

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Wabash Community Recreation Centre Community Resource Group (CRG)

Meeting 3 Summary

June 8, 2021



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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

City of Toronto

Doug Giles, Senior Project Coordinator, Capital Projects

Peter Didiano, Program Manager, Capital Projects

Alex Lavasidis, Senior Consultation Coordinator

Cheryl MacDonald, Manager, Community Recreation

Eric To, Supervisor, Community Recreation

Consultant Team

Jarle Lovlin, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Marcin Sztaba, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Yulia Pak, Swerhun Inc

Khly Lamparero, 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, June 8th, 2021 the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PF&R) at the City of Toronto hosted the third Community Resource Group (CRG) Meeting for the new Wabash Community Recreation Centre. Representatives from seven 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 third meeting was to review and discuss the results of the third phase of engagement and to share the next steps. 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 Emerging Preferred Option
3. Feedback about Programming
4. Other Feedback

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.

Support for the emerging Angler option. There was significant support shared for the Angler option. Many participants said that they were happy to see this emerging design preference based on feedback received to date. Participants were briefed by the City that a decision will not be made to move forward with the Angler option until Indigenous stakeholders are consulted and engaged further. Many thanked the Project Team for a good presentation.

Continue thinking about accessibility, safety, access points and elevation in relation to different site sections. Participants discussed the importance of centrally located welcoming elevators and asked questions about building pool on a slope, access points into the building, and measures to prevent birds from flying into the windows.

Provide programs and spaces for all ages and demographic needs. Participants discussed the importance of having a variety of programs for different ages, genders, and cultures and suggested programs and design elements for youth, seniors, middle-aged adults; those who come to the centre for exercise and those who come for leisure; as well as Muslim girls, members of trans community, trauma survivors and others.

Consider a community kitchen and a visit to Canoe Landing Community Recreation Centre. Participants emphasized the value of a community kitchen, especially in concert with the existing ongoing farmers' market. There was a lot of support for the City's offer to visit the Canoe Landing CRC kitchen to see what is possible.

Other. The Fieldhouse is an asset for community animation, and it will be important to continue using it and animating it. Members also asked questions about timeline for the environmental work and plans for integrating the future extension of the West Toronto Railpath.

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

With the history of the environmental work on the site and several environmental studies done, why is there a pessimistic timeline, especially considering that the project is quite forward in its thinking? *The timeline takes into consideration the City's environmental consultant's estimates. The City is working with Terrapex geotechnical consultants. Terrapex has access to the past environmental studies of the site. Based on their research and the information available, the environmental work could take up anywhere from a few months to 24 months. Part of it is the iterative feedback process with various government agencies that need to review and approve the environmental studies. Draft reports are shared with these agencies, then the agencies provide comments, then they review the revised reports. At this point it is hard to predict how many reviews it will take, but we will have more information on the timeline by the end of 2021.*

Moving forward, will you show the design of the exterior? *Yes, at the stage when we develop more detailed design, planning, and configuration of the building.–We are just at the beginning of the Schematic Design process.*

Are there any migrating birds in the area? Will the City be using film on the windows to prevent birds flying into the windows? *There has not been a specific bird study done for this site, but we are following Toronto Green Standards, which requires fritted glass to prevent birds from flying into the windows.*

How long will the engagement with the Indigenous Peoples take? *We are working with the Indigenous Advisory Circle members (two Indigenous community members and the Mississaugas of the Credit) to determine how they would like to be engaged moving forward. We will keep you updated on this process.*

Understanding that Indigenous communities still need to be consulted on the options, how does it align with the emerging preferred option? *At this point we are sharing what is emerging based on the public feedback to date and technical analysis, but the engagement is not complete. We will be reaching out with this information to the Indigenous Advisory Circle members for their input before moving forward with a preferred option.*

Part 2: Emerging Preferred Option

Ensure that all activities and amenities above the ground floor, such as a gym in the emerging option, are fully accessible. Consider glass elevators to ensure they feel welcoming and do not hide them in the back. *The whole building must be completely accessible. Accessibility requirements are part of the Ontario Building Code. In 2004, the City of Toronto came up with accessibility guidelines that are above and beyond, and there is an update going to the Council soon that is going to make the accessibility requirements even more thorough.–We will do our best to keep activities at-grade, but we are limited with space. There will be two elevators to make movement through the building convenient for more people. We also envision the elevators to be centrally located allowing the shortest distance to travel to get to different rooms in the building.*

It would be helpful to see site sections. Looking at the emerging option and thinking about the site, it seems like the pool would probably be underground. Between the Town Square and the dog park, how would the north-south and the east-west site sections work? *The pool will not be underground but would partially be tucked in at-grade on the north end. We located a central entry point at the top of the Town Square. There is some landscape work that needs to be done but we do not see any major challenges, as it is not a flat site. As the project develops, we will share the elevation changes and the site sections. The pool will have a height of two storeys, with an opportunity for glazed openings. So, depending on where you are in the building, there will be opportunities to see the pool deck, even if a part of the pool is in a slope.*

The emerging option shows the pool to be outside of the 30-m required setback and the change rooms to be within it. Is there a crash mitigation for the train? *We have been working with HATCH Engineering to develop a crash mitigation strategy. While we do not have specific plans yet, the strategy was reviewed by Metrolinx and is on the right track.*

It looks like all the access points to the building are from the lobby – one from the park on the west side and one from the parking on the east side. It is an elongated building, so if you are on the north side of the building, you do not have access to the interior. Is this right? *Yes, currently the access is central to the building to centralize control and dispersion in a horizontal and vertical direction rather than dragging people from one end to the other. The pool requires one entry for staff to control and manage the traffic flow efficiently. There are other points of entry to the building, including emergency exits and the loading dock on the east side of the building.*

Toronto is an important migratory path and the reflection of green in window glass is always a hazard. Consider consulting Michael Mesure at Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) on how to reduce hazards.

Part 3: Programming

The power of commercial kitchens should not be underestimated. Not all community centres have operating farmers' markets. A decent space and better-quality equipment would help bring community together for events and workshops. The kitchen could also be used for preserving food from the Farmers' Market. *What you are describing sounds like what we've been doing at newer community recreation centres. For example, Canoe Landing and York Community Recreation Centres (CRC) have fairly large kitchens that have capacity to act as teaching kitchens. Such kitchens would have a fridge and freezer and other commercial-grade appliances, but not a deep fryer or a griddle. A food-to-table approach is something we can explore. When safe, we could arrange a tour of the Canoe Landing CRC kitchen. Its set-up is quite impressive. It has a tv screen that could be used for teaching a class or for events. Without getting into the category of "commercial" kitchens, we can provide the amenities that the City and the community request.*

NOTE: *There was a lot of interest and support for a tour of the Canoe Landing Community Recreation Centre kitchen.*

It is exciting that youth can participate in this consultation process. What about older adults? Have there been discussions with older generations? *Yes, we are looking at programming for diverse range of users to ensure the new community recreation centre is a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone. We have a community recreation lead for older adults city-wide and we have reached out to representatives of West Lodge with significant seniors' population. We always include different types of programs to accommodate older adults as well.*

It is also important to ensure there are recreation programs for middle-aged demographic. It is great to have programming for youth and elderly, but it is also important to have classes for adults. Consider Masters swim classes or coast style spin classes.

Ensure programs for Muslim girls can be accommodated, meaning blacked out windows or interior window coverings, different change rooms, and girls-only time slots to make it safe for the girls to remove hijabs. Interior blinds are a good option to accommodate programming for many different participants including from trans persons, people experiencing body issues, victims of trauma, and others who do not find it appealing or do not want to be looked at while participating in programs. *Yes, it is an important part of programming. We are running programs, like inclusive swims in Regent Park, with motorized blinds to accommodate the needs of diverse demographics. While we like to design multi-purpose rooms with transparency in mind, there could be interior blinds on the walls as well.*

Ensure that the lap pool is for exercise and has cool water in it. Consider a wading pool with warmer water for kids and seniors. *We still need to figure out if it will be a warm water pool. This facility will have two pools – a lap pool and a leisure pool. What the City has been doing lately is leisure pools with shallow warm water. Some of our recent pools also have bubble benches for parents who are supervising kids and seniors to have bubble jet massages in a lap pool. It seems to be a workable feature as it brings all generations together. We are not going to do a salt-water pool, as it does not work for the City.*

Is there an opportunity to design for programs outside or is this project limited to the building only? A skateboard park for youth would be great. *We will be doing some landscaping around the perimeter of the building to knit in the park, but our mandate and budget is not to redesign the park. So, a skateboard park is outside of the scope of this project.*

Part 4: Other

Ensure that the Fieldhouse is not pushed aside and forgotten to become derelict with a caving roof because we did not pay attention to it. What is the Fieldhouse going to be used for in the future? As we are putting a lot of resources into the new building, it seems that everything is going into the new community recreation centre. *The nice thing about the emerging option is that we cannot ignore the Fieldhouse. As the activities from the Fieldhouse will find their way into the community centre, there is an opportunity for the Fieldhouse to be reimaged for other community-based uses. We do not know what these uses are at this point.*

Note added by a participant: Friends of Sorauren Park (FOSP) fundraised to restore and animate the Fieldhouse and is keen to continue to be involved with and help think through on how to animate it in the future. The Fieldhouse could be an effective community-run asset for after-hours community-based activities, such as birthday parties, use of the pizza oven (that FOSP has fundraised to build), or an outdoor ice rink. FOSP is also interested in a fundraising role.

Consider upgrading the first floor of the Fieldhouse to a kitchen, given its proximity to the pizza oven and the Farmers' Market.

Are there any plans regarding the connection to the planned extension of West Toronto Railpath? *There are no specific plans, as such work would be outside of our scope. However, we are designing the site in such a way that would not preclude the connection to the railpath and would support the integration. For example, logically, the path would land on the park on the north-east corner by the playfield. In the emerging preferred option, the Angler, there is an*

entrance to building from the east, which would be convenient to those taking the railpath. If the bridge were to be built, a staircase could be accommodated on the site.

Note added by a participant: FOSP has been advocating and asking Metrolinx and the City to move the planned extension of West Toronto Railpath forward.

Next Steps

The project team thanked participants and committed to sharing a draft summary of the meeting in the coming weeks. Doug Giles reminded everyone that the plan is to select the preferred site option mid-July and reconvene to review and discuss draft floor plans after the Labour Day ahead of the next townhall meeting.

Contact Us

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

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Appendix A – Meeting Agenda

Wabash Community Recreation Centre

Phase 3 – Site Design Options

Community Resource Group Meeting 2 of 2

Tuesday, June 8, 2021 - 6:30 – 8:30 pm



Meeting purpose: To review and discuss the results of this phase of engagement, and to share the next steps.

PROPOSED AGENDA

Land Acknowledgement

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 6:30 pm | Welcome, introductions & agenda review
Yulia Pak, Facilitator, Swerhun Inc. |
| 6:40 | Project overview, what we heard, project next steps
Doug Giles, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto
Alex Lavasidis, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto
Jarle Lovlin, Diamond Schmitt Architects |
| 7:10 | Discussion

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are your thoughts on the emerging preferred option? Do you see any major issues moving forward or other factors we need to consider?2. Do you have any other advice for the City and design team as they develop the selected site design? |
| 8:20 | Next steps |
| 8:30 | Adjourn |