



November 4, 2019

North York Civic Centre  
Main floor, 5100 Yonge St.  
Toronto, ON M2N 5V7  
Attention: Francine Adamo

**RE: NY10.2: Final Report - Laird in Focus - City Initiated Official Plan Amendment**

Dear Chair James Pasternak and Members, North York Community Council,

Cycle Don Valley Midtown is the cycling advocate for Wards 15 and 16, in liaison with Cycle Toronto and, as such, the recommendations for cycling infrastructure as outlined in the *Laird in Focus Final Report* and noted in the related *Urban Design Guidelines* and *Site and Area Specific Policy (568)*, are of keen interest to us.

With an estimated 8,765 residents, taking approximately 4,180 person trips each day, cycling will need to be both attractive, safe and efficient if it is to make a significant contribution to the expectation that active transportation take up 20% of daily person trips (*Laird in Focus Final Report, July 2018*).

It is disappointing that a safe cycling connection between this neighbourhood and Thorncliffe Park via Wicksteed Ave and Beth Neilson Drive appears to have been abandoned at this time. However, we are encouraged that separated cycle tracks are recommended in both directions on Laird Drive, and that Vanderhoof Avenue will feature a separated multi-use path that will eventually connect to the Don Valley Trail system via the West Don River Trail. Along with the protected bike lanes that are part of the *Eglinton Connects* streetscape design, this new neighbourhood will benefit from having a minimum grid of safe cycling routes.

These improvements will fall short of the stated goal of providing a significantly enhanced pedestrian and cyclist realm, unless safe connections and safe crossings are prioritized.

**Specifically, we recommend the following changes:**

- **Safe connections**

Area A - New Mid-Block Street

“A multi-use path and sidewalk will be provided on the west side, south of the new Mid-block street, connecting the Vanderhoof Multi-Use Path to the proposed park.”

*Urban Design Guidelines, 3.0 Public Realm, 3.1 Streets, 3.1.C. Brentcliffe Road Guidelines (iv),*

This proposed design does not provide a safe connection to the bike lanes on Eglinton Avenue and forces cyclists onto the road against traffic when the path ends mid-block.

- (1) We recommend that the multi-use path be continued to Eglinton Avenue and integrate with the intersection and the bike lanes on the north and south side of Eglinton Avenue in keeping with the City’s Complete Streets Guidelines.**

This change would be consistent with *SASP No. 568 10.6 (i) Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling routes.*

- **Safe Crossings**

The *Site Area Specific Policy No. 568, in section 10. Mobility – item 10.10* specifies that, “Cycling interchanges, as shown on Map 4, Mobility Plan, will have seamless and continuous transfer for cyclists across streets by providing pavement markings and other cycling infrastructure to secure appropriate turning movements for cyclists.”

It is unrealistic to expect pedestrians and people on bikes on Vanderhoof Avenue to cross Laird at Eglinton or McRae. The absence of a safe crossing is likely to result in unsafe behaviour, such as jaywalking and riding the wrong way in a bike lane.

- (2) We recommend that the crossing of Laird Drive at Vanderhoof Avenue be specified as an on-demand signalized pedestrian/bike crossing.**

By restricting the crossing to bike and foot traffic, this will eliminate the concern that Vanderhoof Avenue will become a cut-through route in South Leaside. This crossing should be modelled after the well-used Bike/Pedestrian Crossing at Lawrence Avenue East and the Don Mills Trail, which is signalized on-demand and features separate crossing lanes for people on bikes and people on foot, providing clear direction to users and minimizing conflicts.

In addition, *SASP (568) Map 4: Mobility* makes no provision for cyclists at the pedestrian crossings at Laird Drive and McRae Drive, Eglinton Avenue and Don Avon Drive, and Eglinton Avenue and Brentcliffe Road.

**(3) We recommend that**

**Map 4: Mobility be amended to include people travelling by bike in keeping with Toronto's *Complete Streets Guidelines***

**More generally we recommend that the streetscape and intersection design within the *Laird in Focus* study areas follow Toronto's *Complete Streets Guidelines*, providing safe and connected travel for pedestrians and cyclists, and at the same time minimizing conflicts for people on foot and on bike.**

Respectfully submitted,

Louis Fliss, Geoff Kettel and Holly Reid  
Co-Chairs, Cycle Don Valley Midtown

c.c. Councillor Jaye Robinson  
Joe Nanos, Director, Community Planning, North York District  
Leaside Property Owners Association