

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #4

On October 26, 2020, the City of Toronto hosted the fourth Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting for the Danforth Study. The meeting was held virtually via Webex Events from 6:00 – 8:00 PM.

This meeting provided an update on all study components with a focus on the Planning Study, and sought feedback from the SAC on the presentation (i.e. clarity, format, content and level of detail) in preparation for Community Meeting #3. The meeting agenda included the following:

- An update on the Complete Street Study – Pilot Implementation and Evaluation
- An update on the Planning Study – Land use and built form
- An update on the Planning Study – Parks, open space and public realm
- An update on the Planning Study – Heritage
- Discussion – Feedback on the presentation

A list of members and project team staff in attendance for SAC Meeting #4 is attached to this summary report as **Appendix 1**.

1 Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began with a First Nation land acknowledgement.

The meeting facilitator, Karla Kolli (Dillon Consulting), provided an overview of meeting mechanics for Webex and the meeting agenda. The group was also reminded of the SAC principles for working together, which include listening, being heard, and being respectful and open minded.

Councillor Bradford and Councillor Fletcher each provided opening remarks and welcomed committee members.

A recap of SAC Meeting #3 was provided, and members were shown a timeline of where we currently are in the project.

2 Complete Street Study

To begin, a Destination Danforth video project video was shown, which included highlights of the Pilot Complete Street Implementation and interviews with staff, local business owners and community members.

The City provided an update on the Pilot Installation work that occurred on Danforth Avenue from July to October 2020. This included reference to adjustments and design modifications that have already been made to meet the needs of road users, businesses and residents and the continued analysis and monitoring of the pilot, using an iterative design process.

SAC members were provided with an overview of upcoming changes to the pilot, including traffic signal optimization, removal of patios, and the addition of new loading zones. The list of criteria and measures being used to monitor and evaluate the pilot was presented to the SAC.

To conclude this section of the presentation a series of questions were presented as possible questions to be included as part of Community Meeting #3 and/or an associated survey. The SAC was asked to consider these questions and provide any feedback.

Two of the questions were tested with the SAC members using the Webex Polling function:

What is your overall experience of the pilot?

Very positive – I have few or no concerns	14/49
Positive – I have some concerns	4/49
Neutral – I have not experienced the pilot	0/49
Negative – I have many concerns	0/49
Very Negative – I do not support the pilot	0/49
No Answer	31/49

The poll for the first question was only displayed for 30 seconds, which was not enough time for participants to answer the questions. This test helped to determine a reasonable length of time for Webex polls.

Which aspects of the complete street pilot design do you like?

Overall safety and intimacy of the street	8/49
Cycle Track	11/49
Patios	11/49
Beautification & Art	11/49
Curb Extensions	8/49
Parking	6/49
All of the Above	10/49
No Answer	27/49

A polling question was launched to determine if SAC members were able to hear the audio when the pilot video was shown. The following are the results:

Yes	19/42
No	3/42
No Answer	20/42

3 Planning Study Update

3.1 Direction to initiate the Study

To begin the Planning Study update, SAC members were provided with information around Council's direction to initiate the Planning Study for Danforth Avenue, and the seven planning objectives that will guide the Planning Study.

3.2 What we've heard

The City provided a summary of what the project team has heard to date from the community for the following aspects: parks and public realm, heritage, retail main streets, built form, land use, affordable housing, accessibility and safety, and sustainability/resiliency. The presentation also provided information on how the City will address these comments in the Planning Study.

Possible questions for the public were presented, and SAC members were asked to consider if these questions were appropriate for Community Meeting #3 and/or an associated survey.

3.3 Land use and character areas

The City defined “character areas” and explained why these areas are identified in the Danforth Planning Study. Elements that define “character areas” include existing land uses, landscaping, lot sizes, block structures, building types, and the pattern of public spaces. The City then presented what some of these defining character elements looked like on Danforth Avenue. This included the lot and block pattern of the properties along the street, the land use breakdown, the existing heights of buildings, the density of the street, and the depth of lots.

Potential questions for the public about land use and character were presented, and SAC members were asked to consider if these questions were appropriate for Community Meeting #3 and/or an associated survey.

3.4 Built form and development analysis

The presentation provided a summary of the importance of development potential and how this will help us plan for the future needs of the community. An overview of how this plays into Provincial Policy and the municipalities’ need to satisfy growth policies was provided. The City then provided growth estimate data for the Danforth, including the distribution of Gross Floor Area (GFA) and a comparison of the number of people and jobs that are estimated in the existing situation and in a situation with as-of-right zoning.

Next, the presentation covered built form on the Danforth. This included a highlight of the kinds of buildings that are permitted now, and the built form goals of the Danforth Study.

The City provided an overview of mid-rise development, and recommendations for applying mid-rise development to Danforth Avenue. These recommendations include applying similar urban design strategies (as developed for Phase 1 of the Planning Study), and adding a potential new transition zone, which would provide a height transition space between the taller mixed use areas fronting Danforth and the lower-rise neighbourhood areas adjacent to Danforth Avenue.

Potential questions related to built form and mid-rise developments were presented, and SAC members were asked to consider if these questions were appropriate for Community Meeting #3 and/or an associated survey.

One of the questions was tested with the SAC members using the Webex Polling function.

Do you feel that Transition Zones are appropriate opportunities to create more housing in the area?

Very Positive - I have few or no concerns	12/47
Positive – I have some concerns	9/47
Neutral	1/47
Negative – I have many concerns	3/47
Very Negative – I do not support the idea	0/47
No Answer	22/47

3.5 Parks, Open space and public realm

This portion of the presentation began with the importance of the public realm, and an assessment of the public realm spaces that currently exist along Danforth Avenue: the parks and open spaces, sidewalk standards, streetscapes, and existing projects and design guidelines. Next, the presentation identified the public realm opportunities that have emerged through the Planning Study. This includes public realm enhancements (more art, street furniture), connecting parks and green spaces, improving pedestrian circulation, using side streets and street corners as opportunities for public realm enhancements, and using public art as a placemaking opportunity.

Potential questions related to the public realm were presented, and SAC members were asked to consider if these questions were appropriate for Community Meeting #3 and/or an associated survey.

3.6 Heritage study

One of the components of the Planning Study is a Heritage Study, which includes a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) to document the area's history and cultural heritage value. The City provided information about how the findings from this CHRA will be used as part of the Planning Study, to inform planning policies for the Danforth Study.

Potential questions related to heritage were presented, and SAC members were asked to consider if these questions were appropriate for Community Meeting #3 and/or an associated survey.

4 Next steps

The presentation concluded with a list of the next steps in the Danforth Study. This includes upcoming Interest Group meetings, finalizing the Economic Study Report, and the upcoming Community Meeting #3, scheduled for late November/early December.

5 Discussion period

After the presentation, the remainder of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion period. Throughout the meeting, members were encouraged to provide their questions and comments to the group using the meeting Q&A function. Members were also asked to use the “Raise Hand” function during the discussion period to ask their questions. The SAC was asked to focus their questions and comments on providing recommendations to improve the presentation/content for the upcoming public meeting. These questions and comments were read aloud by the Facilitator, and addressed by City Staff. The following is a record of the questions and comments, organized by theme.

Webex

Some comments were received on the Webex platform with particular concerns being raised about audio connections. It was noted that WebEx is the City approved platform that will be used for all City meetings. City staff do their best to work with participants to help with connection issues.

Suggestions for Improving the Presentation Overall

SAC members were asked for comments on the clarity, format, content and level of detail of the presentation so that City staff could make improvements prior to Community Meeting #3. The following comments and suggestions on the presentation will be addressed where possible for the Community Meeting:

- It is a lot of information to take in, and a lot of detailed questions to answer. One option is to put the questions at the front of each section so people will have a frame for listening to the presentation.
- Having the main questions/issues listed before each section would be useful in helping participants to better focus on the material.
- It may be best to summarize Powerpoint lists and discuss their main points rather than reading a list.
- Simplify the language and make plainer and more digestible to non-planner types. It was further noted that it is not necessary to dumb information down, but that it is important to think about clear language for better understanding.
- It was noted that between this meeting and the last community meeting, the world has changed, that we are all still trying to figure out what we want the City to look like in a post-pandemic world and, that a lot of people will have a whole new series of daily stresses. It was suggested that reflecting on this right at the beginning and throughout will be positive for the presentation.
- There are traffic woes and a lot of challenges with traffic that cannot be ignored. There will need to be a coherent answer to traffic concerns for the community meeting.

- It was asked whether there will be a chat room in the community meeting and how it will be managed in the large public meeting. **The City noted that the meeting will be similar to the SAC meeting, in that participants can use the Q&A function for questions and comments. However, participants will only be able to see their own questions/comments. The questions and comments received at the Community Meeting will be organized in the background to reduce duplication and staff will ask and answer as many questions as possible in the time available.**
- Include information on what came out of the Phase 1 Planning Study and how that has impacted the approach now in Phase 2.
- Would be good to be as specific as possible about timelines for monitoring the complete streets, for example: when are you doing the bike and car counts, near miss analysis etc.
- It was asked whether the City is going to take steps to provide access to anyone who does not have internet access i.e. through reserving library computers or at community centres. **The City notes that the Community Meeting will be recorded and posted online for anyone who was unable to attend the meeting live. This will give community members time to arrange internet access or book computers as needed to watch the meeting in their own time.**
- Comments were received that the presentation was clear and well-managed and that the questions worked well.

Suggestions for Improving Polling & Proposed Questions

A few polling questions were posed to the SAC as a way to test the polling function in Webex. The following comments made about the polling will be addressed to the extent possible for the Community Meeting:

- Not enough time was provided to complete the poll.
- There were too many steps required – you had to agree to take the poll, answer the question and then agree to submit. This was confusing. It was also unclear whether the poll showed up automatically.
- The way that the questions are asked is leading.
- Provide people with some advance information about the objectives, so the question is not just sprung on them.
- There are really varying types of questions. For example, what is missing from the study and how would you like the future to be. Prepare people by giving them guiding comments about the types of questions they will be asked.
- Some questions did not provide enough information to answer. For example, Q1 on slide 31 asked about suggested changes to objectives and it was hard to remember what the objectives were.

- It was asked whether those on the phone would be able to answer polls. *The City notes that unfortunately participants who phone in are not able to answer the poll questions.*
- Some comments indicated that the polls are useful and a good way to engage participants.

Suggestions for Use of Destination Danforth Video

SAC members made the following comments and suggestions about the video:

- The video should be full screen for the public presentation.
- There was zero mention of Destination Danforth until the video appeared. You should use the video as more of a springboard about what the Danforth can look like. It needs to be better folded into the presentation – not just something that pops up and disappears. Use it as an opportunity to get people excited.
- Wow - That was fabulous!

Suggestions and questions on Content

The following are questions of clarification on specific slides and general questions on the content presented. Answers have been provided to specific questions or to provide clarification. All comments will be addressed to the extent possible for the Community Meeting and will help the team anticipate questions from the public.

Questions of clarification on specific slides:

Q: Slide 39 - Some of the deep lots identified on page 39 are churches. What is going to happen to these? Are you looking to create redevelopment opportunities for those specific sites? It was noted that the churches may have heritage value.

A: Agreed, many of the churches have potential heritage value that we will have to be considered.

In the background modelling to produce development analysis the City took out all the institutional uses (churches, schools). So the map only shows sizes of lots, nothing more than that. The City will seek a better way to present information in this slide.

Q: Slide 44 – Are the Job Numbers correct on Slide 44? They seem too low in the As-of-Right and Mid-Rise categories. It was noted that the mid-rise estimates were not provided in the advanced slide package to the SAC members.

Not sure what Slide 44 is saying. Some more explanation would be helpful for the public meeting, especially how the numbers are generated. Need a title and/or index.

A: The numbers shown on Slide 44 are based on assumptions around standard Gross Floor Area numbers per job. We are advancing the development estimates and we will be sure to elaborate on our approach and rationale for the community meeting.

It was noted that the numbers were added to Slide 44 after the slides were circulated to the SAC. The slides as presented will be circulated with the minutes, and the numbers will be included in the community meeting presentation.

Slide 47: It was noted that built form is a difficult concept to grasp. Suggest a simple definition be provided and maybe include a couple of slides with examples to demonstrate.

Slide 52 – 54: More information should be provided about the transition zone including what housing types are possible in this area.

Slide 52 – 54: Uncertainty about the transition zone from a business perspective was raised. It was suggested that the idea needs to be better understood by the team before it is included in a presentation.

General Questions on the content presented:

Q: Will there be any count and safety data released to the public before the report to Council?

A: Yes - we are planning to publish data in batches, similar to how we did for the reporting about the King Street pilot.

Q: How can I be part of the heritage discussion group?

A: We will be inviting a representative of the TEYCC Preservation Panel.

Q: Given that most of the deeper lots are on the south side of the street and ripe for mid-rise development, how will the City maintain light levels for properties on the north side and the street in general? What will the angle of plane be?

A: City Planning will look at shadow impacts on the north side of the street and new mid-rise development is subject to an angular plane to limit shadows.

Q: How will the transition zone maintain an appropriate angle of plane for the greenspaces to the north?

A: Planning will also look at shadow impacts of new development on any parks in the area. There is a rear angular plane requirement for mid-rise buildings also.

C: In regards to the walkways and parking lots – I'm not sure if this is acceptable or ideal for businesses. If it gave more space for patios then maybe there is a case to be made. Otherwise it's a hard sell as it is far from shops. This is the first time I have heard about improving the parking lots.

A: The improvements to laneways and walkways in parking lots is also intended to improve the experience of walking to the Danforth storefronts for people walking from the TPA (Toronto Parking Authority) lots.

Q: It would be interesting to hear whether building up to 4 floors is generally easier/more affordable than tearing down and rebuilding? Is there opportunity to build up/expand, rather than teardown – as it is more environmentally responsible?

A: We are happy to support adding on to buildings, especially from a sustainability perspective. It is a balancing act between intensification and sustainability.

Q: Can you expand on opportunities for employment especially opportunities for office?

A: On the Danforth, because it is mixed use we can work in flexibility so that if someone wants to build a mix of retail and office or have 100% employment, we can encourage this (especially next to transit stations). We can look for ways to incentivize employment, but in mixed use areas the balance between uses is often dictated by the market.

Q: What percentage of density growth is expected to be housing, and what percentage is expected to be job-related?

A: The mix is set, but we generally look at ground floor and percentage of office, and the large portion of it would be residential in terms of modelling for growth.

Q: There is a lot of talk lately about the 15 minute city (being able to work, shop, play within a 15 walk from someone's home). At Pape and Danforth – it will become a future major transit area and future MTSA – have we looked at the implications for 500m walking area around the area? Have we considered what the implications of OMB reform may be?

A: City Planning is interested in making the mix of work, retail, and living work on Danforth Avenue. We currently have this on the Danforth and we want to maintain this. We will definitely include a mix of uses as we change permissions in neighbourhood.

Analysis for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) is underway and we are working with the province on the Ontario Line. As part of this, our team is starting to do analysis on subway stations, and Pape Station is part of this. We do not have an answer about how Pape Station will be impacted yet, we will need to complete a study to see how it interfaces with the Ontario line.

APPENDIX 1 – Attendance

Councillors

Councillor Bradford
Councillor Fletcher

Business Improvement Areas

Billy Dertilis, Danforth Mosaic BIA
Colin Johnson, Danforth Mosaic BIA (Alternate)
Mary Fragadakis, Greek Town BIA
Susan Puff, The Danforth BIA

Residents' Associations

Audrey Kvedaras, Danforth East Community Association
Elektra Simms, Beach Hill Neighbourhood Association
Roula Panagiotopoulos, Danforth Residents Association
Steven Jack, Playter Estates Residents Association
Susan McMurray, The Pocket Community Association
Susan Weiss, Logan Green Field

Cycling Groups

Gerry Brown, Ward 14 Bikes

Community Services

Kegan Harris, Neighbourhood Link
Mwarigha, Woodgreen Community Services

Arts and Culture Groups

Shana Hillman, East End Arts

Accessibility

Mohammed Waluil Islam, Accessibility Consultant

Historical Groups

Anita Millar, TEY Preservation Panel

School Trustees

Jennifer Story, Ward 15 Trustee, Toronto District School Board

Unaffiliated Members

Gelila MeKonnen, Unaffiliated Members

Kathy Laird, Unaffiliated Member

Observers (non-SAC members)

David Andrew Nicholson

Staff and Project Team:**City of Toronto**

Alyssa Cerbu, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
Daniel Samson, Traffic Planning Technologist
Danielle Davis, Capital Project Coordinator, Broadview Danforth BIA
Desi Simova, Project Officer, Planning and Design
Gary Miedema, Project Manager, Heritage Planning
Jacquelyn Hayward, Director, Project Design and Management, Transportation Services
Joseph Luk, Urban Designer, City Planning
Kevin Lee, Urban Designer, City Planning
Kristen Flood, Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning
Loryssa Quattrociochi, Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning
Lynda Macdonald, Director, Community Planning
Maili Sedore, Project Manager, Neighbourhood Projects
Mike Major, Manager, BIA Office
Niki Siabanis, Project Manager, Major Projects, Transportation Services
Paul Mule, Senior Planner, Community Planning
Saikat Basak, Project Manager, Cycling & Pedestrian Projects
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