



Pop-Up Consultation Session Feedback Summary – Phase 2

Overview

In November 2016 the City of Toronto hosted a series of fourteen (14) pop-up consultation sessions to consult with people in-person on the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and two additional initiatives – the City of Toronto Sport Plan and the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Parks and Recreation Permit Review Process. The pop-up sessions were a convenient and interactive way for residents to learn about and provide feedback on the three projects. For each project they represented one of several engagement tactics being used to gather input.

The pop-up sessions were part of the second phase of consultation for the Facilities Master Plan and provided an on-the-ground opportunity to reach out to residents. Twelve sessions were held in community centres located in areas of the city that demonstrated lower response rates to the first Facilities Master Plan survey conducted in December 2015–January 2016. The remaining two sessions took place at outdoor locations that attract visitors from across the city – High Park and the Jack Layton Ferry Docks. See Appendix 1 for a list of pop-up session locations and dates.

At each session residents were invited to provide input through one-on-one discussion with staff and by taking the second Facilities Master Plan survey, which could be done in hard copy or online using a tablet. The same survey was available to the general public at www.toronto.ca/parks/facilitiesplan from November 4 to December 2, 2016.

Over 800 residents learned about and provided feedback on the Facilities Master Plan at the pop-up sessions, including many facing language, financial and information barriers to participation in traditional consultation activities such as town hall meetings. Of the 1,026 surveys received for the Facilities Master Plan, 65% (662 surveys) were filled in during the pop-up session times. On average, approximately 14 conversations on the Facilities Master Plan took place between staff and residents at each session.

The majority of pop-up participant input was received through the Facilities Master Plan survey and is reported as part of the overall survey findings. A summary of the comments received at the pop-up sessions is provided below.

Summary of Comments

Renew and Upgrade Existing Facilities

25% of comments

Some participants reported that overall the City's parks and recreation facilities are in good condition. It was noted that facility upkeep is important, that utilization of some facilities could be increased, and that the City could learn from others such as the YMCA and family-focused community centres in Markham.

Many participants felt that making facilities more accessible to seniors and people with disabilities is a priority, for example through improved parking and seating. The City should consider the proximity of washrooms to entrances, automatic door timing, emergency exits, and the sometimes different needs of seniors (e.g. toilet seat height).

Suggestions to upgrade community centres included: more and larger program spaces; more multi-purpose spaces, kitchens, and weight rooms; improved change rooms; more spaces to accommodate women's only programming and lounge/ lobby space for 'hanging out'. Some participants recommended water bottle filling stations; cafes; Wifi; and better access to screens, tables and chairs. It was suggested that the City make better use of clubhouses, which offer many opportunities for engagement.

Other facilities identified as in need of renewal were gymnasiums, swimming pools and arenas. Many arenas are in poor condition and could be enhanced with comfortable seating and walking tracks. Additional comments included requests for more shade and seating, salt water pools, and a process to address local facility needs/opportunities e.g. growing interest in tennis in the Driftwood area due to a locally active tennis group.

Many respondents provided recommendations for improvements to specific facilities. These are outlined below:

Etobicoke – Enhanced facilities at the West Mall rink; consider acquiring Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Institute if it becomes available.

North York - Add dance studio and reduce noise between program spaces at Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre; improve change rooms at Cumber Park Community Centre.

Scarborough - Larger change rooms and mechanical system upgrades at Centennial Recreation Centre arena; washroom and change room upgrades at Malvern Recreation Centre; more parking at Thorncliffe Community Centre; tennis court upgrades at Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre.

Toronto East York – Improved exterior maintenance and outdoor basketball court lighting at Regent Park Community Centre; more fitness equipment and women's only spaces at East York Community Centre; larger fitness room at Jenner St. Marie; make Metro Hall rooms available after hours for programs and permitting.

Address Gaps and Growth-Related Needs

30% of all comments

Some participants felt that demographics and trends must be considered in determining facility needs. It was commented that a lack of parks and recreation facilities downtown is due to a lack of proactive planning in the past, and that it is not important which ward a facility is in as long as people have access to it. Another suggestion was to improve collaboration around the sale of school properties, particularly if they house community services or have facilities that may be needed in the future.

Participants reported a need for more track and field facilities; cricket fields; basketball courts; shinny rinks; skateparks; picnic shelters; and park washrooms. They also suggested more indoor walking tracks; indoor tennis; spaces for families to use; and senior-friendly facilities, including therapeutic (warm water) pools. Some participants would like facilities for emerging sports such as parkour and roller derby. Other suggestions included a community centre for adults, sports domes in low-income areas, and affordable space for community organizations to provide programs.

Many participants provided recommendations for additional facilities in specific areas of the city. These are outlined below:

Etobicoke – More seniors centres and youth centres; more pools, particularly in northwestern Etobicoke; new community centres to serve Ward 4 and beyond (north of Eglinton) and the Islington Avenue and Westway area; practice soccer field in east Etobicoke; note that the Etobicoke Olympium is not meeting local needs.

North York – More basketball courts.

Scarborough – More public tennis courts, pools and open green space for example near the Scarborough Town Centre; track and field facility in east Scarborough; tennis bubble in south Scarborough; cricket pitch improvements at Terry Fox and Ashtonbee parks.

Toronto East York – More arenas downtown; centrally located practice soccer field; new community centre in north end of Ward 20.

Work with Others and Explore New Opportunities

20% of all comments

Many participants expressed support for facility partnerships. It was noted that partnerships bring benefits but can also bring risks, and that it is important to establish positive working relationships and clear roles and responsibilities. Some participants would like to see more co-location of recreation facilities and libraries. Participants suggested that the City collaborate with a variety of organizations including: school boards and universities; health and wellness organizations; seniors organizations; faith-

based organizations; entrepreneurs; and specialized groups such as ethnic communities to fill program gaps. Some participants would like to see the City participate in community hubs, and provide spaces for community organizations.

Some benefits of partnerships were identified, including increased access to facilities, expanded programming options, and problem-solving, for example by working with developers to address the issue of dogs. It was noted that partnerships with sponsors may have value, but that sponsorships and donations can create inequity as low-income areas may have less access to these resources.

Some participants recommended more community outreach and more comprehensive consultation when development occurs in an area, with residents brought in early on in the process. Some expressed frustration with consultation that does not result in any action on the issues in question.

Comments on working with others in specific areas of the city are outlined below:

Etobicoke – Some respondents reported frustration with the slow pace and lack of movement in securing needed community facilities for the Central Etobicoke/East Mall area. Ongoing facility initiatives in the area include a proposed YMCA at Kipling Avenue and Dundas Street West that will face little competition for local funds (no local hospital and few arts groups), and consideration of a full-site solution for the Silvercreek Public School site in response to community mobilization. It was noted that Thistletown is an important shared space facility that serves seniors well.

Additional Comments

25% of all comments

It was noted that facilities should be considered public spaces. Residents in the core recognize that downtown is a tall building environment with a growing population and have realistic expectations about parks and open space. Some participants commented on funding, wondering about the feasibility of implementing the Facilities Master Plan, the appropriate use of funding, and the use of Section 37 funds in the downtown core. Additional suggestions include the use of non-toxic cleaning products, healthier foods in vending machines and improving security and safety in parks,

Some participants requested more youth, adult, seniors and all-ages programs including camps for 13-15 year olds, adult pool times that are not lane swims, and more Qi Gong and Tai Chi classes. It was suggested that pre-school programs be in the morning and have a consistent curriculum. An online program rating system was recommended.

Registration should be easier and prioritize access for people who live in an area even at centres where programs are free. It was noted that in Peel people can access many

programs for a nominal fee. Comments on permitting addressed the complexity of the permit process, non-resident access to permits, and increased demand for volleyball, cricket, and basketball league teams.

Some participants reported that the City's seniors discount is important, that some seniors lack resources even though they live in areas that are perceived to be well off, and that there is a need for more older adult programs at seniors centres.

Some respondents noted that many arena users travel to and from the surrounding areas to play hockey, particularly girls hockey. Families spend a lot of time in arenas and the availability of family-friendly space and drop in programs would be helpful. Some participants commented on the cost of playing hockey, and appreciated the \$200 learn-to-play incentive. It was suggested that new arenas should be built with Olympic size ice.

Some respondents noted that the City should consider the needs of Island residents and visitors year round, for example make tennis nets available for an extended season and work with residents to maintain clear walkways so that City trucks can stay clear of resident properties. It was also noted that the ferry terminal design is too massive and does not include a spot for dropping off people in wheelchairs and with coolers.

Additional comments pertaining to specific areas of the city are outlined below:

Etobicoke – Too many off-leash dogs and droppings at Marie Curtis Park; review traffic in High Park, particularly at entrances and exits, and improve maintenance of the dogs off-leash area; too much infrastructure is being put into Centennial Park.

North York – Improve maintenance at Dennis R. Timbrell Resources Centre, and secure community centre access to auditorium; finish Don Valley bike path at Leslie/Steeles

Fill all gaps in Martin Goodman Trail, Humber, Finch corridor and Don Valley bike paths.

Scarborough – More sports programs for ages 13–16; more badminton and fitness centre hours at Centennial Recreation Centre; more basketball drop-in at Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre; create a playspace at Guild Park that fits in with the arts and culture aspect of the park, and recreational trails.

Toronto East York – Increase the number of accessible entrances to the park in Regent Park; more seniors services in the Annex area; finish stairs to Don Valley path at Gerrard Street, Dundas Street and Queen Street; fill all gaps in Martin Goodman Trail and Don Valley bike paths; fix up David Pecaut Square; secure a park between Richmond Street and Adelaide Street.

Appendix 1

Pop-Up Consultation Session Locations, Dates and Times

Scarborough

Centennial Recreation Centre, 1967 Ellesmere Rd
Saturday November 5, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Malvern Recreation Centre, 30 Sewells Rd
Saturday November 12, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre, 2467 Eglinton Ave East
Wednesday November 30, 5-8 p.m.

North York

Driftwood Community Recreation Centre, 4401 Jane St
Sunday November 6, 12-3 p.m.

Dennis R. Timbrell Resource Centre, 29 St. Dennis Dr
Wednesday November 9, 4-7 p.m.

Parkway Forest Community Centre, 55 Forest Manor Rd
Saturday November 26, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Toronto East York

Regent Park Community Centre, 402 Shuter St
Monday November 7, 4-7 p.m.

Wallace Emerson Community Centre, 1260 Dufferin St
Tuesday November 15, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, foot of Bay St at Queens Quay
Sunday November 20, 1-4 p.m.

East York Community Centre, 1081 ½ Pape Ave
Tuesday November 22, 5-8 p.m.

Etobicoke York

Memorial Pool and Health Club, 44 Montgomery Rd
Tuesday November 8, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

High Park (near Grenadier Restaurant), 1873 Bloor St W
Sunday November 13, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. (weather permitting)

North Kipling Community Centre, 2 Rowntree Rd
Wednesday November 16, 2-5 p.m.

Amesbury Community Centre, 1507 Lawrence Ave West
Sunday November 20, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.