

Danforth Avenue Planning Study Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting # 2 Summary

Meeting

Thursday, January 26, 2017, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Danforth Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Avenue

Attendance

Name	Organization
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members and Alternates	
Tamara Bassilios	Resident
Charles Braive	Friends of Danforth East
Luisa Coluccio	Resident
Billy Dertilis	Danforth Mosaic BIA
Julia Gray	Resident
Oliver Hierlihy	Danforth Mosaic BIA
Andrey Kvedaras	DECA
Charles Lanktree	Resident
Anita Millar	Toronto/East York Community Preservation Panel
Mary Ann Neary	Ward 32 Spokes
Phil Pothen	Ward 31 Bikes
Matt Reid	Resident
Brian Spratley	DECA
Gay Stephenson	DECA
Peter Woodcock	Friends of Stephenson Park
City of Toronto	
Councillor Janet Davis	Ward 31 Councillor, City of Toronto
Councillor Mary Margaret McMahon	Ward 32 Councillor, City of Toronto
Abby Ramcharan	Constituency Assistant, Councillor McMahon
Erin George	Executive Assistant to Councillor Davis, City of Toronto
Daniel Woolfson	Community Planning, City of Toronto
Kyle Knoeck	Community Planning, City of Toronto
Caroline Kim	Urban Design, City of Toronto

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Name	Organization
James Parakh	Urban Design, City of Toronto
Pourya Nazemi	Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto
Tamara Anson-Cartwright	Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto
Facilitation Team	
Liz Nield	Lura Consulting
Amanda Crompton	Lura Consulting

Meeting Purpose

- Provide update on study process and timeline
- Preview and discuss presentation materials for Community Consultation Meeting #2, including proposed character areas, public realm analysis and heritage review

Meeting Highlights

- **Welcome and Introductions**
 - Councillor Janet Davis welcomed SAC participants
 - Liz Nield (Lura Consulting) welcomed new and returning SAC members to the second SAC meeting for the Danforth Avenue Planning Study
 - Liz Nield introduced herself as the independent facilitator for the SAC, noting that Lura Consulting is a neutral third party facilitating community engagement for the study
 - Participants introduced themselves and their interests in the community
 - The meeting agenda (see Appendix A) was reviewed
- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Recap**
 - The SAC Meeting #1 Summary was approved as final pending a point be added that there is a strong desire to have more employment and job opportunities in the study area
- **Study Update**
 - Daniel Woolfson (Community Planning, City of Toronto) provided a brief overview of the project and study area
 - Daniel Woolfson presented an overview of the community feedback that was collected from the Community Consultation Meeting held on June 27, 2016 and SAC Meeting held on October 24, 2016
 - The draft vision statement for the study was presented
 - Caroline Kim (Urban Design, City of Toronto) outlined the defining character elements of the streetscape: retail animation zone, landscaped areas, and community art
 - Caroline Kim explained that the study area was divided into three Character Areas based on existing features and elements of the street (rhythm, scale and pronunciation):
 - Character Area 1 (Coxwell Avenue to Woodbine Avenue)
 - Character Area 2 (Woodbine Avenue to Main Street)

- Character Area 3 (Main Street to Victoria Park Avenue)
 - Pourya Nazemi (Heritage Preservation Services) discussed the cultural heritage resources within the study area
 - Daniel Wolfson introduced the Complete Streets Guidelines document and explained how it would be used to inform the direction of this Planning Study
 - An update on Metrolinx activities occurring close to the study area was provided
 - It was outlined that the Area Profile Report will be presented at the Community Council meeting on February 22
- **Discussion and Feedback on the Presentation**
 - Following the questions of clarification, SAC members addressed the following discussion questions:
 1. What feedback or advice do you have to improve the clarity of the presentation material in preparation for Community Consultation Meeting #2?
 2. What feedback or advice do you have for staff on the proposed Character Areas?
 3. What feedback or advice do you have for staff on the proposed heritage review of the study area?
 4. What feedback or advice do you have for staff on the proposed public realm analysis?
 5. Do you have any other feedback or advice for staff based on the analysis and work completed to date?
 - A summary of the feedback and advice is outlined in the following section. A more detailed summary (including questions and answers) is provided in Appendix B.
- **Wrap Up and Next Steps**
 - Liz Nield encouraged members of the SAC to email any additional feedback to Lura before February 8, 2017
 - The SAC was reminded that the next Community Consultation Meeting (CCM) is scheduled for the evening of February 23, 2017

Feedback and Advice

Feedback and advice on the presentation and CCM #2 format:

- Include a study timeline and provide a brief update on where we are in the process
- Highlight the differences between the character areas, rather than focusing on the many similarities
- Begin the presentation with a short background on what the planning study aims to achieve
- Provide examples of other completed planning studies (e.g., Queen Street)
- Consider removing the slides focused on the streetscape manual
- Recommend a café style/charrette arrangement for CCM #2 with facilitators and note-takers at each table to assist with the public providing input on the study
- Ensure the CCM #2 venue is large enough to accommodate all those in attendance

Feedback and advice on the proposed vision statement and planning study logo:

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- The planning study logo presented was received well by the SAC
- There was general agreement among SAC members that the vision statement is a good starting point, but may be too long
- Place a greater emphasis in the vision statement on generating additional jobs and economic growth, such as by using the word *'enhance'* instead of *'sustains an independent and diverse commercial sector'*
- Specifically include the word *'employment'* (i.e., "Danforth Avenue welcomes and sustains an independent and diverse *employment* and commercial sector")
- Incorporate the phrase *'live, work, play'* at the end of the vision statement (i.e., "a consistent streetscape that is both authentic and beautiful *and a place to live, work and play*")
- End the vision statement after the fourth line

Feedback and advice on the proposed character areas and built form:

- Prevent the development of *'incompatible'* and low density uses on Danforth Avenue that are permitted under the current Zoning Bylaw (e.g., surface parking lots, a carwash, etc.)
- Consider extending Character Area 1 further to the east (e.g., to Cedarvale or Gledhill)
- The character area boundaries do not need to, and likely should not, align with major intersections
- Ask the public for their view of the character of their community to assist with the formation of character area boundaries (e.g., what parts of the existing character do we want to keep and improve?)
- Be clear about the implications of the character area analysis
- Having character areas is a good approach to urban design and community building
- Clearly articulate what planning mechanisms might be used to achieve the goals and vision of this study
- Encourage the inclusion of more commercial and office spaces along the Avenue to increase foot traffic and activity throughout the day
- Encourage a diversity of uses along Danforth Avenue (not all residential)
- Create site-specific guidelines for the larger soft sites in the study area that can accommodate additional density to ensure a mix of primary uses, such as: offices, commercial uses, residential, educational institutions, spaces dedicated to art, culture and recreational, etc.
- Articulate the desire for more employment and alternative employment uses (e.g., brewery, incubators, arts space, educational institutions, etc.)
- Set the stage to encourage more employment and office development along Danforth (e.g., through incentives, policies, public/private partnerships, etc.)
- Identify the sites in the study area that can accommodate taller buildings (including sites that can be consolidated to do so) and flag them to ensure we do not miss out on the opportunity to bring in additional density, jobs, foot-traffic, etc.
- Provide the community with the opportunity to discuss and comment on building heights – specifically on what they think is appropriate for the character area nearest them
- Encourage the development and inclusion of spaces dedicated to the arts and culture along Danforth Avenue

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- Consider amending the Zoning Bylaw as a result of this planning study to provide clarity to the public and development industry on what is permitted and required for new development
- Include the width of Danforth Avenue in the Area Profile Report
- The large scale high-rise redevelopment planned for Main Square should be considered as part of this study. The study area will be losing important outdoor public space at this intersection as a result of this development.

Feedback and advice on the proposed heritage review:

- Include the East Toronto Masonic Temple in the heritage preservation review
- Explain what the results of the heritage study might be (e.g., will there be any new policies or regulations in place?)

Feedback and advice on the proposed public realm analysis:

- Set out what the optimal setbacks from the curb line to property line might be; not just the existing setbacks
- Encourage additional foot traffic along the Avenue
- Continue to reference the Complete Streets Guidelines
- Implement measures that will make Danforth safer and more appealing as a route for cyclists
- Reduce the number of driveways that cut in and out of Danforth Avenue to create a safer pedestrian and cycling environment
- Consider adding more pedestrian crosswalks to reduce the amount of “j-walking” that results from long blocks
- Address issues with the vehicular lane arrangement on Danforth Avenue – for example, the width of the parking lane does not provide enough space for both curb-side parking and a free flowing travelled lane
- As part of the public realm analysis ask the community for their input. For example, ask the community which type of public space they would value the most, as well as where along the Avenue they would like to see new outdoor public spaces.

Feedback and advice on the SAC:

- Ensure every SAC member has adequate time to provide complete submissions
- Provide SAC members with the materials being discussed in advance of the meeting
- Consider using a sound system at future meetings



Appendix A Meeting Agenda

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Thursday, January 26, 2017, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Danforth Mennonite Church, 2174 Danforth Avenue

Meeting Purpose: 1) Provide update on study process and timeline; and 2) Preview and discuss presentation materials for Community Consultation Meeting #2.

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 **SAC Meeting #1 Recap, Review and Approval of Meeting #1 Summary**
Liz Nield, Facilitator – Lura Consulting
- 7:15 pm **Study Update**
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 **Questions and Feedback on the Presentation**

Discussion Questions

1. What feedback or advice do you have to improve the clarity of the presentation material in preparation for Community Consultation Meeting #2?
2. What feedback or advice do you have for staff on the proposed Character Areas for the study?

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3. *What feedback or advice do you have for staff on the proposed heritage review of the study area?*
4. *What feedback or advice do you have for staff on the proposed public realm analysis?*
5. *Do you have any other feedback or advice for staff based on the analysis and work completed to date?*

8:55 pm

Wrap-up and Next Steps

Liz Nield, Facilitator – Lura Consulting

9:00 pm

Adjourn



Appendix B

Q&A, Comments, and Advice

During the discussion, a number of questions of clarification were raised relating to the content of the presentation and the study. A summary of the discussion is provided below. Questions are noted with **Q**, responses are noted by **A**, and comments are noted by **C**.

Q. How will this Planning Study impact what can be built as of right on Danforth Avenue? It looks like the outcomes you are talking about are Urban Design Guidelines and an Official Plan (OP) Amendment. Neither of those are applicable law. Many of the things that people have objected to recently on Danforth are happening as of right. Recently we saw an older building demolished and replaced with a surface parking lot as part of a car dealership. In addition to the Design Guidelines and OP Amendment, what other outcomes of this study will help to close the gaps in the existing Zoning Bylaw so that we don't have this continued development of uses that are not compatible?

A. We generally think that the existing policies and zoning in place are appropriate. Most of the area is designated for mixed use and the Zoning Bylaw does reflect that. We are not looking to make changes to the existing zoning. This study is primarily intended to produce specific policies that will help guide future growth and supplement the Midrise and Avenue Guidelines for the area.

Q. Would it be worthwhile adding the actual width of the Danforth into your Area Profile Report to help inform how we might be looking at Complete Streets?

A. Absolutely. We do touch on that in the Area Profile Report. Danforth is one of the largest right-of-way's and that presents an opportunity for us.

C. I like the logo.

C. The draft vision statement is very descriptive and it is quite good, however I have some suggestions that will be sent through email.

Q. Are the setbacks shown in the presentation illustrating the *existing* setbacks from the edge of the curb to the property line? When looking at Complete Streets, it lays out *optimum* uses in that zone. Are we going to come up with what the *optimal setbacks* might be from the curb line to the property line?

A. We are heading in that directions. The point of the drawing in the diagram is to illustrate the existing setbacks as a starting point. We are starting to think about what optimal setbacks would be.

C. Looking at the character areas suggested in the presentation, it seems that the Coxwell section should actually extend further to the east. It may not be as simple as going to the major intersections.

C. I like to see that heritage is being considered as part of this study, and that you are referring to Complete Streets.

Q. Can you expand on the implications of the character area analysis?

A. As part of the direction from Council to undertake a planning study of Danforth, the avenue was separated into two segments. The segment we are starting with here is quite large. As such, these character areas are intended to help make the study area more manageable and allow us to make more specific recommendations for certain areas within the study if we choose. A blueprint guideline solution for this entire segment doesn't make sense. The existing zoning is different as you move east and that is reflected in the different character boundaries. I don't think we will be looking at specific zoning changes because the zoning in place does reflect what the Official Plan talks about in terms of growth and having a mix of uses.

Q. The applications that we are receiving are not in conformity with the existing zoning. We are getting requests for increased heights and densities. How will the study address this other than through Midrise Guidelines?

A. The site-specific applications that have come in along Danforth are for more height and density than is permitted in the Zoning Bylaw. Typically, the guidelines that we have produced from our planning studies have anticipated the type of midrise development that could be supported along these streets. Eventually I would expect that we would land at the same place for this study where we will have an understanding of existing conditions and ideas for how development should be shaped. These guidelines are a useful tool for us to evaluate future development applications against. One of the things that we have done in other study areas where we have not changed the zoning, is site and area specific Official Plan policies that set some parameters that don't exist in the city-wide Official Plan around scale, step-backs, setbacks and character areas. We have not changed the zoning in those studies and I don't anticipate we would do that here to accommodate additional density, because not all sites can. It is a good thing to set out an understanding of which sites might be appropriate for more development, but I wouldn't recommend giving those same rights to smaller sites that can't accommodate additional densities.

A. We have not typically looked at non-conforming uses in other studies, but I'd be curious to hear from the SAC on examples of uses that have come forward that are non-conforming (e.g., surface parking lots, the carwash). Let us know what they are, and we can look at those specific sites.

A. Those specific sites are usually very short-term. I believe these are place-holders. When we have the guideline in place, it will help to set the tone for future development. The guidelines will help us planners guide future development on Danforth.

C. It is really important to increase foot-traffic along the street. One way to achieve this is by intensifying. Another way is by having commercial office space so there are people coming down to use the street during the day. We should be looking at the spaces that we have and using them to intensify and increase the number of jobs in this area. We need to generate employment (e.g., the carwash doesn't achieve this).

C. I love the logo and the vision statement. I would emphasize in the vision statement that we want to build up and have more economic development – generate more jobs. Consider the phrase: live, work, play. Consider using the word “enhance” instead of “sustains” the commercial sector.

C. I like the logo and I like that Complete Streets is part of the discussion.

Q. Some of the local restaurants now have photos of how the street used to look in the 1940s and 1950s and it was a booming place. A lot of that was because there were major employers immediate to the Danforth where hundreds of people worked (e.g., at the Shoppers World site, TTC site). This was eliminated and the Danforth seemed to become a vehicular corridor. I see potential in some of the large sites that remain within this area as having the ability to bring people to the area during the day. There are some lovely pockets that are busy, but it is also a quiet street during the business day and retail isn't doing as well as it could. The main reason is because people aren't coming here during the day. Danforth doesn't have the same diversity of primary uses that it had. My fear is that more residential development with one floor of commercial will not significantly alter the vitality of the area. We need to look at the potential of these large sites that can accommodate employment (e.g., TTC site at Coxwell and Danforth, Shoppers World, Value-mart, Main Square, Canadian Tire site). Can we create site-specific guidelines for those larger sites?

A. You raise a lot of good points about how the neighbourhood has changed. We will be starting our soft site analysis shortly, and we will be looking for sites that can support intensification. The policies in place do support growth of commercial, residential and employment along this avenue, but that doesn't mean the street will change over night. Transportation improvements, such as the downtown relief line, might spur that type of change as well.

C. I'm not optimistic about transportation nodes having any significant impact, because they haven't in the past. However, I do understand that the guidelines are good for development. I'd like us to be proactive, specifically with regards to larger sites, to ensure the diversity happens. There may only be economic benefit for residential development at this time, so there is little incentive to provide a mix of employment space, cultural space, residential, etc.

A. From a heritage and historic point of view its important to look at these large sites and understand the history of why they exist. It helps us better understand the street. For example, why do we have one of the widest right-of-ways? It is because there used to be a streetcar on Danforth before the subway. Heritage is really about place-making. Heritage involves looking at the entire streetscape and seeing the contextual value. In terms of zoning and policy, we were very successive at the Ontario Municipal Board in bringing in new Official Plan heritage policies.

They are very important in our work in urban design. Something that is heritage has policies that are specific to those and under the Planning Act it says heritage *shall be conserved*.

Q. What, if anything, policy-wise do we have in place to encourage mixed use development?

A. From a policy perspective, the Official Plan (OP) supports the type of growth and development you are describing. The OP sets out where the City should grow, and not grow. Danforth is designated as an Avenue or an intensification corridor in the Official Plan. The Official Plan also gives specific land use designations, and most of the properties fronting Danforth are designated as mixed-used areas. Additionally, the entire stretch of Danforth is zoned mixed commercial and residential in the Zoning Bylaw. Again, the existing intent is for a mix of uses. That doesn't mean that every building coming in will be mixed use, but that is the policy-direction.

A. Demand is also something we must consider. What parts of the city do employers look at as desirable? This part of Danforth is not atypical compared to other Toronto main streets, in that they are not attracting office development. Developers interested in building office are typically looking at the financial core. Our policy structure also encourages that we look at building office uses in the city centres, which are Etobicoke Centre, Scarborough Centre, North York Centre, Yonge and Eglinton. It may not be realistic to think then that we will get a bunch of offices here. The comment about looking at the big sites and leveraging them to bring a mix of uses is an interesting one and one we can look into further. In the city centres, there is a policy in place that you cannot demolish office space unless you replace it.

A. The city has a heritage tax incentive for commercial buildings.

C. I would like to reiterate the importance of this study going far enough to dig into the large sites and what can happen on those sites. Given that Danforth is identified as an Avenue at 27 metres we are looking at potentially 9-storey buildings. Identifying where there is potential to build that high and where we have the opportunity to really bring in some additional density can help to achieve the different goals and objectives we are talking about today. I don't want to lose the opportunity to build taller on the few larger sites that can accommodate it, or even on the sites with deeper lots that can be consolidated, just because the current zoning says 3-storeys.

Q. Will we be drafting urban design guidelines for each of the character areas identified?

A. There will be one set of guidelines with variation and specific areas of focus for each character area.

Q. When will the community get a chance to weigh in on height limits?

A. We are starting the conversation tonight by talking about the existing built form and character. We have existing height limits of 14 metres and 10.5 metres in the section east of Main Street. With intensification comes height and growth. The current city-wide guidelines that we have in place speak to building heights at a 1:1 ratio with the right-of-way. For this section of Danforth that equates to about 9-storeys (approximately 27 m). We will be looking at that and determining if that is appropriate for the entire study area.

C. I haven't heard anyone say that they don't want intensification, but people also know that there are 6-storey heights on Queen Street, and 4-storey heights in some places. Why can't we have 4 and 6-storeys on the Danforth? When will building heights be discussed?

A. A built form analysis will be complete as part of this study. There is a difference between Queen Street and Danforth Avenue and that is that the width of the right-of-way is wider here.

A. It is not just about height, but also setbacks. On Queen Street for example, a 6-storey height limit is applied across the corridor, however, in certain character areas we had a shallow angular plane, which meant it was harder to get a 5th and 6th floor. We will be thinking about the appropriateness of things like step-backs, angular planes, podiums, etc., as we progress through this process.

A. We will likely discuss building heights at the third Community Consultation Meeting.

C. Step-backs and setbacks don't change the fact that the building still exists at that height.

C. I like the vision statement, but it is too long. End the vision statement after the fourth line.

C. I noticed that the heritage review went up Dawes Road quite a bit. I am curious why the Masonic Temple near Main Street is not included in the heritage study?

A. We extended Dawes Road because of the historic route of Dawes Road. We have the opportunity to look at individual sites through Council nominations and individual nominations from the community. The reality is that we are up to 600 requests in a backlog. For this study, we are looking at sites within the Danforth corridor.

Q. Where do bike lanes and the thinking about bike lanes fit into this process? We can advocate for protected bike lanes, but also for other measures along the street that would make cycling more convenient, safe and appealing as a way to get around. For example, reducing the number of driveways that cut in and out of Danforth Avenue.

A. We are going to do what we can to help staff in cycling look at specific changes along Danforth. In terms of vehicular entrances off Danforth, that is certainly something that we can look at. For example, for the Queen Street study we recommended that new buildings have rear vehicular access using laneways. We can look at the feasibility of that along Danforth as well. It is not going to happen over night, but we can include it as part of the guidelines that new applications have rear vehicular access points. This can help to change the character of the area to be more pedestrian and cycling focused.

A. When we were doing the soft site analysis, we are always looking to see if there is a rear laneway in the back to promote that rear access because we do not support new front access. We want to get vehicular access off pedestrian corridors and moved to rear laneways.

C. Are there opportunities to have spaces dedicated to small businesses, or dedicated to the arts along the Danforth? I'm thinking of spaces like the National Ballet which is located in a condominium, or Crow's Theatre on Dundas. It was negotiated that these developments accommodate cultural and art spaces. I would like to see these types of spaces encouraged on the soft sites.

A. Planning can help to set the stage for that type of thing. The study is not going to deliver a cultural institution, but what the study could do is articulate a desire for that type of thing, and ideas on how that could be encouraged.

C. Include a timeline and update of where we are at in the process in the presentation.

C. There are more similarities than differences in the slides that talk about the different zones, so I might highlight the differences in a more concise way.

Q. What is the format of the Community Consultation Meeting going to be?

A. We haven't given full thought to this, so if anyone has ideas or input on the structure please feel free to share. We will likely focus on a charrette style meeting to give people the chance to speak with their neighbours and share their feedback.

C. Start with a short dialogue on the background of the planning study and how it results in better urban planning. Consider providing examples of other studies.

C. The streetscape manual could be too much detail for the presentation.

C. Reword the vision statement to read: *"Danforth Avenue is a liveable, vibrant and beautiful destination for all ages. Future development will continue the tradition of a fine-grained walkable avenue by directing new development that will be architecturally distinctive, human scale and LEED green. This plan will encourage the creation of an avenue that is fun, safe, community oriented, and inclusive.*

Danforth Avenue welcomes and sustains an independent, diverse employment sector by encouraging commercial, business, and professional users. The Avenue plan will balance mid-rise, mixed-use intensification with new place-making public spaces, community services and local history. The Avenue will serve a variety of transportation users ensuring a safe, walkable and cyclist-friendly experience."