

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting 2 Summary Report

New Park at 34 Hanna Avenue

Phase 1: Towards a Vision

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Introduction

The City of Toronto is working with the local Liberty Village community to develop a vision and design for a new 4,900 m² park (about the size of a soccer field) coming to 34 Hanna Ave. This space is currently a Toronto Parking Authority parking lot. As part of the engagement process, the City formed a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to obtain local input on the park's design, amenities, and features, which will inform outcomes of the draft designs.

The 34 Hanna CAC consist of 26 community members and four local stakeholder representatives. The committee will convene at least once during each phase.

This report summarizes data and conversations from CAC Meeting #2, which was held in person within the local area at Liberty Market.



Figure 1. Aerial image of the current parking lot at 34 Hanna Ave. The site boundary for the new park is outlined in dash lines.

Phase 1: Building a Vision

The purpose of this phase is to develop a vision for the new park together with the local Liberty Village community. In this phase of the engagement process, the project team will collect feedback to develop a draft vision statement for the park, a series of guiding principles and big moves, which will guide the development of design options.

On October 29, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) convened virtually for an orientation meeting to gain more insights about the project, understand their role, and discuss the community engagement process for the new park. The second CAC meeting took place in person at Liberty Village on December 5, focusing on the following objectives:

- Establishing a shared understanding of the CAC's role.
- Clarifying the current context and constraints associated with the future park site.
- Reaching a consensus on the way forward in terms of the engagement process.
- Drafting a vision statement for the park.
- Developing initial draft guiding principles to inform the design process.

The following sections of this report provide a summary of the discussions from the second CAC meeting. For more detailed information on project phases and the community engagement process, please visit the project web page at: toronto.ca/34HannaPark.

How We Reached People

Email Notifications

Members received detailed meeting information, including the date, time, location, and agenda, via email. This allowed them to mark their calendars and prepare any questions or topics they wanted to discuss.

Phone Calls

Phone calls were made to those who either prefer or require more direct communication. This method ensured we reached members who might not check their email regularly and provided an opportunity for any immediate queries to be addressed.

CAC Meeting 2

On Thursday, December 5, 2024, the second Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting took place at the Liberty Village Market Building. The agenda included:

- A group ice breaker activity.
- A presentation from City staff.
- Breakout sessions with hands-on visioning activities.
- Group discussions on guiding principles.
- Wrap-up and next steps.

Meeting Highlights

The CAC meeting focused on developing a vision for the new park at 34 Hanna Ave. Participants engaged in hands-on visioning exercises and discussions to integrate Liberty Village's architectural character with community needs, sustainability, and year-round usability. Key suggestions included:

- Flexible gathering areas
- Playful and artistic elements
- Designated zones for activity and quiet respite

The discussions emphasized the importance of a green, accessible, and inclusive space fostering social connection and relaxation. The strong community desire for a multi-functional park aims to enhance the neighborhood's quality of life.

Ice Breaker: Favourite Park Memory

During the ice breaker activity, CAC members participated in a group exercise using found objects. Staff provided an assortment of loose, random objects for participants to manipulate and creatively assemble. Each member had ten minutes to create a small structural piece on coloured cardboard paper, representing their favourite childhood memory in a park. This hands-on activity was designed to get participants to know one another better while also uncovering common values that could underpin and contribute to later conversations.

Common Themes

CAC members shared various themes that resonated with the group.

These common themes included:

Family & Social Connection:

- Family
- Gathering places
- Congregating spots
- People watching
- Food experiences

Nature & Green Spaces:

- Green spaces
- Trees
- Wildlife
- Peacefulness
- Open spaces

Presentation: 34 Hanna Site & Context

Following the ice breaker exercise, City staff gave a brief presentation on the 34 Hanna site, discussing its constraints, opportunities, interim activation plans, and feedback from the first ThoughtExchange activity, which collected participants' feedback.

You may view and download the [October 2024 online thought exchange activity summary](#).

Breakout Session: Park Visioning

Visioning Exercise

In this breakout session, CAC members were asked to work in small groups to build a larger model using the found objects. The goal was to collaboratively build a model that represents what an ideal park space would look like at 34 Hanna Ave.

Members of each group shared what they built with the larger team and city staff led a group discussion to identify common themes and elements across all built models.

The common key themes from this exercise were:

Family & Social Connection:

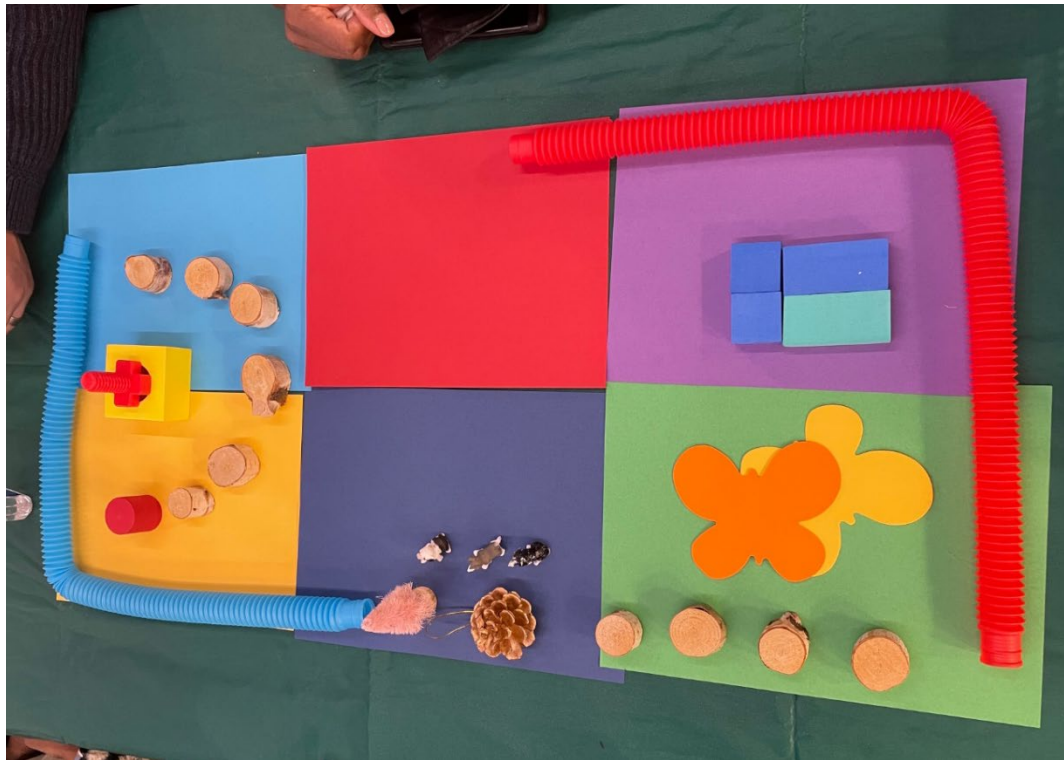
- Social space
- Map
- Respite
- Liberty Village history and character
- Social recreation

Community & Green Spaces:

- Gateway
- Water feature
- Green
- Dynamic thoroughfares
- Activation
- Events
- Landmarks
- Topography
- Night safety and access
- Seating
- Perching rocks
- Pathways
- Porous edges
- Flow
- Directories

Images of built models

Group 1



Group 2



Vision Building

After the model-building exercise, CAC members were given a set of vision cards, including blank cards and cards pre-populated with visioning phrases derived from the previous ThoughtExchange outcomes. Using themes identified during the earlier model-building exercise, participants discussed and wrote down additional key visioning phrases or concepts on the blank cards.

Each group selected their top four to six cards that best captured the collective vision. At least two of the selected cards were from the pre-determined ThoughtExchange outcomes, ensuring that broader community feedback is integrated into the discussion.

The visioning phrases selected and agreed upon by CAC members in their smaller groups are shown on the next page.



Prompt: The new park at 34 Hanna will be...

Group 1	a place where people can gather for social events, connect with their community and build relationships	a place that prioritizes seating, shade and accessible features, ensuring it is clean, accessible and enjoyable year-round	a place that combats climate change and feels like a green oasis with native plants and biodiversity where trees and wildlife thrive.	a place that feels welcoming and reflects the community's priorities, including pet-friendly spaces.	a place to relax, recharge, enjoy nature and find a sense of calmness and respite from urban life.	a place where people can socialize, bring their dogs, listen to live music, sit in a picnic area and play sports.
Group 2	a place that prioritizes seating, shade and accessible features, ensuring it is clean, accessible and enjoyable year-round	a pocket of green space of serenity in an urban jungle, to visit, pause or pass through.	designed with smart and sustainable features with imaginative structures	a gateway to Liberty Village and the City with affordable or free community programs (markets, movies, socializing).	a place that combats climate change and feels like a green oasis with native plants and biodiversity where trees and wildlife thrive.	inspire a sense of cohesive community pride.
Group 3	the perfect place to eat and have a picnic. Shaded, comfy, group friendly, solo friendly.	a gateway to Liberty Village and a unique landmark gathering space.	a place filled with all forms of life - plants, people, animals.	a representation of the wider city: welcoming to visitors, people who work here, people waiting for the train, etc.	a place to relax, recharge, enjoy nature and find a sense of calmness and respite from urban life.	a place that prioritizes seating, shade and accessible features, ensuring it is clean, accessible and enjoyable year-round
Group 4	a place to relax, recharge, enjoy nature and find a sense of calmness and respite from urban life.	a place where people can sit, relax and recharge and a place that services the needs of the community.	a place that provides a green refuge from the concrete world around it. A place where you smell chlorophyll and hear the sound of the trees in the winds and flowing water.	a place for everyone to go and enjoy, relax and unwind. To celebrate the unique culture of Liberty Village.	a place that prioritizes seating, shade and accessible features, ensuring it is clean, accessible and enjoyable year-round	a place where I see kids, grandparents, adults, dogs, people enjoying their lunch breaks, people flowing through (transit, lake, BMO), and reading books.
Group 5	activated year-round.	safe to walk through at night.	a place with a water feature.	a place you don't have to spend money to be at.		

Breakout Session: Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles Discussion

In this breakout session, city staff reintroduced the definition of guiding principles and how they will guide the development of design options in the next phase. CAC members were asked to develop and write down a series of principles that address the potential vision statement and incorporate themes identified in the earlier exercise.

Each group prioritized their cards and selected three to five guiding principles to share back with the whole team. City staff led a group discussion to identify common themes and determine if there was consensus around the outcome. The guiding principles that CAC members drafted and agreed upon as important were:

- The park should reflect on the history of Liberty Village while establishing a space for a collaborative future.
- The park should provide flexible year-round gathering space for residents and visitors.
- The park should be a balance of practical and imaginative use/ideas while focusing on multi-use features.
- The design of the park should reflect the industrial history of the village's architectural identity.
- The park should be safe and beautifully designed, with lighting that is aesthetically appealing and improves safety.
- Playful and whimsical - the park design incorporates features that encourage playfulness.
- The park should be focused on nature, greenery and a refuge.
- The park should engage the senses: sight, hearing, tactile.
- The park should give back to Mother Earth (bee garden, butterfly garden, compost).
- The park should be cross-generational and accessible to all parts of the population including people and wildlife.
- The park should add much needed colours and artistic life to an often monochromatic neighbourhood.
- The park design should incorporate architectural elements that evoke the industrial history of Liberty Village.
- The park should use planting or furniture to create zones of refuge and zones of activity.

Building on What We Heard

The following draft vision and guiding principles were directly developed from the feedback received in the first phase of engagement, in particular the 2nd CAC workshop.

Feedback from this phase consistently emphasized the importance of:

- Establishing a **community hub** for year-round social interaction, informal gatherings, and cultural events.
- Transforming the space into a **green oasis**, filled with native plants and trees to provide shade, clean air, and a refuge from the urban environment.
- Including ample seating and shade
- Designing **inclusive and accessible spaces** where people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can gather, relax, and connect.
- Honoring Liberty Village's unique **industrial character**, while integrating innovation and sustainability to meet current and future needs.

Draft Vision Statement

The park at 34 Hanna will be an immersive space where the energy of Liberty Village meets the tranquillity of nature. Transforming a former parking lot into a thriving green oasis, the park will prioritize flexible spaces for gathering and relaxation. Tactile and colourful design elements will come together to create a landscape that sparks curiosity and joy, encouraging playful exploration through thoughtful details that invite imagination and wonder.

While honouring the area's industrial character, the park will be a haven for relaxation, connection, and urban life, where visitors can connect with the rhythm of the city. Whether strolling through its pathways, gathering with friends, or simply pausing to take in the sights and sounds, the park will reflect the spirit of Liberty Village—a place alive with creativity and community.

Draft Guiding Principles

1. Prioritize Ecology and Sustainability

Replace hard surfaces with eco-friendly materials, native vegetation, and permeable landscaping to create a vibrant, natural refuge that supports biodiversity, mitigates climate impacts, improves air quality, supports pollinators, and manages stormwater, ensuring the park thrives for future generations.

2. Ensure Inclusivity and Accessibility

Design the park to be welcoming and functional for everyone, with barrier-free pathways, diverse seating options, and spaces that accommodate all ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

3. Foster Social and Community Connection

Provide versatile gathering spaces that encourage community-building, including areas for picnics, casual meetups, and programmed events like markets or performances.

4. Balance Active and Passive Uses

Include zones for both quiet relaxation (such as shaded seating areas or garden paths and active recreation), ensuring the park serves a wide range of needs and preferences.

5. Celebrate Liberty Village's Industrial Character

Reflect the area's industrial spirit through materials, art, and design elements, while incorporating innovative features that speak to its evolving identity.

6. Inspire Creativity, Playfulness, and Sensory Engagement

Add imaginative and interactive elements (such as art installations, water features, or sensory play features) that inspire curiosity and engage people of all ages.

Next Steps

Completion of Phase 1: Towards a Vision

The successful completion of Phase 1: Towards a Vision, marks a milestone in shaping the future of the new park at 34 Hanna Avenue. The draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles will be presented to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to ensure they align with the community's priorities.

Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

In this next phase, the project team aims to:

- Finalize the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles through further engagement with the CAC.
- Launch a design competition inviting local and international design teams to submit their qualifications to be considered for the short-list
- Gather community feedback through public workshops, an online survey, and potentially an open house or outdoor pop-up event during favorable weather conditions.

This collaborative effort will guide the design competition. Community reviews and feedback on the designs will ensure transparency and inclusivity, bringing the community's vision to life.

Community Members

We appreciate all the community members who engaged with us during the CAC Meeting 2. Your questions, insights, and feedback have been invaluable in refining our materials and enhancing the overall experience for all participants.

To learn more about the project, visit toronto.ca/34HannaPark.