Phase I Engagement Summary

Downtown Whitby Brock Street Redesign Study

Town of Whitby

60714081

May 2024

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AECOM: 2015-04-13
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1. Executive Summary

The Town of Whitby has started a multi-year project to refresh and revitalize historic Brock Street, from the exit at Highway 401 all the way north to the CP rail track near Maple Street.

The Town has been actively promoting engagement for the project through news ads, social media, curbex signage, and digital screens. Consultation efforts include a study website and project email, online survey, meet-and-greet, and a virtual open house.

In addition, the team presented materials and collected feedback from the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Committee, Sustainability Advisory Committee, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee, and the Heritage Advisory Committee. They also presented materials to the Downtown Whitby BIA Board.

The feedback on the project so far has been positive with the following key themes emerging:

- Road safety is a primary concern, with a focus on traffic calming to reduce risks and enhance public safety.
- Traffic Calming is needed as unsafe speeding makes the area unpleasant for pedestrians.
- Heavy truck traffic using Brock Street as a pass-through to the 401 is frustrating residents.
- Brock Street should be a walkable and cycle-friendly destination, making it attractive to visitors.
- Accessible parking and wider sidewalks are needed to support downtown businesses and residents with disabilities.
- Dedicated pathways with wayfinding signage for cyclists to access shops, the GO station, and the waterfront would be needed.
- Parking difficulties is a significant deterrent for visiting the area.
- Removing or repurposing on-street parking was heavily suggested either to improve traffic flow, especially during rush hour, or to use areas for patios, events, and community rest areas.
- Patios are seen as valuable for community gatherings and dining; however some believe patios should be located behind buildings to free up space for traffic and parking.

- Additional garbage and recycling receptacles are desired near bus stops, parks, restaurants, and specific streets (e.g., between CP Rail and Mary St.).
- More benches in parks and along sidewalks to encourage people to spend time in the area.
- Improved lighting is needed on side streets and parking lots for better safety at night.
- Graffiti tagging is seen as a major issue, making the area feel unsafe and dirty.
- Support for the return of more festivals and events in the area.
- Many are proud of Brock Street's heritage and want efforts to maintain its small-town feel and historic features.
- Integration with public transit future plans to ensure that work is not being undone or duplicated.

The team will consider the feedback collected as they progress into the conceptual design and next phase of engagement, with the final presentation to Council is tentatively scheduled for Q1 2025.

2. Overview of Brock Street Redesign Engagement

2.1 Approach to Public Engagement

The Town of Whitby conducted public engagement for the Brock Street Redesign project.

The objectives of engagement were to:

- Foster active and meaningful participation from key stakeholders, council, and the public;
- Build and maintain relationships with interested parties and demonstrate how their questions, concerns and inquiries are being addressed while balancing the needs of the different groups;
- Involve and consult with the public and stakeholders about the proposed design recommendations for the Brock Street corridor and gather feedback where stakeholder and public input is needed;
- Identify a design approach that is implementable, catering to community needs, with established infrastructure and technology for sustainable future growth;
- Gain buy-in from the community, and establish the value of the communities' investment in the space; and
- Address questions and concerns from the public in a timely manner, such that they feel their voices have been heard with importance and sensitivity.

In conducting public engagement, the Town aimed to maximize public participation by:

- Offering a range of engagement opportunities including online and in-person options;
- Meeting people where they were at a public meet-and-greet; and,
- Addressing questions quickly through the virtual open house.

The engagement period launched on March 12, 2024, and ended April 22, 2024.

The Project Team consisted of:

- Christy Chrus, Manager, Creative Communities for the Town of Whitby
- Tara Painchaud, Senior Manager, Transportation for the Town of Whitby

- Sara Taylor, the Project Lead from AECOM
- Nayer Daher, the Transportation / Traffic Engineering Specialist from AECOM

2.2 Study Website and Project Email

In preparation for public engagement, a new web page was created titled “Have Your Say – Help Shape the Future Design of Brock Street in Downtown Whitby” project. – https://connectwhitby.ca/brockstreet.

The Connect Whitby Brock Street webpage was created to educate the public, provide a home for the online survey, promote the in-person meet-and-greet, and virtual public meeting.

The page included the following:

- Background on the Brock Street area;
- Frequently asked questions about the project ;
- Information about the virtual meeting;
- A link to the recorded virtual meeting;
- The online survey for the public to provide feedback on the design;
- A timeline of the lifecycle of the project; and
- Related reports, resources, and links.

Questions about the project were directed to Christy Chrus at the downtowns@whitby.ca e-mail address. Interested parties were also invited to join the mailing list to receive updates about the project. Through the course of Phase I of the project, 53 members joined the mailing list.

The website had a soft launch on March 12, 2024, and a hard launch on March 25, 2024. It was also updated following the PIC on April 22, 2024.

2.3 Survey

A survey was administered during the engagement period and was the primary source of gathering comments for the Brock Street Redesign. The survey was available online at https://connectwhitby.ca/brockstreet/surveys/downtown-whitby-brock-street-redesign-study-survey:

The survey yielded 519 responses, of which 505 were residents or property owners within the Whitby area. In addition, 53 respondents were business owners in Whitby, and of that 36% had their businesses within the Downtown Whitby area.

2.4 Public Meetings

During the engagement period, a meet-and-greet and virtual public meeting were held.

Meet-and-Greet In-Person

An in-person Meet-and-Greet for commercial business and property owners in the Downtown Whitby area was held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at the Brock Street Brewery (3rd Floor). The event was attended by 45 individuals.

A welcome table invited participants to approach and ask questions about the project. A board was prepared detailing the project study area and asking participants to identify any challenges they faced along Brock Street and any improvements they would like to see.

The results of the polling are as follows:

Q: What challenges do you have along Brock Street?

- Public safety
- Pedestrian areas & walkability
- Speed of traffic
- Parking signage
- Parking options for renters
- Accessible facades

Q: What improvements would you like to see along Brock Street?

- Access to a public toilet
- More displays of local art
- More local events
- More patios
- Free Employee Parking
- More trees and greenery
- Better bus right of way

Virtual Public Meetings

A virtual public meeting was held on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 from 7:00pm – 9:00pm. The event was attended by 62 individuals, and 62 questions were submitted throughout the evening.

The meeting began with a presentation with opportunities throughout to ask questions and provide input about the design and considerations for the area. To wrap up the virtual meetings, attendees were provided project contact information and were encouraged to visit the Connect Whitby page and/ or complete the survey.

2.5 Committee and Board Meetings

During the engagement period, the team presented materials to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Committee, Sustainability Advisory Committee, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee, and the Heritage Advisory Committee. They also presented materials to the Downtown Whitby BIA Board.

Active Transportation Advisory Committee

The Active Transportation Advisory Committee meeting was held on Thursday March 14 at 4:00pm and was a hybrid meeting.

The Committee later provided formal written comments, reiterating that they were fully supportive of a Brock Street Redesign to make the area more walkable, welcoming and inclusive.

The main points discussed included:

- Active transit gaps from Star Ave to Maple St and in and around the CP Railway bridge. The Town is somewhat limited in what we can do with the infrastructure around the CP Railway and that the study scope really is south of the railway.
- Cycling routes specifically along Henry Street, Hickory Street, Mary Street and Dunlop Street. The Town will also consider all routes around the study area and how they are connected.
- Traffic violations specifically around the Brock / Colborne intersection.
- ‘Complete Streets’ approach / model.
- Access to the GO facilities and recreational facilities.
- Traffic impacts of the Redesign in downtown blocks that will shift traffic to alternative routes. The increase of traffic would impact active transportation.
- Impacts of the Dundas Street Metrolinx Bus Rapid Transit connection.
- Consideration of implementing physically buffered cycle lanes if vehicular traffic lanes are reduced.
- Support widened pedestrian facilities in downtown core with reduced on-street parking, or consider offset, alternate side parking lay-bys.

The Committee is also interested in traffic patterns and would like to see consideration for traffic impacts as a result of the design and shift to use of alternative routes. They would like to stay involved as progress continues.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting was held on April 2nd at 7:00pm and was a virtual meeting.

The main points discussed included:

- Timelines for construction and specifically how it would relate with the Metrolinx BRT project.
- Locations for accessible parking spaces – ensuring we have them on both sides of street (where possible) and also north and south of Dundas Street.
- Costing / Phasing plan and being cognizant of the budget. The Town wants to ensure improvements can be implemented and are cognizant of impact on tax base.
- Providing accessible entrances into businesses. Currently, there are no retroactive requirements on a business to make changes, but this project will look to see where grades permit the Town to make improvements into storefronts.

Sustainability Advisory Committee

The Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting was held on April 3rd at 7:00pm and was a hybrid meeting.

The main points discussed included:

- The identity of Downtown Whitby and how will this come out in the design. Some features that are important to DT are the red brick/buff brick accents, the heritage buildings and streetscape.
- Heat island effect and shade structures in those high traffic / heat island spaces. The Town is looking at the colour of pavers / pavement to see if specific colours can be used to reflect heat.
- Cooling features like mist sprayers for summer months when the heat is extreme are also being considered.
- Traffic consideration for the option of reducing a traffic lane along Brock Street. The study should factor in how the traffic is going to be redirected. The team could refer to example of streets in Vancouver where they have reduced traffic lanes and then used the centre lane to install rain gardens.
- Possibility of incorporating electric vehicle charging stations; however further investigation would be required to determine feasibility.

Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee

The Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting was held on April 4th at 7:00pm as a hybrid meeting.

The main points discussed included:

- The placement of benches or rest stops should be located in spaces / places where people congregate.
- Concern over how to address the edge of Rotary Park and how to 'contain' the space for children with the busy road and the playground area. Views from Brock Street into the gardens at Rotary Park should be preserved as that is the central focus of this space. The playground is somewhat buffered by existing washroom building, gardens and retaining wall).
- Many comments on how we can work with the Indigenous communities to consider truth and reconciliation opportunities through the design. Some thoughts included:
    - Creating storyboards that show the area was used for fur trade routes, salmon fishing, portages
    - Using landscape elements and public art to help tell the story i.e. medicinal plants.

Heritage Advisory Committee

The Heritage Advisory Committee meeting was held on April 9th at 7:00pm as a hybrid meeting.

The main points discussed included:

- Ability to remove / reduce truck traffic along Brock Street but ensuring local businesses can have truck delivery (i.e. FreshCo).
- Comment around signage for truck traffic to ensure they are using the alternative routes coming off of highway.
- Can we consider customizing a unique furniture design specific for DT Whitby / Brock St instead of using off the shelf items as study area may be large enough to support custom furniture i.e. benches, lights, signage, bike racks, Whitby branded?
- Consideration of using black for traffic lights / light poles along study area – more of a historic colour palette. The Gateway Study also recommended black poles as part of that project.
- DRT bus shelters – do they have designs that are more heritage friendly? Could we work with DRT to see what options are available. And then could we use this standard for the Metrolinx BRT as well throughout the Downtown?
- Busy road crossings along Brock St make it difficult for pedestrians to fully enjoy Downtown Whitby.

- Graffiti tagging is quite prominent in Downtown – can we consider materials with a rough surface that could deter taggers.

Downtown Whitby BIA Board Meeting

The Downtown Whitby BIA Board Meeting was held on April 29th at 3:00pm as a virtual meeting.

The main points discussed included:

- Liked the idea of moving the transit stop from the near side to the far side at Brock / Dundas (east side) – the members noted concerns in terms of limited space for people to wait for the bus here, often people will hang out in the doorways / alcoves of their business to get out of the rain. However, they will smoke which often will linger into their store.
- They also indicated the bus shelter on east side at Brock / Dundas is often very dirty with garbage, cigarette butts.
- They liked the idea of considering a transit shelter style as well as a garbage can that was more fitting in with the historic nature of the Downtown.

Technical Advisory Committee #1

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is an internal review committee made up of Town of Whitby staff from various departments.

The Technical Advisory Committee meeting #1 was held on February 28th from 1:00pm – 3:00pm as a virtual meeting.

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, Aspirations (SWOTA) Analysis was conducted and general feedback on the background study was collected from members.

- Strengths:
  - Heritage and historic sites, such as the Lynde House Museum, were sited.
  - Green space and trail systems including Rotary Park.
  - Sidewalks on both sides to be pedestrian friendly.
- Weaknesses
  - Lack of convenient parking.
  - Lack of accessible connection to the GO train.
  - Existing sidewalks are narrow or close to the street.

  - Maintaining the space.
- Opportunities
  - Better space utilization and ability to create connection spaces.
  - Develop pedestrian and cycling pathways.
  - Highlight unique features and attractions.
  - Traffic calming to improve safety for pedestrians.
  - Signage and wayfinding.
- Threats
  - Pedestrians feel unsafe about crossing the road and being too close to the road while on sidewalks.
  - High volume of traffic.
  - Fast moving traffic.
  - Noise.
  - Speeding along the street.
- Aspirations
  - Aspire to create more of a historic streetscape.
  - Aspire to create more development including residential, commercial space, and opportunities for mixed use.
  - Aspire for this to be a destination.

3. Communication Activities

Various communication activities were undertaken by the Town to inform and encourage residents to meaningfully participate in the online and in-person public engagement.

3.1 Media Relations

There was a news story posted to whitby.ca/news and a media pitch was shared with local reporters. This resulted in owner and earned media coverage.

A newspaper ad about the community engagement activity, including project information was published in Brooklin Town Crier for two weeks.

An article was also published in Durham.Insauga on March 26, 2024 and detailed the project area and the priorities of the project. A copy of the article can be found here: Brock St. Downtown revitalization project launched in Whitby.

Furthermore, an article was included in the Town of Whitby Economic Development eNewsletter on April 2, 2024.

In addition, the BIA promoted PIC #1 and Connect Whitby project page through online newsletter published on March 13, 2024.

3.2 Digital Platforms and Social Media

During the consultation period, three posts were made on Facebook to share information about the project and promote attendance of the in-person event and encourage interested parties to fill out the survey. The main concerns and themes from social media engagement are highlighted in Section 3 below.

- The March 25 post had the most engagement with 872 reactions and 339 comments.
- The April 5 post has 332 reactions and 85 comments.
- The April 12 post has 14 reactions and 9 comments.

Three postings were also made on Twitter to share information and encourage participation in upcoming events.

The first post had 27,894 impressions and a result rate of 1.5%, and the second post had 44,192 impressions and a result rate of 1.7%.

In addition to the social media, Town of Whitby eNews Article (released March 25, 2024) 'Have Your Say – Help Shape The Future Design Of Brock Street in Downtown Whitby' was published and distributed.

3.3 Promotion

The Town engaged in many rounds of marketing to promote events.

- 300 postcards which contained information promoting the Meet & Greet Event and PIC #1 were hand delivered to commercial business / property owners in Downtown Whitby (March 12, 2024).
- A Virtual Open House Letter regarding the Brock Street Redesign Project, upcoming PIC and Connect Whitby project page was mailed to just over 3,000 property owners in Downtown Whitby (March 11, 2024).
- Personal invitations were emailed to business and property owners re: Meet & Greet Event including info on Brock St Redesign project.

In addition, the events were promoted in municipal spaces where screens at various facilities were used to promote Phase I Engagement.

3.4 Curbex Signage

Curbex signs were placed at two locations and were up from March 25, 2024 – April 22, 2024.

The signs were located at:

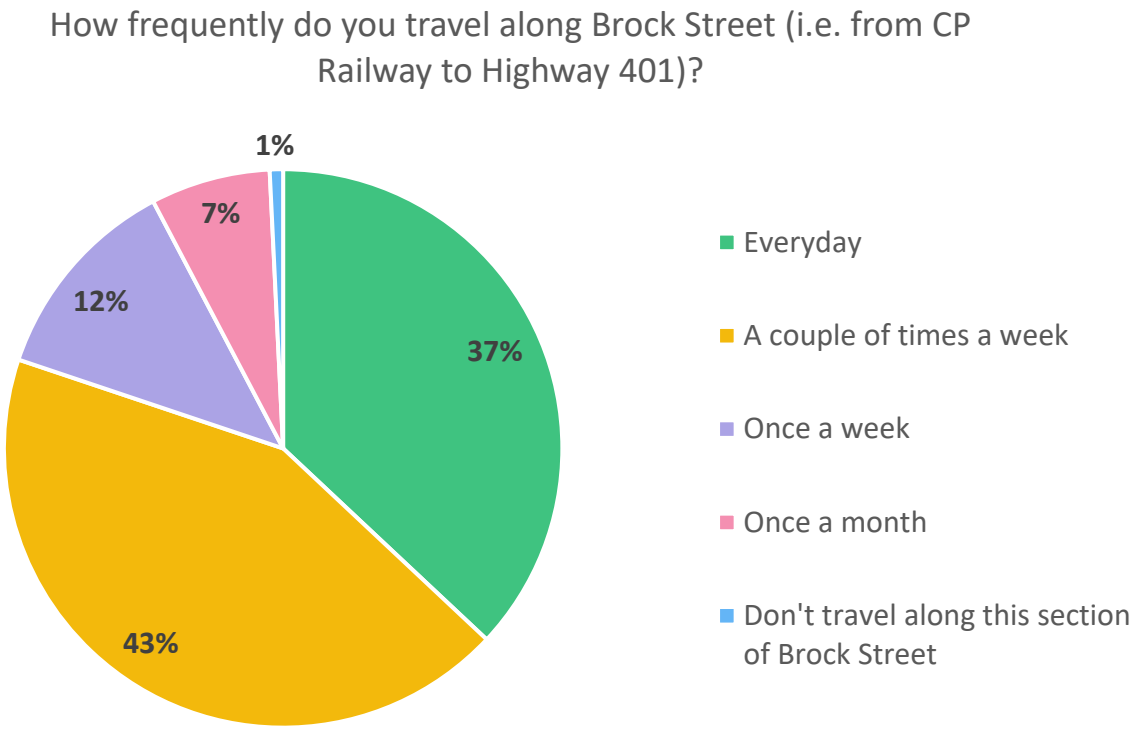
- **Brock Street North** – near 918 Brock St N, Whitby, ON L1N 4J6 (Brock Street and Starr Avenue).
- **Brock Street South** – near 833 Brock St S, Whitby, ON L1N 4L4 (Brock Street and Burns Street)

3.5 Digital Screens

Digital ads were posted to all Town facilities to encourage residents and visitors to complete a survey on Connect Whitby.

4. What We Heard

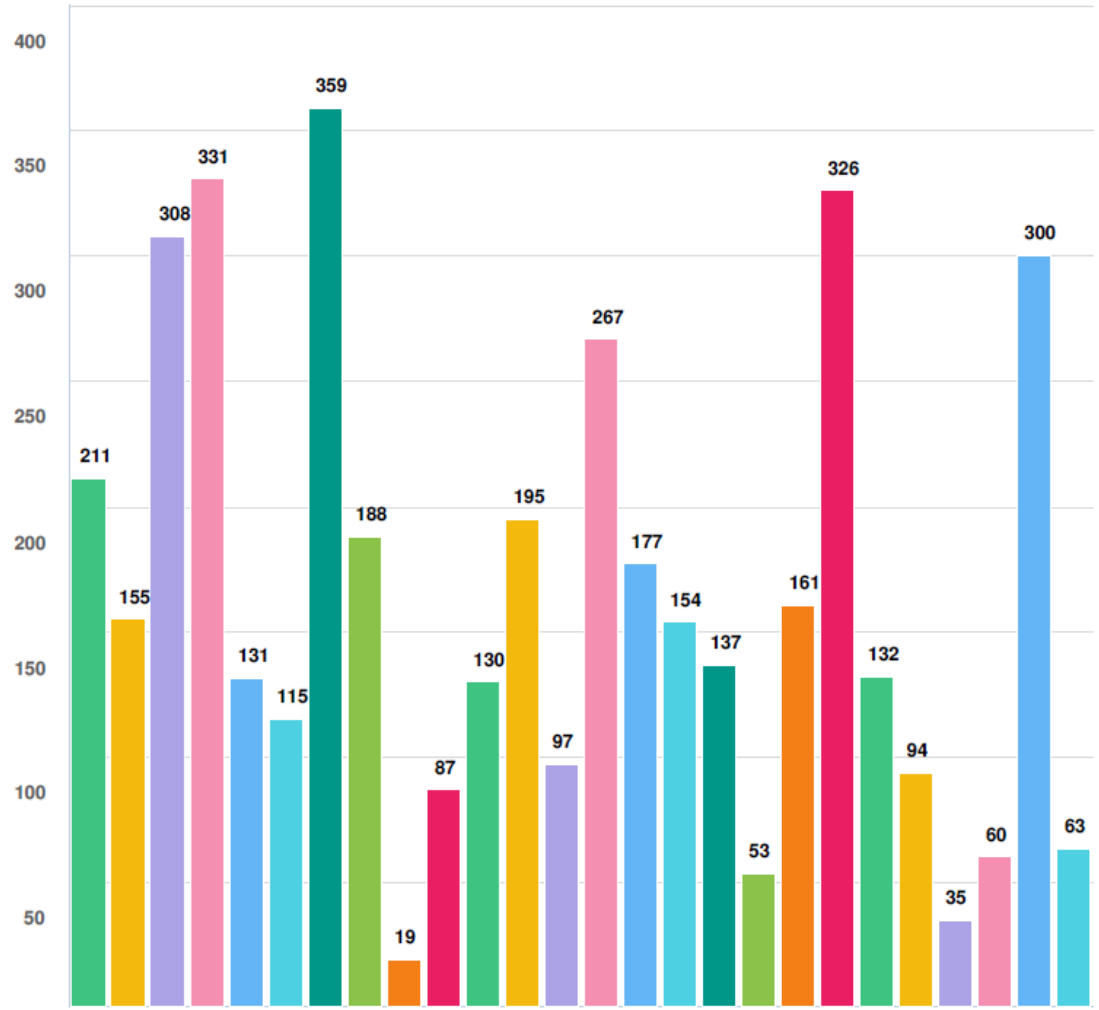
Highlights of comments and concerns received through the engagement activities (Connect Whitby survey, and public meetings) and highlights of the survey responses are summarized in the subsections that follow.



Many of the respondents travel through the area frequently with 37% traversing the space everyday, and 43.2% travelling through a couple times a week.

When asked what the top priorities for the redesign study were, participants indicated that of the list, the following were the most important. Participants were asked to vote for their top 10, and 517 responses were received:

1. Patios (359)
2. Trees (331)
3. Planters / Flowers (326)
4. Green spaces (308)
5. Seasonal decorations (300)
6. Town Event Space (267)
7. Wider Sidewalks (211)
8. Benches / More Resting Spaces (195)
9. Public Art (188)
10. Pedestrian Cross walks (177)



Question options

Wider sidewalks
Bicycle Lanes
Green Spaces
Trees
Public Performance Space (i.e. buskers)
On-Street Parking
Patios
Public Art
Better Fibre Optic Connections for Businesses
Free Public Wi-Fi
Upgrades to Street Lights
Benches / More Rest Stops
Bicycle Racks
Town Event Space (i.e. temporary street closure for festivals and events)
Pedestrian Crosswalks
Traffic Calming (i.e. roundabouts, lowering speed limit, etc.)
Accessible access to storefronts (where possible)
Bus Shelters
Garbage / Recycling Receptacles
Planters / Flowers
Historic Plaques
Directional Signage (i.e. key destinations, Green 'P' parking)
Visitor Information Boards
Street Banners
Seasonal Decorations (i.e. holiday lights)
Other (please specify)

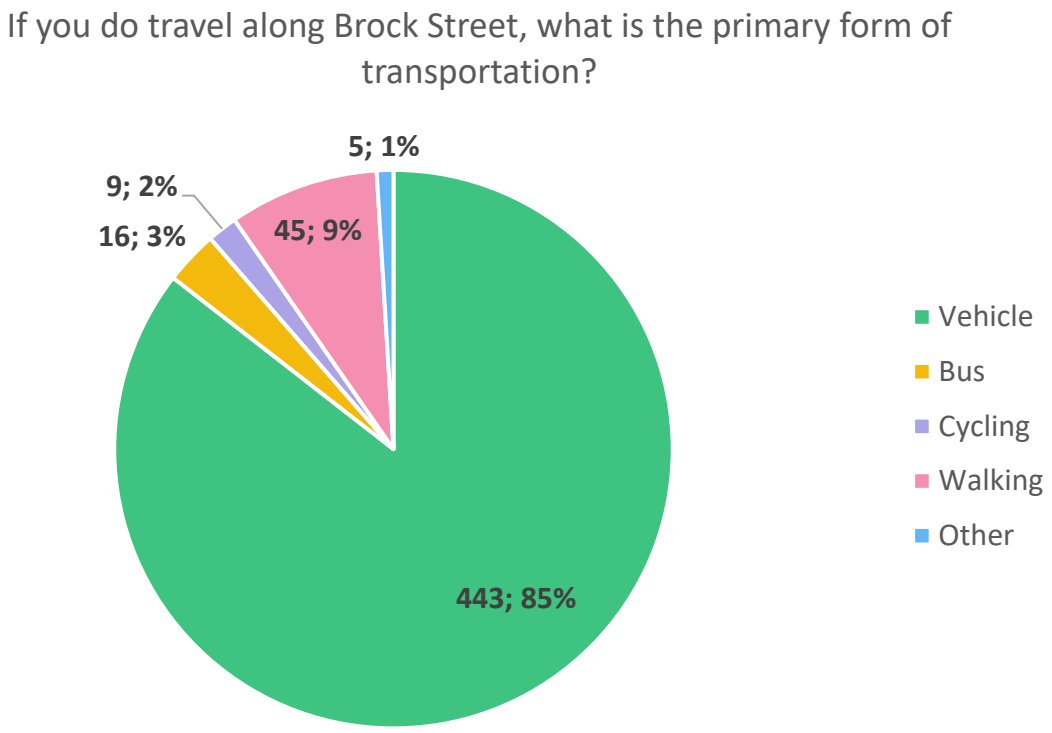
4.1 Road Safety

Road safety is the most common theme brought forward, with traffic calming measures mentioned frequently for mitigating risks and enhancing public safety. Solutions like curb bump outs and roundabouts were also mentioned as possible tactics for improving road safety.

4.1.1 Traffic and Traffic Calming

The Brock Street area is heavily used for car traffic, and many use the street as a means to access the 401.

When asked how people typically travel through the study area, approximately **85.5% of survey respondents currently use vehicles to get through the area.**



The most frequently mentioned suggestion for the area was traffic calming. Many noted that drivers would speed through the area making it feel unsafe for pedestrians.

In favour of traffic calming:

There were many concerns that traffic constantly speeds through the area and that it was not a pleasant space to spend time.

Having traffic calming measures that would slow traffic and enable pedestrians to feel safer would be highly coveted.

The calming measures would also help to reduce the noise of the area making the space more pleasant to navigate as a pedestrian / cyclist.

Some suggestions for potential traffic calming tactics included: bulb outs, permanent speed enforcement cameras, police presence, additional traffic lights (at Mary Street and Walnut Street) and a lane reduction in each direction to reduce the volume of cars.

Against traffic calming:

However, not all are in favour of traffic calming measures with some commenting that the measures would making the existing traffic more congested.

Participants noted that the traffic is particularly challenging to navigate during the rush hour as people are trying to get to the GO station. They noted that

"TRAFFIC CALMING! We live on the east side of Brock St and I'm already dreading the time when my kids will start going to Henry Street high school and have to cross the Brock St at Burns St twice a day. The traffic is flying in that area, especially at rush hour. The sidewalks on Brock St are way too narrow and close to the road."

"Traffic calming should be the priority so Brock St is a safe place to walk along with your family. The sidewalks need to be more far away from the road."

"Keep lanes narrow and use traffic calming tools such as bulb outs at intersections, raised crosswalks and raised separated bicycle lanes along brock street"

"Slow down the traffic and take away a lane in each direction, the struggle to get people downtown is because of the noisy high speed traffic - make connector routes to the go station for pedestrians and cyclists."

"Traffic calming measures where possible and designating the study area as a no heavy truck route if a suitable alternate route can be devised."

"I don't want to see a reduction in lanes. The commute is already slow today and with the zig-zagging and dips on brock, there is no need to spend funds on constructing calming zones."

"Further traffic calming measure are non-nonsensical with the amount of traffic lights already causing congestion with their poorly coordinated timing and overall volume means it is already slow

while changes are important, that maintaining access to the GO is critical for people travelling to Toronto during the weekday.

Others noted that the area is quite congested and difficult to navigate, and that removal of any lanes would be detrimental.

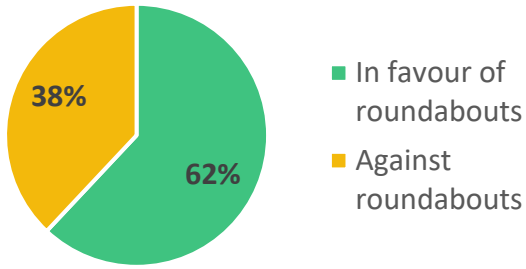
and awful to travel on particularly in the afternoon."

"Traffic congestion at Brock St and Hwy 2 is a major issue for a number of years. Please try to address. It has a ripple effect on traffic and walk ability in downtown core."

4.1.2 Roundabouts

A roundabout is being considered for the Brock Street and Burns Street intersection, and while there was generally support for the idea, there were a few concerns with the implementation of a roundabout.

"Traffic calming along Brock Street would likely help with making things look a little nicer. A large roundabout with green space where those plazas are and a downtown Whitby sign."



In favour of the roundabout:

- Safety: Many responded that they were in support of the roundabout and found roundabouts to be safe and efficient.
- Traffic Calming: By slowing down traffic in the area, traffic will be more easily managed.
- Aesthetically Pleasing / Entrance to the Town of Whitby: A roundabout, even in its standard design, is a pretty way for residents and visitors to enter the area.

Against the roundabout:

- Pedestrian Safety: Many noted concerns for pedestrians crossing in the area, especially with it being close to the senior centre. They noted that those who were unfamiliar with roundabouts may cause accidents.
- Back up of traffic: Some concerns included that volume of traffic, especially during rush hour where GO Train users may be backed up in the area.

- Preference for lights: A few noted that lights worked, and they would prefer to keep them instead of implementing a roundabout.

4.1.3 Truck Traffic

Some respondents described their frustration with the truck traffic as drivers would use the street as a pass through to get to the 401.

They suggested having the street designated as a no-heavy truck route if possible, assuming another route could be implemented.

"I would like to see downtown look more inviting to pedestrians and a place to visit not just pass through, I would like to see large trucks diverted to possible Thickson to re-join Highway 12 north of Brooklin, or up Lakeridge."

"Encourage large trucks to use the 412 when heading north, would help with noise and congestion."

4.2 Pedestrian Safety and Accessibility

Pedestrian safety and accessibility were heavily mentioned from respondents with many indicating that they would love the space to be a walkable / cycle friendly destination that they would want to visit.

4.2.1 Safe for Walking and Walk-Only Area

Some suggested the area should be partitioned off during select times and turned into an area where people could walk through and enjoy the shops and restaurants without vehicles passing through.

This would make the space more pedestrian and cyclist friendly and encourage tourism to the space.

Respondents also indicated that the design of the space could be improved with pathways between the offsite

"I would love to see the four corners turned into a cobbled, traffic free area, with cafes/restaurant opening patios for dining."

"Try to discourage car traffic away from 4 corners and perhaps incorporate pedestrian walking streets, like in Copenhagen."

"Stop allowing developers to build communities that have no walkable access to shops and services people need."

parking and the main street where pedestrians could easily access shops and services.

> *"Would love to see "walking only" events where cars are re-routed around the main intersections and restaurants could open up patio spots and people could explore all the downtown stores without the traffic."*

4.2.2 Accessibility

Participants also noted that they would like the space to be more accessible for all abilities.

Potential improvements could be made to the sidewalks, so they are easier to walk through, and to available parking to enable people to access shops and services. The Town may also consider reducing grade differentiation or steps into businesses along some sections of Brock Street to help with accessibility.

> *"It's discouraging not to be able to support more downtown businesses. Making the sidewalks smoother would also be a big help. As a disabled resident of downtown Whitby, the only places I can get to on my own are downtown."*

> *"Parking is horrendous for mobility challenge folks. I simply don't parallel park. Moved back here in 2020. Shop where there's convenient parking and interesting stores. The knitting store appeals to me but where do I park."*

> *"Make the downtown wheelchair accessible!"*

4.2.3 Pet Friendly

For pedestrians that do access the area with pets, more pet friendly amenities would be a welcome addition to the neighbourhood. These include spaces to tie pets while shopping, pet friendly water fountains, and patio spaces for pets to wait while dining.

In addition, readily available garbage receptacles available for people to dispose of pet waste are needed.

> *"Some stores have no where to tie dogs to. Others it's only a parking meter, or somewhere too far away for me to tie them and go into a store."*

4.2.4 Bicycle Friendly

Many also mention that the space is not particularly bicycle friendly. The current design is heavy on car traffic, and there are limited lanes cycling pathways for cyclists to safely use.

Having additional / dedicated pathways for cyclist to access the shops on Brock Street, GO station, and the waterfront may be beneficial to alleviate some of the traffic and encourage more visitors to come to the area.

Wayfinding signage to direct cyclists to routes in and around downtown is also being considered.

> *"Perhaps closing it to vehicular traffic on Sundays, encouraging people to walk or bicycle with their families. Foster an environment where communities are strengthened, and people can interact face-to face. Dedicated bicycle infrastructure so that families can safely cycle to the lake or the GO station."*

> *"I currently travel on Brock St by car, but not by choice. If the street was safely designed for bicycle and pedestrian usage, with ample green space to enhance cooling during warmer months, I would love to see it become a destination. Many cities with a population of 100,000+ like Whitby are taking steps to remove on-street parking, and I support that change across our municipality."*

4.3 Parking

Parking was a particularly controversial topic. Many noted that the lack of available parking was a key deterrent for visiting the area. Respondents frequently noted that attracting business to the area would be difficult with the lack of available parking, and that the current businesses were having a challenging time with customers choosing to avoid the area rather that attempting to find parking.

No Street Parking

Some noted that there should be no parking on the street and that the lane should be used for vehicles which would allow for better traffic flow through the neighbourhood. They describe that there is already a backlog of traffic during rush hour and that having an extra lane would be helpful.

> *"There needs to be adjustments to street lights and street parking around the Brock and Dundas intersection.... not enough timing to get through lights creates massive back ups of traffic and causes dangerous vehicle operations from people merging and running through lights and side streets!"*

> *"Remove the street parking along Brock so it can accommodate a two lane traffic North and south. Brock Street doesn't really need Street parking. There is a lot*

of side streets and lots where people can park. Keep Brock Street flowing."

"Make it useful to park within a few blocks and walk the main downtown path in summer, spring and fall. Not just for summer. Eliminate on street parking on the actual Brock Street to free up space."

"Make it as walkable and pedestrian friendly as possible. Push cars to the many adjacent municipal parking lots and make people walk a few metres for a change."

Parking Off the Street

Others suggested that they should remove parking from the streets and have available lots behind buildings. They acknowledge that parking is needed, but that it should not be street parking and parking within walking distance of the main street would be acceptable.

Respondents noted that there are some available lots within walking distance; however, more lots are needed to accommodate the amount of vehicle traffic that is currently in the area.

In addition, some noted that the side streets are quite narrow and that parking there may not be ideal, so having somewhere dedicated to parking would be needed.

Non-Paid Parking

Some suggested that having free parking instead of paid parking would be more of an incentive to visit the area. Conversely have paid-parking accessible for other forms of payment would also mitigate some of the frustration.

"Free parking is a must. It doesn't make sense to charge people to go shopping."

"Make it easier for Independent small business to thrive. Offer free parking."

"Traffic and parking. Even though it has lots to offer, I try to avoid downtown Thursday, Friday and Saturday because of this. Today I met a friend for coffee and it took me a long time to find a space. Then when I did, the metre only took change. Time to update them with debit/credit or HonkMobile. Parking garage maybe."

Re-Claim Parking

Some noted that the on-street parking should be removed in favour of non-traffic related opportunities such as patios or events. Respondents indicated that they liked the patio spaces and having festivals along the street would be welcome to bring the community together.

"Would like to see some of the on-street parking reclaimed to open up patios, events, community rest areas, etc. Brock Street has so many great restaurants but lacks a real community feel - there's no "soul" there but offers a lot of opportunity.

Quick Parking

While many noted that they wanted to do away with on-street parking, others reinforced the need for convenient parking that someone could use for quickly visiting a shop.

4.4 Furniture and Fixtures

4.4.1 Patios

Many noted that furniture was important to the space with patios being a frequent mention.

In favour of patios:

A significant number of people showed an interest in more patios in the area as space for gathering and enjoying downtown. They often partnered this with a desire to see more events in the space.

They noted that the patios would be inviting and would encourage people to

"The summer patios are a wonderful addition and increase the sense of community."

"Would like to see some of the on-street parking reclaimed to open up patios, events, community rest areas, etc. Brock Street has so many great restaurants but lacks a real community feel - there's no "soul" there but it offers a lot of opportunity."

visit, dine and spend time in the Brock Street area.

Against patios:

A few others responded that they thought the patios could be elsewhere, or should be removed in favour of a lane for traffic or on-street parking.

They noted that there is space behind most shops and businesses where the patios could exist without interrupting foot traffic.

They also noted that the patios took up valuable travel and parking spaces which either pushed traffic to alternative routes and side streets leading to more delays or took up parking which was needed for older customers.

"Shop/business owners encouraged to maintain and clean sidewalks in front of their stores ie sweeping, window washing. Address back alleys behind businesses and encourage clean up and use of these interesting spaces as a solution to patios taking up sidewalk space at the front."

*"As a business owner, the seasonal patios take up valuable on-street parking spaces, which are already difficult enough to come by during the off-season … The fact that they make it that much more difficult for my elderly customers who are my target market, to find parking spaces during *our* off-season (spring/summer months), has a deeply negative impact on our foot traffic."*

4.4.2 Garbage Cans and Recycling

There were several suggestions for where people would like to see additional garbage and recycling receptacles in the Brock Street area including near bus stops, parks, restaurants, and the plaza.

While there was sentiment that more garbage / recycling receptacles would be desired at all intersections, some specifics that were called out include:

- Between CP Rail and Mary St.
- On Mary St. between Bryon St. and Hickory St.

"We live downtown and I walk the area everyday and everyday I see garbage all over as there are no garbage cans."

"Garbage/recycling should be a standard along with benches for people to sit but, can look better if surrounded by trees and flowers."

- On the east side between Burns St. and Gilbert St.
- Near the Lynde House Museum and Melly's Market

Others noted that while there are some garbage receptacles in the area, that they are often full which leads to the area not being perceived as clean. They suggested that the garbage bins need to be serviced more frequently.

4.4.3 Benches

Some comments also recommended having benches and rest places for people especially in parks.

The benches could also be a means for artists to showcase their work and to make the area more vibrant.

"To encourage residents to flock to downtown Brock Street, the town should work to make this a space designed for the people rather than the traffic. Having spaces that are free to sit and rest (ex. Picnic benches, areas for sitting within the sidewalk) would encourage people to spend time there."

"It would be a great opportunity to have artists paint benches along the downtown."

4.4.4 Lighting

Many also noted lighting as a key area for improvement.

For safety:

They noted that the side streets are quite dark and did not give pedestrians a safe feeling.

Additional lights would add to the

"There is a need for better lighting at night in the surrounding area; once you're off the Brock strip, the parking lots and side streets are dark."

"Lighting is terrible. Downtown Oshawa has very bright lighting on poles and looks fairly attractive. Downtown Whitby is dark and dull."

atmosphere and would make the space more vibrant.

For decoration:

The decorative lighting was also appreciated, with some noting that the regular lights should reflect the historic feeling of the area.

"I would like to see the building facades upgraded and the street lights and furniture be more period appropriate to the historical nature of the downtown buildings.

4.4.5 Graffiti

Many noted that the amount of graffiti tagging was a large detractor for visiting the area. The graffiti tagging makes the street feel unsafe and dirty, and some hoped that the landlords would maintain their facade and remove tagging quickly.

However, they noted that murals featuring intentional graffiti were beautiful and enhanced the space.

"I will reiterate that the graffiti tagging is an ongoing issue that has gotten much worse since the last election and hasn't improved in any way. When I called the town about spots they said they couldn't do anything and it's the landlords job. The landlords don't care, and are probably not local, so how do we make them care? How do we clean up the tagging and beautify and revitalize our downtown again?"

"A concerted effort to address graffiti and missing buildings to create a complete street. The broken-window theory and keeping up with graffiti removal will make the downtown feel safer and belong to the community."

4.5 Festivals and Events

Many comments noted that they want to see more festivals and events within the area.

"Brock Street could become a destination location with the proper balance of restaurants, trendy shops and entertainment. Art Hubs always attract people and improve business. Closing the street at select times of the year for major events seems to be popular (ie;

Respondents noted that they remembered when the area used to host more events and the community came together to celebrate and would like to see more of them in the future.

There was general support for closing the space for vehicle traffic to host events. Respondents noted that these events build the community feeling and encourage people to come out and explore the area.

The Blueberry Festival & The Maple Festival, in Bowmanville where they close King St. for one Saturday."

"Whitby used to have a lot more downtown festivals, displays and street closures that brought the community together. Where did they all go? It was nice to see so many people out together in the downtown area where the businesses are."

4.6 Destination

4.6.1 Heritage

Many participants were quite proud of the Brock Street heritage and were encouraging of efforts to preserve and highlight the small-town community feeling and historic features.

"Continue to focus on developing Brock Street's historical value by encouraging a fun and artsy vibe while maintaining a small town community feeling."

"Keep the historic part of Downtown intact it's one of the greatest parts of our town."

Some sited examples of other areas such as Port Hope or Port Perry that also celebrated their heritage and could serve as inspiration during this redesign.

Respondents noted that they would like designs that highlight and celebrate historic features including art and cultural references that residents can be proud of.

"I'd like to see Whitby looking more like other historic downtowns like Georgetown, Port Hope, Port Perry etc rather being greeted by fluorescent store front wraps and neon signage."

"Considering other historic downtown cores in other countries, the Town could consider making greater use of adjacent streets as pedestrian walk areas away from the busy through fare of Brock St, free parking (see Port Perry and Port Hope's success in free parking lots), connect the downtown core to Celebration Square better to capitalize on events."

> *"I'd also like to see more art in the Town that goes beyond road painting or murals. Artists can also infuse historic sites with cultural meaning and references to their history that can become much more than historic plaques and provide education in addition to civic pride and identity."*

4.6.2 Shops and Restaurants

Many expressed concern over the types of businesses in the area. In particular the Royal Hotel, vape stores, and the vacant spaces were detractors for visiting the area and added to the perception of the space being unsafe.

> *"Remove less desirable businesses e.g. money mart. Buy and sell. Etc. The appearance of section of brock tattered and worn and is dark and gloomy. Bars on windows is not very welcoming. Is not a friendly and quaint appearance."*

Many also observed that the space felt dark and unfriendly, and like there was not a lot that would merit visiting.

> *"I'd like to see the vacant store fronts be used for something instead of remaining vacant buildings that encourage vandalism. Put pressure on the landlord's to fill the commercial/ vacant spaces. Fill with non-profits at subsidized rates if you can't find tenants. At least the space would be used and not boarded up or left to decay."*

They noted that while there were some nice current establishments within the area, that having others worth visiting would be more incentive to visit the area.

> *"Bring in more UNIQUE stores. Little cafes, unique arts, bands. Pop up stores and events."*

Many respondents asked for more unique and upscale stores, that encourage people to want to visit and walk around the area. They also noted that the current places look a bit tired, so a sprucing up of the space would help to encourage more foot traffic.

> *"Bring in more elegant restaurant venues that appeal to a premium-casual & chic atmosphere so that our downtown is an elevated experience from the rest of Whitby. It should be a place that people want to go grab a drink after work or celebrate big events by venue hopping from restaurant to restaurant for a different atmosphere at each. Further to that, we need better STORES."*

Respondents also noted that more restaurants and a diverse variety of cuisine is desired for the space. Some observed that there was a high turnover of restaurants in the area that was likely a result of the parking challenges. Having a parking strategy, where visitors could easily find space would be needed in order for businesses to succeed.

Some also suggested a unified space look and feel. This would include having new signage welcome visitors to the space and highlighting what attractions and shops are in the area.

4.6.3 Height of Buildings

The height of buildings within the area was also mentioned as a point to be considered. They noted the small-town feel was important and limiting the heights of buildings within the area would help maintain the atmosphere.

In particular there was a general disapproval for condo buildings in the area, with the exception of Station 3 which many describe as tastefully designed and well incorporated into the space.

"NO tall buildings No more condos Keep the small town look & feel. Last part of town that feels that way."

"What we don't need are enormous condos (The Station 3 condo was surprisingly well designed), … modern art or (more) stacked townhouses all along Brock St."

4.7 Trees and Plants

Trees and plants were the top priority during the initial vote, and these sentiments were echoed with many noting that green features should be prioritized.

Having trees available for shade and beautification are highlighted as key features that would make the area more appealing and would be beneficial for pedestrians who visit the area.

"More large green features. Trees etc please."

"Greenery and trees should be prioritized during all new phases of building. They built that sitting area at Byron/Brock and I've not seen a single person hang out there since. I believe it's because no trees were planted for shade, asphalt was used instead of brick, woodchips were used with no garden space or grass, making it appear too industrial and brown."

"Plant large form trees with ample soil volumes will allow you to have fewer planting spaces, rather than multiple planting spaces for small form trees. This will still ensure ample canopy coverage. The city should consider land purchases of under-utilized locations to develop downtown green spaces or parkettes."

4.8 Transit

Many respondents noted that any future plans should integrate with transit.

They noted that the current transit is not easy to navigate for those who want to visit the area.

"We need to integrate public transit into the 4 corners in a way that promotes this intersection to be a stop that people want to get off at to eat, shop and explore for both north/south and east/wets roads."

Apart from accessing the area, the current bus stop locations may also pose traffic flow challenges and shifting them off major intersections may free up some of the congestion.

“A redesign to both traffic flow and pedestrian accessibility especially around the four corners is key. It turns into a bottleneck both for cars, but also pedestrians. Suggest moving the bus stops half a block back from the corner to alleviate that pressure point.”

“Bus shelters should be removed for these areas with a drop off just north of Dundas and North of Mary Street (or corner of Mary on NW side/NE to accommodate travellers going N, E and W, and for travellers coming S to get off at Mary Street.”

Consulting Metrolinx was a key importance for future decisions so that any designs made are not undone when the transit line is development.

“I would hope that any decisions in spending the budget would be done in consultation with Metrolinx so we aren't doing construction around the 4 corners to only have it get torn up again and possibly built differently in the near future.”

5. Next Steps

Communication and engagement of interested community partners and community members is critical to the success of integrating the proposed update into Brock Street.

The team will consider the feedback collected as they progress in refining the design alternatives. The design will consider how people enter the area, and what features will enhance their experience while there.

There will be another round of engagement for the team to share the refined design and potential redesign updates this Fall. There will be an open house to share the refined design and gather further feedback and attend the Town's various Advisory Committees and Boards.

The final presentation to Council is tentatively scheduled for Q1 2025.