

# 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.

## 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.

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.



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.**

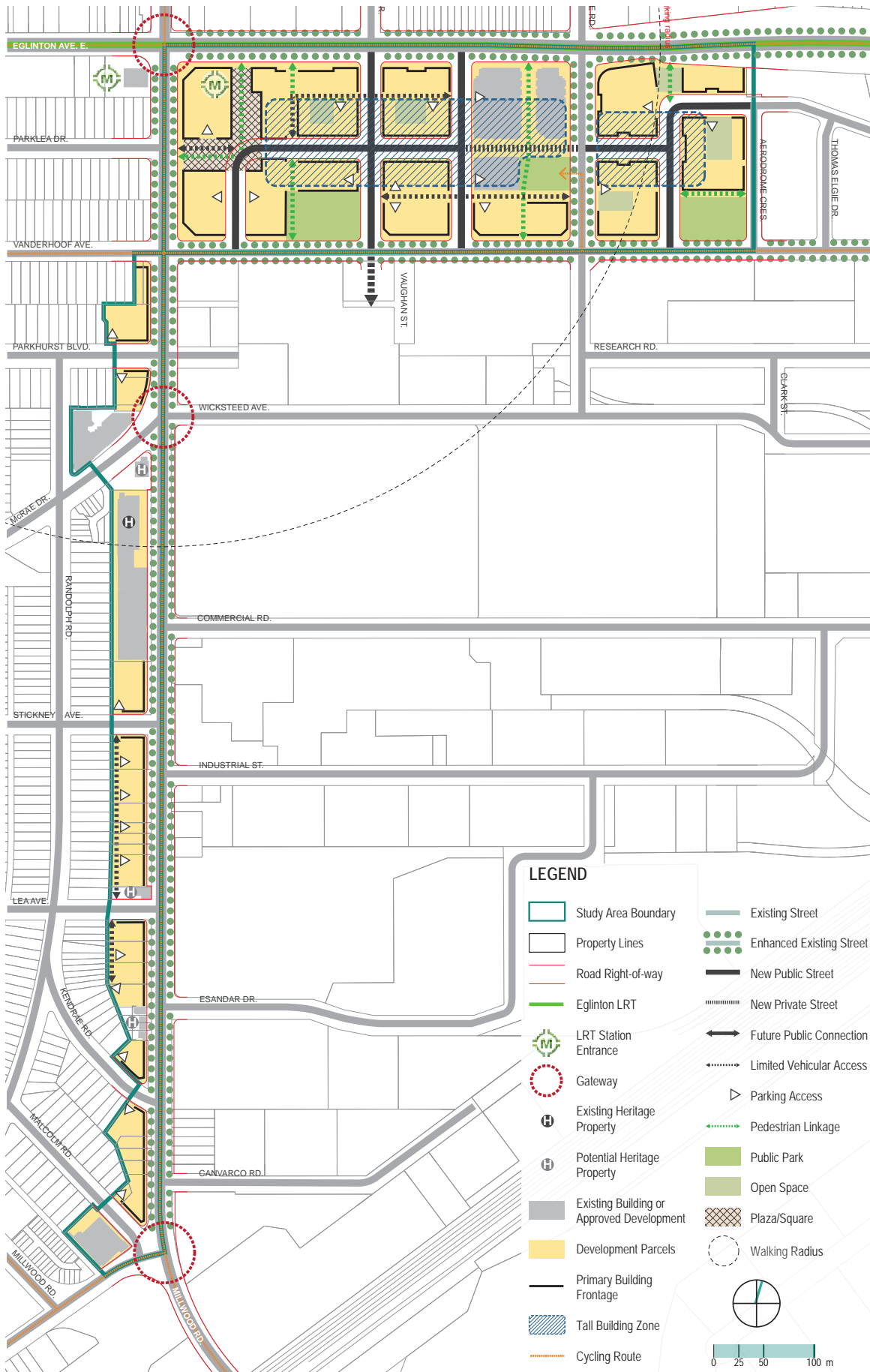
## Implementation of Goals through 10 Guiding Principles and Moves

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*



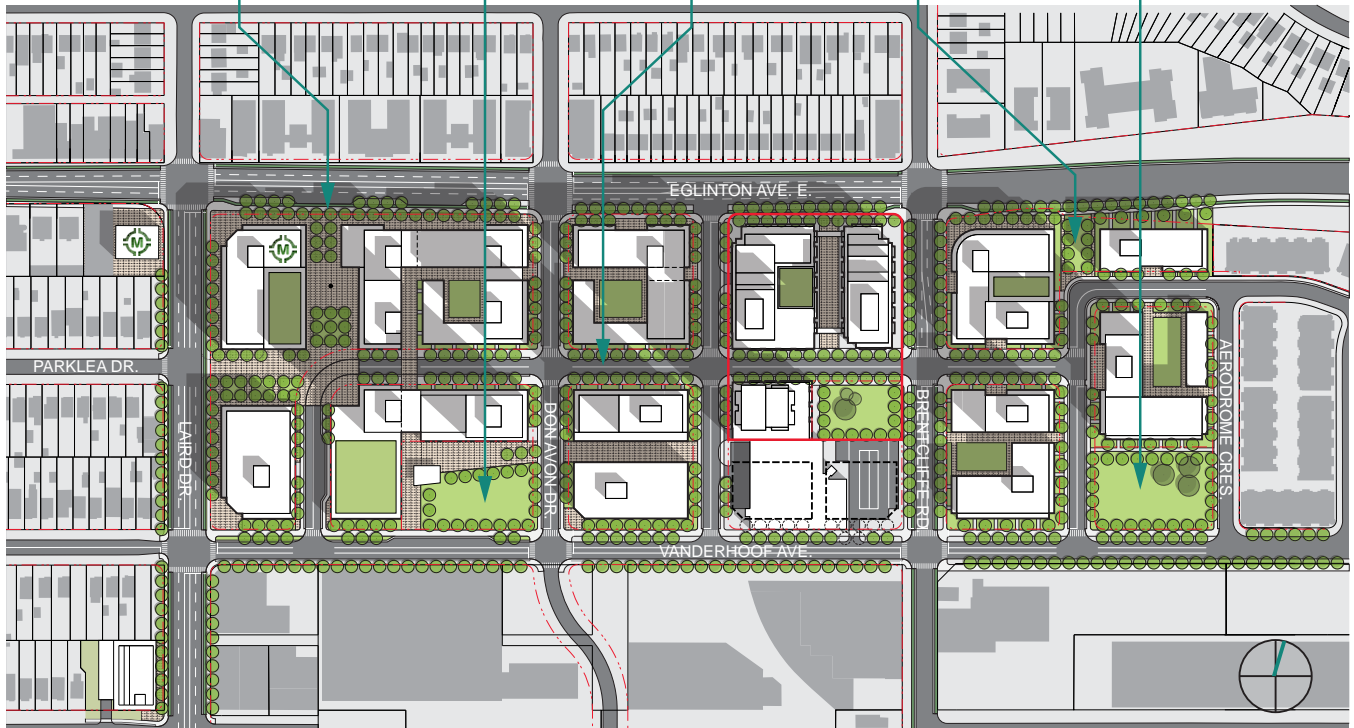
*Enhanced streetscape along Eglinton Ave. E.*



*Greening of local streets*



*Neighbourhood park*



**LEGEND**

- EGLINTON CROSSTOWN LRT STATION
- FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
- APPROVED OP/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 Vanderhooft 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

## Heritage

The **Laird Focus Area Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment Report** (prepared by EVOQ Architecture) was done concurrently with the **Laird in Focus Planning Study**. This study identifies a number of cultural heritage resources within the study area for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. These properties include:

- 66 Laird Drive;
- 68-70 Laird Drive;
- 72 Laird Drive;
- 96 Laird Drive; and
- 180 Laird Drive.



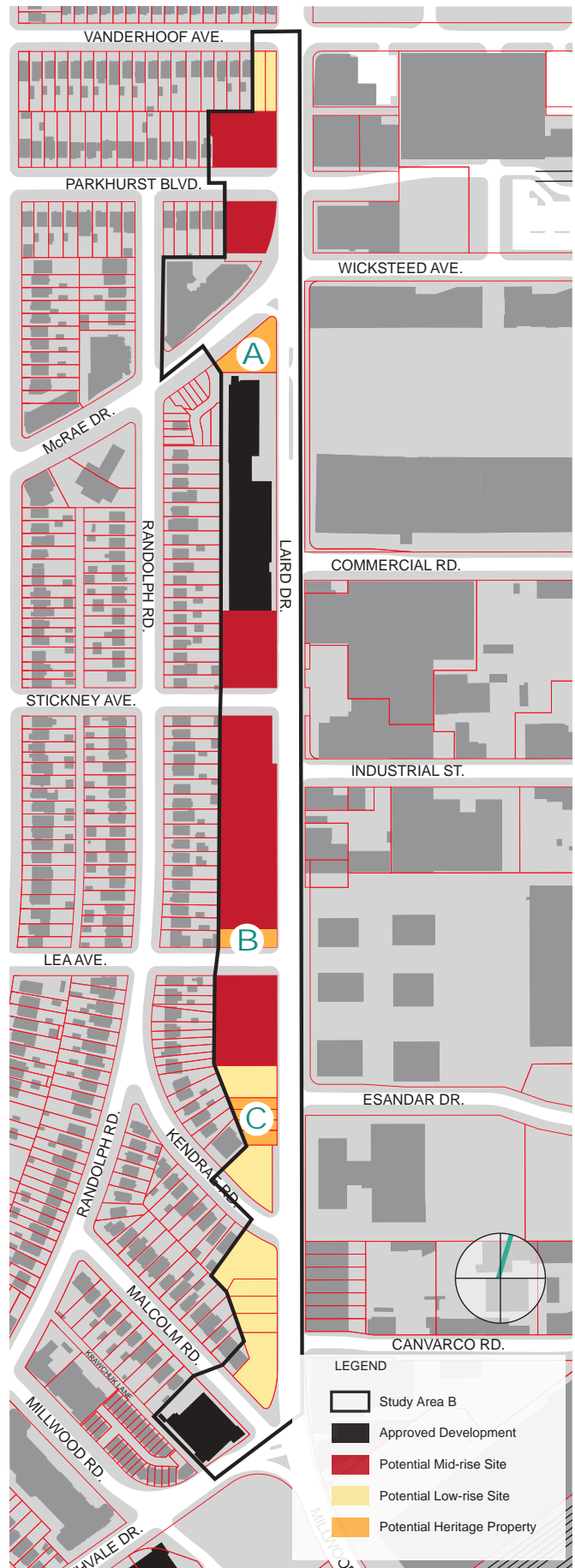
180 Laird Drive



96 Laird Drive



66, 68-70, and 72 Laird Drive



Sites identified as potential heritage sites

### Streetscape Demonstration Plan

Study Areas A and B possess distinct characteristics through their size of parcels, relationships to transit and existing street network, and proximity to neighbourhood designated lands. The common thread linking them together will be a unifying streetscape strategy that includes identifying gateway and public realm improvements, as well as street rights-of-way cross-sections. Laird Drive is the spine supporting not only the two areas but also connecting existing and future public entities: Leaside Memorial Gardens and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT Station and, by extension, a future community facility. Intersecting Laird Drive is Vanderhoof Avenue as well as Eglinton Avenue. Each plays an important role in providing a continuity of character throughout the area. Designed as “Complete Streets” (i.e. public environments designed for people, placemaking, and prosperity) each will facilitate the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and surface transit thereby shifting the modal split away from car-dependent travel.

### Gateways

The accentuation along Laird Drive on non-vehicular activities should be further emphasized at key intersections that serve as gateways into and out of the community or as transition spaces between different character areas. Gateways provide opportunities to incorporate supportive active transportation infrastructure, such as bike share and bike parking facilities, as well as street furniture amenities. Three such nodes have been identified:

**Laird Drive at Eglinton Avenue E.** is proposed as the northern gateway into the community bridging both North and South Leaside while anchoring the new community to the southeast.

**Laird Drive at McRae Drive/Wicksteed Avenue** is a significant crossroad with an opportunity to enhance the intersection and relate the landscape treatment to the building and, by extension, to Leaside’s history.

**Laird Drive at Millwood Road** is a heavily traversed intersection. Anchored at its southwest corner by Leaside Memorial Gardens it delineates the southern limit of the former village.

### Typical Road R.O.W. Cross-sections

The proposed cross-sections for existing and new streets in the area acknowledge the modal hierarchy adopted by this plan. Typical cross-sections for streets within the area will include sidewalks, cycling facilities (i.e. cycle tracks or multi-use paths), greenery, landscaped setbacks with spill over opportunities for ground related uses, and vehicle travel lanes that support both the movement of personal vehicles and goods movement.



Potential gateway locations

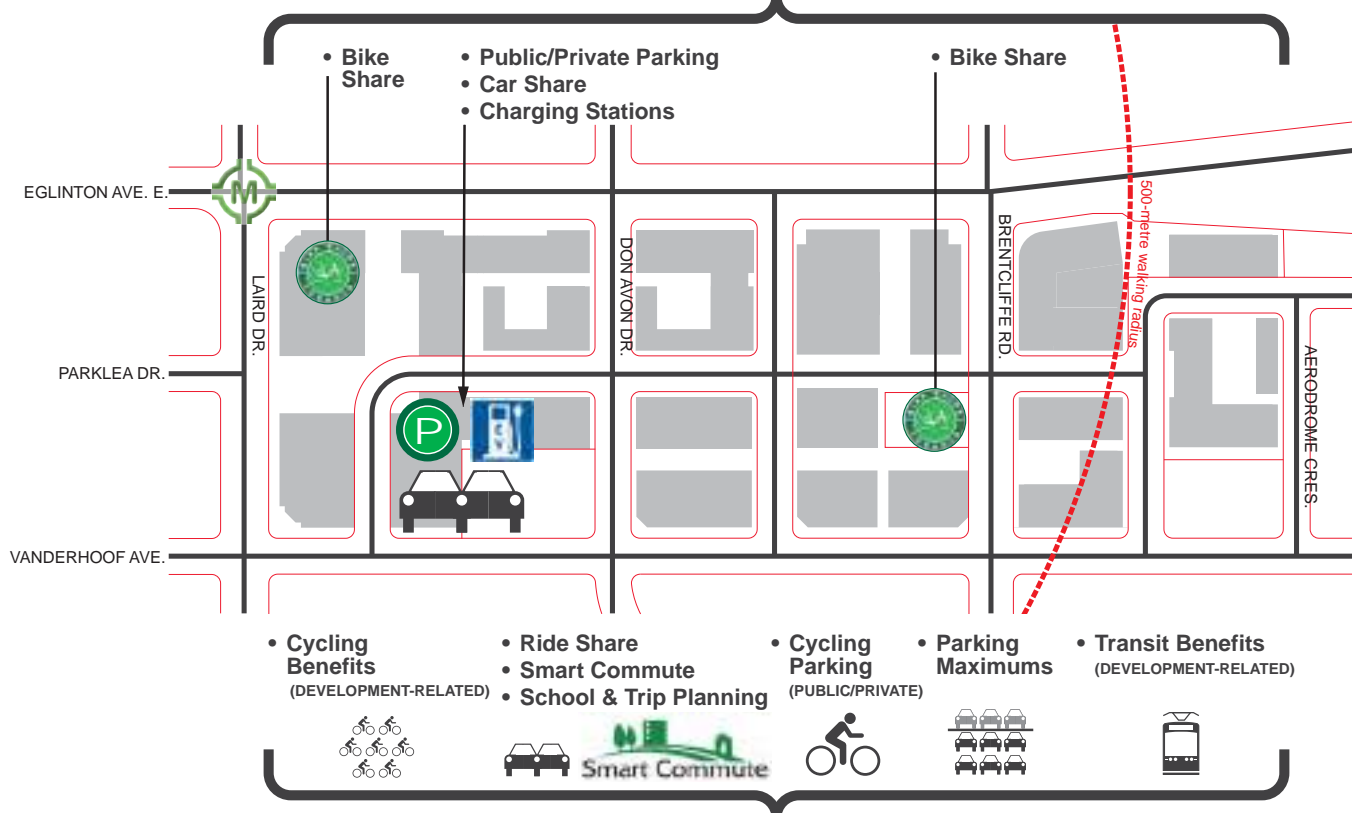
## Mobility Plan

The transportation review confirms that the major investment into the ECLRT line will significantly improve regional and local mobility, both directly through enhanced higher-order and connected feeder bus transit options, and indirectly through supportive multi-modal access and shared mobility strategies.

In embracing a multi-modal transportation approach that is sustainable and balanced, redefining the transportation mode structure is required. The following transportation mode hierarchy has been adopted, consistent with the City's policies:

- **Active transportation;**
- **Transit;**
- **Transportation demand management (TDM) and innovative mobility strategies;**
- **Goods movement; and,**
- **Vehicular movement and associated parking.**

### Site-specific Opportunities

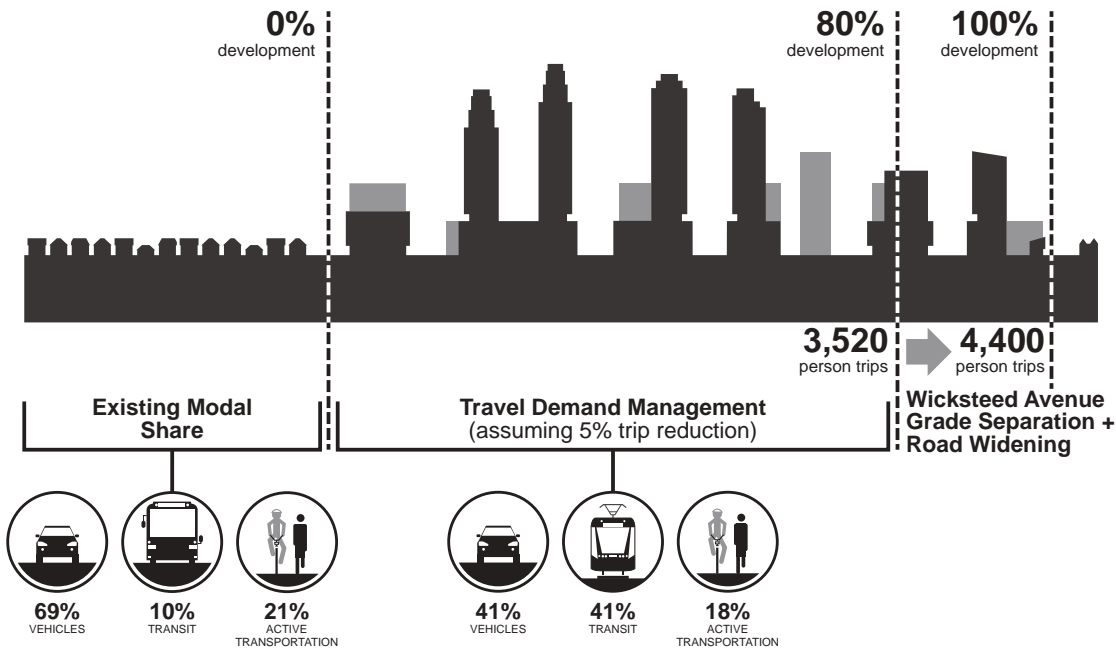


Menu of Transportation Demand Management options

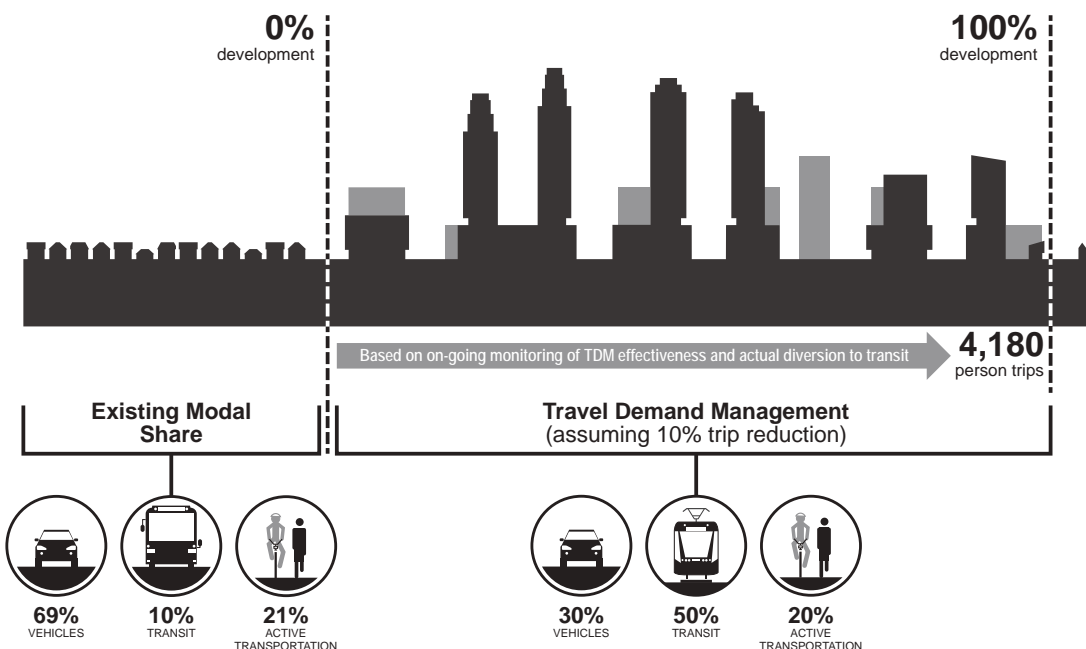
**Implementation Plan: Phasing**

The evaluation and analysis has found that the Preferred Alternative can achieve a 5% reduction in total people trips. However, it is anticipated that up to 80% of development within Study Area A can proceed based on a system of new streets and associated

infrastructure as proposed. Monitoring of the transportation network and the available capacity for all modes will be required as development proceeds. If, through this monitoring, a higher level of trip reduction can be achieved, additional development (beyond 80%) may proceed.



Development phasing with assumption of 5% trip reduction and 41:41:18 modal split



Development phasing with assumption of 10% trip reduction and 30:50:20 modal split

## Servicing Analysis

The infrastructure recommendations provided through this analysis were determined by modelling anticipated contributions to municipal infrastructure from the proposed development (Preferred Alternative) into the various systems reviewed. The following conclusions were derived through the testing of the Preferred Alternative model:

## Sanitary Sewers

Where specific upgrades have been identified development proponents will be responsible for the design/construction/funding of the improvements.

## Storm Sewers

New development must achieve a minimum peak flow reduction of at least 50%.



Location of identified watermain improvements necessary to support development intensification

**Combined Sewers**

The City should undertake a feasibility study for the separation of storm and sanitary sewers along Laird Drive. This should be coordinated with the planned streetscape improvements identified in this plan.

**Watermains**

The impacts of the increased densities can be mitigated through approximately 2.5 km of local system improvements.

**Summary Yields**

The Preferred Alternative Plan recommends a vision, goals, and a series of guiding principles to manage growth within the Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue East Area. This plan and the supporting analysis anticipates that the area can accommodate approximately 8,765 new residents and 1,545 new jobs. This growth meets the provincial target established for transit station areas.

**Recommendations**

The Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue East Area within the neighbourhood of Leaside is evolving. This Report and the Preferred Alternative plan outline a vision for the area that will guide and manage future population and job growth in the area while acknowledging the area's history, character and community. The guiding principles and recommendations of the Preferred plan set the stage for further implementation by the City of Toronto through planning policy, urban design guidelines and other tools.





# 1.0 Study Overview





Figure 1.1: Study Area

## 1.0 STUDY OVERVIEW

The **Laird in Focus Planning Study** was initiated in response to the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit line including a new underground 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. Prior to this study, the City of Toronto undertook EGLINTONconnects, a comprehensive planning study along the length of the Eglinton LRT corridor (from Weston Road to Kennedy Road) which provides a vision for the corridor for the development of lands around each of the LRT's 25 stations. The **Laird in Focus Planning Study** provides a framework for the redevelopment of the lands adjacent to the Laird Drive LRT station. The Study provides detailed recommendations and a refined vision for the redevelopment of properties in proximity to the Laird LRT Station.



Figure 1.2: 150 Laird Drive: former Durrant Office Building



Figure 1.3: Laird Drive looking north from Lea Avenue



Figure 1.4: Looking towards parking area of Riocan plaza, 815-845 Eglinton Avenue East

### 1.1 Study Boundaries

The Laird in Focus Planning Study Area is bounded by the Canadian Pacific (CP) rail corridor that runs along its eastern and southern edges, Laird Drive to the west, and Eglinton Avenue East to the north. Of the 117 hectares that comprise the study area, 103 hectares are designated for “employment” uses, with most of the remaining land designated for “mixed use”. The entire area and its immediate adjacencies form the basis of the transportation component of the study. Two sub-areas, one along Eglinton Avenue East (Study Area A), the other along the west side of Laird Drive (Study Area B), are predominantly designated as Mixed Use Areas, and are the subject of the planning, urban design, and servicing component of the study.

### 1.2 Study Objectives

The objective of the **Laird in Focus Planning 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 the City’s Site and Area Specific Policies. With the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown transit line interest in the **Laird in Focus Planning Study Area** is expected to increase. This study provides appropriate goals, objectives, and performance standards for new development.

The first two phases of this study involved establishing an understanding of the existing conditions, issues, and opportunities of the study areas and, working with the community, developing the **Draft Emerging Preferred Alternative Plan**. The objectives of Phase 3 are to develop the following:

- Land Use Recommendations;
- Streets and Blocks Framework;
- Parks, Open Space and Public Realm Strategy
- Built Form Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines;
- Heritage Strategy;
- Employment Strategy;
- Affordable Housing Strategy; and
- Community Facilities and Servicing Strategy.

## 1.3 Description of Methodology and Process

This study has been completed over the course of three phases and has involved broad-based public and stakeholder consultation, inclusive of residents, community groups, land and business owners, external agencies, and the City of Toronto. Phase 1, documented in “**Laird in Focus: Background Report**”, provided an overview of the historical, planning, physical, transportation, and infrastructure context of the study areas, and provided a comprehensive knowledge base for the subsequent phases.

Phase 2, documented in “**Laird in Focus: Phase 2 Report**”, began with the crafting of the **Vision and Guiding Principles** for the **Study Area**, which formed the basis for the subsequent evaluation criteria. A series of development options were then developed, guided by the results of two design charrettes with the public, and were evaluated against the evaluation criteria. This public design charrette process further included the development of potential scenarios for road network evolution within the Employment Lands and review by staff.

The most favourable elements of the development options were carried forward in the **Draft Emerging Preferred Alternative Plan** for **Study Area A** and **B**. This public process resulted in a broadly supported framework and vision for future development in **Study Area A** and **B** and a movement network throughout the larger **Study Area**.

Phase 3, the subject of this report, further refined the **Draft Emerging Preferred Alternative Plan** resulting in the **Preferred Plan** for **Study Area A** and **B**. This work was supported by a detailed streetscape plan for Study Area A and B as well as network recommendations for the larger Laird in Focus Study Area. These plans, in addition to draft urban design guidelines and planning recommendations, were presented to the public and reviewed by City Staff prior to arriving at the consultants final recommendations.



Figure 1.5: Study timeline and key deliverables

## 1.4 Community Consultation Summary

A summary of the community consultation events and input received during Phases 1 and 2 may be found in each of the previous reports. A synopsis of each event is provided below.



### Phase 1:

#### Project Kick Off

**November 30, 2016**

The project was introduced by City of Toronto staff with the objective of gathering feedback that would inform the study process, its key themes, and its content.

#### Transportation Summit

**March 25, 2017**

The consultation session provided a forum for the project team to better understand the transportation issues enabling them to better focus efforts in the initial stages of the project. Fifteen people (in addition to City staff and the project team) participated representing residents, business owners, and active transportation advocates.

#### Local Advisory Committee Meeting No. 1

**April 25, 2017**

The study's purpose, process, schedule, background research, and key consultation activities to date were presented. The meeting included a round-table discussion focused on obtaining input for the team to develop the Vision Statement and Design Principles.

#### Public Consultation Meeting No. 1: Visioning & Emerging Principles

**May 1, 2017**

The team's understanding of the Study Area was presented at the late afternoon and evening sessions with the purpose of gaining feedback from the public. A total of 100 participants attended the 2 sessions and contributed to the basis of a vision statement and a set of guiding principles.

#### Public Consultation Meeting No. 2: Design Charrette

**June 3, 2017**

Registrants participated in a morning or afternoon workshop with the expressed purpose of developing design alternatives for Study Area A and B, evolving scenarios for the Transportation Study Area, and streetscape options for key streets. The two sessions garnered interest from a total of 38 individuals who contributed to the formation of the options.

#### Design Review Panel

**June 8, 2017**

The Laird in Focus Study was presented to the Design Review Panel which provided comments on the project's scope, its urban design approach, and potential public realm opportunities.

#### Leaside Business Park Association

**June 14, 2017**

City Planning staff attended a meeting of the Leaside Business Park Association to introduce the project and receive feedback and comments.

#### Landowners' and Business Owners' Drop-in No. 1

**June 29, 2017**

The results of the design charrette were presented at a breakfast drop-in attended by 30 local landowners and business proprietors. Feedback from the session helped to inform subsequent work on the study.

#### Toronto Planning Review Panel

**June 10, 2017**

The panelists provided comments to City staff on the project's deliverables to date. They spoke to issues regarding employment areas in general before providing feedback on the Study Area concerning the emerging vision and principles, urban design and built form, transportation, and servicing.

## Phase 2:

### Local Advisory Committee Meeting No. 2

**October 10, 2017**

The meeting offered an opportunity prior to the upcoming public session to review and provide feedback on the presentation material. The subjects discussed included the progress to date of the Heritage Study, the emerging vision and the results of the design charrette, draft alternative development options for both Study Areas A and B, an emerging streetscape concept, and the results of the transportation analysis.

### Public Consultation Meeting No. 3: Development Alternatives

**October 17, 2017**

The purpose of this meeting was to present the planning and urban design scenarios for each of the study areas and to gather feedback that would inform subsequent steps of the study. At the public session transportation analyses was provided as well as a draft framework for evaluating the options. 150 people attended the presentation and provided comments on this and the accompanying display panels.

### Landowners' and Business Owners' Drop-in No. 2

**October 19, 2017**

The breakfast drop-in provided an opportunity for land- and business owners to review the alternative development options as well as streetscape options and potential future road network scenarios for the Leaside Business Park. Seven people attended the event.

### Local Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3

**November 21, 2017**

An evaluation of the alternative development options was presented leading to a draft preferred alternative for Eglinton Avenue (Study Area A) as well as a draft urban design approach for Laird Drive (Study Area B). The committee provided comments that informed refinements to the subsequent public presentation.

### Public Consultation Meeting No. 4: Draft Emerging Preferred Alternative

**December 5, 2017**

The draft emerging preferred alternative for Study Area A as well as for test sites along Laird Drive (Study Area B) were presented as well as an update on the transportation component of the project. Comments were provided in breakout sessions that focused on issues concerning height and density, transportation, community facilities, the public realm, land use, heritage, and infrastructure.

## Phase 3:

### Local Advisory Committee Meeting No. 4

**April 10, 2018**

Committee members were presented with the draft public presentation which included "The 10 Big Moves", refined demonstration plans for Study Areas A and B, properties to be considered for the City's heritage registry, recommendations for the Transportation Study Area, the Streetscape Master Plan, transportation phasing, and the results of the servicing analysis. Projected population and employment yields were provided along with a breakdown of the potential number of residential unit types.



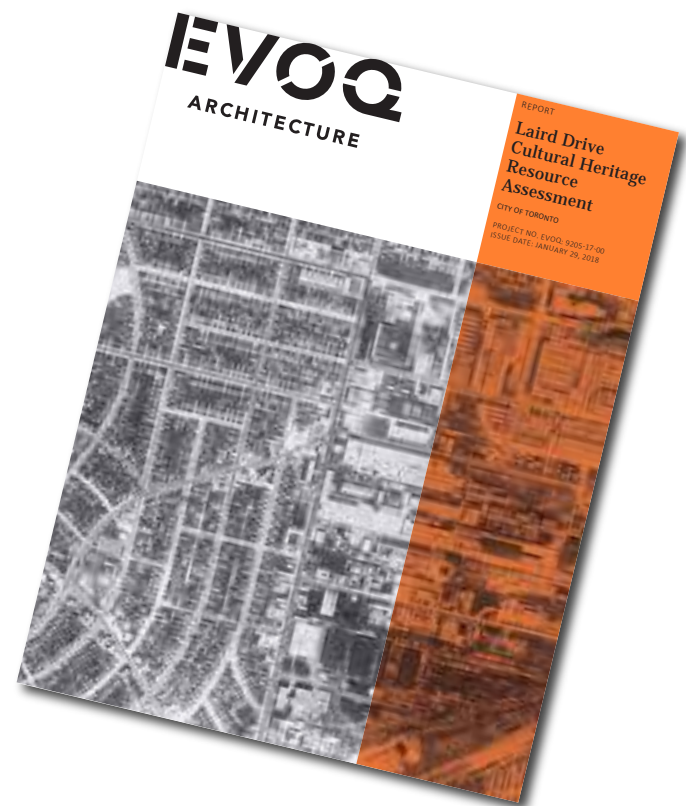
## Public Consultation Meeting No. 5: Preferred Alternative Plan

April 23, 2018

The evening was comprised of a presentation by the project team followed by a “question and answer” session bookended by an open house. Participants viewed panels illustrating “The 10 Big Moves”, prospective sites for consideration on the City’s heritage registry, and the demonstration plans for each of the study areas. Augmenting this material were precedent images and development yield statistics. Rounding out the exhibit were panels describing transportation and servicing improvements required to support the projected development capacity. Approximately 85 people attended the presentation and open house.

### 1.5 Cultural Heritage Assessment

In co-ordination with the **Laird in Focus Planning Study**, EVOQ Architecture was commissioned to undertake a detailed Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment of the properties located on the east and west sides of Laird Drive, between Vanderhoof Avenue and Millwood Road, as well as three properties



along Vanderhoof Avenue. As part of this work, EVOQ conducted a review of the historic context and development of the study area, identified and evaluated potential cultural resources and prepared recommendations to inform the planning framework of the Laird in Focus Study.



Figure 1.6: Public presentation and open house, April 23th, 2018

The assessment began with archival research to document the historical evolution of the development and the key historic, cultural and economic themes that led to its current built form. This was followed by a field and photographic survey of the study area to identify properties with potential cultural heritage value, and additional primary research. EVOQ then presented these initial findings to the Heritage Focus Group, and gathered feedback and additional information.

Of the properties which merited further in-depth research, a heritage evaluation as per Ontario Regulation 9/06 was then completed, which was reviewed by the City. A consultation meeting was held with the Local Advisory Committee, followed by an open public meeting to present the findings and proposed recommendations, and to gather feedback. The final stage of this assessment included outlining proposed management and protection mechanisms for the identified cultural heritage resources.





# 2.0 Inventory & Background



## 2.0 INVENTORY & BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Planning Context

#### 2.1.1 Study Areas A and B: City of Toronto Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan provides high level guidance for the future development of the City and works with a wide range of other plans, strategies and implementation guides to achieve its vision. A fundamental approach of the Official Plan is the integration of land use and transportation policies which help steer future growth to areas which are well-served by transit, the existing road network, and which have a number of properties with redevelopment potential. The integration of transportation and land use planning is critical to achieving the overall aim of increasing accessibility throughout the City, which combines improvements to both mobility (transportation) and proximity (land use). This approach contributes to the protection of existing stable neighbourhoods and green spaces, while directing development to growth areas which are well connected by the City’s transportation network.

Study Areas A and B are primarily designated “Mixed Use Areas” in the City of Toronto’s Official Plan, with the southernmost portion of Study Area A, along the north side of Vanderhoof Avenue between Laird Drive and Brentcliffe Road, designated “Employment Areas”. The land designated “Employment Areas” marks the northern edge of a larger employment area, which extends east from Laird Drive.












The Official Plan intends for lands designated as “Mixed Use Areas” to accommodate a broad range of uses, including residential, commercial, institutional and open space, permitting residents to live, work, and shop in the same area. Mixed Use Areas are also intended to create

animated streets and communities, create a pleasant pedestrian environment, take advantage of transit services, and reduce car dependency.

Employment Areas are recognized for their role in supporting business growth. To this end, the Official Plan includes policies which protect these lands from incompatible development, while permitting a broad range of employment uses, as well as uses which are supportive of employment activities.

A portion of Study Area A, east of Brentcliffe Road, also falls within the boundaries of Special Policy Area 142. Special Policy Area 142 places a “Holding Zone” on the subject lands, which may only be removed upon the submission of detailed reports by a qualified transportation engineer and includes urban design policies to guide a future implementing Zoning By-law and Site Plan Approval.

#### Land Use Designations

- |   |                            |   |   |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|
|    | Neighbourhoods             |    | Other Open Space Areas (Including Golf Courses, Cemeteries, Public Utilities) |
|    | Apartment Neighbourhoods   |    | Institutional Areas   |
|   | Mixed Use Areas            |  | Regeneration Areas  |
|  | Parks and Open Space Areas |  | Employment Areas  |
|  | Natural Areas              |  | Utility Corridors   |
|  | Parks                      |   |   |

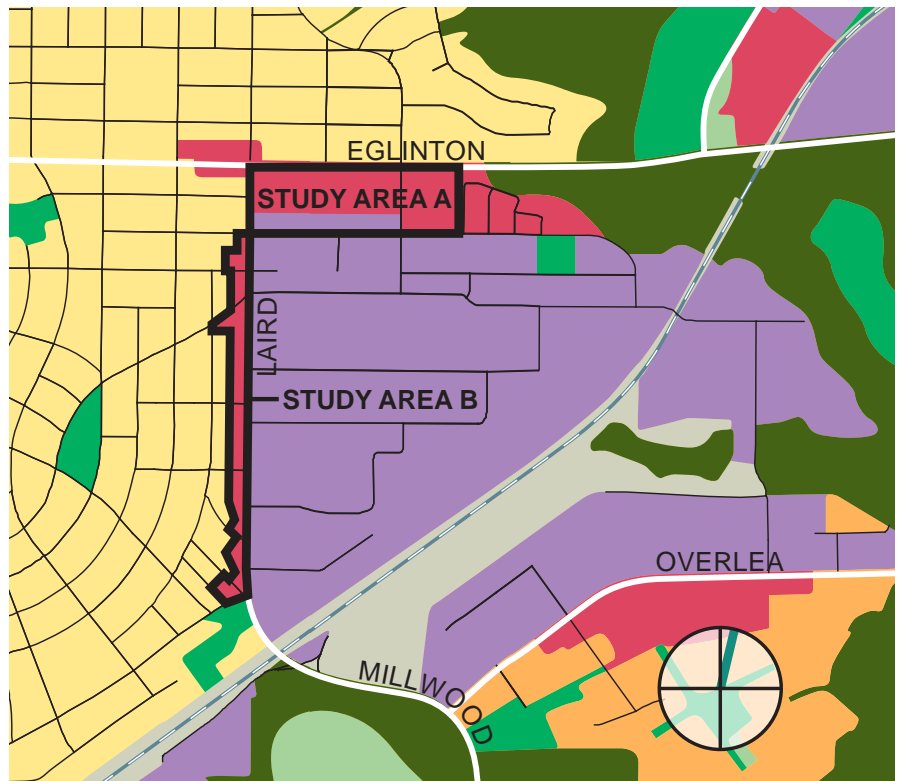


Figure 2.1: City of Toronto Official Plan Land Use Maps 17 and 20, composite detail

### 2.1.2 EGLINTONconnects and OPA 231

The genesis of the Laird in Focus Planning Study is the **Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit** line, commissioned by Metrolinx. In response, the City of Toronto undertook **EGLINTONconnects**, a comprehensive planning study along the length of the Eglinton corridor. The study provides a vision for the corridor as well as a framework for the development of lands around each of the LRT's 25 stations. The subject of this study is the lands adjacent to the Laird Drive station.

In tandem with **EGLINTONconnects**, City Council adopted **OPA 231** which redesignated portions of Study Area A from Employment to Mixed Use Areas. Employment uses are defined within a 50-metre wide band extending along the north side of Vanderhoof Avenue from Laird Drive to Brentcliffe Road.

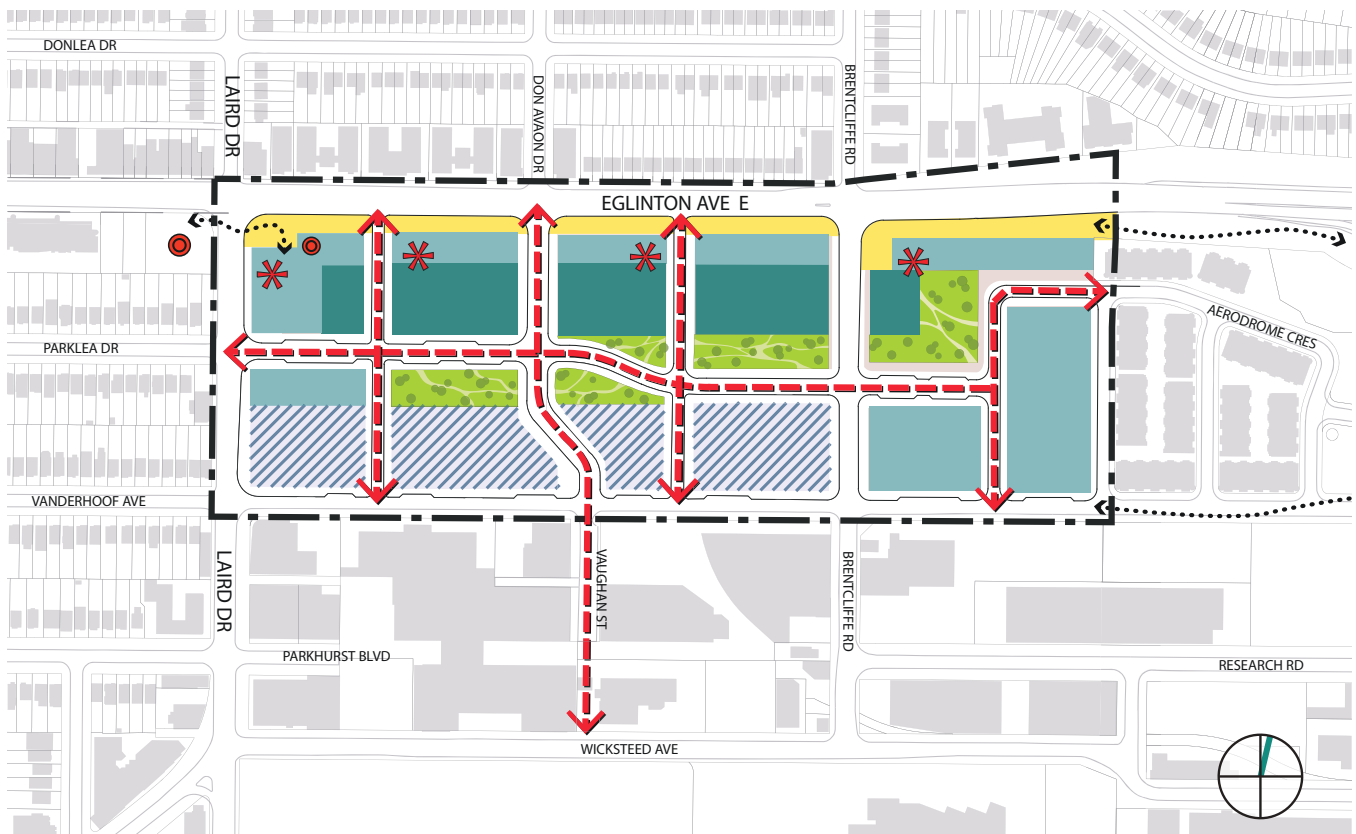


Figure 2.2: Demonstration Plan from EglintonCONNECTS Vol. 2 Appendix F: Focus Areas & Mobility Hub Studies

## 2.1.3 Study Area A: Zoning By-law (former Borough of East York By-law 1916)

**Zones within Study Area A: M1 (7); M1 (8); M1 (10); M1 (3); BC-H 7 storeys; BC-H 10 storeys**

The properties within Study Area A were not included in the City-wide Zoning By-law and are still subject to the former Borough of East York Zoning By-law 1916. The properties to the west of Brentcliffe Road are zoned “Light Industrial”, which permits a broad range of industrial uses including manufacturing, research and development, wholesaling, business and professional offices. There are also a number of site-specific policies that apply, which establish minor deviations to permitted uses and development standards, as well as the need for expanded transportation infrastructure along Eglinton Avenue East.

The properties to the east of Brentcliffe Road are zoned “Business Centre”, which permits the same range of industrial uses as the “Light Industrial” zone, as well as business and professional offices, data processing, and some expanded permissions for accessory business service uses. Due to the inclusion of a “Hold” designation, the development of business and professional offices is limited until it is demonstrated that street network and servicing can adequately support a proposed development.

## 2.1.4 Study Area B: City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013

**Zones within Study Area B: CR 2.0 (c2.0; r1.3) SS3 (x1163); RA (f30.0; a930; u33) (x302); CR 2.0 (c2.0; r1.3) SS2 (x1163); RA (f30.0; a2785; u70) (x307); RD (f9.0; a210; d0.45) (x892)**

The properties within Study Area B generally fall under either the “Commercial Residential” or the “Residential Apartment” zones. The properties zoned “Commercial Residential” may accommodate a broad range of residential, commercial, and institutional uses, many of which are guided by specific provisions. Residential uses such as apartment buildings, mixed-use buildings or townhouses are permitted, and must be located above non-residential uses in a mixed-use building.

The “Residential Apartment” zone permits a range of residential, institutional, and other residential-supportive uses, many of which are also guided by specific provisions. There are also site-specific provisions which further limit the permitted uses and include minor changes to the development standards.

One property along Malcolm Road is zoned “Residential Detached”, permitting a detached dwelling and several public and institutional uses.

## 2.1.5 Study Area B: Zoning By-law (Former Borough of East York By-law 1916)

Two properties, one at 25 Malcolm Road and another at 180 Laird Drive, were not included in the City-wide Zoning By-law and are still subject to the former Borough of East York Zoning By-Law. Both properties are zoned “Commercial General” (C1), which permits a broad range of commercial uses, residential uses over a permitted use, and a nursing home.

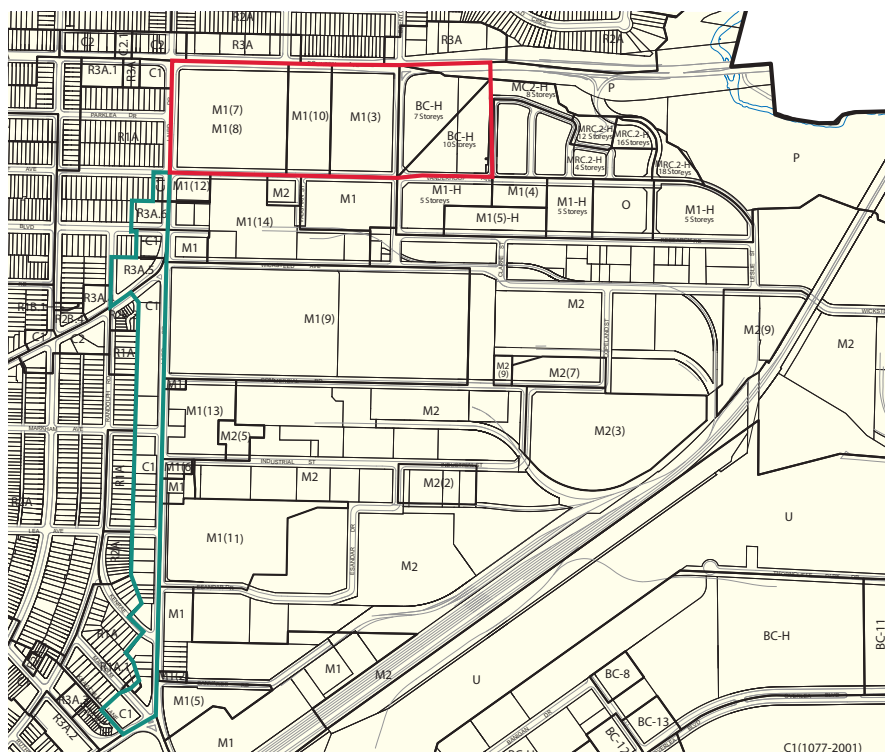


Figure 2.3: Former East York Consolidated Zoning Map (Leaside Zoning Bylaw 1916)

- Study Area A
- Study Area B



Figure 2.4: Zoning Map for Northern End of Study Area B (Zoning By-law 569-2013)



Figure 2.5: Height and Lot Coverage Map for Northern End of Study Area B (Zoning By-law 569-2013)



Figure 2.6: Zoning Map for Southern End of Study Area B (Zoning By-law 569-2013)



Figure 2.7: Height and Lot Coverage Map for Southern End of Study Area B (Zoning By-law 569-2013)



Figure 2.8: Leaside Memorial Gardens



Figure 2.9: Trace Manes Community Centre



Figure 2.10: Leonard Linton Park

### 2.1.6 Community Services and Facilities

As part of **EGLINTONconnects**, an analysis of community services and facilities was undertaken for Study Area A. Significant growth and demographic changes within the area are resulting in increased demands for services and facilities required to meet residents' needs. This analysis considered child care, libraries, green and open space, community recreation facilities, schools and community agency/human services space and concluded that additional investment in community services and facilities will be required as new development occurs and that creative solutions should also be explored to make more efficient use of space and resources.

Legend

- Leaside
- Arena
- Child Care Centre
- Community/Recreation Centre
- Library
- Place of Worship
- Pool
- Public Elementary School
- Public Secondary School
- Catholic Elementary School
- Human Services
- Fire Station
- Existing Parks & Open Space
- Existing School Playground
- Future Park/Parkette (approved)
- 500-metre walking radius



Figure 2.11: Location of community services and facilities in Leaside and adjacent Thorncliffe Park

## 2.2 Existing and Emerging Context

The Urban Design Analysis examines the Study Area through a historical lens looking at the areas evolution in terms of block structure, built form, building heights, development density, lot coverage, sun-shadow impacts and neighbourhood transition.

### 2.2.1 Area History

Leaside today owes its urban structure to the masterplan of the landscape architect, Frederick Todd and his client, the Canadian Northern Railway. It was on their behalf that, in 1912, Todd prepared the layout for the future Leaside community and the adjacent employment lands. The plan provided a street network influenced by the Garden City movement: an interplay of curvilinear streets and rectilinear blocks extending eastward from Bayview Avenue to Leslie Street. However, the framework did not include the lands east of Laird Drive and south of Wicksteed Avenue.

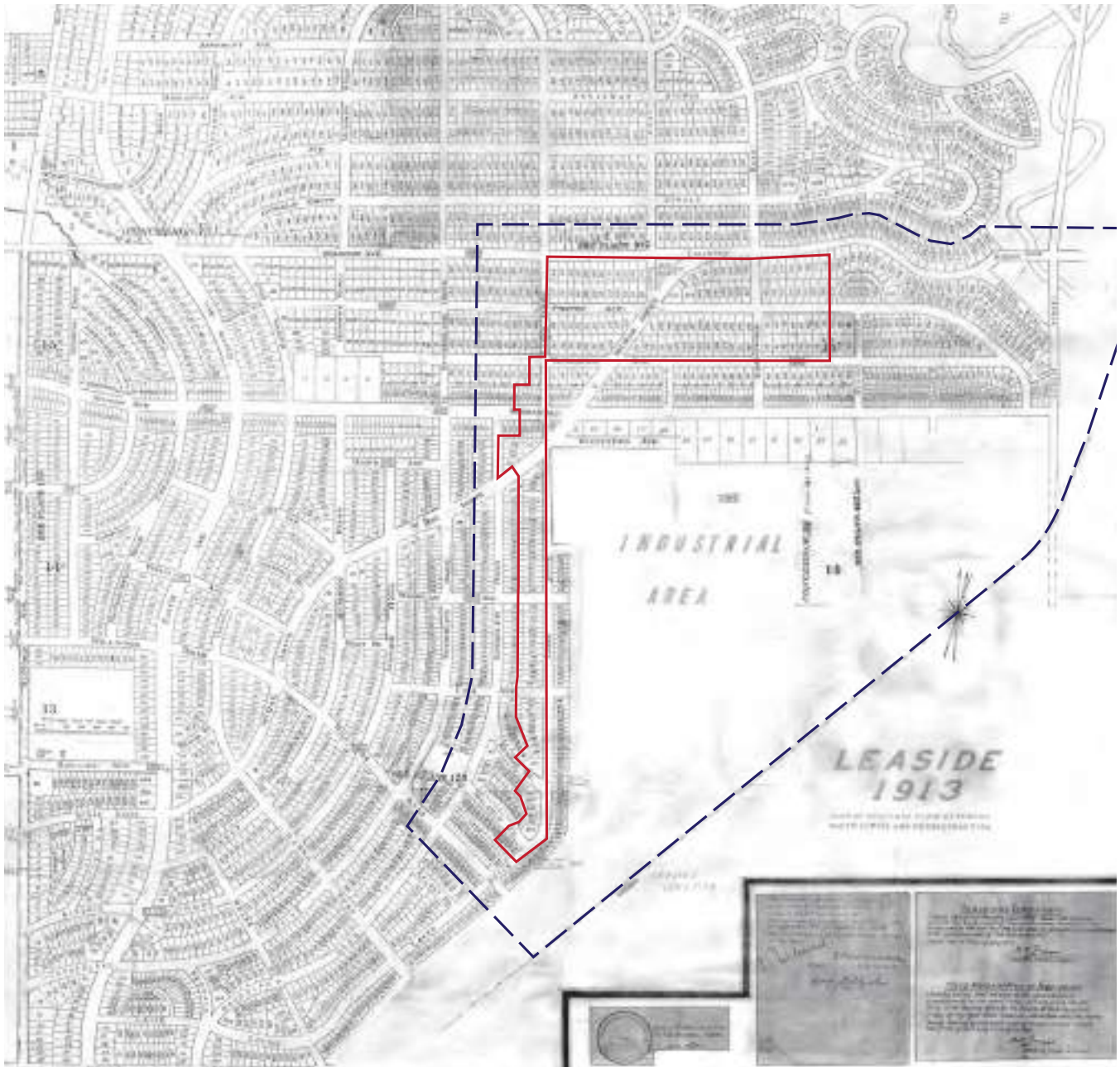


Figure 2.12: Todd plan for layout of Leaside (1913) with Study Area highlighted

- Planning and Urban Design Study Area
- Transportation Study Area



This triangular area was simply designated “shops”, in acknowledgement of the railway work yard and future, yet to be defined, employment uses.

Residential development was slow to materialize in Leaside. When houses first arose they were in relation to industrial investment along Laird Drive. Canadian Wire and Cable Company and Durant Motors of Canada Limited joined the rail yard in the first decades of the 1900’s. Other smaller industries followed and with them the residential population of Leaside slowly increased. While the population was only 43 in 1913 and grew only slightly for twenty years, in the late 1930’s it experienced a dramatic climb to 6,180 people.

The Todd plan envisaged Laird (named “Harding”) Drive as primarily a two-sided residential street with the exception of the block south of Wicksteed Avenue. By 1924 the full length of the street had been lotted out, as had all of Leaside, with residential as its primary use. Industrial uses were to be confined to lands east of Laird and south of Soudan Avenue (today’s Research

Road). No meaningful open space was included as part of the masterplan. The teardrop-shaped block that contains Trace Manes Park was initially subdivided into residential lots.

The Village of Leaside has from its inception been challenged by limited accessibility. Leslie Street was surveyed to extend northward from the City of Toronto and would have provided an eastward access road for the village. However, the topography of the Don Valley interrupted the ambitions of this alignment, leaving Leaside dependent on Bayview Avenue for access from the south. It was not until 1927 that the Millwood Road rail line underpass and bridge were constructed, and not until 1956 that Eglinton Avenue was extended eastward over the valley.

### 2.2.2 Block Structure

The block structure west of Laird Drive and north of Eglinton Avenue East originates from the Todd Plan and consists of blocks that are scaled for single-family residential dwellings. To accommodate larger industrial



Figure 2.13: Aerial view of Employment Lands looking north (c. 1920s)

uses, the Todd Plan did not identify a street layout for the lands east of Laird Drive. The block and street pattern evolved responding to the needs of industrial uses as they arose. As a result, the block and street pattern east of Laird Drive bears no relation to that on the west side.

### 2.2.3 Built Form

The residential area to the west of the Study Area is characterized by a majority of fine grained single-detached and semi-detached dwellings with a strong street-edge. Along the west side of Laird Drive, a mixture of uses occupy both house-form structures and larger scale buildings. The built form becomes more inconsistent along the east side of Laird Drive, along Eglinton Avenue East and within the employment area, with larger building footprints of varying sizes and sitings located on long, deep blocks. However, recent development and applications proposed taller mixed-use buildings will become more common along Eglinton Avenue East, and mid-rise residential typologies along the west side of Laird Drive.

### 2.2.4 Building Heights

Existing building heights are generally between one and three storeys throughout the study area, with the exception of the north east corner where residential buildings are upwards of 20 storeys. Future and active development along Laird Drive will result in buildings of seven to eight storeys; along Eglinton Avenue East new developments propose residential towers of 16, 20, and 28 storeys (approved) and upwards to 26 and 34 storeys (under review).



Figure 2.14: Block structure



Figure 2.15: Rendering of proposed development at 939 Eglinton Ave. E.

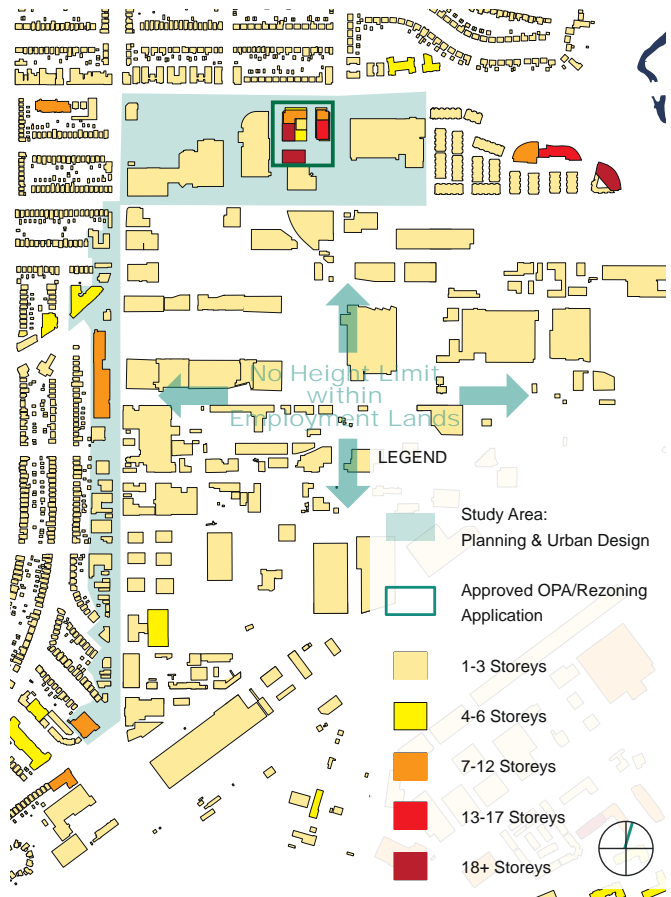


Figure 2.16: Existing and approved building heights

## 2.2.5 Development Density

Development density is expressed as “floor space index” (FSI) defined as the ratio of a developments overall gross floor area to site area. New developments along Laird Drive average 3.5 FSI; projects (approved and under review) along Eglinton Avenue East average 3.7 FSI. While taller than existing uses, the new developments’ vertical configuration, with parking reassigned below-grade, offer a greater opportunity for new streets, parks, and open spaces.

## 2.2.6 Lot Coverage

Lot coverage indicates the amount of land occupied by a building at ground level, and currently averages 40% along Eglinton Avenue East (ranging between of 34% to 46%) and 46% along Laird Drive (ranging between 13% to 79%). Most of the unoccupied land utilized for surface parking and driveways with very little usable green space remaining. New development indicates a shift towards higher lot coverages, with below-grade parking and additional landscaped space.

## 2.2.7 Sun-shadow Impacts

There are currently negligible shadow impacts from the existing built form within the study area due to low building heights, and significant building setbacks provided for the taller residential towers to the north-east. However, recent development applications are on lands closer to established residential communities and include taller buildings as part of their design. New developments along Laird Drive are mid-rise and incorporate step backs to help mitigate shadow impacts on neighbouring properties.

## 2.2.8 Neighbourhood Transition

Study Area A is defined by street edges and is generally surrounded by a low-rise context of small lots, much of which will remain unchanged over the near future. Of note, the southwest corner of Laird and Eglinton will be occupied by the station pavilion for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. Study Area B occupies a half block, or single lot, in depth and therefore shares a more immediate relationship with its adjacent neighbours. The Study Area backs onto the rear yards of 1- to 2-1/2-storeys dwellings. Across the street on the east side of Laird Drive is a mix of employment-compatible uses ranging from automotive garages to retail/commercial establishments.

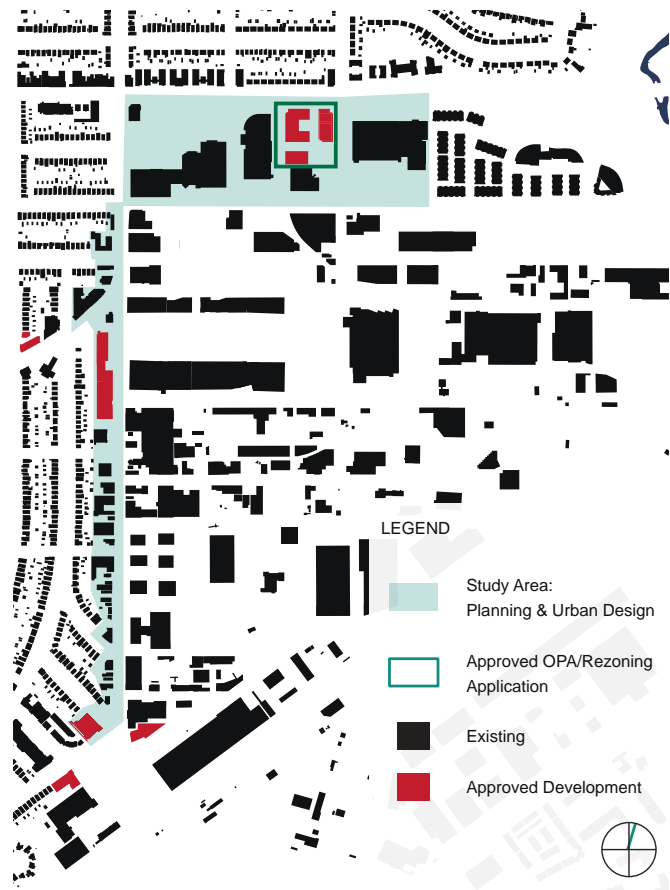


Figure 2.17: Existing and approved buildings (Nolli diagram)



Figure 2.18: View behind 146 Laird Drive looking south



Figure 2.19: View behind 134 Laird Drive looking north

## 2.3 Streetscape and Public Realm Context

### 2.3.1 Open Space

Besides public streets, the planning study areas currently do not contain public open space, although these amenities exist in the surrounding area and contribute to the Leaside character. Parks in Leaside are generally block-sized and emerged in lieu of development lots, with the exception of Leonard Linton Park (8,080 m<sup>2</sup>) which was developed on employment lands in consideration of the residential enclave along Aerodrome Crescent. Future open space is to be expected as part of new development. Leaside is further surrounded by the Don River Valley system, which extends along the east side of the employment area, as well as by affiliated open spaces, such as cemeteries and trails, forming an extensive natural corridor. However, year-round access points to this system are somewhat removed from the study area.

### 2.3.2 Streetscapes

The ground plane of Study Areas A and B are dominated by surface parking, servicing yards and driveway access. Laird Drive provides a poor pedestrian experience with narrow sidewalks, front yard parking pads, and frequent driveway entrances. Within the right-of-way cross-sections, there is currently no formal accommodation for cyclists. An intermittent landscaped median along Laird Drive discourages undesired vehicular turning activity, while also making it more difficult for pedestrians to cross the road. Eglinton Avenue East provides wider boulevards and more landscaping, although there is limited buffering from this busy arterial road. In the future, a significantly enhanced pedestrian and cyclist realm is envisioned as part of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project.

### 2.3.3 Road Improvements

Anticipated development along the west side of Laird Drive provides the opportunity to widen the right-of-way to a consistent width of 27 metres, providing sufficient room for wider sidewalks, street trees and street furniture along with setbacks. The reconfiguration of the intersection of Malcolm Road and Laird Drive has reduced the amount of pavement and realigned its geometry to create additional boulevard space. This has been implemented with the objective of improving pedestrian safety at this busy intersection.



Figure 2.20: Vehicles parked in front of 76 Laird Drive



Figure 2.21: Eglinton Ave. E. looking west towards Don Avon Drive



Figure 2.22: Laird Drive, with landscaped median, looking north

## 2.4 Transportation Analysis

The major investment into the Eglinton Crosstown LRT (ECLRT) line will significantly improve regional and local mobility, directly with enhanced higher-order and feeder bus transit options, and indirectly with supportive multi-modal and shared mobility strategies. Correspondingly, “city building” opportunities will emerge presenting opportunities to integrate new residential and employment intensification, including an enhanced public realm. To understand the existing transportation conditions, a review of existing policies, strategic plans, local area and land use characteristics, travel patterns, and the transportation conditions for all modes of travel was undertaken.



Figure 2.23: Mode share comparison

### 2.4.1 Mode Splits

Trips into and out of the study area have significantly changed in travel mode shares since 1991. Initially, auto trips were much lower, with significant use of active modes. However, active mode share use has dropped significantly since then, with an increasing reliance on auto, both as a primary driver and passenger. This is also reflective of the trend in nearby residential areas for increased vehicle ownership. There has been a marginal decline in transit trips due to the lack of new infrastructure in the area.

### 2.4.2 Regional Travel Patterns

Location-based data was utilized using archived GPS data from connected cars, trucks, traffic apps, and other similar data sources to develop metrics for travel behavior. This vehicular travel-pattern assessment using location-based data showed that approximately 50% of peak period traffic in a typical fall day in 2016 travelled to and from the study area, either internally or from nearby areas (less than 3 km), and that less than 10% of total traffic was from areas outside the City of Toronto boundaries. Key findings from this data assessment include:

- Generally, all designated local roadways exhibit over 90% vehicular traffic to / from the local community and the immediate surrounding areas (i.e. Zone 3, which is bounded by Lawrence/Yonge/Bloor-Danforth/DVP – an area within 3 km of the study area);
- Arterial roads and collectors such as Eglinton Avenue, Bayview Avenue, Laird Drive, McRae Drive, and Southvale Drive exhibit similar characteristics, with 50% of traffic derived locally within the Leaside area (i.e. within the existing community), and a further 25% or more from the surrounding area (< 3 km); and
- Average trip length from within the community (i.e. Zones 1 and 2) is 1.6 km, and along the local roads only (i.e. excluding McRae, Southvale and Millwood), 50% to 80% of the trips are to / from this community.

From this analysis, the roadways are generally compatible with the functional role as per their classification. It also indicates that traffic within the community is primarily from the local community (i.e. ranging between 50% to 80% along local roadways) and the adjacent surrounding areas (i.e. additional 10% to 40%), which is compatible with the functional role of a local roadway. Trips to / from the community (i.e. Zones 1 and 2) that are from / to the surrounding community (i.e. Zone 3) are prime candidates for improved safe and attractive pedestrian and cycling facilities, an enhanced feeder bus network, and coordinated TD measures. Longer distance trips (greater than 3 km) are limited to arterial and collector roadways, with only the major arterials experiencing vehicular trips to / from the broader Toronto area.

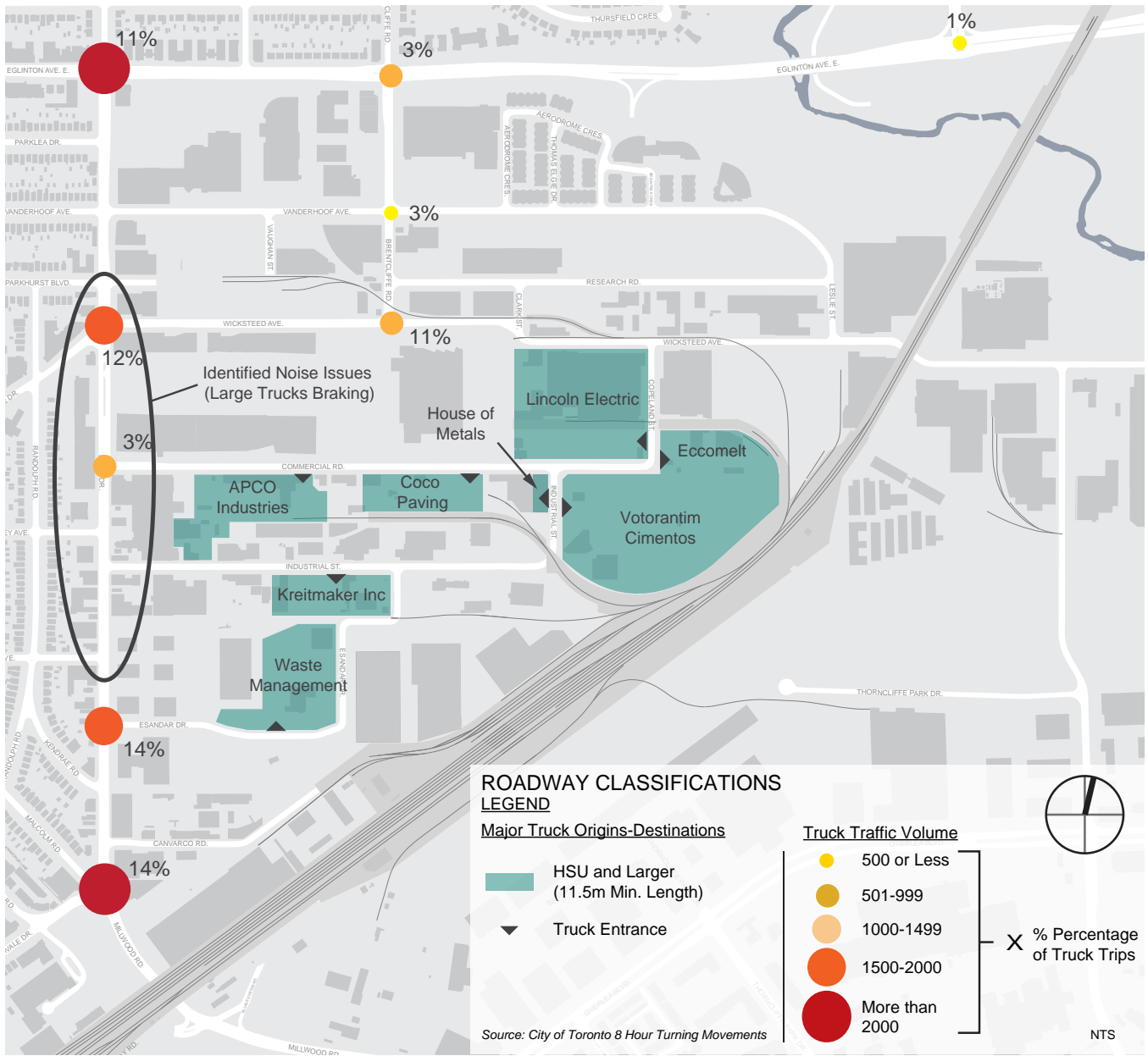


Figure 2.24: Heavy vehicle movement through Leaside Business Park

### 2.4.3 Active Transportation

Pedestrian and cycling modes will be critical for short distance trips within the area, connecting both development areas, as well as transit stations. Both modes were assessed individually, and generally it was found that there is a lack of active transportation-supportive infrastructure in the area. However, despite the poor environment and challenges, there are opportunities to build upon the latent demand.

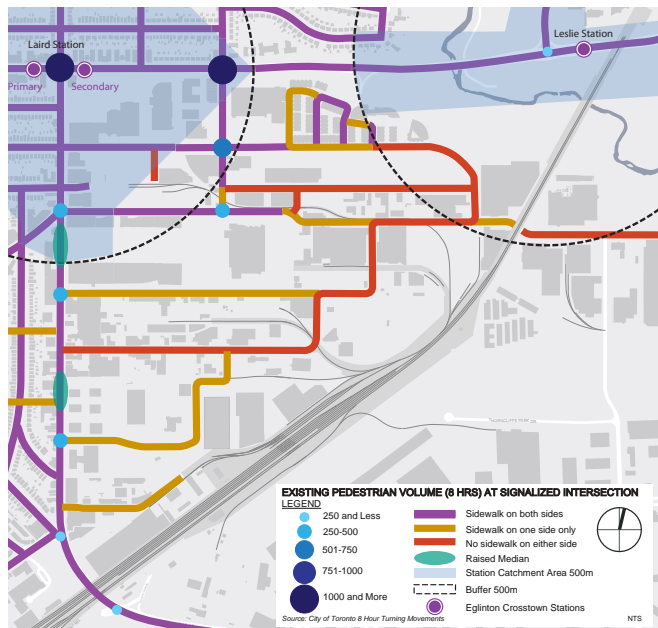


Figure 2.25: Pedestrian movement and conditions through Study Area

### 2.4.4 Goods Movement

Heavy vehicle traffic to facilitate goods movement within the study area appears to be primarily from Laird Drive providing access to the commercial/industrial areas of the study area. Location-based traffic data analysis indicates that commercial traffic appears to be greater than expected along Brentcliffe Road and Millwood Road. Most heavy vehicle traffic travel to the southern portion of the study area, consistent with the location of industrial land uses.



Figure 2.26: Concrete truck turning onto Wicksteed Ave. from Laird Dr.

### 2.4.5 Vehicle Movement and Parking

The two major arterials within the study area are Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue. There is limited connectivity within the study area due to the lack of granularity. Furthermore, on a more regional basis, barrier effects due to the rail corridor and Don Valley Ravine limit the number of east-west connections.



Figure 2.27 Surface parking at 815-845 Eglinton Ave. E.

Parking is generally limited along the roads; this is to be expected given the ample amount of retail and employment surface parking available in the vicinity.



Figure 2.28: Front yard parking along Laird Drive

## 2.5 Servicing Analysis

As part of a comprehensive analysis of Study Areas A and B, existing servicing capacity was reviewed and tested. The infrastructure identified for the study comprises the sanitary sewer system, the storm and combined system, and water mains. The properties along Eglinton Avenue East are generally connected to the Eglinton sanitary sewer; the properties along Laird Drive are connected to the Laird Drive combined sewer. At Laird Drive and Wicksteed Avenue there is a Combined Sewer Overflow facility where surcharge within the combined sewer is relieved by overflowing into a storm sewer running eastward along Wicksteed Avenue to the Don River (south of Eglinton Avenue).

Under parameters established for “2-year storm wet weather”, “100-year storm wet weather”, and “May 2000 extreme event”, the analysis identified the intersections at McRae Drive/Wicksteed Avenue and Laird Drive, and at Brentcliffe Road and Vanderhoof Avenue as having surcharge conditions. Testing and analysis of the watermain system indicate that pressures are within the recommended range of 40 psi to 100 psi in most of the area. However, under peak hour demand scenario, there are low pressures located in areas at the higher elevation range of the pressure district.

Analysis of the Preferred Plan with respect to the existing infrastructure capacity is summarized in Section 7 of this Report.

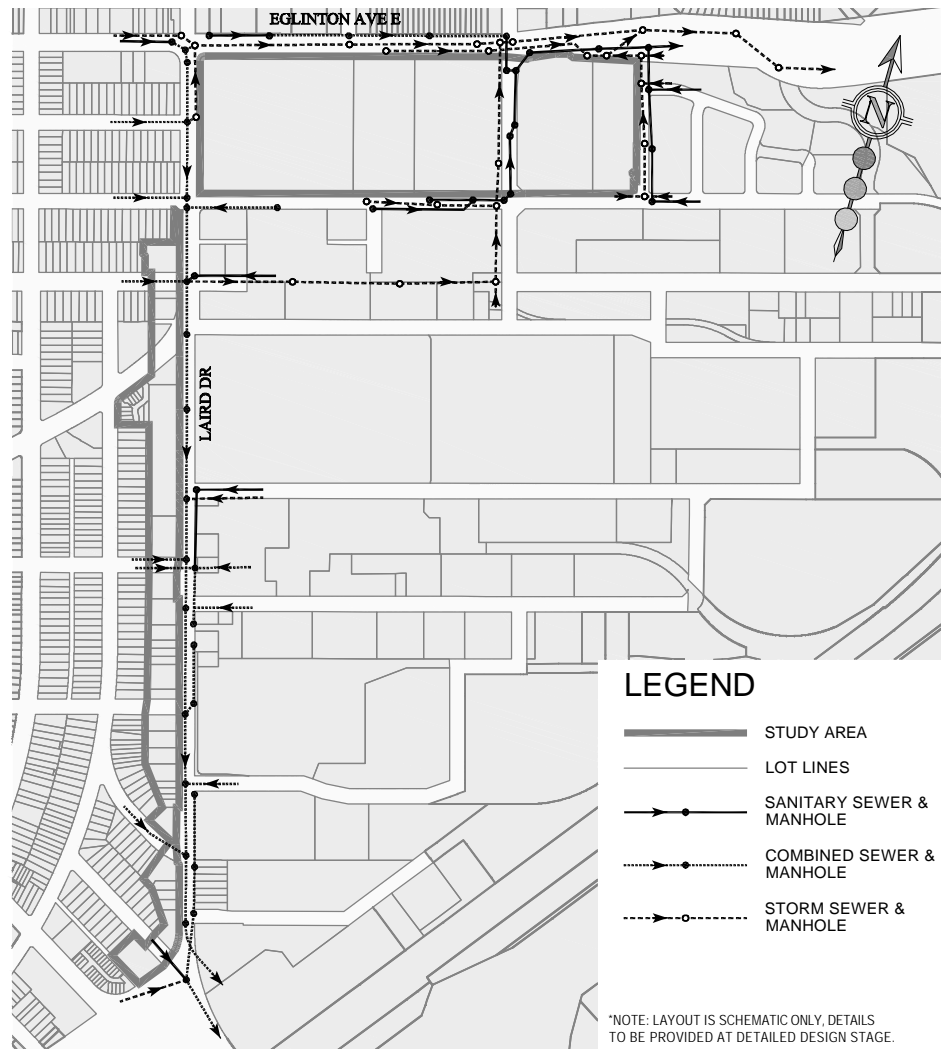


Figure 2.29: General infrastructure plan indicating existing location of sanitary, storm, and combined sewers