

# **Don Mills Community Recreation Centre**

## **SUMMARY REPORT: Youth Meeting**

**March 30, 2023**



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# 1.0 Introduction

A new Community Recreation Centre (CRC) is coming to the Don Mills community, near the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road.

This large, integrated, and multi-component facility will offer the diverse and growing communities of the Don Mills Corridor and beyond a range of year-round programs and services. Located at the former Celestica Lands site at 844 Don Mills Rd., the new CRC will be next to a new large park and all within walking distance of a planned Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (ECLRT) station and is part of the ongoing implementation of the [Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan](#).

## 1.1 Project Context

### **Previous Community Engagement: Recreate Don Mills**

In early 2019, community and stakeholder engagements were conducted to determine the CRC location that would best meet community needs. Two location options were presented to the community.

The results indicated that locating a large ‘one-stop’ community recreation centre with arena, aquatics facilities, full gymnasium and multipurpose room uses at the former Celestica Lands (844 Don Mills Road) was preferable to two separate facilities.

Based on the outcomes of the 2019 community engagement and recommendations by City staff, City Council directed the City to [proceed with the Preferred Facility](#) on the former Celestica Lands site.

### 1.1.1 Project Scope

The community engagement and design process for the Don Mills CRC will consider only the amenities, programs and services within the CRC located on the former Celestica Lands.

Separate community engagement processes will be held for the design and programming of the one-hectare park next to the Don Mills CRC.

The proposed CRC will include:

- An indoor twin ice pad arena / multi-use indoor sports field
- A large indoor lap and leisure pool
- A double gymnasium
- Multi-use community and activity spaces

### 1.1.3 Project Schedule

- Fall 2021: Hire a design team
- **WE ARE HERE - Summer 2022 to Summer 2023: Community engagement and design development**
- Winter to Fall 2023: Detailed design
- Spring 2024: Hire a construction team
- Summer 2024: Construction starts
- Winter 2027: Construction complete, Community Recreation Centre opens

## 1.2 About this Report

This meeting summary report, prepared by SAFFY, summarizes the key findings that emerged during the Youth Meeting for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre project, held on March 22, 2023.



## 2.0 Engagement Overview

### 2.1 Engagement Objectives

The goal of the Youth Meeting was to provide an overview of the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre project, hear from youth voices on suggestions for features, amenities and programs, and provide participants with information on the Youth Ambassador opportunity and application process.

#### 2.1.1 Engagement Approach

**Youth Meeting Structure:** During the 2-hour Youth Meeting, SAFFY and MJMA Architecture & Design guided participants through a presentation about the new Community Recreation Centre (see Appendix A for presentation slide deck). The Project Team facilitated a discussion to answer initial questions about the project, before moving into a short engagement activity to gather preliminary feedback on the youth's preferred programs and activities for the new community recreation centre.

The engagement activity asked youth to answer three questions:

- 1) How would you describe the youth of Don Mills?
- 2) What types of spaces and activities do you wish existed in the Don Mills community?
- 3) What other elements could encourage youth to access the new Don Mills CRC?

Following the engagement activity, the Project Team discussed the Youth Ambassador opportunity, application process and answered questions.

**Youth Ambassadors:** As part of the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre project, a Youth Ambassador program has been developed to ensure that youth perspectives are included in the design and programming of the space. The Youth Meeting acted as an information session for youth interested in applying.

Youth Ambassadors will support the project team by sharing information about the project with their networks and communities, and creatively capturing feedback and ideas. The 4-5 selected Youth Ambassadors will be paid an honouraria of \$500 for their participation and expected to participate in 2-3 meetings throughout the remainder of the project.

## 3.0 Youth Meeting Summary

### 3.1 Youth Meeting Participation

WHEN:	March 22, 2023, at 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
WHERE:	Don Mills Collegiate Institute
ATTENDEES:	5 participants (4 youth, 1 parent/guardian)
PROJECT TEAM:	City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division SAFFY (Public and Stakeholder Engagement) MJMA (CRC Architecture & Design)

### 3.2 Summary of Feedback from the Youth Meeting

This section provides a summary of feedback and suggestions for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre received at the Youth Meeting. See Appendix B for the Complete List of Considerations for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

Participants of the Youth Meeting were keen to provide their ideas and vision for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre, and did not raise any concerns about the types of facilities that are confirmed to be included in the space. When compared to participants of the Public Meeting (December 15, 2022) or Community Advisory Committee Meeting (February 1, 2023), participants did not spend much time considering the design or aesthetics of the centre, and were more interested in the programs and types of activities that could take place.

Participants provided a range of general ideas for the space including: modular seating, a community theatre, a recording studio, plants or a greenwall, and a viewing room to watch movies or sports together. Other comments provided during the Youth Meeting are summarized by theme below.

#### FOOD-CENTRIC PROGRAMS AND AMENITIES

Many of the youths' ideas and suggestions for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre were centred around food, including addressing nutrition and food insecurity in the neighbourhood. Meal programs, a food bank, or a place for youth to drop-in and grab food or snacks (i.e., a community pantry) were suggested as ways to encourage youth to access the centre and to thrive in other aspects of their lives. A community garden, coffee shop, and nutrition counselling were other amenities and programs suggested by youth.

**Don Mills Community Recreation Centre Project**  
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## **CAPACITY-BUILDING**

Participants expressed an interest in capacity-building programs and opportunities at the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre such as skill-building education programs, financial planning courses, and tutors or homework help. Participants mentioned that amenities like a study area, access to free Wi-Fi and computers, and a library would be beneficial to youth in the area.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Suggestions around safety and security were mentioned several times. Conversations were generally focused on preventing bike theft and having well-trained staff or security guards present to help youth feel safe accessing the Community Recreation Centre's amenities and programs. Participants also discussed the idea that safety does not look the same for everybody. Some youth shared that they avoid other City-owned facilities due to certain community members (including youth) who make the space feel unwelcoming and unsafe.

## **SENSE OF OWNERSHIP AND PRIDE**

Participants shared that they would like to see people take pride in the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre to ensure that it feels like a community space and to encourage people to take care of the amenities provided at the centre. Suggestions for improving a sense of ownership of the space included community arts-based activities such as a mural, decorating the Community Recreation Centre's shared spaces, as well as community clean-up initiatives, and opportunities to promote and create additional programming opportunities within the broader community.

## **INCLUSION**

Youth expressed that the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre should provide facilities and amenities that make the space welcoming and accessible for the diverse local community, which includes a large Muslim community. They discussed the ways that a multi-faith prayer room could support people from many religious backgrounds and allow them to spend more time in the space. Participants would like to see staff that reflect the diversity of the community, subsidized or accessible programs, and a welcoming, safe and non-judgmental environment.

## **SPORTS AND FITNESS**

The sports and fitness-related facilities were not discussed much when compared to other elements; however, youth would like to see the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre provide women's-only fitness opportunities, a fitness instructor (e.g., to teach people how to use equipment), adequate equipment for various sports, and more ice time available to members of the immediate community (rather than being booked up by members of other communities with better access to rink facilities).

# Appendix A

## Youth Meeting Presentation



### 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.



## African Ancestral Acknowledgement

The City of Toronto acknowledges all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.



Thank you for being here!



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## Meeting Agenda



Welcome and introductions



Project overview



Questions & Activity



Next Steps



Adjourn



## Goals for this Meeting

**Get to know** each other.

Establish the **purpose and goals** of the meeting.

Provide an **overview** of the Don Mills CRC project.

Create a **shared community vision** for the CRC.

Review next steps and **chart a path forward**.



# Let's introduce ourselves.



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## Project



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**Jo Delos Reyes**, Strategist + Planner

**Ridge Road Consultant**, Indigenous  
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**Robert Allen**, Partner

**Matt Lamers**, Project Architect

**Haleh Ghodsimaab**, Project Manager

**Melanie Taylor**, Communication and  
Engagement Specialist



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**Don Mills Community Recreation Centre Project**  
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## Introductions

Tell us....

- Your name
- Your connection to the community
- If the Don Mills community was a food, what would it be and why?



# Community Guidelines





## Community Guidelines

### As a meeting 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.



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## 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.



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# Don Mills Community Recreation Centre Project Background



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## Project Background

**Location:** 844 Don Mills Road, at the northwest corner of Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road.

- The site is part of a multi-phase mixed-use redevelopment is being marketed as a new community called Crosstown.

**Size:** 150,000 sq ft total

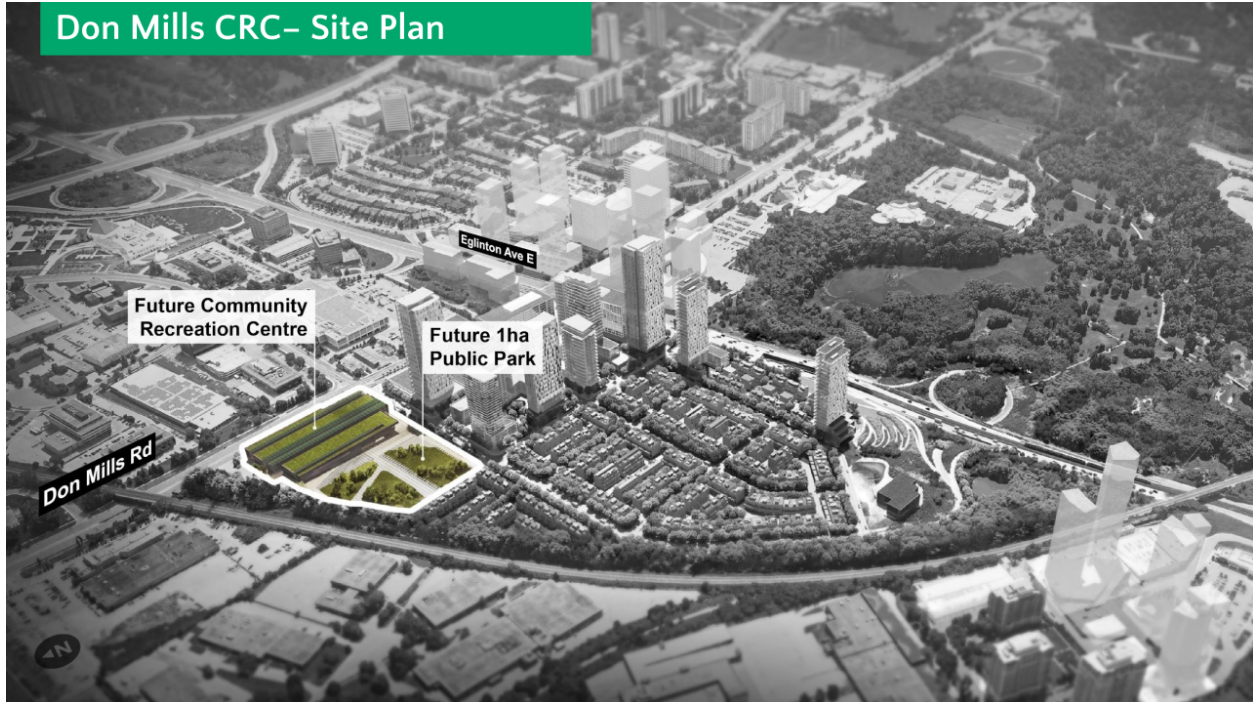
### Opportunities:

- Introduce new programming and community amenities to a growing population
- CRC can support indoor and outdoor programming, using the adjacent park

**Architect:** MJMA



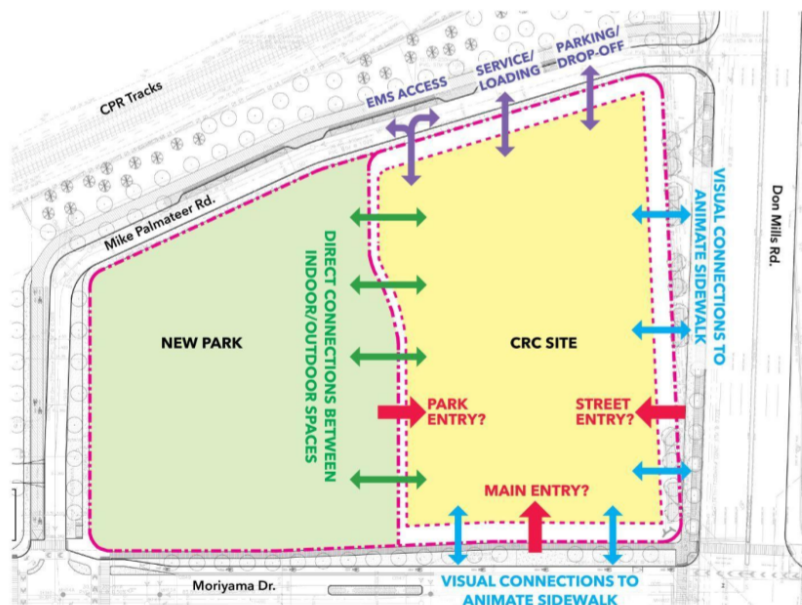
## Don Mills CRC– Site Plan



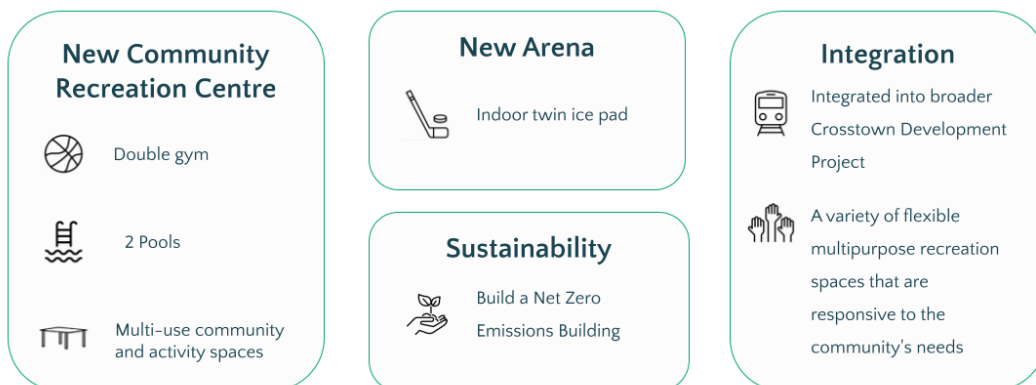
## Site Plan

- Allow the building to "open up" on 3 sides:
  - physical connection of indoor/outdoor spaces along the park
  - + visual connections to animate sidewalks on Moriyama Dr and Don Mills Rd

- Collect back of house and vehicular functions towards the north along Mike Palmateer Rd, adjacent to CPR tracks



## Key Project Components



**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:** Every project component will be shaped by the public input collected through the process.



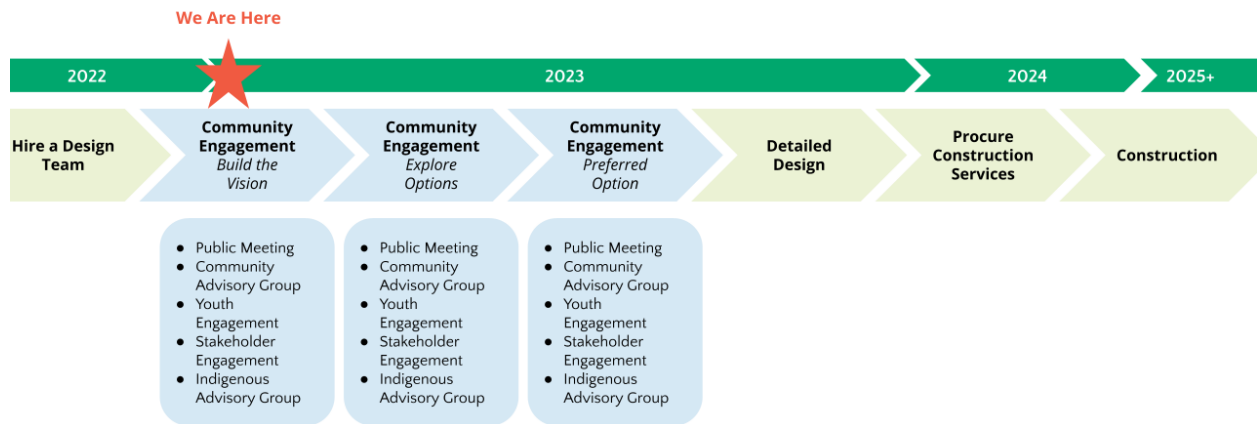
## What is Open for Influence

What will be included:	What we can collaborate on:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground floor lobby and administration area</li> <li>• Two arenas</li> <li>• Team rooms</li> <li>• Swimming pools, aquatic storage, staff and universal change rooms</li> <li>• A double gymnasium and walking track</li> <li>• Fitness studio, flex fitness/dance room, and change rooms</li> <li>• Multi-purpose and activity rooms</li> <li>• Kitchen</li> <li>• Emergency vehicle bay and crew rest area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for the included program in the Community Recreation Centre, such as program interrelationships, flexibility of uses, and relationships to the park</li> <li>• Community multi-purpose room(s) features and uses</li> <li>• Lane pool features and uses</li> <li>• Leisure features and uses</li> <li>• Lobby features and uses</li> <li>• Program adjacencies</li> <li>• Opportunities for key safety features, such as sight lines, visibility, and views</li> </ul>



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## Project Timeline



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## What Will Make this Project Successful?

The Community Recreation Centre will serve as a **gathering place** for an array of people, communities and experiences.

The project will be a success if the **diversity of community members** who use the Community Recreation Centre today as well as future community members – feel interested, **welcome**, and **safe** to use these amenities in the future.

### Engagement Principles

**Parks are for everyone!** Our engagement process should reflect this.

**Build on the work** that's already been done.

Our engagement process should be **flexible and iterative**.

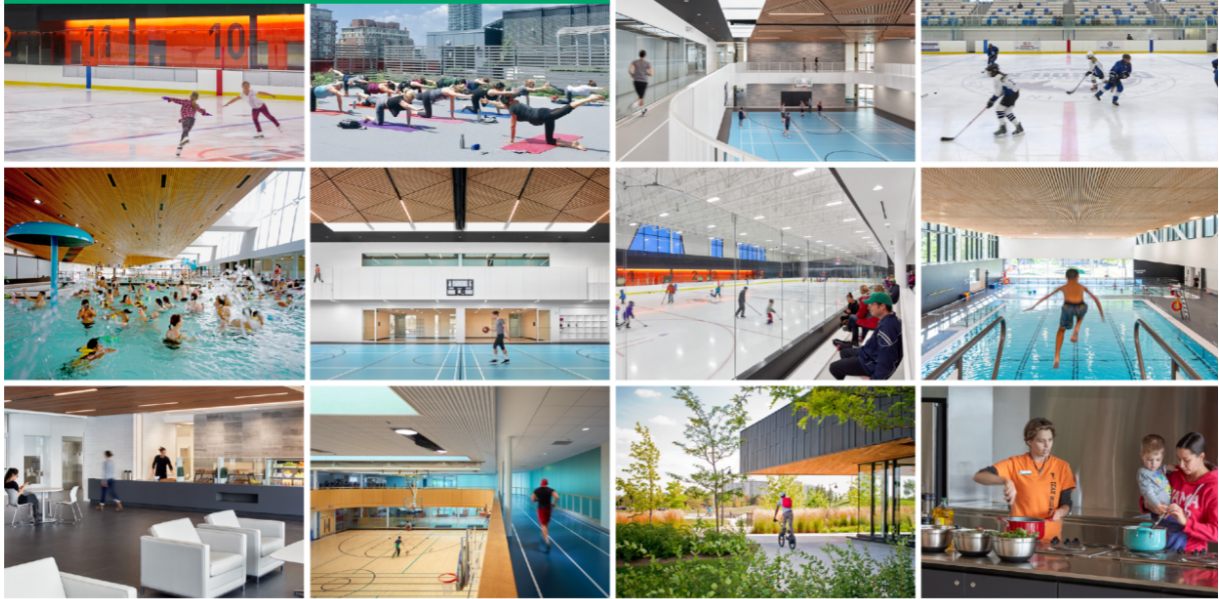
The best engagement process is a **defensible** one.



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## Project Precedents



 **TORONTO**

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## Case Study #1

### Western North York Community Centre

- 'Create Your Place': An engagement process was carried out to ensure that the building design was reflective of the values and aspirations of the community.
- The feedback collected during this engagement process helped refine and inform the design of both indoor and outdoor spaces of the new Community Centre.

 **TORONTO**

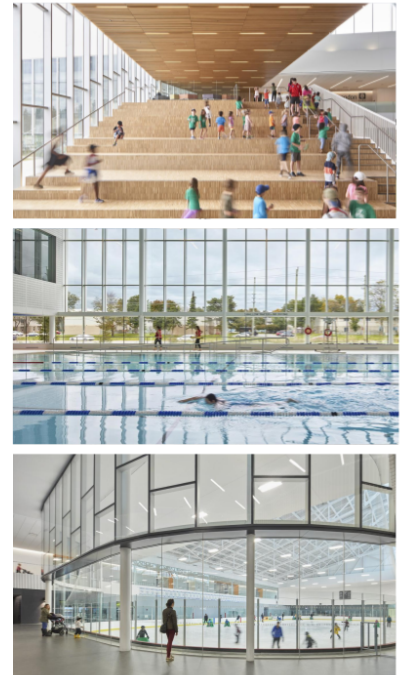
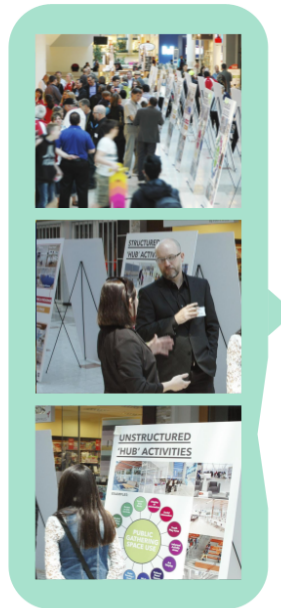


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## Case Study #2

### Bostwick Community Centre, YMCA & Library

- The public engagement process revealed community needs, aspirations, and concerns that informed how recreation and gathering spaces were designed and programmed.
- Open houses sparked conversations that led to a collaborative design process and resulted in a facility that the entire community could enjoy.



## Questions about the Don Mills CRC?



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# Activity: Creating a Youth-Focused Vision



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## Youth Visioning Activity: Part 1

How would you describe the youth of Don Mills?

### Activity:

1. In small groups, brainstorm some ideas.
2. Add your ideas onto the board using sticky notes.
3. Share your ideas back with the broader group.

What **characteristics** do youth in Don Mills have? What makes them **unique**?

What are youth of Don Mills **interested** in?



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## Youth Visioning Activity: Part 2

What types of spaces and activities do you wish existed in the Don Mills community?

### Activity:

1. In small groups, brainstorm some ideas.
2. Add your ideas onto the board using sticky notes.
3. Share your ideas back with the broader group.

What types of **activities, programs, and events** are youth of Don Mills interested in?

What types of **spaces** would you like to have access to? What's **missing** from the neighbourhood?



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## Youth Visioning Activity: Part 3

What other elements could encourage youth to access the new Don Mills CRC?

### Activity:

1. In small groups, brainstorm some ideas.
2. Add your ideas onto the board using sticky notes.
3. Share your ideas back with the broader group.

What would make the CRC **exciting and useful** for youth?

How can youth feel **safe, comfortable and welcome** at the CRC?



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# Youth Ambassadors



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## Youth Ambassadors: Overview

We are looking for 4-5 local youth (ages 13-24) to apply to become Youth Ambassadors.

Youth Ambassadors will support the project team by:

- sharing information about the project with their networks and communities
- creatively capturing feedback and ideas

Youth Ambassadors will be provided with project information and expected to connect with their local networks and community to collect ideas and feedback to inform the design, development and programming of the new Don Mills CRC

The feedback and ideas collected should be captured and communicated in a **creative method** which can be shared with the project team, public and local community. This creative method could include (but is not limited to): **an audio diary, podcast or sound piece, a video or animation work, a collage, a collection of writing** (poems, short stories, interviews, etc.).



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## Youth Ambassadors: Commitment

We are looking for 4-5 local youth (ages 13-24) to apply to become Youth Ambassadors.

**Deadline to Apply:** Applications are being accepted until **11:55pm on March 31st, 2023**

**Meetings:** The 4-5 selected Youth Ambassadors must join an in-person meeting on **April 24th, 2023** for a project orientation, and participate in **2-3 additional meetings** in the Spring and Summer of 2023

**Compensation:** Youth Ambassadors **will be paid an honoraria of \$500** for their participation. This honoraria will be paid upon completion of the work.

**Application:** The application form can be found on the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre project website ([www.toronto.ca/DonMillsCRC](http://www.toronto.ca/DonMillsCRC)) and asks questions about:

- You and your connection to the Don Mills Community
- How you'll collect feedback and input from members of the Don Mills area
- What kind of creative project you imagine you might create for this project



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## Next Steps



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## Next Steps

- Visit [www.toronto.ca/DonMillsCRC](http://www.toronto.ca/DonMillsCRC) to apply to be a Youth Ambassador. Applications are due on **March 31st, 2023** and applicants will be notified if they have been successful or unsuccessful **by April 7th, 2023**.
- Sign up for updates related to the new Don Mills Community Recreation Centre and to be notified of the next public meeting



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Thank you!



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# Appendix B

## Youth Meeting - Complete List of Considerations for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre

### Features, Amenities and Programs

- Sound systems, speakers
- Ability to customize space
- Modular furniture
- Diverse seating options
- Beanbags
- Community theatre or mini theatre
- DJ recording
- Accessible party room
- Themed areas (e.g., Toronto Metropolitan University's Student Learning Centre)
- Music room, space to play instruments
- Plants, green wall, green space
- Free feminine products
- Viewing room to watch sports or movies
- Playground
- Clothing swap, donation, or space for people to pick-up clothing

### Food-Centric Programs and Amenities

- Community garden
- Food bank program, for students to access lunch
- Meal programs, breakfast programs
- Nutritional counselling
- Teaching kitchen
- Coffee shop
- Soup kitchen, food programs
- Help with cooking and meal planning

### Capacity-Building Opportunities

- Skill-building education program
- Classes for newer immigrants
- Social workers and health information for youth
- Build capacity within the community
- Study area
- Free wifi
- Internet cafe, access to computers
- Library
- Financial planning courses
- Tutors, homework help

### **Safety and Security**

- Bike storage inside that is secure
- Enough staff
- Security guard
- Bike locks
- Security system in place
- Staff that are trained and qualified

### **Sense of Ownership and Pride**

- Community pride in space
- Local artist mural
- Graffiti wall, community mural
- Group spring cleaning
- Furniture that is easy to clean
- Student-led or resident-led initiatives
- Promotion, awareness of opportunities in the community
- Community members could decorate the space
- Community awareness to create respect

### **Inclusion**

- Prayer room with diverse religious symbols, multi-faith room
- Prayer mats, divided men's and women's prayer spaces, large enough space
- Window coverings in prayer space, foot wash area
- Welcoming to newcomers
- Lifeguards that reflect the diversity of the community
- Staff that reflect the diversity of the community
- Subsidized or accessible programs
- Welcoming, safe and non-judgmental

### **Sports and Fitness**

- Rent space for local leagues
- Bike hub, bike rental
- Correct equipment (e.g., not using volleyball nets for badminton and vice versa)
- Women's-only fitness space/time
- Improved lifeguard staff
- Fitness instructor (e.g., teach people how to use equipment)
- More ice time available to members of the immediate community
- Lockers