

Armstrong Street Study: Community Vision

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A collaborative community vision for the future of Armstrong Street that will see Armstrong develop into a dynamic residential corridor with small-scale commercial uses that promotes safe and active modes of transportation.

Kitchissippi
WARD



HINTONBURG

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Supporting documents

Document 2:

Armstrong Street: Engaging Community | Realizing Potential (McGill, MUP Studio III, 2015)

Document 3:

Armstrong Street Consultation Report (Milieu Technologies Ltd, 2016)

Acknowledgements

This community vision was written by Fiona Mitchell-Gougeon in the office of Kitchissippi Ward Councillor Jeff Leiper, with significant content and editorial contributions by Zachary Dayler (Executive director of the West Wellington BIA), John Ferguson (WWBIA), Michel Frojmovic (WWBIA), Randy Kemp (WWBIA), Jay Baltz (Hintonburg Community Association), Roland Dorsay, Melanie Wright, Graeme Hussey and John Thompson. In addition, consultation and data analysis was provided by planning students from McGill University (Joshua Adams, Ryan Lo, Zoé Poirier Stephens, and Kristín Una Siguðardóttir) and from Milieu Technologies (Lee-Michael Pronko, Luisa Ji, and Trevor Deley). Further technical edits and contributions were made by Andrew McCreight, Planner in Development Review Services, Carol Ruddy, Planner in Zoning and Interpretation Services, and management within Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development at the City of Ottawa.

On behalf of Councillor Leiper, we would like to thank everyone who contributed towards this document.

Introduction & background information

Over the past year, the Wellington West Business Improvement Association (WWBIA), the Hintonburg Community Association (HCA) and Kitchissippi Ward Councillor Jeff Leiper alongside Armstrong Street residents and the broader community have come together to consult on a future vision for Armstrong. The objective was to assess how Armstrong would best look, feel and function after implementing small-scale, local-serving commercial zoning (suffix -c) zoning along the south side of Armstrong and side streets in the block between Armstrong and Wellington Street West, a Traditional Main Street. In addition to needing further consultation to determine whether allowing widespread small-scale commercial uses along Armstrong was in the best interest of the community, stakeholders wished to create a community vision for how Armstrong would look, feel and function with these new zoning conditions.

The impetus for this broad-based community-led consultation was a recent City zoning study from the Zoning Consistency Team. In spring 2015, the City completed and put forward the [*Local Commercial Study: City-Initiated Zoning By-Law Amendments for Local Shops and Services in Residential Areas*](#) to the Planning Committee of City Council. The study recommended that Council permit local shops and services in residential areas for multiple properties and areas across the urban areas of the city. Armstrong was one of the corridors reviewed as part of the City study. The WWBIA and the HCA expressed support for the initial study but requested that the report be amended to allow a more substantial and detailed area-specific analysis for Armstrong that would include Grant Street from McCormick Street to Parkdale Ave.

City Council agreed with the condition that the properties along Armstrong be a part of an area-specific visioning study funded and resourced by Councillor Leiper, the WWBIA, and the HCA. As a result, Armstrong was subject to holding zone until such study took place.

After multiple rounds of consultation, including two independent studies and reports, one completed by Atelier, a group of planning students from McGill University and the other by Milieu Technologies (Document 2 and Document 3), the community was found to support the lifting of the hold placed on implementation of the suffix -c zoning along in the specified locations along Armstrong, on the condition that the following community vision be referenced and consulted moving forward.

When the suffix -c zoning hold is lifted and implemented, our community envisions Armstrong as a dynamic partner to the well-established and bustling Wellington W. Armstrong would have its own welcoming character, which would see increased height on the south side including vibrant local commercial uses that prioritizes active modes of transportation. The north side of Armstrong would continue with its low-rise residential character protected.

Embracing Armstrong’s strong and passionate residential community engagement while utilizing innovative urban development techniques, Armstrong has the opportunity to become a distinctive jewel not only within Kitchissippi ward but within the entire City of Ottawa.

In addition to Armstrong, the south side of Grant, which lies between Armstrong and Wellington W. for one block east of Parkdale, would have similar function, with the south side encouraging mixed-use development with the stable residential development protected on the north side. The portion of Armstrong that runs parallel to Grant would maintain its low rise residential character on both sides, since Grant functions as the transition from Wellington West in that block.



Residents enjoying a walkabout consultation along Armstrong, June 25, 2016

Planning & Development

That the suffix -c zoning hold be lifted & the zoning implemented

Our vision sees the suffix -c zoning hold lifted implemented after this report is received. After considerable community consultation there is evidence of substantial support to allow small-scale commercial activity along the south side of Armstrong, in both newly-constructed buildings and/or in converted existing properties, along with protection of the street's predominantly residential character.

Our vision would see higher heights of up to six storeys (~ 20 metres) if at grade commercial is part of a development

The majority of the community is comfortable with allowing increased building heights to an absolute maximum of six storeys (~20 meters) to serve as an incentive for both commercial uses at grade and particularly the conversion of existing vacant lots and parking lots into new buildings. The community is adamant about maintaining reasonable permitted heights along its traditional main street on Wellington W. A transition zone between Wellington W. and Armstrong is both appropriate as well as protective, since it provides a larger development envelope without increasing heights on Wellington W. above the currently-permitted six storeys. Therefore, buildings up to six storeys may be permitted on the south sides of Armstrong and Grant (subject to the step-back requirements described below). These should be particularly encouraged on vacant lots and existing parking lots fronting on the south sides Armstrong or Grant. In addition, small-scale commercial uses at grade should be required in buildings permitted at such increased heights. Large parking areas or lots adjacent to the street should be strongly discouraged.

Our vision would require step-backs for buildings higher than three storeys or 11 metres

The community's support for allowing greater total heights is conditional on the City requiring a substantial step-back on buildings higher than three storeys. A step-back would complement the scale of the residential north side of Armstrong and Grant, whose maximum permitted height is three storeys, and ensure compatibility with the character of the existing stable residential community. A step-back after the third storey would help keep future development within a human scale for those walking, cycling or driving along Armstrong, and will ensure that shadows are minimized on the north sides of Armstrong and Grant. The required step-back should be the same as the 45° envelope required by the

zoning bylaw for the through-lots between Armstrong and Wellington W.; those properties lying within the study area that have traditional main street zoning (TM11[124]) (i.e., that the building envelope above three storeys lies within a 45° view plane measured from the top of the third storey).

Our vision is to require a minimum building height of two storeys on all new development on properties abutting Armstrong St

Once the suffix -c zoning is implemented, future developments should take full advantage of the opportunities along Armstrong. As such, we support a minimum building height of two storeys for any new development projects. By promoting a minimum height of two storeys, any development will be better able to take advantage of supporting a rich mix of commercial with residential, retail, or residential with a home-based business, in ways a single storey is unable to accomplish. A rich mix of uses, utilizing the possibilities within the suffix -c, will be beneficial in creating the vibrant feel along Armstrong that the community hopes to see.

Our vision reinforces the zoning requirements regarding patios

The Zoning By-law (Section 141) provides specific provisions for outdoor commercial patios in locations that are subject to the Residential Neighbourhood Commercial Suffix (-c). Outdoor commercial patios are permitted on corner lots, are limited to a maximum of 10 square metres, must be located in the front yard and or corner side yard, and must not exceed an elevation higher than the existing average grade. For commercial uses not on corner lots, small café-style seating may be provided, but larger patios must remain prohibited. Our community vision supports these specific provisions provided in Section 141. Patios uses must, however, not have an impact on nearby residents, in particular by ensuring that effective measures are taken to prevent noise from disturbing residents.

Transportation

Our vision would see cycling route signage installed along Armstrong as soon as possible

Since Armstrong has been designated as part of Ottawa's official cycling network for some time, but signage indicating this has still not been installed by the date of the conclusion of this study, cycling route signage should be installed as soon as possible, including signage on Somerset, Parkdale and Wellington W. With proper signage installed, cyclists wishing to ride separate from the heavy traffic in Wellington W.'s narrow lanes will have an easily-identifiable alternative route. Further, promoting cycling along Armstrong St will connect cyclists to and from the newly installed cycling infrastructure along Spencer. Ensuring cyclists have seamless connections across both the ward and our city through various pieces of cycling infrastructure and clear directional signage will help enforce safety for a cyclist within any skill range, and provide an alternative for those who wish to patronize the businesses on Wellington W. but are not comfortable riding on a heavily travelled main street. The Armstrong / Spencer / Byron cycle route is an excellent option for cyclist commuters who are travelling through.

Our vision sees Armstrong evolving to become a more pedestrian and cycling friendly street

Since Armstrong is a cycling route, and since pedestrian traffic will be needed to sustain small commercial uses on Armstrong (especially since there is no parking on Armstrong), the street should become more of a complete street over time. The community envisions improved sidewalks, addressing the presence of hydro poles located within the street itself, and prioritizing active transportation. This should be a major consideration in any future resurfacing or reconstruction of Armstrong.

Our vision sees contraflow bike lanes implemented on Carruthers and Merton

In addition to cycling route signage along Armstrong, and addressing the community support of cyclist safety, having contraflow bike lanes on Carruthers and Merton would make the cyclist connection to either Wellington W. or Scott more fluid and facilitate convenient access to the businesses along Wellington W. Contraflow bike lanes on these streets would also assist in general traffic calming, without having to remove existing parking.

Our vision includes additional bike parking infrastructure installed at locations to be determined

When the opportunity arises, either with a new build development, a converted development or with a street reconstruction or repaving, all efforts should be made to incorporate additional bike parking infrastructure at key locations along Armstrong and/or at the intersections of Wellington W. with the side streets that lead to Armstrong. The general community vision sees Armstrong as becoming more accessible for cyclists. Incorporating bike parking is essential to getting cyclists to utilize the street and access the commercial uses, either on Armstrong itself or along Wellington W. Easily-accessible bike parking opportunities will encourage cyclists both to stop and shop as well as to integrate Armstrong into their natural cycling route.

Our vision sees the streets surrounding McCormick Park receiving a Public Realm and Mobility Study

There was strong community sentiment regarding the streets around McCormick Park, which include Carruthers, McCormick, Grant and Armstrong. To address the safety concerns, the *Armstrong Street Consultation Report* prepared by Milieu Technologies Ltd., recommended turning those streets into shared streets, pending a traffic study and significant interventions. Our recommendation is to request a formal Public Realm and Mobility Study for those streets, to review what is possible both in the short and long term and to further express the notion of a pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle friendly space that encourages and expands safe use of the park.

Our vision sees strong connectivity between Armstrong and Wellington W.

In order for the community vision for Armstrong to work and complement the neighbourhood as it exists currently, every effort must be made to enhance the connectivity between Armstrong and Wellington W. This connectivity must be beneficial and facilitate safe movement for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Short-term objectives

While the vision that has been described is essential moving forward once the suffix -c zoning is permitted and speaks to a holistic approach, there are some key short-term adjustments within the vision that the community is requesting be completed as soon as possible. These include:

- Having the dangerous intersections identified by the community (including but not limited to: Armstrong and McCormick, Armstrong and Merton, McCormick and Grant), evaluated further by Traffic Services for mitigation measures that would improve safety concerns for pedestrian, cyclists and drivers.
- Installing the cycling signage.
- Installing the contraflow bike lanes on Carruthers and Merton.
- With new commercial uses permitted along Armstrong, the WWBIA will work to maintain and promote both commercial zones. As such, additional way-finding measures are requested to create seamless connections between the two commercial zones. Way-finding measures should be a joint collaboration between the WWBIA and the City of Ottawa.
- Utilize new and interesting technological measures whenever feasible to promote safe, active transportation through the corridor.

Conclusion

The WWBIA, the HCA and Councillor Jeff Leiper are satisfied with the amount of community contribution and discussion that has occurred in crafting this community vision for Armstrong. As stakeholders in the community, it was very important to hear from as many residents as possible about how they wanted to see the future of Armstrong evolve. We are further appreciative to staff for allowing the suffix -c zoning to be held pending further community consultation, and we are grateful for the opportunity, now that that consultation has been completed, to submit our vision to City staff to take into consideration as we move forward.