

# THE DANFORTH STUDY

## Community Meeting 1 Engagement at a Glance



56,000

notices  
sent to  
local  
residents



400+  
attendee

2 Public  
Presentations

Facebook &  
Twitter using  
**#DanforthStudy**

75



workbooks  
completed



100+  
comment  
forms  
completed

3  
activity  
stations



600+

sticky  
notes with  
public  
feedback

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

On November 7, 2019, the City of Toronto hosted the first Community Meeting for the Danforth Complete Street and Planning Study. The meeting was held at Monarch Park Collegiate at 1 Hanson Street, in the Cafeteria from 6:30-8:30 pm. The meeting agenda is appended to this summary (**Appendix 1 - Agenda**).

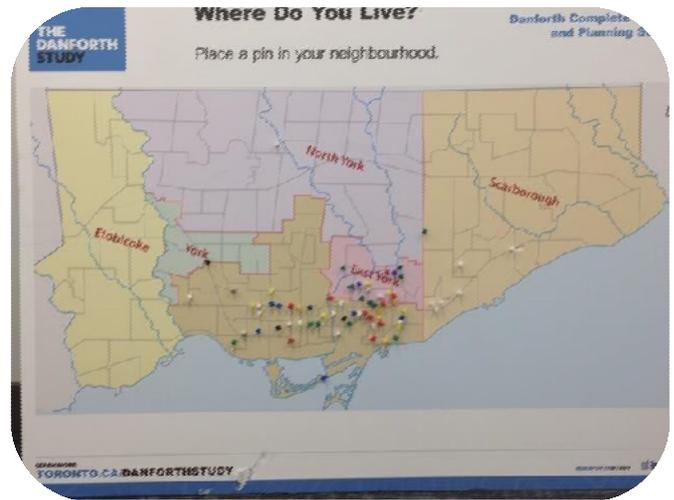
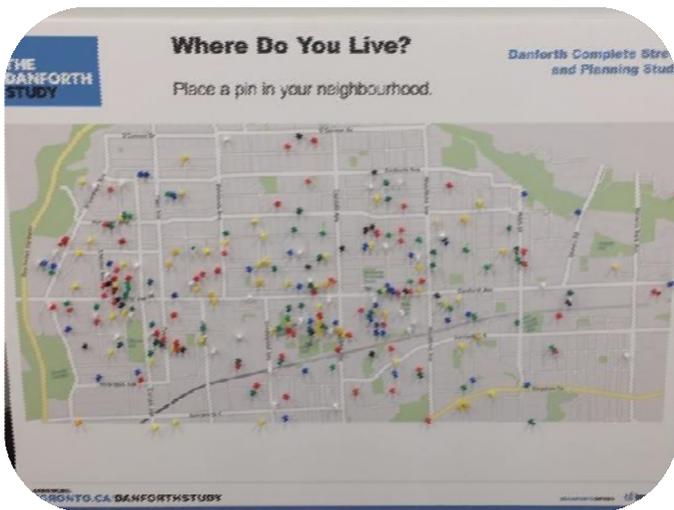
This first community meeting focused on introducing the public to the study, providing an overview of the Study's three components (the Planning Study, the Economic and Retail Study, and the Complete Street Study), and the Study Terms of Reference, and to gather feedback from the community to help guide and shape the scope and Terms of Reference for the Study.



To advertise the event, 56,000 notices were sent out to residents within and around the Study area, and social media posts were used on Facebook and Twitter. In total, there were over 400 attendees at the meeting. Due to the room capacity of the cafeteria and the high public turnout, the library was used as an overflow room. Those in the overflow room were provided with the same presentation, workbook, and materials.

## **Open House and Activity Stations**

Community members were welcomed to the meeting and were asked to place a pin on a map to indicate where they lived. The following are images of the “Where do you live?” maps.



The large majority of the public members who attended the meeting came from within 2 kilometers of the Study Area.

The community members were given time before the presentation to complete three other engagement activities. Panels were positioned at each activity station to provide context and instructions for completing the activity. Facilitators were also available to assist the public with the activities, answer questions, and listen to feedback. The following summary represents feedback that was captured at the community meeting and is not statistically valid.

**Activity #1: Community Charter**

The community was asked to provide their input for a “Community Charter” which will outline the City and Community’s commitment to each other for the Danforth Study. Participants were asked to provide their own ideas on what the charter should include. Ideas collected from this activity are organized into the themes below, together with the number of times the theme was listed.

- Consideration for climate change and the climate emergency (5)
- Using Vision Zero as a mandate (3)
- Using evidence-based decision making (3)
- More pilots and tactical urbanism to prove concepts (3)
- Respect for all road users – treating everybody equally (3)
- Looking at best practices and what has worked in other places (3)
- Results of the Study should be a net overall benefit that is quantifiable (2)
- Include the needs of the Francophone community (2)
- Consideration for the rights of future generations (2)



- Making the engagement process truly accessible to all people regardless of income, education and employment (2)
- An objective Study that is unbiased, keeping an open mind, and seeing all viewpoints (2)
- Looking at overall costs and benefits in this Study (2)
- Engaging with the larger community of citizens who use the Danforth but live outside the study area
- Choosing accessible locations for meetings and bringing engagement to people
- Universal human-centred design
- Setting realistic goals and timelines
- Valuing human life and safety above all else
- An honest process and engaging in a meaningful way
- Returning emails from constituents with concerns
- Involving schools of architecture in the process

### **Activity #2: Mapping Exercise**

At this station, there were large-scale maps of the Study Area and coloured sticky notes for comments. Participants were provided green sticky notes to comment on what they love about the Danforth; yellow sticky notes to comment on what needs improving; and pink sticky notes to comment on any other ideas or concerns. Participants were able to provide general comments about the Danforth Study Area, or pinpoint more location-specific comments. The majority of comments received were general comments about the 6km stretch of Danforth Avenue. The general comments were reviewed by the project team and grouped into themes that emerged due to multiple comments. The following is a summary of the general comments received, organized by theme in no particular order:

#### **What do you love about the Danforth?**

- Restaurants and patios
- Walkability and neighbourhood feel
- Services and retail options
- Existing local bike lanes
- Parks and green spaces
- Diversity
- Complete Street Pop-up (Summer 2019)
- People and the community
- Public transit access



**What do you think needs to be improved?**

- Safety – better lighting, more crosswalks, red lights, more enforcement
- Protected Bike Lanes
- Consideration for all street users
- Traffic calming
- More affordable housing and diversity of housing types
- More trees, public art, and street furniture



**Other Ideas or Concerns:**

- A mix of comments about density – some members of the public want more (up to 6 storeys), while others are happy with the current level
- Decline of retail along Danforth (empty store fronts)
- Preserving heritage and park space

There were also location-specific comments that were reviewed by the project team. Location-specific comments that were mentioned more than once were combined. All of the location-specific comments received are captured in **Appendix 2 – Mapping Exercise Location-Specific Comments**.

**Activity #3: Theme Priority Ranking**

Participants were asked to vote for their top two priorities from the list of the 9 project themes.

The following are the results from this activity, including the theme description and the number of votes that each theme received.

- Safety and Complete Streets: Reviewing Danforth Avenue and look to create a street that is designed to be safe for everyone: people who walk, bicycle, take transit, or drive, and people of all ages and abilities. (240)
- Getting Around: Assess the movement of cars, transit, people, cyclists and pedestrians on Danforth Avenue and look to improve connections and access. (109)



- Land Use and Development: Reviewing existing land uses and zoning, and identifying opportunities for accommodating growth, housing and development. (81)
- Public Realm: Assess and identify potential opportunities to enhance public spaces, streetscapes and the quality of the public realm. (76)
- Retail and Local Businesses: Review existing businesses, support and promote the economic vitality of Danforth Avenue. (69)
- Heritage: Document heritage resources and preserve the heritage, historic, and cultural resources in the area. (61)
- Community Services and Facilities: Reviewing the community services and facilities for the area to ensure they meet future needs. (43)
- Architecture and Buildings: Review existing built form and character to ensure that the design of buildings improve the community character. (39)
- Parking and Loading: Assess parking and loading conditions to understand demand and available supply. (36)

Based on the results of this activity, it is clear that the top priorities are Safety and Complete Streets and Getting Around.

## 2.0 Introduction and Presentation

Councillor Bradford and Councillor Fletcher provided opening remarks and welcomed the public. The meeting started with a First Nation land acknowledgement and a presentation by City Staff to introduce the Study, provide an overview of the scope of work, engagement process, and timelines.



### 3.0 Question and Answer Period (Q+A)

Following the presentation, the public was given the opportunity to ask questions of clarification about the Study. A transcript of this discussion is in **Appendix 3 – Question and Answer Transcript**.

### 4.0 Workbook Session

The public was asked to work individually or in small groups to provide feedback on the scope of work outlined in the Study Terms of Reference, using workbooks as a guide. In total, 75 workbooks were completed. The results are categorized into the 3 Study Components: Planning, Complete Streets and Retail, and general comments (the scope of work overall).



#### **SCOPE OF WORK OVERALL**

##### **Project Breadth and Approach**

Many feel the overall approach to the study is comprehensive and includes many important topics and like that the plan is cross-disciplinary and involves different sectors working together. Others wished to see more participation (e.g. diverse advisory group; work with schools and students in architecture). Three topics people felt were missing include climate change, development with attention to accessibility, and arts and culture.

##### **Geographic Scope**

Many indicated that the scope of work covered an appropriate geography. Others identified the desire to expand the focus area beyond the existing study area to include alleys, quieter laneways, and streets north and south of Danforth Avenue.

##### **Timeline**

The most frequent comment received regarding project timing included the desire for implementing a cycling lane pilot in 2020. Many people indicated that they appreciated that the Study timeline fit within a single council term while others felt that the timeline is too long and want to see action sooner. Many people felt that studies should be conducted year-round and at different times of the day and week to gather more

accurate data based on usage and weather. A suggestion was made to coordinate capital investments to minimize the amount of construction and interruption.

### **Project Details and Data Sharing**

While some appreciated the amount of detail shared, others would like greater details (e.g. capital budgets) or information available at all times (e.g. online, real-time data sharing).

### **Learning from Others' Best Practices**

Many want to see that the project incorporates evidence and best practices from similar local, national, or international projects. Many want to make sure that the project demonstrates learning from other studies and pilot projects implemented in the area and in Toronto.

### **Level of Community Engagement**

Many were appreciative of the community meeting and invitation to voice feedback. People are interested in ongoing engagement and would like to see more information about engagement opportunities online or in multiple forums.

### **Diverse and Representative Engagement**

Many considered it very important to ensure that community engagement is diverse and representative of the area; particularly, engagement with Indigenous representation, in other languages and with all ages including youth and seniors. Many people want to ensure that engagement is carried out to reach stakeholders (people and organizations) who may not normally participate in a community meeting.

## **PLANNING**

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### **Street Aesthetics, Heritage, & Beautification**

Some people would like to establish building height limitations to preserve views, avoid obstructing sunlight, and maintain the streetscape. Some would like to ensure heritage designations are preserved and suggest working with the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.

### **Development**

Some people are concerned about the potential disadvantages to sudden growth in the area, such as gentrification and loss of small business, and would like to see a paced approach to development. Many people are concerned about the consequences of increased density on traffic, inconvenient construction, subway usage, and sidewalk congestion, and the impact that these may have on the local businesses.

**Climate Change Mitigation, Greening, and Sustainability**

Some people would like to ensure the plan includes greening, including greater tree canopy, green space, parkettes, and places to rest. Many people noted the absence of any reference to climate change and would like to see radical and urgent action to address the climate emergency within the project. Many would like sustainable and ecological development addressed particularly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and suggest making use of Toronto's sustainability experts and adhering to Toronto Green Standard.

**Affordable Housing**

Many people would like to see the plan emphasize affordable housing and rental housing development.

**Arts and Culture**

Some people would like to engage the Francophone community to develop a French-Canadian identity in the area. Many people would like a greater artistic presence (e.g. murals) and placemaking activities.

**COMPLETE STREET**

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**Cyclist and Pedestrian Safety**

A lot of people specifically want protected bike lanes, and protected intersections. Some would like to see bike lanes connected to create a network and increase use. People would like to see new traffic rules and greater enforcement for cyclist and pedestrian safety (e.g. No right turn on red; enforced speed limits; longer pedestrian signals; better lighting; clearer lane markings).

**Traffic Flow**

Some people suggest creative ways to reduce driving congestion (e.g. reversible lanes of traffic for particular events or times). Some people would like the project to consider the impact of reducing traffic from the Danforth on quieter streets, particularly related to emergency vehicles, waste removal, delivery vehicles, and e-bikes or scooters.

**City Maintenance**

People would like to see a plan for year-round maintenance of bike lanes (e.g. snow clearance).

## **RETAIL**

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### **Incentives for Business**

People are looking for incentives and other ways to ensure small businesses will invest and stay in the area and contribute to a greater sense of identity along the street. Some would like to see identified ways to attract patrons to the area and see increased local employment so that employees can take active transportation to work.

### **Land Values and Taxes**

People are concerned about the impact of new development on tax assessments and land values. Some people would like assessments based on important values as well as financial measures (E.g. artistic value, community impact).

### **Retail or Service Gaps**

Many people would like to see the project identify current gaps in service or retail offerings (e.g. grocery stores; public washrooms).

## **5.0 Other Feedback Received**

The Project Team, City Staff and Consultants also gathered public feedback through their interactions with the public during the meeting. The following is a summary from these interactions.

### **Complete Streets:**

- Street design and safety were the most important issues that the majority of residents highlighted.
- Consider approaches to accommodate assisted mobility devices/vehicles, especially with an aging population.
- Design the road for all road users.
- Use early pilot projects to test concepts

### **Retail:**

- Micro-retail along the lanes at the rear of the retail streets should be considered.
- Accessibility of stores along the Danforth (not barrier-free).

### **Meeting Logistics:**

- Acoustics were difficult to hear at times and screens were too small.
- American Sign Language and use of other languages should be considered for future meetings.

- A Planning 101 may be useful for the future to inform the public on the planning process.
- Consider a longer question and answer portion for meetings.
- Provide information ahead of community meetings.
- Share community feedback and outcomes of previous meetings.

## 6.0 Comment Forms

There were more than 100 completed comment forms received at the end of the meeting, and 1 submitted via email. The following is a summary of the comments:

- The majority of those who attended felt satisfied about meeting (average was 3.5 to 4 based on a scale of 1 – 5).
- The top three ways that the public heard about the meeting was: 1) Mailed notice; 2) Social Media; 3) Word of Mouth.
- The top three ways that the public would prefer to be reached about future updates, events, and meetings related to the Danforth Study were: 1) Email; 2) Mailed Notice; 3) Social Media.
- The most preferred method to be engaged in this Study in the future included online surveys, and public meetings. However, there was support for a range of methods, including workshops, events, and pop-ups within the community.

## 7.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

The first community meeting was very well attended and there is significant interest in the Study from both within the Study Area and city-wide. Key themes that emerged from the meeting include ensuring consideration for all road users, improving safety, the potential for testing or piloting ideas, the importance of supporting retail and local business, increasing housing options including affordable and rental housing, and more emphasis toward climate change.

Comments and feedback received from the first community meeting will help the City to develop and refine the Study Terms of Reference including the engagement plan for the Study. The feedback received will also help the project team to develop a Community Charter for the Study that outlines how we will work together over the course of the Study.

The Draft Study Terms of Reference will be available on the City website prior to going to City Council in January 2020. Engagement will be ongoing throughout the duration of

the Study, and the next Community Meeting will be on January 27, 2020. There will also be an online survey available.

**Appendix 1 - Agenda**

Item	Time
Open House	6:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Presentation	7:00 PM – 7:30 PM
Question and Answer Period	7:30 PM – 7:40 PM
Workbook Session	7:40 – 8:10 PM
Open House/Closing	8:10 – 8:30 PM

## **Appendix 2 – Mapping Exercise Location-Specific Comments**

There were large-scale maps of the Study Area and coloured sticky notes for comments. Participants were provided green sticky notes to comment on what they love about the Danforth; yellow sticky notes to comment on what needs improving; and pink sticky notes to comment on any other ideas or concerns.

All of the location-specific comments received at the Community Meeting are captured in maps in this Appendix. Location-specific comments that were mentioned more than once were combined.

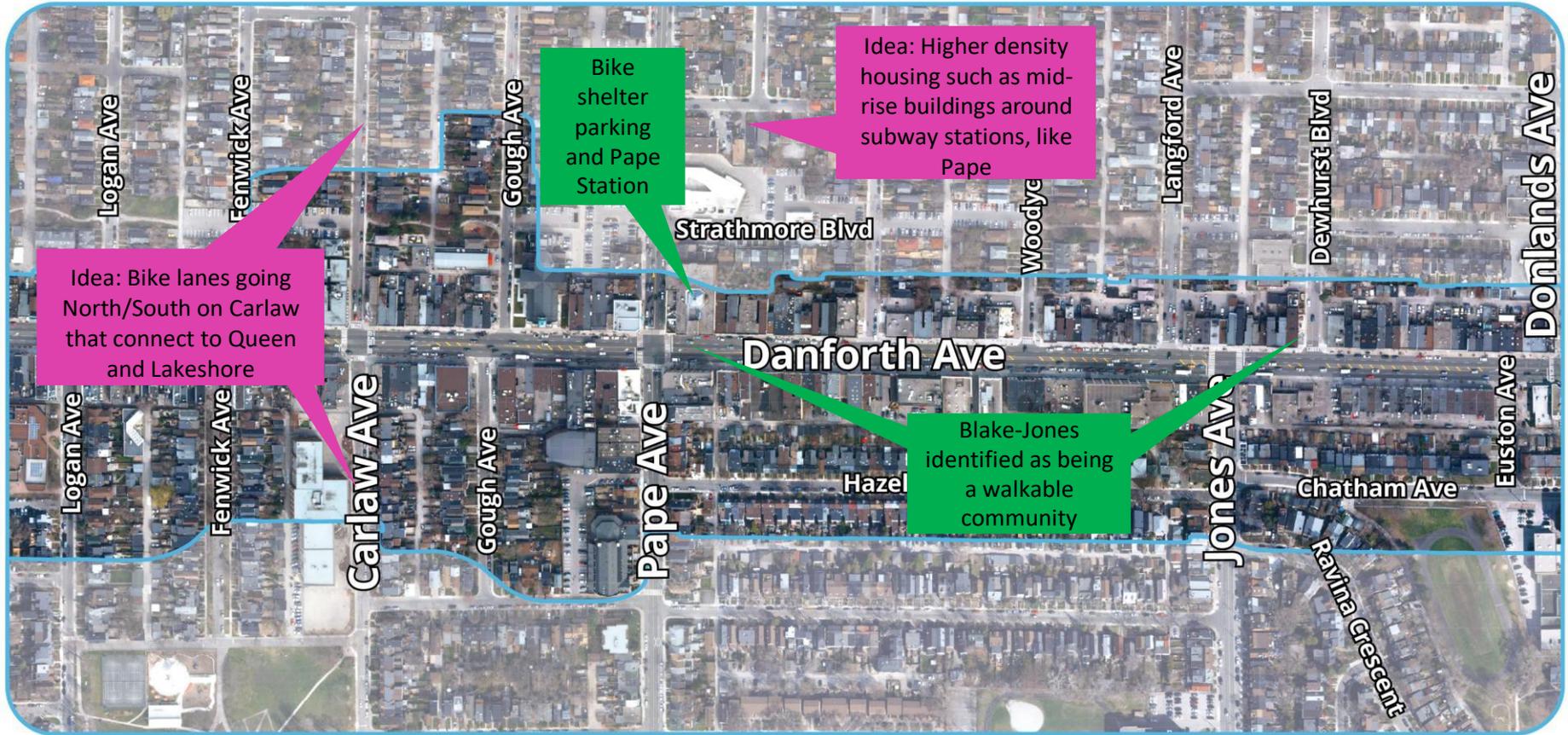
## Map 1: Don Valley Parkway to Arundel Ave



### LEGEND

- What do you like about the Danforth?
- What would you improve?
- Any other ideas or concerns?

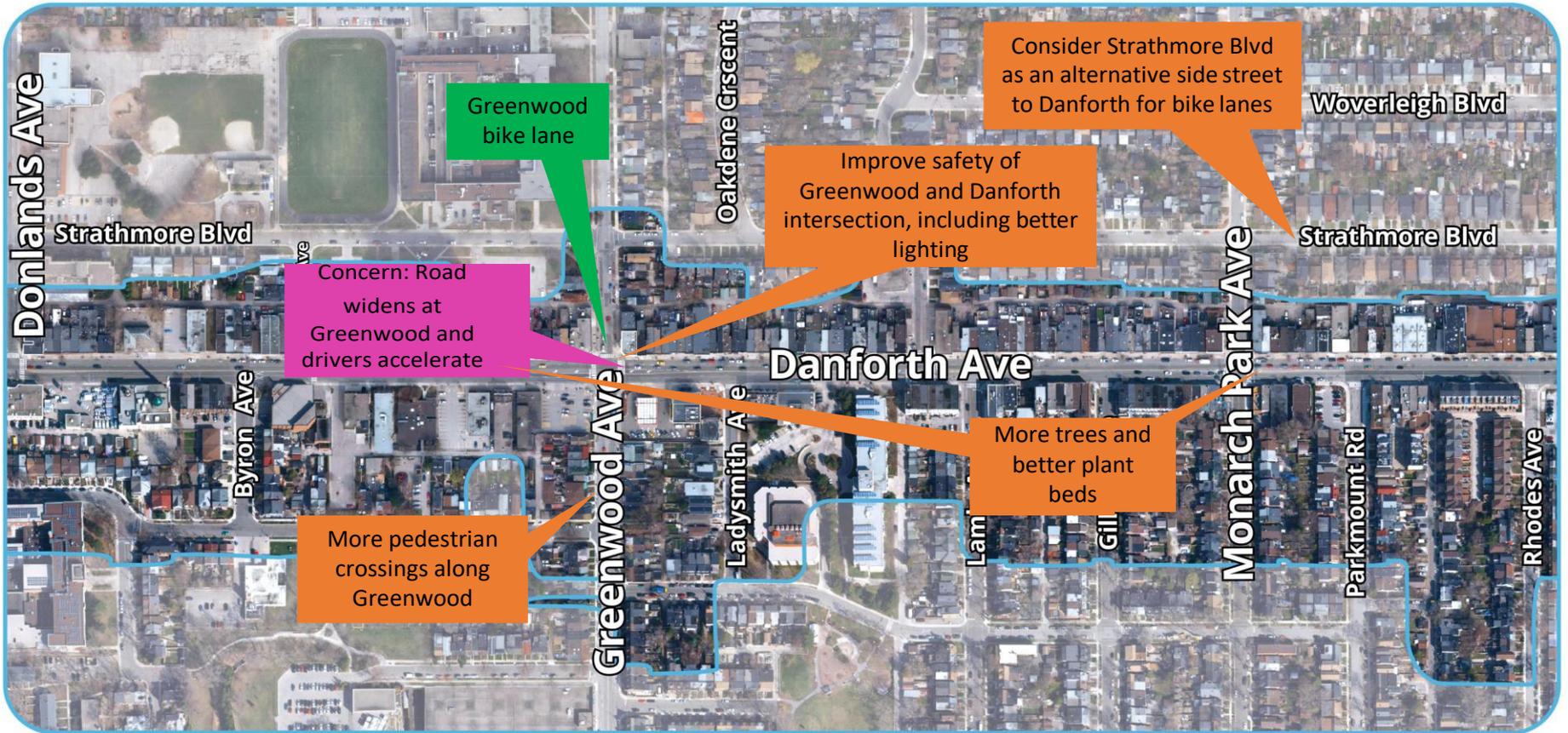
**Map 2: Logan Ave to Donlands Ave**



**LEGEND**

- What do you like about the Danforth?
- What would you improve?
- Any other ideas or concerns?

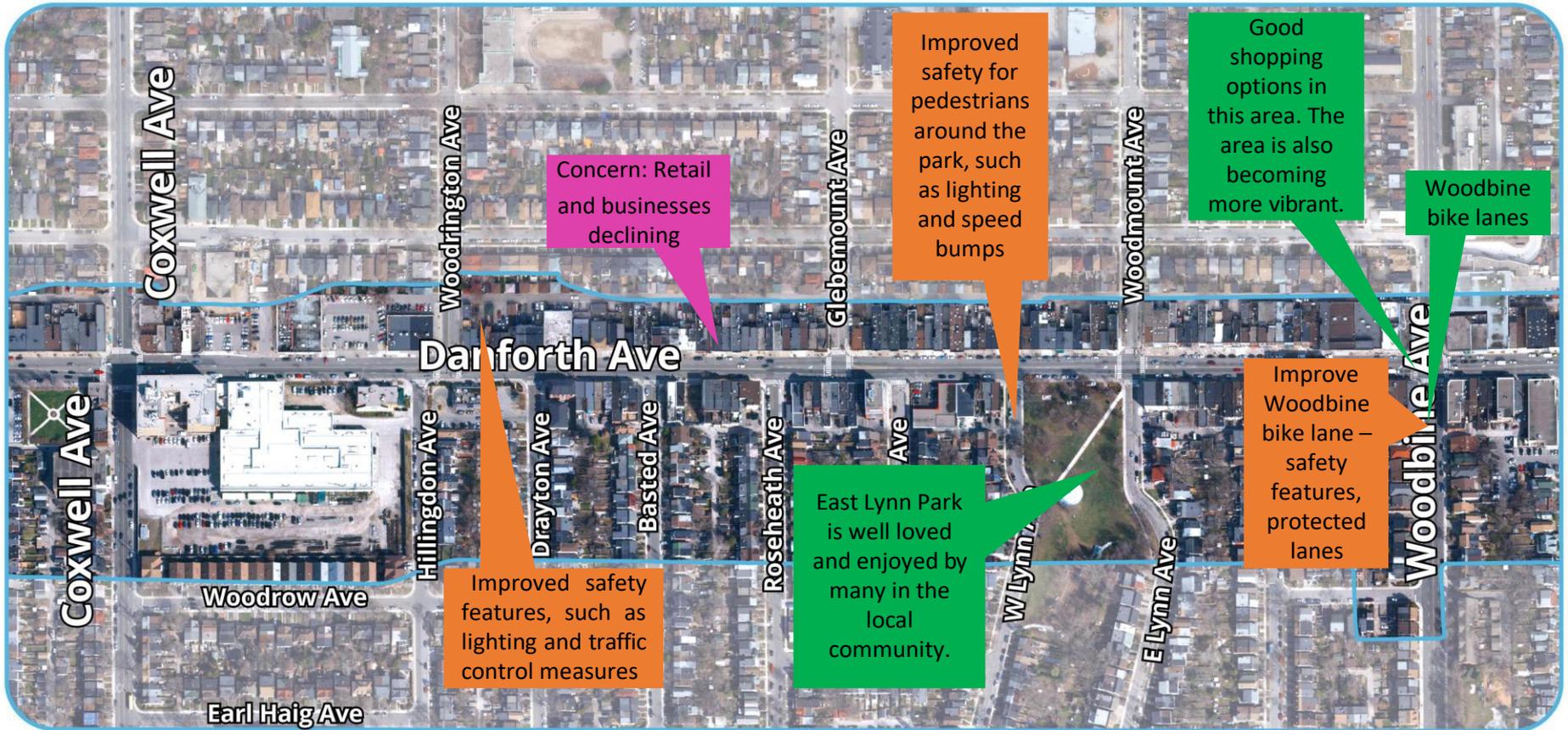
**Map 3: Donlands Ave to Rhodes Ave**



**LEGEND**

- What do you like about the Danforth?
- What would you improve?
- Any other ideas or concerns?

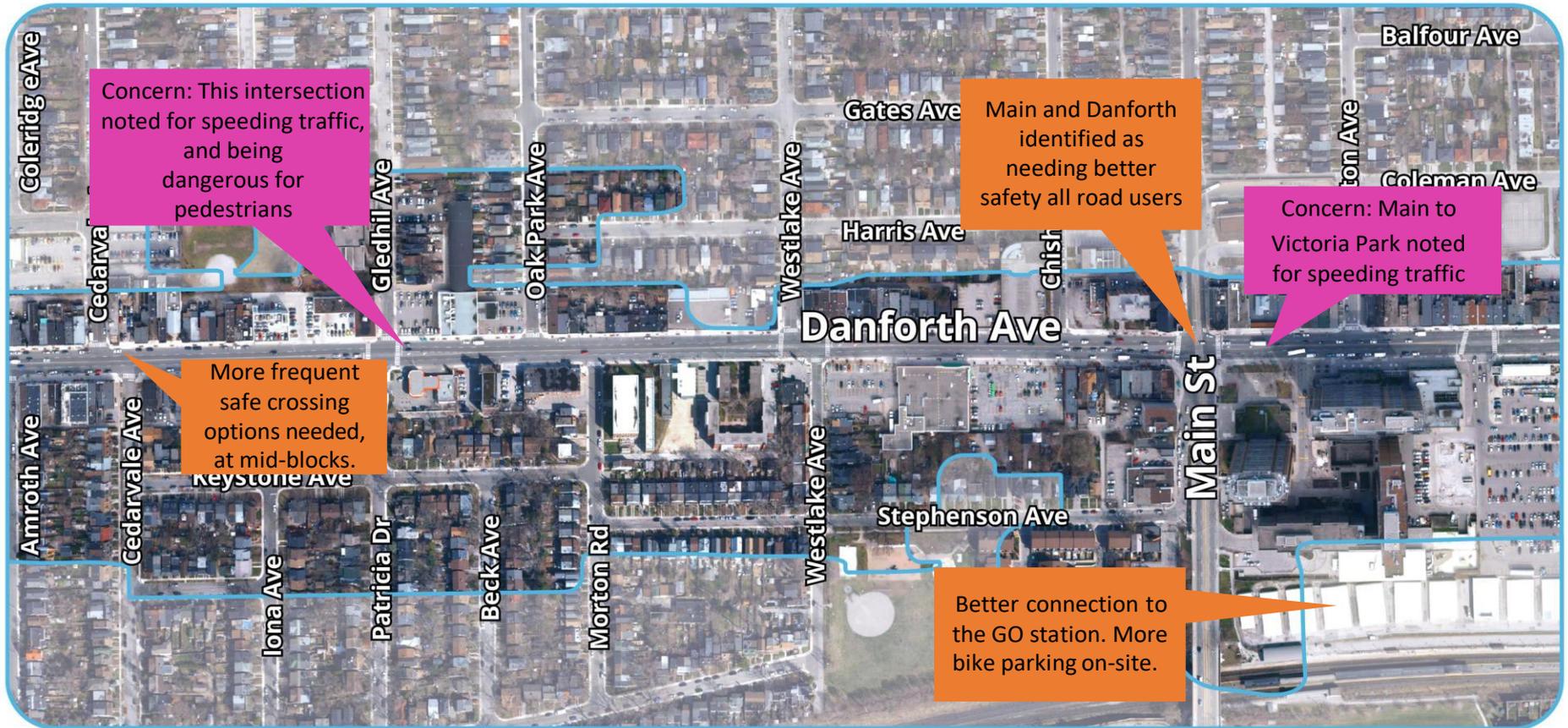
**Map 4: Coxwell Ave to Woodbine Ave**



**LEGEND**

- What do you like about the Danforth?
- What would you improve?
- Any other ideas or concerns?

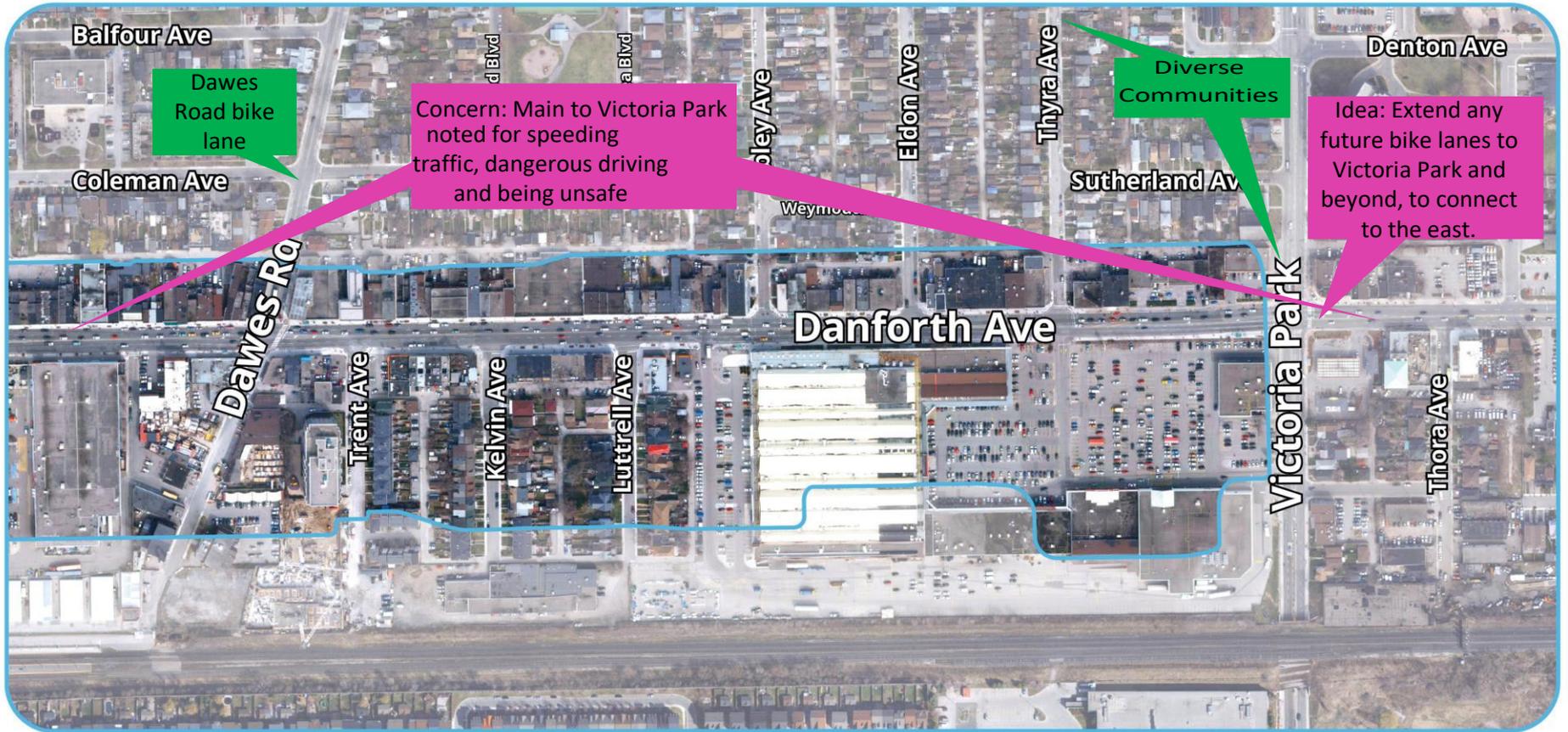
**Map 5: Amroth Ave to Barrington Ave**



**LEGEND**

- What do you like about the Danforth?
- What would you improve?
- Any other ideas or concerns?

**Map 6: Dawes Road to Victoria Park Ave**



**LEGEND**

- What do you like about the Danforth?
- What would you improve?
- Any other ideas or concerns?

### **Appendix 3 – Question and Answer Transcript**

Q: Will the SAC membership include more people than just those businesses and people directly on Danforth? It will affect the surrounding communities north and south of the Danforth.

A: *Yes. To clarify, we would like the SAC to include a broad range of organizations and individuals that represent the variety of people that use and experience the Danforth. This includes people from the surrounding community as well as broad range of organizations.*

Q: Regarding the complete streets piece of work – can the pilot for a bike lane be put in before the study end in 2021? So could a pilot be part of the process from now until 2021?

A: *The process identified here is one that we would like to work through with the community. We are seeking feedback on this process to inform our work plan. The design phase could include recommendations for a pilot. The timing of a pilot is something that we will explore and make recommendations on to Council, based on what feedback we receive from the community.*

Q: So the design should be done in 2021 but when is the implementation?

A: *Right now, implementation is planned to follow study completion. The process and timing of implementation will be confirmed during the study.*

Q: Will there be any implementation of a bike lane pilot between now and 2021?

A: *As noted previously, we are seeking feedback on the study process and work plan as part of tonight's meeting.*

Q: Will land use and density options on the north side of Danforth be different than those on the south side because of the subway on the north side?

A: *No we don't think so as of right now. The subway location has not historically been a technical constraint in this area. It doesn't actually run under the north side of Danforth so it's not a technical design issue that we think, as of right now, will impact options.*

Q: Who is doing the technical work? Will City staff be doing this or consultants?

A: *The City is doing most of the technical work and we have resources dedicated to this. If there is a piece of work in the terms of reference that could use some consulting support then the City will decide at that time. Overall the study is being led by the City.*

Q: Are there any major development applications right now along the Danforth that are important?

*A: Right now there isn't much in the west end of the Danforth which means that we are in a good position to get ahead of future applications. In the eastern end there are a few relatively big applications: the redevelopment of the ValueMart block on the north-east block of Woodbine and Danforth, the redevelopment of Main Square on the south-east side of Main and Danforth as well as a development application on the south-west corner of Main and Danforth, and the redevelopment of the Coxwell Barns on the south-east corner of Coxwell and Danforth.*