

## Toronto East York Community Council

---

**From:** DECA Visioning <visioning@deca.to>  
**Sent:** October 24, 2024 6:48 AM  
**To:** Toronto East York Community Council  
**Cc:** info  
**Subject:** [External Sender] Toronto Agenda Item 2024.TE17.8 Meeting 17, October 24, 2024  
**Attachments:** Screen Shot\_DAPS.png; Screen Shot\_MTSA Report.png; Woodbine Community Map.png

**Categories:** Marjo, Communication

City of Toronto Agenda Item

2024.TE17.8 - 985 Woodbine Avenue and 2078, 2086, 2100, 2102 and 2106 Danforth Avenue - Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition Applications - Decision Report - Approval

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE17.8>

### **Danforth East Community Association (DECA) Submission to Toronto & East York Community Council Item 2024.TE17.8**

Good morning,

The Danforth East Community Association was formed in 2007 to help build a strong, vibrant and inclusive area including this essential main street. The Danforth Ave. had slipped into decline in the second half of the 20th century. DECA has had several significant successes and it should be noted that unlike most community groups we've never been NIMBYs and we're not in a rush to start down that road.

The housing crisis is real, our neighbourhood can and should be part of the solution. We understand what a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) designation is all about and we realize the city and province have essentially agreed that the broader area within 500-800 metres from station entrances is targeted to more than double its current density (from 92.3 people and jobs per hectare to a minimum of 200). DECA advocates that affordable housing, in all developments in the area, needs to be part of this greater density.

The plan for 985 Woodbine leaves much to be desired, if not demanded. As globally renowned planner Brent Toderian regularly points out, there's a huge difference between density and density done well and this particular case may well be a once-in-a-century chance to get it right.

DECA worked for years just to get City Planning and councillors interested in commissioning a Danforth Avenue Planning Study. In 2014, we got one started, covering the stretch from Coxwell to Victoria Park. Four years and a lot of work later, it led to Council's adoption of Official Plan Amendment 420.

We understand that many things, including the city and province's top priorities have changed since 2018, but we're reluctant to throw out the DAPS exercise entirely. Through the community's urging and City Planning's willingness to listen, the final report focused heavily on a pedestrian-friendly environment, something crucial to a thriving main street, a successful MTSA and consistent with DECA's mission. It recognized the importance of short blocks (a point often made by Toderian, Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl) and rich mixes of land uses beyond merely the residential (an important point considering the spare subway capacity in the morning rush is on outbound trains).

It won't be a surprise to anyone that some neighbours are unhappy about the unprecedented 35-storey height when DAPS endorsed mid-rises. In the current climate, we choose not to challenge the height and density, especially when serious attention to key ground-level factors — walkability, block permeability and various opportunities for community engagement can more than offset the downsides of taller buildings. See below for these considerations.

**1. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY\_WIDER SIDEWALKS:** We like the wider sidewalks planned for the Woodbine frontage and by matching the level, largely unobstructed 5.4m width of the sidewalk across Woodbine Ave. this project would provide greater safety for pedestrians. We would like to see a similar design approach on the Danforth east of Woodbine. Both the Woodbine and Danforth sidewalks are often crowded — and dangerously crowded when the TTC has to employ emergency shuttle buses. This proposed urban pedestrian realm with wide unobstructed sidewalks for movement, lined with benches for people watching and attractive planters and displays, can set a safe and attractive precedent for all four street corners for further development at this intersection and beyond, within the MTSA.

**2. PEDESTRIANS FIRST AT GROUND LEVEL:** Move the truck-turning functions underground to facilitate a mid-block break in the overly long wall of stores on Danforth east of Woodbine and create an outdoor mid-block community gathering space (as per Amendment 420). Pedestrians need to be the top priority at ground level throughout all Toronto's MTSA's, beginning at Woodbine. Choice's plan to prioritize trucks at ground level treats much of this rare site as if it were the backside of a suburban mall or big-box store. Cedarvale is a wider street than Strathmore and better suited for vehicular access.

**3. COMMUNITY ACCESS TO INDOOR SPACE:** Allocate significant indoor space (maybe 10,000 SF) at a discounted rate to community-oriented enterprises and another 5,000 or so SF to arts-oriented uses. Community oriented uses could include: A mezzanine in the supermarket's second-floor space (overlooking Danforth) that could contain co-working facilities + daycare (like the current Workaround), a library of tools and other household needs and nice-to-haves that lots of our new neighbours in small units don't have room to store. A seniors drop-in centre and cooking classes. Arts-oriented uses could include performance and rehearsal spaces for theatre, music, which are in short supply across the east end. The area lacks an adequate space for all-candidates meetings at election time.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

**Danforth East Community Association (DECA)**

Screenshots from DAPS and the MTSA reports attached.