

HUGE OPPORTUNITY



Andrew Cohrs

Dramatic changes may soon be happening at Bloor and Dufferin as a proposal to redevelop the southwest block of the intersection into a denser and pedestrian-oriented community gets started.

“We see that this as a huge opportunity to create a destination, a new community which fits within the urban fabric of the surrounding neighbourhoods and takes advantage of a strategic location with a major bus line and subway line in an area which is really up-and-coming,” **Capital Developments** co-founder and managing partner **Todd Cowan** told *NRU*.

Capital Developments and partner **Metropia** have agreed to purchase a 2.95-ha site on the southwest quadrant for Bloor Street West and Dufferin Street from the **Toronto District School Board**. The property includes Kent Public School and Bloor Collegiate Institute. While the project is in its early stages, Cowan said it will include a new community hub, range of housing options, new retail opportunities and potentially new office space. A pedestrian-oriented street, running north-south from Bloor will form the central focus of the redevelopment, along with a 3,716 m² public

park. The street and park are to be lined with retail uses.

Cowan says that his firm’s experience developing properties across Europe inspired the “high street” with a focus on the pedestrian environment.

“We think that there is interesting opportunity to bring some of our European experience and apply it to this site, particularly as it relates to the public realm because I think a lot of the great European cities really did a great job creating pedestrian-friendly cities.”

Recognizing the area’s vibrant art community, the development team is also considering the creation of a second pedestrian promenade, one that would showcase local art.

“One of the ideas we have is this artist muse. I would say we kind of got the inspiration from Wynwood Walls in

Clockwise from right: Rendering shows the Art Muse, part of Capitol Developments and Metropia’s redevelopment concept for the southwest quadrant of Bloor and Dufferin streets. Artwork depicted in the rendering is by Anastasia Sokolyk and Wandy Cheng.

SOURCE: BLOOR DUFFERIN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

Rendering shows outdoor space in Capitol Developments and Metropia’s redevelopment concept for Bloor and Dufferin

SOURCE: BLOOR DUFFERIN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

Rendering shows the Kent Public School building on Dufferin Street, which is proposed to be retained by Capitol Developments and Metropia

SOURCE: BLOOR DUFFERIN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

Rendering shows a Bloor Street portion of Capitol Developments and Metropia’s redevelopment concept at Bloor and Dufferin

SOURCE: BLOOR DUFFERIN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

Site plan for Capitol Developments and Metropia’s redevelopment concept for Bloor and Dufferin

SOURCE: BLOOR DUFFERIN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP



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Miami, which is one of the biggest tourist destinations in Miami. ... I think it's a great opportunity to help support the local artist community, where we create opportunities for artists to display their work and promote themselves, and it also can be changed, managed and coordinated by the local community."

Ward 18 Davenport councillor **Ana Bailão** told NRU in an email that she wants the development to reflect the character and needs of the community including affordable housing units, childcare spaces, onsite parkland, heritage preservation and a community hub.

"Prior to the sale of the site, the city, province and school board worked together to require that the developer set aside space in [its] proposal for a 30,000 ft² community hub on the site. The hub would be funded by a provincial contribution and what the city can secure through the development process."

An independent community hub visioning group, has been set up by the city and province to assist the community in developing a vision and service framework for the hub. This process is being led by **SN Management**.

The proposal, so far, is to

demolish the Bloor Collegiate Institute building while retaining and renovating the Kent Public School building. Cowan suggests the former school building would be an appropriate location for the community hub.

In terms of built form, Cowan is cautious about suggesting potential heights or densities. Nevertheless, he suggests that in comparison to the nearby large redevelopments at Galleria Mall and Mirvish Village, this site is better suited for intensification.

"Arguably, it's a better site for intensification than [Galleria Mall and Mirvish Village]. ... If you are making a comparison with those two sites, I think this site would be more suitable and [tall buildings would] have less impact."

Cowan says that because The Dufferin/Bloor site is much deeper than Mirvish Village, twice its size, adjacent to a large mall and better served by transit, including the GO train. Thus the impacts of tall buildings can be better "softened," Cowan says, than in the other two redevelopments.

In terms of residential units, a mix of condominium and purpose-built rental is proposed, and the inclusion of

affordable homeownership is being considered. Cowan says they would also like to include office uses if they can find the demand for them.

Capital Developments and Metropia anticipate submitting an application for an official plan amendment this fall.

Kent Public School was closed in 2012. In partnership with the province, the TDSB plans to redevelop Brockton High School, which is directly adjacent to the redevelopment site, to accommodate 900 students, including those currently attending Bloor Collegiate Institute.

SN Management was unavailable for comment before deadline. 🌸

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