

Park People (www.parkpeople.ca)

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**UNDER GARDINER WALKSHOP
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION NOTES
June 2, 2016**

1. Stop #1 - Fort York Visitor's Centre

- **Walkshops** This is the third of four Under Gardiner Walkshops
- **Comments** The project design team will receive your comments from the walk.
- **Leads** Jake Tobin Garrett of Park People is our walk leader, Anna Hill of Park People is our note-taker, Lauren Abrahams is attending on behalf of Public Work and Christopher McKinnon is here on behalf of Waterfront Toronto.
- **Background** – Project: Under Gardiner was made possible with a donation of \$25 million from Will and Judy Matthews. The City is providing additional funding for programs. 1.75 km linear corridor with 10 acres of new public space, serving 70,000 adjacent residents and a city-wide audience. Different zones of space called Pulse Points.
- **Pulse Points** will include 1) Strachan Creative Action Hub, 2) Fort York-Liquid Landscape, 3) Fort York Boulevard Crossing, 4) Bathurst Community Hub
- **Feedback** A key goal of today's walk is to receive your feedback, particularly in regards to the design of the four pulse points.
- **Route** We will adjust today's route slightly due to the lack of access to Fort York which is preparing for the Field Trip Music Festival.
- **Participant Comments (C) or Questions (Q) and Answers (A):**
 - **Participant Demographics** Walkshop participants are from surrounding communities such as downtown, Etobicoke and Scarborough.
 - **Audience Reasons for Participation** include general curiosity about what is happening, an interest in art and music in public space, hoping to eradicate “the wall” feeling of the Gardiner Expressway, desire for more activity on the waterfront, hoping to see a network of public spaces along the waterfront as seen in other North American cities.
 - **Q-Timeline** What is the timeline? Is the current construction on schedule?
 - **A-**The first phase of the project will be finished in July 2017. The Gardiner repairs are currently on schedule.
 - **Q- Noise** The Gardiner is very noisy. Are there any plans to compensate for this noise?

- **A-“Strange Beauty”** The Under Gardiner landscape has a “strange beauty” with telescoping columns, the rhythm of concrete bents, and the play of light and shadow. Although we are conscious of noise challenges, we do not want to erase what is here, rather try to recognize inherent design opportunities. The thump thump noise you hear has to do with the current construction. Once the construction is finished, that thumping will be much quieter.
- **Q-Commercial** Are you envisioning seasonal commercial activity?
- **A-Pop-Ups** We are envisioning pop-ups, meaning nothing is permanent. Flexibility of use is an important goal for us. We envision kiosks, markets and other temporary program elements.
- **Q- Economic Development** Is there any discussion of economic development opportunities for immigrant youth or aboriginal youth? For example, Market 707 at Scadding Court provides shipping containers for micro-enterprise.
- **A-Flexibility** We are designing the space to accommodate flexible programs. Each pulse point has its own characteristics that will change with the seasons. There will be opportunities to engage many different user groups.
- **C- Farmer’s Market** If there is a Farmer’s Market, it needs to be economically viable, not just window dressing.
- **C-Food Trucks** Food trucks might be more appropriate because this is a place people will come in search of prepared food. Destination park users don’t want to carry home bags full of market produce.

2. Stop #2 - Strachan-Creative Action Hub

- **Location** The Creative Action Hub is for higher intensity programming because it is further away from residential units than other “pulse points”.
- **Performance** Creative Action Hub will host various types of performances
- **Boardwalk / Seating** A boardwalk along Strachan will fold down into a stepped seating area that descends from Strachan Avenue down to the space under the Gardiner.
- **Gateway** This stair-stepped seating area will also double as an iconic gateway entrance into the Under Gardiner trail.
- **Grand Trunk Railway** Notice how the Under Gardiner columns were placed alongside the Grand Trunk Railway, creating a triangular view cone into the performance space.
- **Children & Youth Playgrounds** – The City is proposing to install a playground and skate park just west of Strachan Avenue, also under the Gardiner.
- **Participant Comments (C) or Questions (Q) and Answers (A):**

- **Q- Washrooms** Are there going to be new washrooms at the Creative Action Hub?
- **A- Temporary Solution** For Phase One, we will rely on the washrooms at Fort York and may need to bring in temporary Port-o-Potties at specific Pulse Points. As part of the next phase, permanent washrooms will likely be installed at three of the four centres of activity.
- **Q-Strachan Bottleneck** What is the traffic management proposal? Will there be a bottleneck of pedestrians and vehicles at Strachan?
- **A – Multiple Entrances** In addition to the Strachan gate, it will be possible to enter the site on foot anywhere along the trail. As well, the sidewalk will be widened at Strachan with a belvedere. There will be a barrier between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- **Q- Baffles** Will there be baffles under the Gardiner at Strachan so that actors do not have to project over the traffic noise?
- **A- Noise Attenuation Strategy** – We are looking at various strategies for noise attenuation.
- **C-Noise Impact** Whenever there is a Fort York concert, the windows literally vibrate. Please think about how noise travels and be aware that a loud music performance at the Creative Action Hub could adversely impact residents further east.
- **C-Graffiti Strategy** It is a good idea to have designated areas for graffiti.
- **Q-Accessibility** What is the accessibility strategy at the Creative Action Hub?
- **A –Ramps & Berm** –This site will be AODA compliant. No slopes greater than 5%. There will be a ramp that provides access to the platforms and connects the Strachan gate to the path below. As well PFR has funds earmarked for a berm that will provide additional access to the site.
- **Q- Seating Capacity** What is the seating capacity of the Creative Action Hub?
- **A- 150-200 seats.**
- **Q- Art on underside of Gardiner decking** Can we put any art on the underside of the Gardiner decking?
- **A- Yes. Suggestions for art beneath the decking** include a daytime sky with clouds, a projected night sky or films.
- **C-Headphones** If you show movies, consider some kind of headphones to make it easier to hear the sound.
- **Q-Programming** Who is planning the programming for the site?

- **A-Programming Study** A new entity will be created that is tasked with programming. A study is underway right now regarding programming and governance models. This study will be reviewed first by Executive Committee and then presented to City Council in July.
- **Q-Frequency of Construction Repairs** How often will comprehensive construction repairs need to occur on the Gardiner? How will this type of construction impact the project?
- **A – Every 50 Years** This type of comprehensive rehabilitation of the Gardiner will occur in another 50 years.
- **Q- Approach to sustainable design** What is the project approach to sustainable design? Are you implementing solar panels? Rain water diversion strategies? Permeable surfaces?
- **A – Yes to sustainable design** Although we do not have a plan for solar power at this point we are definitely looking into various environmental approaches to water management. Instead of the existing down spouts which dump the highway run-off into muddy puddles under the Gardiner, we want to look at bio swales with salt-tolerant plants. As well, we want to use environmentally friendly materials and permeable surfaces. We are very open to innovative technology that may be appropriate for the site.
- **C – Solar lighting** How about solar powered lighting?
- **C- Trees** How about lining Strachan Avenue with native trees to create a green screen between the fast moving traffic and the slow moving pedestrians?
- **Q- Width of park** Will the park extend beyond the width of the Gardiner?
- **A – Green Space** There will be additional green space that will extend south from the Creative Action Hub. The area where we are standing is currently a municipal parking lot. A portion of it will be developed as green space and the rest will be used as parking.
- **C-Karaoke** Could the stage have capacity for Karaoke? Please consider a Karaoke festival.

3. Stop #3- Fort York-Liquid Landscape

- **High Point of Gardiner** Please notice that this is the highest elevation of the Gardiner decking. According to urban planner, Ken Greenburg, it is possible to fit a 5-storey building under the decking at this point.
- **Softer Landscape** There is a proposal to provide softer landscaping and native plants at this point. Landscaping could reference the Lake Ontario shoreline. “Docks” will extend into this grassy area and provide focal points for activity.

- **Acoustics Under Gardiner** are better here. Easier to hear.
- **Proximity of Residences** Notice that residential units are adjacent to the trail.
- **Intersection of Cultures Here** such as indigenous, military, natural history of the lake, Grand Trunk Railway, Gardiner. There was a suggestion to create an outdoor Toronto Museum on this site. Right now, there is a historic schooner under a tarp, just sitting on this site. Perhaps it could be displayed. As well, there was a suggestion to paint the bents to recognize the many different cultures living together in Toronto.
- **Participant Comments (C) or Questions (Q) and Answers (A)**
 - **C-Second Level** How about a second level so you can walk among the bents, high in the air?
 - **C- Tree House** How about a tree house that you can climb up to and use as a viewing platform.
 - **C- Historical Relevance** Whatever you do at this pulse point, please keep it historically appropriate and relevant.
 - **C- Reflected Light** There are some really neat projects in cities like New York that involve reflected lighting. Consider reflecting light into this space or including a light sculpture that creates the feeling of water with ripples of light on the bents.
 - **C- Elevator** –Please ensure that any installation is accessible.
 - **C- Bike and Car Parking** – Can bike and car parking be functional and artistic?
 - **C- Winter Attractions** It is important to design a site that is attractive in winter.
 - **C- Fire pits** Fire pits or heat lamps would make the site much more useable in winter.
 - **C- Warming Huts** What about warming huts along the trail?
 - **C- Versatile Huts** What about warming huts that can double as something else in summer?
 - **C-Greenhouses** How about a mini green house that has overwintering plants in winter and seedlings in spring?
 - **C-Ice Sculptures and Beaver Tails** – We need ice sculptures and Beaver Tails to make the park a success in winter.
 - **C-Historic Huts** The huts should be historical, demonstrating a pioneer cabin or the architecture of First Nations.
 - **C- Maple Syrup Festival** – How about a maple syrup festival with a hollowed out log and hot rocks in celebration of First Nations maple syrup production?
 - **C-Snowboard Park** Toronto needs a snowboard park and this is a great place for one. We need a half pipe here.

- **C- Plantagon** Please check out Plantagon's Agritecture and Plantscrapers. Consider vertical gardens climbing up the columns. Vertical gardens could be a neat approach to providing more community garden space.

4. Stop #4-Fort York Boulevard Crossing

- **Location** - An east/west Boulevard Crossing occurs at the halfway point of the length of the Under Gardiner.
- **3 Options** - An Environmental Assessment evaluated three options for the trail to cross Fort York Boulevard; 1) At Grade Crossing, 2) Pedestrian Bridge, 3) Tunnel
- **Preferred Option** The preferred option is the pedestrian bridge to create an iconic moment, to allow a continuous flow of pedestrian and cycling traffic, and to allow existing car traffic and a possible future LRT line to continue unimpeded.
- **Pedestrian Bridge Location** The pedestrian bridge will be parallel with the roof of the Gardiner. The bridge will provide east-west connection, not north-south.
- **Proximity of Residences to Under Gardiner** – Notice that high-rise units are very close to the Gardiner at this point.
- **Suspended Bridge or Supported Bridge** – Let's discuss the pros and cons of a suspended bridge versus a supported bridge. A suspended bridge will hang from the Gardiner itself whereas a supported bridge will involve footings that come down to the ground.
- **Skating rink** – A skating rink will be installed at this location in winter. It will be possible to skate from here to the Fort York visitor's centre along Toronto's longest linear skating trail. In future phases, the skating trail might connect to the Mouth of the Fort park at the Fort York Library.
- **Water** As part of this discussion, let's also talk about innovative ways to celebrate water. The rink will be a splash pad in summer.
- **Participant Comments (C) or Questions (Q) and Answers (A)**
 - **Q- Bridge location-** Will the pedestrian bridge be located under the Gardiner, between the bents? How wide?
 - **A – Yes.** The approximate width will be 4 meters.
 - **C- Bridge Balconies** – There could be balconies on the bridge that stick out beyond the width of the Gardiner. These balconies could function as viewing platforms, allowing for views of Fort York or the CN Tower. The balconies could project out between the bents.
 - **C – Seating** How about some seating on the bridge or on the balconies
 - **C- Accessibility** Please ensure the bridge is fully accessible.
 - **C- Suspension Bridge Views** The cables of a suspension bridge might obstruct views.... or maybe the cables could

frame views. A suspension bridge keeps the space below free and clear.

- **C- Supported Bridge Views** A supported bridge keeps the space above free and clear. Views from the bridge would be unobstructed.
- **C- VOTE** – 2/3 like Suspension Bridge. 1/3 likes Supported Bridge.
- **Q- Lateral Stability** What will provide lateral stability for a suspension bridge?
- **A – Collars and Tendrils** would support the suspension bridge. Collars would clamp around the columns and tendrils would anchor the hanging bridge to the columns, providing lateral stability.
- **C-Northern Extension** The bridge could have a northern extension. Maybe a balcony or some other form of viewing platform. In this location, you want an elevated perch to get the best views of the fort, the skating rink, and the CN tower.
- **Tree Platforms** There are interesting platforms that surround tall trees in the Black Forest in Germany. Perhaps similar platforms could encircle the bents at selected locations.
- **Vines** What about vines that climb up the columns?
- **Children's Play Space** There is a very strong need for children's play space in these high density communities Please incorporate play space into the design.
- **Acrobats** – The site needs some acrobats or circus programming.
- **Shipping container cafe** What about a shipping container café in winter, especially to provide hot drinks for the skaters?
- **Q- It is hard to get to this site.** What steps are being taken to make it easier to get to this location, especially on TTC?
- **A-Waterfront Transit Reset.** The City is in the midst of Waterfront Transit Reset public consultation. Please check the City's website for consultation dates. There is some talk of a waterfront bus. A waterfront bus could link waterfront park destinations together. If there is a lot of activity at the site, we are hopeful that new TTC routes will be created. It is important that the pedestrian bridge not impeded TTC access to the site.

5. Stop #4 - Bathurst Community Hub

- **East of the Boulevard Crossing, Land Is Not in the Public Domain** – East of the boulevard crossing, we are on privately owned publicly accessible land.

- **Proximity of Residences** – There are a number of residential units very close to the trail at this point.
- **Pop up commercial activity** – This space could accommodate pop-up micro-enterprise. What kind of retail services do we want to see here?
- **Connections** – This section of the trail will cross Bathurst at grade and connect to the new community centre, school and off-leash dog park at City Place. The Bathurst crossing will be a new signalized crossing. A new Loblaws is under construction just south on Bathurst.
- **Community Hub** How can we design this section of the Under Gardiner to act more like a community park?
- **Participant Comments (C) or Questions (Q) and Answers (A)**
 - **C-Farmer’s Market** – How about a Farmer’s Market here?
 - **C- No Farmer’s Market** not a good idea because there is no area to load in or load out. This is a dark, windy space. The Farmers will freeze and people will not want to linger.
 - **C-Loading** Very important to consider loading zones along the entire length of the trail.
 - **C-Underpass Park** This space feels more like underpass park. It is hard and tough.
 - **C- A place to smoke cigarettes.**
 - **C-Wind art; art with light** What about inserting art installations that respond to wind? What about art installations that reflect light into the site or on the glass building walls? What about wind chimes or coloured glass? What about lights powered by wind power?
 - **C-No signalized crossing** The last thing we need is a light to slow down traffic. Let the cars get to the Gardiner as fast as possible.
 - **C-Councillor Cressy wants to slow traffic** Actually, the councillor has expressed a desire to slow traffic at this point, based on resident comments.
 - **C-Major investment ends at Fort York Boulevard** Because we are on private land here, the majority of funding will be invested in spaces west of Fort York Boulevard.
 - **C- 5 meters** The air space 5 meters above grade is privately owned.
 - **C-Transform the ceiling with a “soft above.”** If there is air space under the decking that is public, think about how you could transform the allowable airspace. Colored light, giant lanterns, flowing curtains, mobiles or other art installations could be suspended from the decking. Leave the ground plane as is but create a “soft above”.
 - **-END-**