

Laird in Focus Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Laird in Focus Study** was initiated in response to the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (ECLRT) line including a new underground Light Rail Transit (LRT) station at Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue East. In recent years there has also been an increase in development activity in the Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue East area. The **Laird in Focus Planning Study** adjacent to the Laird Drive LRT station provides a vision and framework as well as recommendations for the redevelopment of properties in proximity to the Laird LRT Station.



Study Area in the larger context

The entire Study Area is comprised of 117 hectares of land bounded by the CP rail corridor along its eastern and southern edges, Eglinton Avenue East to the north, and, to the west, properties 1/2-block in depth along the west side of Laird Drive. “Employment” uses occupy 103 hectares, with most of the remaining land designated for “mixed use”. The Study Area and its immediate adjacencies form the basis of the transportation component of the study while two sub-areas, one along Eglinton Avenue East (**Study Area A**) and the other along the west side of Laird Drive (**Study Area B**), comprise the planning, urban design, and servicing component of the study.

The objective of the **Laird in Focus Study** is to develop a vision and framework that will guide new development and changes in the area. Building on this vision and framework, the Study provides recommendations regarding land use, planning, built form, public realm, heritage, movement, and servicing, which will inform City policy and guidelines for the area. This study provides appropriate goals, objectives, and performance standards for new development.

Description of Methodology and Process

Carried out over the course of 18 months, this study consisted of meetings, open houses, presentations, workshops, drop-ins, and other public events. The plans that emerged are the result of an iterative process involving the public, advisory panels, City staff, and the Consultant Team. Along each step of the way, plans were revised and refined to reflect input from the participants. The final plan and its supporting recommendations are the culmination of ideas and suggestions contributed by the public, stakeholders, City staff, and the Consultant Team.



Study process timeline

Vision for Study Area

Through a broad-based public consultation program, the following vision was crafted to guide future development in the study area:

The Laird in Focus Study Area will integrate with Leaside. New forms of development will respect the character of the residential and business community, while evolving to meet the needs of future residents and workers. The Study Area will be accessible to people of all ages, in all modes of travel. It will provide a diversity of uses and businesses set in a high quality public realm. Laird Drive will be a vibrant main street and pedestrian promenade. Development along Eglinton Avenue East will have a high quality connected public realm of streets, blocks, parks, and community amenities, and create a walkable, landscaped neighbourhood.

Goals

The vision for the study area is further articulated through 5 goals:

1. **Create a vibrant and unifying main street that integrates with the broader Leaside community and is accessible to all people in all modes of travel.**
2. **Respect the historic character of Leaside, while evolving to meet the needs of future residents and businesses.**
3. **Establish a high quality and well-connected public realm, contributing to a walkable, cycle-able, and beautifully landscaped neighbourhood.**
4. **Ensure there is an appropriate link between the consideration of development proposals and the required investments in service infrastructure and community facilities.**
5. **Support the investment in transit and ensure that the consideration of development proposals is linked to the ability of the transportation network to accommodate growth.**

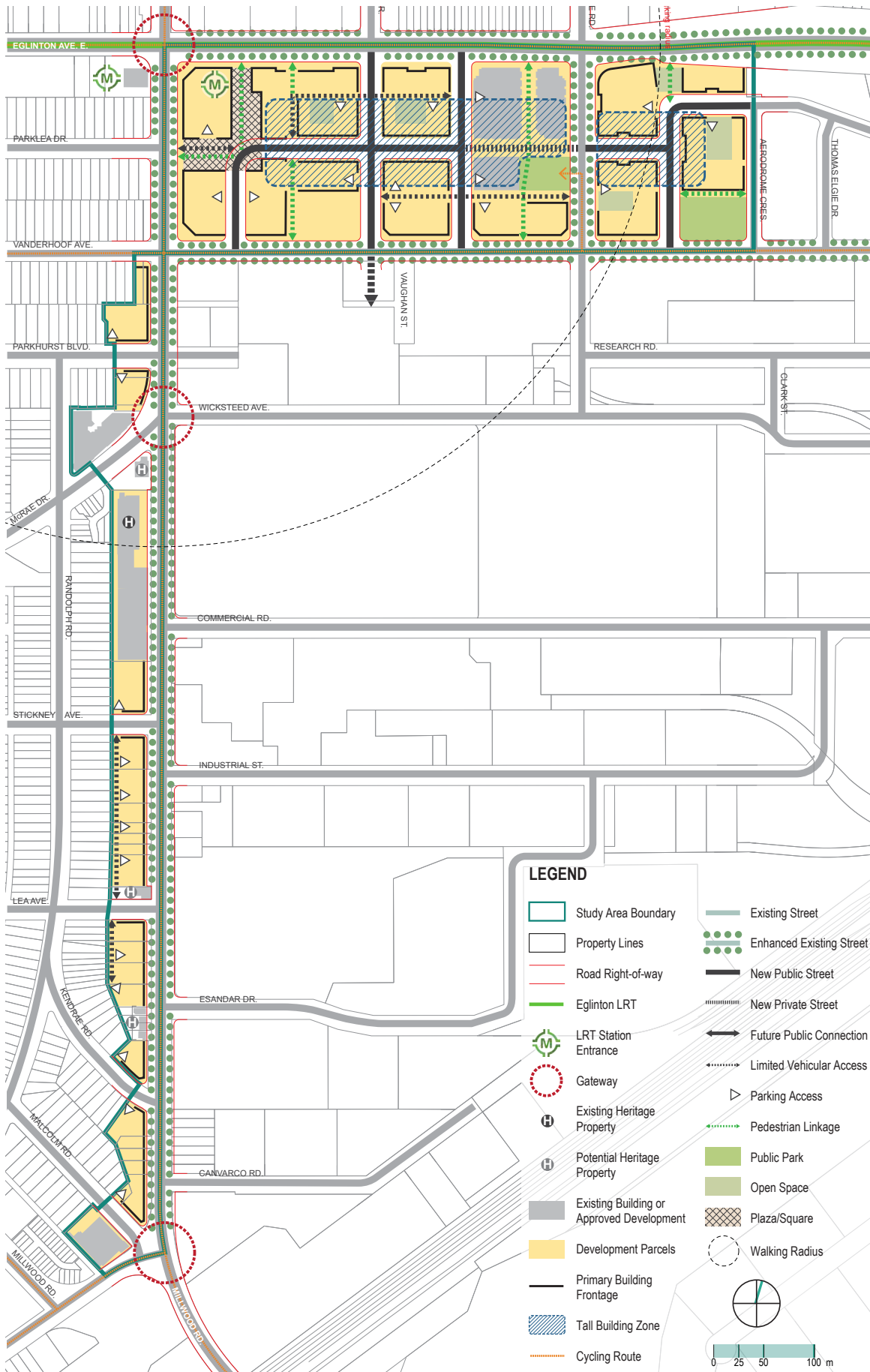
Implementation of Goals through 10 Guiding Principles and Moves

Each Guiding Principle builds on the five Goals and is strengthened by the recommendations of this plan. Taken together, they reinforce and complete the Vision.

1. **Protect *Neighbourhoods***
2. **Provide a *Transition in Height***
3. **Create *New Local Public Streets***
4. **Create *New Parks and Open Spaces***
5. **Build *Community Facilities***
6. **Realize the *Eglinton Avenue Promenade***
7. **Re-invent *Laird Drive as a Main Street***
8. **Transform *Vanderhoof Avenue into a Green Connector***
9. **Build a *Cycling Network***
10. **Support *Employment Lands***

Structure Plan for Study Areas A & B

The Structure Plan is comprised of streets and blocks; parks and open spaces; vehicular, pedestrian and cycling movement networks; gateway opportunities; and areas identified for taller development. The plan is a graphic representation of the main ideas underpinning the demonstration (recommended) plan and provides a conceptual framework for the underlying “10 Guiding Principles and Moves” as well as for the associated urban design guidelines.



Structure Plan for Study Areas A and B

Study Area A

Demonstration Plan

The Study Area A Demonstration Plan incorporates a network of new public streets, parks and open spaces, with pedestrian and cycling connections from Leaside to the ravine system. Public realm improvements, mid-rise building elements and active ground floor uses

along Eglinton Avenue East and Laird Drive will create a new experience for the residents and employees who will live, work and play in the area. A potential new community facility, located in proximity to Laird Drive and the transit station, and linked by plazas, parks, and open spaces, will create a destination for new and existing residents. Taller building elements,



New park and community space



New development will have building heights comparable to existing buildings along Aerodrome Crescent



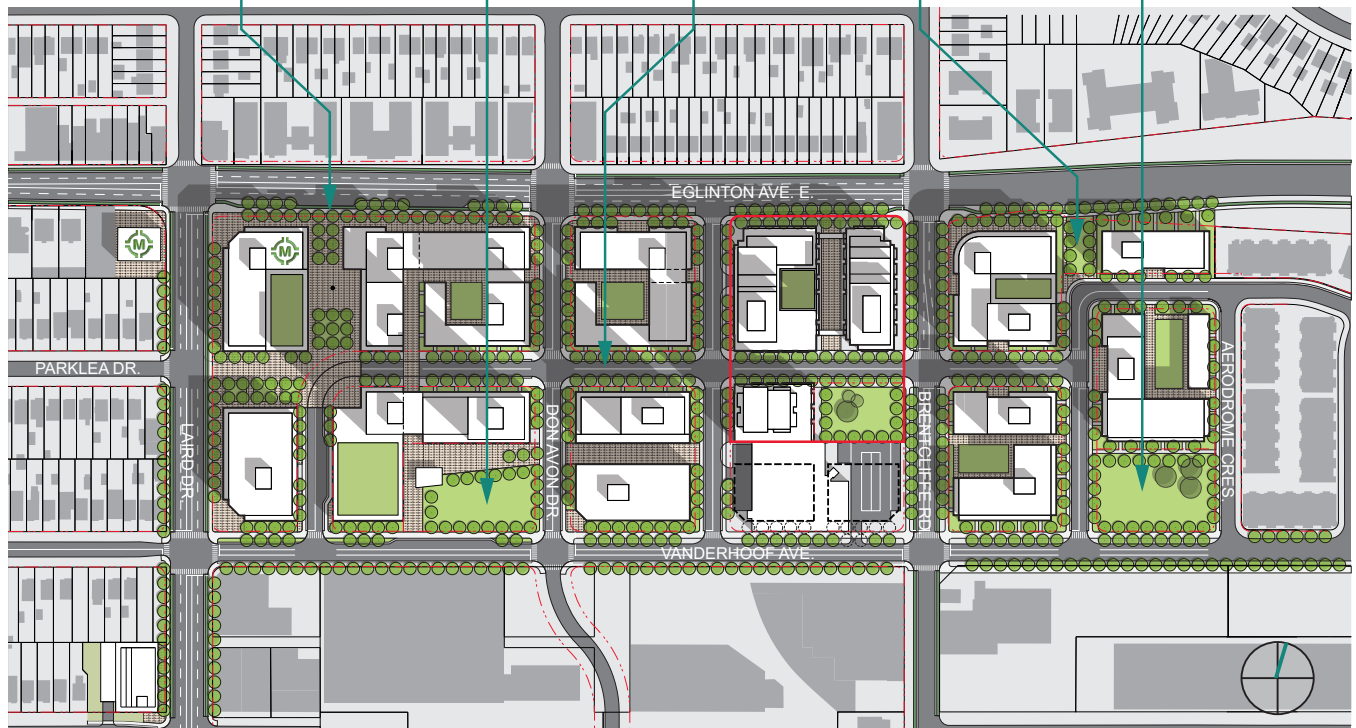
Enhanced streetscape along Eglinton Ave. E.



Greening of local streets



Neighbourhood park



LEGEND

- EGLINTON CROSSTOWN LRT STATION
- FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
- APPROVED OPA/REZONING APPLICATION

Demonstration Plan for Study Area A

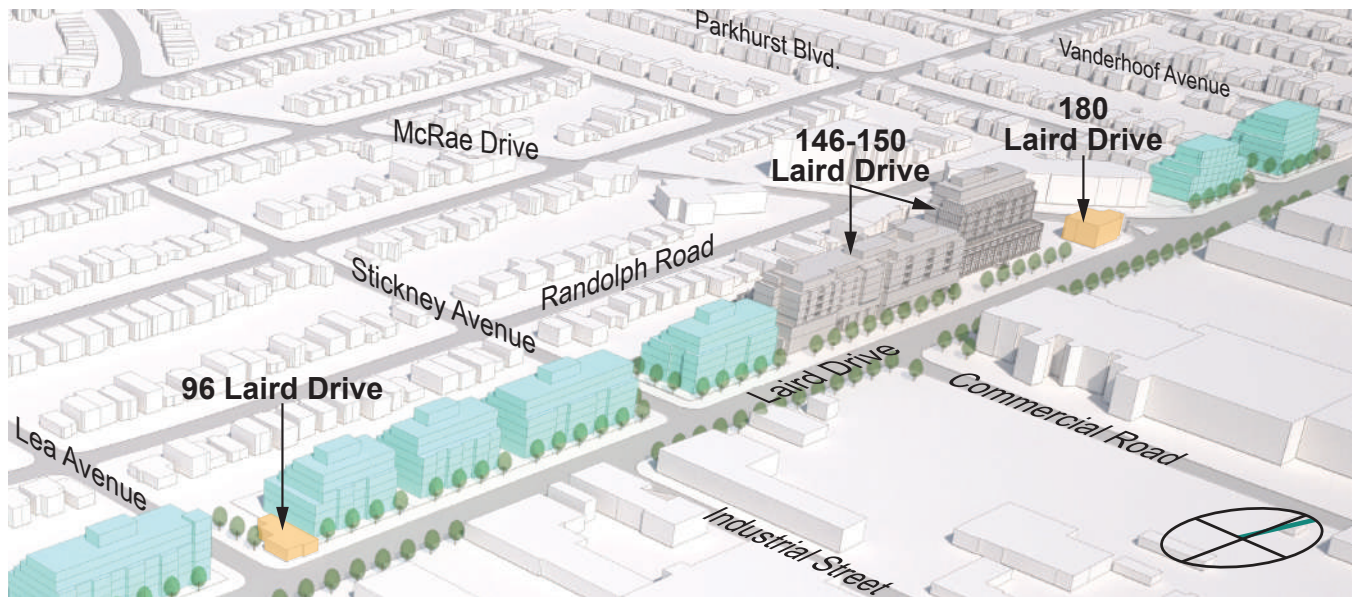
falling within an arc of height transition, are sited away from Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue East with the tallest buildings located nearest to the LRT station. New office buildings, located on the north side of Vanderhoof Avenue, complement the existing business park to the south, taking advantage LRT station access.

Study Area B

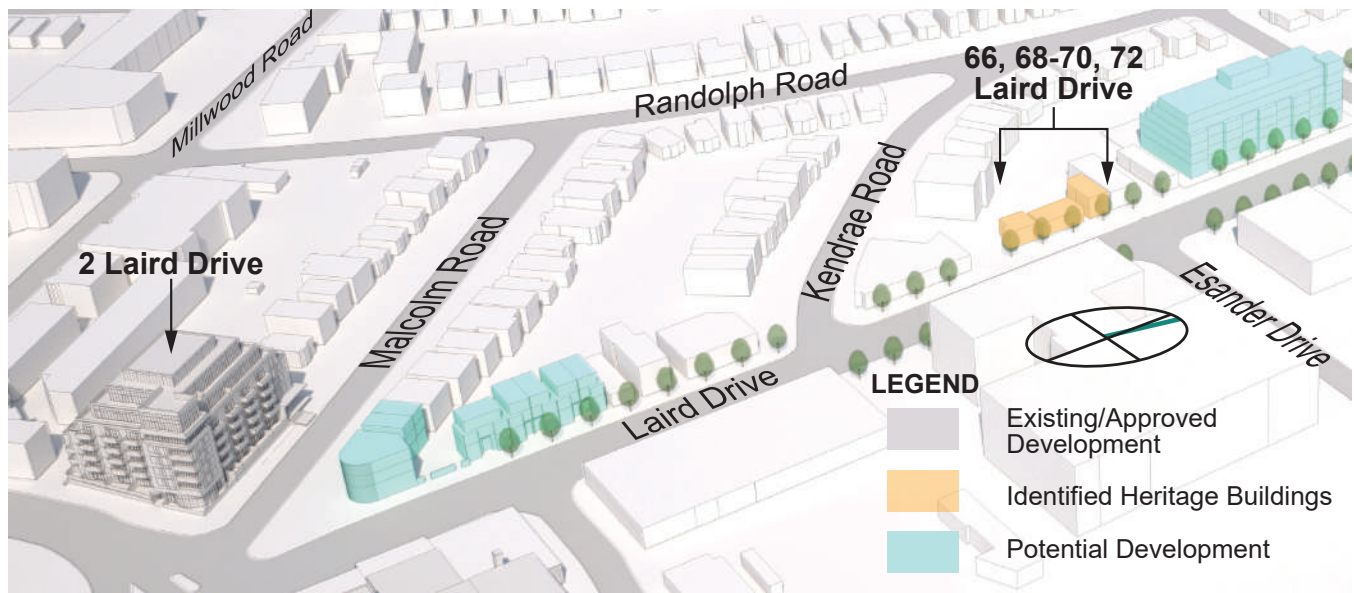
Demonstration Plan

The Study Area B Demonstration Plan illustrates the mid-rise development potential of the area. The Plan incorporates a new streetscape that replaces driveways, parking pads and substandard sidewalks with cycle tracks, widened sidewalks, landscaped setbacks, and greenery. A consistent 4-storey street wall, set back from the property line, provides space for additional

landscaping and spillover from non-residential ground floor uses. The vibrant, revitalized main street will link the existing Leaside Memorial Gardens with a new proposed community facility south of Eglinton Avenue East. Applied angular planes to both the rear yards and front yards of the properties results in a built form that transitions between the employment area to the east and the low-rise residential neighbourhood to the west providing good sunlight and sky views. A network of public lanes or shared private driveways at the rear of the properties will remove curb cuts along Laird Drive improving pedestrian safety and vehicular movement. Landscaping and fencing will screen these views from adjacent residential properties.



Laird Drive north of Lea Avenue



Laird Drive south of Lea Avenue

LEGEND

- Existing/Approved Development
- Identified Heritage Buildings
- Potential Development