



City of Toronto

Danforth Avenue (Don Valley to Coxwell Avenue) urban design guidelines

Danforth Avenue (Don Valley to Coxwell Avenue) urban design guidelines online:

<https://www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy> or <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/>

Mandate

On July 8, 2014, City Council adopted a motion which requested that the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning undertake a planning study of Danforth Avenue in two segments, from the Don Valley to Coxwell Avenue and from Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue.

The Study for Segment 1 was completed in 2018. The Segment 2 Study was conducted in accordance with the 2018 Council direction that it use a Complete Streets approach, integrated transportation and economic development considerations along with planning matters.

Key objectives of the Study include identifying future city-building opportunities, guiding new development, and enhancing the public realm and quality of place.



Table of Contents

Mandate

1.0	Introduction	7
1.1	STUDY AREA	8
1.2	PURPOSE	9
1.3	STUDY PROCESS AND CONSULTATION	10
1.4	HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANFORTH	12
2.0	Vision	15
2.1	VISION AND PLANNED CHARACTER STATEMENT	16
2.2	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	16
3.0	Heritage	17
3.1	HERITAGE CONSERVATION	18
3.2	HERITAGE REGISTER	18
3.3	DANFORTH AVENUE'S HISTORIC MAIN STREET CHARACTER	19
3.4	HERITAGE INVENTORY	19
3.5	BUILDING TYPOLOGIES	20
4.0	Public Realm	23
4.1	STREETSCAPE	24
4.2	BOULEVARD SPACES	26
4.3	SHADOW MITIGATION	27
4.4	MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION	28
4.5	PUBLIC ART	29
4.6	SIDE WALL CONDITIONS AND MURAL ART	29
4.7	THE GREENWAY	30

5.0	Built Form	33
5.1	BUILT FORM	34
5.1.1	Site Characteristics	35
5.2	POLICY AREAS	36
5.3	POLICY AREA A	38
5.3.1	Mid-rise buildings in Policy Area A	38
5.3.2	Building on and/or Adjacent to Heritage Properties	40
5.4	POLICY AREA B	41
5.5	POLICY AREA C	43
5.6	POLICY AREA D	44
5.7	POLICY AREA E	45
5.8	POTENTIAL NODES	46
5.9	BUILDING DESIGN	47
5.9.1	Ground Floor Height, Storefront Size and Design	47
5.9.2	Building Material	49
5.9.3	Vehicular Access, Loading Area and Utility	49
5.10	ADDITIONS AND LOW-RISE BUILDINGS	50
6.0	Mobility	51
6.1	DESTINATION DANFORTH COMPLETE STREETS PILOT	52
	Appendices	55
APPENDIX A	MAP 1 - STUDY AREA MAP	56
APPENDIX B	MAP 2 - HERITAGE INVENTORY MAP	57
APPENDIX C	MAP 3 - LOT DEPTH MAP	58
APPENDIX D	HERITAGE INVENTORY	59

1.0 Introduction

The Danforth is a diverse, mixed-use area that is evolving. Danforth Avenue is a main street, with direct access to higher-order transit is identified for growth in the City's Official Plan. The guidelines in this document form part of the overall planning framework to guide development and growth management for this area. The urban design guidelines must be read in conjunction with the policies in the Official Plan Amendment No. 573 and Site and Area Specific Policy No. 772.

- 1.1 Study Area**
- 1.2 Purpose**
- 1.3 Study Process and Consultation**
- 1.4 Historic Context Statement**



Map 1: Study Area Map

1.1 STUDY AREA

The Study Area includes all properties fronting Danforth Avenue between the Don Valley and Coxwell Avenue, as shown on Map 2 in Section 5.3 of this document. In addition to Danforth-fronting properties, the Study Area includes some lands designated *Neighbourhoods* which have been identified as areas for transition, as follows:

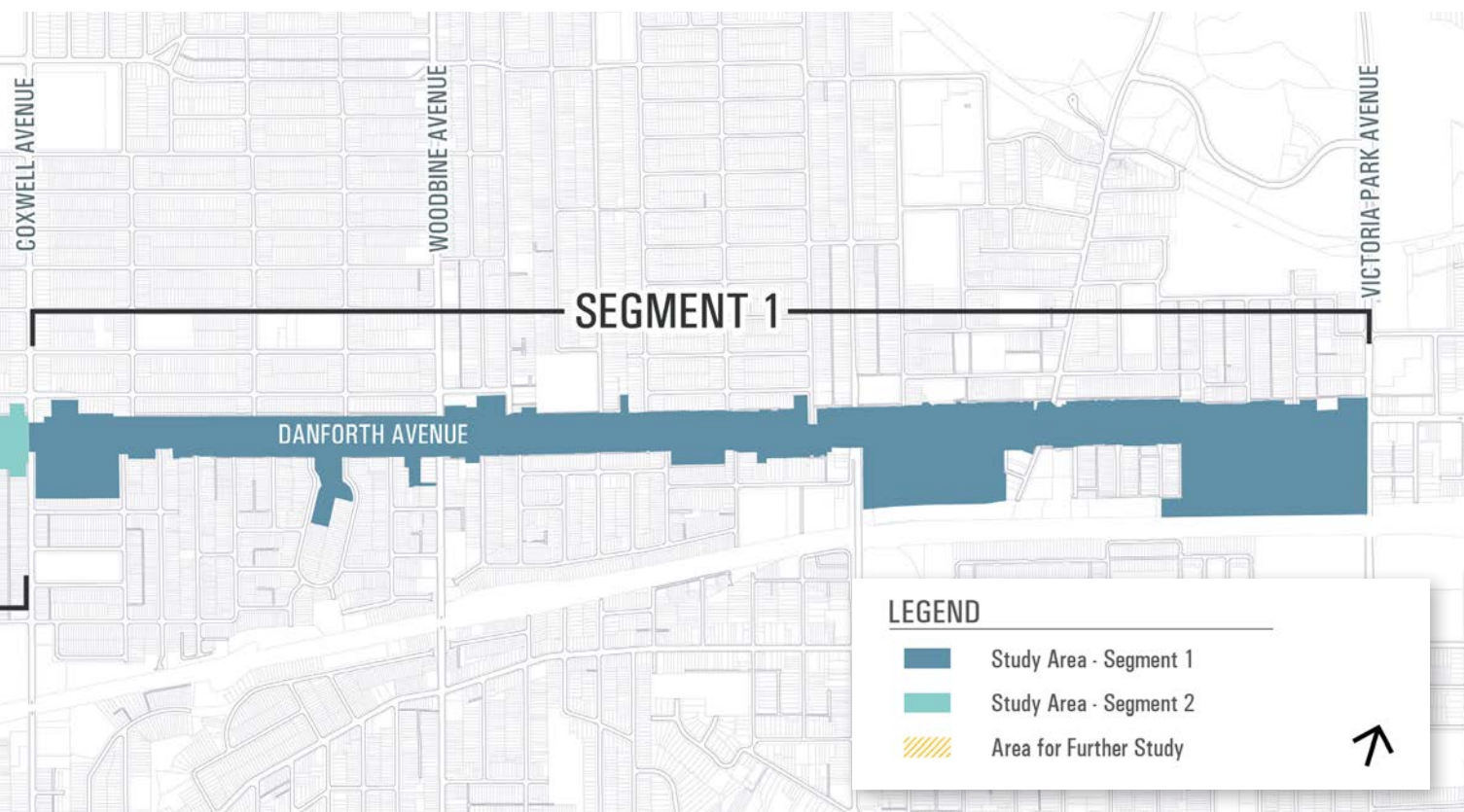
- Lots immediately south of the existing Toronto Parking Authority (TPA) parking facilities or public parks located between Chester Avenue and Langford Avenue.
- Lots immediately north of the TPA facilities or public parks located between Chester Avenue and Langford Avenue.
- A collection of 2-3 lots on some of the side streets abutting sites designated *Mixed Use Areas*.

Lands within the yellow hatched overlay will be subject to further study to craft appropriate policies and design guidelines for their growth. Until then the policies within Site and Area Specific Policy No. 772 and these urban design guidelines, in addition to the Official Plan will continue to guide growth.

Most of the Study Area as we experience it today was constructed during the first quarter of the 20th century following the development of improved infrastructure, better roads, public transportation and the Prince Edward Viaduct in 1918. The Study Area rapidly developed into a retail main street, serving new communities north and south of Danforth Avenue and an increasingly diverse array of Torontonians.

As a result of its history, the Study Area's built, landscape, and archaeological resources reflect its evolution from ancient Indigenous habitation to its annexation to the City of Toronto and subsequent transformation into a prosperous commercial street during the first few decades of the twentieth century.

The Study Area is approximately 3 kilometres in length with a right-of-way (ROW) width of 27 metres. The majority of Danforth-fronting lots in the Study Area are relatively shallow, with an average lot depth of 30 metres.



The predominant building type is 2-3 storey main street commercial buildings, which contain commercial uses at-grade with residential above and were largely constructed in the period from 1910-29. There are also significant landmarks on the Danforth, including banks, theatres, and places of worship, which are notable for their architectural style, design, massing, and their social value.



Danforth Avenue has a diverse mix of retail and cultural uses which contributes to the streets vibrancy.

1.2 PURPOSE

The Study identified the existing character of the area, including the identification of cultural heritage resources and character-defining features, and developed design standards and a policy framework to guide future development. It is an extension of the work in the initial phase (Segment 1) of the Danforth Study, while responding to the unique context of the Study Area.

The Study resulted in the identification of public realm opportunities, delivered a built form strategy that responded to the local and surrounding context.

1.3 STUDY PROCESS AND CONSULTATION

The Danforth Study included a robust Engagement Strategy which provided multiple ways for the community to participate throughout the project. The City retained an independent facilitator, Dillon Consulting, to lead the community engagement process.

The local community, including residents, land owners, business owners, community members, ratepayer associations, and business improvement area (BIA) representatives, participated in the consultation process and provided substantial input and feedback throughout the Study process. Community and stakeholder meetings, workshops, mapping activities, and online surveys were used in order to gather feedback from the community.

Five community meetings and five stakeholder advisory committee meetings were held. The community meetings were well attended, with more than 400 people in attendance at both in-person meetings (Community Meetings #1 and #2), and approximately 200 people on average at each of the virtual meetings (Community Meetings #3A, #3B and #4).

In addition, feedback was gathered via online surveys. The first online survey ran from January 27, 2020 to March 6, 2020 and focused on identifying the community's likes, concerns and opportunities within the Study Area. Over 800 responses were collected. The second online survey, which ran from December 1, 2020 to January 22, 2021 supported Community Meeting #3A and #3B and focused on establishing the direction and goals of the Study, as well as evaluating the complete street pilot. This survey received 2,495 responses.

City staff also hosted three Heritage Focus Group Meetings, conducted individual interviews with heritage knowledge keepers, including music historians and long-time business owners, and hosted separate meetings with the area BIAs. Through the entire Danforth Study, it is estimated that a total of 5000 individuals were consulted or provided feedback throughout the study process.

Through the Heritage Focus Group, Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings, and Community Consultation meetings, staff heard that the existing historic main street character of Danforth and its cultural diversity were important reasons why Danforth Avenue is a valued place, and change should respect and maintain this character.

Staff also received general support for the direction of the planning study, including a mid-rise approach to the Danforth, and opportunities for low-rise infill within the adjacent *Neighbourhoods* along with a strong emphasis on an expanded and improved public realm.

Further details of the Community Consultation process are available online within the Consultation Summary at the following link:

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studiesinitiatives/danforth-avenue-planning-study/>



In person engagement near the beginning of the Study process to identify priorities.
Credit: Dillon



In person engagement near the beginning of the Study process to identify priorities.
Credit: Dillon



Mapping Activity used early on in the engagement process.



Participants provided comments about Danforth Avenue Area through Mapping Activity at Community Meeting #1. Credit: Dillon



Over 400 attendees joined the first Community Meeting in November 2019. Credit: Dillon



Participants provided comments about Danforth Avenue Area through Mapping Activity at Community Meeting #2. Credit: Dillon

1.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANFORTH

The Study Area is part of the homelands of Indigenous peoples from time immemorial. South of the Study Area, Withrow Public School now occupies a site of Indigenous encampments where a spear point dating back approximately 7000 years was found. The banks of the Don River, Withrow Park, Phin Park and parts of Riverdale Park have been identified as areas of Archaeological Potential. The Study Area continues to be home to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people today.

In the period from 1780-1850, early colonial land surveys and land subdivisions fundamentally shaped the subsequent pattern of development in the Study Area. Then known as the Second Concession Road, today's Danforth Avenue originally ran between two-hundred acre farm lots north and south of the road. The lots on the north side of present-day Danforth Avenue were laid out in an east-west pattern to maximize frontage on the Don River while those on the south side were laid out north to south, with frontages on Queen Street East, then the road to Kingston. Throughout this period, today's Danforth Avenue remained an often poorly maintained rural road.

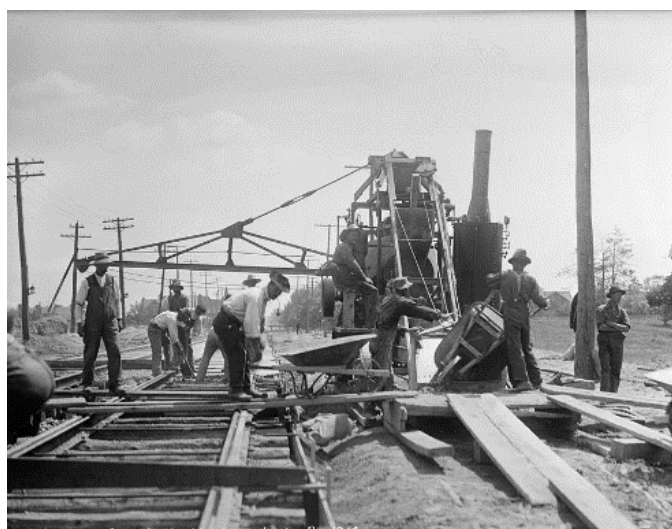
From 1851-1909, early infrastructure and transit improvements, and annexation to the City of Toronto contributed to the historic development of the Study Area. In 1851, for example, the Don and Danforth Plank Road Company was organized to build a plank road between the Don River in Toronto and Danforth Road in Scarborough.



Historic photo of streetcar No. 325, at Danforth and Broadview (1896) (City of Toronto Archives)



Playter's Society Hall (1909) (Toronto Public Library)



Detail of tracks being laid on Danforth Avenue in 1913 (City of Toronto Archives)

A sign of things to come, in 1884, the area running from the south side of Danforth Road to Queen Street East and from the Don Valley to Greenwood was annexed into the City of Toronto. Development, however, remained slow. Only 4% of buildings within the Study Area today were constructed during this time, notably all near the significant crossroad of Broadview Avenue at the eastern end of Danforth Avenue, closest to the density of the growing City.

After 1909, significant changes would help quickly transform the Study Area from a largely rural road to the commercial street we still recognize today. In that year, the remainder of the north and south sides of Danforth Avenue to beyond the Study Area were also annexed into the City of Toronto, bringing more investment in infrastructure, including road maintenance and public transportation. Within four years of annexation, Danforth Avenue was paved from Broadview to Luttrell Avenues and the Toronto Civic Railway's Danforth line was constructed. Then, in a pivotal moment in the Danforth's history, the Don section of the Bloor Viaduct was completed, bridging the wide Don Valley and directly linking Danforth Avenue with Bloor Street East in 1918.

From 1910-1929, the predominant historic main street character was established within the Study Area. Approximately 70% of the buildings lining the Danforth today were the result of a building boom in that period. Danforth Avenue became a commercial main street defined by a majority of two and three-storey brick buildings, articulated by landmarks including places of worship, theatres, and bank buildings. In the two decades following 1910, the population bordering Danforth Avenue increased six-fold. The predominant cultural groups present during the period were people of English, Irish and Scottish descent. Italian immigrants also began settling in the area and establishing fruit markets and working in the brickyards.



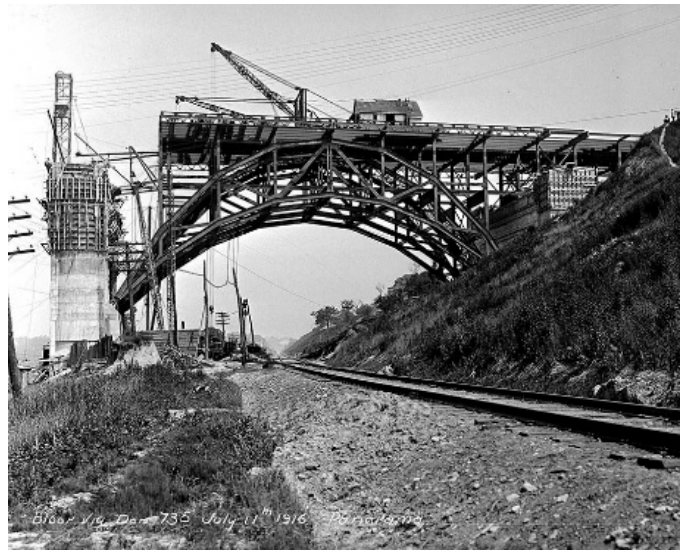
1903 Goad's Atlas Map from showing Danforth Avenue from Broadview to Pape (top) and 1924 Goad's Atlas Map showing the same area (bottom), illustrating the construction boom the Study Area experienced during the 1910s and 1920s (University of Toronto)

The Great Depression and commencement of WWII curtailed development in the Study Area from 1930-49. The situation began to improve after 1950. In 1966, the Bloor-Danforth subway line was extended to Woodbine Station, and in 1968, to Main Street Station and Victoria Park Station. The demographics of the area also began to significantly change. The Study Area began to attract diverse cultural groups and a flourishing live music scene was established. Census data and newspaper publications illustrate that during the 1960s, Ukrainian and Estonians communities were present in the area and by the 1980s, the area began to be referred to as "Greektown." As new communities have continued to make the Danforth their home, old buildings have been adapted to new uses. The Madinah Masjid, an important Islamic centre on Danforth Avenue, is a prominent example.

Relatively few properties were re-developed along Danforth Avenue after 1980, but Carrot Common is a noted exception. Originally led by The Big Carrot, a natural food market that was founded in 1984 as a worker cooperative, Carrot Common was completed in 1987 and continues to be a neighbourhood anchor.

Today, Danforth Avenue continues to attract various cultural groups and immigrants who have also contributed to the cultural mosaic that continues to contribute to the sense of place of Danforth Avenue.

A full account of the historical development of the Study Area is included in the Danforth Avenue CHRA Historic Context Statement, available on the Study webpage: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/danforth-avenue-planning-study/>



Detail of the Don section of the Bloor Viaduct during construction in 1916 (City of Toronto Archives)



The opening of Allen's Danforth Theatre (now the Danforth Music Hall) in 1919 illustrated well the growth of entertainment and services to meet the needs of the quickly growing surrounding population. (Toronto Public Library)



Sunkist Fruit Market in 1934 at the southeast corner of Danforth and Carlaw (City of Toronto Archives)

2.0 Vision

2.1 Vision and Planned Character Statement

2.2 Guiding Principles

2.1 VISION AND PLANNED CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Danforth will continue to evolve as a complete community to serve the local residents as well as a unique regional destination. The Danforth will remain economically vibrant by supporting local businesses and other diverse non-residential uses.

Growth on the Danforth will accommodate new homes and new places for people to work, supported by community services and facilities and hard infrastructure. New buildings will generally be mid-rise with nodes at the Broadview and Pape interchange stations, and will contain a mix of uses with a focus on conserving the integrity of the Danforth's rich cultural history.

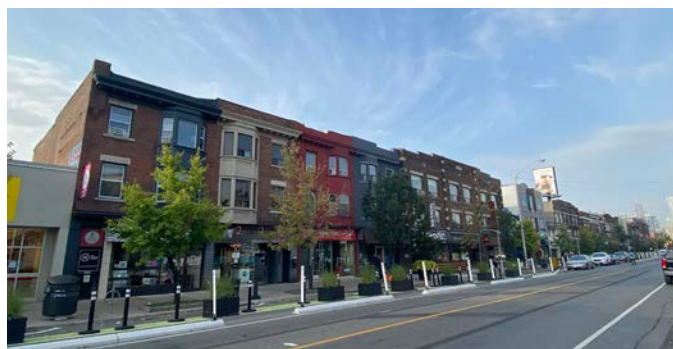
The Danforth will be a resilient community integrating sustainable design principles, landscape treatments, and parks and open spaces to minimize energy demand, encourage near-zero emissions, absorb and retain stormwater, protect natural areas and enhance biodiversity.



2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These Guiding Principles will provide direction for future developments and public realm improvements to achieve a cohesive vision for the Danforth. New developments will:

1. Appropriately respond to the area's existing and planned character.
2. Conserve and reinforce the area's cultural heritage resources.
3. Improve the public realm and create place-making opportunities.
4. Contribute to the creation of a complete street on Danforth Avenue.
5. Contribute to the creation of complete communities.
6. Provide connections to surrounding neighbourhoods, parks and opportunities.
7. Enhance and reinforce a vibrant street life with appropriately scaled and designed ground floor spaces/ frontages.
8. Integrate sustainable design including green building practices landscapes treatments, and parks and open spaces to protect the natural environment.



3.0 Heritage

- 3.1 Heritage Conservation
- 3.2 Heritage Register
- 3.3 Danforth Avenue's Historic Main Street Character
- 3.4 Heritage Inventory
- 3.5 Building Typologies

3.1 HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Identifying properties of cultural heritage value or interest is an essential part of a municipality's role in heritage conservation. Beyond identifying individual properties, CHRA's also contribute to an understanding of an area's character and sense of place through a clear statement of its historical development.

The conservation of cultural heritage resources, a historic main street character, and a valued sense of place identified through the Danforth Avenue CHRA have been fully considered and integrated into these urban design guidelines and the Site and Area Specific Policy. These tools will promote the conservation of the urban pattern and scale of the existing main street character and individual buildings within it, to maintain and enhance what is special about Danforth Avenue, and to add context-sensitive new development to it. As a result, new development or alterations within the Study Area will respect, conserve and maintain the integrity of cultural heritage resources and Danforth Avenue's historic main street character.

3.2 HERITAGE REGISTER

Section 27 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the Act as well as properties that have not been designated but Toronto City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest." Non-designated properties on the Heritage Register are often referred to as "listed" properties.

Properties identified through CHRA's as having potential cultural heritage value may be further evaluated for inclusion on the Heritage Register, most often as non-designated or "listed" properties.

Properties on the City's Heritage Register are conserved in accordance with relevant policies, Official Plan, the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA), and the Provincial Policy Statement, and with regard to the *Standard and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

Non-designated listed properties do not have any protection under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, except insofar as an owner must give Council at least 60 days' notice of their intention to demolish or remove a structure on the property. This allows staff to conduct further research and evaluation and, if merited, to recommend designation of the property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and seek appropriate conservation.

Although inclusion on the Heritage Register as a listed property provides interim protection from demolition, it does not preclude an owner's ability to make exterior and interior alterations in the case when demolition or a planning application is not involved. Listing does not trigger maintenance requirements over and above existing property standards and it does not restrict altering, removing or adding any features on the property.



Church of the Holy Name, 606 Danforth Avenue (c.1914-26)

3.3 DANFORTH AVENUE'S HISTORIC MAIN STREET CHARACTER

Within the Study Area, Danforth Avenue is representative of historic main street commercial/residential, mixed-use development in Toronto. The collection of historic main street buildings along Danforth Avenue, the vast majority of which were constructed between 1910 and 1929, define a continuous streetwall of low-rise buildings, articulated by a rhythm of narrow storefronts with recessed entrances, and a strong datum line of cornices and sign bands.

Danforth Avenue has maintained a strong sense of place and character as a functioning historic main street that provides for diverse main street activities serving the community, including commercial and cultural uses at street level with housing and non-residential uses above.

3.4 HERITAGE INVENTORY

The Danforth Avenue Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) adhered to the Study boundary originally set by Council, which included only properties fronting on Danforth Avenue. Properties added to the Study Area through a later modification of the Study boundary were not reviewed through this CHRA.

At the commencement of the Danforth Avenue CHRA, 8 properties in the Study Area had been included on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. Through the CHRA, properties not already on the Heritage Register were evaluated using provincial criteria that were informed both by the Danforth Avenue Historic Context Statement and by community engagement.

Cultural heritage value or interest is not limited to landmark buildings or views and landscapes. Residents also value the contribution that historic main street commercial buildings bring to their local neighbourhoods. It is these everyday historic places where the shared experiences of communities occur. Understanding and conserving local and historic main street character means that, as places change, they can still maintain a sense of place, and hold onto what makes them distinct.

The CHRA identified an additional 231 properties as having potential cultural heritage value. The resulting Heritage Inventory for the Study Area (Appendix B, C) includes properties on the Heritage Register and those identified through the CHRA. Properties identified through the CHRA will be further evaluated for a future recommendation for inclusion on the Heritage Register.



Danforth Avenue west at Logan Avenue (1932), illustrating that the street had largely been built out by this time (City of Toronto Archives)

3.5 BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

The Danforth Avenue CHRA revealed building types that are consistently represented within the Study Area. Of these, two types combine commercial uses at grade with residential uses above: the main street commercial row and the main street commercial block. These two typologies comprise approximately 84% of the existing built form and were largely constructed during the period from 1910-29. In addition to these mixed, commercial-residential building types, there are also important landmarks on Danforth Avenue, including banks, theatres, and places of worship.

All of these building types were consistently identified throughout consultations as important to the history of Danforth Avenue, and important to its contemporary identity and sense of place.

Main Street Commercial Row

The Main Street Commercial Row type most often established the predominant main street character of a street, and reflects typical patterns of development along arterial roads in the 19th and through the mid-20th century. They are generally designed to accommodate retail at-grade, with residential or commercial use above and their form is long and narrow, maximizing the number of storefronts on any given block. These buildings were designed in a variety of architectural styles and vernacular interpretations, most typically with brick cladding and more rarely with clapboard siding, various rooflines and heights ranging from 1 to 4 storeys. Individual row buildings may be constructed in isolation or as part of a larger, continuous development consisting of multiple row buildings with shared characteristics.

Common Features

- 1-4 storeys
- Public retail/commercial use at-grade with private/residential uses above
- Generally one part of a row of buildings with the same or similar architectural scale, design, proportions and materials
- Brick or clapboard cladding
- Flat roof with parapet, gable roof, or mansard roof with dormers
- Storefronts of varying designs, often with side or centre entrance, display windows, transoms and/or signboard



309-341 Danforth Avenue (c.1919; Photo from 2020; Google Street View)

Main Street Commercial Block

The Main Street Commercial Block type is closely related to the commercial row, sharing many of the same characteristics. The primary difference is the scale and design of the commercial block, which are, in contrast, generally larger in width and height, and of a singular architectural design in which several individual units are integrated to appear to be part of a larger building complex. Commercial blocks retain a more prominent placement on the street, often located at corners or an axis with perpendicular streets, and have architectural details that draw greater attention. They may be divided into multiple units with retail at-grade and residential or commercial above, but always have a unifying design.

Common Features

- 3-5 storeys
- Singular architectural design across multiple units, often with retail/commercial uses at-grade and private/residential uses above
- Masonry cladding, often with detailing in brick or stone
- Storefronts of varying designs, often with side or centre entrance, display windows, transoms and/or signboard



261-273 Danforth Avenue (c.1919; Photo from 2020)

Landmark

The key physical characteristic of a landmark is its prominence within its context. Landmarks are often well-known markers in the community, are memorable and easily discernible, and they often serve as orientation guides and/or local or regional tourist attractions. There are three building typologies that have been identified as landmarks within the Study Area:

- Bank
- Place of Worship
- Theatre

Bank

The design impetus characteristic of the bank building type is to convey a perception of security and wealth and reflect the stability of the bank to customers and investors. Banks constructed through to the early-20th century generally featured ground floors often clad in stone or brick with stone detailing, with smaller windows and a formal customer entrance with a smaller office entrance to the side, and were often designed in classical architectural styles including Renaissance Revival and Beaux Arts. Modern and more contemporary bank design broke from tradition, and embraced transparency, the use of contemporary materials including glazing, steel and cast stone, and often adopted a lower profile. Most often found on main streets, banks are generally located on corner lots, or situated with high visibility. Within the Study Area, bank buildings have also been identified as landmarks, which are notable for their architectural style, design, or massing, and/or their contextual/social value.

Common Features

- 1-3 storeys in height
- Masonry construction, often with stone or stone detailing at the base and brick or stone cladding on the upper levels. Later banks embraced glazing, still often featuring some form of masonry or cast stone detailing
- Formal primary entrances, with secondary office entrances to the side or rear
- Architectural detailing in classical revival or inspired styles, including strong courses, pilasters, dentilated cornices and friezes, often with the financial institution's name engraved or embossed prominently for high visibility



Former bank building at 1190 Danforth Avenue (c.1924) Photo from 2020

Place of Worship

The form and details of places of worship vary according to the requirements of the particular religious groups inhabiting them. Exterior forms are frequently irregular and comprised of a variety of masses as it is expressive of internal functions which often include large halls, smaller spaces for entry, separate spaces for choirs and altars, raised basements for Sunday Schools and community functions and bell towers. Similarly, window openings also have a wide variety of shapes, sizes and repetition. The places of worship within the Study Area were designed in a variety of architectural styles, however, they were predominantly designed in classical, Neo-Gothic, Modern, and Islamic architectural styles. Within the Study Area, places of worship have also been identified as landmarks, which are notable for their architectural style, design, or massing, and/or their contextual/social value.

Common Features

- 2-3 storeys in height often with a raised basement
- Complex massing expressive of different functional parts of the place of worship including towers
- Typically clad in brick with stone details or stone
- Architectural style evident in both the form and window openings and details may be classical, Neo-Gothic, Modern, or Islamic
- Prominent main entrance, may also include smaller entry points

Theatre

The theatre building type varies greatly depending upon context, ranging from neighbourhood movie houses to grand theatres in the centre of the city. The neighbourhood theatre was often integrated within a main street context, with a narrow street front presence defined by a central recessed ticket booth and entrance below a marquee and sign. The buildings often expanded at the rear of the property or stretched back further than adjacent buildings to accommodate screening rooms; as their popularity increased and they were being constructed in streetcar suburbs with more affordable land, their orientation switched and theatres often occupied a greater proportion of the block frontage in order to accommodate more than one screen. Theatres were generally clad in brick masonry, with detailing on the upper levels, smaller windows and often symmetrical design to draw attention to the central signboard and marquee. Theatres were designed in a variety of architectural styles, including Beaux Arts, Edwardian, Art Deco and Art Moderne.

Common Features

- 2-4 storeys in height
- Either a long and narrow or wide and shallow form
- Brick masonry or stone veneer cladding, with stone or terra cotta detailing and less glazing than other main street building types
- Symmetrical design, with a focus on the central marquee and sign



Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Avenue (c.1923) Photo from 2020



Danforth Music Hall (previously Allen's Danforth Theatre), 147 Danforth Avenue (1919; Listed on the Heritage Register) Photo from 2020

4.0 Public Realm

- 4.1 Streetscape
- 4.2 Boulevard Spaces
- 4.3 Shadow Mitigation
- 4.4 Mid-Block Pedestrian Connection
- 4.5 Public Art
- 4.6 Side Wall Conditions and Mural Art
- 4.7 The Greenway

4.1 STREETScape

The Danforth is one of the most successful retail streets in Toronto with a vibrant streetscape enjoyed by members of the community and visitors from all across the City, and beyond.

In 2020, the City conducted a Complete Streets Study to examine how the public realm can be improved to area, and various street art and street furniture zones. Due to the wider right-of-way width of Danforth Avenue, opportunities to create generous pedestrian sidewalks, patio spaces and street furniture zones were envisioned to further support the thriving main street and its businesses.

In an effort to enhance the public realm, new developments will be required to provide additional public realm improvements including a generous building setback at grade to maintain a comfortable and attractive streetscape sidewalk network and additional building stepbacks on the upper floors for shadow mitigation and access to sky view.

Building design features such as recessed building entrances, weather protection, active storefronts, and street furniture will be encouraged, as they contribute to a lively and attractive street character. These design guidelines should be applied in tandem with the City's Streetscape Manual, local Business Improvement Area (BIA) master plans, and other applicable documents.

GUIDELINES

- New developments will have a minimum building to curb setback of 4.8 metres except for where a narrower sidewalk width has been established by existing heritage properties.
- The streetscape should consist of three different zones:
Tree Planting/Furniture Zone, Pedestrian Clearway, and an Animation Zone.

Tree Planting/Furniture Zone - An area with minimum width of 0.8 metres immediately abutting the road where street trees and various street furniture such as planters, waste receptacles, and/or benches can be placed.

Pedestrian Clearway - An unobstructed portion of the sidewalk intended for the use of pedestrians. The minimum width of this zone is 2.1 metres.

Animation Zone - A portion of the sidewalk where local retail activities such as fruit stands, temporary retail sign placement, outdoor patio benches and chairs encroach onto the public right-of-way.



An example of a pedestrian-oriented streetscape with a wide side walk.

- Ensure street trees have appropriate soil volume, growing medium, and protection for mature growth.
- Consider using native plant species, sustainable materials with more permeability and lower carbon footprint in long term maintenance when designing the streetscape.
- Refer to City policies, local BIA design standards, and manuals such as the Streetscape Manual, Toronto Green Streets Technical Guidelines for the design of the streetscape and other pedestrian amenities.

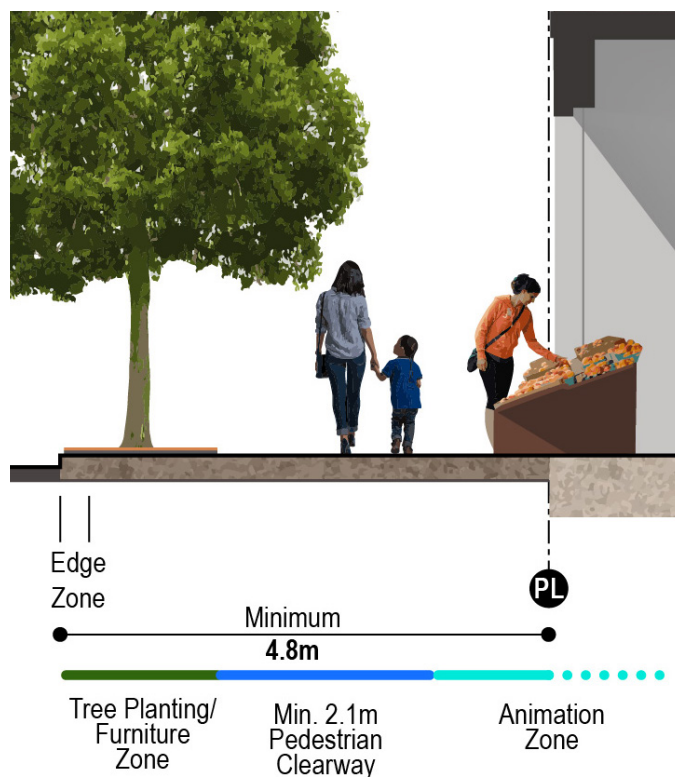


Diagram 2: Cross section of typical Danforth Avenue streetscape



Map 1: Public Realm Opportunities



Diagram 1: Different Public Realm opportunities within the Study Area.

4.2 BOULEVARD SPACES

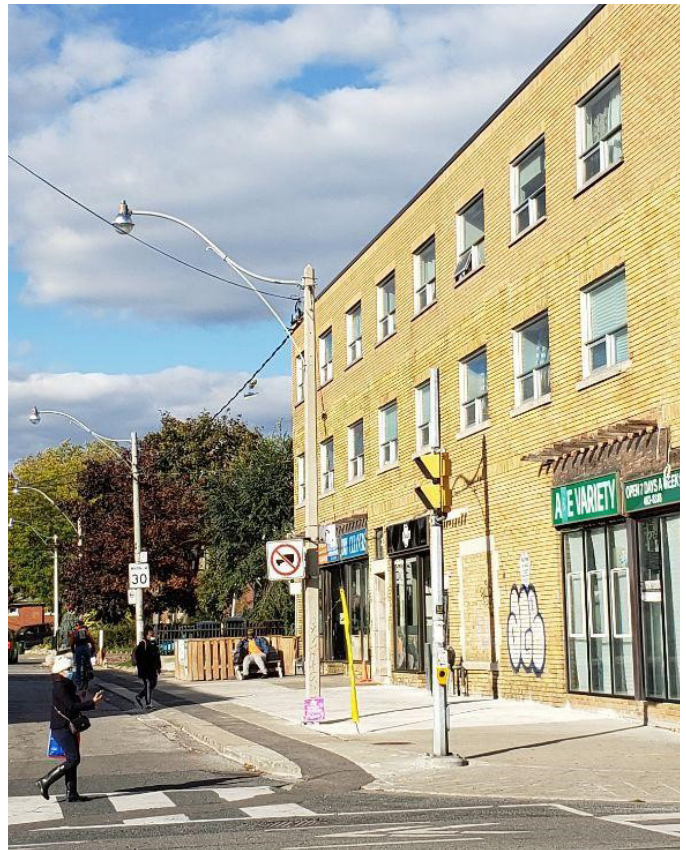
Boulevard Spaces are located within the existing right-of-way of side streets perpendicular to the Danforth. They are the spaces between the curb and the property line.

Many of these existing Boulevard Spaces are underutilized, however, some are currently supporting local businesses with restaurant patios and seasonal retail. The boulevard spaces will continue to serve as the extension of retail spaces for local businesses with new designs which considers new retail activities such as patios and/or seasonal food stands.

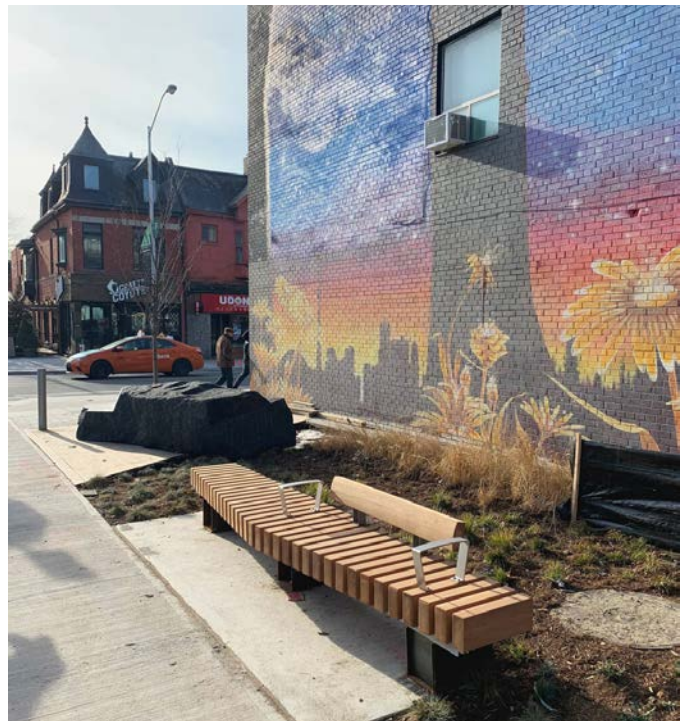
Furthermore, the Boulevard Spaces which are underutilized present an opportunity to further expand the public realm with the addition of parkettes, or POPS which are designed to provide safe, vibrant, and barrier-free amenity with lighting, public art, and permanent seating for visitors. Improvements to these spaces are anticipated to be made through new developments and City-led initiatives.

GUIDELINES

- a. Boulevard Spaces should be improved with additional opportunities for public art, art installations, landscape enhancements, patios that support local businesses, and other pedestrian amenities to contribute to the local identity and enhance the character of the public realm.
- b. Boulevard Spaces should be designed with a high regard for sustainability and resiliency and include green infrastructure such as trees, green walls, and low impact development (LID) stormwater infrastructure that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes.
- c. Ensure that each Boulevard Space is accessible and AODA compliant, which may include:
 - Providing a minimum 0.85 metres wide clear opening at entry points into the space.
 - Providing a firm, stable, and slip resistant ground surface with colours and textures clearly defining primary routes to assist wayfinding.
 - Providing a curb, railing or other barriers for walkways adjacent to a sloped area or hazardous area (e.g. water feature)



An example of boulevard spaces on Danforth Avenue underutilized.



An example of a rejuvenated boulevard space with added planting and seating. Credit: toronto-bia.com



The north side of Danforth Avenue always has access to abundant amounts of sunlight.

4.3 SHADOW MITIGATION

Sunlight is essential to the success of the Danforth and the SASP and these urban design guidelines contain criteria to mitigate shadow impacts onto the public realm and surrounding *Neighbourhoods*. Sunlight supports a vibrant retail experience and often becomes an important basis for success of on-street cafes and patios. Sunlight is also vital to the health of trees and other plantings along the street. As a result of the existing right-of-way width of Danforth Avenue coupled with relatively low building heights, the north side of the street enjoys access to abundant sunlight. This condition will be maintained through the SASP policies. New developments will be capped to a maximum height of 8 storeys on the south side of the street. Additionally, new buildings will be required to provide appropriate stepbacks at upper levels to limit any net new shadows from 12:00pm to 5:00pm from March 21st to September 21st onto the sidewalk on the north side of the street.

The presence of sunlight on the north side sidewalk will enhance the pedestrian experience along both sides of the street.

GUIDELINES

- Ensure no net new shadow on the sidewalk on the north side of Danforth Avenue between 12:00pm and 5:00pm from March 21st to September 21st.
- Provide a minimum stepbacks of 4.0 metres from the building face above the 7th level or at the height of 24.0 metres, for new developments located on the south side of Danforth Avenue.
- Integrate the mechanical equipment into the overall building design. If this is not possible, ensure the mechanical equipment is designed and located in such as way as to meet Section 4.3(a).

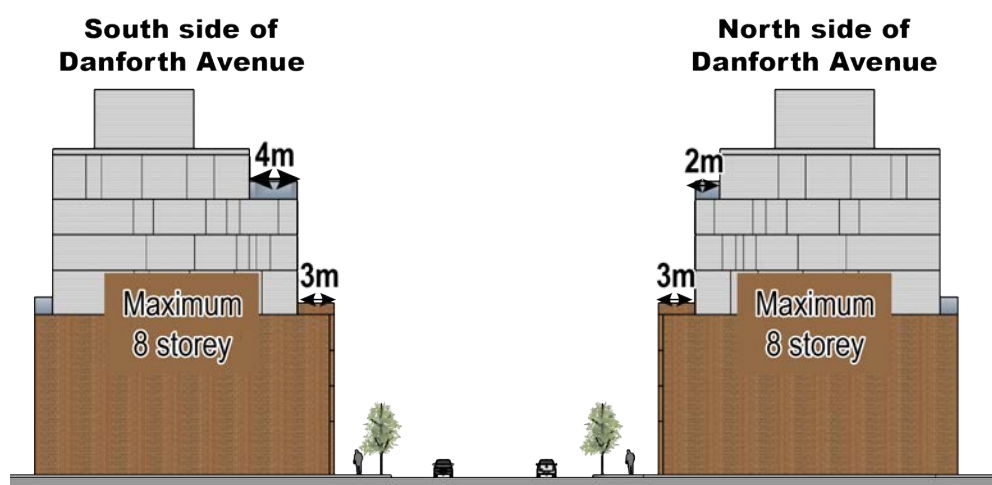


Diagram 3: New mid-rise buildings on the south side of Danforth Avenue should provide a greater step-back at the upper floor to reduce shadow impact onto the public realm. The sidewalk on the north side of the street should have access to sunlight from noon onwards March to September

4.4 MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION

The Danforth has numerous north-south streets providing good pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

New mid-block pedestrian connections will further enhance the pedestrian experience by adding through connections on longer blocks or where high pedestrian traffic is anticipated towards key destinations such as schools, open spaces, or transit stations.

These mid-block connections will act as an extension of the sidewalks on Danforth Avenue, and pedestrian comfort and safety will be the key focus in designing these connections.

GUIDELINES

- Refer to Map 1 in Section 4.1 for recommended locations of the mid-block pedestrian connections.
- Provide a minimum width of 4.0 metres for new mid-block connections with clear pedestrian pathway with a minimum width of 2.1 metres complemented by planting and street furniture.
- Ensure the comfort and safety for pedestrians with appropriate lighting and wind mitigation.
- Consider opportunities for internalized pedestrian connections for new developments near transit stations. Ensure the pedestrian connection is direct with clearly defined routes to assist wayfinding.



An example of a pedestrian connection with landscaping and seating.



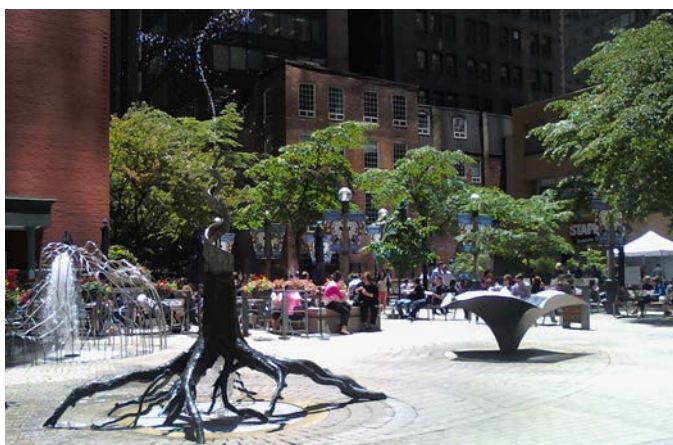
An example of a pedestrian connection with a good amount of planting and seating area.
Credit: Eugene Akimov

4.5 PUBLIC ART

Public art is an important component of the public realm that can enliven various places such as parks, POPS, streetscape, and pedestrian connections. Public art should be encouraged and pursued at every opportunity, and can be provided in a variety of ways - via private development, commissions by the City, or the community. City staff may request public art be provided through the development application process, and proponents should consult with City staff to determine the appropriate process for any proposal of public art in the Study Area in order to comply with the selection, location, and consultation processes.

GUIDELINES

- Consider providing public art or other art installations and engage with City programs such as the Percent for Public Art, StreetARToronto, and Arts and Culture Services in the Economic Development & Culture division.
- Engage with local agencies, business improvement associations, residents' associations, and non-profit organizations to assess public art opportunities in the community.
- Consider providing public art in the public realm such as in Boulevard Spaces or publicly visible areas of private developments. (Refer to Map 1).
- Consider the history of Danforth Avenue and its communities, as developed in the Danforth Avenue Historic Context Statement, as inspiration for public art that further support's Danforth Avenue's distinctive sense of place.



Installing public art or other art installations is a great method to beautify the public realm.
Credit: Ran Chen

4.6 SIDE WALL CONDITIONS AND MURAL ART

Consider murals for side wall(s) of new developments that are visible from the public realm. Mural or artwork treatment could draw inspiration from the history of Danforth Avenue and its communities, as developed in the Danforth Avenue Historic Context Statement, to further support Danforth Avenue's distinctive sense of place. Ensure consultation with the community is included in the process of site and subject selection for murals.

GUIDELINES

- Provide attractive treatments and articulation on visible side wall(s) on buildings.
- Consider murals for side wall(s) that are visible from the public realm. Ensure consultation with the community is included in the process of selection for murals.



Example of a mural art on a side wall Credit: to_urbanist via Instagram



Diagram 4: Open Space Network on the north side of Danforth Avenue.

4.7 THE GREENWAY

The existing Toronto Parking Authority (TPA) parking lots and public parks form a continuous linear network from Chester Avenue to Langford Avenue on the north side of Danforth Avenue.

The open space network was established when the Line 2 subway network was developed, and contains below-grade transit infrastructure. The open space network forms a part of the identity of the Danforth, and is currently underutilized with disconnected pedestrian walkways and side and rear yards of buildings abutting the narrow network.

This network is a significant public realm improvement opportunity. Guidelines describe the approach to expand and further connect this network to itself and to the Danforth over time.

As such, new developments within Policy Areas B and C will be required to provide improvements along the edges of this open space network by providing a minimum 6.1 metres setback on either side of the open space network to form the enhanced “Greenway”.

The 6.1 metres setback will consist of a pedestrian clearway, soft landscaping, and entrances to new developments and act as a soft buffer from the many TPA parking lots or as an informal extension of the existing public parks.

The Greenway will include features such as lighting, permanent seating, and AODA¹ compliant paving to create a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. The Greenway will be created as Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS) and will offer a secondary connection to improve pedestrian circulation and access over time.

¹ Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act



An example of TPA Parking Lots on the north side of Danforth Avenue.

GUIDELINES

- Enhance the existing 'side yard' or 'rear yard' condition along the existing TPA parking facilities or public parks with the following set of guidelines.
- Orient individual unit entrances onto the Greenway with a minimum 6.1 metres setback from the property line abutting an existing TPA parking facility or public park.
- The Greenway should consist of three distinct zones:
Private Green Space, Pedestrian Clearway, and Landscape Buffer.

Private Green Space - Grade-related outdoor private amenity space directly adjacent to a unit facing the Greenway.

- The minimum width of the Private Green Space is 2.0 metres as illustrated in Diagram 5.
- Provide individual outdoor private amenity area for every grade-related unit.
- Raised terraces are permitted within the private green space with a maximum height of 1.2 metres above grade.
- Provide a landscape transition area with planting and architectural elements such as translucent or solid railings to distinguish the public and private realm.
- Avoid below-grade terraces or unit access.

Pedestrian Clearway - Privately-owned publicly accessible pedestrian throughfare parallel to one of the existing TPA parking lots or public parks.



An example of a green corridor framed by residential units.

- Provide a minimum width of 2.1 metres for pedestrian clearway as illustrated in Diagram 5.
- Provide lighting fixtures for pedestrian safety and comfort.

Landscape Buffer - A landscaped setback area which separates the Greenway from the existing TPA parking lot or public park should be provided.

- Provide street furniture such as benches, public waste receptacles and lighting fixtures in this zone to enhance the user experience and safety.
- Consider providing space to accommodate bioswales and snow storage.



Diagram 5: View looking through the new publicly accessible private Greenway next to Policy Area B & C.

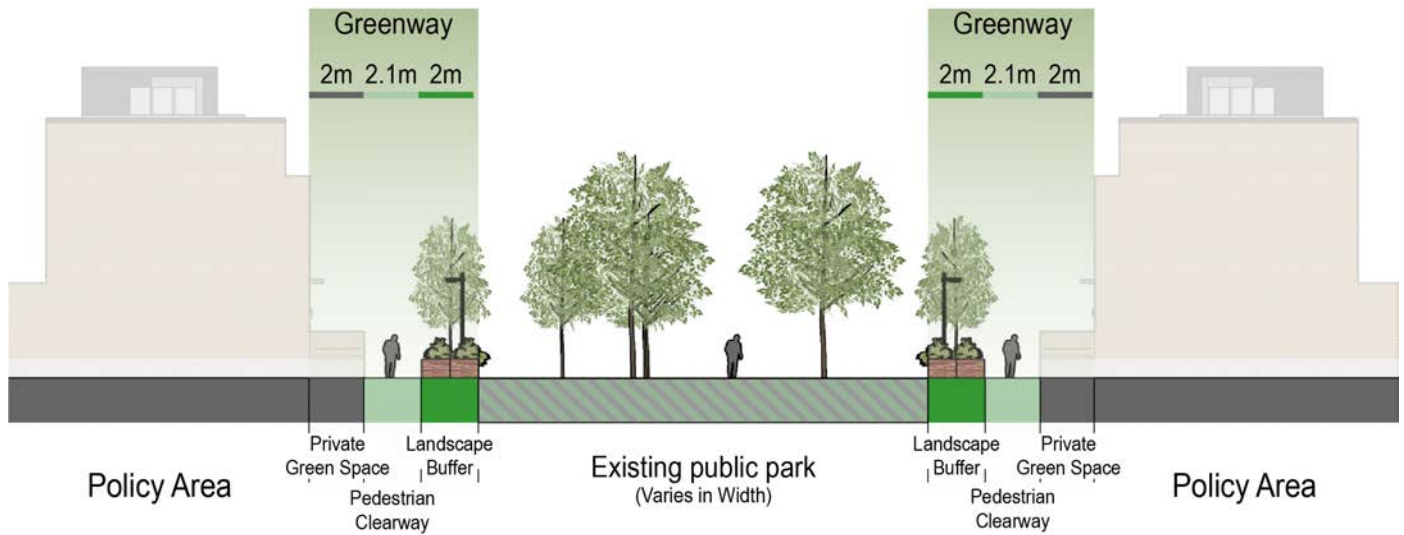


Diagram 6: Cross section illustrating the potential Greenway which is developed on private lands framing the existing public park.

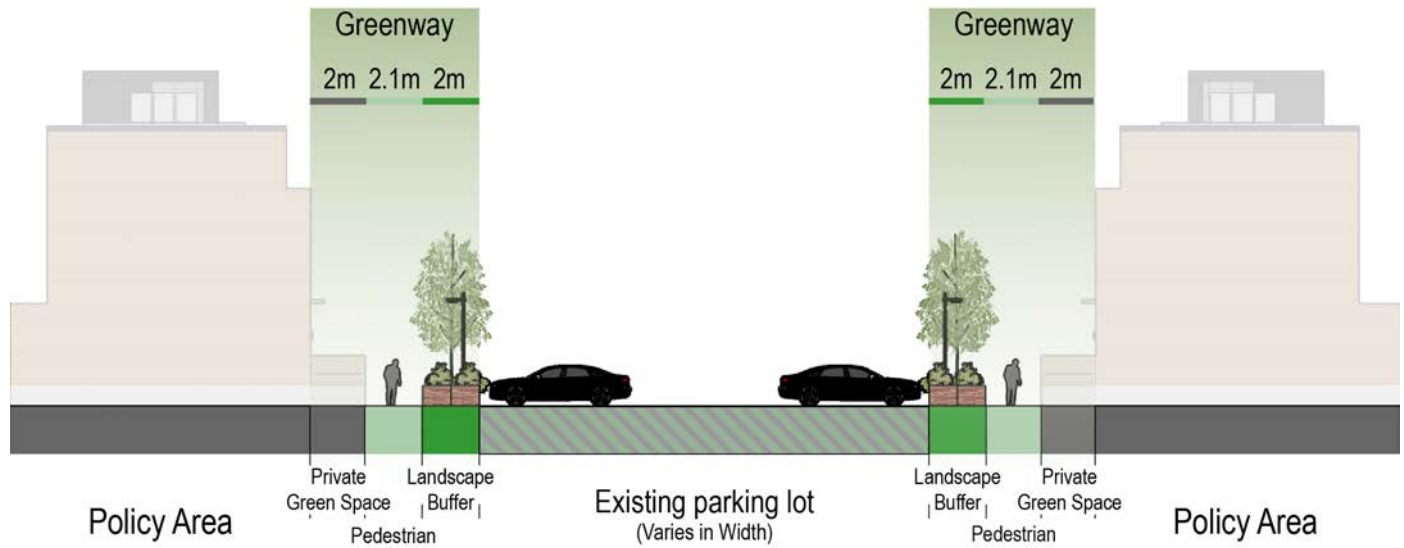


Diagram 7: Cross section illustrating the potential Greenway which is developed on private lands framing the existing TPA parking lot.



Diagram 8: Conceptual rendering illustrating the existing public park framed by the Greenway and residential units in Policy Area B.