

SWOT Consulting|Students Working for an Original Toronto

Community Engagement Implementation Plan



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1.0 Introduction

The Queen Northwest Triangle has been described as a "desirable place to live and work" due to its proximity to Downtown Toronto. The Dufferin Jog Elimination Project is currently under construction and upon completion will result in Dufferin Street being extended south under the railroad tracks. This connection will provide greater access to the area increasing the pressure to develop.

The area is in a transition phase of new development with increasing density. The City of Toronto, in response to the province of Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, has designated growth targets to be achieved by the year 2031. The City of Toronto, in response to these targets, will direct growth to lands that are currently underdeveloped.

In addition, the subject land is currently zoned for employment uses. In order to meet the targets of the Provincial *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, the City of Toronto will need all of its current supply of land contained in *Employment Districts*. This means that protecting employment uses such as those currently taking place in the Queen Northwest Triangle, will be a priority for the city. The conversion of employment lands to residential use is only permitted by Provincial policy subject to a comprehensive review.

The community together with Active 18 have started the process of creating a Master Plan for the area. This Master Plan will outline the development principles and guidelines for the area that are reflective of the community. Therefore the importance of involving the public in the process is critical. This community engagement plan outlines the framework in which public participation can be achieved fairly and effectively.

Our vision in this process is to be reflective of the diverse population, engage the public in a meaningful way, respect local knowledge and engage the public early on in the process. We are committed to creating opportunities for the public to play a role in the planning process by being active in the decision making process. The public includes, but are not limited to the residents, businesses, land owners, public agencies as well as other interested parties and individuals. We want the community engagement process to be inclusive and accessible to all individuals who choose to participate.

2.0 Vision (Public Engagement Principles)

Our vision for the public engagement process in the Northwest Queen Triangle Area is to:

1. Strive to increase depth and breadth of public engagement

Community development has been proven to be more successful when the public is involved in the planning process. It is therefore important to engage as many people as

possible in the planning process for the redevelopment of the Queen Northwest Triangle. It is also pertinent to engage a diverse population, including the elderly, women, persons with disabilities, youth, visible minority groups and the large Portuguese population living in the Queen West area. The Master Plan for the Queen Northwest Triangle must be reflective of these diverse populations.

2. Engage the public in a meaningful way

We want to move beyond 'consultation' to active public 'engagement'. Mere consultation with the public does not provide much opportunity for two-way communication. The public and technical staff must engage in a dialogue which will provide learning opportunities on both ends, and provide an environment conducive to consensus decision-making.

3. Engage the public early in the planning process

The public should be notified of plans for the neighbourhood as soon as possible to when they are made known. This will allow them to process the details of development proposals and to contemplate responses and to provide input as early into the process as possible. In addition, early-stage engagement greatly reduces public apprehension and may eliminate late-stage confrontation.

4. Respect local knowledge

We want to respect and incorporate local knowledge of the area into the Master Plan. Local residents know the ins and outs of their particular part of the city, and will likely have some of the best ideas for how to improve it. Incorporating local knowledge into the design and development process can only enhance the neighbourhood for current and future residents, as well as for the employers and employees who will continue to make use of this neighbourhood.

3.0 Open Houses

As developments in the Queen Northwest triangle are proposed, development proposals shall be subject to community comment through open houses to ensure that designs are compatible with both the city's need to preserve *employment lands* and with the aspirations of community residents. Open houses will be organized by Active 18, and will include representation from the development community. City staff will be also be encouraged to take part in open houses in the Queen Northwest Triangle. Open houses will take advantage of opportunities for maximizing the amount of public input into the development process.

4.0 Innovative Community Involvement Mechanisms

In order to make sure that community input is maximized, a variety of strategies will be

used to engage various segments of the community such as seniors, youth, workers, and the religious and business communities. As well, efforts will be made to reach out to involve members of different cultural and linguistic groups.

The innovative community involvement mechanisms will also help to alleviate Active 18 of some of the financial responsibilities of undertaking this process. These strategies include, but are not limited to:

"Doors Open" Queen Northwest Triangle

A night that brings together community members, Active 18 members, local businesses, City of Toronto Officials, wider City of Toronto population as well as any other interested parties and individuals. The overall goal of the evening would be to raise money to cover the financial costs of the Master Planning process, by showcasing the unique attributes that the Northwest Queen Triangle has to offer. This could include, but is not limited to::

- Free concert
- Presentations from (Active 18, local politicians)
- Community animator
- Silent auction
- "Taste of Queen Street"
- Tours of art galleries

City Wide Design Contest

A city wide design contest will provide a unique opportunity for residents in the City of Toronto to create a logo for the area that reflects the community's vision.

Use of Social Media Outlets

Reach out to youth through the following types of social media:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Youtube

Youth involvement on the Active 18 technical steering committee could be organized through the involvement of student council at local high schools, who could also help organize some of the social media usage. Student council could also organize mail-outs from homeroom classrooms for students to take home to their parents, and also pre-class announcements. Youth engagement could also be furthered through the 40 hours of mandatory community volunteering established through the Ontario high school

curriculum, to better foster civic engagement.

5.0 Public Meetings

Under the *Ontario Planning Act*, development projects require at least one statutory public meeting to be held. We will hold two public meetings in order to maximize opportunities for the public to be involved in the process. The two meetings will be held on different evenings, childcare services will be provided, and meeting organizers will cover public transportation costs.

In addition, there will be interpretation in Portuguese in consideration of the significant population in the neighbourhood from whom Portuguese is their first language. As well, through contacting our Accessibility Coordinator considerations will be made for individuals with mobility and communicative disabilities.

6.0 Media Exposure

Efforts will be taken to ensure that the public has every opportunity to learn about and provide input on the development process in the Queen Northwest Triangle. Accordingly, advertisements for open houses and public meetings will be posted in city newspapers, as well as neighbourhood newspapers and local radio stations. Advertisements will also be posted in Portuguese newspapers such as the Voice and the Portuguese Sun (Sol Portugues). Community groups, religious institutions and business groups will be notified, posters will be put up, and flyers will be put into local area mailboxes.

7.0 Website

A website will be created (separate from the Active 18 website) to keep the public informed and up to date. The website will include, but is not limited to, the following information:

- Information about the planning projects in the Queen Northwest Triangle
- Interactive forum for two-way communication
- Post notices about upcoming events
- Monthly e-newsletter
- RRS feed

8.0 Contact Information

Key contacts will be established to be responsible for different aspects of the community engagement plan. They will provide their contact information so they can be easily contacted, via phone, email and mail inquires.

- Media Relations
- TAC (Technical Steering Committee Active 18)
- Student Liaison
- Website Support
- Community Involvement Mediator
- Accessibility Coordinator

This document was prepared by **SWOT Consulting | Students Working for an Original Toronto**