

Hello Everyone,

Thank you for coming out last week for the KMBIA's Public Realm Master Plan Open House. Your feedback and comments will help re-shape some of the ideas on the Master Plan.

Please see below a summary of Question and Answers from what we heard at the open house and from the comment sheets you left with us.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (Q&A)

What is an Urban Design Masterplan?

A Masterplan is a 'dynamic' document that provides a long term vision to guide the future growth and development of an area in the city.

-Although Masterplan is the word generally used by city officials, hence given the name to the document, we consider this document more as a 'framework' of reference.

This is a Public Realm Masterplan

This Masterplan is restricted to the '**Public Realm**' (street, lanes, parks, public spaces, sidewalks, etc.) that exist within the designated boundaries of the Business Improvement Area (BIA) and focuses predominantly on the commercial areas within the study area. Nevertheless it considers a larger boundary (HCD boundary) that extends beyond the study area in order to identify opportunities to establish or improve connections throughout the market and towards the surrounding neighbourhoods. **This document does not deal with built form (building heights, shapes, heritage designations, styles or affordability)**

Why did the BIA commission a Masterplan?

The BIA Office at the City of Toronto introduced a **Streetscape Master Plan Program**. "The Streetscape Master Plan Program provides eligible BIAs with one-time funding to acquire consulting services to create comprehensive streetscape plans that guide future improvements."

"This program is available to Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to undertake comprehensive streetscape plans to guide future streetscape improvements. The goal of the program is to help BIAs to identify a long term vision for streetscape improvements which can be implemented with support from the BIA Capital Cost-Share Program and other funding sources.

Capital Plans provide a framework for the goals and aspirations of the BIA and a reference for other City Divisions and Agencies when other works are planned for the area. It is the intention of the BIA Office that all Streetscape Master Plans developed under this program will be submitted to the Community Council for information purposes."

The KMBIA participated in this program due to growing concerns within the Market about waste management, poor pedestrian lighting, a depleting green canopy a lack of environmentally conscious strategies, the negotiation between pedestrians, trucks, cars and bicycles, etc.

The purpose of the **KMBIA Public Realm Masterplan** is to serve as a tool to provide a comprehensive long-term vision for Kensington Market's **Public Realm** that works to mitigate some of the above-mentioned threats and challenges. It aims to provide guidance and allow for change to happen in a direction that is appropriate for Kensington Market's unique character and circumstances.

About change

Kensington Market is an integral part of Toronto's history. Its walls, streets and public spaces are a palimpsest, layering the different origins, cultures, artistic sensibilities and history of the people that, over time, have inhabited its spaces and collectively shaped and determined its character. By fighting back as an organized community, Kensington has managed to resist the pressures from an array of external forces that have threatened the market.

Today, organizations such as Friends of Kensington Market, the Kensington Market Action Committee, the Kensington Residents Association, and the Kensington Market Land Trust are only a few of the many associations that organize to protect the market by representing the community and its interests.

Nevertheless, additional help is needed at a government level to maintain and improve its physical infrastructure and character.

Its public spaces (street, lanes, parks, public spaces, sidewalks, etc) through the KMBIA Public Realm Masterplan and its built form and character through protection measurements such as:

- It has been given a "National Historic Site of Canada designation (2006)"
- It is under "Special policies recognition". The City of Toronto's Official Plan – October 2016 - identifies Kensington Market as site that "requires special policies" recognizing the special characteristics of the area, such as

- a) low scale buildings with retail at grade;
- b) minimal setbacks; and
- c) open air display of goods on the boulevard.

-It is under a "Heritage Designation Recognition: The Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District Study (HCD Study)", commissioned in 2016 (on going)

These are the documents that protect and regulate over built form elements such as building heights, shapes, heritage designations, styles, etc.

What did we hear over this year?

Strengths:

- People love the **unique atmosphere** (the 'vibe', 'grit', 'chaos' and 'spontaneity'). This also includes the diversity of shops, the new park, and the mix of people.
- People also feel that Kensington is a **community where everyone feels welcome**, including artists, musicians, low-income groups and recent immigrants.
- The **history of the market** was seen as a strength.

Weaknesses

-**Tension between pedestrians, cars and cyclists** is viewed as a major issue within the market. Many participants indicated that it can be unsafe to walk in Kensington and many requested to turn the market into a pedestrian-only area. However, many business owners voiced the need for car accessible, so shoppers could park and visit their stores. They also noted that it is necessary to ensure easy access for delivery trucks. Better timing of deliveries could be considered to avoid tensions.

- Other major concerns in the market:
 - Sidewalk accessibility;

- Safety at night, specifically in the laneways;
- Garbage removal; and
- Parking.

What did we hear at the Open House?

There are major concerns about Curbless streets, as it is a big change and might cause too many disruptions and gentrification.

This document is a framework, a frame of reference and it's currently under revision, there are no plans to implement this plan yet. We are working together to arrive to solutions that are appropriate for the market.

- This Masterplan is meant to improve the public spaces of the market. Its parks, sidewalks, gathering spaces, etc.

-Curbeless streets are meant to improve overall the quality, accessibility, mobility and safety for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Gentrification is not the necessary outcome, BUT after hearing your feedback, we think we can meet in the middle. By finding a solution that is not that disruptive but that addresses accessibility. We want a market (and a city) for everyone!

Stay tuned! More conversations about this to come in the near future

-Gentrification is driven by rent prices; even where no improvements have been done. Measurements such as Heritage Designation Recognition and National Historic Site of Canada designation can protect the market and help direct the change in a direction that preserves its character and atmosphere.

-There are concerns about the operation and maintenance of the market

This is not under the scope of the Masterplan, or the BIA. This is a responsibility of "the facilities management division of the city of Toronto, which *"provides comprehensive maintenance, custodial and repair services to ensure City properties are maintained in a safe, clean and functional state to best serve the staff and residents of the City."*

-There are concerns about Hydro undergrounding

There is NO hydro undergrounding being proposed in this Masterplan

-There are concerns about communications

Please see how you can stay connected at the end of this email

What else are we proposing?

-Decluttering

The strategy intent is not to 'sanitize' the Market, as clutter is part of its character, but to remove broken and redundant elements of the streetscape to improve the pedestrian realm

-Implementing an urban tree system to provide trees in strategic location while keeping the patios and stores functioning.

-Improve the public waste bin disposal strategy

-Preserving and enhancing selected non-residential laneways, inner-blocks and private spaces

There are opportunities to further develop some of the non-residential laneways, inner-blocks and private spaces into more permanent extensions of the public realm by improving their:

-Physical condition: particularly existing pavement and lighting

-Programming: Although this already happens spontaneously in Kensington during local festivals and events, increasing activation with occasional art and recreational events

-Incorporation of historical values and heritage attributes as part of the public realm

Combine the physical improvement of the Market's public realm with educational initiatives in the form of art and design interventions that highlight historical places, events, and noteworthy people associated with the Market.

Do you want to know more?

The whole document can be found in this [link](#)

Is this plan going to be implemented?

Masterplans are rarely fully implemented, but they provide a guideline, a vision for the future, a framework of reference to guide future public realm improvements in case capital projects are planned in the area.

-Currently, there are no capital projects planned in the area at the moment or in the near future. In other words, there is no funding available to do any changes.

Then what happens next?

The BIA has invited other associations in the Market to work together to develop a series of low-cost, high-impact small interventions (called Pilot Projects) that foster community buy-in and set the tone (and test) the Masterplan. They will happen in spaces identified on the Masterplan, in enhanced pedestrian areas & in under-utilized areas of the market.

There are plans to do four of these intervention in the next two years. These interventions have been 'outlined' at a 'Masterplan' level in the Masterplan Document (see Appendix C). They need to be developed before they become a tangible reality. We will keep you posted, but we are just starting.

if you have any **other comments or questions, or would like to be added to the mailing list** please email us to:

kensingtonmarketinfo@gmail.com

You can also check **the BIA media outlets** below to stay informed:

<https://kensingtonmarket.to/kensington-market-bia-initiatives/>

www.facebook.com/KensingtonMarketBIA

www.instagram.com/kensington_bia/

