

## 2.0 IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter documents the need and justification for the St. Clair Avenue West Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Several supporting analyses were undertaken to develop a rationale for the study, including a review of the City's policy framework and an assessment of the identified problems and opportunities within the study area.

### 2.1 Problems and Opportunities

St. Clair Avenue West is a heavily-used street in the City of Toronto that features two lanes of traffic in each direction alongside the dedicated Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) streetcar right-of-way (ROW). In the area of the railway underpass between Keele Street / Weston Road and Old Weston Road, the bridge span limits the roadway to one traffic lane in each direction.

The City of Toronto continues to be a growing City, as stipulated in the *Places to Grow Act*. To support this growth, the City must ensure adequate transportation infrastructure is in place to provide efficient means for people to move within the city.

Problems and opportunities within the study area have been identified by reviewing the existing conditions and current initiatives by others. An assessment of the study information identified the following:

#### Problems

- Reoccurring traffic congestion along St. Clair Avenue West under the railway underpass due to the lane reduction.
- Limited east-west routes crossing the rail corridor within the study area that limit the movement of people and goods.
- No continuous cycling facilities exist within the study area.
- The Kitchener Rail Corridor rail bridge over St. Clair Avenue West was constructed in 1931, and requires rehabilitation work within the next five years that would result in extensive traffic disruptions. After the rehabilitation, it is expected that the bridge can operate another 15 years before needing to be replaced.

#### Opportunities

- Develop a plan for future capacity improvements to relieve traffic congestion while ensuring the efficient movement of people and goods.
- Create linkages to existing facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Improve access and connections to public transit facilities.
- Implement a construction plan that allows for road works to be coordinated with the rail bridge replacement to minimize traffic and rail disruption.
- The St. Clair rail bridge reconstruction will also accommodate the addition of a 4th

track for the Metrolinx GO Expansion program and protection for a second CP track.

## 2.2 Accommodating Planned Growth and Community Revitalization

The City of Toronto is located within the boundaries of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (2017) (Growth Plan), which is a comprehensive growth management plan to the year 2041. The Growth Plan includes guidelines to support the expansion infrastructure to accommodate the planned growth. While the St. Clair Avenue West TMP study area is not designated as an urban growth centre, 2016 statistics indicate the population within the entire study area is growing. The proposed infrastructure improvements developed and considered in this study support the growth within the study area as well as the planned growth within the City of Toronto by providing connectivity among transportation modes, new and improve road infrastructure using the 'complete streets' approach, supporting active transportation, and improving transit.

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 designates 31 specific neighbourhoods as a 'neighbourhood improvement area'. The strategy offers an action plan to ensuring that these neighbourhoods can thrive by strengthening the social, economic and physical conditions.

Sections of the TMP study area have been designated by the City of Toronto as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area (2014), including Neighbourhoods 91, 110, and 111. The staff at the Community Hub located at 1652 Keele Street have provided comments which cite safety issues within the vicinity of the hub. The proposed transportation improvements incorporates a 'complete streets' approach to the design, support active transportation, and improve safety and accessibility in the area, thereby providing infrastructure to support the growth of a stronger neighbourhood.

## 2.3 Problem and Opportunity Statement

Under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process, proponents are required to develop and document problems and opportunities that provide reasonable justification to proceed with the project. The following problem and opportunity statement was prepared by the Project Team and refined based on comments received from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

The north/south rail corridor in the vicinity of St. Clair Avenue West between Keele Street and Old Weston Road limits east/west movement for cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles. This results in issues of congestion and connectivity.

The Transportation Master Plan will evaluate alternatives to improve movement using existing and potential new road connections for the benefit of all modes of travel.