

City of Toronto Complete Streets Guidelines
Summary: North York Moving Conversation
Starting Point: Mel Lastman Square
Saturday, June 20, 2015
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

1. Meeting Overview

On Saturday, June 20, 2015, the City of Toronto hosted a Moving Conversation to discuss its Complete Streets Guidelines. Participants were encouraged to ask questions about the project, share insights about how streets could be more complete, and share their thoughts on the project's Draft Guiding Principles.

This Summary covers the main areas of discussion during the Moving Conversation. Jay Pitter and Ian Malczewski of Swerhun Facilitation wrote this Meeting Summary and shared it with participants for review before finalizing it.

2. Insights & Issues

Participants and members of the City and Consultant Team shared insights about North York's street, including:

- **All streets.** The Guidelines should apply to all streets in the City, not just busy main streets.
- **Dangerous intersections.** Participants noted that, at one intersection that's close to a community hub, three teenagers for a single family had been struck by cars, and felt more needed to be done to make streets safe. One person noted that there should be more consistent feedback from traffic signals: at some intersections, pedestrians don't have to push the button to get a pedestrian crossing signal, but at others, they do. Some intersections don't have a pedestrian count down timer, too. When traffic gets a green light, pedestrians should automatically get a crossing signal by default with a count down timer; if a pedestrian pushes a button, they should get more time to cross.
- **Cycling.** The recent boom in condo development has resulted in many younger families in the neighbourhood and many cyclists, but many of these cyclists are recreational cyclists, not commuters. Some in the group said that, even though the city requires 1 bicycle spot per 10 condo (which, at 2.5 people per unit, means 1 spot for every 25 residents), there is no shortage of bicycle parking spaces (and many of those spaces are unoccupied). Overall, participants said there's a lack of a cycling network in North York Centre, which contributes to low rates of cycling.
- **Wide roads.** Participants said Spring Garden is one of the liveliest streets in the community, however, the road feels very wide for a side street. Participants discussed the possibility that the road was designed so wide since the street was once a connector to a large grocery store and it preceded the influx of new condo residents (who likely want wider sidewalks).

- **Narrow sidewalks.** Participants spent a lot of time on the issue of narrow sidewalks. In one case, the group discussed the fact there are large groups of students in the neighbourhood and they don't have enough room to move safely on the sidewalks. Participants also discussed how, during the winter, the issue of narrow sidewalks is amplified by snow piles and public transit users trying to make their way to local subway stations. In many cases, narrow sidewalks lead to people walking on the road, which is a safety issue and makes it difficult for people with mobility challenges to navigate the area. One participant suggested the City could paint pedestrian chevrons on narrow sidewalks so that people walk on the right hand side of the sidewalk and improve pedestrian flow. A recent renovation of the Yonge Eglinton Centre added floor tiles in the shape of chevrons which has helped address pedestrian queueing there.
- **Greening.** Participants said some of the trees on the walk looked neglected. Some felt it could be due to substandard soil used by developers, while others said the poor health of trees could be attributed to ash disease and the planting of a single species in the area.
- **Utilities and "invisible infrastructure."** Participants also discussed the issue of above and below-ground infrastructure, noting that in some places, utility and signal boxes in the wrong place take away from the already narrow sidewalk.
- **Uneven streetscape design.** Participants noted that the sidewalk and pavers seemed uneven in some sections. They liked that some developers turned unused space on some parcels into park-like areas, which helped create a good sense of place.
- **Other feedback.** Participants also noted that a neighbourhood community garden, which provides valuable community engagement experiences, is a valuable asset to the public space network made up mostly of streets and parks.

3. Next Steps

Members of the study team committed to sharing a draft summary of the key points of the discussion in the coming weeks and encouraged participants to take an online survey about the project's Draft Guiding Principles, available until July 2nd.