



Davenport Community Rail Overpass

Davenport Community Rail Overpass *Reference Panel Day Three Report – 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-



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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.



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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.