



# Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework

December 7, 2021

**Perkins&Will**



**Land Acknowledgment:**

We acknowledge that Mount Dennis is located on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



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The City of Toronto and Study Team thank the Heritage Focus Group for contributing their time and providing input and insight to the project. The Focus Group was comprised of local residents and knowledge keepers in the local area.

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# Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## A renewed vision and framework for Mount Dennis

Mount Dennis is set to become one of the most transit connected neighbourhoods in Toronto. When the Eglinton Crosstown LRT opens in 2022, Mount Dennis will be the western terminus station and a key interconnection point between the subway and commuter rail systems, providing access to the Kitchener GO Line and UP Express.

In anticipation of this connectivity and resultant development interest in Mount Dennis, the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework creates a comprehensive vision for the future based on the input of current residents, businesses, local services and non-profit organizations and Indigenous partners. It seeks to protect what the community values about their neighbourhood in Mount Dennis today, establish the parameters for new growth to fit into this context and capitalize on new investment to benefit the current and future population.

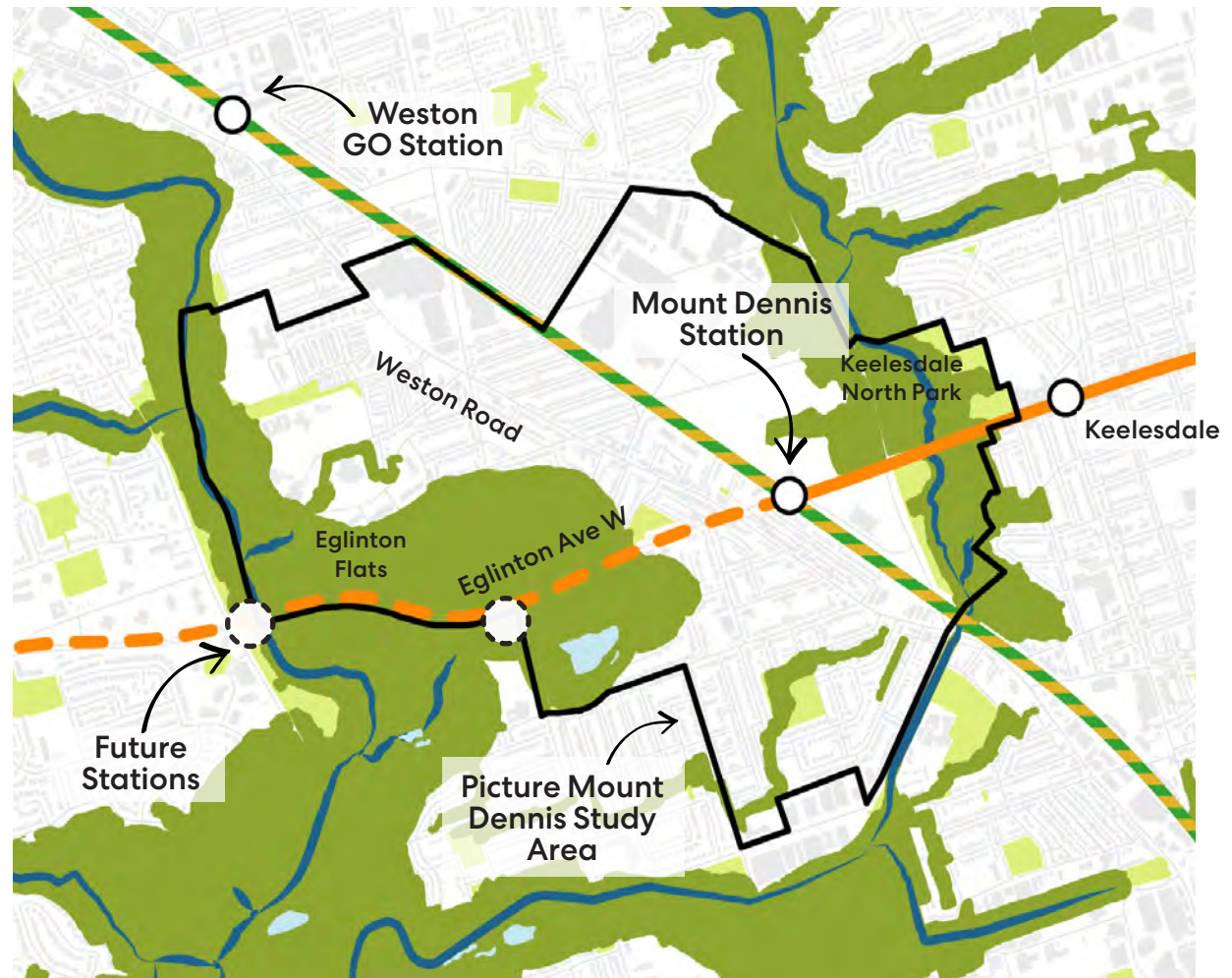


Figure 1. Study Area boundary and context



## History of Mount Dennis

The land on which Mount Dennis sits today has been a human settlement area and transportation route for thousands of years. The Humber River, known as Niwa'ah Onega'gai'h'ih (Onkwehonwe) or Cobechenonk Zibii (Anishnaabe) and the Carrying Place Trail, an Ancestral footpath and portage route, have been and continue to be of great significance to the Wendat, Seneca, Mohawk and Mississauga Nations. Countless Onkwehonwe, Anishnaabe, Great Lakes Métis and other Indigenous Peoples have journeyed the paths along this river for millennia, making possible connection, trade and movement between clans, families and communities.

Mount Dennis's growth has been shaped by transportation and industry, including: Weston Road, a portion of which was constructed on the historic Carrying Place Trail; the Grand Trunk Railway; and the Kodak Factory, which became the largest employer in the area following its construction in 1916. Most of the existing built form of the original residential areas developed in the first half of the 20th century, when neighbourhood growth and several major industrial and institutional developments helped establish Mount Dennis as a distinct industrial settlement.

## Mount Dennis Today

When compared to the City of Toronto as a whole, Mount Dennis has:

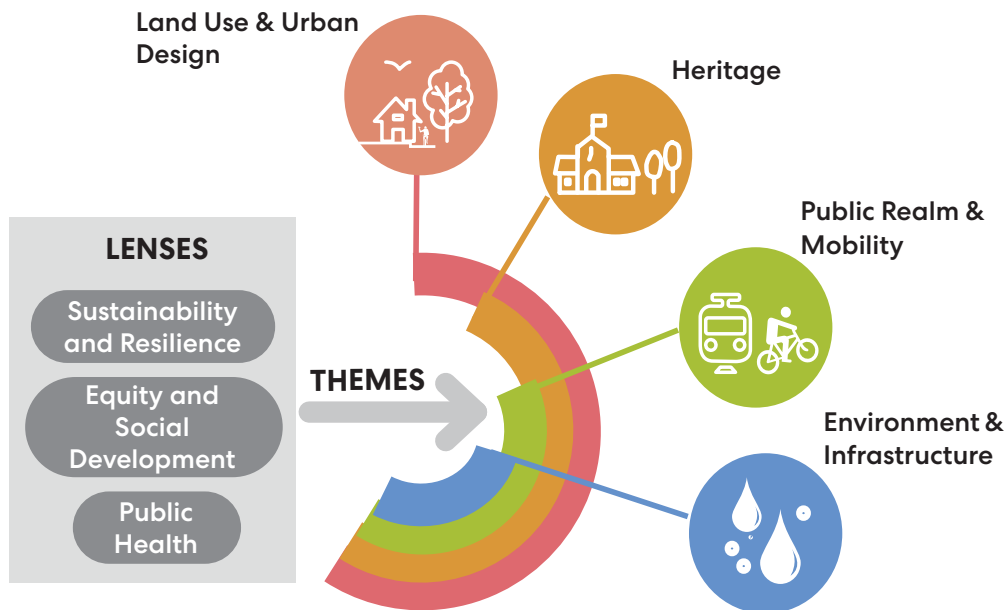
- **A higher proportion of visible minorities and immigrants.** Ethnic and cultural diversity are defining features of Mount Dennis and are reflected in the diversity of its businesses and places of worship.
- **A lower median income.** In 2016 the average estimated median income for residents in the catchment area was \$51,500, 22% lower than the city-wide average of \$65,829.
- **A higher percentage of renters.** Fifty-two percent of households rent their home in Mount Dennis as compared to 46% in the City as a whole.
- **Greater housing affordability:** In 2016 average housing prices in Mount Dennis were significantly lower than in the City as a whole, however they have increased in the past five years. Even with cheaper housing prices, in 2016 40% of households in Mount Dennis spent over 30% of their income on shelter costs.
- **Greater prevalence of chronic diseases.** Public health data shows that prevalence of conditions such as asthma, high blood pressure and diabetes is higher among people living in Mount Dennis than the City as a whole. Mount Dennis also had high rates of COVID-19.

"The Toronto Carrying Place 1615-1793" by C.W. Jefferys (Robinson 1965), with approximate location of Mount Dennis highlighted



## Overarching Lenses

Three overarching lenses – sustainability and resilience, equity and social development and public health – are applied across the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework. Planning and development matters cannot be effectively regulated unless they are embedded in an understanding of the types of communities we are trying to achieve – communities that actively address the climate emergency, that build and foster equity and inclusion for all and that support the public health of their residents, employees and visitors. The three lenses inform each of the four structuring themes of the plan – land use and urban design, public realm and mobility, cultural heritage and environment and infrastructure.



## Vision and Guiding Principles

The vision for the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework speaks to the incredible opportunity that is before the community today. It reflects the desire to embrace growth, but on the community's own terms. It articulates what is treasured about the community today and must be maintained as well as the community values that need to be reflected as new development takes place.

The vision was developed from the feedback heard from the community and stakeholders throughout the engagement process. It sets the intention for the Planning Framework and is further elaborated through nine guiding principles.

**VISION:** As a transit hub, Mount Dennis will grow to accommodate and connect new residents, businesses and institutions through sustainable new development and public space improvements while maintaining the diversity, affordability and cultural heritage that define its character today.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Direct growth and density
- Promote and protect affordability
- Encourage Weston Road's development as Mount Dennis' historic main street
- Honour the historical and contemporary Indigenous presence in the area
- Celebrate the local Mount Dennis character
- Develop complete and green streets
- Promote public health and safety
- Advance Mount Dennis as an eco-district
- Facilitate local job growth



## Character Areas

Character areas are a tool to understand the differing existing conditions and future potential of a large and diverse study area like that of the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework. Five character areas have been defined in Mount Dennis:

**Valleys and Flats** encompass the Humber River, Black Creek, Eglinton Flats and associated open space areas.

**Employment and Institutional Areas** include areas that are devoted to economic activity and jobs, including the Black Creek Business Area, Irving Tissue Corporation and West Park Healthcare Centre.

**Residential Areas** include both high-rise and low-rise residential areas in Mount Dennis and their supporting parks and amenities.

The **Mixed-Use Main Street** consists of Weston Road and its immediate surrounding areas that feed its activity.

The **Mixed-Use Node** consists of the triangle between the rail corridor, Eglinton Avenue West and Black Creek Drive, which currently houses a No Frills store but is poised to be redeveloped as a high-density, mixed-use development.



Figure 2. Map showing character areas

## Transformative Moves

Eight transformative moves encapsulate the big ideas for Mount Dennis that the Planning Framework is designed to accomplish.

### Connect People to the Land



To many residents, Mount Dennis' location between valleys and flats is one of the things that makes it special, and the connection to nature becomes even more important with the addition of significant new urban growth. Exposure to nature has well-documented benefits to physical and mental health which have become critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Planning Framework includes recommendations to make it easier for people to access the existing green space in Mount Dennis and extend nature out of the ravines to permeate all areas of the community.

### Revitalize Weston Road



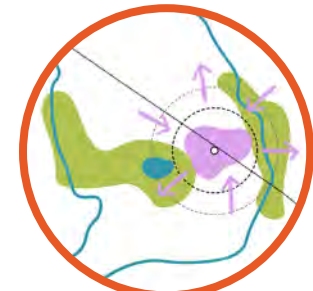
Thriving neighbourhood main streets are an essential part of healthy communities. They support local entrepreneurship and employment, facilitate social interaction and integration and encourage short, local trips using active transportation. Weston Road requires some support to achieve its potential as a true neighbourhood main street for Mount Dennis. There are several components to the revitalization of Weston Road: supporting its businesses, protecting its existing commercial main street built fabric, defining the parameters for when redevelopment takes place and making capital investments to create a complete street.

### Honour Indigenous Cultures



In Mount Dennis the proximity to the Humber River and alignment of a portion of Weston Road along the route of the Carrying Place Trail make the link to Indigenous history very strong. The Mount Dennis community has expressed a desire to honour the historical and contemporary Indigenous presence in the area for some time. The Planning Framework proposes to do this by recognizing and supporting the Indigenous cultural activities that take place today, including ceremonies along the Humber River, continuing to support the local Indigenous community with culturally-appropriate services and community spaces, and bringing awareness to the larger community of Indigenous history and culture in Mount Dennis.

### Expand the Community Heart



Centrally located within the community, Mount Dennis Station will become a huge centre of activity when it is fully functional as an LRT, GO and UP Express station. There is already a small collection of community uses close to the station: the Mount Dennis Library, York Recreation Centre and Mount Dennis Community Hall. The renovated and repurposed Kodak Building housing the station entrance itself, City-owned land on the Black Creek triangle opposite the station and potential future surplus Metrolinx land offer potential to expand the community heart with additional community and/or institutional uses such as a post-secondary campus. This is also a location for an exceptional public realm with high quality urban public spaces and premium materials.

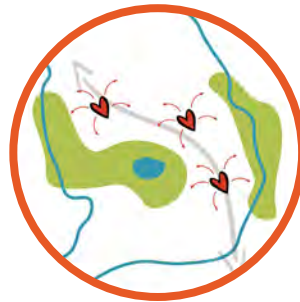


### Connect Across the Rail Corridor



The rail corridor is currently a significant barrier in the neighbourhood. The construction of Mount Dennis Station adds urgency to the need for better connectivity but also provides the opportunity to piggyback on station access improvements to advance overall neighbourhood connectivity. The ability of the Black Creek Business Area to benefit from the new transit infrastructure is contingent on finding ways to breach this barrier and reduce travel times from the station. There are many opportunities for reducing the barrier of the rail corridor, including creating new connections, improving existing connections and introducing micro-mobility options designed to cross the corridor.

### Support Black and Afro-Caribbean Cultures



Mount Dennis is known for its cultural diversity, which is demonstrated in the diversity of the businesses that are found along Weston Road. In particular, the contribution of the area's large Black and Afro-Caribbean community is evident in the businesses along Weston Road, including barbershops, hair salons and take-out oriented restaurants. Many residents identify these businesses as key to the community identity of Mount Dennis. Enabling Black-owned and operated businesses to continue to flourish means actively planning to support their retention and growth and celebrating the contributions of the Afro-Caribbean community to the character and identity of the neighbourhood.

### Develop an Eco-Neighbourhood



There has been grassroots interest in pursuing sustainability and resilience at the neighbourhood level in Mount Dennis for many years. The Mount Dennis Community Association is leading the effort with its Mount Dennis Eco-Neighbourhood Initiative that aims to co-design a community-based climate action plan with local stakeholders. This initiative is also aligned with the City's TransformTO climate action strategy. An eco-neighbourhood in Mount Dennis would include both opportunities for climate mitigation (reducing local greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (developing resilience to the impacts of climate change).

### A Mount Dennis for Everyone



The Mount Dennis of today is a diverse community in terms of income levels, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and family types. Current residents feel that its relative housing affordability and the diverse community who are able to settle in Mount Dennis as a result are some of Mount Dennis' greatest strengths. The Planning Framework aims to ensure that Mount Dennis remains a community for everyone by using every tool available to maintain the diversity and affordability of the housing stock and making recommendations regarding a safe and welcoming environment, equitable employment opportunities and community amenities and supports to ensure everyone feels like they belong in Mount Dennis.

## Frameworks and Strategies

The Frameworks and Strategies of the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework take the desired future state of Mount Dennis as defined by the vision, guiding principles and transformative moves and translate it into the concrete steps required to make it a reality over the next 30+ years. The four Frameworks are derived from the four themes which guided the study.

Each Framework is accompanied by a Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy designed to ensure that the three lenses of equity and social development, sustainability and resilience and public health are reflected in the Planning Framework. The Strategies aim to optimize the potential of development in Mount Dennis to advance sustainability objectives and strengthen the social cohesion of existing and new residents through social/economic/environmental recommendations that take an equity lens to development in accordance with a variety of City strategies and action plans.



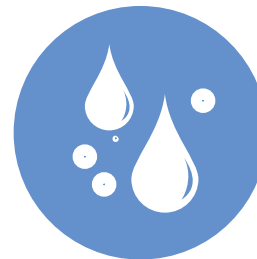
Land Use and Urban  
Design Framework



Public Realm  
and Mobility  
Framework



Cultural Heritage  
Framework



Environment and  
Infrastructure  
Framework

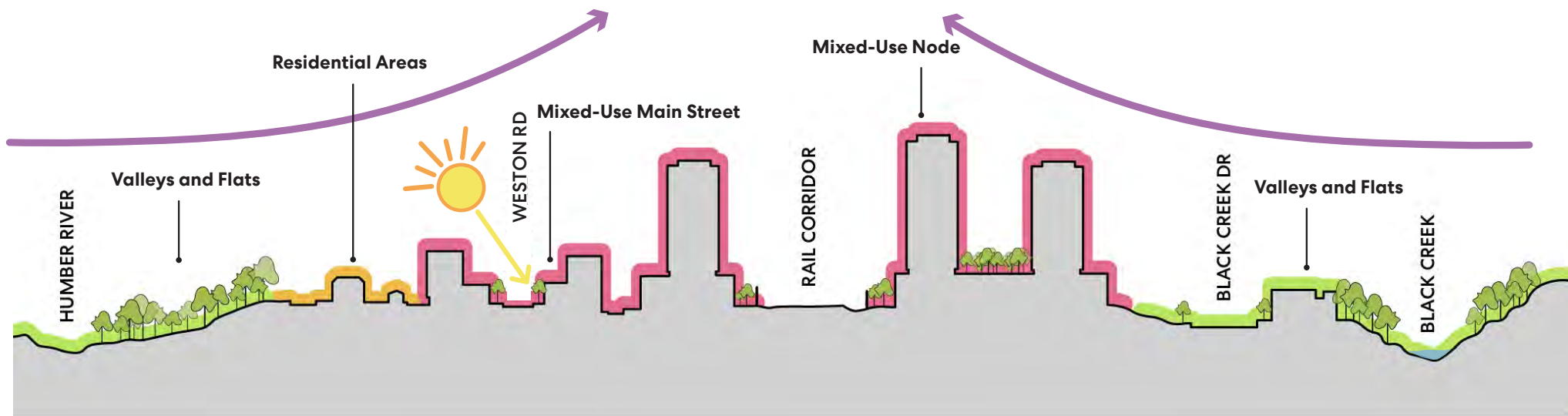
## Land Use and Urban Design Framework

The Land Use and Urban Design Framework is intended to guide Mount Dennis' evolution with regard to built form, economic development and community services. It creates an urban structure within which Mount Dennis can accommodate significant new growth - a more than doubling of its population over the next 30+ years - while continuing to develop as a diverse, liveable and transit-supportive community. The Framework defines the areas within which the majority of this growth should be concentrated and the areas that should remain relatively stable with only incremental change. It also establishes urban design guidelines to address how the new growth fits into the existing neighbourhood.

The Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy within the Land Use and Urban Design Framework includes recommendations designed to ensure that the growth that is coming to Mount Dennis benefits everyone. It addresses housing diversity, community services and facilities, economic development and local employment,

enabling tools and healthy design and built environment principles. These topics require proactive management as new growth comes to Mount Dennis to achieve the healthy, equitable and inclusive future that the community desires.

The image below depicts the future vision for Mount Dennis in a cross section from west to east. The community is nestled between the green lowlands of the Valleys and Flats on either side, providing a direct connection to nature. Residential Areas remain at a similar scale as they are today, growing through incremental change and gentle intensification. Along the Mixed-Use Main Street of Weston Road there is mid-rise development on either side, privileging the pedestrian experience by protecting for sun exposure and skyview from the sidewalk. Heights step up gradually towards the rail corridor, where shadow impacts and overlook issues are negligible. The peak continues on the other side of the rail corridor at the Mixed-Use Node before descending into Black Creek.



Character areas cross section of Mount Dennis



### Public Realm and Mobility Framework

The Public Realm and Mobility Framework will guide the development of the public spaces and mobility system in Mount Dennis. It builds on the introduction of significant new transit infrastructure with the opening of Mount Dennis Station in 2022 to make sure that people in the community are able to safely and conveniently access that transit. It also lays the groundwork for the creation of a public realm - including ravines, parks, plazas, Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Space (POPS) and the streets themselves - that sustains the connection to greenery and nature that residents value in Mount Dennis today while the neighbourhood accommodates significant new growth.

The Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy within the Public Realm and Mobility Framework includes recommendations for the implementation of a public realm and mobility system that meets the needs of all residents, workers and visitors in Mount Dennis. It addresses diverse, accessible and inclusive park and open spaces, a safe and connected cycling network, pedestrian safety and last mile solutions and complete and green streets. Weston Road, Black Creek Drive and Ray Avenue are identified as priority complete streets with conceptual design options for reconfiguration. Opportunities for the introduction of green streets infrastructure such as bioswales and rain gardens are identified throughout Mount Dennis.



Illustration of rain garden interventions along Weston Road

## Cultural Heritage Framework

The Cultural Heritage Framework is intended to ensure Mount Dennis' history is recognized and commemorated and to promote cultural vibrancy as the neighbourhood continues to grow and change. It is grounded in the Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) for Mount Dennis prepared by Common Bond Collective and the Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment prepared by Timmins Martelle Heritage Consultants. It is also informed by the recommendations regarding culture from previous studies in the area including the Mount Dennis Economic Development Study. The Cultural Heritage Framework is particularly indebted to input from the community through the Heritage Focus Group, interviews with members of cultural communities, the Indigenous engagement sessions and the larger engagement program for the Picture Mount Dennis Study.

The Cultural Heritage Framework identifies heritage potential properties. The Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy within the Cultural Heritage Framework includes recommendations that augment the heritage conservation tools and direction available under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, *Planning Act Provincial Policy Statement*, *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and *Official Plan* to ensure a comprehensive approach to cultural heritage in Mount Dennis. It addresses celebrating Indigenous cultures, intangible heritage, workers' housing, opportunities for public art and promoting creative and cultural enterprises.

## Cultural Heritage Themes



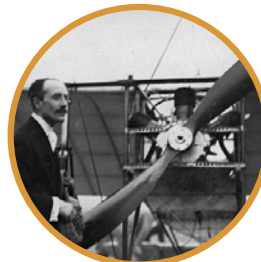
### Natural Environment

- Topography
- Water Courses



### Urban Environment

- Settlement
- Land Division and Subdivision
- Residential Development



### Economic Activity

- Industry & Manufacturing
- Commerce



### Civic Institutions

- Education
- Parks and Recreation
- Healthcare
- Public Safety
- Public Housing



### Indigenous People and Practices

- Land Use
- Transportation Routes
- Treaty 13



### Transportation and Infrastructure

- Early Roads
- Railways
- Commuter Transit



### Governance and Civic Administration

- York Township (1793-1961)
- Borough of York (1961-1983)
- City of York (1983-1998)
- Metropolitan Toronto (1953-1998)
- City of Toronto (1998-present)



### Community & Culture

- Places of Worship
- Lodges and Halls
- Cultural Communities



### Environment and Infrastructure Framework

The Environment and Infrastructure Framework recommends upgrades to municipal servicing infrastructure in Mount Dennis to address existing and future system needs. Its recommendations are based on the Master Servicing Plan conducted by GM BluePlan as part of the Picture Mount Dennis Study, which looks at water, wastewater, stormwater and combined sewer systems. The Environment and Infrastructure Framework builds on the comprehensive recommendations of the City's Basement Flooding Study for Area 45 (Black Creek) which includes Mount Dennis. It takes into account the additional growth that would be permitted in the area by proposed changes to land use, height and density in the Land Use and Urban Design Framework. In general, recommended upgrades to address flooding issues will also meet growth needs. Green infrastructure opportunities outlined in the Public Realm and Mobility Framework also contribute to improved stormwater and combined sewer performance.

The Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy within the Environment and Infrastructure Framework includes recommendations to consider social development and equity in procurement for infrastructure upgrades as well as recommendations relating to other aspects of a sustainable and resilient environment such as protecting and enhancing the natural heritage system, supporting local environmental initiatives and promoting net zero carbon/net zero energy initiatives.



30 Denarda Street (top) and 15 Oxford Drive (bottom). The two buildings are of the same vintage, however 15 Oxford Drive has been recently reclad.

## Implementation

For ease of implementation, each recommendation in the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework is categorized based on the actions the City will need to take to implement it.



### Planning policy and development review

These recommendations can be implemented by City Planning by making policy changes to the Official Plan, zoning by-law or other by-laws, including properties on the City's Heritage Register, or through the development review process.



### Community benefit

These recommendations can be implemented through community benefits negotiated as part of the development approval process or as part of Community Benefits Agreements for major public sector projects.



### Collaborative effort

These recommendations will need to be implemented by City divisions working together, the City working with other public agencies, the City working with private sector partners or the City working with community players (non-profit and grassroots).



### Capital project

These recommendations are capital projects that the City will need to plan for in future capital budgets.



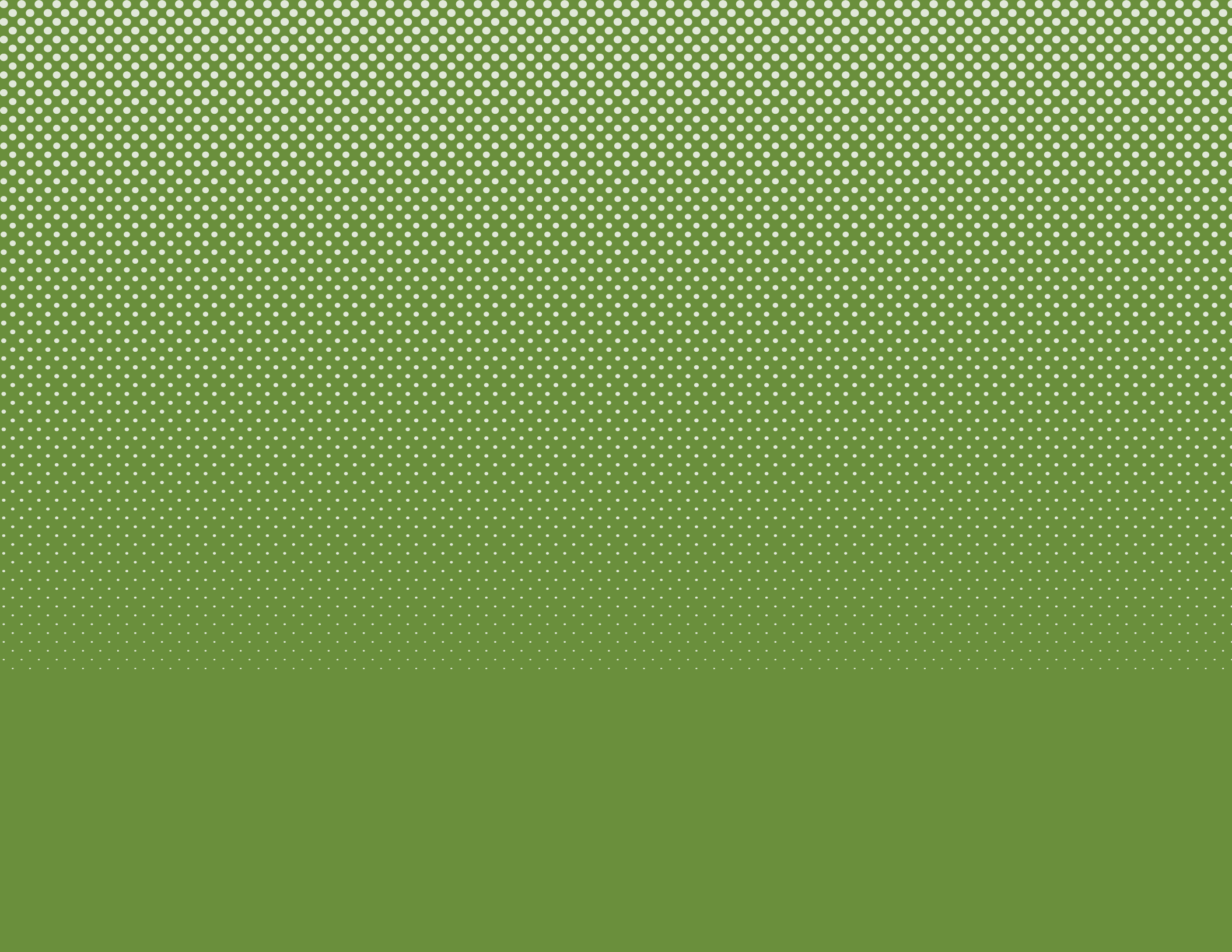
### Follow up study

These recommendations require the City to undertake additional analysis or study.

Existing flex space interventions in Mount Dennis ►







# 1 Picture Mount Dennis: Introduction

# 1.1 The Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework

## A renewed vision and framework for Mount Dennis

Shaped by rivers, valleys and flats, Mount Dennis has been an area of human settlement and transportation route for thousands of years as Indigenous peoples and later settlers travelled the historic Carrying Place Trail. The neighbourhood we know today emerged around the important transportation connections of the Humber River, Weston Road and the Grand Trunk Railway and over a century of industrial expansion and contraction. Now, major investment in public transit, converging at the new Mount Dennis Station, is poised to attract new investment and create a new focal point in Toronto.

**Major transit investments have a transformational effect on neighbourhoods.** With greater transit connectivity comes development interest, increased density and new residents. The influx of people, activity and investment can be a significant asset, but often comes with concerns about gentrification, loss of identity, and existing residents getting “pushed out.”

Mount Dennis is set to become one of the most transit connected neighbourhoods in Toronto. When the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and Mount Dennis GO Station open in 2022, Mount Dennis will be the western terminus station of the LRT and a key interconnection point between the subway and commuter rail systems, providing access to the Kitchener GO Line and UP Express. The line will provide rapid transit access along

the length of Eglinton Avenue to Kennedy Road, with connections to Lines 1 and 3 of the subway system. Planning is also underway to extend the Eglinton Crosstown LRT west to Renforth Drive and eventually Pearson International Airport.

In anticipation of this connectivity and resultant development interest in Mount Dennis, the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework creates **a comprehensive vision for the future** based on the input of current residents, businesses, local services and non-profit organizations and Indigenous partners. It builds on the significant work that has been done in the area over the past ten years, including the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study (2013), the Urban Land Institute’s Curtner Leadership Program (2019), the Mount Dennis Economic Development Study (2020), the Mount Dennis BIA’s Streetscape Master Plan (ongoing) and Black Urbanism TO’s Report: A Black Business Conversation on Planning for the Future of Black Businesses and Residents on Eglinton Avenue West.

The Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework seeks to **protect what the community values about their neighbourhood today, establish the parameters for new growth to fit into this context and capitalize on new investment to benefit the current and future population.** It sets out a roadmap for the City to implement the plan through policy, programs, capital investments and partnerships.









## 1.2 Self-Portrait: Summary of the Historic Context

### A rich pre-contact, settler and recent history

Evolution of the study area's existing built forms dates to colonial surveys in the late 18th century, but its topography and water courses have shaped human activity in the area for a much longer time. As a result of the periods of development and historic themes discussed in the Historic Context Statement, the study area contains a combination of landscapes and built features - floodplains, valleys, streets, railway lines, industrial buildings, residences and mixed use commercial buildings - that together can be understood as a former industrial community near the confluence of two river valleys.

### Principal organizing features

Human activity in the study area has long been driven and constrained by the area's water courses and hilly topography. The valleys and floodplains related to the Humber River and Black Creek have helped define the area's distinctive topography, characterized by a number of high points sometimes set dramatically against floodplains or valleys below.

For centuries at least the ancient Toronto Carrying Place portage route passed near to the Humber River through the western portion of the study area. The trail connected Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, and at its foot sat the Onödowa'ga (or Seneca) village of Teiaigon. Most recently used by the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississauga peoples, the trail fell into disuse when colonial authorities opened other routes to the north.

Authorities also surveyed the landscape as York Township, establishing right of ways for concession roads that would become Jane Street and Eglinton Avenue West in the coming decades. Mount Dennis is named after one of the early settlers in the area, John Dennis, a Loyalist shipbuilder who hailed from Philadelphia and established a farm in York Township in the early 1800s.

As European settlers established milling operations along the Humber River, Weston Road emerged by the 1840s as an important route connecting the City of Toronto with settlements to the northwest.

**The Humber River, known as Niwa'ah Onega'gaih'ih (Onkwehonwe) or Cobechenonk Zibii (Anishnaabe) and the Carrying Place Trail, an Ancestral footpath and portage route, have been and continue to be of great significance to the Wendat, Seneca, Mohawk and Mississauga Nations. Countless Onkwehonwe, Anishinaabe, Great Lakes Métis and other Indigenous Peoples have journeyed the paths along this river for millennia, making possible connection, trade and movement between clans, families and communities.**



Weston Road was ambivalent to the colonial survey grid, adhering instead to expedience and topography. The railways were established midway through the 19th century, parallel but slightly east of Weston Road. The Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) line opened in 1856, followed in 1871 by the Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railway (TGBR). The river valleys, Weston Road, concession roads, and railway corridor are the principal organizing features of the study area's existing built form.

### Early Residential Areas

The original residential areas are generally located between Jane Street and the railways, and also include several streets off Jane Street south of Weston Road and along Buttonwood Avenue. A number of subdivision plans were registered in the study area between the 1880s and early 1890s between Jane Street and the railways. Generally oriented about Weston Road and adhering to topographical constraints, these helped establish the general street and block patterns that would characterize residential development. By the 1910s a more conventional grid had developed west of Guestville Avenue and south of Lambton Avenue.

Most of the existing built form of the original residential areas developed in the first half of the 20th century, when neighbourhood growth and several major industrial and institutional developments helped establish Mount Dennis as a distinct industrial settlement. Buildings include a mixture of residential (primarily semi-detached and detached) and institutional (schools, places of worship and fire stations) types.

Many of the residential buildings reflect traits of worker's housing, tying them to nearby industrial development. Residential buildings are typically modest, one- and two-storey structures employing vernacular styles. House designs vary widely, and include small groups, and long sections of repeated designs, reflecting both developer and owner-built housing types. Particularly large sections of repeated designs are found between Weston Road and the railway corridor on Mahoney Avenue, Rutherford Avenue, and Victoria Boulevard.

### Development along Weston Road

Weston Road cuts through the original residential areas, serving as the major thoroughfare and key organizing principle for adjacent streets. Being diagonal to the conventional street grid, certain blocks intersect it at acute and obtuse angles. Some buildings are set parallel to the street, while others are slightly askew, or uniquely situated on corner lots.

Much of Weston Road's existing built form developed in the first half of the 20th century, alongside concurrent residential and industrial development. Weston Road between Jane Street and Lambton Avenue is characterized by a diversity of building types, many of which have historically served as the community's commercial, institutional and service amenities. In this way it has a historic functional relationship to the surrounding residential areas.

Weston Road's built form varies in consistency within the study area. Long stretches of consistent Main Street Commercial buildings are most common between Denarda Street and Lambton Avenue on the north side, and between Glenvalley Drive and Eglinton Avenue West on the south side. These sections are defined by fine-grained buildings with unbroken street walls, normally two storeys tall with minimal setbacks. They employ vernacular Edwardian and interwar design motifs of varying complexity. The remaining sections are defined by a residential or light industrial character with sporadic commercial or institutional uses, or by a heterogeneous mixture of building types and a varied character. Residential buildings generally employ vernacular designs, whereas the Gothic Revival style is employed by several places of worship.

## Industrial Areas

The establishment of major industrial employers throughout the 20th century supported the corresponding development of Weston Road and the nearby residential areas. In the mid-1910s Kodak Canada and Canadian Nitro-Products built facilities on the east side of the railway corridor, on former agricultural lands north of Eglinton Avenue West. In the 1920s a larger area around these sites (bound on the northeast by Trethewey Drive) was reserved for industrial sites by the township. The area developed with industrial sites into the 1980s, creating a clearly defined industrial zone within the study area. The area is characterized by substantial sites with large manufacturing and warehouse buildings. Most buildings in the area date from the 1950s and later, reflecting contemporary design motifs including streamline moderne, mid-century modern and international style elements.

A nearby industrial area emerged at the triangular area north of Jane Street and Weston Road with the establishment of a National Cellulose of Canada facility south of Clouston Avenue c.1940. Numerous independent industrial facilities were built to the south into the 1960s, but have subsequently been consolidated into a large complex.



Kodak Heights Complex, 1930. Source: Wikimedia

## West Park Campus

In 1904 the Toronto Free Hospital for the Consumptive Poor (currently West Park Healthcare Centre) was opened on former farmlands overlooking the Humber River. The site grew steadily through the 1930s, developing into a healthcare campus with multiple buildings and pavilions set in landscaped grounds. The West Park campus has continued to evolve into the 21st century as a modern healthcare facility. Contextually, the site is somewhat isolated and not integrated into Mount Dennis' urban fabric.

## Post-War Development

The study area continued to mature following the Second World War with several affordable housing developments, a number of large residential towers, and ongoing infill development. In the mid-1950s several affordable housing developments were built in the study area's southeast. These included low-rent apartments built by the Toronto Metropolitan Home Builders' Association on Jasper and Langdon Avenues, and the Beech Hall Cooperative providing low cost seniors' housing built between Cordella Avenue and Humber Boulevard North. The resulting built form creates a repetitive streetscape on Jasper and Langden Avenues, and an interruption to the conventional residential streetscape on Cordella Avenue and Humber Boulevard North.

A number of high-rise slab towers were built in the study area between the late 1960s and early 1980s. A prominent group of four was built overlooking the Humber River Floodplain on Emmett Avenue, and another two were built adjacent to the railway corridor at the heads of Denarda Street and Oxford Drive.

Infill development plays an ongoing role in the evolution of the study area's built form. Some infill sites have created new neighbourhoods beyond the original residential areas, such as at Sidney Belsey Crescent. Most however represent more localized interventions such as at Forest Point Drive, and a number of townhouse developments on Weston Road.



## Parkland & River Systems

In the early 1950s the Eglinton Flats floodplain was occupied by dwellings and market garden operations. Hurricane Hazel struck the area in 1954, and caused extensive damage to the floodplain. In its aftermath, low lying areas on the Humber River were taken over by Metropolitan Toronto and formed an important part of Toronto's nascent regional parks system. The valley lands were also eventually taken into public ownership for conservation purposes and to be used for a variety of active and passive recreational activities. Much of the parkland that exists today was developed in the 1970s.

Humber River  
Source: Wikipedia ►





## Existing Built Form

The existing landscape and built form features of the study area contains the following elements relating to its history as a former industrial community:

- The area's defining geographical features, including the hilly topography and valleys of the Humber River and Black Creek;
- Existence of the Concession Roads Eglinton Avenue West and Jane Street;
- Existence of the historic railway corridor and related infrastructure;
- Evidence of Weston Road as the historic main street, as seen in:
  - The path of Weston Road, cutting through Mount Dennis and connecting to adjacent Weston and Junction neighbourhoods;
  - The diverse mixture of Main Street Commercial Row and Blocks, Residential and Institutional building types;
  - Sections of consistent main street fabric (primarily found between Denarda Street and Lambton Avenue), defined by fine-grained buildings, unbroken two- to three-storey street walls, and minimal setbacks from the public realm;
  - Materials and details related to Main Street Commercial Row buildings, including brick elevations, glazed storefronts, second floor bay windows, parapets, metal cornices, and various brick detailing (including piers, segmental arches, and cornice detailing / embellishments); and
  - Its historic functional relationship with nearby residential areas, providing access to commercial and social services and amenities.



Hilly terrain at Westlake Memorial Park. Source: Perkins&Will



Rail corridor. Source: Toronto.com

- Evidence of the early residential areas, as seen in:
  - Residential street and block patterns, often oriented toward Weston Road;
  - The mixture of residential and institutional building types; and
  - Westlake Memorial Park
- Evidence of owner- and developer-built workers' housing throughout the residential areas, as seen in:
  - Modest one to two storey dwellings;
  - The use of vernacular forms and restrained detailing;
  - Stretches of repeating building designs; and
  - The use of detached, semi-detached and terraced configurations.
- Evidence of affordable housing initiatives, as seen in the Beech Hall and Jasper / Langden avenue developments;
- Evidence of the industrial and manufacturing history, as seen in:
  - Distinct areas supporting ongoing industrial operations;
  - Separation of major industrial and residential areas by large roads or railway corridors; and
  - Examples of industrial facilities and structures from different eras.
- The existence of the West Park Healthcare Campus;
- The existence of large parks and recreation areas related to the Humber River and Black Creek valleys.



Beech Hall Complex. Source: Peter MacCallum



Irving Tissue Corporation. Source: ACO Toronto



## 1.3 Snapshot: Mount Dennis Today

### A diverse and vibrant community

Ethnic and cultural diversity are defining features of Mount Dennis and make it the community it is today. Census data shows that Mount Dennis has a higher proportion of residents who identify as Aboriginal (0.98%) than the City of Toronto as a whole (0.86%). The majority of the Aboriginal population in the area identifies as First Nations, while 20% identifies as Métis. Mount Dennis is home to many organizations serving the Indigenous population, and its valleys host several locations used for ceremony by the Indigenous community.

Mount Dennis also has a higher proportion of immigrants (first generation Canadians) than the city as a whole (57% vs. 51%), and of visible minorities (63% vs. 51%). Black residents make up 28% of the population in Mount Dennis compared to approximately 8% across the city.

There is a large community of Caribbean origin and particularly of Jamaican origin. Toronto's Jamaican population has a strong cultural presence on Eglinton Avenue West, giving the area immediately east of the Study Area the name of Little Jamaica.

The diverse population in Mount Dennis is also reflected in its diverse businesses and places of worship. Most businesses in Mount Dennis are small, owner-operated businesses. Twenty-five percent report that they are "diverse suppliers," meaning they are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by an equity-seeking community or social purpose enterprise. Overall, about half of businesses in Mount Dennis are retail/service, and almost 60% lease their space and may be vulnerable to cost increases.



Mount Dennis' businesses reflect its cultural and ethnic diversity



Total population (2016)

**18,593**

Total Aboriginal Identity\* (2016)

**180**

Total Visible Minority\*\* (2016)

**11,740**

Black Residents (2016)

**5,190**

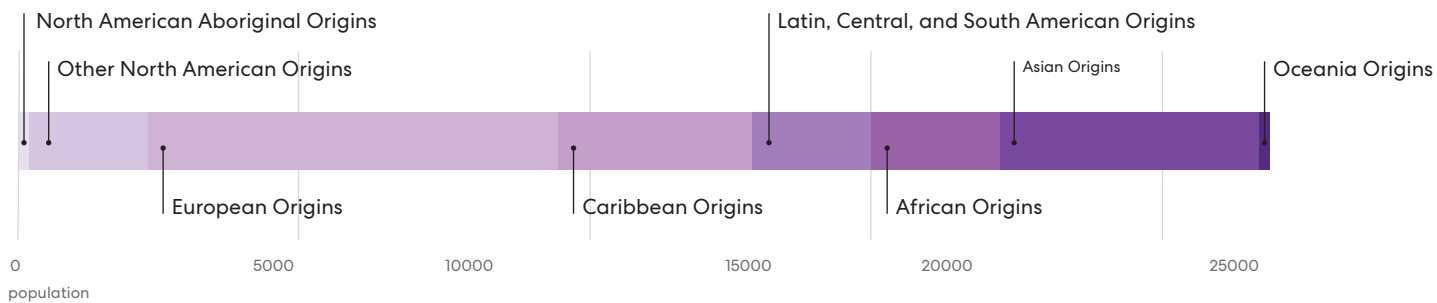
\* 'Aboriginal identity' is a term used by the Census, and includes persons who are First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

\*\* 'Visible Minority' is a term used by the Census, and includes persons other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.



**Figure 4.** Birth country of immigrant population

#### Country of Ethnic Origin



Most popular Mother Tongue  
**Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese**

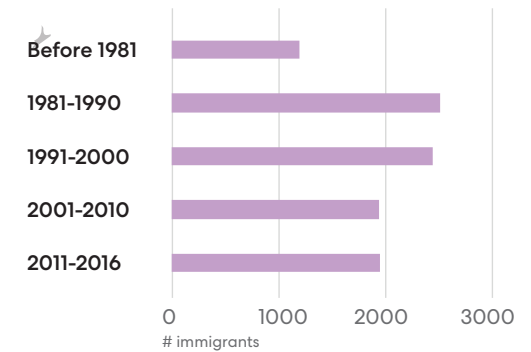
Non Canadian Citizens

**14%**

Immigrants

**57%**

#### Immigration Period





## A community with socio-economic vulnerabilities

The 2016 Census reveals that people in the Study Area have on average relatively lower income than the rest of the City of Toronto. The average estimated median income in the catchment area was \$51,500, 22% lower than the city-wide average of \$65,829. The Census also reveals that the neighbourhood has notably higher EI claims and social assistance rates (both OW and ODSP).

Slightly more than half of households in Mount Dennis rent their home, which is a bit higher than the average in Toronto as a whole (Toronto has 46% renters as compared to 52% in Mount Dennis). As of 2016, average home prices in

Mount Dennis were significantly cheaper than across the city (\$492,000 vs. \$892,000), however it was noted throughout the engagement undertaken for this study that the neighbourhood has become significantly less affordable over the past five years.

Forty percent of households in Mount Dennis spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs, meaning that they are in core housing need according to the CMHC definition. These households are particularly vulnerable to the accelerated increases in housing costs that often occur in areas receiving major transit investments.

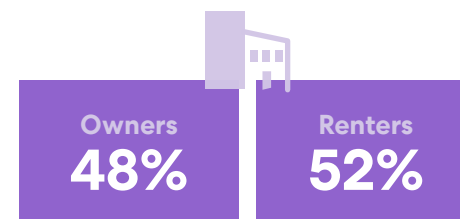
### Mount Dennis is not all the same

The Northwest part of the neighbourhood is the **densest**, has the highest total number of **visible minorities** and the **lowest income**.

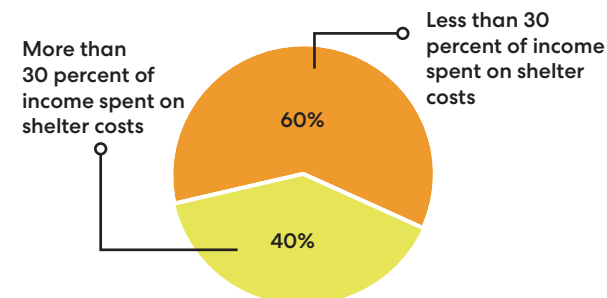
The Northeast part of the neighbourhood is the **most youthful** and has the highest proportion of **families**.

The Southwest part of the neighbourhood has the highest total number and proportion of **low-income seniors**.

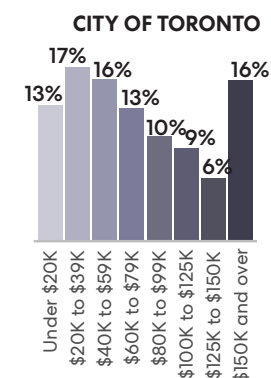
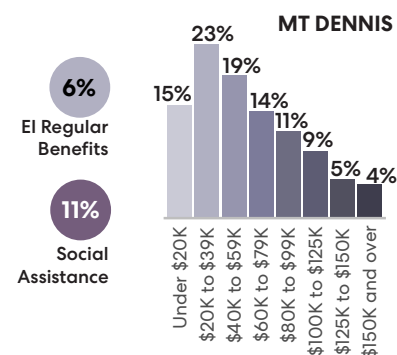
The Southeast part of the neighbourhood is the **highest income** and where residents are most likely to **own their home**.



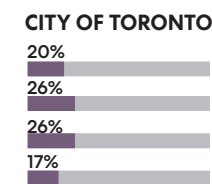
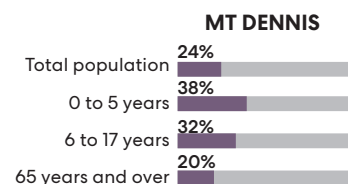
Income spent on shelter costs



Estimated Median Income\*



Prevalence of low income (LIM-AT)

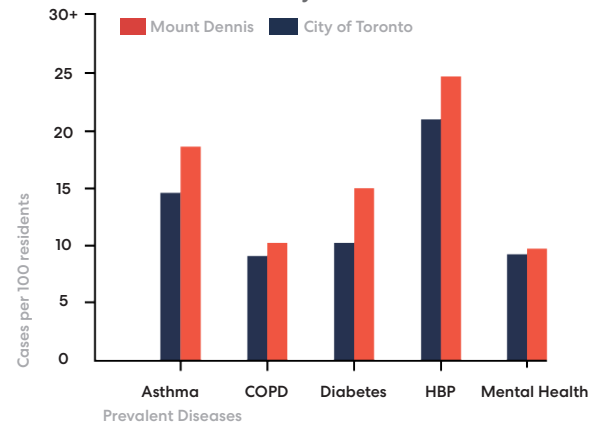
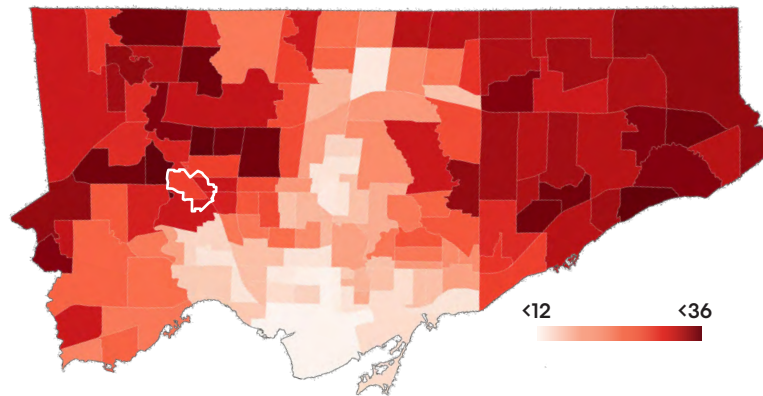
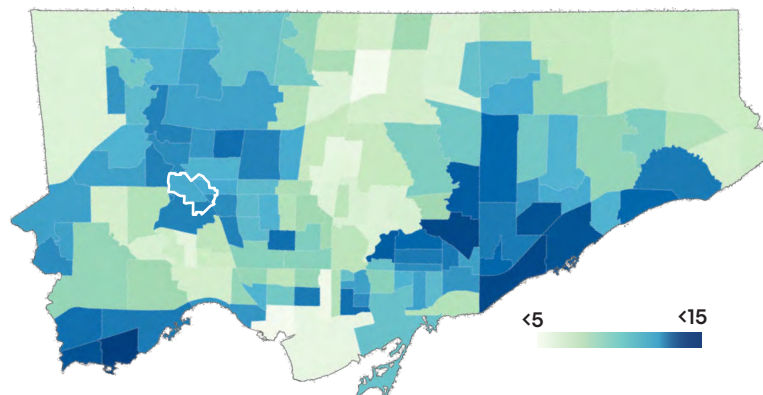
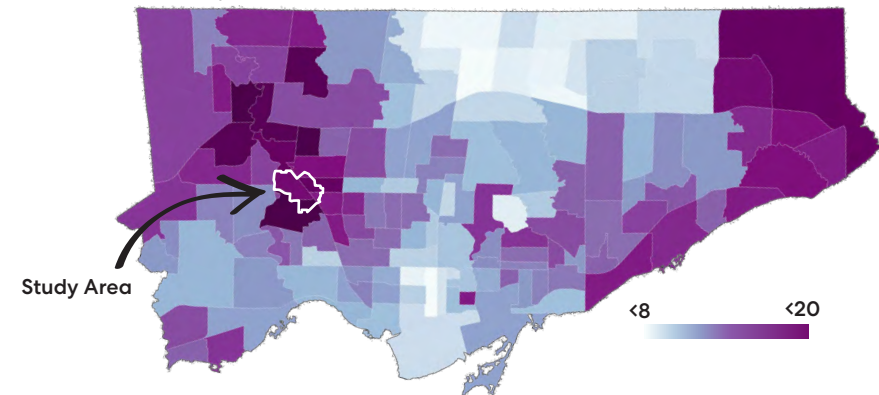
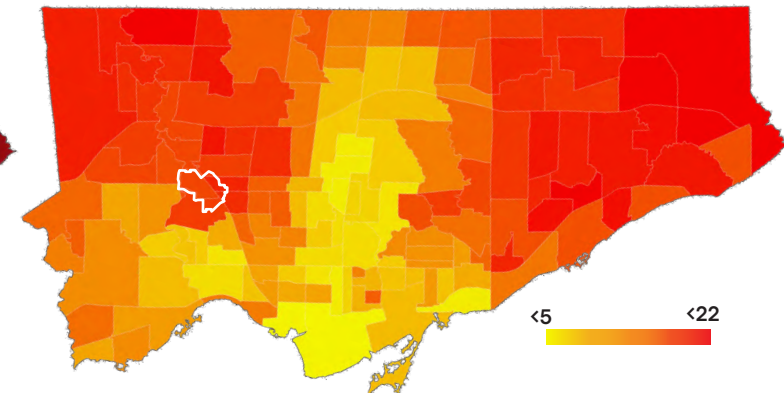
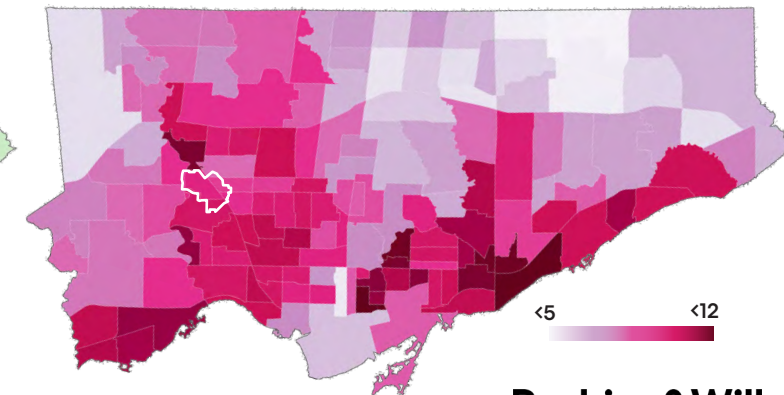


4% EI Regular Benefits

6% Social Assistance

\* The estimated median income is calculated by using count data for the median value would be located, assuming an even distribution in the median income group.

Graphics showing socio-economic distribution in Mount Dennis

**Figure 5. Comparison of Public Health Indicators in Mount Dennis and the City of Toronto****Figure 7. Prevalence of High Blood Pressure** per 100 residents**Figure 9. Prevalence of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease** per 100 residents**Figure 6. Prevalence of Asthma** per 100 residents**Figure 8. Prevalence of Diabetes** per 100 residents**Figure 10. Prevalence of Mental Health and Addiction-Related Visits** per 100 residents

Health outcomes in Mount Dennis for many common conditions are poorer than in the city as a whole and in many other neighbourhoods. Health outcomes are often very strongly correlated to income, so as Mount Dennis is a relatively lower income community these findings are not surprising. Other factors, such as access to employment, services, transit and greenspace and characteristics of the built environment can play a role in public health as well.

## 1.4 Developing the Framework

### A framework built on local voices

Throughout the study process, the City of Toronto alongside its consultant partners hosted a variety of community engagement sessions to a passionate group of residents and stakeholders. Participants gave insight on their priorities, needs and hopes for the future which were critical to the development of the Planning Framework. In order to ensure as many voices as possible in the neighbourhood were heard, engagement sessions ranged from large-scale community meetings to specialized small group meetings designed to capture harder to reach audiences and an online and hard copy survey. Due to COVID-19, all meetings were hosted virtually for the safety of all participants.

The engagement process was augmented by individual meetings with local community builders, local knowledge keepers, Indigenous partners and groups and other organizations who are deeply engaged in the area, such as the Mount Dennis Community Association and Black Urbanism TO.



Responses to the Social Pinpoint survey

### The engagement program at a glance:

#### 4 Community Consultation Meetings

Interactive virtual public meetings

#### 3 Indigenous Engagement Sessions

Led by an Indigenous engagement consultant, two general sessions and one session specifically for youth were held

#### 2 York-South Weston Neighbourhood Improvement Area Planning Table Meetings

On hold due to COVID, the Planning Table was reconvened to provide input into the study

#### 2 Heritage Focus Group Meetings

Comprised of local historians, heritage experts, Indigenous knowledge keepers and knowledge keepers of cultural communities

#### 3 Local Advisory Committee Meetings

Established as a non-political advisory body with a mandate to provide a forum for feedback, guidance, and advice to the Project Team at key points during the process

#### 2 Human Services Agency Engagements

Local human services agencies were engaged through a focus group discussion and a survey

#### 2 Design Review Panel Meetings

Independent panel of design professionals provided comments on the initial background analysis and emerging framework

#### 1 Survey

The survey was available both as a Social Pinpoint survey online and in hard copy at the Mount Dennis Library



## Study process

### PHASE 1: BACKGROUND REVIEW

OCTOBER 2020 - FEBRUARY 2021

- » Understand the existing characteristics of the neighbourhood
- » Introduce the project to the community and establish engagement groups

#### Engagement:

- Community Meeting #1
- Social Pinpoint Survey
- Hard Copy Survey
- Human Services Agencies Engagement
- Design Review Panel #1

### PHASE 2: TESTING

MARCH 2021 - AUGUST 2021

- » Develop vision, principles and concrete plans and strategies
- » Develop and test alternative design concepts

#### Engagement:

- Community Meeting #2 & #3
- Heritage Focus Group #1
- Local Advisory Committee #1 & #2
- Indigenous Engagement Sessions #1 & #2 and Youth Engagement
- NIA Planning Table #1 & #2
- Design Review Panel #2

### PHASE 3: EMERGING FRAMEWORK

SEPTEMBER 2021 - DECEMBER 2021

- » Prepare recommended framework, plans and strategies

#### Engagement:

- Community Meeting #4
- Local Advisory Committee #3
- Heritage Focus Group #2

The Planning Framework was developed through a three-phase process between October 2020 and December 2021, each of which included significant engagement.

# 1.5 Layout: Document Structure

The remainder of the Planning Framework is organized into four chapters.

**Chapter 2: Framing the Landscape** sets out the guiding philosophy of the Planning Framework. The three lenses of sustainability and resilience, equity and social development and public health and the vision and guiding principles provide the overarching approach for the Framework as a whole. The study area is also broken down into five character areas, each of which has a bespoke vision for the future.

**Chapter 3: The Big Picture** presents eight transformative moves for Mount Dennis that together encapsulate the vision for the future. The transformative moves reflect community input on priorities for the neighbourhood and the recommendations of previous studies on Mount Dennis.

**Chapter 4: Zoom In** includes the four structuring frameworks of the Planning Framework: land use and urban design, public realm and mobility, cultural heritage and environment and infrastructure. The frameworks go into greater detail about how the vision is to be achieved with specific recommendations for the City. Each framework is accompanied by a suite of healthy and inclusive communities strategies that ensure that the lenses are reflected throughout the Planning Framework.

**Chapter 5: Coming into View** contains the implementation plan, recommending specific actions and tools to turn the Planning Framework into reality.



## CHAPTER 2: Framing the Landscape

3

### Lenses

The Planning Framework is guided by three overarching lenses that permeate all of its recommendations

1

### Vision

A Vision and Guiding Principles developed from community input establish what the Planning Framework is trying to achieve

9

### Guiding Principles

5

### Character Areas

Five character areas break the study area down into districts that have different existing characteristics and potential for growth

## CHAPTER 3: The Big Picture

8

### Transformative Moves

The eight transformative moves encapsulate the big ideas for Mount Dennis that the Planning Framework is designed to accomplish

## CHAPTER 4: Zoom In

4

### Frameworks



Land Use &  
Urban Design



Public Realm  
& Mobility



Cultural  
Heritage



Environment &  
Infrastructure

### Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategies

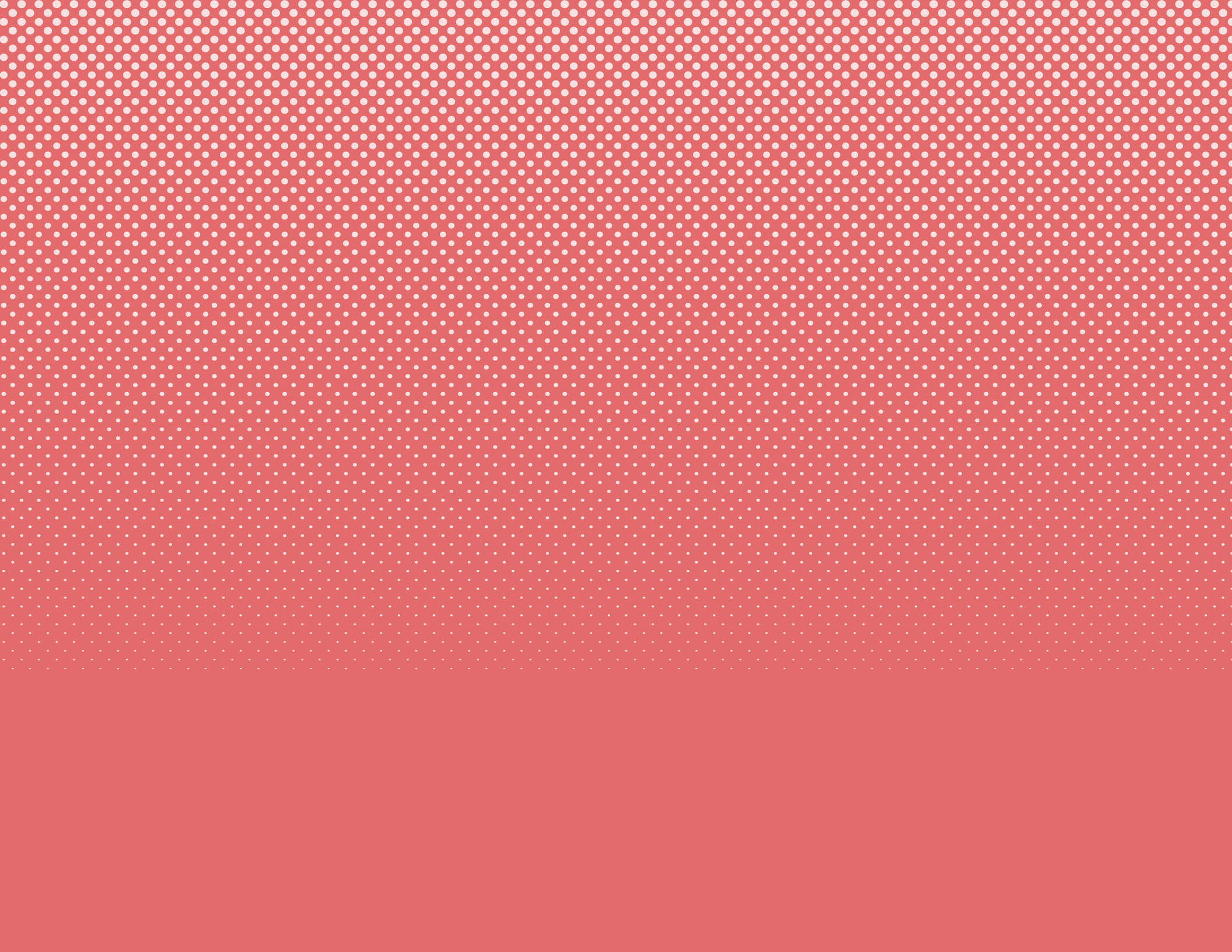
Under each of the four organizing frameworks, a Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy sets out policies and actions to implement the three lenses

## CHAPTER 5: Coming Into View

### Implementation

The implementation plan describes the steps needed from the City to implement the Planning Framework





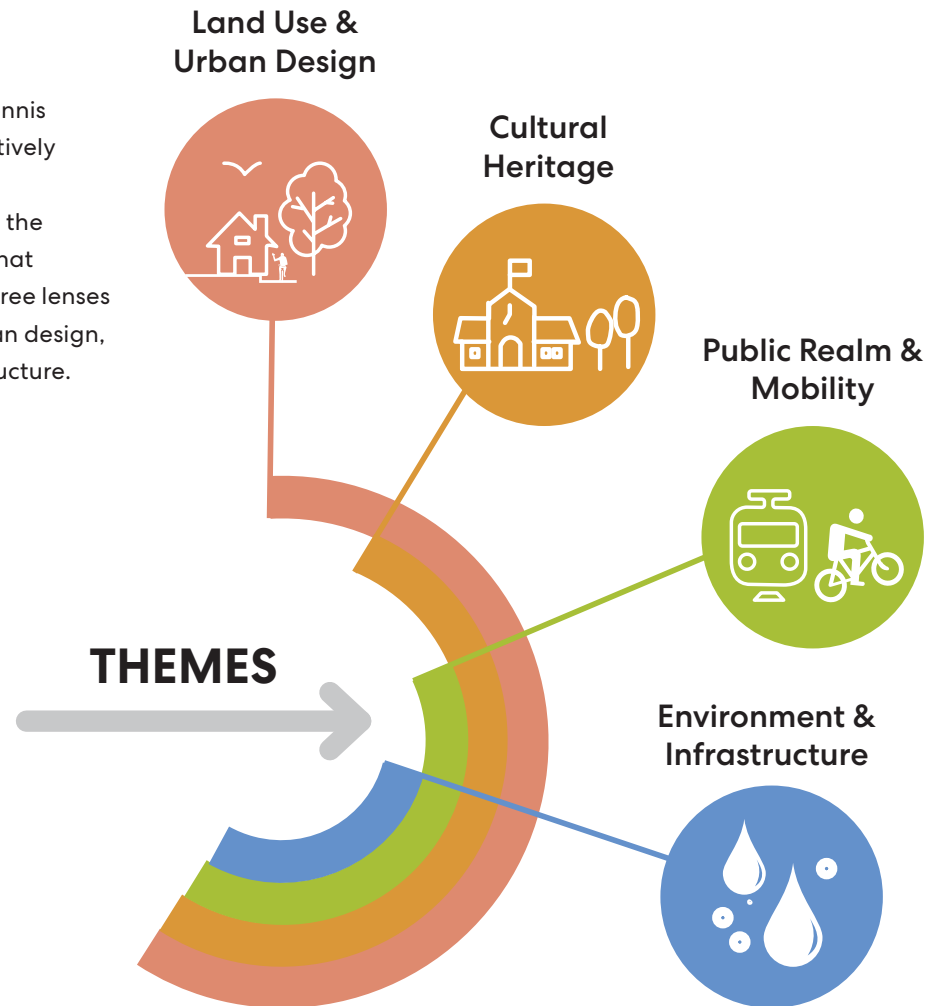
# 2

## **Framing the Landscape: Vision, Guiding Principles and Character Areas**

## 2.1 Overarching Lenses

### Taking a holistic view

Three overarching lenses – sustainability and resilience, equity and social development and public health – are applied across the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework. Planning and development matters cannot be effectively regulated unless they are embedded in an understanding of the types of communities we are trying to achieve – communities that actively address the climate emergency, that build and foster equity and inclusion for all and that support the public health of their residents, employees and visitors. The three lenses inform each of the four structuring themes of the plan – land use and urban design, public realm and mobility, cultural heritage and environment and infrastructure.







The Pollinators, Toronto  
Source: Supercoffee



## 2.2 Vision

### Setting a bold intention

The vision for the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework speaks to the incredible opportunity that is before the community today. It reflects the desire to embrace growth, but on the community's own terms. It articulates what is treasured about the community today and must be maintained as well as the community values that need to be reflected as new development takes place.

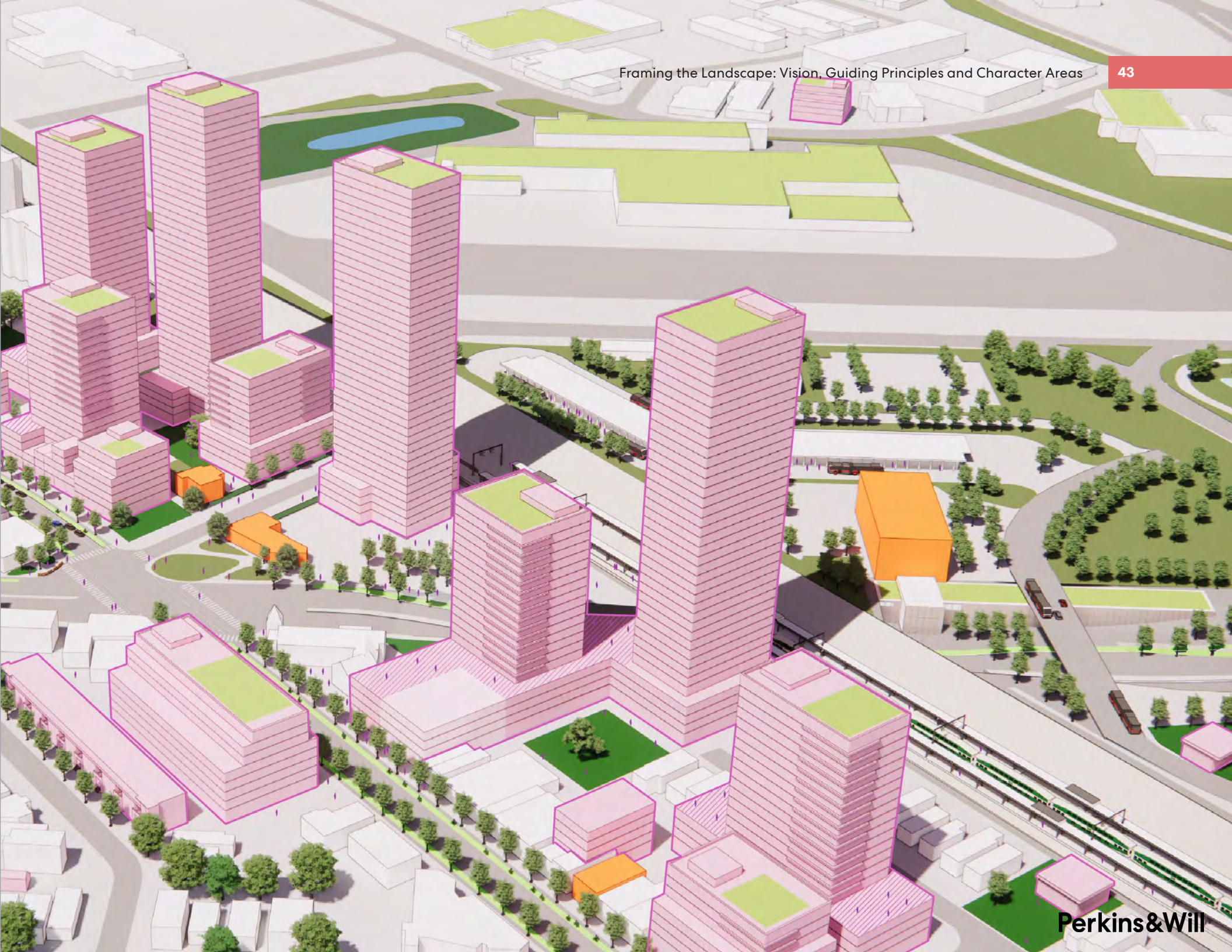
The vision was developed from the feedback heard from the community and stakeholders throughout the engagement process. It sets the intention for the Planning Framework and is further elaborated through nine guiding principles as well as supporting a place-specific vision for each character area within the study area.

### VISION

As a transit hub, Mount Dennis will grow to accommodate and connect new residents, businesses and institutions through sustainable new development and public space improvements while maintaining the diversity, affordability and cultural heritage that define its character today.









## 2.3 Guiding Principles

### Clear objectives for the Planning Framework

Nine guiding principles provide greater detail on the community's priorities for the future of Mount Dennis and provide direction to the Planning Framework. Like the vision, the guiding principles were developed from community feedback, in particular visioning discussions held with the public at Community Consultation Meeting #2, with the Local Advisory Committee and NIA Planning Table at their respective first meetings and with the Indigenous community at the first Indigenous engagement session and the youth-specific Indigenous engagement session.



Ideas shared during visioning session at CCM#2 using a Miro Board tool

### Direct growth and density

Recognizing that significant growth is coming to Mount Dennis, it is important to direct that growth to areas where it is most appropriate. Not all areas of Mount Dennis will experience the same level of change. The Planning Framework defines the type of growth that is appropriate across Mount Dennis' character areas and dictates where density should be focused.



### Promote and protect affordability

The relative affordability of Mount Dennis is one of its most valued characteristics. Protecting affordability as connectivity improves and new development takes place is a key community priority.



### Encourage Weston Road's development as Mount Dennis' main street

Weston Road is Mount Dennis' main street, but has struggled in comparison to many community main streets in Toronto. The Planning Framework aims to support Weston Road to play the important role of the commercial heart of Mount Dennis.



### **Honour the historical and contemporary Indigenous presence in the area**

From the historic Carrying Place Trail to contemporary ceremonies on the banks of the Humber River, Indigenous peoples have inhabited Mount Dennis for millennia. The Planning Framework aims to recognize and honour the culture, values and contributions of the Indigenous population.



### **Celebrate the local Mount Dennis character**

When significant change comes to an area there tends to be concern that local character will be lost. One of the key priorities of the Planning Framework is to celebrate and protect the local Mount Dennis character - whether it is cultural heritage resources or intangible heritage - while accommodating growth and change.



### **Develop complete and green streets**

The City of Toronto has been changing its approach to streets, viewing them holistically for their placemaking and ecological functions as well as their mobility function. The Planning Framework applies that approach across all the streets in Mount Dennis.



### **Promote public health and safety**

In addition to being one of the overarching lenses of the Planning Framework public health and the ways in which urban environments can support public health has become a topical issue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting public health including its most basic element - the ability for everyone to feel safe in their community - is at the heart of the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework.



### **Advance Mount Dennis as an eco-neighbourhood**

The Mount Dennis community has embraced the idea of being an eco-neighbourhood for several years. The Planning Framework offers the opportunity to help advance this objective through its policies and recommendations.



### **Facilitate local job growth**

Through the community engagement process economic development emerged as one of the primary challenges for Mount Dennis. The Planning Framework aims to complement the Mount Dennis Economic Development Study and help to implement some of its recommendations to facilitate local job growth.





## 2.4 Character Areas

### A tailored approach

Character areas are a tool to understand the differing existing conditions and future potential of a large and diverse study area like that of the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework. Five character areas have been defined in Mount Dennis:

**Valleys and Flats** encompass the Humber River, Black Creek, Eglinton Flats and associated open space areas.

**Employment and Institutional Areas** include areas that are devoted to economic activity and jobs, including the Black Creek Business Area, Irving Tissue Corporation and West Park Healthcare Centre.

**Residential Areas** include both high-rise and low-rise residential areas in Mount Dennis and their supporting parks and amenities.

The **Mixed-Use Main Street** consists of Weston Road and its immediate surrounding areas that feed its activity.

The **Mixed-Use Node** consists of the triangle between the rail corridor, Eglinton Avenue West and Black Creek Drive, which currently houses a No Frills store but is poised to be redeveloped as a high-density, mixed-use development.

Each of the character areas is described on the following pages in terms of its existing conditions and the vision for its future growth and change.

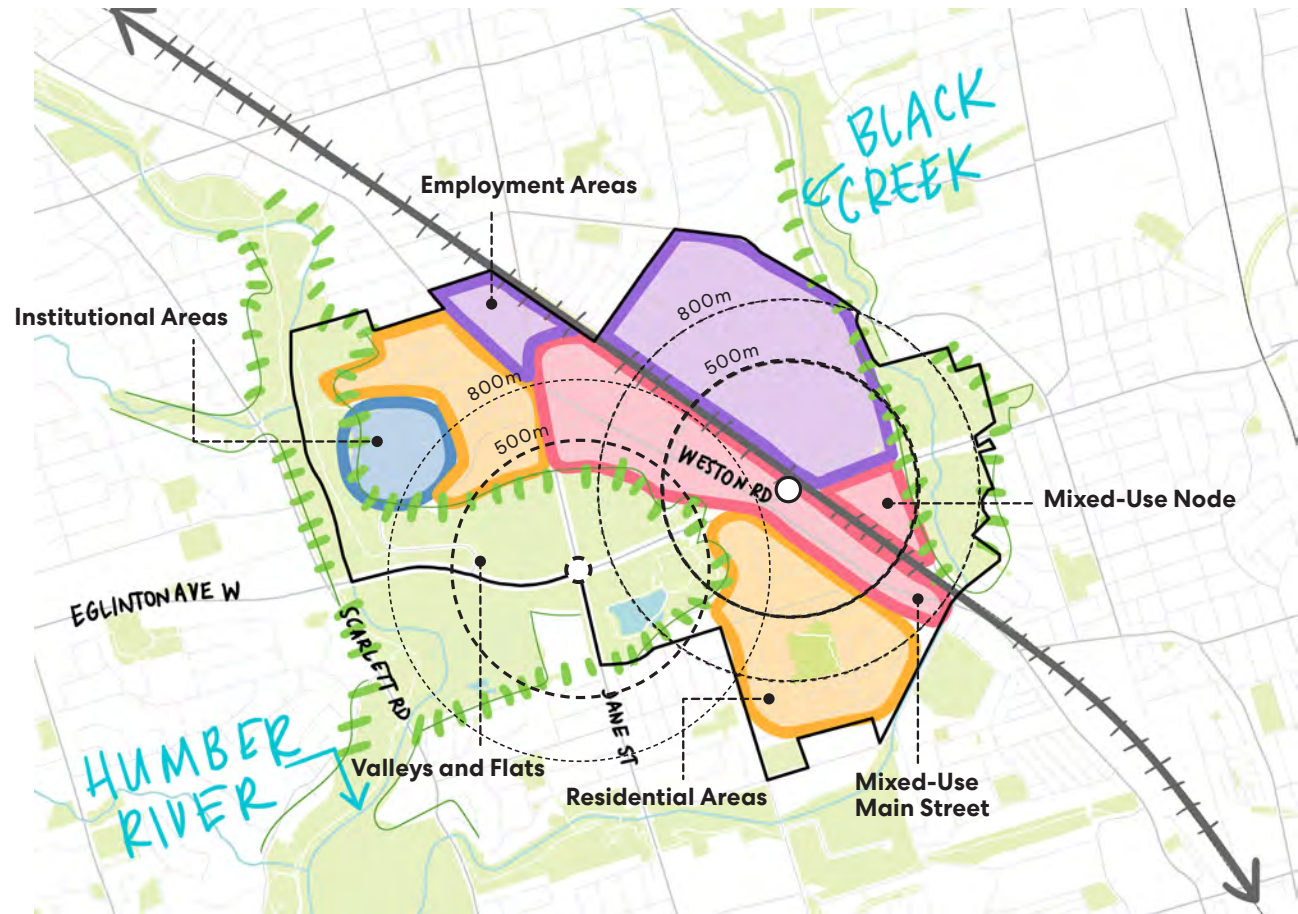
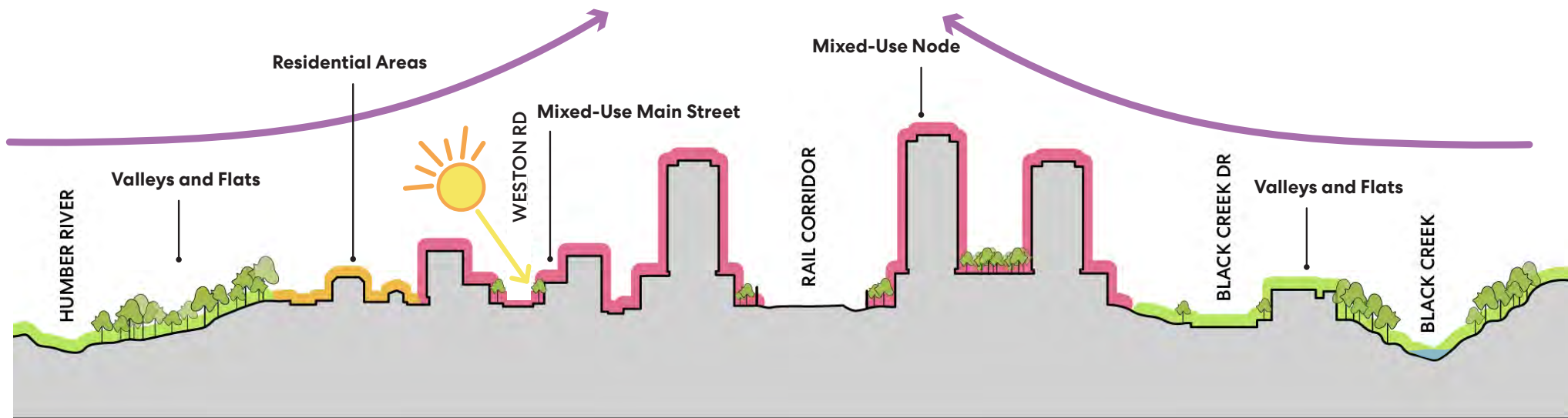


Figure 11. Map showing character areas

The diagram below depicts the future vision for Mount Dennis in a cross section from west to east. The community is nestled between the green lowlands of the Valleys and Flats on either side, providing a direct connection to nature. Residential Areas remain at a similar scale as they are today, growing through incremental change and gentle intensification. Along the Mixed-Use Main Street of Weston Road there is mid-rise development on either side, privileging the pedestrian experience by protecting for sun exposure and skyview from the sidewalk. Heights step up gradually towards the rail corridor, where shadow impacts and overlook issues are less significant. The peak continues on the other side of the rail corridor at the Mixed-Use Node before descending into Black Creek.



Character areas cross section of Mount Dennis



## 2.4.1 Valleys and Flats

### The green and blue lifeblood of Mount Dennis

The steep topography of the Humber River and Black Creek Valleys and the vast open spaces of the Eglinton Flats are a defining feature of Mount Dennis today and will remain so in the future. While the amount of open space that they provide is substantial, this incredible ecological, recreational and public health amenity is difficult to access for many due to slopes and limited formal entry points. Programming of the Flats is primarily focused on sports fields with some trails and passive recreation opportunities. Access and amenities can be expanded to serve a greater portion of the community. Indigenous communities have established spaces for ceremony and education within the valleys, with one primary location along the Humber River.

The community's goals for the Valleys and Flats are to allow more people to enjoy them and to ensure the open spaces they provide meet the needs of all residents. There will also be a need for stewardship and protection of the Valleys and Flats given the increased pressure on the natural heritage system created by population growth and the planned adjacency of future transit infrastructure to the Humber River Valley.



Figure 12. Map showing character area 'Valleys and Flats'



Topham Pond



Eglinton Flats



Humber River



Black Creek



St. John's Cemetery



Keelesdale North Park

## VISION

The valleys and flats will be recognized for the ecological and public health benefits that they bring to the community and will be made accessible to all – including families, youth and seniors – as spaces for ceremony, recreation and connection with nature.



Leisure spaces



Spaces for families



## 2.4.2 Employment and Institutional Areas

### Places for working

Mount Dennis has always been known for industrial employment with the famous Kodak Heights complex having operated in the community for nearly 100 years. Today there are three areas in Mount Dennis that are strictly devoted to jobs, business development and employment and will remain so in the future:

The **Black Creek Business Area** includes major employers such as the TTC, Metrolinx, FoodShare Toronto, and a wide range of other employees. It is seeing applications for employment intensification.

The **Irving Tissue Corporation** is a major, long-standing employer in Mount Dennis which has undergone several expansions and upgrades over the years.

**West Park Healthcare Centre** already employs over 1,000 people and is currently undertaking a major expansion.

Along with the Weston Road commercial main street, these areas are key to meeting the community's goals for local economic development and job growth and the Planning Framework strives to support their continued growth as hubs of employment.

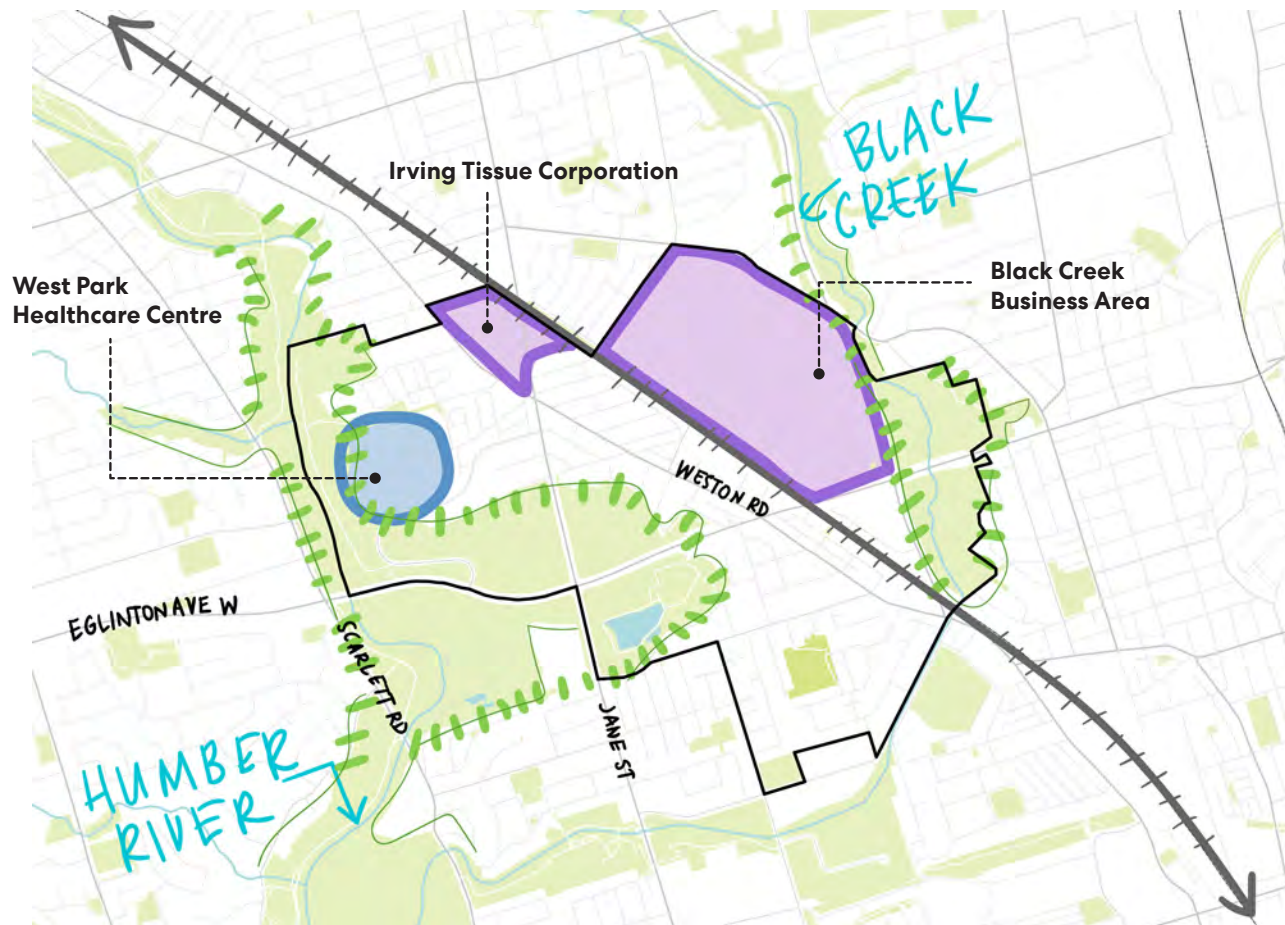


Figure 13. Map showing character area 'Employment and Institutional Areas'



TTC Bus Garage



West Park Healthcare Centre



Irving Tissue



Industry St. business



Relocated and re-purposed  
Kodak Building



Eglinton MSF

## VISION

The Framework will protect and support the growth and development of employment and institutional areas in Mount Dennis through improvements to accessibility, streetscape design and green infrastructure.



Supporting employment growth



Better accessibility



## 2.4.3 Residential Areas

### Places for living

Residential Areas in Mount Dennis provide a diversity of housing forms and tenures. There are older low-rise detached and semi-detached houses, newer townhomes primarily in the northwest of the study area, a few low and mid-rise apartment buildings and several apartment towers of greater than 12 storeys, including some operated by Toronto Community Housing. There are housing options for ownership and for rental and units of all sizes from small apartments to large family homes. There are two early examples of affordable housing in the southeast of the study area built in the 1950s and many characteristic examples of workers' housing built after the emergence of industry in the early 20th century. Until recently, housing in Mount Dennis was relatively affordable compared to the rest of the city.

The change envisioned for Residential Areas is minor and is focused on meeting community goals for affordability and resiliency. Additional housing can be accommodated in Residential Areas through “gentle intensification” with infill development and laneway, garden and secondary suites. Climate resilience can be supported with green infrastructure that helps to mitigate flooding and social infrastructure that supports social wellbeing.



Figure 14. Map showing character area 'Residential Areas'



Emmett Ave. Apartments



Sidney Belsey Crescent



Low-rise apartments



Single-detached housing



Westlake Memorial Park



Existing Playground

## VISION

**Maintaining and improving affordability and increasing housing options will be the focus in Mount Dennis' residential areas. Improvements to community infrastructure including local parks and green streets will support the resilience of Residential Areas.**



Laneway suites



Garden suites



## 2.4.4 Mixed-Use Main Street

### Weston Road: the spine of the community

Running diagonally through the heart of the community, Weston Road is Mount Dennis' commercial main street but some portions of it are struggling. Existing built form varies significantly along its length, including everything from detached single family homes, some of which have had the main floor converted into commercial space, to classic two-storey Toronto retail fabric, to low-density automotive uses to low and mid-rise apartment buildings. The historic scale of commercial spaces on Weston Road is small - most frontages are under 10 metres in width - creating relatively affordable retail spaces that house diverse small businesses. Weston Road is also dotted with a variety of institutions and places of worship that support a diversity of community activities. The dead-end residential streets extending from Weston Road to the rail corridor have already started seeing applications for the development of residential towers.

Primarily within 500 metres of the new Mount Dennis Station, the Mixed-Use Main Street will absorb the majority of the new growth coming to Mount Dennis, resulting in a complete transformation of this character area. The community's priority is to protect what is valued about Weston Road today - its human scale and affordable retail space - while harnessing new development to add the people, activity and vitality necessary to support its businesses.



Figure 15. Map showing character area 'Mixed-Use Main Street'



Car dealerships



Fine-grained retail



Low-rise apartments



Existing church



Local business Supercoffee

## VISION

**Weston Road is the heart and spine of Mount Dennis. Its historic character of diverse, small scale, affordable retail will be maintained as it develops as a safe, multi-modal, and vibrant mixed-use destination for the community.**



Vertical additions



Mid-rise. Source: R-Hauz



## 2.4.5 Mixed-Use Node

### A new vertical community within Mount Dennis

The Black Creek triangle is immediately opposite the new Mount Dennis Station and is currently underutilized with a No Frills supermarket and large parking lot on the site. Given the transit proximity and lack of adjacency to sensitive uses such as low-rise residential areas, the Mixed-Use Node is an appropriate location to absorb significant new growth. The community's priority for the Mixed-Use Node is ensuring that it adds to the diversity and affordability of the housing supply in Mount Dennis and to the suite of non-residential uses in the community. City-owned land on the triangle offers the potential to work with the private landowner Choice Properties to achieve City objectives on the site, where there is currently a formal application. The Mixed-Use Node is a possible location for a post-secondary campus satellite facility in Mount Dennis as part of the non-residential land use mix. The retention of an affordable food store on the site is also a priority.



Figure 16. Map showing character area 'Mixed-Use Node'



Existing No Frills



CreateTO Lands



Grade change along Eglinton



Mount Dennis Station entrance across Eglinton Ave. West

## VISION

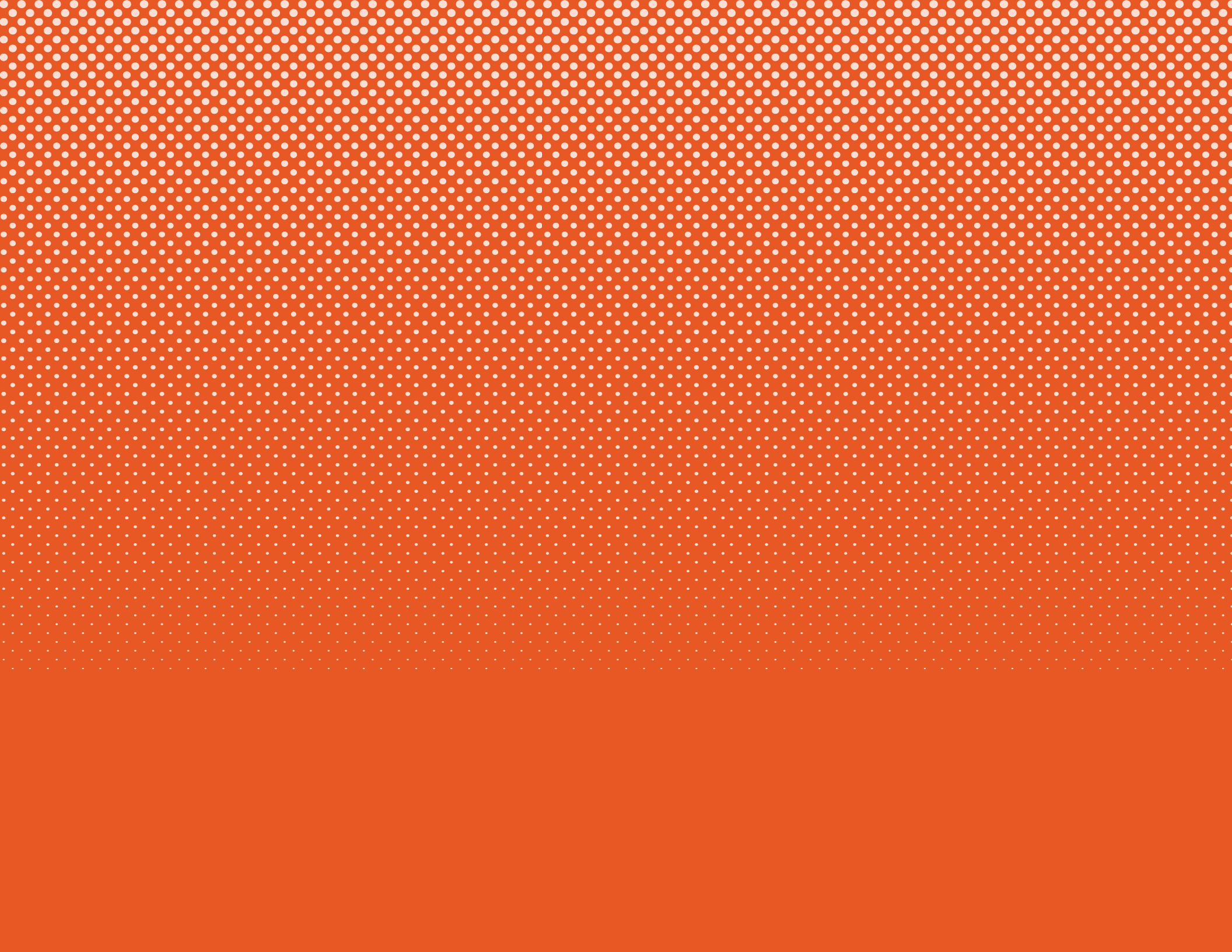
The Mixed-Use Node will develop into a high-density mixed-use area that complements the fine-grained retail main street along Weston Road with larger format retail space including a grocery store. Affordability and increased residential housing options will be a priority.



Mixed use development with grocery retail



Marine Gateway, Vancouver





# 3

## The Big Picture: Transformative Moves

## 3.1 Connect People to the Land

### The importance of nature in the midst of urban growth

Throughout the engagement process for the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework, participants at community meetings, Indigenous engagement sessions, Design Review Panel meetings and other events kept bringing the discussion back to the land. Mount Dennis' location between valleys and flats is to many what makes it special, and the connection to nature becomes more, not less important with the addition of significant new urban growth. Exposure to nature has well-documented benefits to physical and mental health which have become more important than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a concern that the level of growth anticipated will turn Mount Dennis into a concrete jungle, wiping out the perception of nature and space that appeals to many residents today.

The first transformative move is to strengthen the connection of people to the land throughout Mount Dennis. There are two parts to this undertaking: making it easier for people to access the existing greenspace in Mount Dennis, and extending nature out of the ravines to permeate all areas of the community.

The first part will be achieved by adding and improving access points to the ravine system as described in Section 4.3 Public Realm and Mobility Framework. The second part requires a multi-faceted suite of policies and capital projects designed to “green” Mount Dennis as it densifies. These include:

- Implementing green streets infrastructure such as rain gardens and bioswales on most streets in Mount Dennis, with a special focus on Weston Road as a central green corridor.
- Requiring development to prioritize on-site and off-site parkland dedication - land first - in parallel with growth before cash-in-lieu of parkland and encouraging landowners to coordinate parkland dedication requirements, allowing for consolidated new park spaces to support new development.
- Contributing publicly-owned lands - whether existing underutilized public parcels or unneeded portions of public right-of-ways - to expand parks where possible.
- Pursuing and supporting opportunities for renaturalization where feasible, including along the channelized portion of Black Creek and as part of major infrastructure developments like the western extension of the Eglinton Crosstown.
- Protecting and enhancing the Natural Heritage System, anticipating increased pressure resulting from increased population in the area.







Meadoway, Toronto  
Source: Perkins&Will



## 3.2 Revitalize Weston Road

### A true neighbourhood main street

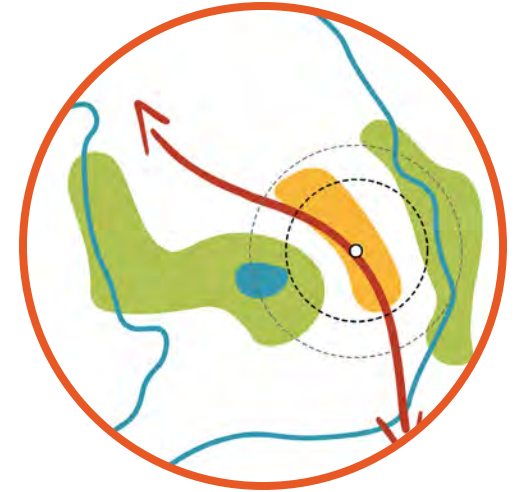
Thriving neighbourhood main streets are an essential part of healthy communities. They support local entrepreneurship and employment, facilitate social interaction and integration and encourage short, local trips using active transportation. Main streets tend to play an important role in defining the “sense of place” of a neighbourhood.

Transforming Weston Road into a vibrant urban place requires coordinated efforts between multiple City divisions and partners such as the Mount Dennis Business Improvement Area (BIA), which has invested significant effort into the development and implementation of a Streetscape Master Plan for its portion of Weston Road.

There are several components to the revitalization of Weston Road: supporting its businesses, protecting its existing commercial main street built fabric, defining the parameters for when redevelopment takes place and making capital investments to create a complete street. Options for the latter are described in Section 4.3 Public Realm and Mobility Framework.

Opportunities for Weston Road include:

- Updating the Official Plan land use designation for Weston Road to Mixed-Use Area to align better with the reality on the ground and enable businesses to expand their operations.
- Considering the properties identified in Section 4.4 Cultural Heritage Framework for inclusion on the City’s Heritage Register.
- Where possible, conserving the existing two-storey commercial main street fabric and heritage features that promote a sense of place.
- Establishing maximum retail frontage requirements and unit sizes for new development to conserve the existing small-scale main street character of the street.
- Establishing a pedestrian-scaled streetwall that responds to the existing scale of the street.
- Adjusting requirements for parking and loading to facilitate the provision of quality retail spaces at grade in new development.
- Working with the BIA on the implementation of their Streetscape Master Plan and extending the concept beyond the BIA boundaries.
- Exploring ways to calm and divert traffic between Jane Street and Black Creek Drive and prioritizing safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists, and surface transit.







Vibrant streetscape on the Danforth, Toronto  
Source: Toronto Star



## 3.3 Honour Indigenous Cultures

### Visibility and support for the Indigenous population

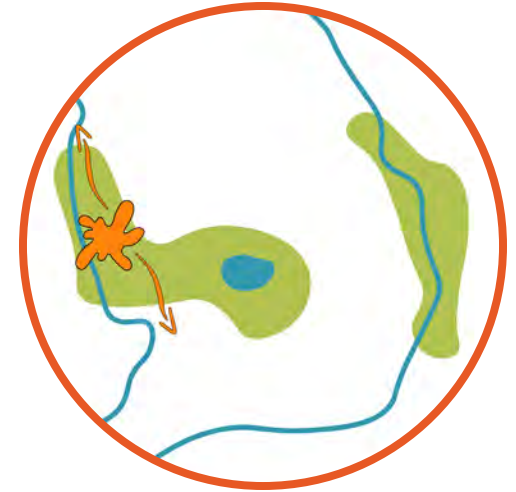
The City of Toronto has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in 2015, identified eight Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation report which it is prioritizing. The future of Mount Dennis should support these commitments through the planning process and prioritize the revitalization of Indigenous land, language and culture.

More than in many neighbourhoods in Toronto, in Mount Dennis the proximity to the Humber River and alignment of a portion of Weston Road along the route of the Carrying Place Trail make the link to Indigenous history very strong. With ceremonial practice taking place in the ravines and strong supportive organizations in the community such as Anduhyau Inc. providing emergency housing to Indigenous women and ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency providing cultural, employment, recreational and wellness services to Indigenous youth, contemporary Indigenous culture is also an important part of Mount Dennis.

The Mount Dennis community has expressed a desire to honour the historical and contemporary Indigenous presence in the area for some time. The recent Mount Dennis Economic Development Study included among its top 20 initiatives “supporting a local Indigenous placemaking initiative in Mount Dennis” as part of a suite of recommendations to create a unique and positive identity for the community.

Through the engagement for the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework, particularly the Indigenous and Indigenous youth engagement sessions, a number of opportunities were suggested. A multi-pronged approach must be taken to celebrate Indigenous culture, recognizing and supporting the cultural activities that take place today, continuing to work with the local Indigenous community on culturally-appropriate services and community spaces, and bringing awareness to the larger community of Indigenous history and culture in Mount Dennis. Opportunities to implement this transformative move include:

- Improving accessibility for Elders to ceremonial spaces in the ravines.
- Working with Indigenous groups to secure community space for culturally-appropriate programming.
- Renaming parks and streets to recognize Indigenous history in the area in keeping with the City’s new commemoration framework.
- Celebrating historic and contemporary use of the ravines by Indigenous peoples for travel and ceremony with Indigenous languages and interpretive signage along trail routes.
- Planting of medicinal plants as identified by the Elders and Knowledge Holders in parks and greenspaces in Mount Dennis.
- Inviting Indigenous artists to create public art in the community.
- Employing Indigenous earth workers as environmental stewards for parks, ravines and green streets infrastructure.







Wigwam Village, Georgina Island  
Source: Cambium Indigenous Professional Services



## 3.4 Expand the Community Heart

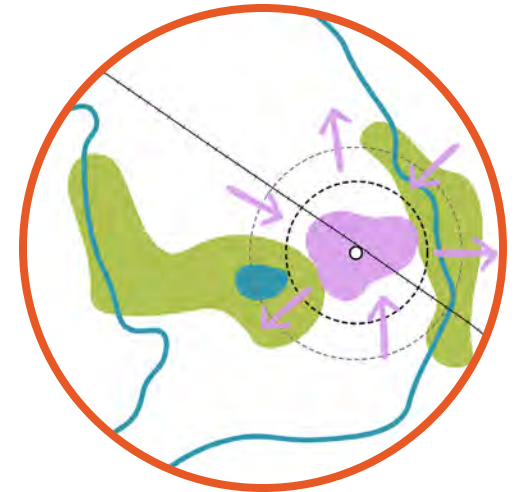
### Community and institutional uses surrounding Mount Dennis Station

Centrally located within the community, Mount Dennis Station will become a huge centre of activity when it is fully functional as an LRT, GO and UP Express station. There is already a small collection of community uses in close proximity to the station, with the well-loved Mount Dennis Branch of the Toronto Public Library just to its west on Weston Road and the new and well-used York Recreation Centre to its east on Black Creek Drive. The Mount Dennis Community Hall is also opposite one of the station entrances on Hollis Street. The renovated and repurposed Kodak Building housing the station entrance itself will add to the cluster, with potential for community use such as an art gallery or museum.

There are also significant public land holdings in proximity to the station. There is a vacant City-owned parcel immediately opposite the station on the Black Creek triangle adjacent to the No Frills site. Following completion of the western extension of the Eglinton Crosstown there may also be surplus Metrolinx lands on the site of the station and Maintenance and Storage Facility, which would have to go through Metrolinx's regular process for disposal of surplus lands.

With this conglomeration of existing and planned community uses and additional public land in the most accessible location in Mount Dennis, there is an opportunity to expand the community heart with additional community and/or institutional uses. This is also a location for an exceptional public realm with high quality urban public spaces and premium materials. Appropriate additions include several initiatives identified in the Mount Dennis Economic Development Study as well as other suggestions made by the community during the engagement process. These include:

- A post-secondary institution or satellite institution. Efforts are currently underway to attract an institution to Mount Dennis and this would be a possible location for a post-secondary campus satellite facility.
- A major economic/social/community project. The Economic Development Study promotes attracting a major project such as a clean tech, mass timber construction, food or social innovation/social enterprise hub, photography/film museum or major arts/cultural facility.
- A new open space on the Black Creek triangle secured as part of Choice Properties' current development application.





York Recreation Centre, Toronto  
Source: Perkins&Will



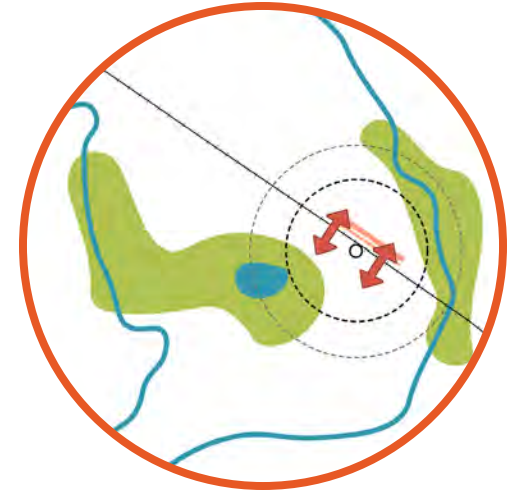
## 3.5 Connect Across the Rail Corridor

### Connectivity across the infrastructural divide

Many of the previous studies done on Mount Dennis, including the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study and reports from ULI's Curtner Leadership Program, have identified improved connectivity over the rail corridor as a significant opportunity for the neighbourhood. The construction of the station itself adds urgency to the need for better connectivity but also provides the opportunity to piggyback on station access improvements to advance overall neighbourhood connectivity. The ability of the Black Creek Business Area to benefit from the new transit infrastructure is contingent on finding ways to breach this barrier and reduce travel times from the station.

There are many opportunities for reducing the barrier of the rail corridor, including creating new connections, improving existing connections and introducing micro-mobility options designed to cross the corridor. This transformative move includes the following:

- Working with Metrolinx to create a new pedestrian crossing across the rail corridor at the south end of the GO platform. In addition to providing access to the GO station the bridge would also provide access from the City-owned parcel on the east to Barr Avenue on the west without crossing into the fare zone. Similar crossings exist at other GO Stations such as Exhibition.
- Working with Metrolinx to explore opportunities for a new station access from Locust Street to the north end of the GO platform.
- Exploring the opportunity for a new pedestrian path along the west side of the rail corridor from Hollis Street to Ray Avenue, which, in combination with a new station access, would significantly reduce the distance from the station to the Black Creek Business Area.
- Improving the public realm at the Ray Avenue bridge with lighting, murals and signage for cyclists.
- Introducing micro-mobility infrastructure such as BikeShare Toronto stations at Mount Dennis Station and at strategic locations within the Black Creek Business Area.







Footbridge of the High Speed Train Station Saint-Laud, France  
Source: Archdaily



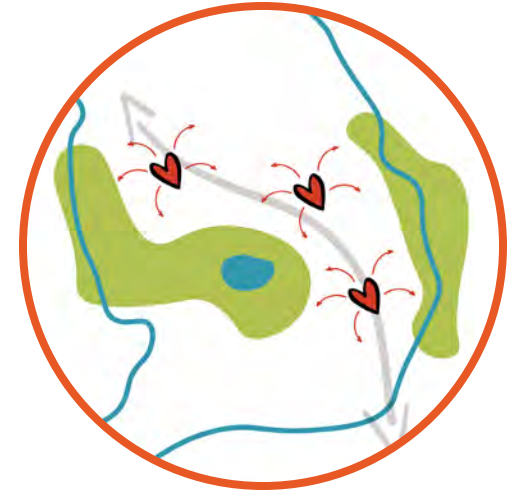
## 3.6 Support Black and Afro-Caribbean Cultures

### Community identity expressed through local businesses and food

Mount Dennis is known for its cultural diversity, which is demonstrated in the diversity of the businesses that are found along Weston Road. In particular, the contribution of the area's large Black and Afro-Caribbean community is evident in the businesses along Weston Road, including barbershops, hair salons and take-out oriented restaurants. Many residents identify these businesses as key to the community identity of Mount Dennis. Enabling Black-owned and operated businesses to continue to flourish means actively planning to support their retention and growth and celebrating the contributions of the Afro-Caribbean community to the character and identity of the neighbourhood.

There are many strong advocates for Black business and Black culture in Toronto including BlackUrbanismTO, which participated in the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Study, the Mayor's Roundtable on Black Business and the Black Business and Professional Association. Locally, Mount Dennis has active voices from the Black and Afro-Caribbean community among its residents, businesses and nonprofit organizations, some of whom participated in the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Study. Continuing to consult and collaborate with members of the community as Mount Dennis develops and as the Planning Framework is implemented will be essential to supporting Black and Afro-Caribbean residents and businesses and celebrating this important part of Mount Dennis' culture. Opportunities related to this transformative move include:

- Investigating specific actions that could be extended to Mount Dennis in relation to supporting and promoting Black business along the Eglinton West corridor.
- Engaging with the Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) Division including the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, relevant community organizations and others, regarding support for Black-owned businesses.
- Using planning tools to retain small-scale retail units that are appropriate for local businesses and entrepreneurs in existing and new development.
- Considering the strong presence of Afro-Caribbean businesses and Afro-Caribbean food as a distinguishing feature in the development of a Mount Dennis brand.
- Commemorating the intangible heritage of Mount Dennis as a diverse community that has hosted several waves of new immigrants to Canada, including many immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean.
- Showcasing the work of local Black artists and arts groups in the development of public art in Mount Dennis.





Black Owned Holiday Market  
Source: Nneka Elliott



## 3.7 Develop an Eco-Neighbourhood

### A resilient and sustainable neighbourhood

There has been grassroots interest in pursuing sustainability and resilience at the neighbourhood level in Mount Dennis for many years. The Mount Dennis Community Association is leading the effort with its Mount Dennis Eco-Neighbourhood Initiative that aims to co-design a community-based climate action plan with local stakeholders. This community driven momentum provides an excellent starting point for the Planning Framework's transformative move to develop an eco-neighbourhood in Mount Dennis. This initiative is also aligned with the City's TransformTO climate action strategy and greenhouse gas reduction targets of reducing emissions by 30 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, by 65 percent by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050 or sooner and the City's Resilience Strategy.

An eco-neighbourhood in Mount Dennis would include both opportunities for climate mitigation (reducing local greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (developing resilience to the impacts of climate change), including:

- Exploring opportunities offered through the City's Tower Renewal Program to improve energy efficiency in the older apartment towers in Mount Dennis.
- Facilitating the use of active transportation and micro-mobility for local trips with improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Supporting the Mount Dennis Business Improvement Area's plans for bee-friendly plantings.
- Supporting the development of a sustainable transportation sector in Mount Dennis, as recommended by the Economic Development Study.
- Supporting mass timber construction in Mount Dennis, including potential for a mass timber innovation centre as suggested in the reports from the Urban Land Institute's Curtner Leadership Program.
- Continuing to advance net-zero energy initiatives like the Mount Dennis Early Learning and Childcare Centre as part of Mount Dennis' designation as a pilot net-zero energy neighbourhood.







Bee Friendly Bus Stops, The City of Utrecht  
Source: ArchDaily



## 3.8 A Mount Dennis for Everyone

### Building on a legacy of a welcoming and inclusive place

The Mount Dennis of today is a diverse community in terms of income levels, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and family types. For the last several decades it has been one of the neighbourhoods where newcomers to Canada land and get on their feet. Current residents feel that its relative housing affordability and the diverse community who are able to settle in Mount Dennis as a result are some of Mount Dennis' greatest strengths.

While recognizing the benefits of transit connectivity and growth, there are serious concerns in the community about gentrification and displacement due to increasing housing prices and commercial rents. Given the demographics in Mount Dennis, the BIPOC community will be disproportionately affected by displacement. There is also concern that by virtue of the level of anticipated growth - a more than doubling of the population over the next 30+ years - the essential nature of the community as an affordable place for people of all backgrounds will change.

The final transformative move put forward in the Planning Framework is to ensure that Mount Dennis remains a community for everyone. Using every tool available to maintain the diversity and affordability of the housing stock and maintain small and affordable retail spaces as described in Section 4.2 Land Use and Urban Design Framework is part of the equation. The other part of the equation is providing the safe and welcoming environment, equitable employment opportunities and community facilities and supports to ensure everyone feels like they belong in Mount Dennis. A number of suggestions were

made through the engagement process and many of the initiatives of the Mount Dennis Economic Development Study are relevant. Opportunities include:

- Prioritizing food security in Mount Dennis, building from existing food security infrastructure such as FoodShare Toronto, the Weston Farmers' Market and existing community gardens in the Eglinton Flats and implementing the Black Food Sovereignty Plan approved by City Council on October 1, 2021.
- Pursuing opportunities for community benefits, both for major public sector projects in line with the City's 2019 Community Benefits Framework, and on a voluntary basis for private development. This could include supporting local talent and skills development through local and/or social hiring and procurement.
- Designing streets, parks and new indoor and outdoor community spaces to support all segments of the population, including children, youth and seniors and to provide opportunities for gatherings and mingling that build community between existing and new residents and diverse groups within the community.
- Continuing to work with BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+ community members to identify physical changes to the built environment that would improve safety.
- Ensuring Mount Dennis is a seniors-friendly community with housing options, services and a safe and accessible public realm designed to meet the needs of seniors.
- Prioritizing social infrastructure to support the seamless integration of new and existing residents.







Black Creek Community Farm, Toronto  
Source: Earth to Tables





# 4 Zoom In: Frameworks and Strategies



## 4.1 Introduction: Frameworks and Strategies

The Frameworks and Strategies of the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework take the desired future state of Mount Dennis as defined by the vision, guiding principles and transformative moves and translate it into the concrete steps required to make it a reality over the next 30+ years. The four frameworks are derived from the four themes which guided the study.

Each Framework is accompanied by a Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy designed to ensure that the three lenses of equity and social development, sustainability and resilience and public health are reflected in the Planning Framework. The Strategies aim to optimize the potential of development in Mount Dennis to advance sustainability objectives and strengthen the social cohesion of existing and new residents through social/economic/environmental recommendations that take an equity lens to development in accordance with a variety of City strategies and action plans.



**4.2 Land Use  
and Urban  
Design Framework**



**4.3 Public Realm  
and Mobility  
Framework**



**4.4 Cultural Heritage  
Framework**



**4.5 Environment  
and Infrastructure  
Framework**

City plans that inform the Healthy and Inclusive Community Strategies:

- Poverty Reduction Strategy 2019-2022 Action Plan
- Toronto Youth Equity Strategy
- Seniors Strategy
- The Toronto Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019-2038
- Toronto Resilience Strategy
- Transform TO Climate Action Strategy
- Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism
- Housing TO 2020-2030 Action Plan
- Urban Design Guidelines for Privately-owned, Publicly Accessible Spaces
- Toronto Public Art Strategy 2020- 2030
- Black Food Sovereignty Plan
- Parkland Strategy Report
- Forestry Strategic Management Plan
- Ravine Strategy Implementation

Other documents also reviewed to inform the overall strategy:

- Economic Development and Culture Divisional Strategy
- Neighbourhood Improvement Area Table Action Plans
- City of Toronto Tower Renewal Plans

- City of Toronto Social Procurement Program
- Mayor's Task Force on Housing 2016
- City of Toronto Community Benefits Framework

The Strategies are also informed by the findings of the Community Services and Facilities Study carried out by the Canadian Urban Institute and input from the public engagement program, in particular interviews with local community builders carried out by the Centre for Connected Communities and interviews with knowledge keepers of cultural communities undertaken by Heritage Planning to augment the Heritage Focus Group.

The following are the principles that guide and inform the Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategies:

- Improved livability/social cohesion of existing and new communities is a key metric of success of infrastructure projects.
- Infrastructure projects offer unique opportunities to make progress on the City's equity goals.
- The people currently living in the Mount Dennis community are active contributors to creating social cohesion now and in the future.
- Designing for equity and social cohesion requires cross-City divisional collaborative approaches.
- Transparency and accessible communication is foundational to building the requisite trust in City processes.
- Intentional coordination of all aspects of a project amplifies the success of the entire project.

For ease of implementation, each recommendation in the Frameworks and Strategies section is categorized based on the actions the City will need to take to implement it. Icons representing the five categories appear next to each recommendation. Section 5: Coming into View elaborates further the steps required to implement the Planning Framework.



### Planning policy and development review

These recommendations can be implemented by City Planning by making policy changes to the Official Plan, zoning by-law or other by-laws, by including properties on the City's Heritage Register or through the development review process.



### Community benefit

These recommendations can be implemented through community benefits negotiated as part of the development approval process or as part of Community Benefits Agreements for major public sector projects.



### Collaborative effort

These recommendations will need to be implemented by City divisions working together, the City working with other public agencies, the City working with private sector partners or the City working with community players (non-profit and grassroots).



### Capital project

These recommendations are capital projects that the City will need to plan for in future capital budgets.



### Follow up study

These recommendations require the City to undertake additional analysis or study.





## 4.2 Land Use and Urban Design Framework

### 4.2.1 Introduction

The Land Use and Urban Design Framework is intended to guide Mount Dennis' evolution with regard to built form, economic development and community service facilities. It creates an urban structure within which Mount Dennis can accommodate significant new growth - a more than doubling of its population over the next 30+ years - while continuing to develop as a diverse, liveable and transit-supportive community. The Framework defines the areas within which the majority of this growth should be concentrated and the areas that should remain relatively stable with only incremental change. It also establishes urban design guidelines to address how new growth fits into the existing context, in particular, ensuring that new growth respects Weston Road's character as a historic commercial street and responds appropriately to cultural heritage resources.

The Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy within the Land Use and Urban Design Framework includes recommendations designed to ensure that the growth that is coming to Mount Dennis benefits everyone. It addresses housing diversity, community services and facilities, economic development and local employment, enabling tools and healthy design and built environment principles. These topics require proactive management as new growth comes to Mount Dennis to achieve the healthy, equitable and inclusive future that the community desires.

#### Objectives:

1. Delineate a Protected Major Transit Station Area around Mount Dennis Station and concentrate the most significant height and density within it.
2. Direct tall buildings along the rail corridor with the height peak surrounding Mount Dennis Station, transitioning down to a mid-rise form on Weston Road.
3. Encourage gentle density/incremental intensification within Neighbourhoods and Apartment Neighbourhoods.
4. Enable Weston Road's development as a thriving and diverse commercial main street with an animated ground level.
5. Preserve the main street character of Weston Road through requirements for active uses and small scale units at grade and prescribed podium or base building heights and setbacks and stepbacks.
6. Require, incentivize and facilitate the creation of a diversity of housing types that cater to a range of household sizes, abilities, ages, incomes and lifecycle needs.
7. Support existing and new residents with community services and facilities that meet the community's needs, including culturally-appropriate spaces and services for BIPOC communities in the area and social infrastructure including community services and robust communication strategies.
8. Support large-scale and small-scale economic development initiatives that prioritize place-based workforce and social procurement strategies.
9. Promote public health through the design of the built and natural environment.
10. Ensure all new developments meet a standard of design excellence that will complement the neighbourhood and enhance the character and image of the community over time.
11. Respect cultural heritage resources and ensure new development is sensitive to the context and sense of place of Mount Dennis.

## What we heard

Make sure BIPOC residents are able to access jobs in Mount Dennis

Economic development and jobs is the number one issue facing Mount Dennis

Affordability of housing and retail space is essential to make sure existing residents and businesses can remain in Mount Dennis

Weston Road should have a mid-rise scale with taller heights behind it up to the rail corridor



Maximize the transit investment to get healthy density and a diverse housing supply

Land use designations on Weston are preventing businesses from expanding

Mount Dennis does not have enough affordable community space

Mount Dennis is a gap in the City when it comes to options for post-secondary education

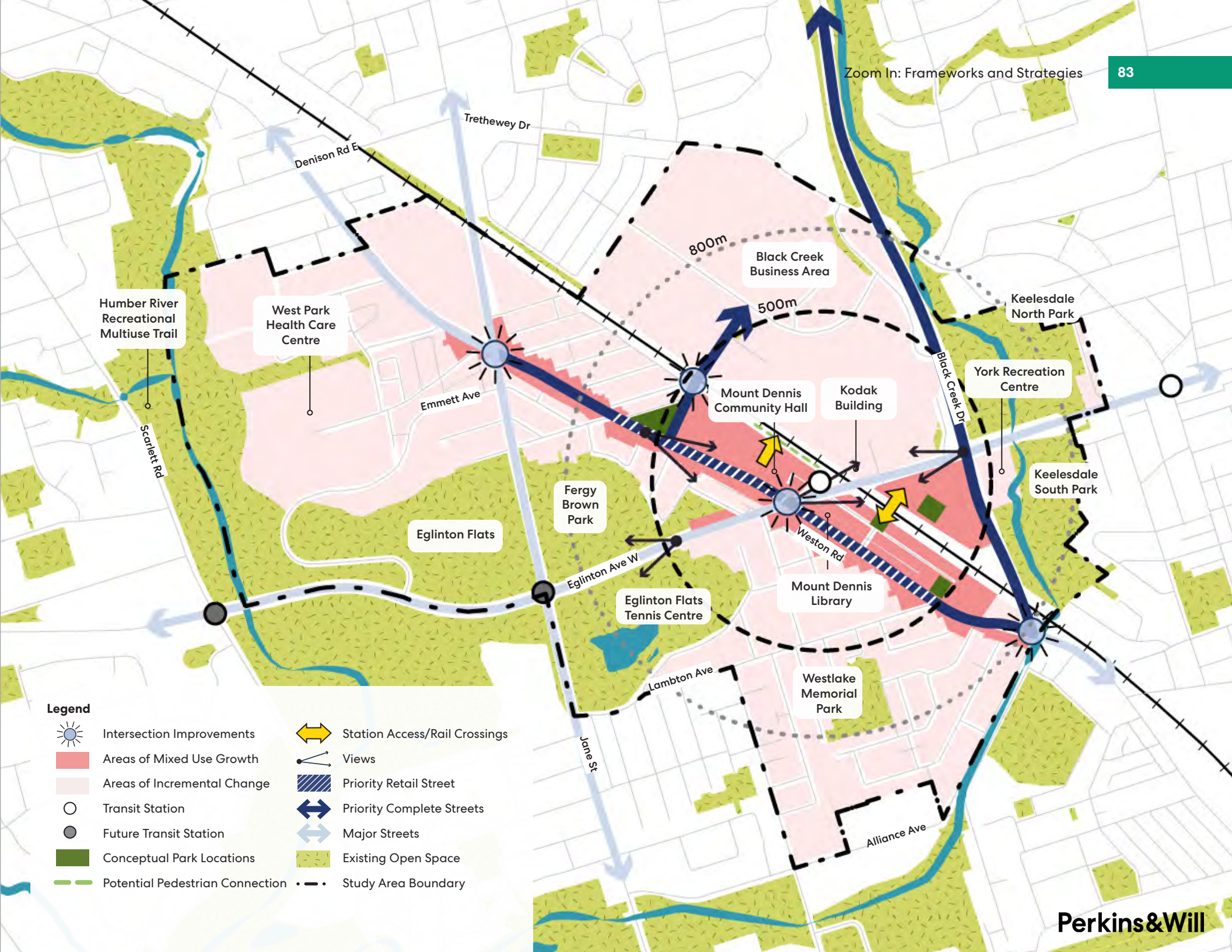




## 4.2.2 Area Structure Plan

The Area Structure Plan for Mount Dennis establishes the major structuring elements of the community, including:

- **Transit stations:** These stations are along the current extent of the Eglinton Crosstown set to open in 2022.
- **Future transit stations:** These stations are planned as part of the Eglinton Crosstown extension.
- **Areas of mixed-use growth:** These are the parts of Mount Dennis where the majority of new residential and mixed-use development will take place.
- **Areas of incremental change:** These areas will remain relatively stable, with incremental growth possible at a similar scale to what exists today through means such as employment intensification (in *Employment Areas*) or small scale redevelopment (in *Mixed-Use Areas*). In *Neighbourhoods*, the City's Expanding Housing Options in *Neighbourhoods* initiative will facilitate the creation of more low-rise housing in an incremental manner.
- **Conceptual park locations:** Conceptual park locations indicate suggested locations for the City to create new parks of more significant size than could typically be achieved on a single development parcel using a combination of existing City-owned land, on-site and off-site parkland dedication and acquisitions. The exception is the park on the Black Creek triangle, where the size of the development parcel will allow a fairly substantial on-site parkland dedication. These would be augmented through smaller on-site parkland dedication/POPS throughout Areas of Mixed-Use Growth.
- **Station access/Rail crossings:** These are proposed additional access points to the GO platforms with connectivity across the rail corridor where possible.
- **Priority complete streets:** These are priority streets for right-of-way reconfigurations to become more "complete" as discussed in Section 4.4 Mobility and Public Realm Framework.
- **Priority retail street:** This indicates a requirement for active/retail uses at grade.
- **Intersection improvements:** These are intersections with planned or proposed intersection improvements to improve safety or traffic function. The City is already working on improvements at the intersection of Weston Road and Eglinton Avenue West.
- **Views:**
  - East and west along Eglinton Avenue to the Kodak Building.
  - South at Weston Road and Sunnybrae Crescent to the existing church tower at 1272 Weston Road.
  - West along Eglinton Avenue to the Eglinton Flats.





## 4.2.3 Land Use Plan

Changes are proposed to the Official Plan land use designations for Mount Dennis in order to facilitate the revitalization of Weston Road and accommodate growth. Changes are confined to the Mixed-Use Main Street and Mixed-Use Node character areas. The proposed changes are:

- Extending the *Mixed-Use Area* designation along both sides of Weston Road for its entire length within the study area, with the exception of properties currently designated Employment Area. Commercial at grade will be concentrated and required along Weston Road.
- Where lots fronting Weston Road are less than 32 metres in depth in Areas of Growth on the Area Structure Plan (Figure 17), extending the *Mixed-Use Areas* designation to one or more residential properties behind Weston Road in order to allow for assemblies to create developable parcels. Mixed-use development would only be permitted on these parcels if assembled with a parcel fronting Weston Road. Assembly of sufficient depth of property will be required in order to achieve a tall building or a taller mid-rise (see Section 4.2.7 Urban Design Guidelines).
- Extending the *Mixed-Use Area* designation from Weston Road to the rail corridor from Ray Avenue in the north to Jasper Avenue in the south.
- Breaking the *Mixed-Use Area* designation into the sub-categories of *Mixed-Use Areas A - Growth* and *Mixed-Use Areas B - Main Street* to reflect the character of desired development:
  - *Mixed-Use Areas A - Growth* will contain areas with the highest heights and density, primarily along the rail corridor. This area will mostly comprise of the tall buildings typology, with the exception of a 10 metre setback from the north/east Weston Road property line where a mid-rise streetwall will be provided, as described in Section 4.2.4 Height Plan.

Non-residential space, including community space, will be located in podiums. MUA is also an appropriate location for larger-format retail, limited to the Black Creek triangle.

- *Mixed-Use Areas B - Main Street* will apply to the remainder of lots fronting Weston Road. These areas will have a mid-rise character with diverse uses like retail, restaurants, and services at grade with residential and commercial uses above. Retail in MUB will be small-scale, community serving retail.
- Redesignating the parcels between Ray Avenue, Bartonville Avenue East and the laneway behind the Weston Road frontage to Parks.

As development takes place park space will also be added to the study area through on-site parkland dedication, off-site parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication, as described in Section 4.3.2. Public Realm Plan.

Changes to the Zoning By-law are also proposed in areas designated *Neighbourhoods* to facilitate intensification, housing diversity and affordability.

### Recommendations:



1. Amend the Official Plan Land Use Map in accordance with Figure 18.
2. Require active uses at grade on Weston Road.
3. As the City of Toronto is currently undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Review process, known as “Our Plan Toronto”, the *General Employment Areas* lands municipally known as 915-945 Weston Road should be considered for the introduction of other uses, including residential uses, through the MCR process and including further consultation.

**Figure 18.** Proposed Land Use Designations for the Mount Dennis Study Area ►

# Legend

- Neighbourhoods
- Apartment Neighbourhoods
- Mixed Use Areas A - Growth
- Mixed Use Areas B - Main Street
- Natural Areas
- Parks
- Other Open Spaces
- General Employment Areas
- Core Employment Areas
- Institutional Areas
- Existing Open Space
- Study Area Boundary





## 4.2.4 Height Plan

Figure 19 shows areas in Mount Dennis where changes are proposed to the maximum heights currently permitted by the zoning bylaw. In general, the proposed height regime is as follows:

- A height peak of 45 storeys immediately adjacent to Mount Dennis Station, which gradually steps down to the north and south and towards Weston Road. The height peak allows for the greatest density in locations that are closest to the station.
- A strategy of locating the peak and tall categories in areas where they will have the least impact (in terms of shadows and overlook onto *Neighbourhoods and Parkland*), such as on sites adjacent to the rail corridor.
- A mid-rise built form fronting Weston Road on both sides to create a pedestrian-scaled main street character. The height limit of eight storeys within Areas of Growth (from Ray Avenue to Jasper Avenue) is reflective of the planned right-of-way width of 27 metres for Weston Road.
- On the north/east side of Weston Road, a strategy of allowing heights to transition up to the rail corridor with the tall category beginning 10 metres from the future property line.
- North of Ray Avenue within Areas of Mixed Use Growth the maximum height reduces to 5 storeys which is reflective of what the zoning by-law permits today. This area is more than 500 metres from Mount Dennis Station and is envisioned for “moderate intensification” rather than large scale redevelopment.

The proposed height regime is described further in Section 4.2.7 Urban Design and Built Form Guidelines.

### Recommendations:



1. Allow heights in accordance with Figure 19 in proposed developments.





## 4.2.5 Protected Major Transit Station Area

**Provincial policy requires municipalities to update their Official Plans to prioritize growth in areas where transit infrastructure currently exists or is planned:**

### Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

*A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* prescribes minimum density targets for the number of residents and jobs per hectare in areas within an approximate 500-800 metre radius of a transit station (representing a 10-minute walk). Light rail transit is assigned 160 residents and jobs per hectare and GO Transit stations are assigned 150 residents and jobs per hectare. Mount Dennis will be required to achieve 160 residents and jobs per hectare.

### Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs)

PMTSAs are a subset of MTSAs which a municipality can delineate under Section 15(16) of the *Planning Act*. The *Planning Act* allows for the adoption of inclusionary zoning policies in PMTSAs.

#### Recommendations:



1. Amend the Official Plan to delineate the Mount Dennis PMTSA in accordance with Figure 20.



2. Amend the Zoning By-law for lands within the PMTSA with a *Neighbourhoods* designation to Residential Multiple Dwelling Zone (RM) u4 (permitting up to a fourplex).

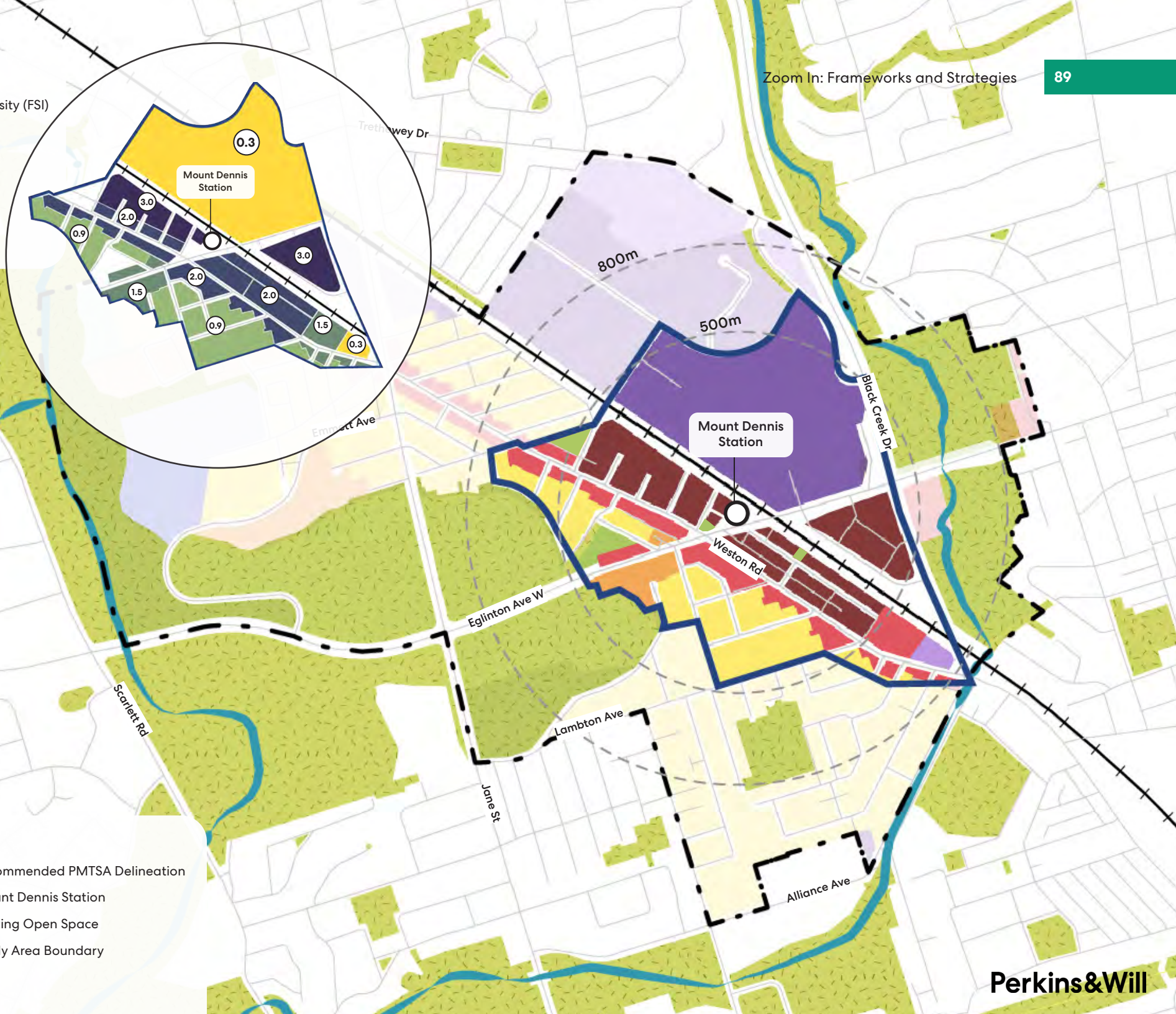
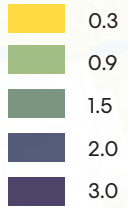
The Mount Dennis Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) is the area where the greatest densities within the study area are planned and where the Land Use Plan in Section 4.2.3 and Height Plan in Section 4.2.4 allow the greatest change. Figure 20 shows the proposed delineation of the PMTSA, which extends between 500 and 800 metres in each direction from the primary station entrance. It also shows recommended minimum densities within the PMTSA.

- **Mixed-Use Areas** within the PMTSA are appropriate for mid-rise or tall buildings with supporting retail or community uses at grade.
- **Employment Areas** within the PMTSA are priority areas for intensification of employment uses.
- **Neighbourhoods** within the PMTSA are priority areas for residential intensification such as denser forms of ground related housing or additional units on a parcel.
- **Apartment Neighbourhoods** within the PMTSA are priority areas for residential intensification such as infill housing on large sites.

**Figure 20.** Map showing proposed PMTSA delineation ►

**Legend**

Minimum Density (FSI)



**Legend**

- Recommended PMTSA Delineation
- Mount Dennis Station
- Existing Open Space
- Study Area Boundary



## 4.2.6 Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy: Land Use and Built Form

Achieving a healthy and inclusive community partially depends on the physical design of the community, but more than that, it depends on the process by which decisions are made, the two way flow of information and ideas and the inclusive involvement of community members (residents, organizations, businesses and institutions) in planning for and facilitation of creative community social infrastructure. The Healthy and Inclusive Communities Strategy for Land Use and Built Form attempts to “centre community” in the future development of Mount Dennis to ensure:

- Benefits to existing residents
- Benefits to existing businesses
- Affordable, family friendly housing, public spaces and amenities for both new and existing residents
- Intentional integration of new and existing residents and businesses



Laneway Housing in Toronto. Source: Toronto Life

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### Recommendations:








1. Adopt a definition of social infrastructure to include "the people, processes and physical elements of a community that facilitate bringing people together, creation of a social capital, support for people's needs, celebration of culture, and building of community so that local people can effectively interact with an influence the systems affecting them."





2. Assess the impacts of major decisions on the equity of various groups (including low-income people, newcomers, racialized people, youth, women). The development of a tool to integrate equity considerations into the planning and design of projects in the area could help to ensure that new change and investment resulting from future growth and development is assessed through a community-specific development lens and is therefore shaped to maximize community benefits.
-

## 4.2.6.1 Housing Diversity

### Diverse Housing Types:

-  1. Encourage a balanced mix of housing types, unit sizes and tenures in new development to accommodate a variety of income levels and household types.
-  2. Require development containing more than 80 new residential units to include larger units suitable for families, as follows:
  - a. A minimum of 10 percent of the total number of units will be 3-bedroom units or larger;
  - b. A minimum of 15 percent of the total number of units will have at least 2-bedrooms; and
  - c. An additional 15 per cent of the total number of units being a combination of 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units.
-  3. Require designs of residential units to include operable windows and storage space, and balconies or terraces to support larger households wherever possible.
-  4. Maintain and increase housing options across the housing spectrum in Mount Dennis, including supportive housing. This will include accessible emergency shelter spaces for Indigenous women and children.
-  5. Explore opportunities to develop housing types that appeal to a broad spectrum of residents such as cooperative housing.

### Infill Housing:

-  6. Encourage multi-unit housing in *Neighbourhoods* in accordance with the City's Expanding Housing in *Neighbourhoods* Initiative.
-  7. Amend residential zoning within the proposed PMTSA boundary as recommended in Section 4.2.5 and outside of the PMTSA boundary to Residential Multiple Dwelling Zone (RM) u3 (permitting up to a triplex).



8. Encourage additional units on lots in *Neighbourhoods* in accordance with the City's policies supporting Laneway Suites, Secondary Suites, and Garden Suites



9. Encourage compatible infill development on existing tower in the park sites in *Apartment Neighbourhoods* and *Mixed-Use Areas*, including shared amenities between existing and new buildings.

### Rental Housing and Tenant Protection:



10. In accordance with the Official Plan and the Residential Rental Property Demolition and Conversion Control By-law, require existing rental housing that would be demolished due to redevelopment to be replaced. Encourage opportunities to extend the affordability period for replacement units.



11. Secure improvements and renovations to existing rental housing where it will be maintained on sites where significant new development is proposed. Improvements should enhance the viability of the existing rental housing and encourage the inclusion of renewal opportunities that would extend the life of the building.



12. Explore opportunities to enhance rental housing and tenant protections, for example, through lowering the threshold of demolished units that triggers rental replacement requirements.

### Affordable Housing:



13. Delineate the Mount Dennis Protected Major Station Area so that Inclusionary Zoning is able to be implemented in accordance with City Council direction on November 9, 2021.



14. Encourage the provision of a full range of housing in all developments containing more than 80 new residential units with the objective of providing a minimum of 10% affordable units in new buildings.



15. Prioritize the provision of affordable units as a community benefit achieved from new development.





16. Encourage applications for affordable housing development in Mount Dennis through the City's Open Door Program.



17. Explore the opportunity for the development of affordable housing in Mount Dennis through the City's Housing Now program and other affordable housing programs.
- Work with CreateTO and Mount Dennis residents on plans for 2700 Eglinton Avenue West, which is immediately adjacent to the Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework study area. The site was approved as part of Housing Now Phase 3 by City Council on November 9, 2021.



18. Explore options for existing Mount Dennis residents to have priority access to new affordable housing created in the neighbourhood.



19. Facilitate the development of affordable housing by public sector organizations (e.g. West Park Healthcare Centre).



20. Incentivize reinvestment in existing rental buildings in Mount Dennis to ensure a state of good repair, increase energy efficiency and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.



21. Explore opportunities for additional rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units in Mount Dennis with Toronto Community Housing. Should redevelopment of existing TCH sites be contemplated, ensure adherence to the following basic principles:

- No loss of RGI units; and
- Zero displacement of residents during redevelopment.



22. Explore opportunities for the provision of affordable rental and supportive housing units for the Indigenous community in Mount Dennis as part of the October 1, 2021 City Council commitment to establish a partnership with the Miziwe Biik Development Corporation to further the development of 5,200 affordable rental and supportive housing units that are culturally respectful and unique to the needs and strengths of the Indigenous community. This action would also align with the Reconciliation Action Plan currently being developed by the City.



Affordable Housing at Alexandra Park. Source: The Globe and Mail



Garden Suites. Source: Garden Suites Barrie

## Access to housing: A cornerstone of healthy, vibrant neighbourhoods

The Toronto Housing Charter - Opportunity for All takes a human-rights based approach to housing, recognizing that adequate housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of all people. Access to good quality, safe, affordable housing is an important determinant of health and improves the social and economic status of an individual.

As part of the *HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan*, the City will review options to revise its Official Plan definitions of “affordable rental” and “affordable ownership” housing to better reflect residents’ ability to pay for housing in Toronto’s housing market. The City is also looking at how it can expand permissions to allow for more “missing middle” housing in existing neighbourhoods - ground-related housing such as townhomes, duplexes and low-rise walk-up apartment buildings that can provide more housing units where services and amenities already exist. Recent changes to the zoning by-law to allow secondary suites as-of-right and allow laneway suites, as well as the forthcoming garden suites policy are also important tools to create more housing options in existing neighbourhoods.

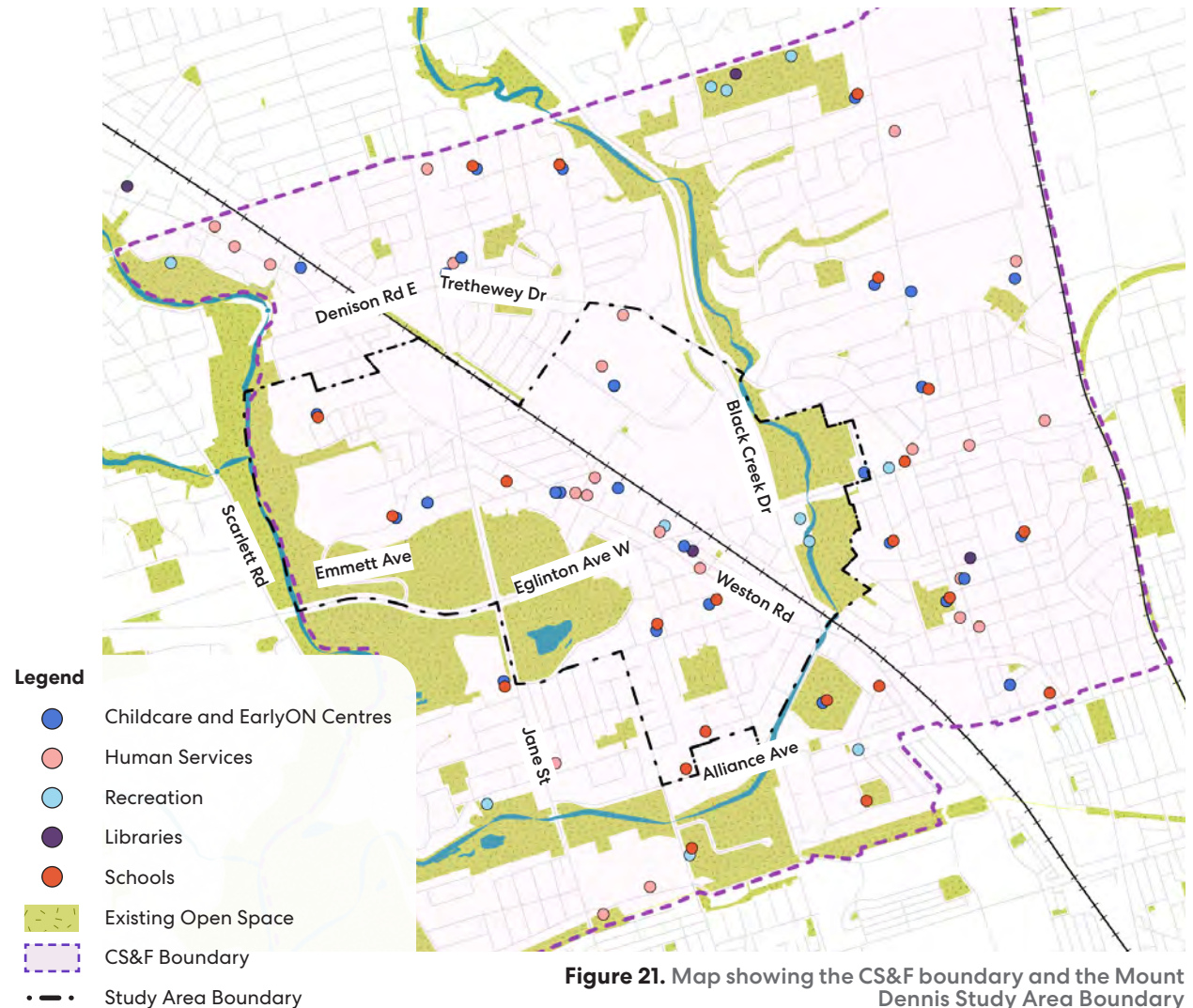




## 4.2.6.2 Community services and facilities

Community Services and Facilities (CS&F) are publicly accessible, non-profit facilities and places where City Divisions, agencies and boards, and school boards deliver programs and services. These include child care centres, libraries, recreation facilities, schools and community space for human services. Accessible, high-quality community services and facilities support the health, safety and wellbeing of those living and working in our communities and are essential to building community capacity and fostering complete communities.

The findings of the Mount Dennis CS&F Study support the need to maintain, improve and enhance existing community services and facilities in the Study Area as well as to add additional facilities to keep pace with growth. The following recommendations have been identified through an analysis of existing conditions, anticipated growth and engagement with various City Divisions and partner agencies.



**Figure 21.** Map showing the CS&F boundary and the Mount Dennis Study Area Boundary



1. Maintain and enhance existing community service facilities and create new community service facilities to meet existing needs and accommodate growth. New community service facilities should be located in highly visible locations with strong pedestrian, cycling and transit connections.



2. Leverage development to achieve community benefits by contributing to the existing CS&F network through both on-site and off-site contributions.



3. Encourage the accommodation of priority on-site contributions including new licensed non-profit child care and community space for non-profit community-based agencies in the base buildings of new development.



4. Secure new affordable community space under the City of Toronto's Community Space Tenancy (CST) policy. These spaces should be designed as flexible, accessible, multi-purpose spaces that can be programmed in different ways and adapted over time to meet changing needs.



5. Create spaces designed for youth that are welcoming to all, appropriate for youth programming and accessible on evenings and weekends.



6. Encourage new opportunities for co-location that build on successful examples in the Mount Dennis community.



7. Enhance local library facilities through renovations or potential expansions to address anticipated service level pressures.



8. Explore opportunities to reimagine or repurpose local recreation facilities including Chris Tonks Arena and Mount Dennis Community Hall. These facilities could provide tailored and enhanced community recreation opportunities in the community and address local needs for more multi-purpose space, youth space and/or space for culturally-appropriate programming including to serve Indigenous populations.



Alex Wilson Community Garden. Source: blogTO



Aaniin Community Centre and Library. Source: Perkins&Will





9. In coordination with the Indigenous Affairs Office, look for opportunities to work with Indigenous groups to assist them to secure community space for culturally-appropriate programming. This may include:
- a. Community gardens with the freedom of growing traditional food and medicines;
  - b. Youth and elder programming; and
  - c. Regional friendship centre.



10. Ensure that existing community service facilities are maintained or replaced as development occurs.



Corner Commons. Source: Corner Commons





Urban Agriculture Program at Evergreen Brickworks. Source: Evergreen



## 4.2.6.3 Economic development and local employment

### Supporting small businesses:



1. Promote Weston Road as Mount Dennis' community main street through placemaking, branding and local events.



2. Inventory and identify retail/service gaps along Weston Road.



3. Support the development of a unique Mount Dennis identity and brand, working in collaboration with the Mount Dennis BIA. Consider the diversity of businesses, particularly the representation from local cultural communities including the Afro-Caribbean community as a distinguishing feature of the Mount Dennis brand.



4. Encourage a distinction in the retail offer between Weston Road and the Black Creek triangle, as follows:

- a. Retail on Weston Road will be primarily small-scale, independently-owned businesses with frontages under twelve metres.
- b. Retail on the triangle will be primarily larger-format retail including chain stores.



5. On Weston Road blocks where there is existing fine-grained retail, establish a maximum retail unit frontage length for new development of 12 metres and a maximum retail unit size of 400 m<sup>2</sup>.



6. Where a new development on Weston Road replaces two or more existing retail units, prioritize as a community benefit the provision of similar retail spaces, including:
  - a. Fitting out retail spaces with base flooring, tile ceilings, standard white walls, HVAC, and plumbing;
  - b. Establishing commercial base rents similar to existing rents; and
  - c. Ensuring that existing retail tenants on the property have the right of first refusal on the new retail units.



7. Address impacts to small businesses related to transit construction. This will include:

- a. Engaging with the Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) Division including the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, relevant community organizations and others, regarding support for Black-owned businesses;
- b. Investigating specific actions that could be extended to Mount Dennis in relation to supporting and promoting Black business along the Eglinton West corridor; and
- c. Engaging with the Mount Dennis BIA and encouraging it to pursue Metrolinx Crosstown grants,












8. Monitor city-wide policy initiatives to support access to space for business, cultural and community purposes for potential application in Mount Dennis. This may include: property tax sub-classes; a program to provide 'meanwhile' leases; and relevant policy approaches emerging from work in other study areas.



9. Investigate potential new supports (City or external) for business in Mount Dennis as part of any city-wide policy and program initiatives. This may include, for example, an investigation of new mechanisms to reduce costs such as retail property taxes and/or business license fees and to increase financial support for main street businesses.

**A recent development agreement for 315-325 Spadina Avenue prohibited chain stores, which were defined as: “retail establishments with 11 or more locations globally that have at least two of the following characteristics: a standardized array of merchandise, a standardized façade, a standardized décor and colour scheme, uniform apparel, standardized signage, or a trademark.”**

-  10. Participate in a review being led by the City's CFO to report on geographically based development incentives in conjunction with consideration of the Mount Dennis Planning Framework.
-  11. Identify further community development funding opportunities.
-  12. Encourage temporary use of vacant/underutilized retail space and investigate potential incentives, for example through a Retail Pop-Up Program opportunity in Mount Dennis.
-  13. Investigate initiatives to secure space for entrepreneurs, businesses, cultural purposes, social enterprises, etc. and support their establishment and growth, working with local commercial/industrial property owners, the Mount Dennis Business Improvement Area and the real estate community.
-  14. Promote Mount Dennis as a location for business investment (e.g. through the creation, maintenance and communication of a development sites inventory, business/community profile and ICI investment opportunity package).
-  15. Investigate the opportunity to establish a Mount Dennis business ambassador program.
-  16. Promote key business support programs available from the City and other agencies to the local business community by: developing and promoting an inventory of key programs and creating a communications campaign customized to target business community by business size/type.
-  17. Promote 'buy local' opportunities for Mount Dennis business products and services (business-to-business and business-to-consumer) through the establishment of a local business directory and marketing/communications campaign.
-  18. Continue to actively engage, support and collaborate with the Mount Dennis BIA on a range of business, cultural and capacity-building activities including promotion of City/agency grants and funding for eligible BIA initiatives.



Rendering for the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.  
Source: City of Toronto



Afro-Caribbean Food Market. Source: Food Network



## Establishing a campus:



19. Continue to support efforts to attract a post-secondary satellite campus to Mount Dennis that can align with sustainable transportation, clean tech and eco-business themes, and potentially other sectors. This will include:
  - a. Working with public and private sector partners to prioritize locations, in particular, locations on the Black Creek triangle, on other City/public or privately-owned lands and on future surplus lands owned by Metrolinx; and
  - b. Supporting post-secondary institutions, the Mount Dennis community and other partners in advancing this opportunity.

## Growing business sectors:



20. Promote the attraction of major development projects in Mount Dennis including, for example: a clean tech, mass timber construction, food or social innovation/social enterprise hub, a photography/film museum or a major arts/cultural facility.



21. Initiate efforts to attract new types of businesses to Mount Dennis including, for example: co-working office space, a brewery or STACKT (or other container-oriented) retail opportunity.



22. Investigate the development of an integrated food industry growth hub in Mount Dennis, including the potential incorporation of an urban agriculture opportunity, as a response to local food security issues.



23. Investigate potential to support the establishment of a tourism collaborative/co-operative in Mount Dennis for the purpose of scaling up community-based tourism.



24. Conduct targeted business outreach to key employers focusing on medium/large industrial/manufacturing sector. In the future, investigate potential interest in the establishment of an industrial/manufacturing focused business association in Mount Dennis.



25. Promote the creative and cultural sector in Mount Dennis as elaborated in Section 4.4.4.5.



26. Promote the environmental/clean tech sector in Mount Dennis as elaborated in Section 4.5.4.2.

## Local employment and skills development:



27. Support local talent and skills development through local and/or social hiring and procurement:

- a. Work with partners to establish Community Benefits Agreements for major public sector projects such as the western extension of the Eglinton Crosstown in line with the City's 2019 Community Benefits Framework;
- b. Where there is no formal requirement for a CBA, pursue opportunities for community benefits on a voluntary basis for private development; and
- c. Identify local and/or social hiring and procurement opportunities with local anchor institutions such as West Park Healthcare Centre.



28. Facilitate access by area residents to key employment opportunities and relevant training programs in Mount Dennis, including by:

- a. Partnering with local public, private and non-profit employers to identify current and future skills needs;
- b. Developing pathways or new employment opportunities and connecting local residents to job opportunities;
- c. Promoting local hiring/training initiatives and job fairs; and
- d. Considering the following sectors as potential target sectors for local access to employment/training opportunities: manufacturing, food, health care, green, fashion and design, film, music, retail, construction, hospitality and tourism and "GLAM" (galleries, libraries and museums) industries.

- 29. Work with the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and local Indigenous organizations/service providers and representatives to promote Indigenous entrepreneurship in Mount Dennis.
- 30. Investigate the opportunity to establish a small business/entrepreneurship hub in Mount Dennis.
- 31. Hold small business capacity-building sessions targeting Mount Dennis business owners/operators.
- 32. Create a community food works program in Mount Dennis to provide Food Handler Certificate training.
- 33. Ensure the social infrastructure is in place so that local people have the best possible opportunities to prepare for and qualify for the local jobs being created through the development.



Sign for local skills development organization LEF.



FoodShare, Industry Street, Mount Dennis



## 4.2.6.4 Enabling tools



1. Leverage public land holdings in Mount Dennis to achieve community and City objectives such as affordable housing, public open space and new or enhanced community service facilities.

- a. Where appropriate, work with adjacent private landowners to maximize public good through the coordination of development proposals.



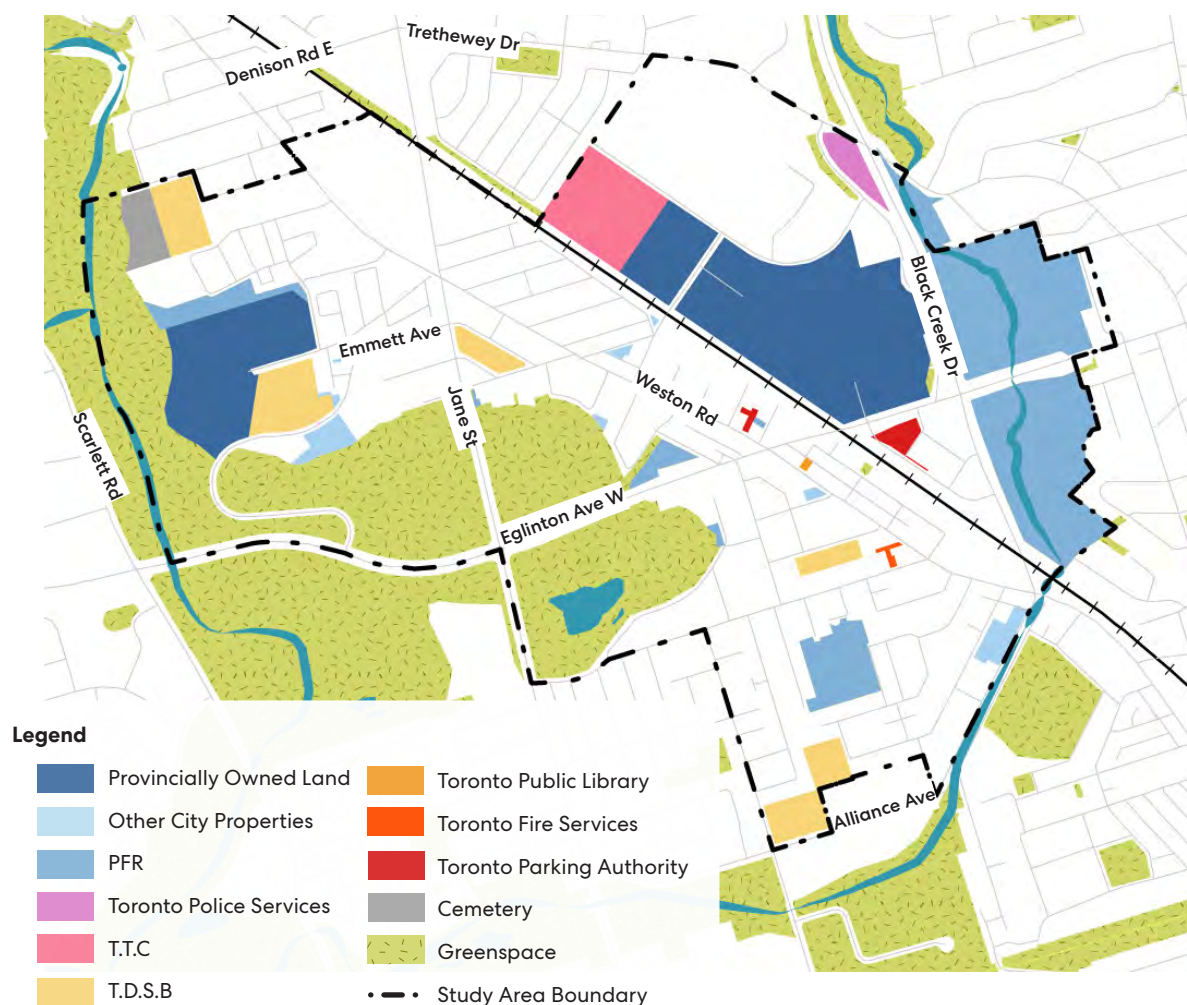
2. Co-create a local Community Benefits Strategy for all future development. Focus on community centred workforce integration (stream 3 of the City Community Benefits Framework) as a core strategy to ensure that local people have the best possible chance of preparing for and securing local jobs being created through the development process. This will include:

- a. Establishing both process and outcome targets (minimum 10%) for all City investments and development where City dollars are spent; and
  - b. Identifying employment opportunities that include, and go beyond construction jobs, prioritizing jobs that last beyond the development phase.



3. As the City develops a Community Benefits Charge Strategy in support of the transition from the current Section 37 system to a Community Benefits Charge By-law, ensure that the strategy supports the ability to achieve community services and facilities for Mount Dennis.

**Figure 22. Map showing publicly owned lands**





4. Improve coordination and communication across City divisions including SDFA, Economic Development and Culture, Toronto Employment and Social Services and City Planning to align strategies, action plans and policies such as the Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology (IMIT) and the Community Benefits Framework to better prepare for incoming employment demand.



5. Investigate potential models of community ownership (e.g. opportunity for Mount Dennis community to create a local community development corporation or land trust). The purpose would be:
  - a. To allow local residents and organizations to control how land is used and developed; and
  - b. To protect the social, cultural and economic diversity of Mount Dennis.



**Case study: The Denver Urban Land Conservancy's mission is preserving, developing, stewarding, and managing permanently affordable housing and shared office space for nonprofits and mission-minded organizations in Metro Denver and surrounding communities.**

**Source: Urban Lands Conservancy**



## 4.2.6.5 Healthy design and built environment principles

### Community-led design:



1. Design public spaces using a human-centered/community-led design methodology. Invest in community led design of public spaces including capacity building for local residents on planning and design principles, resident-led safety audits and walkability studies and interactive visualization of design details.



2. Learn about informal pathways, “short cuts” and other unexpected routes community members use to navigate the community and formalize those pathways.

### Safety:



3. Design public spaces to promote safety for all, and in particular spaces where Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and LGBTQ2+ groups feel safer and invited.
  - a. Work with groups such as BIPOC Public Space group to ensure inclusive public space design.
  - b. Commit to the co-design of public spaces with Black and Indigenous communities in order to advance culture and heritage objectives by celebrating and preserving Black and Indigenous culture.
  - c. Consider CPTED principles in public space design.



4. Undertake regular safety audits of Mount Dennis with participation from women and members of vulnerable communities to identify locations in need of improvement from a safety and security perspective.



5. Work with public and private sector partners to advance the goals and priority actions of SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.



6. Install Seniors' Safety zones: These designated stretches of roadway signs and a variety of other measures such as increased crossing times, improved pavement markings, and more to increase awareness of drivers and improve safety of seniors.

Toronto City Council adopted SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan in July 2021. Goal #6 of SafeTO is to Invest in neighbourhoods by developing responsive and accountable place-based approaches to address the social, cultural, physical and economic environments that impact neighbourhoods and public spaces. It includes the following priority actions:

- Embed transparent and accountable monitoring and reporting practices into integrated place-based planning;
- Add more safe and culturally-accessible community spaces and advance Indigenous place-making;
- Implement place-based economic empowerment and development approaches; and
- Enhance local cultural development.





Lighting safety for parks and open spaces. Source: Landezine



## 4.2.7 Built Form and Urban Design Guidelines

### Introduction

The Built Form and Urban Design Guidelines for Mount Dennis address the most complex and unique of the character areas - the Mixed-Use Main Street. Elsewhere in the community city-wide policy and guidelines such as built form and public realm policies in the Official Plan, the Tall Buildings Design Guidelines and the Mid-Rise Buildings Performance Standards provide adequate guidance for new development. In the Mixed-Use Main Street character area, however, unique local conditions combined with strong development pressure require additional guidance.

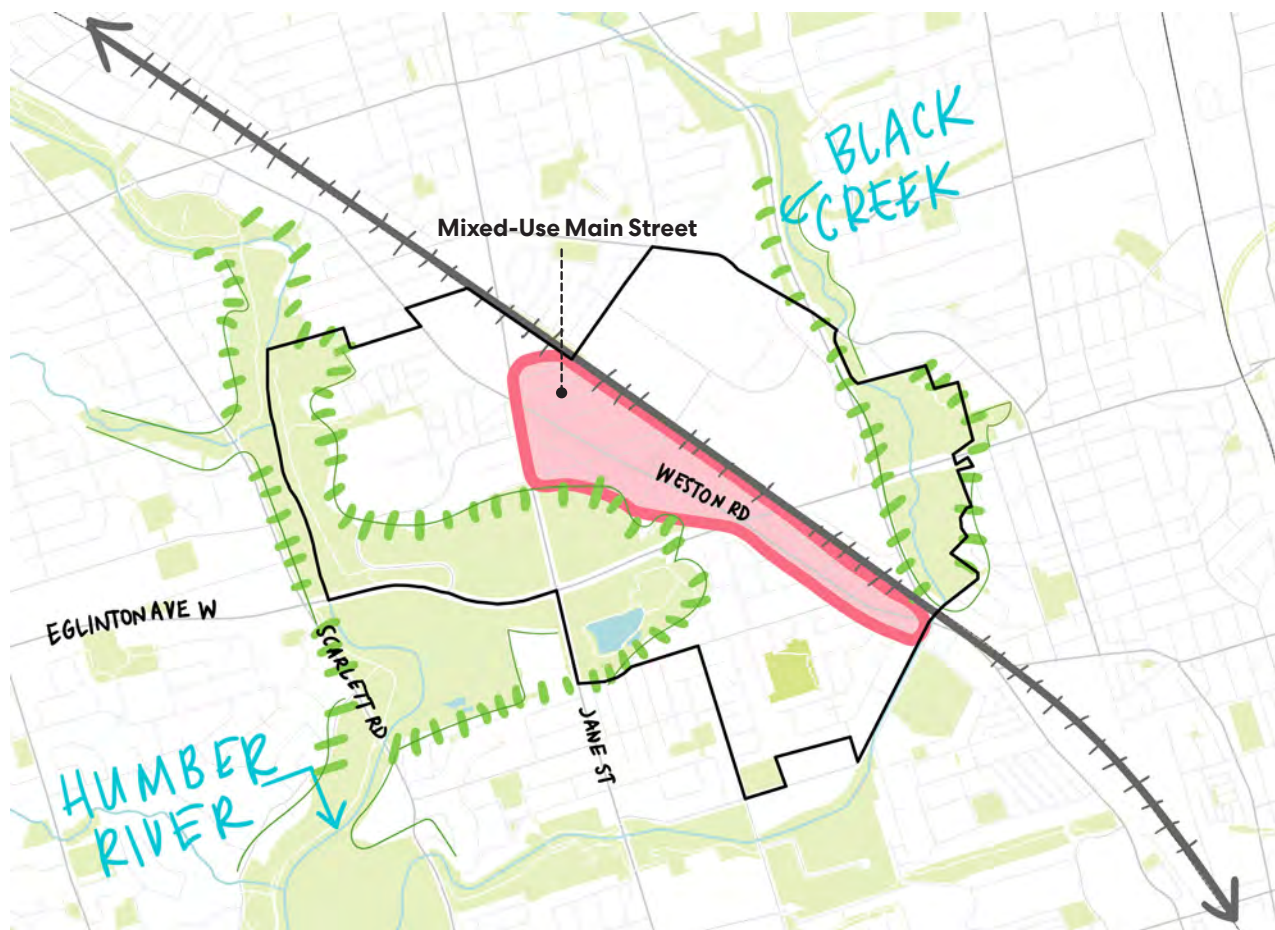


Figure 23. Map showing character area 'Mixed-Use Main Street'

## Vision and Objectives:

*Weston Road is the heart and spine of Mount Dennis. Its historic character of diverse, small scale, affordable retail will be maintained as it develops as a safe, multi-modal, and vibrant mixed-use destination for the community.*

Running diagonally through the heart of the community, Weston Road is Mount Dennis' commercial main street but some portions of it are struggling. The existing built form varies significantly along its length, including everything from detached single family homes, some of which have had the main floor converted into commercial space, to classic two-storey Toronto retail fabric, to low-density automotive uses to low and mid-rise apartment buildings. The historic scale of commercial uses on Weston Road is small - most frontages are under 10 metres in width - creating relatively affordable retail spaces that house diverse small businesses. Weston Road is also dotted with a variety of institutions and places of worship that support a diversity of community activities. The dead-end residential streets extending from Weston Road to the rail corridor - originally home to single-family homes on leafy streets - are already seeing applications for the development of high-rise condominium towers.

Primarily within 500 metres of the new Mount Dennis LRT Station, the Mixed-Use Main Street will absorb the majority of the new growth coming to Mount Dennis, resulting in a complete transformation of this character area. The community's priority is to protect what is valued about Weston



Rendering showing the Vision for Mount Dennis

Road today - its human scale and affordable retail space - while harnessing new development to add the people, activity and vitality necessary to support its businesses.

Historically home to a diverse population that has come to Mount Dennis and set down roots, it is a place that evolves to host new industries, welcomes new residents, supports new businesses and hosts new places of worship. It is a dynamic places that grows while supporting a high quality of life and opportunity.

The form of new development within the Mixed-Use Main Street Area will be shaped by a number of key drivers including:



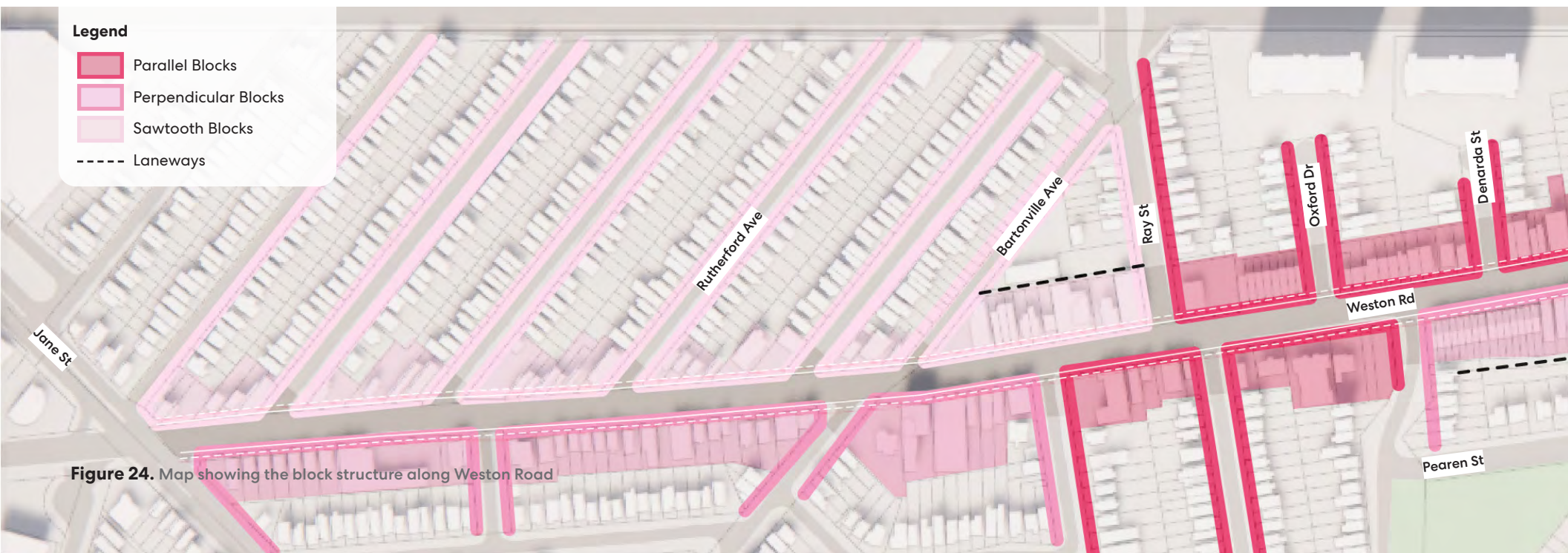
### Streets and Block Patterns

The angular alignment of Weston Road relative to Toronto's concession grid results in a variety of conditions that also shape development potential in the *Mixed-Use Main Street*. Namely:

**Parallel Blocks** are characterized by long (~100 - ~200m) and shallow (~50m) blocks, with backyard conditions in the rear and often with laneways. These blocks are too shallow for towers but well-suited for mid-rise buildings.

**Perpendicular Blocks** are typically short (~75m) blocks with no rear laneways and side yard conditions to the rear. These blocks are also well-suited for mid-rise buildings along the Weston frontage. With proper assemblies, these blocks can accommodate up to two towers (north to south) per block.

**Saw-tooth Blocks** are similar to Perpendicular Blocks (short, no rear laneways and side yard conditions to the rear), however, their irregular geometry and lot depth makes any form of development difficult without greater assembly.



**Figure 24.** Map showing the block structure along Weston Road

### Parcel Size

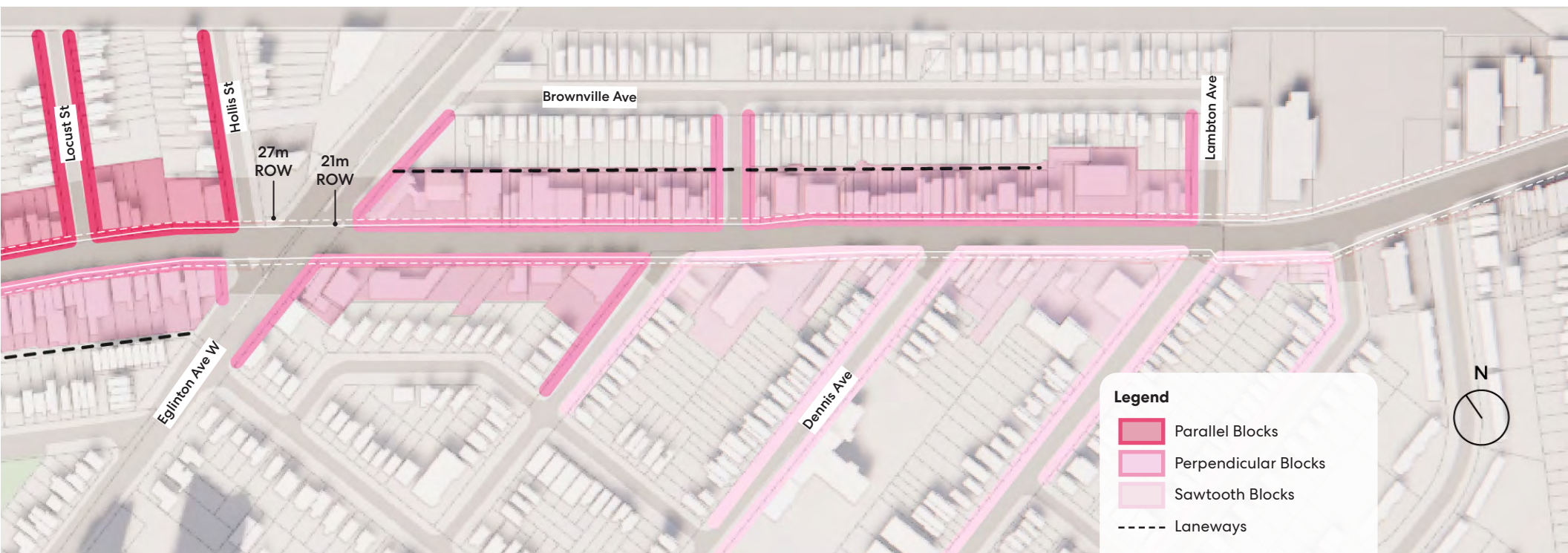
Parcel sizes within the Mixed-Use Main Street can be grouped into two major categories:

**Weston Road frontage** – Characterized by narrow parcels that house a fine grained collection of retail and commercial uses with apartments above. 55% of parcels along Weston Road are less than 12m wide and 20-30m deep.

**In Behind** – The blocks immediately off of Weston Road were originally developed as single-family homes on lots typically 8m wide by 35m deep. Buildings on these parcels have generous front yard setbacks that accommodate landscape features. Generally, these parcels have not been assembled.



**Figure 25.** Existing narrow and wide building frontages along Weston Road (2-3 storeys)





## Drivers:

### Sunlight and Shadow

Development within the Mixed-Use Main Street will be shaped to respond to the sun in ways that optimizes comfort for its uses.

Given that Weston Road is closer to an east-west alignment in Mount Dennis, development on the south (west) side of the street will have a direct impact on the street and building heights should be determined in ways that limit shadows on the north (east) side of the street. Conversely, buildings on the north (east) will not impact Weston Road.

At the scale of the block, spaces at the south-east corners of blocks will benefit from early morning sun and could be programmed with uses that benefit from this alignment (coffee shops, daycares) and paired with adjacent public realm moves (traffic-calming intersection improvements, new parks). Conversely, spaces on the south-west corners of blocks will benefit from later afternoon sun and could be paired with deeper setbacks that support complementary uses (patios or restaurants).

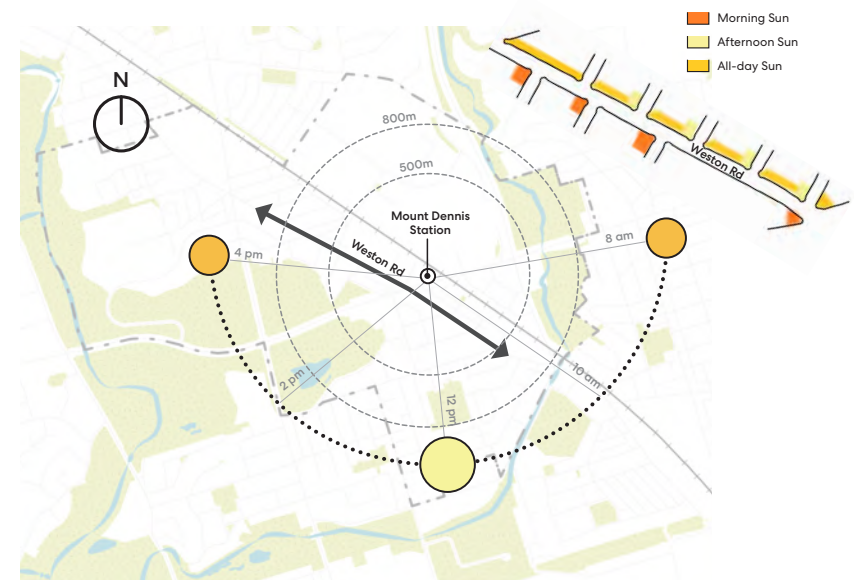
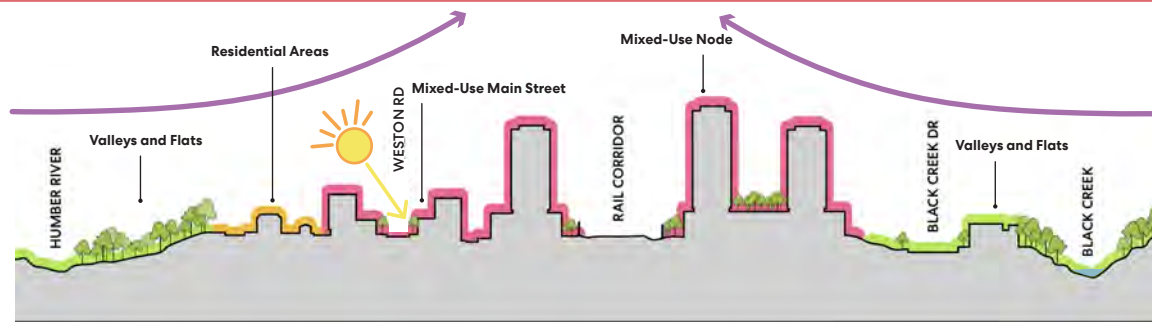


Figure 26. Map showing solar exposure in Mount Dennis

### MTSA Policy

Provincial policies for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) aim to encourage new homes and jobs close to transit infrastructure. The central portion of the Mixed-Use Main Street falls largely within the catchment area of this policy and we expect that new development within this area will be at densities that support these objectives. Taller buildings will be located closer to the new Crosstown LRT Station and taper in height as you move away from the station.



Section showing height strategy responding to MTSA policy

## Heritage

A number of heritage potential properties have been identified within the Mixed-Use Main Street Area. New development will conserve the main street character of Weston Road and cultural heritage value and heritage attributes of conserved properties through appropriate built form. Other heritage potential properties may be commemorated in different ways such as historic plaques or public art.



Properties with heritage potential along Weston Rd

## Building Heights

Building heights along Weston Road vary from 1-4 storeys with the majority (70%) being two storeys or lower.

The blocks off of Weston Road are generally home to 1-2 storey buildings with a small number of taller (20 storey) buildings.



Existing varied building heights

Together, these physical design characteristics suggest an approach to new development – one that aims to maintain and enhance the fine-grained main street character of Weston Road while also supporting new mid-rise development. Mid-rise development could take various forms depending on assemblies and landowner preference - traditional mid-rise developments created by a developer who has assembled a series of parcels, “mini” mid-rises that take up only one or two parcels, or vertical additions consisting of additions to existing commercial fabric.

Given the appropriate land assemblies and block dimensions, the existing fabric also points to opportunities to strategically introduce tall buildings in places where shadow impacts can be mitigated and connections to new transit infrastructure leveraged, while introducing spaces for new community amenities. Comprehensive assemblies that include the Weston Road frontage in a larger development will ensure that all aspects of a complete community and good planning and urban design can be considered in the development.



## Approach

As a mature neighbourhood with fragmented ownership, the specific path towards growth in Mount Dennis will depend on the choices of individual landowners and land assemblies that may occur. At the same time, it is important to ensure a level of certainty and establish clear community priorities for development within Mount Dennis. These Urban Design Guidelines aim to set out a clear structure and priorities for growth but also anticipate a variety of potential paths for the development of individual sites, allowing individual landowners to choose their own path towards implementation.

The Urban Design Guidelines aim to balance two clear community priorities which have emerged:

- Accommodating a sufficient level of growth to bring new people and vibrancy to Weston Road and achieve community benefits and amenities such as affordable housing; and
- Maintaining the fine-grained commercial main street character of Weston Road.

## Structure

Development within the Mixed-Use Main Street Area will be structured around two major elements:

**Weston Road** – a primarily mid-rise street that prioritizes vibrant retail and a comfortable pedestrian realm for people coming to and from Mount Dennis Station; and

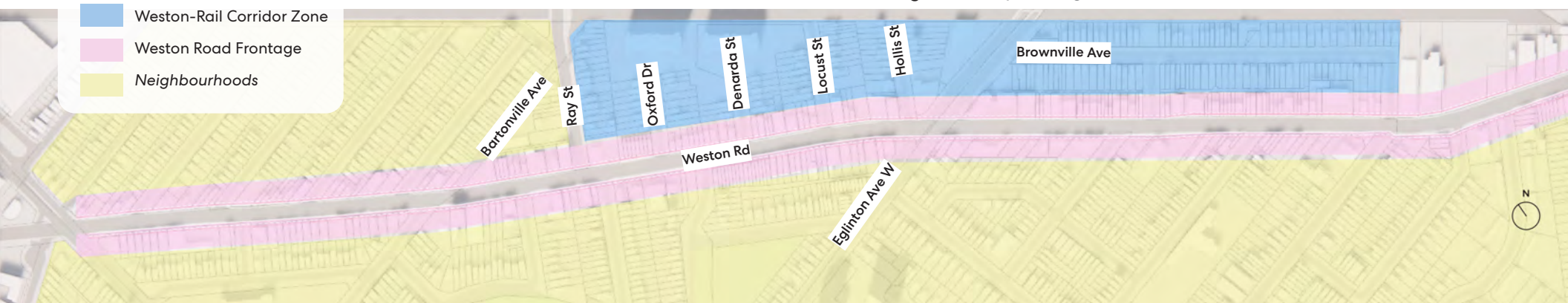
**Weston-Rail Corridor Zone** – a series of interconnected blocks that feed into Weston Road and support a series of progressively taller buildings as you approach Mount Dennis Station, with a transition down to the mid-rise character of Weston Road.

Additionally, a Tall Building Overlay anticipates hybrid buildings along the north (east) side of Weston Road, between Ray Avenue and Eglinton Avenue West.

### Legend

- Weston-Rail Corridor Zone
- Weston Road Frontage
- Neighbourhoods

**Figure 27.** Map showing structure: Weston Road and Weston-Rail Corridor Zone





Existing conditions on Weston Road



## Weston Road

New development along Weston Road between Jane Street and Black Creek Drive will be mid-rise in character and generally consistent with the City of Toronto's Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards, 2010 but with a series of modifications in response to the specific context of Mount Dennis.

Buildings will be in accordance with Figure 19. Height Plan, generally up to a maximum of eight storeys (27 m) in height (Performance Standard #1). Where deep lots (either existing or created through the use of Enhancement Zones) allow for the achievement of appropriate rear transitions to *Neighbourhoods* buildings may be up to 10 storeys.

Developments with wider frontages should break down the scale of the streetwall into varying heights between 2 and 5 storeys to reflect the eclectic and fine-grained main street character, support incremental change and provide transition to existing buildings and heritage properties.

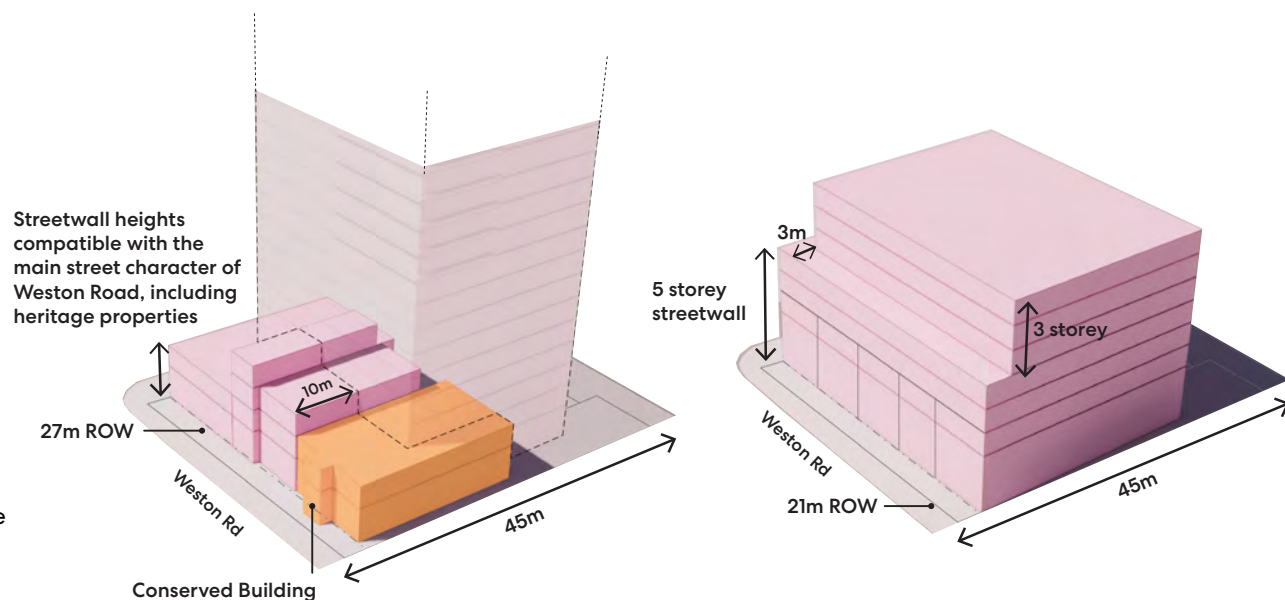


Diagram showing varied streetwall heights up to five storeys

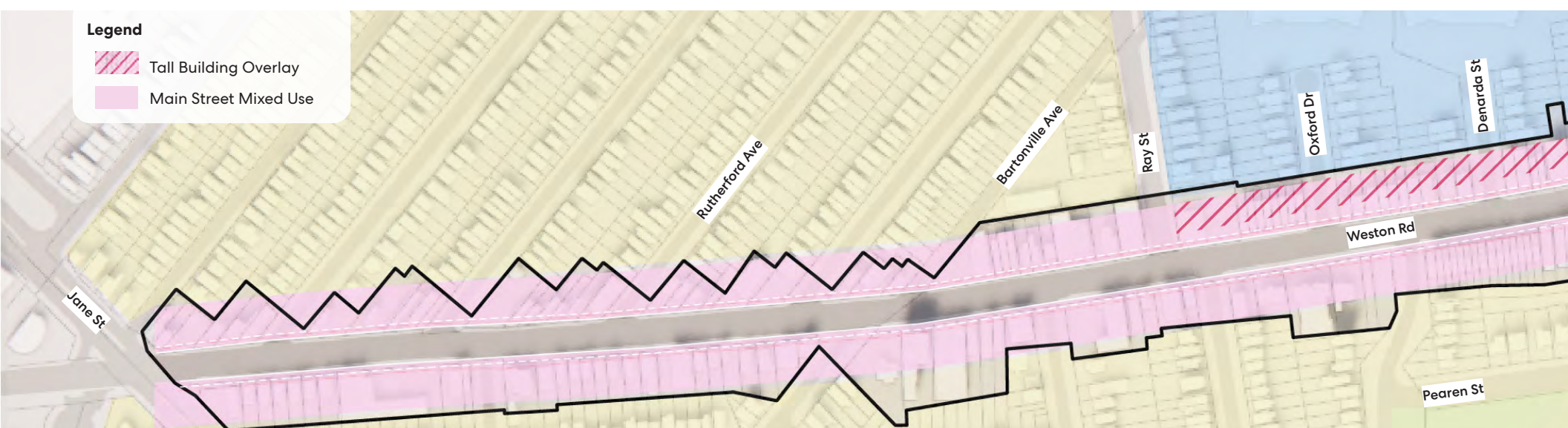


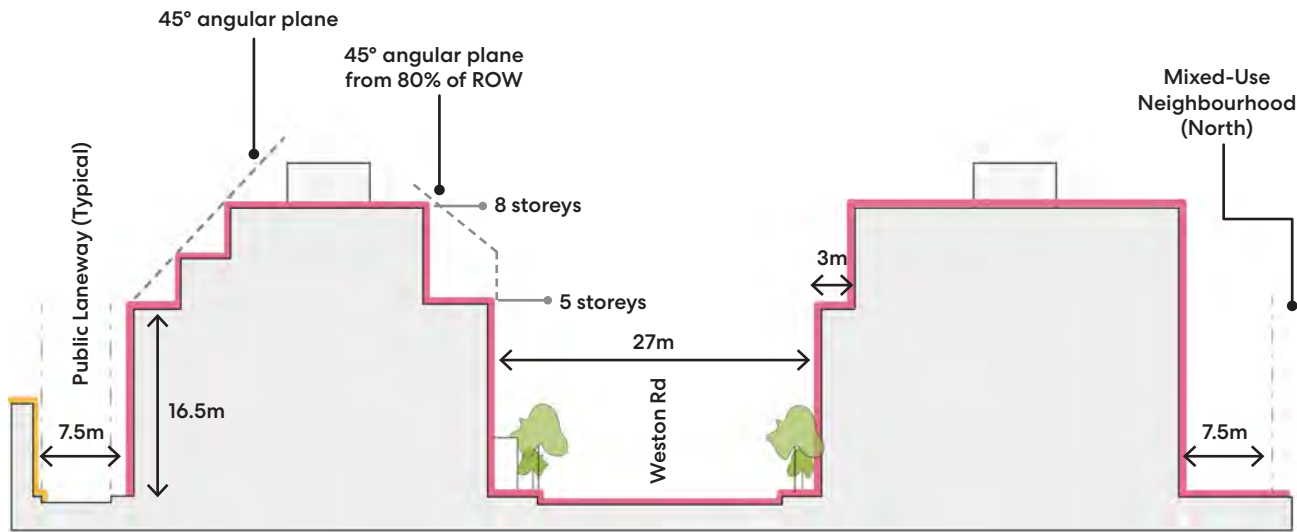
Figure 28. Map highlighting the Mixed Use Main Street along Weston Rd and the Tall Building Overlay setback at 10m from the 27m ROW

Buildings will use architectural features and materials reflecting the existing architectural and material character of adjacent buildings along Weston Road.

A pedestrian perception stepback of at least 3 metres is required above the streetwall (Performance Standard #4B). Streetwall height and stepbacks will continue along the side street frontages on corner lots.

Rear transitions to the *Neighbourhoods* to the south (west) will include a minimum setback of 7.5 metres from the property line (including public laneways, where appropriate) and a 45-degree angular plane from a height of 16.5 metres above the 7.5 metre setback line.

Rear transitions to the *Mixed Use Area* to the north (east) will include a minimum setback of 7.5 metres from the property line (consistent with Performance Standard #5D).



Section view showing mid-rise built form along Weston Rd

