

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Don Mills Community Recreation Centre

Indigenous Advisory Group Meeting 1

Meeting Summary

March 7, 2023

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Indigenous Advisory Group (IAG) meeting that was held virtually on Tuesday, March 7, 2022 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 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 IAG members & the project team.
- Review and confirm Terms of Reference.
- Present a project overview.
- Create a shared community vision for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre (CRC).
- Share next steps.

Attendance

IAG Members Present

- Tylissa D.
- Valerie V.
- Katherine G.
- Brandy S.
- [Anonymous]
- Tanya LR.
- Amanda P.

Project Staff Present

- Ashley Wilson, Senior Project Coordinator
- Cristian Lukaszuk, Senior Project Manager, Capital Projects

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were reviewed with IAG members. Members made no suggested edits or comments. The Terms of Reference were approved by all IAG members present.

IAG members absent from the meeting will review and confirm the Terms of Reference through email.

Presentation

Project staff presented:

- An overview of the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre (CRC) project background.
- Draft of the Community Vision Statement, Draft Principles, and Big Moves

Questions and Discussion

As the Community Vision Statement, Draft Principles, and Big Moves were presented, they were discussed with the IAG. In addition, the IAG was asked a question concerning how Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and histories can be reflected in the CRC. Guiding discussion questions included:

1. Reflect on the Community Vision Statement.
 - Does it feel right to you?
 - Which aspects are the most important?
 - Is there anything missing?
2. Reflect on the Draft Design Principles.
 - Do these feel right to you?
 - Which are the most important?
 - Is there anything missing?
3. Reflect on the Draft Big Moves.
 - Do these feel right to you?
 - Which are the most important?
 - Is there anything missing?
4. How might you like to see Indigenous knowledge, culture and histories be reflected at the Don Mills CRC?

Note: Discussion focused on questions 1 & 4. There was not enough time for the IAG to discuss questions 2 & 3 in depth.

Q & A

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

Q. The area is very diverse and multifaith. Will there be opportunities for smudging or other religious functions? Will there be space for this?

R. Based on some current projects, it is a possibility to include a ceremonial space. However, the adjacent park to the CRC might be a better location for this.

Q. Who owns the land of the CRC?

R. The land is fully owned by the city and the CRC will be a public facility.

Q. Will there be a budget allocated to fund Indigenous programming run by Indigenous staff?

R. This will need to be addressed during the planning stages of the CRC.

Feedback on Community Vision Statement

The following provides a summary of the IAG members' discussion about the Community Vision Statement:

- **General Summary:** The Indigenous Advisory Group agreed on the wording of the Community Visions Statement, particularly focusing on the cultural safety aspect of the CRC.
 - In general, much of the discussion was conversational, with participants asking questions and project partners responding. It is felt that the CRC has tremendous potential to meaningfully support Indigenous peoples and serve as an Indigenous community hub.
 - The CRC is seen as a valuable space for Indigenous peoples to share and learn their cultures. It can become a vital hub, which is particularly important in an area that does not have many Indigenous-run organizations/spaces.
 - There were suggestions that the name of the Community Recreation Centre should be changed and to ensure the name is reflective of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
 - There is concern that previous consultations on city projects have not resulted in Indigenous peoples' opinions being fully and meaningfully integrated into the design and programming of community centres.
- **Safety:** the wording around safety in the Community Vision Statement was brought up by several participants. IAG members had questions about how ceremonial spaces and practices would be protected (e.g., recognized as sacred, held in private). Safety was seen as paramount to having the CRC be a place where Indigenous peoples can comfortably share, teach, and learn their cultures. There were suggestions to having a screen/barrier to provide privacy for ceremonial spaces.

Indigenizing the Don Mills CRC

The following provides a summary of the IAG members' discussion about how Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and histories can be reflected at the Don Mills CRC:

- **General Summary:** There are several ways the CRC can reflect Indigenous cultures and ways of being, from the programming spaces to the design principles and building materials.
 - Cost of renting the facilities in current community centres was noted as being particularly prohibitive, inaccessible, and insulting to Indigenous peoples.
- **Food & Nutrition:** the CRC can be an excellent location for Indigenous community members to prepare food to share amongst themselves and with the wider community. It would be ideal to have ample kitchen space in the CRC. This space should be available to Indigenous peoples free of charge.
- **Design Features:** it was recommended that the CRC be bright and open, with a lot of windows. There were suggestions that natural materials such as wood be incorporated where possible. Indigenous artwork could be showcased within the CRC. The CRC should be connected and there should be flow within the building to reflect Indigenous principles of interconnectedness.

Next Steps

- Members can send additional ideas, comments, or suggestions to Elijah.Bawuah@toronto.ca and/or abirioukovbrant@theridgeroad.com
- 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.
- The second IAG meeting is planned to take place in May 2023.
 - Members will receive an email in April to confirm a meeting date and time.

Contact Us

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

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