

Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines – Final Report

Date: April 17, 2024

To: Scarborough Community Council

From: Director, Community Planning, Scarborough District and
Director of Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: 21 - Scarborough-Centre and 20 - Scarborough Southwest

SUMMARY

In response to a series of development applications and interest for sites near the Eglinton GO station, City Council directed City Planning staff to initiate a Planning Study for the segment of Eglinton Avenue East generally between McCowan Road and Mason Road. The subsequent Council adoption of Official Plan Amendment 570 identified lands around Eglinton GO Station as a Protected Major Transit Station Area and included Site and Area Specific Policy 625 that provides for minimum densities for sites within the PMTSAs. With the planning framework anticipating intensification and limited guidance for the lands from a policy or zoning perspective it was important to examine the area and determine appropriate built form guidance for future development. The Urban Design Guidelines recommended for adoption in this report respond to the original Council direction and reflect a work plan initiated, developed and implemented by City Planning staff and informed by community and landowner consultation.

The Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines will assist in advancing the vision of a connected and sustainable community along a vibrant commercial main street anchored by the Eglinton GO Station and the Eglinton East Light Rail Transit (EELRT) line. The Guidelines seek a diversity of building types that will frame and support an attractive, green, and memorable public realm supporting non-residential uses at grade.

This report recommends that City Council adopt the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines. This report also recommends that City Council direct the Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to use the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines in the evaluation of all current and new development applications within the Study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Community Planning, Scarborough District and Director of Urban Design, City Planning recommend that:

1. City Council adopt the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines substantially in accordance with Attachment 1 to this report.

2. City Council direct the Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to use the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines in the evaluation of all current and new development applications within the Study area as shown in Attachment 1 to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

DECISION HISTORY

On February 2, 2022, City Council directed City Planning staff to initiate a Planning Study, for the segment of Eglinton Avenue East (on the north and south side of the Avenue generally between McCowan Road and Mason Road) in consultation with the Ward Councillors and the Owner of the lands at 2956 to 2990 Eglinton Avenue East. This direction was provided through the amended recommendations from the preliminary report on the rezoning and draft plan of subdivision applications at 2956 to 2990 Eglinton Avenue East. The report and decision of Community Council can be found here: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.SC29.4>

On March 25th, 2022, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 570 which contained Site and Area Specific Policy ('SASP') 625 for the Eglinton GO Area. The SASP includes a minimum population and employment target of 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare and minimum density requirements for sites within the Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) defined area by the SASP mapping. The OPA and the SASP were the outcome of the Growth Plan Conformity and Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) which includes the delineation of approximately 180 potential Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) across the City to meet Provincial minimum intensification requirements. Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) MTSAs, where the Council-approved inclusionary zoning policy framework can be implemented. The OPA is currently before the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and a decision has not yet been made. The report can be found here: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH32.7>

BACKGROUND AND STUDY AREA

Reason for the Study

As directed by City Council, City Planning staff initiated a planning study of the Eglinton GO Area (Eglinton GO Area Study). The intention of the study was to establish a public

realm and built form vision for the area and provide guidance to on-going and future development in the area.

The study was originally initiated to update the planning framework to assist in evaluating the application at 2956 to 2990 Eglinton Avenue East and other potential applications on lands identified for intensification along an identified *Avenue* designated *Mixed Use Areas*. The identification of Eglinton GO as a PMTSA with Council approved minimum densities along with subsequent submission of additional applications lead City staff to determine that the outcome of the study could be scoped to Urban Design Guidelines. A work plan was to complete the task.

Staff will continue to monitor the area and use the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines to determine whether new policy direction for this area will be required beyond that provided by SASP 625 pending a decision thereon by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. With further direction from City Council, City Planning staff can initiate additional work to support the Urban Design Guidelines or to study other aspects of the study area that are beyond the current scope of work through other policy or regulatory tools.

Study Area Description

The Study Area is bounded by McCowan Road to the West, generally Trudelle Street and to the north, Bellamy Road North to the east and the rail tracks to the south. The Study Area was determined through an evaluation of the Official Plan land use designations nearest to the Eglinton GO Station, the SASP mapping for the PMTSA and the focal point around the Eglinton GO Station where there is the most development activity.

Existing Context

Eglinton Avenue East

Along Eglinton Avenue East most of the buildings are between 1 and 2 storeys. Eglinton Avenue East has priority bus lanes on both sides of the street. Cyclists are also permitted to use the priority bus lanes, which are reserved for TTC buses, Wheel-Trans buses, school buses, and bicycles. The existing pedestrian environment is challenged with limited street trees, sidewalks abutting the road curb, and many driveway curb cuts along the street interrupting the public realm.

Along Eglinton Avenue East, there is a significant amount of existing retail, commercial, and other non-residential uses. Approximately five properties contain retail, office and service-oriented uses, twelve properties contain automotive uses and there are two large format retail stores including Home Depot and Swiss Chalet/Harvey's. As described below, the policy context anticipates an evolution of these lands providing for mixed use intensification.

McCowan Road, Trudelle Street, Torrance Road, Bellamy Road North and Grace Street

The area to the north of Eglinton Avenue East is characterized by townhouses and apartment buildings. There are existing mid-rise buildings at 5 and 8 storeys and tall

buildings at 12, 17 and 19 storeys. In terms of land uses, this area is primarily residential with some small shops located at the ground floor of the existing apartment buildings. Trudelle Street, Bellamy Road North, Grace Street, and Torrance Road are typical local residential streets with sidewalks separated from vehicular traffic by sodded boulevards with street trees.

South of Eglinton Avenue East, McCowan Road slopes down towards the underpass at Landmark Boulevard at the southwest corner of the Study Area. There is a generous treed boulevard along McCowan Road leading to Landmark Boulevard, which is a service road adjacent to the Home Depot site.

Parks

There are no existing parks within the Study Area. To the south and southwest, McCowan District Park extends as a linear park along the rail corridor with a multi-use trail system. Colonial Park is located adjacent to the GO south parking lot. To the northwest and further north of the Study Area, there is a connected network of parks and open spaces including Trudelle Park, Knob Hill Park, Pringdale Ravine, McCowan Park, Hague Park, and the West Highland Creek.

Development Applications in the Study Area

There are currently four active development applications in the study area. The applications with significant intensification are located around the Eglinton GO Station. The on-going review of these development applications informed the work on the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines.

The current applications are summarized in the table below:

Address & Application Number	Application Description	Units
2956 to 2990 Eglinton Avenue East	Three buildings are proposed at 25, 30 and 37 storeys with non-residential uses at grade and a public park. Rezoning and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications currently under review.	935
2911 Eglinton Avenue East	6-storey self-storage building. Rezoning approved, Site Plan application under review.	N/A

Address & Application Number	Application Description	Units
2941 Eglinton Avenue East	46-storey mixed use building with retail proposed along Eglinton Avenue East. Rezoning and Site Plan applications appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal ('OLT')	598
126 Bellamy Road	8-storey mid-rise building and a public park. Rezoning and Site Plan applications under review.	184
Total		1,717

LEGISLATIVE & POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

This Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines builds upon the Official Plan, including the delineated Eglinton GO PMTSA and provides a guiding document for the implementation of provincial and municipal policies.

Provincial Policy Statement and the Provincial Plans

All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (the "PPS") and shall conform to provincial plans including the A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) (August 28, 2020 Consolidation) (the "Growth Plan").

The PPS and the Growth Plan provide for direction on creating a safe, accessible and vibrant public realm.

Policy 1.5.1 of the PPS directs that healthy, active communities should be promoted by: a) planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity; b) planning and providing for a full range and equitable distribution of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages.

Policy 1.8.1 of the PPS also directs that planning authorities support energy conservation and efficiency, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate through land use and development patterns which promote the use of active transportation and transit in and between residential, employment (including commercial and industrial) and institutional uses and other areas.

Policy 1.2.1 of the Growth Plan directs, among other matters, guiding principles, including supporting the achievement of complete communities that are designed to support healthy and active living and meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime.

Policy 2.2.1.4 of the Growth Plan builds on that guiding principles by reinforcing a number of matters to support the achievement of complete communities, including improve social equity and overall quality of life, including human health, for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes; expanding convenient access to, a range of transportation options, including options for the safe, comfortable and convenient use of active transportation and an appropriate supply of safe, publicly-accessible open spaces, parks, trails, and other recreational facilities; and provide for a more compact built form and vibrant public realm, including public open spaces.

The Growth Plan contains policies pertaining to population and employment densities that should be planned for in major transit station areas (MTSAs) along priority transit corridors or subway lines. The Growth Plan required that (as part of the last municipal comprehensive review (MCR)), the City update its Official Plan to delineate MTSA boundaries and demonstrate how the MTSAs are planned for the prescribed densities. Through that process, the Eglinton GO Area was delineated as a PMTSA with a minimum density of 150 people and jobs per hectare. Minimum densities were assigned to the properties within the SASP boundaries. The OPA was adopted by Council and is currently with the Minister for a decision. Protected Major Transit Station Areas are the areas that the Province allows municipalities to implement Inclusionary Zoning.

Inclusionary zoning in this PMTSA would require a minimum of 7 percent of the total new residential gross floor area to be secured as affordable ownership housing or a minimum of 5 percent of the total new residential gross floor area shall be secured as affordable rental housing. If a purpose-built rental development is proposed, there is no minimum requirement for affordable rental housing.

As part of implementing the Growth Plan within these delineated areas, Section 5.2.5.6 directs that in planning to achieve the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, municipalities will develop and implement urban design and site design official plan policies and other supporting documents that direct the development of a high-quality public realm and compact built form.

To support a complete community, the public realm is a key organizing element that supports the use of active transportation, contributes to the social and economic well-being of the area and the City as a whole. *Avenues* that are planned for greater levels of intensification, like Eglinton Avenue East require ample, well-designed open spaces and an appropriately designed and integrated public realm to ensure a high quality of life.

Official Plan: The section of Eglinton Avenue East in the study area is identified as an *Avenue* on Map 2 of the Official Plan. *Avenues* are important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents.

In terms of land use, all of the properties in the study area are designated *Mixed Use Areas* or *Apartment Neighbourhoods* on Map 20 of the Official Plan.

Mixed Use Areas achieve a multitude of planning objectives by combining a broad array of residential uses, offices, retail and services, institutions, entertainment, recreation and cultural activities, and parks and open spaces.

Apartment Neighbourhoods are made up of apartment buildings and parks, local institutions, cultural and recreational facilities, and small-scale retail, service and office uses that serve the needs of area residents. In these established Apartment Neighbourhoods, improving amenities, accommodating sensitive infill, where it can improve the quality of life and promoting environmental sustainability are key considerations.

Section 3.1.1 of the Official Plan also provides directions on the importance of the public realm to building a successful City. Section 2.2.4 and 3.4 of the Official Plan also provide directions on integrating land use planning with the public realm along with ensuring the natural environment, including tree planting supports the public realm. Section 3.5.3 of the Official Plan also provides directions respecting retail along *Avenues* and in *Mixed Use Areas* with access to transit to support the local economy.

Policy 5.3.2.1 in the Official Plan identifies that "Implementation plans, strategies and guidelines will be adopted to advance the vision, objectives and policies of this Plan."

The Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines advance the vision, objectives and policies of the Official Plan and support development in the Eglinton GO PMTSA.

The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/Citygovernment/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>.

Zoning: A majority of the study area is subject to the City of Toronto Zoning By-law No. 569-2013, some properties are subject to the Former City of Scarborough Eglinton Community By-law No. 10048 and the Former City of Scarborough Employment Districts By-law No. 24982 (Knob Hill).

Along Eglinton Avenue East, the areas subject to By-law 569-2013 are zoned Commercial Residential (CR) with various density permissions. Most of the area zoned CR has a height limit of 11 metres with the exception being the Eglinton GO Station site which has a height limit of 77 metres which was granted by a previous approval.

The CR zone permits a variety of uses including Art Gallery, Artist Studio, Automated Banking Machine, Community Centre, Courts of Law, Education Use, Financial Institution, Fire Hall, Library, Automobile Sales, Service and Maintenance Uses, Funeral Homes, Fraternal Organizations, Hotels and Motels, Place(s) of Worship, Retail Uses and Professional and Business Offices. While the CR zone can permit residential uses (dwelling units in apartment buildings, mixed use buildings and townhouses) in this

area the CR zoning does not permit residential uses as shown by the numerical value or zero density for residential uses in the zoning standards.

North of the properties fronting on Eglinton Avenue East there are properties that are zoned Residential Apartment (RA) which permits dwelling units in apartment buildings, parks, emergency services uses and various non-residential uses subject to conditions. The RA zone applies to the properties where there are existing apartment buildings.

There are also properties zoned Residential Multiple (RM) which permits dwellings units in a detached house, semi-detached house, duplex, triplex, fourplex and apartment building and other non-residential uses subject to conditions.

There are lands south of Eglinton Avenue East that are subject to the Scarborough Employment District By-law No. 24982 (Knob Hill Employment District Bylaw), as amended, and are zoned Industrial Commercial Zone (MC). The MC zone permits a range of industrial uses, including day and garden nurseries, furniture warehouses and places of worship.

There are also lands on the north side of Eglinton Avenue East that are subject to the Eglinton Community Zoning By-law No. 10048, as amended, and zoned Highway Commercial, which permits day nurseries and “highway commercial”, but does not permit residential uses. Highway Commercial uses are defined as commercial uses which necessitate a location adjacent to a major traffic arterial and do not require large areas for sustained off-street parking or those which are not suited to locations in shopping centres.

Design Guidelines

The following existing design guidelines were considered when developing the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines:

- Tall Building Guidelines
- Mid-rise Performance Standards
- Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines
- Complete Streets Guidelines
- Streetscape Manual
- Toronto Green Standards
- Green Infrastructure Standards
- Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities
- Pet Friendly Design Guidelines and Best Practices for New Multi-unit Buildings
- Retail Design Manual
- Percent for Public Art Program Guidelines

The Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines are not intended to repeat the guidelines and standards from other existing city-wide urban design guidelines; they are intended to supplement those guidelines with a localized perspective to achieve the vision set out in the guidelines.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A Virtual Community Consultation meeting to discuss the Study was held on March 20, 2024. Presentations were made by staff. Approximately 18 people participated, as well as the Ward 20 Councillor and Staff from the Ward 21 Councillor's office. Residents provided comments related to the following concerns:

- Timing and phasing of development in the area
- Existing and future traffic
- Street dimensions
- Tower podium heights
- Emergency services
- Construction Impacts

A Study website was created with the contact information for City Staff. The presentation slides and a recording of the presentation were made available for members of the public upon request. At the time of writing this report, the presentation material and recording were provided to 4 residents that requested the materials.

A second meeting was hosted by the Ward 20 Councillor's in a hybrid virtual/in-person format on April 2nd 2024. There were approximately 20 people in attendance in-person and 6 people attending online.

Local landowners and Metrolinx also provided email comments on the urban design guidelines and their comments were considered in the development of the finalized guidelines.

COMMENTS

Vision

The vision for the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines is to assist in the creation of a connected and sustainable community along a vibrant commercial main street anchored by the Eglinton GO Station and the Eglinton East Light Rail Transit (EELRT). The Guidelines seek a diversity of building types that will frame and support an attractive, green, and memorable public realm.

Development in the Study Area will support this vision by creating an integrated and enhanced public realm, contributing to creating a vibrant commercial main street with enhanced connectivity, supporting retail, commercial, community and other non-residential uses. The guidelines will look for development to protect for spaces at grade that will allow for the preservation of existing trees and the planting of new trees while establishing a desire for a mix of building types and looking to achieve improved sustainability and accessibility through design.

Public Realm

The public realm section of the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines provides guidance on matters such as the character of Eglinton Avenue East and local streets, new public streets and lanes, new parks and open spaces, mid-block connections, cycling and public art.

The goal of the Guidelines that apply to Eglinton Avenue East is to transform the street into a safe, green and vibrant commercial main street supported by transit infrastructure and non-residential uses at-grade. The goals for the local streets are to enhance the existing streetscape character by maintaining existing healthy trees and increasing tree planting, while providing appropriate built form that will preserve sunlight on sidewalks.

When new public streets and lanes are needed to service and provide access to development, they will be designed to maintain a safe, vibrant, attractive, sustainable and comfortable pedestrian and cycling environment in the study area. Specific guidance is provided on street elements, tree planting and setbacks.

A network of parks is suggested in the Guidelines to serve as community focal points and connect to the larger park system beyond the Study Area. Some of these park locations are already proposed through development applications in the Study Area while others are potential locations to be secured through future development. Further guidance on building placements and the relationship to adjacent parks is provided in the guidelines.

To enhance connectivity for all modes, mid-block pedestrian connections and cycling connections are contemplated throughout the Study Area. A multi-use trail is envisioned within the buffer zone along the north side of the rail tracks.

Public art installations are recommended to foster community identity and pride, contribute to a sense of place and belonging, and celebrate the rich cultures of people from diverse backgrounds in the area.

Non-Residential Uses

To support the vision for the study area as a vibrant commercial main street supported by transit, the Urban Design Guidelines include direction on the design of non-residential spaces to support the existing cultural character and future tenants of non-residential spaces in the area. Key considerations include providing opportunities through the design of new spaces so that existing uses could return or similar locally focused uses could occupy future non-residential spaces secured through redevelopment. This includes guidance on providing , high visibility and attractive frontages that will support successful local retail along with considerations for existing and future large format retail uses to be incorporated into future redevelopment.

Built Form

The built form guidelines includes direction on building types and heights, setbacks, step backs, separation distances, green space and amenity space, base buildings and

vehicular access and parking areas, implementing policy directions of the Official Plan. Some of the key considerations include, locating the tallest buildings on and nearest to the Eglinton GO station site and future EELRT stop. These aspirations will support the use of transit, optimizing the public investment in transit infrastructure while also providing guidelines on transitioning in height to the areas further from the GO station. The Guidelines provide for setbacks and step backs that are reflective of the existing and planned context, for sunlight on the public realm and transition to *Neighbourhood* areas, seek a mix of building types, and encourage setbacks that support the public realm vision. Specifically, the Guidelines look to create strong street wall and base building conditions along Eglinton Avenue East with, building separation distances and height guidance meant to protect for sunlight, skyview and privacy. Required setbacks from the GO Rail Corridor provide an opportunity to establish a multi-use trail that can be addressed and implemented as part of any redevelopment of such adjacent lands adjacent to the rail line.

Sustainability and Climate Resilience

The guidelines stress the importance of building and public realm design supporting sustainability and climate resilience. The strategies employed in the guidelines include, preserving mature trees and maximizing tree planting and landscaping opportunities, setbacks to allow for soil volume and tree planting, optimizing green infrastructure and energy performance and design to respond to climate change.

Design Excellence

The guidelines promote design excellence for both buildings and the public realm through the design of buildings and landscaping, public art, and materials.

Demonstration Concept

A Demonstration Concept was developed to illustrate how the area could develop using the Urban Design Guidelines vision (See Attachment 2). The Demonstration Concept shows public realm elements such as the GO Station, the widened Eglinton Avenue East with future EELRT stops, new public streets and parks, pedestrian and cycling connections, along with a mix of tall buildings and mid-rise buildings and the existing low-rise buildings in the *Apartment Neighbourhoods*. The Demonstration Concept does not show conceptual development on the Eglinton GO Station lands (including and GO Station site and the two parking lots as those areas will be subject to further study).

Conclusion

City Planning staff have reviewed the existing context and character in the Eglinton GO Area and evaluated the emerging intensification trends to develop the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines. The Guidelines build upon the area's strengths and seize on the opportunities provided by the planned intensification anchored by existing and new transit infrastructure. The recommended Urban Design Guidelines seek to achieve the vision of a retail and commercial main street supported by transit, public realm improvements and diverse built form that supports intensification around the Eglinton

GO station and the future interchange with the Eglinton East LRT providing appropriate transition in scale to other areas of the study area.

The Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines conform to and is consistent with relevant provincial and municipal policies. The Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines, as with other City guidelines, expresses Council policy and "advances the vision, objectives and policies of [the] Plan" as per Policy 5.3.2.1., although they are not part of the Official Plan and do not have the status of Official Plan policy under the *Planning Act*. In developing these guidelines as provided for by this Official Plan direction, the recommended Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines, as with other guiding documents, assist in evaluating development applications. The Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines provide guidance on priorities and important future public realm enhancements as the Eglinton GO area continues to grow and may assist and inform future work updating the planning framework through policy or zoning initiatives advanced within the PMTSA. Utilization of these Guidelines will ensure that an improved, enlarged and connected public realm will be secured over time to serve the growing population supported by investments in local and regional transit systems.

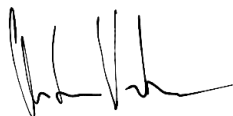
City Planning staff recommend that the Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines be adopted by Council and that City staff are directed to utilize the guidelines to review current and future development applications within the study area.

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SIGNATURES



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ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Drawings

Attachment 1: Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines

Attachment 2: Demonstration Concept

Attachment 1: Eglinton GO Area Urban Design Guidelines

(Attached as a PDF)

