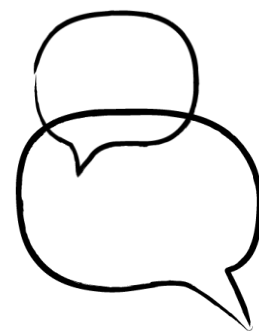


Meeting Summary

Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan Community Consultation Meeting



Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan Community Consultation Meeting

April 20, 2022, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Online via Webex Events

Overview

On Wednesday, April 20, 2022, the City of Toronto hosted a Community Consultation Meeting for the Parkdale Main Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to present and seek community input on the Draft Parkdale Main Street Heritage Conservation District Plan (see Appendix A for the agenda). Approximately 20 community members attended the meeting. Other participants included City of Toronto staff from Heritage Planning and Community Planning as well as a representatives from Councillor Gord Perks office.

Ian Malczewski from the independent facilitation team Third Party Public, provided a Land Acknowledgement, reviewed the agenda, and introduced the project team. Pourya Nazemi and Megan Albinger from the City Planning, Heritage Planning presented the Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan (the HCD Plan) overview and its draft objectives, policies, and guidelines. Following the presentations, Ian facilitated questions of clarification and plenary discussions. The discussions focused on seeking feedback on the draft HCD Plan objectives and the draft policies and guidelines.

Participants were encouraged to send any additional feedback to the Third Party Public team by May 4th. This summary written by Third Party Public summarizes the feedback shared during the meeting – both during the discussions and through the chat box — as well as feedback from meeting participants shared afterwards. It is not intended as a verbatim transcript.

Following the meeting, the City shared and made the [presentation](#) and [supplementary materials](#), including excerpts from the draft HCD Plan, available on the project website and asked that any questions and or comments about the supplementary material be shared with the City by May 4th.

What we heard overall

This section summarizes the key points heard in the meeting. They are high-level takeaways and should be read in the context of the broader, more detailed feedback that follows.

General support for the draft HCD Plan and process. Participants called the plan ambitious and aspirational. Others were happy with the inclusivity of different organizations being engaged.

Concern that current development applications would not be required to follow the HCD Plan, such as the HCD Plan's policies around streetwall height.

Interest in understanding how the boundaries for the HCD Plan area were selected and if/how other areas and properties could be designated. Some said that the Roncesvalles area has a similar feel to Parkdale and that it should have been included. Others said it is a different area/feel and don't see a need to have it included. Participants also discussed the property at 119 Dowling Avenue and the importance of honoring and telling the history of Dr. Abbott, the first Canadian-born Black doctor.

Questions of Clarification

After the presentations, participants asked questions of clarification. Questions from participants are in **bold** text, responses from project team follow each question in *italicized* text.

Question: Assuming all goes well, how soon will the HCD Plan be in force?

Answer: City staff are targeting a Council decision on the HCD Plan for mid-July. If Council approves the HCD Plan, there will be 30-day appeal period. If there are no appeals, the HCD Plan would be in force immediately after that period. If there are appeals, the timing will depend on the number of appeals and the complexity of the issues expressed in them.

Question: Why was the stretch on Queen Street west of Jameson (all the way to Roncesvalles) not included in the HCD Plan area?

Answer: During the previous HCD Study, the City's consultant's recommendation was not to include this area in the HCD Plan as it did not have a comparable number of heritage buildings as the area between Jameson and Dufferin. The City has still added individual buildings west of Jameson to its Heritage Register to help protect them.

Question: What type of Indigenous engagement has taken place for the HCD Plan?

Answer: The team used the Tkaronto Indigenous Peoples portal to identify Indigenous serving organizations and has reached out to these organizations to discuss what places and/or properties are important to them.

Question: How does the HCD Plan protect heritage buildings?

Answer: The goal of the HCD Plan is to protect buildings through designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. Heritage Planning works with property standards and 311 to help address the maintenance issues for historic buildings.

Detailed summary of feedback

The discussion covered four main topics:

1. The HCD Plan overall
2. Feedback about draft objectives, draft policies, and guidelines
3. Feedback about process, and other comments
4. Post meeting feedback

The summary below is organized under these four topics. Participant feedback and suggestions are included first. Responses from the project team, where provided, follow in *italicized* text.

Feedback about the HCD Plan overall

General support for the HCD Plan, objectives, and goals. Some participants said the goals are aspirational and said they had no concerns with the HCD Plan.

Concern that the objectives may not be met when applied to current development applications. Interest in understanding if current development applications are subject to the HCD Plan, especially the objective of having a two and three-story streetwall when some existing applications include four storeys or greater. *Response: As a foundation we are proactive in ensuring there is an opportunity to protect these buildings when we can by including them on the Heritage Register. If we get to a contested hearing with the Ontario Land Tribunal, we bring forward what an appropriate streetwall height should be.*

Concern that the Ontario Land Tribunal can overrule the HCD Plan to allow for higher-story buildings. *Response: The planning framework policies are informative and guide planning, but they are not determinative. If there is a planning framework that is not enforced, compromises must be made to reach settlements at the Ontario Land Tribunal. Community members can contact Patrick Miller from Community Planning at Patrick.miller@toronto.ca to discuss specific planning applications in the area.*

Mixed opinions on whether to include the Roncesvalles area as part of the HCD Plan. Some said that the area has a similar feel to Parkdale while others said it is a different area/feel and don't see a need to have the area included. *Response: It was part of the consultant team recommendation to not go that far. The staff report indicated that there should be a transition from the Main Street to the Residential area. Additionally, most of these buildings were built after the period of significance (1880s to 1920s).*

Although the property at 119 Dowling Avenue is one block outside of the Jameson boundary, it should be considered as part of the HCD area. It is the home of the first Canadian-born black Doctor, Dr. Anderson Abbott, who served in the Civil War and was a surgeon for President Lincoln. There should be a way to honour that history and Dowling Avenue. *Response: The district is part of a whole, and it is not necessary to have a building outside of the district to be protected specifically by including it in the HCD Plan area; it can be done individually. The Sunnyside Historical Society has already put in a nomination proposal for the designation for Dr. Anderson Abbott's building, with support from Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust.*

Protecting and increasing affordable housing in Parkdale is of great importance. Consider ways the HCD Plan can incentivize development of affordable housing. *Response: The HCD plans don't speak to use of the buildings (use is regulated by other planning tools). There are indirect ways the HCD Plan encourages affordability, such as supporting simpler built form (which is easier and cheaper to build) and through heritage incentive programs that help residential and commercial property owners cover part of the cost of conservation and maintenance work.*

Feedback about draft objectives, draft policies, and guidelines

General support for the draft objectives. Participants generally shared support for the draft objectives and did not raise any specific objections. One participant said it can be hard to understand the difference between the future aspirational goals and what is currently happening.

Concern that the parapet/cornice is being left out, based off the graphics on the presentation.

Response: The cornice on the top of the building is part of the overall height of the street wall and may not be illustrated properly. The team will take this as advice to adjust the illustrative component of the presentation. These features have been included in the objectives and need to be protected.

Consider adding policies and/or guidelines that prevent land assembly to protect the fine granularity of buildings. *Response: There is nothing specific that prevents land assembly, but there are policies towards maintaining and enhancing the fine-grain character of properties. The HCD Plan anticipates and includes a strategy to address people combining contributing and non-contributing properties, so that they can be looked at together.*

Support for policies that allow for creative design that both protect heritage and respect the area's existing context. Participants said they liked the example of the LCBO building at Queen Street West and Bathurst shown in the presentation, in particular how policies for non-contributing properties allow for using contemporary materials like steel and glass and suggested this type of creative design be encouraged in Parkdale. *Response: We agree it is a good example of how to respect existing context and articulation in a new building and hope to see buildings like this, on non-contributing properties in Parkdale and other HCD areas.*

Feedback about process and other comments, suggestions, and advice

Participants also shared feedback about the process and other comments, suggestions and advice which include:

- **Grateful that the project team reached out to various organizations for their input and feedback.** Some people have been participating since 2013, and it's good to see the City's inclusive approach in engaging with Parkdale organizations
- **A reminder for the team to avoid the use acronyms for Public Meetings and communications to ensure the public understands the technical terms**

- **Some confusion about where to access the password to join the meeting online.** *Response: The password for the meeting was posted on the City's website with the link to join and was set to pre-populate in the login form.*
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Post meeting feedback

Participants were encouraged to send any additional feedback not discussed during the community consultation to the team via email up until **May 4th, 2022**. One email with additional feedback was received following the meeting from Parkdale People's Economy. The full submission is attached as Appendix B. The submission included feedback and questions about:

- Connections between Parkdale's culture, heritage, and affordability;
 - How Indigenous engagement has and will meaningfully inform the HCD Plan;
 - If there are opportunities to offer economic support to locally serving and immigrant owned businesses;
 - If/how the HCD Plan is incorporating feedback from community-based research and reports to support inclusive local economies; and
 - Ideas and specific recommendations about preserving and increasing the supply of affordable housing and commercial uses in Parkdale with reference to specific reports and existing City policies.
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Next steps

City staff thanked participants for their feedback and participation in the community meeting. The City committed to sharing the presentation with participants after the meeting and explained that the presentation and supplementary documents would be posted on the project website. Ian reminded participants to share any additional feedback by email by May 4 and explained that a draft summary of the meeting would be shared with participants in draft before it is finalized.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan

Public Meeting

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Online and by phone via WebEx Events

Meeting Purpose

To present and seek community input on the Draft Parkdale Main Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan.

Draft Proposed Agenda

6:00 Welcome, land acknowledgement, introductions, agenda review

Councillor Perks, City Staff, and Third Party Public

6:10 Overview: Draft Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan

City Planning (Heritage Planning)

Questions of clarification

6:50 Discussion

Draft objectives

1. How well do the draft objectives capture the heritage aspects of the District? Which objectives, if any, do you particularly like?
2. What, if anything, do you think is missing from the draft objectives? Do you have any suggested changes or additions?

Draft polices and guidelines

Thinking of the draft policies and guidelines for contributing properties, non-contributing properties, and parks and public realm:

1. What, if anything, do you particularly like?
2. Do you have any suggested changes and/or additions?

7:55 Wrap up and next steps

8:00 Adjourn

Appendix B: Post Meeting Feedback

The following was sent to the team as post meeting feedback on behalf of the Parkdale People's Economy organization. Other than formatting, no changes have been made to the submission.

Parkdale People's Economy: Feedback and Questions on the HCD

Parkdale's culture goes beyond the visual design of the neighbourhood's heritage buildings - its heritage is also affordability, providing a space of belonging, welcoming to newcomers, a home

to psychiatric survivors, and a space for connecting community members to safety and supports that centre wellbeing. There needs to be tangible means of preserving the community members, community services, and local businesses that make Parkdale a caring community and ensuring that they can continue to stay rather than be displaced by rising rents, evictions, and gentrification.

There are claims to Indigenous consultation and engagement, though there is not a clear outline of the impact of that engagement within the Plan. Can someone from the City clarify how they are meaningfully integrating Indigenous guidance and feedback into the Plan? What does heritage preservation look like under the context of ongoing settler colonialism and how will the Indigenous history of Parkdale be recognized, preserved, and honoured through the Plan?

Are there means of offering economic support to the locally serving and immigrant-owned businesses, such as the businesses of Little Tibet, to substantively support the wellbeing of these businesses and preserve heritage?

How is the Heritage Conservation District incorporating the feedback from community-based research and reports such as the Parkdale Community Benefits Framework and the Parkdale Community Plan to support inclusive local economies?

Please see below for key highlights from the community reports that are relevant to this process:

Parkdale Community Benefits Framework (2018 Report)

Recommendation for Expansion of Affordable Housing (Page 28):

“Any redevelopments of mixed-use buildings along Queen, King, or Dufferin should vertically expand to accommodate a minimum of 20% inclusionary units in expansions that are less than 8 storeys, and a minimum of 30% inclusionary units in expansions that are 8 storeys or more, and 100% social housing on public and community-owned properties.”

According to the City's growth management strategy, Parkdale's section of Queen Street West is designated as an 'avenue.' Avenues are main commercial streets that can accommodate mid-rise buildings with new housing and jobs while improving public space. The strip between Dufferin and Jameson has also been approved as the **West Queen West Heritage Conservation District**. This means that buildings can vertically expand to accommodate new housing, as long as the development does not exceed 14 meters (approximately 4 storeys) and abides to the character

and design of the historic district. Any mixed-use, privately-owned buildings along Queen Street that are structurally sound for redevelopment should explore partnerships with supportive housing providers to

expand in order to accommodate a minimum of 20% affordable and deeply affordable units. Properties owned by the government or non-profit entities should strive for 100% social housing. For example, in the case of Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre (PARC), their proposed expansion will be entirely deeply affordable supportive units. Buildings along King Street or Dufferin Avenue should similarly explore expansion based on the zoned height allowance of the respective sites. The new housing should be adequate and accessible for Parkdale tenants.”

Recommendation for Municipal Tax Benefit for Small Businesses (Page 37-38):

Establishing a Municipal Tax Benefit for Small Businesses that address local needs, provide community services, and offer decent work

“Commercial taxes are currently determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) based on the potential value of a site rather than its current value. Over the past year, the City of Toronto has been investigating the feasibility of piloting several tax-based solutions to support ongoing sustainability of small and independent businesses in areas of City experiencing displacement pressures. In Kensington Market, the City is conducting a study on supporting small and independent businesses with the goal of ensuring that independent main street businesses, specifically raw food vendors, grocers, and other small vendors, remain viable. The study will be exploring property tax adjustments that could assist in maintaining and growing a mix of independent retailers, such as new lower tax brackets, assessment adjustments, and a financial relief program.

Likewise, when a number of small businesses along Yonge Street fought back after receiving a tax reassessment of over 100%, the City negotiated with MPAC to reassess the properties in the Downtown Yonge BIA. MPAC recognized the area’s designation as a Heritage Conservation District as one of the key reasons to warrant a reduced assessment. Following this experience, the City recommended creating a new small commercial property classification to ensure long-term solutions. This led to City council approving a 10% cap on property tax increases for commercial, industrial and multi-residential property classes. In light of the Province's agreement to create a new property tax class for arts and culture hubs to protect spaces like 401 Richmond, which could no longer afford to maintain affordable arts spaces with their rising property taxes, the City is also advocating for a small business tax class under MPAC's assessment.

In Parkdale, we have the opportunity to explore the feasibility of applying a covenant model to commercial properties for landowners to opt in and receive a Municipal Tax Benefit. For example, conservation land trusts create covenants that landowners opt into and receive financial benefits. Councillor Gord Perks proposed that this model could be applied for commercial land owners who opt into restricting the development of a site to preserve affordable commercial space. The taxing model for bachelorettes in Parkdale also offers an alternative opportunity that could be explored. Bachelorettes are taxed as residential properties instead of commercial properties, which provides a 22-69% tax decrease. Careful attention will need to be maintained in designating tax incentives for 'local businesses,' because franchises can be owned by local independent owners. One potential measure is to prioritize small businesses that uphold the Parkdale values of inclusivity, diversity, equity, and affordability.”

Recommendation to Recognize Businesses as Cultural Landmarks (Page 38):

Recognizing long-standing, locally-serving businesses as cultural landmarks

“The City of Toronto has the opportunity to protect its culturally-relevant businesses by developing an adaptation of San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry. The model follows in the footsteps of Rome, Paris, and London by recognizing long-standing, locally serving businesses that are cultural assets to community and provides access to grants for business and property owners. Legacy businesses are eligible for a yearly grant based on the number of workers they employ, and property owners who extend ten year or longer leases to Legacy Businesses are eligible for a yearly grant.”

Additional Recommendations for Affordable Commercial (see Framework for more details):

- Making amendments to the Commercial Tenancies Act to incorporate stronger rent control and tenant protections;
- Requiring developers to reserve a portion of the project's overall commercial space for locally-owned businesses - such as the Parkdale recommendation for 20% affordable commercial space - particularly when the project involves public land or subsidy.
- Incorporating innovative approaches to planning for inclusive local economies, such as preserving smaller footprints to reduce rents, lower upfront risks, and discourage the move-in of corporate chain businesses; as well as introducing “neighbourhood-serving” zoning to retain local businesses that meet community needs of residents through regulating the size and use type of retails.

Please also review the section on Equitable Process for planning consultations (page 20).

Additional Reports: Values and Visions for Parkdale

- Parkdale Community Planning Study (2016 Report): Core values of equity, inclusivity, diversity, and affordability to guide changes in the neighbourhood. Please note that the plan and values are being updated for a renewed community plan focusing on economic, racial, and climate justice at the end of 2022.
- Parkdale’s Recovery, Rebuild, and Transformation (2020 Report): Offers key visions for Parkdale, outlines equitable consultation processes, and encourages supporting BIPOC leadership in decision making.