



II. MOBILITY

The Lawrence Allen Revitalization Plan focuses on shifting travel behaviour away from auto-oriented travel patterns and towards increased transit, walking, and cycling use. This approach is consistent with the broader transportation goals of the City's Official Plan and helps meet the sustainability goals for the Revitalization Plan.

The Secondary Plan for the Lawrence-Allen area will be supported by a Transportation Master Plan that provides a strong long-term planning framework to help rebalance the transportation system in the Study Area and that satisfies Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process.

Significant intensification cannot be achieved if the transportation infrastructure and travel patterns remain predominately auto-oriented, since the street network surrounding the Lawrence-Allen area has effectively reached its full capacity in the morning and afternoon peak hours and there is little practical opportunity to provide significant new auto capacity.

Successful revitalization relies on a balanced transportation system where in the future, the majority of travel is made by non-auto means. With a more balanced transportation system, there is a range of intensification between 5,500 and 6,300 new units that the area's transportation infrastructure can reasonably support. As redevelopment occurs over time, the transportation infrastructure will continue to be monitored and studied.

a. The Allen Road

Allen Road is the largest auto-oriented piece of transportation infrastructure in the Lawrence-Allen area. It dominates the landscape by physically dividing the neighbourhoods that surround it and by attracting significant auto-oriented travel patterns and land uses. The complex, auto-oriented ramp intersections at Lawrence Avenue West also pose significant barriers for people walking, cycling, and trying to access the subway station. Public opinion on Allen Road itself is varied; some people view it as an essential auto travel corridor, while others dislike its relationship with the lands adjacent to it.

To examine these issues, the City initiated the Allen Road Technical Feasibility Study that explored possible alternative configurations for Allen Road to transform the current expressway condition into a more urban condition that is better integrated with the surrounding neighbourhoods and that would encourage walking, cycling, and transit use along the corridor.

Potential Allen Road alternative configurations were categorized into three key concepts:

- Keep the existing grade of Allen Road;
- Create a multi-grade Allen Road with both a raised and lowered area;
- Fill in Allen Road and raise its grade to create a fully at-grade boulevard.

Based on these concepts, the Technical Feasibility Study examined ten possible variations for the Allen Road, compared and evaluated them, and selected the following three designs to be carried forward during the Revitalization Study. (Figure 19)

- *Do Nothing Option* - Allen Road would remain as it is today, an urban highway, with no significant modifications or improvements.
- *Modified Ramps Option* - The grade of Allen Road would remain the same, but the existing on and off ramps would be reconfigured with potential new ramps added between Lawrence Avenue West and Highway 401.
- *At-Grade Grand Boulevard* - The trench of Allen Road would be filled in and raised to the grade of the surrounding lands to create a fully at-grade grand boulevard with sidewalks, trees, and active building frontages.

The Technical Feasibility Study also determined that due to the complexity and scale of the Allen Road corridor, an Individual Environment Assessment (EA) study should be undertaken by the City to examine the corridor in more detail and to determine

a preferred alternative configuration of the Allen Road for the future. While the final configuration of Allen Road has not been determined, the Revitalization Plan can accommodate many possible changes to Allen Road that could result from the future EA study.

As the Allen Road EA process is initiated, the Revitalization Plan proposes and will protect for a 10 metre wide Greenway with multi-use trails for pedestrians and cyclists along the east side of Allen Road. The Greenway provides important north-south circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists within the Study Area between the Lawrence West and Yorkdale subway stations. They also have the potential to connect to the larger city-wide pedestrian and bicycle network further south along Allen Road to the Beltline Trail, and further north, possibly to the Downsview National Urban Park.

The Revitalization Plan also proposes two new pedestrian and bicycle bridges across the Allen Road – one north of Flemington Road and one south. These provide important new east-west pedestrian and bicycle connections across the corridor and will be studied further in the Allen Road Individual EA.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Undertake an Individual Environmental Assessment for Allen Road.
- Develop and implement pedestrian improvements in the short-term at the intersections of Lawrence Avenue West and Allen Road, at the Ranee Road underpass at Allen Road, and at the underpass at the north end of the Yorkdale subway station at Allen Road.



Allen Road looking north from Flemington Road bridge



Humber Bridge - Toronto



West Toronto Railpath



Amgen Helix Bridge - Seattle, Washington

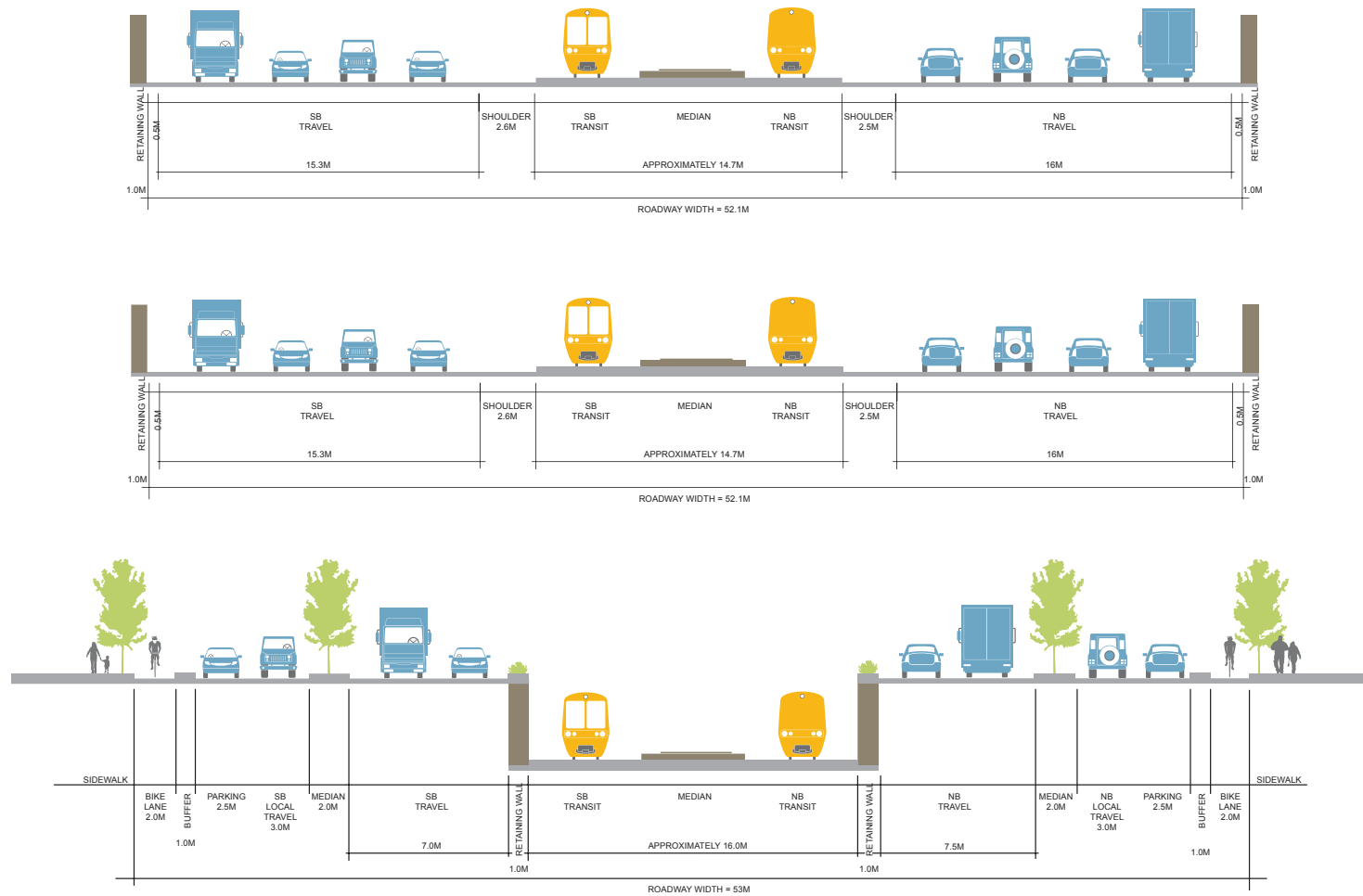


Figure 19: Allen Road Options - Cross-Sections

Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan

PROPOSED PUBLIC STREET NETWORK

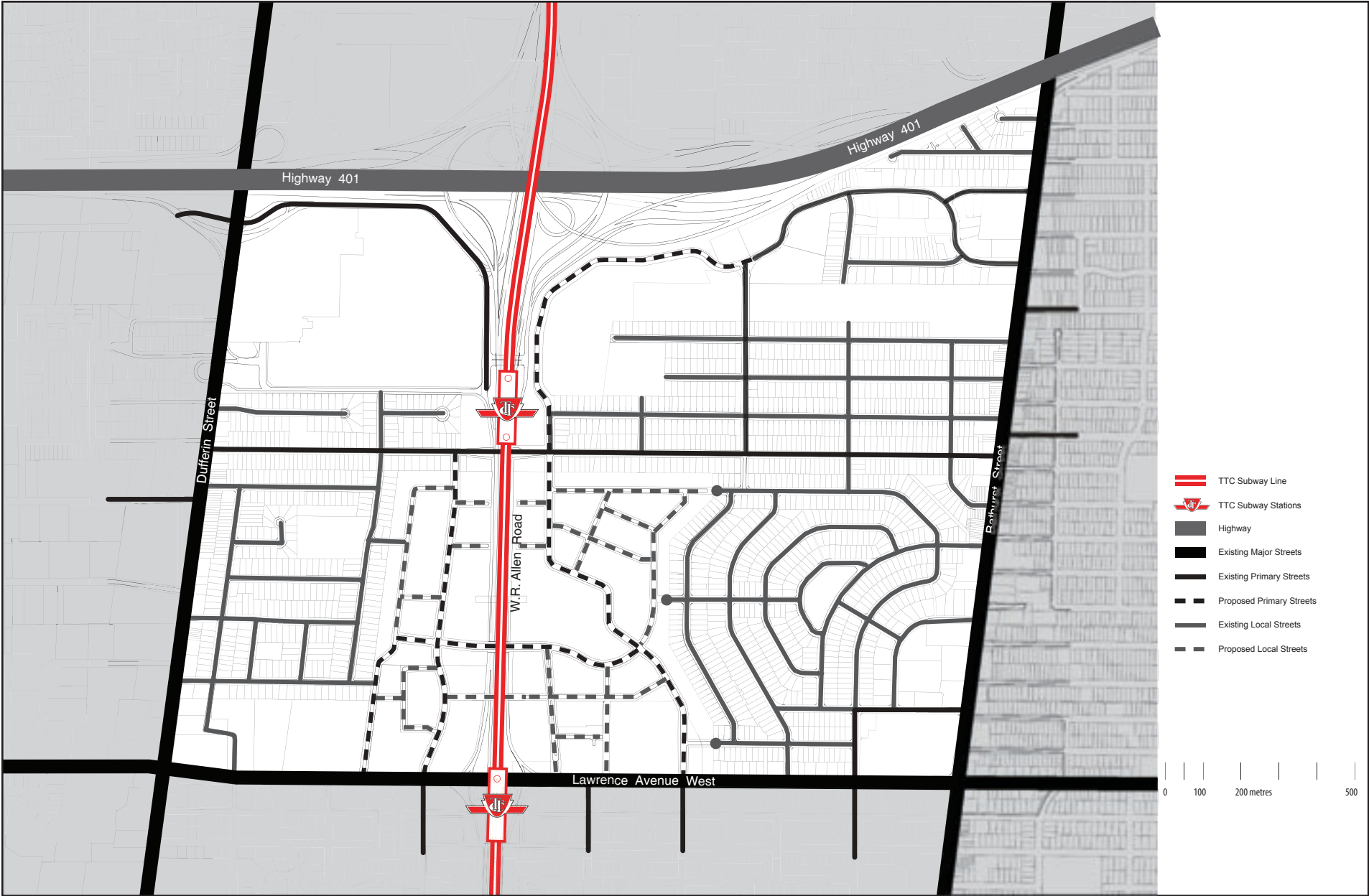


Figure 20: Proposed Public Street Network

Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan

EXISTING PUBLIC STREET NETWORK



Figure 21: Existing Public Street Network

b. Public Streets

The current street network in the Study Area has poor connectivity and circulation and offers circuitous and indirect travel routes for people walking, cycling, driving, or using surface transit. (Figure 21) The Major Streets (Bathurst, Dufferin, and Lawrence) are currently unpleasant for pedestrians and cyclists, the Primary Streets (Varna, Flemington) do not offer direct travel routes and are designed primarily for moving auto traffic, and many Local Streets are winding and often do not have sidewalks.

The Revitalization Plan creates a new network of public streets in with a legible hierarchy of street types – Major Streets, Primary Streets, and Local Streets. (Figure 20) The network allows improved connectivity and circulation for all users and is well-integrated with the surrounding existing public street network.

At this time, significant changes are not expected along the Major Streets bounding the Study Area, outside of short term improvements to the intersection of Lawrence Avenue West and Allen Road. Other changes to Major Streets may be examined as part of future Avenue Studies.



Examples of Primary Streets
Harbord Street, Merton Street, Annette Street



Illustration of proposed Primary Street - Marlee Avenue extension looking north - Rendering produced by Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co Architects Inc.



Examples of Primary Streets
Birmingham Street, Ameer Avenue, Ranee Avenue

The new Primary Street network contains some key changes from the existing Primary Street network:

- Marlee Avenue has been extended north from Lawrence Avenue West to Ranee Avenue, creating a direct north-south route from Eglinton Avenue West to Ranee Avenue.
- Varna Drive has been re-aligned with Englemount Avenue at Lawrence Avenue West and follows a new more direct diagonal route north to Ranee Avenue.
- Varna Drive has been extended north from Ranee Avenue around Baycrest Park to connect with Neptune Drive, which creates another travel route to Bathurst Street. This provides an improved publicly accessible edge to Baycrest Park, but requires that the adjacent Highway 401 on-ramp be realigned to create some additional space.

The most visible change to the street network will be the character of the new Primary Streets themselves, which will be designed as urban streets and important public spaces. They will have minimal traffic lanes, wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes, generous boulevard tree plantings, and excellent transit amenities, like bus shelters and benches. There are opportunities for streetscape investments to improve the public realm on existing Primary Streets in the area, such as Ranee Avenue, Ameer Avenue, and Neptune Drive. The Revitalization Plan does not widen these existing streets for additional traffic lanes.

A fine grain of new Local Streets will create useable development blocks and a permeable walking environment within the neighbourhood. The exact layout and pattern of Local Streets is flexible and can be determined in more detail in the future, as individual phases of development come forward for review and approval.

The right-of-way width required for each Primary Street will range between 23 metres and 27 metres. Local Streets generally will have right-of-way widths between 18.5 metres and 20 metres. There are no proposed changes to the planned right-of-way widths for the Major Streets that form the boundaries of the Study Area.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Utilize a Transportation Master Plan to support implementation of the public street network in the Revitalization Plan. Secure the location of Primary Streets and permit the precise location of Local Streets to be determined at the time of each phase.
- Complete the remaining phases of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process to refine the detailed design and alignment of the Primary Street network.
- Co-ordinate the implementation of the Primary Street network with each phase of re-development as it occurs over time.

Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan

PROPOSED TRANSIT NETWORK

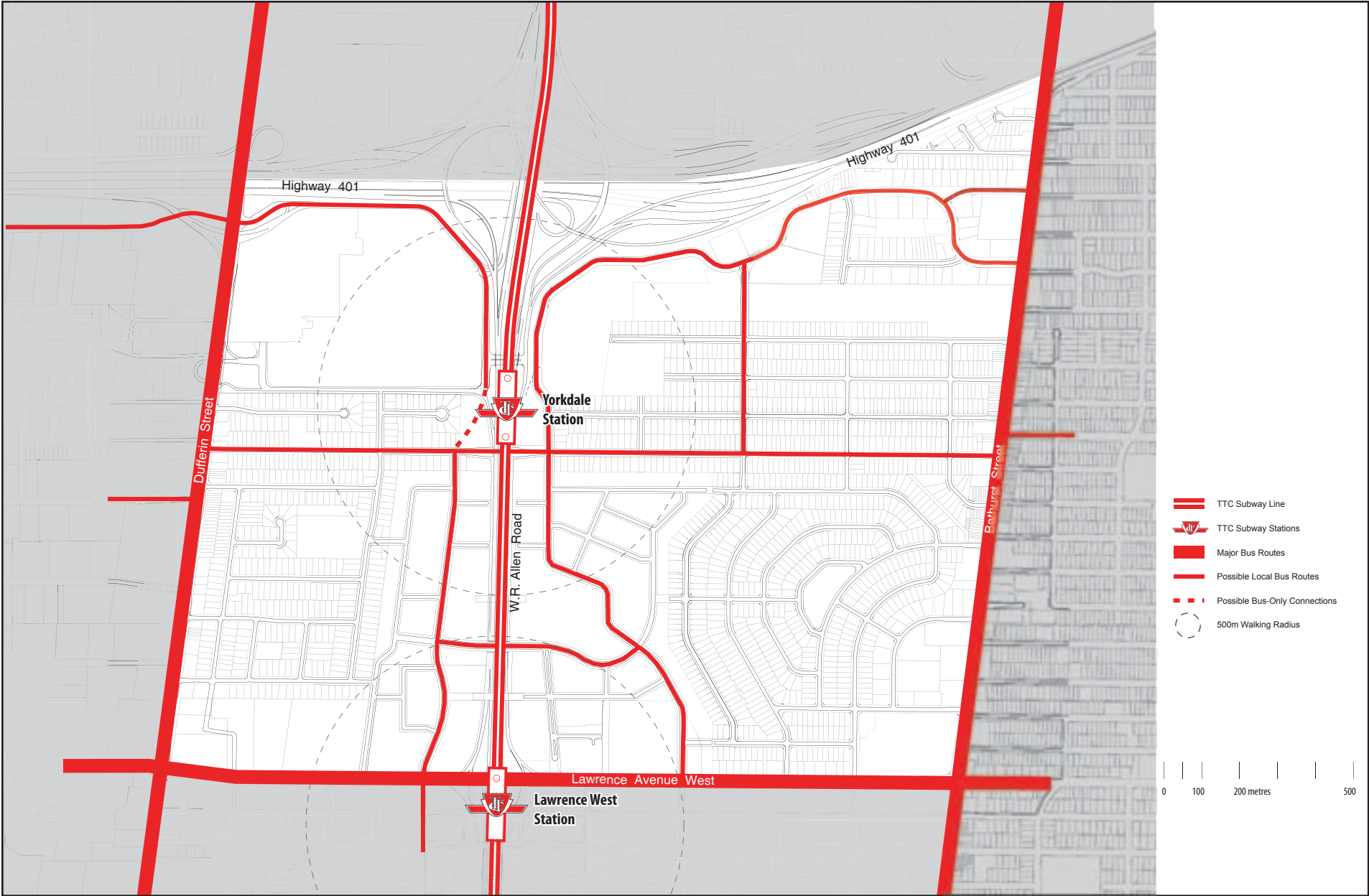


Figure 22: Proposed Transit Network

c. Transit-Supportive Development

Poor access to transit is an issue in Lawrence-Allen that must be addressed to achieve a well-balanced transportation system. TTC bus routes in the area are circuitous and don't connect well to subway stations. The two TTC subway stations in the Study Area – Lawrence West and Yorkdale – are located in the middle of the Allen Road corridor, difficult for people to access, and physically isolated from the surrounding neighbourhoods. People experience difficulty crossing the busy intersections at Lawrence Avenue West and Allen Road to get the Lawrence West station entrances because they must compete with high volumes of auto traffic in intersections that are not well-designed for pedestrians. The Ranee entrance to the Yorkdale station feels unsafe for many users – it is poorly lit, poorly designed, is located in an underpass beneath Allen Road, and it has little public activity surrounding it to provide “eyes on the street”. In addition, the entrance is not staffed, making it impossible to enter using a TTC bus transfer.

As a result of these conditions, many residents in the community have expressed frustration regarding poor access to transit. Key elements of a proposed transit network are illustrated on Figure 22. More importantly, the Revitalization Plan addresses transit access issues by providing for Transit-Supportive Development – a concept based on a well-established framework of transportation planning principles designed to maximize access to transit facilities and encourage transit ridership. The Revitalization Plan, to be supported by a Transportation Master Plan, incorporates Transit-Supportive principles in a number of ways:

- Development is compact and located within a 5 to 10-minute walking distance (approximately 500m) of TTC subway stations and local bus routes.
- Higher densities are concentrated closer to the subway stations with progressively lower densities radiating outwards. The highest density buildings are located around the Lawrence West subway station and the Yorkdale subway station. Moderate densities are located along the new Primary Streets where local TTC bus routes are expected to operate.
- New development in the Study Area is comprised of a mix of uses.
- New neighbourhoods are designed primarily for walking and cycling with direct, convenient, and attractive pedestrian and bicycle connections to TTC subway stations entrances and bus routes.
- The public street network has good overall connectivity with short block lengths and is designed to reduce the impacts of vehicle traffic, while providing good routes for local TTC buses.
- The TTC subway stations and their surrounding areas will be designed to be human-scaled and accessible, with a vibrant public realm.

- Developments will be required to provide car-sharing parking spaces and reduced amounts of auto parking.
- To encourage transit ridership, the City's free Metropass program for new condominium residents should be extended to this area.

These transit-supportive principles, guidelines, and policies will shift private vehicle trips to transit, increase accessibility for people with special mobility needs, create viable travel options for people of all income levels, and increase demand for improvements to non-auto transportation infrastructure. They will reduce the distance required for auto trips, allow a greater portion of trips to be made by walking and cycling, and allow some households to reduce their car ownership, which together can result in large reductions in vehicle travel. All these elements will help create a more liveable and sustainable community.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Incorporate principles of Transit –Supportive Development into planning policies and development approvals in the Lawrence-Allen area.
- Extend the City's Metropass policy for new condominiums to the Lawrence-Allen area.
- Request the TTC to begin Station Modernization Studies for the Lawrence West and Yorkdale subway stations in 2010.
- Initiate a future study of Lawrence Avenue West to explore designating it in the Official Plan as a Surface Transit Priority Route between Lawrence West subway station and Lawrence subway station at Yonge Street.
- Initiate studies with the TTC, as development in the Lawrence-Allen area proceeds, to explore possible short-term surface transit priority measures to improve TTC bus operations along Lawrence Avenue West, Dufferin Street, and Bathurst Street.



Example of underpass at Yonge Street and Summerhill Avenue

Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan

PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN PLAN

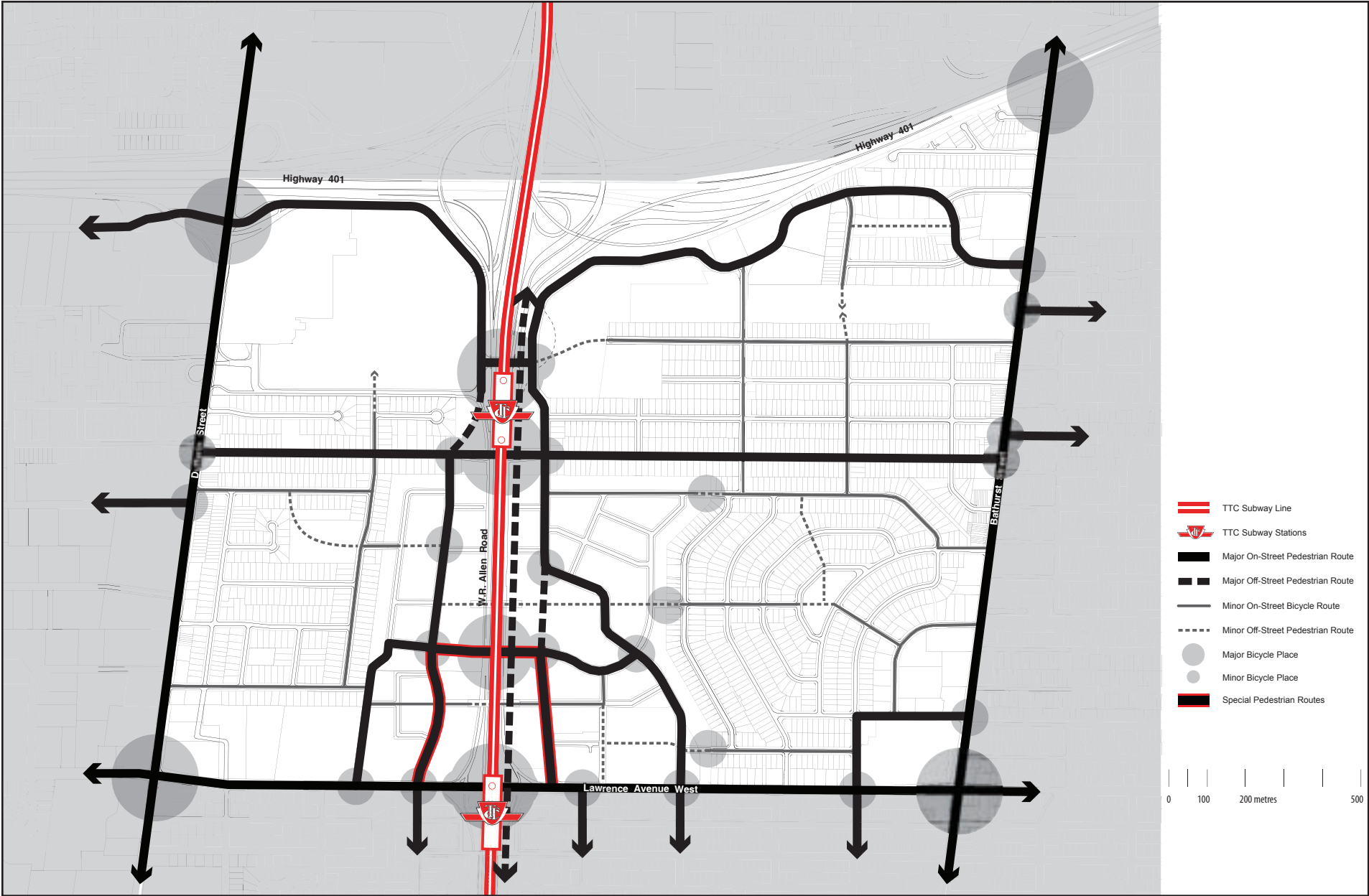


Figure 23: Proposed Pedestrian Plan



d. Street for People: Pedestrians and Cyclists

Streets in the Lawrence-Allen area have historically been designed primarily to move cars and do not provide a pleasant area for people to walk, bicycle, or simply sit and rest. The quality of the pedestrian environment along the public streets discourages walking as a viable means of travel. Many Local Streets do not have sidewalks and there are very few protected crossing locations for pedestrians along the Major and Primary Streets in the area. This is especially prevalent at the Allen Road ramp and Lawrence Avenue West intersections where pedestrian crossings have been eliminated entirely at some intersections in favour of increasing car traffic movement to and from Allen Road.

The Revitalization Plan addresses a number of pedestrian and cycling topics, with implementation to be supported by a Transportation Master Plan (Figures 23 and 24):

Connectivity and Circulation: Pedestrian travel routes are clear and direct, with legible connections between important neighbourhood destinations including homes, schools, parks, shopping areas, and community facilities. There is also a well-connected network of safe and convenient bicycle lanes and pathways between important neighbourhood destinations, which are integrated with the City-wide cycling network.

Major Streets and Primary Streets have been identified to have on-street bicycle lanes. The Allen Road Greenway is proposed as a major off-street walking and cycling multi-use trail, and there is a fine grained network of local walking routes within the neighbourhood. There is opportunity for a pedestrian way-finding signage system to help direct people to destinations in the area.

Access to Transit: Implementing Transit-Supportive Development principles will contribute to safe and convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists to bus stops and subway stations and ample bicycle parking facilities at subway station entrances.

Safety and Design: The new street network presents opportunities to design intersections to provide pedestrians with safe and protected crossing opportunities. In some cases, bicycles may be given signal priority over vehicles.

The design and operation of key intersections in the Study Area will be examined to improve crossing conditions for pedestrians by adding pavement markings, improving signal timing, reducing crossing distances, and constructing curb extensions.

Quality of Pedestrian Environment: Pedestrian spaces are to be designed for a variety of public activities and encourage social interaction, with places for standing, walking, and sitting. Sidewalks should be protected from vehicular traffic, well-lit, and sufficiently wide. Streets should be designed to reduce traffic speeds with narrow lanes, on-street



Examples of pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets

Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan
PROPOSED BICYCLE PLAN

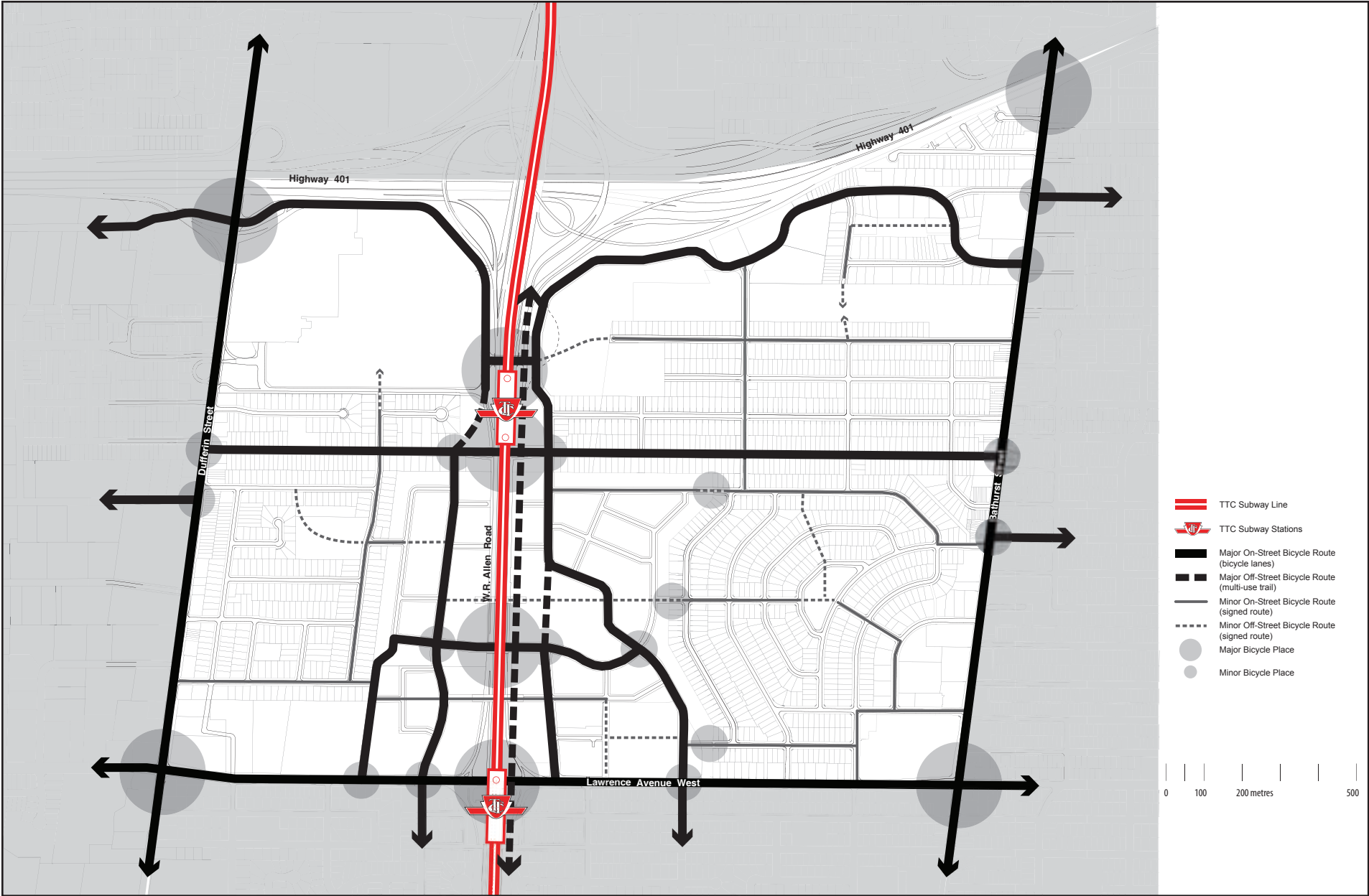


Figure 24: Proposed Bicycle Plan



parking, and other high-quality, innovative traffic-calming elements, such as shared streets.

The Revitalization Plan also identifies important Pedestrian and Cycling spaces, such as at the major intersections of Allen Road and Lawrence Avenue West, or around the Lawrence West and Yorkdale subway stations, and in the new Commons, where high levels of pedestrian and cycling activity are anticipated and where a variety of pedestrian and cycling improvements will be required. Specific potential improvements for these spaces will be detailed in the Transportation Master Plan, and could include improvements at major intersections, improved bicycle parking, lighting underneath Highway 401 overpasses, improvements to the connections between the Lawrence Heights and other neighbourhoods, among others.

Bicycle Parking: Bicycle parking facilities should be provided at important neighbourhood destinations, such as shopping areas, schools, libraries, community centres, and subway stations. Bicycle parking should also be a requirement in new development.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Incorporate a Pedestrian Plan and Bicycle Plan into the Transportation Master Plan for the Lawrence-Allen area.
- Review the existing sidewalk inventory in the Lawrence-Allen area, as part of Transportation Services "Missing Links" program, and begin an implementation plan to build sidewalks on existing streets where there are none.
- Prioritize short-term and long-term pedestrian infrastructure and bicycle infrastructure improvements in the Lawrence-Allen area.
- Establish bicycle parking standards for new development in Lawrence-Allen to be implemented as zoning requirements.



Examples of bicycle-friendly spaces

e. Neighbourhood Connections

Connectivity is one of the fundamental principles of the City's Official Plan. The Revitalization Plan takes a number of steps to physically connect Lawrence Heights with the surrounding city and intends to address the physical isolation which Lawrence Heights has experienced in the past. The proposed street network, transit access, and pedestrian and cycling plans are all elements to strengthen the connectedness of the neighbourhood to the surroundings.

Local Street Connections: There are three “dead end” public streets between Lawrence Heights and the east: Rondale Boulevard, Kirkland Boulevard, and Ridgevale Road. These areas currently permit pedestrians and cyclist to pass, but provide poor conditions.

There are strong public opinions about these connections. Many residents view the existing connections as physical and psychological barriers between neighbourhoods which discourage inclusion and interaction; they would prefer full public street connections at these points. Many other residents have strong concerns about potential traffic infiltration in stable neighbourhoods that they feel that would occur with full street connections.



Existing Neighbourhood Connection looking east to Rondale Boulevard



Illustration of Neighbourhood Connection looking west from Rondale Boulevard - Rendering produced by Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co Architects Inc.

There is general consensus that these connections should be improved for pedestrians and cyclists. The Revitalization Plan encourages the integration of new and existing neighbourhoods by enhancing the existing neighbourhood connections at Rondale, Ridgevale, and Kirkland for pedestrians and cyclists. In the future, if there is an interest in opening the connections for full public streets, there will be opportunity for public discussion with all residents in the area. These discussions can occur in association with specific phases of development.

Replin Road: Replin Road currently dead ends at Lawrence Avenue West. Opening this intersection, has potential to improve access to Lawrence Heights and provide more permeability along Lawrence Avenue West between Allen Road and Varna Drive.

The Revitalization Plan recommends improving the Replin Road connection as a pedestrian and cycling entrance to the neighbourhood. At this time, Replin Road is too close to the Allen Road ramps to open as a connection for automobiles. Through the Allen Road Environmental Assessment process, future study will determine the feasibility of realigning these ramps and opening Replin Road as a full public street.

Yorkdale Shopping Centre: The shopping centre is a popular destination in the Study Area. There are strong and varied public opinions with respect to the potential for street connections to Yorkdale Shopping Centre, with concerns focused on the resulting potential traffic impacts on stable neighbourhoods from a large regional shopping centre.

The Revitalization Plan recommends improving the pedestrian and cycling and transit connections around Yorkdale Shopping Centre and Yorkdale subway station and identifies the area for future study to better co-ordinate any improvements with the TTC Yorkdale Station Modernization Study and the Allen Road Environmental Assessment.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Improve the neighbourhood connections at Rondale, Kirkland, and Ridgevale for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Determine improvements to the connections around Yorkdale Shopping Centre and Yorkdale Subway station for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit.
- Identify parts of Yorkdale Shopping Centre as an area for future study to better co-ordinate with the TTC Yorkdale Subway Station Improvement Study and the Allen Road Individual EA.

f. Automobile Traffic

Private automobiles are just one element of a balanced transportation system. Successful revitalization in Lawrence-Allen will be based on significant new investments in the pedestrian, cycling, and transit systems to re-balance travel modes in the area.

The Major Streets bounding the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Study Area have effectively reached their full capacity in the morning and afternoon peak hours and there is little practical opportunity to provide significant new auto capacity. Residents have expressed concern over existing traffic issues in the area, including gridlock on major travel routes and traffic infiltration in neighbourhoods. However, existing traffic conditions in Lawrence-Allen must be considered in a context of future transportation initiatives that affect the area, such as the Toronto York Spadina Subway Extension and Transit City LRT routes. Long-term travel patterns in the area are expected to change over time.

A 20-year perspective on revitalization considers that future investment and development patterns in Lawrence-Allen will improve the function of the transportation system. Traffic analysis has determined that the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan provides sufficient auto capacity to support existing and new development while managing traffic impacts on local neighbourhoods in a balanced way that considers other city-building objectives. The analysis supports a range of 5,500 to 6,300 new residential units over a long-term 20-year horizon, as long as travel patterns can be shifted and rebalanced. Achieving more than 5,500 new residential units will require continuous monitoring and further study. The traffic analysis does not rely on Local Streets to provide auto capacity to accommodate new development.

All future development in the Study Area will be required to undertake comprehensive Transportation Impact Studies in order to assess the transportation and traffic impacts of any proposed development and identify any required transportation infrastructure improvements. In addition to this work, the City will establish a Transportation Monitoring Program with stakeholders to monitor the development levels, trends, and associated travel characteristics. Such a program could include evaluation of traffic volumes along key streets and intersections, transit ridership, neighbourhood traffic infiltration, parking, and other transportation elements.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Require Transportation Impact Studies for all future developments in the Study Area, in order to assess the transportation and traffic impacts of the proposed development phase and identify any required transportation infrastructure improvements.
- Establish a Transportation Monitoring Program for the Lawrence-Allen area to commence after occupancy of substantial development in the area.