

Midtown in Focus

Executive Summary

The continuing transformation of Toronto's urban landscape reflects the City's planned intensification Downtown, at four urban growth Centres and along the Avenues. As the Yonge-Eglinton skyline expands, the demands on the extent, quality and connectivity of the streets, parks and accessible open space – the public realm – become more and more urgent.

This Plan offers a vision able to articulate a clear direction on how fundamental improvements to the area's parks, squares, open space and streetscapes can coincide with growth to ensure Midtown's continued vitality and quality of life for its residents, workers and visitors.

Why This Study?

In 2013, amidst concerns about accelerating development, the Midtown Planning Group and the City of Toronto initiated a process to develop a Master Plan for Yonge-Eglinton's parks, open space and streetscape that can be implemented over time by public and private investment. This study models a new, comprehensive approach to planning for the area's public realm that brings all three Ward Councillors, both Toronto East York and North York planning service areas, and community members from across the study area under one 'big tent.'

A New Public Dialogue

Midtown in Focus represents the launch of an entirely new conversation about the public realm at Yonge-Eglinton. At the heart of the multi-faceted public engagement process is the Midtown Planning Group, a Council-created body of passionate, engaged citizens. The study enlists a broad range of communities to join a new dialogue about the future of Midtown's public realm. The result of the collaborative planning effort is the *Yonge-Eglinton Parks, Open Space, and Streetscape Master Plan – Midtown in Focus*.

An Inclusive, Contextual Vision

The Master Plan draws upon the knowledge and direct experience of the community – what we heard – combined with fresh observations by the consultant team to provide the guiding vision for Midtown's evolving public realm over the next 20-30 years. It serves as both a conceptual blueprint to direct the transformation and development of the public realm in Midtown, and as a practical manual for all parties engaged in development projects which interface with the public realm in the Yonge-Eglinton area.

Elaborating on the Secondary Plan and with the participation of the community, the Midtown Planning Group and the City, the *Yonge-Eglinton Parks, Open Space, and Streetscape Master Plan* intends to create, focus and communicate a shared vision for this important neighbourhood. The Plan aims to strengthen the areas distinct character by amplifying its inherent strengths – to transform the neglected and disconnected public realm and strategically invest it with quality, connectivity, vitality, and a coherent identity.

The quality and character of Midtown's public realm is born out of its particular context and essential attributes. In its idealized form, Midtown conjures a balance of urban forms between the intimate and the metropolitan. It suggests a combination of the urban vitality of the city within the generosity of a lush, green, open landscape.

The vision for Midtown's public realm articulates a proper balance in the planning and design of its parks, streets and open space network by drawing upon two inherent attributes – urban vitality and lush green spatial character – to create a memorable identity and enriched experience at the crossroads of Toronto.

Five Place-Making Moves

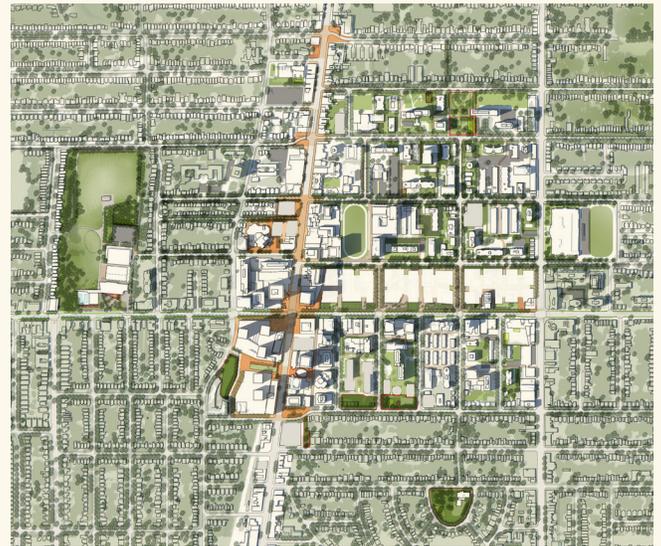
The vision takes form in an illustrative Framework Plan that integrates the analysis and public feedback. Five place-making ‘moves’ amplify existing qualities and synthesize diverse elements to create a framework of distinct but integrated public spaces. The moves are large scale public space proposals that bring together changes in the design of parks, streets and open space, working together with complementary influence. These high-level interventions are supported by a series of strategies and site-specific initiatives that reinforce and complete the vision, helping to identify and prioritize the essential aspects of the public realm transformation.

Making Midtown Happen

The long range vision will be achieved incrementally over time, guided by critical milestones and channels to direct investment and resources. An important consideration is how to imprint the place-making moves on the public realm from the onset. Starting immediately, there are a number of interim programs and initiatives that catalyze the moves and give the community a preview of the spatial transformations set to unfold. The vision is organized in two main implementation phases – short term priorities for 2020 and the long term build out of the Master Plan. This approach allows for flexibility to adjust to and leverage future opportunities that arise from changing development dynamics over the next 20-30 years.

Ongoing Community Stewardship

Throughout the development of the Master Plan, momentum has been galvanizing around community-initiated, bottom-up strategies to implement and sustain the emerging vision. The *Yonge-Eglinton Parks, Open Space, and Streetscape Master Plan* intends to foster a safe, inspiring and meaningful public realm framework through the continued stewardship of this public realm dialogue, that will contribute to the identity and quality of life which makes Midtown one of the most desirable communities in the city.



Framework Plan



Five Place-Making Moves

1. Eglinton Green Line

Linking Eglinton Park with an iconic Green Line along Eglinton Avenue – a significant new public space which will dramatically expand the presence of parks and open space in Midtown in a new form of open space, combining green with urban culture, commerce and streetlife.

2. Yonge Street Squares

A transformed Yonge Street corridor defined as a sequence of great, intimately-scaled, connected urban public spaces – rather than a single, central square.

3. Park Street Loop

A coveted new park address is created with the transformation of Broadway Avenue/Montgomery Avenue and Roehampton Boulevard/Orchard View Avenue into a lush green multi-purpose promenade to serve the heart of Midtown.

4. Midtown Greenways

Midtown Greenways enhance some of the area’s most established apartment-lined residential streets, promoted as the new green conduits for community life and movement – elevating their status to key components of the public realm network.

5. Redpath Revisited

A re-imagined Redpath Avenue including a shared block between Eglinton Avenue and Roehampton Avenue, bookended by two great parks defining the north and south ends of a central community axis – to attract and focus the local scale of Midtown activity.