

City of Toronto Curling Strategy Consultation with Etobicoke Arena Users

June 17, 2021

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Land Acknowledgement

I'd like to begin by honouring the land that I'm on. If you are not currently in Toronto, I encourage you to learn about the lands you're on.

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



Agenda



Welcome, Meeting Goals, Introduction, and WebEx Tips



Presentation

- Project overview and Council direction
- Review of survey results
- Introduce draft principles for shared use or conversion



Questions of Clarification and Discussion



Next Steps

thank
you!

Adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Goals

- Provide an introduction and overview of the Curling Strategy
- Review your survey results
- Introduce and gather feedback on draft principles for shared use or conversion
- Answer questions of clarification
- Share next steps

Project Team

Capital Projects & Public Consultation (PF&R)

Suzanne Coultres – Project Manager, Parkland Strategy

Matt Bentley – Project Manager, Facilities Master Plan

Alex Lavasidis (facilitation) – Consultation Coordinator

Cathy Hargreaves – Manager, Client Services

Titti Dunn – Supervisor, Client Services

Trish Power – Manager Facilities Management

Terrance Duffy – Manager, Community Recreation

Cathy Vincelli - Manager, Community Recreation

Project Overview

Introduction: The Facilities Master Plan and Council Direction

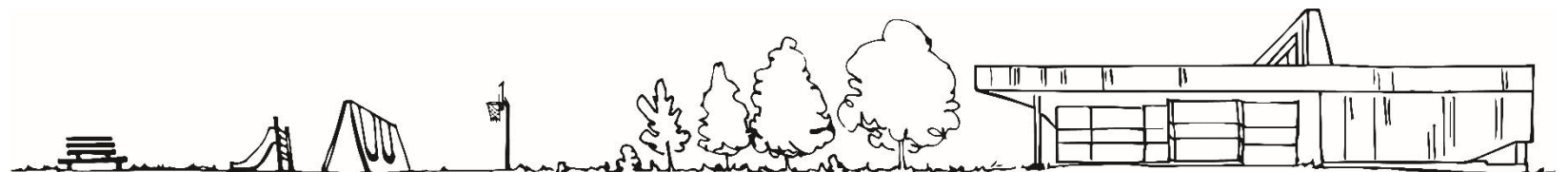
The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan(FMP) 2019-2038 is a 20 year plan that guides recreation investment in the City.

The FMP originally found Toronto's per-capital supply of curling sheets was adequate and no new curling facilities were recommended.

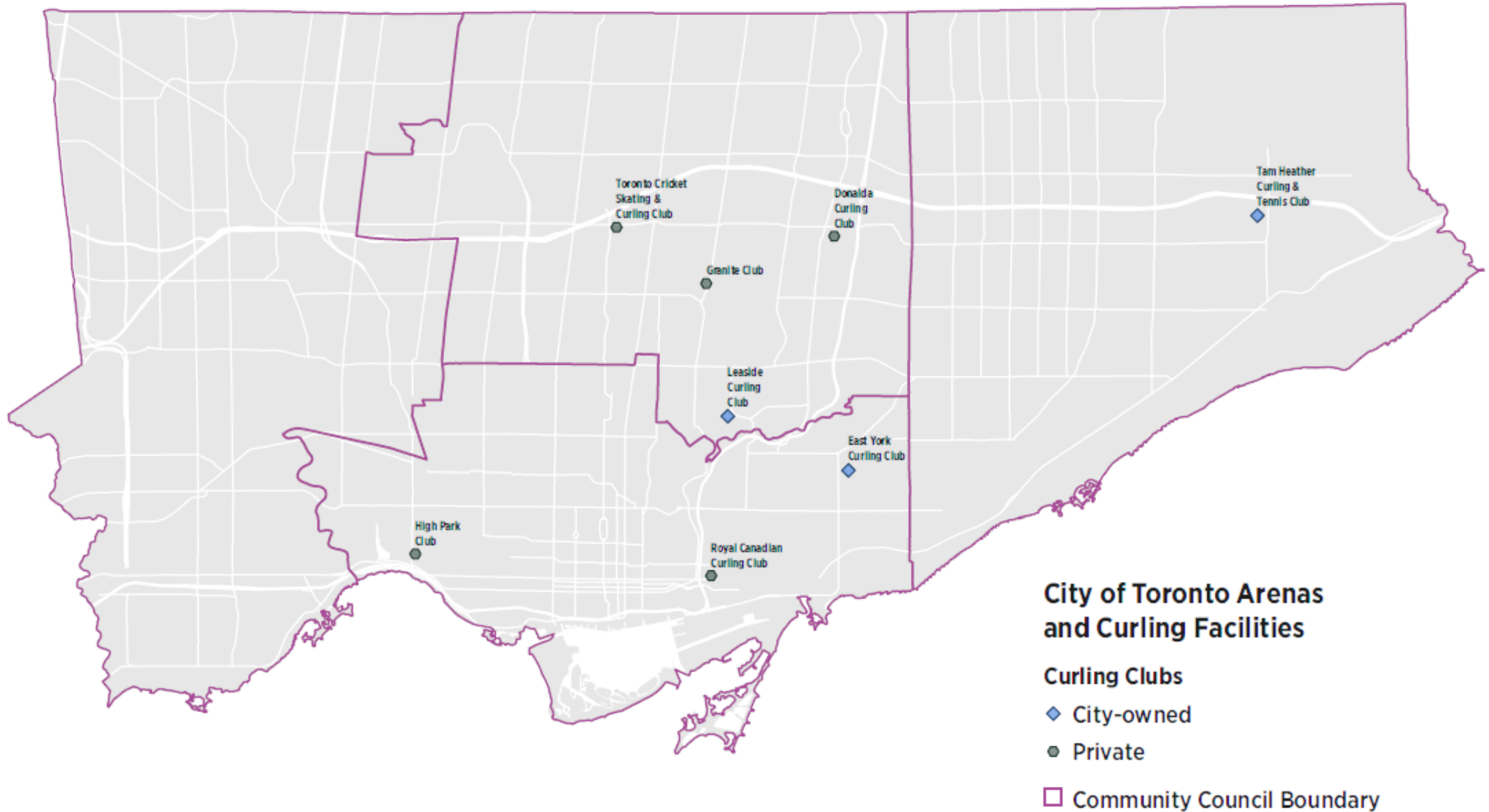
Since the FMP was approved, three privately owned curling facilities have closed (two in Toronto's west end). The principal reason for these was not lack of demand or revenue related to curling. Although specific circumstances differ, each closure related to prioritizing golf activities.

The closures altered the context of curling in the city.

In October 2019 City Council directed staff to assess trends and participation in curling.



Curling Facilities in Toronto



Demand from Recent Closures of Privately-Owned Facilities

A conservative estimate of demand from recent closures is 550 curlers in the west end (625 city-wide).

- **5 to 6 sheets of curling ice are required to meet this demand** based on the industry benchmark for utilization (100 to 125 members/sheet).
- There is **no capacity at nearby existing facilities** to accommodate these curlers.
- This estimate does not capture occasional curlers or high school curling programs. Six high school programs (roughly 100 students) in Etobicoke York have recently ended due to lack of ice.
- The closures also led to **specific programming gaps** including the discontinuation of Toronto's only Special Olympics curling program (formerly located at Weston) and a shortage of practice ice for university teams.

Trends in Curling Participation

- An estimated **37,000** Torontonians curled at least once last year.
- Membership at curling facilities is **stable or growing**.
- Ratio of male to female curlers is **approximately equal**.
- **Programs for Little Rocks (under 12) and Juniors are growing.**
Participation is often capped based on available ice time and volunteers.
- The most popular and fastest-growing curling leagues are mixed or open leagues.
- Curling plays an important **social role**, especially for seniors and others who may be isolated during winter months.

Summary of Supply and Demand for Curling

1. There is unmet demand for curling ice in Toronto, especially in the west end.

- Toronto's supply of City-owned curling ice has not changed and is in line with other jurisdictions.
- The recent closure of 3 privately owned curling facilities, 2 in the west end, decreased the overall supply of curling ice. Demand is stable or growing.
- There is no curling ice in Etobicoke York, demonstrated demand, and little or no capacity at nearby facilities to meet this demand.

2. Curling serves a wide range of ages and abilities.

- Curlers in Toronto range in age from 7 to over 100.
- Specialized programs include youth curling, blind curling leagues, LGBTQ2S curling leagues and wheelchair and stick curling.
- Programming is limited by a available ice, especially transit and wheelchair accessible ice.
- Recent facility closures have caused some programs such as Special Olympics curling and high school teams to end.

3. The delivery model for curling in Toronto presents a barrier to broader participation.

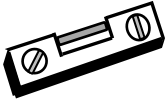
- Most curling ice is used by members of clubs and established leagues.
- Many curling facilities offer programs for new curlers but these are limited by the high demand for ice.
- When these barriers are removed, there is evidence of interest among new participants and a more diverse group of participants.

Curling Strategy: Facility Options

Specifications for Curling Ice



A sheet of curling ice is roughly 45m (150') long by 4.75m (15'7") wide



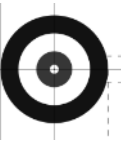
Ice surface must be level and clean



Ice temperature is -4.5° to -5°C (roughly 1° to 3°C warmer than hockey ice)



Ice surface is “pebbled” by spraying with clean water (no minerals or impurities) at a consistent temperature



Curling-specific markings and “hacks” for rock delivery are installed at correct dimensions



Ice quality depends on consistent ambient air temperature and humidity



Types of Curling Facilities

Dedicated curling facility

May be stand-alone or co-located with other recreation amenities.



Image: Leaside Curling Club (City of Toronto)

Arena facility

Arena ice can be converted to curling ice permanently or on a part-time or temporary basis. Conversion requires staff time and technical expertise.



Image: PEI Curling



Image: Town of Petawawa

Facility Options Analysis

The following facility options for curling were identified by stakeholders and through a jurisdictional scan:

- **Convert an existing arena to curling ice**
- **Shared use of an existing arena (hockey/skating + curling)**

Potentially
Feasible

- **New stand-alone curling facility**
- **New co-located curling facility (part of a CRC)**
- **Add curling facility onto an existing arena building (three-wall addition)**

Not recommended based on
Capital Budget pressures

Option: Arena Conversion to Curling Ice

- Potential to deliver 5 sheets of curling ice.
- Aligns with opportunity identified in Facilities Master Plan to repurpose an underutilized single-pad arena as new twin-pad arenas come on line (planned budget: \$2.55M for each arena).
- Depends on identifying a suitable site based on FMP criteria and community consultation.
- Flexibility to convert ice back to a different use if demand changes.
- Cost TBD based on facility condition (e.g. accessibility requirements, State of Good Repair). Curling-specific costs (rocks, ice equipment) are estimated at <\$250,000.

Case Study: West Northumberland Curling Club at Jack Heenan Arena (Cobourg, ON)

- Volunteers converted arena to 5 sheets of curling ice in 2011
- Leased and operated by third party (curling club)
- Future plans include lounge space, snack bar, locker rooms and wheelchair accessibility

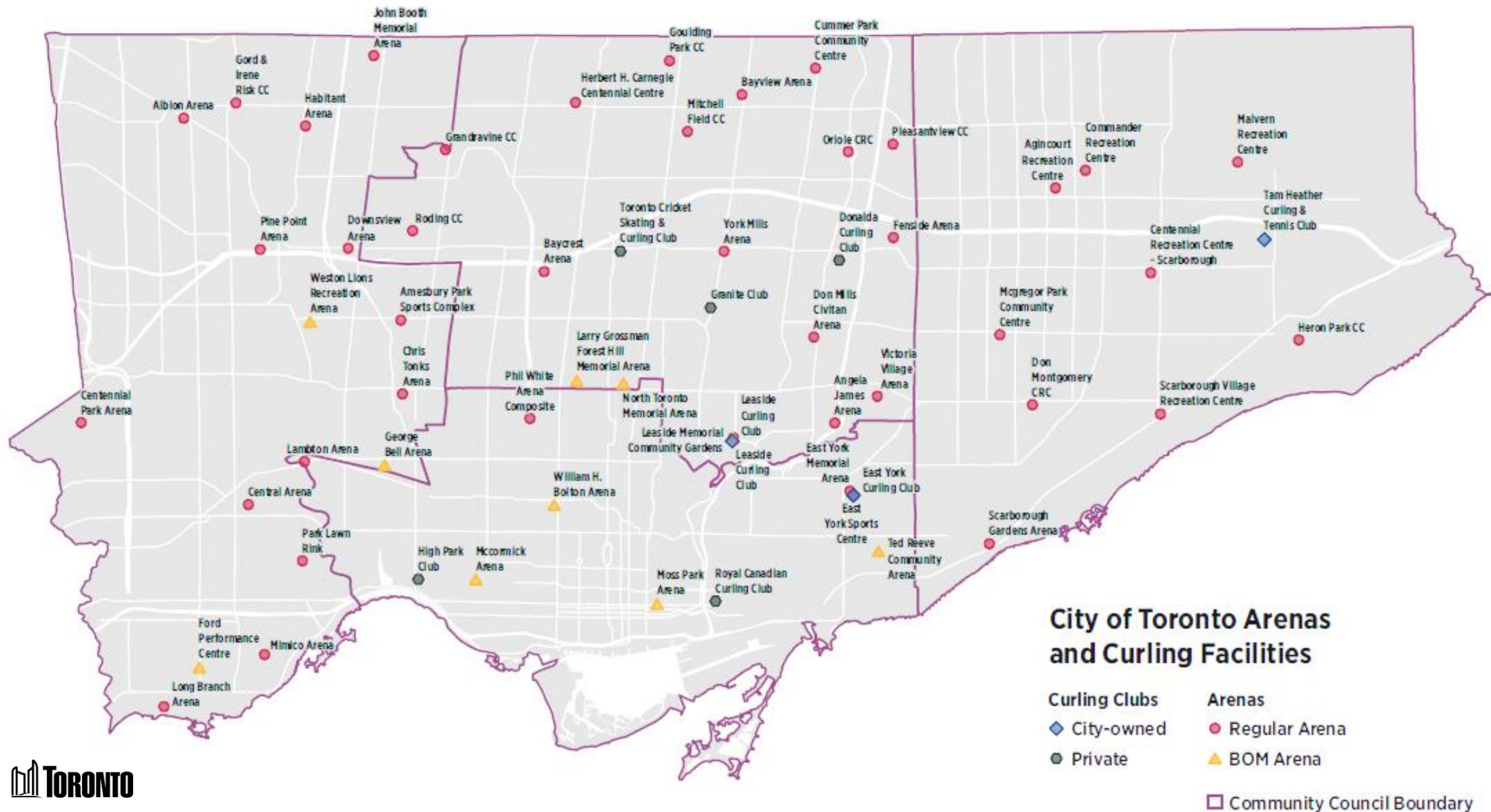
Option: Arena Shared Use (Hockey/Skating and Curling)

- Staff time and expertise required to convert between hockey and curling on a regular basis.
- Conversion takes minimum 4 hours where no permitting can occur.
- Lower capacity for curling than an arena conversion (4 sheets instead of 5) due to requirement to leave space for ice-making equipment.
- Curling ice is suitable for recreational rather than competitive curling. Ice quality is not as high as a curling-only facility.
- Requires multiple sets of lines on the ice which may impact users.
- Competition for uses and lower overall capacity for both curling and hockey.

Case Study: Petawawa Civic Centre Arena

- Curling 2 mornings per week – conversion requires 2 staff/2 hrs
- Remaining use is hockey/skating – conversion requires 15 min
- Portable scoreboards, hacks
- Curling stones stored in a shed and cooled on ice prior to use
- User fee (\$8/day) offsets roughly 20% of operating cost

Curling and Arena Facilities in Toronto



Current Uses at Arenas

- City-run programs:
 - Drop In/Leisure Skate
 - Learn to Skate
- Permit holders:
 - Children/Youth versus adult
 - Non-profit (house league) versus competitive
- Community use
- Anchor programs: e.g. House League based at the arena, figure skating programs
- Community impacts: degree to which utilization is local vs. city-wide
- Special events

Overall demand for arena ice is decreasing over time.

Demand remains strongest in prime time.

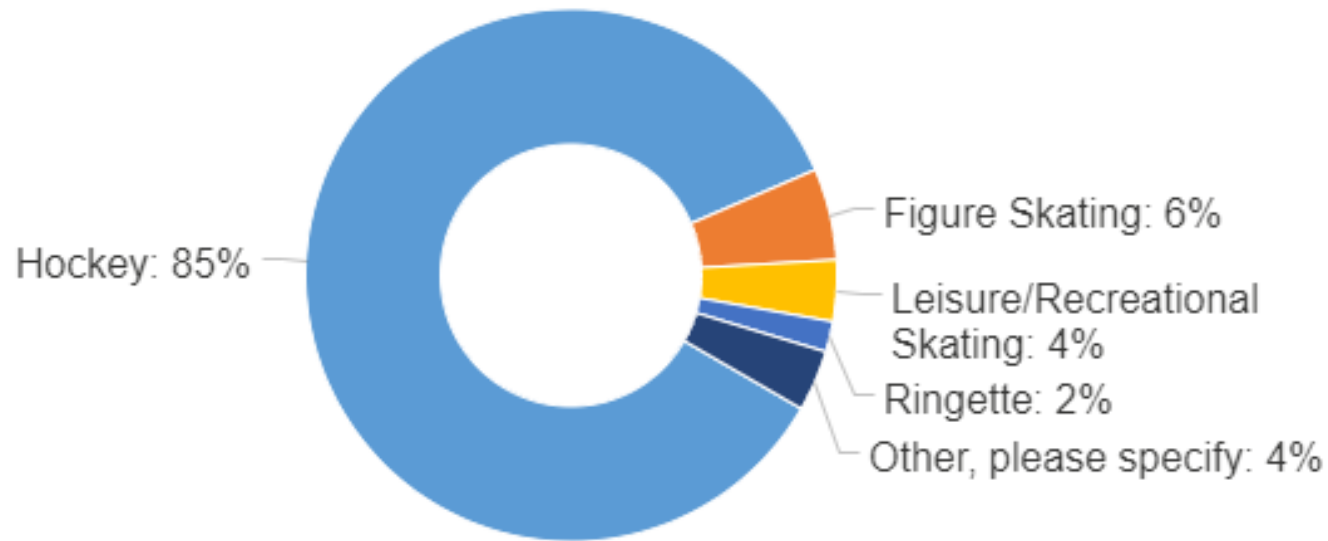
Criteria to Identify Potential Arenas for Curling

- **Arena Location & Type:** Focus on locations that will address geographic gap in supply of curling ice (in Etobicoke York).
- **Arena Use:** Identify which arenas would result in the least impact to existing permits/programs.
- **Suitability of Arenas for Curling:** Review facility condition, physical accessibility, and transit and car access to ensure the arena would be suitable for curling.
- **Neighbourhood Indicators:** Compile information about the communities where arenas are located including:
 - Participation in hockey, skating and curling.
 - Community use.
 - Proportion of equity-deserving groups: Recent immigrants, Aboriginal Identity, Visible Minority, Low Income.*
 - Whether arena is located or serves a Neighbourhood Improvement Area.

Etobicoke Arena Users Overview of Survey Results

Survey Results Overview

- Survey Live: May 18 – 31
- Sent To: Etobicoke Arena permit holders (130)
- Responses: 53
- User Group of Respondents:



Concerns Related to a Shared-Use Model

- **Scheduling**
 - Maintain existing/consistent time slots/locations
 - Existing users want more ice time
 - Time slots lost to conversion process
- **Ice quality**
 - Lowered/inadequate ice quality
 - Additional lines on ice confusing
- **Off-ice amenities**
 - Inadequate storage
 - Crowding of facilities
- **Change rooms**
 - Maintain change room times and shower use for existing users
 - Separate children and adults
- **Other**
 - Separating leagues from arenas they have fundraised to improve
 - Perception that hockey is losing popularity
 - Allocation of ice should reflect demand

Suggestions for a Shared-Use Model

- **Timing:**

- Fill unused ice time slots (e.g. days /off-peak times)
- Convert for one full day a week in an arena to reduce time spent on ice conversion

- **Arena Selection:**

- Consider only those arenas primarily used for practice spaces (e.g. not those used as home ice by leagues)
- Convert a single pad in a double pad arena

- **Other:**

- Create bubbled outdoor rinks to make room for new users
- Provide new school curling programs

Opportunities of a Shared-Use Model

- Access to curling for new participants: Youth, existing arena users, local communities.
- Potential to add curling components to existing arena leagues/associations.
- Potential to improve off-ice facilities.
- Potential ice quality improvement (shared between figure skating and curling as opposed to figure skating and hockey).

Concerns Related to Conversion & Relocation of Activities

- Lost membership and/or reduced program/team viability due to :
 - Programming moving further away from members' homes.
 - Splitting programs across various arenas.
 - Losing existing time slots.
 - Losing ice time (especially smaller permit holders).
- Less ice time access (currently unmet demand).
- Losing connection to:
 - The association's namesake arena.
 - Long-standing local neighbourhood ties.

Opportunities of Conversion & Relocation of Activities

- Depending on the relocation some organisations could be closer to their members.
- Potential for improved arena facilities.
- Curling program access for students.
- Amalgamation of rinks could provide associations with access to more players.

Suggestions for Conversion & Relocation of Activities

- Work with permit holders impacted to select the least disruptive time slots/ relocations.
- Ensure clear and transparent communications throughout this process and maintain open dialogue between arena users and the City.
 - Once identified, share what arenas are being considered for conversion or a shared-use model.

Draft Principles for Shared Use or Conversion

Draft Principles for Shared Use or Conversion (*for Discussion*)

1. Maintain open dialogue and transparent communications between arena users and the City
2. Allocate ice time based on the demand for each activity (adjusted over time)
3. Maintain safe and good quality of ice for all users
4. Minimize impacts on existing user groups by:
 - Filling unused ice time slots (e.g. off-peak times) before other actions are taken
 - Minimizing any reductions to existing ice permit hours
 - Maintain existing permit time slots and permit locations whenever possible
 - If required, work with permit holders to select the least disruptive time slots changes and/or relocations
5. Ensure off-ice amenities are not overcrowded and are safe for all users
6. Do not create gaps in programming provision for existing user groups (e.g. skating, ice hockey, etc.)
7. Support sport development for all ages and abilities

Q&A and Discussion

Q&A and Discussion

- Do you have any questions of clarification?
- Do you have any comments about the draft principles?
 - Is anything missing?
- Do you have any preference between the two options (Shared-Use or Arena Conversion)? If so, why?
- Do you have any additional feedback?

To Participate: Use the Raise Hand or Chat feature. Please share your name & the permit group you represent when you start to share your feedback.

Next Steps

Next Steps

- Refine principles based on your feedback and feedback from curling stakeholders (June)
- Host a public meeting and an online survey to gather additional feedback on the principles (Summer)
- Apply the principles to develop staff recommendations (September)
- Report back to Council (October - TBC)
- Any further steps to be determined by Council

THANK YOU