

meetmidtown



Let's Talk Midtown: How We Grow Together



Summary Report

Prepared by Bespoke Collective / November 13, 2023



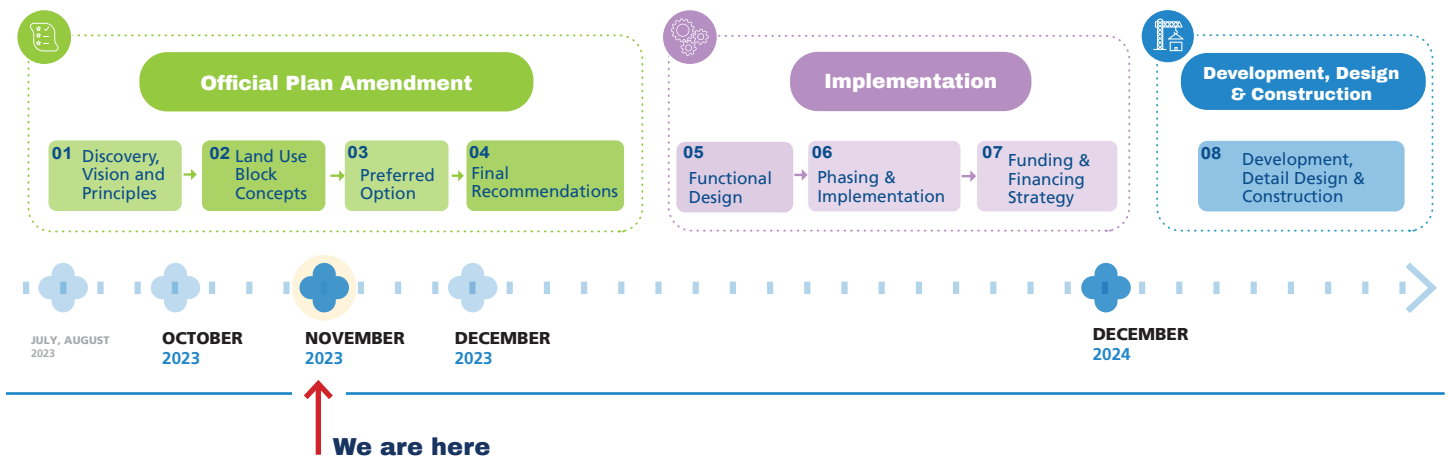
Background

Midtown is an underdeveloped area in Oakville that is centrally located around the Oakville GO Station. Plans are underway to make this area a livable, connected and mixed-use urban community that better serves the entire town.

With Oakville’s population expected to double by 2051, there is a need for the Town of Oakville to create more livable spaces for people of all ages and income levels and purposefully plan how our municipality grows. The Province of Ontario requires that the town create more livable spaces for people over the next 30 years. Midtown Oakville has the potential to offer more options for diverse and affordable housing, better connectivity to the rest of Oakville through pedestrian, cycling, and transit improvements, additional parks and open spaces, more community amenities and the enhanced servicing infrastructure that is needed to support growth.

The Town of Oakville is currently in the process of developing the final recommendations for the Midtown Official Plan Amendment (OPA). The purpose of the OPA is to update the land use policies for Midtown Oakville in the Livable Oakville Plan, and to create a framework that will guide the creation of a transit-supportive and complete community for people to live, work and play. As part of this process, The Town of Oakville is hosting a series of public consultation events to gather public input, which will inform the final recommendations for the OPA.

Project timeline





Overview

This report provides an overview of the Midtown public consultation event, *Let's Talk Midtown: How We Grow Together*, that was held on October 25, 2023 at Oakville Town Hall, South Atrium. The objectives of the event were to (1) inform and update the public about the project, (2) gather public input on issues and opportunities associated with growth in Midtown, and (3) lay the foundation for a draft vision and principles to guide growth and change in Midtown.

The public consultation event was organized by Bespoke Collective, in collaboration with the Town of Oakville, Jacobs, Urban Strategies, R.J. Burnside & Associates Ltd. and GLPi Consulting. The presenters and Q&A panelists at the event were Gabe Charles, Director of Planning Services, Town of Oakville; Leigh McGrath, Partner, Urban Strategies; Ray Bacquie, Senior Vice President, Transportation, R.J. Burnside & Associates Ltd.; and Jeff Qiao, Assistant Program Manager, Jacobs. The event was hosted by Christina Bagatavicius, Founder and Principal of Bespoke Collective.

EVENT AGENDA

The public consultation event took place on October 25, 2023, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. The following is an outline of the two-hour event:

1. Presentation (40 min.)

Members of the Project Team presented (1) an overview of the project, (2) information on existing conditions, constraints and opportunities, (3) the draft vision and principles, and (4) next steps for the project. The presentation contained information on Midtown Oakville's Transportation Master Plan and Stormwater Master Plan.

2. Moderated Q&A (30 min.)

Attending members of the public provided comments and posed questions to a panel of Project Team members.

3. Interactive booths and activities with Project Team (50 min.)

Members of the public were able to visit four booths on the following topics: (1) process, FAQ and Q&A, (2) draft vision and principles, (3) existing conditions, and (4) transportation and mobility. Each booth contained informational panels and interactive activities pertaining to the topic. Members of the public were able to provide input on worksheets, as well as meet, chat with and pose questions directly to Project Team members.



Images: Adam Pulicichio Photography

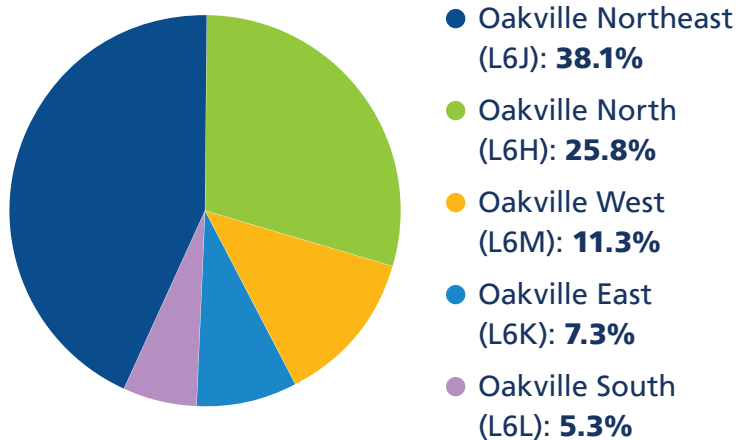


Overview

ATTENDANCE

A total of 151 members of the public attended the event. 52.3% of the attendees were first-time attendees of a Midtown public consultation or meeting. 78.2% were attendees who registered on Eventbrite prior to the event, 21.9% were walk-in attendees.

86.8% of the attendees were Oakville residents. The event drew in residents from all five Oakville postal code areas:



7.3% of attendees were from the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), in areas such as Brampton, Hamilton, Burlington, Mississauga, Toronto, Stoney Creek, Ancaster and Milton.

The event was also available as a live-stream on YouTube. Members of the public can also view the video after the event. As of November 8, 2023, the video has received 286 views.

COMMUNICATIONS REACH

The public consultation was promoted on the Town of Oakville website and the Town’s social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn. Social media posts about the event reached an estimated 87,000 to 104,000 users. Organic social media posts reached 37,000 users, and two paid social media campaigns reached between 50,000 to 67,000 users.

Leading up to the event from October 2, 2023, the Midtown web page received a total of 1,132 views from 568 unique visitors. 46.0% (261) of those visitors were new to the web page. The Eventbrite event page received 2,425 visits. As well, a total of 247 individuals registered on Eventbrite for the event. However, only 47.8% checked in at the event. The attrition rate of Eventbrite registrants is 52.2%.

KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings summarize the public input provided by members of the public during the moderated Q&A and on the activities or worksheets that were present at each of the four interactive booths. Feedback has been organized by the four categories: (1) general project comments and feedback, (2) vision and principles, (3) existing conditions, and (4) transportation and mobility.

It is important to note that the qualitative data in this section are simplified and are not arranged in any hierarchical order denoting frequency or importance. To present this information without bias, the data are presented in alphabetical order. The synthesis of the qualitative data below should be considered as a longlist of topics or concerns raised by participants.



Overview

GENERAL COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

1 Participants stated that the following issues are the most important to them:

- Affordable housing
- Arts spaces and installations (i.e., amphitheatre, music, performing arts spaces)
- Availability of family homes, townhomes, semi-detached homes
- Barrier-free
- Bicycle infrastructure
- Bicycle safety
- Car-free infrastructure
- Community amenities
- Communities for active seniors
- Crime
- Democratic process
- Fire stations
- Green spaces
- Noise
- Pedestrian infrastructure
- Police stations
- Project costs
- Public schools
- Public transportation and connections (inter-city and within Oakville)
- Sustainable density (or “gentle density”)
- User-friendly spaces
- Vibrant communities (“appealing,” “no more boring suburbs”)

2 Participants expressed concerns about the following topics:

- Affordable housing
- Assumption that people will travel to parks
- Building heights, i.e., 58-59 floors, >20 floors
- Density
- Floor space index (FSI), i.e., 10 FSI

- High-rise developments or condominiums
- Impact on downtown Oakville
- Insufficient space and infrastructure in Midtown to accommodate population growth
- Insufficient funding for the project
- Lack of clarity on the terms “vibrant” or “complete community”
- Lack of democratic process
- Noise
- Privatization of schools
- Project costs
- Project delays as a result of misinformation
- Traffic plan
- Traffic congestion
- Unauthorized development on the northwest corner of Midtown near Lyons Lane Garden Plots

3 Participants stated that they would like to add the following topics to the conversation about Midtown:

- Affordable housing
- Architecture and design (“creative,” “inspiring,” “good quality”)
- Bicycle and e-bike sharing
- Bicycle infrastructure, i.e., bicycle lanes with physical separation, bicycle and pedestrian bridge over QEW
- Car-sharing
- Climate change
- Event spaces
- Family-friendly housing
- Green spaces
- Housing
- Litter-free spaces
- Mixed-use areas and buildings
- Other infrastructure, i.e., police, fire, public schools
- Preference for “mansion blocks not towers”
- Project budget and costs
- Public spaces



Overview

- Public transportation (“equitable transit-oriented development,” “connection to downtown Oakville,” “to minimize parking”)
- Specific locations and details of planned schools and parks
- Strategies to mitigate air pollution
- Strategies to mitigate noise

- Parks and green spaces
- Pedestrian infrastructure
- Pedestrian safety, i.e., safety for children and seniors
- Playgrounds
- Public transportation
- Restriction on tall building heights
- Sidewalk repair/maintenance
- Traffic, i.e., traffic plan, traffic control, traffic congestion

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

4 Participants stated that the following topics matter most to them in the vision and principles of the project:

- Accessibility
- Active transportation
- Affordable housing
- Bicycle and e-bike sharing
- Bicycle lanes
- Building systems and technology
- Built form
- Car-sharing
- Climate-resilient design for public transit stops
- Community
- Connection and integration with the rest of Oakville
- Cyclist safety
- Design (“inspiring”)
- Environmental sustainability and resilience
- Expedited implementation phase
- Healthcare
- Adequate-sized housing
- Impact on residential areas south of Midtown
- Improving Morrison Creek
- Infrastructure to support population growth
- Low-rise residences and townhouses
- Mobility

5 Participants stated that the following were missing in the vision and principles:

- Affordable housing
- Car-friendly
- Child- and family-friendly spaces
- Community gardens
- Community spaces
- Connections to other parts of Oakville
- Consideration of winter season in transportation planning
- Bicycle lanes
- Family-friendly housing
- Multi-cultural spaces
- Parks and green spaces
- Pedestrian infrastructure, i.e., walking trails
- Pedestrian safety
- Retail
- Senior communities
- Social responsibility, i.e., “Oakville is creating an environment where every human being thrives.”
- Social spaces

EXISTING CONDITIONS

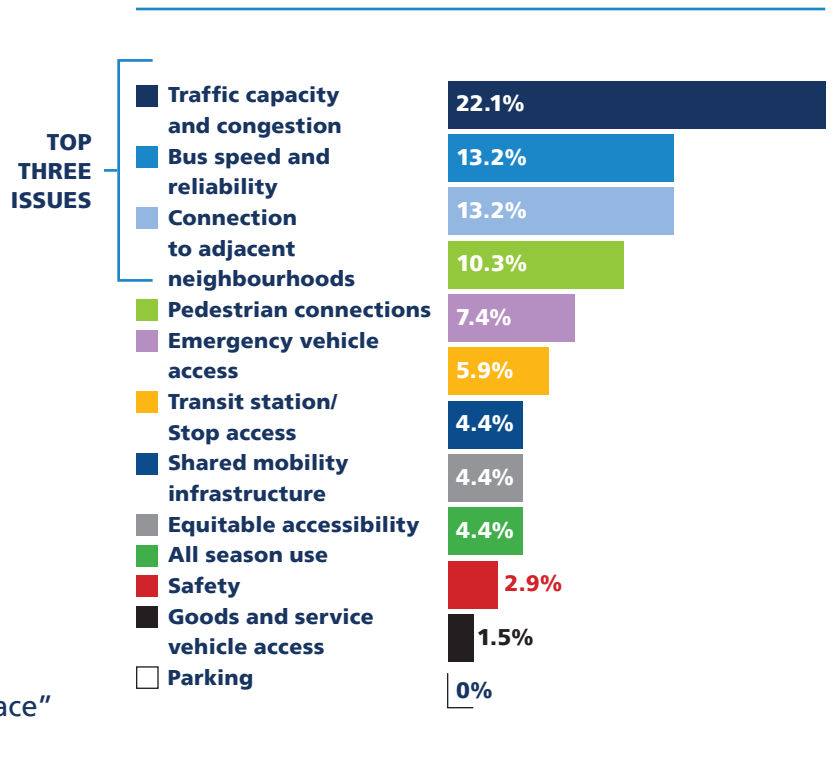
6 Participants stated that they would like to be able to see or visit the following in Midtown:

- Arts centre
- Barrier-free spaces
- Bars
- Bicycle lanes
- Bicycles
- Cafés
- Community centre
- Community gardens
- Community spaces
- Cultural attractions
- Daycare
- European-style planning, i.e., “attractive focal point”
- Libraries
- Local food shops
- Low-rise buildings
- Mid-rise buildings
- Mixed-use neighbourhoods
- Outdoor music venues
- Parks and green spaces
- Places to shop
- Public transportation
- Restaurants
- Safe spaces
- School playgrounds
- Schools
- Small village feel, i.e. “inviting,” “Oakville charm”
- Tall buildings, i.e., “to allow for open space”
- Underground parking to replace surface parking
- Walkable amenities, i.e., walkability
- Walking trails

7 When asked what places or characteristics in Midtown they value or want to see protected, participants indicated existing parks and green spaces in Midtown such as Cornwall Road Park.

8 **TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY**

For participants, the top three important issues to address in the objectives and vision for transportation in Midtown are traffic capacity and congestion (22.1%), bus speed and reliability (13.2%), connection to adjacent neighbourhoods (13.2%) and pedestrian connections (n=34).





Overview

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When participants were asked what they would envision a residential street to look like in Midtown, 85.0% of participants preferred Scenario A, an image of a residential street that shows pedestrian-friendly roads, wide sidewalks, public seating and bicycle lanes. In contrast to Scenario B, Scenario A shows more pedestrians and does not show parked vehicles.

85.0%



Scenario A

15.0%



Scenario B

10

When participants were asked what would be the most comfortable pedestrian and cycling environment, 70.8% of participants preferred Scenario A, an image of a bicycle lane painted green with a physical separation from vehicular traffic. In contrast, Scenario B shows a bicycle lane on the road with vehicular traffic, while Scenario C shows a shared pedestrian and bicycle path.

70.8%



Scenario A

29.2%



Scenario B

0.0%



Scenario C

Overview

11 When participants were asked what they would like an arterial corridor to look like in Midtown, 79.3% of participants preferred Scenario A, an image showing a road shared by vehicles and cyclists and a wide median separating a two-way street. In contrast, Scenario B shows a two-way street with a dedicated outer lane for buses.

79.3%



Scenario A

20.7%



Scenario B

12 When participants were asked what they envision a main street to look like in Midtown, 65.2% of participants preferred Scenario A, an image of a pedestrian-only street with outdoor patios and commercial activity. In contrast, Scenario B shows a two-way street for vehicles and cyclists, and with visibly less pedestrians and outdoor commercial activity.

65.2%



Scenario A

34.8%



Scenario B

NEXT STEPS

The key findings from this public consultation event will inform the development of the vision and principles, and land use block concepts for Midtown. The land use block concepts will be presented at the next public consultation event in late November. Please visit the Town of Oakville website for up-to-date information on upcoming public consultation events: www.oakville.ca/midtown

In 2024, the Midtown Oakville Implementation program will be completing the Midtown Official Plan Amendment, a range of implementation studies covering community building topics, and working alongside the community at every phase. The redevelopment itself has a long timeline — we'll start to see some expansion by 2031 and continue through 2051 and beyond. The program will plan for a 2051 horizon year, when Midtown is forecasted to have **32,472 people and 17,268 jobs.**





Images: Adam Pulicchio Photography





Appendix

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

For the key findings outlined in this report, the data were collected from attending members of the public during the event through these sources:

1. Verbal comments and questions during the Q&A
2. Written responses from five fill-in-the-blank prompts
3. Responses from five polling questions
4. Responses from a mapping exercise

The following prompts and questions were posed to the public:

1. The most important issue to me is: (Written response)
2. What I would like to add to this conversation is: (Written response)
3. What matters me to most here [in the vision and principles] is: (Written response)
4. What I think is missing here [in the vision and principles] is: (Written response)
5. In Midtown, I would like to be able to see or visit: (e.g., libraries, restaurants, sports facilities, etc.) (Written response)

6. Identify the location of a place or characteristic in Midtown that you value or want to see protected. (Mapping exercise)
7. What is most important for us to address in our objectives and vision for transportation in Midtown? Please select two. (Poll)
8. What would you envision a residential street in Midtown to look like in Midtown? (Poll)
9. What would be the most comfortable pedestrian and cycling environment? (Poll)
10. What would you like an arterial corridor to look like in Midtown? (Poll)
11. What do you envision a main street to look like in Midtown? (Poll)

These prompts and questions were presented on four large worksheets at the event. Each of the four interactive booths contained one worksheet. Project team members were present at each booth to assist or guide participants through the activities as needed. For the fill-in-the-blank prompts, participants were able to write as many responses on the worksheets. For the polling questions, participants were provided with stickers to respond. Each participant had a limit of one response per polling question.

Images: Adam Pulicichio Photography





Appendix

Booth 1: Process, FAQ & Q&A

The most important issue to me is:				What I would like to add to this conversation is:			
The most important issue to me is:							
The most important issue to me is:				What I would like to add to this conversation is:			

Booth 2: Vision and principles

What matters to me most here is:				What I think is missing here is:			
What matters to me most here is:							
What matters to me most here is:				What I think is missing here is:			

