

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

# Kidstown Water Park

## Youth Design Jam Summary Report

November 30 and December 2, 2020

Joe Ferrara, Senior Project Coordinator

Jane Farrow, Public Engagement Consultant, Dept of Words & Deeds



## Introduction

This document provides a summary of the feedback gathered at the Kidstown Design Jams held on Nov 30 and Dec 2, 2020.

Three remote classroom discussions (via Zoom) were held with teachers on hand to assist in gathering input from Grade 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 students of St Sylvester, located near Kidstown.

Students were introduced to a couple of the PMA design team, city project staff and shown slides of precedents drawn from other water parks and asked to offer input on what they liked, didn't like and wanted to see in the Kidstown redesign.

The design jams were facilitated by Jane Farrow, Dept of Words & Deeds with notes taken by Pauline Craig.

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

## Meeting Attendees

### City Staff

Joe Ferrara, BLA, OALA, CSLA, Senior Project Coordinator, Parks Development and Capital Projects

Alex Lavasidis, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

Katy Aminian, City of Toronto PFR Capital Projects

### Design Team

#### **Representatives from PMA & Dept of Words & Deeds:**

Mehran Ataee, PMA Landscape Architects

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects

### Facilitation Team - Dept of Words & Deeds

Jane Farrow, facilitation

Pauline Craig, Summary writing

## Feedback Summary

### Kidstown Design Jam #1 – Grades 5 & 6

#### Existing Conditions

Existing water play features that are high action, where kids can feel powerful force of water are favoured. The bucket dump was mentioned by several students as a feature they like. Reasons including waiting factor, anticipation for water to fall and feeling the force of water when it is dumped. The multi-platform structure with stairs which the bucket dump is attached to is also favoured because water comes from multiple sides. Water guns, which allow for shooting were also mentioned as favourable play components. There was less emphasis on the existing slide and pool as features the students like.

Question about incorporating the existing basketball court was raised by a teacher.

Response was access in and out of water park to basketball court would have to be coordinated with operations, acknowledging that younger children would need to be accompanied by an older child or adult to this area.

#### Splash Pad

Majority of students showed interest in image #1. They favoured the general aesthetic, which consists of boulders and water jets. It gives the impression of a multi-age play space and could be enjoyed by wildlife in addition to humans. They could imagine bringing their dogs to this park.

#### Splash Pad Toys

The water slide is a major draw, as is the water dump. The students were asked what they thought makes a good slide. Speed was mentioned, and the slide paired with a water dump could contribute to increased speed. Adjectives used to describe the ideal slide include long and fast, with mention of different lanes, an appealing colour and addition of a surprise element at the end of the slide to create a unique experience. Features such as bumpers or a whirlpool were provided as examples of adding a surprise element to the water slide experience.

#### Pool Options

Students favoured what was shown in image #4. They like the stepping stones, natural aesthetic, and long open space which allows for meandering. The students imagine they can come up with their own games and activities within the type of space shown. There is also interest in diving, which is the second most appealing feature based on votes. Swimming is the third favoured feature.

#### Water Slide Options

A tall slide that is long and swirls, such as the one shown in image #2 is favoured by the students. Students also like the slide shown in image #1 which curves around a planted area. No students showed interest in the wide multi-user slide. Majority of students prefer an open body slide to an enclosed flume.

#### Canal Options

A canal with natural components is most favoured but there is also a strong interest in a canal with a smooth surface and curves, as shown in image #1. What is shown in image #2 is favoured because the canal takes on the appearance of a river and there is opportunity to walk in the water. The image with large boulders (#4) is least favoured. There is dislike for the prominence of dark coloured boulders. [1]  
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### **Immersive Water Features**

Of the options shown, the water fall feature is favoured among multiple students. Students like the natural look and can go into a secluded area with their friends. Students also like having water going over and around them, as depicted with the tunnel and water room. What is mentioned as appealing with the misters is their randomized placement.

### **Cognitive Play**

Students like the water table because it allows for experimental hands on play, where they can modify materials into different shapes, in addition to inserting and removing objects. They like features where they can see water being reused, and are in favour of the water bike feature.

### **Bridges/Natural Play**

The students like the possibility of going from one destination point to another, which the suspension and rope bridges can enable. These bridges also enable for climbing opportunities which are also of interest.

### **Least Favourite Features**

Several students dislike the idea of sand within a water park. Not everyone likes being shot at randomly with water guns. A comparison was made between how in ground sprays and jets generally shoot more water than the ones in pools. There was mention that spray poles within a pool can obstruct sight.

## **Kidstown Design Jam #2 – Grades 2 & 3**

### **Existing Conditions**

The bucket dump and slide are favourite features within the park. Students also mentioned liking the water fountain, yellow sprinklers, ship and bikes which they can sit on.

### **Splash Pad**

Most students like what is shown in image #3. There are many features to engage with such as the bucket dump and elephant spray. Many students showed interest in image #1. They like the rocks, water and opportunity to run in this type of area. What is appealing about #4 is the incorporation of small steps that can be climbed. It appears that students are interested in a multi-level play environment.

### **Splash Pad Toys**

There are many elements incorporated in image #1 which is favoured the most. The water slide is a major draw, as is the water dump. The dump shown is of interest due to its large size and twirling feature. This shows the students are drawn to big, splashy equipment.

### **Pool Options**

Swimming and playing in shallow water are favoured. Students like how the spray toys have different colours. None of the students like what is shown in image #4. There was a comment about the presence of trees which are not appealing.



### **Splash Pad Toys**

Most students are interested in the splash pad toys shown in image #1. The slide looks fun because it is big and has a water dump. They also like flowers from image #2, the large spray structure in image #3 and the banana shooters from image #4.

### **Pool Options**

The idea of exploring is very appealing, with a student describing what is shown in image #4 as hardcore. The play space shown allows for flexibility in terms of what type of activities can occur and the students like the potential of autonomous play. Students can decide how to move through the space and the things they do within it which makes it attractive. They like the idea of jumping from one stepping stone to another. Diving is also of interest and going into deep water by jumping is an appealing experience.

### **Water Slide Options**

There were cheers as soon as the slide was revealed. The slide depicted in image #2 is the most appealing because of its size, height, speed and potential to make a big splash. Students like a slide that terminates in a pool. The slide in image #1 is also appealing because it looks like it would be a smooth ride with big splash. Students also like how vegetation surrounds the slide. Students like the short and wide slide in image #3 because they can go with other people and think it would be good for little kids. What is appealing about image #4 is that there are a lot of different activities.

### **Canal Options**

There wasn't as much immediate enthusiasm to this slide, but the students found the canal idea "interesting". The curvy canal shown in image #4 is most appealing to the students; they like that it's bigger and they like the colour. Comments about image #1 include liking the texture and that it appears many people can go into it. The canal in image #2 is appealing because of its natural feel with rocks and surrounding trees.

### **Immersive Water Features**

This slide elicited a lot of enthusiasm. The students are most interested in the waterfall feature because they enjoy the natural aesthetic and surrounding elements. They think it would be a good place to take pictures and it reminds them of Niagara Falls. The water tunnel is also appealing because you can walk under it without getting wet. It also appears to be a feature that would be good to take photos with. The students like the shape of the water room and the fact that it can allow for different games. Being trapped inside a circle sounds like it would be fun.

### **Cognitive Play**

The majority of students are in favour of the water wheel. They like how the water spins, how it flows down to different levels and that they can soak other people with it. Being able to ride on the water bike is appealing to some and the water table is liked because it is set up to allow many children to play together.

### **Bridges/Natural Play**

This slide received loud praise upon reveal and there is general appeal to playing in nature. The suspension bridge is appealing because it is long, wobbly, allows for views of the surrounding area and can offer ravine-like experiences. The students think the rope bridge would be good for little kids. Sand play is not of interest to most because sand can be gooeey, sticks to feet and they don't want to get dirty.