

# 805 DON MILLS ROAD

## Design Brief

April, 2022

*For:*

**CreateTO**

*By:*

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The Planning Partnership

HDR

Stantec



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# **1 | Background + Context**

# 1.1 | Background

The purpose of this document is to support city-initiated zoning by-law amendments and Draft Plans of Subdivision for the sites at 770 and 805 Don Mills Road. The Design Brief is intended to guide future development by illustrating key design considerations and principles developed alongside CreateTO, the City of Toronto, the local Councillor, and local community stakeholders.

While this Design Brief focuses on 805 Don Mills Road, consideration to 770 Don Mills Road is given where appropriate.

## Policy Framework

The lands at 770 and 805 Don Mills Road are governed by several policy documents. They include, but are not limited to;

- *City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013*
- *Former City of Toronto Municipal Zoning By-law 438-86*
- *Don Mills Crossing Secondary Plan*
- *Don Mills Crossing Mobility Planning Study*
- *Tall Building Design Guidelines*
- *Growing Up Urban Design Guidelines*
- *Toronto Green Standard Version 3*

Commenting Authorities include, but are not limited to;

- *Metrolinx*
- *Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)*

## Housing Now Initiative

Housing Now is a city-building initiative which utilizes City-owned lands to deliver affordable housing within inclusive, complete

communities. Initiated by City Council in December 2018, the Housing Now program is intended to accelerate the development of affordable housing and mixed-income, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities. The program includes the delivery of a mix of rental and ownership housing options to serve Toronto residents, including new affordable rental homes which will remain affordable for 99 years,. The development of new housing through Toronto’s Housing Now Initiative is guided by the following principles adopted by City Council:

1. Develop the properties to achieve the highest possible public benefits.
2. Optimize the development of market and affordable rental housing with a mix of unit types and sizes.
  - At least 20% of all units will meet or exceed accessibility standards.
3. Create homes affordable for a diverse range of incomes, including deeply affordable homes.
  - Average rents across all affordable units in each site will not exceed 80% of the average market rent for the City of Toronto.
  - A minimum of 10% of all units will be deeply affordable, rented at 40% of average market rent.
4. Appropriately address and accommodate existing City uses and other operations on the 11 sites.
5. Retain public ownership of the properties, including prioritizing long-term land leases.
  - Affordability will be secured for new affordable rental units for

99 years.

6. Engage City Councillors and local communities in the planning and developing of each property.

**Project Goals**

The following City-building imperatives inform the development proposals:

- *Provide new Public Streets in accordance with the Secondary Plan and Mobility Planning Study.*
- *Provide new Public Parks and pedestrian connectivity as outlined in the Secondary Plan.*
- *Integrate transit expansion projects underway in the vicinity, including the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, and the Ontario Line elevated guideway.*
- *Provide a range of uses in addition to housing, including Retail, Daycare, and Community spaces.*
- *Provide approximately 560 rental housing units, 50% of which will be affordable rental.*
- *Provide approximately 280 market ownership units, not to exceed 1/3 of the total unit count on site.*

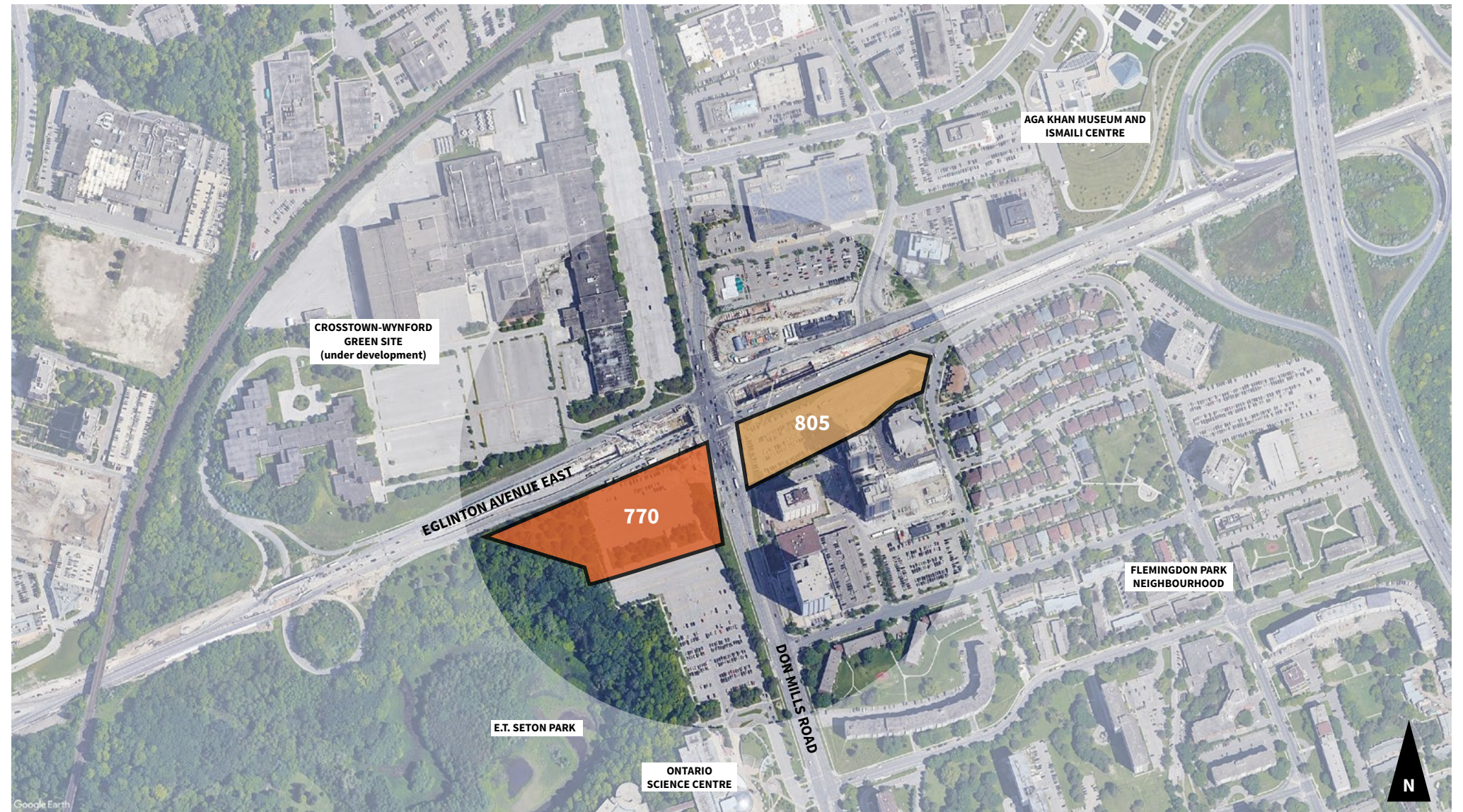


# 1.2 | Context

### Site Context:

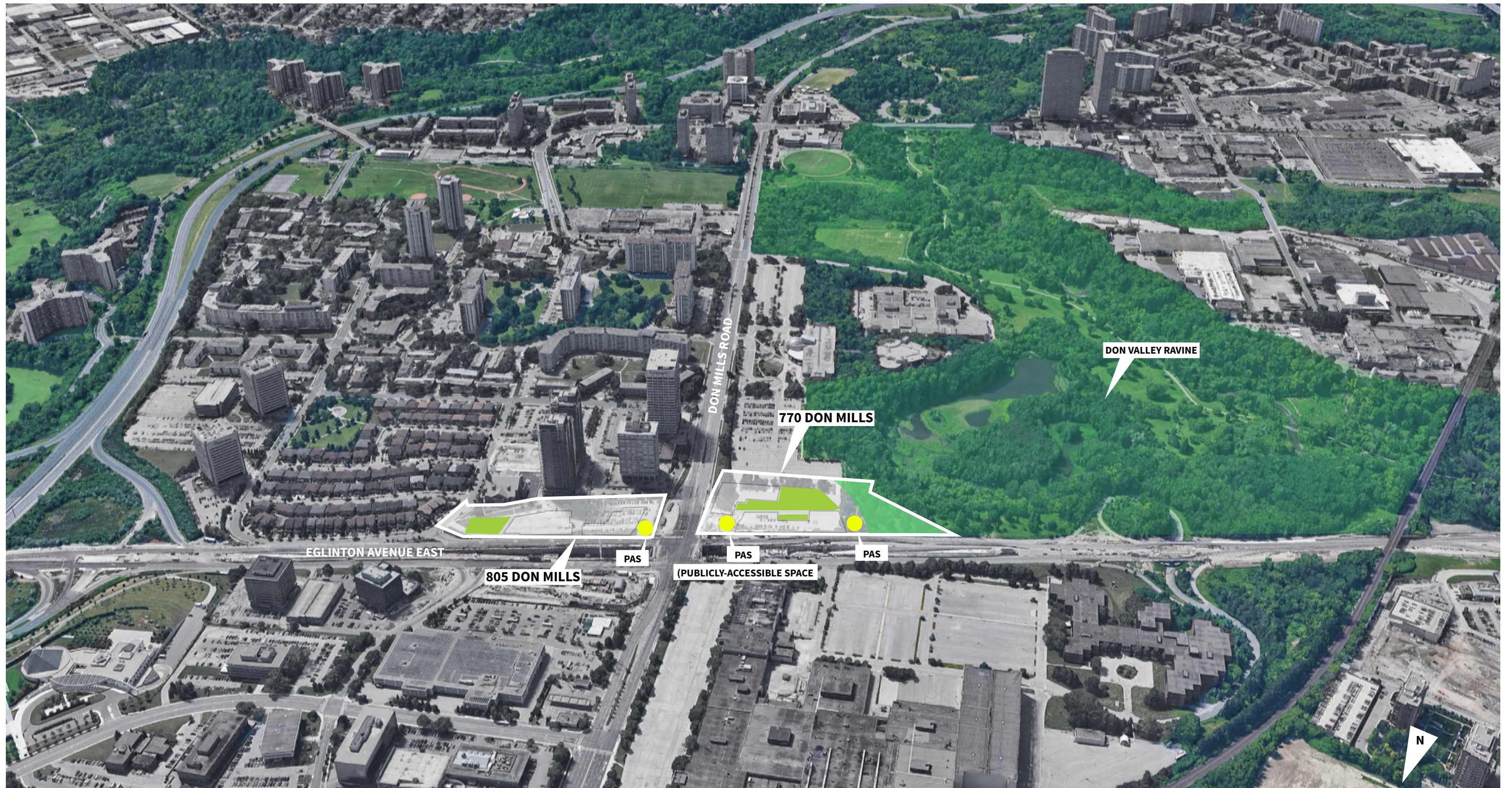
Municipally known as 805 Don Mills Road, the subject site is bounded by Eglinton Avenue E to the north, Don Mills Road to the west, the Ontario Science Centre to the west, high density residential developments to the south, and a low rise neighbourhood to the east. The site is currently seen as a node for intensification given the new Eglinton LRT station to the west of the site, as well as the future Ontario Line station directly to the north. The infrastructure developments of Eglinton Avenue and Don Mills Road will also contribute to the walk-ability and cycle connectivity to the area. The site has no existing structures and is currently used as a surface parking lot.

Within the City's Official Plan, the site is designated for Mixed Use. In keeping with the Official Plan, this site is proposed to be developed as a high-density, mixed use community with improvements to public realm.





## 1.2 | Context

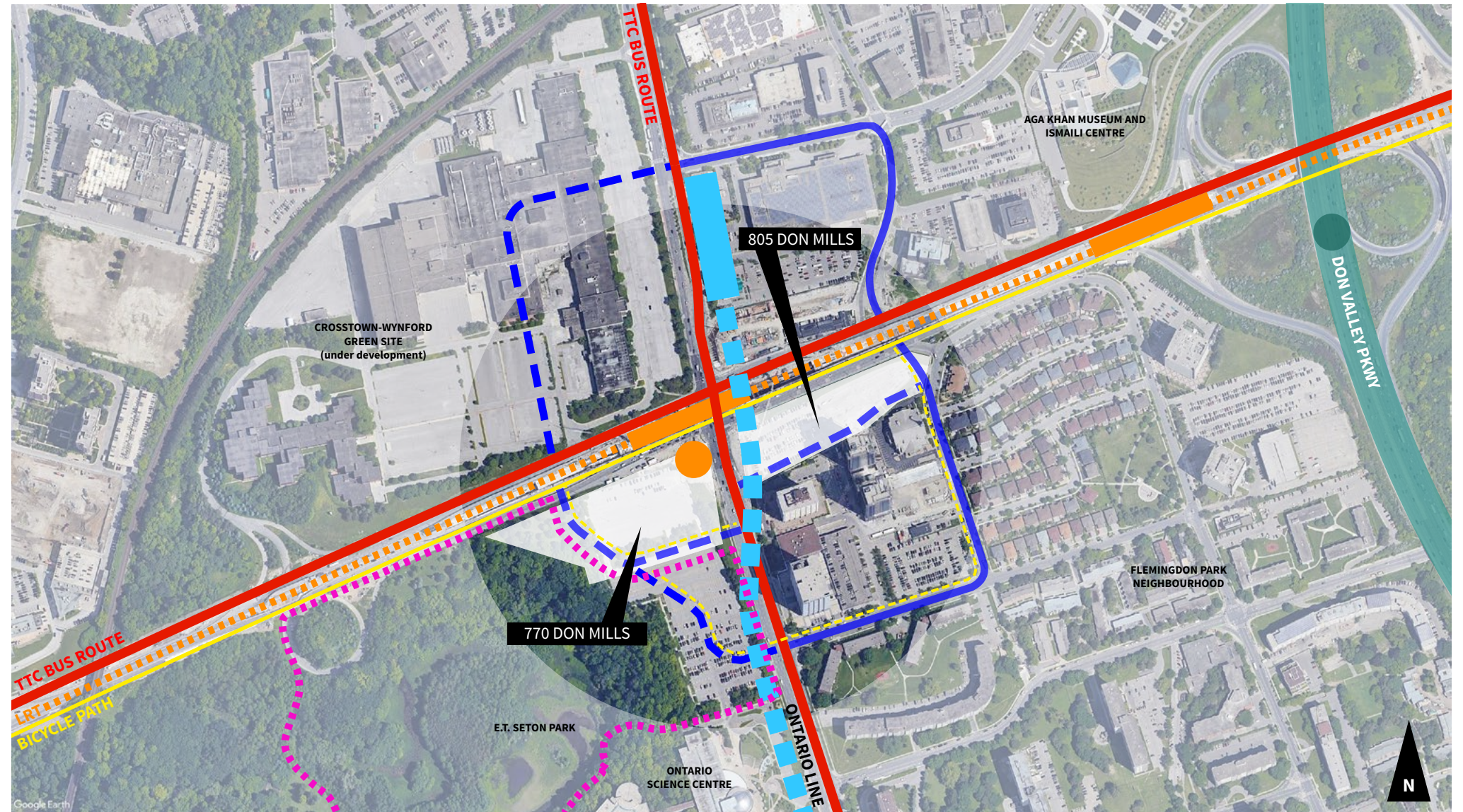




## 1.3 | Transit + New Streets + Mobility

There are significant infrastructure works planned for the immediate area, both as part of nearby development proposals, as well as larger transit projects.

- ■ ■ Eglinton Crosstown LRT
- Ontario Line (Future)
- ■ ■ Future Street Networks
- Don Valley Pkwy
- Ontario Science Centre Station
- Ontario Line Station (Future)
- Existing Streets
- LRT Stations (new)
- Bicycle Path
- ■ ■ Future Bicycle Path
- ■ ■ TTC Bus (10 min service)
- ■ ■ Multi Use Trail





# 1.4 | Site History

Built in the post-war era, the Don Mills and Eglinton area was developed as the employment sector of two early planned suburban communities of the 1950s: Don Mills to the north and Flemingdon Park to the south. Designed to be accessed primarily by private automobile, the development of the area coincided with major transportation infrastructure investments by Metropolitan Toronto, which led to the extension of Eglinton Avenue and the development of the Don Valley Parkway. The unique design of these new modernist communities combined with easy access to Toronto's downtown core by means of the expressway made this area highly desirable as a location for regional and international company headquarters.

Just as the development of arterial roads and highway infrastructure for automobiles defined the first wave of development within the area, the recent investment in public transit along Eglinton Avenue in the form of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and Ontario Line will serve to transition the area to become more pedestrian-oriented in scale.





# 1.5 | Nearby Developments Underway

The recent investments in public transit along Eglinton Avenue in the form of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT as well as the future Ontario Line along Don Mills Road are catalysts that will transform the neighbourhood into a more dense, transit-oriented hub. Two major new transit stations, the Ontario Science Centre Station and the Ontario Line station will serve to transition the immediate area to become more pedestrian-oriented in scale. Among the new developments in the area, the Crosstown-Wynford Green community to the north of Eglinton is comprised of a series of proposed multi-scaled mixed use buildings and public spaces housing approximately 10,000 new residents across the 60 acre development. Directly south of the 805 Don Mills site, recent high-rise developments such as the Sonic condominiums are contributing to a denser urban fabric in the area.

### 1 - Crosstown-Wynford Green Community

### 2 - Sonic Condominiums (recently completed)

### 3 - Eglinton LRT Ontario Science Centre Station

### 4 - Proposed Ontario Line Science Centre Station





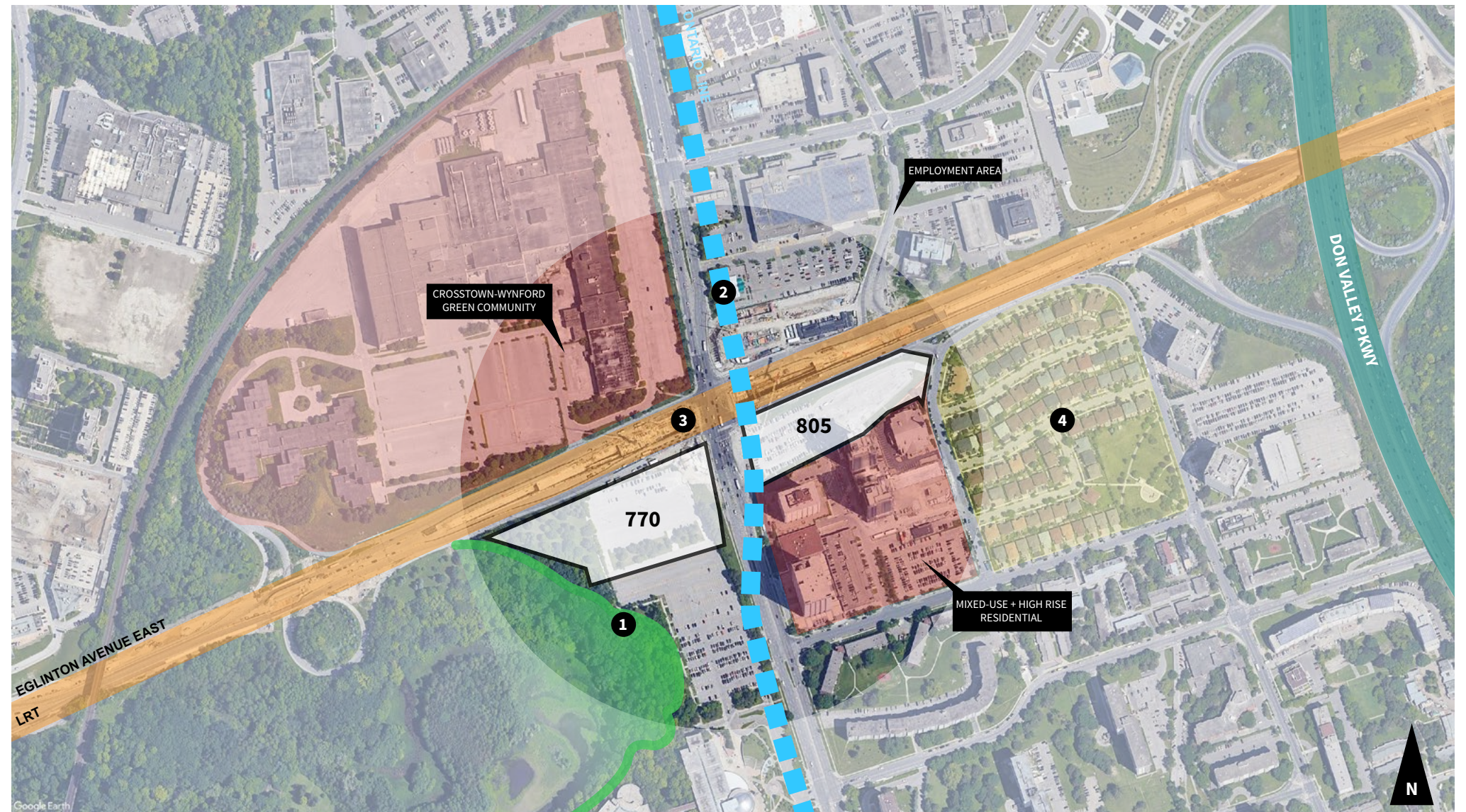
# 1.6 | Site Attributes + Constraints

The sites are naturally endowed with positive attributes that should be celebrated and enhanced with new development. There are equally significant considerations to creating a normalized urban realm that require tactful consideration.

The new **Ontario Line** transit expansion will offer significant mobility benefits to supplement what is becoming a major transit node. Conversely the elevated guideway presents unique urban design and environmental conditions, such as acoustic and vibration control measures, life-safety considerations, and phasing and continuity of public realm.

The **Eglinton Crosstown LRT** is bringing new transit to the area and a redesigned grand Avenue along with it. As one of the widest rights-of-way in the City, managing scale and creating a positive urban realm must be carefully considered

The **Low-Rise Neighbourhood** to the east contributes to a healthy mix of housing types in the area, while its built form type requires a thoughtful response to transition.



- 1 Don Valley Ravine
- 2 Ontario Line (Future)
- 3 Eglinton Crosstown LRT
- 4 Low Rise Neighbourhood



## **2 | Vision + Design Principles**

## 2.1 | Project Vision

The development of these lands will create a **distinct, complete and resilient community** with buildings, public streets and open spaces of high design quality. It will leverage its location to accommodate **housing, community facilities, and non-residential uses**, with strong connections to transit and the wider community.

New built environment and open spaces will address major transit infrastructure through **coordination of design elements, landscape features and programming of public spaces** with priority given to environmental quality, comfort and safety.

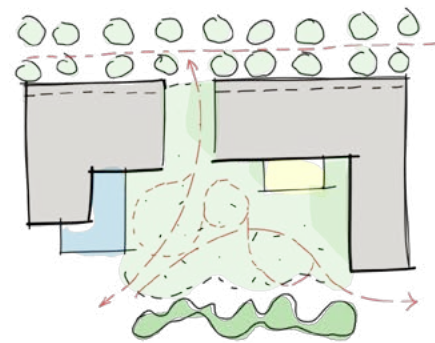
Development will create a **strong sense of place** built around meaningful outdoor spaces, and will fit well within the context of the Don River Valley System. The design of public realm will **support year-round as well as comfort and safety** through the provision of generous landscaping with shade trees, wide sidewalks, cycling facilities and pedestrian amenities.

Development and streetscape improvements will integrate **stormwater capture, trees, and landscaping** with a focus on providing trees with **suitable soil volumes, permeable pavers and water features** for stormwater management.

Design of high performance and resilient buildings, sustainable landscapes and emphasis on the use of transit, walking and cycling will advance opportunities for the **creation of a low carbon community**.

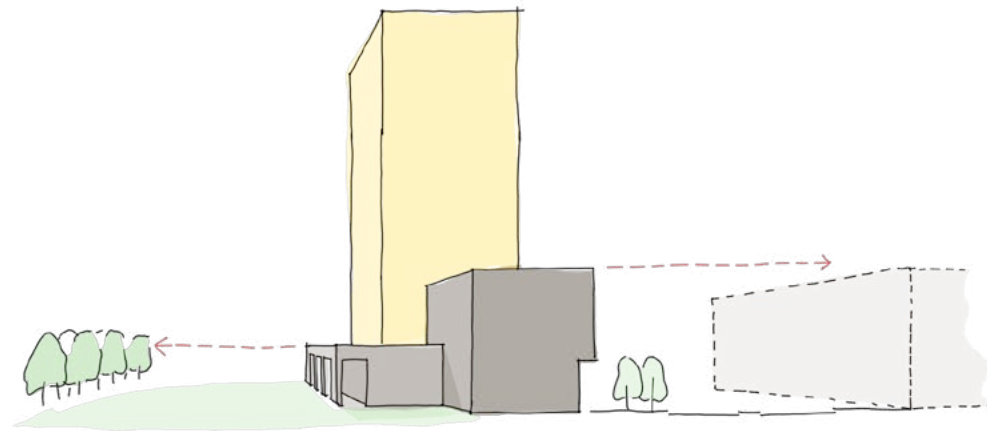


## 2.2 | Design Principles



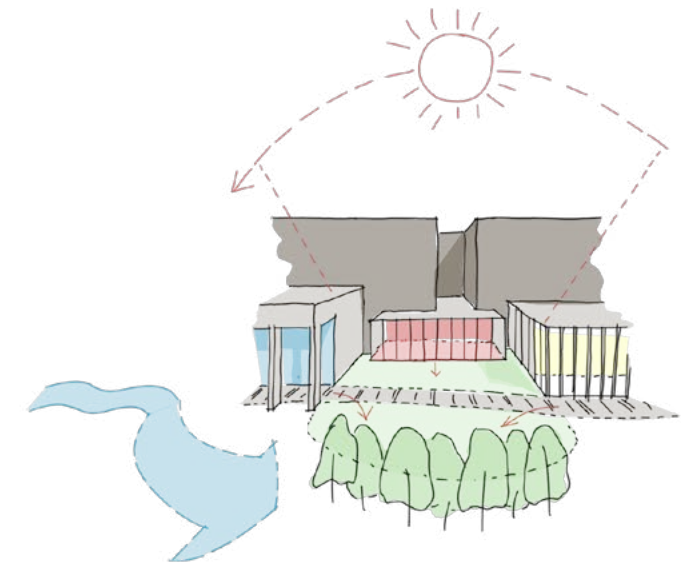
### Strong Sense of Place

Built form should structure an inner and outer public realm, each with their own character.



### Contextual Fit

Podium heights should vary to frame their immediate context with meaningful proportions, and should have articulated grade interfaces suitable for their frontage.



### Meaningful Outdoor Occasions

Open spaces should form positive micro-climates that can be actively programmed throughout the seasons, and are fronted by complimentary uses.

## 2.3 | Areas of Design Focus

### Integrated Site Design

The proposal for the site constitutes a complete community of new streets, parks, landscape design, and built-form. Given the complexities surrounding multiple facets of these conditions, an integrated approach between street and park design, landscape solutions, and thoughtful built form must be emphasized to generate a healthy public realm. Some examples of conditions requiring attention are as follows:

- Streetscape interface with development frontage;
- Integration of landscape and street design in setbacks;
- Opportunities for street trees throughout the site;
- Efficient on-street pick-up and drop-off locations;
- Coordinated public realm elements at street crossings;
- Interface with Ontario Line to ensure a continuous public realm.

### Contextual Grading Approach

The site gently tapers towards the south, presenting an impactful grade transition to the south of the site where recent developments have developed a connected pedestrian pathway. To mitigate the height impact of retaining walls where required and ensure accessibility from the site’s new mid-block to the existing paths, coordinated grading solutions must be prioritized. These solutions should be exemplified in some of the following conditions:

- Mid-block path access to existing path south of site;
  - Edge of Street C along park and Church site;
- Grade differential along Street C to adjacent south site;
  - Sloping grade frontages along Don Mills;
- Varying floor elevations at north and south of site.

### Wind Mitigation

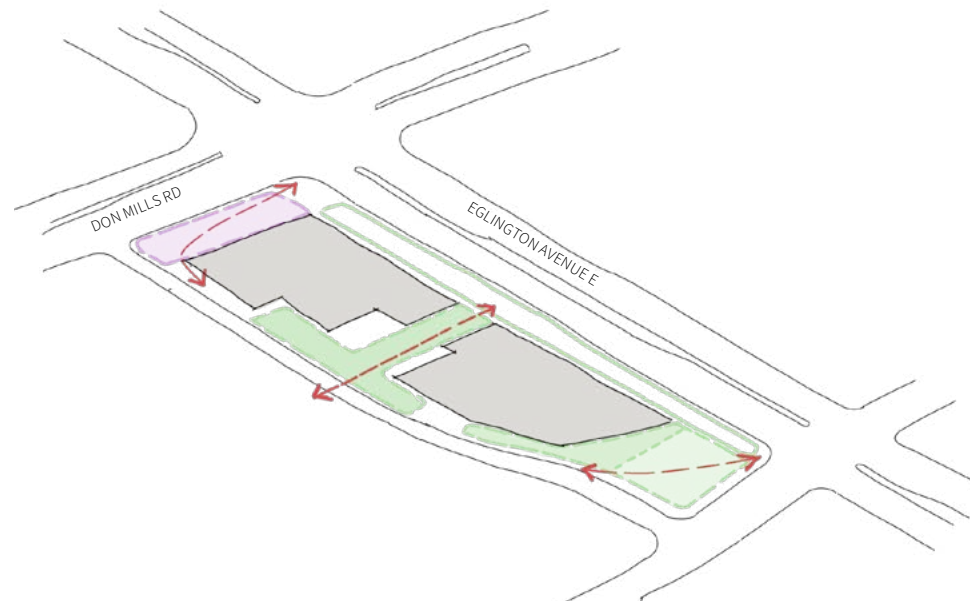
The site today is surrounded by vast, unbuilt conditions that flank the area along the west towards the ravine, which results in large sweeping winds whose effects would be exacerbated with the introduction of new towers. This challenge must be specifically addressed through mitigating built-form measures and specific strategies addressed in the wind study. Strategies on wind mitigation are proposed later in this document, however some key examples are as follows:

- Wind forces between blocks at their mid-block path;
- Consideration of wind forces at rooftop amenity levels;
- Key entry points of Block 1 at the South West corner.



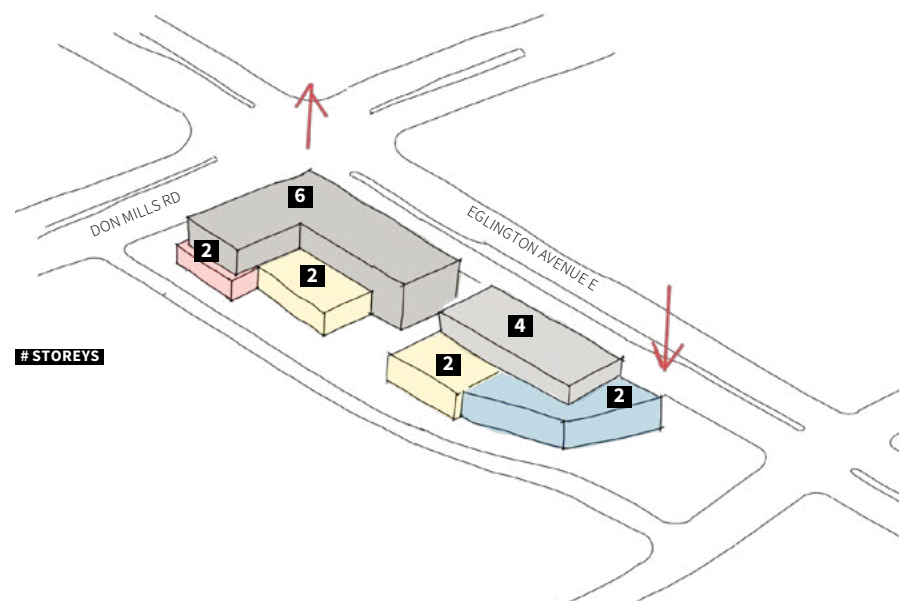
# 3 | The Proposal

## 3.1 | Massing + Built-Form Approach



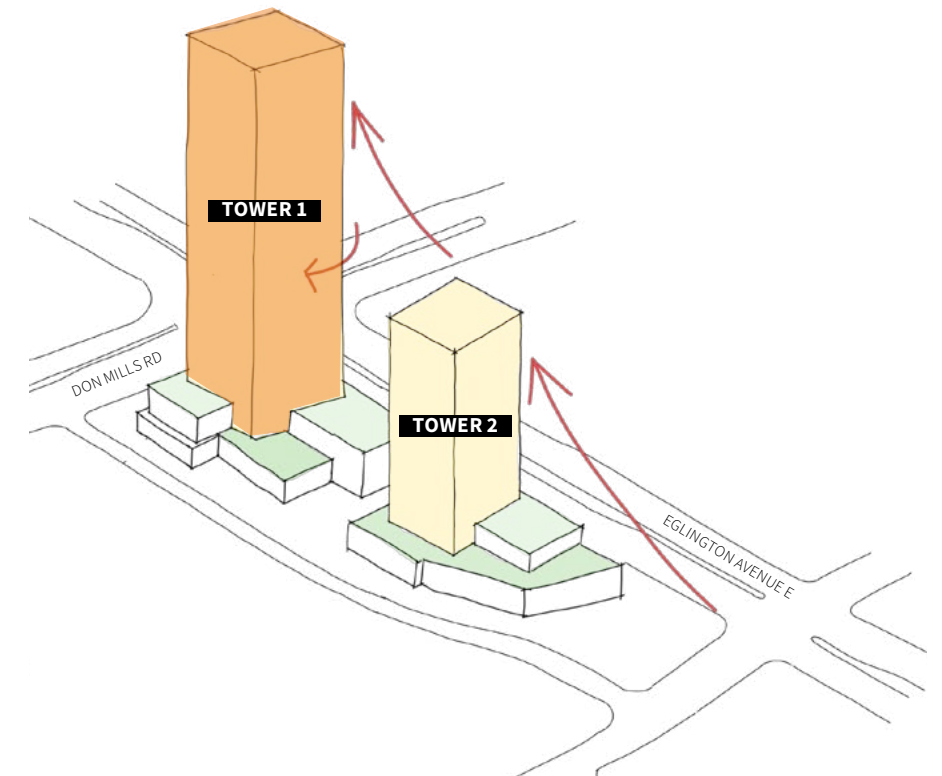
### Open Space Framework

- (a) A linear shape building footprint that forms a forecourt towards the south.
- (b) An opening at the center reveals a mid-block connection.
- (c) Open spaces are staggered across the site, from the most urban condition plaza at the west to a park at the east.
- (d) Long podium faces define street walls, and short ends frame the publicly-accessible space below the guideway and park.



### Podium Form

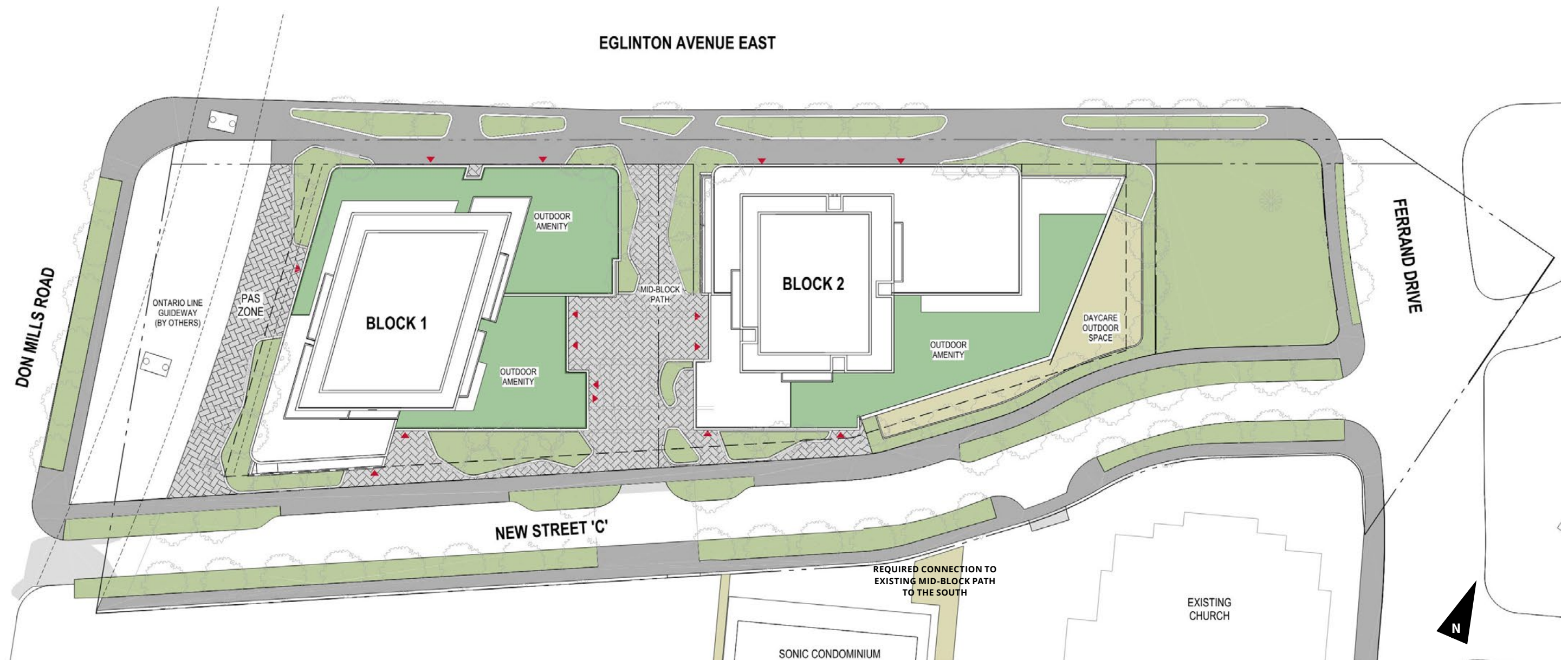
- (a) The long Eglinton frontage should be broken into two parts to manage scale.
- (b) The south-facing podium should be no more than 2 storeys in height to establish a lower-scale residential presence and optimize sun exposure to open spaces.
- (c) 4 and 6 Storey massing should be provided along Eglinton to emphasize a strong street-wall condition.



### Tower Placement

- (a) Towers are staggered and heights culminate at the major intersection.
- (b) The tower closest to Don Mills is skewed to align with the street.
- (c) Towers straddle varied podium heights and generally do not land at grade uninterrupted.
- (d) Tower 2 should not exceed 750sm, while Tower 1 can be configured with a maximum floor plate of 870sm if the increase is mitigated by variation in building articulation and design.









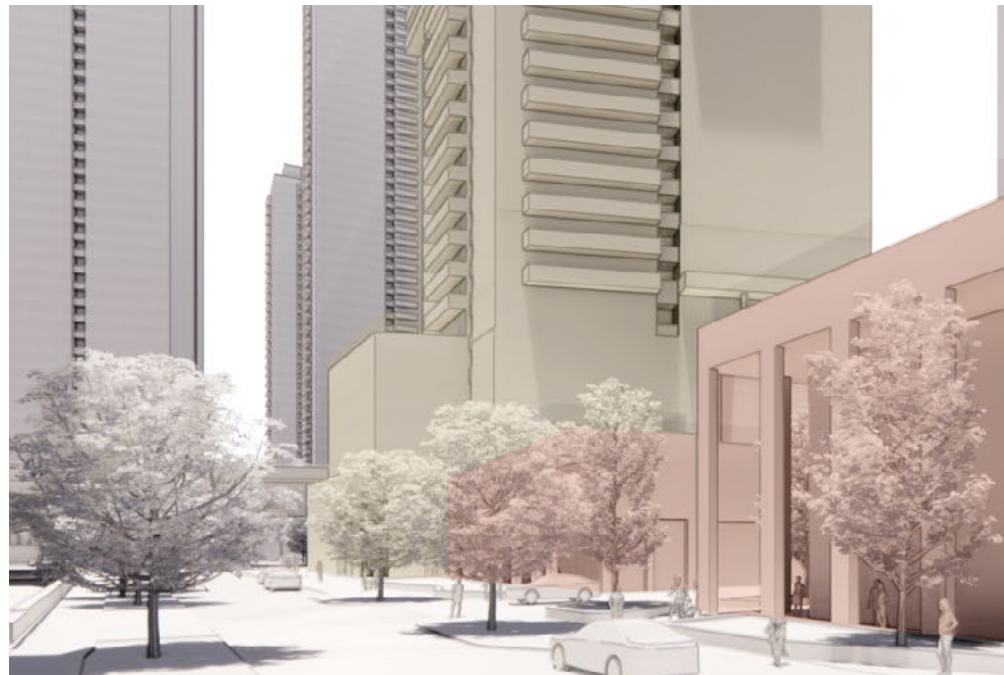
**View** | Axonometric From North East of 770 and 805 Don Mills



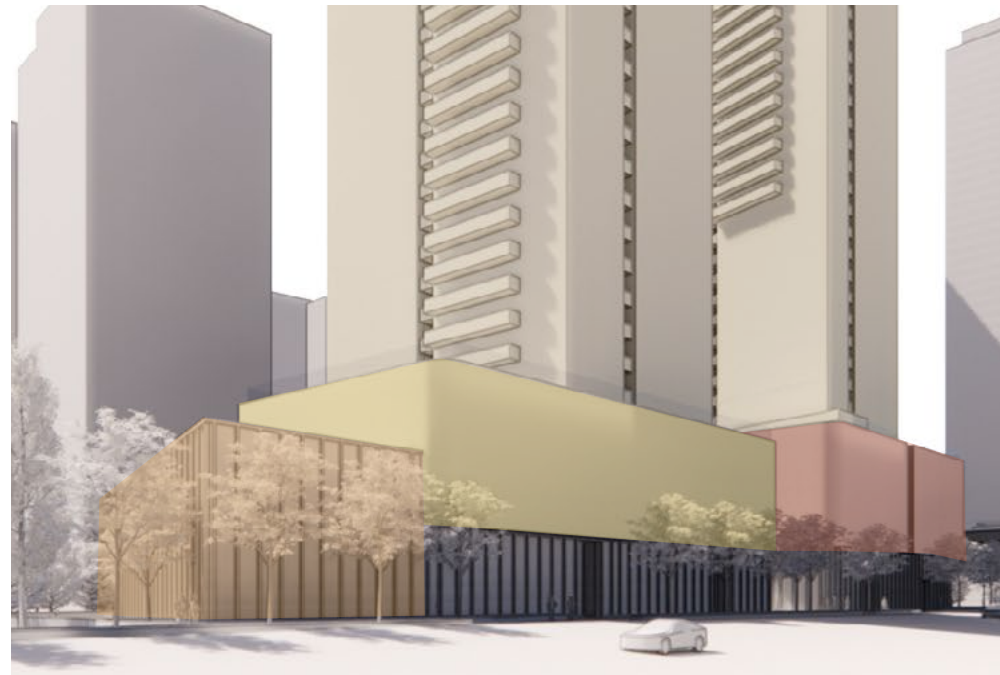
**View** | Aerial From East (park shown for illustrative purposes only)



## 3.1.1 | Podium Articulation



View | Looking West along Street C



View | Looking West along Eglinton Ave E



View | Aerial looking South-West

### Colonnades + Canopies

Colonnades along covered canopies should be provided towards the south of the site along Street C at key entry points to the residential lobbies and daycare. These will create shelter from elements and provide transitory interior-exterior conditions.

### Podium Heights

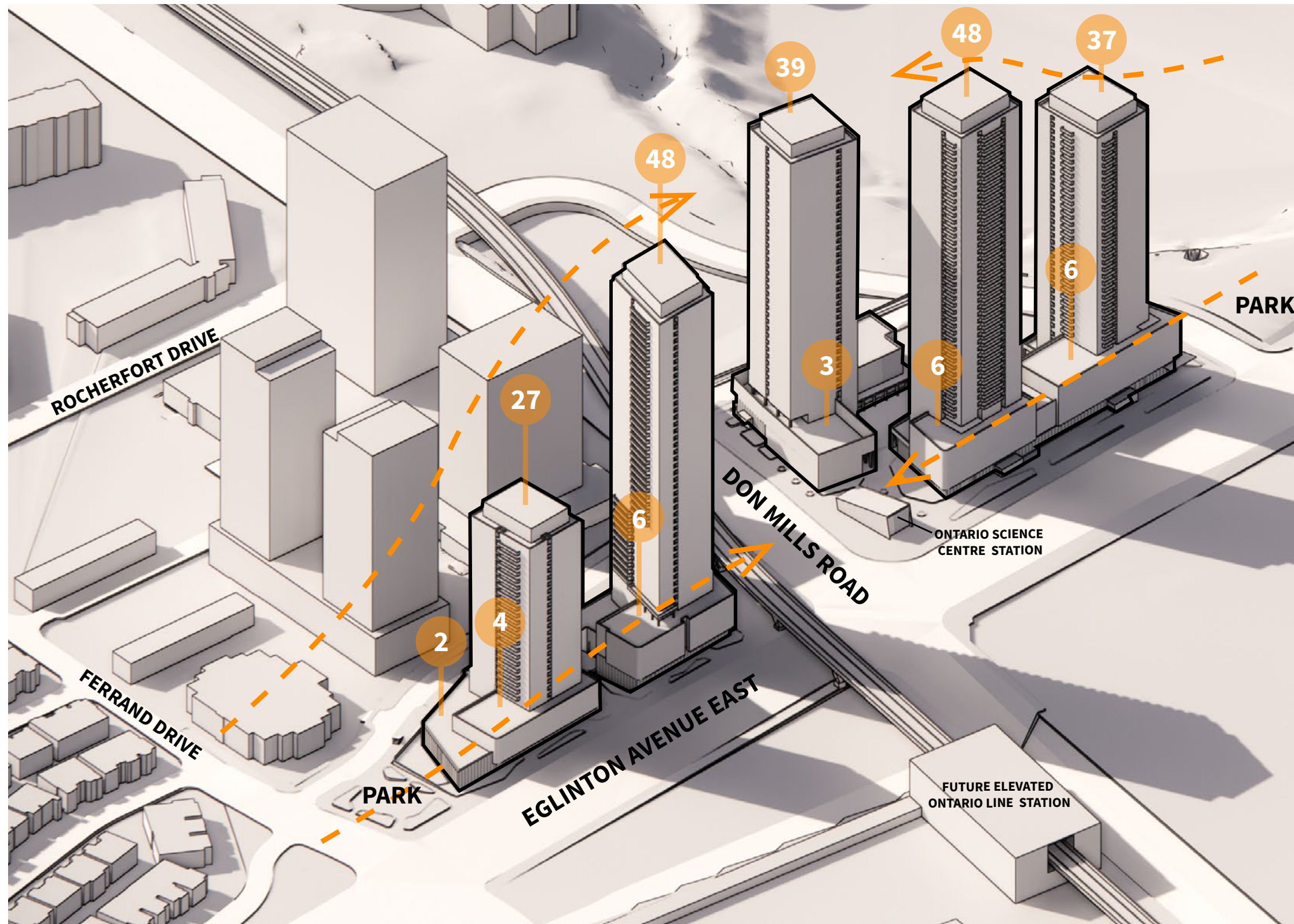
The base building forms are composed of varying heights between 2 and 6 stories, to provide a diverse and articulated built-form that manages the scale of the site. The heights should be lowest at the east and south and build in height intermittently to the west.

### Buffering Mass

Along the site edge where the future condition of the Ontario Line elevated guideway presents a challenging interface, the podium building should read and perform as an element that buffers the block from noise and vibration and create a prominent building face.



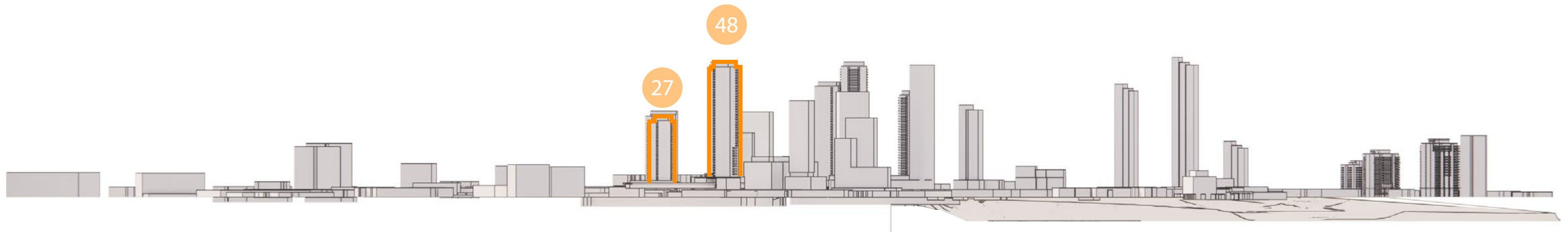
## 3.1.2 | Built Form Heights



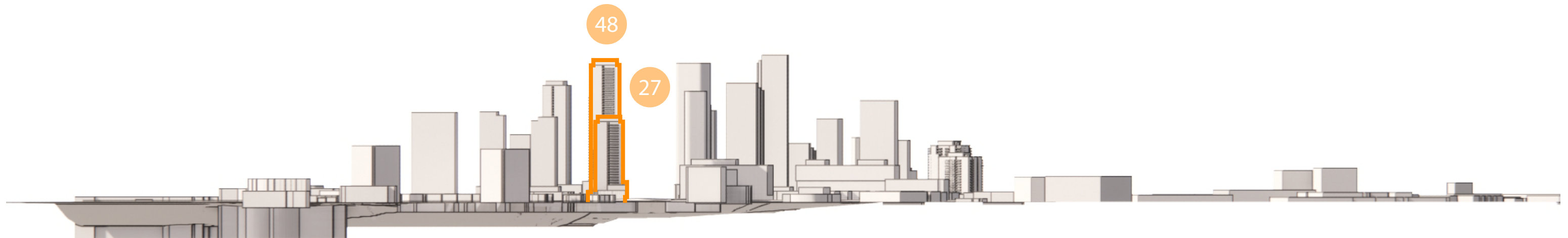
- 37 770 Don Mills Tower 1
- 48 770 Don Mills Tower 2
- 39 770 Don Mills Tower 3
- 48 805 Don Mills Tower 1
- 27 805 Don Mills Tower 2



## 3.1.3 | Tall Building Forms



SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



## 3.1.4 | Tall Building Principles

1| In general, towers should be designed in conformance with the City of Toronto Tall Building Design Guidelines, which detail and address specific objectives of this development such as step-backs of the tower from the base podium, tower separation distances, and shadow mitigation among other recommendations.

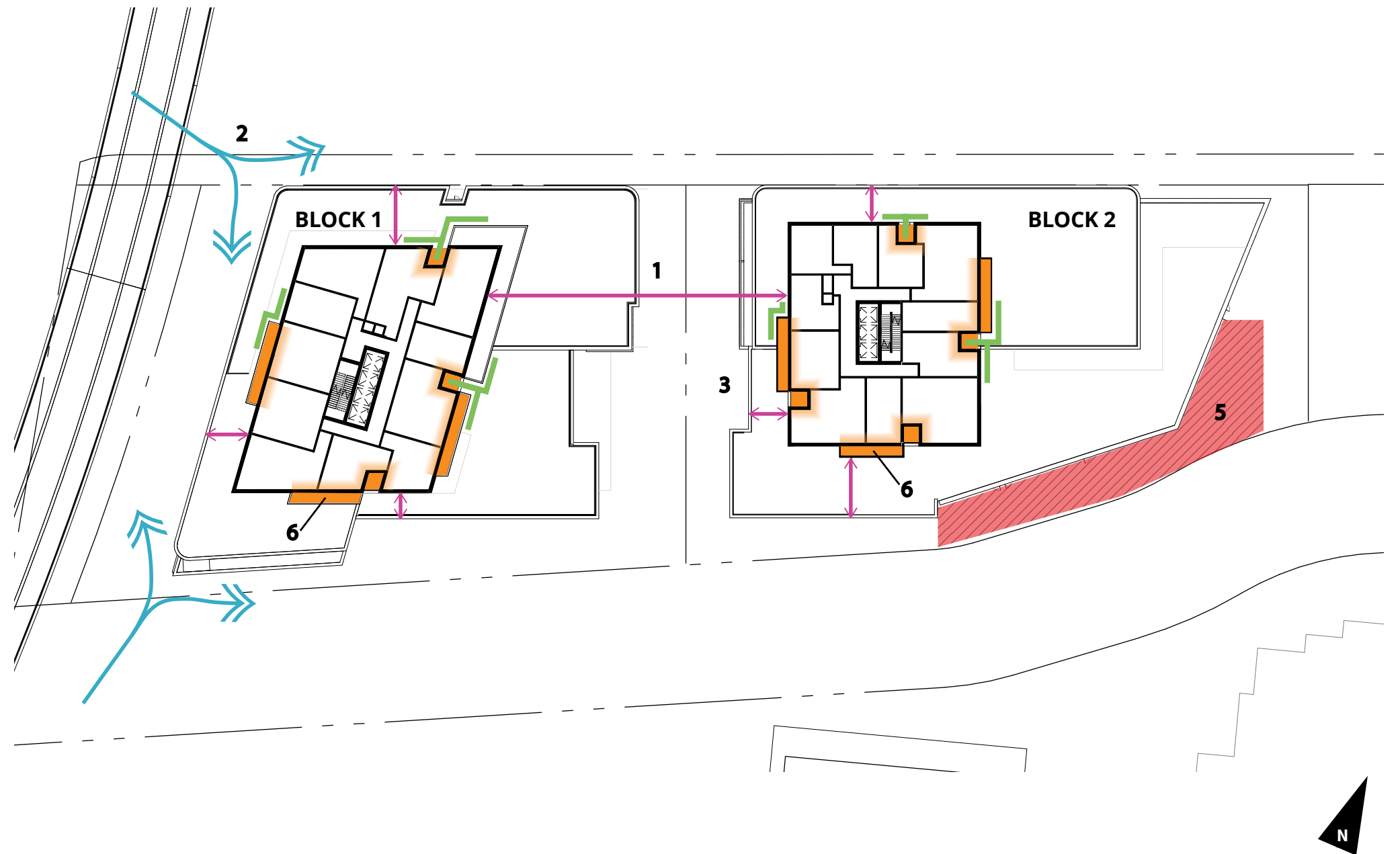
2| Consideration should be given to the shape, location, and orientation of the building mass as it relates to wind effects as detailed in the associated Wind Study. Buildings should be massed and located to limit wind impact on public realm. Wind conditions should be suitable for walking or sitting with higher standards applied to areas at building entrances, to usable outdoor spaces and main pedestrian pathways.

3| Opportunities for articulation to reduce the visual mass of the tower, such as reveals in the building face or alternating balcony locations, should be thoughtfully considered.

4| Where towers cannot terminate at a base building, consideration should be given to address wind concerns in these areas, thoughtfully animate the building face, and consider mitigating energy efficient design features.

5| Balconies should not occur over Daycare yard spaces, be they at grade or at roof level. Where balconies do not conflict with these locations, they should be limited to 1/3 the length of a tower building face.

6| Balconies should only wrap the South-West corner of a tower for mitigation of sun exposure. Balconies should step back from the building face at all other corners to control overall shadow impact





## 3.2 | Open Space Framework

1| Create a Mid-Block Path linking Eglinton Avenue E with the new ROW at the south, allowing for a pedestrian route that links to an existing mid-block path further south. The Mid-Block Path shall also serve as a service and vehicle access lane that consolidates access doors along the east and west building faces. The shade impact of this space should be carefully addressed.

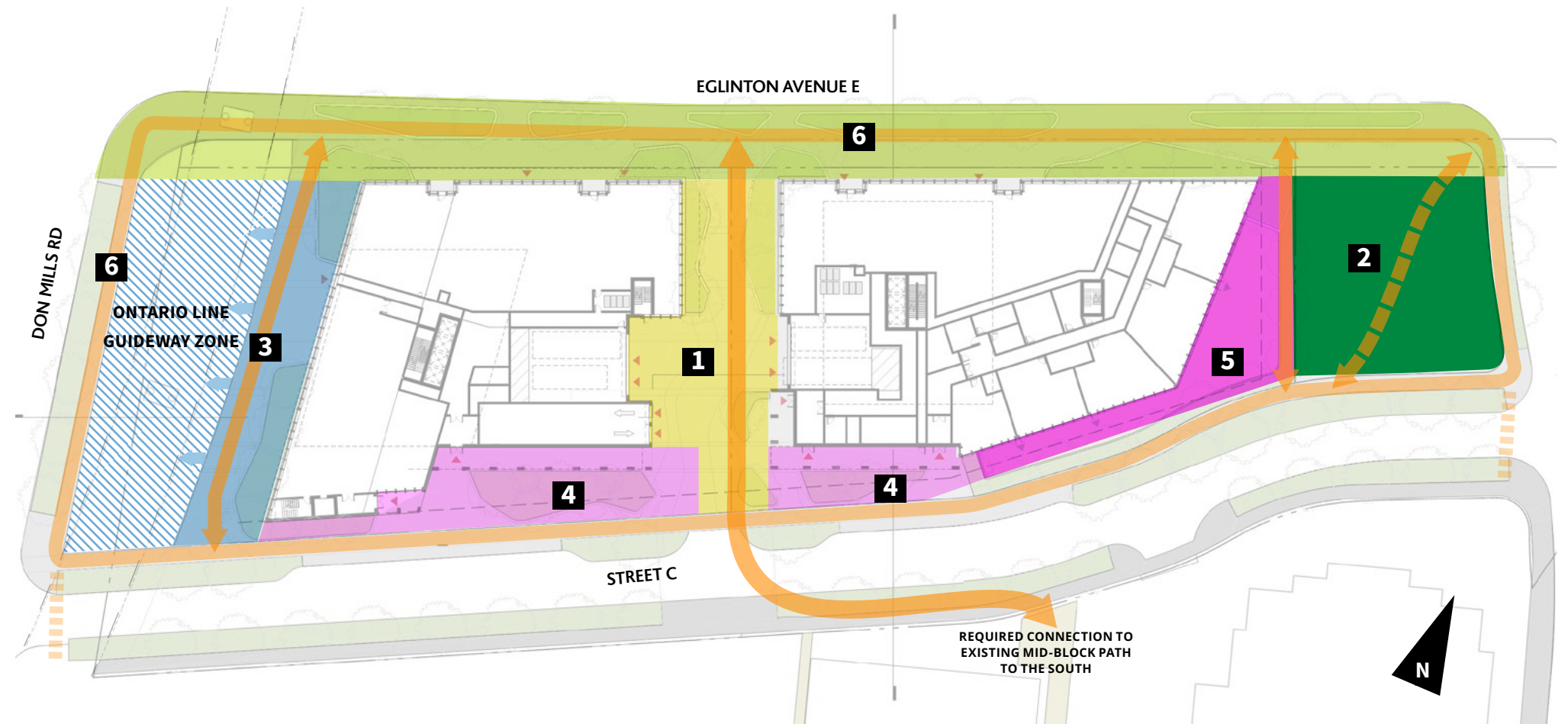
2| The public park component is located directly east adjacent to the low-rise neighbourhood, echoing the lower density and neighbourhood scale with an open park condition filled with trees and street furniture. The final park design, envisioned as a site gateway, will be undertaken by City of Toronto.

3| A publicly-accessible space (PAS) fronting the elevated guideway lands opens the door to positive urban integration of the two realms and affords an off-street pedestrian route. The shade impact and below-grade storm sewer within this area should be carefully addressed in the design and program.

4| The forecourt zone along the south of the site is framed by a lower 2 storey podium height and contains a mix of hard and softscaping that reflect a more neighbourhood scale. A community porch at the southwest provides access to the community use sheltered from westerly winds and open to southern sun.

5| The daycare yard should face the park and be protected with a landscaped buffer, allowing for a calm and more private environment for children.

6| Attention should be paid to the Secondary Plan policies for the zones along Eglinton Ave E and Don Mills Rd, which include detailed guidance on these pedestrian links such as conceptual boulevard elements, types of street trees, and the required 5m clearway along Eglinton Avenue E.





## 3.3 | Active Public Realm

1| Animate Eglinton Ave E and Don Mills Rd with varied active program uses and maximize clear glazing at grade to ensure a dynamic and safe public realm. Attention should be paid to the Secondary Plan policies and the City of Toronto's Retail Design Manual on design guidance for interactive facades and retail frontages where applicable.

2| Residential entrances should be located off the forecourt area adjacent to the new Street C ROW, and denoted with covered canopies and colonnades that are clearly visible and easily accessible. Street C should be conceived as having a more residential, smaller scale with traffic-calming measures.

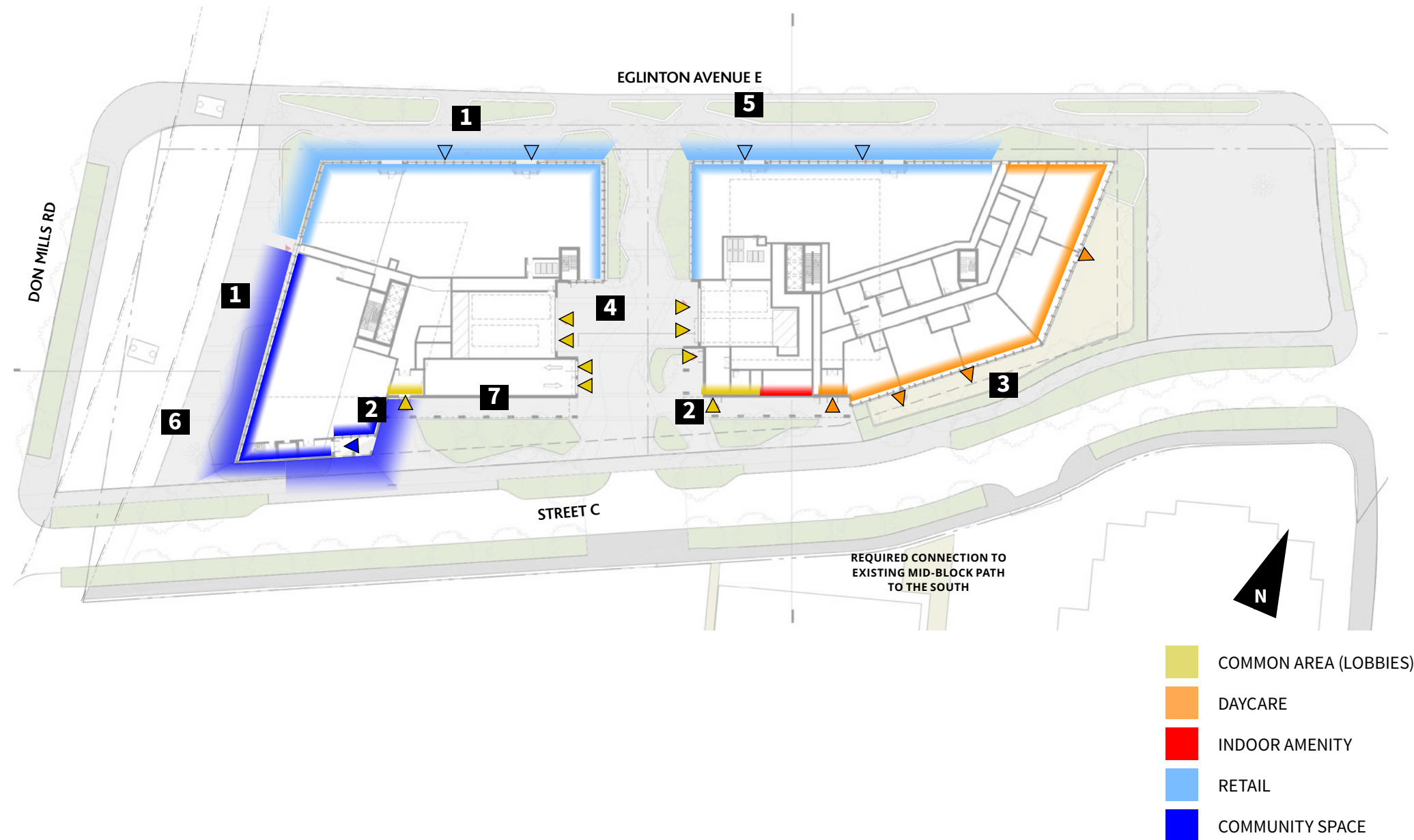
3| Provide generous walkways with trees and landscaping around the periphery of the site.

4| The Mid-Block Path should be provided with a consistent hardscape surface treatment that is shared with the service lane, and provide an efficient plan for separating the service access from pedestrian zones to ensure safety. Where possible, it shall be fronted with active program and glazing.

5| The streetscape along Eglinton Ave E ties the various qualities of the site with a consistent line of street trees, a continuous sidewalk, and an additional landscape buffer between the sidewalk and the curb.

6| The public open space along Don Mills should be designed as an active pedestrian plaza that shares the public space with the area below the Ontario Line delivered by Metrolinx. It should be animated by community programming and ample street-level glazing.

7| Blank walls, when unavoidable, should be articulated with pedestrian-scaled features that animate the public realm such as opportunities for architectural feature walls or integrated landscape elements.





# 3.3 | Active Public Realm



**View** | Looking North from above Ontario Line

## Ontario Line Plaza

A significant pedestrian zone at the west of the site facing Don Mills Road is shared with the public area below the Ontario Line elevated guideway which will be delivered by Metrolinx. The plaza should be envisioned as a welcoming public zone to the site, contain robust pedestrian amenities, and be complementary to design of the space provided by Metrolinx.



**View** | Looking South towards Mid-Block

## Active Street Program

Animate Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road with varied active program uses and maximize clear glazing along exterior walls to ensure a dynamic public realm. Indents in the facade at ground level contribute to a varied streetscape and a scaled-down massing composition.



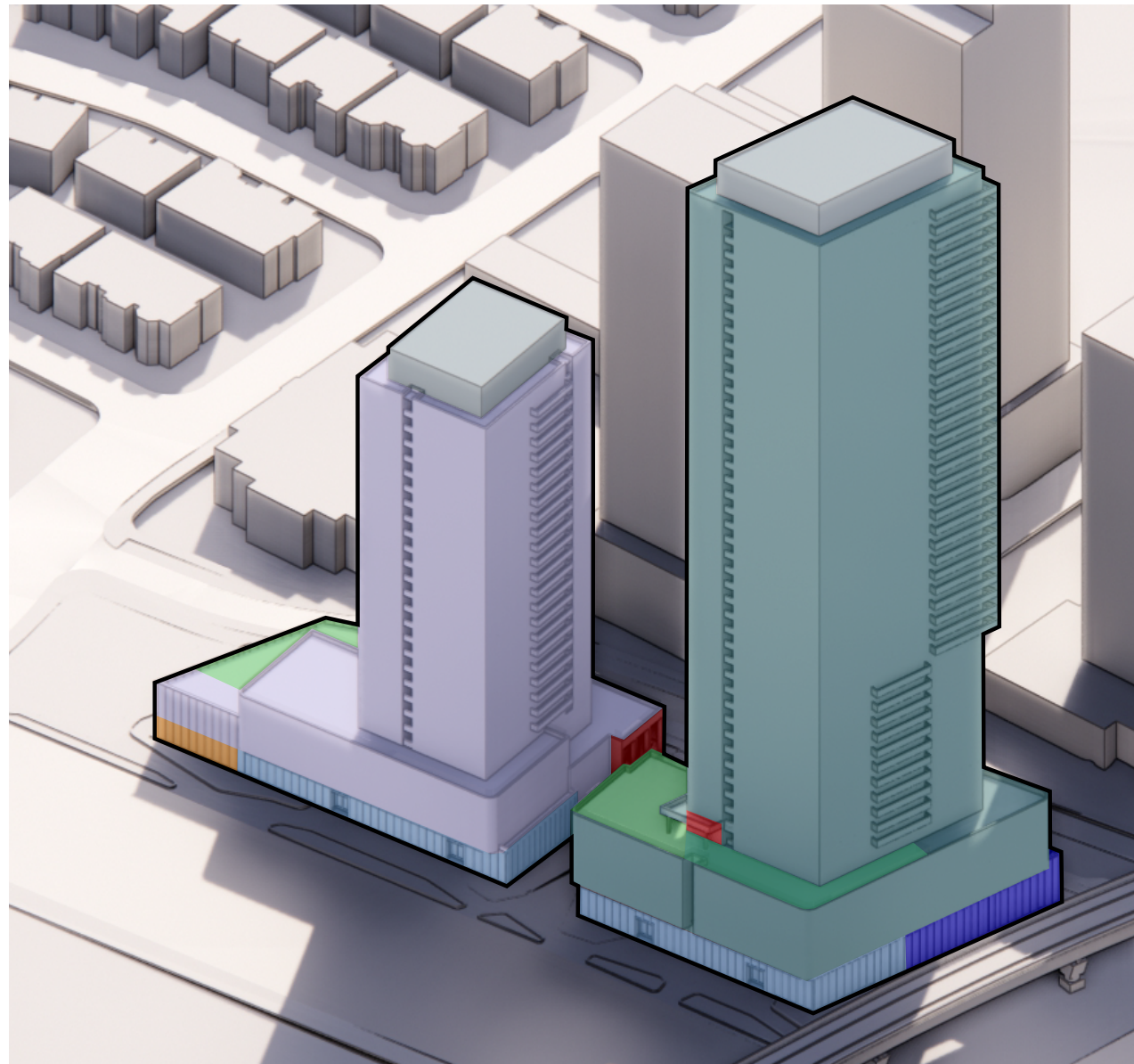
**View** | Looking North towards Mid-Block

## Mid-Block Path

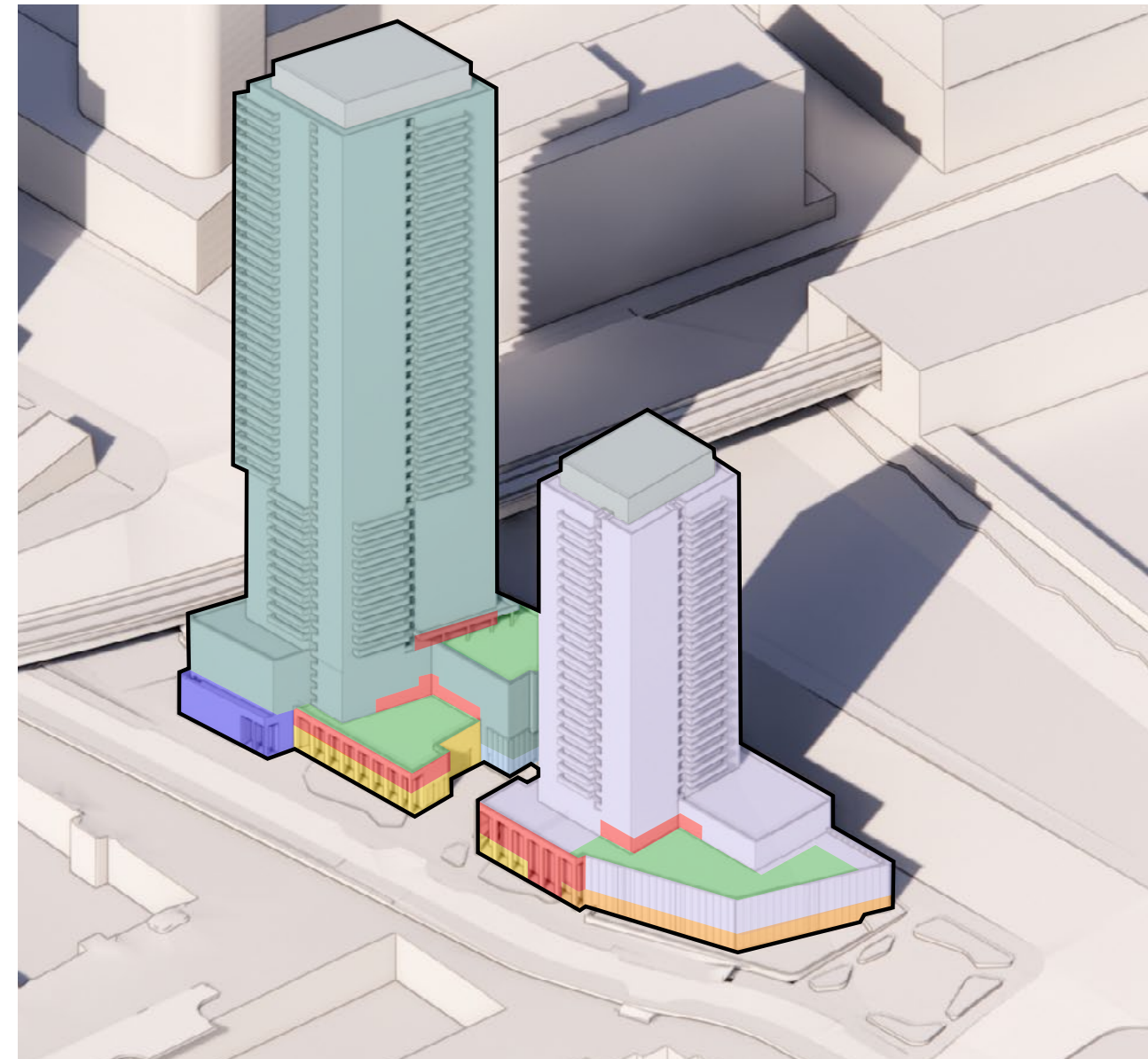
The Mid-Block Path should be provided with a hardscape surface shared with the service lane to provide a more generous and active territory. An efficient plan for separating service access from pedestrian zones should be provided to ensure safety. Where possible, it should be fronted with active public program and clear glazing. The shade impact of this space should be carefully addressed in its design and program.



# 3.4 | Program



SOUTH-EAST | Axonometric



NORTH-WEST | Axonometric

|   |                 |   |                      |
|---|-----------------|---|----------------------|
|  | COMMON AREA     |  | RESIDENTIAL (CONDO)  |
|  | DAYCARE         |  | RESIDENTIAL (RENTAL) |
|  | INDOOR AMENITY  |  | RETAIL               |
|  | OUTDOOR AMENITY |  | COMMUNITY SPACE      |
|  | MECHANICAL      |   |                      |