



Mulock Property Master Plan

Consultation with Mulock Neighbours

What We Heard Summary

July 29, 2020, 7:00pm - 9:00pm
Location: Zoom

Overview

On July 29, 2020, the Town of Newmarket, along with consultants Plant Architect Inc. and PROCESS, conducted a consultation with neighbours adjacent to the Mulock Property. The event took place virtually over Zoom, with approximately 27 local residents in attendance.

The objective of the conversation was to better understand neighbours' experiences and perspectives on the vision for the site and create a dialogue to build mutual understanding and collectively design solutions to address concerns. The conversation focused on three priority topics that were raised in previous consultations: 1) Thoughtful integration of Jim Bond Park with the site, 2) Noise and privacy; and 3) Traffic and parking.

After an introduction and land acknowledgement, a presentation was given regarding the Master Plan process to date, a summary of feedback to date, and an overview of design concepts. After the presentation, attendees were separated into three breakout groups to discuss four topics: 1) Jim Bond integration; 2) Traffic and Parking; 3) Noise and Privacy; 4) Other

See the Key Takeaways by topic below and Detailed Summary of Feedback from the breakout conversations.

Key Takeaways

Jim Bond Park Integration

There was a range of opinions on whether Jim Bond Park and the Mulock Property should be connected. While some voiced opposition to the integration of the two parks, most participants felt that it “only makes sense” to connect the two. Participants who were in support of connecting the park voiced that it increases walkability and access to green space for the neighbouring residents and communities. Through the discussions, participants noted aspects of Jim Bond Park that they enjoyed and wanted to maintain, including passive uses such as dog walking, exercise in the park, child-friendly activities. They also suggested recommendations for thoughtful integration, which included ways to mitigate concerns of privacy and noise, traffic and parking, safety and security and others.

Privacy and Noise

Participants discussed opportunities to mitigate privacy and noise concerns. For instance, some suggested that if there is a skating trail, it should be located further from the adjacent houses and/or have natural noise buffers to help mitigate noise. It was also noted by some that this activity would have little noise impact. Others shared concerns regarding potential trespassing on abutting properties and requested approaches to mitigate this. For the most part, participants felt that quiet and passive uses were best for the site. While music events and special events were seen as appropriate in the park, there were requests for acoustic concerts and to locate these events further away from the adjacent homes.

Traffic and Parking

Traffic and parking were the top concerns discussed. This included speeding on Jordanray Blvd., traffic and congestion on Mulock Drive, and overflow parking on Doubletree Lane, Osler Court, and Jordanray Blvd. To mitigate these issues, participants suggested speed humps, alternating parking, and restricted parking for visitors. Participants also mostly preferred parking locations outside of the Mulock Property. Many favoured parking in the hydro corridor. Some indicated Mulock Drive as an appropriate option, especially for the provision of accessible parking, while others were concerned that it would cause more traffic on Mulock.

Other

- **Safety and Security:** There were several comments that there is unsafe behaviour in Jim Bond Park especially at night. Participants discussed the best approaches to mitigate this. While some proposed security and policing, others discussed that more people animating the park can help to prevent unwanted behaviour.

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- **Preserve Trees:** Many participants indicated they want to preserve and enhance the trees on both the Mulock Property and Jim Bond Park.
- **Activities and Uses:** Participants recommended activities and uses for the site including activities for youth, community gardens, outdoor dining during COVID-19.
- **Process:** Some participants requested frequent check ins with residents during and after the development of Mulock Property, to ensure their concerns are addressed and they are kept in the loop. Others suggested the Town should consider a phased approach to test initial ideas.

Detailed Summary of Feedback

Participants were divided into three breakout groups to discuss the four topics: Jim Bond integration; Traffic and Parking; Noise and Privacy; and Other. Feedback is organized below by topics, questions asked and major themes.

Jim Bond Integration

Questions Asked:

- *How is Jim Bond Park currently used in the neighbourhood?*
- *What aspects would you like to maintain?*
- *What additional uses or activities can be added?*
- *What are the opportunities to connect?*

Summary of Responses:

Current Jim Bond Park Experiences:

Positive uses and aspects of Jim Bond Park that people want to maintain:

- The park's current passive uses, specifically the family-friendly uses of the park.
- Walking dogs in the park.
- Large family gatherings that take place in the park.
- Opportunities for children to explore nature, learn to ride their bikes and play.
- Exercise and yoga in the park, which has become more common since the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing small groups of people to the park.
- Special events that take place in the park 2-3 times a year.
- Sense of nature and being near forested areas.
- Peace and quietness of the park.
- Views of the park.

Negative aspects of Jim Bond Park that participants identified:

- Coyote presence in the park.
- Littering - It was suggested that the trash cans in the park should be updated to more hygienic ones (i.e., having a foot pedal to open) and that there is a lack of garbage cans in the middle of the park.

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- Safety concerns: Some participants mentioned unwanted behaviour occurs within Jim Bond Park, specifically within the wooded area and along Mulock Drive. There were concerns that this behaviour could escalate with the Mulock Property integrated with Jim Bond Park. However, others suggested that more people creates “eyes on the street.” This is the idea that a public presence can help to keep people safe and prevent unwanted behaviour. Other suggestions to mitigate unwanted behaviour:
 - Use programming and public art are to mitigate against illegal and unwanted behaviour.
 - Hire security guards or increase policing.
 - Install cameras to calm negative activities and reassure residents.
 - Increase lighting at night.

Jim Bond Park Integration

Concerns shared include:

- The park should be maintained for local use by neighbours.
- Access from Jordanray Blvd. could lead to more pedestrians and drivers in the neighbourhood, which was seen by some as negative.
- Connecting the park could cause more litter and result in more cleanup efforts in the park.
- Noise, privacy, traffic, parking and safety were amongst the main concerns.
- Many felt these concerns could be addressed through thoughtful design and policy solutions.

Opportunities shared include:

- Many participants felt that the connection would increase access to green space for adjacent neighbours and communities and increase walkability.
- Opportunities and considerations for thoughtful integration identified include:
 - Connect the area through natural trails. There were also suggestions to create trails that connect Jim Bond to Tom Taylor Trail. Participants indicated if the park was not connected, people would make their own paths to access Mulock.
 - Some participants mentioned that they would like structures such as large fences between the two areas, while others requested natural buffers.
- Participants also indicated additional uses or activities to be added:
 - Increase opportunities to connect with nature.
 - Ensure there is some privacy and cleanliness in the park if events are to occur at the Mulock Property (i.e. increase privacy through gates).
 - Create more seating options.

Privacy and Noise

Questions Answer:

- *Are there current privacy and noise issues?*
- *What uses are seen to be appropriate in close proximity to the houses?*

Summary of Responses:

Concerns over privacy and noise:

- After-hour uses: Participants indicated that noise by-laws should be obeyed.
- Lighting: Some neighbours identified the location and position of lighting as a concern. There were suggestions to use techniques that focus the lights on the park and not on the properties.
- Increase in noise from traffic and the proposed skating trail: While some were concerned with the noise from the skating trail, others felt it would not be an issue, especially since it is seasonal.
- Some indicated concerns with trespassing, specifically for backyards abutting Mulock Property.

Appropriate opportunities for Mulock Property:

- When asked, most participants indicated that special events, such as music events, were appropriate uses of the Mulock Property. However, participants preferred events being acoustic or held during the day and further from adjacent homes (closer to Mulock Drive and Yonge Street).
- Participants mentioned that quiet events/activities were appropriate for site, such as gardens, yoga, fitness, and family activities.
- Many had questions about the skating trail options. Participants indicated that having the skating trail located further away from the houses would be optimal. Participants raised questions regarding lighting on the skating trail. They also raised questions about if security would be used for night skating. Participants indicated that they want to maintain trees located around the skating path, specifically the walnut trees.

Ideas to mitigate noise and privacy issues:

- Tree plantings.
- Use the natural dyke to create stepped/sloped seating facing Yonge Street and act as a landscape buffer or separation from adjacent houses.
- Some asked if the park would be locked and closed at night.

Traffic and Parking

Questions asked:

- *What are your top traffic and parking concerns?*
- *What are the current uses with parking and traffic?*
- *What are solutions to ensure traffic and parking issues do not emerge with Mulock?*

Summary of Responses:

Top concerns of neighbours:

- Increased traffic and congestion on Mulock Drive.
- Speeding along Jordanray Blvd./Austin Paul Drive was seen as an issue. Many participants indicated that these streets are already heavily used by drivers as a shortcut from Mulock Drive to Yonge Street.
- Parking in the neighbourhood, specifically increased parking on Jordanray Blvd., Osler Court and Doubletree Lane.

Potential solutions to traffic and parking issues identified:

Participants discussed several possible solutions with the architects and Town staff:

- Install speed humps to calm traffic in the area, specifically on Jordanray Blvd. Some participants indicated that collapsible bollards were not as effective as speed humps. Participants also noted that York Region Transit is on Doubletree, which may not be compatible if speed humps are placed on the street.
- Implement alternating parking on one side of the street to calm traffic.
- Install “no parking signs” with exceptions to residents on streets near Mulock.
- Remove parking where the road curves on Jordanray Blvd. Councillor Kelly Broome indicated that this was an action the Town is already taking, and in the first phase of this, the Town lowered speeds along Jordanray Blvd.
- Build parking off the Mulock Property to maintain it as a natural space and suggested it be located in the hydro corridor. Participants also raised concerns over accessibility and suggested having accessible parking spots located on Mulock Drive. Other participants indicated that parking along Mulock Drive was the best option as the main parking area for the site. Yonge Street already has reduced lanes due to buses and would be difficult to install parking. However there were concerns about parking on Mulock Drive increasing traffic on the street.
- Participants raised the possibility of using new developments nearby to supplement parking.
- Conduct a traffic study for the area, in association with the Mulock Property Master Plan.

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Other Comments:

- A community garden could be incorporated into the design.
- There are many adult-oriented activities in the concept designs for the Mulock Property, but there was a lack of proposed activities and programming for children. They noted that these need to be included for the children in the community.
- If the carriage house is to be used, ensure privacy for residents nearby. Do not use the carriage house to serve food (for fear of rodents and garbage). Food should be served in the main house, away from the adjacent neighbours.
- Maintain the trees. One participant suggested that if trees are to come down, they should be repurposed within the Property (i.e., being used for a play area).
- Support COVID-19 friendly opportunities, including local businesses and artists impacted by the pandemic. For example, Main Street and Fairy Lake can be used as a precedent where the area combines local business with nature and recreation to create a place for people of all ages to enjoy. One suggestion was to have year-round outdoor dining, such as Cachet Supper Club in Fairy Lake Park and their igloo dining experiences.
- Participants suggested using a phased approach to test out ideas.
- Participants suggested zoom meetings (or in-person) on a regular basis throughout the project (pre and post development) to address issues in the neighbourhood, such as noise, parking, etc.

Next Steps

Three design options are underway, based on all the feedback, research and this consultation to date. The options will be presented to Council in the Fall. A follow-up public meeting will be scheduled in the Fall to show the proposed plan options and collect additional feedback.