

Park People (www.parkpeople.ca)

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**UNDER GARDINER WALKSHOP
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION NOTES
May 8, 2016**

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

- **Walkshops** This is the second 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.
- **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.
- **Participant Demographics** Walkshop participants are from surrounding communities as well as East York, Leslieville, Scarborough, and Etobicoke.
- **Audience Reasons for Participation** include an interest in urban design, public space, neighbourhood integration, Toronto history, an east/west extension of the project, and how the Under Gardiner will fit into a larger, downtown multi-use trail system.

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 ground 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.
- **"The Bentway" is one of four names under consideration as a new name for Project: Under Gardiner.** It is the front runner name as of noon today (you can vote until 11:59 PM today). "The

Bentway” takes its name from the structural columns and beams supporting the Gardiner that are known as “bents.”

- **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):**
 - **C- Water run-off** - Please consider creative design solutions to handle water-run-off from the Gardiner.
 - **C- Light installation** -Consider some kind of installation that references the traffic volume with light that pulses or responds in some other way to reflect the passing cars hitting the expansion joints. (Speaker commented that traffic will sound slightly different after construction is completed)
 - **C- Sound mitigation** - It is very noisy due to traffic on adjacent roads. Think about a sound mitigation strategy.
 - **C- Ropes course** -What about a ropes course, adult swings, or climbing wall in this space?
 - **C- Dance floor** What about a dance floor for tango night or other community dance nights?
 - **C- Hanging screens** How about hanging screens to allow for projections of movies or other visual installations.
 - **C- Drive-in headphones** Install drive-in head phones so that people can listen to the movie and hear the sound of the movie without competing with the sound of the traffic.
 - **C- Hanging gardens** How about hanging gardens?
 - **C- Hanging art** would also be great.
 - **C- Lighting** Important that this section is well-lit.
 - **C- Multi-use path connections** Please consider how the Under Gardiner connects to other, local multi-use paths.
 - **C- Homeless strategy** Please develop a homeless strategy as this will be a very attractive place for homeless people to sleep. What resources will be available for them?
 - **Q- What will happen to the parking lot where we are standing?**
 - **A- Greenspace & parking** This is currently a municipal parking lot. A portion of it will be developed as green space and the rest will be used as parking.
 - **Q- Existing infrastructure?** What is the state of the existing infrastructure (water, sewer, electrical) and how will it be improved?
 - **A –Currently, the site is under-served** in terms of water and sewer because not many people use the site. The water drains from the Gardiner through downspouts and flows directly into the mud below. This presents an important design opportunity to redirect and manage water in an

environmentally friendly way. Swales, irrigated gardens and plantings are all under consideration as potential design solutions to highlight water management. As well, we are aware of the need for washrooms and lighting.

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 Lake Ontario shoreline.
- **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.
- **Participant Comments (C) or Questions (Q) and Answers (A)**
 - **C-Outdoor City Museum** – one idea from last walk is that you could have an outdoor city museum here that include installations like the historic and new street cars.
 - **C- Sanctioned Graffiti**-Consider murals on the columns or sanctioned areas for graffiti art. See graffiti park in Venice Beach by way of example.
 - **C- Food Trucks**-How about food trucks? There needs to be some commercial activity here. Food brings people together.
 - **C- Waterfall**- A waterfall could help accentuate the height of the space.
 - **C- Timeline** -How about creating a giant timeline on the bents to tie together the site's historical strands (indigenous, military, railway, Gardiner, natural history)
 - **C- Zipline**- The space is so tall! What about a zipline, bungee jump or a giant swing?
 - **C-Second level** -Consider a second level that makes it possible to walk from bent to bent in the air.
 - **C-Winter works** -We need to animate the space in colder months so it is not a winter dead zone. What about ice sculptures, an ice slide, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, some heating poles, warming huts or an outdoor fire place? Refer to winter festivals in Winnipeg. Refer to Toronto Winter Stations.
 - **C-Create a sky** on the canopy above by painting either clouds and blue sky or a starry night mural.

- **C- Kids Railway** What about referencing the old Grand Trunk Railway with a kids' train that also helps people with mobility issues to see the length of the space?
- **C- Sanctioned Buskers** Buskers and music will help enliven the space.
- **C-Micro-retail** like a flower market, farmer's market, or food carts will also help enliven the space.
- **C-Balance between trail access and programming** Although all of these programming suggestions are great, please also make it possible for commuters to be able to access the trail as a safe route to downtown.
- **C- Bike Cooperative** – In terms of micro-retail, this would be a great location for a bike cooperative like the one at the Evergreen Brickworks. Kids could come here to get their bike tuned up. Consider installing a bike park near the skateboard park.
- **Q- It is hard to get to this site. What steps are being taken to make it easier to get to this location?**
- **A-New pedestrian bridge** is being constructed south of King to the Garrison Commons. This bridge will improve pedestrian and cycling access to the site.

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.
- **Skating rink** – A skating rink will be installed at this location in winter.
- **Participant Comments (C) or Questions (Q) and Answers (A)**
 - **C-Hanging pedestrian bridge** – what about hanging the pedestrian bridge rather than supporting it from below?
 - **C- Extending the pedestrian bridge** – what about extending the bridge further to the west or east to allow for vertical “lookouts” under the bents?

- **C-Ensuring people use the bridge** To ensure people use the bridge rather than dashing across the street, this bridge is going to need to have amenities that attract people to it. It should be an interesting design as well.
- **C- Accessibility of bridge** – The bridge should not just be stairs. It needs to be accessible. (Walk leader confirmed that yes, the bridge will be accessible though there could be switch backs in the ramp.)
- **Q- Can you reroute the traffic into tunnel so people can cross at grade?**
- **A-No.** The structural integrity of the bents is paramount. It is too dangerous to dig around the foundations of the columns. Therefore, we cannot create a tunnel for cars or for people. As well, there is archeological heritage here that should not be disturbed.
- **Q-Will there be a separation between bikes and pedestrians?** Look at the example of the cycling paths at Queen's Key.
- **A – Perhaps.** This is something the designers are looking at. The need for a separation between bikes and pedestrians was also raised at the last consultation.
- **C-Connect Above and Below** There needs to be some kind of art installation that alerts drivers to the fact that the Under Gardiner Park is occurring below. For example, tuned rumble strips on the Gardiner could signify the presence of the park below. Rumble strips can be tuned based on their distance apart from one another. As well, there could be a digital data stream that alerts drivers to the park below. The data stream could contain facts about Toronto. For example, how many births occurred in the city that day. There is something very similar in London, UK right now. Please reference the London installation. (*Anna gave Laura cards for the two women who made this suggestion*).
- **C-Suggestion for park opening** When the park opens, consider a symphony of car horns on the Gardiner to announce the opening of the park below. In St. John's Newfoundland, every year, the ships in the harbour perform a song with their ship horns. A local musician writes the music for the ships. Something similar with vehicles would be an amazing way to announce the opening of the park. (*Anna gave Laura cards for the two women who made this suggestion*).
- **C-Splash pad** The skating pad should also be a splash pad in summer.
- **C-Lost Rivers of Toronto** The architecture should refer to Garrison Creek which probably runs under this very site.

Other “Lost Rivers” may also run under the site. What about day lighting Garrison Creek? Important to research and refer to these lost rivers as well as the original shoreline of Lake Ontario in the design.

- **C-Ravine Watersheds** You could also refer to the city’s main six watersheds that define the north/south ravine system.
- **C-Age of the Sail** Historically, Toronto was built during the age of the sail. What about referring to the sail in the design of the pedestrian bridge? Or what about referencing sails in the design of a play structure?
- **C-Art installation that references water** – In your treatment of water from the highway, please highlight the purification process with some kind of design feature. There could be an educational piece around storm water management similar to the one at Sherbourne Common.
- **C-Water fountains** How about some water fountains.
- **C- Water for homeless** What about washrooms, or washing stations for the homeless?
- **C-Research project** It would be good to research and document how the Under Gardiner space is used right from the beginning. As well, this site could be a research site for urban life in general. Research topics could include effects of air pollution, noise pollution, survival of plants etc. Schools and universities could be involved in this research.
- **C-Benches** We need benches near the skating rink, both to put on skates and to appreciate the view of Fort York in summer.
- **C-Visual Connection to Fort York** – There is an opportunity to create a much stronger visual connection to Fort York at this pulse point. During special events, what about historic soldiers standing on the hill? What about aboriginal structures on the hill or other references?
- **Reference to aboriginal culture** – Please reference aboriginal culture in some way at this pulse point. Think about aboriginal meaning of the name “Toronto”.
- **C-Column for each nation** We need to celebrate Toronto as a multi-cultural city in this park. What about dedicating a column or bent to each nation in Toronto? You could create murals on the columns that reflect the city’s diversity of cultures and the pedestrian bridge could “bridge” these cultures.

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.
- **Sound Quality More Representative** Listen closely as there is no rehabilitation work presently occurring on this portion of the Gardiner. Therefore, the traffic sounds are more representative of the future project sound quality.
- **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 Loblaw's 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-Micro enterprise in shipping containers** Maybe this is a good spot for a shipping container market similar to Market 707,
 - **C-Dog waste management strategy** is very important here.
 - **C-Lighting** could warm up this space as it feels rather dark and cold. But somehow the lighting should not project into residential windows. Perhaps lighting needs to be screened. Hanging lanterns with giant curtains could be cool.
 - **C- Hearth / giant living room** Maybe this cold dark space needs to feel like an outdoor "living room" with a hearth, lanterns and curtains. There was some interesting seating at Winter Stations.
 - **C-Lighting is key to success of this space** Think about colored lights.
 - **C- Room with a view** Think about the view here and reference key landmarks like the CN Tower.
 - **C-Gateway to City from Toronto Airport** This space is the closest public gateway to visitors arriving at Billy Bishop. This space should welcome visitors to Toronto.
 - **C-Electronic Signage** As part of the "gateway welcome concept", there should be electronic signage here that references the rest of the city as part of an inspirational way-finding and welcome strategy.
 - **C-Noise** It is still noisy here. Need noise attenuation.
 - **C-Washrooms** Need a plan for public washrooms.
 - **C-Include Homeless** Don't separate the homeless from everyone else. Refer to public wash stations in Paris.
 - **C-Bike share station** We need a Bikeshare stand here for those who are cycling the rest of the path.
 - **C- The best plans are plans that liberate other people's plans – Jane Jacobs.**
 - **-END-**