



**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
MEMORANDUM**

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TO: CITY BUILDING COMMITTEE

FROM: W. LOEVENMARK, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PLANNER, EXT. 4743

NOTED: M. BANFIELD, RPP, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P.ENG, PMP, DIRECTOR OF
INFRASTRUCTURE/GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND
GROWTH MANAGEMENT (ACTING)**

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: HERITAGE PARK MASTER PLAN (WARD 2/AII)

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2021

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Committee with an update regarding the Heritage Park Master Plan project and to seek feedback on the draft Master Plan options prior to the continuation of the public consultation process. Additional project details can be found at [buildingbarrie.ca/Heritage Park Master Plan](http://buildingbarrie.ca/Heritage_Park_Master_Plan).

Background & Vision

Heritage Park originated as an infill project in the 1980s against the former rail bed encircling Kempenfelt Bay. Since its original construction, complete with ornamental landscaping, buildings, and water features, no major physical upgrades or master planning have occurred. To begin to address the long-overdue revitalization of this key waterfront park, Parks Planning retained consulting firm SHIFT Landscape Architecture to undertake the development of a new Master Plan for Heritage Park. The Master Plan Report will include a Master Plan design, order of magnitude cost estimate, recommendations and an implementation plan. The vision for Heritage Park is to revitalize this key public space as a regenerative urban oasis that:

- responds to current, and future social, cultural, and environmental needs and trends;
- provides rich, four-season experiences and opportunities to re-connect land and people, people to people;
- complements Meridian Place to further attract residents and visitors to the waterfront and city centre for longer and repeat visits; and,
- addresses the aging and deteriorating infrastructure.

The current *Waterfront + Marina Strategic Plan* (WMSP) recommends that Heritage Park be upgraded to ensure its long-term appeal as a major waterfront destination and demonstrate the park's importance as an interface between the downtown and the waterfront. The draft Master Plan has incorporated many of the WMSP's recommendations and is also aligned with the strategic direction of the update to the *Waterfront + Marina Strategic Plan* commencing this fall.

The location of the Heart Barrie landmark sign was council-endorsed based on the recommendation of staff report ACC002-21 (Motion 21-G-166). The first round of Public Information Centres for the Heritage Park Master Plan took place before Council approved the recommendation. Through the master plan work for this project, the consultant has suggested an alternate location for the Heart Barrie landmark sign that considers the long-term vision of Heritage Park.

Project Objectives

Updating this park's Master Plan presented an opportunity to create an iconic conceptual framework that ties together flexible programming, contemporary landscape forms grounded in native and regional materials, social and ecological supports, and facilitating more connections to water. The process may include recommendations for park infrastructure managed by other City departments but will not include conceptual designs for civil infrastructure and facilities.

Specific objectives of the project include:

1. Enhancing social cohesion and equity;
2. Creating spaces that promote multigenerational interaction and all-ages programming;
3. Supporting pedestrian connections and active modes of transportation;
4. Incorporating universal and inclusive design principles to ensure accessibility and barrier-free access;
5. Connecting waterfront open spaces and natural heritage systems;
6. Design for four-season passive and events-based programming incorporating "Winter City" design principles;
7. Designing restorative landscapes that assist to support urban wellness and community health;
8. Incorporating resilient and ecologically driven design;
9. Creating direct water access to enhance the visitor experience and park programming;
10. Provide opportunities for natural heritage education and interpretation;
11. Meet the needs of an increasing downtown population, evolving downtown and region; and
12. Revitalizing the park infrastructure including the electrical, water, and stormwater servicing.

Conceptual Development

The conceptual development began through an internal stakeholder consultation process involving numerous technical and end-user City work groups from Infrastructure, Operations, Economic & Creative Development, Recreation & Culture, and Corporate Facilities. Additional consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority has been undertaken.

The key takeaways from the consultation process identified a focus on:

1. **Servicing:** The electrical and water services that are relied upon for community programming and events is past the end of its useful life. The public washroom and water feature equipment and infrastructure is maintenance-heavy and ill-suited for contemporary needs. There is an opportunity now to identify an appropriate level of service that achieves event, facility and maintenance performance standards which ensure a safe and enjoyable user experience.
2. **Mobility:** Mobility and accessibility to and within the park needs to be addressed. This includes active transportation, accessible parking spaces (location and amount), ease of use of the paths and bridges for every age and ability of visitor. Also desired is accommodating safe ways to view Kempenfelt Bay and enjoy the water-based amenities. Launch areas for personal watercraft (canoe, kayak, stand-up paddleboards) would increase the possibility of arriving to the park by means other than a car.
3. **Flexible Spaces:** Heritage Park is the site of many events and a destination for passive use year-round. There is a desire to better equip the park for community events with the design of flexible-use spaces and event zones. Passive and spontaneous use (walking, cycling, eating, reflecting, gathering) needs to be accounted for as well with the inclusion of diverse spaces with a range of options for seating and gathering. There are particular opportunities with the water feature and at the water's edge to create spaces that maximize functionality and accommodate the greatest number of visitors across all age ranges.

The issues and recommendations obtained from the above consultation process were considered in association with the project vision and objectives to develop three conceptual master plans. The three plans illustrate graduated levels of intervention, quality and preliminary estimated level of re-investment:

- Concept 1 - Refresh: Low Intervention (\$4M - \$5M)
- Concept 2 - Rehab: Medium Intervention (\$6M – \$7M)
- Concept 3 - Rethink: Highest Intervention (\$8M - \$8.5M)

All three conceptual plans include a reconsideration of the circulation network to better accommodate programming and accessibility and draw on the regional landscape for design inspiration to enhance the idea of “place”. Please refer to Appendix “A” and “Appendix B” to review the three conceptual master plans and for a comparison chart of the key design elements included in each.

Community Engagement

As per the memorandum to Council dated May 17, 2021, two virtual Public Information Centres (PICs) were held on May 27, 2021, to obtain feedback on the three conceptual master plans for Heritage Park. The PIC presentation is available online at buildingbarrie.ca. Public and stakeholder comments were collected during the live presentation via email and an online survey hosted on buildingbarrie.ca. Please refer to Appendix “C” for an overview of the feedback received during the consultation period.

More specifically, the results of the survey ranked following items in order of importance as shown below in Figure 2, below:

Survey Item Ranking (226 Responses)	Very Important/ Important	Not Important
1) Environmental health of shoreline	206	3
2) Trees and gardens	205	1
3) Accessible washrooms	188	6
4) Ability to adapt to climate change	186	6
5) Shade	186	5
6) Ability to get close to Kempenfelt Bay	176	11
7) Water features for water play	153	20
8) Quieter areas	144	17
9) Areas for group gathering	140	28
10) Open space for cultural events	128	26
11) Recognition of indigenous histories	119	29
12) Public art	92	52
Other requests: Watercraft launch, winter picnic areas, food opportunities and noise pollution to be considered.		
How often do you visit Heritage Park?	Once a week: 85 Once a month: 58 Few times a year: 41 Daily: 37	
How do you get to the park?	Car: 45 Active/ Public Transportation: 167	

Figure 2: Survey Results Ranked According to Community Perceived Importance

The key messages received from the PICs feedback include:

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- **Water:** Increased and better access to the water by creating safe and easy ways to view and physically access Kempenfelt Bay and a waterplay feature along with integrating water-based active transportation modes (e.g., SUPs).
 - **Environment:** The environmental health of the park is a common theme, indicating it is a critical aspect of any future design direction, including the ecological health of the waterfront, the introduction of pollinator gardens, and climate change adaptation strategies.
 - **Accessibility:** A safe and universally accessible park was important to many attendees. Paths, lookouts, seating and special site features should prioritize ease of use through universal design standards and adherence to the Design of Public Spaces Standard O. Reg413/12.

Draft Master Plan

As result of the feedback received from the first PIC, a draft final Master Plan has been created which reflects the current and future priorities indicated by community members and stakeholders, meets the needs of a growing and more diverse community, and celebrates the prominence of this waterfront park locally and regionally. Please refer to the PowerPoint presentation that highlights the key elements of the draft Master Plan provided concurrently with this report.

Next Steps

Following the consultation with the City Building Committee, staff will review and consider any revisions to this draft of the Master Plan prior to the second community engagement event. The next PIC is scheduled for Thursday, November 25, 2021. The development of a Communication Plan is in process that will include an update to buildingbarrie.ca and a memorandum to Council. It is anticipated that the Zoom format will be used for the PIC, subject to COVID-19 Pandemic requirements.

The project team will analyze the results of the second PIC feedback for adjustments to the draft Master Plan and prepare a staff report to Council that is projected for early 2022. The staff report will include a Master Plan Report, final recommended design, cost estimate and implementation schedule.

APPENDIX "A"

Three Preliminary Concepts, Available At buildingbarrie.ca

Refresh



Refresh focuses on responding to the minimum immediate facility needs to maintain public use and safety (water spray feature), while adding minor enhancements through a new shade structure and two new wood deck overlooks.

Rehab



Rehab creates a new look for the park by augmenting entrances and pathways, remodeling the park topography into mounds and seat walls. Water connection improves through boardwalks, deck overlooks and pond access. Small scale entrepreneur space is explored.

Rethink



Rethink creates a future-forward redesign of the park to bring it to its full potential to provide quality of life for everyone under intensified use. People connect to the park through built form that maximizes sensory experience with extensive water access, four-season gardens, social stimulation and quiet moments spaces.

APPENDIX “B”

Heritage Park Concept Development Comparison

Feature	Element	Final	Refresh (Low)	Rehab (Medium)	Rethink (Highest)
Park Entryways	Enlarging Entryways	x	x	x	x
	Entry responds to Meridian form	x			x
	Entry seating	x		x	x
	Entry water feature	x			x
	Entry Trellis shade feature	x			x
	Potential “I Heart Barrie” Sign	x			
	Street at Simcoe redone, possibly no curb	x			x
Paths	Circulation (paths and bridges)	x	x	x	x
	Boardwalk			x	
	Covered Bike Parking, extra bike parking	x			
	Event Allée - more space for market stalls	x		x	x
	Lighting features, light as art focal points	x		x	x
Exercise Stations	Exercise station relocated		x	x	x
Event Space	Preserved	x	x	x	x
Pond	Enhanced pond walkway & seating area	x		x	x
	New pond deck	x			
	New pond cantilevered platform	x			x
	Pathway all around pond	x			x
	Stream viewing deck	x	x	x	x
	Stream step stone bridge				x
	Remove pond island	x	x	x	x
Water Feature	Redesigned Small Water Feature/Play	x	x		
	Redesigned Large Water Feature/Play			x	x
	Refinish cladding on buildings	x		x	x
Planting	New planting Ideas – natural, seasonal	x	x	x	x
	Increased landscape planting areas	x		x	x
	Riparian (water edge planting)	x			x
	Infiltration planting beds	x			
Seating	New mounds or seat walls	x		x	
	Sea Serpent seating enhancement	x			x
	Fireplaces	x	x	x	x
	New Shade Structure	x	x	x	x
	New Gathering Area	x			x
	Boulder focal points	x		x	x
Market Lane	More space for market stalls			x	x
Art Location	In new Gathering Area Plaza	x			
Kempfenfelt Bay	Physical access to Kempfenfelt Bay			x	x
	Personal Watercraft Launches & storage	x			
	Wood Decks		x	x	x
	Cantilevered wood decks	x		x	x
	Spit decking			x	x
	Spit seating	x			x

APPENDIX “C”

Heritage Park Public Information Centre #1 Summary of Results

Please note a fuller version of this Summary is available on buildingbarrie.ca/Heritage Park.

Introduction

SHIFT Landscape Architecture, in coordination with the City of Barrie, hosted a public information centre (PIC) on May 27, 2021, to provide information on the proposed design concepts for Heritage Park.

This was the first opportunity for the general public to review the direction of the design concepts and master plan concerns, including the project objectives, site background, precedents, and three design concepts.

The three design concepts were presented in a graduated approach, meaning there were three levels of intervention and investment, with consistent basic ideas across all three. The common threads introduced to all concepts were:

- A reconsideration of the circulation network (paths) to better accommodate programming and accessibility,
- Drawing on the regional landscape for design inspiration; and
- To make more legible the idea of “place.”

The three concepts, from lowest level of investment to highest, were the “**Refresh**” concept, the “**Rehab**” concept, and the “**Rethink**” concept.

PIC Overview			
Session 1	Session 2	Website	Responses
2-4pm	6-8pm	633 visits	226 surveys
33 viewers*	27 viewers*	197 downloads	7 emails
10 comments	11 comments		21 PIC comments

*Unique viewers by registered email. There could have been more than 1 viewer at home for each unique viewer email.

Survey Design

Respondent demographic and visiting information

Of the 226 responses, 219 respondents reside in Barrie, 1 respondent owned property in Barrie, and the remainder (6) were not residents of Barrie. Most respondents reside in wards located adjacent to Heritage Park and Kempenfelt Bay; however, all wards were represented, showing the level of interest in the greater community in the master planning process. The data generally shows the ages of users is varied and design decisions related to the master plan need to account for the large range, in terms of accessibility, safety, and function.

Respondents By Ward				Age		How do you get to the park?		How often do you visit the park?	
1	35	6	10	14-25	11	Car	145	Daily	37
2	53	7	14	26-44	99	Walk	118	1x/week	85

3	10	8	35	45-65	79	Bike	45	1x/month	58
4	13	9	15	66+	35	Bus	5	Yearly	51
5	12	10	19						

The high use of active transportation to visit the park indicates the master plan and design concept need to integrate environmentally conscious ways to support existing and new ways people access the park. The high number of users that arrive by car indicate the need to continue to support alternative ways to get to the park, while accommodating the existing parking, keeping in mind the requirement for parking lots for events. There should be options included in the master plan and design concept for better use of parking spaces to mitigate heat island and stormwater runoff factors.

Survey Results

Overview of uses, needs, and activities

PIC participants were not asked outright which concept they preferred; however, the graduated concepts provided some context to engage participants on the value they apply to the activities (and the supporting elements) shown in the concepts. Please find below a summary of the ranked responses to the survey questions based on need/activity topics, with email and PIC comments included, as appropriate, to the 224 survey responses received online and associated recommendations. More detailed analysis of the results is available online at buildingbarrie.ca/Heritage Park.

Survey Item Ranking (226 Responses)		Very Important/ Important	Not Important	Comment
1	Environmental health of shoreline	206	3	The master plan and design concept should include ways to improve the Kempenfelt Bay shoreline while considering visitor access, accessibility, safety, and ecological function, while continuing to consult and partner with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA).
2	Trees and gardens	205	1	The master plan and design concept development process should continue to integrate trees and gardens within the overall park design, while considering mental restoration, quiet, shade, pollinators, and native gardens. The challenge will be to find a balance between views to the bay and spaces for events with the desire for trees and gardens.
3	Accessible washrooms	188	6	The master plan document should include basic guidelines for a washroom renovation, highlighting the need for accessibility, safety, and functional needs, related to AODA standards at a minimum.
	Shade	186	5	The master plan and design concept should improve and make clear the need for shade.



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4	Ability to adapt to climate change	186	6	The master plan and concept design should clearly highlight and state the responses to this topic and make legible the related improvements, also in consultation with the LSRCA .
5	Ability to get close to Kempenfelt Bay	176	11	The existing park design does not safely accommodate reaching (walking, rolling, etc.) the shoreline and truly engaging with the water's edge. The master plan and design concept should continue to explore ways to fulfill the desire for this activity.
6	Water features for water play	153	20	The master plan and concept design should make it clear the importance of water play, while considering accessibility, safety, and integration into the overall objectives of the park master plan, i.e.: mental restoration, introducing nature and art in an urban environment.
7	Quieter areas	144	17	As Barrie grows in population, considering downtown specifically, Heritage Park will continue to be a busy, urban place. The master plan and design concept should clearly identify the need and location of areas that support this activity in a safe and accessible manner.
8	Areas for group gathering	140	28	The master plan should be clear in introducing areas for eating and passive group gathering with tables.
9	Open space for cultural events	128	26	The master plan and design concept should clearly designate well-supported event spaces and find ways to balance these spaces against the need for shade and quiet areas, while communicating the need for updated water and electrical services for events.
10	Recognition of indigenous histories	119	29	Of societal importance is reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The master planning process should identify opportunities related to this topic. Staff have reached out on several occasions to but have not connected yet with the Barrie Native Friendship Centre but will continue to invite comment and discussion.
11	Public art	92	52	The master plan and concept design should include a guideline for partnering with arts organizations for the display of temporary and permanent sculpture at Heritage Park. Sculptural art has already been demonstrated as a positive addition to the public realm in Barrie and Heritage Park and its use as a place-maker should be considered
Other requests: Watercraft launch, winter picnic areas, food opportunities and noise pollution to be considered.				



Conclusion

The 3 concepts (Refresh, Rehab, Rethink) shared common themes but different levels of investment and intervention, which was evident in some of the layout and elements presented. The graduated concepts provided a framework for engaging participants in discussion on the value they apply to the existing and potential activities (and the supporting elements) shown in the presentation material.

The survey, along with emailed comments and PIC discussion, provided a lot of confirmation of the approach, so far, furthermore, it provided elements to think about going forward.

The feedback provided from the community suggests that Heritage Park is a much-loved space in the City of Barrie. There appears to be a desire from most to strive for a thoughtfully designed, high quality park which will fulfill the needs of the city across a wide range of programmatic and experiential opportunities.

Going forward, a master plan will be developed that considers these desires in tandem with future capital expenditures that are deemed realistic to City staff, based on comparables both within the City of Barrie as well as with projects in Cities of a similar size. This information will allow the City to make sound decisions from both a park planning point of view and an economic one.