

5. A New Public Square



*Cenotaph /
Confederation Park*

Create a Public Square, a multi-purpose outdoor venue for gatherings and community celebrations.

Where can the City hold a party? Great cities often have large public spaces that become the accepted and cherished venue for a community to gather in celebration. Toronto has Nathan Phillips Square. New York has Time Square. Ottawa has Parliament Hill.

Peterborough has several spaces that serve as gathering venues for specific special events. The Cenotaph is a respectful place, used for solemn and reflective ceremonies. Millennium Park is a place of quiet refuge where the community can gather in a natural park space beside the river. It has been used for music and arts festivals but its geometry and style of landscape development does not readily lend itself to large, intensive gatherings. It also has limited opportunity for use in winter conditions. Del Cray Park is an outstanding venue for the performing arts, however it too is a park and is situated just beyond the generally accepted heart of the City where there already exists the infrastructure to support large gatherings such as restaurants and parking. The City has used Downtown streets for short duration gatherings however the temporary nature of these venues do not establish an affinity to the space by the community nor is it practical to consider public streets as a long term venue without significant impact on adjoining properties.

This Master Plan strategy seeks to create a permanent Public Square in Downtown Peterborough for the benefit of the entire community. What is envisioned is a large, multi-purpose outdoor venue for gatherings and community celebrations.

The location that leads the list for consideration is the Louis Street Parking lot. It has the following attributes:

- It is municipally owned and can be expanded to include the north portion of the Louis Street road allowance.
- It is adjacent to the King Street Parkade.
- The parking lot today has a relatively low utilization rate and is in need of cosmetic upgrades for it to continue to be used for public parking.
- The site is large and the geometry is conducive to large gatherings.
- The location adds depth to the downtown by placing a traffic generator to the shoulder of George Street rather than to the length of George Street. A more compact downtown is preferable to a longer downtown.



*View of Clock Tower
from Louis Street*

- The location is within the view shed of Downtown's symbolic icon (the Clock Tower) and the site is important to the Charlotte Gateway.



A Public Square, designed to be multi-purpose, could be a Farmer's Market venue on Wednesday and Saturday mornings from Victoria Day to Thanksgiving. It could be a second or third stage for the Festival of Lights. It could be an overflow parking area in December and an outdoor skating rink in January and February. It could be a Rib-fest in July and summer arts and craft festival in August. It could be a New Year's countdown, a place for democracy to be heard and even a bench in the shade to eat a workday lunch.

It should be designed with park elements, including shade trees and benches. It should be designed as an urban space with lighting and durable surfaces. It needs to be cosmopolitan in flavour with colour, character and transformable spaces. It is a statement of civic pride and civic life.

An alternative location considered, though much smaller, is the open north-west corner of Peterborough Square, well situated adjacent to Market Hall, a historical gathering place in Downtown Peterborough.

This space has very urban edges being so central to the

commercial core. About 4 years ago a design exercise was undertaken to look at the adaptability of the Peterborough Square Court Yard as a home for an expanded Farmers Market currently occupying Charlotte Street on Wednesday mornings for 6 months of the year. The owner's of Peterborough Square however have advised that the open corner is now being actively considered for another purpose. Therefore it is no longer a candidate location for the Public Square.



This Master Plan strategy requires the preparation of a feasibility study and urban design study as a prelude to implementation. There is a need to investigate more fully the potential Public uses through discussion with the broader community in order to program the space at the conceptual level. The creation of such a venue would directly respond to recommendations in the **DEA** concerning clustering of cultural uses such as a Farmer's Market in the downtown.

6.
Renew Charlotte
Street as a priority

Prioritize the renewal of the Charlotte Street right-of-way from Water Street to Park Street.

Charlotte Street is the principle western gateway to the downtown. The entire length of the street from Park Street to Millennium Park is commercial or mixed use and supports one of the strongest retail corridors in the Downtown.

Site Evaluation Matrix Criteria

Access and Linkages

- 1.1 Visibility from distance
 - Street frontage visibility
- 1.2 Ease in walking to the place from downtown
 - Pedestrian access in the downtown core within 2 minutes
- 1.3 Transit access / Transit stop
 - Stop locations within 2 minutes
 - Proximity to transportation hub
 - Number of routes servicing the site
- 1.4 Barrier-free accessibility
 - Grading issues / steep
- 1.5 Available parking
 - High capacity parking within 2 minutes
- 1.6 Linkage to Gateway
 - Location and number of frontage on gateway street (Hunter, Charlotte and George and Water)

Comfort and Image

- 2.1 Overall attractiveness of the area
 - Street scape
 - Building condition
 - Building vacancy
- 2.2 Feeling of safety
 - Visibility from street
 - Pedestrian activity
 - Traffic / pedestrian conflicts
- 2.3 Orientation / exposure (wind, sun, micro-climate)
 - Wind, sun, micro-climates
- 2.4 Views out
 - Views out
 - Landmark features / heritage
 - Natural features
 - Waterfront
- 2.5 Sound and Traffic
 - Industrial traffic
 - Major roads and volume

Urban Context

- 3.1 Mix of Land-use
 - Variety of land uses surrounding the site
 - Compatible land uses
- 3.2 Active and defined edges
 - Does the edge have a defined physical form which frames the site
 - Does the edge have activity
- 3.3 Surrounding built form
 - Tactile surfaces
 - Quality historical buildings and character
 - Condition of buildings
- 3.4 Relationship to civic / cultural / heritage
 - Civic / cultural / heritage property (including performance theatre) or feature within 2 minute walk
- 3.5 Relationship to attraction / entertainment node
 - Attraction / entertainment node within 2 minute walk
- 3.6 Commercial Activity
 - Vacancy of surrounding buildings within 2 minute walk

- Magnitude of pedestrian traffic (contributes to incidental shopping)
- 3.7 Appropriate for large gatherings at different times
- Appropriate relative to residential units
 - Impact surrounding land-uses in positive or negative way

Strategic Development Opps

- 4.1 Scale / Facility fit (program uses)
- Larger the better to fit more facilities
 - +10,000 sq.m = 3
 - $\geq 7,500 - 10,000$ sq.m = 2
 - $\geq 5,000 - 7,500$ sq. m = 1
 - $< 5000 = 0$
- 4.2 Flexibility of space (accommodate programs)
- Ability for surroundings to accommodate a spill of activity from the site (open spaces)
 - Number of directions the activities can spill to
- 4.3 Potential for linkages
- Link to trails
 - Number of links
 - Back property links (pedestrian movement behind buildings)
 - Trail heads
 - Open space links
- 4.4 Potential for activation / animated edges
- Potential for surrounding edges to be built up with active uses and pedestrian traffic
- 4.5 Fewer obstacles to implementation
- Ownership
 - Environmental (brownfield)
 - Open site vs. built site (requiring demolition)
- 4.6 Potential short term gains
- Ownership
 - Impact on surrounding areas
- 4.7 Potential long term gains
- Environmental Impact
 - Economic vitality
 - Identity / Attraction to the core
 - Attractiveness to site
 - Catalyst for development
- 4.8 Future redevelopment of surrounding area (catalytic effect)
- Potential of the site surroundings to develop as a result of the construction of an urban square
 - Room for the surroundings to develop

SITE EVALUATION STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Evaluation Results (out of 78 possible points):

Site A – Louis Street Site:	51 pts.	65%
Site B – Peterborough Square:	50 pts.	64%
Site C – Harvey's Site:	45 pts.	57%
Site E – Victoria Park Site:	35 pts.	45%
Site F – No Frills Parking Site:	22 pts.	30%
Site D – Ontario Court of Justice/Gas Works Lot:	21 pts.	26%

SITE A – LOUIS STREET SITE

The Louis Street site is in some ways the opposite of the Peterborough Square site. The site is particularly strong in the Strategic Development Opportunities category (future potential) and weak in the Urban Context category (existing conditions). The unique strength of this site, compared to the other evaluated sites, is the fact it is owned by the city and relatively undeveloped. This dramatically decreases the amount of obstacles to implementation and allows for both short and long term gains. For example, the city could easily start the design and construction of an urban square immediately and experience the short term gains an urban square could generate.

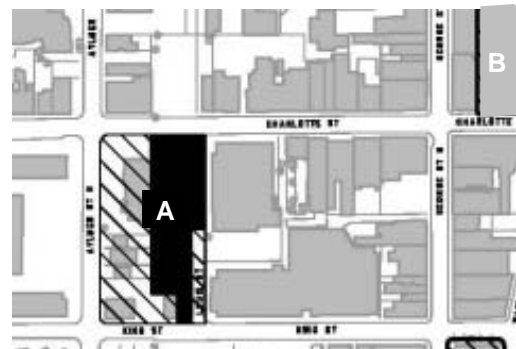
The existence of several parking lots surrounding the site not only provide adequate parking but also provide space and flexibility for programs in an urban square to spill out on the surroundings. Additionally, these open spaces have the potential to be filled in with development with the urban square acting as a catalyst. This could dramatically influence the surroundings in terms of vibrancy and economic vitality. The site is also ideally located near transit routes and a transportation hub but is relatively quiet with little industrial traffic and a lower volume of road traffic.

The site also has possible opportunities to expand over the block to gain greater frontage and visibility along Alymer and King streets through possible property acquisition and removal. Alternatively, opportunities for participation from building and property owners with the square are also present to foster activity and vibrancy. Conceptual design of the square will aid in the determination of which options are favourable.

The weakness of the Louis Street site is in its urban context where the existing edges lack definition and activity. In its present state, this lack of activity could negatively impact the success of an urban square. Additionally, the lack of an attraction / entertainment node nearby also decreases the amount of activity around the site creating less of a draw to the area. These weaknesses however could be mitigated by the potential of the site as the site could possibly act as the catalyst for this type of development. It should also be noted that street improvements along Charlotte Street are being proposed and will potentially generate greater activity along the Charlotte Street frontage. Additionally, the construction of the Charlotte Street improvements in conjunction with the construction of an urban square at the same time will lead to a unique opportunity to blend the design of both together into a cohesive and comprehensive feature.

Strengths

- Strategic Development Opps
 - Flexibility of space (accommodate programs)
 - Fewer obstacles to implementation
 - Potential short term gains
 - Potential long term gains
 - Future redevelopment of surrounding area (catalytic effect)
- Access & Linkages
 - Transit access
 - Barrier-free accessibility



- Available parking
- Comfort & Safety
 - Sound & Traffic / train

Weaknesses

- Urban Context
 - Defined and active edges
 - Relationship to attraction/entertainment node

Result: 51 pts. / 78 possible pts. 65%

SITE B – PETERBOROUGH SQUARE

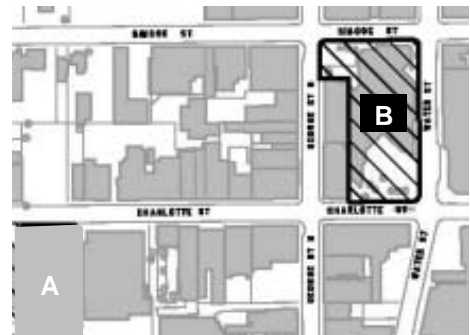
In comparison to all other sites, the main strength of the Peterborough Square site, with regards to quality, is in the Access & Linkages category where it consistently scored top marks. Being directly downtown with convenient access to several transit routes and gateways, the fact that the site is easily accessible and linked is not surprising.

The site also scored well in the Urban Context category. In particular, the surrounding mix of land-use, relationship to civic/cultural/heritage buildings, surrounding economic vitality and appropriateness for large gatherings at different times were the criteria which set this site apart from the others. It is also the most urban and central site, with regards to location.

In general the Site B led the scoring with regards to existing conditions. However, the site was found to be weak in potential. The site and surroundings was determined to be at or near its potential. Therefore, the potential for the site to have a major impact on its surroundings is low in comparison to the other evaluated sites. The built form around the site is largely built up and therefore there is not a lot of room for flexibility to spill out to the surroundings. The catalytic effect on its immediate surroundings is also low since the area seems to be doing quite well at the moment. The obstacles for implementation for this particular site are also significant since the site is not owned by the city and a sizable building is located there.

Strengths

- Access & Linkages
 - Visibility from a distance
 - Ease in walking to the place
 - Transit Access
 - Barrier-free accessibility
 - Available Parking
 - Linkage to Gateway
- Urban Context
 - Mix of Land-use
 - Relationship to civic/cultural/heritage
 - Economic Vitality
 - Appropriate for large gatherings at different times
- Comfort & Image
 - Overall attractiveness of the area
 - Feeling of safety (traffic conditions)
 - Views out



Weaknesses

- Strategic Development Opps
 - Flexibility of space (accommodate programs)
 - Potential for linkages
 - Potential for partners (institutional / academic)
 - Obstacles for implementation
 - Potential short term gains
 - Future redevelopment of surrounding area (catalytic effect)

Result: 50 pts. / 78 possible pts. 64%

SITE C – HARVEY’S SITE

The Harvey’s Site did not score particularly well in many categories, but also did not score particularly badly in many. The site’s strengths can be found in its visibility from a distance, barrier-free accessibility and views out toward the Otonabee River. The site does have some strength in its accessibility and potential. Being at the edge of the downtown core the site exhibits some urban context, but also some sub-urban context. At the west end of the site facing George Street the site has some exposure to urban activity and vibrancy. However, to the south the site faces open spaces with little activity. This is both a negative and a positive in that there is no current advantage for an urban square, but an urban square could capitalize on the flexibility of the surroundings and potentially encourage the development of these spaces.

The existence of a large building on the site is a large obstacle to implementation and hurts the short term gains of an urban square on the site. Therefore, the largest weakness of the site is the lack of potential of short term gains.

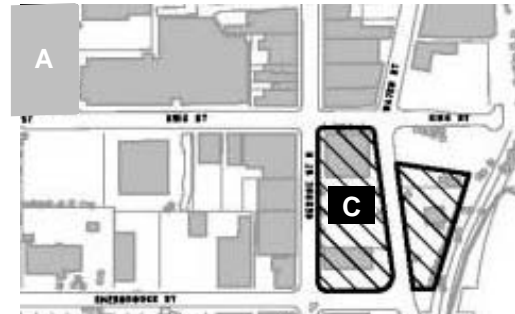
Strengths

- Access & Linkages
 - Visibility from a distance
 - Barrier-free Accessibility
- Comfort & Image
 - Views out

Weaknesses

- Strategic Development Opps
 - Potential short term gains

Result: 45 pts. / 78 possible pts. 57%



SITE E – VICTORIA PARK SITE

Site E is strong in its comfort and image getting high marks for its orientation/exposure and sound and traffic. The numerous trees on the site provide pleasant shelter and shade while still allowing a good amount of sunlight into the space. The site frontage is very strong on all sides and it is quite sizable. The site is also close to many heritage/cultural and civic buildings.

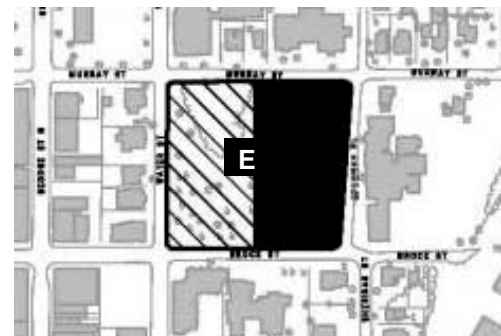
The site is most weak in its urban context. The site lacks mix of land-use, defined active edges and economic vitality since the surroundings start to become more residential in nature. There is a lack of business, entertainment and attractions surrounding the site and there is a sub-urban feel. The site does not front a gateway street and has no short term gains due to the edges being filled.

Strengths

- Access & Linkages
 - Visibility from a distance
- Comfort and Image
 - Orientation/exposure (wind, sun, micro-climate)
 - Sound & traffic/train
- Urban Context
 - Relationship to civic/cultural/heritage
- Strategic Development Opps
 - Scale/Facility fit (program uses)

Weaknesses

- Access & Linkages



- Linkage to Gateway
- Urban Context
 - Mix of Land-use
 - Defined and active edges
 - Relationship to attraction/entertainment node
 - Economic vitality
- Strategic Development Opps
 - Potential short term gains

Result: 35 pts. / 78 possible pts. 45%

SITE F – No Frills Parking Site

The strength of Site F is similar to the other evaluated sites in that it is relatively barrier-free due to its flat grading. However, Site F scored particularly poorly in many more areas of the evaluation.

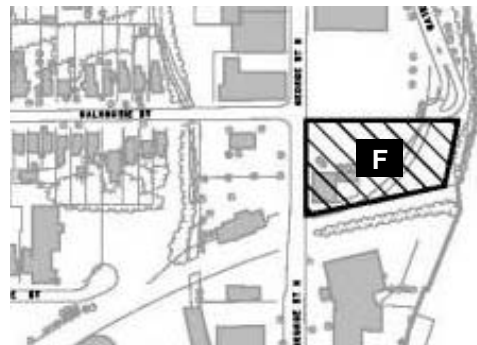
The site is arguably the furthest from the downtown core and its surrounding character is largely sub-urban. As with the sub-urban context, the edges of the surroundings lack definition and activity and there is a lack of built form to frame a potential square. Transit access and ease of walking to the site are concerns being this far from the core. This also leads to a lack of relationship to civic, cultural, heritage, attraction and entertainment features. Economic vitality surrounding the site is largely based upon big box stores and therefore limited. As a result of the lack of uses surrounding the site, the short term gains are also limited.

Strengths

- Access & Linkages
 - Barrier-free accessibility

Weaknesses

- Access & Linkages
 - Ease in walking to the place
 - Transit access
- Comfort & Image
 - Orientation/exposure
- Urban Context
 - Defined and active edges
 - Surrounding built form
 - Relationship to civic/cultural/heritage
 - Relationship to attraction/entertainment node
 - Economic vitality
- Strategic Development Opps
 - Potential Short term gains



Result: 24 pts. / 78 possible pts. 30%

SITE D – Ontario Court of Justice/Gas Works Lot


Site D scored the lowest of all the sites. The only redeeming feature may be the existence of high capacity parking nearby. The list of weaknesses however is many.

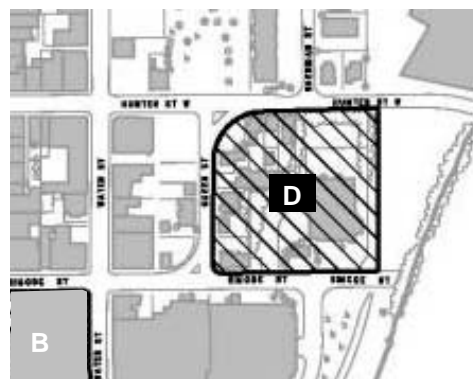
The site is the only site that may have issues with barrier-free accessibility since the grading of the site is high. The site is not highly visible; however it is at a junction of the Trans-Canada Trail. The surrounding industrial use presents a comfort issue and the existing brownfield nature of the site presents a challenge to implementation. The existing surroundings do not show much promise for the site to act as a catalyst due to the nature of the surrounding land-use (they are unlikely to change) and the edges are not active, attractive or particularly conducive to an urban square. The site is generally weak in both existing conditions and potential for an urban square.

Strengths

- Access & Linkages
 - Available Parking

Weaknesses

- Access & Linkages
 - Visibility from a distance
 - Barrier-free accessibility
 - Comfort & Image
 - Sound & Traffic / train
 - Urban Context
 - Mix of land-use
 - Defined and active edges
 - Surrounding built form
 - Economic vitality
 - Strategic Development Opps
 - Fewer obstacles to implementation
 - Potential short term gains
 - Future redevelopment of surrounding area (catalytic effect)
- 



Result: 21 pts. / 78 possible pts. 26%

Peterborough Square

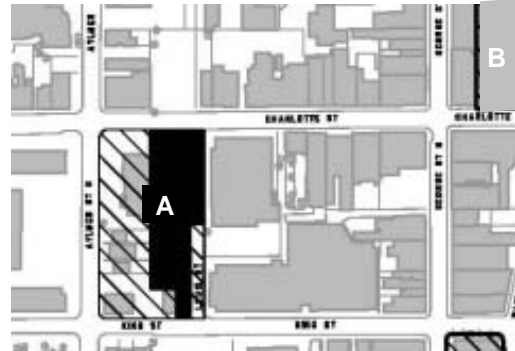
Site Selection Secondary Evaluation

Top contenders:

- **Louis Street Parking Lot**

Strengths

- Strategic Development Opps
 - Flexibility of space (accommodate programs)
 - Fewer obstacles to implementation
 - Potential short term gains
 - Potential long term gains
 - Future redevelopment of surrounding area (catalytic effect)
- Access & Linkages
 - Transit access
 - Barrier-free accessibility
 - Available parking
- Comfort & Safety
 - Sound & Traffic / train



Weaknesses

- Urban Context
 - Defined and active edges
 - Relationship to attraction/entertainment node
- **Peterborough Square**

Strengths

- Access & Linkages
 - Visibility from a distance
 - Ease in walking to the place
 - Transit Access
 - Barrier-free accessibility
 - Available Parking
 - Linkage to Gateway
- Urban Context
 - Mix of Land-use
 - Relationship to civic/cultural/heritage
 - Economic Vitality



- Appropriate for large gatherings at different times
- Comfort & Image
 - Overall attractiveness of the area
 - Feeling of safety (traffic conditions)
 - Views out

Weaknesses

- Strategic Development Opps
 - Flexibility of space (accommodate programs)
 - Potential for linkages
 - Potential for partners (institutional / academic)
 - Fewer obstacles for implementation
 - Potential short term gains
 - Future redevelopment of surrounding area (catalytic effect)

What will make these sites suitable for consideration as a successful public square in Peterborough?

- ***Availability – is the site ready for development as a square?***
 - Peterborough Square Site
 - Site is privately owned
 - Existing building is currently occupied by food court and restaurants with underground connections to shopping mall currently occupies the site
 - NW and SE corners of the site have small open spaces providing access to the food court
 - Conversion to permanent square would be more difficult and would require more time - - would be difficult to phase over time
 - Louis Street Parking Lot
 - Site is publicly owned (City of Peterborough)
 - Parking lot occupies large part of the site
 - Temporary uses already exist periodically throughout the year
 - Conversion to permanent square can take place soon and relatively easily – would be easier to phase over time

- ***Development cost – what is involved in converting the site to a Public Square?***
 - Peterborough Square
 - Structural feasibility assessment of the property is required
 - Purchase of property required if deemed suitable
 - Removal of existing food court building and re-decking required to create at-grade surface for Public Square
 - Redevelopment costs are anticipated to be high and would require more time to realize
 - Louis Street Parking Lot
 - Increased street frontage is required along Aylmer Street and King Street requiring purchase of the Shoppers Drug Mart site and eventually other properties in the block along both Aylmer and King
 - Site is flat and open and could be converted to a Public Square relatively easily
 - Costs are anticipated to be substantially lower and would require less time to realize
- ***Activity – Healthy and successful urban squares need activity. Will the activity and draw come from the square or from the surroundings or both? Will the square be successful now or later?***
 - Peterborough Square
 - The edges of Peterborough Square are active and the site regularly receives a high amount of pedestrian traffic and businesses directly in the area are a major draw. An urban square here will benefit immediately due to the inherent traffic and draw the surrounding businesses create. The relationship will also be symbiotic as the urban square will create an additional attraction for pedestrians to come to the area and therefore benefit business. Although the area will become stronger from this mutually beneficial relationship, the impact will not be nearly as high as the Louis Street Parking Lot. Therefore, there is little risk in terms of the success of an urban square on the site and it will be able to be measured almost immediately once the square is actually built.
 - Louis Street Parking Lot
 - Although construction and implementation can start immediately, the surroundings of the site are, at the moment, not particularly conducive to an urban square. With little activity on the edges the square itself will have to be the major draw and also the major activity to keep people there. Therefore program will be most important and will need to be continuous for a number of years for the site to remain active. This is the risk of the site as there is not much, at the moment, in the surroundings to help draw and keep people on the square. If the edges surrounding the site do not develop, than the strength of the site may not meet its potential. The success of the urban space will be measured over many years and will not be apparent for some time. Until the edges develop with more activity and attraction, the site will need to be managed more intensively in the interim.

- ***Construction Disruption – what sort of impact would construction have on the site and surroundings?***
 - Peterborough Square
 - Market Hall is a historical building. Special care required during demolition and construction around it
 - Business surrounding the site on George, Simcoe and Charlotte streets may encounter disruption and loss of business during the construction period. Provisions may need to be made to ensure their continued operation.
 - Traffic disruption may occur due to construction and demolition. The volume of traffic on George and Charlotte streets may be disrupted to a point where it becomes a nuisance.
 - Lois Street Parking Lot
 - Site is relatively clear with surrounding parking lots which may act as temporary construction storage areas
 - There is not a large amount of business activity surrounding the site so little business disruption
 - Traffic is calmer around the site and therefore less disruption
 - Residential units nearby may be disturbed by construction activity during the day
- ***Pedestrian Street Closures – is there potential to close streets surrounding the site for larger pedestrian gatherings?***
 - Peterborough Square
 - High vehicular and pedestrian traffic area. Street closure among any of the streets surrounding the site will cause significant disruption to overall traffic flow.
 - Louis Street Parking Lot
 - With the proposed Charlotte Street re-development there is an opportunity to implement design measures to aid in future street closures for temporary pedestrian only days and square activities. Businesses along Charlotte Street could benefit greatly from this sort of activity.
 - There is less traffic around the site allowing for less overall traffic disruption if there were to be street closures for square activities.