

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Meeting Type: In-Person

Start time: 10:00 a.m. **End Time:** 12:00 p.m.

Project Overview:

The City of Toronto is designing ways to increase pedestrian space and improve the way people move through and experience Yonge Street between College/Carlton Street and Queen Street. The watermain beneath Yonge Street will soon need replacing and this construction provides an opportunity to consider a new street design and bundle the two projects to better serve everyone.

Meeting Objectives:

Provide members of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) with a project update and discussion on roadway design, streetscape design opportunities, technical design challenges, public art approach, and next steps.

Receive feedback on the overall design and public art approach to assist in advancing the roadway design and Operational Plan.

Meeting Overview:

The meeting was facilitated by Michael Chiu, Principal of Michael S Chiu Consulting. Support staff from Councillor Saxe and Councillor Moise’s office were in attendance. A presentation was provided by Nick Onody, Urban Design Lead (O2 Planning + Design) and Yannis Stogios, Project Manager (Parsons). The meeting agenda included: public consultation activities conducted thus far, the design progress and technical challenges, streetscape design opportunities, public art, and next steps. A Question and Answer (Q&A) period followed with all Project Team members and the CAG attendees, and a roll plan was provided for participants to review the preliminary design.

Discussion

The comments from the Q&A discussion are summarized below.

Questions & Comments	Project Team Response
<p>Environmental Assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why is the project taking so long? The Environmental Assessment (EA) was approved in 2021, with detailed design planned for 2023, and construction in 2026. 	<p>We undertook preliminary work, such as travel and traffic monitoring/numbers, to update data following the disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional time was required to re-establish data, develop scope, and fill in gaps before beginning preliminary design. Given the time lapse, pre-engagement activities were also necessary.</p>

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<p>Environmental Assessment:</p> <p>2. When the EA was approved by Council, there were various options about how the road could be reconfigured and between which blocks. What happened to those?</p>	<p>The EA approved by Council included the physical design of the roadway in terms of reducing four motor vehicle lanes to two (one in each direction). The EA also explored various operational strategies, such as one-ways, and street closures, however a preferred strategy was not selected. This was deferred to detailed design as the Operational Plan. Currently, the Operational Plan does not have any one-way streets or long-term closures planned. However, the Project Team is looking at the design to include event-based closures and design for a flexible, shared street approach.</p>
<p>Pedestrian Priority Areas:</p> <p>3. Just before the pandemic, there was discussion about the segment south of Gerrard Street being closed off to increase the size of the square and spillover space. What changed between then and now that we need to have a single-through traffic lane vs pedestrianization?</p>	<p>That discussion happened before the EA was finalized. There were concerns about operations and how the street would function in terms of transit, business delivery access, and traffic flow in the surrounding area, resulting in the deferral of this option to the detailed design phase.</p> <p>Since then, we have conducted additional studies, and the plan is to keep through traffic. Consider that travellers going north-south will likely not choose Yonge Street as the throughway with a reduced speed limit and with additional speed management design elements.</p> <p>We are designing a street that can be flexible for closures throughout the year for events. Flexible design can be done through measures such as materiality and curb treatments.</p>

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<p>Pedestrian Priority Areas:</p> <p>4. I understand there seems to be a need for two lanes, but cities around the world with similar set ups can accommodate operations: they have designed the street so that vehicles can be expected to slow down significantly during specific times. Will there be consideration for additional crosswalks? What is going to happen regarding vehicles (e.g., semi-trailers) making deliveries? Has there been discussion around forcing delivery companies to use smaller vehicles to not ruin the pedestrian feel? There may be an opportunity to expand that initiative throughout the city.</p>	<p>As part of the Operational Plan, we are obtaining input from businesses to look at areas for reduced spaces and changes to those movements and services. Once the Operational Plan is further developed, the Project Team will reconvene with this group for feedback.</p> <p>We are also looking at one new pedestrian crosswalk as well as exploring other traffic measures (e.g., raised table crosswalks, paving treatments).</p>
<p>Design Considerations:</p> <p>5. Streets without curbs don't work. It lends itself to concept of a shared road space but given the reality that we see on the street, people are struggling to stay on sidewalks as it is. At a minimum a rolled curb is needed.</p>	<p>We are looking at a rolled curb. Curb treatments will also be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the surrounding context.</p>
<p>Design Considerations:</p> <p>6. What is the current speed?</p>	<p>The design speed is 50 km/h, and the operating speed is 40 km/h. Through this project, we have the opportunity to design at a lower speed.</p>
<p>Design Considerations:</p> <p>7. At the corner of Yonge Street and Elm Street, I have concerns about people turning right/left and loading. Vehicles turning slow down to avoid pedestrians and can generate a bottleneck. The team needs to make sure arterial roads don't become bottlenecks.</p>	<p>The Operational Plan will consider traffic movement and what turns can be made and potentially restricting some turns (e.g., restrictions during certain times or no right turns on red in certain areas, etc.).</p>

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<p>Design Considerations: 8. If the ultimate objective is to create a pedestrianized space, it seems ideal if the design speed is less than 20 km/h. Most of the time the area is congested with all kinds of traffic, which reduces traffic speed, but some cars will speed through intersections to avoid getting stuck at red lights. Off hours (midnight to 6 a.m.) is when it becomes dangerous for people if the road isn't designed for a lower speed.</p>	<p>The Project Team did not consider 20 km/h as 20 km/h is not a typical standard even for "low-speed" urban environments and the lowest we can get is 30 km/h. 30 km/h on an arterial road is atypical, and the Project Team is doing internal work at the City to get approval for that design speed.</p>
<p>Design Considerations: 9. Is there any way to change the arterial roadway designation for this segment of Yonge Street?</p>	<p>The Project Team is looking to change the roadway designation to allow for the lower design speed. There still needs to be some movement of vehicles since it is not fully pedestrianized. There will also be other interventions to enforce the design speed.</p>
<p>Design Considerations: 10. When the snow melts, the water pools at intersections where pedestrians try to cross, and they have to go around it. The team should consider installing grates in those areas. TTC and utility grates need to be non-slip; right now, they are flat. There are examples of grates that have a spiked texture.</p>	<p>Grading and drainage are critical components. We will be looking at various grading options to drain at those areas, as well as the future design of the subway grates.</p>
<p>Design Considerations: 11. Based on the roll plan, it does not look like there is cycling infrastructure south of Gerrard Street.</p>	<p>As shared streets are designed for slower speeds and integrated use by pedestrians and people who cycle and drive - with pedestrians given priority - cycling infrastructure is a core part of the design. This includes a shared roadway south of Gerrard Street, which also contributes to traffic calming.</p>
<p>Design Considerations: 12. Montreal also has cohesive street design. Will the anchors permeate into the design, or will it be more cohesive?</p>	<p>There are some options such as different materials (e.g. paving) that differentiate character zones. Anchors do not have to be completely different from the rest of the street, but just have features that enhance them (e.g., changing paving pattern, colours, etc.).</p>

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<p>Streetscape Activation: 13. Who will be managing and activating the spaces? If it is the City, is there a plan to commit to doing that and maintain the area? Otherwise, it would be wasted space. Existing snow-clearing equipment will not work if there is stuff in the activation zone.</p>	<p>Activation will require coordination from various groups. For example, surrounding businesses may wish to expand into the space and develop plans or programming to use it. We are also exploring designated by-lawed busker stops. These spaces would not need to be activated at all times and, during off-periods, could be used by the City for operational purposes such as snow clearing.</p> <p>The City can collaborate with the BIA and businesses to curate the street. Features/activities in activation zones do not need to be fixed/permanent. The intent is to provide a flexible space that can offer a variety of uses.</p>
<p>Streetscape Activation: 14. An absence of programming can become a public safety issue.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Streetscape Activation: 15. What is the vertical scale of the design? We dream of big trees but understand that underground space is limited.</p>	<p>The design of the tree canopy along the street is ongoing. The Project Team is developing a variety of options and is working closely with utility companies to have appropriate clearances and soil volumes. We are looking at having robust street trees with big canopies. Existing trees that are currently along Yonge Street were planted under a different standard of soil volume; the new standards are more extensive. The Project Team is also working to understand what the sunlight looks like on the street to help ensure that the trees will thrive.</p>
<p>Streetscape Activation: 16. Will there be space to accommodate event set up (e.g., shipping containers for audio equipment)? The cost of shipping is expensive.</p>	<p>We are exploring ways to integrate supporting infrastructure into public realm design. There will not be space for event storage in the right-of-way and coordination may fall to the organizers that activate that space. However, the Project Team can look at different design elements and how items are delivered.</p>

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<p>Streetscape Activation: 17. It is important to consider seasonality, including TMU's schedule as it significantly impacts businesses/organizations. Additionally, concern regarding long-term maintenance is an issue that has been raised previously, and we ask the City to use the highest standards available. Montreal has good examples of designing streets with programming that can be shared with the City.</p>	<p>The City acknowledges the importance of considering seasonality and TMU's academic schedule, as it significantly influences adjacent businesses. These factors will be considered as part of the planning and phasing of street programming.</p> <p>In terms of high standard design elements, we also recognize that non-City standard items (bespoke design elements) are harder to maintain because the stock is not readily available. However, there will be maintenance plans attached to any potential bespoke elements.</p>
<p>Streetscape Activation: 18. Sidewalk cafes in Toronto are always on the side of the road. However, some businesses prefer to have it adjacent to their business. Since Yonge Street is so busy, businesses do not want to cross the pedestrian clearway. Also, are there any interim measures that can be done earlier to realize some of those design elements?</p>	<p>We hear the concern about café space and will take it back for review. We do not have resources right now for a pilot project.</p>
<p>Safety: 19. We have approximately nine years' worth of safety perception surveys that talk about what people think is safe. We are happy to share it with the City and set up a briefing and/or walk to contextualize it. Safety issues at Yonge-Dundas are different from other neighbourhoods. The primary issues related to erratic behaviour. People do not feel safe between midnight and 6 a.m.</p>	<p>We appreciate receiving this information and be briefed on it. We are also exploring Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and hostile vehicle mitigation.</p>
<p>Public Art: 20. East-west connectivity is important. Is there opportunity to tie-in the TTC's grates with public art?</p>	<p>Further engagement with the TTC is needed regarding grate design.</p>
<p>Public Art: 21. Montreal has good examples of interactive art.</p>	<p>We are reviewing precedents, including interactive art in various cities including Montreal.</p>

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<p>Additional: 22. The Church Street Neighbourhood Association is excited to see the project progress and would like to invite all members to the summer Church Street closure in July and August to see how pedestrianization works.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Additional: 23. The Project Team should take into consideration how sound travels as the Downtown Yonge BIA are getting more noise complaints and Yonge Street is becoming taller with developments.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Follow Up Required:

- Meeting Summary to be shared with CAG
- Pauline Larson to provide safety perception survey and arrange for a walking tour with Project Team

Attendees

Councillor Office:

Tyler Johnson, Chief of Staff, Councillor Moise
 Andrew Greene, Chief of Staff, Councillor Sax
 Benjamin Dooley, Director of Communications for Councillor Sax

City of Toronto:

Violetta Savage, Senior Project Manager, Major Projects
 Ahmed Bhabha, Senior Engineer, Engineering and Construction Services
 Jennifer Hyland, Manager, Major Projects, Transportation Services
 Solmaz Rezaei, Engineer Technologist Technician One, Transportation Services
 Maogosha Pyjor, Senior Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit
 Emily Cameron, Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit
 Mark DiMiglio, Senior Coordinator, Public Consultation Unit

Parsons:

Yannis Stogios, Project Manager
 Fernanda Rodrigues, Deputy Project Manager
 Irene Huzar, Public Consultation & Env Services Lead
 Skyler Goudswaard, Technical Coordinator
 Rita Hu, Transportation Lead
 Cooper Howieson, Engineer
 Lucy Huang, Public Consultation & Env Services Support

O2 Planning + Design:

Nick Onody, Urban Design Lead
 Renaldo Jordan, Senior Landscape Architect

MSR:

Micheal Chiu, Facilitator

Community Advisory Group:

Bay Cloverhill Community Association, Al Rezoski

Branded Cities Canada, Jenelle Clarke

Bicycle Mayor, Alison Stewart

Canada Post, Scott Watson

Downtown Yonge BIA, Cheryl Diego, Pauline Larson

Chelsea Hotel, Shane Downey

Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association, Connie Langille

Concord Adex, Concord Sky, Jennifer Yeaman

Cycle Toronto, Michael Longfield

Elgin & Winter Garden Theatre, Ellen Flowers

Financial District BIA, Andrew Robertson

CAA Ed Mirvish Productions, Jason Powell

Salad King, Alan Liu

Sankofa Square, Taylor Balint

St. Michael's Hospital, Tom Parker

St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association, Stewart Linton

Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Milkin Holdings, Rachel Hillier

The Tenor, Eli Waxman

The Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall, Brian Lidster

Toronto Financial District BIA, Andrew Robertson

Walk Toronto, Sean Marshall

Not Present & Regrets:

Atrium (Triovert, Colliers), Elizabeth Green

Canderel, Diane Horvat

CF Toronto Eaton Centre, Brian O'Hoski

City Sightseeing Toronto, Chris Norman, Aoife Noctor

McGill-Granby Village Residents' Association, Louis Mirando

Old Town Toronto BIA, Al Smith

St. Michael's Choir School, Geoff Rawlinson

Thorton Smith Building, Ken Rutherford

Toronto Metropolitan University, Molly Anthony

Triovert, Carrie Ashfield

University of Toronto Schools (High School), Jacob Binder

Yonge Suites/Firkin on Yonge, Elisabeth Antonacci