

Methodology

This background report examines the planning policy and socio-economic context for the Study Area by describing and detailing the existing context, including land use, development, heritage, open space and character profile of the study area.

The socio-economic background for the study area includes an overview of the retail and commercial environment of Yonge Street and the downtown context and an introduction to the heritage context. This is followed by a review of the current and forecast population, dwelling numbers and type, and income profile for residents of the study area.

The planning context, specifically details the relevant policy changes proposed by the Council-approved Downtown Plan Official Plan Amendment (OPA 406) related to land use designations, zoning and current development applications. At the time of preparing this report, the province was still reviewing OPA 406 and had not yet made its amendments finalizing the policy document.

The evolution of the street network describes its growth and relationship to the Yonge Street corridor.

The major characteristics of the neighbourhood are described in more detail, including the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District, College Park, the Church-Wellesley Village Business Improvement Area, Ryerson University, the Eaton Centre, the “Civic Core”, the Financial District, and the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District.

Lastly, a detailed breakdown of the character of the Yonge Corridor and the east-west corridors is provided, including overall descriptions of the character indicating major buildings and open spaces, a description of the streetscape, descriptions of all the heritage buildings, and providing detail on the remaining built form context and development proposals, with accompanying maps and images.

An inventory of the Yonge Street right-of-way providing further detail on the existing conditions of the streetscape is available under separate cover.



The Eaton Centre's main atrium, parallel to Yonge Street

Key Works Cited

Official Plan, City of Toronto (2006)

The City of Toronto Official Plan was approved by the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) in 2006. The statutory Five Year Review subsequently began in 2011, but due to the size and complexity of the City and its policies, the review is being done in thematic stages which include: transportation, urban design, employment, environment, heritage, housing, and neighbourhoods & apartment neighbourhoods. Most of the stages are complete and approved or are working their way through appeals. The transportation stage is currently underway.



City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013, City of Toronto (2013, as amended to January 1, 2019)

While the City's current zoning by-law is still subject to appeals under section 34(19) of the *Planning Act*, the City's Chief Building Official and the Committee of Adjustment are applying the new By-law to applications filed after its enactment.



Zoning By-Law No. 438-86, Former City of Toronto (1986).

Parts of the Former City of Toronto's zoning by-law (No. 438-86) are still in effect for certain areas of the Study Area.



TOCore - Downtown Plan, City of Toronto (2018)

TOCore is a multi-year initiative to prepare a new plan for Toronto's downtown that started in 2014, and included a significant amount of public engagement, and background reports on key topics. A series of five infrastructure-related strategies have been developed to implement the Downtown Plan, including for community facilities, parks and public realm, mobility, energy and water. The final Downtown Plan, which was implemented by Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 406, provides detailed direction on the appropriate scale and location of future growth in Toronto's core. City Council adopted OPA 406 (with amendments) in July 2018, and was forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. The findings included in this report reflect the City's version of OPA 406 prior to comments/ amendments provided by the provincial government.



Reports prepared as part of the TOCore initiative include:

Trends | Issues | Intensification | Downtown Toronto - Background Report (2014)

Retail and Service Commercial Land Use Study (2015)

Planning Downtown: The Outlook for Office & Institutional Employment to 2041 (2018)

Building for Liveability Recommendations Report (2018)

Downtown Parks & Public Realm Plan (2018)

Downtown Plan Official Plan Amendment (OPA 406) (2018)

Downtown Plan, City of Toronto (2018)



"Yonge Love" Campaign Findings Report, Downtown Yonge BIA (2015)

The Yonge Love campaign was a seven month public engagement project started in 2014 by the Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area to aid in guiding future improvements to the corridor.



Yonge Street Planning, Downtown Yonge BIA (2011)

This study developed a high-level vision for the future of Yonge Street from Dundas Street to Gerrard Street.



Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Plan, City of Toronto (2016)

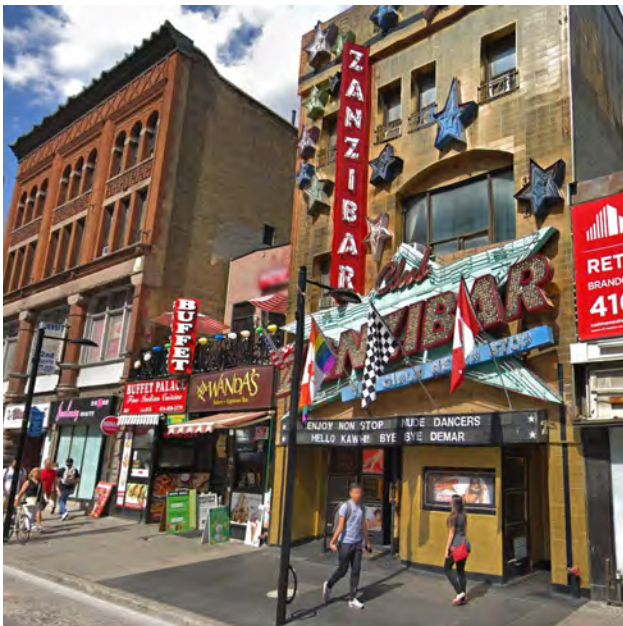
A new Heritage Conservation District for the section of Yonge Street between College Street and Bloor Street was designated in 2016. It is currently under appeal to the LPAT.

Socio-Economic Background

Toronto's Main Street

Despite significant ongoing redevelopment in many areas, the overall character of Yonge Street remains that of a commercial main street. The study area is home to a large variety of retail stores, restaurants, and cultural and commercial activity, including fashion, grocery, home and furniture, jewellery, electronics, sporting goods, pharmacies, convenience stores, strip clubs, bookstores, and art supplies. There are national and international chains as well as a diversity of independent stores. According to a report prepared by Ryerson University's *Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity* in 2018 and cited by the *Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area* (which includes most of the Phase 1 Study Area), almost 80% of the area businesses are small, non-leading retailers.

According to the *Downtown Yonge BIA* there is over 4 million square feet (370,000m²) of retail space and over 700 retail stores in the BIA, not including the Shops at Aura (that advertises 130 shops and a food court). The Eaton Centre alone has 240 different shops and services and is the second largest shopping centre in Canada. Within the BIA there are 27 bars, pubs and lounges, 23 cafes and coffee shops, 60 restaurants, 27 fast food restaurants, and 7 separate food courts. In addition there are personal services, cinemas, theatres and 4 separate shopping centres (College Park, the Shops at Aura, the Atrium on Bay, and the Eaton Centre).



Eclectic stores on Yonge Street near Elm Street

Key Commercial Core of Downtown

The Yonge Street corridor represented by the Overall Study Area also functions as a key commercial core in Toronto's larger Downtown area. According to the background studies prepared as part of the *TOCore initiative* that led to the creation of the new *Downtown Plan*, the Downtown area contains over 500,000 jobs, accounting for 35% of all of Toronto's jobs and making it Canada's largest employment cluster. The number of jobs grew by 15.7% between 2011 and 2016. This number is expected to grow by 250,000 new jobs by 2041. Of the jobs in the Downtown, 65% are in the office category and 14% are institutional, with the remainder primarily in the Service and Retail sectors.

Close to 240,000 people live in the Downtown and is projected to nearly double to 475,000 by 2041. While Downtown accounts for only 3% of Toronto's land area, it is the location of 40% of the non-residential gross floor area and 38% of the residential units proposed across the city.

Heritage

The Phase 1 study area includes a number of heritage buildings, including some of Toronto's most significant historic landmarks. Yonge Street is home to 30 listed and designated heritage buildings including *College Park*, the former *Simpson's Department Store* and the *Confederation Life Building* as well as several banks. The study area also includes listed and designated properties such as *Holy Trinity Church*, *Old City Hall*, the *Metropolitan United Church*, *St. Michael's Cathedral*, the *Arts & Letters Club*, and *Maple Leaf Gardens*.

ERA Architects has produced a *Cultural Heritage and Landscape Screening Assessment* (CHLSA) report for the Yonge TOMorrow Environmental Assessment project that provides background historical research and analysis of the study area, identifies existing built heritage resources and cultural landscapes and proposes preliminary character areas. The CHLSA provides an overview of the existing conditions within the study area from a cultural heritage perspective and is intended as a framework against which design proposals can be evaluated and their potential impacts assessed.

Population

The 2016 Census provides a population of 64,282 people living in the census tracts that cover the area from University Avenue to Jarvis Street and from Davenport Road to Front Street (roughly equivalent to the boundaries of the basemap on page 4). The population grew by 19% between 2011 and 2016. Only 5% of the population was 0-14 years old compared to 15% for the City as a whole. However 15-24 year-olds represented 19% of the area population, compared to 12% City-wide. The working age (25-64 years) population was 62% versus 57% across the City. Those 65 years and over were 11% of the area population, compared to 16% City-wide. There were 37,310 employed persons living within the area in 2016. Approximately 35% took transit to work, 45% walked to work and 4% biked to work.

Dwellings

The Census indicates there were 45,411 dwellings in the area in 2016. Of those dwellings, 94% were in apartment buildings 5-storys or higher. 32% of the dwellings were owner-occupied and 68% rented. 61% were condominium. The composition of dwelling sizes includes 5% bachelor/studio apartments, 56% 1 bedroom, 34% 2 bedroom, 4% 3 bedroom and 0.5% 4 bedroom and more.

Income

According to the 2016 Census, the median income varied significantly amongst the 13 census tracts covering the boundaries of the basemap on Page 4, from a low of \$24,133 to a high of \$63,424, compared to the city-wide median of \$30,089. The median household income also varied significantly, from a low of \$42,807 to a high of \$110,336, compared to the city-wide median of \$65,829. Only 3 of the 13 census tracts have a low-income prevalence lower than the city-wide rate of 20.2% based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT). The low-income rates were 37.7% for the 4 census tracts between Yonge Street and University Avenue and Bloor and Front Streets (the Bay Street Corridor) and 26% for the 7 census tracts between Yonge and Jarvis Streets and Bloor and Front Streets (the Church-Yonge Corridor).



Yonge Street looking north from Dundas Square