

September 30, 2016

Matias de Dovitiis Executive Director, DUKE Heights BIA 1120 Finch Ave W – 205 Toronto, ON - M3J 3H7

### Subject: Final submission of transit and cycling assessment and accompanying recommendations

Attachments: Existing Conditions and Analysis Report, Key Findings and Recommendations

Dear Mr. de Dovitiis,

We are very pleased to submit the results of the of the transit and cycling assessment for which the Pembina Institute was retained by the DUKE Heights BIA in May 2016. Our mandate was to:

- Understand existing conditions by analyzing travel behaviour and transit needs of DHBIA employees;
- Assess implications and opportunities for new transit services (LRT and subway) to DHBIA;
- Identify ways to improve transit and cycling accessibility of DHBIA;
- Provide suggestions for short and long-term transit and cycling infrastructure to properly serve the area and its visitors.

Enclosed you will find two documents. The **Existing Conditions and Analysis Report** presents the results of the first two activities above. The **Key Findings and Recommendations** document summarizes these findings and provides the results of the second two activities.

It is an exciting time for the DHBIA and surrounding neighbourhoods, as proposed and ongoing projects present an opportunity to improve accessibility to the area for businesses, employees and customers and ultimately to increase the attractiveness of the DHBIA as a place to work and do business. This transit and cycling assessment provides insight into existing and future infrastructure, services and commute patterns in order to support the DHBIA in working with its partners to guide these changes.

Based on the completed assessment, we recommend:

### Regional and local transit:

• Without overlooking the importance of accessibility to all areas of the DHBIA, that particular efforts be made to maintain and improve transit services and active transportation infrastructure to and within the northeast quadrant, where destinations are concentrated and where new rapid transit projects will not provide direct service.

- That the DHBIA work with the TTC and the City of Toronto to ensure that the re-routing of buses in response to the TYSSE is based on the following principles:
  - Service levels to all areas of the DHBIA are maintained or improved,
  - Efficient connections to new and existing rapid transit stations are provided,
  - Re-routing takes into account the concentration of destinations in the northeast quadrant of the DHBIA,
  - o Bus 117 (Alness) is maintained through the northeast quadrant,
  - A route equivalent to bus 105 (Dufferin North) is maintained for TTC customers between Downsview Station and Steeles Avenue,
  - o Opportunities to serve Chesswood Drive with a local bus route are studied,
  - The Dufferin Street stop on bus 199 (Finch Rocket) is maintained,
  - Night/off-peak services are maintained or improved.
- That the DHBIA host focus groups with employees and employers in 2018 on commuting needs and experiences and to test satisfaction with the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE) and re-routed buses. We recommend that the DHBIA share the results of the focus group with transit and government agencies.
- That the DHBIA communicate the importance of providing efficient and comfortable transit services commensurate with current and future demand along the full Finch corridor, including from Finch West Station to Finch Station and, ultimately, to Pearson Airport. This can contribute to the achievement of broader city-building objectives by facilitating eastwest movement in northern Toronto, connecting important employment, transportation and institutional hubs and neighbourhood improvement areas.
- That the DHBIA pursue its work to render its portion of Finch Avenue a more transitsupportive corridor, including through public realm improvements and intensification of land use.
- That the DHBIA work with York Region Transit to ensure that north-south bus routes crossing the York Region/City of Toronto boundary are maintained and/or improved when the TYSSE is opened. Since many trips are destined to the eastern parts of the DHBIA, it is recommended that bus 105 (Dufferin North) continue southward to Downsview Station after crossing Steeles Avenue.

- That further study of the conditions required to achieve higher GO ridership levels to York University Station be carried out before a decision about the future of the station is made. Elements studied should include train schedules and frequencies to match demand as well as improved bus, cycling and walking connections required to get users from the station to their destination, and the potential impact of a co-fare between GO transit and the TTC. Of particular interest is the impact on ridership if there is direct access to the east side of the station, connecting the northeast quadrant, which is the destination of 43% of all trips to the DHBIA. The ability of the future Downsview Park Station to serve commuters to the DHBIA should also be studied.
- That the DHBIA provide public support for the establishment of a co-fare between GO transit and the TTC in order to reduce barriers to transit ridership for its employees, especially with a new GO station and increased GO service in coming years.

### Cycling:

- That the DHBIA work with the City of Toronto to install bike parking (ring and post) along major arterials, particularly near commercial and retail centres.
- That the DHBIA work with business owners to install bike parking at business locations. There may be an opportunity to provide incentives through Metrolinx's Smart Commute program. The DHBIA could also support employers by sharing best practices about bike parking installation and coordinating bulk purchases of equipment.
- That the DHBIA publicly support the development of the City of Toronto and York Region cycling networks. Without efficient connections to the areas where employees and clients live, cycling infrastructure within the DHBIA will be underused.
- That the DHBIA work proactively with the City of Toronto to ensure that the ten-year Cycling Network Plan is implemented rapidly and that the most-needed connections to and through DHBIA are prioritized. We suggest that:
  - The proposed Dufferin Street boulevard trail be implemented as a priority. In order to facilitate access to businesses and other destinations, the trail should be located on the west side or, if design constraints cause it to be located on the east side, several mid-block crossings should be installed.
  - The proposed completion of the Finch Street bike lane be implemented as a priority and that it take the form of a "cycle track" (protected bike lane).
- That the DHBIA work proactively with the City of Toronto to explore opportunities to provide protected bike lanes wherever possible in both new and existing bike infrastructure. In a context of heavy truck traffic, sharrows should be avoided where road widths permit full lanes. Bike pathways alongside sidewalks could be considered along some of the major arterials.

- In addition to the new infrastructure proposed in the Cycling Network Plan, that the following elements be considered:
  - An extension of the Dufferin Street trail south of Finch Avenue to Downsview subway station.
  - A cycling connection between the multi-use pathway along the busway and the future Finch West Station, either along Keele Street or Tangiers Road. (This connection has already been confirmed and will be installed as part of the TYSSE station planning around Finch West Station.)
  - Additional north-south connections within the DHBIA including bike lanes on Alness Street.
- That the DHBIA work with CN, landowners and the City of the Toronto to explore possibilities for providing cycling and pedestrian connections across the rail corridor at mid-block locations.

Walking:

- That the DHBIA continue to work with the City of Toronto to plant trees along streets.
- That the DHBIA work with the City of Toronto to install sidewalks on both sides of inner streets. We suggest in particular that Alness Street (missing west side) and Chesswood Drive (missing parts of east side) be considered as priorities given their importance as north-south connections and the visible evidence of unpaved areas as pedestrian paths.
- That the DHBIA work with the City of Toronto to install bus shelters and benches on inner streets, using the re-routing of certain bus routes in response to the TYSSE and the Finch West LRT as an opportunity to do this.
- That the DHBIA extend its public realm work to other streets in the area, using applicable solutions from the Finch Avenue study.
- That the DHBIA work with CN, landowners and the City of the Toronto to explore possibilities for providing cycling and pedestrian connections across the rail corridor at mid-block locations. This would support general connectivity through the DHBIA and would significantly increase access to the York University GO Station.

Transportation demand management:

- That the DHBIA meet with representatives of the Smart Commute program and large employers to explore the potential for TDM measures in the area.
- That the DHBIA establish a Smart Commute program through engagement with employers in the area. Although this list is non-exhaustive, the following interventions should be considered:
  - Reduced transit fare cards for employees, particularly those commuting from York Region.
  - Programs and incentives to encourage and facilitate carpooling among employees.

- A shuttle service connecting key employment destinations with transportation hubs (regular transit services should be developed as a priority; however, a shuttle may be able to fill gaps in service, for example during off-peak hours).
- Employee and employer education programs on transit and active transportation options and benefits.

Goods movement:

• That the DHBIA participate in the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) put in place for the Finch West Goods Movement Study, projected to begin in late 2016.

Communications:

• That the DHBIA establish a communications strategy with the goal of sharing of findings and recommendations from this report with key decision-makers.

Yours sincerely,

Dianne Zimmerman Policy Director, Transportation and Urban Solutions Pembina Institute



# DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area Transit and Cycling Assessment

Existing Conditions and Analysis Report

FINAL REPORT

September 30, 2016

## About the Pembina Institute

The Pembina Institute is a national non-partisan think tank that advocates for strong, effective policies to support Canada's clean energy transition. We employ multi-faceted and highly collaborative approaches to change. Producing credible, evidence-based research and analysis, we consult directly with organizations to design and implement clean energy solutions, and convene diverse sets of stakeholders to identify and move toward common solutions.

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## Disclaimer

This document is an independent report prepared exclusively as information for the Duke Heights Business Improvement Area.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s).

The information, statements, statistics and commentary (together the 'information') contained in this report have been prepared by the Pembina Institute from publicly available material and from discussions held with stakeholders.

The Pembina Institute have based this report on information received or obtained, on the basis that such information is accurate and, where it is represented to The Pembina Institute as such, complete.

# Open data

This document contains public sector information made available under the Regional Municipality of York's Open Data License as well as information licensed under the Open Government License – Toronto.

This document also contains data from the *Transportation Tomorrow Survey*, 2011 published by the Data Management Group at the University of Toronto.

# DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area Transit and Cycling Assessment

# Existing Conditions and Analysis Report

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# 1. About this report

This report presents the findings of the analysis of existing conditions and future projects completed as part of the transit and cycling assessment for which the Pembina Institute was retained by the DUKE Heights BIA in May 2016.

Research activities conducted for this draft report include a site audit, a review of past and ongoing studies, an analysis of data from the Transportation Tomorrow Survey and from the City of Toronto and transit agencies, as well as meetings with key actors.

This report begins by presenting the urban context of the DUKE Heights BIA (DHBIA) and its role as an employment hub in the region (Sections 2 and 3). Next, we present existing transit infrastructure and services and current ridership levels (Section 4). A similar overview of active transportation infrastructure (cycling and walking) follows in Section 5. In Section 6, using data from the Transportation Tomorrow Survey, we examine travel patterns to the DHBIA including a detailed analysis of travel by different modes (Section 6.2) and origins (Section 6.3).

In the final sections of the report, we examine future projects and initiatives that will change travel behavior to and within the DHBIA. In Section 7, we present proposed and underway rapid transit projects and associated modifications to the local transit network. In Section 8 we present proposed changes to the cycling network, in Section 9, opportunities for transportation demand management, and in Section 10, details about an upcoming goods movement study in the area.

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of current conditions as they relate to transit and cycling in the area was conducted in the initial phase of the project and is presented in Appendix A.

A survey of DHBIA employers, led by the DHBIA, was also conducted. The results of this survey are presented in Appendix B.

It is an exciting time for the DHBIA and surrounding neighbourhoods, as the proposed projects and initiatives present an opportunity to improve accessibility to the area for businesses, employees and customers. An accompanying report presenting key findings from this report and recommendations for the DHBIA to guide these changes has been submitted separately.

# 2. Introduction

# 2.1 Context

With over 30,000 employees and spanning over 720 hectares, the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area<sup>1</sup> (DHBIA) is an important employment hub within the City of Toronto and the Greater Toronto Region. The approximately 2,500 businesses within the DHBIA include office, manufacturing and retail/service industries.

Located near the northern periphery of the City of Toronto, the DHBIA was until recently not well-served by higher-order transit: Downsview Station, at the end of the University subway line, is located at the southeastern extremity. York University Station on the Barrie GO line, though located within the DHBIA, is largely designed to serve passengers travelling to York University. Furthermore, the DHBIA's built form (large, industrial/commercial sites), the high volumes of trucks and the relative lack of active transportation infrastructure have made walking and cycling less viable options for traveling to and within the area.

Several new projects and initiatives present a unique opportunity to rethink transit and active transportation services and infrastructure within the DHBIA and the surrounding areas.

Three new major rapid transit projects are planned or under construction which will connect to the periphery of the DHBIA: the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE), the Finch West LRT, and a new station on the GO train line. Increases in service frequency and an addition of two-way service on the GO line are also planned. Some local buses will be re-routed in response to these new services. In addition, the City of Toronto has recently approved a new ten-year Cycling Network Plan, and the DHBIA has been working with the City and other partners to undertake public realm improvements, particularly surrounding the future rapid transit stations.

Taken together, these new investments could provide more and better options for travelling to and through the DHBIA and reducing dependence on cars to do so. However, careful planning and collaboration among actors is required in order to ensure that these changes result in a net benefit, not only for DHBIA businesses, employees and customers but for the surrounding neighbourhoods as well.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A **Business Improvement Area** (BIA) is "an association of commercial property owners and tenants within a defined area who work in partnership with the City to create thriving, competitive, and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses." (City of Toronto, "Toronto's Business Improvement Areas." http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=37812fa8499bc410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD).

# 2.2 Mandate and objectives

The DHBIA has retained the services of the Pembina Institute in order to conduct a transit and cycling assessment of the area, taking into consideration existing and planned infrastructure and the nature of economic activity in the DHBIA.

The following activities were undertaken as part of this assessment:

- Understand existing conditions by analyzing travel behaviour and transit needs of DHBIA employees;
- Assess implications and opportunities for new transit services (LRT and subway) to DHBIA;
- Identify ways to improve transit and cycling accessibility of DHBIA;
- Provide suggestions for short and long-term transit and cycling infrastructure to properly serve the area and its visitors.

## 2.3 Approach

This report was generated through the following research and analysis activities:

- Site audit,
- Review of past and ongoing studies and plans,
- Analysis of data from the Transportation Tomorrow Survey 2011 and from the City of Toronto and transit agencies,
- Meetings with key actors,
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of existing conditions,
- Assessment of implications of proposed transit changes based on best-available information.

# Understanding the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area

# 3.1 Land use and built form



### Figure 1. The DHBIA is close to several major economic and transportation hubs

At just over 720ha in area, the DHBIA is the second largest BIA in the City of Toronto. As shown in Figure 1, it is centred along Finch Avenue West and bound by four major arterial roads: Steeles Avenue, Keele Street, Sheppard Avenue West and Dufferin Street. Though the DHBIA was originally at the urban periphery, the fast-paced development of the Greater Toronto Area in recent decades has brought development to and beyond the DHBIA area. It is now located in proximity to several important economic, academic and transportation hubs, including Pearson International Airport, Downsview Airport, several 400 series highways, York University, the Yonge-University subway line and North York employment centre. It is also near large urban greenspaces, including Downsview Park and other parklands.

The Finch hydro corridor, which hosts the York University busway and an off-street multiuse trail, passes from west to east in the northern part of the DHBIA. A CN rail corridor, also used by the Barrie GO line, splits the site in half in the north-south direction and acts as a barrier to east-west travel by car, bike and foot in the northern and southern sectors of the DHBIA.

The majority of the DHBIA area is designated as an "employment area" in the City of Toronto Official Plan<sup>2</sup> (please see the next section for a more detailed discussion of its role as an employment hub). Employment in the area is largely comprised of office, manufacturing and retail/service industries. Finch Avenue has a higher concentration of office and retail functions, with parking lots generally located in front of buildings (Figure 2).

Some heavy industrial uses are also located within the DHBIA: a large fuel terminal complex in the northwest quadrant (Figure 3), a waste processing facility in the southeast quadrant, and an iron and metal scrap yard in the southwest quadrant. The fuel terminal complex, considered a critical infrastructure by the Ministry of Energy and Emergency Management Ontario (EMO), is comprised of three fuel terminals and is the largest volume fuel storage/distribution industry complex in Canada, providing approximately 95% of the liquid transportation fuels (gasoline/diesel), heating and other fuels used by businesses, governments, public transit and private motorists used within the GTA. About 600 to 700 tank trucks per day come in and out of the site, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Relatively few employees work at the terminals due to the high level of mechanisation of operations.<sup>3</sup>

In line with their manufacturing functions, the inner roads of the DHBIA are characterized by large, low-rise warehouse and commercial buildings on large sites with significant infrastructure for truck deliveries and shipping (Figure 5). Some mid-rise office buildings with retail at grade are located near the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West, and a pocket of high-rise residential towers is located at the intersection of Dufferin Street and Sheppard Avenue West near Downsview Station. Although the DHBIA has very little residential development, the surrounding area is largely designated as residential, with some mixed use along arterial roads. As

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> City of Toronto City Planning Division, *City of Toronto Official Plan* (2015), Map 16. http://www1.toronto.ca/planning/16-landuse.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Jean Roy, Canadian Fuels Association, personal communication, July 5, 2016.

documented in the *Finch Avenue West Light Rail Transit Corridor Profile*, the population in the area tends to have a higher proportion of immigrants and young people, and have lower than average private household incomes.<sup>4</sup> The employment and manufacturing functions of the DHBIA mean that shipping and delivery is a key element of operations in the area (Figure 6). Transit and active transportation planning in the DHBIA must consider the high volume of trucks.

### 3.2 Role as an employment hub

22 employment areas — which are characterized by manufacturing, warehousing, product assembly and commercial business parks — were recognized by the City of Toronto as of the 2015 Toronto Employment Survey. Together, employment areas provide more than 400,000 of Toronto's 1.4 million jobs. The City recognizes that "the lands represented by the Employment Areas are structural elements of Toronto's economic future in order to ensure a stable environment for investment and to maintain and grow the City's revenue base."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, protecting employment areas and investing in transit, walking and cycling infrastructure in these areas is a recognized priority of the province, as identified in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.*<sup>6</sup>

As of 2015, the Dufferin Keele North employment district (the employment area corresponding with the boundaries of the DHBIA) offered the fourth greatest number of jobs from among the employment areas at 30,980 jobs.<sup>7</sup> This accounts for 7.6% of all employment area jobs and 2.2% of all jobs across the city. Approximately 2,500 businesses are located in the DHBIA.<sup>8</sup>

In recognition of the area's importance as an employment hub, the DUKE Heights BIA (originally named the Dufferin Finch BIA) was created in 2014 in order to grow and promote the area's potential and provide support to businesses. The confirmation that two new major rapid transit projects — the Toronto York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE) and Finch West LRT — would bring new transit service to the area was also an important motivator. Indeed, transportation networks — road, transit, active transportation — are key assets for employment hubs and can bring potential for growth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Toronto City Planning, Finch Avenue West Light Rail Transit Corridor Profile (2015).

http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/SIPA/Finch%20Sheppard%20Pl%20Approach/Finch%20Sheppard%20Approach/Finch%20Sheppard%20Approach/Finch%20Sheppard%20Sheppard%20Approach/Finch%20S

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> City Planning Division, *Toronto Employment Survey 2015* (2015), 13.

http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=c7ac186e20ee0410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *Places to Grow* (2008).

https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=366&Itemid=15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Toronto City Planning, "Toronto Employment Survey Summary Tables", February 2016. http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=d5b0c4fdc0b8f310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Matias de Dovitiis, Duke Heights BIA, personal communication, June 23, 2016.



Figure 2. Parking lots are commonly placed in front of commercial buildings along Finch Ave.



Figure 3. A large oil terminal dominates the northwestern part of the DHBIA



Figure 4. The intersection of Finch Ave. and Dufferin St., one of the gateways to the DHBIA (looking west along Finch Ave.)



Figure 5. The inner streets of the DHBIA are characterized by large buildings and loading docks



Figure 6. Trucking is an important part of economic activity in the DHBIA



Figure 7. Residential development surrounds the DHBIA

# 4. Transit infrastructure and ridership

## 4.1 Subway

**Downsview Station**, built in 1996, is currently the last station on the western portion of the Yonge-University-Spadina subway line. It is located at the southeast corner of the DHBIA at the intersection of Dufferin Street and Sheppard Avenue West. Trains run every few minutes from 6 a.m. until 1:30 a.m.

Several regular and limited service buses offer connections to different areas of the DHBIA for riders arriving at Downsview Station (see Section 4.3).

### Ridership

The Yonge-University-Spadina subway is the most trafficked Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) route, carrying 731,880 people per day in 2012-2013. At 38,100 riders on an average weekday in both directions, Downsview Station is the entry/exit point for about 5% of these riders. Downsview Station is the 19<sup>th</sup> most frequented out of 34 subway/RT stations in the TTC network. It has a lower ridership than other end-of-line subway stations, with the exception of Don Mills Station on the Sheppard line.<sup>9</sup>

## 4.2 Regional rail

**York University Station**, on the Barrie GO line, is located in the northern part of the DHBIA. The Barrie line connects south to Union Station and north to Allandale Waterfront Station in Barrie. Seven southbound trains run between 6:40 a.m. and 8:40 a.m., and seven northbound trains run between 3:40 p.m. and 6:45 p.m., on weekdays only.

York University Station was completed in 2002.<sup>10</sup> The station is highly disconnected from the surrounding urban fabric, as it is not connected to any major roads and is accessible only by a footpath between two industrial buildings. Signage for the station is minimal (Figure 9). In addition, since the boarding platform and access to the station is located only on the west side of the tracks, a rider would have to walk over 2 km to get from the station a destination immediately on the east side of the station.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, *Subway ridership*, 2012-2013 (2014). https://www.ttc.ca/PDF/Transit\_Planning/Subway\_ridership\_2012-2013.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Elana Horowitz, Metrolinx, personal communication, June 10, 2016.

York University provides a complimentary shuttle for staff, faculty and students between York University Station and York University.<sup>11</sup> TTC bus 41B, with limited service, also passes near the GO station exit and connects to the York University terminal. GO buses do not stop at York University Station.

Currently, there is no co-fare between GO Transit and the TTC, meaning that an individual transferring from the GO train to a local TTC service would be required to pay both full fares. A co-fare for riders using a PRESTO card has been established between GO Transit and all other municipal transit agencies.<sup>12</sup>

#### Ridership

The GO Barrie line had a daily ridership of 20,227 riders in both directions in 2015.<sup>13</sup> It ranks fifth for ridership among the seven GO train lines.<sup>14</sup> At 447 riders on an average weekday in both directions, the York University GO Station is the entry/exit point for about 2% of riders on the line.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> GO Transit, "Stations and stops: York University GO Station- TRAIN STATION."

http://www.gotransit.com/publicroot/en/travelling/stations.aspx?station=YKGO (accessed July 5, 2016). <sup>12</sup> Metrolinx, *Transit Fares in the GTHA Today – An Overview* (2015).

http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/fareintegration/Transit\_Fares\_in\_the\_GTHA\_Today-An\_Overview\_EN.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Elana Horowitz, Metrolinx, personal communication, June 17, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Metrolinx, GO Transit Rail Parking and Station Access Plan (2013).

 $http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regional planning/project evaluation/studies/GO\_Transit\_Rail\_Parking\_and\_Station\_Access\_Plan\_EN.pdf$ 



Figure 8. Many buses connect to Downsview subway station



Figure 10. The York University GO station is accessed via a pedestrian walkway between two buildings and is only accessible on the west side of the rail line

Figure 9. The York University GO station is not well-marked



Figure 11. Bike parking at the York University GO station

## 4.3 Bus services

A number of regular, express and limited service buses, operated by the TTC and York Region Transit (YRT) run through the DHBIA area, as shown in Figure 12 and Figure 13 below.



Figure 12. Existing TTC transit services

Source: Toronto Transit Commission



Figure 13. Existing YRT transit services

Source: York Region Transit

### 4.3.1 Buses along the Finch corridor

Finch Avenue West is the spine of the DHBIA and a main transportation corridor in the area. The TTC bus 36 (Finch West) runs east-west along Finch Avenue, between Finch Station in the east and the Humberwood Boulevard area in the west. Bus 36A, the main bus on this route, is part of the TTC's "10 minute network," meaning that it operates at intervals of 10 minutes or better all days of the week. Buses 36D and 36F, which follow modified routes, operate at peak periods only. Accessible service and bike racks are provided on the route.<sup>15</sup>

Signal priority for buses has been installed by the TTC along Finch Avenue for several years at most intersections.<sup>16</sup> In 2014, low floor articulated buses were introduced on the bus 36 route. These buses have a 45% greater capacity than standard buses and have a third door, allowing for faster boarding and the deployment of fewer buses along the route.<sup>17</sup>

Two express services also carry transit riders from east to west through the DHBIA on the York University busway: bus 196 (York University Rocket) and bus 199 (Finch Rocket). Bus 196 shuttles riders directly between the York University Commons and Downsview Station. Bus 199, introduced in March 2016, provides an express service between the York University Commons and Finch Station, stopping at Murray Ross Parkway, Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street and continuing further eastward to Scarborough.

### Ridership

Bus 36 (Finch West) is the fourth-most heavily-trafficked TTC surface route (including streetcars) and the third-most heavily-trafficked bus route, at 43,952 riders per day<sup>18</sup> (Table 1). The peak hourly ridership occurs on the eastbound route during the morning period, where the maximum load is 950 passengers per hour. On the segment of the route that passes through the DHBIA, the maximum load occurs at the intersection with Keele Street, at 835 passengers per hour.<sup>19</sup> Passenger activity along the line is spread out: large volumes of passengers get on and off at many locations along the route, rather than being concentrated at specific locations.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, "36 Finch West." https://www.ttc.ca/Routes/36/RouteDescription.jsp?tabName=map (accessed July 5, 2016)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Eric Chu, Toronto Transit Commission, personal communication, June 29, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, "TTC introduces new articulated bus," October 3, 2013. https://www.ttc.ca/News/2013/October/1003\_Articu\_Bus.jsp

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, *TTC Ridership - All Day Weekday for Surface Routes* (2014). http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=34b6c316f16e8410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgne xtchannel=1a66e03bb8d1e310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, *Maximum Hour Report – 36 Finch West*. Provided to the Pembina Institute on June 27, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Eric Chu, Toronto Transit Commission, personal communication, June 29, 2016.

### Rider Comfort and Safety

In 2015, as part of the background studies prepared for the Finch West LRT, <sup>21</sup> Metrolinx documented high levels of daily and peak ridership on bus 36 and noted the issues this presents. As Metrolinx noted, buses on Finch Avenue West operate in mixed traffic, and since they operate at short intervals to accommodate high demand, "bus bunching" and overcrowding often occur. This in turn produces a less efficient and comfortable service for riders. Moreover, this route was identified as having the most criminal and bylaw infractions from among TTC services by a Toronto Star report in March 2016.<sup>22</sup>

Rank	Route no.	Route Name	All-Day Ridership
1	504	King	64,579
2	32	Eglinton West	48,684
3	35	Jane	45,699
4	36	Finch West	43,952
5	510	Spadina	43,804
6	501	Queen	43,464
7	29	Dufferin	39,721
8	506	Carlton	39,601
9	25	Don Mills	39,066
10	512	St. Clair	38,113
11	54	Lawrence East	36,277
12	505	Dundas	32,410
13	60	Steeles West	29,819
14	34	Eglinton East	29,501
15	53	Steeles East	28,278

Table 1. The most trafficked surface routes in Toronto include the Finch West and Steeles West buses

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Metrolinx, *Setting the Stage: Encouraging Transit Supportive Places on the Finch West LRT Corridor*, prepared by planningAlliance and N. Barry Lyon Consultants (2015).

 $http://www1.toronto.ca/City\%20Of\%20Toronto/City\%20Planning/SIPA/Finch\%20Sheppard\%20Pl\%20Approach/Finch\%20West\%20LRT\%20Study_Final.pdf$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Michael Robinson and William Davis, "Fraud, assault top list of crimes on TTC buses," *Toronto Star*, March 8, 2016. https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2016/03/08/fraud-assault-top-list-of-crimes-on-ttc-buses.html

### 4.3.2 Other buses

Other existing bus services are summarized in Table 2. With the exception of buses 196 and 199 that travel along the busway, and a dedicated bus lane along Dufferin Street south of the busway, these buses operate within mixed traffic.

Transit Operator	Route no.	Route name	Service Level
TTC	36	Finch West	10-minute network:
	84	Sheppard West	10-minute or better service from
	60	Steeles West	Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. Sundays
	106	York University	Regular Service:
	108	Downsview	Operates all day, every day until
	105	Dufferin North	1.30 d.III.
	41	Keele	
	101	Downsview Park	Limited Service
	107	Keele North	
	117	Alness	
	196	York University Rocket*	Express Service (York University Busway)
	199	Finch Rocket	Limited Express Service (York University Busway)
York Region Transit	N/A	Viva Orange – Martin Grove to Downsview*	Peak service only, 15-16 minutes at peak.
	N/A	Viva Orange – Martin Grove to York University**	Midday: 18 minutes Evening: 24 minutes
	003	Thornhill	All day service, approx. every 30 minutes.
	010	Woodbridge	All day service, approx. every 40- 60 minutes.
	22A	King City	All day service, approx. every 30- 40 minutes.
Mississauga Transit	501	Züm Queen**	All day service, 15 minutes at peak.

Table 2. Local bus	services on	weekdays
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\* The Viva Orange route and the 196 – York University rocket follow the same trajectory from York University Commons to Downsview Station.

\*\* Midday service operates from Martin Grove to York University, Evening service operates from Pine Valley to York University. The Viva Orange Route and 501 Züm Queen have an integrated fare.

### Ridership

In addition to the Finch West bus, the routes on the surrounding arterial roads (Keele Street, Steeles Avenue and Sheppard Avenue West) and on the busway (buses no. 196 and 199) also have high ridership levels (Table 3). With the exception of Keele Street, each of these routes moves in the east-west direction, indicating the significance of east-west movement in the northern part of the City of Toronto.

Transit Operator	Rank	Route no.	Route Name	All-Day Ridership
TTC	1	36	Finch West	43,952
	2	60	Steeles West	29,819
	3	41	Keele	24,597
	4	196	York University Rocket	21,892
	5	84	Sheppard West	19,143
	6	199	Finch Rocket	19,055
	7	106	York University	7,687
	8	108	Downsview	6,841
	9	105	Dufferin North	4,781
	10	107	Keele North	4,111
	11	117	Alness	2,771
	13	101	Downsview Park	292
York Region Transit	1	22A	King City (Keele Street)	1,737
	2	003	Thornhill (Steeles Avenue)	1,522
	3	N/A	Viva orange* (operates between York University and Downsview during midday and evening periods)	1,434
	4	010	Woodbride (Steeles Avenue)	497

### Table 3. Ridership on TTC and YRT bus lines in the DHBIA area



Figure 14. Bus 36 (Finch West) is the fourthmost trafficked surface route in Toronto



Figure 15. Buses 196 and 199 run along a dedicated right-of-way on the York University busway, from Downsview Station to York University

### York Region – Toronto interface

Currently, the TTC is contracted by York Region Transit (YRT) to run buses across Steeles Avenue, which is the boundary between City of Toronto and the Regional Municipality of York. North-south buses along Jane, Keele and Dufferin are some examples.

There is no co-fare between the TTC and YRT as there are between municipal transit systems in the 905 (with the exception of Milton Transit).<sup>23</sup> Transit riders crossing Steeles Avenue must therefore pay two fares for their trip regardless of whether the route is operated by the TTC or the YRT.<sup>24</sup> This means that fares are significantly higher for individuals commuting from York Region to the DHBIA if they need to complete their trip on a TTC route, which presents a barrier to transit ridership.

### Off-peak services

Of the bus routes operating on local streets within the DHBIA (117; 107 B, C and D; 105 C; 41 B), the following operate after 7 p.m.: 107 C, 105C. None have a night route. However, the bus routes operating on major arterials surrounding the DHBIA (36, 60, 84, 41, 105) do operate until 1:30 a.m. and have night routes. Some have significant night ridership, including bus 36 (Finch West), which has a maximum load after 10 p.m. of 280 passengers per hour (westbound).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Metrolinx, Transit Fares in the GTHA Today – An Overview (2015).

http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/fareintegration/Transit\_Fares\_in\_the\_GTHA\_Today-An\_Overview\_EN.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> York Region Transit/Viva, "Fare Policy." http://www.yorkregiontransit.com/en/farespasses/farepolicy.asp (accessed July 5, 2016)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, *Maximum Hour Report – 36 Finch West*. Provided to the Pembina Institute on June 27, 2016.

Results of the survey of employers on transportation issues indicate that most businesses (84% of respondents) have regular daytime hours, while 11% involve shift work.

### Route performance

Data on route performance published by the TTC in 2015 indicated that some of the bus routes serving the DHBIA had relatively low performance levels, measured as the percent of vehicles that were within three minutes of the scheduled headway.<sup>26</sup> This includes buses 107 (42% performance), 105 (51%), 117 (54%), and 36 (54%). Bus 41 performed relatively well, at 80%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, 2015 Route Performance – Q1 (2015). https://www.ttc.ca/PDF/Customer\_Service/Quarterly\_Reports/Route\_Performance\_Q1-2015.pdf

# 5. Active transportation infrastructure

# 5.1 Cycling infrastructure

There are currently 4.6 km of linear cycling facilities in the DHBIA, of which 0.6 km are unprotected<sup>27</sup> bike lanes, 1.9 km are sharrows<sup>28</sup> and 2.1 km are an off-street multi-use pathway (Figure 16). The existing lanes are:

- A bike lane along Finch Avenue West, on both sides of the street, from Alexdon Road to just west of Chesswood Drive. No physical separation is provided (Figure 17). Sharrows extend the lane on the west from Alexdon Road to Tangiers and Alexdon Road and just west of Chesswood Drive (Figure 18).
- Sharrows along Flint Road and Supertest Road (Figure 19).
- A major multi-use pathway along the York University busway in the east-west direction (Figure 20).

Cycling connections to the broader cycling network are currently limited. In particular, there are no connections across Highway 401 which would facilitate access bewteen the DHBIA and southern Toronto.Where connections do exist, they are to multi-use pathways that pass through green spaces but do not tie in to the broader regional cycling network. There is, however, a nearly continuous multi-use pathway leading to Finch Station further east.

Within the DHBIA, no cycling connections are available to Downsview Station or York University GO Station. The CN rail corridor acts as a barrier to movement in the east-west direction. North-south movement is also limited by the lack of continuous north-south streets in the DHBIA.

The large volume of trucks passing through all areas of the DHBIA has an impact on the safety and comfort of cyclists. On side streets with sharrows, cyclists must share the road with trucks, which can lead to a real and perceived safety concerns. Further, cars and trucks were observed using sharrow lanes as parking and there seems to be a lack of clarity around parking regulations in these areas (Figure 21). Cycling infrastructure needs to account for the reality of trucking in the major and minor streets of the DHBIA.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> **"Protected" bike lanes**, often referred to as **"cycle tracks"** in the City of Toronto and "separated" bike lanes elsewhere, refer to bike lanes that have a physical separation between the bike and vehicle lanes. There are no protected bike lanes in the DHBIA at this time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> **Sharrows** are painted street markings that indicate where cyclists should position themselves on the street and remind motorists to share the road with cyclists. They do not involve a reserved lane for cyclists.

Very limited bike parking facilities are currently present in the DHBIA, with the exception of a bike rack at York University GO Station. During a site visit on a weekday morning in early June, bikes were observed parked to trees and poles outside of some businesses (Figure 22, Figure 23), suggesting that there is a demand for bike parking. Four bikes were observed in the rack at York University GO Station.



Figure 16. Existing cycling facilities



Figure 17. Bike lane on Finch Ave. West between Alexdon Rd. and Chesswood Dr. (looking east)

Source: Google Maps



Figure 18. Sharrows on Finch Ave. West between Keele St. and Alexdon Rd. (looking east)

Source: Google Maps



### Figure 19. Sharrows on Supertest Rd. (looking east) Source: Google Maps



Figure 20. A separated bike trail runs east to west through the DHBIA, sharing the rail corridor with the York University busway



Figure 21. Cars and trucks park in sharrow lanes on DHBIA inner roads



Figure 22. Cyclists use informal bike parking as bike racks are not provided (1)



Figure 23. Cyclists use informal bike parking as bike racks are not provided (2)

## 5.2 Pedestrian infrastructure

Pedestrian facilities are somewhat inconsistent across the DHBIA. Along major corridors, such as Finch Avenue West, sidewalks are present on both sides of the road and bus stops are equipped with shelters and benches. However, some inner roads have no sidewalk or a sidewalk on one side only (Figure 24), and some bus stops are missing a shelter (Figure 25). "Desire lines" — traces of pedestrian activity along roads where no sidewalk is present — suggest areas where a sidewalk is particularly needed, for example on the western side of Alness Avenue (Figure 26).

As with cycling, the large volume of trucks circulating in the DHBIA is an issue for pedestrian comfort and safety. Along Finch Avenue West, crosswalks are generally well-marked (Figure 28), though there are no bulbouts,<sup>29</sup> pedestrian refuge islands,<sup>30</sup> or other forms of assisted crossings. Crossings are generally unmarked on inner streets, and the lack of four-way stops at some intersections makes pedestrian crossing difficult (for example, at the intersection of Alness Street and Brisbane Road).

Dominated by large buildings and parking lots, the DHBIA is a significant urban heat island,<sup>31</sup> which presents a concern for pedestrian comfort. A number of recently planted street trees contribute to improving the situation along many streets. The DHBIA is working with the City to have a total of 2000 trees planted in the near future.<sup>32</sup>

Currently, there are no planned rest or gathering areas for pedestrians in the DHBIA. Some employers have installed informal picnic tables on their property, presumably to give employees access to an outdoor gathering space at breaks or lunchtime (Figure 29).

A public realm study has been completed for Finch Avenue West between Keele Street and the CN rail corridor,<sup>33</sup> and a second study is underway for the remainder of the avenue. These studies look more closely at issues and solutions with respect to pedestrian comfort and should be considered as part of overall active transportation planning in the DHBIA. In addition, a sidewalk inventory and specific recommendations for the completion of sidewalks have been generated as part of the "Tree Planting and Missing Sidewalks Report" recently commissioned by the BIA. This report also identifies potential street tree planting sites.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> A **bulbout**, also known as a curb extension, is an extension of the sidewalk at an intersection which serves to calm traffic and reduce the distance that pedestrians have to cross.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> A **refuge island** is a section of pavement, usually added in the middle of a large street, where pedestrians can stop before completing their crossing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> An **urban heat island** is a developed area that is hotter than surrounding rural areas due to human activity and modification of the landscape (for example, through pavement and buildings).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Matias de Dovitiis, Duke Heights BIA, personal communication, June 7, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The Planning Partnership, *DUKE Heights BIA Public Realm Design Report*, prepared for the DUKE Heights BIA (2016). http://www.dukeheights.ca/wp-content/uploads/160302\_Public-Realm-Design-Report.pdf



Figure 24. Some inner streets lack sidewalks and 2-way stops make pedestrian crossings difficult



Figure 26. "Desire lines" along Alness St. indicate a need for a sidewalk



Figure 25. Some bus stops on inner streets lack benches, shelters, and bus information



Figure 27. A lack of cycling infrastructure on Alness St. causes cyclists to use the sidewalk (seen in distance)



Figure 28. Painted crosswalks direct pedestrians across the very wide crossings along Finch Ave. W.



Figure 29. Some employers have provided outdoor seating
# 6. Moving to and through the DHBIA

The Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) is a travel survey conducted by telephone in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and surrounding region (extending to the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, the City of Brantford and Dufferin County) once every five years. The TTS provides a snapshot of transportation behaviour on a typical day, including the origins and destinations as well as the modes of trips. In the following sections, we explore travel behaviour to and through the DHBIA<sup>34</sup> using the results of the TTS 2011. There is a margin of error associated with the TTS data, especially where trip numbers are low and where neighbourhoods have lower-income and/or transient populations, as is the case of some neighbourhoods near the DHBIA. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the results of this analysis.

# 6.1 Portrait of trips to the DHBIA

#### Distribution

By all modes of transportation and for all purposes, approximately 34,500 trips are made to the DHBIA on a typical weekday, down from approximately 38,700 trips in 2006. These arrivals are not spread evenly across the sector, but are concentrated in the eastern end: the northeast quadrant (incidentally, the quadrant the farthest from rapid transit stations) is the destination for 43% of all trips to the DHBIA, while the southeast quadrant is the destination for 28% of all trips (Figure 30). This distribution trend was similar in 2006.

#### Purpose

Given the function of the DHBIA area as an employment and commercial hub, it is unsurprising that 61% of all trips to the DHBIA are made for work purposes, while some 14% of trips are for shopping. Another 17% are made for "other" purposes, which includes personal business and entertainment trips (Figure 31).

In the northeast quadrant, where 43% of destinations are concentrated, the percentage of trips for shopping is somewhat higher, at 19%. This is likely explained by the concentration of retail outlets in this quadrant.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Four TTS zones were considered as being part of the DHBIA: zones 392, 393, 394, and 395. Note that this excludes a small portion of the DHBIA territory at the southeast tip (adjacent to Downsview Station) which is residential.

#### Demographics

Travellers to the DHBIA are generally of working age. More than half (52%) are between the ages of 36 and 55, as shown in Table 4. Travellers to the DHBIA are disproportionately male, at 59% males and 41% females.

#### Mode

A large majority of trips to the DHBIA are made by car: 72% as a driver and another 13% as a passenger for a total of 85% of trips by car. Most of the remainder (14%) of trips are made by transit. Though some trips are made by bike and on foot, they are relatively negligible as a share of overall trips. Figure 32 presents the overall modal share of trips to the DHBIA.

It is of note that only 11% of trips to the DHBIA were made by transit in 2006, so, despite the fact that the total number of trips decreased from 2006-2011, the transit mode share increased.

#### Trip distance

Understanding the distance of trips to the DHBIA is important for understanding the potential to replace car trips with other modes.

For all trips to the DHBIA, the average trip distance<sup>35</sup> is 12.3 km. Comparatively, the average trip distance for all trips made in the Transportation Tomorrow Survey region is 10.7 km (Figure 33). This relationship is inversed for transit trips. For transit trips to the DHBIA, the average distance travelled is 9.8 km, compared to 12.4 km across the survey region (Figure 34).

Fully 36% of all trips (equivalent to 12,417 trips) to the DHBIA have a straight-line distance of 5 km or less, representing an opportunity to encourage a modal shift to cycling. Similarly, 14% of all trips (equivalent to 4,743 trips) to the DHBIA have a straight-line distance of 2 km or less, representing an opportunity to encourage a modal shift to walking.

#### Planning districts of origin

Though people travel to the DHBIA from all corners of the region, 47% of trips originate in one of three planning districts<sup>36</sup> that contain or surround the DHBIA: Planning District 10 of Toronto (17%), Vaughan (15%), and Planning District 11 of Toronto (15%). Table 5 presents the top 20 origins of trips to the DHBIA, by planning district. Figure 35 illustrates this information on a map.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Distances are reported as the distance of a straight line between the origin and destination of the trip.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Planning Districts are a geographical unit used in the TTS. They represent municipal boundaries except in the case of the City of Toronto, which is divided into several planning districts.



Figure 30. Average number of daily trips arriving in each zone of the DHBIA



Age range	Number of people	Percent
11-25	3539	10%
26-35	4786	14%
36-45	8289	24%
46-55	9621	28%
56-65	5520	16%
65+	2820	8%

#### Table 4. Age distribution of travelers to the DHBIA

![](_page_39_Figure_3.jpeg)

Figure 33. Trip distances for all trips to the DHBIA compared to region-wide trips

![](_page_40_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Figure 34. Trip distances for transit trips to the DHBIA compared to region-wide transit trips

RankingPlanning District of HouseholdNumber of tripsPercent of all trips1PD 10 of Toronto596717%2Vaughan509015%3PD 11 of Toronto508015%4PD 3 of Toronto20396%5PD 4 of Toronto16965%6Brampton13464%7PD 16 of Toronto11813%8Richmond Hill11623%9Mississauga11563%10PD 1 of Toronto11303%11Markham9623%12PD 13 of Toronto8813%13PD 2 of Toronto8172%14PD 9 of Toronto7892%				
1       PD 10 of Toronto       5967       17%         2       Vaughan       5090       15%         3       PD 11 of Toronto       5080       15%         4       PD 3 of Toronto       2039       6%         5       PD 4 of Toronto       1696       5%         6       Brampton       1346       4%         7       PD 16 of Toronto       1181       3%         8       Richmond Hill       1162       3%         9       Mississauga       1156       3%         10       PD 1 of Toronto       1130       3%         11       Markham       962       3%         12       PD 13 of Toronto       881       3%         13       PD 2 of Toronto       817       2%         14       PD 9 of Toronto       587       2%	Ranking	Planning District of Household	Number of trips	Percent of all trips
2         Vaughan         5090         15%           3         PD 11 of Toronto         5080         15%           4         PD 3 of Toronto         2039         6%           5         PD 4 of Toronto         1696         5%           6         Brampton         1346         4%           7         PD 16 of Toronto         1181         3%           8         Richmond Hill         1162         3%           9         Mississauga         1156         3%           10         PD 1 of Toronto         1130         3%           11         Markham         962         3%           12         PD 13 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	1	PD 10 of Toronto	5967	17%
3         PD 11 of Toronto         5080         15%           4         PD 3 of Toronto         2039         6%           5         PD 4 of Toronto         1696         5%           6         Brampton         1346         4%           7         PD 16 of Toronto         1181         3%           8         Richmond Hill         1162         3%           9         Mississauga         1156         3%           10         PD 1 of Toronto         1130         3%           11         Markham         962         3%           12         PD 13 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	2	Vaughan	5090	15%
4         PD 3 of Toronto         2039         6%           5         PD 4 of Toronto         1696         5%           6         Brampton         1346         4%           7         PD 16 of Toronto         1181         3%           8         Richmond Hill         3%         3%           9         Mississauga         1156         3%           10         PD 1 of Toronto         1130         3%           11         Markham         962         3%           12         PD 13 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	3	PD 11 of Toronto	5080	15%
5       PD 4 of Toronto       1696       5%         6       Brampton       1346       4%         7       PD 16 of Toronto       1181       3%         8       Richmond Hill       1162       3%         9       Mississauga       1156       3%         10       PD 1 of Toronto       1130       3%         11       Markham       962       3%         12       PD 13 of Toronto       881       3%         13       PD 2 of Toronto       817       2%         14       PD 9 of Toronto       789       2%	4	PD 3 of Toronto	2039	6%
6         Brampton         1346         4%           7         PD 16 of Toronto         1181         3%           8         Richmond Hill         1162         3%           9         Mississauga         1156         3%           10         PD 1 of Toronto         1130         3%           11         Markham         962         3%           12         PD 13 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%	5	PD 4 of Toronto	1696	5%
7       PD 16 of Toronto       1181       3%         8       Richmond Hill       1162       3%         9       Mississauga       1156       3%         10       PD 1 of Toronto       1130       3%         11       Markham       962       3%         12       PD 13 of Toronto       881       3%         13       PD 2 of Toronto       817       2%         14       PD 9 of Toronto       789       2%         15       PD 8 of Toronto       587       2%	6	Brampton	1346	4%
8         Richmond Hill         1162         3%           9         Mississauga         1156         3%           10         PD 1 of Toronto         1130         3%           11         Markham         962         3%           12         PD 1 3 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	7	PD 16 of Toronto	1181	3%
9         Mississauga         1156         3%           10         PD 1 of Toronto         1130         3%           11         Markham         962         3%           12         PD 13 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	8	Richmond Hill	1162	3%
10       PD 1 of Toronto       1130       3%         11       Markham       962       3%         12       PD 13 of Toronto       881       3%         13       PD 2 of Toronto       817       2%         14       PD 9 of Toronto       789       2%         15       PD 8 of Toronto       587       2%	9	Mississauga	1156	3%
11         Markham         962         3%           12         PD 13 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	10	PD 1 of Toronto	1130	3%
12         PD 13 of Toronto         881         3%           13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	11	Markham	962	3%
13         PD 2 of Toronto         817         2%           14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	12	PD 13 of Toronto	881	3%
14         PD 9 of Toronto         789         2%           15         PD 8 of Toronto         587         2%	13	PD 2 of Toronto	817	2%
15 PD 8 of Toronto 587 2%	14	PD 9 of Toronto	789	2%
	15	PD 8 of Toronto	587	2%

Table 5. Top 20 most common origins of trips to the DHBIA

16	PD 6 of Toronto	566	2%
17	PD 12 of Toronto	559	2%
18	PD 5 of Toronto	472	1%
19	Aurora	273	1%
20	Oshawa	256	1%

![](_page_41_Figure_2.jpeg)

#### Figure 35. Origins of all trips to the DHBIA

# 6.2 Trips by mode

#### 6.2.1 Transit trips

As mentioned in the previous section, 14% of all trips to the DHBIA are made by transit, equivalent to approximately 4,851 trips per day. Of this, the share of trips made by GO train is minimal, at approximately 77 trips per day.

It is of note that a disproportionate number of transit trips arriving in the DHBIA involve multiple transfers, compared to the region-wide average. Only 26% of trips arriving in the DHBIA are made without a transfer, whereas this is the case for 68% of region-wide transit trips. Fully 13% of transit trips to the DHBIA involve three or more transfers, whereas this is the case for only 4% of region-wide transit trips (Figure 36).

Figure 37 presents the most common routes used by riders coming to the DHBIA by transit. The most commonly used route is the University subway at 33% of transit trips to the DHBIA, followed by bus 36 (Finch West), at approximately 1,118 (or 23%) of transit trips to the DHBIA. From among the more local bus routes serving the DHBIA, bus 117 (Alness) is the most used, carrying 638 people per day to the DHBIA (or 13% of transit trips to the DHBIA).

![](_page_42_Figure_6.jpeg)

# Figure 36. Number of transfers used in trips arriving in DHBIA compared to the region-wide average

![](_page_43_Figure_1.jpeg)

Figure 37. Most common transit routes used by riders coming into the DHBIA

### 6.2.2 Cycling trips

There are approximately 117 cycling trips made to the DHBIA each day with an average trip distance of 3.7 km.<sup>37</sup> Currently, as shown in Figure 38, trips by bike originate in areas immediately to the east and north of the DHBIA. No trips that start and end in the DHBIA are made by bike.

Cycling destinations within the DHBIA are not evenly distributed: half of cycling trips arrive in the northeast quadrant of the DHBIA, roughly a quarter are heading to the northwest and a quarter to the southeast, and none are going to the southwest quadrant.

### 6.2.3 Pedestrian trips

There are approximately 151 trips made by foot to the DHBIA each day with an average distance of 1.8 km. Currently, as shown in Figure 39, trips by foot originate in adjacent or nearby

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> For cycling and walking trips, the trip distance is measured as the "Manhattan distance," which refers to the sum of the vertical and horizontal components of the trip. Given the general grid configuration of city streets, this more accurately represents the distance travelled than a simple straight line.

residential areas as well as the York University campus. No trips that start and end within the DHBIA are made by foot.

42% of pedestrians have destinations in the southwest quadrant. Presumably, they are visiting the retail outlets along the east side of Keele Street in this area (Walmart, No Frills, etc.).

![](_page_44_Figure_3.jpeg)

Figure 38. Distribution of origins of cycling trips to the DHBIA

![](_page_45_Figure_1.jpeg)

Figure 39. Distribution of origins of walking trips to the DHBIA

# 6.3 Trips by origin

### 6.3.1 Trips from the City of Toronto

More than half (64%) of all trips to the DHBIA (equivalent to 22,281 trips) originate from the City of Toronto. These origins are concentrated in north Toronto, particularly in the residential areas to the immediate east and west of the DHBIA (Figure 40). This makes east-west travel across north Toronto important for the DHBIA, as evidenced by the high ridership of the Finch West bus. Indeed, one quarter (25%) of all trips to the DHBIA (equivalent to 8,491 trips) originate from zones within 800m of Finch Avenue in the City of Toronto.<sup>38</sup> About 42% of all trips made from within this corridor come from west of the DHBIA, while the remainder (58%) come from the east.

The transit modal share is relatively high for trips to the DHBIA from within the City of Toronto: 19% of trips from the City of Toronto are by transit compared to 14% for trips to the DHBIA from all regions (Figure 41). No trips to the DHBIA from the City of Toronto are made by GO, since there is no northbound service in the morning period on the Barrie line.

The most-used transit routes for trips from the City of Toronto to the DHBIA are the University subway, bus 36 (Finch West), the Bloor-Danforth subway, bus 105 (Dufferin North), and bus 84 (Sheppard West) (most trips involve multiple transfers) (Table 6).

### 6.3.2 Trips starting and ending in the DHBIA

Relatively few trips -3% of all trips to the DHBIA (equivalent to 1,069 trips) – originate from within the DHBIA. Interestingly, these internal trips are all by car, either as a driver or passenger. None of these trips are by walking or cycling, and have a variety of purposes (work, shopping, etc.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> For this analysis, TTS zones touching but not completely contained in the 800 m buffer were considered to be in the corridor.

![](_page_47_Figure_0.jpeg)

Figure 40. Distribution of origins for trips to the DHBIA from the City of Toronto, showing proximity to the Finch corridor

![](_page_48_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Figure 41. Primary mode of trips to the DHBIA from the City of Toronto

Route no.	Route name	Transit trips from the City of Toronto to the DHBIA		
		Number	Percent	
	University Subway	1557	37%	
36	Finch West	994	24%	
	Bloor-Danforth Subway	719	17%	
05	Dufferin North	667	16%	
84	Sheppard West	648	15%	
41	Keele	585	14%	
17	Alness	528	13%	
	Yonge Subway	524	12%	
60	Steeles West	436	10%	
08	Downsview	282	7%	
07	Keele North	263	6%	
35	Jane	250	6%	
	Sheppard Subway	180	4%	
07	Bathurst	178	4%	
96	York University Exp	162	4%	
52	Lawrence West	160	4%	
85	Sheppard East	154	4%	
39	Finch East	148	4%	

Table 0. Most neguented transit routes for trips to the Dribik norm the City of foronto	Table	6. Most f	frequented	transit routes	for trips t	to the	DHBIA	from the	City of	Toronto
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### 6.3.3 Trips from York Region

Nearly one quarter (23%) of all trips to the DHBIA (equivalent to 8,071 trips) originate in York Region. Of these trips, the majority originate in Vaughan (Table 7), where they are concentrated near the border of the City of Toronto and the DHBIA.

In terms of proximity to transportation corridors, as shown in Figure 42:

- 42% of trips from York Region (3,366 trips) originate in zones within 800m of Dufferin Street or Bathurst Street.
- 12% of trips from York Region (974 trips) originate in zones within 800m of the GO stations in York Region on the Barrie line (there is some overlap with the area mentioned above).
- Few trips from York Region originate in proximity to the future TYSSE stations in York Region (Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and Pioneer Village).

The modal share of transit is particularly low for trips to the DHBIA from York Region: 1% of trips from York Region are made on GO rail, while another 4% are made by other transit services (whereas the transit modal share is 14% for all trips to the DHBIA) (Figure 43). The most used transit routes for trips from York Region are the GO train, bus no. 107 – Keele North, and bus no. 36 – Finch West (Table 8). It is of note that TTC routes play an important role in helping transit riders from York Region complete their trip.

Vork Pagion Municipality	Trips from municipality to the DHBIA			
fork Region Municipality	Number	Percent		
Vaughan	5090	63%		
Richmond Hill	1162	14%		
Markham	962	12%		
Aurora	273	3%		
Newmarket	218	3%		
Whitchurch-Stouffville	158	2%		
King	94	1%		
East Gwillimbury	76	1%		
Georgina	38	0%		
Total	8071	100%		
Total trips to DHBIA	34572			

#### Table 7. Municipalities of origin of trips to the DHBIA from York Region

![](_page_50_Figure_1.jpeg)

Figure 42. Distribution of origins for trips to the DHBIA from York Region, showing proximity to major transportation corridors

![](_page_51_Figure_1.jpeg)

Figure 43. Primary mode of trips to the DHBIA from York Region

Route	Route name	Transit trips originating in York Region and arriving the DHBIA that use the route		
110.		Number	Percent	
	GO Train - Barrie Line	77	20%	
107	Keele North	75	20%	
36	Finch West	50	13%	
05	Dufferin North	46	12%	
003	Thornhill/York University	44	11%	
60	Steeles West	38	10%	
900	York Blue Viva	28	7%	
17	Alness	26	7%	
60	Bathurst North	26	7%	
088	Bathurst	22	6%	
904	York Orange Viva	20	5%	

Table 8. Most frequented transit routes for trips to the DHBIA that originate in York Region

### 6.3.4 Trips from the GO corridor

In total, approximately 1001, or about 3% of all trips to the DHBIA, originate from zones within 800m of the GO stations on the Barrie line.

# 7. New transit projects

Two new major rapid transit projects and a new GO station are planned for the area in and around the DHBIA (Figure 44). These projects will be formative for the area, and may change travel patterns to and from the DHBIA.

![](_page_52_Figure_3.jpeg)

Figure 44. New rapid transit projects near the DHBIA

# 7.1 Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension

#### Project history

The provincial environmental assessment was approved for the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE) in 2007, and the federal environmental assessment was approved in 2008. Construction began in 2009. The estimated cost of this project, which is jointly funded by the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the City of Toronto and the Regional Municipality of York, is \$3.18 billion.<sup>39</sup>

#### Project concept

Led by the TTC, the TYSSE is an 8.6-km extension of the Yonge-University subway line into the Regional Municipality of York (2.4 km are in the Regional Municipality of York). It extends from **Downsview Station** (which will be renamed to Sheppard West Station), northwestward through York University, to the **Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**. This project involves the addition of a six new subway stations of which two are on the outer border of the DHBIA:

- **Downsview Park Station**, on Sheppard Avenue West adjacent to the railway corridor. This station will connect to the GO Barrie line. No new parking spaces will be added at this station.
- **Finch West Station**, at the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West. This station will connect to the Finch West LRT. Four hundred commuter parking spaces will be added at this station.

Trains on this part of the subway are planned to run every four minutes. The project is under construction and completion is anticipated at the end of 2017.<sup>40</sup>

# 7.2 Finch West LRT

#### Project history

The originally proposed Etobicoke-Finch West Light Rail Transit (EFWLRT) was a 17 km light rail project that linked Finch Station (at Yonge Street) with Humber College. It included connections to the TYSSE at Finch West Station (at Keele Street) and the proposed Jane LRT. It was one of seven network lines identified in the City of Toronto's 2007 Transit City Light Rail Plan and one of three identified as a priority, along with the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and the Sheppard East LRT. In this original proposal, the EFWLRT had a total of 30 stations. Extensions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, "Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension – History and Major Milestones." https://www.ttc.ca/Spadina/About\_the\_Project/History\_and\_Milestones.jsp (accessed July 5, 2016)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, "Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension – Overview." https://www.ttc.ca/Spadina/About\_the\_Project/Overview.jsp (accessed July 5, 2016)

westward to Pearson Airport and eastward to Don Mills Station were also contemplated.<sup>41</sup> The EFWLRT is included in Metrolinx' 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (the *Big Move*); in this plan, it runs from Pearson Airport to Finch Station ("full scope").<sup>42</sup>

In 2009, the Province of Ontario announced that it would fully fund the EFWLRT. A Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) and accompanying environmental project report (ERP) were completed in 2010 for the Humber College – Finch Station segment.<sup>43</sup> However, the provincial government's 2010 budget included less funding for transit than had been previously committed.<sup>44</sup> In the case of the EFWLRT, this ultimately resulted in the 6 km segment from Finch West Station to Finch Station being eliminated, despite the ERP having been completed for this segment. The revised project was renamed Finch West LRT.

#### Project concept and associated redevelopment

The Finch West LRT will thus span from Humber College to Finch West Station (at Keele Street) where it will terminate at the TYSSE. The LRT will be set in a partially exclusive right-of-way in a raised median along Finch Avenue West. Improvements to the public realm will be made along the length of the LRT corridor, including the installation of bike lanes and investments in pedestrian safety and comfort such as sidewalks, landscaping, streetscaping and protected crossing facilities.<sup>45</sup>

Together with the new TYSSE subway station, the Finch West LRT is expected to spur significant office and residential intensification at the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue West, and this area is considered to be of great market interest.<sup>46</sup> A City of Toronto Planning Study (Keele Finch Plus) is currently underway in order to guide these changes.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, this intensification is necessary along the entire LRT corridor in order to maximize the

<sup>47</sup> City of Toronto, "Keele Finch Plus" (2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Toronto Transit Commission, *Report: Request for Approval of the Etobicoke-Finch West LRT Environmental Assessment Study*, December 16,

 $<sup>\</sup>label{eq:2009} 2009. \ http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2009/December_16_2009/Reports/Request_for_approval.pdf$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Metrolinx, *The Big Move – Schedule 1*, (2008). http://www.metrolinx.com/thebigmove/en/interactive/schedule1.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Delcan Corporation, *Etobicoke-Finch West Light Rail Transit – Transit Project Assessment Environmental Project Report*, prepared for the Toronto Transit Commission and the City of Toronto, March 2010

http://www.metrolinx.com/en/projectsandprograms/transitexpansionprojects/finch\_west.aspx

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Jill Mahoney and Kelly Grant, "Toronto-area transit projects put on hold," *Globe and Mail*, March 25, 2010. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/toronto-area-transit-projects-put-on-hold/article4188706/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Delcan Corporation, *Etobicoke-Finch West Light Rail Transit – Transit Project Assessment Environmental Project Report*, prepared for the Toronto Transit Commission and the City of Toronto, March 2010 http://www.metrolinx.com/en/docs/pdf/finch\_west\_ea/table\_of\_contents\_and\_cover.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> N. Barry Lyons Consultants Limited, *Finch West LRT Real Estate Market Conditions Study – Appendix A*, prepared for Metrolinx (2015).

https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/SIPA/Finch%20Sheppard%20Pl%20Approach/Finch%20West%20LRT%20Real%20Estate%20Study%20-%20Final.pdf

http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=57f21159537d2510VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD

investment in rapid transit infrastructure<sup>48</sup> and meet the province's transit-supportive density guidelines.<sup>49</sup>

Construction of the LRT is set to begin in 2017, and completion is anticipated in 2021.50

#### Justification for rapid transit

Bus 36 (Finch West) currently operates in mixed traffic. As mentioned in the ERP, congestion according to City of Toronto standards has been documented along the length of the Finch corridor, including in the DHBIA at Dufferin Street, Alness Street, and Keele Street. This congestion, paired with the high frequency of buses required to accommodate demand, leads to bus bunching and overcrowding, despite operational measures that have been implemented including signal priority and articulated buses. It is of note that bus 199 (Finch Rocket) was introduced in March 2016, providing an express service from York University Commons, along Finch Avenue from Dufferin Street to Yonge Street and continuing on to Scarborough. Ridership numbers for this route are not yet available but it presumably diverts some riders from bus 36.

Ridership through the Finch corridor is projected to increase with the installation of an LRT. The ERP, completed in 2010, projected peak hourly ridership levels on the LRT of 2,300-2,800 passengers in the peak direction in 2031<sup>51</sup> (the current peak hourly ridership is 950 passengers on bus 36). As shown in Figure 45 taken from the ERP, this level of travel demand is considered to correspond to bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit (LRT) technologies. Thus, projected demand, along with the other factors mentioned above, justified rapid transit on Finch Avenue in order to safely, reliably and efficiently meet current and future demand in the corridor.

<sup>49</sup> Ontario Ministry of Transportation, *Transit-Supportive Guidelines* (2012). http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/transit/pdfs/transit-supportive-guidelines.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> PlanningAlliance & N. Barry Lyons Consultants Limited, *Setting the Stage: Encouraging Transit Supportive Places on the Finch West LRT Corridor,* prepared for Metrolinx (2015).

https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/SIPA/Finch%20Sheppard%20Pl%20Approach/Finch%20West%20LRT%20Study\_Final.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Tess Kalinowski, "Finch LRT to be complete in 2021, before Sheppard breaks ground," *Toronto Star*, April 27, 2015. https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/04/27/finch-lrt-to-be-complete-in-2022-before-sheppard-breaks-ground.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Delcan Corporation, *Etobicoke-Finch West Light Rail Transit – Transit Project Assessment Environmental Project Report*, prepared for the Toronto Transit Commission and the City of Toronto, March 2010 http://www.metrolinx.com/en/docs/pdf/finch\_west\_ea/table\_of\_contents\_and\_cover.pdf (accessed August 26, 2016)

![](_page_56_Figure_1.jpeg)

Figure 45. Projected Finch West LRT travel demand in 2031 with accepted ranges for transit technologies (source: Finch West LRT Environmental Project Report)

LRT was ultimately selected over BRT in the ERP for the following reasons<sup>52</sup>:

- LRT results in greater emissions reductions than BRT.
- The existing right-of-way does not allow for the by-pass lane considered necessary for implementing a high-capacity BRT along Finch Avenue.
- LRT is generally cheaper to maintain than BRT above a peak hourly demand of 2,000 passengers.
- LRT outperforms BRT in vehicle lifespan.
- Some studies show that LRT has a higher potential to bring economic investment and is more attractive to riders, but insufficient data is available to support this being a critical difference.

It is notable that the environmental assessment conducted for the Hurontario/Main Street rapid transit project<sup>53</sup> selected an LRT option from among four options (LRT, LRT/BRT split, BRT and a "do nothing" option) based on similar factors. In the modelling completed for this study, LRT was also considered capable of attracting more riders than BRT – about 17% on average.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Delcan Corporation, *Etobicoke-Finch West Light Rail Transit – Transit Project Assessment Environmental Project Report*, prepared for the Toronto Transit Commission and the City of Toronto, March 2010

http://www.metrolinx.com/en/docs/pdf/finch\_west\_ea/table\_of\_contents\_and\_cover.pdf (accessed August 26, 2016) <sup>53</sup> MMM Group, *Hurontario/Main Street Corridor Master Plan*, prepared for the City of Brampton and the City of

Mississauga (2010).

http://www7.mississauga.ca/documents/TW/HurontarioLRT/Hurontario\_Master\_Plan\_Final\_LowRes.pdf

#### Updated ridership projections

In 2013, ridership projections for the Finch West LRT were updated, taking into account new information about the future transit network as well as the reduced project length. The revised projected peak hourly ridership levels in the peak direction in 2031<sup>54</sup> are:

- LRT committed scope (Humber College Finch West Station for which construction will begin next year): 2,200 passengers
- LRT full scope (Pearson Airport Finch Station): 2,500 passengers excluding airport arrivals

In other words, according to these projections, about 12% (300/2,500) of the 2031 peak ridership anticipated on a "full scope LRT," would be lost under the committed scope LRT.

Other highlights of the updated 2031 projections include:

- In both the full scope and committed scope scenarios, the highest passenger activity in the morning is expected to occur on the eastbound route at Finch West Station, where the LRT connects to the subway.
- For the committed scope scenario, it is predicted that of the approximately 2,200 passengers travelling eastbound on the LRT during the peak hour, about three quarters will transfer to the subway, while about one-fifth will transfer to a bus. In other words, many eastbound passengers who currently transfer to the subway at Finch Station will now enter at Finch West Station.
- Significant volumes of passengers are expected to arrive at Finch West Station by bus (about 1,200 during the peak hour from all directions), with just over half boarding the subway and one-third boarding the westbound Finch West LRT.

# 7.3 New GO station and GO RER

Simultaneously, Metrolinx is planning to open a new station along the Barrie GO line. Located at the southern extremity of the DHBIA on Sheppard Avenue West, the new Downsview Park station will enable transfers between the GO train and the new subway extension. No additional parking spaces are planned at this GO station,<sup>55</sup> which is expected to be opened in 2016.<sup>56</sup> For the time being, service levels will be the same as on the current GO Barrie line; however, increased service levels are planned by 2024 through Metrolinx's GO RER program. Electric, 15-minute

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Chris Fong, Metrolinx, personal communication, September 15, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Metrolinx, GO Transit Rail Parking and Station Access Plan (2013).

http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/projectevaluation/studies/GO\_Transit\_Rail\_Parking\_and\_Station\_Acce ss\_Plan\_EN.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Metrolinx, 2015-2020 Metrolinx Five-Year Strategy (2014).

http://www.metrolinx.com/en/aboutus/publications/Metrolinx\_Five\_Year\_Strategy\_2015-2020\_EN.pdf

two-way daytime service is planned on part of the line which would provide a direct service between Union Station and the DHBIA throughout the day.<sup>57</sup>

Metrolinx is studying the possibility of closing York University station once Downsview Park station is in operation but no decision has been made at this time.<sup>58</sup>

## 7.4 New TTC bus services

The TTC has been working to revise local and regional bus routes in response to the TYSSE and, ultimately, the Finch West LRT. External consultation will be carried out in the fall, with a view to producing a refined strategy in December 2016 for Board approval in the spring of 2017.

Though no final bus re-routing strategy is currently available, the TTC has indicated that the main elements of the revised system are likely to be the following:

- Bus services will connect all major rapid transit stations.
- Service levels will be comparable in the revised system.
- Bus 196 (York University Rocket) will be eliminated because the TYSSE will serve this trip.
- Bus 199 (Finch Rocket) will be maintained and will continue to operate in the busway east of Keele Street.
- Other local routes may be adjusted.<sup>59</sup>

With bus 196 being eliminated and bus 199 bus being maintained, the dedicated bus lanes on Dufferin Street between the York University busway and Finch Avenue will be maintained, while they will return to regular traffic lanes south of Finch Avenue.<sup>60</sup> There may be an opportunity to use the reserved lane north of Finch Avenue for other purposes.

## 7.5 New YRT services

YRT has also been preparing a strategy to modify its services in response to the new rapid transit projects. In its 2015 annual service plan, it presents the Spadina Subway Transit Strategy (SSTS)<sup>61</sup> which includes the following bus network changes:

• Viva Orange would no longer run south of Steeles Avenue to Downsview Station.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Metrolinx, *Discussion Paper for the Next Regional Transportation Plan* (2016). http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/rtp/RTP\_Discussion\_Paper\_EN.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Elana Horowitz, Metrolinx, personal communication, June 10, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Eric Chu, Toronto Transit Commission, personal communication, June 29, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Eric Chu, Toronto Transit Commission, personal communication, August 31, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> York Region Transit, 2015 Annual Service Plan – 7. Spadina Subway Transit Strategy (2015). http://www.yorkregiontransit.com/en/aboutus/resources/2015\_ASP/07-2015-ASP-

Spadina\_Subway\_Transit\_Strategy.pdf

• YRT will assume operation of routes currently contracted to the TTC running north-south across Steeles Avenue. Most of these routes will be restructured to service the new Pioneer Village Station.

Some elements of the revised network plan have yet to be determined.<sup>62</sup> In addition, current discussions about fare integration on a regional scale will potentially impact the cost of transit trips between York Region and the City of Toronto.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Adrian Kawun, York Region Transit, personal communication, June 29, 2016.

# 8. New cycling facilities

As shown in Figure 46, the recently approved City of Toronto ten-year Cycling Network Plan identifies approximately 8 km of additional linear bike facilities in the DHBIA over the next ten years.<sup>63</sup> The proposed elements are:

- A new boulevard trail along Dufferin Street between Steeles Avenue and Finch Avenue. This trail will connect to the bike lane on Dufferin Street in York Region and facilitate north-south travel between the neighbourhoods with the most cycling origins and the northeast quadrant of the DHBIA, where about half of all trips end. In addition, it will serve many businesses along Dufferin Street. It is not clear whether the trail will be on the east or west side of the street and the plan does not currently consider extending the trail south to Downsview Station.
- The completion of the bike lane along Finch Avenue across the entire DHBIA, connecting to the future Finch West Station and continuing westward along the Finch West LRT corridor (bike lanes are planned as part of the LRT project). It is not clear whether this lane will be protected from vehicle traffic by a physical barrier.
- The addition of bike lanes on inner roads in the northwest and southeast quadrants: Canarctic Drive, The Pond Road, Alness Street (south of the busway only), Chesswood Drive and Steeprock Drive. It is not clear whether these lanes will be protected from vehicle traffic by a physical barrier.
- Notably, the Cycling Network Plan does not propose a bike lane along Alness Street north of the busway and does not provide for connections to Downsview Station, York University GO Station or the future Downsview Park GO/subway station.

The plan also proposes new cycling connections to the surrounding area, including, importantly, connections across Highway 401 via Wilmington Avenue and Bathurst Street. These southward connections may unlock the potential for individuals to travel to the DHBIA by bike from south of the 401. Major corridor studies for Jane Street and Yonge Street are also part of the plan.

City staff will be consulting with local area councillors, residents and stakeholder groups during the design phase of this planned infrastructure.<sup>64</sup>

In addition, a new connection on Keele Street between Finch Avenue and the multi-use trail along the busway is planned as part of the TYSSE station planning around Finch West Station (not pictured in the Figure below).

<sup>64</sup> City of Toronto, "Cycling Network Plan Draft Map."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> City of Toronto (2016). "Cycling Network Ten Year Plan." Accessed August 30, 2016 at http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=981f88b7b32e9410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD.

http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=63cd42adae062510VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgne xtchannel=981f88b7b32e9410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD

![](_page_61_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_61_Figure_2.jpeg)

# 9. Transportation demand management programs

Smart Commute is a transportation demand management<sup>65</sup> program run by Metrolinx. From 2004 to 2007, the Smart Commute Initiative operated as a partnership of the towns, cities and regions of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, with partial funding from Transport Canada and private sector partners. In 2008, Smart Commute became a program of Metrolinx, with the support of local municipalities.<sup>66</sup>

Through its district representatives, Smart Commute offers services to employers to assess employee commute behaviour and develop action plans and tools to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, including carpool ride-matching programs, discounted transit passes, flexible work arrangements and walking and cycling programs, depending on the needs and local context.

The DHBIA is located in the North Toronto, Vaughan Smart Commute district. York University is one of the most active Smart Commute members in the area, with over 60,000 commuters. The York University GO shuttle, operated by York University, is part of the program. Smart Commute also has some agreements for work with new development near the intersection of Steeles Avenue and Keele Street in Vaughan.

Currently, there are no Smart Commute programs in the DHBIA. However, representatives have identified the DHBIA and surrounding area as an important sector for future work, and have indicated their openness to meeting with the BIA to explore options.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> **Transportation demand management** is a set of strategies, policies or initiatives to reduce or redistribute travel demand, especially single-occupancy vehicle travel. TDM programs often involve partnerships with employers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Smart Commute, a program of Metrolinx, "What is Smart Commute?" http://smartcommute.ca/about-us/what-is-smart-commute/ (accessed July 5, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Lauren Bates, Smart Commute, personal communication, June 15, 2016.

# 10. Goods movement study

The City of Toronto, in partnership with Metrolinx, will be carrying out a Goods Movement Study in the Finch West LRT corridor that is projected to begin in late 2016. The impetus for this study emerged in the context of the proposed Finch West LRT and resulting questions and concerns regarding its potential impact on goods movement in the corridor.

The primary focus area of the study will be the LRT corridor along Finch Avenue, which stops at the western border of the DHBIA. However, the secondary focus area of the study will be broader and includes the DHBIA in its entirety.

The study will be focused on vehicular traffic to and around the affected BIAs. It is expected to take 18 months. A stakeholder advisory group (SAG) will be established.

# Appendix A. SWOT analysis

The following table summarises the preliminary SWOT analysis for existing transit and cycling infrastructure in the DHBIA.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Location	Location
Located in proximity to Downsview Airport, several 400 series highways, and York University	Road network is discontinuous throughout the DHBIA due to barriers posed by Finch Hydro Corridor and CN Railway
Located in a strategic east-west corridor that connects	DHBIA is a large area
employment areas in Scarborough	These factors affect efficiency of transportation by car,
Transit	Transit
Subway and GO service reach the DHBIA	Subway station is at the periphery of the DHBIA: additional
York University Busway crosses the DHBIA	transfers are generally required to access final destinations
York University Bus Terminal at York University Commons in proximity to the DHBIA	Access to the GO station is limited despite location within the DHBIA
Multiple local bus routes service the inner streets of the DHBIA and connect to Downsview Station and/or York	GO Train service is a one-direction, peak service only with no service on weekends
University Commons Bus no. 199 – Finch Rocket, introduced in March 2016,	Bus "bunching" and overcrowding documented on highly- trafficked no. 36 – Finch West route
provides an express service in the east-west direction connecting to Finch Station	No. 36 – Finch West ranked very poorly for safety due to overcrowding
Transit priority signals are located at most intersections along Finch Avenue	Travel by transit to the DHBIA generally requires several transfers
Articulated buses on route no. 36 – Finch West carry greater numbers of passengers and allow faster boarding than regular buses	Lack of an integrated or co-fare between the Regional Municipality of York and the City of Toronto makes transit trips across Steeles Ave. disproportionately expensive
Cycling	Cycling
Some cycling facilities are present	Cycling facilities not connected within the DHBIA or to
An off-road multi-use pathway along the York University	subway/GO stations
Busway provides a fast, safe, east-west route through the DHBIA	Surrounding cycling network is not well developed;
Walking	limited
Sidewalks and well-marked crosswalks are present on major	Incomplete bike lane along Finch Avenue
arterial roads	Bike sharrows conflict with parked cars and trucks
Bus shelters and benches are present on major arterial roads	Lack of bike parking facilities

Recent tree-planting initiative has improved pedestrian comfort	Cohabitation between large trucks and cyclists presents a challenge <b>Walking</b> Lack of sidewalks on some inner roads Lack of bus shelters and benches at some locations on inner roads Heat island effect diminishes pedestrian comfort Lack of formal pedestrian rest areas Cohabitation between large trucks and pedestrians presents a challenge
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul> <li>Location</li> <li>Projected growth across Greater Golden Horseshoe presents opportunity for increased business and employment in DHBIA</li> <li>Office and residential intensification is anticipated at the intersection of Keele Street and Finch Avenue as a result of new transit projects</li> <li>Transit</li> <li>Arrival of University subway at Finch West Station will provide a more direct connection for transit riders coming from the south</li> <li>Arrival of Finch West LRT at Finch West Station will provide a faster service for transit riders coming from the west</li> <li>Metrolinx' GO RER initiative may involve the addition of stations and increased service on the GO Barrie line</li> <li>The University subway line and the Barrie GO line can both accommodate increased ridership</li> <li>Discussions about fare integration at the regional level could benefit transit riders arriving to the DHBIA from outside of the City of Toronto</li> <li>Opportunity to re-think access to the GO train with the arrival of Downsview Park GO Station</li> <li>Opportunity to re-think local bus routes in order to provide more direct connections for trips to and within the DHBIA</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Transit</li> <li>New transit projects could fail to improve service for employees, customers and clients of the DHBIA</li> <li>Discontinuation of Finch West LRT at Keele Street could provide less optimal service along the Finch Corridor</li> <li>Uncertainty surrounding future of York University GO Station</li> <li>Lack of solution to issue of fare integration for riders from outside of the DHBIA could deter potential transit riders from these areas</li> <li>Cycling</li> <li>Conflicts between automobiles, trucks and cyclists contribute to a real or perceived lack of safety for cyclists, deterring users</li> <li>Walking</li> <li>Conflicts between automobiles, trucks and pedestrians contribute to a real or perceived lack of safety, deterring users</li> </ul>
The importance of the Finch Corridor in connecting multiple nodes, combined with a current high transit ridership along Finch, help build a strong case for rapid surface transit along this corridor	

The environmental project report (ERP) for the Etobicoke-Finch LRT included the segment between Keele Street and Yonge Street/Finch Station

Potential work to improve transit connections at Pearson Airport can have a positive influence on the DHBIA

#### Cycling

New higher-order transit stations can catalyse planning of cycling connections and infrastructure

New, approved City of Toronto Cycling Network Plan identifies some cycling investments in and near the DHBIA

#### Walking

Eventual densification/redevelopment in the zone surrounding Finch West Station could result in a more human-scale environment in this area

New multi-modal stations (Finch West Station, Downsview Park Station) can enable planning of pedestrian connections and infrastructure

#### **Transportation Demand Management**

Strong potential for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs in BIA and interest expressed by Smart Commute to explore options

# Appendix B. Results of the Employer Survey on transportation

# **B.1** Introduction

In June 2016, the Duke Heights BIA (DHBIA) carried out a survey of its employers on questions related to transportation, mainly focusing on employee's use of and access to transit and active transportation.

From June 8 –June 21, 381 businesses were invited to complete the survey, and 326 responded. It should be noted that the businesses that were contacted and indicated that they had "transportation" issues in general on a previous (more general) survey also conducted by the DHBIA.

The results of this survey will inform the transit and cycling assessment that is currently underway.

# B.2 Profile of the respondents

- The businesses surveyed are located across the DHBIA, with a concentration along Finch St. and in the NE and SW quadrants, where business density is higher (Table 9).
- The businesses illustrate the range of activity in the DHBIA; they include retail, restaurant, office, manufacturing, personal services (i.e. dentist offices) as well as several community and cultural centres.
- Most businesses (84%) have regular daytime hours, while 11% involve shift work.

Location	Number of Respondents
Dufferin	36
Finch	68
Keele	30
Sheppard	5
Steeles	21
Inner streets, NE quadrant	46

#### Table 9. Geographical distribution of respondents

Inner streets, SW quadrant	40
Inner streets, NW quadrant	10
Inner streets, SE quadrant	27
Address unknown	43
Total	326

# B.3 Employee Transportation Habits

For all of the questions where "I don't know" was a potential response, these responses were included in the percentages calculated and reported here.

#### B.3.1.1 Parking

- Most businesses (71%) have 0-20 parking spaces, while 18% have 20-50 parking spaces, and 7% have more than 50 (10% do not know).
- At the time when it is most full on an average day, 28% of employers estimate that their parking lot us 100% full, while 40% estimate that their lot is 70-90% full.
- 61% of employers consider that parking is not an issue, while 36% consider that it is (3% do not know). The share of employers who have parking issues is highest in the south west quadrant, on Dufferin and on Keele, while it is lowest on Sheppard and Steeles (Figure 47).

![](_page_68_Figure_8.jpeg)

Figure 47. Share of employers that consider parking to be an issue

#### B.3.1.2 Transit

- 66% of employers believe that they have employees that come to work on transit, 33% do not, and 2% do not know.
- Many of the employers that estimated high transit ridership among their employees are retail and restaurant services located along Dufferin, Finch and Keele; automative businesses feature prominently among those employers who estimated no transit ridership.
- 35% of employers consider that transit service to their location is adequate or excellent; fully 44% are unaware of the transit service level (Figure 48).
- 39% of employers consider that local bus services are aligned with the hours of arrival/departure of their employees; again, 44% were unable to say.
- 48% of employers believe that if better transit was available, more of their employees would use it.

![](_page_69_Figure_7.jpeg)

Figure 48. Level of transit service in the area as identified by employers

#### B.3.1.3 Cycling

- Most (80%) of employers do not believe that any of their employees come to work by bike, 16% do, and 4% do not know.
- Employers with employees that bike to work do not seem to be concentrated in one particular area of the DHBIA.
- Two cultural centres estimate having the highest bike ridership levels.

#### B.3.1.4 Walking

• Most (82%) of employers do not believe that any of their employees come to work on foot, 13% do, and 5% do not know.

- Employers with employees that walk to work do not seem to be concentrated in one particular area of the DHBIA.
- Two cultural centres and some restaurants estimate having the highest bike ridership levels.

#### B.3.1.5 Employer programs (Transportation Demand Management)

- 11% of employers say they have programs in place to support their employees in using modes of transportation other than single-occupancy vehicles to come to work.
- Of these, the vast majority identified that carpooling occurs or is encouraged. Three employers mentioned transit pass subsidies, and one mentioned that they encourage the use of Uber.

## B.4 Ideas for Improvement

In an open question, employers identified many specific ideas for improving transit services and cycling/walking infrastructure for their company and their employees. The ideas fell into the main categories displayed in Figure 49. A full list of the comments is available in the raw results.

![](_page_70_Figure_8.jpeg)

![](_page_70_Figure_9.jpeg)

![](_page_71_Picture_0.jpeg)

# DUKE Heights BIA Transit and Cycling Assessment

Key findings and recommendations

FINAL REPORT

September 30, 2016
### About the Pembina Institute

The Pembina Institute is a national non-partisan think tank that advocates for strong, effective policies to support Canada's clean energy transition. We employ multi-faceted and highly collaborative approaches to change. Producing credible, evidence-based research and analysis, we consult directly with organizations to design and implement clean energy solutions, and convene diverse sets of stakeholders to identify and move toward common solutions.

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# Disclaimer

This document is an independent report prepared exclusively as information for the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s).

The information, statements, statistics and commentary (together the 'information') contained in this report have been prepared by the Pembina Institute from publicly available material and from discussions held with stakeholders.

The Pembina Institute have based this report on information received or obtained, on the basis that such information is accurate and, where it is represented to The Pembina Institute as such, complete.

# Open data

This document contains public sector information made available under the Regional Municipality of York's Open Data License as well as information licensed under the Open Government License – Toronto.

This document also contains data from the *Transportation Tomorrow Survey*, 2011 published by the Data Management Group at the University of Toronto.

# DUKE Heights BIA Transit and Cycling Assessment Key findings and recommendations

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# 1. About this report

This report presents the key findings and recommendations that have emerged from the transit and cycling assessment for which the Pembina Institute was retained by the DUKE Heights BIA in May 2016. It draws on the Existing Conditions and Analysis Report also submitted as part of the assessment.

# 2. Summary

With over 30,000 employees and spanning over 720 hectares, the DUKE Heights Business Improvement Area (DHBIA) is an important employment hub within the City of Toronto and the Greater Toronto Region, providing 2.2% of jobs across the city. The approximately 2,500 businesses within the DHBIA include a wide diversity of office, manufacturing and retail/service industries as well as some heavy industrial operations.

Located near the northern periphery of the City of Toronto, the DHBIA is currently not wellserved by higher-order transit. Furthermore, its built form (large, industrial/commercial sites), the high volume of trucks and the relative lack of active transportation infrastructure have made walking and cycling less viable options for traveling to and within the DHBIA.

Several new projects and initiatives present a unique opportunity to rethink transit and active transportation services and infrastructure within the DHBIA and the surrounding areas. Three new major rapid transit projects are planned or under construction which will connect to the periphery of the DHBIA: the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE), the Finch West LRT, and a new station on the Barrie GO line. Increases in service frequency and an addition of two-way service on the GO line are also planned. Some local buses will be re-routed in response to these new services. In addition, the City of Toronto has recently approved a new ten-year Cycling Network Plan, and the DHBIA has been working with the City and other partners to undertake public realm improvements, particularly surrounding the future rapid transit stations.

Taken together, these new investments could provide more and better options for travelling to and through the DHBIA and reducing dependence on cars to do so, which can increase the attractiveness of the DHBIA as a place to work and do business. This transit and cycling assessment has provided insight into existing and future infrastructure, services and commute patterns in order to support the DHBIA in working with its partners to guide these changes.

For trips from the City of Toronto, transit improvements should focus on travel in the east-west corridor, particularly to the immediate east and west of the DHBIA, where origins are concentrated. Ensuring an efficient integration of the Finch West LRT within this corridor, and potentially expanding rapid transit along Finch Avenue to Yonge Street, are key considerations.

For trips from York Region, transit improvements should focus on travel in the north-south corridors along Keele, Dufferin and Bathurst Streets. Again, origins are concentrated in relative proximity to the DHBIA, in this case in the Municipality of Vaughan. Establishing a co-fare between York Region Transit and the City of Toronto will be a key component of increasing transit use from York Region.

Currently, the GO train serving the DHBIA is underused. Further study of the conditions required to achieve higher GO ridership to the existing station are required, including taking into

consideration the potential impact on ridership if improved bus, cycling and walking connections to the station are provided.

The re-routing of local bus routes, as well as the prioritization of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, must take into account the concentration of destinations in the northeast quadrant of the DHBIA. In addition, there is a particular need to improve cycling and walking connections in the east-west direction across the CN rail corridor and in the north-south direction across the busway, as well as to provide infrastructure that improves cyclist and pedestrian safety and comfort in general. Moreover, to truly increase the cycling modal share, connections outside of the DHBIA to regional networks must be established.

The DHBIA is an excellent candidate for a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program such as Metrolinx's Smart Commute initiative. TDM is a set of strategies, policies or initiatives, often involving partnerships with employers, to reduce or redistribute travel demand – especially single-occupancy vehicle travel. Currently, there is no Smart Commute program in the DHBIA but there is great potential to explore and implement strategies such as carpool ride-matching programs, discounted transit passes and walking and cycling programs.

The time is right for the DHBIA to actively engage with transit agencies and government on transit and cycling. Beyond the new rapid transit projects in the area, other opportunities to participate in change include the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan review, the MTO Greater Golden Horseshoe Multimodal Transportation Plan, the City of Toronto's review of transportation policies in its Official Plan (through the *Feeling Congested*? Initiative), the Goods Movement Study for the Finch West LRT Corridor and the implementation of the ten-year Cycling Network Plan. The recommendations in this report outline specific opportunities and, based on the transit and cycling assessment, provide initial direction on priorities and solutions.

# 3. Portrait of trips to the DHBIA<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1 Key findings

- By all modes of transportation and for all purposes, approximately 34,500 people travel to the DHBIA on a typical weekday.
- 61% of all trips to the DHBIA are made for work purposes, while some 14% of trips are for shopping. Another 17% are made for "other" purposes, which includes personal business and entertainment trips.
- A large majority of trips to the DHBIA are by car: 72% as a driver and another 13% as a passenger, for a total of 85% of trips by car. Most of the remainder (14%) of trips are by transit, while less than 1% are by cycling and walking (Figure 1).
- 64% of all trips to the DHBIA originate in the City of Toronto and 23% originate in York Region. More specifically, nearly half of all trips originate in sub-districts that surround or contain the DHBIA.
- The northeast quadrant of the DHBIA is the destination of 43% of all trips to the DHBIA (incidentally, this quadrant is the farthest from future rapid transit stations), while the southeast quadrant is the destination for 28% of all trips.
- The University subway is used in 33% of transit trips to the DHBIA, while the bus 36 (Finch West) is used in 23% (Figure 2).
- A disproportionately high number of transit trips to the DHBIA involve multiple transfers, compared to the region-wide average.
- The TYSSE is under construction and completion is anticipated at the end of 2017.
- Construction is set to begin on the Finch West LRT in 2017, and completion is anticipated in 2021.
- In the employer survey on transportation issues, 11% of employers indicated that some employees have shift work. However, the night bus routes on arterial roads through and around the DHBIA do have relatively high levels of ridership. Most of the bus routes on local roads do not operate at night.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Information on travel behavior in this report is sourced from the *Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) 2011* (the most recent available survey year). The TTS is a travel survey conducted by telephone in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) once every five years to provide a snapshot of transportation behaviour on a typical day. There is a margin of error associated with the data, especially where trip numbers are low and where neighbourhoods have lower-income and/or transient populations, as is the case of some neighbourhoods near the DHBIA.



#### Figure 1. Primary mode of trips to the DHBIA



#### Figure 2. Most common transit routes used by riders coming into the DHBIA

We recommend:

• Without overlooking the importance of accessibility to all areas of the DHBIA, that particular efforts be made to maintain and improve transit services and active transportation infrastructure to and within the northeast quadrant, where destinations are concentrated and where new rapid transit projects will not provide direct service.

# Improving transit accessibility and service for trips from the City of Toronto

The Finch Corridor is addressed in the following section.

## 4.1 Key findings

- The City of Toronto is the source of more than half (64%) of trips to the DHBIA.
- Origins are concentrated in north Toronto, particularly in the residential areas to the immediate east and west of the DHBIA, making east-west travel across north Toronto important for the DHBIA (Figure 3).
- The transit modal share for trips from the City of Toronto to the DHBIA is relatively high, at 19%. The subway plays a key role in these trips, as do several major bus lines: Finch West, Dufferin North, Sheppard West, Keele, Alness and Steeles.
- Relatively few trips 3% of all trips to the DHBIA originate from within the DHBIA. This is unsurprising since there is a low residential population.
- Among the bus routes travelling principally on local roads in the DHBIA, the most highly trafficked for trips to the DHBIA is bus 117 (Alness), which passes through the northeast quadrant. About 638 riders per day use this route to get to their destination in the DHBIA.

Future plans:

• The TTC has been working to revise local and regional bus routes in response to the TYSSE, with a view to producing a refined strategy in December 2016 following stakeholder consultation. Though no final re-routing strategy is currently available, the TTC has indicated that revised bus services will connect all major rapid transit stations and that service levels will be comparable or improved in the revised system.





In the short term (0-2 years), we recommend:

- That the DHBIA work with the TTC and the City of Toronto to ensure that the rerouting of buses in response to the TYSSE is based on the following principles:
  - $\circ$   $\;$  Service levels to all areas of the DHBIA are maintained or improved,
  - $\circ$  Efficient connections to new and existing rapid transit stations are provided,
  - Re-routing takes into account the concentration of destinations in the northeast quadrant of the DHBIA,
  - o Bus 117 (Alness) is maintained through the northeast quadrant,
  - A route equivalent to bus 105 (Dufferin North) is maintained for TTC customers between Downsview Station and Steeles Avenue,
  - Opportunities to serve Chesswood Drive with a local bus route are studied,
  - The Dufferin Street stop on bus 199 (Finch Rocket) is maintained,
  - Night/off-peak services are maintained or improved.

In the medium term (2-5 years), we recommend:

• That the DHBIA host focus groups with employees and employers in 2018 on commuting needs and experiences and to test satisfaction with the TYSSE and rerouted buses. We recommend that the DHBIA share the results of the focus group with transit and government agencies.

# Improving transit accessibility and services along the Finch Corridor

## 5.1 Key findings

- One quarter (25%) of all trips to the DHBIA originate from zones within 800m of Finch Avenue in the City of Toronto (Figure 3).<sup>2</sup>
- Travel through the DHBIA must be considered in the context of its location along the wider Finch corridor that connects several important economic and transportation hubs: Pearson Airport, Emery Village BIA, DHBIA, Finch Station and North York Centre, several employment areas in northern Scarborough as well as seven Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.
- Bus 36 (Finch West) is the fourth most highly-trafficked surface route in the City of Toronto, at 43,952 riders per day. The maximum hourly load is 950 passengers, which occurs on the eastbound bus during the morning rush hour. Passenger activity along the route is spread out: large volumes of passengers get on and off at many locations along Finch Avenue. Bus bunching, overcrowding and safety issues have been identified as issues on this route.
- The TTC has implemented service improvements on bus 36 (Finch West), including signal priority and low-floor articulated buses. Bus 199 (Finch Rocket), introduced in March 2016, provides an express service between the York University Commons and Finch Station, passing through the DHBIA on the busway and stopping at at Murray Ross Parkway, Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street.

#### Future plans:

 Initial plans for an LRT along Finch Avenue involved a 17 km line between Humber College and Finch Station (on the Yonge subway line), for which the Province of Ontario initially committed funding and an environmental project report (ERP) was completed. The ERP found light rail transit (LRT) to be the most appropriate technology to meet current and future demand along the corridor based on environmental, quality of life and economic factors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For this analysis, TTS zones touching but not completely contained in the 800 m buffer were considered to be in the corridor.

- However, funding was ultimately only provided for the 11 km segment from Humber College to Finch West Station (at Keele Street on the new University subway extension, or TYSSE). Construction will begin on this modified project, the Finch West LRT, in 2017 and completion is anticipated in 2021.
- The most up-to-date 2031 projections for the Finch West LRT anticipate peak hourly ridership levels in the peak direction of 2,200 passengers for the committed scope (Humber College Finch West Station). For a full scope LRT (Pearson Airport Finch Station), 2,500 passengers would be anticipated during this same period.
- In both the full scope and committed scope scenarios, the highest passenger activity in the morning is expected to occur on the eastbound route at Finch West Station, where the LRT connects to the subway.
- For the committed scope scenario, it is predicted that of the approximately 2,200 passengers travelling eastbound on the LRT during the peak hour, about three quarters will transfer to the subway, while about one-fifth will transfer to a bus. In other words, many eastbound passengers who currently transfer to the subway at Finch Station will now enter at Finch West Station.
- Significant volumes of passengers are expected to arrive at Finch West Station by bus (about 1,200 during the peak hour from all directions), with just over half boarding the subway and one-third boarding the westbound Finch West LRT.
- Based on the Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS), of the trips to the DHBIA originating in zones within 800m of Finch Avenue (58%) come from the east and will not be served by the LRT for trips to the DHBIA.
- Planning initiatives are underway to intensify appropriate areas along the LRT corridor in order to maximize the investment in rapid transit infrastructure and meet the Province's transit-supportive density guidelines.

#### **Considerations:**

When considering the appropriate transit service to provide from Finch West Station to Finch Station in the immediate and long term, the following elements should be considered:

- The ability to serve demand on Finch Avenue east of Keele Street. Currently, the load profile is relatively distributed across the bus 36 (Finch West) route, so there will presumably continue to be high demand east of Keele Street. As documented previously, 58% of trips that arrive at the DHBIA from within the Finch Corridor come from the east and will not be served by the Finch West LRT.
- The importance of achieving broader city-building objectives by facilitating east-west movement in northern Toronto and connecting important employment, transportation and institutional hubs and neighbourhood improvement areas across this corridor.
- The potential for densification, redevelopment and public realm improvements along the corridor in order to achieve the Province's transit-supportive density targets. The public realm study led by the DHBIA for Finch Avenue from Keele Street to Dufferin Street is a step in this direction.
- Close collaboration with surrounding businesses to manage concerns about the impact of modified transit services on goods movement and economic activity through the corridor.

#### We recommend:

- That the DHBIA communicate the importance of providing efficient and comfortable transit services commensurate with current and future demand along the full Finch corridor, including from Finch West Station to Finch Station and, ultimately, to Pearson Airport. This can contribute to the achievement of broader city-building objectives by facilitating east-west movement in northern Toronto, connecting important employment, transportation and institutional hubs and neighbourhood improvement areas.
- That the DHBIA pursue its work to render its portion of Finch Avenue a more transit-supportive corridor, including through public realm improvements and intensification of land use.
- That the DHBIA participate in the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) put in place for the Finch West Goods Movement Study, projected to begin in late 2016.

# 6. Improving transit accessibility and services from York Region

## 6.1 Key findings

- York Region is the source of 23% of all trips to the DHBIA.
- Very few trips from York Region to the DHBIA are made by transit (5% versus 14% for all trips to the DHBIA). About 1% of trips are made by GO transit and the remainder by other transit.
- Vaughan is the most common origin within York Region, at 63% of trips from York Region, or 15% of all trips to the DHBIA.
- There is a concentration of origins in the southeast corner of Vaughan, in proximity to the DHBIA, as well as along north-south arterial roads such as Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street (Figure 4). 42% of trips from York Region (3,366 trips) originate in zones within 800m of Dufferin Street or Bathurst Street.
- Few trips to the DHBIA from York Region originate in areas in proximity to the future TYSSE subway stations (Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and Pioneer Village), highlighting the need to connect the surrounding areas to these new stations by bus.
- There is no co-fare between the TTC and YRT, so riders crossing Steeles Avenue must pay two fares for their trip, making transit trips between York Region and the City of Toronto disproportionately expensive. A co-fare has been established between between municipal transit systems in the 905 (with the exception of Milton Transit).
- Given the relative proximity and the clustering of origins along key corridors, York Region residents could be well-served by transit to the DHBIA. Unlocking this potential could greatly increase transit ridership to the DHBIA overall.

Future plans:

• York Region Transit has been preparing a strategy to modify its services in response to the new rapid transit projects. Viva Orange will no longer run south of Steeles Avenue to Downsview Station and YRT will assume operation of routes currently contracted to the TTC running north-south across Steeles Avenue. Most of these routes will be restructured to service the new Pioneer Village Station. Some elements of the revised network plan have yet to be determined.



Figure 4. Distribution of origins for trips to the DHBIA from York Region, showing proximity to major transportation corridors

In the short term (0-2 years), we recommend:

• That the DHBIA work with York Region Transit to ensure that north-south bus routes crossing the York Region/City of Toronto boundary are maintained and/or improved when the TYSSE is opened. Since many trips are destined to the eastern parts of the DHBIA, it is recommended that bus 105 (Dufferin North) continue southward to Downsview Station after crossing Steeles Avenue.

# 7. Improving GO transit accessibility

# 7.1 Key findings

- The DHBIA is served by GO transit at the York University Station on the Barrie GO line, which connects to York Region, Bradford and Barrie in the north and Toronto's Union Station in the south. Seven southbound trains run during the morning peak period and seven northbound trains run in the evening peak period.
- York University Station is highly disconnected from the surrounding urban fabric. Since the boarding platform and access to the station is located on the west side of the tracks, a rider would have to walk over 2 km to get from the station to a destination immediately on the east side of the tracks. This represents a missed opportunity to serve the northeast quadrant of the DHBIA, where destinations are concentrated.
- Besides the complimentary shuttle provided by York University, there is no public transit service from York University Station to surrounding areas.
- In total, about 3% of all trips to the DHBIA (about 1001 trips) originate from zones within 800m of the GO stations on the Barrie line. However, only about 77 trips are currently taken by GO train to arrive at the DHBIA.
- Currently, there is no co-fare between GO transit and the TTC, meaning that an individual transferring from GO transit to a local TTC service would be required to pay both full fares. A co-fare for riders using a PRESTO card has been established between GO transit and all other municipal transit agencies.

Future plans:

- Metrolinx is planning to open a new station, Downsview Park Station, on the Barrie GO line at the southern extremity of the DHBIA (on Sheppard Avenue West) to connect to the TYSSE. This creates uncertainty regarding the future of the York University Station.
- Increased service levels on the GO Barrie line are planned by 2024 through Metrolinx's GO RER program. Electric, 15-minute two-way daytime service is planned on part of the line which would provide a direct service between Union Station and the DHBIA throughout the day.

In the short term (0-2 years), we recommend:

• That further study of the conditions required to achieve higher GO ridership levels to York University Station be carried out before a decision about the future of the station is made. Elements studied should include train schedules and frequencies to match demand as well as improved bus, cycling and walking connections required to get users from the station to their destination, and the potential impact of a co-fare between GO transit and the TTC. Of particular interest is the impact on ridership if there is direct access to the east side of the station, connecting the northeast quadrant, which is the destination of 43% of all trips to the DHBIA. The ability of the future Downsview Park Station to serve commuters to the DHBIA should also be studied.

In the medium term (2-5 years), we recommend:

• That the DHBIA provide public support for the establishment of a co-fare between GO transit and the TTC in order to reduce barriers to transit ridership for its employees, especially with a new GO station and increased GO service in coming years.

# 8. Improving cycling accessibility

### 8.1 Key findings

- Although the modal share of cycling for trips to the DHBIA is small (0.3%), approximately 117 trips are made to the area each day by bike. These individuals generally come from residential areas to the immediate east and north of the DHBIA and about half of them are headed for the northeast quadrant of the DHBIA.
- There are currently 4.6 km of on- and off-street linear bike facilities in the DHBIA. These facilities are not well-connected to each other in part because of the lack of internal street connectivity in the east-west direction across the CN rail corridor and in the north-south direction across the busway. Options to connect to the regional cycling network are limited since the surrounding cycling network is not well-developed.
- Where bike facilities are on the road, cohabitation between cyclists and truck traffic is a challenge, particularly where cyclists are not provided with clearly delineated road space, as in the case of the sharrows on Finch Avenue and Supertest Road.
- On arterial roads surrounding the DHBIA such as Dufferin Street and Keele Street, the relatively wide right-of-ways and spaces between the roadway and buildings provide an opportunity to allocate dedicated space to cycling.
- There is extremely limited bike parking in the DHBIA.
- The recently approved City of Toronto Cycling Network Plan aims to add 8 km of linear bike facilities in the DHBIA over the next ten years (Figure 5).
- The addition of new rapid transit stations on the periphery of the DHBIA can change cycling behavior and can catalyze investments in cycling connections. For example, a new connection on Keele Street between Finch Avenue and the multi-use trail along the busway is being installed as part of the TYSSE station planning around Finch West station.
- Fully 36% of all trips (equivalent to 12,417 trips) to the DHBIA have a straight-line distance of 5 km or less, representing an enormous opportunity to encourage a modal shift to cycling. Another 22% of trips are between 5 and 10 km. Moreover, of the 3% (1,069 trips) internal trips, none are currently made by bike.

In the short term (0-2 years), we recommend:

- That the DHBIA work with the City of Toronto to install bike parking (ring and post) along major arterials, particularly near commercial and retail centres.
- That the DHBIA work with business owners to install bike parking at business locations. There may be an opportunity to provide incentives through Metrolinx's Smart Commute program. The DHBIA could also support employers by sharing best practices about bike parking installation and coordinating bulk purchases of equipment.
- That the DHBIA publicly support the development of the City of Toronto and York Region cycling networks. Without efficient connections to the areas where employees and clients live, cycling infrastructure within the DHBIA will be underused.

In the medium term (2-5 years), we recommend:

- That the DHBIA work proactively with the City of Toronto to ensure that the tenyear Cycling Network Plan is implemented rapidly and that the most-needed connections to and through DHBIA are prioritized. We suggest that:
  - The proposed Dufferin Street boulevard trail be implemented as a priority (Figure 5 1). In order to facilitate access to businesses and other destinations, the trail should be located on the west side or, if design constraints cause it to be located on the east side, several mid-block crossings should be installed.
  - The proposed completion of the Finch Street bike lane be implemented as a priority and that it take the form of a "cycle track" (protected bike lane) (Figure 5 2).
- That the DHBIA work proactively with the City of Toronto to explore opportunities to provide protected bike lanes wherever possible in both new and existing bike infrastructure. In a context of heavy truck traffic, sharrows should be avoided where road widths permit full lanes. Bike pathways alongside sidewalks could be considered along some of the major arterials.
- In addition to the new infrastructure proposed in the Cycling Network Plan, that the following elements be considered:
  - An extension of the Dufferin Street trail south of Finch Avenue to Downsview subway station (Figure 5 1).
  - A cycling connection between the multi-use pathway along the busway and the future Finch West Station, either along Keele Street or Tangiers Road (Figure 5 – 3). (This connection has already been confirmed and will be installed as part of the TYSSE station planning around Finch West Station.)
  - Additional north-south connections within the DHBIA including bike lanes on Alness Street (Figure 5 4, 5, 6).

In the long term (5+ years), we recommend:

• That the DHBIA work with CN, landowners and the City of the Toronto to explore possibilities for providing cycling and pedestrian connections across the rail corridor at mid-block locations. Figure 5 shows suggested connection locations.



Figure 5. Proposed long-term cycling and walking connections in the DHBIA

# 9. Improving pedestrian accessibility

## 9.1 Key findings

- Although the modal share of walking for trips to the DHBIA is small (0.4%), approximately 151 trips are made to the area each day by foot. These individuals come from adjacent or nearby residential areas as well as the York University campus and are headed to all quadrants of the DHBIA.
- On arterial roads, sidewalks and crosswalks are well-marked and bus shelters with benches are provided.
- A recent tree-planting initiative with the City of Toronto has improved pedestrian comfort throughout the DHBIA.
- A public realm study for Finch Avenue is underway. In addition, specific recommendations for the completion of sidewalks have been generated as part of the "Tree Planting and Missing Sidewalks Report" recently commissioned by the BIA.
- Some inner roads are missing key pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, bus shelters and rest areas.
- A lack of street connectivity makes some trips by foot prohibitively long. For example, since there is no way to cross the rail corridor at the York University GO Station, a rider would have to walk over 2 km to get from the station to a destination immediately on the east side of the tracks.
- The addition of new rapid transit stations on the periphery of the DHBIA may change pedestrian behavior and the resulting infrastructure investments will provide an opportunity to improve the public realm.
- 14% of all trips (equivalent to 4,743 trips) to the DHBIA have a straight-line distance of 2 km or less, representing an enormous opportunity to encourage a modal shift to walking. Moreover, of the 3% (1,069 trips) internal trips, none are currently made by foot. With an improved public realm and increased connectivity, employees could make more lunchtime and business trips by foot.

In the short term (0-2 years), we recommend:

- That the DHBIA continue to work with the City of Toronto to plant trees along streets.
- That the DHBIA work with the City of Toronto to install sidewalks on both sides of inner streets. We suggest in particular that Alness Street (missing west side) and Chesswood Drive (missing parts of east side) be considered as priorities given their importance as north-south connections and the visible evidence of unpaved areas as pedestrian paths.

We also note the importance of the public realm studies completed and underway for the Finch/Keele intersection and Finch Avenue.

In the medium term (2-5 years), we recommend:

- That the DHBIA work with the City of Toronto to install bus shelters and benches on inner streets, using the re-routing of certain bus routes in response to the TYSSE and the Finch West LRT as an opportunity to do this.
- That the DHBIA extend its public realm work to other streets in the area, using applicable solutions from the Finch Avenue study.

In the long term (5+ years), we recommend:

• That the DHBIA work with CN, landowners and the City of the Toronto to explore possibilities for providing cycling and pedestrian connections across the rail corridor at mid-block locations. This would support general connectivity through the DHBIA and would significantly increase access to the York University GO Station. Figure 5 shows suggested connection locations.

# 10. Transportation Demand Management

### 10.1Key findings

 Currently, there are no Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs in the DHBIA. However, representatives of Smart Commute, the TDM program offered by Metrolinx, have identified the DHBIA and surrounding area as an important sector for future work, and have indicated their openness to meeting with the BIA to explore options.

### 10.2Draft recommendations

In the short term (0-2 years), we recommend:

• That the DHBIA meet with representatives of the Smart Commute program and large employers to explore the potential for TDM measures in the area.

In the medium term (2-5 years), we recommend:

- That the DHBIA establish a Smart Commute program through engagement with employers in the area. Although this list is non-exhaustive, the following interventions should be considered:
  - Reduced transit fare cards for employees, particularly those commuting from York Region.
  - Programs and incentives to encourage and facilitate carpooling among employees.
  - A shuttle service connecting key employment destinations with transportation hubs (regular transit services should be developed as a priority; however, a shuttle may be able to fill gaps in service, for example during off-peak hours).
  - Employee and employer education programs on transit and active transportation options and benefits.

# 11. Communications strategy

### 11.1 Draft recommendations

In the short term (0-2 years), we recommend:

- That the DHBIA establish a communications strategy with the goal of sharing of findings and recommendations from this report with key decision-makers. This may include:
  - Creating a formatted, five- to ten-page primer and/or tailored PowerPoint presentations with the key findings from this study.
  - Sharing information on the DHBIA website.
  - Submitting input to formal consultation and review processes on transportation including the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan review (submissions are due on October 31, 2016<sup>3</sup>), the MTO Greater Golden Horseshoe Multimodal Transportation Plan,<sup>4</sup> and the City of Toronto's review of transportation policies in the Official Plan (through the *Feeling Congested*? Initiative<sup>5</sup>).
  - Participating in project-based stakeholder advisory groups including for the Goods Movement Study for the Finch Corridor and the ten-year Cycling Network Plan, both led by the City of Toronto.
  - Proactively organizing meetings with city councillors in areas with a high concentration of commuters to the DHBIA both in the City of Toronto and in York Region.
  - Sharing information through the DHBIA's channels (website, newsletter) and pitching to local and regional media on a regular basis.
  - Seeking opportunities to participate in panels and discussions to share best practices and lessons learned and generate excitement for the DHBIA's work on transit and active transportation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/rtp/connect.aspx

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/transit/greater-golden-horseshoe-transportation-plan.shtml

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=3649837c1b915410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD