

Midtown Public Realm Study

Random thoughts

Priorities:

We know the immediate population's going to double in ~15 yrs. Today, 70,000 pedestrians/day use the Yonge-Eg intersection. If that will be double in 15 years, **when will pedestrian congestion become unbearable?** It's pretty unacceptable already during rush hours on the TTC platforms. If push comes to shove, I think **pedestrians should have preference – with priority for the infirm, then cyclists.** Give them room to breathe with line of sight to parks.

I'd like to see the new separate bike lanes signalized independent from cars or pedestrians. If the Centre is to become pedestrianized, how can we secure right of way for bikes?

Streetscape:

I like the wide sidewalks, trees, bike lanes and street parking that Eglinton Connects will propose for the entire length of Eglinton Avenue but **will the Midtown Plan recommend the same between Mount Pleasant Rd. and Oriole Parkway?**

Subway accessibility:

We must make it much easier to wheel a suitcase (or a bicycle) onto the subway. The door on Eglinton at the southwest corner – a challenge even for able-bodied people and an easy fix – is symbolic of an outdated attitude. **Public entry ways and walkways must be soft, welcoming, with an integrated way-finding language and plenty of rest areas along the way.**

Way-finding in public spaces near TTC:

Signage (including distances) should include:

- more information
- escalators/elevators
- toilets
- rest & relief places – benches, parkettes
- streets
- restaurants
- shops

Any number of cell-phone apps can display real-time vehicle information (within 30 seconds or so). As well as time left to departure, **TTC displays should include real-time position of vehicles** with accompanying metadata, eg: delays, capacity/crowding/room left, bike rack space.

Sidewalks:

Are **sidewalks** on Yonge St. going to be **wide enough** for restaurant **patios**? Should patios/sandwich boards/planters be disallowed on narrow sidewalks close to the node? Should restrictions be eased outside of rush-hours?

Pedestrianization:

Can we encourage **pedestrianization around the Yonge-Eg intersection?** Expanded scrambles? Wider POPS? Semi-continuous mid-road crossing islands making it easier/safer to cross mid-block? I hope for growing use of the street as a pedestrian mall, eventually crowding out cars at the intersection...(!)

Soundscape:

Where will we be able to hear birds, water, quiet..?

POPS:

Very good to hold future large development applications responsible for providing on-site POPS, but **ongoing maintenance – trees included – is essential** to be included as a condition.

Parking:

When/if Eglinton is narrowed, we must provide **adequate off-street public car parking.** Over either end of the new LRT station – unless it will be backfilled – will be space for hundreds of parked cars (and/or retail), similar to University Ave. north of Front St..

Hydro poles:

They truly are an eyesore. Could someone please have an honest look at the real costs of burying the overhead cables –

including long-term maintenance – when Eglinton's being dug up? The mantra is that it's prohibitively expensive, but wouldn't this be the best – if not the only – of all possible opportunities, at least between Holly and Duplex?

The Yonge Eglinton Hub/Gateway/Destination:

If only the **Grand Public Space** we see from the TTC station would be **something other than a food court**. (Good luck! Rio-Can's already building it.)

Is there **something unique to celebrate?** with an icon, like a store (Eaton Centre)? Product (Apple)? Service (TTC)? Diversity? – a figure? statue? monument? fountain? sculpture? art work?

Way-finding in the area:

When we (commuters • school crowds • shoppers • truck traffic • visitors • tourists) approach the area from the outside, what is it we **most want to be directed to** – and at what (different) times?

- Yonge subway?
- Crosstown LRT?
- Bus?
- Large stores?
- Small shops?
- Restaurants? (will need twice as many)
- Parking?
- Truck loading/delivery?
- Parks?
- Shelter from the elements?

Timing:

The sense that the horse is already out of the barn is ever present. Would implementation of an **interim control by-law** – to allow for encoding of the Study/Plan under discussion before further development applications – be appropriate?

Personal:

My wife's reading Katherine Boo's Behind the Beautiful Forevers – life, death and hope in a Mumbai undercity – for her book club. Sure puts a different perspective on all this stuff, doesn't it! :)