

Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan

Community Advisory Group - Information Meeting

September 19th, 2024

Zoom

Summary of Feedback

1. Background

This Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting was held to continue to discuss the development of the Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Plan.

City staff welcomed CAG members and thanked them for attending the session, and Susan Hall, LURA Consulting, reviewed the meeting agenda. City staff provided an update on the Kensington Market HCD Plan activities since the last meeting, what the City has heard through internal and external engagement activities, and key policy updates. They also discussed policy direction for the Public Realm and Augusta Avenue.

The meeting was attended by the following:

Names	Affiliation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Heritage Planning, Policy and Research Program Manager • Tatum Taylor Chaubal, Senior Heritage Planner • Megan Albinger, Heritage Planner 	City of Toronto – Heritage Planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Hall, Partner • Marissa Irene Uli, Community Engagement Specialist 		LURA Consulting

CAG Members	Affiliation
Sylvia Lassam	Kensington Market Historical Society
David Pearlman	Friends of Kensington Market
Robert Allsopp	Local Resident
Zenon Mandziuk	Kensington Market Residents Association
Susan Alexanian	Kensington Market Action Committee
Gwen Bang	Kensington BIA
Mika Bareket	Local Resident and Business Owner

2. Presentation and Process

Megan Albinger and Tatum Taylor Chaubal provided an overview presentation to the CAG members covering the following topics:

- Update on HCD Plan schedule and process
- Update on key policy directions
- Discussion of Public Realm and August Avenue

3. Guided Discussion, Feedback and Questions

Susan Hall (LURA Consulting) led a guided discussion of the content provided in the presentation. A summary of the CAG feedback is below, organized by theme.

The feedback provided will inform the materials for the next Community Consultation Meeting.

City staff comments are included for informational purposes only.

A. Definition of Demolition

- City staff noted that a key difference between properties identified as "contributing" or "non-contributing" in the HCD is that contributing properties may not be demolished. A CAG member inquired about the definition of demolition, asking whether it refers to the full removal of a structure or could be partial, for example, the preservation of facades.
- City staff noted that in the Ontario Heritage Act and the City's Official Plan, a heritage property's demolition refers to the building's full demolition. Otherwise, it is considered an alteration. A contributing property cannot be fully demolished; policies and guidelines in the HCD Plan will address alterations.

B. Statements of Contribution

- City staff discussed that current provincial legislation requires that 25% of properties within an HCD meet at least two criteria for cultural heritage value under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. A CAG member asked for clarification about meeting two or more criteria under *O. Reg. 9/06 – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest* and whether more information can be shared about which criteria are being met for each property.
 - City staff clarified that the intent is to provide a qualitative review to indicate whether a property meets the threshold. The statement of contributing for each contributing property or group of properties will explain why it was considered important to the district.
- CAG members noted it will be important to ensure that the plan readers and property owners understand the contribution statement and how the property relates to it.

C. Public Realm and Augusta Avenue

- Several CAG members raised concerns about controlling lot size to reflect the district's character, including a narrow lot pattern. They are concerned about overshadowing existing properties by buildings being too high or amassing multiple lots through a potential development and were hoping the HCD Plan could control lot sizes.
 - City staff clarified that the HCD Plan would include policies limiting storefronts' width within the commercial market but that lot consolidations can not be prevented through the HCD plan. This is a legal issue as

Ontario has no planning or heritage tools or regulations to stop the consolidation of lots.

- Several CAG members indicated they appreciated the proposed vision and approach the City team has put forward, specifically concerning limiting storefront widths and breaking up elevations to reflect narrow lot patterns.
- A CAG member noted the scarcity of new buildings on Augusta Avenue. They emphasized that any new construction should adhere to a narrow design as this aligns with the Kensington character.
- A CAG member expressed concern over an observed decrease in retail uses within the market's public realm, and an increase in restaurant patios. The proposed use of the term "Storefront" in the HCD Plan was appreciated for its connotations of retail uses.

D. Pedestrianization of Kensington

- Several CAG members expressed concern about the potential pedestrianization of Augusta Avenue arising from the Kensington Safe Streets project, a City initiative separate from the HCD.
- A CAG member inquired about protecting vehicular market access in a traditionally shared space. They highlighted the risk that pedestrians' priorities may eliminate necessary vehicle access such as for aging populations.
- Another CAG member confirmed the previous point, expressing concern that proponents of pedestrianization may overlook the needs of local residents and merchants reliant on vehicle access for their businesses.
- A CAG member advocated for community-driven decision-making regarding the market.
- Several CAG members echoed concerns about pedestrianization plans and their impact on local businesses, particularly in the Baldwin area.
- A CAG member highlighted the unique challenges Augusta Avenue faces. This is particularly true with the transition from retail to restaurant uses. They stressed the importance of considering the implications of pedestrianization in conjunction with the loss of parking near businesses due to the redevelopment of the 35 Bellevue parking lot.
- A CAG member highlighted that any infrastructure to increase pedestrian access should not be permanent fixtures.
- *City staff acknowledged the concerns about the pedestrianization of Kensington and said that this feedback would be shared with Transportation Services.*

E. Support of the HCD Plan

- CAG members acknowledged the HCD plan's limitations while encouraging solidarity within the advisory group to support its progress and direction.
- CAG members generally supported the policy directions as presented, as they felt they responded to the unique aspects of heritage conservation in Kensington Market.

- They appreciated the City's thoughtful approach in addressing the district's unique aspects.

4. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

City staff thanked CAG members for their input and the discussion. They noted CAG members would have the opportunity to connect again to review the draft display boards before the CCM if the group is interested.