

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Eglinton Park Master Plan Implementation Indigenous & Gardening Group Meeting 1

Meeting Summary

January 18, 2023

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Indigenous & Gardening Group (IGG) meeting that was held virtually on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Welcome and introduce IGG members & the project team
- Present a project overview and update on Phase 1 of the Eglinton Park Master Plan implementation
- Receive IGG members' feedback on Phase 1. Topics open for discussion included the locations of a dog off-leash area, skate spot, landscape architecture, and passive gathering spaces
- Share next steps

Attendance

IGG Members Present

- Paula M.
- Michelle L.
- Mary J.

Project Staff Present

- Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
- Tonya Crawford, Senior Project Coordinator, Capital Projects
- Daniel Fusca, Consultation Manager, Capital Project

Presentation

Project staff presented:

- An overview of the Eglinton Park Master Plan engagement and design process (2017-2019).
- A project overview about Phase 1 of the Eglinton Park Master Plan Implementation.
- A summary of what the engagement team has heard throughout Phase 1 engagement activities (park pop-up, interactive mapping activity, and Community Advisory Group Meeting 1), including:
 - Preferred location for the dog off-leash area.
 - Preferred location for the skate spot.
 - Indigenous place keeping and gardening.
 - Passive gathering spaces.

The full presentation is available on the [project webpage](#).

Questions and Discussion

A discussion period followed the presentation. Guiding discussion questions included:

1. How will the introduction of a dog off-leash area change the community's experience at the park? Which location works best?

2. How will the introduction of a skate spot change the community's experience at the park? Which location works best?
3. What features, amenities or improvements reflected in Phase 1 of the Master Plan Implementation are most important to you, and why?
4. How might Indigenous knowledge and planting strategies inform landscaping decisions throughout the park, and support Indigenous place keeping?

Q & A

Questions received from IGG members (Q) and responses by staff and Design Team (R) include the following. These are not verbatim:

Q. Will the off-leash area be fenced off?

R. The OLA will have adequate fencing to ensure dogs are contained.

Q. The current design layout makes it seem that the park may be paved over. Is this area being touched? Concern about a new proposed path removing the garden.

R. There are no plans to remove and/or displace the garden. The garden will be preserved.

Design Priorities for Phase 1 of the Eglinton Park Master Plan Implementation

The following provides a summary of the IGG members' discussion about priorities and suggestions for the locations of the dog off-leash area (OLA) and skate spot, landscaping, as well as other conversations that emerged during the meeting:

- **General Summary:** The IGG reached consensus on the location of the OLA and skate spot. A lengthy discussion ensued about the landscape architecture of the park, Wendat history, and the garden's current and future needs.
- **Location of the OLA**
 - There was a consensus that the OLA should be Area A. It was felt that many dog owners already congregate in this area and it would be a logical and functional to place the OLA in this location.
- **Location of the skate spot**
 - The preferred option for the skate spot was Area C. There is less slope in this location, providing an even building surface the skate spot requires.
 - There have been previous safety concerns in the garden, as there have been incidents of vandalism in the past. Thus, it was felt that Area A would be too tucked away and secluded to be safe.
- **Landscaping**
 - There is a desire to have distinction and separation between the garden and the rest of the park. The IGG would like to see a new path built along the western edge of the garden to ease crowding in the garden during pinch points (e.g., line-ups for the pool). Currently, people have been using the garden as a shortcut, which has led to littering. While the garden is open to all, it must be used in a respectful way.
 - The IGG request more seating and garbage bins in the pool line-up area to ease with crowding and litter.

- There is an existing informal dirt pathway on the western border of the garden that could be converted into a formal path. It would be ideal if the formal path was moved slightly westward and further away from the garden, as the current informal dirt path touches some of the garden's plantings. This would direct the already existing foot traffic a small distance away from the plantings.
- The IGG welcomes the idea of expanding beyond the current garden. There is a desire to acknowledge and honour the Wendat history and heritage in the area where Eglinton Park is currently situated. This land was previously a Wendat cornfield and there were suggestions to plant corn to honour this history. Alternatively, a circle of sunflowers could be planted, another Wendat planting tradition.
- There is a desire to incorporate seating in the garden. The IGG would also like a structure (e.g., lodge) to hold ceremonies and workshops out of the elements.
- **Additional concerns**
 - There have been several instances of vandalism. The shed and wooden stools have been covered in graffiti. The stools have been taken out of the garden. Alcohol has been spilled and broken alcohol bottles have been found in the garden.
 - The garden's only source of water is from the adjacent community centre. The IGG must negotiate with community centre staff for water. There have been instances where the gardeners were unable to access water for extended periods of time (e.g., 2 weeks). There is a wish to have an independent water source.

Next Steps

- Members can send additional ideas, comments, or suggestions to Elijah.Bawuah@toronto.ca.
- Staff will compile a written summary of the meeting and distribute to members for review.
 - Members will have one week to provide suggested edits to the draft summary, after which the summary will be finalized.
- Members will be sent an email with access to a poll to vote on their preferred location for both the OLA and skate spot.
- The design teams will consider feedback from the IGG meeting and poll, and other community engagement events to create draft designs for the new amenities.
- The second IGG meeting is planned to take place in late February 2023.
 - Members will receive an email in January to confirm a meeting date and time.

Contact Us

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

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Appendix A – Location Options for the Dog Off-Leash Area



Appendix B – Location Options for the Skate Spot



Appendix C – Eglinton Park Site Plan





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January 18, 2023