

## Keele Finch Plus: March 7, 2017 Open House & Public Workshop

### Consultation Summary

*This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting, but instead provides a high level summary of participant feedback.*

*If you have any questions after reviewing this summary and the appendix, please contact Matt Armstrong, Planner, Strategic Initiatives, City of Toronto at [matt.armstrong@toronto.ca](mailto:matt.armstrong@toronto.ca) or 416-392-3521.*

#### Event Overview

On March 7, 2017, the City of Toronto hosted an Open House and Public Workshop for the Keele Finch Plus Study. This is the second open house hosted for the Study and first workshop. The consultation was held at James Cardinal McGuigan School at 1440 Finch Avenue West. Consultation materials are available online at [www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus](http://www.toronto.ca/keelefinchplus).

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- remind the public about the Study and its intentions;
- update and educate the public on work done to date and results of Phase 1;
- discuss the implications of Phase 1 results;
- get initial thinking and ideas from the public for creating a "local urban structure" (specifically, the focus was on where new connections may be needed, where development should be focussed and what the area's organizing elements are);
- discuss and get feedback on the emerging principles from Phase 1 (which guide Phase 2);
- discuss initial thoughts from the public on building types;
- provide attendees opportunities to share what is important to them as the area evolves (e.g. green space, employment, walkability, etc); and
- raise awareness, interest and involvement in the Study.



The event was part of the second phase of the Keele Finch Plus Study. City staff from City Planning (Community Planning, Urban Design, Transportation Planning and Strategic Initiatives) and Transportation Services were in attendance to answer questions and have discussions with attendees

about the Study. Representatives from the TTC and Metrolinx were also in attendance to answer questions about their respective transit infrastructure projects.

Approximately 60 people attended the event. Younger and older people attended, as well as renters and homeowners, business people, students, community organizations, architects and developers, and people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Attendees provided feedback by speaking directly with Staff, providing feedback on comment sheets, completing the survey on emerging principles and participating in the workshop. The participation and involvement of attendees was appreciated. **Thank you to all who attended!**

### **Consultation Details and Promotion**

The consultation ran from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and consisted of an Open House with display boards, survey and discussion table regarding the emerging principles, a short presentation and a facilitated workshop. Feedback was encouraged from participants throughout the event and through conversation with Staff.

#### *Promotions*

The consultation was promoted through two newspapers: the North York Mirror included a print ad on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Downsview Advocate sent out a notice to their email list, posted a banner on their website, and included Facebook and Twitter messages. A consultation flyer was also mailed to all who previously provided an address. The dedicated website listed the event, emails were sent from the dedicated listserv, posts made through official City social media accounts, and word was spread through the local Councillor and centres of influence, such as the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area and York University Heights Neighbourhood Action Partnership.

For more on the event itself, attendees, promotion and more details, please see Appendix B.

#### *Emerging Principles Survey*

The survey included the emerging principles that resulted from Phase 1 work, including public input. There were 10 emerging principles listed and participants were asked to indicate their level of support for each principle. There were two open-ended questions asked as well: one to offer participants an opportunity to provide their own emerging principle and one that allowed for any other comments about any aspect of any of the emerging principles. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

#### *Workshop Activities*

The workshop was scheduled to run from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and was intended as a brainstorming exercise based on Phase 1 work, including research, technical assessment and public input. However, participants were eager and shared lots of useful information which led to the workshop running right until 9:00 p.m. The workshop itself was based on three exercises, each of which were briefly introduced. These exercises were facilitated at seven tables of roughly six to eight participants each. The exercises were: connections, area of development focus, and buildings and placement. At the end of the workshop, each table reported back on the key items that their table discussed.

## Summary of Feedback

Feedback was received from attendees through comment sheets, surveys and workshop activities at the event and through conversation. **The following is a summary of the feedback received.**

### *In General*

Overall, there was great energy at the consultation. Participants are clearly excited about the new transit infrastructure and how it could or should change the community. Most participants remained engaged and stayed right until the end of the consultation at 9 p.m.

There was a genuine enthusiasm for new investment to take place as a result of the coming transit infrastructure, provided that the new development and supporting community infrastructure enhances and improves the area. For example, participants wanted improvements to parks and community facilities, but also wanted new development to be walkable and include retail on the ground floor (particularly at the nodes of Keele and Finch, and Sentinel and Finch).

Participants also provided their opinions on where new development should be focussed, and where connections should take place to improve the transportation network.



### *Emerging Principles Survey*

A total of 21 participants completed the survey (see Appendix A for a copy of the survey and results). Of the 10 emerging principles, 8 had "support" or "strong support" from at least 19 of the 21 respondents (over 90%). The two remaining emerging principles had the support or strong support of 16 and 18 respondents (both represent over 75% of respondents).

Survey respondents also provided suggestions for further principles, which could be summarized as follows:

- Make better use of existing green spaces, including parks, the ravine and hydro corridor;
- Leverage the transit to support new employment opportunities; and
- Encourage flexible design of buildings and public spaces that can adapt as the area evolves.

On the final, open-ended question, respondents were offered an opportunity to provide any additional comments. This is a summary of most of the comments:

- Future public art should reflect the community;
- Community services and facilities could be improved (Edithvale was provided as good example);

- The hydro corridor is a community space because of the community garden, but it could be both improved and taken better advantage of;
- The fuels distribution facilities are of concern to local residents; and
- Better connections are needed in the area, including to York University.

### Workshop – Connections

The first exercise of the workshop was focussed on connections, improving the transportation network and better connecting existing communities. These connections could be improvements to existing

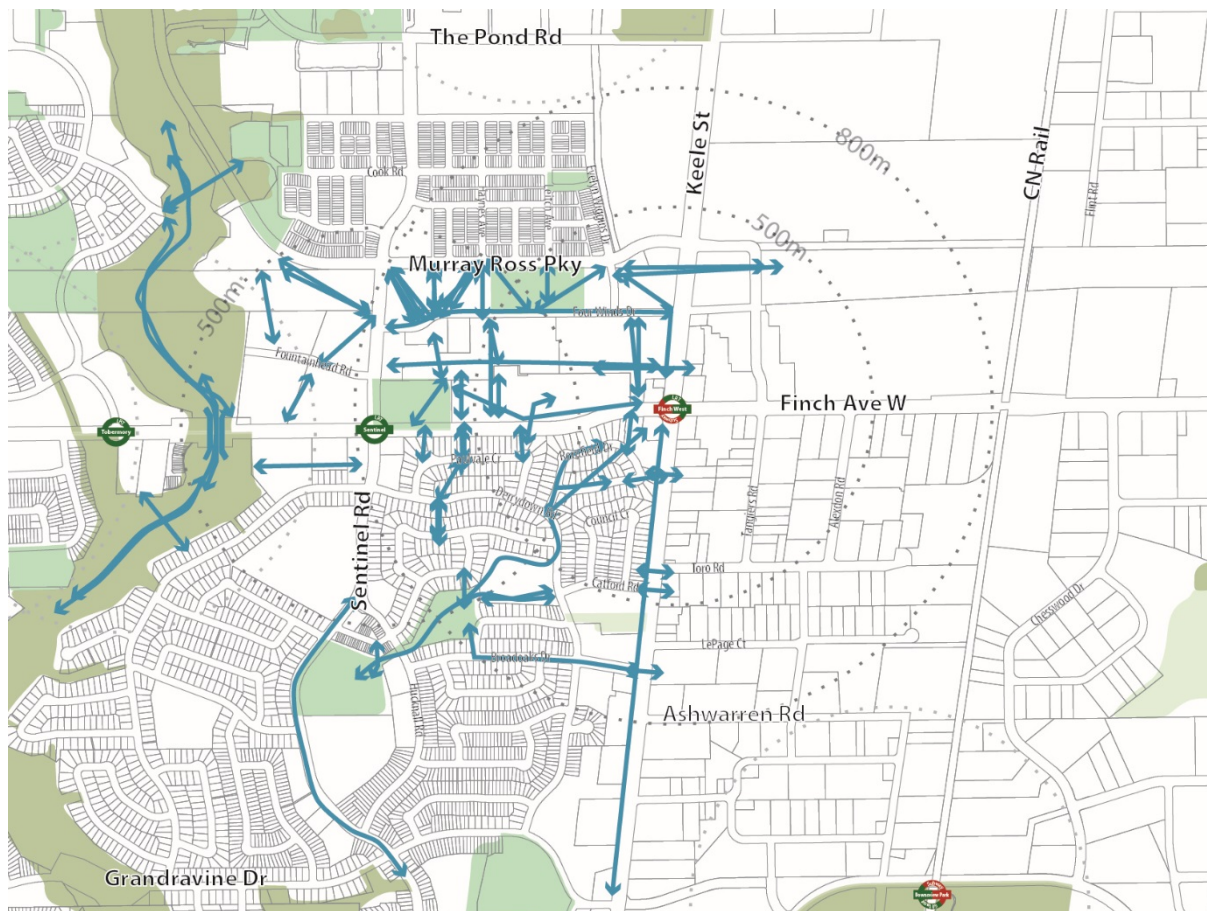


Figure 1 - consolidation of participant-identified potential pedestrian and cycle connections from Workshop Exercise 1.

connections or new connections, but participants were encouraged to focus on new pedestrian/cycling connections and on new roads. Figures 1 and 2 are a consolidation of all of the connections identified by participants.

Participants discussed the condition of existing pathways and cycle paths and indicated that better maintenance and more formality are needed. In some cases, pedestrian connections are unpaved and in other cases they could be made to feel safer, have better lighting and improved drainage. For cycling



paths, they could be more direct and more continuous (the hydro corridor path was cited as being indirect across Keele Street, and bike lanes on roads were cited as ending abruptly and unprotected).

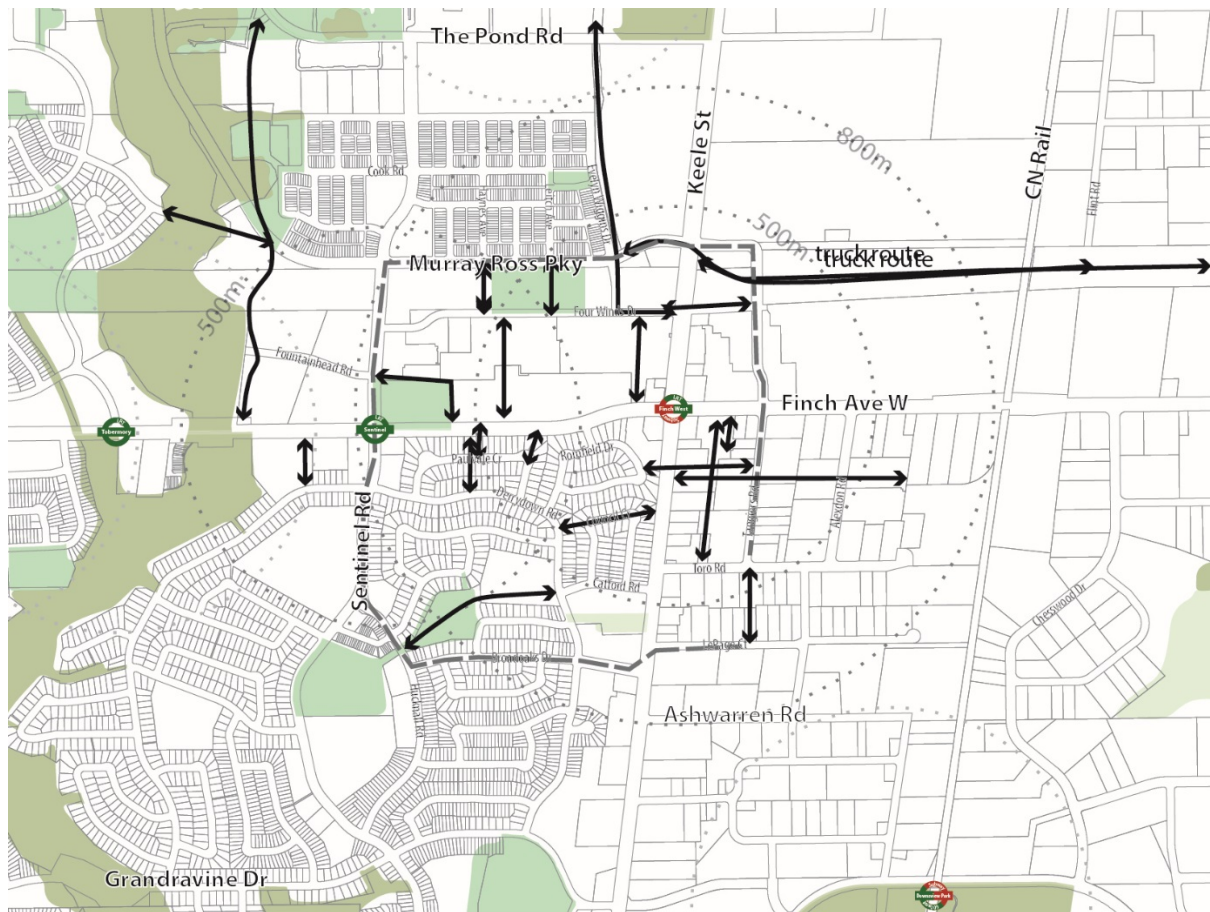


Figure 2 - consolidation of participant-identified potential roadway connections from Workshop's Exercise 1. The grey dashed line was one table's suggestion of creating a ring road around Keele and Finch.

Better connections were encouraged to be made to community elements such as the Yorkwoods Library, community garden, parks, shopping and to key destinations nearby such as York University. New formal connections were often cited to access the plaza on Four Winds Drive, to access the future subway, and to better connect to neighbourhoods on the south side of Finch Avenue West. Crossing the ravine was cited less often, but an improved and more direct alignment of the Black Creek trail was desired.

The condition of roadways was discussed by participants, with an emphasis on improvements to the public realm in many areas. A key example was the need for more trees and screening of fuels distribution facilities and the need for on-street cycle tracks. New roadways were suggested to better connect with York University, to break up some of the larger blocks in the area (northwest and southeast of Keele and Finch in particular). The busway in the hydro corridor was cited as a potential alternate route for trucks.

### *Workshop – Areas of Development Focus*

Attendees expressed interest and enthusiasm for new development and investment in the area provided it benefitted the community and had appropriate siting, scale, design, location and uses. In general, participants cited two main 'nodes' of development focussed on the intersection of Keele and Finch, and at Sentinel and Finch. However, several participants saw these two nodes as performing two different but complementary roles in the larger community. Keele and Finch was envisioned as the commercial, employment and retail node, while Sentinel and Finch was envisioned as a 'community node' with higher density residential uses, retail on the ground floor, and improved nearby parks and open spaces.



Secondary areas of intensification were cited as being to the southeast of Keele and Finch, and along the main arterial roads. However, the level of intensity varied among some tables specifically regarding development intensity between the two nodes on Finch. Similarly, some tables suggested that the east side of Keele should have more intensive development than the west side, bearing in mind that only employment uses would be contemplated on the east side. Two tables suggested that Keele Street should be identified as an 'Avenue' in Toronto's Official Plan.

Infill in apartment neighbourhoods differed by table and location, with the Fountainhead area almost universally identified for intensification, whereas the Four Winds area was suggested as having less infill potential. Some tables did cite redevelopment of the townhouses between Four Winds and James Cardinal McGuigan, with each table suggesting that these should better frame adjacent green spaces and be redeveloped to allow better north-south connections through the green space. Some participants suggested redevelopment of some of the low-rise apartments roughly between Grandravine Drive and Ashwarren Road.

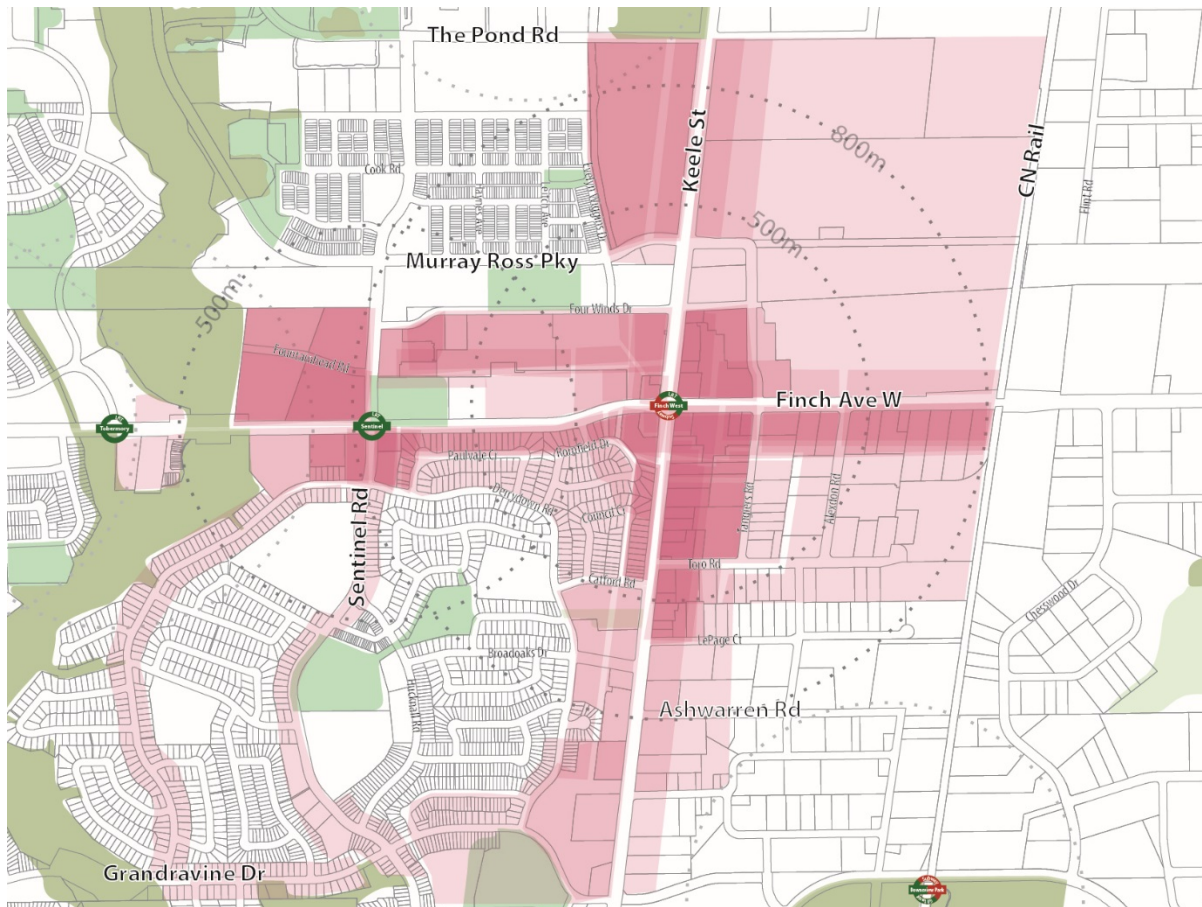


Figure 3 - consolidation of all areas identified by participants as part of the 'area of development focus' exercise (Workshop Exercise 2). Each layer is semi-transparent, leading those areas cited by participants more often to show up as a darker pink.

The map above is a consolidation of all of the areas of development focus identified by participants through the workshop. When made semi-transparent and placed on top of each other, the pattern of two nodes (Keele and Finch, Sentinel and Finch) and desire for intensification along the main arterial roads is made clear.

### *Workshop Exercise 3 – Building Typologies and Placement*

The final workshop exercise involved a visual preference survey of building typologies. Having just completed an exercise to identify areas of development focus, participants were then asked to populate those areas with building typologies. This exercise was conducted to get participants to think about their development focus structure and to help staff interpret what participants intended by each area of intensity.

There was general consensus about placing mid-rise or taller buildings at the nodes of Keele and Finch, and at Sentinel and Finch. Similarly, there was a desire for mid-rise sized employment buildings on Finch



east of Keele, and on the east side of Keele south of Finch. Some participants suggested these should also be placed on the east side of Keele north of Murray Ross Parkway.

There was some variation about what kinds of new development were appropriate on the west side of Keele south of Finch, and on the south side of Finch between the two nodes. Some tables suggested that these be mid-rise buildings while others suggested townhouses, and still others suggested walk-ups.

One table suggested that Sentinel and Derrydown act as more important roads in the area and should allow walk-ups.



### **What happens to this feedback?**

This feedback is one component of input into the Study. Other inputs include planning policy and directions (including Provincial policy), research and technical analysis with facts and figures, and other inputs from the local community, stakeholders, City Divisions and agencies. Toronto City Planning will consider all of this feedback to develop concept plans for how the area may change in the future. The concept plans will be presented at future public consultations to refine and improve them.



## Appendix A: Emerging Principles Survey

Through our Phase 1 conversations and input, the following emerging issues were identified. These will be refined further into guiding principles.

**Please evaluate these and provide your comments to help get them right.**

If you think we've missed one, please add it at the end of the document.

Thanks for your input!

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Involve the community in transforming the area into a transit supportive place over the medium to long term.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      16      5      0      0

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Ensure the complexity of the area is well understood and expressed. Investment and change in policy should respond to the differences within the area

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      14      5      2      0

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Encourage compact development that frames public streets and the public realm of parks and open spaces at good proportion, and both supports and leverages the investment in transit.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      15      3      3      0

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Encourage development that contributes to the vitality and vibrancy of the area, and provides amenities and services.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      19      2      0      0

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Ensure that future uses and built form support and complement the existing employment uses in the area, including nearby industry and Downsview Airport.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      12      4      4      1

*Continued on the other side*

Support a high quality of life for current and future residents and workers.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      19      1      1      0

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Support and encourage a more comfortable, walkable, cycle friendly and more beautiful public realm.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      18      2      1      0

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Investment is needed in the public realm to make it more functional and connected, and to enhance the identity and liveability of the area.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      16      5      0      0

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Encourage a vital employment area that supports a range of business activities.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      13      7      1      0

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Improve the transportation network by making new connections, supporting goods movement, reducing block sizes and encouraging walkability. This supports active transportation options such as walking and cycling.

☐ Strongly support      ☐ Support      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Do not support

Result:      17      2      2      0

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If you like, provide us with your own guiding statement. If you need more room, feel free to use the back of page 3.

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*Continued on the other side*

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Do you have any other comments about any of the emerging issues? Are we missing anything? If you need more room, feel free to use the back of this page.

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About you (all questions are optional):

A. ☐ Male ☐ Female

B. ☐ Live nearby ☐ Student nearby ☐ Work nearby ☐ Own business nearby

B-1. If you live nearby, do you ☐ Own, ☐ Rent or ☐ Other?

C. First 3 digits of your Home Postal code: \_\_ \_\_ \_\_

D. Your age range: ☐ Under 20, ☐ 21-30, ☐ 31-40, ☐ 41-50, ☐ 51-60, ☐ 61-70, ☐ over 70

E. How did you hear about tonight's event (check all that apply)?

☐ City Planning Staff, ☐ Community Organization, ☐ City of Toronto E-updates,

☐ Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc), ☐ Word of Mouth, ☐ Newspaper Ad,

☐ Ward Councillor, ☐ Word of Mouth, ☐ Flyer or Bulletin, ☐ Study Website, ☐ News Story,

☐ Professional Association, ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*End of survey*



## Appendix B: Consultation Details

**Date, time and location of consultation:** March 7, 2017 between 5:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at James Cardinal McGuigan School (1440 Finch Avenue West, just west of Keele Street).

**Format:** Open House with display boards. Extended hours to allow as many people as possible to participate. Survey and discussion table. Fifteen minute presentation. Workshop.

**Handouts:** Discussion Guide that explained the Study at a high level and summary of Phase 1. Comment sheets. Contact details and the website are on the Guide.

**Promotions:** Two newspaper ads: North York Mirror on March 2<sup>nd</sup> in print and Downsview Advocate through electronic means (email listserv, website post, Facebook and Twitter posts). A flyer distributed to interested parties who previously provided an address. A dedicated website was set up for the Study and contained event details. Two emails were sent to the Keele Finch Plus listerv containing over 150 subscribers in advance of the event. Social media were used for promotion through City of Toronto official accounts (Facebook, Twitter). Encouragement of centres of influence, such as organizations and community groups to spread the word. Promotion through Councillor Perruzza's office.

**Aboriginal Consultation:** Letters were sent to the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, the Conseil de la Nation Huronne-Wendat, the Kawartha Nishnawbe First Nation, the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and the Metis Nation to offer to consult with them directly. The letter also provided details of the public consultation. The Conseil de la Nation Huronne-Wendat responded and questions were clarified via email. The Mississaugas of the New Credit responded that they would provide a future response.

**Feedback opportunities:** Staff covering many disciplines, including Transportation Planning, Urban Design and Community Planning were present to take questions. Questions of clarification were taken after the presentation. A comment section was included in the Discussion Guide. A half-page comment sheet was left on the tables. The workshop was conducted at tables with facilitators who took notes and helped facilitate the workshop discussion. A survey was conducted and results collected. Two students – one enrolled in urban planning and one enrolled in social work – took notes of what they heard and submitted comments to staff.

**Reach:** Over 60 people attended on March 7, 2017. There were a total of 323 unique visitors to the website (February 1 to March 7). Twitter impressions for tweets about the event were 1,294 during the event and 2,624 leading up to the event. Note that these are impressions on the City Planning account only (@CityPlanTO). Additional impressions would have occurred from tweets from Councillor Peruzza, Metrolinx, DUKE Heights and other accounts (personal or otherwise).

**Comments received:** The following were received in addition to one-on-one discussions and feedback received by Staff, emails received, completed workshop maps and notes: 21 surveys with comments and 2 additional comment sheets.