

Riverwalk Area Urban Design Master Plan Meeting Summary

October 1, 2020

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Online via Webex Events

Overview

On Thursday October 1, 2020, the City of Brampton hosted the first of two planned Public Information Sessions about the Riverwalk Area Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP). City staff and DTAH (the lead project consultant), were joined by City and Regional Councillors Paul Vicente (Wards 1 and 5) and Pat Fortini (Wards 7 and 8).

Due to the advice from public health officials during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Information Session was held remotely via Webex Events. Participants were able to join and participate in the online event using a computer, tablet, smartphone app, or by telephone.

Over 40 members of the public logged into the Public Information Session. The purpose of this first meeting was to introduce the Riverwalk Area Urban Design Master Plan and present and seek feedback on the:

- existing conditions analysis,
- constraints and opportunities analysis,
- the UDMP Vision update and design principles, and
- opportunities to explore for the Riverwalk UDMP upcoming work.

Councillors Paul Vicente and Pat Fortini provided opening remarks, thanked participants for attending the meeting, and shared their excitement about the Riverwalk UDMP. Michael Heralall and Alex Taranu from the City of Brampton presented an overview and history of the Riverwalk area and program. James Roche and Tanya Brown from DTAH presented their background analysis, outlined opportunities and constraints in the Riverwalk area, and summarized the vision update and design principles and objectives from the UDMP. Following the presentations, Ian Malczewski, an independent third-party facilitator from Swerhun Inc., facilitated questions of clarification and a plenary discussion.

The Riverwalk UDMP Public Information Session #1 is part of a larger engagement effort that also includes online engagement, and a second Public Information Session (date to be determined). Visit the Riverwalk website for more information: www.brampton.ca/riverwalk

Swerhun Inc. prepared this Meeting Summary. The intent of this summary is to capture the range of perspectives shared at the meeting and e-mailed to the facilitation team up to and including October 9, 2020. This summary is not intended to serve as a verbatim 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. This summary was reviewed by participants before it was finalized.

Attachments included: Attachment A – list of project team members in attendance; Attachment B – link to meeting presentation; Attachment C – post-meeting e-mailed feedback

1. Key themes of feedback shared by participants

In general, participants were very interested to learn more about the Riverwalk UDMP.

Participants asked the project team questions about the UDMP and shared advice, suggestions, and considerations for the Riverwalk area. The following key themes emerged from the feedback shared by participants both during the Public Information Session and after the meeting by e-mail:

- **This UDMP should strive to improve connections, safety, and ecology.** The project team should consider opportunities to improve and reconnect pedestrian and cycling infrastructure (especially north-south connections), improve safety (such as adding lighting, better sightlines, and discouraging illicit and illegal activity), provide play structures, and include more native trees, shrubs, and restorative influences of trees and water.
- **The relationship to and influence of other initiatives need to be clearer.** How does this project relate to the ideas and vision set out in the Brampton 2040 Vision? How does it relate to the Downtown Brampton Flood Protection Environmental Assessment? What decisions were made through those processes that influence or inform this work? Will this UDMP process result in any expropriation of (or other impacts on) private property?
- **The connection between engagement and decision making should be clearer.** Other than this public meeting, what other ways is the City seeking input on the UDMP? What can the public influence through the UDMP engagement process, and how will the City keep residents informed on the progress of the Riverwalk and Environmental Assessment?

These themes are meant to be read in concert with the more detailed summary of feedback in the following sections.

2. Detailed summary of feedback

Questions and comments from members of the public at the Public Information Session are summarized below by topic. Responses by the City and DTAH are indicated below in *italics*, where provided.

The post-meeting feedback, questions, and comments that were e-mailed to the facilitation team up to and including October 9, 2020, are summarized in the following section on page 4.

Feedback about existing conditions

Consider community safety and people experiencing homelessness in the Riverwalk area. Participants asked about potential impacts to people experiencing homelessness who currently settle in parts of the Riverwalk area. One participant said the area feels unsafe for children during the day, particularly in the wooded areas in Duggan Park, and suggested the team provide more clear sightlines and better lighting to improve the sense of safety.

The City and DTAH responded that the focus of the UDMP is on open space, and how buildings and built-form can shape and activate these open spaces, but that resolving issues of homelessness are beyond the scope and breadth of the project. The team is aware that some people live and use areas along the edges of and within the bypass, is sensitive to this broader social issue, and is not looking to remove people from the Riverwalk or create hostile spaces to those experiencing homelessness. In terms of improving a sense of safety overall, the design

team's experience is that following Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles such as improving connections, visibility and activity within public spaces makes them more inviting to more people, which can improve overall safety. Separate from this study, the Regional of Peel and City of Brampton have initiatives focusing on homeless in Brampton, such as the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy.

Consider other current and future plans in the Riverwalk area. Some participants were interested to learn about how the UDMP relates to other current and future plans and buildings in the area, particularly whether the UDMP would recommend or result in new development on Scott Street.

The City responded that the UDMP study is about open space, including how buildings in the future could frame that open space. Downtown Brampton is an Urban Growth Centre and has higher density targets as per Provincial policy (see "A Place to Grow: Growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe"). There are a lot of active development proposals in the area, including on some segments of Scott Street, but the Riverwalk Urban Design Master Plan itself is not proposing any specific developments.

There is not much parking in the area. How is the project team thinking about parking provisions if Rosalea Park is proposed to become an attraction in the future? There is some overflow parking on the local residential streets and hopefully more people will transition to cycling and transit in the future.

The City and DTAH responded that the Riverwalk UDMP focusses on sustainability, transit, and active transportation. There is currently a large amount of underutilized parking at Garden Square and other existing parking facilities in the Downtown. The Project aims to fully utilize parking infrastructure available in the area, and promote the use of active and public transportation, as well as maximize the use of public spaces. When there are large events, the City will develop a parking strategy for these events.

What is the plan for Ken Whillans Drive? Participants wanted to learn more about the plan for Ken Whillans Drive. *The City and DTAH responded that Ken Whillans Drive is an important part in the recently approved Downtown Brampton Flood Protection Environmental Assessment (EA). As noted in the EA, Ken Whillans Drive will need to be realigned to allow for excavation into the floodplain, expand the valley, and provide more stormwater storage.*

Is there any planned construction for the Queen Street bridge or a new bridge on John Street over the creek? *The City responded that there is no immediately planned construction for these bridges. The Queen Street bridge was improved around 12-15 years ago and, as a result of the EA, will need to be widened to allow more water to flow in the creek underneath. The detailed planning and design work will take place in the next couple of years. The City sees the widening of the Queen Street bridge and a John Street connection to Peel Memorial Centre as great opportunities for a better pedestrian experience with wider sidewalks and views of the creek.*

What do you have in mind for the aesthetics in the area? What does the team mean when it speaks about urbanizing space in the Riverwalk? There are sections of creek valley that are bleak and unkempt; does urbanizing mean cleaning up these spaces?. *The City and DTAH responded that it is important to preserve and enhance the natural elements of the area to support the ecology of the space. Urbanizing refers to creating new access points, better lighting, and improved visibility to the Riverwalk, and providing more guidance and direction*

regarding future development. It involves redefining the relationship between the built and natural areas. The creek is currently facing away from the city, and the Riverwalk UDMP focuses on making it a part of the city.

Feedback about opportunities to explore through the Riverwalk UDMP

Connect north-south pedestrian and cycling trails. The City and team should explore ways to connect a continuous trail from north to south for pedestrians and cyclists. For example, it is difficult to cross Queen Street by the creek. *The City and DTAH responded that they agree: reconnecting trails north to south is one of the objectives of this project. They said they will be coordinating with the flood mitigation work to make sure any connections they propose meet flood and safety assurances as well.*

Suggestion to add more play structures for kids in the Rosalea Park area. Rosalea Park is currently very sports-focused.

Feedback and questions about the project overall and process

What is the total cost of this project? *The City responded that it is working to determine the costs for components of the Riverwalk and preliminary estimates will be available next year. The total cost to improve flood protection as outlined in the Downtown Flood Protection Environmental Assessment is estimated at \$250 million.*

3. Summary of post-meeting feedback

The facilitation team received four e-mails after the Public Information Session. This section categorizes and summarizes the feedback, questions, and comments that were e-mailed to the facilitation team up to and including October 9, 2020. Direct responses to participants were provided by the City and DTAH.

The e-mails are also included at the end of this summary as Attachment C.

Feedback and questions about the UDMP

Questions about the engagement and consultation, including how the City and project team intends on considering and incorporating public feedback into the UDMP; what the second round of UDMP consultation will cover; whether there will be additional and other opportunities to provide feedback; how the City intends on communicating project updates and implications/impacts to the local community; and how the City plans to keep the community informed about the funding, progress, and detailed design of the DBFP EA work. There was also some interest shared in staying informed about the UDMP.

Questions about how the UDMP connects to other initiatives, including how the UDMP complements or conflicts with the solutions identified in the DBFP EA and the City's 2040 Vision work with Beasley & Associates Planning Inc., how this work fits into the detailed design phase for the DBFP EA, if there will be any impacts or recommendations on the Queen Street bridge, and how the UDMP fits with the area's transit plans.

Questions about potential property and development impacts. There were a few questions about whether the UDMP will have any private property impacts including: will the UDMP recommend any land expropriations; are there any anticipated or planned development along

the southern segments of Scott Street; and are there any plans to redevelop neighbourhoods beside the creek between Nelson Street and John Street?

Feedback about existing conditions

Questions and feedback about maintenance in natural areas: whether any trees along Ken Whillans Drive that border the creek will be removed as part of the realignment; if the City intends on removing dead trees and dense bushes along the creek to create more “maintained” area; what the City meant by “urbanizing water margins”; and how the team plans on providing access, sightlines, and lighting while conserving the existing natural environment.

Feedback about community safety. The addition of more lights alone is not enough to make the space feel safe. Clearing underbrush and dense thickets are also important for people to feel safe and secure. Trees should be maintained, but efforts to establish sightlines to the road are imperative.

Feedback about parking and accessibility. The parking lot on Church Street is well used by locals, during Christmas, by film crews, and the St. Andrews Church. It is important to consider elderly people who want to access the church but would be required to park at the Rose Theatre garage if the Church Street parking were removed.

Feedback about opportunities

Considerations for Rosalea Park: More trees and native plants, potentially even an arboretum; a circular skating path; and a raised pavement amphitheater by the western edge of the park for events that could also serve as flood protection.

A suggestion to provide other uses in Duggan Park. It currently only has baseball diamonds and inaccessible meadow and brush areas.

Suggested other opportunities to explore: More north-south cycling connections; more pedestrian crossings over the bypass throughout the Riverwalk; and more treed areas, gardens, winding paths, and fountains like in European cities.

Other questions

Additional questions about project administration, process, and engagement that were emailed to the project team are included in Attachment C.

4. Next steps

Michael Heralall (City of Brampton) and Tanya Brown (DTAH) thanked participants for joining the first Public Information Session for the Riverwalk Area Urban Design Master Plan. Ian from the facilitation team said there will be an online survey posted on the UDMP website after the Public Information Session, and a draft of the meeting summary will be distributed to participants for review.

Attachment A: List of project team members

In attendance:

City of Brampton:

Michael Heralall, *Senior Manager*
Environment & Development Engineering – Public Works and Engineering

Alex Taranu, *Senior Advisor*
Public Works and Engineering

Steve Bodrug, *Senior Manager*
Park Planning and Development – Park Maintenance and Forestry, Community Services

Stavroula Kassaris, *Environmental Planner*
Environment and Development Engineering, Public Works and Engineering

DTAH:

James Roche, *Partner, Landscape Architect, Design Lead*

Tanya Brown, *Landscape Architect, Project Manager*

Swerhun Inc. Facilitation Team:

Ian Malczewski, *Lead Facilitator*

Jacky Li, *Facilitation Support*

Attachment B: Meeting presentation

Link to the meeting presentation: https://www.brampton.ca/EN/Business/planning-development/projects-studies/riverwalk/Documents/2020-10-01_PIS%201%20Presentation-FINAL-combined-accessible.pdf

Attachment C – Post-meeting e-mailed feedback

The facilitation team received 4 e-mails after the meeting with feedback for the project team. The e-mails are copied below, with personally identifiable information removed.

E-mail 1 received on October 2, 2020

Hi,

Thank you so much for your efforts to try to connect me this evening during the information session. I have no idea why my microphone was not working.

May I please ask you to convey my questions to the design team for Riverwalk? Thank you.

Question: Will all the trees along Ken Whillens that border the creek be taken down? The design team is very interested in the ecosystems along the creek and I wonder how they will be able to preserve those with the trees taken down.

I'm still not clear what is going to be done to Ken Whillens Way (Street). If it's widened, what will be lost that exists now on the street?

Thanks very much.

Best,

E-mail 2 received on October 8, 2020

Good afternoon

I had some thoughts about Rosalea Park. I would like to see it turned into an arboretum. I can visualize stands of sugar maple, Canadian Red Maple, Chestnuts, Redbuds, (pink and white), Platanus, etc. I would also like to see beds of native shrubs.

The parking lot on Church Street should remain. It is used at Christmas by the people who give carriage rides, it is used by film crews when they are in the City and it is used by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church for parking on Sunday. I am a member, elder and gardener at that Church. We have a very small parking lot and for many of our members walking from the Rose Theatre Garage will be next to impossible.

Have a good Thanksgiving.

E-mail 3 received on October 9, 2020

Good afternoon,

We attended the virtual Public Information Session on October 1st, 2020 for the Riverwalk Area project.

As we are the representatives for a few properties along Queen Street E, we have prepared a letter with comments to actively participate in this process.

Please see attached letter.

Friday October 9th, 2020

Corporation of the City of Brampton
2 Wellington Street West
Brampton ON L6Y 4R2

Attention: City of Brampton – Riverwalk Project Area

Tanya Brown
Swerhun Inc.

RE: Public Information Session – Riverwalk Area Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP) – Comments

Dear Riverwalk Planning Team,

Corbett Land Strategies Inc. (CLS) is representing landowners with interests in the area north west of Queen Street E and Centre Street. These interests include properties which generally abut the east side of Etobicoke Creek and are located closely to the Queen Street bridge (See Appendix A). We attended the virtual PIS on October 1st, 2020 and wish to remain engaged in the process. Please add the below contact information to a notification list and keep us apprised of the process going forward.

As we would like to become an active participant, we would appreciate confirmation on whether the expropriation of land may be a recommendation which results from this process (to accommodate any trails or open spaces being contemplated). This is particularly relevant as the subject properties abut this section of the Etobicoke Creek, which is identified within Area 4: The Etobicoke Creek Bypass Channel.

In addition, we would appreciate direction on whether this project may result in recommendations for a replacement of the Queen Street bridge (to accommodate any recommendations for the active transportation network contemplated for underneath the bridge)?

We would also appreciate direction on how the UDMP will interact with the transit plans for the applicable sections of Queen Street?

Further, we would like to know if City staff will accept any planning applications while the Environmental Assessment is currently going on?

The appended map shows the area of interest of the landowners we represent (please see Appendix A). We welcome a fulsome discussion with staff to discuss the questions above and ascertain the potential future impacts to the properties. If there are any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Thank you,

Candice Hood

Candice Hood, BA, CPT
Senior Planning Technician
Corbett Land Strategies Inc.
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289-725-0121

APPENDIX A

CITY OF BRAMPTON ETOBICOKE CREEK BYPASS CHANNEL

Area of Interest



Scale NTS

E-mail 4 received on October 9, 2020

At the first public meeting for Riverwalk on Oct 1, 2020, it was indicated that only 2 public engagement meetings would be scheduled – the meeting already in progress and another in January 2021. The first meeting was largely introductory, presenting the opportunities and constraints of Riverwalk and asking for input from the public, but without having provided substantive content on the process for developing the project plan, and its intended direction.

In order to fill the gaps not addressed at the meeting (especially in light of the very limited Q&A period provided), here are some questions we would like addressed:

1. When did DTAH enter into its contract with the City for the Riverwalk project?
2. Why aren't more opportunities than two 90-minute meetings being provided for this major project? Are the City of Brampton and DTAH intentionally limiting opportunities for public comment?
3. What is the intended purpose of the second public engagement meeting?
4. Will any additional opportunities to participate in this process be made available to the public?
5. Are the City and DTAH committed to transparency to the public regarding the details of this project, and project implications for local residents? If so, how do the City and DTAH plan to demonstrate this?
6. To what extent will public input (questions and comments) inform or impact decisions pertaining to the Riverwalk project (e.g. aesthetics, environmental impacts, property impacts, proposed use of public space, impacts on neighbourhoods [parking, noise, etc])?
7. Is DTAH's mandate to concretize Larry Beasley's aspirational vision for the lands surrounding the Etobicoke Creek (not a river), or is DTAH's mandate to develop a realistic new vision for this project? If the latter, how will DTAH's vision differ from Beasley's vision? How will it be similar?
8. How will you align Riverwalk with the requirements of the DBFP environmental assessment? And how will you ensure that all parties, including residents, can know and trust that the requirements of the EA have not been sidelined or overridden in order for the City to get what it wants?
9. What is the working relationship between DTAH's design work on Riverwalk and the City's "detailed design" phase of the Downtown Brampton Flood Protection plan?
10. Who is responsible for the design and construction of the Bypass Channel and who is responsible for the design and construction of Riverwalk? What are the timelines for these two projects?
11. At the first Riverwalk meeting, Scott Street was described as a road having three distinct segments: northern, middle and southern. Aspects of the northern and middle segments were discussed, while the southern segment was largely avoided in your discourse, despite

direct questions about this. What impacts are anticipated or planned for the southern segment of Scott Street?

12. What decisions have already been made that intersect with the Riverwalk project, with regard to re-development of neighbourhoods adjacent to the creek (e.g. between Nelson and John Streets)?
13. The Etobicoke Creek flows through Brampton, a city of 600,000. In many areas, the creek environment is natural and unmaintained; and due to the growing presence of coyotes, feels unsafe. This is the case, even in the heart of the city. Residents enjoy the sounds of the creek, the trees, winding paths, and tranquility of the spaces adjacent to the creek. However, we would like to see more care and maintenance of the environment, which appears neglected. Dense brush needs to be thinned (or eliminated), and dead trees removed.

We note that, although TRCA is responsible for both the Etobicoke Creek watershed and the Heart Lake Conservation Area, Heart Lake's fallen trees are properly managed and its lands look better maintained than the creek lands in the heart of Brampton. Surely city parkland should be made more hospitable to its residents.

14. We note that half of Duggan Park is unusable, as meadow and brush areas make the river margin almost completely inaccessible, and carry the risks of both ticks and fire ants to those who venture in. The rest is baseball diamonds, which are frankly uninviting spaces for anyone who doesn't participate in the sport.
15. Our concrete-dominated world doesn't need more concrete or the arty blocks of decorative grasses of the so-called "chic" urban park. As humans, we need the restorative influences of trees and water; to that end, we would like to see well-treed environments with shrubs, gardens, winding paths, and even fountains, similar to what you find in European cities. There is no excuse for the overgrown brush that currently obscures the creek from view, and makes our public spaces feel unsafe.
16. Our neighbourhood has endured 2 years of the DBFPP EA process, throughout which we were told that certain dimensional parameters for the new bypass channel were immutable. Naturally, we would like to know how it is that these parameters are now negotiable to accommodate Riverwalk, when aspects such as channel wall slopes or a naturalised low flow channel were flatly non-negotiable with the TRCA, even when these directly impacted private properties, homes, and businesses.

This appearance of duplicity leaves residents with the concern that the underlying intent of TRCA's EA decision-making was to enable land expropriations by the City, under the auspices of requiring these properties for the DBFPP, when the real intention was to enable Riverwalk (and Beasley's vision). Please comment on the accuracy of this perception.

17. Does the City and DTAH intend to both acknowledge and address (through consultative and constructive actions), the expressed and valid concerns of Brampton residents, with respect to coyotes, the homeless, drug dealers, and prostitutes who frequent and/or inhabit the dense thickets adjacent to the Etobicoke Creek, and Rosalea Park?

NOTE: The addition of more lights alone is insufficient to make the space feel safe. Clearing underbrush and dense thickets are also important for people to feel safe and secure,

particularly in a park area which has seen sexual assaults in the past. At the Oct 1 meeting, we did not feel that you adequately acknowledged residents who commented on how unsafe these areas feel to residents, whether walking alone or taking children to the park. Trees should be maintained, but efforts to establish sightlines to the road are imperative.

18. If your plan is to maintain the “natural environment”, including fallen trees and dense underbrush, how do you plan to reconnect the people of Brampton with a creek that they cannot see?
19. Can you explain why the City/DTAH are keen to preserve fallen/dead tree as wildlife habitats, (which become dangerous projectiles in the event of serious flooding), yet concurrently have no qualms about destroying living trees in the Bypass Channel and Ken Whillans area, human habitations (houses), and places of business?
20. In the service of government transparency, how does the City plan to keep us informed, re: funding and progress on **DBFPP detailed design** and **Riverwalk**?
21. What are the respective roles in the Riverwalk project of: the City of Brampton, TRCA, DTAH, Larry Beasley, and AECOM? What are the individual roles and functions of each proponent in this project, and how are they all working together?
22. We feel there is a disconnect between your messaging about protecting natural woodlots and ecosystems and the sterile urban aesthetic proposed by Beasley. Can you clarify what the aesthetic vision for this project is? How will Riverwalk look and feel?
23. There is also a disconnect between Beasley’s aspirational designs for the Riverwalk and the requirements of the DBFPP EA. Given this, can you explain why the City and DTAH presented Beasley-esque images for the future Riverwalk at the meeting, and in public materials promoting the Riverwalk project? Is this realistic, or is it misleading the public as to what can actually be accomplished? And how you will work within the parameters of the DBFPP EA to accomplish Riverwalk?
24. Can you elaborate on your comments that there are “challenges” in connecting the bike paths, north and south of Queen Street, through the bypass channel, and how you will address these?
25. Would it be feasible for DTAH to consider providing a circular skating path in Rosalea Park, similar to the one in Gage Park?
26. Has the City considered connecting Maple Avenue with Ken Whillans Parkway, in association with both the DBFPP and Riverwalk projects? A raised road on the western margin of Rosalea Park, in conjunction with the raised pavement of Church Street, would create an amphitheatre-like bowl in the park for events, and could also serve as secondary flood protection.
27. Are there plans to enable pedestrians to traverse the bypass channel from within it? If so, can you elaborate on this?
28. People enjoy stopping on bridges to enjoy the trees and water, and watch the ducks and other wildlife. Currently, there is a single footbridge traversing the Etobicoke Creek between Vodden Street and Church Street (connecting Ken Whillans Drive and Duggan Park). Are

any additional footbridges planned in the Ken Whillans area north of the Church Street Bridge? Similarly, could a footbridge be provided between Centennial Park and the Legion building located on Mary Street? This would make the parkland south of Clarence more accessible.

29. What is planned with regard to fences along the creek and Bypass Channel? Given the depth of the channel, some form of safety fencing is important. It is not clear that this is necessary adjacent to the natural creek, however.

30. What is meant by “urbanizing the water margins”?

31. The southern segment of Scott Street and Maple Street are home to many seniors (Grace Court, Maple). How will you address their concerns (as well as those of other residents), regarding noise, pollution, increased traffic, and street parking, which are sequelae of the use of Rosalea Park as an event space?