

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Curling Strategy

Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting 1 Summary

June 18, 2020

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Curling Strategy Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting 1 that was held on June 18, 2020.

[More information about the project can be found on the project webpage at www.toronto.ca/curlingstrategy](http://www.toronto.ca/curlingstrategy)

Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting #1

The purpose of this workshop was to review and confirm results and findings of “Phase 1: Taking Stock”. Prior to the meeting, stakeholders were provided the Phase 1 findings, in a PowerPoint format. Members were asked to review the findings and bring their questions of clarification and comments to the Stakeholder Meeting.

Feedback Summary

Project staff presented the Curling Strategy Phase 1 Findings to the Stakeholder Reference Group. Participants provided questions of clarification and comment throughout the meeting. These comments (C) and responses from staff (R) presented below, by meeting section:

Context for Curling in Toronto

C. Curling clubs from colleges and universities need to be acknowledged, as well as curling from public schools.

R. We are aware of elementary schools taking kids to use ice, but it is not as widespread as high school curling.

C. York University is using the Granite Club and Seneca College is using facilities outside of Toronto.

C. TSSC noted that it is hard to get into private clubs, and questioned if it is fair to count those private clubs in the overall count of sheets if the ice is hard to access.

R. We listed the total number of sheets in the city, but realize that private sheets are not generally available to the public, and we differentiate that from publicly accessible ice in our analysis which will come up later in the presentation.

C. While private clubs do have a different structure, they are not completely closed to the public. Users (e.g. schools) can contact them and make arrangements, but it is up to the club’s discretion.

Supply of Curling Ice

C. Population change from year to year was not considered for in provision of ice analysis for 2020 compared to the 2017 Facilities Master Plan analysis, skewing the results.

R. It was a conscious decision to compare like to like for this analysis. The Facilities Master Plan (FMP) has a 5 year revision target that will consider the impact of population growth.

C. Torontonians also curl in Unionville, Markham, and Richmond Hill

R. Acknowledged that many Torontonians are curling at many facilities outside of the city. Certain clubs were highlighted if they have a very high proportion of members from Toronto, such as Dixie, or because they took on members following Toronto facility closures, for example clubs north of Steeles took members from Scarboro G&CC.

Demand for Curling Ice

C. There is a large amount of corporate and one-off event demand that goes unsatisfied, and it's hard to capture. It would contribute to latent demand.

R. We may need to make it clear we haven't captured that.

C. Analysis captures current demand instead of latent demand. Suggestion to extrapolate latent demand from other municipalities where curling exists. If you were to extrapolate from other major cities in Canada, you would find that average current curling demand is 1 out of 100 persons, whereas in Toronto right now it is approximately .25 out of 100.

R. We did use the general Curling Canada participation data to extrapolate general participation numbers for Toronto, but maybe it is an issue of clarifying terminology. For latent demand, the analysis refers specifically to demand arising from facility closures.

C. West End Curling has been inviting potential future members and have had 300 people sign up for a club that does not exist yet.

Discussion

Following the presentation portion of the meeting, participants were asked to discuss the following three questions:

- Do the findings presented align with your knowledge of curling in Toronto?
- Do you feel there are any errors or omissions in the findings?
- Do you have any other comments or concerns about the findings presented?

The following reflects the feedback received during the discussion portion of the meeting:

- Suggestion to go deeper on the intangible side in terms of experience. Many people focus on social side of curling and associated benefits including improvements in emotional and mental state. Potentially an opportunity to build on.
- Several comments regarding the current high demand for ice limiting opportunities for new curlers and new programming
 - Leaside turns away 50 or more interested people a year. High Park had 3200 people sign up to try curling through a Groupon, only got 1600 through and had to keep the club open an extra 2 weeks to accommodate them. If there were more sheets available then facilities would be able to open up more space for people to try curling.
 - Curling Canada trends show that there are now more people curling compared to five years ago, partially due to the programming put in place (e.g. multi-week learn to curl programs).
 - High numbers are despite clubs doing little to no marketing. With slightly more marketing, numbers could skyrocket. As an example, Royal Canadian Curling Club spent about \$200 on social media marketing, and quickly filled a new Sunday Evening league.
 - Staff noted that they found that there isn't marketing because currently facilities are full without marketing. This is also because of the membership model for curling. We found that when marketing is in place it reaches people that have no exposure to the sport and can draw a diverse cross section of Toronto. The membership model was found to be a barrier to new curlers.

- When people play in bonspiels or learn to curl clubs offered by outside organizations (e.g. Toronto Sport and Social Club) there is a wide variety of people, and many come back to participate in a league
- Regarding accessibility to private club, hockey arenas are understood to be public facilities but curling clubs seem to be private facilities, with less access. We need accessible, public facilities.

Next Steps

Participants will have until Friday, June 26 to provide additional feedback. In addition, the outcomes of this meeting will be shared back with participants to confirm accuracy.

The feedback gathered during the meeting (and through email until June 26th) will be used to update the Phase 1 findings. [The revised findings will be posted on the City's Website at www.toronto.ca/curlingstrategy](http://www.toronto.ca/curlingstrategy) , and will inform Phase 2 of the Curling Strategy: Identifying Opportunities.

The next stakeholder meeting will take place in September of 2020. City staff will follow up with stakeholders to arrange a date and time for the meeting.

Contact Us

For questions or comments related to this project, please contact:

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