

Meeting Summary

West Queen West HCD Plan

LAC Meeting #1



West Queen West Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan

June 24, 2024, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Online via Zoom

Overview

On Monday June 24, 2024, the City of Toronto (the City) hosted the first Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting focused on the West Queen West Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to recap the West Queen West HCD Plan purpose and process, review the Draft LAC Terms of Reference, and review and discuss sections of the Draft HCD Plan, including the statement of objectives, district significance, heritage resources, and key policies and guidelines (see Appendix A for agenda). The meeting was held online via Zoom.

12 organizations were invited to join the LAC. 8 out of 12 organizations invited agreed to be part of the Local Advisory Committee, and 6 of those organizations participated in the first LAC meeting (see Appendix B for the participant list). Other participants included City of Toronto staff from Heritage Planning, Community Planning, and Urban Design, as well as Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik and Councillor Alejandra Bravo, and staff from their offices.

Following the land acknowledgement from Deputy Mayor Malik, and African Ancestral Acknowledgment from Councillor Bravo, Ian Malczewski and Matthew Wheatley from the independent facilitation team Third Party Public facilitated a round of introductions and reviewed the agenda and Draft LAC Terms of Reference. Pourya Nazemi and Emma Doedens from the City Planning Division then presented the West Queen West HCD Plan background, purpose, and key policies and guidelines. The City divided its presentation in two parts, with each followed by questions of clarification and a plenary discussion.

Participants were encouraged to send any additional feedback to the Third Party Public team by July 5th. This summary written by Third Party Public summarizes feedback shared during the meeting — both during the discussions and through the chat box — as well as feedback shared afterwards via email. It is not intended as a verbatim transcript. This summary was shared in draft with participants for review before being finalized.

What we heard overall

This section summarizes key themes we heard in the meeting. They are high-level takeaways only – readers should review them in the context of the detailed feedback that follows.

LAC members did not share any major concerns about the LAC Terms of Reference or the Draft HCD Plan objectives, district significance, heritage resources, or policies presented.

It is important to LAC members that the City continue to consider the cultural heritage of the West Queen West area. Heritage is not only about bricks and architectural elements; it's also about the communities, landmark occasions, shared activities, and other collective expressions of the area's diversity that actively animate the street life.

Interest in dedicated conversations with the West Queen West area residents' associations. Many residents associations and property owners have participated in planning discussions about the area for years – the City should have a dedicated meeting with them about the HCD plan (similar to how the City is planning to meet separately with the Business Improvement Area).

The HCD Plan and designation of listed properties need to happen as quickly as possible. LAC members are concerned that new Provincial legislation means existing listed properties are at risk of being delisted soon. They encouraged the City to work as quickly as possible.

LAC members expressed their appreciation for City staff. They said they appreciate the extensive work the City is doing, the expertise they are bringing, and the thoroughness of the process.

Questions of clarification

Throughout the meeting, participants asked questions of clarification. Questions are in **bold** text, responses from City staff follow each question in *italicized* text.

- **Does the West Queen West HCD boundary mirror the West Queen West BIA boundaries?** *It mostly aligns with the West Queen West BIA boundaries. The HCD Plan area includes properties fronting onto Queen Street West from Bathurst to Dufferin, except for the CAMH site and Trinity Bellwoods Park.*
- **Why is there a separate meeting with the West Queen West Business Improvement Area (BIA)?** *The City is planning a meeting with the WQW BIA because the HCD Plan includes specific policies and guidelines for storefronts, accessibility, signage,*

etc. so we want to ensure impacted businesses can share comments or concerns and we can adjust the HCD Plan if necessary.

- **What specific policies or considerations (if any) will apply to identified landmark buildings?** *The HCD Plan will include specific and slightly different policies for landmark buildings, particularly around developments on or adjacent to them, to address their unique massing and prominence within the streetscape.*
- **Is a Cultural Heritage Resources Assessment (CHRA) a component of this process?** *No, a CHRA is not being completed as part of this process. An HCD Plan is a more comprehensive process, so a CHRA is not necessary.*
- **Would residents' homes be considered part of the study?** *No, the scope of this HCD Plan is storefronts along Queen Street West. The City sometimes develops HCD plans for residential areas, like Cabbagetown.*
- **Has there been an application for 1154 Queen Street West (the Death and Taxes Free House Building)?** *As of the meeting date, no, the City does not have a record of a Planning Application or pending Building Permit at that address.*
- **Will the setbacks be the same in West Queen West as in the Parkdale HCD Plan?** *Yes, these will be consistent with the Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan.*

Detailed summary of feedback

The discussion in the meeting covered four discussion topics:

1. The HCD Plan's district significance, heritage resources, and Statement of Objectives
2. Differences between West Queen West and Parkdale
3. Feedback on draft key policies and guidelines
4. Other feedback and process advice

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

Feedback about district significance, heritage resources, and Statement of Objectives

In the first part of the meeting, the City shared draft text and images describing the district significance (including Statements of Cultural Heritage Value and Heritage Attributes), heritage resources (including building typologies, architectural styles, and others), and a Statement of Objectives. The City asked LAC members to share advice on if or how it could improve these sections. The discussion and post-meeting feedback included:

- **No major objections to the draft statements or descriptions.** LAC members did not share any major objections to the draft statements or descriptions. One LAC member said

they were happy to see the Theatre Centre identified as a landmark. Some members supported the references to encouraging vibrant, mixed-use communities in the Statement of Objectives. The City must acknowledge and be mindful that, as it makes choices with the HCD Plan, it can result in trade-offs that limit growth, reduce density, and lead to less affordable housing.

- **Suggested edits and additions:**

- While the District Significance section thoughtfully includes Indigenous cultural heritage, it does not sufficiently name other cultural groups who have had a significant role in building the community and/or who have been displaced, including Black communities and other immigrant groups. The City should consider strengthening references to these groups in this section.
- The Statements of Cultural Heritage Value and descriptions of the neighbourhood's attributes should go beyond built form, saying heritage and identity are "not just about bricks." The City should identify and seek to conserve the community rhythms that actively animate street life, including landmark occasions, shared activities, and other collective expressions of the area's diversity. It should also identify and seek to conserve the spaces that have historically enabled (and continue to enable) different communities to create cultural value. The City should include these "human impact" considerations in the WQW HCD Plan, as it did the Parkdale HCD Plan.
- In a post-meeting submission, a LAC member shared a portion of a report prepared by an external party in 2016 and suggested the City consider specifically the mapping which suggests segmenting West Queen West into four "Areas of Special Identity". The portion of the report and map shared are available upon request.

Feedback about the differences between West Queen West and Parkdale

The City asked LAC members to share any significant differences between West Queen West and Parkdale. Participants said that one key difference is that Parkdale was an incorporated village before it became part of Toronto, whereas West Queen West is more of a collection of different areas. Parkdale had its own town centre, fire hall, and businesses, which are critical to the history and identity of Parkdale. In contrast, West Queen West is a collection of different areas that transition from one to another, with CAMH and the Canada Post Station 'C' building being examples of these transitions.

In a post-meeting submission, a LAC member shared an excerpt from a 2016 report prepared by ARRIS Strategy Studio, emphasizing the importance of the Ossington-Queen intersection. ARRIS report identified four distinct "areas of special identity" along Queen Street West: Niagara (Bellwoods-Bathurst), Garrison Creek-Dundas Road (Dovercourt-Gore Vale), Beaconsfield (Gladstone-Lisgar), and Parkdale (Roncesvalles-Dufferin). These segments were

identified based on their historical trajectories and could be useful in developing the West Queen West HCD Plan.

Feedback on draft key policies and guidelines

In the second part of the meeting, the City shared draft key policies and guidelines about contributing and non-contributing properties and enhancing the public realm. The City asked LAC members to share their thoughts on the draft policies, including whether it had adequately identified all the potential development scenarios. They also asked for feedback on what elements of the public realm should be conserved or enhanced. The following are comments and suggestions LAC members shared:

Feedback on development scenarios

LAC members did not identify any additional development scenarios for the City to consider. One member said that a new development that replaced Duke's Cycle is a good example of a new building respecting a heritage context that this HCD Plan should encourage similar results. A LAC member also said that, while these policies are important, they said it was also important for other members to know that development applications have come in along West Queen West for buildings ranging from 16 – 20 storeys despite City policy requiring a 6-storey height limit.

Feedback on gateways

LAC members said it is important that the gateways and focal points identified in the HCD Plan are easily recognizable as such by community members. They also said there seems to be a bias towards east-west gateways (as opposed to north-south gateways) in the draft policies. They said many would consider north-south streets as gateways into the area, too. They suggested the City consider adding other gateways, including:

- **The intersection of Ossington and Queen.** Many would likely consider this a gateway to Queen Street West, even though we missed an opportunity to preserve a focal point with the Hullmark redevelopment of the building next to the fire hall. *The City said it hadn't identified this area as a gateway (given that much of the built form is not historic), but have identified it as a historic node. We will consider this advice as we refine the draft Plan.*
- **Canada Post Station C.** This property is unique in the neighbourhood since it is surrounded by a park and you can see its heritage elements from all sides. This property could represent a "Bryant Park" opportunity that functions as a new focal point in the community.

Feedback on laneways and greenspace

LAC members said the area doesn't have a lot of green spaces and that they would like to see corner lots converted into green areas or gardens to give the streetscape a different feel. They also said there have been previous efforts around animating laneways near West Queen West and they would like to see the HCD Plan carry these ideas forward (like how the Parkdale HCD Plan included policies to support laneway animation and uses by businesses, such as Milky

Way Lane). *The City mentioned challenges with laneways in that HCD Plan policies and guidelines only apply to one side of laneway due to the legal boundary of the district. The HCD Plan will provide direction on laneways, similar to the Parkdale Main Street HCD Plan.*

In a post-meeting submission, a LAC member suggested the City consider the “do’s and don’ts” of West Queen West that the Parkdale Residents’ Association prepared in 2015, which includes advice on both streetscape and buildings. A copy of the document can be made available upon request.

Other feedback and process feedback

Over the course of the meeting, LAC members shared broader feedback about heritage in West Queen West and the HCD Plan, including:

- **Concern with the timeline to complete the HCD Plan because of potential appeals to Ontario Lands Tribunal.** Participants wanted to know if there had been any thought given to how the 223 listed properties (22 designated) will be impacted by the provincial government’s new policies (including listed properties being delisted). *The City said those properties have interim protection until the HCD Plan is finalized. We hope to have all the properties designated by the deadline, which has been extended to January 1, 2027.*
 - **The City should engage resident associations, property owners, renters, and residents.** While these community members do not have the same interest as businesses with potentially affected storefronts, they will also be affected by heritage policy changes and have a keen interest in seeing the existing heritage attributes protected, preserved and promoted. Some have been championing for heritage conservation in the area for many years and have a wealth of information to share. Consider creating a space for the residents where they can bring up their concerns or comments.
 - **The City should build off the wealth of community-led work and feedback from the last ten years (and more).** With HCD Plans in place in both sides and much work already done, the City should be able to move quickly to complete this HCD Plan in a way that joins the two HCDs that bookend West Queen West.
 - **Continue to engage Indigenous voices meaningfully as part of reconciliation.** The federal government had a duty to consult Indigenous voices through the engagement process for the Canada Post building, but they did not meet this duty. *The City explained that a separate Indigenous engagement process has been completed, facilitated by [Innovation 7](#). 5 sessions were held from July 2023 to March 2024. All meeting materials are posted on the website, [here](#).*
-

Next steps

City staff thanked members of the LAC for attending the meeting and sharing their feedback. The City committed to sharing the presentation with LAC members the next day and explained that a second LAC meeting would be held on July 31st or August 1st. Additionally, City staff asked LAC members to review the materials shared and to provide the team with detailed comments and feedback relating to its social contract values, ensuring no aspect of heritage values of the district is missed. Third Party Public reminded LAC members to share any additional feedback by email by July 5th and explained that a draft summary of the meeting would be shared with participating LAC members before posting on the website for their review.

Appendix A: Agenda

West Queen West HCD Plan

Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Meeting #1 of 2

June 24, 2024

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Online and by phone

Meeting purpose:

To recap the West Queen West HCD Plan purpose and process, review the Draft LAC Terms of Reference, and review and discuss sections of the Draft HCD Plan, including statement of objectives, district significance, heritage resources, and key policies and guidelines.

Proposed Agenda

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

Deputy Mayor Malik and Councillor Bravo, Third Party Public

6:15 Terms of Reference review

Third Party Public

Questions of clarification

6:20 Draft HCD Plan: background, purpose, and overview

City (Heritage Planning)

6:40 Discussion

Questions of clarification

1. To what extent do you feel we've adequately identified and described:
 - The HCD Plan objectives
 - District Significance (cultural heritage value and heritage attributes), and
 - Heritage Resources (contributing and non-contributing properties, architectural styles, building typologies, and landmarks)Do you have any suggestions on how we could improve these sections?
2. Thinking about heritage resources and district significance, what (if anything) do you think differentiates West Queen West from Parkdale?

7:00 Draft HCD Plan: Key policies and guidelines

City

7:15 Discussion

Questions of clarification

1. What are your thoughts on our draft policies regarding new development and additions to contributing and non-contributing properties? Based on your knowledge of the area, have we adequately identified all potential development scenarios (like corner properties, landmarks, etc.)?

2. Considering things like streetscape, laneways, views and gateways, public art, and other elements, what aspects of the Public Realm do you think should be conserved and enhanced? Do you see any gaps in our draft policies?

7:55 Wrap up and next steps

8:00 Adjourn

Appendix B: Participant List

The following organizations were invited to be part of the Local Advisory Committee. 8 out of 12 organizations invited agreed to be part of the Local Advisory Committee, and 6 of those organizations participated in the first LAC meeting, identified below **bold**.

Beaconsfield Village Residents Association

CAMH

Drake Hotel

Gladstone Hotel

Ossington Community Association

Philip Carter Architects

Theatre Centre

Trinity Bellwoods Community Association

West Neighbourhood House

West Queen West BIA

West Queen West Community Post

West Side Community Council

Attachment 1: Post Meeting Submission – External Report and Mapping – Provided by West Side Community Council

A copy of this report can be made available upon request: heritageplanning@toronto.ca.

Attachment 2: Post Meeting Submission – Parkdale Residents Association Queen West Study Observations & Recommendations

A copy of this document can be made available upon request: heritageplanning@toronto.ca.