

Laird in Focus Planning Study Design Charrette

Saturday, June 3, 2017

Two sessions: 9:30 am – 12:30 and 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Leaside Memorial Arena, 1073 Millwood Road – William Lea Room

SUMMARY REPORT

Meeting Overview

A design charrette was held on June 3, 2017 for the Laird in Focus Planning Study. Staff from Community Planning, Parks Planning, Economic Development, Urban Design, Transportation Planning and Transportation Services as well as Councillor Burnside were in attendance with the consulting team.

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the design charrette was to involve the community in the exploration of:

- Options for built form, mobility and public realm in the Eglinton Avenue and Laird Drive study areas.
- Streetscape and public realm enhancements; and
- Connectivity opportunities in and through the Leaside Business Park;

The team will use the charrette results as a basis for design alternatives for Eglinton Avenue and Laird Drive, including streetscape/public realm and transportation network recommendations for the business park.

An invitation via mailed flyers, e-blast and social media was extended to register for the morning or afternoon design session. Twenty eight people joined the morning session and ten attended the afternoon session. Each session began with a brief presentation describing the purpose of the charrette, the structure of the design teams, and a reporting out on inputs from the community, as well as the draft vision and design principles.



Areas of Focus:

Eglinton Avenue and Laird Drive Sites: Explore alternatives for the Eglinton Avenue Study Area and three Laird Drive Sites (shown in red)



Public Realm: focus on streetscape and public realm opportunities along Laird Drive, Brentcliffe Road and Vanderhoof Avenue (shown in red)



Leaside Business Park: focus on enhancements to the transportation network (area shown in red)



Eglinton Avenue and Laird Drive

Three teams focused on the Eglinton Avenue and Laird Drive study areas. Three prototypical sites were selected to illustrate different site redevelopment conditions and potentials along Laird Drive (Study Area B):

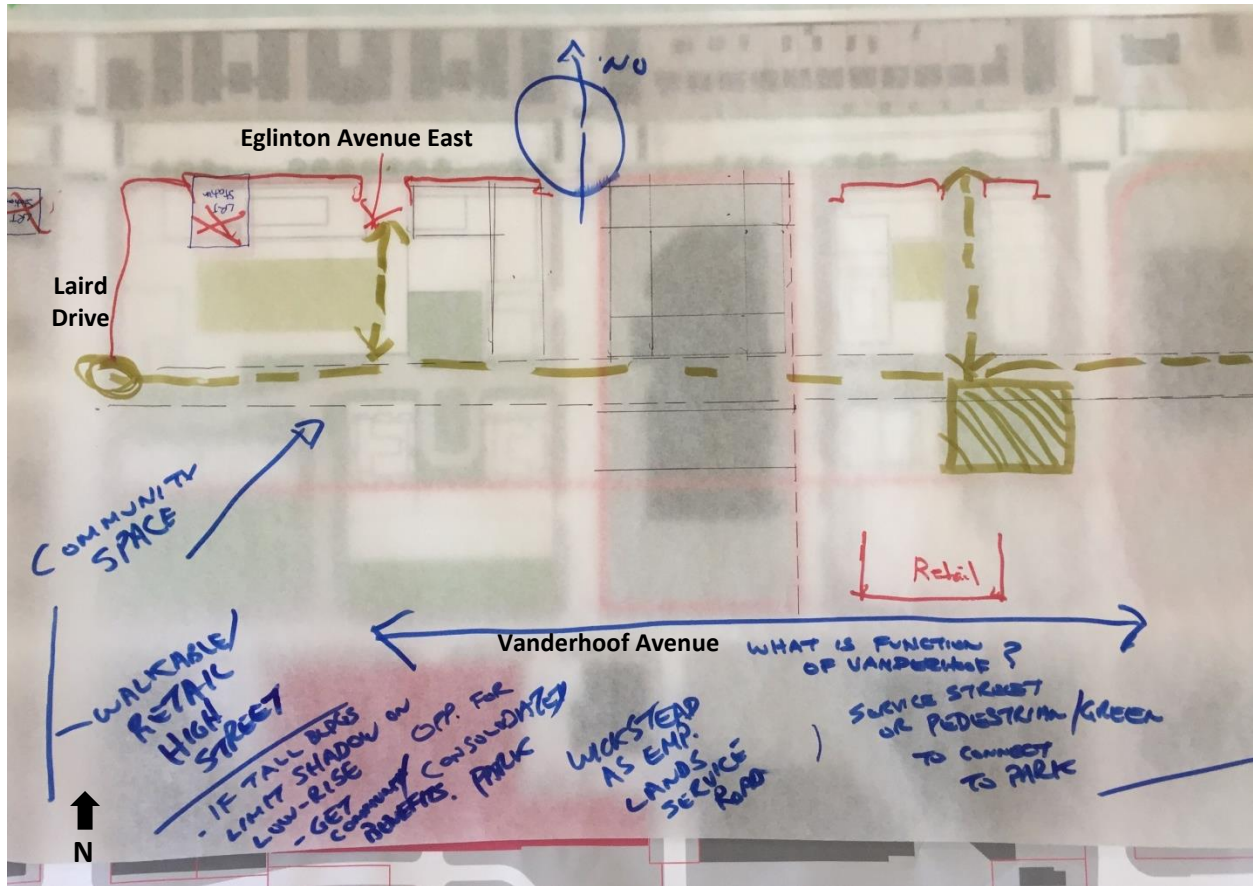
- 1. Laird Drive at Parkhurst Boulevard;**
- 2. Laird Drive at Stickney Avenue; and**
- 3. Laird Drive at Malcolm Road.**

Each team was also assigned variables to explore one of three scenarios in built form, open space and access for the Eglinton Avenue study area (Study Area B):

- **Scenario A:** Development applications as approved (939 Eglinton Avenue) or under review (815 and 845 Eglinton Avenue); exploration of design possibilities on remaining two sites;
- **Scenario B:** Incorporation of the Eglinton Connects Laird Focus Area concept, amended to include the 939 Eglinton Avenue East approved scheme; and
- **Scenario C:** Approved application (939 Eglinton Avenue East) and consideration of City of Toronto Tall & Mid-rise Building Guidelines, enhanced circulation network, and public open space allocation applied to the remainder of the study area.

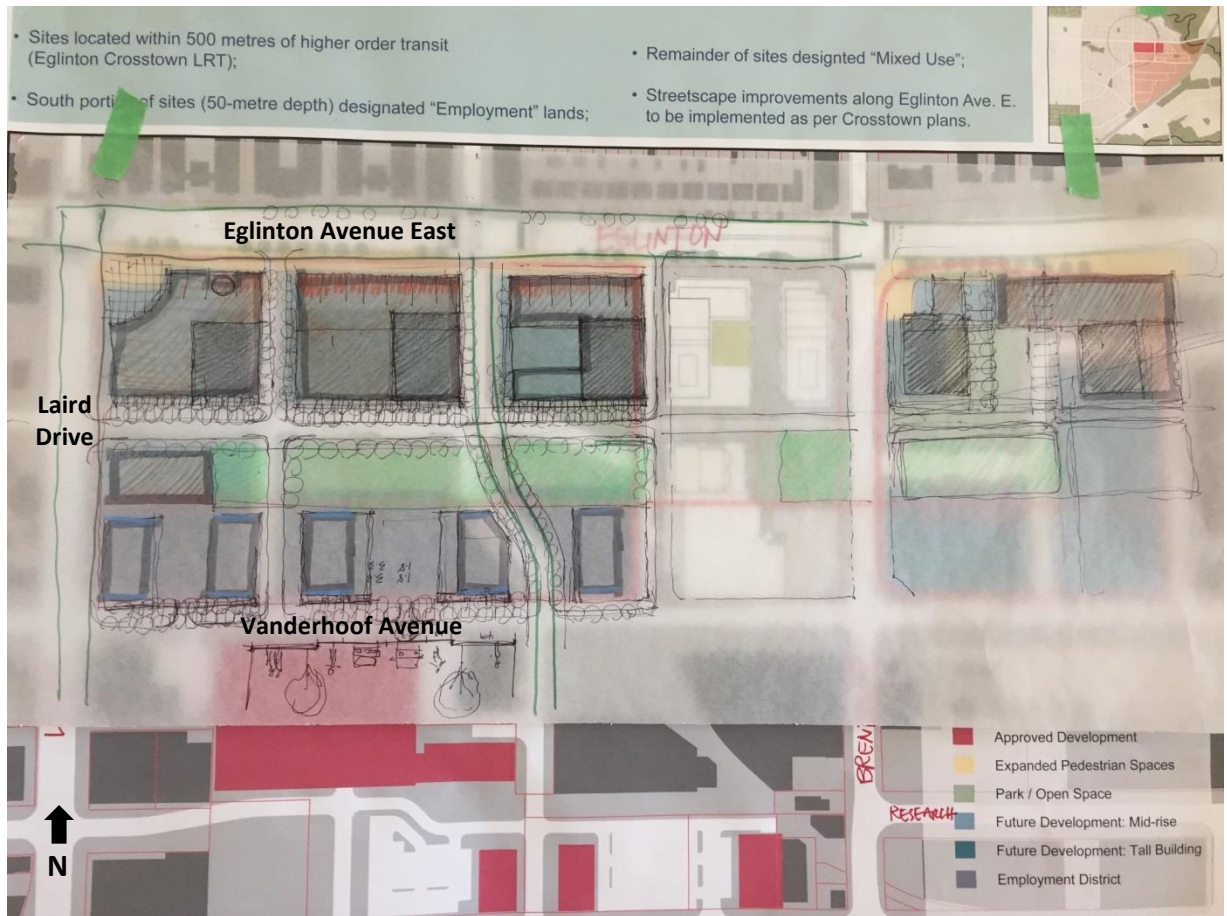
The following is a summary of results from the morning design session, presentation and discussion:

Eglinton Study Area



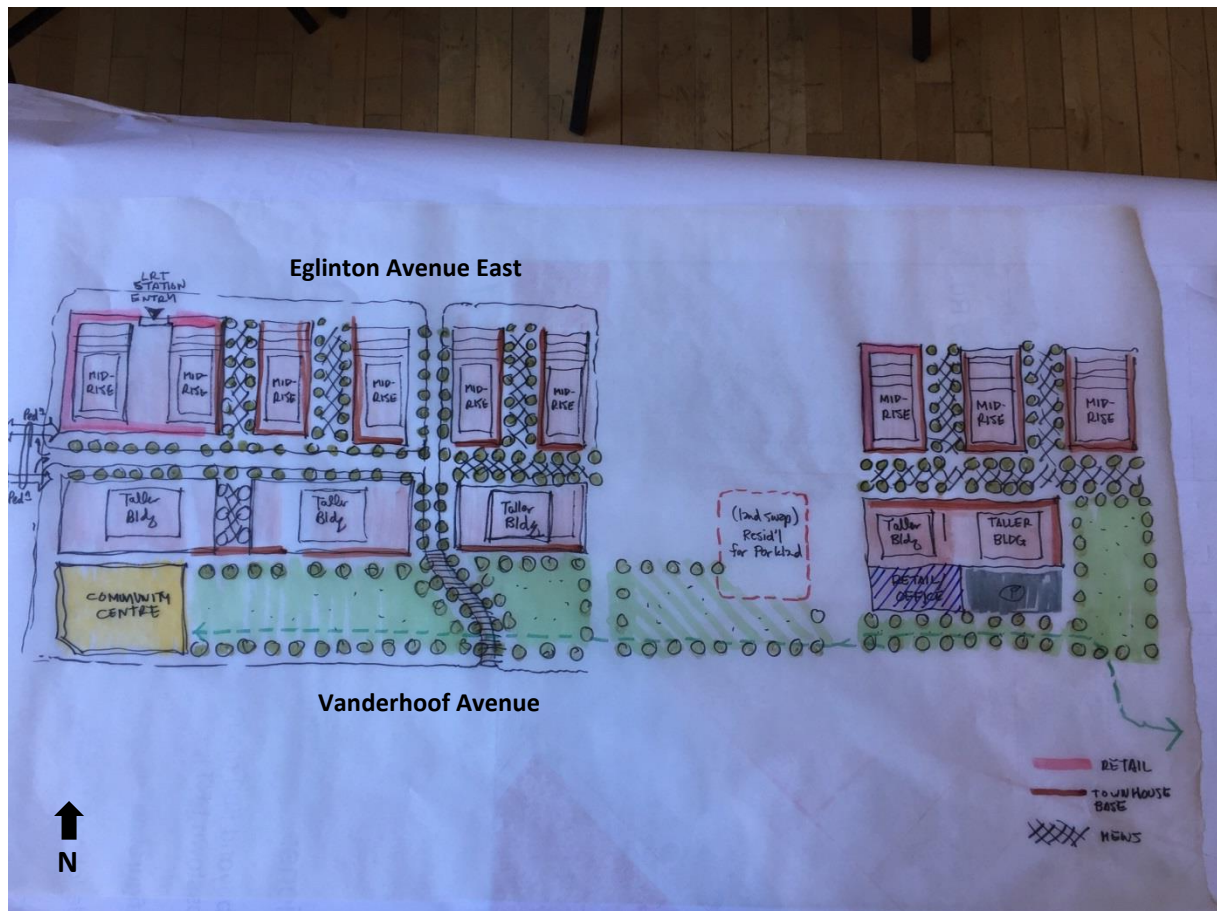
Scenario A: Development applications as approved (939 Eglinton Avenue) or under review (815-845 Eglinton Avenue), with option to explore possibilities on two sites with no application

- Eglinton Avenue may be a retail street east of the stop, won't be a comfortable pedestrian street – will be a large retail street;
- Need to make pedestrian linkages through the street wall and connect to the south;
- Consider Laird as the new High Street – has a lot of existing retail and restaurants;
- Vanderhoof Avenue: now it's the back door to a lot of what's happening, needs to be a pedestrian focused street for those who want to walk east;
- Needs to incorporate an internal linkage, a local/private street with public access;
- The group had a discussion on whether it was preferable to have small parks or one larger park. Parks need to be accessible to the public;
- Need a community facility: one could be located on an upper level of a building;
- The group discussed servicing/loading off the north-south streets as opposed to private street or Vanderhoof Avenue;
- The group considered that mid-rise was suitable to frame streets and that tall buildings were acceptable if they were designed to adhere to the City's angular plane guidelines;
- If tall buildings are built, need parks and community facilities; and
- Felt that the existing Leonard Linton Park is too far away from Laird Drive and the only access is from Vanderhoof Avenue, which is not pedestrian friendly.



Scenario B: Overlay of the Eglinton Connects Laird Focus Area concept, amended to include the 939 Eglinton Avenue East approved plan

- Many principles of the Eglinton Connects study coincide with what the group wanted – finer grained system of streets, mid-rise on Eglinton Avenue with towers set back;
- Primary design focus should be on great streets and great parks: green spine;
- North of Vanderhoof Avenue and the north side of the new east-west road should have development set back to create a wider green boulevard;
- A simplified, central, east-west public street for the site east of Brentcliffe Road; this site can accommodate two towers;
- Smaller shops along Eglinton Avenue;
- Larger format retail should be on second or third floor;
- Need pedestrian connection to Eglinton Avenue east of Brentcliffe Road;
- Need for bike lanes on Eglinton Avenue;
- New, central, north-south street needs bike lanes to connect people to City-wide routes; and
- Employment uses to have great building faces on all public sides – especially the side that faces the park.



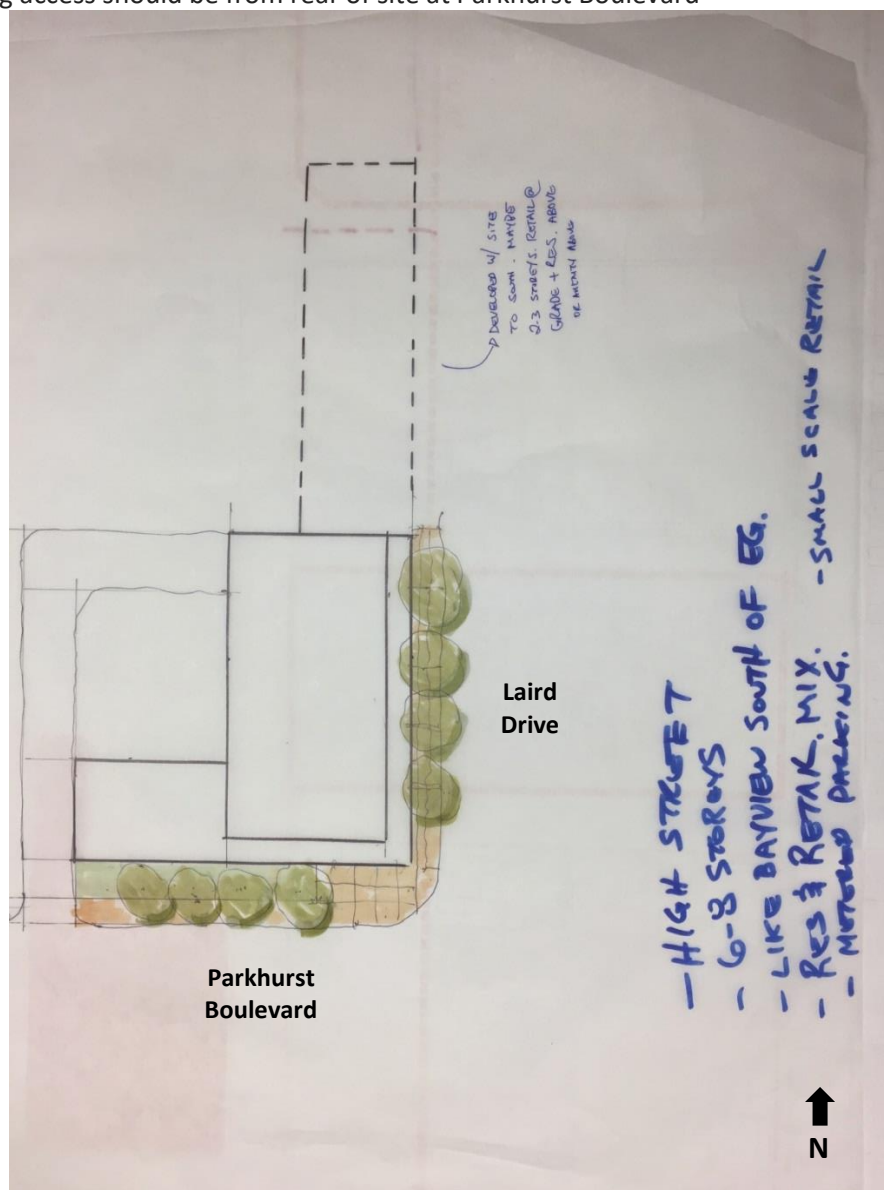
Scenario C: Approved application (939 Eglinton Avenue East) and consideration of City of Toronto Tall & Mid-rise Building Guidelines, enhanced circulation network, and public open space allocation applied to the remainder of the study area.

- Need for family-sized units;
- Looked at street network and open space system;
- Strong open space system at south edge of Eglinton Avenue in employment lands anchored at west end with community centre and at east end with park;
- Cycle track through open space connecting community centre with Leonard Linton Park;
- Future park at 939 Eglinton Avenue could be swapped and moved to south to allow development to the north;
- Road network to break up block structure with a mews or local street;
- Mid-block, east-west road aligned with Parklea Drive;
- LRT station entrance in corner building;
- Parking in underground structure; and
- Taller buildings on south side of mid-block connection facing park.

Laird Sites

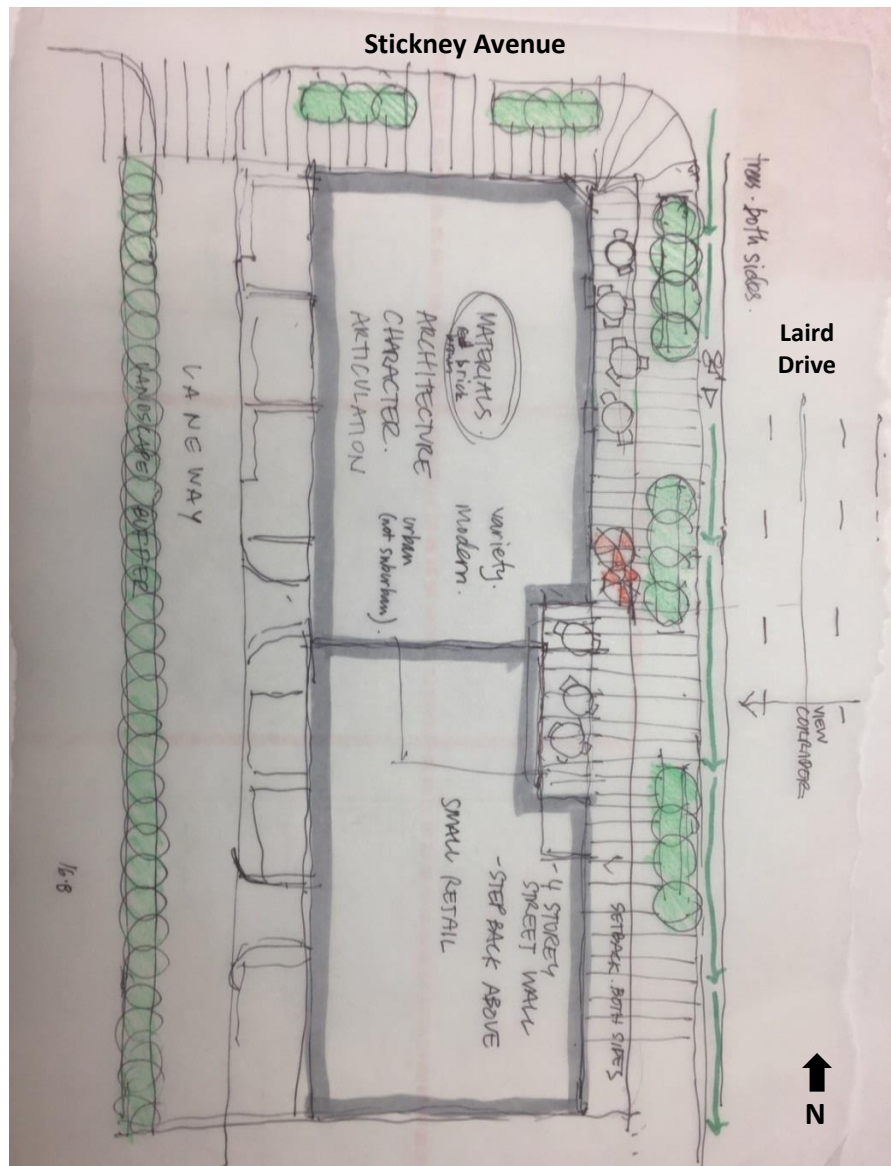
1. Laird Drive at Parkhurst Boulevard

- Mid-rise building (7 or 8 stories) with a transition from lower scale residential neighbourhood;
- Northern portion of the site is too narrow for redevelopment unless associated with southern portion and used for amenities or retails;
- It was noted that the site currently includes a day care;
- Do not support a 7 or 8 storey building, should be replaced with either townhouses or a (maximum) four story building; and
- This is also in keeping with the current development (Longo's development, SmartCentre, TD Bank etc. are all 2 storeys);
- Parking for mid-rise building should be underground
- Parking access should be from rear of site at Parkhurst Boulevard



2. Laird Drive at Stickney Avenue

- Flexibility to allow building to be set back on Laird Drive for wider sidewalk, better green space, and retail animation;
- Continuous lane at back of property with a landscape buffer, to make sure front is not broken up with driveways;
- Street wall should be kept lower at 4 storeys with step back above;
- Critical for architecture to reflect Leaside neighbourhood through materials (emphasis on brick), character, articulation and variety;
- Urban (not suburban), modern forms are desired;
- Small scale retail along Laird Drive;
- Bike lanes along Laird Drive; and
- Have a special feature (view terminus) on corner sites and at end of Industrial Street.



3. Laird Drive at Malcolm Road

① ② ③

- Lower built form – townhouses or live/work spaces, 3-4 storeys with laneway access off rear;
- Parking at grade accessed from laneway;

①

- Parkette between row buildings;

②

- Live/work with café as corner anchor and some surface parking behind; and

③

- Townhouses with units facing the parkette at the corner.



Public Realm / Streetscape

- The group discussed how the street was experienced – heritage resources, series of contributing buildings- many associated with industrial heritage;
- The group identified community generators – restaurants, shopping, grocery store, community facilities at Sky Zone Trampoline Park and Amsterdam Brewery, and the potential for new destinations;
- Categorized each of the blocks: grey: not pleasant, blue: pleasant; 50% of study area is not pleasant;
- West side of Laird is least favourable;
- Then looked at opportunities: Vanderhoof Avenue could be a great connector with a green street for existing condo development; looked at other green streets through Business Park; highlighted intersections;
- Identified key connecting streets through the blocks;
- There's an opportunity to include cycle tracks, trees at curb, sidewalk in short term, not enough room for cycling, until widening occurs; and
- Vanderhoof Avenue: important to line street with trees, formalize left turn into larger retail, trees on both sides (tree-lined streets are more important, no cycling here).

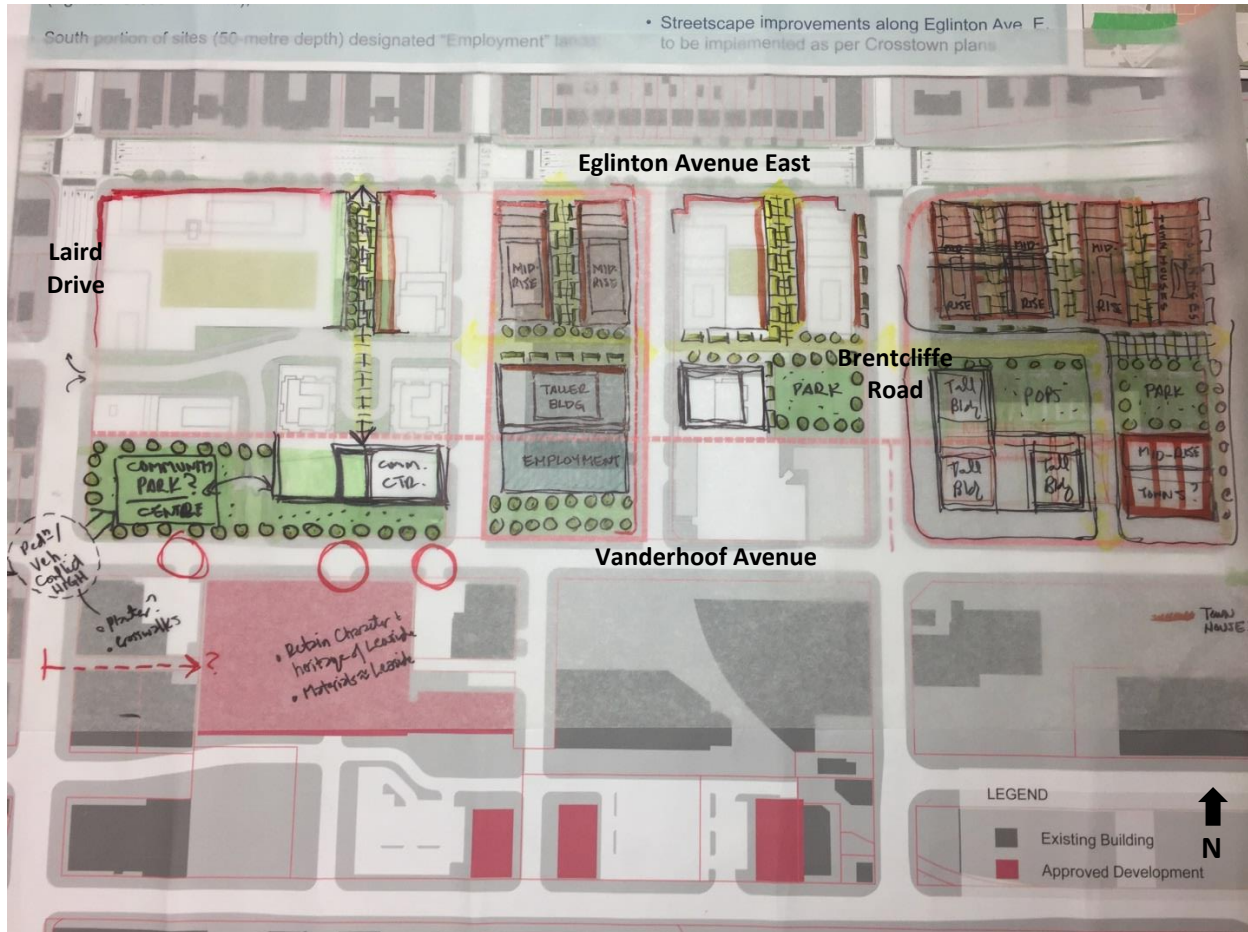
Leaside Business Park

The conversation on the transportation network opportunities in the Leaside Business Park resulted in the following key points:

- Promote a better connected road pattern to facilitate easier and more direct truck movement;
- Promote improved modal opportunities (pedestrian and cycling), identify key destinations and improved aesthetics; comfort and safety;
- Define the role of the Toronto Parking Authority in providing more options for off-street parking as development occurs; get rid of on street parking along Laird Drive;
- Be cognizant of the future intensification of employment uses within the Business Park: more office uses;
- Discuss other location opportunities with CBM, Tremco, House of Metal and White Management;
- Work on operational opportunities along Laird Drive, Eglinton Avenue, Wicksteed Avenue, and Vanderhoof Avenue: additional traffic lights, left turn lanes and adequate turning radii; and
- Understand land use density inputs of potential future GO station; also, connectivity opportunities to Thorncliffe Park.

The following is a summary of results from the afternoon design session, presentation and discussion:

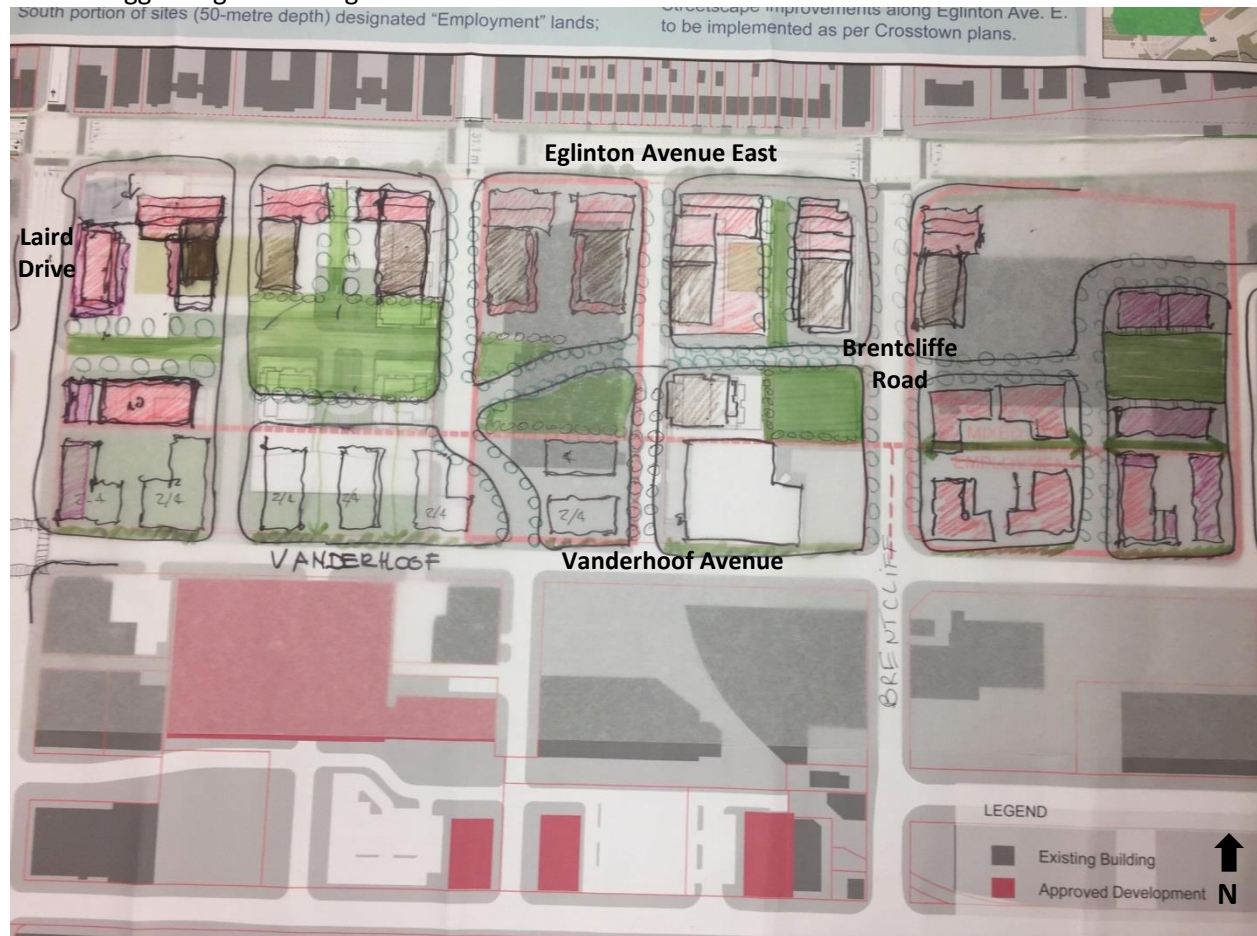
Eglinton Site



Scenario A: Development applications as approved (939 Eglinton Avenue) or under review (815 and 845 Eglinton Avenue); exploration of design possibilities on remaining two sites;

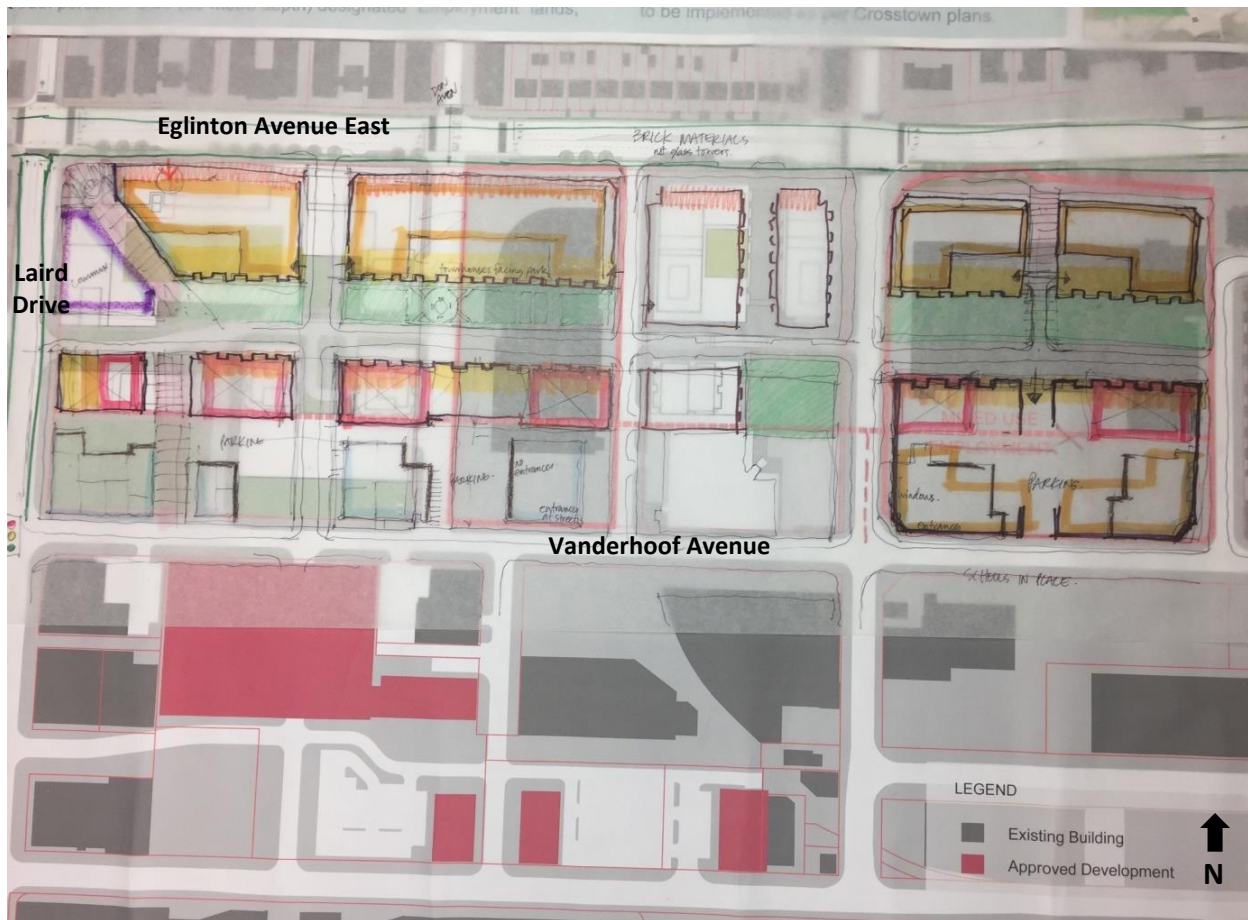
- Along Vanderhoof Avenue there are a number of driveway access points that are incongruous with pedestrian/cyclist safety;
- Intersection at Laird Drive has pedestrian signalization/vehicular conflict issues - having a green space at the corner will attract more people (needs more study); too close to McRae Drive intersection for another signalized intersection;
- Community Centre is located in the current development application;
- Incorporate linear park along Vanderhoof Avenue;
- Mid-rise on Mercedes site along Eglinton, taller building on south side of proposed east-west connection and employment fronting onto Vanderhoof;
- Block at south east corner of Brentcliffe and Eglinton is similar in scale to RioCan site; Mid-rise with townhouses facing Aerodrome Crescent and linear park;
- C-shaped, mid-rise building at south end stepping down to Eglinton Avenue;

- Through-connection to taller buildings on south-west corner with a POPS – townhouses fronting on to public open space; and
- Staggered green linkage.



Scenario B: Incorporation of the Eglinton Connects Laird Focus Area concept, amended to include the 939 Eglinton Avenue East approved scheme;

- Stop the internal street east of Laird Drive;
- Anchor the internal street with an open space block (park) at either end;
- Looked at a system with higher buildings set back from Eglinton Avenue;
- Frame street with lower building form; stepping back up to allow for higher buildings (proposed red buildings are 6-8 storeys, grey buildings are high-rise);
- Mixed use building south of Eglinton Avenue, Vanderhoof Avenue is lined with employment in office style buildings;
- Frame the park with existing townhouses on east end as well as new townhouses adjacent to the park; and
- Mews to connect parks from Eglinton Avenue to Vanderhoof Avenue.



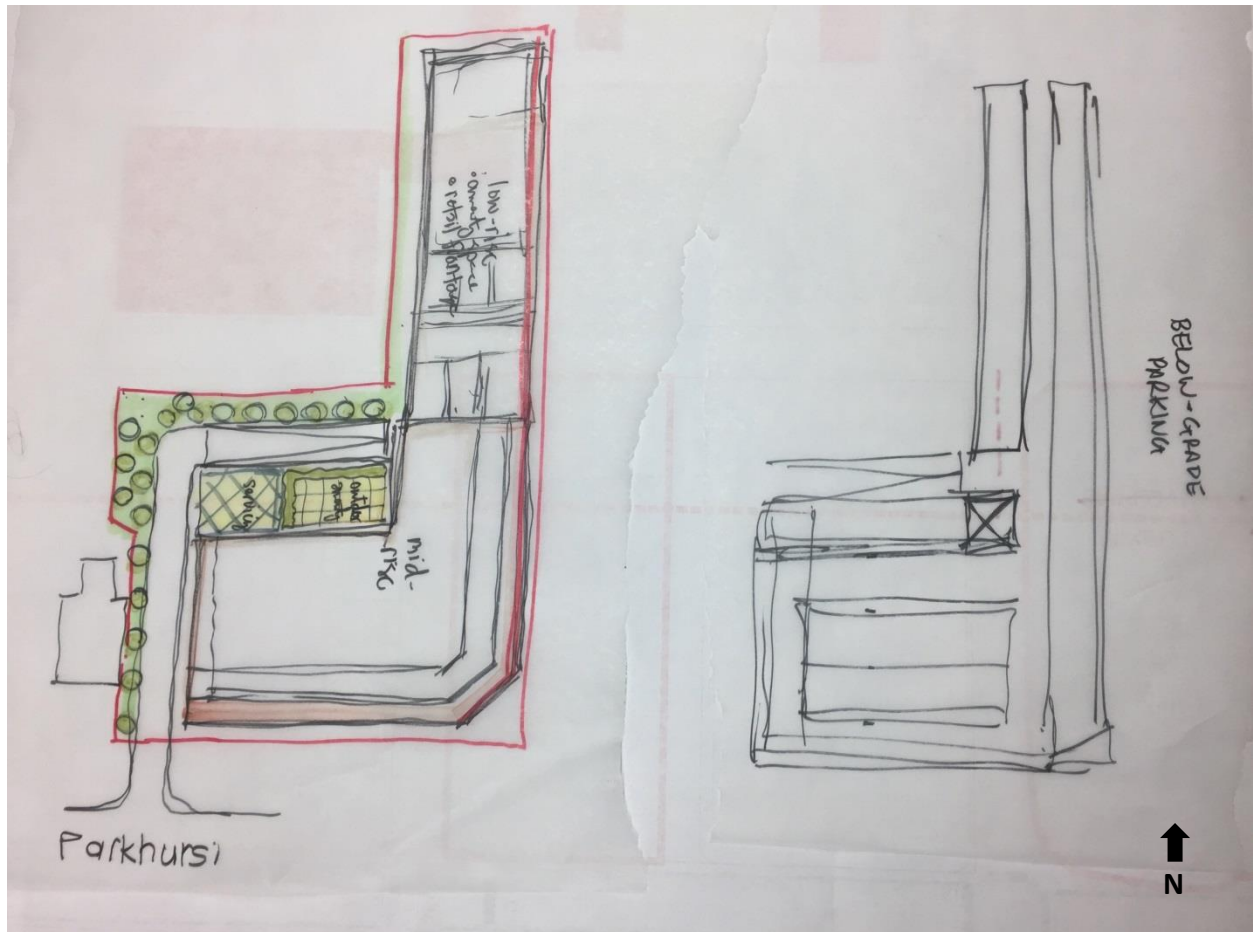
Scenario C: Approved application (939 Eglinton Avenue East) and consideration of City of Toronto Tall & Mid-rise Building Guidelines, enhanced circulation network, and public open space allocation applied to the remainder of the study area.

- Primary consideration is to create a fine-grain, block structure to integrated with Leaside;
- Series of east-west and north-south streets and blocks, important for connectivity;
- Deliberately offset intersections at Eglinton Avenue;
- Connect intersection at Eglinton Avenue and Laird with LRT and with public space;
- Outdoor galleria lined with shops, great location for a new community centre in the small triangular parcel south of Eglinton, on east side of Laird;
- High rises located on south side of east-west street and mid-rise on Eglinton Avenue;
- Townhouses facing park;
- New buildings with connections to employment lands;
- Flexible space could be used by a variety of industries;
- Retail facing Eglinton Avenue, but it may not be as attractive for retail east of Brentcliffe Road.

Laird Sites

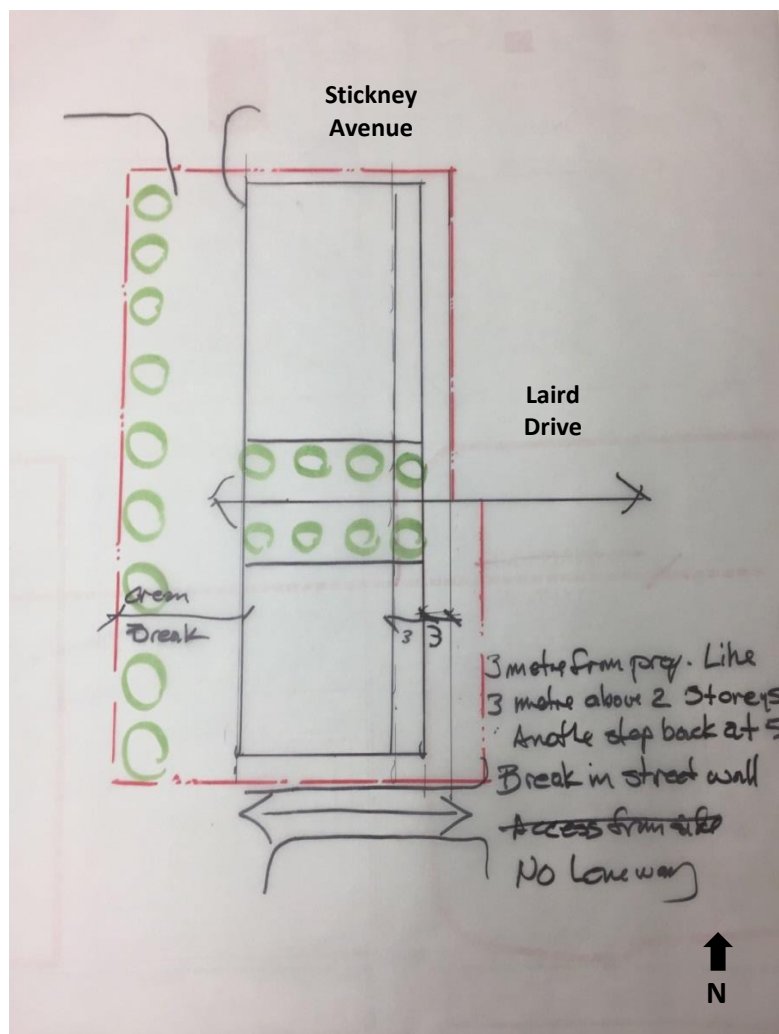
1. Laird Drive at Parkhurst Boulevard

- Mid-rise on wider portion of site with at-grade retail;
- Challenge with the site is parking;
- Below-grade parking accessed from Parkhurst Boulevard; and
- Provide landscape buffer between development and adjacent residential properties.



2. Laird Drive at Stickney Avenue

- Building should be set back an additional 3 metres to provide a wider streetscape;
- 3 metre setback at 2nd storey;
- Another step back at 5th or 6th storey;
- Some kind of a break on the façade;
- No lane at the back;
- 10 metre minimum setback on west side;
- Restriction on balconies at lower level;
- Different forms of buildings, townhouses, mid-rise; and
- Some resistance within groups to anything over 3 storeys.



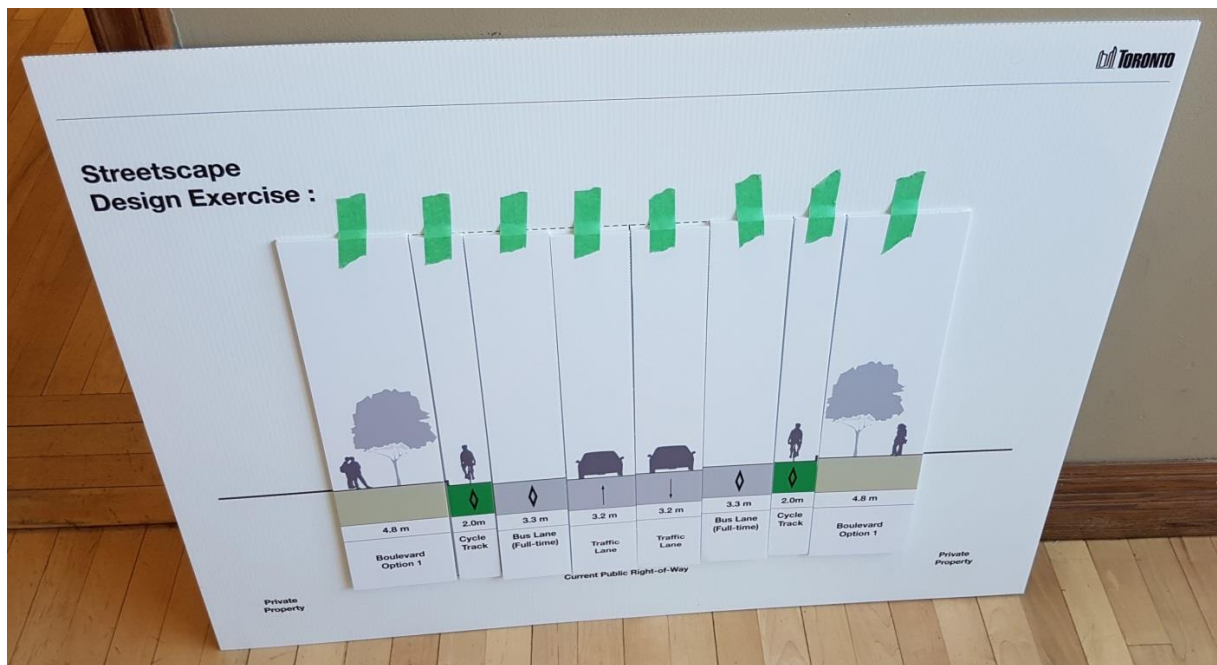
3. Laird Drive at Malcolm Road

- ①
 - Continuation of small sale retail on Laird Drive;
 - Townhouses can face Malcolm Road for access; and
 - New retail on Laird provides modest convenience parking only.
- ②
 - Small, custom townhouse blocks;
 - Shared laneway provides access for units facing Laird Drive;
 - Tuck parking into unit or into available spaces;
 - Units facing Malcolm Road with front garages; and
 - All streets faced with front doors.



Public Realm / Streetscape

- Think about a greening strategy for the entire neighbourhood; opportunities to connect the proposed park, spaces next to proposed building, and parking lots;
- Add cycling infrastructure;
- Vanderhoof Avenue – one side for cycling and one side for pedestrians;
- Look at a bigger green link lining Canvarco Road;
- On the north side of Canvarco Road there is a little artisanal community, use it as a node for laneways and public spaces;
- On Laird examine ways of offsetting intersection to eliminate cut through;
- Cycling on Laird Drive is critical and greening the street is important;
- Laird Drive - think about flip lane on Jarvis (three lane cross section);
- No parking on Laird Drive; and
- Median disappears.



Leaside Business Park

- Promote long term evolution of the Business Park into creative industry/new economy – less reliance on trucking;
- Remove rail tracks from unused rail corridors to enhance cyclist/pedestrian safety (keep the corridor);
- Need to enforce (or establish) development standards for rail repairs and maintenance;
- Do not align any additional streets across Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue;
- Bike lane on Laird Drive is more important than on-street parking;
- Promote efforts to reduce truck traffic on Laird Drive;
- Build a cycleway on south side of tracks from Village Station Road to Wicksteed Avenue;
- Wicksteed Avenue to be primary east-west cycling route through Business Park to McRae Drive;
- Potential future GO Station to be 'urban' and employment destination with higher intensity uses;
- Need to involve Toronto Parking Authority in considering parking supply as redevelopment occurs and for provision of bike share; and
- Formalize existing trail into Don Valley from Leslie Street.