

The Wellington Destructor, Adaptive Re-use

Community Meeting Update – Summary

Monday, October 18, 2021

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Online Via Zoom

Background and Meeting Overview

The Wellington Destructor is a landmark heritage building near Bathurst Street and Wellington Street West that was built in 1925 as a garbage incinerator and has sat vacant since the 1980s. CreateTO and the City of Toronto are exploring opportunities for the adaptive reuse of the existing City-owned heritage building as a cultural community hub, with employment and commercial uses to serve the growing community of residents, workers, and visitors around the site. Following a community meeting, held in 2017, City Council directed the City of Toronto to lead a procurement process to seek and secure a Head Lessee for a long-term lease for the Wellington Destructor.

On Monday, October 18, 2021, CreateTO, in conjunction with City Planning and Councillor Joe Cressy, hosted a Community Update Meeting about the Wellington Destructor. Over 100 members of the public joined the meeting. At the meeting, CreateTO, City Planning, and Councillor Joe Cressy provided an update on the work done to date since the last community meeting, introduced TAS as the recommended Head Lessee for approval by Committee and Council, answered questions through a facilitated discussion, and shared next steps. TAS also introduced themselves, their approach to their work, and the vision and proposal for the Wellington Destructor site, which they submitted to the City as a response to the competitive Request for Proposals process to redevelop the site.

The meeting agenda is attached to this summary report. The meeting presentation and additional information about the Wellington Destructor site and the engagement process are available on the project website at www.createto.ca/wellingtondestructor.

Swerhun Inc., the independent facilitation retained by CreateTO, facilitated the meeting and wrote this summary, which was shared with participants for review prior to being finalized. This summary is intended to reflect key discussion points from the meeting and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

Summary of Feedback and Questions

The following section summarizes questions and points of feedback shared by participants during the meeting, as well as feedback shared with CreateTO following the meeting. It is organized by common topics of discussion. Responses and/or comments shared by CreateTO, City Planning, Councillor Cressy, and TAS are indicated in *italics*.

Interest and excitement about the potential for the site.

Participants shared excitement about the redevelopment of the site saying that it presents a great opportunity to reinvigorate the neighbourhood and create an important place for Toronto.

Traffic, parking, and access to the site

Concerns about traffic. Participants shared concerns about existing traffic and the potential for traffic to get worse. They said they are excited about the redevelopment of the site but concerned that creating a beautiful landmark building / space will attract more people to the area, many of whom may come by car. Participants were interested in understanding how traffic will be managed and by whom. *Traffic is a key issue that is and has been examined as part of this process. This is a dense area and traffic will continue to be something that needs to be managed. One of the best ways to manage traffic is to provide other ways for people to access the site, including by transit, by bike, and on foot.*

Interest in dedicated transit to/from the site. A participant noted that other City sites that have undergone adaptive reuse (e.g., Evergreen Brickworks) have dedicated transit and asked if this is being considered for this site? *It is unlikely that this site will need dedicated transit as it is already very well served by existing public transit. Evergreen Brickworks is a bit of island with limited transit access.*

Parking for the local community and users of the site. Participants said that local residents currently have trouble finding parking in the area and expressed concern that it could become even more difficult with people coming to the site by car. There was interest in understanding if on-site parking would be provided. *We want to keep parking on the site to a minimum to provide as much space as possible for community and commercial uses. Like traffic management, making the site accessible by transit, by bike, and on foot will be essential to managing parking on-site and in the surrounding community. Parking will be available on the adjacent site (2 Tecumseth) for people visiting the Destructor site.*

Improving laneways near the site. There was interest in exploring opportunities to improve and integrate the public laneways in the area as part of the redevelopment of the site.

Use of the site

Details about proposed site uses, management, and funding. A participant was interested to know how much of the site would be dedicated to different uses, including community, residential, and commercial; if the agreement with the Head Lessee had already been signed; and since the City is planning to invest \$32 million dollars in the redevelopment of the site why the City isn't building and managing the site themselves as opposed to leasing the site.

The site will not include any residential development, it will be entirely community and commercial uses. The exact amount of community and commercial space is yet to be determined.

The Head Lessee has not yet been confirmed and no agreement has been signed. The General Government and Licencing Committee and a Council need to approve the Head Lessee before an agreement is signed. Council must also approve the \$32 million capital investment through the City's 2022 budget process (early 2022) before an agreement is signed. The City's investment of \$32 million, if approved by Council, would be paid back to the City over time with some interest. It is expected that the total cost of the project will be more than triple the City's initial investment.

The City does not animate multi-use sites alone, we need partners for projects like this. A key part of the process to date, which has included five plus years of public engagement, has included developing principles and a vision for restoring and animating this site. The principles and vision developed have and will continue to inform the partnership and the development of the site.

Creating and defining affordable space. A participant discussed the importance of providing affordable spaces in the area. They were interested to understand how affordability is being considered and defined for the site. *A key piece of the affordability will be providing "makerspaces". Note added after the meeting: Through the RFP, the City required the Head Lessee Proponents to demonstrate how community/public uses and community use tenants would be incorporated into the tenant strategy and how they would be balanced with complementary commercial uses. Including affordable spaces in the Destructor will be important part of the tenant strategy, and TAS will work with the City to secure and confirm potential community/public uses.*

Environmental impacts, wildlife, and archaeological significance

Concern about environmental contamination. A participant shared concerns about environmental contamination due previous uses of the site as well as risks associated with redeveloping the site, including moving materials that may be harmful. They asked what, if any, testing has been done and where. *An environmental engineering firm was retained several years ago to do initial testing for potential contaminants, which included borehole testing. They have also been reengaged and have continued doing tests over the past few years. Site remediation will be required, the exact processes followed will be determined based on the uses of the site.*

Connections to wildlife and outdoor education. A participant said they have seen a lot of wildlife in the area in the past few years (e.g., foxes, coyotes, migratory birds) and asked if / how wildlife is being considered in the redevelopment of the site. *Wildlife is*

being considered through the development greenspace on-site and integrating it with the broader network of green spaces in the area as well as creating a car-free environment.

Another participant suggested exploring ways to provide outdoor education on-site, including connecting with the University of Toronto about their Lab School and Environmental Education Initiative about natural curiosity.

Interest in archaeological significance. A participant asked if any studies have been completed to determine any archaeological significance, noting that there was a soldier's barracks on site in 1850s and a cattle market from 1877 to the 1920s. *CreateTO will work with the City to determine potential areas of archaeological significance on the property, and will engage archaeological consultants as required.*

Process and engagement

Including Indigenous peoples and culture as part of the process. A participant spoke about the importance of engaging and partnering with Indigenous peoples and communities as part of the process. They suggested connecting with the Indigenous Land Stewardship Circle, among others, as part of this process. *The City and CreateTO are very committed to Indigenous engagement and will be working closely with the Head Lessee to ensure this is part of the process.*

Making the site accessible. There was a suggestion to connect with the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and other organizations in the area that serve people with disabilities to ensure the site is made accessible.

Next Steps

Councillor Joe Cressy and Jennifer Tharp from CreateTO thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and for their participation to date in the process. Yulia Pak from the facilitation team committed to sharing a draft meeting summary with participants for review before it is finalized and posted to the project webpage (www.createto.ca/wellingtondestructor).

Jennifer explained the immediate and broader project next steps, including seeking approval for the recommended Head Lessee at General Government and Licencing Committee on October 20th and at Council on November 9/10th and funding for the project at Council in February 2022. Additional detail on the project next steps is included in the presentation, available on the project` website.

Attachment A. Agenda

Wellington Destructor Community Update Meeting

Monday, October 18, 2021

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Online and by phone

Meeting Purpose

To provide an update and answer questions about the redevelopment of the Welling Destructor

Proposed Agenda

- 7:00 Welcome, land acknowledgement, introductions, agenda & meeting guidelines review**
Councillor Joe Cressy & Swerhun Inc.
- 7:15 Presentation**
CreateTO, City Planning, TAS
- 7:45 *Questions of Clarification***
- 8:25 Wrap up and next steps**
- 8:30 Adjourn**