

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION – COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Block 31 Schools, Community Centre and Child Care

City of Toronto

Saturday, July 20, 2015

Harbourfront Community Centre

SUMMARY OF INPUT RECEIVED

A Public Information Session was held on Saturday, June 20, 2015 from 2:00-5:00 pm at the Harbourfront Community Centre. The purpose of the Information Session was to canvass the community for their input on preliminary design concepts for the Community Centre and park.

The Information Session was organized with six information stations:

- a recurring presentation providing an overview of the project was made every hour at 2:15, 3:15 and 4:15 (attached to this memo)
- a table group discussion with representatives of the TDSB and TCDSB
- a table group discussion with representatives from the City of Toronto Children's Services speaking about child care
- a table group discussion with representatives from the project team speaking about traffic, parking, pick-up and drop-off
- a table group discussion with representatives from the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation speaking about the community centre and recreation
- a table group discussion with representatives from the project team and the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation speaking about the park
- a table group discussion with representatives from the project team speaking about the building design

Approximately 40 people came to the Information Session. Generally, the input was very positive. Most people attended the presentation only, and a few took time to visit some of the discussion tables. We received only a few written submissions on the comment forms. This memo summarizes the notes recorded at each table group discussion. The primary discussion leaders at each table group are noted in brackets.

1. TDSB/TCDSB (David Percival TDSB and Maia Puccetti & John Yan TCDSB)

How would you bring your child to school? What would make drop-off and pick-up easiest for you?

- Not many people dropped by this table
- Only received one comment regarding using the roof as playscape for schools or day care

2. CHILD CARE (Gail O'Donnell and Karen Guthrie, City of Toronto)

How will you drop off your child? Ideas for stroller and bike trailer parking?

- Not many people dropped by this table
- Received one comment saying they would use the streetcar to access the Child Care centre and then will be pushing child in stroller to childcare

3. Traffic, Parking Pick up and Drop off (Michael Parker, Consulting team, Rafique Tabassum, City of Toronto)

Do you have suggestions for improving the circulation plan?

- Adjust median on east arm of Brunel/Fort York Boulevard intersection and mark crosswalk
- Difficulty crossing Spadina as a pedestrian. No crossing on south –arms of intersection with Fort York Blvd/Bremner. Also no marked crossing on the north or west arms of intersection at Lakeshore/Gardiner ramps
- Planters on Iceboat Terrace create a blind spot at Telegram Mews. Parking (particularly by contractors) is also a safety issue there. May be a risk for cyclists on Telegram Mews
- Protection needed for pedestrians crossing at Brunel/Fort York Blvd intersection
- Pedestrians currently cross the Spadina/Fort York Blvd intersection southern arm where there is no crosswalk
- Fort York Blvd approach to Spadina often blocked by illegally parked vehicles outside the bank on the south-west corners of the intersections
- Consider widening Fort York Blvd approach to Spadina to 3 lanes (a dedicated left-turn lane, a through lane and a dedicated right-turn lane) and bike lane by taking space from the median
- Make on-site parking available to the public
- Brunel may be congested. Concerned about parent drop-off along Brunel
- Speeding motorcycles on Fort York Blvd. Consider speed bumps
- Through-right curb lane on Bremner westbound approach to Spadina is short and does not reach Navy Wharf Court. Can it be extended so through and right turners don't have to join the left-turn queue?

- Bicycle lanes on Fort York Blvd do not extend onto Bremner on the east side of Spadina. Cyclists on Bremner tend to use the sidewalk
- On Fort York Blvd approach to Spadina right-turners create a third lane by forcing their way into the bike lane. Add a curbside dedicated right-turn lane in addition to the existing two traffic lanes and bike lane
- Poor pedestrian access from east side of Spadina. Crossing at Lakeshore/Gardiner ramps is dangerous as there is confusion as to whether cars have to yield to pedestrians. There is a marked crosswalk over the Gardiner ramp onto Spadina, however the signs indicate that pedestrians must wait for a gap. Risk of pedestrians being hit by vehicles and rear-end vehicle collisions on ramp.
- Look at short-term parking (layby?) for the bank on south-west corner of Fort York Blvd/Spadina intersection. Currently illegal parking obstructs the bike lane. Pedestrian volumes on the south side of Fort York Boulevard outside the bank are currently lower than on the north side.

4. **COMMUNITY CENTRE/RECREATION (Kim Brown, City of Toronto)**

What do you want to use the Community Centre for? What types of programs?

- Adult – fitness, yoga, dance, music (piano, guitar, etc.), martial arts, cooking classes
- Children’s programs – soccer, play programs, sports (preschool to school age), gym programs, cooking classes
- Adult - fitness classes, yoga, tai chi
- Need programs for older adults – live in condos in the area
- Love to have specific program space for preschool
- Adult to older adult – fitness classes, yoga, general interest programs (woodworking), cooking programs (healthy eating programs), arts programs
- Indoor activities for kids (indoor playground with permanent fixtures if possible)
- Playscape – for ages preschool up to school age – love it, need it (several said this). Want it open for drop-in to be able to use with kids at anytime, not a fee-based opportunity – like playgrounds in parks
- Gym programs – for all ages – not just adults – free play and structures programs in gym for kids
- New Fort York library – packed with toddlers in their programs
- Programs/social space new moms – drop-in and meet other new moms
- Music room(s) with built-in non-portable instruments (e.g. piano, drum)
- After-school programs for kids
- Dance
- Community organizations should have easy access to run activities

How and when would you be coming to the community centre?

- Weekday evenings and weekends: walk
- Weekdays, evenings: walking
- Weekday evening with kids and weekend with kids
- Weekday daytime – adult
- Weekday evenings and weekends: walk
- Weekday evening, weekends: walking, biking (bike parking)
- Walking (live at condos in area) Use all times – weekday evenings and weekend
- Flexible work schedule so weekday daytime, once per week
- Several times per week

Ideas for stroller, bike and bike trailer parking?

- Live in area – walk to facility
- Need wide corridor for moms watching kids and stroller parking
- Space for strollers for child care, bike and bike trailers (places to lock up bikes)
- Live in area, no stroller, bike parking
- Design – ensure hallways are wide and bright
- Casual seating close to indoor playscape
- Large hallways

In addition, a survey was distributed seeking input on rank ordering the top five amenities with 1 being the highest. The following is a summary of input provided:

Change facilities	4		5	3	3	4	1	1	5	3		1
Shower					4	5	3	3	5			2
Lounge spaces	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	4	2	4	5	3
Large teaching kitchen	3	2	3	4	1	1	5	5	4	2	3	5
Servery		5		5	5	3			4	5		
Party space		4	2			3	4		1	1	4	4
Indoor playground	1	1	1	1		1		2	3		1	

The survey also asked how often each amenity space would be used. The following is a summary of input provided:

	Always use	Sometimes use	Never use
Change facilities	11	111111	11
Shower		11111	11111
Lounge spaces	1111	111111	
Large teaching kitchen	1	111111111	
Servery	1	11111	1111
Party space	11	111111	11
Indoor playground	111111	11	11

5. PARK (Nancy Chater, Consulting team, Ray Stukas and Brian Green, City of Toronto)

What kinds of events would you like to see in the space adjacent to the building?

- Make amphitheatre space generous
- Farmers market, pop-up art shows, art and crafts, buskers
- Lots of bike parking (so hard to drive and park)
- Fort York Blvd becomes too busy when Rogers in on
- Surface materials? Not all asphalt for playground
- Issues:
 - Dogs use the north field and artificial field
 - Will conflict with kids
 - Run into the fountain/waterplay
 - Need dog drinking fountain
 - More concerns about dogs and dog waste
 - Create a designated area for dogs and provide incentive to use designated area
 - Need more trees/shade in Canoe Landing

- Loves amphitheatre
- Need shade on playground
- Include benches on roof garden to enjoy views out over park
- Swimming pool in Community Centre
- Movie night
- Farmer's market
- Live music
- Performances like at music garden
- Use the roof for school playground only? How to coordinate with public use of roof regarding security or would it be schools only?
- Skating rink? Nearby Harbourfront Centre
- Roof rink on Community Centre?
- Build over the railway and use it as amenity space
- Very impressed with the overall approach of building and landscape
- Like extent of open space in playgrounds and plaza
- Currently the turf and open grass area is dominated by large dogs off leash and this is a safety concern for young children (who might be afraid)
- The turf is also mostly used by adults (competitive soccer, non-permitted bootcamp workouts...) I would love to see an outdoor play structure for kids

How will you use the Block 31 playgrounds? What kinds of play spaces would you like to see?

- Swings
- Play structure (at least one)
- Sand play with water
- Need play equipment in area, sand, teeter totter, swings, traditional stuff
- Take up part of north field with playground with equipment
- No washrooms to use with the park at present
- Small kids need WC's – make it easily accessible from outside
- Examples in presentation look good
- Play structure, playground with equipment
- There is nothing very close with play equipment
- Like Vic Square Park
- Use the roof for playspaces
- Access to roof – like the Montessori School nearby at Bremner and Spadina. This is part of a vertical community approach – use the roofs
- You get safety and enclosure on roof playgrounds
- Play surface safe for falls (not concrete pavement)
- Not too dirty/mucky
- Space to climb, run, swing, games, play/art

6. Building Design

- Need to re-evaluate the presence of a large number of planters on the sidewalk and design the street edge at Fort York Blvd. to include conveniently located bike parking
- The Community Centre would benefit from a cafeteria / restaurant
- Concern about the height of the Block 31 facility in relationship to the townhouses located on Brunel Court and how this might impede upon existing views
- Concern that unenclosed outdoor play spaces would allow children to leave the premises freely and this could potentially be dangerous
- Desire to see the indoor playground sectioned for use by different age groups. e.g. above and under age 4
- Questions about resource sharing between the two schools. e.g. : How are the 2 schools sharing art supplies. Where is this going to be stored?
- Desire to see intergenerational use of the Community Centre / importance should be given both to open ended spaces for children to play freely and more structured spaces for adults
- Desire to see flexible use of educational spaces / classrooms (inclusion of 21st century learning concepts)
- Questions about the staggered use of the outdoor play spaces and gyms

Other comments received on comment forms and by email:

- I have a comment regarding expansion of the proposed school areas of this project. Currently the western boundary ends up on Bathurst Street, but considering growing population of the Fort York area (Fleet Street as an example), it makes more sense to expand the school area to accommodate children from the Fort York area as well. Currently, children from the Fort York areas need to attend Niagara Public School 2.3 km away from its neighbourhood, so it makes more sense to expand the school boundaries in western direction.
- Mother of 1 child (lived in area for 10 years)
Will the park/outdoor area have enough to offer young children?
I recommend an outdoor play structure
Safety: I suggest enclosure of the outdoor park during school hours
Indoor playground for preschool to 12 year (kids need more space to run free)
Concerned about large area for assemblies, lunch (schools) I don't see an auditorium (cafeteria/lunch space will get dirty), how many people in the library?

- These meetings are more for show than reality, but maybe someone will recognize the obvious. You need much parking space for school buses, now fighting for space with the TV wagons on Front. The use a whole lane of already overcrowded traffic lanes. You need as low profile a building as possible given the area is already overbuilt and overcrowded.. Maybe a flat roof could accommodate community gardens. Other cities have community gardens. By the way, all the crowing about the Pearson express is rubbish...in Vancouver I can get from downtown to YVR Van. by the same type of train in the same time for \$1.75.
- I am wondering why there are 2 elementary schools being planned for that space, as opposed to 1? That seems excessive and creating more student spaces than is necessary, both now and into the future. With that much capital investment, whatever is built should be usable for the public in the event the second school proves to be excess and needs to be shuttered due to lack of demand. As a parent, I'd like to see the possibility of a junior high or high school in that space instead, and I am wondering what plans are there for that in the neighborhood or if older students would be serviced somewhere else?
- I'd like to share my input regarding the proposed Block 31 community centre. There are many opportunities to increase the usefulness of this space. Since this is a very dense community, additional floors are needed to meet future and current needs. The elimination of the weight room is problematic as co-op housing residents do not have these facilities in their building. Most condo gyms are already stretched to capacity. Weight training is important for adults and seniors. An ice pad would be a great addition. There are currently few hockey arenas downtown and those that exist cannot meet community needs. This would be a revenue generating endeavour as membership fees would cover associated costs. I am aware that two aerobic rooms will be built. As there will be two neighbouring schools, this is not nearly enough space for exercise. The YMCA provides a good model for use of space and activities schedule. An indoor pool for swimming lessons and aqua aerobics would be very useful in this community. We are lacking any such facilities at the present time. The test kitchen would not be a good use of space in this community centre. A small number of individuals would use this kitchen and the room cannot serve as a multi-use space. This space would best be used for strength training, dance classes or aerobic activity which would attract many more individuals.