

Draft Street Furniture Placement Guidelines –
Public Feedback - following June 20th Open House

#	Name	Letter Submitted
1	Karen Sun Executive Director Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter	<p>On behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO) please find our comments below. CCNCTO is an organization of Chinese Canadians in the City of Toronto that promotes equity, social justice, inclusive civic participation, and respect for diversity. We achieve this by conducting activities in the areas of: public education, systemic advocacy, community development and coalition building as well as providing assistance to individuals facing discrimination.</p> <p>The City’s design and placement guidelines should be flexible enough to be able to tailor the size and type of street furniture to suit the specific needs of individual communities. In addition to reviewing the designs of the furniture, the city should also be reviewing the operations and maintenance related to this, such as the frequency of garbage and recycling pick-up. The best designed garbage bins are meaningless if they are constantly overflowing. Frontline workers should be consulted to ensure that street furniture design and placement does not negatively affect maintenance and operational efficiency (i.e. garbage pick up, street sweeping, snow clearing, etc.).</p> <p>Street furniture should be designed with cultural considerations in mind. For example, when traditional round garbage bins were replaced with the Viacom bins, the garbage slots became too small to fit a coconut and the slanted tops do not accommodate piling coconuts on top of the bin. As a result of the inappropriateness of the new garbage bins, piles of coconuts overflowed onto the sidewalks of Chinatown. This reinforced racial stereotypes about the cleanliness of Chinese people and businesses. It also created more work for the City’s frontline workers. This situation could have been avoided if the garbage cans were designed to accommodate the needs of the community in which they were placed.</p> <p>Another cultural consideration regarding street furniture, such as garbage, recycling and compost bins and community notice boards, is that they should have linguistically appropriate instructions. This should include information on how to properly use the bins and who to call if maintenance is required.</p> <p>The placement and design of benches should consider the needs of seniors and Toronto’s aging population. The availability of public washrooms and outdoor seating is very important, particularly in areas busy market areas and main streets. The City should also consider a design for drinking fountains or handwash stations for these areas, as part of this request for proposal.</p> <p>In bustling market areas such as Chinatown, Kensington Market and other vibrant areas of Toronto street life, the City should consider allowing additional uses in the “Furnishing and Planting Zone”. These additional uses could include new opportunities for (licensing) a variety of sidewalk vendors, buskers and other impromptu aspects of street life. Providing space for micro businesses along city streets is an important component of the local economy. The opportunities for economic self-sufficiency that these businesses create can greatly improve the livelihood of individuals living in precarious situations.</p> <p>We also support increased infrastructure that will improve environmental health and encourage sustainable behaviours, such as additional bicycle parking racks, planters and trees. The placement of street furniture and trees adjacent to roads should take into consideration operational issues, such as the placement of plowed snow in the winter,</p>

		<p>as this will obscure street furniture and the road salt will harm the trees.</p> <p>CCNCTO is pleased that the City is taking on this initiative to improve the streetscape of our city. We hope that the City will find creative ways to accommodate and enhance different activities that are beneficial to Toronto's street life. This process must take into consideration the wide variety of issues across the city including culture, language and the needs of an aging population. If you have any questions regarding this submission please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this further.</p>
2	Jonathan Goldsbie Toronto Public Space Committee	<p>Please consider this the official Toronto Public Space Committee submission on the Draft Placement Guidelines. (I hope I'm not too late.)</p> <p>While we are very happy with some of the recommendations in the report, such as that the functional parts of elements be situated on the side facing the pedestrian clearway, it was clear from comments made at the consultation on Tuesday evening that there is still much work to be done. Many people made very intelligent, logical, and important suggestions concerning the enhancement of the Guidelines for the purposes of accessibility and pedestrian-friendliness, and we hope that you will incorporate many of them into the next draft.</p> <p>Further to those, we have ten more recommendations, all of which are additions or changes to the "Detailed Guidance for the Placement of Street Furniture" as set out in the last pages of the report:</p> <p>GENERAL PLACEMENT OF ALL STREET FURNITURE</p> <p>(1) No furniture will be placed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in a manner that obstructs pedestrian, driver, OR CYCLIST sight lines <p>The word "cyclist" should be added to the above, because although cyclists have many of the same needs as drivers and pedestrians, safe cycling has unique visibility requirements that should be taken into account.</p> <p>(2) No furniture will be placed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IN A MANNER THAT COMPROMISES SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS, DRIVERS, AND CYCLISTS <p>Although it is of course impossible to offer a complete guarantee of safety, a guideline such as this would send a strong message that safety should be one of the primary considerations in the placement of street furniture.</p> <p>TRANSIT SHELTERS</p> <p>(3) If shelter is ENCLOSED, it must have 2 entrances/exits</p> <p>As per one of the recommendations of METRAC (the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children), ALL shelters that are enclosed (and not just those "more than 4 metres in length," as the report currently suggests) should offer at least two entrances/exits, both on the pedestrian clearway side.</p>

(4) SHELTERS OF WHICH AT LEAST ONE SIDE IS COVERED BY AN AD PANEL MAY NOT BE PLACED ON A MAIN STREET

METRAC recommends that ³transit shelters should be placed in isolated areas, and that there be no ads placed on the transit shelters because they obstruct sightlines. The images in your PowerPoint presentation showing potential new street furniture arrangements illustrate that even in optimum locations, transit shelters with an entire wall of advertising are dangerous obstacles in the urban environment. No person's ability to assess the security of his or her surroundings should ever be compromised for the sake of an advertisement.

(5) MUST BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

The report already applies this guideline to the placement of litter/recycling bins; it should be extended to transit shelters as well.

LITTER/RECYCLING BINS

(6) Must be placed in a manner which allows clear sight lines FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS, AND DRIVERS

This guideline should make clear for whom clear sight lines must be allowed.

BENCHES

(7) BENCHES MUST BE SITUATED PARALLEL TO THE PEDESTRIAN CLEARWAY

Benches should not be placed diagonally or perpendicular to the pedestrian clearway.

MULTI-PUBLICATION STRUCTURES

(8) MUST NOT BE POSITIONED WITHIN 10 METRES OF AN INTERSECTION OR THE END OF CORNER RADIUS

As one of our members has written, ³multi-publication boxes are too way too big and obtrusive to be put anywhere near the corner² and ³should have to be placed several metres away at least.

INFORMATION/WAYFINDING (INFO PILLARS)

(9) MUST BE POSITIONED A MINIMUM OF 400 METRES APART

If there are too many Info Pillars, they will become obtrusive and obnoxious. We believe that a minimum of 400 metres apart is a reasonable distance in order that the pillars can be located where they may be useful, without also excessively cluttering sidewalks.

PROCESS - HOW STREET FURNITURE LOCATIONS WILL BE APPROVED

(10) An interdivisional team of City staff will oversee the approval process for the implementation of new street furniture. They will be responsible for ensuring the Street Furniture Placement Guidelines are followed AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, HOLDING COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS TO DETERMINE HOW LOCAL RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS WOULD LIKE STREET FURNITURE PLACED IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS.

The consultations that have been held thus far have shown that there is an immense public interest in how the shared public realm looks and feels. These consultations should continue after a contract has been awarded, and residents of Toronto should be encouraged to remain involved in the ongoing development of the

		<p>city's public spaces, and those of their own neighbourhoods in particular.</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback,</p>
3	<p>Gord Brown Harbord Village Residents Association</p>	<p>In addition to the comments provided last evening, this is to formally record our strong support for the concepts outlined in the Draft Placement Guidelines, with the enclosed specific recommendations and qualifications.</p> <p>City staff are to be congratulated for the leadership shown in developing and driving a model which will improve functionality, accessibility, safety and beauty of Toronto's sidewalks. In our opinion, there is no better foundation from which to encourage pedestrianism as a healthy, economical and environmentally-friendly form of transportation -- and to drive all manner of larger-scale civic improvements.</p> <p>While we realize the current emphasis is on providing adequate details for the Integrated Furnishings RFP (and most comments below reflect that), we encourage City Staff to continue investigation of related concepts such as curb-side patios -- which would allow the clearway to be moved closer to building face. Development of innovative concepts such as these -- which have proven very successful elsewhere -- will provide further opportunities to provide pedestrians with the best possible conditions on the sidewalk and drive revitalization across the city.</p> <p>Please call if I can provide clarification on any of the attached suggestions or requests. =====</p> <p>The design guidelines provide an excellent template for driving improvement in quality of pedestrian amenity and public space.</p> <p>The upfront description of the Public Boulevard Right-of-Way Organization and Zones provides excellent overview and context -- a logical, defensible model to drive improvements in pedestrian amenities and public space. In particular, the primacy of the Pedestrian Clearway is made very clear -- and logically, articulately presented.</p> <p>Introduction, Purpose, Placement Goals provides good context and direction-setting for design of furnishings.</p> <p>SUMMARY COMMENTS:</p> <p>*Pedestrian Clearway should be consistently shown as 2.1m (minimum) -- to reinforce the priority of providing this minimum space for accessibility, and the city's prerogative for increasing above this minimum to provide more generous pedestrian space whenever possible. Reduction of the clearway to the very minimal 1.525m should be restricted to situations where the physical size of the existing sidewalk is literally only wide enough to provide an edge zone (for utility poles, car egress/access, snow piling, garbage setout) and a 1.525m clearway. In these situations, no street furnishings would be provided unless on an adjacent boulevard.</p> <p>*Main Street Alternate Location should be reconsidered to keeping furnishings curbside. The benefits of this arrangement are: buffering pedestrians from traffic; providing improved sheltering close to buildings; and, easier access for vision-impaired pedestrians who can use the building face for guidance. This was effectively demonstrated in the presentation at Metro Hall, where moving furnishings curbside visually demonstrated the need for in-and-out movement as obstructions came and went.</p> <p>*Installation "concepts" should be provided to indicate expected density and distribution of furnishings, in particular, bike parking (see below). It should be also be stressed that furnishings "in use" should not impact on the clearway, by providing adequate setback (most important for bike parking and benches -- but also useful for garbage bins and poster kiosks).</p> <p>*"Excluded street furnishings" should be itemised in the zone descriptions, such that bidders can better understand the full context. It's not entirely clear how "excluded" street furnishings (utility poles, traffic signs, pay & display kiosks, a-frames, phone booths, etc) will be incorporated into the proposed zones. Presumably, the majority of them will also be located in the Tree & Furnishings Zone, with street signs, pay & display, utility poles in the edge zone?</p> <p>*Process for approving street furniture should be expanded and clarified -- not clear how it applies to backfitting existing streetscapes (see below).</p>

*Design jury should include true "users". While the proposed design jury has good "professional" representation, it would benefit from having knowledgeable, interested "users" of the street furniture. We strongly recommend that design jury include a member from Toronto Pedestrian Committee, and, to balance TABIA interests, at least one jury member from the "resident communities" at large (reflecting Main Street and Green Street areas).

SPECIFIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON DESIGN GUIDELINES:

Applicable By-laws and Guidelines: Not clear why vendor is being asked to consult a series of guidelines -- including the very general official plan. If there are additional, specific considerations to be addressed in the RFP, suggest they be added to the guidelines to ensure consistent understanding amongst potential bidders.

Main Street Zones:

*What is the purpose of the 0.46M buffer zone between Frontage/Marketing Zone and Clearway? Suggest deleting as a separate description unless it has important significance in the going-forward vision.

Pedestrian Clearway: as noted above, we strongly recommend that this reads 2.1m (minimum) - consistent with existing bylaw provisions such as the boulevard café provisions. If there is a need to consider reduction in exceptional circumstances (where existing sidewalk width simply won't accommodate an edge zone and 2.1m clearway), so be it -- they can be dealt with as limited exceptions. It would be a shame to inadvertently use this visionary document as a vehicle for reducing the pre-existing pedestrian accessibility provisions. Suggest also clarifying for vendors that "clear, straight, unobstructed continuous path of sidewalk" should ideally be planned for a given street; but, as a minimum, must be applied on a block by block basis.

Design Priorities: Width of Public Boulevard Right-of-Way Zones

*As above, "unless precluded by physical dimensions of existing sidewalk, Pedestrian Clearway should be at least 2.1 metres wide."

Placement of Street Furniture:

*Very good information.

*Suggest that this should outline conditions under which furnishings in Frontage and Marketing Zone would be acceptable, for clarity.

Main Street: Alternate Location

As noted above, it is strongly preferable to have the Pedestrian Clearway along building frontage => pedestrians are buffered from traffic, and have a more clearly defined pathway. In addition:

- *greater opportunity for pedestrian shelter via building overhangs
- *reduced impact of sloped sidewalk at entrance/exit ramps
- *reduced incentive for cyclists to ride across/along sidewalks to reach bike parking.
- *easier/less obstructive access for servicing furnishings
- *Improved accessibility for vision impaired pedestrians, who can use building face as a guideline.

Detailed Guidance for the Placement of Street Furniture:

*Prohibited locations are good, with the following clarifications:

* "within 1 metre of > ...> ..tree or cycle ring". Should probably indicate clearance wrt edge of tree pit vs tree. Reference to 1m from cycle ring is arbitrary, and presumes bike rings vs other form of parking. Since bike parking is part of integrated furnishings, suggest deleting this restriction.

*"within the pedestrian clearway zone, or such that use of the furnishing will obstruct the clearway. In individual sections, should indicate that benches, bike parking and furnishings other than transit shelters should be located at least 1' back from the clearway to minimize impact of their use on other pedestrian movement. This is currently a major problem with bike rings located directly at the edge of a clearway section.

*"on unpaved areas"? Suggest clarifying the intent of this. There are numerous good examples of Eucan bins located on grassed boulevards on small concrete pads.

*Suggest adding that consideration be given to alignment of street furnishings with other vertical items wherever possible, to minimize visual clutter.

*Suggest that preferred locations/clustering be added, in addition to prohibitions. For example:

*Reiterate guidelines for logical groupings of components as indicated in the section "Placement of Street Furniture".

*Consider providing guidelines for expected "density" of furnishings on the basis of per transit

		<p>stop, per block, per intersection -- as well as in response to specific local need (eg. concentrated bike parking near entrances to institutions). Is there a minimum "service level" which the city would accept? Is it assumed that the number of transit shelters and garbage bins will remain as at present?</p> <p>*Provide guidelines specifically for bike parking, since with 15000+ existing bike racks on city streets, this furnishing has the potential to impact streetscape functionality and attractiveness more than any other. Guidelines might include preference for: grouped parking vs singleton bike stands, akin to a vehicular parking lot serving the demand associated with a particular building or block; physical location as close as possible to source of demand (eg. Hospitals, schools, other institutions -- U of T does this superbly) as opposed to strung out along the length of a street; strong consideration of aesthetics and optimal use of public space given the large number of these elements. Clearly identifying expectations here will help guide vendors to an optimal solution. Numerous examples have been provided in previous presentations to city staff -- and superb examples available throughout U of T.</p> <p>*Allow way-finding to be located on utility poles? Highly successful in Philadelphia and may reduce clutter.</p> <p><u>Process -- How Street Furniture Locations will be Approved:</u></p> <p>*Not clear how this addresses existing sidewalk situations.</p> <p>*What does "New" refer to? What is the process for retrofitting street zones and integrated furnishings to pre-existing streetscapes?</p> <p>* Who decides on the width of the clearway, and who has input? This is a major, upfront planning consideration -- which will affect not only the look and feel of the city, but the degree to which pedestrianism is encouraged as a mode of transportation.</p> <p>* What are criteria for "Feasibility" and who specifically has the final judgement?</p> <p>IMPLEMENTATION COMMENTS/QUESTIONS -- NEXT STEPS</p> <p>* How will MLS bylaws be aligned with Zone Proposals, and what is the timeline and process for doing so? This is needed to ensure that boulevard cafes, marketing displays and vendor locations support the Main Street Zones -- in particular, the Pedestrian Clearway.</p> <p>*What is the process for retrofitting zones to existing streets? Need to emphasise that this approach requires at least a block-by-block assessment.</p> <p>*What is the timeline and priority for replacing existing furnishings with Integrated Street Furnishings?</p>
4	Wulf Higgins	<p>I was unable to attend today's public consultation meeting on this subject, but would like to comment on the draft Guidelines.</p> <p>Generally I find the proposed guidelines address my concerns quite adequately, and seem to incorporate many improvements on existing situations. I particularly like that the information side of wayfinding pillars should face the pedestrian clearway, not the advertising side as is currently the case. I know some people have complained that there is a lack of specifics on "safety and accessibility" in the Guidelines but these seem to me to be factors of design, not of placement.</p> <p>I do have two critical comments regarding the relationship of the street furniture to the pedestrian clearway:</p> <p>1. All street furniture is to be located in the Furniture and Planting Zone, immediately adjacent to the Edge Zone and curb. Exceptions are to be made to allow furniture in the Commercial/Marketing zone only where the overall sidewalk width is too narrow to allow use of the Furniture and Planting Zone. But there are situations where lining up all the street furniture (transit shelters, waste bins, media boxes, etc.) along the curb on the same side of the pedestrian clearway may produce a forbidding "wall" between the sidewalk and the street. Obviously pieces of street furniture often benefit from being grouped together, so I think Planning</p>

		<p>staff should have an option of moving some of the furniture, such as media boxes, benches and bicycle stands, over into the Commercial Zone if it will result in a more open streetscape, even when space considerations do not otherwise demand it.</p> <p>2. Page 16 states that the entrance/exit of transit shelters must be located on the pedestrian clearway side. Currently, though, some shelters are placed with the entrance facing the curb, and some facing the sidewalk, depending on which is more appropriate for the site and the size of the shelter. I think the wording of this reference should be altered to give preference to clearway-facing entrances, but allowing entrances to face the curb where it is more appropriate.</p> <p>And a third comment on transit shelters, which touches on both design and placement: transit shelters should ALWAYS have an opening or transparent wall facing the direction from which transit vehicles will approach the stop. Advertising or other opaque surfaces should NOT be allowed to obstruct the view of approaching vehicles from within the shelter. This is one of the best features of the new design of transit shelters, and has been a great improvement over many of the older structures.</p> <p>I look forward to seeing the "design" portion of these guidelines. Please keep me informed of any upcoming meetings or other information on this subject.</p>
5	Jennifer McKinney	<p>I am unable to attend the meeting but am VERY concerned about the placement of newspaper boxes, garbage bins etc. They are ALWAYS placed right ON streetcar stops. It is dangerous enough getting on and off a streetcar without the added danger of not being able to access the sidewalk.</p> <p>The north west corner of King and Yonge at my last count had 18 boxes of various kinds. This on a sidewalk at the exit/entrance to a subway stop and a highrise office building. God help us all if emergency personnel and equipment have to access either the subway or the office building.</p> <p>The north east corner of Yonge & King, same corner at Yonge and College - boxes leave almost no space for transit users to wait and access the street cars. It makes no sense at all, but then what did I expect!!</p> <p>Thanks for the good work.</p>
6	Shirley Morriss	<p>my comment on the InfoToGo pillars: Placement was frequently ridiculous e.g. Budd Sugarman Park, Yonge St, n. of Aylmer, and Dupont Park East, se corner of MacPherson and Avenue Rd. Neither location has any significant number of tourists and the pillars marred very small parks, especially the pillar on Budd Sugarman which is about 11 ft. tall! The maps are only visible to those curious enough to walk around two panels of advertising. The silly seat-rests attached below the advertising are superfluous - B.Sugarmann Park has always had two benches just a few feet from the obnoxious pillars. It was ALWAYS about advertising. Similar maps are available in any hotel, library, City Hall, Prov. Info outlet, etc.</p>