

ULI John Street Wrap Up Meeting

Sept 19th at 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Meeting Notes

York West Active Living Centre

1. Introduction

Councillor Nunziata began the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and ULI for their advocacy work in Weston.

Jamie Christie, from ULI's Outreach Committee spoke about how the project came together, starting from the Weston 2021 Design Charrette and ULI Technical Assistance Panel. Recommendations from each of those efforts led to the current Public Realm Plan for John Street and Weston Village. The Public Realm Plan is funded through a joint effort by ULI, Metrolinx and the City. It is considered an advocacy document for the community and not a formal City process.

2. Presentation

The consultant hired by ULI for the Public Realm Plan, Brent Raymond from DTAH, presented a brief review of the purpose, process, and recommendations. The recommendations--informed by the previous meetings, design workshop and pilot project from summer 2012--focused on enhancing the Village identity of Weston. Strategies include widened sidewalks and narrowing roadways while maintaining traffic function. Curbside activities are better managed to allow for street tree planting and spaces for other potential uses. Custom street and festival lighting is also proposed to provide a unique outdoor environment for Weston Village. Improved paving materials and opportunities for public art and other forms of cultural expression are considered.

Several renderings were presented to demonstrate what the Village streets could look like if the recommended principles and strategies are applied.

3. Discussion

A number of questions were asked about what was learned from the Pilot project and how did it inform the recommendations. Acknowledging the difficulties with schedule, the pilot was still considered a success by many. It demonstrated that the community will use outdoor public space along a street if provided the opportunity. If a business or the BIA wish to place tables and chairs along the sidewalk and have ownership, then people will use them. This in turn will help to animate the street, provide eyes on the street, and help to further stimulate a sense of safety and community. The overhead lights helped to create a more inviting and safe outdoor space. It also showed us that traffic operations were not greatly impacted by a roadway reduction. In the long term traffic will be calmed and become more conducive to a pedestrian first village.

The demonstration also showed us that the north side is the more appropriate location for curb extensions as originally intended but due to technical limitations, it was placed on the south side. In the long-term full build out condition, the curb extension should be on the north.

People attending the meeting said that they or people they knew would use it, but less so at night when less desirable activities would occur. This is a consistent problem along John Street and environs and one of the main concerns with a long term solution that includes outdoor seating. It was mentioned that during the 2021 Charrette that a number of community initiatives were identified to help Weston revitalize, with one being improving community safety. This is something being worked on by the Police but will take more time and effort from the entire community to get there.

A number of questions were asked about the process, and how the public realm fits in with the larger picture. It will take more than just a streetscape improvement to revitalize Weston. The

local business community and residents must do their part. Programs are available through the City and BIA to assist with façade improvements. The community must demonstrate to the development industry that Weston is serious about revitalization, and the public realm is only part of a bigger process. The technique of investing in public realm improvements to stimulate private investment in a community is time tested and common throughout the world. It is how many communities like Weston move in the right direction.

Comments were offered about the success and draw of the Farmers Market, and how John Street is the connection between Weston Road into the Market. Improvements are welcome and the community should capitalize on the Market's popularity.

Comments were offered about the importance of getting all parties on side to work together. This will require property owners, businesses and residents alike to work with the BIA, City, Metrolinx and whoever else wants to see Weston improve.

4. Next Steps:

- DTAH to finalize report submit it to ULI
- ULI to present to community, BIA, the City
- City and BIA should continue dialogue of the public realm on what the community would like to do

5. Conclusion

Councillor Nunziata thanked everyone and ULI for participating in the process, and reminded everyone that Weston is open for business.

Adjourned