Transportation-Led Redevelopment and Affordability along the Eglinton Avenue LRT Line, Toronto.

A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies,

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ABSTRACT

New rapid transit lines have been demonstrated to increase access and enhance equity and social inclusivity in cities. However fixed transit infrastructure improvements have also been shown to lift property values, decrease affordability, and lead to displacement and community homogenization in areas adjacent to its construction. The following case study examines this often overlooked relationship between enhanced mobility and reduced affordability in the context of Ontario's largest single infrastructure project, the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (LRT).

The case study first looks at the history of rapid transit infrastructure in Toronto and the role of provincial transit agency Metrolinx and their stated goals in the development of new transit. The case study area, a 2.1km stretch of Eglinton Avenue West is subsequently examined, detailing the neighbourhood's history, demographic makeup and existing affordability conditions. The implications of new transit development in the study area to date and in the future are considered.

Parties likely to gain the most from the Crosstown LRT such as the development and real estate firms are discussed in context to those most at risk of losing out, tenanted business and residents. Reggae Lane, a local project in the case study area conceived in recognition of the changes to come, is discussed by way of interviews with the local councillor who proposed the project as well as the founder of Canadian Reggae World and active participant in the project.

Finally the paper offers up a series of policy recommendations that could prove beneficial in preventing transit land displacement and towards create positive outcomes for neighbourhood affordability.

FOREWORD

This major paper is being submitted in partial fulfillment of York University's Master of Environmental Studies (Planning program) degree requirements. The paper, a case study on the implications of rapid transit on neighbourhood affordability serves as a capstone to my studies and goals set out within my academic Plan of Study. These goals are represented by three component areas within my Plan of Study and include: Land Use Planning; Suburbanization, and; Urban Political Economy. These three component areas have both served to inform and in turn have been further informed in the undertaking of this major paper.

Land Use Planning, the first component of my Plan of Study, was drawn from throughout this major paper. Toronto's Official Plan, the Eglinton Connects Planning Study, numerous social planning documents as well as the history of transportation planning in Toronto were studied in the development of this paper. The relationship between land uses and land value were explored from the perspective of the private development industry, the public infrastructure providers and the communities who contend with the results. The current lack of consideration for affordability in the transit planning process in Toronto underpins much of this paper.

Suburbanization as a component factored into the paper in my understanding of the case study area. The Eglinton West neighbourhood was formerly under the governance of the City of York and an early suburb of Toronto. While now encompassed within the city many suburban features such as strip malls, bungalows and separation of uses still endure. An historical understanding of post-war suburbanization in North America provides context to the current day movement to re-occupy the urban and demand for rapid transit in place of lengthy auto commutes. The increasing prevalence of inner-suburban poverty in Toronto is also explored at a structural level. This is discussed in the displacement of low-income communities to lesser served inner-suburbs in the face of rising property values related to transit improvements.

Urban Political Economy as a component features heavily in this paper. It is captured in the relationship between capital, land, housing and services in the study area and provides a foundation for understanding neighbourhood change in the study area. The framework for the provision of affordable housing is critically examined in this paper from divestment at the provincial level to the municipal and subsequent reliance on the private market for new housing creation. Decisions to reward the private sector through public infrastructure projects such as the Eglinton LRT underscore the lack of affordability and equity in Toronto housing creation today.

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Finally I would like to thank my family who supported me in my decision to pursue my masters, and provided me with the time and encouragement throughout to persevere. To my kids Leo and Isla thanks for all the laughs along the way.

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1. Introduction

High quality public transportation has been widely acknowledged as vital for well-functioning socially and economically inclusive cities. A well-developed public transportation system can promote social equity allowing residents to travel easily and affordably from their homes to work, school, entertainment, shops and restaurants (Pendall et al. 2012). Public transportation has further been demonstrated to moderate congestion and private vehicle reliance, help reduce climate change emissions, and foster walkable vibrant streets and communities. High quality public transportation and more specifically rapid transit (subway and light rail transit) infrastructure development has also proven to be economically valuable from a land use perspective, particularly at a time where the urban is increasingly in demand by business and residents (Ehrenhalt 2013). In 2011 nearly 7 in 10 Canadians were living in one of country's CMAs (Statistics Canada 2011). Rapid transit proximity gives certain locations a relative advantage over other locations and can attract both users and uses from less strategic areas. Transit rich areas subsequently attract development and investment interest enhancing the commodity value of land enabling enhanced wealth generation for those that hold transit proximate lands (Molotch 1976).

The implications of this demand and ability to capitalize upon location are property values along rapid transit lines that are measurably higher than lesser accessible areas (Center for Neighbourhood Technology. 2013). As an increasing number of key studies show with rapid transit investment comes a decline in neighbourhood affordability, and in social and economic diversity (Kahn 2007, Foth 2010, Wayland 2011, Lund 2006). The wealthy become the ones who can outbid for the privilege of living near an amenity that offers easy access to everyday needs while those most dependent on transit have been shown to be displaced and replaced with a population with greater means and much more likely to own a private vehicle (Pollack et al. 2010). While the transit planning process takes into account typical cost-benefit analysis (e.g. total construction labor hours, GDP increases, and property value rise), it often fails to account for the resultant costs of new transit infrastructure construction. These costs include declining neighbourhood affordability (both housing and business), loss/conversion of rental units, and displacement of existing populations in proximity to new transit lines. Although housing and transit can account for 60% of household budgets "neither public nor private policy considers these two phenomena to be bundled" (Keough 2011 p. 2).

In six years from now Eglinton Avenue, one of Toronto's major east-west arteries will be home to the $5.3-billion Eglinton Crosstown LRT line, the largest single infrastructure project in Ontario's history. The potential for the Eglinton LRT to reshape the 19km of the city it will traverse is immense. It will bring rapid transit access and ease of mobility to many of the city's most underserved areas. Similarly it will bring investment attention and development pressure unseen in many areas across the city. Metrolinx, the Ontario provincial agency overseeing the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (LRT) line, have estimated a predicted uplift in land value of as much as 20% following the LRT construction (Steer, Davies and Gleave 2012).

Property value uplift is by no means an unforeseen outcome of new rapid transit infrastructure. In fact it is cited as a benefit in the Metrolinx business case along with direct and indirect economic gains in respect to construction labor and GDP growth. Redevelopment and intensification are also promoted in addition to potential health benefits of a more walkable community. However what is not considered, and the issue that I am seeking to explore in this paper, is the inverse relationship between public transportation infrastructure and affordability in the context of the largest infrastructure project in Ontario's history. New transit infrastructure reduces local affordability and leads to displacement, this relationship is not acknowledged in transit planning. How can those that depend most on public transit be provided the continued opportunity to live in close proximity to it?

The paper begins by exploring the importance of the role of public transit in creating an equitable and just city. Reliable and efficient public transit is essential in curbing extended commute times and providing a viable option as an alternative to car ownership. In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) studies (Pembina 2014, Forum Research 2013) have indicated that residents want to live closer to work and spend less time in lengthy auto commutes. Interest and demand for more public transit proximate locations in Toronto is growing (City of Toronto 2012). The combined interest in reduced commute times and greater transit access is increasing demand for living in Toronto, particularly in areas close to rapid transit (subway and LRT) infrastructure. The implications of this growing demand is transit proximit housing garnering a premium on the private market with those unable to afford this premium effectively priced out. This section will conclude with the importance of establishing and protecting equity in transit access.

Section 2 recounts the recent history of rapid transit in Toronto from the announcement of 120 kilometers of new rail transit dubbed Transit City in 2007 to the much more modest Metrolinx Big Move plan responsible for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT today. This section examines the role of Metrolinx and the City of Toronto in the construction of the line and setting the development framework for Eglinton Avenue in response to the anticipated demand for investment and growth. Section 3 defines the case study area, a 2.1km stretch on Eglinton Avenue West comprising three neighbourhoods and home to three new LRT stops along the Crosstown Line. The study area history, housing statistics, immigration history of the neighborhood and affordability are all discussed in the context of the arrival of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT.

Section 4 builds on the previous analysis of the study area and provides a critical analysis of the implications of the new transit line along Eglinton Avenue West. People that have the most to gain and the most to lose from the project are identified and discussed. This section features an investigation of a local project developed to preserve the history and culture of the neighbourhood under threat from LRT associated speculation and development. Local media coverage, first hand observations and direct participant interviews are used to tell the story of Reggae Lane.

Section 5 draws on academic literature, case studies, and community action perspectives in presenting a number of recommendations towards managing transit led land value increases, mitigating negative impacts and maximizing benefits for affected communities. Recommendations include focusing on building community wealth, regulating equity in the housing market, and looking to new innovative ways to lower housing costs and prevent unchecked speculative growth in the housing market.

Why A New Rapid Transit Line?

In a recent study conducted by Harvard University, researchers found the link between social mobility and transportation to be more determinant than the relationship between social mobility and education, crime, or family structure (Chetty and Hendren 2015). Cities that feature long commutes were found to have higher incidences of poverty and poorer outcomes for children (Chetty and Hendren 2015).

Toronto has the longest average commuting times of all of Canada’s urban regions, and just two minutes less than the US’s longest at 34.7 minutes for New York – Northern New Jersey (Statistics Canada 2011).

According to Statistics Canada's figures from 2011, commute times by car in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) were on average 32.8 minutes, while public transit travel times averaged a lengthy 49 minutes. Growing commute times have been closely linked to issues of quality of life. In a recent Forum Research's survey, 6 in 10 people in the Greater Toronto Area admitted that the time spent commuting reduces their quality of life (Forum Research, 2013). Commuting also carries significant environmental and economic costs. The cost of traffic congestion in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area has been estimated at $6Billion per year and this is considered to be an underestimate as it fails to account for the forgone benefits of urban interactions (C.D. Howe 2013). Traffic based air pollution has been estimated to be responsible for 440 premature deaths and 1,700 hospitalizations per year in Toronto (Toronto Public Health 2007).

The availability of transit, according to a 2013 City of Toronto report prepared by the Medical Officer of Health (2013 p.1), is crucial for low income residents to "access important goods and services such as food, health care, employment, and recreation, all of which impact on their health." Similarly, Chetty and Hendren (2015) found that areas with some but insufficient transit (as the case of many of Toronto's inner suburbs) suffer the highest rates of unemployment and lowest incomes. The Toronto report calls for action to alleviate the barriers experienced by low income populations in accessing transit. With the City's current focus on expanding rapid transit, as the report states, now is the time to take action (City of Toronto 2013).

A recent survey by the Pembina Institute found that GTA residents are increasingly interested in living closer to work and transit; however, housing options are limited and come at a financial premium in Toronto. As a result, homebuyers are often priced out of transit rich and location-efficient neighbourhoods and driven to the urban fringes where long and stressful automobile commutes are required (Pembina 2014). With a predicted population growth of 130,000 new residents by 2020 the struggle to find affordable housing close to work and transit is likely to become increasing important (City of Toronto 2009).

Transit and Affordability and Inverse Relationship

Over the previous three decades, Toronto has seen rising poverty levels and an expanding gap between rich and poor (City of Toronto, 2009). A 2015 United Way report found that income inequality in Toronto is increasing rapidly and creating barriers in accessing affordable housing and quality employment. In

2010 David Hulchanski released an update to the report, The Three Cities within Toronto. The report found that Toronto's neighbourhoods are geographically segmented along economic lines with high income residents clustering in the central city and around the city's subway lines and low-income residents occupying the city's northern fringes. Hulchanski's study which looked at economic change between 1970 and 2005 in the city noted that low-income neighbourhoods historically occupied areas in the centre of the city close to transit and services. However, over the 35 years study period, lower-income populations shifted into Toronto's outer fringes typically underserved by transit.

In a 2014 research report by the Martin Prosperity Institute which studied class and geography in major cities in the United States revealed very similar trends to that of Toronto. Proximity to transit was found to be the second most defining locational factor for the concentration of professionals and highly educated residents (Martin Prosperity 2014). In nearly all of the cities studied there was evidence of clustering around major transit arteries. The authors concluded that access to transit provided professional workers with greater benefits (ability to work in transit) and less costs (vehicular upkeep and lost commuting time) (Martin Prosperity 2014). However, transit-driven gentrification can result in worsening levels of social mix and ethnic diversity and drive income disparity and overall neighbourhood inequalities (Walks and Maaranen 2013).

A long term study looking at change in the vicinity of Vancouver's SkyTrain stations found denser, wealthier and more educated neighbourhoods as compared to the city as a whole (Foth 2010). In a study looking at gentrification in Toronto, Skaburski and Nelson (2013) found that between 1981 and 2006 low-income households were being displaced to areas with limited access to public transit and employment opportunities. The older stock inner city housing was gentrifying while the newer post war high-rise apartment neighbourhoods in the inner suburbs were "filtering down to visible minorities, recent immigrants, ethnic minorities, single parents, and the unemployed and underemployed people in low wage jobs" (Skaburski and Nelson 2014 p. 885).

A report from the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy found that when new rapid transit was introduced to a neighbourhood, the result was often an increase in housing prices, wealthier residents displacing existing residents, and increased car ownership (Pollack et al. 2010). Renter and low-income residents were further shown to be displaced by a demographic much less dependent on public transportation. Kahn (2007) in a study of 14 U.S. cities found similar results, new walk and ride rapid transit stations experienced greater gentrification than park and ride stations, indicating an economic premium of living close to rapid transit.

Transit has been widely shown to be critical for low-income communities and social mobility. However, people most dependent on high quality rapid transit are frequently priced out of transit rich areas. Further, when rapid transit is introduced into low-income communities the result can often be an overall increase in housing prices and eventual displacement. This situation presents what Pollack et al. (2010 p.1) position as a Hobson's choice "If transit investment and expansion inevitably lead to gentrification and displacement: either make the transit investments and accept loss of neighbourhood diversity as collateral damage, or avoid transit expansion projects serving diverse, lower income neighbourhood and leave those residents with poor public transit or none at all." As Pollack et al. (2010) surmise, and the perspective from which this paper is situated, is that quality transit for all the many reasons reviewed above is too important not to build, rather the negative implications to neighbourhood affordability and displacement must instead be addressed.

2. Eglinton Crosstown LRT is coming

Overview of Rapid Transit in Toronto: From Transit City to the Big Move

On March 16, 2007 Toronto's Transit City Light Rail Plan was announced with a great deal of fanfare. The plan proposed Light Rapid Transit (LRT) lines for a total of 120 Kilometers of new track running along (and in many parts under) six of the city's major avenues. Transit City included 7 LRT lines in all travelling along major arteries: Jane Street, Don Mills Road, Finch Avenue West, Sheppard Avenue East, Eglinton Avenue and through the neighbourhoods of Scarborough Malvern and Waterfront West, . As proposed, the Transit City Plan would have extended rapid rail transportation across a large swath of Toronto's inner suburbs better linking these communities to the city-wide network (Rogers 2013).

Toronto's Transit City plan, announced by then Mayor David Miller, was premised on two-party financing and required the province of Ontario to cover a substantial portion of the costs (Bow 2014). From the time of the Transit City announcement in 2007, the provincial government was onboard with the City's proposal, and tentative financing of $6 Billion for the project was incorporated into the provinces MoveOntario 2020 plan (released just months after Transit City) for regional transportation improvements (Government of Ontario 2007). Soon after the announcement of Transit City the seven proposed lines underwent an expedited public consultation process (Bow 2014).

Transit City Light Rail Plan (Source: Transit Toronto 2015)

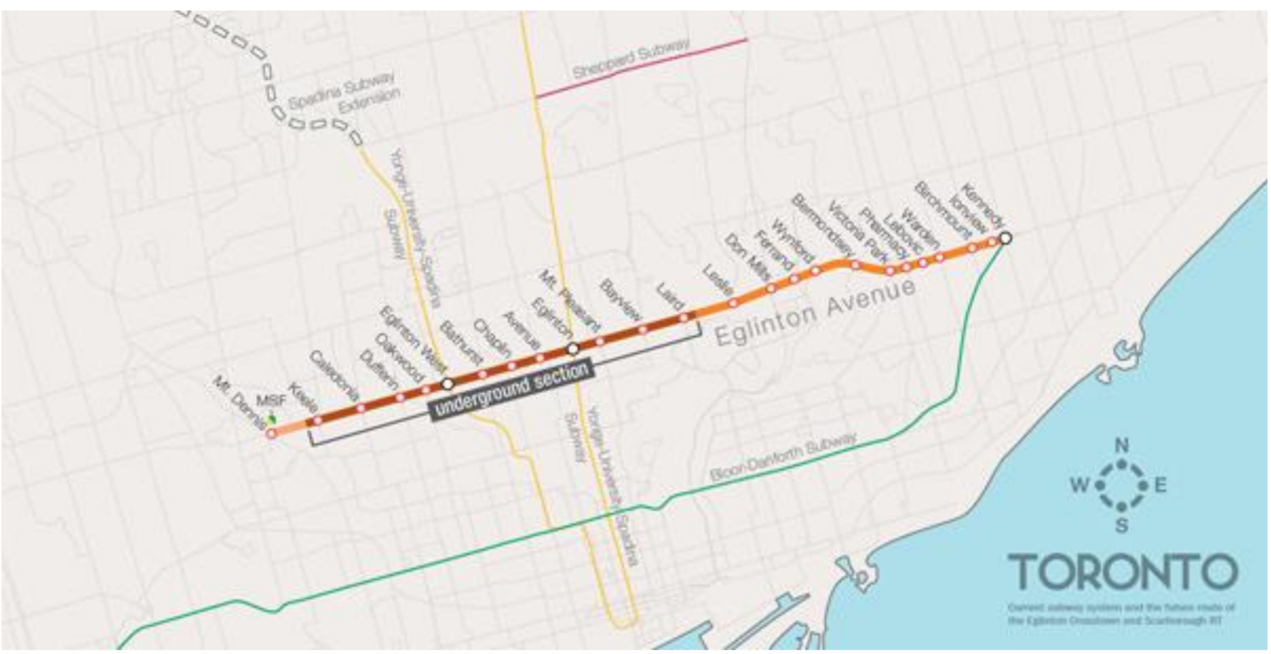
Projected costs of the Transit City Light Rail Plan continued to escalate throughout the consultation period and, with time, the seven proposed lines were reduced to four and shortened by several kilometers (Rogers 2013). The province of Ontario approved funding for the construction of the four lines and committed to begin construction of the Sheppard East LRT, Eglinton-Crosstown LRT, the Finch West LRT and the conversion of the Scarborough RT to an LRT. In total, 22 km of tracks were truncated from the approved four lines including the proposed western termination of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT at Pearson Airport. This airport connection could have provided rapid rail access to Pearson at no more than $3 dollars from anywhere in the TTC's network. Today however the only airport rail option is from Pearson to Union Station aboard Metrolinx's new Union Pearson Express at a cost of $27.50 (one-way).

Along with the inclusion of the four approved LRT lines into the MoveOntario 2020 plan, the province claimed sole financing of Transit City and in effect subsumed control over much of Toronto's transit future. In this arrangement, the provincial agency Metrolinx would maintain ownership of the new LRT lines while the TTC would be responsible for their operation. Toronto's mayor at the time David Miller and then Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty's relations became severely strained in the struggle over the future of Toronto's transit development (Rogers 2013). The two heads of government, however, managed to find common ground in an attempt to gain additional funding for purchasing the required vehicles for Transit City under the Federal Government's economic stimulus program. The funding was however denied as jobs would have been created in Bombardier's Thunder Bay factory and not in the locality in which the funding was requested, i.e., Toronto (Gee 2009).

This emergence of provincial interest in urban transportation was a reflection of the growing social and economic relevancy of Ontario's biggest city. Toronto' Census Metropolitan Area saw a population increase of nearly 10% between 2001 and 2006 accounting for 42% of the province's population growth (Statistics Canada 2011). Moving the Greater Toronto Area's rapidly growing population was becoming an urgent issue both practically and politically. Organisations including the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA), the CD Howe Institute and the Toronto Board of Trade were becoming increasingly vocal on the costs of congestion in the GTA. Estimates on the cost of congestion in the GTA ranged from $6 to $11 billion annually and the province was compelled to respond (Ionova 2013). The provincial government further cemented its role in the planning and implementation of public transportation in the GTA with the introduction of the 2008 Big Move regional transportation plan, a successor to the 2007 MoveOntario 2020 plan (Metrolinx 2008). While the Big Move set out the blueprint for transportation improvements across the GTA, it did not fully account for the City of Toronto's political influence in the realisation of new transit projects within its borders.

When Toronto's new political regime took office on December 1, 2010 Transit City (which had been subsumed into the 2008 Big Move) was all but declared dead. Toronto's then new mayor Rob Ford had run on a platform of ending a perceived war on the car and to rein in City's spending (packaged in a call to respect the taxpayer). As such in his first day in office Ford announced that "the war on the car stops today . . . Transit City is over... we will not build any more rail tracks down the middle of our streets" (quoted in Kalinowski and Rider 2010). The mayor then set about reimagining the approved Eglinton LRT and renaming it the *Eglinton-Scarborough Crosstown (subway).* This re-visioning included burying the entire 19-km length of the line at a near doubling of estimated costs. The provincial government was hesitant to act and much of Transit City was subsequently in paralysis. The Eglinton and Sheppard LRT projects were put on hold indefinitely (Coutts 2010). Metrolinx faced significant criticism at the time and was accused in the media of failing the city's transit users (James 2012). Less than two years later, Ford's modified plan was voted down 25 to 18 votes by Toronto City Council and the previously approved LRT design for the Eglinton Crosstown was restored. The Eglinton LRT is currently under construction and projected to be completed and in service by 2021.

This protracted struggle from the LRT's first proposal in the 2007 Transit City plan, later included in the 2008 Big Move, put on political hiatus for two years but eventually breaking-ground in 2013 was not the first attempt to bring rapid transit to one the city's main east-west arteries. A rapid transit line was first proposed along Eglinton Ave West in the early 1980s under the City of Toronto's Network 2011 plan for rapid transit expansion. Initially the project was imagined as a rapid bus-way with eventual conversion to an Eglinton West subway as demand dictated. Implementation of the Network 2011 plan was delayed until 1994 – and by that point, the bus-way was dropped and plans evolved into a full-fledged subway. Yet, just one year later, the newly elected provincially Conservatives led by Mike Harris made the call to fill in tunneling work on the Eglinton West Subway line. Subsequently, two decades later the remnants of that first attempt at an Eglinton West Subway are being removed to make way for the station box of the new Eglinton West LRT stop (Mackenzie 2013).



Eglinton Crosstown LRT Route (Source: Metrolinx 2015)

Construction of the Eglinton West Crosstown LRT is well under way with the completion of the western tunneling work in the spring of 2015. However, the future of the transit landscape on Eglinton West remains fluid. Toronto's sitting mayor John Tory came to power in 2014 on the promise of implementing an $8 billion surface rail system that would intersect with the subway, the Eglinton West LRT, and surface routes and would provide an alternative to existing regional rail (Kalinowski 2015b). Tory's so-called SmartTrack plan would run predominantly on existing surface rail lines but offer fares more similar to the TTC than GO Transit. In February 2015, the City of Toronto Council voted in favour of undertaking a feasibility study of the project to develop a business case for Council approval in the fall of 2015 (Pennachetti et al. 2015). The Province of Ontario and Metrolinx have indicated support of the project in part with the planned electrification of existing rails through the Regional Express Rail initiative. This plan would allow for electric locomotives to meet the service frequency required for the SmartTrack plan (Percy 2015).

A major spur of the proposed SmartTrack plan and the only portion that would require new tracks to be laid is proposed to run west from the Eglinton LRT terminus at Mt. Dennis. This SmartTrack spur would follow the Eglinton West corridor making four stops prior to terminating at Toronto's Airport Corporate Centre. The Eglinton West portion of the project has been described as a glaring flaw in the SmartTrack plan due to the predicted huge costs of tunneling and expropriating land (Barber 2015). Following months of study, Toronto City staff presented a report to its Executive Committee in October of 2015 with concerns of both cost and neighbourhood disruptions associated with the western portion of SmartTrack, while nevertheless supporting many other aspects of the plan (Hui 2015). If constructed the western portion of the SmartTrack system would connect the Eglinton West Corridor to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area's second largest employment zone with frequent and rapid rail (Woo 2015). The implications for the Eglinton West corridor are likely to be significant with greater connectivity to jobs and destinations in the western part of the city and increased local demand for housing and related services.

Metrolinx: Provincial Agency takes over new transit delivery

Metrolinx is the Province of Ontario's transportation agency charged with developing and maintaining public and road infrastructure for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. Metrolinx initially known as the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority was established through legislation in 2006 with a stated mission to "to champion, develop and implement an integrated transportation system for the GTHA region that enhances prosperity, sustainability and quality of life” (Metrolinx 2012 p. 1). The Big Move, as discussed previously was Metrolinx’s first key deliverable to bring new transit to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT was a substantial early deliverable of the Big Move plan. The Eglinton Crosstown is the largest single transit expansion in Ontario’s history. The project financed by the provincial government is estimated to cost $5.3 Billion. This cost includes the construction of 19 km of new track (10 km of which are underground) and 25 new stations (Metrolinx 2013).

Oakwood LRT Station Entrances: Storefronts will sit vacant for 5 years (Source: Author)

<u>Metrolinx and the evaluation of the Eglinton LRT Crosstown</u>

One of the initial stages of the Eglinton Crosstown was undertaking a cost benefit analysis to determine the best approach to the project. In 2011 Metrolinx commissioned a benefits case analysis of the Eglinton LRT line (Steer, Davies and Gleave 2012). This study was a comprehensive update to an earlier study and evaluated a suite of factors to determine the ideal route and operational design for the crosstown line and its overall viability. Examined in this analysis were transportation factors, financial accounts, environmental costs and benefits, economic development opportunities, and social and community implications. The benefits case analysis found that environmental impacts would generally be positive as they expect a reduction in vehicular CO^2 emissions due to greater transit use despite the fact that some studies by Kahn (2007) and Pollack et al. (2010) show an increase in automobile use proximate to rapid transit stations. The benefits case analysis indicated that ridership and travel time numbers will vary depending on routing options and the same goes for operating costs and revenues.

In respect to economic development, the benefits case analysis indicated that short term benefits associated with the construction of the Crosstown are expected to create “direct and indirect employment, leading to increased wages and GDP to the GTHA region” (Steer, Davies and Gleave 2012 p. 30). Long-term economic benefits were identified as increased productivity in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, the rationale being an increased labour pool, improved accessibility, and reduced congestion as a result of the new LRT line. The benefits case analysis also estimated a land value uplift of up to $1.8 Billion associated with the LRT upon completion.

Finally, in regards to social community outcomes the benefits case report noted that more compact and mixed-use communities are likely to be built as a result of the LRT line, bringing about improved physical health due to less driving and more transit use and increased accessibility to rapid transit. No negative social or community impacts were identified. The report actually offered very few to no negative outcomes of the LRT in any of the above categories. Potential issues of decreased affordability (from the predicted property uplift) and related loss of essential community amenities such as laundromats, affordable groceries, or employment centres due to development pressures and potential community displacement (again due to the property uplift) were not considered. Further construction impacts (business losses due to difficulties in access) on the community were not considered in the report. The construction phase of the project is estimated at 7 years in length and this timeline includes major disruptions to business and users of the street. A 2012 TTC report on the Eglinton West LRT project delivery warned specifically of the community impacts upon the neighbourhood and the high cost in mitigating impacts in a so-called ‘alternative financing and procurement’ model favored by Metrolinx.

<u>Metrolinx and the construction of the Eglinton LRT Crosstown</u>

Metrolinx in partnership with Infrastructure Ontario is managing the construction of the project through an ‘alternative financing and procurement’ model. Under this model, Metrolinx and the province have set out the overall budget and parameters of the LRT project and the route, stations, entrances/exits etc. of the system while the actual construction is both financed and undertaken via a private sector contractor. Infrastructure Ontario requires the consideration of an ‘alternative financing and procurement’ model on all projects over $50 million as cost overruns and delays become the responsibility of the contracted private sector firm and not the government.

Metrolinx bundled the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown into two phases and three contracts. The first phase includes 10 km of tunneling and tunnel construction, with one contract for the eastern portion and another for the western portion. The second stage and third contract includes all work related to construction of the stations and the surface lines. The initial series of contracts faced criticism due to their enormous scale and scope and the required undertakings to put together proposals. The Ontario Association of Architects has spoken out about the architectural component procurement process valued at $1.75 Billion of the $4 Billion dollar tunneling phase. The concern is based upon the size of the contract and the lack of competition as only large international firms would have the resources to bid successfully on these types of contracts. According to Leal (2013 p.1), "Ontario's larger firms will not compete because they cannot afford to lose." If the contract was broken up into smaller projects, local firms could do the work for less money, the Ontario Association of Architects (2013) claims. These concerns about contracting were also raised by the TTC in a 2012 report noting that few if any local contractors would have the resources to submit a bid on contracts of this size, effectively rendering the process non-competitive (TTC 2012).

The second phase contract for the station and surface rail construction was awarded to the consortium Crosslinx Transit Solutions. In June 2015, Crosslinx Transit Solutions consortium was announced as the recipients of the design/build contract for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project estimated at $5 billion dollars. The consortium includes large multidisciplinary construction and engineering firms such as SNC-Lavalin, ACS Infrastructure Canada, EllisDon, and Aecon and will be responsible for the construction of the stations, tracks work, signaling, communications, and other required infrastructure. Crosslinx Transit Solutions was one of two pre-qualified construction consortia's (Metrolinx 2013). This phase of construction will begin in 2016.

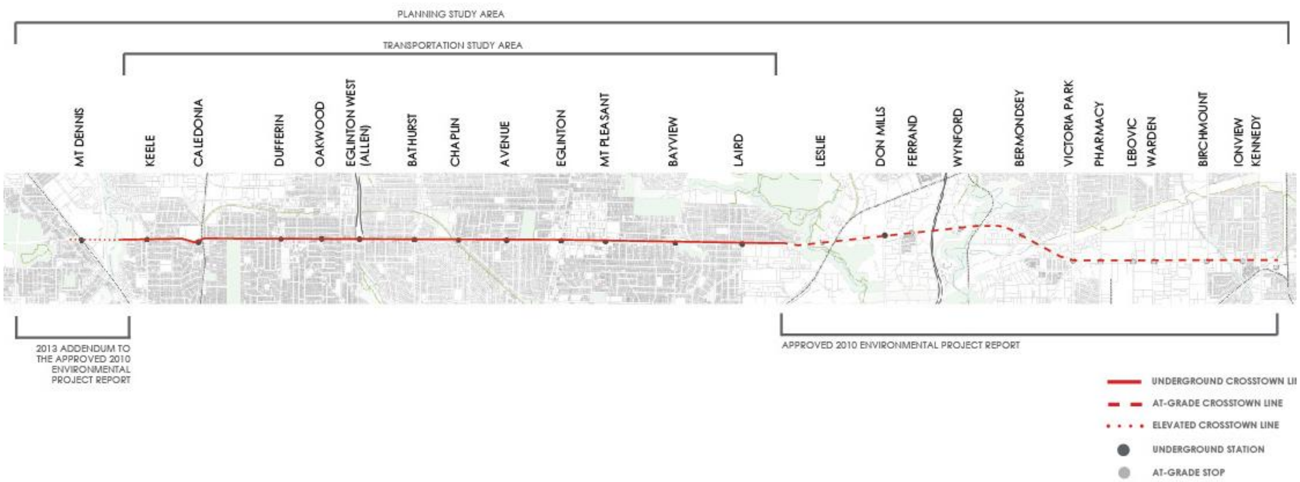
City of Toronto: Setting the Development Framework along Eglinton Avenue

The Eglinton Crosstown LRT may be branded, funded, and construction managed by the Provincial agency Metrolinx, yet it is the City of Toronto that will ultimately host and operate the new line. It is the City's role (under the provincial planning framework) to set out the parameters for growth and development along this new major infrastructure corridor. This is achieved at a city level in the form of land use and transportation planning and policy. The City of Toronto's Official Plan sets out the broad high level framework for how the City will approach transit-based growth along one of its major arteries, in this case Eglinton Avenue. Section 2.2 of the Official Plan for example calls for the integration of land use and transportation and identifies that future growth should occur in areas that are well-served by transit, particularly rapid transit. Section 2.2.3 further outlines the City's interest in intensification on *Avenues*. The City also has a vested interest in the communities that will line new transit corridors. Section 3.2.1 broadly calls for adequate, affordable, and appropriate housing to be provided. Official Plan's policies attempt to address a current lack of purpose built rental housing, affordable rental housing and affordable low-rise ownership housing in the City through the protection of existing stock and incentives to build new units. In recognition of the transformative nature of the new Eglinton Crosstown LRT project, the City of Toronto (2014) struck out to create a specialized study, Eglinton Connects, to direct development along the Avenue.

Eglinton Connects

The City of Toronto's Eglinton Connects planning study was undertaken over a two year period (2012-2014) towards developing a strategy for future land uses, built form, public realm, and road layout on Eglinton Avenue. The study was undertaken in preparation for the arrival of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and examines the entire 19 km of the crosstown route. The study includes an environmental assessment for the underground portion of the line as well as the identification of six focus areas and two mobility hubs for more detailed study where more concentrated development is expected to occur (City of Toronto 2014d). The vision for the Eglinton Connects plan states that "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" (City of Toronto 2014d p. 2). The Eglinton Connects plan has identified six focus areas which are anticipated to undergo (and being planned for) significant intensification and redevelopment. One of these focus areas is located at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue West and Dufferin Street within the study area of this paper. The report affirms that there are a significant number of underused sites along Dufferin Street that present an opportunity to build larger high-rise buildings although the majority of future development should still be consistent with the Eglinton mid-rise Avenues designation (City of Toronto 2014a).

While focused on land use and urban design elements, the Eglinton Connects report identifies a greater need for park spaces, enhanced community recreation facilities, and additional community and human services and spaces as redevelopment occurs in the Eglinton/Dufferin area. The study suggests that such facilities can be secured through a combination of Section 37 and 47 Planning Act agreements, a development permit system (potential first use in the City of Toronto), and through approval of plans of condominium and subdivisions, and parkland dedication policies.



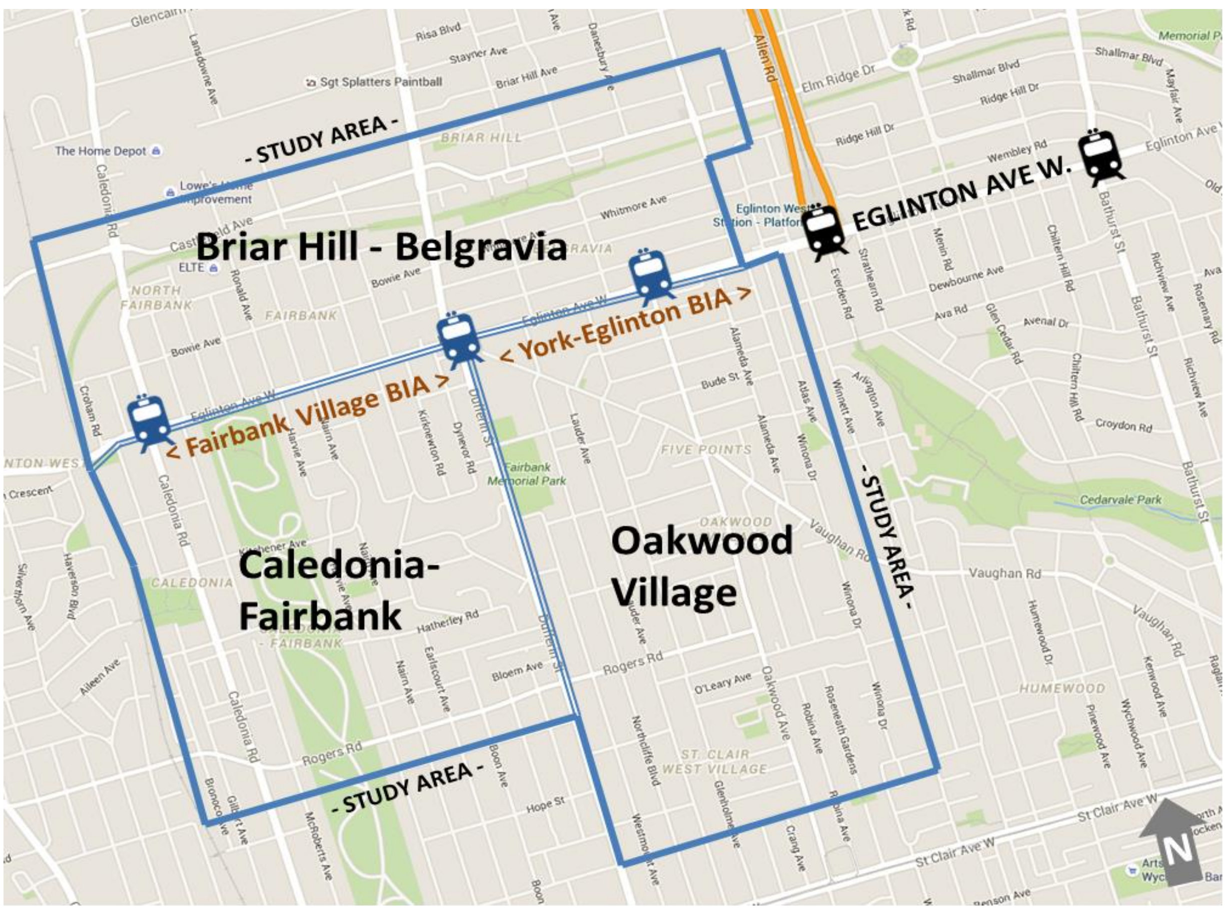
Eglinton Connects Study Area Map (Source: City of Toronto 2014d).

The study additionally proposes a pilot project to permit mid-rise construction on lots typically too shallow for mid-rise to reach its maximum (most profitable) height. Through this pilot project development is achieved by allowing residential lots abutting the rear of shallow commercial properties on Eglinton Avenue West to be consolidated into a single larger developable site. There are a number of conditions on this "Neighbourhood Transition Area" pilot project and currently it is only being piloted between Croham Road and Sanderstead Avenue just within the study area's western boundary. However there are eight additional blocks along the route that have been identified by the city as potential sites for this approach (City of Toronto 2014e). In practice the Neighbourhood Transition Area project opens up the possibility for speculation and development as properties that would have normally been difficult or expensive to amass into developable parcels become feasible.

The outcome of the Eglinton Connects planning study was 21 recommendations and an implementation strategy that included a number of Official Plan amendments to land use designations and allowances for lot consolidation. The study broadly recommended the construction of new laneways and the expansion of existing laneways to service new development on Eglinton Avenue West. While the plan does speak to addressing the need for enhanced community services and facilities in the Eglinton/Dufferin study area, there is no consideration given to affordable housing creation or policies related to the preservation of existing communities and businesses. Rather the new Eglinton Crosstown LRT project as a whole is seen as an opportunity to "reinvigorate adjacent neighbourhoods and attract a new population looking for a high quality of life that is contemporary in its urban vision" (City of Toronto 2014d p. 2)

3. Eglinton Avenue West Study Area: Neighbourhood profile

An area of Eglinton Avenue West has been selected as a case study for assessing the current and projected effects of the LRT crosstown on land value and neighbourhood affordability and change. The area has been selected as it is likely to experience significant social and economic change based upon its current demographic makeup and location in the city. The case study analysis focuses on a 2.1-km stretch of Eglinton Avenue West from Marlee Avenue in the east to Caledonia Road in the west. This specific segment will be the site of 3 new Crosstown LRT stations: Caledonia, Dufferin, and Oakwood stations.



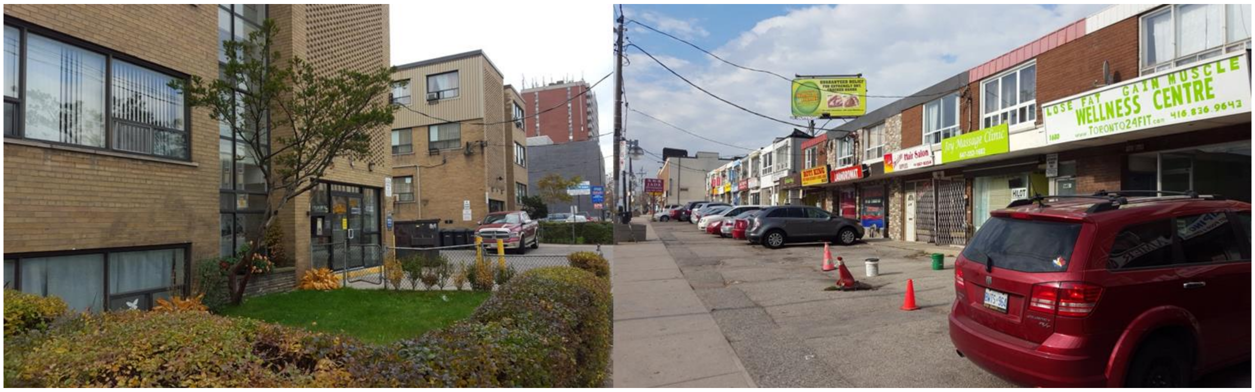
Study Area and Proposed LRT Stations (Source: Author 2015)

This section of Eglinton Avenue West comprises the neighbourhoods of Briar-Hill-Belgravia, Caledonia-Fairbank, and Oakwood-Vaughan with a combined 2011 Statistics Canada population of 45,856 (Briar-Hill Belgravia: 14,302, Caledonia – Fairbank: 9,851, Oakwood Village: 21,703) (City of Toronto 2014). Neighbourhood boundaries for the study area were chosen based upon the boundaries used by Toronto's Social Policy Analysis and Research Unit. These established boundaries provide the best available statistical information on population, human services and demography at the neighbourhood level.

Eglinton Avenue West Then and Now

The study area is located in the west end of Toronto within the former municipality of York incorporated in 1850 by Canada West (Later known as Ontario). The area was developed during the inter-war period in the early half of the 20th century with the expansion of the Oakwood/Rogers/Eglinton streetcar line in 1929 (Bow 2015). Much of the area was farmland prior to the new rail line opening up this area of South York to development. Eglinton Avenue, previously called the 3rd concession, grew rapidly from 1930 through 1960 when the road was widened and defined itself as the city's midtown commercial strip (Flak 2013). In 1954, York was one of 12 municipalities that joined Toronto to form Metropolitan Toronto but it was later amalgamated with the City of Toronto in 1998.

Today Eglinton Avenue West serves as the both the primary transportation route (Oakwood Avenue to a lesser extent) and commercial centre for the study area. The commercial strip along this section of Eglinton Avenue is comprised of primarily independent businesses such as beauty services and supply stores, convenience stores, Caribbean-food restaurants, bargain stores, sports bars, cafes and fast food chains restaurants. The built form along Eglinton Avenue West consists of predominantly 2 or 3 storey buildings with commercial activities at grade and residential apartments above. There is a sole high rise apartment building at 1775 Eglinton Avenue West run by Toronto Community Housing Corporation at the south east corner of Eglinton and Dufferin and three post-war strip malls (with 8 to 10 business each) that front onto Eglinton Avenue just east of Northcliffe Boulevard, a number of midrise apartment buildings are interspersed along the Avenue..



Midrise Residential and Strip mall on Eglinton Avenue West (Source: Author)

Within the study area, there are two Business Improvement Areas (BIA) representing the Eglinton Avenue West commercial strip. Located west of Dufferin Street is the Fairbank Village BIA established in 2007 and comprised of approximately 150 local business members. East of Dufferin Street falls within the boundaries of the York-Eglinton BIA and is comprised of approximately 200 businesses. The portion of Eglinton Avenue West of Dufferin Street has been branded by the York-Eglinton BIA as “International Market,” yet is more commonly referred to as Little Jamaica due to the concentration of Caribbean businesses and services (Colle 2015).

Housing Mix

Housing in the subject area consists of a mix of bungalows, semi-detached and detached homes on relatively narrow lots built during the early to mid-20th century. Apartments outside of duplexes/triplexes consist of primarily low-rise buildings along Eglinton Avenue, Vaughan Road, and Oakwood Avenue with a number of them dotted amongst the smaller residential streets. Apartment buildings of 5 storeys or less account for 26% of occupied dwelling in Oakwood Village; this is 10% higher than the City of Toronto average. While this built form is generally consistent in the neighbourhoods of Caledonia Fairbank and Oakwood Village north of Eglinton in the Briar Hill-Belgravia neighbourhood the built form is distinctly different. The Briar Hill-Belgravia neighbourhood is a mix of larger lots with post-war bungalows (many in the process of being expanded into large homes), new suburban and townhome infill projects and a number of high rise post-war apartment buildings. The 51% ratio of ownership to rental in the study area is somewhat higher than the city average of 45%, and 46% respectively for the neighbourhoods of Briar Hill–Belgravia and Oakwood Village. Caledonia-Fairbank, the south-western most neighbourhoods of the study area and the least populated area, has a significantly higher ownership share at 69%.

Private Dwelling by Structure Type – Eglinton West Study Area				
2006 Data	Caledonia-Fairbank	Briar Hill - Belgravia	Oakwood Village	Toronto
Single/Semi/Row	2110	1735	4080	391776
Apartment	1425	3945	4560	587664
Total Units	3435	5680	8640	979440
Owned	69%	49%	54%	55%
Rented	31%	51%	46%	45%

(Source: Statistics Canada 2010).

Immigration History of the neighbourhood

Following the reformed Immigration Act in 1976 the study area became a popular destination for Jamaican newcomers, while previous immigrants in the study area were of British, Italian, and Portuguese origins. By the 2001 census the top three ethnic origins (self-identified ancestry) in Oakwood Village were Canadian (2,590), English (1,765) and Jamaican (1,665). Residents with Jamaican ancestry ranked fourth (390) in Caledonia-Fairbank and tenth (540) in Briar Hill-Belgravia, where Italian, Canadian, and Portuguese ranked at the top. This data is revealing of the role of Eglinton Avenue West as a dividing line between the Jamaican communities to the south and Italian and Portuguese communities to the north.

However, by the 1990s the study area began to see fewer Jamaicans arriving and the beginning of a new demographic shift was underway. Between the period of 1991 to 1996, 750 new immigrants from Jamaica arrived in the study area. This number dropped to just 360 for the period from 1997 to 2001. By 2002 up to 2006 there were too few immigrants from Jamaica to the study area to be counted as an individual group and were statistically grouped into a category consisting of immigrants from all of the Caribbean and Bermuda (for a total of 470).

While Italian, Portuguese and Jamaican diasporic communities continue to live and work in the neighbourhood as reflected in the businesses and services in the neighbourhood, there has been a marked shift in immigration trends since the beginning of the 21st century. The study area has seen a steady increase in newcomers from South East Asian communities. During the period of 2006 to 2011, the primary birthplace of new immigrants to the neighbourhoods of Oakwood Vaughan and Briar Hill-

Belgravia was the Philippines. During this same time period the resident populations self-identifying as Filipino were in the top three represented groups across the study area.

Affordability

Housing is the largest expenditure most households endure. The greater expense that a household is required to spend on shelter, the less capacity this household has to meet other needs, such as childcare costs, transportation, or food. As such the percentage of income that is spent on housing is a closely watched indicator of wellbeing (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2008). More than 47% of renters in Toronto have affordability challenges, 200,000 tenant households are paying more than 30% of their income on rent and home ownership is increasingly challenging for low and middle income residents (City of Toronto 2009).

Similar to Toronto as a whole, the neighbourhoods within the study area are paying beyond the affordability threshold of 30% of their household income on shelter, and as high as 37% in Caledonia-Fairbank. Housing suitability of the three study area neighbourhoods, however, fairs worse than the Toronto average. Between 15 and 20% of study area residents are living in homes that are too small or inappropriate for their family composition. This condition suggests that these residents are unable to secure appropriate housing for their families and with the high number of households spending over 30% on accommodations, it indicates a lack of affordability for approximately one third of the residents. Further compounding the lack of affordability in the neighbourhood is the relatively low average after tax household income for the study area. The average income in the study area is nearly 20% less than the city wide average.

Housing Affordability and Suitability – Eglinton West Study Area				
2011 Data	Caledonia – Fairbank	Briar Hill - Belgravia	Oakwood Village	Toronto Average
Spending 30% or more on shelter costs	37%	34%	35%	35%
Not meeting National Occupancy Standard*	20%	17%	15%	14%
Percentage of low-income population	16%	17%	19%	19%
After tax household income	$59,777	$56,959	$57,422	$70,945

(Source: Statistics Canada 2011). The 2011 census data was voluntarily provided so caution should be used in interpretation. According to Statistics Canada (2011), National Occupancy Standards dictate one bedroom for each cohabitating adult couple; each lone parent; unattached household member 18 years of age and over; same-sex pair of children under age 18; and additional boy or girl in the family, unless there are two opposite sex children under 5 years of age, in which case they can share a bedroom.

When incomes are compared to average housing price values in the study area the distinct lack of affordability is evident. Since the announcement of the Eglinton LRT project in the Metrolinx Big Move regional transportation plan in 2008, average housing prices in the study area have increased between 68% and 82% depending on neighbourhood. The largest gains have also come in the last two years since construction of the Crosstown LRT has begun. Toronto has seen strong housing price increases across the city with single detached homes surpassing the $1M mark in 2015 (Pigg 2015). Yet, the average housing price has increased by just 49% on average significantly less than in the study area (reference needed). While it is difficult to separate the effects of the Crosstown LRT on housing prices from the overall buoyant housing market in Toronto, it appears that the study area prices are accelerating much quicker than that of Toronto as a whole.

Average Housing Prices – Eglinton West Study Area			
Neighbourhood	2008 Announcement of Metrolinx Big Move	2013 Ground breaking of the Eglinton LRT	2015 Five years out to completion of LRT
Caledonia-Fairbank	$320,261	$467,296	$543,138
Briar Hill Belgravia	$299,543	$439,096	$503,046
Oakwood Village	$390,013	$508,785	$713,777
Toronto Average*	$379,347	$522,958	$566,626 (end of 2014)

Neighbourhood Average Housing Prices - Eglinton West Study Area
(Source: Manza McGovern 2015). . Toronto average housing selling price (Source: Toronto Real Estate Board 2015).

4. Who stands to win or lose? What's being done?

The Eglinton LRT is a major infrastructural undertaking, one which will have a profound effect on the neighbourhoods it transects. The beginnings of these changes can be seen today in the multitude of development proposals, the rapidly appreciating property values, and the shuttering of businesses in anticipation of the speculation to come. The implications of new rapid transit along Eglinton Avenue West will not be felt evenly. Many newcomers will find a new home and community in recently constructed condominium or townhouse projects. At the same time, many residents may find themselves no longer able to stay in their homes and communities they have known as rents climb and properties change hands. Businesses and investors will see new opportunities and markets to enter while existing establishments may see their regular clientele dwindling.

The following section examines the standpoints of those who are most likely to benefit from the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and who may find themselves worse off in a neighbourhood that becomes increasingly unaffordable. The case study area is examined in addition to efforts that are underway to acknowledge and preserve the existing community.

Property Owners, Developers, and the Real Estate Industry

Following the announcement of the new rapid transit infrastructure, property owners, speculators, and real estate firms find themselves in the potential position to reap significant economic gains from development and intensification of these newly served lands. Fixed-route transit lines such as LRT provide investment stability that bus service lacks because the latter can be cancelled or reduced, and therefore a more permanent infrastructure enhances the value of properties along the route (Rayle 2014). Fixed-route transit like the Eglinton Crosstown LRT particularly attracts high-density development in proximity to rail stations. Stations are the preferred locations for the greatest numbers of units to be built in relation to site size and highest returns for developers (Foth 2010). Market capitalization of the new Eglinton Crosstown LRT route is already in progress particularly in the vicinity of planned stations. New high rise residential development is proposed for many of the avenues characterized now by post-war low density structures (Landau 2015).

<u>(Re)Development on the Avenue</u>

Five years away from operation, the Eglinton Crosstown LRT has already sparked development on Eglinton Avenue unseen since the post-war years and has effectively reimagining Toronto's mid-town artery as "the new Bloor Street" (Landau 2015). Since the confirmation of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, dozens of applications for redevelopment have been received by the City and it is likely that dozens more will be filed in the years leading up to the LRT's first trip. The bulk of the redevelopment applications have come to the east of Yonge Street where (suburban) properties are larger and can be more easily developed. However, there are a number of projects planned west of Yonge Street and significant development is expected for Eglinton Avenue West particularly around the stations nodes and at the intersections of the LRT and the Eglinton West Subway Station (Ross 2013). Many of the (re)development applications on Eglinton Avenue have been well in excess of the midrise built form called for in the City's Eglinton Connects plan and Toronto's Official Plan's Avenues designation. Since the announcement of the approval of the Crosstown LRT, more than 40 rezoning applications have been submitted to the City of Toronto's planning department. The City of Toronto has rejected all of these applications but half of them are currently under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (Vanta 2015).

As Lehrer (2009 p. 145) explains, “[w]ith their dislike for less profitable mid-rise housing structures, developers prefer almost exclusively high-rise condominium buildings.”

RioCan, Canada’s largest real estate investment trust, has purchased Sunnybrook Plaza, Toronto’s first strip mall at Bayview Avenue and Eglinton Avenue directly across the street from the site of the new Bayview LRT station. RioCan is proposing a 13 and 19 storey towers with a combined 426 residential units and 25,000 square feet of commercial retail space (Landau 2015). Diamond Corp, the development arm of lawyer Steve Diamond, has bought another of Toronto’s post war strip malls at Brentcliffe and Eglinton just east of the new LRT station at Laird Drive. Tech Company Celestica was proposing to redevelop its Eglinton and Don Mills property into a mixed use community including nearly 3,000 three-bedroom residential units (Bateman 2014). The City of Toronto refused Celestica’s application as it is counter to the City’s desire to protect office and industrial lands and preference for a mid-rise built form on Eglinton Avenue (as stated in the Official Plan). Celestica is appealing the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board (Vanta 2015).

Besides these most recent proposals, there are already more than a dozen multi-unit development projects in various stages of development along the future Eglinton LRT corridor (Kuitenbrouwer 2014). Some of these ongoing projects include: The Madison development at Eglinton Avenue and Yonge Street with 646 units/ 33 Storeys, and a 2016 completion date; The Eglinton Condos at Eglinton Avenue and Mt. Pleasant Road with 378 units/34 storeys) scheduled for completion in 2018; the Oben Flats Castlefield Design Districts, at Eglinton Avenue and Caledonia Road, with 29 units of purpose built rental; and The Hub at Oakwood Avenue and Eglinton Avenue with 220 units/16 Storeys with an estimated completion of 2016 (Buzzbuzzhome.com 2015).

Province Enters in the Development Game

Not only does the private sector have an interest in the development opportunities arising from the Eglinton Crosstown LRT but so too does Metrolinx, the sole property holder of the new station lands. In 2015 Metrolinx announced that it would be selling the air rights of some of the properties that were purchased or expropriated by the agency to construct the LRT stations along Eglinton Avenue. In February 2015, a request for proposals (RFP) was released to develop four station parcels along the rail route, with expected revenue of $76 million for the province (Kalinowski 2015). Two of the sites on offer are zoned for high-rise towers (Weston Road and Bathurst Street.) while the two others at Keele Street and Eglinton Avenue are currently zoned for mid-rise.

Metrolinx (Wickens 2015) has stated that it is keeping a hands-off approach on the land transaction and as such the purchaser would be free to construct any mix of housing it sees fit and even apply for rezoning of the property to the City of Toronto. Metrolinx (Wickens 2015) has indicated that additional stations on the 25 stop line will be available for development following the same request for proposals process so long as there is interest from the private market. With a minimum of two entrances per station, up to 50 provincially owned sites could be available for private market purchase and development. For the ability to build directly above a rapid transit station and the associated convenience of living so close to transit, it is difficult to imagine that development interest will be anything but fierce. This sale of air rights was potentially a great opportunity for the Province to ensure affordable housing is constructed right across the city along the Eglinton Crosstown LRT line directly adjacent to rapid transit stations. From a cost benefit approach, the potential gains of permanent affordable housing units with little to no cost to the Province would appear to be a win-win situation when you compare it to the cost of transfer payments to the City to provide affordable housing. Even if the Province entered into agreements with developers to construct 25% of units as affordable, Metrolinx could still garner a profit from the sale of the lands. In the context of the study area this affordable housing scenario could potentially mean 6 new buildings (at Oakwood, Dufferin, and Caledonia stations with 2 entrances each) comprising potentially 100 or more affordable units. Yet, the air rights have been sold unfettered in an effort to reap as much return for Metrolinx as possible.

Condo (Re)Development in the case study area

The Hub, a condominium development by developer and builder Empire Communities, is the first major redevelopment project located within the boundaries of the case study. The condominium project dates back to 2010 with an appeal the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) over a City decision to not amend the existing York zoning by-law. Empire Communities had proposed an 18 storey, 204 units mixed-use residential tower that not only exceed local zoning but also contradicted the City’s newly established 2010 Official Plan’s mid-rise designation for Eglinton Avenue (City of Toronto 2015). The City of Toronto and Empire Communities came to a settlement prior to the hearing of the case at the OMB agreeing on a 14-storey building of 172 dwelling units (Ontario Municipal Board 2010). Height and density bonuses were negotiated with the City under Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act, along with cash contributions of $2,000 per unit, a monthly transit pass for 1 year for each tenant, and a public art contribution of 0.5% of gross construction cost of the development (City of Toronto 2011). Pre-build units were up for sale in 2013 just prior to construction beginning on the LRT line and as of fall 2015, units remain for sale and the Hub condominium development has yet to break ground.

The Hub is considered a 'smart' development project by real estate watchers and pundits as it is the first major project in the neighbourhood, a pioneer of sorts, capitalizing on relatively low land prices prior to the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT (Johnson 2013, Mullins 2013, Starr 2013). According to the vice president of Empire Communities, several other developers failed to bid on the parcel because of the area's unproven location but he believes the location will be in demand by the time occupancy begins in 2016 (quoted in Mullins 2013).

The Hub Condominium Project Site (Source: Author)

The Hub project features square foot prices of $90 less than the city 's average of $557 (as of January 2015) and a number of incentives for 'early adopters' to the neighbourhood including parking discounts, free maintenance fees and property taxes waived for the first year in an effort to attract buyers. The Hub development recognized that the LRT line is one of its key strengths and prominently features it in all promotional and advertising materials. Empire Communities positions the Hub development as playing a significant role in what it deems as the renewal of Eglinton Avenue West. Empire Communities' (2015) advertisement boast: With "the Eglinton Crosstown LRT right at your front door, where would you rather be? Take advantage of the good value combination of a yet-to-be-discovered uptown neighbourhood.". The Hub's promotional materials also promise that by "[l]iving at the Hub, you'll be first to benefit from the new Eglinton Crosstown LRT" (Empire Communities 2015). Additional promotional material for the Hub emphasizes (as its name demonstrates) the strategic location of the development:

> Toronto's future crosstown LRT network will be steps from our front door, making your commute that much faster. You'll be able to get to Black Creek or Kennedy Station in a flash, right from the planned Oakwood Station. Expect the York Eglinton area to surge forward with more trendy shops and less congestion! (Empire Communities 2015).

It is unclear if this aggressive marketing approach is representative of an unsure developer about its own project in an area that has yet to witness first hand Toronto's condominium boom or perceived buyers' uncertainty of a community that is less affluent and ethnically diverse or both. The project is positioning itself as a promise of gentrification and property value growth for those buyers willing to invest in the commercial ground floor of this venture. Interestingly, this project in the heart of Toronto's Little Jamaica, has chosen not to promote the vibrant community that currently exists there but rather a perceived "nicer" one that will potentially emerge in the future. The City of Toronto also appears to be tacitly supporting the gentrification of the neighbourhood bonusing new purchasers with transit passes and public art improvements and have taken no steps to mitigate affordability impacts of the development. With units still for sale two years later, questions about the project's viability remains.

Pressures on Existing Communities and Affordability

The City of Toronto's 2010 Official Plan clearly states that "adequate and affordable housing is a basic requirement for everyone" and that "[c]urrent and future residents must be able to access and maintain adequate, affordable, and appropriate housing" (City of Toronto 2015, p. 3, 12). The importance of balancing the housing stock, the Official Plan affirms, is for not only shelter reasons but in the interest of social diversity, cohesion and economic success (City of Toronto 2015). Yet the ability to access affordable housing in Toronto has become a major challenge as job quality has declined and housing prices and rents continue to soar (United Way 2015). As housing prices shift into the range of un-affordability, social diversity, cohesion and economic success, and the aspirations of the City are very much at risk.

Residents who can no longer afford homes in the city's core or other well-known and desirable neighbourhoods, often adjacent to rapid transit, begin to look for housing in other comparatively more affordable neighbourhoods (Hulchanski 2010). As transportation costs are often only second to housing costs in household expenditures, one of the major elements that prospective residents look for is access to rapid transit. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT corridor will now be high on the shopping list of prospective buyers with rapid transit only 5 years away. Developers are well aware of this economic potential and have begun to build and acquire condominium sites along the line. Perhaps most in demand though will be the existing housing stock of single and semi-detached homes as very little new stock of this type is being added in Toronto.

The Eglinton Avenue West neighbourhood will be at risk of an accelerated loss of affordability and increased displacement as housing stock is generally smaller and prices less than along Eglinton Avenue East or in Toronto's downtown. A recent study of the San Francisco Bay area found that neighborhoods that have easy access to rail transit, pre-1950s housing stock and rising housing prices are especially at risk of losing low-income households (Zuk and Chapple 2015). The Eglinton Avenue West neighbourhood shares all these parameters. In the Vaughan-Oakwood neighbourhood, housing prices have already experienced an 82% increase in value since the announcement of the Big Move transit plan in 2008 while Caledonia-Fairbank and Briar Hill-Belgravia have seen similarly high increases of 69% and 68% respectively (Manza McGovern 2015).

Research shows that neighbourhoods with a high proportion of renters are particularly vulnerable to transit induced gentrification (Pollack, Bluestone and Bellingham 2010). In these neighbourhoods, rents increase faster and the proportion of owner-occupied units outpaced that of non-transit served neighbourhoods. In the Eglinton Avenue West Study Area, there are 1,380 duplex apartment units and 4,180 apartment units in buildings that are 4 stories or less (Statistics Canada 2011). Cumulatively, this housing stock accounts for 57% of the rental housing stock in the study area at risk of conversion from rising property market values and demand for single family homes in close proximity to transit. While the City of Toronto does place conditions on the conversion of rental properties, such regulations apply only to buildings with 6 or more units and as a result more than half of the study area's rental housing is without protection from elimination. Even apartments with 6 or more units as found in the Briar Hill-Belgravia neighbourhood may still be converted to either cooperative or condominium ownership so long as a prescribed process is followed (City of Toronto, 2007). This demand for single family housing coupled with a lack of rental protection regulations could result in significant displacement for those with tenuous housing arrangements.

Further compounding the threat of displacement in the study area is a purpose built rental stock in Toronto that has stagnated over the decades with units becoming increasingly unaffordable. According to the City of Toronto (2009), 95% of new housing in Toronto is constructed for the ownership market. The result is a rental market dependent on privately rented condominium units. Toronto's Official Plan (2015) recognises that condominium apartments are overrepresented in Toronto's housing mix and that more purpose built rental and affordable low rise ownership housing for larger families is required. However, the regulatory support for rental and affordable housing construction is lacking. In Toronto, developers are required to construct affordable units only in projects that are 5 hectares or larger. However, as stated in Toronto's Affordable Housing Action Plan, the vast majority of residential development occurs on sites smaller than the 5 hectares threshold (City of Toronto, 2009). This situation then only leaves Section 37 negotiations with developers to obtain affordable housing contributions. However, Section 37 funds more frequently get allocated to art projects or green spaces as opposed to affordable housing or community facilities (Lehrer 2009).

In the case of the Eglinton Avenue West neighbourhood, an increasing demand for housing and a rise in prices is likely to have compounding negative consequences for those displaced or priced out of the neighbourhood. As residents are displaced by higher rents, they are likely to face increased economic burdens in more affordable neighbourhoods often located further out in Toronto's older suburbs. A recent Toronto study found that economic restructuring between 1981 and 2006 has led to a reduction in housing choice and an increase in housing costs for low-income households (Skaburskis and Nelson 2013). Low-income households have been displaced to areas with fewer services, limited access to public transportation and employment opportunities (Skaburskis and Nelson 2013).

This condition has been referred to as the "favoured-quarter effect" in which residents seeking affordability are worse off because they relocate in un-favored areas of the city where residents' access to jobs decreases (El Nasser 2015). A recent report by the Brookings Institution found that ethnically diverse and low-income neighbourhoods are losing jobs faster than any other neighbourhood (Pendall et al. 2012). Pendall et al. (2012) note that employment centres seek out more affluent areas subsequently extending commutes for low-income residents, typically in areas that suffer from inadequate transportation. In the Eglinton Avenue West study area, this "favour-quarter effect" may manifest in a displacement of low-income residents who can no longer afford housing costs to less served areas of the city while middle- and high-income earners move in and subsequently an increasing number of jobs in services emerges to cater to this new demographic. As Councillor Colle explains the City needs to recognize the cause and effect between new transit infrastructure and affordability but the impact “is not yet fully fleshed out” (Colle 2015.) A more conscious effort to leverage transit investment and private development must be sought through a wider city policy to ensure development revenues are directed towards affordable housing (Colle 2015). As Councillor Colle (2015) states, “Currently in this city the pitch of transit is in accelerating property values and why you will want to go through the construction pain. We haven’t had the conversation yet as to what happens to the local community when you put new transit in and how do you keep from driving them out.”

Community/Business Resiliency

As Pendall et al. (2012) argue in *Bringing Equity to Transit-Oriented Development: Stations, Systems, and Regional Resilience,* new fixed-rail transit development in established lower income neighbourhoods, such as in the case of Eglinton Avenue West, come with both short term and long term loses in affordability. Lower income communities within urban centres, as the authors explain, tend to feature as a status quo a disproportionately high percentage of absentee owners and speculators (Pendall et al. 2012). When new fixed-rail transit lines are announced in these areas, the result in the short term is often disinvestment in the community. As speculators hold out for the market to reach its anticipated post-transit highs, little investment is made to maintain the properties in a good state of repair. During this stage between transit announcement and market capitalization, existing tenants and residents face a combination of higher rents and declining neighbourhood amenities.

Vacant Storefronts Study Area (Source: Author)

Three years into construction on the LRT line, commercial vacancies are an increasingly prevalent manifestation of this in-between stage of property speculation in the Eglinton Avenue West study area. Between Marlee Avenue and Dufferin Street alone, there are 18 vacant storefronts creating a visual sense of disuse and disruption in the continuity of the commercial strip. As an increasing number of businesses close, pedestrian traffic decreases and makes it that much more difficult for the remaining businesses to succeed. This situation, at least in part, is the manifestation of the speculative property market holding out for high paying tenants and a Toronto taxation policy that provides municipal tax rebates on vacant commercial units to land owners. This is particularly damaging when there may be interested tenants for the properties but just not the type of corporate tenants that exemplify the future high-return vision of the property owners. According to the Eglinton Way BIA's executive director business may be further leaving voluntarily to ensure they find a new home ahead of expected rent increases when construction of the LRT is complete (McAllister 2014).

When market values have sufficiently increased, business tenants that have managed to succeed thus far may ultimately be forced out in the face of higher rents and redevelopment of commercial properties into mixed use condominiums (Zuk et al. 2015). The outcome is a situation where you have an exiting of existing smaller local businesses and low income tenants (many of whom lived above the shops on Eglinton Avenue West) replaced by new wealthier residents and upmarket businesses. Businesses are in turn attracted to sites with good transit and peers that offer similar goods and services as these areas tend to feature higher income and more relevant pedestrian traffic (Smith and Gihring 2015). A further outcome of increasing market values is a loss of business that provide affordable goods and services to lower income residents such as laundromats, drop-in centres, affordable groceries, and internet cafes (Mazer and Rankin 2011).

Further compounding the pressure on existing businesses is the disruption brought on with the construction of the LRT line itself. In 2012 the TTC commissioned a report on the impacts of the development of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project and the report found that "the Metrolinx schedule carries the risk of disproportionate community disruption. If all of the stations are designed and constructed in the same timeframe, there will inevitably be major disruption for the length of the underground section on Eglinton. In addition, there will be a cumulative impact across the city with Sheppard East LRT and Finch West LRT construction in the same time period" (TTC 2012 p. 10) According to LRT tunneling engineers, traffic on Eglinton Avenue West has dropped by 33% since construction began, vehicle counts on Eglinton Avenue are down to 12,000 daily from a preconstruction average of 36,000 (Levy 2014).

The Chair of the York-Eglinton BIA, Nick Alampi, has stated his concerns regarding the disruptions on the businesses on Eglinton Avenue West, particularly in respect to lane reductions and parking restrictions in the BIA area. Alampi (quoted in Eastwood 2013) states: “There were a lot of committed promises from Metrolinx in the beginning on strengthening communication and encouraging shop-local business programs” however “[i]t seems to beat at their drum, not at ours.” Metrolinx Director of Community Relations simply refers to the difficulties facing business during construction as “short term pain for long term gain” (quoted in McAllister 2014). In 2014 Toronto Mayor John Tory indicated that compensation for businesses along the LRT route should be considered, however to date no funding has been announced. When protracted streetcar construction on St. Clair Avenue began to significantly impact the livelihood of business, a $100 million class-action lawsuit was launched by a consortium of affected proprietors. The lawsuit was subsequently dismissed by the Ontario Court of Appeal.

Local councillor Josh Colle (2015) and Chair of the TTC acknowledges that there is no doubt that construction has hurt businesses. The problem is not only in the physical barriers created by construction of the LRT but in a perception that it is too difficult to access these businesses and it better to avoid the area because of the construction. For those that own the buildings, Colle (2015) explains, there is less concern as compared to those that are tenants who do not have the same property value gain light at the end of the tunnel. “According to Colle (2015), “[m]any of the businesses are located there [on Eglinton Avenue West] because it is affordable.”

Reggae Lane Project: A response to a neighbourhood in change

In recognition of the rapid change coming to the Little Jamaica neighbourhood, local councillor Josh Cole put forward the recommendation that a short lane running south of Eglinton Avenue West honour the reggae history of the neighbourhood. Reggae Lane, as it was named by City Council in August 2014, is one of two pilot projects in the city that aim to increase the community use of Toronto’s 250 km of laneways. In the summer of 2015, the laneway received a City of Toronto historic plaque honouring the reggae roots of the area and the addition of a 1200 square foot mural depicting both local and international reggae music legends at the eastern edge of the lane.

Reggae Lane Mural (Source: Author)

With rapid transit underway and with the investment that will follow on Eglinton Avenue West, Councillor Colle (2015) explains that some of the character of the neighbourhood will inevitably be lost and displacement of some Jamaican businesses is likely to occur. As Colle (2015) further explains, the naming of Reggae Lane stems from an attempt to give a brand or identity to the neighbourhood and lock in some of the heritage of the community that could be lost. As Colle (2015) asks, "When the drums cooking chicken are gone because they cannot afford the rent, what trace of those roots will be left?" Colle (2015) feels strongly that some of that legacy should be enshrined in order to survive gentrification.

There are critics that wonder why you would spend time on this kind of a project, Colle (2015) admits, many community members have spoken out in favour of the closing of dollar stores and cash for gold businesses and in favour of Starbucks. While Colle supports the desire for the departing of the pawn shops, he warns that with the arrival of chain businesses the character of the neighbourhood is severely threatened. Says Colle (2015), "I don't know what that the answer to that is (referring to the looming gentrification of Reggae Lane)? People who live there now don't appreciate the amazing history that is there, some of the great reggae artist that once lived, rehearsed and performed in the neighbourhood". In August of 2015, Colle appeared at the Canadian National Exhibition (CN) band stage to hand out Toronto Reggae Hall of Fame awards, an award which he made up only earlier in the year. According to Colle (2015), "[s]ome of those [reggae] guys are still there and sadly they don't get the recognition on the strip or in general that they deserve."

Councillor Colle (2015) furthered suggested that the branding of the neighbourhood as "International Market" by the York Eglinton BIA should be revisited as it is just not used in the parlance of Toronto or even within the neighbourhood. Rather a brand that reflects the strong Jamaican history and continued presence in the neighbourhood should be adopted as opposed to one that was arrived as a compromise between the Caribbean and Italian business owners. As Colle (2015) further offered, the move to brand this community as Little Jamaica could create a destination status for the neighbourhood similar to Greektown, Chinatown or even The Junction hold today. "If we can get hipster foodies up here to buy chicken straight from the metal drums wouldn't that be great for the local community (Colle 2015)?"

Julian King, Canadian Reggae World founder, Manager of Toronto based reggae group IBADAN, and self-declared "reggae head" is for the most part a vocal supporter of the Reggae Lane project. King (2015) used to rehearse with his band in a small studio on the lane back in the 1990s and has been keenly involved in the Reggae Lane project from the beginning. The Canadian Reggae World founder like Councillor Colle recognises the inevitable change that will come with the construction of rapid transit in the neighbourhood and feels it important to signify the history of his reggae peers in the neighbourhood. King was involved in recruiting famed Canadian reggae artist Jay Douglas to write a song in celebration of the newly named lane.

However, King (2015) underscores that not all local residents support the lane. Many of the Jamaican businesses, he explains, are disgruntled with the project as they perceive it being led by the local BIA with whom they have had poor relations with and distrust over the years. The project is however being led by the City and Councillor Colle's office but that fact gets lost in the antagonism between the Jamaican businesses and the Italian-run BIA, and according to King (2015), a more cohesive plan should be developed. King (2015) tells of trouble seeing past the state of disrepair that the laneway is in wondering why anyone would choose to celebrate it. Others have expressed feelings of tokenism, a "pat on the back" to what was there and is about to be lost. When asked about the branding and even commodification of reggae music history in the laneway project Julian King (2015) explains that he was not privy to the motivations of those that set the project in motion yet he chooses to view the project in a positive light.

King (2015) also shares the desire for Little Jamaica to become a destination neighbourhood. “Look what happened to GreekTown, and Little Italy (how successful they are), why can’t this happen for little Jamaica?” asks King (2015). There are some fundamental differences that may stand in the way of destination status for Little Jamaica (King 2015). The most pressing issue being that of all of the business owners he knows along the strip, only two are owner operators. With the speculation and development following the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, it will be hard for the Jamaican business to hold on to their shops, King (2015) explains.

Little Jamaica Storefronts (Source: Author)

It is difficult to predict whether Reggae Lane will be an anchor for the existing community or simply a plaque and passing reminder of a community that once was. Some people from the community such as the York Eglinton BIA chair feels like change is needed: “Eglinton has always been neglected. It’s always been the throughway to get through the city. Well, now it’s going to be a community where we hope to see the residents come out and voice their opinions of what they would like to see” (Kurek 2015). And there are people like Julian King and Josh Colle who are hopeful that the history and cultural vitality of the existing community is strong enough to continue.

A 2010 study entitled *Maintaining Diversity in America’s Transit-Rich Neighborhoods: Tools for Equitable Neighbourhood Change* found that new transit infrastructure does not necessary lead to a change in a neighbourhood’s racial composition (Pollack et al. 2010). Rather Pollack et al. (2010) and others (Center for Transit Oriented Development 2007) argue that more affluent black and Hispanic households tend to remain while the influx of new residents tends to be racially mixed resulting in a racial composition that is similar to what previously existed there. The diversity remains roughly the same; the authors find however, it is comprised of wealthier households. As a result new low income residents may find themselves priced out of the neighbourhood while those living there prior to the new transit infrastructure may face the threat of displacement. The services and goods offered in Little Jamaica are predominantly low margin and profitability premised on low business overhead. Even if the area remains socially diverse a wealthier neighbourhood may result in the existing businesses of Little Jamaica displaced by higher margin and chain retail and services.

5. What else can be done?

The important relation between good transit and a high quality of life is well understood. Transit has been shown to be important for lower-income residents to access services, education, and employment. Yet, as this paper has discussed improving transit while increasing access and providing greater opportunities can also have detrimental effects to local affordability and can even displace residents most dependent on transit services. However, avoiding constructing rapid transit in a neighbourhood that has poor transit in an effort to protect affordability and prevent displacement is not a reasonable solution.

The following section puts forward a number of points or recommendations for getting ahead of transit related land value increases wave by examining policy options to mitigate negative impacts to existing communities. The recommendations include focusing on building community wealth, regulating equity in the housing market, looking to new innovative ways to lower housing costs, and preventing unchecked speculative growth in the property market.

Increase Overall Housing Supply: The Right Kind

Data on average private apartment rents in Toronto show that units constructed prior to 1975 rent for significantly less than those constructed after 2005. A one-bedroom unit, for example, rents for an average of $989/month in older buildings as opposed to $1404/month in newer buildings (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2014). Vacancy rates in Toronto for 2014 were reported at a very low 1.6% on average and even lower for condominium units at 1.3%. Vacancy rates for the same time period in the study area (former City of York) were slightly higher at 1.8% but still quite low overall (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2014). With the completion of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT there is likely to be increasing demand for the existing rental units putting further pressure particularly on the older more affordable rental stock.

In the face of rising housing demand (particularly with the opportunity to live near rapid transit) a new supply of housing is needed to alleviate pressure on older more affordable units from being priced up or converted to condominiums by property management corporations. The demand for transit proximate housing has not gone unnoticed in the development industry and new housing (both rental and otherwise) is being built along rapid transit corridors. There are multiple development projects and proposals in place right across the 19 km length of the Eglinton Avenue West LRT route and if these units are built, the potential to ease supply at the higher end of the rental market exists. Development projects to date along Eglinton Avenue consist almost exclusively of high-rise market condominium towers with a clear void in affordable unit creation. This is in stark contradiction to Toronto's mid-rise vision for Eglinton Avenue West and the City of Toronto is in the midst of fighting these proposals at the Ontario Municipal Board. But some if not all of these projects are likely to get built and the result will be higher end housing, at higher prices, and on average a wealthier population.

While purpose built affordable rental and ownership would be the ideal course forward in preserving affordability along Eglinton Avenue West, the regulatory framework to support affordable housing is lacking at both the municipal and provincial levels. Such policy needs to change. Alternatively protectionist policies that would limit development outright in hopes of protecting affordability are not a sound solution. This approach as discussed above would likely see developers shift their focus to existing affordable old rental stock to turn a profit by renovating and raising rents or for the purpose of condominium conversion and sales (Duarte 2015).

Toronto, while arguably failing at providing new affordable housing, is at least opposing much of the high-rise market condominium development on Eglinton Avenue West and from the perspective of affordability this is important. Mid-rise construction, as called for in the City's Official Plan, is both quicker and less expensive to build. As the Ontario Building Code now allows for the use of wood framing up to 6 storeys, midrise properties are less expensive to build and maintain allowing for units that are more affordable in the long run (Humphreys 2014). As Jennifer Keesmat, Toronto's Chief Planner, states: "Mid-rise, six-storey wood structures present the opportunity to build our avenues in a way that is compatible with low-density residential neighbourhoods and allow for an affordable choice in the housing market. This is an essential initiative for our city" (quoted in Huminilowycz 2013).

From a cost perspective, wood frame construction is a significantly cheaper alternative to poured concrete for mid-rise buildings. A 2013 report entitled *Unlocking the Potential for Mid-Rise Buildings* estimates savings of $30 to $40 per square foot, or up to 20% over steel and concrete construction, with a cost saving on a 1,000 square foot home of $20,000 to $25,000 (Bedford 2013). To incentivise the construction of affordable wood midrise construction on avenues such as Eglinton West (as opposed to the current proposals at the Ontario Municipal Board), Bedford (2013) recommends the waiving of development charges as required infrastructure is already in place. Additionally permitting developers of rental housing to deduct capital costs from their income tax, as was done in the 1960s and 1970s, could promote a rebirth in rental unit construction.

Community Benefits Agreements

When a proposed development has the potential to significantly impact upon a community, negatively or otherwise, a 'community benefits agreement' (CBA) can leverage positive benefits for residents, workers, and businesses adjacent to the development. Such agreements are typically negotiated amongst interested members of the community, city representatives, and the developer. The agreements are most often legally binding and can include such benefits as affordable housing, enhanced local employment opportunities and local hiring, additional community services, and environmental improvements among others (Mowat Centre 2015). Well-developed community benefit agreements can be both advantageous for developers who can avoid community resistance and legal appeals as well as for communities who can maximize positive impacts of a project on local residents and business (Blumgart 2014, Partnership for Working Families 2015). Community benefits agreements have had a long history in the United States including the development of Los Angeles megaprojects such as the Staples Centre and LAX Airport Master Plan (The Public Law Center 2011). In Canada, however the use of community benefits agreements are less common but momentum is building, Vancouver has notably employed such agreements in the construction of the athlete's village for the 2010 Winter Olympics. Ontario may have moved to the forefront of community benefit agreements in Canada with the passage of *Bill 6: Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act (2015)* mandating the province with a legal imperative to consider the inclusion of community benefit agreements when entering into infrastructure investments projects (Mowat Centre 2015).

The Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) has been advancing the local need for community benefits agreements in promoting equitable communities for a number of years. In response to Bill 6 and the major transit infrastructure both planned and underway, Toronto Community Benefits Network, United Way, and the City of Toronto have entered into a community benefits agreement with Metrolinx to hire youth from low-income neighbourhoods for the construction of major transit projects, beginning with the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, a first for the Province of Ontario. This particular Community Benefits agreement requires that as part of their bid proposals, qualified consortia must include plans for increasing apprenticeship training on the Crosstown, provide significant opportunities for local companies, and ensure design excellence and other unspecified community benefits (Metrolinx 2014).

The outcomes of the agreement, however, hang on implementation conditions of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and the community benefits agreements that are required to be included in the final contract between Metrolinx and the successful bidder, Crosslinx Transit Solutions. The community benefits agreements will be only applicable to the second stage of contracts, as the joint agreement was signed after the tunnel boring and excavation contract was awarded. This applicable phase will, however, include the construction of the stations and related infrastructure, the most visible work. Crosslinx Transit Solutions must now submit a detailed work plan in respect to apprenticeship hiring and proposed community engagement by the close of 2015 (Toronto Community Benefits Network 2015). Specific employment numbers and requirements of the community benefits agreement are to be further negotiated between Metrolinx and Crosslinx Transit Solutions.

This ground breaking agreement is the first of its kind in Ontario and it will be revealing to see if Metrolinx pushes for significant lasting benefits to the local community. However, it is challenging to be optimistic when Metrolinx has already divested its air rights (unfettered) over future LRT stations. Community benefits agreements could have been requirements of the sale to ensure developers are providing jobs, affordable housing for local residents as well as other opportunities to succeed in the community. As Raffol (2012) explores in *Community Benefit Agreements in the Political Economy of Urban Development*, such agreements have had limited success in facilitating equitable development in the United States due to the nature of the agreements being limited and site based in contrast to the significant need of low-income communities. Raffol (2012) does explain that the true strength of community benefits agreements is in the coalition of disparate community members into a powerful force that can oblige developers to negotiate. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT is a multi-billion dollar development that spans a great swath of the city; perhaps it is at a significant enough scale to see lasting equitable development. Toronto Community Benefits Network has also shown to be a powerful community entity that can sit at the negotiating table with both the City and Provincial governments.

Land Value Capture Strategies

Interest in value capture strategies has grown of recent as local and regional governments have seen their budgets shrink and infrastructure investment requirements and costs climb. Yet when the public sector invests its limited resources in major infrastructure projects such as light rail transit, private sector economic gains in property value are often not recouped by government. As Ingram and Yu-Hung (2012) argue, there is a growing consensus that public investment costs should at least be partially repaid by the private interests who gain from the investments. There are a number of land value capture strategies available in relation to transit infrastructure improvement that can help municipalities recoup costs. These include; tax increment financing, land value tax, special assessments (charges on property close to a new facility), transportation utility fees, development impact fees (one-time development related off site fee), joint development (private financial contribution to transit facility in exchange for developable land), and air rights (Johns 2009). However, while there is often public sector interests in land value capture strategies and approaches, there are often difficulties in the selection of and operationalization of the strategies.

In 2013 Metrolinx released its investment strategy, a set of recommendations for how to fund transportation improvements in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. A number of revenue tools were put forward including increasing the harmonized sales tax (HST) by 1%, a levy on off-street parking, increasing fuel tax, and a proposal to implement a land value capture (LVC) strategy. In support of the investment strategy Metrolinx procured a discussion paper (George Hazel Consultancy) on land value capture which featured a number of case studies, methods, and next steps for Metrolinx and value capture. The paper placed a conservative estimation of $20 million in annual revenue of land value capture, potentially much more if it is aggressively pursued (Metrolinx 2013a). With discussions of land value capture transpiring at the provincial level, the Ontario Home Builders Association (2013) issued a release claiming Metrolinx was about to make transit-oriented communities less affordable. The Ontario Home Builders Association (2013) claimed that land value capture and the other revenue tools put forward would add up to $8,000 in charges per condominium unit.

In 2014, Metrolinx turned again to private sector consultants to assess the size and potential of land value capture in upcoming transit projects. A 2014 memorandum from Metrolinx's Chief Financial Officer noted that a gain from land value capture could be quite significant (Metrolinx 2014a). In early 2015, Metrolinx announced the sale of air rights to four of its stations, the first and only land value capture to date. The outright disposition of air rights are both narrow-based in that they focus on solely the space above the stations and limited in revenue generation as they are a one-time source of funds. Air rights sales further benefited the development industry opening up new revenue generating opportunities while providing little if no benefits to the community. Due to air rights sales' lucrative prospects for developers, it is the one land value capture approach to be acceptable to the Ontario Home Building Association.

Metrolinx needs to broaden its approach to land value capture and ensure that those profiting from increased transportation infrastructure repay in part what they gain. Transportation utility fees, for example, look at charging fees based on trip generation rates essentially shifting "the economic burden from residential properties to commercial and industrial properties," the highest users of the transportation system (Johns 2009 p. 7). A land value tax that "captures the general increase in the price of land due to improved accessibility" can if designed effectively shift the taxation burden to developers of empty lots encouraging efficient use of land (Johns 2009 p. 5). There are many land value capture approaches that can be adopted to target those that are profiting from transit while shielding those that have limited ability to pay. For example, what if a levy was implemented for a 500 m walking radius around new LRT stations that required all properties within those areas to pay a percentage of selling price to recover costs associated with the new transit line? This levy could be capped at 5 or 10 years after completion to target mainly those looking to profit in the short term off the new transit line. Residential sales levies could go towards affordable housing and affordable business opportunities. It could alternatively be structured as a purchasing levy, to redirect a portion of increased land values into local affordable housing provision.

If Metrolinx is considering implementing additional broad based, equitable land value capture strategies beyond selling air rights, they are running out of time as development is now well underway. The Province needs to act now to ensure that "the benefits of urban land ownership… flow to all city users (not just those profiting off its development)… and be used to redress disadvantage" (Fainstein 2012 p. 22).

Inclusionary Policies

Inclusionary zoning is a commonly used term to describe the requirement or incentive to construct affordable housing as an element of a development project through the use of local zoning regulations (Mah and Hackworth 2011). Inclusionary zoning has been used widely across the United States and other countries. However, its use in Canada has been limited as a result of limited legal powers of municipalities.

The ability of Inclusionary zoning to shift the economic costs of affordable housing provision from the public to the private sector has made it increasingly popular. New York City, for example, has a voluntary inclusionary zoning policy but is considering making the policy mandatory requiring 25 to 30 percent of all new units to be permanently affordable (Davidson 2015). The implications of such policy in the context of Toronto could be significant.

Inclusionary zoning is increasing relevant in Toronto as the responsibility for the provision of affordable housing has been downloaded to the City from the federal government by way of the province. The taxation revenues to fund social housing, however, have not made the same journey down the line. Municipalities as a result have been forced to seek other means for funding the maintenance and construction of affordable housing.

Toronto has attempted to adopt inclusionary policies with the Policy 9 -- Large Sites Policy of its Official Plan. The large sites plan did not come into effect until 2006 as a result of a lengthy Ontario Municipal Board appeal (Drdla 2010). The Policy as enacted is very limited in scope and applies only to sites that are 5 hectares in size or larger (of which there are few in Toronto) and would only provide a maximum of 20% of affordable units if the developer received an increase in density or height. Moreover, it would only apply to the part of the development that is additional or bonus to the current zoning. Further, under policy 9 affordable units are only one option, the developer and local councillor could agree instead to any number of acceptable Section 37 benefits. As Gladki and Pomeroy (2007) state, Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act, as currently drafted, lacks the teeth for municipalities to require affordable housing as a condition of development approval. Benefits must be negotiated. As Pendall et al. (2002 p.12) writes:

> Promoting mixed-use and mixed income developments, and acquiring parcels of land to help facilitate the construction of affordable housing, in planning documents and city policies, provides opportunities for greater equity. But without mandates or specific goals in place to assure that benefits will accrue to low-income residents and neighbourhoods (results are uncertain at best).

Although the City of Toronto currently lacks a clear legislative framework to implement an inclusionary housing program, it is not for a lack of interest. In the 2009 City of Toronto Affordable Housing Action Plan, the City indicated its desire for the province to grant Toronto inclusionary zoning powers. However, with the recent updates to the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement, affordable housing targets last seen on the 1988 Policy Statement were not to be found. These specific targets would have given Ontario municipalities a potential avenue to pursue an inclusionary housing policy. In May 2015, Toronto City Council passed a motion to move towards securing inclusionary zoning powers for the city. The motion requests the province to include affordable housing as part of the review of the *Growth Plan* (2005) and *Greenbelt Plan* (2005) and to amend the Ontario Planning Act to include permissions for inclusionary zoning as part of Bill 73, *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act*, currently before the house (City of Toronto 2015). The City is proposing a fast tracking of approvals and other incentives for developers if inclusionary zoning is adopted and at least some developers are on board with the City.

Martin Blake, VP of the Daniels Corporation, one of Toronto's largest development firms, has said that inclusionary housing would be a great movement on affordable housing in this city (quoted on CBC Radio 2014). Blake is of the opinion that all developers would potentially support the use of inclusionary zoning so long as the zoning requirements are applied city-wide to provide an even playing field. Inclusionary zoning could actually temper the value of land as it would then carry an additional cost – the provision of affordable housing - and ultimately prevent the shift of affordable unit costs onto the market units. Toronto Chief Planner, Jennifer Keesmat, has spoken strongly in favour of inclusionary zoning and has pointed to the neighbourhood of Eglinton and Yonge as an example of a successful community that mixes social housing, affordable rental, and market stock together (Skinner 2015). If Toronto is successful in its bid for inclusionary zoning powers, it could be significant win for affordable housing and for the communities who live along Eglinton Avenue West.

6. Conclusion

It is not the transit line that creates problems of unaffordability and displacement at the neighbourhood level rather it is the development interests that come with it. Such as the interest of the City that sees an opportunity to “revitalize” a new neighbourhood, to bring the vibrancy and diversity of uses to a new area. It is the interest of future residents looking for a home near transit who can pay a little more than current residents living there now. Perhaps most transformative, it is the interest of land holders and developers generating profit from the increased amenities that a new transit line affords. If affordability is to be maintained or improved in neighbourhoods experiencing new rapid transit, it is important to strike out a plan well in advance and ensure that it is achieved. Affordability must be integrated into the planning of transit projects from the earliest stages by all levels and parties.

As this paper demonstrates, this is not the case for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. An argument can be made that Toronto lacks the regulatory framework to implement inclusionary zoning or fund new social housing along Eglinton Avenue West as budgets are already strained from past provincial housing downloading. However, Toronto developed the Eglinton Connects Plan with no discernable strategy for addressing affordability either for local residents or businesses. As discussed previously, there are a number of tools that the City has as its disposal to drawn upon in ensuring affordability is achieved. Much the same can be said for Metrolinx, the project developer. The agency’s cost benefit analysis foresaw no negative social or community impacts rather a $1.8 Billion dollar property value uplift was celebrated. Perhaps the greatest problem is that the connection between new transit development and decreasing affordability is not yet understood.

At the municipal level, there are signs that this movement is coming. The City of Toronto’s executive committee recently endorsed the 2015 poverty reduction strategy, TO Prosperity (City of Toronto, 2015a). The plan puts forward some substantial policy actions that if implemented would address affordability and displacement in the context of the Eglinton LRT project. The report’s key actions include such policy changes as making affordable housing a first priority as a community benefit for any section 37 development proceeds, providing surplus city land for affordable housing, and incorporating affordable housing into public facilities and development projects by the City or its agencies.

The connection between decreasing affordability in proximity to rapid transit and the need for increased provision of new affordable housing options must to be strengthened and addressed on a policy level. The Province of Ontario and Metrolinx must also come on board with these and other recommendations in the TO Prosperity report such as enabling the use of inclusionary zoning policies and ultimately including affordable housing policies in infrastructure planning. Rich cultural histories and communities such as that of Little Jamaica in the Eglinton Avenue West neighbourhood are arguably too important to lose. Greater community engagement in the transportation planning process needs to occur, and community assets and needs have to be incorporated into the plan. The city is ultimately a collective good, not a private one, so participation in the power to create the city must be shared.

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