

## PLAY WELLINGTON: PRELIMINARY PLAN

Wellington West has several growing nodes of vibrant activity, which are facing issues of accessibility and traffic safety. As development in the area continues, the limited number of public spaces will become increasingly important. However, most of these spaces currently have poor accessibility from the main street. Also, there are several underutilized areas with good potential for contributing to the public realm, especially with the recent completion of wider sidewalks. Common concerns raised by the community have to do with lack of social spaces, park space, identity and signage. Visitors, in particular, have little knowledge of spaces outside of a few select nodes. Yet, there are many spaces within Wellington West that can serve to attract and entertain public use. It appears such spaces suffer from problems such as poor visibility.

As such, Wellington West can greatly benefit from a strong network of public spaces to facilitate the flow of people to both existing areas of activity, as well as underutilized areas with high potential for reactivation. playCe proposes a General Design Strategy centred on applying strategic wayfinding devices to attract and connect people with important nodes within the area. This strategy aims to increase levels of use in public spaces, to better distribute activity levels throughout the area, and to facilitate longer, multi-destination visits. Gateway treatments will mark transitions into Wellington West and strengthen the area as a unique destination in the City of Ottawa. The strategy also incorporates elements important for promoting social activity within spaces, such as temporary uses, active transportation, greening, seating, lighting and shelter. The following recommendations have been developed based on relevancy to Wellington West and implementation feasibility (i.e. costs, funding, partners, phasing and potential revenue).

For the client, please select specific sites (in A and B) for the detailed design plan:

**A. SITE-SPECIFIC DESIGN :**

One gateway location.

**B. SITE-SPECIFIC DESIGN:**

**ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO I** – The two blocks targeted for a temporary street closure. This will involve all applicable interventions mentioned below.

**ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO II** – The future public space at Bethany Hope. This will involve all applicable interventions mentioned below.

## GATEWAYS

*Gateways are place-making devices with many uses and meanings, and they come in different shapes and sizes. They are a community's symbolic means of connection that also highlights their distinct character. Gateways could be used to address functional shortcomings while simultaneously improving the aesthetics of key entrance points into the community. We identified six such points in Wellington West:*

- *Wellington St. West at Island Park Drive;*
- *Wellington St. West at Somerset Bridge;*
- *Parkdale Ave. at the Queensway;*
- *Parkdale Ave. at Scott St.;*
- *Holland Ave. at the Queensway;*
- *and, Holland Ave. at Scott.*

*Each has tremendous strategic potential but is currently underutilized. People pass through Wellington West without being fully aware of the fact that they have entered a unique part of the city. The creation of gateways to Wellington West would highlight the corridor's connectivity with the rest of the city, while also signaling its uniqueness in space by reinforcing a distinct identity. Recommended gateway interventions are:*

**[GATEWAY SIGN]** - A gateway sign is a highly visible piece of public art, installed at a prominent location that serves as an entry and exit point to the area. Gateway signs are usually used to advertise the area's name, letting people know they are entering an area with a distinct character.

Why Wellington: To provide Wellington West with an opportunity to reach out to the public with a showcase piece of art that demonstrates the area's identity.

Target Location: All gateways locations.

**[LIGHT PROJECTIONS]** - This involves projecting images and videos that reflect the area's history and showcasing the strengths of Wellington West. An example could be rotating art pieces by local artists. Also, "Welcome to Wellington West" messages could be projected instead of being painted, making them more durable. This gives an opportunity to cover up unsightly surfaces while lighting up dark areas and activating underutilized public spaces.

Why Wellington: It has numerous unique elements that deserve to be showcased to the public. It will lighten up a dreary pedestrian environment, act as a traffic calming measure and serve as a memorable entry to the district.

Target Location: Holland/Queensway and Parkdale/Queensway underpasses, both on the walls and the road surface.

**[WALL ART]** - Well-designed and context relevant art has the potential to have a strong and memorable impact on visitors. The art could be also thematic, linking the separate gateways across Wellington West and telling a story about the area.

Why Wellington: Some of the gateways have blank walls that the community considers unsightly. It may be possible to paint some of these walls with murals, or to install permanent frames that can be used for rotating art displays or advertising. This intervention also applies to other blank walls within Wellington West.

Target Location: Parkdale Ave. and the Queensway; Holland Ave. and the Queensway.

Each of these underpasses have an existing physical arch. As a result, there are blank concrete walls facing oncoming traffic to the underpass. Also, the walls along the underpass present an opportunity to display art. In addition, one small dead-end alley would be ideal for wall art. Located at 1091 Wellington Street, this alley could provide a very unique viewing area, where one simply walks in and out of an alley art gallery of sorts. It could be painted similar to The Quay Arts by MU in Montreal.

**[COLOURFUL PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS]** - Brightly painting the pedestrian crosswalks has the potential to draw drivers' attention to the transition into a new area. It can also calm traffic and reduce risk of accidents.

Why Wellington: Wellington West has a number of troublesome intersections with significant potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

Target Location: All gateways locations, and the following intersections:

- Wellington St. West and Parkdale Ave.
- Wellington St. West and Holland Ave.
- Wellington St. West and Rosemount

### **WAYFINDING**

*Wayfinding has been one of the key themes plaYce has been working with, and our community design workshop has noted that it is an important component to increasing the use of Wellington West. We believe with the proper maps and signage, visitors and residents will stay in Wellington West for a longer period of time, and will be more likely to traverse the threshold that is the border of Hintonburg and Wellington Village. Recommended wayfinding interventions are:*

**[MAPPING]** - Map stations not only aid an area's overall identity, they also allow for visitors to fully explore everything the area has to offer. Our review of existing plans and policies, in addition to information gathered from engaging the community, have identified specific nodes and corridors that would be beneficial to highlight in such map stations.

Why Wellington: One of the main recommendations from our community design workshop was that of map stations and, more specifically, people recommended business maps similar to those found in shopping centres (i.e. business directories).

Target Location: Gateway locations: Bridge/Somerset Park area; Tunney's Pasture/Holland Cross; and Island Park. Also: HCC/Church area; Hintonburg Park; in between Parkdale and Holland (or at both intersections); Parkdale Park/Market; Near Wellington Village Bridgehead; Clarendon (or near Metro)

**[SIGNAGE]** – Effective signage can help clarify boundaries, strengthen identity and attract more business traffic.

Why Wellington: From our interviews, surveys, and consultation, we have found there tends to be confusion as to the boundaries of Wellington West. For instance, the banners along Wellington Street West are very similar to those in Westboro, which hinders creating a separate identity for Wellington West.

Target Location: The main locations for signage improvement in an effort to improve identity within Wellington West are the traffic and utility boxes, street signs, and the existing banners on lampposts. Similarly, we recommend signage at the main transit stops and gateways in an effort to pull visitors in to Wellington West (i.e. on the Queensway, the Tunney's Pasture transit stop, and the O-Train stop). Main nodes should also be identified in a manner similar to their map representations.

**[INTERSECTION PAINTING]** - Intersection painting is popular in Portland, Oregon, where it is known as intersection repair. When painting an intersection, the community comes together and closes the streets for a weekend to paint the intersection and in effect turn it into a public square of sorts. Not only is it a staple in the community, but it also creates a unique landmark for wayfinding and has the potential for traffic calming.

Why Wellington: This area has a funky arts scene that is very conducive to this type of intervention. It is also a low-cost method to reduce traffic problems in the area.

Target Location: Intersections at Rosemont and Island Park, and blocks that may have temporary pedestrian zones. Several key informants discussed the issue of Rosemont's dogleg as being a dangerous intersection due to the location of a school and library that attract children and older adults. On the other hand, Island Park represents a gateway between Wellington West and

Westboro, a border that we found to be misconstrued by many people. Therefore, intersection repair at this intersection would symbolize a gateway into Wellington West and thus improve its identity separate from Westboro.

**[PAINT UTILITY BOXES]** - The transformation of the utility boxes on streetlights and traffic lights could have the potential to do great things for Wellington West. One solution is to paint the boxes. These can range from simple solid colours (i.e. orange to match the official colour of Wellington West) or local artist-designed works of art.

Why Wellington: The utility boxes currently serve no visual purpose. This is a good opportunity to beautify and contribute to the identity of Wellington West.

Target Location: Utility boxes.

### ***SOCIAL SPACES***

*Physical spaces in the urban fabric that support social encounters are important for street vitality and sense of community. These can be public spaces, such as streets, squares, dog parks, or even two benches arranged in a way that facilitates the exchange of glances, smiles and, perhaps, some good conversation. Social spaces can also be private, such as courtyards or patios.*

*Important elements recommended for Wellington West:*

**[TEMPORARY STREET CLOSURES/PEDESTRIAN ZONE]** – There are several successful examples of temporary street closures across Canada; notably, on Robson in Vancouver, Yonge in Toronto and Ste-Catherine in Montreal. This intervention is ideal for neighbourhoods with a limited public realm, and traffic-related issues. Street closures bring more vibrancy to neighbourhoods by increasing traffic safety, social use of space and business traffic. They provide additional public space that is ideal for social interaction and activities such as walking, rollerblading, cycling and even street performing. A UK study has shown street closures to reduce traffic problems, such as congestion, pollution and noise, by over 50%.

Why Wellington: To enhance and enlarge the area's public realm.

Target Location: Successful precedents usually close only one to three short city blocks. An ideal location would be on Wellington Street West from Holland to Hamilton Avenue. These two blocks contain a good density of restaurants, cafes and a theatre for facilitating a lively pedestrian zone.

**[EDIBLE LANDSCAPING]** - Edible Landscapes refer to the visual, physical and social impacts of producing food in urban land. This approach incorporates edible species throughout the

landscape in a manner that is aesthetically pleasing, functionally effective and that takes advantages of the different growing conditions and micro-climates.

Why Wellington: Edible planters was a key suggestions made during the community design workshop. Additionally, many restaurant owners and chefs in the neighbourhood have a commitment to local, seasonal, fresh ingredients. They could use the edible landscape intervention to strengthen their identity as sustainable and socially conscious businesses.

Target Location: The edible plants (fruits, vegetables, nuts, and herbs) would replace ornamental plants, and would be planted alongside the sidewalk, and in public areas. We envision the future public space at Bethany Hope to become an accessible garden that would be open to the public or specific community groups.

**[PARKLETS]** - Conceived in 2005 by a design studio in San Francisco, parklets have become a low-cost, creative way to reclaim street space for pedestrian use. Quickly spreading across the continent, the popular idea is valued for increasing business traffic and, especially, healthy activities such as walking, cycling and socializing. Key elements of parklets are: conversion of on-street parking spots (usually two), greenery, seating, shelter, lighting, and public access.

Why Wellington: To increase greening and social use of the street.

Target Locations: Parking spots in front of businesses.

**[GREENERY]** - Adding trees, planters, flowers and other forms of greenery improves the aesthetics of an area that currently appear ill-kept. Colour can also be added to drab and characterless areas by using innovative containers.

Why Wellington: During the process of consulting the community, a number of people expressed the desire to see increased greenery. Being an area that has recently undergone street revitalization, there are many newly planted trees that will mature over the years. However, smaller plantings are a good way to increase the greenery in the area for the next five to ten years.

Target Location: All gateway locations and along the street length where possible for a consistent identity.

**[BIKE ROUTES]** – Bike routes and contribute to the larger vision of the Ottawa Cycling Plan (OCP) to develop a more visible and connected cycling network. As observed in the in OCP, promoting cycling supports the City of Ottawa’s GHG reduction targets, its public health programs, and its objective of being a world leader in sustainable transportation.

Why Wellington: Answers local demand for a stronger biking network with more north-south cycling routes. Also, further solidifies Wellington West’s reputation as a leader in active

transportation for Ottawa.

Target Location: Along Harmer Ave N and Caroline Ave from Byron Ave to Scott St for a north-south route. Along Byron Ave and Gladstone Ave for an east-west route.

**[ENFORCE DESIGNATED TRUCK ROUTE]** – Truck traffic is often detrimental to the pedestrian environment. The City of Ottawa has designated Holland Ave as the only official truck route in Wellington West. Therefore, the heavy truck traffic currently on Parkdale Ave should be rerouted to Holland Ave.

Why Wellington: Parkdale is one of the most congested and undesirable intersections, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. This is particularly unfortunate as Parkdale Market and Park is one of the most valued destinations in the area, especially for families with young children.

Target Location: Parkdale Ave.

**[PUBLIC RECYCLING BINS]** - Ottawa's municipal recycling bins are a relatively new intervention with advertising panels down the front and back. They are often found at bus stops along major transit routes. The advertising brings in revenue, while promoting environmentally-friendly actions and eco-conscious image for an area.

Why Wellington: There does not seem to be any public recycling bins in Wellington West, although the well-being of the natural environment and sustainability were values that were vocalized by participants in the community design workshop as well as individual interviews.

Target Location: Anywhere there is currently a garbage bin, to give people that choice.

**[DOGGY STATIONS]** - Other communities have installed "pet waste stations" with waste receptacles and a supply of waste collection bags. Pet waste management results in cleaner neighborhoods, with improved aesthetics and better water quality. Reducing pet waste reduces an important source of water-polluting nutrients.

Why Wellington: Doggy bag stations were an element of the streetscape that was suggested during our community design workshop. Certain participants felt that this intervention would help the area be more used and enhance public spaces.

Target Location: TBD

**[CIGARETTE RECEPTACLES]** - A cigarette receptacle is a container or device for extinguishing and disposal of cigarette waste, instead of on the ground. The benefits of a fully funded Cigarette Receptacle program:

- Potentially significant reduction in the amount of waste and debris along the sidewalks and roadways.

- Significant contributions to Ottawa 20/20's A Green and Environmentally-Sensitive City goal to having a Cleaner, Greener city.

Why Wellington: Several participants of the community design workshop were extremely vocal about the importance of cigarette receptacles, and the need to encourage smokers to stay away from certain public spaces.

Target Location: Outside of key public spaces.

**[LIGHTING]** - Well-designed streetscape lighting will attract more visitors that stay longer, as well as enhance beauty and security. Studies show that better lighting at mid-block crossings have significantly improved pedestrian safety. Also, effective lighting can help strengthen the identity of an area, while promoting community and seasonal events. Newer technologies have enabled lighting systems that can be controlled by text messaging, which can allow for fun public interaction or energy savings for local shop owners.

Why Wellington: Increase use of the area at night and during the darker seasons of autumn and winter. This intervention is meant to complement the recently installed street lamps.

Target Locations: TBD, selected based on need to increase pedestrian use and/or safety.