

May 06, 2025

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Elm Street Streetscape Vision

From: Joanna Chludzinska, Senior Planner Urban Design, TEY North
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Re: Notes from the Community Consultation Meeting held on
April 29, 2025 at 6:00pm
Webex Events

Attendees: Councillor Diane Saxe, James Parakh, Joanna Chludzinska, Aviva Pelt, Konain Edhi, Robert Mays, Julius Aquino, Jason Timmins, Liz McFarland, Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Erin Smith, Pinremola Olufemi,
25 members of the public

Following presentations by Joanna Chludzinska, James Parakh and Liz McFarland, Aviva Pelt and Konain Edhi the following issues were raised:

1. Space for trees, utilities and conflict with trees:

Q: Has some provision around this plan started to look into using Silva Cell System? When will we know what types of trees are feasible for this area, and what further work is required to determine that?

A: City staff will be looking into soil volume available as a part of subsequent applications. This study presents a high-level vision, and we are identifying space for tree planting using existing high-level surveys to avoid conflict. Adequate soil volume will be prioritized to support healthy tree growth, and all tree planting strategies will meet Urban Forestry standards. A recurring approach in the plan is to utilize open planting and growing environments wherever possible. Detailed utility surveys including sidewalk daylighting conducted during future development stages are expected to identify any specific conflicts with proposed tree locations. If conflicts occur, there are strategies City staff can implement to keep the trees. These include raised planters, changing tree type and slightly shifting the trees.

Q: Have QLA (Quality Level A) investigations been conducted prior to finalizing the design, particularly in relation to the proposed street trees? Specifically, have you verified the vertical location and depth of utilities within the right-of-way?

A: Trees have been shown based on the City of Toronto DMOG (Digital Mapping Owner Group). All options we presented were overlayed on top of The City of Toronto's DMOG (Digital Map Owners Group) mapping. Based on DMOG, we're able to locate servicing positions. The DMOG cross-sections also show the locations of the various services below grade. We were also able to cross reference the DMOG maps with the detailed site plan information we received for 8 Elm and the information on both plans were consistent. For this project, our primary focus is on preserving the existing tree canopy and enhancing growing conditions for those trees. For any new tree plantings, we are currently relying on the utility clearance guidelines provided by Engineering and Construction Services (ECS).

2. Traffic Calming and Street Jog:

Q: A request was made to consider traffic calming measures along the corridor, emphasizing the importance of slow-moving traffic on destination streets rather than treating them as throughfares. Suggestions included exploring a raised pedestrian crossing and considering a non-linear street alignment to naturally reduce vehicle speeds and support active and slower modes of transportation.

A: The street design incorporates several traffic calming measures to enhance the pedestrian environment while ensuring AODA compliance. Bump-outs are being used to narrow the roadway, which slows traffic, while also widening sidewalks for pedestrians. Additional proposed street trees along the curb line will create visual friction, further encouraging slower vehicle speeds. At both the east and west entrances, reduced turning radii are proposed to slow vehicles and shorten pedestrian crossings. A raised mid-block crossing is also under consideration. While it offers traffic calming benefits, it presents challenges, including maintenance issues—particularly with snow removal—and impacts on street drainage that would require additional infrastructure, such as relocating catch basins. This option will continue to be evaluated and considered further.

3. Stakeholders' consultation

Q: What consultation will take place with stakeholders?

A: We are happy to meet with stakeholders and have already engaged with several, including those who reached out through our website, such as the Arts and Letters Club. We are committed to ongoing engagement with the public, BIA members, and industry partners. For BIA members who are unable to attend the presentation or provide feedback, we will proactively reach out to ensure their voices are heard.

4. Laneways

Q: On some of the proposals the laneways are blocked by parking. Are you planning to block the laneways?

A: There is no intention to block the laneways. We know how important those laneways are to the businesses and restaurants.

5. What integration is there with yongeTOMorrow project?

Q: The yongeTOMorrow project envisions the Elm Street especially the east part of the Elm Street, that it will be providing loading and servicing spaces to support the project. We included on-street parking and loading spaces to south-east part of the Elm Street to respond to this vision.

A: More consultation on yongeTOMorrow will be starting shortly and we will be making every attempt to coordinate, but the idea is to make the whole of the Downtown Yonge BIA area more attractive to pedestrians, more attractive to visitors, and to ultimately attract many more people overall.

6. Delivery of the Public Notice

Q: Was there a notification sent out to property owners on Elm Street? Because I don't remember to be receiving one.

A: We have sent hundreds of notices out through Canada Post. We had confirmations a few weeks ago that it was received by many people.

7. Elm tree as part of the Elm Street design:

Q: My suggestion is to consider planting elm trees along the street as a symbolic gesture to honour the street's name, integrating them into the natural landscape alongside other nice flowering and centered trees for the enhanced ambience of the neighborhood.

A: We will consider planting elm trees if any existing trees along the street need to be replaced, as the elm is a historic symbol of the street character.

8. Servicing Access to Chelsea Hotel,

Q: The entrance of Elm Street is a very important one to the hotel. This is their only access to the loading facility of the hotel, and the access to the pickup and drop off that's under, under covered. The hotel is concerned about potential impacts to this access.

A: We know that this is a major entrance to the hotel, including tour buses. This portion of the streetscape with the mid-block crossing will be implemented when the future redevelopment of the Chelsea hotel with new park take place and the current access will not be an issue since it will be removed.

9. Mid-block connection and one-way street

Q: Is there an interim/permanent solution for the mid-block pedestrian crossing?

A: We have received valuable feedback on the mid-block connection and crossing today, and we'll take that into account as we move forward with the design. Currently, a crosswalk is proposed, but based on today's comments, we will revisit the design to ensure it best meets the needs of pedestrians.

Q: Was there an option in the previous three options that was suggesting or looking at a one-way street.

A: Initially we considered one-way street but after the consultation with the technical advisory team, we decided on keeping two-way street.

10. Implementation

Q: What is the intended timeline for the implementation of these streetscape improvements?

A: We understand that the implementation will need to be gradual and closely tied to ongoing development. The streetscape plan is being developed to guide future development along the street, helping inform decisions made during the planning and design phases of development applications. At this time, there are no plans for street reconstruction, resurfacing, or major repairs from the transportation services department.

The approach will be phased, with improvements made as part of future development projects to enhance the public realm.

Q: How will the implementation be done incrementally, given the scale of the work?

A: One of the examples that we used in terms of implementation is Grenville Street. The design and implementation process for Grenville Street included the bump-outs and phasing stages. They also kept the catch basins where they were and used a bridge system over the catch basins. We are using that model from an implementation perspective.

11. Winter activities

Q: We see the beautiful summer rendering, but we are a four seasons city, and we would also like to see how it would look in the winter. It is an open conversation about making a complete street where in the winter we can give back those spaces for winter, operational things for some of the patio spaces or give it back as a parking space.

A: On Market Street in Toronto, we found that transitioning between parking and patio spaces seasonally required significant effort, including protective measures and a considerable seasonal operational commitment. This proved difficult to manage and secure consistently. As a result, we have not included this in the current street design. Instead, the focus is on narrowing the street to make space for trees, wider sidewalks, and parking, while ensuring a flexible and practical design.

12. Providing comments

Q: What is the timing to provide comments?

A: We welcome your feedback as soon as possible, but there is no specific deadline. We're gathering comments today and will refine the concept based on your input. If you have further comments or want more details on the Elm Street streetscape design, you can contact me via email, reach out to Councillor Saxe's office, or visit the Elm Street Vision website. Thank you for attending, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Meeting was adjourned at 7.30pm.