

Laird in Focus Planning Study – Community Engagement Launch

Wednesday, November 30th, 2016

4:00 – 8:00 p.m. (Open House)

5:00, 6:00, 7:00 p.m. (Presentations)

Leaside United Church, 822 Millwood Road – Church Gymnasium

SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting Overview

On November 30th, 2016 approximately 80 people participated in the Community Engagement Launch for the Laird in Focus Planning Study.

The meeting was set up in the form of an open house with approximately 30 information and activity boards. Staff from Community Planning, Urban Design, Transportation Planning, Transportation Services, Economic Development, the Toronto Transit Commission and Metrolinx were stationed at the boards to speak with participants and to record feedback. Councillor Burnside and his staff also attended the Community Engagement launch to receive feedback from the participants. John Andreevski, Senior Planner, Community Planning, together with Ron Palmer, lead consultant for the study and Principle, The Planning Partnership, gave an overview presentation of the study process repeated on the hour at 5:00, 6:00 and 7:00 p.m.



Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Laird in Focus Planning Study and to gather feedback to inform the study process, key themes, and content.

This summary report was written by City Planning staff of the City of Toronto. It summarizes the feedback received and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript. Summaries of the feedback received at each of the information and activity boards follows in the body of this report.

Meeting Background

At the community engagement launch, background material was presented to the public for feedback. The key themes covered by the background material presented include:

- Study Process
- Area Statistics
- Land Uses
- Community Services and Facilities
- Public Realm
- Built Form
- Land Use
- Transportation (including transit)
- Community Services
- Engagement Tools

A total of eight activity boards were developed to allow participants to indicate their preferences and provide feedback on the study process. The activity boards sought input on streetscape design, building design, transportation infrastructure, mobility choices, and public engagement tools.

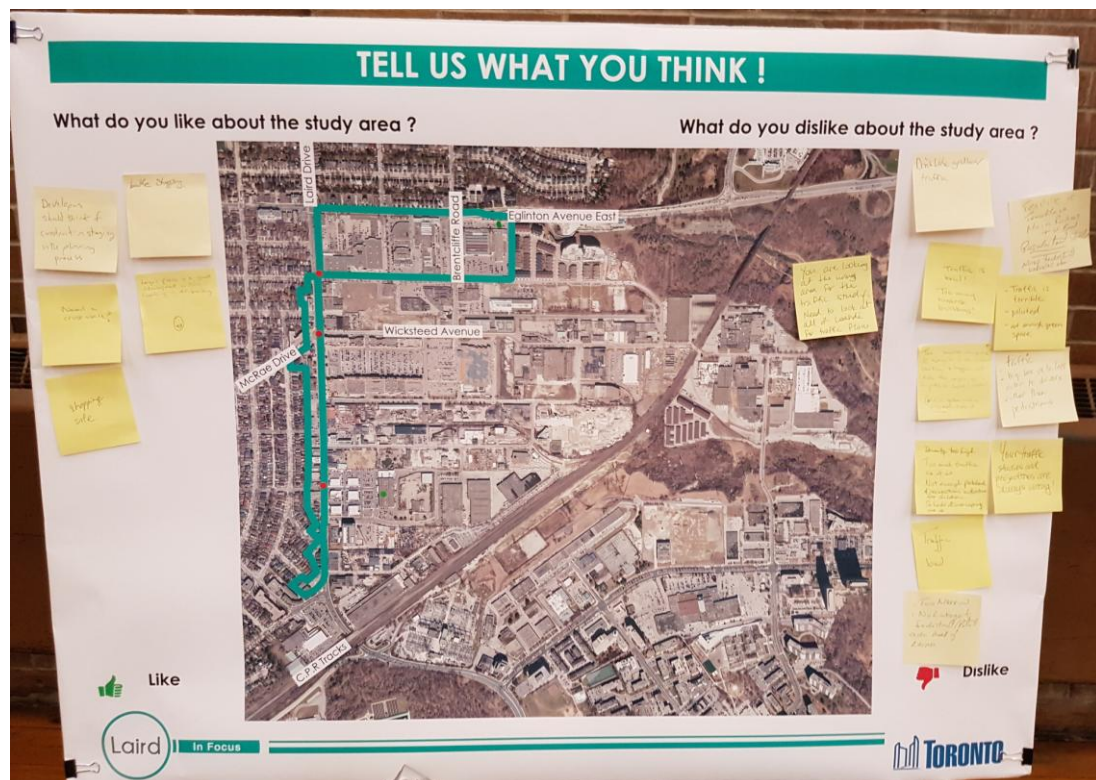


FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The following feedback was provided by participants during the Open House portion of the meeting at the information and activity boards.

Study Process

- Generally, participants liked that the study has started and that it will provide a framework for developing the lands in the study area.
- Some participants expressed concern that the study was not started earlier.
- Several participants did not agree with the boundaries of the transportation study area. Some participants commented that the transportation study area identified is not large enough, others disagreed with the southern boundary location along the railroad.
- Some participants raised concerns with the accuracy of traffic studies and data that may be used to inform the study.
- Participants were interested in the activity boards and were eager to engage with the study further.
- Some participants commented that they were interested in gaining a better understanding of how development applications currently under review and the Laird in Focus Study would inform one another moving forward.



Community Services and Facilities

- Most participants commented that they actively use the community services and facilities located in the area.
- Several participants commented that they would like a larger community centre that could accommodate programming and activities for Leaside residents of all demographics, including: pools, ice pads, and exercise spaces.
- Several participants commented that the schools in the area are at capacity and they are concerned that new development will contribute to overcrowding in schools.
- Many participants commented that there is not enough parkland or green space in the study area or in Leaside, particularly north of Eglinton Avenue.
- Several participants expressed an interest in improving and upgrading existing park facilities.
- Some participants commented that they would like to see improved child care and seniors care facilities.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Help us learn about CS&F in the area ?

STEP 1

- What CS&F do you use in this area?
- Which services and facilities work well? Where can they be improved?
- What, if any, additional CS&F are needed in this neighbourhood?

STEP 2

- Grab a sticky note and write down why you use it or why it should be improved.

STEP 3

- Put it up on the map! If your comment applies to the area in general, please put it in the box:

Look at CS&F as part of this study ?

The CS&F component of this Study will review the services and facilities currently serving the area and examine the particular needs of the community, now and in the future, to determine what services and facilities are needed to support a growing population.

Laird In Focus **TORONTO**

Public Realm

- Most participants like urban streets with active storefronts.
- Most participants like landscaped streets with street trees and generous landscaped setbacks.
- Participants like urban parks for places to gather.
- Participants like parks with playground facilities.
- Participants like landscaped midblock connections.
- Several participants would like to see additional connections and linkages created throughout the study area as well as from the study area to broader areas.

Built Form

- Many participants expressed a preference for a mid rise built form.
- Participants generally do not like tall buildings, are concerned with visual impact and density impact on the local community including infrastructure, traffic and schools.
- Several participants like landscaped courtyards between mid rise buildings.
- Some participants like taller building elements when combined with a mid rise podium.
- Participants both like and do not like townhouses.
- Some participants have difficulty identifying their community as either 'suburban' or 'urban'.

Transportation

- Several participants expressed an interest in expanding the cycling network both within and to/from the study area.
- Most participants dislike the amount of traffic congestion and gridlock in the study area, particularly on Brentcliffe Road, McRae Drive, Laird Drive, Southvale Avenue and Glenvale Avenue.
- Several participants commented that they are concerned that new development will result in more vehicle traffic congestion.
- Some participants suggested a need for a wider transportation influence area to include the entire Leaside community.
- Participants suggested that future development should consider existing big box retailers and their associated vehicle uses.

- Some participants commented on their interest in pursuing the Redway Road Extension.
- Several participants support current retail uses and locations; however, they expressed that the locations are not accessible on foot due to the poor pedestrian environment.
- Some participants do not like the number of new streets shown in the Eglinton Connects demonstration plan.
- Some participants would like to see improved transit priority on main bus routes based on the time of day to allow buses to bypass queued vehicle lineups.
- The majority of the participants have a strong preference for street design that supports narrow streets and low vehicular speed. Some participants suggest this should be reviewed based on the type of streets, where a wider street is preferred to accommodate separated cycling lanes.



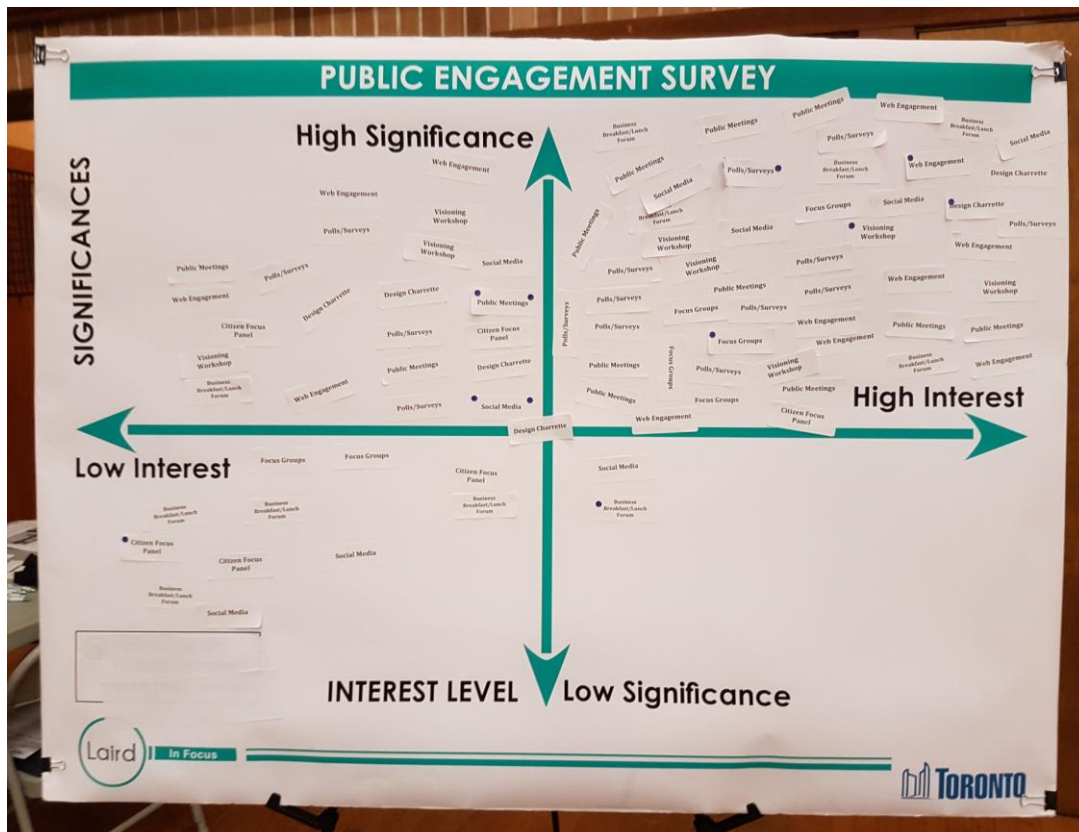
- Most participants indicated walking, cycling and transit as their preferred mobility choices in an urban environment
- Most participants would like sidewalks to be more visible, wider, and greener.
- Most participants support better street design, preferences for landscaped

medians for wide streets, green traffic calming, and green bump outs with multi purpose parking.

- Some participants dislike the existing median on Laird Drive as they are concerned that it contributes to congestion and an unsafe environment.
- Some participants expressed curiosity about alternative mobility options (including autonomous vehicles) and their impact on existing traffic conditions.
- Several participants expressed an interest in the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, including the current status of construction, where the lines will run, and where the lines will transition between underground and aboveground. Concerns were also expressed with respect to the long-term staging plans for the Crosstown and its impact on pedestrian movements in the area.
- Several participants raised concerns with existing traffic infiltration and potential impacts of the Crosstown and proposed new developments on traffic entering the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Engagement

- In general, participants enjoyed the diverse selection of engagement tools (Public Meetings, Focus Groups, Visioning Workshop, Social Media, Web Engagement, Business Breakfast/Lunch Forum, Polls/Surveys, and Citizen Focus Panels).



- Some participants expressed concern that businesses may not have significant engagement in the process. Feeling that there is a significant focus on transportation and built form issues but little connection to how the study will benefit the business park or how the business park will be impacted by development at Laird and Eglinton.

Other Feedback

- Several participants expressed an interest in the history of the study area and of Leaside. Participants made reference to several heritage buildings located in the area, including the Longos building located to the east of Study Area B.
- Several participants expressed concern that the outcomes of the study will be altered by decisions made by the Ontario Municipal Board.
- Some participants dislike the amount of noise and pollution generated by truck traffic within the study area.
- Some participants raised concerns with the capacity of existing infrastructure in the area, especially storm water capacity.
- One business representative expressed an interest in development at Laird and Eglinton providing opportunities for the expansion of nearby businesses.



WRITTEN FEEDBACK

During the meeting, some participants provided written feedback in the form of comment sheets that were provided at the sign-in tables. The following summarizes the written feedback received at the meeting on November 30, 2016.

Study Process

- Disappointment expressed that the study for the Laird Focus Area did not start sooner, prior to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications submitted for the lands at 939 Eglinton Avenue East.

Transportation

- Concern that the Transportation Study Area identified is deficient.
- Interest in providing space for cyclists and pedestrians within the study area by relocating parking below grade.
- Interest in providing more greenspace in the study area.
- Concern with existing traffic congestion and gridlock, particularly at the intersection of Brentcliffe Road and Vanderhoof Avenue.
- Concern that traffic will increase as a result of future development.