

Danforth Avenue Study

# Urban Design Guidelines and Concept Plan

City of Toronto  
December, 2007

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Danforth Avenue Study Urban Design Guidelines provide detailed guidance on the design and organization of the built environment along the Study corridor between Victoria Park Avenue and Scotia Avenue. They include specific recommendations on site planning, building massing and design, and public realm improvements.

The Danforth Avenue Study Concept Plan illustrates key components of the vision for the Avenue, including building locations, development heights and envelopes, locations of parking and access, etc.

The Guidelines and the Concept Plan are intended for the use of developers in the preparation of development proposals, and by the City of Toronto in the development review process, and in the planning of public projects.

## 2.0 Built Form and Site Development Guidelines

The Avenue is characterized by distinct pre-war buildings with diverse architectural styles and frontages over a short main street distance. The Guidelines respect and support this traditional development pattern by developing a strategy which subdivides and humanizes the massing of large redevelopment sites.

This approach will result in a collection of buildings and a hierarchy of composite building elements typically associated with small lot main street development, ensuring that new developments are compatible with each other and with the existing pre-war buildings, and contribute to a cohesive main street.

### Building Orientation

- Buildings on Danforth Avenue should be sited to address first street intersection or



Pedestrian friendly pre-war main street fabric along Danforth Avenue

corner location, second to occupy the Danforth Avenue street frontage, and third to occupy the side street frontage.

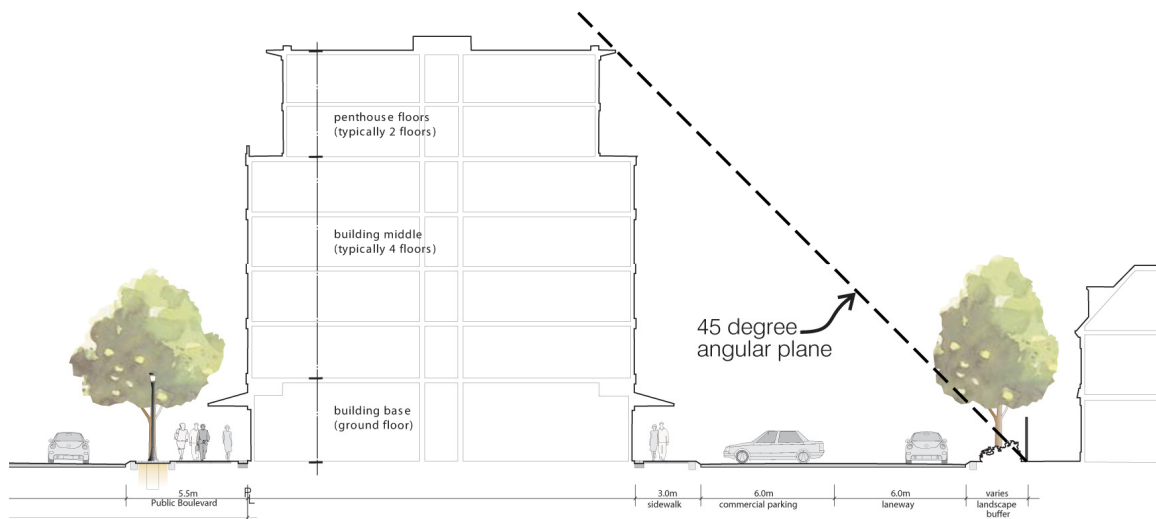
- Except at locations where side yard setback is required and/or open space is desired, buildings fronting onto Danforth Avenue are encouraged to occupy the entire frontage. A minimum of 70% (for lots 30m and wider) or 60% (for lots under 30m) of the lot frontage should be occupied by building mass.

### Building Height

- Developments should be in either the form of mid-rise buildings or as small additions to the existing pre-war buildings.
- General height and massing characteristic should reflect a 5 storey base plus 2 storey setback penthouse condition, provided that the buildings conform to the 45 degree angular plane restriction.
- Greater heights, from 8 to 10 storeys, are encouraged at some locations, also utilizing a base building plus 2 storey setback penthouse condition, provided that the buildings conform to the 45 degree angular plane restriction. These locations include



An eight storey building with step backs at the top addresses a key intersection



A seven storey building appears as a five storey building from the street



frontages along Danforth Avenue within approximately 30m from the street lines of

- Victoria Park Avenue;
- Macey Avenue;
- St. Dunstan Drive (east side);
- Pharmacy Avenue;
- Robinson Avenue (west side);
- Reconfigured Danforth Road (The 30m distance may be extended on the east side, provided that a publicly accessible open space is located at the north-east corner of the intersection);
- Warden Avenue (south-east corner);
- Balford Avenue;

Or, within approximately 15m from the centre line of Macey Avenue or Pharmacy Avenue, along the south side of Danforth Avenue.

#### **45-Degree Angular Plane**

- Buildings along the Danforth Avenue frontage should not exceed the 45-degree angular planes from the lot lines of abutting low rise residential properties.
- Exceptions to the 45 degree angular plane restriction will be considered on a site by site basis if the building is located along Danforth Avenue within approximately 70m from the street lines of
  - Victoria Park Avenue;
  - Pharmacy Avenue;
  - Reconfigured Danforth Road; and



Setback and step-backs help to reduce new development's impact on adjacent low rise residential area

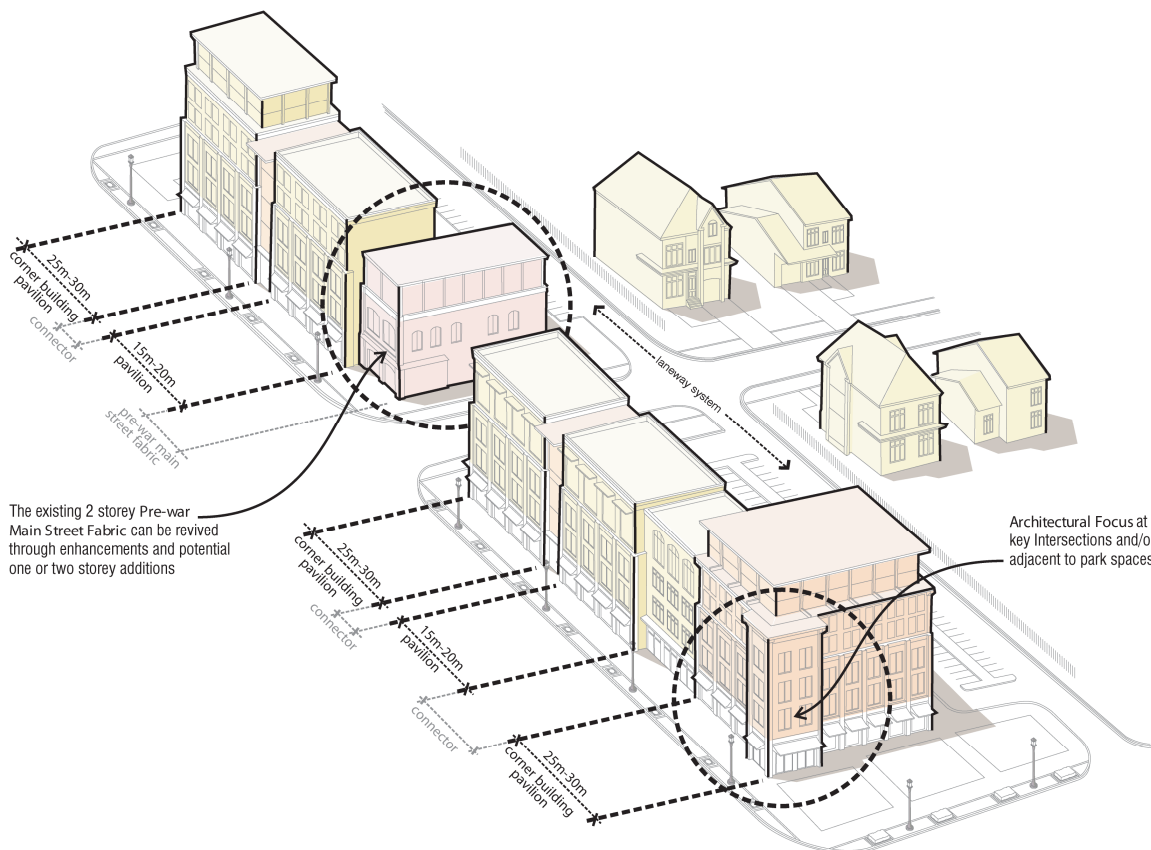
- Warden Avenue;

Or, within 35m from the centre line of Pharmacy Avenue, along the south side of Danforth Avenue.

- Where exceptions are considered, developments should provide proper transition in scale to the low rise residential area and ensure adequate light, view and privacy conditions through setbacks, step-backs, terracing, and landscaping.

### Massing of New Mid Rise Developments

- Large redevelopment parcels should be expressed as a linked series of pavilion-type buildings with distinctive and interesting built form expressions, some with greater importance than others.



Developments should be expressed as a linked series of building segments

### Corner Segments

- Corner building segments should be expressed as the most significant building component.
- Architectural features or foci are encouraged to enhance the visual prominence and identity of the district.
- Corner segments should generally occupy 25 - 30m of the street frontage with a 0m setback from Danforth Avenue.



Distinct architectural features are encouraged for corner building segments

### Mid-block Segments

- Mid block building segments will generally occupy 15 - 20m of the street frontage with a 0m setback from Danforth Avenue, to assert the prominence of the corner unit.

### Recessed Connector Segments

- Recessed connector segments should be setback 1.5 - 3.0 m from the street line.
- Recessed connector segments should generally occupy 6 - 15m of the street frontage.
- These locations are appropriate for private landscape enhancements including street furnishings, seating, and plantings.



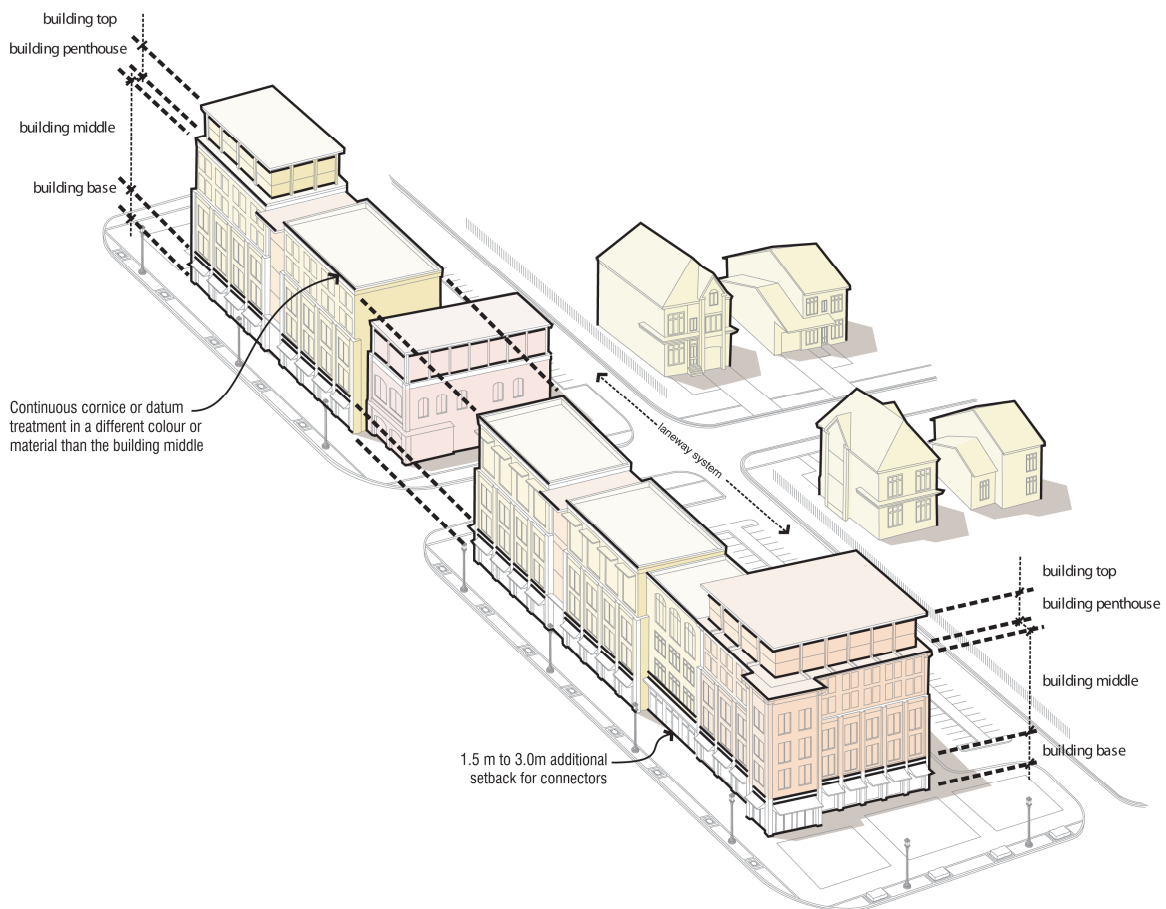
Recessed connector segments provide variation on the façade and space for landscape enhancements

### Pedestrian Connections

- Pedestrian through building connections from Danforth Avenue to rear commercial parking areas are encouraged for any development exceeding 50m of continuous building frontage.

### Distinct Building Elements

- Buildings should include the following distinct elements:
  - Building base;
  - Building mid section;
  - Building top or cornice; and
  - Setback penthouse floors



Buildings should be articulated to include distinct building elements

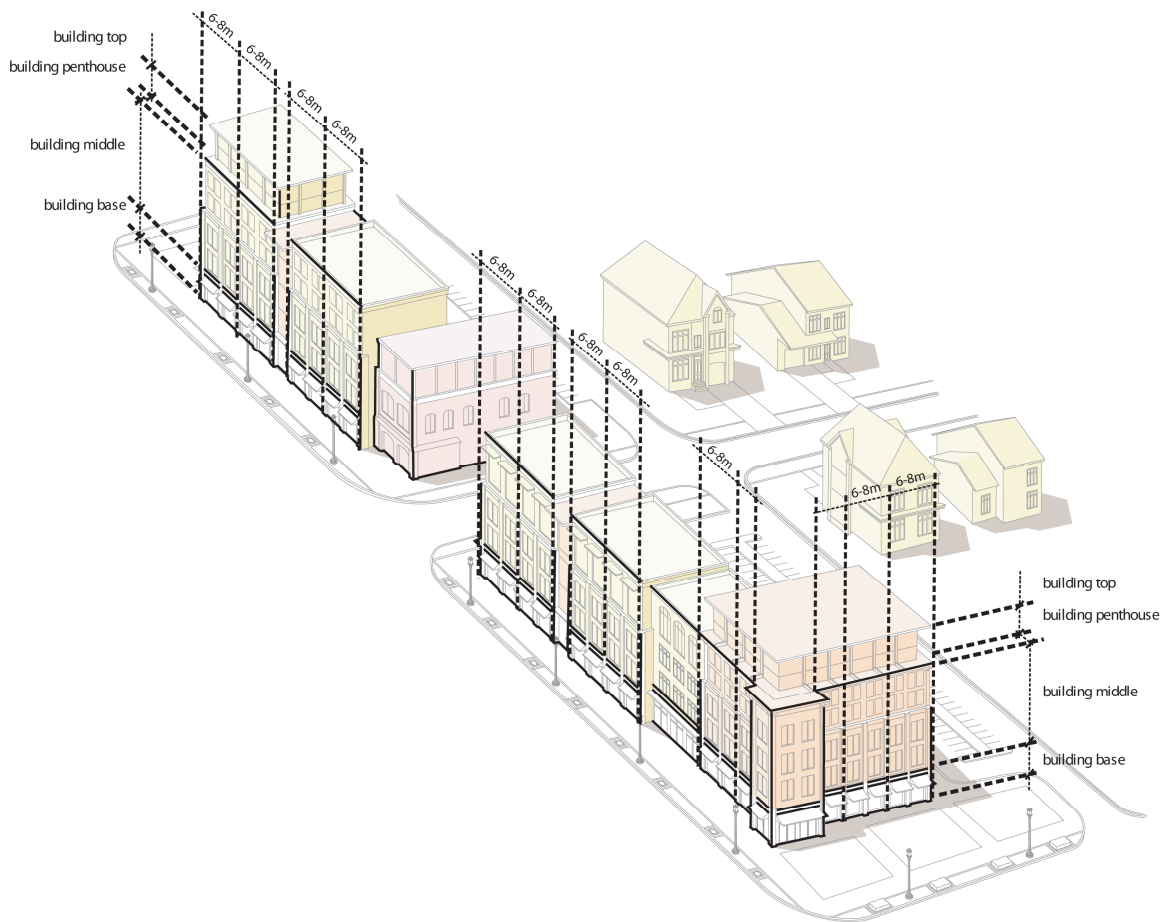
## Building Base

- The commercial ground floor should have a floor to ceiling height of 4.5m.
- All buildings along Danforth Avenue should have entrances fronting onto Danforth Avenue that are easily identifiable and appropriately signed. Privately provided landscaping, including planters and benches, is encouraged at entrance locations. Corner entrances are encouraged at all corner locations at street intersections.
- The commercial ground floor should be composed of a minimum 75% glazing for retail window displays.
- The height of window and door articulation on the commercial ground floor should respond to the greater ground floor to ceiling height. 4 m of glazing height is recommended.
- Weather protection in the form of window awnings is encouraged. Projected concrete canopies or balconies should be avoided at the top of the building base.
- The top of the building base should be marked with a 0.6 - 1.0m cornice feature. Storefront signage may be mounted as a marquee within the cornice feature zone.
- The building base should exhibit a material change from that exhibited along the building mid section above. The use of high quality materials, including stone or parged concrete is encouraged.
- The building base and cornice feature may be expressed to the second storey level. This treatment is appropriate for residential entry lobby locations and will help to establish variation along the commercial frontage.



Building base exhibits a material change from building above





Vertical relief and articulation should be provided on the building mid section

### Building Mid Section



Vertical relief and articulation on the building mid section break down building mass along the street frontage

- The building mid section should exhibit a distinctive and regular pattern of vertical articulation along the street frontage occurring from the building base cornice to the building top or cornice occurring at the top of the building middle.
- A 6.0 - 8.0m interval of vertical articulation is recommended.
- The articulation of windows should vary along the building mid section. The use of divided windows and top and bottom lintels is encouraged. Corner pavilion locations are appropriate for additional architectural details including horizontal relief, special

window articulation and wider window sill articulation.

- The use of brick is encouraged for building mid sections. Vinyl siding should be avoided. Stucco can be used, however, window lintels and other details should not be articulated in the same material.
- Projected concrete balconies should not occur below the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor or project into the public right of way. They should occur along recessed connector building segments only as an integrated design element. The use of black decorative railings at window and balcony locations is encouraged. Opaque glass is encouraged to conceal private outdoor furniture and unify the overall building presentation.
- Mirrored curtain walls and coloured windows should be avoided.



Balconies designed as an integral part of the building mid section

#### Building Top

- A distinctive building top roof feature or 0.6 - 1.0m cornice element should be provided at the top of the building.
- Cornice features should exhibit relief and project beyond the mid building segment.
- Mansard roof and windowed gables may occur at the building top.

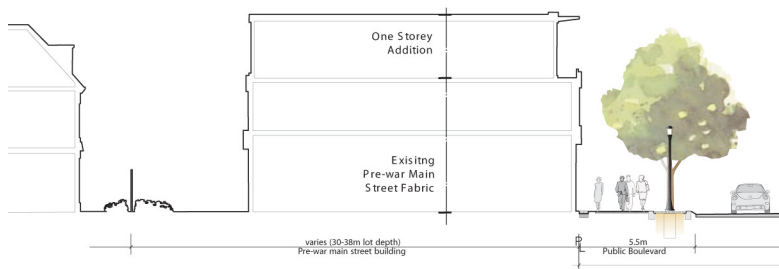
#### Penthouse Floors

- At mid block building segments, all additional storeys above the building mid section should be set back 1.5m from the edge of the building mid section and may be fully glazed. Projected balconies are allowed at these locations provided that they do not extend into the public right-of-way. A distinctive roof or canopy feature is encouraged to complete the building.

- At corner building segments, all additions to the building mid section are considered an extension of the building mid section. The first additional storey above the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> storey may be projected directly up and should be completed with a building top or cornice feature. Additional floors should be set back a further 1.5m, with the top floor completed with a building top or cornice feature.
- Green roofs are encouraged for all new developments.

### Additions to Pre-war Buildings

- A maximum of 2 storeys may be added to the existing pre-war buildings (See Concept Plan for locations).
- Additions should be set back a minimum of 1.5m from the existing façade.
- Façade improvements are encouraged to preserve and enhance the character of the existing buildings.



One to two storey additions may be added to the existing pre-war buildings

### Architectural Features

- General architectural features should not replicate any particular period or style. They should balance with new and historical built form elements, and add to the character and distinct image of the corridor.



- Canopies and awnings should reinforce the vertical rhythm of the mid building segment, and be configured with breaks at each vertical pier or articulated vertical relief element to avoid uniformity and bland application of these decorative features.
- Architectural lighting is encouraged for all pre-war main street buildings. Lighting specialists should be retained to design a low voltage lighting strategy for these structures, to ensure that light pollution will not adversely affect adjacent uses or elements of the natural environment, and to enhance the distinct character of the pre-war main street fabric.
- Architectural lighting is encouraged for all new mid rise developments. Lighting specialists should be retained to design a low voltage up lighting strategy to light the mid building segment, reinforce the verticality of the structure, ensure light pollution will not adversely affect upper storey uses, and enhance the character of the main street environment.
- Signage should be located along the building base cornice line. Painted and relief signage is encouraged.
- Projected signage located perpendicular to the primary building frontage, neon and internal or rear lit signage, and sandwich board signage within the public realm should be avoided.

#### **Site Landscaping, Loading, Storage, and Noise Mitigation**

- At the interface between residential and non-residential properties, a minimum of 1.5m landscaped buffer consisting of tightly planted coniferous hedge material to a height of 2m should be provided.

- Loading, garbage storage and other service areas should not be visible from any public street. Screening in the form of fencing or landscaping should be provided.
- Ensure adequate noise mitigation measures for HVAC equipments and other mechanical equipments.
- Rail safety, noise and vibration should be considered in the design of any development within 300m of the CN right of way. Matters to be considered may include berming, fencing and building construction features.

### Parking and Access

- A system of connected public laneways parallel to Danforth Avenue and behind the buildings is encouraged.
- Direct vehicular access onto Danforth Avenue is discouraged. Access to surface parking behind Danforth Avenue should be from side streets or rear laneways.
- Parking for development along Danforth Avenue should be internal to the block and on parking spaces located behind the buildings that front onto Danforth Avenue.
- Parking should not be visible from the public street and should be screened from view with a minimum 1.5m landscape buffer with coniferous hedge material or a combination of plantings and a 0.6-1.0m high brick wall.
- Trees and other landscaped areas are encouraged to break up large areas of parking. A 1 tree/5 parking spaces ratio should be achieved.
- Any frontage of above grade deck parking structure adjacent to a public street should be lined with active uses which obscure the



Parking and access laneway located at the back of a mixed use building



Examples of bicycle parking

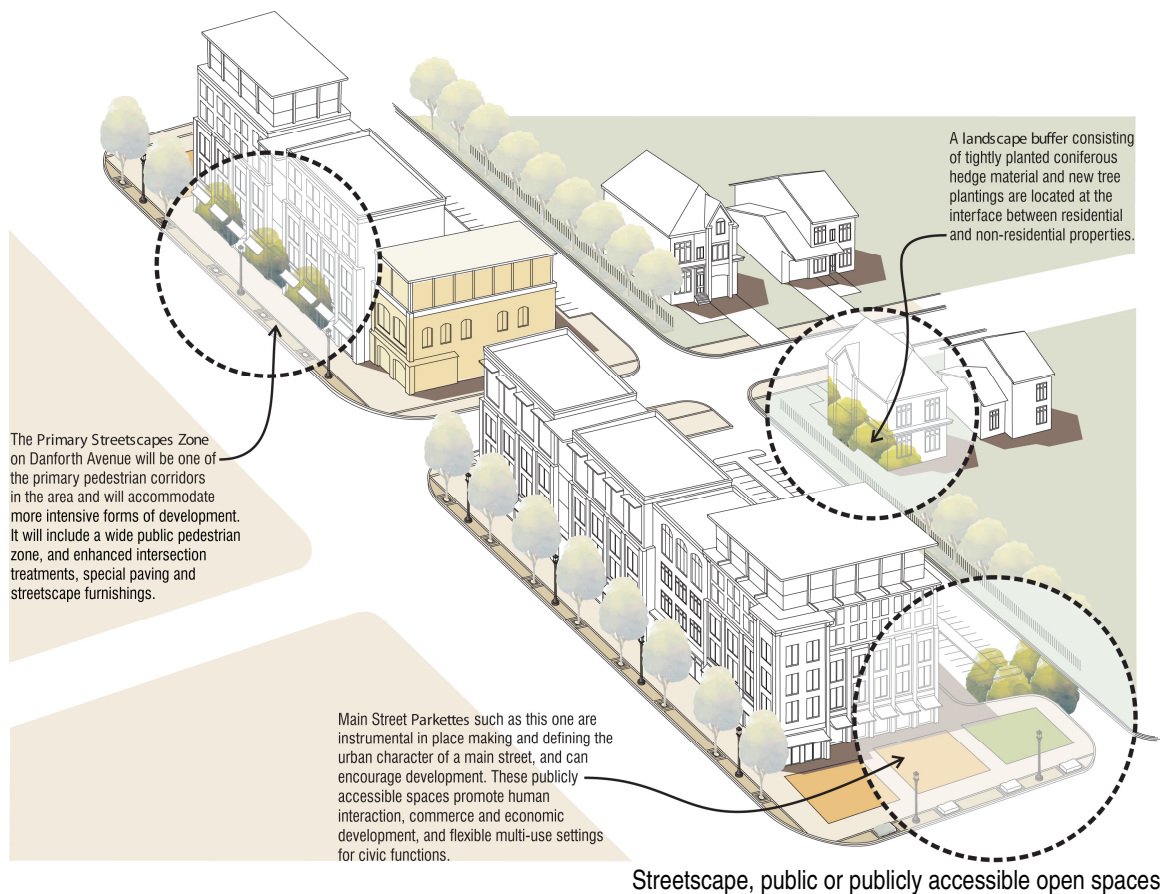
parking structure from the street.

- Parking facilities for bicycles should be provided for commercial and residential developments.

### 3.0 Public Realm Guidelines

Public realm improvements in the Study Area will improve connections to neighbourhoods, encourage pedestrian oriented activities, and establish a renewed setting for the main street redevelopment.

The public realm includes streetscape, public parks and open spaces, as well as publicly accessible private open spaces.



## Streetscape

### Danforth Avenue



Street furnishings and decorative elements enhance the character of a main street

- Danforth Avenue is the most significant street and the primary pedestrian corridor within the Study Area. A streetscape improvement project was implemented by the City in 2004. The improvements included street tree planting, decorative pavers for the sidewalk, seating walls, etc. Future improvements should include:
  - Street furnishings; pedestrian scale street lighting; decorative elements such as banners, flower baskets, etc.;
  - Special intersection paving and design treatments; and
  - Additional enhancements at key intersections

### Danforth Road, Victoria Park Avenue, Pharmacy Avenue, and Warden Avenue

- Similar design treatments as those on Danforth Avenue should be carried out on Danforth Road, Victoria Park Avenue, Pharmacy Avenue, and Warden Avenue, especially at the locations near the Danforth Avenue intersections.
- The streetscape treatments along Victoria Park Avenue should be further extended to the TTC Victoria Park Station.

### Denton Avenue, Coventry Street, Mansion Avenue, and Lucy Avenue

Streetscape improvements for these streets should be focused on lands adjacent to commercial uses and pre-war main street buildings and may include the upgrading of



sidewalks, special paving, and pedestrian scale lighting and street tree plantings.

## Public Parks/Open Spaces

### Madelaine Park

- Madelaine Park is envisioned to be vibrant, accessible and beautiful focal point for the community. Overall improvements and potential expansion to Denton Ave. and St. Dunstan Dr. are recommended.

### St. Dunstan Court

- The court-like space can be designed to facilitate parking for the adjacent mixed-use fabric as well as a pedestrian connection from Danforth Avenue to Madelaine Park.

### Lucy Avenue Tot Lot

- The small neighbourhood park can be improved through overall improvements to the active play area and enhancements to hard and soft landscaping.

### Kenworthy Park

- Additional access and park frontage would be possible with Mansion Street extension.

### Mansion Parkette

- The underutilized lot is a potential neighbourhood park location with generous street frontage and access.

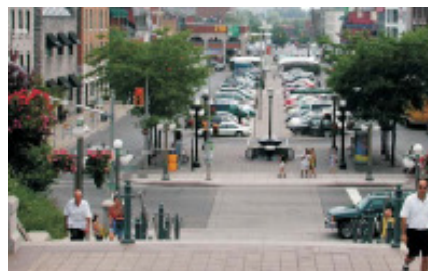
### Scotia Parkette

- The main street parkette provides transition to the residential neighbourhood to the north. Overall park improvements can make it a more desirable destination.

### Oakridge Park



Madelaine Park can become the focal point for the community through enhancements and expansion



St. Dunstan Court may serve as a parking facility as well as a pedestrian connection to Madelaine Park



Oakridge Park has the potential to be reconfigured and improved to be another community focal point



Small open spaces along a main street frontage encourage urban interaction and enhance the character of the main street

- Oakridge Park is currently owned by the Toronto District School Board. If the park ownership can be conveyed to the City in the future or if its long term use as a park can be secured, it has the potential to be reconfigured to be a focal point for the community. A possible reconfiguration plan is illustrated on the Concept Plan.

### Publicly Accessible Open Spaces

- Small open spaces for pedestrians should be provided along the Danforth Avenue frontage, especially at corner locations at intersections.
- While these areas may not be in full public ownership, they should be publicly accessible.
- These spaces should be designed to provide a flexible multi-use setting for pedestrians. They should be small and intimate, and capable of accommodating day-to-day use. They should be comprised of a mix of durable hard and soft landscaping with many places for sitting.
- The following locations are identified as potential locations for such spaces (See Concept Plan). Other locations along the Danforth Avenue frontage should also be considered when redevelopments occur.

#### Danforth Avenue/Pharmacy Avenue

- The spaces at the north-west and north-east corners of the intersection should be designed to enhance the urban character of the Pharmacy node and its role as an identifiable place along the corridor.

#### Danforth Avenue/August Avenue

- The north-east corner should be designed to be a small and intimate urban space

capable of accommodating a variety of day-to-day uses and encourage urban interaction with an opportunity for commercial uses.

#### Danforth Avenue/Danforth Road

- As a focal point, the triangular area at the north-east corner of the realigned intersection should be designed as an urban plaza, and to include both hard and soft landscaping to accommodate the commercial presence of the bordering mixed use development.



Potential new open space at the reconfigured Danforth Avenue and Danforth Road intersection

#### **Public Art**

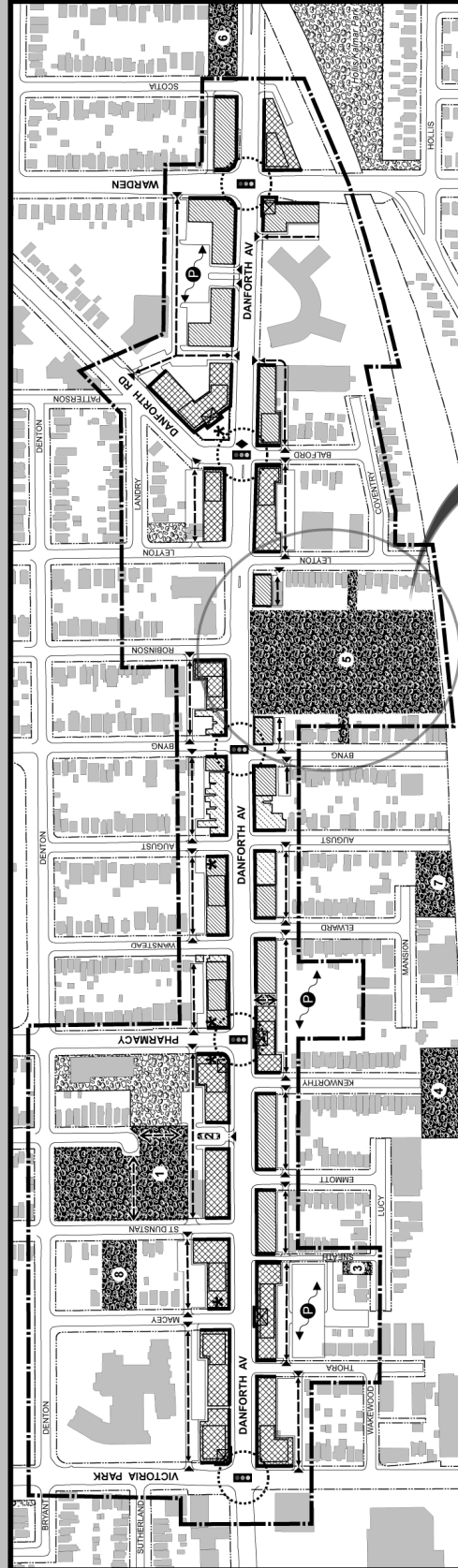
- Public art enhances the pedestrian experience and contributes to place-making and should be part of the redevelopment of Danforth Avenue.
- Public art can take the form of paintings, sculptures, statues and other forms of art.
- Public art should be incorporated into the landscape adjacent to buildings, along paths and within parks.
- Potential locations for public art installation include:
  - Danforth Avenue / Victoria Park Avenue;
  - Danforth Avenue / Pharmacy Avenue;
  - Danforth Avenue / Danforth Road;
  - Danforth Avenue / Warden Avenue;
  - Madelaine Park; and
  - Oakridge Park



Public art reflects community heritage and values and serves as markers for important places

#### **4.0 Danforth Avenue Study Concept Plan** (See next page)





**Legend**

- Focus Area Boundary
- Existing Building
- Street Right-of-Way
- Potential Municipal Parking in the vicinity

**Movement System**

- Laneway System
- Pedestrian Access
- Access Point
- Signalized Intersection

♦ Proposed intersection improvements at Danforth Avenue and Danforth Road subject to environmental assessment approval.

**Building Information**

- Mid-Rise Building Envelope (height 2-10 storeys)\*
- Mid-Rise Building Envelope (height 2-7 storeys)\*
- Pre-War Main Street Building Envelope (height 2-4 storeys)\*
- Primary Commercial Frontage

\* Building heights are subject to consideration of the 45 degree angular plane where applicable.

**Parks**

- 1 Madeline Park Expansion
- 2 Potential St. Dunstan Courtyard
- 3 Lucy Avenue Tot Lot
- 4 Kenworthy Park
- 5 Oakridge Park
- 6 Scotia Parkette Improvements
- 7 Potential Mansion Parkette
- 8 Potential Madeline Park Extension

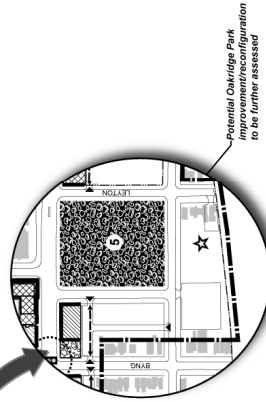
**City Owned Land for Possible Park Use**

- 7 Potential Mansion Parkette
- 8 Potential Madeline Park Extension

**Park/Open Space (potential)**

- Public Park/Plaza
- Institutional Open Space
- Publicly Accessible Open Space
- Possible Community Facility

Not To Scale



Potential Oakridge Park Expansion to be further assessed