

2306 St. Clair Avenue West Neighbourhood Improvements Idea Rating Activity Summary Report

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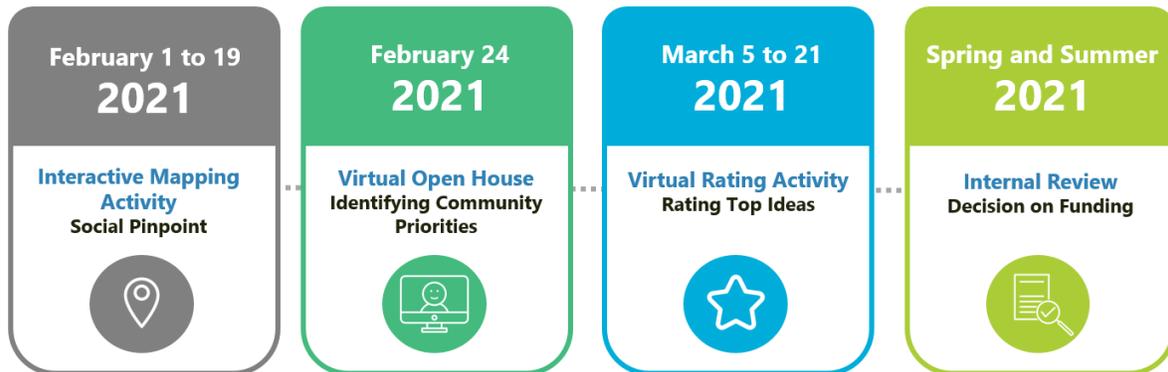
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Project Background

There will be a new 10-storey mixed-use building development at 2306 St. Clair Avenue West. Funding from this development (Section 37) will be used to improve local parks, streetscapes and/or cycling and pedestrian safety in the neighbourhood. The local community is being engaged to help determine how and where this funding is used in close vicinity to the development.



What is Section 37?

Zoning bylaws control how the land in your neighbourhood is used, including the height and density of buildings. When a developer wants to build something that exceeds these limitations, Section 37 of Ontario's Planning Act allows the City to permit the developer's proposed construction, in return for community benefits (cash-in-lieu or in-kind contributions) that help to improve the neighbourhood the development is located in. Section 37 benefits are used for a variety of local improvements that meet the needs of the community. Learn more about [Section 37 benefits](#).

This project is in the public consultation phase, which will help to identify community priorities for how the Section 37 benefits generated from this and future developments are used in the area surrounding 2306 St. Clair Ave. W and wider community. This also provided valuable information regarding areas for improvement identified by the local community.

Project Timeline

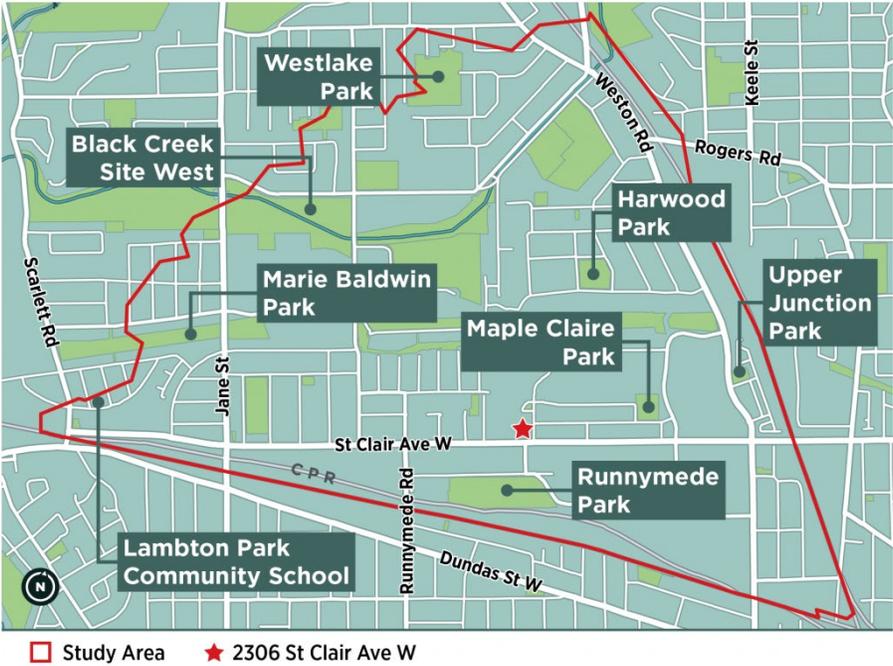
The Virtual Rating Activity was the third engagement activity for the project. The anticipated project and engagement schedule is as follows:

Notification

Due to COVID-19 and following the recommendations of Toronto Public Health, this engagement exercise was conducted online to ensure appropriate physical distancing requirements were met. In general, the community was informed of this activity through virtual outreach methods, including:

- Communications from the local Councillor's Office
- During the February 24th, 2021 Virtual Open House
- Project webpage: toronto.ca/StClairWestImprovements

Idea Rating Activity – March 5 to March 21, 2021



2306 St. Clair Avenue West Neighbourhood Improvements Study Area

Background

In February 2021, the local community was asked to share their ideas on improvements they would like to see around 2306 St. Clair Ave. W using an interactive map (Social Pinpoint). The most commonly mentioned and highest rated ideas were presented to the community for more feedback at a Virtual Open House on February 24, 2021.

For a look at the Interactive Mapping Activity results and the presentation slides from the Virtual Open House, visit the [project web page](#).

Virtual Rating Activity Ideas

Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division staff reviewed the feedback received in the Interactive Mapping Activity and Virtual Open House and conducted an internal assessment to identify which ideas would be feasible within the budget and scope of the project.

These ideas were presented for further community feedback through an online Virtual Rating Activity on the project web page, from March 5 to March 21. Each idea included contextual information and the estimated financial cost. Participants were able to rate each idea on a scale of one to five stars.

Note, the City’s Transportation Services department received all transportation-related feedback related to Pedestrian Experience, Streetscape, Lighting, and Cycling Safety and Infrastructure improvements. These improvements were already underway in the community and were, therefore, excluded from the Virtual Rating Activity.

To help the community make an informed decision, “\$” icons indicated estimated financial cost:

- \$ for project costs less than \$100,000
- \$\$ for project costs between \$100,000 and \$500,000
- \$\$\$ for project costs between \$500,000 and \$750,000
- \$\$\$\$ for project costs above \$750,000

These ideas included:

- **A new Off-Leash Area in a neighbourhood park**
Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to build a new Off-Leash Area (OLA) in either Marie Baldwin Park or Harwood Park. Construction of the new OLA could take 1-2 years depending on design.
Cost: \$\$
- **A new or upgraded playground in a neighbourhood park**
Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to update an existing playground in Runnymede Park, Upper Junction Park or Harwood Park. It can also be used to build a small playground in Black Creek Site West. Construction of a new playground or playground update could take 1-2 years.
Cost: \$\$
- **Revitalize the public amenities at Lambton Park Community School***
Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to revitalize or update the existing publicly-accessible amenities at Lambton Park Community School (located at 50 Bernice Crescent). Examples of this include improvements related to the school’s play structure and surface, and revitalizing the school’s outdoor space to create new outdoor learning environments. The Toronto District School Board would have to be involved as a partner in this revitalization process.
Cost: \$\$\$
- **A new ice skating rink or skate trail in a neighbourhood park**
Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to provide services for a new natural community ice rink at Marie Baldwin Park, Maple Claire Park, Harwood Park, or Black Creek Site West. Creation of a natural community ice rink would require community members to come together each year to build the rink.
Cost: \$
- **Improve landscaping and tree planting at Runnymede Park**
Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to update Runnymede Park—including improvements to seating, landscaping, tree plantings, new accessible pathways, etc. Design and construction of these improvements are estimated to take approximately 2 years.
Cost: \$\$

- **New or upgraded water play areas**

Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to upgrade existing water play areas and/or splash pads, or build brand new ones.

This could look like:

- Upgrading the wading pool at Runnymede Park to create a new splash pad;
- Building a new splash pad at Harwood Park or Westlake Park, or;
- Refurbishing the existing Maple Claire Park splash pad.

Cost: \$\$\$\$

- **Improve landscaping and tree planting at Maple Claire Park**

Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to update Maple Claire Park - including improvements to seating, landscaping, tree plantings, new accessible pathways, etc. Design and construction of these improvements are estimated to take approximately 2 years.

Cost: \$\$

** Included at the request of the local Councillor.*

Key Feedback Highlights

The Virtual Rating Activity provided an opportunity for local residents to rate six ideas that were identified as priorities in the Interactive Mapping Activity (Social Pinpoint), as well as the option to revitalize public amenities at Lambton Park Community School at the request of the local Councillor.

- **Staff Note on Lambton Park Community School:**

The Lambton Park Community School option received the **highest overall rate (4.2 stars)** and the **largest number of ratings (1,274)**. A large influx of ratings for this option was received within the first few days of the activity. City staff received emails from community members who expressed concerns over the nature of this large influx and the validity of the data.

After careful review of the data, City staff concluded that the ratings collected through this activity are valid and that there had been no tampering to the exercise. It is likely that the large influx of activity was a community-led effort to increase the ratings for the Lambton Park Community School idea, and decrease ratings for the other ideas listed.

- **Criteria for determining how Section 37 Funds can be used for this project:**

According to City Planning, Section 37 funds should be used towards local improvements within a 2km catchment of the site. The 2km distance (i.e. appropriate geographic relationship) is based on how far people are generally willing to travel, in order to take advantage of local improvements.

The Section 37 guidelines provide that an appropriate geographic relationship exists if one or more of the following criteria are applicable:

- a. the contributing development is located within the catchment area of the facilities being constructed or improved as a community benefit;
 - b. the contributing development is located within the community or neighbourhood that benefits from the provision of the community benefits;
 - c. the occupants of the contributing development will have the opportunity to use the facilities being constructed or improved; and
 - d. the contributing development will benefit from the provision of the community benefits, possibly through increased value, or enhanced marketing or business opportunities.
- **Other considerations for use of Section 37 funding in this neighbourhood:**

Section 37 contributions should, before all else, benefit the parks and right-of-way (ROW) within the closest proximity to the development site. If and only when no other parks or ROWs exist that require funded support, a school or alternate agreement would be suitable.

Summary of Results

The Idea Rating Activity received 2,144 page users (the number of individuals who visited the activity web page at least once) and received 7,499 total ratings across seven ideas.

<p>Improve landscaping and tree planting at Maple Claire Park!</p> <p>Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to update Maple Claire Park - including improvements to seating, landscaping, tree plantings, new accessible pathways, etc. Design and construction of these improvements are estimated to take approximately 2 years.</p> <p>Cost: \$\$</p> <p>Overall Rating: 2.2 - 930 votes My Rating: ★★★★★</p>	<p>Improve landscaping and tree planting at Runnymede Park!</p> <p>Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to update Runnymede Park—including improvements to seating, landscaping, tree plantings, new accessible pathways, etc. Design and construction of these improvements are estimated to take approximately 2 years.</p> <p>Cost: \$\$</p> <p>Overall Rating: 2.2 - 1010 votes My Rating: ★★★★★</p>	<p>Revitalize the public amenities at Lambton Park Community School!</p> <p>Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to revitalize or update the existing publicly-accessible amenities at Lambton Park Community School (located at 50 Bernice Crescent). Examples of this include improvements related to the school's play structure and surface, and revitalizing the school's outdoor space to create new outdoor learning environments. The Toronto District School Board would have to be involved as a partner in this revitalization process.</p> <p>Cost: \$\$\$</p> <p>Overall Rating: 4.2 - 1533 votes My Rating: ★★★★★</p>
<p>New or upgraded water play areas!</p> <p>Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to upgrade existing water play areas and/or splash pads, or build brand new ones.</p> <p>This could look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading the wading pool at Runnymede Park to create a new splash pad. • Building a new splash pad at Harwood Park or Westlake Park, or, • Refurbishing the existing Maple Claire Park splash pad. <p>Cost: \$\$\$\$</p> <p>Overall Rating: 1.8 - 970 votes My Rating: ★★★★★</p>	<p>A new ice skating rink or skate trail in a neighbourhood park!</p> <p>Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to provide services for a new natural community ice rink at Marie Baldwin Park, Maple Claire Park, Harwood Park, or Black Creek Site West. Creation of a natural community ice rink would require community members to come together each year to build the rink.</p> <p>Cost: \$</p> <p>Overall Rating: 1.9 - 840 votes My Rating: ★★★★★</p>	<p>A new or upgraded playground in a neighbourhood park!</p> <p>Based on community feedback, this funding can be used to update an existing playground in Runnymede Park, Upper Junction Park or Harwood Park. It can also be used to build a small playground in Black Creek Site West. Construction of a new playground or playground update could take 1-2 years.</p> <p>Cost: \$\$</p> <p>Overall Rating: 2.0 - 942 votes My Rating: ★★★★★</p>

1 Screenshot of the Virtual Idea Rating Activity.

The final ratings for each idea (out of five stars) are:

- **Revitalize the public amenities at Lambton Park Community School***

1,533 ratings received | Rated 4.2

Staff Comment:

- While it is possible to allocate Section 37 funds to a school in a separate legal agreement, City Planning states funds can only be allocated to a school if no other parks exist near the development site that require funded support. The public engagement on this project so far has identified parks that require improvements near 2306 St. Clair Ave W.
- See Appendix B for further information.

- **A new Off-Leash Area in a neighbourhood park**

1,274 ratings received | Rated 2.2

Staff Comment:

- An off-leash area can be further explored. Before any further study can be accommodated, City policy requires an organized group to make a formal application, form a Dog Owners' Association and send a request to dola@toronto.ca.
- An off-leash area in Marie Baldwin Park would be a low priority as it is across the street from Woolner Park Off-Leash Area. Harwood Park has an existing playground and ballfields, and therefore would be a tight fit for a new off-leash area.

- **Improve landscaping and tree planting at Runnymede Park**

1,010 ratings received | Rated 2.2

Staff Comment:

- Runnymede Park had the third highest rating overall and the highest rating based on proximity to the development site (less than 200m).
- Runnymede Park has a number of existing amenities that can be improved and are aligned with community improvements that are currently proposed and underfunded. These potential improvements include an update to the playground, additional seating, and adding a splash pad.

- **Improve landscaping and tree planting at Maple Claire Park**

930 ratings received | Rated 2.2

Staff Comment: Some consideration could be given to improved tree canopy around the splash pad and playground area. Consideration could also include accessibility improvements (new sidewalk) on the south side of the park along Tarragon Boulevard.

- **A new or upgraded playground in a neighbourhood park**

942 ratings received | Rated 2.0

Staff Comment: Priority for a new or upgraded playground, based on community

feedback, will be considered at Runnymede Park given that the existing play area is much older and dated compared to those in neighbouring parks.

- **A new ice skating rink or skate trail in a neighbourhood park**
840 ratings received | Rated 1.9

Staff Comment: This idea, based on feedback, is ranked lower in priority.

- **New or upgraded water play areas**
970 ratings received | Rated 1.8

Staff comment: This idea, based on feedback, is ranked lower in priority.

During the Idea Rating Activity, City staff also received comments from the community via email. See Appendix A for this correspondence.

Next Steps

The results and feedback received during this virtual activity will be shared with the local Councillor's office, and will help to identify community priorities for how the Section 37 benefits generated from this and future developments are used in the area surrounding 2306 St. Clair Avenue West.

A decision on where the funding generated from this development will be shared in summer 2021 on the project webpage, at toronto.ca/StClairWestImprovements.

Appendix A: Comments Received by City Staff

Email 1: February 24th, 2021

Hi Councillor and Casey,

I really appreciate the efforts that your office and the city are taking to engage the community with tools like social pinpoint and Webex. It's so much easier to participate this way, resulting in lots of high quality data to be gathered less expensively. I also think it's a big win for accessibility. Alex also did a great job as host.

Your last eNews mention of the Planning oriented Social pinpoint exercise was on December 9th, and the first mention of this Section 37 oriented one in eNews was January 27th. I also got a flyer about this in January. I didn't participate in the second exercise because I already participated in the first one, and I thought it was the same exercise. I wonder if other area residents felt this way. If we don't use the data from the first exercise, we may be missing the input from many residents, and I see the scope of the Planning exercise as covering this more focused section 37 exercise. Can we ensure that the data from the Planning exercise gets used as input here? I know I asked this during the session but I wanted to get a confirmation of this. Thank you!

Email 2: March 9, 2021

Good morning all,

Just wanted to share with you this sad and concerning trend that many residents have flagged to me. It seems a group of people have organized to try and sway the voting process for the section 37 money for the neighbourhood. A few residents were monitoring the voting numbers coming in for Lambton community school park.

At one point it was getting a vote a minute for approx. 30 minutes? Can people vote more than once? Did they have an automated voting system?

For a school of 125 students to garner so many votes in short period of time is interesting. I flag this issue for you to consider and review. I'd also like to share that it saddens me that this exercise is laid out as a competition. It's a shame to have neighbours pitted against neighbours in an NIA community fighting for city crumbs because of years of civic neglect.

We can do better. Dream bigger.

Email 3: February 10, 2022

Hi Casey,

Hope you are well.

I was voting this evening using the Virtual Rating tool and am thrilled that a Dog Off Leash Area is an option. While reviewing the suggested locations Harwood Park and Marie Baldwin Park two things came to mind. One, neither of those options are very close to where the new building is going to be and population dense areas in general and two, There is already a DOLA at

Woolner Park (735 Jane St) which is literally across the street from Marie Baldwin Park (746 Jane St.)

I was really hoping to see a DOLA in a more central, accessible area where the population is denser and will become increasingly so with the proposed condo projects in the area. With developments proposed at 6 Lloyd Avenue, 290 Old Weston Rd and the one in progress at 2306 St Clair there will be many new residents in the area with dogs and no appropriate place for those people to exercise their pets freely and conveniently. I fear that failing to prepare for the inevitable influx we are setting the community up for a real problem.

I truly hope that you and your team will reconsider the location for a future DOLA.

Regards.

Appendix B: Section 37 re: School Board Playgrounds

5.9 Improvements to School Board Playgrounds

Cash contributions toward the capital improvement of school board playgrounds are eligible S.37 community benefits where the playground serves as a local park, where the public will continue to have reasonable access for the foreseeable future, and where there is no local City-owned parkland performing a similar function in the same community that could otherwise benefit from the cash contribution.

Further information can be viewed [here](#).