

**O'Connor Drive Avenue Study – Toronto and East York District and North York District – Final Report**

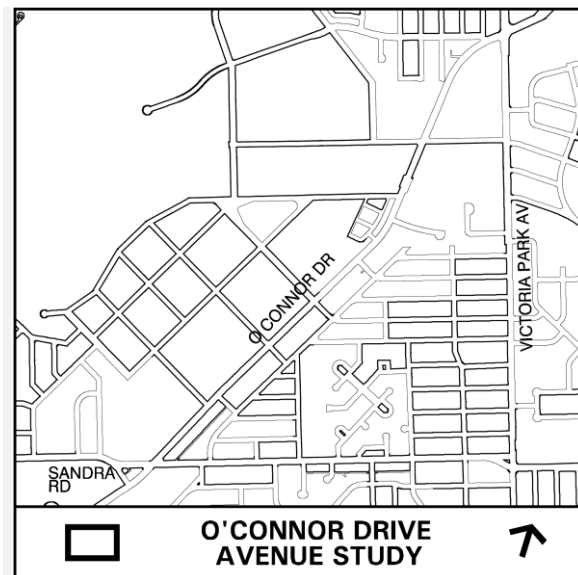
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|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Date:</b>             | October 12, 2012   |
| <b>To:</b>               | Planning and Growth Management Committee                     |
| <b>From:</b>             | Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division |
| <b>Wards:</b>            | Ward 31 – Beaches-East York<br>Ward 34 – Don Valley East     |
| <b>Reference Number:</b> | P:\2012\Cluster B\PLN\Pg12082 (06 116093 SPS 00 TM)          |

**SUMMARY**

The portion of O'Connor Drive between Victoria Park in North York District and St. Clair Avenue East and Sandra Road in Toronto and East York District is identified as an *Avenue* in the Official Plan. This report recommends adoption of an Official Plan Amendment and Urban Design Guidelines which will be used to guide public realm improvements and to assess future development proposals within the *Avenue*.

The Official Plan recognizes that each *Avenue* is different in terms of lot sizes and configuration, street width, existing uses, neighbouring uses, transit service and streetscape potential. There is no one size fits all program for the *Avenues*, and thus, a framework for change is required to be tailored to suit the local conditions along the street. The purpose of the O'Connor Drive Avenue Study is to identify a vision for the future development of the area, as well as its implementation.

The vision for O'Connor Drive is that it becomes a vibrant urban corridor that will provide more opportunities for people to live, work, and shop. The urban design guidelines identify how new developments will fit harmoniously into the existing/planned context by ensuring that appropriate transitions in scale



to adjacent uses occurs and that there are limited impacts. The Guidelines are intended to foster the creation of a high quality, safe, urban environment with attractive streetscapes, pedestrian friendly open spaces and vibrant streets. The Guidelines identify: where and how mid-rise, mixed-use buildings can be introduced; how the streetscape and pedestrian environment can be improved; where trees should be planted; and how use of the road allowance can be optimized. The benefits to new and established communities will be gradually implemented over time as development proceeds and opportunities present themselves.

This report recommends approval of a draft Official Plan Amendment to include area specific policies related to development in the O'Connor Drive Avenue Study area, defined as O'Connor Drive between St. Clair Avenue West and Victoria Park Avenue. The proposed Official Plan policies are supported by Urban Design Guidelines that are also the subject of this report. These policy documents represent the culmination of the O'Connor Drive Avenue Study.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. City Council amend the Official Plan substantially in accordance with the draft Official Plan Amendment No. ~ attached as Attachment No. 1;
2. City Council adopt the O'Connor Drive Avenue Urban Design Guidelines in accordance with Attachment No. 2; and
3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Official Plan Amendment and Urban Design Guidelines as may be required.

### **Financial Impact**

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting of May 31, 2005, Toronto City Council adopted a recommendation from the Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning that O'Connor Drive be considered for an Avenue Study. While work was commenced on this project in 2006 through 2008, work was recommenced in 2011 and 2012 to complete the project.

## **BACKGROUND**

O'Connor Drive between Victoria Park Drive and St. Clair Avenue East is identified as *Avenue* in the Official Plan. *Avenues* are selected corridors along major transit routes where transit-supportive re-urbanization is intended to create new jobs and housing while improving local streetscapes, infrastructure and amenities. *Avenues* are intended to gradually accommodate development as Toronto continues to grow. As each *Avenue* is different in terms of lot sizes and configuration, street width, existing uses, neighbouring uses, transit service and streetscape

potential, the Official Plan directs that a framework for change be tailored to the situation of each *Avenue*, or section of longer *Avenues*, through a local *Avenue* study involving local residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The purpose of the study is to develop a shared vision for the anticipated future growth and enhancement of O'Connor Drive, while recognizing its unique characteristics and protecting area attributes. The O'Connor Drive Avenue Study is intended to identify a vision for the future development of the area, as well as implementation to achieve this vision.

The vision for O'Connor Drive is that it becomes a vibrant urban corridor that provides more opportunities for people to live, work, and shop. To achieve this the Urban Design Guidelines:

- Provide a framework for the desired urban structure for the area;
- Establish where and how mid-rise, mixed-use buildings are to be introduced; and
- Identify how the streetscape and pedestrian environment can be improved.

### **Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans**

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and, protecting public health and safety. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS identifies that healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by:

- promoting efficient development and land use patterns which sustain the financial well-being of the Province and municipalities over the long term;
- accommodating an appropriate range and mix of residential, employment, commercial institutional, recreational and open space uses to meet long-term needs;
- promoting cost-effective development standards to minimize land consumption and servicing costs; and
- improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly.

The PPS also identifies that Planning authorities shall identify and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment where this can be accommodated by taking into account existing building stock or areas, and the availability of suitable existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities required to accommodate projected needs.

On June 16, 2006, the Places to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe came into effect. City Council's planning decisions are required to conform, not conflict, with the Growth Plan. The Growth Plan sets out a basis for guiding decisions on how land is developed, resources are managed, and investment is to occur in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Where there is a conflict between the PPS and the Growth Plan, the Growth Plan prevails. Key policies in the Plan include:

- Providing for a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant neighbourhoods;
- Providing for high quality public open spaces with site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant spaces;
- Supporting transit, walking and cycling for everyday activities; and
- Achieving an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent areas.

## Official Plan

The Official Plan identifies O'Connor Drive between Victoria Park Drive and to just south of St. Clair Avenue East as an *Avenue* on Map 2: Urban Structure. *Avenues* are corridors along major streets where transit is available and re-urbanization is anticipated. Section 2.2.3 of the Official Plan establishes the policy objectives of *Avenue* studies. Among these objectives the Plan directs that both a vision and implementation be developed to demonstrate how the streetscape and pedestrian environment can be improved; where new public open space can be created and existing parks improved; where trees and shrubs should be planted, and how the use of the road allowance can be optimized. The *Avenues* are intended to be transformed incrementally, through redevelopment over a number of years.

The majority of properties along O'Connor Drive are designated *Mixed Use Areas* and are made up of a range of commercial, residential and institutional uses, in single use and mixed use buildings, as well as parks and open spaces. The Official Plan identifies that *Mixed Use Areas* will create a balance of high quality commercial, residential, institutional and open space uses that reduces automobile dependency and meets the needs of the local community. The development criteria for *Mixed Use Areas* identifies that new development should provide a transition between areas of different development intensity through such means as appropriate setbacks and or a stepping down of heights, particularly to lower scale *Neighbourhoods*. In addition, development in *Mixed Use Areas* is to create an attractive, comfortable and safe pedestrian environment.

Properties in the northern portion of the *Avenue* on the east side of O'Connor Drive are designated *Apartment Neighbourhoods* which provides for apartment buildings, parks, local institutions and small scale retail and office uses. Compatible infill development may be permitted and new development is to provide residential amenity for new and existing residents. Properties in the northern portion of the *Avenue* on the west side of O'Connor Drive are designated *Neighbourhoods* which are made up of low scale residential uses and where small scale incremental growth is expected.

The Official Plan designates a number of properties on the west side of O'Connor Drive as an *Employment District* on Map 2: Urban Structure. *Employment Districts* are to be improved for economic purposes in order to ensure a stable environment for investment, offer suitable locations for a variety of employment uses, and nurture key clusters of producers, suppliers and services that benefit from these strategic locations. The lands within the *Employment District* are designated *Employment Areas*. *Employment Areas* are places of business and economic activity. Uses that support this function include, but are not limited to, offices, manufacturing,

warehousing, distribution, research and development facilities, media facilities, hotels, and restaurants and small scale stores and services that serve area businesses and workers.

*Natural Areas, Parks and Other Open Spaces* designations are adjacent to O'Connor Drive. *Natural Areas* are to be maintained in a natural state while allowing some compatible recreation, cultural and educational uses. *Parks and Other Open Space Areas* are to be maintained or expanded to improve usability.

Other applicable sections within the Official Plan Policies, such as, but not limited to: Built Form, Public Realm, and Housing; were reviewed in the context of the *Avenue Study* and were used in formulating the attached Urban Design Guidelines.

## **Zoning**

### **Former Borough of East York Zoning By-law 6752**

The portion of the O'Connor Drive Avenue between St. Clair Avenue West and Wakunda Drive is covered by the former Borough of East York Zoning By-law 6752, as amended. The east side of O'Connor Drive is zoned Commercial (C). This zoning category allows for mixed use buildings, no taller than 3-storeys, with residential uses permitted at the second floor and above. A maximum density or gross floor area is not explicitly stated, rather, the By-law limits the siting of the building and the height, setting out an envelope for development.

The west side of O'Connor Drive has a number of zoning categories. The area south of Curity Drive is zoned Commercial. The areas between Curity Drive and Dohme Avenue have a mix of zoning permissions including Commercial, Automotive, and Residential. The lands on the west side of O'Connor Drive that are within the O'Connor/Bermondsey Business Area are zoned Mixed Commercial Industrial (MCI)

### **Former City of North York Zoning By-law 7625**

The portion of the O'Connor Drive Avenue located between Wakunda Drive and Northline Road on the south and Victoria Park Drive to the north is covered by the former City of North York Zoning By-law 7625, as amended. Commercial zones include C1 and C2 and permit a wide range of commercial uses including retail, restaurant, office and service uses and a Floor Space Index of 1.0. Employment uses are zoned M1 and M2 and permit a range of uses including office, manufacturing, colleges, self storage and service uses and a Floor Space Index of 1.0. Residential zones include single family dwellings, townhomes and apartments and apartment zones. The apartment zones permit a Floor Space Index of 1.5.

## **Site and Surrounding Area**

O'Connor Drive is the primary pedestrian and commercial area for the adjacent neighbourhoods and the O'Connor/Bermondsey Business Area. It also functions as a through route for traffic and transit moving between downtown Toronto and the east end of the city. O'Connor Drive is one of the few long roads in Toronto that breaks with the grid pattern. It runs on a diagonal course and is 27 metres wide.

The portion of O'Connor Drive from Victoria Park south to Northline Road is in the North York District. The portion from Northline Road to St. Clair Avenue East is in the Toronto and East York District.

## **Recent Redevelopment Approvals and Proposals**

O'Connor Drive has remained relatively stable over the years, with limited development occurring. Since the initiation of the study, the City had only received 2 planning applications on the *Avenue*.

In 2008, the owner of 968 O'Connor Drive submitted a Zoning By-law Amendment application to redevelop the site with an 8-storey mixed use building. The file was closed due to inactivity.

In 2011, the owner of 1401 O'Connor Drive submitted a Zoning By-law Amendment application to redevelop the site with a 10-storey mixed use building. Staff are currently reviewing the application and anticipate reporting to Toronto and East York Community Council on the proposal in the first quarter of 2013.

## **Community Consultation**

A number of Community Consultation meetings have taken place over the period of the study and have been well attended. The first community consultation meeting was held on April 10, 2006 where background information was presented and attributes and opportunities for the *Avenue* were discussed. A Design Workshop was held on May 13, 2006 and involved the community in a discussion of the location, form and character of intensification and improvements for O'Connor Drive. A third community meeting was held on June 21, 2006 which presented a review of the results of the Design Workshop and future directions for the Avenue Study. An additional consultation meeting was held on July 24, 2006 to continue the discussion of future development and improvements for the Avenue. Staff held meetings with the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) to receive their input prior to proceeding to community consultation meetings.

Members of LAC and participants in the community consultation meetings had concerns about building heights on the east side of O'Connor Drive south of Northline Road in terms of compatibility with the character of the adjacent low density neighbourhood. There was concern that overdevelopment would result in additional traffic congestion along O'Connor Drive. Certain benefits of redevelopment were acknowledged including improved streetscape, eyes on the street, better retail and possibly enhanced public transit.

City staff reviewed comments received during the 2006 meetings, workshops and from the LAC and used those comments assist in to formulating the vision and design standards for O'Connor Drive. The study was put on hold in 2009/2010 since development demand was minimal on O'Connor Drive and staff resources were allocated to ongoing projects and Ontario Municipal Board hearings. The work was resumed in 2011, and the Official Plan Amendment and Urban Design Guidelines are now complete.

A final Community Consultation meeting was held on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 and approximately 80 members of the public were in attendance. Matters and issues identified at that meeting

included: increased traffic and infiltration of traffic into the neighbourhood, the shortage of parking in the area for commercial uses, improvements to the business area and whether assistance is available for the business owners, the purpose of the study if a Zoning By-law Amendment for the area is not proposed, allowing residential development within the *Employment Area*, the requirement of commercial and retail uses at grade, and ways to improve the streetscape in absence of development.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Official Plan Amendment**

The proposed Official Plan Amendment establishes local objectives for the study area and sets out how the urban design guidelines will be used to provide direction for future development and improvements to the public realm along O'Connor Drive. The policies are intended to be added to Chapter Seven: Site and Area Specific Policies of the City's Official Plan. Attachment No. 1 contains the draft Official Plan Amendment for the O'Connor Drive Study Area. The urban design guidelines as outlined below, are separate and do not form part of the Official Plan Amendment.

### **Zoning By-law Amendment**

No changes to current zoning permissions are recommended for the lands within the O'Connor Drive Avenue Study area. Proposed amendments to the existing Zoning By-law will be made on a site specific basis through applications and will undergo the formal development review process and will be evaluated through the Urban Design Guidelines contained in this report.

### **O'Connor Drive Urban Design Guidelines**

The Urban Design Guidelines contain direction for improvements to the public realm and direction for future built form. The intent of the public realm guidelines is to help balance the function of O'Connor Drive as a through route for traffic to the downtown with its transformation into a high quality pedestrian environment which functions as a main street that can lead to increased commercial activity. The public realm guidelines address streetscape, public parks and open spaces and will guide the City's decisions with regards to capital improvements along O'Connor Drive.

The built form guidelines are intended to provide the tool for a co-ordinated and consistent response related to the City's development review process for development applications, and are intended to give clear guidance to the development industry, and their consultants, in the preparation of development applications. The objective is to ensure that new development is sensitive to its existing and/or planned context. The application of angular planes and building setbacks are intended to provide a transition towards adjacent low rise residential neighbourhoods, to limit shadow impacts on neighbourhoods and to optimize sunlight for pedestrians on O'Connor Drive. The built form guidelines provide direction regarding siting, massing, and detailing of new development so that there is an attractive and well proportioned frame to the public realm and an interesting environment for pedestrians. The guidelines encourage excellence in architecture, site planning and landscape design in order to create an attractive urban corridor.

A District Structure Plan illustrates generally where development and public realm improvements are expected to occur and is incorporated in the Urban Design Guidelines.

In the District Structure Plan the north and south ends of the *Avenue* are defined by two key intersections; Victoria Park/ O'Connor Drive in the north and St. Clair Avenue/ O'Connor Drive at the south. An emerging main streets area is located on the northern portion of O'Connor Drive between the Victoria Park/ O'Connor Drive Key Intersection and Wakunda Drive. The southern portion of O'Connor Drive between Wakunda Drive and the St. Clair/O'Connor Drive intersection is identified as a main streets area. Moving from north to south, the District Structure Plan provides for the following development pattern:

**a) Key Intersection – Victoria Park/O'Connor Drive**

The Victoria Park /O'Connor Drive Key Intersection is the entrance to the *Avenue* from the north. It is on a transit hub which includes a future Eglinton crosstown LRT stop. Existing development in the Key Intersection is suburban in character and consists of large lots with stand alone one and two storey commercial buildings and surface parking.

Lands within the Victoria Park/O'Connor Drive Key Intersection are intended to be generally mid-rise, mixed-use buildings which transition downward in density, height and scale to the low rise *Neighbourhood* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* fronting onto O'Connor Drive immediately to the south. In the event that properties on the east side of the Key Intersection are consolidated, an urban design master plan will be prepared which addresses the O'Connor Drive Urban Design Guidelines contained in this report. A mix of uses and wider landscaped boulevards are encouraged for a more attractive and active pedestrian environment.

**b) Emerging Main Streets Area – North O'Connor Drive**

The Emerging Main Streets Area, North O'Connor Drive will consist of lower scale development that is in keeping with the *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* designations of these lands. Only one portion of the 'Emerging Main Streets Area', a large site located at Sunrise Road on the west side of O'Connor Drive is designated as *Mixed Use*. Upon proposed redevelopment of this site, direction for the preparation of an urban design master plan is provided in the Urban Design Guidelines contained in this report.

**c) Main Streets Area – South O'Connor Drive**

South O'Connor Drive has a main street character which consists of a lower scale, fine grained context. The guidelines identify that any new development on the east side of O'Connor Drive within the Main Streets Area should reflect the character of existing development, while respecting the low rise, stable neighbourhood to the east.

The west side of O'Connor Drive forms part of the O'Connor/Bermondsey Business area. The redevelopment of these sites is to be consistent with the *Employment Districts* and *Employment Areas* policies within the Official Plan. The lands on the west side of O'Connor Drive, within the O'Connor/Bermondsey Business Area are to be maintained for non-residential uses in order to ensure a stable environment for investment and offer suitable locations for a variety of employment uses. Redevelopment of these lands for residential uses is not permitted.



#### ***d) Key Intersection – St. Clair Avenue East and O'Connor Drive***

The northeast and southwest corners of St. Clair Avenue East and O'Connor Drive act as starting and termination points for O'Connor Drive Avenue from the south. The configuration of the existing road at this Key Intersection, as well as the natural features of the Taylor Creek Ravine generates several unusual site conditions.

The St. Clair Avenue East and O'Connor Drive Key Intersection consists of low rise commercial and residential buildings. This intersection functions as an entrance to the O'Connor Drive Avenue from the south. Development within this Key Intersection is intended to be of a lower scale, consisting of mixed-use developments with a focus on commercial uses at grade.

Development within the St. Clair Avenue East and O'Connor Drive Key Intersection should strengthen the commercial/retail function of the intersection while respecting the adjacent low rise, stable neighbourhoods, and minimizing impacts on the Taylor Creek Ravine.

### **Streetscape Improvements**

Improvements to the O'Connor Drive streetscape will likely occur over the long term as sites along the *Avenue* are redeveloped. Streetscape enhancements may act as a catalyst for renewal of O'Connor Drive. It is noted that O'Connor Drive presently has different streetscape treatments and an irregular built form character along its length, given that development has occurred over time across two different districts (former North York, and Toronto and East York). The portion of the *Avenue* that is in the North York District consists of a 9 metre boulevard which includes a 3 metre grassed portion with street trees. The south portion in Toronto and East York District has a variable 5 metre boulevard with no street trees or grassed portion. In order to increase opportunities for tree planting, street furniture and wider sidewalks, new developments shall reflect the setbacks identified in the Urban Design Guidelines.

To date, some streetscape improvements have been implemented on O'Connor Drive *Avenue* including new transit shelters, benches and waste receptacles at the Victoria Park, Sunrise and Bermondsey Nodes and at Dohme Avenue on the west side of O'Connor Drive. In addition, to supplement tree planting along O'Connor Drive which occurred in 2005, new locations were planted in 2010 which include; in front of the walk up rental apartment buildings between Bermondsey Road and Curity Avenue and along the length of the Parma Park internal walkway. In future, it is recommended that a City capital improvement plan for the O'Connor Drive study area be created to improve the public realm over time.

The application of the streetscape guidelines will vary along O'Connor Drive as described in the Urban Design Guidelines. Future streetscape improvements for O'Connor Drive should include unified street furnishings (lighting, seating, transit furniture and signage) and landscape improvements such as boulevards, and tree planting where possible. Improvements to the streetscape are intended to promote a street that is safe, comfortable and attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Conclusion**

This report recommends the adoption of an Official Plan Amendment and Urban Design Guidelines for the O'Connor Drive *Avenue* between Eglinton Avenue East and St. Clair Avenue

East. The recommendations contained within this report support Council's focus on investment in quality of life, the desire to link public initiatives with private investment in order to stimulate development and the need to strategically create opportunities that reflect the desired future of O'Connor Drive. The Urban Design Guidelines provide direction for new development so that there is an attractive and well proportioned frame to the public realm and an interesting environment for pedestrians. They encourage excellence in architecture, site planning and landscape design in order to create an attractive urban corridor. New development is to be sensitive to adjacent uses, particularly the low rise stable residential neighbourhoods that abut the O'Connor Drive *Avenue* area.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Jennifer Keesmaat MES, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Official Plan Amendment  
Attachment 2: Urban Design Guidelines

**Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment**

**CITY OF TORONTO**

**Bill No. ~**

**BY-LAW No. ~-2012**

**To adopt Amendment No. ~ to the Official Plan of the City of Toronto  
respecting the lands on O'Connor Drive  
between St. Clair Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue**

WHEREAS authority is given to Council under the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, as amended, to pass this By-law; and

WHEREAS Council of the City of Toronto has provided adequate information to the public and has held at least one public meeting in accordance with the *Planning Act*;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. Amendment No. ~ to the Official Plan, consisting of the text and maps attached as Schedule "A", is hereby adopted pursuant to the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P. 13, as amended.

ENACTED AND PASSED this ~ day of ~, A.D. 2012

ROB FORD  
Mayor

ULLI S. WATKISS,  
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

**Schedule "A"**  
**Amendment No. ~ to the Official Plan respecting**  
**O'Connor Drive between St. Clair Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue**

**The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:**

1. Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by adding the following Site and Area Specific Policy ~ for the lands identified on the accompanying schedules that form part of the policy as follows:

**"~. O'Connor Drive, between St. Clair Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue**

The O'Connor Drive Avenue includes properties that front onto O'Connor Drive between Victoria Park Drive in the north and St. Clair Avenue East and Sandra Road in the south. It includes properties that are in close proximity to the intersections of O'Connor Drive and Victoria Park Drive and O'Connor Drive and St. Clair Avenue East.

**a) Objectives**

Throughout the O'Connor Drive Avenue area development will:

- contribute to the vision of the desired urban structure for the area;
- support the range of permitted uses including residential, employment, retail and institutional while contributing to the vitality of the area;
- enhance, improve or add to the public realm;
- provide appropriate relationships between buildings, and between buildings and the public realm by addressing matters such as massing, set-backs, and step-backs;
- provide high quality architecture, site planning, and landscape design;
- provide active at grade uses in support of a dynamic, interesting and safe street life; and
- encourage environmental sustainability.

**b) Urban Design Guidelines**

In order to assist in meeting the objectives of the Plan, the O'Connor Drive Avenue Urban Design Guidelines will be used to provide direction for reviewing development applications in the area. The guidelines will be read in conjunction with the urban design and built form policies of the Official Plan.

The O'Connor Drive Urban Design Guidelines have been developed in order to achieve the above noted objectives. The Urban Design Guidelines identify two key intersections and two portions of O'Connor Drive which have unique functions and characteristics and which are shown on Schedule 2. Future development in the two key intersections will be sensitive to the adjacent land uses, will contribute towards the creation of a consistent street wall and provide room for an attractive pedestrian environment. Active uses at grade which includes commercial and retail uses are encouraged.

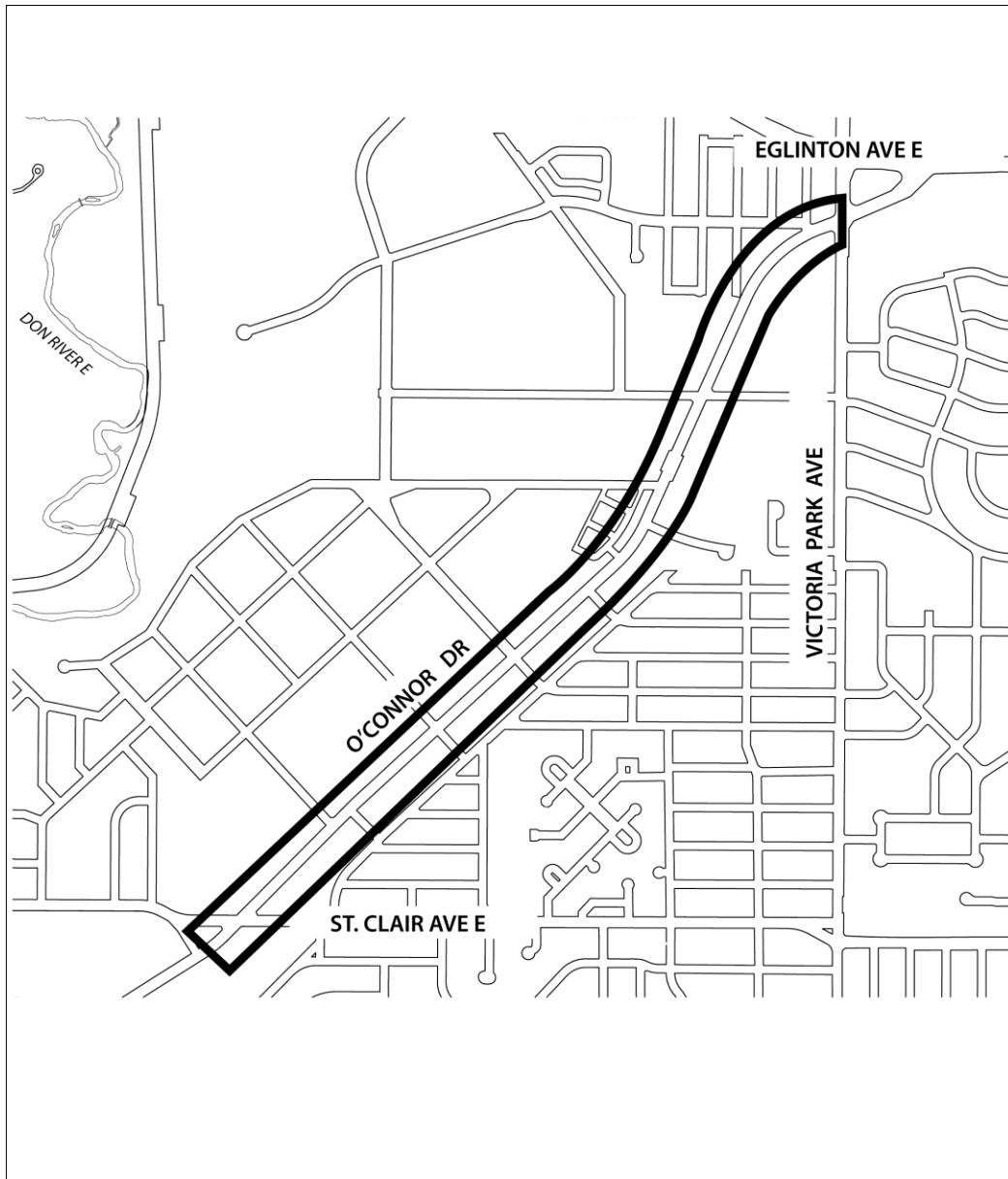
The northerly portion of O'Connor Drive is identified as an emerging main street area. Applicants for development on lands designated *Mixed Use Area* are to provide an urban design plan which provides an appropriate transition in scale to adjacent uses, consolidates vehicular access to the site and provides for active uses at grade.

The southerly portion of O'Connor Drive is identified as having a main street character and future development is to contribute to the revitalization of the area and be sensitive to its context.

The Urban Design Guidelines provide direction for improvements to the public realm that promote a healthy and vibrant pedestrian environment and include streetscape improvements and enhancing open spaces. Such improvements will occur incrementally and will be considered through new development on adjacent properties.

2. Map 31, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by adding the lands shown on Schedule 1 to the identified "Areas affected by the Site and Area Specific Policies" as Policy No. ~.

**Schedule 1  
Official Plan Area**



O'Connor Drive

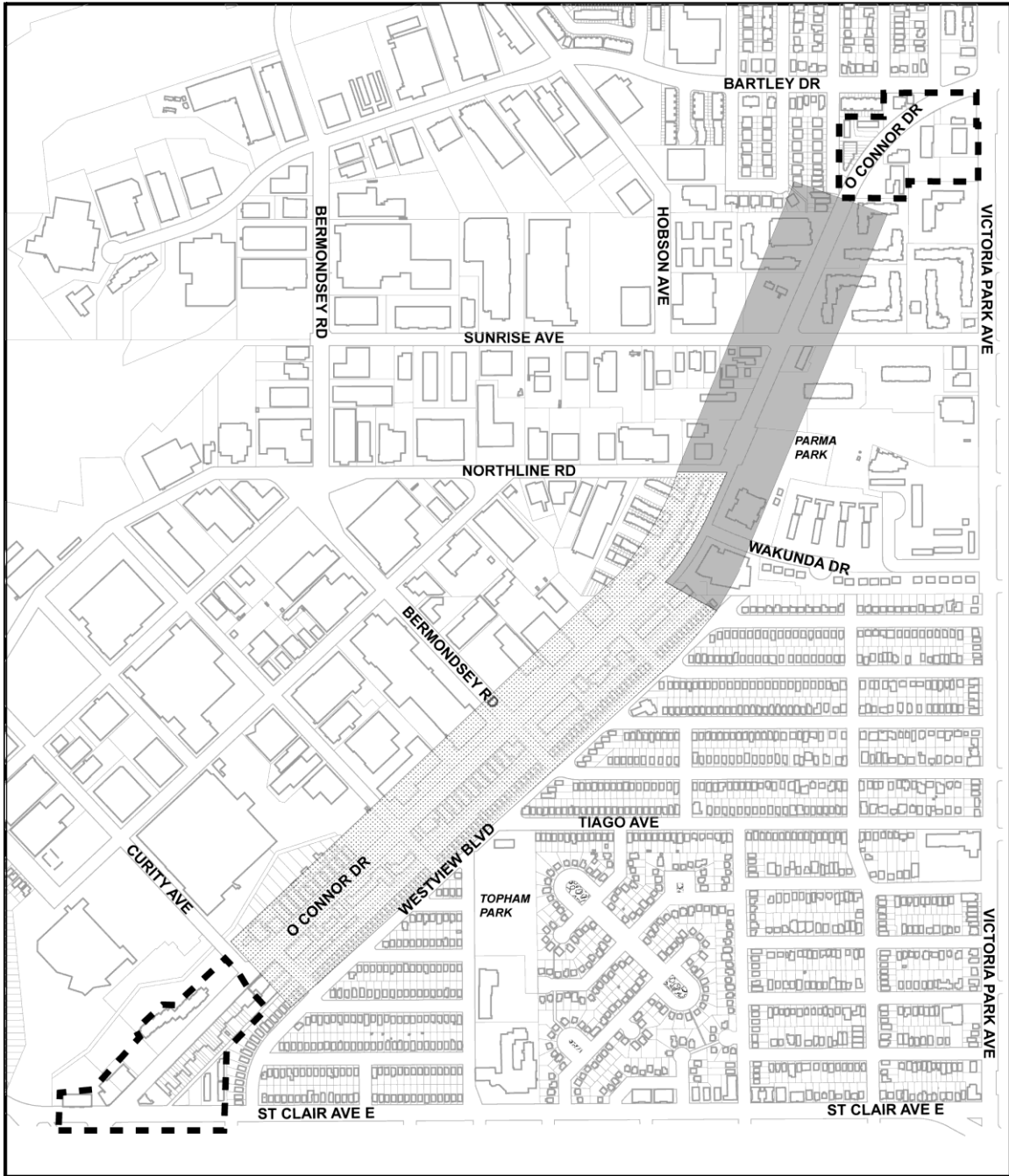
Official Plan Amendment # xxx - Schedule 1

 Study Area



Not to Scale  
10/03/12

## Schedule 2 District Structure Plan



## O'Connor Drive

Official Plan Amendment # xxx - Schedule 2

- Key Intersections
- Emerging Main Street Areas
- Main Street Area



Not to Scale  
10/03/12

O'CONNOR DRIVE

# URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES





# O'CONNOR DRIVE

## URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

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Figure 1: Aerial photo showing the study area: O'Connor Drive from St. Clair Avenue (south) to Victoria Park Avenue

## 1.0 PURPOSE

Development along O'Connor Drive between Victoria Park Avenue and St. Clair Avenue will be consistent with the following public realm and built form guidelines. These guidelines will provide a framework for development within the area and are to be read in conjunction with the policies in the Official Plan.

## 2.0 LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

These guidelines apply to the lands fronting onto O'Connor Drive between Victoria Park Avenue at the north and St. Clair Avenue East and Sandra Drive at the south (Figure 1). O'Connor Drive is the primary pedestrian and commercial area for the adjacent neighbourhoods and the O'Connor/Bermondsey Business Area. It also functions as a through route for traffic and transit moving between downtown Toronto and the east end of the city.

O'Connor Drive is one of the few long roads in Toronto that breaks with the grid pattern. It runs on a diagonal course which, along with changes in grade along its length, creates some unique lot shapes and views. O'Connor Drive is also unique in that large portions of the west side of the Avenue are made up of employment lands while the east side is comprised of land uses typically found on Avenues. The close proximity of the Don River and Taylor Creek Ravines at the south end creates a natural background which frames the street and adds to its unique character and impacts development opportunities.

The portion of O'Connor Drive from Victoria Park south to Northline Road is in the North York District. The portion from Northline Road to St. Clair Avenue East is in the Toronto and East York District. O'Connor Drive presently has somewhat different streetscape treatments and built form character along its length, the result of development occurring over time across two different former municipalities.

The North York District portion of the Avenue is characterized by larger lots and building footprints. Along this portion there are stand alone commercial buildings and plazas with front yard parking, apartment buildings, townhouses, a community park and an elementary school. Heights are predominately 1 and 2 storeys, with some 4 storey apartment buildings, a five storey office building and one 11 storey apartment building. A portion of a low rise, stable neighbourhood fronts onto O'Connor Drive on the west side. In 2005 the City planted street trees on the boulevard.

The Toronto and East York portion, between Northline Road and St. Clair Avenue is characterized by more fine grained, compact development along with some larger lots and building footprints. A main street commercial area with attached low rise buildings and narrow frontages at the street edge is located on the east side of O'Connor Drive between St. Clair Avenue East and Gardens Crescent. Heights range from 2 to 4 storeys. A low rise, stable neighbourhood is adjacent to the main street commercial area along the length of this portion of O'Connor Drive. The boulevard is narrow in the Toronto and East York portion and there are no street trees.

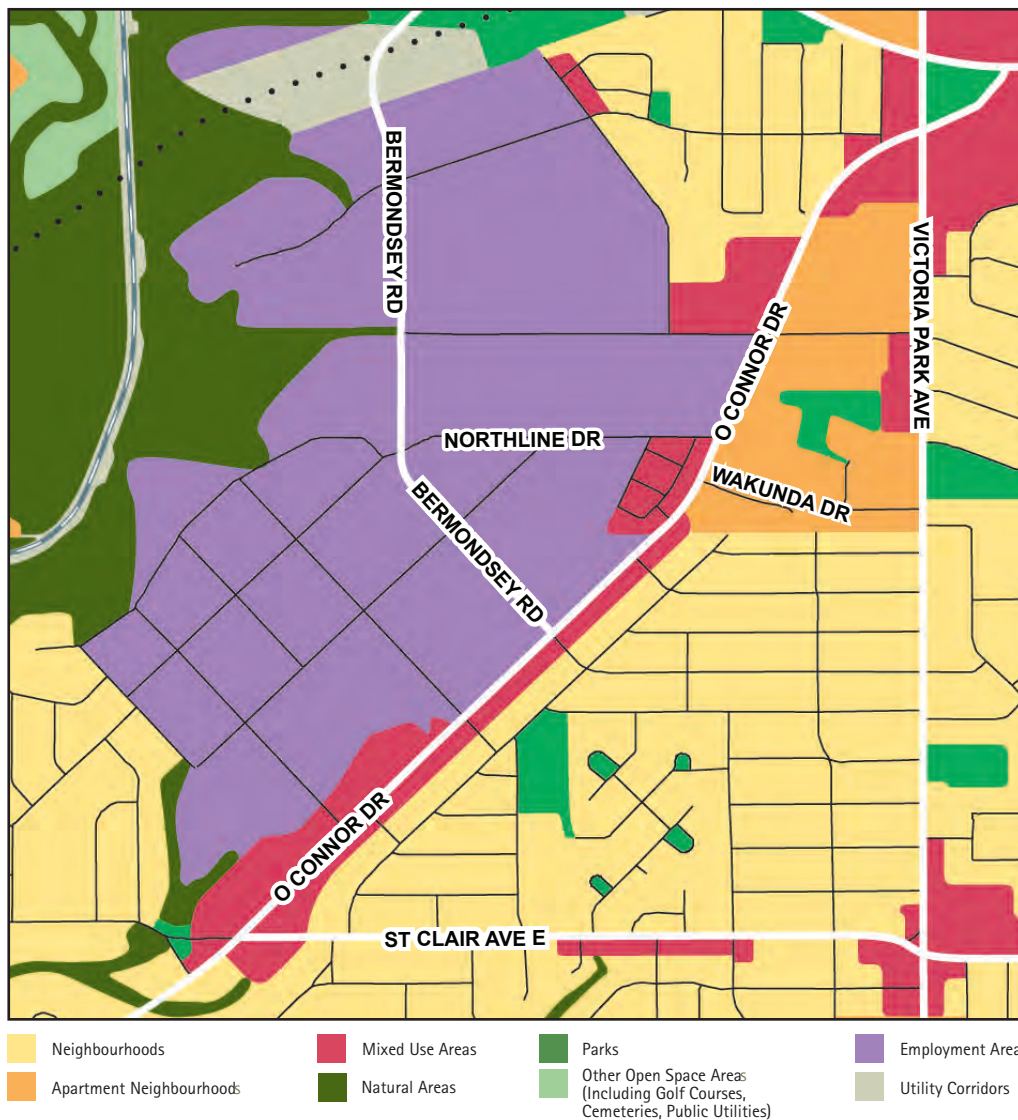


Figure 2: Official Plan: Land Use Plan Map 20

### 3.0 GOALS

The vision for O'Connor Drive is that it becomes a vibrant urban corridor that provides more opportunities for people to live, work and shop. To achieve this, the District Structure Plan and guidelines:

- provide a framework for the desired urban structure for the area;
- balance the function of O'Connor Drive as a through route for traffic to the downtown with its transformation into an active main street that is pedestrian friendly;
- provide that new development is to be sensitive to its existing and/or planned context;
- provide that new buildings are attractive, well proportioned and relate to the street;
- provide that new buildings create a comfortable and interesting environment for pedestrians; and
- encourage excellence in architecture, site planning and landscape design.

### 4.0 DISTRICT STRUCTURE PLAN

The District Structure Plan shows the framework for future development of the O'Connor Drive Avenue and is contained in Figure 3. The north and south ends of the Avenue are defined by two Key Intersections; Victoria Park/ O'Connor Drive in the north and St. Clair Avenue/ O'Connor Drive at the south. An Emerging Main Streets Area is located on the northern portion of O'Connor Drive between the Key Intersection and Wakunda Drive. The southern portion of O'Connor Drive between Wakunda Drive and the St. Clair/O'Connor Drive Key Intersection is identified as a Main Streets Area.



Figure3: Schematic District Structure Plan



Moving from north to south, the District Structure Plan provides for the following development pattern:

a) Key Intersection –

Victoria Park/O'Connor Drive

- midrise, mixed use buildings which transition downward in density, heights and scale to the low rise and apartment neighbourhoods immediately to the south;
- and
- commercial uses at grade which are encouraged in order to provide interest and encourage pedestrian activity at the Key Intersection leading to a main streets area.

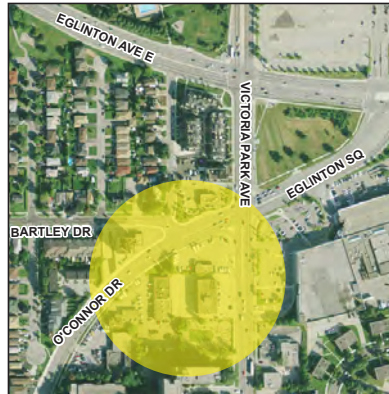


Figure 4:  
Key Intersection –  
Victoria Park/O'Connor Drive

b) Emerging Main Streets Area –  
North O'Connor Drive

- lower scale development in keeping with the Neighbourhoods and Apartment Neighbourhoods designations of these lands in the Official Plan;
- midrise development on the large site on the west side of O'Connor Drive at Sunrise Avenue;
- and
- mixed use development with a transition in height, density and scale to the low rise neighbourhood to the north.



Figure 5:  
Emerging Main Streets Area –  
North O'Connor Drive



Figure 6:  
Main Streets Area –  
South O'Connor Drive

**c) Main Streets Area – South O'Connor Drive**

- development on the east side to reflect the lower scale, fine grained character of existing development and respect the low rise, stable neighbourhood to the east; and
- development of lands on the west side of O'Connor Drive, which are designated Employment Areas in the Official Plan will be consistent with the Employment Areas development criteria contained in Section 4.6 of the Official Plan

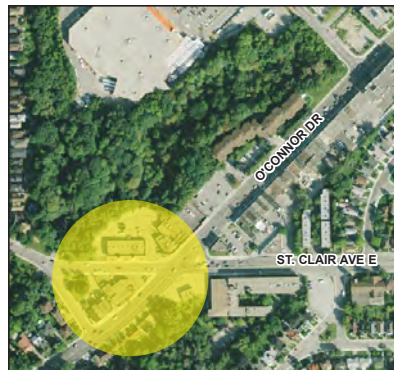


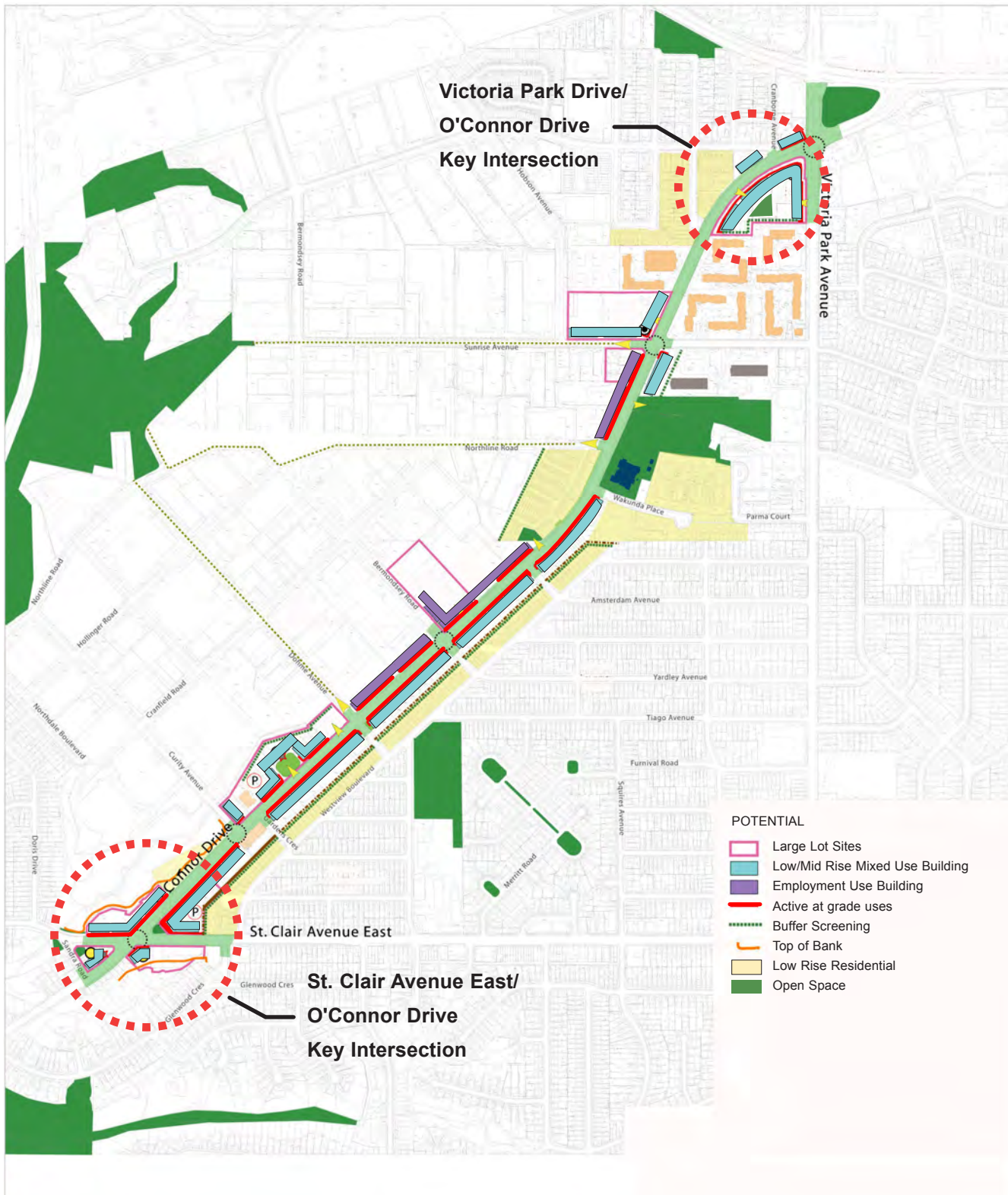
Figure 7:  
Key Intersection – St. Clair Avenue  
and O'Connor Drive

**d) Key Intersection – St. Clair Avenue and O'Connor Drive**

- lower scale, mixed use development with a focus on commercial uses at grade to provide interest and encourage pedestrian activity at the Key Intersection, and to respect the adjacent low rise, stable neighbourhood.



Figure 8: DISTRICT STRUCTURE PLAN



## 5.0 PUBLIC REALM AND BUILT FORM GUIDELINES

### 5.1 Key Intersection - Victoria Park/ O'Connor Drive

Lands at the O'Connor Drive and Victoria Park Avenue intersection provide the north entrance way to the O'Connor Drive Avenue and have been identified as a Key Intersection. The elevation of O'Connor Drive at this intersection provides a panoramic view of downtown Toronto. The Eglinton/Victoria Park bus transit hub is located immediately to the north of this Key Intersection. The underground Eglinton Light Rail Transit is proposed to extend from Black Creek in the west to the Kennedy subway station in the east with a stop at the bus transit hub. As well, plans are underway to improve the appearance and function of the transit hub through the creation of a "Gateway Park." Existing development in the Key Intersection is suburban in character and consists of large lots with stand alone, one and two storey commercial buildings and surface parking. The commercial uses consist of restaurants, retail strip plazas and an office building.

#### Built Form

New development will generally be mid-rise buildings positioned along O'Connor Drive to frame the street. Heights will peak at the Eglinton/O'Connor intersection and there will be a transition downward in height, density and scale to the low-rise apartments and single detached neighbourhood which are adjacent to the south and west. Base buildings will have a minimum height of 3 storeys, and where taller than 3-storeys and a minimum building setback at the third story of 3 metres from O'Connor Drive. Front yard setbacks for new development should be a minimum of 3 metres in order to achieve a double row of trees in the pedestrian realm. Rear yards will be a minimum of 15 metres in depth in order to accommodate a service lane, parking, a walkway, a landscape buffer and tree planting.

For development on the west side of the Key Intersection, a 45 degree angular plane from the Neighbourhoods property line will be applied to ensure new development provides an appropriate transition to the adjacent low rise neighbourhood.



Figure 9: View southwest from O'Connor Drive and Victoria Park Avenue East



Figure 10: Context Victoria Park Avenue and O'Connor Drive Key Intersection

In the event that properties on the east side of the Key Intersection (1474 to 1861 O'Connor Drive) are consolidated, or partially consolidated, the proponent will prepare a detailed urban design master plan which will show how development will address these Design Guidelines as well as:

- the location of a limited number of consolidated vehicular access points to the site;
- the organization and location of parking and consolidated service functions within the built form of the development;
- the location and conceptual design of mid block pedestrian connections across the site; and
- the organization and conceptual design of open space on site.

Applicants for individual properties, or partial consolidations, will provide a detailed three dimensional plan that will explain how their proposal would fit with potential future development on adjacent lands.

### Public Realm

Buildings will be brought to the street and a mix of uses will be encouraged, particularly grade related commercial uses for an active pedestrian environment. Curb cuts are to be minimized to lessen potential pedestrian and vehicle conflict and servicing is to be consolidated out of view from the street. In order to increase opportunities for tree planting, street furniture and wider sidewalks, new development will provide for a minimum 6.5 metres wide sidewalk zone, to allow for tree planting on the boulevard and within adjacent private front yards. This will allow for a double row of street trees and the creation of a promenade.

In conjunction with possible future redevelopment of the properties at 1880, 1888 and 1900 on the west side of O'Connor Drive, minor reworking of the Bartley Drive/Cranbourne Avenue intersection with streetscape improvements should be pursued to make this intersection more attractive and pedestrian friendly. This includes minor road realignment of the Bartley Drive/Cranbourne Avenue intersection, installing pedestrian crossing markings at this intersection on the west side of O'Connor Drive and landscape improvements.



| Potential                 |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Midrise Building          |  |
| Ground Floor Commercial   |  |
| Open Space                |  |
| Public Realm Improvements |  |
| Pedestrian Linkage        |  |
| Service Laneway           |  |
| Tree Planting             |  |

Figure 11: Conceptual Plan for Key Intersection



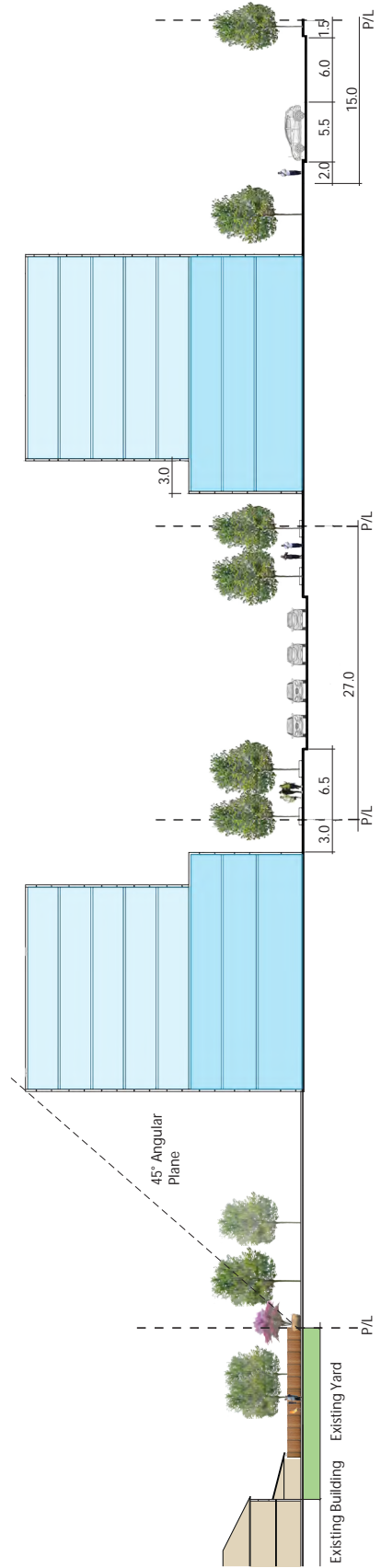


Figure 12: Victoria Park Avenue / O'Connor Drive  
Key Intersection Cross Section with Low Density Residential

## 5.2 Emerging Main Streets Area – O'Connor Drive North

The Emerging Main Streets Area is the portion of O'Connor Drive located between the Victoria Park Key Intersection in the north to Northline Road/Wakunda Drive in the south.

Only one portion of the "Emerging Main Streets Area" is designated as Mixed Use, which is the large site at 1776 O'Connor Drive and for which direction for future development is provided below. The remainder of this portion of the Avenue is made up of Neighbourhood, Apartment Neighbourhood and Employment lands. Compatible infill development may occur in the Neighbourhood and Apartment Neighbourhood lands and development on Employment lands is discussed below.

The property on the north-west corner of Sunrise Avenue and O'Connor Drive (1776 O'Connor Drive) is designated Mixed Use. Formerly the site of a Canadian Tire store, the property is currently occupied by a Self Storage facility, auto service station and a large, common surface parking lot. As part of preparation to redevelop this property, the proponent will prepare a detailed urban design master plan that will address these guidelines and show:

- the location of a limited number of consolidated vehicular access points to the site;
- the organization and location of parking and consolidated service functions within the built form of the development;
- how an appropriate downward transition in scale to the low rise neighbourhood to the north will be achieved by development on site; and
- how retail uses will be incorporated at grade in order to support the character of the Emerging Main Streets Area.

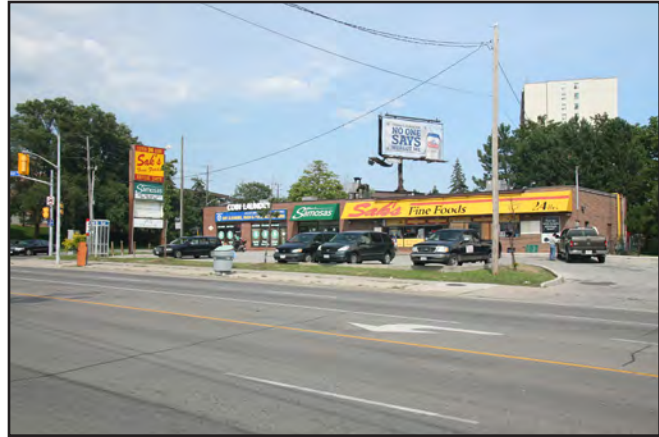


Figure 13: Emerging Main Streets Area



Figure 14: 1776 O'Connor Drive at Sunrise Avenue

Properties on the west side of O'Connor Drive between Sunrise Avenue and Northline Road are part of the O'Connor/Bermondsey Business Area and are designated Employment Areas. It is the intent of these Guidelines that the employment lands that front onto O'Connor Drive will contribute to an attractive pedestrian environment on the Avenue through the following:

- new buildings will be located at the street edge behind publicly accessible open space;
- parking will be located at the back of the site out of view from the public street;
- permitted commercial uses will be encouraged at grade adjacent to the street; and
- vehicular access from O'Connor Drive will be limited. Driveways will be consolidated.

## Public Realm - General

Improving the quality of the public realm on O'Connor is an ongoing priority.

## Open Space - Parma Park

Parma Park is located south of Sunrise Avenue on the east side of O'Connor Drive and is an important amenity for residents and businesses in the area. It contains the O'Connor Community Centre and sports playing fields.

At present, Parma Park is fenced off from O'Connor Drive and the only connection to the street is through a 2 metre wide opening leading to a pedestrian walkway which extends east-west across the park. A wider, more inviting public access should be created at O'Connor Drive by removing fencing at the entrance edge and installing lighting, landscaping improvements, seating and signage to identify Parma Park and the interior location of the O'Connor Community Centre.

In terms of recreation improvements, a new water play facility was built for the O'Connor Community Centre in 2010. The Capital Budget provides for the expansion of the community centre in 2014 - 2015. The existing baseball field at the north east corner of the park is underutilized and could be re-purposed as a community garden, a playground or basketball court. This improvement project would require a consultation process with the community, Parks & Recreation staff and the ward Councillor.

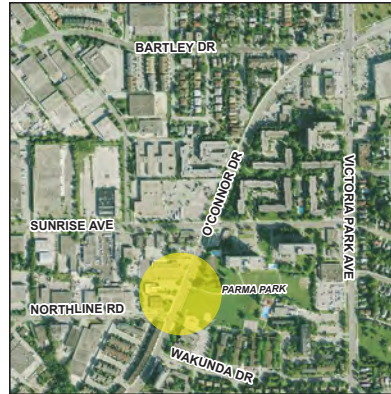


Figure 15: Location map of Parma Park



Figure 16: View of entrance to Parma Park from O'Connor Drive



Figure 17: O'Connor Community Centre

The Toronto District School Board owns the east-west walkway and it is maintained by the City of Toronto. In addition to the tree planting along the walkway completed in 2010 further landscaping improvements are needed in the north east corner of the park where existing plantings need to be replaced. Plantings should include species that are easy to maintain, organized to accentuate the entrance way to the O'Connor Community Centre and to allow for unobstructed sight lines.



Figure 18: Tree Planting Opportunities



### 5.3 Main Streets Area – O'Connor Drive South

The Main Streets Area – O'Connor Drive South is located between Northline Road and Wakunda Drive in the north and the St. Clair/O'Connor Drive Key Intersection in the south. The east side of O'Connor Drive between Gardens Crescent and St. Clair Avenue contains the only predominant main street commercial built form on the Avenue. The buildings are low rise (2 to 4 storeys) with narrow frontages at the street edge. The commercial lots are shallow in depth and back directly onto the low rise residential neighbourhood. There are also low-rise apartments, employment lands, a community park and ravine lands on this portion of the Avenue.

#### Built Form

The lands on the east side of O'Connor Drive containing the main street commercial uses are designated Mixed Use Areas, as shown on Figure ~, and the Official Plan provides that new development is to be compatible with and respect the context of the existing low rise neighbourhood to the east. New developments is to provide a transition to existing development.

New development on lands designated Mixed Use Areas fronting onto the east side of O'Connor Drive will be modest in scale in order to respect the low rise neighbourhood immediately to the east. All development should be setback a minimum of 7.5 metres from adjacent low rise residential properties and a 45 degree angular plane will be applied from the adjacent residential property line. This will ensure an appropriate transition in scale, and all development, including mechanical penthouses, will fall below it. In combination with the angular plane, the height of development will be limited by the lots' comparatively shallow depth.

Mechanical penthouses, can be very visually prominent on low mid-rise buildings, and should be well integrated with a building's overall design. On O'Connor Drive they may be surrounded or wrapped with habitable space, so long as it falls below the angular plane. This will improve the appearance of the building and provide an opportunity for added density without additional impact.

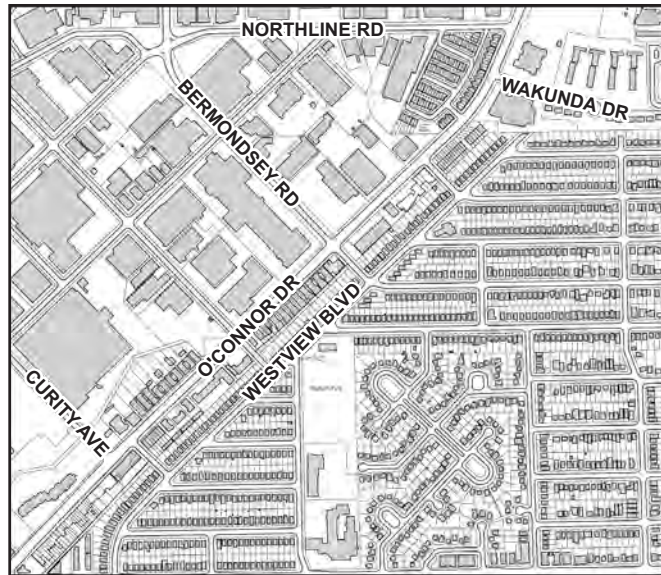


Figure 19: O'Connor Drive South between Northline Road and St. Clair Avenue East



Figure 20: Main Streets Area, O'Connor Drive south



| Potential                 |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Midrise Building          | XXXXXX |
| Ground Floor Commercial   | —      |
| Open Space                | ●      |
| Public Realm Improvements | ■      |
| Pedestrian Linkage        | ▶      |
| Service Laneway           | ---    |
| Tree Planting             | ●●●    |

Figure 21: Conceptual Structure Plan

Along the O'Connor Drive frontage, new development will be brought to the property line and will create a "street wall". This cumulative frontage will include active at grade uses. Over time, such development will fill the gaps in the streetscape.

Adjacent to O'Connor Drive and side streets, buildings will incorporate a 1.5m upper level stepback at a height of 11m, approximately the height of the existing built form along the street edge. This will place a convincing emphasis on the base of new buildings and allow taller development to visually integrate with the built form context.

Properties on the west side of O'Connor Drive, to the north and south of Bermondsey Road, are part of the O'Connor/Bermondsey Business Area and are designated Employment Areas in the Official Plan. It is the intent of these Guidelines that the Employment Areas that front onto O'Connor Drive will also contribute to an attractive pedestrian environment.

New buildings on the west side of O'Connor Drive will be massed in a manner complementary to the prevailing character and scale of the street and neighbourhood. Adjacent to the public sidewalk they will address the street in two ways. They will generally be built to the property line and incorporate a 1.5m stepback above 11m as do the buildings on the east side of the street. However, in consideration of the shortage of parkland in the area, where possible, development will be encouraged to incorporate publicly accessible open space along O'Connor Drive. All parking and servicing will be located at the rear of properties with views limited from O'Connor Drive. Uses permitted by the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, will be encouraged to limit vehicular access from O'Connor Drive and to consolidate driveways.

Public Realm

The Main Streets Area has a variable 6 metre wide boulevard that includes areas of on-street parking, but no street trees or grassed portion. As outlined above, buildings should be brought to the property line. The pedestrian sidewalk will be a minimum of 3.5 metres wide with a minimum pedestrian clearway of 2.1 metres. It will include tree planting wherever feasible, however, if on-street parking currently exists, it will remain to support retail uses at grade.

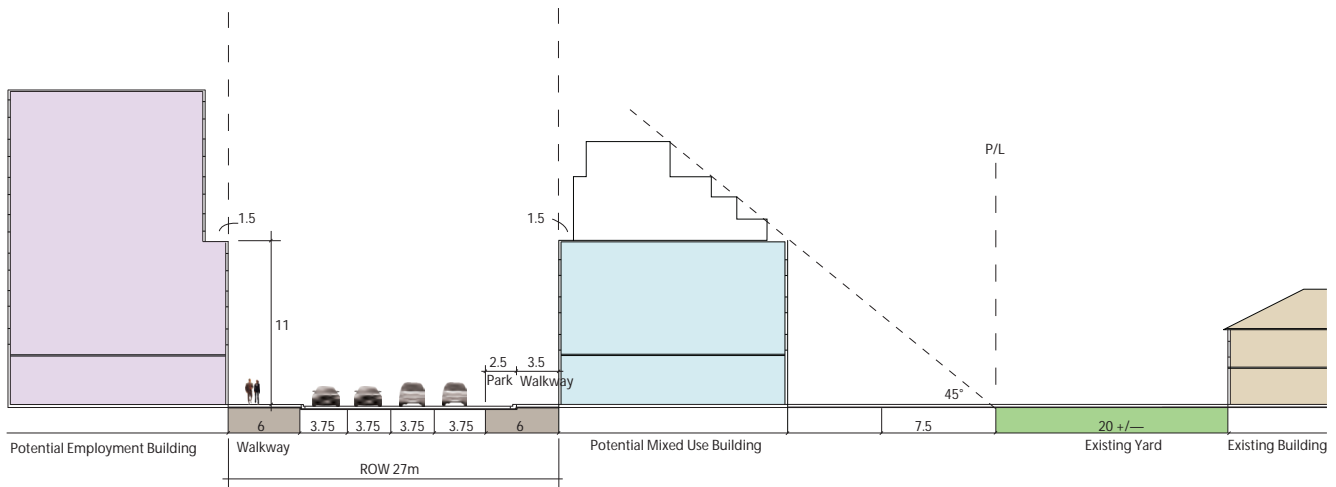


Figure 22: Cross section for Main Street Area - O'Connor Drive South





Figure 23: Topham Park

#### Public Realm– Topham Park

Topham Park is located on the east side of O'Connor Drive at Tiago Avenue and Dohme Avenue. It contains a playground, sports playing fields and a community building with a multi-purpose room.

Potential improvements for Topham Park include placing signage on O'Connor Drive to identify the park location and additional tree planting along Dohme Avenue leading to the park. Within Topham Park, the suggested upgrades include improvements to the driveway, in consultation with the School Board painting a mural on the school's building and removing the oversized planter boxes. There may be opportunities for improvements over the long term to the Topham Park clubhouse and the tennis courts.



Figure 24: Taylor Creek Ravine

#### Taylor Creek Ravine

A tributary to the Taylor Creek Ravine runs parallel to O'Connor Drive from Curity Avenue to Taylor Creek Park, below the O'Conner Viaduct. The existing connection to the Taylor Creek Ravine, located at the O'Connor Viaduct near Glenwood Crescent should be enhanced through better signage at the trail connection. Placing directional and information signs at the south-west corner of Curity Avenue and O'Connor Drive, where the tributary meets O'Connor Drive, is recommended in order to direct residents to the connecting trail within Taylor Creek Park and provide environmental information.



Figure 25: Taylor Creek Park

#### 5.4 Key Intersection - St. Clair/O'Connor Drive

The Key Intersection of St. Clair Avenue and O'Connor Drive consists of low rise commercial and residential buildings and functions as an entrance to the O'Connor Drive Avenue. Almost all of the properties in the Key Intersection are designated Mixed Use in the Official Plan. Development here will require an appropriate transition to the adjacent low-rise residential uses.

##### Built Form

New development will be brought forward to the street and contribute to the creation of a continuous "street wall" with active at grade uses. Over time such development will fill the gaps in the streetwall. For development on mixed use sites, a 45 degree angular plane will be applied from the adjacent low rise residential lot lines to ensure an appropriate transition in scale.

The development potential of some lots in this area will be significantly impacted by their proximity to the Taylor Creek Ravine and its regulatory "top of bank". Setback requirements from "top of bank" are established by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

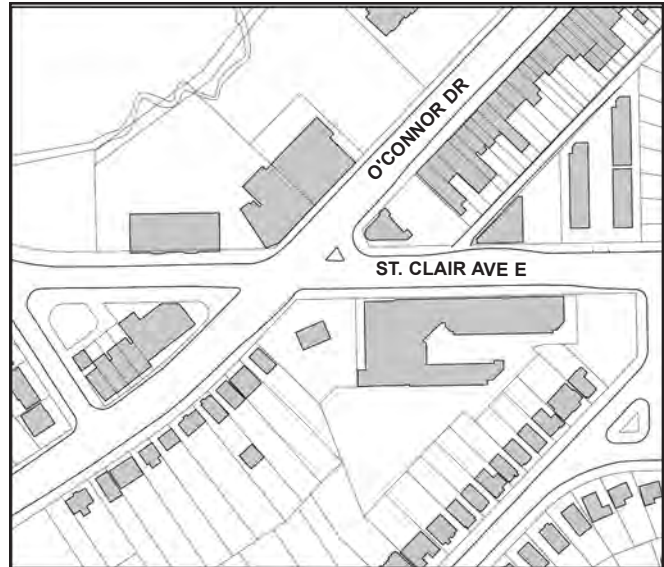


Figure 26: O'Connor Drive and St. Clair Avenue East Intersection



Figure 27: O'Connor Drive/St Clair Avenue East

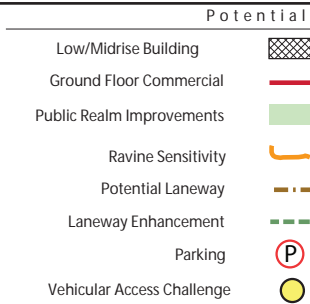
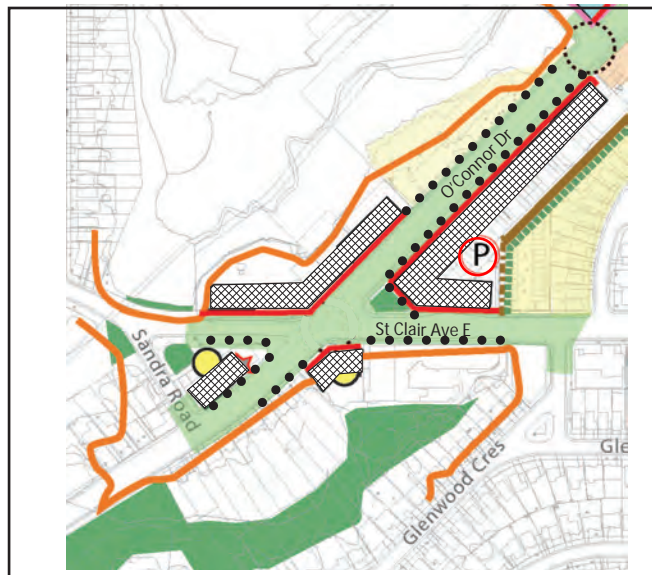


Figure 28: Conceptual Plan for Key Intersection

Public Realm

The irregular alignment of St. Clair Avenue East and O'Connor Drive creates unusual site conditions. The present road configuration gives priority to automobiles over pedestrians. Developers of properties here will take particular care to avoid creating conflicts between pedestrian movements and vehicular access.

In order to create better quality, more defined sidewalk zones, the reduction of curb cuts on the north side of St. Clair Avenue East should be explored in conjunction with future redevelopment. Existing parking spaces currently located in lay-bys on the east side of O'Connor Drive support the adjacent commercial uses and are to be retained.

Trees should be planted in continuous tree pits or raised planter beds wherever possible. Tree planting in the boulevard adjacent to the apartment complex on the west side of O'Connor Drive would be continued in open planting beds.



## 6.0 STREETScape IMPROVEMENT

To date, some streetscape improvements have been implemented on O'Connor Drive including new transit shelters, benches and waste receptacles at the Victoria Park, Sunrise Avenue, Bermondsey Road and Dohme Avenue intersections. To supplement tree planting along O'Connor Drive which occurred in 2005, new locations were planted in 2010 which include; in front of the walk up rental apartment buildings between Bermondsey Road and Curity Avenue and along the length of the Parma Park internal walkway. Additional streetscape improvements along O'Connor Drive will be secured as part of any development proposal within the Study area.



Figure 29: Existing view of O'Connor Drive looking north between Dohme Avenue and Bermondsey Road



Figure 30: Rendering of street related mixed-use development and redevelopment of employment lands with office buildings

## **7.0 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA**

There is potential for redevelopment and stakeholder interest in seeing the O'Connor Drive Avenue evolve. The creation of a Business Improvement Area (BIA) for O'Connor Drive would provide a body to coordinate marketing, signage, streetscape improvements, event planning and information resources. This in turn, would strengthen O'Connor Drive's identity as a unique Avenue, increasing the rate of investment in the area and attracting residents who would sustain the retail businesses. Investment would encourage further redevelopment, continuing improvement to O'Connor's image and streetscape. A BIA for O'Connor Drive could play a role in assisting the area to reach its full potential as a revitalized urban corridor. Additional information regarding establishing a BIA can be found at [www.toronto.ca/ecdev/bia](http://www.toronto.ca/ecdev/bia)





