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PORT LANDS ENERGY CRUNCH

Rare move may be too late to stop mega power plant

By Anne Marie Aikins

Toronto's medical officer of health **David McKeown** plans to ask Ontario environment minister **Laurel Broten** to review the environmental approvals given to the **Port Lands Energy Centre** in a rare attempt to challenge the approval. McKeown, with the backing of **Toronto Board of Health**, claims the province failed to take into account that the area already has a compromised airshed.

Earlier this week, councillors on Toronto's health board passed a motion by councillor **Paula Fletcher** asking McKeown to file for a review of the certificates of approval for air (there is a certificate for air, water and waste) granted to the centre under Ontario's *Environmental Bill of Rights*. As medical officer of health, McKeown does not require direction from full council and will proceed to file a letter with the environment ministry on the direction of the board. He best work fast as time may be running out to stop the mega power plant—work has already begun clearing the site and the province has a full 60 days to even respond to the request. Those hurdles, however, do not scare east-end environmentalists one bit.

"I'm a firm believer in the faint hope clause," Fletcher told *NRU*. "All I can see that PEC has done so far is clear off the trees. We are determined to stop this project—it's bad for the port lands and the city and it's bad for the environment. It's especially bad for the South Riverdale community."

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RECONFIGURATION TO AID REDEVELOPMENT

Six Points renaissance

By Blake Eligh

After nearly two decades in the making, the "Six Points" renaissance is another tiny step closer to reality this week as city staff presented a shortlist of preferred options for a major overhaul of the tangled west-end intersection.

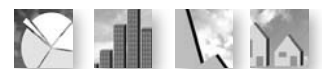
Currently, the intersection near the Kipling subway station is a no-man's land of wide arterial roads where cars whiz by local plazas and quiet residential streets. Running north-south Kipling Avenue interrupts the east-west connections along Bloor and Dundas streets, resulting in a confusing tangle of loops and overpasses and a big waste of good land.

"There are a lot of barriers for both drivers and pedestrians," Toronto EA project manager **Uwe Mader** told *NRU*. According to Mader, the current layout has city-owned roadways hogging much of the 40-acre area, which Mader says is a prime spot for redevelopment.

He notes that that the current configuration is

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confusing for drivers and unfriendly or even dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.

“Some residents have told us that they are afraid to cross the streets,” he adds.

A major overhaul of Six Points has been envisioned since long before amalgamation. Studies conducted by the former City of Etobicoke in the 1980s supported an overhaul of the neighbourhood. Those recommendations were included in the 1987 *Etobicoke City Centre Secondary Plan*; however, the plans never came to fruition so it has been up to the new city to deal with the deteriorating infrastructure and the confusing auto-oriented landscape.

In 2002, council approved a new secondary plan for the area that included policies for an overhaul. The new secondary plan recommended simplifying the existing road network, with fewer

overpasses, more intersections and better streetscapes, as well as better connections to adjacent land uses.

In 2003, city staff and consultant **iTRANS Consulting Inc.** launched a municipal class environmental assessment and have been considering a number of proposals to bring the area into conformity with the secondary plan.

Staff is now hoping to redevelop Six Points into an attractive pedestrian-friendly streetscape, with lots of opportunities for safe crossings and more space for new development. The environmental assessment is currently weighing a number of different options to deal with the problem intersection, narrowing the choices down from 33-initial design concepts to four options to reconfigure the road.

In addition to the standard “do nothing” option, two lower-cost proposals include modifying access to the Westwood Theatre site—located southeast of Bloor

Street and Kipling Avenue—and building an underpass for Dundas at Kipling and Bloor streets. Both would incorporate existing infrastructure without much alteration to the existing roadways.

However, according to Mader, the preferred option—the fully-at-grade Dundas Loop—is to tear down the existing snarl of over- and underpasses and replace them with at-grade intersections. The solution would realign Dundas Street and eliminate the disruptions along Bloor, Dundas and Kipling.

With this version, Mader says, staff will have to be mindful of maintaining access for current public transit

uses—the area is home to the Kipling subway station, which provides connections for both **TTC** and **Mississauga Transit** buses. The arterial road uses of Dundas, Kipling and Bloor streets would also have to be

Six Points Needs an Overhaul



Source: City of Toronto

maintained to prevent traffic from cutting through adjacent residential streets.

According to Mader, the proposal would slow down vehicular traffic and create more places for pedestrians and cyclists to cross arterial roads. The plan would also achieve better connectivity between the existing arterial roads and provide better integration of surplus interchange lands with the existing urban land uses.

The Dundas Loop option would also open up more land for development, Mader commented. The interchanges and the Westwood site are city-owned and could potentially be developed by the city or sold to new owners.

“Right now, the current set-up takes up a lot of land,” Mader said. Providing better access to sites, such as the Westwood theatre site, would make vacant properties more amenable for development.

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Still, the connections will not all be straight roads. “If we wanted to bring Dundas Street right across Kipling, it would displace homes,” he says. “We wanted to design the roads so they would fit into the space at hand without disrupting homes and businesses.”

Mader says that the recent public meeting garnered both supporting and opposing opinions for the proposals. Some residents were upset that existing overpasses, which were repaired just three years ago, could be demolished in the future. However, Mader notes that the overpasses were deteriorating and the repairs just could not wait for a reconfiguration plan that was still up in the air.

Next steps for the project include gathering public opinion until July 4, after that staff is to evaluate if the preferred option is still the best route to go. Those recommendations are to be presented to community council by late fall, and to council in early 2007. If all goes well, the budget agreement for the \$35-million project will be hammered out by 2008, with construction to start soon after. Mader says that the preferred design should take about three years to implement, and could be completed by 2012. •

The Six Points interchange project is not the only initiative proposed for the area. The city is currently looking at a cost-sharing funding strategy for a proposed interregional transit terminal, which would relocate the existing Mississauga bus facility from Islington to Kipling station.

Facilities and real estate staff are also considering plans to centralize west district services from a number of offices to the city-owned Westwood Theatre property. Staff recently wrapped up studies of two other proposed sites one at the West Mall and the other in the Islington and Bloor area. A design charette for the Westwood option is to be scheduled for the fall.



Dundas Loop is the preferred option

Source: City of Toronto

2ND ANNUAL YORK UNIVERSITY PLANNING ALUMNI SOCIAL

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