

City of Toronto Curling Strategy

Phase 2 Analysis



Council Direction

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, 2019-2038 (FMP) found that **Toronto's supply of City-owned curling sheets is in line with or exceeds the benchmark for large GTA and Canadian cities**, and this supply is augmented by privately owned facilities.

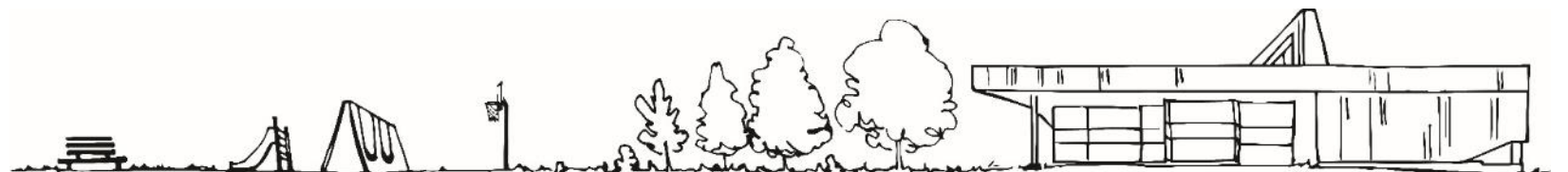
Based on this analysis no new curling facilities were recommended.

Since the FMP was approved, closures of three privately owned curling facilities, including two in Toronto's west end, have altered the context of curling in the city.

In October 2019, as part of approval of the FMP Implementation Strategy, City Council directed staff to assess trends and participation in curling.

City Council directed staff to:

"Monitor and assess trends and participation in curling including considering the capacity of existing private and public curling facilities, opportunities to make interest in curling broader and more inclusive and to consult with relevant stakeholders on potential opportunities and report back in the fourth quarter of 2020."



Project Timeline and Phases of Work

Phase 1: ✓

Taking Stock

Assess supply of and demand for curling ice in Toronto.

Identify gaps and opportunities.

Phase 2:

Identifying Opportunities

Review existing City ice facilities, provision models for curling ice, and sport development opportunities.

Develop cost estimates and funding options.

Reporting out

Final recommendations relating to facilities, financial models and programming.

Summary of Phase 1 Findings

1. There is unmet demand for curling ice in Toronto, especially in the west end.

- Toronto's supply of City-owned curling ice has not changed and is in line with other jurisdictions.
- The recent closure of 3 privately owned curling facilities, 2 in the west end, decreased the overall supply of curling ice. Demand is stable or growing.
- There is no curling ice in Etobicoke York, demonstrated demand, and little or no capacity at nearby facilities to meet this demand.

2. Curling serves a wide range of ages and abilities.

- Curlers in Toronto range in age from 7 to over 100.
- Specialized programs include youth curling, blind curling leagues, LGBTQ2S curling leagues and wheelchair and stick curling.
- Programming is limited by a available ice, especially transit and wheelchair accessible ice.
- Recent facility closures have caused some programs such as Special Olympics curling and high school teams to end.

3. The delivery model for curling in Toronto presents a barrier to broader participation.

- Most curling ice is used by members of clubs and established leagues.
- Many curling facilities offer programs for new curlers but these are limited by the high demand for ice.
- When these barriers are removed, there is evidence of interest among new participants and a more diverse group of participants.

Curling Facility Basics

Specifications for Curling Ice



A sheet of curling ice is roughly 45m (150') long by 4.75m (15'7") wide



Ice surface must be level and clean



Ice temperature is -4.5° to -5° °C (roughly 1° to 3° °C warmer than hockey ice)



Ice surface is “pebbled” by spraying with clean water (no minerals or impurities) at a consistent temperature



Curling-specific markings and “hacks” for rock delivery are installed at correct dimensions



Ice quality depends on consistent ambient air temperature and humidity



Types of Curling Facilities

Dedicated curling facility

May be stand-alone or co-located with other recreation amenities.



Image: Leaside Curling Club (City of Toronto)

Arena facility

Arena ice can be converted to curling ice permanently or on a part-time or temporary basis. Conversion requires staff time and technical expertise.



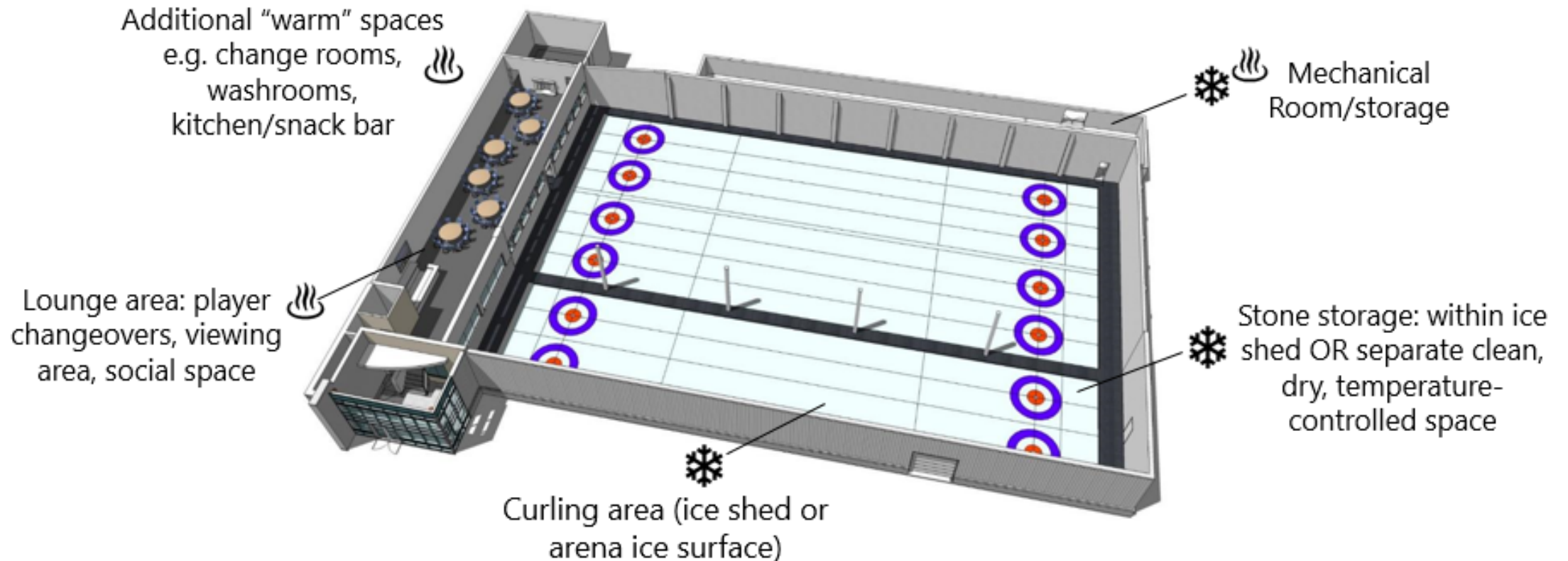
Image: PEI Curling Website



Image: Town of Petawawa

Components of a Curling Facility

Both warm [☹] and cold [❄] spaces are required for curling facilities regardless of facility type.



Operating Models for Curling Facilities

There are three basic operating models for municipally-owned curling facilities in Toronto and other Canadian cities:

- **Operated by entirely by City staff.** City staff are responsible for ice maintenance as well as programming and/or permitting of ice to outside groups. Toronto does not currently use this model.
- **Operated by City staff in collaboration with a third party.** City staff maintain the ice and handle ice permitting. A community group (curling club) holds a permit for the majority of ice use and employs staff to run club operations.

Example: East York Curling Club

- **Operated by a third party.** The City leases or permits ice to a community group which is responsible for ice maintenance, programming, and capital improvements up to a certain value.

Examples: Leaside Curling Club, Tam Heather Curling and Tennis Club

Facility Options Analysis

Approach to Analysis

We are following a 3-step process to identify what actions to prioritize to support curling in Toronto:

Curling Facility Options

Identify facility options based on input from stakeholders and examples from other jurisdictions

Assess facility options against common criteria to identify a preferred option

Seek Council direction to deliver preferred option contingent on:

- a) Identifying an appropriate location based on additional criteria
- b) Community consultation

Sport Development Opportunities

Identify opportunities based on input from stakeholders and past examples

Draft sport development plan that complements preferred facility option

Seek Council approval of sport development plan for curling

Step 1

 **Step 2**
We are here

Step 3
Council Consideration

Curling Facility Options

The following facility options for curling were identified by stakeholders and through a jurisdictional scan:

- **New stand-alone curling facility**
- **New co-located curling facility (e.g. as part of a community recreation centre)**
- **Addition to an existing arena facility to add curling ice (three-wall addition)**
- **Convert an existing arena to curling**
- **Shared use of an existing arena (e.g. hockey and curling)**

- **Leverage existing facilities to deliver programming and sport development (can be considered in combination with other options)**

Assessment Criteria for Facility Options

General Criteria (first order assessment + ongoing assessment throughout process)

→ Use to narrow options prior to considering specific sites. Apply again as part of site consideration.

Capital costs & considerations

- Relative comparison

Operating models & considerations

- Relative comparison of potential operating models and costs

Delivery timeline

- Relative comparison

Funding Models

- Existing source? Y/N
- Potential options

Revenue Potential

- Relative comparison

Site Identification Criteria (second order assessment)

→ Use to identify one or more appropriate sites/locations. Facility options may be ruled out if an appropriate site cannot be identified.

Community-related

Potential to address gaps identified in Phase 1 to support equitable participation

Facility-related

Factors such as facility use and condition (applies to options that involve an existing facility)

Sport Development

Ongoing analysis to ensure facility options and sport development are complementary





New Stand-alone Curling Facility

A new, purpose-built curling facility (6-8 sheets).

- Not identified in Facilities Master Plan or 10-year Capital Budget and Plan.
- Requires allocation of land or purchase of suitable site (potential for considerable additional cost).
- Can be designed for complementary off-season use (e.g. other sports, camps).
- Costing assumes 30,000 sq. ft. facility including ice shed + warm spaces (lounge area, kitchen, change rooms, etc.). Further analysis would be required to determine ideal facility design and associated cost.

Case Study: Chilliwack Curling Club (Chilliwack, BC)

- 30,000 sq. ft., 8-sheet facility opened in 2018
- \$11M project cost (design-build process)
- Maintained by third party (curling club)
- Other uses of concrete pad during off-season

 Capital costs & considerations*	 Operating models & costs	 Delivery timeline	 Funding model	 Revenue potential
Highest Rough cost estimate: \$13.5M <u>plus cost of land</u> (30,000 sq. ft. @ \$450/sq. ft.)	City staff, third party, or hybrid. Costs vary depending on model.	2-3 years, plus additional time for land acquisition and approvals	No existing source. Would require allocation from a future capital budget (subject to Council approval).	Highest – likely to be self-sustaining. Most permitting hours + potential to rent ancillary spaces and host major events

*Estimates for capital costs and considerations are based on lump-sum tender process typically used to deliver large-scale recreation facilities and reflect unique costs associated with the Toronto market.






Co-Located Curling Facility

A new curling facility (4-6 sheets) delivered as part of a community recreation centre (CRC).

- Co-location with other sports, especially skating or hockey, yields cost savings (e.g. staff, energy costs) and may increase exposure for curling.
- Depends on identifying a need and a site for a CRC based on FMP criteria.
- Long delivery timeline and high capital cost due to project complexity.
- Costing based on adding curling ice (assumes CRC has required amenities).

Case Study: King Curling Club at the Trisan Centre (Schomberg, ON)






- \$14.9M investment for 4 curling sheets, skating pad, fitness centre, EMS
- Investment by municipal, Regional, Federal and Provincial governments plus the community

 Capital costs & considerations	 Operating models & costs	 Delivery timeline	 Funding model	 Revenue potential
High Rough cost estimate: \$8M <u>plus</u> cost of CRC (18,000 sq. ft. additional space @ \$450/sq. ft.)	Operated by City staff with potential to partner with third party	3-4 years or more. Increased complexity due to co-location. Need to align with FMP timelines for CRC.	No existing source. Would require allocation from a future capital budget (subject to Council approval).	Highest – likely to be self sustaining. Most permitting hours + potential to rent ancillary spaces and host major events

Addition to Existing Arena Facility

Add curling ice to an existing City-owned arena facility (3-6 sheets).

- More cost effective than a new stand-alone facility but more expensive than converting an existing facility.
- Requires a suitable facility with sufficient available land and equipment (ice plant) capacity. Potential size (number of sheets) will depend on how much land is available.
- Opportunity for benefits from co-location including lower operating costs and potential for increased exposure for the sport.
- Costing based on adding an ice shed and lounge space/change rooms to an existing arena (assumes use of existing ice plant).

 Capital costs & considerations	 Operating models & costs	 Delivery timeline	 Funding model	 Revenue potential
Moderate Estimated Cost: \$10M (23,000 sq. ft. addition @ \$450/sq. ft.)	Operated by City staff with potential to partner with third party	Estimate 2-3 years	No existing source. Would require allocation from a future capital budget (subject to Council approval).	Moderate – likely to be self sustaining. Lower potential than a new facility






Arena Conversion

Repurpose an existing underutilized arena as curling ice (5 sheets).

- Aligns with opportunity identified in FMP to repurpose an underutilized single-pad arena as new twin-pad arenas come on line.
- Depends on identifying suitable site based on FMP criteria and consultation.
- Flexibility to convert ice back to a different use if demand changes.
- Costing depends on site-specific analysis of any required upgrades (e.g. accessibility improvements, facility upgrades, equipment replacement).

Case Study: West Northumberland Curling Club at Jack Heenan Arena (Cobourg, ON)

- Volunteers converted arena to 5 sheets of curling ice in 2011
- Leased and operated by third party (curling club)
- Future plans include lounge space, snack bar, locker rooms and wheelchair accessibility

 Capital costs & considerations	 Operating models & costs	 Delivery timeline	 Funding model	 Revenue potential
Conversion is typically low cost. Capital upgrades may be required to facility (TBD). Estimated cost of rehabilitation is \$180/sq. ft.)	City staff, third party or hybrid. Cost varies depending on model.	Potentially shorter – depends on existing permits and outcome of community consultation	FMP includes budget to repurpose single-pad arenas as new twin-pads come on line (may not include curling-specific costs)	Moderate – likely to be self-sustaining. Similar or less capacity and less rental potential than new facility






Arena Shared Use

Share use of an existing arena between current programs (e.g. hockey) and curling (4 sheets).

- Ice is suitable for recreational rather than competitive curling. May create future demand for higher-quality ice as new curlers progress.
- Staff time and expertise required to convert between hockey and curling on a regular basis.
- Requires multiple sets of lines on the ice which may confuse users.
- Competition for uses and lower overall capacity for curling.

Case Study: Petawawa Civic Centre Arena

- Curling 2 mornings per week – conversion requires 2 staff/2 hrs
- Remaining use is hockey/skating – conversion requires 15 min
- Portable scoreboards, hacks
- Curling stones stored in a shed and cooled on ice prior to use
- User fee (\$8/day) offsets roughly 20% of operating cost

 Capital costs & considerations	 Operating models & costs	 Delivery timeline	 Funding model	 Revenue potential
<p>Lower – TBD.</p> <p>Capital upgrades may be required to facility.</p> <p>Rehab cost estimate: \$180/sq. ft. (higher for new elements)</p>	<p>Operated by City staff (full time and part time). Additional staff time required for conversion.</p>	<p>Shorter – depends on existing permits</p>	<p>Requires allocation from a future operating budget plus modest capital investment (e.g. curling stones)</p>	<p>Lower - Less rental time available and less potential to host competitive events (targets recreational rather than competitive use)</p>

Leverage Existing Facilities

Support curling through off-ice and/or temporary programming. May be combined with other options.

- Pursue opportunities at existing City community centres and indoor or outdoor rinks such as floor curling or temporary curling ice installations.
- Explore additional sport development opportunities such as coach and volunteer training.
- Promote communication about the sport of curling including a presence for curling on City website.

Case Study: Outdoor Rink Pilot

- Installation of curling ice at two outdoor rinks: Harry Gairey and West Mall
- Three-year partnership with Toronto Curling Association
- Each rinks was home to three curling sheets and all of the necessary equipment
- Goal: introduce new participants to curling

Site Identification Criteria

Proposed Site Identification Criteria

Primary Criteria

Criteria*	Description
Located in Etobicoke York (or adjacent)	Prioritize west end sites to address existing service gap
Arena type	Focus on single-pad arenas operated by the City
Arena use (programs, permits)	Prioritize underutilized arenas where opportunities exist on-site or nearby to continue to accommodate existing users

Secondary Criteria

Arena condition and suitability	Assess facility condition and investment needed to deliver a functional and successful curling facility
Curling demand/ participation	Identify neighborhoods with more active curlers (curl \geq 3x/year)
Accessible to equity-seeking populations (Equity Score)	Identify neighbourhoods with a high concentration of equity-seeking populations
Physical & transit accessibility	Identify sites close to transit, those that can accommodate barrier-free ice access, and those with parking

*Not all criteria are applicable to all options. Criteria will be refined based on the preferred facility option.

Sport Development

Toronto's Approach to Sport Development



The Sport Plan is a guide for the City and its partners to collaboratively support lifelong participation in sport by:

- **Building capacity** for the delivery of quality sport programs.
- **Increasing awareness** by promoting the value of sport, inspiring participation and facilitating access to information.
- **Promote inclusive opportunities for participation** through progressive policies and practices that reduce systemic barriers and support increased participation by diverse communities.

The Sport Plan is rooted in the **Sport for Life** movement.

Sport for Life guides participation across all ages and stages through a **Long-term Sport Development Framework**.

It also emphasizes the importance of **physical literacy**.

“Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.”

-International Physical Literacy Association

Sport Programming

The City offers sport programming in several ways.

Direct Sport Program Delivery is affordable sport programming that focuses on introductory and recreational opportunities to support lifelong participation.

The City **supports community sport organizations through permitting** facilities and working with service providers to ensure quality recreation opportunities.

The City bids for and organizes the **hosting of sporting events** through Economic Development and Culture Division, guided by a Council-approved process.

The City is committed to increasing access to recreation.

The **Welcome Policy** helps individuals and families with low income participate in City recreation programs.

Free centres increase access to programs in neighbourhoods with high levels of low income by eliminating program fees.

Many community centres offer **free drop-in programs** such as leisure swimming and skating.

There is a **50% discount for adults 60 plus** who register for adult programs.

Sport Development Plan for Curling

Staff will develop a sport development plan for curling that includes concrete actions to support and promote the sport.

- Explore **programming** (off-ice and/or on-ice) to broaden participation and raise the profile of the sport.
- Support **coach and volunteer development** by offering coaching certification programs.
- Develop and implement an **ongoing communications plan** including a presence for curling on the City website to increase awareness about participation opportunities.
- Consider **opportunities to partner** with local, provincial and national curling organizations.