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*Planning  
Resource*

Recommendations from the  
**Toronto Residents'  
Reference Panel on the  
Davenport Community  
Rail Overpass**

“As local residents, we volunteered for the Residents’ Reference Panel because we wanted to represent our community and learn more about one of the most important public infrastructure projects to impact the Davenport neighbourhood in recent history.

The Davenport Community Rail Overpass affects us. It impacts our neighbourhoods, our families, our environment, and our livelihoods. We have chosen to live in this neighbourhood and we have a natural interest in ensuring that the land that becomes available through the project becomes a valuable community space.”











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# Recommendations from the Toronto Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass

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# Moderator's Note

**This report contains the recommendations of the Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass. The Reference Panel was convened by Metrolinx to open up a discussion around an important infrastructure project and invite representatives of the community to play a central role in shaping its design.**

Significantly, the work of the Panel precedes any preliminary design for the overpass, or the start of the official environmental assessment process. Instead, the recommendations contained in the report will provide direction and serve as a 'creative brief' to Metrolinx planners and engineers who are now tasked with bringing forward a plan for the Davenport overpass which the community can support.

My own task has been to support the members of the Reference Panel as their moderator — a role that is part host, part consensus-builder with the goal of looking for common ground.

What I can tell you is that the members of the Reference Panel served their community with great passion, insight and dedication. Among our members you can find a Ryerson student, an arborist, two software engineers, a retired guidance counsellor, a Portuguese-language radio producer, a peer support worker — exactly the sort of people who call this community home. When we tallied the total number of years our members have lived in the Davenport area, we landed north of 400. In short, it's a group with real understanding and experience. These are true local experts.

Together, over the course of four Saturdays and one evening this spring, the panelists invested some 1500 hours in conversation with one another, more than a dozen guest presenters, as well as their friends, family and colleagues.

As the members point out in their report, the proposed elevated rail corridor running roughly between Bloor Street West and Davenport Road represents the "single greatest local infrastructure project in a generation." They are determined to see that Metrolinx gets this right — making it, again in their words, "an asset, not an eyesore".

Exactly how to do this is the subject of their report. But in the course of developing their recommendations, the members of the Reference Panel wrestled with several of the most challenging issues facing Toronto. For instance, how can we relieve congestion while balancing the interests of local residents and commuters? How do we create new public spaces while also ensuring that we have sufficient funding to maintain them? How can a community retain its fundamental character while also accommodating change and growth?

The Reference Panel has provided thoughtful direction on these and other questions. Its work also marks the start of the conversation, and we have been assured that there will be many additional opportunities for the community to influence the design of this project.



As a city, we are dealing with the consequences of decades of stop-and-start transit planning. Now the region is playing catch-up and each new project will require us to weigh the trade-offs and find creative ways to enhance our communities as we reinvent our transportation system.

To this end, I want to commend the panelists for their thoughtfulness and tenacity. Many members participated in spite of their opposition to the overpass, their willingness to serve on this panel despite their concerns deserves special mention. Necessarily, their report does not condone the decision to build an overpass, but seeks to make the best of this planning decision.

I also want to acknowledge Metrolinx and their staff for supporting the integrity of the Reference Panel process. I should also acknowledge our guest experts, including the planners, engineers, design professionals and community representatives who took the time to prepare remarks and participate in our deliberations.

The panelists exemplified the best of Davenport and worked collaboratively to reach consensus concerning their priorities. I thank them most of all for their contributions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P MacLeod', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter MacLeod  
Moderator, Davenport Community Rail  
Overpass Project



# Residents' Reference Panel





# How To Read This Report

**This report is divided into three sections. The first section, drafted by the Reference Panel project team, explains the process and provides a summary of the recommendations.**

The second section of the report has been drafted by the members of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass Reference Panel through a collaborative process. It represents their voice and consensus view concerning the design principles that they believe should shape the direction of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass project.

Their work includes a preamble and a set of values that have shaped their thinking. Most importantly, it contains both recommendations that the Panel believes should be applied to the project as a whole, as well as specific recommendations directed to the five geographic zones within the rail corridor area. These recommendations and the accompanying maps and illustrations constitute their guidance to Metrolinx.

The final section of this report contains short profiles of each of the panelists, a list of the guest presenters, and a summary of each day's activities. This section also includes a brief minority report produced by one member of the Panel to comment on or direct additional attention to various recommendations or concerns. Minority reports do not represent a consensus view, but the perspective of one or more named members of the Panel.

# Recommendations Overview: What Policy Makers Should Know

This report represents the best advice of a 36-member Reference Panel that was convened by Metrolinx to consider the impact and potential benefits of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass. This project is intended to eliminate the ‘Davenport Diamond,’ one of the busiest train track crossings in North America where CP/CN freight trains intersect with GO commuter trains on the Barrie corridor. This crossing acts as a bottleneck, frequently delaying GO trains and impeding the progress of Metrolinx’s service expansion plans, GO Regional Express Rail, funded by the Province of Ontario.

The panel was tasked with studying the project and providing detailed recommendations to inform the design of the overpass.

The Reference Panel is an early-stage component of Metrolinx’s on-going public consultation process, which includes additional public meetings, the disclosure of various feasibility studies, and a forthcoming environmental assessment that will be conducted under the Province of Ontario’s Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP).

## **Local context**

The history of Davenport as an important crossroads stretches back thousands of years, first as an overland route linking the Humber and Don waterways. As early as the 1600s, a footpath through this area became a popular route for European traders, settlers and eventually farmers. In the 1800s the trail was privatized and a system of tolls was established. One of the toll-keepers cottages was recently restored and currently sits at the intersection of Davenport and Bathurst. The existing rail corridor, established in the mid 1800s predates Confederation, and was built to link a burgeoning city with the communities surrounding Lake Simcoe. With the rail line came new industry, and the construction of extensive housing. The single-track corridor continued to serve both freight and passenger rail until 2009 when the track was acquired by Metrolinx. Twinning this line and elevating it above the CP freight line is considered an essential step to expanding regional rail services in the area.

## **The Panel’s Recommendations:**

The panelists recognize the important public benefits that could come with the development of the overpass. In contrast to earlier eras where public transit infrastructure was shunned or walled off, the panelists instead make recommendations that would treat the project as an opportunity to create important new public spaces and community connections. With additional investment from Metrolinx and its partners, they hope that the site can be designed as a local amenity that will demonstrate the benefits of community-centred design and engineering.



Their recommendations include:

- Creating inviting, safe and separated cycling and walking paths underneath the overpass that also link to other parks and trail systems.
- Using skilful, contemporary design to reduce the scale and profile of the overpass, while incorporating a range of aesthetic features.
- Creating a new public square at Wallace Avenue.
- Incorporating a pedestrian bridge and observation deck into the overpass design where it crosses the CP freight tracks to ensure continuous north-south connectivity.
- Building a pedestrian bridge at the north end of the corridor connecting the pathway to Earls court Park.
- Redeveloping local parks and public spaces to feature new uses and a more naturalized habitat.
- Incorporating distinctive signage and place-making features that heighten local connectivity and create local attractions.
- Preserving land at the south end of the corridor for a future Bloor Street GO Station.
- Ensuring compliance with accessibility standards for all ages and abilities.
- Protecting the health and well-being of local residents by mitigating both construction and ongoing noise, vibration, dust and emissions.
- Designing features which preserve the industrial and cultural heritage of the neighbourhood.
- Ensuring the new public spaces are open and welcoming year-round.
- Prioritizing the use of natural materials, textures, sustainable plantings and native species.
- Establishing a mechanism for ongoing community stewardship, and a long-term endowment or commitment to ensure sufficient funds to maintain and animate the site.

The panellists also took care to underscore their concern regarding the expansion of service prior to the full electrification of the line. They strongly encourage Metrolinx to establish a clear timeline for electrification as a condition of community support.

# Understanding the Reference Panel Process

The Davenport Residents' Reference was convened as an advisory body comprised of 36 impartial, randomly-selected residents living within a radius of the proposed project. Over four Saturdays in April, May, and June 2015, the Panel met to “represent the Davenport community and propose a series of recommendations to inform the design and delivery of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass project and any potential community benefits”.

During their meetings, the members of the panel heard from a range of experts and learned about regional and municipal goals for transportation expansion, population growth, and urban planning. The Reference Panel developed a set of community values and recommendations to guide the creation, design, use and stewardship of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass and any potential public spaces, parks, trails and connections flowing from the planning and construction of the project.

The panel's recommendations will now be reviewed by Metrolinx and which has committed to incorporating many of the panel's recommendations into the design of the overpass.

## **SELECTION PROCESS: THE CIVIC LOTTERY**

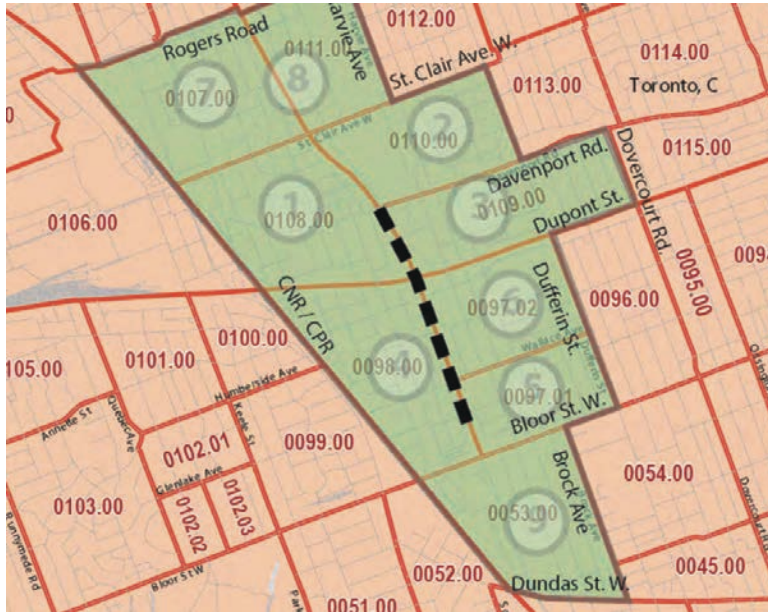
The 36 members of the Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass were selected by civic lottery. A total of 10,000 invitations were sent to randomly selected households in the Davenport study area in early March 2015. The invitations were transferable to anyone aged 18 or over living in that residence.

The letter invited recipients to volunteer four full Saturdays to meet, learn, discuss, and ultimately recommend actions and guidelines that could help influence the shape and character of the Davenport area for generations to come. They were also asked to volunteer one evening to host a Public Roundtable Meeting, which all area residents were encouraged to attend.

One hundred and seventy-three people responded to the invitation, either volunteering to be a part of the Panel or sending their regrets but requesting to be kept informed about the process. Elected municipal, provincial, and federal representatives, as well as employees of Metrolinx and other public transit or urban planning agencies were ineligible to apply. From the pool of eligible volunteers, 36 panelists were randomly selected in a blind draw that balanced three criteria: the selection guaranteed gender parity, matched the age profile of the study area, and ensured geographic representation from across the study area. The candidates' ethnicity, income, educational attainment or other attributes were not factored into the selection process. These attributes typically emerge proportionate to the general popu-



lation during a civic lottery. In short, the panel was composed in such a way as to deliver good demographic diversity and to ensure that it was broadly representative of the residents of the Davenport neighbourhood Study Area. One participant chose not to complete the process.



10,000 invitation letters were sent to households within the green study area.

## OVERVIEW OF THE REFERENCE PANEL'S ACTIVITIES

The Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass met for four Saturdays. During their first two sessions, each panelist had the opportunity to become better informed about the issues at hand. Fourteen experts and community representatives were invited to speak to the panel, presenting their concerns and ideas to improve the project. Panelists heard from technical experts, urban designers and planners, as well as representatives of local business and residents associations. Each presentation was followed by a vigorous question and answer period.

Each panelist also received a binder containing extensive background materials which were used to support their deliberations. As the process unfolded, the panelists were encouraged to share clippings and other resources with one another. They were also encouraged to engage their friends, families, and neighbours to deepen their understanding of different perspectives and priorities.

On the afternoon of their first session, the panelists spent two hours walking through the community and visiting the project site. This allowed the panel to closely explore the area impacted by the overpass and to imagine different options. The panelists also took care early in the process to define a set of values concerning the project, which they used to shape their recommendations.

During the second session, the panelists continued to hear from outside guests, but they also began a detailed study of five specific zones within the site. In each zone, they listed specific features or concerns that the project would need to address. The panelists also

continued to press Metrolinx for more information concerning the timeline for the project and the results of ongoing studies concerning air quality, noise, vibration and dust. Specifically, many panelists were concerned about the prospect of increasing the use of diesel trains on the overpass prior to the electrification of the Barrie line. Panelists also questioned the rationale for the project and insisted that Metrolinx better explain their preferred option to build an overpass rather than a tunnel or trench.

On May 12, 2015 the panelists hosted a Public Roundtable Meeting attended by more than ninety residents. This evening session provided an opportunity for Metrolinx to share more information about the project and for the panelists to hear directly from other local residents.

The process shifted during the third session as the panelists began to weigh different options. The panel spent most of the day working in small groups developing and sharing recommendations. Though they were excited by the task, they also expressed concern that Metrolinx could not provide a budget for either the construction of additional community amenities or long-term maintenance. This concern is reflected in several of their final recommendations.

During the afternoon, two designers from the architectural firm Perkins+Will assisted the panelists by producing sketches of potential features they were recommending along the corridor.

During their fourth and final session, the panelists concentrated on revising and aligning their zone-specific recommendations. They did this by rotating and presenting their ideas to members of different working groups. They also formed new groups to develop broader recommendations that would apply to the overpass project. Again, each group took turns sharing and receiving feedback from all members of the panel. Lastly, the members formed a final set of groups to draft a preamble to their report and review all of their thematic and zone recommendations. Another group reviewed the visual resources provided to the panel to select images to accompany this report.

During their final hour together, representatives from the panel presented highlights of their report to Metrolinx CEO, Bruce McCuaig and other guests including Councillor Ana Bailão, MPP Cristina Martins and MP Andrew Cash, who each offered congratulatory remarks.

Following their final session, the members were invited to edit their draft report and submit a minority report to highlight an issue or concern.

*A detailed account of each panel session can be found in the appendix to this report.*





On Day One panelists went on a site walk to discuss specific strengths, challenges and opportunities in the corridor.







**A great overpass project will...**

make Davenport more  
attractive to young  
families.

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This is about getting to what matters most in  
your life.  
This is the road ahead.  
Ready. Set. GO.



# The Panelist's Report









# The Panelist's Report

## PREAMBLE

We are 35 members of the Davenport community who have been tasked with making recommendations regarding the Davenport Community Rail Overpass. As local residents, we volunteered for the Residents' Reference Panel because we wanted to represent our community and learn more about one of the most important infrastructure projects to impact the Davenport neighbourhood in recent history.





The Davenport Community Rail Overpass affects us. It impacts our neighbourhoods, our families, our environment, and our livelihoods. We have chosen to live in this neighbourhood and we have a natural interest in ensuring that the land that becomes available through the project becomes a valuable community space.

Over the course of 1500 cumulative hours – at least 40 volunteer hours per panelist – we discussed our recommendations concerning the overpass and potential uses for the land underneath with many people and organizations.

We went on a guided walk of the spaces, streets, and parks that will be affected by this project. We heard from speakers representing Metrolinx, community groups, the City of Toronto, as well as transit planners and urban designers. We learned about good design principles, the work that goes into developing a transit plan, and the impact of this project on our community from a planning perspective. Metrolinx also hosted a Public Roundtable meeting so that we could hear the concerns of the broader community in order to better reflect the perspectives of those people not directly involved in the Reference Panel process, and to raise awareness of the overpass project.

Before reading these recommendations it is important to note three things.

First, as stated in our mandate from Metrolinx, our task was not to consider whether alternatives to an overpass were appropriate or desirable for this community.

Second, the proposed timeline for electrification of the GO rail line was divisive and could jeopardize Metrolinx's relationship with the community. Some panel members called for no expansion of service along the Barrie corridor line without the use of electric trains, while others called upon Metrolinx to electrify the line as soon possible.

To us it's clear that Metrolinx needs to provide greater clarity concerning its timeline for the use of Tier 2 and Tier 4 diesel locomotives, the electrification of the Barrie line, and the implications for this project.

Third, Metrolinx was unable to confirm a budget or cost-sharing agreement for the construction or maintenance of community amenities. Consequently, our recommendations are aspirational but will ultimately be shaped by the availability of funds.

Given these constraints as well as our hope to create an inviting new space future generations will enjoy, we developed the recommendations presented in this report.

## VALUES

Our values are intended to guide the design, programming and governance of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass. Together they represent a vision for design and community excellence.

### **Heritage, History and Culture**

Davenport's culture is based on its First Nations, industrial, railway and settlement heritage. We believe diversity is our strength; heritage is our asset. Davenport's culture should be embodied in the design of this project and celebrated.

### **Connectivity**

This project should create a new community corridor and increase all types of connectivity while prioritizing walking and cycling in the Davenport neighbourhood. Specifically, a continuous multi-use path should connect local parks, public transit and active transportation routes, from Bloor Street to Davenport Road. This project should also strive to connect the community by removing existing barriers and establishing 'destination areas' within the project.

### **Creativity**

We value creativity and cultural expression and see the overpass as an opportunity to open up space to showcase local artistry including planned programming and spontaneous activities. We imagine a corridor that becomes a cultural attraction within the community, celebrating nature and creativity.

### **Health, Well-being and Accessibility**

We imagine a new community space that promotes a holistic approach to community health, well-being and active living. High design standards will mitigate the consequences of construction, rail noise, air pollution, vibration, and ensure public safety. These standards will also ensure that the space appeals to all residents regardless of their age or abilities.

### **Stewardship, Collaboration and Partnership**

We recognize that the success of this project will require close collaboration between Metrolinx, the City of Toronto, residents and community groups. We need innovative mechanisms for long-term community engagement and stewardship, as well as programming alliances that can help to animate and support the space.

### **Sustainability**

We believe that any new project should be economically, socially and ecologically sustainable. This includes considering the current and future needs of the neighbourhood's diverse community, abiding by evidence-based environmental best practices, and establishing the appropriate partnerships, endowments and governance models necessary to maintain the space and offer community programming in perpetuity.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We have identified five sets of thematic recommendations that are intended to apply to the overall design, construction and maintenance of the site.



The design should encourage activity along the path - connecting people within the area to each other and to other parts of the city through active transportation.



Benches act as gathering and relaxation spots. Wood warms and softens the concrete in the space making it more attractive for people to use.

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### A. Community Connections

We urge Metrolinx to:

- A.1 Future-proof its design of public spaces and infrastructure by considering the long-term needs of the community and avoiding the costs and disruption of undoing poor decisions which fail to connect people, community and spaces.
- A.2 Provide active transportation connections in, out and within Davenport including adding a bridge for pedestrians and cyclists on the north end linking the path to Earlscourt Park.
- A.3 Ensure the north-south continuity of the corridor by adding a pedestrian and cyclist bridge adjacent to the rail overpass across the CP freight line.
- A.4 Preserve and incorporate the existing rail bridge over Dupont St, incorporated into a new path system along the corridor, while also providing pedestrian and cycle access from the street.
- A.5 Plan for future connections and continuity of the corridor beyond the study area, continuing north to the Green Line and south to the West Toronto Railpath.
- A.6 Create partnerships with Cycle Toronto and Bike Share Toronto in order to evaluate the installation of a public bike tool depot and bike share stations at major entry points.
- A.7 Reach out immediately to local stakeholders and developers to discuss mutual opportunities to integrate plans for public spaces, ensuring seamless continuity of the green spaces and avoiding unsightly visual barriers between public and private lands.



## B. Safety, Security, Lighting

We urge Metrolinx to:

- B.1 Ensure that all community spaces associated with the project are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
- B.2 Install easy-to-read maps and attractive, highly visible signage throughout the corridor.
- B.3 Communicate routinely with local residents concerning their plans to ensure safety on the corridor as well as their plans to deal with any rail emergencies.
- B.4 Design and install lighting that provides the highest levels of safety while also being sensitive to the concerns of neighbours, modern aesthetics and lighting requirements during different seasons.
- B.5 Ensure good cell phone receptivity throughout the corridor for everyday use and personal safety.
- B.6 Employ durable, low-maintenance construction materials noting that clean, well-maintained spaces create and enhance feelings of personal safety.
- B.7 Preserve a good long-term relationship with the community by earmarking sufficient funds to maintain the corridor.
- B.8 Install devices along the pathway to allow people to connect to emergency services. This could include emergency call buttons or pay phones as appropriate.



Tunnel-like openings must be very brightly lit.



A good example of an appropriate level of light any underpasses or tunnels such as the one that will be at Paton Road.



This lighting design adds security to the space and adds visual interest to otherwise blank surfaces.



Creative re-purposing of old train wheels is an effective way to highlight the neighbourhood's industrial heritage.



Visual transition and integration between industrial heritage and natural environment.



Old train wheels can also be used to hold a historic plaque.



A visual identity that reflects the neighbourhood's culture and defines it as an inviting public space. This identity should be visible to passerbys whether on the train or driving.



Bas relief set in concrete can visually tell the story of the neighbourhood.

### C. Design and Culture

We urge Metrolinx to:

- C.1 Adopt as a design principle the idea of creating an asset, not an eyesore.
- C.2 Engage recognized architects to design the overpass to ensure high standards, reduce the footprint of the overpass and limit unnecessary shadows. The project should be aesthetically pleasing, especially to those residents whose views will be affected by the project.
- C.3 Incorporate local culture to reflect Davenport's natural, indigenous, industrial and rail heritage as well as the contributions of successive generations of immigrant communities to the area by incorporating artistically-inspired cladding, reliefs and repurposed, locally-appropriate materials in the design of the overpass and public spaces.
- C.4 Establish a project committee including but not limited to design experts, historians and local researchers, residents, representatives of prominent community groups, as well as arborists and landscape designers to advise the project and engage the community.
- C.5 Ensure that local greenery — especially mature trees — are preserved, and incorporate new naturalized native species habitats that will also attract songbirds, butterflies and pollinators.





Wood makes the concrete seem warmer and more inviting and is aesthetically pleasing when greenery is not an option.



Covered areas could be used year round. This example offers good lighting and the use of wood make the space more welcoming.



Open, covered spaces have potential for playful year round uses. The ceiling mirrors in this design add visual interest, brighten the space and in the Davenport context, would reflect the Davenport Diamond heritage.

## D. All-Season Use

We urge Metrolinx to:

- D.1 Establish a detailed legal framework, in cooperation with the City of Toronto, the Government of Ontario, members of the public, local developers, business interests and other stakeholders, that clearly outlines which parties will be responsible for maintaining the public space year-round.
- D.2 Develop a service standard that encourages use of the public spaces year-round. The standard should include:
  - a. Snow removal on all pedestrian and cycling paths
  - b. Regular and routine garbage collection including recycling and compost bins.
  - c. Seasonal clean-ups and leaf removal
  - d. Proper prevention of pooling water and drainage
  - e. Grass-cutting, trimming and watering of trees, shrubs and plants
- D.3 Develop design principles that support year-round use of the public space that include:
  - a. Building materials that are aesthetically appealing year-round and are resistant to vandalism and graffiti.
  - b. Use of evergreen trees and shrubs mixed with native species that show and rotate well throughout the seasons.
  - c. Outdoor spaces for winter activities, like skating, cross-country skiing, and winter carnivals.
  - d. Indoor space for all-season activities, e.g. farmers markets, shipping container cafes, small vendors, children's activity and play spaces
  - e. Lighting and safety measures that are seasonally-appropriate.



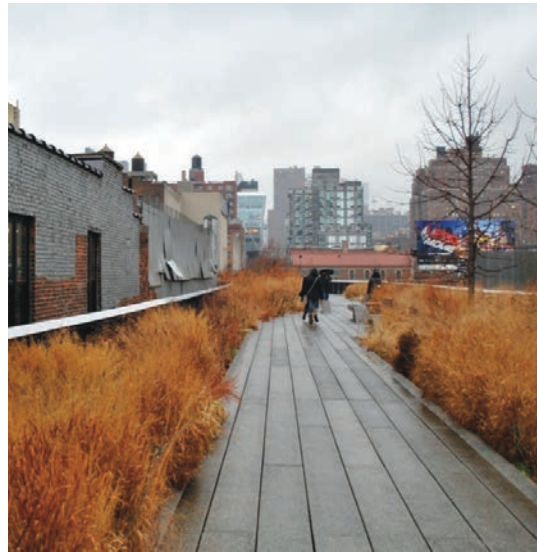
## E. Ongoing Stewardship and Sustainability

We urge Metrolinx to:

- E.1 Establish a Community Benefit Agreement to support employment opportunities for local residents related to the construction and maintenance of the corridor.
- E.2 Protect the health and well-being of local residents by restricting the use of diesel trains and adopt an accelerated commitment to electrification that can coincide with the completion of the overpass, and be completed prior to any increase in service.
- E.3 Monitor and address where feasible instances of neighbourhood gentrification associated with the project that undermine the affordability and inclusiveness of the community.
- E.4 Integrate environmental technologies to lower ongoing costs and demonstrate the use of solar, geothermal, wind, grey water, composting, and other green strategies. Any earnings from the use of these technologies should be used to support the maintenance and animation of the corridor.
  - a. Assess the feasibility of incorporating solar panels along the overpass to offset environmental impacts and generate revenue.
- E.5 Establish a council of community representatives to oversee the planning, construction and long-term maintenance of the site. The council would be composed of elected members of the community, and representatives of community groups, including but not limited to Davenport Residents Associations, and Davenport BIA's. Representatives of the City of Toronto, Metrolinx, and the Government of Ontario could also participate as ex-officio members. This council would be governed by a public document, to be called the Davenport Diamond Community Charter. This charter would be informed by this report and developed through broader public consultation. The council's responsibilities would include:
  - a. Guiding programming, the use of public space, curating public art, and designing and pursuing local heritage projects.
  - b. Representing the needs and interests of the community in relation to the site.
  - c. Serving as community liaison to Metrolinx and the City of Toronto, and other partners stated above.
  - d. Sharing information regarding council's findings and work.
  - e. Administering the community fund to maintain and animate the site
- E.6 Secure a commitment that Metrolinx, the City of Toronto, the Government of Ontario and CP Rail, will be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the overpass and related public spaces. Specifically, there are three revenue streams that Metrolinx should secure:
  - a. Capital funding to build the overpass and proposed amenities based on a sufficient portion of the GO Regional Express Rail budget and with consideration to the savings achieved by an overpass against other options.
  - b. An endowment fund to offset the costs of long-term maintenance
  - c. A community fund that uses the City of Toronto Section 37 allocations to encourage innovative, community-directed projects along the site
- E.7 Adopt as a public name for the site 'Davenport Diamond Commons'.



The built form and the natural environment should blend together.



The New York Highline aligns with many of the panel's articulated design principles, including natural habitat, complements industrial features, more green space, and creates a "destination". Wooden walking path gives a natural feel underfoot, enclosed by plantings, providing nature within an industrial architectural context, and reminding us of the area's history.



Enhance opportunities for small businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises along the tracks. These could serve as a source of revenue for future community initiatives in the area.



# Recommendations



## CONNECTIVITY

East-west connections; legitimize current uses, fewer E-V connections exist in T.O.

(improve N-S connections too)

• psychological accessibility → visual connectivity → community/social connectivity

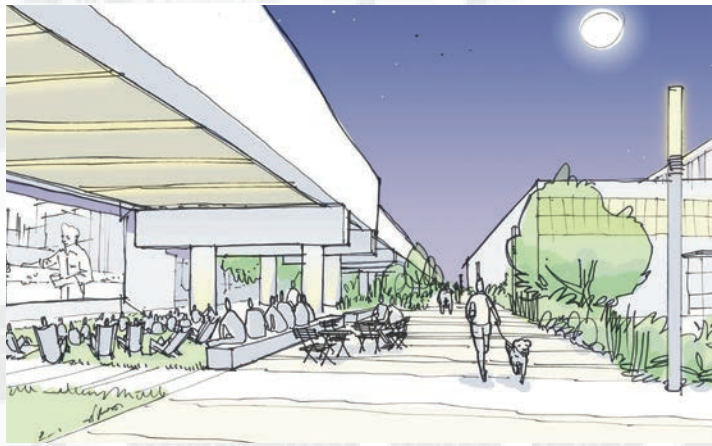
Reading:

• create a place to be used  
• more ppl are already getting on  
• value for  
• 14, 15 and

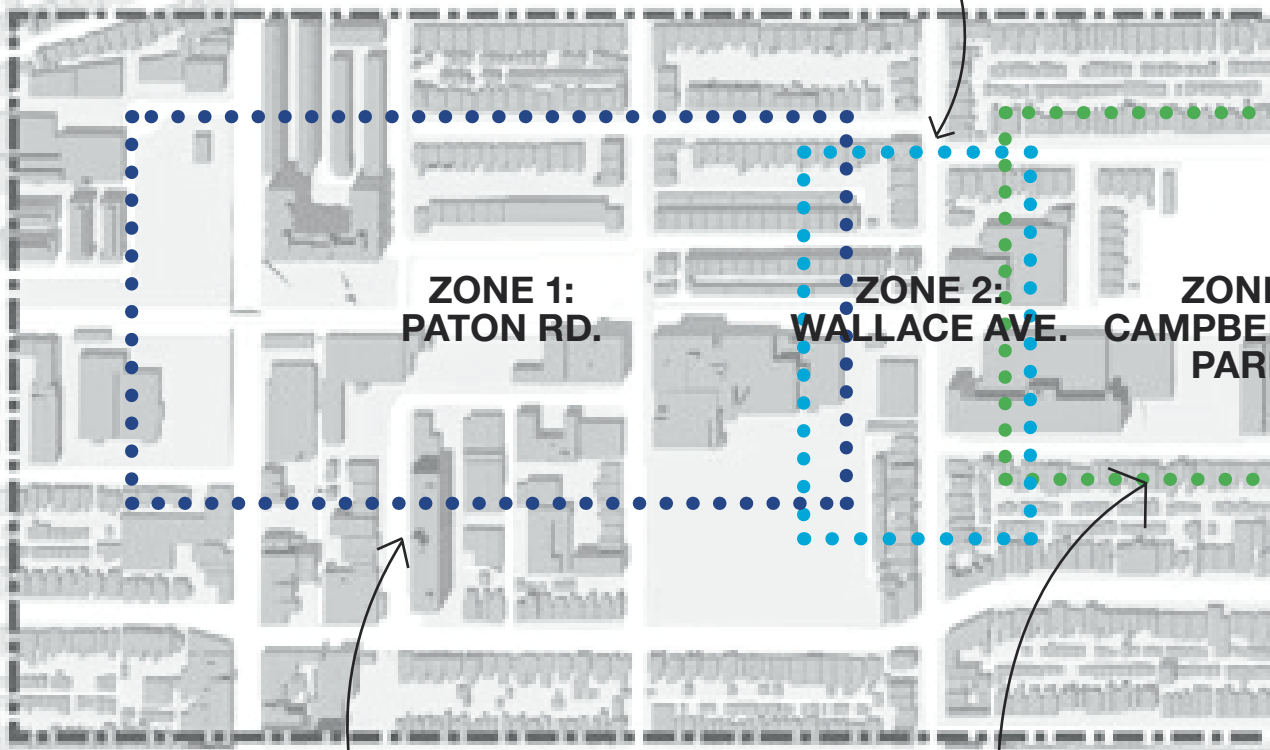
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# A New Vision for the Davenport Rail Corridor



Residents propose using the space underneath the overpass at Wallace Avenue as a neighbourhood gathering place, Wallace Square, where local businesses, studios, and arts organizations could put on screenings, events and pop-up programming.



**ZONE 1:  
PATON RD.**

**ZONE 2:  
WALLACE AVE.**

**ZONE 3:  
CAMPBELL PARK**

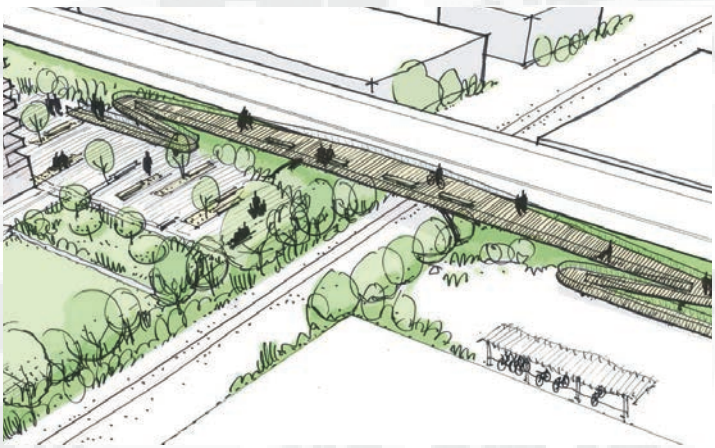


Toronto Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass

Looking east on Paton Rd., the new pedestrian and cyclist connection should be bright, safe and inviting for all.

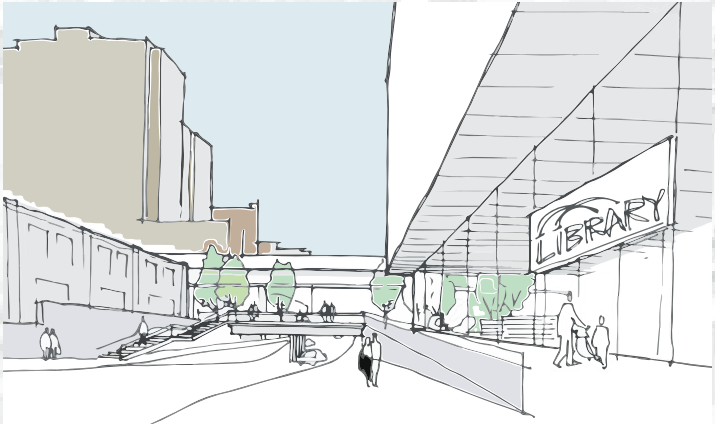
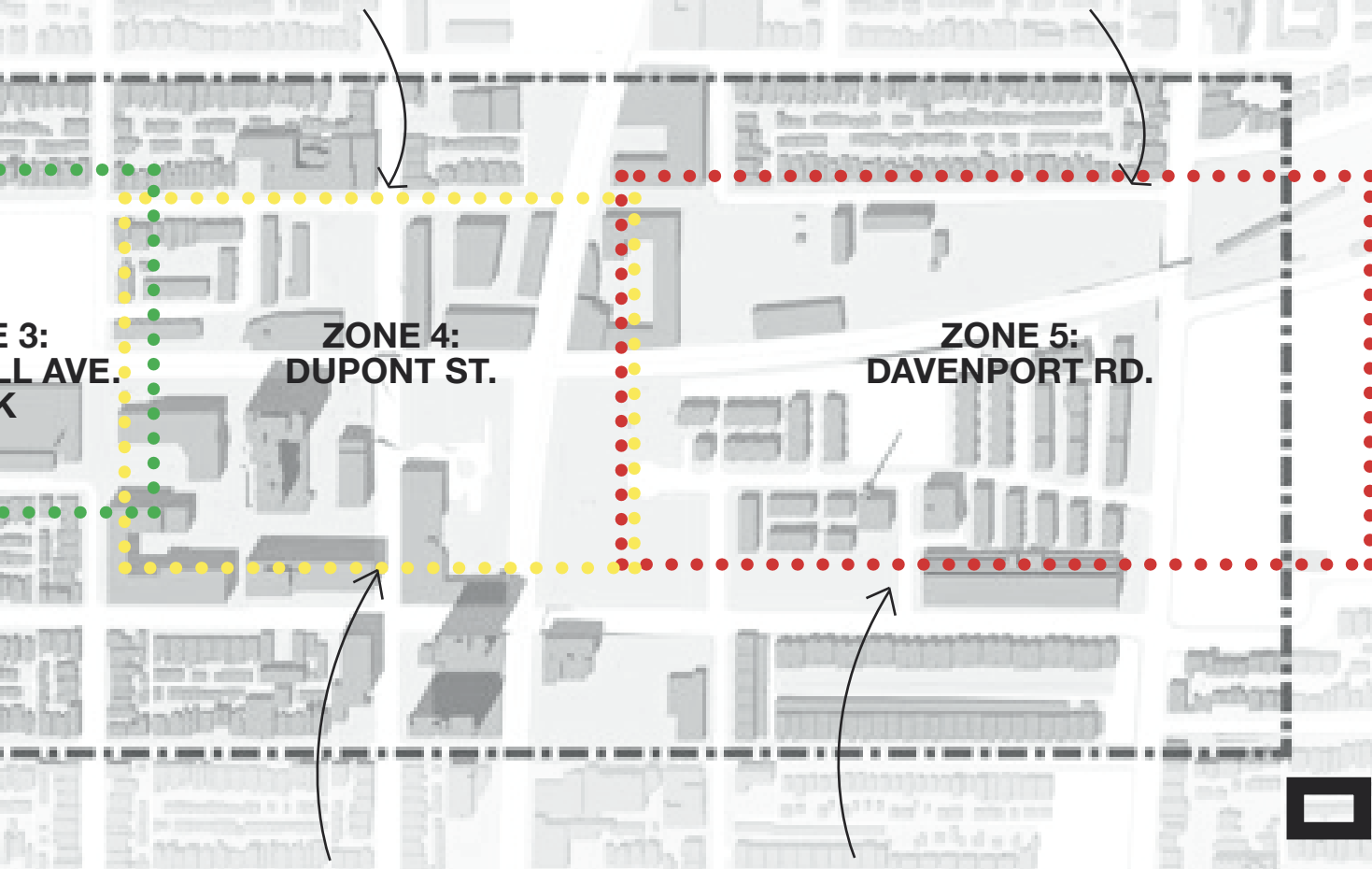


A fully separated multi-use trail complements a new blended space which connects seamlessly with a rejuvenated Campbell Park at Lappin Ave. and Antler St.



The Panelists propose incorporating a new pedestrian bridge and observation deck into the overpass where it crosses the CP freight tracks between Dupont and Davenport.

Continuous connectivity on the path from north to south is strongly recommended, including a pedestrian bridge across Davenport Road into Earls Court Park.



Toronto Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Hall Overpass

Dupont St, looking east, with the old bridge deck preserved and incorporated into the new path.

Design excellence and routine maintenance make spaces welcoming, safe and inviting year round.

## ZONE RECOMMENDATIONS

The length of the proposed overpass running roughly from Bloor Street West to Davenport Road has been divided into five geographic zones. In making their recommendations, panelists worked intensively on identifying the strengths, challenges and opportunities present in each zone.



Looking west on Paton Avenue, the new pedestrian and cyclist connection should be bright, safe and inviting for all.

### 1. Paton Road

We recommend that:

- 1.1 The existing underpass and associated concrete slabs be removed entirely.
- 1.2 The new Paton Road underpass for active transportation be connected to the north-south multi-use path, that it be as wide as possible so that it is inviting, safe, open, and well-lit.
- 1.3 An open 'skylight' feature be considered for the Paton Rd tunnel to allow natural sunlight.
- 1.4 The Paton Road underpass be separated for different modes of transportation (i.e. cyclists and pedestrians).



- 1.5 If necessary, a pier be erected in the center of the underpass to make the underpass as wide as possible.
- 1.6 The multi-use trail extend south of Bloor Street, to merge with the West Toronto Railpath. This will help build a connected active transportation grid in the city, reduce congestion, and promote public health. Furthermore, we recommend that there be an opportunity to enter and exit the path at Bloor Street.
- 1.7 The entrance to the corridor be widened or flared to reduce the risk of collision with users of the paths – no 90° points of intersection between the paths.
- 1.8 The berm on Erwin Krickhahn Park be maintained and extended to be flush with the guideway's retaining wall with additional barriers erected for safety, if necessary.
- 1.9 In keeping with the green space of the park, the retaining wall be a living wall, subject to a horticulturalist's best recommendation for plant variety.
- 1.10 The cladding for the abutment and retaining walls be selected for visual appeal and aesthetic merit, even where a living wall feature is installed.
- 1.11 The design and construction of the overpass accommodate and support a new GO Station at Bloor Street believing it to be of crucial benefit to the citizens of Davenport and something that should be undertaken as soon as possible. We fully support and encourage the community and the city's vocal advocacy for this station as it will increase community value and better access to public transportation.
- 1.12 An exposed retaining wall be used for half-court basketball courts, European handball, and an area for public screenings (i.e. projections).

## 2. Wallace Avenue



Looking west on Wallace Avenue, a pop up event animates the proposed Wallace Square.

We recommend that

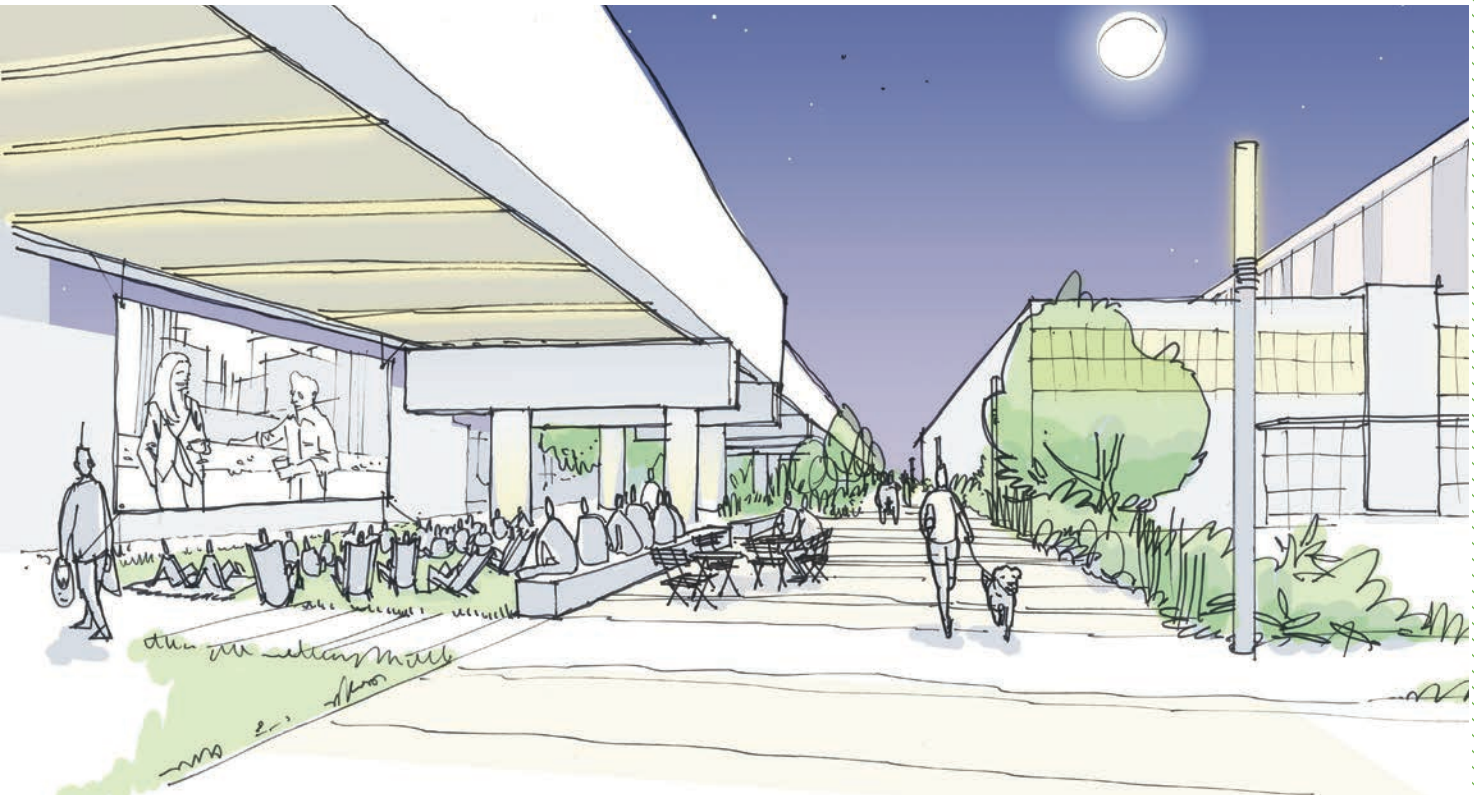
- 2.1 A space called “Wallace Square” be created in this zone that can be used and maintained year-round, which invites community connectivity and social engagement.
- 2.2 Wayfinding, branding and signage be incorporated into the design for ‘Wallace Square’ that can be seen by passing trains.
- 2.3 Intermodal transportation be encouraged by designing active and safe connections to the public transit system.
- 2.4 Priority be given to sustainable and maintainable design principles and construction materials.
- 2.5 Crime prevention achieved through environmental design be incorporated into the design.
- 2.6 Industrial and cultural heritages of the Junction Triangle be reflected in the design.
- 2.7 The emerging character of Wallace Avenue as a cultural corridor be reflected in the design.
- 2.8 The interaction between pedestrians, bikes, cars, and wheelchairs, be managed with sensitivity, design excellence, and strong safety considerations.
- 2.9 Space be made to accommodate features such as a farmers’ market, a bake oven, and an area for outdoor screenings and cultural & art performances.

2.10 Sidewalks be widened and benches and planters added in order to create a pleasant area for walking and socializing.

2.11 Consider adding chess tables, water fountains, seating, design elements like Portuguese style-tiles, dog runs, fire pits and gazebos.

2.12 Extensive greenery be used along the path to provide bird and pollinator habitat.

2.13 Local schools such as Centennial College, and businesses such as Ubisoft and the Wallace Film Studio, be involved in creating interactive and visual art under the overpass.



Residents propose using the space underneath the overpass at Wallace Avenue as a neighbourhood gathering place, Wallace Square, where local businesses, studios, and arts organizations could put on screenings, events and pop-up programming.



### 3. Campbell Avenue

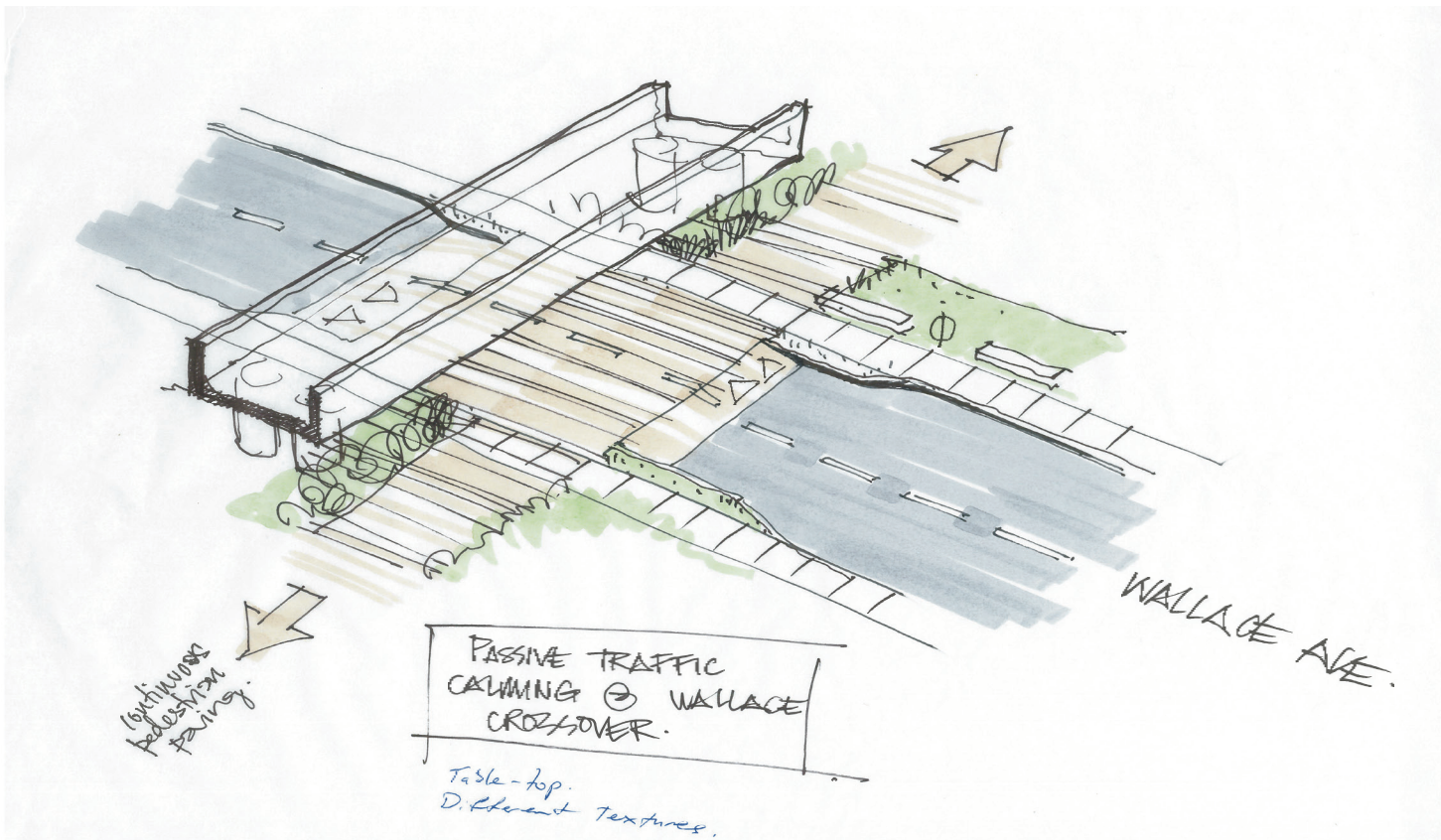


A fully separated multi-use trail complements a new blended space which connects seamlessly with a rejuvenated Campbell Park at Lappin Ave. and Antler St.

We recommend that:

- 3.1 A uniform signage and wayfinding system be used throughout the multi-use path, and that it utilize both digital and static displays. Static signage that could be used for constant features such as entrances and exits to the pathway, and digital signage could be used for changing features such as recreation sites. Digital displays should be in multiple languages for those in the community whose first language is not English.
- 3.2 New-East-West connections be created across the north-south pathway from Antler to Lappin and if possible from Sarnia to Ward. These connections should be open to pedestrians and cyclists, but not cars or trucks.
- 3.3 The east-west connection at Antler/Lappin is designed to accommodate emergency vehicles.
- 3.4 A clear connection to Perth Park and the West Toronto Railpath be made along Antler Street.
- 3.5 Appropriate safety measures be taken where pathways cross other paths and roads, in order to prevent accidents.
- 3.6 There be frequent entry and exit points between the pathway and park, making the new green space read as an extension of Campbell Avenue Park and integrated into the north-south pedestrian bike paths.

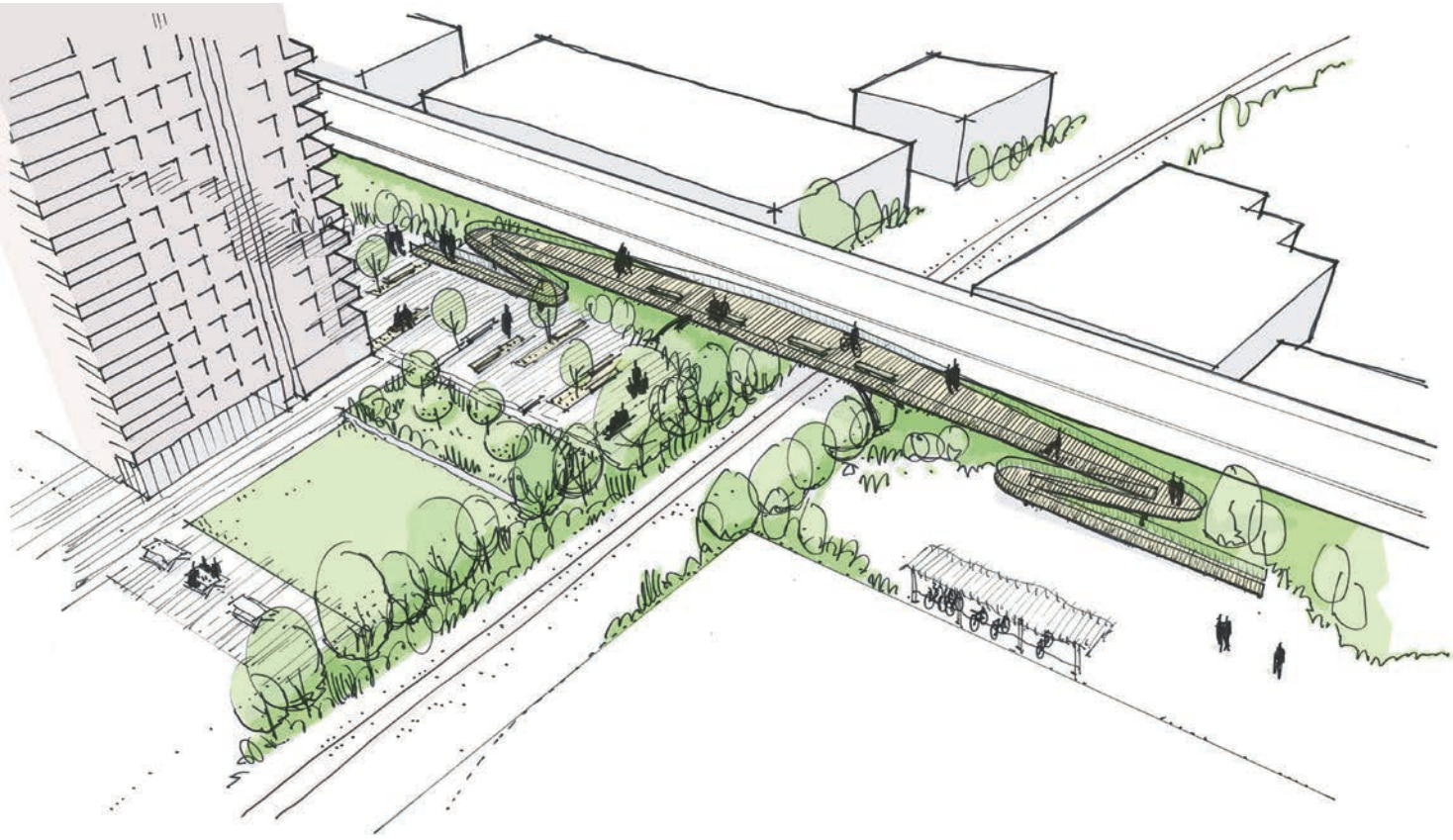
- 3.7 The park be made more dog-friendly by designating a dog area with 24-hour access, by extending the park to create more multi-purpose spaces, and by adding more garbage bins for waste disposal.
- 3.8 The overpass piers reflect the cultural history of the area through a variety of materials and media including sculptures, painting and texture.
- 3.9 A naturalized adventure playground similar to Dufferin Grove, or the Evergreen Brickworks be built, and make use of any trees that are to be removed for the construction of the overpass.
- 3.10 The new community space under the overpass be well-lit, with artistic input into the design and the use of modern LED lights.
- 3.11 An electrified, multi-use stage or amphitheater be constructed to encourage community events.
- 3.12 That additional, movable seating be placed on the south side of the park towards Wallace and throughout the site.
- 3.13 That the barrier created by the overpass be made as unobtrusive as possible and that it be sensitive to and well integrated with the new condominium developments.



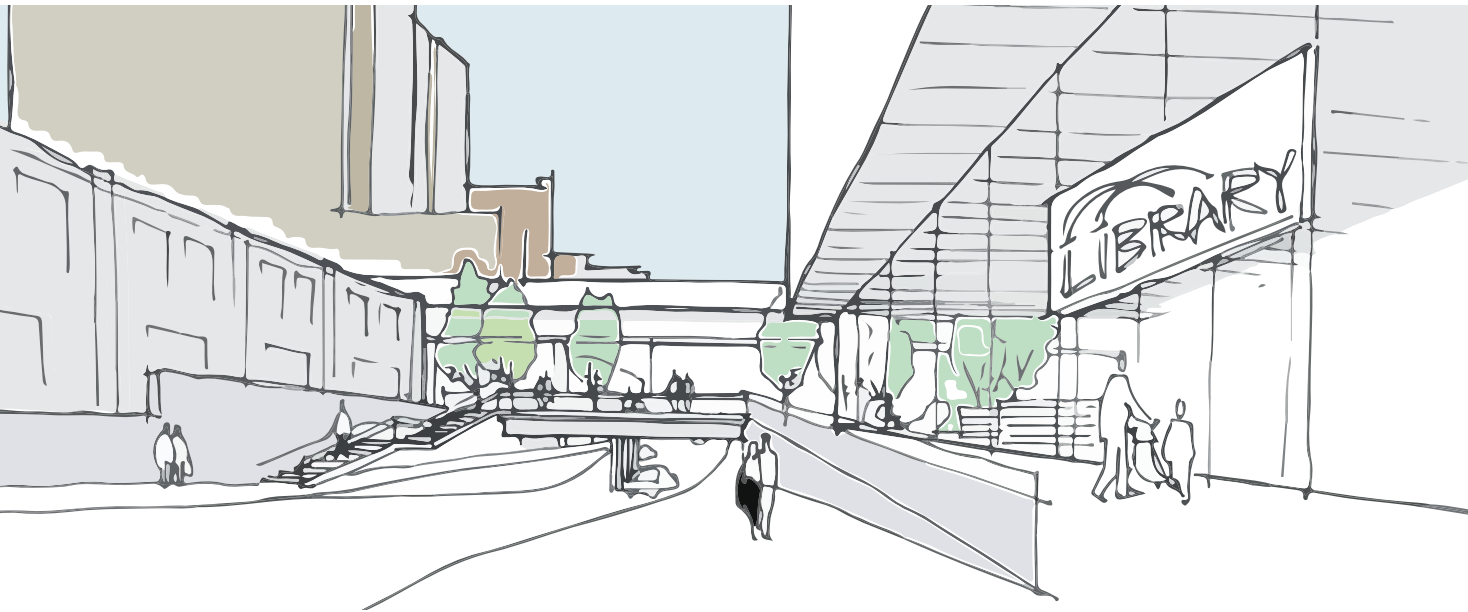
Wallace Avenue could be a busy intersection of pedestrian, cycle and vehicle traffic. Traffic calming, such as raised road surfacing and bump outs, are recommended.



#### 4. Dupont Street



The Panelists propose incorporating a new pedestrian bridge and observation deck into the design of the overpass at Dupont St. and Davenport Rd.



Dupont St, looking east, with the old bridge deck preserved and incorporated into the new path.



We recommend that:

- 4.1 A pedestrian/cyclist bridge be incorporated into the design of the overpass as its crosses the CP freight line in order to facilitate the continuity of the path. An observation deck should also be included to create a new focal point.
- 4.2 In order to encourage use and increase safety we recommend making the path accessible to pedestrians and cyclists at as many points as possible from Dupont St., including the construction of ramps instead of stairs.
- 4.3 We recommend that the current rail bridge over Dupont Street be converted into a pedestrian and cyclist bridge to maintain north-south accessibility along the path. A re-engineered bridge would also allow for more sunlight to illuminate the street below.
- 4.4 Enhanced lighting be installed on Dupont Street and the associated bridge, ramps, and pathway in order to increase safety.
- 4.5 Every effort be made to transform the area known as the Dupont Desert (due to a lack of services and shops) into something more appealing.
- 4.6 The design be tailored to the needs of the area and accommodate growth and higher density. This could include a dog park, a market, and a skateboard park.
- 4.7 Incorporating facilities and amenities that enhance the path without blocking pedestrian and cyclist access due to the narrowness of the area.
- 4.8 The new Public Library site include a garden, green space, and exercise area as well as direct connections to the path.
- 4.9 The area along the pathway include an adult exercise area as well as a playground and splash pad for children and families.
- 4.10 There be increased greenery around the path in this area with an emphasis on native plants for wildlife and pollinator habitat.
- 4.11 There be a unique design element in this section of the overpass to reflect the history of the rail line, and consider using the name "Royce Junction" to reflect local heritage.
- 4.12 Any remaining intersecting GO train tracks at the Diamond crossing be removed in order to reduce the distinctive 'clanking' noise of train wheels over the old tracks.
- 4.13 The design also address the community's susceptibility to flooding.

## 5. Davenport Road



Design excellence and routine maintenance make spaces welcoming, safe and inviting year round.



Continuous connectivity on the path from north to south is strongly recommended, including a pedestrian bridge across Davenport Road into EarlsCourt Park.



We recommend that:

- 5.1 In the design and construction of the proposed overpass, Metrolinx adhere to four overarching planning and design principles: Connectivity, Safety, Aesthetics, and Stewardship, as outlined through the following recommendations. Special care must be taken to mitigate the impact of the project on the Davenport Village community as they are directly and disproportionately affected by this project.
- 5.2 Bridges be built to connect the path over Davenport to Earlscourt Park and Caledonia Road.
- 5.3 The design of the multi-use pathway protect for the potential extensions of the pathway north.
- 5.4 A ramp be built from Davenport Road to the new path to encourage connectivity.
- 5.5 In this area, the noise wall be designed to be taller than the train and accompanying power lines and tall enough on the west side to block views of the transformer station. This wall should then be used for community art or as a green wall.
- 5.6 Metrolinx be conscientious about the existing structures at the Davenport Village Park and ensure that this community asset is not negatively affected by the project.
- 5.7 The retaining wall end as soon as possible and be made of red brick with vines to match the aesthetic of the Foundry neighbourhood. If this is not possible, it should be beautified and greened.
- 5.8 We recommend that the green space west of Caledonia Road be beautified and potentially used as an area for a market or community garden.



Metrolinx is urged to reach out to new condominium developers to ensure that their proposed amenity and green spaces seamlessly connect to the new paths and corridor.







# Appendix

## **MINORITY REPORT**

Each member of the Residents' Reference Panel was invited to contribute a 'minority report' if they wished to express an idea, issue or concern that they believed was inadequately addressed by the panel. Minority reports do not represent a consensus view, but the perspective of one or more named members. They are provided for the benefit of the reader so that he or she may consider the additional views of various members of the panel.

The complexities and challenges faced by all communities affected in regard to the proposed Davenport Community Rail Overpass are great. The guiding principle of 'getting this right' for communities (not simply functional transit infrastructure) must of course be the paradigm for all work moving forward.

Nowhere is this more essential than within the confines of the Davenport Village community. Indeed, Zone 5 as defined by this report comprises Davenport Village in its totality. It must be understood and acknowledged that with a population of more than 3800 this is the single largest number of people affected by this project and that this project should pay special consideration to the transformative mixed-use success story Davenport Village has been for the broader community. This project simply must add to and in no way impinge that level of current and future success. Embracing the character of our unique heritage buildings is essential. Preserving the integrity of Davenport Village park and seeking greater connectivity in creative ways is a must. Special consideration to noise as it relates to a community made up largely of young families is as also as essential as visual impact. For this project to be palatable it must strive to make us even better. It is my expectation that Metrolinx will work to develop a special relationship with the Davenport Village community every step of the way moving forward and we will find solutions in consort. — Matt Park



## WORKSHOP + MEETING SUMMARIES

### Day One: Saturday, April 25, 2015

On the morning of April 25th, the Davenport Community Rail Overpass Residents' Reference Panel gathered at the Davenport Perth Community Centre. It was explained by Panel moderator Peter MacLeod that the 36 panelists were drawn in a random lottery from 173 applicants who reside in the neighbourhood surrounding the overpass site. They were provided an overview of the four day-long workshops and a binder full of resource materials and background readings on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass to help inform their deliberations and recommendations. The panel members are tasked with learning about transportation planning and processes, weighing design options and approaches, and proposing values, priorities and detailed recommendations to Metrolinx that will shape the design and delivery of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass.

Metrolinx President and CEO Bruce McCuaig kicked off the day by welcoming the panelists and thanking them for making the significant time commitment required to be on the Panel. He reinforced that the Panel is but one of many ways Metrolinx is engaging with the community and their job is to deliberate and come up with recommendations about how this project can provide a legacy for their community. Specifically, he instructed panelists to consider “how we can take a linear, physical barrier to the community and create good, connected public spaces for the community that weren't there before.”

Next, Cristina Martins – Member of Provincial Parliament for Davenport – welcomed panelists, commending them for engaging in the process and giving their time generously to the deliberations. She noted that it had been an exciting few weeks as the Province has stepped forward with \$13.5 billion in funding which will transform GO Transit into a truly regional transportation system. She reminded panelists that her office is open to those wishing to discuss any issues throughout the consultation and provincially mandated Environmental Assessment process.

Panel moderator Peter MacLeod then addressed the panelists delving deeper into the objectives and values behind the Residents' Reference Panel process. As he explained, their task as panelists was two-fold:

- To develop a set of community values to guide the creation, design, use and stewardship of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass and any potential public spaces, parks, trails and connections flowing from the planning and construction of the project.
- To develop specific recommendations concerning the Davenport Community Rail Overpass project that may address preferred land use, transportation planning, walkability and connectivity, potential community benefits such as new public spaces and trails, landscaping and ongoing stewardship for the site.

MacLeod emphasized that while panelists have a sizeable mandate, there are also constraints. They will need to ensure their recommendations are in line with Metrolinx's broad plans. On this note he said, "the what is already decided, it's the how that's open for discussion." He encouraged panelists to think not only for their community and what a newly created public space could be, but also for the entire Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area transit region and "how we as a region can best move around".

MacLeod also explained that Metrolinx is invested in this process and the report recommendations the Reference Panel will produce. Metrolinx has committed to reviewing and responding to all recommendations in a timely and transparent manner.

After this overview of the Reference Panel process, panelists were asked to situate themselves physically around the room in relation to where they live – north, south, east and west. This helped illustrate the random and even distribution of participants from across the neighbourhood. Panelist introductions followed, with people saying how long they'd lived in the neighbourhood (a combined total of 414 years) and stating their motivations for being part of the process and conversation. Many shared a broad curiosity about transit issues, neighbourhood connectivity and a belief in civic engagement. A few panelists expressed a skepticism about the process, questioning whether their recommendations would be addressed by Metrolinx and stating they were "disappointed we weren't consulted from the start about going over versus under."

People shared concerns about condominium development and increased density, air quality, noise, vibration and traffic (vehicular and train) saying that while they "believe in public transit, there's a need to mitigate the negative impacts and make this project work for the neighbourhood." Panelists talked about wanting better access to transit, public spaces, cycling trails and pedestrian infrastructure. Several noted their deep appreciation for the economic and social diversity in the neighbourhood, its rich industrial and cultural heritage, and emphasized their desire to "give back and help achieve realistic, tangible and long-lasting local benefits."

Next, Metrolinx President and CEO Bruce McCuaig presented Metrolinx's three-fold mandate:

- Deliver the best transportation services while leading to a better, more convenient service tomorrow
- Make the best possible use of public transportation investment dollars
- Measurably improve quality of life in the region

McCuaig noted that Metrolinx's regional planning and infrastructure projects directly influence neighbourhoods and they are looking for innovative ways to engage with communities and to create connections across all Metrolinx-owned rail corridors. He stated that Metrolinx is interested in being a good neighbour and serving communities while implementing major projects and delivering local benefits.

Next, Richard Joy – Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute of Toronto – provided an overview of some of the major planning issues affecting the GTHA region. He stated that these issues largely come down to population growth pressures and grid-lock. The 3 implications of these issues result in productivity loss, deepening inequality across the region, and poorer health outcomes. This part of the presentation was about the "big picture" in the region, to provide context around the need for the



Davenport Community Rail Overpass project within the broader pressures facing the GTHA region and understanding the implications of maintaining the status quo.

Elise Croll, Metrolinx Director of Environmental Programs and Assessments, addressed the panelists next. She contextualized how this Panel process fits within the wider environmental assessment and public engagement required for the project. She explained how Metrolinx would use design excellence principles for this project and that the noise, air quality, vibration issues would all be mitigated as directed by regulatory requirements. She reviewed in detail how Metrolinx arrived at its preferred option for going 'over' the Davenport Diamond rail crossing, as opposed to 'under' after extensive review and consideration. She reiterated that Metrolinx recognizes the overpass will have impacts as well as offer potential benefits for the community. It's the Panel's job to make recommendations on how to mitigate any impacts and to identify opportunities for long-term local benefits.

The presentations from McCuaig, Joy and Croll prompted questions from panelists and further discussion to shed light on the process, scale and purpose of regional transportation expansion and infrastructure planning. People were curious to know if a specific budget had been allocated for investing in the community with public realm improvements such as park and public spaces. Metrolinx clarified that in developing the GO Regional Express Rail strategy, it is working to finalize a program to fund public realm improvements, similar to what was done for the Eglinton Crosstown. Questions were also asked about the plans and timelines for electrifying the Barrie Corridor (an 8 - 9 year horizon for all of the GO lines with work still to be completed on the phasing for which corridors would be electrified first). Panelists were provided copies of the presentations and backgrounders in binders and encouraged to continue to ask questions and discuss the project at any time during the process with their neighbours, stakeholders, Metrolinx resource people and the facilitation team.

After a quick lunch break, the entire group headed outside for a site walk to explore the area where the overpass will be constructed and envision how new community connections and public spaces could be 'unlocked' with this project. The walk allowed panelists to learn more about the construction, engineering and mitigation requirements. Seeing the rail corridor allowed panelists to better absorb the height and scale of the overpass as well as actively envision creative possibilities for community place-making. En route, people brainstormed creative ideas for the proposed public spaces – pop-up markets, community art projects, native species plantings, community gardens and engaging local artists – but also worried that their efforts will be met with resistance or be deemed 'impossible' or 'unaffordable' by decision makers.

This conversation continued into the post-walk observations with one person noting that good design doesn't necessarily mean expensive or high maintenance, "but regardless, we should think big about what we want in this community." Moderator Peter MacLeod said that while all their ideas and recommendations may not be possible, it was their job as panelists to think expansively about what they want, what would be good for the community. Their task was to get their ideas out on paper for all to hear and discuss. Metrolinx's job is to consider all recommendations and engage with, respond and explain their plans with the community on an ongoing basis.

After the walk, panelists took part in small group discussions about their initial impressions, as well as their own values and priorities that would guide their delibera-

tions on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass. A volunteer from each table shared their collective ideas with the room. Some common themes included: sustainability, environmental stewardship, heritage, and safety. Panelists were curious to know what kind of resources and budget would be allocated to this project, something that Metrolinx confirmed they were in the process of determining and would report back. A number of people felt that regardless of the constraints, it was critical for the community to “think big and make sure this is something that serves the community and is as good as it can possibly be.”

As the meeting adjourned, panelists were encouraged to share what they learned from the day with family, friends, and colleagues to deepen their sense of community perspectives and priorities.

### **Day Two: Saturday, May 9, 2015**

On the morning of Saturday, May 9th, 2015, members of the Metrolinx Community Rail Overpass Reference Panel returned for Day Two at the Davenport Perth Community Health Centre. During the two weeks since their first meeting, panelists had the opportunity to speak with friends, family and neighbours about what they had learned and also to collect feedback to share with the Panel.

Panel Moderator Peter MacLeod started the day by reorienting the group in order to get back into the learning process. MacLeod reminded the group that, as panelists, they are tasked with learning about transportation planning and processes, weighing design options and approaches, and proposing values, priorities and detailed recommendations in a final report to Metrolinx that will shape the design and delivery of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass project. MacLeod told panelists they would be hearing from a varied group of community representatives and design and urban planning experts, as the purpose of this session is to motivate panelists to start thinking about tangible design options.

MacLeod also took some time to report back on the results of the group values exercise, which the panelists undertook at the previous meeting. Some of the themes that emerged included: celebrating local history, improving local traffic, enhancing walkability and active transportation routes, engaging the local community, creating a gathering space, and celebrating local art and creative industries. Panelists were encouraged to think of these themes as they begin considering design possibilities and priorities.

The first speaker of the day was Elise Croll, Director of Environmental Programs and Assessment at Metrolinx. Croll had previously addressed the group on Day One to explain the Environmental Assessment Process. She led off with some clarifications about the environmental assessment process, street connection options, and the costs and viability of public realm improvements for GO Regional Express Rail projects like Davenport. Croll explained that they are still developing the criteria for allocating resources and budgets to public realm projects for GO Regional Express Rail. However, she confirmed that a portion of the capital budget will be allocated for public realm improvements. She clarified that it will not be a uniform allocation across the system because some areas, like Davenport, have significant potential to benefit from investment as opposed to area with limited potential (e.g. industrial location). She used the example of the recent investment by Metrolinx in the Eglinton Crosstown project which allocated 1.5% of the capital budget to public realm improvements.



The presentation provoked a number of technical questions from panelists who wished to confirm some engineering and construction details of the project before moving onto the brainstorming process for their design recommendations.

Panelists asked questions about the project budget for public realm improvements, the timeline for transitioning from diesel to electrification, and about the timing of train service increases over the short and long term. The panelists felt that this information was critical for planning possible uses of the unlocked public lands both in the short and long term.

Croll answered these questions as directly as possible with the available information, noting that many of the details are limited at this stage of the project. The panel moderator MacLeod reminded the room that Metrolinx has come out early and proactively to do consultations before 'decisions are set in stone' and the consequence of this is that not all answers are available. He also suggested that Metrolinx come back to the panelists on Day Three with more information about electrification and service increase timelines.

Next the Panel heard from Beth Kapusta, Senior Manager of Design Excellence at Metrolinx, who began her presentation by telling the panel that during her time at Metrolinx she has witnessed a transition in their design thinking towards the aspirational. "We focus on the human dimension of design," she said. "Our job is to advise a big picture approach to each project, identify the design opportunities and make them a priority." She remarked that the reference panel approach would be appreciated by someone like the urbanist Jane Jacobs, a strong proponent of bringing the wisdom of the local community to bear on planning. She concluded by encouraging panelists to be pragmatic and aspirational, saying, "be as creative as you can be in the conversion of your experience into clear and straight-forward recommendations". She advised that, as an architect, having a "clear design brief" is essential to ensure that the panel's principles act as a strong guide throughout the design process.

The next speaker was City of Toronto's Chief Planner, Jennifer Keesmaat who presented on the local planning context and the City's responsibilities in this process. Keesmaat began by recognizing that there can be tensions between regional and local interests, and reminded panelists that her role is to support local interests and to implement the City's Official Plan. She elaborated on the complex web of policy guidelines, both provincial and municipal, which direct the City's planning department. She highlighted the diversity, heritage and complexity of land uses in the Davenport corridor, noting, "It is a real mix: there's employment lands, mixed use areas, residential, parks and open space".

In terms of transportation planning, said Keesmaat, the City's broad goal is to increase options and to address gaps in transit infrastructure. To that end she said that the City was looking to Metrolinx to build a new station on the GO Barrie line at Landsdowne Ave. and Bloor St. as identified in the City's Official Plan. She said that this aligns with the City's and Metrolinx's shared goals of promoting transit, reducing dependence on the car, and providing reliable, fast service to busy destinations like York University. She emphasized her mandate as Chief Planner to uphold heightened standards for walkability, connectivity and cycling infrastructure. "Most trips we take are under 5 km," she noted, "the kinds of trips people can and will do on bikes, on foot or on transit if given safe, accessible options". She closed by saying that she is looking forward to getting down to work with Metrolinx in negotiating "the things that are a given and those that are aspirational about this project."

Discussion followed both Kapusta's and Keesmaat's presentations regarding the parameters of what is possible in the corridor, the assignment of roles and responsibilities, and how best to balance pragmatic and aspirational design principles for the project.

Next panelists had the opportunity to hear from three local community representatives on the topic of "complete and connected communities". This group of speakers included Liz Sutherland from Cycle TO, Scott Dobson from West Toronto Railpath, and Vic Gedris, a resident and blogger from the Junction Triangle. They presented their thoughts on the proposed project and offered their insights on potential improvements to connectivity and public spaces. Liz Sutherland presented a map of priority roads and proposed bike lanes in the area and made recommendations for specific connections to improve active transportation routes. Scott Dobson reflected on his involvement with the West Toronto Railpath, and advised stepping back from the small details of this path and considering the whole west end and "how we can create shared infrastructure." He also advised ensuring a legacy program is in place, stating, "In a strange way, the easiest part is getting it built but you also need to think about this 50 to 100 years down the line, the stewardship and partnership you need to maintain it." Finally, Vic Gedris, a resident in the area, said in his view, "we need to look at this as a neighbourhood connection project" as he went street by street emphasizing the opportunities at hand to better connect the community.

After taking a short break to grab a sandwich and stretch their legs, the group took in a comprehensive presentation by urban designer Melanie Hare (Urban Strategies) and architect John Potter (Perkins & Will) highlighting well-designed public spaces and infrastructure projects. The global design precedents were provided to panelists to get creative ideas percolating in advance of the design flare exercises in the afternoon. Hare began by stressing the importance of place-specific ideas, saying, "we need to think deeply about the distinct areas of your community, how you use it, how you move through it, the opportunities and challenges at hand."

Next, Hare showed a map of the five zones of opportunity: Paton Road, Wallace Avenue, Campbell Avenue Park, Dupont Street, and Davenport Road. She highlighted some of the uses and characteristics of each area. John Potter then took the group through a number of international transit and transportation infrastructure projects to demonstrate the range of urban design approaches to consider. He recommended thinking of this project as a blank canvas, and to think both at the micro and macro level. He pointed to innovative approaches designers have taken in Toronto and around the globe to lighting, plantings and landscaping, retaining wall designs, micro-business opportunities and public art partnerships for both structures and unlocked public spaces.

After a morning of introduction to design principles, it was now time for the panelists to document their experience and knowledge of current uses of the area and to provide recommendations on how it could be better used in the future. The panelists moved to any of the five tables representing a zone of opportunity (Davenport Road, Dupont Street, Campbell Avenue Park, Wallace Avenue, and Paton Road) with which they were most familiar. They were asked to identify the distinctive features, strengths and challenges as well as record how they move in, around, and across the zone. On the second map, they were asked to identify where and how they want to make improvements to the zone and how they would strike the right balance of activity and connectivity, quiet spaces versus active.

Following the group design session was the second Community Panel, on "community impact and design". This panel consisted of Donna Cowan from the Dupont Improve-

ment Group, Dyan Marie from the Bloordale BIA, and Jason Campbell from the Bloor Improvement Group. Representing resident interests, each panelist presented a passionate presentation on their broad views of the overpass project and their recommendations for moving forward. Donna Cowan spoke about the preference of local residents for electric, local transit asserting that “GO transit would be enhanced if the trains were electric from the very beginning as electrification would allow for more stations which would address local concerns”. Next Dyan Marie performed an expressive spoken word piece to convey the perspective of the Bloordale BIA, which prefers leveraging opportunities for quiet green space rather than commercializing the area. Finally Jason Campbell advocated for considering the broader impacts of the project, suggesting that “this great transformation in West Toronto will lead to greater physical, cultural, and economic opportunities that everyone will benefit from, not just residents of Barrie”.

The diversity of opinions of this last panel sparked lively discussion in the room. Panelists asked the speakers to get specific on their ideas for potential business opportunities underneath the path, which brought out a disagreement among Dyan, who disagreed with the sentiment of commercializing the space, and Donna, who expressed concern that in the absence of commercial activity the area would go unused by residents. One panel member commented, “it’s always difficult to distinguish where your community begins and where it ends” but noted that their job was to consider local interests not only regional interests. This sparked personal accounts from each speaker about the direct personal impacts of the project and their thoughts on how to reconcile conflicting local and regional interests.

The last exercise of the day allowed Panelists to share their earlier work identifying current uses and recommended uses within each of the five zones. In this sharing exercise, most Panelists rotated tables while two Panelists stayed behind to ‘host’ and summarize their table’s findings for the ‘visitors’. Each group then shared their feedback and discussed their ideas, laying the groundwork before making particular design recommendations. The panel took in a sizable amount of information on Day Two and returned home with even more material to comb through. They left having much to reflect on, as it will be in their hands to decide how to incorporate the design principles they learned about on Day Two into their final recommendations.

### **Public Roundtable Meeting: Tuesday, May 12, 2015**

A few short days after Day Two of the Metrolinx Community Rail Overpass Reference Panel, the group returned to the Davenport Perth Community Health Centre on the evening of Tuesday, May 12th for a public roundtable meeting. As opposed to the previous Reference Panel meetings, this session was open to the public and gave community members the opportunity to learn more about the project, express their concerns and ask questions. The Public Roundtable was attended by approximately 96 local residents and stakeholders. The Public Roundtable meeting served two functions, it was the first public consultation meeting for the Environmental Assessment process now underway with Metrolinx. It was also a public meeting in support of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass Resident’s Reference Panel. All interested members of the public were invited to learn about the project, hear presentations from Metrolinx, and share their thoughts and concerns with fellow community members. Members of the



Resident Reference Panel facilitated the roundtable discussions, which were broken up into two rounds. The first round elicited input about how the overpass will affect the community, and what can be done to improve and mitigate the impacts. The second discussion focused on place-based discussions and analysis, drawing out people's comments and ideas for design ideas and improvements for the 'unlocked' public spaces being created beneath the overpass.

Reference Panel Chair, Peter MacLeod, reviewed the agenda and the Reference Panel process, noting it is "an upstream effort to bring members of the community into the design process at the earliest stages of public engagement." He explained that the Reference Panel members are tasked with learning about transportation planning and processes, weighing design options and approaches, and proposing values, priorities and detailed recommendations in a final report to Metrolinx that will shape the design and delivery of the Davenport Community Rail Overpass project. MacLeod encouraged community members to be vocal during this Public Roundtable session, and offer their insights, ideas, concerns and advice on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass project and process.

A presentation from Elise Croll, Director of Environmental Programs and Assessment at Metrolinx, followed. She began by reminding the room that it is very early in the planning, consultation and assessment process. The benefit of this approach is that community input will be used to shape the project and process more pro-actively. The downside is that they don't have answers to all the questions that people have about the scale, scope, engineering and mitigation requirements for the project. Croll then gave a presentation featuring many images, infographics and maps to illustrate and contextualize the project.

### **Small table discussion #1: Issues and Impacts**

The first roundtable asked participants to consider how the overpass will affect the community and what can be done to improve or mitigate the impacts? Comments and concerns expressed included:

- **Short-term impacts:** Noise, dust, vibration, and road closures from prolonged construction. Vibration from construction impacting residents and local businesses.
- **Long-term impacts:** Declining property values in the neighbourhood, unclear responsibility for ongoing stewardship of the 'unlocked' public space, and concern that local businesses will leave the area resulting in a negative economic impact.
- **Health Concerns:** Air pollution and noise pollution that will come from construction and the increased service of diesel trains.
- **Aesthetic considerations:** Visual blight, concerns that the overpass will resemble the Gardiner Expressway and that the noise walls will be unattractive, 'block the view', create additional shade and attract graffiti and tagging that won't be cleaned up or removed.
- **Community Safety:** Concerns about the overpass structure being dark, unsafe and would provide spaces for illicit activity like drinking and drug use.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Concern for wildlife and bird habitat and losing mature trees and greenery.

- **Timeline for Electrification:** Concerns that the transition to electrification will take much longer than is predicted now.
- **Funding:** Residents wanted to know more about the criteria or formula for determining the final budget for community benefits and public art.
- **Community members expressed dissatisfaction with the shortened consultation process (TPAP – Transit Project Assessment Process):**
  - o Some participants stated that they felt the public consultation was tokenistic and that there wasn't enough engineering and planning information about the criteria used to select Metro linx's preferred option of going over.
- **Local Impact for Benefits Outside Davenport:** Many residents feel that the suburbs and regional populations around Toronto were being prioritized over the downtown, and that the Province is downloading cost savings on the local community.

### **Small table discussion #2: Design Ideas, Zones of Opportunity**

The second roundtable discussion invited participants to sit at tables labeled for the “five zones of opportunity”: Paton Road, Wallace Avenue, Campbell Park, Dupont Street, and Davenport Road. They were asked to share their ideas and local expertise about what design approaches and ideas could improve and enhance the area. Suggestions included:

- **Community connectivity:** Many participants welcomed the opportunity to create much needed east-west connections, highlighting opportunities at Lappin Ave. and Antler St. in particular.
- **Subway access:** Participants noted that the north/south walking & biking route to the subway at Lansdowne would be improved substantially with a new connection at Paton Road.
- **Cycling infrastructure:** People encouraged the creation of cycling paths and were very supportive of any design innovations that could strengthen connections to and between downtown routes including the West Toronto Railpath.
- **Public Art:** Many people suggested creating partnerships with local arts organizations and artists, inviting them in to be part of the design and creation of vibrant local art projects and programming on the overpass structure, the retaining walls and in the community spaces created.
- **Longevity concerns:** Participants supported the idea of creating a stewardship body composed of community members and stakeholders who program the public space.
- **Aesthetics:** Many participants felt that the overpass design should reflect the local area and should highlight the industrial, labour heritage of the area.
- **Community safety:** Many felt that good lighting was key, that it should strike the right balance of lighting that makes people feel safe but was not overlit and invasive to nearby households.
- **Create more GO stops in the neighbourhood to make the Junction a true transit hub.** Many felt that having additional transit stops would offset concerns of property devaluation and help relieve city and neighbourhood congestion. Most recommended a stop at

Bloor and Landsdowne on the Barrie line as an important way of giving local residents more options for travelling north, especially to destinations like York University.

- **Electrification:** Many expressed the preference to speed up the timeline for electrification and minimize service increases that involve more diesel trains.
- **Enhance the consultation process:**
  - o Provide multi-lingual material to engage all community members.
  - o Get an independent, unbiased study that compares the underground options and the overpass option.
  - o Make the process more transparent, set up a website for resident and Metrolinx Q&A's [Note: Available at [metrolinx.com/RERDavenport](http://metrolinx.com/RERDavenport) – 'Have Your Say']
  - o Include more visuals to guide the discussion, which will trigger more thoughts and design ideas.

**Zones of Opportunity Input:** The main concerns and recommendations are highlighted for each of the five Zones below. General concerns and ideas (not place-specific) are summarized above.

### PATON ROAD SUMMARY

<b>Considerations &amp; Concerns</b>	<b>Ideas for enhancement</b>
Discussions about the Paton Road area highlighted that this area was very dangerous 10-20 years ago, so residents are concerned about public safety and expressed the concern that re-connecting the street could open-up problems again.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design for safety</li> <li>• Preserve old trees and plant new ones, vertical gardens</li> <li>• Create amphitheater style outdoor seating areas</li> <li>• Build or extend a trail from Paton Rd. to connect with the Railpath at the No Frills area</li> <li>• Pedestrian Bridge over CP Rail</li> </ul>

### WALLACE AVENUE SUMMARY

<b>Considerations &amp; Concerns</b>	<b>Ideas for enhancement</b>
Discussion included safety concerns for both those on the trains and at ground level. Residents worried noise walls would act as visual barriers and attract graffiti. Residents were also concerned about traffic constraints around Wallace during construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectivity to the rest of the City is important, think broader than simple connections like a bike path from Bloor to Davenport</li> <li>• Incorporate a farmers' market</li> <li>• Not sure if green space makes sense with the additional shade</li> <li>• Make connections to the Railpath</li> </ul>



## CAMPBELL AVENUE SUMMARY

### Considerations & Concerns

Concerns raised at the Campbell Avenue tables included the expected shadows created by the overpass and the effect this will have on neighbouring properties and on the public space being created. Other considerations included concerns about potential removal of mature trees, noise impacts, and who will take responsibility for maintenance.

Residents expressed concern that Antler St. won't be opened up 'because Metrolinx doesn't own the land' on the other side of the tracks.

### Ideas for enhancement

- Create cycling and pedestrian paths at Lappin Ave./Antler St.
- Increase connectivity of neighbourhoods and connect east and west traffic
- Include dog park, seating areas
- Create a GO station at Bloor
- Bring local commercial activity: (cafes, studios, food trucks, etc.)

## DUPONT STREET SUMMARY

### Considerations & Concerns

At the Dupont tables, key areas of concern included community safety, and environmental protection. It was also expressed that an overpass may become a barrier between communities, acting as a visual and psychological impediment.

### Ideas for enhancement

- Ensure the noise walls are clear (Plexiglas) so it does not visually separate communities
- Incorporate clean energy, such as windmills, solar panels along the corridor
- Use designers, not engineers, "good design, not cheap design"

## DAVENPORT ROAD SUMMARY

### Considerations & Concerns

The two main concerns that were discussed at the Davenport Road tables were community safety, especially concern for the safety of children, as well as aesthetic considerations of the overpass itself.

### Ideas for enhancement

- Incorporate Victorian elements of the Foundry Buildings into design
- Landscape architecture, plantings and trees that create shade and absorb sound,
- Design sound barriers with trees, plantings wisteria and other vines

### **Day Three: Saturday, May 30, 2015**

On the morning of Saturday, May 30th, 2015, members of the Metrolinx Davenport Community Rail Overpass Residents' Reference Panel returned for their third day, ready to review their ideas for each of the five zones within the study area and to continue discussing their ideas for improving the Davenport Overpass. During the first two days, the Panelists focused on understanding one another's perspectives and learning about different aspects of the project. Now it was time to begin drawing their ideas together.

The Panel's moderator, Peter MacLeod, started the day by reviewing the agenda, as well as the process that would lead to a finished report to be submitted to Metrolinx for consideration. To date, the Panel had already spent several hours brainstorming ideas which were compiled by zone on special working maps which the Panelists annotated. As the third day progressed, he reassured the Panelists that they would have several opportunities to review one another's work and weigh in as their recommendations began to take shape.

MacLeod also invited the Panelists to share their experience of the May 12 Public Roundtable meeting. This meeting was open to any neighbourhood resident and was intended as an opportunity to meet and interact with the members of the Residents' Reference Panel. As most everyone acknowledged, many local residents expressed considerable concern about the Davenport Overpass project as well as frustration that further consideration wasn't given to lowering the rail corridor below CP Rail — regardless of the technical limitations or the financial cost. The Panelists reminded Metrolinx that more could have been done to explain its decision to build an overpass, including more outreach in different languages. They also pressed for a clearer explanation of how their work would feed into the environmental assessment process and again urged Metrolinx to make this process more explicit. However, the Panelists also acknowledged that despite the opposition voiced during the public meeting, many of the small group discussions were more sympathetic to the proposed plan.

One Panel member asked whether the overpass could proceed without the support of Toronto City Council. In response, a representative from Metrolinx explained that while it could proceed without the formal support of City Council, it would need the approval of the provincial Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change before construction could begin. However, it was also explained that Metrolinx relies on maintaining a good working relationship with the City of Toronto and that their corporate objective remains to work closely and co-operatively as an important partner in this and other transit projects across the City.

Next, Erin Moroz, Director of Community Relations and Communications for GO Regional Express Rail provided an update concerning communications for the Davenport Overpass project. She said that Metrolinx has been strongly influenced by the advice they had received from the Panel and would be moving forward with a community outreach plan to further explain the project and process, update residents on electrification plans and reach out to cultural groups represented in the neighbourhood. She explained that in the coming months, new materials would become available in multiple languages and that a door-to-door outreach initiative would be launched to provide face-to-face engagement.

Daryl Barnett, Metrolinx Vice President of Network Infrastructure, was invited to speak to the Panel and answer questions about system-wide electrification. He explained the

elaborate technical requirements that must be in place before the GO system can be electrified, and why planning and construction would take several years. In regards to the proposed timeline, Barnett said that it is hard to confirm with certainty right now without a completed system-wide environmental assessment, but said “I can assure you I’m pushing everybody as hard and as fast as I can to see this timeline through.”

After the presentation on electrification, Panelists returned to their zone working groups. Each group began by reviewing the zone maps and ideas they developed on Day Two.

After a quick break, the groups reordered themselves so that representatives from each zone could share their proposals and receive feedback. The Panelists then returned to their zone working groups to debrief and discuss the feedback they had received. Each group used this feedback to further refine their maps and begin drafting specific recommendations.

Following lunch, each group was invited to present their recommendations and receive additional feedback. This provided an opportunity to begin reconciling different ideas and incompatible ideas in adjacent zones. With this feedback in hand, the groups continued to revise their recommendations. At this stage, each group was joined by a guest illustrator who sketched a concept or recommendation the group was considering.

With just 90 minutes left in the day, the Panelists were asked to propose new overarching themes which they felt connected their plans or deserved special attention in their final report.

If the proposed theme attracted interest from at least two other Panelists, a new group was formed to discuss it in detail. Together the Panel proposed and formed six new groups:

- overall connectivity
- history, heritage and culture
- lighting, safety and security
- timing of the project and sequencing
- year-round use and seasonality
- long-term sustainability and stewardship

The brainstorming process began within these six groups with Panelists each making lists of different ideas and concerns related to the chosen theme. Before concluding for the day, each thematic group presented highlights from their discussion. The Panel will resume working on these thematic areas during their fourth and final day.

#### **Day Four: Saturday, June 6, 2015**

On the morning of Saturday, June 6th, 2015, members of the Metrolinx Davenport Community Rail Overpass Residents’ Reference Panel returned to the Davenport Perth Community Health Centre for their final day together. After a productive meeting only one week before, the Panelists came ready to put forward their fresh ideas, revisions and final recommendations. Panel Chair, Peter MacLeod, welcomed panelists to Day Four noting that after weeks of hard work, “today is the finale when it all comes together”.

Returning to their thematic groups, panelists revisited the ideas they had shared with one another during the previous Saturday. These groups included: ‘history, heritage and



culture', 'overall connectivity', 'lighting, safety and security', 'timing of the project and sequencing', 'year-round use and seasonality', 'long-term sustainability and stewardship'. After 90 minutes of focused discussion, a representative from each group presented their ideas for feedback from other panelists.



Generally, the panelists were encouraging, but they also sought more information, pressing one another to draft more detailed recommendations. Occasionally, a panelist would flag a detail or issue that might have been easily overlooked by anyone but a nearby resident. Overall, they were supportive of recommendations that increased connections between the site and other park spaces or thoroughfares. They urged Metrolinx to develop a plan that could with time be expanded to other active transportation routes.

Panelists also grappled with what some perceived as trade-offs between cost and community safety. For instance, should emergency buttons be placed along the corridor at a time when many people carry cell phones? Other panelists focused on the governance of the site, asking whether a local 'stewardship council' and charter might help to ensure stronger community ownership for the site and its development.

Following their presentations, the panelists resumed their work incorporating the feedback they had received. Some groups elected to send representatives to other groups to address specific issues and resolving some overlap between their recommendations.

With their thematic recommendations complete, the panel broke for a celebratory lunch. Portuguese grilled chicken, fish and salad replaced the sandwiches that the panelists ate during their first three meals together.

Following lunch, a final set of working groups was formed. One group began drafting the preamble, which explained why the members had volunteered and how their recommendations should be read. Another group returned to the original values exercise from their first session to draft clearer definitions that would give readers a better sense of the panelists priorities.

A third group combed through hundreds of images to select photos from other projects that illustrate the design qualities they like best. Lastly, two groups reviewed the full

set of zone and thematic recommendations to eliminate any unnecessary repetition and address any remaining gaps. Again, each group took turns sharing their progress with the other members of the panel before finalizing their work.

Before the day concluded, the chair acted on the suggestion of one panelist to hold a brief in-camera session without representatives from Metrolinx or other observers in the room. As the panelist noted, it was important that all members have a chance to talk amongst themselves before finalizing their recommendations.

Once again, several panelists voiced their concern about the timetable for electrification, noting that any delay or expanded use of diesel locomotives would likely harm public confidence in the project. Others also underscored that their participation on the panel should not be equated with their support for the overpass, stating that in the absence of other options they had elected to participate to make the best of an unwelcome project.

With this private session concluded, the chair prepared the panelists to present highlights of their recommendations to senior Metrolinx staff, including CEO Bruce McCuaig and local politicians.

Representatives from all three levels of government, including Ward 18 City Councilor Ana Bailão, MPP Christina Martins, and MP Andrew Cash, joined the panelists to hear their recommendations. Taking turns, ten panelists read selections from the final recommendations including the preamble text, the guiding values, as well as several themes and design priorities for each of the five geographic zones.

Following their presentation, Bruce McCuaig, thanked the Panel for their hard work saying, “by learning from each other we’ve come up with something really powerful”. McCuaig said that Metrolinx was very impressed and grateful for the panel’s guidance, and assured them that their recommendations will be considered closely. “You have my strong commitment”, he told the Panel, “that we will respect and respond to all the recommendations moving forward.”

Each elected representative was then invited to address the Panel. They took the opportunity to thank the Panelists for their work and for the significant time they committed to serving their community. They also explained for they will continue to watch this project closely and ensure that it reflects the interests of the Davenport community.

To close the day, Bruce McCuaig presented each panelist with a “Certificate of Public Service” in acknowledgement of their commitment to the process and their community. In closing, MacLeod reminded the group that each Panel member would have the chance to review a draft of the final report and make any edits or additional suggestions before it is presented to Metrolinx and the community. If any member of the Panel felt they were not in agreement with the draft set of recommendations, they were invited to submit a “minority report” to be included in the final document. With a final thanks, the Panel adjourned.

### **Next Steps**

After their final meeting, the Panelists worked by email and phone to edit and approve the Final Report of Residents’ Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass, with the support of panel facilitators. The Panelists were also invited to attend the Final Report launch later in June to present their recommendations to other local residents.

## PANELIST PROFILES

**Paul Allamby:** I am originally from London, UK and after moving to Toronto I have moved around the West end several times. I love the diversity, greenness, and grit of the Junction. I have three kids, a wife (ex-Chicagoan), one dog and one cat. I admire Jane Jacobs and her work.

**Deneille Balkissoon:** I am a SEM Account Coordinator working at Catalyst Canada. My background is varied with a B.A. from University of Waterloo in Political Science and International Studies, and a Post-grad certificate from George Brown in Strategic Relationship Marketing. I have spent years working in international education within and outside of Canada. My internship at the City of Toronto with the Partnership Office emboldened my passion towards working on local initiatives such as *Clean Toronto Together* and *Recipe for Community* that help the community and environment.

**Maria Brum:** I am a lifelong resident of the Davenport neighbourhood and a full time caregiver and advocate for seniors and those with disabilities. I am a property manager within Davenport, enjoy urban farming and am an Early Childhood Educator.

**Justin Bull:** I am a software developer at FreshBooks and computer scientist undergraduate from Ryerson University. I've lived in the community for one year, Toronto for six, and my hobbies are computer security and cycling. I'm partially known for my discovery of the CRA's vulnerability to Heartbleed, MyBikeLane.TO, and Doored.ca initiatives. When I'm not coding at Toronto's makerspace, Hacklab.TO, you can find me cycling around as a crazy cyclist with a camera strapped to my head.

**Derek Carter:** I'm a 33 year old, who moved into the Davenport community six years ago. Originally, I moved into the neighbourhood due to it's proximity to the school I would be attending, George Brown college. I graduated with honours, from the Computer Systems Technician program at GBC, and am now I am working in Information Technology for a large, multi-national CPG (Consumer Packaged Goods) company near Toronto Pearson Airport. In the six short years I've lived in the Davenport Community I've watched it change and grow and I fell in love with it's charm! That is why I've chosen to give residents a voice during this Metrolinx panel, and am glad I was selected to represent the community.

**James De Monte:** I have been with the provincial government since 1997. I am currently Senior Policy Advisor for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner of Ontario. I have a BA in Classical Civilization from Toronto, an MPhil. in Roman History from Oxford, and a Master of Public Administration from Queen's. I moved to Wallace-Emerson in 2011 with my wife. A brand new resident of Wallace-Emerson is expected in December. I enjoy reading history, wilderness canoeing, exploring on bike, perfecting my postage-stamp lawn, cooking and writing poetry. My wife and I are thrilled to be part of this lively and diverse mid-town community and look forward to sharing in its growth and development.

**Marie Cécile Díaz-Thomas:** I live on Springton Avenue, and have been here for 12 years, with my children Stephanie and Carlos. I'm a single mom. I work as a French/English/Spanish customer service representative for an Air Canada call centre at the Islington and 401 area. I use the TTC daily. I also use the GO bus on occasion to visit friends in Barrie and Whitby.

**Pasquale Di Paola:** I have lived in the Earls court neighbourhood for about seven years and enjoy cycling and living here with my son. I particularly enjoy the neighbourhood's love of soccer and the culture that comes with it.

**Mabel Ernest:** I have been a resident of Davenport Riding 17 in Toronto for the past 15 years. I am a Latin American woman with a law degree from the University of Guayaquil and have completed the community worker program at George Brown College. I am a human rights advocate and a Community Representative of the Pelham Park Gardens neighbourhood. I volunteer with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) where I am also a member of the TCHC Staff and Tenants Communication and Safety workgroups. In addition to all of this, I am a 3Rs Ambassador Volunteer for the City of Toronto and the President of the Social Housing Latin American Tenants Association in the GTA.

**Francis Finnison:** I am a resident in the Bloor-dale area and plan on living here for a long time and grow my family in this neighbourhood. I am a public educator investing in providing a community voice and opinion to the issue surrounding the Davenport Diamond project.

**David Gill:** I live in the Davenport area.

**Jaime Ginter:** I am a professor of biological anthropology at Sheridan college. I love living in a city that is walkable and offers a variety of public transit options, yet I do spend a lot of time in my car commuting to and from campus. I am an avid supporter of public transit and expanding our transit offerings, but also recognize that the interests of many stakeholders need to be considered in these projects. As a researcher, I am interested in the impact that our culture and environment have on our health. As a mother, wife and neighbour I am very much concerned with the impact that changes in our community are having and could have on our health. I have observed many positive changes taking place in our community since moving to the Wallace-Emerson neighbourhood in 2010. My neighbours have also told me that our community has experienced many changes in the past decades, mostly positive but some negative. I wanted to take part in the Resident's Reference Panel to help insure that the voices and concerns of the residents are well represented in this transit expansion.

**Matthew Gray:** I have lived in the Junction Triangle for almost a year, and love it. I bike to my job at Queen's Park when I can, and love using the West Toronto Railpath. The neighbourhood's old



trees, industrial heritage, and above all its friendly, community-minded residents make it a great place to live. I believe strongly in the importance of investment in public transit. I hope that Metrolinx, the City, and the province can successfully cooperate and ensure that the infrastructure built in the Junction Triangle will enhance the quality of life of all residents.

**Jeff Groves:** I'm a father of two, aged one and four. I grew up in the west end of Toronto and have lived in the Junction Triangle for three years. I have always been interested in local issues. I'm an arborist currently working for the city of Mississauga. I volunteered for this panel because it is important for local residents to have a voice in large projects that will change the neighbourhood for ever.

**Ayasha Mayr Handel:** I am a longtime Toronto resident, LGBTQ parent and public sector leader. I've called Carleton Village home since 2008. Over the years I've contributed to many community projects to advance social justice and inclusion. In my professional life I work in partnership with communities to strengthen the equity and impact of public services. This includes leading the provincial launch of the Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA) tool, and most recently the strategic implementation of Ontario's Youth Strategy. I value the diversity and vibrancy of my neighbourhood, and the mix of longtime and newer residents. Many people on my street have lived here for over 50 years. My hope is that our neighbourhood remains inclusive and accessible as it continues to change over time. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve on the panel and work with neighbors to develop recommendations for healthier, greener, connected public spaces in our community.

**Srimonti Karmakar:** I work as a Lead Software Engineer & Manager in Toronto, and am a graduate of Computer Engineering from the University of Waterloo. My partner and I bought a house and moved to the Wallace-Emerson area in late 2014. We love the diversity and potential of this neighbourhood. I joined the residents' panel with the hope to actively participate in responsible transit expansion through this part of the city.

**Ellen Kaross:** I have been a Junction resident for over five years. I am interested in local, sustainable and fair food systems, and committed to food access, health, and community building. I am keenly aware of the growing disparities in the City of Toronto. I work for a government-funded not-for-profit in the healthcare sector and I provide holistic nutrition coaching part-time. I rely on public transportation to commute to and from work and to move around. I believe that transportation options should connect people and communities and that it's not just about connecting people beyond the service area, but within. I will advocate for a space that my neighbours recognize as their own - a space that belongs to the community.

**Nigel King:** I have lived here since January 2013. I have always been interested in transportation, since my late father always took me to see planes, trains, and boats.

**Frances Kong:** I am a seasoned law clerk with over 15 years experience in the Ontario legal system in a broad range of legal practices. Educated in Beijing and Toronto, I have two law degrees – an LLB from China and an LLM from Osgoode Hall Law School. I have worked as a law clerk for leading law firms and banks in Toronto and Hong Kong, and as a lawyer in China. I have been a resident of the Davenport community since 2000. I enjoy the convenience of transportation, parks, and friendly neighbours. I wish to be part of efforts for bettering the community.

**Michael Kushnir:** I have lived in Wallace-Emerson for almost three years, and the community has been very good to me in this time. I am hoping to secure the best community improvements to ensure my neighbourhood remains a great place to live.

**Claire Lemieux:** I have lived in the neighbourhood for about two years. We chose this area for its great walkability and access to public transit – no one in our household drives.

**Donna Lim:** I have been a resident of the Junction Triangle neighbourhood for the past 18 years. My daily commute on public transit to the school at Kipling and Finch, where I currently teach, has made me very conscious of how important a connected, reliable public transit system is. Prior to teaching I worked as a landscape architect and I continue to have an interest in urban design. Over the past several years I have watched the neighbourhood evolve and as a result I felt compelled to volunteer to be a part of the Davenport Residents' Reference Panel so that I could have some input into how the neighbourhood would develop in the future.

**Irmgard (Immie) Manthei:** I have a Master's degree in Environmental Studies with a focus on "liveable cities and urban space." As a volunteer member of the Labyrinth Community Network, I am part of a group that, along with Toronto Parks, initiated a process to install a stone labyrinth in Trinity Square. I am also a volunteer for the ROM's ROMwalks program, where I conduct architectural and historical neighbourhood walking tours. Currently, I work as a part-time adult ESL instructor and language assessor with the Toronto District School Board. I enjoy foreign movies, ballet, classical music, and theatre. Finding second-hand book sales is my passion. I have lived in the Davenport neighbourhood for over 35 years.

**Nick Marchese:** I have been a resident of Davenport for close to 30 years. I am also a graduate of Oakwood Collegiate Institute, a Davenport-area high school. Married with two stepdaughters who also live in the area, I am committed to citizen involvement in and control of communities. A professional editor by trade, I have a passion for the written word. I am also an avid participant in the game of soccer, currently as a soccer referee.

**Lily McGregor:** I have lived in the Davenport-Wallace-Emerson Junction since August 2009. I am a Human Resources and Governance Executive, who is passionate about ensuring that the neighbourhood remain a family friendly community. I have

lobbied with Ward 18 Councilor Ana Bailão for reduction of traffic noise, and improvement in litter pick up within the neighbourhood. I joined the Davenport Rail Overpass Panel with the goal of serving the best interests of my community.

**Benjamin McPeck:** I have lived in the neighbourhood all of my life. I attended the nearby elementary and high schools. I am currently an engineering student at Ryerson. My parents own a commercial property adjacent to the project location. What happens in the community has a big impact on my family, which is why I applied to be on this panel.

**Matt Park:** My wife and I made one of the best decisions of our lives and moved to Davenport and Davenport Village specifically more than five years ago from the downtown core. Prior to coming to Davenport I was active with the Bay Cloverhill Community Association and through them had the good fortune to attend meetings of the Canadian Urban Institute. Three years ago I founded the Davenport Village Community Association to speak and advocate in a positive voice to ensure Davenport Village isn't simply a local success story but a mixed-use model for all of Toronto. This project is of course transformative and great care must be taken to ensure the end result is an asset, not an eyesore. I'm also a long-suffering Leafs fan, lover of a good book and travel junkie.

**Stacey Plowright:** I have been a resident of the Davenport area for the last three-and-a-half years. I joined the residents' panel to learn more about Metrolinx and to help shape a new community space. A technical writer by trade, I hope that my inquisitive nature has been useful to my fellow panelists and am eager to see how Metrolinx and the Government of Ontario incorporate, implement, and elaborate on the suggestions made during this process.

**Bonnie Prentice:** I am 73, a retired teacher and guidance counsellor. During my professional life, I provided education, support to and increased awareness of youth and mental health/addictions, learning disabilities, child abuse, sexual assault and racism in schools. As well I have acted as a consultant to educators, youth, parents and community organizations related to bullying, harassment, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, especially as victimization impacts youth, their mental health and possible substance use. After 50 years in Niagara, I have returned to Toronto where I grew up. I now spend most of my time with my sons, my daughters-in-law (who are like daughters to me) and my amazing granddaughters, as well as friends who share my love of film, theatre and books. This is a city that I love. It is more inclusive and far less brutal to people who are different in ability, in culture, race, religion and gender and sexuality than when I was a child. I hope that the next part of my biography will be meaningful engagement in a developing conversation related to poverty and homelessness - that would be more to love.

**William Ross:** I have lived in the neighbourhood for 24 years, and enjoy growing delicious vegetables in a local allotment garden every summer. I was a Creative Director of

a communications firm before becoming a teacher. Before retiring last year, I was Program Coordinator of the York University/Sheridan College Bachelor of Design program. I sat on the steering committee to establish accreditation for graphic designers in Ontario and served two terms on the Exam Board of the newly formed Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario. In 2007, I participated in the St. Clair West Avenue Study (Glenholme to Keele).

**Marie Sano:** My husband and I moved to the Davenport area in 2012 when we bought our first home. Since then, we've expanded our family with a local cat and baby girl. We chose this neighbourhood because of the reasonable costs of homeownership, good schools and proximity to the downtown core. We plan to raise our family here, so our investment and interests in the area are long term. We are concerned with the environmental and real estate impacts of Metrolinx's overpass on the neighbourhood.

**Mario Silva:** I have lived in the neighbourhood for the last 25 Years and have watched slowly how the neighbourhood has changed. Some things got better, others worse. There are a few things that I would like to see improve, such as transportation & traffic flow. This is the very reason that got me interested in joining this panel to make my contribution in a small way to improving the neighbourhood where possible. My hobbies are reading, gardening, soccer, jogging, and bike riding. For this reason, I would like to see the bike path extended north along the tracks.

**Joseph Sinnott:** Born and raised in Galt (Cambridge), Ontario, I fell asleep to the whistles of trains passing through town on the CP mainline and spent hours with his Dad trackside "just watching the trains go by." Some 60 years later and settling nicely into the Davenport community, I fall asleep to the click-clack of trains passing 50 metres or so from my apartment window on that same main CP mainline. (I am fascinated by and maintain a romantic attachment to all things rail--with the exception of trains relegated to ditches or trenches, to open wounds in the landscape.) During the intervening years, I have cherished my family of four children and a career in adult education and community development in a shantytown on the margins of Lima, Peru and the hallowed halls of Queen's University. I am presently employed as a Peer Hepatitis C Worker at Central Toronto Community Health Centres.

**Mary Joe Tavares:** Born in Azores, Portugal, I moved to Canada in 1989 with my husband and three children. I has worked with CIRV radio, researching and preparing morning talk shows. I have had a long career working with the First Portuguese Canadian Cultural Centre (FPCCC). While there, I showcased numerous events and interviews on radio and TV on behalf of the FPCCC. Now I spend my time volunteering at Skills for Change.

**Katherine Thomaidis:** I am a Quality Assurance professional who is a lifetime resident of the area. Panel participation has allowed me to positively contribute to my community.

## REFERENCE PANEL PRESENTER PROFILES



**Daryl Barnett** is Vice President of Metrolinx Network Infrastructure. As such Daryl is responsible for GO Transits, Signals and Communications, Electrification and Train Repair Facilities. He has over 29 years of experience in railroad infrastructure construction and maintenance, including stations, bridges, grading, track, and signals.

**Jason Campbell** is a dedicated member of the Bloordale community and currently serves as Chair of the Bloor Improvement Group. He has also has experience in public policy, research analysis, and working for major festivals such as Nuit Blanche.

**Elise Croll** is the Director, Environmental Programs and Assessment, Capital Projects with Metrolinx. She has been with Metrolinx for three years. Her group is responsible for undertaking projects and providing advice relating to all aspects of environmental assessments. Her work includes testing, monitoring, and reporting on soil and groundwater conditions, noise, vibration, air quality and heritage concerns.

**Donna Cowan** is a long time community advocate, Donna is the current chair of DIGIN, a community group in Bloordale and the former chair of the Bloor Improvement Group. In these roles, she has launched the second annual Big on Bloor Street Festival and helped inspire and facilitate the making of many community arts projects and programs. She has lead numerous community improvement and safety projects and championed an inclusive revitalization plan.

**Scott Dobson** is a member of both the Friends of West Toronto Railpath and the Junction Triangle Traffic Committee. Beyond this he has served as a board member of the Toronto Fringe Festival for 14 years and currently serves on the board of the Parkdale Festival.

**Vic Gedris** is part Dad part computer geek, part urban explorer. Whether on foot or bike, Vic can usually be found, with camera in hand, gathering material for his blog about Campbell Park, The Junction Triangle, and beyond.

**Melanie Hare** is a Planner at Urban Strategies Inc. with over 24 years of planning experience, Melanie has a thorough understanding of community dynamics, urban form, and economic realities. She uses this understanding to tackle a range of urban development challenges. She has won awards for her work on such projects as Toronto Waterfront and the Waterloo Region Transit Corridor. She has also been involved in preparing master plans and reinvestment strategies, and researching effective growth management policies.

**Richard Joy** is the Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute Toronto. The Urban Land Institute is a non-profit organization that does education and research into land use policy, sustainability and regional economies worldwide. Richard has 20 years experience in urban leadership and policy including roles as Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Lead Advisor on The City of Toronto Act, Key Advisor on Greenbelt Act and numerous legislative reforms, and Vice President, Policy and Government Relations for the Toronto Board of Trade.

**Beth Kapusta** is the Senior Manager of Design Excellence at Metrolinx. Beth's work focuses on elevating the quality and customer focus of design across Metrolinx's city-building projects. The role has included overseeing the 6-billion Eglington Crosstown LRT, introducing a design review panel and harmonizing transit signage across the GTHA. Her career has also included collaborating on competition and award-winning designs and 20 years as an architecture critique. Outside of this, Beth sits on the board of Directors of the National Cancer Institute of Canada and is an avid urban farmer, mother, rock climber and cyclist.



**Jennifer Keesmaat** is Chief Planner for the City of Toronto. As Chief Planner, Jennifer is committed to create cities where people thrive, where communities connect and where good design flourishes. Jennifer is responsible for overseeing all the development that goes on in Toronto. In her work, she emphasizes the creation of complete communities and improving consultation processes. Beyond this, Jennifer has over a decade of planning experience, has been recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, the Design Exchange and +EDRA for her innovative work in municipalities across Canada.

**Dyan Marie** is a local artist and the current Creative Director of the Bloordale BIA and the Big on Bloor Festival. She has also been involved in an extraordinary array of art galleries, magazines, projects and programming. In addition to founding DIG IN, a dynamic Bloor West community arts project, she is a co-founder of C Magazine, Cold City Gallery and Walk Here. She has been recognized for her efforts with a City Soul award and a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

**Bruce McCuaig** is the President & CEO of Metrolinx. Bruce is the man in charge of keeping our region's transit plans on track. He provides oversight, guidance, and leadership. He has been a public servant for over 30 years working in areas involving land use and transportation planning and municipal policy. Before joining Metrolinx, he worked for 10 years with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, and 15 years with the Ministry of Transportation, ultimately as Deputy Director.

**John Potter** is a Toronto based architect with 25 years of experience and a commitment to social responsibility. He has worked on over 45 award-winning civic, corporate, and commercial projects across Canada including: schools, community centres, and transit infrastructure.

**Liz Sutherland** is an active member of Cycle TO, serving both as a volunteer ward leader and member of the Board, chairing their advocacy committee. Liz has lived in the Junction Triangle since 2011 and when she is not advocating for cyclists, she works as a policy advisor for the Ontario Non-profit Network.

## ABOUT MASS LBP

MASS LBP is Canada's leader in the use of deliberative and participatory forms of democracy to shape public policy. We work with forward-thinking governments to make better decisions while deepening and improving their efforts to engage and consult with citizens. Fundamentally we believe in people. Given the opportunity to participate in a thorough, fair, and inclusive process, citizens are ready to provide constructive advice, offering officials the intelligence, perspective, and sensitivity that difficult public issues require.

Since 2007, MASS LBP has led some of Canada's most original and ambitious efforts to engage citizens in tackling tough policy options while pioneering the use of Civic Lotteries and Citizens' Reference Panels. To date more than 200,000 households across the country have received invitations to participate in 24 Citizens' Assemblies and Reference Panels formed by governments to address a wide range of issues from mental health policy to transportation planning.

To learn more about our work, please visit our website: [masslbp.com](http://masslbp.com)

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*Planning  
Resource*

Recommendations from the  
Toronto Residents'  
Reference Panel  
on the Davenport  
Community Rail  
Overpass

Final Report | June 2015  
Issued by Metrolinx