

Future of the Gardiner Expressway/Lake Shore Boulevard East Reconfiguration EA and Integrated Urban Design Study Stakeholder Advisory Committee - Meeting 15-8

Tuesday, September 1, 2015 | 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Room 308/309

Meeting Summary

1. Agenda Review, Opening Remarks and Introduction

Mr. David Dilks, President, Lura Consulting, began the eighth Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting by welcoming committee members and thanking them for attending the session. He introduced the facilitation team from Lura Consulting and led a round of introductions. Mr. Dilks reviewed the meeting agenda and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to present the alternative design concepts for the hybrid option as well as to obtain SAC input on the results of the initial screening process and proposed approach to the alternative design evaluation. He added that these SAC meeting summaries are circulated to members for comment, prior to posting the final versions on the project website.

Mr. John Livey, Deputy City Manager, City of Toronto, outlined the next steps in the EA study process which include interim progress report to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee in mid-September, followed by a round of stakeholder and public consultations in October and November. He noted that in the meantime, the project team will be working on the evaluation of the alternative designs as well as the public realm concepts. The project team expects to submit a final report to Council in early 2016.

John Campbell, President, Waterfront Toronto, noted that the project team has been working on the alternative design concepts, focusing on the segment between Cherry Street and Don Roadway. Mr. Campbell conveyed the project team's appreciation of the feedback and comments provided by SAC members, particularly as the EA approaches completion.

The meeting agenda is attached as Appendix A, while a list of attending SAC members can be found in Appendix B.

2. SAC Member Briefing

Don McKinnon, Project Manager, Dillon Consulting, presented a summary of the work completed in the current phase of the EA as well as an overview of the alternative design concepts for the hybrid option, covering the following topics:

- What we heard at SAC #7
- Initial screening process and outcomes
- Alternative design concepts
- Process for selecting alternative evaluation criteria
- Process/Next Steps

3. Facilitated Discussion

The following provides a summary of the recurring themes and ideas discussed by SAC members on the material presented. More detailed accounts of the discussion can be found in Appendix C (Q & A).

Alternative Hybrid Concepts

- Highlight the distinguishable features or unique benefits of each alternative concept; they appear to be very similar.
- Clarify whether Lake Shore Boulevard will function as a high-end urban boulevard with public realm features or as a roadway primarily for vehicles.
- Expand the discussion on alignment of the hybrid to focus on how it fits within a system of roads that will service the area (including Lake Shore Boulevard).
- Limit the amount of overhead infrastructure above Cherry Street.
- Ensure that the alignment of the elevated expressway maximizes the quantity of developable land along the Keating Channel.
- Downplay the discussion on speed and travel time associated with each concept and focus the conversation on other important topics such as public realm improvements.
- Consider modelling a no- or one-ramp option and include this among the options presented to Council.
- Locate ramps away from the southern edge of the Gardiner Expressway as much as possible to support high-quality development north of the Keating Channel.

Evaluation Criteria

- Include criteria that consider the lost potential for high-quality development north of Queens Quay and along East Bayfront (i.e., development that would have occurred if Council's decision had been to remove the elevated expressway).
- Ensure criteria evaluating safety include the safety of all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.
- Ensure the evaluation criteria consider a fulsome range of topics beyond travel time and speed.
- Other criteria suggested by participants include:
 - Quality and quantity of developable land;
 - Long-term flexibility (e.g., de-constructability, modular development);
 - Sustainability (e.g., ability to adapt to change);
 - Resilience to extreme weather considerations (e.g., flooding);
 - Future access to the Port Lands; and
 - Quality of life/liveability for residents near the expressway (e.g., travel/walk time for pedestrians, noise levels, vibrations).
- Ensure coordination and consistency between the different EAs focused on revitalizing the waterfront in terms of evaluation criteria.

Public Realm Improvements

- Prioritize public realm improvements for the area between Jarvis and Cherry in the concept plans.
- Provide examples of the public realm improvements that are feasible between Jarvis and Cherry.
- Make sure public realm improvements are a prominent part of future presentations.

Costs

- Clarify the cost differences of the alternative concepts.
- Consider presenting a broader concept of costs beyond the straight financial cost of each alternative (e.g., reflective of economic, social and environmental factors).
- Ensure cost estimates fully reflect the public realm benefits/costs of the hybrid alternative.
- Reflect the cost of renewing the Martin Goodman Trail in cost estimates of each concept.

4. Next Steps

Next SAC meeting: October 2015

Post Meeting Update: An additional SAC meeting has been added to the project schedule and will take place in October 2015, preceding the SAC meeting planned for November 2015.



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Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #8

Tuesday, September 1, 2015

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Room 308/309

REVISED AGENDA

Meeting Purpose

- Present and discuss the alternative design concepts for the hybrid option, the screening process and outcomes, and proposed approach to the design alternative evaluation.

6:30 pm Agenda Review, Opening Remarks and Introductions

- David Dilks, Lura Consulting, Facilitator

6:40 pm SAC Member Briefing: Project Update and Next Steps

- Don McKinnon, Dillon Consulting

Presentation to include:

- What we heard at SAC Meeting #7
- Alternative design concepts
- Initial screening process and outcomes
- Draft design alternative evaluation
- Process and next steps

7:00 pm Facilitated Discussion

1. Thinking about the initial screening of the alternative design concepts and screening outcomes:
 - What do you like?
 - What, if anything concerns you? Why?
 - What refinements, if any, would you like to see explored?
2. Thinking about the alternative designs and the proposed approach for their evaluation:
 - What evaluation criteria are important to you and should be considered?
 - What other advice do you have for the project team on the evaluation of alternative designs?

8:25 pm Summary/Closing

8:30 pm Adjourn

Appendix B – List of Attendees

SAC Meeting #8 List of Attendees

Beach Triangle Residents' Association
Canadian Courier and Logistics Association
Civic Action
CodeBlueTO
Cycling Toronto
Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association (GWNA)
Heritage Toronto
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association
Toronto Financial District BIA
Toronto Urban Renewal Network
Transport Action Ontario
Unionville Ratepayers Association
Walk Toronto
West Don Lands Committee

Invited Guests:

Mayor's Office
Deputy Mayor PamMcConnell's Office
Castlepoint Numa

Appendix C – Facilitated Discussion

A summary of the discussion is provided below. Questions are noted with **Q**, responses are noted by **A**, and comments are noted by **C**. Please note this is not a verbatim summary.

Q. Are the kilometres per hour (km/h) associated with each concept the design or posted speeds?

A. They refer to the design speed; the posted speed would be about 10 km/h less.

C. The proposed concepts do not appear to include public realm improvements west of Cherry Street, along the East Bayfront, other than aesthetic improvement to the Jarvis St. underpass. I am concerned about the impact to current and future residents. The evaluation criteria should consider the possibility of new development north of Queens Quay and along East Bayfront without the highway. The Remove alternative did propose significant improvements west of Cherry Street; it is necessary to evaluate what has been lost by not being able to make those improvements. My understanding is that this is a continuation of the EA process, which means the area west of Cherry Street is within the scope of the study area and should be considered more thoughtfully in the concepts.

A. In terms of the area west of Cherry Street, the intent is to look at public realm improvements (e.g., streetscaping) under the EA. We are not anticipating any major infrastructure improvements that would require further EA approval. There certainly is a commitment to look at public realm improvements in that particular area.

Q. Will the evaluation criteria include the benefits of potential development?

A. Any improvements proposed within the corridor and how they would complement development will be looked at.

Q. Does the streetscape experience include the experience of crossing Lake Shore Boulevard?

A. Yes it does.

Q. During the presentation, the criteria for safety focused mainly on the elevated expressway users. Can you speak to safety in terms of active transportation around the expressway? For example, the areas around the expressway on/off ramps tend to have more aggressive drivers, which is another issue of road safety. Also, are maintenance costs assumed to be the same for all of the concepts or will they vary?

A. Any potential variation in the alternative designs in terms of cyclist and pedestrian safety will be examined. In terms of costs, there is certainly potential for some variation.

Q. When can we expect to see how the public realm in the area between Jarvis and Cherry Streets will be treated?

A. That will likely be November, possibly late October. Six slides depicting public realm improvements east of Jarvis Street were presented at the last SAC meeting. We will discuss public realm strategies and recommendations at the October SAC meeting, and in greater detail at the November meeting

Q. Is there a reason the timing is in November (e.g., PIC #5 meeting)?

A. It is based on the cycle of SAC and PIC meetings.

C. If you are presenting this material to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee (PWIC) in September, consider including content about public realm improvements between Jarvis and Cherry Streets.

Q. The three concepts, which are all very similar, meet the EA requirements for cars, but not other users. There was no mention of no or less ramps in any of the concepts. Perhaps it would make sense

to present more of a compromise (i.e., a concept with one or no ramps) to Council, given the varying support of Councillors.

A. One of the concepts we looked at involved one ramp but we heard concerns about traffic problems with only one ramp. A no-ramp option would lead to significant traffic issues.

C. I would like to see a no- or one-ramp concept modelled. If it was presented as an option, Council would at least have the opportunity to say they are not interested in looking at that kind of compromise.

Q. At the last SAC meeting, a proposal prepared by an external team featuring a viaduct option was presented. Is that proposal reflected in the options presented this evening?

A. There were a few options proposed by external teams, including the viaduct option. Most of them are similar to the alternative solutions that were examined earlier in the EA study process. There are aspects of these options that we are trying to accommodate within the hybrid options.

C. I am concerned that instead of looking at a fulsome range of EA criteria there is more of a focus on the vehicle user experience of the elevated ramp. The criteria should not focus only on travel-related issues (e.g., time or speed) as each hybrid option has different spinoff benefits. As a second point, the quality in addition to the quantity of developable land should be considered by the evaluation criteria. There is also a need to clarify whether Lake Shore Boulevard will be used primarily to convey vehicles or whether it could be more of a high-end street with public realm features.

Q. The new ramps will require actual shoulder widths – how much wider will they be than the current ramps?

A. They are currently two metres wide; they would be widened out to about four metres. There are currently two lanes in the elevated expressway that serve as connections to the Logan Avenue ramps that would no longer be needed, resulting in a new overhead structure that is a lot narrower than what it is today. The ramps going over the Don River would certainly be wider compared to what they are now.

Q. Is the overhead structure from Cherry to Jarvis Streets also going to be two lanes? Will it be narrower than it is today?

A. It will be two lanes in each direction and narrower than it is today.

Q. At what point will the new overhead structure begin to narrow down?

A. The exact location requires additional study, but it will be east of Cherry Street. There will be a rethink on the entire Gardiner Expressway in terms of its design, to consider the new alignment and connection with the re-decking taking place west of Jarvis Street.

Q. Will you evaluate the number of lanes that are necessary on Lake Shore Boulevard?

A. With the realignment of Lake Shore Boulevard through the Keating Channel, there is an opportunity to reconsider the number of lanes. However, we are not anticipating any changes to the lane configuration west of Cherry Street, unless this is being considered in another study.

Q. [Referring to Concept 3] There has been some discussion as to whether the ramps to/from Cherry Street can be located in the middle (of the split configuration) and away from the southern edge of the elevated structure. The concern is that ramps along the southern edge will not support nearby high-quality development.

A. Yes, that is what is depicted in the concept. It was not depicted on the north side of the westbound on ramp because of the location of the stormwater management facility.

C. I think it is more important on the south side.

Q. I want to emphasize that Cherry Street should be kept free of any additional elevated infrastructure. I see the ramps are continuing to the west of Cherry Street, are there other opportunities to reduce their impact?

A. The intent to this point has been not to widen the overhead infrastructure any more than what it is today. If there is an opportunity to narrow it further, we are exploring.

Q. Is the de-construction of the elevated highway being considered as a criterion? It is worth considering in terms of long-term flexibility?

A. It's something to think about; it could tie in to the sustainability aspects of the EA.

C. The angle of sustainability and ability to adapt to change over time is worth weighing. We have seen dramatic changes in recent decades that were not expected (e.g., with technology). Sustainability should be included in evaluation criteria in some form.

C. Building off that point, changes in weather and extreme weather should also be considered in terms of the resiliency of the designs.

A. There is certainly an expectation from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to consider climate change in the expressway design.

C. Prioritize public realm improvements west of Cherry Street. It appears that any changes will only benefit the area east of Cherry Street – this is not ok with existing residents.

C. The redevelopment of the Port Lands will generate all kinds of new traffic. Future access to the Port Lands should also be considered as a criterion.

C. Find a way to include quality of life in the criteria, particularly for the people who live in the surrounding area (e.g., St. Lawrence Market, Distillery District, Queens Quay, East Bayfront). The number of residents affected by the highway is considerably more than the number of drivers who benefit from its use.

C. Explore and highlight the options that have clear and distinguishable benefits (e.g., the trade-off of two versus three lanes on Lake Shore Boulevard).

A. During the alternative solution stage, we did look at the impact of different lane reductions. The results typically indicate an increase in travel times, for which there is little appetite.

Q. You mentioned that you would be looking at the ramps in more detail – can you speak to that?

A. We will be looking at the ramps in more detail from the point of view of their alignment, grade, exact location, length, where they merge with Lake Shore Boulevard, property needs, and confirming right-of-way requirements, etc.

C. I appreciate work that the EA team has done, since Council's decision to proceed with the hybrid option. It is important to ensure that the east Keating District is viable and has the potential to be a strong transitional area between the City and the Port Lands. Everything that can be done to maximize the quantity and quality of development along the Keating Channel should be done.

I am also interested in the potential collateral benefits of expanding the railway bridge (e.g., mitigating flooding on Broadview Avenue), particularly in terms of costing. It is also extremely important to ensure that costing fully reflects public realm benefits, not just in the Keating Channel or defined by land sale revenues. A more robust and wide-ranging evaluation of costs is needed.

It also needs to be emphasized that the concepts that leave infrastructure on the north side of the Keating Channel will potentially have negative effects on any development on the Villiers Island Precinct. That said there is a need for a more robust look to understand the true cost-benefits of this alternative.

It would also be helpful to have some concrete examples of what we can expect in terms of public realm benefits between Jarvis and Cherry Streets and what is feasible.

A. You have raised some very important points. We are essentially trying to decide between variations of an alternative that have the same underlying assumptions about the area between Jarvis and Cherry Streets. We understand that something needs to be done to improve the liveability of that area and we will look at this closely.

C. A big part of the campaign to maintain the Gardiner Expressway focused on public realm improvements under the structure; we'd like to see them.

C. Please consider using only the posted speed in presentations to Council or the public to avoid confusion if the terms “design speed” and “posted speed” are both used.

C. The Martin Goodman Trail has not been mentioned. The cost of renewing the trail should be included in each of the concepts.

A. Absolutely, the continuation of the Martin Goodman Trail through the Keating Precinct is included in all the options. The next stage will include details about how the Trail will be integrated with the road alignment in all the options.

C. Opening up sites for potential development south of the expressway, closer to the waterfront and away from the rail corridor would lead to higher quality neighbourhood development. My understanding is that the impact on travel times across all the concepts is similar; this has helped move the conversation forward to now enable us to discuss other elements of the study (e.g., public realm). I would be concerned to see the introduction of another concept that re-opens the conversation on travel times.

C. We should be thinking about this from the perspective of a system of roads, not individual roads or the hybrid in isolation. That might be a way to reintroduce Lake Shore Boulevard into the conversation and open up discussion about its future design. It is an important component of the EA study.

Q. Will Lake Shore Boulevard be updated to modern standards?

A. Yes.

C. Consider the following as measureable criteria to assess the experience of living near the expressway – travel time for pedestrians, noise levels, vibrations.

C. Consider doing research on population estimates for East Bayfront and Keating Channel to understand how many people will be affected by the highway compared to the number of drivers who use the eastern segment of the Gardiner Expressway.

Q. Is the plan to present the costs the same way they were presented during the last round? Will considerations such as land value, tax base be rolled in, or be presented separately? The way this information is presented will help clarify which one of these alternatives is in fact the best for the City.

A. We have not decided how that information will be presented. We will absolutely look at the costs and benefits of each concept.

C. Consider a broader conception of costs.

C. It is important to consider how information about costs is presented. Figures can be easily misrepresented. It is important to present the information in a way that people recognize the value of the broad range of issues being reflected in the costs.

Q. Will Lake Shore Boulevard be redesigned as an urban street or a highway?

A. It will be an urban street.

C. In terms of evaluation criteria, there are so many EAs currently underway for this section of the waterfront. Ensure all those EAs are reviewed in the context of this EA to ensure a timely completion and that there is consistency in how evaluation is approached.

C. I would like to reinforce the idea of walk times as an indicator of liveability. The focus of the debate between the boulevard and hybrid options was after all about travel time for vehicles.