

City of Toronto

Danforth Complete Street and Planning Study

Engagement Summary Report

January 2022

THE DANFORTH STUDY

Engagement at a Glance

5



Community Meetings



1400+

Attendees at community meetings

5



Stakeholder Meetings

32



Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members

2

Online Surveys



440+

Intercept surveys completed



3



Heritage Focus Group Meetings

3300+

online surveys completed



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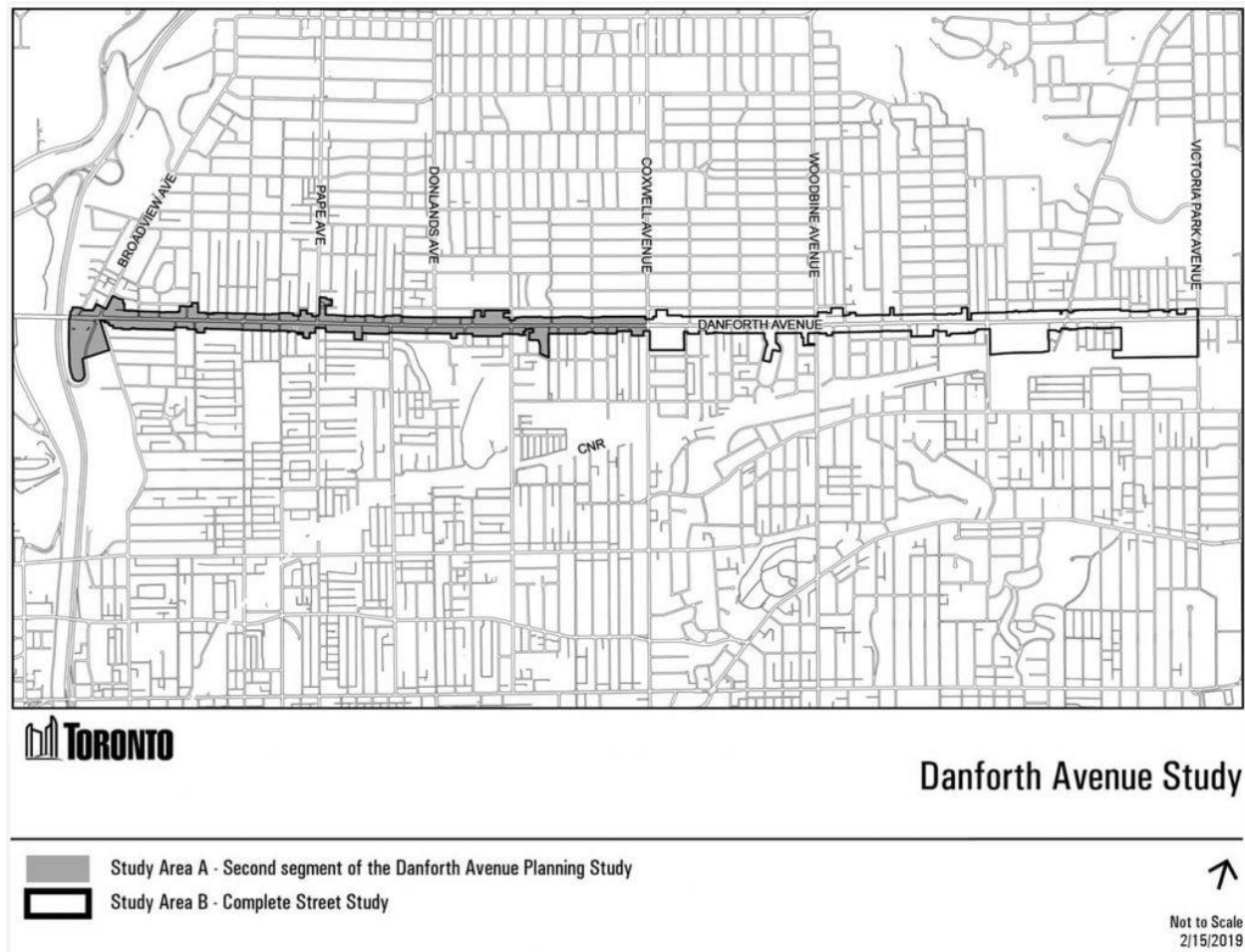
1.0 Introduction

The City of Toronto has undertaken a **Complete Street and Planning Study of Danforth Avenue**, one of the most recognizable and major avenues in the City. This Danforth Complete Street and Planning Study (the Study or Danforth Study) began in August 2019 and is anticipated to conclude in early 2022, with a final report to City Council. The Study is a joint initiative between three City divisions – Transportation Services, Economic Development and Culture, and City Planning, bringing together a study of three components through a comprehensive and coordinated process:

- **A Complete Street Study**, which involved the examination of the right-of-way and a feasibility design study to review traffic, parking, pedestrian safety, and other impacts specific to determine a complete streets design (ensuring the needs of all people and street users are considered), including the potential for on-street protected bike lanes;
- **An Economic and Retail Study** to provide an understanding of the economic environment and issues faced by retailers along the Danforth; and,
- **A Planning Study** to identify future city-building opportunities, guide new development, and enhance the public realm and quality of place.

The Complete Street Study, Economic Study and Retail Study were undertaken for the six kilometre stretch of Danforth Avenue between Broadview Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue (Study Area B), while the Planning Study was completed for the three kilometre stretch of Danforth Avenue between Broadview Avenue and Coxwell Avenue (Study Area A).

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A major component of the Danforth Study was public and stakeholder consultation, to ensure that the voices of the community were being heard and were considered in shaping the direction and recommendations of the Study. To achieve this, the City retained an independent consultant, Dillon Consulting Limited and the sub-consultants Overlap Associates to lead the consultation process.

1.1 Terms of Reference and Scope of Work

At the beginning of the Danforth Study, a Terms of Reference (ToR) was developed to help define the key areas of focus, the scope of work, and the deliverables that resulted from the Study. The final Terms of Reference can be found on the study website (www.toronto.ca/danforthstudy, under “Information and Reports”).

As outlined in the ToR, City staff was directed to undertake a scope of work that included the following goals:

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- Create a plan for the study area that is informed by and reflects the input and interests of a broad range of community members that are representative of the area;
- Complete a comprehensive review and analysis of Danforth Avenue to assess existing conditions in order to understand how the street is currently used and apply a complete street design approach with a focus on safety, pedestrian, and cycling infrastructure;
- Identify potential street cross-sections and opportunities for improvements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that are based on complete street principles and a Vision Zero approach to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Assess the benefits and impacts of complete streets design options, including the potential for on-street cycling facilities along Danforth Avenue, along with an accompanying implementation plan;
- Ensure the development of a vibrant retail and business environment to support continued economic growth and prosperity, support Danforth Avenue as a destination and protect and encourage cultural vibrancy;
- Support businesses in the study area through a retail and economic strategy that improves the business environment and minimizes impacts during potential streetscape projects;
- Establish an updated planning framework and urban design guidelines to support healthy and inclusive communities, local business activity, and growth while preserving the historic fabric and identify defining characteristics of the study area;
- Support initiatives that incorporate green infrastructure, encourage resilience and address climate change;
- Identify public realm and streetscape improvements that considers character-defining features and incorporate community input to improve the public realm;
- Align the development of a planning framework with complete street designs and other parallel initiatives in the area; and,
- Align planning strategies to support growth, including consideration of growth management objectives and other development opportunities.

The review and analysis of these components would be undertaken through the preparation of the final deliverables for this Study, which include:

- An Area Study Report;
- Historic Context Statement;
- Heritage Evaluation and Identification of Potential Heritage Resources;

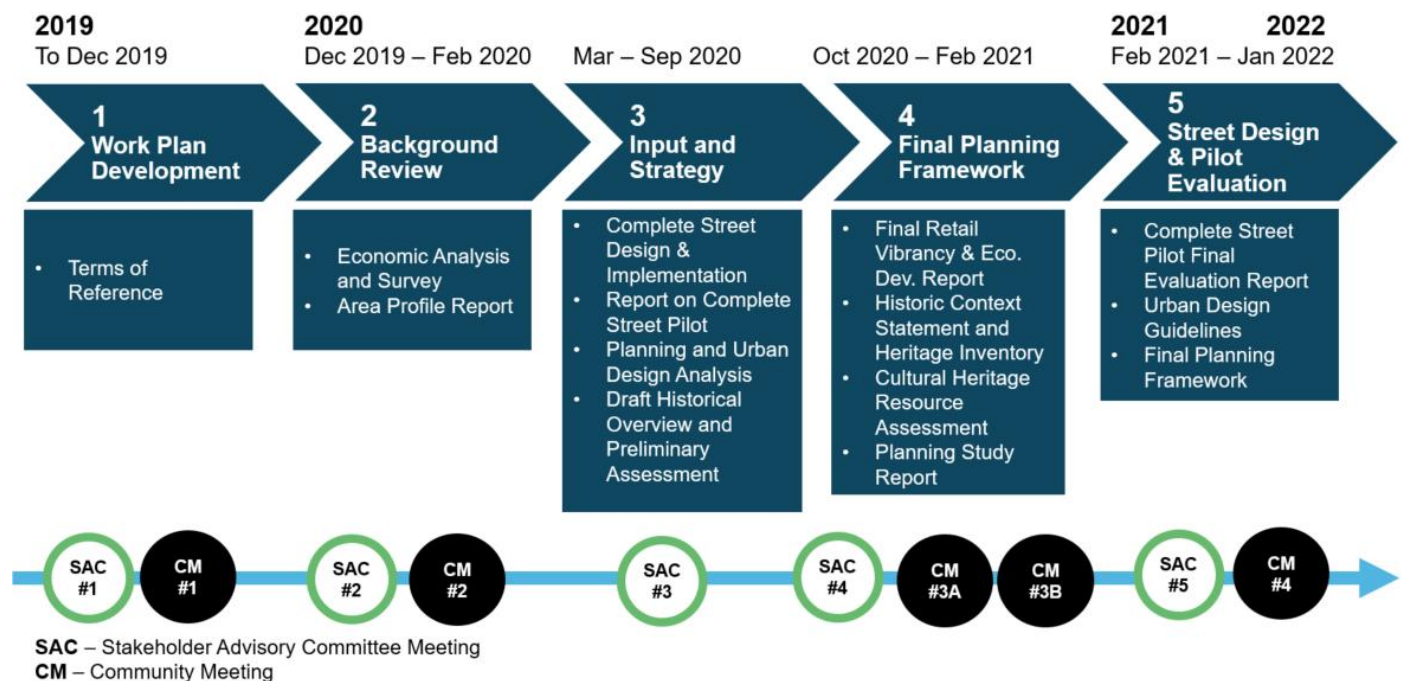
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- Economic Scan Report;
- Retail Analysis, Origin and Destination Study, and Economic Development Report;
- In-Service Road Safety Review;
- Danforth Avenue Planning Study Report and Urban Design Guidelines;
- Complete Streets Study Report;
- Phasing and Implementation Plan;
- Detailed Complete Street Plans/Design; and,
- A summary report of all public engagement feedback, events, and activities.

These components were prepared and developed with a comprehensive and coordinated public engagement process.

1.2 Study Process and Timeline

The engagement process was designed to collect input from the community and stakeholders at key milestones in the project life cycle, and the feedback heard was integrated into decision-making at each stage.



1.3 Community Charter and Engagement Goals

At the onset of the Study, a Community Charter was developed to outline the City's Commitment to the community for engagement, in order to ensure that a cooperative, collaborative and respectful process was established. The Charter included the following City commitments:

- We will encourage your participation and welcome your feedback.
- We will ensure that the consultation process will be purposeful and meaningful to you.
- We will consider and listen to all voices, perspectives, and opinions.
- We will consider all feedback we receive, and ensure that community input is reflected in the results of this Study.
- We will communicate openly with the community and in a timely manner.

Further to these commitments, the Study was guided by overarching engagement goals and objectives:

- ❖ **Increase awareness** of the Danforth Study and get the public interested in the project.
- ❖ Ensure engagement is **inclusive of diverse stakeholder groups**, and representative across the geography of the Study Area.
- ❖ **Provide multiple ways for the community to engage** and participate throughout the projects.
- ❖ **Engage early and often** by providing people with the information they need to participate.
- ❖ Provide communication that is **clear and accessible**.
- ❖ **Be open and honest** about the implications of decisions being made. The need for compromises is inevitable. There will be trade-offs associated with differing community desires and competing demands.
- ❖ **Build trust, garner buy-in.** Foster genuine relationships based on mutual respect and dialogue through this process, undertake collaborative decision making wherever possible, and be clear about how public and stakeholder input impacted decision making.

2.0 Consultation Approach and Activities

A series of activities to support community and stakeholder engagement were held throughout the project process. The activities were designed to provide multiple opportunities to gather feedback on various aspects of the Study, including both in-person and online methods. The following section provides a synopsis of the approaches used to gather community input.

2.1 Notifications and Communications

To notify the local community of upcoming community meetings, notices were sent to residents within and around the study area, which totalled over 56,000 notices at each round. These notices were sent approximately two weeks before the scheduled meetings, and were also posted online and/or were emailed to those who signed up for project updates. Meetings were also advertised in the local newspapers, such as the *East York Mirror*. **Appendix A** contains an example of notices sent to local residents to advertise Community Meeting #3B, with meeting details and instructions on how to join the virtual meeting.

2.1.1 Project Website

A dedicated webpage for the Danforth Complete Street and Planning Study was hosted on the City of Toronto website ([Danforth Avenue Complete Street and Planning Study](#)). This project page served as the main hub and one-stop location for project information and communications, including details on upcoming consultation events, meetings dates, project updates, opportunities for feedback, and it is where the public could

access engagement materials, such as meeting presentations, recordings, and summaries. The page was updated continuously throughout the process.



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2.1.2 Social Media

The City of Toronto used its various social media pages on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to promote the project and to notify followers about upcoming meetings and engagement opportunities for the Danforth Study. The hashtag **#danforthstudy** and **#destinationdanforth** was used by many affiliate accounts, organizations, and community social media accounts to generate discussion, engagement, and spread information regarding the Study.

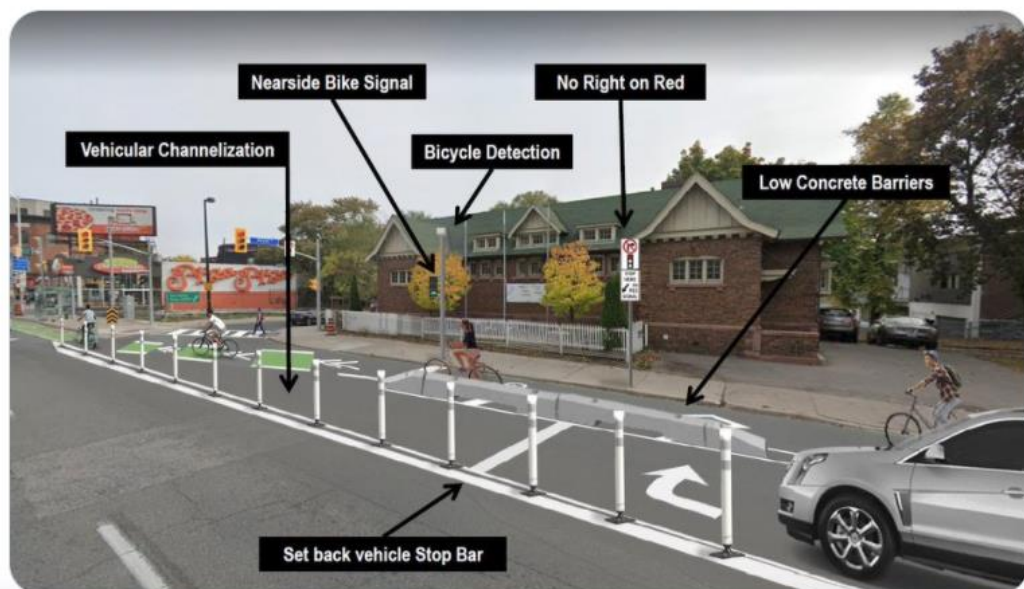
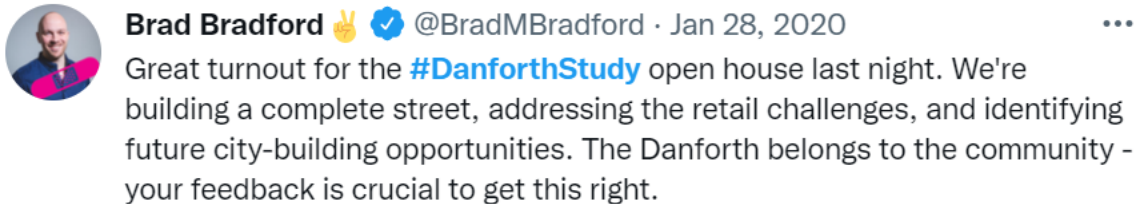


Figure 1: Examples of #DanforthStudy and #DestinationDanforth tweets from Councillors Bradford and Fletcher

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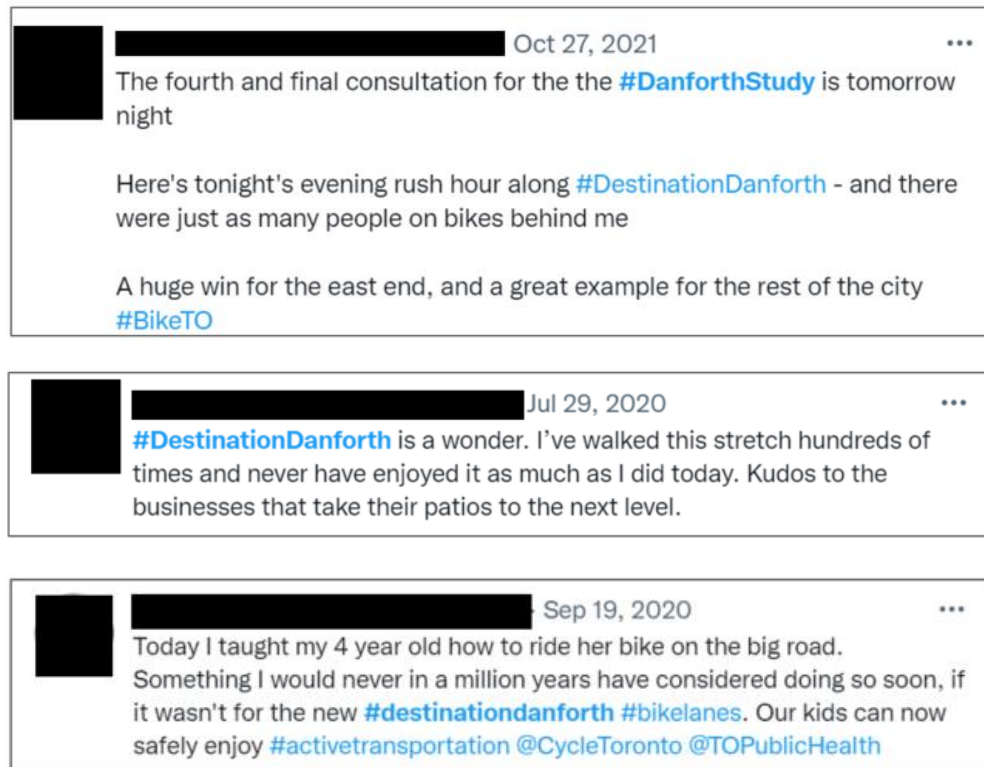


Figure 2: (Above) Examples of Danforth Study tweets from community members

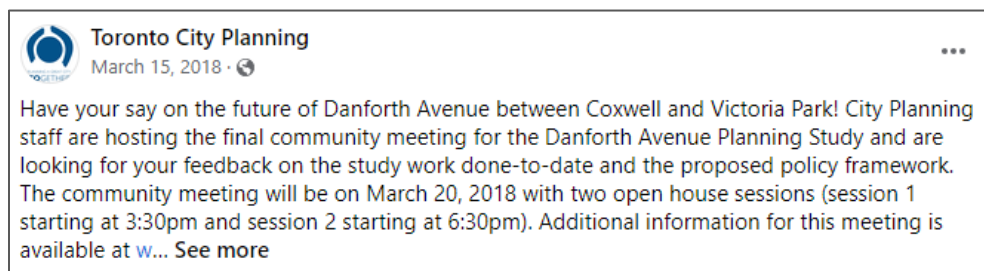


Figure 3: A Facebook post from the Toronto City Planning account

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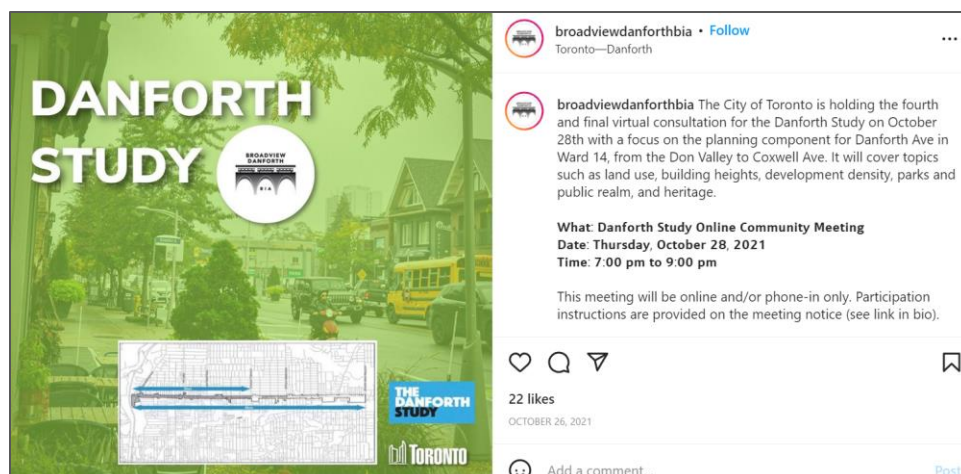


Figure 4: An Instagram post from the Broadview Danforth BIA promoting Community Meeting #4

2.2 Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) was established to help guide the development of the Danforth Study. This Committee was comprised of 32 members representing BIAs, Residents Associations, cycling



groups, historical groups, community services, arts and culture groups, accessibility groups, and interested residents and community members who reside and/or work



close to the study area. The goal of the SAC composition was to provide a balanced group of members (gender, age, cultural/ethnic diversity), including representation from Wards 14 and 19, to provide a diverse range of representation and perspectives. The role of the SAC was to provide local knowledge and understanding, to identify issues and opportunities from a range of perspectives, and provide a review of materials from a

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public lens. The SAC served as a sounding board throughout the project, and SAC meetings were held in advance of the community meetings in order to gather the SAC's feedback on the materials, which resulted in improving final presentations, engagement materials, and key messaging for each community meeting. SAC members were a valued component of the consultation process, helping to shape and guide the engagement process and materials, and provide a local lens and understanding of the Study Area.



The following is a list of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee members.

City Councillors

- Councillor Brad Bradford (Ward 19)
- Councillor Paula Fletcher (Ward 14)

Business Improvement Areas

- The Danforth
- Greek Town on the Danforth
- Danforth Village BIA
- Danforth Mosaic

Residents Associations

- Beach Hill Neighbourhood Association
- Danforth East Community Association
- Danforth Residents Association
- Danforth Village Residents Association
- Greenwood Community Association
- Logan-Greenfield
- Playter Estates Residents Association
- The Pocket Community Association

Cycling Groups

- 32 Spokes
- Doctor's for Safe Cycling
- Ward 14 Bikes

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Community Services

- Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services
- Neighbourhood Link (Danforth location)
- Tobias House
- Woodgreen Community Services

Accessibility

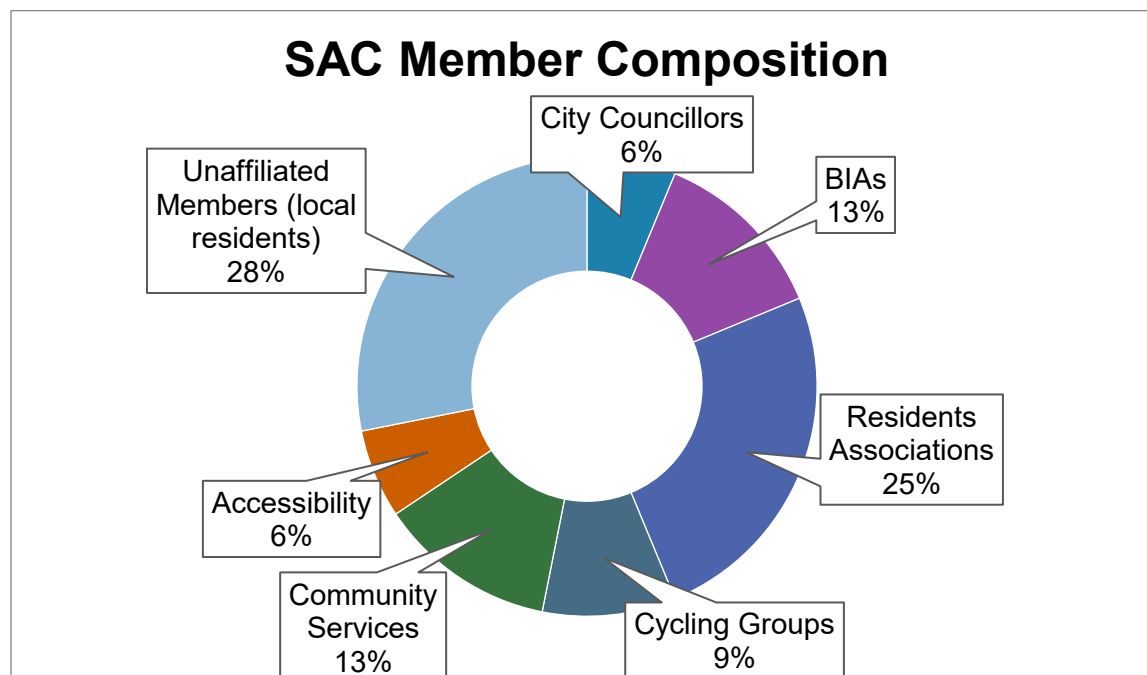
- 2 accessibility members, including an accessibility consultant

Unaffiliated Members (Local Residents)

- 9 total local residents, representing students, community leaders, business owners, young professionals, and retirees.

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The following chart shows the composition and proportional representation of the stakeholder groups.



In total, five Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings were held throughout the duration of the Study. They are summarized in the table below. A full summary of each SAC meeting, including feedback provided by SAC members can be found in **Appendix B**.

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SAC Meeting #	Meeting Date	Purpose
1	November 4, 2019 (in-person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the project to SAC members; • Provide an overview of the role of the SAC; • Solicit SAC feedback on the project goals, Terms of Reference and proposed design for Community Meeting #1; and, • Complete a mapping exercise with SAC to identify issues and opportunities along the Study Area for the project team.
2	January 14, 2020 (in-person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new SAC members; • Provide a presentation on the revised Terms of Reference, and the Area Profile Report; • Provide a summary of the community feedback received to date; and, • Discuss and test the approach to Community Meeting #2.
3	June 24, 2020 (virtual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the Complete Streets (ActiveTO) pilot implementation on Danforth Avenue, “Destination Danforth”; • Provide an overview and background on the bike lane and goals of the pilot, in the context of COVID-19; • Pilot implementation details, including design considerations and timelines; and • Discuss the next steps in the pilot and project.

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SAC Meeting #	Meeting Date	Purpose
4	October 26, 2020 (virtual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide an update on the Complete Street Study pilot implementation and evaluation;• Provide an update on the Planning Study components and the progress on the technical work to date, including land use and built form, parks, open spaces and public realm, and heritage; and,• SAC members were given a run-through of the Community Meeting #3 presentation, and provided their feedback on the presentation and polling questions.
5	October 6, 2021 (virtual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a brief update on the Complete Streets Study, but focused primarily on the Planning Study and the updated direction, policies, and technical work that has been completed since the last SAC meeting, including the completion of a heritage survey;• Provide update on the emerging directions for public realm, heritage, and built form; and,• Seek feedback on the presentation and content for Community Meeting #4.

2.3 Community Meetings

Five community meetings (CMs) were held during the course of the Study, in both in-person and virtual formats. The meetings were designed to be interactive and encourage broad participation by offering activities to collect feedback and opportunities for participants to ask questions to the project team.

The format of the in-person meetings (CM #1 and #2) were open house style, which included presentations, activity stations (see Sections 2.1.3 and 2.1.6), panel display boards, workbook sessions, facilitated discussions, and a question and answer period. Participants were also provided with comment forms to provide feedback on the meeting and materials.



In March 2020, the World Health Organization officially classified the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. The pandemic and public health measures required changes to the engagement plan and to move engagement online. The remaining community meetings were reconfigured to virtual formats.

The third round of consultation was divided into two community meetings (CM #3A and #3B), in order to give the Planning Study component and the Complete Street Study component their own dedicated meeting focused on the updates and progress achieved to date in the respective studies.

The virtual meetings (CM #3A, #3B and #4) were hosted by the City on Webex, and included a presentation, polling, facilitated discussion, and question and answer period. Meeting participants were also able to submit their questions and comments in the chat box throughout the meeting to the panelists and members of the project team who were available to respond directly. Due to the large



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volume of questions received, a Record of Questions and Answers was created for all virtual meetings. This record provides an organized list of all questions received during the meeting(s) with the Study team's response to each question. The Record of Questions and Answers from Community Meeting #3A, #3B and #4 can be found in **Appendix E**.

The public showed great interest in the Danforth Study, which was evident through the well-attended public meetings. The in-person meetings were focused on the entire Study Area (Study Area B from Broadview Avenue to Victoria Park Avenue) and on all components of the Study. Each of these in-person community meetings prior to the pandemic were **attended by more than 400 people**. The virtual meetings were organized to focus either on the Complete Street Study or the Planning Study (which only applies to Study Area B from Broadview Avenue to Coxwell Avenue). These virtual meetings were each attended by **approximately 200 people**.

The table below outlines the timing and purpose of each community meeting. The meeting presentations along with recordings of all virtual meetings can be found on the project website. A full summary of all community meetings can be found in **Appendix F**.

CM	Meeting Date	Location	Purpose
#1	November 7, 2019	In-person Cafeteria, Monarch Park Collegiate Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce the public to the study, providing an overview of the Study's three components;• Provide an overview of the Study Terms of Reference, and gather feedback from the community to help guide and shape this document;• Identify the community's project priorities; and,• Identify what the community likes about Danforth Avenue, what needs improvement, and other ideas and opportunities using a mapping activity.
#2	January 27, 2020	In-person Cafeteria, Monarch Park Collegiate Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share the updated Study Terms of Reference, based on the feedback received from CM#1;• Provide an overview of the Area Profile Report;

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CM	Meeting Date	Location	Purpose
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more information on each of the Study components; • Report back on what we heard from CM#1; and, • Continue to gather feedback on issues, opportunities, and priorities using a mapping activity.
#3A	December 1, 2020	Virtual, Webex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief update on the three study components, with a focus on presenting the Complete Street pilot project, Destination Danforth, that was implemented over the summer of 2020; and, • Provide an overview of the City's plans for monitoring and evaluating the pilot.
#3B	January 11, 2021	Virtual, Webex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the Planning Study component, covering topics including land use, building heights, development density, parks and public realm and heritage; and, • Provide an update on the technical work completed to date, soliciting feedback on the direction of the Planning Study.
#4	October 28, 2021	Virtual, Webex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus mainly on the Planning Study, providing a summary of the results of the heritage survey and an overview on the draft planning framework and Urban Design Guidelines, including the approach to public realm, heritage, and built form. • Present graphics illustrating visualizations of Danforth Avenue with mid-rise heights, transitions and potential building scenarios.

2.4 Mapping Activity

At Community Meeting #1 and #2, a mapping activity was used to allow the public to identify location-specific issues and opportunities in the Study Area. Large maps of the Study Area were displayed around the meeting room, and participants were provided with 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 other ideas or concerns. Participants were asked to place their sticky notes directly on the maps on the specific locations within the Study Area where their comments applied.

In total, **over 1000 sticky notes with comments were collected** from the mapping activity at Community Meetings #1 and #2.



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In order to allow members of the public who were unable to attend Community Meeting #1 and/or #2, or for those who had additional comments, the mapping activity was replicated in an online format through Social Pinpoint. Similarly to the version used at the meetings, participants were able to leave their comments about specific locations in the Study Area by dragging coloured pins to identify what is great about the Danforth (green pins), what needs improving (yellow pins), and other ideas and concerns (pink pins). The online mapping activity was active from January 27, 2020 to March 6, 2020 and received **over 300 additional comments**.



Figure 5: A word cloud showing the most frequently used words in the online Mapping Activity comments.

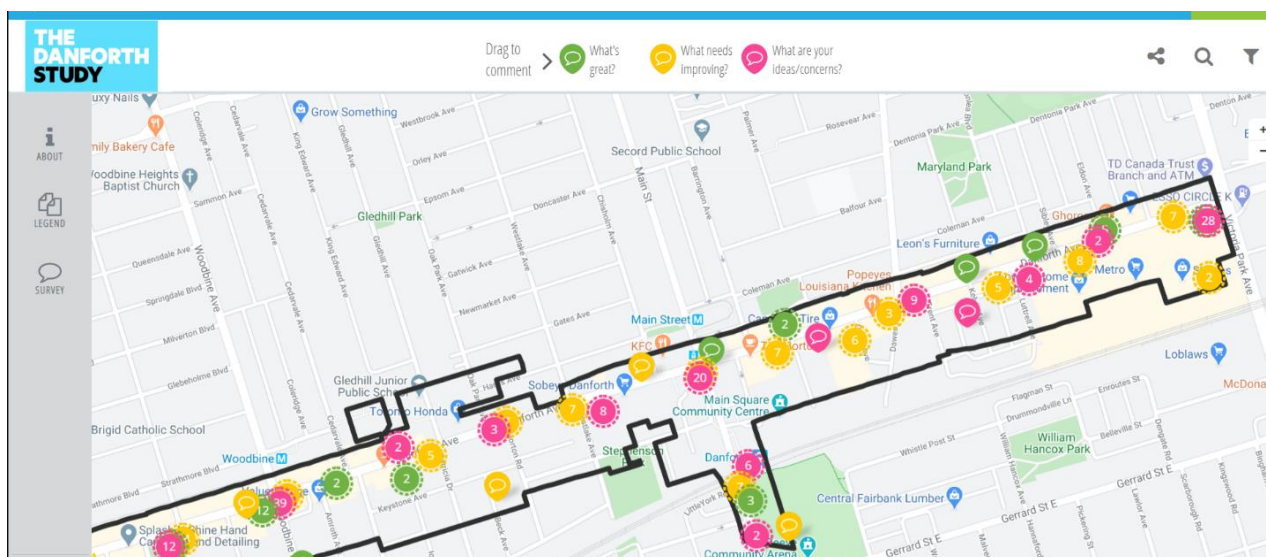


Figure 6: The Social Pinpoint Mapping Activity.

A full summary of what we heard from the mapping activity can be found in **Appendix C**.

2.5 Online Surveys

Two online surveys were used during the consultation process to gather feedback from the community. The first survey was available online for six weeks from January 27, 2020 to March 6, 2020 on Social Pinpoint. This survey focused on respondents' relationship to the Study Area and their typical mode of travel on Danforth Avenue. The results provided insight on the habits of survey respondents, how they interact with Danforth Avenue, and their preferred modes of transportation. In total, **more than 800 survey responses were collected**. A full summary of the findings for Online Survey #1 can be found in **Appendix C**.

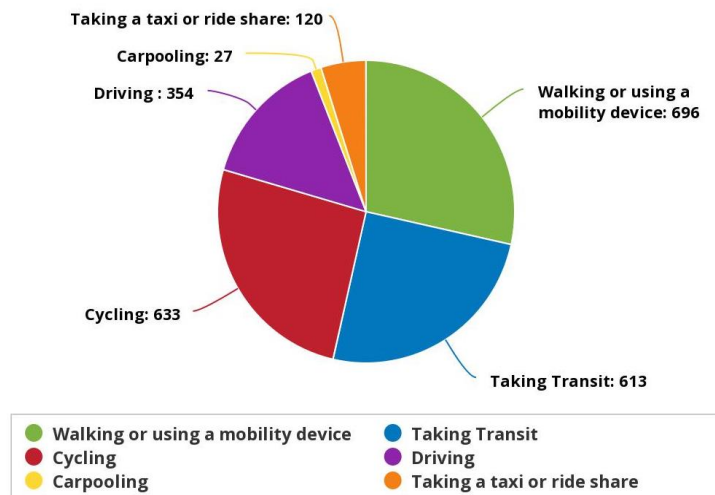
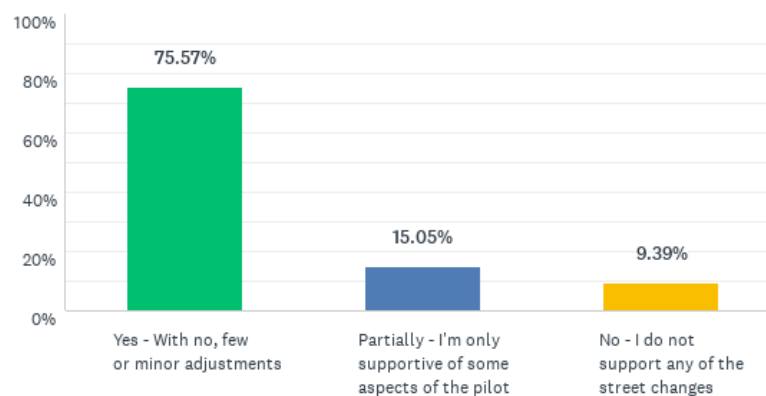


Figure 7: Survey results showing the primary mode of travel of survey respondents on Danforth Avenue.

800

The second online survey supported Community Meeting #3A and #3B, and was available on SurveyMonkey via the project website from December 1, 2020 to January 22, 2021. This survey provided the public with an opportunity to offer their feedback on the

Q23 Would you like to see the pilot become permanent?



direction of the Complete Street Study and Planning Study components. For the Complete Street Study, this included their agreement with the project goals, experience with the installed pilot and design elements, the evaluation and criteria measures of the project, feedback on the pilot bike lanes, and accessibility. For the Planning Study, survey users were asked to provide their feedback on the objectives, character areas,

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transition zones, urban design elements, and park, public realm, and streetscape considerations. The results of this survey helped to understand the level of community support for the various aspects of the Study, and what could be improved or adjusted to better suit the public's needs and concerns. The results helped the Study team refine and shape the direction of Study and ensure that it was reflecting of the community's needs. In total, the survey was **completed by 2,496 respondents**. A complete summary of the feedback received, including a full list of survey responses is provided in **Appendix D**.

2.6 Voting and Polls

Voting activities and polls were used at the community meetings to help gauge the public's interests, priorities, support and opinions on various aspects of the Study. At Community Meeting #1, participants voted using marbles and jars to identify their top priorities for the Danforth Study. In the virtual community meetings, Webex polls were used to solicit live feedback, and the results were shared instantly with the group for greater discussion.



Figure 8: Community members use

2.7 Heritage Focus Group Meetings and Interviews

In addition to Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings and Community Consultation meetings, City staff sought input from a Heritage Focus Group composed of historians and representatives of neighbourhood organizations with insight into the area's heritage, including its Indigenous heritage. Three meetings were held with the Heritage Focus Group, on November 17, 2020, December 8, 2020, and April 1, 2021. Consultation with local and professional historians through the Heritage Focus Group informed an understanding of the historical development of the Study Area, as well as the assessment and documentation of properties with cultural heritage value.



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Through the Heritage Focus Group, Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings, and Community Consultation meetings, staff heard clearly that an understanding of the lived history of the Danforth, including its cultural diversity, was critical to this study. As a result, Heritage Planning piloted the collection of 11 individual interviews with



longstanding business owners who were in operation since 1975 or earlier to enrich an understanding of the more recent history of the Danforth. As there was also a desire to include representation from cultural communities raised through engagement, the entire physical geography of the study area, as well as a variety of business types, interview candidate selection was expanded to more recent business owners if they fulfilled the other criteria and additional interviews were conducted. Heritage Planning also explored the live music history of the Danforth through interviews with proprietors of live music venues.

A summary of the Heritage Focus Group meetings can be found on the project website.

3.0 What We Heard

The Danforth Complete Street and Planning Study involved a robust two-year consultation strategy, to engage with the community and stakeholders directly through the use of a variety of tools and avenues for the public to participate and provide feedback. The public and stakeholders provided substantial input and feedback throughout the process. **We engaged with over 1,400 individuals at the public meetings, we heard from more than 3,300 individuals through our online surveys, and hundreds more provided their feedback in other ways.**

The significant feedback, ideas, and input we received informed the development of the Study, its direction, the priorities, and helped to ensure that the plans and deliverables support and reflect the desires and needs of the community. The following is a summary of the overarching themes and frequent comments that we received through all engagement activities. What we heard has been categorized into the main subject areas covered in this Study.

3.1 Planning Study

3.1.1 Heritage

We heard from the community that the existing historic main street character of Danforth (defined by its streetscape, retail, main street and neighbourhood-feel) was identified as one of the main reasons why Danforth Avenue is a valued place, and change should respect and maintain this character.

Public feedback collected throughout the project also helped the Heritage Planning team identify the buildings in the Study Area that have potential cultural heritage value and could be candidates for listing on the City's Heritage Register. These include main street commercial buildings that were constructed from 1910-29 that define the historic character of the Danforth, buildings associated with important community uses (e.g. social clubs, theatres, long-standing restaurants), live music venues, places of worship and bank buildings.



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The community also expressed the importance of conserving the diverse cultural identity of Danforth Avenue, which is home to various immigrant and cultural groups such as Italian, Greek, Ethiopian, Bangladeshi, and Indigenous communities.

The diversity of uses and cultures, and architecture/built form on Danforth Avenue was identified by the community as some of the area's most valued qualities. There was widespread support from the public to conserve historic buildings on Danforth Avenue, and to ensure that they continue to define and support its sense of place. Public feedback collected throughout the Study helped staff first complete a Historic Context Statement to inform heritage evaluations, and then to identify buildings in the Study Area that have potential cultural heritage value. Most commonly, participants identified the cultural diversity of Danforth Avenue as critical to its history. They also identified landmarks like the Danforth Music Hall, places of worship, and historic banks, as well as the main street commercial buildings from the 1910s and 1920s, that define the historic main street character of Danforth Avenue.

There was some concern that “over-designating” properties and sites could limit opportunities for development, by restricting the space or development potential that is available.

In addition to buildings, the community also expressed the need to preserve and promote the ethno-cultural heritage of area, including the contributions of Italian and Greek communities, as well as more recent Ethiopian and Bangladeshi communities, to Danforth Avenue. Recognizing and celebrating the area's indigenous history was also identified as an important piece of Danforth's heritage.



The community provided recommendations on how to commemorate and promote the history of the area, including through the use of plaques, public art, signage, and the naming of streets and public spaces.



The feedback provided about heritage was valuable to help develop the Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment, which has documented the Study area's development history to ensure that properties of cultural heritage value or interest are appropriately identified, understood and conserved, and can inform planning policies and guidelines as part of the greater Danforth Study.

3.1.2 Land Use

The community values the mixed-use nature of Danforth Avenue, where services, retail, and amenities are located in close proximity to the residential neighbourhoods where people live. This creates a more walkable, liveable, accessible, and convenient community for local residents. Continuing this mixed-use approach is encouraged and supported in future development and land use for the Study Area.

The mixed use landscape of Danforth Avenue makes it possible to have many amenities and community services available in the community. It was noted by residents that the community is well-served, with a variety and abundance of community services that are available and easily accessible, such as libraries, community centres, schools, health services and recreational spaces. As Danforth evolves, the top three services and amenities that residents would like to see in the community are parks and open spaces, restaurants and retail. The community highlighted Carrot Common as one of the community's favourite spaces, and they would like to see more open market, open spaces, and community spaces similar to this. It was also noted that the community would like more art spaces, such as theatres, music venues, and galleries, and there were some residents who would like to see more night life to make Danforth a destination that can be enjoyed at all times.



Affordable housing was another key consideration by the public. It was identified as a need within the community, and the comments received from the public indicate that there is a desire for affordable housing to be incorporated as part of any new developments in the study area. The comments encourage the Planning Study to make this a priority, and to include clarity on how affordable housing will specifically be achieved as part of the Study.

3.1.3 Growth and Density

A major focus of the Planning Study was to identify future city-building opportunities and to guide new development in the Study Area. Throughout the engagement process, the public was informed about the Municipal and Provincial direction to direct more growth along Danforth Avenue, and it was understood by the public that there will be a need for Danforth Avenue to accommodate more density and growth in the future. Part of the discussion with the community included understanding what this growth should look like, and the scale that would be most appropriate for future development on Danforth Avenue.





historic main street character of Danforth Avenue. Finding the right balance between these two aspects was a key consideration and comment from the community.



Some participants were opposed to more density and were cautious of intensification, as there were concerns that this would change the character (look and feel) and landscape of Danforth Avenue too drastically. The majority of community members, however, were supportive of introducing density through a mid-rise development (buildings from 6-8 storeys high) approach, which would provide more density while still maintaining the

It was also noted by many community members that Danforth Avenue is a transit corridor that is uniquely situated along the subway line, but the current density of the street does not take advantage of this opportunity. While mid-rise buildings were identified as appropriate heights for the Study Area, community members were supportive of increasing building heights beyond mid-rise and permitting higher around

interchange transit stations in order to concentrate density, growth, and development around transit hubs.

Community members voiced their concerns for the potential negative impacts that future growth may have, such as greater congestion, transit demand, lack of school capacity and the greater strain on community services and infrastructure. The community wanted the Planning Study to address and accommodate for these concerns, through appropriate planning, guidelines and policies for growth management.

3.1.4 Built Form

Many comments were collected about built form and urban design throughout the engagement process. One of the key themes that emerged from this feedback was the need to respect the historic main street character of Danforth Avenue; it was made clear from the community that the design of new buildings should not change the existing fabric or charm of the street, and should respect and/or “fit” into the existing street.

The community had concerns that new development and buildings could have potentially negative impacts on existing residents, houses and users of the street. This includes limiting or blocking sunlight exposure, shadow casting, wind tunneling, and the loss of sky views. The community expressed the need for built form and design to consider these challenges in order to mitigate these impacts.

This feedback helped to shape the Urban Design Guidelines for the Study Area, and the establishment of transition zones and policies for built form that mitigate the development impacts identified by the community. The community showed support

for the use of transition zones in the Planning Study Framework and Urban Design Guidelines as a means to create a buffer between the lower-scale residential neighbourhoods north and south of Danforth Avenue and any higher (new) buildings on



Figure 9: An illustration that depicts the potential for an 8 storey form with a further modified transition when paired with a development within a designated Transition Zone

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Danforth Avenue. The community responded positively to these transitions, as they provide a gradual introduction of density to the neighbourhood.



Figure 10: Built form including step backs to ensure that shadows are eliminated on the public realm.

The feedback also indicated that the community encourages the use of building stepbacks and terraces in the design of buildings as ways to mitigate the impact of new developments on adjacent properties, the street, and

pedestrians. In order to keep buildings in line with the character of the existing neighbourhood, the selection of building materials was also noted as an important element to consider. Some participants commented that building materials should complement the character of the Study Area, and that building façades should blend with the existing streetscape. This is particularly important for new development adjacent or close to heritage buildings, as the building materials (such as brick and masonry) should respect these historic buildings.

3.1.5 Public Realm and Open Space

One of the major goals of the Planning Study was to enhance the public realm and quality of place of the Study Area. As part of the engagement process, the community was consulted on what elements of the public realm they valued most, what they would like to see more of, and any improvements or recommendations they supported that would improve the public realm. The feedback received revealed that the existing green spaces, trees and parks were some of the most valued features of Danforth Avenue. East Lynn Park, Withrow Park, and Monarch Park were noted as some of the community's most important assets. As the Danforth Area evolves, the community would



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like to see not only the existing parks and green spaces maintained and protected, but more of these spaces added. The community also supported improving access to these parks and open spaces by improving linkages and connections to make them safer and more accessible.

In terms of the relationship between the public realm and built form, the community was supportive of using public spaces, particularly green spaces, to provide buffers and setbacks from higher (mid-rise) buildings. The continued maintenance of these spaces, however, is necessary as there was concern that they could become orphaned spaces that are neglected over time. Creating a pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically pleasing environment within the public realm was a key finding that emerged from the community feedback. The community supported expanding sidewalks and pedestrian-dedicated spaces to improve walkability, safety and increase accessibility. This was also seen as a way to limit crowded/cluttered sidewalks and obstacles that impede mobility. There was also consistent support for the beautification of the street, including enhancing boulevards, adding more street furniture (specifically washrooms and seating options to provide more options to enjoy the street and public spaces), and using public art, planting, landscaping, and trees to help decorate and animate the streetscape.



3.2 Complete Street Study

3.2.1 Complete Street Pilot, Destination Danforth – Separated Bike Lanes

Prior to the installation of the Complete Street pilot on Danforth Avenue in summer 2020, a significant amount of feedback received from the community was in support of a bike lane installation, whether as a pilot or as a more permanent solution. The community made it clear that a separated bike lane was both desired and needed, and much of the feedback highlighted the safety concerns that people experienced with riding their bikes on Danforth Avenue (pre-pilot).



After the installation of the Complete Street pilot, the feedback received from the community provided valuable input to help make adjustments and modifications needed to help improve the pilot. These recommendations include enhancing sight lines for oncoming vehicles, more education about road safety and rules, and better enforcement of rules relating to speeding, following light signals and appropriate use of the cycle track. Similarly, the community requested additional features or amenities that would enhance the cycle track or cycling experience of users. This included more bike racks and parking, and protected intersections for greater protection for all road users who are crossing or turning at intersections.



Overall, the feedback received indicated that there was a strong uptick in the number of people who cycled on Danforth Avenue after the installation, as cyclists felt safer and biking was now a more convenient mode of transportation for getting around.

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Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the bike lanes provided an alternative mode of transportation that was outdoors, safer, and socially distanced. The vast majority of users of the bike lane identified a positive experience with the pilot and showed wide-spread support for the pilot becoming permanent.

3.2.2 Complete Street Pilot, Destination Danforth – Street Elements

Early in the engagement process, common concerns were raised about vehicular speeding, traffic congestion, safety issues for all road users, pedestrians and cyclists, and the need for more vibrancy and street improvements. With the installation of the Complete Street pilot in summer of 2020, many of these issues were directly addressed or mitigated.



The public responded positively to the Complete Street installation and showed appreciation for many of the new street features. Most notably, the patios were strongly supported and the safety elements such as extended curbs, refreshed crosswalks, signal timing and traffic calming measures. The public also responded positively to the beautification of Danforth Avenue, such as the use of public art and greenery to enhance the look of the street.

The community also provided the Study team with their concerns and the elements of the pilot that were identified as areas of improvement. One of the most noted concerns was the increased traffic and congestion for automobiles on the road. It was also



noted by the public that the street was now more intensely used, and the lanes feel more closely clustered together, side-by-side.



Another concern was the misuse of loading zones by delivery trucks and other vehicle users, which cause roadblock issues, particularly as they obstruct the cycle track lane. Some participants also expressed feeling unsafe at intersections and strongly suggested the implementation

of protected intersections to enhance the safety of road users at busy points throughout the Study Area. The feedback and concerns put forth by the public was used by the project team for continuous improvements and alterations to the pilot.

The community also supported the evaluation criteria being used to monitor the pilot, with notable suggestions for a few additions. This includes measuring environmental (climate change) and health impacts, accessibility needs, and considering the satisfaction of local businesses.

3.2.3 Complete Street Pilot, Destination Danforth – Accessibility

With the implementation of the Complete Street pilot on Danforth Avenue, a number of adjustments were made to address the diverse needs of road users, including more accessibility features. Feedback from the community, including those who have accessibility or mobility challenges, highlighted many of the improvements of the pilot including greater safety at crosswalks, traffic calming, and improved barriers and visibility and extension of curbs.

However, participants also expressed some of the new challenges, which require more attention and further adjustments.



Figure 11: Curb Extensions to slow vehicle turns



Figure 12: Reflective posts provide greater protection and visibility

Accessible parking was noted as a concern, as accessible spaces have been restricted to certain areas along Danforth Avenue, which may not always be convenient or close to the drivers' destination. Drivers also noted that exiting cars was a safety concern, particularly for those with mobility or accessibility needs, since the vehicle traffic lane is located right next to the driver's side within a close proximity upon exiting. Generally, those with mobility needs did feel safer crossing the street, although concerns were raised about the cycle track adding an additional barrier and safety issue, as the interaction between cyclists and people in wheelchairs or with walking devices can be potentially dangerous.

The feedback collected and the accessibility concerns noted by community members will be considered and used by the City to modify and examine the pilot installation moving forward to improve accessibility and safety.

3.3 Economic and Retail Study

3.3.1 Economic Development

The feedback collected throughout the engagement process revealed that one of the most valued features of Danforth Avenue is its "main street" character, and the abundance of small, independent retail businesses that line the street. These types of retail spaces helped to make the Danforth unique, and they were preferred over the big-box stores and larger chains. The public expressed a desire to maintain this type of retail character.



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As Danforth evolves, the community would like to see more restaurants, retail, grocery stores, and high-end boutiques to expand the range of retail opportunities available and to increase the diversity and variety of retail options. Some participants also indicated a greater need for more art-specific spaces in the Study Area, such as theatres, galleries and music venues. The community also expressed the desire to encourage more office space development (creating more employment opportunities) in new mixed-use buildings, which would help to strengthen Danforth Avenue as a destination, and as a complete community where you can live, work, and play.



The community expressed some concern for the high vacancy and turnover rates of businesses observed along particular sections of Danforth Avenue, particularly in the eastern portions of the Study Area. The stretch of Danforth Avenue from Donlands Avenue to Greenwood Avenue, for example, was noted for a lack of

vibrancy with vacant stores and graffiti. The community would like to see the vacant storefronts addressed, and new businesses opening up on Danforth as well as greater vibrancy along Danforth Avenue, in particular stretches that appear to be less active, animated, and vibrant.

With COVID-19, it was acknowledged that some small businesses were struggling and that there may be greater challenges for independent retailers along Danforth Avenue, which may contribute to greater turnover or closure of businesses. The community feedback received emphasized the greater need to support local businesses in the Study Area overall, but particularly during and post COVID-19. The public strongly supported maintaining the patios which were introduced to Danforth Avenue in the summer of 2020 as part of the CaféTO program, expanding outdoor dining areas to help some restaurants and bars impacted by COVID-19.



4.0 Next Steps

The significant feedback and community response received was used to shape, direct and inform the Danforth Complete Street and Planning Study, and the final deliverables from this assignment. The feedback was used in many ways, including:

Planning Study

- Identifying the historic main street character of Danforth Avenue, the importance to its history of themes like cultural diversity, as well as specific properties and places valuable to the community, informed the **Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA)**, the development of a **Historic Context Statement** and the identification of properties and places with potential cultural heritage value;
- The qualities, features and neighbourhood assets that were most valued by the community, such as the parks and open spaces, retail and small-scale shops, community services and mixed-use neighbourhoods all helped the City identify what matters to the community, and what needs to be preserved, enhanced and supported in the **Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP)** as Danforth Avenue evolves;
- The support for mid-rise development and appreciation for the existing character of Danforth Avenue from the community shaped the creation of the Planning Study's midrise approach to development and the **SASP**, which aims to add gradual density to the corridor without compromising the character of Danforth. The SASP will continue to guide Danforth's growth and focus on supporting transit-oriented development, creating opportunities for additional housing including affordable housing and supporting a robust public realm, in keeping with what we heard from the community; and,
- The concerns about greater development and higher buildings was used to refine the built form policies and **Urban Design Guidelines**, to mitigate the community's concerns and such aspects as reduction of sunlight, shadow casting and loss of views.

Complete Streets Study

- The experiences (including both positive feedback and concerns identified) of the bike lane installation, as part of the Complete Street pilot helped the City understand what modifications and adjustments were needed to improve safety and accessibility of the pilot. **Modifications to the pilot design** were implemented throughout the pilot, and the feedback will continue to shape the permanent use of the complete streets design; and,

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- The support for the complete street elements, including patios, separated bike lanes, beautification, street furniture and art helped the City understand what features of the complete street were preferred, and the recommendations received on what can be enhanced such as accessibility, usage of space, safety concerns and the need for more public education will help in assessing the installation in the **Complete Street Pilot Final Evaluation Report**, and making improvements for the future.

Economic and Retail Study

- The public's appreciation for the independent businesses on Danforth Avenue, and recommendations for more office spaces, expanding retail and the need to support businesses will be used towards the **Economic Development Report** to guide future economic development.

The final deliverables for the Danforth Complete Street and Planning Study, which were shaped and refined by the public's input and feedback, will be taken to the Council for consideration in early 2022. The project team greatly appreciates all the stakeholders and public members who engaged with us throughout the consultation process, and provided their valuable feedback. Thank you for helping to shape the future of Danforth Avenue.

