

City of Toronto Curling Strategy

Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting
March 8, 2021



Council Direction & Work to Date

Council Direction

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, 2019-2038 (FMP) found that **Toronto's supply of City-owned curling sheets is in line with or exceeds the benchmark for large GTA and Canadian cities**, and this supply is augmented by privately owned facilities.

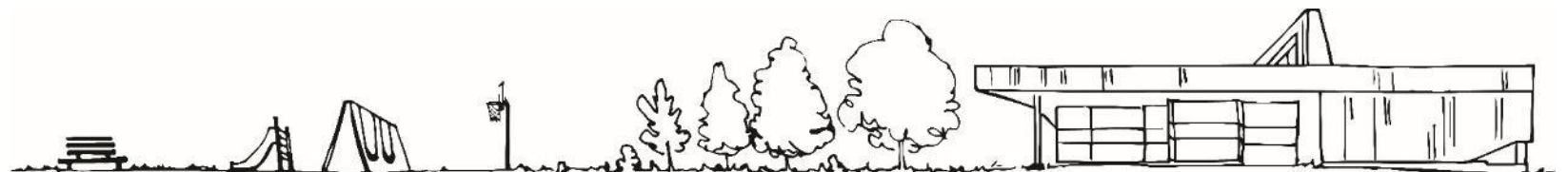
Based on this analysis no new curling facilities were recommended.

Since the FMP was approved, closures of three privately owned curling facilities, including two in Toronto's west end, have altered the context of curling in the city.

In October 2019, as part of approval of the FMP Implementation Strategy, City Council directed staff to assess trends and participation in curling.

City Council directed staff to:

"Monitor and assess trends and participation in curling including considering the capacity of existing private and public curling facilities, opportunities to make interest in curling broader and more inclusive and to consult with relevant stakeholders on potential opportunities and report back in the fourth quarter of 2020."



Facilities Master Plan

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2019 – 2038) (FMP) is a 20-year plan approved by Council in 2017 for new and enhanced recreation facilities to meet the needs of our changing city.

The Plan measured service levels by calculating the provision of recreation assets on a per capita basis.

Analysis found that **the per capita supply of City-owned curling sheets in Toronto is in line with or exceeds the benchmark for large GTA and Canadian cities**, and this supply is augmented by privately owned facilities.

Based on this analysis, no new curling facilities were recommended.

Since the FMP was approved in 2017 the closure of three privately-owned curling facilities changed the context for curling.

Additional Opportunities

The FMP identified an opportunity to repurpose single pad arenas with lower utilization as new twin-pads come on line (planned budget of \$2.55M per arena for repurposing).

Several arenas in Etobicoke York were identified for potential conversion based on utilization data available at the time:

Albion | Habitant | Gord & Irene Risk
Chris Tonks | Long Branch

Etobicoke York's provision of indoor arenas is the highest in the city and would continue to be highest if one arena was taken off line.

COVID-19 has changed arena utilization. There is a need to assess the impacts and trends on a long-term basis.

Demand from Recent Closures of Privately-Owned Facilities

Since the FMP was approved, 3 privately-owned curling facilities in Toronto have closed:

- **St George's Golf & Country Club** (6 sheets) closed in spring 2020.
- **Weston Golf & Country Club** (6 sheets) closed in 2018.
- **Scarboro Golf & Country Club** (6 sheets) closed in 2018.

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.

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).

- Demand estimate is based on regular curlers (members and seasonal leagues) that have not relocated to other facilities. 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.

Facility Options Identified for Further Investigation

Phase 2 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

There may also be the opportunity to assess the opportunity to offer curling programs at existing indoor and outdoor City-owned facilities (e.g. floor curling at CRCs, curling on outdoor ice, curling programs at city-run camps).

Arena Options for Further Investigation

Full conversion of an arena to curling is one option to meet demand from recent closures of privately-owned curling facilities, contingent on identifying a suitable site, current users and community use relocation opportunities and public consultation.

	 Capital cost	 Operating considerations	 Delivery timeline	 Funding model	 Revenue potential
Fully convert an existing arena to 5 sheets of curling ice	TBD based on facility condition (e.g. accessibility requirements, SOGR) Curling-specific costs (rocks, ice equipment): <\$250,000	Could be operated by City staff, third party or hybrid.	Earliest potential implementation: September 2022	Aligns with FMP opportunity to repurpose arenas with lower utilization as new twin-pads come on line (planned budget: \$2.55M for each arena)	Opportunity to be self-sustaining. Supports both recreational and competitive curling.

A **shared use model** (regular conversion between hockey/skating and curling) could be considered if arena conversion is not viable. This model presents challenges for both curling and hockey:

- May only partially meet curling demand (4 sheets) and curling ice quality is likely more suitable for use by beginners/recreation.
- Requires staff time and expertise and additional operating cost to convert ice from hockey/skating to curling and back.
- Potentially disruptive to arena schedule with impacts to current hockey/skating users.

Considerations for Arena Analysis

Assessment Methodology for Arena Analysis

Completed
(Phase 2)

Identified arena
options as most
feasible

1. Identify Most Feasible Facility Options based on General Criteria

→ Use to narrow options prior to considering specific sites and continue to apply throughout assessment

 **Capital cost**

 **Operating considerations**

 **Delivery timeline**

 **Funding Models**

 **Revenue Potential**

**Arena Analysis
(current work)**

2. Identify Arena Short List based on Arena Criteria and Filters

A. Located in Etobicoke York (Y/N)

C. Arena utilization (program and permit data)

B. Arena type: City-Operated Single Pads (Y/N)

D. Proximity to other arenas

3. Identify Potential Arenas

**Detailed arena
utilization analysis**

**Facility analysis
including site visits**

**Neighbourhood-level
Indicators**

- Sport participation
- Equity lens

4. Conversion/Shared Use Scenarios

Assess anticipated impacts for arenas:

- Business case
- Program reallocation
- Community Use
- Capital cost estimate
- Operating model

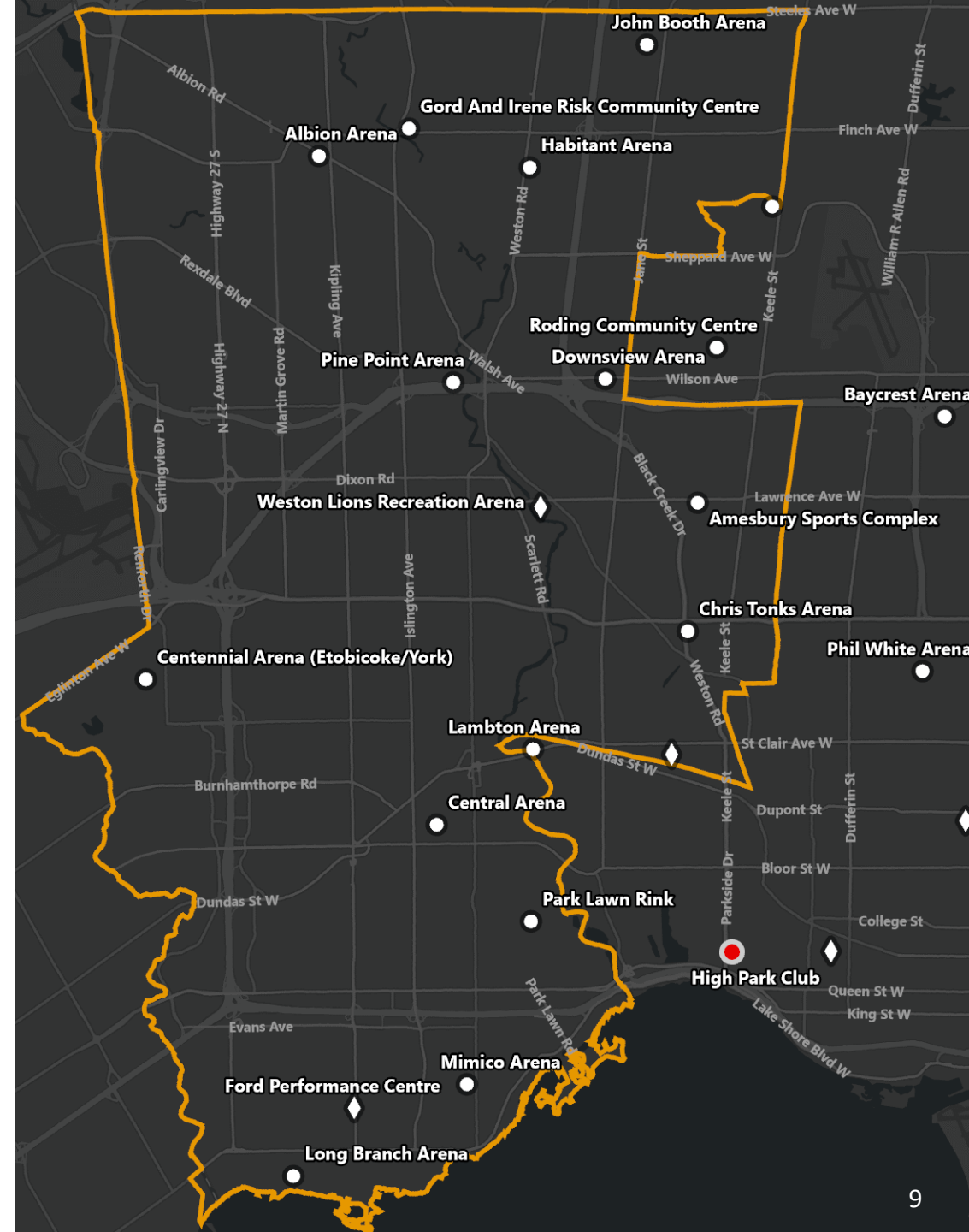
5. Public consultation

Arena Scoping – Location and Type

Narrow scope to:

- Arenas located in "Etobicoke York"
- Single pad arenas owned and operated by the City

Single Pad Arenas in Etobicoke York	Ward
Albion Arena	1
Amesbury Sports Complex	5
Central Arena	3
Chris Tonks Arena	5
Downsview Arena	7
Gord and Irene Risk Community Centre	7
Habitant Arena	7
John Booth Arena	7
Long Branch Arena	3
Mimico Arena	3
Park Lawn Rink	3
Pine Point Arena	1
Weston Lions Club (Board of Management) <i>BOM arena does not have potential for curling use but may have potential to absorb additional permits or programs</i>	



Criteria to Identify Potential Arenas for Curling

	Approach to Assessment	Goal
Detailed Utilization Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse overall use at each arena compared to City-wide and Etobicoke York averages Analyse the breakdown of hours of ice use at each arena, by type: Drop in, Learn to Skate, Community Youth, Competitive Youth, Community Adult Identify community uses or interests 	Identify considerations for relocating programs and permits
Arena "Suitability Score"	Assess suitability of arenas based on a set of criteria including facility condition and physical accessibility, transit and car access	Assess overall facility condition and required investment to deliver curling ice
Neighbourhood Indicators	<p>Provide a snapshot about the communities where arenas are located including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in hockey, skating and curling Community use "Equity score" based on proportion of equity-deserving groups: Recent immigrants, Aboriginal Identity, Visible Minority, Low Income.* Whether arena is located or serves a Neighbourhood Improvement Area 	Relative comparison of arenas to support analysis and public consultation

Arena Utilization Analysis – Current Use Considerations

- 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

Facility Assessment – Suitability for Curling

The following assessment criteria have been developed based on Facilities Master Plan assessment criteria for repurposing recreation facilities as well as stakeholder input:

- How **accessible** is the facility to **persons with disabilities**?
- How **accessible** is the facility by **car**, including adequacy of parking to accommodate up to 100 users?
- How **accessible** is the facility by **public transit**?* (Based on mapping of locations within 5 min walk of TTC 10-min network)
- How adequate are **support spaces**, such as lobbies, washrooms, change rooms/locker rooms - to accommodate up to 100 users?
- How adaptable is **floor plan/building design** to curling (up to 100 users)? (e.g. ability to maintain clean curling ice, stone storage)
- How **safe** is the facility (for staff and/or patrons) and does it lend itself to supervision, e.g. parent/guardian **observation of youth**?
- Are there **complementary facilities** on site or nearby that could support staffing efficiencies and/or increase exposure to the sport?
- Other? **General observations**

Criteria are assessed using City datasets complemented by site visits as needed.

Neighbourhood Indicators: Curling, Hockey, Skating Participation

For each neighbourhood in Toronto staff estimated the **concentration of active participants in curling, hockey and skating**.

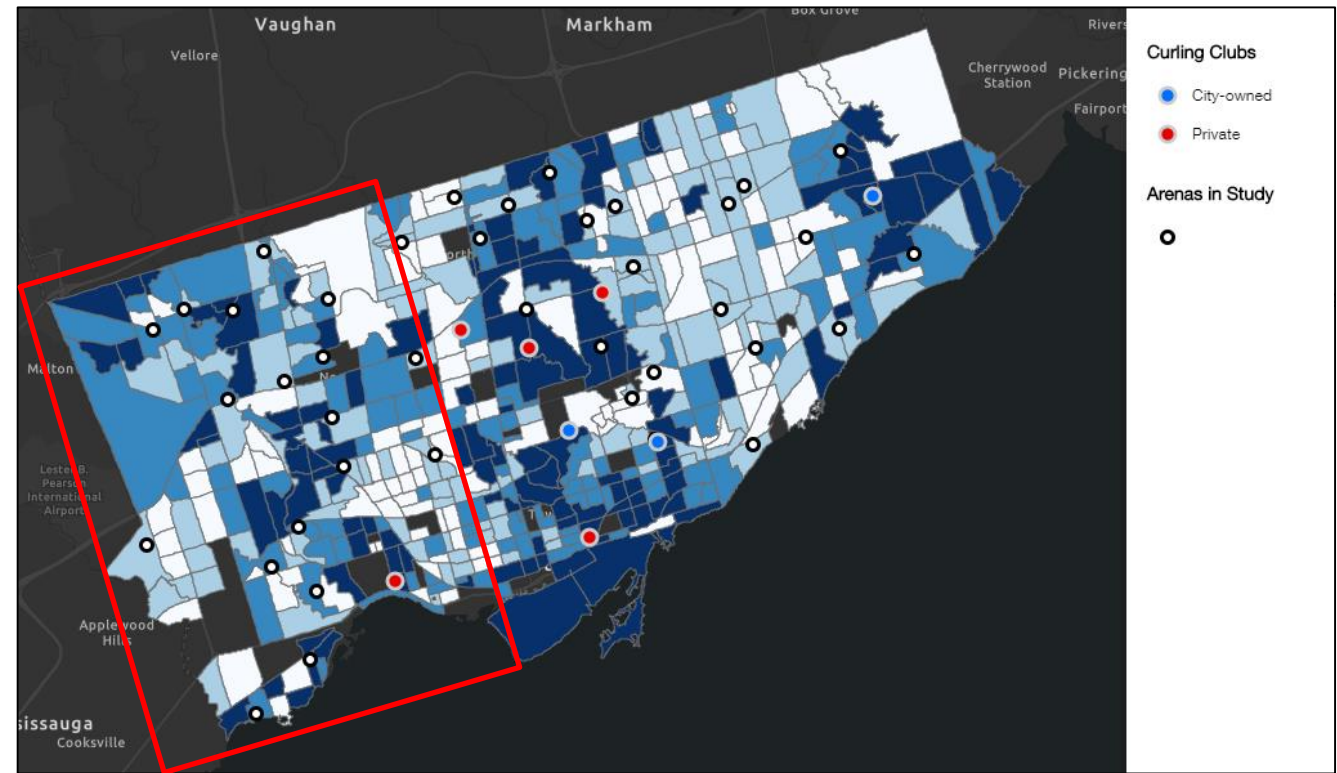
Data (Environics) captures the number of participants that curled, skated or played hockey $\geq 3x$ per year.

Quartiles are labeled: Very low, Low, Moderate or High based on the relative participation in a particular sport.

The definition of “Low” or “High” varies for each sport based on the overall level of participation in Toronto.

Overall, there is more participation in hockey than curling.

□ = Etobicoke York



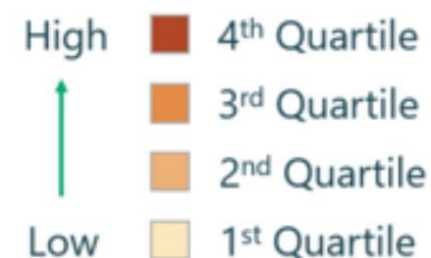
Example: Curling participation. **Source:** Please note that these are modeled data (not true count) based on Opticks Vividata (Survey Edition – 2018; EnviroNics Data Vintage – 2019).



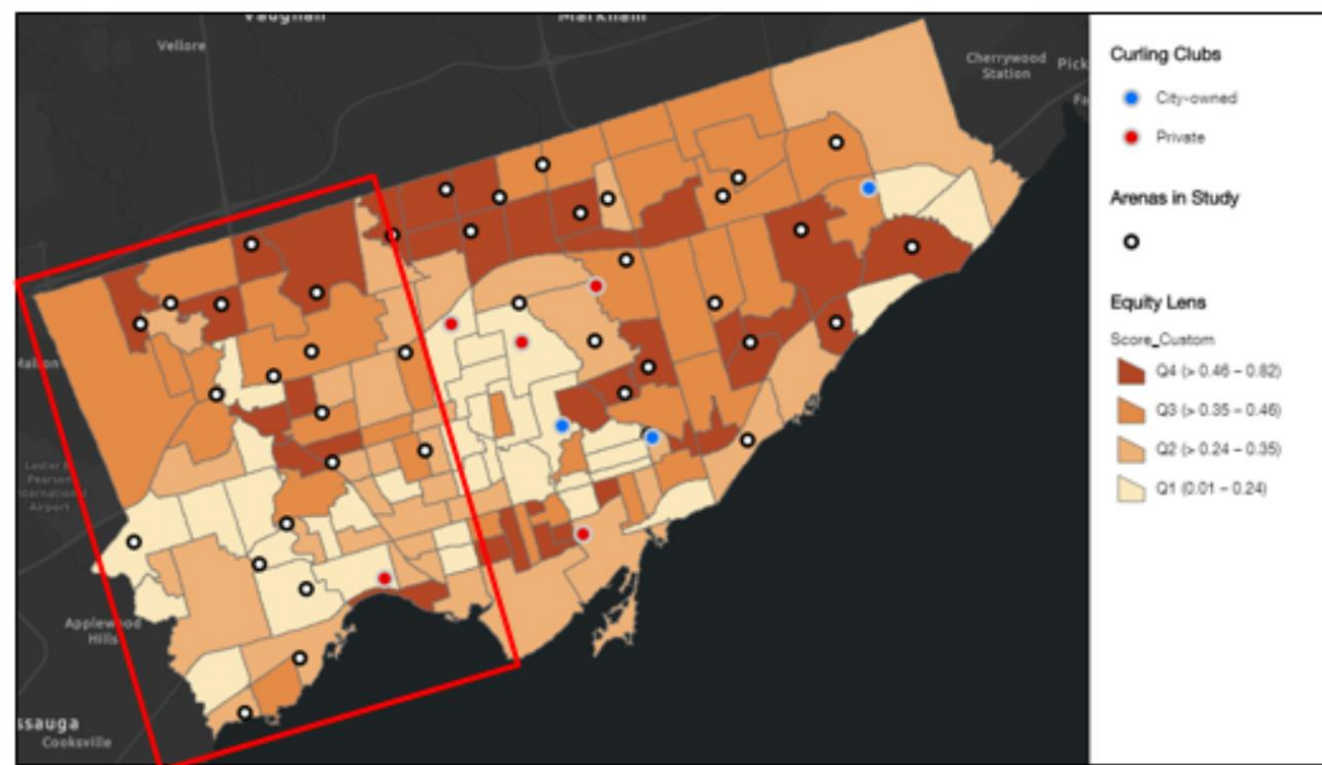
Neighbourhood Indicators: Composite Equity Score

The composite **equity score** represents the aggregate concentration of four populations.

For purposes of analysis quartiles are labeled: very low, low, moderate, high.



Criteria	Definition	Weight*
Percent of low income	The percentage of the neighbourhood population that is below LIM-AT	1/2
Percent Visible Minority	The percentage of the neighbourhood population that is Visible Minority	1/6
Percent Aboriginal	The percentage of the neighbourhood population that identifies as Aboriginal	1/6
Percent recent immigrants	The percentage of the neighbourhood population that immigrated between 2011 and 2016	1/6



 = Etobicoke York

Summary & Next Steps

Next Step: Broader Stakeholder Engagement

Summary

Work to date has identified a number of challenges and opportunities related to providing curling ice in Etobicoke York:

- There is need for curling ice in Etobicoke York. The City does not have available funds to build a new curling facility.
- Etobicoke York has the highest provision of arenas in the Toronto and there may be opportunity to improve current utilization.
- Arenas are currently used for hockey, skating and community use. Impacts to current users must be considered and consultation is necessary to better understand those impacts.

Next Steps

- **Staff will seek input from current arena users on the possibility of introducing curling ice at an existing City-owned single pad arena in Etobicoke York. Consultation will not focus on recommending a specific arena.**

Potential topics include:

- Key needs of hockey and skating users.
 - Pros and cons of a shared use model between hockey/skating and curling.
 - Potential opportunities to consolidate current use.
 - Any other considerations that may inform this work.
- **Staff will report back to Council on work to date and outcomes of this consultation to seek direction on next steps.**

Questions of Clarification & Discussion

Questions and Discussion

- Do you have any questions of clarification or general comments?
- If a shared-use model is pursued, what are the:
 - Opportunities this model presents (e.g. for growing the sport)?
 - Challenges that would need to be addressed, and potential solutions?
 - What are key features that would be required for a shared-use facility?

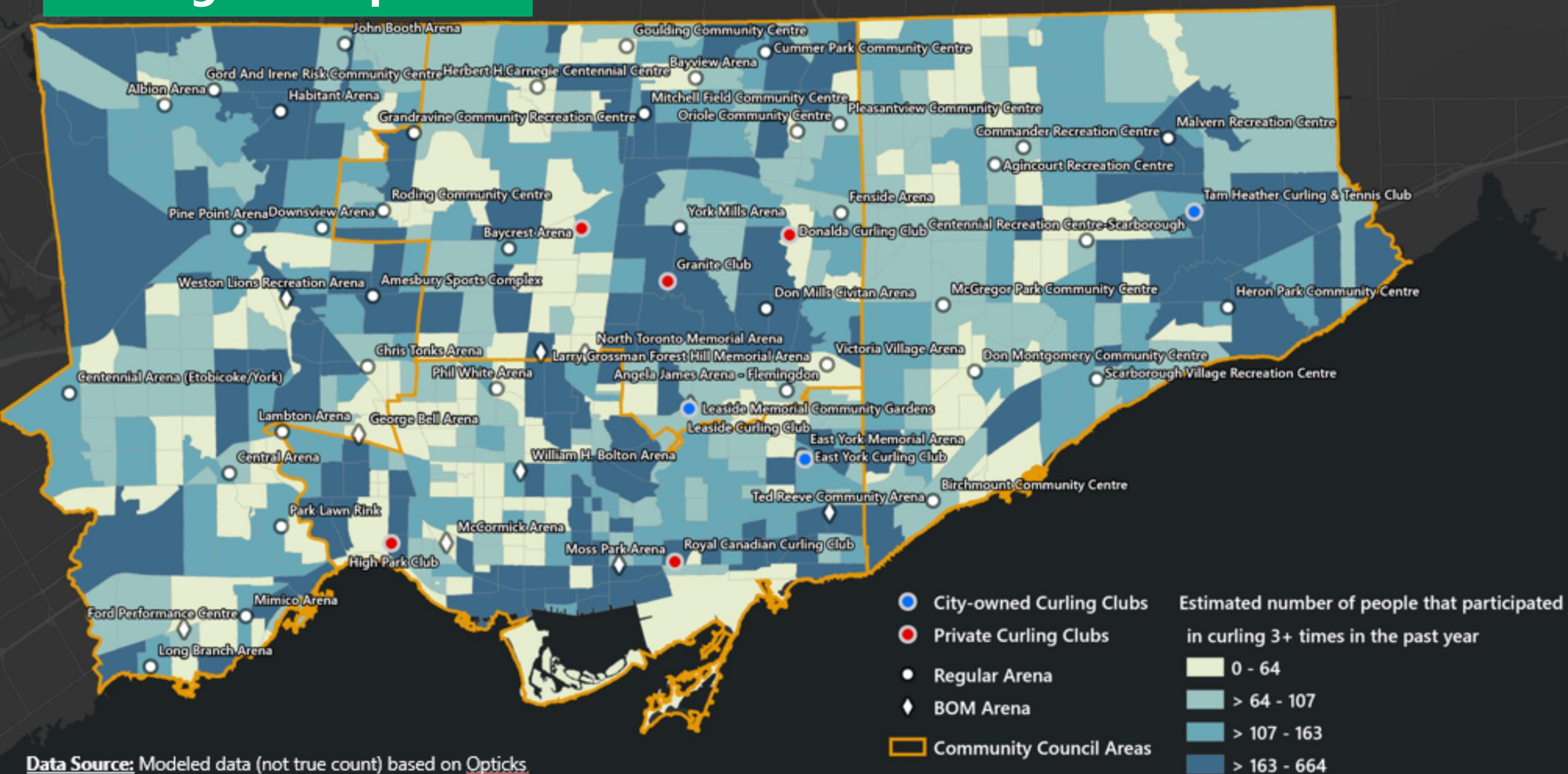
Thank You!

Appendix: Neighbourhood-Level Indicators Mapping

Curling, Hockey and Skating Participation

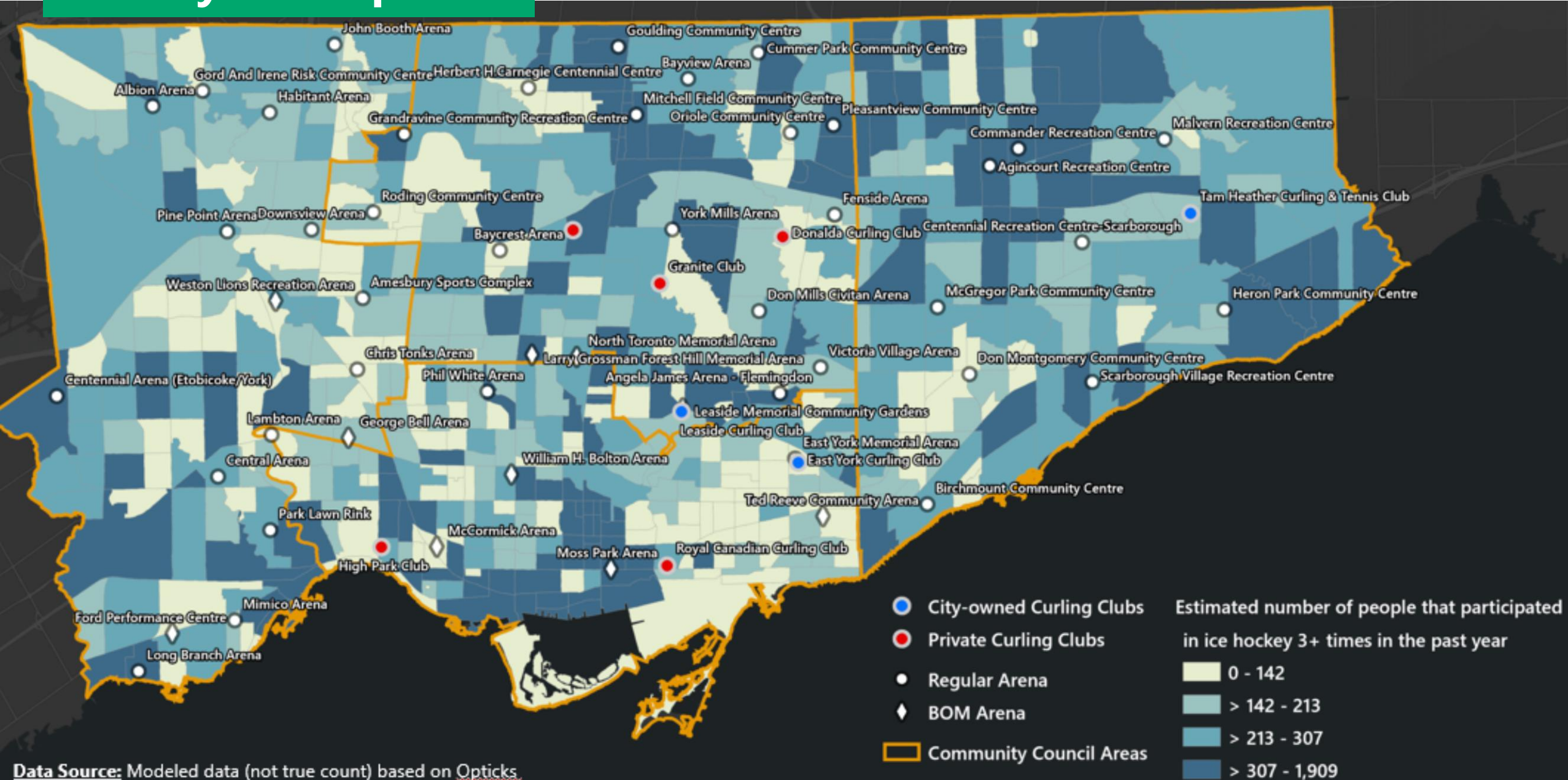
Equity score and Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

Curling Participation



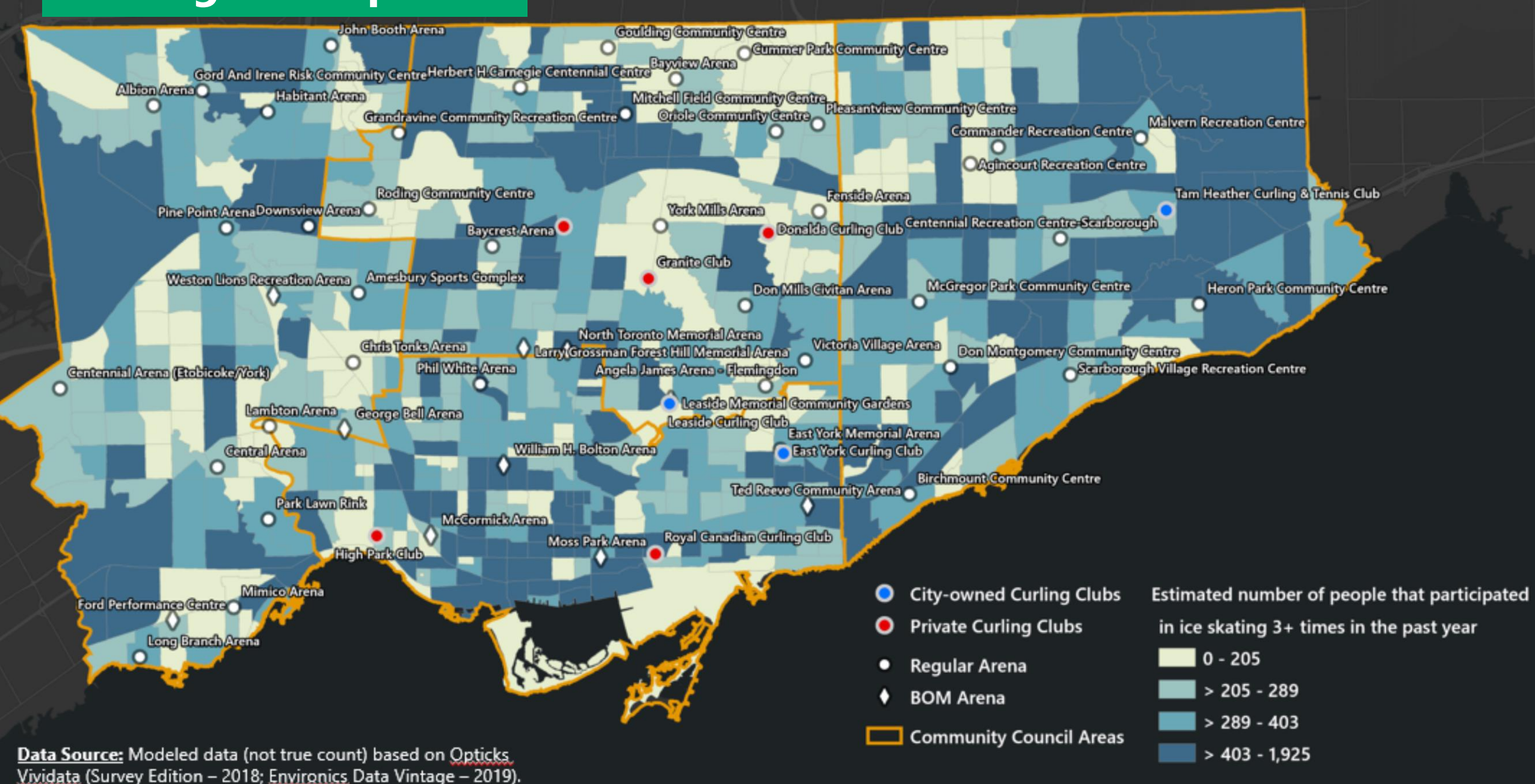
Data Source: Modeled data (not true count) based on Opticks Vividata (Survey Edition – 2018; Environics Data Vintage – 2019).

Hockey Participation

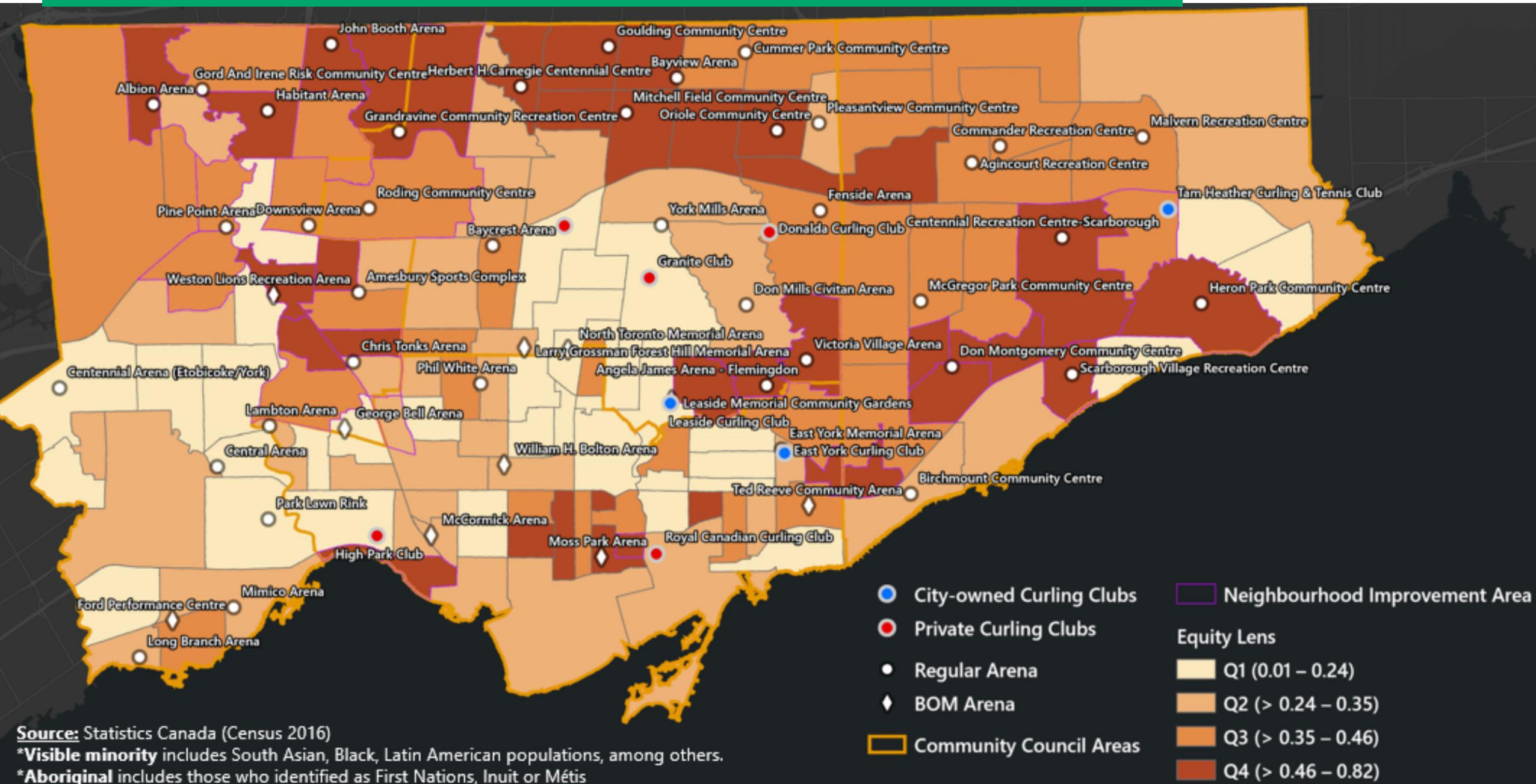


Data Source: Modeled data (not true count) based on Opticks Vividata (Survey Edition – 2018; Environics Data Vintage – 2019).

Skating Participation



Equity Score & Neighbourhood Improvement Areas



Source: Statistics Canada (Census 2016)

*Visible minority includes South Asian, Black, Latin American populations, among others.

*Aboriginal includes those who identified as First Nations, Inuit or Métis