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Planning & Development
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2013/ 2014 Comprehensive Zoning Review

Technical Paper #6: The Aurora Promenade

Introduction

New legislation in the *Planning Act* requires municipalities to update its Zoning By-law within three years of a new Official Plan coming into effect. The Town's Official Plan came into effect on August 14, 2012. The goal of the Comprehensive Zoning Review is to revise and update our current zoning standards primarily to implement the policies of the Town's Official Plan, incorporate new standards for the Aurora Promenade and also update standards related to the general provisions to apply current progressive planning practice and regulations.

The Aurora Promenade comprises of Downtown Aurora along Yonge Street and Wellington Street East. Current zoning in the Promenade Area is a mix of Commercial, Residential, Institutional, Industrial and mixed exception uses.

The Aurora Promenade Plan and the Town of Aurora Official Plan (2011) are the guiding documents for permitted uses, siting specifications, built form and parking standards for lands within the Aurora Promenade. Policy from the Promenade Plan and the Official Plan direct the creation of new zones for lands within the Promenade. These new zone categories will reflect the policies of the Promenade as prescribed in the Official Plan.

The following technical paper applies to lands located within the Aurora Promenade.

There are several options for the re-zoning of lands within the promenade. The following is a list highlighting each option:

Option 1, Pre-Zone:

With a pre-zoning method, all lands within the Promenade would be re-zoned to reflect the performance standards, permitted uses and parking standards as outlined in the Official Plan and Promenade Plan.

Pros: -Permitted uses and Zoning Standards are simplified into basic categories

-A wide range of permitted uses and very specific built-to standards (ie Build Within Zone) are provided for lands with the same zoning

Cons: -Does not address numerous previously approved site specific zoning

-Promenade Standards may prove difficult to achieve on all lots and will create numerous legal non-conforming situations (from conforming to non-conforming)

-No re-zoning for applications which meet zoning requirements with no input from the public. Planning applications would be Site Plan applications.

Option 2, Status Quo:

A status quo approach would maintain existing zoning as noted in By-law 2213-78. As new development applications are received, the lands would be re-zoned to reflect new Promenade zoning standards as outlined in the Official Plan.

Pros: -New applications within the Promenade will have public input through a re-zoning process

-Site specific issues could be evaluated and exceptions included into new site specific by-laws where warranted

-No legal non-conforming situations would be created, beyond what currently exists in the Town

Cons: -Current permitted uses and zoning standards in the Zoning By-law are out of date with the Official Plan

-Re-zoning or Minor Variances will be required for almost any application with a site alteration

-Virtually every site would require a site specific zoning amendment

Option 3, Hybrid Categorization:

A hybrid categorization would include a pre-zoning component, along with maintaining existing uses within the Promenade. This approach will broaden permitted uses within the Promenade while recognizing existing legal permitted uses from the time of passing of the new Zoning By-law.

Promenade zones would be categorized under land use designations as prescribed in "Schedule B1" of the Official Plan. New Promenade zones include Downtown Area, Upper Downtown Area, Promenade Shoulder Area, Promenade General Area and Promenade Focus Area. Lands within each Promenade zone would be further sub-categorized based upon existing residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, open space or environmental protection zoning. Prohibited or incompatible permitted uses or standards would be deleted from the new zoning standard. Site specific zoning will also be reviewed and maintained where appropriate.

Pros: -Harmonization of exceptions (standards and permitted uses)

-Existing use permissions and standards are maintained with the addition of defined permitted uses in accordance with the Promenade Plan

-Number of exception zones reduced

-Rezone all Promenade lands in closer harmony with the Promenade Official Plan policies

-Assess which performance standards will best suit the affected lands

Cons: -May require stand-alone exception zones to remain in the new By-law potentially creating a conflicting set of uses and performance standards

Recommendation, Hybrid Categorization:

Staff recognize the challenges of implementing any change to lands within the Aurora Promenade. The hybrid categorization approach is recommended in order to implement policies from the Official Plan while recognizing existing site specific provisions and uses within the Aurora Promenade. This approach will reduce the number of non-conforming situations that may arise.

Parking Standards:

Section 11.14 of the Official Plan outlines parking requirements for the Aurora Promenade. Minimum parking standards for each Promenade zone shall be consistent with policies identified in this section of the Official Plan. Site specific parking standards will be evaluated and maintained where appropriate.

Prohibited Uses:

Some lots within the Promenade may include uses which are prohibited or incompatible with the Official Plan. Prohibited uses as identified in Section 11 of the Official Plan are unique to each Promenade designation.

Contact Us:

For more information about the 2013 Comprehensive Zoning Review, contact Town of Aurora Planning & Development Services at planning@aurora.ca or by phone: Glen Letman at 905-727-3123, ext. 4346 or Jeff Healey at 905-727-3123, ext. 4349.