

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION – COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Block 31 Schools, Community Centre and Child Care

City of Toronto

Saturday, February 28, 2015

Fort York Visitor Centre

SUMMARY OF INPUT RECEIVED

A Public Information Session was held on Saturday, February 28, 2015 from 2:00-5:00 pm at the Fort York Visitor Information Centre. The purpose of the Information Session was to canvass the community for their input on ideas for the use of the Community Centre and park, seek information on how residents will access the site, and to provide information on the two schools and child care facility.

The Information Session was organized with six information stations. Participants were invited to share their thoughts at any or all of the information stations:

- a recurring presentation providing an overview of the project was made every hour at 2:15, 3:15 and 4:15
- 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 MMM Group Limited and City of Toronto staff, 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 Planning Partnership and the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation speaking about the park

In addition, Councillor Cressy hosted a table for a general discussion about the project and to obtain suggestions for naming the site.

Over 100 people came to the Information Session. Generally, the input was very positive and people took the time to provide input at several of the tables. We received a few written submissions on the comment forms as well as comments provided by residents through email. This memo summarizes the notes recorded at each table group discussion. The primary discussion leaders at each table group are noted in brackets.

The key questions posed by residents at the Public Information Session were:

1. What is the catchment area for the schools and what is the relationship to Harbourfront schools?
2. How was the size of the child care centre determined? Will CityPlace residents have priority?
3. What mechanisms can be considered to ensure safe pedestrian crossing of Spadina?
4. What mechanisms can be considered to relieve traffic congestion in the area?
5. Need for facilities in the Community Centre to complement vast array of facilities and programs that are already available in the condos in the area
6. Need to manage dogs off leash in the area north of the artificial turf area in Canoe Landing Park given the conflicts with other users.

Detailed input received at each Information Station follows:

1. TDSB/TCDSB

(David Percival TDSB and Christina Fernandes and John Yan TCDSB)

- Very few older kids – more smaller kids in the community now
- Traffic a big concern
- Schools should lobby against airport expansion to protect air quality
- Height on Brunel Ct. has an impact on townhomes – effect on light into the garden/worried about shadow effect
- Play structure – playgrounds are needed in park on north side
- Questions about eligibility to attend new school – attendance area
- What is the relationship to the Harbourfront Schools and Community Centre (will they be closed?)
- How was the school size determined? Will there be that many kids?
- Concerns that the school is only being built to serve the TCHC buildings where there are larger units and more families
- Concern that development of the schools will hurt property values

Comments submitted on Comment Sheet

- Is the catchment area final? We are located at Bay St. & Harbour St. (just east of Bay St.) and there are lots of young families in our condo building (Pinnacle Center). Would be really interested to see if the catchment area can be extended to Yonge St.
- Please extend the school catchment area (attendance) up to Yonge St. along Harbour St. to include the condominium couples at Pinnacle Centre.
- The building on the side south of Harbour St. is included in the area for the Island school but not north side of Harbour St. between Bay St. and Yonge St. is not included. It would be good to get attendance area to include these buildings as well.

2. CHILD CARE

(Gail O'Donnell and Karen Guthrie, City of Toronto)

- Will City Place residents have priority at the child care centre?
- Why so small? Needs to be bigger for more infants and toddlers
- What about full day kindergarten and school age child care? Who will do this? (Not part of child care)
- Families would like to stay in the area if schools and day care is provided.

3. Traffic, Parking Pick up and Drop off (Michael Parker, MMM Group Limited, Sue McAlpine, City of Toronto)

How do you anticipate getting to the schools, the Community Centre and/or the Child Care Centre?

Walking

- Extend walkway along south, put in pedestrian bridge to connect two sides
- Make it safe for kids to get to school and park
- Bridge over Spadina Ave.
- With increase in pedestrian traffic, improvements for pedestrians needed to make it safe
- Concern with children crossing Spadina Ave.
- Pedestrians need more focus
- Focus on crossing at Fort York Blvd. and Brunel Ct. to make it safe
- Landscaping in Fort York Blvd. median blocks views when crossing on eastside of Brunel Ct. north and south crossing

Cycling

- People use existing bike lane on Fort York Blvd. to create 3 lanes – given the congestion and making it worse
- Cycling up Dan Leckie Way – difficult with parking obstructing bike lanes

Driving

- Left turn signal timing at Spadina Ave. – too short (only four cars can move on each signal)
- Need to reassess – traffic operation restrictions in the larger area
- Question regarding possibility for new signals or roundabouts
- Concern that not enough capacity from left turn at Spadina Ave. will back up traffic even more (Currently a big problem in mornings)
- A.M. peak eastbound overly congested
- Concerned about capacity of Brunel Ct. – not enough to handle parents drop off to the schools
- Two left turn lanes on the east side of Spadina Ave going south are. a concern for small children crossing
- CIBC Branch customers stop and block traffic (needs better enforcement)
- Traffic challenges
- Balance transportation modes (pedestrians, cyclists etc.)
- Implications of uses on traffic movement, traffic congestion etc.
- Coordinate traffic assessment with developments in larger area

- Intersection Spadina Ave. - eastbound requires 4 or 5 cycles to get through intersection
- Can Fort York Blvd. be widened?
- Lighting poor
- Assess traffic operation i.e. additional signals, lanes, turning etc.
- Airport expansion will create additional traffic – need to assess this
- Morning and afternoon peaks – Bremner Blvd. / Spadina Ave. / Fort York Blvd. too congested
- Question regarding how drop off will be managed with 1100 kids when traffic is already failing on Fort York Blvd and Spadina

Parking

- Concern that anyone can park in proposed lay by areas for schools and they will be occupied for other purposes. Will need constant enforcement
- Incorporate public parking into the facility like “TPA” lot. Support both commercial uses and for neighbourhood.
- Remove the median on Fort York Blvd to provide for parking
- Cars stopping to park are blocking street
- Can the median be removed?
- Don't use the north/south 30 m area adjacent to park for driveway/cars
- Need for more public parking – people parking overnight on local streets

Busing

- Intersection Brunel Ct. and Fort York Blvd. and busing

Public transit

- Will this be increased with schools and community centre i.e. TTC bus?

4. COMMUNITY CENTRE/RECREATION

(Sue Bartleman, Kim Browne and Maryann DiBiagio, City of Toronto)

- Promote physical activity for children, music, and piano
- Ballet classes, karate
- Swimming pool - 25-70's, swim club
- Workshop – i.e. membership fee to access tools like building materials
- Food share depot register and pick up box at community centre
- Rooftop gardens – integrate kids
- Sauna – infrared
- Arboretum
- Digital media – don't duplicate library
- Indoor playground flexible to ages

- Commercial kitchen – appliance share

How do you want to use the Community Centre?

- Music performance – music rooms – space to practice – rent space to practice – lessons
- Outdoor stage in the park (performances)
- Permit opportunities
- Private party rentals
- Indoor snack bar Bring kids to participate in programs and adult programs – drop-ins and indoor playground
- Community garden space – roof top?
- Indoor swimming pool
- Space children’s programs – instructional programs – drop-in social space for moms and kids (informal chill space)
- Community events / special events / permits – parties
- Permitting artificial turf – with outdoor programs
- Permit rentals

What amenities would you like to see (think about the types of rooms)?

- Dance studio
- Community kitchen – cooking lessons/programs
- Indoor social space
- Squash court
- Pool
- Multi-purpose rooms with mirrors
- Sliding doors facilitate indoor outdoor space concept
- Exercise / workout space with mirrors (exercise studio)
- Activity rooms/ event gathering/ study
- Running track padded – indoor
- Like what is in presentation – dance studio, multi-purpose room, and stage
- Parking using space
- Meditation Space

What programs and services would to like to see in the community centre?

- Natural ice rink – Arenas? For hockey and skating
- Indoor playground
- Complement condo amenities
- Patio / event space (Hunters Landing)
- Programs for moms – on maternity leave – share ideas with other new moms
- Public health
- Martial arts for kids and adults
- After school programs either with community centre or offered at schools

- Lots of light and windows in the design – welcoming design – places to chill, meet, greet
- Yoga, swimming (lessons, lane swims)
- Gathering space – for programs like speak outs, poetry slams – use garden to program food program
- don't need a weight room, given the facilities that are available in the condos

Information on existing recreation facilities in development near the site

- 25 metre pool above Sobey's
- Free yoga/fitness delivered at condos with private service delivery
- 33,000 ft. recreation space
- 5 condo buildings (West of Spadina Ave.) have these amenities: 25 metre pool, basketball court, and fitness room with equipment. Spaces are programmed – not just drop-in. Private recreation company – fees
- South Beach Marina Townhomes south of Lake Shore Blvd. (38 Stadium Rd. – stacked town homes): Looking for public pool; Pools in condos but private; No amenities
- 15 Fort York Blvd. – NI – pool, gymnasium/exercise equipment (part of condo fees)
- 27 Brunel Ct. swimming pool, fitness workout room (part of condo fees) not programmed
- 19 Grand Trunk Crescent (2 buildings) exercise space, ping pong room, movie room – party space, pool – party room – rental free, outdoor, fire parks
- 8 Telegram Mews – no pool – shared with next door building small gym – exercise facilities – no programs
- Lower running cost elements – relative to programs – i.e. community gardens, maintenance costs

5. PARK

(David Leinster, The Planning Partnership, Ray Stukas and Brian Green, City of Toronto)

How do you currently use the park?

- used by personal trainers, yoga on the hill
- movies in the park
- walking, sports, jogging
- soccer
- sun bathing
- summer – splash pad popular with families and children
- sloped lawn used by personal trainers and for yoga
- north field used by young children for playing ball and running around
- north field also used for off leash dog walking, very annoying for other users
- north field very smelly and not appealing for families
- Park used for walking, sports, jogging
- south field used by community for pick up games
- south field used for off leash dog walking in the winter

How would you like to use the park? What activities? Structured and unstructured play.

- Community hub/socializing
- Ok with special events, encourage events
- Playground, toboggan hill
- Skating rink in north field managed by the residents
- Movies in the park potentially, working on getting into the TIFF program

Any suggestions for the landscape character of the park? Think about trees, landform, etc.

- Control the weeds; invasive species are a problem
- More trees, especially along slopes
- Add pollinator plants
- Possibly add a small playground or natural play area for families
- Move the canoe and make more lawn area

How do you anticipate accessing the park?

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Other comments

- If park space to be used by children should be fenced in for safety purposes
- Ensure that the built environment is multi-purpose
- Need to think about wind impact through north and south corridor adjacent to park – currently very windy
- Existing park very windy – uncomfortable conditions – need to manage this with the design
- Need to incorporate “design” elements into the view corridors to divert wind, make them visually appealing
- Concerned about number of dogs off leash in north park and in water feature at bobbars
- Need new and innovative play structures in the north field of Canoe Landing Park

6. EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Comments have also been submitted by email. The following is a summary of input received up to March 8, 2015.

1. I just wanted to say that it would be nice to have a rooftop 'farm' as part of the development.
2. it's exciting to see that the planning has finally started! I'm especially excited about the

park & recreation centre, as it will be nice to have a public gathering space (and hopefully outdoor playground?) for the neighbourhood, which is something we have definitely been lacking.

3. I just wanted to submit 3 suggestions/concerns that fall under the traffic/transportation/parking umbrella:
 - a. There is a serious lack of parking in the neighbourhood, something that will hinder businesses that choose to come into the area. I had dinner at Citta (on Fort York Blvd) yesterday evening, and it seemed that the lack of parking would definitely limit their clientele (and their income) to people who live in the neighbourhood. Whether it's paid parking or parking that can be validated when using area businesses, this is something that hopefully will be considered in the planning process. An underground Green P in Block 31 as well as some street level short-term parking (for the Recreation Centre?) might be part of the solution.
 - b. TTC access. If there cannot be a line running on Front Street, I think that a bus line that runs across Bremner & Fort York Blvd would be well used...for taking people to work in the mornings or to the neighbourhood for programming at the recreation centre or dining at restaurants. There is quite a distance from the east-west lines on King Street and on Lakeshore Blvd.
 - c. Traffic. The intersection at Spadina & Fort York Blvd/Bremner Road is very busy, especially in the afternoon rush hour. Travelling east along Fort York Blvd & across Spadina is a route that is particularly congested, with a very short traffic light and a lot of cars (turning south onto Spadina from Bremner Road) that get stuck in the intersection. With the access to Block 31 being planned via Brunel Court, I think that it is really important to plan the traffic routes carefully and possibly introduce a set of lights at Fort York/Brunel Court, etc.
4. We just wanted to voice our concern about health and safety issues for the kids if we temporarily annex portions of Canoe Landing Park during playtime. There are thousands of dogs that defecate all over the park despite signage and nearby leash free zones, and of course non-staff could get close to the kids during playtime. Fencing in the park and reducing its availability would be a loss for the community. We'd like to recommend rooftop playgrounds as a solution. There are many successful examples near and far including [CityPlace](#), [Kensington Market](#), [Hamilton](#), [Victoria BC](#), and [England](#). It's bold, but I think the unusual intensification in the area requires it.
5. I live across the street from Block 31. I, along with hundreds and perhaps even a couple thousand people living in the towers around Block 31, have it as my primary view. I have many friends in these buildings, and from my discussions with them I believe that my comments would resonate with these thousands of voters. First, I'd like to state that new schools, a community centre, and child care are badly needed in this area, and that Block 31 is a good location for them. However, please take the following into consideration for the ultimate design, as it will impact the quality of life in the area:

- a. Open up Brunel Court to Lake Shore Blvd - The corner of Fort York/Bremner and Spadina is probably one of the most congested intersections in the city. It can take 15 minutes just to travel a hundred metres by car in the area at the busy times of the day. Now we are proposing to have nearly 1,200 students and children in child care at this location (not to mention employees at the site)...this will add significantly more traffic at exactly the worst hours of the day. If we assume that even only 1/3 of the children get dropped-off or picked-up that is another 400 cars during both rush hours. I suggest that Brunel Court be opened to Lake Shore Blvd. This would provide another outlet for the traffic. Otherwise Fort York will continue to bear the burden, and it is barely coping already.
- b. An indoor play gym is essential - As a parent, the last two brutal winters have taught us something...there is no high quality, affordable, indoor recreation in the neighborhood to take refuge from cabin fever and the cold. We have resorted to annual passes at the Ripley's Aquarium, but not everyone can afford this, and its entertainment wears thin after a 3rd time in one week. The indoor gym also needs to accommodate all ages: infants/toddlers to teens.
- c. Rooftop garden - The new structure should have a rooftop garden. Staring at all the concrete downtown gets monotonous. The Gardiner is a bad enough view on its own. But now if we have to look across an ugly rooftop of this new large building with the sight of the Gardiner as the background, it will be even more of an eyesore. I suggest making the rooftop a community garden, or at least something with as much green-space as possible. This way it may be able to maintain the continuity of the "green" feel from the neighboring Canoe Landing Park.
- d. The new building should be less than 5 stories - Many of the people in the buildings surrounding Block 31 purchased their condos for views of the lake (once we get over having to look at the Gardiner). I'm sure you're well aware of why the original proposals for another tower on Block 31 have been so opposed within the community.
- e. Canoe Landing park issue - This is unrelated to Block 31, but there is a serious problem with the uses of the two Canoe Landing Park fields. The north field is grass, and is meant for dogs. The south field is astro-turf and meant for recreation. However, most dog owners use the south field because the ground conditions are more consistent. The problem is that the dogs make a mess of the south field. We bring our children to play on the south field, as do many others. Everyone using the south field (parents, children, soccer players, boot camp participants, picnickers, etc.) has to be mindful of dog droppings. It is disgusting and unsanitary. I suggest putting a low fence around the south field (say 4 ft.) with gates on each side, and signs requesting that animals not be permitted.