

CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT

October 29, 2012

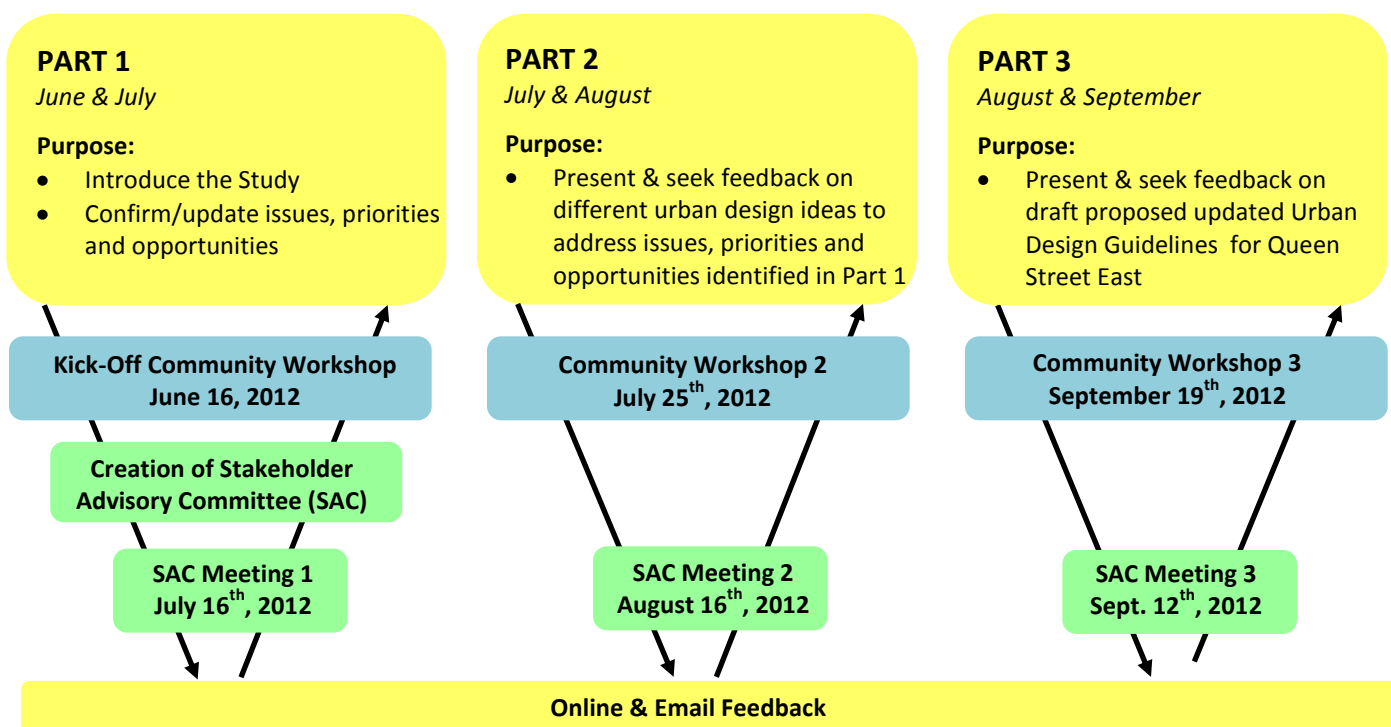
I. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

From June – August, 2012 the City of Toronto worked closely with members of the Beach community to address City Council’s request that appropriate Urban Design Guidelines be developed that balance the policies of the Official Plan with the desire of the local community to maintain the existing character of this portion (Coxwell Avenue to Neville Park Boulevard) of Queen Street East. Over 250 people participated representing a broad range of perspectives and interests, including resident associations, local business, industry associations, developers, planning firms, environmental and affordable housing advocates, students and the general public.

The consultation process was delivered in three parts:

- **Part One** of the consultation process focused identifying what participants would like to see in the updated set of Urban Design Guidelines;
- **Part Two** focused on testing different ideas proposed by City staff on how to balance the policies of the Official Plan with the desires of the community; and
- **Part Three** focused on presenting and seeking feedback on the Draft Proposed Urban Design Guidelines.

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) was created for the purpose of this study. Members included representatives from local organizations and resident associations, representatives of the local development industry, and local urban planning, architecture, and urban design professionals. The graphic below provides an overview of the process.



In total, there were three community meetings and three SAC meetings held and a number of written submissions received. A report was drafted following each of the meetings (six reports in total), which are available online at <http://www.toronto.ca/planning/queen-study.htm> . All reports have been subject to the review of participants at the meeting. Each individual meeting report contains detailed feedback and should be read in conjunction with this report.

This consultation report is a summary of the feedback received. It was written by Kate Green and Nicole Swerhun, independent process facilitators with SWERHUN Facilitation.

II. SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

The summary of what we heard through the process is organized in two parts, starting first with a summary of areas where there was considerable common ground in the feedback received, followed by areas where opinions differed.

CONSIDERABLE COMMON GROUND

- 1. Many participants were very clear that they are not opposed to new development as long as the small town feel of the Beach is maintained (i.e. protect the things the community likes) and development is responsible.** Most participants said that maintaining the existing character of the Beach is extremely important for the future of the neighbourhood. While some participants said they do not want to see any change in the beach, many also said that they were willing to accept new development only on the condition that it is “responsible development” that fits in to the neighbourhood and enhances the existing character.
- 2. There was considerable agreement among participants on the importance of understanding the capacity of existing infrastructure to support new development.** Many participants identified traffic, stormwater, sanitary sewers, parking, and transportation infrastructure as being already stretched, and there is significant concern among participants that new development will have an increasingly or cumulatively negative impact on the quality of life in the neighbourhood. Many participants said that they would like the neighbourhood infrastructure studied comprehensively, rather than on a site by site basis. Many participants also said that they would feel more comfortable with new development if this issue was being addressed.
- 3. Many participants have expressed a strong interest in being more involved in the development application process in the future through additional points of contact with developers either before or during the assessment of applications.** Suggested approaches to this involvement included: creating a committee of residents and small business operators chosen by their constituent members to have the ability to critique any proposals or significant changes in the neighbourhood; and/or holding post-construction community meetings to give residents an opportunity to comment on newly constructed buildings.
- 4. Many participants recommended strongly restricting attempts by developers to seek significant exemptions to specific Urban Design Guidelines.** *Note that in response to this, City staff said that if the new Urban Design Guidelines are adopted by Council they will be policy, consistent with the Official Plan, and staff will require that development proposals comply with these guidelines. If development proposals don't comply with the new Urban Design Guidelines, staff said they would have to consider whether to recommend refusal of the application, which could lead to an OMB challenge. Staff also said that in the event of an OMB hearing, City Planning Staff would defend the Guidelines as the most recent thinking in the Beach.*

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

5. **There is a real split in opinion among participants regarding the results of the Visioning Study and the proposed Urban Design Guidelines:**
 - **CONCERNED** - Many participants said they are not supportive of the draft proposed Urban Design Guidelines. They said they would like to see the current Urban Design Guidelines maintained because they feel they are more restrictive toward new development and support a lower overall building height which they would like to maintain. Many participants also said they would prefer for the existing Urban Design Guidelines to be maintained until further studies on the impact of new development have been completed. Some would like to see the City implement an Interim Control Bylaw to freeze development. Several participants said that they felt that the Visioning Study was too rushed or that it was difficult for some to attend meetings during the summer months. Several participants said that they would like the Visioning Study to be extended to address feedback provided during the Visioning Study and to gain additional feedback.
 - **SUPPORTIVE** - Many participants said that they felt that the draft proposed Urban Design Guidelines “have come a long way” in balancing and matching the requirements necessary to maintain the small town character of the Beach while also being open to future reasonable and contextual development. They said they felt that the Proposed Urban Design Guidelines effectively balance a range of concerns that were expressed by participants at the City’s consultation meetings held during the Visioning Study. Several participants also said that they wished that the Guidelines had been in place previously during the approval process for other recently approved developments.
6. **There were concerns about the consultation approach used during the Visioning Study.** The consultation approach implemented during the Visioning Study was designed as a qualitative one, which worked to identify common ground as well as areas where opinions differ regarding the proposed Urban Design Guidelines. Several participants requested that use of a quantitative tool be considered to determine where the balance of opinion falls when there are opinions that differ.