



Bronte Village Streetscape Study What We Heard Report

July, 2024

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1.0 Introduction

The Town of Oakville is planning to enhance the streetscape in the main street and historic village area of Bronte Village. This will involve the development of a public realm study and a streetscape plan which will include recommendations for improvements and implementation.

The Public Realm Study and Streetscape Plan has been initiated with the first round of public engagement. The Town of Oakville (the Town) has launched a web page ([Bronte Village Streetscape Study Web Page](#)) where information on the project and the team's work in progress is posted. In the first three phases of the project there have been one-on-one conversations with residents, meetings with the Business Improvement Area (BIA), Town staff, local councillors and the public. A summary of what we've heard so far is summarized in this report.

The project is being undertaken in seven phases. The team has completed the project initiation with the launch of the web page, start up meetings with Town staff and assembly of background information. During phase two and three the team completed their early inventory and analysis of existing conditions such as land use, building character, streetscape features, trails and cycling facilities, parks, squares, open spaces, parking and traffic. The team shared their inventory, analysis and thoughts on an overarching public realm framework at a June public information centre.



Study process:

- Phase 1: Project Initiation
- Phase 2: Inventory and Analysis
- Phase 3: Public Realm Framework
- Phase 4: Streetscape Concepts
- Phase 5: Public Consultation
- Phase 6: Final Streetscape Master Plan
- Phase 7: Streetscape Implementation Plan

Bronte Village Streetscape Study

Planning is underway to enhance the streetscape in the main shopping area of Bronte Village.

Project overview

We're making Bronte Village a more vibrant place for residents, visitors and businesses. Planning is underway to enhance the streetscape in the main shopping area of Bronte Village. The town has hired a consultant to conduct a public realm study and develop a streetscape plan which will include recommendations for improvements and implementation.

We can't do it without you! Public engagement opportunities are built into every step of the process. Proposed improvements will be shaped by input from residents, community groups, business owners, developers, Council, town staff and the consulting team.

- [Public engagement opportunities](#)
- [Project area map](#)
- [Project details](#)
- [Project timeline overview](#)
- [Project status](#)
- [Background information](#)
- [Contact us](#)

Transportation & Roads

- Parking
- Roads & Sidewalks
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- Active Transportation
- Traffic & Road Safety
- Transportation & Roads Studies and Plans
- Transportation & Roads Studies and Plans
- Bronte Village Streetscape Study

Public engagement opportunities

There will be many opportunities to share your input on the public realm framework and streetscape concepts.

Four rounds of engagement are planned. Each round will offer different ways to participate, share feedback and raise community awareness.

Upcoming public engagements

Public information centre - Fall 2024

Public workshops will be held in late September/early October 2024 to share initial streetscape concept plans based on the feedback and ideas received to date.

We will present the concept plans and seek input on preferences and constraints as we work towards developing a consolidated and comprehensive streetscape design for Bronte Village.

Past public engagements

Review the June 26, 2024 presentation

Public information centres were held on June 26, 2024. The afternoon and evening sessions began with a presentation on the project, followed by small group discussions where the community was invited to share comments and ideas.

[Review The Presentation Slides - June 26, 2024 \(Pdf\)](#)

If you were not able to attend and would like to provide your comments and ideas, please email Christina Tizzard at christina.tizzard@oakville.ca.

1.1 What is a Public Realm and Streetscape Study?

Public Realm Study

Public realm refers to publicly accessible and highly visible spaces located along our streets, boulevards, pedestrian ways, parks, plazas and the interface with buildings. So many vital activities that are part of our daily lives take place in public spaces, shaping our day-to-day experiences. These spaces make our neighbourhoods vibrant places to live, and are crucial to the community's participation in public life. Investing in the public realm is essential in creating harmonious and socially inclusive communities.

The public realm study will identify existing amenities and opportunities for physical improvements to enhance the spaces and connections between the traditional commercial main street and surrounding community.



Parks and Open Space in Bronte Village

Streetscape Study

Streetscape refers to the physical environment of a street. This includes its visual character and how the space is used by pedestrians, patrons, cyclists and motorists. The streetscape of a town shows the natural and built environment of the street, enhancing the experience of that space. Streetscapes also envision the public life of the residents, workers, patrons and visitors in the area, becoming the success criteria for the public life of a town.

The streetscape concept plans (design and layout) will include street trees and other landscape materials, special paving, lighting, street furniture, public art and wayfinding.



2.0 Conversation with the Bronte Business Improvement Area

June 14, 2024

- Project has generated excitement.
- Smallest BIA with 175 businesses.
- Focus on beautification, winter décor, planters/baskets, and activating Market Square with heavy event programming.
- 75 days of activation on the waterfront and square, including music and library events.
- Town handles waterfront permitting; BIA manages Muskoka art chairs (80 in the park, 50 in commercial area).
- Market Square hosts various events, including a curling rink and a Sunday farmers market (58 vendors, expecting 40 per Sunday), but faces infrastructure issues like insufficient hydro and no public bathrooms.
- Event period runs from July 7 to August 25.
- Private parking lots are common, with some businesses offering parking for customers.
- Development applications are supported, aiming to welcome 3,000 new residents.
- Current vacancy rate is 7%.



3.0 One-on-one Conversations with Residents



June 3, 2024

On June 3, 2024, a consultant team member had eighteen 15-minute conversations with Bronte Village residents as an opportunity for the community to voice any concerns, ideas or thoughts on the project. The following points below are a summary of what we heard during these conversations:

Parking and Walkability

- Issues with predatory towing, particularly near the lake and Bronte south of Lakeshore.
- Lack of parking is an issue, suggestions for more free parking spaces and better integration of parking with retail areas.
- Desire for more pedestrian-friendly spaces to encourage walking and shopping locally.

Retail and Development

- Concerns about high retail rents driving out small businesses and making it hard for new ones to open.
- Importance of maintaining a variety of shops to serve the community's needs.
- Emphasis on keeping the small-town feel with low-rise buildings rather than high-rise developments.
- Mixed opinions on new developments, with some residents welcoming it if it includes amenities and retains community character.

Community and Streetscape

- Desire for a cohesive community feel similar to Downtown Oakville.
- Suggestions for consistent design elements such as heritage lights, benches, and bollards to enhance the streetscape.
- Calls for more green infrastructure, including trees and planters, to make the area more attractive and environmentally friendly.

Waterfront and Public Space

- High value placed on access to the waterfront and its amenities.
- Suggestions for improving the waterfront area to make it more usable and attractive for residents and visitors.
- Interest in increasing cultural and entertainment offerings along the waterfront, such as outdoor concerts and markets.
- Desire for more interesting light standards, better plantings, and more Muskoka chairs throughout the village.
- Enhancements to the Bronte Market Square, including a bigger water feature and more seating areas to create a sense of community.

Traffic, Cycling and Pedestrian Safety

- Need for better bike lanes and pedestrian crossings, particularly over bridges and busy streets.
- Intersection of Lakeshore and Bronte is a bottleneck; suggestions for a roundabout to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.
- Introduction of a centre median along Lakeshore for pedestrian safety and removal of slip lanes.

Village Atmosphere and Character

- Residents appreciate the village feel and vibrancy, emphasizing the need to maintain it amid new developments.
- Concerns about “wall to wall condos” creating a tunnel effect; preference for stepped-back building designs to preserve the open feeling.

4.0 Input Received Through the Public Information Centre #1

June 26, 2024

62 participants

Two public information centres were held on June 26, 2024. The afternoon session took place between 2:30 pm and 4:30 pm at the Church of the Epiphany (141 Bronte Road) with a total of 30 participants. The evening session took place between 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Walton Memorial United Church (2489 Lakeshore Road) with a total of 32 participants. Both sessions began with a presentation on the project, followed by small group discussions where the community was invited to share comments and ideas on parks, open space, streetscape, moving around, as well as the activities, landscaping, and types of uses they would like to see at Market Square.



The following is a summary of what we heard:

Parking and Traffic

- Parking is a major concern; unresolved parking issues affect residents and visitors.
- Shift suggested from prioritizing cars to prioritizing cyclists and public transit, though this won't solve current car problems.
- Ongoing issues with predatory parking practices and upcoming meetings to address them.
- Suggestions for on-street parking and clearer parking regulations.
- Concerns about multi-unit developments increasing traffic congestion and longer travel times to major roads like the QEW.
- Suggestion for a roundabout at Bronte/Lakeshore intersection to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Reports of people avoiding Bronte due to parking difficulties.

Community Identity

- Mixed feelings about Bronte Village adopting a similar identity to Downtown Oakville; many prefer a distinct Bronte Village character.
- Desire for unique streetscape elements, like interesting light standards and more green infrastructure, to enhance the village's charm.

Public Spaces and Amenities

- Enhancement of Market Square with more seating, flowers, arts and craft markets, and art installations representative of Bronte's heritage.
- Under-maintenance of small parks on East/Marine St. and Nelson/Marine St., with calls for more frequent upkeep.
- Suggestions for more amenities like dog parks by the waterfront, shaded seating areas, and more pedestrian-friendly walkways.
- Need for permanent structures like pergolas in Market Square for shade and social gatherings.
- More public art installations, sculptures, and murals to enhance the village atmosphere.
- Reports of new park benches giving a good feeling and enhancing the area.

Streetscape Improvements

- Introduction of traffic calming measures, such as a centre median with planters on Lakeshore, to reduce speeding and improve pedestrian safety.
- Pedestrianization of Bronte and reduction of speeds on Lakeshore to make the area more walkable.
- Concerns about construction disruptions affecting businesses.
- Requests for more street trees and improved lighting to enhance the village atmosphere.

Connectivity and Infrastructure

- Discussion on bridging the gap between the east and west sides of Bronte Creek, possibly with a pedestrian bridge over Bronte Creek.
- Improving connectivity to the Bronte GO station with better walking and cycling paths.

Wayfinding and Signage

- Need for clear wayfinding signs at each end of Lakeshore to guide visitors to Bronte Village.
- Improved signage for amenities like beaches, playgrounds, and public washrooms.
- Improvement of the "Bronte Waves" sign and other elements that are representative of Bronte Village.

Safety and Maintenance

- Safety concerns at the Lakeshore bridge for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Need for regular maintenance of heritage sites and better upkeep of public amenities to preserve the village's historical and aesthetic value.



This is what we heard...

Parks, Squares & Open Spaces

Take advantage of waterfront

Care + maintenance of the small beach at the foot of East St should be included in the scope of work

Beautiful street lights with a golden glow

More park equipment

Put the lighthouse back in Bronte Harbour

Leave sufficient open streets to allow adequate sun exposure

Memorable squares in Barcelona where buildings do not enclose roads and allow for even more openness, light

Benches & trees along Bronte/Lakeshore

Underutilized area on Bronte and the waterfront - consider shipping containers for small businesses, retail, cafes

Able to obtain a drink every few yards = more outdoor patios

I loved the idea about making some streets pedestrian only during the summer/weekends

Modern uniform lighting across all zones

Large flowering trees on Lakeshore to provide shade, habitat, visual appeal

More large trees on Lakeshore

Street furniture theme that captures the history and character of Bronte - ie. fishing village roots

pop-up events

Spectacular gateways

Beyond what's approved - there needs to be height restrictions for buildings

Streetscape

Marine Dr. street lighting insufficient and dangerous

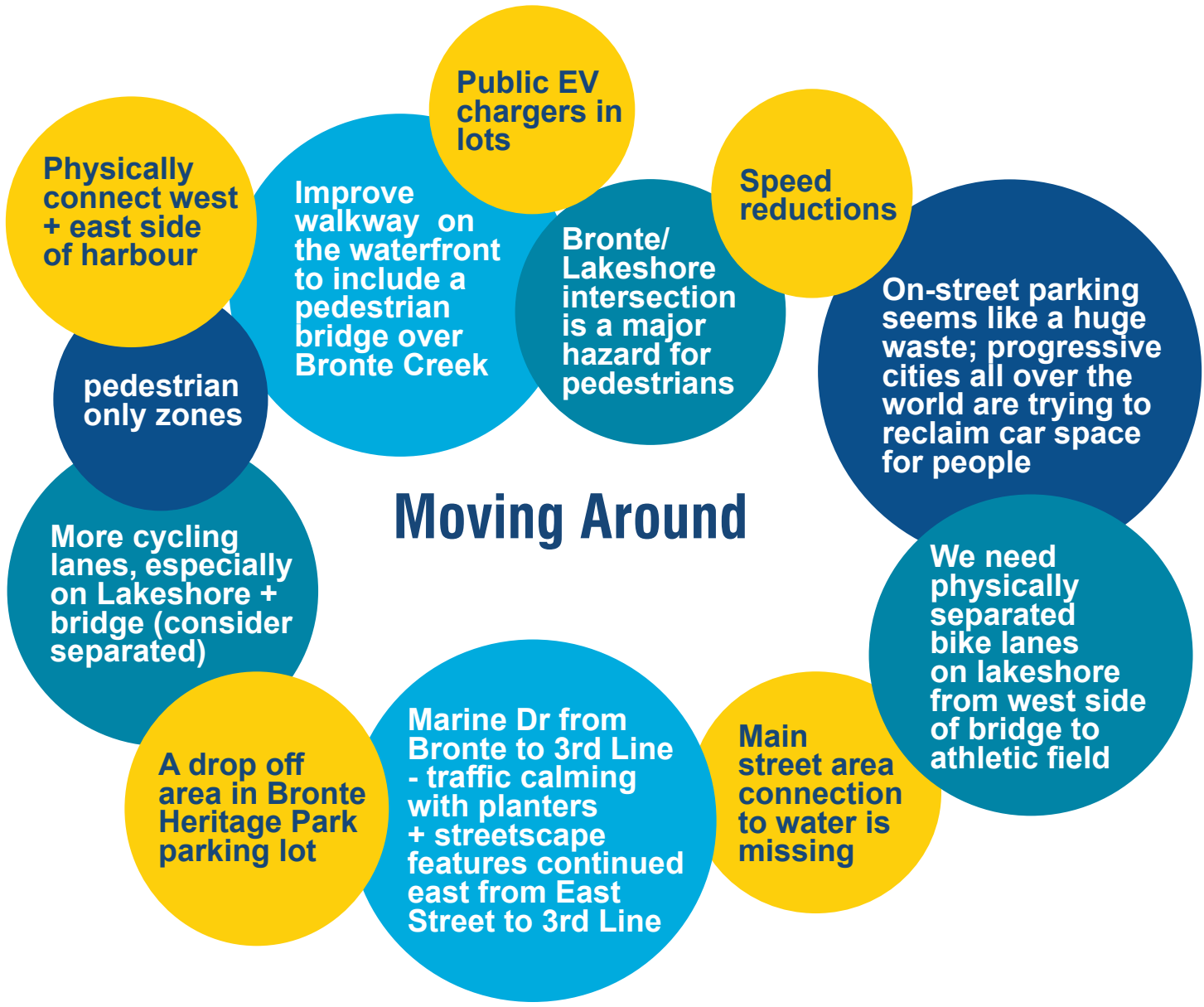
Landscape to prevent mud pit (Lakeshore and Marine Dr.)

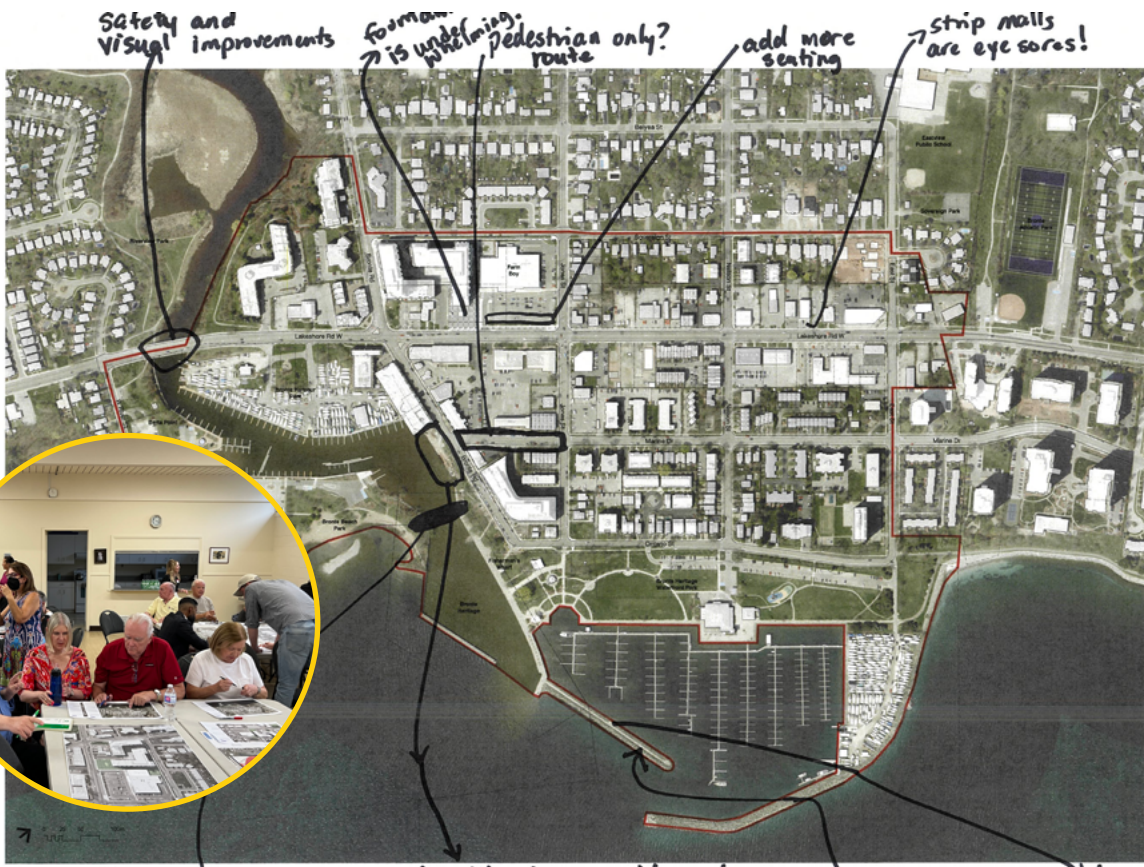
Continuity of materials from store fronts to sidewalks

Wide sidewalks

I see several streets where trees were planted and now the stop signs are no longer visible. Need to consider safety in everything that is planned.

Lots of public art





- Parks, Squares and Open Space**
Think about how to improve the spaces. Think about places you've visited and describe what make them memorable - what could be considered for Bronte?
- more tree cover in Market Sq. too
 - more planters and shade structures
 - seating for diff demographics - chillin adults
- Streetscape**
Think about trees and other landscape sidewalk width, furnishings, public art
- public art
 - signage at entry to Village
 - modern design
 - lighting around district
 - more patio space
- Moving Around**
Think about traffic, pedestrian routes and crossing, parking on the street and in lots, cycling lanes, signage
- more cycling lanes, especially on lakeshore + bridge (consider separated)



Here's examples of worksheets filled out by participants at the workshop:



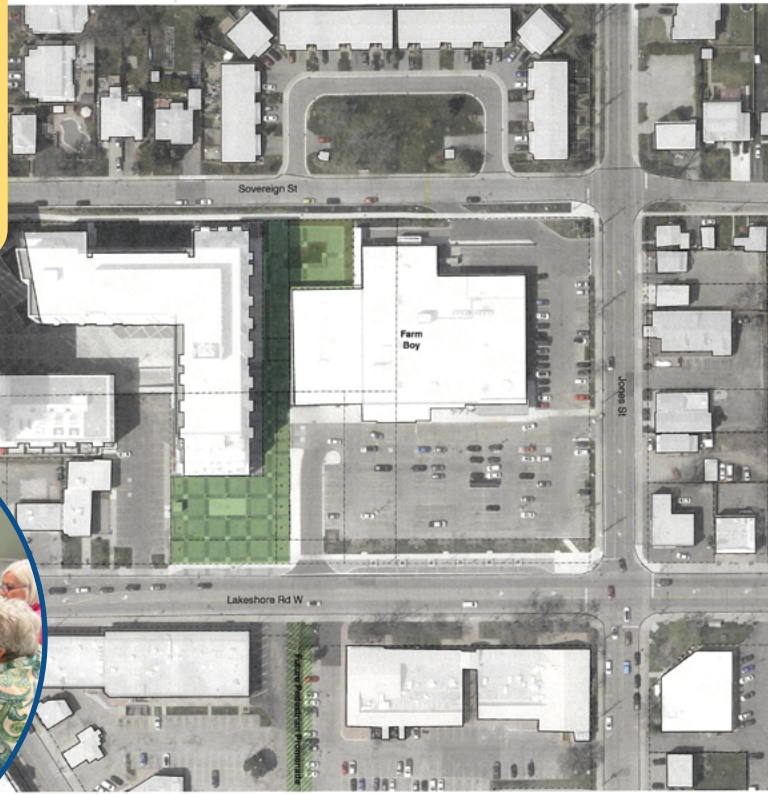
- Parks, Squares and Open Space**
Think about how to improve the spaces. Think about places you've visited and describe what make them memorable - what could be considered for Bronte?
- Market square needs signage, visual separation from sidewalks, parking lots, shade, greenery, large central water feature with permanent seating around it. Needs to be inviting, welcoming + family-friendly, lots of small shops, behind the shops at the bottom of Bank Rd. Use Lakeshore boulevard as waterfront for Streetscape public purpose. Bronte*
- Streetscape**
Think about trees and other landscape, Benches, sidewalk width, furnishings, public art
- Large planters trees on Lakeshore to provide shade, habitat, visual appeal. Shaded area seating area on Lakeshore incorporating multiple plant types. Public art with natural theme. Seating with enough big tables + seating with shade, need more trees less concrete. More benches with ornamental light poles, seating, etc.*
- Moving Around**
Think about traffic, pedestrian routes and crossing, parking on the street and in lots, cycling lanes, signage
- Physically connect east side of Market + Lakeshore streets. Remove dangerous intersection at Bank + Lakeshore. Avoid accessibility + rough paving - keep accessibility in mind. Increased activity + black improvements require significant pedestrian public parking. Avoid mistakes of Brantford. Brantford where 2 lanes of on street parking + 2 lanes of public access way with no safe space for cyclists. Days parking in + out of cars on street side. We need physically separated bike lanes on Lakeshore from west side of bridge to adjacent fields.*



Bridge over Bronte creek needs to be wider, separate bike lanes, green boulevard, lookout areas on north + south side with seating.

Street side. We need physically separated bike lanes on Lakeshore from west side of bridge to adjacent fields.

Here's an example of a worksheet filled out by participants at the workshop:



OAKVILLE
Public Realm Framework & Streetscape Plans
Bronte Village
June 26, 2014

What Activities and Events Would You Like to See in Market Square?
*Seating place with
benches, chairs, tables
Games tables
Good Christmas decoration
was had enjoyed by all.*

*1. Looking forward to the
farmer's market.
2. Arts & crafts market.*

What Kind of Landscape and Furnishings Would You Like to See in Market Square?
*More plants and good raised beds
similar to Bronte Beachhouse.
Trees for shade.
more benches along lakeshore
with planters.*

What Other Types of Uses in the Immediate Area Would Support the Market Square?
*MUSIC CONCERTS
A cultivated small
area of Milkwood to
encourage monarch to
lay their egg.
MORE BUTTERFLY
(Monarch) flowers!
Blossom trees to attract
butterflies!!!*

Market Square Ideas:



Market Square Ideas:

Uses within the Immediate Area

Reclaim parking area next to Market Square

Village Square - "welcome to Bronte Village" sign with cool positive image at each entry on Lakeshore

Accessible parking nearby

A cross walk between Market Square across the road to the south, with lights

Landscape & Furnishings

Change appearance - looks too corporate

Plants and flowers similar to Niagara-on-the-Lake

More flowers for butterflies!! (Monarchs)

Water feature to be enhanced + to run continuously during daylight hours

For shade - a large pergola with fixed louvers to cast shade but dump snow

More planters and raised beds similar to Bronte Boathouse

Attractive, visually appealing

Trees on every street & walkway

Some grass, more gardens, more trees & more seating

Shade canopy

More benches along Lakeshore with planters

5.0 Next Steps

The team received input to advance the overall public realm framework for Bronte Village by making green connections to the harbour, the Bronte Athletic Park and the Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park. Many ideas were shared with the team which will be used to inform the development of the streetscape concept options for Lakeshore Road and Bronte Road. We heard support for a streetscape that was distinct from Downtown Oakville, enhanced tree/landscape planting, more shaded seating and better wayfinding and signage. The team also heard a lot of ideas for Market Square including suggestions for events and activities, more variety in the landscape and need for shade structures.

The team will continue to reach out to business owners and other stakeholders in Bronte Village over the coming months.

The team is advancing to Phase 4 of the project. The next round of public engagement will occur in the fall of 2024 when the team will present options to consider for the streetscapes and suggestions for Market Square.



