

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Toronto Golf Course Operational Review

Phase 1 What We Heard Report

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Description

The Toronto Golf Course Operational Review project (“the Project”) will inform an operational sourcing strategy and recommendations for the future of city-operated golf courses that will be presented to City Council in Fall 2021. In 2018, The City of Toronto began its review of five city-operated golf course locations: [Dentonia Park](#), [Humber Valley](#), [Don Valley](#), [Scarlett Woods](#) and [Tam O’Shanter](#). This review, primarily focussed on creating recommendations for operational efficiency and financial sustainability. However, due to the changing needs and demands for publicly accessible open space and parkland through the COVID-19 pandemic, this review expanded in 2020/2021 to include an exploration of alternative and complementary uses and includes:

- A review of golf course operations
- A financial review of operating revenues, expenditures, and required capital investments
- A review and analysis of potential future operating models
- A jurisdictional scan for best practices
- Industry and market analysis to understand trends
- Stakeholder engagement to understand golf user experience at these courses
- Stakeholder engagement on potential complementary and/or alternative uses at these courses

The purpose of this golf course operational review is to uncover a future for City-owned golf courses that uphold the follow goals:

- Continue to provide high-quality and affordable golf
- Uphold environmental stewardship
- Advance an operational model that is financially sustainable and responsible
- Improve golf-related amenities (e.g. rental shops, golf programming, food and beverage)
- Increase public space access
- Balance multiple and competing desired uses for the sites

1.2 About this Report

This report is a summary of what was heard during the Phase 1 public consultation and stakeholder engagement process for the Project. Phase 1 focussed on city-wide public engagement including multiple approaches and tactics outlined in section 4.1 of this report. The report also includes an overview of top takeaways from Phase 1 as well as a detailed summary of feedback collected (see section 6.0).

2.0 Why Engage?

2.1 Objectives Outlined by City Council

The inclusion of city-wide public consultation in the Project was a directive provided by Council in September 2020. In September 2020, PFR presented a report to Council titled, “Lease and Contract Extensions for City of Toronto Golf Courses” (also known as [GL 15.14](#)) which outlined an extension of existing golf course operational contracts to December 2022 (with possible extension to December 2023). This was to allow for an additional year for operational review to assess COVID-19 pandemic impacts and trends on golf course operations. Council adopted recommendations to extend contracts and included amendments to conduct an exploration of alternative and complementary uses including a robust consultation process. Engagement objectives from Council are included in the following amendments:

6. Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to undertake a public consultation process on Part 5 [exploration of alternative/complementary uses] above with stakeholders including, but not limited to, the golf community, local community members living in proximity to each golf course, and other stakeholders including the local Councillor.

7. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consult with the Indigenous Affairs Office and the Aboriginal Affairs Committee as a part of any public consultation.

8. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to ensure that there is full notification and consultation with stakeholders in the golf community and golfers who use City golf courses, including notifications, surveys and public meetings, if, at any time, a City golf course is contemplated to be used for another purpose.

To fulfill Council’s directives the Project team outlined the following engagement goals:

- Engage a diversity of people in the Project
- Provide information about how the City makes decisions
- Share preliminary opportunity ideas and gather the public’s input, visions and perspectives about the future of the City’s golf courses

2.2 Desired Outcomes

The desired engagement outcomes for the Project include:

- Participants are informed about the Project and understand what regulatory, policy, and planning frameworks inform decision-making
- Participants learn about preliminary opportunities for alternative and complementary uses at golf courses identified by City staff
- Participants share insights and perspectives on how to improve golf courses as places to play golf
- Participants share insights and perspectives of identified preliminary opportunities as well as share ideas for opportunities not yet identified
- PFR better understands public perceptions on adding alternative and complementary uses to golf course sites to balance competing uses and plan for the future of operations of the five city-operated golf courses

3.0 Engagement Timeline

Engagement for the Project includes a two-phased approach. This report focuses on findings and feedback from Phase 1. See the timeline below for a detailed engagement timeline.

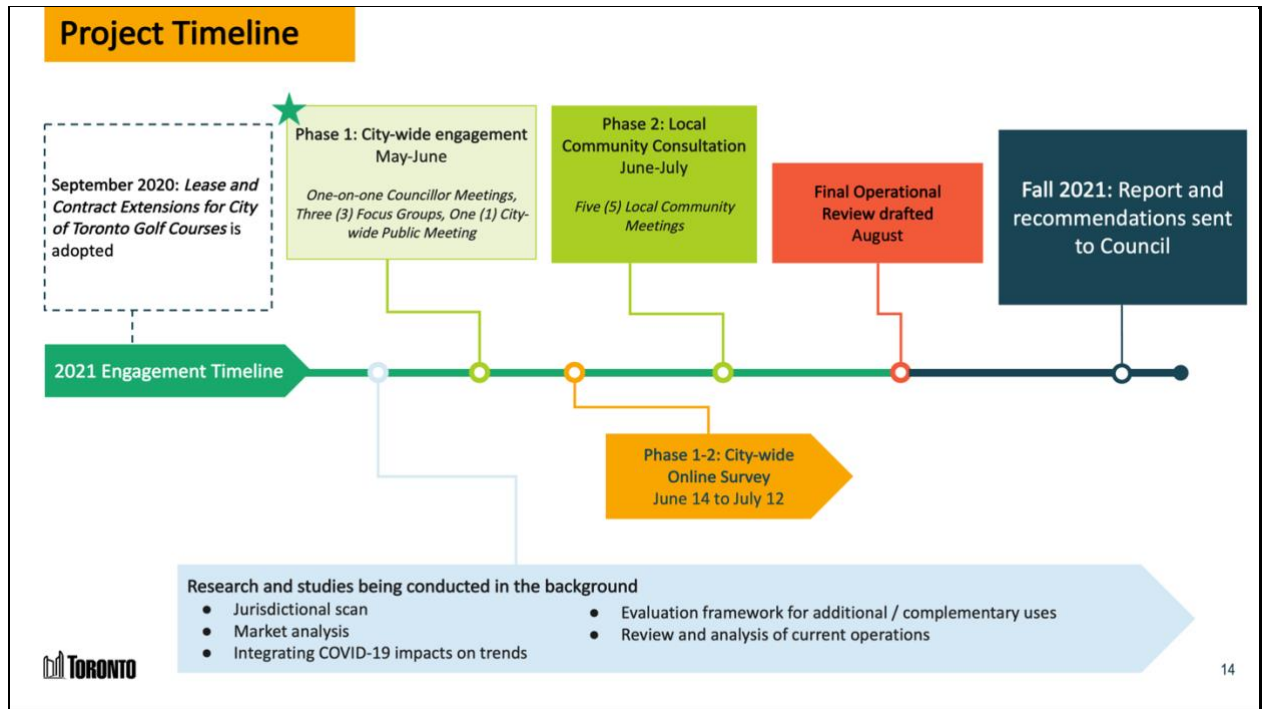


Figure 1. The Project’s Engagement Timeline

4.0 Project Overview

This section outlines the key project elements as part of the Toronto Golf Course Operational Review. Phase 1 engagement participants were primarily asked to comment on the preliminary opportunities for the future of golf course operations as identified by PFR and were given key context and parameters for discussion. In addition to the preliminary opportunities, participants were given high-level profiles of each city-operated golf course including insights using three lenses:

1. **Play:** information on how the golf courses operate as golf courses
2. **Place:** information about the golf course within the neighbouring land use context
3. **People:** information about the local communities who reside within a 3km radius of the golf course sites

4.1 Preliminary Opportunities

The City's golf courses are designated as Parks and Open Space areas. This means that golf course sites cannot be sold or disposed of. Further, development is generally prohibited within Parks and Open Space Areas except for recreational and cultural facilities, conservation projects, and similar non-residential or commercial uses. As a part of the Golf Review Project, the City is exploring the following preliminary opportunities for additional and/or complementary uses on golf course sites:

- **Improving Golf Play:** Continue to explore ways to improve golf play including speed of play, food and beverage operations, rental shops and other golf-related amenities.
- **Improved Trail Access:** The golf courses are all located nearby ravines, trails, and other parkland. Seen as an opportunity to improve public space access, golf course operations can work on improving trail access and connections to and through City-owned golf courses.
- **Tree Planting:** Additional and targeted tree planting that does not impact golf operations. This aligns with the City of Toronto's goals to increase tree canopy coverage (see CanopyTO) for its ecological and economic benefits.
- **Recreational Facility:** Make space for recreational facilities and amenities to serve the community. Considering the limitations of floodplains, initial ideas for additional recreational facilities on golf courses include splash pads and sports fields that require the least development intervention.
- **Food Growing Opportunities:** Increase community access to the golf course sites by providing space for community gardens or allotment gardens. This aligns with the City's strategic priorities to increase food security and equitable access to food.
- **Natural Area Restoration:** Renaturalize golf courses for ecological benefits like increased tree canopy and flood mitigations on floodplains. Any naturalization projects should not impact golf operations.
- **Complementary Programming:** Adding new complementary evening and winter uses that do not impact golf operations. Building upon existing programming on golf course sites (e.g. fling golf and snow trail loops), the

City is exploring complementary programming like even more additional off-season programming like snowshoeing and on-season evening programming like movie nights and picnicking infrastructure.

- **Indigenous Placekeeping:** Working with Indigenous Treaty Rights holders and Indigenous leaders to find opportunities for Indigenous cultural practices and placekeeping.

4.2 Summary of What's Open for Influence

This section outlines what was deemed open for influence during Phase 1 engagement as approved by PFR. This informed the scope of discussion and provided a parameter for comments and input received through engagement. Ideas and items open for influence:

- Improving the sites as golf courses
- Improving complementary non-golf access to courses
- Expanding recreational opportunities
- Ecological restoration and environmental stewardship
- Access to food growing opportunities
- Facilitating opportunities for Indigenous cultural practices
- Other innovative ideas that you may have within current possibility

The following list includes items deemed not open for discussion:

- Residential uses
- The construction of large facilities within floodplains
- The sale or disposal of parkland
- Free golf play

5.0 How We Engaged

Phase 1 included multiple engagement tactics to gather input and perspectives on the Project. The intention was to engage city-wide while providing opportunities for key stakeholders to engage.

5.1 Engagement Design

Phase 1 included the following engagement tactics detailed below:

1. **One-one-one interviews and meetings**
2. **Focus Groups**
3. **City-wide virtual public meeting.**

One-on-one interviews and meetings: Toronto City Councillors were invited to participate in one-on-one meetings with the Project team from June 7th to June 14th, 2021. The criteria for conducting a Councillor meeting was either: (1) they have a city-operated golf course(s) located within or directly adjacent to their ward; or (2) have invested interest in the future of golf course operations. Based on this criteria, the following Councillors were invited to participate:

- a. Councillor Robinson
- b. Councillor Holyday
- c. Councillor Colle
- d. Councillor Perruzza
- e. Councillor Bradford
- f. Councillor Crawford
- g. Councillor Fillion
- h. Councillor Nunziata
- i. Councillor Ford
- j. Councillor Mantas
- k. Councillor Pasternak
- l. Councillor Layton
- m. Councillor Fletcher

Focus Groups: Three invite-only focus groups were conducted in Phase 1. The focus groups were organized by stakeholder groups and included:

- I. The golf community (e.g. golf organization representatives, league organizations, operators) on June 7th, 2021 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm
- II. Food access groups (e.g. urban agriculturalists, food sovereignty organizations, food security organizations) on June 9th, 2021 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm
- III. Other advocacy and interest groups (e.g. environmental organizations, public space organizations, complementary sports organizations) on June 8th, 2021 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.

One-on-one interviews were also offered to focus group stakeholders unavailable during focus group sessions but still interested in providing feedback. Note: No focus group stakeholder accepted the offer for a one-on-one interview.

City-wide Public Meeting: One city-wide public meeting was held in Phase 1 on June 14th, 2021 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. The public meeting was open to anyone interested in the future of golf course operations and was promoted through Councillor networks, paid social media advertising, focus group stakeholder networks, and signage at the five city-operated golf courses.

5.2 Who We Engaged

Each engagement tactic followed a similar format which included a project presentation that provided a general overview, policy context, site profiles, and details on preliminary opportunities. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period and a facilitated discussion.

5.2.1 One-on-one interviews and meetings

The following Toronto City Councillors were engaged in Phase 1:

- Councillor Bradford (City staff representative)
- Councillor Colle (City staff representative)
- Councillor Crawford
- Councillor Fillion
- Councillor Ford (City staff representative)
- Councillor Holyday
- Councillor Nunziata
- Councillor Pasternak
- Councillor Perruzza
- Councillor Robinson (City staff representative)

5.2.2 Focus groups

The following individuals/organizations were engaged through the three focus groups:

Golf Community

- Leo Abanilla, Bayanihan Golf Association of Toronto
- Kathryn Wood, Canadian Golf Superintendents Association
- Earl Fritz, Canadian Junior Golf Association
- Brent Miller, ClubLink
- Steve Bloom, FlingGolf
- Ryan Logan, Golf Canada
- Jeff Mingay, Golf Course Architect
- John Plumpton, Golf Course Architect
- Craig Loughry, Golf Ontario
- Kyle McFarlane, Golf Ontario
- Darren Godden, Golf Plus Marketing Inc.
- Michael Moniz, Maple Downs Golf Club
- Blair Breen, National Golf Course Owners Association

Food Access Groups

- Anan Lololi, Afri-Can Food Basket
- Jacqueline, Black Farmers and Food Growers Collective

- Katie German, FoodShare TO
- Rhonda Tietel-Payne, Toronto Urban Food Growers
- Sheldomar Elliot, Toronto Youth Food Policy Council, FoodShare TO
- Annisha Steward

Advocacy and Interest Groups

- Nahomi Amberber., Climate Justice TO
- James, Friends of the Don East
- Emmay Mah, Toronto Environmental Alliance
- Anne Purvis, Toronto Field Naturalists
- Donata Frank, Toronto Field Naturalists
- Ellen Schwartzel, Toronto Field Naturalists
- Cara Chellew, Toronto Public Space Committee
- Andrew, Toronto Outdoor Club
- Matthew, Toronto Public Space Committee
- Barbara Hopewell, Track 3
- Brianne Lee, Urban Minds

5.2.3 City-wide Virtual Public Meeting

A total of 370 members of the public participated in the City-wide Virtual Public Meeting. There were 607 recorded RSVP's to the session and 4,457 event page views. There was no additional demographic information collected but anecdotal information shared in the breakout sessions illustrate that the make-up of the participants included golfers, non-golfers, golf organization representatives, and advocacy organization representatives.

6.0 What We Heard

6.1 Top Takeaways

This section provides the top takeaways gathered in Phase 1. Section 6.1.1 focuses on overall recommendations for the future direction of city-operated golf courses while Sections 6.1.2 to 6.1.6 include top considerations for each preliminary opportunity. This section does not include top considerations for Indigenous Placekeeping as comments about this opportunity were minimal and direction for Indigenous Placekeeping will be informed by a separate engagement process with Treaty Holders and Indigenous leaders/organizations.

6.1.1 Overall Recommended Direction

Overall, there was a general consensus that **city-operated golf courses could incorporate some additional and complementary uses in addition to using the sites as places to play golf**. Based on the volume of comments received per preliminary opportunity, the following preliminary opportunities most resonated:

- **Improving Golf Play**
- **Improving Trail Access**
- **Natural Area Restoration**
- **Food Growing Opportunities**
- **Complementary Programming**

6.1.2 Improving Golf Play Top Considerations

The following represents the top feedback received in Phase 1 related to Improving Golf Play:

- **Designate putting and practice areas** for training purposes, entry-level practice, and general player warm up. Tangible suggestions for infrastructure include fenced-off putting areas or driving ranges.
- **Prioritize and explore junior programming.** There was a consensus from Phase 1 that the City of Toronto's junior golf programming is a vital resource and entryway to the sport. PFR could prioritize finding ways to expand and improve program delivery for junior golf through future golf course operations.
- **Prioritize and improve seniors' golfing experience.** Both golf experts and general golf players acknowledge that seniors are a vital market segment in the golf industry. Phase 1 identified shortening (or providing options for) to 9-holes or 12-hole courses as well as creating designated seniors tee times as ways to improve the seniors' golfing experience.
- **Explore complementary golf programming.** Golfers engaged in Phase 1 urged the City to explore complementary golf programming including top golf, collaboration with local schools, and local resident tee times to appeal to larger and more diverse audiences.
- **Shorten courses to 12-holes or 9-holes.** Golfers encouraged staff to explore opportunities to shorten the 18-hole courses to either 12-holes or 9-holes

to: (1) improve the golf play/experience (via course redesigns, etc.) and, (2) allocate land for additional and/or complementary uses.

- **Collaborate with local leagues to organize tee times.** There was interest from league representatives to find a better way to organize large quantity tee times and/or designated league reservation times to accommodate larger groups to play together.

6.1.3 Improving Trail Access Top Considerations

The following represents the top feedback received in Phase 1 related to Improving Trail Access:

- **Prioritize improving trail access for Dentonia Park and Don Valley.** Many comments about trail access from the public meeting revolved around trail disconnections at Dentonia Park golf course and Don Valley golf course.
- **Improved trail access complements golf play.** Among the presented preliminary opportunities, improving trail access was the one most seen to complement golf play.
- **Consider safety in trail design and golf course redesign.** Introducing trails onto golf course sites require additional safety considerations as trail users may interject and pose risk of injury during golf play.
- **Consider a multi-use path approach to trails.** Improved trail access was cited as a way to also allow access for other activities like running, cycling, dog walking, and nature walks.

6.1.4 Tree Planting Top Considerations

Tree planting did not resonate as much as other preliminary opportunities. A top consideration is to integrate targeted tree planting alongside any efforts for a more fulsome naturalization process (see section 6.1.7).

6.1.5 Recreational Facility Top Considerations

New recreational facilities did not resonate as much as other preliminary opportunities. If pursued, consider recreational facilities that the local community/residents need/lack. The five local meetings in Phase 2 may inform what these needs may be.

6.1.6 Food Growing Opportunities Top Considerations

The following represents the top feedback received in Phase 1 related to Food Growing Opportunities:

- **There is general agreement to pursue community and allotment gardens on golf course sites.** In Phase 1, there were no clear demands for any larger or robust form of urban agriculture on golf course sites.
- **Tools and key food growing infrastructure already exist on golf course sites.** The Food Access focus group acknowledged that food growing resources like sheds/storage, tilling equipment and gardening tools already exist on golf course sites.

- **Prioritize a community garden model over an allotment garden model.** Focus group participants shared that the community garden model provides better networking and community building opportunities.
- **Consider supply and demand on the City's existing community and allotment garden programs.** When determining which golf course(s), if any, are suitable for food growing, PFR could factor in the local neighbourhood's supply and demand of existing community and allotment gardens.
- **Consider ensuring that garden tenants are from the local community.** Food growers cited that City gardens are often used by residents who do not necessarily live close to their plots.
- **Consider exploring alternative food growing opportunities like beekeeping and a backyard hens program** at golf courses where floodplains pose a challenge for growing food. These were *novel* food growing ideas that were not initially considered by the City.

6.1.6 Natural Area Restoration Top Considerations

The following represents the top feedback received in Phase 1 related to Natural Area Restoration:

- **Prioritize biodiversity through the creation of wetland areas.** As all the golf course sites are located along the ravine system, any naturalization project could include efforts to reestablish wetland ecosystems to increase biodiversity and diverse habitats in the city.
- **Prioritize naturalization to support bird migration.** Both focus groups and the public meeting included interests to consider bird migratory patterns in any naturalization project taken up on the golf course sites.
- **Consider pollinators.** The City's pollinator strategy was mentioned in one focus group. The golf course sites are seen as a space to advance pollination efforts and goals.
- **Enhance tree canopy.** Most comments for both tree planting and natural area restoration opportunities supported the prioritization of increasing the tree canopy on the golf courses. A few golfers' comments did share fear that tree planting would interfere with golf play.

6.1.6 Complementary Programming Top Considerations

The following represents the top feedback received in Phase 1 related to Complementary Programming:

- **Prioritize programming sites for winter uses.** The majority of the complementary programming comments focussed on activating golf course sites during the winter. Ideas included cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, winter golf play, among others.
- **Consider temporary skating rinks.** This *novel* idea was generated at both Councillor meetings and at the public meeting.
- **Consider nature walks.** Nature walks and bird watching programming were also mentioned as possible complementary activities.

6.2 Detailed Summary of Feedback Collected

6.2.1 Feedback by the Numbers

Focus Group Comments

The three focus groups included a total of 122 comments about the preliminary opportunities for the future of golf course operations. The following table provides a breakdown of those comments based on topic and indicates whether they are “in favour” or “against” the opportunity. Any idea or suggestion on how to pursue a preliminary opportunity is coded as “in favour”. For the focus groups, there was minimal resistance to adding alternative and complementary uses to the sites and the top opportunities that resonated were improving golf play, food growing opportunities, natural area restoration, and complementary programming.

Table 1. Summary of focus group comments coded per preliminary opportunity.

Topic	In favour	Against
Improved Golf Play	60	7
Improved Trail Access	7	0
Tree Planting	2	0
Recreational Facility	0	0
Food Growing Opportunities	16	0
Natural Area Restoration	12	0
Complementary Programming	15	0
Indigenous Placekeeping	3	0

City-wide Public Meeting Comments

The public meeting included a total of 165 comments on the preliminary opportunities presented during the session. The following table provides a breakdown of those comments based on topic and indicates whether they are “in favour” or “against” the opportunity. Any idea or suggestion on how to pursue a preliminary opportunity is coded as “in favour”. The conversation overall was predominantly focussed on how to improve golf play but the two alternative and complementary uses that resonated most were improved trail access and complementary (specifically winter) programming.

Table 2. Summary of public meeting comments coded per preliminary opportunity.

Topic	In favour	Against
Improved Golf Play	73	1
Improved Trail Access	22	2
Tree Planting	1	1
Recreational Facility	0	0
Food Growing Opportunities	10	5
Natural Area Restoration	9	0
Complementary Programming	34	5
Indigenous Placekeeping	3	0

6.2.2 One-on-one Councillor Meetings

Discussions with Toronto City Councillors were centred around uncovering what constituents have said and desire for the future of the golf courses, what is valuable to them for community engagement, and who they think should be engaged in the process. The following summarizes the feedback provided by the Councillors and/or their respective representatives.

What constituents are saying about the golf courses

- **Councillor Colle's Office:** Constituents want winter uses on the golf courses. Constituents feel that tee times are too early making golfing at the city-operated golf courses inconvenient or inaccessible.
- **Councillor Crawford:** Interest in making sure the land is fully utilized. Ensure that activities cater to the local community. Constituents want access to local city parks in their neighbourhoods.
- **Councillor Filion:** Interest in guided nature walks in the area. Can see constituents interested in off-season programming, food growing opportunities and complementary summer programming.
- **Councillor Holyday:** Clubhouses should serve additional, all season functions such as providing meeting and/or rental spaces. Overall, constituents are supportive of golf activities. Constituents are already using sites for unprogrammed winter uses like tobogganing and cross-country skiing. Constituents want any additional activities to be complementary and that golf play remain affordable.
- **Councillor Nunziata:** Interest in an outdoor skating rink during winter months.
- **Councillor Robinson's Office:** Constituents generally appreciate golf and accessible golf play in the ward. Constituents were very anxious to play golf throughout COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Constituents want additional active programming like community runs or nature walks.

What is valuable to Councillors for community engagement

- **Councillor Colle's Office:** Prioritize including newcomer voices in local workshops.
- **Councillor Crawford:** Ensure local community engagement in the Project.
- **Councillor Holyday:** Engage schools and other youth-oriented agencies.
- **Councillor Nunziata:** Be clear about possibilities and limitations.
- **Councillor Pasternak and Councillor Perruzza:** Interested in joining the local resident workshop.

Who should be engaged

- **Councillor Nunziata:** For Scarlett Woods, make sure to engage adjacent neighbours on Cynthia Road who have been vocal about golf course operations and impacts to their property.
- **Councillor Perruzza:** Make sure to engage the Humberlea community nearby Humber Valley.

- **Councillor Bradford** provided the following list of stakeholders to invite to the local community workshop:
 - AccessAlliance
 - Neighbourhood Link
 - BCS - Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services
 - BCCS - Bangladesh Centre and Community Services
 - The City's Taylor Massey NIA Community Development Officer
- **Councillor Colle** provided the following list of stakeholders to invite to the local community workshop:
 - York Mills Heights Residents Association
 - South Armour Heights Residents' Association
 - Upper Avenue Community Association
 - Bedford Park Residents Organization
 - Lytton Park Residents' Organization

Other comments

- **Councillor Bradford's Office:** Dentonia is a unique context that requires consideration of the spectrum of income levels, ethnic diversity, density, and access to public space.
- **Councillor Colle:** There is opportunity to honour Indigenous history through interpretive signed and/or guided commemorative walks.
- **Councillor Filion:** Improve food and beverage offerings. Consider adding a swimming pool and golf programming centred around a younger generation.
- **Councillor Holyday:** Consider the heritage and cultural components of golf courses (e.g. cutting-edge landscape architecture).
- **Councillor Nunziata:** Consider creating golf programming for local residents including the creation of temporary free tee time and free equipment rental.

6.2.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups were organized based on stakeholder categories including (1) the golf community, (2) food access groups, and (3) other advocacy/interest groups. While each focus group had tailored questions, the focus group discussions centred all around the preliminary opportunities identified, ways to improve golf play and who else should we engage. The following summarizes the feedback provided per focus group.

6.2.3.1 Golf Community Focus Group

- **Ways to Improve golf play**
 - Continue to provide accessible golf play locations within the City
 - Continue to provide affordable golf play
 - Prioritize the creation of putting/practice/warm-up areas
 - Prioritize junior-level and student golf programming
 - Consider partnering with Toronto school boards or local schools to create student golf programming
 - Consider programmatic changes to allow larger leagues to reserve large group/quantity tee times (e.g. operations can pursue collaborative programming efforts with key golf leagues in Toronto)

- Consider expanding its entry-level education and training programs
- **Comments on city-operated golf courses and preliminary opportunities**
 - The City's golf courses are the most affordable and geographically accessible golf courses in Toronto
 - Consider reducing 18-hole courses to 12-hole or 9-hole courses to accommodate additional and complementary uses. The shortening of courses was also mentioned as a way to provide flexible golf play for those looking for less time-intensive rounds.
 - Consider introducing additional golf-related programming like Top Golf, an expansion of FlingGolf and Disc Golf programming, designated local resident tee times, school programming
 - Consider Don Valley's back nines for naturalization projects
 - Consult a golf course architect within feasibility studies for preliminary opportunities
 - Consult prior golf play research conducted by the City and Golf Ontario that indicate which sections of the golf courses are least trafficked (and ample to situate additional and complementary uses)
 - Many other golf courses across North America are already adding additional and complementary uses like the ones presented in the focus group
 - Pitch and Putt facility at City of Vancouver's Stanley Park was cited as a key precedent for additional golf programming
 - Winter Park golf course in Winter Park, Florida cited as precedent for good golf course operations
- **Who else should we engage**
 - Golf course architects

6.2.3.2 Food Access Groups Focus Group

- **Comments on golf courses and golf play**
 - Consider expanding junior golf programming
 - Golf not seen as reflective of local interests and needs
- **Comments on preliminary opportunities**
 - There is a need to conduct soil quality and remediation studies to continue exploring food growing opportunities at the golf courses
 - The focus group pointed out that many food growing resources already exist on golf courses like sheds/storage facilities, tilling equipment, and gardening equipment
 - Prioritize making decisions and introducing programming catered to the local community nearby the golf courses
 - Prioritize allocating space and facilities for composting infrastructure that is vital for food growing operations
 - Consider leveraging programmatic supply, demand, and waitlist data of the City's community garden and allotment garden programs to determine which golf course(s) are most appropriate for food growing opportunities
 - Consider restricting and food growing opportunities at golf courses for the local residents only

- Consider the barriers for participation (e.g. fees, finding resources, etc.) in the City’s community garden program when pursuing food growing opportunities
- Consider working with Indigenous land stewards if food growing opportunities require any soil remediation
- Consider creating greenhouses for food growing
- **Who else should we engage**
 - Solomon Boye, PFR Community Gardens Supervisor
 - Toronto Beekeepers Collective
 - Isaac Crosby, Evergreen
 - Indigenous Land Stewardship Circle
 - Taiaiko’n Historical Preservation Society
 - Carolynne Crawley, Urban agriculturalist

6.2.3.3 Other Advocacy/Interest Groups Focus Group

- **Comments on golf courses and golf play**
 - Consider adding additional golf programming that is accessible and appeals to younger generations
 - Consider examining how many people play golf in relation to total population of the City
 - Consider examining golf course usage compared to city-operated public parks usage
 - Consider examining demographic data in review analysis
 - Introduce putting and practice areas for new golfers
 - Acknowledged trends in the preference for 9-hole sessions
- **Comments on preliminary opportunities**
 - Prioritize naturalization projects that uphold the City’s biodiversity strategy targets including the creation of diverse habitats (e.g. wetlands) and bird migration patterns
 - Prioritize trail access to complement golf programming and increase public access
 - Prioritize winter uses and programming like cross-country skiing
 - Prioritize programming guided nature walks
 - Prioritize food growing opportunities
 - Prioritize Indigenous placekeeping
 - Prioritize local residents’ needs and create opportunities for use and access to golf course lands
 - Prioritize creating an evaluation framework for success for any additional / complementary uses pursued
 - Consider cycling access and connections
 - Consider connecting with local schools to program additional / complementary uses
- **Who else should we engage**
 - School-age populations
 - Seniors population
 - Toronto Youth Cabinet
 - North York Community House
 - Local organizations close to golf courses

6.2.4 City-wide Public Meeting

The public meeting consisted of a presentation about the project, an extended question and answer period, and 9 breakout groups. Meeting attendees were asked their opinions on ways to improve golf play and the other identified preliminary opportunities. While not an exhaustive list of the comments, the following outlined the key and repeated messages heard during the meeting.

Comments on golf courses and ways to improve golf play

- Many comments asking to consider how city-operated golf courses provide financially accessible and transit accessible golf courses compared to other privately-owned/operated sites
- Many comments acknowledging that the city-operated golf courses have good and fair quality of facilities but can also be improved with improved food and beverage operations to enhance golf experience
- Many comments asking to consider evaluating programming and operations to cater to seniors; current operations do not particularly accommodate some seniors' needs (e.g. shorter sessions, speed of play, etc.)
- Openness to shorten golf courses from 18-holes to 12-hole or 9-hole. There was no explicit consensus but in general there was interest in reducing number of holes to accommodate other uses and users
- The City's junior golf program is one of the best within Ontario or even nationally
- Consider adding twilight programming and infrastructure (e.g., lighting) to increase access and appeal to different audiences
- Consider exploring additional golfing facilities like driving ranges and Top Golf to appeal to a larger group of prospective users/golfers

Comments on preliminary opportunities

- **Improving Trail Access**
 - Many comments asked to prioritize improving trail access and connections at Dentonia Park golf course and Don Valley golf course where golf sites directly cut-off existing trail networks
 - Many comments asked to consider a multi-use path approach to trail access to account for dog walkers, cyclists, runners, and other prospective users
 - Prioritize ensuring user safety for trails as to avoid injury from golf play or golf course operations
 - Improved trail access will open opportunities for other identified programming like nature walks, community runs, bird watching, and winter programming
- **Tree Planting**
 - Tree planting is acceptable as long as it does not interfere with golf play
- **Recreational Facility**
 - No comments on recreational facilities were collected
- **Food Growing Opportunities**
 - Golf courses are seen to provide a great opportunity for community gardens and food access that prioritizes low-income residents nearby the sites
 - Introducing food growing opportunities to golf courses will provide an opportunity for nearby (apartment) residents without outdoor spaces

- Consider timed access for community gardens to balance with golf play and general golf course operations
- Consider introducing farmer's markets in addition to food growing opportunities to golf course sites
- Articulated reasons to not pursue food growing opportunities include floodplain extents, identification of other open areas for food growing (e.g. hydro corridors), and safety concerns during golf play
- **Natural Area Restoration**
 - No comments on recreational facilities were collected
- **Complementary Programming**
 - Participants expressed openness to complementary programming and uses that do not impede golf play and considers user safety in the midst of golf play and golf course operations
 - Significant interest for off-season winter uses as a starting point for complementary programming and to promote all season use of golf course sites. Recommendations include cross country skiing, sledding, and coffee/hot chocolate stands
 - Consider partial day closures to provide summertime complementary programming (e.g. temporary golf closures for an afternoon or a day for family programming)
 - Articulated reasons to not pursue complementary programming including risk of increased litter and parking problems
- **Indigenous Placekeeping**
 - Consider prioritizing Indigenous sovereignty in the future of golf course operations