

Runnymede Park Improvements

Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting 1 and Park Site Meeting

Summary Report

CAG Meeting Date: January 25, 2023

Park Site Meeting Date: February 13, 2023

Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
Erika Richmond, Senior Project Coordinator



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Introduction

This document provides summaries of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting for the Runnymede Park Improvements that was held virtually on Thursday January 25, 2023 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m, and the site meeting with CAG members and others at the park on Monday February 13, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

More information about the project can be found on the [project webpage](#).

A meeting agenda for the CAG meeting on January 25th is included in Appendix A.

CAG Meeting and Site Meeting Purpose

Members of the project team and CAG met virtually on January 25, 2023 to discuss:

- What we heard from previous consultations conducted in 2019 - 2021 regarding the park's improvement opportunities;
- The park's existing conditions;
- Project timeline; and
- To collect feedback on two draft design options for the park layout and discuss general suggestions, comments and preferences.

The site meeting on February 13, 2023 provided CAG members and the project team an opportunity to explore the park site together in-person, discuss improvement ideas and prioritize community interests at Runnymede Park.

Attendance

[CAG Members Present at the January 25, 2023 Meeting:](#)

- Tanya C

- Deane F
- Fana S
- Aziam S
- Cameron W
- Leah H
- Sue B

City Staff Present

- Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, City of Toronto
- Erika Richmond, Senior Project Coordinator, City of Toronto
- Melody Brown, Lead Cluster Coordinator, City of Toronto

Design Team – THINC

- Misha Franta, Landscape Architect

City Staff Present

- Erika Richmond, Senior Project Coordinator, City of Toronto
- Phil Jarow, Park Supervisor, City of Toronto

Design Team – THINC

- Misha Franta, Landscape Architect, THINC

January 25, 2023 CAG Meeting Summary

The meeting summary is organised to reflect the meeting agenda (Appendix A).

Project Overview

Project staff provided a brief history of the project which included a previous 2020 proposed design option for Runnymede Park that suggested opportunities to animate and improve the park site (Appendix C – Image 1). Staff provided a summary of the community consultation events completed in 2021 that helped identify the allocation of Section 37 funds towards Runnymede Park from the development at 2306 St. Clair West. Project Staff reviewed existing park conditions and presented a project timeline.

Draft Design Options for Runnymede Park

The following provides a summary of discussion about the two design options. Overview images of each design are provided in Appendix C – Images 2 and 3.

- **CAG participants who provided feedback did not identify a strong preference for either the Curvilinear or Geometric design options.** Feedback included:
 - A preference for curved seating similar to Carlton Park (armour stone seating)
 - A preference of a circular path/loop for bike use, jogging, and walking
 - A preference for more curvilinear shapes in the design because it's visually pleasing, more communal, and provides a better opportunity for loops in the park paths
 - Improve the existing wading pool
- **CAG participants provided feedback on what they disliked about the design options.** Feedback included:
 - Concern about wooden play elements because of termites in the area
 - Concern for overcrowding the park with too many new amenities
 - Lack of formal gathering space
- **CAG participants provided feedback on what they felt was missing from the design options.** Feedback included:
 - More picnic tables
 - More gathering space and amenities such as a fire pit or pizza oven
 - Dog space/run
 - A big slide that is suitable for older children
 - A border around the ice rink so it could be used as a community ice rink, replacing the existing community ice rink in the west portion of the park.
 - A permanent outdoor rink
 - More integrative design options that merge the play areas
 - Curved seating that would allow park users to sit together face-to-face or facing away from each other
 - Games tables such as a chess table

Design Options for Playground Area

The following provides a summary of discussion about the three playground precedent option presented to CAG participants. Images for each playground precedent option are provided in Appendix C – Images 4, 5, and 6.

- **CAG participants identified a preference for a hybrid playground area design that merged the modern and natural design options.** Feedback included:
 - The neighbourhood includes many traditional playgrounds already.
 - A preference for a big slide
 - Natural play structures are often geared to older kids, include something for younger kids too.
 - The natural playground design option is aesthetically more pleasing and aligns with the existing character/look of the park
 - If a natural sand pit is included, water accessibility should be explored to enable additional ways to play with the sand
 - Concern about wooden structures because of termites in the area

Pollinator Garden

The following provides a summary of discussion about the idea of introducing a pollinator garden at Runnymede Park. Feedback included:

- A community members or group would need to lead the maintenance and care for the garden and no one has been identified or volunteered
- The idea of having a pollinator garden is well received, but support is needed to apply for a grant and for maintenance of the garden

February 13, 2023 Site Meeting Summary

The project team and members of the CAG participated in a site meeting at Runnymede Park to discuss ideas and opportunities to improve and change the park. Feedback obtained during the event included:

- A preference for no dog off-leash area (DOLA)
- A preference for no second entrance. Instead, a single safer entrance is preferred at an accessible location
- A preference in re-paving the wading pool with a smoother finish
- A preference in maintaining the existing natural ice rink, not moving it to the tennis court.
- A preference for a hybrid modern and wooden (natural) playground instead of a traditional design, although the wood must be termite resistant.
- A preference for monkey bars and a climbing wall
- A need for paving wherever there is a break in the green metal barrier, as these spots tend to get muddy
- A concern for a crack in the tennis court and paving overall that requires fixing. Request for upgraded tennis court surfacing.
- The volleyball court should be re-paved
- More picnic tables and benches throughout the park
- Re-Paint the barrier along Ryding Avenue green or host a community art event to paint, or hire a mural painter.
- Fix the chain link fence along the rail corridor
- Improve the lighting within the park
- Discussion on how to stay up to date with the project: sign up for project updates (on website), look for signage in the park, subscribe to the Councillor's newsletter, check social media, check the project website.

Next Steps

- CAG members can send additional ideas, comments, or suggestions to elijah.bawuah@toronto.ca
- City of Toronto PFR will take a survey to help prioritize the improvements to the park. The survey will be live March 2-17, 2023.
- A public meeting to share updated draft design options and gather feedback from the public will be organized for April 2023. Further details regarding this meeting and how to stay up-to-date with new project information will be available on the [project webpage](#).
- The second CAG meeting to review a preferred schematic design option will be planned for spring 2023. CAG members will receive an email at least 2 weeks in advance to confirm a meeting date and time.

Contact Us

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

Elijah (Eli) Bawuah | Sr. Community Consultation Coordinator
Phone: 647-289-6559 | Email: Elijah.Bawuah@toronto.ca

Erika Richmond: Sr. Project Coordinator
Email: Erika.Richmond@toronto.ca

Appendix A – CAG Meeting Agenda

Runnymede Park Improvements Community Advisory Group Meeting 1



January 25, 2023, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

AGENDA

5:45 Project team tech check

6:00-6:10 – Introductions/Welcome

6:10-6:20 – Project Overview and What We Heard

6:20-6:40 – Park Design Options Presentation

6:40-7:15 – Discussion of Runnymede Park Design Option 1: Curvilinear Park; and
Discussion of Runnymede Park Design Option 2: Geometric Park

7:15-7:20 – Runnymede Park Playground Design Options: Traditional, Modern, Natural

7:20-7:25 – Pollinator Garden

7:25-7:30 – Next Steps/Final Remarks

7:30 Adjourn & Thank You

Appendix B – Post-CAG Meeting Email Feedback

Two CAG members followed up via email with the project team with a few questions regarding opportunities to improve Runnymede Park. City Staff responses to the emails are also included below.

**Q = Question, R = Project Team Response, C = Comment*

Email 1

Q: The proposed paths are nice but being at the park today I don't know that they will fulfill what the community is asking for. They will not be long jogging paths, maybe long enough for some young kids to bike but not past being a few years old. A path the entire perimeter of the park would be nice, I understand how the trees would impact machinery accessibility but maybe there are other paving options?

R: If we are going to provide a formal path, it must be an accessible one. I.e. it needs to be at minimum 2.1m width, level, firm and slip resistant. An asphalt path throughout the park will impact many trees and be a major budget item.

C: The park is well shaded with lovely big trees, I don't know that a shade structure is a good use of funds with so much shade the park already gets in the summer.

C: Gathering space is key, places to sit together, families to eat a meal, groups to celebrate birthdays, or just meet and enjoy each others company. I think gathering spaces need to be bright as a key wish list item.

C: A way to bring the gathering and pollinator garden together may be a bench/garden area as done in Maple Clair park.

R: Great idea, something to think about. However, note that the pollinator garden needs full sun and the gathering area might be in a shaded area.

C: If it were up to me, I'd say the play structure on the West end of the park needs more love. The playground alongside the arena is used and loved, we spent 2 hours alone there today with my 3 and 5 years olds.

R: We would like to concentrate on the eastern playground because it is close to the wading pool, tennis courts, volleyball, and is a better candidate for a "park gathering hub"

C: It may be just me, but the tennis court "ledge" to hold water to make an ice rink seems brilliant. It's bigger than the current rink, and seems like an easy win to create a good ice surface.

R: The community members that build the rink would like to keep the rink where it is.

Email 2

C: I am concerned about what looks like a lot of extra formal paths in the park. I feel they will detract from the natural beauty and openness of the park. Keep the grass! From the slides it was very difficult to imagine how it would look, but my thought was that it would be very chopped up.

R: We can certainly look at reducing the amount of paths in this location. I think we should have a look at desire lines while on site next week.

C: I liked the idea of more seating. Please lots of tables too not just seats. It's a great place for a picnic or a game of checkers.

R: Great, we will include a lot of seating of various types when we bring forward options to the larger community.

Q: One main entrance seems to be the safest entrance. Clearly marked - archway? And maybe leading to central hub - cement or cobble stone pad with planter boxes for future pollinator garden and casual seating and scattered tables and place to fill up water bottles, bike racks, garbage bins. Shrubs?

R: -If we are going to provide a formal path, it must be an accessible one – cobble stone is not accessible.

-One main entrance at the crosswalk seems to be of more interest than having two.

-We will need to place the pollinator garden in an area with access to a hose bid and maximum sunlight. Something to look at while on site.

C: Request maintenance for the tennis court

R: We will likely include re-paving the tennis court as part of this project.

Q: Instead of trying for a formal paved loop around the circumference of the park (as it would interfere with the trees) Can spaced paver stepping stones be placed instead? People already have a worn path and it would be nice to give it some shape.

R: If we are going to provide a formal path, it must be an accessible one. I.e. it needs to be min. 2.1m width, level, firm and slip resistant. Spaced paver stones do not meet that criteria.

Q: I am very happy the wading pool is being resurfaced with more seating. Can some of those colourful muskoka type chairs be added in that area as well?

R: Resurfacing and adding seating to the wading pool is on the list, Muskoka chairs are a good option.

C: A mix of modern and natural play equipment would be cool.

R: Great, we will bring these options to the larger community.

C: Not sure a shade canopy over the sand box is needed but I like the idea of adding a water spout there for mud!

R: Since the sand playground is already shaded with large trees, we probably do not need to add a canopy. Parks maintenance prefers not to have water in sand areas, as the water spouts often break.

Q) Paint the short metal fence (guard rail) that runs the length of the Ryding side with local art or pop of colour. Maybe add wood cut-outs to give it character?

R: Let's discuss this on site.

Q) Is there an opportunity to rename - rebrand the park with something more creative? Could this be something the city could help organize or the councillor's office? to draw positive attention. A community renaming contest? Maybe could involve heritage department?

R: There are new City of Toronto Property Naming guidelines. Please see this [webpage](#), and discuss with the Councillor if there is interest in pursuing this.

Appendix C – Presentation Images

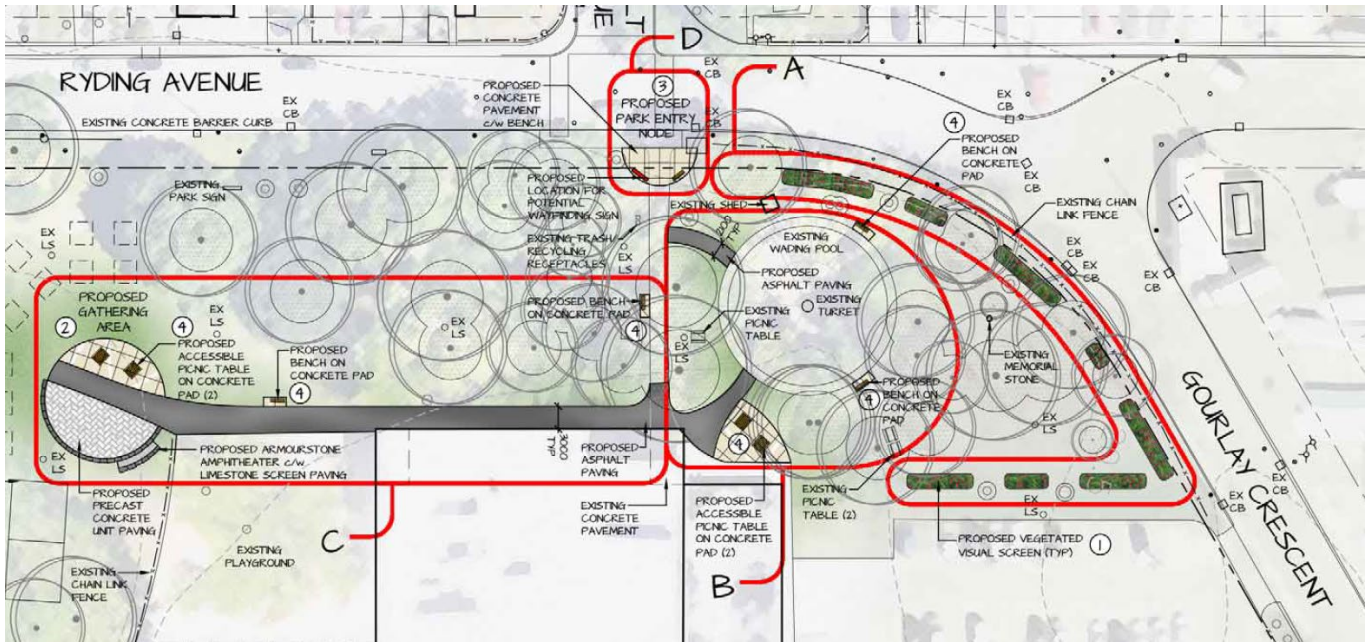


Image 1 POL park animation. The 2020 proposed design includes: gathering areas, screening along Gourlay, signage at new entryway, accessible pathways, picnic shelter with a gazebo, lighting on concrete pad, and new seating.

- 1 New entrance at Ryding Ave
- 2 Existing wading pool with new joint sealant and finish
- 3 Seating throughout
- 4 Senior playground
- 5 Junior playground
- 6 Natural sand play
- 7 Shade structure
- 8 Native planting buffer
- 9 Accessible pathway circulation
- 10 Formalized entrance at Cobalt Ave

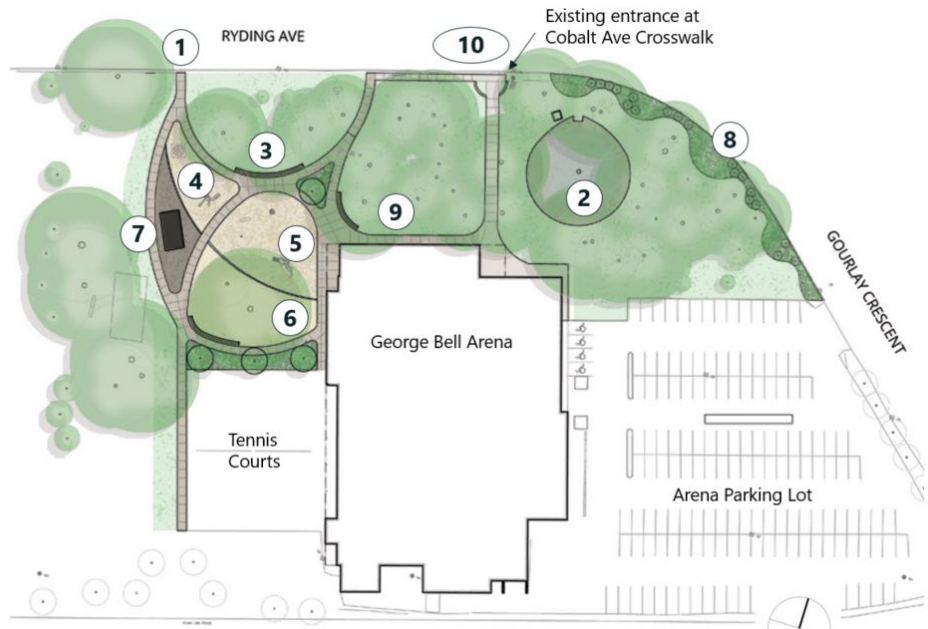


Image 2 Curvilinear Park Design Option

- ① New entrance at Ryding Ave
- ② Existing wading pool with new joint sealant and finish
- ③ Seating throughout
- ④ Senior playground
- ⑤ Junior playground
- ⑥ Natural sand play
- ⑦ Gathering Area
- ⑧ Native planting buffer
- ⑨ Accessible pathway circulation
- ⑩ Formalized entrance at Cobalt Ave



Image 3 Geometric Park Design Option



Bright, colourful play equipment, including traditional play towers and springers.

Image 4 Traditional play equipment



Sculpturally inspired play equipment with alternative play experiences.

Image 5 Modern play equipment



Nature-inspired playground design, with a focus on incorporating natural materials.

Image 6 Natural play equipment