

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Barbara Hall Park Improvements

Community Workshop Summary Report

July 2023

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Workshop Summary

Visioning Workshop on May 15, 2023

On Monday, May 15, 2023, the City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division held a Visioning Workshop for Phase 1 of the Barbara Hall Park Master Plan. Over 40 community members, including from local organizations, as well as the project team and the Councillor's office staff participated in the workshop. The event was held at The 519 Community Centre.

The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the Master Plan and the project team, share the work done to date, and co-develop a renewed vision, comprising design principles and big moves for the future of Barbara Hall Park. This summary is structured to reflect key points from the workshop activities, including:



- Overview of activities
 - Ideas for a renewed vision for Barbara Hall Park
 - Ideas for design principles
 - Identified potential big moves
- Next Steps

A detailed summary of the feedback can be reviewed through this [Miro Board](#).

This summary is not intended to be a verbatim transcript, rather it summarizes key points of discussion shared by participants during the workshop.



Ideas for a New Vision for Barbara Hall Park

Activity 1: Building a Vision – Mad Libs

Participants worked in small groups to collaboratively assemble an overall vision statement for Barbara Hall Park, either by choosing from a list of words provided by the project team or by creating their own. Participants shared different ideas on how to finish the sentence, "Barbara Hall Park will be/feel/look..." while facilitators documented the feedback. This section reflects a synthesis of visions shared across all groups.

Meeting space
Focal Point
Calm
Express identities safely, openly, and in community
Art and culture
Comfortable
Connect
Have fun
Healthy
Celebrate
Vibrant
Multi-use
Inclusive
24/7
Active at all times
All ages
Welcoming
Diverse activities
All backgrounds
Quiet
Mourn
Engaging
Reflect
Permanent and sustainable Trans + AIDS memorials
Safe for all
2SLGBTQQIA+

All of the documented vision statements can be reviewed in the [Miro Board](#). Participants shared visions of Barbara Hall Park that...:

...will provide a welcoming and inclusive space for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community by: acknowledging and celebrating the existing community and its history; providing comfortable spaces for the community to gather in small groups or individually; making the park a focal point in the neighbourhood through programming, art and design; prioritizing safety for diverse communities including residents and unhoused/underhoused community members; addressing barriers to access for equity deserving groups; and being an example of what a safe space can look and feel like in Toronto.

- Frequent words or phrases used include: Welcoming, inclusive, healthy, connect, safe for all, 2SLGBTQQIA+, all backgrounds, engaging, comfortable, open, community, focal point, meeting space, art and culture

...will be a multi-purpose space offering dedicated spots that are easy to program with regular and diverse activities for all ages, including young adults and children. Programming may support winterized washrooms, smaller food vendors and mobile food cards, fitness equipment, and game tables that welcome visitors at different times of day.

- Frequent words or phrases used include: Active at all times, diverse activities, 24/7, all ages, multi-use, vibrant, have fun

...will work to improve and potentially relocate the AIDS and Trans memorials on site, to create permanent spaces where the lives of those community members can be celebrated, mourned, and remembered.

- Frequent words or phrases used include: Reflect, quiet, mourn, permanent and sustainable AIDS and Trans memorials

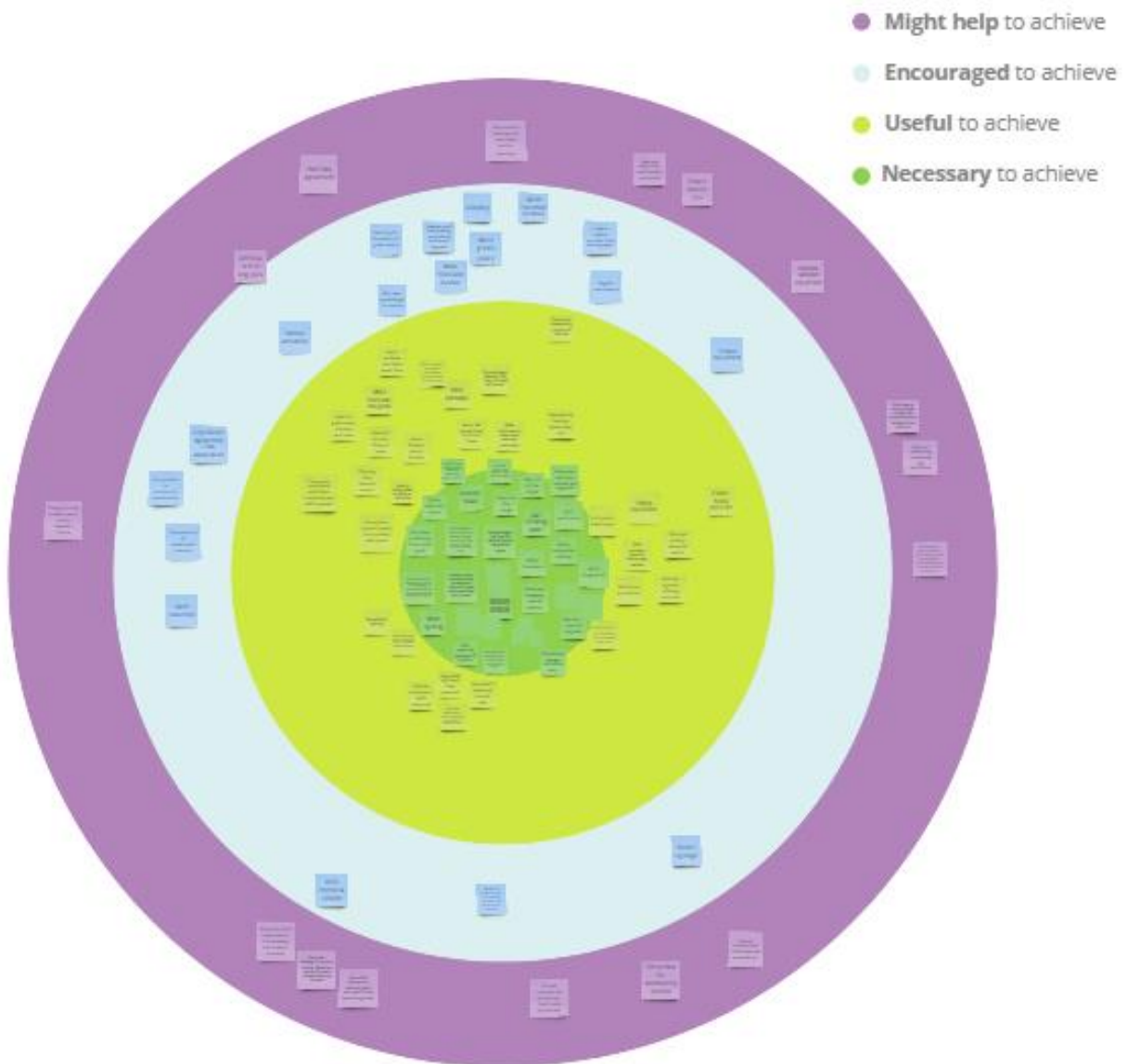
... will work to recognize the different perceptions of "safety" that are held by different groups including the unhoused, and those who are street-involved, to facilitate future conversations around programming and operation of social services on site.

- Questions asked by participants: What does "safe" mean to different groups; are we listening to diverse perspectives and points of view about the park; can we make this a social plan as well as a design one; and can the plan address some of the programming and operational issues?
- Some participants requested that the word "safe" not be used, as it means different things to different people and tends to reflect how non-vulnerable park users feel around vulnerable park users.

Ideas for Design Principles

Activity 2: Design Principles – Bullseye

Participants worked in small groups to establish design principles that achieve the group's vision statement. Groups completed a tabletop worksheet and placed their design principles on a graphic image of a bullseye following four prompting levels of importance. The responses have been summarized below according to the common themes that were identified within each ring of the bullseye.



All of the documented ideas for design principles can be reviewed in the [Miro Board](#).

● **Under "might help to achieve":**

- **Create unity between areas of the park**
 - Improve entrances, pathways and park edges, creating a design that connects with different areas of the park and feels less isolated
- **Invite community members to share information**
 - Install a community bulletin board, with the potential to host a list of community principles or code of conduct for the park
- **Provide a range of seating options**
 - Ensure seating is accessible
 - Include a mix of seat walls and benches

● **Under "encouraged to achieve":**

- **Ensure the park is well maintained**
 - Install waste bins along walking paths and near entrances
- **Integrate public art**
 - Explore opportunities to include art that plays an interpretive or commemorative role, contributing to an identifiable sense of place

● **Under "useful to achieve":**

- **Prioritize greenery and calm spaces**
 - Provide calm, lush areas for quiet reflection and resting
 - Reduce the amount of flat open lawn areas
- **Provide multi-purpose park animation**
 - Create spaces for adult fitness (e.g., dance, yoga, wellness activities)
 - Avoid creating spaces which are disconnected or without a clear purpose
- **Re-envision the location and legibility of the AIDS and Trans memorial**
 - Review the locations of the AIDS and Trans memorial with families of the impacted to explore opportunities for increasing visibility and legibility, and ensure they are in easy-to-access locations within the park



Under "necessary to achieve":

- **Ensure that it is a welcoming, inclusive space for all park users**
 - Create a space that is welcoming and inclusive to community members of different backgrounds
 - Centre the needs of unhoused/underhoused people in the design
 - Provide park programs that appeal to teens, young adults, and seniors
- **Provide a space for community events and gathering**
 - Demarcate a flexible space for community animation such as community markets, installations, performances, music, and other free events
- **Support community comfort, safety and accessibility for all**
 - Ensure AODA-compliant design for people of all abilities including those with mobility devices and other special needs
 - Create wide pathways for easy navigation
 - Provide cohesive lighting throughout the park
 - Ensure good visibility into, out of, and through the park
 - Install a sharps/needle disposal container
 - Install a universal and gender inclusive washroom facility, to be open throughout the year and 24/7
 - Install drinking fountains (bottle filler and drinking fountain)

Identified Potential Big Moves

Activity 3: Potential Big Moves – Play Your Best Hand

Participants worked in groups to prioritize specific interventions that implement their previously established design principles. Each table received a deck of cards comprising 6 potential big moves and 6 "wild" cards on which participants could write their own big moves.

Top cards representing each table's "best hand" were collected and the scores were tallied. The cards played by each table are documented in the [Miro Board](#).



	BIG MOVE 1	BIG MOVE 2	BIG MOVE 3	BIG MOVE 4		BIG MOVE 1	BIG MOVE 2	BIG MOVE 3	BIG MOVE 4
Table 1					Table 6				
Table 2					Table 7				
Table 3					Table 8				
Table 4					Table 9				
Table 5					Table 10				

In summary, participants played the following potential big move cards the most, reflecting their desire to add new programs to the park, as well as seating and a formalized Trans memorial:

- **Add Small Café and Retail Space**
 - 7 times played
- **Add Washroom Facilities**
 - 6 times played
- **Add Game Tables**
 - 4 times played
- **Add more Seating (wild cards)**
 - 2 times played
- **Formalize the Trans Memorial (wild cards)**
 - 2 times played



Next Steps

Parks, Forestry and Recreation is continuing its engagement efforts related to Barbara Hall Park, with focused meetings with stakeholders like the AIDS Committee of Toronto, the stewards of the Trans Memorial, the Dog Park Association, and vulnerable park users. The City will develop a draft vision statement, design principles, and big moves based on the feedback from this workshop, the earlier thought exchange activity, and these other stakeholder meetings, and bring them back to the community for confirmation in the early fall.