

An aerial photograph of a city street grid, showing a mix of commercial buildings, residential areas, and green spaces. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid in the top right corner, containing the title and date of the report.

GOLDEN MILE SECONDARY PLAN STUDY

# FINAL REPORT

November 29, 2019

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Version Control

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Cover photo:

3D Aerial View of Golden Mile Secondary Plan  
Study Area (Google)



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## Executive Summary

The Golden Mile is expected to undergo significant change and redevelopment in the coming years. The construction of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (ECLRT) will trigger the next phase of city-building. Five new higher-order transit stops will spark the transformation of Golden Mile's current landscape of auto-oriented retail and industrial uses into a higher-density mixed-use, transit-supportive community. The Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study was initiated to set out a comprehensive vision and planning framework for the area. The study aims to guide the creation of a complete community through a new street and block pattern, connected system of parks and open spaces, enhanced mobility network, diverse and high quality built form, and generous community infrastructure to support current and future growth.

### Study Context

SvN was retained by the City of Toronto, Community Planning (Scarborough District) to conduct the Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study (GMSP Study). The objective of the GMSP Study is to develop a comprehensive vision and comprehensive planning framework for the historic Golden Mile in Scarborough. The vision and comprehensive planning framework will form the foundation for a Secondary Plan, Urban Design Guidelines, and other planning tools which are to support existing and future employment, mixed use and residential uses.

The Study Area encompasses lands generally bounded by Victoria Park Avenue/Cranborne Avenue to the west, Ashtonbee Road/Hydro Corridor to the north, Birchmount Road to the east, and an irregular boundary to the south. The Golden Mile area is characterized by mostly auto-oriented retail uses, with large amounts of surface parking and a built environment which poses challenges for pedestrians and cyclists.

The GMSP Study was conducted over three phases, as follows:

- Phase 1: Background Analysis - the first phase involved commencing the study, introducing the project to the community through engagement activities, completing background research on existing conditions, performing opportunity and constraint analysis, and developing a vision for the Golden Mile.
- Phase 2: Design Analysis and Alternative Solutions - the second phased involved identifying, analyzing and testing various design alternatives, selecting a preferred alternative, and reaching out to the public to receive feedback.
- Phase 3: Final Design and Plan Development - the final phase involved refinement of the preferred alternative, presentation of the final design and completion of the Final Secondary Plan Report.

Extensive public consultation was included in each phase of study, with engagement tailored to collect feedback from local residents, business owners, landowners, public agencies, community agencies and other key stakeholders. This feedback helped guide the development of the GMSP Study at key decision points throughout the process.

### Area Structure

To achieve the vision of a connected, accessible and diverse mixed-use community, a series of Structuring Elements are identified as key 'moves' guiding the future growth of the area. These include:

- Re-configured/widened/improved existing streets;
- New streets;
- Eglinton/Victoria Park Gateway;
- *Transit Nodes*/LRT stops;
- Existing parks and open spaces;

- Ten key new parks; and
- *Green Nodes*.

Further to the Structuring Elements, an organizing framework of four Districts and eight Character Areas is identified to respond to existing and future conditions and to help reinforce the distinct character and identity of these different areas. This includes the compact, retail-focused form associated with the West District, the civic and cultural focus of the Central District, the residential emphasis of the East District and the commercial office focus of the Employment District. These Districts are further implemented through eight Character Areas, which are envisioned to contain defining land use, built form and public realm characteristics.

## Land Use

The land use strategy in the Golden Mile will support a diverse, mixed-use community with a balance of residential, commercial and employment uses that enable residents to live, work and play.

*Mixed Use Areas* are the predominant land use, located between Eglinton Avenue East and Ashtonbee Road throughout the length of the Golden Mile and at the Commercial Gateway. These areas are encouraged to include higher-density residential and non-residential uses, including but not limited to office, retail, restaurants, medical offices, and/or community facilities. Major office development is recommended in close proximity to planned ECLRT stops.

*Employment Areas* are located south of Eglinton Avenue East generally between Pharmacy Avenue and Birchmount Road. These areas are encouraged to support the redevelopment and modernization of existing office buildings and commercial uses.

A small portion of lands situated in the northwest portion of the Golden Mile are designated as *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, which will facilitate higher-density residential uses.

A two-tiered hierarchy of active commercial uses at-grade complements the land use framework by identifying areas of required and recommended commercial frontages in *Mixed Use Areas* and *Employment Areas*.

## Public Realm

The public realm plan for the Golden Mile incorporates both publicly and privately-owned and accessible features into an interconnected network of open and inviting spaces that all users can enjoy. New major parks will be complemented by a series of privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS), a robust pedestrian and cycling network, green boulevard treatments, and public art installations to create a vibrant and attractive public realm.

Ten key new parks, including the Central Park, West Park, and East Park, will be located and programmed to serve as focal points for new Districts. The planning, design and development of new parks will consider their ability to accommodate a diverse range of user groups year-round, connect to nearby streets and open spaces, and integrate valuable ecological functions.

Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (*POPS*) will be designed to supplement the public park system while incorporating high quality design and animating key locations such as *Green Nodes* and LRT *Transit Nodes*. These can include green spaces, urban squares, courtyards, plazas, and pedestrian connections, and contain a mix of hardscapes and softscapes.

Active transportation is promoted through a network of fine-grain pedestrian and cyclist connections to increase comfort, accessibility and safety, encouraging the adoption of travel modes beyond the private automobile.

Recommended design strategies introduce generous streetscape enhancements for all existing and new streets, with dedicated street and furniture zones to improve visual aesthetics and provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. Public art will be introduced at visually prominent locations to support local character and create an enhanced sense of place that reflects the heritage of the Golden Mile.

### **Built Form**

The built form is envisioned to transform from the current low-density, auto-oriented environment to one which promotes high quality urban design accommodating transit-supportive densities and an active, pedestrian-scaled public realm. New buildings will reinforce a coherent, harmonious and responsive streetscape through active ground floor uses, setbacks, streetwalls, stepbacks and articulated facades.

A mix of building types, from low-rise to tall buildings, is encouraged to be achieved throughout the Golden Mile. Greater heights and densities will be concentrated at the Commercial Gateway (30-35 storeys), in close proximity to ECLRT stops at the Mixed Use Transit Nodes (20 to 30 storeys), and along major north-south streets (15-20 storeys), transitioning down in scale and intensity moving away from Eglinton Avenue E. Maximum building heights will vary based on location within Character Areas, along key streets, and in proximity to parks and open spaces. Existing Neighbourhoods and Parks and Open Space Areas will be protected through the application of 45 degree angular planes, with low and mid-rise forms providing a transition between neighbourhoods and tall buildings.

The built form strategy is structured around seven key principles:

- Contextually Appropriate and Transit Supportive Development;
- Supporting the Street and Block Network;
- Defining, Framing, and Supporting the Public Realm;
- Defining and Supporting the Character Areas;
- Variety and Variation;
- Transition in Scale; and
- Limiting Impact.

### **Cultural Heritage**

A number of strategies are recommended to preserve the rich history of the Golden Mile, including public recognition of its distinct agricultural, industrial and commercial eras of development. Heritage resources should be studied and designated as appropriate, and their defining features should be celebrated in the public realm through incorporation into landscape, lighting, signage, interpretation and art.

### **Design Excellence and Sustainability**

Development in the Golden Mile will demonstrate the highest levels of design excellence in building, site and landscape design, including a high level of sustainable design. A high standard of consideration and attention to the relationship between the public and private realms, as well as the relationship between the built and natural environment, is necessary to support the creation of an integrated and liveable environment.

Sustainability principles and practices are encouraged to be integrated into new development, as well as the wider public realm. This can be accomplished through a range of measures, including swales, rain

gardens, and other Low Impact Development measures for improved stormwater infiltration, native planting treatments and biodiverse green roofs for improved natural habitats, and public art, informational signage and interpretive features for increased environmental awareness. Development is also encouraged to improve energy efficiency and resilience through heat recovery from nearby infrastructure sources, shared connections to thermal energy networks, on-site energy generation, and near-zero emissions targets.

## Mobility

The Golden Mile's mobility network will shift from one dominated by private vehicle travel to one which emphasizes a greater role for active modes including transit, walking and cycling. Consideration and design of the mobility network will be informed by a complete streets approach which recognizes and accommodates the needs of all users.

The planned street network provides a fine-grain network that efficiently facilitates pedestrian, cycling and vehicular circulation. The network implements a series of extensions, widenings and realignments to O'Connor Drive, Civic Road, Craigton Drive, and Thermos Road, as well as new streets including Golden Mile Boulevard and a series of new north-south links. In addition, Victoria Park Avenue and Warden Avenue are required to be widened to achieve 36 metre right of ways to accommodate transit priority measures or potential future higher-order transit along these corridors. The exact location, alignment and design of new and re-configured/widened/improved streets will be determined through subsequent Environmental Assessment study and/or review and approval of development applications or other implementation mechanisms deemed appropriate by the City.

*Transit Nodes* along Eglinton Avenue East will provide integrated mobility infrastructure. Shared mobility will be encouraged through a

series of "Ecomobility Hubs" located at LRT stops, which will establish one-stop multi-modal service points including bike-share, ride-share and car-share facilities. Additionally, smaller-scale hubs will be located throughout the Golden Mile on key streets.

All development will be required to implement the required transportation infrastructure and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures identified in the Golden Mile Transportation Master Plan. The City with development partners will also be encouraged to develop and undertake a transportation monitoring program which will assess transportation needs and identify required infrastructure improvements on an ongoing basis.

## Servicing Infrastructure

As the Golden Mile continues to develop and intensify, opportunities to improve servicing infrastructure will be assessed and undertaken. The municipal servicing strategy is based upon relevant City of Toronto mandated design standards and contains specific recommendations for sanitary, storm and water servicing. A Master Servicing Plan has been completed as a part of this study to assess infrastructure capacity in relation to population growth.

Generally, the existing sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and watermains contain adequate capacity, with the exception of the sanitary system in extreme wet weather events. Recommended upgrades include but are not limited to a new sanitary sewer on the proposed realignment of Craigton Drive, upsizing or the twinning of existing sewers on Ashtonbee Road and additional sewers to service new developments and new roadways such as Golden Mile Boulevard. New developments must undertake technical analysis having regard for future development levels anticipated by the Golden Mile Secondary Plan when determining capacity. Where

there is limited capacity, developments will be responsible for the cost and implementation of all new infrastructure and/or improvement to existing infrastructure. Phased and/or sequenced construction may be necessary to ensure sufficient servicing capacity.

## Housing and Community Services and Facilities

New residential and employment growth will create significant additional demand for housing and community services, including schools, child care, libraries, recreation centres and social services. To address this need, residential development is recommended to provide a wide spectrum of housing options, including diversity in building type, unit size and tenure, and affordability. It is preferred that residential buildings include a minimum percentage of family-sized units (2 or 3-bedroom) and dedicated amenity spaces for the use of residents.

New community services and facilities (CS&F) should be established and existing services and facilities renovated, expanded and/or replaced to achieve the range of community services and facilities necessary to serve future growth within the Golden Mile. As part of this study, a CS&F assessment was undertaken to identify emerging priorities in the area. These priorities include: two new elementary schools, replacement of the Victoria Village Hub and provision of affordable community agency space, ten new licensed child care facilities, maintenance and expansion of the Eglinton Square and Kennedy/Eglinton branches of the Toronto Public Library, and revitalization of nearby community recreation centres. Community facilities and services should be delivered in a timely manner concurrent with growth. Facilities are encouraged to be co-located and integrated with other community uses, and delivered through partnership agreements with public, private and non-profit agencies.

## Economic Development

The Golden Mile is envisioned to retain its historical status as a centre for economic activity. This will be facilitated through protecting existing employment and office uses and encouraging further development through numerous potential municipal incentives. This includes developing a Community Improvement Plan, implementing Tax Increment Equivalent Grants for targeted industries, and considering development approvals incentives such as fast-tracked applications.

## Implementation

A number of identified measures will help guide the successful implementation of the recommendations of this study and the transformation of the Golden Mile.

Development shall be sequenced to ensure efficient infrastructure provision and transportation network expansion. The expansion of the street network into a finer grid of streets and blocks will occur incrementally, with the required right-of-way for streets secured during the first phase of development. Landowners will be held to financial contributions to support road infrastructure abutting and traversing their sites, as well as key street network improvements required through the Transportation Master Plan. To provide for the orderly sequencing of development and requisite provision of infrastructure and community services, the City may choose to enact a Zoning By-Law with a Holding (H) symbol with respect to residential uses on lands designated as *Mixed Use Areas*. To ensure the facilitation of development proposals in conformity to municipal policy, complete applications shall require a Context Plan, Transportation Demand Management Strategy and Heritage Impact Statement for properties with identified heritage value.