

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1 MINUTES

Prepared by Gladki Planning Associates

October 15, 2025 – 7:00pm – 8:30pm

Attendees

Gladki Planning Associates (GPA)

Andrew Davidge, Principal

Robert Walter-Joseph, Principal

Natalie Barcellos, Planner

Devshri Shah, Planner

Divankshi Gandhi, Planner

City of Toronto

Ali Meghani, Senior Planner, Community Planning

Nicholas Deibler, Planner, Community Planning

Noe O'Brien, Assistant Planner, Community Planning

LAC Members

Abdirashid Duale, Resident

Bryan Douthwright, Weston King Neighbourhood Centre (WKNC)

Cherri Hurst, Weston Historical Society (WHS)

Jason Doolan, Weston Village Community Association (WVCA)

Kimberlee Henderson, Resident

Peggy Chi, Resident

Marilyn McCrea, Weston Village BIA (WVBIA)

Peter Kalamaris, Weston Village BIA (WVBIA)

Romano D'Andrea, Weston Village Community Association (WVCA)

Yasmeen Tian, COSTI Employment Services (Weston)

Meeting Purpose and Overview

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- kick-off the Local Advisory Committee (LAC);
- introduce the City-led Weston in Gear planning study and gather community input on strengths, challenges and opportunities, challenges; and
- present the draft vision and guiding principles for the planning study and solicit feedback on them.

The meeting format included a round of introductions where LAC members were invited to share what they love and/or value about Weston. The consultant team shared a presentation on the first phase of work, which was followed by a facilitated discussion.

Discussion

What LAC members value about Weston:

- **Jason Doolan (WVCA)** appreciated the strong sense of community in Weston. He highlighted Weston as the gateway to the Humber Valley, noting that the 74 acres of valley lands are a unique asset and are defining feature of the area.
- **Marilyn McCrea (WVBIA)** noted that it is great to have a diversity of business within a compact geographical area.
- **Bryan Douthwright (WKNC)** described the community as a “miniature city within a city,” noting that Weston contains many of the same elements and characteristics found throughout Toronto, all within a small area.
- **Abdirashid Duale (Resident)** shared that Weston remains one of the last relatively affordable areas in Toronto. However, rising costs threaten to displace folks. He emphasized the importance of preserving Weston and keeping it affordable for long-time residents. He added that he appreciated Weston's diversity.
- **Cherri Hurst (WHS)** expressed her appreciation for the area's rich history and strong sense of community, noting that Weston feels like a small town within a big city.
- **Kimberlee Henderson (Resident)** shared that she and her family chose to move to Weston due to its affordability compared to other parts of the City. She also shared that she liked Weston's “small-town charm”, which reminds her of the small city in Northern Ontario she is from.
- **Peggy Chi (Resident)** highlighted Weston's proximity and easy access to Downtown Toronto via the UP express, connection to the Humber River and park network, anticipated trail improvements, and the area's great food.
- **Peter Kalamaris (WVBIA)** highlighted Weston's diversity, strong community, and potential as a vibrant space, noting that everyone wants to see it improve.
- **Romano D'Andrea (WVCA)** shared that he loves the sense of community and the nearby Humber Valley. He added that Weston is a place that people to great pride in and that people want to be engaged.

- **Yasmeen Tian (COSTI Employment Services)** stated that she loves the people, the vibrant community and access to the trails along the Humber River.

Density, Growth & Study Boundaries:

- **Bryan Douthwright (WKNC)** shared that he is aware of the updated density target for Weston (200 people and jobs combined per hectare) from the recently introduced MTSA policies, however, is curious what the current density is of the area is. **Robert Walter-Joseph (GPA)** clarified that the MTSA Site and Area Specific Policy Bryan referred to defines expected densities and the consultant could look into what the existing people and jobs per hectare is.
- **Cherri Hurst (Weston Historical Society)** asked why the study boundary area does not cover all of Weston. Nicholas Deibler provided a justification for why the current boundary was selected.
 - West: The Humber River acts a natural boundary.
 - North: Mostly features street patterns and residential areas developed before the 1950s.
 - East: Jane Street has a slightly different condition and character and therefore the study area goes to Pine Street.
 - South: The study area only goes as far as Edmund Avenue to avoid overlapping with planning work happening in Mount Dennis.

Economic Development and Retail:

- **Jason Doolan (WVCA)** raised concerns about residents moving out due to limited employment opportunities. **Robert Walter-Joseph (GPA)** acknowledged that this is something that we have heard and noted. This is a concern that overlaps with other City-wide initiatives, however, is not a focus of the Weston in Gear study. The study will contemplate how to maintain active frontages and the main-street character along Weston road. The project team is looking at a balance between residential, commercial, and employment uses to sustain the character along Weston Road.
- **Marilyn McCrea (Weston Village BIA)** shared that the BIA wants people to relate to the commercial corridor and access the shops and services that are located within the BIA. She added that people come to Weston for the food options, however there is no grocery store.
- **Romano D'Andrea (WVCA)** stressed the absence of a night-time economy and the need for sit-down restaurants and cultural businesses to create a vibrant street life.
- **Abdirashid Duale (Resident)** asked that the study team prioritize existing residents and local businesses in new development.

Community Services & Amenities:

- **Kimerlee Henderson (Resident)** shared a concern that there would not be adequate services to support increased density. She asked if this is something that the study team is considering. **Robert Walter-Joseph (GPA)** confirmed the City is

undertaking a Community Services and Facilities Study which includes an assessment of existing and potential future services, including childcare, human services, and other amenities.

- **Cherri Hurst (Weston Historical Society)** added that the assessment should consider schools as part of future planning. **Robert Walter- Joseph (GPA)** confirmed that schools are a part of the Community Services and Facilities study.
- **Yasmeen Tian (COSTI Employment Services)** noted that space for employment support services and youth programs are essential for maintaining a balanced and inclusive community.
- **Romano D’Andrea (WVCA)** shared that he would like to see more cultural amenities in the community. He mentioned that he leads a foundation that is working towards having a performing arts space in Weston.

Public Space, Housing & Affordability:

- **Bryan Douthwright (Weston King Neighbourhood Centre)** highlighted that existing community hubs and gathering spaces are a strength but are vulnerable to displacement. He stressed the need for the City to protect these spaces, particularly those located in commercial spaces, during redevelopment.
- **Abdirashid Duale (Resident)** raised concerns about the affordability of housing and the risk of displacement. He emphasized the need to maintain a mix of housing types and provide opportunities for long-term residents to remain in the area.
- **Jason Doolan (WVCA)** affirmed the use of the terms “coexist” and “mix” in the vision statement. He shared that it was important to him that Weston is a place that has is not homogenous and that there is socio-economic diversity within in the community. He envisioned maintaining and strengthening connection and inclusion between the different groups in Weston, such as those that live in the low-rise housing and those that live in the apartment building along Weston Road.
- **Abdirashid Duale (Resident)** proposed exploring community land trust models (e.g., Little Jamaica Land Trust) to combat displacement. He also suggested the City consider purchasing land for protected community use.

Transportation, Connectivity & Safety:

- **Peggy Chi (Resident)** shared a strong desire for improved pedestrian infrastructure, sidewalks, and dedicated cycling lanes to enhance safety and accessibility, particularly for children and families. She noted that she feels more comfortable driving with her young kids. She also suggested that it would be great to have a place to stop and for her kids to play near Weston station.
- **Abdirashid Duale (Resident)** raised issues of traffic congestion and parking shortages, noting that new developments (e.g. 40-storey condo at Weston and John) could worsen traffic impacts on nearby schools and residents.

Planning Priorities & Policy Considerations:

- **Bryan Douthwright (Weston King Neighbourhood Centre)** and **Marilyn McCrea (Weston Village BIA)** emphasized maintaining ground floor spaces active with shops, cafés, and community hubs, ensuring a vibrant street life that supports social and economic activity along Weston Road.
- **Robert Walter- Joseph (GPA)** asked if **Bryan Douthwright (Weston Kind Neighbourhood Centre)**, **Abdirashid Duale (Resident)**, and **Yasmeen Tian (COSTI Employment Services)** could share with the project team the names of organizations that are at risk of displacement. The project team can ensure that this feedback is passed along to the appropriate City division. They provided the names of the following groups: Frontlines Toronto, Crossroads Theatre, Urban Arts, Al-Rowda Mosque and UMAID. **Kimberlee (Resident)** notes that ENAGBI should also be engaged as they have several spaces along Weston Road.

Next Steps

Robert Walter- Joseph (GPA) reviewed upcoming engagement activities for Phase 1, and outlined the remaining tasks for Phase 1. **Nicholas Deibler (City)** will circulate notes from the meeting and the slide deck. Additional questions or comments can be sent to Nicholas or Ali from the City.

Nicholas Deibler, Planner

Community Planning, Development Review
E: Nicholas.Deibler@toronto.ca
C: 416-394-2946

Ali Meghani, Senior Planner

Community Planning, Development Review
E: Ali.Meghani@toronto.ca
C: 416-394-8236