

West Toronto Railpath Extension Detailed Design

Key Stakeholder Meeting #1 - May 14, 2018

Meeting Summary

Overview

The West Toronto Railpath Extension (WTRE) Key Stakeholder Meeting #1 for the Detailed Design phase was held on May 14, 2018, at ArtScape Youngplace, 180 Shaw Street. Stakeholder groups that were highly involved in the Environmental Assessment study, as well as active transportation groups, were formally invited to participate in the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to re-establish relationships with key stakeholders, provide them with an update on the status of the Detail Design phase prior to a general public update, to create an opportunity for engagement between key stakeholders and members of the project team, and to better understand key stakeholders' priorities in regards to the design phase of the project.

Attendees

Key stakeholders that were represented at the meeting included:

- Friends of West Toronto Railpath
- Friends of Sorauren Park
- DeRAIL
- Cycle Toronto
- Walk Toronto
- Office of Councillor Ana Bailao, Ward 18
- Office of Councillor Mike Layton, Ward 19

Members of the project team present included representatives from Hatch Ltd. Montgomery Sisam Architects and FORREC Landscape Architecture Studio. Staff from City of Toronto Transportation Services were also present. Metrolinx employees were not able to attend due to restrictions on public activity during the writ period of the provincial election.

Presentation

Members of the project team from Hatch Ltd. and the City of Toronto delivered a presentation that addressed:

- Recommendations for the Railpath Extension made through the Environmental Assessment study;
- Activities and related project activity that took place since the completion of the EA in May 2016;
- An introduction to Hatch and the project team, including sub-consultants;
- An overview of the Detail Design phase, including deliverables, project components and timeline;
- Planned public consultation activities for the Detail Design phase;

- Information about north- and south-end tie in of the trail
- Updates on connections between the Railpath Extension and other related projects in the area.

Questions & Discussion:

1. *WTR was supposed to continue north of Phase 1. There are people still exploring options for this.*
 - City of Toronto: Thanks for raising this. Extension north of Phase 1 is not within the scope of the current Railpath Extension project.
2. *Metrolinx owes the area trees. Is Scott Torrance aware of this? Metrolinx has an obligation to fulfill.*
 - CoT: Unfortunately this isn't something we're in a position to address. It wasn't discussed with Metrolinx representatives before the meeting. However, we will take this point back to Metrolinx for their response.
 - CoT: Future electrification of the corridor may impact how trees are managed.
 - i. *Post meeting response provided by Metrolinx:*
Metrolinx understands that trees are an important part of communities, and environmental responsibility is a core value for Metrolinx. Electrification of the core segments of the GO network requires a maximum seven metre clearance zone from the center of the outermost electrified track for safety, maintenance, and to reduce the risk of trees falling on the track or overhead wires. Other works necessarily require the removal/injury of trees to provide space for new or expanded infrastructure.

Tree removals/injuries are assessed as part of the environmental assessments undertaken for our projects. Metrolinx is committed to compensating for tree loss and making a meaningful long-term contribution to the tree canopy across the region, and we are working with the Conservation Authorities and Municipalities to explore the adoption of a Vegetation Compensation Protocol, which will be a standard approach to tree removal and related compensation.
3. *Don't forget about the future bridge to Sorauren Park. You have not mentioned it in the presentation slides. It should be mentioned in all public communications. We like the term 'futureproofing' because it reflects the commitment that the bridge over the Barrie corridor will be designed to ensure the bridge to Sorauren Park is technically feasible in the future.*
 - CoT: Thanks for raising this. This messaging will be included in future communications.
4. *Metrolinx has publicly posted an expropriation notice for 1875 Dundas.*
 - CoT: This isn't something that we're able to comment on.

5. *Will City of Toronto Bikeways Guidelines replace the MTO Bikeways Guidelines in terms of directing the design process?*
 - CoT Transportation staff: Yes, if the City guidelines are finalized by that time.
6. *What elements of bridge design will the public be consulted on?*
 - Montgomery Sisam: Most likely span options, design of guards and railings, stairs and ramps.
7. *It's important to engage the public early around public art. We're surprised that public art isn't part of the current project. This priority for early engagement is reflected in a new City report.*
 - Thanks for raising this as a priority. We're not familiar with the report but will look into it.
 - CoT: Gatineau Trail is an example of a project where public art wasn't initially part of the project, but they were still able to incorporate it.
 - i. **Post-meeting note:** The report referred to is Redefining Public Art in Toronto (2017) prepared jointly by OCAD University and University of Toronto. The City's Economic Development Committee has committed to reviewing the report with City Planning and City staff will report back with any recommendations and steps required to improve Toronto's public art policies and practices.
8. *Ideally the project team would work with stakeholders to identify sites that can be used for public art as the project moves forward, for example to reimagine a space as it is decommissioned. Could the project team facilitate a walkshop for the key stakeholders to identify sites?*
 - CoT: We have noted your suggestion and will need to discuss it with the full project team.
9. *Bridges with switchback ramp access can be an inconvenience for pedestrians. Please keep stairs as an access option.*
 - CoT: It's very unlikely that there will be ramps with switchbacks because there is such limited space to work with.
10. *It should be noted that there are people still working to get Railpath over the tracks and into Liberty Village. But you need to be careful how the King-Liberty SmartTrack station drawing is presented: the upper dotted orange line on Sudbury St. was never a part of Railpath. It makes property owners in the area nervous.*
 - CoT: Thanks for bringing this to our attention. It's something we will discuss with the City of Toronto staff who are working on station design.
 - CoT Transportation staff: Another round of public consultation for station design is coming in June.

11. *Is there consideration of a future cycle track along Bloor through the Bloor-Lansdowne area? Raising the sidewalk under the rail bridge over the Barrie corridor at Bloor would be good.*
 - CoT Transportation staff: We have received this recommendation before.
12. *Is there a way for eastbound cyclists on Dundas Street West to connect to the Railpath?*
 - CoT: We need to look at property requirements. In the past we have received the recommendation to keep the Railpath off the street. If you review the EA report, there was a consideration of a south side connection.
13. *At the bridges, is it possible for users to connect directly to the streets that they pass over?*
 - Yes, but there are currently no plans to build additional on-street cycling infrastructure to connect with the WTRE at this point, unless it was already identified in the Ten Year Cycling Network Plan.
14. *We're concerned that there is no timeline for construction.*
 - CoT: Construction of the Railpath Extension must be coordinated with other Metrolinx construction projects in the area, specifically the Barrie corridor expansion project, to avoid a situation where we have to pull out a trail that has already been constructed.
15. *What if there is a review of Metrolinx, given the upcoming election, and funding for the Barrie corridor expansion project is pulled back? How would this impact the timeline for construction of the WTRE?*
 - This isn't something we're able to comment on but it's important to recognize that completion of the Detail Design phase gets us 'shovel-in-the-ground ready' for construction.
16. *This question is for Scott Torrance: Some things worked better than others in Phase 1, so it's helpful to reflect on what we have learned from Phase 1. Do you plan to do things the same? When can we give you feedback based on that experience?*
 - Scott Torrance: I'm open to hearing suggestions now. What have you seen?
17. *We have learned a lot about different user types. Different users use the path at different times of day and days of the week (commuters vs. dog walkers)*
18. *It's important to have visual cues at access points that send the message to slow down.*
19. *It's essential to creating a connection to Railpath for people who live in the area but don't use the path.*

20. *The planting plan from Phase 1 was great (retaining seeds from the original landscape). Continue this; there should be a strong dialogue with Phase 1.*
- Scott Torrance: One challenge we are facing with the landscape is limited space south of Dundas. It's a very different context compared to Phase 1.
21. *It might be helpful to create a separation of users, but not to the point where the trail isn't going to be built. The trail should be intuitive (unlike Queen's Quay, which can be confusing for pedestrians who are visually impaired). We need to reconsider messaging that suggests that Railpath is a commuter route or messaging that it's a way to get bikes off the street.*
22. *Loblaws doesn't really see that there is a benefit to facilitating a connection from the Railpath to the store for customers of NoFrills. We need someone to have a conversation with them about this.*
23. *Please ensure that there are provisions for maintenance in the tender documents. The quality of the Bloor GO station is very poor*
- Hatch: There is a need for better control during construction
24. *Is there space for a ramp to/from the bridge at Brock Street?*
- CoT: We will need to review the designs and follow up on this.

Meeting Wrap-Up

- A summary of the meeting will be sent to all key stakeholders that were present.
- A project update on the website and through the project mailing list can be expected in the next few weeks.
- A feedback form was distributed. Stakeholders were encouraged to contact the Public Consultation Unit with questions or additional feedback.