

Queen-Spadina TOC Public Engagement Summary Report



Virtual Event (October 6,
2021) & Online Engagement



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Introduction

Transit-oriented communities (TOC) are part of the government's plan to build new, sustainable transit. TOC will enhance Ontario's "[New Subway Transit Plan for the GTA](#)" by placing more housing and jobs near or at transit stations along the routes of the province's four priority subway projects, including the [Ontario Line](#), the [Yonge North Subway Extension](#), the [Scarborough Subway Extension](#), and the [Eglinton Crosstown West Extension](#).

The TOC proposal at the future King-Bathurst station looks to add more housing and office space while retaining heritage buildings and structures, recognizing the character of this vibrant neighbourhood. The King-Bathurst station includes two sites that have been identified as TOC opportunities. The sites will be developed by the Province of Ontario (the Province), in line with the [stated objectives of the TOC program](#).

Outreach Materials

- Postcards distributed to area residents and businesses within a 500 m radius to proposed station site.
- Three (3) social media posts on Twitter from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) supported (i.e., shared) by Infrastructure Ontario (IO).
- Community input received through the EngageIO website at engageio.ca/en/king-bathurst.

Presentation

As part of the public engagement process, on Wednesday, October 6, 2021, IO held a virtual public meeting for the Queen-Spadina area TOC with an attendance of 84 unique viewers and a third-party moderator serving to facilitate the presentation and questions. The meeting began with a land acknowledgement, introductions, opening remarks from Associate Minister of Transportation Stan Cho and City Councillor Joe Cressy, followed by a presentation on the Queen-Spadina TOC by IO and the Ontario Line Technical Advisory team.

Minister Cho explained the government's vision of taking a bold new approach to connecting people and jobs to transit within mixed-use communities. Part of this vision is to reimagine neighbourhoods through sound planning principles that will build transit and housing, integrate employment opportunities, and create vibrant public spaces. Through this open house, the public is encouraged to provide feedback on what would best serve their needs and help to build these vibrant communities.

Councillor Cressy reiterated Minister Cho's sentiments on building transit, but more importantly, surrounding that transit with complete communities. Through public input,

we will be able to ensure that the Queen-Spadina TOC contributes to livability, affordable housing, and a vibrant community.

The presentation started with a declaration of the provincial objectives for the TOC program: increasing housing supply, catalyzing complete communities, offsetting the cost of station construction, and stimulating the economy. Next, there was a discussion of engaging early and often with multiple stakeholders to make sure this TOC program is a success. Two forums were mentioned to gather initial feedback and consultation: the City of Toronto (the City) and Local Advisory Committee (LAC), which run parallel to the open house sessions. These forums provide a thoughtful opportunity to collect feedback and information to help build complete communities that retain community character.

The timeline for the Queen-Spadina TOC was provided—the planning documents were submitted in May 2021, which was followed up with the Province’s announcement of the Queen-Spadina TOC in June 2021. Since then, there have been LAC meetings leading up to the first virtual open house in October 2021, with a final open house to occur in the coming months.

Next, the project team presented the draft TOC concept for the Queen-Spadina station area. In addition to the TOC program objectives and principles, there are three important criteria for TOC including: 1) being technically feasible, 2) meeting market and community requirements to ultimately ensure that what is built can be delivered, and 3) being beautiful while demonstrating innovative solutions for the urban form, fulfilling both public and private needs.

Following this overview, the TOC site concept was discussed in detail. From a provincial planning context, the TOC offers incredible growth opportunities, addresses housing needs, and offers an efficient use of the land, infrastructure, and assets available to protect the environment. Details on the surrounding context, station neighbourhood, active development applications, heritage context, planning policy context, and proposed TOC concept can be found in the presentation and related materials at engageio.ca/en/queen-spadina.



Question and Answer

Following the presentation, a question-and-answer period was conducted. Responders submitted questions over Zoom and on the phone. Those interested were also able to continue to submit their feedback via the EngageIO site following the meeting. A summary of the live discussion and the comments received online is presented below by theme. Questions and comments were categorized into the following themes: Stakeholder Consultation and Project Governance; Built Form; Mix of Uses; Sustainability; Heritage; Public Realm; and Parks and Open Space.

Stakeholder Consultation and Project Governance

Many questions were received about the construction timeline of the TOC and the expected completion date. At the open house, a question was received about the cooperation between various agencies involved in delivering the Ontario Line and TOC program, specifically about adherence to the proposed timelines. Open house responders asked who the developer for the TOC would be and what the future financial agreement might entail. Open house responders asked about interim conditions for businesses adjacent to the development during construction, and if any residents would

be displaced by the development and what provisions were in place to house them. One responder asked if the subway would be built using tunnelling technology.

The project team provided a general timeline for construction, stating that the transit station construction is anticipated to begin in 2022 and TOC construction is anticipated to begin in 2029. In response to questions about adhering to the proposed timeline for construction and the anticipated completion date, the project team explained that the TOC program has always been part of the Ontario Line project and timing has been considered since inception. The project team added that the TOC work cannot begin until transit infrastructure construction is complete, additionally explaining that following the rezoning process, the concepts will be further developed and built by a private developer, and the process for selecting the developer is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2022. The project team suggested that Metrolinx would be able to best answer questions about interim construction impacts. The project team responded to questions about existing residential tenants, noting while rental units are unavailable between transit construction and TOC construction, a Metrolinx property acquisition team will assist in relocating tenants. The TOC also proposes to replace all existing rental units, as per the City's rental replacement policy. Questions about subway construction technology were directed to Metrolinx.

Built Form

Open house responders expressed concern about the proposed heights of the developments and the relationship to the existing mid-rise form along Queen Street West and Spadina Avenue. Despite concerns, some responders asked for increases in height and expressed their support for the project. At the open house, a responder asked why a station entrance is not provided at the northeast corner of the intersection from Spadina Avenue. A couple of open house responders were concerned about the potential loss of views and sunlight to the "Morgan" building (438 Richmond St W). There were also questions about potential noise and vibration impacts upon completion of the subway.

Maximum heights for the TOC concepts at Queen-Spadina are based on an assessment of provincial and municipal policy direction, urban design and planning principles, existing and emerging built form context, and public realm impacts. The new transit station establishes a new subway node associated with Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) requirements for density and employment. It is understood that the TOC developments represent the introduction of a height peak for the neighbourhood. Both TOC buildings maintain the existing low-rise street condition with three-storey base buildings. The South site TOC provides a 5 m setback along the building's Queen Street West frontage to the middle portion of the building, responding to the building's Queen Street West frontage and best practice for new development within the Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD). For the North site, a generous 11 m step back is provided from the base building, pulling the taller mid-rise component away from the Queen

Street frontage to emphasize the heritage attributes present in the public realm, as well as the conserved heritage base building.

The project team acknowledged concerns from residents of the Morgan building; however, the South site TOC remains lower in height than the Morgan building and separation distances of between 11 m and 17 m are maintained between the tower facade and the Morgan building directly to the south.

The project team explained that there is no station entrance at the northeast corner of the intersection due to station requirements (ex. queueing for fares, circulation, etc.); however, they did acknowledge that some details of the station are not yet final. The project team acknowledged that the new developments create net-new shadow impacts between approximately 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. during the spring and fall equinoxes, but heights are capped to limit shadowing on Ogden Junior Public School. The project team explained the TOC does not impose shadow impacts onto adjacent neighbourhood and apartment neighbourhood designated properties to the north of the site along Cameron Street. Noise and vibration will be mitigated using lighter trains than the other subway lines and by the fact that the alignment is within the public right-of-way and not directly under any private buildings for this segment.

Mix of Uses

An open house responder asked about the tenure of residential units, whether they would be purpose-built rental or sold as condos. Another open house responder asked about the mix of non-residential uses, wondering if they would be dedicated to institutional or commercial uses. One open house responder asked if there would be any affordable housing in the TOC. The development program includes residential and transit uses on the North site, and residential, transit and flexible commercial uses on the South site. Discussions about the amount, tenure and split of affordable housing are ongoing between the Province and City.

Sustainability

A question was received at the open house about the building's environmental impact and anticipated emissions. The project team acknowledged they did not have data on the emission impact of the TOC; however, emissions reductions from the subway line were included in the published business case for the project. A question was raised at the open house about the potential for a green rooftop and other commitments to greenery onsite. The project team explained that there are greening commitments in the form of green rooftops, which can be flexibly programmed as amenity space.

Heritage

A question was received at the open house about the Queen Street Heritage Conservation District, specifically if the development would need to adhere to height limitations based on the existing context or establish new precedents for the area.

The project team responded to questions about heritage by explaining that the design of the TOC buildings responds to the existing character of the area, including maintaining street wall heights and setbacks above base buildings. The North site implicates a heritage property, and the concept conserves the heritage base building, while introducing an additional tower component above. The South site will result in the demolition of three contributing heritage properties, coordinated through a separate heritage review process. The strategy for the South site will see the proposed development incorporate key heritage attributes from both the King-Spadina and Queen Street West heritage districts. Overall, the TOC concept considers and is informed by the policies and guidelines of the Queen Street West HCD Plan.

Public Realm

At the open house, concerns were raised about pedestrian overcrowding in the neighbourhood, referencing narrow sidewalks as a current issue. An open house responder asked about quality-of-life provisions for existing residents, referencing economic challenges for local businesses during construction on Eglinton Avenue. Online responders asked about the potential increase in vehicular traffic in the neighbourhood from the development. An online responder asked about potential road changes to the area post-construction.

The project team pointed to proposed 3.3 m pedestrian clearways that accommodate the City's 2.1 m minimum sidewalk width requirement. The project team explained that the TOC proposal maintains existing setback distances along Queen Street West and Spadina Avenue, and that conservation of existing heritage buildings limits opportunities to expand the sidewalk zone. The project team acknowledged concerns about impacts for the existing community and directed responders to Metrolinx, as they will be coordinating construction. The project team also noted that the TOC sites are constrained and impacts will be quite localized. In addition, the project team responded to questions about transportation changes by referring to a forthcoming consultation led by Metrolinx focused on transportation impacts. The project team expects that all existing routes will be maintained, explaining that the transit station and subway alignment are being integrated into the existing network.

No further comments on the topics above were received through the online portal.

Parks and Open Space

Online and open house comments were received requesting more park space and recreational amenities to serve existing and future residents.

The project team acknowledged comments about increasing park space and recreational amenities. During the open house, the project team displayed adaptable floor plates on levels 2 and 3 on the South site that offer space for potential community or institutional uses. Responders were directed to engageio.ca/en/queen-spadina to provide input on potential amenities and community benefits from these projects.