

Moss Park Park Improvements & John Innes Community Recreation Centre Replacement Project

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT:

Indigenous Communities' Meeting #3

Meeting Date: February 28th, 2023



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1.0 About this Report

This report summarizes key findings, insights and input collected from the Moss Park park Improvements & John Innes Community Recreation Centre Replacement Project's third Indigenous Communities Meeting

The primary focus of the meeting was to share three park design options, and to collect feedback and learn about preferences on the park options,

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 [*We Are Here](#)

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.

1.2 Indigenous Communities' Engagement Timeline

Engagement with Indigenous Communities has included meetings with local Indigenous organizations and individuals at each phase of the project. The meetings to date to date have been:

- Indigenous Communities Meeting #3 - February 28, 2023 [*We Are Here](#)
- Indigenous Communities Meeting #2 - December 12, 2022
- Indigenous Communities Meeting #1 - August 31st, 2021
- Pre-engagement meeting with Council Fire - June 10th, 2021

1.3 Meeting Overview

WHEN: February, 28th 2023, at 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM
WHERE: Virtually on WebEx
ATTENDEES: 20 Participants
PROJECT TEAM: City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division
SAFFY (Public and Stakeholder Engagement)
The Planning Partnership (Landscape Architecture)
Two Row Architect (Landscape Architecture & Indigenous Lens)

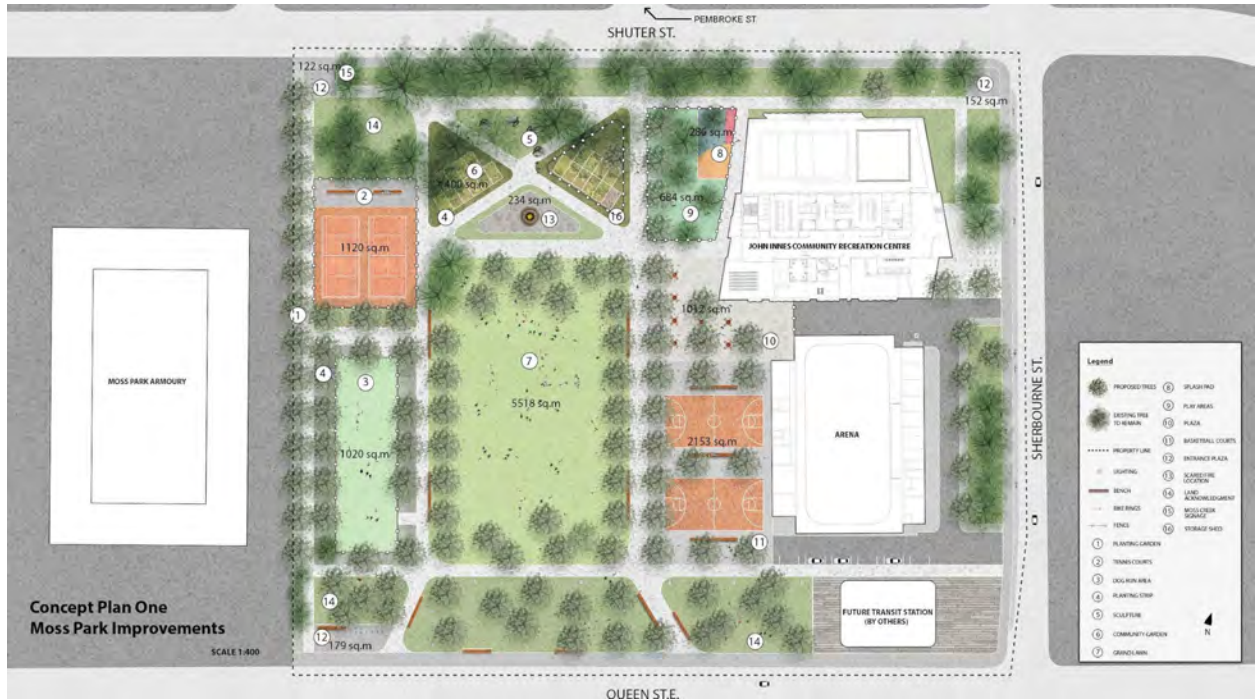
During the virtual meeting conducted on WebEx, 29 participants were in attendance. The meeting began with a welcome and Land Acknowledgement, followed by a presentation explaining the background of the project and engagements to date (see [Appendix for the presentation slide deck](#)). The contents of the first section of the presentation included:

- project overview and background
- engagement timeline to-date
- what was heard in Indigenous Communities Meeting #1 and #2

Following the introduction, the design team presented three park design options ([open house presentation](#)). All three designs include park features organized around a large central grass field. The park amenities in all the plans include a junior and senior playground and splash pad, direct access to washrooms on the exterior face of the building facing the park, an entrance to the community recreation centre from the park, tennis courts, basketball courts, community garden area, fenced off leash area, central lawn for flexible uses, connecting paths, seating, lighting, trees and horticultural planting. Indigenous Placekeeping elements in the plans include a Sacred Fire which could be either a permanent, dedicated area or a mobile Sacred Fire bowl and supporting equipment which could be set up in different areas of the park. Other Indigenous Placekeeping features include public art that will be curated by an Indigenous artist and will showcase the work of an Indigenous artist who is awarded the commission, medicinal planting and an overall ecological approach to the park that will revitalize the habitat for urban birds and creatures with whom we share the land.

The three park design concepts that were presented for discussion are as follows:

Draft Concept Plan #1: The Grid



Draft Concept Plan #2: The Creek



Draft Concept Plan #3: Meander



2.0 What We Heard

2.1 Summary of Key Findings

Trina Moyan, the Indigenous Engagement Lead for the project, facilitated the discussion of the park plans. Each participant was given an opportunity to speak about the park options and provide feedback and ideas on the proposed park elements.

From the discussion the following key takeaways emerged:

Sacred Fire

Participants expressed a preference for a permanent Sacred Fire location rather than a mobile Sacred Fire bowl. They shared ideas about the importance of a dedicated and protected use of the Sacred Fire location for Indigenous ceremonies and what the look of the protective locking cover could look like. Ideas about the design of the protective cover included incorporating plants on the surface, and inviting artists to decorate the cover with different designs and imagery. A participant shared the idea of adding a mosaic along the interior of the pit that would feature designs representing diverse Indigenous knowledge, and when a fire is lit, the use of mosaic materials would create a captivating effect.

However, one community member expressed concern that having a locked Sacred Fire pit could create a barrier to access and that it would be important for Indigenous communities to have unimpeded access to the Sacred Fire.

The project team clarified that if the park does include a permanent Sacred Fire, it would be dedicated for use by Indigenous communities only and would be locked and protected the rest of the time. The Sacred Fire space would have signage to explain its intended purpose. The team clarified that having a Sacred Fire would not create any additional bureaucracy or require permits, as Sacred Fires can now happen on any city parks and do not require permits as part of the City's efforts to decolonize Sacred Fires for Indigenous community use. An information form is recommended to be provided to Toronto Fire Services so they are aware of fires, but permits are not required.

“the Sacred Fire space should be permanent and accessible - not temporary”

“Yes please have the fire pit closed off until it's being used.”

Seating

Attendees discussed the proposed seating locations in the new park designs. They expressed a desire for a seating circle around the Sacred Fire location, and seating near the community gardens. Participants appreciated others shared their preference for a widened sidewalk and seating options along Sherbourne St. Attendees noted that this would be a valuable addition for the unhoused population and service providers, as that section of the street is often used for meal drop-offs and is already a spot that is frequently used by the unhoused population.

One participant expressed concern about "hostile architecture" meant to deter certain uses. The project team emphasized their commitment to inclusivity in the park including features such as seating. They explained that their goal is to ensure that no one feels excluded, and to achieve this, the plans provide benches and ample lighting throughout the park to make it comfortable for everyone to sit in various areas.

"Having seating in the garden can invite people in." – Workshop Participant

"Perhaps there should be seating and a focus on gathering with respect to the gardens."

– Workshop Participant

"Incorporate seating around the Sacred Fire pit." – Workshop Participant

Planting

A majority of participants had questions related to the types of plants, planting locations and community garden space proposed in the park designs. One participant shared the idea of expanding the community garden to accommodate a teaching garden. Another meeting participant shared that they have observed that food bank lines in the area are getting longer, and proposed the option of making the community garden space bigger to be used for food justice initiatives in the area. Another question was raised around whether a medicine garden would be included in the park or if it was already part of the community garden's intended purpose.

The project team responded that the community garden plots were based on the needs and feedback heard from John Innes Community Recreation Centre staff. They assured meeting attendees that the suggestions about the different uses of the community garden will be passed on to community recreation staff and the City.

In response to the medicine garden, a member of the landscape shared that medicinal plants and native plant species will be included throughout the park including both cultivated and wild varieties.

"Create a larger garden for teaching opportunities." – Workshop Participant

“Make the community garden space bigger,. . . get organizations in there to create spaces to create food for people that don't have access to it. . . I feel like that is something that's very, very important.” – Workshop Participant

Public Art

One participant suggested that the public art component could be linked to the Sacred Fire through a specially designed cover to protect the Sacred Fire as well as decorative mosaic on the interior of the firebowl. Additionally, there was a suggestion to involve artists who are street-involved in creating a mural. The blank wall of the arena that faces the basketball court could be a potential location for a mural. Another idea put forward was to make the colors associated with the four directions of the medicine wheel visible in areas of the park.

“maybe even having some mosaic work done with different Indigenous knowledge or teachings along the inside of the fire pit.” – Workshop Participant

“It is a park and has four corners, maybe some four . . . colors in each corner of the park to represent the Medicine Wheel.” – Workshop Participant

Pathways

A majority of the meeting participants particularly appreciated the organic lines of the paths in the Meander and Creek option. Many attendees also liked the Creek's homage to the location of the buried Moss Creek, and the design team's incorporation of water into different design elements. While some participants shared that they did not like the rigidity of the grid pathways, others liked the grid concept noting that it allows pedestrians to view the path from beginning to end.

I think it's important to honor what used to be there before settlers came to change that. – Workshop Participant

Like Creek and Meander options. Like that it is space sharing and circular. – Workshop Participant

I feel the grid format did not make the city welcoming, Felt like an institutional space and park. – Workshop Participant

Appendix

Moss Park Park Improvements: Park Design Options

Indigenous Communities' Meeting #3

February 28th, 2023

4:00 – 6:00 PM



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



Community Guidelines



Community Guidelines

As a meeting and CAC participant, you agree to:

- Be an active listener and keep an open mind by valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
- Treat all participants with kindness and respect.
- Critique ideas, not individuals.
- Avoid cursing as well as language or behaviours that could otherwise be considered rude or offensive.
- Abide by the City's Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination policy by refraining from making racist, xenophobic, misogynist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-Indigenous, ableist, ageist or other forms of discriminatory, prejudicial, exclusionary or hateful comments or questions. These will not be tolerated and may result in expulsion from the meeting and/or process.



Community Guidelines

As City staff, project team staff and process stewards, we commit to:

- Providing fair and equal access to the public engagement process to all who are interested in participating.
- Maintaining an atmosphere that is respectful of all participants and other staff members.
- Ensuring that the project outcomes and/or staff recommendations are informed by participants' concerns, interests and desires.
- Being advocates for the integrity of the public process and ensuring it reflects as much as possible directions contained in relevant Council-approved strategies, including but not limited to the Reconciliation Action Plan, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, the Seniors Strategy, ChildFriendlyTO and the Newcomer Strategy.
- Undertaking and encouraging actions by other City staff that build trust and credibility for the process among all participants.
- Providing the information participants need to meaningfully participate.



Agenda



Presentation

- Project Background
- Engagements to Date
- Moss Park design options



Questions & Discussion



Next Steps



Adjourn



Goals for this Meeting



1. Moss Park park Improvements, 3 Design Options



Project Background



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Project Team



Daniel Fusca, Manager, Public Consultation, Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Pablo Muñoz, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Suzanne Cooke-Wooland, CP Capital Lead, Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Nancy Chater, CP Capital Lead, Parks, Forestry & Recreation



Nadia Galati, Principal and Engagement Lead

Trina Moyan, Indigenous Engagement Lead

Jo Delos Reyes, Planner + Strategist



David Leinster, Principal, Landscape Architecture

Jennifer Williamson, Project Manager, Landscape Architecture



Brian Porter, Principal

Matthew Hickey, Partner

Erik Skouris, Intern Architect



Chris Burbidge, Principal in Charge

Krista Clark, Project Manager

Viktors Jaunkalns, Design Lead



Project Timeline



2015 Initial reimagining of Moss Park began as a partnership between the City of Toronto, The 519 and a philanthropic partner. Engagement and feasibility study conducted.

Report Released
Report included engagement with 2,500 people and a feasibility study. Project deemed not feasible.

2019 City Council adopts the implementation strategy for the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan with amendments.

The City analyzed what was done to date, and prepared to listen and gather more local ideas and experiences. The project is led and funded by the Parks, Forestry and Recreation department within the City of Toronto.

Summer to fall 2022
Confirm the community's visions.

Fall 2022 - Spring 2023
Develop and present conceptual designs for feedback.

Winter - Spring 2023
Finalize designs and approvals.

Construction

Spring 2024
Procurement of construction services

Summer 2024 to Fall 2027
Construct community recreation centre

Spring 2027 to Fall 2029
Park construction

Indigenous Engagement Process

Trina's process is grassroots, flexible, and rooted in relationship building. It will adapt as she learns more from those she speaks with. All conversations will be paid.



Local Service Providers & TASSC

Trina began her work speaking to local agencies and grassroots organizations providing services to Indigenous communities. She invited these agencies to join the Local Advisory Group (LAG), the Project Champions, or the Youth Designer/Artist role. Over the course of the project, Trina will continue to build relationships and ask these agencies to connect her with Local Indigenous residents with lived experience of the Park and area.

Trina will also arrange a meeting(s) with TASSC as needed.

Local Residents and Organizations

Trina will connect with local Indigenous residents and facilitate one-on-one conversations about the Project.

Treaty holders

While Trina's process is ongoing, City of Toronto staff will consult treaty holders.

Design will respond to what is learned through engagement with Indigenous communities

Set the Stage

Confirm the Vision, Principles, Big Moves

Early Design Ideas

Confirm Design

What is Open for Influence

What will be included:

COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRE (C.R.C.)

- A 25-metre 6 lane lap pool
- A leisure/tot pool
- Community, multi-use space
- double gymnasium with a mezzanine running track
- Fitness studios
- Dance studio
- Common & administrative areas, including a large Lobby
- WIFI access throughout
- Gender-neutral washrooms and change rooms
- A green roof or rooftop community access – to be determined
- Service spaces

PARK

- Passive & Active Recreation Amenities including playground, splash pad, community gardens, walking paths, other features TBD such as tennis, basketball etc.
- Safety – sight lines, lighting, animation to create more eyes on the park
- Flexible, multi-use spaces for different activities
- Consider Food security & urban agriculture
- Indigenous Place-keeping elements
- Input from local Indigenous communities
- Enhance ecological and social sustainability and resilience of the park
- Broader connectivity to parks and public realm network

What we can collaborate on:

COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRE (C.R.C.)

- Opportunities for the included program in the Community Recreation Centre, such as program interrelationships, flexibility of uses, and relationships to the park
- Community multi-purpose room(s) features and uses
- Lane pool features and uses
- Leisure/tot pool features and uses
- Rooftop features and uses
- Lobby features and uses
- Program adjacencies
- Opportunities for key safety features, such as sight lines, visibility, and views

PARK

- Opportunities for park improvements, including seating & gathering areas
- Opportunities for recreation amenities, such as playground, splash pad, community garden, walking paths, tennis, basketball, etc.
- Indigenous placekeeping (to be discussed with local Indigenous communities)
- Opportunities for key safety features, such as sight lines & lighting
- Selection of initiatives to support food security and urban agriculture
- Initiatives to support ecological & social sustainability & resilience of the park

Design Principles

- Ensure the design of the CRC and park supports **equity, belonging and inclusion**.
- Ensure the CRC and Park are **accessible to all**.
- Create a space that makes **safety for all users** a priority.
- Design an **open, permeable, and transparent** environment.
- Maximize, enhance, and improve **green spaces**.
- Celebrate and share information about the **Indigenous history** and character of Moss Park.
- Contribute to **food security**.
- Be **sustainable** and carbon neutral.



Big Moves

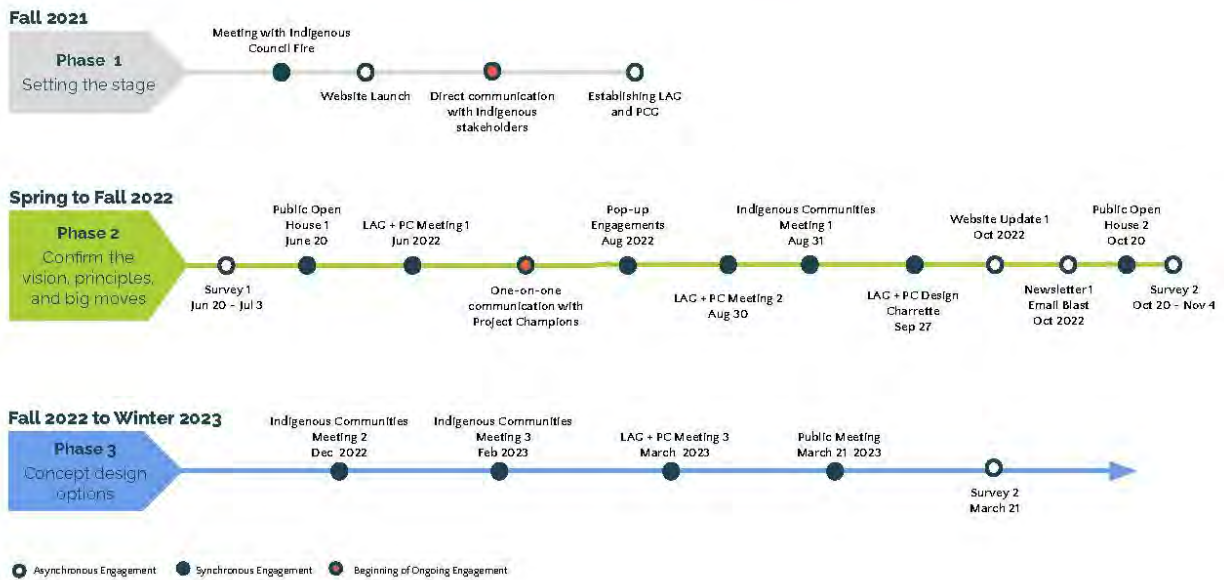
- **Maintain a large area of open parkland with frontages onto Queen and Shuter** by building the new CRC along Sherbourne St., over the existing footprint.
- Establish a **cohesive design language between the CRC and the Arena** and a strong relationship between both buildings and the future Moss Park **subway station**.
- Optimize opportunities for **rooftop access** to the new CRC.
- Incorporate spaces for **prayer and ceremony**.
- Ensure **washroom access from the outside of the building**.
- Create a new urban gateway at Queen and Sherbourne.
- Integrate **Indigenous placekeeping** throughout the park.
- Establish a **renewed urban canopy** of trees on Queen Street to match the Shuter edge.
- **Maintain and enhance key pedestrian pathways** and access points into the park.
- **Maintain and enhance existing permeable park edges** and protect the existing urban canopy along Shuter Street.
- **Maintain the strong Sherbourne St. urban built edge** and enhance the relationship between the CRC/Arena/Park and Metrolinx Station with improved visual and physical connectivity and accessibility.
- **Remove the baseball diamond** to accommodate a wider range of park uses.
- Add a fenced, dedicated **dogs off leash area** to the park to support growing number of residents with dogs in the intensifying neighbourhood, and to protect other park amenities and park users from conflict with dogs.



Engagements To Date & What We've Heard



Engagement Timeline to Date



Indigenous Communities Meeting #1 – Aug. 31st

Indigenous Placekeeping

- Incorporating **Indigenous art into the design** of fencing or having seating areas for park users to listen and share.

Spaces for Ceremony

- Include a **medicine garden** space that is gated.
- possibilities to have **smudging ceremonies inside the facility**.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Ensure the **new park is accessible to all, specifically those who reside in the park or in nearby shelters** that use the park during the day.

Green Roof

- possibilities to have **smudging ceremonies** on the proposed green roof.

Natural Heritage

- Memorialize and respect the life of the trees that will be lost during Metrolinx construction

Indigenous Communities Meeting #2 – Dec. 12th

CRC Updated Designs

Maintaining a welcoming space for the unhoused

- Make sure that the new building still be **inviting and meet the needs of unhoused people** in Moss Park.

A place for healing and ceremony

- Using the Community Recreation Centre for PowWows, and smudging.
- Having a **designated sacred fire location** within Moss Park.

Public Art Component

Investing in local artists and incorporating youth mentorship

- Suggestions included having one of the two **artworks be youth-lead, and having a mural designed by a youth** incorporated in the youth space.

Opportunity for community building

- An opportunity for **Intergenerational exchange and importance of language** for the art project.

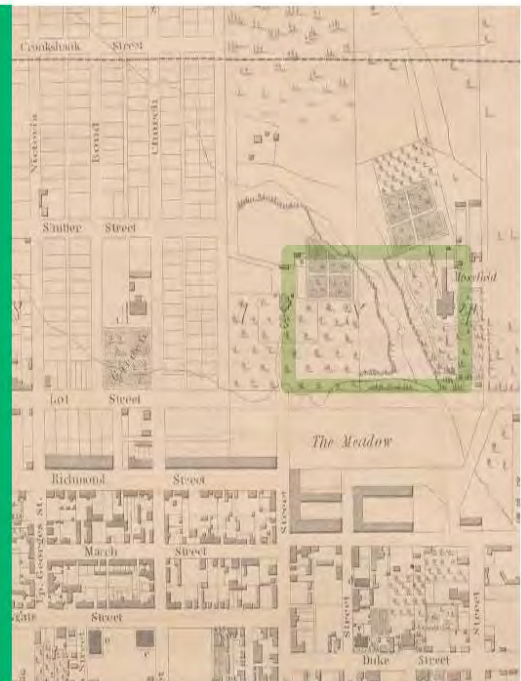
Moss Park park Improvements

3 Design Options



Moss Park Improvements Today's Agenda

- Purpose of Design Session
- Programming
- Design Drivers
- Concept Plans – Options 1, 2, & 3
- Discussion



Purpose of Today's Design Session

- Work with Indigenous community members to provide input on the three concepts and the various key components
- The Planning Partnership team will consider the input in development of the preferred concept plan



Local Advisory Group – September 2022

Design workshop held on September 27, 2022

Produced two concept sketches with images depicting the aspirations for the Park



Programming



Key elements for the park

1. Integrate Indigenous Placekeeping
2. Fenced off-leash dog run
3. Sports: large field, basketball, tennis, pickle ball
4. Community gardens
5. Children's play area and splash pad
6. Gathering / outdoor program space
7. Seating and paths (including walking loop)
8. Lighting
9. Park Entrances



1. Indigenous Placekeeping



· Buried Moss Park Creek will be acknowledged



1. Indigenous Placekeeping



All Our Relations



2. Off-Leash Area

- Park design will include a dedicated, fenced, dog off-leash area
- The off-leash area will be lit, and will animate the park year-round and throughout the day and night
- The off-leash area will function as a social space for dog owners and other park visitors that enjoy dogs
- Anticipated future development in the neighbourhood will increase the need for a formalized dog amenity in the Park



3. Sports fields: Designing for Change

Moss Park neighbourhood context is changing:

- **Population growth** through residential development – more people and more dogs
- **Pedestrian traffic through the park** will increase with new OL Moss Park station
- **Park size is decreasing** to accommodate the Moss Park Station and the larger footprint of the John Innes CRC (which will provide enhanced programming)
- **New park program** – dedicated Off Leash Area
- **Need to increase the use of the park** by community members of all ages and abilities by **providing amenities to animate the park** at all times of the year – bringing more “eyes on the park” and increasing safety for all – a key concern
- City has **carefully considered the context** for the park improvement and **engaged with stakeholders** and the local community for future needs of the park
- Large, dedicated space required for baseball without conflicts will no longer be available
- **To design for this changing context, the park plan does not include a baseball diamond**



3. Sports fields: Designing for Change

Ontario Line construction and Baseball in the park:

- Existing diamond at Moss Park is closed for use during the 7-year period of construction of the Ontario Line subway, 2023-2030
- City is relocating the leagues that play at Moss Park to other diamonds through engagement with the permit leagues.
- Downtown East End Softball League (DEESL) will be relocated to Riverdale Park West, and will maintain its program support from Recreation

The City recognizes the importance of providing baseball diamonds for adult baseball in the downtown. While existing permits are being relocated, the City is monitoring the demand for ball diamonds in the downtown and will continue to explore opportunities for new diamonds in consultation with stakeholders.



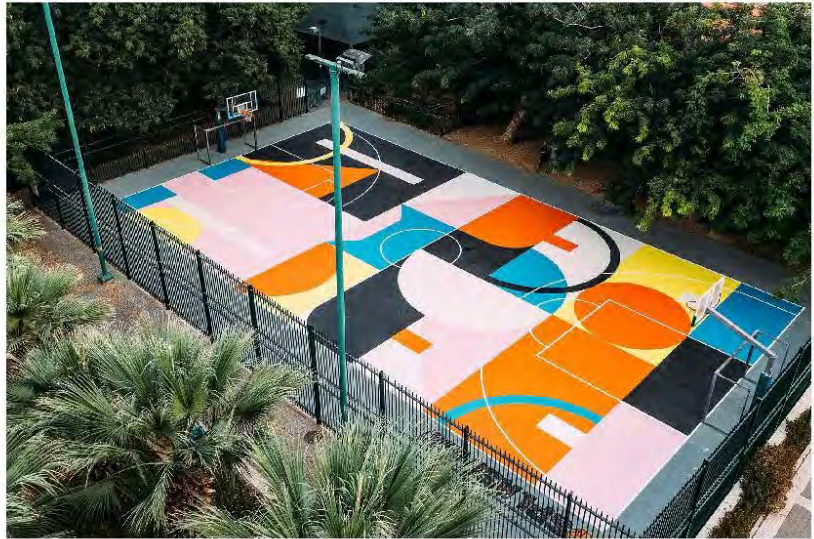
4. Precedents: Play Courts



Jackie Tatum Harvard Park, Los Angeles



Combined Tennis and Pickleball court



Deconstructed Court, Tel Aviv, Israel



5. Precedents: Community Gardens



Key Community Garden Area Features

- Water access
- Gates
- Fencing
- Secure storage sheds, flat roof

Garden Plots

- 4' x 8' lined beds
- Double course of 4x4 cedars for edging



6. Precedents: Children's Play Area



Corktown Commons, Toronto



Grange Park, Toronto



Confederation Park, Calgary



St. James Park, Toronto

Playground design guidelines

- A new playground for junior and senior age play
- Range of ages and abilities
- Fully accessible play value
- Accessible surfacing
- Clear sightlines for enhanced site safety
- Shaded spaces
- Potential for natural play features
- Potential for water play



7. Precedents: Gathering/Outdoor Program



Georgetown Waterfront Park, Washington, DC



Brooklyn Bridge Park, NYC



Bryant Park, NYC



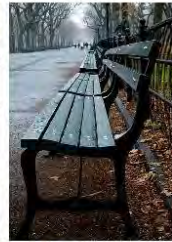
Regent Park, Toronto



Dufferin Grove Park, Toronto



8. Precedents: Seating and Paths



9. Precedents: Lighting



Design Drivers



4. Social Inclusion



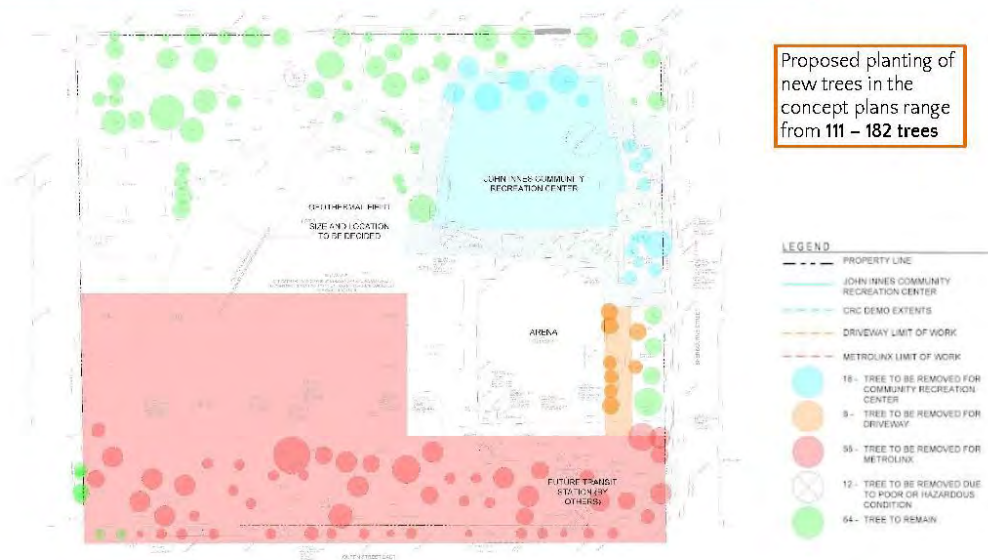
5. Visual Permeability and Access



6. Movement and Circulation



7. Tree Strategy



The Grid: Renderings



The Grid: Renderings



The Grid: Renderings



The Grid: Renderings



The Grid: Precedents



Concept Plans: Option 2 *(The Creek)*



The Creek: Concept Plan – Proposed Trees



The Creek: Renderings



The Creek: Renderings



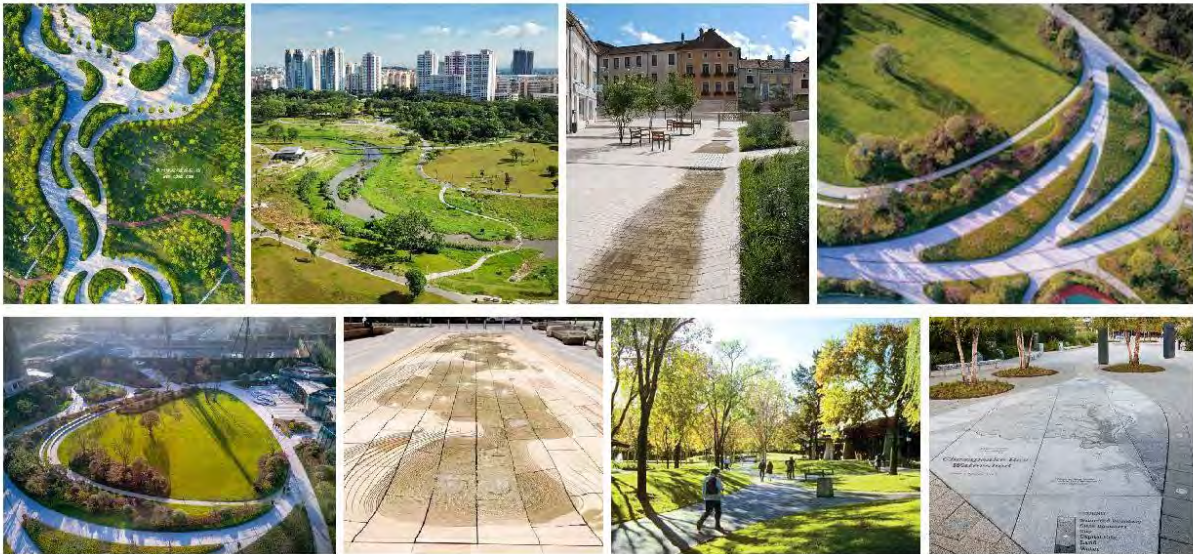
The Creek: Renderings



The Creek: Renderings



The Creek: Precedents



Concept Plans: Option 3 (*The Meander*)



The Planning Partnership

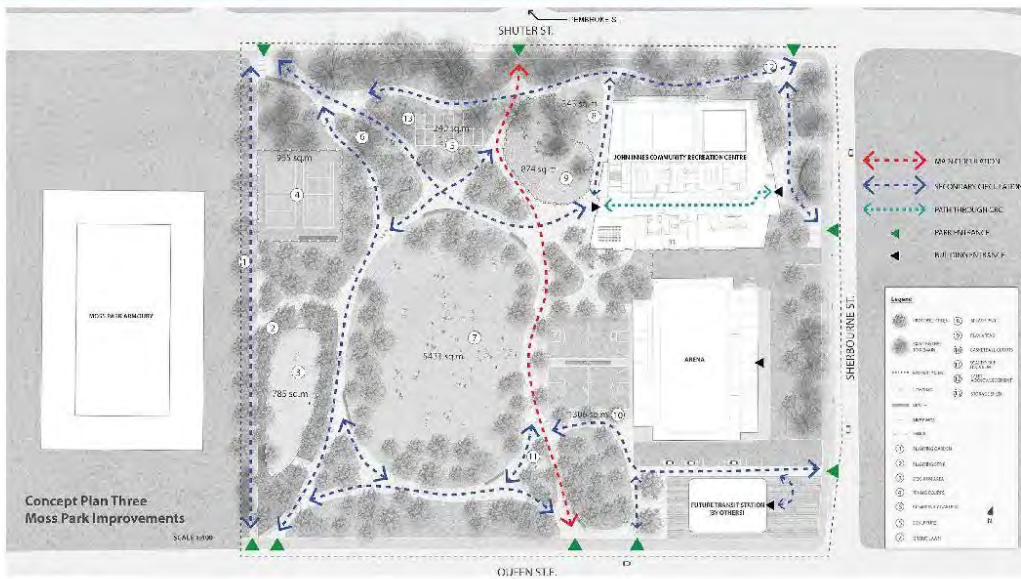
The Meander: Concept Plan



The Meander: Concept Plan - Programming



The Meander: Concept Plan - Circulation



The Meander: Renderings



The Meander: Renderings



The Meander: Renderings



The Meander: Renderings



The Concepts



Option 1 - The Grid



Option 2 - The Creek



Option 3 - The Meander



Questions & Discussion

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Next Steps



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Next Steps



Open House #3

Purpose: Park Design Options

Date: Tuesday, March 21st

Times: 4-5:30 p.m. and 6:30-8:00 p.m. (choose the time that's best for you)

Location: Online



Online Survey

Launch: March 21

Closes: April 7

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How to stay connected



Project Website toronto.ca/mosspark



Contact the project team by sending an email to:

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Pablo Muñoz: pablo.munoz@toronto.ca

Thank you!