

**Dufferin Grove Park**  
**Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements**

**Community Resource Group Meeting – Summary**

November 28, 2019



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*This meeting summary report was prepared by Lura Consulting, the independent facilitator and consultation specialist. If you have any questions or comments regarding the report, please contact either:*

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**FACILITATED BY:**

Liz McHardy, Lura Consulting

**ATTENDED BY:**

***Community Resource Group Members:***

Tom Berry  
Anne Freeman  
Ellen Manney  
Skylar Hill-Jackson  
Chang Liu  
Thomas Buckland  
Migs Bartula  
Daniel Halpert  
Andrea Holtslander  
Robin Crombie  
Tamara Romanchuk  
David Anderson  
Erella Ganon  
Katheryn Scharf  
Jutta Mason  
Shane Morgan

***City of Toronto:***

Katy Aminian, Senior Project Coordinator  
Peter Didiano, Supervisor Capital Projects  
Sofia Oliveira, Community Recreation  
Keith Storey, Community Recreation Supervisor

***Design Team (Consultants)***

Megan Torza, DTAH  
Victoria Bell, DTAH  
Bryce Miranda, DTAH  
Liz McHardy, Lura Consulting  
Alex Lavasidis, Lura Consulting

***Other:***

City Councillor Ana Bailão and assistant.  
2 additional observers were present at the meeting

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*These minutes are not intended to provide verbatim accounts of discussions. Rather, they summarize and document the key points made during the discussions, as well as the outcomes and actions arising from the CRG meeting.*

Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements  
Community Resource Group Meeting – November 28, 2018 –Summary

**OPENING REMARKS, INTRODUCTIONS AND AGENDA REVIEW**

Liz McHardy, Lura Consulting, and Katy Aminian, City of Toronto, welcomed participants to the Community Resource Group (CRG) meeting. Ms. McHardy conducted a brief overview of the meeting's agenda and facilitated a round of introductions. Ms. McHardy noted that any additional comments or questions not shared during the meeting can be emailed to Lura Consulting, who will ensure they are shared with the project team.

Peter Didiano, City of Toronto, provided a brief updated on the state of the ice rink at Dufferin Grove Park. Mr. Didiano noted that the rink was not opened on the scheduled date due to mechanical and refrigeration issues. Repairs are currently being undertaken and it is anticipated that the rink will be open in the first week of December, weather permitting (once repairs are made, it typically takes 4 days for the ice to be made). Mr. Didiano noted that the type of mechanical and refrigeration issues being experienced are not unusual for a rink that is the age of the Dufferin Grove rink; other, similar rinks around the city are also experiencing similar issues. This is not unexpected as a report completed in 2014 for capital asset management (completed by engineers) noted that the rink was to reach the end of its life around 2018 or 2019-. He noted that replacing the mechanical and refrigeration unit of the rink is included in the scope of work that the CRG is currently meeting about. The City will do what they can to extend the life of the mechanical and refrigeration units.

A CRG member inquired if the rink could be made using a water hose (without the mechanical processes). Mr. Didiano noted that this is a possibility, as long as the weather is cooperative. He noted that a natural rink has been created at Riverdale Park in the past.

A CRG member noted that there is confusion on the City rink website about what is happening at Dufferin Grove's rink. The CRG member noted that the state of good repair report suggests that all the rink infrastructure was installed in 1993. They noted that a log of what had been replaced at the rink over the year from the City had been requested, but had not received. They requested clarification on what the specific technical issues of the rink are. The CRG member was concerned that at this rink and others in the City, the community was only being notified of delayed rink opening a couple of days before scheduled openings. They would like to see more transparency with information and early notification of issues that may impact rink opening times.

Mr. Didiano noted that the community was notified as soon as the City were certain the rink would not open on time. Prior to this disclosure, the City had been working to address the issue and open the rink on time. Mr. Didiano noted that the City understands the inconvenience this rink opening delay has caused and aim to have the rink running as soon as possible. Mr. Didiano noted that he would be available after the meeting if people would like to discuss the matter further, or he can be contacted through email.

The CRG member noted they would like to ensure the issue is managed competently.

**PRESENTATION – PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The design team provided a project overview presentation. This included a history of the park and its context, a site inventory and analysis, an overview of the desired improvements for the site, and preliminary site improvement strategies. This presentation is available here: <https://dufferingrove->

Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements  
Community Resource Group Meeting – November 28, 2018 –Summary

[northwestrevitalization.ca/documents](http://northwestrevitalization.ca/documents) . The design team noted that this is only a preliminary presentation, and that the goal of the meeting tonight is to receive feedback on the accuracy and clarity of the presentation.

CRG members provided questions and comments throughout the presentation:

C. In addition to the identified development proposals near the site, there are additional 10 storey developments that will be located at Dundas and Dufferin and Dundas and Ossington.

A. The design team noted that they only showed developments within 400 metres of the site, as those will be the immediate users of the park. The design team recognizes that the park does have a larger role within the City, attracting those beyond a 400 m boundary.

C. One of the best and most important features of Dufferin Grove is how flexible the spaces are. This flexibility and the value of multi-use space seems contrary to how the City plans things.

C. Though mapping assets within the park and comparing those to neighboring parks is useful, to truly understand the importance of the features in Dufferin Grove, you need to compare the frequency of **uses** of the features within the parks. For example, Christie Pits bake ovens are not used as much as those in Dufferin Grove because there a number of barriers (e.g. permit costs). The importance of a park feature rests in its use. The assets in Dufferin Grove are all heavily used, and they are therefore very important.

C. Affordability of features of the park is important (e.g. costs of permits).

Q. When the presentation refers to communications systems, what is it referring to?

A. Telephone and Internet.

Q. When the presentation refers to a boiler, what is being referenced?

A. These are two large vertical hot water tanks in the small mechanical room at the east side of the clubhouse building that are making domestic hot water for the entire building including kitchens and washrooms. There are separate systems for the heating of the building and for the Zamboni water.

#### **DISCUSSION PERIOD**

The design team noted that the presentation shared was a draft that would be refined and built upon for the January public meeting. Participants were asked the following questions:

- Are we missing anything in our analysis of the site and its existing conditions?
- Have we understood the general Functional Program ambitions of the project correctly? Are we missing anything?
- What are your thoughts about the range of initial site improvement strategies outlined in the presentation?
- Other thoughts /comments?

The following provides a summary of the CRG's input:

*Suggestions for improving the presentation:*

Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements  
Community Resource Group Meeting – November 28, 2018 –Summary

- Consider providing a 3D image to show the potential new buildings suggested in alternative 3 and 4. Also consider providing general square footage of any proposed additions or rebuilds. This information would help people better understand potential changes and options.
- Highlight how activities inside the north-west corner impact activities throughout the park, and vice versa. Ensure the programming and activities in this corner of the park are understood in their wider park context.
- Show potential construction timelines with each preliminary site improvement strategy, as this is an important consideration for many people in the community.
  - Also provide timelines that describe when tenders for construction, drawings, etc. will be sent out. Ensure these timelines are adhered to in order to ensure construction timelines are not drawn out.

Suggestions for the Preliminary Site Improvement Strategies:

- Consider including WIFI in the park. This has been arranged with developers in other parks.
- Ensure that a commercial kitchen is provided to allow for all types of cooking.
  - The project team noted that in order to not be limited to “reheating” food in the kitchen, a commercial hood would be required. The CRG members agreed that they would not want to be limited in what cooking could take place in the new kitchen, and noted the kitchen should therefore be commercial grade.
- Add a skate rental space.
- For preliminary site improvement strategies 3 and 4, the access from the clubhouse to the ovens seems complicated and impractical as one would have to travel through the rink, shinny, or basketball courts; consider revising this.
- Consider locating switchback accessibility ramps on Dufferin Park Avenue to lead into the existing or a new clubhouse space. If a new clubhouse is constructed the main entrance could face Dufferin Park Avenue.
  - The design team noted that the sidewalk slope up Dufferin Park Avenue does not meet accessibility standards, and therefore this option would not allow those with accessibility needs to enter the clubhouse. They noted that it is a good idea to consider placing the entrance to any potential new clubhouse on or close to Dufferin Park Avenue.
- If a new pleasure pad is installed, do not place the pleasure pad beside Dufferin, as this would provide poor views for skaters (onto the busy road and mall parking lot).
  - *POST MEETING NOTE: For clarity, moving forward, “Hockey Rink” will refer to the rink with boards and “Pleasure Pad” will refer to the rink without boards.*
- There was discussion about whether a pleasure pad should or should not include a fence. The City noted that standard shinny does not include fences and is meant to be a low equipment game. One CRG member noted that the original reason the fence went up around the pleasure pad was because park users would shoot pucks against the adjacent hockey rink boards late into the night, preventing neighbours from sleeping; the fence helped deter this use by allowing the pleasure pad to be locked. CRG members who are part of the skateboarding community noted

Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements  
Community Resource Group Meeting – November 28, 2018 –Summary

that the fence is helpful as a barrier as it prevents stray skateboards from hitting passerby's around the skateboard ramps.

- A CRG member inquired if the fences could be lowered and still serve the same purpose for skateboarders.
  - A CRG member who is part of the skateboarding community noted that the fences could be lowered a small amount but are generally appropriate for their needs.
- The City inquired if there was a setback between the ramps and the fence.
  - There is a small setback.
- The design team requested that CRG members who are part of the skateboard community sketch out the general setup of ramps on the shiny pad to provide the design team with a better understanding of their space needs.
  - The appropriate CRG members will provide the Design team with this sketch.
- A CRG member noted that the fence is also useful during the ice rink season, when novice skaters use the fence for support and to stop.
- Consider altering the stairs towards the centre of the park (south-east of the existing clubhouse) into an accessible walkway.
- One CRG member noted they think the renovation options are full of potential and think the reconstruction options may not provide enough additional practicality to warrant the extra cost and construction.
- Include a washroom by the wading pool. This would be especially helpful for families with small children and is a recurring need in the park.

General Concerns:

- This part of the City already has too little park space for the population; this will only be exacerbated by population growth and development.
- Concern about how long the construction for this project will take.
- Concern about construction starting and not finishing due to budget shortfalls.
- Broaden the scope of the project to include the whole park. One CRG member noted that they emailed the City and design team a list of projects that are needed throughout the park and requested the scope of the project be broadened to include the whole park.
  - The City noted that they are currently evaluating the list of projects that the CRG member provided to understand which of those projects may be able to be included in the scope of this project, and which would need to have additional funding allocated. The City suggested that this project should flush out a design that community members are happy with. If there is budget remaining, there may be potential to complete minor projects beyond the original scope of this project. The City would also like to plan how projects can be completed outside of and following the current project, noting that all improvements do not need to occur within this one project.
    - A CRG member noted that if remaining money can be used on additional projects in other areas of the park, that should be made clear to the public so they can consider that fact when providing feedback on proposed site improvement strategies.

Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements  
Community Resource Group Meeting – November 28, 2018 –Summary

- The City noted that the priority is to use the funds for the north-west corner and that this project should not be shortchanged to make budget for other projects, as other projects may be able to receive separate funding.
- The design team noted that the January public meeting will not be asking members of the public to choose an option. Instead, the meeting will provide an opportunity for understanding and confirming the characteristics of each of the four proposed strategies to identify opportunities and challenges that are important to consider for each (e.g. where are important areas to create pathways and connections). They noted that at this stage, the budget should not be the main focus of the conversation as each option is possible within the \$4 million budget.
- Address drainage issues on the rinks in warmer weather to prevent water pooling and to keep the surface safe for bike polo and other users.
- Consider standardizing the size of the hockey rink to match other rinks across the city. Currently the rink size is long and narrow. This would improve the ability of bike polo leagues to entice new users into joining the sport. CRG members who are bike polo participants will send their sport's ideal rink dimensions to the project team.
- *One participant provided follow-up email feedback noting that they see benefit to enlarging the ice surface in the park as many children use the rink after school, and would benefit from increased ice space. Please note that this topic was discussed further in the December 11<sup>th</sup> CRG meeting.*

General Support:

- Support for raising as much mechanical and storage space off the main floor to reduce the amount of square footage taken away from park activities.
  - One participant provided email follow-up stating that they think the support the CRG shared for raising the mechanical areas of the building to a second level, does not equate to full support for relocating the mechanical areas. The participant would like additional discussion surrounding what activities would replace the space currently being used as the mechanical area.
- Skateboarders will need a smooth surface in the shinny area, while bike polo users will need a textured surface on the rink area.

Additional Questions

- A CRG member inquired who decided that the scope of the project was the north-west corner of the park, and why.
  - The City responded that the decision was made by capital projects and operations. In its infancy, the project was meant to use the space once used for the Zamboni and convert that into a commercial kitchen. Once it was discovered that this would not be possible, the City turned to the Clubhouse to see if there was a way the space could be better configured to improve the space and bring the kitchen up to code. Additional projects



Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements  
Community Resource Group Meeting – November 28, 2018 –Summary

around the clubhouse in the north-west corner were brought on to promote finding synergies in this corner of the park, given the proximity of various features.

- In Preliminary Site Improvement Strategy 2, where would the market be located when it is outdoors?
  - This question is yet to be addressed in the design. Potentially, the location could remain as is, though there are concerns about vehicles parking over tree roots, which the design team would like to avoid. The design team noted that if there was a fence around the leisure rink, overall the goal will be to allow improved flow through the site and large pathways that can support market booths (if appropriate and desired).
- What is the likelihood of reusing the concrete slab and cooling system used for the existing rink? What would the lifespan of that rink then be?
  - The design team noted that they are looking into this further, and it may not be possible. As long as the plastic pipes and concrete aren't broken, there is potential to use that part of the system in perpetuity. This will rely heavily on testing of the site, because the team wants to ensure that if the system is reused, it won't become a problem in 5-10 years.
- The design team inquired if the CRG members thought there would be merit in using the Gladstone path as the spine of the park, as it is an accessible connecting path through the park. This could include making Gladstone a main gateway into the park. The design team explained that in their experience, converting pathways that cut a park in half into a focal point can improve comfort, accessibility, amenity and usefulness of the path and encourage people to travel to and use more areas of the park.
  - While one CRG member initially responded that they did not support the idea because they felt people did not enter the park through Gladstone, other CRG members did support this idea, noting that people do enter from Gladstone, and that this could also help provide an accessible drop-off point for the park.
  - CRG members noted that relocating the clubhouse to enable direct access from Gladstone could improve access to the building overall.
- Who is considered part of the “public” who will be invited to the public meeting in January?
  - The design team noted that this is a great question, additional outreach for the public meeting will be considered. The team also noted that the meeting will be open to anyone to attend.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The Design Team noted that next steps will be for their team to refine the presentation based on CRG feedback from this meeting. The next CRG meeting will include a review of the updated presentation and a discussion about the public meeting in the new year. Additional feedback from the CRG can be provided to the Design Team ([lmchardy@lura.ca](mailto:lmchardy@lura.ca)) for one week; this feedback will be included in the meeting summary which will be posted online.

Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse and North-West Corner Park Improvements  
Community Resource Group Meeting – November 28, 2018 –Summary

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

**Action Items**

Nov 28.01 - CRG members who are a part of the skateboard community will provide the Design team with a sketch of where ramps are set up, including their use of existing fencing.

Nov 28.02 - CRG members who are bike polo participants will send their sport's ideal rink dimensions to the project team.