

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Kidstown Water Park

Public Meeting 2

Feedback Summary

December 1, 2020

Joe Ferrara, Senior Project Coordinator

Jane Farrow, Public Engagement Consultant, Department of Words and Deeds



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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the second online public meeting for the Kidstown Water Park Redesign that was held on December 1, 2020.

More information about the project can be found on the project webpage:

www.toronto.ca/KidstownRedesign

Public Meeting 2

A virtual meeting was held on the Zoom platform on Tuesday December 1, 2020 6:30pm-8:00pm to gather feedback from the public on the preliminary design concepts for Kidstown Water Park. There were 29 participants including City of Toronto staff and consultant Project Team members.

Following welcome and introductions, a land acknowledgement was offered by Joe Ferrara from the City of Toronto. This was followed by an overview of the consultation process and project timeline presented by Jane Farrow from Words and Deeds. PMA Landscape Architects' Fung Lee provided a summary of the feedback received through the first phase of community consultations, including the first Community Resource Group meeting, an online survey, and through consultation with members of the Huron-Wendat Nation. This information was followed by a presentation of the design guidelines and objectives for the park.

Joe Ferrara from the City of Toronto explained to the group that the construction budget still needs to be finalized for this project and that the goal of the meeting was to discuss big ideas and to gather information about the priorities of the community.

PMA Architects' Fung Lee then presented the preliminary design concepts for Kidstown Water Park. In discussion, the public were asked to share their thoughts on the three design concept options as well as individual design elements that were presented in each option. Participants were encouraged to take (and share) the online survey which will be available from the project website until December 31, 2020.

The Dept of Words & Deeds produced this summary of key points and themes from the video conference discussion, and group chat. It will be circulated to the Community Resource Group for review before being finalized and posted to the project webpage.

Project Team Meeting Attendees

City Staff

City of Toronto

Joe Ferrara, Senior Project Coordinator, Parks Development and Capital Projects

Katy Aminian, Construction Management and Capital Projects, Parks Forestry and Recreation

Alex Lavasidis, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

Gary Sanger, Supervisor, Scarborough District, Parks Forestry and Recreation

Scott Topping, Supervisor, Parks Maintenance & Construction

Robert Wright, Supervisor Property Management & Maintenance

Design Team

PMA Architects

Fung Lee, Lead Landscape Architect, Principal

Mehran Ataee, Landscape Architect, Project Manager

Waiyee Chou, Landscape Designer

Anya Moryoussef Architect

Anya Moryoussef, Director, Architect

Facilitation Team

Dept of Words & Deeds

Jane Farrow, Facilitation

Andrea Bennet, Tech

Pauline Craig, Notes

Feedback Summary

Summary of Key Points

- Most participants preferred the separate bus loading area shown in Option B for the parking lot layout.
- Most participants found some elements of each water park concept to be appealing while a small number of participants preferred one design option over others.
- Design options such as those showing naturalized features that would appeal to all ages and abilities were preferred by many participants
- Some play elements were strongly preferred by the group.
- The impact of positioning different play elements next to each other should be considered, such as the location of areas targeted to younger children and older children.
- Materials used in the design should be functional and comfortable.
- Most participants liked the idea of naturalized play areas.
- Longer park operating hours could help accommodate a wider range of park users.
- A majority of participants were in favour of the open-air showers, lockers and change area.
- Some participants preferred a park entrance that led visitors through the change area while others did not – however all participants agreed that having showers very close to the entrance would be preferred.

Detailed Feedback

Parking Lot Layout

A majority of participants preferred the separate pick-up / drop-off area for buses away from vehicle parking as shown in design Option B. One participant pointed out that this separate bus loading area would make it much easier for camp staff to manage groups of kids. Some participants also said they would like to see a separate entrance for buses only.

One participant asked about the parking capacity and whether the current design options show an oversupply of parking for the water park. Other participants noted that during peak times the parking lot can be very busy and cars can be waiting along Birchmount to turn into the parking lot which can cause congestion along Birchmount Road. Another participant noted that sometimes visitors who are using other parts of the park are still parking in the lot near the water park. A suggested measure to improve vehicle flow within the parking lot was to design one-way directional aisles for vehicle circulation.

One participant asked how the signalised intersection near the Kidstown park entrance will be impacted by vehicles accessing the parking lots.

Note: A representative from City of Toronto said that the redesign concept for the parking lot is to realign the existing parking lots to improve parking capacity and circulation.

A representative from PMA Landscape Architects highlighted the key differences between the 3 design concepts for the group and told the group that the intent is to keep the existing driveway

entrance at the south end of the parking lot and to create a new driveway entrance to the north, as far as possible from the existing signalised intersection to minimize impacts on traffic flow through that intersection.

A representative from PMA Landscape Architects also told the group that the information about parking provided to the design team indicated that there is currently a lack of parking at the park during peak times. The new design will find a balance by formalizing the existing granular parking surface to the north and rearranging the existing parking to the south to improve capacity.

Something Appealing in all Water Park Design Concepts

Participants pointed out that they really liked the natural features in Options B and C, while others did not say they had a strong preference for a specific design but found elements of each to be appealing.

Designs that Appeal to a Wide Range of Ages

Design elements such as those shown in the naturalized play areas were preferred by several participants because of the learning environment they could provide that would appeal to children of different ages and even to adults. While some participants pointed to specific design concepts, one participant felt that all of the design concepts looked as though they could engage children of all ages. The different depths in the pool design were also pointed out as a good option to cater to children of all ages and one participant said they would like to see swimming lanes for a variety of ages.

Note: In response to a question, a representative from PMA Landscape Architects said that all the design options show a gently ramped pool that provides a shallow beach area at one end and a 4-foot-deep swimming area at the opposite end.

Play and Furnishing Elements that were Most Appealing

Some play elements were strongly preferred by participants. These included the water slide, river feature, stepping stones, the water table, bench style seating/ seating edges, lounge style seating, misting poles, water room (especially with randomized, surprise patterns), rain curtain, water bucket and boulders. The misting poles were favoured by many participants and one participant mentioned they can be good for adults to use for cooling down as well.

When asked “what makes a good water slide” participants responded: “twisty, long and really steep”, “an open slide (not tunnelled) that can be monitored and to prevent older kids from stopping inside it”, “twisty slide with a long part”.

Consider the Impacts of Locating Different Play Elements Next to Each Other

Some participants wished to see water play areas that are geared toward younger children kept separate from areas designed for older children. However, one participant pointed out that supervising multi-age camps could be very challenging if these areas were significantly far apart.

One participant felt that having sand or soil near to water features could cause a mess for parents or camp supervisors to manage, while another participant pointed out that children really enjoy playing with sand and water.

Materials used in the Design Should be Functional and Comfortable

Some participants provided feedback about the kinds of materials they would like to see used in the park features. Suggestions included: materials on the ground surface that do not get too hot in the summer sun; comfortable materials for seating that do not get too hot or are a hard surface.

Naturalization and Play

Most participants thought that the naturalized play areas were a positive aspect of the design options and would be appealing to children and adults of all ages.

One participant said they would like to see something to connect the water park to the nearby parkland such as a natural stream behind the water park area.

Several participants like boulders but it depends on where they are placed. There are concerns about kids slipping if they are wet. One participant did not like the idea of naturalized features such as boulders or mud.

Note: A representative from PMA Landscape Architects told the group that the design team has tried to provide some options for greening the park to balance the hard landscaping and to provide elements that encourage a cause and effect type of play.

Longer Park Opening Hours

Several participants said they would like to see the park open for longer hours, and that this would provide an option for people who want to enjoy swimming at the swimming lanes after young children leave the park.

Open-Air Lockers, Showers and Changing Rooms

A majority of participants were in favour of the open-air showers, lockers and change area. Some participants preferred either Options A or C (linear arrangements) because they provided slightly more lockers and change facilities compared to Option B (Clusters) and several participants felt that these options provided good visibility and ease of movement through the change area into the park. All of the elements shown in the design (showers, change facilities, lockers, sinks, change tables, washrooms and misting poles) were well received by participants.

One participant said they preferred Option B (Clusters) because they thought it provided a more open area at sinks and a separate baby change area.

Two participants remarked that the open air design does not provide any shelter for people if there was a heavy thunderstorm and one participant suggested that an open trellis would need to be designed so that materials do not weather easily.

Park Building and Entrance

When asked about the preferred location of the park entrance, some participants preferred that visitors be required to enter through the change room and shower area before accessing the water park. When considering that visitors will be required to shower before using the water features, these participants felt that this configuration would be very helpful for parents and supervisors to ensure that children shower before using the pool / water features. However, some participants raised the potential issue of congestion at the park entrance with this configuration. And other participants said they wouldn't like to have to enter through the change area. One suggestion was to have showers located very close to the entrance so that it was a natural flow to use the showers before entering the water park.

One participant said they would like to see a wall of the building have learning elements included such as indigenous icons/images/ or other cultural aspects.

General Questions

In addition to the main discussion, some questions of clarification were posted on the Zoom platform chat feature. This section lists those questions and the answers that were posted by project team members.

Q - Will the waterpark still be fenced in?

A- Yes. All pools have fences in city parks.

Q - That makes sense. Was just trying to understand if the picnic area (red in one of the slides) was shared with the green park just outside the water park.

A – The picnic areas shown in red/blue are just for the water park users, as they are fenced in. We're also thinking about planting on the outside of the fence to soften the boundary.

Q - What happens to the playground behind the waterpark?

A- The playground will remain as is at this time.

Next Steps

Participants were asked to:

- Email any additional feedback and comments to Jane Farrow, facilitator, until December 22, 2020 at jane@janefarrow.ca
- Fill out the online survey which will be available until December 31, 2020.

The design team will use the feedback collected in this meeting to inform the next stage of design.

A summary of the meeting will be posted to the project website.