

VMC Edgeley Pond + Park

Public Meeting #1

Tuesday, February 21, 2017, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Vaughan City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive West, Multi-Purpose Room

Followed by a reception for the Vaughan Urban Jungle Juried Art Exhibition

MEETING SUMMARY

On Tuesday, February 21, 2017, the City of Vaughan held the first of three public meetings for Edgeley Pond and Park in Multi-purpose Room in Vaughan City Hall. About 15 people participated in the first public meeting, in addition to approximately 25 City staff and the consultant team.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- To introduce the Edgeley Pond + Park project to local and city-wide residents and organized interest groups.
- To review the key decisions that will be made during the project and the information being gathered to inform those decisions.
- To seek feedback from participants on their vision for the pond and park, desired public uses, and other advice for the team to move forward.

This meeting summary was written by Yulia Pak of Swerhun Facilitation & Decision Support. It is based on the feedback shared by participants during and 1 week after the meeting. It is structured to reflect the following four key areas of the discussion:

1. Highlights of Feedback;
2. Questions of Clarification;
3. Detailed Feedback:
 - A Day in the Park
 - Landscapes in the Park;
4. Summary of Written Feedback (provided after the meeting); and
5. Next Steps.

Please note that the meeting agenda is attached as Appendix A and detailed written feedback provided after the meeting as Appendix B.

I. FEEDBACK HIGHLIGHTS

The following points capture the highlights of the feedback received at the meeting. They are intended to be read with the rest of the report.

- Ensure that the park is inclusive of and accessible to people of all ages and abilities, to local residents and the broader Vaughan community.
- Design spaces that allow a variety of activities — community animation, education, health and wellness, family gatherings, and self-reflection.
- There was a difference of opinion about pets in the park.
- Create a more natural park and pond with good connections to the subway and the rest of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. Preserve the island and the wildlife, and create natural water experiences that help mute city noise.
- Ensure that the park and the pond can be enjoyed in all weather conditions, times of the day and all four seasons.

II. QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

After the presentation, participants asked the following questions of clarification. The responses from the Project Team are noted in *italics*.

- **What's the budget for this whole project?** *The budget for Phase I to design and build the park and pond is approximately \$19 million.*
- **How many phases are there?** *Once the design for Edgeley Pond and Park is selected, the number of phases will be determined along with details and associated budgets.*
- **What are you doing in terms of stormwater mitigation? It is a very confined space with a significant water problem.** *One of the project objectives is to maximize water storage but the Highway- 7 culverts present impediments to flow. We will dig down where we can and we are also investigating the use of tanks or forebays for increased water storage. Currently, we are doing hydrology and hydraulics modelling at different extremes. Based on the data and the vision for this pond and park, we will come up with modulated design to balance function with aesthetics.*
- **How are you improving water quality?** *Tanks and forebays can capture the water coming from sewers. The water will sit inside the tank or the forebay to allow contaminants to settle before being released into the pond.*
- **What is a strata park?** *Strata park is a park built on top of a parking structure.*
- **What is the difference in elevation from the beginning to the end of the water flow?** *The creek and the pond are shallow. The difference in elevation is a couple of meters.*

III. DETAILED FEEDBACK

After the questions of clarification, participants proceeded to the first station where they had an opportunity to imagine a day in Edgeley Park. There were two activities at this station. For the first activity, participants drew and/or wrote on the station wall about different park users that the City and the team need to consider when designing the park. For the second station, participants picked a number of different cards that represented activities they would like to see happen in the park, stuck them to the wall or drew their own activities and explained why they would like these activities happen. The summary of the shared feedback is captured below.

A DAY IN THE PARK

Park users identified by participants include:

- Kids;
- Teenagers;
- Young adults;
- Senior citizens;
- People with different abilities;
- Families;
- Dog owners;
- Fishing enthusiasts;
- Local residents; and
- All residents of Vaughan.

Activities that participants would like to see happening in the park include:

- **Walking.** Natural trails for people to walk. It is an easy activity for everyone to enjoy and it is relatively low-cost to build and maintain.
- **Sitting.** Opportunities for people to take a break from a stroll, sit on a bench and enjoy scenery. Participants also envisioned people coming to the park for escape from a noisy busy city and for self-reflection.
- **Interaction with water.** Docks where people can sit and dunk their feet into the pond. Splash pads and wading pools for kids to play in the summer. A place for people to race their motorized model boats.
- **Swimming.** A place for adults and kids swimming outside, if not in the pond, then in a pool.
- **Food vendors.** An opportunity for people to enjoy a snack or a casual meal in the park that can be purchased either from a food truck or a local park café.
- **Winter activities.** Programmed and unprogrammed spaces in the park for people to enjoy the park and pond in the winter. Consider an ice-skating rink or a meandering ice-skating path on the pond.
- **Activities for seniors.** A place for seniors to play bocce or to do other activities in the park, including participation in a community garden.
- **Family picnics & spaces.** Public BBQ areas for families to have picnics. Big sheltered areas to accommodate large groups of people.
- **Play structures for adults.** A play area for adults only – where adults of all ages can use different play structures and have fun. Such play structures can also serve as public art. The area should have proper signage and park staff encouraging adults to use the structures.
- **Public art.** A place in the park with lots of creativity and color, where people can enjoy rotating seasonal exhibits in specially designed outlets for public art.
- **Social gatherings and events.** A venue for music events, dance parties, and wedding ceremonies.

- **Exercise stations.** Special spaces with exercise stations that are connected to trails. Consider designing the park in such a way that would allow people to exercise on the trail and at the station, track everything on a Fit Bit and get more awards and points.
- **Off-leash dog areas.** A dedicated space in the park for dog owners to walk their dogs. Some participants thought it was important that Edgeley Pond and Park is dog-friendly emphasizing the need for off-leash dog areas. A participant shared that 35% of Canadian households have at least 1 dog. The majority of new housing in the area is condo developments which are pet-friendly. Currently, Vaughan has only 1 dog park in Thornhill that is not easily accessible by public transit. New local condo residents and those who live west of Highway 400 will need a place to bring their dogs. Another point of view was not to have any pet areas in the park and make it for people only.
- **Skateboarding.** A dedicated space for teenagers and young adults to skateboard.
- **Wi-Fi access.** Wi-Fi hotspot locations that would grant free, public access to Internet.
- **Parking.** Sufficient parking in and/or around the park with easy access.

LANDSCAPES OF THE PARK

Topography

- Ensure that the landscapes are natural and the island at the centre of the pond is preserved.
- Create a nature reserve.
- Design a topography that creates a “wow!” moment.
- Ensure that programs and activities are designed in places that overlook the views of the pond.

Types of water

- Ensure natural water experiences.
- Consider a waterfall or a fountain that lights up at night-time and produces a sound of rushing/falling water to drown out city noise.
- Look at Calgary Island Park as an example for the type of water.

Paths and bridges

- Consider a pedestrian bridge over Jane Street to connect the subway station to the park and the residential areas around the park.
- Create walking trails for all ages.
- Consider raised pathways so that wildlife is not impeded by human traffic.
- Consider covered walkways to make throughways safer and more comfortable to use in all seasons and weather conditions.

Outdoor rooms and planting

- Consider community gardens. Community gardens provide opportunities for connections with the community. They can provide many great educational opportunities.
- Build lookout structures that look modern but natural and have lighting for night-time.

OTHER ADVICE

- For this project, make sure that the ecological function comes first.
- Provide examples on what kind of pond and park can be designed with the current budget. For example, the new City View Park in Vaughan at Bathurst and Major McKenzie cost 1 million.
- Consider building a dam, similar to Dufferin Reservoir, to make sure the pond does not overflow.
- Address illegal dumping that is happening at the site now.
- Update wayfinding in Vaughan and general branding unification.
- Ensure there is a good maintenance plan to keep the pond and the park clean. Ensure there are dedicated city staff for this park to implement that plan.
- Achieve highest standards in existing sustainability design standards for parks similar to Boma BESt or LEED building certifications.
- Incorporate history of Edgeley Village in your design.
- Be inspired by New York City's High Line.

IV. SUMMARY OF WRITTEN FEEDBACK

The following is a summary of written feedback provided after the meeting. The detailed feedback is attached as Appendix B. The summary outlines main themes that are not captured above.

- Create a park with more of a passive recreation purpose with a Conservation Area feel. Create a regional forest or a nature reserve. Explore options to make the area mosquito free. Consider having a dedicated employee to help visitors with questions or act as a companion to seniors and others.
- Consider designing spaces in the park that improve emotional and spiritual wellness. For example, a labyrinth is a walking tool to relax the mind. The City may also want to offer meditation classes at a Zen garden.
- Make Edgeley Pond and Park a leading example of sustainable design. Investigate different types of renewable energy sources that could be utilized in the park – solar panels, wind turbines or biofuels.

V. NEXT STEPS

Yulia Pak, an independent facilitator, thanked attendees for their participation and invited them to join a reception for the Vaughan Urban Jungle Juried Art Exhibition that was held following the meeting. She also reminded participants to submit their written feedback within a week of the meeting.

Appendix A. Meeting Agenda and Worksheet

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PROPOSED AGENDA & WORKSHEET

Meeting Purpose:

- *To introduce the Edgeley Pond + Park project to local and city-wide residents and organized interest groups.*
- *To review the key decisions that will be made during the project and the information being gathered to inform those decisions.*
- *To seek feedback from participants on their vision for the pond and park, desired public uses, and other advice for the team to move forward.*

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 7:00 pm | Welcome
<i>Andrew Pearce, City of Vaughan</i> |
| 7:05 | Introductions and Agenda Review
<i>Yulia Pak, Swerhun Facilitation</i> |
| 7:10 | Project Overview
<i>James Roche, DTAH & Abe Khademi, WSP</i>

<i>Questions of Clarification</i> |
| 7:30 | Facilitated Activity <u>(All)</u>

<u>A day in the park</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What are some of the park users that the City and the team need to think about when designing the park?</i>• <i>What activities would you like to see happen in this park?</i>
<u>Landscapes in the park</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What landscapes would you like to see in the park? Why?</i> |
| 8:20 | Report Back |
| 8:30 pm | Next Steps & Adjourn |

A day in the park

1. What are some of the park users that the City and the team need to think about when designing the park?

2. What activities would you like to see happen in this park? Why?

Landscapes in the park

3. What landscapes would you like to see in the park? Why?

Other Advice

4. Do you have any other advice?

If you would like to provide additional feedback to the project team after the meeting, please e-mail it to Yulia Pak at ypak@swerhun.com. **The deadline to submit written feedback is Tuesday, February 28, 2017.**

Appendix B. Detailed Written Feedback Submitted After the Meeting

One participant submitted the following detailed feedback after the meeting.

A day in the park

1. What are some of the park users that the City and the team need to think about when designing the park?

A park that is only for adults 18 years and older. Most parks are built for children; it would be nice to have a park that is meant for adults. Quietly relaxing at a tranquil pond; hearing only the frogs in the background. No screaming kids and no barking dogs. A pet-free zone at least; if not, a no pet park. A "Silent Section" of the park. This includes: no speaking - even no whispering. No technology including any photography such as cameras on a cellular phone or digital cameras or disposable cameras or professional cameras. No music playing from any device even with head phones that nobody else can hear. A compromise would be two portions of the park. One for 17 years and younger and the other for 18 years and older. Ideally, an employee such as a Security Guard would be allowed to require every person to show a valid photo Government issued piece of identification to ensure the age ranges are enforced. Security Guards would call the York Regional Police when visitors illegally dump garbage in the park. A prevention plan would be in place to minimize the risk of illegal dumping. Security Guards would also deter smoking by their presence. Signs of no smoking within 9 metres or 30 feet would be posted and enforced. No food or beverages allowed into the park and no placing items in a garbage or recycling in the park. People would throw out their garbage at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre inside the building. An active transportation only bridge that connects the park to the VMC going over Jane Street. The bridge would be accessible for all users such as those with mobility aids. The grade of the bridge would be appropriate. No graffiti anywhere on the park property. Hiring employees to enforce the laws such as Security Guards and Police Officers.

2. What activities would you like to see happen in this park? Why?

A York Regional Forest or a Nature Reserve. Except for the Happy Valley York Regional Forest in King Township; all the other York Regional Forests are in Whitchurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury or Georgina. They are not easily accessible by public transit. There are few Nature Reserves in York Region. Is there a way to have a Nature Reserve without mosquitos? One of the activities would be an employee with a number tracker to know how many people are in the park at any given point in time. There would be statistics of how many people and when and this would be made available to the public. An employee would be designated to discuss topics of visitors' choice. This employee could act as a Companion; typically sought after for Seniors. There would be a Companion for Children, Youth, Adults and Seniors as these four age groups are at different stages in their life.

A labyrinth is a walking tool to relax the mind. This would serve a need as it is popular inside and traditionally used outside. A Zen/Japanese garden would fulfill the environmental objectives of this park. Meditation and Mindfulness classes being offered in this park. It would be similar to yoga being offered at other parks. The City of Vaughan would hire a Meditation and Mindfulness Instructor to ensure standards are being met. Emotional and Spiritual Wellness are important and qualified employees to provide that need is vital to the quality of life visitors expect. This park would have more of a passive recreation purpose than an active recreation purpose. It could have a Conservation Area feel.

Landscapes in the park

3. What landscapes would you like see in the park? Why?

The most planet-focused landscapes and a plaque indicating the highest environmental standard. For example, LEED Platinum or BOMA Gold for buildings are two different standards at the highest level. A park equivalent would be appreciated. If there is not a park standard for sustainability, is it possible to create one that would be recognized at the Federal level. This would encourage other provinces and cities to follow Vaughan's leading-the-way attitude. Note: Vaughan City Hall has reached LEED Gold. Toronto's 200 Bay Street has achieved LEED Platinum. There is a sign showing the different environmental advantages. The North York Centre has a sign for BOMA Gold. This sign has the address and the years that it is applicable for. There is a renewal process for BOMA. There is not a renewal process for LEED. I have been told that BOMA Gold is a higher standard than LEED Platinum.

Other Advice

4. Do you have any other advice?

Coppa's Fresh Market at 3300 Rutherford Road in Vaughan has a bilingual plaque for "Commercial Building Incentive Program". Underneath it reads "In recognition of an energy-efficient building design aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions". The bottom of the plaque states "Natural Resources Canada". This is a federally recognized 'green' building. Parks Canada might have some ideas on how to make the Edgeley Pond + Park as advantageous as possible in terms of sustainability. Are solar panels or a wind turbine possible? Are biofuels a possibility? What renewable energy sources are available to utilize?