

Danforth-Main Community Development Action Plan

A plan that outlines the initiatives, vision, goals, and objectives to enhance the quality of life for residents in the Danforth-Main community.



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Development Action Plan
2025

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Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that the Danforth–main neighbourhood is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Mississauga’s of the Credit First Nation, The Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and The Huron–Wendat and Wyandot Nations. In engaging with racialized communities around displacement and land use across Southern Ontario, we must acknowledge and prioritize the presence and leadership of the many diverse Indigenous groups, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who were first displaced from this land. We commit to prioritizing actions to support Indigenous communities throughout all aspects of our work.

African Ancestry Acknowledgements

We acknowledge all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers –as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans–Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.

Community Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the many community members, the Bangladesh Centre and Community Services, and Hope United Church that have supported CP Planning’s Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism (Roadmap) work. Your invaluable insights, feedback, and unwavering support have been instrumental in our journey towards developing new affordable housing. This endeavour is not just about buildings; it’s about nurturing communities, hope, and a future where everyone has access to affordable housing. The collaborative spirit and collective efforts have been the cornerstone of our progress.

Message from Our Leaders

“Serving as a Community Leader and contributing to the development of the Community Development Action Plan has been a highly rewarding and educational experience. It provided valuable insight into the key elements that support a thriving community—particularly in the areas of equitable and affordable housing—and the actionable steps required to address these complex issues.

Through distributing the community survey, I had the opportunity to engage directly with residents, listen to their perspectives, and gain a deeper understanding of their needs and concerns. Analyzing the survey results highlighted existing gaps and helped inform a more thoughtful and responsive approach to community planning.

I also appreciated the chance to observe interviews with local community organizations. Hearing about their work and the challenges they face offered a powerful reminder of the importance of collaboration, empathy, and shared leadership in building a more inclusive community.

I want to take what I’ve learned and apply it to my own grassroots efforts in making the Danforth–Main neighbourhood a place for all.”

– **Jennifer Lee**

Breaking all barriers in the existing housing environment, we are committed to building a future rooted in affordability and inclusivity.

– **Shikha Ahmad**

Key terms

Glossary

Community Development Action Plan (CDAP):

A strategic document that outlines the initiatives, vision, goals, and objectives a community will pursue to enhance the quality of life for its residents. Typically developed through collaboration among local governments, non-profit organizations, and community groups, the plan includes a clear problem statement, a needs analysis, and specific, measurable objectives aligned with the community's overall vision. It also identifies funding sources, necessary partnerships, an actionable timeline, and methods for tracking progress to ensure accountability and long-term success.

Community Land Trusts (CLT):

A non-profit organization that acquires and holds land to ensure long-term affordable housing, community development, and responsible land stewardship. By separating land ownership from homeownership, CLTs keep housing permanently affordable, support community-led governance, and often provide additional benefits like green spaces or local businesses.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU):

A self-contained residential unit located on the same lot as a single-family home. It typically includes a kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area, and may be built as a separate structure or converted from existing space, such as a basement or garage. ADUs are commonly used to generate rental income or provide affordable housing options in urban areas.

Laneway/Garden-suite Housing:

Small, self-contained residential units built along the laneway or along the laneway of an existing home. These are adus that are detached

from the main house but share the same property. Designed to be compact and efficient, these homes are often used for rental income, multigenerational living, or as an affordable housing option. Where allowed by zoning bylaws, they can be built after an approved building permit.

Co-operative Housing (Co-op Housing):

A type of housing collectively owned and managed by a non-profit housing cooperative. Unlike traditional homeownership or renting from a landlord, members purchase a share in the co-op, which gives them the right to live in a unit and participate in the community's governance. Co-op housing is community-oriented and offers an affordable, inclusive alternative to conventional housing models.

Community Engagement:

The process of building relationships and fostering meaningful participation and dialogue with community members in a collaborative way. It supports inclusive decision-making, planning, and problem-solving, and is essential in fields like urban planning, education, and social services. It aims to result in more sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Key terms

Glossary

Missing Middle Housing:

Housing types that fall between single-family homes and mid- or high-rise apartment buildings in terms of size and the number of homes in the building. These often include townhomes, triplexes, courtyard-style cluster homes, or other buildings of 3 storeys or fewer. Missing Middle Housing provides more affordable options, gently increases density, and supports more inclusive, diverse neighbourhoods.

Age-friendly Housing:

Housing designed to be accessible, adaptable, and comfortable for older adults. It includes features such as ramps, elevators, wide doorways, grab bars, and well-lit walkways to support safety and mobility. Age-friendly housing often integrates access to public transportation, community services, and shared gathering spaces to promote independence, connection, and well-being as people age.

Economic Development:

The process of improving a community's economic well-being through job creation, investment, and infrastructure. Housing plays a key role in economic development through activities like construction, renovation, and homeownership. Access to affordable housing supports stable employment, family life, and stronger communities, while a lack of it can limit growth and opportunity.

Displacement:

The forced relocation of individuals or households due to factors such as redevelopment, rising rents, foreclosures, or demolition of existing housing. Displacement can significantly affect a person's quality of life, health, and economic stability, and often disproportionately impacts marginalized communities.

Inclusionary Zoning:

A housing policy that requires developers to include affordable or mixed-income housing units within new residential developments. In cities like Toronto, inclusionary zoning is one tool used to address growing housing needs and promote more equitable access to housing across neighbourhoods.

Perpetuity:

A condition or arrangement that is intended to last indefinitely, with no maturity date. In housing, it often refers to long-term affordability requirements or land-use restrictions that remain in place across generations. This is an important concept in finance and investment analysis.

Systemic Barriers:

Are obstacles rooted in the policies, practices, and structures of institutions that prevent certain groups from accessing opportunities and resources.

Introduction to the Community Development Action Plan

This Community Development Action Plan (CDAP) serves as a tool for guiding growth, addressing local challenges, and facilitating collaboration within the Danforth–Main neighbourhood. Residents, community organizations, and partners were engaged throughout the planning process, which promoted a shared vision and built consensus. This inclusive approach ensured that the community took an active role in providing feedback and shaping the development of their neighbourhood.

This plan provides a structured framework that ensures urban development aligns with the community's needs, values and priorities, such as affordable housing, green spaces, and accessible public services.

This CDAP project is a **collaborative initiative** with Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS). BCCS leads with community knowledge and connection in the Danforth–Main neighbourhood. Together, our partnership ensures the project is both community-driven and strengthened by shared expertise.

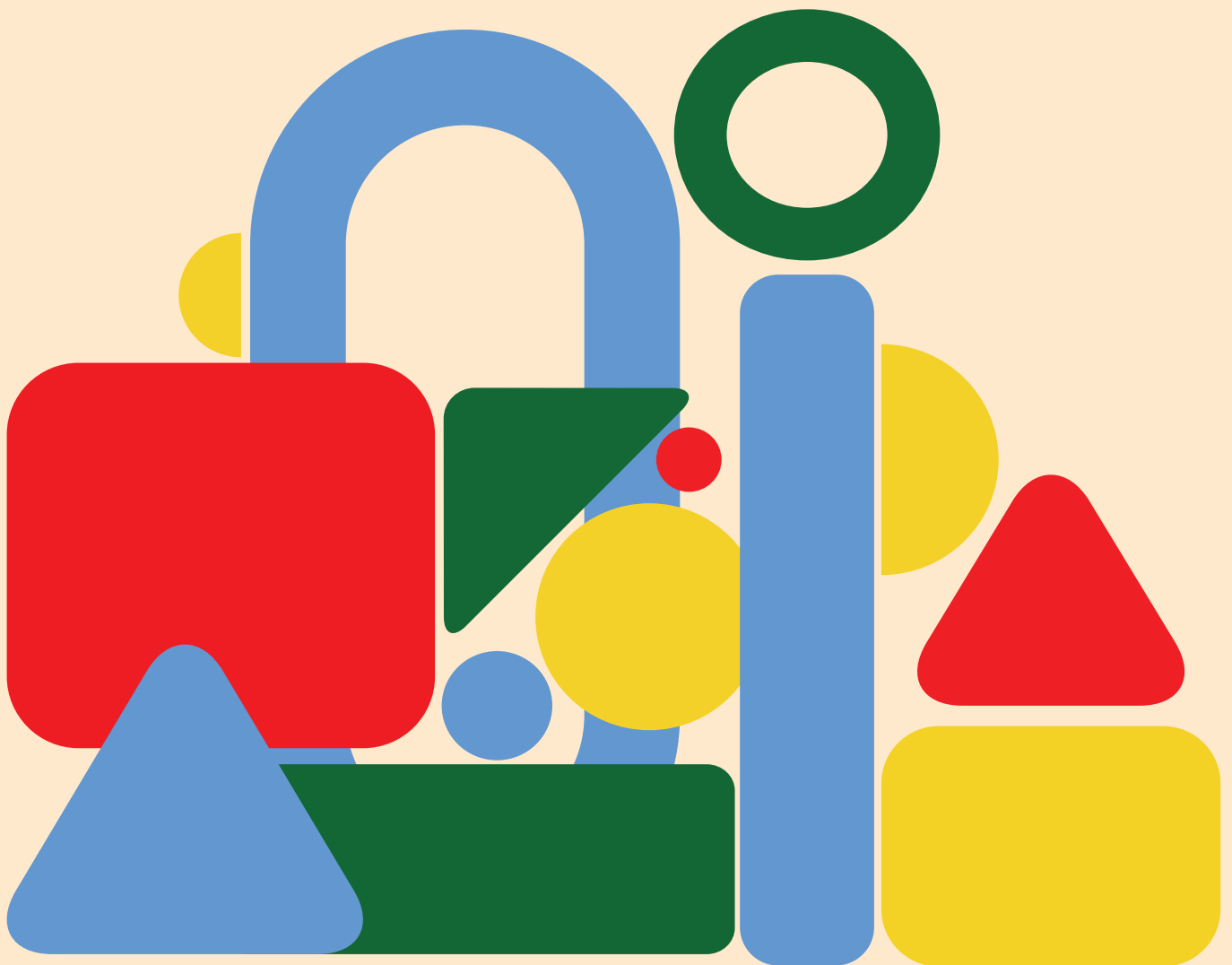
Organizations or individuals interested in supporting or collaborating with this initiative are encouraged to reach out directly to CP Planning, who manages partnership engagement and ensures alignment with project goals.

Prepared by CP Planning, this report applies a human rights-based approach to community planning, grounded in the principles of equity, participation, and accountability. It reinforces the belief that everyone has the right to live in a safe, inclusive, and thriving community.

CP Planning is a non-profit urban planning organization practicing a human rights approach to community planning. Through this approach, multi-sector and multi-disciplinary collaborations guide for land use planning reform that upholds the economic, social, and cultural rights of marginalized people to have access to good housing, good jobs, an adequate standard of living, and cultural expression.

1.0

Executive Summary



1.0 Executive Summary

The Danforth–Main Community Development Action Plan (CDAP) is a resident-driven roadmap for guiding equitable growth, deepening affordable housing options, and strengthening community resilience in one of Toronto's rapidly changing neighbourhoods. Developed by CP Planning, in collaboration with Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS) and supported by many incredible community partners, this plan centers the lived experiences of local residents to shape neighbourhood development rooted in equity and inclusion.

This work has focused on building relationships, creating space for conversations, and supporting community ownership in shaping a community-led initiative for planning of the Danforth–Main neighbourhood. The Danforth–Main CDAP emerged from this collaboration, aiming to address systemic inequities while promoting inclusive community-driven solutions across housing, economic development, and well-being. This plan reflects a commitment to long-term transformation that centers the perspectives and experiences of those most impacted.

Amid increasing development pressures, rising housing costs, and the ongoing economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Danforth CDAP was created to ensure that long-standing residents, especially those most affected by systemic barriers, are not left behind. The planning process involved community members and local organizations through surveys, workshops, and collaborative design sessions, resulting in five main goals.

Process and Key Findings

The CDAP was developed through several

engagement processes led by CP Planning and BCCS. The process focused on lived experiences and aimed to identify key challenges and opportunities related to the neighbourhood's planning. Residents emphasized the urgent need for affordable, diverse housing, protections against displacement, and more inclusive, community-led planning.

Five core goals emerged from the engagements:

1. Strengthening inclusive engagement in housing decisions
2. Broadening affordable housing options
3. Encouraging cross-sectoral collaboration
4. Advancing municipal and policy tools to protect affordable housing
5. Planning for equitable economic development and displacement mitigation

These goals form the foundation of the CDAP, guiding actions and recommendations to develop a plan that centres the voices of the neighbourhood to create a welcoming and sustainable community for everyone, especially providing opportunities and resources to the most vulnerable groups.

Next Steps

With the CDAP now established, the next phase focuses on **implementation and partnership development**. CP Planning and BCCS will continue to build support for the plan by working closely with residents, organizations, government, and institutional partners to champion its goals, prioritize key actions, and align resources for this phase. Early efforts will focus on advancing short-term, high-impact initiatives, particularly those related to affordable housing, economic development, and community well-being.

Our partnership will include nurturing leadership by embedding strategies for ongoing engagement. This approach ensures that the CDAP remains responsive to emerging needs and continues to reflect the lived experiences of residents.

Beyond Danforth–Main, the CDAP serves as a guiding tool for other neighbourhoods seeking to implement community-driven development strategies. The lessons learned throughout this process, such as centering marginalized voices, building cross-sector partnerships, and supporting local ownership, offer valuable insights for how similar plans can be developed and scaled across other neighbourhoods. Through gathering insights, reflection, and knowledge sharing, CP Planning will support the distribution of this model as a pathway to more equitable, locally rooted neighbourhood transformation.

2.0

Introduction



2.0 Introduction

2.1 Background

The Danforth–Main area in Toronto’s East end is a diverse and vibrant neighbourhood, home to a mix of long-standing residents, newcomers, young families, and seniors. Centred around the intersection of Danforth Avenue and Main Street, this area is known for its multicultural character, featuring a mix of Greek, South Asian, and Caribbean influences. Local small businesses, family-run restaurants, and culturally diverse shops all contribute to the area’s unique character and strong sense of community.

In recent years, the City of Toronto has experienced rapid population growth, gaining about 268,900 residents between mid-2022 and mid-2023, a 3.9% increase in just one year. This makes it one of the fastest-growing cities in North America¹. This surge has intensified demand for housing across the city, at a time when supply has struggled to keep pace. Simultaneously, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated affordability pressures, with average asking rents across Canada jumping 4.6% in 2021 and 12.1% in 2022, followed by another 8.6% rise in 2023.² Broader economic stressors, like inflation and rising cost of living, have further strained household budgets across the city, contributing to Toronto becoming increasingly unaffordable.

The pandemic had a significant impact on local businesses and residents, particularly those in the hospitality and service sectors. In response, the City launched programs like CaféTO in 2020 to support restaurants and bars



Figure 1: Intersection of Victoria Park and Danforth Ave (Shawn Micallef photo)

through expanded outdoor dining options. While initiatives like this were well-received, many local businesses are still recovering, and economic uncertainty persists for workers in lower-wage, frontline jobs. Renters, who generally earn less than homeowners, were especially hard hit, with nearly half of all renter households lacking sufficient savings to weather the financial shock.³

Even before the pandemic, Toronto faced serious housing challenges such as, low vacancy rates, rising rents, and growing rates of homelessness, particularly affecting Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities, as well as refugees, youth, and women fleeing violence.⁴ The pandemic has intensified these issues, deepening inequalities and increasing the urgency for action.

1 Frank Clayton, Toronto Tops in 2023 Population Growth in Canada and the United States (Toronto: Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, June 10, 2024),

2 TWIG (Toronto Workforce Innovation Group), Toronto at Home: Building on Shifting Ground, June 11, 2025 (February 2025 preface), Toronto Workforce Innovation Group

3 City of Toronto, Complete Streets Study Summary Report (Toronto: City Planning Division, February 2022)

4 <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-156418.pdf>

2.2 Current Context

In Danforth–Main specifically, the area is experiencing increasing pressure from new development. Its proximity to transit stations such as Main Station, Victoria Park Station, and the Danforth GO makes it a prime location for new housing and business growth. Major new developments are already planned (see map below in 2.2), which will attract more growth and visitors, but also raise concerns about rising housing costs, gentrification, and the potential displacement of low-income residents. This Community Development Action Plan (CDAP) was developed in response to these challenges. It sets out clear, community-driven goals and recommendations to guide growth that preserves affordability, advances equity, and ensures long-term residents can stay and prosper. At the heart of this plan is the creation of deeply affordable housing that remains accessible not just today, but for many generations.

“There is desire for affordable housing at 2714 Danforth (across from Canadian Tire), but progress stalled due to COVID-19 and funding challenges.”

**Christine Foster, Senior Manager–
Housing Services Department, Dixon
Hall**



Figure 2: CP Planning, BCCS, and Hope United hosted a ‘Walk and Talk’ tour of the Danforth–Main neighbourhood

The map below highlights the scale and location of proposed developments near key transit nodes in the Danforth–Main community, here defined as the East End–Danforth and Taylor Massey neighbourhoods.



Figure 3: The map features 18 proposed Developments and 3 developments currently under construction.

2.2.1 Census Snapshot

These census differences underscore the need for a comprehensive Community Development Action Plan that looks beyond East End Danforth alone to also include neighbouring communities such as Taylor Massey, which is designated as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area. With multiple developments being proposed across the area, planning decisions in East End Danforth will inevitably impact surrounding neighbourhoods. The census data below reveals stark disparities between East End Danforth and its neighbouring community of Taylor Massey, particularly in income levels and housing suitability, highlighting uneven socio-economic conditions across the area.

Census Data (2021)	Taylor Massey	East End Danforth
Population	15, 025	21, 840
Median Total Households Income	\$68, 500	\$90, 000
Households in unsuitable housing (overcrowded)	29%	8%
Total Individual Income (age 15+)	\$40, 700	\$66, 800

2.3 Why This Plan Matters

The Danforth–Main CDAP is an essential step towards ensuring affordable housing remains accessible and sustainable for residents in this rapidly evolving neighbourhood. With increasing housing costs and growing redevelopment pressures, community members and organizations have provided feedback to develop solutions that meet the diverse needs of renters, homeowners, and vulnerable populations. This plan is important because it prioritizes community-driven solutions to tackle the current housing crisis. It also serves as a pathway for collaboration among policymakers, developers, and community organizations, demonstrating that community-led housing solutions are not only necessary but also achievable when guided by a shared vision.

2.4 Creating the Plan

This CDAP was created through a collaborative engagement process led by CP Planning in partnership with the Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS). Over the past two years, workshops, surveys, and feedback sessions have invited residents and local organizations to identify housing issues, share experiences, and develop recommendations for a fairer neighbourhood.

The result is a grounded and forward-looking plan that reflects the priorities of those most affected by displacement, affordability pressures, and redevelopment. The CDAP serves as both a roadmap and a coordinating tool, ensuring that community needs, aspirations, and local knowledge inform future planning and investment decisions.

2.5 How to Use This Plan

The Danforth–Main CDAP is a practical, community-driven guide. It offers a shared roadmap that different stakeholders can use to promote fair and inclusive development in the neighbourhood.

This plan can be used by:

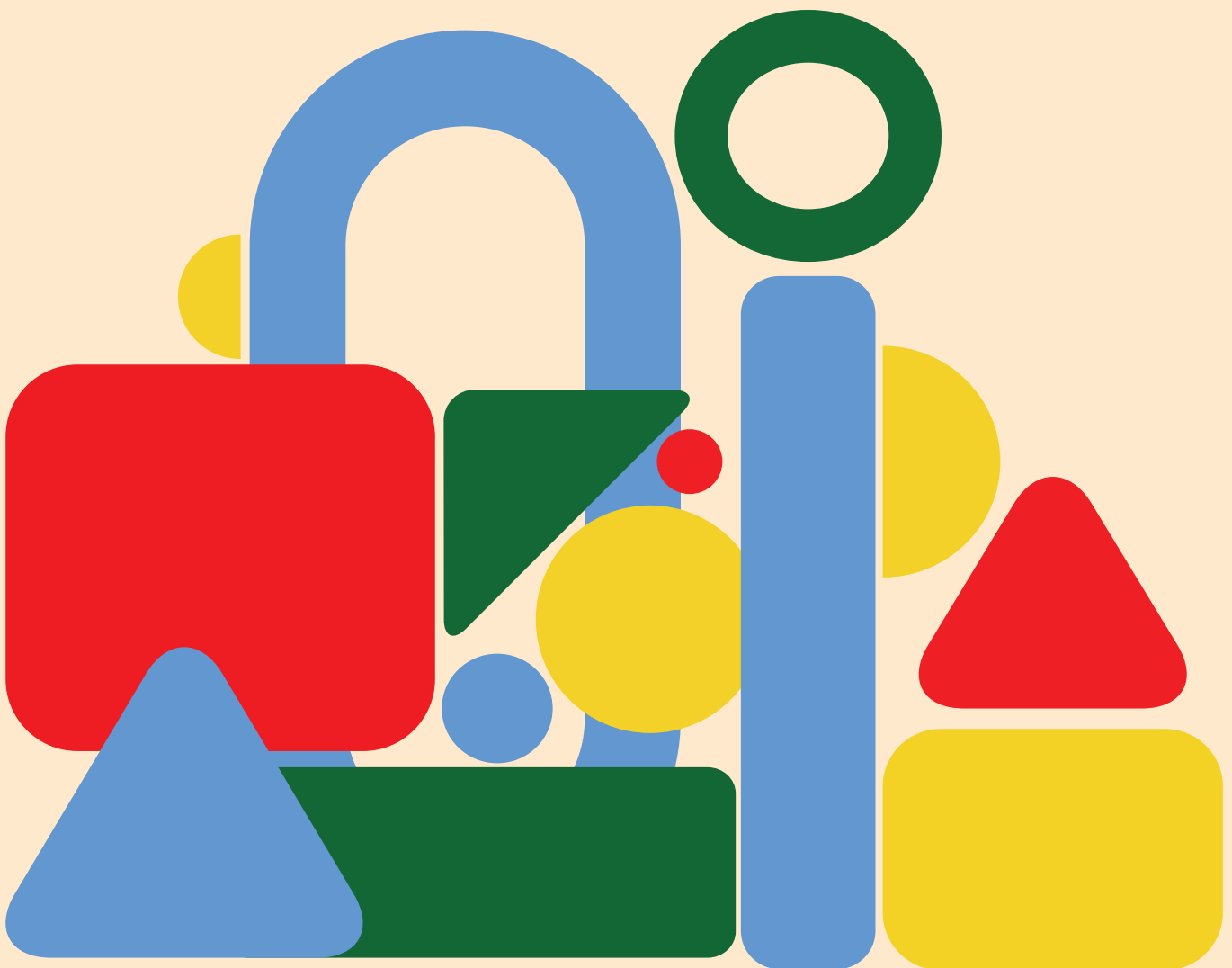
- **Residents** to better understand local issues and engage in shaping housing solutions.
- **Community organizations** to align their work with shared priorities.
- **Public sector leaders** to support inclusive policy design and service delivery.
- **Private and nonprofit partners** to explore opportunities for collaboration.

To make the most of this plan, people and organizations are encouraged to review the key goals and action steps and to identify areas that align with their interests or lived experiences.

This collaborative project welcomes conversations with those interested in getting involved, sharing ideas, or learning more about upcoming engagement opportunities to reach out. Local organizations whose work aligns with the plan's vision are also encouraged to connect with CP Planning to explore potential collaborations to advance shared goals. Whether through public meetings, partnership development, or collaborative initiatives, this plan provides a roadmap for inclusive, coordinated action and enhances the voice of the Danforth–Main community in shaping its future.

3.0

Our Role in Building Community-Led Housing Solutions



3.0 Our Role in Building Community-Led Housing Solutions

3.1 Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism

This CDAP is part of CP Planning’s Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism (“Roadmap”). The Roadmap itself builds the capacity of racialized communities to identify and lead the implementation of solutions to protect and increase affordable housing in areas experiencing gentrification due to transit infrastructure investment. Priority cities of the Roadmap are Toronto, Ottawa, Peel, York, Hamilton, and Kitchener–Waterloo. The Roadmap aligns with the National Housing Strategy goals to increase affordable supply and its key principle to account for a human rights-based approach to housing.

3.2 Our Commitment to Equity-Driven, Resident-Centred Planning

CP Planning prioritizes racialized and marginalized communities in shaping housing solutions. We ensure those most affected by systemic barriers lead decision-making processes, not just participate in them.

Our approach centers on lived experience, ensuring residents facing housing insecurity and displacement inform planning efforts. We advance anti-racist planning by advocating for policies that prioritize affordability, tenant protections, and long-term community stewardship. We also build community capacity by equipping residents with skills and resources to lead local planning efforts.

3.3 Key Partners

The Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS) is a non-profit, charitable organization focused on assisting Bengali newcomers and long-time residents integrate into Canada through knowledge, skills, and other support. Through partnerships and collaboration, BCCS strives to develop services and programs centered on the growing needs and initiatives around youth, women, and mental health. As a key partner in the CDAP, BCCS brings valuable insight into the lived experiences of racialized and immigrant communities.

Hope United Church is a long-standing and faith-based institution located in the heart of the Danforth–Main community. The Church has been a gathering place for spiritual reflection and community support. Beyond its role as a place of worship, Hope United plays an active part in addressing local needs – offering space for community meetings, food programs, cultural events, and grassroots organizing.



Our roles aims for

**Building
local
capacity**



**Addressing
systemic
barriers**



**Empowering
community
leadership**

4.0

Context



4.0 Context

4.1 Aligning with Danforth-Main Planning Studies

city priorities, the plan strengthens its impact, supporting a more resilient and inclusive neighbourhood.

The City of Toronto has carried out a number of planning studies to guide growth and development along key corridors. The Main Street Planning Study (2019) and the Danforth Avenue Complete Street and Planning Study (2022) have provided insights for the Danforth–Main CDAP, with both addressing key priorities including housing, public spaces, and community development. These studies provide a solid foundation to guide the direction of the Danforth–Main CDAP.

The Main Street Planning Study focuses on intensification and enhancing public spaces near Main Street TTC and Danforth GO Stations. Through Official Plan Amendment 478 (OPA 478), it enables higher-density development and creates opportunities for new parks and improved community facilities. These initiatives align closely with the Danforth–Main CDAP with the plan’s goals to increase affordable housing and foster inclusivity. The study’s integration of transit, housing, and public spaces ensures sustainable growth that benefits the neighbourhood

The Danforth Avenue Complete Street and Planning Study emphasizes safety, accessibility, and economic vitality. Successful initiatives like the “Destination Danforth” Complete Street project showcase how thoughtful design and meaningful engagement can enhance the neighbourhood’s quality of life. Incorporating the findings of these studies ensures the Danforth–Main Community Action Plan is rooted in evidence-based strategies. Additionally, the study’s focus on economic sustainability through local business support can help create a balanced neighbourhood where housing, employment, and services coexist, reducing the need for long commutes and promoting community stability. By aligning with broader

5.0

Community Conversations



5.0 Community Conversations

5.1 Introduction

From 2023 to 2025, CP Planning and BCCS, with support from Hope United, worked closely with the Danforth Main community to support residents and co-identify community prioritized solutions. This work focused on gathering feedback, identifying local needs and priorities, and mapping the neighbourhood's existing assets and resources.

Types of Engagements Included:

- **Community Engagement Session:** Community walks, workshops and working groups
- **Survey**
- **Community Organization Interviews**

The outcomes of these engagements provided critical insights that directly shaped the goals and actions of the Danforth–Main CDAP. Through multiple avenues of outreach, including resident engagement sessions, community surveys, and roundtables with local organizations, participants highlighted both immediate needs and long-term priorities.



Figure 4: Walk n Talk Tour of the Danforth–Main neighbourhood

Community Engagement Sessions

Through workshops, storytelling sessions, and in-person discussions, community members emphasized a strong desire for affordable housing that is accessible and secure, particularly for seniors, newcomers, and low-income families. They also called for more public spaces that foster community connection, such as parks, gathering areas, and libraries, as well as increased access to culturally relevant services and programs. Concerns about displacement, rising rents, and a lack of deeply affordable housing emerged as central themes. Notably, community members involved through the BCCS-led resident group shared that they now feel more informed, connected, and included in local planning conversations.



Figure 5: Tura Cousins Wilson from SOCA Designs presenting different housing models

Community Survey

Survey responses reflected the findings from the engagement sessions, with many individuals highlighting collaboration across different sectors and municipal involvement as top priorities for addressing affordable housing initiatives. Respondents showed interest in various housing options, including co-ops and multi-generational housing, and expressed a desire to learn more about Community Land Trusts and Community Benefits. People also wanted to see stronger tenant protections and more opportunities to be involved in planning decisions that affect their neighbourhood.

Community Organization Interviews

Organizations shared insights on barriers, resource constraints, and policy challenges that impact their ability to effectively support their networks and community members. Common themes from the organizations included the need for more supportive housing options, better coordination between partners across sectors, and increased access to funding and space for community programming. The recommendations and feedback gathered from community organizations will be integrated into the core goals of the CDAP to ensure that the strategies reflect on-the-ground realities and organizational expertise.



Figure 6: Community workshop held at BCCS

5.2 Engagement Summary Timeline

8
Organizations
Feedback

An event to introduce the community to the Roadmap project, outlining strategies for community-led planning, and inclusive development. The session also encouraged community participation in shaping local planning efforts.

A dedicated working group focused on community solutions to increase and protect affordable housing within Danforth–Main. Meetings were held to strategize solutions, explore policy recommendations, and build partnerships with housing advocates and organizations.

2023

Danforth–Main
Walk n Talk
July 8th

Roadmap
Launch
July 19th

Community
Workshop
November 22nd

Establishing an
Affordable Housing
Working Group
April – October

2024

A guided neighbourhood walk to discuss local places, the different types of housing, opportunities, and future development in Danforth–Main. Community members and leaders have shared their lived experiences in Danforth–main, highlighting the importance of belonging and having affordable options.

A hands-on workshop where residents and partners discussed key issues related to affordable housing, public space, and learning opportunities. The session helped identify priorities for the Community Action Plan.





A community survey was conducted to gather feedback from the workshop and to better understand participants' interests and preferred types of involvement in implementing the Community Development Action Plan.

Targeted discussions with local organizations to strengthen partnerships, share resources, and align community-led initiatives with broader planning efforts. These sessions also aimed to understand the unique challenges faced by each organization and gathered key recommendations to improve service delivery and cross-sectoral collaboration.

2025

Community Workshop – CDAP
November

Community-engagement Survey
November

Community-wide Survey
January

Community organization feedback
April – September

A larger community gathering was designed to finalize and validate the community goals and vision of the Community Development Action Plan, incorporating feedback from past engagements and creating action items for the goals.

A community-wide survey to capture residents' evolving needs, perspectives on housing affordability, and feedback on community-led initiatives.

100+
Residents
Engaged

6.0

Community Goals & Action Plan



6.0 Community Goals & Action Plan

6.1 What outcomes do we envision for the future?

The following community goals reflect the input gathered through extensive engagement sessions with residents, stakeholders, and partners in the Danforth–Main area.

Five key goals were co-developed to guide the Danforth–Main CDAP. These goals represent a shared vision for prioritizing affordable housing alongside community development. While listed numerically, the goals are interconnected and not ranked in order of importance.

They are:

01 Strengthening Inclusive Community Engagement in Housing Solutions

02 Broaden Affordable Housing Options

03 Encourage Cross-sectoral Engagement

04 Advance Municipal and Policy Tools to Support and Protect Affordable Housing Units

05 Plan for Local Economic Development and Displacement Mitigation

Each goal is broken down into the following components:

1. **Description:** A summary of the goal's focus and intent, highlighting its relevance to the neighbourhood.
2. **Key Objective:** The overarching aim associated with the specific community goal.
3. **Context:** Background information and current conditions that shape the goal, including existing assets and emerging opportunities.
4. **Need:** The specific gaps, challenges, or systemic barriers that must be addressed.
5. **Actions:** Identified strategies and initiatives grounded in community input, engagement sessions, and consultations with local partners.

This structure provides a focused and practical approach to identify targeted pathways forward.



Figure X: Community workshop held at BCCS

6.2 Community Goals

6.2.1 Strengthening Inclusive Community Engagement in Housing Solutions

Description: This goal aims to create meaningful participation of community members, especially those from marginalized groups, in local housing decisions, events, and projects. It emphasizes building strong social ties, increasing community awareness, and supporting residents in becoming more involved and aware of the development in their neighbourhood. By incorporating neighbourhood-level indicators and community-based research, the process ensures that local knowledge and lived experiences guide development. It also highlights the importance of collaborating with local community organizations that have established relationships within their community to help address systemic barriers and foster a stronger sense of ownership and pride in community initiatives.

Objective: Enhance community participation to gather input and feedback on proposals for affordable housing, ensuring that all community voices, especially those that are often underrepresented are heard.

Context: During the in-person workshops, community members consistently voiced a strong preference for engaging in interactive activities and participating in capacity-building sessions. These formats not only made the workshops more lively and inclusive but also provided community members with meaningful opportunities to share their knowledge and lived experiences. Many participants highlighted the importance of having a welcoming and supportive environment where they could openly share their ideas, voice concerns, and reflect on the housing challenges they faced themselves and those of their neighbours. They appreciated the chance to engage in dialogue with others in the community, collaborate on shared ideas, and learn from diverse perspectives. There was a clear call for more opportunities to be

directly involved in shaping discussions around housing needs and influencing the development of responsive, community-led solutions. Participants emphasized that when they are genuinely and consistently included, it not only builds trust but also enhances their capacity to steward for themselves and promote equitable change in their neighbourhoods.

A follow up survey was distributed in January 2025 helped to dive deeper into understanding how residents want to be included in planning decisions. When asked “In what way would you prefer to participate in shaping housing solutions?”, the top responses were participating in workshops and providing feedback through surveys and focus groups.

Preferred method to participate	Count
Community Conversations, Workshops, Events	35 (35%)
Focus Groups & Surveys	34 (34%)
Volunteering	17 (17%)
Coalition / Working Group Committee	13 (13%)

The table above shows how community survey participants expressed interest in contributing to housing solutions. Workshops offer an inclusive space where community members can share their ideas, concerns, and lived experiences. These sessions not only encourage dialogue but also empower residents by involving them in shaping their neighbourhood. Based on feedback from community sessions with local groups, it's clear that residents can play an essential role in reaching housing goals by supporting initiatives that address local needs.

Need: An inclusive and transparent approach to community involvement is crucial not only for building trust but also for empowering residents to actively shape the future of their neighbourhood.

Importance of inclusive community engagement

- In a diverse neighbourhood like Danforth Main, engagement must reflect cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic realities rather than relying on one-off or symbolic consultations.
- Genuine participation requires sustained, culturally responsive outreach that prioritizes accessibility and removes barriers to involvement.

Creating welcoming conditions and engagement methods

- This includes providing language-specific materials, childcare and transportation support, and outreach in trusted community spaces so that low-income residents, newcomers, racialized communities, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities can participate fully.
- Proactive outreach must create a welcoming environment where residents feel safe and respected when sharing their experiences and concerns about housing.
- Engagement tools such as workshops, multilingual surveys, storytelling sessions, focus groups, and participatory planning methods help bridge the gap between residents and decision-makers.
- These approaches strengthen the relevance of housing solutions, support collective problem-solving, and build community capacity grounded in lived experience.

Actions

Short-term (1–2 years)

A1.1 Identify and map key partners (e.g. community organizations, local businesses, grassroots groups, policymakers) to establish an interest in supporting initiatives around affordable housing and to pool resources.

A1.2 Collaborating with local community organizations and residents to create an inclusive approach to addressing affordable housing concerns and inclusive practices in community engagement.

A1.3 Continue the ongoing conversations about affordable housing and feedback approaches by hosting community dialogues, workshops, and events.

Long-term (3–5+ years)

A1.4 Build on the early partner mapping by establishing a sustained network of housing-focused organizations, resident groups, and local leaders. This network can share resources and jointly design community engagement practices for housing projects across the Danforth–Main

A1.5 Based on lessons learned, create a locally grounded toolkit or engagement framework that sets standards for inclusive participation and community-led planning. This could be used by local government, developers, and nonprofits.

6.2.2 Broaden Affordable Housing Options

Description: This goal aims to diversify and expand housing options in the Danforth–Main neighbourhood to meet the evolving needs of the community. It emphasizes the creation of family-sized units, senior-friendly and accessible homes, accessory dwelling units, co-housing, and multi-family developments. Supporting programs, incentives, and policies such as inclusionary zoning, encourages a balanced mix of housing types that serve residents across different life stages and income levels.

Objective: Expand housing options to accommodate a wider range of affordability levels and family sizes

Context: The housing landscape in Danforth–Main is currently dominated by high-rise condominiums and apartments and detached single-family homes. While these housing types serve specific demographics, they fail to meet the needs of a broad range of residents, particularly middle-income families, multi-generational households, and individuals seeking smaller, more affordable units. In community workshops, residents specifically expressed the need for housing that can accommodate larger families at affordable prices, survey results showed a predominant and strong demand for more family-oriented housing options. This imbalance has contributed to what is often referred to as the “missing middle”, a critical gap in housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, low-rise apartments, and secondary suites.

The absence of these more attainable housing options makes it increasingly difficult for residents to find homes that suit their budgets and life circumstances, especially as housing costs continue to rise across the city. This lack of diversity in the housing supply is not just a market failure, it has social implications. Young adults, seniors hoping to age in place, and families experiencing transitions (such as caring for aging parents or welcoming adult children back home) are all impacted by the limited range

of options available to them. Moreover, the limited availability of adaptable and affordable units increases the risk of displacement, pushing long-term residents out of the neighbourhood in search of housing elsewhere.

At the same time, there is a growing recognition of the value of more flexible and community-oriented housing forms. Residents and housing advocates alike have expressed increased interest in innovative alternatives such as laneway and garden suites, co-living and shared housing arrangements, housing cooperatives, and community land trusts. Community Land Trusts were a recurring topic in the workshops and were identified as a top priority by participants for improving housing over the next several years, reflecting a strong interest in long-term, community-driven solutions for affordability.

“It can be hard to get elected officials, builders, and developers to agree with the need for accessible housing. They must also be convinced that it is not significantly more expensive to build accessible housing if universal design features are incorporated at the project design stage.”

Accessible Housing Network, Carol Damioli, Board Member

Need: To address the growing housing challenges in Danforth–Main, there is an urgent need to diversify housing options, close the gap in the “missing middle” and ensure that new housing is both affordable and accessible.

Housing Gaps

- Danforth–Main faces growing housing pressures that require a more diverse and balanced range of housing options.
- New housing must be affordable and accessible to meet the needs of a wider range of residents.
- Underserved groups include:
 - Middle-income earners who do not qualify for subsidized housing but are increasingly priced out.
 - Multi-generational families needing larger, flexible, and affordable homes.
 - Individuals seeking compact, accessible, and cost-effective options, including students, seniors, people with disabilities, and newcomers.
- Expanding housing types and integrating universal design helps address immediate affordability challenges and supports long-term neighbourhood stability.

What Collaboration Must Achieve

- Policymakers, planners, and community stakeholders must work together to enable and scale alternative and accessible housing solutions.
- This includes modernizing zoning bylaws to allow gentle density such as multiplexes and townhouses, providing incentives for affordable and accessible rental development, incorporating universal design features at the project design stage, and supporting community-led housing initiatives like co-ops and land trusts.

Actions

Short-term (1–2 years)

A2.1 Exploring conversations with non-profit housing providers, developers, and residents to identify opportunities for purpose-built rentals, ADUs, and promoting family-sized units.

Long-term (3–5+ years)

A2.2 Support the creation of shared equity housing models ensuring affordability and accessibility through partnerships with non-profits and co-ops.

A2.3 Piloting a project in the Danforth–Main neighbourhood to explore ADUs with residents and non-profits.

6.2.3 Encourage Cross-sectoral Engagement

Description: This goal focuses on strengthening collaboration between residents, non-profits, government, public institutions, and private partners to develop innovative and collaborative housing solutions. This includes supporting Community Land Trusts (CLTS), joint ventures, and funding opportunities that strengthen cross-sectoral partnerships and build the capacity and resources of local community organizations for community development. Cross-sector collaboration ensures that development and economic strategies are both grounded in local needs and supported by diverse expertise and resources with the community organizations that serve their local neighbourhoods.

Objective: Strengthen collaboration among community organizations, housing advocates, developers, public institutions, and residents to co-create holistic housing solutions.

Context: Tackling the complex and interrelated housing challenges in Danforth–Main requires more than isolated efforts by individual organizations or sectors, it demands a coordinated, collaborative approach that draws on the diverse strengths, expertise, and resources of multiple stakeholders. Currently, partnerships between key sectors, including public health, housing providers, planning departments, social service agencies, non-profits, and the private development industry, remain limited, sporadic, or fragmented. This lack of integration often results in disjointed strategies that fail to respond to the full scope of residents' needs.

For example, affordable housing developments may proceed without alignment with essential social supports like mental health services, employment assistance, or child care. Transit improvements may be planned without considering how they can support or be supported by mixed-income housing growth. Community organizations may pursue advocacy and support services without the resources or leverage to meaningfully influence development

decisions. These disconnects make it more difficult to deliver truly holistic and effective solutions that address both the housing crisis and the broader structural issues that underlie it, such as systemic inequities, income disparity, and access to opportunity. In Danforth–Main, where demographic diversity, rising housing costs, and development pressures intersect, cross-sector collaboration is not just beneficial, it is essential. Residents, particularly those from equity-deserving groups, have emphasized the need for community-led housing solutions that are culturally appropriate, deeply affordable, and grounded in lived experience. Yet, realizing these goals requires building stronger and more durable partnerships between residents and institutions, whether through joint ventures, community benefit agreements, or the establishment and support of Community Land Trusts (CLTs). These types of partnerships can bring different perspectives to the table while unlocking resources, funding, and technical expertise that no single actor can access alone. (back home) are all impacted by the limited range of options available to them. Moreover, the limited availability of adaptable and affordable units increases the risk of displacement, pushing long-term residents out of the neighbourhood in search of housing elsewhere.

At the same time, there is a growing recognition of the value of more flexible and community-oriented housing forms. Residents and housing advocates alike have expressed increased interest in innovative alternatives such as laneway and garden suites, co-living and shared housing arrangements, housing cooperatives, and community land trusts. Community Land Trusts were a recurring topic in the workshops and were identified as a top priority by participants for improving housing over the next several years, reflecting a strong interest in long-term, community-driven solutions for affordability.

Outcomes prioritized in the next year	Count
Community Land Trusts	30 (25%)
Community Benefits Agreements	27 (23%)
Cross-sectoral engagement	18 (15%)
Tenant organizing	17 (14%)
ADUs / Laneway suites	16 (14%)
Inclusionary zoning	10 (8%)

Need: The need for stronger cross-sectoral collaboration in Danforth–Main is critical to addressing the complexity of today’s housing challenges and creating sustainable, inclusive communities.

Why Cross-sector Collaboration is Essential

- Effective collaboration allows stakeholders to share risks, pool resources, and coordinate actions across interconnected systems such as housing, transit, health care, and social services.
- Cross-sector partnerships also make it easier to leverage diverse funding streams, align policy goals, and strengthen support for community-led initiatives.
- Examples include partnerships between municipalities and Community Land Trusts to protect land from speculation, and collaborations with developers and financial institutions to deliver mixed-income or cooperative housing at scale.
- Non-profit organizations contribute essential roles in tenant support, community engagement, and long-term stewardship of housing assets.

What Structure and Practices Are Needed

- Creating structured opportunities for ongoing dialogue—such as cross-sector working groups, joint planning tables, or neighbourhood solution committees—helps prevent siloed decision-making.

- These mechanisms ensure alignment between community priorities and institutional responses, improving the effectiveness and accountability of housing strategies.

“More funding and new partnerships are always needed to sustain and expand programming. A collaborative approach across government, arts organizations, and community groups can help preserve affordable creative spaces.”

**East End Arts, Eileen Arandiga,
Executive Director**

Actions

Short-term (1–2 years)

A3.1 Identify and explore opportunities with key partners (e.g. community organizations, local businesses, policymakers) on the feasibility of establishing community land trusts and cooperative ownership models.

Long-term (3–5+ years)

A3.2 Support the development and long-term sustainability of community-led initiatives (e.g., Community Land Trusts, housing co-ops, social enterprises, CBAs) by building the capacity in order to secure land, capital, and technical assistance through public-private partnerships.

A3.3 Champion for the integration of housing into local and regional planning strategies for climate resilience, public health, and economic development, ensuring a holistic and systems-based approach.

6.2.4 Advance Municipal and Policy Tools to Support and Protect Affordable Housing Units

Description: This goal leverages municipal powers and planning tools to secure, expand, and protect affordable housing across the Danforth–Main neighbourhood. Strategies include redeveloping public lands for community benefit, enhancing inclusionary zoning, and implementing stronger affordability protections across the housing system. These tools help to ensure that affordable housing units are not only created but also preserved in perpetuity, securing long-term affordability for current and future residents.

Objective: Leverage planning and policy tools to protect and expand affordable housing in Danforth–Main.

Context: Danforth–Main is undergoing significant redevelopment, but the current zoning framework and municipal tools are not being fully utilized to ensure long-term affordability or to prevent displacement. While policy tools such as inclusionary zoning, density bonusing, and rental replacement bylaws exist, they are inconsistently applied or not well understood by the community.

“It would be great to see an increase of funding for non-profits and faster construction of housing spaces.”

**Dixon Hall, Christine Foster,
Senior Manager–Housing Services
Department**

Need: To protect community members from being priced out of their neighbourhood, municipal governments must utilize existing planning tools and strengthen them where necessary.

- Transparent, well-communicated policies can help hold developers accountable,

prioritize affordability, and secure long-term benefits for the community.

- Preserving existing affordable units, municipalities must explore creative tools such as land trusts, community benefits agreements, and the strategic use of public land to ensure that housing remains accessible for generations to come.

Actions

Short-term (1–2 years)

A4.1 Increase community awareness and partners on existing policy tools (e.g., inclusionary zoning, rental replacement, community benefits agreements) through workshops and plain-language guides to increase transparency and engagement in development processes.

A4.2 Work with the Beaches East York Planning staff to explore opportunities to map underutilized or surplus public lands that could be prioritized for affordable or non-profit housing development.

“Programs such as the Rapid housing initiative – where nonprofits receive full capital funding – have to make sure these programs is multiplied and not erase”

**Woodgreen Community Services,
Mwarigha M.S – Housing and Real
Estate Assets Executive**

Long-term (3–5+ years)

A4.3 Support policies such as inclusionary zoning around the Danforth GO, a Protected Major Transit Station area, ensuring a minimum percentage of affordable units in all new residential developments.

A4.4 Collaborate with the City and non-profit developers to pilot public land development for community-led housing (e.g., co-op, CLT, or Indigenous housing).

“Metrolinx and the TTC have properties and facilities (or are planning such) in the immediate area that don’t currently have any plans for integrated residential construction which seems to be a lost opportunity. The unwillingness of the province to release it’s PMTSA & MTSA plans has also been an obstacle to negotiating inclusive housing requirements from the multiple private development applications”

More Neighbours Toronto, Brian Cheung

6.2.5 Plan for Local Economic Development and Displacement Mitigation

Description: This goal promotes equitable economic growth that supports local businesses and residents while actively preventing displacement for residents and businesses. By aligning economic development with housing goals, communities can support small businesses and enact policies that protect renters and vulnerable populations from being pushed out of their communities.

Objective: Support equitable economic development while protecting residents from displacement.

Context: Public and private investment is increasing in the Danforth–Main area through new transit, mixed-use developments, and streetscape improvements. These changes can bring positive opportunities such as better services and revitalized spaces. At the same time, they also create a higher risk of displacement for people and organizations with fewer resources, including low-income renters, small and family-owned businesses, cultural organizations, and community-serving nonprofits.

The Danforth–Main area is home to many small businesses that reflect the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the neighbourhood. These businesses act as gathering places, local employers, and anchors of community identity. Rising commercial rents, increasing property taxes, speculative real estate investment, and changing land-use pressures threaten their survival. Residents, especially seniors, newcomers, and low-income households, are also finding it increasingly difficult to stay in their homes due to rising rents, a shortage of affordable housing, and limited tenant protections. Without action, the neighbourhood risks losing its cultural richness, social connections, and economic vitality.

Need: There is an urgent need for proactive and coordinated strategies that help the

neighbourhood grow while also protecting the people and businesses who are already here. Displacement is not only a housing problem. It is also an economic, social, and cultural challenge.

- Rising costs, commercial gentrification, and speculative development threaten small businesses, local entrepreneurship, and community networks.
- Growth policies must prioritize benefits for existing residents and businesses.
- Support is needed for diverse entrepreneurship and affordable, culturally relevant commercial spaces.
- Stability for renters and small business owners can be strengthened through tools such as community land ownership, commercial rent stabilization, anti-eviction measures, and cultural asset mapping.

Actions

Short-term (1–2 years)

A5.1 Conduct a neighbourhood-wide cultural and small business asset mapping project to identify at-risk spaces and prioritize supports.

A5.2 Develop a tenant and small business rights education campaign to increase awareness of protections, resources, and supports available.

Long-term (3–5+ years)

A5.3 Work with municipal and provincial governments to embed anti-displacement policies into planning and zoning processes, ensuring affordability is considered in all redevelopment approvals.

7.0

Implementation & Next Steps



7.0 Implementation & Next Steps

Implementing the Danforth–Main CDAP will require strong collaborations and clear steps across three key areas for the five goals: community planning, investing in local leadership, and collaborative mobilization

In terms of community planning, the plan calls for:

- Strengthened partnerships between residents, grassroots groups, City staff, and the neighbourhood Councillor to ensure planning decisions reflect neighbourhood priorities.
- Ongoing dialogue with developers and housing providers to secure commitments to affordability, accessibility, and community benefits.

For investing in local leadership and community-based initiatives, the plan emphasizes:

- Training, mentorship, and resources for residents, particularly youth, seniors, and equity-seeking groups to lead on housing and neighbourhood change.
- Partnerships with institutions and research organizations to bring technical expertise and capacity.
- Fair compensation for residents through stipends and honorariums to ensure meaningful and equitable participation.

Finally, collaborative mobilization between all constituents will require:

- A Community Action Group that brings together residents, non-profits, small businesses, faith groups, and service providers.
- Regular community dialogues and forums to strengthen transparency, accountability, and shared decision-making.
- Calls to action to secure policy change and investment across municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

For this collaborative project, our role is to help convene and coordinate the actions needed to move this plan from vision to implementation. Below is how this collaboration can support each group to move this forward

Residents

Support residents by:

- Facilitating neighbourhood workshops and participatory planning activities
- Providing accessible information about the plans progress, upcoming initiatives, and opportunities to get involved

Community Groups and Non-profits

Support community organizations by:

- Coordinating partnerships between groups to strengthen collective impact and minimize duplication of work
- Assisting with capacity building and resource-sharing to support aligned program delivery with the plan

Government and Public Institutions

Support by:

- Acting as a community liaison
- Coordinating community feedback to provide actionable insights into consultation processes
- Offering collaboration on pilot project and research initiatives that advance shared goals

This collaborative project invites residents, community groups, local businesses, governments and partners to join us on collaborating on the actions and collaborative solutions above, and to email **connect@cpplanning.ca** for further interests or information.

