

Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE NETWORK



Figure 25: Parks and Open Space Network



III. LIVEABILITY

The success of a neighbourhood relies not only on the quality of its physical spaces and buildings, but also on the opportunities it provides for the people who live there. To create a liveable neighbourhood – one with a high quality of life –the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan provides for strong community amenities, services, and institutions through its parks, community facilities, and schools.

a. Parks

The proposed park system is a fundamental element of the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan, providing recreational opportunities and spaces for social activity. The existing parks in the Focus Area are generally in need of improvement. They consist of small parcels, sometimes linked by linear connections, often without substantial street frontage.

The Focus Area will see extensive redevelopment of streets, blocks, and existing park spaces. This offers an opportunity to replace or reconfigure existing parkland with a high quality system of safe, visible, and accessible parks that are of a shape and size suitable for recreational programming and are well integrated into the broader public realm. These parks will provide amenities to residents throughout the Lawrence-Allen area. (Figure 25)

A Full Range of Parks

Lawrence-Allen residents have articulated the need and desire for a wide range of new park amenities. These include those which the community already enjoys, such as sports fields, playgrounds, basketball courts, and community gardens as well as new amenities such as picnic areas, an amphitheatre, and space for cultural events. To provide opportunities to address a full range of community needs in this area, the Revitalization Plan provides a park system with a hierarchy of types and sizes, encompassing a District Park, a Community Park, three Neighbourhood Parks, Parkettes, and a linear Greenway.

Baycrest Park: More than 9 hectares in size, Baycrest Park is the largest park in the Lawrence-Allen Study Area and serves a District Park function today. The Revitalization Plan retains Baycrest Park. The revitalization process is an opportunity for investment to improve the park, so that it can become the focus of active recreation, with amenities such as full-sized lit sportsfields, an arena, tennis courts, hard sports courts, pathway connections, and a major playground. A new Primary Street proposed on the edge of Baycrest Park will improve access and visibility. A better and safer community connection to the Yorkdale Shopping Centre will also be provided.

Reconfiguration of the park to create the Primary Street and potentially a new development block will require that additional parkland be added to Baycrest Park to maintain its current size. The most likely strategy to achieve this would be through land transfers involving the two existing school properties that border the park.

Community Park: The Commons of the Revitalization Plan is anchored by a Community Park on either side of Allen Road. The existing Flemington Road and a new pedestrian bridge create two connections between these park spaces. The two sides of the Community Park together will be approximately 5.3 hectares in size. The Community Park is centrally located to both the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood and the larger Study Area. It will accommodate some smaller scale sports fields and will also be able to function as a hub for social activities and cultural events. The community centre, which will contain indoor recreation and social spaces and is a potential location for a new indoor swimming pool, will also be associated with the parks in the Commons. Sites reserved for elementary schools are located adjacent to the parks in the Commons, and could share the park's open space to optimize community access to available park and school facilities.

Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes: The Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes will primarily serve the residents living within walking distance around them. These parks will have smaller, neighbourhood-oriented elements such as sportsfields, playgrounds, community gardens, multi-use event spaces and areas for quiet and passive enjoyment. They can share open space with adjacent elementary schools. Neighbourhood Parks will be approximately 1.1 to 1.3 hectares.

Greenway: The proposed Greenway along the east side of Allen Road is also part of the parkland system. It will be wide enough to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and will be designed to ensure a safe and pleasant environment for users. It will provide a north-south link through the neighbourhood and will connect pedestrians and cyclists to trails and park systems beyond the Study Area.

Providing Parkland for Current and Future Residents

The Revitalization Plan for Lawrence-Allen will result in an increase in population and apply additional pressure on area parks. Lawrence-Allen is identified as a priority area for parkland acquisition. To optimize the conveyance of new parkland as a result of development, the City's alternate rate of parkland conveyance (Municipal Code Chapter 415) applies to this area.

The Revitalization Plan reflects compliance with the City's Official Plan policies respecting parkland conveyance and with the City's alternate rate for parkland conveyance. Existing parkland that is used for development is being replaced with parkland of equal or better quality. Full application of these planning tools will ensure



Harbourfront Music Garden

that existing and new residents will be provided with a good system of parks and open spaces. The Plan more than doubles the amount of parkland in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood by retaining or replacing 5.2 hectares of existing local parkland and adding more than 5.5 hectares of new parkland, for a total of nearly 11 hectares of parkland in the Focus Area.

Well-used and Programmable Parks

Existing parks in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood largely consist of small parcels linked by linear connections. While the size of the existing Flemington Park is considerable (more than 3.5 hectares), few recreational uses are possible because of its awkward shape. All of the proposed parks in the Revitalization Plan are well-located for accessibility and visibility within their neighbourhoods and have been planned with a regular shape and size suitable for a full program of recreational uses.

Parks and Public Realm Master Plan

New park spaces must be of a high-quality design to ensure that they are well-used by residents and contribute to place-making in the community. All parks should be located and configured to contain usable spaces, programmed with appropriate facilities and activities, and designed to address community safety and user comfort and to create valued community assets. A Parks and Public Realm Master Plan is an implementation tool that will further develop goals for the parks system and its individual park spaces. It will also provide standards and design intent for the proper integration of parks and open spaces, streetscapes, and pedestrian connections throughout the neighbourhood. Opportunities to partner with the school boards will



Examples of successful park facilities

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Prepare a Parks and Public Realm Master Plan.
- Plan, design and program parks consistent with a hierarchy that includes a District Park, a Community Park, Neighbourhood Parks, Parkettes, and a Greenway.
- Determine a program and schedule of improvements and investment in Baycrest Park.
- Provide a strategy for replacement of parkland in Baycrest Park, to address impacts of the proposed new street and the proposed development site on parkland.
- Configure new parks with shapes and dimensions to facilitate appropriate programming.
- Secure parks in the Focus Area in the locations shown on the Revitalization Plan. On the Lawrence Square site, permit flexibility in the location of a neighbourhood park on site, with the final location to be determined at the time of a development proposal.
- Replace all parkland that is removed as a result of redevelopment of Lawrence Heights and secure additional parkland by meeting the City's alternate rate for parkland conveyance.
- Include a minimum of 5 hectares of parkland in the Commons.
- Ensure that neighbourhood parks are a minimum size of 1.1 to 1.3 hectares.
- Engage TDSB and TCDSB to coordinate public access to school yards and school access to parkland to optimize public open space resources.
- Determine a real estate strategy to convey City parkland as needed to TCHC in a context of parkland replacement
- Undertake a program of community consultation prior to design, programming and construction of each new park.

be investigated to share open space needs with the parkland system and thus optimize the use of available resources.

One issue raised consistently by residents of the Lawrence-Allen area is that of park safety. Many residents cite issues with the existing Baycrest Park, Flemington Park, and Yorkdale Park, which have areas hidden from surveillance by the surrounding roads and the rest of the community. When a park does not feel safe, residents are not comfortable using it and the park space and its facilities and amenities are not used to their full potential. Consequently, the value and use of the public resource is diminished.

The Revitalization Plan is an opportunity to upgrade and renew Baycrest Park with better access, visibility and use that can contribute to a safer park. New opportunities for Yorkdale Park may arise out of TTC's Station Modernization Study for the Yorkdale subway station. Lastly, the Plan replaces and reconfigures Flemington Park as the new Community Park. Like other new parks in the plan, the Community Park will front onto public streets and be visible from all sides.

Community participation will be key to creating safe, well-designed parks. Each new park will be subject to a community consultation process to assist in designing the parks and to ensure that they reflect community needs and preferences.



Examples of successful park facilities

Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan

COMMUNITY FACILITY SITES

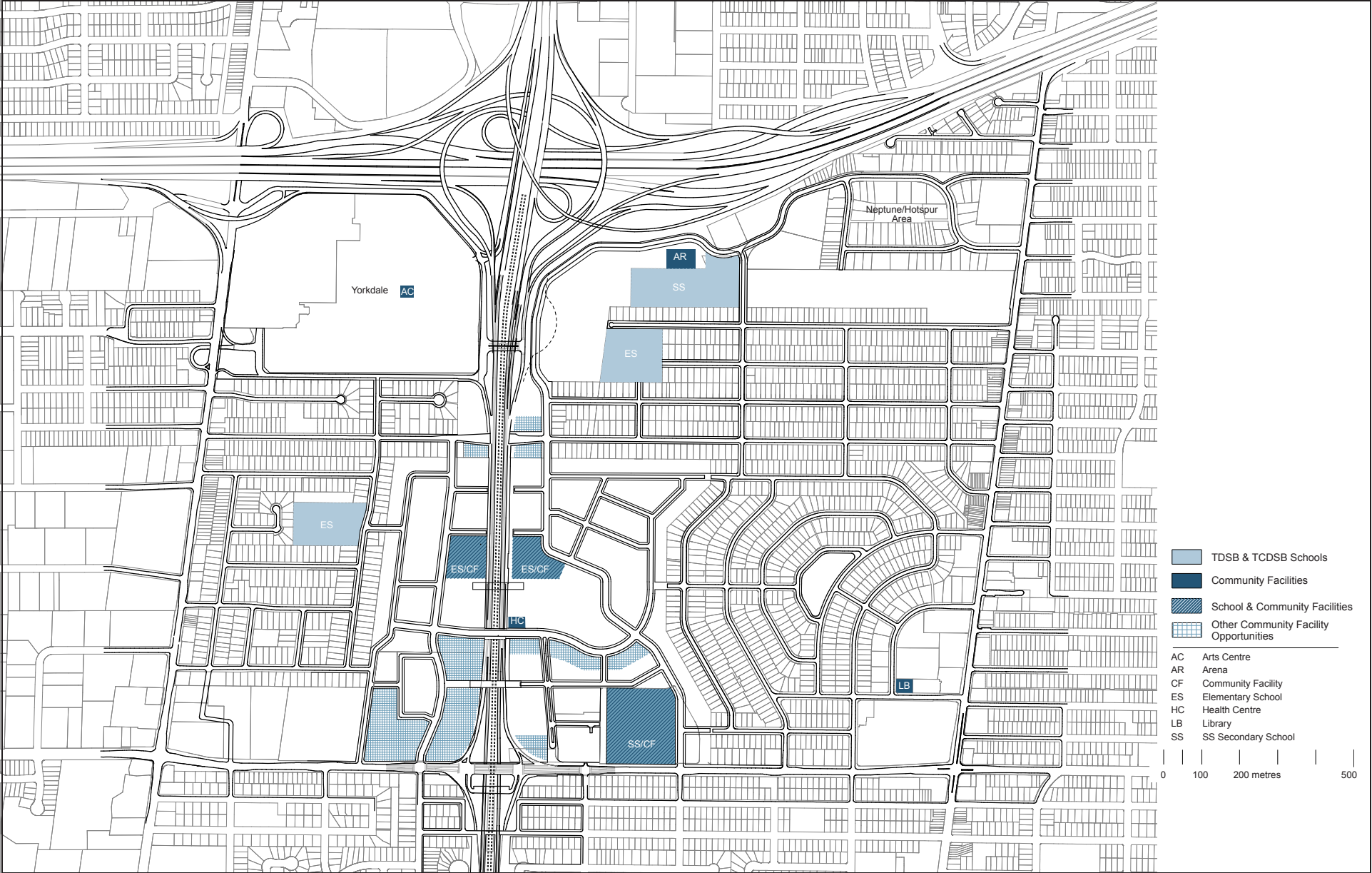


Figure 26: Community Facility Sites



Barbara Frum Library



New Heights Community Health Centre



Baycrest Arena

b. Community Facilities

Revitalization is an opportunity to invest in both physical and social infrastructure. The social infrastructure in Lawrence-Allen is its network of publicly accessible non-profit community facilities that includes schools, community centres, child cares, the library and health centre. They are the places where city divisions, community agencies, school boards and grassroots groups deliver their services and people from different communities across the Lawrence-Allen area come together to enjoy diverse physical, social, cultural and economic activities. They are strong focal points and key destinations for area residents and will play a critical role in developing the skills and capacities of individuals and build strong interpersonal networks.

In 2005, City Council designated the Lawrence-Allen area as part of the Lawrence Heights Priority Neighbourhood, and targeted it for community service investments. While many of the current facilities in Lawrence-Allen provide excellent services today, the size and scope of facilities across the area have been recognized as inadequate. The area's population includes a number of groups who face challenges including: lower incomes, higher unemployment and large populations of young children and older seniors, with many children living in single parent families and many seniors living alone. The population growth anticipated in the Revitalization Plan further reinforces the need for investment in social infrastructure to address the needs of current and future residents across the Study Area.

The Revitalization Study has assessed:

- Existing facilities serving the area;
- Current unmet needs of the existing population;
- Growth-based needs of the future population; and
- Preferred location and space characteristics of facilities.

Based on this assessment, the Revitalization Plan includes an inventory of opportunities for new community facilities and improvements for existing ones. (Figure 27) Six priorities guide the provision of these facilities:

1. Maintain current levels of service: As certain buildings are demolished and replaced, some community services will be displaced. Service providers and their priorities will also change over time. To provide the opportunity to maintain current levels of service in the community, the Revitalization Plan provides opportunities for service delivery in new public and private buildings.

2. Increase the number and range of facilities: To serve the growing population, existing facilities, such as the Barbara Frum Library, will require renovation. In addition, new facilities, such as a large community centre and an aquatic facility will be constructed.

These facilities can provide a range of programs and are important bridges between different communities in the Study Area.

3. Locate facilities on prominent, accessible sites: Facilities are located on prominent sites with good pedestrian, cycling and transit access. (Figure 26) All residents in the Focus Area and many in the broader area will have a facility within short walking distance of their home and opportunities will be sought to broaden access over time.

4. Explore opportunities for hubs by co-locating different facilities: New facilities are typically co-located in multi-use buildings and opportunities will be sought to add facilities and services to existing buildings. A single block therefore may include a residential building, a school and a community centre or child care facility. This strategy maximizes the opportunity for agencies to share space, coordinate programs and complement each other's mandates. It also makes it easier for family members with different ages and needs to access services. The efficient land use also allows for increased open space.

5. Organize timely provision of facilities by phase: For each development phase in the Focus Area and for significant developments in the broader Study Area, construction or renovation of relevant facilities will be timed to coincide with the construction of the homes that they are intended to serve.

6. Review community services and facilities over time: A community services and facilities review will be required for each development phase in the Focus Area and for significant developments in the broader Study Area. This will ensure that existing facilities impacted by a specific phase or development are addressed and will also allow for the update and review of the area-wide Community Services and Facilities Strategy.

Community Services and Facilities Strategy and Social Development Plan

The Secondary Plan will be complemented by a detailed Community Services and Facilities (CS&F) Strategy which focuses on the physical transformation of the area's social infrastructure, describing priorities for the Study Area, identifying location opportunities for physical facilities, and discussing tools for implementation, monitoring and re-evaluation over time.

In addition to the CS&F Strategy, a Social Development Plan (SDP) will be developed for Lawrence Heights. It will guide the social transformation of the area from an exclusively low-income, social housing neighbourhood to a mixed use, mixed income community. The City will develop the SDP in collaboration with Toronto Community Housing, as well as agencies, community groups and residents. A social inclusion tool, it will detail stakeholder priorities, as well as various institutions, partnerships and processes allowing them to directly guide revitalization. The SDP will therefore

influence the way that community services and facilities are designed and implemented, including the community centre and parks. It will also outline processes for working with agencies, landowners and the community to utilize facility location opportunities.

Private Amenity Space

In addition to public community facilities, revitalization is an opportunity to design apartment buildings with indoor and outdoor amenity space for building residents. While not a substitute for public facilities, such amenity spaces can provide additional opportunities for community programming, in addition to supporting the quality of life for building residents.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Provide community facilities that reflect the Revitalization Plan's priorities and which consider the suggested inventory of community facilities.
- Prepare a Community Services and Facilities Strategy to implement facility requirements in Lawrence-Allen.
- Prepare a Social Development Plan for Lawrence-Allen to facilitate social transformation of the area.
- Require indoor and outdoor amenity space in multi-unit residential development.
- Undertake a program of community consultation prior to design, programming and construction of new community facilities.



Harbourfront Community Centre with school and child care



Market Lane Public School and St. Lawrence Community Recreation Centre



Claude Watson School for the Arts

c. Schools

Schools serve as particularly vital community hubs in an area with a large youth population. The Revitalization Plan provides locations for both the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) to meet the existing and future needs of elementary and secondary schools.

As with other community facilities, the priorities of the two boards will be outlined in the CS&F Strategy and guided by the 6 priorities noted above. Planning for schools was

coordinated through an Education Partnership Table including senior staff from TDSB and TCDSB, Toronto Community Housing and other stakeholders. The Revitalization Plan reserves sites for two secondary schools (one TDSB and one TCDSB) and three elementary schools (two TDSB and one TCDSB), and shows a school continuing on the Lawrence Heights Middle School site.

The three school sites within the Focus Area are all co-located with residential apartments and opportunities for other facilities, such as a community centre, pool, or child care. The apartments may be located in the same physical structure as facilities, or could be located next to them on the same block. In either case, physical access to schools will be separate from that of the residential buildings. This type of mixed-use site, with schools integrated with the surrounding neighbourhood, is an emerging model within Toronto. Other examples of such schools which are currently active or under construction include Market Lane Public School, Claude Watson School for the Arts in North York, and North Toronto Collegiate in the Yonge and Eglinton area.

The TDSB and TCDSB have differing, and in some ways complementary challenges in the Lawrence-Allen area. The TCDSB does not have any operating schools within the Study Area, and those just outside the Study Area operate significantly over capacity. For example, Dante Alighieri secondary school is over 200% capacity and some classes are held at Bathurst Heights. The Revitalization Plan meets the Board's request that it accommodate one elementary school and one secondary school for TCDSB.

The TDSB, on the other hand, owns five sites in the area. Four of these are operating schools which have faced almost a decade of declining enrollment. The fifth is the Bathurst Heights secondary school site, which is no longer an operating school and is leased out to a number of organizations. The TDSB has undertaken an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) process to determine future needs in the area and has concluded that it should maintain three elementary schools, but only a single secondary school. In the short term, Sir Sandford Fleming Secondary will be moved to the existing Bathurst Heights site. In the long term, the Revitalization Plan provides for the Bathurst Heights lands to be redeveloped into a mixed-use site with a new secondary school, residential apartments and potential for other community facilities, such as an aquatic centre and child care. This allows the two school boards to explore the opportunity of a new TCDSB high school on the Sir Sandford Fleming site.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Request to TDSB coordinate its land holdings and redevelopment initiatives to support the direction and phasing of the Revitalization Plan.
- Request TCDSB to coordinate the provision of its new school facilities to support the direction and phasing of the Revitalization Plan.

LAWRENCE-ALLEN REVITALIZATION STUDY RECOMMENDED COMMUNITY FACILITIES INVENTORY

TDSB Schools

- 1 Secondary: Redeveloped Bathurst Heights
- 2 Elementary (JK – 8): Redeveloped Flemington, Baycrest
- 1 Core Holding Site: Lawrence Heights Middle School

TCDSB Schools

- 1 Secondary: Potential discussions with TDSB on Sir Sandford Fleming
- 1 Elementary: New school on west side of Allen Road

Community Recreation

- New Community Centre: Larger facility located within the community commons
- New Pool: Indoor district aquatic centre located in community commons, Bathurst Heights school or Baycrest Park
- Baycrest Arena, Yorkdale Community Arts Centre, Barbara Frum C.R.C. continue to serve community in current locations

Library

- Barbara Frum Library: Future renovations and enhanced services at current location

Child Care

- Focus Area: 4 – 6 centres, typically co-located with other facilities
- Outside Focus Area (e.g. Avenues): Additional centres as required

Health

- New Heights Health Centre – Current Location: Continues to serve population
- New Heights Health Centre – Additional Space: Seeking new facility space within Lawrence Heights

Employment and Human Services

- City-owned, non-profit facility space: Priority to secure as part of the Lawrence Square redevelopment
- Other facility opportunities: Redeveloped Lawrence Square site, Base of private residential buildings

*This inventory includes only facilities physically located within the Lawrence-Allen Study Area. Many community services and facilities located outside this area serve the area. These include: Glen Long CC, several child care centres and human service agencies.



North Toronto Collegiate Institute



S. Walter Stewart Library - Computer Centre



Canadiana Court Child Care Centre

Figure 27: Recommended Community Facilities Inventory



IV. PLACE-MAKING

Community revitalization is more than providing new housing, better facilities, improved transportation network, and infrastructure improvements. However important these functional components are, equally important is the less tangible “sense of place” that gives a community its distinct identity and gives people their sense of civic pride and a place to call home. The creation of a recognizable “sense of place” is place-making.

The physical components of place-making are found primarily in the public realm consisting of parks, streets, and community buildings and spaces, but also include the other buildings and landscapes that make up a community. These components can be scaled, arranged and designed in many different ways to create vastly different environments, or places. The quality, characteristics, design and arrangement of these components determine how a distinct place is created.

Place-making is also about maintaining a sense of connection to the history or memory of place. This is achieved by developing an understanding of local heritage, including land ownership and development patterns, and then determining appropriate ways to express the site history through the new physical plan of the area.

In the Lawrence-Allen area, the re-interpretation of the central green space and preservation of the alignment of a portion of the ring road, Varna Drive and Flemington Road, will contribute to a positive connection to local heritage. Intensification along with its variety of built form, built form transition, network of connective streets and parks, new community buildings and tree planting all contribute to creating a memorable and evocative sense of place, while protecting the sense of place for surrounding stable residential communities.

Developing a sense of place within the new community will involve the creation of a distinctive and high-quality public realm of parks, streets and public buildings that will speak to local character. The location, massing and organization of the different types and scales of buildings that line the public realm will also have a key role in place-making. Trees will continue to be an important element of the sense of place in Lawrence-Allen and there will be opportunities to consider the heritage of the neighbourhood. The design of these physical elements will be integrated not just to address functional issues, but to reinforce a positive image for the emerging community.

a. Creating a Beautiful Public Realm

The integration of parks, streets, Allen Road, and public building sites into a coherent public realm is illustrated in Figure 28.

Parks

The existing Lawrence Heights neighbourhood has a very spacious green character combining deep landscaped setbacks from the surrounding street network with park blocks and green spaces in the interior of the central block. The community image is memorable and distinctive and the community has expressed a desire to maintain a green and landscaped image through revitalization.

Like the existing Lawrence Heights neighbourhood, the Revitalization Plan establishes a connective open space network with a central open space – the Community Park which anchors the Commons. The Community Park is surrounded by the new road network, and connected by pedestrian bridges, public walkways and roads to other parks. Its central location and extensive street frontage ensures eyes on the street for safety and easy accessibility by the public.

Supporting the Community Park, Neighbourhood Parks and school yards are distributed into each quadrant of the neighbourhood. These open spaces are also surrounded on at least three sides by public streets, providing a more intimate though no less prominent space for local residents' daily recreation. The parks are sited at the termination of view corridors and faced directly with residential front doors and windows, reinforcing the animation and safe use of public spaces and the green image of the community.

As a District Park, Baycrest Park serves a larger area than other parks in the Revitalization Plan, but currently has very limited street frontage. The Revitalization Plan proposes a new street along the north edge of Baycrest Park, between it and Highway 401. The street will provide a public edge and advantages of public accessibility, “eyes on the street” and enhanced security, and open up the park and its regional facilities to greater use by the public.

Allen Road

Allen Road was built as a trenched expressway and open subway tunnel through this part of the city. It divides Lawrence Heights and the Lawrence-Allen area both socially and physically. Along its edges are noise walls and an informal public path.

To transform Allen Road into a public place and to begin to reduce its barrier effect, the noise walls will come down and the path will be lighted, landscaped and enhanced for pedestrians and bicycles. The Greenway will line the Allen Road. The trail will connect Baycrest Park to the Community Park, make the neighbourhood more accessible to visitors traveling on foot and by bicycle, and provide an important local mobility function. New buildings lining Allen Road will be designed to support and enhance the Greenway as an important public space. New bridges and enhancements to the existing tunnels and bridges will further help make Allen Road less of a physical barrier for pedestrians and cyclists.

Streets

Public streets are the connecting structure of any city, providing vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access, landscape, and utilities for individual building sites. Streets are the linear connecting open space of the city and have the greatest potential to create



Illustration looking east and north into the Commons from Marlee Avenue and Flemington Road - Rendering produced by Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co Architects Inc.

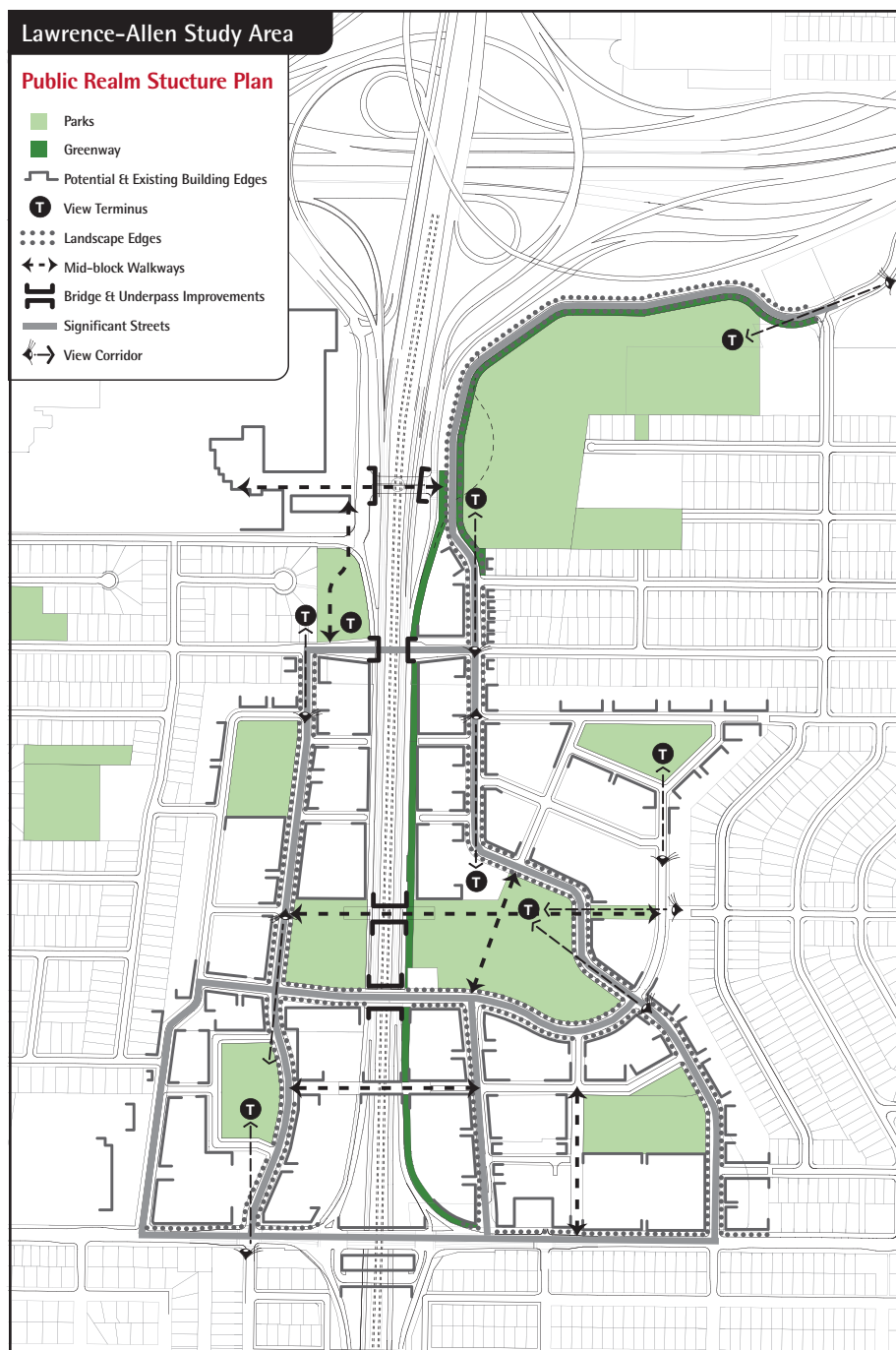


Figure 28: Public Realm Structure Plan

place. The scale, alignment, streetscape and furniture contribute to the character of the street and support public activity.

When originally designed, the street pattern in Lawrence Heights was internally focused, with few connections to Lawrence Avenue West and to the neighbouring subdivisions. The neighbourhood has large development blocks and very few public streets. Private open space and public walkways are the primary pedestrian connectors. The lack of streets limits vehicular movement, but also limits social interaction, as there are few places for casual public meeting.

The Revitalization Plan transforms existing streets and creates new streets that respect the existing historic street pattern, make up for its short-comings, and anticipate a more intensive form of neighbourhood. The Revitalization Plan keeps a significant portion of the ring road (Varna Drive and Flemington Road) in place but remakes this street to promote bicycle and pedestrian use. It has been integrated into a more grid-like set of new north-south and east-west Primary Streets with enhanced connections with Marlee and Englemount at Lawrence Avenue West. An extension of Varna Drive north of Ranee Avenue and east to Bathurst Street around the edge of Baycrest Park enhances access to the park and visually and physically connects the park with the communities to the south and east.

Public Buildings

The Revitalization Plan provides a range of new community facilities. They are located on sites which are accessible by streets and transit and are visually prominent in the neighbourhood. The location and quality of community buildings work together with streets and parks to become key elements of memorable, interesting and lively public places.

The public open spaces around each of these community facilities – whether a school yard, park, or streetscape – are designed to enhance the setting of the public buildings, promote its safe use, and contribute to the unique character and sense of place of the community.

These spaces are also opportunities for public art to contribute to the character and identity of the community. Public art is appropriate both in public buildings and spaces, and publicly visible areas of private development.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Prepare a Parks and Public Realm Master Plan to refine the program, design and phasing of public realm improvements for public spaces, including streets, parks and public building sites.
- Develop a strategy to foster creation, curation, and maintenance of public art in Lawrence-Allen, associated with private development and public investment.

b. Built Form Quality and Design

Buildings contribute to the character of a neighbourhood through their relationship to the adjacent public realm, their scale and massing, and the quality of their architecture.

The Revitalization Plan has demonstrated an arrangement of built form in the new Lawrence Heights neighbourhood that expresses a number of important principles. Built form policies will work together with other land use controls to create opportunities for new development and land uses, while defining the quality of the neighbourhood's character.

Development Blocks and Building Types

The current layout of development blocks in Lawrence Heights was part of a bold experiment in modern neighbourhood design in the 1950s. Most housing was located to take its address from a connected system of parks and walkways rather than public streets. Today the design approach creates significant problems for visitors to find their way through the neighbourhood and reduces the sense of personal safety by eliminating the casual overlook and natural surveillance found on typical streets.

The Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan uses a more traditional urban design approach, providing a fine grain of public streets to divide the area into blocks. Blocks are an appropriate size for the type of building planned for a given location. Wherever possible, streets are designed so that buildings of similar scale define the edges of the street.

The Revitalization Plan has been tested using conventional building types that are currently constructed throughout the Toronto including townhouses, mid-rise buildings and tall buildings with mid-rise building bases. There are four types of development blocks provided for in the Revitalization Plan. Each anticipates certain building types, open spaces for use by residents of the block, and a scale and intensity of development based on the location in the plan. The types of development blocks fit within different areas of land use and development intensity identified earlier in this chapter on Development Potential Diagram (Figure 14).

Development in all areas of the Revitalization Plan must meet the restrictions of the Downsview Airport flight path, which protects for airplane approaches to allow for the continued operation of the airport. The restrictions are greatest in the northern parts of the Study Area, with possible height increasing southward to the intersection of Lawrence Avenue West and Allen Road, generally resulting in maximum building heights ranging from 10 to 18 storeys. However, buildings will not always be built to these maximums, as the heights permitted by the airport restrictions often exceed important built form principles of the Revitalization Plan.



Tall standard towers with pedestrian scaled base buildings



Mid-rise buildings define edges of primary streets and parks



Townhouses define and support the local streets and transition adjacent to neighbourhoods.



Townhouse Areas: Many areas of the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood will retain their existing low-rise scale and will be developed with townhouses and parks. Development blocks in Townhouse Areas are planned with enough depth to have townhouses with small front gardens, a back yard, and parking pads or garages. Lanes and/or shared driveways are planned for the middle of these blocks to limit the use of integral front yard garages, which reduce the quality of the public streets and create pedestrian/vehicular conflicts on public sidewalks. Half blocks for townhouses have been located along the west, north, and east sides of the Focus Area, placing the backs of new townhouses against the backs of existing single family homes along its edge.

Mid-Rise Areas – Primary Streets: Development blocks in Mid-rise Areas – Primary Streets are laid out for mid-rise buildings and townhouses. In some cases, individual blocks in these areas are bounded by both Primary Streets and Local Streets. In this case, a mid-rise building will face the Primary Street, whereas townhouses or other low-rise built form will generally face the Local Street. These blocks are of sufficient size to provide parking access, garbage collection, and loading in the middle of the block, along with a shared landscaped open space for use by the residents.

Mid-rise buildings are lower in height than the width of the adjacent street. In the Revitalization Plan, this would allow for 6 to 8 storey buildings depending on the street right-of-way width. Mid-rise buildings will be designed to have retail, commercial, or other non-residential uses at grade, or grade-related apartments depending on the location in the plan.

Mid-Rise Blocks – Allen Road: Blocks located between Allen Road and the Primary Streets adjacent to the Yorkdale subway station have been laid out for mid-rise buildings on each of their edges. A landscaped open space in the centre of the block will provide amenity and open space for the residents. This open space could be completely enclosed by buildings or left open on one side to be visually accessible from the street. In addition to providing parking access, waste collection and loading off of the street, these blocks will need to provide pedestrian access to the Greenway

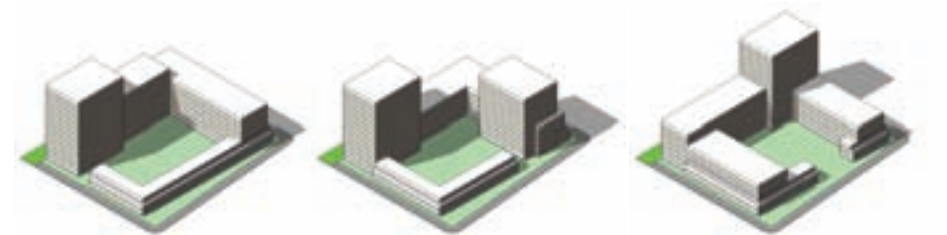
Mid-rise buildings on these blocks will take a similar form to those in Mid-Rise Areas – Primary Streets. However, the width of Allen Road means that the portion of these buildings along Allen Road could be taller than eight storeys. In addition, buildings on these blocks will need to provide ground floor uses facing Allen Road that create overlook onto the Greenway to promote personal safety of trail users. Development should be designed to support and enhance the public use and amenity of the new urban trail. Buildings along the Greenway will have appropriate step-backs and active uses both indoors and outdoors, as well as entrances, extensive glazing and lighting to support this public edge. This will provide opportunities for casual surveillance and positive programming.

Tall Building Areas: Blocks located along the Allen Road and south of the Commons in proximity to the Lawrence West subway station will be the most intensively developed blocks in the Revitalization Plan. These blocks are similar in scale and dimension to the mid-rise blocks but will have tall buildings. The organization of the block should be similar to the mid-rise blocks, with a landscaped open space for the use of residents forming the centre of the block. This open space can be enclosed by a flexible arrangement of tall buildings with bases, mid-rise buildings or townhouses. The open space may be completely enclosed by buildings or open on

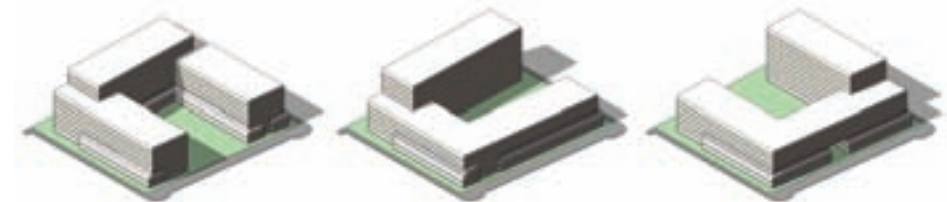
one or more sides to the streets. On these blocks, tall buildings with small floor plates will rise above 6 to 8 storey base buildings. Building heights are limited by restrictions associated with the flight path of the Downsview Airport, generally ranging up to 18 storeys in height depending on location.

Tall buildings are taller than the width of the adjacent street. They should consist of three parts. The base defines and supports the edge of streets and open spaces. The shaft is the tall part of the building, which is to be of a size and location that limits its shadow and sky view impacts on adjacent streets, parks and neighbouring properties. The top of the building should integrate mechanical equipment and be designed as part of the skyline.

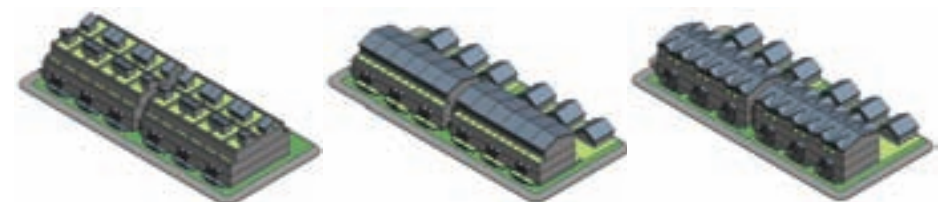
When adjacent to the Greenway, tall buildings should address the trail in the same way as buildings in Mid-Rise Areas.



Alternative layouts of blocks with tall buildings



Alternative layouts of mid-rise blocks



Townhouses can take a number of forms.



Illustration looking north and west into the Commons from Varna Road and Flemington Road - Rendering by Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co Architects Inc.

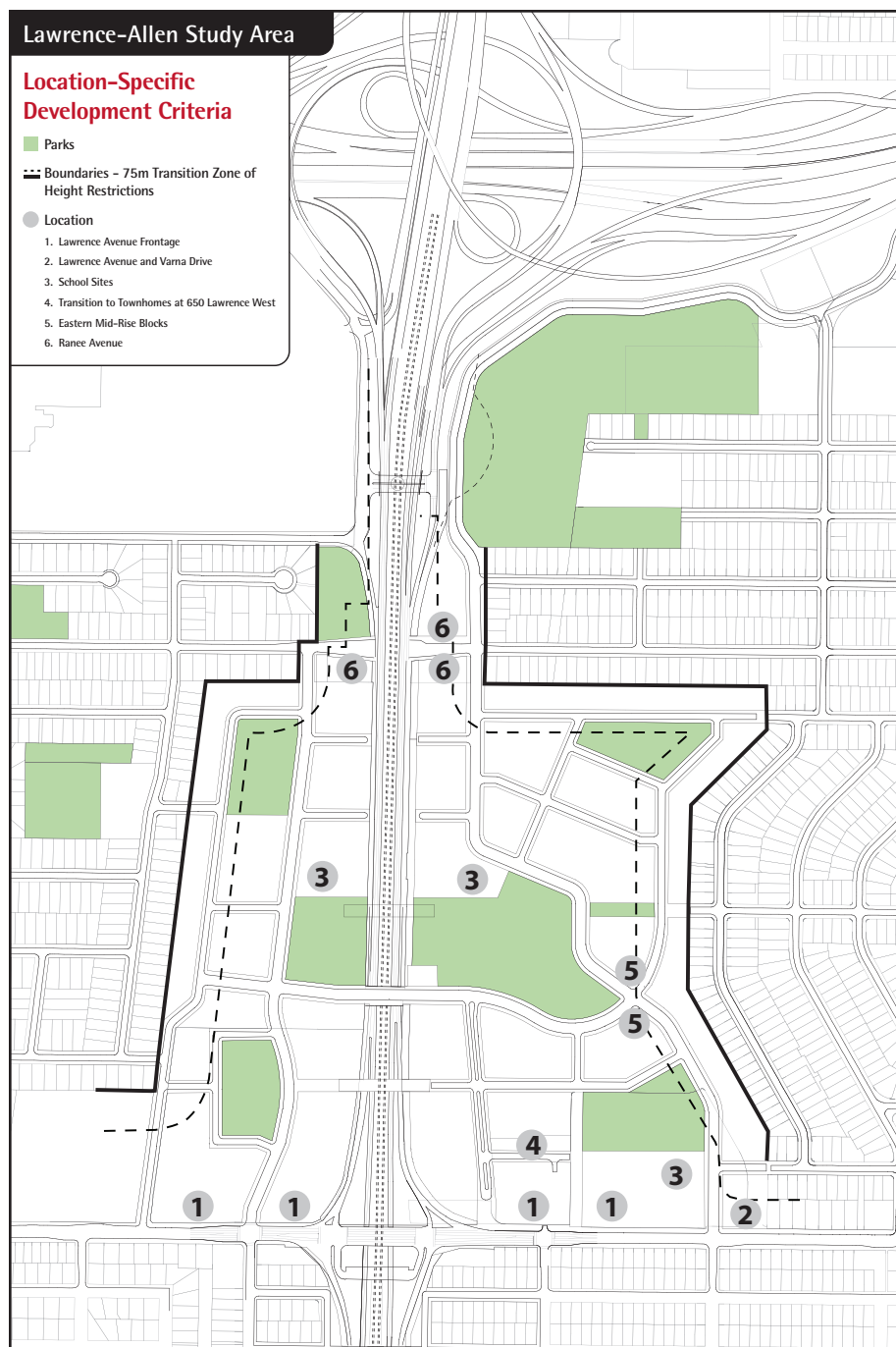
Transition in Built Form

The Revitalization Plan provides for more intensive and taller forms of development in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood than currently exist. The stable, low-rise character of adjacent neighbourhoods should be respected and protected.

The Official Plan requires that the massing of new development provide appropriate transition in the scale of new buildings to ensure a good fit of old and new and to limit impacts on existing low-scale neighbourhoods. Appropriate transition can be achieved with many geometric and design methods. The larger the difference in scale of development, the greater the need for transition.

The Revitalization Plan places the development blocks for mid-rise and tall buildings along Allen Road and Lawrence Avenue West, furthest from the neighbours north, east, and west of Lawrence Heights. This separates the taller buildings and development blocks from the lower scaled neighbourhoods and places the most of the higher and denser buildings between the Primary Street system and Allen Road.

The Revitalization Plan also establishes a transition zone 75 metres wide along the north, east, and west edges of Lawrence Heights (Figure 29). Within this zone, buildings are no higher than four storeys, in keeping with the Official Plan *Neighbourhoods* designation. The zone is measured from the closest property line of adjacent houses on the east, north and west sides of the Focus Area. Within the 75 metre width, it is possible to have a row of townhouse lots, a public street, and another row of townhouse lots across the street.



Location-Specific Development Criteria

Some locations in the Revitalization Plan have unique circumstances that should be addressed through good urban design. In some cases these are about the appropriate relationship of buildings to adjacent public space, whereas others are about reinforcing the principles of built-form transition in sensitive locations. The locations affected by these criteria are identified on Figure 29.

1. Lawrence Avenue frontage

Development criteria must provide for a moderate height along the Lawrence Avenue frontage of these blocks to ensure a consistency of built-form along the street that matches the existing condominium building at 650 Lawrence Avenue West. Tall buildings require a substantial set back.



650 Lawrence Avenue West

2. Lawrence Avenue and Varna Drive

Development criteria should:

- Limit development on the northern part of this block to townhouses or other single family homes no taller than three storeys;
- Limit development along Lawrence Avenue West to 6 to 8 storeys with a 45 degree angular plane measured from the closest property on Kirkland Boulevard; and
- Provide an exception from the 75-metre transition zone at this location to permit a mid-rise building, as described.

3. School sites

On three sites, schools may occupy the lower floors of mixed-use buildings. Additional block studies will be required on these special sites to balance and achieve a number of objectives, including:

- Clear and distinct identities for these two separate uses;
- Separate drop-off and loading areas for the two uses, while minimizing surface parking and drop-off areas;

Figure 29: Sites with Location-Specific Development Criteria

- Minimized shadow and skyview impacts on the school yard;
- A view corridor from Varna Drive to the Community Park; and
- Integration of the school outdoor play areas into the design of the Community Park.

4. Transition to townhouses at 650 Lawrence West

Development directly north of the existing townhouses at 650 Lawrence Avenue West should be developed with townhouses and/or mid-rise buildings. No tall buildings will be permitted on this block.

5. Eastern mid-rise blocks

The portion of these mid-rise blocks at the intersection of Flemington Road and Varna Drive should be limited to four storeys, in order to reinforce the transition in built form to the neighbourhood to the east.

6. Ranee Avenue

The blocks between Allen Road and Varna Drive and Flemington Road are where planned intensification comes closest to the existing low-scale neighbourhoods. These blocks must balance appropriateness of density near the subway with the proximity to low-scale neighbourhoods to the north, east, and west. Development criteria for these locations should:

- Limit building heights along Ranee Avenue;
- Provide for step backs from Ranee Avenue; and
- Limit sunlight and skyview impacts from Ranee Avenue and nearby properties.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS

- Apply built-form and site design principles to be a primary determinant of development form and scale.
- Establish a 75-metre wide built-form transition zone along the edges of the Focus Area adjacent to existing Neighbourhoods where development is limited to townhouses and other low-rise buildings of four storeys or less.
- Limit building heights to meet the restrictions associated with the flight path of the Downsview Airport.
- Limit the height of mid-rise buildings to the right-of-way width of adjacent streets.
- Incorporate site-specific development criteria on sites with unique circumstances.
- Implement urban design guidelines to guide the built form of buildings, the relationship of development to adjacent public spaces, and the design of streets and the public realm.



Existing tree canopy helps define a unique character for Lawrence Heights.

c. Trees in the Community

Trees and natural areas play an important role in the health of a neighbourhood. They clean the air and water, contribute to well-being by beautifying the community, provide shade during sunny days, and provide habitat for animals and plants. The long-term goal of the Revitalization Plan is to increase the tree canopy and to create opportunities for new natural areas.

Residents in Lawrence-Allen value the trees in their neighbourhoods. At this time, the existing tree canopy in the area is 7-18% – the lowest category for City of Toronto neighbourhoods. The Revitalization Plan provides an opportunity to increase the tree canopy in Lawrence Heights. A target of 30-40% matches the city-wide target for the urban forest. Increasing the tree canopy in the neighbourhood will provide benefits, such as noise and air pollution mitigation, reduction of heat island and climate change effects, softening neighbourhood streetscapes, attenuation of stormwater flow, and increased real estate value at a neighbourhood level.

Redevelopment of Lawrence Heights will require the removal of many mature trees. The tree canopy target will require that trees are replaced and that new trees are planted, both on public lands and as a requirement of new development. The target is a long-term goal; it will take time to realize the benefits provided by fully-grown trees as newly planted trees take many years to mature into a substantial canopy.

In addition to increasing the tree canopy in Lawrence Heights, the City should assess the current street tree planting opportunities throughout the Lawrence-Allen area. Once opportunities are identified, new trees will be planted.

The Study Area has a fairly high percentage of non-native trees. Tree planting should increase the proportion of native species in new road allowances, parkland, and other public areas. Native trees are preferred because they are more resilient to challenging conditions such as climate change, insects, diseases and pollution. Selecting appropriate trees for different planting locations will be key to planting healthy, long-lived trees.

Proper tree growth and sustainability requires optimal planting conditions and appropriate above- and below-ground infrastructure. For street trees, these conditions are outlined in the Urban Design Streetscape Manual. For tree planting required as part of a development application, the specifications are outlined in the Toronto Green Standard.

A sound and transparent process will be followed during the tree removal and replacement program in accordance with City tree by-laws. To retain as many mature trees as possible, Urban Forestry will require early input and cooperation with City of Toronto Divisions and Toronto Community Housing to identify priority areas for

tree retention and areas where replacement is more appropriate or desired. Where existing road alignments will be maintained, Urban Forestry can identify street trees to be retained.

The existing natural heritage system, consisting of the tree canopy, park system, and open space areas with vegetation, is minimal and not well connected. The Revitalization Plan addresses this condition by providing north-south and east-west linkages through its system of parks, green streets, and greenway. A connected and healthy natural heritage system provides habitat for flora and fauna, improves water and air quality, and incorporates beauty into the community and an appreciation for nature.

PLANNING DIRECTION

- Establish a tree canopy target of 30-40% for Lawrence Heights.
- Assess street tree planning opportunities throughout the Lawrence-Allen Study Area.
- Meet or exceed City standards to ensure optimal planting conditions to achieve mature tree growth.
- Incorporate tree planting opportunities in the site design of new development.
- Provide planting conditions to achieve mature tree growth.

d. Cultural Heritage: A Memory of Place

The Lawrence Heights neighbourhood was developed to address a housing crisis that emerged in the mid-1950s. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation introduced and tested a number of innovative planning techniques that had previously not been applied in Canada. As a planned community, Lawrence Heights embodies elements of the “Neighbourhood Unit,” first articulated by American urban planner Clarence Perry in 1929, including integration of a continuous system of parks and playgrounds, the central location of community facilities and the clear separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

A Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment for the Study Area concluded that the existing buildings and landscape elements within the Focus Area are only significant insofar as they represent the application of innovative planning ideals from the period of their construction. The Assessment recommended that the new development incorporate aspects of the original planning intent.

The Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan provides a means of retaining the character defining elements within a framework of new development. The plan provides for:

- A continuous system of parks and playgrounds;
- A central location for community facilities;
- A clear hierarchy of roads; and
- A clear prioritization of various modes of transportation.

The revitalization of the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood offers an opportunity to mitigate the loss of this historic development by interpreting the history of the site and the intentions of the original design, as well as by documenting the social and cultural history of the area’s inhabitants over time, through a Heritage Interpretation Plan. In maintaining the original planning elements of the neighbourhood plan and by employing an interpretation strategy to inform future residents of the history of the area, the heritage value of Lawrence Heights will be appropriately conserved.

A Stage 1 archaeological assessment has been completed for the Lawrence-Allen Study Area which determined that only 2% of the land required additional archaeological assessment or investigation. These lands, located in Baycrest Park, will have to undergo Stage 2 archaeological assessment prior to any completion of final project design. The balance of the Study Area has no further archaeological concern.

PLANNING ACTIONS

- Prepare a Heritage Interpretation Plan for the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood.
- Conduct a Stage 2 archaeological assessment on those lands in Baycrest Park that may have archaeological potential.



Outdoor patios of Lawrence Heights townhomes, 1960 - Photo by Geoffrey Frazer, Commercial Photography