

Mouth of the Creek Park

PUBLIC MEETING

Tuesday, March 5th 2013

7.00-9.00 pm

Blue Barracks – Fort York

Toronto, ON, M5V 3K9 Canada

SUMMARY REPORT

On March 5th, 2013, 35 people participated in the first of two public meetings for the Mouth of the Creek Park. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project, to identify potential uses for the park and to begin to prioritize these potential uses.

This meeting summary was written by Bianca Wylie from SWERHUN Facilitation, part of the Mouth of the Creek Park facilitation team. The report was distributed to meeting participants in draft prior to being finalized. This summary is intended to reflect the key messages delivered during the meeting and is not a verbatim transcript. Also, please note Appendix A. Meeting Agenda

KEY MESSAGES FROM FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The following key messages emerged from the discussion. Detailed feedback follows.

- 1. The size of the park is a major factor in its design – acknowledge the size limitation and prioritize use accordingly.** The park is a small space; it will encourage a great number of users and increased potential for conflicts. Rather than trying to include a long list of activities, pick the core uses for the park and spend the effort doing them well, rather than creating a compromised vision of many uses.
- 2. The park will serve as both a destination and a throughway.** There is an opportunity to consider the use of the park through two main lenses, the user who will stay in the park, and the user who will move through the park. Pay attention to both cases equally in the design of the park, and consider all decisions made with the limited space through these two lenses.

DETAILED FEEDBACK

Detailed feedback is organized into three parts.

- How would you like to use the new park?
- Do some of the uses identified in question one make more sense/seem more feasible than others?
- What potential challenges could come up related to those uses? And what ideas do you have, if any, to address them?

A. Participants' Desired Use for the New Park

During the meeting, participants were given Post-it notes to record suggested uses. The notes were then grouped at the front of the room. The following themes and specific uses emerged from the discussion:

Connectivity

- Connect the past (Fort York) and the present (the park and the community)
- Build throughway and connections for bikes and pedestrians, including the yellow Portland bridge
- Create a trail hub

- Connect visually with Fort York
- Connect communities to the east and west
- Connect with the northern linear park and Strachan Avenue
- Connect to Liberty Village
- Access to Fort York

Recreational Uses

- Dog walking
- Bike riding
- Sports, exercise and stretching
- Relaxing, lounging, sitting
- Reading
- Picnics
- Walking
- Quiet zone
- Games
- Tobogganing
- Eating lunch under a tree

Community Uses

- Pizza oven
- Outdoor performance amphitheatre for music and theatre
- Movies, lectures and talks
- Public art
- Extension of the library
- Social space for the community
- Story-telling area
- Extension of the library
- Community garden
- Connect with history

Play Space

- Playground that includes activities from 1812; consider forts, cannons and ships
- Playground suitable for ages 4-10, one that can hold their attention and be engaging
- Playground suitable for ages 0-5
- Play area with grass
- Play area for birthday parties and picnics
- Bicycle rides
- Tobogganing
- Skateboard park in underpass

Heritage Uses

- Place for historical discussion
- Reuse the stones from the archaeological dig to build a bake oven
- Mark the Garrison Creek River banks
- Celebrate area history

Natural Environment

- Create a marsh area at the mouth of the creek
- Create a shelter area under the bridge

- Create lighting under the bridge
- Add green space and trees

B. Feasibility of Uses – Early Stages Prioritization

- **Make Connections.** The theme of connectivity was raised often, examples include: connecting neighborhoods east and west of the site, connecting to the library and its programming, connecting to Fort York, making bike path connections, connecting the space between the bridge and the library and creating clearly defined access points for the park.
- **Acknowledge the history of the site in the design.** Find ways to include the history of the garrison and the marshlands in the area. Commemorate the past and the founding of Toronto with murals.
- **Use the slope.** Design with the natural environment as a principle. There are a multitude of uses that could be supported with the slopes from active use, including winter activities, to passive terraced use for reading and leisure.
- **Have the natural environment drive leisure use, especially as connected to the library.** Many participants commented about reading and relaxing in a green open space with trees. Include green space and do not “over-design” it, allow for a feeling of being in nature while connecting with programming.
- **Activate the space.** Consider the community use options, such as a performance and play space, as well a place for farmer’s markets and social interaction.

C. Challenges Associated with Uses and Ideas to Address Them

Size of the Park

- **Manage user conflicts.** Keep user conflicts top of mind and design to minimize conflicts.
- **Use the slope for multi-purpose activities to capitalize on its function in a small space,** the slope can support both passive (leisure) and active (play) recreation.
- **Delineate clearly between active and passive uses to enable a quiet reading and relaxing area.**

Natural Environment & Existing Built Form

- **Maximize sunshine** to counteract shadows from adjacent buildings.
- **Include as much grass and as many trees as possible.** Green space is highly desirable and grass is preferable to materials such as sand or concrete.
- **Consider a windbreak to mitigate the northwest wind** that will affect the park via the adjacent buildings.
- **Create a well-lit space under the bridge.**
- **Use the space under the bridge as well as beside it for active or play use.** Having people use the space is another way to make it a safe space.

Neighbourhood Context

- **Don’t duplicate use with existing parks in the neighborhood, such as Canoe Landing.** Consider what is missing and prioritize by filling gaps in the community. Consider having a concurrent discussion about what can be done to improve existing parks.
- **Mitigate, if possible, the impact of smog and diesel exhaust from passing trains and cars.** The park is on a rail corridor and near a busy street.
- **Address the existing barriers with Fort York.** Make the connections to Fort York natural and inviting.

- **Make the park accessible.** The park is atypical in that it is not open on all sides, especially due to the bridge, adjacent development and the rail corridor. It's not just about developing one front door but about creating multiple doors so the community knows about the park and will access it.

Safety

User conflict between children and dogs must be managed. Many participants raised the issue of this conflict, and suggested having dogs on leash policy, as well as fenced in area for children similar to the one in Victoria Park Square. Enforcement of dogs on-leash policy is a challenge, it's best to resolve the user conflict through design if possible.

- **User conflict of walkers, cyclists and other active recreation users must be managed.** Many participants also raised the issue of the conflict between heavy and/or fast bicycle traffic with pedestrians and other park users.
- **Define what is "safe use" for the slopes,** and mitigate safety and injury issues related to the use of slopes in design.

Amenities

- **Include benches, shade and washrooms and bike parking.** There is minimal car parking options, bike parking encourages bike use.
- **Address dog waste.** Ensure bins and bags are available to help manage pet waste.

Other Advice

- **Maintenance of the park and their associated costs is an important factor when deciding on landscaping, built form and materials.**
- **Consider a different venue for the second meeting** to increase participation, make it a more accessible venue.

D. Written comments

Additional uses and facilities suggested in the written worksheets included: a splash pad, swimming pool, skating rink and washrooms.

Other advice included:

- **Create a pedestrian green bridge,** similar to the one tree bridge in Vancouver that runs south of 7th Ave. to Granville over 6th Ave, just west of Laurel St.
- **Create a program to mentor kids** doing murals under the bridge area, use a world class street artist if possible.
- **Use materials for benches and play structures that will not get too hot in direct sunlight.**
- **Acknowledge the Aboriginal context of the site.**
- **Recognize the archaeological discoveries in the area.**
- **Design a plan to keep paths clear and clean.**
- **Include tennis courts or a volleyball court.**

NEXT STEPS

Councillor Vaughan thanked everyone for attending, and reminded participants of the second meeting, to be held in April. Bianca Wylie let participants know that a draft of the notes from the workshop would be distributed to them for review prior to being finalized, and to send any additional feedback via email or phone by March 12, 2013 for consideration in the draft summary report.



Mouth of the Creek Park - Public Meeting #1

The Blue Barracks – Fort York
250 Fort York Boulevard
Toronto, ON M5V 3K9
Tuesday March 5th, 2013
7:00 – 9:00 pm

AGENDA

Meeting Purpose: To introduce the project, to identify potential uses for the park and to begin to prioritize these potential uses.

- 7:00 pm** **Welcome**
Bob Duguid, Sr. Project Coordinator / Landscape Architect, South District Construction Management, Capital Projects, Parks Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto
- 7:05** **Introductions & Agenda Review**
Bianca Wylie, Facilitator, SWERHUN Facilitation
- 7:15** **Presentation/Participant Briefing – Part 1**
Marc Ryan, Principal PUBLIC WORK, Urban Design & Landscape Architects, Brendan Stewart, ERA Architects Inc.
The Park in Context
- 7:30** **Discussion & Full Room Plenary – Part 1**
Discussion Questions Part 1
1. How would you like to use the new park?
- 7:50** **Presentation/Participant Briefing – Part 2**
Marc Ryan, Principal PUBLIC WORK, Urban Design & Landscape Architects, Brendan Stewart, ERA Architects Inc.
Site Conditions & Program Opportunities
- 8:20** **Discussion & Full Room Plenary – Part 2**
Discussion Questions Part 2
2. Given the additional information, are there other uses to add?
 3. Do some of the uses identified in question one make more sense/seem more feasible than others?
 4. What potential challenges could come up related to those uses? And what ideas do you have, if any, to address them?
- Any other advice for the project team at this point?
- 9:00** **Adjournment**