

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Major investments in public transit infrastructure have the potential to significantly impact development in the areas surrounding transit stations. In theory, these impacts include higher land values for properties located in close proximity to transit stations as a reflection of the high value placed on access to public transit by both people and firms. The empirical evidence, in this regard, tends to be inconclusive. This report addresses the following research question:

*How does the opening of a new transit node affect development in its neighbourhood?*

To address the research question, this report examined the influence of the opening of the Sheppard Subway Line, in 2002, on the housing, demographic, and transportation profiles of the two transit neighbourhoods surrounding Bayview and Don Mills Subway Stations, respectively. As the most recently constructed subway line in Toronto, the experiences of these case studies demonstrated the highest generalizability to future transit neighbourhoods in Toronto.

Qualitative methods were employed to conduct a multiple case study analysis of the two transit neighbourhoods. Census data was used to identify changes in the housing, demographic, and transportation profiles of the Bayview and Don Mills transit neighbourhoods over three Census periods (1996, 2001, and 2006). Observed changes were then compared against City-wide trends to establish significance. Newspaper articles and policy documents were used to supplement Census data observations.

The analysis showed that the opening of the Sheppard Subway Line did have a significant impact on the housing, demographic, and transportation profiles of the Bayview and Don Mills transit neighbourhoods. While the opening of the subway line was successful in stimulating development, attracting household diversity, and increasing transit ridership in the Bayview transit neighbourhood, its impact in the Don Mills transit neighbourhood was far more effective in supporting commercial development and attracting employment. In large part, observed changes in the housing, demographic, and transportation profiles of the transit neighbourhoods surrounding the Bayview and Don Mills transit stations were attributed to the direction provided by the Sheppard Subway Corridor Secondary Plan, which established area-specific policies to guide transit supportive development along the Sheppard Subway Corridor (City of North York, 1997).

Based on the findings of the analysis, five recommendations are offered to the City of Toronto and to Metrolinx to improve guidance for future transit-oriented development in Toronto.

- Encourage condominium development to create affordable housing options.
- Increase dwelling unit sizes to accommodate growing household diversity.
- Zone for mixed-uses to maximize local ridership.
- Create Secondary Plans to address the specific needs of TOD.
- Tailor TOD Secondary Plans to be Context-Specific