

Guild Park Management Plan - Public Consultation Meeting Report

DATE: June 19, 2014
TIME: 7:00 – 9:00 PM
REPORT ISSUED: July 8, 2014

LOCATION: Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute, 145 Guildwood Parkway, Scarborough

STAFF and AGENCY ATTENDEES

Ruthanne Henry	Project Coordinator, Capital Projects, PF & R
Gord Bacon	General Supervisor, Parks Operations, Parks Operations, PF & R
Joanna Swietlik	Officer, Real Estate Services, City of Toronto
Nancy Lowes	Manager, Parks Operations, PF & R
Jo Ann Pynn	Supervisor, Cultural Assets, City of Toronto
Lisa McLean	Parks Program Officer, City of Toronto
Patricia Newland	Project Manager, Environmental Engineering, TRCA
Beth McEwen	Manager, Urban Forest Renewal, City of Toronto
Ray Vendrig	Supervisor, Urban Forestry, City of Toronto
Cara Webster	Natural Resource Specialist, PF & R, City of Toronto
Stewart McIntosh	Landscape Architect, Parks Development, PF & R
Paul Maka	Heritage Planner, City of Toronto
Connie Pinto	Watershed Trails Planning, TRCA
Chris Martin	Parks Supervisor, PF & R
Karen Sun	Parks Program Officer, PF & R
Katrien Darling	Snr. Planner, Community Planning, City of Toronto
Garth Armour	Horticulture, PF & R
Diane Leal	Culture, City of Toronto
Alex Mut	Supervisor, Capital Projects, PF & R
Clara Hargittay	Public Art Officer, City of Toronto
Donna Hinde	Partner - The Planning Partnership
David Leinster	Partner – The Planning Partnership
Kerrie Harvey	The Planning Partnership



The public meeting was attended by close to 60 members of the Guildwood community including representatives from various community associations such as the Friends of Guild Park & Gardens, and The Guildwood Village Community Association. The consultation event ran smoothly. Participants were actively engaged in discussions at the breakout tables, following presentations. Positive comments about the process were received by City staff and the consultation team members.

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. Senior Project Manager, Ruthanne Henry welcomed attendees. Ruthanne noted how important the contribution of the community is to the management plan. Ruthanne provided a brief description of the need for a management plan for Guild Park & Gardens to help coordinate a range of city and TRCA initiatives.
2. David Leinster welcomed attendees and gave a presentation summarizing the management themes, guidelines, initiatives and priorities.
3. Donna Hinde facilitated the break-out discussion group process which was structured as follows:
 1. Participants moved from one table to the next in four twenty minute intervals and provided feedback on four key themes of the management plan. They also commented on the communications process and implementation with the City at a separate table. Feedback was collected at 8 discussion tables, each facilitated by a city staff member from various related departments. Each table also included a theme map, guidelines, initiatives, and priorities.
 2. There were two tables for each topic; Trails, Culture/Heritage, Natural Heritage, Events, and Horticulture/Park. Participants could also speak one-on-one to team members at the front and back of the room, where additional theme maps were located.
4. Donna Hinde closed the meeting with comments about the importance of hearing from all community members present and thanked people for speaking up in the small-group conversation format.

The feedback on the 4 themes, Events, Communications, and Implementation were collected and are summarized below, by theme and topic:

1. Natural Heritage Theme

i. Current Development Proposal:

1. There were a number of questions and concerns raised about the current development proposal for a banquet facility and restaurant that will repurpose the Guild Inn building. It was noted by facilitators that evaluating the development proposal is beyond the scope of the management plan. The questions and concerns are recorded below.



2. Question: How can the City plan for the Park if the limits of the Dynamic proposal development area are not yet defined?
A: One assumption we can make is that there will be minimal impact to forested areas
3. There was a concern about the developer potentially being “subsidized” in relation to taxes.
4. Some participants felt that opposition to the development had been expressed at an earlier public meeting (on April 29, 2014). They anticipated more discussion about the development at this meeting.
5. Other concerns included the extent of public access, cost, and increased parking.
6. It was clarified that the buildings currently used by City operations staff will likely not change with the Dynamic development, as the development is in the early stages of review these details are not confirmed yet.
7. There was an expectation of transparency regarding the arrangement with Dynamic – “no hidden meetings.”
8. There was a concern that the Dynamic proposal would result in more tree cutting. It was clarified that this question is under review by the City.
9. There was a concern that recent tree removals had been related to the proposal. It was clarified by City staff that removals were due to Emerald Ash Borer and not related to the proposal.

ii. Emerald Ash Borer

1. It was noted that some trees that were removed did not appear to be infected. It was clarified that all trees removed had been infected but some were at different stages of visibility/damage.
2. Q: Where did the wood go?
 - a. To sawmills in the Guelph area
3. It was noted that an increase in understory growth including flowers was occurring in canopy openings, after the tree removals.

iii. Initiatives & Priorities in Management Plan

1. There was lots of support for improving pathways
2. Many members of the public indicated that they did not want more trees removed based on obstructing heritage views. A phased approach that does not require healthy tree removal for implementing heritage views was discussed.
3. There was support for a commemorative forest approach and it was noted that an increase in funding opportunities and community involvement could be helpful.



iv. Current Work On Site

1. There were a number of comments about work being done on the site. Current work is beyond the scope of the draft Management Plan. Comments are recorded below.
2. Participants were happy with new plantings throughout the site and with wood chips on the trails.
3. Guild fence – surprised it came down. Not happy with the type of fence. Concern with wildlife access to the road.
 - a. Concern to minimize access points
 - b. Others want fences gone
 - c. Other options: post & paddle and farm fence, however this style does not slow down deer or stop litter from blowing around.
 - d. Like look of area without fence. Leave short term to monitor trail development. Some suggested more police monitoring on site.
 - e. Doesn't mind fencing – useful for notice posting
 - f. Others are indifferent about fence removal
4. Jack Minor Public School – debris on ground
 - a. Limited access to chip wood. Reviewing installation of other fences.

v. Implementation

1. Participants asked how much money is the City going to spend on implementation of this plan? City staff explained the following:
 - a. \$50k has been spent on tree removals.
 - b. \$200k has been requested for trails including detailed design of trail enhancements, possibly boardwalks
 - c. A hydrology study is proposed to go forward (costs not available yet).
 - d. Infrastructure review – plan for replacement if required

2. Culture / Heritage Theme

i. Heritage interpretation Strategy

1. It should instruct and provoke
2. Should provide both instruction and be experiential i.e. some people want to know the 5 W's. (who, what, when, where, why?)
3. There should be a map of and introduction to Guild Park & Gardens at the entry from Guildwood Parkway



4. There could be an ‘artist row’ created, with interpretive alcoves incorporating past artists
5. Self-guided tour could incorporate QR codes
6. It could address the history of the site ‘then to now’
7. It could display historic plans
8. As part of the interpretation strategy, existing artefacts need to have a plaque
9. It could list past artists that have worked here
10. It could explain how the site has influenced Canadian culture

ii. Initiatives & Priorities of the Management Plan

1. Support for creating an inventory of artefacts at building 191
 - a. Some artefacts could be located in the new building
2. Sequentially restoring and protecting the cultural landscape is extremely important
3. Sequentially restoring and protecting heritage views is also very important
4. Coordination among forest management, parks & horticulture makes a lot of sense and the idea of forming a working group is a good one
5. Creating a safe waterfront vista should be phased in as part of a later wish list. This would be wonderful down the road, and phasing it would allow for the potential fundraising by local groups & businesses.
6. Integrating lighting strategy with parks interpretive lighting and interpretive strategies is important

iii. Guidelines:

1. There was support for developing specific guidelines regarding artefacts & public art
 - a. Need to consider carrying capacity of the site (size of site and other features, integrity of the site)
 - b. Quality and context of existing collection needs to be evaluated
2. The question of potential connection between the site and area for Aboriginal populations was raised and it was suggested that this be investigated.

iv. Other Potential Initiatives:

1. Add a Provincial Heritage Plaque
2. Repair damaged items (statues)
3. Return Etrog sculptures / Hahn horsehead
4. Bring back the artists



- a. There should be an artist studio with painters, clay sculpting, leather work

3. Horticulture / Park Theme

i. Initiatives & Priorities:

1. Participants agreed it was important to enhance horticultural quality
2. Enhancing the cultural heritage landscape structure, improving amenities, and creating a lighting master plan were all seen as equally important priorities
3. There was lots of support for restoring historic gardens
4. Remove chain link fence in park/garden area
5. There was an interest in having more formal gardens by the entrance from GW Parkway
6. There was a suggestion to add a semi-circular bench in front of the Greek Theatre
7. There was support for lighting along path
8. There was support to make the path accessible
9. There was a suggestion to plant the trail area near the bluffs with a plant material that does not require mowing.
10. There was support to maintain current passive recreation use and for “no splash pad, ice rink, playground (no room for these)”
11. It was noted that a Sculpture Garden plan is not included in the draft management plan whereas earlier plans/initiatives included the Sculpture Garden

ii. Guidelines:

1. Manicured area should not be limited to native species; peripheral areas would better suit native species
2. There was support to demarcate boundaries of manicured area.
3. There was support for the vision of Guild Park as a destination park – “make sure this park doesn’t cater solely to area residents.”
4. There was support for community stewardship
 - a. Allow volunteers and community associations to help deal with invasive species where feasible
5. There was a concern for the City to ensure adequate staff to maintain site properly and help to secure the artefacts and gardens from vandalism.
6. There was support for lighting plan to focus on walkways, entrances and exits to parking lots



7. There was a suggestion that deer damage to plant material needs to be addressed.
8. There was support to assess the park's capacity for group events/program:
 - a. Event frequency tolerable by neighbours eg. Weekly event (eg. Theatre, MME Night, Jazz Festival) during summer
 - b. It was noted that the park has great concerts and picnic areas
 - c. A management committee was discussed for coordination of uses/events.

4. Trails Theme

i. Initiatives & Priorities:

1. The main north-south pathway, currently 'turf stone' (located west of the Guild Inn building) should be resurfaced
2. Coordination of trail management is most important
3. Connection to waterfront trail is also a priority
4. The steep trail down into the ravine could have a lookout and rest point part way down, seating on steep slopes. Erosion in this area needs to be addressed.
5. There could be an aesthetic character fence
6. There could be a canoe launch at the groyne at the foot of the access road to the shoreline
7. Clean up rebar/concrete along shoreline
8. There was interest in an accessible washroom
9. Trail Master Plan: there was strong support for a trail master plan that would include consultation with trail users, and include a survey of trail user experience in the master planning process
10. There could be an outdoor classroom for the high school, located inside the woodland
11. Garbage/recycling: it was noted that more animal-proof garbage/recycling bins are needed in natural environment trails. Signage reminding trail users to pack out their own trash in areas without immediate garbage receptacles could be added.
12. More bike racks needed
13. Seating: There was support to increase seating.
 - a. More seating along waterfront trail needed
 - b. There should be seating at the main vista for the bluffs
14. Signage:
 - a. Signs should use international standard symbols
 - b. Signage could be done in partnership with local companies; community noticeboards needed too



- c. Connections to Guild trails need signage and sponsors should fund signage
- 15. QR codes for interpretation could be included in signage
 - a. Accommodating maintenance vehicles: Either make trails wider for vehicles, or use narrower machinery to avoid damaging vegetation.
- 16. Viewing Platform:
 - a. Another example of a safe waterfront vista is in Quebec City – different viewing platform structure, but same purpose
 - b. Viewing platform structure needs to be located on stable ground with adequate setback from eroding top of bank.
 - c. Some did not support viewing platforms
 - d. Some thought the public should not be encouraged to be near the bluff while others wanted a raised boardwalk as close to the bluff edge as possible.
- 17. Can there be a designated fire pit location near the shoreline?
- 18. There was support for raised, boardwalk trails in wet areas to provide access.

ii. Guidelines:

- 1. The view from the Guild Inn to the lake should be opened up
- 2. Accessibility:
 - a. Does accessible mean paved?
 - b. Maybe not all areas can be accessible to all park users
- 3. Keep forest trails natural.
- 4. Path Materials:
 - a. No asphalt or concrete surfaces in natural environment areas
 - b. Paved trails near buildings is okay
 - c. The compacted limestone pathway is for many users/abilities
- 5. Cycling:
 - a. No bike paths in the Guild Park, no space
 - b. Cyclists on multi-use trails need to be managed in the following ways:
 - i. Separate uses
 - ii. No bikes in manicured park area
 - iii. No bikes near buildings
 - b. No bikes on trails for safety reasons
 - c. Intermodal travel important- Cyclists arriving from GO station.
- 6. Fencing:
 - a. No chain link fencing, especially along GW Parkway
 - b. No fences (if unavoidable, must be as natural as possible, to blend in visually)



- c. No fences that can be sat upon or climbed (liability?)
 - d. There should not be a fence along Guildwood Parkway
7. Connections:
- a. Connection from other parks to Guild trails is important
 - b. Need an easier connection from the waterfront to rest of park without using GW Parkway
 - c. There was some interest in creating additional access from the apartment buildings along the west edge of the park. It was also noted that there is an existing, well-used community access to the Park at Livingston Road.
 - d. There was support to address the access point from the high school to the trail
8. View points: there was support for trails to provide safe access to views of water
9. Make sure this plan ties into Natural Environment Trail Strategy – this park should be a priority area
10. Signage: currently there is unclear messaging about where dogs may go – and bicycles, with conflicting signage in parking lot & on pathways. Signage needs to be consistent and clear for park users.
11. Poison Ivy: it was noted that there is lots of poison ivy at the east edge of the park site, and along the trail adjacent to Sir Wilfred Laurier Collegiate Institute.

