

Little Jamaica Initiative - Master Plan and Aligned Initiatives: Introduction and Status Report

Date: March 10, 2022

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture Division, and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: Toronto-St. Paul's - Ward 12, Eglinton-Lawrence - Ward 8, Davenport - Ward 9, and York South Weston - Ward 5

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to introduce the Little Jamaica Initiative, a multifaceted response to 26 City Council recommendations resulting from six Member's motions and provide a status update.

Approximately 50 years ago, the area along Eglinton Avenue West, also known as Little Jamaica, became an immigration settlement neighbourhood for newcomers from Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, and continues to serve as a distinct ethnic and cultural hub. The area is recognized for the clusters of Black-owned and operated businesses of cultural relevance and is internationally known for its contribution to the reggae genre of music. Similar to many neighbourhoods in Toronto, the area has enjoyed settlement from other newcomers, and has a rich Indigenous history closely connected to the numerous ravines and water tributaries that traverse through it.

Black community leaders and activists have called upon the City to formally recognize this area for its cultural heritage significance and to respond to years of underinvestment in the community and to address a number of challenges including a substantial loss of Black-owned and operated businesses and a lack of affordable retail/commercial spaces and residential rental units.

In response to Council's directions and calls to action from the community, an Interdivisional Team was established with membership from a number of City divisions with current mandates in Little Jamaica including actions to address anti-Black racism measures, mobility, housing, development review, and social development services. The Interdivisional Team has worked together to develop an approach that intends to align inclusive economic development, culture, people and place-making initiatives with an engagement process, using an equity, anti-Black racism and cultural lens.

The Interdivisional Team supports this work and coordinates a number of Aligned Initiatives. The Aligned Initiatives include specific work directed by Council and current on-going city-wide or area specific work, programs or initiatives that specifically impact

Little Jamaica. The goal is to align all identified initiatives for a more impactful, relevant and effective response through the Little Jamaica Initiative. Some of the Aligned Initiatives include, support for Black-owned businesses in Little Jamaica through the Business Improvement Areas ('BIA's), advancing affordable housing initiatives including 20 Shortt Street, Economic Development and Culture's Cultural Hotspot, Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative and ArtworxTO programs.

City Council also requested staff to develop a new Cultural Districts Program for Toronto. The city-wide Cultural Districts Program is currently being developed. The Cultural Districts Program will provide a set of tools to support cultural activities and small businesses that occupy all types of buildings and landscapes.

The engagement and work to develop the Little Jamaica Master Plan will begin prior to the finalization of the Cultural Districts Program. The Little Jamaica Master Plan and engagement strategy will be led by a Program Advisor and will result in the implementation of culturally responsive tools and policies that support and contribute to the cultural identity and significance of the area, manage growth and development, advance social equity and economic inclusion for current and future residents to grow in place and guide investment in infrastructure and services.

This report provides an introduction and a status update on the Little Jamaica Initiative and its two streams of work – the Master Plan and Aligned Initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommend that:

1. The Economic and Community Development Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial impacts arising from the actions contained in this report. Funding is included for the development of the Little Jamaica Master Plan in the 2022 Approved Operating Budgets for Economic Development and Culture and City Planning. There may be financial implications associated with Little Jamaica initiatives in future years and staff will report back to identify these costs and include them as part of the future budget processes for consideration.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Little Jamaica Initiative and its two main streams of work will be continually assessed for potential impacts on residents who are made vulnerable by structural inequality and equity deserving groups. It is anticipated that the Master Plan and the Aligned Initiatives, once developed, will have a positive reconciliation and equity impact through addressing structural and systemic barriers. Indigenous self-determination and priorities will be considered throughout the development of the Master Plan and the ongoing work on the Aligned Initiatives. Indigenous communities will be engaged and consulted to ensure that the outcomes reflect those principles. The negative impacts of anti-Black racism on diverse Black populations will also be analysed and addressed through this initiative, including the experiences of Black women, Black people living with disabilities, Black immigrants and Black residents living on a low income, in addition to responding to structural barriers impacting the way Black businesses, Black organizations and Black residents living, working and visiting Little Jamaica experience neighbourhood change. The Little Jamaica Initiative aims to leverage benefits from future development that can address barriers to adequate housing, social services, employment and economic opportunities for equity-deserving groups who live in the area.

The Program Advisor uses an equity-based place making lens that considers spatialized anti-Blackness, Indigeneity, accessibility, sexual and gender diversity, sustainability etc. The Master Plan work will include additional priorities like the provision of dignified and diverse housing options, physically and psychologically safe streets, vibrant green spaces, gender-responsive design approaches that consider LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals and sustainability using an environmental justice lens. The goal of using an equity lens is to establish new, equitable ground for recognizing all of our cultural contributions and building increased pathways toward prosperity.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 30, 2020, City Council directed the City Manager to report to the Executive Committee on several urgent actions required to help the survival of small businesses on Eglinton Avenue West impacted by 10 years of constructing the Eglinton Crosstown. City Council also directed the City Manager, in consultation with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, along with the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit to report back as soon as possible on the immediate actions required to establish the Eglinton Avenue West area as a Little Jamaica Heritage and Innovation Heritage Hub that recognizes and promotes the local Black History and culture of the area.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM24.17>

At its meeting on September 30, 2020, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to collaborate with key stakeholders to explore measures to provide financial relief and other measures as appropriate to stabilize Black-owned and operated businesses along Eglinton Avenue West. City Council also

directed several divisions to form an inter-divisional working group to address a number of recommendations related to the development of a Cultural District Plan, an affordable housing strategy for the area, and a comprehensive planning framework study and plan.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM24.36>

At its meeting on September 30, 2020, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to include Eglinton Avenue West station as part of the Phase 1 Protected Major Transit Station Area Study being conducted and to develop a Housing Strategy so that inclusionary zoning permissions can be achieved within the new cultural district and to work with Community Planning to incorporate the Protected Major Transit Stations Areas requirements into a new planning framework.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM24.36>

At its meeting on March 10, 2021, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the appropriate officials of the Toronto Parking Authority, the Social Development Finance and Administration, and CreateTO, to prepare a feasibility study on repurposing the Green P parking lot at 20 Shortt Street to a community service hub and an affordable housing development, while maintaining current parking levels; and develop an inventory of the existing social community infrastructure within a 500-metre radius of Dufferin Street and Eglinton Avenue West, and compare this list to the future level of expected density arising from the completion of new developments and the Eglinton Light Rail Transit.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM30.24>

At its meeting on April 7, 2021, City Council directed the Chief Planner, Executive Director, City Planning to prioritize a survey of the cultural heritage resources of Little Jamaica in the 2021 and 2022 City Planning Study Work Program as a part of the Council-adopted Little Jamaica Cultural District Plan and report back to City Council on the outcome of a comprehensive heritage survey.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM31.11>

At its meeting on July 14, 2021, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, in consultation with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to report, as part of their ongoing Study, on the feasibility of not allowing Chain Stores ("formula retail") in the subject area to support the retention of Black-owned and/or operated businesses.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM35.38>

On July 27, 2021, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee ('CABRAC') directed the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit of Social Development, Finance and Administration to engage the Unit's Partnership and Accountability Circle as a primary reference group for the Little Jamaica Initiative to increase community participation and accountability in project governance and decision making. The CABRAC also requested the Manager, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, to report back to the CABRAC in the first quarter of 2022 on a financial structure that can be created to assist members of the Black community to own commercial property in Little Jamaica.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.CR2.1>

At its meeting on November 9, 2021, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to undertake broad public engagement with the local City Councillors, community members, stakeholders, Business Improvement Areas and relevant Council Advisory Bodies on the development of a Cultural Districts Program that strengthens local culture and communities, supports small businesses and retail and promotes community-owned spaces. As part of the broad public engagement, to continue targeted engagement with equity-deserving communities and report back through the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee and to work with Indigenous communities in Toronto to ensure that a Cultural Districts Program reflects communities' priorities regarding place-making, place-keeping and self-determination and is aligned with the upcoming City of Toronto Reconciliation Action Plan. City Council also directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to work with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to identify Municipal and Provincial planning policies that would support cultural districts.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EC25.3>

At its meeting on November 9, 2021, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report in June 2022 after conducting additional market analysis in areas currently undergoing study such as Little Jamaica, the Sheppard Subway Corridor and any other areas where planning studies are currently being undertaken and which were not subject to the original detailed analysis to identify additional opportunities wherein Inclusionary Zoning may apply.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.PH28.1>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Commonly known as Little Jamaica, the Eglinton Avenue West area includes commercial main streets and numerous neighbourhoods. The area is culturally important to City residents and visitors as a distinct ethnic and cultural hub for Caribbean, African and Black residents. The area is recognized for the clusters of Black-owned and operated businesses of cultural relevance including barber shops, restaurants specializing in Caribbean cuisine, Black aesthetics and hair shops, recording studios, and music stores, and internationally-known for its contribution to the reggae genre of music.

Little Jamaica stretches across Eglinton Avenue West from approximately Allen Road to Keele Street. For over 50 years, Little Jamaica has proudly served as a regional hub for the highest concentration of Black businesses and culture in Toronto. The area experienced an accelerated growth in the 1960s through immigration from Jamaica, other Caribbean islands, and recently from Africa.

Metrolinx's Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit ('LRT') project is a major transit investment with 25 stops between Kennedy Road in the east and Mount Dennis (Weston Road) in the west, along Eglinton Avenue. The construction of the LRT has created significant disruption along Eglinton Avenue West for local residents and businesses. This, combined with natural neighbourhood change and evolution, growing

real estate market demand, disproportionate impacts arising from COVID-19 and the civil rights uprisings, has contributed to complex challenges.

Businesses have been particularly hard hit. Since the start of the LRT construction in 2011, more than 140 businesses have closed. Over 48 of the 85 Black-owned and operated businesses in the area have closed and a growing number of prominent and historic small Black businesses are at risk of shutting their doors due to rising affordability challenges in the area.

Community leaders and activists have called upon the City to formally recognize this area for its cultural heritage significance and to respond to years of underinvestment in the community and to address a number of challenges in the area. City Council responded by adopting six Member Motions with 26 recommendations and 61 action items.

LITTLE JAMAICA INITIATIVE

The Little Jamaica Initiative is an overarching approach that will develop and implement a series of programs, plans and/or strategies to respond to Council's direction and calls from the community to begin to address cultural erasure, community displacement and the lack of affordable spaces for Black residents and businesses. More specifically, the Initiative supports Caribbean, African and Black residents and equity-deserving communities to navigate neighbourhood change and intensification, infrastructure development and other urban renewal investments.

The Little Jamaica Initiative will engage with communities to develop a plan to stabilize, strengthen and promote the cultural assets and diverse neighbourhoods in Little Jamaica. Ultimately, the Little Jamaica Initiative is a long-term community building process that aims to foster innovative tools and ideas to encourage City leaders to embrace culturally responsive policies and to remove barriers allowing communities to thrive.

City staff continue to endeavour to gain a deeper understanding of the Little Jamaica community to adequately understand the dynamics within Little Jamaica. A key intention is to uncover the real, deep and complex nuances that exist in Little Jamaica and to listen to diverse local voices by providing a platform and various ways for people to share their authentic narrative of their lived experience and insights.

The Little Jamaica Initiative has two main streams of work, the Little Jamaica Master Plan and Aligned Initiatives. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between these components. The Little Jamaica Initiative will also consider the outcomes of the city-wide Cultural Districts Program which is currently under development.

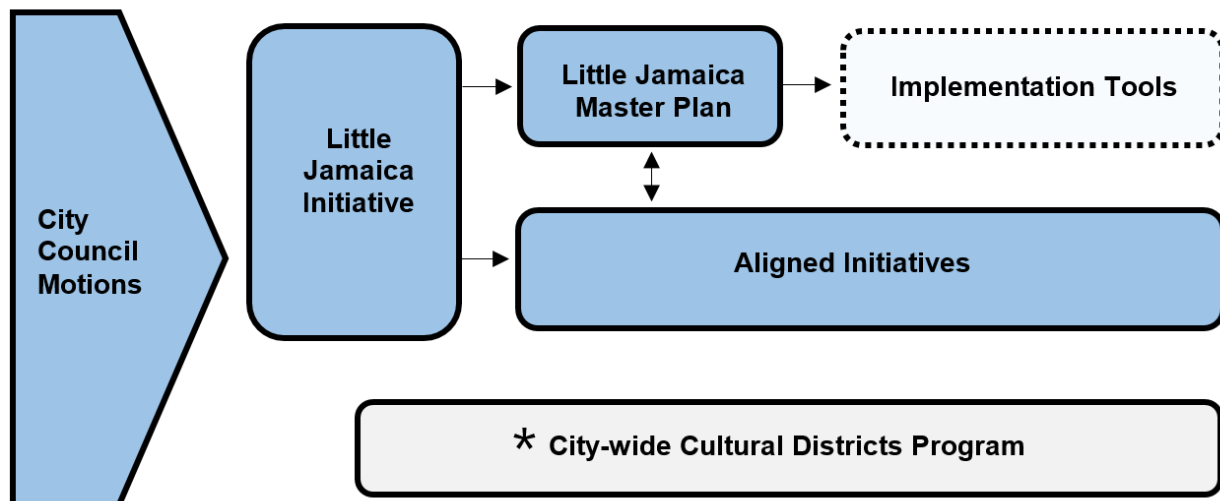


Figure 1 illustrates the components of the Little Jamaica Initiative and how they inform and support one another. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates that the city-wide Cultural Districts Program is currently under development.

Interdivisional Team

The Interdivisional Team consists of staff from a number of City divisions with current mandates in Little Jamaica including mobility, housing, parks and recreation, development review, main street recovery, inclusive economic development, cultural services, heritage, and social development. A key objective for this team is ensuring collaboration on dynamic and complex issues, allowing for creativity and synergies to be realized. The Interdivisional Team is committed to using an equity and anti-Black racism approach in their work.

The Interdivisional Team serves as an advisory roundtable for staff from various divisions advancing the two streams of the Little Jamaica Initiative, The Little Jamaica Master Plan, and Aligned Initiatives. The Interdivisional Team will continue to provide strategic guidance and support.

An integral member of the Interdivisional Team is the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit in the Social Development, Finance and Administrative Division. The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit aims to tackle the systemic and structural barriers that Black residents and businesses face through advancing transformative culture change at the City. Focused on driving more equitable outcomes across policy, processes and institutions, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit's work increases access to social and economic opportunities for people of African descent. The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit provides strategic advice and community feedback to the Interdivisional team and has worked to ensure all staff supporting this initiative participated in mandatory anti-Black racism training to ensure staff could proactively embed an Anti-Black Racism Lens to all aspects of their work.

Program Advisor

In November 2021, Jay Pitter Placemaking, was announced to lead public engagement for the city-wide Cultural Districts Program and to co-develop the Little Jamaica Master Plan. The addition of Jay Pitter Placemaking is one way the City will advance its understanding around applying both an equity and cultural lens to the master planning and place-making process.

Launch Event

On March 4, 2021, the City of Toronto, hosted a launch event to bring public awareness to the initiative to commence the public consultation process and community relationship building. The consultation was virtual due to COVID-19 pandemic regulations.

Approximately 330 people participated at the virtual event. The event was primarily to promote and bring awareness to the Initiative and was aligned with the City's Black Mental Health Week activities. The following is a summary of the feedback provided:

Opportunity: A number of participants shared that Little Jamaica is a great community and a great place to live. Many cited the variety of businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of the area with nods to the Black legacy businesses and their owners who have helped create and establish this area. There is an opportunity to make this area a district that centres and celebrates Jamaican, Caribbean and Black cultures as well as the legacy of all newcomers who contributed to the area's history. This area can be made more beautiful, with lots of public art and more bicycle-friendly infrastructure with the inclusion of separated bicycle lanes. A key opportunity mentioned is creating a cultural district with many different arts and cultural organizations and businesses.

Affordability: It is clear from numerous comments and questions that the affordability of both residential and commercial units is of significant importance and concern. Comments asking for more affordable housing in the area as well as units with rent geared to income.

Change is Expected: Most comments suggest that change and growth in the area is expected as the LRT construction ends, and the LRT opens. Most comments were about protecting existing businesses and residents from negative impacts of change. Many comments about how the area could be transformed into a cultural district with the inclusion of cultural events, spaces, markets, and cultural hubs or centres.

Community: Many comments addressed the desire to maintain the existing community, especially the businesses. A number of comments spoke to urgent support needed to keep all businesses but especially Black-owned and Black-operated businesses operating. Other comments spoke of community health and healthcare and how to incorporate it into a cultural district.

Asset-based approach: Many spoke to the key principle of robust and deep community engagement and collaboration on the development of a cultural district, as well as the need to build on the existing community leadership and assets. Suggestions included different engagement methods and techniques that use existing community

organizations to reach out to relevant stakeholders and the public. Many comments reinforced the City's asset-based approach to this initiative's engagement.

Other Engagement and Listening

Since 2019, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit has held regular meetings with community partners connected to Little Jamaica to gather advice and explore partnership opportunities, including Nia Centre for the Arts, Black Urbanism Toronto, The Black Businesses Professional Association, CP Planning, the Mayor's Round Table on Black Business, as well as other leaders, elders, and grassroots groups.

Mayor Tory hosted two roundtables, one on Little Jamaica and another on Black businesses and professionals in the tech sector. The roundtable discussions resulted in several interventions, including a partnership grant to the Black Business Professionals Association and Black Urbanism TO, investment stewarded by the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit and facilitated by the Economic Development and Culture Division; a social media campaign and website dedicated to marketing the area; and the engagement of Black businesses, community stakeholders, and partners to generate a Confronting Anti-Black Racism supported report and research entitled, "A Black Business Conversation: On Planning for the Future of Black Businesses and Residents on Eglinton West", developed and led by Black Urbanism TO and released in fall 2020.

Through conversations with community partners, staff identified that residents felt disconnected and more community engagement and updates were needed. In response, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit worked to amplify the voices and interests of Black communities seeking to receive more timely and fulsome updates on the progress, opportunities and activities related to the Initiative. As such, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Units community engagement efforts have focused on ensuring Black communities, including Black businesses, Black-led and Black mandated organizations, and local Black residents are effectively engaged in the design, decision-making and planning of the Little Jamaica Initiative. The Unit's focus aims to ensure the development of a comprehensive framework that responds to the increasing displacement of Black residents caused by the growing social and economic neighbourhood pressures and change in Little Jamaica.

City staff will continue to build its understanding of Little Jamaica through listening to residents, business owners, stakeholder groups and community advocates. Over the past year City staff have committed to attending as many meetings as possible, hosted by community members and others, to better understand the community, local insights and perspectives.

City staff from a number of divisions regularly hear from residents as part of their daily work or from current or past studies and engagement sessions. City staff are reviewing feedback from past consultations as a continued reference. Specific themes that have been raised are embedded in the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit's Growing in Place Framework, which is informed by years of engagement in Little Jamaica include:

- Building a supportive eco-system for Black ownership of commercial units;
- Forming Community Trusts to provide and improve affordable housing options;

- Creating culturally-responsive parks and green spaces;
- Thinking differently about community and cultural spaces;
- Promoting and cultivating environmental and community resiliency;
- Identifying and conserving the area's cultural heritage resources; and
- Exploring opportunities for a holistic City response to gentrification and Black displacement.

The Mayor, local Ward Councillors and Chair of the Economic and Community Development Committee have been and will continue to be engaged by City staff throughout the Initiative.

THE PARTNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY CIRCLE & WORKING GROUP

The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee, at their meeting on July 27, 2021, identified the need for increased community engagement and participation in the governance and decision making of the Initiative. To improve accountability and to leverage existing community leadership bodies, the Committee recommended that the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit's Partnership and Accountability Circle be engaged to develop a Little Jamaica Accountability Table. The Table will act as the primary community reference group for the Little Jamaica Initiative, working to ensure community members and key stakeholders can help inform important decision making.

The Partnership and Accountability Circle ('Accountability Circle') is the program advisory body of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit. The Accountability Circle is composed of 12 Black Torontonians from across the City, who represent youth, elders and sectoral leaders of African descent and help guide and support the full implementation of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. The Accountability Circle's expertise, diversity, and experience in navigating City systems and advocating for Black communities will ensure greater alignment across City work, and will help to ensure community voices are embedded across all City projects through a commitment to ongoing engagement.

The Partnership and Accountability Circle Members have established a Working Group focused to support Little Jamaica and other Growing in Place initiatives. The Partnership and Accountability Circle was provided with a summary of community concerns related to the need to improve community engagement and increase local Black business and property ownership.

In alignment with the broader public engagement commencing in Q1 2022, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit will host two consultation sessions with the Partnership and Accountability Circle's Little Jamaica Working Group and key community stakeholders. The consultations will help to develop and finalize the Terms of Reference for the Accountability Table. Sessions will explore and inform ongoing opportunities and challenges to advance shared goals and develop Black-led partnerships. Various community stakeholders will be engaged, including, Reclaim Rebuild Eglinton West, Black Urbanism Toronto, Black Business Professional Association, the Mayor's Roundtable on Black Business, the Business Improvement

Areas in the area, CP Planning, Nia Centre for the Arts, and local community elders and advocates.

THE LITTLE JAMAICA MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan will be developed and led by the Program Advisor in collaboration with the Interdivisional Team. The Master Plan will be a foundational, non-statutory, dynamic, long-term planning document that will establish an equitable and expansive framework for Little Jamaica. It will go beyond cultural commemoration, and include the best practices in urban design and urban policy thinking and ideas related to affordable housing, beautiful green spaces, safe and vibrant streets, and community and cultural amenities, all with the goal of fostering prosperity, equity and social cohesion. While the Master Plan will be a non-statutory document the implementation of it may result in statutory documents being revised.

The Master Plan area is currently undefined to allow for public consultation and input, and will be scoped to align with the advancement of the Cultural Districts Program.

To date the area of focus has been Eglinton Avenue West between Allen Road and Keele Street and includes north-south corridors including Oakwood Avenue, Dufferin Street, Caledonia Road, and Keele Street and portions of the following surrounding neighbourhoods to the north and south of Eglinton Avenue West: Forest Hill North; Humewood-Cedarvale; Oakwood Village; Caledonia-Fairbank; Briar Hill-Belgravia; Keelesdale-Eglinton West; and Beechborough-Greenbrook. [See Attachments 1-8 showing Area Maps detailing land use designations, park land and green spaces]

An initial step in the development of the Master Plan will be to engage with the community to understand its history, define what is special about its place, including cultural heritage resources, and establish a vision for the future of the area. The development of guiding principles for future phases of work and an initial set of priorities will shape policy directions related to heritage, character areas, land use, mobility networks, public spaces, parkland, community facilities, housing and infrastructure, among others.

The Master Plan will include conventional components and themes including but not limited to:

Built form and Land Use – Examination whether the existing land use policy framework and diversity of built form types and scales supports the area's liveability, character, safety and beauty and a future cultural district.

Housing - Identifying opportunities and policy options to address the issue of housing affordability and the provision of a full range of housing, in terms of form, accessibility, unit size, tenure and affordability.

Mobility – Consideration of the local mobility needs through the engagement of residents, business and visitors to better understand the changing demands on streets, laneways, sidewalks and pedestrian connections. An important theme will be to explore

the best use of limited public spaces including public laneways with strong consideration of place-making, safety, sustainability and resiliency, and strengthening local businesses.

Parks, Public Realm and Public Art – Consideration for how public spaces, such as parks, squares, Privately Owned Publicly-accessible Spaces ('POPS') streets, laneways, pedestrian routes, natural areas and other open spaces, can be designed in a culturally-, age- and gender-responsive and integrated manner to address community interests, safety and needs. Indigenous place-making and place-keeping, and a process to engage indigenous community partners interested in local festivals and cultural activities will be explored. Another important consideration is how Public Art can meaningfully be integrated into the public realm.

Prosperity – Explore the retail main streets in the area as areas of employment, economic and social activity, culture expression and social diversity and consider various policy options for creating new local economic opportunities.

Cultural and Community Space – Explore cultural and community spaces and how these spaces are essential places where residents can exchange ideas, have a good time, and build relationships. Consideration will be given to defining these types of spaces, supporting existing spaces, and identifying opportunities to provide new cultural and community spaces.

The overall goals of the Master Plan are to:

- Honour the Indigeneity of the area;
- Centre the contributions of the Jamaican community, while embracing a Pan Africanism lens that will recognize Black place-making contributions more broadly; and
- Create space for all residents, businesses and organizations to participate in the process.

Additionally, the Master Plan will explicitly consider design approaches, histories of municipal divestment and spatialized anti-Blackness (and other forms of spatialized discrimination) to contribute to redressing past harms. To achieve this, a significant emphasis will also be placed on urban policy, mutual aid, neighbourhood-level social planning, and a prosperity plan intended to address economic stratification in the area.

Equity, Cultural and Place-making-based Screening Toolkit

Development interest continues to increase in Little Jamaica, especially along Eglinton Avenue West. Planning staff continue to review and monitor development applications within the area. Over the past year City Planning has coordinated regular meetings with relevant staff who participate in the development review process within Little Jamaica to keep informed and to ensure a consistent approach.

The Program Advisor in collaboration with City Planning staff, will develop an Equity, Cultural and Place-making Screening toolkit to assist Staff and commenting partners in the assessment of development applications using a cultural and equity lens, with a

focus on place-making. Through the review of active development applications, Staff will continue to engage with the local community and applicants to better find how mutually beneficial opportunities can be achieved.

Community Engagement

The Program Advisor will conduct public engagement for the Master Plan with an established, evidence-based equitable place-making approach. Place-making is conventionally defined as a collaborative approach to the design, programming and policy of public and semi-public spaces. It brings community knowledge and vision to the forefront of public realm design processes, historically going beyond the urbanism status quo and hierarchy. Equity-based place-making builds on pluralism and recognizes power relations within communities and the place-based histories of exclusion and socio-spatial dynamics that shape the character of public spaces. An equity-based place-making approach explicitly acknowledges that urban design is not neutral; it either perpetuates or reduces urban inequities. All stakeholders have an important role in equity-based place-making.

Engagement will take place over the entirety of the Master Plan process, providing flexibility and agility to modify the approach as the work advances.

Phase 1: The first phase of engagement will focus on establishing relationships with local stakeholders, particularly stakeholders from Black communities who have led advocacy and place-based initiatives over the past few years; and meetings with stakeholder groups including Business Improvement Associations ('BIAs') and neighbourhood associations including the Oakwood Vaughan Neighbourhood Action Partnership and Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization ('OVNAP and OVCO').

The Program Advisor will review reports, studies and engagement summaries to create a succinct summary inclusive of key themes and priorities. This will ensure that the master planning process is not contributing to community engagement fatigue while allowing the initiative to respectfully build on past efforts.

The Program Advisor will launch a newsletter that will not only feature project highlights but also create a platform to support and celebrate the contributions of local stakeholders.

Phase 2: The second phase of engagement will focus on stakeholder engagement for local residents and business owners including:

- A series of Deep Listening Circles on topics such as affordable housing, vibrant greenspace, prosperity for all, food access and insecurity, dignified and safe(r) Black spaces, cross-cultural connections etc.;
- A Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation ('CMHC') funded workshop and design charrette, which will result in high-level visual concepts for the community to enhance and mark up. The charrette will help to translate local place-based concerns, insights and aspirations to a hands-on, visual medium.

Phase 3: The third phase of engagement will significantly increase the number of community engagement events and be open to the broader public. A unified Little Jamaica Community Engagement Calendar will be created outlining engagement events open to the public including:

- Bi-weekly Afro-Caribbean Market Engagements
- Informal Local Walks
- Cross-Cultural Mapping Activity
- Community Cooking Events
- Patty Pop Ups
- Indigeneity Audit and Acknowledgment
- Gender-Based Street Audit
- Intangible Cultural Heritage Audit
- Intergenerational Audit
- Public Space Play Date
- Story-Based Engagement
- Place-Based Healing Circle

ALIGNED INITIATIVES

Financial Support Toward Property Ownership

Members of City Council's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee have expressed concern about the lack of support for Black businesses in Little Jamaica. Members identified that many Black businesses in the area do not own their storefronts, and as a result, have not been able to benefit from Federal COVID-19 business supports aimed at property owners. Notwithstanding the partnership with the Black Business and Professional Association to provide wrap-around support to Black businesses, the lack of property ownership is linked to an increased likelihood of being pushed out of the area due to rising rent costs.

To respond to this issue, the Advisory Committee requested an update in the second quarter of 2022 on possible financial structures that can be developed to assist members of the Black community to own more commercial property in Little Jamaica. Motion CR2.1 aims to address the gap in commercial property ownership among Black residents and to support Black businesses to continue to grow in place, as Little Jamaica changes.

Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment

A comprehensive heritage survey of Little Jamaica will be conducted through a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment ('CHRA'). A Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment, led by Heritage Planning, has two key components or phases. First, a CHRA builds foundational knowledge of the area's history, through research and the engagement of communities. In addition to other engagement methods, Heritage Planning staff has developed a pilot "Community Heritage Places" project, a research and engagement component within the planned Little Jamaica Cultural Heritage Resources Assessment,

to inform heritage evaluations with a deeper understanding of community values. This knowledge is used to understand how the area has evolved over time, and how past and present communities have shaped it.

The second phase of a CHRA is informed by the knowledge gained in the first. An evaluation is conducted for all properties within the study area using provincial criteria. That evaluation results in a list of identified properties that could include individual buildings, groupings of properties that together form an integrated whole, or landscapes. The CHRA then makes recommendations on how identified properties may be conserved under the Ontario Heritage Act, and/or other land use planning mechanisms.

The results of the CHRA will inform policy development related to the conservation of cultural heritage resources and will be informed by the Master Plan.

Housing Initiatives

In response to Council direction, the following projects have commenced and are being advanced:

Housing Now: The Housing Now initiative includes one confirmed site, and one potential “future pipeline” site in the area:

- **1250 Eglinton Avenue West:** at the northeast corner of Eglinton Avenue West and Allen Road. Early design feasibility work began for this site in September 2021. City staff have engaged with affordable housing providers on potential new affordable housing developments in Little Jamaica and surrounding areas as they advance this work.
- **20 Shortt Street:** at the northwest corner of Eglinton Avenue West and Dufferin Street, as a “future pipeline” site. Prior to its inclusion within the Housing Now initiative by way of a Councillor motion through Item PH28.2, City Council through Item MM30.24, requested that a feasibility study be conducted on repurposing the site (currently operated as a surface parking lot by the Toronto Parking Authority) to a community service hub and an affordable housing development, while maintaining current parking levels. CreateTO, in collaboration with the Interdivisional Team, are advancing this work.

Inclusionary Zoning: In November 2021, City Council adopted a policy and zoning framework for Inclusionary Zoning ('IZ'). IZ is one tool among a range of actions identified in the HousingTO Action Plan to help achieve the City's target of approving 40,000 affordable rental homes and 4,000 new affordable ownership homes by 2030.

Beginning in 2022, IZ will require 5-10% of new condominium developments to be secured as affordable housing if the development is located in both a Protected Major Transit Station Area ('PMTSA') and an IZ market area.

Based on background analysis conducted to date, potential PMTSAs within Little Jamaica (i.e. Oakwood, Fairbank, Caledonia and Keele stations) are not currently included in IZ market areas. However, staff will conduct additional market analysis in

areas currently undergoing study, such as Little Jamaica, to identify additional opportunity wherein Inclusionary Zoning may apply. As part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review process, known as "Our Plan Toronto" City Planning staff are advancing draft delineations for MTSA's and PMTSA's for the basis of consultation. Over the course of Q1 2022, Planning staff will continue to report to the Planning and Housing Committee with draft delineations for the basis of consultation.

Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit Housing Research: The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, with support from the Housing Secretariat, and in partnership with CP Planning, a Black-owned human rights planning firm, will research Black-led, community supported affordable housing models to explore new opportunities and approaches to increase access to housing. This work also seeks to engage, assess and strengthen the capacity of existing and new Black housing providers to expand Black leadership in the housing sector.

Public Realm Initiatives

Some public realm initiatives that have commenced and are being advanced include:

- Planned new north-south connections to the Eglinton Avenue West cycling route.
- York Beltline Park between Marlee Avenue and Allen Road is in design stage. Community consultation will occur in 2022.
- Expanding Woodborough Park with a new 0.72 hectare park currently under construction at 2175 Keele Street (former Keele Hospital site).
- Allen Greenway, walkways on the west and east side of the Allen Road north of Eglinton Avenue West will be reopened at the end of 2022. Plazas will be provided at the northeast and northwest corners of Allen Road and Eglinton Avenue West in conjunction with new Cedarvale station entrances/exits.
- A new public plaza at Eglinton Avenue West and Croham Road will be completed in late 2022/early 2023 in association with a development at 2270-2296 Eglinton Avenue West.

Retail Strategy

Development of the Retail Strategy will include consultation with key business and commercial stakeholders on the current state of retail in the area and put forth strategic measures to ensure the sustainability and success of commercial areas and business owners. The Retail Strategy will also consider issues identified by local stakeholders including, but not limited to:

- Boundaries of the local BIAs
- Retaining, expanding and attracting new businesses to the area
- Support for legacy businesses that contribute to the local cultural heritage
- Affordability of retail units
- Restricting "big box" or large retail format stores
- Commercial vacancies and opportunities to animate empty store fronts
- Community-oriented business development
- Potential new forms of retail business support
- Interjurisdictional scan and best practices

Informed by the Master Plan, the Retail Strategy will provide clear recommended actions, priorities and timelines for stakeholders that can have an impact on the success of the area.

Economic Development and Cultural Programs

Work is underway to develop a Cultural Districts Program that strengthens local culture and communities, supports small businesses and retail and promotes community-owned spaces and to work with City Planning to identify Municipal and Provincial planning policies that would support cultural districts. The Cultural Districts Program will provide a set of tools for cultural activities and small businesses that occupy all types of buildings and landscapes within a geographic area. The Cultural Districts Program will be a new and a complementary set of tools for communities to advance their own place-making and place-keeping solutions. The focus of the Cultural Districts Program will be on communities, small businesses and cultural spaces. It will be developed with consideration to existing municipal programs, such as the ones led by the Business Improvement Area ('BIA') Office and others, to identify and develop tools to achieve the goals of cultural districts.

While the City is developing its Cultural Districts Program, Economic Development and Culture ('EDC') continues to support Little Jamaica with a number of initiatives including:

- The BIA Office provides ongoing engagement with all the local BIAs such as York-Eglinton (which has 180 businesses), Fairbank Village (which has 81 businesses), and Eglinton Hill (which has 80 businesses). Together, the three BIAs represent \$213.4 million in commercial assessment, and approximately 25 percent of the businesses are Black-owned or operated. The nearby Oakwood Village BIA is also aware of this work.
- In July 2021, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) announced an \$18 million investment in Main Street Recovery and Rebuild Initiatives for all local retail businesses across Toronto, and a dedicated \$1 million investment in the revitalization and recovery of Little Jamaica through the Black Business and Professional Association ('BBPA'). Support through this FedDev Ontario program will include technical assistance, area branding, marketing, web and e-commerce solutions, support with tax filing, business plan development, financial reviews, payroll, marketing and connections to professional accounting and legal services.
- The Black Business and Professional Association has since solidified its presence in Little Jamaica by opening a storefront office at 1621 Eglinton West to better serve the Black businesses community on-site. BBPA programs in Little Jamaica include: 'Shop Talks' hosted by a different business each week on topics such as technology, enhancing customer experience, finance and money management, launching a Little Jamaica App and other digital media marketing tools for local businesses and further business service programs.

- The Economic Development and Culture Division has also partnered with the Black Business and Professional Association to provide Black businesses in Little Jamaica support through a Community Economic Development ('CED') grant for marketing and business strategies, professional services support, tax and property support, etc. The partnership is worth \$100,000.
- The BIA Office will continue engagement with Little Jamaica Black businesses and local BIAs through partnerships with the Black Business and Professional Association and other City divisions, including third party organizations, to deliver City programs such as the existing Commercial Façade Improvement Program, Innovation Fund, Outside Mural and Street Art Program. New and enhanced programs supported through FedDev Ontario include the Commercial Rehabilitation Program, the Commercial and Industrial Property Improvement Program, Retail Accelerator and plazaPOPS.
- In 2021, Toronto City Council approved a new small business property tax class, to allow for a 15 per cent property tax reduction for small businesses. The new small business property tax subclass is in effect for the 2022 tax year. It is estimated that property tax reductions will apply to approximately 25,000 small businesses across Toronto, or 60 per cent of all commercial properties.
- The Cultural Hotspot is an annual EDC program that shines a spotlight on arts and culture in Toronto's outside-the-core communities. Delivered in collaboration with local arts and community organizations, the program provides valuable opportunities for youth employment and mentorship through workshops, exhibits, art activations, events and more. From June through October 2022, the Cultural Hotspot will highlight Little Jamaica through a series of projects with local artists and organizations, providing approximately \$150,000 in funding support.
- The second iteration of SPACED, a Cultural Hotspot Signature Project (a 2021 project that has extended to 2022), will be produced by Nia Centre for the Arts and mounted to the sites of businesses within the Oakwood-Vaughan, Little Jamaica community. SPACED will showcase photographic works by five artists, taking a futuristic approach on the pandemic; exploring themes of community, identity and resilience. The exhibition will be on view from mid-April 2022, accompanied by programming to engage the community residents living within the Oakwood-Vaughan neighbourhood. Nia Centre received \$20,000 in support from the Cultural Hotspot program for this project.
- The Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative ('YCISI') is a three-year pilot project to work with six youth-serving organizations. Nia Centre for the Arts is one of these organizations and aims to develop capacity and tools for continued sustainability, including workforce development, resource sharing, and skill development.
- UrbanArts is a Local Arts Service Organization that receives annual operating funding from EDC, and Little Jamaica is part of its service area. UrbanArts also receives project funding from the City to support participation in initiatives like the Cultural Hotspot and ArtworxTO.

- ArtworxTO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021–2022 is a year-long celebration of Toronto's public art collection and the creative community behind it. This initiative supports artists and art projects that reflect Toronto's diversity and creates more opportunities for the public to engage with art in their everyday lives. The 2022 projects include an additional public mural in Reggae Lane called "Concrete Jungle" by Adrian Hayles that will be installed across from the mural Adrian Hayles painted in 2015. The addition of the Concrete Jungle mural will turn the entire Green P parking lot into an immersive experience.

Metrolinx Funding and Support

Metrolinx continues to reaffirm its previous commitments to supporting businesses along the LRT route, including in Little Jamaica. As the COVID-19 situation began, Metrolinx continued its efforts to support businesses through ongoing initiatives including:

- Direct funding to BIAs for design and printing, advertising and promotions, festivals and special event costs
- 1:1 individual business support funding for specific marketing and business promotion efforts
- Experience Eglinton corridor-wide quarterly paid advertising initiatives (signage, radio, digital and social ads)
- Discounted parking
- 'Open for Business' signage developed upon request
- Enhanced street cleaning and litter pick-up efforts
- Developing strategies to provide one million dollars of committed Metrolinx funds through dedicated City of Toronto business support programs

NEXT STEPS

City staff and the Program Advisor will advance the engagement strategies identified in this report. The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit will also support the Partnership and Accountability Circle to host an information session to engage the broader community in spring 2022 on the call for participation for the Little Jamaica Accountability Table. The Interdivisional Staff Team will continue to advance the Little Jamaica Initiative and report back to the Economic and Community Development Committee in Q1 2023.

CONTACT

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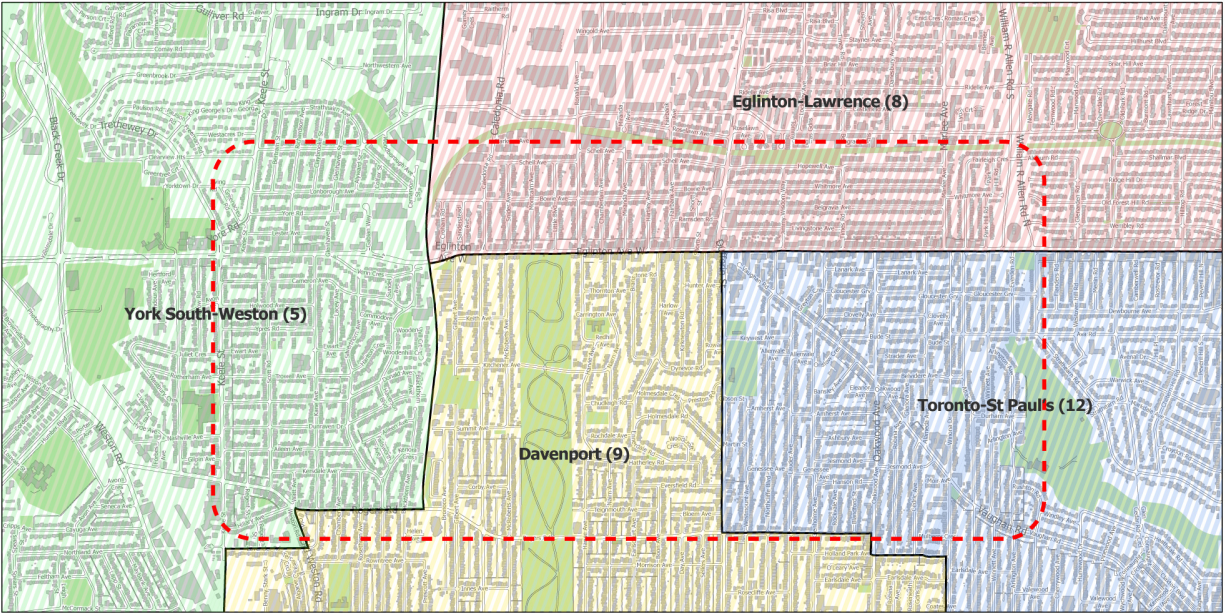
Cheryl Blackman
Interim General Manager
Economic Development and Culture

Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Ward Boundaries
Attachment 2: Official Plan Land Use Designations
Attachment 3: Parks and Open Spaces
Attachment 4: Public Streets and Laneways
Attachment 5: Community Services and Facilities
Attachment 6: Business Improvement Areas
Attachment 7: Neighbourhoods
Attachment 8: Aerial Map

Attachment 1: Ward Boundaries



Area Map 1- Ward Boundaries

AREA OF FOCUS CITY WARD

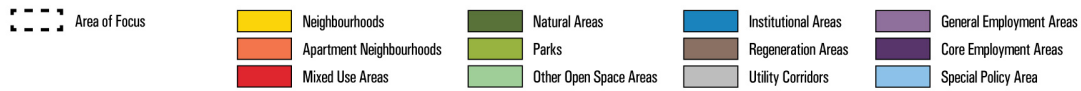
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Attachment 2: Official Plan Land Use Designations



Toronto Official Plan Land Use Map #17

Area Map 2 - Official Plan Land Use Designations



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12/07/2021

Attachment 3: Parks and Open Spaces



Area Map 3 - Parks and Open Spaces

- CITY GREEN SPACES
- RCA_AUTHORITY
- RAVINE_BYLAW
- AREA OF FOCUS



Attachment 4: Public Streets and Laneways

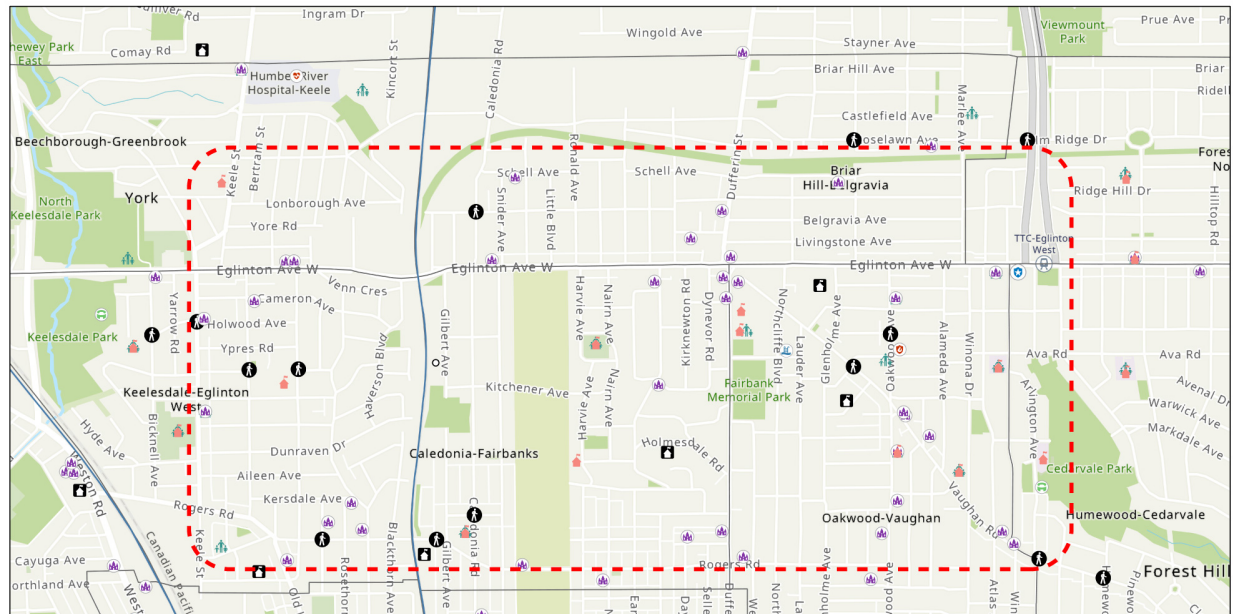


Area Map 4 - Public Streets and Laneways

MAJOR STREETS PUBLIC STREETS AND LANEWAYS AREA OF FOCUS

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Attachment 5: Community Services and Facilities

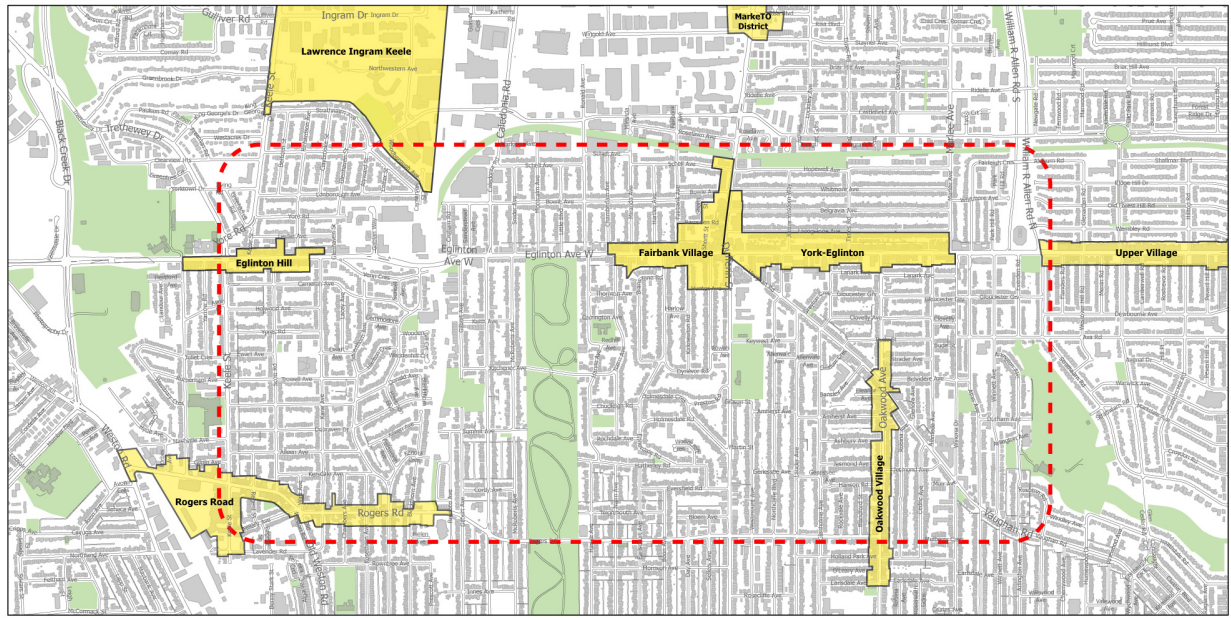


Area Map 5 - Community Services and Facilities

	PLACE OF WORSHIP		ARENA		POOL OUTDOOR		PEDESTRIAN CROSSOVER
	POLICE FACILITY		HOSPITAL		SCHOOL		CHILD CARE CENTRE
	FIRE FACILITY		AMBULANCE FACILITY		CATHOLIC SCHOOL		AREA OF FOCUS

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Attachment 6: Business Improvement Areas

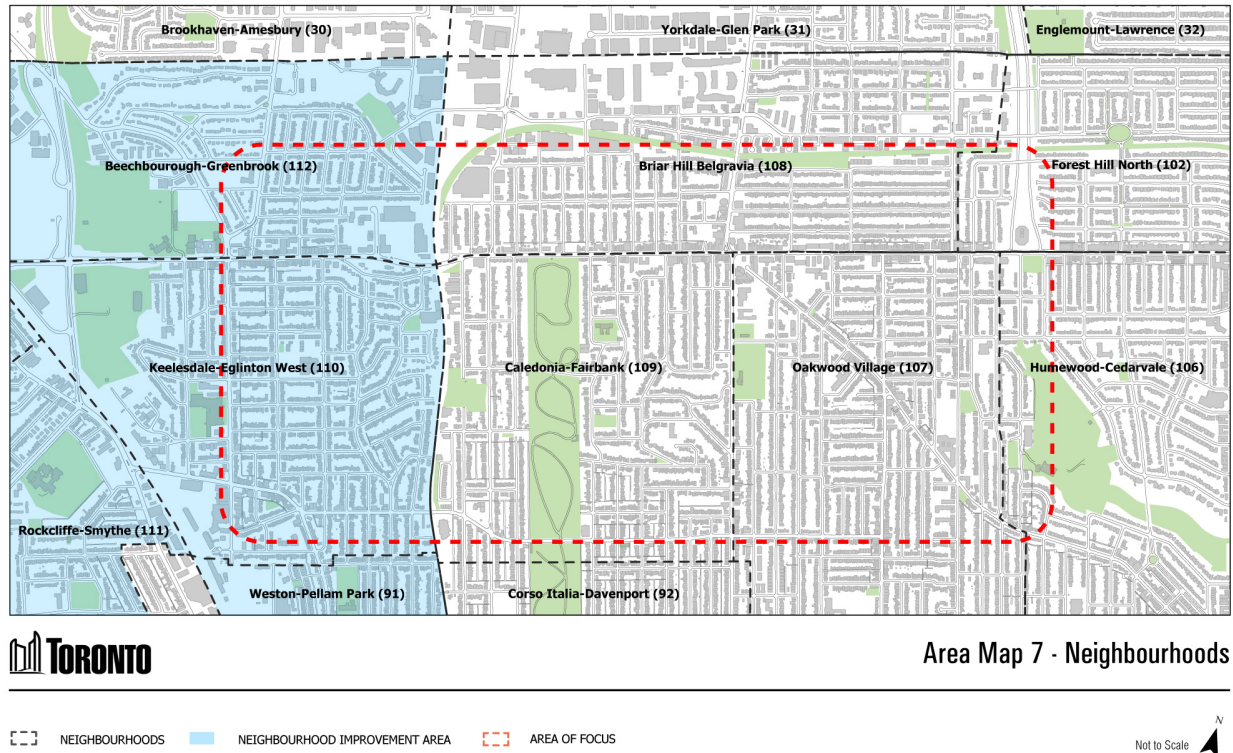


Area Map 6 - Business Improvement Areas

 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS  AREA OF FOCUS

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Attachment 7: Neighbourhoods



Attachment 8: Aerial Map



Area Map 8 - Aerial Map

 AREA OF FOCUS

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