

Agincourt Mall Planning Framework Review Design Charrette (Visioning Workshop) – Meeting Summary

Saturday, January 20, 2018
9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Agincourt Mall, Unit 100
3850 Sheppard Avenue East

This is a high level summary of key themes, feedback and outcomes from the Design Charrette held as part of the public engagement process for the Agincourt Mall Planning Framework Review.

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MEETING OVERVIEW

On Saturday, January 20, 2018, City of Toronto staff hosted a Design Charrette as part of the Agincourt Mall Planning Framework Review.

The purpose of this Design Charrette is to allow participants to collaborate on a vision for the Agincourt Mall and surrounding area. The Charrette was a focused and structured workshop and a creative brainstorming session to create visions for the Agincourt Mall site and surrounding area.

Approximately 40 people participated in the visioning workshop, including Local Advisory Committee (LAC) members, a representative from Councillor Norm Kelly's office, MPP Soo-Wong's office and MP Jean Yip's office. City of Toronto staff from various divisions including City Planning (Community Planning, Urban Design & Transportation Planning), Transportation Services and Parks & Recreation also attended to provide information and to assist in facilitating the workshop. Councillor Kelly and MP Jean Yip attended the latter part of the session to listen to feedback on both exercises.



DESIGN CHARRETTE PROCESS

The Charrette was organized into four (4) main parts:

1. Introductions & Framework for Design Sessions;
2. Design Session 1: Agincourt Mall Planning Framework Review Area (Corridor);
3. Design Session 2: the Agincourt Mall Site; and
4. Conclusion / Table Report Out.

The Introduction & Framework for Design Sessions included a staff presentation that provided an overview of:

- Reasons for doing a Planning Framework Review;
- The Planning Framework Review process;
- Site Context, the Policy Framework (Provincial and City), Transit Investments;
- Public Consultation events that have occurred as part of the Planning Framework Review;
- Emerging Guiding Principles; and
- Purpose, format and instructions for the Design Charrette exercises.

Following the presentation, participants joined their assigned tables to begin the design exercises.

- Session 1: Participants did a high level review and created a design vision for the larger Agincourt Mixed-Use corridor study area.
- Session 2: Participants collaborated to develop a design vision for the Agincourt Mall site and how it fits with their vision for the larger corridor.

Both sessions involved members discussing and creating connections, destinations, parks and open space, land use and general building organization including type, location and height of buildings.

The Charrette Design sessions consisted of 5 tables/teams which included at least 2 City of Toronto facilitators and 6 participants. Each table was provided with resource material consisting of: a context map showing the location of future planned roads and heights of existing and approved buildings, air photo base maps, trace paper, to-scale templates (parkland, Wal-Mart and grocery store), representative sample images and a copy of the conceptual master plan proposed by the developer.

The City facilitators at each table were responsible for asking appropriate questions and providing guidance to participants in order to generate ideas, as well as drawing the participants' ideas on plans for each of the design sessions.

At the end of the sessions an individual(s) from each table reported back to the entire Charrette group and summarized key themes from each design session.

DESIGN ASSUMPTIONS:

Participants were provided with the following assumptions required to be considered when designing for both the corridor study area and the Agincourt Mall site:

- Existing Wal-Mart and grocery store uses will be retained on-site but relocated and rebuilt in smaller format as proposed in the application at 6500m² for Wal-Mart and 2350m² for a grocery store.
- City public parkland requirements are approximately 15,000 m². Parkland templates provided at 1500m² or to be cut up into smaller parks equaling 1500m².
- New north-south public street along the west property line of the Mall lands to connect Sheppard Avenue to Bonis Ave across from Allanford Road (as required by the Agincourt Secondary Plan).
- Given the location of the Agincourt Mall site, proximity to transit, and the existence of tall buildings nearby, tall buildings are appropriate to consider as part of any redevelopment vision for the mall lands.

KEY MESSAGES FROM DESIGN SESSION 1 – Agincourt Mall Planning Framework Review Area (Corridor Study Area)

Key common themes expressed by participants through the Design Exercise 1 are summarized as follows:

➤ Movement & Circulation

- Traffic congestion and pedestrian safety were major concerns amongst the participants. Participants emphasized the lack of connections throughout the community and the need to enhance and improve connectivity by providing safe and direct connections. Safe connections for all ages was emphasized.
- In particular, improved pedestrian connections to the Agincourt GO station were recommended from the west, east and south. Suggestions included enhancing the pedestrian qualities of Cardwell Avenue and Dowry Street, creating new street and pedestrian connections to the GO Station from the east and integrating the existing GO surface parking into a parking structure to enhance the pedestrian experience to the GO station stop from Sheppard Avenue.

- Participants expressed that a finer grain street network is needed to help drivers (including buses), cyclists and pedestrians to safely access transit, amenities and community facilities within the community. Some tables also suggested creating multi-use pathways to improve connectivity within the community. For example, a multi-use pathway was recommended along West Highland Creek to encourage alternate transportation routes along parks and natural features throughout the community.
- A pedestrian connection (tunnel or bridge) under/over Kennedy Road to connect to the Agincourt GO station was suggested.
- Participants expressed the need for additional traffic lights to implement pedestrian crossings, especially for seniors that live in the area.
- Participants thought bike lanes should be created but opinions were mixed regarding bike lanes along Sheppard due to traffic congestion and safety concerns.

➤ Streetscape

- All 5 tables generally expressed support for a mix of uses along Sheppard Avenue with retail uses at grade to animate the streetscape and to foster a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Participants expressed the need to enhance the pedestrian experience of Sheppard Avenue within the study area as a special street. Many participants mentioned that the current look and feel of Sheppard Avenue corridor is very unattractive and that high quality landscaping and good urban design principles including setbacks, wider boulevards and bike lanes with the provision of public art should be applied through new developments along Sheppard Avenue in order to further enhance the Sheppard Avenue streetscape.

➤ Parks and Open Spaces

- Many participants expressed the need for more parks and public gathering spaces along the Sheppard Avenue corridor and should be designed in a manner that they are publicly visible, designed for all age groups and with convenient and safe connections to access these spaces.
- Participants expressed the need to enhance and improve exposure and connectivity to existing parks and trails such as the Collingwood Park and West Highland Creek to the community.

Specifically, there were suggestions to create a public access from Sheppard Avenue to access Collingwood Park.

- Participants reinforced the importance of providing safe and well-lit walkways, trails, parks and open spaces.

➤ Built Form

- There were differing opinions about building height along the Sheppard Avenue corridor. Some tables felt that tall buildings could be located close to major intersections, the Agincourt GO station and future LRT stops, whereas other tables preferred to see mid-rise buildings only along the Sheppard Avenue corridor with high-rise(tall) buildings setback and concentrated in and around large sites such as the Agincourt mall site.
- Many tables recommended built form transition in height to *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* for new development so that they fit within the existing context.
- Participants expressed the need for careful placement of built form, such as lower scale mid-rise buildings around parks and open spaces and important streets to minimize shadow impact on public amenities.

KEY MESSAGES FROM DESIGN SESSION 2 – Agincourt Mall Site

Key common themes expressed by participants through the Design Exercise 2 are summarized as follows:

➤ Streets and Blocks

- Participants at all tables supported the need to "break up" the mall site into smaller blocks by implementing a network of new public streets throughout the mall site and by creating development and park blocks.
- All tables supported the notion of adding a midblock east-west street to alleviate traffic congestion along Sheppard Avenue and Bonis Avenue, as well as new north-south streets to break up the site into smaller blocks.
- Most tables supported a series of mid-block pedestrian connections and/or multi-use pathways to connect parks and open spaces and enhanced connections to the Agincourt GO Station.
- Some felt that the design of streets should reflect their planned function. For example, there should be a design distinction between

major streets such as Sheppard Avenue which accommodate transit and high volumes of traffic and connect to the rest of the City versus local streets which serve a more specialized function such as access to nearby residential, commercial or local institutional uses.

- Most tables put emphasis on pedestrian safety along streets and at crossings to promote walkability and safety for all ages.

➤ Parks

- For the most part, participants envisioned a maximum of 2 to 3 parks on the Agincourt Mall site.
- Most tables supported the notion of one large central park being the focal point of the community which would be programmable throughout the year to host events such as a farmers' market, skating rink, concerts and festivals and equipped with park furniture such as splash pads, fountains and other amenities for a diverse range of users.
- Many tables supported quieter passive uses for smaller local parks.
- Some tables suggested that a large centrally located park could be used as a mechanism for traffic calming as well as promoting a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- A few tables suggested the park network be designed to act as an anchor to a cultural/social hub of the community including the existing Agincourt Library. Facilities such as schools, art galleries, daycare, community service agencies and community gardens were recommended to be integrated into the proposed park network.
- All tables expressed that a park be located along the westerly edge of the property, immediately adjacent to the Shepherd's Village seniors' complex.
- Most tables thought that a park should be located immediately adjacent to the Agincourt Library and in close proximity to the existing Ron Watson Park to create a continuous and connected public amenity and open space network.
- Some tables showed publicly-accessible private open space areas adjacent to Sheppard Avenue and the Kennedy/Sheppard intersection to create plazas that supplement the public parks and open space network.

➤ Land Use

- Participants expressed that Wal-Mart or the grocery store should not be or designed to appear as the anchor or focus of the site.
- All tables clustered the Wal-Mart and grocery store together creating a retail node for ease of convenience. Smaller stores should complement the larger big-box stores.
- Tables expressed varied opinions on the location of the Wal-Mart and grocery store.
- Many tables illustrated the Wal-Mart and grocery store along or within close proximity to Sheppard Avenue to take advantage of the active street frontage.
- Some tables felt that both the Wal-Mart and grocery store should be located close to the Shepherd's Village seniors' complex for convenience to the senior residents.
- One table retained Wal-Mart's existing location towards the northerly boundary of the site, with the grocery store being sited adjacent to the Wal-Mart. This decision was in response to information provided by the developer that, due to legal reasons, the location of Wal-Mart should remain generally in the same location.
- Some tables wanted Wal-Mart to be designed as a 2-storey format within a tall building or on the 2nd floor of a tall building to allow for smaller format retail stores at street-level.
- All tables wanted a fine grid of retail uses at the ground floor along the Sheppard Avenue frontage to animate the streetscape and to provide convenient accessibility to the adjacent seniors' complex and proposed LRT stops.
- All tables reinforced that restaurants and cafes with patios should be provided. Some tables suggested that restaurants and cafes be located along internal streets and adjacent to parks so there are "eyes on the park" and to make the area more animated and welcoming.
- Participants expressed the need for covered and/or underground pedestrian walkways throughout the site and across both Kennedy Road and Sheppard Avenue to accommodate for ease of shopping and access to amenities, safe and convenient access to transit, and in particular to accommodate the high number of seniors living in the area.

- Although not shown on the designs, participants expressed support for an indoor mall to be incorporated into the development due to the winter climate.
- For the most part, offices were generally located near proposed LRT stops and located in an area easily accessible to the GO station. Offices were proposed to be located either in stand-alone office building(s) or incorporated into tall mixed-use building(s).

➤ Built Form

- There was general support for a mixture of building types on-site including some tall buildings, mid-rise buildings and low-rise buildings in the form of townhouses and at the base of tall buildings. However, participants said that the number of tall buildings on the mall site should be limited.
- There were mixed reviews where tall buildings should be located. Some tables wanted tall buildings to be located along Sheppard Avenue near LRT stations and at the intersection of Kennedy Road and Sheppard Avenue. Other tables expressed that mid-rise buildings should be located along Sheppard Avenue and wanted tall buildings to be located at the northerly boundary of the mall site near the existing tall buildings along Bonis Avenue.
- There was general consensus that tall buildings should be located and designed to avoid and limit shadow and wind tunnel impacts on parks. Mid-rise and low-rise buildings adjacent to parks were preferred.
- There was also general consensus that buildings should transition down in scale to adjacent apartment neighborhoods. Specifically, many felt that along the westerly boundary of the site, adjacent to the seniors' complex, mid-rise buildings should be proposed to create a comfortable scale and preserve views.
- There were different opinions regarding maximum height permissions for tall buildings on the mall lands. Maximum building heights ranged from 30 to 50 storeys and the table visions provided different options for how they could be distributed on-site.

NEXT STEPS

City staff thanked attendees for their participation in the Design Charrette exercises and advised that preliminary design options for the Corridor Study Area and the mall site will be developed and informed by all the feedback ideas and visions that have emerged from the Design Charrette.

Staff also advised that a summary of this Design Charrette workshop will be posted on the Agincourt Mall Planning Framework Review webpage.

Appendix A

Design Charrette Agenda

Date: Saturday, January 20, 2018
Time: 9:00 am. - 1:30 pm.
Location: Agincourt Mall, 3850 Sheppard Ave. E., West Entrance

9:00 am	Welcome & Introductions
9:15 am	City Planning Presentation: Framework for Design Sessions
9:45 am	DESIGN SESSION 1: Agincourt Planning Framework Review Area (Corridor)
10:30 am	Coffee Break!
10:45 am	DESIGN SESSION 2: Agincourt Mall site
12:15 pm	Pizza Lunch!
12:40 pm	TABLE REPORT OUT
1:30 pm	Closing Remarks

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix B – Design Charrette Participant List

Moderator: Doug Muirhead – City Planning

TABLE 1

Xue Pei (Staff – Urban Design)
Nasim Norouzi (Staff – Transportation Planning)
Carl Novikoff (Staff – Urban Design)
R. Potter (LAC member)
J. Law (LAC member)
M. Gagnon (LAC member)
A. Manji
J. Manji

TABLE 3

Itai Peleg (Staff – Urban Design)
Paul Zuliani (Staff – Community Planning)
Nima Arbabi (Staff – Transportation Engineering)
S. Bishop (LAC member)
E. McCullough (LAC member)
T. Ho (LAC member)
R. Wong
D. Jardine
B. Eng

TABLE 5

Joanna Chludzinska (Staff – Urban Design)
Jessica Kwan (Staff – Community Planning)
S. Vaughn (LAC member)
K. Simon (LAC member)
J. Siboni
W. Tsang
A. Wu
R. Wu

TABLE 2

Sasha Terry (Staff – Urban Design)
Alan Filipuzzi (Staff – Transportation Planning)
John Stuckless (Staff – Parks & Recreation)
Lynda Bowerman (Councillor Norm Kelly's representative)
Jo-anne Linton (MPP Soo – Wong's representative)
Hilla Master (MP Jean Yip's representative)
L. Chu (LAC member)
K. D'Souza (LAC member)
H. Kuang (LAC member)
J. Hawke

TABLE 4

Rong Yu (Staff – Urban Design)
Colin Ramdial (Staff – Community Planning)
Lora Mazzocca (Staff – Parks & Recreation)
C. Allan (LAC member)
C. Goodrich Dyer (LAC member)
P. Sherman (LAC member)
H. Tam
R. Lowe
B. Gregor

Appendix C – Corridor Study Area Visions (Design Session 1)

Table 1

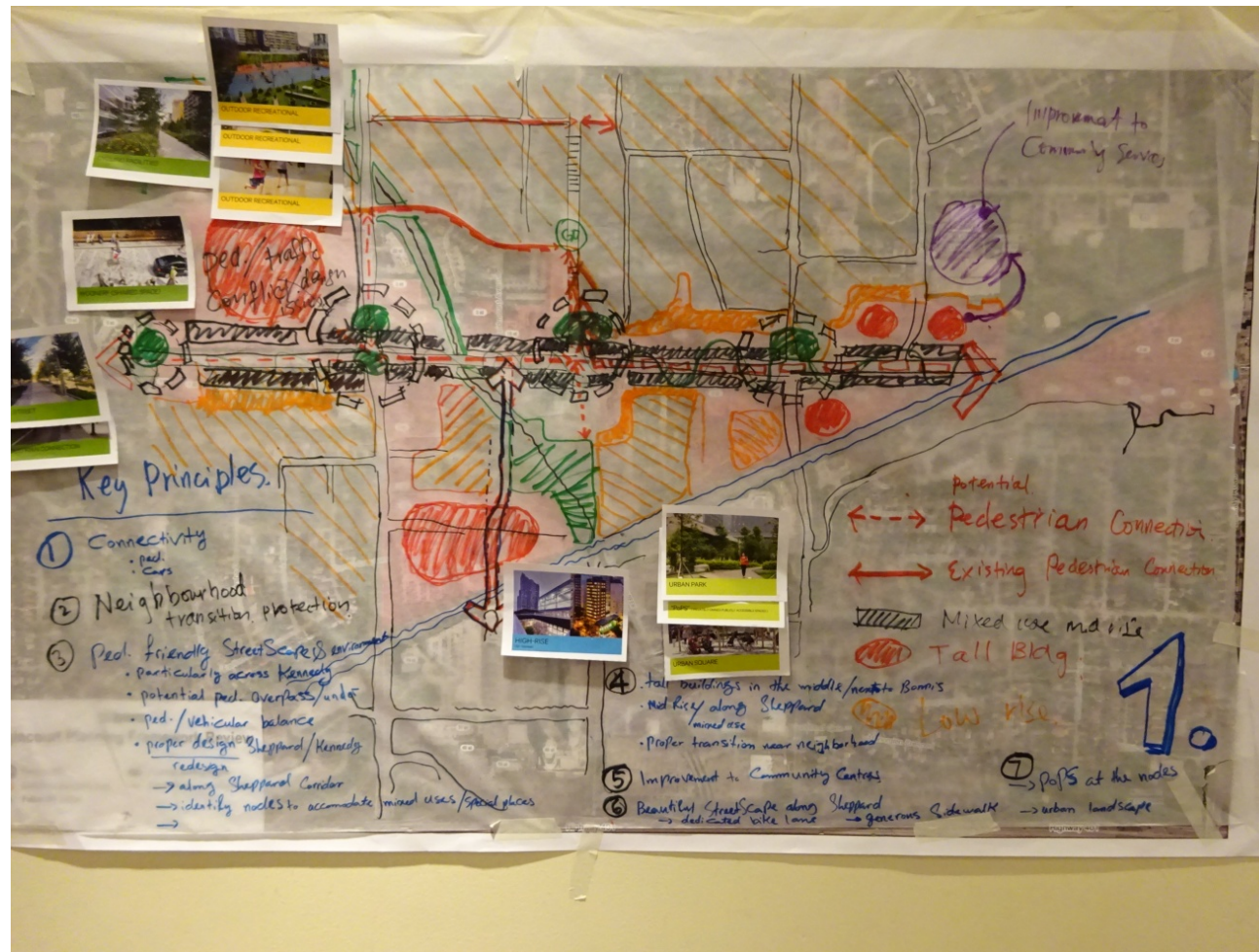


Table 2



Table 3

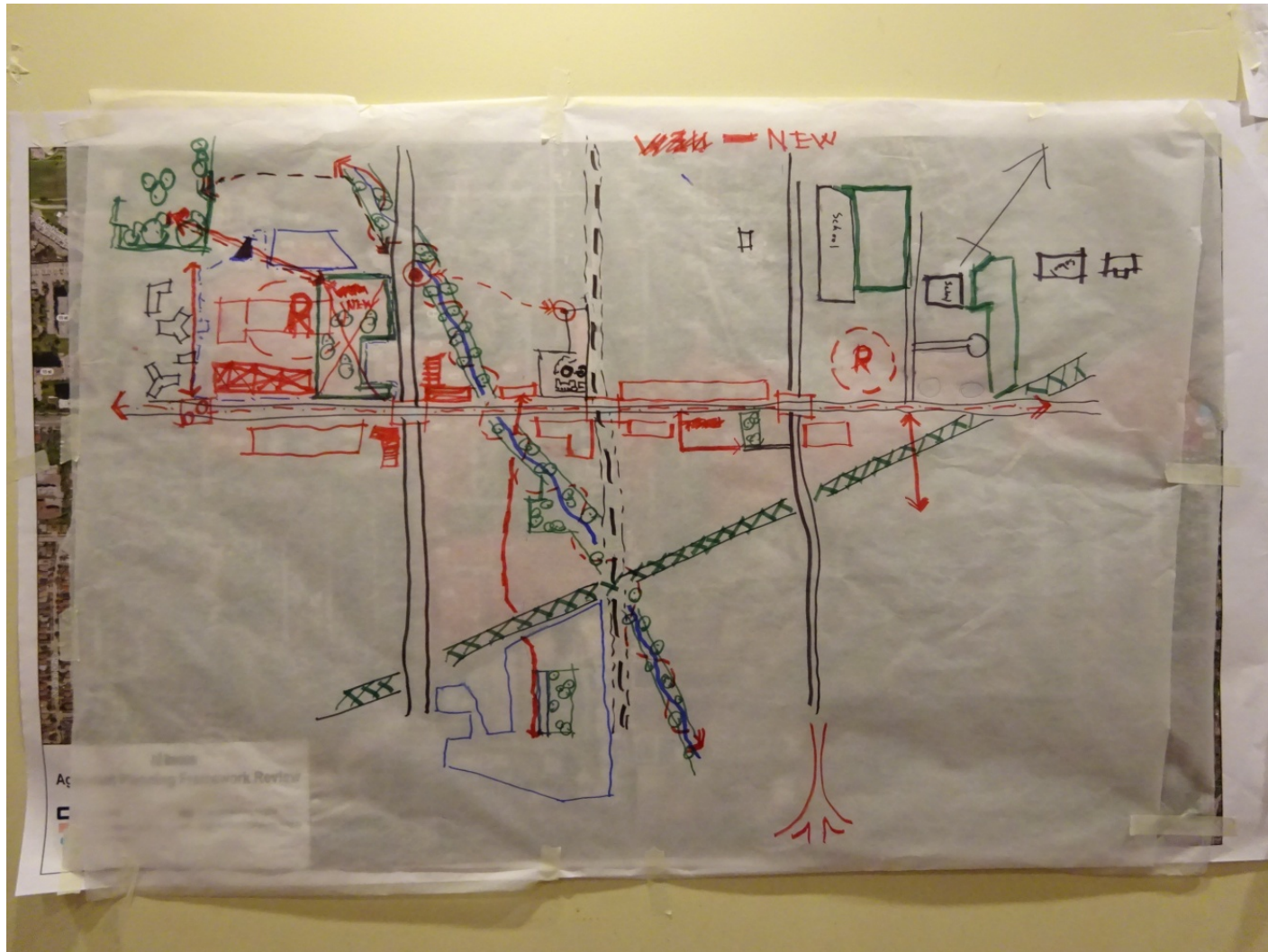


Table 4



Table 5



Appendix D – Mall Site Visions (Design Session 2)

Table 1



Table 2



Table 3



Table 4



Table 5

