



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Westboro Beach Design Plan and Mitigation Measures for the Parking Lot at 234 Atlantis Avenue

COMMUNITY MEETING REPORT
SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

Canada

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I. Project description

A. Background

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is proceeding with the implementation of the Ottawa River South Shore Park Plan, in conjunction with planned works for Phase II of the Ottawa light rail transit (LRT) project. Therefore, the Westboro Beach sector of the plan will be implemented in the coming years. In the interim, upgrades are required for the parking lot at 234 Atlantis Avenue in advance of the LRT works, and final designs were submitted in October 2017.

II. Community meeting overview

A. Overview

a. Objectives

As the Ottawa River South Shore Park Plan has been the subject of extensive consultations, the NCC met with community members at their request to present the final design for the parking lot and discuss potential mitigation measures.

There was also an opportunity to discuss ideas for the Westboro Beach portion of the project, based on the current identified requirements and design elements. Future consultations will engage the community at large on the site plan, pavilion design and amenities.

b. Date and time

September 20, 2017, 7 pm to 9 pm

c. Location

The Fieldhouse, 29 Van Lang Private

d. Format

Community meeting

B. Consultation procedure and tools

a. Presentation

The meeting featured two separate presentations: the first, a 15-minute overview of the Westboro Beach sector plans, as laid out within the broader Ottawa River South Shore Park Plan, together with a summary of feedback received during previous rounds of public consultation; and the second, a 10-minute overview of the plan for the parking lot at 234 Atlantis Avenue.

b. Discussions

Participants were invited to share their ideas for Westboro Beach, both verbally and in writing. All participants were provided with comment sheets on which to jot down these ideas, as well as maps of the parking lot, crossing and Westboro Beach itself. After 40 minutes, a plenary session was held, during which each table was invited to present its members' ideas to the rest of the group.

The meeting ended with a 25-minute session, during which participants were invited to ask questions and provide comments on the Westboro Beach sector plans.

C. Invitation and promotion

Invitations were distributed to members of the community by the Westboro Beach Community Association.

D. Participants

a. Members of the public

Approximately 60 members of the community participated in the meeting.

b. Community leaders

Mari Wellman, the community association president, presided over the meeting.

III. Community meeting highlights

The participants engaged in extensive discussions, with the majority of comments being creative suggestions about the amenities that could be offered at the redesigned site. Participants also presented a series of comments about the plans, focusing primarily on accessibility, safety, the environment, minimizing impacts for local residents and safeguarding the prized, existing features of the area.

IV. Analysis of results and main comments received

A. What we heard

Beach facilities

Participants largely agreed on the types of basic facilities required to ensure that all beach goers can enjoy their time at the new site:

- All-season public washrooms
- Change rooms

- Showers
- Bike racks
- Storage space for lifeguard equipment

Sports and athletics

Many participants expressed a keen desire to expand the range of sporting and athletic activities facilitated at Westboro Beach. The following are some of the ideas put forward by participants:

Rentals

- Kayaking
- Paddleboarding
- Canoeing
- Kite boarding
- Biking
- Cross-country skiing

Facilities

- Yoga
- Dance
- Volleyball
- Skating (outdoor rink)
- General sports / gym space / multi-purpose room

A number of participants indicated that sporting and athletic activities should be offered at Westboro Beach year-round, and should not simply cease with the arrival of winter.

Food, refreshments and entertainment

Participants commented extensively on drink and dining options. While there was consensus around the need for a place where beach goers and facility users could purchase food and refreshments, there was little agreement as to the extent and type of venues suited to this purpose. Proposals ranged from a small café to a range of pubs and restaurants. However, most participants did express a preference for something small, practical and unobtrusive.

Similarly, though many participants acknowledged the appeal of both live and recorded music at the site, most also recognized that noise pollution must be kept to a minimum, and recommended that all speakers point in the direction of the river rather than toward residential areas.

Cultural elements and awareness

Suggestions for cultural amenities covered a broad range of options, which included the following:

- An art gallery
- An educational space where visitors can learn about local wildlife

- An environmental education centre
- A forest school
- An Indigenous museum
- A small exhibit on the history of the Ottawa River

In a similar vein, a number of participants highlighted the importance of taking local history into account in the design of the site/building and its planned amenities, in particular the presence and legacy of Indigenous peoples. Some participants recommended that environmental and Indigenous themes be incorporated into the design and construction of the building itself, and suggested that no public monuments should be erected on the site unless they celebrate Indigenous peoples.

Communal spaces

A number of the comments made by participants expressed a need for spaces around which families, groups of friends and strangers can gather to share in outdoor experiences. These included the following:

- Fire pits
- Picnic areas
- Patios and terraces
- Overnight campsites
- A play structure
- A splash pad
- A designated area for dogs and dog owners

Some participants also stressed the need for quiet, contemplative areas where users can simply enjoy being in nature.

Access

Issues related to access loomed large in participant feedback, with many highlighting, above all, the importance of ensuring that access to Westboro Beach and its facilities is guaranteed year-round. Several participants made more pointed comments in this vein, requesting the following:

- A sidewalk on the north side of Lanark Avenue from Churchill Avenue to the beach
- Access to the river from Dominion station
- Wheelchair access to a paddle dock
- Late-night access to the beach, including better lighting and late hours for facility operation

Design

Participants provided a significant amount of feedback on various design elements. Lighting was a recurring topic, with participants requesting that adequate lighting be installed on the

footpath under the parkway, at the pedestrian crossing and in the parking lot. Others stressed the importance of ensuring that lighting be carefully managed in order to avoid light pollution.

Some participants commented on incorporating nature in the design, asking that the use of concrete be reduced, in order to expand green areas and to reduce the plan's overall environmental footprint.

Other requests in this vein included the following:

- Widening the bike path
- Updating signage
- Performing more maintenance on the grounds
- Ensuring that ski trails are of an appropriate size and adequately maintained

General comments

With new possibilities come new concerns. The enthusiasm expressed by participants for many of the ideas discussed at the community meeting was accompanied by a number of concerns related primarily to implementation.

Noise pollution was a recurring concern, with many participants suggesting that all music played at the new site be non-amplified, directed toward the river and/or contained by a sound barrier. Increased traffic was also mentioned a number of times. Participants suggested that speed bumps be installed on nearby residential streets, and that access to the parkway from residential streets be restricted.

Several participants also expressed concerns regarding the expansion of facilities, and requested that commercialization at Westboro Beach be limited in scope. Many participants also asked that the breadth of services offered at the main building be similarly limited to recreational pursuits, and that the size of the building itself be appropriate.

Other recurring concerns included the following:

- Strictly limiting the use of motorboats in this section of the river
- What will happen to nearby ski trails, and how best to adapt them to the new design
- The installation of guardrails / security fencing at the top of the hill in order to prevent children from tumbling onto the parkway
- Moving storage facilities away from the beach

Parking lot

A number of comments touched specifically on the parking lot. Many participants expressed a desire for parking in the lot to be free out of a concern that paid parking at the site would push visitors into residential side streets. Some expressed a desire to move the parking area closer to the parkway, while others wanted it removed altogether.

A number of participants shared their concerns about the size of the parking area and the required felling of trees, and argued that the beach could not accommodate as many people as

might be attracted by the parking capacity. Finally, a number of participants requested that the parking lot be surrounded by a tall fence.

V. Integration of results

The NCC has launched an internal design competition for Westboro Beach. As part of this competition, teams composed of NCC staff members—including architects, designers, planners and landscape architects—will put together comprehensive design proposals for Westboro Beach and its facilities. The feedback received from community members is currently being used to inform the designs that NCC staff are developing for Westboro Beach.

These comments, together with feedback that will be collected during upcoming meetings with stakeholders and public consultations in the spring of 2019, will help to ensure that the redesigned beach and its facilities reflect the needs and aspirations of its community of users and neighbours.

VI. Next steps

The NCC will hold meetings with community stakeholders in March and April 2019 to solicit their input of the design and uses of the Westboro Beach pavilion. In-person and online public consultations will be held in April–May 2019 to give members of the public an opportunity to provide feedback on all aspects of the project, from the site layout to possible uses for the new pavilion.

Once the internal design competition has ended, a second round of engagement activities will be held to collect feedback on the proposed design for Westboro Beach.