



Dundas Works Roundtable #11: The Virtual Pandemic Version  
Thursday, February 11th, 2021 7:00-8:30 pm  
Meeting Minutes Rev.1 - draft

We hosted our first virtual roundtable using Zoom. 28 people were in attendance. We used the breakout room feature to maximize individual input.

## **To frame the discussion**

1. During the pandemic, what strengths and weaknesses have you observed in our community?
2. What changes would you recommend to rebuild a stronger, more resilient Dundas?

## **Businesses**

- We are lucky to have the ability to shop locally for most of our needs, and be able to walk to those businesses.
- Some question of whether the businesses will survive the pandemic. Government is allowing large, foreign-owned, box stores to remain open, and forcing others to close their businesses (e.g., the Collins and its “igloos”)
- We can shop online, especially for artistic and cultural goods
- A shop-local campaign would be helpful, as well as a directory of local businesses
- COVID recovery funds might be used to support small local business
- A King Street pedestrian/cycle mall would help local business, instead of CactusFest.

## **Community Groups**

- we are blessed with long-established groups such as the Food Bank, DCS, Routes, Rotary, Association of Dundas Churches, Dundas Rides, Dundas Works
- Newly, we have Action 13 working on climate change responses
- The Witherspoon Neighbourhood Newsletter is a good example of a local initiative
- A local townhouse group has come together to help each other with shopping

## **Connection/ Division**

- both physical and technological disconnect with the pandemic
- Many are connecting now outdoors, by walking together or cycling together
- People are watching out for neighbours and greeting them on the street
- Neighbourhood associations, or even “block captains”, where there would be a leader in each small community
- Also look at connections between urban and rural parts of Dundas
- Increasing divisions between the better-off and the struggling
- Many people live alone and have trouble keeping connection with others; many are not technologically literate
- People use different platforms to connect, so hard to reach out for many people
- Youth often seem to be “at loose ends”, especially with the schools being closed
- The community seems to be less diverse than it was, more gentrified



## **Natural Areas**

- we have the parks (eg, the Driving Park, with the skating rink)
- Walking trails and natural areas are being used more than ever
- Walking outdoors seems to have become a good way to meet people spontaneously, as well as purposefully

## **Community Development**

- main issue for most of us was the poor availability of affordable housing. We need to have housing at all levels to maintain a robust and interesting community
- The Canadian Tire site, and the Wentworth Lodge land, represent an opportunity to engage the community in the development process
- Forming connections between citizens' groups in Dundas would strengthen them and help with the use of personal resources
- When roads get re-done, there needs to be an effort to make them "complete roads", with wide sidewalks and space for bikes (even to the disadvantage of car traffic)
- Better infrastructure, not just for cars, but also for pedestrians and cyclists

## **Food**

- a food co-op in Dundas would be an advancement. With the restrictions placed on the Canadian Tire Store property, as well as the closure of the grocery store at University Plaza, we have areas of town that are food deserts
- Local food development should be encouraged (Community Permaculture, Community Gardens)

## **Going Forward**

- "Going back to normal" isn't good enough.
- Support for the Just Recovery Hamilton project
- Using recovery funds (federal, provincial) for better pedestrian and cycling infrastructure (public infrastructure), as well as perhaps to buy land for community-sponsored development
- Support local businesses as the struggle to recover
- Begin working towards the next municipal election: who will be the candidate? Also, the next provincial election.