



DANFORTH



AVENUE PLANNING STUDY



Consultation Summary Report

April 2018



Danforth Avenue Planning Study Consultation Summary 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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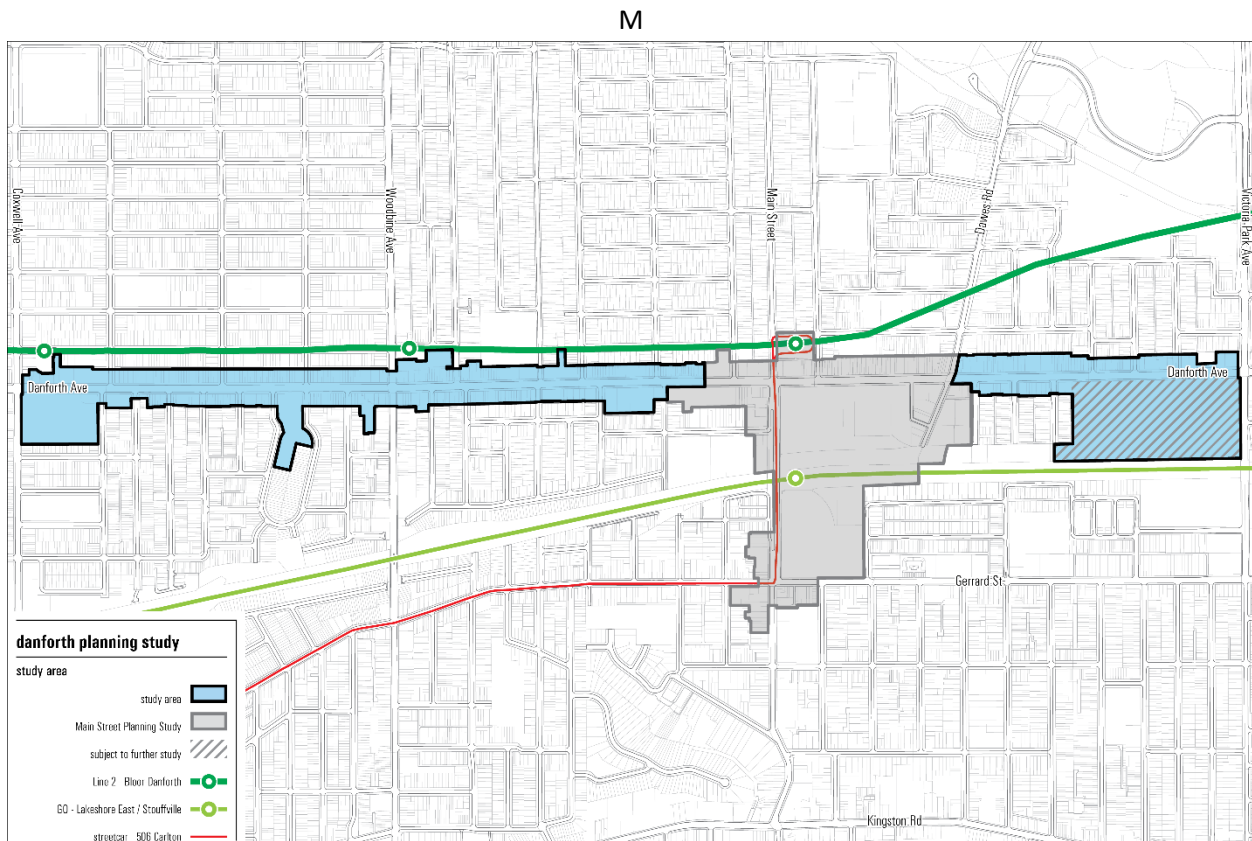
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Executive Summary

Background

In July 2014, City Council directed the City Planning Division to undertake a study of Danforth Avenue, in two segments, between the Don River and Coxwell Avenue and between Coxwell Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue. The Danforth Avenue Planning Study commenced with the first segment, Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue in mid-2016. The study area was revised (figure 1) to respond to Toronto and East York Community Council item TE27.42. The item requested City Planning to initiate a study focusing on the development potential, built form, and public realm within proximity of the Main Street TTC station and the Danforth GO station.

The Avenue Study worked to create a community-supported long-term vision of change for the study area. The final deliverable of the study was to develop a comprehensive planning and urban design framework that addressed land use, built form and retail vitality, public realm, Complete Streets and transportation, community services and facilities, heritage, and parks and open spaces. The final policy document and planning and urban design guidelines will create the framework to guide intensification and growth within the study area. The framework will apply to the review of any Planning Act development application within the study area and for other city initiatives.



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Figure 1: Revised Danforth Avenue Planning Study Area

Consultation Process Overview

Public and Stakeholder consultation played a key role in shaping the Danforth Avenue Planning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park). Five rounds of consultation were conducted between June 2016 and April 2018 designed to obtain feedback at key project milestones. Consultation activities included Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings, Community Consultation Meetings, Planners in Public Spaces (PiPs) events, and a Bengali Community Information Meeting.

Participant Feedback

Public participation was integral to the Danforth Avenue Planning Study process. Members of the community provided their feedback to help shape the study through feedback forms, online surveys, emails and other methods of correspondence during each round of consultation. Public input assisted the City in understanding the community's priorities related to the seven focus areas identified in the project's Terms of Reference; built form, public realm, retail vitality, complete streets, community services and facilities, heritage and historic character and character and place. Community input was used to continuously refine the approach of the Avenue Study at each stage of the process and was central to the development recommended policy directions drafted by City staff.

Next Steps

The final deliverables, include City Planning's final report, site and area-specific policies and area-specific guidelines will be submitted to Toronto and East York Community Council (tentative date May 2, 2018). Several complementary planning studies are in the works and will be scheduled in the near future. These include the Main Street Planning Study, the Coxwell TTC Barns Master Plan and the Shopper's World Future Study.

1. Introduction

Background – About the Danforth Avenue Planning Study

In July 2014, City Council directed the City Planning Division to undertake a study of Danforth Avenue, in two segments, between the Don River and Coxwell Avenue and between Coxwell Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue. The Danforth Avenue Planning Study commenced with the first segment, Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue in mid-2016.

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Study Area

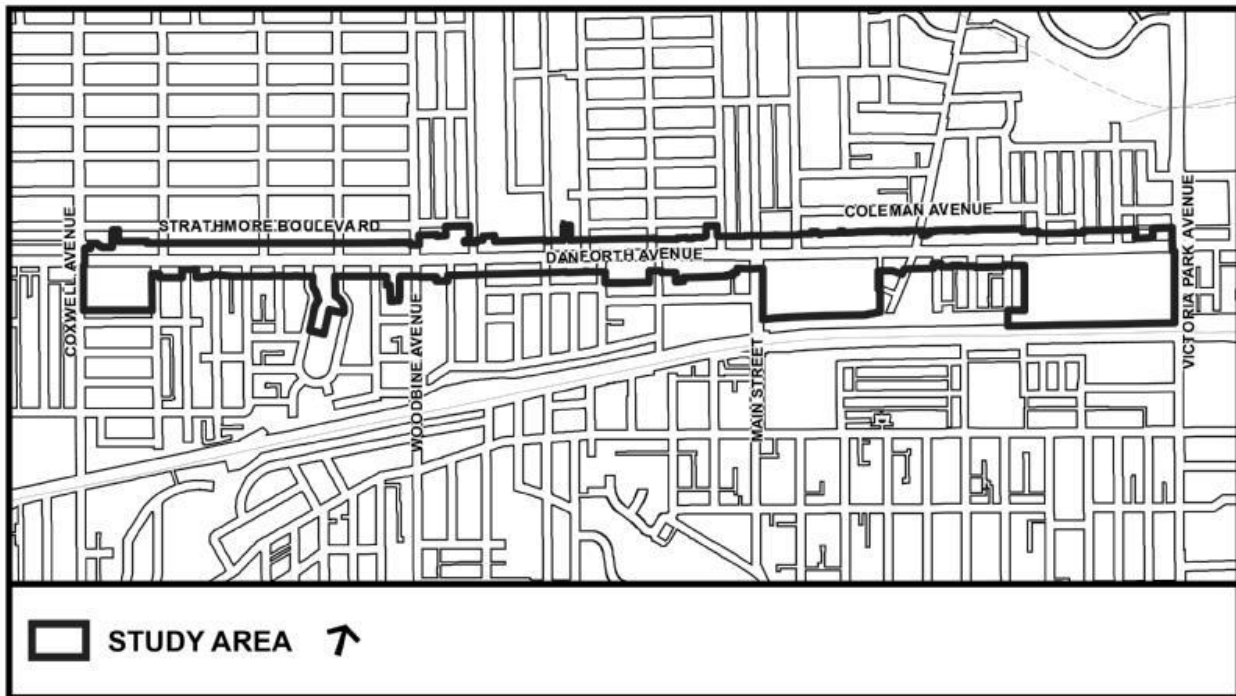


Figure 2: Original Danforth Avenue Planning Study Area

The original study area (Figure 2) included properties with frontage on Danforth Avenue between Coxwell Avenue to the west and Victoria Park Avenue to the east. Existing TTC subway stations (Coxwell, Woodbine, and Main Street) north of Danforth Avenue were also included for the explicit purpose of reviewing connectivity to the stations.

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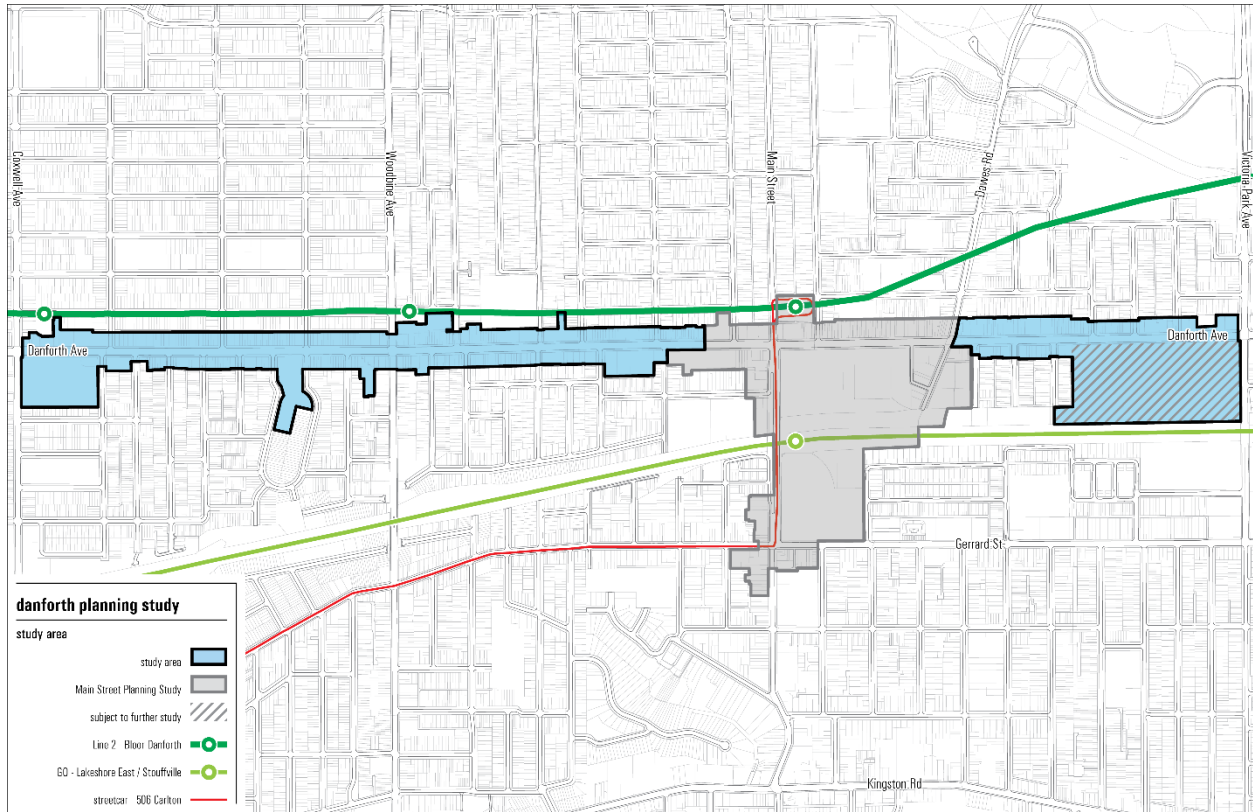


Figure 3: Revised Danforth Avenue Planning Study Area

The study area was revised to respond to Toronto and East York Community Council item TE27.42. The item requested City Planning to initiate a study focusing on the development potential, built form, and public realm within proximity of the Main Street TTC station and the Danforth GO station. Figure 3 shows the extent of the Danforth Avenue Planning Study and the new study area for the Main Street Planning Study, which will commence in the near future.

Terms of Reference & Scope of Work

The Terms of Reference defined seven key areas of focus for City staff. A final Terms of Reference and scope of work for the study was adopted by Toronto and East York Community Council on February 22, 2017. The final Terms of Reference can be found on the study website (www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy).

The seven topic areas identified in the Terms of Reference are as follows:

- Built Form
- Public Realm
- Retail Vitality
- Complete Streets
- Community Services and Facilities
- Heritage and Historic Character
- Character and Place

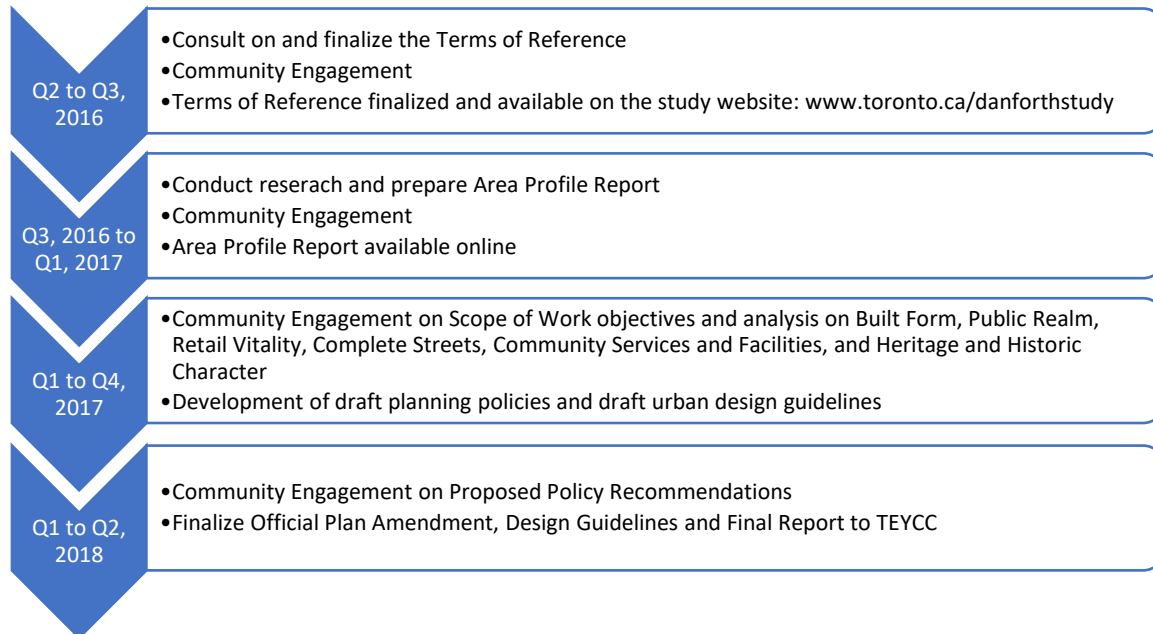
Project Goals

Six key project goals, based on the Terms of Reference, were identified to guide the project:

- Goal 1:** Implement a new site and area specific policy for the study area;
- Goal 2:** Create new Urban Design Guidelines that support the implementation of a site and area specific Official Plan policy that will supplement the existing Avenues and Mid-Rise Building Guidelines;
- Goal 3:** Identify specific public realm and streetscape improvements that use local character-defining features to enhance the public realm of Danforth Avenue;
- Goal 4:** Determine area demographics, existing community services and facilities inventory, and growth projections;
- Goal 5:** Outline areas for future investment to support growth; and
- Goal 6:** Examine potential future rights-of-way for Danforth Avenue that are based on a principle of Complete Streets.

Study Process and Timeline

The Danforth Avenue Planning study included the preparation of an Area Profile Report, a final report to Council that includes draft amendments to the Site and Area Specific Policies in the Official Plan, Official Plan Amendment, and Planning and Urban Design Guidelines. A key objective of the study was to fully engage and work with the community at each of the project milestones to obtain feedback, and to inform and guide the process. An overview of the study process and timeline is provided below.



Report Contents

This Record of Consultation provides an overview of the public consultation process. Section 2 below provides an overview of the consultation program and key consultation mechanisms used to encourage

broad participation throughout the study. An overview of stakeholder and public input received during the study is included in Section 3. The next steps in the study process are briefly outlined in Section 4.

2. Consultation Process Overview

Consultation Program

Public and stakeholder consultation played a key role in shaping the Danforth Avenue Planning Study (Coxwell Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue). Consultation activities during the study included Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings, public meetings, and online engagement. Engagement opportunities were aligned with key project milestones to ensure that public input, advice, and concerns shaped the direction of the study. The following section provides a synopsis of the engagement methodologies that were used to generate community input.

Communication and Promotional Tactics

Public Notices

Formal notices were published approximately two weeks before scheduled Community Consultation Meetings and were posted online (or a combination of both), to launch each round of consultation and promote and encourage participation. Notices were also mailed to local residents and members of the community within 360 metres around the study area and who signed up for project updates.

Project Website

The project website (www.Toronto.ca/danforthstudy) served as a portal for all information and engagement activities during the study consultation process. The website included a comprehensive overview of the study, relevant documents and resources, information about consultation events and opportunities to provide feedback, including engagement activities such as online surveys (which included presentation materials from each community meeting). The project website also included links to background information and relevant policy documents.

Social Media

The City of Toronto's City Planning Division used its Twitter account @CityPlanTO to advertise Community Consultation Meetings.

Consultation Activities

The following consultation activities were implemented during the Danforth Avenue Planning Study to ensure broad participation from key stakeholders and members of the public during each round of the consultation process.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) was established following the first Community Consultation Meeting in 2016 and included members of approximately 12 interest groups, community associations, and community members. The mandate of the SAC was to provide an ongoing forum for advice and

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guidance to the Project Team at key points during the Danforth Avenue Planning Study. A total of 5 SAC meetings were convened during the study, as summarized in the table below.

Table 2: Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings

| Meeting No. | Meeting Date | Purpose |
|-------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | October 24, 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review SAC mandate and roles; Provide an update on study process and timeline; and Discuss and develop a vision statement for the study area. |
| 2 | January 26, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an update on study process and timeline; and Review and discuss presentation materials for CCM 2, including proposed character areas, public realm analysis, and heritage review. |
| 3 | June 28, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an update on study process and timeline; Preview and discuss presentation information and format for CCM 3; and Provide information on the Metrolinx Connectivity Study. |
| 4 | November 15, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an update on study process and timeline; Continue the discussion on built form analysis, discussion on Complete Streets guidelines; and Preview and discuss presentation materials and format for CCM 4. |
| 5 | March 8, 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and discuss the draft presentation for CCM 5 on recommendations for the Danforth Avenue Planning Study. |

Summaries of each SAC meeting, including feedback provided by SAC members can be found in **Appendix A**.

Community Consultation Meetings

Five Community Consultation Meetings (CCMs) were held during Danforth Avenue Planning Study process. The meetings were designed to encourage broad participation through a variety of engaging formats (e.g., open houses, presentations, questions of clarification, facilitated discussions, and group activities.) All CCM participants were provided with feedback forms that could be submitted in person or by email or traditional mail. Feedback surveys, mirroring the feedback forms, were made available online following all CCM meetings. The table below outlines the timing and purpose of each CCM.

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Table 3: Community Consultation Meetings

| CCM No. | Meeting Date | Purpose |
|---------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | June 27, 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the Danforth Avenue Planning Study; • Engage participants in a discussion to identify community assets and opportunities for improvement in the study area; and • Provide an opportunity for feedback on the draft Terms of Reference. |
| 2 | February 23, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |
| 3 | September 14, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an update on the study process and timeline; and • Obtain feedback from the community on built form analysis, provision of parks and other work done to date. |
| 4 | December 11, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an update on the study process and timeline; • Obtain feedback from the community on built form analysis and Complete Streets guidelines; • Obtain feedback from the community related to desired street configurations; and • Offer the community the opportunity to ask questions of the Project Team. |
| 5 | March 20, 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain community feedback on the draft policy framework and general policy direction for the Danforth Avenue Planning Study; and • Receive final public feedback on how the City should proceed prior to the submission of its policy guidelines to Toronto and East York Community Council. |

Summaries of the Community Consultation Meetings and feedback received from participants are available for review in **Appendix B**.

Planners in Public Spaces (PiPS)

Two PiPS events were held at the East Lynn Park Farmer's Market in the fall of 2016 and 2017 to engage a range of community members in an informal setting.

Bengali Community Information Meeting

A special community information meeting was held for the Bengali Community on March 6th, 2018. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the Danforth Avenue Planning Study, obtain community input, and provide clarity on the process moving forward. A summary of the Bengali Community Information Meeting can be found in **Appendix #**.

3. Summary of Participant Feedback

What We Heard

The Danforth Avenue Planning Study consultation engaged an approximate 1,300 individuals, generating significant feedback, ideas and actions to inform the development of the City planning staff's draft policy directions. Feedback collected during each round of the consultation process was used to refine City staff's approach to the avenue study. City staff reserved time at each community consultation meeting to demonstrate what they had heard and how community input had influenced proposed policy directions. For example, office priority areas were added to the study area to respond to recurring feedback that asked City staff to consider economic development as a part of the avenue study.

The following section is a high-level synopsis of the overarching recurring comments, concerns and/or advice received through all consultation activities. It is not intended to be a verbatim summary of all feedback received. The summary has categorized participant feedback into the main subject areas covered in the study and discussed throughout the consultation process.

Built Form

Feedback covered a range of themes including discussions about building heights and density, building setbacks, development impacts, and building design and function. The emerging themes in this section highlight the range of opinions that were captured:

Building Heights and Density – The proposed increase of building heights from seven to eight storeys was a key point of conversation. Many participants indicated that they were either fully supportive or somewhat supportive of the increase to maximum building heights within the study area. They noted that increased density made sense because of the transit-rich nature of Danforth Avenue and that increased density would improve the area's economic vibrancy. Some participants were supportive of development beyond the recommended threshold provided that the design of the building incorporated the appropriate setbacks or were proven to have minimal impacts on the surrounding area.

A range of conditions were placed on the support of increased building heights and density:

- Development should be monitored, controlled, studied, and occur at a reasonable pace;
- Seven to eight storeys should not become the new minimum. Participants do not want to see developers exploit the new threshold to then propose even taller developments. The proposed 30 storey development at the intersection of Danforth Avenue and Main Street was noted as an example of a development seemed excessive by several participants;
- New height guidelines should not create a consistent eight storey streetwall along the entire stretch of the study area. Limit the number of mid-rise developments per-block;
- Mid-rise development should only be permitted at certain sites, such as large lots with adequate depth and laneway access, intersections, near transit stations, or sites where the structure will not cast shadows or impede on neighbouring low-rise buildings. Conduct site-specific analysis to determine which lots would be appropriate;
- Mid-block sections should only be permitted to reach a maximum of six storeys; and
- Adequate transitions areas from high-rise to low-rise development.

Concern for increased building heights and density was also recorded, suggestions were provided, such as:

- Danforth Avenue should be built to the human-scale;
- Limit heights to four-six storeys;
- Heights should be restricted to three or four storeys or less to match the existing character of the neighbourhood and preserve the privacy of single-detached homes; and
- No opportunity was given to discuss maximum heights or the possibility of not increasing height or density at all.

Building Stepbacks – The importance of stepbacks was noted for the design of new mid-rise developments, as they are seen as a way to mitigate the impact of new developments on adjacent properties, the street, and the pedestrian experience. For some, mandating stepbacks was the only way to make mid-rise development suitable for Danforth Avenue. However, some participants found the proposed building stepbacks and angular planes to be visually unappealing and not in line with the character of the existing neighbourhood.

Development Impacts – A prominent concern is that development will place significant strain on local infrastructure (e.g., roads, public transit, water, electricity, and sewage) and services (e.g., medical facilities, schools, community gathering spaces). Some worry that the City will be unable to keep up with the pace of development. Others are concerned there are not enough parks or greenspace the neighbourhood to support a growing community. Additionally, some participants questioned why impact studies (e.g., wind, shadow and infrastructure requirement studies) were not conducted to complement the draft policy directions on built form. Other concerns include the impact of development on skyline views, the study area’s existing character and community.

Building Design and Function – Suggestions were made for the use of specific materials such as mass timber or the incorporation of design features such as green roofs. Some participants made suggestions for environmentally sensitive design such as requirements for LEED standards. It was noted that all buildings should be required to meet accessibility standards. Specific comments were also received regarding the height and size of mechanical penthouses (e.g., visual appearance and the inclusion of mechanical penthouses within building height limitations, reducing or limiting protrusions [i.e., balconies], and rear setbacks.)

In addition, participants expressed concern that new development would be limited to luxury condominiums. Several requests were made for the City to encourage the developers to build rental, co-op and affordable housing buildings. Others suggested that residential building developers should be required to construct certain percentages of affordable or subsidized units and family-sized (three and four bedroom) units. Participants regularly expressed the desire for mixed-use developments that contain retail, office, and residential uses. Some participants want to see spaces for small-scale arts and culture hubs.

Public Realm

Recurring themes included discussions about parks and outdoor spaces, patios and cafés, street furniture, streetscaping, and pedestrian friendliness. The summary of key themes in this section highlight the range of opinions that were captured:

Parks and Outdoor Spaces – Parks and outdoor spaces were consistently highlighted as an important element of the study area’s public realm. East Lynn Park, Stephenson Park and Coleman Park were noted as some of the community’s important assets. Participants urged the City to identify opportunities to incorporate more parks, parkettes and green space into the study area. Many also requested that the City consider providing outdoor gathering spaces such as piazzas or public squares. A few participants recommended that surface lots and alleyways be permitted for community events or converted into green space. Participants said that the area is deficient in outdoor spaces, which could increase by development pressure. It was suggested that development funds received by the City should be funneled into the creation and maintenance of parks and outdoor spaces.

Patios and Cafés – Consistent support was shown for sidewalk patios and cafés. However, some participants worried that patios and cafés might cause pedestrian bottlenecks or create obstacles for those with limited mobility. Some participants suggested that policy directions mandating 4.8 metre widths may not adequately support patios and cafés or other merchandising zones.

Street Furniture – Participants encouraged the installation of additional street furniture. Benches and other seating were highlighted as important street furnishings, particularly for aging populations. Additional trash receptacles are also desired.

Streetscaping – Participants want to see the beautification of Danforth Avenue. This includes the planting of trees, the planting and maintenance of flower beds and native plant gardens, replacement of

dying ash trees, and other beautification measures. Some participants noted that tree planting and other landscaping can be used as stormwater management tools. Developers should work with the study area's Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to ensure consistent streetscaping. Better lighting is also needed. In addition, public art and points of interest such as murals, fountains and other landmarks were requested by community members.

Pedestrian Friendliness – Public realm features that contribute to walkability and pedestrian friendliness are desired. Several participants stated that Danforth Avenue needs to be made safer for pedestrians. Additional signalized cross-walks are needed on Danforth Avenue to address long blocks and offset intersections. Several participants stated that accessibility standards should be addressed, including timely snow clearance, increasing sidewalk traction, creating barrier-free walkways and considerations for the elderly. Wayfinding signage and public washrooms should also be considered.

Retail Vitality

Participants provided feedback on retail vitality in their community. Comments discussed the value of small, independent retail and storefront design. The following section captures the feedback that was heard:

Small, Independent Retail – Many participants value the small, independent businesses that operate on Danforth Avenue and want the City to implement policy that will preserve the community's retail character. Preference was repeatedly shown for small, independent retail over big-box and chain operations. Some participants indicated a preference for high-end or boutique-style retail. Many suggested that retail frontages should be required to stay within the current size ranges (approximately 2,000 square feet). Several participants expressed concern about the affordability of rents and taxes for retail spaces for small business owners in new developments. Independent retail operations should not be priced out of the neighbourhood. Specifically, the concern is that long-term storefront vacancies may increase. One solution may be to end tax breaks for vacant storefronts. Some participants requested that retail studies be conducted to determine why retail on certain streets is struggling in order to prevent potential issues on Danforth Avenue.

Storefront Design – Frequent comments regarding storefront design were captured. Particular emphasis was placed on recessed entrances and small store frontages. Small store frontages were considered by many to improve the public realm and walkability of the neighbourhood. Some participants want regulations placed on storefront signage to create a unified and cohesive character for Danforth Avenue. Other considerations included better storefront lighting and awnings to provide weather protection for pedestrians.

Complete Streets

A range of opinions were collected regarding traffic lanes, bike lanes, pedestrian walkways and parking. Traffic calming and traffic infiltration were other key themes that emerged. The following section summarizes the input received over the course of engagement:

Traffic Lanes – Inconsistent feedback was received regarding traffic lanes. Some participants encouraged the City to reduce traffic lanes to support the introduction of wider sidewalks and buffered or protected bike lanes. Some participants indicated that Toronto is too “car-centric”. Alternatively, other participants do not want lane reductions. They indicated that Danforth Avenue is a major thoroughfare that already faces serious traffic congestion issues, and any lane reduction would exacerbate traffic congestion, decrease safety for motorists and pedestrians, and reduce air quality. They noted that increased density on Danforth Avenue would compound the issue. Some participants noted that they rely on their car due to age, mobility issues, or to transport children and family members. Some participants suggested that lane reduction would negatively affect local businesses. Multiple traffic studies were requested including baseline traffic statistics and studies that might predict the impact of potential lane reductions.

Traffic Calming – Frequent requests for traffic calming measures were made by participants. Requests ranged from the introduction of bike lanes, additional traffic lights, narrowed lanes and reduced speed limits on Danforth Avenue.

Traffic Infiltration – Several participants expressed concern regarding traffic infiltration. Some participants worried that any form of lane reduction or increase in traffic congestion on Danforth Avenue would cause motorists to cut through residential streets, thus reducing safety on local roads. Some participants are already noticing increases to traffic infiltration on their streets. One suggested solution is to create a complex network of one-way streets like what was introduced in the Annex.

Bike Lanes – Multiple participants encouraged City staff to implement bike lanes on Danforth Avenue. Participants provided a range of protection options they felt would be suitable (e.g., bollards, painted buffers, physical buffers, and raised-curbs). Some participants expressed support for cycle tracks. The addition of bike lanes should connect to the City’s existing cycling network and be paired with the installation of bike signals and bike lock-up facilities. Conversely, some participants do not want bike lanes on Danforth Avenue. These participants indicated that the introduction of bike lanes would affect traffic congestion issues, and some stated that bike lanes would be better suited to secondary roads. The Woodbine bike lanes was a consistent example that was used. Some individuals appreciated the bike lanes, while others noted that they had caused traffic, parking and accessibility issues. The City was asked to conduct studies to determine the impact of bike lanes on Danforth Avenue before making decisions.

Parking – Some participants want to see existing parking spaces on Danforth Avenue preserved or increased. They cautioned that a reduction in parking may negatively impact businesses or cause (or exacerbate) parking issues on residential streets like Coleman Avenue and Gledhill Avenue. However, other participants want to see parking lanes reduced. A few participants wanted to see parking removed from Danforth Avenue altogether. Several participants requested that the City establish additional Green P parking lots or work with developers to mandate public parking in new developments. Some suggested that street parking could be used as a buffer to increase cyclist and pedestrian safety. Some individuals asked for additional accessible parking spaces. A few suggested that laybys or taxi-stands be

added to provide space for vehicles (e.g., taxis, Uber and Lyft drivers, delivery vehicles, and WheelTrans) to drop-off passengers or materials without causing traffic back-up.

Pedestrian Walkways – Pedestrian safety was consistently said to be a number one priority. Many participants indicated support for widened sidewalks. Although some participants requested wider sidewalks, 4.8 metre pedestrian walkways received the most support. However, some participants did not approve of widened sidewalks if they would reduce traffic lanes. Curb cuts and surface parking lots and driveways (especially in front of stores) should be limited to increase pedestrian safety. Participants frequently asked for porous blocks, shortened block lengths, and more signalized cross-walks. Some participants requested that e-bikes be banned from using sidewalks.

Character and Place

Common themes regarding character and place revolved around economic development and auto-related land uses. The following section highlights the range of feedback that was received for each of these themes:

Economic Development –Participants regularly urged City staff to consider how the Danforth Avenue Planning Study could provide policy directions to improve Danforth Avenue’s economic competitiveness and contribute to the economic revitalization of the neighbourhood. Participants want the study area to be a “live, work, and play” neighbourhood that serves as a vibrant community both day and night. Some said that the community vision of enhancing streetscapes, improving walkability, and preserving the community’s existing character will all contribute to economic prosperity. However, the City should develop specific policy guidelines that will create employment opportunities in the area. Several suggestions were made for new development to contain a better mix of office, retail/commercial and residential space. Specific recommendations were made for new residential towers to include at-grade retail, mid-building office space, and residential units on upper floors. Several participants approved of the office priority areas identified in the draft policy directions. Participants feel that adding office space and other employment opportunities to the neighbourhood will help the study area become a destination rather than a dormitory neighbourhood.

Auto-related land uses – Mixed responses were received regarding auto-related land uses such as auto-repair shops, car washes, gas stations and car dealerships. Some participants noted that they did not want to see auto-related land uses on Danforth Avenue as they are perceived to be a “waste of space,” visually unappealing or not fitting within the proposed plan to increase height and density in the study area. For some, the issue with auto-related land uses is the number of auto-repair shops, gas stations, car dealerships and surface parking lots that occupy space on Danforth Avenue. They do not want to see the removal of *existing* auto-related land uses, but have limitations placed on the introduction of *additional* uses of this type. Alternatively, some participants noted their approval of auto-related land uses in the neighbourhood. Some participants said that they appreciated having auto-repair shops and car wash facilities within proximity of their home. Other participants said that auto-related land uses provide good jobs in the neighbourhood and should not be removed or restricted in any way.

Community Services and Facilities

Danforth/Coxwell Public Library, Hope United Church and Main Street Community Centre were identified as important community assets. However, participants want more community services and facilities in their neighbourhood. This includes schools, hospitals, fire departments, libraries, grocery stores, homeless shelters, safe injection sites, child care facilities, community centres and community hubs. Some participants want to see new arts and cultural spaces for youth, seniors, families and new immigrants like Regent Park's Daniel's Spectrum. It was suggested that some at-grade retail spaces could be used for community space. The TTC Coxwell Barns site was identified as a potential site for a community hub. Several participants are concerned that increased density on the Danforth Avenue will place a strain on community services. Community service provision should be planned in parallel with intensification.

Heritage and Historic Character

Participants regularly cited the importance of heritage and the contribution of existing building design to the community's overall character. The following section captures the key themes that emerged in heritage discussions:

Heritage Preservation – City staff were encouraged to identify and preserve the study area's heritage buildings and structures. Several sites were listed for their heritage significance (e.g., Hope United Church, TTC Coxwell Barns, Bus Terminal Diner, 10 and 10A Dawes Road [and several other sites on Dawes Road], the Lutrell Loop, the Morton Road hydro building, the Hakim Optical Building, and the East Toronto Masonic Lodge). Some participants said that heritage zones should be established. It was suggested that design elements should be included to promote the history of the area through plaques, public art, and historical signage. Participants expressed concern that allowing increased height and density along Danforth Avenue will result in the loss of key heritage sites or that large-scale development will occur within close proximity of heritage buildings, thus reducing their appeal. Alternatively, some participants noted that not all "old-buildings" should be identified as heritage sites. Some are concerned that too many properties will receive heritage designation.

Traditional Building Materials – Regarding design, some participants requested that policy directions require the use of traditional materials (e.g., brick and masonry) to complement the character and history of the study area. Many participants said that they did not want to see the street turn into a monotonous row of modern, "glass-box" buildings. New developments should incorporate traditional materials to complement and respect the history and character of Danforth Avenue. Alternatively, some participants said that prescriptive policies may limit building design creativity or cause the neighbourhood to appear "outdated." They felt that the City should not limit creativity, innovation or variation in building design.

Transit

Participants want to see transportation improvements and increased connectivity in their neighbourhood. Recurring feedback discussed a connection between Main Subway Station and Danforth

GO Station, increased public transit, station improvements and the creation of a transit hub. The emerging themes from transportation discussions are captured in the section below:

TTC/GO Station Connection – Participants support the creation of a connection between Main Subway Station and Danforth GO Station. Suggestions included a weather-protected pathway, an over-head pedestrian walkway with retail and shopping spaces, or an underground tunnel. Several other enhancements were recommended for the existing transit stations. This included an additional entrance for Main Subway Station, support for the proposed secondary entrance to Danforth GO station on Dawes Road, safety improvements at Danforth GO station, and better wayfinding signage for the transit stations on Danforth Avenue.

Increased Public Transit– Concerns about existing transit capacity were frequently raised and participants are worried that increased height and density will increase transit demand and contribute to capacity issues. Potential solutions include introducing and bolstering bus services on Danforth Avenue (e.g., new routes or a dedicated bus lane), light rail, and redesigning and adding capacity to existing subway stations. Although not directly part of the study area, many participants noted support for the Downtown Relief Line.

Transit Hub Potential – Access to transportation (both TTC and GO transit) was identified as an important feature of the study area. While some worry about the capacity of existing transit services, others believe that Danforth Avenue and Main Street should be identified and transformed into a transit hub. These participants felt that increased height and population density is appropriate for the study area due to a relative high degree of transit access.

Additional Feedback

Character Areas - The character areas defined by City staff were modified several times to address comments received during each round of consultation. The overarching theme regarding proposed character areas urged City staff to draft policy that recognizes and respects the distinct character and needs of multiple sections of the broader study area.

Study Area - Several participants noted from the early stages of consultation that the Planning Study should consider how increased height and density, changes the right-of-way configuration of Danforth Avenue, and other policy changes might affect areas outside of the study area (e.g., both north and south of Danforth Avenue). Some participants requested that the City provide information about what the impacts of planning policy changes might be on neighbouring residential communities and surrounding streets.

The change to the study area around the intersection of Danforth Avenue and Main Street and extending south to Gerrard was a point of controversy. There are several development proposals within proximity of the Danforth Avenue and Main Street intersection, including a proposed 30-storey tower. Some participants are worried that the change to the study area might result in planning policy that

differs from what is proposed for the rest of Danforth Avenue (e.g., greater height and density than the proposed seven to eight storey mid-rise guidelines).

Process Feedback

While some participants expressed support for the study and thanked City staff for their work, others provided input as to how the process could have been improved. A summary of the process feedback is captured below:

Consultation – Some participants felt the presentation materials prepared by City staff were inaccessible for the general public. Additionally, some participants noted that more materials such as presentations should always be made available on the project website. City staff were encouraged to use less jargon and technical language and to explain information in plain language.

While some participants indicated that City staff are “on the right track,” others said that more meetings could be conducted. Feedback was also received about the demographics of those engaged in the consultation process. Participants said that more should have been done to engage various communities, including the study area’s significant Bengali population. Others said that the area’s shelter users and street involved population should have been consulted.

Studies and Evidence – In nearly every round of engagement, participants wanted to know if the City would conduct studies to determine the impacts of any potential changes to the community. Study suggestions included determining the effects of increased height and density on shadows, wind tunnels, the pedestrian experience, and the infrastructure capacity (e.g. water, sewage, public transit, roads) and the strain to community services and amenities (e.g., schools, medical facilities, parks and greenspace). Additional studies were requested to determine the potential outcomes of any Right of Way (ROW) configuration changes (e.g., road capacity in relation to development, reducing or narrowing lanes, adding bike lanes, removing parking). Participants also wanted to know what changes might be experienced in neighbouring residential areas (e.g., traffic infiltration and non-resident parking). The community wants assurance that policy changes that may affect their neighbourhood will be made in tandem with the careful study of potential outcomes. Policy changes that will result in changes to the area should be anticipated and defensible.

General Process Feedback – Some participants felt that the vision and policy directions established by the City were too high-level or too vague. Some information regarding policy parameters and enforcement was left unexplained (e.g., assuring that mid-rise development occurs on adequate lots or assuring that development occurs within the proposed height guidelines). Additionally, it was suggested that a completed version of the draft policy should be made available for public review prior to the final round of consultation. One participant felt that the Danforth Avenue Planning Study did not conform to the standards of a traditional Avenue Study.

4. Process Review

The community engagement process for the Danforth Avenue Planning Study will inform City staff's approach to public consultation in the future. City staff learned that the community values ample opportunity to ask questions of staff through facilitated plenary discussions. Related to this, community members found that they benefited from hearing the concerns of their neighbours in an open forum format. Residents also noted the value of having City staff reiterate what had been heard from the public at previous meetings and how their feedback had been incorporated into the project. While most community consultation meetings were held in the evening hours, City staff learned that afternoon sessions, such as the well-attended afternoon session hosted for Community Consultation Meeting #5, are a good option for future consultation.

The Danforth Avenue Planning Study consultation process demonstrated the effectiveness of round table discussions. Round table discussions were seen as a useful tool for members of the community to work collaboratively to provide feedback to influence the development of the avenue study. In particular, participants responded positively to the interactive exercises used at some meetings, one example was the design charrette exercise at Community Consultation Meeting #4. More round table discussions and interactive exercises should be incorporated into future engagement opportunities.

Feedback collected through the consultation process indicates that City staff can improve the way it relates information to the community. Staff should reduce the amount of jargon it uses and provide information in plain language that can be easily digested. This may include providing more information related to the planning and decision-making processes through a "Planning 101" document or incorporated into staff presentations. Questions directed to the public for feedback should also be worded in plain language. Future consultations should consider less open-ended questions to assist residents in developing feedback that can influence project outcomes.

City staff can also improve its methodologies for consulting diverse community groups. Focused sessions may be needed to involve members from specific demographic groups (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) to ensure adequate representation from the City's diverse communities. Meetings such as the Bengali Community Information Meeting was effective, however the City should continue to be organized for future engagement processes with concerted efforts to foster diversity in the City's consultation processes, and possibly request that presentations could be made at meetings that are already being held by community groups or organizations.

Consistent feedback heard over the course of the consultation process also indicates that residents want tangible evidence that demonstrates the projected impacts of changes to planning policy in their community. Participant feedback suggests that the community wants assurance that the City plans for growth and change in a way that is controlled, monitored, and responsible.

5. Next Steps

The final deliverables, which include City Planning's final report, site and area-specific policies and area-specific guidelines will be submitted to Toronto and East York Community Council (tentative date May 2, 2018). Several complementary planning studies are in the works and will be scheduled in the near future. These include the Main Street Planning Study, the Coxwell TTC Barns Master Plan and the Shopper's World Future Study.