

Kensington Market Public Realm Master Plan

Phase 2 Design Charrette Summary Stakeholder + Public Workshop

On November 29th, the Kensington Market Business Improvement Area (KMBIA) Public Realm Master Plan team ('the team') led two workshops, also known as design charrettes, for the key stakeholders and the general public.

What is a design charrette?

A design charrette is a short, collaborative workshop where a diversity of stakeholders, designers and decision makers come together to explore and share a broad diversity of design ideas.

Approximately 17 people attended the stakeholder session. The majority of participants were members of the KMBIA. There were also residents, some of whom were members of Kensington Market Action Committee (KMAC - the Kensington Market Residents Association) and Friends of Kensington Market.

Approximately 30 people joined for the public engagement workshop. This included residents of Kensington Market, both renters and homeowners, one landowner, business owners as well as interested Torontonians.

At both sessions, the team provided an overview of the study, process and the findings to date, including:

- The existing conditions, strengths and weaknesses, within Kensington Market;
- The draft vision and guiding principles for the public realm master plan; and
- Opportunities within the market, including precedent examples of possible solutions.

Ruth Mora, Gaston Soucy, Sara Udow, Nadia Galati and Dylan Cassidy facilitated the table brainstorming.

Kensington Market Vision

Kensington Market is a place for everyone! Kensington Market is one of the most beloved and celebrated neighbourhoods in Toronto. Throughout Kensington's history, it has always been a place where people from diverse backgrounds come together to live, work and enjoy the unique and vibrant market experience. Over the years, the Market, and the people within it, have adapted to growth and change within our City. Kensington's community has also worked hard to maintain the market as a place for everyone; resisting unwanted changes proposed and developing grassroots and community-based improvements and interventions.

As change continues, it is important that Kensington remains a place where everyone is welcome and included. The Market is finding itself in need of a larger vision to help preserve its defining character and atmosphere.

The KMBIA Public Realm Masterplan aims to provide a community-driven framework that allows for change to happen in a direction that is appropriate for Kensington Market's unique character and circumstances and one that prioritizes equity and inclusion.

Guiding Principles

1. "Keep the Market as a market"
2. A Market for everyone: Maintain a market that is for everyone by designing and programming public spaces to be inclusive and healthy and by improving the quality, accessibility, mobility and safety

3. Engage the community on the design and implementation process to create a sense of ownership and belonging, promote participation and social cohesion
4. Integrate the Arts to improve the quality of the public space, build opportunities for creative expression, experiences and community dialogue
5. Strengthen the relationship between the Market's commercial and residential communities
6. Foster collaborations with organizations inside and outside the Market
7. Activate the Market year-round
8. Celebrate the Market: its cultural heritage, diversity and unique atmosphere

After the presentation, at both workshop sessions, the participants were separated into three tables where they were asked to brainstorm design ideas for the market. Each table was provided with a large aerial map of Kensington Market, copies of the presentation, the Public Realm Master Plan vision and guiding principles, and a toolkit of ideas. The toolkit included both design and programming options, as illustrated below:



Participants were asked to consider the following functions of the public realm:

- 1) Streetscape and Comfort (Design, Furnishing, Safety, Greenery & Accessibility);
- 2) Mobility and Services (Parking, Bikes, Cars, Deliveries/Loading & Garbage);
- 3) Special Conditions (Entrances, Toronto Western Hospital, Buffers & Parks, Inner Blocks, Laneways).

Stakeholder Workshop Design Charrette Summary

The stakeholders marked up the maps with stickers from the toolkit and call out boxes (see Appendix A for Maps).

Key Messages

Streetscape and Comfort

Traffic/Safety

- Participants recommended bump-outs in select locations to add to the public realm, to increase safety and to regulate car traffic. It was suggested that the bump-outs could include greenery, seating and/or micro-vendor opportunities. Specifically, there was consensus that a bump out at Nassau and Augusta (on the southeast corner) would be beneficial to make drivers aware that this is a pedestrian intersection. Eye level signage (indicated 'No Right Turn') was also proposed to make drivers aware that this is a pedestrian intersection. It was indicated that eye-level signage could be mounted on a flex-post or a rigid bollard depending on emergency vehicle requirements. It was also suggested that a challenge of the bump-out design will be to ensure bike safety because cyclists are allowed to make right turns.
- Participants expressed affinity for creating a 'chicane' (curve in street) along Augusta to limit through-traffic and parking.
- Additional suggestions:
 - Augusta should be a designated bike sharrow route. "The City should paint north-facing bike sharrows to indicate to motorists that the roads must be shared with cyclists."
 - Decrease speed limit to 20 km/hr or less.
 - The City should be install signage indicating "Community Safety Zone - Fines Doubled" on as many Kensington area streets as possible.'

Accessible Design – Sidewalks and curbless streets

- Include wider sidewalks where it makes sense.
 - This includes along the west side of Augusta along patio spaces where width is < 1.5m.
 - Kensington and Baldwin was also identified as a corner where a bump-out or wider sidewalk could work (for loading and unloading).
- While wider sidewalks were seen as important for accessibility, there was also discussion that the tight and narrow spaces create a sense of intimacy within the market and there was worry the market would become too sterile. Moments of human interaction were appreciated in the market setting. In general, while participants were in favour of making Kensington market more accessible for people of all ages and abilities, it was noted that it should not be at the expense of intimacy and the close-quarters that makes Kensington market feel like a bustling and active place.
 - "Shouldn't be too wide open."
- There were mixed opinions on curbless streets. Many supported curbless streets because they view the sidewalks and streets in the Market as already integrated. However, there were concerns of gentrification, specifically that the market would only attract tourists (similar to Market Street near St. Lawrence Market).
 - Additional research of curbless streets and woonerfs was requested.

Seating/Gathering Spaces

- Enhance seating and gathering spaces throughout the market. Most stakeholders discussed the need for individual seating, but others identified key areas for benches and/or gathering spaces.
 - Key locations for gathering spaces discussed include:
 - The southwest corner of Augusta and College, along the stairs;
 - St. Andrews Street (the building and lot on the south side of the street);
 - Sonya's Park.
 - Individual seating should be considered in front of storefronts and/or on bump-outs.
 - This will require conversations with the various property owners to see where seating is possible. The Kensington Market Lofts are undergoing a redesign of their public realm. This could be a good opportunity to consider seating (and/or other public realm improvements aligned with the master plan).

Design - Buffer between residential and commercial areas

- Opportunities include:
 - Different lighting between commercial and residential areas.
 - Plantings/greenery between the commercial and residential areas.
 - Signage within Kensington that informs visitors that residents live in the area (because there is still overlap where residents live atop commercial properties).
 - Incorporate education for visitors that this is a residential area and not 'party central'.

Design - Greenery and Public Art

- Create planters along streets (Baldwin and Spadina).
- Integrate public art into design of market furnishings (garbage bins, lighting, seating).

Programming/Activation

- It was expressed that winter programming or a winter market would be beneficial to animating the space
- 'Market days' and art events were also proposed
- Include micro-vendor shopping opportunities throughout the market and year round:
 - Micro-vendor opportunities were discussed in detail. There was consensus that existing vendors/grocers should be permitted to spill-out onto the streets (specifically on Baldwin Avenue) and the City should better support existing grocers/vendors to do so.
 - Some participants felt that bringing outside vendors in could help to spur new visitors in the market. The vendors would be charged a fee to participate. Others thought that the opportunities should be specifically available for existing grocers and vendors within the market.

Mobility and Services

Pedestrian Movement

- Prioritize pedestrians by widening sidewalks where it makes sense, decreasing parking time limits and incorporating traffic calming measures, such as tabletops, bump-outs, speed bumps and/or public art that signify slower speeds (street art).

Garbage

- Consensus that garbage pick-up and storage need to be improved. Many stakeholders identified the infrequency of garbage collection. Different ideas on improvements were discussed:
 - Many BIA members discussed the need to bring back garbage pick-up twice per week.
 - Some suggested opportunities to consider in-ground garbage storage opportunities. (One BIA member was approached by private company Re. in-ground storage).
 - There were other suggestions to consolidate garbage in centralized locations. This would limit unwanted smells, views, etc., but also reduce large vehicle traffic through the market. Participants proposed that garbage could be dropped off by businesses in designated areas such as parking lots. Partnerships with Green P/ Toronto Parking Authority, Waste Management could be pursued to make this happen.
 - “Pressure City Council to get more garbage removal. This is a public health concern.”
- There was a comment that additional litter receptacles in general are needed.

Deliveries

- Schedule deliveries before noon as often as possible. Many business owners propose that deliveries should be scheduled before noon so that trucks do not take up valuable parking and pedestrian spaces.
- One suggestion is to paint areas on the street that say ‘delivery vehicles only’ (or paint the curbs), deterring shoppers and residents from parking there.

Parking

- Limit parking within the market (to 15 to 30 minutes) on Baldwin. This would allow for visitors to run in and shop. Visitors who want to stay can park in the Green P lots.
 - However, participants pointed out that any reduction of parking in the commercial zone negatively affects the surrounding residential streets that rely on street permit parking. Many residents do not have on-site parking at their homes and parking meters have been rejected on residential streets.
- Add bicycle parking throughout the market. Some stakeholders recommended including the Green P lot as a key location for bike parking. Others discussed the need for more bike parking dispersed through the market (not clustered in one location).

Special Conditions

Laneways

- Create linkages between select alleys and laneways and with the main streets of the market. This can be done by both creating pedestrian connections (i.e. safe passageways), more public spaces, platforms for public artists (i.e. graffiti art tours could be explored), improved lighting and public art within these spaces. However, there are concerns that attracting the public to the laneways will result in more noise. Specific locations mentioned for pilot opportunities include:
 - Fitzroy Lane and Kensington Place were mentioned as great laneways for pilot projects. Specifically, string lighting in laneways was discussed as a cheap and easy option.
 - Connections to Sonya's Park through the laneway were also discussed to improve visibility, create more access points and make the park more inviting. One stakeholder mentioned that the laneway used to be more accessible but was closed off due to unwanted behaviour.

Entrances

- Mixed opinions on whether entrances should be marked by gateways. Many stakeholders like the idea of marking the entrances with public art, greenery or lighting features. Others were concerned that the entrances shouldn't be too flashy to keep Kensington's charm.
- Other suggestions included the need to slow down traffic at entrances and create smoother transitions into the market.

The Hospital

- The hospital site could be better integrated into the character of the market. The Bathurst and Nassau intersection could serve as a minor gateway into the market. It was also proposed that the hospital smokestack could serve as a wayfinding marker for the Market. One participant suggested that this intersection should not be considered a gateway as it is busy and acts as a connection to residential areas on Nassau, Lippincott and Leonard.

Other

- Wi-Fi in parks (and in the market generally) can help with wayfinding for visitors/tourists.
- Heritage vs. New Development
 - Any heritage treatments proposed should not contribute to visual clutter on the streetscape. Participants were receptive to the ideas of bronze inlays, paint on streets, light installations
 - New development should consider the character of the market when designing setbacks, streetscapes, façade treatments, and POPS (privately owned public spaces)

Specific locations for interventions discussed



Figure 1: St Andrews lot and vacant building as gathering space



Figure 2: Augusta-College stairs as seating area

Augusta Ave

- Add bump-out at Nassau and Augusta
- Include bike lane contraflow down Augusta
- Include bike parking along Augusta



Figure 3: Sonya's Park - Potential to include allotment gardens and connect to laneways nearby



Figure 4: Nassau and Leonard - The hospital site



Figure 5: Fitzroy Laneway – lighting and other animations

Public Workshop Summary

The public marked up the maps with stickers from the toolkit and call out boxes (see Appendix A for Maps).

Key Messages

Overall

- “Kensington is attractive because it is topsy turvy” – The public supports the existing ‘organized chaos’.
- There is increasing frustration and tension between market (commercial) uses and residential uses.
 - “Focus on making Kensington a better place to live and steer away from branding issue as visitors to the Market already come!”
- Noise is a concern. There is a growing seniors population living in the market
 - “When I tell people I live in Kensington they think I live in a party a neighbourhood.”
 - “The more bars the more people will come to drink late at night.”
 - “Not very much food/restaurant options past 7pm.”
- Balance space for people and space for parking.

Streetscape and Comfort

Seating

- Design seating for longer use.
- Public furniture should be comfortable.

Sidewalks/Accessibility (especially along Augusta)

- Consensus that sidewalks in the market need to be widened to accommodate all users.
- Increase accessibility of sidewalks, especially at Bellevue Park (the South-west intersection - all corners).
- Widen sidewalks - “I need to walk on the road when it is laundry day because there is no room on the sidewalk.”
- A Frames on Augusta are a problem.

Curbless Streets

- Add curbless streets because the market already acts like it has curbless streets. Sidewalks and roads are basically integrated.

Public Art

- Add graffiti and other public art throughout the market.
- Integrate art in furniture design, garbage bins etc.
 - Art should be organic and not only designed to be functional – i.e. benches.
- Create spaces for regular folks to be artistic.

Programming

- Include micro-vendor opportunities (i.e., Scadding Court). Could be located in Bellevue Park or in Parking Lot (or other locations).
 - In order to do this properly, participants suggest taking the lead from grocers to find out what they want. (i.e. locations, who should be permitted to sell, etc.)
- Incorporate more community events:
 - “Paint Kensington” event - where the public can paint the streets and blank walls with big areas of bright colours.
 - Shipping container market in empty parking lots.
 - Music in Bellevue Park (such as a piano).
 - Event space on St Andrews Street in empty bldg and empty lot.

Seating

- Increase seating in the area - specifically, including long benches (for street-involved people to sleep on if needed).
- Co-locate seating and vegetation.
- Include sheltered seating area in Sonya’s Park.

Lighting

- No general consensus – Some participants felt lighting is appropriate in the Market, while others felt that lighting should be increased for safety.

Safety

Facilitator Question to Group: Where do you feel least safe?

- “All along Augusta because of speeding northbound car traffic.”
- Kensington Ave and Baldwin Ave.
- Denison Sq. and Augusta
- Leonard and Wales – dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists - need visible crosswalk.
- Nassau along the hospital is an uncomfortable/unwelcoming pedestrian environment/not much going.

“St. Andrew’s Street open lot is a dead space = opportunity for improvement!”

Mobility and Services

Parking

- No general consensus concerning parking. Suggestions include:
 - Eliminate parking along Augusta.
 - Reduce parking, don’t eliminate.
 - Limit hours of parking (1-2 hours).
 - Maintain parking in the Bellevue Parking Lot (either above or underground). Could expand permit parking for residents.
 - Ensure the Green P lot is saved for Kensington market visitors/customers (not by hospital staff and visitors). This could be done by raising the cost of parking (something to consider).

- Bike parking:
 - Currently lots of abandoned bikes – requires residents to report abandoned bikes. This leads to more maintenance required and less bike parking spaces

Pedestrian Access

- Some identified that Baldwin and/or Augusta should be pedestrian-only with deliveries should only allowed between 6-10am.
- Midblock connections are needed.
- Mixed views on traffic calming - some say not needed because cars already are slow in the market while others say traffic calming is required on Nassau, especially with Freshco and condos opening in the area.

Cycling

- “Prioritize cyclists, not cars.”
- Contraflow bike lanes are needed on Augusta and Baldwin
 - “People will continue to ride regardless of the rules.”
- Include bike parking “everywhere.”

Garbage

- No general consensus concerning garbage (centralized location vs. individual pickup).
 - Centralized location for commercial areas (such as in a parking lot – i.e., Mirvish Village, Rome).
 - Consider different pickup for residential areas.

Special Conditions

Laneways

- Animate laneway mid-block connections.
- Make laneways more accessible to improve safety.

Heritage

- Incorporate history (ex. Murrum).
 - See how Pittsburgh has incorporated history into public realm.

Other suggestions

- Implement limits to the number of restaurants and bars.
- Develop safe injection sites in the market.
- Create a ‘rent a buggy’ program where customers could rent (or borrow) small carts or buggies to roll their groceries from shop to shop.

Site- Specific Locations (see maps in Appendix A)

- Tabletop at Baldwin and Spadina (traffic calming).
- Noise buffers on Baldwin (Baldwin and Kensington).
- Add bump outs with vegetation and potentially seating along Augusta, Baldwin and Kensington.
- Dundas and Leonard - Opportunity for wayfinding in front of hospital (use art).

APPENDIX A: Stakeholder + Public Mapping

Stakeholder Inputs



Figure 6:

Stakeholder inputs at Table 1



Figure 7: Stakeholder inputs at Table 2

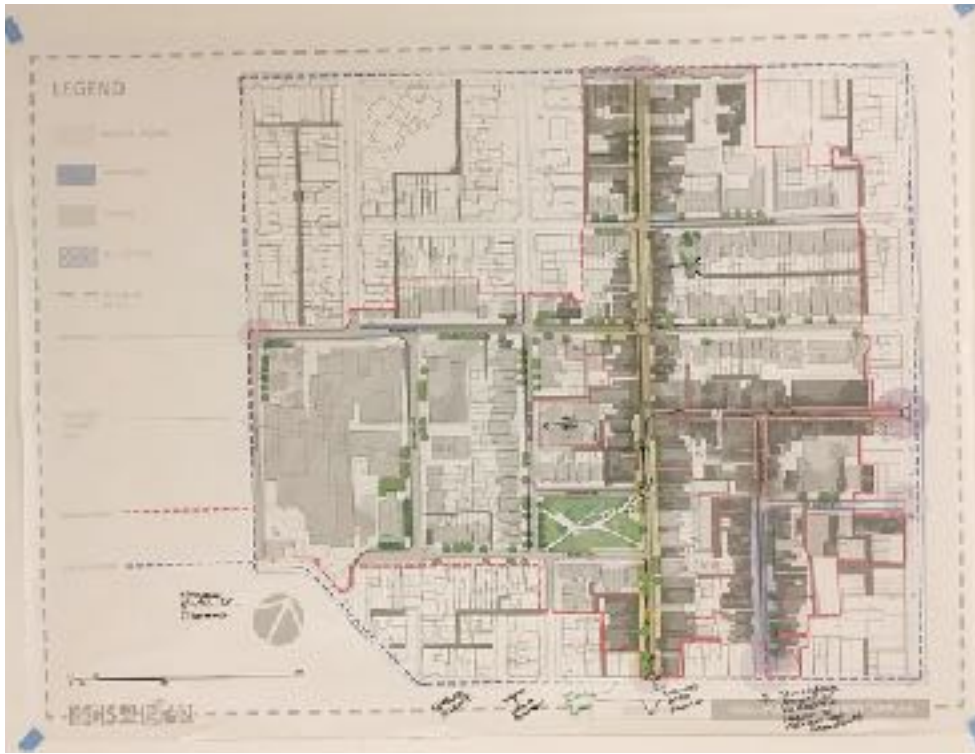


Figure 8:
Stakeholder inputs at

Table 3

Public Input

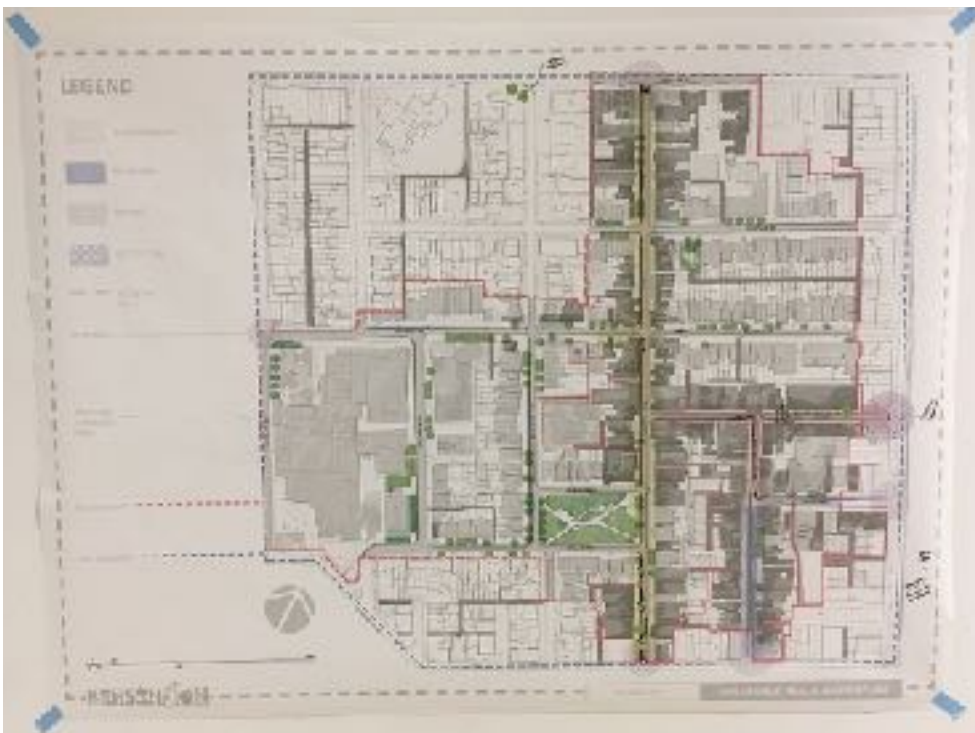
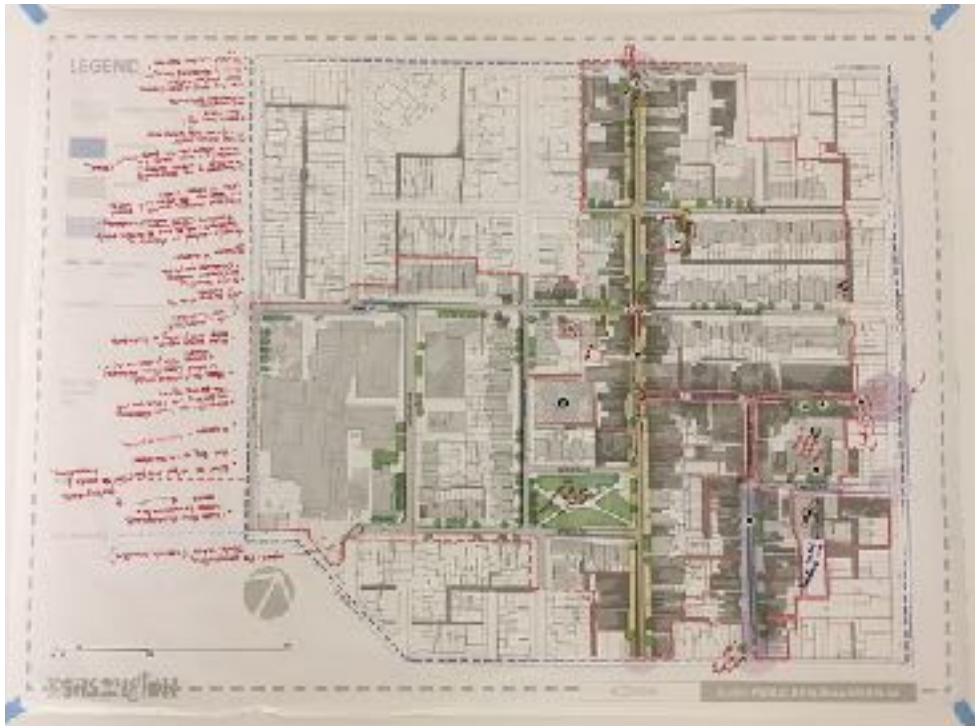


Figure 9: Public inputs at Table 1



inputs at Table 2

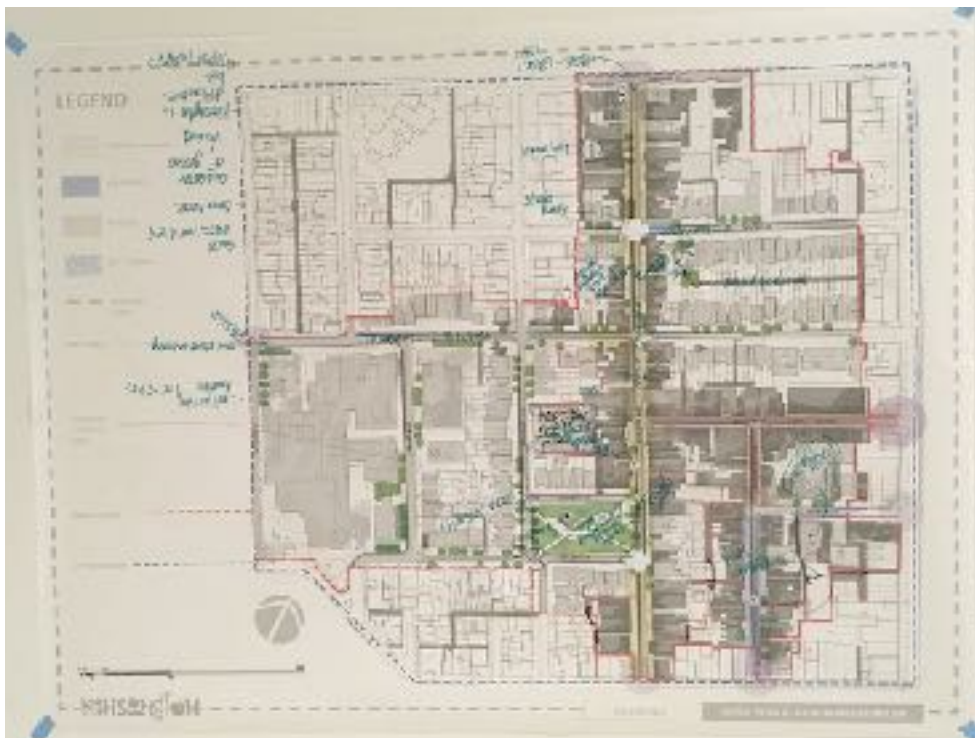


Figure 10: Public

Figure 11: Public inputs at Table 3