

City of Toronto Complete Streets Guidelines  
Meeting Summary: Stakeholder Advisory Group #1  
Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Room 314  
Tuesday, March 24, 2015  
6:00 – 6:30 pm: Open House  
6:30 – 9:00 pm: Presentation and Discussion

## 1. Meeting Overview

On Tuesday, March 24, 2015, over 20 members of the Complete Streets Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) participated in the first SAG meeting. Participants represented organizations with a range of interests and expertise related to Toronto's streets. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project team, review the role of the SAG, and to present and seek feedback on the work done to date on Toronto's Complete Streets Guidelines.

The meeting included two parts: the first focused on the Vision, Guiding Principles, and the proposed Guidelines format, sections and intended audiences; the second focused on a recommended approach to Street Context. Each part began with an overview presentation followed by small-group discussions and a plenary report back.

This Meeting Summary covers the main areas of discussion and written feedback submitted during and after the meeting. It is organized into the following sections and sub-sections:

1. Meeting Overview
2. Key Messages & Outcomes
3. Detailed Feedback
  - 3.1 Feedback about Vision, Guiding Principles, and Proposed Format, Sections and Intended Audiences of the Guideline
  - 3.2 Feedback about Recommended Approach to Toronto's Street Context
  - 3.3 Public Engagement and Other Process Advice
4. Next Steps

Please note the detailed meeting agenda is attached as Appendix A and the list of participants as Appendix B.

This Meeting Summary was subject to participant review before being finalized.

## 2. Key Messages & Outcomes

The following are the key points that emerged during the two-part discussion. Readers should review them in concert with the more detailed feedback that follows.

**The Vision and Guiding Principles are generally right.** Most SAG members agreed with the Vision and Guiding Principles, suggesting tweaks to show that the concept of “complete” means more than just all modes—it also means all ages and abilities, all times and seasons, every part of the city, and all types of uses.

**Generally, the approach to Toronto’s Street Context is on the right track.** In general, SAG members expressed a lot of interest and enthusiasm about the proposed approach to Street Context. SAG members suggested including laneways as a separate Street Context and asked for an explanation of how this approach would address streets that change in scale and place status.

**The discussion of the format, sections, and audiences of the Guidelines requires more context.** In general, SAG members thought the discussion about the proposed sections, format, and intended audiences of the Complete Streets Guidelines was premature and required more information about each of the sections’ content. Participants said it was important to use clear language and balance the need to provide necessary information to all audiences without making the Guidelines overwhelming.

**Use plain language and visuals for public consultation and make consultation materials accessible in advance.** SAG members strongly recommended making presentation materials easy to understand and easy to access in advance of meetings for people of all abilities, including people with visual impairments and those who do not speak English as their first language.

**SAG Membership.** Ian Malczewski, an independent facilitator, reviewed the SAG Terms of Reference with SAG members and asked to them e-mail him before March 31, 2015, with any suggestions for other groups to invite to apply for SAG members and/or with any questions about or suggested edits to the Terms of Reference.

## 3. Detailed Feedback

### 3.1 Feedback about the Vision, Guiding Principles, and Proposed Format, Sections and Intended Audiences of the Guidelines

The Consultant Team asked SAG members what they thought about the Complete Streets Vision and Guiding Principles and how the proposed guide format and sections would be most helpful to them. After a small-table discussion, participants reported back key points of their conversation. These key points are summarized and organized under respective headings below.

#### VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Many SAG members said, generally, they agreed with the Vision and Guiding Principles with a few suggested revisions. One participant said the Guiding Principles captured the zeitgeist of the times well. Suggested revisions included:

- **Strengthen the language around Active Transportation.** Some participants suggested using “provide for” instead of “encourage” in the principle that reads “Encourage Walking, Cycling and Transit Use”. They further advised including a “pedestrians first” statement as one of the Guiding Principles.
- **Consider maintenance.** Some SAG members said it was important to consider maintenance of streets as a guiding principle since there needs to be a balance between beauty and practicality. If there is no budget to maintain the beauty of unique features of the streets, then the street quickly could become “incomplete.”
- *Comment Submitted after the Meeting:* The word "maintenance" doesn't have to be explicit. It could be incorporated into a principle about time—that the streets will remain complete at all times and in all seasons, for example.
- **Do not lose sight of the need to provide resting areas.** Some participants said vibrant public spaces need to provide resting areas for users of all abilities and ages, including elderly people and those who simply need to stop to send a text message on the phone.
- **Navigation should be included in the Guiding Principles.** Some SAG members suggested including a principle guiding navigation under “Connectivity” or “Safety and Comfort.”
- *Comment Submitted after the Meeting:* Recognize seasonality and time—that people change modes at different times and within the same trip.
- **Call out users of all ages and abilities.** In the Guiding Principle “Respect the needs of All,” several participants suggested substituting “All” with “users of all ages and abilities” to be clear that the Guiding Principles do not speak for the needs of trees or birds, etc. Instead of “respect”, consider using more active terms, such as “embrace” or “provide for”.
- **Call out Toronto Streets.** Ensure that the Guiding Principles indicate that the Guidelines are for the streets of Toronto specifically.
- **Consider more focused Guiding Principles.** One participant felt the Guiding Principles read as a “kitchen sink” that made it sound like we can accommodate everything on the street. It is misleading because the Right of Way cannot do it all, so the Guiding Principles should be more concise and focused.
- **Consider the speed at which the street moves.** One participant commented that speed is a very important part of a street’s dynamic and suggested adding a principle about reducing speed limits while increasing the flow of movement. Speed should not be about how fast we move, but about how fast we move on average. Furthermore, if all users of the street move at the same speed, there is a greater potential for all users to intermingle.

- **Clarify Economic Prosperity.** Some participants requested clarification about whom economic prosperity is for in the Guiding Principle “Support Economic Prosperity.”
- **Clarify the last Guiding Principles.** Some participants felt that the last Guiding Principles “Sensitively Respond to Context” is vague and needs to be clarified.
- **Would the Complete Streets Guideline apply to all streets?** *Brent Raymond clarified that, yes, that’s the intent of the Guidelines.*
- *Comment Submitted after the Meeting:* There's no answer in the principles to the question of “do Complete Streets apply to all streets?”. Consider including "integrated into all parts of the city" to indicate they're not just a localized fluff for downtown but part of an integrated vision for the whole city.
- *Comment Submitted after the Meeting:* It would be good to incorporate the concept of flexibility—being complete can include being used in different ways at different times, for example being closed off for festivals or runs, having lanes be transit-only during rush hour, etc...
- *Comment Submitted after the Meeting:* It would be good to incorporate more explicitly the concept of streets as place as well as links, since that is really important, and essential to the Street Context concept. Consider balancing "connectivity/mobility" with something more explicit about being a place. Streets are not just a place to move, but also a place not to move.

### **PROPOSED FORMAT, SECTIONS, AND INTENDED AUDIENCES OF THE COMPLETE STREETS GUIDELINES**

In general, SAG members said that they needed more information about the content of the Complete Street Guidelines to review the table outlining the proposed format, sections, and intended audiences of the Guidelines. Several participants said they found the table useful for the most part and suggested including a preamble to tease out the thinking behind the table content. Other comments and advice included:

- **Performance metrics, procedures, and engagement are important to everyone.** Several participants said that these sections should be intended for everyone’s use, including developers, investors, elected officials, and street users of all abilities. As such, these sections need to be universally accessible and take into considerations the needs of all. One participant cautioned that special interests would be keen on particular metrics and it might be difficult to lump all metrics to one category.
- **Elected Officials should be treated as a separate category.** Several participants recommended creating a separate category for elected officials, as they are the ultimate decision-makers. As such, decision guidance and performance metrics would be especially useful to them.
- **There needs to be a balance between making the Guidelines accessible to everyone and not making the Guidelines everything to everyone.** Some SAG

members thought that the Guidelines should be “one size fits all” for all audiences. Other participants expressed some concern over trying to make the Guidelines everything to everyone.

- **It is important that the Guidelines are easy to understand and provide the essential information audiences need to know about streets.** Several participants suggested using less technical jargon and more of a “layperson’s language” especially in the public-facing sections. Ensure that the Vision and the Guiding Principles are at the beginning of the document and the technical procedures are at the back.
- *Comment Submitted after the Meeting:* Consider rethinking this approach to audiences. Are there really parts that won't be of interest to everyone with specific interests (i.e. other than the general public)?

### **3.2 Feedback about the Proposed Approach to Toronto’s Street Context**

SAG members expressed a lot of enthusiasm about the proposed approach to Toronto’s Street Context. Several participants said it was a good approach because it brings predictability to the design of Toronto’s streets, looks at streets from a pedestrian point of view, and recognizes the importance of the pedestrian realm. SAG members asked questions and gave advice about the proposed approach to Toronto’s Street Context:

- **The “place-link” approach is an innovative, interesting, and useful way to think about Toronto’s streets.** Many SAG members said they were happy to see the place-link approach to developing Toronto’s Complete Streets Guidelines. In addition to accommodating a pedestrian point of view and thinking about streets in an unprecedented way, this approach accommodates the needs of cyclists, transit users, and drivers, and recognizes that people change modes of transportation. For example, “place” recognizes the need for storage - parking, bike lock-ups, and transit stops – street elements that enable that change.
- **Can the Complete Streets Guidelines restrain growth? How would they affect the development application?** *Brent Raymond responded that it is not the Guidelines’ intent to restrain growth. In terms of the impacts on development applications, the team will consider how the Guidelines will relate to development application review. The Complete Streets Guidelines will contribute to the review of existing and the future contexts in development applications. The Guidelines will inform future policy updates and development that deal with urban development its relationship to the street network.*
- *Comment Submitted after the Meeting:* It is important to consider how the Guidelines will impact the application process given that there is a lot of growth and development in Toronto. For example, a Complete Street might mean that new buildings include a small setback from the sidewalk to widen it. Also, the Guidelines may impact the placement of parking garage access, front doors, street traffic capacity, parking, etc.

- **Treat Laneways and service roads as a separate street context.** Some participants mentioned that currently laneways and service roads are not captured under municipal regulations and much of these streets are not being used to their fullest potential. For example, it could be a part of the bike network or the network for service trucks. Furthermore, one participant suggested including roads narrower than 6 meters in Complete Streets, as generally laneways are between 3 and 6 meters wide.
- **Have you decided on the best way to present the link-place matrix?** *Brent Raymond replied that the team has tried avoiding using names for the street contexts, but rather focus on the existing and aspiring objectives of the street. There may end up being a combination of names and visuals.*
- **How do you deal with streets that change contexts—for example, from a large-scale Bloor Street to a small-scale Bloor Street?** *Brent Raymond replied that the minimum scale of a street is about the size of a block. For example, Eglinton Avenue is one long street with a lot of different street types—from a park street to a main street. Functionally, Eglinton Avenue is an arterial road, but it has many different street contexts. The team will provide more clarity on this at the next SAG meeting.*
- **How does your approach to Street Context accommodate a change in status of an area—e.g. from a small residential place to a high place status?** *The proposed approach to Toronto’s Street Context is based on both the link and the place status. So, if the residential streets sees more pedestrian activity, etc., and become an arterial road, then its link-place status changes as well.*

### 3.3 Public Engagement and Other Process Advice

Participants shared advice on how to best present this material to the public and on the engagement process. Advice included:

- **Use more visuals.** Many participants suggested using more images and pictures to make the Guidelines accessible and easy to understand to the public, including many multi-cultural residents of Toronto, who do not speak English as their first language. Furthermore, participants said that visuals can help connect scale with timelines—e.g. what is possible in 20 years. Other suggestions included using the cover of the Official Plan when the Guidelines refer to it and to use images when describing the vision and the principles.
- **Avoid technical jargon and planning terminology.** Several participants urged the team to avoid jargon and planning terminology and to make meeting materials more relatable to the public.
- **Provide verbal explanations to all the visuals in plain language.** Some participants said that in order to make meeting materials accessible to people with all abilities, including those with visual impairment, it’s important to make sure all visuals are accompanied by a short, easy-to-understand description.

- **Emphasize new ways of thinking about the streets.** Several participants said they found the part of the presentation on designing the street “from the outside to the inside” very useful because it is a new way of thinking about streets. They suggested focusing on this part of presentation and spending more time on it.
- **Make meeting materials publicly available before the meeting.** Some participants noted that it is difficult to formulate opinions on the fly. Having materials in advance gives the public to come to meetings informed and better prepared to share and participate in the consultation. Doing so would benefit everyone, including people with visual impairments.
- **It is important to articulate that the internal cross-divisional City structure is engaged in developing the Guidelines.** One participant noted that it should be clear that there is a process that generates an internal buy-in for this project through the Technical Advisory Committee.

#### 4. Next Steps

The City and Consultant Team thanked participants for their feedback and committed to sharing a Draft Workshop Summary in the coming weeks. They reminded participants of a number of upcoming events related to the project, including the Bike Summit, the Active City Forum, upcoming meetings with the 6 Points and Eglinton Connects teams, upcoming public consultations, and the next SAG meeting in early summer, 2015.

## **Appendix A. Meeting Agenda**

### **City of Toronto Complete Streets Guidelines**

Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #1

Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Room 314

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

6:00 – 6:30 pm: Open House

6:30 – 9:00 pm: Presentation and Discussion

## **Proposed Agenda**

**Purpose:** To introduce the project team, review the role of the SAG, brief SAG members on the work done to date on Toronto's Complete Streets Guidelines, as well as present on and seek feedback on the intended audiences of the Guidelines, Vision and Principles, and Recommended Approach for Toronto.

**6:00 pm**     **Open House**

**6:30**             **Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review** -- *City of Toronto, Swerhun Facilitation*

**6:35**             **Review of SAG membership** – *Swerhun Facilitation*

**6:45**             **Overview Presentation** -- *City of Toronto, DTAH, Nelson/Nygaard*  
*Questions of Clarification*

**7:05**             **Discussion**

1. Would the Guidelines in the proposed format be helpful to you? Would you like to see any changes or additions in terms of the intended audiences, proposed sections, and the proposed style of the sections?
2. What do you think about presented Vision and Guiding Principles for Complete Streets? Do you think anything is missing?

**7:45**             **Recommended Approach for Toronto** -- *Nelson/Nygaard*

*Questions of Clarification*

**8:05**             **Discussion**

3. What do you think about the potential approaches to street context? Would you suggest any changes or additions?

**8:40**             **Other Advice**

4. Do you have any advice on how to communicate this content to the general public?

**8:55**             **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

**9:00**             **Adjourn**

## Appendix B. List of Invitees and Participants

Below is the list of the organizations that were invited to apply for SAG membership. The organizations that participated in the first SAG meeting are noted in **bold**.

8-80 Cities	Cancer Care Ontario	<b>Metrolinx - Smart Commute</b>	Residential and Civil
Active and Safe Routes to School	CARP	Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC)	Construction Alliance of Ontario
<b>Alliance for Equality for Blind Canadians (AEBC)</b>	Centre for Independent Living in Toronto CILT	Municipal Engineers Association of Ontario	Ryerson University
Architecture for Humanity	<b>City of Mississauga</b>	<b>Municipal Urban Designers Roundtable (MUDR)</b>	Senior's Strategy Leader
Autoshare	<b>Transportation Works Department</b>	Neptis Foundation	Share the Road Coalition
Beanfield	Civic Action	<b>North American Native Plant Society</b>	Spacing
Bell Canada	Clean Air Partnership	<b>Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA)</b>	Steve Munro
BionX International Coporation	<b>CNIB</b>	Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO)	<b>The Laneway Project</b>
<b>Building, Industry, and Land Development (BILD)</b>	Code Red TO	Ontario Motor Coach Association	Toronto and Region
Canada Post	Council for Canadian Urbanism	Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI)	Conservation Authority
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment	Creating Healthy and Sustainable Environments	Ontario Public Works Association (OPWA)	Toronto Association of BIAs (TABIA)
<b>Canadian Automobile Association (CAA)</b>	Cycle Toronto	Ontario Traffic Council	Toronto Atmospheric Fund
<b>Canadian National Institute for the Blind</b>	Cycling Think and Do Tank	Ontario Trucking Association	<b>Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT)</b>
<b>Council of Canadians for the Blind</b>	Ecojustice	<b>Park People</b>	Toronto Community Foundation
Canadian Courier and Logistics Association	Enbridge Gas Distribution	People Plan Toronto	Toronto Electric Riders Association (TERA)
Canadian Environmental Law Association	Environmental Defence Canada	Pollution Probe	Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)
Canadian Institute of Transportation Engineers	Enwave	Public Space Workshop	Toronto Society of Architects
Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA)	Evergreen	Registered Nurses Association of Ontario	Transportation Options
	Green Communities Canada		TTC Riders
	<b>Harbord Village Residents Association</b>		University of Toronto
	Heart and Stroke		Urban Land Institute
	iTaxiWorkers		<b>Urban+Digital</b>
	Jane's Walk		<b>Walk Toronto</b>
	LEAF		Waterfront Regeneration Trust
	Metrolinx - GO Transit		Wellesley Institute