

Highland Creek Village

**Urban Design
Guidelines
and Concept Plan**

**City of Toronto
October 2012**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Highland Creek Village

Highland Creek Village is located in south-east Scarborough and includes all properties fronting Military Trail to the west, Old Kingston Road to the north, Kingston Road to the east, and Highway 2A to the south. The Village consists of five blocks and is about 9.5 hectares in size. It is a key entryway to the City of Toronto.

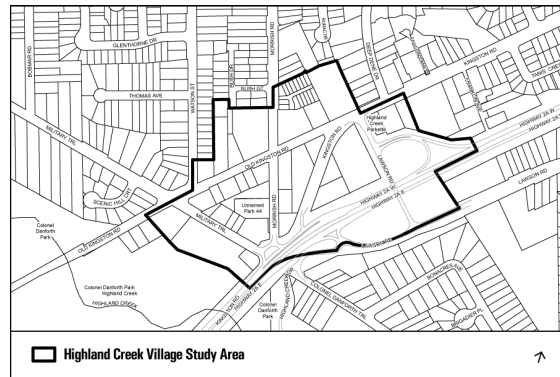
The Village was one of the first neighbourhoods established in Scarborough. It was developed shortly after Scarborough was first surveyed in 1793. In 1850, Scarborough Township was incorporated and had a total population of 3,820; 250 of those residents called Highland Creek Village home. By 1885, Highland Creek was the largest commercial centre in all of Scarborough with 600 inhabitants and it contained several churches, a blacksmith, a grist mill, saw mills and a number of other businesses.

Situated at the eastern entrance to Scarborough, the Village became an important destination for coaches between Kingston and Toronto. As such, numerous roads were constructed at this destination. Military Trail is a remnant of the first highway to be built in Scarborough in 1799 by Asa Danforth. It ran from King Street, at the Don River, through to Port Union. The original route can be traced today along Danforth Road, Painted Post, Military Trail and Colonel Danforth Road. A second highway, Kingston Road, originally named Front Road was built in 1801 and ran from Markham Road through the valley and the Village.

In the early 1800's the Village became identified as a distinct settlement. Some of the early pioneers in the area included: Issac Secor, John Closson whose son operated a sawmill on Highland Creek; James and John Richardson who settled in the Village in 1806; Samuel Heron whose name is commemorated by Heron Park, and Jordon Post who built a sawmill and general store after arriving in 1834.



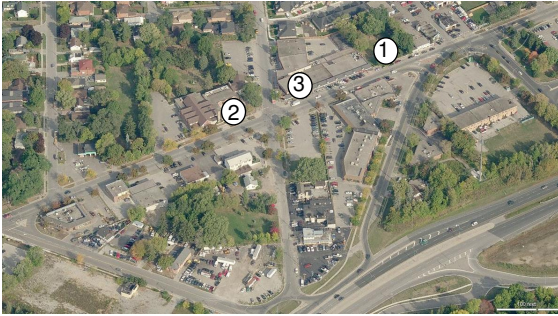
Context: City of Toronto



Highland Creek Village Study Area as shown above is generally referred to as "the Village" in this document



Highland Creek



Landmarks in the Village

William Helliwell built a grist mill in the valley around 1850 and John Morrish who arrived in 1855 built a store at Meadowvale Road and Kingston Road, which today remains very much as originally built.

There are a number of historic landmarks within the Village along Old Kingston Road. They are:

- 1) The Old Methodist Cemetery which dates back to the early 1800's.
- 2) St. Joseph Church was built in 1854 and rebuilt in 1964. It is the second oldest Catholic Church in Scarborough.
- 3) In 1924, W.D. Morrish constructed a store at the corner of Morrish Road and Old Kingston Road.



Morrish Plaza located at Old Kingston Road and Morrish Road

Today there is a mix of commercial, residential and institutional uses in the Village. The most predominant businesses in the area are automobile related uses and food and retail/service facilities. Due to a lack of investment in the neighbourhood, there are numerous vacant and underdeveloped lots, areas of deterioration, and few public amenities.

With its unique location, character, and its underutilized public and private lands, the Village has the potential to be revitalized and become a vibrant community again. Over the years, several initiatives have been undertaken by the City in consultation with the community. The Highland Creek Village Secondary Plan designated the majority of the Village as Mixed Use Areas in the Official Plan to allow for a variety of uses and to encourage consolidation of lands and co-ordinated developments. Several transportation studies were conducted to review transportation improvements in the area. In 2002, the Highland Creek Village Urban Design Guidelines (the original version of this document) were developed.



St. Joseph Church

1.2 Highland Creek Village Study

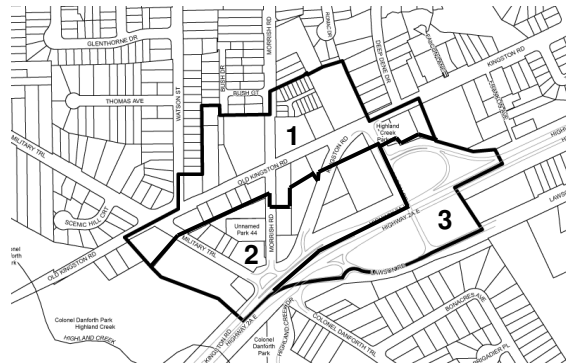
In 2011 and 2012, the City conducted the Highland Creek Village Area Study to establish a comprehensive vision and implementation strategy for the Village. It is envisioned that, over time, the Village will become:

" a vibrant, mixed-use, community-focused, pedestrian-friendly destination, where attractive building design references the area's heritage, respects the Village character and the surrounding established neighbourhoods, and attracts new businesses and residents to live and work in the community." (Highland Creek Village Area Study Staff Report, 2012)

The Village will consist of three general areas: the Main Street, South Village, and East Village.

Twelve key urban design objectives were established through the Study:

- 1) Maintain the historic character of the Village by encouraging improvements to the existing historic landmarks in the Village, and by promoting compatible developments;
- 2) Create a vibrant Main Street by enhancing the traditional main street character along Old Kingston Road;
- 3) Transform the City owned open space on Morrish Road to create a focal point for the Village and a central gathering place for the residents;
- 4) Create the South Village, mostly a green residential area, behind the Main Street, centred on the Village Green, and with access and views towards the Highland Creek Ravine, and the Highland Creek (Lawson Road) Parkette;
- 5) Provide general directions on the future mid-rise developments in the East Village;
- 6) Create pedestrian friendly streetscapes;



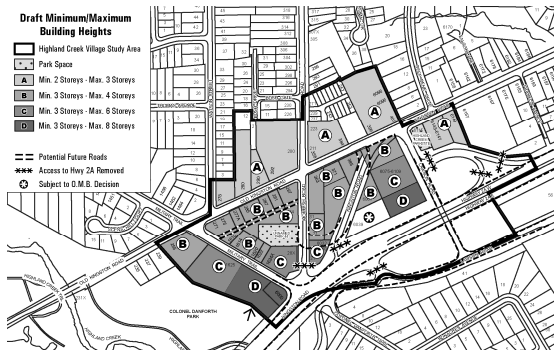
The three areas of the Village:
1-Main Street; 2-South Village; 3-East Village



Maintaining and enhancing the historic character of the Village is an important part of the Vision for the Village



Streetscapes along the streets in the Village are in deteriorating conditions. Significant streetscape improvements are needed.



Transition in heights through the Village promotes a gradual change of scale in the Village (See large map attached to the Highland Creek Village Area Study Staff Report)



Highland Creek Village today



Concept Plan for the Village showing potential future initiatives and developments (See larger drawing on Page 18)

- 7) Recommend public art installations that reflect the Village's history and identify potential public art locations;
- 8) Establish a well connected pedestrian network throughout the Village;
- 9) Promote extensive landscaping in private developments;
- 10) Establish maximum building heights based on the existing built heritage and the character of the local streets, and create a gradual transition in heights from the Main Street to the edges of the Village;
- 11) Promote pedestrian friendly developments through measures such as step backs, adequate building separation distances, side yard setbacks, and multiple individual entrances at grade where appropriate; and
- 12) Promote high quality of design; In particular, recommend building exterior materials that reflect the Village's built heritage.

1.3 Highland Creek Village Urban Design Guidelines and Concept Plan

The Highland Creek Village Urban Design Guidelines and Concept Plan are developed as part of the implementation strategy for the Highland Creek Village Study to provide design guidance on future public and private initiatives. Key considerations in the 2002 Highland Creek Village Urban Design Guidelines have been incorporated into the guidelines in this document.

The guidelines are covered in three sections: Public Realm Guidelines; General Site Development Guidelines; and Area Specific Guidelines for the three areas of the Village. A Concept Plan is included at the end of the document.

The Guidelines and the Concept Plan should be read in conjunction with the Highland Creek Village Study Staff Report, the Highland Creek Village Secondary Plan, as well as the City of Toronto Official Plan.

2.0 PUBLIC REALM GUIDELINES

Public realm guidelines provide guidance on the planning and design of the public spaces and features in the Village, including:

- The Village Green;
- The Lawson Road Parkette;
- Streetscape; and
- Potential public art installations.

2.1 The Village Green

- The City owned open space located on Morrish Road should be transformed into a park, the Village Green, a focal point and gathering place for the community.
- The Village Green should be connected to Old Kingston Road and Military Trail through landscaped mid-block connections.
- The Village Green should be framed and supported by adjacent developments to promote activities and safety in the area (See additional guidelines on Page 16, Section 4.2 South Village).
- Due to the irregular shape of the property north of the Village Green, reconfiguration of the northern property line of the Village Green may be considered to create a more developable parcel. Should the reconfiguration be considered, the frontage (width) of the park along Morrish Road shall be maintained or increased, and the area of the park should be no less than 90% of its original size.
- Amenities such as benches, lighting, pathways, children's playground, landscaping, etc., should be installed.
- A public art feature reflecting the Village's history should be considered.

2.2 The Highland Creek (Lawson Road) Parkette

- The Lawson Road Parkette should be maintained and improved where possible.



The City owned open space on Morrish Road is currently an underutilized open space with no formal park designation and programming



The City owned open space on Morrish Road has the potential to be transformed into the Highland Creek Village Green, a focal point and gathering place for the community



A public art feature can be installed at the entrance or the centre of the Village Green

2.3 Streetscape

There are six streets in the Village, including

- Old Kingston Road
- Military Trail
- Morrish Road
- Kingston Road
- Lawson Road
- Highway 2A (Kingston Road)

Streetscapes along the existing streets are in various degrees of deterioration. They do not provide for a comfortable pedestrian environment and are not adequate to support the Vision for the Village established through the Highland Creek Village Study. Opportunities for significant streetscape improvements should be explored through both public and private initiatives.

Key urban design objectives and guidelines for streetscape design are outlined in the following sections. Preliminary cross sections are also included. They will provide general guidance on the streetscape improvements in the Village, and will also inform the future Environmental Assessment Study.

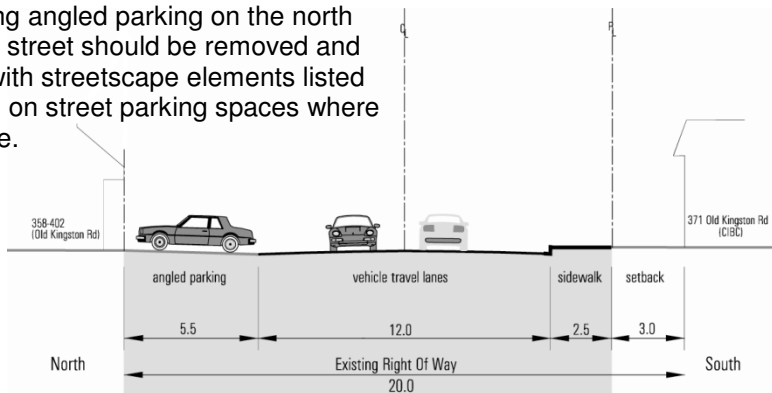
The City's Streetscape Manual should be updated to reflect the directions of these streetscape design guidelines.

2.3.1 Old Kingston Road Streetscape

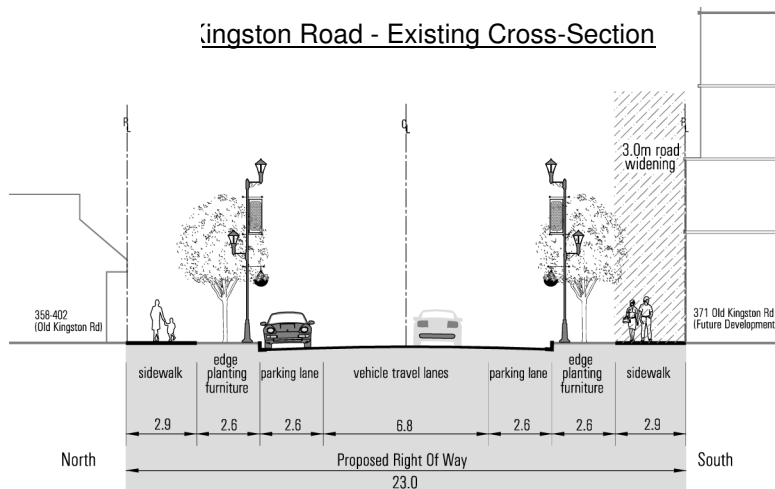
- Old Kingston Road should be designed as a "Main Street" ("Emerging Main Street"), as defined by the City's Streetscape Manual, to support the street's function as the key commercial street of the Village.
- Streetscape design should include elements such as sidewalk, street trees, decorative paving, decorative lighting, and street furniture.
- The existing 20m Right-of-Way should be increased to 23m by acquiring a 3.0m road widening on the south side of Old Kingston Road where necessary. This will allow for a 5.5m min. distance from the road curbs to the street lines on both sides of the street to accommodate the streetscape elements.
- The existing angled parking on the north side of the street should be removed and replaced with streetscape elements listed above and on street parking spaces where appropriate.



Old Kingston Road looking east



Kingston Road - Existing Cross-Section



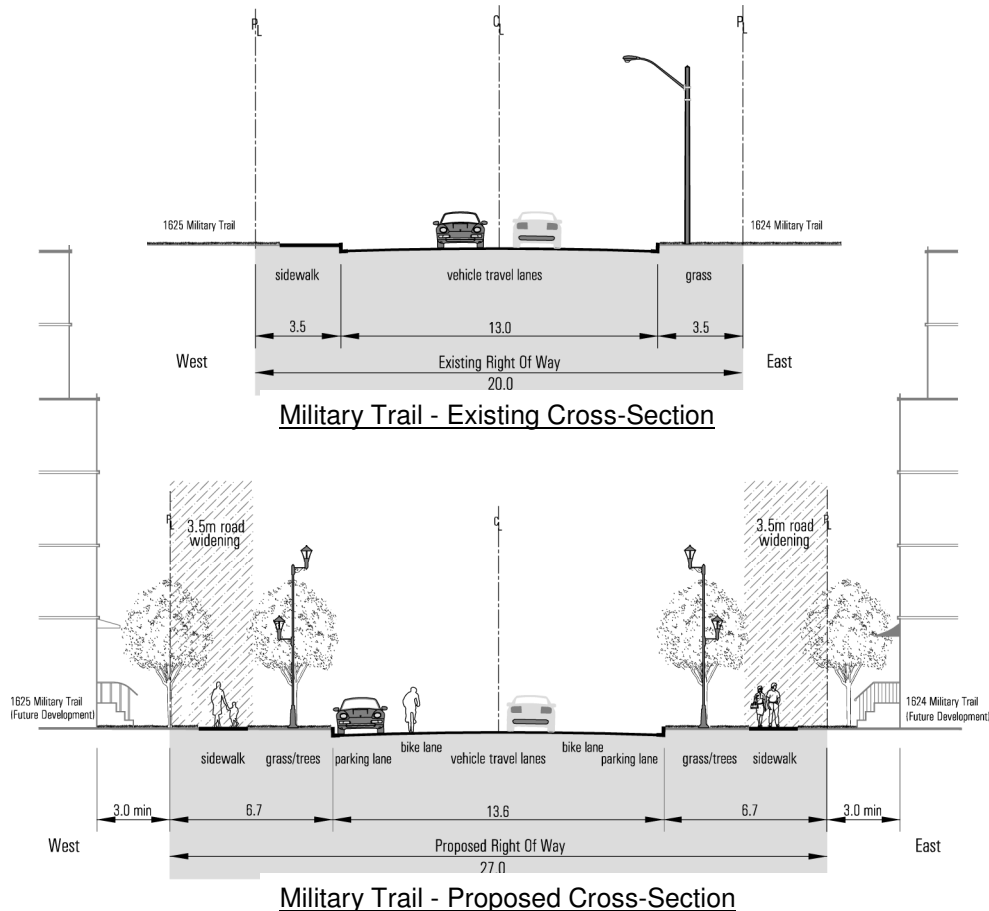
Kingston Road - Proposed Cross-section



Military Trail looking north

2.3.2 Military Trail Streetscape

- Military Trail should be designed as a "Green Street" ("Intermediate Street") as defined by the Streetscape Manual, to support the street's function as mostly a residential street.
- Streetscape design should include elements such as sidewalk, street trees in sod, and decorative lighting. A double row of trees along the sidewalks should be achieved where possible.
- The existing 20m Right-of-Way should be increased to 27m as required by the Official Plan. A 3.5m road widening is required on each side.

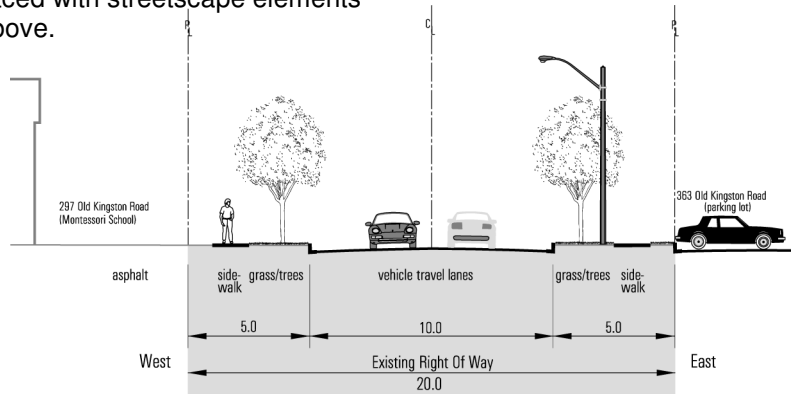


2.3.3 Morrish Road Streetscape

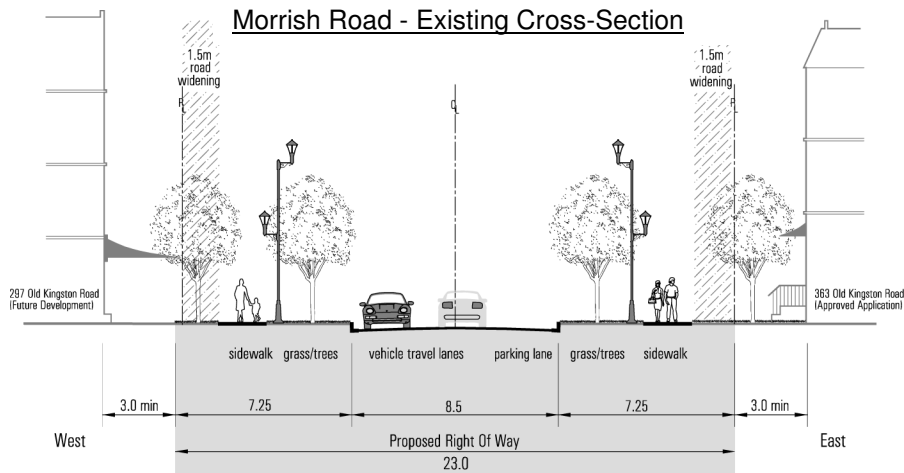
- Morrish Road should be designed as a "Green Street" ("Intermediate Street") as defined by the Streetscape Manual, to support the street's function as mostly a residential street.
- Streetscape design should include elements such as sidewalk, street trees in sod, and decorative lighting. A double row of trees along the sidewalks should be achieved where possible.
- The existing 20m Right-of-Way should be increased to 23m as required by the Official Plan. A 1.5m road widening should be provided on each side.
- The parking along the west side of the street north of Old Kingston Road should be replaced with streetscape elements listed above.



Morrish Road looking north



Morrish Road - Existing Cross-Section



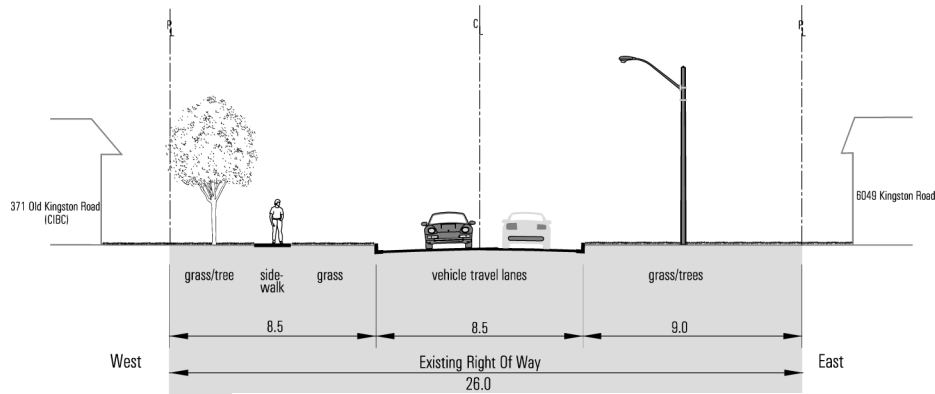
Morrish Road - Proposed Cross-Section



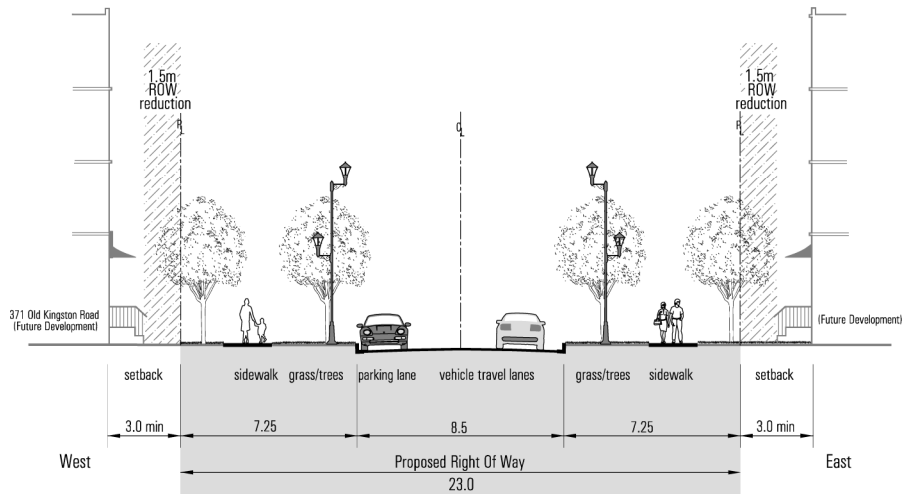
Kingston Road looking north

2.3.4 Kingston Road Streetscape

- Kingston Road should be designed as a "Green Street" ("Intermediate Street") as defined by the Streetscape Manual, to support the street's function as mostly a residential street.
- Streetscape design should include elements such as sidewalk, street trees in sod, and decorative lighting. A double row of trees along the sidewalks should be achieved where possible.
- A reduced Right-of-Way of 23m (from the existing 26m) should be considered to create a more pedestrian friendly streetscape.



Kingston Road - Existing Cross-Section



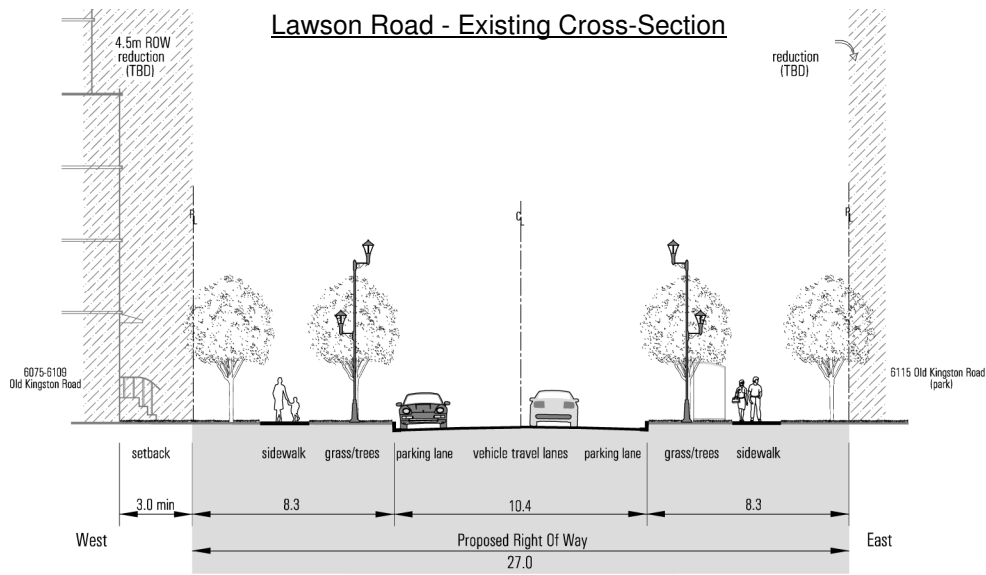
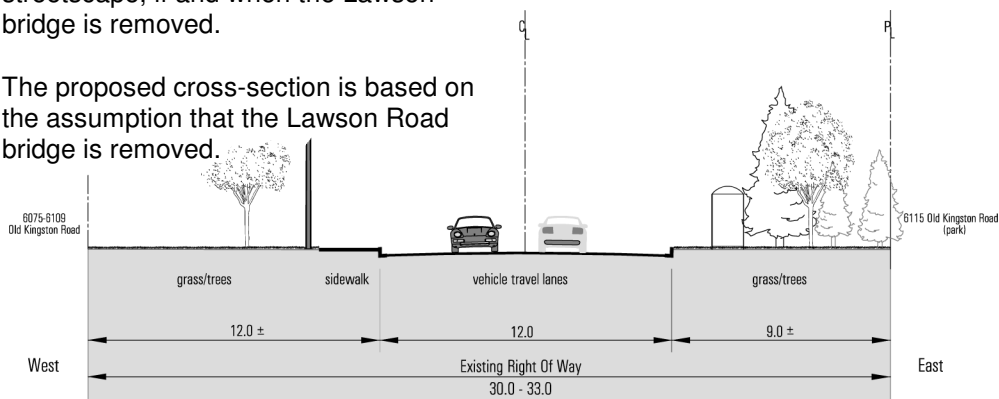
Kingston Road - Proposed Cross-Section

2.3.5 Lawson Road Streetscape

- Lawson Road should be designed as a "Green Street" ("Intermediate Street") as defined by the Streetscape Manual, to support the street's function as mostly a residential street.
- Streetscape design should include elements such as sidewalk, street trees in sod, and decorative lighting. A double row of trees along the sidewalks should be achieved where possible.
- A reduced Right-of-Way of 27m (from the existing 30-33m) should be considered to create a more pedestrian friendly streetscape, if and when the Lawson Road bridge is removed.
- The proposed cross-section is based on the assumption that the Lawson Road bridge is removed.



Lawson Road looking north



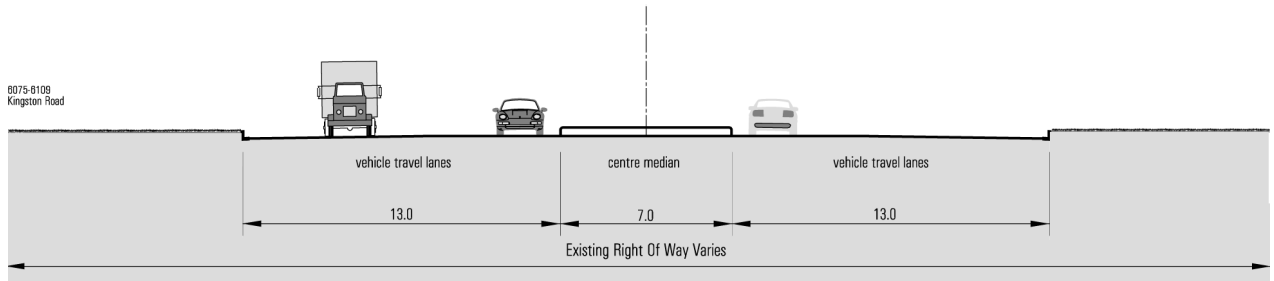
Lawson Road - Proposed Cross-Section



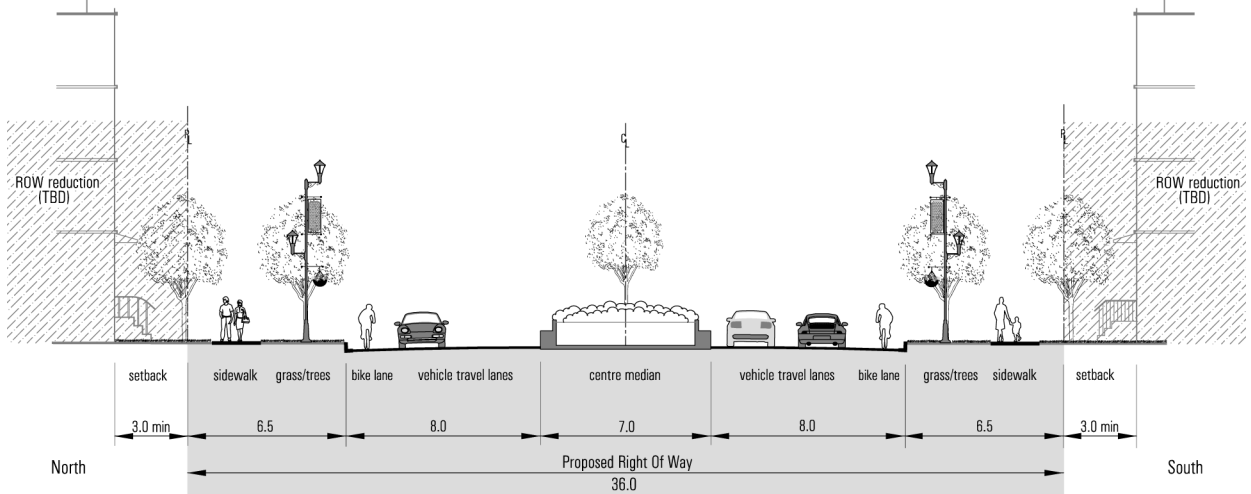
Highway 2A looking east towards the Lawson Bridge

2.3.6 Highway 2A Streetscape

- Highway 2A should be transformed from a highway to a City street.
- The street should be designed as a "Green Street" ("Intermediate Street") as defined by the Streetscape Manual, to support the street's function as mostly a residential street.
- Streetscape design should include elements such as sidewalk, street trees in sod, and decorative lighting. A double row of trees along the sidewalks should be achieved where possible.
- A reduced Right-of-Way of 36m should be considered.
- A planted centre median should be considered.



Highway 2A - Existing Cross-Section



Highway 2A - Proposed Cross-Section

2.4 Public Art

Public art installations should be considered throughout the Village at key locations, through both public and private initiatives.

- Public art installations should reflect the Village's history, generally be small in scale, and be designed as an integral part of the streetscape or landscape, with other pedestrian amenities such as street furniture, lighting, and planting.
- Public art installations can take many forms such as sculptures, murals, sidewalk inlays, and plaques.
- Potential locations for public art installations include:
 - 1) At the entrance and/or the centre of the Village Green;
 - 2) At the entrance and/or the centre of the Highland Creek (Lawson Road) Parkette;
 - 3) Along the Main Street, at the intersection of Old Kingston Road and Morrish Road, and other main street locations;
 - 4) At the north-western gateway, the intersection of Old Kingston Road and Military Trail;
 - 5) At the south-western gateway, the intersection of Highway 2A and Military Trail; and
 - 6) At the eastern gateway, the intersection of Highway 2A and Lawson Road.



Public art features can be integrated into the landscape and be designed to reflect the Village's history



Images of local landmarks such as the original Morrish Store at Ellesmere Rd. and Meadowvale Ave. can be incorporated into public art design

2.5 Street Signage

- Branded street signage that reflects the Village's history should be implemented throughout the Village.



Recommended public art locations



Double row of trees and extensive landscaping can enhance the green character of the Village



Lights with a historic character can be introduced along public streets, in parks, and on private properties



A network of public sidewalks (solid lines) and walkways on private development sites (dotted lines) will improve pedestrian connectivity in the Village

3.0 GENERAL SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

3.1 Site Organization

- Developments and their main entrances should front onto public streets and parks.
- Minimize the number of curb cuts along the streets by sharing driveways with adjacent properties.
- Parking should be located underground. Where appropriate, parking may be located at the rear of the buildings. Design of parking lots should follow the "Greening Surface Parking Lots Guidelines".

3.2 Landscaping and Lighting

- Where possible and appropriate, landscape improvements should be provided to enhance the overall quality of the landmark buildings and sites in the Village (See Page 2 for locations).
- Generous landscaping should be provided throughout development sites to promote a harmonious transition between new developments and their surroundings.
- Well landscaped and publicly accessible open spaces with pedestrian amenities should be incorporated into developments.
- Where appropriate, foundation planting is encouraged to soften the building edges, promote a pedestrian scale, and reflect the landscape character of a traditional village.
- Lights with a historic character, similar to those approved for 363 Old Kingston Road, are encouraged. All lighting fixtures should be full cut-off lights.

3.3 Pedestrian Connections

- Tree lined walkways should be provided throughout the Village to form a well connected pedestrian network to promote pedestrian activities in the Village.

4.0 AREA SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

4.1 Main Street

Old Kingston Road and developments along the street should be designed to support its function as the key commercial street of the Village with a traditional main street character.

- Buildings along the Main Street should be 2-4 storeys high.
- Mixed use developments are encouraged, with commercial uses at grade required at appropriate locations.
- A mid-block break with landscaping and pedestrian amenities is encouraged on the south side of the street between Military Trail and Morrish Road, to connect the Main Street to the Village Green.
- Buildings should be designed to create a continuous "street wall", minimizing gaps along the street, except where mid-block breaks are desired.
- Building design should respect the existing two-storey base condition. For buildings higher than two storeys a strong cornice line or setback of a minimum of 0.6m at the top of the 2nd storey should be provided.
- Regular vertical facade articulations should be provided with elements such as masonry coursing, changes in material, projecting piers, pilasters or columns.
- Horizontal articulation should be provided through elements such as projecting mouldings, intermediate cornices, changes in material, and masonry coursing.
- A minimum of 60% of the ground floor façade should be glazed.
- Traditional materials such as brick, natural stone, and wood are encouraged.
- Signage reflecting the Village's history is encouraged.



While the existing angled parking along Old Kingston Rd. provides for some convenience for local residents, the streetscape is not pedestrian friendly



Some areas along Old Kingston Road are losing the traditional main street character; The character can be re-established through future initiatives



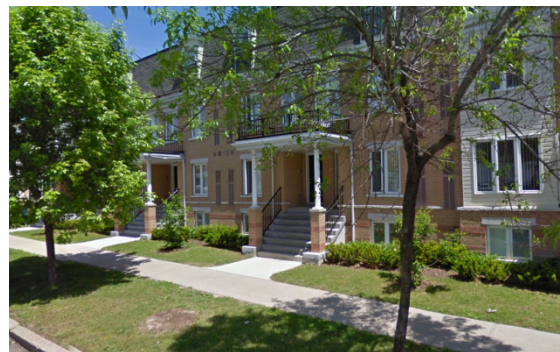
The streetscape along Old Kingston Rd. can be redesigned to include street trees, decorative lighting, benches, and a wider and more comfortable pedestrian walkway



Developments in the South Village (dashed area) will have access and views to the open spaces in the area, including the Highland Creek Ravine, the Village Green, and the Highland Creek (Lawson Road) Parkette



Architectural articulations such as step-backs and change in material are effective measures to reduce a building's scale and minimize its visual impact



Individual residential units and entrances at the base of the building promote human scale and pedestrian activities on the street

4.2 South Village

While commercial uses will be permitted, the South Village is envisioned to be mostly a green residential area behind the Main Street, centred on the Village Green, and with access and views towards the Highland Creek Ravine, as well as the Highland Creek (Lawson Road) Parkette.

- Buildings in the South Village should generally take a 4-6 storey mid-rise form, to maintain a compatible scale with the existing built heritage and the anticipated main street character along Old Kingston Road. In locations near the edges of the Village, a maximum height of 8 storeys may be considered where appropriate.
- Around the Village Green, developments should be designed to promote the pedestrian scale, usage, and safety of the park. Step backs, multiple individual entrances at grade, and walkways are encouraged along the edges of the park.
- Pedestrian connections to the Village Green from Old Kingston Road and Military Trail should be established.
- Along the Highland Creek Ravine and Military Trail, developments should promote physical and visual connections to the ravine. A minimum of two view/pedestrian corridors should be created.
- Appropriate side yard setbacks should be provided between developments to promote pedestrian connectivity and extensive landscaping.
- Developments should have prominent front entrances facing the public streets, with direct pedestrian access from the sidewalk.
- Developments should be designed with 2-4 storeys base buildings with step-backs above, to promote a pedestrian scale;

- Banding or other architectural treatments should be incorporated into the building design to add definition between storeys.
- Individual at-grade units and entrances should be provided along the streets and along the park and ravine edges.
- A proportionate solid wall to fenestration ratio should be provided; large expanses of solid wall or glazing should be avoided. Glass curtain walls should be avoided.
- Long continuous balconies should be avoided.
- Brick with warm, earth tones should be considered as the primary cladding material. Other traditional materials such as stone and wood can be incorporated into the design.

4.3 East Village

The East Village is anticipated to be an area for potential future mid-rise developments on both sides of the Highway 2A, with a focal point at the intersection of Highway 2A and Lawson Road. Developments in this area will provide additional support for activities along the Main Street and in the Village. The creation of the East Village will largely depend on the removal of the existing Lawson Bridge and the conversion of Highway 2A from a highway to a street.

- Developments in the East Village Area will take mid-rise forms similar to those in the South Village, to maintain and extend the Village character. The massing and design of the buildings should generally follow the guidelines for the South Village.
- The removal of the bridge at Highway 2A and Lawson Road should be considered to create a signalized intersection and to improve the pedestrian environment.
- Opportunities to convert Highway 2A into a 36m wide street should be explored.

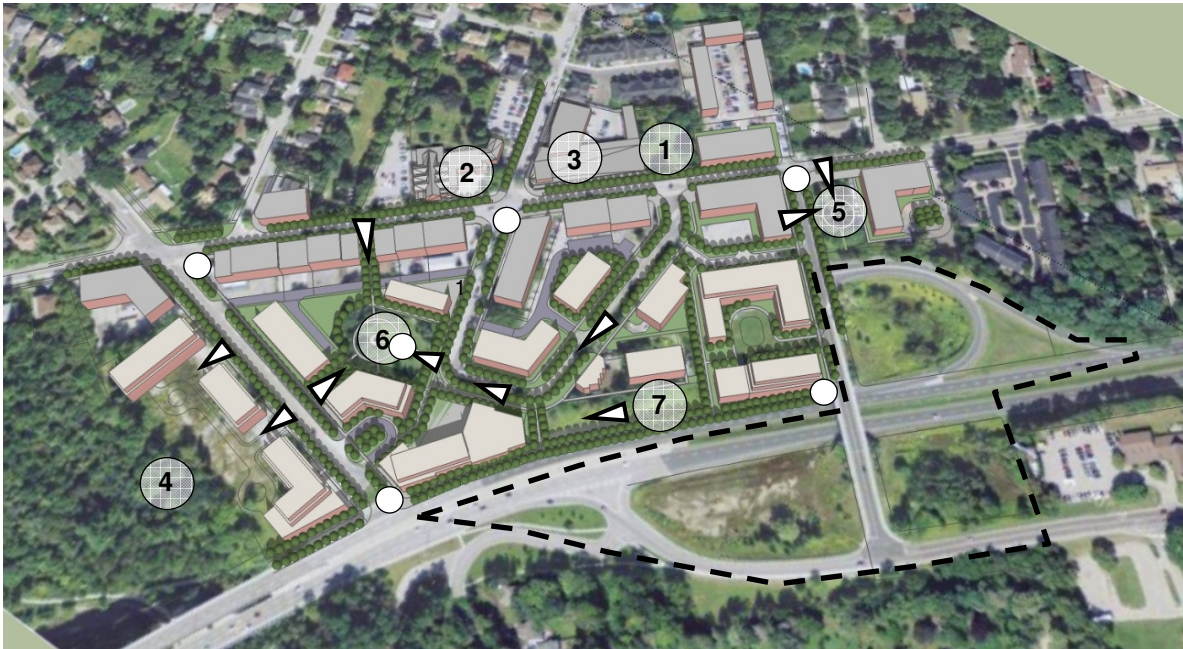














The lands owned by the City at the north-east, south-east, and south-west corners of Highway 2A and Lawson Road (dashed area) can be transformed into the East Village in the future



Potential future developments in the East Village will take mid-rise forms to maintain the Village character

5.0 HIGHLAND CREEK VILLAGE CONCEPT PLAN



- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|
|  | Main Street |  | Highland Creek (Lawson Road) Parkette |
|  | South Village |  | Highland Creek Village Green |
|  | Future East Village |  | Potential future open space along Kingston Road/Highway 2A |
|  | Methodist Cemetery |  | Recommended public art location |
|  | St. Joseph Church |  | Access and/or view to ravine/park |
|  | Morrish Plaza | | |
|  | Highland Creek Ravine | | |