

Cabbagetown Speaks

Neighbours Working to Improve Riverdale Park West

Dear Friends;

Riverdale Park West Improvement Master Plan is Ready

After 2 community surveys, 17 months of work, 12 multi-stakeholder meetings, 1,500 hours of email and telephone correspondence, 8 in-person visits with City staff from 4 departments, 2 hillside clean-ups, 1 session that planted 1,000 spring bulbs and unrelenting relationship building and lobbying — the Riverdale Park West Planning Committee is pleased to report to our community that a first draft of the improvement plans for Riverdale Park West is ready.

Do you remember what you said?

Let us remind you of the results of the October 2009 community survey that started this process.

- 62% of you use RPW daily or a few times per week
- 28% of you use RPW weekly
- 75% of you agreed that elements of the Park should be improved.

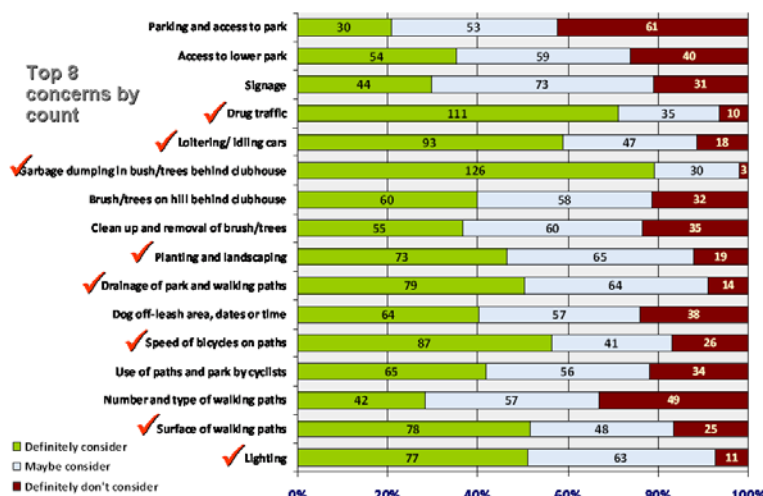
Do you remember the troublesome issues?

We asked you to tell us whether specific aspects of Riverdale Park West should

definitely be considered for improvement (**green**), or definitely not be considered for improvement (**red**). If you weren't certain, you could indicate, maybe consider (**grey**).

The top 8 issues that you felt should **definitely be considered** are flagged in the Figure with a red check.

1. Garbage dumping in bush area behind the clubhouse
2. Drug activity in the park
3. Loitering and idling cars
4. Speed of bicyclists using the park
5. Drainage of park & paths
6. Surface of paths
7. Lighting in the park
8. Planting and landscaping of the park (aesthetics)



Issue No. 7 Riverdale Park West Master Improvement Plan

June 6, 2011

RPW Improvement Planning Committee

- Aberdeen Avenue Residents Association
- Cabbagetown Arts and Crafts Sale
- Cabbagetown Preservation Association
- Cabbagetown South Residents Association
- Councillor Pam McConnell's Office
- Don Vale Cabbagetown Residents Association
- Friends of the Farm
- Old Cabbagetown B.I.A.
- Parks, Forestry & Recreation, City of Toronto
- Residents of Cabbagetown
- Riverdale Farm, City of Toronto

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Do you remember your observations?

We divided your 242 comments into **Observations** and **Solutions**. Here's what you thought:

	Observations	Solutions
Garbage Purposeful use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overfilling existing bins in upper park and Flats (sports teams, spectators) • Infrequent pick-up (weekend) • Minimal pick up Nov-May in Flats • Many bins removed Nov-May 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more garbage and recycling bins • Add weekend pick-ups • Keep bins in Flats and pick up all year round • Add specific bins for dog waste (for future composting)
Garbage Dumping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooded area between Carlton & Spruce is not regularly maintained by City • Strewn garbage left for days encourages new dumping • Garbage accumulation behind clubhouse and in wooded area behind ball diamonds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve park maintenance schedule to include area south from Carlton to Spruce/River

	Observations	Solutions
Paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface of upper park paths deteriorating • Drainage serious issue • Dirt paths created by people (along Farm, Riverdale Park Rd, from hilltop to Flats behind clubhouse) • Most paths dangerous in winter (freeze, re-freeze) • All paths not plowed or maintained equally (those with mobility issues) • Area from Geneva to Spruce relatively ignored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-pave/repair upper park paths (surface?) • Surface people-created dirt paths where there is new traffic • Improve drainage in upper park and Flats • Consider replacing people-created path to Flats with stairs or surfaced path to discourage new trails being made

	Observations	Solutions
Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating sub-optimal • Lack of child-friendly spaces • Poor landscaping and perennial planting • Regent Park and Donlands redevelopment will bring more people to the park • Park is not in keeping with rest of heritage nature of community • Doesn't seem to be a Park plan that integrates the space from Winchester to Spruce/River • All entrances to Park should have similar features/themes (information kiosks, entranceways) • Lack of shade trees in Flats • Lack of community gathering places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of benches • Fence in children/fence in dogs • Create plaza/observation lookout at end of Carlton east • More indigenous planting from Winchester to Spruce/River • Specific gardening approaches – create outdoor 'spaces' (rocks, hedges) • Improve tree maintenance (regular pruning) • Gazebo in park (upper or Flats); consider putting Farmer's market in gazebo • Consider statue or wall regarding history of Cabbagetown

	Observations	Solutions
Bicycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speed on paths compromises safety of pedestrians and children Bikes have to use park to access Don trails and bridges to Broadview area Blind corner at base of hill dangerous to pedestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a dedicated bike path for cyclists to re-direct them off the paths Consider expanding Winchester east to Bayview/bridge Purposefully slow cyclists down (bollards, corrals, speed bumps)
Dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dog-walkers are lifeblood of park Dog-walkers are eyes and ears of park Not all park users comfortable with off-leash dogs Dog excrement in Farmer's market/child areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-evaluate off-leash times and locations Fence in families or fence in dogs? Dog waste-specific receptacles throughout park
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports teams overwhelm residential parking spaces Access to sporting fields doesn't need to be through the park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new parking opportunity off Bayview for sports teams and dog walkers

	Observations	Solutions
Loitering Non-purposeful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human defecation hillside Public alcohol consumption Clubhouse attracts drug dealers and users Clubhouse become back-drop for graffiti Idling cars on Riverdale Park Road and Spruce/River in late evening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase frequency of police patrolling Lighting next to benches prevents shadows Keep the community <u>in</u> the park at all times
Prostitution Drug use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex in wooded area behind clubhouse and in washrooms Presence of hanging shoes at Spruce/River and in park Drug use behind clubhouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase frequency of police patrolling Lighting next to benches prevents shadows Staff clubhouse during day time hours

	Observations	Solutions
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park is dark Lighting is out of date and insufficient Lighting only along walking path Not in keeping with heritage specifications Doesn't light ground Safety compromised which encourages loitering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve lighting Lighting that conforms to heritage specifications Consider lighting in trees
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create reasons for community to gather and stay in the park at all times and for the right reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winter festival in park Art installations Sunday evening film in the park Author readings Permanent park café (with public washrooms) Create new role for existing clubhouse (rentals, snacks) Playgrounds



Where are we today?

The City assigned to us a dedicated Landscape Architect from Planning Design & Development. Her job was to incorporate our community survey results, the minutes of all the RPW Improvement Planning Committee meetings and feedback from other key stakeholders whose activities impact and are impacted by Riverdale Park West.

In addition to working with the Planning Committee members (see page 1), the City also sought input from a heritage consultant, the City of Toronto Public Realm Office, Riverdale Farm Advisory Council, Cabbagetown People Project, Friends of Riverdale Farm, and the Cabbagetown Regent Park Museum.

Purpose and Principles

Recall that the primary purpose of our work was to bring the voice of Cabbagetown residents to the City of Toronto to help them create a master plan that will be used as a reference document by our community AND the City to guide and gauge future improvement work.

A second purpose was to create a strong partnership with key City staff and build a strong rapport so that future discussions about our Park are more meaningful, productive and timely.

This document neither guarantees funding nor is it meant to guide operations or work schedules.

The RPW master plan merely states that where and when funding becomes available, work will occur only once it is compared to and consistent with the RPW master plan. Any new City staff will have to refer to this master plan.

Will anything happen in 2011?

Yes!

- In this calendar year, the City will improve the surface and drainage of the walking paths that appear in the area bounded by Winchester (north), Carlton (south), Sumach (west) and the Farm (east).
- You will be invited to attend a public meeting and view the RPW master plan and offer your feedback.

As we go forward

Remember that all discussions relating to improvement refer to the following area:

- The upper park — the area west of the Farm, which runs from Winchester to Carlton
- The Flats — lower park that includes the baseball diamonds, clubhouse and the associated descending path
- The path and hilltop that run parallel to Riverdale Park Road
- The open space and hillside wooded area that runs south from Geneva to the intersection of Spruce/River.



The RPW Master Plan ~ What will you see?

Photographs and architectural drawings will show:

- Clay pavers that will replace the existing RPW paths. They will not replicate the cobblestone on Carlton Street but will be contemporary and respectful to our neighbourhood's heritage
- New paved plazas that will be created in areas where people tend most to congregate
- Natural obstacles (curved lines, benches and horticulture plantings) that will be inserted in order to slow down the speed of cyclists who move through the park
- New benches that will be of a classic style
- A new cow paddock fence that will allow for more room for the three cows to move about freely
- New lighting style
- A new plan for the easternmost terminus of Carleton Street
- New plan for the southernmost entrance of RPW at River Street and Spruce Street and the entrance at Geneva Avenue and Riverdale Park Road
- A proposal to formalize the footpath along the top of hill along Riverdale Park Road

When is the public meeting?

Please mark this date in your calendar

DATE: Tuesday, June 21, 2011
TIME: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
PLACE: Riverdale Farm Meeting House

This will be your chance to provide important input to our Riverdale Park West.
We look forward to seeing you there.

