

West Toronto Junction Heritage Conservation District Study

Local Advisory Community (LAC)

Meeting #1 Summary of Feedback

Meeting Details

Date: Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Location: Zoom Meeting

Time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Attendees

The meeting was attended by the following:

Project Team	Affiliation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Heritage Planning, Policy and Research Program ManagerClint Robertson, Heritage Planner	City of Toronto – Heritage Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dima Cook, Architect, Principal, DirectorReece Milton, Intern Architect	EVOQ Architecture
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Zoie Edwards Browne, AssociateMarissa Irene Uli, Community Engagement Specialist	LURA Consulting

LAC Members	Affiliation
Domitillah Antoinette	West Bend Community Association
Eleni (Helen) Vassilakos	Junction Residents Association
Jim Baxter	West Bend Green Community
Kenneth Sharratt	West Toronto Junction Historical Society
Charles Hazell	Junction Heritage Conservation District Board
Mario Silva	Junction Residents Association
Marilyn Miller	Junction Heritage Conservation District Board

LAC members who sent regrets and were unable to attend included the following:

LAC Members	Affiliation
Carol Jolly	The Junction BIA
Diana Fancher	West Toronto Junction Historical Society (WTJHS)
Katherine Goodenow	West Bend Community Association
Janet Di Bernardo	The Junction BIA

1. Meeting Purpose

The first Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting was held to discuss the West Toronto Junction District Study. The meeting purpose was to:

- Introduce the Junction Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study, process and project team;
- Review and confirm the Terms of Reference and role of the Local Advisory Committee;
- Present the findings of preliminary data collection and character analysis; and
- Engage in a guided discussion to inform consultants on the character of the Study Area.

2. Presentation and Process

Zoie Edwards Browne (LURA) facilitated the meeting and welcome LAC members and reviewed the meeting purpose, agenda and led a round of introductions of LAC members and project team staff.

After the set of introductions, Zoie reviewed the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) and the code of conduct for the LAC members. LAC members accepted the TOR finalizing the document for the group.

Clint Robertson (City of Toronto) presented an overview and process of the HCD Study including public and Indigenous engagement process.

Dima Cook (EVOQ) presented the West Toronto Junction HCD study preliminary data collection, methodology and character analysis, which included:

- Historic overview
- Survey and archaeology
- Character analysis including dates of construction, land use, building cladding, architectural styles, potential landmarks, typology, storefront locations, typical streetscapes, streetscapes and development zones

Following the presentation, provided by EVOQ, Zoie provided a brief overview of feedback received during Community Consultation Meeting 1 (held on June 11, 2025), for contextually purposes only. Zoie then presented three discussion questions and led a guided discussion to gather detailed feedback from LAC members.

(For further information and the complete Community Consultation Summary, please visit the project webpage: [West Toronto Junction– Heritage Conservation District \(HCD\) Study – City of Toronto](#))

3. Summary of Feedback – August 13 LAC Meeting #1

The summary below includes feedback from the LAC members discussed during Meeting #1 (August 13) and received by email, after the meeting. This summary was prepared by LURA Consulting. It is not intended to be a verbatim record of respondent feedback; rather, it summarizes and synthesizes the feedback shared throughout the meeting. Three main discussion questions were used during the guided discussion. The feedback received is organized by discussion question and theme. City staff and consultant comments are included for informational purposes only.

1. What do we need to know about the Study Area to understand it (stories, important people, events)? What makes Dundas Street West unique and special as a Main Street?

Community Evolution

- The Junction, developed as a separate town before amalgamating with the City of Toronto, makes the area feel like its own unique place. There are separate identities and areas within the Junction that are unique, such as industrial, commercial, institutional and working class and middle class residential areas, where nodes are still legible today.
- The considerable range of small shops is increasingly threatened by modern development and chains. LAC members noted that the Junction is a place to accommodate new ideas, start-ups, and small shops, which make it an exciting place to visit and live.

Dundas Street West Evolution

- The relationship between Dundas Street West and its side streets is an active public space with essential features such as views, sun exposure, microclimates and corner entrances. This should be recognized as it is essential to understanding the street function and community character.
- Dundas Street West had previously inserted houses into the main streetscape.
 - The block between Keele Street and Pacific Avenue is very long on the north side, with all kinds of lanes running behind it, because there used to be a large property called Aikenshaw from the mid-1800s eventually replaced by storefronts.
 - An elegant Queen Anne Villa, formerly at the northeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Dundas Street West, from the 1890s to the 1920s, was home to the local mayor.
 - A cheese factory also replaced a Scarlett house at the corner of St John Place in 1800s and became a row of houses in the 1970s. There were also “historic” gas stations and garages scattered throughout, one replaced by lawyers/accountants McMaster McIntyre & Smyth, another by

Vesuvio's, then Noctua & Pretty Clean Shop and still another at St. John's Rd., now Tim Hortons.

- In the 1890s, there was a streetcar line that turned onto Gilmour, which was just a "sideline" to the main street Toronto Suburban Railway (TSR) that, also from the 1890s, continued along Dundas Street West to Lambton Park, a popular picnic area. In 1917, the main street line was extended to Guelph.
- Members of the early Jewish community built several prominent buildings west of Gilmour, outside the Study Area.
- The Melita Soccer Club also has a prominent three-storey building west of Gilmour, outside the Study Area.
- Residential areas on both sides of Dundas Street West, Maria Street to the north and St. John's Road to the south, are close behind each other and date back to the late 1800s.

Streetscape

- The area's street networks, such as the intersection between Keele Street and Dundas Street West.
 - This is a valuable piece of reference made in the analysis and appreciated by members.
- The characteristic corner entrances set at a 45-degree angle to the street, make the area unique, particularly on eastern side of the area.
- The angular lots are unusual in Toronto because most streets are part of a grid of right-angle divisions. LAC members explained that there is a tie between the city's geography and the Lake Iroquois shoreline, railways, and native trails resulting in Dundas Street West running on a line diagonal to the grid that makes up most of Toronto.
 - An architectural detail provided by LAC member: Most original buildings on the corner of the street have front entrances at a 45-degree angle.
- Street and lane development should be provided, like Kensington Market. Understanding the development of West Toronto Junction requires close attention to its block structure, varied block depth shaped by the laneways; and light industrial uses and dense workers' housing outside of the Study Area. This is critical to commercial activity, residential life, informal economies, and live-work arrangements in the area. The area reflects many working-class roots and an evolving urban form.

Built Form

- The built form in the area remains mainly two-to-three-storey brick buildings, mostly shops with apartments above, intermingled with housing and various sorts of other compatible uses, such as churches, car-related businesses.
- The importance of anchor locations to the street in urban layouts and how the infrastructure can shape this neighbourhood. For example, Malta Park to the

West and the underpass and overpass to the east as Annette Street connects to Dundas Street West, serve as pivotal points that terminate the HCD and create easily recognized urban landmarks.

- The intersection of Keele Street and Dundas West Street is a layout that transcends mere demarcation to offer distinctive form and expression, with deep-rooted narratives within the community that should be explored.
- The public spaces and built form in these locations indicate the boundaries between the former City of West Toronto and the City of Toronto. The buildings on the east side of the intersection of Dundas Street West and Runnymede Road are architecturally-designed landmarks clearly differentiating the city of West Toronto from its suburbs.

Heritage Character

- The brickwork detail throughout the area is typical of the late 19th century and early 20th century in Toronto. Many older buildings are built with 'Ontario-sized brick' and the mortar lines are close to ¼ or 3/8 of an inch instead of the newer larger standard. The importance of preserving the brickwork and details in newer developments was emphasized.

Places

- Annette Street originally ended in the backyard of the Peacock Hotel, with outlets north and south onto Indian Road. When the city demolished the hotel and created the intersection of Dundas, Dupont, (Old) Weston Road and Annette Street circa 1924, it also effectively ended the business district at that point.
- The "spaghetti-junction-type" intersection street network arrangement of Dundas Street West, (Old) Weston Road, Dupont Street and Annette Street, (as described by one LAC member) arrangement of street networks intentionally created as an access point within the area.
 - This is an interesting historical part of the area to preserve, with way-finding plaques or anything for someone going through it.

People

- Many artists live in the area, such as filmmakers, actresses, street artists, writers, publishers, historians, and others. This demographic continues to have a high level of influence on the nature of social and cultural life in the HCD. They have much experience developing the main street, and contribute to its economy, diversity and inclusive character and why the Junction is successful and resilient. One LAC member suggested interviewing them to get more information about the artist side of the neighbourhood for the study.
- One LAC member has oral history interviews provided by Madeline McDowell (refer to Appendix A) to the JHCDB which has been noted on streetscape mapping and can be made available to the project team.

- Numerous landmarks are recorded and the project team will add properties within the Study Area to Historic Land Use and Landmark maps accordingly.

2. Are the 'development zones' accurate to your understanding of the Study Area? Do these zones need further refinement or adjustments?

Overall Feedback

- It is good that built form variations are identified in the HCD, and LAC members acknowledged that some of the zones (precincts) blend with others.
- LAC members wanted greater clarification on the reason for the industrial designation on the built form typology and contributing areas.
 - The consultant noted it was more of a comment on the character of the building and how the area was. This is also true of the street setbacks of the properties and the sizes of the lots in the area. They acknowledged that maybe a different term for the designation would be better (such as precincts and transition zones).
 - LAC members appreciated the amount of attention that has been focused on creating the mapping for the 'development zones'.
- The unique character of the area, as a whole, should be mentioned rather than focusing on 'development zones'.
- These 'development zones' should not be looked at in isolation. Members explained that understanding the context that informs the changes and the zones on the map would be valuable.
 - The consultant recognized that the area's character is fluid and there are less defined boundaries than the 'zones' shown. The consultant's focus is on the character expressed by buildings themselves. The consultant also noted specific intersections where one is transitioning gradually into another rather than being separated by clear demarcations.
- A LAC member acknowledged the well-made characterization of the Study Area. They, however, question how the demarcation of the area and the zones were determined. They wondered why they were limited to the back of the lots, and if the study team could provide any feedback regarding justification for extending HCD to back lots and reviewing the east and west limits to the study.
 - City staff answered that these were boundaries presented at City Council and approved by them in 2018.
 - City staff also clarified that the consultants were given the property address they are currently looking at.
- It was suggested to remove 'zones' to avoid introducing characterization that could be inaccurate to the area and use precincts instead, so that each area can be described in terms of their unique building types, landmark buildings and structure relationships to the area.

Residential-Mixed-Use

- Concerns were raised about the western edge of the study area. Some members explained that a Mixed-Use Residential zone, instead of the Historic Main Street zone, could carry the landmark main street further west.
- Buildings leading up to the west end are much more interesting and complex than what is noted in the development zones. The infrastructure was put in place 20 years ago due to the burden of the hydro lines and street services that extend to Runnymede. This infrastructure is an extension of what is within the HCD Study Area boundary.
- The commercial buildings on St. John's Road has a row of distinctive storefronts. Dundas Street West just west of Malta Park has church properties, industrial car wash, garage type places and residential properties. St John's Road has also been used for filming.

Historic Main Street

- The Historic Main Street development zone was highlighted as the area with the earliest buildings.
- The Historic Main Street is an artificial, not an accurate "zone". Early buildings are scattered across the whole of Dundas Street West from (Old) Weston Road to Runnymede Road.

Institutional Node

- Keele Street and Dundas Street West can be challenging to identify as 'institutional zones' due to the many storefronts on the north side and residential properties with offices in conjunction with private school, and Mechanics Hall.

Industrial Main Street

- A couple members noted that there is no industrial zone/area within the Study Area today. Historically, the Junction developed from the other side of the rail tracks (to the northwest of the Study Area). However, some buildings and underpass, north of Dundas Street West as well as at Keele Street and Vine Ave, (near the stockyards), could also be considered an industrial area.
- One member noted that there are significant buildings related to industrial activity both on the main street and on the main blocks. These continue to be used for a variety of purposes and represents a building type that characterizes the street, provides employment options, and infrastructure that can be added to through new construction and additions, thereby contributing to the Junction being a place of employment and business development.

Other

- Near Runnymede, outside the Study Area, there are a few commercial buildings that could be added, which have the same era and typology as in the Study Area.

3. What are the most important features or landmarks (e.g. buildings, institutions, streetscapes, landscapes, views/vistas/ gateways) in the Study Area?

Overall Feedback

- The street's history with many hotels and theatres can still be seen in some built forms even though they have been repurposed as commercial buildings. These could be highlighted for future consideration for restoration and interpretation.
- Some members highlighted that a landmark is where people naturally gather to walk, meet and eat for their daily life in the junction community.
- The 15-minute walk connecting Keele Street and Dundas Street West, the park, and the surrounding area is an important daily route.

Streetscape

- The intersection of Keele Street and Dundas Street West is a prominent landmark. Although a building was demolished at the southwest corner and is currently a parking lot, all the other buildings are intact. This intersection points to various industrial pasts and other institutions.
- The intersection of Dundas Street West and (Old) Weston Road, dating back to 1840, should have a historic plaque.
 - The intersection of Dundas Street West with Weston Road, Keele Street, Pacific Avenue and St. John's Road. The east side of Dundas Street West and Runnymede Road intersection (outside the Study Area) is also recognized as a local landmark.
- The south side of Pacific Avenue was formerly a bus service location.

Buildings

- The Treasury building at 2896 Dundas Street West.
- James Hall, which was built in 1888, is a building on the southeast corner of Dundas Street West and Pacific Avenue. This is now a paint store. This building has a strong presence on the street and was used as a Town Hall gathering place before. Nearby churches were also highlighted, noting that one had an odd branch design on a circular window.
- Indian Grove and Dundas Street West have a good example of a historic building on the south-east corner which demonstrates how a well-built commercial residential building becomes a local landmark. Historic buildings such as this occur throughout the Junction area, which connect back to the character of the main street.
- The former location of the Customs House and Town Hall, at Keele Street and Dundas Street West, is of the highest significance. The adjacent building to the West is the Bank of Montreal, which has had continuous occupancy for 120 years.

- The stockyards (outside the Study Area), the Junction City Music Hall and the Carlton Cinema are among historic sites that include aspects of the railway history.

Views/Vistas/Gateways

- The area features mixed uses with housing tucked between shops and churches as well as the view north on Pacific to the industrial style Sweet Potato market located outside the Study Area, at the end of the strip.
- View north of Keele Street towards the railway bridge; and various views to institutions on Annette Street from Dundas Street West, including the library viewed south of Dundas Street at Medland Street.
- As you walk through the area, one would experience the granular, layered feel of the buildings and the stories they tell.
- Malta Park has a unique geometry that acts as a landmark that connects the eastern and western ends of the commercial strip. Malta Park is essential as it demarcates the transition to the residential part of the area with a view of St John Road.

4. Other Questions/Comments

In addition to the feedback received for the three discussion questions presented, LAC members provided additional feedback highlighted below:

Information, Methodology and Analysis

- Methodology and data accuracy should be less generalized and more highlighted, focusing on diversity and stylistic variation.
- Typologies in Toronto West are diverse and established due to its unique development history and evolving building technologies; this variation needs to be described rather than generalized.
- Develop a text to understand each category of the mapping terminology used relative to the significance of individual buildings, blocks, and overall identification.
- The eastern portion of the Runnymede Estate (east of Runnymede Road) was subdivided before the town of West Toronto Junction was established in 1887 and is not relevant to the current Junction HCD Study. The only building there, was St John's Anglican Church, which was built in 1881. It was demolished and eventually replaced with Malta Park. A gas station in front of the church was later replaced by a Tim Horton's.

Boundary

- The intersection of Gilmour Avenue and Dundas Street West is not an appropriate boundary.
- Extend the boundary to the east and west. The area from Gilmour Avenue to Runnymede Road, should be considered for inclusion due to its significance.

LAC members requested that several streets to the far east end need to be verified as contributing to the HCD.

- Extend the boundary north on Pacific Avenue to include the building at 108 Vine, which is part of Junction BIA. 108 Vine has been nominated for designation by WTJHS and JHCDB.
- During the 2018 study, the study area was pushed to the rail and down to Annette Street. However, due to the physical size of HCD, the study was limited to north and south sides of Dundas Street West. Annette Street could be considered for a phase two Study Area.

Priorities

- The Junction is a town with its own dynamic heritage character, including its commercial activity. LAC members are interested in seeing how the patterns of the area will be divided to represent a growing area.
- Protecting the Junction heritage must be balanced with economic resilience and ongoing investment. Preserving what matters should also leave room for change and adaptation. Finding the balance will be important, and LAC members look forward to supporting this process.
- Many of the LAC members are interested in how the study can change the neighbourhood as well as how they can preserve the character of their neighbourhood.
- Many LAC members encourage future buildings to maintain the predominant small-town streetscape.
- There should be a rule in the future to follow specific guidelines regarding heights, such as a maximum of three storeys and a storey-podium with heritage details and increased setbacks.

Suggestions

- The parking lot at the corner of Keele and Dundas Street should be made into a park with a train wheel plaque and the cornerstone from former custom houses.
- The intersection connection of Dundas Street West, Old Weston Road, Annette Street and Dupont Street need to be redesigned with heritage preservation in mind.

Engagement and Communication

- Providing further details about the Junction HCD Study more clearly would be helpful to the LAC members. A few members are confused about what the process means. It would be helpful to have public-facing materials to define an HCD Study vs an HCD Plan.
- The Community Consultation Meeting was very well organized with key insights. It would be helpful to have the input catalogs, as is, for LAC members to view.
- LAC members would like to understand how specific research, such as mapping, character analysis, historical overview, and resources, has been used and

completed and what materials have been generated (as seen in the Community Consultation Meeting display boards).

- LAC members requested that PowerPoint presentations of LAC meetings be received ahead of time so that they can be received by members.
- The Junction Residents Association is currently doing a study with the City of Toronto, and it was suggested that the HCD Study assist with the project.
- The Junction BIA is planning a short survey for local businesses and commercial properties to gather feedback. The BIA is happy to share a summary of the feedback.

Questions

- Was the Common Bond Collective study, that began in 2018, considered part of the HCD team's work?
 - The consultant responded yes and acknowledged that the Common Bond Collective did a whole neighbourhood study with a larger scope. For this work, they looked at their research on history and the analysis that informed the history of the Study Area.
- Why is the area west of Malta Park thought to have archaeological interest?

5. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Zoie Edwards Browne, Clint Robertson, and Dima Cook thanked LAC members for their input and discussion, which will be used to further the study.

Zoie Edwards Browne reminded LAC members that if they have any more comments or questions, they should email Marissa Uli, LURA by September 5, 2025. All input will be considered for the Junction HCD Study. The LAC members will also be able to review the draft summary once it is available. The next LAC members meeting will be planned for the end of October.

Appendix A: Additional Resources Provided by LAC Members

The subject of social and cultural context as well as the principle behind a heritage conservation district being a living history and ongoing narrative is important to identify to the HCD study. As an example of this we, JHCDB, have included text from interviews conducted with one of the long-term residents from the Junction. A sampling of this narrative from one person is highlighted below. Madeleine McDowell is an artist/educator, teller of stories, with an abiding respect for the Common Good and need for Corporate Memory. She was a member of the City of York Board of Education 1980/95. An activist in Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage for over 40 years, she likes to work collegially in an inclusive community, attempting to voice the beauty of Mother Earth and the magic of both the Ordinary and the Grand.

Also refer to the ongoing research and documentation from the Junction Elevation Study site on Miro. The QR code is highlighted below: