

Stakeholder Working Session

Wednesday, November 23, 2016

4:00 – 6:15pm

The 519

519 Church Street

OVERVIEW

On November 23, 2016, the City of Toronto hosted a large stakeholder working session to share progress to date on the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP), and seek feedback on the vision, guiding principles, emerging directions, and preliminary objectives developed to date. All organizations, groups and individuals who were invited to participate in focus groups held as part of the first round of consultation on the FMP (in the Spring of 2016) were again invited. 37 people representing 25 organizations participated in the meeting (see attached participant list).

This summary was written by Matthew Wheatley & Nicole Swerhun of Swerhun Facilitation, a third-party facilitation firm retained as part of the Monteith Brown Planning Consultants team to support development of the FMP. This summary is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting but instead provides an overview of the perspectives and advice provided by participants during the facilitated discussion.

This summary was subject to participant review prior to being finalized.

Questions of Clarification

Following the presentations and throughout the facilitated discussion, participants asked questions of clarification. Responses from the project team are denoted in *italics*.

- One of the guiding principles is equity, is inclusiveness part of this principle? *Yes, we started with nine principles and realized we needed to cut them back, but inclusion will be a huge part of the plan. We heard from the public that inclusion is important; they told us that many of our community centres are great, but there are people that feel they aren't for them.*
- Will the Facilities Master Plan look at repurposing spaces, such as schools, for Community Hubs? *The Facilities Master Plan will use an evidence based approach that can help determine where Community Hubs are needed. Parks Forestry and Recreation is actively considering Community Hubs, but we will not run or organize them.*
- I represent Tennis Toronto, is there still an opportunity to become a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) for the Facilities Master Plan? *Members of the SAG are generally sector wide and represent more than one sport. We did hear a lot about tennis through our public consultation activities.*
- How much emphasis is there / will there be on technology in the Facilities Master Plan? *Innovation is a big part of the plan. Technology and innovation will play a key role in getting information out to residents about our facilities. We heard through the consultation that we need to be doing a better job of sharing information.*
- Have you considered a process objective that ensures the community can stay involved as the Master Plan is implemented? *This is coming. We heard a lot about what can be done when building*

and improving facilities. We also heard that we need to consult with non-users and future users to understand their needs as the plan is implemented.

- Our tennis club at Winston Churchill was looking to move temporarily. It was local Councillors, not staff, that objected and stopped us. How are you going to get the Facilities Master Plan approved by Council when some don't want to fund anything? *Getting Council approval can be a challenge; the good news is that this plan will be considered by all Councillors, which will give staff a strong plan to use when speaking with Councillors in the future. The best thing we can provide is an up-to-date plan that reflects current needs. This plan will be updated every five years to allow us to update recommendations as priorities change.*
- How does the Toronto Wayfinding Strategy interconnect with the Facilities Master Plan? *We have evidence that shows a lot of people want / need proper wayfinding to get to our facilities. This evidence gives us a real opportunity to align the Master Plan with the Wayfinding Strategy.*

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The summary below is based on the perspectives and advice shared verbally and in writing at the working session. The written feedback has also been transcribed and is attached to this summary (see attachments 3 and 4). It is important to review the attached written feedback in concert with this summary as several questions asked participants to list and rank their responses. These responses are displayed through charts along with the transcribed written feedback.

All feedback has been grouped into the following five categories: (1) Vision, Guiding Principles and Emerging Directions; (2) Preliminary Objectives; (3) Renewing and Upgrading Facilities; (4) Addressing Gaps and Growth-Related Needs; and (5) Working with Others.

Vising Guiding Principles and Emerging Directions

Vision

Support for the vision. Several participants said they liked the Vision with some saying it was good and/or excellent. One participant shared that accessibility is key and was pleased to see it included.

Putting the vision into practice. Participants said there is a need to clarify how the Vision will be used to balance different needs and priorities, including how the Vision will help determine where different types of recreation facilities are located.

Guiding Principles

Accessibility and inclusion. Participants identified accessibility and inclusion as important practices that should be key elements of the Facilities Master Plan. Some felt that they could be included under the Equity principle, others felt that inclusion should be its own Guiding Principle.

Defining the guiding principles. Participants felt that the Guiding Principles could have more descriptive definitions to clarify what is and isn't included in each. A few participants discussed innovation, noting that it can mean many different things.

Emerging Directions

Access and affordability. Some participants felt the Emerging Directions should be used to strengthen commitments to equitable access, including maintaining affordable user fees. One participant felt that ensuring access and affordability should always be considered when 'working with others'.

Addressing gaps. There was a suggestion to consider both cultural and geographic issues when addressing and filling gaps.

Preliminary Objectives

Participants provided a few overall comments on the Preliminary Objectives as well as comments specific to some of the Objectives. The comments relating to all the Objectives are included below. Specific comments are included in Attachments 3 and 4 (see question 2).

Overall thoughts on the Preliminary Objectives

Suggested new objective. There was a suggestion to add an objective that makes a clear commitment to ongoing community engagement.

Reducing overlap. A few participants said that some of the objectives overlap and that the overall number could be reduced.

Renewing and Upgrading Facilities (Goal 1)

Overall thoughts on improving recreation facilities

Needs assessment. Some participants said they found it difficult to identify which parks and recreation facilities need to be improved the most without the data from a city-wide assessment that identifies if and where needs are being met.

Capturing the needs of non-users and future users. Some participants said the City should think about how they can engage people that aren't currently using City parks and recreation facilities to understand why this is and what their needs are.

Specific facilities that need improvements

Participants were provided with a list of indoor and outdoor facilities and asked to identify those that they feel need to be improved the most. Participants selected facilities from the list as well as suggesting other specific facilities. These responses are included in Attachments 3 and 4 (see question 3).

Most important parks and recreation facility improvements

Participants were provided with a list of facility improvements and asked to identify the ones they feel are most important. Participants selected facilities from the list as well as suggesting other improvements. These responses are included in Attachments 3 and 4 (see question 4).

Addressing Gaps and Growth-Related Needs (Goal 2)

Overall thoughts on addressing gaps and growth-related needs

Missing groups. Participants said that opportunities to provide places for people who are homeless (e.g. places to shower) are missing in the Facilities Master Plan and the questions being asked about the plan.

Important considerations when deciding where and when to develop or expand parks and recreation facilities

Participants were provided with a list of considerations and asked to rank them in order of importance. Participants ranked the considerations as well as suggesting others they feel are important. These responses are included in Attachments 3 and 4 (see question 5).

Working with Others (Goal 3)

Overall thoughts on which organizations the City should work with to provide parks and recreation facilities

Locally based decisions. Participants said that it is difficult to identify the organizations the City should be working with on a city-wide basis. They said this should be determined locally in conjunction with local needs.

Additional organizations. Participants identified sports groups, seniors' centres, private enterprises and faith-based groups as additional organizations that the City could work with to provide parks and recreation facilities.

Funding. Participants said that ongoing sponsorship is preferable to a one-time infusion of funds from organizations working with the City.

Potential organizations for the City to work with

Participants were provided with a list of potential organizations for the City to work with to provide parks and recreation facilities and asked to rank them in order of importance. Participants ranked the organizations as well as suggesting others to consider. These responses are included in Attachments 3 and 4 (see question 6).

Overall thoughts on facility-related partnership outcomes

Public-private partnerships. Participants said they are aware that all City departments are being asked to reduce their budgets. There was a suggestion to consider how public-private partnerships may be able to support parks and recreation facilities.

Additional outcome. Participants suggested adding 'new connections for people who have little access to parks and recreation facilities' as a facility-related partnership outcome.

Facility-related partnership outcomes

Participants were provided with a list of facility-related partnership outcomes and asked to rank them in order of importance. Participants ranked the outcomes as well as suggesting others to consider. These responses are included in Attachments 3 and 4 (see question 7).

NEXT STEPS

City staff closed the working session by thanking participants for their continued participation in the process and let them know that the final Facilities Master Plan will go to City Council for approval in late spring 2017. Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, let participants know that a draft of the meeting summary would be distributed to all participants for review prior to being finalized. The group was also reminded that the online community survey would be live until November 30, 2016, and encouraged to connect with their networks about the opportunity to provide feedback.

Attachment 1 – Participant List

Stakeholder Working Session Participant Organizations

The following is a list of organizations and groups that were present at the Stakeholder Working Session held on November 23, 2016 (organizations are listed alphabetically).

1. The 519
2. Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians
3. Boys and Girls Club of Toronto
4. City of Toronto Disability, Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee
5. Flemington Community Support Services
6. Friends of High Park Zoo
7. Futuresign Multimedia
8. Humber Community Senior's Services
9. Lace Up Your Cleats
10. Netball Ontario
11. Open Sports
12. Outdoor Pickle Ball
13. Parks Forestry and Recreation Disability Steering Committee
14. Rosedale-Moore Park Association
15. Scarborough Baseball Association
16. Scarborough Tennis Federation
17. Social Planning Toronto
18. Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership
19. Toronto Baseball Association
20. Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership
21. Toronto Skateboarding Committee
22. United Way Toronto & York Region
23. West Hill Baseball League
24. York University
25. York University Athletics & Recreation

Attachment 2 – Agenda

Stakeholder Working Session Agenda

Wednesday, November 23, 2016

4:00 – 6:15pm

The 519 (ballroom)

519 Church Street

Purpose: To share progress to date on the development of the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and seek feedback on the vision, guiding principles, emerging directions and preliminary objectives to help further refine the plan.

4:00 Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Petra Wolfbeiss, Director Policy and Strategic Planning - Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto

Nicole Swerhun, Swerhun Facilitation

4:05 Presentation – Facilities Master Plan Update and Strategic Framework

Matt Bentley, Project Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation,

City of Toronto

Steve Langlois, Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

Questions of Clarification

4:40 Plenary Discussion

Focus Questions:

1. Do you have any observations or comments on the consultation findings?
2. What are your thoughts on the vision, guiding principles, and emerging directions?
3. What are your thoughts on the preliminary objectives?

5:00 Break

5:10 Table Discussions

Focus Questions:

1. Renewing and Upgrading Facilities

- A. What types of **indoor** and **outdoor** parks and recreation facilities need to be improved the most?
- B. Which parks and recreation facility improvements do you think are the most important?

2. Addressing Gaps and Growth-Related Needs

- A. What considerations are most important when deciding where and when to develop or expand parks and recreation facilities?

3. Working with Others

- A. Which organizations are most important for the City to work with to provide parks and recreation facilities?
- B. Which facility-related partnership outcomes are most important to achieve?

5:45 Table Report Back and Plenary

6:10 Wrap Up & Next Steps

6:15 Adjourn

Attachment 3 – Individual Workbooks

This attachment contains all the written feedback received in response to the individual workbooks handed out at the stakeholder working session. For each question, there is a description of what was asked and how the feedback has been recorded.

A total of 19 individual workbooks were submitted. Some participants answered all questions while others only answered some.

1. **What are your thoughts on the vision, guiding principles, and emerging directions?**

Comments provided in the worksheets on the vision, guiding principles and emerging directions are included below.

Vision

- Excellent. How does this translate into a “guide post” to determine what a “parks and rec” space is vs. sport specific or high performance?
- Great, accessibility is key. Where to focus first? Is there an increased focus on revenue generation from these facilities to support funding/investment?

Guiding Principles

- Equity – does this include accessibility and inclusion? Accessibility as in AODA standards? Inclusion based on programming? Also, does equity cover cost?
- Equity is a critical and unmet need. Quality is good but should not prevent low cost simple solutions that expand access to more places. Innovation works best in partnership with consumers of the service.
- Add “inclusion” to the guiding principles.
- Innovation required to bridge gap between number of facilities and number of citizens. Cost effective to maximize utilization.
- Equity – defined and enriched feedback.
- Innovation – local engagement feedback.

Emerging Directions

- Should include a point about a commitment to accessible user fees. The investment in facilities will mean nothing if user fees significantly increase. Add naturalized space.
- Gaps should be number one. Old facilities at least offer some access. Gaps should respond to geographic issues but also cultural issues. Working with others should always happen with an eye on ensuring access and affordability.
- Renew and Upgrade Facilities – terrific. Address Gaps and Growth-related needs – terrific. Work with others and explore new opportunities – what criteria is used to identify “others”?
- Increase naturalized space.
- Allow for communities to come together informally through apps like OpenSports to reduce unused spaces.

2. What are your thoughts on the preliminary objectives?

The 10 preliminary objectives are listed below in bold text followed by the comments provided.

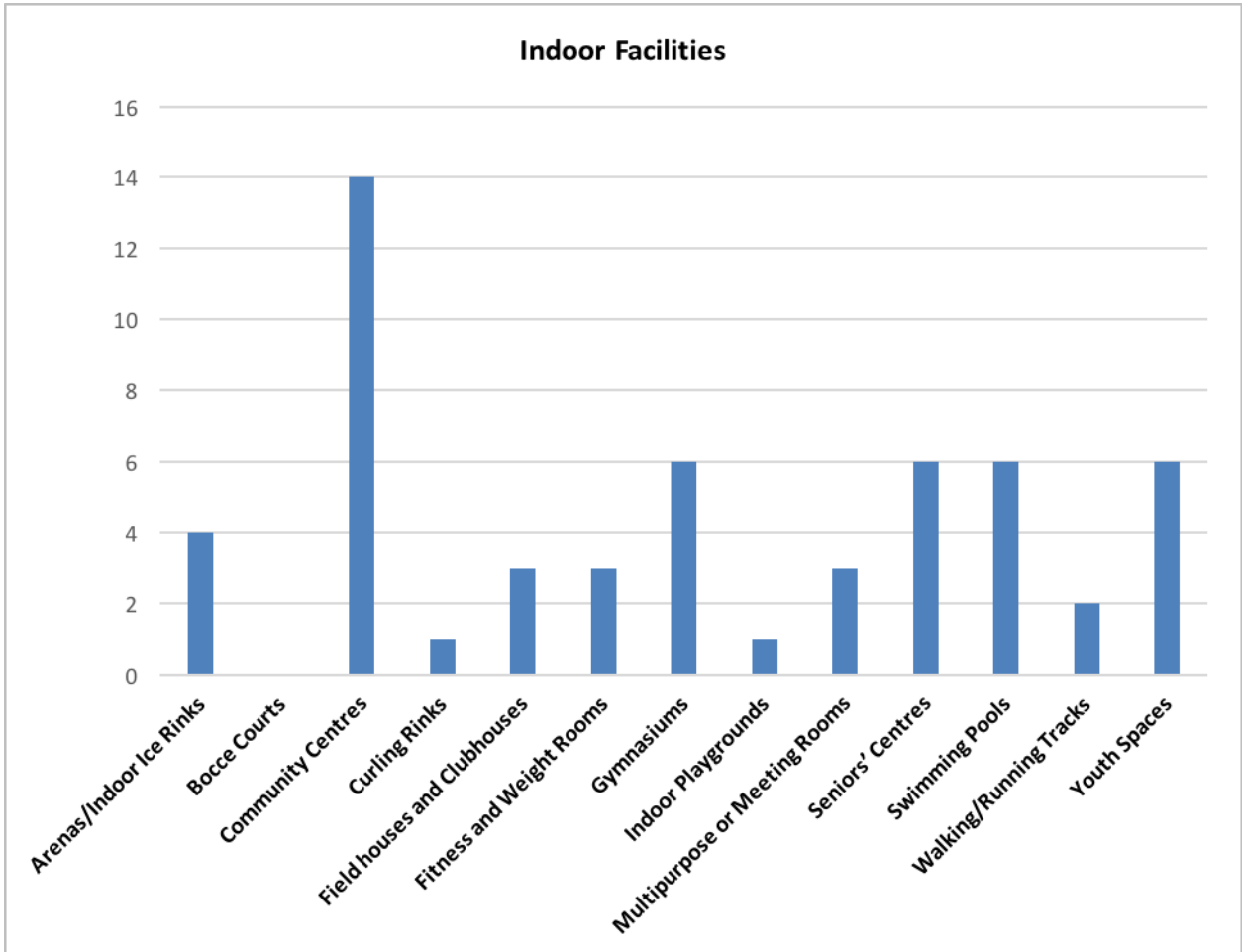
- 1) **Facility planning will be evidence-based and use a variety of inputs based on our guiding principles.**
- 2) **We will invest in parks and recreation facilities where they are needed most, and promote equitable access to high quality local facilities.**
 - What criteria are used to determine “needed most”?
- 3) **We will prioritize co-location and shared space with other City services and community partners and seek partnerships that enhance public access to needed spaces.**
 - Does this include operation money as well as capital investment?
 - This should include private and other organizations such as in #6.
 - Let’s figure out other “hub like” planning taking place in the City of Toronto. External scan of development/retrofit and refurbishing opportunity.
- 4) **We will be proactive and innovative in making the most of the facilities we have.**
 - Do this in partnership with users.
 - This should include who is best to operate specific facilities.
- 5) **We will invest more in renewing and upgrading our existing facilities.**
 - How will the City decide where to spend investment?
 - Yes, don’t overlook existing heritage facilities for new high profile ones.
 - Importance.
- 6) **We will seek a sustainable funding model that can meet facility needs across the city, including areas without a lot of development and growth.**
 - Includes user fees and capital renewal?
 - Sustainability may involve reducing operational costs.
 - Re: Tennis, this is something that community tennis clubs can offer – maintenance, resurfacing, fair and equitable play, social events and programs for all.
- 7) **We will use the plan to inform the City’s budget and related planning work.**
- 8) **We will design community centres that provide appealing spaces, features and amenities that respond to a broad range of needs.**
 - Do this in partnership with users.
- 9) **We will seek ways to use our facilities year-round and for multiple purposes.**
 - Spaces are a big issue so facilities should be multipurpose.
- 10) **We will closely monitor facility utilization and make adjustments to ensure that they are aligned with our principles and directions.**
 - Outside of City Council influence or interference?
 - Do this in partnership with users.

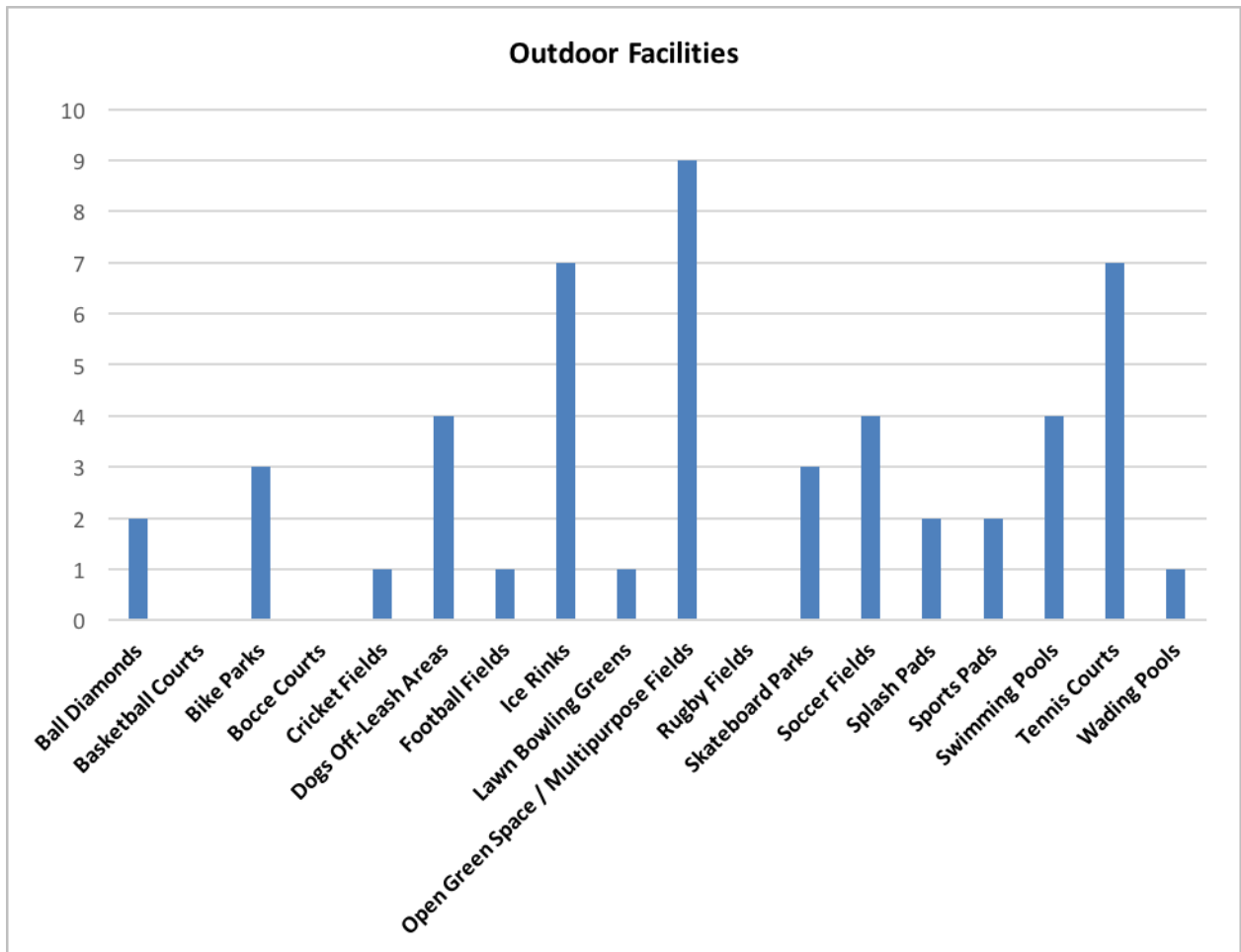
Other comments:

- Just sign us up for 20 years. 20 years – never pay a dime for digital developments.
- Needs to be more focused and pared down to five, max.

3. What types of parks and recreational facilities need to be improved the most?

Participants were provided with a list of indoor and outdoor parks and recreation facilities and asked to identify three indoor and three outdoor facilities they feel need to be improved the most. The two charts below display the results of this question.



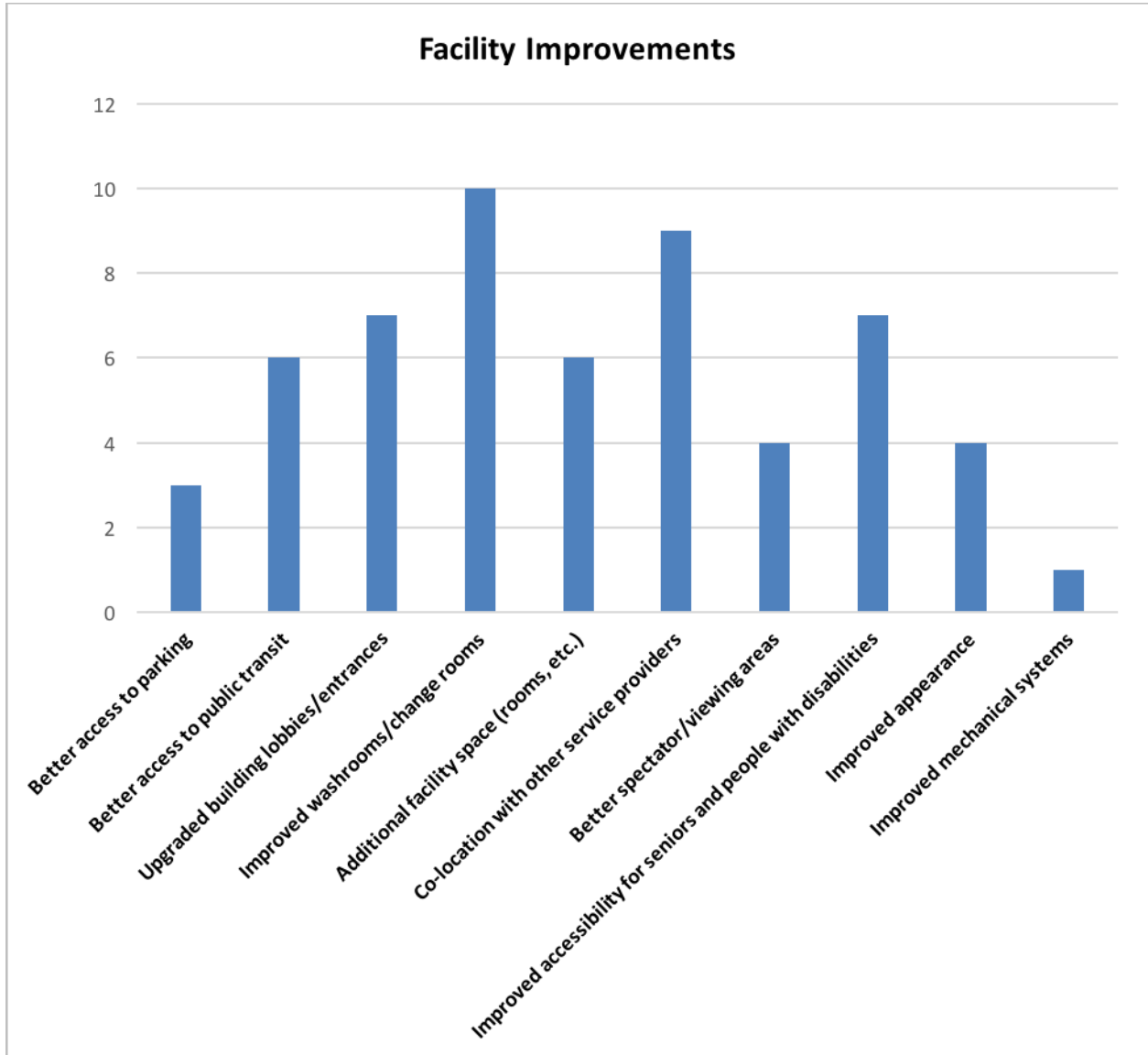


Other comments and facilities identified:

- Netball courts (indoor and outdoor)
- Washroom access (outdoor)
- Community gathering space (outdoor)
- Community kitchens (indoor)
- Walking/running trails (outdoor)
- Outdoor pickleball. Note: 55+ parks in Florida are adding more and more individual pickleball courts every year, separated from the tennis courts. Outdoor courts that I am aware of: Etobicoke (0); Mississauga (2); Port Hope (2); Lindsay (2); Kitchener (1); Oshawa (10) by doubling existing tennis courts. Double line tennis courts to accommodate pickleball, much the same as a school gym and community centre.
- Quidditch court (other)
- Zoos (outdoor)
- Sustainable mountain bike trails (outdoor)
- Separated hiking/walking trails (outdoor)
- Multipurpose (outdoor)
- Tennis courts (indoor) x2

4. Which parks and recreational facility improvements do you think are the most important?

Participants were provided with a list of parks and recreation facility improvements and asked to identify the three they feel are most important. The chart below displays the results of this question.

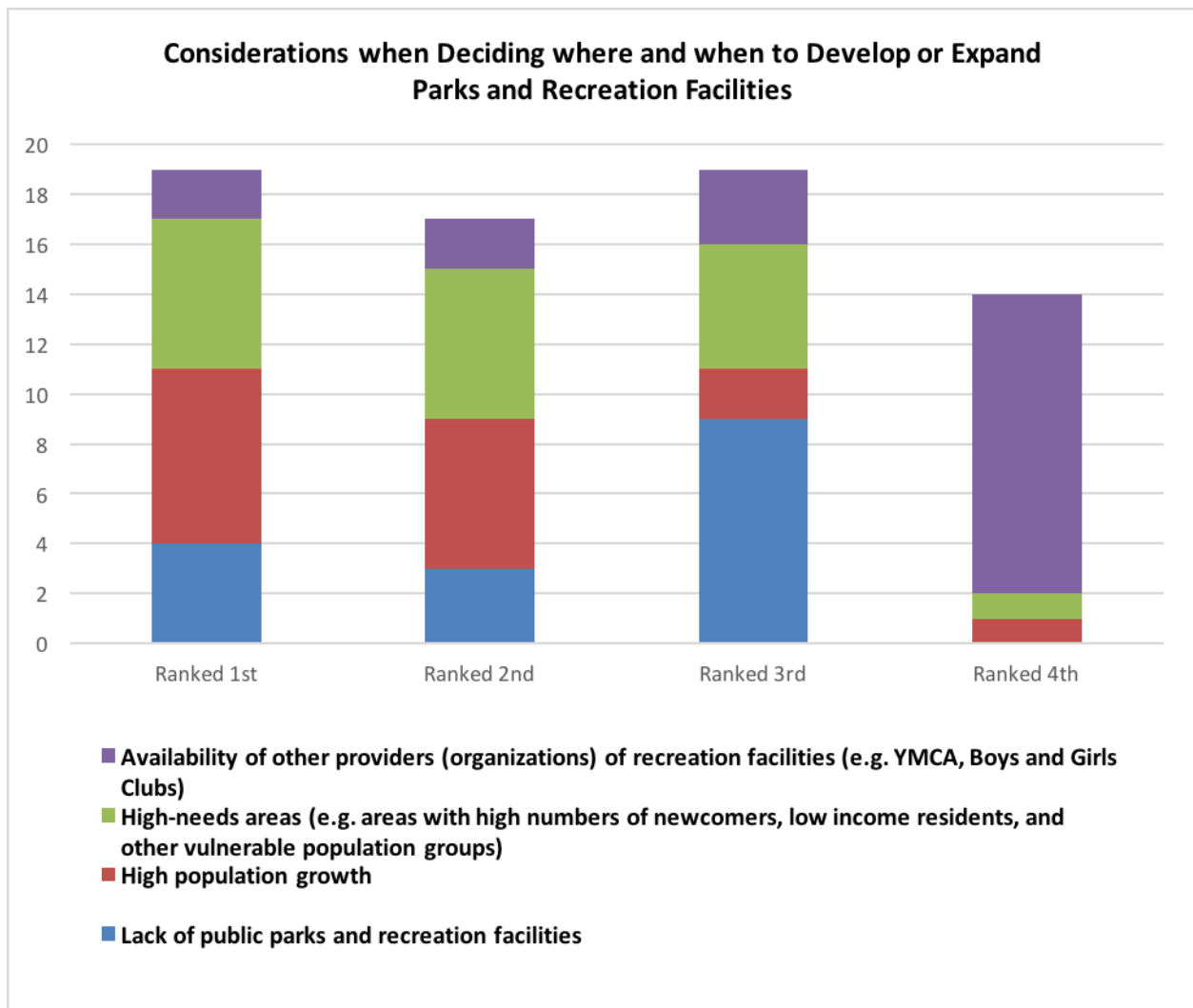


Other comments and facility improvements identified:

- More service in areas with limited access.
- Digital infrastructure. Interactive informational screens to assist staff in registration, scheduling and community announcements.
- Quality of facilities/maintenance (e.g. sports field maintenance including fieldhouses).
- Better signage and possible ratings of trails and their features.
- Picnic tables.

5. What considerations are the most important when deciding where and when to develop or expand parks and recreation facilities? Rank the following in order of importance.

Participants were provided with a list of things the City considers when deciding where and when to develop or expand parks and recreation facilities and asked to rank them in order of importance. The chart below shows how participants ranked the four different considerations.

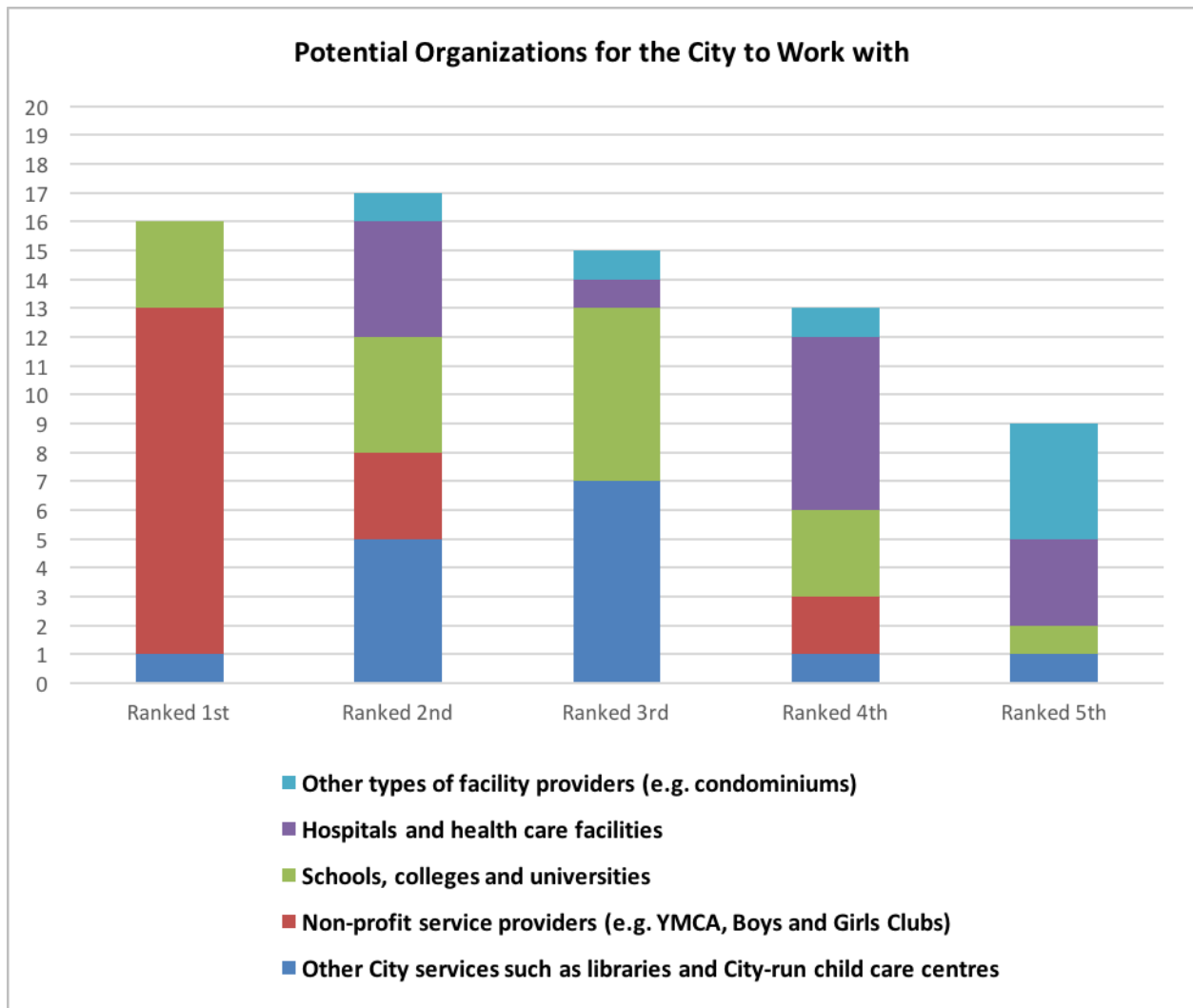


Other comments and considerations identified:

- Accessibility to transit infrastructure. (2nd)
- Homeless programs in some community centres – sleep/shower/food – change locations available daily to keep them moving about.
- Hard to prioritize.
- Pickup/informal play. (2nd)
- Optimize/utilize clubs and other facilities. (4th)
- High needs areas would not be separate from high population growth – this consideration should also include outreach and support for these area residents to introduce them to the park/recreation facility.

6. Which organizations are most important for the City to work with to provide parks and recreation facilities? Rank the following in order of importance.

Participants were provided with a list of potential organizations for the City to work with to provide parks and recreation facilities and asked to rank them in order of importance. The chart below shows how participants ranked the five different types of organizations.

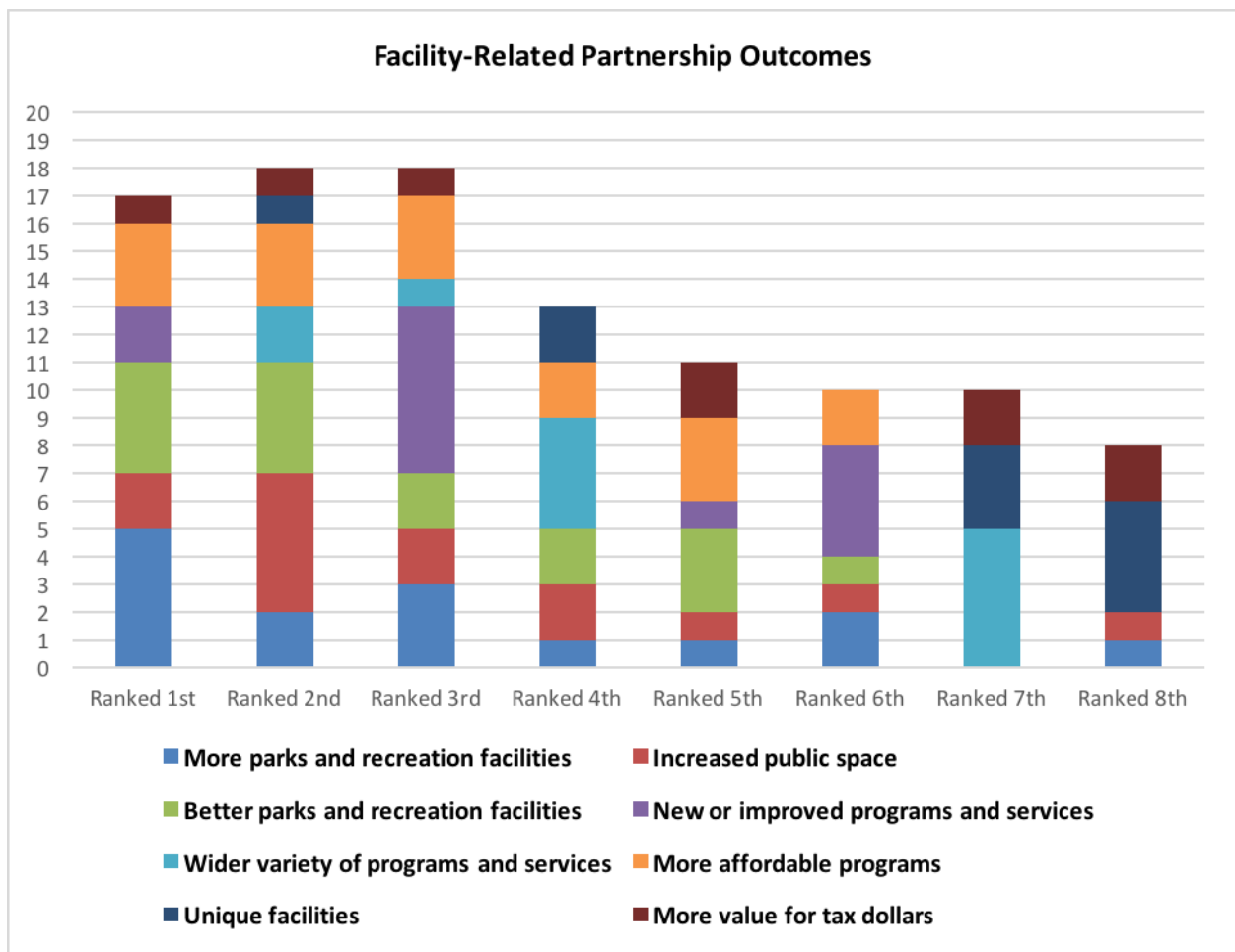


Other comments and organizations:

- Cultural facilities (1st) and faith groups. (3rd)
- Revenue generating partners to assist in funding investment or ultimately sustainability. (1st)
- Sports organizations/clubs. (2nd)
- Have heard discussions that condos and private developers who buy up green space, etc. should have to put in effort and money to create new community areas and recreation facilities. How can we use urban spaces, to get best of both worlds (e.g. field on top of parking garages)?
- Private funds – monetary benefit, sports groups, museums.
- Community groups. (4th)
- OpenSports. (1st)
- Community hubs. (3rd)

7. Which facility-related partnership outcomes are most important to achieve? Rank the following in order of importance.

Participants were provided with a list of facility-related partnership outcomes and asked to rank them in order of importance. The chart below shows how participants ranked the eight outcomes.



Other facility-related outcomes identified:

- Naturalized areas. (1st)
- More community group involvement. (6th)
- Better availability online. (1st)

8. Any other thoughts, comments, or advice?

- Multipurpose sports fields are a key way to impact positively a large number of organizations and the general population.
- Sports organizations are happy to share facilities, but need the access to them.
- Improving the permitting process for sports fields/areas is something to explore. Very archaic and tedious process. Even TDSB has moved to an online system.
- Preliminary objectives are spot on.
- Thumbs up to your consultant on feedback that states “City should optimize existing facilities”. Repurposing is a great focus.
- No mention of homeless people??
- Improved space usage – multipurpose facilities.
- Accessibility issues and safety issues to be addressed.
- Thoughts and opinions of youth and children should be given importance.
- Unstructured play for kids in the parks.
- Issue of permits for events in the parks.
- Focus on finding programming across service providers (City and 3rd parties) Ex. OpenSports app to connect residents to all types of programming.
- Communities being “sold” on the facilities -> dedicates their tax dollars -> impression created about the need -> demand -> self-sustaining.
- Keep public assets public.
- Adaptability and flexibility.
- Those that can pay – do – often a small population. Those that cannot – probably need – not only facilities but support to engage and learn a sport/pastime (a growing population). But it’s those who are just ‘ordinary’ that need PFR facilities and are the easiest to make happy and easiest to maintain (larger population).

Attachment 4 – Table Workbooks

This attachment contains all the written feedback received in response to the table workbooks handed out at the stakeholder working session. Participants were asked to use the table workbooks to record the discussions they had at their table. For each question, there is a description of what was asked and how the feedback has been recorded. Four table workbooks were submitted.

1. What are your thoughts on the vision, guiding principles, and emerging directions?

Comments provided in the worksheets on the vision, guiding principles and emerging directions are included below.

Vision

- Good, but how does it translate into practice, and balance needs and priorities?

Guiding Principles

- Define these better: culture, age, income, cost, access.
- This is key and must also be inclusive.
- Doesn't include accessibility.
- Local responsiveness and ongoing change and adaptation.

Emerging Directions

- More natural space.
- Geographic in low growth (be specific, appropriateness).
- Protect access and affordability.

2. What are your thoughts on the preliminary objectives?

The 10 preliminary objectives are list below in bold text followed by the comments provided.

- 1) **Facility planning will be evidence-based and use a variety of inputs based on our guiding principles.**
 - Cliché, less is more.
- 2) **We will invest in parks and recreation facilities where they are needed most, and promote equitable access to high quality local facilities.**
- 3) **We will prioritize co-location and shared space with other City services and community partners and seek partnerships that enhance public access to needed spaces.**
 - Partner.
- 4) **We will be proactive and innovative in making the most of the facilities we have.**
 - Partner.
- 5) **We will invest more in renewing and upgrading our existing facilities.**
- 6) **We will seek a sustainable funding model that can meet facility needs across the city, including areas without a lot of development and growth.**
- 7) **We will use the plan to inform the City's budget and related planning work.**

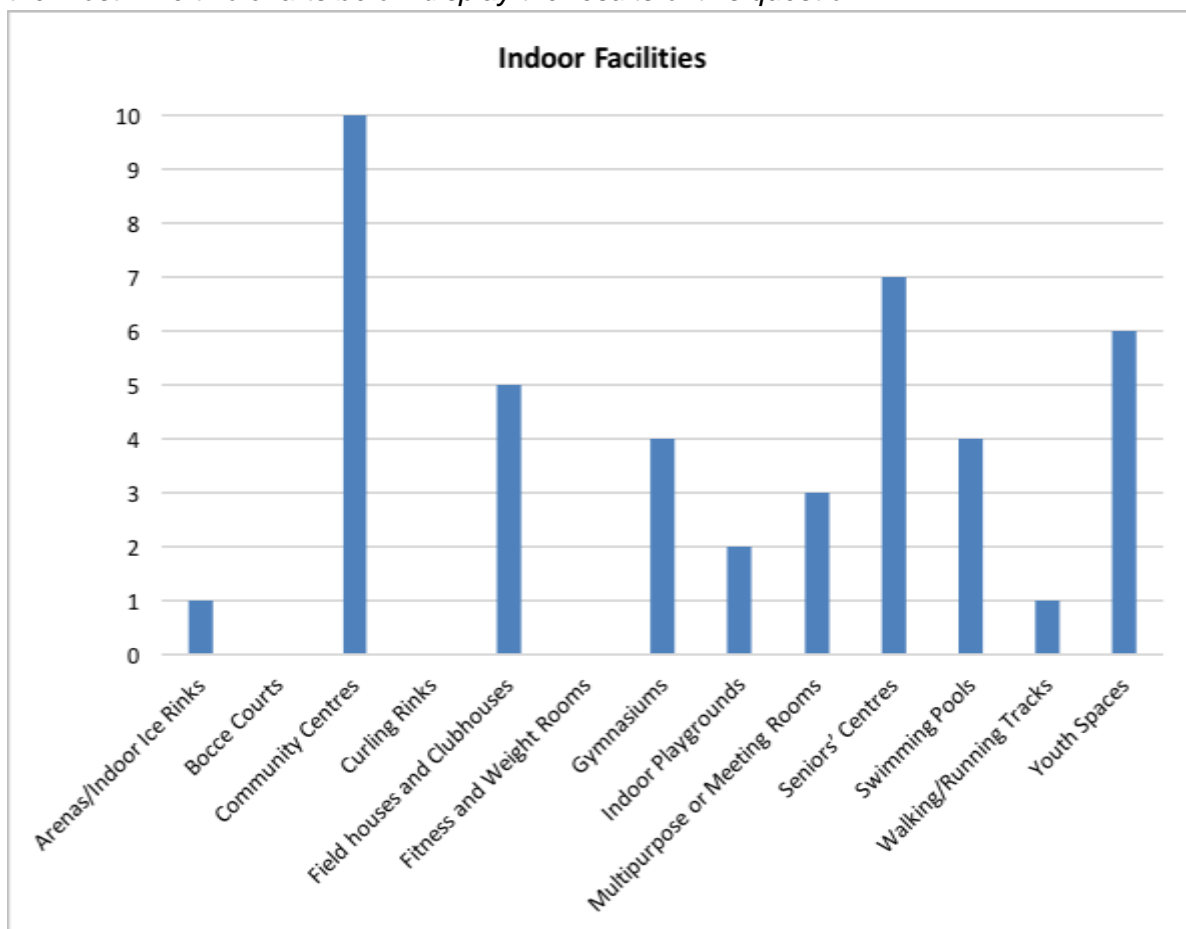
- 8) **We will design community centres that provide appealing spaces, features and amenities that respond to a broad range of needs.**
 - Partner.
- 9) **We will seek ways to use our facilities year-round and for multiple purposes.**
- 10) **We will closely monitor facility utilization and make adjustments to ensure that they are aligned with our principles and directions.**
 - Partner.

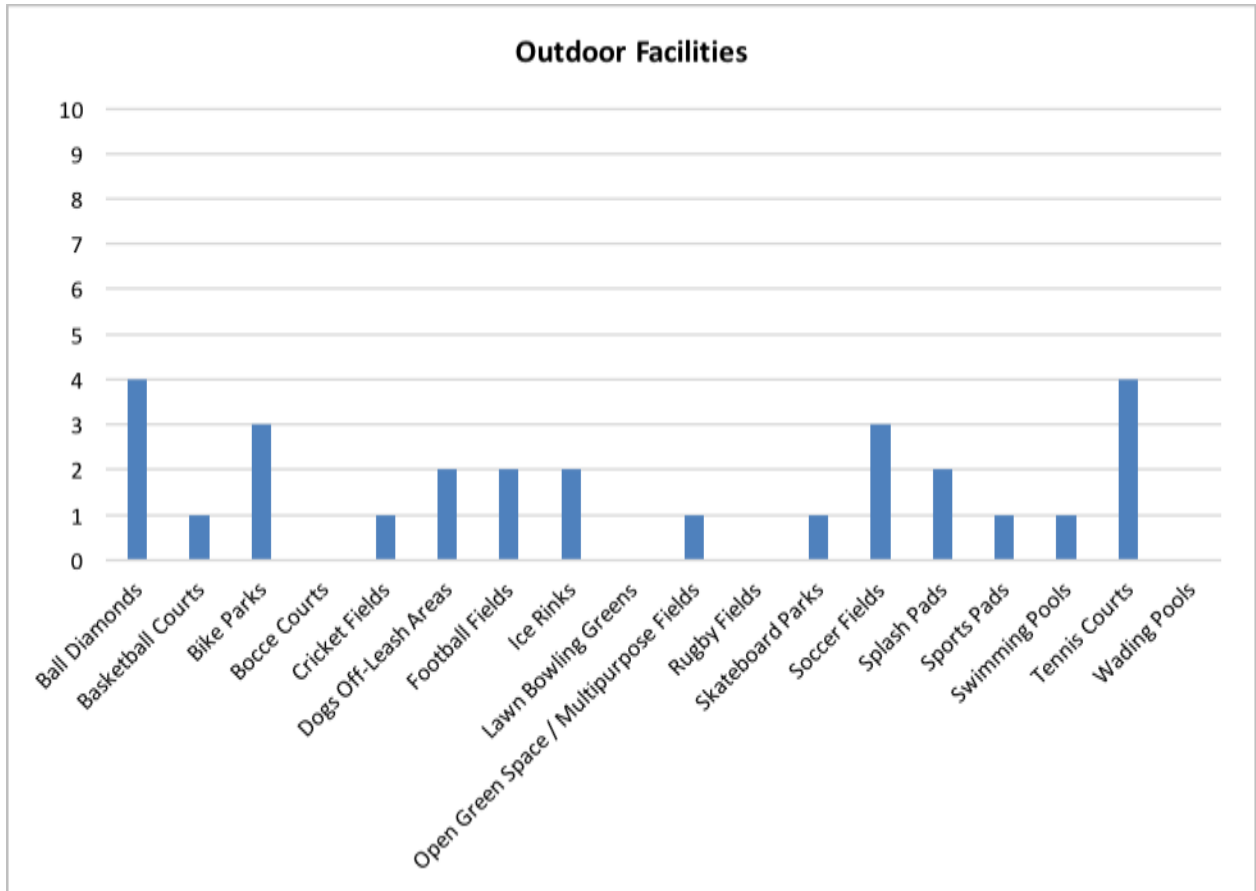
Other comments:

- Ongoing engagement of community in implementation and change through advisory representative.

3. What types of parks and recreational facilities need to be improved the most?

Participants were provided with a list of indoor and outdoor parks and recreation facilities and asked to identify three indoor and three outdoor facilities they feel need to be improved the most. The two charts below display the results of this question.



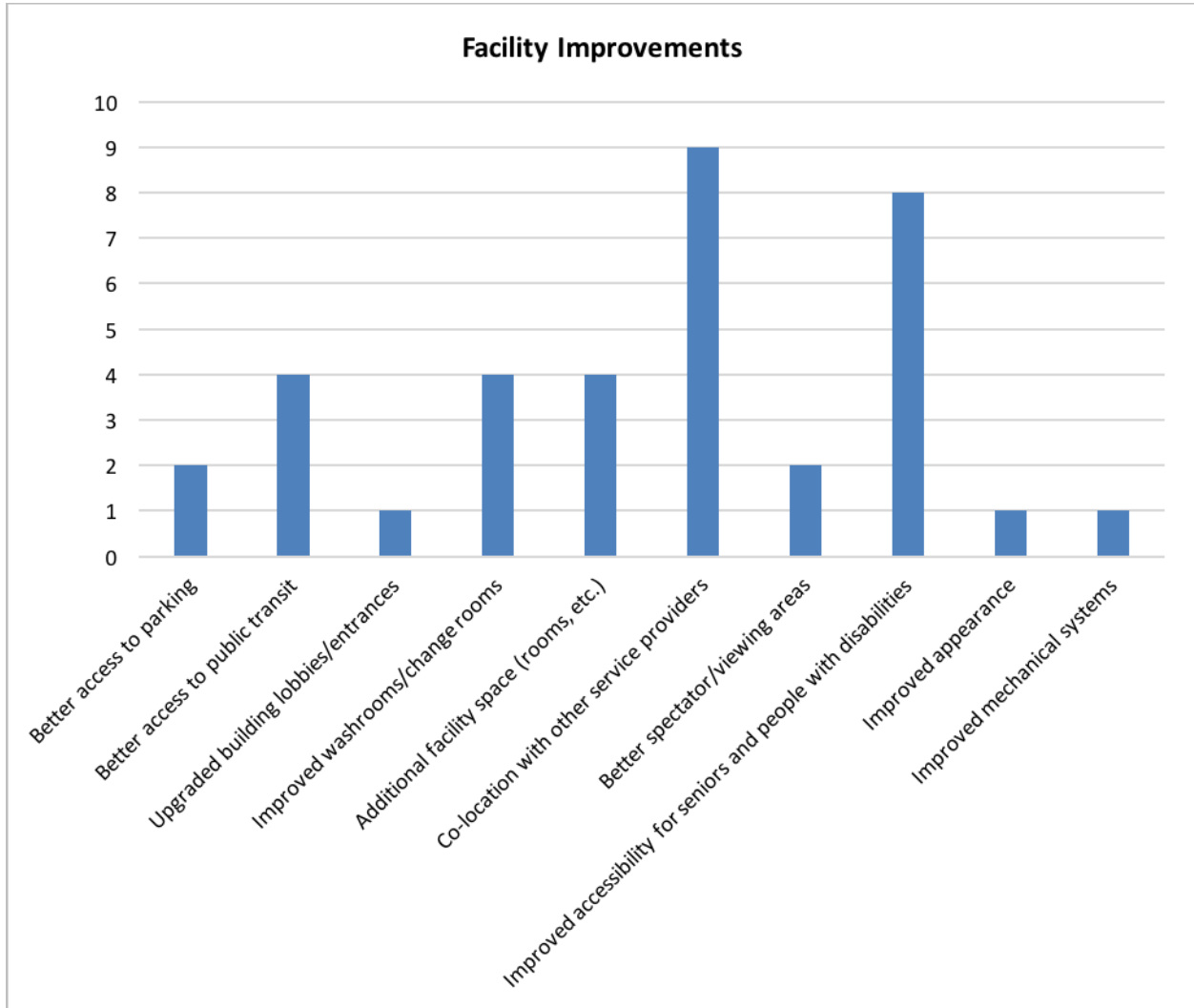


Other comments and facilities identified:

- Quiddich.
- Active mixed with passive.
- Better access.
- Fill gaps.
- Sustainable bike trail.
- Open spaces.
- Pickleball (multipurpose).
- Community kitchens.
- Walking trails (outdoor).
- Allotment gardens, greenhouses.
- Tennis court bubbles.
- Permanent tennis courts: removable walls.
- Washrooms need to be open year-round.
- Community centres – too expensive, too generic.
- Introductions to space for marginalized -> ambassadors.
- Walking trails.
- Fields – multipurpose.
- Seating, benches, lights, cameras.
- Less smelly dog parks.
- Water and cooling facilities.

4. Which parks and recreational facility improvements do you think are the most important?

Participants were provided with a list of parks and recreation facility improvements and asked to identify the three they feel are most important. The chart below displays the results of this question.

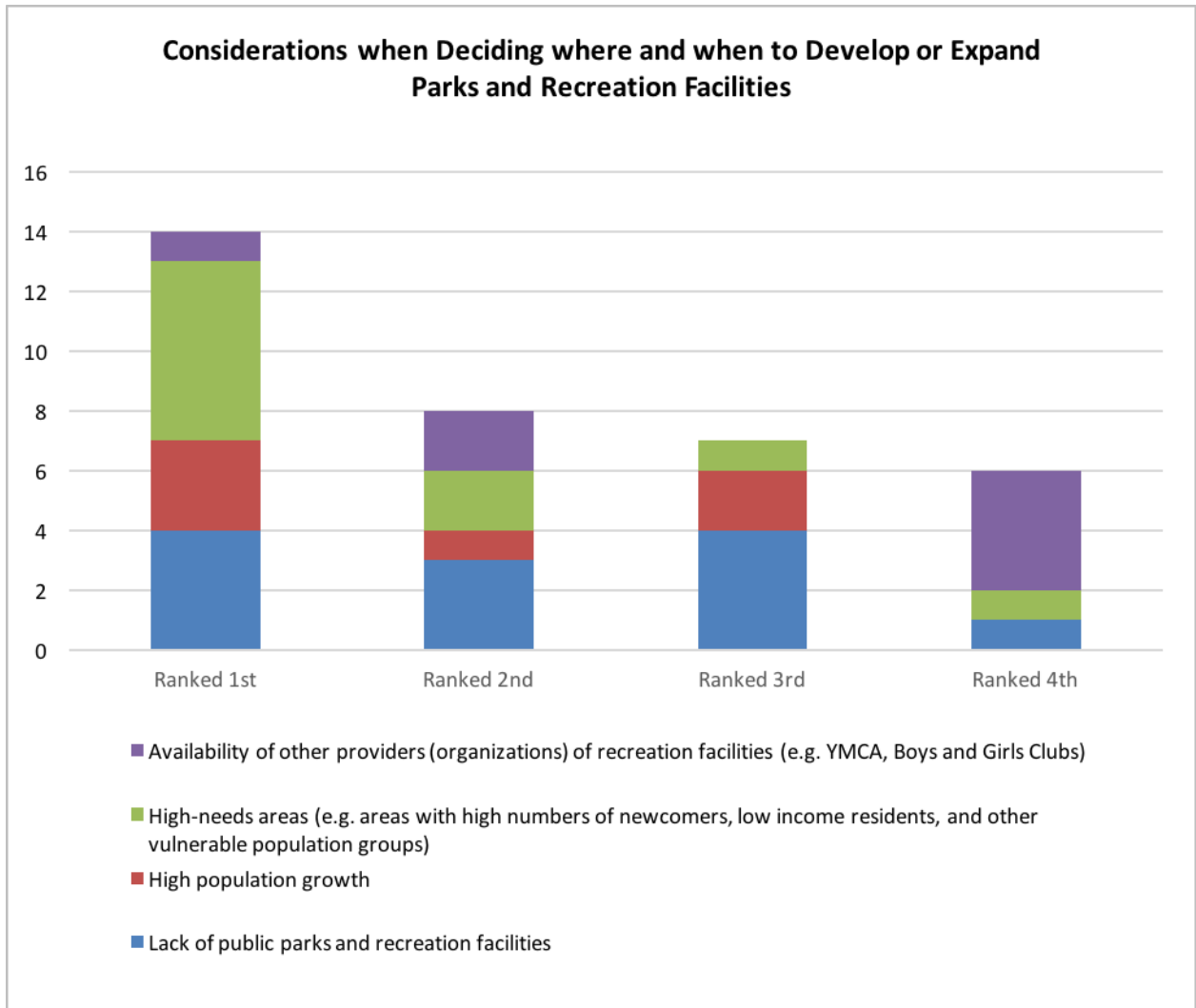


Other comments and facility improvements identified:

- Improved access.
- Picnic tables / fire pits.
- Additional facility space for seniors and new Canadians.
- Areas/rose gardens/fountains.

5. What considerations are the most important when deciding where and when to develop or expand parks and recreation facilities? Rank the following in order of importance.

Participants were provided with a list of things the City considers when deciding where and when to develop or expand parks and recreation facilities and asked to rank them in order of importance. The chart below shows how participants ranked the four different considerations.



Other comments and considerations identified:

- Access to transit.
- Groups that help.
- Optimize utilization of facilities.
- Implementation time important due to demographic shifts.
- High needs areas need full support.

6. Which organizations are most important for the City to work with to provide parks and recreation facilities? Rank the following in order of importance.

Participants were provided with a list of potential organizations for the City to work with to provide parks and recreation facilities and asked to rank them in order of importance. The chart below shows how participants ranked the five different types of organizations.

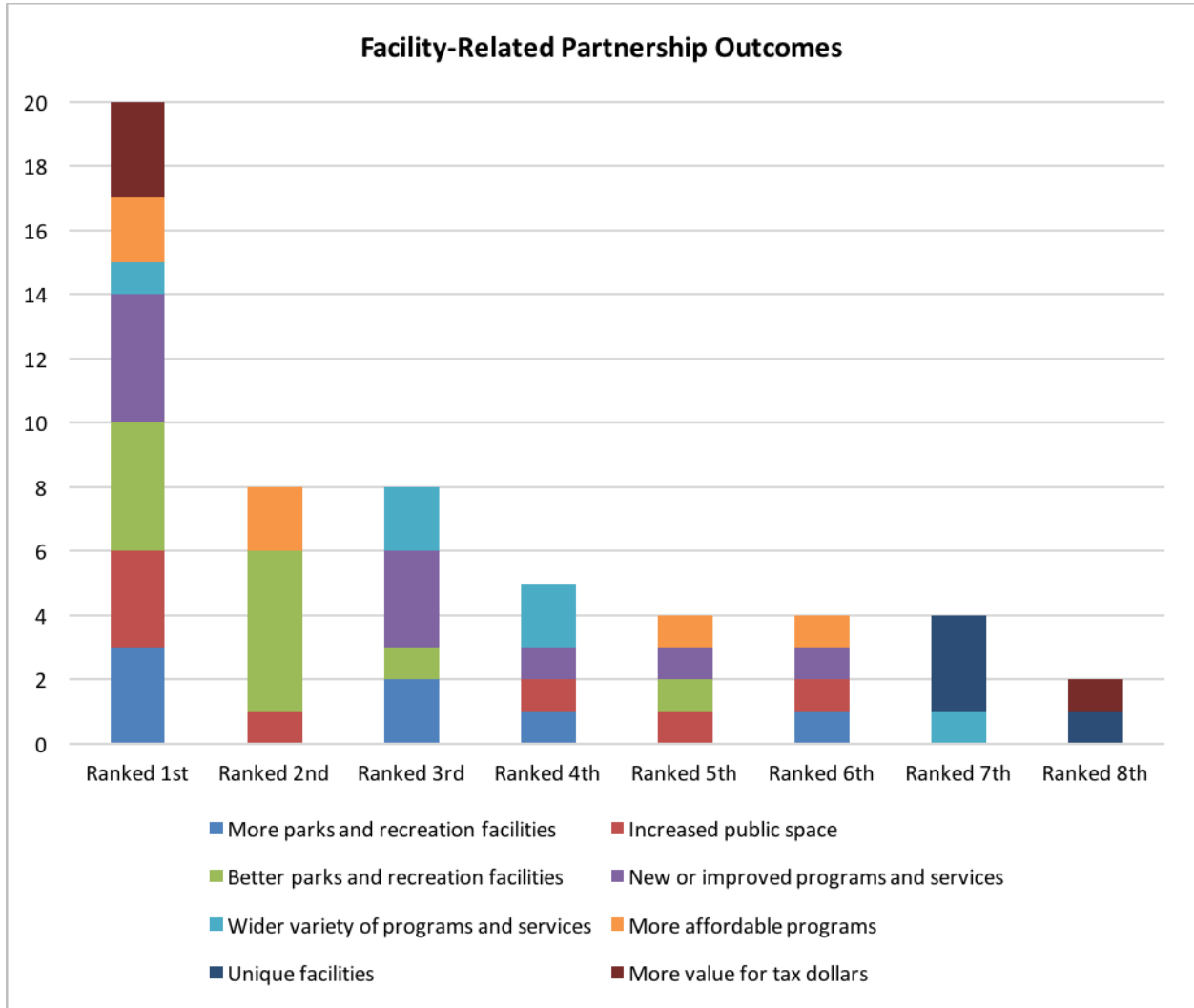


Other comments and organizations:

- Develop capacity for partnerships and working with citizen groups.
- Community hubs.
- Schools – affordability is an issue.

7. Which facility-related partnership outcomes are most important to achieve? Rank the following in order of importance.

Participants were provided with a list of facility-related partnership outcomes and asked to rank them in order of importance. The chart below shows how participants ranked the eight outcomes.



8. Any other thoughts, comments, or advice?

- Responsiveness, more community group involvement.
- Better understanding of needs, process and outcomes.
- Very broad, difficult to rank.
- Agree on multipurpose.
- Safety and accessibility.
- Youth perspective.
- Parent perspective.