

KING STREET PILOT STUDY

A thick red line that starts on the left, slopes down, then runs horizontally across the middle, and finally slopes up on the right side.

Phase One and Two
Consultation and Communications
Summary



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1. Introduction

Background

The City of Toronto and TTC are undertaking a King Street Pilot Study (formerly called the King Street Visioning Study) to explore bold, transformative ideas for how to redesign King Street in order to achieve three broad city-building objectives:

- Move people more efficiently on transit
- Improve placemaking
- Support economic prosperity

King Street is one of the major east-west streets crossing the Downtown core. Historically, King Street was the most important east-west street in the Old Town of York. As the city grew, King Street remained a significant address for commercial development. It remains the heart of the Financial District and the largest concentration of jobs in the Greater Toronto Area. Transformed by the King-Spadina and King-Parliament regeneration planning initiatives in the 1990s, the industrial and warehouse districts on the east and west shoulders of the Financial District redeveloped into vital, intensively urban, mixed-use districts. King Street with its streetcar has reinvented itself as the main street of these vital urban districts, with concentrations of theatres, nightclubs, restaurants and hotels.

King Street travels through a highly-urbanized environment. The 504 King streetcar route is the busiest surface transit route in the City, carrying over 60,000 riders on an average weekday. The streetcar currently operates in mixed traffic with transit signal priority at intersections, sharing the street with about 20,000 vehicles each day. Streetcar operations currently suffer from slow travel speeds, delays caused by traffic signals and turning vehicles, unreliable headways, and frequency leading to bunching, and general overcrowding of vehicles.

The City and TTC have recently been making operational changes to improve streetcar service. But they determined a more significant change is needed to improve transit service on King Street. The purpose of the King Street Pilot Study is to develop and implement pilot project(s) that will test a range of options to determine what might further improve transit reliability, capacity, and efficiency.

Report Purpose and Contents

This Consultation and Communications Summary is a comprehensive summary of Phase One and Phase Two consultation and communication activities. It is organized into three sections: Section 1 provides an introduction to the King Street Pilot Study; Section 2 describes the overall consultation plan, objectives, principles, and tactics; Section 3 summarizes feedback from Phase One and Phase Two, and; Section 3 describes Next Steps.



Public Meeting #1 (February 2017)



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2. Consultation Overview

Consultation Plan

The King Street Pilot Study is a three-phase study. Phase One focused on Clarifying Goals & Developing Options and ran from April 2016 – March 2017. Phase Two, which began in April 2017 and concluded in June 2017, focused on Evaluating Options and Developing a Pilot Design(s). Phase Three will focus on the Design, Implementation, and Monitoring of a pilot—its timeline is still to be determined. Each phase of the study involves both public and stakeholder consultation.

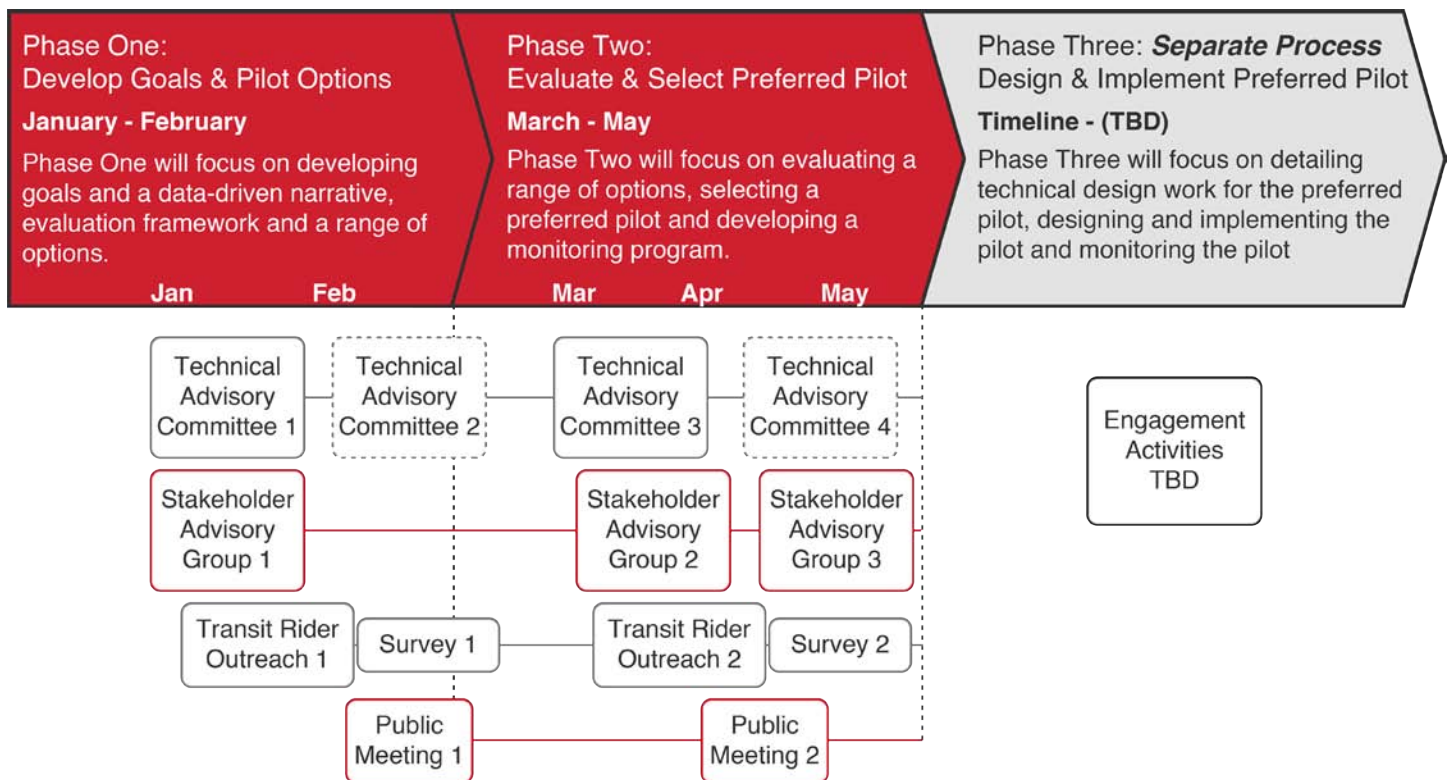


Figure 1. Consultation Plan

Consultation Objectives and Principles

The City committed to engaging stakeholders and the public in a way that is transparent, collaborative, and inclusive. The goals of the Consultation Plan are to raise general awareness of the Pilot Study and to seek feedback from the general public and area- and interest-specific stakeholders. The following consultation principles strive to help achieve these goals:

- **Accountability** – Accountability to participants will be maintained by providing accurate, timely information throughout the engagement process and by demonstrating how participants' views and perspectives have informed the vision and principles, the ideas explored and the draft proposed plan.
- **Clarity** – The purpose and scope of the project, the engagement process overall and each of its three parts will be clearly communicated.
- **Timeliness** – The engagement process will commence early to allow the greatest range of opportunities and issues to emerge and to raise the chances of successful issue resolution.
- **Openness and Inclusivity** – The engagement process will be open to any member of the public or stakeholder organization that wants to be involved. A broad cross-section of people from across Toronto will be encouraged to participate, share their needs and perspectives, and hear those of others. Engagement materials and information will be made publicly available through the TO Core project website (and other means as appropriate).
- **Flexibility** – The engagement process will strive to accommodate the needs of participants, taking into account their different abilities, areas of expertise, geographic distribution, and availability.
- **Coordination** – The engagement process will be coordinated with concurrent TOcore, King Street Visioning Study and Public Life Study projects to enhance knowledge sharing, ensure coherence in decision-making, avoid duplication, and reduce the risk of “consultation fatigue” among citizens and stakeholders.
- **Evaluation** – Throughout the process, the City of Toronto will seek feedback from the public and stakeholders regarding the engagement process and may modify the engagement plan in order to respond to feedback received or changing conditions.

Consultation and promotional tactics

The Phase One and Phase Two process involved both communications-focused promotional activities and dialogue-based consultation activities.

Promotional Tactics

Public Lectures. Large-scale public lectures were used to raise awareness of the project; share different perspectives about King's past, present, and future; and answer questions about the Pilot Study.

Email lists and networks. The City and project team established an email list, which included the contact details of: participants in public meetings, interested parties that contacted the City via a dedicated project email address, and members of a Stakeholder Advisory Group. The City sent emails to this list to generate awareness of the project and invite people to participate in public consultation activities. The City also encouraged recipients to forward emails to those in their networks to broaden participation.

Project website. The City's website (www.toronto.ca/kingstreetpilotstudy) was the one-stop shop for information about the project, including background studies, updates on the process, presentations and reports, project-related videos, technical studies, and more. In both Phase One and Phase Two, the project website hosted an online survey to seek feedback about the emerging pilot study design.

Transit Rider Outreach. During Phase One, City staff and the TTC conducted Transit Rider Outreach. This outreach included posters at St. Andrew and King subway stations as well as major streetcar stops in which staff distributed postcards to raise awareness of the study.

Twitter. City Planning and the TTC regularly used Twitter to promote the study, encourage attendance at public meetings and lectures, and to provide updates about the status of the King Street Pilot Study.

Consultation Activities

Focus Groups and interviews. The project team hosted Focus Groups and interviews with key stakeholders (such as Business Improvement Areas) to discuss the Pilot Study and to identify issues needing to be addressed. The project team prepared draft and final summaries of Focus Groups and interviews.

Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings. The City convened a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) for the King Street Pilot Study. The SAG was a non-political advisory committee formed for Phase One and Phase Two of the project composed of representatives of organizations with an interest in the King Street Pilot Study. The SAG's role was to provide advice over the course of the study, and members submitted Application Forms and agreed to a Terms of Reference to be considered for membership. See Appendix A for the Terms of Reference, Application Form, and a list of invited and approved SAG members.

SAG Meetings generally consisted of an overview presentation, facilitated questions of clarification, interactive workshops with the City and their consultant team, and plenary reports back. In total, the City met with the SAG three times in Phase One and Two. The project team prepared final summaries of SAG feedback and advice from each meeting, which were distributed to SAG members for review before being finalized. See Appendices B and C for SAG meeting summaries.

Public meetings. The City hosted large-scale Public Meetings to seek feedback on the Pilot Study. Each meeting consisted of: welcoming remarks from City staff and area Councillors; an overview presentation; plenary questions of clarification; interactive, breakout workshops, and; plenary reports back. There were two large-scale public meetings, one in each of Phase One and Two. The project team prepared summaries of feedback from both public meetings. See Appendices B and C for public meeting summaries.

Online surveys. The City hosted online surveys seeking feedback about the Pilot Study. Each survey included a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions and shared information about the emerging pilot design. There were two online surveys, one in each of Phase One and Two. The project team prepared summaries of both online surveys (see Appendices B and C).

The table below summarizes all promotional and consultation activities in Phase One and Two of the process:

Phase One			
Date	Event	Description	Reach
May 19, 2016	B.I.A. Focus Group	A focus group to introduce B.I.A.'s to the project team and to discuss insights, opportunities, and priorities related to King Street	6 participants from 3 B.I.A.'s
May 19, 2016	Walkshop	A walkshop with various City and TTC staff to understand existing conditions and discuss potential opportunities to explore	Over 20 City and TTC staff
June 16, 2016	Our Future King Public Lecture	A public lecture from various City and TTC staff followed by a panel discussion about the King Street Pilot Study	Over 200 registrants
January 30, 2017	SAG Meeting #1	A meeting to introduce the Pilot Study and to share and seek feedback on the team's emerging thinking on: how to evaluate and measure success; the pros and cons of different street block options, and; key considerations and ideas to test in King's different neighbourhood contexts. See meeting summary in Appendix B	Approximately 15 members of the King Street SAG
February 13, 2017	Public Meeting #1	A meeting to introduce the Pilot Study and to share and seek feedback on: how to evaluate the pilot; different street block options; where to pilot, and; ideas to consider in different neighbourhood contexts. See meeting summary in Appendix B	Over 450 participants
February – March 2017	Online Survey #1 and Emails	A survey to seek input on the public's support for a pilot on King Street and to seek feedback on the three block options. Members of the public also sent individual emails to a dedicated project email address. See survey summary in Appendix B	5,165 total responses 3,000 completed surveys 120 emails received
May 17 – June 9 2017	Transit Rider Outreach	A promotional event to raise awareness of the Study and encourage transit riders to participate in the study process	Over 750 reached

Phase Two			
Date	Event	Description	Reach
April 5, 2017	SAG Meeting #2	A meeting to share and seek feedback on an emerging pilot design. See meeting summary in Appendix C	Approximately 20 SAG members
May 5, 2017	SAG Drop-In Session	A drop-in session to share and seek feedback on a revised pilot design. See meeting summary in Appendix C	Approximately 8 members of the SAG
Week of May 8th	Individual meetings with SAG members	Project team with SAG members who were unable to attend the May 5th Drop-In Session	
May 18, 2017	Public Meeting #2	An open house to share, answers questions, and listen to feedback about the revised pilot design. See meeting summary in Appendix C	Over 300 participants
May 18 - June 10, 2017	Online Survey #2 and emails	An online survey to seek feedback on the revised pilot design. Members of the public also sent individual emails to a dedicated project email address. See survey summary in Appendix C	2,878 total responses 2,207 completed surveys 38 emails



3. Summary of Participant Feedback

Aggregated summaries of participant feedback in consultation activities in both Phase One and Phase Two follow.

Feedback from Phase One

The first phase of the engagement program focused on “Clarifying Goals and Developing Options” and ran from May 2016 – March 2017. During this phase, the study team prepared and sought feedback on:

- A draft evaluation framework
- Three potential block options,
- The extent of the pilot, and;
- Potential ideas to explore in the different neighbourhood contexts along King.

Participants were asked the following questions to generate discussion and feedback:

Defining success

- What does success look like on King?

Draft evaluation framework

- What do we need to measure on King?
- What measures are missing and/or are most important in the draft evaluation framework?

Block options

- What do you like about the potential block options?
- What (if anything) is concerning?

Pilot extent

- What do you think of the proposed extent of the pilot? Do you have any suggested changes?

Ideas to explore in different neighbourhood contexts

- What ideas would you like to see explored in each neighbourhood context?

The City and project team received a high volume of feedback through the various Phase One consultation activities, including over 500 participants at the February Public Meeting.

Defining success

Generally, many were supportive of the pilot approach and its focus on improving transit. Several said the solution for King would need to go “beyond tinkering” to address congestion problems on the street. Some said that the pilot should balance transit and public space improvements with the needs of local businesses (such as car-based pick-up, drop-off, and delivery activities). Many said the success of the pilot will require strong enforcement to ensure compliance from all street users. Participants also shared a range of opinions about cycling: some felt the existing situation on King is very unsafe and that the pilot should accommodate bikes on King; others felt that the limited space on the road and the presence of streetcar could result in an unsafe situation for cyclists no matter what, saying the study should focus on strengthening parallel streets, connections to King, and not making the situation on King any worse for cyclists.

Participants shared other, specific suggestions about what success would look like:

- A reliable, predictable streetcar route.
- An increase in transit usage.
- A change in the perception of and public narrative around transit.
- A street that still works for delivery, pick-up/drop-off, and loading/unloading activities.
- A more comfortable walking space.
- A street that’s universally accessible.
- A healthier environment.
- A street with vibrant, local retail.
- A street that considers commercial vehicles.
- A street with a usable, social public realm.
- A beautiful street.
- A pilot that thinks beyond King.
- A pilot that balances King’s role as both a destination and through street.
- A pilot reinforced by by-law enforcement (such as no stopping by-laws) and clear communication (such as what is allowed and not allowed).

Draft evaluation framework

Participants generally supported the draft evaluation framework and its focus on people, places, and prosperity. Many said that it would be important to evaluate success differently depending on the context (Parkdale versus King East, for example), consider different times of day and different seasons, and base the evaluation on quantitative metrics. Participants also said that the study should take a network-based, context-sensitive evaluation approach, thinking about King as part of a broader network (and not just an isolated street).

Participants shared specific suggestions of what they would like to see measured as part of the evaluation of the pilot and to say which metrics they felt were most important.

Metrics that were identified as most important were:

- Changes to overall travel time/speed of transit
- Degree of reduction in personal car use
- Changes to the overall reliability and predictability of transit
- Changes to transit capacity and use
- Impacts on other streets
- Ability to accommodate loading, delivery, pick-up, and drop-off
- Impacts on sales and businesses
- Number of conflicts between different street users
- Changes in air quality
- Changes to the beauty of the street
- Changes to the number of people who “just hang out”

Metrics that had some importance were:

- How universally accessible the street is
- How comfortable the street is for pedestrians and transit users of all ages and abilities
- How many spontaneous social interactions the pilot enables
- If/how transit revenue changes through the pilot
- Any changes in foot traffic
- Any changes to the types of businesses on King

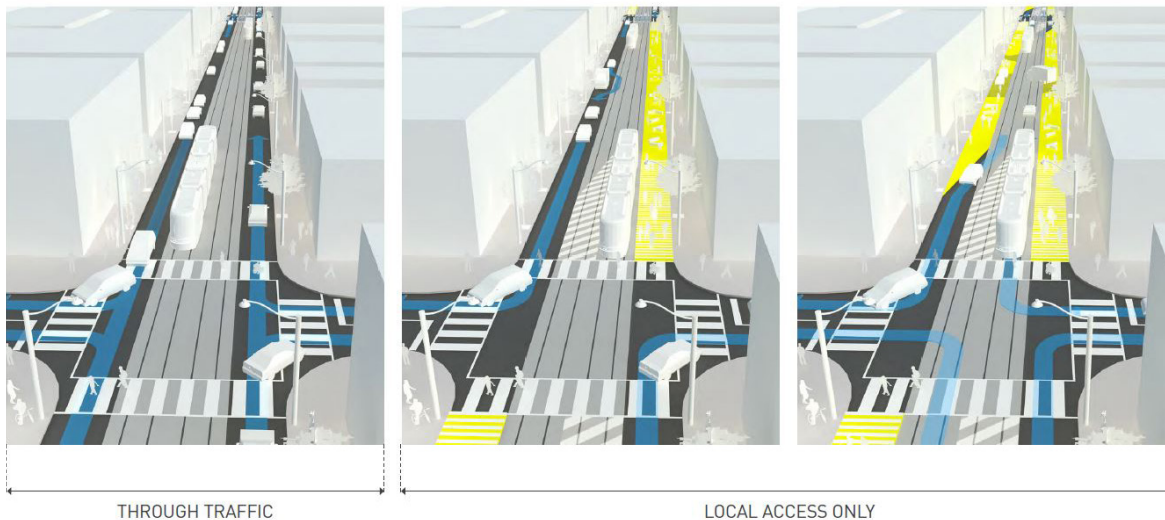
Other important metrics were:

- Changes in the need for parking
- Changes in the demographics of people using King
- Changes to boarding time
- Changes in underground activity (such as more people using the PATH)

A - SEPARATED LANES

B - ALTERNATING 'LOOPS'

C - TRANSIT PROMENADE

*Block options for the King St. Pilot Project*

Block options

Participants shared feedback about three block options: Separated Lanes, Alternating Loops, and Transit Promenade.

- **Separated lanes.** Participants generally felt that the Separated Lanes option was easiest to understand and would likely result in an improvement to transit. Many felt that this option had too many potential downsides, including traffic back-ups, negative impacts on business (especially due to the lack of space for pick-up, drop-off, and deliveries); risks to pedestrian and cyclist safety; and a lack of public space improvements. Some participants said this option is too car-centric and is not significantly different from what currently exists on King Street.
- **Alternating loops.** Participants liked that this option put priority on transit while also making efforts to accommodate other modes. Their concerns focused on: the potential for people to be confused by the design; challenges with loading and deliveries and impacts on businesses; impeding access to garages. Some felt that this option would work well on some, but not all parts of King. Some also appreciated that the team had developed a Cycling Infrastructure Option, though there were mixed opinions on whether this option should be further explored and how to safely accommodate cyclists. Participants also said this option would require strict enforcement to ensure compliance with parking and stopping restrictions.
- **Transit Promenade.** Participants liked that the Transit Promenade option could create generous sidewalks, new public space on King Street, and easier streetcar boarding. Concerns were related to potential impacts on traffic flow; streetcar backlogs caused by shared lanes; and the absence of a dedicated bike lane.

Many participants agreed with the proposed pilot extent and the rationale for the extent; some felt it should extend further west to capture the growing and dense Liberty Village and Parkdale areas, while others felt it should extend east to capture George Grown College and intensifying areas around Parliament. Some felt the pilot should also include Queen Street. Participants also said that ending the pilot at Bathurst St and Jarvis St may cause increased congestion at these already busy intersections.

- **Manageability:** choose a pilot extent that is manageable
- **Degree of challenge:** pilot in areas with the most challenging issues
- **Population growth:** pilot in areas where the population is growing
- **Diversity of uses:** pilot in areas with the most diverse uses



Ideas to explore in different neighbourhood contexts

Participants shared feedback about six specific neighbourhood contexts:

- **Roncesvalles-Liberty Village.** Generally, participants said congestion is a big issue in this area and suggested that the team make sure it considers the growing density in the area (mostly concentrated in Liberty Village). Participants also said starting at Roncesvalles would allow the team to gather more data on the pilot's traffic impact.
- **King West.** Key issues participants identified in King West included parking, congestion (especially on evenings and weekends) and the need to safely accommodate cyclists.
- **Entertainment District.** Participants said traffic and cycling were key issues to think through in the Entertainment District. They also said that, because of the area's theatres, nightclubs, and restaurants, the pilot would need to consider how pick-up and drop-off might work.
- **Financial District.** Participants said it would be important to make sure people can get to work and/or offices in this area. There should be ways to keep some car activity in this area since many rely on taxis or other vehicles to access the area. Some felt more could be done to improve the cycling experience in the Financial District.
- **St. James Park.** Several said pick-up / drop-off activities would be especially important near St. James Park, especially for both the businesses and St. James Cathedral.
- **King East.** Several said that maintaining access to garages would be important in King East since there are several buildings whose parking access is on King. Others said there should be a focus on the pedestrian environment and the public realm in this area. Some suggested extending the pilot to Parliament St to connect to the Distillery District or River Street to include the Canary District and the Pan Am Village Housing.



Public Meeting #2 (May 2017)

Feedback from Phase Two

The second phase of the engagement program focused on “Evaluating Options and Developing a Pilot Design(s)” and ran from April 2017 – June 2017. During this phase, the study team prepared and sought feedback on the emerging pilot design. Participants were asked the following questions:

Reactions to the proposed pilot design for King Street

- Do you support the proposed pilot design for King Street?
- How well do you think the emerging preferred pilot would move people? Is anything missing?
- How well do you think the emerging preferred pilot option improves placemaking? Is anything missing?
- How well do you think the emerging preferred pilot option supports economic prosperity? Is there anything missing?

Pilot length

- How long do you think the pilot should be undertaken?

Other advice

- Do you have any other advice or feedback about the emerging preferred pilot option?

Reactions to the proposed pilot design for King Street

Many participants supported the emerging pilot design and felt it would help move people more efficiently on transit, improve public space, and support business and economic prosperity on King St. Participants especially liked specific features being proposed to improve transit on King St. Participants generally liked the idea of consistent right-turn loops because they will be relatively easy to navigate and allow local traffic access throughout the entire pilot area.

Moving people

Participants generally liked the idea moving streetcar stops to the far side of major intersections and agreed this should help to reduce congestion on King St. Participants also said transit on King St. should be more accessible and suggested using temporary decking with ramps at streetcar stops and installing tactile paving on sidewalks during the Pilot Study. Participants also said streetcars should have traffic light priority to avoid transit backlogs. Some participants said they would like to see the pilot area car free and a reduction in on-street parking.

Improving placemaking

Participants liked that public realm improvements are being considered as part of the Pilot Study. There was support for improving laneways to help enhance their ability to provide public space, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. Participants also liked the idea of using some sections of the curbside lane in the pilot area for public space. Participants suggested widening sidewalks and adding more trees, planters, and street furniture. Participants also suggested involving Indigenous artists in the design of the public realm to showcase Toronto's Indigenous identity.

Supporting economic prosperity

Participants supported the idea of providing some dedicated space for loading, deliveries, and taxi pick-up/drop-off in the curbside lane. Participants also suggested the City identify side streets and specific times when deliveries can be prioritized. Some participants expressed concerns about the potential loss of customers for businesses on King Street because of reduced vehicle access/traffic.

Pilot length

Many said they want to see the pilot run for at least a year with the aspects of the pilot determined to be successful installed permanently. Some participants said the pilot should run longer than one year, up to three years, to provide enough time to entrench change in habits and study the impact and benefits of the pilot.

Other advice

Participants shared other advice about the pilot study:

- **Ensure clear communication and strong enforcement.** Many participants said the enforcement and education of new traffic rules will be crucial to the success of the Pilot Study. Participants suggested the City develop a public education campaign to promote new rules and work closely with Toronto Police Services to strengthen enforcement.
- **Promote accessibility across the pilot area.** Participants said the entire pilot area needs to remain accessible for people with disabilities, including providing adequate space for Wheel-Trans to make pick-ups and drop-offs.
- **Cycling on King Street.** Similar to the first phase of engagement, there was a range of opinions shared about cycling on King Street. Some strongly supported having space for cyclists on the entire length of the Pilot; others shared concerns about limited space and potential conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians, especially around streetcar stops. Some said that cycling signage needs to be legible and at the right height for cyclists.
- **Traffic impacts on nearby streets.** Participants shared concerns about increased congestion on nearby streets (e.g. Wellington, Bathurst, Queen St.) and said the City will need to closely monitor this during the Pilot Study. Participants also suggested the City develop strategies for diverting traffic well ahead of the pilot area on King St. to avoid backlogs at the intersection where the pilot area starts.

- **Ongoing development in the downtown core.** Participants shared concerns about the level of development occurring downtown, especially condominium development. Some said this development is a key cause of congestion across the downtown and the Pilot Study alone is not enough to reduce congestion.
- **Area specific suggestions.** Participants shared feedback and identified key issues about different locations in the pilot area, including Bathurst St. and King St. (pedestrian safety and congestion); Spadina Ave. and King St. (conflicts between turning streetcars, vehicles and pedestrians); St. James Cathedral (vehicle access for weddings and funerals and people with disabilities); Restaurant row (high volume of pedestrian traffic); and the Entertainment District (pick-up and drop-off for the theatres and restaurants).



Unique businesses (King & Portland)



4. Next steps

The feedback shared during the consultation process informed the development of the pilot design, which was presented to the Toronto Transit Commission Board on June 15th, 2017; the Executive Committee on June 19th, 2017; and City Council from July 5 – 7th, 2017. Implementation of the King Street Pilot will begin in the fall of 2017 and include: further detailed design and procurement; the development of an evaluation, monitoring, and data collection program; economic impact monitoring; and the launch of a public education and awareness communications strategy.



King Street Walkshop-Workshop (King & Bay)

