

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Curling Strategy

Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting 2 Summary

September 29, 2020

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Curling Strategy Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting 2 that was held on September 29, 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 #2

The purpose of this workshop was to review and confirm results and findings of "Phase 2 : Identifying Opportunities", which included facility options analysis, site identification criteria, and suggestions for sport development. Prior to the meeting, stakeholders were provided the Phase 2 findings, in a PowerPoint format. Members were asked to review the findings and bring their questions of clarification and comments to the Stakeholder Meeting. The Phase 2 PowerPoint presentation was revised based on participant feedback and is now available on [the project webpage](#).

Attendees

Staff

- Suzanne Coultres, Project Manager
- Matt Bentley, Project Manager
- Alex Lavasidis, Senior Consultation Coordinator

Reference Group Members

- Toronto Curling Association: Danielle Inglis, *President* and Tom Worth, *Club Manager Liaison*
- CurlON: Steve Chenier, *Executive Director*
- Curling Canada: Danny Lamoureux, *Director*
- Rocks and Rings (sport development): Chad McMullan, *President, Rock Solid Productions*
- West End Curling Committee: John Rudd and Susan Lawrence
- York Urbanist Curling Design: Mark Inglis
- Special Olympics: Michael Chung, *Program Developer - GTA*
- Ontario Rental Facilities Association (ORFA): Mark Reinert, *ORFA Board member and Town of Petawawa*

Feedback Summary

Participants provided questions of clarification and comment throughout the meeting. These questions (Q), comments (C) and responses from staff (R) presented below. Notes are based on discussion of the following six options presented at the meeting:

- Option 1: New stand-alone curling facility
- Option 2: New co-located curling facility
- Option 3: Renovate an existing arena facility to add curling ice
- Option 4: Convert an existing arena for curling
- Option 5: Shared use of an existing arena
- Option 6: Leverage existing facilities to deliver programming and sport development

Q. Have staff considered 8 sheet models given that there are 2 successful clubs in Toronto with 8 sheets? It's not reflected in the options.

R. 6 sheets reflects the need (users to accommodate) identified in Phase 1.

C. Options 1-3 could be 3 to 8 sheets.

Option 1

C. Costing is conservative (rounded up)

C. Coburg and Newmarket both took 1 year to complete. Trisan took 2 years in a design build program. These timelines are shorter than the projections provided.

Option 2

C. The cost of adding a curling facility to existing likely would require fewer 'behind the glass' facilities depending on the attached community centre.

Q. (from staff) Is 18,000 sq. feet appropriate for co-location?

C. Will depend on the actual location, how much space, and what part of the curling club you're going to add.

C. Not sure you can use \$450/ft. on the addition, will be closer to \$220 in the Toronto context as there won't be much "behind the walls".

C. Sizing should be accompanied with a qualification statement "business plan needs to be prepared on the size of the facility".

Option 3

Q. Why is option 3 is based on only 3-4 sheets?

R. That decision is based on what is needed and what land beside an existing facility is likely to be available. Noted that the sizes were based on previous input from sources including those in this group, but we are open to revising them. Costs are based on the City PFR capital group's projections.

Option 4

C. If it is an older arena, the plant would likely need replacement

C. Conversion may be of an American or Olympic size rink. Olympic could fit 6 sheets. American can fit 5 sheets.

Option 5

C. Competition ice could likely be accommodated, it would just need more time to prepare. This is currently done at Maple Leaf Gardens for events.

C. Yes, it can be done, but is difficult for quick conversions.

R. We envision this option as some permitting for curling and some for hockey in a given week, meaning there would not be sufficient down time to create competition ice regularly (perhaps beginning or end of season or at certain times).

Q. Has a short-term model like option 5 has been considered as a bridge to a more permanent model?

R. We will consider combinations.

C. Curling community “buy in” should be considered. The community would likely take no ownership of Option 5.

Option 6

C. It is not a standalone option but should augment the other options.

C. This is a perfect way to develop the sport.

C. Community would also like to see outdoor activations be in more prominent locations.

Other Options

C. Refurbish an existing building. For example, Soccer City at Centennial Park is a free-standing building, lots of parking, close to TTC and has not been used for 7+ years.

R. Soccer groups have asked to regain access. It will likely be turned into a parks maintenance yard.

Site Identification Criteria

Facility Access

C. Even when facility is transit accessible most curlers drive.

Marketing Opportunities / Visibility / Sport Development

C. Consider financial opportunities. Marketing opportunities, opportunities to attract major sponsors. For example, a site near the 401 might have more visibility.

C. Visibility is also important to attract new curlers. Consider potential to accommodate new curlers when considering number of sheets, not just existing demand resulting from facility closures.

C. Consider partnership potential.

C. Consider energy efficiencies as well, ease of maintenance, and association with other programs.

Sport Development Plan

C. Look at the program, not as one or none, but progression. If we convert an arena and capture some of the curling market, then a dedicated facility could follow.

C. Existing curling organizations should be leveraged to build and deliver programming. The City should not start from scratch.

C. Refer to “Curl for Life” document for curling development.

C. Consider 60+ group for programming.

Impacts of COVID-19

C. GTA clubs meeting every 2 weeks to discuss the situation.

C. COVID-19 has had significant impact. Difficult to plan for an unknown future.

- C. Putting pressure on our whole curling infrastructure. Can't find space for UofT Varsity team to practice as clubs are withdrawing to protect their members.
- C. Huge concern is the capacity of the banquet spaces that can't be used.
- C. Concern around membership demographic (older folks).
- C. Every facility is in a different situation depending on its space, layout, and operating model.
- C. On a positive note, snowbirds that normally go away are reaching out to try something new.
- C. There will be a resolution and when we will reopen demand will still be there. For example, Fort McMurray club had to shut down because of fire risk but when it reopened the demand was still there.

Potential Interim Solutions

- C. Rocks and Rings equipment adaptations: Adapting for outdoor use, do not need hacks.
- C. Outdoor curling can come into play, even in the interim. Will provide visibility now which will have benefits for later.
- C. Noted curling is a non-contact sport, so potentially safer than other activities
- C. There may be opportunity to restart in some way in early November. This could represent an opportunity to take over an arena in partnership with other curling organizations, to get people into the sport.
- C. Providing more space should be a potential design consideration going forward.

Next Steps

All SRG members will have until Friday October 9 to provide additional feedback to the City through email. The outcomes of this meeting will be shared back with participants to confirm accuracy.

The feedback gathered during the meeting, and through email, will be used to update the Phase 2 findings. [The revised findings will be posted on the City's Website at www.toronto.ca/curlingstrategy](http://www.toronto.ca/curlingstrategy) .

City staff will follow up with stakeholders to arrange a date and time for the meeting in early 2021.

Contact Us

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

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