

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

# Newtonbrook Community Recreation Centre

Virtual Public Meeting  
Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 19, 2021, 7:00 – 8:30 pm  
Via Zoom Webinar (online and by phone)

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## Introduction & Project Background

The City is planning to build a new two-storey multi-use community centre, located within the base of the Newtonbrook Plaza Redevelopment, M2M community, at Yonge Street and Cummer Avenue in North York.

The new community centre will be a two-storey facility accessed from a new street (Olympic Garden Drive), east of Yonge Street and across from a proposed new public park. The Newtonbrook Community Recreation Centre (CRC) will be owned and operated by the City of Toronto and will be open to the public.

The new CRC will be accessible and is planned to include:

- A 12,300 square foot gymnasium
- A 15,500 square foot multi-purpose space
- A community kitchen
- Community multi-use space
- Common area multi-purpose space
- Free public WiFi
- Gender-neutral washrooms and change rooms
- Storage and staff office space

This document provides a summary of the Newtonbrook CRC Virtual Public Meeting that was held on May 19, 2021 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

More information about the project can be found on the City of Toronto webpage at [www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC](http://www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC)

## Meeting Overview

On Wednesday, May 19, 2021, the City's Parks, Forestry & Recreation (PF&R Division) hosted a virtual public meeting for the new Newtonbrook Community Recreation Centre (CRC). The purpose of this virtual public meeting was to introduce the new CRC to the community and gather feedback on the design, programming and features of the new community centre.

Given the COVID-19 health pandemic, this meeting was held online and by phone in an effort to protect the health and safety of Toronto residents and City staff.

Over 100 people participated online and/or called in over the course of the virtual public meeting held on Zoom Webinar. The presentation is available on the project website at [www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC](http://www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC).

A virtual poll was also taken to solicit feedback from participants regarding the types of programming and features they would like to have in the new CRC. This poll was launched over the course of the discussion period and received 63 submissions. The results of the poll are available in the Appendix of this document.

Councillor John Filion provided opening remarks and welcomed participants. Ashley Wilson, Senior Project Coordinator with the PF&R Division at the City of Toronto and Vladimiro Carelli, Senior Associate at Wallman Architects provided an overview presentation. Jocelyn Deeks, a third-party facilitator with Bousfields Inc. facilitated the Q&A period following the presentation. Additional representatives from City Planning, City Parks, Forestry & Recreation, and Aoyuan Group, were also in attendance to respond to questions and comments.

This summary was prepared by Bousfields Inc. Please note that it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript, rather it is intended to capture key discussion points shared by participants at the meeting.

*This summary does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives, nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of the City of Toronto.*

## Public Meeting Advertisement

This virtual public meeting was advertised both via mail and online. Mailed flyers advertising the meeting went out to residential and commercial addresses within 1.5 km of the new community centre, which amounted to approximately 18,000 flyers. An e-flyer was also prepared for online distribution via the following social media platforms and PF&R social media accounts: Instagram, Facebook & Twitter.

## Feedback Summary

Project staff introduced the project to the community. Participants provided questions and comments throughout the meeting. These questions (Q) and responses (R) from Staff, the Councillor or other members of the Project Team are presented below, by discussion theme:

### 1. Overall planning & operations of the CRC

**Q: Is this development City-owned and will this replace the Goulding community centre?**

*R: Yes, it will be a fully City-owned and operated facility, even though it is being built as part of the M2M condo project. No, it is not replacing Goulding. It is something that is in addition to Goulding.*

**Q: Will the cost of maintaining this community centre be borne by the residents, the taxpayer or both?**

*R: The Newtonbrook CRC will be a City of Toronto asset and what we call a 'freehold strata conveyance'. At the completion of construction, the community centre will be fully City-owned and operated, so its operating budget will be out of City funds as well. So, it is completely separate from the condominium project.*

**Q: Will the community centre be open to the public or just to residents of M2M condominium?**

*R: Since this would be a City-owned community centre, it will be open and accessible to everybody (i.e. condo residents or anybody else in the community).*

**Q: Why would the City not expand or redesign an existing centre, such as Goulding?**

*R: There is currently repair work going on and planned for Goulding. It might appear that the site is expandable but there are a lot of other uses, such as the park and park amenities and the baseball facility that are very well used and permitted. So, in terms of expanding that, it has limitations on what it can provide. Certainly, further feasibility can be done. What is being proposed here, at this location, would not be any different than what is already at Goulding with exception of the outdoor pool.*

**Q: My question is for the Councillor. I have been living in this neighbourhood, close to Yonge and Finch for 20 years. Condos are growing along Yonge and, with that, comes an increase of population. Kids need these facilities to go and enjoy and yet, we don't have enough community centres that have swimming pools, skating rinks, hockey arenas,**

**gyms, and all the basketball courts. They are always booked. Do not tell us that we have enough availability at Douglas Snow. If you want to go there on a weekly basis, before COVID, you might be lucky to get in time there once a week. In 20 years, I have attempted many times and I have succeeded only five times with my kids to enter Douglas Snow and use the swimming pool. Why don't we get more facilities like this one?**

R: (Councillor Fillion) *It was a long time ago, and the area wasn't built up. We would love to have some great big expanses of land to build fabulous facilities; we simply do not have the space for that. We will be getting a new five-acre park over on the other side of Yonge and there will certainly be some facilities that can go into that space. But we're always trying to add new things in this area and if you look at what's been added over the last 25 years, it's remarkable. Try to find anywhere else in the city that has added two new community centres in the last 15 years. You will find that there is nowhere at all. Something that I will add though, a big problem, and I've tried to alert people to this at every opportunity: we have been able to build a lot of facilities (childcare centres, community centres) through something called Section 37 funds that developers contribute as this developer did. But the province changed the rules two years ago, so that we will now get, in North York along Yonge Street, roughly a third of the money that we use to get to build these kinds of facilities. So, it will become extremely difficult to keep up with the increasing population. Not because that's what the City wants, but because the provincial government has changed the requirements. This development thankfully preceded all of that and the applicant here has been very helpful.*

**Q: In regard to the programming discussion, I understand that the City of Toronto has type A, B and C facilities for their fitness memberships, are there plans to include/accommodate fitness memberships programs, if so, what type of facility would this facility be?**

R: *We're redoing our fitness model, and it wouldn't be a C because a C comes with a swimming pool. In terms of what kind of fitness facilities, we'll have this consultation and will determine what kind of facility it will be. It'll most likely be a multifunctional fitness space with some weights, and for some functional fitness equipment, but that really depends on the feedback we get during the consultation.*

**Q: Will there be a cost to use the facilities/programs?**

R: *It'll be a paid location.*

**Q: Will there be security at the building?**

R: *We are going to have cameras and security features like in most buildings. We don't have security officers in general, but we do equip our centres with cameras and those types of things.*

**Q: How will the size of this community centre compare to Edithvale?**

R: *They are very comparable. As a matter of fact, we've been looking at Edithvale as a good example for this community centre. We take it as a model and take some of the lessons learned and some of the great aspects. I can say they're almost exactly the same size, but this site is just slightly smaller.*

**Q: How do you calculate that its size will accommodate the community?**

R: *As part of our Facilities Master Plan, we have a series of metrics that we look at. We look at where there are service gaps, and then where certain types of facilities might best be suited in a particular area. The size of this particular community centre was partly based on that metric, and partly based on the negotiation that took place as part of the development review process as Councillor Fillion mentioned.*

## 2. Newtonbrook Plaza Redevelopment (M2M community)

**Q: How was this community centre secured through the development approval process?**

*R: (Councillor Fillion) When I first started representing this area again, after the 2018 election, the Parks and Rec Staff came and spoke to me and said, there is a community centre planned for Newtonbrook but it is only 25,000 square feet. That is much too small for our needs and maybe we shouldn't build that at all. I said, "let me talk to the applicant" and see what we can come up with. So, this is after the development was already approved, section 37 was signed, sealed, delivered. Again, you know, I rarely compliment developers but, in this case, Aoyuan has been very helpful, and we have been able to, in the past year, get an agreement to double the size of the community centre. It has gone from 25,000 square feet to more than, 50,000 square feet, at a cost of just what the additional cost to the developer was to create the space (with all of the economies of scale and everything). So, that's actually how this particular community centre happened.*

**Q: Will there be a supermarket in the development?**

*R: We are trying our very best to secure one for the first phase, which is currently under construction. That's where we are in our minds anyway, that we'd like to bring one back. There isn't one planned for the second phase, and that's simply because all of our efforts are going toward housing one here in the first phase so nothing's a guarantee, but we are working very hard behind the scenes to try to secure it in the first phase.*

**Q: How many spots for kids will there be in the daycare?**

*R: The daycare facility will be a standard City of Toronto 62 childcare facility.*

## 3. Design considerations for the CRC

**Q: I'm involved in track and field and there's a severe lack of indoor training space. The inclusion of a running track is great - the radius of turns on elevated tracks is usually too tight for any meaningful training. Can the turn radii be increased to make the track more functional? This would understandably overhang the court below. Also, a sand pit at the end of a runway would be a great addition. Thank you for your consideration.**

*R: There are three running lanes, so each one is obviously going to have its own radius. In terms of broadening these radiuses, that is something that we can certainly look at. We don't want to close it too much because we are trying to keep the space open to the basketball court below which does require a certain amount of ceiling height. But there's no reason why we couldn't look at this especially these tighter corners to see if we could broaden out that radius.*

**Q: Will the kitchen be equipped with overhead mirrors and demo counters to enable cooking classes and demonstrations?**

*R: These are good ideas. We've got precedents in some of our other recent community kitchen facilities. These are the kinds of ideas that we like to hear. We're certainly happy to accommodate where we can.*

**Q: Is the community kitchen a full kitchen ie: with a stove and oven? If so, where there any challenges to obtaining permits and meeting building code requirements (as this is not common to have in community centres)? Also, what kind of programming will the kitchen be used for?**

*R: It hasn't been determined yet, and again this is part of why we're here tonight, is to see what appetite there would be for a community kitchen. What or what size or form it may take. Certainly, there is consideration for commercial kitchen requirements, and the question is*

*pertinent because commercial kitchens do have a code requirement, but these can be met. This is something that has been done before in our community centres and so it can be accommodated. But the question is, what is the desire for such a kitchen in this facility, and that is part of what this evening is about. As a technical thing, it's certainly feasible.*

**Q: Has the design been changed in any way because of COVID or is the design based on pre-pandemic standards?**

*R: The design of the buildings hasn't changed. Programs were all modified due to COVID and still continue to be modified, due to COVID. In terms of the design of the facility, it follows the City of Toronto guidelines and recommendations in terms of things like hand washing stations. Those are the kinds of things that we will work into the facility, but it's really going to come down to how the facility is programmed itself and how the facility will be used. The vast majority of the areas are dedicated to multi-purpose rooms. It's a large space and it's going to come down to how many people are going to be allowed into that room and so on. So that's going to come down to how a facility functions, versus physical spaces.*

**Q: In regard to the universal (gender neutral) washrooms/change rooms, could you talk a little more about the design and how it would help mitigate any concerns from the public?**

*R: As per the City's requirements, the bathrooms are designed as universal bathrooms, so they're accessible to everyone. The universal bathrooms feature individual stalls for each toilet and then a kind of communal hand washing area, the entire bathroom itself would be barrier free accessible. In the lower level in the universal public bathrooms, there is a specific area for change rooms, and family change rooms, that would each have their own individual little cubicles within that, as well as access to lockers. The main area itself has individual cubicles that people can go in and change.*

**Q: What is the capacity of change rooms per level?**

*R: Right now, we haven't gotten into the specifics of how many actual change rooms there will be. The current plans are showing, for example, the family change room will have approximately four areas where families can go in. The gender-neutral change rooms, we'll have to work through those numbers as we get into the detailed design.*

**Q: I'm excited to hear about this new community centre being planned. I go to the Cummer United Church, and also have made use of the facilities at Mitchell Field and Edithvale Community Centre. One thing that I hope won't be repeated in this community centre is in the gym. Some designers like to use a so-called 'open concept' to allow people from outside to see what people are doing inside. It sounds good, but if you are trying to play badminton or table tennis and there is light on the outside, especially on sunny days, you get blind - you cannot see the ball, or the bird. You cannot enjoy playing when you cannot see. So, hopefully in this new community centre, I see that your design has one side that's going outside to some community space or Garden. Hopefully they won't be full length windows that would create this type of problem. If you go in there, you will understand.**

*R: For the gymnasium, there is going to be visibility in and out, which is one of the things the City of Toronto wants to try to achieve with their facilities. Now in terms of the glare, there's no reason why we couldn't incorporate things like sun shading devices as well as blinds and things of that nature. For the facility itself, like any building that we design in the City of Toronto, it has to adhere to certain requirements in terms of energy efficiency. So, although in the renderings we're seeing these giant wonderful expanses of glass, it's not going to necessarily be an entire wall of glass. We do want to promote visibility in and's not you're not going to be inside of a glass box necessarily. We don't expect any direct sunlight to be penetrating into the actual*

*gymnasium itself, so I think it is a valid concern and something I think that can be addressed as we progress the design.*

**C: I think this is a really great idea to involve the community as part of the design planning. Even just the proposed ideas from both the guests here tonight and and your teams are really exciting. My suggestion involves specifically these spaces that we haven't quite designated yet. I know there's a lot of options for mixed use, and I think a really great way to support that in the future (even if we can't decide now) is by offering room divisions and opportunities to rent out media. A lot of community groups within the area often have problems renting out spaces to host their events and classes; whether it's language classes, new parent classes, even students looking just looking for a space to book a space to run through presentations for school. I know we're not including a library here but there's no reason why we can't take elements of a library and incorporate them here. Having room dividers where you can either rent out a whole room or rent out a quarter of a room with room dividers, I think that even that maximizes the number of folks we can have in those spaces and also the number of opportunities to bring together folks in the area.**

*R: Thanks for your comments. You gave lots of ideas of types of potential uses, which are fantastic.*

#### **4. Programming Ideas for the CRC**

**Q: Is there a plan to put a bowling alley in this community centre? I think it would be a great tribute to the former Newtonbrook Bowl. I also think a rock climbing/obstacle course would be great features of this community centre. Do you think these will be considered for the community centre?**

*R: We haven't worked in a bowling alley into the community centre's design. Right now, the facility itself is predominantly multifunctional spaces that can be used for a multitude of activities. A bowling alley has quite specific technical requirements and it isn't in the City's program category right now. Based on space limitations, it would be hard to put one in this facility. The suggestion has been noted, however, as something identified for the new community centre.*

**Q: Is there going to be a library?**

*R: The Toronto Public Library has their own master plan for libraries. We're not involved in that, and it's not something we're considering as part of this project.*

**Q: Is a swimming pool being planned to be included in the CRC?**

*R: An aquatic facility with a swimming pool has not been considered as part of this development. We do have some facilities (which we refer to as two anchor facilities) which are similar to what we have now except with an aquatic centre component as well. Due to specific space and technical considerations, for this particular project there is not the mandate to have an Aquatic Centre as part of this facility. However, we do have our Facilities Master Plan, which identifies areas around the City of Toronto where there seem to be gaps in particular services (e.g. an aquatic centre), looking at what community is most in need of an aquatic centre. So that is something that is ongoing and will be addressed, but not as part of this particular project.*

**Q: Will there be a room for snooker (much like Edithvale) and possibly a billiards table?**

*R: That's what today's process is about: to get an understanding of what kind of amenities and services you're looking for in this facility. Based on that, we'll go back and build a program. The*



*program will highlight the sort of services we offer and how we make the facility, so fine tuning the rooms of the facility.*

**Q: Will there be a space suitable for roller skating?**

*R: Let's look at that as something that has been brought forward as a possibility / an ask. We're very open to hearing these ideas. That's absolutely what this evening is all about.*

**Q: Will there be medical facilities?**

*R: We do have first aid stations in all of our facilities (e.g. defibrillators), but if you're asking about a therapeutic centre, that's a different kind of a question.*

## **5. Timing**

**Q: This is very exciting. May I ask again the estimate time/year this will be done? (Recognizing that delays could happen.)**

*R: Right now, with our delivery schedule we're looking to start construction sometime next year late summer, and close to the fall of 2026 we'd like to have the project complete. That's our current projected timeline, so we'd like to have this ready and operational for not just our future residents, but everybody in the area by the fall of 2026.*

**Q: Will the condos be built first and the community centre last?**

*R: The fall of 2026 is the time for the community centre to be completed. I believe it is a requirement for us to be able to complete that as part of the registration process for the entire Phase, so it's not going to lag behind. In that sense, that's the date that we're aiming toward. There may be some purchasers that are in their units and occupied their units prior to it actually being finished, but the timeline that we are targeting right now, as I mentioned would be the fall of 2026.*

## **6. Future public park design process**

**Q: Will there be a separate consultation with respect to amenities for the park? Any idea when the public park will be completed?**

*R: Our colleagues in Parks Planning are working on that and they will have their own separate public engagement. And my understanding is that that will be upcoming later this year, sometime this fall of 2021. My understanding is that it will have a variety of uses, including a pathway, and there will be public amenities as part of the park, as well as planted green space and trees, planning a variety so that it's an inviting public park for the use of everyone in the community. Likely in September. I think that's the tentative date for the public consultation on the park.*

## **7. Parking and traffic considerations**

**Q: What is the parking strategy for the site and greater community? Will there be onsite parking? Will it be free or paid parking? Will there be parking for bicycles?**

*R: Both Block 1 and Block 2 have a commercial parking garage below that will be interconnected when completed. This parking garage will have parking spaces available for visitors to the community centre. It's going to be a paid commercial parking facility. There are also visitor bike parking facilities on that same level and around the entire site. For example, we have a series of bike rings and ample opportunity for bikes to park both inside facility as well as outside the facility.*

**Q: Does the “Private Street” provide access to both Yonge Street and Olympic Garden Drive and will there be traffic lights?**

*R: Yes, there is going to be a new signaled intersection at the south end of Olympic Garden Drive at Yonge Street.*

**Q: How is traffic onto Cummer Ave from Olympic Garden Drive going to be managed?**

*R: As part of both phases of the site plan application, the applicant submitted a traffic study which is reviewed by City Staff, both engineering and construction services. The transportation services department analyzes the traffic volumes in the study. They provide recommendations back to the applicant and the applicant would incorporate some changes and submit it back to staff for review and that's where we determine where traffic signals would be required. We did that as part of Phase 2. Phase 1, which is currently under construction (so that's been approved) and an updated traffic study for Phase 2 has been submitted and is currently under review by Staff. There are no proposed traffic signals at the private street between Olympic Garden Drive and Yonge Street. There are stop controls, but it'll be something that we would look at because residents coming from the community to the east that will walk in through the new public park, we want to make sure that they can get across Olympic Garden Drive to the community centre safely. That's something that will be reviewed as part of the Phase 2 Site Plan Application, which is currently under review.*

**Q: Will the community centre be accessible from Yonge Street via the upcoming Yonge Street bicycle lane extension?**

*R: Yes, you would ride north bound on Yonge Street, as part of the Reimagine Yonge. Although it's a private street, there will be a public access easement over in the east-west street between Olympic Garden. You can park your bicycle at one of the indoor or outdoor bicycle parking facilities and use the community centre. Olympic Garden Drive also features bike lanes on both sides of the road as well. So, then that will interlink the bike lane network along Yonge Street and Cummer. That's planned for the future. I also want to add that the Transform Yonge stops at Bishop. We will certainly be looking at expanding it further. There will be a lot of consultation on that in the years ahead, but there are currently no definite plans for that, and it may have to wait until after the subway construction.*

## Next Steps

The Project Team thanked participants for their participation and interest in the process and encouraged them to fill out the online survey to provide additional feedback on the features and programming of the CRC. Findings from this survey will be posted on the City's website at [www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC](http://www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC).

The feedback gathered during the meeting, via email, and through the survey will be used to update the design, programming and features of the Newtonbrook CRC. The revised findings will be posted on the City's Website at [www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC](http://www.toronto.ca/NewtonbrookCRC).

## Contact Us

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

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## Appendix – Polling Results

Total respondents: 63

**Q1: Fitness / Dance Space: What types of fitness and dance programs would you like to have in this flexible space? Select all that apply.**

- Yoga/Meditation (41)
- Pilates (23)
- Tai Chi (22)
- Zumba (27)
- Bootcamp/Cross-Fit (26)
- Hip-hop dance (20)
- Ballroom dance (20)
- Martial Arts (15)
- Qigong (11)
- Other ideas (6)

**Q2: Community Kitchen: What types of activities or features would you like in the new community kitchen? Select all that apply.**

- Cooking workshops/classes (56)
- Permits for special events along with multi-purpose rooms (38)
- Other ideas (4)

**Q3: Lounge/Common Area Spaces: What amenities would you like included in or near to the lounge/common area spaces? Select all that apply.**

- Bottle filling station/drinking fountain (53)
- Seating that is comfortable and can be used by those waiting for a pickup (especially wheel trans or the elderly), or to meet others (43)
- Reading space (40)
- A mural (18)
- A book exchange library (38)
- Plants or greenwall (41)
- Tables (24)
- Charging stations (38)
- Other ideas (4)

**Q4: Gymnasium & Running Track: What types of programs, activities or sports would you like to have in the gym space and running track area? Select all that apply.**

- Drop-in Sports (e.g. basketball, volleyball, badminton, soccer, dodgeball, etc.) (49)
- Intramural Sports Leagues (e.g. basketball, volleyball, badminton, soccer, dodgeball, etc.) (31)
- Gymnastics (16)
- Martial Arts (13)
- Open Track Time (34)

- Dance Classes (e.g. Zumba, Hip Hop, Ballroom, etc.) (39)
- Other ideas (8)

**Q5: Multi-Purpose/Activity Rooms: What types of programs and activities would you like to have in the multi-purpose rooms? Select all that apply.**

- Visual Arts (e.g. painting, drawing) (38)
- Yoga / Meditation (40)
- Music (31)
- Crafts (29)
- Drama / Theatre (22)
- Youth or Senior Programs (36)
- Language classes (32)
- Computer classes (31)
- Community permits/Events (e.g. Birthday party rentals, community meetings, workshops) (39)
- Other ideas (5)