

# ConsumersNext: Final Report

May 11, 2017



Prepared by:

R.E. Millward & Associates | DTAH | HDR | Fabian Papa & Partners | Swerhun Facilitation



This page is intentionally left blank.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Study Purpose and Background.....</b>	<b>16</b>
1.1 Purpose	16
1.2 Study Area	16
1.3 Policy Overview	17
<b>2. Study Process and Methodology.....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Summary of Phase 1	18
2.2 Guiding Principles	18
2.3 Summary of Phase 2	20
2.4 Consultation	24
<b>3. Overall Strategy for ConsumersNext.....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1 Structure Plan	26
3.2 Districts and Nodes	28
3.3 Streets and Blocks Plan	30
3.4 View Corridors and Vistas	32
<b>4. Building Block Directions.....</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1 Public Places	34
4.2 Built Form	50
4.3 Transportation Choices	72
4.4 Opportunities for Business Growth	86
4.5 Community Services and Facilities	90
4.6 Water Infrastructure	94
<b>5. Implementation.....</b>	<b>98</b>
5.1 Official Plan	98
5.2 Zoning Updates	100
5.3 Urban Design Guidelines	103
5.4 Early Solutions and Interventions	103
<b>6. Conclusions and Next Steps.....</b>	<b>105</b>

This page is intentionally left blank.



## List of Figures

Figure 1 - ConsumersNext Study Boundaries	16
Figure 2 - ConsumersNext Planning Study Area	17
Figure 3 - Official Plan Policy Changes (OPA 231 and SASP 386)	17
Figure 4 - Demonstration Plan	23
Figure 5 - Structure Plan	27
Figure 6 - Districts and Nodes Plan	29
Figure 7 - Streets and Blocks Plan	31
Figure 8 - View Corridors and Vistas	33
Figure 9 - Public Realm Plan	35
Figure 10 - Street Types	41
Figure 11 - Sheppard Avenue East Cross-Section	42
Figure 12 - Victoria Park Avenue Cross-Section	43
Figure 13 - Consumers Main Street N/W Segment Cross Section	45
Figure 14 - Consumers Main Street E/W Segment Cross Section	45
Figure 15 - Yorkland Road/Boulevard Cross-Section	46
Figure 16 - Local Street Cross-Section	47
Figure 17 - Setbacks	55
Figure 18 - Relevant Residential Property Lines	57
Figure 19 - Front Angular Planes	58
Figure 20 - Rear Angular Planes	60
Figure 21 - Potential Tall Building Locations	63
Figure 22 - Kit-of-Parts	65
Figure 23 - Grade-Related Uses Plan	69
Figure 24 - Existing versus Proposed Walk-Shed	73
Figure 25 - Composite Transportation Plan	75
Figure 26 - Grid Network Implementation	77
Figure 27 - Proposed Transit Map	79
Figure 28 - Proposed Pedestrian Network	81
Figure 29 - Proposed Cycling Network	83
Figure 30 - Potential EcoMobility Hub Locations	85
Figure 31 - Community Services and Facilities	91
Figure 32 - Community Commons	93
Figure 33 - Catchment Areas for Infrastructure Updates/Expansions	95

## List of Tables

Table 1: Alternative Development Scenarios	19
Table 2: Summary of Consultation Events	20
Table 3: Summary of TMP Alternatives	69
Table 4: Development blocks and associated infrastructure requirements	72

## Appendices

[Appendix A - Evaluation of Land Use Alternatives](#)

[Appendix B - Local Advisory Committee Meeting 3 \(LAC #3\) Summary](#)

[Appendix C - Community Consultation Meeting 4 \(CCM #4\) Summary](#)

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

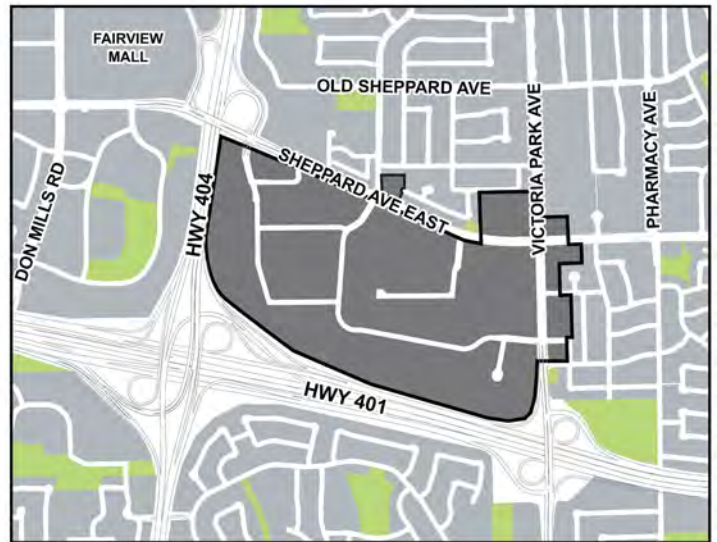
The ConsumersNext area is evolving. What was once an auto-oriented business park is poised to reinforce its position as one of Toronto's major office nodes, with an enhanced public realm, improved amenities for workers and complementary mixed-use intensification on revitalized urban *Avenues*. The ConsumersNext study was initiated to provide a coordinated approach to ensure this unfolds in a way that is sustainable and beneficial to existing and future communities.

## Background

### Study Area

The ConsumersNext Planning Study Area encompasses lands bounded by Sheppard Avenue East to the north, Victoria Park Avenue to the east, Highway 401 to the south and Highway 404 to the west, including immediately adjacent parcels with *Mixed Use Areas* designation.

Bordering established *Neighbourhoods* to the north and east, the area includes the Consumers Road Business Park, a primarily office-based employment centre; new residential redevelopment along the south side of Sheppard Avenue East; and low-rise commercial plazas on the east side of Victoria Park Avenue. The area has developed in an auto-oriented manner with vast amounts of surface parking and few pedestrian, cycling and transit amenities.



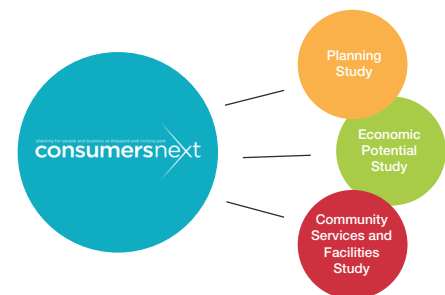
The ConsumersNext Planning Study Area

### Purpose

Recent changes to permitted uses in the Study Area have allowed for a potential increase in development, including significant new residential and employment intensification. ConsumersNext was initiated to provide a roadmap to:

- manage anticipated residential intensification along Sheppard Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue;
- support continued employment investment in the Consumers Road Business Park; and
- direct strategic investments into broader neighbourhood improvements.

This Planning Study has been undertaken concurrently with an Economic Potential Study and a Community Services & Facilities Study.



## Policy Context

Following its recent Municipal Comprehensive Review of Toronto's employment lands policies, the City adopted land use changes through Official Plan Amendment 231 (OPA 231) for the lands bordering the Consumers Road Business Park. Lands fronting on the south side of Sheppard Avenue East and the west side of Victoria Park Avenue were redesignated from *Employment Areas* to *Mixed Use Areas* allowing additional residential and commercial development. An area-specific policy was developed to ensure no loss of employment space and to provide for amenities such as restaurants, recreation, retail and services. The current zoning does not reflect the intent of OPA 231 and will need to be updated to align with the emerging planning direction.

## Study Process

This study is being conducted in four phases, the first three of which are complete:

1. The first phase was to introduce the project to the community, understand the local context and issues, and develop a vision for the Study Area.
2. In the second phase, a range of alternative development options were explored, tested and evaluated to arrive at an emerging preferred alternative.
3. In the third phase, input and refinements to the preferred alternative were considered in the development of a final recommended plan.
4. The City will undertake the fourth and final phase of implementing recommendations and strategic directions.

## Building Blocks

Review and analysis of existing conditions, as well as the development of planning objectives, were organized according to the six 'building blocks' of ConsumersNext:



**Public Places**



**Built Form**



**Transportation Choices**



**Opportunities for Business Growth**



**Community Services and Facilities**



**Water Infrastructure**

## Guiding Principles

Based on background review and consultation input, three guiding principles were created that integrate objectives for the six building blocks and inform the approach to the Study Area.

**Define and Enhance Places & Livability** for residents, employees, and users with high-quality streets, parks, open spaces, and community services and facilities. Locate buildings to support and create active edges to public spaces at appropriate scales to provide a welcoming environment.

**Connect and Move** by creating a balance of transportation options to get to, and move through the business park and surrounding area, improving connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.

**Support and Promote Business** by enhancing the area's attractiveness as a place to do business through encouraging complementary uses for employees and residents, and ensuring a robust system of transportation choices and City services.

## Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders and members of the business and residential communities were involved in all phases of the study process to date, which included:

- Two series of employee pop-up consultations held in various locations around the business park;
- Three public open houses at important milestones during the project;
- A community visioning workshop at the outset of the development of alternatives;
- A business forum with landowners, tenants, and real estate representatives within the Consumers Road Business Park;
- Three Local Advisory Committees meetings, one in advance of each open house;
- Two presentations to the City of Toronto Design Review Panel for feedback on design intention; and
- Three Technical Advisory Committee meetings with public agency stakeholders.

## Development Alternatives

Informed by the community Visioning Workshop and precedent review, the study team developed a foundation for the creation and evolution of planning strategies for the Study Area:

- Urban Structure Strategies to define Districts and Nodes and lay out a pattern of streets, blocks and open spaces;
- Mobility Strategies to identify potential new street and path connections along with pedestrian, cycling and transit service improvements;
- Urban Design Strategies to explore built form and public realm possibilities for varying intensities of development in the Study Area.

Within that framework, several potential development scenarios were explored and tested for each of the Districts and Nodes. These scenarios formed the basis of three alternatives created for further evaluation, with varying intensity examined in the Mixed Use Districts and a consistent average density assumed in the Business Park Districts.

## Evaluation

The design alternatives were evaluated and compared using a matrix of criteria based on building block objectives. The evaluation led to the emergence of a preferred alternative influenced by the Guiding Principles, policy framework, professional expertise and community and stakeholder input. The preferred alternative was advanced for further consideration and refinement in Phase 3, and ultimately was the basis of the following recommendations.

# Recommended Strategies

## Overall Structure

An organizing structure of Districts and Nodes is recommended to respond to existing and emerging local characteristics, and help focus the character, identity and environment in each area. Mixed Use Corridor Districts are located along the Sheppard Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue, with two Nodes at key intersections to enhance connectivity for planned higher-order transit. Business Park Districts retain their primary employment function while encouraging opportunities to improve the public realm and pedestrian connectivity. The Consumers Main Street is proposed as a central spine where expanded retail, restaurant and recreational uses are encouraged to enhance amenities for workers and create a ‘16-hour-a-day place’.

A series of structure plans lay the groundwork for a finer-grained pattern of streets, paths and blocks; potential new parks, open spaces and new urban plazas; built form edges; pedestrian improvements; highway ramp reconfigurations; view corridors and vistas; and signature landscape treatments.

## Public Places

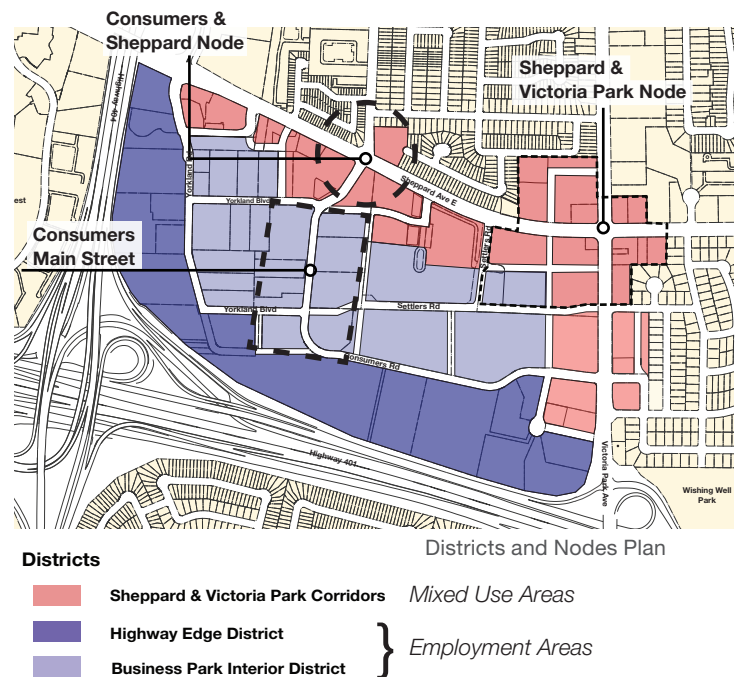
Redevelopment of the large parcels in the Mixed Use Corridor Districts offers the best, most immediate opportunity to achieve significant parks that benefit both the residential and working populations. They should be located for maximum visibility and accessibility from both Mixed Use and Employment Districts and linked by a network of green streets and pedestrian paths.

New parks will be complemented by a series of publicly accessible private open spaces including plazas, forecourts, lobbies, walkways, landscaped outdoor spaces and pedestrian easements located throughout the Study Area. A greenway multi-use trail connection is proposed to be established and implemented over time along the highway frontages to be a landscaped amenity and active transportation link within the required setbacks from adjacent freeways.

Recommended standards for streetscaping address the different widths, character and function of both main and local streets within the Study Area. Signature landscape treatments and public art at visually prominent locations will help define the identity and green character of the area.

## Built Form

Built form is encouraged to shift from a low-intensity, auto-oriented typology to one that creates a more comfortable urban condition for pedestrians, fostering ground floor activity through grade-related uses and landscaped setbacks. In the Business Park Districts, a collection of key urban design strategies, or “Kit of Parts”, is recommended to influence the incremental transformation of these employment areas over time, responding to particular site conditions. In the Mixed Use Districts and Nodes, more prescriptive performance standards are recommended to manage the anticipated growth, achieve an appropriate scale of development, proper built form transition, and direct public realm improvements. The general built form direction for each District and Node is as follows:





**Sheppard East Corridor District** – Continuing the emerging development pattern along the south side of Sheppard Avenue East: towers significantly set back from six-storey base buildings accompanied by new streets, parks, and public realm improvements.

**Victoria Park Corridor District** – Establishing a predominantly mid-rise character, expressed through a consistent six-storey streetwall balancing both sides of the street with generous setbacks.

**Sheppard & Victoria Park Node** – Reorganizing large redevelopment parcels to provide streets, significant parks, public open spaces and linkages to the Business Park Districts; predominantly six-storey base building typology with towers set back to minimize impacts on the public realm, while achieving the greatest heights and densities recommended for the Study Area to mark this future transit interchange.

**Sheppard & Consumers Node** – Siting development to emphasize an enhanced public realm, cluster community-focused amenities to take advantage of potential intermodal transit accessibility.

**Business Park Interior District** – Bringing new buildings closer to the street to form a legible, comfortable edge; create prominent building entrances for pedestrians; provide new streets and mid-block connections; consolidate vehicular access points and move parking to the rear.

**Highway Edge District** – Encouraging visually prominent “towers in the landscape” surrounded by substantial green space with generous setbacks and outdoor amenity spaces.

**Consumers Main Street** – Focusing new grade-related amenity uses in existing and new buildings along a central spine to accommodate patios, urban plazas and seating areas within the prevailing landscaped setback.

## Transportation Choices

Redevelopment offers the opportunity to transform the area from an auto-centric environment to a multi-modal, smart mobility network. Promoting and facilitating active transportation such as transit, cycling, walking and next-generation technologies are critical to supporting the economic health of the business park while addressing traffic congestion.

The ConsumersNext Transportation Master Plan (TMP) satisfies Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class EA process. The TMP identifies six big opportunities to improve connectivity, convenience and choice for people moving to and through the area:

1. Balancing the land use mix with a wider range of residential, retail, and recreational uses will maximize the road capacity by diverting peak-hour drivers and promoting short-distance non-auto trips.
2. Expanding the street network for all travel modes by creating new streets, pedestrian pathways, open spaces, and other access points to the arterial roads.
3. Improving pedestrian and cycling connections at highway interchanges to encourage active transportation from outside the area.
4. Promoting an innovative smart mobility plan and parking strategies to shift away from the single-occupant vehicle, including car-sharing, bike-sharing, preferred carpool parking, and strategically located “ecomobility hubs” to facilitate the last mile of travel.
5. Exploring feasibility of greater integration with regional transit systems, including improved TTC connections to GO train and bus facilities within and beyond the ConsumersNext area.
6. Implementing Pre- and Post-LRT measures for transit integration – such as conversion to HOV lanes to prioritize transit on Sheppard and Victoria Park Avenues prior to the construction of the Sheppard LRT.



## Opportunities for Business Growth

The Consumers Road Business Park remains an important office node in Toronto that continues to experience employment growth, but not a significant amount of investment in the construction of new office buildings. The City can make targeted policy changes to incent new employment development by supporting the evolution of a business park that provides a wealth of amenities, an attractive public realm, state of the art infrastructure and a variety of viable transportation choices. The Economic Potential Study offers the following recommendations to realize these goals:

1. Promoting amenitization by providing greater zoning flexibility, public WiFi, and/or the reduction or rebate of fees for works which substantially upgrade or increase amenity space.
2. Providing an expedient, flexible and certain development review process, potentially through a pilot Development Permit System.
3. Providing financial support for retrofits of existing office space through an office tenancy program, in the form of a grant or low interest loan to building owners or tenants who are expanding or relocating to the business park.
4. Undertaking public sector capital investment to spur private sector development, including pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, new green spaces and parks, transit improvements, streetscaping and the provision of new roads and complete streets.
5. Continuing the IMIT program as a means of offsetting the commercial tax differential between office markets in Toronto and other GTA municipalities.
6. Establishing a business association or BIA to coordinate recommended initiatives such as Smart Commute, shuttle services, branding and marketing with wayfinding and signage, creating a local business directory and local community-building events.

## Community Services and Facilities

New residential and employment growth in the ConsumersNext Study Area is anticipated to occur incrementally as land ownership, use patterns and market conditions change. In collaboration with various City Divisions and partner agencies, the City undertook a community infrastructure needs assessment and identified the following emerging priorities and opportunities:

- Addressing the ongoing need for new subsidized child care spaces;
- Introducing new parks and open spaces to support existing service providers and to serve as focal points for locating new community services and facilities; and
- Creating visible, accessible and affordable community agency spaces through redevelopment.

Two directions have emerged to address current and future community services & facilities (CS&F) needs in the ConsumersNext area:

1. Encouraging the establishment of two “Community Commons” located within the nodal transit interchanges to facilitate the clustering of services and facilities, including new non-profit child care and community agency spaces, at central locations adjacent to new open spaces.
2. Enhancing the wide range of existing community assets in the surrounding area with targeted capital investments to benefit both existing and future residents.

A CS&F Strategy and Implementation Plan will be developed in conjunction with implementing a secondary plan and/or site-specific policies for ConsumersNext, identifying appropriate planning tools and funding mechanisms to support the identified directions.

## Water Infrastructure

The supporting servicing infrastructure systems in the ConsumersNext area are well-established and well connected to the City's larger water supply and distribution infrastructure. There is no need to implement major system upgrades to support the level of anticipated growth for the Study Area. As development proceeds, the City should continue the application of its Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines and the Toronto Green Standard, while seeking opportunities to expand and improve the system at the time that new roads are constructed. Increasing the permeable surface area through the use of soft landscaping, street tree planting and green roofs would improve stormwater and groundwater discharge throughout the area.

The ConsumersNext Master Servicing Plan contains detailed analysis and recommendations for potential improvements to the City's stormwater, sanitary sewer, water supply and distribution systems in the Study Area.

## Implementation

A suite of planning tools and targeted actions are needed to facilitate the recommendations of this study and the transformation of the ConsumersNext Study Area:

1. The development of a Secondary Plan would be an effective tool for the City to realize the goals and objectives, policies and implementation mechanisms needed to realize the vision for the area. It would address the organizing structure, public realm and built form objectives, mobility strategies and monitoring requirements for new development over the long term.
2. A review of Site and Area-Specific Policy 386 (SASP 386) should be considered in light of this study to determine which policies should be maintained, adjusted and/ or brought forward within a Secondary Plan.
3. Updates to the current in-force zoning should be considered to reflect the intended land use and built form recommendations of this study. In particular, the City could examine the zoning of former industrial employment parcels in *Mixed Use Areas* to commercial-residential zoning, potentially subject to holding provisions to ensure appropriate analysis and transportation monitoring at the time of redevelopment.
4. A comprehensive set of Urban Design Guidelines would outline design criteria for the appropriate location of new parks, open spaces and pedestrian connections; provide standards for streetscaping and other public realm improvements; and offer built form guidelines specific to the different characteristics of the ConsumersNext Districts and Nodes.

The Secondary Plan and implementing zoning by-law(s) should utilize the holding (H) symbol provided for by the *Planning Act*. This tool would ensure that growth in the Mixed Use Corridor Districts is managed in such a way that will support the business park, with particular regard to transportation infrastructure as well as other municipal services that benefit the community as a whole.

## Early Solutions and Interventions

While many of the ConsumersNext recommendations are intended to be brought forward in the medium to long term, a number of solutions or interventions can be implemented sooner. These potential “quick wins” would help establish early successes and reinforce confidence in the Consumers Road Business Park:


1. Streetscape improvements can be integrated with larger public capital projects and coordinated with major below-grade infrastructure works to minimize disruption to the local and business communities.
2. Transportation “Quick Wins” can be undertaken in the short term to improve modal share, including improved pedestrian crossings, lane width reductions, implementing planned cycling facilities and enhancing partnerships with regional transit agencies.
3. Improved communication between area businesses can lead to coordinated branding and wayfinding efforts to increase the business park’s visibility and identity.
4. The use of shipping containers and other temporary structures can assist in amenitizing areas of the business park on a ‘pop-up’ basis while highlighting possibilities for future investment.
5. Solar energy resources can be introduced to take advantage of the business park’s many parking lots, potentially integrated with opportunities to pursue “vertical agriculture” on employment lands.
6. An office tenancy incentive program could be implemented to offer incentives to tenants who wish to relocate to Toronto, but may have locational requirements or preferences that the business park does not otherwise provide.

## Next Steps

The next era of city-building in the ConsumersNext area will see new investment in higher-order, and potentially regionally integrated, transit systems, that will spur additional residential and employment intensification. ConsumersNext has endeavoured to produce appropriate strategies and recommendations to ensure that growth is both sustainable and beneficial.

The implementation phase of the work program will be completed by City Planning staff in consultation with partner Divisions and agencies.

## Summary of Strategic Directions

Building Block Objective	Guiding Principle	Statement of Goals
 <p><b>Public Places</b> Create green, safe and attractive public spaces with a range of social and recreational activities.</p> <p><b>Built Form</b> Promote a rich and varied built form that supports the existing and planned land uses, with new amenities and appropriate transitions.</p> 	<p><b>Define + Enhance Places and Livability</b></p> 	<p><i>Define the identity of the ConsumersNext Study Area and enhance the livability of the place for residents, workers and users with high quality streets, parks, open spaces, and community services and facilities.</i></p> <p><i>Locate and design buildings to support and create active edges to public spaces at appropriate scales to provide a welcoming environment.</i></p>
 <p><b>Transportation Choices</b> Improve mobility by providing greater transportation choices.</p> <p><b>Opportunities for Business Growth</b> Retain a strong employment base and provide opportunities for business in the area.</p> 	<p><b>Connect + Move</b></p> 	<p><i>Create balanced transportation options to get to and move through the business park and surrounding area, improving connections for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders.</i></p>
 <p><b>Community Services &amp; Facilities</b> Identify priorities for community services and facilities to serve the needs of the existing and future population in the area.</p> <p><b>Water Infrastructure</b> Integrate land use and redevelopment with supporting infrastructure, including stormwater management and energy efficient designs</p> 	<p><b>Support + Promote Business</b></p> 	<p><i>Enhance the area's attractiveness as a place to do business by encouraging more complementary uses for workers and residents, and ensuring a robust mobility network and community services and facilities.</i></p>

## Strategic Directions

**New Streets and Connections** help create smaller, more human-scaled development blocks and delineate distinct districts.

**A Cohesive, Connected Network of Parks and Open Spaces** includes new and expanded parks, POPS, green streets, urban plazas, pedestrian linkages and gathering areas, linking within and beyond the Study Area to surrounding neighbourhoods.

**Greening of Streets** through enhanced tree planting and generous landscaped setbacks improves the pedestrian experience and creates streets that are places in their own right.

**Defining Districts and Nodes** creates distinctive, identifiable places that build upon existing and emerging character.

**Specific Performance Standards for Mixed Use Districts** provide built form guidance to frame the edges of streets, parks and open spaces and provide adequate transition to the surrounding context.

**Flexible Guidelines for Business Park Districts** are intended to maintain adaptability for a range of non-residential uses while ensuring new and infill development supports an enhanced public realm.

**Two Community Commons** are identified at the Sheppard/Consumers and Sheppard/Victoria Park intersections, to help focus the strategic location of new community agency and child care facilities where access to transit, new open spaces and residential population are maximized.

**Enhanced Existing Community Infrastructure** like upgraded and expanded schools, libraries and recreational facilities within a reasonable walking distance to the ConsumersNext area will be achieved as opportunities arise.

**A Balanced Mix of Land Uses** allows for a wider range of residential, commercial and institutional uses near employment areas, promoting shorter trips and encouraging active transportation.

**A New Grid Street Network** creates additional access points to Sheppard and Victoria Park Avenues; new internal streets accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, transit and vehicles; and midblock connections to help people move more efficiently through the area to access transit services.

**Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Connections** are recommended to help make active modes of transportation a more convenient and attractive alternative to driving - including enhanced links crossing Highway 404 and at the Highway 401 on-ramp to connect to transit and area parks.

**Regional Transit Integration** will improve access and transfers between the TTC, GO and York Region Transit routes to facilitate transit commutes beyond Toronto's boundaries.

**An Innovative Mobility Plan** leverages emerging transportation technologies to promote alternative modes of travel, including ecomobility hubs providing access to car share, ride share and bike share options near transit and throughout the business park.

**Pre-LRT and Post-LRT Transit Integration** offers priority measures such as HOV lanes to prepare for transition to the planned higher-order transit on Sheppard.

**Additional Amenities for Businesses** are encouraged by providing zoning flexibility for uses like retail and restaurants.

**Financial Support for Office Retrofits** and other leasehold improvements support job growth and expansion in place without redevelopment.

**Public Realm, Transit and Transportation Infrastructure Investments** increase connectivity and walkability through the business park while improving the physical environment and attractiveness of the area for tenants.

**A Local Business Association** is encouraged to promote the business park, manage travel demand and establish branding and wayfinding.

**Continued IMIT Incentive** will offset the tax differential with potential enhancements to attract new office development.

**Efficient Development Approvals** can result from clear planning tools that provide guidelines with flexibility for various building needs of businesses.

# 1. Study Purpose and Background

## 1.1 Purpose

Recent changes to Official Plan designations within the Consumers Road Business Park and areas around the Sheppard Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue intersection have allowed for a potential increase in development, including significant new residential and employment intensification.

In April 2015, the City of Toronto engaged the consultant team, led by R.E. Millward & Associates, to conduct the ConsumersNext Planning Study. The study is intended to provide a roadmap for:

- managing anticipated residential intensification;
- supporting continued employment investment in the Consumers Road Business Park; and
- directing strategic investments into broader neighbourhood improvements, including community services and facilities and public realm enhancements to serve to serve local resident and working populations.



Contributing to the 'big picture' of ConsumersNext, the City has undertaken concurrent initiatives to ensure a cohesive vision for the Planning Study Area, including an Economic Potential Study and a Community Services and Facilities (CS&F) Study. The ConsumersNext Planning Study consists of four phases, with the City to lead the implementation of the outcomes following receipt of this report.

## 1.2 Planning Study Area

The ConsumersNext Planning Study Area (the Study Area) encompasses the Consumers Road Business Park, bounded by Sheppard Avenue East to the north, Victoria Park Avenue to the east, and Highways 401 and 404 to the south and west; it also includes certain parcels north of Sheppard Avenue East and east of Victoria Park Avenue, by virtue of their *Mixed Use Areas* land use designation (See Figure 3).

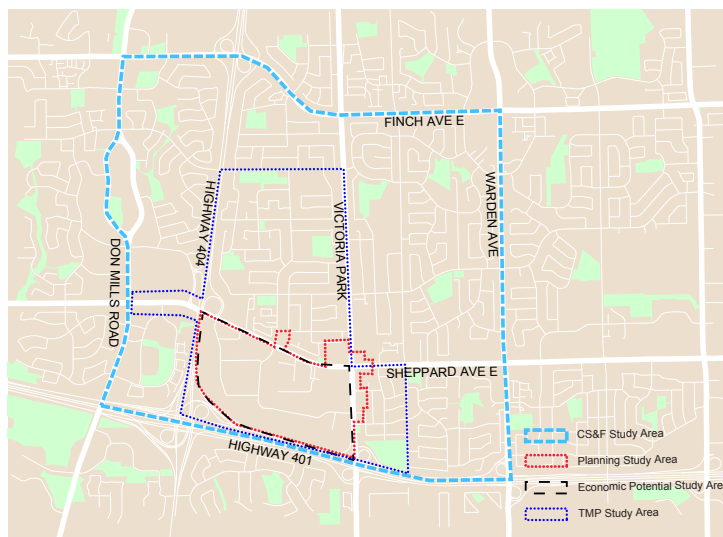


Figure 1 - ConsumersNext Study Boundaries



This report represents the final stage of the ConsumersNext planning study. The fourth stage, implementation, will be based on the recommendations of this study and undertaken by City staff.



The Study Area provides a place of work for nearly 20,000 employees and the largest concentration of office jobs outside of the downtown core. The area is also experiencing significant recent residential growth, with over 4,500 residential units approved, under construction, or occupied in the past ten years. A soft site analysis indicates there is much potential for redevelopment. The parcels are large in size, can be easily assembled, include a large amount of surface parking and are situated near existing high density developments. As development continues, meeting the needs of residents and workers requires planning policies and implementation strategies to provide options for active transportation, public spaces and community services.

## 1.3 Policy Overview

There are a number of planning policy documents that shape the future direction of ConsumersNext, including provincial policies and legislation, the City of Toronto Official Plan, the zoning by-law as well as various municipal guidelines. These are discussed in further detail in Section 4.4 of the ConsumersNext Phase 1 Report (October 21, 2015). Recently, the City of Toronto undertook a Municipal Comprehensive Review of its Official Plan, which included a thorough study of Toronto's employment lands and recommended certain land use changes through Official Plan Amendment 231 (OPA 231).

As part of OPA 231, lands within the ConsumersNext Study Area fronting on the south side of Sheppard Avenue East and west side of Victoria Park Avenue, were redesignated from *Employment Areas* to *Mixed Use Areas* allowing additional residential and commercial development.

Lands within the business park were given the newly created designation of *General Employment Areas*, which provides for a wider range of non-residential uses. In addition, Site and Area Specific Policy 386 (SASP 386) was developed for the Consumers Road Business Park to ensure no loss of employment space and to provide for amenities such as restaurants, recreation, entertainment, retail and services to be more readily accessible to workers in the area. SASP 386 also establishes sub-areas to provide additional policy detail on land use compatibility. The current zoning in force does not reflect the policy intent of the new Official Plan land use designations and will need to be updated to align with the emerging planning direction.



Figure 2 - ConsumersNext Planning Study Area

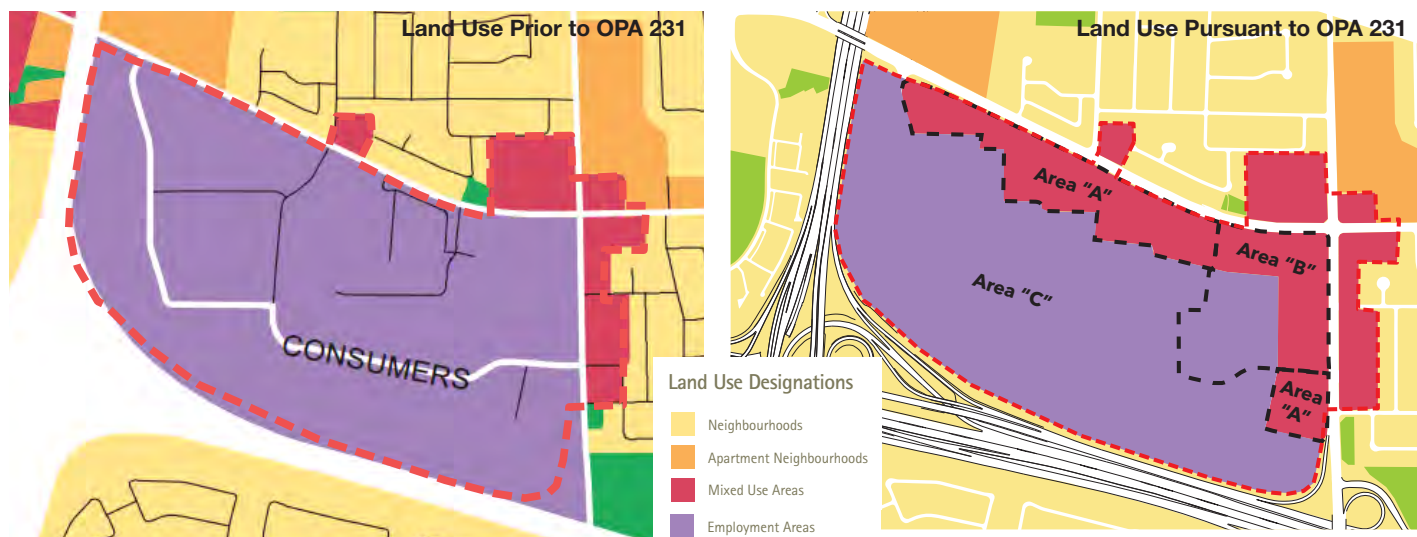








Figure 3 - Official Plan Policy Changes (OPA 231 and SASP 386)

## 2. Study Process and Methodology

### 2.1 Summary of Phase 1

The first phase of ConsumersNext was focused on understanding the Study Area and establishing a vision for its future development. This involved a review and analysis of existing conditions, organized by six “building blocks”.

Building Block	Objective
 <b>Public Places</b>	Create green, safe and attractive <b>public places</b> with a range of social and recreation activities.
 <b>Built Form</b>	Promote a rich and varied urban <b>built form</b> that supports the existing and planned land uses, with new amenities and appropriate transitions.
 <b>Transportation Choices</b>	Improve mobility by providing greater <b>transportation choices</b> .
 <b>Opportunities for Business Growth</b>	Retain a strong employment base and provide <b>opportunities for business growth</b> in the area.
 <b>Community Services and Facilities</b>	Identify priorities for <b>community services and facilities</b> to serve the needs of the existing and future population in the area.
 <b>Water Infrastructure</b>	Support improvements in <b>water infrastructure</b> , including stormwater management and energy efficient designs.

Supplementing this work was a thorough investigation of the history of the Study Area, an analysis of the current land use planning policy framework, an examination of the existing physical conditions, and a review of emerging development activity. In addition, similar business parks in Canada and the United States were examined to understand how they are evolving to meet the needs of 21st century communities and enterprises. These precedent examples have employed strategies such as introducing a more diverse mix of land uses, improving amenities for employees, and regional transit integration. Central to the Phase 1 process was working with area residents, local business leaders and other stakeholders to explore and imagine a vision for the potential future of the ConsumersNext Study Area. Further detail regarding these efforts can be found in the ConsumersNext Phase 1 Report (October 21, 2015).



**Public Places**



**Built Form**



**Transportation Choices**



**Opportunities for Business Growth**



**Community Services and Facilities**



**Water Infrastructure**

## 2.2 Guiding Principles

At the conclusion of Phase 1, once objectives for each building block were developed, three Guiding Principles were created that integrate these objectives and inform the approach to the Study Area.

### Define and Enhance Places & Livability



**Define the identity of the Consumers-Next Study Area and enhance the livability of the place for residents, workers and users with high quality streets, parks and open spaces, and community services and facilities. Locate and design buildings to support and create active edges to public spaces at appropriate scales to provide a welcoming environment.**

Establishing the desired character of the Study Area will help to set priorities for future development. The current underutilization of lands allows for the opportunity to leverage redevelopment to provide a comfortable and attractive public realm. The placement and scale of new buildings should have an appropriate relationship to the street, to adjacent uses and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. Defining and nurturing the identity of the area, as achieved through strategic interventions, can aid in positioning the competitive advantage of the business park to sustain and attract new employment uses, and help create a 16-hour-a-day place.



Shops at Don Mills  
Source: Google

### Connect and Move



**Create balanced transportation options to get to and move through the business park and surrounding area, improving connections for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders.**

The next evolution of this area should focus on reducing vehicular dependence and providing alternative ways of getting around. This can be achieved by creating new streets and paths, resulting in a more complete street network that accommodates and encourages pedestrian movement, cycling activity, and improved transit connections including to the higher order transit along Sheppard Avenue East. Encouraging a mix of uses, such as amenities and community services in appropriate locations, increases the likelihood that people will walk or cycle between places, ultimately reducing the number of trips made by private vehicles.



Complete Street Guidelines  
Source: City of Toronto

### Support and Promote Business



**Enhance the area's attractiveness as a place to do business by encouraging more complementary uses for workers and residents, and ensuring a robust system of transportation choices and City services.**

For the business park to continue to grow and thrive, it needs to have the qualities of a place where companies will want to locate their employees. It should be easier to get to and from work using a variety of transportation modes. It should include activities and services such as community facilities, dining, shopping, recreating and socializing that can also be enjoyed by neighbouring residents. A range of building types and office spaces should accommodate the needs of different business users and be sustained by adequate services including reliable hydro capacity and broadband internet service that can meet these various demands.



Mountain Equipment Co-op Office, Source: Google  
ConsumersNext Final Report / 19



## 2.3 Summary of Phase 2

The background work and Guiding Principles were the basis for a Visioning Workshop with the community. This workshop informed the ideas developed in Phase 2, and provided the foundation for the creation, evolution and evaluation of development alternatives for the Study Area:

### 2.3.1 Creation of Development Alternatives

The process of determining strategies, developing options and testing/evaluation of alternatives is detailed in Chapters 3 and 5 of the ConsumersNext Phase 2 Report (September 13, 2016).

The exploration of development alternatives for the Study Area began with an iterative process which devised a number of strategies that work towards the objectives of the planning study expressed by the Guiding Principles. They are summarized as follows:

- **Urban Structure Strategies** marked out clear Districts within the Mixed Use Corridors and Business Park, as well as distinct Nodes at key intersections. These Districts and Nodes correspond with existing conditions, emerging characteristics and future opportunities to refine the street and block structure for further development and better connect places within the Study Area.
- A comprehensive set of **Mobility Strategies** were proposed to encourage multi-modal transportation to and within the Study Area, by identifying potential new streets and connections to Sheppard and Victoria Park Avenues along with pedestrian, cycling and transit service improvements.
- A series of **Urban Design Strategies** explored integrated built form and public realm possibilities for varying intensities of development in the Study Area. For the Mixed Use Corridor Districts and Nodes, strategies for appropriate and compatible intensification contributing to a comfortable public realm. A more flexible 'kit of parts' design strategy for the Business Park Districts was developed to achieve the proposed urban structure and enhancement objectives while maintaining adaptability for specific business needs.

Based on these proposed strategies, a number of potential development scenarios were explored for each of the Districts and Nodes. Different built form massing options of varying development intensity were demonstrated resulting in a range of projected residential and employment populations. A full discussion of this process is found in Chapters 3 and 5 of the Phase 2 report.

Three development alternatives were advanced for testing as described in Table 1. The alternatives applied the built form scenarios of varying intensity explored for the Mixed Use Corridor Districts: Mid-Rise Avenues, Tower/Base Avenues, and High-Rise Node. In the Business Park Districts, an average 1.0 FSI was assumed for all three alternatives to capture the anticipated intensity and pace of development in the employment lands.

### 2.3.2 Evaluation of Development Alternatives

These development alternatives were tested against a range of evaluation criteria looking specifically at the impacts of each from the perspectives of Public Places, Built Form and Transportation Choices. The detailed evaluation outcomes are attached as Appendix A to this report. The evaluation revealed:

**High-Rise Node Problematic.** A higher intensity of development was considered appropriate at the Sheppard/Victoria Park Node given its location at a transit interchange, but the High-Rise Node alternative resulted a scale of development that is not in keeping with the overall City structure with densities not supportable by

local infrastructure. The built form demonstrated in the High-Rise Node alternative also resulted in unacceptable impacts to the public realm, in particular with respect to shadows on existing and potential public places within the Sheppard/Victoria Park Node.




Development Alternatives for Study Area		Total Jobs	Net Jobs	Total Residents	Net Residents
	<b>Mid-Rise Avenues</b>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Built form on Sheppard follows recent redevelopment pattern 6 storey base with towers set back under a 45 degree angular plane from <i>Neighbourhoods</i> to the north of Sheppard Avenue East.</li></ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Predominantly mid-rise built form (up to 11 storeys) on Victoria Park.</li></ul>	31,609	+13,903	15,398	+8,993
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Streetwall base buildings at Sheppard &amp; Victoria Park Node with taller elements set back beneath a 45-degree angular plane projected from a height equal to 80% of the right-of-way width.</li></ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stand-alone low-rise building at Sheppard &amp; Consumers Node for potential community and/or commercial use.</li><li>FSI of 1.0 for Business Park.</li></ul>				
	<b>Tower/Base Avenues</b>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Same as Victoria Park Mid-Rise, with addition of tall building elements on deep sites on west side of Victoria Park Avenue set back under a 45 degree angular plane projected from a height equal to 80% of the adjacent right-of-way width.</li></ul>	31,418	+13,712	19,406	+13,001
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Southeast parcel at Sheppard &amp; Consumers Node redeveloped for mixed uses following tower/base built form including potential community uses.</li></ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tall building elements exceeding angular plane at northwest corner of Sheppard &amp; Victoria Park Node.</li></ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>FSI of 1.0 for Business Park.</li></ul>				
	<b>High Rise Node</b>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Same as Tower/Base Form, with addition of taller building elements exceeding front angular planes at Sheppard &amp; Victoria Park Node.</li></ul>	31,418	+13,712	20,561	+14,156
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>FSI of 1.0 for Business Park.</li></ul>				

Table 1: Alternative Development Scenarios

**Table 1: Alternative Development Scenarios**

**Mid-Rise Avenues Performs Best.** Redevelopment of this area within the context of the overall city structure is an important consideration. Sheppard and Victoria Park are both *Avenues*, but with differing contexts, characteristics and transit access. Sheppard Avenue East has an established tower/base built form pattern which was considered appropriate to continue along a planned higher-order transit corridor. Victoria Park Avenue is not planned for the same degree of transit improvement as Sheppard and is immediately adjacent to stable residential neighbourhoods, therefore a less intense, mid-rise approach to development was found to be more contextually appropriate.

Generally, the three alternative scenarios performed similarly against evaluation criteria related to Public Places, Built Form and Transportation Choices. Like all alternatives, the Mid-Rise Avenues alternative was challenged from a transportation capacity perspective. However, it still resulted in less vehicular mode share, and a better volume to capacity ratio for transit services. The evaluation also revealed the advantages presented by the Mid-Rise Avenues alternative that provides a more appropriate built form response to the context and minimize transportation impacts.

### 2.3.3 Selecting and Refining a Preferred Alternative

The Mid-Rise Avenues alternative was advanced as the Emerging Preferred Alternative near the conclusion of Phase 2. However, after public engagement and additional technical review opportunities for refinement of the emerging preferred alternative were identified for consideration and further evaluation in Phase 3 including:

- The potential for including additional development intensity at the Sheppard & Victoria Park Node to better recognize the location at the interchange and the need to secure a number of city building outcomes to achieve the goals of the Guiding Principles;
- The need to ensure maximum parkland dedication is achieved on-site, wherever feasible so to the Public Realm Strategy makes the best use of parkland dedication to connect to and expand the existing green network

### 2.3.4 Preferred Alternative and Demonstration Plan

The Mid-rise Avenues Alternative was refined to include additional built form demonstrated for the Sheppard & Victoria Node through the slight relaxation of some built form constraints. This results in a slight increase in the potential for additional building height to mark the intersection. This was seen as acceptable because the additional height corresponds with only a marginal increase in density that could be supported at a transit interchange that will include higher-order transit capacity. The additional height still allowed for an appropriate level of sunlight on sidewalks north of Sheppard Avenue East within the Node.

Within the Victoria Park Mixed Use District, additional flexibility was examined for lands west of Victoria Park Avenue where development parcels are not immediately adjacent lands designated *Neighbourhoods*. The appropriate density for these lands was determined through built form and transportation analysis which selected the Mid-rise Avenue Alternative and was not increased for these parcels through the refinement process. However, the massing of this potential density was redeployed to demonstrate how taller building forms could be accommodated. If a tall building were to be proposed for the lands west of Victoria Park in this District, it would need to adhere to the same built form regulations and density parameters advanced in for this District in the Mid-rise Avenues alternative.

Since maximum parkland dedication is achieved in the Mid-Rise Avenues alternative, no additional public space benefits were found through more intense development, but the Public Realm Strategy was refined to ensure that every development in *Mixed Use Areas* dedicates parkland through the development review process. Where it cannot be achieved in an effective or useable manner, the refined Public Realm Strategy suggests options for pooling dedicated parkland area to achieve larger, programmable parks within the Sheppard & Victoria Park Node.

Following the refinements, a final preferred alternative was presented at a community meeting held on November 2, 2016, the results of which are summarized in Appendix C. At this meeting a demonstration plan (Figure 4) of the preferred alternative was presented as one of the many ways that the future Study Area could redevelop over the long term. The recommendations of this report which follow are based on the preferred alternative and should form the basis for the preparation of a new planning framework for the ConsumersNext Study Area.



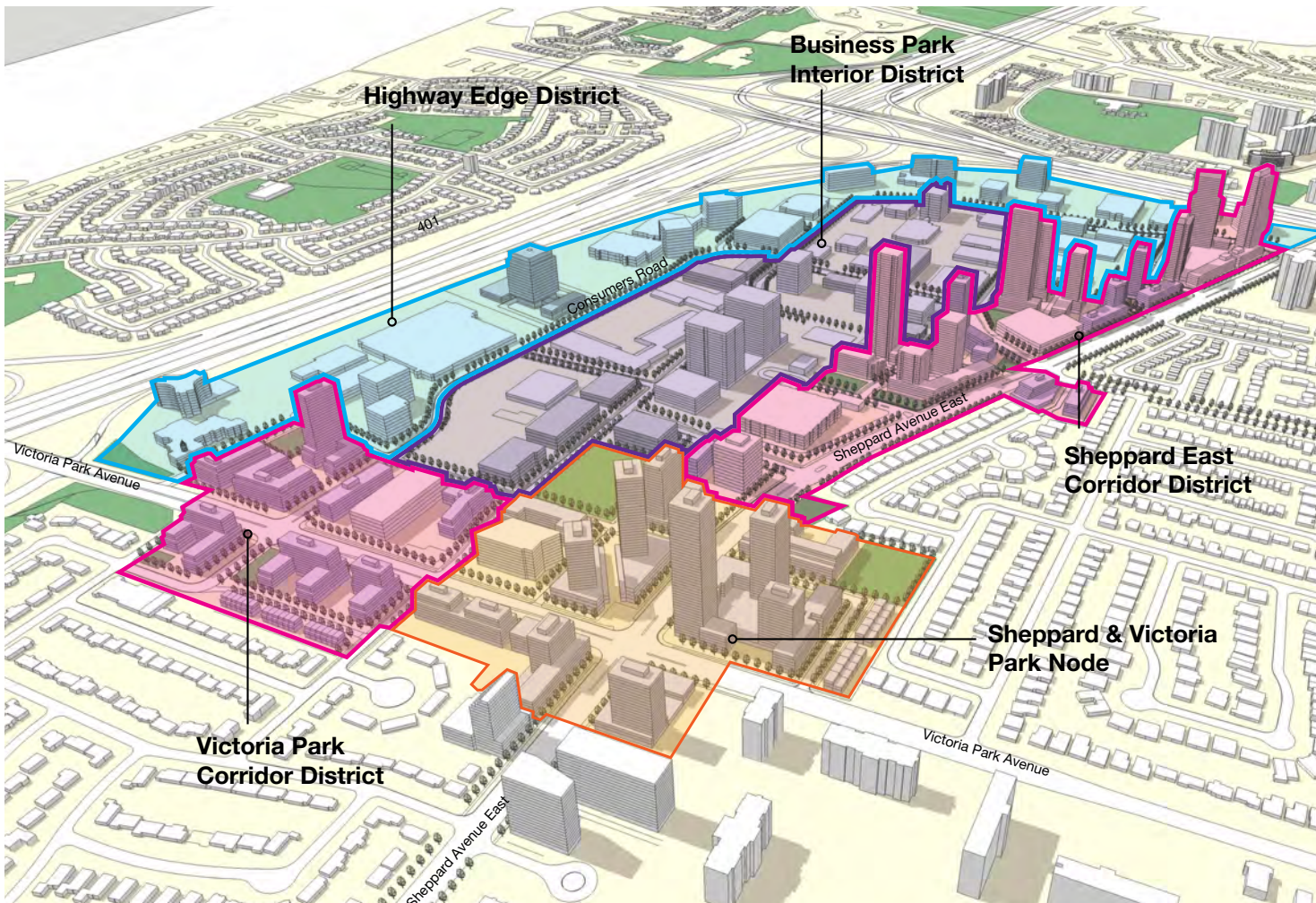


Figure 4 - Demonstration Plan

## 2.4 Consultation

Over the course of the study, over 2,000 people have been engaged in ConsumersNext through a variety of means including surveys, pop-up consultations and formal community meetings (Table 2 below). In addition, the study team consulted with City staff and a Technical Advisory Committee comprising representation from provincial, regional, and municipal agencies.

Date	Event	Summary of Meeting
June 15, 19, 22, 23, 2015	Employee Pop-up Consultations and Travel Survey	Planners in Public Spaces Summary, June 2015 ( <a href="http://toronto.ca/consumersnext">toronto.ca/consumersnext</a> )
June 24, 2015	Community Meeting #1: Project Launch	Phase 1 Report, Appendix 5
September 15, 2015	Local Advisory Committee Meeting #1	Phase 1 Report, Appendix 6
September 24, 2015	Community Meeting #2: Visioning Workshop	Phase 1 report, Appendix 7
October 1, 2015	Design Review Panel (First Review)	City of Toronto DRP website
January 21, 2016	Business Forum	City of Toronto ConsumersNext site
April 11, 2016	Local Advisory Committee Meeting #2	Phase 2 Report, Appendix A
April 25, 2016	Community Meeting #3: Alternative Scenarios	Phase 2 Report, Appendix B
May 5, 2016	Design Review Panel (Second Review)	City of Toronto DRP website
May 6-15, 2016	Employee Pop-up Consultation	Planners in Public Spaces #2 Summary
September 20, 2016	Local Advisory Committee Meeting #3	Appendix B to this report
November 2, 2016	Community Meeting #4: Preferred Alternative	Appendix C to this report

**Table 2: Summary of Consultation Events**

The community and business consultation effort included pop-up consultations during business hours, travel surveys, open houses, design charrettes, and engagement with a Local Advisory Committee.





## Consultation Key Messages

Full accounts of each meeting and feedback received in the reports listed in Table 2. Some of the key messages that helped guide the development of strategies for ConsumersNext include:

- Vehicular traffic is an ongoing concern. Intensification of Sheppard and Victoria Park Avenues should not worsen congestion nor adversely impact the business park.
- The intersection at Sheppard Avenue East and Yorkland Road is particularly problematic; more intersections are needed to alleviate the “pinch points”.
- Crossing Highway 404 should be more hospitable to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Ground floor-related uses and pedestrian-only streets should be considered.
- Existing trees should be preserved and more green spaces are needed.
- Larger retail spaces, especially grocery stores, are needed in the area.
- Parking continues to be an important part of the business park.
- The central location highway access, and value proposition of the business park are seen as advantages. Employers welcome opportunities to improve access to transit and amenities.
- Properties in the business park have experienced energy brownouts which affect service and productivity.
- The business park could adopt a strong “green identity” through a comprehensive sustainability strategy.
- The business park includes non-employment uses, and in particular the Armenian Community has established a strong presence in this area.
- Greater zoning flexibility and streamlined approval processes would encourage investment in the business park.

Summaries for all public events are found on the study website ([www.toronto.ca/consumersnext](http://www.toronto.ca/consumersnext)) under the Get Involved tab.



### 3. Overall Strategy for ConsumersNext

A successful direction for ConsumersNext must balance the objectives for the six building blocks within the Guiding Principles to establish an attractive and vibrant transit-oriented community with improved multimodal connections, where intensification occurs with minimal impacts on existing neighbourhoods and supports the ongoing health of the business park.

The preferred alternative was developed through multiple iterations of community and technical feedback, and informed by the evaluation of development alternatives undertaken in Phase 2. Using the organizing framework of Districts and Nodes, described in Section 3.2 of this report, a finer street and block pattern is proposed to create a better connected, more walkable place for the people and businesses at Sheppard and Victoria Park. Described below, a Structure Plan forms the basis for recommended public realm improvements, built form guidelines, mobility strategies and infrastructure enhancements detailed in Sections 3 through 5 of this report.

#### 3.1 Structure Plan

The Structure Plan represents the preferred alternative for ConsumersNext, which was prepared iteratively through numerous consultations and tested using evaluation criteria based on the Guiding Principles. The Structure Plan provides a framework that balances the many objectives for the six building blocks to ensure a comprehensive approach to the future development of the area.






The Structure Plan, found in Figure 5, aims to build on the economic capacity of the ConsumersNext area and enhance the visitor, resident and employee experience. It is the foundation upon which a cohesive and attractive transit-oriented community can be built that reflects the design principles, guidelines, and standards recommended in this report. These recommendations were developed through multiple iterations of community and technical feedback, informed by the evaluation of development alternatives undertaken in Phase 2, and refined through further exploration and consideration in Phase 3.

The key directions of this study are organized by the Structure Plan and elaborated on the following sections of this report to include:

- Establishing Districts and Nodes, each with their own specific guidelines to help shape the character, identity and environment in each area.
- Implementing a fine grained pattern of streets, paths and blocks that help to create urban scaled development blocks, provide more choices for how people move through the area, strengthen pedestrian and cycling connections to higher order transit, parks and amenities, and create a legible edge between the business park and the *Mixed Use Areas*.
- Improving pedestrian connections to local parks and the broader neighbourhood.
- Greening streets and retaining existing mature trees to improve the pedestrian experience, and identifying signature landscape treatments to mark gateway intersections.
- Creating an interconnected public realm network of new parks, plazas, pedestrian friendly streets, pathways and open spaces of varying sizes to accommodate diverse activities; and locating them to maximize access from both Mixed Use Corridor Districts and Business Park Districts.
- Ensuring a range of building types in specific locations, including mid-rise, high-rise and townhouse options, with area-specific guidelines to promote a rich and varied urban built form that frames and animates the streetscape and supports the existing and planned land uses, with new amenities and suitable transition to existing neighbourhoods.
- Identifying locations for specific ground-floor uses to enliven the public realm with new commercial, retail, restaurant, recreation, and community-oriented uses in appropriate areas that support the intended character and function of the ConsumersNext Districts and Nodes.
- Developing a mobility strategy that improves pedestrian and cycling facilities, as well as local and regional transit access, to reduce auto dependency, encourage alternative modes of travel and alleviate vehicular congestion through the area.



Figure 5 - Structure Plan

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Conceptual Location for Potential New Public Park  |  | Pedestrian Connection                        |
|  | Existing Park                                      |  | Greenway                                     |
|  | Existing Open Space                                |  | Signature landscape treatment                |
|  | Conceptual Location for Potential New Plaza (POPS) |  | Pedestrian Improvements at Highway Interface |
|  | New Streets  |  | Potential Frontages (not to scale)           |
|   |  |  | Blocks                                       |

Each of the elements of the Structure Plan is described in more specific detail in the following sections, establishing the intent of the planning and design framework, to outline the overall vision for the physical form and character of the entire Study Area. This includes guidelines and standards for streets, blocks, parks and open space, land use, built form and height, and density. The recommendations contained in these sections should not be considered individually, but rather as part of an integrated document in which each contributes to a cohesive vision for ConsumersNext.

The Demonstration Plan, Figure 5, provides a visual composition of the potential full build out of the recommended alternative over 20 or more years. This Demonstration Plan illustrates one possible outcome when the framework, guidelines and standards are implemented.

## 3.2 Districts and Nodes

To address the considerable land area, it is proposed that distinct districts and nodes be established, responding to existing and emerging local characteristics to help focus the character, identity and environment in each area (Figure 6). Future development and public initiatives can define, enhance and connect unique places to the benefit of workers and residents alike by reinforcing the current strengths and evolving functions of these Districts and Nodes.

### Sheppard East Corridor District

Recent redevelopment approvals provide an established built form pattern for this ridership-ready transit corridor: along the south side of Sheppard Avenue East, mixed-use towers would continue to be significantly set back from six storey base buildings accompanied by new parks and public realm improvements. Base buildings occupying larger footprints can accommodate the retention and expansion of non-residential uses, including grade-related retail, larger format retail, office commercial and community-oriented spaces.

### Victoria Park Corridor District

Lower intensity development is balanced along both sides of Victoria Park Avenue in a predominantly mid-rise character built closer to the street edge. A mix of residential, commercial and office uses can be accommodated in new and existing buildings.

### Sheppard & Victoria Park Node

As an intersection where major thoroughfares and transit routes come together, this location presents a key opportunity to strengthen connectivity through public realm improvements, pedestrian links and higher intensity development. Six storey base buildings that frame new and existing street edges should be designed to allow for a variety of residential and non-residential users, including larger-format retail with integrated internal parking. New open spaces and pedestrian links to the interior of the business park will aid pedestrian movement from transit and multi-modal connections. Taller towers built on parcels in this Node must be set back and oriented to minimize shadow impacts on the public realm.

### Sheppard & Consumers Node

This intersection presents a highly visible entry to the business park from the planned Sheppard LRT stop at Consumers Road and neighbourhoods to the north. The irregular configuration of Consumers Road at Sheppard Avenue East opens opportunities to create a community-oriented commons adjacent to local services and facilities. Signature landscape treatments will enhance the public realm while providing orientation for visitors to the business park, marking the gateway to the amenity uses along the Consumers Main Street (see below).

### Highway Edge District

With high visibility from the adjacent 400-series highways, the large parcels along the south edge of Yorkland Boulevard/Road and Consumers Road are encouraged to be redeveloped with new office and non-residential uses in “towers in the landscape”. Buildings should be sited within a significant landscaped area that helps establish a green character for the business park, provides storm drainage on-site and creates outdoor amenity areas for employees.

### Business Park Interior District

Between the Mixed Use Districts and the Highway Edge, new and infill buildings are encouraged closer to the street edge while preserving the landscape character along Consumers Road and Yorkland Road/Boulevard. To make a more walkable place, new streets and mid-block connections would be secured.

### Consumers Main Street

The portion of Consumers Road running south from Sheppard Avenue East is identified as a potential retail and restaurant hub, which will emerge as a central destination for both area residents and workers to create a “16-hour-a-day” place.



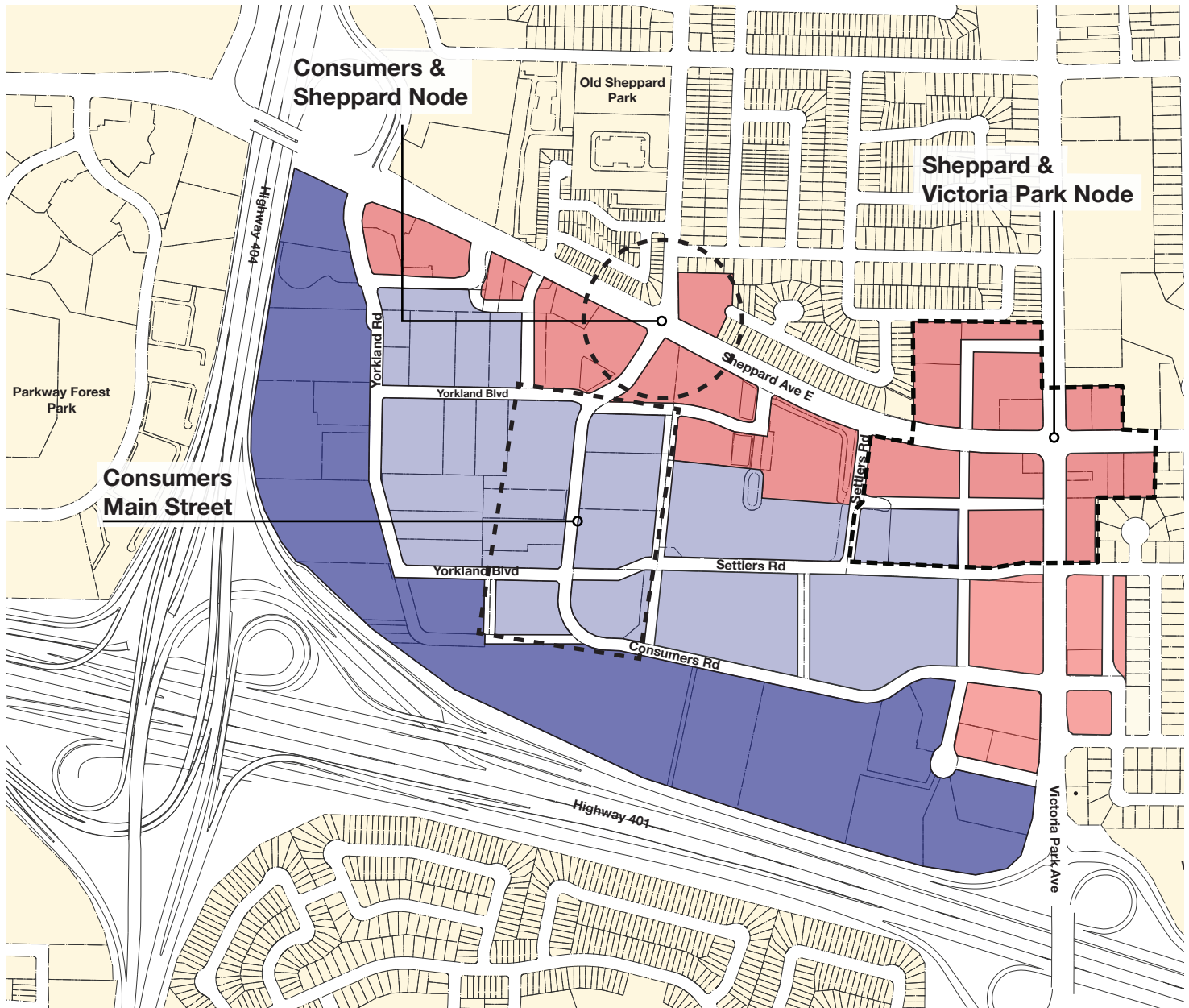


Figure 6 - Districts and Nodes Plan

Districts	
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Sheppard & Victoria Park Corridors
<span style="color: blue;">■</span>	Highway Edge District
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span>	Business Park Interior District
	<i>Mixed Use Areas</i>
	<i>Employment Areas</i>

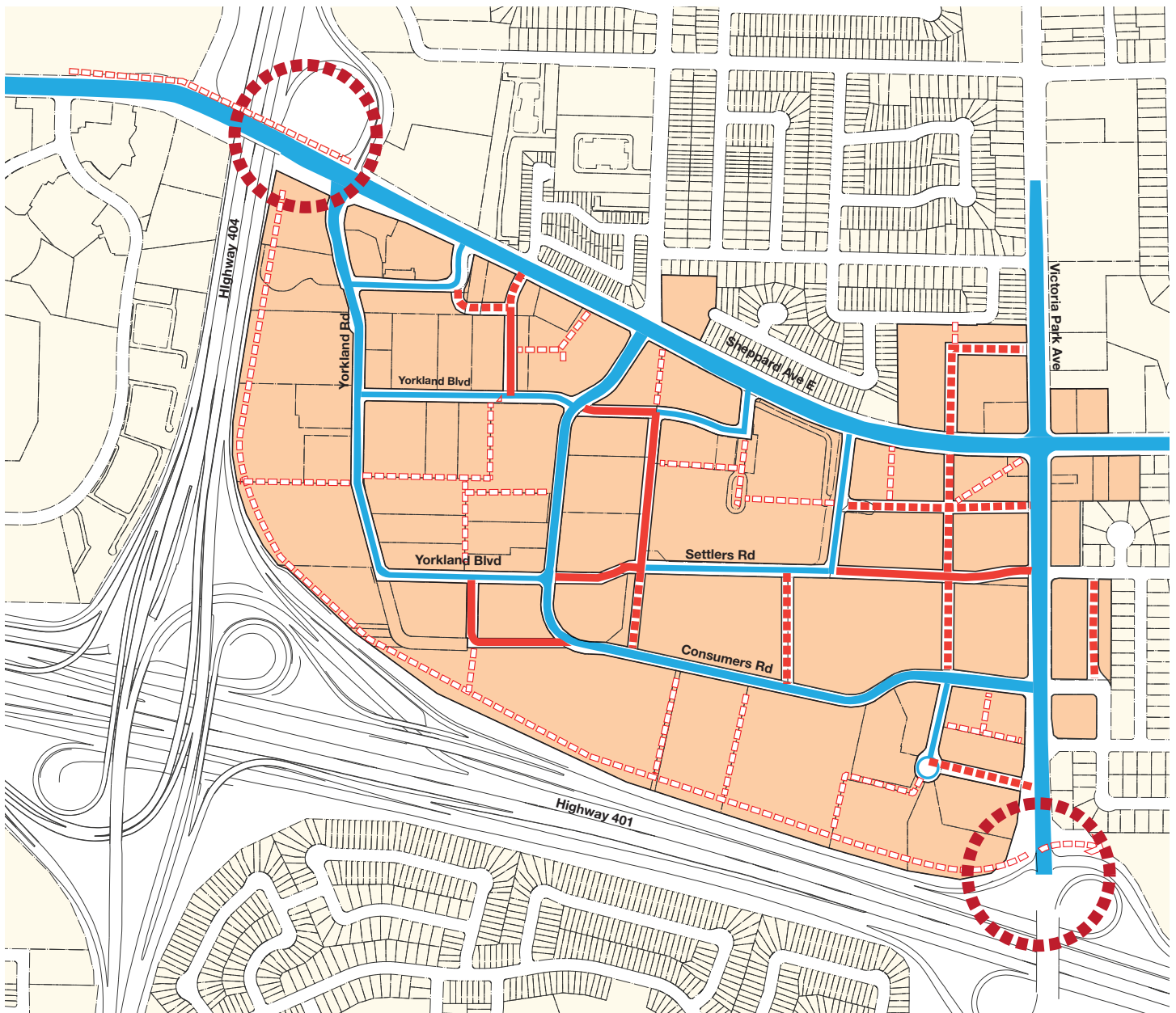
### 3.3 Streets and Blocks Plan

Expanding the street network will enhance the existing structure of streets and blocks in the Study Area to better connect people in the area to destinations within and beyond the business park.

Several actions are recommended to address congestion, increase connectivity, and encourage alternatives to driving. Creating additional connections creates more choices for how people move through the area, nearly doubling the number of intersections and adding up to 15 potential new walkways, laneways and paths. They divide large blocks to ensure appropriate access to new development and improve walkability. The streets outlined in Figure 7 form a key part of the public realm: those shown as Fixed are recommended to be located in the conceptual alignments illustrated; the remaining connections are shown more generally as Flexible to allow for adjustment at the time of redevelopment. Streetscape treatments recommended in Section 4.1.3 will ensure that streets act as places as well as links between places.

#### Recommendations:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>R1.</b> Add new streets connecting to Victoria Park Avenue and Sheppard Avenue East to provide additional choice, redistribute vehicular traffic and ease congestion at the existing pinch points. To minimize disruption of flow on the arterials, these would likely allow for only right-in/right-out movements. | <b>R4.</b> Improve permeability through interior parcels, ideally achieved through road conveyance at the time of site redevelopment. Where new streets are less likely to be secured in the short term, mid-block connections supplement the street network by increasing pedestrian choice through the area. |
| <b>R2.</b> Extend Settlers Road to connect with Esquire Road to the east and Yorkland Boulevard to the west, to ultimately provide an alternative east-west route through the Business Park. A new signalized intersection with Victoria Park Avenue should allow for full vehicular turning movements.                | <b>R5.</b> Reconfigure the Victoria Park on-ramp to Highway 401 to create a more normalized, human-scale intersection and unlock lands for improved pedestrian connections to the adjacent Wishing Well Park and neighbourhood.  |
| <b>R3.</b> Secure new streets along the edges of the Mixed Use Districts to clearly delineate residential uses from the employment area and create a legible edge between the two areas.   | <b>R6.</b> Reconfigure the ramps at the Sheppard Avenue East interchange with Highway 404 to remove right-turn channels, allowing for improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities.   |
|  | <b>R7.</b> All new streets should be public streets and designed to meet the City's Development Infrastructure Policy & Standards.   |



#### Streets and Blocks

- Existing Streets
- Proposed Public Streets:  
Fixed location
- - - Proposed Public Streets:  
Flexible location
- □ □ Potential Pedestrian Connections:  
Flexible location
- ○ ○ Ramp Reconfiguration

Figure 7 - Streets and Blocks Plan



### 3.4 View Corridors and Vistas

View corridors and vistas play an important role in creating a distinct identity for ConsumersNext and will assist with orientation and placemaking.

View corridors are planned openings in the built environment intended to direct a viewer's attention to important scenic vistas, landmarks or open spaces. In the ConsumersNext area, view corridors and vistas are located along and adjacent to primary streets and along the surrounding highways and overpasses, from which the business park is highly visible. They also help orient people between different Districts and Nodes to contribute to pedestrian comfort. A framework to establish new view corridors and identify potential visual points of interest will also reinforce views to existing landmark elements such as St. Mary's Armenian Church, the Atria office towers, and distinctive architectural features. The curvilinear nature of the existing Consumers Road provides opportunities for a memorable sequence of visual landmarks strung along the main spine of the Business Park.

#### Recommendations:

- R1.** Employ built form and design strategies to frame existing and potential views and points of interest, identified in Figure 8, such as articulated corners, projecting and receding balconies, and accentuating features at various scales, visible along view corridors.
- R2.** Locate public art at visually prominent sites and open spaces to contribute interest to the public realm.
- R3.** Establish a sequence of visual points of interest along Consumers Main Street. This could include distinctive architectural features incorporated in new development or public art.
- R4.** Site taller buildings in the deeper blocks along Highway 401 and 404 highway frontages to create visual landmarks, taking advantage of the high visibility of the views for thousands of motorists passing by daily.
- R5.** Maintain a view corridor to the cupola of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, an existing prominent landmark, from Consumers Road and Hallcrown Place within the Business Park and from Victoria Park Avenue outside the Business Park. A twenty-metre public right-of-way located to the north of the property can help to open up and reinforce these views.
- R6.** Provide an 'aperture' view corridor into the Business Park to visually and physically link the proposed central park with the Sheppard Avenue East and Victoria Park Avenue intersection. A mid-block connection lined with articulated built form edges is recommended to frame views and encourage pedestrian travel between the interior of the business park and the intersection.
- R7.** View corridors will employ wayfinding tools and establish destination points to orient users within ConsumersNext.



St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church view from Hallcrown Place  
Source: [www.armenianprelacy.ca](http://www.armenianprelacy.ca)



Example of an 'aperture': a mid-block connection with building edges arranged to animate the walkway and framing prominent views  
Source: [www.thestar.com/content/dam/thestar/life/homes/2015/03/27/setting-the-stage-for-city-of-the-arts/city-of-the-arts-the-yard/jpg](http://www.thestar.com/content/dam/thestar/life/homes/2015/03/27/setting-the-stage-for-city-of-the-arts/city-of-the-arts-the-yard/jpg)

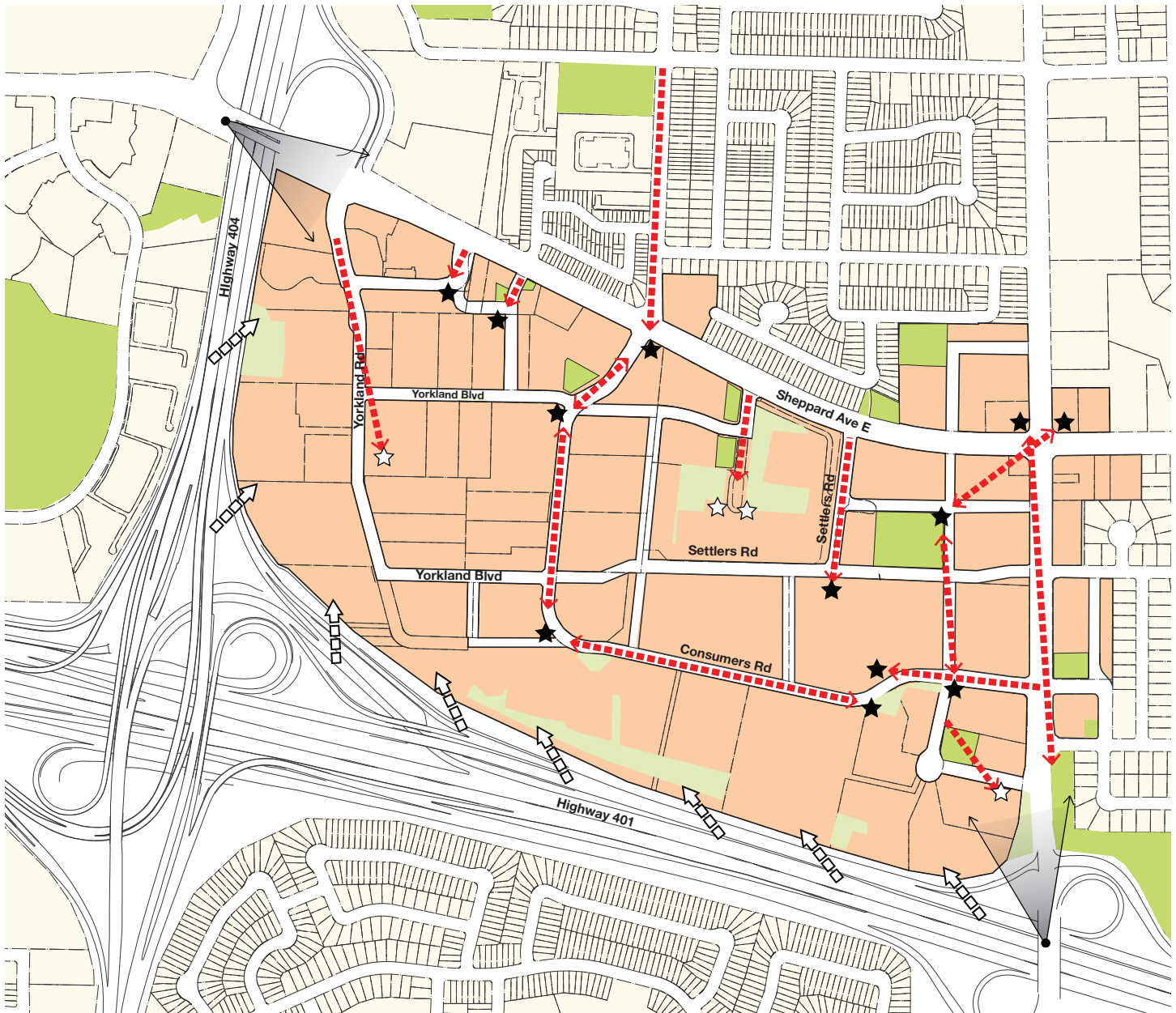


Figure 8 - View Corridors and Vistas

#### View Corridors and Vistas

- ☆ Visual Point of Interest - Existing Enhanced
- ★ Visual Point of Interest - Potential
- ➡ View Corridor
- ➡ Vista
- ➡ Views of the Business Park from the Highway Frontage



## 4. Building Block Directions

### 4.1 Public Places

The ConsumersNext Study Area is currently lacking key components of a pedestrian-oriented realm. A comprehensive strategy to deliver new parks, open spaces and public realm improvements will help direct and site these elements where they are most beneficial to the area as a whole.

There is an overall lack of amenities such as lighting, landscaping, street furniture and sidewalk-related buildings that would contribute to creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Many of the existing sidewalks are narrow, with buildings often situated behind large surface parking lots fronting public streets.

There are currently no public parks in the Study Area, though new mixed-use redevelopment has led to three new planned parks near Sheppard Avenue East. Pedestrian connections to existing parks in the neighbourhoods outside the Study Area also need improvement. There are few street trees within the Study Area and the majority of trees and planting is located within private property setbacks.

#### OBJECTIVE:

**Create green, safe, and attractive public spaces with a range of social and recreational activities**

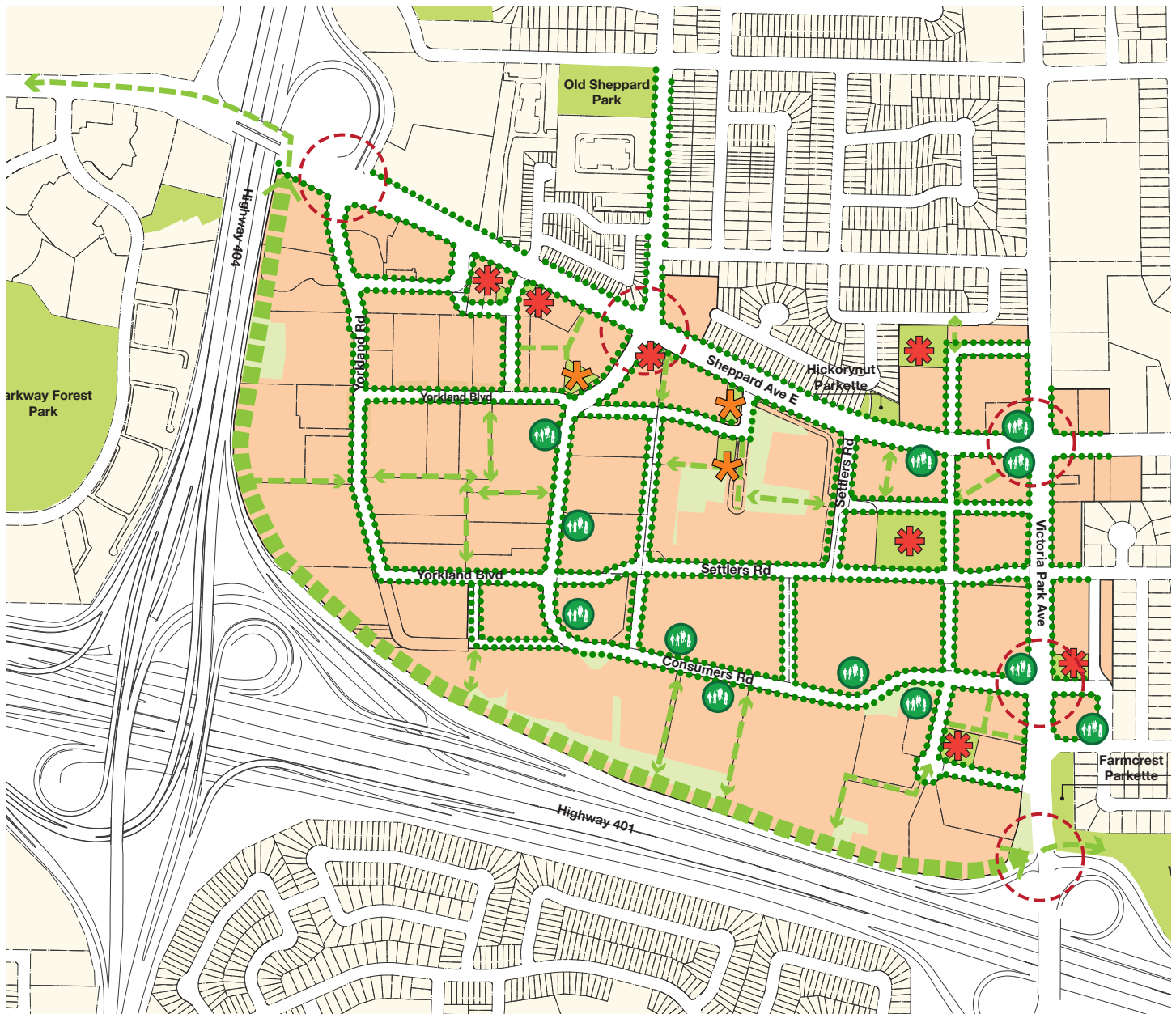
#### 4.1.1 Strategy

Redevelopment within the ConsumersNext area presents the opportunity to provide a range of high-quality streets, parks and public spaces that contribute to a comfortable urban setting, re-oriented from cars to people. A comprehensive Public Realm Plan, the components of which are illustrated in Figure 9 and described below, is recommended to direct the strategic location of new parks and open spaces, new streets, streetscape improvements, tree planting and pedestrian connection system. This strategy includes the following interrelated components:

**New Parks.** Redevelopment of the large parcels within the Mixed Use Corridor Districts offers the best, most immediate opportunity to achieve significant parkland acquisition. Where possible, new parks should be provided on-site and located to provide maximum visibility and accessibility for both residential and working populations. Where the parcel fabric does not allow for a meaningful, programmable space, the City should consider collecting cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication for the purpose of acquiring parkland in the vicinity of development. Conceptual locations for seven potential new parks are illustrated in Figure 9.

**Street Greening.** To encourage greater pedestrian movement within the Study Area, whether from a transit stop, between residential and commercial uses or during the lunch hour, streets must be reconceived as spaces in their own right. New streets and improvements to existing streets will incorporate tree planting, street furniture and building setbacks to allow for landscaping along property frontages. Existing mature trees will be retained to the greatest possible extent.

**Publicly Accessible Private Open Spaces (POPS).** A rich urban environment needs a diversity of open spaces to support a variety of users. Not all development parcels will yield significant parkland dedication, particularly within the Employment Districts. However, development throughout the Study Area offers opportunities to provide publicly accessible plazas, forecourts, lobby and atrium areas, interior and exterior pedestrian paths, and landscaped outdoor spaces to provide greater amenity to the working population and extend the public realm network. These should also include pedestrian easements to facilitate mid-block connections where new streets are not likely to be secured.



# Public Realm

-  Park
-  Open Space
-  Street Greening
-  Conceptual Location for Potential New Public Park
-  Conceptual Location for Potential New Plaza/POPS
-  Pedestrian Connection
-  Greenway Connection
-  Proposed and Secured Parks
-  Signature landscape treatment

Figure 9 - Public Realm Plan



A conceptual rendering of a proposed public park. Large public spaces help knit together employment functions with the surrounding community uses.

### **Signature Treatments at Nodes and Key Intersections.**

High-quality urban design features will help define the identity of each District and Node, as well as the ConsumersNext area as a whole. At the Sheppard & Victoria Park Node, a collection of urban plazas, streetscape elements, new parks and pedestrian links connecting from the intersection should reflect its function as an important community hub and transit interchange. Similarly, the Sheppard & Consumers Node is well-positioned for a “gateway” landscape treatment to enhance the community-oriented commons at the entrance to the business park, marking the start of the Consumers Main Street. Strategically located plazas and wayfinding elements can help orient visitors to additional access points connecting with Sheppard and Victoria Park Avenues.

**Pedestrian Connections.** Tree-lined walkways and mid-block paths should be pursued wherever possible to supplement the role of public streets in breaking up the large land parcels to provide a more human-scaled environment. The provision of additional pedestrian connections that are comfortable and accessible will make walking more attractive as a mode of transportation.

**Greenway Connection.** The position of large parcels backing onto the highway corridors presents an opportunity to establish a publicly-accessible multi-use trail that can provide alternative pedestrian and cycling routes for both recreational and commuting purposes and amenity for workers. It can also contribute to the landscaped character of the business park as a green edge to the highway.

**Public Art.** Public Art can contribute to local identity and enhance the character of the public realm within the ConsumersNext Area. Provision of public art can be achieved through development proposals within the larger blocks and is encouraged to be located within visual points of interest, as identified in Figure 8, and within POPS and other public open spaces indicated in Figure 9.



## 4.1.2 Parks and Open Space

There are currently few parks or landscaped open spaces for the public within the ConsumersNext area. Redevelopment and intensification presents the opportunity to contribute to a range of high-quality parks and public spaces that provide a setting for civic and community life by enhancing the identity and character of the area.

### Recommendations:

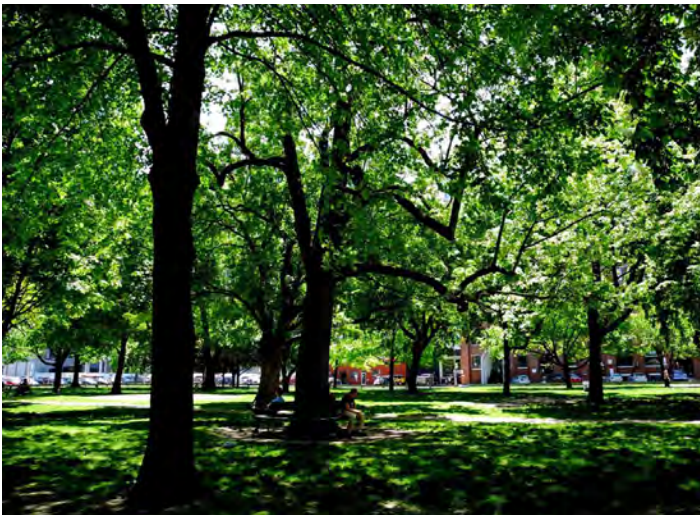
#### Parks

- R1.** Create a hierarchy of parks, public open spaces and outdoor environments that are linked to surrounding neighbourhoods and form a connected, multi-purpose park and path system.
- R2.** Ensure that parks reflect a high-quality, sustainable design, offer a sense of place, and provide a range of recreational opportunities, amenities and programming.
- R3.** Require the redevelopment of large parcels in the Mixed Use Corridor Districts to achieve parkland dedication on-site, pursuant to the City's Official Plan, in areas identified conceptually on Figure 9.
- R4.** Locate new parks fronting onto public streets, to provide the greatest possible benefit, visibility, safety and accessibility for existing and new residents, as well as the working population in the Business Park Districts.
- R5.** Where the redevelopment of smaller parcels would not result in appropriate parkland on-site, pool the cash-in-lieu funds collected to contribute toward the consolidated development of meaningful parks in the ConsumersNext Area.

- R6.** New buildings will be positioned to define the shape and function of the public park as well as frame and support adjacent public parks with active and interesting building elevations.

#### Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS)

- R7.** Secure a range of Privately Owned, Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS) through new development in both Mixed Use Corridor Districts and Employment Districts, subject to the City's Design Guidelines for POPS, as conceptually illustrated in Figure 9.
- R8.** Design new publicly accessible places with an open, welcoming environment with a range of uses and amenities to support their use by both the employment and residential populations.
- R9.** Seek high-quality public realm treatments, including well-designed urban plazas, greening, wayfinding elements and public art, to mark Community Nodes and gateway intersections.



Public parks are required with redevelopment and intensification  
Source: [www.taylorhistory.com](http://www.taylorhistory.com)



POPS can have a hard or soft landscape character that invite and support urban life and energize places  
Source: Tim Ground

- R10.** Provide a series of urban plazas along Consumers Main Street and at the signature landscape treatments.
- R11.** Where feasible, design and locate POPS in relation to active ground-level retail, restaurant and community uses such as cafes and agency space, and consider linkages to the public realm network.
- R12.** New buildings will be positioned to define the shape and function of publicly accessible open spaces.
- R13.** Where private courtyards and outdoor spaces are visible from the public realm, they will provide high-quality design to enrich the pedestrian experience.
- R14.** Integrate outdoor amenity spaces such as roof gardens, terraces or balconies into the architectural design of new and existing buildings.
- R15.** Consider microclimate conditions resulting from the surrounding buildings, such as wind and shadow impacts, when locating a new private open space.
- R16.** Public and private open spaces will adhere to the City's Wayfinding Standards established in the City of Toronto Parks Plan 2013-2017 and any subsequent follow-up documents.

## Streetscape Greening

- R17.** Plant street trees on both sides of all existing or proposed streets in the Study Area, wherever possible, as recommended in the cross sections developed through ConsumersNext.
- R18.** Position new buildings to positively define the shape and function of open space. Setbacks will be provided to extend connections through the public realm; provide amenity space for retail or pedestrian access; allow the streets to take on a 'green'



The greening of streets will further contribute to a sense of place and identity and provide pedestrian comfort (Melbourne, AU)  
Source: Rodney Dekker

character; and create opportunities for transition from public to private spaces. The setbacks will vary depending on the nature of the adjacent uses as described in Section 4.2.2 of this document.

- R19.** Coordinate streetscaping and provision of street furniture as opportunities arise through redevelopment, public investment or both.

## Signature Landscape Treatments

- R20.** Require high-quality landscape design in areas identified for Signature Landscape Treatment in Figure 9, to enhance the identity of the area at its key intersections and as viewed from highway overpasses.
- R21.** Mark the Sheppard & Victoria Park Node with urban plazas, streetscape elements, new parks and pedestrian links connecting from the intersection to reflect its function as an important community hub and transit interchange.
- R22.** Establish a community-oriented commons at the Sheppard & Consumers Node to mark the start of the Consumers Main Street and the entrance to the business park. Strategically locate a new public open space at the intersection with wayfinding elements to help orient visitors to additional access points connecting with Sheppard and Victoria Park Avenues and the interior of the business park.
- R23.** At the Victoria Park and Consumers Road intersection, mark the entrance to the business park with a well-designed urban plaza and wayfinding elements along the west side and a high-quality public park on the east side.



Pedestrian lanes and walkways  
Source: Google