

Executive Summary of Recommendations

Toronto Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass

This report contains the recommendations of the 35-member Residents' Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass. The Reference Panel was convened by Metrolinx to open up a discussion with the community on one of the first projects to support GO Regional Express Rail – electrified, 15-minute GO service in core areas. Community representatives were invited to play a central role in shaping the design of the transit infrastructure and the public space created by elevating the rail corridor. Together, over the course of four Saturdays and one evening this spring, the panelists invested a combined 1,500 hours in conversation with one another, more than a dozen guest presenters, as well as speaking with their friends, family and colleagues.

The Davenport Community Rail Overpass is intended to eliminate the 'Davenport Diamond', one of the busiest train crossings in North America where CP Rail freight trains intersect with GO commuter trains on the Barrie corridor. This crossing acts as a bottleneck, regularly delaying GO trains and impeding the progress of Metrolinx's service expansion plan, GO Regional Express Rail, funded by the Province of Ontario.

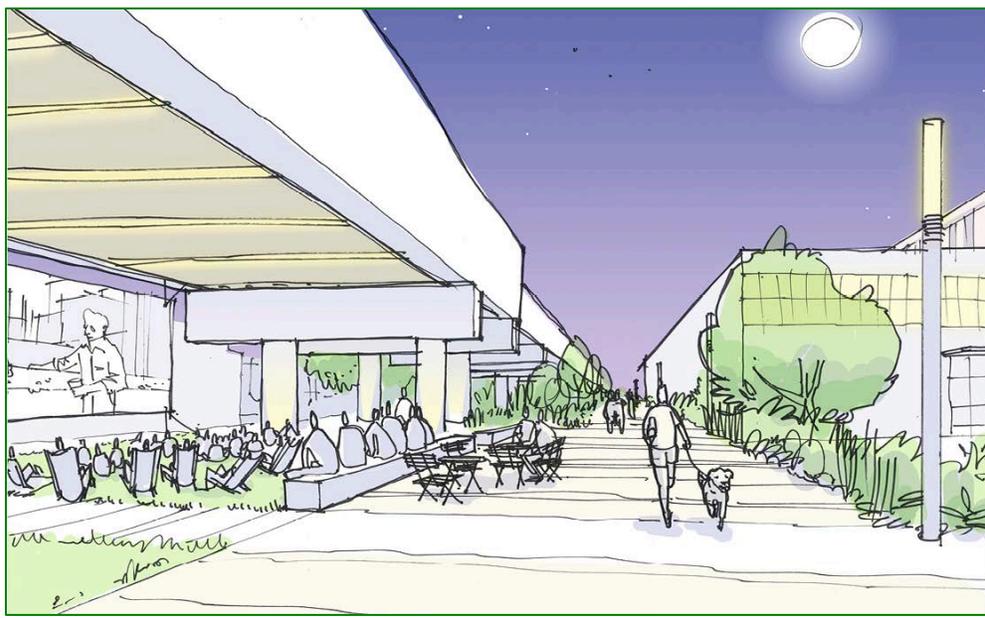
The Reference Panel was tasked with studying the project and providing detailed recommendations to inform the design of the overpass and the unlocked public space underneath. It is an early-stage component of Metrolinx's ongoing public consultation process, which includes additional public meetings, 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).

The Reference Panel's Recommendations

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 volunteered for the panel because they wanted to serve their community and are determined to see that Metrolinx gets this right — making it, in their words, "an asset, not an eyesore." They hope that with additional investment from Metrolinx and its partners, the site can be designed as a local amenity that will demonstrate the benefits of community-centred design, connectivity and engineering. Panelists wanted it known that their participation in this process and report does not condone the decision to build and overpass, but seek to make the best of this planning decision. The panelists also took care to underscore their concern regarding the expansion of GO 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.

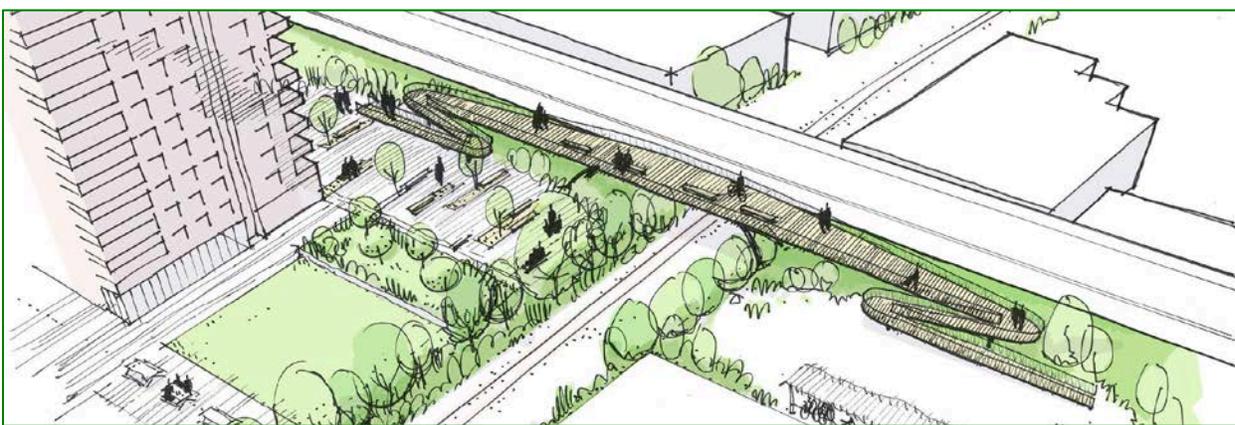
Their recommendations include:

- 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



Proposed Wallace Avenue Square

- Incorporating a pedestrian bridge and observation deck into the overpass design where it crosses the CP Rail freight tracks to ensure continuous north-south connectivity



Proposed Pedestrian Bridge and Observation Deck over CP Rail tracks

- Building a pedestrian bridge at the north end of the corridor connecting the pathway to EarlsCourt 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



Proposed trail and connection at Lappin Avenue/Antler Street

- 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



Proposed pedestrian/cycling connection at Paton Road