

Gerrard-Carlaw South Transit-Oriented Community Final Engagement Summary Report



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1 Project Background

1.1 Introduction

This report provides a record of the first and second rounds of community engagement activities that were conducted for the future Gerrard-Carlaw South Transit-Oriented Community (TOC). TOCs are part of the government's plan to build new, sustainable transit. The province's TOC program will create vibrant, mixed-use communities that will bring more housing (including affordable housing options), jobs, retail, community amenities, and entertainment at or within a short distance of transit stations.

The Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC development process involves the following steps in chronological order:

- Development of an initial design concept, which was shared with the City of Toronto (city) in fall 2023.
- Delivery of a public engagement program (conducted between January and September 2024) to share information and gather stakeholders' and community input to help inform future plans and revise designs.
- Finalizing the TOC rezoning process with the city, based on the results of the previous two steps.
- Construction of the Ontario Line Gerrard station and related infrastructure that is overseen by Metrolinx.
- Selection of a building partner using an open, fair, and competitive bidding process to develop the TOC.
- Securing all necessary approvals for construction of the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC to begin.

The Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC site consists of two existing blocks, which have been identified as TOC opportunities and will be developed in line with the following objectives of the province's TOC program:

- Increase transit ridership and reduce traffic congestion;
- Increase housing supply (including affordable housing);
- Stimulate the economy through major projects and create jobs;
- Bring retail and community amenities (for example, community centres) within a short distance of public transit stations; and
- Offset the cost of station construction, which would save taxpayers money.

1.2 Revised TOC Concept

Infrastructure Ontario (IO) and the Ontario Line Technical Advisor (collectively called the project team), in consultation with the City of Toronto, is working on a revised concept for the future Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC site. The revised TOC concept builds on the first draft

TOC concept which was shared with community members during the first round of community engagement. IO and the project team shared the revised TOC concept with the community during the second round of community engagement activities. The revised TOC concept considered community feedback from the first round of engagement and includes over 13,000 square metres (m²) of office, retail, and commercial space, supporting around 460 jobs while complementing the area's existing industrial character. The plan promotes sustainability by adding housing and jobs near transit and exceeding bicycle parking requirements. It will include more than 1,300 residential units, with 32 per cent having two or more bedrooms, and offer communal amenity spaces to enhance livability. With integrated access to multiple transit modes at the future Gerrard Station, and streetscape improvements, the development will encourage active transportation, including walking, and will offer more than 1,500 bicycle parking spots.

2 Round One Engagement

There were three components of community engagement for the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC site, including an online and written survey, a Local Advisory Committee, and virtual and in-person public open houses.

IO, on behalf of the province, led a process to identify the community's priorities for the future Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC site, guided by the following objectives:

- Make information about the project available to the public;
- Build relationships with neighbourhood residents, commercial tenants, community organizations, and key stakeholders;
- Understand the aspirations, concerns, and priorities of various stakeholder groups and audiences;
- Refine the draft concept to integrate and respond to feedback, where feasible;
- Maintain a two-way dialogue with engagement partners; and
- Positively contribute to the growth and evolution of the City of Toronto.

2.1 Engagement Activities and Tools

The first round of community engagement was conducted from January to March 2024 and the engagement tools are summarized below.

The EngageIO website project page: A Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC project page and online survey were launched at the start of the first round of engagement. The project page allows community members to find information about the TOC program, information about engagement to date, and the draft concept. The website domain is <https://engageioca/en/GerrardCarlawSouth> and website content has been updated throughout the engagement process.

Postcard: IO notified residents and stakeholders of upcoming meetings through various channels, including the distribution of a postcard inviting residents and businesses within a 500-metre radius of the proposed TOC site to the upcoming virtual and in-person community engagement meetings.

Social media posts: The Ministry of Infrastructure and IO published social media posts to expand outreach of the virtual and in-person community engagement meetings.

Local Advisory Committee Meeting #1: A joint Eastern Avenue and Gerrard-Carlaw South Local Advisory Committee (LAC) was formed to gather community stakeholder input for the TOC draft concepts, facilitating collaborative discussions and feedback. The LAC had 11 community representatives from within an approximately one-kilometre vicinity of the future Ontario Line stations (Gerrard and East Harbour) and representing a range of community members, organized groups, local organizations, and interests. The project team and City of Toronto held a virtual two-hour meeting on February 1, 2024, with all LAC members and the local councillor to present TOC concepts, answer questions, and collect feedback.

Virtual Public Engagement Meeting #1: On February 13, 2024, 89 people attended the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC virtual public meeting. The event was hosted on Zoom by IO, who partnered with the Ontario Line Technical Advisor (OLTA) and the City of Toronto. The project team presented information about the planning and design of the TOC site. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session to allow the community to ask questions and provide comments on the draft concept.

Engagement Survey: For a 30-day period, starting on February 13, 2024, IO offered an online survey on the EngageIO website to gather community feedback on various aspects of the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC, including its design, sustainability, services, economic impact, housing, and public spaces. The survey link was shared with attendees at the virtual and in-person open houses and promoted on the postcard delivered to residences within a 500-metre radius of the TOC sites. A total of 22 responses were received.

In-Person Open House #1: On February 21, 2024, an in-person open house was held at the Ralph Thornton Community Centre from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. This was a drop-in event where facilitators responded to attendees' questions about the TOC project. Attended by 45 people, the event featured 15 project information boards showcasing the neighbourhood context, draft concepts, and design objectives. Project team members and city staff were available to answer questions and record feedback, while also promoting the online survey or offering participants the option to complete a paper copy of the survey.

2.2 What We Heard in Round One

The first round of community engagement gathered participants' feedback and questions on a wide range of topics including housing, transportation, density, heritage, transit integration, open spaces, and much more. These topics are captured in detail in the first [Gerrard-Carlaw South Transit-Oriented Community Engagement Summary Report](#).

Housing

Public feedback emphasized the need for affordable housing within the TOC, focusing on the amount, type, accessibility, and distribution of units. The project team noted that the project is still in early design stages, acknowledged that affordable housing is seen as a priority and that it plans to collaborate with the city and province to incentivize its development. Inquiries about the flexibility of the building partner were addressed by explaining that zoning for the TOC would guide their actions. Community members also

requested housing that accommodates multi-generational families and local artisans and industrial workers.

Street Network and Traffic

Participants discussed the street network design for the new neighbourhood, focusing on safe, accessible spaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers while addressing concerns about parking disruptions during construction and congestion from potential street closures. The project team explained that the design aims to enhance pedestrian and cyclist access, especially along Dickens Street and Thackeray Street, while accommodating motor vehicle use without promoting shortcuts, ultimately fostering a dense, transit-oriented community.

Local Businesses and Amenities

The future of local businesses and potential rent increases was a key concern for participants, as was a desire to retain current community amenities such as children's programs, affordable cafes, grocers, and retail stores, and spaces for industrial, commercial, and creative work. The project team acknowledged these priorities, noting plans to accommodate community amenities and support the existing economic landscape as part of the site's heritage fabric. The team confirmed that businesses with leases on the site would remain during subway construction.

Height

Participants raised concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed building height on the lower-density neighbourhood. The project team responded that density is higher due to the area's designation as a Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA), but the design considers these sensitivities, with towers massed to the south and west to maintain the look along Carlaw Avenue similar to existing nearby buildings.

Construction Timeline

Participants inquired about the expected completion date for the future Gerrard Station. The project team confirmed that early works have started at the site, with IO managing the TOC program and Metrolinx overseeing the Ontario Line Subway project.

Heritage

The community appreciated the project team's efforts to preserve the Carlaw Avenue chimneys/heritage façade and blend its heritage in the new design. Along with that, community members shared feedback about parks, green spaces, public realm design, and pedestrian accessibility related to the TOC development with some suggestions to create a parkette or plaza at the intersection of Carlaw Avenue and Dundas Street for community events.

2.3 Addressing Feedback from Round One

Feedback from the first round of engagement for the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC site was organized into a set of key themes. Those themes were further divided into two groups by the project team to update the community on: changes to revise the concept; and changes

that are still being assessed or will be resolved in the future by a building partner. Both were presented to the community during the second round of engagement activities.

2.3.1 Revisions to the Fall 2023 Concept

Height and Massing

The TOC site is located within the Gerrard-Carlaw PMTSA, which is planned to accommodate a minimum of 300 people and jobs per hectare. The revised TOC concept reflects the development potential within this station area, especially given that this is one of the rare large sites in the area to support substantial redevelopment and intensification.

To achieve the density target, the TOC concept must accommodate increased density while managing the effects of taller buildings in the existing built context and prioritizing pedestrian comfort. In response to public feedback concerning the scale and height of buildings, the base podium of the tall buildings has been reduced by at least one storey to create a more comfortable, pedestrian-scale building that frames the adjacent streets. To offset this, additional height has been added to the towers, which is minor from a pedestrian perspective. The height around the Carlaw block and its courtyard has also been lowered by up to three storeys to allow for additional sunlight penetration.

Heritage

There are several heritage elements in the existing structure that the project team has worked to conserve, including the portion of the building façade along Carlaw Avenue, chimneys, and the original trusses of the heritage building. Some of the changes made between the original fall 2023 draft concept and the revised concept include the simplified building façade along Carlaw Avenue, which removed the portions of the building that protrude toward the street. This would keep the focus on the heritage building at street level, and not the levels above. It also has the added benefit of reducing some of the shadows that are cast onto that frontage. There is also a minor change to increase the building's setback from the access lane to the south to provide more reveal and prominence to the heritage building below it.

Pedestrian Experience

Community feedback regarding pedestrian experience aligns well with the TOC concept. For instance, the proposed public realm network highlighted ground-level building programs and pedestrian routes showing accessible paths across the site and connections to nearby public streets. The team's early focus on enhancing site connectivity for pedestrians is a priority echoed by feedback received in the first round.

In later refinements, the project team addressed practical details like adding street-level bike parking near building entrances, open spaces, and adjacent streets for short-term use. Laybys were also included to facilitate safe vehicle pickups and drop-offs, ensuring cars don't interfere with sidewalks, all contributing to a pedestrian-friendly environment.

2.3.2 In-Progress/Future Updates

Heritage

The project team discussed heritage conservation efforts, particularly regarding the site's chimneys and Boiler House Building. The project team is exploring the possibility of preserving additional portions of the existing structure around the chimneys, shown in the revised landscape plan. They are working closely with structural engineers and heritage experts to determine the feasibility of retaining a larger portion of the Boiler House, considering site conditions. Additionally, the project team must also coordinate the placement of a crash wall for safety near the rail corridor, which may affect conservation efforts. The current landscape plan is conceptual, with ongoing assessments needed for final decisions.

Local Businesses

The project team outlined the approach for non-residential space, aiming to align future uses with current creative and retail activities. The Carlaw block is a focal point in this design, with the ground floor featuring multiple entrances and ample street frontage for storefronts, creating a flexible and open interior layout. The design allows a range of commercial unit sizes, from 500 to 7,500 square feet. The adaptable floor plan supports various business needs, providing smaller leasing options for new businesses and expandable space for those looking to grow within the development.

Community Services

The project team outlined a high-level zoning framework for the site that includes the development concept's gross floor area, height, and setbacks. In addition to residential uses, the framework will accommodate a broad range of existing uses such as light manufacturing, creative industries, artist studios, beverage manufacturing, and bake shops to encourage these uses within the future development.

Regarding affordable housing, the city and province are actively collaborating to maximize affordable housing availability. While the project team does not yet have a final commitment or specific targets, this remains a key focus of their joint efforts.

City staff is addressing a council motion from May 2024 to explore strategies to maximize affordable housing in TOCs, with a focus on achieving 20 per cent affordable units. Working with a consultant, the city is conducting a feasibility analysis involving financial assessments of various TOCs citywide. The findings will be presented to the Planning and Housing Committee on December 5, 2024, aiming to prioritize affordable housing and ensure maximum provision in collaboration with IO.

3 Round Two Engagement

From June to September 2024, the province conducted a second round of community engagement for the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC to update the community on what was

heard during the first round of engagement, share the revised concept, and gather feedback on the revised concept.

3.1 Engagement Activities and Tools

The following section summarizes the engagement tools used in the second round of community engagement.

Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Meeting #2: On June 5, 2024, the project team met with 10 members of the LAC to review what was heard from stakeholders and community members during the first round of community engagement and verify the key themes heard from the community.

Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Meeting #3: The project team held its third and final LAC meeting with eight members on September 18, 2024, to present updates to the concept plans for the Eastern Avenue and Gerrard Carlaw South TOC sites, additional updates that are still in progress or will come in the future, and areas where no changes have occurred because they are out of scope or have been accounted for already. Members of the LAC were asked to share the presentation and minutes within their community networks.

Virtual Public Engagement Meeting #2: To conclude the public engagement process, on September 26, 2024, the project team facilitated a joint public meeting for the Gerrard-Carlaw South and Eastern Avenue TOCs. The open house was attended by 48 members of the public over a one-and-a-half-hour virtual session. It included an overview of the TOC projects' objectives and timeline, detailed presentations of the updated TOC concepts for the Gerrard-Carlaw South and Eastern Avenue sites, and a discussion with community members.

3.2 What We Heard in Round Two

The following is a summary of participants' feedback gathered from the second round of community engagement events, which discussed the revisions outlined in the section *Addressing Feedback from Round One*.

3.2.1 Balancing Multiple Objectives: Urban Form, Heritage, and Shadow Impacts

From the LAC, we heard that the initial massing of the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC was preferred because the updated concept concentrates more density in the Dickens block buildings rather than in the Carlaw and Thackeray blocks. We also heard inquiries about why the proposed height and density is concentrated near Dickens Street and Thackeray Street instead of at Carlaw Avenue and Dundas Street. This was raised because the Carlaw Avenue and Dundas Street area sees more people and transit, is closer to the future Gerrard Station on the Ontario Line and is closer to all the taller 12-plus storey buildings along Carlaw Avenue (from Queen Street to Gerrard Street). We also heard dissatisfaction with the shadow impacts of the revised concept because of the updated massing.

The project team referred to Figure 1 below and explained that density was placed farther from the transit station to ensure building shadows remain within the site and to preserve heritage elements along Carlaw Avenue. The project team clarified that the increased heritage preservation, revised building massing, and associated shadow impacts were revised to appropriately balance multiple objectives and address various comments brought forward during the first round of engagement. While placing more height on Carlaw Avenue would reduce the associated shadow impacts on the buildings on the west side of the site, it would cast more shadows on the buildings and neighbourhood towards the east.



Figure 1 – Proposed Shadow Impacts

Besides this, the project team considers the fit and integration of heritage features on the site to be more suitable in the revised concept. This is because the proposed height is more appropriate for the internal network on the site, and the design of the heritage components interacts in a more elegant way within the site from an architectural perspective. Many warehouse heritage buildings in the city, which are similar to the types of established heritage buildings we see on Carlaw Avenue, have a rectangular and bulky mid-rise form. As shown in Figure 2 below, the TOC concept adopts a similar approach by retaining important portions of the existing building that frame the street and public realm and setting back a new building above it.

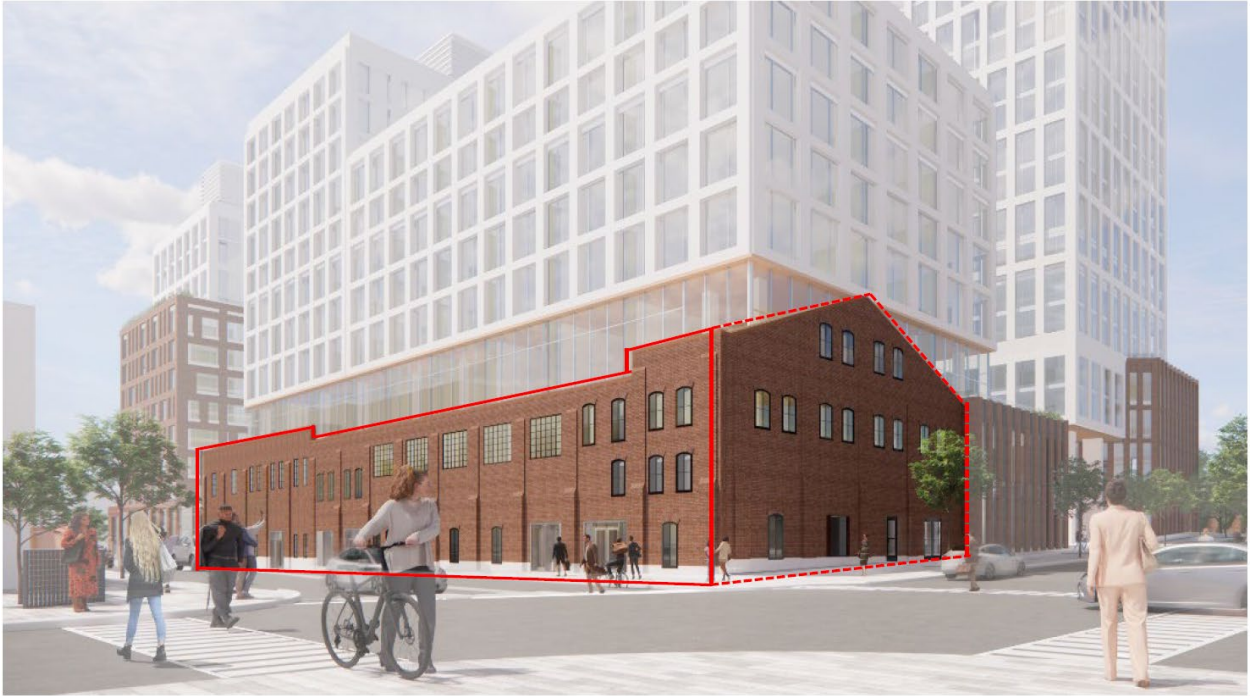


Figure 2 – Proposed Heritage Approach

3.2.2 Affordability and Community Benefits

At the virtual open house, we received questions about how the 20 per cent affordable housing target aligns with the typical practices for community friendly TOCs. The city explained that although TOC programming is new in Ontario, city Council has given previous direction through inclusionary zoning policy for developments to provide at least five per cent affordable housing when located within Protected Major Transit Station Areas in this part of the city.

The province understands that affordable housing is a key concern. The city and the province are in the process of balancing the various objectives that the TOC will achieve. They are also in the process of identifying the community benefits that need to be prioritized, most notably affordable housing, along with the options for how to allocate available funding to these benefits. The magnitude of funding that can be applied will depend on the components of the TOC, the results of the city's affordable housing feasibility study, and other factors.

3.2.3 Unit Sizes and Affordability in the Building Partners Terms of Reference (ToR)

We heard concern over the mix and affordability of units that will be required on the site and a desire for a greater portion of the residential space to be allocated to larger units through the Terms of Reference (ToR) to ensure the building partner does not build primarily smaller units that are more suitable for investors than end users. We also heard that the ToR should include affordable unit targets like the city's 20 per cent affordable housing target for TOCs to ensure that this goal is achieved.

The project team emphasized that the provincial mandate sets out the proposed amount of residential space/Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the site that will be included in the TOC. The updated concept includes a proportion of two- and three-bedroom units that aligns with the City of Toronto's current guidelines. The expectation is that the building partner may propose a different proportion of two- and three-bedroom units but that they would still align with the city's guidelines. The project team is considering multiple avenues for deciding the anticipated unit mix that the building partner can expect to provide through the building partner agreement. This mix of units and whether they will be a requirement, or a recommendation will be defined in future conversations with the province and the building partner.

3.2.4 Site Landscaping and the Closure of Local Businesses

We heard the need for clarity around who is responsible for the maintenance of the site, specifically around managing the grass and landscaping. We also received inquiries about the future of the recently closed Gerrard Square Shopping Centre and local gas station and whether these businesses will be included in the new development.

The project team noted that while these businesses are nearby, they are part of the Gerrard-Carlaw North TOC for which the public engagement process was completed in 2023. The city is currently working with the province to finalize the zoning and building partner agreement for the Gerrard-Carlaw North TOC. The Gerrard Carlaw North TOC site is currently under the control of Metrolinx and being used for construction of the Ontario Line. Metrolinx will create a Construction Liaison Committee to engage with the community during the construction of the future Gerrard Station. For subway construction related questions, the project team encouraged attendees to reach out to Metrolinx.

3.2.5 Flexible Retail Space

We also heard a request for clarity on whether 'flexible' or 'multipurpose' spaces will be included in the TOC, especially when it comes to commercial spaces.

The project team explained that flexibility in commercial spaces is assumed in the revised concept's design. It is a key part of the planning process for the TOC; right now, the project team is selecting the appropriate grid to use for the structure to support retail spaces and ensuring that there are different entrances available to access different units.

For public community space uses, the city has a set of architectural and design standards that the building partner will need to adhere to. These community space design standards would be considered in the TOC along with the types of community benefits that could be provided on this site.

3.2.6 Traffic Management Along Dickens Street

At the virtual open house, we heard concerns about Dickens Street and whether it would be the primary access point for vehicular traffic to the TOC, become a one-way street and have traffic mitigation measures in place. We also heard inquiries about the traffic flow from Dickens Street into Carlaw Avenue and the potential safety risks if traffic from the TOC is

allowed to flow into the local community through Badgerow Avenue, which is a quiet street with lots of families and kids.

The project team explained that vehicle access to the TOC is primarily via the extension of Thackeray Street eastward to Carlaw Avenue. Thackeray Street will serve as the primary street through the site connecting Dickens Street to Carlaw Avenue as shown in Figure 3 below.

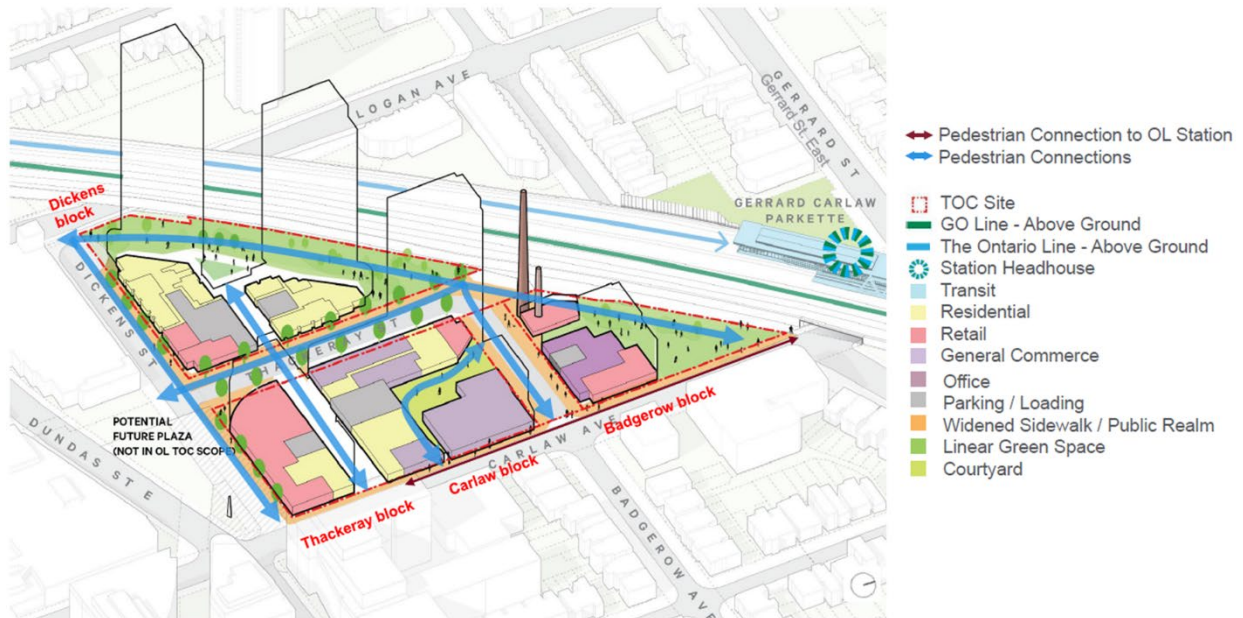


Figure 3 – Proposed Public Realm Network

The revised concept proposes a closure of a portion of Dickens Street between Thackeray Street and Carlaw Avenue, which is owned by the city. While the closure is not required for the TOC to move forward, the project team believes that this closure should be considered by the city and neighbouring property owners because there may be an option to create more public space while preventing an influx of cars through the congested intersection. The future of Dickens Street is for the city to determine and if it chooses to evaluate a closure it may define a planning process to evaluate what that closure would look like and how it would function. Future updates on the Dickens Street closure, if it proceeds, will be made through appropriate city channels. The city is aware of the awkward and potentially unsafe intersection of Dickens Street and Carlaw Avenue and is keen on the proposed new accesses north of Dickens Street.

The city explained that the extension of Badgerow Avenue into the TOC would provide a public street and connect to the existing road. This connection was evaluated as part of the proposal's Traffic Impact Assessment Study and was determined to meet applicable standards for road safety and design. The building partner will also need to prepare an updated Traffic Impact Assessment Study which will consider the new street in more detail and provide detailed design recommendations prior to its construction.

3.2.7 Wind Tunnels Along the Site

We heard concerns about wind tunnels created around the tall buildings on the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC site, which are unfriendly for pedestrians and may have intense winds, especially in the winter. The project team explained the standard approach to managing wind tunnels is through a wind study prepared by a computer or physical model that assesses those wind impacts against prevailing winds. This study has not been conducted yet, but a future building partner could be required to complete a wind study when preparing a site plan application with the city, and that will define the architectural detail around the building and the building massing.

At this stage in the TOC design, some of the architectural step backs from the lower portion of the building help reduce the downwind experience along the buildings. A proper study from the future building partner would look at wind studies and could provide canopies at the pedestrian level to minimize the wind impact at grade. The study would make recommendations to deal with high wind areas, which might include baffles, coverings, plantings, and other measures.

3.2.8 Gathering Spaces in the TOC

We also heard interest for welcoming community gathering spaces or vertical green spaces in the TOC where residents are encouraged spend time.

The project team explained that a portion of the green spaces on the site have been set aside for active space to provide a natural buffer zone between the rail corridor and the TOC. The programming in that space also needs to consider the safety of users since it is near the rail corridor. The vision for this portion of the community is to have woonerfs (traffic calmed areas) or laneway spaces that can accommodate pedestrian activity. While there is a multi-use path with discrete seating areas, the space is not meant for public assembly.

There is an internal courtyard in the Carlaw block which can provide an opportunity for different types of gatherings and activities including art spaces, staging areas, and other creative opportunities. There are also Privately Owned Public Spaces on the site that will provide more than 6,000 m² of open space. While outdoor amenities have not yet been programmed, there is an opportunity to introduce amenities/facilities designed to accommodate the needs of pets and their owners in the future. These pet amenities are one of multiple amenity options being considered for the TOC.

3.2.9 Community Services and Facilities

When asked whether there has been an analysis of the existing community services and facilities, the project team stated that while a formal assessment of the Community Services and Facilities has not been completed, a high-level mapping analysis is completed. In tandem, the city is assessing what amenities are being used and what may be required in the community. Findings from these assessments have been and will continue to be shared with IO to consider.

4 Next Steps & More Information

The community engagement process was designed to collect input from the community and key stakeholders ahead of planning and design milestones so they could be considered during the decision-making stage. The engagement process resulted in the community's identification of key themes, priorities, and benefits, which are summarized in the Gerrard-Carlaw South final engagement report. The information will help inform the direction of future plans and designs of the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC.

<https://engageio.ca/en/GerrardCarlawSouth>.

Now that the engagement process is complete, the project team will move towards concluding the TOC rezoning process with the city. Metrolinx will continue to construct the future Gerrard Station and required infrastructure as part of the Ontario Line subway. During the subway construction, IO will conduct an open, fair, and competitive bid process to identify a building partner to deliver the Gerrard-Carlaw South TOC. TOC construction will begin after a building partner is selected and required approvals are in place and once the site is no longer needed to support Ontario Line construction.

All Gerrard Carlaw South TOC project-related materials, available recordings of public engagement activities, and updates are available at

<https://engageio.ca/en/GerrardCarlawSouth>.

For any TOC-related inquiries, the public can contact the project team through the EngageIO contact webpage at <https://engageio.ca/en/contact>.

Appendix A. Gerrard-Carlaw South and Eastern Avenue TOC: Local Advisory Committee

Membership List

For the Local Advisory Committee (LAC), IO reached out to 20+ community stakeholder organizations within one kilometre of the Gerrard-Carlaw South and Eastern TOC sites. The current LAC membership includes the following stakeholder groups:

- Crow's Theatre
- Gerrard Square Shopping Mall
- Lakeshore East Community Advisory Committee
- Leslieville Business Improvement Area (BIA)
- Leslieville Historical Society
- Leslieville Resident Association
- Nellie's Shelter for Women and Children
- Pocket Community Association
- Ralph Thornton Community Centre
- Riverside BIA
- The Opera House
- Toronto District School Board
- Woodgreen Foundation

Note: The City of Toronto facilities, such as libraries, arenas, and community centres, are not included in the LAC membership list, as the city coordinates consultation with them.