



Don Mills Crossing -  
Mobility Planning Study

City of Toronto

Final Report  
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## Executive Summary

The Don Mills Crossing (DMC) Study Area, centred around the intersection of Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue, is a key focus area for City-building, especially as major investments have been made to expand surface transit through the area. The construction of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail transit (ECLRT) presents an opportunity to plan and develop a complete community within the Don Mills Crossing area through transit-oriented intensification and redevelopment that aligns with Provincial, municipal and local planning policies.

The anticipated growth in the vicinity of the Don Mills-Eglinton intersection creates a need for a more cohesive multi-modal transportation network to accommodate mobility users of all ages and abilities, with enhanced connectivity and integration at both local and regional levels. The purpose of this Mobility Planning Study (MPS) is to provide a framework to connect the existing, and future transit networks and planned developments in the Don Mills-Eglinton area, following a planning process that satisfies the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process Phases 1 and 2.

This MPS builds on the findings from the City-led Don Mills Crossing Phase 1 Transportation Study, completed in December 2016; and takes into consideration the subsequent Phase 2 Public Realm Structure Plan to develop an overall planning framework that addresses transportation and mobility in the area. The Don Mills Crossing Study established a “core study area” centred at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road. This core study area includes the four (4) corners of this intersection and extends to a radius of approximately 800 metres around the intersection. To review impacts and opportunities of the local area transportation network, a larger geographic area of influence was considered as the “transportation area of influence”.

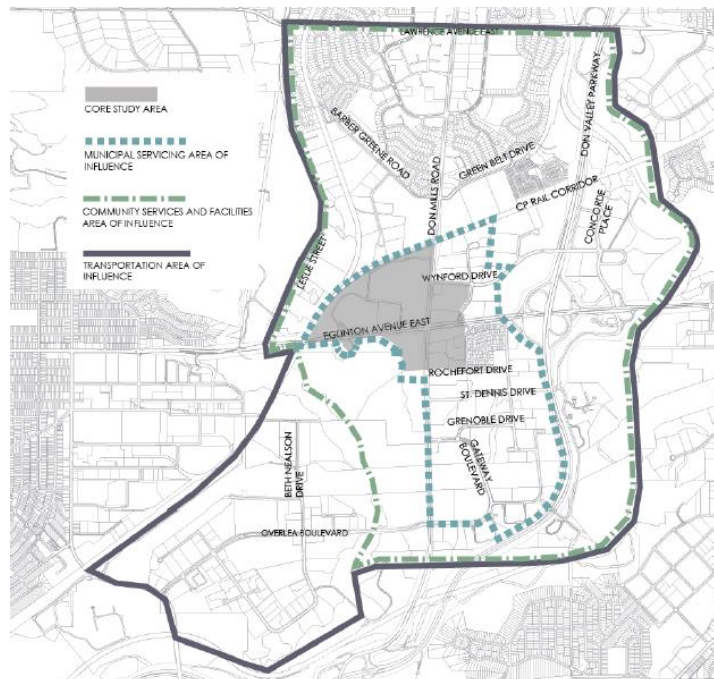


Exhibit E-1: Study Area

## Existing and Future Conditions

The existing transportation network, as well as natural, socio-economic, cultural and built environment of the Don Mills Crossing study area inform the local baseline conditions, and set the stage for reviewing future conditions.

### Transportation

Key findings in the Don Mills Crossing Phase 1 Transportation Study support the need to develop a comprehensive area Mobility Plan that addresses the existing challenges of: crossing barriers, providing connectivity both within the community and to future transit networks, and accommodating anticipated growth in adjacent development blocks.

- **Travel Behavior:** The existing transportation network in the study area is auto-oriented with limited options for people to travel by other modes. Although the existing transportation network is auto-oriented, findings from the 2011 Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) indicate that the existing mode share within the transportation area of influence for transit and other sustainable modes of transportation (walking, cycling carpooling, etc.) is 40-47%. The local nature of travel in the transportation influence area highlights the need to improve active transportation and transit modes and support the range of land uses included within the study area.
- **Active Transportation:** The study area exhibits poor connectivity in pedestrian and cycling networks, which is attributed to the lack of local streets and presence of cul-de-sacs, discontinuous sidewalks and cycling facilities with physical barriers (valley / ravine system, Don Valley Parkway, CP rail corridor). Recreational trails are located along the West and East Don River, however there are a few key locations where the trails are not continuous, resulting in longer walking distances for nearby residents and visitors. Safety is another key concern for active transportation users, especially for crossing activities at the major intersection of Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue, where higher number of lanes, traffic exposure and longer clearance distances present higher collision risks.
- **Transit:** While the main arterial roads are served by bus transit, the neighbourhoods within the study area exhibit a “transit desert” effect which are pockets that are underserved by TTC transit, leading to lower usage and longer bus routes. The implementation of the ECLRT and enhanced bus service along Don Mills Road will increase transit options in the area, and along with active transportation network improvements can help develop a multi-modal hub.
- **Vehicular Travel:** Arterial roads and major intersections are congested during peak periods due to the lack of alternative routes for east-west movements. Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue East both serve as regional routes carrying a large proportion of through traffic in the area.

### Natural Environment

A review of the natural heritage features of the study area indicated a few historic records of plant species and wildlife regulated under the Ontario Endangered Species Act, 2007; efforts should be undertaken to identify the location and sensitivity of habitat prior to commencement of any construction related activities.

Natural features within the study area also include one Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), two Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and areas regulated by Ontario Regulation 166/06 and by City of Toronto's Ravine and Natural Feature Protection (RNFP) By-law, requiring permitting from appropriate authorities for any works undertaken.

The major vehicle emissions as well as noise and vibration within the study area are the major existing roadways with higher traffic volumes, Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road. It is considered very unlikely that future minor changes to the interior access roadways within the core study area and the desired shift of existing or new trips to more sustainable modes (transit, cycling, walking) will result in any significant noise or air quality impacts.

### **Heritage Resources**

The identified cultural heritage resources within the core study area include two industrial properties, an institutional property, two commercial properties, and one railscape.

A Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment determined that one previously registered archaeological site is located within 1km of the core study area, while remaining portions of the core study area do not retain archaeological potential and will not require Stage 2 assessment.

### **Problems and Opportunities**

Within the study area, Eglinton Avenue and Don Mills Road serve as regional roads that carry significant through traffic volumes, especially due to their proximity to the Don Valley Parkway. Historically, the intersection of these two major roads has experienced some of the highest traffic volumes and collision risks in the City of Toronto. There is currently limited transportation network connectivity, especially for active modes, due to major natural or man-made barriers including the Don Valley Parkway, Don Valley Ravine, CP Rail corridor, wide roadways, and separated development blocks. As a result, there is a lack of a coherent and integrated multi-modal transportation network.

However, the construction of the ECLRT will transform the area surrounding Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue, creating an opportunity to shift away from the originally planned vehicle-oriented place towards a more multi-modal and people-oriented place. A review of existing transportation conditions confirms the need for a more integrated multi-modal transportation network, internally and to the surrounding areas, that allows for:

- Walkable and connected communities;
- Cycling infrastructure within a connected network; and,
- Safe and convenient access to transit.

The arrival of new transit infrastructure will unlock the redevelopment of existing large, single use parcels of underutilized lands into a complete community with a range and mix of uses and fine-grained street network, and connectivity with higher priority to transit, walking, cycling and other sustainable shared vehicle modes or technologies.

The DMC MPS provides an opportunity to shape and manage the emerging multi-modal transportation network which includes: linkages to open spaces and the ravine system planned in conjunction with natural heritage considerations; new active transportation crossings, such as over the CP rail corridor, for a more complete and connected network; and new and safe street

connections that do not significantly affect roadway operations and are based upon high quality urban design.

### **Development and Evaluation of Alternative Solutions**

Land development and transportation infrastructure concepts in each quadrant of the Don Mills-Eglinton intersection are currently in various stages of planning, and along with various transit expansion plans (ECLRT, bus services), and the Public Realm Structure Plan adopted by Council in 2017, will provide the future mobility concept of the study area.

To identify alternative solutions for addressing the changing needs and existing constraints in the Don Mills Crossing study area, combinations of development levels and mobility infrastructure / service improvements were evaluated using a multi-modal transportation assessment model. The following set of alternative solutions were developed:

- Scenario A (Baseline): Full Development and implementation of the ECLRT;
- Scenario B (Limit Development): Partial Development and implementation of the ECLRT;
- Scenario C (Enhanced Mobility): Significant Development, Travel Demand Management (TDM) measures, and multimodal improvements including newer operations/technologies, implementation of the ECLRT and enhanced bus transit on Don Mills Road; and,
- Scenario D (Regional Transit): Full Development, and implementation of the ECLRT and the Relief Line North.

The alternative solutions were evaluated using five criteria including: Transportation, Natural Environment, Social Environment, Compliance with existing Policies and Cost.

A comparison of the four solutions showed that Scenarios A and B do not address the mobility needs and/or density requirements of the area to be supportive of the ECLRT.

Scenario D is the ideal long-term solution, although the integral higher order transit component is contingent upon other City initiatives.

Scenario C improves mobility on top of existing planned improvements with monitoring of impacts to allow for further development and is determined to be the best scenario to allow for development in the short and medium term.

### **Public Consultation**

During Phase 1 of Don Mills Crossing Study, several public consultation events took place to gather public input. Feedback received from these included strong public desires for improved cycling infrastructure and connections, as well as pedestrian facilities and accessibility. Other concerns expressed by the public included potential congestion as future developments occur in the Don Mills Crossing area.

This Mobility Planning Study was undertaken through a planning process that satisfies Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process. In accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class EA process, this project included a Notice of Study Commencement, a Public Information Centre (PIC), and consultations throughout the study with various stakeholders, as well as aboriginal communities. The public and stakeholders were

undertaken to ensure that the different needs and objectives of others is adequately considered and addressed.

For technical stakeholders, including transit agencies, TRCA, CP Rail and land developer, preliminary meetings were held early in the project to discuss key objectives, vision and needs. A public consultation was held on April 19th, 2018 for the overall planning study, with specific boards and presentation materials on the Mobility Plan Study component. Overall, there was support for the improvements to the mobility network in and around the core study area, including the ring road around Don Mills and Eglinton, the Wynford extension and other new streets.

### **Recommendations**

Recognizing the benefits of an integrated multi-modal transportation system, the recommended mobility plan also reinforces low-carbon options, while addressing environmental and health benefits, and social equity in mobility planning for all users.

The overall mobility plan strategy has been developed based on the following:

- Multi-modal analysis;
- An emphasis on completing networks with connections to the wider transportation network and linkages to the surrounding neighbourhoods;
- Fully integrating the Eglinton Crosstown investment; and,
- Stakeholder and public consultation, including with on-going development planning initiatives.

To achieve the desirable and increased walk mode share for proposed developments and for existing neighbourhoods in the core study area, a high quality and safe pedestrian network should be implemented. It is recommended that existing planned connections be carried forward with new mid-block crossing implemented to reduce travel distance for pedestrians.

Planned cycling facilities along Eglinton Avenue should integrate and connect with local roads, developments, and the trail system. Transit access should be implemented incrementally, with multi-modal connections to the ECLRT stations as a priority. In the medium term, additional bus connections/routes should be added to support developments as they are completed, with the potential for a new regional transit line in the long-term.

The provision of parking should be planned to manage vehicular traffic growth and limit unnecessary car travel, thereby encouraging transit and active transportation modes. It is recognized that each planned development within the core study area will require parking, however policies and efforts to encourage shared uses should be implemented.

The Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue corridors will continue to function as major regional vehicular and truck routes and connecting to the Don Valley Parkway in the short- to medium term. As development growth occurs there will be additional vehicular trips on these key roads that will be competing for roadway space and priority with potential incremental transit improvements. Supporting goods movement is vital to an economically sustainable city. As noted, Don Mills Road, Eglinton Avenue and Wynford Drive will continue to function as major regional vehicular and truck routes connecting to the Don Valley Parkway.

Proactive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and innovative multi-modal strategies will be required to be successful to achieve the planned development growth within the core transportation study area. These strategies promote travel demand measures and technological advances that support alternatives to single occupant vehicular travel, adding capacity to the network without requiring its expansion and additional major investment.

### Next Steps

Following this Mobility Plan Study, additional work is required to fulfill phase 3 and 4 of the Class Environmental Assessment for the potential projects identified below and in **Figure E-2**:

1. Right-of-way widening along Wynford Drive and Gervais Drive to include cycle tracks, enhanced pedestrian environment including associated public realm, and surface bus operational improvements to ensure transit reliability and capacity. The reconfiguration of the Eglinton Avenue / Gervais Drive / Ferrand Drive intersection is critical to support surface transit improvements, to provide enhanced active transportation connections to the wider neighbourhood, and to facilitate access to the planned development in the southeast quadrant.
2. Wynford Drive extension, and multi-use trail (MUT) with connection to the existing Don Mills Trail north of the CP rail corridor and a grade-separated CPR corridor crossing; and to the south of Eglinton Avenue to the West Don River ravine. The preferred CPR corridor crossing solution is an elevated (pedestrian bridge) rail crossing.

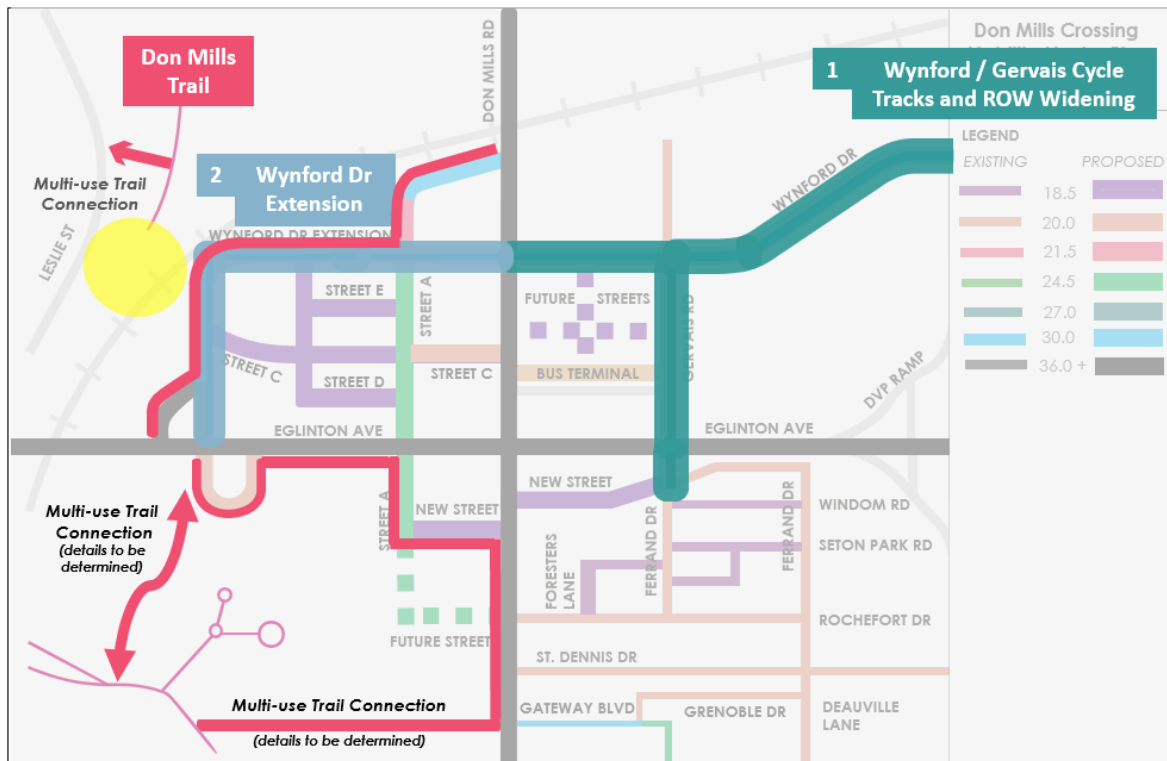


Exhibit E-2: Potential EA Requirements

Updates to the City’s Official Plan, 10-Year Cycling Network Plan, and Secondary Plan should be completed to reflect the recommendations proposed. Due to the complexity of the study area, a



micro-simulation traffic analysis is suggested to determine impacts of development phases and new bus routes and/or dedicated transit facilities. Continued monitoring of parking, active transportation, and travel demand management strategies should be completed as development phases are implemented to ensure that mode shift and diversion from auto travel is occurring, and to inform planning and infrastructure decisions. Opportunities can also be identified in order to improve future policies and strategies with more local and area specific data.