

## **Dundas Community Roundtable # 3:**

### **TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTION: Walkability in Dundas**

#### **WALKABILITY DISCUSSION SUMMARY: Michelle Chin's Notes**

**Introduction:** Walkability could be defined as "the extent to which the built environment is friendly to the presence of people living, working, enjoying, shopping, visiting, or spending time in an area." A walkable city is one that puts people before cars. Physical features affect our walking experience and heavily influence an individual's decision to walk in the first place. These are factors we can design into our built world.

1. DENSITY, MIXED USE RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS is key to walkability. 3 story mixed use buildings, ideally 35 feet frontage with parking at back, in centre of town surrounded on all sides with single family homes within a 10-20 minutes walk is the best design practice for intensification
2. A VARIETY OF NEARBY LOCAL DESTINATIONS such as recreation & community centres, shopping, services, parks
3. BUFFERS TO MOVING TRAFFIC (planter strips, on-street parking or bike lanes) Traffic volume and speed affects feeling of safety in walking. King Street has double wide sidewalks, trees, streetlights, parking meters/ parking affect feeling of safety and lingering to talk with neighbours, so more likely to walk.
4. AESTHETICS - natural organic plants, welcoming street furniture. Benches, outdoor areas to rest - Memorial Square, York Road Parkette
5. FACTORS AFFECTING HEALTH... Air quality, shade or sun in appropriate seasons, weather - distance. Deciduous trees shady in summer, sunny in winter, density better in bad weather.
6. PUT PARKING IN BACK, puts streetscape and people first. This is what makes King Street work, lots are behind with links to high street, example alley between Picones and Adventure Attic
7. BUILDING HEIGHT that operates on a human scale. 3-4 story, ideally goods on street level, services and residences above
8. PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, LINKS, PRESENCE AND QUALITY OF FOOTPATHS. Continuous connections east to west and north to south, to trails, to public transit, to destinations. Walkability is best guaranteed if the entire system of public corridors is walkable - not just limited to certain specialized routes.

**WALKABILITY THINKTANK:** Tom Sehn, Phylis Sehn, Tanya Jenkins, Allison Maxted, Michelle Chin, James Jennings, Sara Woods, Paul Vandenbrink and Tim Leslie

### **THE GOOD:**

- most of the Dundas core operates on a human scale with a variety of walkable quality destinations. It is a town for real residents, not gentrified for tourists.
- actual destinations are key to walkability
- there are multiple ways to get to the same destination which makes things interesting for pedestrians
- we are a town in a bowl, with green on all sides, which is very desirable
- the OMB is relinquishing some control to the local level.

### **THE BAD:**

- as infill increases from Toronto, Dundas must make a conscious effort to retain the quality of life. Prices and rents are increasing, making it more and more difficult for independent unique business owners to make a living, making it more gentrified and touristy and not actually livable.
- sidewalk in the core are uneven and should cater to the constant stream of pedestrians using it. Subtracting space for parking meters, trees, garbage cans, etc, the effective width is much thinner, no buffer. Eliminate parking on King Street and widen sidewalks in core.
- it is difficult for development east of Tim Hortons which is part of the flood plain?
- suburbs are single use residential areas with long frontages. How can we intensify these areas and create mixed use spaces?
- concern about the old Dairy Queen becoming an 8 story condo building
- the sidewalk is narrow on Ogilvie near the DVSA and library
- the property on the NE corner of Kin and Market remains empty. Apparently it is too expensive to develop.
- frontages are too long past McMurray Street. Replace parking lots fronting King with storefronts instead, parking behind.
- the HB Rail Trail has garbage along its sides, access from downtown Dundas is tricky and unpleasant (up steep Ogilvie/ Old Ancaster Road past Dundana).

### **THE UGLY:**

- the marked crosswalk from Eccles to Winchester does not have a pedestrian activated signal. It is confusing for those from other parts of the country who assume that cars will automatically stop if they see a pedestrian in the crosswalk, which is not part of the culture in southern Ontario. Neither is an arm out or eye contact, which don't necessarily work in the dark.
- the intersection of York and Main Street (at Town Hall) is dangerous for pedestrians
- South Quay Trail and Hillside Trail are important connector/ shortcut trails for pedestrians travelling from University Plaza toward Canadian Tire. They are extremely steep, a staircase would be more pedestrian friendly.

### **THE HOPE:**

- King Street between Sydenham and Cross could be regularly closed on summer weekends, instead of having festivals. Even better, define a 6 block x 6 block area to become permanently pedestrian.
- replace the dead tree with a new tree in front of One Rebellion.
- speed limit should be 50 km/hr west of Olympic Drive, add significant visual cues that you are entering a town and should slow your speed
- ensure that existing residents have comparable quality of living after the new development.
- emphasize areas meant as car thoroughfares, but mark areas that are pedestrian friendly

## WALKABILITY DISCUSSION SUMMARY: Tim Leslie's Notes

### WHY DUNDAS IS WALKABLE

1. Human Scale
2. Destinations- One of almost everything I want in walking distance
3. Favourably compares with European Cities
- 4. The town centre of Dundas is why people are here**
5. Not touristy- real town
6. Visually Interesting
7. Friendly place to live...attracting immigrants from Toronto
8. One can live in Dundas without a car

### IDEAS AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS

#### NEED WORK ON SIDEWALKS

*Why are they so nice in Ancaster and Stoney Creek?*

Widen Sidewalks- have parking on only one side- i.e. Sarnia

**Improve sidewalks by widening**, boulevards with trees where possible

Older Curbscuts are too steep, and are not level with road and sidewalk

Curbscut from Creekside to Metro poor

#### CROSSWALKS

##### **Not safe in current state**

Need Flashing Lights and raised walking area like in Toronto

Need safe crosswalks in key areas- ie Hatt and Main

#### CONNECTIONS

##### **Need to be better designed for those who don't have a car**

ie Develop stair access from Thorpe St to Osler Drive

to connect downtown with University Plaza

i.e. Develop access from Osler to South Street

#### IMPROVED ENTRANCE TO DUNDAS AT COOTES

##### **Need Defined Entrance** -Gates like in Hamilton?

Need to slow down cars with visual cues to transition to a walking zone.

Encourage different kind of development that encourages walking.

This area is difficult to develop- because of flood plain you can't build anything new within 8' elevation

#### WE NEED TO PROTECT THE CORE

As the population increases around Dundas the land values will skyrocket in the core and will create economic pressures that could threaten and change the character of the downtown

**Create a Master Plan** that defines the public spaces and outlines the parameters for development -(Make this vision concrete by embodying it in a plan) ie Luxembourg worked to protect its core

Core Area: Cross to Sydenham, Hatt to Park

Larger Core: York to Market, Hatt to Park

##### **Create a special zone in the core that protects its character and make it more walkable and bikeable**

Currently Downtown Dundas is identified as "a node and corridor that warrants intensification Planning"- The former protections for unwanted development (to protect the character of the core) have been removed and need to be reinstated

Don't allow derelict buildings and sites to remain

### CREATE A KING STREET PEDESTRIAN ZONE

Start on summer weekends- extend as it becomes popular- IN SUCCESSFUL European cities this happened at a certain point ...and it protected it and enhanced the core

### DEVELOP OTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

Need to create stronger neighbourhoods surrounding the core with walkable services - replicate the essence of what the downtown has in order to avoid sprawl

### RAIL TRAIL

needs regular care- cleaning up garbage especially behind University Plaza

### **Accessibility group summary (after 8:30):**

- create an accessibility survey - transit frequency, spread and transfers
- widen sidewalks, most not up to bylaw standards
- wintertime is a big problem. Ancaster residents pay for snow clearing. Can Dundas do this to increase accessibility
- examine additional connectors into neighbourhoods where there is only single entry and exit points.
- identify isolated areas and seek way to connect
- Hamilton has a "nodes and corridors" strategy which differs from previous road before amalgamation