

Riverwalk Area Urban Design Master Plan Online Survey #1 Draft Summary of Feedback

November 2020

Overview

The City of Brampton hosted an online survey about the Riverwalk Area Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP) from October 9 to November 6, 2020. This survey is intended to support the Public Information Session #1 hosted by the City of Brampton on October 1, 2020.

The City used Twitter, the Riverwalk project website, and the Brampton Engage website (brampton.ca/engage) to promote the online survey. The survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey. Participants were able to download the presentation slides from Public Information Session #1 for review before taking the survey.

Similar to Public Information Session #1, the survey sought public feedback on the following topics. The questions from the survey are also listed below each topic:

UDMP Vision Update and Design Principles & Objectives

- Question 1: Do you agree that the UDMP Vision and Design Principles & Objectives provide a good framework for the Riverwalk UDMP?
- Question 2: Is there anything else you think we should consider in the UDMP Vision Statement and/or Design Principles & Objectives?

Background Analysis

- Question 3: What current issues and/or things that exist in the Riverwalk Area should we consider as part of our background analysis?

Opportunities and Constraints

- Question 4: Are there any specific opportunities you would like to see the team consider at the scale of the overall Riverwalk UDMP Area? What are they?
- Question 5: Are there any opportunities you would like to see the team consider in a specific area? What opportunities, and in which areas?

Other feedback

- Question 6: Any other feedback, suggestions, considerations, and/or advice you have for the City of Brampton and the project team?

Between October 9 and November 6, 2020, 23 people responded to the survey and 9 of those people also signed up to receive project updates.

Feedback from the survey will be reviewed and considered by the City of Brampton and DTAH, the project's lead consultant team, to inform the UDMP and Public Information Session #2.

This Summary of Feedback was written by Swerhun Inc., the third party facilitation team supporting the City of Brampton on the public consultation for the UDMP.

The intent of this summary is to capture the range of feedback shared by participants using the online survey. This summary is not intended to serve as a transcript, does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives, and does not indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of the City of Brampton or the project team.

1. Key themes

The following key themes emerged from the feedback shared by participants on the UDMP online survey. These themes are meant to be read in concert with the more detailed summary of feedback in the following sections.

- **In general, participants were interested to learn more about the Riverwalk and were excited about the project.** Participants said they were excited about the economic, social, and placemaking opportunities that might be achieved with the UDMP.
- **Participants shared many suggestions for the UDMP and Riverwalk Area,** including: improve lighting; add more connections to the Riverwalk; connect people to the water; create a continuous trail along the Etobicoke Creek; improve/maintain the natural environment; provide new amenities and outdoor programming; provide more safe cycling trails; and more.
- **Some participants also shared concerns about:** impacts to the natural environment, people experiencing homelessness in the area, sense of safety, litter along the Riverwalk, increased population, and traffic congestion downtown.

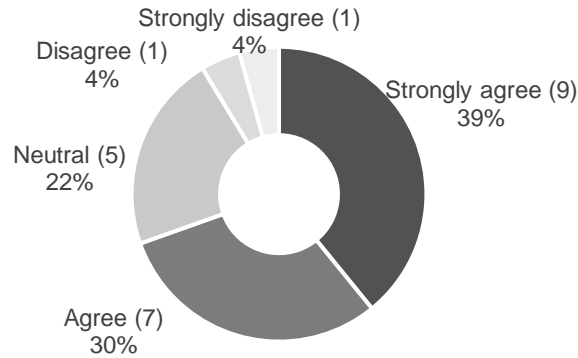
2. Detailed summary of feedback

The following sections summarize the feedback shared by participants. The feedback is organized by question and the following categories:

- Feedback about the Vision Update and Design Principles & Objectives
- Feedback about the Background Analysis
- Feedback about Opportunities and Constraints
 - Feedback about the overall Riverwalk Area
 - Area-specific feedback
- Other Feedback

Feedback about the Vision Update and Design Principles & Objectives

Question 1: Do you agree that the UDMP Vision and Design Principles & Objectives provide a good framework for the Riverwalk UDMP? Total responses: 23



Question 2: Is there anything else you think we should consider in the UDMP Vision Statement and/or Design Principles & Objectives? Total responses: 11

- **Consider potential impacts to ecology and flooding upstream.** It would be nice to see how the project team is addressing specific issues like improving fish passage upstream, maintaining riparian zones, ensuring that habitats are not negatively affected by development in the area, and any impacts to flooding upstream to Heart Lake.
- **Connecting people to the water and the ability to enjoy the water is important.** This connection could be an objective, potentially the first. The project should focus its efforts on rehabilitation of the waterway and reestablishing a natural riverbank with native species.
- **The economic, social, and placemaking aspects of the project are important and exciting.**
- **Consider using high-quality and durable materials that will survive the elements in Brampton.**
- **Consider additional play areas for kids,** such as basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer pitches, etc.
- **Consider budget and future funding.** It is important that City Council provides sufficient funding to successfully deliver this project (e.g. increasing property taxes as suggested by one participant).
- **Consider additional and/or improved bicycle paths for leisure.**

Feedback about the Background Analysis

Question 3: What current issues and/or things that exist in the Riverwalk Area should we consider as part of our background analysis? Total responses: 14

- **In general, lighting in the Riverwalk Area parks could be improved.** On the other hand, minimal lighting at night could also be considered because artificial overhead lighting can adversely affect plants and wildlife. The team could also consider low voltage foot path markers along the trails too.
- **Sense of safety in the Riverwalk area parks.** Currently, there seems to be a growing number of people experiencing homelessness living in the parks. There should also be enhanced safety measure on paths that travel under roadways.
- **A disconnected pedestrian and cycling trail system could be improved.** Currently, the trail that runs alongside the Etobicoke Creek is not continuous for both pedestrians and cyclists. For instance, between Rosalea Park and the railroad crossing, people have to use city streets to get back to the trail. These trails should be continuous. Trail wayfinding signs could also be improved or added to the area.
- **There could be more bicycle paths and trails.** Trails should be wide enough to allow for pedestrians and cyclists. The team should also consider separating cyclist and pedestrian traffic because mixing both on one trail could be dangerous.
- **Queen Street from Centre Street to the railroad could be improved** with streetscaping, beautification, and planting more trees.
- **Consider the future plans for the railroad crossing at John Street and James Street and bridge over the creek.** It is important to consider the public's and City's "asks" of Metrolinx if/when they want to close the railroad crossing and/or expand the bridge over the creek to accommodate an additional track.
- **There is lots of litter in the water, on the banks, and in the bushes.** There should be efforts to clean and improve the natural environment to create a beautiful space, with a natural riverbed and native plants.
- **Incorporate ways to recognize Indigenous history.**
- **Consider maintaining or salvaging the existing tree inventory.**
- **Not many people currently walk in Brampton.**

Feedback about Opportunities and Constraints

Feedback about the overall Riverwalk area

Question 4: Are there any specific opportunities you would like to see the team consider at the scale of the overall Riverwalk UDMP Area? What are they? Total responses: 13

New or improved connections:

- **Provide more connections between the Riverwalk, downtown commercial area, and neighbourhoods in general.** Consider wider trails to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists, more bike trails, and separating cycling and pedestrian traffic.
- **Leverage the opportunities with the future Queen Street BRT and Brampton GO Station.** Make the connection from transit fun, good, and easy to get more people to the Riverwalk Area. The City could also consider installing wayfinding signs from the GO Station to the Riverwalk.
- **Explore opportunities to connect with Peel Memorial.** New connections and open space could be a nice breath of fresh air for patients and visitors who need a break.
- **Considering buying the properties along the Etobicoke Creek by Centre Street and Queen Street to provide more open space.** For example, the commercial plazas on the southwest corner of Queen Street and Centre Street (with the Dairy Queen) could be turned into a beautiful urban park space that will create new important connections to the future medical district at Peel Memorial.

Amenities and programming:

- **Suggested new, additional, or improved amenities to consider include:** gathering spaces with shaded picnic tables, chairs, benches, accessible toilets, outdoor skating paths, splash pads, tennis courts, and a pond so that community members can interact with water.
- **Consider more public events, workshops, and sports events.** There could be a wide range of uses for the new areas that must be considered. The City can also look into Healthy Communities use cases.

Natural environment:

- **Be mindful of and ensure a healthy natural environment.** The informal trails in the Riverwalk are well used, though they may damage the riparian lands – it is important to maintain healthy environment for wildlife and vegetation in the area. Consider improving connections for wildlife, as well. One side of the creek could be for people, and the other side of the creek could be for wildlife or remain natural.
- **Maintain present forest density and habitats.**
- **Consider improving the natural spaces for community gardens to grow produce.**
- **Ensure low impact development.**
- **Keep the Riverwalk natural and open.** Do not allow restaurants to take over the riverfront.

Other opportunities and constraints

- **Consider adding/improving wayfinding.** There could be clear directions and waypoints throughout the area to and from Garden Square, Queen-Etobicoke Bridge Vista, and entry points to the trail.

- **Provide aesthetically pleasing affordable housing in an environmentally conscious manner.** The removal of the Special Policy Area designation creates opportunities to ensure a high standard for new developments and character of the area.
- **Consider compensation for the inconvenience/disruption for residents and homeowners most impacted by the project.**
- **There are currently people experiencing homelessness who live in tents in the area.**
- **Clean up the area.** The parks currently look dirty and there is garbage in the area.

Area-specific feedback

Question 5: Are there any opportunities you would like to see the team consider in a specific area? What opportunities, and in which areas? Total responses: 10

Area 1: Duggan Park

- **Consider providing a wildlife crossing at Vodden St East** via a new underpass for wildlife and/or by using the riverbank.

Area 2: Central Public School Field

- **This would be a great spot for outdoor events and organized gatherings,** something like Celebration Square in a greener environment.

Area 3: Rosalea Park

- **Consider an outdoor swimming area.** Before the YMCA was here, there was an outdoor public pool. It would be amazing to have a place to swim outdoors downtown again.
- **Consider space for community gardens.** There are people in the Downtown Brampton Area that struggle with food security and/or may enjoy growing their own food.

Area 4: Etobicoke Creek Bypass Channel

- **Area 4 has character and could be a City icon.** A big draw to the Etobicoke Creek Trail is how parts are truly narrow and envelop you in nature. This natural character should be preserved in Area 4, and parts of Area 1 and Area 5. These features would also create variety along the Creek, possibly adding to its charms. Considering that Area 4 could be open and publicly accessible, placemaking efforts should be prioritized here, and perhaps even through Area 3. There should also be clear guidance/wayfinding to accessing this area from Garden Square.
- **Maximize public access and safety in this area.** There should also be access to the water's edge to reconnect people to nature. There must also be safety measures in place to limit access during high water events/emergencies.
- **Consider converting the concrete riverbank to a natural one.** It is important to have natural areas for wildlife and vegetation growth. The creek has been concrete for decades

and makes the area feel commercialized. It would be great to see the area returned to a natural state, maintained, and preserved before additional improvements.

- **There should be more careful consideration to the Etobicoke Creek Bypass Channel to avoid flooding up stream.** The documents online do not have information north of Williams Parkway. It is important to consider flooding upstream of Williams Parkway.

Area 5: Centennial Park

- **Consider multiple uses in the sports areas.** The sports areas are very nice, but are not used very much for the amount of space they take up. This area may be a good spot for large community gardens, public art, and a stopping area along the creek path to encourage and educate people about taking care of nature.

Other feedback

Question 6: Please provide any other feedback, suggestions, considerations, and/or advice you have for the City of Brampton and the project team below. Total responses: 10

- **This is an exciting opportunity for the development of Downtown Brampton and the rest of the city.** The little creek can become a mighty river with more rain, and because of climate change, we will see more water and flooding in the creek. Brampton can proactively address climate change in the Riverwalk Area. It is also important to be mindful of the budget and funding aspects of the project, local ecology, future developments, and careful trail improvements. Keep the project going and don't let COVID-19 slow down the project.
- **Consider future infrastructure and maintenance.** Choose materials that are environmentally-friendly and/or easy to replace. Instead of concrete and asphalt, use wood, steel, and aggregate/stone. Modular design using natural materials could allow spaces to age gracefully to avoid large maintenance projects. This can minimize the impacts to the environment, community members, and cost.
- **Consider creating a pond in the Riverwalk Area.** One with a gazebo in the middle of it and a walking path to the gazebo.
- **There should be spaces along the Riverwalk for people to grow their own food.**
- **Bicycle paths are a must have in this city, please don't ignore this.**
- **The City should provide drinking fountains along the trails.**
- **Consider hosting walking tours about this project** – maybe when the numbers are down. COVID-19 makes this difficult, but walking tours can be physically distant.
- **This is a nice idea, but might not be appropriate for Brampton.**
- **There should be more support for people experiencing homelessness,** who are currently living in tents in the Riverwalk.
- **Consider future population increases and traffic.** There is already a lot of development in Brampton and there is also a lot of traffic congestion.

3. Next steps

Feedback from the survey will be reviewed and considered by the City of Brampton and DTAH, the lead consultant team for the project, to inform the UDMP and Public Information Session #2. Public Information Session #2 will be held in 2021.