

# Humber Bay Parks Project Master Plan Development and Pavilion Design

## Community Meeting #1 – Summary Report



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This report was prepared by Lura Consulting, the independent facilitator and consultation specialist for the City of Toronto Humber Bay Parks Master Plan. If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please contact:

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## 1. Project Background

The Humber Bay Parks offer a quiet, natural refuge for people and wildlife from traffic and high-density development on the waterfront. This man-made parkland covers 43-hectares in Ward 6 on the Toronto Waterfront located at the mouth of Mimico Creek, south of Park Lawn Avenue and Marine Parade Drive.

The City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) have begun developing the Humber Bay Parks Master Plan. The Parks Master Plan will reflect sustainable and environmentally sound landscape design and management and will be created in consultation with local stakeholders, the community and the public. The new Master Plan will establish a shared vision and design for the park that celebrates existing features while accommodating increased park use. In addition, the Master Plan will aim to balance and achieve synergies between active and passive recreational use and ecological sensitivity.

In response to the increased residential density of the area and alongside the Master Plan, the City of Toronto has proposed a pavilion in Humber Bay Park East. The pavilion is envisioned as a multi-purpose community space that will complement the natural environment and waterfront setting of the park while supporting existing active and passive park uses and provide access to a wider range of park users including families and seniors.



Figure 1. Aerial Map of Humber Bay Park East and West

## 2. Community Meeting #1 Format

### 2.1. Overview

The City of Toronto held the first Community Meeting for the Humber Bay Parks Project Master Plan Development and Pavilion Design. The meeting took place on February 16, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Mimico Centennial Library.

The purpose of the meeting was:

- To introduce the Humber Bay Parks Project, including the Master Plan and Pavilion
- To introduce the Humber Bay Parks Project team, expertise and experience
- To present project approach, consultation process and projected schedule;
- To highlight how the Master Plan and Pavilion design projects and processes will be related;
- To discuss and understand the community's vision for the park, design principles and potential future uses; and
- To discuss and understand the community's vision for the pavilion, design principles and potential future uses.

The format of the meeting consisted of two presentations by City Staff and Consultant teams followed by a short question and answer period and an interactive workshop. The workshop included 4 stations where meeting participants were invited to share their ideas and thoughts about current and future use of the park. Approximately 100 people attended the meeting.

Participants received a Discussion Guide and were also encouraged to submit feedback after the meeting until March 8, 2016. All meeting materials were made available on the project website: [www.toronto.ca/humberbayparks](http://www.toronto.ca/humberbayparks).

### 2.2. Presentations

Liz Nield, Lura Consulting, opened the Community Meeting and described her role as the independent facilitator responsible for keeping the meeting on schedule and moderating discussions. She reviewed the meeting purpose and agenda and introduced Councillor Mark Grimes, Ward 6, who made opening remarks and expressed his excitement and support for the major capital investment in the parks.

Two presentations were made to give community members an overview of the Master Planning and Pavilion Design processes as well as the key features of the park site. The first presentation was provided by James Roche, DTAH. Mr. Roche introduced the consulting team for the Master Plan and described the approach, scope and project timeline. He also gave an overview of the park site including existing buildings, structures, parking, trails and circulation, open spaces and vegetation communities, habitat sensitivity, ponds and water bodies, and park programming.

The second presentation was provided by Jon Neuert, Baird Sampson Neuert Architects. Mr. Neuert described the approach and scope for the pavilion design process and provided



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examples of work completed as well as provided an overview of siting considerations for a pavilion in Humber Bay Park East.

Following the presentations, participants had the opportunity to ask questions of clarification.

**2.3. Interactive Workshop**

Following the presentations, participants were invited to visit four topic stations (see below) and provide their feedback. Project team members and City/TRCA staff were available at each station to facilitate the discussions and answer questions. Participants were encouraged to answer the questions in the Discussion Guide provided and write comments or draw on the aerial maps and share their ideas/comments on sticky notes at each station.

Topic	Discussion Questions
1. Vision and Outdoor Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your vision for Humber Bay Park?</li> <li>2. What activities would you like to be included as part of the Master Plan?</li> </ol>
2. Pavilion and Related Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your vision for a pavilion in Humber Bay East?</li> <li>2. What are the activities that should be included in the pavilion design?</li> </ol>
3. Natural Environment and Ponds	<p>With respect to the natural environment and ponds...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What issues should be considered in the Master Plan?</li> <li>2. What opportunities should be considered in the Master Plan?</li> </ol>
4. Circulation, Parking and Accessibility	<p>With respect to circulation, parking and accessibility...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What issues should be considered in the Master Plan?</li> <li>2. What opportunities should be considered in the Master Plan?</li> </ol>

After the workshop portion of the meeting, a facilitator at each station shared highlights of the discussions with the full group. This exercise was intended to identify likes and dislikes within the existing park and to identify key issues to help inform the direction and form the foundation for the Masterplan and the pavilion projects.

**3. Summary of Feedback**

Feedback was obtained through the following methods:

- a) Input during the Community Meeting workshop;
- b) Discussion Guides submitted in-person and following the meeting; and
- c) Direct e-mails to City of Toronto staff.

To extend the opportunity for feedback a comment period was open until March 8, 2016. People were invited to visit the project web-site, to submit comments and or discussion guides via e-

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mail or in person. In total, 31 Discussion Guides were submitted during the comment period and approximately 60 e-mails with feedback were submitted to City.

The summary of feedback has been divided into the four topic areas as listed above. Input has been further divided into common themes within each topic area.

### ***3.1. Vision and Outdoor Activities***

#### ***3.1.1. Vision***

Participants frequently described the Humber Bay Parks as a natural treasure and sanctuary that provides an escape from the growing urban environment. The vision elements shared by community members related to protection and enhancement of the park's features, a safe and well-maintained park, accessible by all community members at all times of the year, and a space for passive recreation.

A summary of the ideas shared by meeting participants for the "Vision" for Humber Bay Park East and West is below:

#### **Natural Environment**

- Keep the park wild, natural, and undisturbed; maintain as much natural habitat as possible.
- Retain and enhance the park's natural values.
- Protect the park from overuse.
- Enhance water quality in the lake, wetlands, and ponds.

#### **Park User Experience**

- A walkable and quiet escape from the city; a respite.
- Safe at all hours.
- A park suited to all ages and abilities.
- HBP East as a quiet, natural environment and HBP West as a more active environment with clubs, sports, and markets.
- An area primarily for passive recreation.

#### **Park Facilities**

- Well-maintained and clean facilities and features.
- Gathering spaces for people that take advantage of the park's natural beauty and sightlines of the cityscape.
- Use of the park and ponds year round.

#### ***3.1.2. Outdoor Activities***

Several outdoor activities, programs and park elements were shared by community members to be included in the Master Plan. Although a wide range of ideas were suggested, it was also

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emphasized by some participants that the Master Plan should focus on passive recreational activities only. A summary of the feedback on outdoor activities is provided below:

### Activities & Programs

- A variety of activities for all age groups and abilities.
- Outdoor education and clubs; interactions with nature.
- Farmer's market.
- Cycling, running, walking.
- Sports activities, outdoor fitness programs (e.g., yoga).
- Skating.
- Recreational fishing.
- Swimming.
- Bird watching.
- Photography.
- Kite flying.
- Bike tours.
- Paddle sports, kayak/canoe rentals and storage opportunity.
- Model sailing.

### Physical Park Elements

- Sheltered picnic areas.
- Improved seating areas, looking out towards the lake and around the skating pond.
- Outdoor amphitheatre for educational opportunities and small-scale arts performances (i.e., plays, concerts).
- Playground and splash pad (potentially located near HBP West parking lot).
- Repurposing of parking lots for community use (e.g., baseball diamond, sports field, open lawn, naturalized area).
- Washrooms that are accessible, well-maintained, safe, heated and open daily during all seasons.
- Gardens.
- Tennis courts.
- Ice rink.
- Water fountains.
- Composting receptacles.
- Coin-operated bird feeders.
- Consistent furnishings throughout the park.
- Discrete public art that complements the natural environment.



### ***3.2. Pavilion and Related Activities***

#### *3.2.1. Vision for a Pavilion*

Among the community members that were supportive of a pavilion in the park, the following ideas were raised related to the vision for a new facility:

- A facility that brings the community together.
- A facility that is not at the scale/size of a banquet hall or large facility, but is a smaller site within the park, could also split into two facilities, or improve existing facilities within the park (e.g. washrooms).
- Integrated into the natural environment; integrated as a “zen” space (i.e., water, gardens, and trees both inside and outside).
- Designed to showcase eco-friendly innovations (e.g., solar panels, green roof, etc.).
- Naturalized with wood, rock and stone materials.
- A place for quiet, passive activities.
- A point of pride.
- Wide hours of use for open programming.
- Versatile indoor/outdoor space.
- Incorporation of views of downtown skyline, sunrise, and sunset.
- Ensure that it is accessible.

#### *3.2.2. Concerns with Proposed Pavilion*

Many community members had questions about the Pavilion and raised concern about the proposed pavilion within Humber Bay Park East. Comments regarding the proposed pavilion were primarily related to the proposed size of the facility and anticipated impacts to the natural environment and setting of the park, increased visitors to the park and need for additional parking and ongoing maintenance and operations of the facility. Concern was also expressed over the rationale used for determining the community need for a pavilion. A summary of the comments is provided below:

- Keep the focus of HBP East as predominantly natural and deliberately undeveloped. Consider moving the pavilion to HBP West or outside of the park site (alternative sites could include: the Christie site, Eau de Soleil presentation centre site, Humber College Marina, locations on Marine Parade Drive, and Humber Bay Park West).
- There is concern that ecologically sensitive habitat and wildlife will be negatively impacted by increased stresses on the park in the form of increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic, noise and light pollution, littering, and the pavilion construction process.
- The scale of the pavilion should be compatible with the park and greatly reduced in size (Note: An online petition was launched opposing the proposal of a 12,000 Sq. Ft Pavilion for large gatherings capable of hosting parties, weddings, and business functions for hundreds of people in Humber Bay Park East.). There is concern that the pavilion will

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become an event/banquet facility. Additional questions/concerns were raised regarding event revenue and annual maintenance and operations of the facility

- There were suggestions to renovate and consolidate the existing service buildings within the park, rather than create a new large-scale-facility. The renovated building should only include washrooms, winter change room for skaters, and storage for the model boat club.
- An impact study should be conducted to assess the proposed uses and location for a pavilion, taking into consideration the natural environment and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Humber Bay Park Terrestrial and Biological Inventory & Assessment.
- There was concern raised regarding the use of glass materials in the pavilion design as it can be hazardous to birds.
- Parking during events is a concern; there is a desire for no additional parking or roadways within the park.
- If the pavilion is to be in a secluded location in the park, there are concerns with safety and accessibility.
- Questions were raised about when the decision to plan for a pavilion was made and whether the community had any input.
- It was suggested that the City could consider the renovation of the Eau De Soleil Sales Centre in its location, rather than the introduction of a new building near the ponds.
- It was expressed that there is a need for an accessible and local community facility in the neighbourhood.

### *3.2.3. Activities Related to a Pavilion*

There was a preference for the activities related to a pavilion to be passive and nature-focused. The various programs, activities, and features suggested by participants are summarized below:

#### Programs

- Environmental education, nature interpretation, kids camps (e.g., High Park Nature Centre).
- Self-guided nature discovery for all ages.
- Library (e.g., City of Toronto Biodiversity Booklet Series to be made available).
- Painting.
- Birdwatching.
- Music.

#### Pavilion Features

- Outdoor social space (e.g., amphitheatre).
- Raised viewing platform for observation, photography, teaching sessions, etc.
- Small auditorium for music, plays, seminars, etc.

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- Room(s) to host community activities, clubs, meetings and instruction that support passive activities in the park.
- Accessible washrooms.
- Sport-related facility, exercise space (e.g. yoga).
- Gallery space.
- Green roof.
- Community notice board.
- Small restaurant/café.
- Skating shop and change room.

### ***3.3. Natural Environment and Ponds***

#### *3.3.1. Issues/Concerns Related to the Natural Environment and Ponds*

A number of issues/concerns were raised related to the protection and maintenance of the natural environment, ponds, Mimico Creek and outer shoreline. A summary of issues/concerns is provided below:

#### Natural Environment

- Keep Humber Bay Park East natural; a pavilion would be better suited in Humber Bay Park West.
- Jet-skis/boats should not be allowed in wetlands and bird nesting areas (Dunker's flow); there is a need for more enforcement/signage to educate boaters to keep out of the wetlands. Add a fish gate or rock barrier to keep boats out of wetlands.
- Remove invasive species.
- There are conflicts between park users and nesting birds (e.g., park users feeding the birds, dogs swimming near nesting sites, birds becoming hooked on fishing lure). Consider better nesting site locations that provide more protection and seclusion for birds.

#### Ponds

- There are concerns with algae levels in the ponds.
- Ensure good circulation of water within the ponds.
- Consider a wind-powered pump system for the ponds. This could provide an opportunity to learn about sustainable technology while providing a low cost pumping solution.
- Make the ponds a closed system.
- Pond decking is in poor condition.
- The shallow ponds are not suitable for sustaining fish populations. Fishing should not be allowed in the ponds; signage should be installed to this effect.

#### Maintenance

- There is a lack of park maintenance.

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- Increased park use may cause a negative impact on the natural environment (e.g., litter, dog waste, etc.).
- Improve the sandy shoreline; remove rebar and other hazards.
- There is an accumulation of plastic at the shoreline. Need more garbage cans/garbage collection.
- Remove and replace dead trees near major pathways. Do not remove dead trees in naturalized areas as they provide habitat for birds such as woodpeckers.

Mimico Creek

- Support expressed for both retention and removal of the boat launch at HBP West – further investigation required.
- Make the boat launch smaller and better suited for kayakers/canoists.
- Dredge the creek to improve habitat and help keep the waterway clean.
- Don't change the creek area; it is good habitat for birds.

Fishing

- Recreational fishing access could be improved. The old fishing pier on the east side of the park has not been rebuilt after it was destroyed.

*3.3.2. Opportunities Related to the Natural Environment and Ponds*

The opportunities raised by community members related to the natural environment and ponds were focused on improving habitat and naturalized areas as well as increasing educational and stewardship opportunities. A summary of opportunities for consideration in the Master Plan is provided below:

Habitat

- Naturalize the ponds; create micro-environments in and around the ponds.
- The pine trees around the ponds provide good wildlife habitat.
- The stormwater pond attracts many species of fish because it provides shelter. Improve the aquatic habitat of the bottom of the stormwater pond and the eastern bays to improve the fisheries of the park. This will result in improved recreational fishing opportunities.
- Reintroduce native species wherever possible.
- Create pollinator gardens.
- Reduce the amount of open lawn.
- Make the park bigger (more lakefilling). Various sites around the park are ideal for wetland expansion.

Programming

- Include educational programs for children (e.g. pond ecology education).
- Encourage stewardship group events.
- Include interpretive signage and tree identification plaques.

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- Continue to have skating on the pond.
- Enhance sandy shoreline areas as safe swimming zones.

### ***3.4. Circulation, Parking, and Accessibility***

#### *3.4.1. Issues/Concerns Related to Circulation, Parking and Accessibility*

The issues/concerns related to circulation, parking and accessibility were focused on pedestrian and cyclist safety, and the condition and accessibility of trails, boardwalks, and bridges throughout the park. In addition there was concern expressed about the addition of new parking and interest in exploring reduction of parking and paved areas in the park. A summary of issues/concerns for consideration in the Master Plan is provided below:

#### Cycling

- Enforce slower speed for cyclists (i.e., police to ticket fast cyclists, speed bumps, etc.).
- Encourage fast cyclists to use Lake Shore Boulevard and slower cyclists to travel through the park.
- Improve signage on cycling trails (e.g., stop signs, distance markers).
- Include a stop sign at the bike crossing at Humber Bay Park West Rd.
- Improve cycling trail connectivity.
- Add more bike parking and introduce bike share facilities.

#### Trails & Bridges

- Improve the condition of natural trails (i.e., there are rocks, roots, and potholes that need to be smoothed out). There are several informal trails that should be upgraded to formal trails to reduce damage to the surrounding vegetation.
- The boardwalks around the ponds are in poor condition and need to be replaced.
- Drainage improvements are required on some trails.
- Realign the trails in HBP West and implement more signage to encourage more people to explore the outer portion of the park.
- Widen pedestrian pathways.
- The surface of Mimico Creek Bridge is in poor condition and should be replaced.
- Widen Mimico Creek Bridge to accommodate separation of pedestrians and cyclists. Also, create a lookout platform at one end of the bridge so people can stop and look at the creek and lake without blocking the bridge.
- Consider a new bridge connecting HBP East and West at the outer shoreline.
- Replace wooden viewing platforms with metal viewing platforms (e.g., Colonel Sam Smith Park as precedent).

#### Traffic & Parking

- The proposed pavilion presents concerns with respect to the need for increased parking. There is a preference for no new parking facilities.

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- A study should be undertaken in HBP West to determine if there is an oversupply of parking.
- Remove parking and replace it with natural areas.
- Policing and ticketing is needed in parking lots.
- Discourage undesirable activities occurring at night in the West parking lot.
- New painted lines in the parking lot would assist drivers in only taking up one parking spot.
- Consider the spatial needs of the farmer's market in terms of the safety of participants from vehicular and cycling traffic.
- Pedestrian crossings around the parking lots and vehicular routes should be clearly defined.

Accessibility

- There is limited accessibility at the Air India Memorial.
- Improve accessible parking facilities.
- The condition of paved and unpaved trails do not provide adequate access to park features for all park users.

*3.4.2. Opportunities Related to Traffic, Parking, and Accessibility*

The opportunities related to traffic, parking and accessibility for consideration in the Master Plan were focused on achieving a balance of uses, and improving trails and access to the park:

Trails & Pathways

- It is important to achieve a balance of uses; provide separated trails for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Consider a path along the east bank of Mimico Creek.
- Lighting the pathways may improve pedestrian safety and encourage use during wider hours of the day.
- Stone pathways are preferred over asphalt.
- Consider raised platforms/walkways through the wetlands and near the naturalized pond and channel.

Access

- Consider future boat transport to the downtown core.
- Improve access to the park by public transit (i.e., better promotion and signage of transfer points, schedules, and route options).
- Improve access to the park from the Mimico community. Connect the western arm of the park to Mimico with a bridge. However, the West gap is important for boat access; a bridge may impact boating.
- Improve access for kayakers who use the park as a rest stop on daylong paddles.
- Add a kayak launch separated from larger boats.

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### ***3.5. Additional Feedback***

Additional feedback was provided related to the dog park in Humber Bay Park West and as well as signage opportunities throughout the park:

#### *Dog Park*

- The lighting near the dog park of HBP West needs to be fixed.
- Adding wood chips around muddy entrances would help to increase safety by reducing slippery surfaces.
- A community notice board at the entrance of the dog park was suggested.
- Increasing the size of the dog park was suggested.

#### *Signage*

- Add more wayfinding and educational signage throughout the park.
- Include signage in the park to: discourage users from feeding the wildlife; discourage littering; encourage users to keep dogs on leash and clean up after them; prohibit fishing in the ponds; and prohibit boating near the wetlands.

## **4. Next Steps**

The project team will consider the input received in the development of a vision and mission for the Master Plan and preliminary design concepts. As part of the community engagement process, a Community Resource Group (CRG) will be formed with interested stakeholders to provide ongoing advice to the Project Team during the design phase of the Project. The Community Resource Group will be comprised of members that represent the community, park/trail users, local community organizations and businesses and institutions. In addition, there will be on-going opportunities for public updates and input as the project moves forward through the project web-site and future public meetings/consultations.

The next opportunity for community members to participate in the Master Plan's development will be in June 2016. Updates on the project will be posted on the website:

[www.toronto.ca/humberbayparks](http://www.toronto.ca/humberbayparks).



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**Appendix A – Community Meeting Notice**