

Consultation Summary

Don Mills Crossing Study Emerging Public Realm Plan Meeting and Open House

This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting, but instead provides a high level summary of participant feedback. If you have any questions after reviewing this summary and the appendix, please contact Christian Ventresca, Senior Planner, Strategic Initiatives, City of Toronto, City Planning Division at Christian.Ventresca@toronto.ca or 416-392-3439.

Event Overview

Don Mills Crossing's Meeting and Open House on the Emerging Public Realm Plan took place on two consecutive days. The first event was held on Tuesday June 27, 2017 at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre at 6 Garamond Court. The second event took place on Wednesday June 28 at the Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre at 29 St. Dennis Drive. The format was an open house with a 15 minute presentation offered every hour on the hour. Consultation materials are available online at www.toronto.ca/donmillscrossing under the "Getting Involved" tab.

The purpose of this event was to present the emerging public realm plan for the Don Mills and Eglinton area to the community for feedback and refinement to shape future work, and to continue to learn from attendees about what works and what needs improvement in the area.

City staff from the City Planning Division were present at the event to answer questions and engage with attendees about the study materials. The event consisted of an open house format with information boards on display. In addition to the open house format, a 15 minute presentation was given introducing the study, its purpose and the activities. The presentation was given at 5pm, 6 pm and 7 pm at the first event, and at 4:30, 5:30 and 6:30 on the second evening. Approximately 85 people attended this event over two days. The majority of adult attendees were between the ages of 25 and 65 and of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with approximately 15 children (ages 4 to 13) taking part in the kids' activities.



Event Promotion

This event was promoted through a number of avenues:

Mail: The meeting notice was sent out to interested parties who had previously provided their contact information requesting notification of future events.

Email: The Don Mills Crossing Study maintains a dedicated website, and the email subscribers list currently has over 250 subscribers. Two e-updates were sent

out – on June 16th and June 26th – promoting the meeting. The notice was sent to Don Mills Residents Incorporated, the Leaside Property Owner's Association, the Wynford-Concorde Residents Association, Friends of Flemington Park, and the Don Valley Planning Table with a request to circulate the notice on their websites, member lists, community boards and other networks. **Online:** The meeting was promoted through City Planning's official Twitter account.

Advertisement: Two newspaper ads (North York Mirror and East York Mirror) ran on June 22, 2017. **Aboriginal Consultation:** Letters were sent to the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, the Conseil de la Nation Huronne-Wendat, the Kawartha Nishnawbe First Nation, the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and the Metis Nation. In these letters, City staff offered to meet to provide an update on Phase 2 work completed so far and to consult directly with them on the emerging public realm plan. The letters also provided details of the June Public Realm meetings.

The Emerging Public Realm Plan

The emerging Public Realm Plan is an important structuring element for Don Mills Crossing, organizing public places and emphasizing mobility through the area via active transportation (walking, cycling). The Plan is organized into **Crossings** (Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue) and **Connectors** (District and Core) which tie together existing places and spaces with new public places that will emerge through the redevelopment of the Core Study Area around Don Mills and Eglinton. Combined, the Crossings and Connectors link existing and planned cycling routes, existing and potential parks, cultural and institutional destinations, into the Core Study Area. Streetscape treatments, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and supportive land uses will combine to tie together these places in a new public realm network facilitating movement through the area and establishing a character for the emerging neighbourhood.



Concept Map of Emerging Public Realm Plan



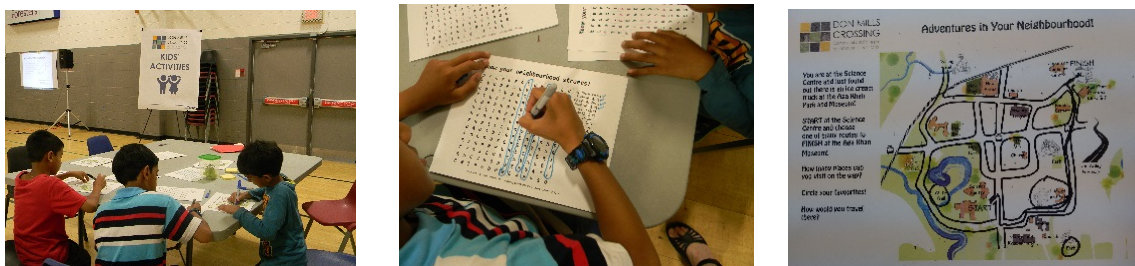
3. Residential Area Experience

This activity focused on the preferred residential experiences of quiet pedestrian streets and active pedestrian streets, with participants marking their preferred design choices with dots and expanding these choices on the comment sheets or on Post-it notes.



4. Kids' Activities

These activities consisted of a maze that started at the Ontario Science Centre and ended at an ice cream truck parked by the Aga Khan Park and Museum, showed routes that followed the major connector loop and smaller core loop, highlighted various landscape and building features along the paths, including the Valley Trail, the new Civitan arena replacement and proposed park, the Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre, the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and the Ismaili Centre. Participants were asked to choose their favorite route, describe how many places they would visit on the way, describe why, indicate how they would travel, and circle their favorite places. There was also a Word Search of local street names in the Don Mills area, and a Connect-the-Dots of the Ontario Science Centre.



Summary of Feedback

Emerging Public Realm

The public realm was identified as a key theme through the consultation undertaken in Phase 1 of Don Mills Crossing. Developing an engaging Public Realm Plan is central to advancing the Don Mills Crossing Study. This includes enhancing Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road as human-scaled **crossings** connecting through the area, and linking important places such as the Ontario Science Centre, the Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre and the ravine system through two looped **connectors** to improve walking and cycling experiences. Participants indicated that overall, the design strategies presented were advancing the public realm in the right direction. Comments indicated that participants were in favour of linking the bike path across the rail corridor to the existing Leaside Spur trail to the north and the recent redevelopment to the west. Some participants expressed concern that reducing vehicular lane widths necessary to accommodate bike lanes could lead to increased traffic congestion, and that the transition of the Celestica ramp off Eglinton to an active transportation link might increase vehicular traffic at Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue East, impacting pedestrian crossings at that intersection.

Active Transportation – Rail Crossing

Connecting the Leaside Spur/Don Mills Trail across the CP Railway corridor with a pedestrian and cyclist crossing was strongly supported. Most participants felt that an underpass would be the best option for this link, as it could be designed to be more discreet and integrated into the landscape, and have less impact on the surrounding area. There were concerns expressed for the safety of an underpass at certain times of the day and in certain weather conditions, and the preference would be for well-lit conditions with direct visibility to the other side, similar to the Belleville Underpass along the Lower Don Trail. This also presented an opportunity for seating and public art to increase the safety by bringing increased activity to the area. The overpass design was less favoured, as it was thought to interrupt the continuity of the pedestrian and cyclist experience, have a greater visual impact on the landscape, and be the more expensive option. Many participants reiterated the desire to have separated bike/pedestrian paths. Participants identified other potential cycling/pedestrian connections and paths, including a link north to Prince Andrew Place, bike lanes and pedestrian zones along Concorde Place east of the Don Valley Parkway, and bike lanes along Wynford Drive.

Ravine Connection

Participants spoke about their appreciation for the proximity of the ravines to urban areas for recreational use and visual enjoyment, and the desire to protect this important resource. Ideas on how this could be accomplished favoured the use of a naturalized trail to preserve the quality and feel of the ravines. Many felt that this could best be accomplished using a combination of naturalized trails without fencing in less sensitive areas, and trails with rustic fencing to protect vulnerable areas. A more formal multi-use trail was generally thought to be too intrusive for the area, and did not respond to the character of the ravine.

Concern was expressed that highrise development should not block the views into the ravine or shade the vegetation.

Don Mills Employment Area

The public realm can support continued employment growth by providing better connections from existing job clusters to higher order transit and new amenities within the Core Study Area. Many participants felt this could best be achieved with wider sidewalks and shared bike paths with a double landscape buffer, which created a feeling of openness and tied in well to the ravine experience; others preferred to move the cycling lane to the street, again supporting the idea of separating cyclists and pedestrians, and allowing a more active pedestrian sidewalk experience. The single row tree planting option was not well supported, showing that there is strong support for greenspace within the public realm.

Residential Area Experience

With the anticipated residential and employment growth in the Don Mills Crossing Study Area, achieving the right residential experience will be key to creating a livable, safe and dynamic community. For quiet residential streets like Ferrand Drive, participants preferred to have wider sidewalks with well-landscaped bumpouts for traffic calming, with multiple road users. For busier thoroughfares such as Don Mills Road, there was a clear preference for sidewalks wide enough to accommodate a variety of active uses, mature tree and vegetation planting to create a buffer with traffic, and bike parking accommodated away from pedestrian uses. Participants did not generally support single row tree planting, although did express a desire for street furniture such as benches. Again, there was a preference for separated bike lanes for greater cyclist safety.

Kids' Activities – Adventures in Your Neighbourhood

To get a sense of why certain routes are taken by the area's younger residents, children could complete a maze to indicate the route they would take to get from the Ontario Science Centre to the Aga Khan Museum. Many of the participants chose to take the larger connector route towards the Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre (containing the Toronto Public Library and pool), continue up through the existing park and playground, then up past the Ismaili Centre to the Aga Khan Museum and ice cream truck (the finish line). Favorite places included the Valley trail in the ravine, the library and pool, and the existing park at Ferrand Drive.

Other Comments

Parks and Open Spaces

The importance of green space and the need to increase the programming options at parks and playgrounds was reiterated at this event, with the suggestion that new features such as a splash pad and benches be installed at the children's playground located across from 58 Grenoble Drive. There was concern expressed over making sure parks are integrated into the

neighbourhood and visible, not overshadowed by highrise towers. It was also suggested that the Ontario Science Centre parking lot be used as greenspace.

Increasing Retail Diversity

Given the history of large single-use precincts in the Don Mills and Eglinton area, participants continue to express a desire for greater retail diversity in the area, including independent coffee shops and restaurants, local retail shopping opportunities and small scale pubs to animate the area after business hours.

Adaptive Reuse of the Heritage Resources

Some participants commented on the importance of retaining the Parkin Building at 1150 Eglinton Avenue East to reuse for multiple programming, acting as a community hub with public and private events, similar to Wychwood Barns or Swansea Town Hall Community Centre. Retaining the landscape setting of this building was identified as important. Other participants commented on the historic significance of 844 Don Mills Road, the potential for reuse, and maintaining the view lines to this building from Don Mills Road.

Traffic Patterns

Additional comments expressed concern that the extension of Wynford Drive through the Celestica site to Eglinton Avenue East could potentially lead to the increased use of the street as a traffic through-way and impact other adjacent neighbourhoods.

Built Form

Several participants commented on the potential for mid-rise buildings to achieve density targets and act as a buffer to the CP Railway corridor.



Next Steps

The feedback from this meeting will inform additional refinement of the public realm plan and the preparation of a Proposals Report for Don Mills Crossing to be advanced at the conclusion of Phase 2. To stay up to date on upcoming engagement events through 2017, **sign up for e-updates** on the Don Mills Crossing website www.toronto.ca/donmillscrossing.



Event Materials

[Event boards](#)

[Discussion Guide](#)

[Presentation](#)

[Handout 1: Why Study Don Mills?](#)

[Handout 2: What Guides the Study?](#)

[Event Flyer](#)