

Renew Golden Mile

Meeting Summary — Community Consultation Meeting 3

Tuesday, June 26, 2018, 6:30 am – 9:00pm

Wilmar Heights Event Centre, 963 Pharmacy Avenue, Toronto, ON M1R 2G5

Overview



On Tuesday, June 26, the City of Toronto hosted the third Community Consultation Meeting for Renew Golden Mile, a study focused on developing a vision and planning framework for the Golden Mile area. The purpose of this third meeting was to review and discuss emerging development alternatives and an evaluation framework for the Study. Approximately 70 people attended, including City of Toronto staff and members of the consultant team. Representatives of Councillor Thompson and Councillor Holland's offices also attended.

The meeting began with a welcome and opening remarks from Jamie Ramesbottom from Wilmar Heights and Emily Caldwell from the City of Toronto City Planning Division. After the welcome, Ian Malczewski, third party facilitator from Swerhun Facilitation, reviewed the meeting purpose and agenda. Jason Petrunia of SvN, lead consultant team on the study, gave [a presentation](#) that provided some background on the project and an overview of three potential development alternatives for the Golden Mile. Following the presentation, participants asked questions of clarification and shared feedback about each of the development alternatives.

Casey Craig, Matthew Wheatley, and Ian Malczewski of Swerhun Facilitation facilitated the meeting and prepared this meeting summary, which was shared with participants for review before being finalized.

Key messages

The following key messages emerged from the feedback provided by participants. They are meant to be read along with the more detailed summary of feedback that follows.

Traffic congestion and pedestrian safety are big concerns. Many participants liked that the alternatives included new roads, saying these roads could be helpful in better distributing traffic. Some were concerned that these new roads could lead to more traffic infiltration into residential areas. Several were concerned about pedestrian and cyclist safety and wanted to see more measures to make the area safer.

The Golden Mile needs more community services and parks. Participants wanted to see the plan identify locations for community services like schools, community centres, recreation centres, and facilities for seniors and others in the area.

Eglinton Square Mall is an important social and gathering space. Many said that Eglinton Square Mall is very important, providing indoor gathering space, acting as a community hub, and providing seniors with a place to walk. Many advocated for retaining the mall as part of the future of the area; others said they would be willing to accept redevelopment of the mall if its important social and gathering functions were retained or scaled up as part of new development. Several said it would be important for there to be indoor retail space in the area.

Height and density near transit. Several liked the idea of directing growth to areas near the future LRT on Eglinton (and further from existing neighbourhoods). A few wanted to see density distributed evenly through the area, while others didn't want to see many tall buildings at all.

Questions of clarification

Following the overview presentation and throughout the meeting, participants asked questions of clarification. The questions below are questions that were about the study as a whole; questions about each Alternative follow in the detailed summary of feedback. Responses from the City and/or study team are in *italics*.

- What is the range in height between low rise, mid-rise, and high-rise? *Low rise is up to three storeys, mid-rise is four to eleven storeys, and high-rise is between twelve and forty storeys. The illustrations primarily show high-rise buildings of up to thirty storeys.*
- Which alternative has the highest population? *All three have the same approximate density.*
- Are you testing the alternatives as they are or will they be refined? *The team will make some tweaks based on the feedback from this meeting and then test and evaluate them.*
- How are current development applications connected to this plan? *The City is currently reviewing four development applications within the study area, which is part of the reason for this plan. The City wants to develop a vision for the entire area and have asked developers to work with the City through this process. That said, developers do have the right to submit development applications whenever they like.*

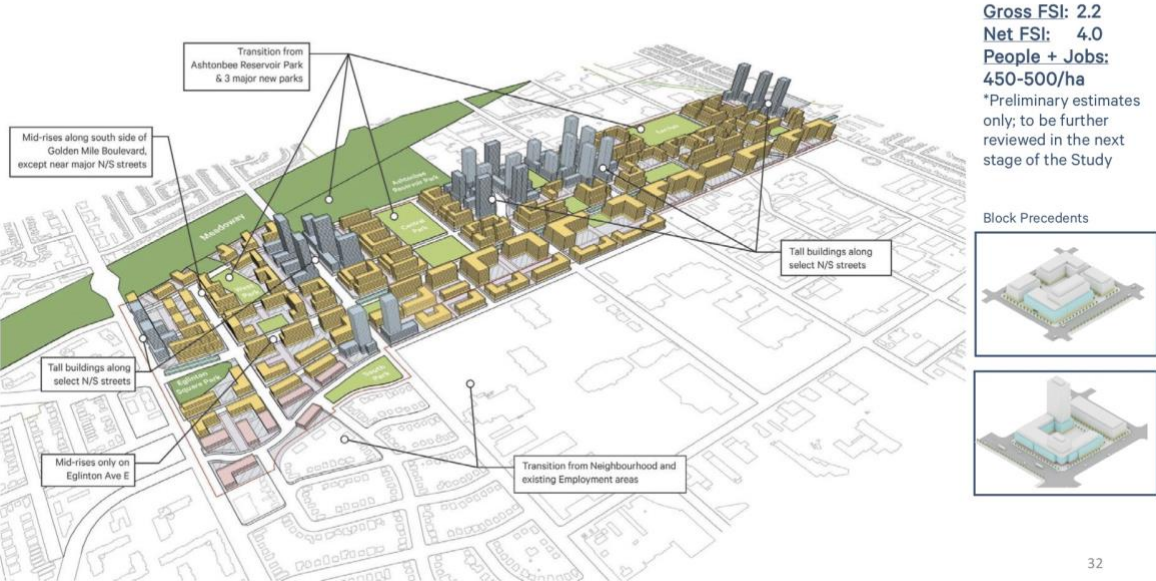
- Is Alternative 3 the only alternative that keeps the indoor mall? *Yes.*
- Do the images shown in graphics represent the actual number of high-rise buildings that will be built? *No, these are demonstrations of where they would generally be located.*
- Will all the new development be condos? *Secondary Plans can have policies that speak to affordable ownership/rental, which will be reflected in the Golden Mile Secondary Plan.*
- *but we have heard that affordable housing is important in this area. The City has policies to protect and promote affordable housing and will be applying them here.*
- Will parking be underground? *The City prefers underground parking if land is redeveloped.*

Detailed summary of feedback

Following the overview presentation and plenary questions of clarification, participants rotated through three stations and/or shared feedback in writing. Each station focused on one of the development alternatives and was staffed by a member of SvN and City of Toronto staff, who answered questions and listened to participants’ feedback. A facilitator helped manage and document the discussion at each station. Participants shared likes, concerns, and suggested refinements for each alternative. They also shared what they would like to see considered as part of the evaluation of the alternatives. After the three rotations, the facilitators shared feedback highlights from each station with the rest of the room.

1. Feedback about Alternative 1: A Mid-Rise Eglinton

Alternative 1: A Mid-Rise Eglinton



Alternative 1 included a focus on mid-rise buildings along Eglinton, a new east-west street north of Eglinton called Golden Mile Boulevard, tall buildings primarily north of Golden Mile Boulevard and away from major parks, and a built form transition to neighbourhoods.

Questions about Alternative 1

- What is the rationale for exploring mid-rise on Eglinton? *Two reasons: the Eglinton Connects planning study recommended mid-rise all along Eglinton and City policies recommend mid-rise on Avenues (like Eglinton).*
- What is the rationale for adding parks to the area? *The team is considering adding new parks because people in the area will need outdoor places to go nearby. They added that supplying parkland is also a requirement of planning legislation.*
- Will the team be recommending the addition of facilities like schools, employers, and other community service facilities? *Once the team chooses a preferred alternative and has a sense of the anticipated population, it will work with the City to assess how many new schools, community centres, child care facilities, libraries, and spaces for other human services might be needed.*

What participants liked about Alternative 1

Some participants said they liked that the neighbourhoods north and south of Eglinton would be protected from redevelopment. Some felt the proposed heights were ok, saying they were more interested in the buildings' beauty than their height (though there was a suggestion that tall buildings be the "lowest tall buildings possible"). Some participants liked that the tall residential buildings were located away from Eglinton Avenue, that there would be no big box retail, and that retail would be spread throughout the area. Most liked the new parks, with one person saying they especially liked the proposed new "South Park." Participants also liked the proposed addition of main street retail to the area. One participant liked seeing tall buildings on the Starlight Lands beside Pharmacy Avenue.

Several said they liked the proposed new east-west streets, especially if they can help get traffic off Eglinton and reduce the number of cars travelling on side streets (though there was some concern that these new east-west streets could become congested, especially O'Connor).

Participants' concerns about Alternative 1

Traffic infiltration. Several participants were concerned that Alternative 1 could result in more traffic infiltration into what are currently relatively quiet residential areas. They were concerned that increased traffic could harm property values and be a safety problem. *Jonathan Chai, transportation consultant with HDR, responded that the team will do a traffic analysis to understand how traffic will move through the area. If the analysis reveals a lot of traffic infiltration as a result of the proposed roads, the team will look at measures to mitigate it.*

Removal of Eglinton Square mall. Several participants were concerned that Eglinton Square mall was removed in Alternative 1. They said that the mall provides an important indoor gathering space that is especially important for the area's seniors. Given the area's aging population, they said the importance of this space will only increase. A few said they would only be willing to accept redevelopment of the mall if another accessible indoor space in the same place replaced it.

Mid-rise on Eglinton. A few were concerned that Alternative 1 proposed mid-rise on Eglinton, saying taller buildings would make sense given the transit being built there.

Cycling infrastructure. A few were concerned that the new bike lanes might not be safe for cyclists, noting that the bike lane on Pharmacy Avenue was recently removed. They said they would like to see more north-south cycling and pedestrian connections. *City of Toronto staff said that one of the keys to creating a safe environment for cyclists is to create a network of lanes (instead of a single street) since networks provide a range of options and connections.*

[Suggested refinements to Alternative 1](#)

Building heights. Participants shared a range of suggested refinements about building heights. While some said they were not concerned about tall buildings, others said tall buildings should be as low possible, with one suggesting a maximum height of 25 storeys. Others said there should be higher buildings on Eglinton to take advantage of the future LRT on Eglinton and to create a better transition to the high- and low-rise neighbourhoods to the north and south.

Avoid creating dead spaces. Several participants cautioned the team not to replicate retail areas like the Shops at Don Mills, saying that it's usually "dead." *Jason Petrunia from SvN said one of the challenges Don Mills faces is that there is no residential component in the retail portion of development. All the alternatives for the Golden Mile include residential mixed with commercial, which should help keep the area active and retail healthy.*

Consider strengthening the connection between O'Connor and Eglinton. While participants generally liked the extension of O'Connor to the east, a few suggested the team consider extending it north to connect with Eglinton (west of Victoria Park).

Suggested refinements to new north-south streets. Some said it was important that any new streets — especially new north-south streets — are publicly accessible so that people have options on how to move within and through the Golden Mile. Others said they would like to see the team identify these new north-south streets as comfortable, mid-block side streets. There was a suggestion to consider making these north-south streets only accessible from the south (i.e. O'Connor) to prevent traffic on Eglinton from being slowed down by cars turning on to and off of them. Terminating these streets in cul de sacs (such as at the top of Harris Park Drive) could help achieve this goal.

Other approaches to green space. Most participants really liked the addition of green space to the area and shared ideas on other ways to add or configure it, including: adding green space on the roofs of new buildings; identifying more and smaller parks (instead of a few larger parks); adding parking near parks (since it's really tough to park at parks when there are events like soccer tournaments); and having new schools use the new parks for their outdoor spaces. There was also a suggestion for the team to ensure that the parks were not too big given the recent investment in the Meadoway to the north.

Potential renovations / redevelopments of Eglinton Square mall. There was a suggestion to consider adding recreation or a seniors’ residential component to the top of Eglinton Square mall if the mall is going to be renovated or redeveloped. This renovation or redevelopment could be a “hybrid” option that enables redevelopment, keeps the indoor function available for residents, and provides others with opportunities to take advantage of the mall.

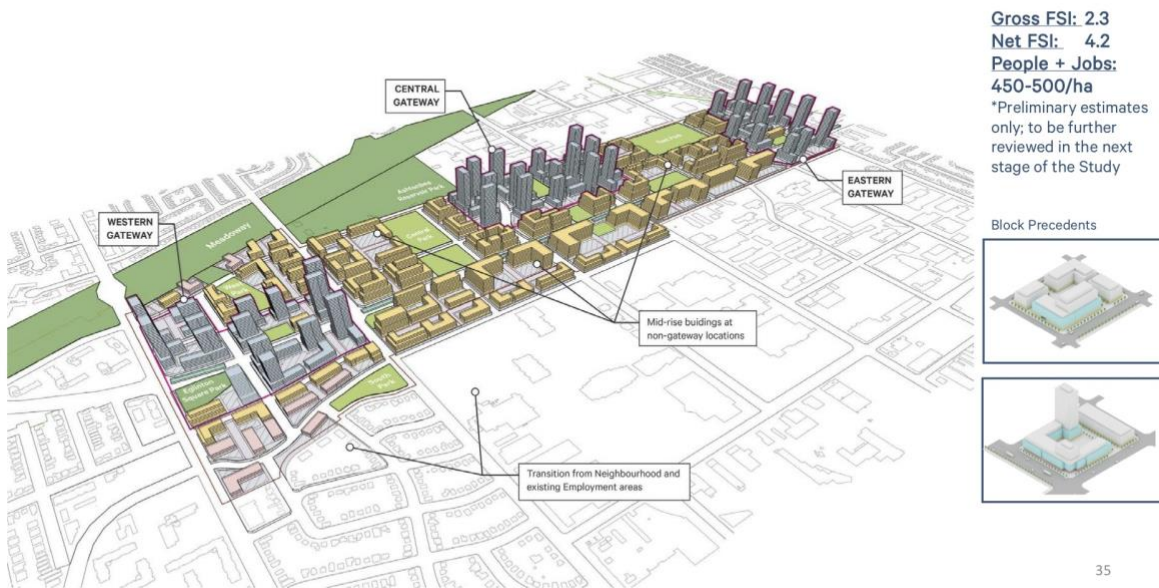
Consider exploring alternative transportation technologies. There were suggestions for the team to consider an internal transportation system (such as golf cart-like vehicles and boardwalks) and ways to accommodate autonomous vehicles.

Other suggested refinements, including suggestions to ensure that:

- all new buildings are designed with accessibility in mind;
- the area’s infrastructure is able to keep pace with the area’s population growth;
- the area has a Community Hub that includes a mall, library, and gatherings spaces/places to eat; and
- residents’ in the south are still able to easily access the Don Valley Parkway.

2. Feedback about Alternative 2: Three Gateways and Parks Districts

Alternative 2: Three Gateways and Parks Districts



Alternative 2 included three tall building gateways (west, central, and east), mid-rise building districts around four major parks, and a built form transition to neighbourhoods.

Questions about Alternative 2

- Can you give examples of an existing area in the city that is similar to what is being envisioned here? *One example would be Bloor Street from Yonge to the Annex (Spadina/Bathurst). It includes some tall buildings that step down to mid-rise.*
- Does this alternative have the highest density? *All three have the same density.*
- Where would the end of the new street (parallel to Eglinton on the south side) be? *It would end at Warden.*
- Will you be able to turn left from Pharmacy on to Eglinton? *No. As a result of the Eglinton Crosstown development (not this process), drivers will not be able to turn left from Pharmacy on to Eglinton — they will have to proceed to the next intersection and make a controlled U-turn (similar to how Spadina Avenue works today).*
- How will you achieve new streets, particularly the one that is shown going through Eglinton Square? Will they require expropriation? *There are a number of ways the City achieves new streets. Expropriation is one way, but more commonly the City acquires them in conjunction with new development.*
- Can you define what the Gateways are, what they're trying to achieve, and what are their strengths? *The Gateways are intended to provide entrance points to the area that come with/provide amenities, services, and quality public realm.*
- How were the locations for the Gateways chosen? *The east and west Gateways are meant to provide entrances to the area and the central Gateway is meant to connect to Centennial College.*
- What is the anticipated timing for all of this change to happen? *The City doesn't create development; it sets a vision and plan and then developers do the actual building. The timing depends on the development industry. We do know there is a desire/demand to develop this area and that there are four development applications in process.*

What participants liked about Alternative 2

Participants liked that Alternative 2 showed tall buildings together with smaller buildings closer to parks, which they thought would be better for sunlight. Participants liked that there was mid-rise on parts of Eglinton and low-rise near Clairlea. They also liked the efforts to green the area with more “amazing green spaces.” One participant liked the lack of big box retail.

Participants' concerns about Alternative 2

Removal of Eglinton Square mall. Several participants did not like that Alternative 2 removed Eglinton Square mall, saying that the mall is a community hub, focal point, and an important indoor gathering space. Participants said they did not want to see only outdoor shopping in the Golden Mile (like the Shops at Don Mills).

Truck traffic on O'Connor. There was concern that trucks will be forced on to O'Connor — a situation that is already “a disaster” — and that many of the places on Eglinton will still require trucks to service them. *The study team said that the plan envisions preventing large trucks from*

using Eglinton and O'Connor as a thoroughfare (though local access will still be provided to allow trucks to service businesses in the area).

Traffic resulting from increased population, especially at the three gateways. High-rises will bring more people, many of which will have cars, which could make traffic worse (especially during rush hour). *One of the main objectives of the plan is to create more streets with more mobility options (including transit, cycling, and walking) to reduce traffic congestion and provide options. Most of the new parking will be underground.*

The level of intensification. There was concern shared about population growth in the area: “there are already too many people.” There was also concern that there was too much density proposed for the Eglinton Square site, which is very close to existing neighbourhoods. *The Province has policies for population growth in the City, and this area is expected to accommodate growth. The purpose of this process is to plan for growth and provide the necessary infrastructure to support it.*

[Suggested refinements to Alternative 2](#)

Consider building above Eglinton Square mall or replicating it elsewhere. Since Eglinton Square is an important community focal point, the team could consider building above the mall in a way that includes recreational space for seniors. Some said that if the mall must be redeveloped, something similar (like an indoor shopping mall or community hub) should be built in the area.

Include a community hub in the area. Several said they wanted to see a community centre or community hub in the area, potentially on the Eglinton Square lands if the mall is to be redeveloped. *The team understands from its Community Services and Facilities assessment that the area will likely need at least one school and a community centre. At the next stage of work, the team will identify where these facilities could go.*

Add policies that support beautification and environmentally-friendly activities and choices, such as solar panels, electric cars, and others.

Refinements to the approach to density, including:

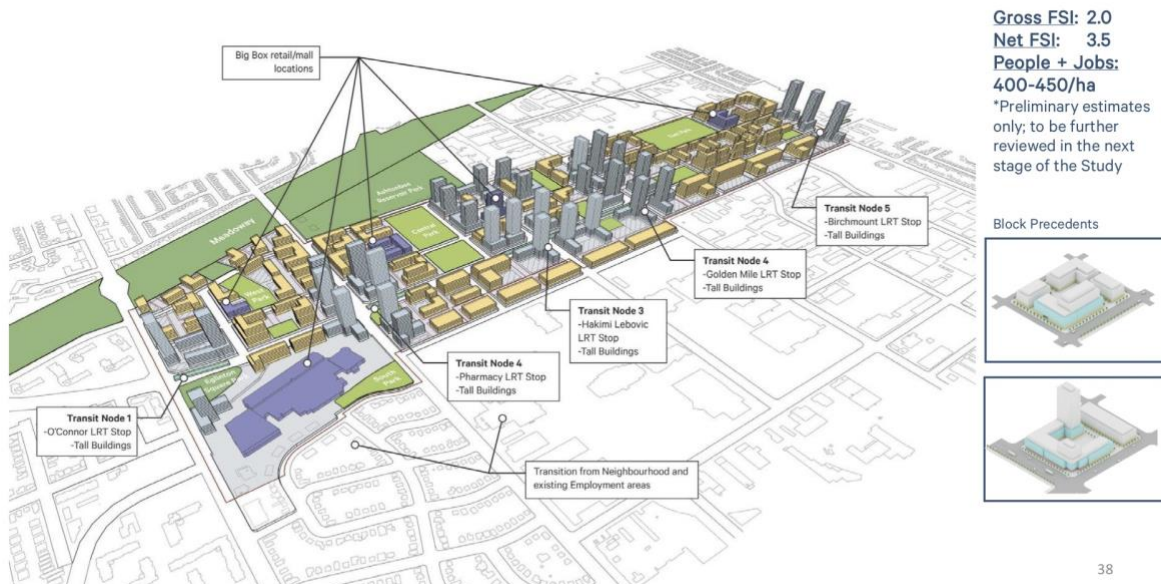
- Move the Central Gateway south, closer to Eglinton Avenue to better connect to activity along Eglinton. Moving this gateway to Eglinton could create more of a downtown by putting taller buildings closer to transit.
- Expand the Western Gateway eastward to allow for taller buildings further east.
- Concentrate more density around the transit stations.
- Create a more defined street edge along Eglinton with podium and tower buildings.
- Consider adding more density on the Starlight Lands beside Pharmacy Avenue.

Some participants suggested **including policies around affordability** for the area. In response to this suggestion, others said that it is difficult to create affordable housing in mid-rise buildings

because they tend to be more “boutique buildings” and said taller buildings could help create more affordable housing options.

3. Feedback about Alternative 3: Five Transit Nodes and a Central Hub

Alternative 3: Five Transit Nodes and a Central Hub



Alternative 3 included tall buildings around transit stations, a tall building concentration around a Central Hub bridging Centennial College and Eglinton Avenue, low and mid-rise buildings beside parks, special north-south parkway streets next to main community parks, and incorporation of large format/mall retail.

Questions about Alternative 3

- Will the people who live at these transit nodes actually use the transit? Or will they just contribute to the existing car congestion because they too will be driving across the city? *It is intended that many of the people living at the transit nodes will use transit, but we do still recognize that some people will drive depending on their destination. The study team is undertaking a detailed transportation analysis to test different levels of transit versus car use.*
- Are there community gathering spaces planned for this area other than the mall? *There is a community infrastructure study that will inform this at the next stage of the study.*
- What is an employment use? *Employment uses can mean offices — it typically means that residential is not permitted.*
- What’s the difference in parks across the three alternatives? *The park network is the same in all three options; Alternative 3 emphasizes connections to the north and has a tree lined street.*

- In Alternative 2 and 3, are high rise densities the same heights? *Yes, both show 20-30 storeys. In Alternative 3, the tall buildings close to parks are 20 storeys and the tall buildings close to nodes are 30 storeys.*
- Will Golden Mile Blvd be for all modes of traffic? *Yes, and it will be a green street, too.*
- Is a PATH-like system possible here? *Theoretically, yes, but it would be very costly.*

What participants liked about Alternative 3

Participants liked that Alternative 3 retains Eglinton Square and big box retail. They also liked the idea of nodes, saying they could lead to more people taking transit and they would make it easier for more people to get to transit stops. Some said they liked that this alternative intensified the area, saying the intensification could produce more affordable redevelopment. One participant liked that this option recognizes some of the long-term leases that are in place that might prevent some buildings from redeveloping in the near-term.

Participants' concerns about Alternative 3

Truck traffic south of Eglinton. Participants were concerned about truck traffic being diverted into residential areas as a result of the redesign of the area's streets.

Lack of policies to protect affordability. Concern that none of the alternatives seem to include policies that will protect rental and affordable housing.

Outdoor retail in winter. Several participants were concerned the street stores would not survive the winter because it's too cold for people to shop outside. They suggested the team consider adding internal connections between buildings.

Availability of parking. There was concern that there might not be enough parking in the area to accommodate all future residents and their cars.

Existing residents being pushed out by new development. Several participants shared concerns that they didn't want this new development to push out the area's existing residents. There was a suggestion that all the high-rises on Eglinton made this the "least friendly" alternative.

Lack of a community centre of hub in the plans. Several people said that the area needs a recreation centre and said it should be a "no brainer" to add one with all the new people that will be in the area.

Fewer new streets, congestion, and traffic movement. Compared to the other alternatives, Alternative 3 has fewer new streets. The lack of new streets and the fact that the owner of the mall could still choose to redevelop could result in an even more congested area. There was also concern about drivers having to make a u-turn to get on to Eglinton from Pharmacy and concern that O'Connor stops at Victoria Park (instead of continuing under Eglinton Square Park to help traffic flow).

The existing mall will not be big enough to support all the people that will arrive with growth.

Suggested refinements to Alternative 3

Extend density north and south of the nodes. While they liked the intensification close to transit nodes, some suggested density should extend further north and south of each node. They were concerned that, with all the density in one central hub would only benefit a small number of landowners. They said they preferred the idea of “five fingers” instead of five nodes.

Consider widening Craigton since it is the main road for cars coming from the south to get to the Don Valley Parkway.

Add beautiful connections, such as beautifying Pharmacy so it’s nice to walk from Eglinton Square all the way up to the Meadoway; adding a walkway from the LRT stop at Victoria Park connecting Eglinton Square (since it has historic value and a commemorative plaque), and; “bisecting” Eglinton Square mall to create a please north-south walkway to the South Park.

Other suggestions, including developing a PATH system, creating a better transition between Eglinton Square mall and residential areas, and incorporating solar panels and geothermal heating/cooling for new buildings.

4. Feedback about evaluation

Participants said they wanted to see the alternatives evaluated against whether each provided opportunity for cultural centres, social services, agencies, and space for outdoor events / festivals. There was also a suggestion for the team to consider “ease of implementation” based on which sites are likelier to develop in the short, medium, and long term. There was also a suggestion to consider how equally density is spread amongst developers.

5. Other advice

Several participants said that, no matter which alternative is chosen, the City should make sure the entire area is pedestrian friendly (including crosswalks, sidewalks, and gathering areas). There were also suggestions to have fewer restrictions mandating retail, employment, or mid-rise so that more housing can be provided. There was also a suggestion to include a fountain as a gathering space (similar to the fountain in Berczy Park) in the triangular park at Victoria Park and Eglinton that incorporates the “future learning” identities of the area (including farming, industry, and munitions/wartime housing).

Finally, participants said the City should provide coffee and/or snacks for attendees since the meetings are at dinner time. There was also a request to extend the feedback deadline.

6. Feedback shared after the meeting

Feedback shared after the meeting included suggestions to: create an internal transportation system to allow people to use skateboard, motorized wheelchairs, and other forms of non-cars to get around the area; avoid creating wind tunnels, too much shade (i.e. make sure there is space between towers), too much of a grid, or a “fishbowl effect” by surrounding the area with tall towers; make sure there are varied heights, setbacks, and purposes of buildings; make sure

the architecture reflects the geography of the area (the Golden Mile is like the “prairie” of Toronto); minimize and manage light pollution, sign pollution (like Dundas Square), too much glass in buildings, air traffic (from drones), noise pollution, air pollution, and bad smells from commercial activity; consider patios for under-age or non-alcohol drinkers; add good public art to the area and interesting architecture.

There were also suggestions to:

- Consider encouraging more intensification of big box sites to capitalize on the Province’s investment in transit.
- Eglinton Square Mall is an existing community hub; its long-term existence as a hub should be recognized and considered.
- Consider how to create an “urban mall frontage.”
- Provide a wider range of built form options and more height and density near transit stations throughout the Golden Mile study area
- Consider tall buildings south of Eglinton on Victoria Park
- Take existing as-of-right zoning into consideration (rather than down-zoning)
- Consider relocating the large park near the future Pharmacy LRT station (which previous planning studies and policies indicated as a potential location for residential development)
- Place more of an emphasis and flexibility for high-quality retail places, including a large-format grocery store
- Consider “soft” and “hard” redevelopment sites (i.e. which sites are likeliest to redevelop in the short, medium, and long-term) to inform an “ease of implementation” consideration in the evaluation process.
- Consider equity amongst major landowners / developments as part of the evaluation criteria to ensure additional density is shared equally.

Next steps

The City and consultant team thanked participants for their feedback and committed to sharing a draft summary of feedback in the coming weeks. The team reminded participants that the next discussions and Community Consultation Meeting on the Golden Mile will happen in the fall of 2018.

Appendix A. Meeting Agenda

Renew Golden Mile
Community Meeting #3
Tuesday, June 26, 2018, 6:30 – 9:00pm
Wilmar Heights Event Centre
963 Pharmacy Avenue, Toronto ON M1R 2G5

Community Meeting #3

Meeting Purpose

To review and discuss emerging development alternatives and an evaluation framework for the Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study.

Proposed Meeting Agenda

6:30 Open House

7:00 Welcome, introductions, and agenda review

Councillor welcome
City of Toronto City Planning
Swerhun Facilitation

7:10 Overview

SvN

Questions of clarification

7:35 Discussion

1. What do you like about each of the development alternatives?
Is there anything that concerns you about each alternative?
What refinements (if any) do you have?
2. What would you like to see considered in the evaluation of the alternatives?

3 concurrent, rotating stations:

Station 1: Development Alternative A

Station 2: Development Alternative B

Station 3: Development Alternative C

Rotation 1: 7:35 – 7:55

Rotation 2: 8:00 – 8:20

Rotation 3: 8:25 – 8:45

8:45 Report back

8:55 Wrap up and next steps

9:00 Adjourn

Meeting materials will be posted to the Golden Mile Secondary Plan webpage www.toronto.ca/renewgoldenmile. The deadline to submit any additional feedback is July 3, 2018.