

Appendix B: Relief Line Project Assessment Public Consultation Plan

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The City of Toronto and the TTC, is planning a new rapid transit line connecting the central business district to the Bloor-Danforth Subway, east of the Don River between Broadview and Coxwell Avenue. The conceptual plan for the full Relief Line is a U-shaped route that would connect the downtown core to the Bloor-Danforth Subway in both the west and east. To the east, a potential extension would connect this line to the future Eglinton Crosstown LRT.

The network benefits of this conceptual line are significant. Previous work has identified the section connecting the downtown to the Bloor-Danforth Subway east of the Don River as a priority.

As part of the planning process, the City is undertaking a study to review station locations and route alignment options for the Relief Line.

Public participation in this process will be critical to ensure we make the best decision to benefit residents, businesses and transit riders.

1.2 Commitment to the Community

The City of Toronto is committed to engaging the public in a way that's transparent, collaborative, inclusive and authentic. The City wants to make it easy for the public to get involved and invites feedback at every stage of the process – in person and online.

All information and events will be accessible, and information will be translated into languages other than English when it is appropriate to do so.

1.3 Keeping you Informed

At every step in the study the City will report our findings to the public. The website (reliefline.ca) and mailing list will provide regular updates and project news. There will also be formal reports from public meetings for each of the four phases. The public will be able to see all input recorded and incorporated into the study.

Relief Line Project Assessment Public Consultation Principles

The project Terms of Reference establishes the governing public consultation principles that will be applied to the process of determining where to build the new transit line. They are:

Inclusiveness – engage the widest possible audience through multiple consultation opportunities

Timeliness – offer early and ongoing opportunities for participation well before decisions are made

Transparency – records of all consultation activities will be made available to the public

Balance – provide opportunities for diverse perspectives and opinions to be raised and considered

Flexibility – adapt as required to meet the needs of participants

Traceability – demonstrate the impact of participant input on decision making

1.4 Study Area

The study will evaluate options to connect the Yonge-University-Spadina Subway in Downtown Toronto to the Bloor-Danforth Subway between Broadview and Coxwell stations. Figure 1 shows the Relief Line Project Assessment study area and secondary expansion study areas.

A secondary study area consisting of the Western connection to the Bloor-Danforth Subway line, Northern connection to the Eglinton Crosstown LRT line and areas to the east (e.g. Main Street) will be analyzed for the purposes of assessing future route alignments and station locations as well as evaluating ridership travel characteristics at a conceptual level. The conceptual analysis of future route alignments in the secondary area will aid in progressing with detailed planning for the ultimate Relief Line alignment in subsequent studies.

Figure 1. Relief Line Study Area and Secondary Expansion Areas



1.5 Balancing Interests

The city wants to plan and build a line that serves local, city-wide and regional needs, and will work closely with stakeholders and the public to ensure that all perspectives are considered and all voices are heard in the process. When planning the Relief Line alignment and station locations, the city will take into account the many local, city-wide, and regional considerations.

1.6 Local Interests

Local residents will have the chance to ensure that the Relief Line will benefit local neighbourhoods as well as the entire City and broader region. Issues of particular concern may include:

- Current land use, protection of stable neighbourhoods, and how the Relief Line might help to revitalize or positively change land use patterns in the future;
- Alteration of existing local mobility (e.g. more travel options, faster travel time, improved access to communities, local businesses and employment areas) and impact on other planned transportation projects and facilities; and,
- Constructability, disruption, operational impacts and effect on property values.

The City will provide community members the opportunity to fully participate in the study process to ensure that local interests and issues are recognized. Consultation opportunities hosted and conducted by the City, targeted at local and city-wide residents include:

- Stakeholder Advisory Group, which will involve a broad cross section of local community leaders;
- Live events such as workshops, charrettes and open houses;
- Presentations to established community groups;
- Information teams;
- Neighbourhood planning office; and,
- Pop-up kiosks.

1.7 City Interests

Torontonians will have the chance to ensure that the Relief Line will benefit the entire City and broader region, including local neighbourhoods. Issues of particular concern may include:

- How the Relief Line will connect to and support future transit network improvements to benefit mobility across the City; and,
- How the Relief Line might support planned land use and economic development patterns

Torontonians will be given the opportunity to fully participate in the study process to ensure recognition of the interests of the whole City. Consultation opportunities targeted at Toronto residents outside the local area include:

- Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), which will involve a broad cross section of interest groups;
- Surveys, interactive mapping, online conversations and other online feedback mechanisms; and,
- Open houses.

1.8 Regional Interests

Residents from across the GTA will have the chance to ensure that the Relief Line will benefit the broader region, as well as the City of Toronto. Issues of particular concern may include:

- How the Relief Line might increase the capacity of the transit network by providing greater mobility choice for long distance commuters; and,
- How the Relief Line might support planned land use and economic development patterns at a regional scale

Regional residents will be given the opportunity to participate in the study process to ensure that it recognizes the interests of all transit and road users. Regional residents are encouraged to participate in all online consultations. Regional interests will also be represented as City staff will meet and discuss the project with representatives of various government organizations.

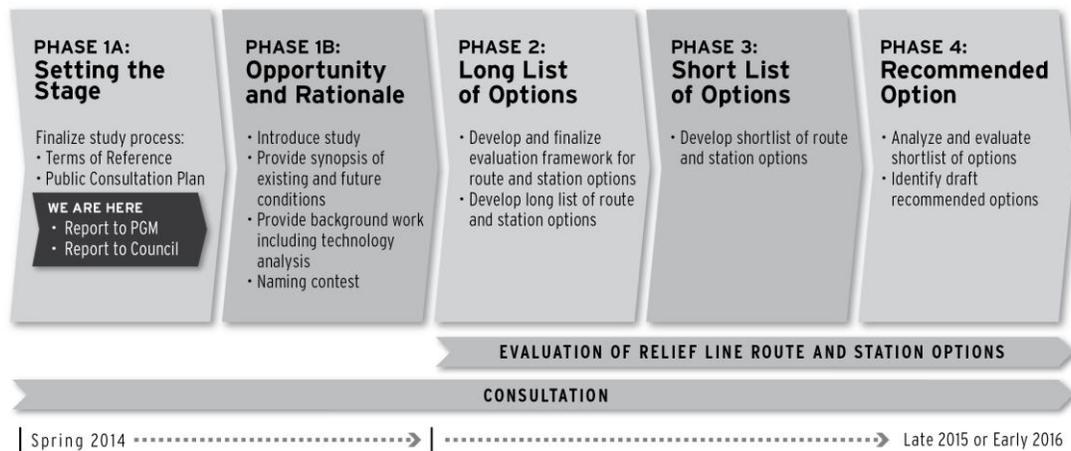
1.9 Regional Collaboration

The City of Toronto and the TTC are working closely with Metrolinx on a Regional Relief Strategy to address crowding on the Yonge Subway Line. The Relief Line is just one element of a broader, comprehensive strategy that will look at all options for dealing with crowding, including service improvements, fare and network integration and new rapid transit lines.

1.10 Study Process

To ensure the public is involved in a variety of ways, this plan lays out a range of options for learning about the study, for working with the City project team and for providing feedback in the decision process. The study process consisting of four subsequent phases with key study objectives that will be consulted on is outlined below.

Figure 2. Relief Line Project Assessment Study Process



Note: Timeline has been extended from mid 2015 to late 2015 or early 2016.

2.0 Communication and Consultation Methods

A variety of methods will be used to communicate about and consult on Phases 1B to 4 of the Relief Line Project Assessment. These methods are divided into five approaches:

Information – the City will share information about the project throughout the study process. Messages will be focused on the key information and actions within each phase of the project. Regular updates will be shared through the project email list, City social media accounts and print material such as newsletters or flyers. The project website will be regularly updated and will act as the hub for information about the project. Key documents produced will also be made available through the project website.

Online Consultation – the City will solicit comments and feedback on key decisions during each phase of the project through the website (reliefline.ca). Online consultation will be one of the primary foci of consultation as it has the ability to engage a large number of people from many different areas.

Live Events – open houses, public meetings and workshops will be held at various key points in the study for local community members and residents at large to learn and provide their input into key decisions of the project.

Community Outreach – the City will proactively educate and solicit feedback from the community in the project by establishing a community planning office and engaging with existing local groups. Community outreach will focus on the local areas where the Relief Line will be located.

Stakeholder Advisory Group – the City will be establishing a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) consisting of community leaders, advocates and experts who will be involved in the decision-making process throughout the study.

A more detailed description of the proposed consultation methods follows this section.

2.1 Phase 1B: Problem Statement and Rationale for the Project

The objective of the Relief Line Project Assessment Phase 1B is to:

- Introduce the study;
- Explain existing and future conditions;
- Conduct the technology analysis; and,
- Administer the naming contest for the Relief Line.

Share background work from earlier studies including the technology analysis. Opportunity for the public to influence the study in this phase will focus on:

- Providing comments or clarification on existing and future conditions;
- Provide feedback on previous studies and how they are to be used; and,
- Provide name suggestions for the Relief Line.

Table 1: Consultation Methods for Phase 1B

Approach	Details
Information	<p>A communications style guide will be developed to ensure communications about the Relief Line are consistent, authentic, confident, and timely.</p> <p>Key Messages will include timing and scope of the study, an explanation of the existing and future conditions within the study area, and clear plain-language messaging of findings from earlier studies focusing on the Downtown Rapid Transit Expansion Study.</p>
Online Consultation	
Responsive Question & Answer	The City will explain the project and answer questions about the study process using Reddit.
Surveys	<p>The public will be able to provide feedback, comment and clarification on the existing and projected future conditions and findings of previous studies through online surveys as well as by regular email and telephone comments.</p> <p>The public will be invited to provide naming suggestions for the Relief Line in this phase.</p>
Community Outreach	
Presentation to Community Groups	City staff will be available to present the Relief Line Project Assessment to meetings of residents' groups, Business Improvement Areas and other existing community groups within the study area. The City will work with stakeholders to leverage opportunities to communicate information about the Relief Line study at events organized by stakeholder groups.
Information Teams	Information teams will be used to raise awareness about the Relief Line Project Assessment. Teams will be positioned at public places such as malls and in transit stations in the study area and throughout the city, and will distribute information cards pointing people to the project website and mailing list and obtain feedback for naming suggestions for the Relief Line.
Expert Symposium	Leaders with expertise gained from working on similar projects around the world will be brought to Toronto to participate in a symposium – sharing their perspectives and experiences with City officials and the public.
Stakeholder Advisory Group	City consultants and experts will present an overview of the study, conditions and objectives of the Relief Line to the SAG. Members will have the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and reactions, and

consider how they can help the City and TTC advance the project (e.g. host an event, write a newsletter or blog article, etc.)

2.2 Phase 2 Develop “Long List” of Options and Evaluation Criteria

The objective of the Relief Line Project Assessment Phase 2 is to:

- Develop draft “long list” of options, including:
 - Station locations;
 - Terminus points; and,
 - Alignment options.
- Develop draft evaluation framework and criteria, including:
 - Planning and engineering study approaches; and,
 - Both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Opportunity for the public to influence the study in this phase will focus on:

- Providing information about travel patterns;
- Help develop options and provide new ideas;
- Identify evaluation criteria for consideration; and,
- Provide feedback on draft criteria.

Table 2: Consultation Methods for Phase 2

Approach	Details
Information	Key Messages will include the long list of options, evaluation criteria, how to provide input and next steps in the process.
Online Consultation	
Responsive Question & Answer	The City will explain and answer question about how evaluation criteria are to be developed and applied.
Feedback Software	The public will be able to provide feedback on the evaluation criteria through online surveys, email, and telephone comments.
Interactive Mapping	The public will be able to help develop the long list of options and provide information about travel patterns by drawing on an interactive map.
Live Events	
Charrette	A charrette will be held near the beginning of the phase to give the public the opportunity to create an urban vision for the entire study

area. This vision will inform City Planning documents such as the Official Plan and any local plans. In this context, the charrette will also be used to brainstorm station locations and alignments for inclusion in the long list of options.

Open Houses

The City will explain the project, answer questions and solicit comments on the project scope, long list of options and evaluation criteria through a series of open houses near the end of Phase 2. Open houses will feature a presentation and question and answer period, and will be located a) Downtown, b) Riverdale/Leslieville and c) the Danforth. Additional open houses will be held throughout the city

Community Outreach

Presentation to Community Groups

City staff will be available to present the long list of options and evaluation criteria to meetings of residents' groups, Business Improvement Areas and other existing community groups within the study area.

Pop-up Kiosks

Pop-up kiosks will be used to raise awareness about the long list of options and solicit feedback about the evaluation criteria. Kiosks will be placed in public places such as malls and in transit stations, and will give people the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the long list of routing options and the draft evaluation criteria.

Community Planning Office (optional)

The City could open a community planning office within the study area where staff will be able to display materials such as maps and documents and answer questions. The office will be open to the public during certain hours. The space will also be used for hosting small meetings.

Stakeholder Advisory Group

Experts will educate the SAG on evaluation criteria and how they are used in making decisions. Members will then consider evaluation criteria and provide recommendations on how to rank and weight them.

2.3 Phase 3: Evaluate Options to Produce a “Short List”

The objective of the Relief Line Project Assessment Phase 3 is to:

- Create a “short list” for further assessment, including:
 - Assess terminus options against “fatal flaws” criteria;
 - Assess in-line station options; and,
 - Consider options for crossing the Don Valley.
- Review network opportunities in coordination with Official Plan review

Opportunity for the public to influence the study in this phase will focus on:

- Provide feedback on “short list” of options and application of the evaluation criteria

Table 3: Consultation Methods for Phase 3

Approach	Details
Information	Key Messages will include how the evaluation criteria was applied to arrive at the short list of options including why certain options will not be carried forward, fatal flaw criteria for terminus options, coordination with Official Plan review, how to provide input and next steps in the process.
Online Consultation	
Responsive Question & Answer	The City will explain and answer questions about how evaluation criteria were applied to identify the short list of options.
Feedback Software	The public will use the feedback software to use the evaluation criteria to determine their own short list of options, focusing on in-line stations.
Live Events	
Open House	The City will explain the creation of the short list of options and demonstrate the network implications with respect to the Official Plan review through a series of open houses near the end of Phase 3. Open houses will feature a presentation, question and answer period, and will give participants the opportunity to provide written comments on the short list. Open houses will be located a) Downtown, b) Riverdale/Leslieville and c) the Danforth. Additional open houses will be held throughout the city.
Community Outreach	
Presentation to Community Groups	City staff will be available to present the short list of options to meetings of residents' groups, business improvement areas and other existing community groups within the study area.

Pop-up Kiosks	Pop-up kiosks will be used to raise awareness about the short list of options and solicit feedback about the evaluation criteria. Kiosks will be placed in public places such as malls and in transit stations, and will give people the opportunity to review simple drawings and provide feedback.
Community Planning Office (optional)	The City could maintain a community planning office within the study area.
Stakeholder Advisory Group	Experts will present the Official Plan review and other relevant planning policies to the SAG, and explain how these policies may impact or be impacted by the urban vision created in Phase 2 and the short listed alignments of the Relief Line. SAG members will then consider each of the short listed options and how they might benefit the community in the long term given the planning and development context.

2.4 Phase 4: Evaluate “Short List” of Options, Identify Draft Recommendations

The objective of the Relief Line Project Assessment Phase 4 is to:

- Review environmental impacts of the short list and develop mitigation measures;
- Assess terminus station options;
- Identify draft recommended option; and,
- Inform the public of the next steps after Phase 4 (e.g. Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), where it will be communicated that there will be very limited opportunity to change the outcomes once the project is in the formal TPAP)

Opportunity for the public to influence the study in this phase will focus on:

- Commenting on terminus station evaluation;
- Assessment of the evaluation outcomes;
- Qualitative analysis of options; and,
- Contributing to the design strategy for mitigating potential negative impacts.

Table 4: Consultation Methods for Phase 4

Approach	Details
Information	Key Messages will include the potential negative impacts and associated mitigation strategies for the short listed options, detailed evaluation, recommended option, how to provide input and next steps.

Online Consultation

Responsive Question & Answer

The City will explain the recommended option and associated mitigation strategies near the end of the phase.

Feedback Software

The public will use the feedback software to explore the details of the short listed options and any potential negative impacts, and select their preferred option.

Interactive Mapping

The public will be able to contribute to local design issues and mitigation strategies by drawing and providing comments on an interactive map.

Live Events

Design Charrette

The City will host one design charrette for each station proposed in the recommended option to solicit feedback from the public on operational design issues and strategies to mitigate disruption during construction. This exercise will help to ensure that station area designs are consistent with the overall urban vision created in Phase 2.

Open House

The City will present and explain the recommended option through a series of open houses near the end of Phase 4. Open houses will feature a presentation, question and answer period, and will give participants the opportunity to provide written comments on the recommended option. Open houses will be located a) Downtown, b) Riverdale/Leslieville and c) the Danforth. Additional open houses will be held throughout the city.

Community Outreach

Presentation to Community Groups

City staff will be available to present the recommended option to meetings of residents' groups, business improvement areas and other existing community groups within the study area, prioritizing groups near station locations.

Community Planning Office

The City could maintain a community planning office within the study area.

(optional)

Stakeholder Advisory Group

Experts will present how the evaluation of the short list led to the identification of the recommended option to the SAG. Members will then critique the evaluation and provide feedback on the recommended option.

Once Phases 1B to 4 are complete, City staff will report to Council and the TTC Board

with a recommended route alignment and station locations for the Relief Line. Council authority will be sought to commence the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), a review and finalization of the Environmental Project Report by the Ministry of the Environment. Following TPAP, the project will be ready to proceed with design and construction, dependent on project funding.

3.0 Proposed Public Participation Methods

Information about the methods that will be used in each of the phases of the Relief Line Project Assessment is provided here.

3.1 Information

A variety of communications channels will be used throughout the Relief Line Project Assessment, recognizing that different channels will lend themselves to different phases and key messages. Wherever possible, the City will piggyback communications on existing channels like City social media feeds and Councillor and community group websites, blogs and newsletters.

Advertising will be focused on reaching transit users by utilizing TTC One-Stop screens and GO Transit in-vehicle screens. Earned media through media releases and advisories will also be an important part of the communications for the project.

3.1.1 Project Website

The project website will be the hub for public consultation and information. It will be an ongoing source for comprehensive and timely information about the study. It will be home to the following:

- News feed;
- Frequently Asked Questions;
- Video;
- Mapping;
- Events calendar;
- Project and consultation reports;
- Online survey tools; and,
- Feedback forms.

3.1.2 Video

The website will also be home to a series of videos produced about the project. One video will be produced to explain the key concept(s) of each phase. The City will then host a responsive question and answer session (Reddit AMA) based on the content of each video. Videos may also be used at open houses or at pop-up kiosks, etc.

3.1.3 Social Media

Social media is an easy and effective way to generate “buzz” for an idea, cause or project. With convenient sharable content, members of the public can post and share

project information through their own networks. However, it is most effective when it engages the public in two-way dialogue.

Facebook

Facebook is one of the most widely used social media platforms with around 1.3 billion users worldwide. The service allows users to join groups and create pages dedicated to specific issues. The Relief Line is already a topic of discussion for multiple Facebook groups and the City will actively interact with those existing networks via Facebook.

Twitter

Twitter is one of the most effective social channels for providing up-to-the minute information to the public, and it can also be a very effective way for the public to quickly spread the word about the Relief Line. The City will not create a dedicated Twitter handle (user name / account) but instead will broadcast key messages and answer questions via existing City handles including [@CityPlanTO](#) and [@GetInvolvedTO](#). A project-specific [hashtag](#) will be developed to coordinate conversations on Twitter.

Instagram

Among all of the social media options, Instagram has the advantage of allowing both photo and video posts can be used in interesting and creative ways including photo and video contests and in sharing visual content that addresses the human stories behind the new line.

3.1.4 Mailing List

The City has established a Relief Line Project Assessment email list (RELIEF-LINE@lists.toronto.ca). The public can subscribe and unsubscribe to this list by visiting the project web page. The City will communicate news about the study approximately monthly. Updates will include key information about the progress of related TTC and Metrolinx work, and how the City is collaborating with these agencies.

3.1.5 Telephone & Email

Members of the public can contact the project team anytime by telephone (416-338-1065) or email (reliefline@toronto.ca). City staff will endeavor to respond to questions within one business day.

3.1.6 Print Media

Traditional print media, such as newspaper advertisements, community newsletters, flyers, brochures and postcards will also be used as appropriate to let community members know about the project (e.g. for distribution at pop-up kiosks or on transit vehicles). The focus of print media will be to drive the public to opportunities where they can learn more about the study and provide comments, such as at public meetings and online resources. The City will seek partnerships with local newspapers, urban issues periodicals and blogs to share information as the project progresses.

3.2 Online Consultation

Web-based engagement tools will be used to engage people in the study at all times and in all areas; across the City and other parts of the GTA. Since online tools can be made available for longer blocks of time, unlike a public meeting it creates more flexibility and enables more people to be engaged. Tools range from in-depth collaboration tools to simple surveys and questionnaires.

3.2.1 Surveys / Public Feedback Software

Online surveys are fast and effective. Surveys will be used to get feedback on specific question or gauge what people think about a specific issue. They can also be invited to rank options and provide detailed written input.

For challenging and complex issues the City will implement more powerful in-depth surveying tools using specialized software, similar to the tools used during the Feeling Congested consultations. Software may be used to enable the public to:

- Quickly rank any list of priority items, nominate new items and add comments;
- Add comments by dragging and dropping project specific icons on a map;
- Input their routing for any type of trip (road, cycling or pedestrian routes);
- Vote, rate or comment on images, categories or specific projects in any categories that are relevant to a plan;
- Choose strategies, learn about potential outcomes and build their own plan one strategy at a time;
- “Balance the budget” using their choice of funding mechanisms;
- Answer polling questions (multiple choice, rate on a scale, text input etc.); and,
- Provide demographic information.

3.2.2 Responsive Question & Answer

The City will host an online, real-time question and answer sessions will be used to answer questions from the public. Hosting an online forum will allow many people to participate without the need to attend a live event. An additional benefit to hosting online question and answer sessions is that all questions and answers are recorded and available in the future, improving transparency.

Reddit AMA will be used. This platform allows the team to engage the Reddit community in Q&A sessions. A participant can ask a question and vote on other questions they'd like to see answered. The questions the community wants to see answered move to the top of the board, and the City can post answers to the most popular questions.

In each phase of the Relief Line study, the City will release a video explaining the key concept(s) of the phase and later, host a question and answer session based on those concepts.

3.2.3 Interactive Mapping

Collaborative mapping software such as Google maps will be used to collect ideas and feedback in cases where comments are location specific. For example, when the public is suggesting station locations or routes, or commenting on existing conditions in the study area.

3.3 Live Events

Live events give participants the opportunity to meet City staff, ask questions and get answers immediately. They can interact with mapping and other exhibits and have a more personal connection to the project. Live events will be planned within the study area and throughout the city.

3.3.1 Open House

Open houses are effective to communicate large amounts of information in display format. They also make it easy for the public to find specific information they are looking for and engage the project team in one-on-one discussions about their concerns. Typically, open-house meetings use display boards and staff would be on hand to explain elements of the decisions with individuals. A typical open house could take place at a library, mall or school.

3.3.2 Design Charrette

A charrette is an intensive, collaborative session addressing a particular question or problem. In the case of the Relief Line study, charrettes will be used to address an urban vision for the study area as well as specific community impacts such as station locations and design details like integration with the neighbourhood.

3.4 Community Outreach

3.4.1 Community Planning Office

The project team is aiming to be a constant, familiar presence in the study area. To achieve this the City will look to open a community office during the project study period. The office could double as a venue for smaller or issue-specific meetings such as focus groups, lectures on local history and technical issues, intensive study days, and the Stakeholder Advisory Group and Stakeholder meetings. Local artists could also be invited to display their work in the community office, hosting vernissages and evening events.

3.4.2 Pop-up Kiosks

Pop-up kiosks or booths could be used at community events and gathering places so that residents can conveniently learn about the project and ask questions of project team members. This is also an effective means of gathering feedback from community members (e.g., using comment cards or short questionnaires) at community locations.

3.4.3 Information Teams

Members of the project team (in easily identifiable t-shirts and name badges) will attend community events, meet with members of the public and share information on the study.

3.5 Stakeholder Advisory Group

As part of Phase 1B the project team will establish strong ties with community leaders and organizations to help reach as many organized groups and their networks as possible.

A Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) will be established to collaborate with the project team throughout the study period. The SAG will help to build dialogue, understanding, and foster a sense of ownership amongst members.

The SAG will have three main goals:

1. Foster cooperation and dialogue between community leaders, the project team and experts
2. Inform community leaders about the initiative and provide an opportunity to hear opinions from experts and other community groups on a regular basis
3. Solicit feedback, address concerns and incorporate input from local interests into the study

SAG members will represent a broad range of interests. They will be drawn from ratepayer associations, Business Improvement Areas, property owners, representatives of other local interest groups and advocacy organizations. Experts in urban planning and transit will also be represented, including academic experts, government agency representatives and professional advocacy groups (e.g. Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, Ontario Professional Planners' Institute). Local City Councillors representing the study area will also be able to appoint up to three citizen representatives with particular knowledge about their ward. Up to 75 members will be selected through an application process. Applicants will be selected by the City to ensure a balance of interests is represented.

At least one formal workshop will take place during each phase. A typical workshop will include:

- A formal presentation by the project team or other experts (e.g. Provincial Government officials, academic experts, etc.) on an issue for consideration;
- Short question and answer session;
- Working sessions designed to solicit feedback about the issue and report-back if appropriate; and,
- Informal networking.

The City may also consult the entire SAG or some portion of the SAG (e.g. all business representatives or all citizen representatives) during the study when appropriate. Agendas, materials presented and outcomes of all meetings will be made public to ensure transparency and assist SAG members' communication with their constituents.