

Community Consultation Meeting #2 Summary Report April 2017





Danforth Avenue Planning Study Community Consultation Meeting #2 Report

This meeting summary report was prepared by Lura Consulting, the independent facilitator and consultation specialist for the Danforth Avenue Planning Study. If you have any questions or comments regarding the report, please contact either:

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Danforth Avenue Planning Study Community Consultation Meeting #2 Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Danforth Avenue Planning Study is to supplement the City of Toronto's Avenue and Mid-Rise Building Guidelines and to bring a lens of local character to development guidelines. A key outcome of the study will be new Urban Design Guidelines and/or an Area Specific Official Plan Amendment that will help guide future development in the study area (see Figure 1).

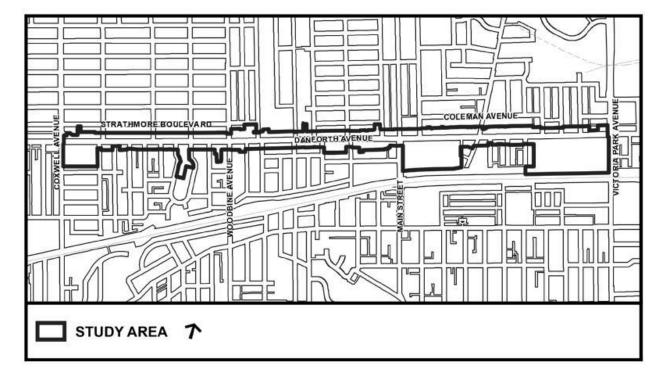


Figure 1. Danforth Avenue Planning Study Area

Community Consultation Meeting #2 – February 23, 2017

Facilitator Liz Nield of Lura Consulting welcomed community members to the second Danforth Avenue Planning Study Community Consultation Meeting. Ms. Nield described Lura's role as the neutral facilitator for the project, which includes facilitating community consultation and stakeholder advisory committee meetings and preparing reports on the feedback received. She reviewed the agenda (Appendix A) and noted that the purpose of this consultation meeting was to:

- Provide an update on the study process and timeline;
- Share the community feedback received so far and the project team's analysis; and
- Obtain feedback on the proposed vision, character areas, public realm analysis, heritage review and complete streets.

Ward 31 Councillor Janet Davis and Ward 32 Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon provided welcoming remarks.





130 participants signed in at registration, but attendance at the meeting was estimated at 150 individuals.

2. PRESENTATION

A presentation was provided by Daniel Woolfson (Community Planning), Caroline Kim (Urban Design), and Pourya Nazemi (Heritage Preservation Services). City staff provided an overview of community and stakeholder feedback collected to-date, introduced a draft vision statement for the study and identified proposed character areas. The presentation also outlined the project team's initial analysis as it relates to the public realm and urban design, heritage preservation and the principles of complete streets. A copy of the presentation can be found on the City's Community Planning webpage at www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy.

3. QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions of clarification following the presentation. A summary of the discussion is provided below. Participants' questions are identified with a 'Q', comments with a 'C', and responses from the Project Team in *italics* are identified with an 'A'.

- Q1. Is there a Terms of Reference for the study?
- A1. Yes, the Terms of Reference (TOR) is available online (www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy). We brought a draft TOR to the community for feedback at the first Community Consultation Meeting in June and the following Stakeholder Advisory Meeting. We incorporated the feedback we received into a revised TOR that was finalized at Community Council this month (February 2017).
- Q2. Is this study proposing an increase in density?
- A2. We are just beginning our soft-site analysis, and as part of this analysis we will be looking at areas where we think additional density might be appropriate. We will identify sites that are large enough to accommodate midrise buildings. After that review, we will have a better sense of growth projections. We are not looking at a specific density number right now.
- Q3. What accommodations will be made for onsite parking for new developments?
- A3. We have a Zoning Bylaw in place that regulates parking per-site. As part of this study, we have identified the need to conduct a parking analysis for the study area. This will be done at a later date.
- Q4. Can you clarify the heritage designation process? How is this part of the study? Are you recommending that the sites highlighted in the presentation be part of the heritage register?
- A4. We have heard from the community that the history and heritage of the area is very important. We are trying to conduct a more thorough analysis of specific heritage elements that exist, and determine what recommendations are required from a built form and urban design perspective to maintain the existing character. This analysis might also include identifying properties that should be considered for inclusion in the heritage registry. We are happy to answer detailed heritage questions during the Open House.





4. SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Following the presentation, participants were invited to visit the following five Topic Stations:

- 1. Proposed Vision Statement
- 2. Character Areas
- 3. Public Realm and Urban Design
- 4. Heritage Review
- 5. Complete Streets

At each topic station, City staff were available to respond to questions, provide additional information and collect verbal feedback from participants.

A summary of the feedback collected during and after Community Consultation Meeting #2 is provided below and organized under the five topics. Participants provided their feedback through in-person conversations with City staff, by completing and submitting hardcopies of the feedback form, by emailing or mailing written comments to Lura Consulting and the City of Toronto or by completing an online version of the feedback form made available on the project website. Approximately 60 feedback forms were submitted (hardcopy, email, mail and online).

PROPOSED VISION

QUESTION #1: Does the proposed vision statement capture what we value about the Danforth study area?

Most participants indicated that the proposed vision statement does capture what they, as a community, value about the Danforth study area. The focus on creating a safe, walkable and vibrant public realm that supports the commercial and retail sector was highlighted as positive.

Some participants outlined that the proposed vision statement is not adequate as is. The statement is said to be too long, and too broad. It is unlikely that anyone will be able to recite this vision from memory. It was suggested that the vision be shorter, and provide more specific direction in terms of future development. One idea is to create a short vision statement with supporting guiding principles.

The vision was also said to be too optimistic by some participants. To ensure the vision becomes a reality, participants suggested that the wording and phrasing be altered to better reflect the existing character of the study area, and a realistic future.

QUESTION #2: What changes or additions should be considered?

When asked how the vision statement could be improved, many participants requested more emphasis be placed on the principles of complete streets. A priority shared by several participants is to have a safe, walkable and cyclist-friendly street. To achieve this, it was suggested that separated bike lanes be added along Danforth Avenue to connect with existing bike infrastructure, automobile speeds be reduced, and driving lanes be narrowed. It was also suggested that transit be mentioned in the vision statement, as nearby subway stations act as transportation hubs and destinations.

Restoring the economic vibrancy of the area was also identified as a priority and an element requiring additional emphasis in the vision statement and Terms of Reference.





Some other suggestions include: incorporating more parks or parkettes along the Avenue, adding more community facilities, highlighting the demographic diversity of area and ensuring affordability of the area. It was also suggested that the City incorporate DECA's five visioning points into this vision statement.

A few participants emphasized that the vision must actually become reality. It was recommended that the vision should be implemented by the policy direction of the Official Plan, Design Guidelines and Zoning Bylaw.

Draft Vision Statement

Danforth Avenue is a liveable, vibrant and walkable place, which serves as a destination for the larger community. The history of Danforth Avenue is important part of its character. Its existing and planned character is that of a vibrant place, with a fine-grained network of buildings that are architecturally distinctive and are developed for the human-scale, encouraging a place that is fun, community-oriented and inclusive. Danforth Avenue welcomes and sustains an independent and diverse commercial sector. The Avenue provides a key location for incremental mid-rise, mixed-use intensification that balances growth with green, place-making public spaces, community services and the area's history. As a transportation corridor, Danforth Avenue will serve a variety of users and modes, ensuring safe, walkable and cyclist-friendly connections and a consistent streetscape that is both authentic and beautiful.

CHARACTER AREAS

QUESTION #1: The Project Team has identified three character areas along Danforth Avenue. Do these character area boundaries make sense to you?

Most participants expressed their support for the three character areas presented. Some suggestions for minor boundary changes were made. These suggestions are listed under Question #2.

Some participants stated that they do not see the value in separating the street into character areas, and instead propose that a common character be created for the length of the Avenue. Others suggested that the proposed character area boundaries seem arbitrary in that they correspond with main intersections and subway stations.







QUESTION #2: Do you have any feedback you would like to share regarding the character areas?

Participants were asked to provide their advice on how the character area boundaries might be altered to better reflect the existing diversity along the Avenue. The following suggestions were shared:

- Extend Character Area 2 (Woodbine-Main) east of Main Street as new development occurs
- Include all four corners of each intersection in one character area
- Include the Danforth and Coxwell intersection in both planning studies
- Extend the study area north and south to the next parallel street
- Divide each character area into a north section and south section
- Identify the Woodbine/Danforth intersection and a few blocks east and west as a character area

Other feedback on the character areas is outlined in the table below.

Character Areas

- Improve the public realm in Character Area 2 (Woodbine-Main) to encourage walking and cycling
- Identify parking lots on the south side of Danforth from Dawes to Victoria Park as priority 'softsites' that can, and should, accommodate additional density (midrise retail and residential development)
- Incorporate additional park space and community facilities in Character Areas 2 and 3
- Preserve the existing character, while also improving the character of some stretches along Danforth
- Identify and preserve the elements that make Character Area 1 (Coxwell-Woodbine) unique and of utmost importance to the community
- Preserve and maintain all heritage properties in the study area
- Identify the unique heritage character of Dawes and ensure this character is preserved
- Consider how the north-south corridors impact the Danforth as well (e.g., Greenwood, Coxwell, Woodbine, Maine, Victoria Park)
- Complete a more comprehensive inventory of available private and public space in the study area
- Treat all three character areas equitably in respect to public space improvements and new construction/redevelopment
- Identify more features that are distinct to each character area in order to locate the opportunities for "place-making" in the public realm
- Consider an equal number of side street expansions for the three character areas

PUBLIC REALM AND URBAN DESIGN

QUESTION #1: What are your top 3 goals for the public realm (what would you like to see accomplished or improved in the future)?

Based on the feedback received, the top three community goals for the public realm include:

1. Improving the pedestrian experience by having wider sidewalks, better lighting, human-scale frontages, more seating, slower traffic speeds, more pedestrian crossings, etc.;





- 2. Adding more greenery along the corridor (e.g., planting trees and other landscaping, adding more parks and parkettes); and
- 3. Building better cycling infrastructure (e.g., separated bike lanes, bike parking).

Other priorities for the public realm identified by participants are outlined in the table below.

Public Realm Priorities

Pedestrian Experience

- Implement traffic calming measures (e.g., safer/slower speed limits, fewer traffic lanes)
- Plant more large trees, incorporate more landscaping
- Add more seating along the Avenue (e.g., park benches)
- Widen sidewalks
- Provide a year-round pedestrian experience
- Establish key areas where the public realm can be enhanced (e.g., community gathering places)
- Improve street lighting
- Add more patios along the Avenue
- Ensure sidewalks are public spaces that can accommodate a range of pedestrian activity
- Build at the human scale to support walkability (maintain community-scale store frontages)
- Add more trash/recycling areas
- Support a vibrant and rejuvenated commercial/retail oriented streetscape
- Manage existing nuisances (e.g., electric bikes on the sidewalk, smoking areas, graffiti)
- Ensure all sidewalks are clear within a reasonable time after snowfall
- Limit building heights to 4-6 storeys to maintain the human scale
- Amend bylaws to provide for maximum and minimum setbacks which align with existing pre-World War II, pedestrian-oriented retail on Danforth

Streetscape Aesthetics

- Incorporate more beautiful street elements, such as unique lighting fixtures, benches, signs
- Beautify and improve existing large residential rental spaces (e.g., Main Square)
- Create a more vibrant public space
- Be a place to visit and linger
- Have a unified look and feel
- Incorporate more street art (e.g., murals to beautify a building, advertise a business, etc.)

Connectivity

- Build better pedestrian-transit connections (e.g., second exit at Main Subway Station, pedestrian connection between TTC's Main Station and GO Transit station)
- Add more pedestrian crossings to create shorter blocks
- Connect new cycling infrastructure to existing cycling infrastructure (e.g., Bloor Viaduct)

Community Amenities

- Add more parks and parkettes
- Expand the "Adopt a Tree" program from Coxwell to Woodbine Avenue
- Incorporate more community spaces: community/recreation centres, libraries, art spaces, etc.





QUESTION #2: What opportunities should be considered?

Participants were asked to share their advice and insight on potential opportunities to improve the public realm. A reoccurring opportunity identified by several participants is the addition of bike lanes along Danforth Avenue. Some participants requested separated bike lanes with physical barriers between cyclists and vehicular traffic, while others suggested off-peak on-street parking as a potential buffer. It was mentioned that the bike lane project on the Bloor Viaduct was successful, and that this cycling infrastructure should be connected to new bike lanes on Danforth in the study area.

To improve cyclist *and* pedestrian safety, many participants suggested that the city implement new traffic calming measures. Participants want a multi-modal street that prioritizes the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Decreasing speed limits, shortening blocks, reducing the number of traffic lanes, and using different paint/paving patterns are suggestions shared by participants as potential traffic calming tools.

From an urban design perspective, it was requested that all new development adhere to barrier-free accessibility requirements. It was also suggested that generous setbacks be granted for main building entrances. Participants outlined that the city should seek opportunities for more public gathering places and small parks along the corridor.

A few participants outlined that there is an opportunity to enhance and beautify Main Square. Maintaining affordable rental housing is a priority. It was suggested that the City host conversations with residents to determine how Main Square should and could be improved.

In addition to Main Square, participants identified other sites that might be revitalized and repurposed. Coxwell TTC Barns was one particular site identified as having potential for revitalization. Large parking lots off of Danforth were also mentioned.

One participant suggested that existing laneways be converted to safe pedestrian walkways, and used for laneway housing. Another participant requested that the City look at opportunities to move City office space to this area along Danforth as a way of creating a better mix of office, commercial and residential uses.

QUESTION #3: What issues should be considered?

Participants identified public safety and motor vehicle traffic as two main issues to be considered. Residents and stakeholders are interested in a community that is safe from crime, and safe for pedestrians and cyclists to travel through. As mentioned above, the inclusion of bike lanes and traffic calming measures along Danforth Avenue is recommended by participants to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. Participants also outlined that there are too many long blocks, main-street vehicle access points, and electric bikes using sidewalks that negatively impact pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Participants also identified potential issues associated with intensification. It was requested that:

- Adequate social and physical infrastructure be provided to accommodate an increasing local population;
- Competing views of Danforth as a transportation corridor be acknowledged;
- Minimum parking requirements be reduced;





- Maximum building heights be put in place for future development to ensure the existing character be maintained; and
- The City identify a selection of decision-making criteria that is used to guide their decisions.

HERITAGE REVIEW

QUESTION #1: What are your top 3 goals for heritage preservation (what would you like to see accomplished or improved in the future)?

The top three goals for heritage preservation, as outlined by the community, include:

- 1. Preserving and enhancing existing historic buildings and building façades;
- 2. Repurposing heritage buildings; and
- 3. Appropriately integrating new buildings with heritage buildings.

A reoccurring priority shared by participants is to preserve the existing individual storefronts located along Danforth Avenue. These façades and historic buildings provide an attractive sense of history and contribute to the unique character of the area. Some participants shared their concerns that these iconic storefronts would be demolished, become vacant or be removed from the existing building and remounted on a new structure. Participants indicated their interest in having a unique and diverse street-level character that appropriately enhances and integrates heritage buildings and iconic storefronts with revitalized or redeveloped sites. This requires mandating the types and styles of materials that are used in the design of new buildings and storefronts.

Participants requested that key heritage sites, and in some instances zones, be identified and included in the heritage registry. This is not to say that all old buildings should receive heritage status. It was also suggested that the public realm be used to tell the history of the area (e.g., plaques, public art, historic signage, material selection, etc.).

QUESTION #2: What opportunities should be considered?

Several opportunities for achieving the above heritage preservation goals were identified by participants. Redeveloping the TTC yard at Coxwell Avenue into a community hub was one idea shared by several participants. Another is to direct intensification to existing larger industrial and commercial sites to preserve the existing character of the street. Sites such as Canadian Tire, Shoppers World, car dealerships, and large surface parking lots were identified as areas that should be considered for midrise redevelopment. A few participants stated that sites that currently have 2 or 3-storey mixed use buildings, should be replaced by similar sized buildings.

In terms of design, participants outlined their desire to have higher standards for the design of building façades. New buildings should be encouraged to integrate design elements from the past as a nod to history, and avoid the introduction of unified, modern-looking buildings. Participants outlined the opportunity to celebrate the area's history; potentially through art, public installations, banners, signs, etc. Some participants stated that it is time for this area of Danforth Avenue to undergo renewal.

Dawes Road was identified in the meeting presentation as an area with several cultural heritage sites. As such, it was suggested that special attention be given to the enhancement, beautification and preservation of Dawes Roads.





One participant explained the history of the area just south of Danforth and Main Street as a railway terminus. This feature provided the area with an early ethnic diversity common to similar locations across the country. This history, among other hidden historic features, should be recognized and conveyed in some way.

It was recommended that the heritage review be informed by the lived experience of the community to ensure the review is comprehensive.

QUESTION #3: What issues should be considered?

Participants were asked to identify their concerns and potential issues with regards to heritage preservation in the study area. The following concerns were shared:

- Heritage sites will not be protected
- Large-scale development will occur near heritage buildings
- Only the building façade of heritage buildings will be preserved; this is not sufficient
- Heritage properties will be preserved, but the overall historic character of the area will not be
- Small, varied retail will be lost
- That residents and business owners want redevelopment over preservation
- Too many properties will be listed as heritage sites. The heritage properties identified in the meeting presentation are worthy of preservation; no additional properties need to be protected
- An increase in residential density will overtake the public realm and commercial realm
- Not enough affordable rental units will be provided
- The Home Bank of Canada located at Danforth and Main Street is not listed as a heritage site

One participant outlined that more information on the heritage study and where the city is in the process needs to be provided before priorities and concerns can be identified.

COMPLETE STREETS

QUESTION #1: What are your top 3 goals for transportation (how would you like to move within and through the study area)?

Based on the feedback provided by community members, the top three transportation goals are:

- 1. Making Danforth Avenue safer and more inviting for pedestrians;
- 2. Building separated bike lanes, adding bike signals, and providing more bike parking; and
- 3. Improving transportation connectivity.

Improving cyclist and pedestrian safety was identified as a priority by many participants. The addition of bike lanes, wider sidewalks, shorter blocks, safer crosswalks, and traffic calming measures along Danforth Avenue were all suggested as ways to make the street safer for all travelers. Although several participants requested the addition of bike lanes on Danforth Avenue, some participants outlined that bike lanes should be accommodated on side streets running parallel to Danforth Avenue in order to minimize impacts on traffic and maintain on-street parking.

Connectivity issues were identified by several participants. Community members are looking for better pedestrian access to existing TTC stations, connections between existing bike lanes and new bike





infrastructure in the study area, and better connections between all modes of transportation. Of particular interest to participants, is the inclusion of a better pedestrian connection between TTC Main Street Station and Danforth GO Station. One participant requested that the Danforth GO Station be identified as a hub for future development.

Public transit optimization was also outlined as a priority for participants. It was suggested that the subway is over capacity along the Danforth corridor, and additional transit is required.

One participant suggested that the application of sound criteria be used by the City to determine the appropriate use of the street allowance (such as, Greenhouse Gas Emissions of competing modes and spatial demand of competing modes).

QUESTION #2: What opportunities should be considered?

The generous width of Danforth Avenue in the study area was identified as an opportunity by many participants. It was suggested that the street be redeveloped to more safely accommodate all modes of transportation. This includes adding separated bike lanes and widening the north and south sidewalk. Participants outlined that the sidewalk should be able to accommodate pedestrian traffic, secure bike parking, pedestrian seating, landscaping and patios and other public gathering places in some pockets of the street. It was also suggested that more crosswalks be introduced to improve pedestrian connectivity, as well as more entry/exit points and better signage at all TTC subways station.

To create transit hubs around TTC subway stations, one participant suggested that mixed-use development be directed to these areas; particularly development that includes employment uses. Another participant suggested that midrise development (8-storeys max.) occur near subways stations/main intersections.

Other transportation opportunities are outlined in the table below.

Transportation Opportunities

- Ensure sidewalks are accessible and safe for people in wheelchairs or with strollers (e.g., plow the sidewalk after snowfall)
- Consider Light Rail Transit for this corridor
- Replace parking along Danforth with Green P Parking elsewhere
- Add more parking along the street
- Amend the by-laws governing as-of-right development to prohibit new automobile-oriented uses
 abutting Danforth (surface parking lots, gas stations, surface car dealerships, car-washes) as well
 as other uses (e.g., ground-floor residential) that do not contribute to the street, regardless of
 whether they are intended to be permanent or mere place-holders
- Permit and encourage the use of existing surface parking (and similar spaces) for temporary uses (e.g., garden centres, street markets) that contribute to the walkability of the street
- Conduct best practice research to see what other cities are doing
- Include better parking signage on side streets and on Danforth Avenue to encourage better use of Green P spaces





QUESTION #3: What issues should be considered?

Participants were asked to identify their concerns about transportation in the study area. A range of issues were identified, as outlined in the table below.

Transportation Concerns

- Unsafe traffic speeds and volumes
- Dangerous cycling conditions
- Unfriendly and unsafe pedestrian experience
- Accessibility for those with reduced mobility
- Carbon loading on the global atmosphere
- Unsustainable transportation economies
- Noise pollution
- New bike lanes pushing traffic onto surrounding residential streets
- Not enough parking to support local businesses
- Insufficient bike parking
- Use of sidewalks by electric bicycles
- Motorcycles parking on sidewalks
- Pedestrian connectivity (e.g., connection between Main Subway Station and GO Station)
- Suburban style shopping centres locating in this area
- Not enough safe and comfortable pedestrian crossings
- Changes to the street will be made without referencing evidence that is relevant to the study area
- Traffic will increase due to structural changes to the street (e.g., new bike lanes)
- Changes to the street will be made without considering the impact to the local economy
- Maintaining the current as-of-right zoning will undermine the stated long-term goal of a safe, walkable and pedestrian-friendly Danforth
- Existing by-laws do not mandate that as-of-right development offer a built form that is compatible with a variety of modes of transportation, or with a walkable and pedestrian-friendly Danforth
- Vibrations felt in homes from GO trains

OTHER FEEDBACK

QUESTION #1: Do you have any additional feedback or advice?

Participants were provided with the opportunity to share any additional feedback or advice on the Planning Study. The following comments and questions were shared through individual submissions:

- The large development proposed at Main Square (Main and Danforth) <u>must</u> be considered by this Study. How will a development this large impact the community? Will the City's density targets lower since this development will be adding 500+ new residential units to the community?
- There is an opportunity to update the Zoning Bylaw as part of this Study. It is strongly recommended that the City amend the Zoning Bylaw to ensure it is in conformity with the policy direction and design guidelines arrived at as a product of this Danforth Avenue Planning Study.





Danforth Avenue Planning Study Community Consultation Meeting #2 Report

An amended Zoning Bylaw would provide another layer of policy that can help to ensure the vision for development in this area is upheld.

- The format of CCM #2 was not successful. The new information presented was not useful and it was mainly a one-way discussion (City staff sharing information)
- Will property taxes increase to cover the cost of these suggestions if implemented?





APPENDIX A: Agenda

Community Consultation Meeting #2

Thursday, February 23, 2017 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Danforth Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Avenue

Meeting Purpose:

1) Provide update on study process and timeline; 2) Share the community feedback we have heard so far and the project team's analysis; and Obtain your feedback on the proposed vision, character areas, public realm analysis and heritage review.

AGENDA

7:00 pm Introductions, Agenda Review and Welcome

Liz Nield, Facilitator – Lura Consulting

Councillor Janet Davis, Ward 31 – City of Toronto

Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon, Ward 32 – City of Toronto

7:10 pm **Presentation**

Daniel Woolfson, Community Planning - City of Toronto

Caroline Kim, Urban Design – City of Toronto

Pourya Nazemi, Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto

7:45 pm **Topic Stations**

Please visit the Topic Stations (listed below) of interest to you and provide any comments using your Feedback Form. City staff will be available at the stations to respond to questions and provide information. Completed Feedback Forms can be submitted at the Registration Table before you leave, or by <u>Friday, March 10, 2017</u> if you would like more time.

- 1. Proposed Vision Statement
- 2. Character Areas
- 3. Public Realm and Urban Design
- 4. Heritage Review
- 5. Complete Streets

8:50 pm Wrap-Up and Next Steps

9:00 pm Adjourn



