

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Moss Park Park Improvements and John Innes Community Recreation Centre Replacement

Pop-Up: Park Design Options Engagement Summary Report

April 15th 2023



1.0 About this Report

This report summarizes key findings from Pop-ups at Moss Park park conducted April 15th 2023. It includes summaries of key comments and input collected from the engagement boards and engagement activities.

1.1 Project Schedule

Summer 2022 - Phase 1: SET THE STAGE

Introduce the project, explain the process, and lay the project groundwork.

Summer 2022 – Fall 2022 Phase 2: CONFIRM THE VISION, PRINCIPLES, BIG MOVES

Introduce the project, revisit More Moss Park findings, and explore how things have changed since 2015. Better understand evolving local issues and how the project can best support local needs. Confirm the Principles and Big Moves of the project.

WE ARE HERE

Fall 2022 to Spring 2023: Phase 3 – PARK CONCEPT DESIGN OPTIONS

Consider all the inputs through consultation in prior phases to develop park design options.

Spring 2023: Phase 4 - PREFERRED CONCEPT

Refine the concept plans for the park and John Innes Community Recreation Centre based on feedback and present one preferred park concept and the final schematic design for the Community Recreation Centre to the community for feedback.

2.0 Overview of Activity



Photo: Image of the Pop-up set up and members of the community gathered around the display and activity boards.

2.1 Moss Park Pop-Up

On Saturday April 15 the engagement team conducted a Pop-up engagement outdoors at Moss Park park. Pop-up engagements are interactive and informal consultations in which organizers ‘pop-up’ a table, booth, activity, etc., in a high traffic location with the intention of engaging with park visitors.

The location of the Pop-up event occurred at the corner of Moss Park situated closest to the intersection of Sherbourne St. and Shuter St. During the event, the team engaged in intercept interviews and set up multiple boards that presented the three (3) different concept design options, and sets of questions visitors were encouraged to respond to by taking part in a “dot-mocracy” activity that involves voting with sticker dots where participants would place their dots next to their preferred choices.

The questions on interactive display boards were derived from the public survey on Park Design Options for Moss Park Improvements.

The primary goal was to collect public feedback on several features related to the proposed Moss Park improvements, including pathways, community garden size, off-leash dog areas, children's play areas, splash pads, seating, and the tennis court and proposed pickleball area. This information will be used to inform the designers on developing the preferred design concept for the Park improvements.

3.0 What We Heard

The engagement team actively engaged with community members encouraging them to explore and answer the questions on the information boards. This also provided opportunities for participants to have conversations with the engagement team, allowing them to gather further insights and information regarding the different park designs.

Through this process, several key findings, common themes, and preferences emerged from the collected data. However, it is worth noting that not all respondents answered every question, leading to variations in the sample size across different aspects of the design.

The analysis of the data yielded insights into various aspects of the park design and community engagement. Popular themes are further described below. A comprehensive list of Pop-up results and comments can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Need for more seating in the park, with a preference for picnic tables and benches.

During our engagements with park visitors, we discovered that there was a strong emphasis on the type of seating they desired to see at the park. Among the various seating options discussed, the most preferred choices were standard size picnic tables and benches with backs and armrests.

Some visitors expressed their desire for lounge seating that faces the playground, enhancing the viewing experience for parents or guardians supervising their children. Another important aspect mentioned was the need for robust and sturdy seating, ensuring durability and longevity. A community member who identified as experiencing homelessness emphasized the significance of seating in providing them with a place to sit, have a meal, gather with friends, and find a place to rest.

Seating in shaded areas was also emphasized, providing a comfortable space for park visitors to relax and escape the direct sun. However, it was acknowledged that not everyone would be comfortable sharing picnic tables with strangers, indicating a preference for individual seating options to accommodate diverse preferences and comfort levels.

Furthermore, concerns were raised regarding potential misuse or vandalism of the seating facilities. It was crucial for the community to feel confident that the seating would be respected and well-maintained and be able to meet the needs of the diverse park uses of park users.

Mixed opinions about the community garden.

During the Pop-up event, participants showed interest in having a larger community garden with specific features.

In regards to the specific features, participants voiced the importance of incorporating tall fences with vertical pickets to ensure privacy and enhance security within the garden space. Additionally, some community members with allotment gardens currently in Moss Park shared the need for appropriate lighting to support healthy plant growth and the inclusion of plants that attract bees and butterflies. A community maintained fishpond was also suggested.

Alongside the positive feedback, concerns were raised to ensure the successful implementation of the community garden. Participants expressed apprehension about placing chairs near the garden area, citing potential risks of plant theft. Additionally, there was a call for a well-defined plan to address the movement of plants, accommodating individuals who may have a substantial collection. Participants also emphasized the significance of providing at least six hours of continuous light to optimize plant growth.

Preference for a large playground area with natural park design.

We interacted with several families and children who were present at the park, many of which were excited to provide feedback specific to the playground and splashpad. During our discussions, it became evident that the majority of participants preferred a larger playground area rather than a larger splash pad. They shared their thoughts and ideas, drawing inspiration from other parks in the city. For instance, some mentioned the idea of incorporating a "soft ground" similar to the St. James Park Playground and expressed a desire for "tall slides" like those found in Grange Park. In addition to playground amenities, accessibility was also emphasized, with suggestions for features like a zipline. It was also noted that a splash pad would be a welcome addition for cooling down during hot summer days. Importantly, participants stressed the importance of not fencing off the children's play area, allowing for an open access to playground features.

Putting community first.

At the Pop-up event, some attendees shared the importance of ensuring that the park serves the needs of the community. Continuous involvement with the diverse communities of Moss Park was emphasized as a crucial factor in achieving this goal. In addition, while housing was not the central focus of the conversation, the sentiment expressed during the event highlighted the community's deep concern and support for the unhoused population within Moss Park. Their comments underscored the significance of actively engaging the local community in park programs and decision-making processes, recognizing that inclusivity is essential to address the specific needs of residents of all ages and across generations, as well as those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

4.0 Who We Engaged

Number of participants engaged: 50+

The Pop-up engagements were designed as a way to connect with people who may not be engaged through other channels such as online surveys, ensuring engagement with a broad range of community members and park users.

As these engagements were informal, candid conversations, we did not ask official demographic questions, but a number of people we engaged with self disclosed or nearby residents living in neighborhoods close by.

Throughout the day careful attention was paid to ensuring we spoke with a diverse cross section of people ranging in age, race/ethnicity, gender identity and housing status.

APPENDIX A: Feedback and comment log*

*As per the City's Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination policy, xenophobic, misogynist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-Indigenous, ableist, ageist or other forms of discriminatory, prejudicial, exclusionary or hateful comments or questions have been removed in this document.

Community garden and planting:

- No community gardens
- Put some nice plants for people
- Largest possible size
- Plants need 6 hours of continuous light.
- With an organized community garden, the garden can be tidy + informative + welcoming even for non-gardeners
- If my garden is on the side I can plan more. It is more protected. There has to be a sign on the fence [about the community garden]
- A fish pond is not hard if you plan for it. it can be fenced
- I want the park to be sustainable. I want fruit trees
- Plants for bees and butterflies
- Sacred fire should go where the garden is four medicines
- No chairs near the garden. people steal plants
- Relocating community garden
- Community garden
- Pollinators attend edge of garden
- I have an allotment garden. Tree gives too much shade. I want [my plot] to be to the side
- Visual separation for trees

Park design (paths, sightlines):

- Tall fence with vertical pickets + tall
- The planting should also reference the creek
- I do not like the grid. It feels like you are a guest walking through.
- Meander and Creek are more inviting
- Like the honoring of the creek
- Path sight lines
- Diagonal NE/SW
- Lighting

Seating:

- Seating has to be robust, sturdy
- Seating in the shade
- Some seating in shade
- Scale furniture to suit a range of people (height, diameter)
- Accessible picnic tables
- Picnic tables: not everyone will want to share tables with strangers
- Picnic tables food for families
- Lounger seating facing playground
- Avoid benches where people can sleep

Heritage:

- Really disappointed to know that the existing community building won't be adaptively revised for the new one, consider: A) Embodies heritage B) The heritage value
- The park used to be beautiful years ago

Safety:

- Metal can hurt more if kids have an accident
- Safety is a big concern
- We need the trees they shouldn't be cut
- Work with police
- Sightlines, dogs in playground
- Always think about children and seniors
- After 6 the light goes down and it isn't safe, lighting is important

Recreation:

- Fish pond supervised by people
- Splash pad great to cool down from summer heat
- Tennis courts are important and basketball court
- Really tall slides like in Grange Park
- Workshops i.e. financial leadership

Housing:

- There should be a space for all to feel safe residents + people who are homeless
- Keep homeless in mind

- Build housing instead
- As long as there are no condos

Tennis Court and Pickleball

- Tennis court/pickleball competing uses if it's going to be shared

Other:

- Places to rinse out reusable dishes

APPENDIX B: Dot-mocracy response

Note: The response rates varied among participants, resulting in variations in the sample size across the different questions.

Concept Design 1

I am satisfied with the location and form of the path

- Strongly Agree: 7
- Agree: 1
- Disagree: 2
- Strongly Disagree: 2

I am satisfied with the park widths?

- Strongly Agree: 5
- Agree: 2
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 1

I am satisfied with the connections between the park and the neighbourhood in the plans?

- Strongly Agree: 5
- Agree: 6
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I am satisfied with the access paths in the community garden area in this design

- Strongly Agree: 4
- Agree: 3
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

i am satisfied with the size of the community garden in this design

- Strongly Agree: 1
- Agree: 7
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: 1

I like the size and layout of the Off-Leash Area in this design

- Strongly Agree: 5
- Agree: 3
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

Concept Design 2

I am satisfied with the location and form of the path

- Strongly Agree: 9
- Agree: 2
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: 1

I am satisfied with the park widths?

- Strongly Agree: 4
- Agree: 1
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I am satisfied with the connections between the park and the neighbourhood in the plans?

- Strongly Agree: 4
- Agree: 3
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I am satisfied with the access paths in the community garden area in this design

- Strongly Agree: 2
- Agree: 2
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 1

i am satisfied with the size of the community garden in this design

- Strongly Agree: 3
- Agree: 2
- Disagree: 2
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I like the size and layout of the Off-Leash Area in this design

- Strongly Agree: 3
- Agree: 2
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: -

Concept Design 3

I am satisfied with the location and form of the path

- Strongly Agree: 5
- Agree: 1
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I am satisfied with the park widths?

- Strongly Agree: 4
- Agree: 1
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I am satisfied with the connections between the park and the neighbourhood in the plans?

- Strongly Agree: 3
- Agree: 3
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I am satisfied with the access paths in the community garden area in this design

- Strongly Agree: 3
- Agree: 1
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0

I am satisfied with the size of the community garden in this design

- Strongly Agree: 1
- Agree: 2
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: 1

I like the size and layout of the Off-Leash Area in this design

- Strongly Agree: 3
- Agree: 1
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: 0

Seating

Which type of seating do you prefer:

Benches with backs and armrests

- Most Preferred: 8
- Preferred: 6
- Neutral: 2
- Least Preferred: 0

Standard size picnic tables

- Most Preferred: 20
- Preferred: 2
- Neutral: 0
- Least Preferred: 2

Large communal tables

- Most Preferred: 6

- Preferred: 2
- Neutral: 0
- Least Preferred: 4

Joint use of Pickleball and Tennis court space

Are you interested in having a shared pickleball and tennis court space?

- Yes: 11
- No: 0
- Not Sure: 1

I would like to provide more feedback about the joint use of the tennis court:

- Green and blue courts
- I do not see people playing pickleball here a lot
- If more people use the courts then better
- Separate courts please”

Playground and Splash Pad

Preferred playground themes

- Buried Moss Creek: 6
- Garden District: 0
- Other Themes:
 - Moss Park mansion
 - Unicorn
 - Dinosaur
 - Natural theme

Provide Feedback on the playground:

- Accessibility playground
- Slides (x2)
- Zipline (x3)

Size of the playground and splash pad area

- Same size for both: 1
- Playground larger: 8
- Splash Pad larger: 1

What type of playground do you prefer?

- Colorful: 20
- Natural: 15
- Combination: 10