

Community Engagement in Traynor-Vanier

Re

Pedestrian Connection Feasibility Study:

Traynor-Avenue to Fairway Road

January / February 2017

Complementary information gathering for the Traynor-Fairway pedestrian connection feasibility study

The engagement of tenants in four Traynor-Vanier buildings (280 units), currently owned and managed by Northview REIT, was made possible due to the long-term collaboration of the Social Development Centre Waterloo Region with the property management company and KW Tenant Group. KW Tenant Group was created in 2015 to provide reliable information and referral to tenants and improve communication between the management staff and the tenants.

Every year, the Social Development Centre Waterloo Region engages less involved neighbourhoods through door to door outreach on behalf of the Festival of Neighbourhoods and sponsors an annual Neighbourhood Connections project for a neighbourhood that wants to improve social conditions. This approach was first applied in Traynor-Vanier in 2013 and development work has continued because of the significant issues that exist in the neighbourhood.

To gather resident input on the LRT pedestrian crossing, door to door outreach was done on five occasions between January 31 and February 5, including one conducted in Nepalese for the 17 Bhutanese-Nepalese families that live in these buildings. In addition, information gathering stations were set up in each of the four building lobbies on the days when volunteers and staff were knocking on doors.

In total, 19 people supported the engagement activities: two Social Development Centre staff, 10 KW Tenant Group members, six urban planning students from the University of Waterloo and two Nepalese interpreters.

We reached 176 people in the four buildings and the response, overall, is in support of the pedestrian connection from Traynor to Fairway.

Number of People With Specific Responses

| # who stated crossing is needed | # who stated crossing is not needed | # with Language barrier* or recently arrived to the buildings/ no specific response | # with mobility issues | # of drivers (to work and for grocery shopping) | # who have changed their shopping patterns (no longer frequent Fairway stores) | # who stated that not having a crossing has no impact on them |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|--|---|
| 145 | 2 | 11 | 10 | 17 | 6 | 22 |

The majority of tenants (145 out of 176) think the crossing is needed (82%).

These include tenants with mobility issues, students who do not drive and use transit for school but walk to stores in the neighbourhood, drivers who have family members who walk to access necessities in the neighbourhood and drivers who changed their shopping patterns to elsewhere in Kitchener and would do more shopping on foot if it were convenient again. A number of tenants said that the reason they moved to the buildings was the once convenient and fast access to the businesses and stores along Fairway so they could have a short trip on foot to buy groceries, to meet friends and go to work.

Most of the newcomers (to the buildings or to the country) do not drive and say that having convenient access to shops is important. This response was also heard from those who do drive or are driven to work or school do their shopping on foot.

We heard from people who said that pedestrian crossing does not impact them personally, although, they acknowledged that there are “seniors, children or disabled” in the neighbourhood who would benefit from an easier access across the LRT tracks.

Two tenants stated directly that the crossing is not needed. Both drive to work and shopping.

** We could not collect input from 11 tenants, newcomers to the country who do not speak English or from new tenants who are not yet aware of the issue.*

Sampling of comments made by Traynor-Vanier tenants grouped by theme

A crossing is important for residents to access necessities:

We fought for Food Basics years ago, and now we have to fight to get to them [Food Basics and other stores]

Crossing over the tracks but without a crossing, it would take a long time and be difficult to carry groceries, very uncomfortable. If you run out of bread or milk, you have to take a bus to get something that is simple to grab.

With a crossing, it would be faster to buy what you need for food.

Walking around takes more time to get to the grocery, drug mart, bank...

It's ridiculous, [although] my husband has a car, I have to walk everywhere. From Food Basics to here, it's \$10 for a cab. If I have to go to Food Basics, I have to take a cab home.

It is difficult carrying groceries [without a crossing] and also since [tenant's] mom is hurt and cannot drive currently.

I might be a single dad now... [and] the importance of getting back and forth is extremely dire. I'm always on foot, I don't own a vehicle. In the winter, I don't own a jacket so I don't want to take the long walk around.

Mother needs someone to give her a ride when she goes shopping. Crossing would make it easier.

Now, I need to drive to get food which is crazy, as it was so close to walk.

I need transfer and two buses needed to go to Food Basics. It can take me 2 hours with my walker and is expensive. A bus transfer does not last long enough so I must use 2 bus tickets.

Crossing is urgent because it would provide immediate access for necessities.

A crossing is important for people with mobility limitations (seniors, peoples with disabilities, and parents with young children):

We're disabled, and we have to walk everywhere.

With two little kids for whom 30 minutes is too much to walk and going by bus around is too long for basic groceries.

Used to walk to the grocery store by myself, now someone has to drive me. I can't cross over the LRT tracks with gravel on the path as it affects the wheel on my walker. I think that the people who created the LRT did not think about people with accessibility issues. When I takes a cab it costs \$11, and \$6 for the bus, but it used to be free when I could walk to the shops.

A crossing is important for safety reasons/It is dangerous without a crossing

There needs to be three bridges. People are using skids to build staircases.

A crossing is really important, once I slipped and was lucky that my brother was close to help and drive me to the hospital. It is crazy slippery to cross. People asked the workers to help with opening the gates. But now, the gravel is making it difficult as well. The train is great but what about the people who stay in the neighbourhood.

I have slipped/fallen when crossing over the tracks. I still cross the tracks to get where I need to go.

Students come from Conestoga home from late evening classes and have to cross from Food Basics when it is dark.

Crossing over the tracks is dangerous for the kids.

Yes, we need crossing. I see the struggle of people and I put the plywood over the tracks to make it easier to cross.

Used to walk but take the cab now because of my son, don't want him to fall/slip on snow or rocks. An overpass will alleviate the inconvenience.

A crossing is important for commuting to work

It is important to get to work early in the morning when not even buses go.

Once those walls go up, I'd have to quit my job because I'd have no access.

A crossing is important for the businesses on the other side of the LRT tracks

I remember how simple it was before when I was using the paths almost every day. Without the crossing, MacDonald's will lose its business.

I work in Food Basics and walk to Tims. It was a poor decision to cut people off. Businesses having less profit for two years of about \$100 000. Two Tims shortened their night hours as there are less people coming.

The LRT Crossing does not affect them personally but is still important for others

I don't feel affected by the construction. I walk with my dog and I just take the long way around, and enjoy the walk. Crossing would be good.

I drive, so it is not important for me but it is for other people so yes, especially seniors.

I do not mind having to walk but my husband walks everywhere and likes taking the little one to Macs. Now it is not easy.

PHOTOS OF MAPPING BOARDS

