

The Quilt on Weston Road Project

The Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF) has been part of the Mount Dennis neighbourhood community for over 40 years. Recently, LEF purchased two properties on Weston Road, at 1240 and 1246 Weston Road, with hopes of redeveloping them and one day calling them home.

Our project envisions a multi-use building, which offers a vibrant streetscape as well as community space on both the ground level and the first few floors. Above that, we'll be building affordable residences, many of which will have access to much needed supports through other community partners. We are in the early stages of our project and are working to develop initial concept plans to submit to the City of Toronto.

First and foremost, we want to hear from the Mount Dennis community to generate ideas of what the community space can and needs to be, and to ensure the project reflects our joint aspirations for a vibrant Weston Road.

Neighbourhood Discussion

On March 9th, 2021 LEF hosted a live-streamed neighbourhood discussion. LEF Executive Director, Peter Frampton was joined by Ward 5 City of Toronto Councillor, Frances Nunziata, in introducing the Quilt on Weston Road project and its vision. Approximately 40+ community members joined for breakout sessions to discuss ideas and concerns, as well as hear project updates.

Future sessions will be hosted to continue gathering community feedback. To share your ideas or to join a future neighbourhood discussion, complete the poll available on the [Quilt on Weston Road Project webpage](#), or call (416) 760-2808 to leave a voicemail.

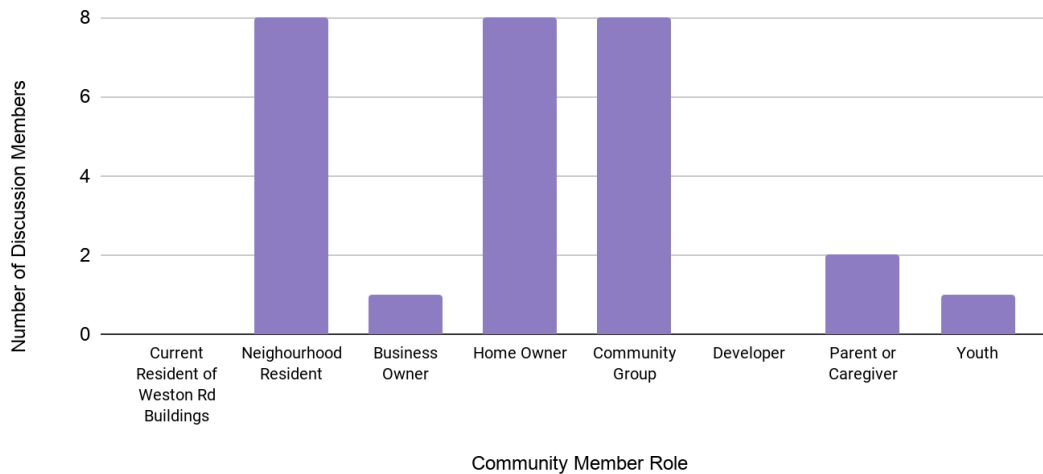
Community Participants

The neighbourhood discussion had approximately 40+ attendees. Some called in via phone while others joined online via webcam. All members were invited to complete a virtual poll, which was also made available on the Quilt on Weston webpage and by phone after the virtual meeting. Fourteen polls were submitted.

The table below shows how respondents described themselves and their role in the Mount Dennis community. Attendees were encouraged to select all descriptors that applied to them. Given that not all attendees completed the poll, it is possible that these findings are not representative of all groups present at the meeting or living in the community. The majority of participants described themselves as neighborhood residents, home owners, and members of community groups.

Table 1: Neighbourhood Discussion Attendee Profile

Total of 14 members selected all descriptions that apply to them



Neighborhood Poll Results

During the neighborhood consultation, participants were asked to rate how important it was to them to have various community elements in their neighborhood (including community services, event space, retail, etc.) Table 2 summarizes the number of people who endorsed each level of importance for each of the various elements. Community services and retail space were rated as being either “important” or “very important” by the largest number of people (with 14 respondents rating community services as either “important” or “very important” and 12 respondents rating retail the same way). If we examine responses only in the “very important” category, however, affordable housing is rated as “very important” by the second highest number of respondents.

Table 2: The Importance of Project Aspects to Neighbourhood Participants
Number of community members responding:

| | Community Services | Event Space | Retail | Casual gathering space | Affordable Housing | Vibrancy of Streetscape |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Not at all important | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Somewhat important | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Neither important nor unimportant | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Important | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 7 |
| Very important | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 |

Discussion Summary

What do you love most about Mount Dennis?

Community members highlighted some of their favourite parts of the Mount Dennis neighbourhood, including:

- The significant amount of scenic parks, ravines and green space, walkable trails, and sport fields.
- The community spirit and strength; the willingness to be engaged in making the community a better place.
- The recognition and celebration of the diverse communities within Mount Dennis.
- The eagerness to support local small independent businesses and restaurants.



Words most commonly used by the community when asked what they love most about Mount Dennis. Words in larger font indicate more common responses.

Quotes:

“I love Super Coffee. It’s my office”

“Mount Dennis is a community where you can both live and work, it’s not just a dormitory”

“I love the level of civic involvement, the concern for the future, the willingness to work together”

“I love the park and ability to walk a long way, cricket fields, and the peace in the city.”

“It’s a collaborative community that enjoys working together and is very cohesive”

“I love the green space, it’s like jewel in the middle of the city”

“I love the diversity and how it translates to the food, the local restaurants are amazing”

“I’ve lived in Mount Dennis since (the) 80s, I love the area’s cultural and economic diversity”

“I enjoy the trails and connecting with the community, the area has nature with dense business community which is a unique juxtaposition”

“I like my neighbours and walking my dog everyday.”

“It’s really very supportive, good neighbours that look out for each other”

“There’s a vibrancy to the community. It’s different but together, different cultures, warmth, belonging that you can feel. I love the community resilience, we’ve been through ups and downs, but we always bounce back”

Mount Dennis Ideas for the Quilt on Weston Road Project

LEF compiled ideas and suggestions from the community on how to ensure that the new building can contribute to the vibrancy of the Mount Dennis neighbourhood. The topics discussed included the streetscape and building exterior, the retail, the community and residential portions of the development, as well as environmental and accessibility considerations.

Streetscape

Exterior

- Vibrancy of the streetscape and a casual gathering space were considered either important or very important aspects by 10 community members.
- It was pointed out that the Mount Dennis BIA has a master streetscape plan for the area, ranging from Lambton Ave. up to Ray Ave to the north. It will include wider sidewalks, and places to sit and congregate.
- Adding green space, along with wider sidewalks were two popular suggestions.. Some individuals expressed concern with the amount of concrete in the area and suggested mitigating it by increasing greenery and garden areas.
- Allowing for space in front of the store fronts was highly recommended. It was suggested that patios and areas to gather, relax, and meet could also reduce congestion and bring more community atmosphere to the area.
- Enhancing pedestrian and cycling connections together with creating bike lanes and incorporating bike share programs was advocated by many participants,
- Individuals agreed that opportunities to better connect the site to nearby trails and parks should be explored.
- Independent stores, cafes, and restaurants were preferred over chain stores.
- Individuals mentioned ensuring accessibility to the property exterior and the building and enough space for easy pedestrian access, strollers and

Table 3: Importance of the vibrancy of streetscape to discussion participants

Number of community members responding:

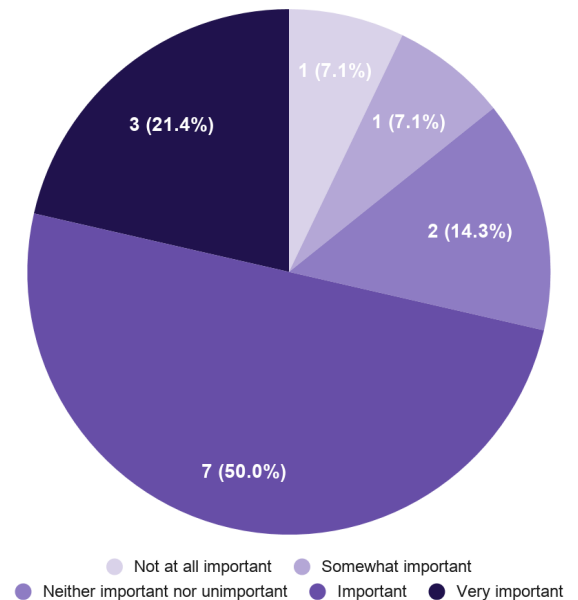
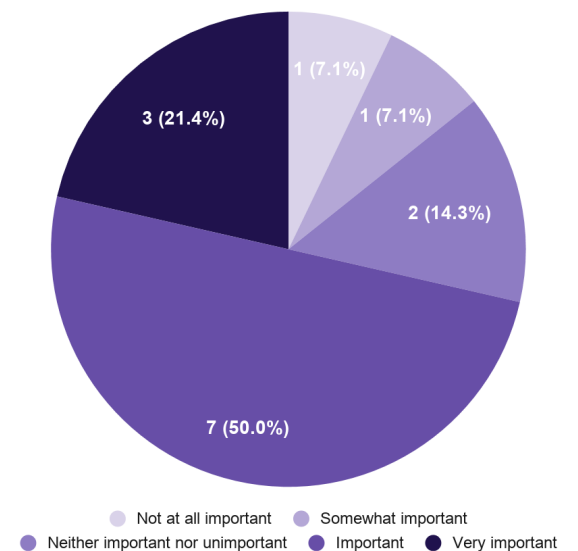


Table 4: Importance of casual gathering space to discussion participants

Number of community members responding:



carts, the provision of benches and places for seating.

- Planning for good exterior lighting to increase safety, especially during evening and night hours was also highlighted.
- Other Toronto neighbourhood that were mentioned as potential models for the exterior included the Junction, Queen West, Trinity-Bellwoods, Harbord Street

Building Design

- Community members stressed the importance of retail, community, and residential spaces all coexisting and complementing each other to create a sense of belonging and cohesion.
- It was mentioned that building design should complement the current aesthetic of the neighbourhood, utilizing brick exterior and keeping storefronts low. Some suggested exploring the possibility of constructing the building with mass timber.
- The majority of participants didn't express concerns regarding the size of the building; some thought increasing height would maximize opportunities, while one participant preferred that the building not be higher than 10 stories.
- Participants agreed that should the building be a highrise, it should be designed in such a way that it integrates well with the surrounding buildings.

Retail

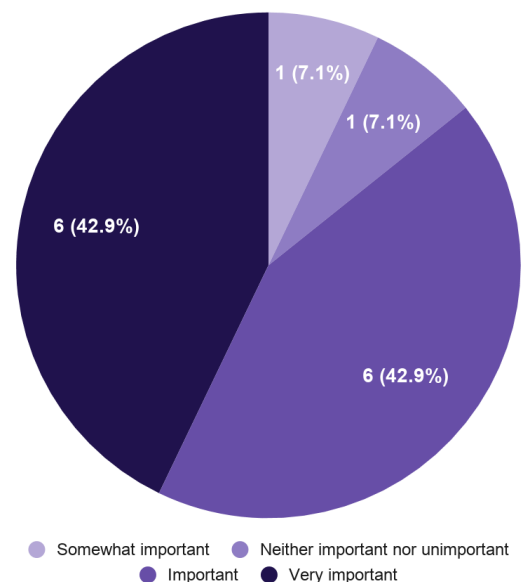
- Many individuals expressed a desire to reserve the retail space for local businesses, providing opportunities for local entrepreneurs and startups.
- Suggestions for the space included a service for local small businesses, including an incubator, markets, or other small businesses.
- Some individuals mentioned a preference to include businesses that could double as gathering spaces, including performance space, patios, and seated areas to maintain a vibrant and lively atmosphere.

Other ideas for retail uses of the space included:

- Art spaces
- Restaurants

Table 5: Importance of retail space to discussion participants

Number of community members responding:



- Cafes & Bakeries
- Clothing and apparel
- Grocery, fruit & vegetable markets
- Rentable office & meeting space
- One-stop shopping for senior accessibility
- Tax /legal/employment clinics
- Medical clinics

Community Space

- It was recommended that the space include diverse programming to engage residents of multiple generations and a variety of interests.
- Suggestions included exploring opportunities for community gathering spaces and networking opportunities for local community groups
- Suggestions also included providing gathering spaces for socialization, performance, and education.

Other suggested uses for the community space included:

- Community kitchen
- Meeting space
- Licensed space for community events
- Green Arts Market
- Childcare centre
- Recreational Spaces (indoor & outdoor)
- Art Gallery
- Entertainment and Performance Space (indoor & outdoor)
- Community Signage/Notice Board
- Roof-top Gathering Space
- TV/Ad section outdoors
- Audio/Visual Technical Support
- Commercial Kitchen
- Youth Recreation/Sport Centre
- Community Bike Shares
- Community BBQ

Table 6: Importance of event space to discussion participants

Number of community members responding:

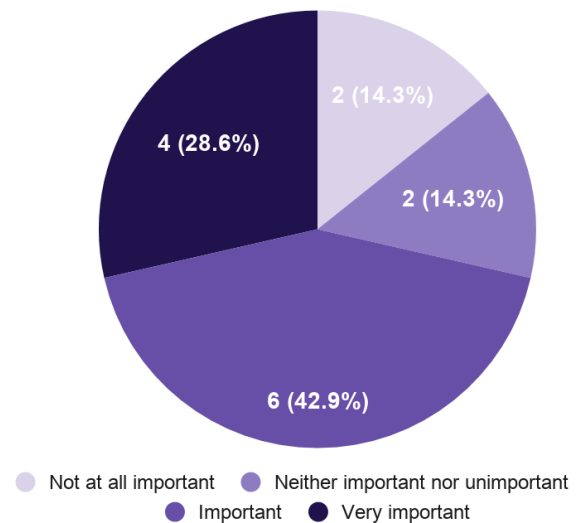
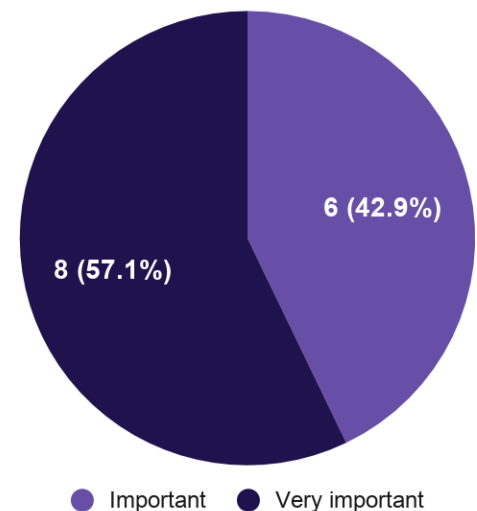


Table 7: Importance of community services to discussion participants

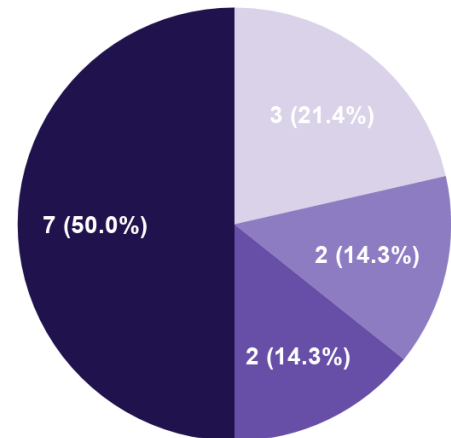
Number of community members responding:



- Community Garden
- Afterschool Programs and Youth Tutoring
- Support for New Immigrants
- Food Security Services

Table 8: Importance of affordable housing to discussion participants

Number of community members responding:



● Not at all important ● Neither important nor unimportant
● Important ● Very important

Residential

- Community members discussed providing affordable housing options and exploring opportunities for rent-gearred- to-income and low-income housing to maintain the current community in the area.
- Attendees suggested a variety of options to keep the residential portion of the build private, while still engaged with the community.

Environmental Considerations

- Mount Dennis is deeply passionate about environmental causes and aims to be the first “net zero” neighbourhood in Toronto. Suggestions were made to ensure that this goal is considered in the design of the building.
- A number of environmentally friendly design features were discussed, including various ways to ensure climate change is taken into consideration, specifically in regards to flooding.
- A green rooftop and solar panels were suggested among other environmentally friendly design features.

Accessibility

- Community members suggested a variety of design features to provide accessibility and inclusion. Suggestions included sliding doors, additional lighting, and wider sidewalks.