

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Wabash Community Recreation Centre Community Resource Group (CRG)

Meeting 2 Summary

April 27, 2021

Doug Giles, Senior Project Coordinator

Alex Lavasidis, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator



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Attendees

Community Resource Group Members

The following organizations applied to participate in the Community Resource Group. All organizations that applied for membership on the CRG were accepted. Those who were able to attend are **bolded** below.

Organizations

Friends of Sorauren Park

Garden Avenue P.S. Parent Council

Mentoring Junior Kids Organization (MJKO Boxing)

Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC)

Parkdale Jr. / Sr. Public School

Parkdale Residents Association

Roncesvalles-Macdonell Residents Association

Sorauren Farmers' Market Association

St. Vincent De Paul Elementary School

West Lodge TCHC community

Youth Outreach Worker (Ex-Officio)

Elected Officials and Staff

Dusha Sritharan, Advisor, Policy and Constituency, Office of Councillor Gord Perks

Mary Newton, Office of Councillor Gord Perks

Warsan Haji-Yusuf, Office of Councillor Gord Perks

City of Toronto

Doug Giles, Senior Project Coordinator, Capital Projects

Peter Didiano, Program Manager, Capital Projects

Alex Lavasidis, Senior Consultation Coordinator

Paula Jacobi, Manager, Aquatics

Consultant Team

Jarle Lovlin, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Marcin Sztaba, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Andrew Keung, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Nicole Swerhun, Swerhun Inc

Khly Lamparero, Swerhun Inc

Athavarn Srikantharajah, Swerhun Inc

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.

Introduction

On Tuesday, April 27th, 2021 the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PF&R) at the City of Toronto hosted the second Community Resource Group (CRG) Meeting for the new Wabash Community Recreation Centre. Representatives from six local organizations, Councillor Gord Perks' Office, as well as members of the project team attended and participated in the meeting.

Meeting Goals

The purpose of the first meeting was to confirm the project vision, design principles, and big moves; share and seek feedback on the draft site design options; and provide the project team with constructive feedback and suggestions on the draft materials to be presented at the public meeting. The meeting agenda is attached to this summary as Appendix A.

Overview

The summary is structured to reflect key topics of discussion:

1. Questions of Clarification
2. Feedback on the Site Design Options
 - a. Overall Feedback
 - b. Site Specific Feedback
3. Advice for the Public Workshop
4. Next Steps

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc., a third-party facilitation firm retained by the City to help support community engagement for this project. This summary is not intended to be a verbatim transcript; rather it summarizes key points of discussion shared by participants during the meeting. This summary was subject to participant review before being finalized.

Key Feedback Received

The following key points were shared by CRG members during the discussion. These key points are intended to be read along with the more detailed feedback that follows in the remainder of the summary.

- **Overall, all five site design options are on the right track.** Participants said the design options are exciting and demonstrate the project team is listening and reflecting on the feedback received to date.
- **Some participants preferred Options 1 and 2, while others preferred Options 3, 4, and 5.** The trade-off between losing the existing Town Square and Fieldhouse should be balanced against the need for accessibility and the benefit of a more compact design.
- **Be clear that the same program space is available in each option.** Some participants found that the presentation was unclear as to whether some options provide more programming space over others.

Summary of Discussion

The following is a summary of questions, answers, and suggestions shared at the meeting. Responses from the project team (where provided) are noted in *italics*.

Part 1: Questions of Clarification

How will construction of the new community centre impact current use of the park for the next 3-4 years, especially the Town Square? *At this stage, it would be fair to say that the Town Square will be affected during construction. We won't be sure about the extent of the impact until a contractor is hired and they provide their plan to stage the area (i.e., where to place materials, the space required for construction equipment, etc.).*

Each option appears to be based on maintaining the façade of the existing Linseed Factory building. Does the heritage designation require you to maintain every wall of the building? *Keeping the outside of the oldest part of the building is required because the heritage designation requires substantive preservation of the main building elevations, including the masonry openings. The inside will need to be gutted as the current structure is not in good shape and would not support large scale activities. We've met with the City's Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) Unit and based on the investigation and report prepared by our heritage consultant, HPS concluded the building meets the tests set out in the provincial act that governs heritage designations. The heritage designation looks for a substantive preservation of the significant elements of the original building, which are the older, more historical elements. Also, the current structure (internal concrete columns and floor slabs) is not in good shape and would not support large scale activities, so we'll have to do a thorough removal of the original structure and replace it.*

You mentioned that all five site design options are possible scenarios based on your conversations with Metrolinx. What is the mechanism for confirming this and when will you find out? *Based on our early conversations with Metrolinx, any of the design options can work. We will need to provide a detailed strategy for implementation which outlines the technical requirements that are involved (i.e., what kind of berm we'll use). Once we select one design option to move forward with, we'll have to develop a formal proposal and have one of Metrolinx's engineers review it, which can be a lengthy process.*

Since Options 1 and 2 represent losing the original Town Square and Fieldhouse, why would we choose them over the others? *Options 1 and 2 do not encroach on the railway setback, both incorporate the façade of the Linseed Factory as part of the interior, have a more urban front entrance (adjacent to Wabash Avenue) and gather amenities closer to the centre across two or three storeys rather than multiple floors – making it more accessible.*

Part 2: Site Design Options

As part of the City's presentation, they shared the five proposed site design options. Participants were asked to share high-level feedback on the overall approach and specific feedback about each design option.

Overall Feedback

Several participants said that, overall, all five site design options are on the right track. Participants said the design options are exciting and demonstrate the project team is listening and reflecting on the feedback received to date.

Participants appreciate the amount of multi-purpose space, especially from an equity and inclusion perspective. Some participants said the number of multi-purpose spaces would support a variety of community uses, especially amongst aging populations who could use the

space for activities such as exercise programs or arts and crafts. Consider how to use multi-purpose spaces to represent the diversity of the communities who will use centre, like the University of Pittsburgh's Nationality Rooms at the Cathedral of Learning.

Prioritize airflow and access to natural light. The Linseed Factory building would benefit from more natural light and better airflow to allow for recreational uses since the current building walls are mostly masonry with punched window openings. For the pools, pay attention to how much energy is used to light the building and how the window glazing affects morning and evening light. Also, many pools are dug below ground and require a significant amount of artificial light and have poor airflow. The project team could consider drawing inspiration from similar heritage building projects and how they maximize natural light and improve air quality in the building.

Design Team note: We'll be paying close attention to the availability of natural light and airflow as we get into the detailed plans. Since the buildings will be net zero emissions, we'll work to see how cross-ventilation and natural light will help to create a sustainable building where people feel healthy and comfortable while also reducing costs and environmental impact of artificial lighting and airflow. The existing Linseed Factory already has a significant amount of natural light served by the large windows and other openings and we can explore the potential for sky lights. In terms of pool lighting, we'll have to consider the impact of window glazing on pool glare and how that might make the pool potentially more difficult to lifeguard.

Parking remains a key priority for the new community centre, including bike parking since there are a large number of cyclists in the community. *The community centre will not have a lot of car parking. Due to the railway setback, parking is one of the least sensitive uses we can put in that area and will be limited in order to make space for accessible parking, a limited amount of parking for some staff, and a drop-off area. The amount of parking will not vary significantly between the five site design options. At this stage, it is hard to confirm exactly how many parking spots will be available since the design options are preliminary and intended to show a general indication of how space is allocated. There will however be a lot of bike parking throughout the site.*

Explore opportunities to use the roof space. One participant suggested leveraging the building massing in Options 3, 4, and 5 to create outdoor spaces that overlook the Town Square and offer viewing points of the city skyline and surrounding neighbourhood. These spaces have the potential for revenue generation as rentable event space or other community uses.

Design Team note: The roof space is something we are considering as well, since there's definitely an opportunity for an outdoor terrace space depending on the level of the building.

Reduce the impact of the railway setback on the park. One participant said that crash barriers along the railway corridor can become a detriment to the park depending on how much space is required for them.

Design Team note: The crash barrier can take the form of a berm, crash wall, crash berm, or combination. We're weighing a number of considerations, including Metrolinx's requirements, the financial impact of different options, and which options will allow us to build slightly closer to the setback.

Site Design Option Specific Feedback

- **Options 1 and 2 are least compact** and disrupt the natural flow of the park (they create a barrier between the street and the park), though they do offer a potential north-south connection straight through the new community centre from Wabash Avenue to the park.

- **Options 3, 4, and 5 minimize the footprint of the new building**, offering better flow from the parking lot to the rest of the park, as you can quickly slip through the lobby to either side.

Other Feedback

- It's good to hear that the community centre is being designed with an aging population in mind and that multiple ages will be served. Having space for the elderly will be important.
- Consider adding a community kitchen in the design options.

Part 3: Advice for the Public Meeting

Clarify the allocation of different amenities in the site design graphics, especially the pools. The current designs suggest that each design option has different amounts of space for pools and other amenities. Consider drawing lines to demonstrate where the lane swimming and children's pools may go, the change room area, and the fact that each option will have identical amounts of multi-purpose (remind participants that they are only viewing the ground level layout).

Design Team note: *Each scheme has a full complement of programming areas including the same number of pools, change rooms, and multi-purpose areas, but are configured differently across the design options. We'll make sure to clarify these distinctions in the presentation.*

Use different kinds of advertising approaches to direct people to the workshop, including advertising on site.

Design Team note: *We are putting up signage on site, including posters promoting the survey and posters promoting the public meeting. We'll also be distributing postcards at neighbouring Toronto Community Housing Buildings and using paid social media ads which have been really effective.*

Next Steps

The project team thanked participants and committed to sharing the presentation once the Public Meeting has concluded, posting the Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) report once it is finalized, and sharing a draft summary of the meeting in the coming weeks. They encouraged participants to utilize the Ethelo survey platform to provide more detailed feedback.

Contact Us

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

Doug Giles

Senior Project Coordinator, Capital Projects

Telephone: 416-392-0989

Email: Doug.Giles@toronto.ca

Alex Lavasidis

Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

Telephone: 416-318-1887

Email: Alex.lavasidis@toronto.ca

Appendix A – Meeting Agenda

Wabash Community Recreation Centre
Phase 3 – Site Design Options



Community Resource Group Meeting #2 (1 of 2 planned for Phase 3)

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

6:30 – 8:30 pm

Meeting purpose: To confirm the project vision, design principles, and big moves; share and seek feedback on the draft site design options; and provide the project team with constructive feedback and suggestions on the draft materials to be presented at the public meeting.

PROPOSED AGENDA

6:30 pm Land Acknowledgement, welcome, introductions & agenda review

Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, Swerhun Inc.

6:40 Update and overview of the Site Design Options

Doug Giles, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto

Alex Lavasidis, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto

Jarle Lovlin, Diamond Schmitt Architects

- Timeline update
- Summary of what we heard in Phase 2 and final Vision, Design Principles, and Big Moves
- Site Design Options

Questions of clarification

7:20 Discussion

Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, Swerhun Inc.

1. What are your thoughts on the site design options? What aspects of the designs do you like and don't like?
2. Are there any other factors we should consider as we move from multiple Site Design Options to one single site design concept for the new Wabash CRC?
3. Do you have any advice as we prepare for the upcoming public meeting?

8:20 Next steps and next CRG meeting

Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, Swerhun Inc.

8:30 Adjourn