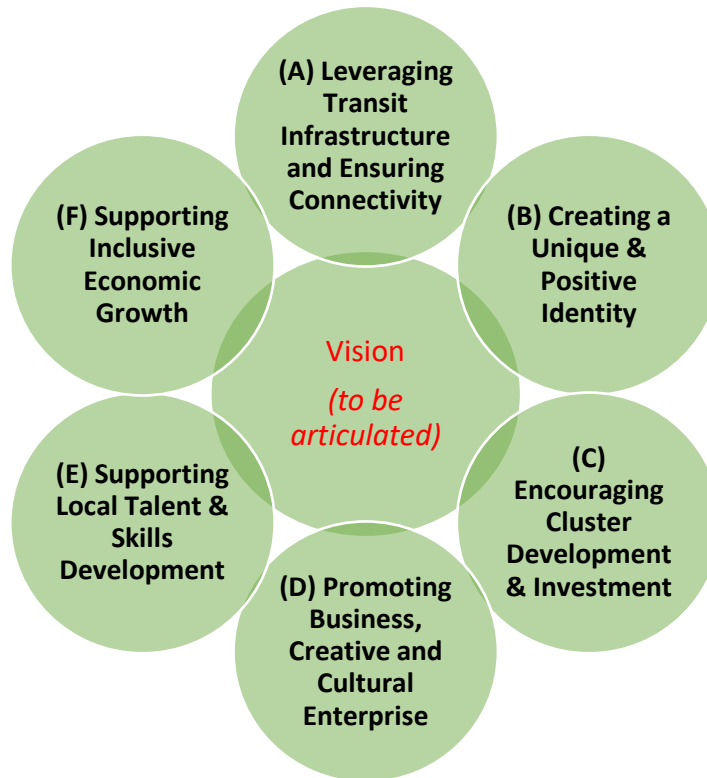


Mount Dennis Economic Development Study: Emerging Framework



- A) Leveraging Transit Infrastructure and Ensuring Connectivity:** This potential area of economic development strategy recognizes that the location of Mount Dennis and the coming transportation infrastructure improvements are a major strength and economic opportunity for the area that needs to be recognized and built upon in an economic development strategy;
- B) Creating a Unique & Positive Identity:** This aspect of the strategy recognizes that branding and community identity is an important aspect of economic development. Moreover: a) the current image and identity of Mount Dennis is somewhat deficient; b) there is an emerging positive identity in terms of an 'eco-neighbourhood' theme; and c) the above-mentioned transportation infrastructure improvements will create positive conditions for an improved sense of place. Accordingly, this is seen as a second important aspect of strategy.
- C) Encouraging Cluster Development & Investment:** The analysis showed that there are current clusters of economic activity existing in the area, where Mount Dennis arguably has a competitive advantage over other areas in the City. In economic development strategy, these areas of concentration represent opportunities to further promote and develop 'clusters' of enterprise where businesses supplying the sector of interest, as well as businesses using the products and services provided by those sectors (so-called backwards and forwards linkages) are promoted and developed.
- D) Promoting Business, Creative and Cultural Enterprise:** Recognizing the relatively low occupancy costs at present in Mount Dennis, combined with the increased accessibility of the area that is foreseen in future, a key opportunity area for was seen to be to promote and develop creative and cultural enterprise (which often thrives in lower cost premises in central and accessible locations). Pursuing these types of new business and investment opportunities for the area, as well as enhanced cultural programming, is seen to be a strategic opportunity area.

- E) Supporting Local Talent & Skills Development:** Understanding the current employment base of Mount Dennis, another major thrust of economic development strategy is to identify training and skills development opportunities for the local workforce in line with employment trends and to promote local hiring. Another component of this strategy area would relate to examining the potential for a post-secondary presence in the area to provide such training, perhaps associated with the identified sectors discussed above.
- F) Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth:** A key risk factor identified throughout the consultation was the risk of ‘gentrification’ and displacement of both existing residents as well as businesses. This component of the strategy would attempt to mitigate these effects to the extent possible by encouraging inclusive economic growth where existing long-established businesses with a defined clientele would be able to remain and thrive alongside new and innovative enterprises.

In each of these 6 areas, various ‘supporting themes’ have been articulated, that respond to the issues and opportunities raised during the consultation process. These emerging opportunities will provide the basis for further consultation and development in Phase 2 of the project, which will develop the draft version of the strategy itself.

Major Theme	Supporting Themes
<p>(A) Leveraging Transit Infrastructure and Ensuring Connectivity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balanced development: Retain the industrial and mixed-use character of the overall area while protecting existing employment lands and encouraging transit-supportive industrial and commercial intensification where appropriate. 2. Promote available, underutilized land and buildings in the area as commercial opportunities for investment, development and renovation/expansion. 3. Transit hub: Leverage the significant transit investment and promote the area as a focal point and destination for those living outside the area to come to Mount Dennis, as well as for local residents to access key employment centres (airport, downtown). 4. Mitigate potential impacts of gentrification through reduced development charges, inclusionary zoning, community benefit agreements, neighbourhood land trusts etc.
<p>(B) Creating a Unique & Positive Identity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Placemaking – build on existing assets, as well as brand and market the area as an ‘eco-neighbourhood’: This pilot approach would provide the opportunity to define both what an eco-neighbourhood is and promote MD as ‘Toronto’s first’. 6. Vibrancy, walkability and authenticity: Improve sidewalks, streets, facades, street furniture, public art, connectivity to transit, etc. through a defined capital infrastructure program, to improve safety, active transportation (including cycling), walkability and reinforce an ‘eco’ image while at the same time appreciating the area’s authentic character. 7. Use public art as a differentiating characteristic: Include public art as an integral part of capital infrastructure projects, to highlight ecological and historical themes." 8. Ensure safety to persons and property throughout the area: Promote the relative safety and security of the area after this is established.

<p>(C) Encouraging Cluster Investment & Development</p>	<p>9. Promote specific niches / clusters / sectors that build upon existing advantages of the area: non-profit and public benefit corporations; health care; green tech; transportation; warehousing; construction; skilled trades; and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>10. Encourage development of an innovation hub / business incubator</p>
<p>(D) Promoting Business, Creative and Cultural Enterprise</p>	<p>11. Develop more cultural activity and awareness in Mount Dennis: Through, for example: encouraging investment in arts and culture; a major festival planned in the area; and other potential programming.</p> <p>12. Promote and attract a variety of retail businesses: through lower business taxes on Weston Road; expansion of the BIA; grocery stores and markets [to address food desert issues]; new restaurants; etc.</p> <p>13. Ensure awareness of existing supports to business: ensure that both existing businesses and new entrepreneurs are aware of the full range of supports and incentives available through the City and various partners.</p> <p>14. Explore potential for major projects in area: e.g. cultural and/or educational activity as part of the former Kodak building; any surplus Metrolinx land; Industry Street land.</p>
<p>(E) Supporting Local Talent & Skills Development</p>	<p>15. Encourage local hiring and talent and skills development to support emerging employment opportunities in Mount Dennis by, for example, exploring potential initiatives and partnerships with local businesses, agencies and others; etc.</p> <p>16. Encourage development of a post-secondary campus in the area</p>
<p>(F) Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth</p>	<p>17. Develop mechanisms for mitigating the negative effects of gentrification and displacement through such mechanisms as Community / Neighbourhood Land Trusts, Community Benefit Agreements, encouraging local procurement, etc.</p>