

Renew Golden Mile

Meeting Summary — Community Consultation Meeting 4

Tuesday, June 25, 2019, 5:30 pm – 9:00pm

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

Overview



On Tuesday, June 25, the City of Toronto hosted the fourth Community Consultation Meeting for Renew Golden Mile, a study focused on developing a vision, planning framework, and ultimately a secondary plan for the Golden Mile area. The purpose of this fourth meeting was to share and seek feedback on the draft final design and implementation strategies for the Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study. Approximately 125 people attended, including City of Toronto staff and members of the consultant team. Councillor Gary Crawford and a representative from MP Doly Begum's office also attended the meeting. The CBC also attended and interviewed a few participants during the open house.

The meeting began with an open house where participants had an opportunity review a number of information panels and speak with City staff and the consultant team. Following the Open House, Jamie Ramesbottom from the Wilmar Heights Event Centre provided welcoming remarks and Ian Malczewski, third party facilitator from Swerhun Inc., reviewed the meeting agenda. Emily Caldwell from the City of Toronto Planning Division provided an update on the process and work completed since the last Community Consultation Meeting. Jason Petrunia of SvN, lead consultant team on the study, provided the overview presentation, which focused on the draft final design and implementation strategies for the Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study. Jonathan Chai of HDR, transportation consultant team on the study, presented sections of the presentation related to the Transportation Master Plan. Following the presentation Ian

facilitated plenary questions of clarification. The meeting concluded with a second open house session.

Matthew Wheatley, Ian Malczewski, and Alex Smiciklas of Swerhun Inc. helped facilitated the meeting and prepared this meeting summary, which was shared with participants for review prior to being finalized. This summary is meant to capture key themes and feedback from the meeting; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

Questions of clarification

Following the overview presentation participants asked questions of clarification. The questions asked are included below in **bold** followed by responses provided by the City and study team in *italics*.

- **From the presentation it sounds like you are planning facilities for future residents along the Eglinton corridor, but what about current residents? It also sounds like Eglinton Square will be gone; will it move to another location?**
 - *Planning for existing and future needs: The plan takes into account both future and existing residents in the area. For example, the Community Services & Facilities Study used both existing and projected long-term demand for services to account for both existing and future needs.*
 - *Eglinton Square: There is an active application for the Eglinton Square property and the applicant's plans for this site are phased and long-term. There are a number of long-term leases at Eglinton Square, so the retailers won't be moving in the short-term. The applicant does propose that some of the existing retail uses will be incorporated into redevelopment. Additional information about the application is shown on the display panels and the long-term development plans are publicly available online at the City's [1 Eglinton Square application page](#).*
- **In the presentation you indicated that large format retail will be retained. What does this mean?** *Large format retail is what you see in the area today (e.g. No Frills, Canadian Tire, etc.). What we mean by retaining this is that these large retail uses will stay in the area, but they could be configured differently as buildings are redeveloped (e.g. they may be spread out over 2-floors of a building instead of spread out over a single large floor).*
- **Could either the City or Councillor Crawford comment on what project/development will happen first once the LRT is up and running?** *City Planning: The answer to this is two-fold. 1. Any project that is initiated by the City comes from direction from Council and Council has not given any direction for a City-initiated project in the Golden Mile. 2. Development initiated by a private landowner/developer is reviewed by the City prior to a decision from Council. We cannot say which development will begin first as all five applications in the area are under review and we don't know which one will be ready first. Councillor Crawford: Council direct staff to set the zoning for an area. Once the zoning is set, developers decide when they want to move forward with their application process. I have not had*

conversations with any developers for the Golden Mile area but, when I do, I will tell them to get feedback from the community on their plans and application.

- **Will there be affordable and supportive housing included in the Secondary Plan?** *Yes, the Secondary Plan will include an affordable housing component. A number of the sites within the Plan area are large sites so they will automatically be required to have a minimum of 20% affordable housing. We are also looking at options for including affordable housing in the smaller sites.*
- **What will the Social & Cultural Hub identified in the centre be?** *This will be a large park close to Centennial College. The idea is to take advantage of Centennial College to support cultural uses and programming in the park.*
- **The Plan includes buildings with heights up to 35 stories; can you give us other examples in Scarborough where there are 35 story buildings?** *There are towers at the Scarborough Centre close to the Scarborough Centre RT Station that are in the 35 – 40 storey range, approximately 37 storeys*
- **The heights allowed in the Plan seem to keep getting taller and there doesn't appear to be a funding formula to pay for community infrastructure. Will allowing these tall buildings allow the City to get money from developers to pay for community infrastructure?** *Community infrastructure is funded through a whole host of tools, which are not necessarily tied to specific heights and densities. Section 37 of the Planning Act is sometimes used to secure funding for community benefits in exchange for providing additional height and density, but this tool is under review by the Province and we're not sure if/how the City will be able to use it in the future. Another mechanism the City uses to pay for community infrastructure is capital funding; City staff have been looking at the magnitude of growth expected for the area to understand capital funding requirements.*

Summary of feedback

Prior to and following the overview presentation and plenary question period, participants participated in two open house sessions. In the open house sessions, participants reviewed information panels and shared feedback with City staff and the study team. Participants also shared feedback by writing comments on feedback forms and through emails after the meeting. The feedback shared during the meeting and afterwards up to July 5th, 2019 is summarized below.

What participants liked about the draft final design

A number of participants showed support for the overall draft final design and shared appreciation for the ongoing work from City staff and the project team throughout the Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study process.

Participants also identified specific parts of the draft final design that they liked, including:

- The variety of **parks and green spaces** proposed throughout the study area;

- Aspects of the Transportation Master Plan that aim to create a **safer and more comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists**, including the creation of a **grid street network**;
- The emphasis placed on creating a **mixed-use community** that would allow people to live, work, play, learn, and shop in the Golden Mile area;
- The proposed **building stepbacks**, especially for taller buildings where the ground floor is close to the street; and
- The inclusion and emphasis on **affordable housing** in the study area.

Suggested refinements to the draft final design

Transit & Mobility

Suggestions and concerns related to traffic congestion. Some participants suggested widening north and south roads in an effort to increase room for vehicles and improve traffic flow in the area. Others raised concerns that increased residential development will increase the number of cars on the road and make the already congested area worse. There were some suggestions to reduce the planned population density for the area. There was also a concern that terminating existing and planned future east-west roads (Ashtonbee Rd, Golden Mile Parkway, and Civic Rd) at Birchmount Rd will result in traffic spillover and congestion in nearby residential areas.

Improving the cycling environment. There were mixed opinions about the inclusion of cycling infrastructure in the area. Some participants strongly supported the proposed cycling network and infrastructure (e.g. bike lanes, cycle tracks, and multi-use trails). Others suggested adding more roads without bike lanes. Specific suggestions included:

- Ensure new bike lanes connect to the City's cycling network;
- Where possible provide separated spaces for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Reduce the number of car lanes on O'Connor from four to two and add a bike lane to create a safer environment for both cyclists and pedestrians;
- Connect with the team working on the bike plan for Eglinton (being developed in conjunction with the Eglinton Crosstown);
- Use data on accidents in the area that involve cyclists to provide a safer environment for all road users.

There was also a suggestion for the City to require cyclists to take a training program and obtain a licence to ride a bike within the City.

Ensure there is adequate transit to move people quickly through the area. Some participants said they are not convinced the planned LRT will be able to adequately support the number of people that will eventually live in the area. There were concerns that because the LRT is planned above ground it will be slowed down by traffic signals and other road users and won't be able to move people through the area fast enough. There was a suggestion to provide pedestrian connections to future LRT stops and across Eglinton either underground or above

street level to increase safety for pedestrians. There was also a request to increase transit service on Pharmacy Avenue.

Ensure road maintenance is a priority. Some participants said road maintenance has been an issue in the past and would like to see this become a priority for the area, including regular repaving of streets as required.

Concerns with the proposed redesign of O'Connor Dr. There was a concern that proposed changes to O'Connor Dr (making it four lanes and ending it at Birchmount Rd) would make the street less walkable and separate the existing Clairlea community from future amenities on Eglinton. Participants also expressed concerns that the O'Connor Drive Extension could eliminate access to the Eglinton Square Mall traffic signal, which currently provides residents of the Clairlea neighbourhood safe vehicular access to Pharmacy Avenue. There was also a concern raised that the proposed realignment of O'Connor Drive would impact active development applications in the area and that the financial and other consequences related to the realignment have not been sufficiently assessed, and as such, the proposed realignment of O'Connor Drive was premature.

[Land Use, Density & Built Form](#)

More emphasis and information on affordable housing. Participants were glad to hear affordable housing will be required in the Secondary Plan area. There was a suggestion to reinforce affordable housing policies present in the City's Official Plan in the Golden Mile Secondary Plan to ensure they are followed. There was also interest in getting more information about affordable housing, including: how the City is defining affordable housing for this area; how affordable housing will be maintained in the long-term; and what tools the City can use to ensure developers comply with affordable housing policies.

Range of opinions on proposed 30-35 storey building heights. Some participants raised concerns about having 30-35 storey buildings, noting that they don't think they will fit in with the surrounding area where there are neighbourhoods with homes as small as 1 ½ storeys, especially in the Neighbourhood area south of Eglinton Square Shopping Centre. There was some concern about locating the tallest buildings at the western entrance to the Golden Mile due to shade impacts and instead suggested locating 30-35 storey buildings on the northern edge of the Golden Mile (and only if buildings this tall are absolutely required). A few others said they are less concerned about the ultimate height of buildings as long as buildings are built well, fit into the area, and look good.

Commercial and retail spaces. There was a desire from participants to keep or replace Eglinton Square. Participants said it provides an important community space, which they don't want to lose. Others said they do not want large format retail stores in the area.

Employment lands. There was a suggestion to investigate and implement strategies that will encourage employment opportunities with high paying jobs (more than minimum wage) so that people living in the area don't need to travel long distances for work.

Public Realm & Community Infrastructure

Put a greater emphasis on community services and facilities. Participants said they would like to see more dedicated space for community services and facilities, including a community centre within the Golden Mile Secondary Plan area. Some participants said they would like more information on the Community Services and Facilities Study, including how demographic data influenced the recommendations in the Secondary Plan. *Note added after the meeting: The Community Infrastructure Strategy Existing Conditions Report prepared for the Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study can be found on the project webpage at: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/8c39-city-planning-golden-mile-secondary-plan-study-background-report-appendix-c.pdf> under Publications & Consultation Reports.*

Impacts on renters. There was a concern raised that people who currently rent in the area and have had reasonable rents for decades may be displaced as a result of redevelopment. It was noted that even if the displacement is temporary it would likely still have negative impacts including, relocation, children moving schools, etc.

Reflecting the area's history. There were suggestions to reflect on Golden Mile's history in the planning/design process, with particular reference to the Eglinton/Warden area on the south side of Eglinton (the original GECO munitions factory site).

Process feedback

Concerns about notice of the meeting. Some participants said the meeting was not well advertised and raised concerns about the distribution of the notice. Participants said that meeting notices were not distributed to a large enough area and several received multiple copies of the notice. Participants provided suggestions on how to improve promotion of the meeting, including:

- distribute meeting notices north of the Hydro corridor, possibly as far north as Lawrence Avenue;
- put sandwich boards with meeting information at major intersections and in local parks;
- ensure local Councillors have the meeting information so they can share it with constituents and local organizations;
- and use newspaper advertisements.
- *City Planning explained that it went beyond the required 120 metre distribution boundary and distributed over 20,000 meeting notices. They said they would look into the lack of notice delivered to some and the duplicate notices delivered to others and thanked participants for bringing these concerns to their attention.*

More time for questions and full room discussion. Some participants said the meeting format should have allowed for additional time for participants to ask questions, get responses from the City and project team, and share feedback in a full room discussion.

Next steps

The City and consultant team thanked participants for attending the meeting and their ongoing participation in the process. The team reminded participants to share any additional feedback by Friday July 5th and committed to sharing a draft summary of the feedback in the coming weeks. The City explained that they will receive the Final Consultant Report in the late summer/early fall. City staff will then prepare and present a Final Report first to Scarborough Community Council and then City Council, including the Draft Secondary Plan Policies, Transportation Master Plan, and Urban Design Guidelines, by the end of 2019. Members of the public will have the opportunity to review the final report ahead of these meetings as well as attend the meetings and make deputations.

Appendix A. Meeting Agenda

Renew Golden Mile
Community Meeting #4
Tuesday, June 25, 2019
5:30 – 9:00pm
Wilmar Heights Event Centre
963 Pharmacy Avenue, Toronto ON M1R 2G5

Community Meeting #4

Meeting Purpose

To share and seek feedback on the draft final design and implementation strategies for the Golden Mile Secondary Plan Study.

Proposed Meeting Agenda

5:30 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

7:50 Open House and Discussion

1. What do you like about draft final design?
2. Do you have any suggested refinements?
3. Do you have any other advice for the Study Team?

9:00 Adjourn

To receive a copy of the presentation and/or share any additional feedback, please contact Emily Caldwell by at 416 396 4927 or Emily.Caldwell@toronto.ca. The deadline to submit any additional feedback is July 2, 2019.