexandra Park the area was part of the traditional grid network of streets that make up downtown Toronto (Figure 2). It contained small Victorian-style houses, typical of many of Toronto’s older neighbourhoods. In 1968, Alexandra Park was developed by the Ontario Housing Corporation (Metro Toronto Housing Authority and the Metro Toronto Housing Company Limited) after nearly 10 years of planning and debate. It came about in the same spirit as other urban renewal initiatives being planned in Toronto at that time. All of these developments were inspired by the Garden City movement, which meant that they were created as insular communities set within a green setting and structured around a meandering pedestrian network.

The design of the community has since proven problematic in terms of capacity to support a diversity of uses, lack of connectivity and relationship with the surrounding community, as well as safety and security concerns. In 1986, the Queen Vanauley building was constructed in 1986 by CityHome. There has been no further development of significance in Alexandra Park since that time. In 2002, several years after the amalgamation of several municipalities into the City of Toronto, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) was established to manage social housing in the City of Toronto. In 2003, after many years of planning, Alexandra Park public housing became the Atkinson Housing Co-operative, the first public housing project in Canada to convert to a non-profit housing co-op. Today, much of the Site is managed by the Atkinson Co-operative, while the Alexandra Park Apartments and Queen Vanauley Apartments are managed directly by TCH.

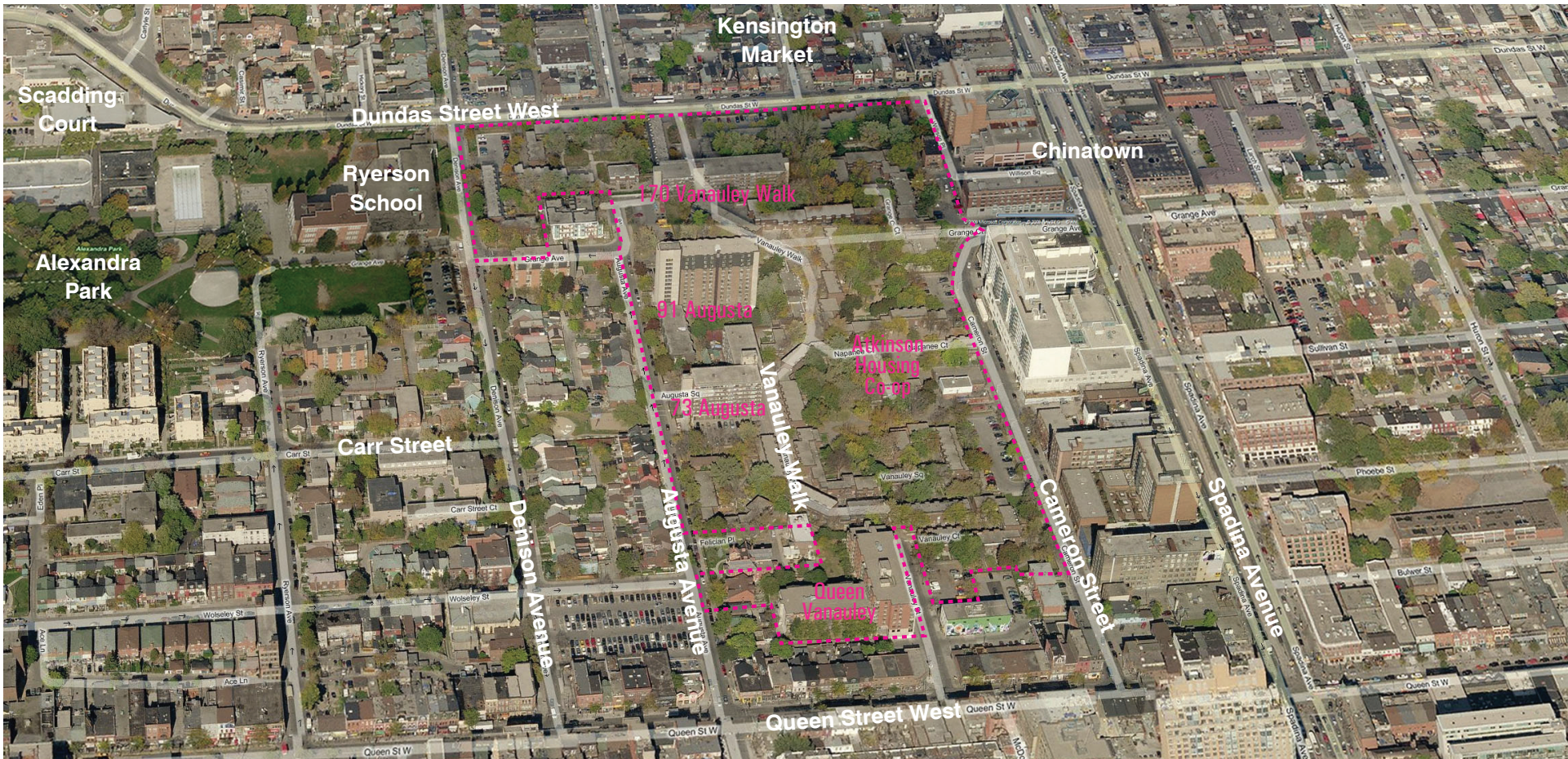


Figure 1: Bird's eye view of Alexandra Park and its surrounding context



Figure 2: Site Plan of Alexandra Park Pre-renewal, 1950

1.2 Purpose of Application

Alexandra Park is currently designated Neighbourhood in the Toronto Official Plan, which only permits small-scale infill development and has a maximum height limit of four storeys. An Official Plan amendment is required before significant development can occur. The Official Plan amendment will establish the policy framework to support the vision and desired land use, built form, public space requirements and density for the community. It is anticipated that a site specific zoning by-law amendment (either to By-law 438-86 or By-law 1156-2010) will be required to facilitate the development, including amendments to permit the proposed heights and density.

1.3 The Site

1.3.1 Built Form

There are a total of 806 units on the Site, nearly all of which are rent-geared-to-income (with the exception of approximately 81 market-rent units in the Queen Vanauley building). The housing mix consists of townhouses and mid-rise apartment buildings in the Atkinson Co-op. Queen Vanauley consists of a mid-rise apartment building and four townhouses, and the Alexandra Park Apartment building is the only high-rise tower on the Site.

Existing Unit Mix

Three Toronto Community Housing properties make up Alexandra Park (refer to Figure 3 for Unit Mix). These include:

Development	Total Units	Unit Mix
Queen Vanauley	139	81 market units 58 rent-geared-to-income units 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments
Alexandra Park Apartments	257	Senior's apartments (bachelor and 1 bedroom)
Atkinson Co-op	410	48 – 1 bed apartments 99 – 2 bed apartments 159 – 3 bed townhouses 77 – 4 bed townhouses 27 – 5 bed townhouses

Figure 3: Existing Unit Mix

- Atkinson Housing Co-Operative (townhouses and apartments)
- Queen Vanauley (mixed market-rental and rent geared-to-income building at 20 Vanauley Street)
- Alexandra Park Seniors Apartments (91 Augusta Ave)

Building Design

All of the buildings in Alexandra Park, with the exception of Queen Vanauley, were designed at the same time, in a minimalist brick architectural style. The limited differentiation in form, material and colour convey the feel of a purpose-built public housing 'project' quite distinct from its varied Victorian context. The buildings appear outdated in part because of their bland colour, older materials and lack of windows at pedestrian height. These building characteristics, together with the lack of connectivity to the adjacent community, further isolate Alexandra Park from its context, and may reinforce the stigma sometimes associated with social housing.

Building Condition

Building condition assessments for Alexandra Park were last completed in 2007 by Jacques Whitford (now operating as Stantec). The assessments were preliminary in nature, but generally found the Queen Vanauley and the Alexandra Park Apartments to be in good condition for their age. The Atkinson Co-op buildings were in fair condition and performing consistently with their age.

Building Density

The overall density of Alexandra Park is 109 units per hectare (uph). A significant proportion of that density is associated with the Queen Vanauley and the Alexandra Park Apartments. The Atkinson Co-op lands are closer to 64 uph, which is comparable to contemporary high-density suburbs or older residential communities such as Riverdale. Given the Site's location and transit access it is appropriate to increase the development density within the Co-op lands.



Existing Townhomes, typical of development on the Site today



Two of Alexandra Park's taller buildings

1.3.2 Community Facilities

Alexandra Park is generally well served by recreational, educational and social service facilities within a short walking distance of the Site. Community services are also available within Alexandra Park, primarily through the Community Centre. These generally focus on programs for Alexandra Park residents.

Within the Atkinson Co-op, the Alexandra Park Community Centre offers programs and services to Alexandra Park residents and the surrounding community. The community centre has several meeting/program rooms, a community kitchen and a larger gathering space for events. The Community Centre was identified as one of the priorities for reinvestment in the 2009 Alexandra Park Residents Survey conducted by Toronto Social Planning Council. It is one of the buildings most in need of repair and many of the spaces are inadequate for meeting program requirements. The mounting maintenance needs are a significant burden for TCH and Atkinson Co-op. The Community Centre also sits on a large site with direct access from Cameron Street and Grange Avenue, making it a potential opportunity site for redevelopment.

The City of Toronto also operates the Alexandra Park Child Care Centre (36 spaces) on the ground floor of 75 Augusta Square in Alexandra Park. A small general store also operates out of this building. CareFirst provides services to seniors in the Alexandra Park Seniors Apartments.

1.3.3 Open Spaces

Alexandra Park is served by many small open spaces but these areas are isolated and there is little connectivity to nearby parks.

Tree Canopy

Alexandra Park's open space includes a substantial tree inventory that includes both young and mature trees. According to the September 2009 tree survey conducted on the Site, there are at least 403 trees over 10 cm diameter at breast height (DBH), of which 270 trees are over 30 cm DBH. There are also 44 City of Toronto road allowance trees. The most prevalent species are green ash, silver maple and Norway maple. The next most common deciduous tree species are honey locust, catalpa and ailanthus. Many of the trees appear to be in fair to poor condition, depending on species.

Community Open Space

The Atkinson Co-op housing is designed around lawns and pedestrian pathways. These spaces are semi-public, in that they generally serve as landscaping for the Co-op and have the appearance of private space, though the public may pass through.

Much of the open space on the Site is inefficiently used, lacks a clear purpose and has no specific programming. There are many 'leftover' spaces found between front yard entrances (i.e. apartment buildings and townhomes) or between private backyards and open space. Some of the shared open space is grass or green landscaping, however, a number of areas are also dominated by paving, presumably for ease of maintenance or lack of use.



Existing Community Centre at 105 Grange Court



Existing tree canopy within Alexandra Park



Existing open space and pathways

A few of the open spaces within Alexandra Park have specific functions or social significance including:

- Basketball Courts: 2 basketball courts and small courtyard located on the west side of Cameron Street
- Children's play area: Located behind the Alexandra Park Community Centre, this space includes lawn, benches and 2 children's play sets.
- 'The Mound': A semi-public open space located in the central area of the Atkinson Co-op. Fenced backyards front onto this space, and as a result, limit visibility and create privacy issues for residents.
- Green Space Collective Initiatives: Several residents have recently come together to implement greening and gardening projects in the community, including a community garden located in the rear courtyard of Queen Vanauley. Other green space initiatives include the placement of planters and flower beds throughout the community.

Private Open Space

The distinction of private and public space is often unclear in Alexandra Park. As noted previously, private entrances into townhomes facing Vanauley Walk have no clear delineation between private and public space. This condition also exists in several other areas of the Site. By contrast, townhomes facing Augusta Avenue are equipped with landscaped front yards which create welcoming and clearly-defined front yards and entranceways. Most of the townhouses within the Atkinson Co-op have private, fenced backyards. While some spaces are well-manicured and utilized to their full potential, several appear to be unkempt and overgrown.

Along Dundas Street, townhouses and parking areas front directly onto what would normally be a busy retail street. Deep setbacks, fencing and lack of a consistent street wall create an awkward relationship to Dundas Street. Residential ground floors onto the street create significant privacy issues for residents and detract from the quality of the public realm.

In general, there is a disproportionate amount of open space (shared and private) to development density on the Site, given its central downtown location. Reorganization and improved programming of both the private and shared space on the Site would allow for more usable and attractive open spaces, as well as creating new development opportunities through more efficient use of the land.



Existing basketball courts at Alexandra Park



Community garden space tended by the residents

1.3.4 Movement

The renewal of Alexandra Park resulted in the removal of the historic street grid, which was replaced by an internal 'walk', surface parking lots and semi-public open spaces. As a result, the community is now isolated from the surrounding street network with no vehicular connections through the Site.

Transit

Alexandra Park is bounded by, or in close proximity to, four main streetcar routes:

- North: 505 Dundas Street
- South: 501 Queen Street; and
- East: 510 Spadina Avenue
- West: 511 Bathurst Street

The Spadina LRT provides a direct connection to subway services at Spadina Station.

Primary Streets

Alexandra Park is roughly bounded by four main arterials:

- North: Dundas Street West
- South: Queen Street West
- East: Spadina Avenue
- West: Bathurst Street

Dundas Street West is the only arterial that directly bounds Alexandra Park (along the northern edge of the community). Access to Queen Street, Bathurst Street and Spadina Avenue is indirect and limited.

Collector and Local Streets

Several streets run parallel to or dead end at Alexandra Park, but no vehicular roads actually traverse the Site:

- **Cameron Street:** A north-south route providing access to Queen Street West and Spadina Avenue. Cameron Street is mainly used as a rear access and servicing route for buildings fronting on Spadina Avenue. It has no intersections or pedestrian crossings, which facilitates higher speed traffic and offers an attractive 'shortcut' for cars trying to access Queen Street from Spadina Avenue. At the south end of the street, turn of the century warehouse and street-related buildings could provide the basis for a more attractive streetscape. In general, the Atkinson Co-op townhouses along Cameron Street do not relate to the street edge, with rear yards, side yards and parking areas taking up most of the frontage.
- **Augusta Avenue:** A one-way (northbound) residential street providing access from Queen Street West. It terminates at the north-west quadrant of Alexandra Park preventing direct connections to Kensington Market.
- **Willison Square:** A small, laneway-style street located just north of Grange Avenue providing access from Spadina Avenue to the eastern edge of the Site.
- **Denison Avenue:** A north-south residential street on the western edge of the Site. It is the only street that provides access to Dundas Street West and it also provides southbound vehicular access through the entire block from Dundas Street West to Queen Street West.



Dundas Street frontage



Access from Vanauley Street

- **Carr Street:** An east-west residential street providing access to Bathurst Street. It does not have a direct connection to Alexandra Park. The Carr Street right-of-way segment between Denison and Augusta Avenues has been replaced by the Randy Padmore Parkette.
- **Wolseley Street:** An east-west residential street providing direct access to Bathurst Street from Augusta Avenue at the western edge of Alexandra Park.
- **Vanauley Street:** A small dead end street located along the eastern frontage of the Queen Vanauley building (the remainder of Vanauley Street was removed during the construction of Alexandra Park). It is the primary emergency access route into the Site.
- **Grange Court/Avenue:** Within Alexandra Park, Grange Avenue has been converted to Grange Court, a pedestrian route running east-west through the Site. East of Alexandra Park, at the Community Centre, Grange Avenue provides vehicular access to Spadina Avenue and Cameron Street. Similarly, on the western side of the Site at Augusta Avenue, Grange Court reverts back to a vehicular route, with one-way (westbound) connections to Denison Avenue.

Site Layout

The arrangement of buildings, pathways and open spaces within Alexandra Park does not follow the traditional grid-pattern found throughout central (pre-war) Toronto. The buildings are arranged in an irregular pattern across the Site, with buildings at unconventional angles to the street/pathways.

Very few of the buildings have a frontage onto a street or have a clear address. The result is a development pattern that is difficult to understand and navigate. There is a lack of passive surveillance or “eyes on the street” that traditionally makes a community feel safe and discourages anti-social behaviour.

Access and Arrival

As noted previously, vehicular access into the Alexandra Park is limited to emergency and service vehicles. Drop off and delivery to individual units is difficult, particularly for the elderly and those with mobility challenges. There are multiple points of entry into the Site for pedestrians and cyclists, however, many are unclear, hidden, fenced or are otherwise unwelcoming. Many of the Site’s edges are dominated by surface parking lots, side and rear yards and servicing areas, which discourage movement and create a poor relationship to the public realm.

Internal Connections

Alexandra Park does not have internal vehicular connections. An internal meandering pedestrian route known as Vanauley Walk is centrally located within the Atkinson Housing Co-op. This heavily-paved route connects Dundas Street West to Vanauley Street, which connects to Queen Street West. Vanauley Walk also acts as a servicing and emergency route through the centre of Alexandra Park; however, it is gated at both ends and can only be unlocked by security personnel. Vanauley Walk creates an ambiguous relationship between the public zone and private entranceways of the townhomes, which immediately front the walkway. There is no transition space between the front doors of houses and the public walkway, making it difficult to understand where the public/private space begins and ends. Several formal and informal pathways stem from Vanauley Walk to provide connections to abutting secondary streets, though they are difficult to understand and navigate.

In general, the internal navigation system within Alexandra Park is confusing and is hampered by dead ends, neglected spaces and lack of passive surveillance. As a result, way-finding can be difficult for those who are unfamiliar with the Site. These factors contribute to a reduced sense of personal security.

Parking

Parking within Alexandra Park is primarily provided in surface lots, with the exception of the Queen Vanauley building, which has one level of underground parking. There are approximately 245 parking spaces on the Site. On street parking is also available on most of the surrounding local streets.

Servicing

Weekly garbage pickup is provided for units facing Vanauley Walk, Augusta and Dundas. Where units are not on truck-accessible routes, residents are required to transport their waste across the Site to a central depot on a weekly basis. Household garbage storage is both an aesthetic and management issue, as there is no place to store the large bins required for City pick-up.

1.4 The Surrounding Area

1.4.1 Immediate Context

Alexandra Park is generally within a residential context (Figure 4). The residential neighbourhood to the west of Alexandra Park includes a mixture of low rise residential buildings as well as institutional services including a school, library, church, community centre and park.

South

Small scale (2 to 4 storey) mixed retail and residential uses characterize the vibrant Queen Street West. Further south, the building heights and floorplates increase in size as part of the King Spadina District, comprised of new and restored buildings accommodating office and residential uses with retail at-grade.

West

A typical Toronto neighbourhood comprised of low-rise residential buildings including single and semidetached houses, townhomes and apartments. This residential character continues further west across Bathurst Street.

North

1 to 3 storey residential buildings with retail at grade front the north side of Dundas Street. The retail in this area tends to be fragmented as compared to Spadina Avenue. Further north of Dundas is Kensington Market, which consists primarily of low-rise residential buildings, many of which have been converted to retail and market-style operations.

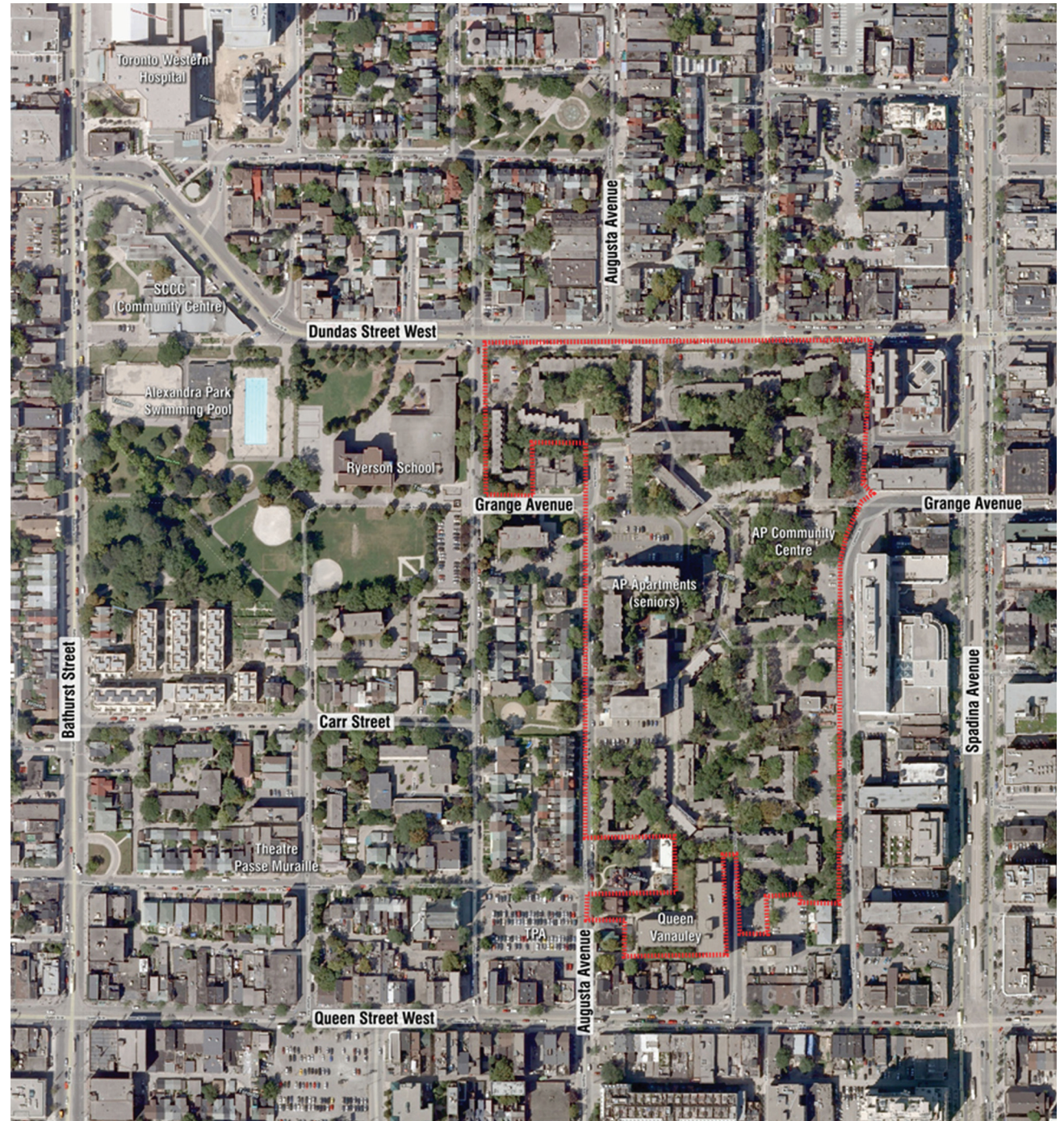


Figure 4: Aerial view of Alexandra Park and its surrounding context

East

Spadina Avenue consists of a broad range of mixed use building types, generally ranging in height from 3 to 6 storeys. However, the west side of Spadina Avenue between Queen Street West and Dundas Street West is dominated by three 10-storey residential buildings, one of which (Chinatown Centre) is a large slab building that creates a hard wall against much of the east side of the Site.

1.4.2 Surrounding Context

Alexandra Park is surrounded by some of Toronto's most dynamic neighbourhoods: Queen West, Kensington Market and Chinatown.

Kensington Market

An eclectic neighbourhood characterized by a variety of second hand stores, cafes, produce markets and an assortment of retailers. Its narrow, pedestrian-oriented streets are easily navigated by foot rather than by vehicle.

Chinatown

The core of Toronto's vibrant Chinatown is found at the heart of the Spadina-Dundas intersection. This district is an enclave of Chinese culture dating back to the early 19th century and is home to a diversity of Asian residents, retailers and restaurants.

Queen West

Formerly known as the garment district for its high concentration of textile and fashion retailers, Queen West is now a trendy downtown neighbourhood characterized by historic, renovated and newly developed buildings, a diverse retail mix and a vibrant and eclectic street character. Retailers include fabric stores, antique furniture shops, fashion boutiques, cafes, restaurants and nightclubs. A portion of the Queen Street West district has recently been designated as a Heritage Conservation District,

under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Queen Street West Heritage Conservation District includes the Queen Street West corridor, between University Avenue and Bathurst Street. This designation protects the historical and unique identity of the area and controls new development from altering the character of the district. A number of Business Improvement Areas are located near the Site, including: Chinatown, Dundas-Bathurst, and Queen West. Kensington Market is in the process of forming a BIA.

1.4.3 Open Spaces

Although Alexandra Park has no formal public open spaces, it is in close proximity to several City parks.

The most significant public park in the area is Alexandra Park, which has a skateboard park, outdoor swimming and wading pool, community garden, a baseball diamond, playground, community oven and ice skating rink. A second public park, the Randy Padmore Parkette and playground, is located between Denison and Augusta Avenues.

Noteworthy parks located outside the study area boundary include:

- Bellevue Square Park: Kensington Market's community park equipped with children's playground and splash-pad.
- Grange Park: Located south of the Art Gallery of Ontario and adjacent to the Ontario College of Art and Design, this active park includes numerous benches, a children's play set and wading pool. The park is significant for its historical context – prior to the development of Alexandra Park, Grange Avenue cut through the Site providing a connection from Bathurst Street to Grange Park.



Kensington Market



Chinatown



Grange Park

1.4.4 Community Facilities

Several facilities that serve the broader community are located on the streets surrounding Alexandra Park.

Adjacent to Alexandra Public Park is the Scadding Court Community Centre, which is operated by Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation and includes a gymnasium, indoor pool and Harry R. Gairey outdoor ice skating rink. The Sanderson Branch of the Toronto Public Library is attached to the Community Centre.

The Scadding Court Community Centre's programs are targeted to under-served, culturally diverse groups such as low-income families, at-risk children and youth, newcomers, people living with disabilities, seniors and the under-employed. Three other community service organizations are active in the area: St. Felix Centre immediately adjacent to the Co-op on Augusta Avenue; St. Stephen's Community House in Kensington Market; and, Youthlink located on Vanauley Street opposite the Queen Vanauley apartments.

Situated between the Alexandra Public Park and the Atkinson Co-op, is Ryerson Public School (K-8), which includes two baseball diamonds and a parking lot on Denison Avenue. The Toronto District School Board is examining opportunities to invest in renewable energy technologies, specifically geothermal heating and cooling.

Located on the north-east corner of the Bathurst-Dundas intersection is the Toronto Western Hospital. The hospital has 236 beds and experiences approximately 43,000 emergency visits per year.

A more extensive analysis of community facilities is included in the Community Services and Facilities Study, submitted under separate cover.

1.4.5 Recent Development Activity in the Area

Site specific zoning by-law amendments (ZBA) have been approved over time for the Alexandra Park and for a variety of residential towers in its immediate vicinity. The ZBAs date back to the 1970s and 1980s, when the neighbouring residential towers to the east and west of the Site were developed.

The few more recent developments that have occurred in the immediate vicinity of Alexandra Park have generally been small-scale residential infill projects. Limited development has also occurred in recent years along all of the arterial avenues in the vicinity of Alexandra Park. These developments have tended to fall within or reasonably close to the intent of the Zoning By-law. None of the recent new developments in the immediate vicinity of Alexandra Park have been subject to a ZBA.

Figure 5 includes a list of recent planning applications and approved developments for mid to hi-rise proposals located in the general vicinity of the Site. The majority of these are located within the designated King-Spadina Reinvestment Area, are the result of revitalization district policies that do not apply to Alexandra Park and are not generally characteristic of the area immediately adjacent to the Site. The significant scale and density of development in the King-Spadina area is unlikely to be a precedent for Alexandra Park, given the current planning framework, existing built form and the character of low-rise residential neighbourhood immediately abutting the Site.

Councillor Adam Vaughan's website (www.ward20.ca) also notes development interests related to the following properties, which do not yet appear on the City's website.

- 17-23 St. Andrew Street, 4-storey Residential
- 3 and 5 Kensington Ave
- 180 Spadina Ave
- 270 Spadina Ave
- Williamson Square

Dundas-Spadina Streetscape Study and Implementation Plan

On April 22, 2009 the City of Toronto released the Staff Report titled 'Streetscape Study and Implementation Plan for Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street.'

The purpose of the report was to inform the process for issuing a proposal call for the undertaking of a two-phase streetscape design and implementation strategy for the section of Dundas Street West between University Avenue and Bathurst Street. This section of Dundas Street requires watermain replacement and road and sidewalk reconstruction: from Bathurst to Spadina in 2010 and from Spadina to University in 2011.

The Staff Report states that this section of Dundas Street West has the potential for a number of significant development proposals, including the redevelopment of Alexandra Park. The report also highlights the potential for this area to develop into a creative corridor, therefore, warranting extensive streetscape upgrades. The study was prepared throughout 2010 and the final design concept for Dundas Street was presented at a public meeting on September 27, 2010. Recommendations in the area adjacent to Alexandra Park included street trees, street furniture and a wider pedestrian zone.

Developer	Address	Use	Description	OPA/Rezoning Status (Site Plan may be in process)
Cresford	399 Adelaide St W	Residential	10 storey residential building	Approved
Boymelgreen Developers	525 Adelaide St W	Mixed Use	11 storey and 14 storey residential buildings with commercial at grade	Approved
Toronto Western Hospital	399 Bathurst St	Institutional	9 Storey addition	Approved
Sorbara Group	32 Camden St	Residential	12 storey residential building	Approved
Unknown	340 College St	Mixed Use	7 storey addition to existing 6 storey mixed use building	In process
Unknown	856 Dundas St W	Mixed Use	8 storey residential with retail at grade	Preliminary Application
TAS Design Build	371-379 King St W	Residential	34 storey tower	Approved
Cabo Three Investments	401-409 King St W	Mixed Use	39 storey building with 2 storeys of commercial	In Process
Great Gulf Developments	430 King St W	Residential	36 storey tower	Approved
BLVD Development	478 King St W	Mixed Use	12 storey residential building with retail at grade.	Approved
Freed Properties	560 King St W	Multiple Use	12 storey residential building with commercial parking garage below grade	Under Construction
620 Development Inc	620 King St W	Mixed Use	11 storey residential building with retail or commercial at grade	Approved
Freed Properties	621 King St W	Mixed Use	314 unit residential building with commercial parking garage below grade and retail at grade	Under Appeal
Freed Properties	650 King St W	Residential	10 and 16 storey residential building	Approved
Minto Group	775 King St W	Mixed Use	17 storey residential building with retail at grade	Under Construction
Riocan	585 Queen St W	Mixed Use	7 storey building - three storeys of retail, with four storeys of residential	Approved
Tribute Communities	156 Portland St	Mixed Use	7 storey residential building with retail at grade	Under Construction

Figure 5: Recently Completed and Approved Projects



Alexandra Park resident workshop, November 2009



REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

2.0 Redevelopment Proposal

2.1 Guiding Principles

The first stage of community engagement established ten guiding principles, which directed the master planning process. These principles reflect Toronto Community Housing’s mandate to provide quality housing for low and moderate income households and to create a well-connected, mixed-income community. They were modeled on the revitalization principles established in Regent Park and Lawrence Heights, and adapted to reflect community priorities relevant to Alexandra Park.

The full set of guiding principles established through the community visioning process is:

1. Zero displacement
2. Providing good housing
3. Providing more than housing
4. Planning together first
5. Minimizing disruption
6. Protecting tenants’ rights
7. Developing connections
8. Ensuring participation
9. Nurturing a green, clean and beautiful community
10. Enhancing opportunities

In the case of Alexandra Park, the guiding principles distinguish this revitalization process from any other that has been conducted by Toronto Community Housing to date. Specifically, the principle of zero displacement ensures that no one currently living on the Site will be required to relocate off-site at any point during the revitalization process. It was clear during community meetings that resident support for redevelopment of the Site would be contingent on ensuring zero displacement.

To achieve zero displacement, the master plan phasing program is built on the premise that residents must be relocated on-site, within existing vacant units, or directly into a new unit, before their building can be demolished. The program relies on an average annual unit vacancy rate of approximately 9 townhouse units per year, as determined by historical records provided by the Atkinson Co-op. It requires that Atkinson Co-op and Toronto Community Housing control the flow of new incoming tenants to provide sufficient vacant units for relocating existing tenants. The recommended master plan ensures zero displacement by taking advantage of vacancies, incrementally relocating residents in phases and extending the phasing program over a 15-year timeframe.



2.2 The Master Plan

The master plan presented here (Figure 6) encompasses all the principles and design goals identified through the consultation program and the technical analyses conducted by the project team. Most importantly, it incorporates all of the critical preconditions for a consensus-based plan. The recommended master plan creates a new mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhood, with improved housing for Toronto Community Housing tenants. It creates a safer, healthier, more inviting environment that knits the Atkinson Co-op/Alexandra Park residents back into the surrounding neighbourhoods. With the addition of market units, approximately 5,000 residents are expected to live in Alexandra Park following its redevelopment.

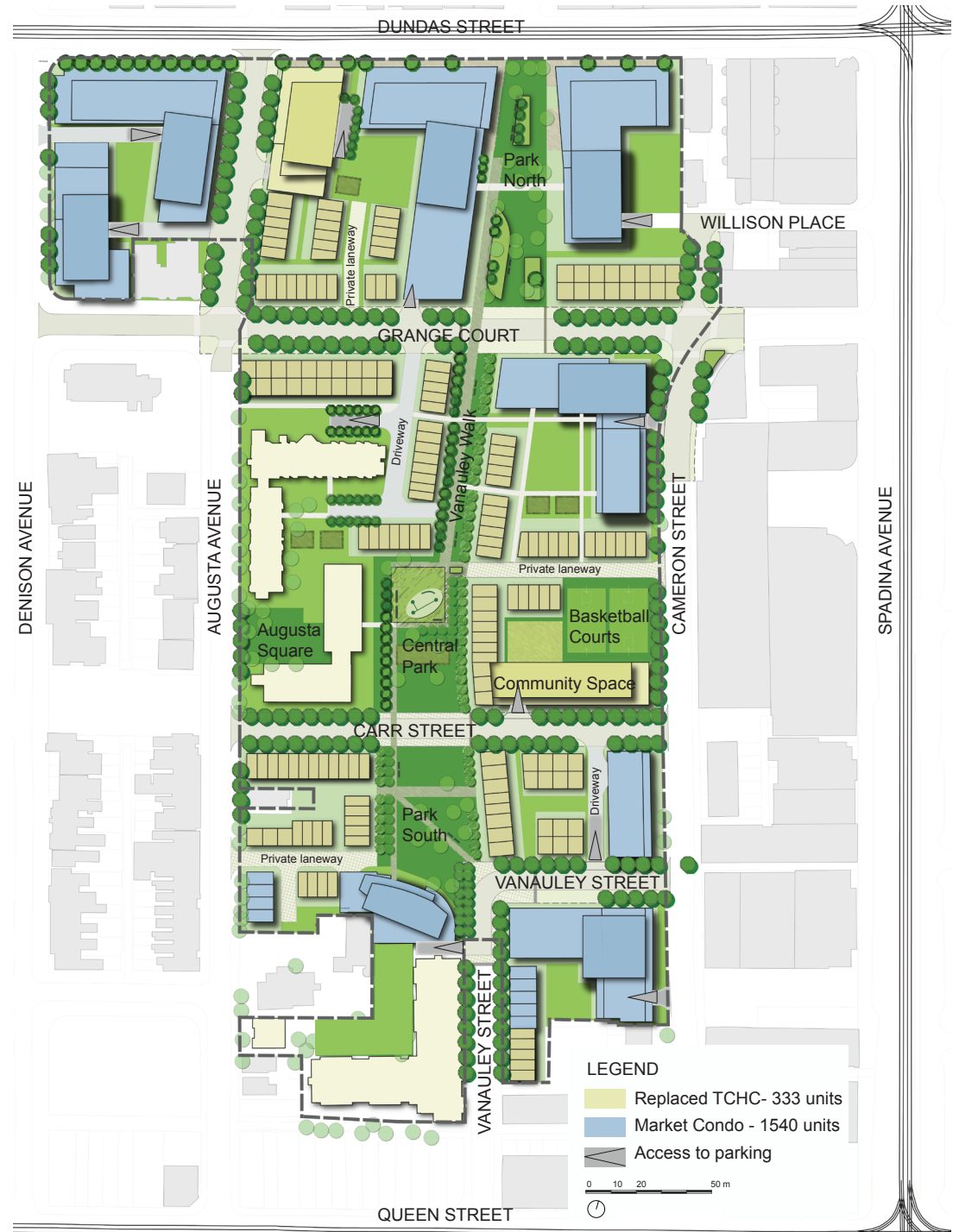


Figure 6: Alexandra Park Master Plan

2.2.1 Streets and Blocks Framework

The new streets proposed in the master plan are designed to improve access, connectivity, security and privacy, with minimal car traffic travelling through the Site. The new street network creates marketable development parcels and ensures that all new buildings have a proper street access, frontage and address (Figure 7). All new units will face onto a public street, public landscaped open space, or privately owned mews, reinforcing the distinction between public and private space and providing the passive-surveillance that is lacking today.

In an effort to reconnect the community with its surroundings and improve Site access and safety, four new vehicular street connections are proposed: Augusta Avenue (extension), Vanauley Street (extension), Cameron Street (realignment), Grange Court and Carr Street. Street sections for each of the proposed streets are shown in Figures 8-11. Augusta Avenue, Vanauley Street, Cameron Street and Grange Court are designed according to the City's Development Infrastructure Standards, in terms of cross-section elements and dimension. Carr Street is designed as a 'Woonerf' street, with a narrow right-of-way to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists. Its character has been modeled on a the implementation of a Woonerf in the West Don Lands. All new streets, extensions and realignments are expected to be dedicated as public rights-of-way.

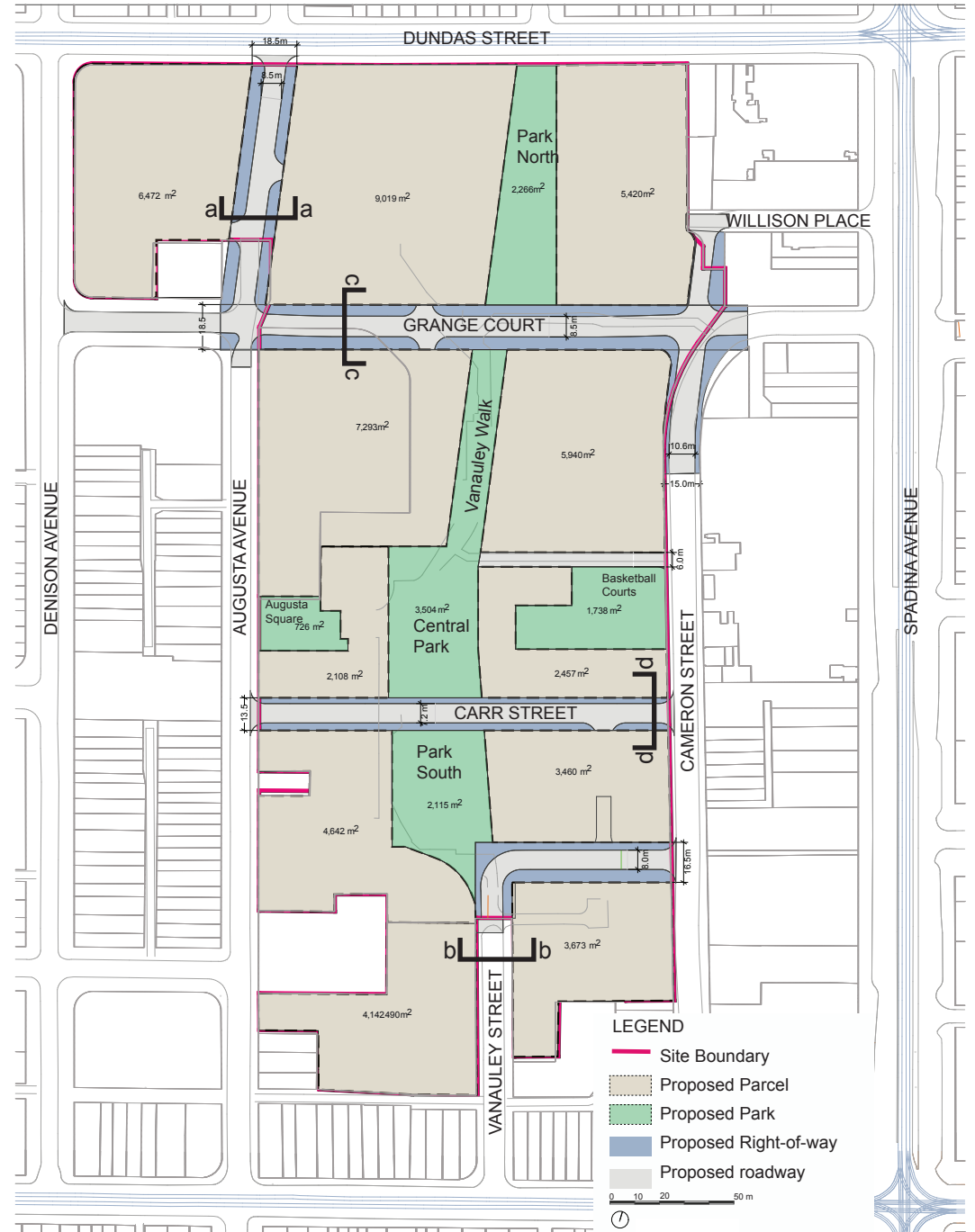


Figure 7: Public Realm Plan

Augusta Avenue Extension: 18.5 m right-of-way (Figure 8)

The northern extension of Augusta Avenue provides a direct connection from Dundas Street to Queen Street. This proposed linkage will reconnect the community with the Kensington Market and Queen West districts. The design for Augusta Avenue is proposed to reflect traditional Toronto street design and continue the character established south of Grange Avenue.

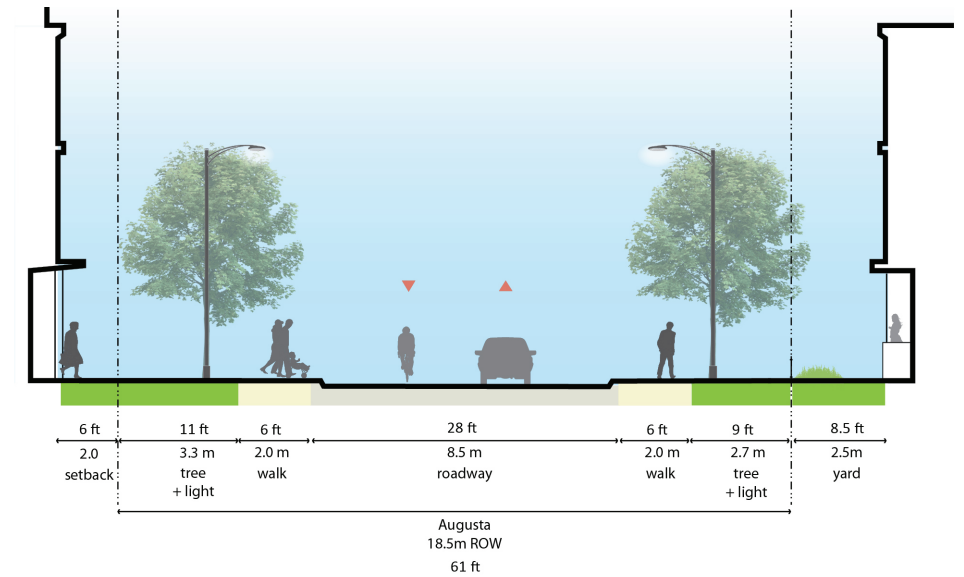


Figure 8: Section a-a: Augusta Street 18.5 m ROW

Vanauley Street Extension: 16.5 m right-of-way (Figure 9)

The extension of Vanauley Street connects the existing dead-end street to Cameron Street, which will improve circulation and access and provide a more inviting gateway into the Site. The design for this public-right-of-way is proposed to reflect traditional Toronto street design, and continue the character already established on Vanauley Street.

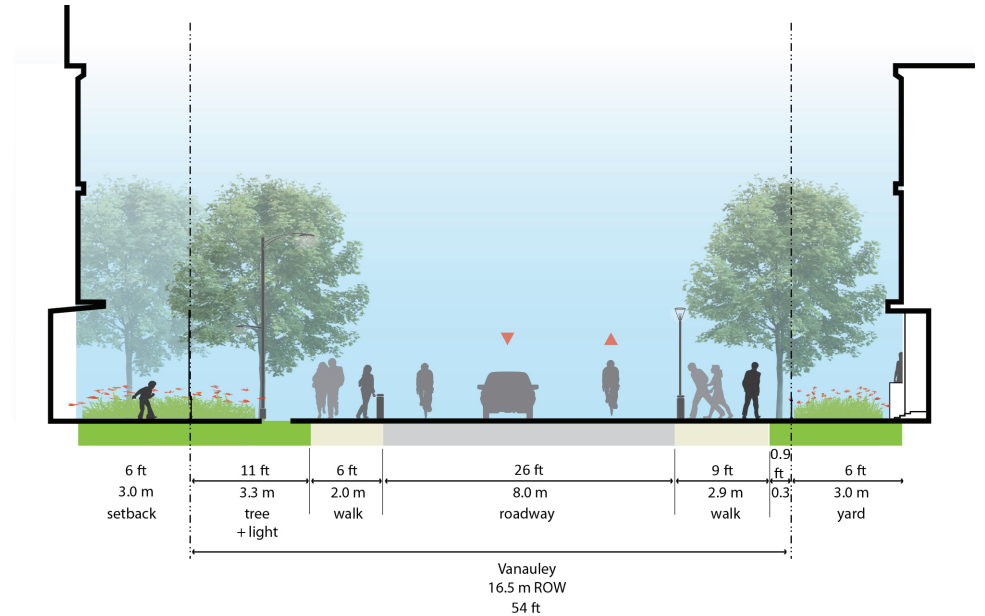


Figure 9: Section b-b: Vanauley Street 16.5 m ROW



Precedent: Heath Street, Toronto

Grange Court: 18.5 m right-of-way (Figure 10)

Grange Court is envisioned as a pedestrian-priority street that provides a direct connection from Cameron Street to the newly-extended Augusta Avenue. This east-west connection re-establishes the Grange Street alignment that was removed when Alexandra Park was constructed. Grange Court and Carr Street are the only two new street connections proposed to extend through the centre of the Site. Given current residents' desire to protect the intimate character of Alexandra Park today, these streets have been designed to create a comfortable pedestrian realm with special landscaping features to focus on pedestrians and cyclists and minimize vehicular traffic. It is envisaged that these streets will include high quality landscaping and traffic calming elements.



Precedent: St. George Street, Toronto

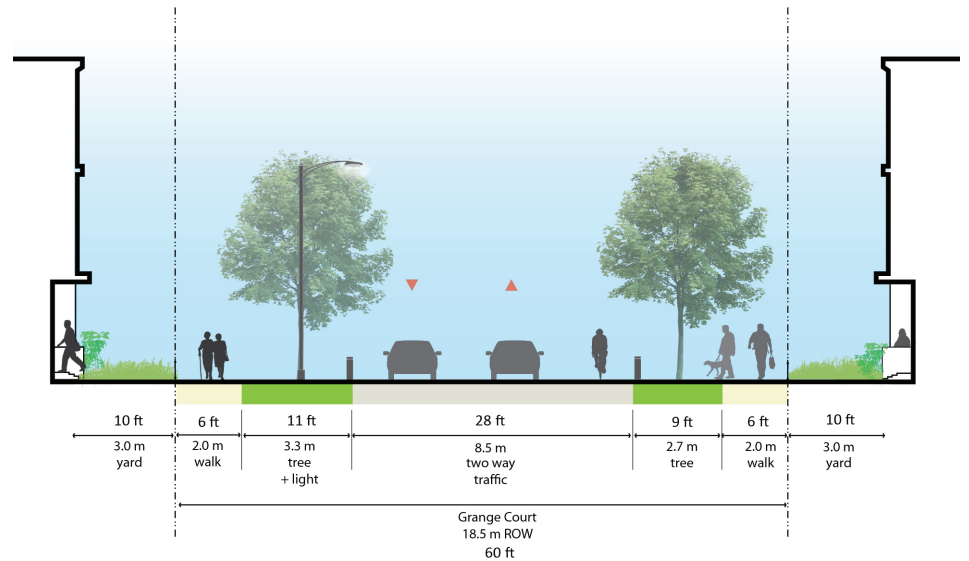


Figure 10: Section c-c: Grange Court 18.5 m ROW

Carr Street: 13.5 m right-of-way (Figure 11)

Carr Street provides a new pedestrian-priority east-west connection between Randy Padmore Parkette and Cameron Street at the south end of the Site. While this street will permit vehicular access to several townhomes, the community amenity, the residential units above the community amenity and a market tower, the character of the street is envisioned to be one that prioritizes pedestrians. The narrow width of the street, combined with various paving treatments across its length will slow cars and allow for an inviting and safe connection between Central Park and South Park.

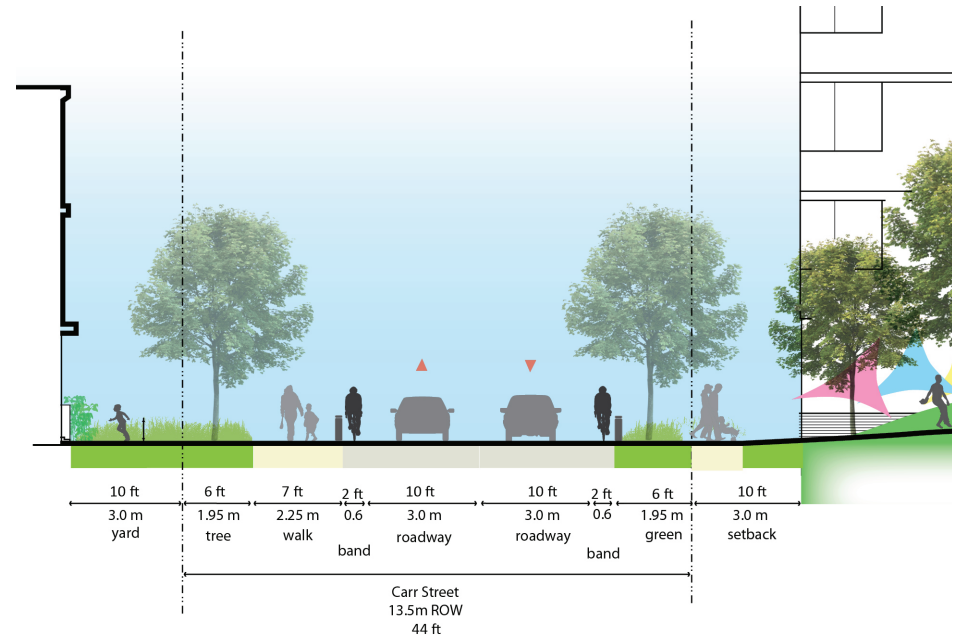


Figure 11: Section d-d: Carr Street 13.5 m ROW

2.2.2 Open Space and Connections

Proposed Public Parks

Alexandra Park is currently well-served by large recreation-focused public parks in the area, including City-owned Alexandra Park (1.8 ha) located immediately west of the community. Park spaces proposed in the master plan are intended to provide smaller-scale play areas, meeting places and amenity spaces that serve the immediate needs of the residents, rather than replicate larger facilities already provided in the surrounding area. The goal is to consolidate and redefine the scattered and unprogrammed open spaces that dominate the Site today into an attractive, functional and connected green space system.

The open space system is a continuous green spine that connects three new public parks at the heart of the community (Figure 12). A total of approximately 2.5 ha of park space is included in the proposed master plan. In addition to the central park system, walkways between townhouses, building setbacks on streets and planted boulevards enhance the landscape elements of the community.



Figure 12: Open Space Plan

The three new public parks at the centre of the community are:

North Park: Emerging from Dundas Street, this public space acts as an entrance into the community. It is the gateway into a series of green pathways and parks leading to Queen Street.

Central Park: This centrally located park is designed to function as the main open space of the community. It is intended to encourage and host a variety of activities including passive and active recreation and community events. A splash pad and multi-use passive open space area could also be accommodated. The park is located adjacent to the new community amenity space and basketball courts with the intent of creating a vibrant central hub for Alexandra Park.

South Park: Located at the southern end of Alexandra Park, this open space acts as a gateway into the community from Vanauley Street and Queen Street. It is large enough to support a variety of facilities and activities. It is anticipated that this park and the north park will act as meeting places that are not only used by residents, but also attract the surrounding neighbourhood.

Private Open Space

One of the most valued elements of the Site for existing Atkinson Co-op townhouse residents is personal outdoor space. All of the townhouses are planned to include front yards and all through townhouses will have back yards. All of the apartment and condominium buildings are planned to include shared outdoor amenity space in courtyards.



Private courtyards in London, UK



Montreal Playground

2.2.3 Residential Uses and Housing Mix

Toronto Community Housing Units

The master plan maintains the same number of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 bedroom rent-geared-to-income units as exists on the Site today. The master plan replaces 333 Atkinson Co-op units through the demolition of all the existing Atkinson Co-op townhomes, and the apartment building located at 170 Vanauley Walk (70 apartment units). All 4 and 5 bedroom townhomes are replaced in townhouse form. Approximately 80 of the 159 existing 3 bedroom townhomes in the Co-op are replaced in apartment form, and the balance are replaced in townhouse form. All 70 demolished apartments are replaced in apartment form. Most apartments will have residential units at grade. All unit sizes will be designed to current standards provided by Toronto Community Housing.

The Alexandra Park seniors' apartments (91 Augusta Avenue), Atkinson Co-op Apartments (73-75 Augusta Avenue) and Queen Vanauley (20 Vanauley Street) apartment building are retained in the master plan. As revenue is generated through revitalization, renovations will be made to improve their condition and reduce operating costs.

One of the community priorities for revitalization is to maintain the cohesiveness and closeness of the community without isolating Atkinson Co-op households into one area of the Site. The proposed siting of Toronto Community Housing units and market residential units in the master plan addresses this priority by locating TCH units throughout the Site from Vanauley Street to Dundas Street, clustering them at the core of the community with addresses on streets, parks and proposed mews. This is intended to preserve the protected and inclusive quality that is valued in the community today. Proposed townhouse units have also been located toward the centre and west side of the Site to complement adjacent development.

Market Units

Approximately 1,530 market-priced condominium units (122,000 m² / 1,315,000 ft² gross GFA) and 9 market-priced townhouse units (2,565 m²/27,600 ft² GFA) are proposed. The market-units are located so as to maximize the potential of the Dundas frontage, a major arterial road and take advantage of areas where greater height and density are more likely to be accepted. As a result, most of the Dundas frontage consists of market-priced condominium buildings. Similarly, the Cameron Street frontage has a number of mid-rise market buildings. A mix of market townhouses and apartment buildings provide a mix of housing tenures at the southern portion of the Site, and take advantage of the high-market value afforded by proximity to Queen Street. Green roofs are proposed on all apartments.

2.2.4 Retail and Commercial

Approximately 1,200 m² / 12,500 ft² of retail-commercial space is included in the master plan. The proposed retail-commercial space fronts onto Dundas Street. The development of Dundas Street will take advantage of the retail and commercial potential extending from Kensington Market and Chinatown. All of the new market and Toronto Community Housing buildings along the Dundas Street frontage have been planned to accommodate ground floor retail and commercial uses. Some of this space can take advantage of the adjacency to North Park, with the potential for businesses to wrap their frontage onto the park and into the community.

The western-most development parcel has sufficient space to accommodate a large-floor retailer such as a grocery-store, should the opportunity arise. Residents have also emphasized the importance of promoting local employment in the revitalization and have suggested using some of the ground-floor commercial space for small resident-run businesses or income streams for the community centre.



Precedent apartment: Toronto



Precedent green roof: Toronto



Precedent townhouses: Vancouver

Although the majority of ground floor commercial space is contained within market-buildings, Toronto Community Housing may retain ownership of the commercial space in the market buildings. With the exception of Dundas Street, the Site has limited capacity to support non-residential uses and no such facilities are proposed.

2.2.5 Community Amenities

In addition to the new open spaces, prominent community amenities are located at the centre of the Site with direct access to the new central park (Figure 12). Alexandra Park Community Centre, a focal point for residents, will be rebuilt adjacent to the basketball courts. This proposed indoor community space is integrated within an 8 storey new rent-geared-to-income apartment building, and is approximately 850m² (9,150 ft²) in size, larger than the existing Centre. Facilities will likely include a community kitchen and several multi-purpose rooms to host a variety of services, activities and programs, as currently offered by the existing Centre, and offer the opportunity for expansion. Two new outdoor basketball courts will be located directly north of the community amenity, replacing the existing courts which are currently located in a similar area of the Site. There is also an outdoor, multi-use plaza which will serve as an amenity for the community space, adjacent to the basketball courts.

Existing apartment buildings on the Site each contain some shared community space, including a day care centre at the base of 73-75 Augusta Square. The new TCH apartment building on Dundas Street will also have common amenity space. Large-scale recreation facilities such as pools and rinks are available at nearby Scadding Court Community Centre.



Community Amenity Precedents

2.2.6 Building Height and Mass

A range of building heights and densities are proposed throughout the master plan, as indicated on Figure 13. New buildings are designed to consider the existing scale of development in the area and minimize shadow impacts.

The master plan focuses the tallest buildings along the Dundas Street and Cameron Street frontages, where existing buildings (10-storey residential building and the 10-storey Chinatown Centre) already establish a precedent for higher-density development. These frontages include building heights ranging from 7-19 storeys. The location of the tallest buildings on Dundas Street and Cameron Street also means that shadows are primarily cast north and west of the Site, rather than within the property. All new buildings are set-back at least 2 metres from the street edge to reinforce a pedestrian-scaled environment.

To respect the low-density, residential character of the surrounding community, buildings proposed at the centre and along the west side of the Site are lower-scale, providing a gradual transition to the taller buildings along Spadina Avenue, Cameron Street and Dundas Street. Generally, townhouses will be three storeys.

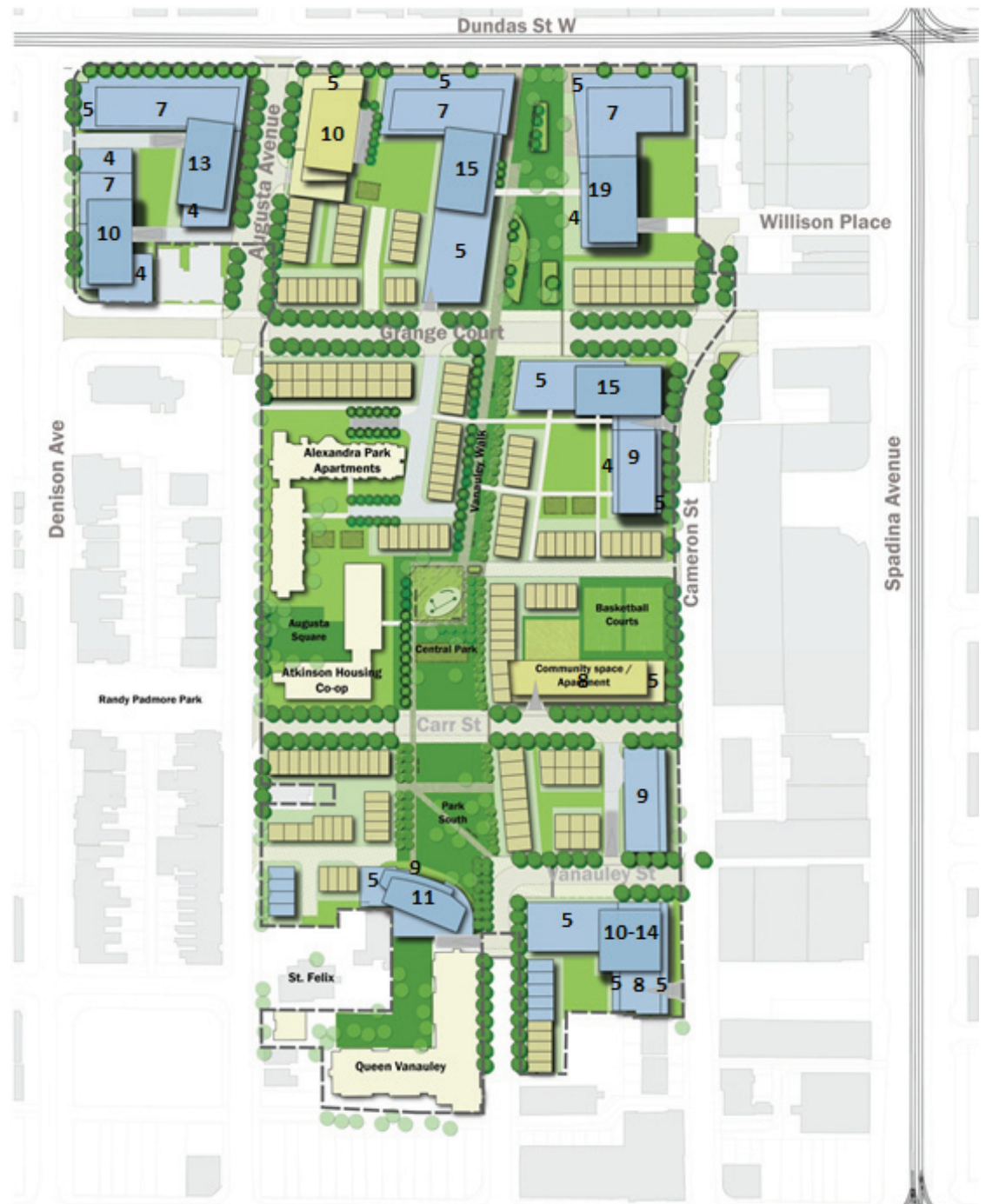


Figure 13: Height Plan

2.2.7 Timing and Phasing

In the context of zero displacement, the implementation of the master plan will require approximately 15 years to complete, phased in ten construction stages. Construction on the Site is anticipated to be relatively continuous over the 15-year timeframe. Creation of public parks and streets are distributed across the 15-year period, as is reinvestment in the existing buildings to be retained. The master plan site layout and the distribution of uses have been strategically organized in order to achieve Zero Displacement, minimize disruption and ensure the financial feasibility of the project. The pace of implementation is largely determined by the on-site vacancy rate and may be accelerated or slowed depending on how many people choose to move out of the community in a given year. The phasing plan is based on the assumption of an initial 24 vacant units which would be held in order to begin the demolition and phasing program. A detailed phasing program, with the location and number of units demolished and constructed, is provided in Figures 14 to 17.

Phase	Demolition	TCHC Building Replaced	Market Building	Infrastructure / Open space/ Amenity
Phase ONE				
Phase 1a1	24 units	51 units	0 units	Half of Carr Street Half of Grange Court Segment of Augusta Ave.
Phase 1a2	20 units	22 units	75 units	Complete Carr Street
Phase 1a3	53 units	5 units	204 units	Vanauley Street
Phase 1b1	3 units	16 units	100 units	Park South
Subtotal	100 units	94 units	379 units	
PHASE TWO				
Phase 2a1	15 units	88 units	0 units	Balance of Augusta Ave.
Phase 2a2	79 units	81 units	0 units	Community Space Basketball Courts
Phase 2b (1,2,3)	87 units	16 units	885 units	
Phase 2c	22 units	39 units	0 units	Cameron Street realignment to Willison Place
Subtotal	203 units	224 units	885 units	
PHASE THREE				
Phase 3a	31 units	0 units	276 units	Park North
Phase 3b	Complete	15 units	Complete	Vanauley Walk (Linear Park)
Subtotal	30 units	15 units	276 units	
TOTAL	333 units	333 units	1540 units	

Figure 14: Phasing Program

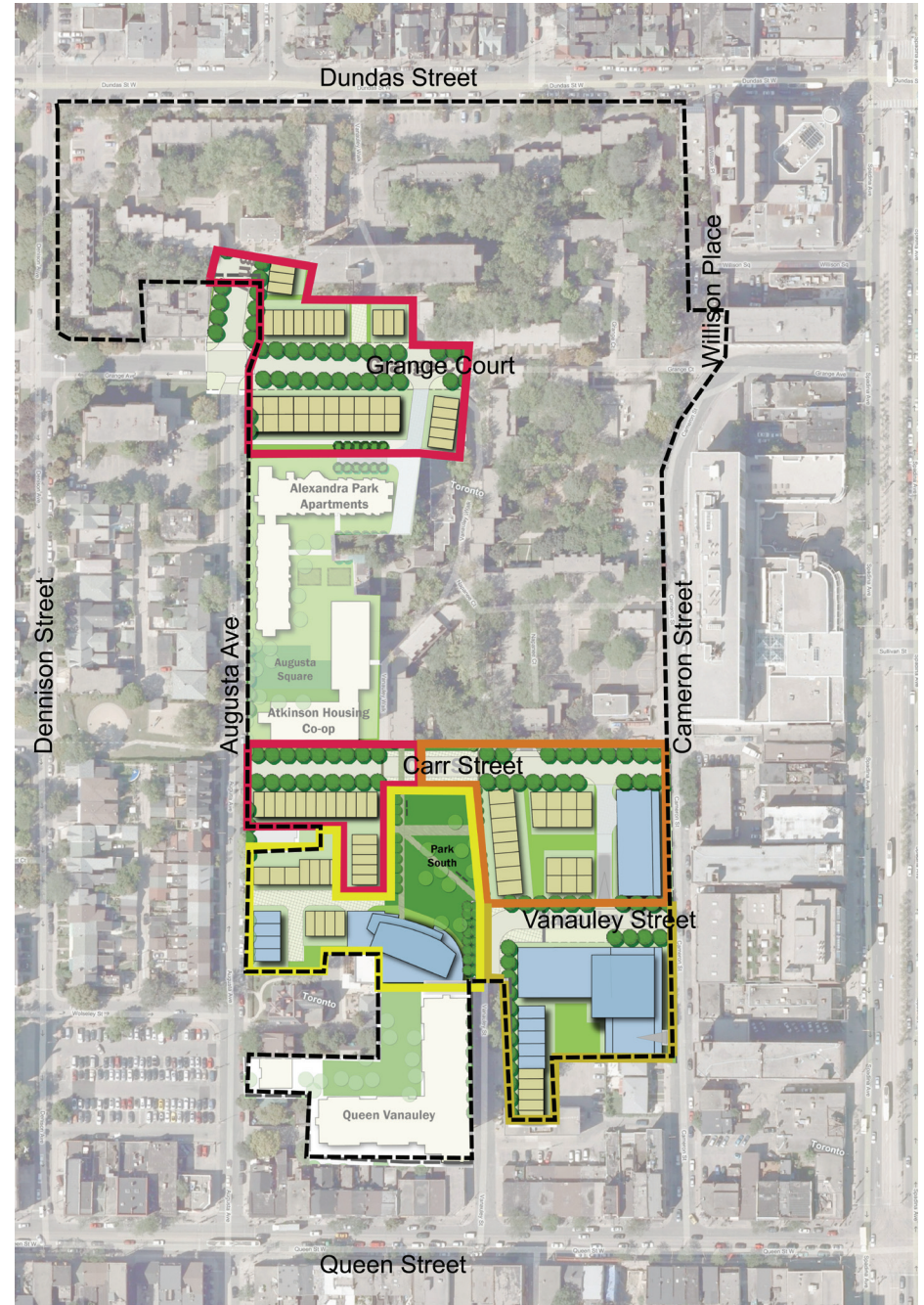


Figure 15: Phase 1

- Phase 1a1
- Phase 1a3
- Phase 1a2
- Phase 1b1

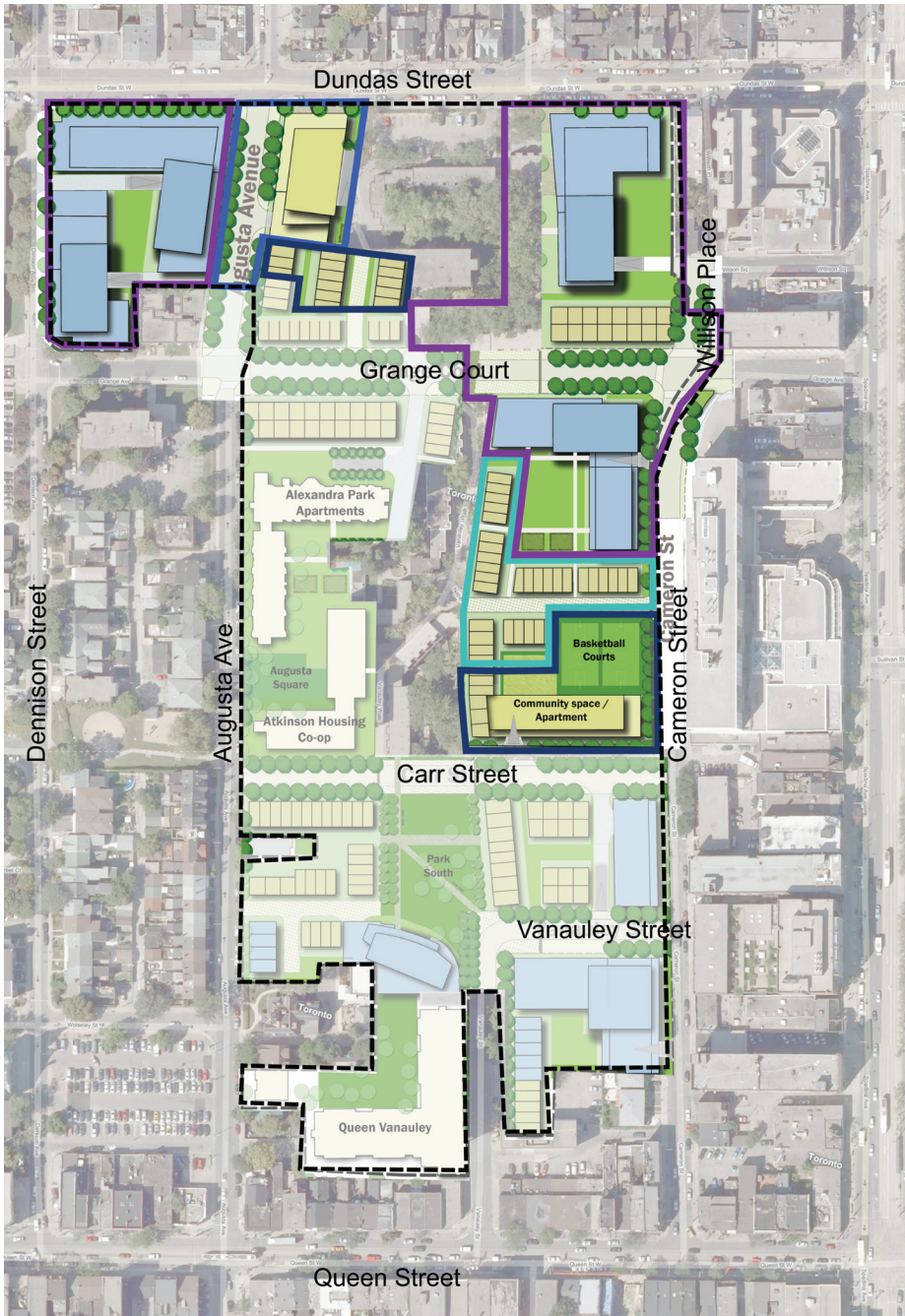


Figure 16: Phase 2

- Phase 2a1
- Phase 2b
- Phase 2a2
- Phase 2c

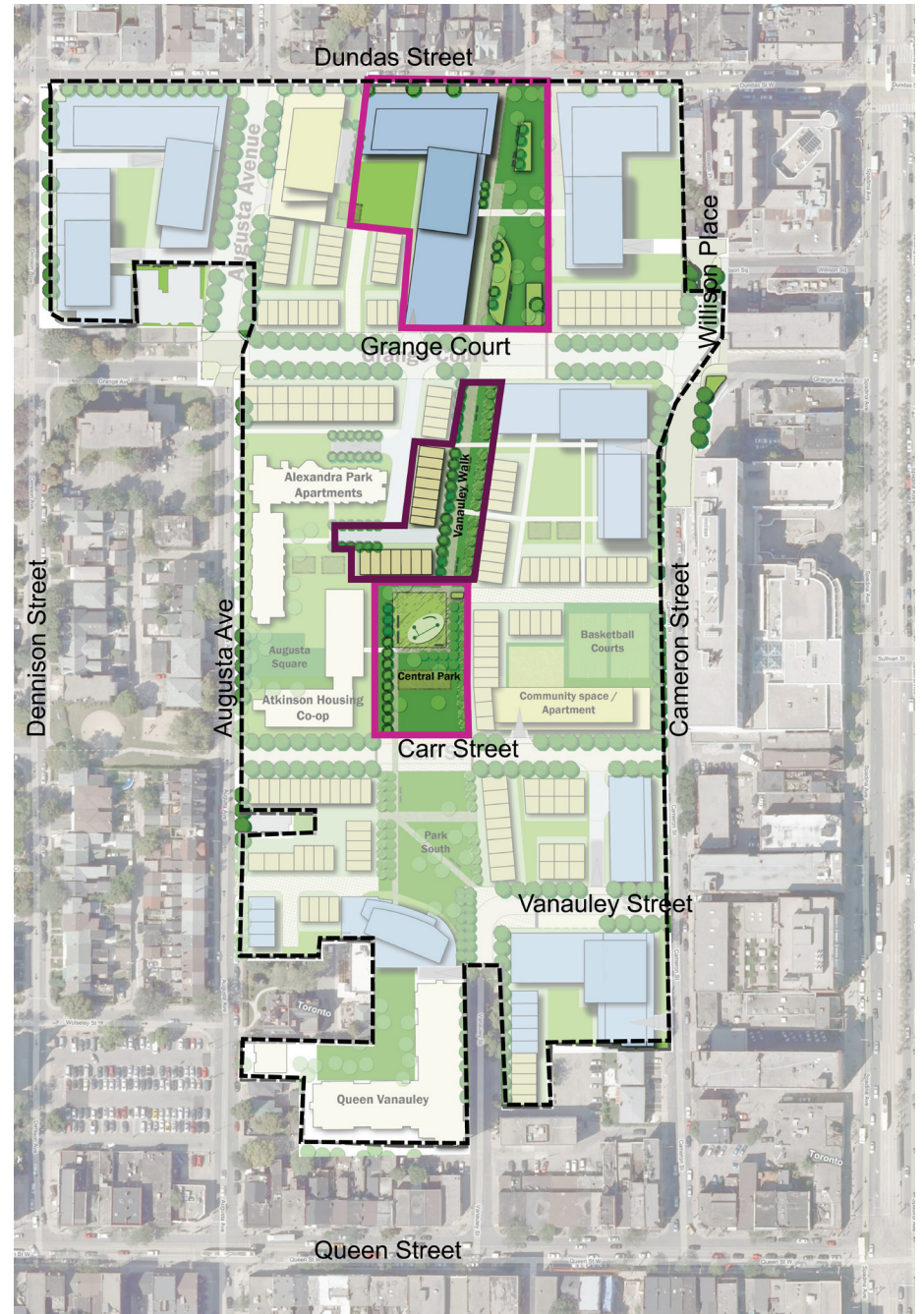


Figure 17: Phase 3

- Phase 3a
- Phase 3b

2.3 Summary of Related Studies

2.3.1 Transportation, Access and Parking

Parking and transportation impacts have been addressed in BA Group's Transportation Considerations report, submitted under separate cover. The report includes:

- parking requirements and provisions for the proposed development plan
- a functional road plan outlining proposed public connections and potential TCH and market site and parking access; and
- transportation impacts due to the proposed density permissions being sought for the market parcels of the master plan.

It should be noted that the Master Plan has eliminated surface parking to the greatest extent possible to take full advantage of the development opportunities on Site. It is anticipated that parking will generally be provided below-grade and will not be deeper than two levels, with the exception of one block, south-east of Vanauley Street which will be three levels of underground parking (Figure 18). The master plan provides for sufficient parking capacity to meet Toronto Community Housing requirements (227 spaces). Parking for TCH tenants and Co-op members is consolidated on selected parcels (parcels B, M and F and the existing garage in the Queen Vanauley). The parking requirements of the new market buildings will be accommodated in below-grade parking structures under each building. Visitor and short-term parking will also be available on the newly proposed streets. Additional details on parking and transportation are provided in the Parking Report prepared by BA Group, submitted under separate cover.

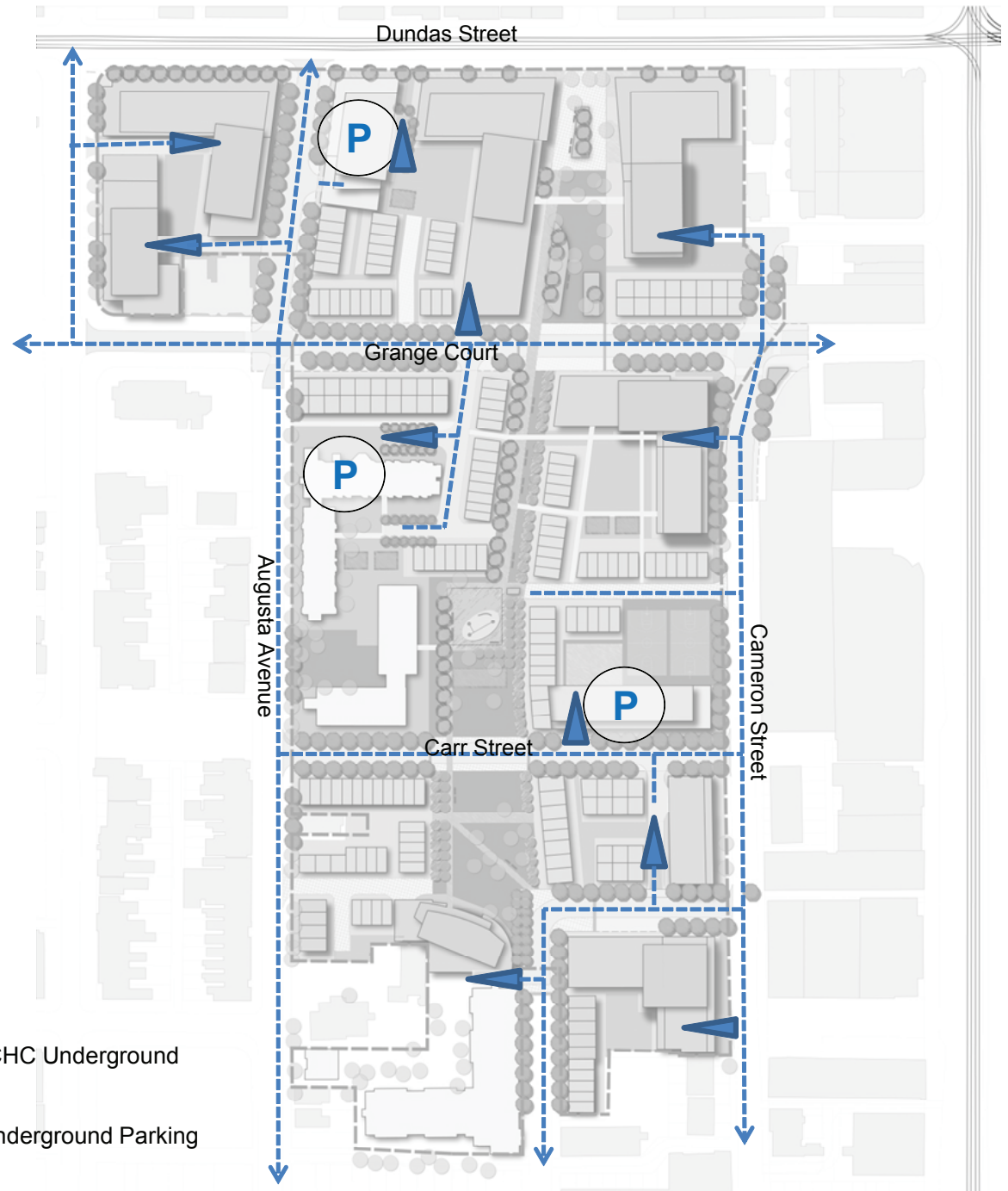
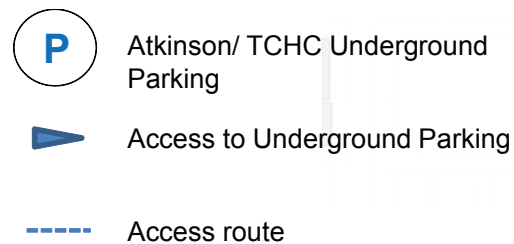


Figure 18: Underground parking access

2.3.2 Servicing and Infrastructure

Internal site-infrastructure has been in place since the Alexandra Park community was developed in the 1960s, and will be replaced and upgraded through the revitalization. The master planning process included an assessment of potential energy systems to be developed on the Site. The project team's energy consultants, Halsall Associates, examined three potential energy options: high-efficiency conventional boiler and chiller, ground-source installation and a district energy system. The nature of the project creates a number of site and development constraints that limit the viability of a district energy system or a ground-source system and neither is currently proposed for the revitalization of Alexandra Park. At a minimum, the revitalization will allow for significant energy savings from a high-efficiency gas boiler system, retrofits to existing buildings, and new energy efficient buildings. Should geothermal facilities be developed as part of the Ryerson school site redevelopment, as envisaged by the TDSB, future development will have the opportunity to connect to this system.

Details on servicing and infrastructure are provided in the Functional Servicing Report prepared by URS, the project engineers. URS concluded that the Site is suitable for the proposed redevelopment and that sanitary services, water and storm water management could be adequately accommodated.

2.3.3 Urban Design Guidelines

Urban Strategies is drafting Urban Design Guidelines to illustrate and describe the vision for the redevelopment of Alexandra Park, providing a detailed urban design framework for Alexandra Park's buildings, private open spaces and interfaces with the adjacent public realm. The document will provide parameters to help ensure a vibrant, mixed-use residential community will be created that includes open spaces, community amenities and retail services within a setting of high quality urban design, architectural expression and design diversity. As with all elements of the master plan, these guidelines will be developed with input from the community. The document will be completed soon after the submission of the Alexandra Park Development Application and is expected to be adopted by the City and appended to the implementing by-law. The document will provide direction to TCH, Atkinson Co-op and private development interests as well as the City when formulating development proposals for the Alexandra Park community.

2.3.4 Shadow Study

Shadow studies, submitted under separate cover, were prepared by Urban Strategies for March 21, June 21 and September 21, at the times indicated in the City of Toronto Development Guide. They demonstrate that the proposal will not have an undue impact with respect to shadowing on neighbouring streets, open spaces and private properties.

On March 21 and September 21, the north sidewalk on Dundas Street is primarily shadow free by early afternoon. To meet the City's angular plane requirements, buildings have been setback 3 metres from the right-of-way and towers have been set back an additional 6 metres from the podium edge. Most towers on Dundas have been set back even further in order to limit Dundas Street shadows.

On March 21 and September 21 the main parks on the Site have few to no shadows between late morning and mid-afternoon. On June 21, the parks are primarily shadow free between mid-morning and late afternoon. During these times, any shadows are generally limited to the northern half of North Park. Shadowing of North Park was mitigated by decreasing the height of the market building podium to the west of the park by two floors, from seven to five storeys.

There are no additional shadows on residential properties to the west of the Site after 9:18 a.m. on March 21, June 21 and September 21.

Fundamentally, key elements of the public realm within Alexandra Park and adjacent sidewalks and properties will not be unduly shadowed.

2.3.5 Green Development Checklist

The Toronto Green Standard checklist for mid to high-rise development has been completed by Halsall Associates and is submitted under separate cover. The report assesses the Tier 1 measures to be addressed as part of future Site Plan applications.

2.3.6 Arborist Report/Tree Preservation Strategy

A Tree Preservation Plan and Report has been completed by D. Andrew White, arborist, and submitted under separate cover. The report determines which trees could be retained and the number of new trees that could be planted on the Site following redevelopment, based on the locations and conditions of existing trees.

The report makes the following conclusions:

- at least 269 non-exempt private trees would need to be removed.
- at least 86 non-exempt private trees could be retained, although up to eleven of these may prove to be incompatible with the construction work
- six road allowance trees, on Augusta Avenue, Vanauley Street and Cameron Street would be removed for redevelopment of streets and thoroughfares but most of the remaining road allowance trees could be retained
- following redevelopment, there would be adequate space for transplanting up to four hundred new trees to the Site, with approximately 140 planted in the public open spaces and up to 270 planted in the new courtyards, boulevards, and gaps in existing tree rows

2.3.7 Housing Issues Study

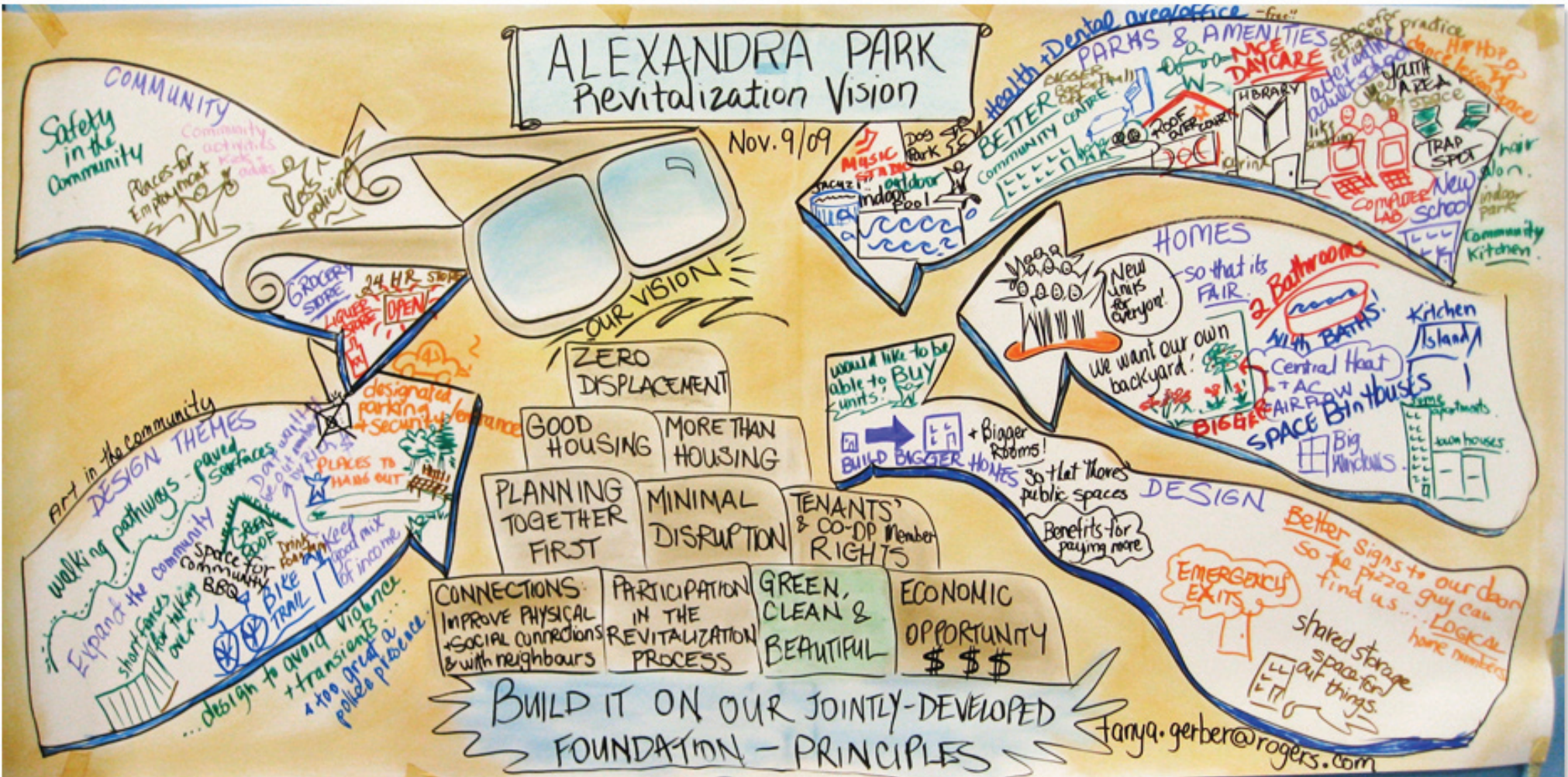
A Housing Issues Study has been completed by TCH along with the Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Application and the Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Declaration of Use and Screening Form and is submitted under separate cover. It should be noted that all rental housing demolished on the Site will be redeveloped with the same number of bedroom units as exists today.

2.3.8 Community Facilities Strategy

Urban Strategies and students from Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning are preparing a Community Services and Facilities Study in support of the Alexandra Park Development Application. The purpose of the Community Services and Facilities Study is to assist in determining whether an adequate level of community services and facilities will remain available to both the redeveloped and neighbouring communities as a result of the proposed redevelopment of Alexandra Park. Such studies are essential in ensuring a quality of life that appropriately meets the needs of existing and new residents while also identifying the social infrastructure required to support safe and healthy neighbourhoods. The document will be completed shortly and submitted in the near future.

2.3.9 Wind Study

A Wind Study by Theakston Consultants will be completed shortly and submitted in the near future.



Drawing developed by community members at the Youth Charette in November, 2009





REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.0 Regulatory Framework

This section describes the planning policies and regulations that govern the use and development of Alexandra Park, each of which have shaped the redevelopment proposal and provide further justification for its approval. These include the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Official Plan for the city of Toronto, Zoning By-law 1156-2010 and the Zoning By-law for the Former City of Toronto (438-86), as amended.

3.1 Provincial Policy

3.1.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Section 3(5) of the Planning Act requires that municipalities and other public bodies have regard to the PPS when exercising any authority that affects a planning matter, including the approval of new developments. The PPS sets out policies to ensure the long term prosperity, environmental health and social well being of the Province through the wise management of change and promotion of efficient land use and development patterns (1.1.1 and 1.1.2).

Policy 1.1.3.2 states that land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of uses that efficiently use land, resource, infrastructure and public service facilities, minimize air quality impacts, and include a range of uses and opportunities for redevelopment and intensification. Policy 1.1.3.3 further states that planning authorities shall promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment taking into account existing building stock or areas with suitable infrastructure and public service facilities. Policy 1.1.3.7 states that new development shall have a compact form, mix of uses and densities that allow for the efficient use of land, infrastructure and public service facilities. Housing specific policy 1.4.3 states that planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range of housing types and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the regional market area through various measures including:

- directing the development of new housing towards locations where appropriate levels of infrastructure and public service facilities are or will be available to support current and projected needs;

- promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of alternative transportation modes and public transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed

The proposed redevelopment of Alexandra Park is consistent with and supports the implementation of these policies. It provides a range of housing types adjacent to higher order transit, incorporates a mix of uses through the introduction of retail on Dundas Street and the expansion of on-site community uses and satisfies the objectives of efficiently using land and resources and promoting intensification where suitable infrastructure and public service facilities exist.

3.1.2 Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan for The Greater Golden Horseshoe presents the framework for the Government of Ontario's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities by better managing growth in the Region. The Growth Plan contains a number of policies intended to manage and shape development in the Province, including policies relating to growth, intensification and major transit station areas. Policy 2.2.2 states that population and employment growth will be accommodated through various measures including:

- directing a significant portion of new growth to the built up areas of the community through intensification
- focusing intensification in intensification areas
- reducing dependence on the automobile through the development of mixed-use, transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly urban environments
- providing convenient access to intra- and inter-city transit

Policy 2.2.3 relates to General Intensification, with section 2.2.3.6 stating municipalities will:

- encourage intensification generally throughout the built up area
- recognize urban growth centres, intensification corridors and major transit station areas as a key focus for development to accommodate intensification
- facilitate and promote intensification
- plan for a range and mix of housing, taking into account affordable housing needs

Alexandra Park, as part of Toronto's Downtown and Central Waterfront, is located within Toronto's Urban Growth Centre (UGC).

In an April 27, 2009 Staff Report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee, Planning Staff advised that its Official Plan is in conformity with the Growth Plan. Staff's report also states that the Growth Plan's density target of 400 residents and jobs per hectare for UGCs will be applied to Toronto's Centres and Downtown. Policy 2.2.4 of the Growth Plan regulates UGCs, with Section 2.2.4.4 stating that UGCs, will be planned:

- as focal areas for investment in institutional and region-wide public services, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses;
- to accommodate and support major transit infrastructure;
- to serve as high density major employment centres that will attract provincially, nationally or internationally significant employment uses;
- to accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth.

It should be noted that, while Alexandra Park is within a UGC and is an appropriate location for a degree of intensification, these policies relate to UGCs as a whole and should not be interpreted as indicating that this scale of development is appropriate for every site within a UGC.

Finally, Section 2.2.3.7 states that Intensification areas (which include Urban Growth Centres) will be planned and designed to:

- cumulatively attract a significant portion of population and employment growth
- provide a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant neighbourhoods
- provide high quality public open spaces with site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places
- support transit, walking and cycling for everyday activities
- generally achieve higher densities than the surrounding areas
- achieve an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent areas.

The proposed redevelopment of Alexandra Park is consistent with and supports the implementation of these policies. It directs growth to a built up area and reduces automobile dependence through development in an urban, transit supportive environment. It plans for a range and mix of housing (from low rise town house to high rise condominium), with a strong focus on affordable housing needs. Finally, it directs intensification to an intensification area (a UGC), increases density and creates a mix of land uses, but does so in accordance with the Growth Plan's design standards, by creating high quality public open spaces and transitioning the height and scale of proposed development down to adjacent, lower rise, neighbourhoods.

3.2 Municipal Policy

3.2.1 Toronto Official Plan

Alexandra Park is located within the defined Downtown Area identified in the 2006 Toronto Official Plan (Section 2.2.1). This section encourages a full range of housing opportunities, improvements to the public realm, and linkages among parks and open spaces. This section further identifies opportunities to enhance public amenities, community services and institutions. Although the Official Plan recognizes that the Downtown will continue to develop and evolve (Policy 1) it also states that a full range of housing opportunities will be encouraged Downtown through residential intensification in Mixed Use Areas and Regeneration Areas and through sensitive infill within Neighbourhoods and Apartment Neighbourhoods (Policy 4).

Alexandra Park and the adjacent residential areas to the west are designated Neighbourhood (Section 4.1) (Figure 19). It is not identified as a targeted 'Priority Neighbourhood' by the City of Toronto. There are no Secondary Plans, Site and Area Specific Policies or Special Policy Areas applying to the Site. The Neighbourhood designation permits lower scale residential buildings, such as detached, semidetached, townhouse, and up to four-storey walk-up apartments as well as institutional uses such as schools, places of worship, community centres, libraries, daycare centres and seniors homes. While existing tall buildings are recognized, no new tall buildings are permitted. Section 4.1 further states that no changes will be made through rezoning, minor variance, consent or other public action that are out of keeping with the physical character of the neighbourhood. The prevailing building type will be the predominant form of development in the neighbourhood. In general, the intent of the Neighbourhood designation is to preserve the character of stable residential areas.

Queen Street, Spadina Avenue, the east side of Cameron Street and the north side of Dundas Street are designated Mixed Use (Section 4.5). Mixed Use areas are planned to accommodate intensification, on the basis that higher density development is most appropriate along arterial roads and around transit infrastructure. Mixed Use corridors usually encompass both sides of the street. In planning for the future of the area, consideration was given to opportunities to develop a mix of uses along the Cameron Street and Dundas Street frontages of Alexandra Park. In particular, the Dundas Street frontage was planned as a mixed use corridor to match the north side of the street, and the character of Dundas Street to the east and west.

A Site and Area Specific Policy, amending the Official Plan, will be required in order to reflect the proposed redevelopment and allow for changes to uses, heights and building typologies.

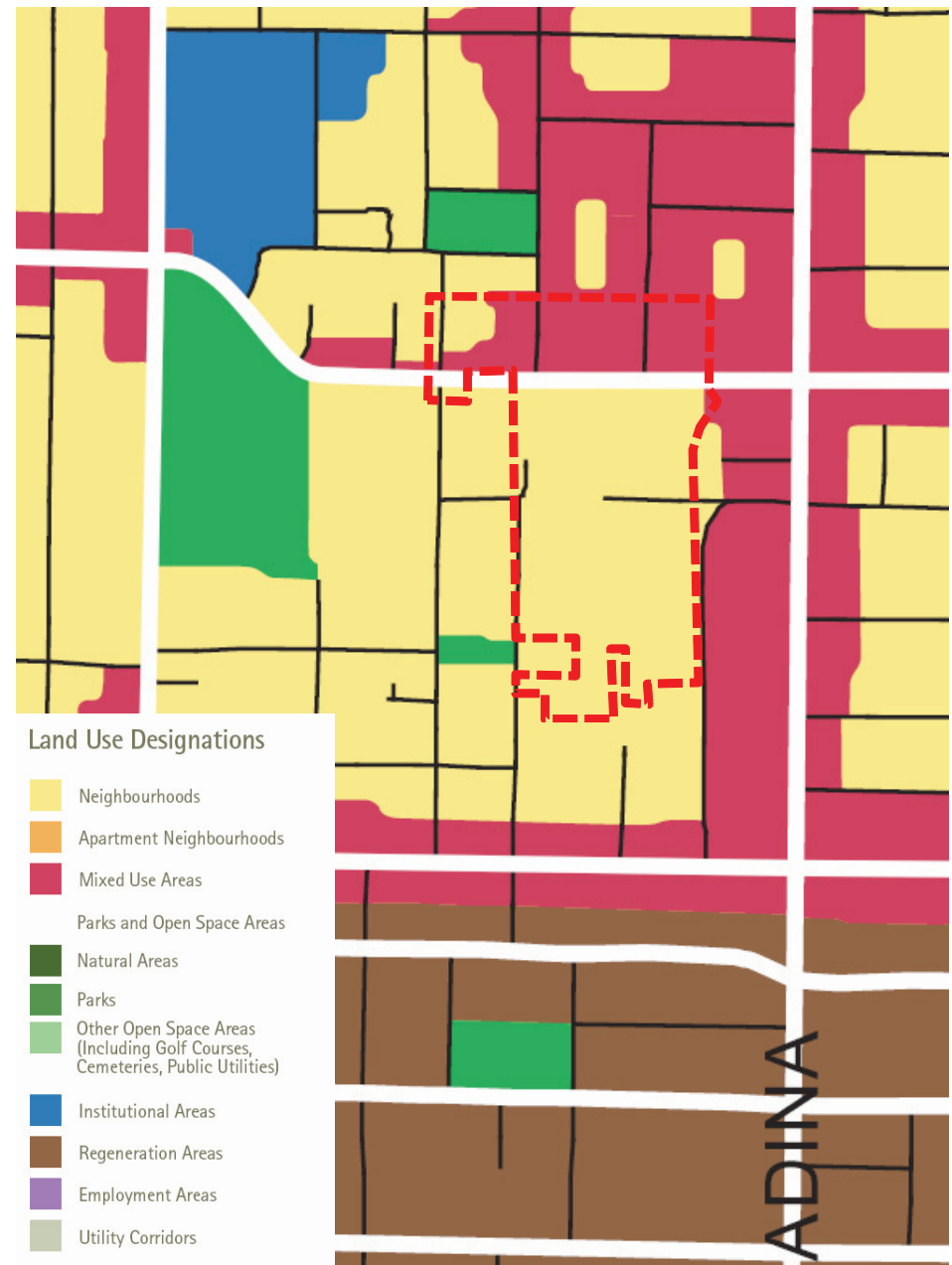


Figure 19: The Site within the City of Toronto Official Plan

3.2.2 Zoning

At its meeting of August 25th – 27th, 2010, the City of Toronto enacted a new Harmonized Zoning By-law (By-law 1156-2010) to bring the former municipalities of East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York under a single zoning regime. While the new By-law applies to Alexandra Park, the By-law in its entirety is currently under appeal. Regulations from both the new By-laws and the By-law governing the former City of Toronto (By-law 438-86) are presented below, for consideration by the City during this time of transition.

New City of Toronto Zoning By-law 1156-2010 (Figure 20)

Alexandra Park is zoned R (d 1.0) (x853) by the new City of Toronto Zoning By-law. (d 1.0) limits maximum gross floor area to 1.0 times the area of the lot and maximum height is 12.0 metres, the same as permissions under the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law. Permitted residential building types in an R district include detached houses, townhouses, fourplexes and apartment buildings. A limited range of non-residential building types are permitted with conditions, including retail stores, community centres, libraries and private-home day cares.

Permitted heights and densities vary in adjacent areas. To the east, along Spadina Avenue, densities range from 3.5 to 5.0 with a permitted height of 28 metres. To the south, along Queen Street West, densities range from 2.0 to 3.0, with a permitted height of 16 metres. To the north, along the north side of Dundas Street West, density is 2.0 and the permitted height 14 metres. And, to the west, the residential neighbourhood has the same permissions as Alexandra Park. Ryerson Community School at Denison and Dundas is excluded from the new Zoning By-law.

The heights and densities envisioned in the redevelopment proposal are not permitted in the new Toronto Zoning By-law. As well, the master plan concept may not conform to the By-laws established standards for frontage, lot coverage, angular planes and other design criteria. It is anticipated that a site-specific by-law will be developed for the new Alexandra Park community reflecting the master plan concept.

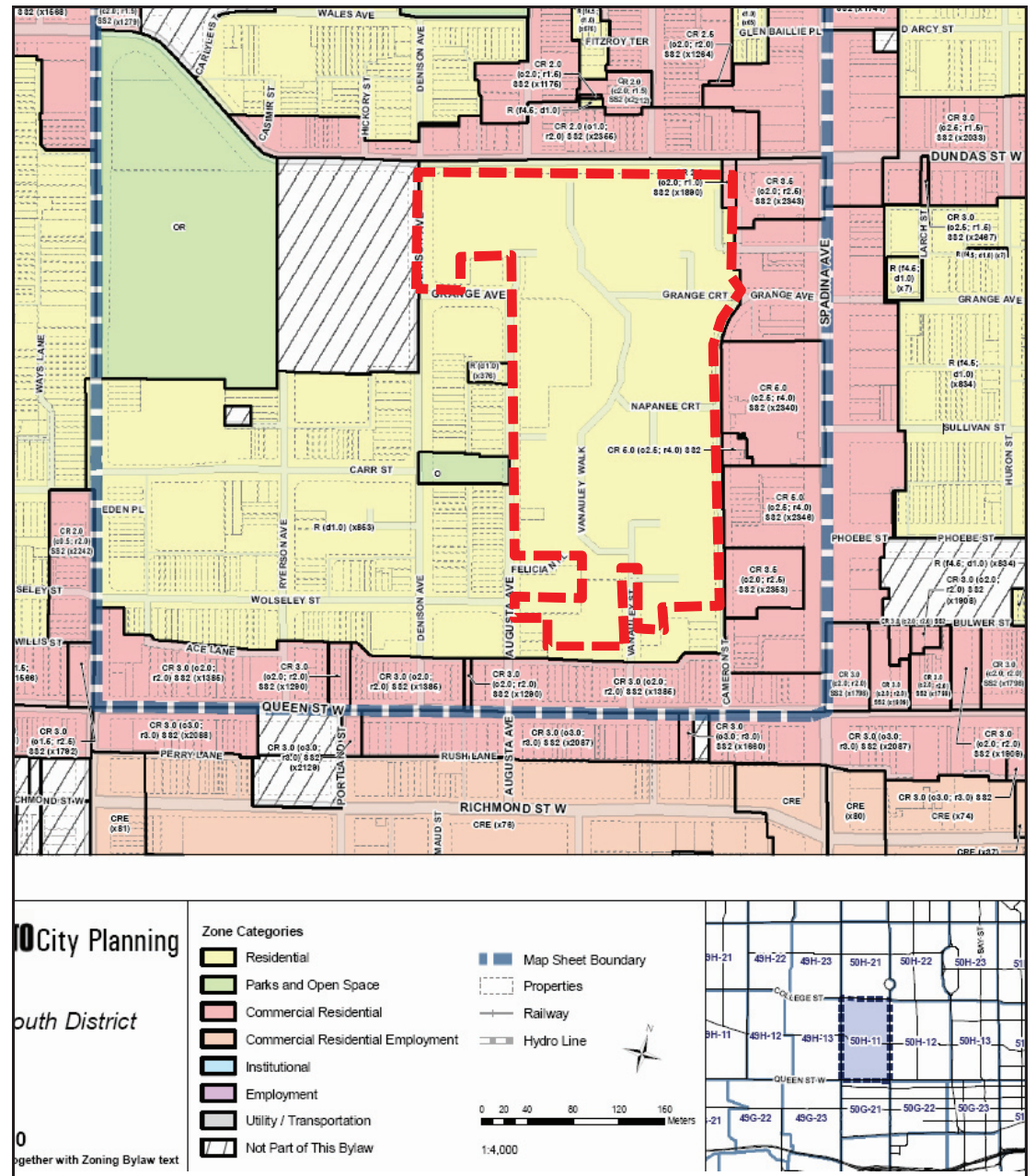


Figure 20: The Site within the New City of Toronto Zoning By-law

Former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 438-86 (Figure 21)

The permitted heights and densities for Alexandra Park fall within the City's pattern of residential neighbourhoods surrounded by higher density Avenues. The arterial streets surrounding the area are zoned for higher densities and heights, while Alexandra Park and the other internal areas bounded by these arterials are generally limited to 1 times density and a maximum height of 12 metres (R3 Z1.0 H 12.0).

Permitted land uses include most housing types (except apartment buildings), certain shared housing types (such as nursing homes or student fraternities) and certain associated residential uses (such as parking areas and private home day care). Permitted non-residential uses are limited to parks, playgrounds, municipal community centres, public schools and public transit.

Several site-specific exceptions apply to the Site, though none of them are significant. There are 4 exceptions on 15-51 Augusta Avenue, all of which are generic. There are several exceptions applying to 91 Augusta Avenue and 20 Vanauley Street but these properties are not being redeveloped. There are no exceptions on the remainder of the properties, including those on Vanauley Court, Vanauley Walk, Grange Court, Augusta Square and Felician Place.

To the east of Alexandra Park, along Spadina Avenue, combined commercial and residential development is permitted at 5 times density (maximum commercial = 2.5x, residential = 4.0x) and 28 metres height. North of Dundas along Spadina, permitted density and height are 2.5 times density and 18 metres height.

Along Dundas Street, mixed commercial and residential development is limited to a density of 2.0 times (maximum commercial = 1.0x, residential = 2.0x) and a height of 14 metres. The 2.0 times density continues north into the retail areas of Kensington Market, but decreases to 1.0x in residential areas. The height permission throughout Kensington is 12 metres. West of Bathurst, the density along Dundas is 2.5 times and the height is 16 metres.

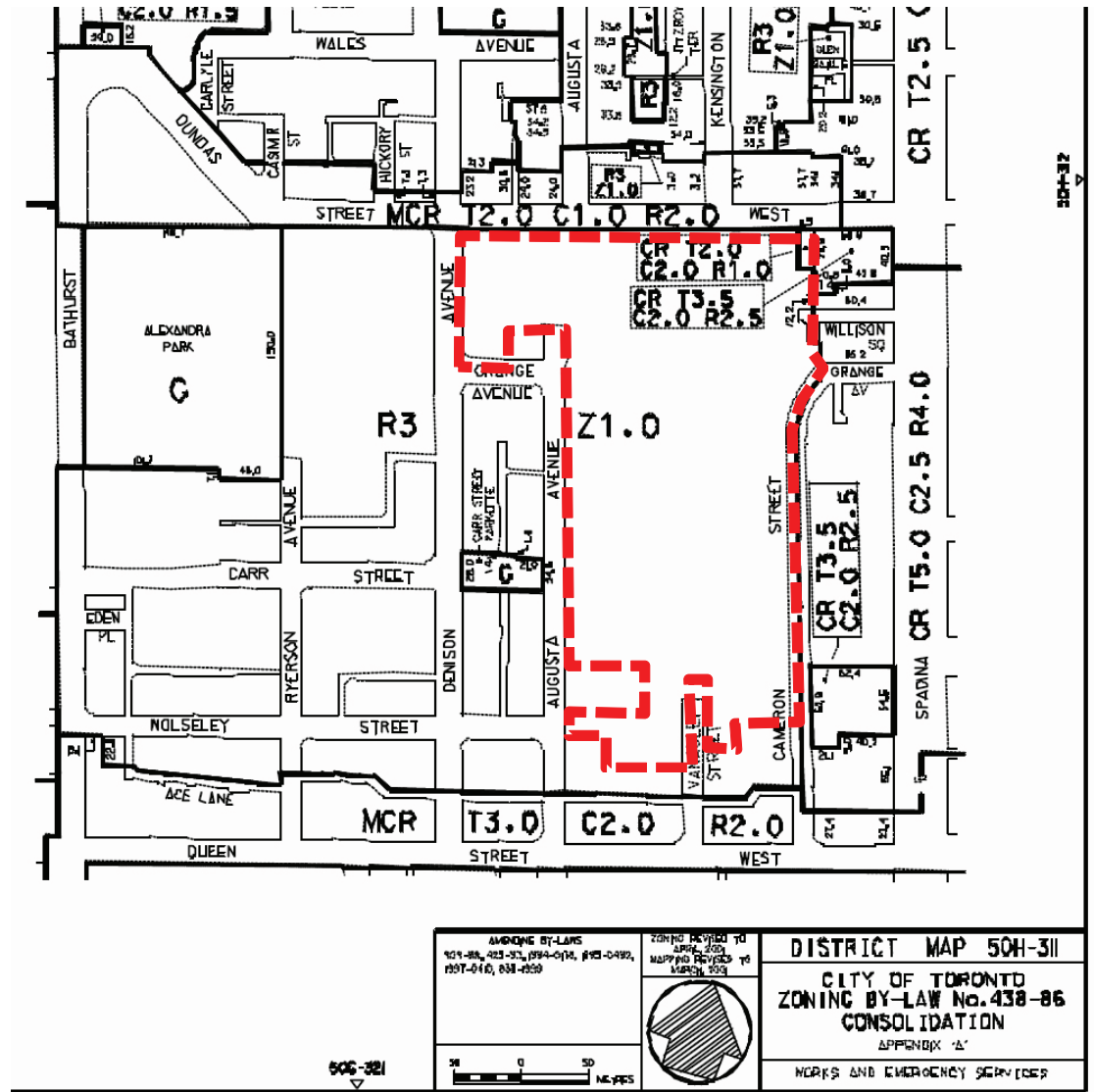


Figure 21: The Site within the Former City of Toronto Zoning By-law

South of the site, the north and south sides of Queen Street, between Spadina Avenue and Bathurst Street, are zoned mixed commercial residential and permits 3.0 times density (maximum commercial = 2.0x, residential = 2.0x) and a maximum height of 16 metres. Immediately south of Queen Street is the King-Spadina Reinvestment Area district, where density is not restricted and height is limited to 23 metres.

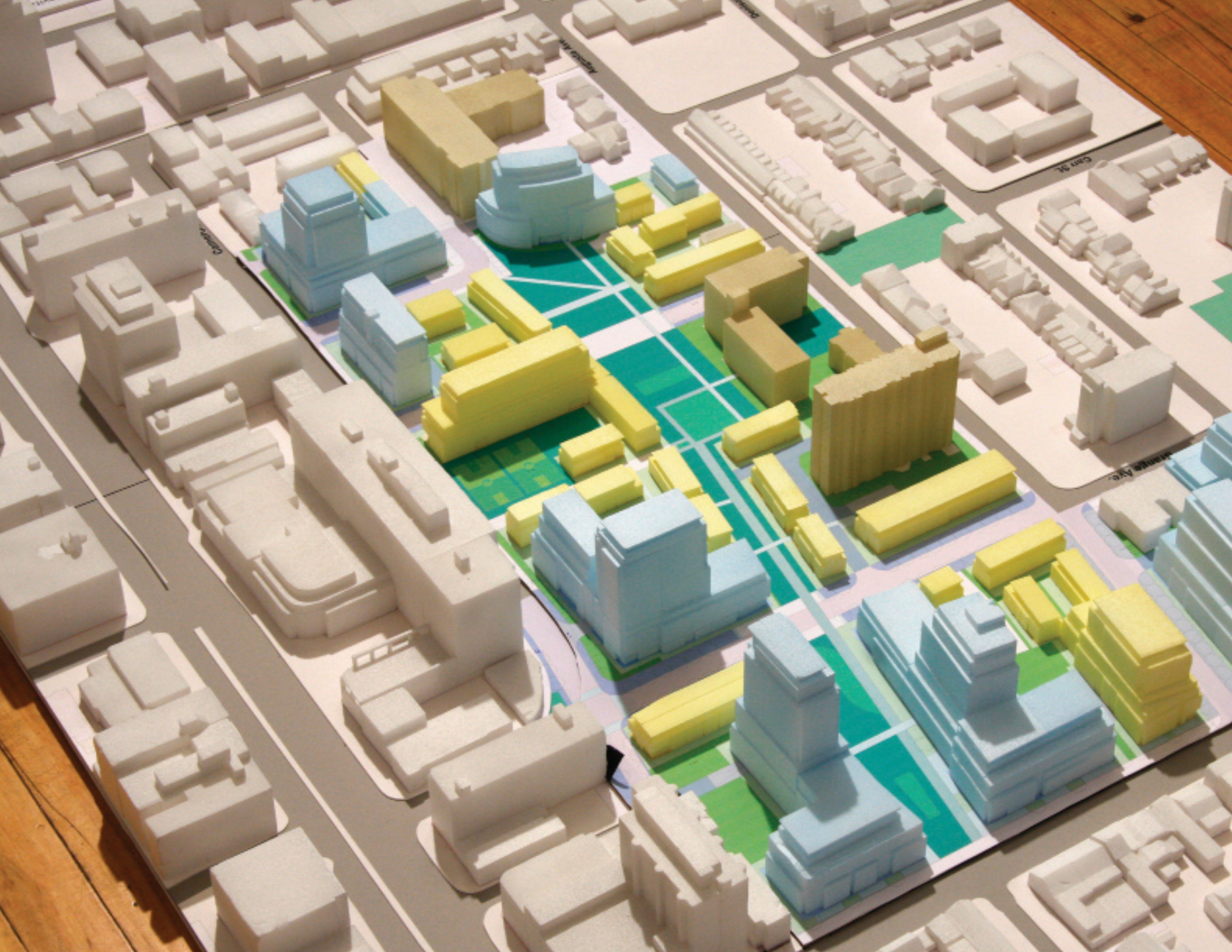
Under the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law the proposed redevelopment of Alexandra Park requires a site-specific By-law to permit apartment buildings and additional height and density. Included in this site-specific By-law may be clauses to accommodate other built form criteria, such as setbacks.

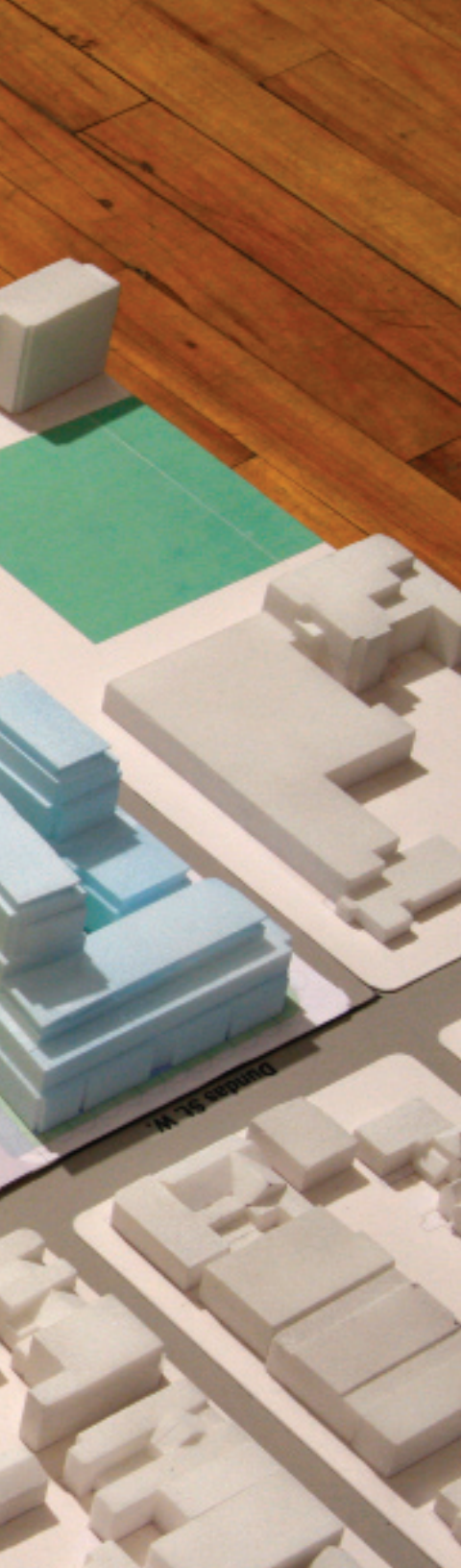
3.3 Summary of Policy Considerations

The proposed redevelopment of Alexandra Park is consistent with and supports the applicable policies of both the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan.

An Official Plan amendment, in the form of a Site and Area Specific Policy, will be required as retail uses and new development within Alexandra Park over four storeys would not be permitted in the Neighbourhood designation. The master plan does respect the built form policies of the Plan as building heights and densities are sensitive to the low density character of the neighbourhood to the west, with low rise townhomes planned along Augusta Avenue.

A site specific amendment to either the former or new Toronto Zoning By-law will be required to reflect the master plan, permit additional heights and densities and establish other parameters.





THE BENEFITS OF REVITALIZATION

4.0 Benefits of Revitalization

4.1 Community Design

The physical environment in Alexandra Park is typical of most 1960s era public housing communities, with many of the same design challenges. The revitalization of Alexandra Park provides the opportunity to address these challenges, which include:

- Isolation from the Surrounding Community
- Unwelcoming Edges
- Disorganized Site Layout
- Ambiguous Relationship Between Public and Private Space

Though located in Toronto's bustling downtown, Alexandra Park is currently an isolated neighbourhood: the housing turns its back on the surrounding community and there are few vehicular, bike and pedestrian routes that directly connect to adjacent areas. Parking lots dominate the entrances to the community, a fenced perimeter along Dundas Street causes an unwelcoming barrier into community and Cameron Street frontages face overwhelming rear building facades and servicing areas. These physical and visual disconnections from the City's urban fabric have created a sense of isolation, segregating the community from its context and potentially impairing social connections. Internally, publicly-accessible spaces feel private and a general lack of transition between private yards and public routes creates privacy issues for residents and discourages pedestrian movement, which restricts activity in the public realm.

Throughout the development of various options for revitalization of the Site, several design goals were discussed to address many of these concerns, including:

- Re-knitting the city fabric
- Strengthening and defining public/private realms
- Protecting the sense of community

The master plan incorporates these goals by proposing welcoming frontages and by introducing mixed-use development, rather than parking lots and fences, along Dundas and Cameron Streets fostering vitality and amenity. An improved site layout creates a more inviting, safe and diverse environment with clear transitions between the public and private realm by:

- Creating a block and street system to provide addresses to all units
- Allowing for passive surveillance or "eyes on the street" by having all units front onto streets, open spaces or mews
- Encouraging pedestrian movement throughout the site and introducing a limited number of streets to support vehicular movement
- Bordering open spaces and streets with housing and removing isolated/dead end areas to limit real and perceived security risks

4.2 Land Use

Alexandra Park is currently almost exclusively a residential community, with few public open spaces or commercial uses. Much of Alexandra Park's existing open space is fragmented and indistinguishable from private land causing it to remain either vacant or underutilized. Further, the design of existing development and the lack of connectivity to adjacent neighbourhoods isolate the community and do not promote safety. A mix of uses with retail on Dundas Street, and potentially within the interior of the community, enhance economic opportunities for residents, create the setting for an active and vibrant street and reinforce the retail activity on the north side of Dundas (Figure 22).

A series of connected public parks, extending from Dundas Street West to the southern boundary of the Site, create an attractive setting for housing and usable space which can support multiple uses, services and facilities and promote activity through the heart of the neighbourhood. These lands will be dedicated to the City, which will landscape and maintain these important community assets.

Ultimately, larger, connected and accessible open spaces and new amenities and retail frontages on primary streets will open up the community to adjacent areas. A new community design with housing fronting streets, parks and open spaces and new employment opportunities on-site encourage activity throughout the site during the day and evening, enhance the sense of security and provide greater accessibility to residents within the community.



Figure 22: Proposed Land Use Plan

4.3 Circulation

The lack of an internal circulation system, coupled with unclear building addresses creates confusion with orientation and way finding, makes access for emergency vehicles, delivery services and taxi pick-up difficult and causes garbage and servicing to be messy and challenging to manage. However, residents of Alexandra Park often cite the neighbourhood’s social and physical cohesiveness as one of its distinctive elements. The spaces internal to the community are intimate gathering places, children’s play areas and recreation spaces that connect this tight-knit community. One of the primary resident concerns is that this unique, and important, characteristic of the neighbourhood would be lost in the revitalization.

While improved visibility, internal-circulation, and site access are needed in Alexandra Park, the Master Plan is designed to maintain the sense of enclosure and inclusiveness at the centre of the site. The Master Plan reconnects the community socially and physically, providing places for social interaction. The plan also supports vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections, where appropriate, and reintroduces through-streets, which are designed to minimize non-essential car traffic.

4.4 Housing

A primary objective of the Master Plan is to improve TCH's housing stock by ensuring good quality housing for tenants, reducing maintenance costs and improving the quality of the community as a whole. One of the requirements of TCH is to replace housing units in kind; retaining the same distribution of unit sizes as currently exists. In addition, current residents of Atkinson Co-op were supportive of the revitalization on the assurance that the townhouse typology would be retained. The challenge for the master plan was to include sufficient townhouses to maintain community support for the plan, while creating sufficient density in market units to finance the revitalization. The master plan has been designed so as to generally maintain the same mix of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 bedroom rent-geared-to-income units as exists on the site today, while integrating new market-priced units.

The master plan makes more efficient use of the land area and provides for new, improved TCH townhouses and apartments, as well as revenue-generating market development parcels. Only one of the four apartment buildings in Alexandra Park is proposed to be redeveloped with the remaining three proposed to be retained and refurbished where needed. Redevelopment will also allow for a range of housing tenures - rental, ownership, affordable and market.

4.5 Amenities

The Atkinson Housing Co-op owns and maintains a community centre. TCH provide capital repairs for the community centre. Programs offered in the community centre include day care facilities, a community kitchen, homework clubs and recreation programs for children, adults and seniors. Perhaps equally important is the social function provided by the community centre - it is the hub of the community and is highly valued by residents. Unfortunately, though less than 50 years old, the building has aged poorly and requires extensive repair or redevelopment. The master plan includes a new community centre which is at least 50% larger than the current centre. The proposed community centre is integrated into the ground floor of a new rent-geared-to-income apartment building and will offer a modern and significantly improved venue for resident services and programs. The two adjacent basketball courts, popular with Alexandra Park youth, will also be replaced.

4.6 Financial Considerations

Alexandra Park is exceptionally well-located in terms of land value, development capacity, urban vitality, community amenity, access to transit and availability of urban infrastructure. The master plan identifies the potential to insert market buildings, revenues from which will support the revitalization of the existing community. Its significant capacity to support and integrate revenue-generating uses will allow for reinvestment in the community, and the built form, density, community infrastructure and phasing of the Master Plan are designed to support a financially self-sustaining plan over the long-term.

New uses and activities can be introduced in a phased approach, and the new framework of streets and blocks allows for change over time, with the flexibility to capture development opportunities as they arise. The current development uses land inefficiently, particularly in its downtown setting, and, due to its age and design, has high operating, maintenance and security costs. Redevelopment and renovation will reduce long-term costs for Toronto Community Housing and the Atkinson Co-op Board.

4.7 Sustainability

The redevelopment of Alexandra Park provides many opportunities for improved sustainability of the Site including:

- decreasing the frequency of concrete and hard surfacing
- more attractive and useable open space opportunities
- increased density
- green roofs throughout the Site
- on-site storm water management
- enhanced energy efficiency for retrofitted buildings, new energy efficient buildings and energy savings from a high-efficiency gas boiler; and,
- building to LEED gold standards for all new buildings

More information on green initiatives proposed for the Site can be found in the completed Green Development Checklist accompanying the Alexandra Park Development Application.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed redevelopment of Alexandra Park is consistent with both the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan. Although an Official Plan amendment is required for land use, and a rezoning is required for height, density and potentially other built form criteria, the proposal is consistent with the spirit and intent of the Official Plan and with the land use, built form and public realm policies established to guide development Downtown. The proposed redevelopment does not create undue impacts as shadow, traffic and wind impacts are minor.

Most importantly, the proposed master plan for Alexandra Park supports all of the community's principles and design goals for the Site. It will create a vibrant mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhood, improving the quality of housing for TCH residents and increasing the safety and connectivity of the neighbourhood, while maintaining and supporting the social cohesiveness of the community.

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