



**planning toronto's downtown**

# First Round of Community Consultations Summary Report

In the month of June, the City of Toronto hosted community consultation meetings on [TOcore: Planning Toronto's Downtown](#), an interdivisional study looking at how the downtown should grow in the next forty years. Three community consultation meetings were held, one in each downtown ward. The details were as follows:

**DATE:** Thursday, June 18, 2015

**PLACE:** Wellesley Community Centre, 495 Sherbourne St  
Councillor Pam McConnell, Ward 28

**DATE:** Tuesday, June 23, 2015

**PLACE:** Metro Hall, 55 John Street (Room 308)  
Councillor Joe Cressy, Ward 20

**DATE:** Monday, June 29, 2015

**PLACE:** Jarvis Collegiate Institute, 495 Jarvis Street  
Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, Ward 27

Altogether, approximately 120 people participated in the community consultations, including residents and workers in Downtown and those who visit Downtown.

The purpose of the consultations was to inform the public of the study, introduce the study's goals and to provide an opportunity for the public to share their questions, comments and feedback on the study. [Twenty-two panels](#) were put on display as individual stations inviting feedback. The panels show the challenges and opportunities of each of TOcore's eight study goals: Balancing Growth; Creating Complete Communities; Sustaining a Robust Economy; Increasing Mobility; Improving Parks and Public Spaces; Enhancing Community Services and Facilities; Creating a Resilient Downtown; and Ensuring Capacity in the Pipe.

## *TOcore Public Open House on the Proposed Downtown Plan and Infrastructure Strategies – Summary Report*

Each consultation started with an open house at 6:30 p.m. Gregg Lintern, Director of Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, presented an overview of the TOcore study, speaking to the residential and non-residential growth trends in the Downtown, introducing the study goals, and detailing the three phases within the study that span three years from 2014 to 2017. Following the presentation, 30 minutes were devoted to questions from the members of the public for clarification purposes on the presentation.

At 8:00 p.m, members of the public were encouraged to visit each of the panel stations to provide their views in writing on flipcharts and on sticky-notes posted on maps, as well as through conversations with City Staff from 6 collaborating divisions, including:

- City Planning;
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation;
- Transportation Services;
- Economic Development and Culture;
- Toronto Water; and
- Environment & Energy Division.

This summary report is a review of all the comments received. Questions about this summary can be directed to George Pantazis, Assistant Planner, Strategic Initiatives, City of Toronto, by email ([gpantaz@toronto.ca](mailto:gpantaz@toronto.ca)) or by phone (416-392-3566).

## **Summary of Feedback**

The summary of feedback below is organized by ward and study goal. The feedback was shared through conversations with study team members and in writing on flipcharts, responding to questions posed by each study goal.

### **WARD 20**

#### **Planning Framework & the Economy**

##### *Questions*

What do you like most about your neighbourhood?

What would you like to see improved in your neighbourhood?

## *TOcore Public Open House on the Proposed Downtown Plan and Infrastructure Strategies – Summary Report*

What are the most important planning issues we need to address to make Downtown a great place to live?

What ideas do you have to make Downtown a better place to work? Shop? Learn? Play?

### *Feedback*

- Evaluate and measure how the **increase in density is impacting mental health and stress levels**
- Increase the **amount of mixed use and expand live/work buildings** for small businesses (creates vibrant living space)
- **Long term plans to meet the needs of families** (e.g. child care, parks, community centres)
- More **meaningful heritage protection**
- Plan for **affordable spaces for arts and culture, and retailers**
- **Stores have improved** overall in the Downtown (such as along Bay, York, and Upper Yonge)
- **Storefront music** can affront pedestrians and drivers
- Create a Downtown character that **mixes old and new architecture**
- More advanced consultation with culture community for property development. New Section 37 spaces are not really usable because there is no demand for the space. **Build smart spaces that art groups can benefit from.**
- Have a **WIFI public network** that is free and will support tourism industry
- What cities are we looking at for inspiration? What cities do we want to avoid emulating?

### **Parks and Public Realm**

#### *Questions*

What do you enjoy most about your favourite Downtown park, open space or street?

What improvements would you like to see to parks, open spaces and streets in the Downtown?

What is your top priority for change?

*Feedback*

- We need **triple the amount of green space** in Ward 20 than what we have now
- Use **green corridors** to connect green spaces
- Get **businesses involved in taking care of new trees** since the City doesn't seem to have the resources to do it (for example watering new trees in the summer)
- Require developers to meet a **certain green space ratio** in their development
- Give developers incentives to **build planters into balconies**
- More **indigenous plants**
- There are sometimes **conflicting uses in parks** (for example, dogs vs. children)
- **Dogs** are a problem in parks
- **Layer in more small parks** that are connected through more improved pedestrian connections and bike lanes
- Have more **urban gardens and community gardens**
- Downtown has **lost its tree canopy**
- Use **Richmond Street as a pilot project for street tree infrastructure** and water conservation
- There is **no children's park** along the waterfront even though many children live by the waterfront
- In partnership with sports organizations, create a **real running and cycling trail network** with safe connections, smooth surfaces, fountains, etc.
- Need more **wider sidewalks** for growing populations
- Integrate parks to **take advantage of stormwater**
- Parks are being cordoned off on peak tourist weekends for commercial reasons. **This practice defeats the purpose of having a people's waterfront**

## **Community Services and Facilities (recreation, childcare, libraries, schools, and human services)**

### *Questions*

What community services are most important to you and your family?

What improvements would you like to see to community services in the Downtown?

What is your top priority for change?

### *Feedback*

- **Add social amenities** (such as basketball courts) in Ward 20 to serve exploding population
- In areas with several new condo buildings, encourage commons areas to be designed to be accessible to outside users and co-ordinate to reduce duplication in neighbouring buildings. Better **amenity space programming** in condo buildings and **shared public access**
- Have more affordable and **accessible arts and cultural facilities**
- **Recreational facilities needs to be completely transformed to be client/citizen-focused.** They seem to be inward looking at best. Involve users in decisions, ask what they want! In free facilities, get voluntary contributions and use the funds to expand hours, programming, amenities and find other ways to make money – e.g. vending machines

## **Transportation**

### *Questions*

What mode of transportation do you use the most to move around or travel to and from Downtown?

What improvements would you like to see to transit (surface and underground), cycling and pedestrian networks, and goods movements?

What is your top priority for change?

### *Feedback*

- Residents tend to **walk** and use **transit** as the mode of transportation most used to move around Downtown.
- Have **low emission zones** in certain parts of the Downtown

## *TOcore Public Open House on the Proposed Downtown Plan and Infrastructure Strategies – Summary Report*

- Unless we build new roads, we need a **hard cap on the number of parking spaces**. New development would be okay, but no parking, or they have to secure it in existing properties.
- **New development should contribute to transit infrastructure** and even operations
- **Study how buses could be relied on more** to compliment street cars and subways Downtown (including more express routes)
- Include **new mobility business models** (for example, Uber, dynamic carpooling, etc.) to shed the use of cars
- Use **controlled lights** to allow pedestrians with impediments to safely get across the road.
- **Reduce traffic speeds** through policy and design on local commercial streets.
- Have a **dedicated streetcar lane** on King and Queen
- Use **special intersection crossing light** that can extend time for elderly or children or people that are mobility challenged
- Implement **bike licensing** to raise money to support bike lanes and educate bikers for safer travel
- **Extend bike share opportunities** north of Bloor
- **Move storm drains away from curbs** so cyclists have a safer ride

### **Water and Energy**

#### *Questions*

Do you have any concerns about water and/or energy infrastructure in the Downtown?

What ideas do you have to improve conservation and resilience during extreme weather events?

What is your top priority for change?

#### *Feedback*

- More needs to be done to adapt to a **changing climate**, such as **burying power lines**, **reducing the risk of flooding**, etc.

## *TOcore Public Open House on the Proposed Downtown Plan and Infrastructure Strategies – Summary Report*

- Can we produce more electricity through **rooftop solar panels**?
- Can we bring in **biomass-fueled district energy systems**, especially in growing areas?
- Put **stormwater and grey water into public green spaces** and **provide green roofs**
- Use **more permeable pavement** instead of asphalt
- **Streetlights** can sometimes malfunction, which can be problematic for safety
- A **network of collection points** for small electronics in stores (idea used in Quebec and France)
- Think about **super high speed broad band** as a basic utility

### **Ward 27**

#### **Planning Framework & the Economy**

##### *Questions*

What do you like most about your neighbourhood?

What would you like to see improved in your neighbourhood?

What are the most important planning issues we need to address to make Downtown a great place to live?

What ideas do you have to make Downtown a better place to work? Shop? Learn? Play?

##### *Feedback*

- Streetscape and diversity of uses makes Downtown a place you want to be. Need to **encourage more active retail and restaurant uses** throughout the Downtown.
- Need to **increase safety through urban design** in our streets, parks, laneways, etc.

#### **Parks and Public Realm**

##### *Questions*

What do you enjoy most about your favourite Downtown park, open space or street?

What improvements would you like to see to parks, open spaces and streets in the Downtown?

What is your top priority for change?

## *TOcore Public Open House on the Proposed Downtown Plan and Infrastructure Strategies – Summary Report*

### *Feedback*

- Downtown parks are being **overrun by dogs**
- **Close streets to pedestrians** during specific hours and open them up later for cars
- Turn wider laneways into café areas with shipping container restaurants like on Bathurst and Dundas.
- For parks and public realm, **need to study: lighting, noise, dogs, traffic speed and safety.**
- Continue to **develop culture corridors** within our public realm

### **Community Services and Facilities (recreation, childcare, libraries, schools, and human services)**

#### *Questions*

What community services are most important to you and your family?

What improvements would you like to see to community services in the Downtown?

What is your top priority for change?

#### *Feedback*

- TOcore panels do not address the **role of churches as local community-based services**
- Should consider building **salt water pools**
- Need to **increase policing** within Downtown

### **Transportation**

#### *Questions*

What mode of transportation do you use the most to move around or travel to and from Downtown?

What improvements would you like to see to transit (surface and underground), cycling and pedestrian networks, and goods movements?

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### *Feedback*

- Consider **reserved/dedicated street car lanes without physical ROW construction** (only signage and enforcement). Could have these lanes dedicated only on peak hours (for example, Gerard Street)
- King Street should be **streetcar and pedestrian only**
- **Increase parking on side streets**, reduce on main street so traffic, transit, cyclists can flow easily and safely
- **Sidewalks not wide enough** on Jarvis, Church and Yonge. Take away traffic lane and improve sidewalk width as pedestrian volumes are high.
- Reduce space for cars and **preserve lane system for walking**
- Add more **lanes for connectivity**
- Zone areas in Downtown for **service vehicles only**
- Improve **accessibility for subway and streetcar**
- Discourage **traffic on “cut through routes,”** such as Charles Street from Jarvis to University
- **Reduce lanes** on Jarvis back to 4 lanes and widen sidewalks

## **WARD 28**

### **Planning Framework & the Economy**

#### *Questions*

What do you like most about your neighbourhood?

What would you like to see improved in your neighbourhood?

What are the most important planning issues we need to address to make Downtown a great place to live?

What ideas do you have to make Downtown a better place to work? Shop? Learn? Play?

### *Feedback*

- Would like to see more Regent Park redevelopment projects on the East end of Downtown. **The Moss Park apartments should be redeveloped** in the same way as Regent Park.
- Currently, the Ontario Municipal Board deals “case-by-case” and refuses to listen to arguments about overloaded infrastructure. **Policies in Official Plan need to specifically address capacity in infrastructure.**
- Need to ensure that we get **smaller store sizes** so we don’t get one large franchise store in the ground floor of a midrise building. Only franchise business can afford to rent such a large space.
- **Affordable housing will reach crisis** unless we drastically change status quo.

### **Parks and Public Realm**

#### *Questions*

What do you enjoy most about your favourite Downtown park, open space or street?

What improvements would you like to see to parks, open spaces and streets in the Downtown?

What is your top priority for change?

#### *Feedback*

- Residents in Ward 28 like **Allan Gardens** as a great green open space with enough shade for the warmer months and a greenhouse
- Parks and open spaces are in general a **great place for everyone to mingle** (dogs, children, seniors, families, couples, etc.).
- Sherbourne Street was recognized as a favourite street because of the **separated bike lanes**
- Need **more trees** and green space instead of concrete open space
- More **public eating spaces** as well as **public washrooms**
- Within parks, add **more benches** and **drinking fountains**
- Get rid of freeways and have **more boulevards**

## *TOcore Public Open House on the Proposed Downtown Plan and Infrastructure Strategies – Summary Report*

- Enhance the connection between parks as **green corridors** and add green infrastructure to them
- Enhance access to **Rosedale Valley Ravine Trail**

### **Community Services and Facilities (recreation, childcare, libraries, schools, and human services)**

#### *Questions*

What community services are most important to you and your family?

What improvements would you like to see to community services in the Downtown?

What is your top priority for change?

#### *Feedback*

- The following were flagged as the most important to residents and their families:
  - Healthcare facilities, specifically **hospitals**
  - Places and services to support life enhancing opportunities (creating **complete caring communities**)
  - **Libraries**, which act as a hub for all other services
- Downtown needs more **combined services and facilities**. Have a mix of services in one facility. Put a library, recreation, and childcare in one building.

### **Transportation**

#### *Questions*

What mode of transportation do you use the most to move around or travel to and from Downtown?

What improvements would you like to see to transit (surface and underground), cycling and pedestrian networks, and goods movements?

What is your top priority for change?

#### *Feedback*

- Residents tend to **cycle** and **walk** as the mode of transportation most used to move around Downtown.
- **Dedicated streetcar and bus lanes** should be implemented within downtown.

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- **Increase the number of streetcars** on Dundas Street East to address the increase in density around Regent Park
- For **bikes**:
  - Connect lanes
  - Create accessibility east to the Don Valley
  - Re-paint lines on the bicycle lanes
  - Add more green lanes
- Market Street should be **free of cars**
- Make use of more **pedestrian priority lights**
- Make streets safer by **lowering the speed limit**
- Cars should have a **right turn light** at intersection
- Illegal parking and idling should be dealt with through **enforcement**
- Should have more **pedestrian days** on different streets throughout the Downtown
- Recognize every street as a cycling street
  - Build streets where **cars and bikes can co-exist**
- **Expand bike share** with on-road stations
- East end of Downtown is **underserved by transit**. A streetcar running down Parliament Street would greatly serve the area.
- **Woonerfs** should be placed in character areas to support year-round active streets
- **Create parking maximums** instead of parking minimums. We need less parking for cars in new building, and more affordable spaces.
- Develop an **integrated transportation strategy**

### **Water and Energy**

#### *Questions*

Do you have any concerns about water and/or energy infrastructure in the Downtown?

*TOcore Public Open House on the Proposed Downtown Plan and Infrastructure Strategies – Summary Report*

What ideas do you have to improve conservation and resilience during extreme weather events?

What is your top priority for change?

*Feedback*

- Need more green infrastructure to **restore natural systems** (use co-generated systems, for example)
- **Add more trees** that are well planned to have a hundred year lifespan
- **Reduce the number of cars** in the Downtown to reduce emissions

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

- Mayor's **Open Door policy** is only is only \$2 million, which is not enough to stimulate growth, especially for social and rent-geared-to-income housing
- Dedicated calls for **housing partnerships** to keep downtown accessible
- Need diverse bylaws to **protect rentals** in condominiums
- **Circle discussions** → empower community members to talk about TOcore to their own communities. De-centralize engagement to address high illiteracy and language barriers.