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Executive Summary

This is the 20-year vision for the Lawrence-Allen area and the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood that is at its centre:

- A mixed-income, mixed-use community with housing, employment, social and recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds.
- Renewed social housing, active parks, schools and community facilities, and a balanced transportation system which prioritizes pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.
- A community that is at once distinct and culturally diverse while being fully integrated with the broader city.

It is a vision articulated in this Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan, a comprehensive planning framework that details the steps required to make it a reality.

Over the next two decades, two-thirds of Toronto's population growth is projected to occur outside the downtown. The evolution of the inner suburbs will play a critical role in determining the City's quality of life in the middle of the 21st century. The Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan can serve as a model for guiding this evolution. It renews social housing, invests in a Priority Neighbourhood, and provides a vibrant and environmentally sustainable community for new and existing residents to call home.

The Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan

The Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan addresses a 340 hectare Study Area bounded by Lawrence Avenue West, Bathurst Street, Dufferin Street, and Highway 401. The Focus Area of major change is 75 hectares in size. It encompasses Toronto Community Housing's Lawrence Heights neighbourhood and lands owned by the Toronto District School Board, the City of Toronto, and Riocan which are interwoven with it.

In 2008, the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing, and the Toronto District School Board each initiated complementary and coordinated studies to plan for the revitalization of this area. While the initial catalyst for these initiatives was TCHC's need to renew social housing stock, it created the opportunity and responsibility to comprehensively examine the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood, its relationship to adjacent neighbourhoods and their joint connection to the broader city. Within this context, the City's study explored how growth and change identified by the various land owners could be balanced with the broader city building objectives articulated by the Official Plan.

Over the last two years, the City engaged a multi-disciplinary consulting team to complete a comprehensive planning study for the Lawrence-Allen area. The study undertook an extensive and inclusive community engagement process with stakeholders from every part of the Study Area. It included: large and small community meetings and workshops, surveys and tours, phone calls, e-mails and face-to-face conversations.

The Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan is the result of this study. It articulates a vision for the area 20 years from now, lays out a new physical plan and recommends short term and long term directions for a Secondary Plan. It suggests implementation tools to establish a comprehensive planning framework for the Lawrence-Allen Area.

The Revitalization Plan is organized around four themes:

Reinvestment

A comprehensive planning framework creates a context for investment to occur. Reinvestment in the Lawrence-Allen area will renew social housing stock, develop new private housing, construct new public infrastructure, and cultivate a sustainable neighbourhood through measures such as:

- Provision for up to 7,500 residential units in the Focus Area.
- Retention or replacement of all existing 1,208 social housing units with housing of similar type and function.
- Land use directions supporting a mix of uses and building types to facilitate a diverse and mixed income community.
- A community energy plan to achieve Toronto's greenhouse gas emission and renewable energy production targets.
- Upgrading of existing servicing infrastructure to more effective and efficient standards.

Mobility

A strong, well-balanced transportation system supports growth and connects the Lawrence-Allen area to other parts of Toronto, enabling residents to access opportunities within their community and across the city. It also allows visitors to reach the neighbourhood to visit friends and family, go to work or school, do their shopping or enjoy their free time. The Lawrence-Allen area will improve mobility for all modes of transportation in a manner that prioritizes pedestrians, cyclists and transit users through:

- A new network of public streets that provides improved connectivity and circulation for all users and is well integrated with the surrounding existing public street network.
- Transit-Supportive Development around the Lawrence West and Yorkdale subway stations and improvements to those stations.
- Improved pedestrian and cycling connections between neighbourhoods, and to Yorkdale Shopping Centre and Lawrence Avenue
- A re-examination of the Allen Road corridor, including new bridges, ramps and road improvements.

Liveability

The residents of new housing – whether social housing or market housing – create the community that ultimately inhabits a neighbourhood’s public realm. A liveable neighbourhood – one with a high-quality of life – will be created through an array of community institutions that foster community health and social networks, including:

- A full range of parks, supporting active and passive uses.
- Elementary and secondary schools for the TDSB and TCDSB.
- A new network of community facilities to serve as community focal points while providing the services that build resident skills, capacities and interpersonal networks.

Place-Making

The bricks and mortar of a new neighbourhood are built around a structure of new streets, parks and other public spaces. These spaces provide the setting for civic life and social interaction among residents. Place-making in the Lawrence-Allen area will contribute to the strengthening of community identity, promote public safety and foster vibrant public activity through:

- A park focused plan for the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood centered on the Commons, where community services, facilities, schools, recreational programming and local retail come together in a park setting. Four residential areas border the Commons, each with their own parks as focal points.
- Streets as enjoyable destinations, with wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trees and comfortable places to sit.
- A mid-rise building character, with generous areas reserved for low-rise townhouses, and some taller buildings located on blocks closest to the Lawrence West subway station.

- A high quality of urban design reflected in the form of buildings, the relationship of development to adjacent public spaces and the design of streets and the public realm.
- Built form principles to create the appropriate arrangement of density and a respectful transition to the adjacent neighbourhoods.

Implementation

Revitalization of the Lawrence-Allen area will be steered by a Secondary Plan, which forms part of the City’s Official Plan. Each phase of redevelopment will require a Zoning By-law Amendment, to be triggered through application by the landowner. The application review process will assess the proposed development in each phase against the policies of the Official Plan and Secondary Plan. A number of specific implementation plans will facilitate the revitalization of the Lawrence-Allen area, including:

- Community Services and Facilities Strategy
- Parks and Public Realm Master Plan
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Transportation Master Plan
- Infrastructure Master Plan
- Community Energy Plan
- Heritage Interpretation Plan

THE REVITALIZATION PLAN IS STRUCTURED IN FIVE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 - Lawrence-Allen in a Changing City identifies the opportunities for revitalization in the Lawrence-Allen area and a vision to guide revitalization over the next 20 years.

Chapter 2 – Setting the Context describes the planning study process and background.

Chapter 3 – From Vision to Plan summarizes the key elements translating the vision for Lawrence-Allen into a plan for the area

Chapter 4 – Planning Directions and Actions recommends directions on a range of planning issues for a future Secondary Plan that will establish a comprehensive planning framework for the Lawrence-Allen area.

Chapter 5 – Making it Happen identifies steps that will be necessary to implement the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan.