



Gardiner Expressway Environmental Assessment and Integrated Urban Design Study

Backgrounder: Terms of Reference

Developed using input collected over months of public consultation in 2009, the Terms of Reference define critical elements of the Gardiner Expressway and Lakeshore Boulevard Reconfiguration Environmental Assessment (EA) and Integrated Urban Design Study. The Terms of Reference include the project goals, alternatives for consideration, assessment and evaluation process and consultation plan.

The Terms of Reference were approved by City Council and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) in 2009. Waterfront Toronto and City staff will report back to Council with a preferred alternative in the spring of 2014. Final MOE review is expected to begin in the spring of 2015.

Project Goals

The following five project goals were developed using Waterfront Toronto's guiding principles, the City of Toronto's Official Plan and Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, and with public and stakeholder input:

- 1. Revitalize the Waterfront** – A public realm that provides adequate access to open space, landscape, land and air, and contributes to the revitalization of the waterfront needs to be created.
- 2. Reconnect the City with the Lake** – Any configuration of the Gardiner Expressway will need to include welcoming and accessible routes to the waterfront, breaking down the barriers that exist today.
- 3. Balance Modes of Travel** – Any configuration of the Gardiner Expressway will need to maintain an effective local and regional transportation system, including commuters and freight, and minimize the impacts by balancing alternative travel modes, including transit, cycling and walking within the system.
- 4. Achieve Sustainability** – This project should advance the City's and Waterfront Toronto's commitments to green, healthy and energy efficient development, and employ sustainable design solutions that can improve environmental quality and biodiversity.
- 5. Create Value** – The future shape of the Gardiner Expressway East should act as a catalyst for good development and contribute to an integrated, vibrant and successful waterfront. Any change, whether rehabilitation, enhancement or replacement, will require investment. That investment should maximize opportunities for revitalization, and net economic and environmental benefits.

Alternatives to be Considered

Under the Terms of Reference, the Gardiner East EA will bring the following broad but defined range of options forward for study:

Alternative 1: *“Maintain” (the elevated expressway)* – The EA Act requires consideration of maintaining the status quo, which will serve as a base against which to compare all other alternatives.

Alternative 2: *Improve (the existing elevated expressway)* – The “Improve” alternative would retain the elevated expressway function, but with modifications to its configuration, as well as to Lake Shore Boulevard underneath.

Alternative 3: *Replace (with a new expressway)* – The “Replace” alternative would eliminate the existing elevated expressway structure, but the expressway function would be retained through construction of a limited access expressway, either buried in a tunnel or reconstructed above ground.

Alternative 4: *Remove (the elevated expressway)* – The “Remove” alternative would eliminate the expressway function and replace it with a lower-capacity, lower-speed roadway.

Assessment and Evaluation Process

Under the Terms of Reference for the Gardiner East study, the alternatives will be evaluated in terms of their ability to address transportation considerations and city building opportunities along with environmental and economic considerations. Four major themes or “evaluation lenses” have been established to provide structure to the assessment of alternatives:

1. *Transportation and Infrastructure* – focuses on accommodating the movement of people and goods, and addresses the potential effects on other infrastructure and issues relating to project constructability.
2. *Urban Design* – focuses on the creation of opportunities for improved urban form and improved or new public realm/open space.
3. *Environment* – focuses on the mitigation of negative effects on the social, cultural and natural environments and enhancement opportunities for the natural environment.
4. *Economic* – focuses on achieving a balance of project costs with project financial benefits that could include increased land values and benefits to the economy.

Consultation Plan

Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto recognize the importance of engaging stakeholders and the public by providing multiple and ongoing opportunities for input and feedback throughout the EA process. The consultation program laid out in the Terms of Reference is designed to be as inclusive as possible and to hear the full range of opinions, viewpoints and perspectives. Public comments, and the responses given, will be documented by the independent facilitation team. Summary reports of public comments will be available for review and feedback following consultation events.

The consultation plan includes the following elements:

Public Forums –provide opportunities for the public to give feedback and comments on study components, results, and ideas as they develop over the course of the study. The format will include: panel displays, presentations and small table discussions on key questions.

First Nations –will be contacted to determine their interest in participating during the EA. Individual meetings will be offered and interested First Nations will be contacted and asked for feedback during each round of public forums.

Stakeholder Workshops/Face-to-Face Meetings –will be convened to seek input from stakeholders on key issues and opportunities during the process. The Project Team will attend meetings when invited by specific organizations, as appropriate.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee – will be established at the outset of the EA, and will provide an ongoing forum for feedback, guidance and advice at key points during the process.

Technical Advisory Committee – consisting of government and agency representatives, it has been established to provide input at various milestones during the EA. It includes participation from various City of Toronto departments, TTC, Go Transit, Metrolinx and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Web-Enabled Consultations –www.gardinereast.ca will be utilized throughout the EA process. It will feature e-consultations that mirror face-to-face consultations at public forums, final published background reports, individual study reports and public notices.