

Utilizing Physical and Digital Wayfinding to Enhance Public Space

Wellington West Business Improvement Area

Ottawa, Ontario

Terms of Reference for McGill University School of Urban Planning

Studio III Fall 2013

Client:

Project Steering Committee

led by the Wellington West Business Improvement Area (WWBIA)

August 19, 2013

Hosted by:

Creative Neighbourhoods



1. Planning Study Objectives

The study is intended to support the twin goals of strengthening the Wellington West Business Improvement Area (WWBIA) as the premier retail, food, cultural, and entertainment destination in Ottawa's west end and contributing to the liveability of the communities of Hintonburg and Wellington Village, which are located within the BIA.

Drawing inspiration from the School of Urban Planning Studio III reports submitted to the WWBIA in December of 2012 ([A Public Spaces Enhancement Plan](#)), and the [Streetscape and Façade Design Guidelines for Wellington Street West](#) prepared in 2007, and building from the experiences of other commercial districts in Canada and abroad, the study will perform in-depth analysis of the potential for implementing a wayfinding system. This system will incorporate Digital Tools with Physical Infrastructure, as well as the provision of a free Wifi corridor along key segments of the BIA corridor and provides the BIA with a powerful set of user metrics through a simple to use Database.

The study will entail an in-depth analysis of the technological requirements needed to launch the digital components of the preferred solution, an urban design plan for 3-5 public spaces, and a financial analysis including costing and revenue options.

2. The Study Area: The Wellington West Business Improvement Area

The Wellington Street West Business Improvement Area is located west of the downtown core and is bounded to the South by the highway 417, to the north by Ottawa Transitway, to the east by a light-rail train right of way and to the west by Island Park Avenue. (See Annex A).

The BIA is comprised of three distinct commercial precincts: Wellington Village, Parkdale Market, and Historic Hintonburg - of which Hintonburg and Wellington Village are recognized neighbourhoods within the City of Ottawa. These three precincts along the Wellington Street West corridor developed at different points in time: The eastern portion - Historic Hintonburg - emerged in the late-1800's as a village core, while the western portion in Wellington Village was established between 1920 and 1950. The Parkdale Market area was developed as an industrial area in the 1920s, with office, commercial and residential redevelopment occurring more recently. The main commercial street, Wellington Street West, runs the entire length of the area for nearly two kilometres from east to west.

The residential neighbourhoods within the BIA are currently experiencing rapid intensification. The BIA is becoming one of the fastest growing urban communities in the country and the construction of condo buildings is already changing the overall character of the area. This will directly impact foot traffic, vehicular congestion, and vibrancy. As the area

continues to evolve, mature, and gentrify, and as residential intensification of the area increases, the pressure on existing public places is growing and the demands for the use of public space are changing.

Following a massive road revitalization project (\$25 million invested over 5 years), the WWBIA found that pedestrian and cycling traffic were not as high as they could be. On the other hand, the BIA corridor has the highest modal share of cycling (+12%) in the entire city and is one of the most pedestrian-friendly environments (+46%) with wide sidewalks, 255 new bike racks and a predominantly mixed-used environment. In response to this problematique, the McGill School of Urban Planning Studio III group from 2012 submitted a Public Spaces Enhancement Plan (PSEP) to the WWBIA in December of 2012. The PSEP proposed a number of solutions to help the BIA increase the level of traffic throughout the corridor, and the BIA responded favourably to the idea of a comprehensive wayfinding system.

The purpose of this wayfinding programme is to integrate digital wayfinding tools (e.g. online mapping, smartphone apps and free wifi) with traditional physical wayfinding devices (e.g. gateways, signage, and interactive touch-screen business directories) and general placemaking devices (e.g. benches, landscaping, and lighting) to improve the sense of orientation and comfort that customers, residents, and visitors feel when traveling the BIA corridor. In so doing, the BIA will make it more likely that customers will linger longer and enjoy the public and private amenities that are available.

3. Relevant Plans and Documents

Over the past six years, the City of Ottawa has supported a series of planning studies and projects aimed at supporting the continued redevelopment of the Wellington Street West corridor and surrounding neighbourhoods. The previously mentioned study, the Public Spaces Enhancement Plan, is directly relevant to the mandate of this project.

A *Community Design Plan (CDP)* was completed in 2011 to guide the urban design and land use planning of the Wellington Street West corridor. The Wellington Street West CDP sets out a vision to guide both the future development of private lands and any undertakings of public works.¹ The City also supported the preparation of the Hintonburg and Mechanicsville Neighbourhood Plan (2010)².

Concurrent with the plan preparation process, the City undertook a major road reconstruction and streetscaping of the Wellington Street West corridor. Construction responded to the corridor's designation as an Arterial Road, Traditional Mainstreet, Transit Priority Corridor, and

¹ <http://ottawa.ca/cs/groups/content/@webottawa/documents/pdf/mdaw/mtm5/~edisp/cap140039.pdf>

² <http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/occ/2010/02-24/pec/10%20-%20ACS2010-ICS-CSS-0002%20DOCUMENT%20%20%20EN%20Vars.pdf>

Truck Route, and accounted for the community's vision to promote a pedestrian, and transit friendly environment, including a high quality streetscape with as many trees as possible, wider sidewalks, safer crosswalks, and opportunities for public art. Other projects taking place within the City of Ottawa, and which may be of interest to the group, include the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario's Mid-Town bridges project, as well as the City of Ottawa's Light Right Transit project, which is now underway.

The Federal government recently launched a consultation process for a 25-year plan to intensify the Tunney's Pasture federal government complex, located just North to the WWBIA. As a first step, Public Works & Government Services Canada hosted a community open house in September, 2012.

Several of the Creative Neighbourhoods-hosted studies address public space in the area³:

- Parkdale Avenue Corridor Plan, Fall 2009
- Urban Greenspace Reclamation Concept, Fall 2008
- Streetscape and Façade Design Guidelines for Wellington Street West, Fall 2007
- City of Ottawa Neighbourhood Planning Initiative, 2007

Other studies include:

- Carling-Bayview Light Rail Transit Corridor Community Design Plan (http://ottawa.ca/en/city_hall/planningprojectsreports/public_consult/carling_bayview/index.html)
- A plan for an east-west light rail corridor (<http://www.ottawalightrail.ca/en/project-plan>)
- A Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage & Culture in Ottawa, 2013-2018 (<http://www.artsoe.ca/uploads/advocacy/renewed%20ahc%20plan%20e.pdf>).

Possible precedent studies that you may consider:

- Toronto 360 Wayfinding Strategy (<http://www.toronto.ca/transportation/walking/wayfinding.htm>)
- Toronto Entertainment District Master Plan (<http://torontoed.com/files/TED-MasterPlan-Amended-2013.pdf>)

The Steering Committee may also provide you with additional relevant documentation at the time of project launch.

4. Studio III Activities

The following activities will take place between September and December 2013

1. Review relevant planning documents

³ Reports are posted at <http://acaciaconsulting.ca/creativeneighbourhoods/projects.htm>

2. Perform in-depth analysis of existing conditions at 3-5 pre-selected street-level sidewalk oriented sites within the WWBIA and perform a detailed redesign to incorporate digital wayfinding infrastructure into enhanced public space.
3. Review examples of innovative wayfinding solutions that incorporate digital and physical solutions in other comparable commercial areas in order to establish precedents.
4. If time permits conduct one design charrette for one publicly-accessible space or area involving the community & BIA members: redesign an existing space with a focus on wayfinding and placemaking.
5. Contact service providers in the private or community sectors who can implement a comprehensive wayfinding programme that incorporates digital and physical tools.
6. Define the physical and technological infrastructure required to implement the programme.
7. Define the costs and potential sources of funding (ie: sponsorship, bonus zoning (Section 37), third-party acquisition of user metrics).
8. Prepare Draft Plan, including a budget outlining the cost of design, creation/manufacture, installation, and maintenance of the various wayfinding and placemaking elements, and potential sources of revenue. The latter may include a draft cost-shared program led by the BIA to support animation of public space.
9. Present draft Plan to Project Steering Committee, and Local Stakeholders.
10. Submit Revised Wayfinding Plan to the Project Steering Committee.

5. Study Deliverables

The study team will deliver the following products by the conclusion of the study:

1. Presentation of draft and final Wayfinding Plan, including a budget outlining costs and potential revenue sources and description of a potential BIA-led cost-sharing program.
2. Draft and Final report of the Wayfinding Plan, including
 - Physical & digital infrastructure requirements
 - Costing and revenue options with a preferred model
 - Detailed redesign of 3-5 sites demonstrating integration of physical & digital wayfinding tools
3. Report of one Design Charrette

All deliverables are to be placed on-line with strong reliance on photos and other visual tools.

6. Study Budget

The client will reimburse out-of-pocket expenses, up to \$1000, associated with the delivery of the assignment. It is anticipated that these expenses will include travel between Montreal and Ottawa by car (up to 3 visits) as well as printing costs. Any other non-incidentals costs must be submitted to the client for approval in advance.

7. The Client

The study team will work under the guidance of a Project Steering Committee, led by the Wellington West Business Improvement Area. The community associations for Hintonburg and Wellington Village will be invited to join the project Steering Committee early in the process. The Kitchissippi Ward City Councillor's Office will also be engaged in the consultation process.

Creative Neighbourhoods will serve as the project host and provide planning supervision and direction.



The Wellington West Business Improvement Area was formed in 2008 to promote the Wellington St West commercial area, which includes Hintonburg, Parkdale Market and Wellington Village. Wellington West is one of Ottawa's largest BIAs, rich in diversity, creativity, and community (www.wellingtonwest.ca)



Creative Neighbourhoods is an Ottawa-based non-profit dedicated to improving the use and design of public space.

Our Values:

- Place matters. Residents and businesses care about their neighbourhoods. They want to see development that reflects their community's unique identity.
- Public space should be both functional and beautiful, reflecting the unique character of each of Ottawa's neighbourhoods.
- Local organizations are vital. Associations of residents and businesses can work as equal partners with city governments and developers.

8. Key Contacts

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Annex 1: Study Area Map

