

Chapter 2

Setting *the* Context

The Revitalization Plan for the Lawrence-Allen area is the outcome of nearly two years of coordinated planning study by the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), and Toronto District School Board (TDSB). All three began planning initiatives in 2008:

- The City initiated the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study to develop a plan for the Lawrence-Allen area that would form the basis of a Secondary Plan.
- TCHC began preparation of a development plan for its lands in Lawrence Heights, along with adjacent public lands.
- TDSB began an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) as part of an initiative to revitalize education facilities in the Lawrence-Allen area.

The City, TCHC, and TDSB worked to coordinate their planning activities in order to come to a comprehensive planning framework that would accommodate landowners' needs while achieving a range of public planning objectives in a balanced way.

City Council authorized the City Planning Division to begin the development of a vision and planning framework for the revitalization of Lawrence Heights at its meeting on July 16, 17, 18 and 19, 2007. Council's instruction followed a report received by Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors in March 2007. The TCHC report provided information regarding the Lawrence Heights community and current conditions which indicated the need to revitalize. The TCHC report also identified a number of revitalization opportunities for the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood.

The City Planning Division, with support from Toronto Water, Transportation Services, and Facilities and Real Estate, released a Request for Proposals on April 1, 2008 to hire a multi-disciplinary consulting team to undertake the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study. A consulting team led by the firm planningAlliance was selected and work on the study commenced in June 2008.

This report presents the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan by City Planning, informed by the work of the City's consulting team. The Revitalization Plan provides the basis for a Secondary Plan. The report also recommends implementation tools to establish a comprehensive planning framework for the Lawrence-Allen area.

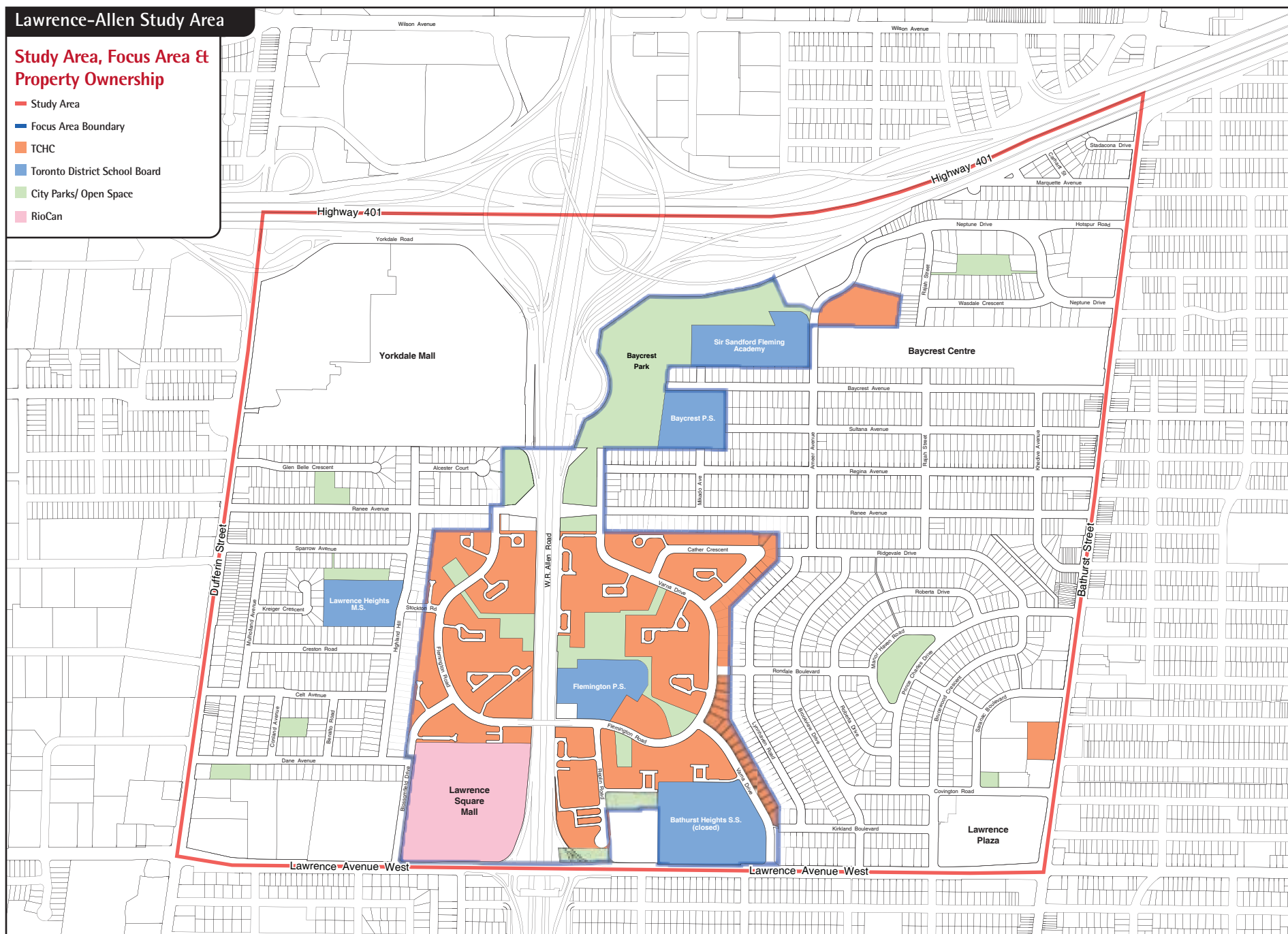


Figure 1: Lawrence–Allen Study Area

I. LAWRENCE-ALLEN STUDY AREA

A comprehensive planning framework requires examination of not only the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood, but also its relationship to adjacent neighbourhoods and its connection to the broader city. The Study Area for the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study is approximately 340 hectares in size (840 acres) and is bounded by Lawrence Avenue West on the south, Highway 401 on the north, Bathurst Street on the east, and Dufferin Street on the west. (Figure 1)

The Study Area includes several neighbourhoods and communities, each with their own characteristics. While these neighbourhoods are not rigidly defined, the area can generally be described as comprising five neighbourhoods (Figure 2). The large majority of properties in the neighbourhoods east and west of Lawrence Heights are developed with single-family detached homes and distinct street patterns. The neighbourhood in the northeast of the Study Area is largely developed with multi-family residential buildings, under rental, condominium, and equity-cooperative tenure. Much of this neighbourhood has a consistent built form of three-story walk-up apartment buildings and multiplex dwellings.

The Study Area is bounded on three sides by major arterial streets. Bathurst Street is developed with a mix of retail, residential, and institutional uses in a mix of low-rise and mid-rise built forms. On Dufferin Street, most buildings are low-rise and support small-scale retail or commercial operations, with parking located in front of the building. Lawrence Avenue West is developed with low-rise residential development, a mid-rise residential building, Bathurst Heights Secondary School building, and three large-scale commercial properties.

Other important features of the Study Area include:

- Two subway stations – Lawrence Avenue West and Yorkdale – on the Spadina subway line which offer potential for excellent transit access. The area is also served by a number of bus routes.
- Yorkdale Shopping Mall – one of the largest regional shopping centres in the country.
- Lawrence Plaza – an active shopping plaza located at the intersection of Bathurst Street and Lawrence Avenue West.
- Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care – located in the northeast of the Study Area, provides health care services to the city and senior's residences with a range of support services.
- The Allen Road Corridor, which bisects the Study Area, providing both a significant piece of transportation infrastructure and creating a physical barrier.

Active development proposals in the Study Area include:

- a development proposal on the northeast corner of Dufferin Street and Lawrence Avenue West recently approved by the Ontario Municipal Board, with a total of 1,500 units in buildings up to 24 storeys in height, and which will include a child care and a neighbourhood park;
- an application at 3180 Bathurst Street to intensify the site of the Asbury West United Church with a residential development of up to 367 units in a 14 storey building.
- an application for redevelopment of two rental properties at 50-52 Neptune Drive with a total of 155 units in a 14-storey building.

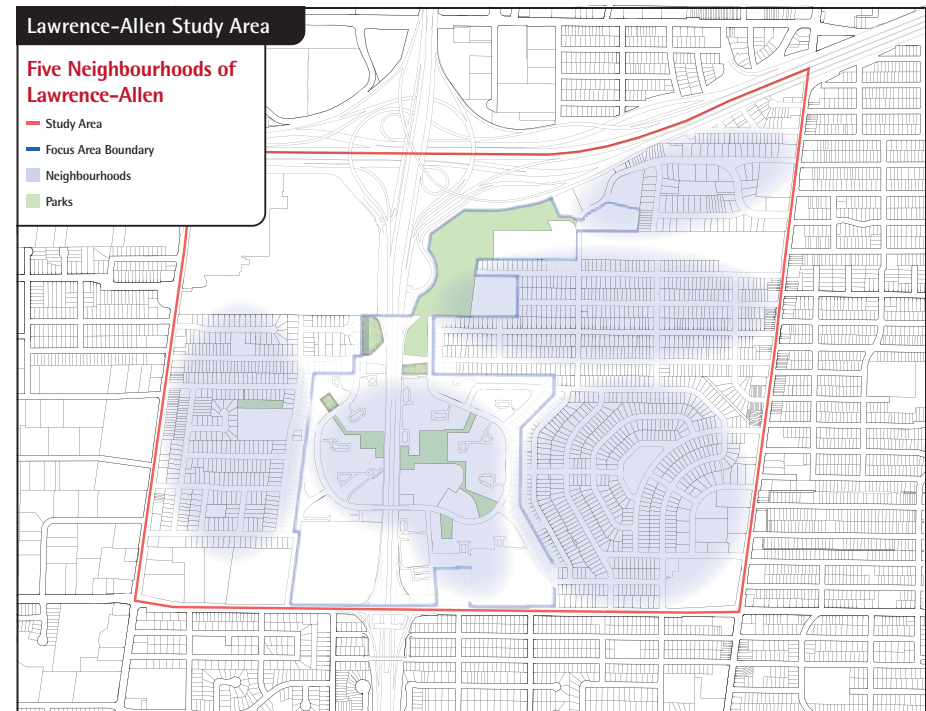


Figure 2: Five Neighbourhoods of Lawrence-Allen

II. LAWRENCE HEIGHTS FOCUS AREA

Most of the Study Area is not contemplated for redevelopment or expected to undergo significant physical change. The Revitalization Plan does however envision significant change within the Focus Area. The study's Focus Area comprises approximately 75 hectares of land on either side of the Allen Road corridor owned by TCHC, TDSB, the City of Toronto, and RioCan.

The Lawrence Heights neighbourhood is structured around a ring road (Flemington Road and Varna Drive) that serves as the primary street network in the neighbourhood. Housing in the neighbourhood includes singles, semi-detached houses, townhouses, and small walk up apartment structures ranging from 1 to 4 storeys in height. Much of this housing addresses courts that are accessed from the ring road. Flemington Park is a 3.5 ha park, distributed unevenly through the neighbourhood. Flemington Public School sits in the middle of the neighbourhood and the Bathurst Heights Secondary School site is on the southeast edge of the neighbourhood, on Lawrence Avenue West. The Allen Road bisects Lawrence Heights; aside from Lawrence Avenue West, the neighbourhood has just two crossings – a bridge at Flemington Road and an underpass at Ranee Avenue.

North of Ranee Avenue, the Focus Area includes Baycrest Park, a 9 hectare district park located on the edge of Highway 401 and Allen Road. Baycrest Public School and Sir Sandford Fleming Academy are located adjacent to the park.

On the southwest edge of Lawrence Heights, the Lawrence Square Shopping Mall is a locally-oriented shopping centre that serves the local area and other surrounding communities.

Lands	Owners	Area (approx.)
Lawrence Heights housing	TCHC	60.6 acres (24.5 ha)
North Acres housing	TCHC	4.4 acres (1.8 ha)
Neptune Drive housing	TCHC	3.8 acres (1.5 ha)
Bathurst Heights Learning Centre	TDSB	12.1 acres (4.9 ha)
Flemington Public School	TDSB	6.1 acres (2.5 ha)
Lawrence Heights Middle School	TDSB	5.0 acres (2.0 ha)
Baycrest Public School	TDSB	5.4 acres (2.2 ha)
Sir Sandford Fleming Academy	TDSB	7.8 acres (3.2 ha)
Streets and Lanes	City of Toronto	23.0 acres (9.3 ha)
Lawrence Heights Community Centre	City of Toronto	1.3 acres (0.5 ha)
Baycrest Park	City of Toronto	23 acres (9.3 ha)
Varna Park	City of Toronto	0.8 acres (0.3 ha)
Yorkdale Park	City of Toronto	2.7 acres (1.1 ha)
Flemington Park	City of Toronto	8.6 acres (3.5 ha)
N/E corner, Lawrence Ave and Allen Rd	City of Toronto	1.0 acre (0.42 ha)
Lawrence Square Shopping Centre	RioCan	19.7 acres (8.0 ha)
TOTAL		185.3 acres (75 ha)

Figure 3: Focus Area Land Parcels



Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care



Yorkdale Shopping Centre



Lawrence Square Shopping Mall



Bathurst Heights Secondary School



Lawrence Heights Swimming Pool



Figure 4: Age Structure of Lawrence-Allen Population

III. DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The City Planning Division completed an updated demographic profile of the Lawrence-Allen area in November 2008, using data from several sources including the Census of Canada and the Toronto Employment Survey.

In 2006, there were 17,505 residents living in the Study Area. Of these, over 3,500 are Toronto Community Housing tenants. There are about 6,700 total housing units, including 1,342 Toronto Community Housing RGI units.

The Study Area population grew by 8.1% or 1,305 persons between the 2001 and 2006 censuses, much faster than the City overall (0.9%). Most of the growth reflected the recent completion of the Shermount and Liberty Walk housing developments.

As with much of Toronto, the area has a diverse mix of ethnic groups, religions, languages and nationalities including concentrations of Italian, Jamaican, African, Jewish, and Filipino residents, among others. The highest percentage of recent immigrants into the area between 2001 and 2006 censuses came from Southeast Asia, including the Philippines.

Across the Study Area, there is a high percentage of very young (0-14 years) and very old (80+ years). Some parts of the Study Area are notable for large family sizes (3 or more children) and seniors living alone. In the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood specifically, there are lower levels of income and employment, low levels of post-high school education, and a high percentage of lone parent families.

IV. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Provincial Policy

Municipal planning decisions, including the adoption of a new Secondary Plan for Lawrence-Allen, must have regard for matters of provincial interest set out in Section 2 of the *Planning Act* and must be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). The PPS came into effect on March 1, 2005 and provides policy direction on land use and development matters of provincial interest. Some of the matters that are relevant to the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study include:

- the efficient use of land, infrastructure and public service facilities;
- intensification in the context of existing and planned development and infrastructure;
- ensuring sufficient land availability for an appropriate range and mix of employment, residential, recreational and open space uses; and
- planning public streets, spaces and facilities to meet the needs of pedestrian and cycling movements.

Places to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was released by the Province in 2006 to provide regional and local area municipalities with a framework to manage growth in urban areas. Municipal planning decisions must conform and not conflict with the Growth Plan. It provides policies relevant to the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study, including priorities to:

- reduce automobile dependency through mixed-use, transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly development;
- provide convenient access to intra- and inter-city transit and intensify urban areas particularly around major transit stations;
- provide for a range and mix of housing, including affordable housing, a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, and high quality public open spaces;
- ensure an adequate supply of lands for employment in support of a diversified economic base; and
- conserve cultural heritage and archaeological resources as intensification occurs.

The Growth Plan plans for intensification in urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and within intensification corridors.

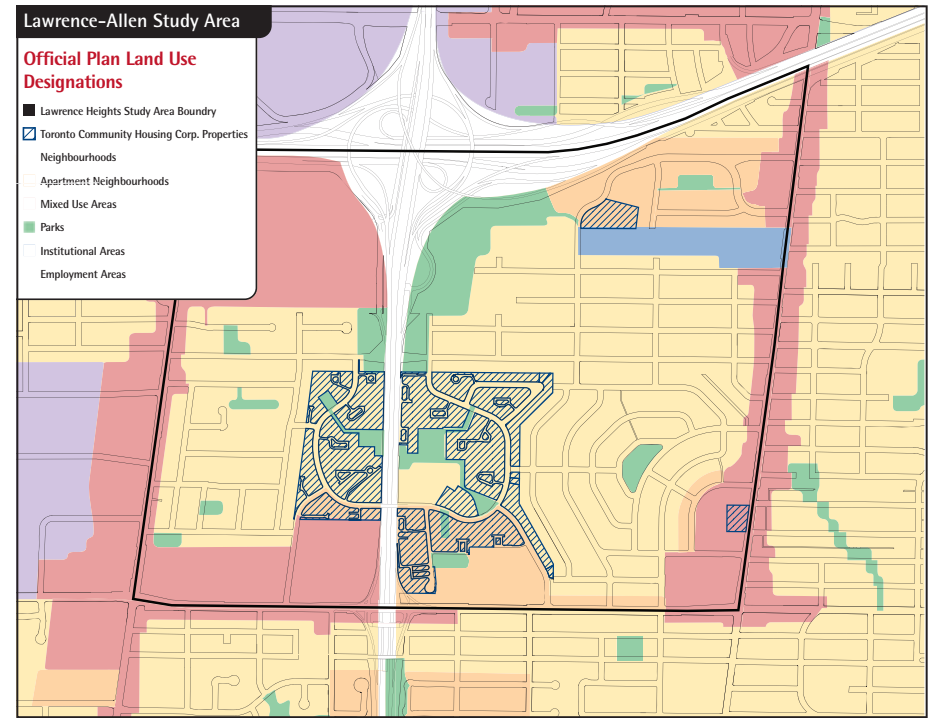


Figure 5: Official Plan - Current Land Use Designations

City of Toronto Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan provides a City-wide policy framework for the Revitalization Plan. A Secondary Plan for Lawrence-Allen will become part of the City's Official Plan. It is guided by the policies contained in the Official Plan and builds upon them.

The Official Plan applies various land use designations to lands within the Lawrence-Allen Study Area: *Neighbourhoods*, *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, *Mixed Use Areas*, and *Parks and Open Space Areas*. (Figure 5)

- A majority of lands within the Study Area are designated *Neighbourhoods*. *Neighbourhoods* are considered physically stable areas made up of residential uses in lower scale buildings. Parks, low scale institutions, home occupations, cultural and recreational facilities and small-scale retail, service and office uses are also provided for in *Neighbourhoods*.
- *Apartment Neighbourhoods* are made up of apartment buildings and parks, local institutions, cultural and recreational facilities, and small-scale retail, service and office uses that serve the needs of area residents.

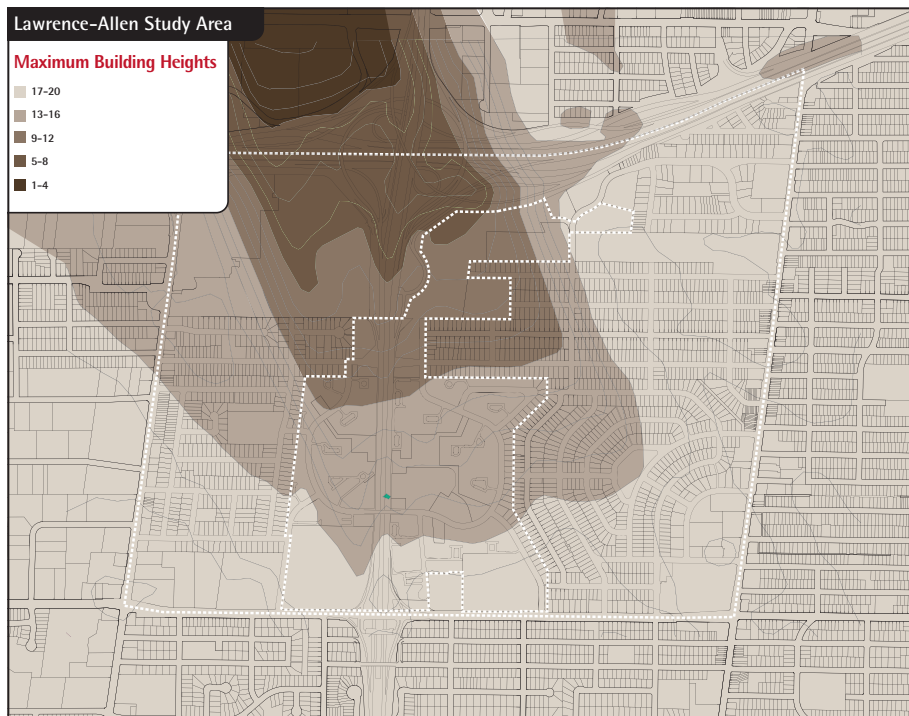


Figure 6: Height Limitations based on Airport Flight Paths

Like *Neighbourhoods*, built up *Apartment Neighbourhoods* are stable areas of the City where significant growth is generally not anticipated.

- *Mixed Use Areas* are made up of a broad range of commercial, residential and institutional uses, in single use or mixed use buildings, as well as parks and open spaces and utilities. *Mixed Use Areas* line all of Dufferin Street and nearly all of Bathurst Street in the Study Area. Lands on the north side of Lawrence Avenue West between Dufferin Street and Allen Road are also designated *Mixed Use Areas*, as is Yorkdale Shopping Centre.

Site- and area-specific Official Plan policy numbers 93, 94, and 95 further define provisions for development on certain properties on the south side of Baycrest Avenue and on the west side of Bathurst Street between Baycrest Avenue and Prince Charles Drive.

- City-owned parkland in the area is designated *Parks and Open Space*.
- Lands that are part of the Baycrest Hospital campus are designated *Institutional*.

In addition to land use designations, the urban structure map of the Official Plan (Map 2) identifies Dufferin Street, Bathurst Street, and parts of Lawrence Avenue West as Avenues – important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged. Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street are also identified as Surface Transit Priority Routes.

Airport Flight Paths

The Downsview Airport is located to the northwest of the Study Area. The airport has an associated “Airport Hazard Zone” – a surrounding area where building and structure heights are restricted to prevent obstruction of flight paths (Figure 6). Bombardier Inc. operates the airport and has provided information to reflect the flight paths and approaches associated with the current airport operations and current Transport Canada guidelines in the City’s Zoning By-law.

V. REVITALIZATION PLANNING PROCESS

The consulting team led by planningAlliance actively began the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study in June 2008. The Study process has occurred in three stages, to research, prepare and evaluate planning options leading to development of the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan.

In addition to the Revitalization Plan, the consultants and City staff are preparing a number of implementation tools, including a draft Transportation Master Plan, a draft Infrastructure Master Plan, and a draft Community Energy Plan. The Transportation and Infrastructure Master Plans will satisfy Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process and are following an integrated approach between the *Planning Act* and the *Environmental Assessment Act*. Extensive public and agency consultation has been undertaken throughout the process.

The three phases of the Revitalization Study were:

Phase 1: Analysis and Objectives (2008)

In this phase, the consulting team undertook substantive research and analysis on the existing conditions of the Study Area. The work included community engagement to understand priorities of community members, including their views on how successful their neighbourhoods are today and how they could be improved. The Phase led to development of a vision for the study area and objectives for the plan.

Phase 2: Alternatives (2009)

In the second phase, the project team used the objectives and principles developed in Phase 1 to prepare option plans for the revitalization. The phase began by outlining plan “building blocks” – parks, streets, buildings – presented to the community as conceptual plan diagrams. In June 2009, four specific Option Plans were presented: Options A, B, C and Do Nothing.

Phase 3: Emerging Preferred Plan to Secondary Plan (2010-2011)

In the third phase, the conclusions from the Option Plan evaluation process led to the development of a single ‘Emerging Preferred Plan’. This plan was initially presented to the community at a public meeting on February 25, 2010. In the months following, this plan was analyzed by staff and consultants at the City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing and discussed at many public events with community members, landowners, community agencies and other stakeholders. This process led to the creation of the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan recommended in this report.

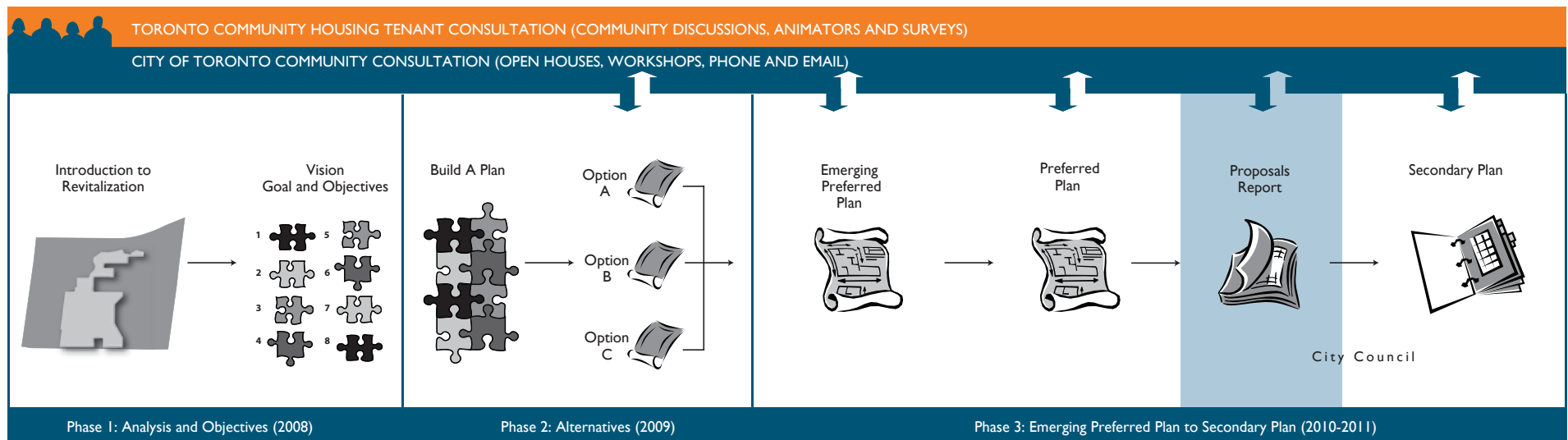


Figure 7: Revitalization Planning Process

Evaluation of Plan Alternatives

During Phase 2, the project teams developed three option plans for the neighbourhood. These were evaluated against each other and against a fourth 'Do Nothing' option, which would maintain the current streets, parks and development blocks in the neighbourhoods.

While the plans each had different characteristics for streets, blocks and parks, there were key similarities across all three plans:

- 10,500 total units in the Focus Area, as proposed by area landowners, including replacement of all 1,208 TCHC units;
- Density focused along Allen Road, Lawrence Avenue West, subway stations and large parks with a transition to townhouses in areas adjacent to existing low-rise neighbourhoods;
- Doubling of existing parkland;
- New large community centre, six school sites, and maintaining existing health centre in current location;
- Aligning Varna Drive with Englemount Avenue at Lawrence Avenue West; connecting Replin Road south to Lawrence Avenue West; connecting Marlee Avenue north through Lawrence Square Plaza to Flemington Road, when it re-develops, and connecting Varna Drive north from Ranee Avenue to Neptune Drive around Baycrest Park;
- Replacement of existing retail space on the Lawrence Square site and provision for new retail and non-residential space on the ground floor of new apartment buildings, along with new schools and community facilities; and

- Ability of the Option Plans to fit with different options for Allen Road changes, including improvements to the Lawrence-Allen intersection.

The project team – including City staff and consultants - evaluated the four Option plans based on an Evaluation Matrix. The conclusions drawn from the evaluation led to the development of an Emerging Preferred Plan that incorporated successful elements from each of the Option Plans.

The Evaluation Matrix, also known as a 'sustainability framework' integrates the project's physical, social, economic and environmental goals into a single assessment tool. The basis of the matrix were the goals and objectives developed with the community in Phase I of the project, as well as input from the City's consulting team and City divisions. The matrix includes 34 evaluation criteria across eight categories:

1. Transportation
2. Economic Environment
3. Building Environment
4. Social Environment
5. Parks and Community Services
6. Cultural Environment
7. Sustainability/Municipal Services
8. Implementation

A draft evaluation matrix was presented to the community in June 2009, and the final, completed evaluation was presented at the Feb, 25, 2010 open house for the emerging preferred plan.

VI. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement strategy for the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study was designed to provide stakeholders with a meaningful voice in a challenging project where the geography of the area is large, the issues are varied and complex, the time horizon is long and the population is diverse.

Over a two-year period, the City of Toronto provided community residents with several different ways to learn and participate in the project. Opportunities at public events included:

- presentations with question and answer sessions;
- booths and displays where residents could speak directly with staff and consultants on specific topics;
- small group workshops where residents could discuss ideas with each other; and
- hand-written comment sheets at all events.

The Revitalization Study advertised community-wide consultation events to all homes in the Lawrence-Allen area, as well as homes within 120 metre radius around it – a total of about 12,000 invitations. In partnership with TCHC, notices were also posted at key community hubs and sent electronically to the project's email list. Notices were translated and interpreters at the events allowed residents to learn about the project in up to 12 different languages. Key meetings began in the afternoon and continued into the evening to accommodate different schedules. While larger meetings were typically held in central locations such as the Lawrence Heights Community Centre, smaller workshops were dispersed to different geographical locations throughout the Study Area. Larger events attracted as many as 350 attendees, and smaller workshops typically ranged from 60 to 100.

Those who were not able to attend meetings could learn about the project through a variety of avenues. Reports of every public meeting were prepared and posted, along with other documents, on the project website at <http://www.toronto.ca/lawrenceallen>. These reports were also available at updated document archives at community hubs such as the Barbara Frum Library, Lawrence Heights Community Centre, New Heights Community Health Centre and Villa Colombo. There were also community tours, surveys, and the BePart community research project organized with the New Heights Health Centre, Toronto Community Housing and other partners. Individuals could also contact project staff through a dedicated project email address, or through telephone and mail.

In addition to these activities directly organized by city staff, the project team participated in the engagement processes of TCHC and TDSB. These processes focused specifically on those most directly affected by revitalization – the residents of the Lawrence Heights Focus Area and the students who attend its public schools. Engagement included community discussions, surveys and direct outreach done by TCHC’s ‘community animators’.

Resident engagement was complemented by regular communication with other area stakeholders, including the TCDSB and large landowners such as Yorkdale, Lawrence Square Mall, Baycrest and Villa Colombo. A special engagement process also targeted over 100 community agencies serving the entire Lawrence Heights priority neighbourhood with different surveys, and large meetings at different stages of the project. City staff have participated in LHION (Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network), an umbrella group of the priority neighbourhood's service providers. Finally, city staff often responded to invitations to discuss the project with small groups of residents, or at larger, more general meetings organized by a city councilor or interested groups in the community.



2010 Youth Workshop Results - Sir Sandford Fleming - produced by Tanya Gerber & Associates



LAWRENCE-ALLEN REVITALIZATION STUDY CITY OF TORONTO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

2008

- May 13: Community Agency Meeting
- July 3: Project Overview and Principles
- July 16: Visioning Workshop
- September 8: Community Advisory Group Meeting
- September 13: Youth Event: 'Rebirth'
- September 18: Community Agency Meeting
- October 6: Community Advisory Group Meeting
- October 16: Community Forum and Open House
- October 19: Neighbourhood Tour - Energy
- November 2: Neighbourhood Tour - Mixed Communities

2009

- February 23: Community Advisory Group Meeting
- March 2: Project Update and Open House
- March 25: Project Update and Open House
- June 10: Option Plans Open House
- June 11: Option Plans Open House
- June 16: Community Workshop
- June 18: Community Workshop
- June 28: Youth Event: 'Invite to Revite'
- Additional scheduled workshops cancelled due to strike

2010

- February 23: Community Open House – Emerging Preferred Plan
- March 1: Community Workshop
- March 8: Community Workshop
- March 10: Community Workshop
- March 19: Seniors Workshop
- March 24: Community Workshop
- April 15: Community Agency Workshop
- April 21: Youth Workshop
- April 27: Youth Workshop

* This table lists major events organized or co-organized by the City of Toronto. Staff participated in many events not listed, including those related to project surveys and research initiatives as well as events organized by Toronto Community Housing, the TDSB and other organizations

Figure 8: City of Toronto Community Engagement Events

vii. TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING & TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The City of Toronto's Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study is only one piece of the extensive planning work undertaken by public agencies in the Lawrence-Allen Area. Toronto Community Housing and Toronto District School Board, as major public sector landowners, are both partners in the Revitalization Study and both have undertaken their own planning initiatives.

Toronto Community Housing – Lawrence Heights Development Plan

On April 2, 2008, Toronto Community Housing released a Request For Proposal for a consulting team to prepare a development plan for Lawrence Heights TCHC awarded the project to a consulting team led by Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co Architects Inc., to prepare plans for the redevelopment of TCHC's lands, including new housing, streets and blocks, open spaces, and built form. TCHC has undertaken extensive consultation and engagement with its tenant community in Lawrence Heights to involve residents in the revitalization process, and TCHC partnered with the City on a number of community engagement events in the Lawrence-Allen Study Area in order to facilitate participation by TCHC tenants.

TDSB Program Revitalization

Toronto District School Board staff viewed the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Project as a major opportunity to improve TDSB schools in the Lawrence-Allen Study Area and to align the revitalization with TDSB's system-wide Better Schools, Brighter Futures initiative. In August 2008, the Toronto District School Board approved the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) to address the future of Baycrest P.S.; Flemington P.S.; Lawrence Heights M.S.; Sir Sandford Fleming Academy; and the Year Round Alternative School.

The ARC began its work on October 2, 2008. It held seven meetings – three pre-public and four public meetings, as well as meeting to discuss findings and recommendations and to finalize its report. Staff from both the City and TCHC participated in the ARC. The ARC recommended that a minimum of two TDSB elementary schools (JK-8) serve the area and at least one secondary school. This spring, the TDSB will be forwarding a staff report with recommendations responding to the ARC report.

Provision of school sites in the Revitalization Plan is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this report.

