Mount Dennis EcoNeighbourhood Initiative
A community perspective on local sustainable development

November 17, 2018
The ecoNeighbourhood concept has been very well received

- BIA Mural
- Toronto Hydro Net Zero Community
- Crosslinx Energy Storage
- Crosslinx Community Benefits
- 501 Alliance private and platinum!
- West Park redevelopment to Leed silver
- 1234 Child Care Net Zero
Time is of the essence

Climate change is not 40 years away. It is here. Now. And its getting worse daily.

This September Secretary General raised the alert that world’s nations are badly off track in reaching the Paris Agreement targets for greenhouse gas reduction.

Cities are recognized as actively pursuing actions to reduce GHG emissions.

Toronto is a City of Neighbourhoods.... We are working to make ours sustainable!
65 years of TTC planning at Yonge and Eglinton

This is why the community should not allow the city to be in charge of planning
George Taylor Denison III, buried in our cemetery, volunteered to fight Louis Riel.

Yet Mount Dennis is on the Shared Path, used by many First Nations since the glaciers retreated.

History needs to be inclusive and tell the bad with the good. Thousands came here to die from TB. History should be embedded in redevelopment.

An ecoNeighbourhood looks both to the past and the future.
Mount Dennis

MDCA has taken up the challenge of making needed change happen

MDCA has a history of community engagement

- Community environment clean up days
- Support for stewardship for the area’s natural assets: Humber River, Black Creek, Topham Pond (Toronto’s Greenest Neighbourhood!)
- Tree planters, tree huggers, and tree recyclers
- Floods and community resilience in extreme weather
- A vision of connecting to the emerging green economy based in hard won experiences
Walking the talk

- Collapse of anchor industry Kodak
  - Proposed Response: Kodak lands redevelop as Green Centre of Excellence, research/innovation and local jobs

- Georgetown GO Line improvements
  - Co-organized Clean Train Coalition, pressed for electrification of UP Express and Regional Rail

- TTC Transit City and Metrolinx Mobility Hub
  - ‘Making Green Work’ looked at the range of places to get green economy happening locally by working collaboratively
  - Transit Investment recognized as the critical driver for change
  - Vision and achievement of Community Benefits
    - Social-Economic inclusion of youth and employment disadvantaged; access to procurement for social business; addressing opportunity for neighbourhood improvement and eco-action
  - Vision for Sustainable Transportation and Green Development
Eco Neighbourhood?

• an integrated Action Learning approach for building community understanding and capacity for action

• Wayne Olsen, Architect and member of Green Building Council, and TO-ENI

• The Portland model as starting point

• Initial visioning discussions and consultations
  – Principles and partnership building
  – Guiding vision statement
  – Community profile, challenges and opportunities
  – Key themes for action planning
Mount Dennis Area EcoNeighbourhood Project
A Vision and Action outline for community discussion

Mount Dennis Community Association TO EcoNeighbourhoods Initiative October 30, 2015
Mount Dennis Area EcoNeighbourhood Project
A Vision and Action outline for community discussion

**Background**

The Mount Dennis area is a historic and dynamic Toronto community dealing with both significant economic and social challenges AND exciting opportunities for transformation connected to major transit investment.

**Vision**

A Mount Dennis area EcoNeighbourhood can be a world-leading prototype for the sustainable revitalization of existing neighbourhoods, where positive change is buoyed by infrastructure investment and facilitated by cross-sector partnerships.

A broad group of community stakeholders will develop the Mount Dennis Eco-neighbourhood Vision and Action Plan; a holistic roadmap to drive enhanced community resiliency, livability, equity, health and prosperity and while shrinking the community’s environmental footprint.

**Guiding Principles**

Mount Dennis Area Eco-neighbourhood Vision and Action Plan will embody broad sustainability at a community scale by addressing the following priority areas:

- Environment and Infrastructure
- Livability
- Equity
- Health
- Prosperity

The eco-neighbourhood visioning process will be collaborative; with early and ongoing participation of residents, businesses, governments, policy makers, property owners and not-for-profits.

The eco-neighbourhood vision will build on and enhance existing community, city and regional initiatives, programs and priorities.

The eco-neighbourhood vision will encompass a broad range of integrated short, medium and long term actions and investments.

The eco-neighbourhood vision will include strategies that leverage cross-sector collaboration and address multiple priority areas.

Successful implementation will require ongoing community based stewardship, evaluation and reporting.
CHALLENGES MAP

Higher unemployment
Lower than average incomes
Higher diabetes rates

Limited access to amenities & services
Lower Walkscore
Aging industrial zone
Historic soil and water contamination
Major loss of historic employment
LRT facility (large industrial use)

Large energy/water user

Aging rental apartment towers
?

Limited tree canopy

Unfriendly pedestrian environment
Noise, vibration & air quality

Flood plain
?

Future transit project disruption

Housing choice, quality & affordability
Struggling “main street”

Runoff contamination

Neighbourhood flood risk

Aging housing - higher energy/water use

Lower rates of community engagement

Transit related gentrification pressures
Limited of healthy food options

High % of children under 14
OPPORTUNITIES MAP

- Local training & employment
- Better access to amenities & services
- "Green Industry" innovation/jobs
  - District energy production
  - "Tower renewal" programs
- Greener, naturalized community
  - Urban tree planting, habitats
- Storm water "green infrastructure"
- Infrastructure "Community Benefits Agreements"
- "Green" golfcourse innovation
  - Housing retrofit programs
  - Community renewable energy
- Poverty reduction
  - Healthier community
  - Reduced greenhouse gases
  - Enhanced community resilience
- Walking & biking connections
  - Regenerated eco-industrial zone
  - Cleaner soil, air and water
  - Kodak Bldg Eco-Community Hub
- Community friendly LRT facility
- Safer communities
  - More programs for children
- Pedestrian friendly environment
- Affordable transit & connected community
- Housing choice, quality & affordability
- Revitalized, intensified "Main Street"
- Community engagement and capacity building
- Healthy food options, community gardens, greenhouses
TRANSIT IS THE BACKBONE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Metrolinx Mobility Hub Catchment
West Park Hospital Redevelopment

Future Transit Line

Irving Tissues (large manufacturer)

Existing mixed density residential

Newer medium density residential

Transit Hub

Older industrial area & City Works yard

Newer industrial zone with ICI development sites

Historic Kodak employee bldg & new ICI development sites

LRT support facilities & intermodal

GO Regional Rail & New Union-Pearson Express

Eglinton Crosstown LRT

Future mixed-use development site

Eglinton Flats flood plain

Public golf course

Existing low density residential

Weston Road Mt. Dennis BIA

Indigenous Heritage Education Sites

Cycling Path & planned extension
Resource Struggles

- Trillium Collective Impact
- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
- Community Partners
- Cap and trade: GreenON
- Toronto Atmospheric Fund
- Political presence, then change of government
Developing Action Partnerships

• **Community Benefits Agreements** as part of the development process

• Community Energy: *we won the Big Battery Battle* (with the help of Sustainable Designer Greg Allen), now its time for serious community-based organizing for
  – Resilient local grid
  – Distributed renewable generation
  – Community Development Corporation
  – Retrofit of old buildings, building green
  – Green jobs in energy tech, electrifying transportation
Green Economic Development

• Eco-Action Community Hub, including Centre for Indigeneity as a global peoples connector
• Tech Innovation and Incubation: Better Building Materials; Shift off Natural Gas; Alliance innovators; Black Creek Business Park (TTC Barns, Postal Depot + Metrolinx Yards—Electric Vehicles)
• Green Walls Everywhere!
• Circular Economy: Compost digesting, materials re-use; community green market, bikes are Best!
Why is MDCA different?

Perhaps how we are different is the key. Why is far too complicated.

MDCA includes home owners and tenants, business owners and representatives from charities, real estate agents and developers, teachers and retirees.

About 1/3 of our revenue is from the local businesses that advertise in our newsletter. We promote our businesses and showcase them at our events.

We try to propose better ways to do things rather than oppose, and developed positive working relationships with Metrolinx and Toronto Hydro.

When we were approached to become a pilot ecoNeighbourhood, we realized that a holistic approach matched our vision statement, which is ......

Toronto’s Greenest Neighbourhood
Thank You!

Questions?