

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

# New Park at 261 Nairn Avenue

## Public Meeting

### Meeting Summary

December 8, 2021

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## Introduction

This document provides a summary of the 261 Nairn Park public meeting that was held on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

The meeting was attended by approximately 55 community members.

The presentation shared at this meeting and more information about the project can be found on the project webpage at [www.toronto.ca/OakwoodStClairStudy](http://www.toronto.ca/OakwoodStClairStudy)

**A note on tech difficulties:** Minutes after starting the meeting, a project team member noticed that attendees were unable to log into the event. The facilitator downloaded the registration list and emailed them a new link. The meeting started about 10 minutes late and the team stayed 10 minutes past finish time to accommodate for the delay.

## Meeting Goals

The new park at 261 Nairn Ave. is located at the southeast corner of Rogers Road and Nairn Avenue in [Ward 9 – Davenport](#). The City recently acquired the property, which was previously a commercial/residential building, and converted it to parkland. Since the summer, the project team has been engaging the local community in order to identify their priorities and vision for the new park. At this meeting the goal of the project team was to:

- **Present key findings** from the engagement and consultation process.
- **Share** the two concept designs developed by the consultants and gather feedback from the community.
- **Launch** concept design survey.

## Meeting Promotion

The meeting was promoted through:

- Paid social media advertisement on Facebook and Instagram geo-targeting the study area.
- Project webpage updates.
- Deputy Mayor Ana Bailao's social media

## Feedback Summary

Project staff presented engagement process and the two concept designs. The presentation was followed by a discussion session. A copy of the presentation is available on [the project webpage](#). Questions (Q), answers (A), comments (C), and responses from staff (R) are presented below as summaries. This is not a verbatim transcript.

## Questions and Answers

### Safety

Q: Does the grass/shrub planting along Rogers immediately impede the view into the park from the already installed benching along Rogers? Would these benches be turned around in this scenario for people to sit along Rogers?

A: For concept A, the planted buffer along Rogers are ornamental grasses and shrubs. They wouldn't exceed the height of one metre. This maintains a sightline into the park while still providing a planted buffer. The existing benches would be reoriented so that when you are sitting you are facing the street.

Q: What about safety? Cars go very quickly on Rogers.

A: We have reached out to Transportation Services and they are aware of the concern. There is an ongoing conversation about potentially creating a "bump out" on the west side of the park along Nairn Ave, which would narrow that part of the street, as a traffic calming measure. Transportation Services will also take a closer look at traffic safety and access improvements along Rogers Rd.

Q: Concept B shows the entrance of the pathway quite close to the laneway, potentially creating an unsafe scenario as cars come out of there quite fast. How are you considering safety in this case?

A: That is a good point. Concept A provides much more distance from the laneway and is therefore safer. We will take this into consideration and ensure that the final design has enough space and that pedestrians and drivers are able to see each other. Thank you for your insights.

Q: I agree with a bump out but I am worried transportation will say no because coming out of Nairn, cars go left and right. I am wondering if we could put bollards or a car proof perimeter around the park?

A: We haven't considered bollards as part of the park design. We can't speak to what Transportation Services is considering at the moment since it is in its early stages. We are including a buffer in concept A and fencing. Concept B has more fencing along both the East and North sides. We are looking at ways of containing activity within the park. We can certainly look at adding more safety measures, such as additional fencing, if the community thinks it is necessary.

Q: Is this steel going to get hot? For something children are touching this is obviously worrisome.

A: Steel in play equipment is structural - the things kids touch is wood or plastic, these surfaces don't heat up so this is not a concern. Fencing is metal but it is far enough from the playground.

### Accessibility

Q: How are these play structures and choices inclusive of children with physical disabilities?

A: For all three themes we have identified play equipment that is geared for a range of abilities, as well as equipment that is geared to children with certain disabilities. It is a key factor in terms of the equipment that we choose. We will work with the supplier to ensure that there is play equipment included in the scheme that is accessible and meets AODA guidelines.

Q: Are the play areas geared towards infants or young children? There is a tremendous amount in this area.

A: Overall the play area is geared towards junior and senior children ages ranging 2 to 5 and 5 to 12. It's a combined space, but there will be specific play pieces for younger kids, toddlers, and for older children.

Q: What features of this space are designed to include our teen demographic? The play area is up to 12. What about our community members who are teens? For example, is there not a way to include a skate area or a basketball net? Or a batting cage type area?

A: Through the survey we heard that children's play space was a priority. We have included hangout spaces, a gazebo and sitting areas. There is also a lawn space for games. There are some gaming amenities that we are considering, table games like ping-pong and chess for example that draw younger demographics. Unfortunately the space is not big enough to accommodate a basketball court or a skate park.

### Features and Amenities

Q: Why is the water fountain provisional?

A: There are some requirements that we're still looking to clarify with Toronto Water, to understand exactly what infrastructure would be required. Surprisingly, that can be quite a costly endeavor. We are balancing that against some of the other features that we've heard the community is looking for here.

Q: What is your reason for not including adult fitness equipment in this park?

A: What we heard from the community through the engagement process that we've done to date, is that a playground amenity is a really a high priority here. The space is quite small, and we just don't physically have the space to accommodate additional fitness equipment. It is important to note that fitness equipment for adults can't be within the same surfacing area within the same space as play equipment.

A: What precisely is the community planting bed?

Q: We heard from community members that there was interest in creating a community led pollinator garden. There is a program at the city called Pollinate TO. Through the survey we are collecting emails from people who are interested in caring for the garden and would like to participate in the program.

Q: Why aren't swings included in playgrounds? Bucket swings are nice but they require a lot of people to operate.

A: Traditional swings take up a large amount of space due to safety zone requirements. Since this is a smaller site, we've included a disc swing as a potential swing feature as they don't take up as much space and would allow us to include other play features enhancing overall play value of the playground. Disc swings also allow for group play. We could look at incorporating a single-bay traditional swing option, if this is the community's preference. The single bay swing structure would accommodate two swings.

Q: Is there any other option for shade? Can trees be planted within the playground as well to provide some natural shade? A: That's a great idea. We are showing several deciduous trees around the perimeter line, but we could look at proposing larger canopy deciduous shade trees for both concepts potentially to provide even more natural shade.

Q: It seems like there are several patches of left-over lawn space that are too small to be functional. Could these be consolidated or changed to additional native perennial gardens?

A: We've intentionally left green space for people to be able to throw down a blanket to relax or for a picnic. In terms of filling the space with plant material, we've already allowed for quite a bit of plant material throughout both concepts. We would also need to be mindful of Parks Operations' capacity to maintain planted areas.

Q: Will there be night lights here - I can't see that in the drawings.

A: No. we don't typically light public parks unless they are larger and the routes allow people to access public services, such as transit. Also, there is light coming from the nearby street lights.

Q: How would watering work for a community garden?

A: The City would have to provide access to water so that the community can maintain the pollinator gardens.

Q: Will the design team prioritize native species when finalizing the plant and tree selection?

A: Lara, please elaborate. Yes, we will be looking to plant native species as part of the planting program.

#### Questions relating to dogs

Q: Is there anything that can be designed to prevent the park from becoming a dog park?

A: We're not containing the area completely at this point, in either of the proposed designs. This will prevent people from using the space as an off leash area. People, of course, are welcome to bring their dogs but they have to be on leash.

#### General Project Questions

Q: What is the overall budget for this space?

A: The overall budget for the project is 430,000. That includes all of our soft costs related to site investigation, consulting fees, permit fees, survey costs, etc., as well as construction costs.

Q: We submitted a name request for the park on behalf of Peter Borsellino whose father had a business on that site. What is the process for naming the park?

A: Currently there is a moratorium on naming parks as decided by the City Council. Once the moratorium is lifted there will be a naming process for the park which will include community consultation.

Q: Is this webcast being recorded? I missed the first part.

A: A summary will be posted online on the project web page.

Q: Will you be sending out a link for voting on the concepts? How will you be determining whether to go with plan A or B?

A: The project team launched a survey where the community can indicate their preferred concept plan as well as provide feedback on specific features.

## Comments

C: Love the natural theme in structures.

C: Love concept A overall.

C: Thank you for your time and effort. I appreciate it.

C: I think these park plans are really wonderful. Thank you for considering community feedback in your designs. My son noted that the 3rd option for play equipment is similar to the new plays cape at nearby Rawlinson Community School, and that children might prefer something different at this park.

C: Consider bollards around the park if there cannot be other speed reducing features. Want to stop cars entering from Rogers and stop kids running out.

C: Have you considered strategic fencing or bollards. They can be very cool Bollards - sculptures even

C: there was a speed bump on Harvie that was removed and never replaced just north of Rogers Rd.

C: (Bollards) that would help slow down traffic.

C: For Bollards, some great examples on twitter from around the world on "World Bollard Association". Rather than fencing

C: Possible to include electronic watch your speed signs before park? None on Rogers and cars travel at high levels of speed

C: Would be great to have fencing as well as shrubs to reduce pollution and noise.

C: As far as a name, Frank from Frank's Shoe Repair passed away this year and had been across from that park for decades. Might be an option - store was Calzolaio Italiano at 260 Nairn Avenue (facing Rogers).

C: Definitely like A better

C: Trees along the south end would be great to enable more shade.

C: Definitely a preference for A. B looks downright unsafe.

C: I prefer concept B.

C: Loving the modern/traditional theme and concept A.

C: Playgrounds in the city are often too hot and exposed in the summer.

C: not a question, but just want to note, I think the planting buffer at rogers road is a much better solution than the metal fence as a traffic buffer.

C: Concept A is best.

C: Love the idea of a shorter (1.2 meters is too high! Feels like a prison) metal fence on the perimeter

C: Please keep the lawn space.

C: They are very thoughtful designs, thank you.

C: A pollinator garden could do well in the other side of Nairn, behind the bus stop. That has been overgrown with weeds but could be a nice garden strip.

C: I would love to be a part of this garden. I can even take the lead.

C: Overall these are really awesome - for such a small space, these feel really GREEN! Thank you for all your work!

C: Thanks very much. It looks great! Looking forward to the next step.

C: I agree with Amanda, I would forgo some play structures for a ping pong table for a larger range of people to use!

C: I agree with Amanda and others opinion, too many young children's parks nearby and not any for older children (teenagers) and adults

C: I prefer concept A.

C: Just to go back to the water situation. There is no public water available anywhere near this location.

C: Can we see the three park play structures patterns again.

C: Earls court has exercise equipment

C: As a parent that lives close to Boon and Hope, there are no playgrounds in walking distance for parents. There is the cemetery for adults and seniors and dog walkers to walk. Young children can't walk all the way to JJP.

C: Parent of young kids here. So many young children have moved to this neighborhood in the last few years and yes there are parks around, but none very close. My family and several others on my street are thrilled at the idea of a playground coming so close.

C: Sorry - no playgrounds in walking distance for after school for instance, to get to quickly.

C: I have lived here on Nairn and Rogers for 25 years and there are many more teens than children. Even Halloween there are very few small kids. More seniors and teens

C: Agree with comments that this site is not suited for a children's playground due to close proximity to fast busy street and homes. As noted there are quite a few playgrounds in the area. This new park should focus on a community garden for trees, plants

C: Love the Adirondack chair idea!!

C: Great seating options

C: Thanks to the team for this great work - this is useful information and context for how the design process will unfold.

C: I prefer benches, rather than the Muskoka chairs

C: Please consider fencing all the way around the park. Rogers is a very busy street, and Nairn is also quite busy with vehicular traffic. I'd love for kids to be able to run around freely and safely

C: My kids are excited for bucket swing!



## Next Steps

The concept options survey will close on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The project team will use that data to develop a preferred concept and present it to the community in the new year at an open house.

## Contact Us

For any questions or additional comments please contact:

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