



**Walking Strategy Consultation Series
Visions for a Walkable Toronto
Northern District Library
July 9th, 2007 6:00pm-8:00pm
Meeting Notes**

This meeting is the second in a series of workshops on creating Toronto's Walking Strategy. The intent of this workshop is to examine the relationship between urban design and walking and feedback from this session will be used in the development of this component of the walking strategy.

City of Toronto Staff

Leo Desorcy – City Planning
Daniel Egan – Transportation Services
Jennifer Hyland – Transportation Services
Maogosha Pyjor – Public Consultation

Presenters

Leo Desorcy – City Planning, City of Toronto
John van Nostrand – architectsAlliance

Workshop Objectives

1. To re-introduce the public to the Toronto Walking Strategy and report on work to date for public comment.
2. To specifically address the subject of “urban design and walking” as an element of the walking strategy.
3. Provide information on public involvement in the walking strategy and continue to encourage ongoing public dialogue about making Toronto a great walking city.

1.0 Welcome (Matthew Cowley)

Matthew Cowley opened the meeting and introduced the meeting agenda.

2.0 Toronto Walking Strategy Update (Daniel Egan)

Daniel Egan presented on the development of the Toronto Walking Strategy

3.0 Presentations

Leo Desorcy (Urban Design, City Planning, City of Toronto)

- Defined urban design and talked about its relationship to walkability, using the City of Toronto Official Plan.

- Discussed the re-development of the Bayview Institution lands including CNIB, linking Official Plan pedestrian policy statements to process and decision-making on CNIB site.

John van Nostrand (architectsAlliance)

- Provided insight on relationship between urban design and walkability
- Discussed projects that he has been involved in that demonstrated good examples of walkable environments and challenged the relationship between urban design and walking. These were local and international examples.

4.0 Group Facilitation

Three brainstorming groups were formed and members of the public provided their ideas on what makes a walkable public realm. (These comments are listed below)

Question 1: What are examples in Toronto of places that have been designed as great or/not so great places to walk? And why? What elements or relationships make those great walking places?

Great Places to Walk

1. University at Osgoode – wide sidewalks, big trees, gardens
2. Bayview/Millwood – cafes, wide sidewalks, lots of benches
3. Cumberland – interesting gardens, variety of shops, slow traffic(easy to cross mid-block), courtyards away from noise
4. Beltline Trail – nature, uninterrupted walkway, canopy of trees, trail that connects city places, not isolated - residential backyards, lit at night.
5. Annex – mixed use, full canopy of trees, crosswalks often and heritage.
6. Kensington – pedestrian belongs, lots to do, chaos slows movement, buildings aren't tall, narrow streets, busy sidewalks
7. Toronto Islands – green, no cars, different escape, community roads = sidewalks.
8. St. Lawrence Market – wide sidewalks, lots of entertainment, easy to cross Front Street, walking becomes part of doing “other business”.
9. Queen Street (Bathurst to Dufferin) – mix of shops, number of galleries, good for strolling.
10. College Street (Grace to Shaw) – big sidewalks, buildings (good scale and uses), pedestrian – vehicle balance is good.
11. Cabbagetown & Annex Laneways – art galleries for graffiti, lots of kids playing, gardens, relatively safe, good short cuts.

Not So Great Places to Walk

1. David Balfour Park – overgrown, cut-off, feels unsafe, paths a mess, broken rails
2. Yonge and St. Clair – needs wider sidewalks
3. Jarvis Street – not appealing designed for cars.
4. Steeles and Dufferin – hostile, adversarial, unsafe.

5. Six Points Etobicoke (Dundas/Bloor/Kipling) – no sidewalks, no trees, no places to go to eat or for entertainment, fast speed of cars, no people.

Question 2: How do we design streets recognizing the need for social design and walkability as well as transport space? Use examples of streets and places that work.

- Connectivity – not piecemeal, no dead ends especially in the suburbs, linkages to places and activities for a richer more varied urban environment
- Clearway - pedestrians first and not bins, boxes, cars, patios or posters.
- Car free areas
- Think of various kinds of pedestrians (strollers/commuters) and include everyone in the discussion (elderly/children)
- Canopies – all season pedestrian environments – there is no consistency now.
- Take space away from cars
- Get rid of laybays
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Texture of paving – make it consistent and maintain it.
- Make traffic free areas – with “support” from transit shuttles – organized services.
- Install sidewalks (make them wider and upgrade materials)
- Need for nature - plant more trees for shade
- Better pedestrian connections to transit
- Bikes off the sidewalks
- Maintenance – snow removal
- Mixed use
- Rest areas (provide benches)
- Good design for buildings – detail, richness
- Wayfinding – directional signage
- Scramble Phasing at intersections.

5.0 Priorities and Next Steps

There will be more public meetings on the Toronto Walking Strategy in the coming months. Public feedback on this meeting could be forwarded to pedplan@toronto.ca.

6.0 Meeting End

The meeting finished at 8:15 p.m.