

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

# MILL WOODS STATION AREA PLAN

## TECHNICAL PAPER SUMMARY REPORT: PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

*Prepared by:*



January 6, 2012

Mill Woods  
Station Area Plan  
Workshop 1 Summary Report

*Prepared for*



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### **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A – Verbatim Summary of Workbooks

# 1.0 APPROACH

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Public Workshop 1 was held on November 23, 2011 at the Lakewood Community Hall. The Public Workshop was the first meeting held with the public in the preparation of the Mill Woods Station Area Plan. The purpose of this workshop was to introduce the community to the Consultant Team who would be assisting the City in the preparation of the station area plan; introduce the concept of Transit Oriented Development (TOD); and review the preliminary analysis of the station area with the community. A total of thirty-four (34) people attended the Workshop.

Upon arrival, workshop participants were encouraged to review the presentation boards which outlined the planning process and initial site analysis for the station area. City staff and members from the Consultant Team were on hand to answer questions during this period. At 7:00 p.m. the team made a presentation to the attendees. This presentation introduced the planning team, project goals and planning process as well as highlighted the existing conditions within the area and suggested ideas for future changes. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available on the project website.

After the presentation participants were asked to break into groups of 4-5 to go over the questions outlined in the workshop workbook. These groups were unfacilitated, with project team members available for questions. The participants discussed the questions within their groups and recorded their answers in the workbooks. The workbook questions were then reviewed with all the participants and individual groups presented their answers to the larger group.

The project team collected the workbooks at the end of the workshop. The answers to the workshop questions were then compiled into verbatim “roll-ups” and key points are summarized in this report.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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Fourteen (14) workbooks were completed and submitted at the workshop. The workbook questions can be found below with a summary of the responses to each of the questions. A verbatim summary is available in Appendix A.

### **Station Area Existing Conditions**

#### **1. *Where do you go in the station area? What do you use and what do you do?***

Participants indicated the following uses and activities that they undertook within the station area:

- Shopping / services for daily needs (8)
- Hospital/medical facilities (2)
- Exercise (walk /bicycle) (2)
- Library (1)
- Police Station (1)

#### **2. *What do you do like within and around the station area and what are the area's key strengths?***

Key strengths included:

- Covered shopping mall / ample retail (6)
- Parks and recreational spaces (4)
- Hospital (2)
- Institutional uses (1)
- User friendly for strollers, wheelchairs, walkers (1)

#### **3. *What do you dislike within and around the station area and what are the key issues that need to be addressed?***

Key issues included:

- Difficulty for pedestrian movement in and around area. (6) Sidewalks lack connectivity, crosswalks are not marked.
- Traffic congestion (3)
- Park attracts undesirables
- Loud patrons at fast food outlets late at night

**4. What adjectives would you use to describe the characteristics of the station area today?**

The following adjectives were used to describe the station area:

- Sparse
- Good basic services
- Dangerous (parking lots)
- Functional
- Difficult for pedestrians
- Tricky
- Good location

**5. What else might be going on in the area that the Project Team should know about? Are we missing anything?**

Workshop participants noted several items for the Project Team to consider during the development of the station area plan:

- Large pedestrian population (seniors, youth) as well as others with reduced mobility (2)
- Outdoor shopping not accessible to older persons in winter
- Pedestrian access in area is very poor
- Elder care facility long walk from station
- 28 Ave traffic congestion
- Lack of bicycle parking
- 66th Street is prone to flooding in heavy rains
- Proposed seniors centre and library
- Utility corridor used by pedestrians and undesirable people at night

**Area of Change and Stability**

**1. What areas/uses do you think may change or should change within and around the station area? And why?**

- Locate library, transit station and LRT station near each other (3)
- Improve pedestrian access
- Widen 28 Ave
- Improve retail

- Improve visibility of parks
- Parkade is needed for 'park-and-ride'
- Redevelop Tawa Centre

**2. What are the areas/uses which should be preserved and enhanced within and around the station area?**

- Parks (3)
- Transit
- Retail
- Parking

**3. Are there sites that are under pressure to redevelop or relocate that we should address?**

- Public access to hospital is to south and east – not on west side where (Grey Nuns) LRT station is proposed.
- Traffic issues on 28 Ave
- Library/Seniors Centre should be closer to LRT station
- Put parkade on current transit centre site

### **Creating Livable Communities**

**1. What new uses and amenities could make this station area a more interesting and attractive place to live, work and visit?**

The following suggestions were put forward by workshop participants:

- Movie theatre (3)
- Seniors housing/affordable housing
- Social gathering space
- Recreational opportunities
- Big box stores
- Washrooms
- Combine LRT station and library building
- *“Heated sidewalks/plazas, more covered spaces, streetcars.”*

**2. What kinds of public spaces, gathering places and parks could enhance the livability and attractiveness of the station area?**

- All seasonal recreation opportunities (ice rinks, soccer)
- More restaurant options
- Higher density residential
- Improve the area around the Mill Woods Town Centre jungle gym into a gathering place

**3. What improvements could be made for pedestrian, cyclists and transit uses in and around the station and station area?**

Suggested improvements included:

- Safe/secure bicycle parking (2)
- Marked crosswalks/crossing lights (2)
- Additional sidewalks
- Lighting, especially utility corridor

**4. What would you like your station to become in 20 years? What are your aspirations for the future of the station area?**

Responses to this question indicated that the participants would like the Mill Woods Station Area to develop into a small “downtown”, with covered or indoor walkways connecting buildings. Accessibility was also an important consideration. Less crime was also noted as an aspiration for the future station area plan.

**Let Us Know What You Think!**

Comments received in this section related to improvements to the transit system, proper integration of future transit services and development of appropriate transit infrastructure. In addition, there were several comments on where the proposed transit line should go, however the location of the transit line is not the focus of this project.

## 3.0 WORKSHOP EVALUATION

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At the workshop, attendees were provided a Workshop Evaluation Form and asked to provide feedback on the workshop structure and effectiveness. Fifteen (15) workshop evaluations were returned. Of the responses received:

- 69% of respondents either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the information presented was useful and informative.
- 85% of respondents somewhat agreed or strongly agreed the information was easy to understand
- 85% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed the project representatives were friendly, helpful and accessible
- 65% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the project representatives provided satisfactory answers to questions
- 85% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed they had a better understanding of the project because of their attendance
- 79% of respondents were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the City's efforts to keep the public informed about the Station Area Plan, and 14% were somewhat unsatisfied or not satisfied
- 77% were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity to ask questions and seek additional information
- 82% were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity to provide feedback and comments

## 4.0 SUMMATION / NEXT STEPS

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Below is a summary of the Mill Woods Station Area Plan project schedule and opportunities for public consultation.



This summary report is a summary of Public Workshop #1 and represents the completion of Phase I of this project.

The project team is now entering Phase II in which we will be developing several design alternatives that will then be tested with stakeholders, internal City stakeholder and the public at the Public Workshop 2. This workshop is scheduled for late February or early March.

Once a design alternative is chosen, the draft Station Area Plan will be developed and presented to the public for review and comment. The final plan will then be presented to Council for approval.

## **APPENDIX A**

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### **Verbatim Summary of Workbooks**

## **Station Area Existing Conditions**

1. Where do you go in the station area? What do you use and what do you do?
  - *Walk to Town Centre for daily needs.*
  - *Banking, restaurant, medical, vehicle registry, parks, other businesses.*
  - *Town Centre Mall – Groceries (Safeway, Sobeys) – Banking – Restaurants Nearby – Boston Pizza – Denny’s – Burger King – Arby’s etc.*
  - *Grey Nuns Hospital – outpatient, Police Station.*
  - *(Walk and bicycle in summer, walk and drive in winter) to get groceries/banking/restaurants/get to work (hospital)/mall and sometimes just for exercise and medical appointments!*
  - *Safeway, optometrist, Royal Pizza, Royal Bank, numerous Stores in Mill Woods Town Centre.*
  - *Mall, retail area.*
  - *I frequently pick up small amounts of groceries in small Sobeys. Use the library, post office in the mall and some other shopping in the good weather and I often walk.*
  - *Walk to stores.*
  
2. What do you do like within and around the station area and what are the area’s key strengths?
  - *Shopping being covered by roof.*
  - *Parks = key strength.*
  - *Shopping mall. Don’t have to drive from store to store (like South Edmonton Common).*
  - *User friendly for strollers, wheelchairs, walkers.*
  - *Service Density lots of providers in close proximity.*
  - *24 hour coffee/gas etc. → hospital is 24/7/365.*
  - *We like to run rc cars in parking lots.*
  - *MW Park is a strength, especially skatepark, waterpark.*
  - *Like: convenient retail area.*
  - *Strengths: hospital, retail, institutions, parks.*
  - *Larger lake is nice but heated shed for putting skates on in the winter.*
  
3. What do you dislike within and around the station area and what are the key issues that need to be addressed?
  - *Sidewalks need to be increased.*
  - *Both shopping areas are very pedestrian unfriendly especially for children + adults with mobility issues.*
  - *Youth hanging around late at night near fast food outlets – bored and often boisterous.*
  - *28 Ave (MW Rd to 66 St) traffic is already very bad – Needs lanes.*
  - *Lack of sidewalks on 66 St.*
  - *“Fake Lake” – although it’s beautiful, it has become a homeless park(?) drug magnet.*
  - *I prefer to walk in the centre vs along 66/34/50/23, but I’ve done it.*

- *Dead-end sidewalks!! Make the cars go around – keep the centre bus/ped/cycle/LRT.*
  - *Traffic; vehicle and pedestrian.*
  - *Traffic congestion at Hewes Way in front of present bus station – there are three (or more?) pedestrian crosswalks that are not clearly marked. Dangerous!*
4. What adjectives would you use to describe the characteristics of the station area today?
- *Sparse, good basic services, dangerous (parking lots).*
  - *Functional, difficult for pedestrians walking in.*
  - *Single lane 2-way ave (28) is at least easier to jaywalk across because it's narrow.*
  - *Tricky.*
  - *Good Location.*
  - *N/A.*
5. What else might be going on in the area that the Project Team should know about? Are we missing anything?
- *Street shopping is not good for this climate. OLDER PERSONS are not able to go shopping (or very difficult) when weather is cold and icy.*
  - *Lots of seniors and large handicapped population (assisted living centres, nursing home, seniors residences).*
  - *Lots of youth (2 senior high schools, Grant MacEwan College, recreation centre) just west on 28 Ave. Huge pedestrian population.*
  - *28 Ave traffic congestion.*
  - *Visitors to elder care facilities – long walk from station.*
  - *Pedestrian access is very poor overall. Lack of bicycle parking along 28<sup>th</sup> and banks, box stores.*
  - *The utility corridor is walked @ night by intoxicated individuals.*
  - *66<sup>th</sup> St (TAWA-side) still floods in heavy rains.*
  - *Proposed seniors centre and library.*
  - *Neighbourhood seems isolated.*

### **Area of Change and Stability**

1. What areas/uses do you think may change or should change within and around the station area? And why?
- *Haven't lived here long enough to make a comment.*
  - *Pedestrian issues should be resolved, especially in mall parking lots.*
  - *Transit centre integration with LRT station.*
  - *Proposed library should go near LRT not near old transit station. This will be the "end of the line" for a long time given past history – so parkade would be needed for park and ride until line extended 2025. Otherwise nearby neighbourhood suffer parking clutter from visitors.*

- TAWA Centre could be redeveloped into mixed-use cool something especially if station is located on 31 Ave.
  - Road from Mill Woods West 28 Ave to 66 St should be widened to 4 lanes.
  - LRT should come down centre of 66 St.
  - Retail because they're dying down a bit compared to those on 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave.
  - Area around the small park and latke behind the Allen Gray feels dangerous to older women. No viewing from the roads.
  - A library + small arts centre (combined) would enhance area. Location is important – should be closer to LRT station stop – not in currently planned area (old bus stop).
2. What are the areas/uses which should be preserved and enhanced within and around the station area?
- Purple areas on slide for sure.
  - Parks, transit, retail, parking.
  - Small park should have an automobile road so what's going on can be seen. More eyes on the park.
  - The small park with pond in centre directly east of present Hewes Way should be preserved – perhaps enhanced with seating areas, more trees.
3. Are these sites that are under pressure to redevelop or relocate that we should address?
- 28 Ave traffic issues.
  - Keep in mind if you're building a station on 31 Ave/66 St that the back of the hospital is only for STAFF use. The public entrance of the hospital faces SOUTH. Many people become lost @ the back of the hospital. After hours, the only public entrance to the hospital is via ER on the EAST side.
  - New library and seniors centre closer to LRT station.
  - Parkade in area of present transit terminal for LRT.
  - Not to my knowledge.

### **Creating Livable Communities**

1. What new uses and amenities could make this station area a more interesting and attractive place to live, work and visit?
- Entertainment-theatres, recreation opportunities.
  - Good movie theatre. Big Box Electronics Store – Best Buy, Future Shop, Staples, London Drugs.
  - Outdoor walk-in movies – FM transmitters + lawnchairs – cool.
  - Heated sidewalks/plazas, more covered spaces, streetcars.
  - Seniors housing in LRT area, affordable housing, skating area.
  - A place to socialize.
  - Washrooms for seniors and young children.
  - Put in glass ceiling area with greenery (trees) like the Winspear Centre so will be warm in winter. Amalgamate with library – LRT building.

2. What kinds of public spaces, gathering places and parks could enhance the livability and attractiveness of the station area?
  - *More restaurant options.*
  - *Outdoor Community Ice Rinks / Soccer in Summer.*
  - *A big dome.*
  - *The park East of the hospital COULD be used, be sacrificed for higher density residential.*
  - *(Why do bars have parking lots?)*
  - *Get rid of gas pumps 28 Ave to 31 Ave.*
  - *N/A.*
  - *Mill Woods Town Centre has a small jungle gym which can be used in all weather. It would be nice to have an expanded area with coffee shops etc. around it and natural light.*
  
3. What improvements could be made for pedestrian, cyclists and transit uses in and around the station and station area?
  - *Additional sidewalks + marked crosswalks in existing parking lots.*
  - *More Bicycle parking to encourage use rather than cars.*
  - *A safe place to park you bike to use the train. I'll walk to the Rec Centre, but I won't take my bike for fear of it being stolen.*
  - *Lights down the utility corridors – we walk there – footpaths.*
  - *More pedestrian crossing lights.*
  
4. What would you like your station to become in 20 years? What are your aspirations for the future of the station area?
  - *Less crime.*
  - *All Season – connected to mall, library, MWTC transit centre by indoor above or below ground spaces/walkways.*
  - *Everything W/C accessible (wheelchair) because I am getting old.*
  - *Something similar to downtown.*
  - *If there is commercial development I would like to see protected glassed in walkways with windows that could be opened in the summer.*

### **Let Us Know What You Think!**

If you have any further comments or feedback on the information presented today, please feel free to include it below.

- *Amalgamate Lakewood TC + TCTC + put the LRT stop along 28 Ave between 66 St and Grant MacEwan?*
- *Please consider putting the train in a trough N of 34 Ave.*
- *Bus service needs improvement as it currently helps us get to 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave businesses from the transit centre. Roads are too small for traffic (buses).*