

yonge**T**omorrow

**Municipal Class EA –
Yonge Street from Queen Street to College Street**

Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #7 Summary

Prepared by LURA Consulting for the City of Toronto
December 2020

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Overview

The City of Toronto hosted a seventh Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) meeting for the yongeTOMorrow: Municipal Class Assessment (EA) – Yonge Street from Queen Street to College Street on December 9, 2020, from 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. The meeting was hosted virtually using Webex. The purpose of the SAG meeting was to:

- provide a summary of Round Three of Consultation feedback
- share updates on the Recommended Design Concept and Updated Modelling Results
- provide an opportunity for questions and answers

There were 41 SAG member organizations and two Indigenous organizations invited to represent various sectors within the Study Area. A total of 26 participants, representing 22 SAG member organizations attended the SAG meeting. The stakeholders included Business Improvement Areas, Resident Associations, research and advocacy groups, educational institutions, landowners and other stakeholders. A full list of SAG members and participants can be found in **Appendix A**.

This meeting feedback document is organized according to the SAG Meeting #7 Agenda. A detailed agenda can be found in **Appendix B**.

Meeting Presentation – Study Progress

The SAG meeting began with a Land Acknowledgement and opening remarks provided by Councillor Wong-Tam, Toronto Centre. Liz McHardy, LURA Consulting, then reviewed the agenda and meeting purpose and facilitated around of introductions. Johanna Kyte, City of Toronto, followed with a presentation providing an overview of Round Three of Consultation and an update on the Recommended Design Concept. Andy Barker, Steer Group, then provided an overview of the updated modelling results for the project. Following the presentations, Liz McHardy facilitated a questions of clarification discussion with SAG members.

Summary of Feedback

Participants had questions about the updated traffic modelling results as well as the changes in operation of the street in the Recommended Design Concept. Organizational representatives shared comments about how interactions with Yonge Street have changed based on COVID-19 (i.e., increase in delivery services). Organizations continued to express both support and concern about the Recommended Design Concept. Key topics that were raised include accessibility and barrier free design elements, loading and drop-off considerations, street vitality and the future of SAG involvement as the project moves into the next phase of Detailed Design.

Questions of Clarification

The following represents a summary of the questions of clarification that followed the presentation. Questions posed by participants are noted with a ‘Q,’ participant comments are marked with a ‘C’ and answers/responses provided by the Project Team are represented by an ‘A’.

- C.** With respect to future developments, it is important to be transparent about the number of parking spaces that have been allocated for future residential developments, as those

cars are not there today. The Downtown Yonge BIA (DYBIA) is doing some additional studies in regard to our existing parking lot usage and neighbourhood capacity.

- A.** Of the proposed developments in the pipeline, there are only a few that are approved at this point in time. The future traffic models are based on projections of growth for the neighbourhood and future development targets. There is accommodation in the traffic modelling for 2031 based on future developments.
- Q.** In the traffic modelling update, you referenced a change for the slowing of streetcars. Why did that lead to an improvement in the traffic results?
- A.** The change has to do with how the boarding and disembarking of passengers was programmed into the model. The issue was not that streetcars were being slowed down by the changes being made to Yonge Street. In the model, streetcars were stopping on the street for unrealistic amounts of time (closing the lane for upwards of 10-15 minutes) and we corrected that issue.
- C.** One thing the Downtown-Yonge BIA is learning because of COVID-19 is that the amount of vehicle traffic is increasing within the residential population, as a result of delivery services (e.g., Skip the Dishes and UberEATS). This is creating congestion. We need to look at the lay-bys again to understand what will be needed as a result of changes to how purchasing is being done. It is no longer about foot traffic on the street.
- A.** Councillor Wong-Tam responded that she had recently had a conversation with twenty prominent developers to review the programmatic and potential changes to Yonge Street. She shared there was agreement that a street prioritizing pedestrians would be important and that developers will continue to ask for reductions of parking ratios. Developers believed that most of the parking spots they are being asked to build are not going to be used by the occupants of the building because of the live-work nature of the area. Developers anticipated that most people will be walking out of their buildings and not necessarily traveling far by vehicle.
- Q.** Is there a recommendation from the team about speed limits on Yonge Street in the project area?
- A.** Yes, the Project Team's recommendation is to lower the speed limit to 30 km/h. The speed limit is an operational change, which will continue to be discussed.
- C.** The David Suzuki Foundation would be pleased to see speeds reduced to 30 km/h, as it would achieve the goals of the project.
- Q.** You mentioned that there was a reduction in travel time on Dundas Street because of changes in timing for the pedestrian scramble. Can you explain that?
- A.** The reduction is a result of signal timing changes and the way the scramble signal works. Right now, there are more phases in the signal than will be needed once the pedestrian priority zone is implemented. By implementing pedestrian priority along Yonge Street north and south of Dundas Street, pedestrians can move east or west any time, and the pedestrian scramble phase can be removed from the signal timing, speeding up the overall cycle.
- Q.** I did not see Victoria Street in the traffic data. I know it is not a commuter route, but have you looked at the impact that this project would have on Victoria Street between Queen

Street and Dundas Street? I have some concerns about that area becoming a lot more congested.

A. The purpose of this modelling exercise is understanding impacts on a neighbourhood and network level. In terms of travel times, we are looking at reductions on major arterial routes that go through the focus area. For example, the Project Team looked at how long it takes to get from Jarvis Street to University Avenue, or from Queen Street to College Street. Since Victoria Street is a shorter street, it was not looked at specifically. However, the team has looked at impacts to intersections as part of the overall modelling process and tried to maximize efficient movement on a neighbourhood level. Shuter Street and Victoria Street was one of the intersections looked at, and at a high level there were no obvious issues on Victoria Street.

Q. Are the traffic simulations based on a normal day or are you stress testing it with impacts such as multiple large events happening in the area?

A. They are based on a normal day's traffic patterns and the City's regional demand models. The Project Team also used real world traffic counts at signalized intersections to determine the typical a.m. and p.m. peaks.

Q. Is it possible to consider the setup of shows and the trucks that will be loading and unloading daily in the modelling?

A. In the model, the team did include temporary road blockages, which are about the length of a car or truck on all the major arterial roads at random intervals (every five to 10 minutes or so for one to two minutes). When looking at the model, they pop up quite frequently and are there to account for anything from delivery trucks, ride hail and any other blockages.

The purpose of the modelling exercises is to have an overview and understand the function of the traffic network at a neighbourhood and focus area level. It is not to optimize the operation of individual sites. Those are things that will come as part of the next phase of design. The modelling team has been very conservative in the model design and is confident in the results being putting forward.

Q. Will the Stakeholder Advisory Group continue into the detail design phase of the project?

A. The City will continue to consult with stakeholders, residents, business owners and others who need to be involved through the process of detailed design, construction phasing, construction and other impacts.

Q. Apart from the section between Walton Street and Gerrard Street, are there any changes in the physical design being put forward? Right now, the design looks good in terms of pedestrian clearways and wide sidewalks, which are good for accessibility. I hear the issues about increased traffic from postal and restaurant deliveries, but restaurants do not benefit much from that; they benefit more from foot traffic.

A. There is no change in the physical design of the roadway. Any changes recommended are in operation only.

Q. How has accessibility been considered for the project?

- A.** The City is providing dedicated space for pedestrians which is not part of a shared zone. This includes traditional sidewalks on either side of the roadway which are separated with a wide buffer and furnishing zone, as well as an elevation change with a mountable curb. Changes in materials including texture and colour contrasts will also help people navigate the roadway. For sidewalks, there will be smooth, light-coloured pavers with no bevel finish to be smooth under wheel or foot. In the roadway, there will be a tumble type paver of a darker colour. This paver will provide more audible sounds to provide warning of any vehicles approaching. Intersections will have all the standard accessibility improvements, including audible signals and tactile plates.
- Q.** The updated traffic modelling showed an increase in travel time as a result of the project on Gerrard Street westbound. Why is there an increase of almost two minutes?
- A.** The model shows that at the westbound left turn on Gerrard Street there is a significant increase in cars wanting to make a left turn onto Yonge Street at the intersection. The capacity of the left turn lane is being exceeded. Cars that wanted to go through the intersection had to queue behind cars that wanted to turn left. There are options to improve that, such as extending that left turn lane, improving the signal timing phase or implementing a dedicated left turn phase to the signal.
- Q.** Now that you do not want cars travelling straight through parts of the study area (e.g., southbound on Yonge Street south of Gerrard Street), how are you going to prevent them from doing so?
- A.** At signalized intersections, the signal helps people to pay more attention. Motorists understand how it works and the City can provide visual cues with signage and lane designations. Additionally, it will not be in anyone's interest to travel through the intersection at Gerrard Street because they will only end up at Walton street. The City is anticipating that vehicles traveling around the study area will choose to take Gerrard Street east to go around this section of Yonge Street. The City cannot guarantee no one will travel through but has seen a lot of success on other projects, like the King Street Transit Priority Corridor, which works in a similar fashion. Operations, enforcement and compliance is something the City will continue to work on through the next phase of the project.
- Q.** On pedestrian streets in other cities, servicing is limited to certain hours so that the street can be fully open to pedestrians during certain times of the day, week, or year. Is that an option?
- A.** This option was explored earlier in the study, during Round Two of Consultation. Based on discussions with businesses, at this point in time the business community felt it was too difficult to coordinate their operations to facilitate such a change. It could be explored in the future as the city grows and evolves. Instead, the Project Team began to pursue the local access routes that provide low-volume local access during the day in between different blocks of pedestrian priority.
- Q.** With the new design of the street, will it be possible to do events like Open Streets more often?

- A. With Yonge Street no longer being a through route, it may change the dynamic in terms of street events. There will still be a permitting process for events but there may be more opportunity to look at closures outside of the core pedestrian priority zones.

Councillor Wong-Tam also shared that she believed the intention of creating a flexible street that allows for all types of uses is to help create a festival corridor on Yonge Street. She shared that some of the infrastructure City staff are contemplating using, such as automatic gates, could reduce costs for event organizers and ensure there is additional street flexibility, as the street is designed for that purpose.

- Q. Can the Project Team speak to the issue of automatic gates and operations? As the theoretical festival center of the study area, one of the things that Yonge-Dundas Square is going to have to navigate is vehicle access to the Square itself for loading and unloading of event equipment. For renewed activity on the Square and the street, we need to give this consideration moving forward.
- A. The design team recommended a half-width gate style in the Round Three of Consultation materials. Yonge-Dundas Square is an agency of the City and there are opportunities and options in terms of accommodating loading. The City will continue to work with Yonge-Dundas Square on ensuring the Square is a viable and vibrant space in the long term.
- C. The return of festivals will be critical to reanimate the space as we move out of COVID-19 and into this reimaged section of Yonge Street.
- C. Knowing that the area is a significant arts and culture hub within Toronto, the load-ins and setups of theatres should be taken into consideration. When Massey Hall reopens, there are planned shows as often as possible and they use large trucks. Mirvish Theatre also has similar issues. Data from the theatres needs to be part of the modelling.
- C. Downtown Yonge BIA (DYBIA) has done extensive consultation with businesses over the last few months in regard to the design. DYBIA, the board of directors and membership are not supporting the design as presented today. This information has been passed on to the Councillor, the Project Team, the Mayor and the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. DYBIA firmly believes in a highly walkable neighbourhood and wants to see Yonge Street as a truly flexible street. It is a key destination for the City of Toronto. Through consultation with the BIA membership, the BIA would like to ensure that what is brought forward is a flexible street and not a pedestrianized street at this time. Any closures of the street would impact businesses, so the flexible street concept and growing the economy to bring in key festivals and economic drivers for the neighbourhood and the City of Toronto should be considered. The challenge that the BIA has are the operational changes that will come out of the next phase of the project in the construction phase. The BIA would like to see one lane northbound and one lane southbound that are open until large festivals and events are in the neighbourhood.
- C. The way this process has gone and the City's commitment to incorporating feedback from all stakeholders has been very encouraging. From CycleToronto's perspective, and many others, it is great to see the project align with many of the City's goals in terms of road safety and climate action. Some of the impacts from the project will not necessarily

be negative. There is appreciation for the commitment from the City to try to work through issues around the construction versus the operation of the street.

Next Steps

Johanna Kyte, City of Toronto, reviewed the next steps for the project. She shared that the City is continuing to prepare the Staff Report on the Recommended Design to be presented to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in on January 11, 2021. Once the recommendation report has been adopted by the Committee it will go to City Council for approval, and then on to the Province for a 30-day public review period. Johanna welcomed any further comments to be sent into the Project Team. Councillor Wong-Tam thanked the Stakeholder Advisory Group for their participation and provided closing remarks.

Appendix A – List of Participants

The following is a list of organizations that are members of the SAG. Those organizations that participated at the meeting on December 9, 2020, are signified in **bold text**.

Stakeholders

- Bridge Company Ltd., McDonalds on Yonge St
- **BA Group (Independent Transportation Consultants to Cadillac Fairview, Great Eagle, Cresford and St. Michael's Hospital)**
- **Bay Cloverhill Community Association**
- BentallGreenOak
- **Cadillac Fairview**
- **Canada Post**
- Canderel
- Church of the Holy Trinity
- **Church-Wellesley Neighbourhood Association**
- Church-Wellesley Village BIA
- City of Toronto Indigenous Affairs Office
- City of Toronto Senior's Forum
- Cresford Developments
- **Cycle Toronto**
- **David Suzuki Foundation**
- **Downtown-Yonge BIA**
- Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre
- Greater Yorkville Residents' Association
- **Goodmans legal consultant for (Great Eagle Holdings and Chelsea redevelopments)**
- HNR Properties
- **Lalani Group**
- Margaret's House
- **Massey Hall**
- **McGill Granby Village Residents' Association**
- Milkin Holdings Limited
- **Mirvish Productions**
- **Ryerson City Building Institute**
- **Ryerson University**
- St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA
- **St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association**
- St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica and Cathedral Block Master Plan
- **St. Michael's Choir School**
- Toronto Camera Centres Limited
- **Toronto Financial District BIA**
- Toronto Skateboarding Committee
- **City of Toronto Youth Cabinet**

- **Walk Toronto**
- YMCA
- **Yonge Suites / Firkin on Yonge**
- **Yonge-Dundas Square**

Toronto City Councillor/Representatives

- Councillor Wong-Tam, Toronto Centre
- Robin Buxton Potts, Strategic Advisor, Community Relations, Toronto Centre Councillor Wong-Tam's Office

Project Team

- Johanna Kyte, City of Toronto, Project Manager, Major Projects
- Maogosha Pyjor, City of Toronto, Senior Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit
- Carol Tsang, City of Toronto, Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit
- Andy Barker, Steer, Transportation Lead
- David Sutanto, Steer, Transportation Lead
- Daniel Burke, Steer, Project Coordinator
- Jordan Talker, Steer, Project Coordinator
- Liz McHardy, LURA Consulting, Community Engagement Lead
- Leah Snowden, LURA Consulting, Community Engagement Support
- Michelle Diplock, LURA Consulting, Community Engagement Support

Appendix B – SAG Meeting #7 Agenda

**Stakeholder Advisory Group:
Meeting #7**

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Virtual Meeting hosted via Webex Meetings
9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.

yongeTOMorrow
meet us there

Agenda

Meeting Purpose:

- Provide a summary of Round Three Consultation feedback
- Share updates on the Recommended Design Concept and Update Modelling Results
- Provide an opportunity for questions and answers

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| 9:30 a.m. | Settling In Liz McHardy, Independent Facilitator, LURA |
| 9:40 a.m. | Land Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks Councillor Wong-Tam |
| 9:50 a.m. | Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review Liz McHardy, LURA |
| 10 a.m. | Presentation – Project Update Johanna Kyte, City of Toronto, Transportation Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Round Three Consultation Feedback• Recommended Design Concept• Updated Modelling Results• Next Steps |
| 10:20 a.m. | Facilitated Question and Answer Period |
| 10:55 a.m. | Next Steps |
| 11 a.m. | Meeting Adjourns |