

## St. Andrew's Playground Improvements

### *Public Engagement Summary – Phase 2 Preferred Concept Plan PUBLIC MEETING 2 and SURVEY*

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#### Consultation Details

##### Public Meeting

Date: October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (6:30 pm to 8:00 pm)

Location: Metro Hall, 55 John Street

#### Attendance

##### Project Team

- Nancy Chater, Senior Project Coordinator at City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation Capital Projects
- James Roche, Partner at DTAH
- Elnaz Sanati, Landscape Architect at DTAH
- Liz McHardy, CEO at LURA Consulting
- Alexander Furneaux, Community Engagement Coordinator at LURA Consulting

##### Attendees

- Thirty (30) people attended the public meeting.
- Two (2) people provided feedback through the online survey.

#### Consultation Summary

##### Consultation Purpose

- To present and gather feedback on the Preferred Concept Plan for St. Andrew's Playground improvements.
- To provide an update on anticipated project scope and schedule through to construction

##### Format

##### Public Meeting

Participants began arriving prior to the meeting start time and were welcomed to sign-in and indicate whether they wish to receive project updates. Participants were provided with a meeting agenda as well as a hard-copy feedback form. Prior to the meeting presentation, participants were encouraged to view the six (6) project boards illustrating different proposed views of the site and a scale model of the Preferred Concept Plan. At 6:30pm participants were asked to take their seats by Liz McHardy (LURA Consulting) who delivered the land

acknowledgement and introduced Councillor Joe Cressy who spoke briefly about St. Andrew's Playground. Following these introductions, James Roche (DTAH) provided an overview of engagement to-date on the project and how this feedback informed the Preferred Concept Plan. James Roche provided a brief presentation on the Preferred Concept Plan highlighting elements such as play, paving, Indigenous place-making, lighting, seating, planting, the Dog Off Leash Area, and signage. At the end of the presentation, there was a short opportunity for the audience to ask questions of clarification about the presentation before beginning the facilitated table discussions.

For the remainder of the meeting, participants were asked to circulate between four tables. At each table, a project team member facilitated an open discussion of one of four elements of the Preferred Design Plan. These tables were organized into discussions of:

- Trees and Horticulture;
- Play;
- Dogs Off Leash Area (DOLA); and
- Gathering Spaces and Seating.

Participants were asked several questions about the Preferred Concept Plan. These questions were:

1. What do you like about the Preferred Concept Plan?
2. What can be improved about the Preferred Concept Plan?
3. What would you like to have included in each of the following spaces?
  - a. Trees and Horticulture;
  - b. Play;
  - c. Dog Off Leash Area (DOLA); and
  - d. Gathering Spaces and Seating.
4. Do you have any additional comments?

Following the round-table discussions, attendees participated in a plenary discussion highlighting ideas that resonated strongly with them from the table discussion. To close, the project team provided an overview of the next steps and the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm. The agenda for this public meeting is included in Appendix A.

#### Online Feedback

An online feedback form was live on the City of Toronto project page from October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The online feedback form included the same questions that were discussed at the public meeting. A link to the presentation slides presented at the public meeting was provided at the beginning of the survey. [Download the Presentation Slides from Public Meeting 2 \(8.63 MB\).](#)

## Advertisement

### Public Meeting

The public meeting was advertised through the following communications channels:

- Flyers were posted in St. Andrew's Playground on Thursday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 advertising the October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting. These flyers were posted at key locations such as entrances to the site, the Dog Off Leash Area, the playground, and the central seating area near the pergolas. Flyers were also mailed by the City of Toronto via Canada Post to over 7,000 addresses in the vicinity of St. Andrew's Playground.
- The project website advertised the public meetings.
- Participants from Phase 1 of the project who provided their email contact information and consented to be contacted about project updates received a reminder email about the meeting.
- DTAH and the Garment District Neighbourhood Association posted the meeting details on their Twitter accounts.
- Councillor Cressy's website announced the meeting.

### Online Feedback

The online feedback form was promoted through the project website, at the public meeting, and through social media.

## Questions of Clarification

The following questions were asked during an open format question and answer period during the public meeting.

### **1) When is the reconstruction of the park scheduled to take place?**

The park improvements are anticipated to begin in Spring 2020 with construction taking place during the 2020 construction season with a target end date in late Fall 2020, weather permitting. The construction schedule will be confirmed upon award of the project construction contract and is subject to change.

### **2) Are there measures being put in place to deal with garbage, recycling, organic waste?**

The City of Toronto will be using the standard litter, recycling and organics bins in the park and for the Dog Off Leash Area. The Waterworks development on the north side of the park is contributing to the park maintenance budget through the terms of its Section 37 Agreement with City Planning.

### **3) Has there been any consideration to remove the fence along Adelaide Street West?**

Based on a few inquiries, removing the fence along Adelaide Street West was considered however the Preferred Concept Plan retains the fence for several reasons. Most notably, the

fence helps to contain the southern edge of the park from traffic on Adelaide Street West. There are no plans to install a mid-block signalized crossing between Portland Street and Brant Street that would provide a safe crossing opportunity. Retaining the fence in the park design is intended to direct park users to safe crossing points on Adelaide Street West such as the signalized intersection at Brant Street. Additionally, due to the grade change between the park and the sidewalk on Adelaide, an accessible exit would not be possible without compromising the root zones of several trees near the southern edge of the park.

**4) Please elaborate on what is proposed for the corner of Maud Street and Adelaide Street West?**

The Preferred Concept Plan proposes the creation of a landscaped and vegetated buffer between the Dogs Off Leash Area and Adelaide Street West. This was intended to respond to concerns expressed by dog owners in Phase 1 regarding the Dogs Off Leash Area being too close to Adelaide Street West.

**5) Is sidewalk reconstruction on the east side of Maud Street (where there are trees and bike parking indicated) covered in the project scope of work? Is this sidewalk being widened?**

Yes, the plan shows a widened sidewalk with improved streetscape including trees and bike parking.

**6) Are measures or arrangements being made to protect or relocate commemorative plaques associated with specific trees in the park?**

Yes, existing commemorative plaques will be retained and reinstalled in the park.

## Feedback Summary

The following provides a summary of feedback provided by community members from the public meeting, and online feedback form on the Preferred Concept Plan (Figure 1). Overall participants indicated the Preferred Concept Plan displayed positive development from the Conceptual Designs, and were appreciative that many of their feedback points were reflected in the Preferred Concept Plan. Feedback primarily focused on comments and suggestions pertaining to the design of select park areas and components. This section is organized by engagement question and feedback themes.

## Play Plaza



Figure 1. The Preferred Concept Plan for St. Andrew's Playground

## Play

Participants were generally supportive of the proposed play area, offering suggestions primarily on the details of what play structures to include and the relationship of the play area to the surrounding park.

- Participants suggested play features such as slides, and additional swings be considered in the design given their popularity.
- Desires for clear sightlines across the park. *The project team reminded participants that high-branching vegetation was selected specifically for this reason, and that limited ground vegetation is included in the Preferred Concept Plan with the intention to preserve the clear sightlines that the park currently enjoys.*
- A few participants expressed concerns about potential conflicts between the children's play area and other plaza uses given that there are no barriers separating these uses. This concern extended to concerns about collisions between children playing and people travelling through the park on foot or by bike.

## Dogs Off Leash Area

The Dogs Off Leash Area design was supported by most participants, with most of the discussion focusing on aesthetic changes or the identification of missing features that would

enhance the Dog Off Leash Area. Participants discussed elements of the design that they liked and disliked.

Participants discussed elements of Dog Off Leash Area they liked including:

- The addition of extra benches, with reference to the Dog Off Leash Area at Wychwood Barns as a good example of seating with shade on top.
- A water fountain for dogs.

The following improvements to the Dog Off Leash Area design included:

- A few participants suggested moving the Dogs Off Leash Area to the north, and relocating the landscape berm to the south end. Participants who outlined this suggestion indicated they thought it struck a balance between the Dog Off Leash Area location and the desire for increased buffering along the Adelaide Street West edge.
- Some dog owners wanted the Dogs Off Leash Area to be more centrally located within the park, while others were supportive of the new western location in the expanded park.
- Several participants highlighted the importance of on-going maintenance to the Dog Off Leash Area. One participant highlighted an example, discussing their concern that there have been issues with the gates not closing properly.
- A few dog owners reiterated the desire for two separate Dog Off Leash Areas for dogs of different sizes. These participants highlighted that there are currently informal evening shifts (from 5:00pm to 8:00pm) for dogs of different sizes to use the park that has been developed by local dog owners.
- Ensuring the Dogs Off Leash Area is adequately and appropriately lit.
- Considering surfaces that are not pea gravel, as not all dogs like the material.
- Considering alternative seating structures like large boulders that dog owners can sit on that double as a play feature for dogs.
- Increasing the height of the fence from four-feet to five-feet to reduce the chance of a large dog jumping it.
- Removing the Maud Street entrance to the Dog Off Leash Area to reduce the chance of a dog escaping directly on to the street.
- Adding seating that allows people to watch the Dog Off Leash Area from outside.
- Adding dog agility equipment (the equivalent of play equipment for dogs) such as ramps.
- Adding an organic waste bin at the gates of the Dog Off Leash Area as well as the corner of Brant Street and Adelaide Street West.
- Adding more trees to this area, including some fenced in trees within the Dog Off Leash Area to provide more shade.

### Tress and Horticulture

Participants were generally supportive of many components of the park's design pertaining to trees, horticulture, and vegetation including the emphasis on native vegetation and the inclusion of a medicine wheel garden. Participants did suggest small changes including:

- Moving the medicine wheel closer to the fire pit to reduce travel back-and-forth between these complimentary uses.
- Increasing the amount of vegetation buffering along Maud Street and Adelaide Street West using plants such as dogwood given that it provides a good barrier while still allowing people to see through it.
- A few participants wished to see more grass surfaces.
- Many dog owners were eager to see slightly more mature trees selected for the areas surrounding the Dog Off Leash Area to provide shade quickly for this area of the park.
- Participants were broadly supportive of including native species in the planting strategy, particularly red osier dogwood for its colour throughout the seasons.

### Lighting and Electricity

- Many participants were pleased that new lighting is proposed for locations such as the Dog Off Leash Area, the plaza, the pathways, and the storytelling circle, expressing that lighting is essential to providing a sense of safety and security.
- The lighting strategy for the park should be mindful of nearby residential buildings, and achieve a balance of sufficient illumination to provide a sense of safety and security in the park at night while not over-lighting to park. Lighting should avoid shining directly into nearby buildings.

### Paving and Pathways

- A few participants expressed their concern that direct paths running diagonally across the park may lead to cyclists cutting through the park. These participants suggested that a winding or meandering pathway might discourage cyclist short-cuts.

### Gathering Spaces and Seating

Participants were supportive of the proposed gathering spaces and seating in the design, offering comments on the types of seating they wished to be included in the park, and potential additional locations for seating. Participants discussed elements of Gathering Spaces and Seating they liked including:

- A mix of seating types.
- The use of low wall seating to control movement and contain activities while preserving access and sightlines.

- A drinking fountain that has both a spout and a bottle filler. Two participants emphasized that the water fountain pressure should be tested so water doesn't overshoot creating puddles.

Participants expressed some concerns in the design of Gathering Space and Seating including:

- Existing issues with waste management in the park that may be exacerbated by the arrival of the Waterworks Market Hall leading to more garbage in the park.
- Issues with discarded drug-use items such as needles.
- The feasibility of monitoring the use of the firepit to prevent unsanctioned fires (fires constructed outside of the City's permitting system) from occurring.

Participants suggested improvements to Gathering Spaces and Seating by:

- Adding more benches along the pathways through the park, especially near the park's entrance points.
- Incorporating seating with back-rests and arm rests to make it more accessible and comfortable for older adults (though broader benefits to other user groups were also noted).
- Adding a small platform for small events, like a stage at Queen Street West and Ryerson Avenue where seating doubles as a platform for performances. *Participants were reminded by the Project Team that platforms in this style are included in the Preferred Concept Plan near the centre of the design indicated by '5 – Wood Platform/Seating'.*

### Heritage

- Participants were interested in learning more about the park history with heritage interpretation elements/signage in visible locations, such as the central plaza.

### Next Steps

The project team will review feedback from the public, as well as external and internal stakeholders as inputs into detailed design development of the park. The anticipated schedule for the park improvements is to prepare construction documents for tender in early 2020, and undertake construction from approximately May 2020 to November 2020, weather permitting and subject to change. The construction schedule will be confirmed once a contract is in place, and updates will be provided on the City's [project webpage](#).

## Appendix A - Meeting Agenda

## St. Andrew's Playground Improvements

### Public Meeting Agenda

Wednesday September 18

6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Metro Hall (55 John Street), Room 310

#### Meeting Purpose

- To present and gain feedback on concept options for St. Andrew's Playground improvements.
- To provide an update on anticipated project scope and schedule through to construction

#### Agenda

6:30 **Welcome and Meeting Agenda Review**

6:35 **Presentation: Project Background and Concept Options**

- Project overview and purpose.
- Review of feedback gathered to date, which has informed the concept options.
- Presentation of the concept options.

6:55 **Questions of Clarification**

7:00 **Station Discussions (4 Rotations)**

12.5-minute rotations through the following 4 stations, providing feedback at each on Concept Options 1 & 2:

- Trees and Horticulture
- Play and Water
- Dogs Off Leash Area (DOLA)
- Gathering Spaces and Seating

7:50 **Closing Plenary**

Participants will have the opportunity to share key insights from their table discussions through a facilitate 'report back' to all meeting participants.