

# Island Partners Targeted Discussion Meeting Summary

October 26<sup>th</sup>

## Purpose

To hear from organizations and institutions that operate at the Island in order to better understand their patterns of use and needs for the park, and to share and discuss emerging ideas that will influence the preliminary master plan.

## Participants



– TDSB



– YMCA



– Island Public and Natural Science School

## Project Team

Lori Ellis – City of Toronto

Victoria Bell – DTHA

Pablo Muñoz – City of Toronto

## Summary of Feedback

### Overall impressions

Maintain existing uses, provide more shelters and washrooms access to enable all-weather, year-round activities, and provide more reliable, all-weather, all-year access to the island (including the consideration of pedestrian access).

## Existing conditions and issues the Master Plan team should consider

### **Use of space, and time of use differs between the TDSB and YMCA.**

Most YMCA programming occurs in the summer (at peak about 400 children per day in 3 camps. Approximately 30 in the "kinder" programs (youngest) with 200 at each of the other 2 locations). YMCA programming begins in spring and runs until Nov 27, with late fall programs that have 30 children at capacity. Much of the YMCA programming occur on snake and Algonquin Islands (e.g. summer archery and swimming).

Most TDSB programming occurring during the school year, though there is an Outdoor Education, 3 week summer camp at the Island School with approximately 60 students. In the Spring/Fall, schools from the main land bring classes for 2-night/3 day stays on the Island, to participate in Outdoor Education programs. Outdoor education has 7 outdoor education centres in the board. Right now they don't have visiting students (COVID). Visiting schools will choose the programs that they want to be a part of.

Outdoor Education/TDSB programs takes place in the same parts of the island across all seasons, but with just different activities in each season.

**Emergency services/access is ok as-is**, since there is ambulance and fire on the Island. The only safety concern/evacuation was during the flood. The dock behind the school provides access for emergency services in case of an incident (e.g. active shooter).

**Current use of the Island for TDSB schools & camps and YMCA camps include various points around the Island. Programming areas change over the years, based on curriculum changes. Current use includes:**

- Ward's Island Park Beach
  - Primary YMCA location (historically)
  - Swimming (YMCA)
- Ward's Island Canoe Club (Close to Wards Island Ferry Docs)
  - NEW location for YMCA programs
  - Kinder Groups
  - Swimming
- Snake Island
  - Primary YMCA location (historically)
    - Paddling /Canoes (YMCA)
    - Archery
    - Fire building
    - Swimming
      - Older kids in lake, younger kids in pool
- Franklin's Gardens
  - NEW location for YMCA programs (behind the gardens)
- Algonquin Island
  - Outdoor Education Programming
  - AIA Clubhouse used by TDSB
- Centre Island
  - Centre Island Day School & Day Care
    - School and daycare include outdoor education elements
    - Community walking routes and walking excursions for day students. There are some frequented, walkable trips for day school students, also used by outdoor education programs:
      1. Chickadee feeding
      2. Beaver pond
      3. Franklins garden
      4. Lighthouse
      5. Saturn park
      6. Centre island beach
      7. Mini maze
      8. Centreville
      9. Far Away Farm
    - Camp fire space for teaching outdoor survival skills (behind school)
- Hanlan's Point
  - Outdoor education programming on the other side of Artscape, in the forested area

**Pathways are used for biking programs across the Island, but this is weather-dependant programing.**

**The YMCA currently bring in a lot of their own equipment** (20' trailers, 4 storage pods, boats, washroom trailers, change room trailer).

## Shelters

Provide more shelters across the island to allow for multi-season, all-weather programming. Shelters could be large and open, as well as heated. This is especially useful by the ferry.

Currently there is no shelter by the Ward's Island Ferry, which is a problem when kids need to wait to be shuttled to the Island School. Currently using the Ward's Association Club House (unheated) in a pinch.

YMCA would consider March break and winter programs but there is no shelter on the island. Outdoor Ed programs are only permitted to bring 4 tents (summer shelters from rain) – not enough for the 400 YMCA students

- Current spaces used as shelters (not all-weather/heated) include:
  - Centreville Bandstand
  - Public Centerville spaces (shared with other visitors)
  - Both Hanlan's and Center Island have open shelters, but Ward's Island does not. Instead the Ward's Association Club House is used as a shelter.
  - AIA Club House/Algonquin Club House

## Washrooms

Provide more washrooms to enable programming across the island. Currently the Canoe Club and Church partners with YMCA to provide washroom access, but Artscape does not.

## Accessibility

Access to the Island is weather dependant and could be improved by increasing capacity and reliability in all weather. Schools need high-capacity, reliable transportation that doesn't take too long/ that doesn't require too much walking, especially for younger students. Providing pedestrian access would be of great benefit.

- Access to the Islands by limited-capacity ferries is a major challenge. Ferries are a cost barrier; the school board pays for each ticket for children who visit the island. Ferries have a capacity limit, which is especially challenging for school/outdoor education programing during COVID. Ferries are not reliable, especially in the winter, which is when the majority of school programs take place. The ice breaker is not dependable and does not have a large enough capacity for winter school programs (250+ people), especially during COVID. Some winter programs have had to relocate to City-side because of these transportation challenges. Can be an up to an hour to two hour wait for the Ice breaker

- Consider access other than ferries. E.g. a foot bridge. When flight traffic was low/the airport was closed, busses were able to get through the Island Airport, but this is not possible when there is a standard amount of flights taking place.
- For the two daycares and the school, children get priority boarding on the ferry, allowing them to enter first to get settled. The general public boards afterwards. This works well. Daycare and YMCA programs have different schedules (therefore different ferry needs)

**Other:**

- TDSB is building a partnership with the MCFN
  - City will reach out to understand the developing relationship between the Island Schools and MCFN
- Warren is the main point of contact for both TDSB and YMCA
- Each organization has their own policies and procedures for programming and partnerships
- City will reach out to Montessori as well