

# Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Plan

## Community Advisory Group Meetings #1 and #2

November 10 and 17, 2020

Cisco Webex

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

### Attendees

#### CAG Members

- Jordan Allison
- Judith Crichton
- Peter Deitz
- George Rust-D'Eye
- Martha Fusca (only meeting #1)
- Clint Gaudry
- Wallace Immen
- Karen Marren
- John Rider (only meeting #1)
- Zahrah Munas, Councillor Wong-Tam's office

#### Project Team

- Alex Corey, City of Toronto
- Dima Cook, EVOQ Strategies
- Christophe Rivet, EVOQ Strategies
- Mark Elsworthy, EVOQ Strategies (only meeting #2)
- Jim Faught, LURA Consulting
- Michelle Diplock, LURA Consulting

### Introduction

The City of Toronto hosted the first two Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Plan Community Advisory Group meetings on November 10, and 17, 2020 via Webex. The purpose of the meetings was to:

- Introduce the Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan, process and project team;
- Review and confirm the Community Advisory Group (CAG) Terms of Reference and role of the CAG;
- Review background information, including results from the Study phase of the project; and
- To discuss and collect feedback on background information and results from the study phase of the project.

CAG Meeting # 1 was structured as an information sharing meeting to contextualize the HCD Plan process and work completed to date, and CAG Meeting #2 provided an opportunity to gather feedback and discuss:

- Features of the neighbourhood that stand out and give Cabbagetown South a sense of place that are missing or need to be highlighted in the HCD Plan materials presented to date;
- Change over time in the neighbourhood at both the neighbourhood and property level, including features that have changed for the better and features that have harmed or diminished the neighbourhood's historic character; and
- The social and community values that should be recognized as part of the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD plan.

## Community Advisory Group Meeting #1 – November 10, 2020, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

### Introduction and Overview

Alex Corey, Senior Heritage Planner, City of Toronto welcomed attendees to the first meeting, provided opening remarks, facilitated a round of introductions, and provided the Land Acknowledgement. Jim Faught, LURA Consulting reviewed the CAG Terms of Reference (TOR). No objections were received from the CAG members, with the caveat that some wanted more time to review the TOR. Dima Cook, EVOQ Strategies presented the background of the Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District Plan. CAG members were introduced to the discussion questions that would guide the conversation in CAG Meeting #2 on November 17, 2020. Jim Faught facilitated a round of questions of clarification, sought feedback on the format of future CAG meetings, and reviewed the next steps.

### Questions of Clarification

*Questions below are denoted with a "Q:" and responses are noted with an "A:".*

Q: Is it more expensive to insure a heritage property?

A: The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries has released information bulletins regarding misconceptions about insurance for heritage properties. The provincial guidelines suggest insurance for heritage properties should not be more expensive. There are some misconceptions in the industry that if something were to happen to your property you would have to rebuild it as it was, which is not the case. Sometimes insurance agents who are less familiar with designation are more hesitant about it. In these cases, the agents are directed to speak with the province, who provides the necessary direction.

Q: Will the presentation from this session be made available?

A: Yes, after this session a copy of the presentation and the Terms of Reference will be sent to help you form your ideas for our discussion for CAG #2 on November 17, 2020.

Q: What is the timeline for implementation of the HCD Plan?

A: It is difficult to say at this point. We are aiming to have the HCD Plan presented to City Council in Spring/Summer 2021. However, if the HCD Plan is appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, it will impact the implementation timeline.

Q: Have there been any objections to the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD at this point?

A: At this point, there have not been any opportunities for formal objections to be received on the HCD Plan. There was the opportunity for communications to be brought forward at the Toronto Preservation Board, those notes are available to be requested from City Clerks.

Q: The Garden District HCD is an area under appeal for more than a year, do you know where it stands?

A: There was activity over the course of the summer, however, we are unsure of the outcomes. The City may be able to provide some more information about the status of the appeal and what the next steps are following the meeting.

Q: Over the summer there were two developers looking to develop properties around the edges of the HCD study boundary, one at Shuter Street and Seaton Street and the other at the former Salvation Army location on Parliament Street. Could these potentially be places that want to appeal?

A: Appeals rarely come in from property owners that are adjacent to the HCD and that far from the HCD boundary. The property owners could appeal, but an appeal would more typically come from property owners immediately adjacent to or within the HCD boundary.

It also depends on the status of the development application. If a developer already has an application submitted, any district designation would not have an impact on their application.

Q: Has Councillor Wong-Tam's office had any complaints, and what is the Councillor's position on the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD?

A: Councillor Wong-Tam supports the designation of the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD and has not had any complaints.

Q: Prior to the implementation of an HCD Plan, how can the City protect existing heritage assets within the neighbourhood?

A: There are changes that may occur before the district is designated, including applications that may be received within the study area during the HCD Plan phase or, if there is an appeal, during the appeal period. During that time, staff are monitoring the

area for development applications. Should there be an application submitted to demolish a contributing property, the City does have the option to proceed with extending individual protection to that property if necessary through designation.

Q: How will the HCD Plan deal with retail on Dundas and Gerrard? Specifically, will the HCD Plan understand how modifications were made to existing buildings to insert retail at street level?

A: The project team will speak to the local Business Improvement Area (BIA) and research the evolution of contributing properties that have seen that change in order to develop specific policies to manage and support retail on Dundas and Gerrard.

Q: How will the Community Consultation Meeting be held if we are still in lockdown?

A: The City of Toronto has been running community meetings virtually through Webex during lockdown. They are more akin to town hall meetings.

### Suggestions for Future Meetings

*Participants shared feedback on the meeting structure and participated in a Webex poll about the timing of the meeting.*

- For the CAG meetings, a few people suggested starting the meeting earlier or later, and one person required additional support with Webex.
- For the community meeting, consider having the ability for participants to network with neighbours like they would at a regular live Town Hall meeting by offering an open-ended, unstructured discussion option or breakout room.

### Next Steps

Jim Faught closed the meeting and shared that the second CAG meeting would be held on November 17, 2020. The meeting will focus on CAG member's feedback, comments, and questions about the material presented in the CAG Meeting #1.

### Community Advisory Group Meeting #2 – November 17, 2020, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m.

#### Introduction and Overview

Alex Corey, Senior Heritage Planner, City of Toronto welcomed attendees to the second meeting and provided opening remarks. Jim Faught, LURA Consulting provided the Land Acknowledgement and introduced the agenda for the meeting. Jim facilitated questions of clarification and led the discussion period. Jim and Alex reviewed the next steps for the Cabbagetown Southwest Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan.

## Questions of Clarification

*Questions below are denoted with a “Q:” and responses are noted with an “A:”.*

Q: Within the HCD Plan is there any guidance regarding shared public space, including parks and laneways?

A: Laneways are core components of the Cabbagetown Southwest neighbourhood. Laneways and laneway culture have historically and continue to be an identifying feature. They were discussed through the HCD Study, and feedback was sought from community members about their value. There was discussion of the potential of laneways being used for laneway housing, which is permitted within the area, and the HCD Plan will not prevent that. In terms of policies and guidelines, the consultant team will be looking to see if there are any policies or guidelines needed to support the role of laneways within the HCD. The City has begun to invest in laneways in Cabbagetown outside of the context of the HCD.

Q: For laneways, there has always been an issue with HCD guidelines protecting what is visible from the public realm. There is a grey area about the rear of houses that are visible from the laneways. Now that laneways are named, does that change the actual definition of the public realm to include laneways?

A: The practice within heritage planning has been to consider the public realm from the sidewalk and the street. Within HCD's we do not review alterations that may be visible from laneways. The City needs to apply an even hand across the board to allow for changes, alterations, and additions that may be visible from laneways. Even though laneways may fall within the larger umbrella of the public realm, for the purposes of developing policies and guidelines within the HCD we focus on alterations visible from the street and sidewalk. However, the laneways themselves present a unique opportunity within the HCD.

## Discussion

*The guided discussion followed the questions outlined below. CAG member responses are summarized as bullets under each relevant question.*

**Based on the information presented to-date, are there features of the neighbourhood that stand out and give Cabbagetown South a sense of place that are missing or need to be highlighted?**

- Cabbagetown is seeing a lot of welcome development in the neighbourhood. It will be a challenge to maintain the setbacks in new developments to allow for gardens, trees, and plantings as is typical of existing properties. These attributes should be preserved if possible.
- The urban tree canopy should be preserved in the neighbourhood if possible.

- It will be important to recognize and maintain building cornices. For example, on Gerrard Street, there are two- to two-and-a-half storey buildings. In the redevelopment at 227 Gerrard Street East, they provided a front main wall of the building at two storeys with a step back behind it. This way, when looking down the street at the new midrise buildings coming into the neighbourhood the architectural language speaks to the other buildings in the neighbourhood.
- Before the HCD Plan is approved and the district is designated there should be a way to protect the properties within the district from changes that could impact heritage features.
- In general, there was a solid capture of the history of the built environment of the neighbourhood represented in the information provided. It is unfortunate that the proposed HCD boundary did not capture some properties in the area at Berkley and Ontario.
- Since we know the area will be prone to future development, recommendations should include guidelines for future development with regards to density and architectural merit. The plan seems to be focused on the conservation of existing buildings, which is important, but future development will be important to address as well, including the potential in laneways.
- Retail along Dundas and Gerrard should be included to understand how retail will contribute to the historical nature of the area. Specifically looking at how to maintain the smaller retail properties in the area.

**Thinking about change over time in your neighbourhood, are there features that have changed for the better? Are there features that have diminished or harmed the historic character?**

- Many businesses in the neighbourhood have recently closed because of COVID-19, and the properties are sitting empty at this point. This is concerning because these properties are zoned commercial-residential and could be sold as development sites. The sooner the HCD Plan is implemented, the better, to prevent speculative property buyers.
- The loss of some of those small-scale commercial storefronts along Dundas and Gerrard would diminish the historical nature of the area.
- Laneways are an important area if invested in and developed and therefore are a paramount historical feature of the neighbourhood. Laneways are also heavily used by pedestrians, cyclists and dog-walkers. There is concern that the development of properties immediately adjacent to the laneways may have a degrading impact on the area's laneways. It would be good to see really strong protection and investment for the laneways.
- The Cabbagetown South Resident's Association worked on a project redeveloping one of the laneways. Instead of using asphalt they used a specific type of paver and did some landscaping. The project has been a big success, and we could build on that and perhaps establish a specific type of paver or style for the neighbourhood.
- Heritage Preservation Services has come out with interesting information about the lighting of heritage properties. It would be helpful to have direction on how to

effectively light a heritage property. For example, we do not want to see pot lights being drilled into tongue and groove soffits.

- Redevelopment of certain laneways has been an amazing success that has brought the neighbourhood together. We are lucky we have development coming into the neighbourhood to facilitate this. All of the buildings on Poulette Street are the backs of storefronts, however, the developer has treated the back of the buildings with a high level of care. That is something that could be written into the plan, especially where the backs of storefronts face residential properties.
- It would be good to have all laneways in the neighbourhood treated consistently.
- The Laneway Project is working on addressing and upgrading certain laneways, adding murals, plantings, and lighting to them.
- It was noted that Dundas Street is not part of the BIA whereas Gerrard Street businesses are, and so the City will need to factor that in when considering properties as redevelopment happens.

**At the individual property level, what type of changes would improve the character of the neighbourhood? Are there changes or existing features that could harm the character?**

- Derelict or unmaintained properties can pose health and safety risks and harm the character of the neighbourhood. It will be an ongoing concern in the neighbourhood. This can occur with new buildings as well and can detract from the overall look that is trying to be established with the historical context of the neighbourhood. It will be important to encourage upgrades and maintenance.
- The needle exchange property has created social problems, and that corner [Sherbourne Street and Dundas Street East] has affected the vitality of the whole neighbourhood.

**What social and community values should be recognized as part of the Cabbagetown Southwest HCD plan? How would you recognize them?**

- Signage came up when signs were replaced at Riverdale Farm. Signs can suggest something along the lines of "Seaton Street – Old Cabbagetown Neighbourhood".
- There are opportunities with the Councillor for other signage, particularly on street poles where they were planning some wrapping.
- There may be other opportunities to identify important laneways or buildings to add plaques about famous people, or former uses. This could be a way to identify, recognize, and speak to those cultural values in the neighbourhood.
- Institutions in the neighbourhood that add cultural value include Central Neighbourhood House and St. Stephens, the Yonge Street Mission, Council Fire, Genesis House, the Children's Library, and Toronto Public Library. These social and community institutions are a vital part of helping everyone in our neighbourhood.
- It would be nice to establish a paver standard that speaks to the original roads in the area, for example, the pavers at the end of Carlton in front of Riverdale Farm.

### Suggestions for Future Meetings

- The two-part meeting worked well for the CAG meetings to allow for the comprehensive presentation of the material, followed by a few days to review by the CAG members, then the second meeting with a full discussion.
- For the upcoming community consultation meeting toward the end of January, previous sessions were at Central Neighbourhood house, and the sessions allowed for lively table discussions. It would be good to recreate that feel and level of interaction virtually.

### Next Steps

Jim Faught closed the meeting and shared that the next meeting for the project would be the first Community Consultation Meeting, tentatively planned for January 2021.