WHAT IS THE EGLINTON WEST PLANNING & STREETSCAPE STUDY?

THE STUDY

Streching across the middle of the city, Eglinton Avenue is a critical east-west spine that connects diverse neighbourhoods to each other and beyond. In 2014, the City completed the Eglinton Connects plan for the central part of the corridor, which established a clear vision for the corridor in support of the Crosstown Light Rail Transit (LRT) project currently under construction. The City is now conducting the Eglinton West Planning and Streetscape Study to adapt and implement this vision to the western end of Eglinton Avenue in anticipation of the Eglinton West LRT, a westward extension of the Crosstown.

THE VISION

Eglinton will become Toronto’s central east-west avenue — a green, beautiful linear space that supports residential living, employment, retail and public uses in a setting of community vibrancy. Its design will balance all forms of mobility and connect neighbourhoods and natural valley systems to the larger city and the region.

– Eglinton Connects Study, 2014

TIMELINE

JULY 2018

DRAFT EGLINTON WEST VISION

MAY 2018

PLANNING + STREETSCAPE STUDY STARTS

JAN 2019

DRAFT STREETSCAPE DESIGNS

MAY 2019

EXPECTED STUDY COMPLETION

WE ARE HERE

STUDY AREA

The Study Area for the Planning and Streetscape Study spans from the boundary of the City of Toronto (Renforth Station) to Mount Dennis Station, east of Weston Road. A total of 11 LRT stations, including Renforth, fall within the subject study area. The area has been divided up into six segments (A to F) based on the assessment of their existing character. Each segment has been separately analyzed in terms of topography, natural heritage, built form, street design and right-of-way, public realm and open space.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

A Planning and Streetscape Study considers opportunities to rethink the design of a street and possible improvements to the public realm along the corridor and adjacent neighbourhoods. A streetscape study will start with an analysis of the existing conditions of the corridor including the buildings, transportation networks, and open spaces. The findings from this Study will provide recommendations for the area and identify an implementation strategy for next steps. The analysis from this Study will further inform the LRT project. This Study will recommend how the area could change and what should stay the same. It will also make specific recommendations about elements like bike paths, commuter parking facilities and street trees that should be included in the LRT project.

THEMES / METHODOLOGY

The three themes from Eglinton Connects will be maintained to frame the study of the western portion of the Avenue as well. These themes will allow to understand the unique character of Eglinton West in the context of the Eglinton corridor as a whole.

TRAVELLING

Eglinton Avenue has historically hosted a diverse range of movement. While automobile travel has occupied a large amount of space along the corridor, significant numbers of people also travel by bus, bike or foot. The introduction of the LRT presents us with an opportunity to upgrade Eglinton West to provide safe, efficient, and accessible multi-modal travel for all.

GREENING

Eglinton West is characterized by a generously wide green landscape that includes a mix of natural and man-made features. This green character will serve as the foundation for Eglinton West’s identity. Enhanced streetscapes, planting, woodlots and rain gardens will provide critical amenities to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

BUILDING

Critically analyzing the existing built form context will reveal not only the potential for new development, but where opportunities are for redevelopment, adaptive reuse, infill, new mid-block connections, and/or new public spaces. The transformation of the built landscape will respond sensitively to the public realm and open spaces.

Together, we can build the City and the transit network we want.
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Eglinton Connects included 21 recommendations. Below is a summary of what each recommendation means in the context of Eglinton West, and which ‘Design Moves’ are being proposed to further develop each recommendation to respond to local conditions:

**EGLINTON CONNECTS APPLICATION**

**TRAVELLING**

**#1  CREATE A COMPLETE STREET**
Although the western portion of Eglinton Avenue has a different character than Eglinton Connects, this objective is consistent for the Eglinton West corridor. However, it is envisaged that the roadway will be a successful multi-modal corridor. Refer to Design Move T1 (Create and Enhance Access to Public) and T4 (Build Intersections). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#2  PROVIDE WIDE SIDEWALKS**
For Eglinton Avenue West, due to the width of the existing right-of-way, desired sidewalks can be achieved within the corridor. Wide sidewalks will continue being a priority to ensure greenery investment, trees, street furniture and benches, and a focus on pedestrian prioritization. Refer to Design Move T12 (Wider Multifunctional Streets). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#3  WIDE PROTECTED CYCLING LANES**
Eglinton West has an existing strong and frequently used cycling network on the south side of the corridor. In order to sustain increased cycling activity, a consistent user identity must be established for the pathway, and safety will be provided by protected cycling. The 3 meter distance and separation is also often seen in unique features along Eglinton West. Refer to Design Move T3 (Protect and Encourage Cycling). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#4  REALLOCATE ROAD SPACE TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS AND MIXED USES**
In the case of the Eglinton West corridor, the balance of the street has been primarily determined in the Environmental Assessment (EA). The allocation of space identified in the EA demonstrates a balanced mobility mix. In the context of this study, it was identified that the right-of-way should be allocated to accommodate the interaction between all modes, especially for the pedestrian and the cyclist. The 3 meter width is the minimum required for infrastructure in the existing condition. **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#5  MAINTAIN PARKING SUPPLY**
The recommendation from Eglinton Connects was aimed to maintain existing parking supply and local business needs. In the context of Eglinton West, due to the limited retail activity that is already serviced by off-street parking, this recommendation will not apply. However, the principle of maintaining parking supply, for the future, is consistent with the recommendation from Eglinton Connects. Through full context, refer to Design Move T16 (No Surface Parking) and T18 (No Off-Street Parking). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**GREENING**

**#6  EXTEND NETWORK OF REAR LANES**
The potential for extending back lanes is a key aspect in the segments specified along Eglinton West. However, the actual character along the Eglinton West corridor has been consistent, therefore, a more comprehensive approach will be applied across segments. **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#7  PROVIDE GREENER TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE**
The greening positions further street, toasted, and retail are unique to Eglinton Connects. However, the character of Eglinton West is more homogeneous across. This strong green character that exists along Eglinton West must be maintained, condiciones and if possible associated with future developments. This recommendation is important to the sense of place. Refer to Design Move G6 (Green Infrastructure) (Character) and G8 (Greocrease Infrastructure) (Surface with). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#8  CREATE A NETWORK OF GREEN AND OPEN SPACES**
Eglinton Connects has a more urbanized character, but Eglinton West will see more greening in the open spaces. The wide boulevards in the context of Eglinton West will welcome opportunities for stormwater management through new developments. The green and open spaces will include the Eglinton West corridor. Refer to Design Move G2 (Underground Infrastructure) and G6 (Green Infrastructure). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#9  CREATE A NETWORK OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**
This recommendation from Eglinton Connects was aimed to maintain existing green spaces and identify new opportunities to promote utilities under the sidewalk of public sidewalks. **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#10  GROW GREAT TREES**
Although sparser along Eglinton Connects, there are already many great, mature trees that frame Eglinton West. It should be a goal to protect the existing mature trees as they provide a wide tree canopy. However, due to the existing conditions, some trees may need to be replaced or relocated. The planting of new trees will be consistent, beautiful and programmable. Refer to Design Move G12 (Protect Mature Trees). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#11  RELocate HYDRO BELOW-GRADE**
Although the corridor is slightly wider on the western portion of Eglinton West, maintaining at-grade trees should work well with new developments. Due to the wide right-of-way of the Eglinton West corridor, hydro lines from the existing (and new) developments should be relocated below-ground. Refer to Design Move G1 (Hydro Below-Ground). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#12  CONNECT Eglinton TO TRASIT AND PEERING SYSTEMS**
It is envisaged that the introduction of new transit solutions that run through the Eglinton West corridor are one critical component of the area’s character. Two connector stations (under the street) will be added. The new stations will align with the new transit stations downstream. To further strengthen the presence of these green spaces and water features, enhanced signage and active planting should be explored in the context of new developments. Refer to Design Move G2 (Underground Infrastructure). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#13  GREEN TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE**
Eglinton West is a vital part of the Eglinton GO Station, and the introduction of new transit solutions that run through the Eglinton West corridor are one critical component of the area’s character. Two connector stations (under the street) will be added. The new stations will align with the new transit stations downstream. To further strengthen the presence of these green spaces and water features, enhanced signage and active planting should be explored in the context of new developments. Refer to Design Move G2 (Underground Infrastructure). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#14  PLAN A PUBLIC ART PROGRAM**
This is key for Eglinton West as well; to ensure that public art is responsive to its social context, as in the case of Eglinton Connects. Refer to Design Move G4 (Design a Cohesive, Celebrate Green Infrastructure). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**BUILDING**

**#15  IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS TO SUPPORT LOCAL CHARACTER**
Heritage value should be protected and enhanced where possible. The cultural heritage along Eglinton West is a showcase of the Modernist Movement. Refer to Design Move B3 (Protect and Enhance Heritage). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#16  MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MID-RISE DEVELOPMENT ON SHALLOW LOTS**
It is understood that buildings should be well connected to the street. However, along Eglinton West, there are fewer opportunities for high-density development in the mid-term. Looking forward, mid-rise is the most appropriate scale for the corridor. Refer to Design Move B6 (Toward Urban Development). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#17  INTEGRATE CROSSWALKS STATION WITH ROO-N DEVELOPMENT**
Contrasting to the condition of Eglinton Connects, the western segment of the corridor will have grade level stops rather than stations. To apply this principle to the western corridor, this principle is not so much about the integration of stations, but planning street, safe and accessible connections to and from the sidewalk and road. Refer to Design Move B6 (Integrate Relationship between Building and Street). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#18  PLAN FOR INTENSIFICATION IN FOCUS AREAS AND MOBILITY HUBS**
There are no areas in Eglinton West identified as “Focus Area”, due to the existing online and store-dominated condition. However, this scenario has been used as a reference to guide future developments. The principle of increasing intensity and diversity is consistent with the recommendations and principles from this Eglinton Connects study. Refer to Design Move B1 (Integrate Relationship with Transit). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#19  DESIGN MOVES CLIPS SERVICES AND FACILITIES, INCLUDING GREEN AND OPEN SPACES**
This principle will be applied to existing large gaps in Eglinton West. Through physical design and community engagement, the design moves that will be guided by existing City of Toronto standards. The inventory of existing community service and future demands should be consistently updated. In comparison to Eglinton Connects, the area is expected to see more intensification. Refer to Design Move B3 (Protect and Enhance Morphologies). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#20  ENCOURAGE STREET-RELATED RETAIL**
This principle is more applicable to Eglinton Connects due to its urban context. In Eglinton West, retail is equally important, as it is a key component of the social fabric. Therefore, with careful masterplanning at the corridor, it should be expected that new uses are expected independently both in the commercial functions of the area as well as its role in adding the street. Refer to Design Move B5 (Integrate Relationship between Building and Street). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

**#21  IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS TO SUPPORT LOCAL CHARACTER**
The cultural heritage along Eglinton West is a showcase of the Modernist Movement and the history of Toronto. Although there are not many formally designated heritage sites, any future development should be acknowledged and enhanced where possible. Refer to Design Move B6 (Toward Urban Development). **EGLINTON WEST APPLICATION**

Together, we can build the City and the transit network we want.
**Reflective and Thoughtful Streetscape**

The streetscape should be designed to prioritize greening and facilitate a comfortable travelling experience. The comparison to the corners at intersections, the streetscape between LRT stops and within midblocks, should be designed to prioritize the experience of waiting at a transit stop along the corridor.

**Safe Intersections**

All intersections should be designed to include safe and adequately timed crossings, visibility between motorized vehicles and cyclists/pedestrians, and between cyclists and pedestrians.

**Clear and Visible Access to Stops**

Creating direct and wide paths of travel, removing barriers, and using innovative wayfinding and public art will create a more legible and accessible environment as a user approaches a transit stop along the corridor.

**T8: No Surface Parking - Access via Internal Road**

Minimizing, consolidating, and locating parking underground will protect visitors and residents.

**T3: Comfortable Waiting Experience at Stops**

The experience of waiting at a transit stop should feel safe, comfortable and accessible, at all times of the day, for all users in all weather conditions.

**T2: All Weather Travelling**

In any weather event year-round, the travelling experience along Eglinton Avenue should be as pleasant and comfortable as possible, which requires thoughtful street design and proactive maintenance.

**T1: Clear and Visible Access to Stops**

In the Toronto climate, providing weather protection for both summer and winter is critical for a comfortable experience. This is an important consideration for the Eglinton West corridor, given that the lack of street-oriented development will impact users from seeking shelter elsewhere when waiting for the LRT. In the summer, shade and ventilation at shelters should be required, adjacent planting may as well provide reintegration and improve the microclimate at the platforms. In the winter, at a minimum shelters should provide significant protection from direct rain, splashing from vehicles, and while though potentially, enclosed and heated shelters should be provided. The feasibility of enclosed shelter is dependent on the right-of-way availability to fit under platforms in a case-by-case basis.

In addition to thermal comfort, transit stops should be designed to accommodate all users of all levels of ability. This includes comfortable circulation to, from and at platforms, range of waiting or seating choices, and appropriately designed access points. Wayfinding aids such as real-time signage, maps or accessible “beacons” can improve the waiting experience at stops.

**T5: Streetscape In Between Stops**

With wider amount of boulevard space in the midblock conditions in comparison to the corners at intersections, the streetscape between LRT stops should be designed to prioritize greening and facilitate a comfortable travelling experience.

**T7: Sense of Arrival**

The threshold created by the highway crossing and underpasses could be a signature element of the corridor’s character.

**T4: Safe Intersections**

As you enter the corridor from the City of Mississauga on the west, the current highway underpasses are currently neglected pieces of infrastructure, but could be used as large-scale canvases for placemaking and wayfinding interventions. By introducing public art (e.g. murals, signage, interactive elements), lighting and generous paths of travel for all modes, a sense of arrival will be created.

**T6: A Major City-Wide Cycling Route**

By enhancing and formalizing the cycling route along the entire stretch of Eglinton Avenue, it will encourage higher cyclist ridership and become a signature element of the corridor’s character.

**T8: No Surface Parking - Access via Internal Road**

Minimizing, consolidating, and locating parking underground will protect the public realm, reduce conflicts between modes, and create a pedestrian prioritized environment.
G.1 Reinforce Green Character
The green character and high open space ratio surrounding the Eglinton corridor shall be preserved, enhanced, and help create strong accessible links between nature and the built environment.

G.2 Protect Mature and Large Trees
Protect the large, mature trees that are central to the urban forest character of the corridor as it is a valuable resource that provides environmental and social benefits.

G.3 Counter Impervious Surfaces with Green
Any areas that will have additional hardscaped elements shall be countered by additional greenness in other areas to preserve the existing balance of green and grey infrastructure.

G.4 Extend the Green Median
A green median that runs along the Eglinton West corridor will provide a consistent and beautiful experience that breaks up the scale of the street.

G.5 Celebrate Green Infrastructure
Connections to green infrastructure such as hydro corridors or ravines should be celebrated or utilized as areas of congregation, to facilitate a stronger relationship between the public and nature.

G.6 Develop a Cohesive, Corridor-Wide Public Art Strategy
A public art strategy will aid in wayfinding, creating a sense of place, increasing community engagement, is an opportunity for education, and make buildings or open spaces more attractive and interesting.

Large and mature trees throughout Eglinton West should be considered carefully when planning for the new LRT, including the potential impacts of shifts to the corridor centrelines alignment, improvements to the multi-use trail, and how future transit oriented development should be integrated. While most mature trees will be covered by the Toronto Tree Protection Policy, there are some large trees that will not meet the minimum requirements individually, and yet are quite valuable as part of a group of trees.

Given there is sufficient freedom in the width of most of the corridor (wide right-of-way), the LRT alignment proposed in the EA should be shifted north or south to be more attentive to where these valuable trees are located. As a result of these shifts and intersection corners, larger root areas will require special attention in regard to how close any infrastructure or construction can be. Any unavoidable removal of trees should be replaced at a 3:1 ratio, and designed to support the growth of healthy big trees (e.g. sufficient non-compacted soil volumes).

Bioretention buffer along curb edge (Seattle)
Rain gardens in buffer area between connector (Toronto, Germany)
Low impact development interventions in urban areas at bus stops and on sidewalks (overall)
Permeable grid pavement solution for driveways and road blocks (Toronto)
Vegetation buffer along curb edge (Seattle)
Surface parking at grade to reduce travel area (Toronto)
Groundwater buffer rain gardens/plan and 1.2 metres

With the implementation of the transit infrastructure, the condition of the street will experience an addition of impervious surfaces. The EA also directs that the design of the roadway should include water quality treatment to offset the increase in roadway pavement area. To reinforce the largely green character of the corridor today, green surfaces should be extended, augmented, or added to the area.

These green areas shall contribute not only aesthetic value, but serve as stormwater management tools. Streetscape and perimeter landscaping will enhance the public backwaard, screening views and improving the appearance of hard landscapes.

Do these Green Moves capture what you feel is important for the future of Eglinton West?

Are there other corridor-edge key matters that should be captured?

Together, we can build the City and the transit network we want.
Heritage is a reflection of Toronto’s evolution over time, and thus should be valued assets. Although heritage is commonly associated with century-old buildings, the definition stretches to include places that are important to the community. For the context of Eglinton West, an area of Toronto where the first settlement dates back to the late 1970s, there are designated and listed heritage properties within the settlement area. However, with the emergence of the Modern movement between the 1920s and 1970s and the influences of International Style, Neo-Expressionism, and Brutalism, many properties have been identified as having potential cultural heritage as a mark of this important era in history. The additional properties should be evaluated and considered as designated heritage assets, as representative examples of the many styles that molded Eglinton as it is today.

Public art, streetscape and other design interventions should acknowledge its Indigenous roots, cultural landscapes (e.g. ravines, gardens, cemeteries, etc.), and be storytelling tools.

Are there other corridor-wide key matters that should be captured?

To ensure permeability and finer grained blocks will prevent congestion along the main corridor of Eglinton. The provision of frequent and direct links off of Eglinton will increase the options of routes one can take within the area, shortening travel times and overall more reliant transportation system for all modes. With more connections throughout, it will encourage more transit and active transportation usage because it will make local trips more pleasant and easy.