

**Wabash Community Recreation Centre
Community Resource Group Meeting #1
Meeting Summary**

September 16th 2020, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
VIA WEBEX

Community Resource Group (CRG) Meeting Overview

On Wednesday, September 16th, 2019 the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PF&R) at the City of Toronto hosted the first Community Resource Group (CRG) Meeting for the new Wabash Community Recreation Centre. Representatives from nine local organizations, Councillor Gord Perks' Office, as well as members of the project team attended and participated in the meeting. The Participant List is attached to this summary as Appendix A.

The purpose of the first meeting was to kick off the Community Resource Group by reviewing and confirming the Draft Terms of Reference, introducing the project and the project team, and by presenting and seeking feedback on the draft proposed vision, design principles, and design goals/Big Moves. The meeting agenda is attached to this summary as Appendix B.

The summary is structured to reflect key topics of discussion:

1. Draft Terms of Reference
2. Draft Vision, Principles, and Goals:
 - Existing Conditions and Site Constraints
 - Draft Vision and Design Principles
 - Proposed Design Goals/Big Moves
3. Next Steps

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc., a third-party facilitation firm retained by the City to help support community engagement for this project. This summary is not intended to be a verbatim transcript; rather it summarizes key points of discussion shared by participants during the meeting. This summary was subject to participant review before being finalized.

KEY FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The following key points were shared by CRG members during the discussion. These key points are intended to be read along with the more detailed feedback that follows in the remainder of the summary.

- No objections to the Draft Terms of Reference were noted. No questions or comments were received after the meeting.
- Overall, CRG members expressed support for the proposed vision, principles and goals and recommended including equity as an important part of the vision and the principles. The new community centre needs to be accessible to all, including members of the broader Parkdale community, and people of all ages.
- Some CRG members urged the City to explore flexibility around site boundaries and the 30-metre setback, noting that the earlier these constraints are explored, the more opportunities for the site design.
- Parking and the Town Square are important considerations for the site design options.

Summary of Discussion

The following is a summary of questions, answers, and suggestions shared at the meeting. Responses from the project team (where provided) are noted in *italics*.

Part 1: Draft Terms of Reference

Yulia Pak (Swerhun Inc.), facilitator, reviewed the draft Terms of Reference with the CRG. The Draft Terms of Reference were attached to and distributed with the application form, as well as CRG confirmation letters in advance of the first CRG meeting. Key points from the review are included below. Yulia asked CRG members to share any additional comments or questions about the draft Terms of Reference by **Monday, September 21st**.

The review of the draft Terms of Reference included the following key points:

Mandate

- CRG is an advisory body to the City and the consultant team, and not a decision-making body, which means the CRG is not responsible for the decisions made by the City on this project.
- The mandate of this group is to provide advice on key decisions during the consultation process, so that these key decisions that the City is making are informed by the perspectives of the communities, members, and constituents the members represent.
- CRG members are tasked with a two-way communication – share their group’s perspectives and advice, and relay back some of the key meeting discussions and outcomes.
- This is not a forum for individual feedback. Any individual perspectives should be shared through the broader public engagement process.

Membership

- We have reserved a total of 16 seats; currently 11 of them are filled. We might be getting a few more organizations after the public meeting on September 22nd, where we will do the last public call for CRG membership.
- Important to note that in addition to seeking local representation and diversity of interests, the City encourages organizations to nominate candidates from equity-seeking groups.
- Each organization gets 1 seat per meeting, with one primary participant and one delegate, in case the primary contact is not able to join.
- Councillor Perks or his representative is invited to these meetings in an Ex-Officio capacity.

Participation in other processes

- Membership in this group does not limit you in any way in participating in other democratic processes through any other channels.
- We only ask that if you do receive media inquiries about this group and the feedback shared by this group, to direct it to Daniel Fusca, Manager, Public Consultation, City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation Division at Daniel.Fusca@toronto.ca
- Finally, if you would like us to share your group’s contact information publicly, we ask you to provide us with your general or business e-mail, if you haven’t had a chance to do so.

No objections to the Draft Terms of Reference were noted. No additional questions and/or suggestions were submitted after the meeting.

Part 2: Draft Vision, Design Principles, and Big Moves

Existing Conditions and Site Constraints

Question about the 30-metre setback zone. The 8-storey building on Noble Street has two lower floors fall within the setback zone. The solution was to have the lower 2 floors as fitness area and not for housing. Could the same principle apply to designing the new Wabash Recreation Centre? *We are not familiar with this project, but we will explore different options with Metrolinx, City Planning, and engineering consultants. The new recreation centre has an assembly occupancy, which is not allowed within the 30-metre setback; only transitory occupancy uses, such as parking, are permitted.*

Railway safety is very important. It is important to ensure that proper safety measures are in place within the 30-metre setback area to prevent a train launching off the rails into the recreation centre or the park. It will be good to see if there are any studies that suggest that the berm shown on the presentation slide is safe enough to stop the train from going over in case of derailment. *The slide shows the generic recommended mitigation measure as per Metrolinx and City Planning guidelines. The actual mitigation measures will need to be engineered and studied by specialists moving forward.*

Flexibility and timing around the decisions about the site boundary and the 30-metre setback. Two big constraints are the site boundary and the requirement for the 30-metre setback from the rail. Can the northern boundary be moved up towards and onto the dog park? Understanding that you will explore the opportunities for exemptions to build within the 30-metre setback zone with Metrolinx and City Planning further, when could we anticipate these decisions to be made? The earlier we explore the flexibility of these constraints the better, as they will have a significant impact on design opportunities. *These are the things that we will be looking into in the next few weeks. There is some flexibility with the northern boundary of the site, as a community recreation centre is a "permitted use" within a park under the City's "Open Space (Recreation)" zoning which applies to the park site. We will provide more updates when they are available.*

Clarification provided after the meeting by the participant: *There is plenty of room going straight north of the current building footprint with no impact on the dogpark, although possibly there might be a slight overlap with the circle running path. This point led to the discussion of the partial reclamation on the berm and the existing concrete cap not being an obstacle; rather adding another layer of concrete for building footings would add to the protection from any existing VOC's.*

The second site boundary point is not represented was about the 30-metre crash allowance. There was a suggestion that we could build a crash wall to eliminate this site restriction. A follow-up with Metrolinx was promised to understand costs of building a crash wall.

Update provided after the meeting by the project team: *Building north may be possible, but is still limited by the 30-m setback, which decreases the buildable area the further north one goes, unless one encroaches into the dog park. A building foundation would act as a 'cap' in any scenario.*

The 30-m set back requirements include a distance of 30 m as well as a physical barrier, which could be a berm or a number of crash wall designs. The distance requirement has been negotiated with Metrolinx as being a combination of horizontal and vertical setback, provided the

occupancy at the lower level is acceptable. The City must hire a consultant to provide a railway mitigation strategy that will be reviewed by Metrolinx as part of this project.

The City's planner has advised that there isn't anything in the zoning or Official Plan for the site that would prevent a community recreation centre use in a portion of the park, although the usual zoning limitations for height, setback, etc. would still apply and would have to be reviewed against a specific proposal.

Draft Vision and Design Principles

It is important to include in the vision and principles the notion of equity that re-integrates Parkdale and bring the broader area together. The division of the Parkdale area into North Parkdale and South Parkdale started about 20 years ago and the area has seen gentrification and displacement. While there are \$2 million homes in Roncesvalles, many residents of South Parkdale are not affluent and are heavily underserved. It is important to consider this context and the history of the area and to ensure that the new community recreation centre serves all, including the broader Parkdale population. Equity will also be important when it comes to service provisions. Equitable access to services is a very important consideration.

It is important that the building design is reflective of many diverse needs and that heritage aspirations do not override the need to serve the greater population. Some participants expressed a strong desire to see the design of the building and the budget allocation be guided and prioritized by the need to serve more people and the broader community, particularly those who are underserved. Others reminded that many in the community would like to see the heritage of the building preserved as much as possible. *Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) at the City of Toronto has notified the Project Team that HPS intends to list the building as a heritage structure as part of the Site Plan Approval process. HPS will require the Project Team to preserve, at a minimum, the chimney and at least the principal exterior façades where not covered by any building addition. At the same time, we know from the structural engineering reports that the exterior masonry will require extensive repair and replacements, and that it is not feasible or safe to keep the building's interior concrete structure (concrete roof and floor slabs, columns etc.). We understand the diversity of needs this recreation centre need to accommodate. Addressing these needs will partially come from the design of the physical space and partially from the programming. The PF&R programs are developed to serve a broad range of age groups and populations.*

Ensure that the new community recreation centre serves people of different ages – from early years to seniors. There are a lot of seniors in this area, as well as youth and families with children. Existing community spaces and programs for them in the area have been built a long time ago and are over capacity (e.g. McCormick Recreation Centre was built in 1960s).

Proposed Design Goals/ Big Moves

Parking is an important consideration. The new community recreation centre will draw more people into the area and will put more pressure on local street parking availability. The community is already at capacity, when it comes to parking, especially in the evenings. Consider underground parking. In addition, presently, the lack of parking presents a big challenge to vendors at the Farmers' Market every Monday. *Yes, parking is an important consideration for us. That being said, the opportunity for onsite parking is very limited in terms of the number of spots that could be provided at grade without paving over the parkland adjacent. While we haven't designed any options yet, an underground parking garage, aside from the*

technical challenges, would be prohibitively expensive and would far exceed the project budget for the centre.

Consider extending the building onto the Town Square. A part of the Town Square could be covered and serve as an extension of the building to accommodate more indoor programming, such as a basketball court.

The Town Square is incredibly important to the Sorauren Farmers' Market. It is important that the proposed design options allow for the Farmers' Market to continue. Sorauren Farmers' Market Association made a submission after the meeting, which is attached to this summary as Appendix C.

Consider seeking advice from the CRG on the detailed design of facilities and the types of materials to be used inside the new recreation centre. For example, placing the running/walking track above the gym/court in a controlled environment with a certain finishing will be more seniors-friendly and will encourage more seniors to use it for walking. *We are anticipating that the CRG will be involved only for the schematic design phase as we develop the building and its floor plans etc., not during the remaining years of detailed design. However, as we develop and review the schematic floor plans, there will be an opportunity for the CRG group to advise us of any "detail" suggestions that they may have at that time.*

Process and Other Advice

It would be good to share summaries of pre-consultation conversations with many of the groups who are on the CRG to know what the key messages of the discussion are. Yulia committed to sharing the aggregate summary of key discussion points from all the Key Informant Interviews and pre-consultation conversations that happened as part of the broader engagement process for Wabash CRC.

Community assets should not be planned in silos. For example, a Parkdale Hub is being planned right now. As far as the City is concerned, it's a separate project led by a separate City agency. However, from the community perspective it should be considered as part of the whole, along with the work happening on the new Wabash Community Recreation Centre. More City partners should work together and broader community uses, not just recreation, should be considered.

The construction of the new community recreation centre should strive to incorporate the Parkdale community benefit framework. For example, consider hiring local people during the building phase. Parkdale People's Economy will share the framework (<http://parkdalepeopleseconomy.ca/parkdale-community-benefits-framework/>) and highlight what could be considered for the building of the Wabash Community Recreation Centre.

It is important to ensure that public streets are not needlessly burdened and constrained by construction hoarding and equipment within the City's right of way if there isn't active construction under way. If for some reason the construction stops, then any construction equipment located within the City's right of way under a street occupancy permit should be removed, as the streets and public right of way are already tight.

Next Steps

Doug Giles thanked everyone for taking the time to participate in the first CRG meeting. Yulia Pak asked CRG members to provide additional feedback on the Draft Terms of Reference by Monday, September 21, 2020 and committed to sharing a draft meeting summary for participant review before finalizing it. She also told participants that moving forward, the Project team will

share the proposed time and date for the upcoming meeting two weeks in advance of the meeting and that the plan is to continue meeting online, using WEBEX, until it is safe to do otherwise.

Appendix A - List of Organizations and Participants

The following organizations applied to participate in the Community Resource Group. All organizations that applied for membership on the CRG were accepted. Those who were able to attend are bolded below.

Organizations

Friends of Sorauren Park
Garden Avenue P.S. Parent Council
Mentoring Juniors Kids Organization
Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC)
Parkdale Jr. / Sr. Public School
Parkdale Residents Association
Roncesvalles-Macdonell Residents Association
Sorauren Farmers' Market Association
St. Vincent De Paul Elementary School
Westlodge TCHC community
Youth Outreach Worker (Ex-Officio)

Elected Officials and Staff

Dusha Sritharan, Advisor, Policy and Constituency, Office of Councillor Gord Perks

City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division

Doug Giles, Senior Project Co-ordinator, Capital Projects
Alex Lavasidis, Senior Consultation Coordinator
Paulo Fetalvero, Supervisor, Capital Projects
Peter Didiano, Program Manager, Capital Projects
Cheryl MacDonald, Manager Community Recreation
Maxwayne Christy, Programmer, Community Recreation
Ronda Murphy, Supervisor, Community Recreation

Consultant Team

Jarle Lovlin, Diamond Schmitt Architects
Marcin Sztaba, Diamond Schmitt Architects
Khly Lamparero, Swerhun Inc
Yulia Pak, Swerhun Inc

Appendix B – Meeting Agenda

New Wabash Community Recreation Centre

Community Resource Group Kick-off Meeting

September 16, 2020, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

VIA WEBEX:

Purpose: To kick off the Community Resource Group by reviewing and confirming the Terms of Reference for the CRG; introducing the project and the project team; and by presenting and seeking feedback on the draft proposed vision, design principles, and design goals.

PROPOSED AGENDA

- 6:50 pm** **Technology check**
Please log-in 10 minutes prior to the meeting to do a technology check, if available
- 7:00** **Welcome**
Doug Giles, *Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto*
- 7:05** **Introductions & Agenda Review**
Yulia Pak, *Swerhun Facilitation*
- 7:15** **Quick Overview: CRG Mandate & Draft Terms of Reference**
Yulia Pak, *Swerhun Facilitation*
- Facilitated Discussion
1. *Do you have any questions or suggested refinements to the Draft Terms of Reference?*
- 7:35** **CRG Member Briefing**
- Wabash Community Recreation Centre Project Overview, Draft Vision and Design Principles – Doug Giles, *Parks Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto*
 - Draft Proposed Big Moves – Jarle Lovlin, *Diamond Schmitt Architects*
- Facilitated Discussion
1. *What do you like about the draft vision and/or guiding principles? Is there anything you would like to see changed or added?*
2. *Is there anything major missing or needs to be changed in terms of the site constraints and the proposed Big Moves?*
3. *Do you have any other advice for the upcoming public meeting?*
- 8:25** **CRG Meeting Dates and Next Meeting**
- 8:30 pm** **Adjourn**

Appendix C – **Participant Submission**

See following page for additional participant feedback submitted after the meeting.

Sorauren Farmers' Market Association

Food is an important and a powerful way to bring people together and SFMA thinks that (*along with everything else they are being asked to do*) the architects should also be sympathetic to ways food can be incorporated into the WCRC design.

Sorauren Farmers' Market has been animating Sorauren Park and providing connections between rural and urban communities for 13 years. Our reach includes not only farmers and local businesses, but many musicians, artists, community groups and thousands of local residents who shop and participate in our free activities each week.

Although we appreciate budget constraints, having a design which could allow flexibility in the future would be ideal. Please consider our suggestions and concerns.

COMMERCIAL KITCHEN (not just a regular kitchen) means:

- Courses for canning and preserving
- Community dinners
- Cooking classes for all ages
- Special events
- Inexpensive opportunities for fledgling businesses to trial recipes or develop their ideas.
- Meal programmes for those in need

SMALL GREENHOUSE or an area that could be developed into one at a later date and an area for **composting**. This would help create the important connection between urban dwellers and their food. It would provide recreational and teaching opportunities for young and old even during the colder months. Please note the phenomenal success of Evergreen Brickworks and the Stop.

TOWN SQUARE

From attending the recent CRG meeting, it seems building space has already been divided up and allocated. If there is no space to house the Market inside during the winter and if the design meant either the removal of the **Town Square**, or the community's inability to access it during construction for a prolonged period of time, this would have a catastrophic effect on the Market. We have permit restrictions and cannot operate on any of the grassed areas so we would be unable to move to a different location in the park. Obviously we consider the farmers' market very important and we would like to continue to operate. As such, any developments on the boundaries of the land package would be very interesting to us.

PARKING

Like many other voices at the meeting, we too feel the need to express our concerns regarding parking. At present we pay for a parking permit from mid-May until the end of October so that vendors can park on Wabash Avenue between 1:30-7:30pm. A lack of parking would create a lot of frustration and tickets for vendors, customers and those using the centre. *We think this a very important issue!*

Parkdale Residents Association

1. Neighbourhood boundaries and profiling (e.g. South Parkdale, Roncesvalles, etc.) work well in some situations but not all. Though Sorauren Avenue Park is in the Roncesvalles neighbourhood it serves a very broad geographic community. The creation of the Wabash Rec Centre is of prime interest to Parkdale area residents. FYI - the now defunct West End Food Coop (started by a group of Parkdadians) was responsible for the creation of the Sorauren Farmers' Market.

2. Food security can and must play a role in the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division mandate.

Clarification from the City: The current practice City of Toronto offers not for profit organizations space(s) to permit rooms in community centres that offer programs to address food security. This is a current practise offered at Community centres in the South Parkdale community.

3. The current layout of Sorauren Avenue Park (Town Square, dog park, tennis courts, soccer area, Wabash rec centre, etc.), can these areas be moved around, shrunk or expanded to be more accommodating to community needs?

Response from the City: Yes, to some extent. At present, Council's mandate (and approved budget) does not include significant park re-design or park-related expenditures (e.g. to the tennis courts, soccer area). One might also expect that the community has some attachment to the park components that they currently enjoy, as they are. However, once the design team starts to explore site design options, it may become evident that the full community recreation centre does not fit on the development parcel, and it may be that a building addition might be best located partially within the parkland, requiring some modest modifications to the parkland.

Similarly, it may be that a building addition might be best located by making some modification to the Town Square etc., if the community-building activities there can be maintained in some other fashion.

This will become more clear as site design options are developed and tested.

4. The 30-metre setback zone as we understand is an arc. This as we understand is why 6 Noble St. 8-storey development bottom 2 floors are in the crash zone and will accommodate bike storage and fitness area with upper storeys residential condos.

5. We understand that City Council approved an allocation of funds for the construction of the Wabash rec centre based on an analysis from a number of years ago. This allocation can be modified by City Council in light of new findings and considerations.

Clarification from the City: Yes, that is true to some extent. PF&R's model or template community centre with two anchors (gym and indoor pool) is about 70,000 square feet GFA and the budget is initially set to reflect the cost of that, based on prior community centre construction cost data and certain early assumptions (e.g. inflation etc.).

However, each community centre project is slightly different with slightly different costs which become evident during design. For example, as each centre is sited on a differently

sized property, some will have parking and landscaping costs, more urban centres will not; contemporary centres are now obliged to incur additional costs associated with net zero emissions (energy), which prior budgeting for older community centres did not include. This project will incur additional costs because of the railway safety and risk mitigation features and the heritage and renovation costs for an existing building, etc., which at this point, are not known with any accuracy.

All this to say that yes the budget may have to be "right sized" through approval by Council once better costing is available following further design, however it will still need to be based on delivering the typical 70,000 square foot program that Council has authorized via the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan (and not on some other program).