

## Keele Finch Plus - Encouraging Growth and Community Building - Phase 1 Report

**Date:** October 31, 2016

**To:** North York Community Council

**From:** Director, Community Planning, North York District and Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis

**Wards:** 8 - York West

### SUMMARY

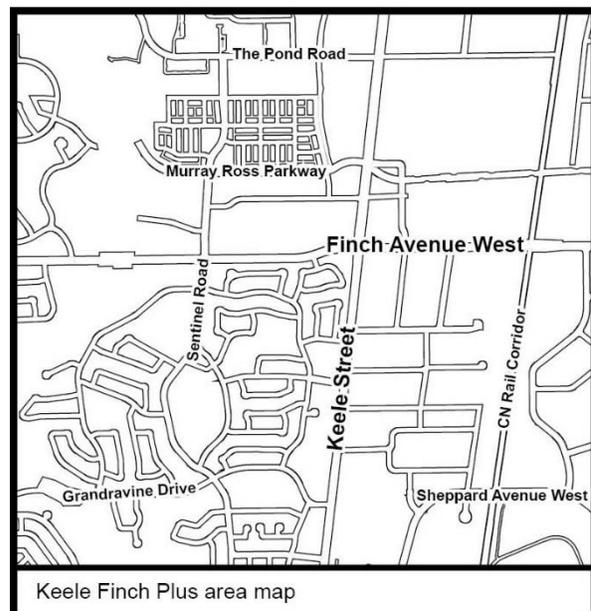
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In early 2016, City Planning initiated a Council-directed study of the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area. This report provides a summary of the first phase of that Study, which is now known as Keele Finch Plus.

The Keele Finch Plus Study ("the Study") is a comprehensive planning exercise. It will result in an updated planning framework to encourage growth and community building, and aims to leverage nearby investment in rapid transit (both subway and light rail transit). The Study work plan consists of three phases and is anticipated to take about two years to complete. Phase 1 (Study Initiation) is the focus of this report.

Building on the work completed as part of Council's approved Finch Corridor Planning Approach, City Planning undertook a number of 'taking stock' measures as part of Phase 1 of Keele Finch Plus. This included public engagement to start the conversation about local needs and desires, and to understand how the area is used as a place to live, work, learn and play.

Phase 1 also included three technical studies. As the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area is under the flight path of Downsview Airport, City Planning undertook work to understand the airport's operations and flight paths. The goal of this work was to understand what potential there may be for building height and location in a way that does not impact airport operations. Similarly, there are significant industrial operations nearby, including large fuel storage and



distribution facilities. City Planning initiated environmental related work to understand separation distances between industrial facilities and potential new sensitive uses. Third, and finally, a transportation analysis was conducted to identify existing transportation conditions.

This report also summarizes the Phase 1 findings and emerging issues derived from results of research, technical analysis and feedback from community consultation. Examples include those related to land use and compatibility, housing choice, transportation and movement, and a desire for improved walkability, beautification and safety. This will inform future options in Phase 2 (plans and analysis) of the Study.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. North York Community Council receive this report for information.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting of December 9, 2015, City Council adopted the Finch Avenue West and Sheppard Avenue East Corridors - Planning Study Approach. This included an approach to studying the Finch Avenue West light rail transit (LRT) corridor in advance of the opening of the new transit line. The Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area was recommended to be studied first. Keele Finch Plus results from that direction. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.PG8.9>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Issue Background**

Keele Finch Plus is a comprehensive Planning Study being undertaken in advance of the opening of new rapid transit infrastructure. An extension of the Line 1 subway is currently under construction at the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West, which will include a new subway and bus station. The new Finch West station is anticipated to be open in 2017. A new light rail transit line (LRT) for the Finch Avenue West corridor is planned and funded, and anticipated to begin operation in 2021. The LRT will connect with the Line 1 subway at the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West intersection. The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is responsible for the subway and Metrolinx is responsible for the LRT. See Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 -This map shows the general location of proposed rapid transit (subway and LRT) in the context of the Keele Finch Plus Study area.

Rapid transit can help to provide better access to and from an area, and stimulate growth and change. However, rapid transit alone may not trigger private sector investment, particularly in areas which have not seen significant investment in recent years. In these cases, other stimuli such as as-of-right zoning, public realm improvements, incentives such as the City's Imagination Manufacturing Innovation Technology (IMIT) program or other measures may be needed; all of which can be recommended through a planning study. Collectively, these stimuli (including the transit) are more likely to result in growth and change than with rapid transit alone. Figure 2 illustrates this.

Case studies completed through the 2015 Planning Approach work identified other locations in North America (such as the Hiawatha LRT Line in Minneapolis-St. Paul and the Metrorail LRT Line in Houston) where planning measures had a positive impact in supporting investment and community building post-implementation of a new rapid transit service. It is important to learn from these case studies.

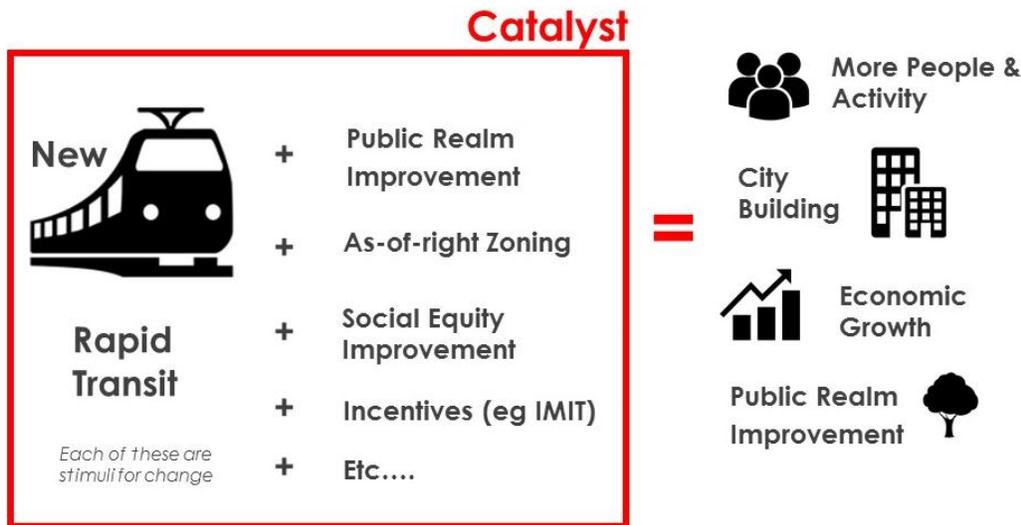


Figure 2 - Rapid transit is a stimulus for change, but it may not be a catalyst by itself. Other stimuli can also contribute to a formula that can result in catalytic change.

The residential, business and institutional community will be involved in creating a planning framework which works with the rapid transit investment to encourage growth and community building. This can include improved access to transit, an improved public realm, more amenities close-by and greater housing choice. This planning framework will also support employment uses, including the nearby aerospace industry and heavy industries, such as the large fuel storage and distribution facilities. Encouraging a transit supportive place while also supporting nearby industry is a key challenge of this Study.

### Study Process

The Study's two year work plan will be achieved through three key phases: study initiation, plans and analysis, and implementation. See Figure 3.



**Public consultation will take place at each stage**

Figure 3 - The Keele Finch Plus Study process.

**Report Organization**

This report is organized into sections. The first section discusses the context of the area from a location and policy perspective. The next section covers taking stock of the area, including the three technical analyses and public consultation. The final section discusses findings and next steps, including emerging issues for Phase 2.

**Area Context - Location**

Regionally, the Keele Finch Plus area is east of Black Creek, northwest of Downsview Airport and west of the Canadian National Rail (CNR) Corridor. Part of the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area (BIA) is within the study area as well (east of Keele Street). The location is also southeast of York University in one of the highest elevations in Toronto. The community is sometimes referred to as "York University Heights".

The area also includes part of an Employment Area, which contains a large amount of manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, and office uses. Employment in manufacturing uses increased by 8.9% in this area between 2010 and 2015 (based on the Toronto Employment Survey for the Dufferin Keele North Employment Area). Toronto's high-tech aerospace industry is located nearby and includes research centres and airplane manufacturing.

Some heavy industries, including large fuel distribution facilities are located near to the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West intersection. To support the continued operation of the industry and ensure public safety, sensitive uses such as residential uses must be kept a reasonable distance away from these industries. Mitigation measures can impact these distances.

Downsview Airport operated by Bombardier Aerospace is located to the southeast of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West. The airport's flight path extends over the intersection. The airport is an important contributor to Toronto's aerospace industry and jobs.

See the aerial photo in Figure 4 which highlights the location of the fuel distribution facilities and other large industry, and the generalized location of the Downsview Airport flight path.



Figure 4 - This figure shows the general location of the Downsview flight path, and examples of large industry in the area

## Area Context - People and Jobs

Based on a larger context area studied for the Planning Approach in 2015, the area has a higher proportion of immigrants to Canada (59%) than Toronto as a whole (49%). The most common places of birth are Italy, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Jamaica. The population increased by 5.5% between 2006 and 2011. The area has a higher proportion of rental tenure and lower income households as compared with the city as a whole. Of all households, 63% are in apartments or condominiums and over 82% were constructed prior to 1990. About 16% of households are single detached homes. For more demographic details, refer to the Finch Avenue West Light Rail Transit Corridor Profile (June 2015) available via [www.toronto.ca/planning/sipa](http://www.toronto.ca/planning/sipa) (click on "Finch Avenue West and Sheppard Avenue East Corridors – Planning Study Approach").

The chart below includes facts about the area defined by an 800 metre radius from the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West. An 800 metre radius was used to align with the Mobility Hub area, explained in the next section.

Population	7,823 (2011 Census)
Population density	39 people per hectare
Employment	3,336 (2015 Toronto Employment Survey)
Employment density	16 jobs per hectare
Key Sectors	office, manufacturing and warehousing, service, retail (in order of total jobs from most to least)
Selected Industries	fuel distribution, chemicals, auto sales and repair, furniture manufacturing and repair, food processing, professional services (e.g. law, accounting, financial services)

## Policy Context - Growth Plan and Regional Transportation Plan

The Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe identifies *major transit stations areas* as the area within a 500 metre radius of a rapid transit station. In Growth Plan policy, a *major transit station area* will be planned to achieve "increased residential and employment densities that support and ensure the viability of existing and planned transit service levels". This will be achieved through a mix of uses wherever appropriate. There are two of these areas under study through Keele Finch Plus: Keele Street and Finch Avenue West, and Sentinel Road and Finch Avenue West.

The Big Move Regional Transportation Plan identifies 'mobility hubs' as areas extending roughly 800 metres from the intersection of two or more rapid transit lines, with a minimum volume of anticipated future transit usage. These hubs support seamless transit integration and higher density development. There is one mobility hub under study through Keele Finch Plus at Keele Street and Finch Avenue West.

Figure 5 shows where the 500 metre and 800 metre radii roughly fall.

Mobility Hub Guidelines are high-level planning considerations, with the 800 metre boundary applying to all mobility hubs across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). It is incumbent on the City to interpret these guidelines, including the boundaries, for the purposes of Keele Finch Plus. Existing land uses, built form and

physical features of the area will inform the boundary, as will other factors such as the results of the technical exercises completed as part of Phase 1 of the Study. The final boundary will be determined through Phase 2 work.



Figure 5 - Map showing the general locations of 500 metre radii from major transit stations at Keele Street and Finch Avenue West and Sentinel Road and Finch Avenue West, along with the 800 metre radii of the mobility hub.

### Policy Context - Toronto Official Plan

Toronto's Official Plan sets out how to grow over a 30 year period. The Official Plan includes land use designations generally reflecting either 'change' or 'stability'. The Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area is characterized by a general east-west split in land use designations, with Keele Street as a rough dividing line. See Figure 6. Most of the land use designations to the west of Keele Street (e.g. *Neighbourhoods*, *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, *Parks*) encourage stability. Most of the land on the east side of Keele Street is designated *Employment Areas*. Through the City's recent Municipal Comprehensive Review, a small area of land along Finch Avenue West east of Keele Street was redesignated from *Employment Areas* to *Mixed Use Areas* (Official Plan Amendment 231). No further redesignation of *Employment Areas* will be considered as part of this Study.

Growth and intensification is contemplated on *Mixed Use Areas* and *Employment Areas* designations in the Official Plan, but no residential is permitted in *Employment Areas*.

While there are some *Mixed Use Areas* in the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area, they may not be suitable for residential uses due to their proximity to heavy industrial uses in the area. Other sections of the Official Plan, including 2.2.4 and 3.4 speak to the need for designing, buffering and separating sensitive uses from industrial uses to promote safety and security, and to prevent adverse effects. See also "Heavy Industry and Related Environmental considerations" below.

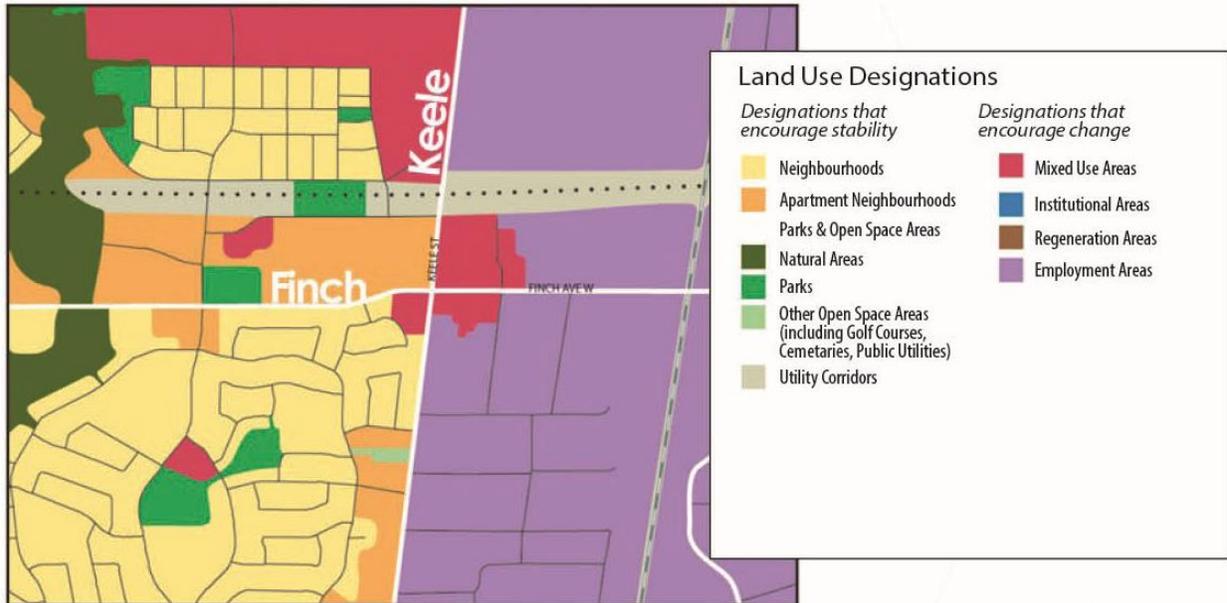


Figure 6 - Excerpt from the Official Plan, showing land use designations around the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area.

Policies within Chapter 2 of the Official Plan discuss the need to work with Metrolinx to focus growth in mobility hubs, make better use of infrastructure (such as the subway extension and planned light rail transit), reduce auto dependency, create and sustain employment opportunities, and increase the supply of housing in mixed use environments to create greater opportunities to live and work locally.

### Encouraging Growth and Community Building

Provincial and City of Toronto policies provide guidance and direction for the Keele Finch Plus Study. Through the Study, an updated planning framework and recommendations will be made to encourage growth and community building. Recommendations will help to leverage the transit investment stimulus for the area.

Putting in place the right policies and stimuli is important for good city building and encouraging the right conditions to create a transit-supportive environment. To support the public sector investment in transit and ensure an efficient transit service, a total of 250 jobs and people per hectare are suggested in Metrolinx's Mobility Hub Guidelines. As this guideline applies to all Mobility Hub areas in the GTHA, it is incumbent that the City interpret these guidelines through planning work for the specific context of the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area. There are currently 55 jobs and people per hectare within 800 metres of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West.

Leveraging the transit investment to achieve community building is of further importance as the Keele Finch Plus area is located within the existing York University Heights Neighbourhood Improvement Area (NIA), as illustrated in Figure 7. Neighbourhood Improvement Areas are part of the Council-adopted Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy led by the Social Development, Finance & Administration Division. An NIA is an area that falls below the Neighbourhood Equity Score and requires special attention. For this reason, the investment in rapid transit should be leveraged for social benefit and to improve the everyday lives of existing residents.

It is important to note that Metrolinx will incorporate a Community Benefits Framework, which provides for local opportunities as part of the construction of the Finch West LRT. The Framework will be modelled on that of the Crosstown, which can be viewed at: <http://www.thecrosstown.ca/about-us/community-benefits>.

The Economic Development and Culture Division is working with the DUKE Heights BIA on an economic development strategy. This strategy covers the BIA area east of Keele Street (see Figure 8), but will benefit the wider area.

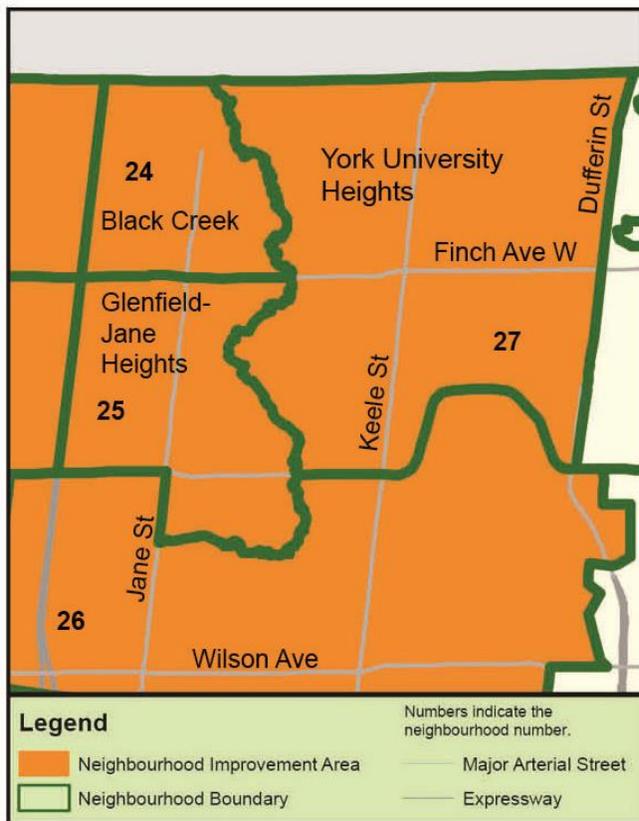


Figure 7 - Excerpt of the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) map.

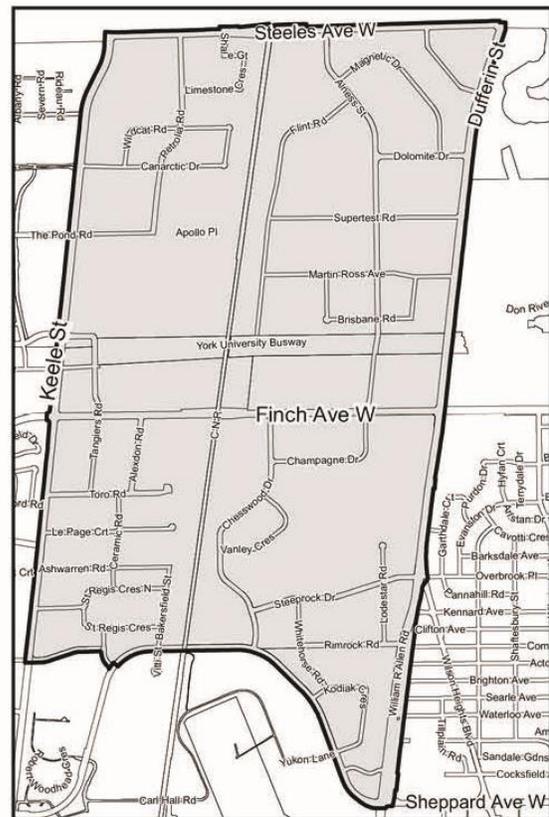


Figure 8 - DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area map.

## Taking Stock - Transportation Conditions

As part of Phase 1 work, City Planning's Transportation Planning staff conducted research into the existing transportation conditions around the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area. Findings of the existing Transportation conditions will be posted at [www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus](http://www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus). For the purposes of the transportation research, the

primary boundary considered was roughly bounded by The Pond Road to the north, Black Creek to the west, Grandravine Drive to the south, and the CNR rail corridor to the east. The objective was to understand existing travel behaviours and identify emerging possibilities to consider for Phase 2. This work is based on aggregated 'smart data' (i.e. massive amounts of aggregated mobile device, GPS and conventional data), site visits and observations by staff, and supplemented by public input at consultations. This work also sets the existing base condition from which to encourage and track a shift toward reduced auto dependency.

Key findings of the research to date include the fact that a large proportion of vehicles in the area originate outside of the City of Toronto. On Keele Street, this applies to roughly half of the vehicles. Over the last 10 years, transit usage has increased by 2.5% annually, while automobile trips have remained steady. Trucks currently represent 4.5% of all vehicles. Transit capacity utilization is 48%.

For all trips, approximately 40% are completed by transit or active modes such as walking or cycling. At major signalized intersections, pedestrian volume share exceeded 10%, with some intersections handling 6,500 pedestrians per day. Combined, this high proportion of non-automobile trips indicates a potential to reduce auto dependency in this area in the future with the coming transit infrastructure. Improving active transportation connectivity through safer, more comfortable and more direct connections will be a focus of the future planning framework.

Surveys also took place locally, including at the recently opened Wal-Mart location at Keele Street and Broadoaks Drive. Unlike older commercial uses in the area, this new centre is designed to have pedestrian access at the street with parking in behind (most commercial in the area has parking in front). At this location, almost half of trips were taken by transit, walking or cycling and almost half of the parking lot was occupied during the busiest time of day. This suggests that good urban design measures can reduce the need for automobile trips.

During construction of the subway, collisions decreased by 17%. This may be a result of reduced lanes, slower traffic and short crossing distances for pedestrians.

At a high level, results of the transportation conditions assessment identify the need for a better transportation network. There is heavy arterial usage and few through east-west or north-south collector streets and routes in general (compared with other, more transit-supportive areas of the city). The layout of streets in the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area leaves few movement choices for motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and deliveries. For drivers, this leads to congestion on the few arterials. For pedestrians and cyclists, the discontinuous and circuitous nature of some streets also results in situations where residents or workers are physically close to future transit, but the actual distance to access transit is much longer. The design of local streets to keep traffic out has resulted in a network that is less walkable than it could be. Figure 9 provides a comparison to illustrate this for both an area with many tall buildings (Yonge and Eglinton) and an area with more mid-rise and low-rise buildings (Bloor and Christie). Figure 9 includes walk scores and transit scores - the higher the score the better the walking and transit networks.

The need for a better network, including improved walkability and access to transit is supported by the fact that nearly a third of households are considered low-income and over 20% of households do not own a car. A better network is a more equitable network.

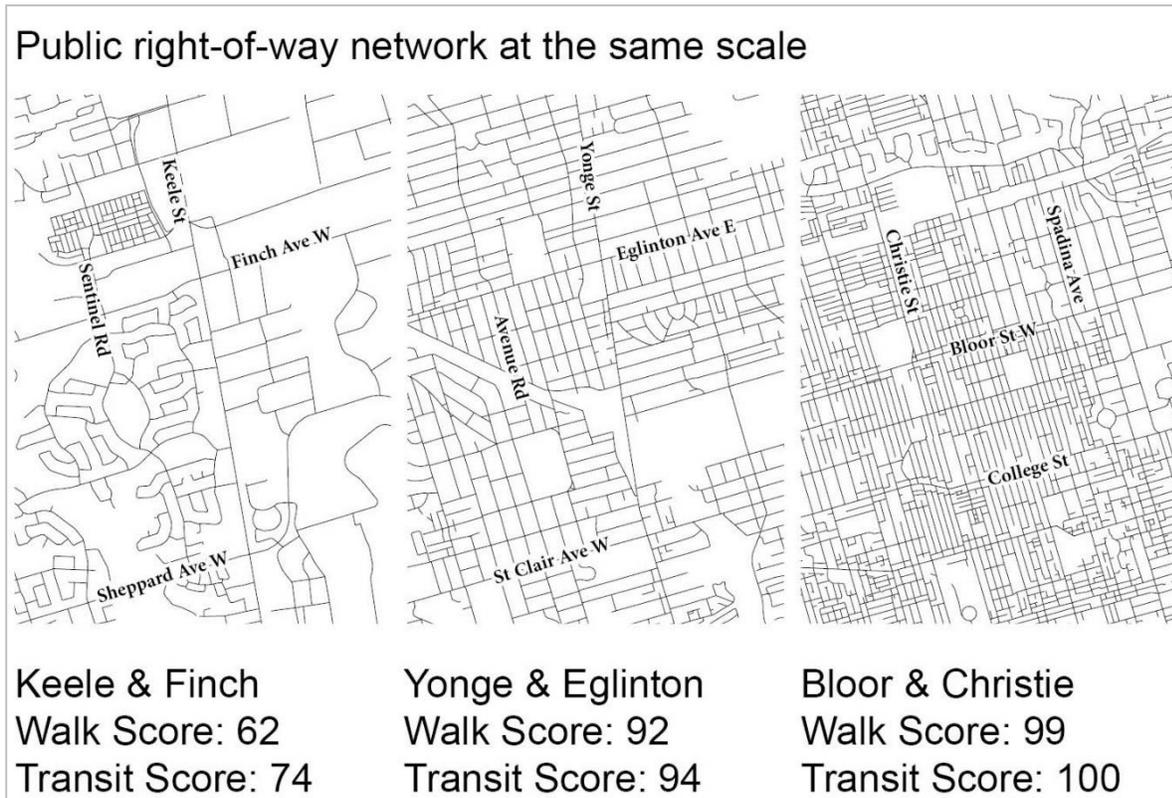


Figure 9 - The public right-of-way network (roads and laneways) at the same scale for three areas of Toronto. A tighter network of streets promotes walkability and routing choices. Walk and transit scores publicly obtained via real estate listings on Realtor.ca.

### **Goods Movement**

Previous studies as far back as 2001 have identified that limitations of the transportation network are impacting the performance of the nearby employment areas. A City-commissioned consultant's report from 2001 entitled "Keele Employment Area Study" identified a number of recommendations, including improved transit and more east-west roads. Traffic was considered the top issue in the area.

Comments received from the public at consultations support the need for understanding of goods movement conditions. Heavy truck traffic was cited as detracting from the area, while employers and the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area expressed interest in improving the conditions for goods movement. A comprehensive review of existing and future truck operations related to goods movement could respond to these concerns. Transportation Services Division in partnership with Metrolinx has committed to undertake this review in the Finch Avenue West corridor, where road and traffic operations will undergo a significant change, as a result of Metrolinx implementation of the Finch West LRT. The assessment will provide recommendations to improve goods movement and truck operations to, from and within the *Employment Areas* along the Finch Avenue West corridor. Further, it will identify next steps to be considered in

addressing the expected demands on the City's road network and the Ministry of Transportation's expressway infrastructure.

### ***Future Transit Conditions***

The Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension is anticipated to be open in late 2017. The Metrolinx Finch West LRT is anticipated to begin construction in 2017 and completed by 2021. These two new transit lines offer significant new movement choices, increased transit capacity for the area and room to grow transit ridership.

### **Taking Stock - Downsview Airport Flight Path and Operations**

The flight path of Downsview Airport passes over the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area. Zoning was put in place at a time when Downsview Airport was operated by the Department of National Defence as a military base. The zoning dates from July 23, 1964. Schedule D of the in-force portion of the North York Zoning By-law 7625 includes an overlay which sets out maximum structure height for areas around Downsview Airport. The military base was closed in 1996 and Downsview Airport is currently operated by Bombardier Aerospace. There are no commercial flights to or from Downsview Airport, and (except with previous permission or in the case of an emergency) the airport is only used for Bombardier's airplane building and testing business.

Where considering site-specific applications for development that propose to exceed the height permissions set out in Schedule D, City Planning has engaged Bombardier Aerospace in the application review process. This includes applications within the Keele Finch Plus area, such as 35 Tangiers Road, which was approved by Council in 2014. The approval includes a 35.38 metre high office building (which Bombardier Flight Operations considered acceptable) in an area where Schedule D sets out a maximum height of 15.24 metres. This suggests opportunity to update Schedule D to coincide with encouraging transit supportive development. An update or replacement of Schedule D would also serve to streamline the development review process, thereby making the planning process more efficient and support future development in the area.

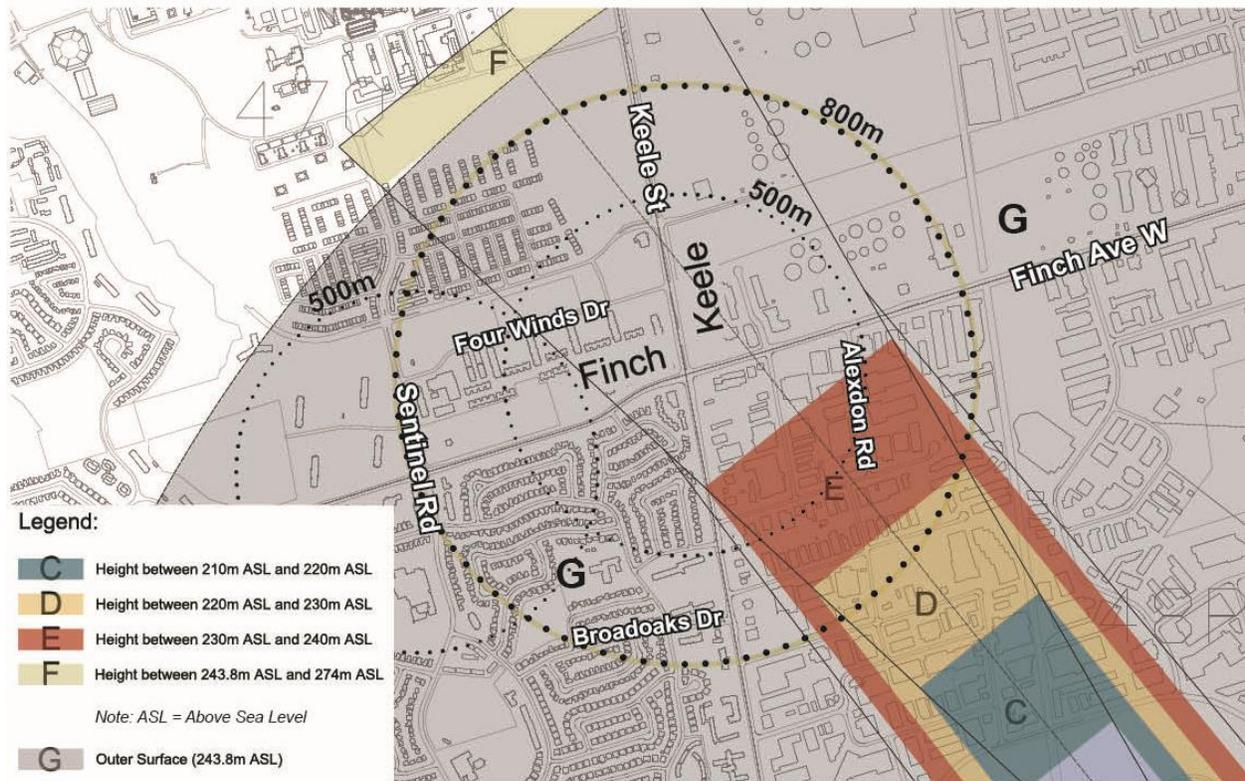


Figure 10 - A modified excerpt of a consultant's map showing heights above sea level (ASL) of the Downsview Airport Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS).

To understand current airport operations in relation to the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area, City Planning procured the services of a consultant firm which specializes in planning around airports, to evaluate the current operations of Downsview Airport. The primary task assigned to the consultant was to provide the "obstacle limitation surface (OLS)" of the airport under the current federal regulations. The OLS represents the limit to which objects may project into airspace and is measured in units above sea level.

Results of the consultant's investigation into the OLS indicate that there is potential to update or replace the Schedule D overlay to identify higher maximum structure heights. As with the current planning framework (including the Schedule D overlay), other planning considerations need to be taken into account. Figure 10 shows height of the OLS in feet above sea level. This work will proceed with caution into Phase 2 for two key reasons: protrusion by any structure (including temporary structures such as cranes) into the OLS could force the closure of the airport, and structure height limits must be expressed in units above sea level (as ground level heights vary and can change).

An Executive Summary of the consultant's findings are available in Attachment 3. The full version of the report is available on the project website at [www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus](http://www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus).

## Taking Stock - Heavy Industry and Related Environmental Considerations

City Planning procured professional environmental services to investigate existing and future industrial facilities in the area. A key part of this work was interpreting the Province's D-6 Guidelines "Compatibility Between Industrial Facilities and Sensitive Uses". Through this work, existing industrial uses were identified by Industrial Facility Class to determine resulting minimum separation distances and areas of influence discussed in the Guideline. The possibility of new industrial uses which fall into the three Classes based on existing permissions in Zoning By-laws were considered as well.

Industrial Class Type	Minimum Separation Distance	Area of Influence
Class I	20 metres	70 metres
Class II	70 metres	300 metres
Class III	300 metres	1000 metres

Table 1 - Separation Distances and Areas of Influence of Industrial Classes in the Province of Ontario's D-6 Guidelines.

The three categories of Industrial Facility Class are Class I, II and III. Class I is considered the least impactful to sensitive uses (such as residential), whereas Class III is the most impactful. Minimum related separation distances reflect this as expressed in Table 1. The recommended distances are general and apply province-wide. The actual context of the Keele Street and Finch Avenue West area, along with results of studies and implementation of mitigation measures could result in different separation distances.

The consultant work was completed by obtaining Environmental Compliance Approvals from the Province, along with site visits and a land use review by desktop computer. Environmental risk factors and other areas of environmental concern were identified.

Five Class III industrial uses were identified in or near the 800 metre area, including three fuel distribution facilities and two manufacturers. Three Class II and one Class I industrial use were also identified. The minimum separation distances from these uses to sensitive uses as per the Provincial D-6 Guidelines is displayed in Figure 11. The consultant states that these distances are for individual facilities and that the cumulative impact of these industries needs to be considered. Therefore, the combined impact of multiple industries located nearby is potentially greater than that of one industry alone. This is likely the case for the Keele Street and Finch area given the nature of local industry operations.

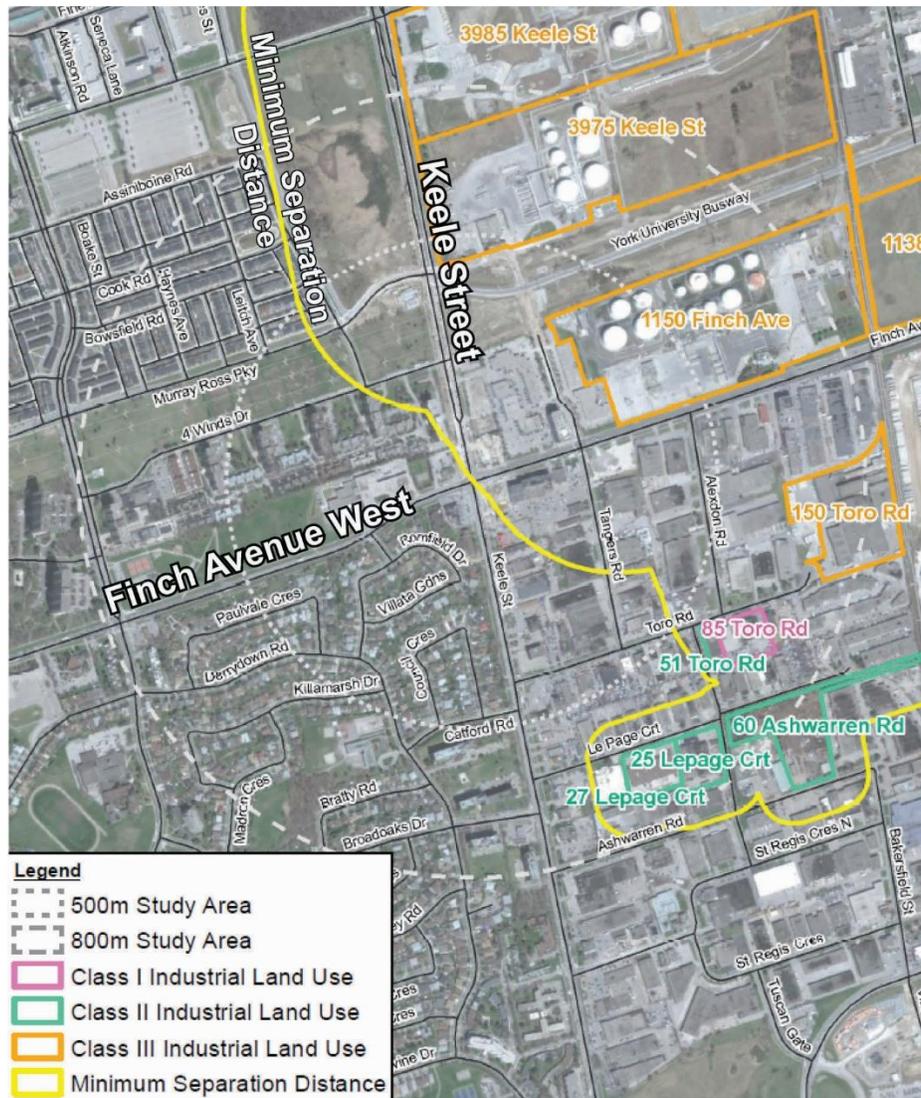


Figure 11 - Excerpt of a consultant produced map showing the minimum separation distance between existing industrial uses and sensitive uses (as per the Province's D-6 Guidelines).

The Province's D-6 Guidelines' minimum separation distance between industrial facilities and sensitive uses covers a large portion of the 500 metre and 800 metre radii around Keele Street and Finch Avenue West, and therefore will impact future land use decisions for Phase 2 of Keele Finch Plus.

Ultimately, the consultant recommends that the City consider requiring potential development to provide studies on air emissions, odour, dust and noise that review the existing industrial development from a cumulative impact perspective. The consultant recommends these air quality studies within a larger 'area of influence'. This area includes a large portion of York University, which will need to be a consideration in future campus development. Attachment 1 provides a Terms of Reference for Air Quality Studies and Attachment 2 identifies the 'area of influence'. The air quality studies would identify appropriate mitigation measures necessary to help ensure that new development would not be adversely impacted by the existing employment uses and, as a result, any new uses would be made compatible with existing and as-of-right

employment uses. City Planning will be advancing the consultant's recommendation as part of the Keele Finch Plus study.

An executive summary of the consultant's findings is included as Attachment 4. A full version of the consultant's report is available at [www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus](http://www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus).

## **Taking Stock - The Finch Hydro and Pipeline Corridor**

Within the Study area is a portion of the Finch Hydro and Pipeline Corridor ("the Corridor"), which is roughly parallel to Finch Avenue West. The Corridor is approximately 250 metres north of the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West and is about 100 metres wide. The TTC's York University Busway runs through the Corridor east of Tangiers Road to Dufferin Street. The Corridor is large, devoid of buildings and physically separates the community. The Corridor does contain a large community garden, Finch Hydro Corridor trail (a key cycling route) and provides a large open space. A commuter parking lot for the Finch subway and bus terminal is under construction in the Corridor between Tangiers Road and Keele Street.

As part of Phase 1, City Planning investigated existing and potential conditions in this corridor, including a review of hydro plans and fuel pipeline guidelines. The Hydro One Needs Assessment Report for the Northern Toronto Subregion, was completed in 2014 by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) and states that "the study team determined that the needs identified for this sub-region can be addressed directly by the transmitter and Local Distribution Companies and further regional coordination is not required." The study timeframe extends to 2023.

Similar to the hydro lines, there are also multiple fuel distribution pipelines running under the Corridor on both the northern edge and southern edge. To ensure the safe and efficient operation of the lines, clear, unobstructed access to them is needed.

The hydro transmission towers and underground fuel pipelines are anticipated to occupy the Corridor into the future. There may be potential for uses such as pathways (possibly to formalize observed informal pathways), recreational spaces, playing fields and roads in the corridor. These spaces and pathways could serve to better integrate the different communities in the area and offer greater transportation choices, and potential solutions to issues identified in Phase 1 of the Study. Additional infrastructure proposed in the Corridor would likely have to be reviewed in consultation with Hydro One and the respective pipeline companies, in particular with regards to safety and emergency management issues.

## **Phase 1 - Consultations**

Phase 1 of Keele Finch Plus saw the public launch of the Study, which included the publication of the dedicated Study website ([www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus](http://www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus)) in May 2016. The Study name was chosen in May from four options by students at James Cardinal McGuigan School during a visit and discussion about the community with City Planning staff.

The first open house and public consultation was held at James Cardinal McGuigan School on June 21, 2016, to raise awareness, inform and educate the public about the

Study, and also to learn from attendees and understand their needs and desires for the future. A total of 67 people attended. Activities for feedback included mapping exercises, feedback forms, dot-mocracy and discussion with staff. Staff from Metrolinx and the TTC were available to answer transit-related questions.

A summary of the first open house and public consultation was posted to [www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus](http://www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus) on July 14, 2016.

Three further "Planners in Public Spaces" consultations were held 'pop-up style' in July, August and September at the Grandravine Community Centre, Yorkwoods Library and 1280 Finch Avenue West (in front of the Tim Horton's), respectively. A further 166 people were engaged at these events.

Staff have also discussed Keele Finch Plus at a York University Heights Neighbourhood Action Partnership table and at classes at York University and the University of Toronto. Business and real estate owners provided feedback to Staff at the "Height of Real Estate Opportunity" event held by the DUKE Heights BIA.

In total, over 300 owners, tenants, students, business people, workers and visitors were reached in person through Phase 1 consultations and outreach. Many more people were reached through other means, including the Study website or social media. See Attachment 5 for a list of consultation outreach and study promotions.

In addition to the public consultations, outreach was made to five aboriginal groups with potential interest in the area: The Mississaugas of the New Credit, The Kawartha Nishnawbe First Nation, The Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, The Conseil de la Nation Huronne-Wendat, and The Metis Nation. An invitation was made to consult directly with these groups, as well as to make them aware of the public consultation. A response was received from The Conseil de la Nation Huronne-Wendat who requested to be kept informed of the Study.

## **Phase 1 - Findings and Emerging Issues for Phase 2 Plans and Analysis**

### ***Findings***

Findings and emerging issues for the Study have resulted from the work completed in Phase 1. The emerging issues were the result of background research, conversations and feedback received at consultations, and through technical analysis on the operations of Downsview Airport, local industry and related environmental concerns, and existing transportation conditions. The diagram in Figure 13 expresses how these inputs work together.

Moving forward, some of the findings that will inform Phase 2 Plans and Analysis are listed below. They are organized based on where they predominantly emerged from in the Phase 1 structure.

## Phase 1 Structure

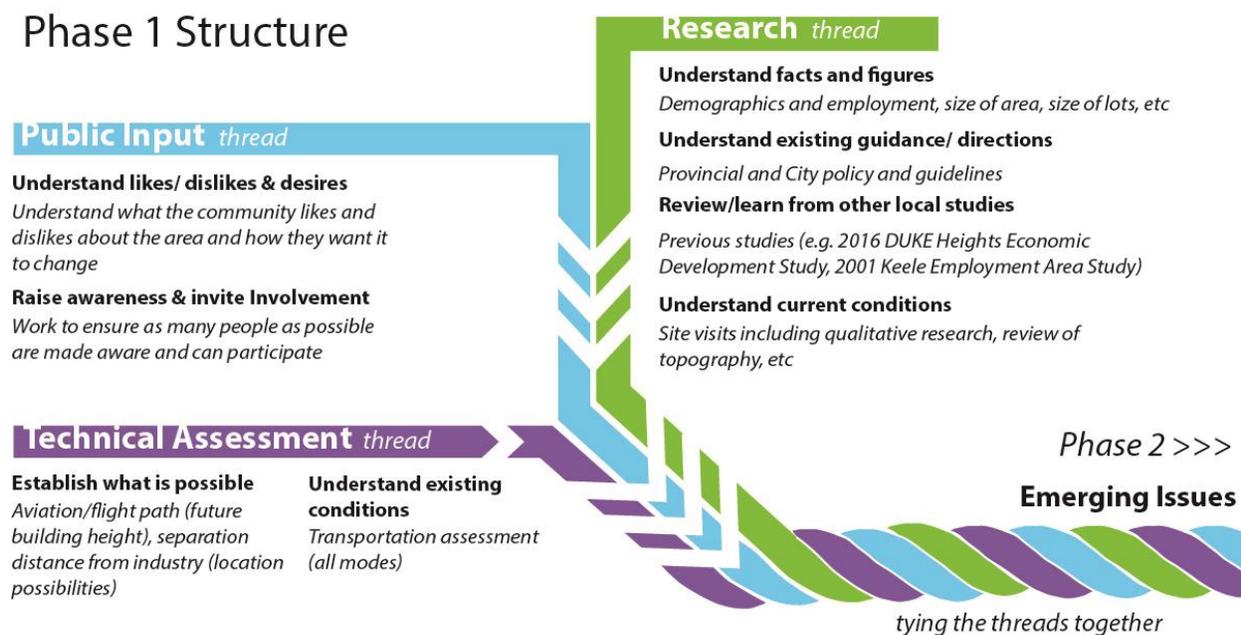


Figure 12 - Phase 1 Structure.

### Findings - Public Input:

- there is community support for growth and change with public transit improvements;
- growth should be focussed at the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West, and the intersection of Sentinel Road and Finch Avenue West;
- new developments should include ground floor retail with other uses above;
- safety is a concern in all its forms (e.g. fear of crime or anti-social behaviour in public spaces, speed of traffic, pedestrian safety in crossing streets, etc.);
- more amenities are desired including cafes, restaurants and services, and more to do generally (especially in the evenings);
- streets, especially east of Keele Street should be made more pleasant to support walking and cycling (e.g. many streets have sidewalks on one side only). This includes a desire for more pedestrian amenities.
- beautification of the area is desired as are more amenities in parks;
- industry and heavy trucks are impacting the look and feel of the area, and the comfort of pedestrians and cyclists on the streets. The large amounts of paved areas (mainly east of Keele Street) have a similar impact;
- traffic and traffic congestion are a concern;
- housing affordability and gentrification are a concern; and
- there is a desire for improved landscaping and more things to do and see, especially in parks.

### Findings - Research:

- the area should be more transit supportive in the future, including a higher density of people and jobs than exists today;
- the area should be more walkable, with improved existing routes and more routes;
- the area is park deficient east of Keele Street only, but parks west of Keele Street need improvement, including improved access, more amenities and better framing by adjacent buildings;

- the street network needs to be better connected, as it currently consists of limited, indirect or circuitous routing choices and large blocks. These are not pedestrian friendly and limit movement choices for vehicles;
- communities could be better integrated across barriers such as the Black Creek Valley and Finch Hydro Corridor; and
- though development interest may be increasing in the area, it remains an emerging market (based on consultant work completed as part of the Planning Approach in 2015). Case studies from other new transit lines in a similar context illustrate that planning measures such as as-of-right zoning have helped to stimulate the market.

#### Findings - Technical Assessment:

- transit mode share is approximately 30%, which may partially be a result of need rather than choice;
- utilization of parking is relatively low;
- there is an ultimate height limit provided by the Downsview Airport Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS), which demonstrates the possibility of structure height limits greater than those identified in the Schedule D overlay in the in-force North York zoning by-law.
- sensitive uses, including residential, will likely require mitigation measures and may not be encouraged in *Mixed-Use Areas* east of Keele Street; and
- proposed sensitive uses in the area of influence should be required to complete environmental studies to ensure user safety and support of employment uses.

#### **Emerging Issues**

A draft set of emerging issues derived from the findings above will be used to inform Phase 2 of the Study. The emerging issues include:

- involve the community in transforming the area into a transit supportive place over the medium to long term;
- ensure the complexity of the area is well understood and expressed. Investment and change in policy should respond to the differences within the area;
- encourage compact development that frames public streets and the public realm of parks and open spaces at good proportion, and both supports and leverages the investment in transit;
- encourage development that contributes to the vitality and vibrancy of the area, and provides amenities and services;
- ensure that future uses and built form support and complement the existing employment uses in the area, including nearby industry and Downsview Airport;
- support a high quality of life for current and future residents and workers;
- support and encourage a more comfortable, walkable, cycle friendly and more beautiful public realm;
- investment is needed in the public realm to make it more functional and connected, and to enhance the identity and liveability of the area;
- encourage a vital employment area that supports a range of business activities; and
- improve the transportation network by making new connections, supporting goods movement, reducing block sizes and encouraging walkability. This supports active transportation options such as walking and cycling.

## **What's Next?**

### ***Phase 2 - Part 1***

The above noted emerging issues, along with research conducted, consultation feedback and technical analysis will inform the development of future growth options moving forward. The development of these options will take place with the assistance of stakeholders and the public.

### ***Phase 2 - Part 2***

Each growth option will assess the impact and need for improvements to the public realm, transportation network, community service and facilities needs, and other criteria. The evaluation will ultimately lead to a preferred option to be reported to Community Council. Phase 3 (Implementation) will begin once a preferred option is adopted.

## **Conclusion**

This report summarizes the findings of the first phase of the Keele Finch Plus Study as a significant step in this comprehensive planning exercise. The Study will result in an updated planning framework to encourage growth and community building in part by leveraging nearby transit investment. The Study is anticipated to be reported out in the winter of 2017/2018.

Phase 1 included three technical exercises: a transportation review, evaluation of Downsview Airport operational needs, and an evaluation of the area's environmental considerations related to industry and employment uses. These exercises, combined with the outcomes of research and input from public consultations, resulted in the first phase findings and emerging issues. These findings and emerging issues will inform the plans and analysis phase (Phase 2) of the Study.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Air Quality Study Terms of Reference

Attachment 2 - Areas Where Air Quality Studies are Recommended

Attachment 3 - Keele Finch Plus Downsvew Airport Needs Assessment - Executive Summary

Attachment 4 - Keele Finch Plus Study Existing Environmental Conditions Report - Executive Summary

Attachment 5 - Consultation List and Promotions