

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Wabash Community Recreation Centre Community Resource Group (CRG)

Meeting 6, 7, and 8 Summary

November 2023



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Attendees

Community Resource Group Members

The following organizations applied to participate in the Community Resource Group. All organizations that applied for membership on the CRG were accepted. Those who were able to attend are **bolded** below.

Organizations

Friends of Sorauren Park

Garden Avenue Junior Public School Parent Council

Mentoring Junior Kids Organization (MJKO Boxing)

Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC)

Parkdale Jr. / Sr. Public School Parent Council

Parkdale Residents Association

Roncesvalles-Macdonell Residents Association

Sorauren Farmers' Market Association

St. Vincent De Paul Elementary School

West Lodge TCHC community

Youth Outreach Worker (Ex-Officio)

Elected Officials and Staff

Clive Scott, Office of Councillor Gord Perks

City of Toronto

Ashley Wilson, Senior Project Coordinator, Capital Projects

Alex Lavasidis, Senior Consultation Coordinator

Cheryl MacDonald, Manager, Community Recreation

Peter Didiano, Program Manager, Capital Projects

Katy Aminian, Senior Project Manager, Capital Projects

Shahn Khan, Supervisor, Parks Construction

Shane Rajapakse, Supervisor, Parks

Travis Bailey, Supervisor, Aquatics

Consultant Team

Jarle Lovlin, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Marcin Sztaba, Diamond Schmitt Architects

Dylan Cassidy, PMA Landscape Architects

Terence Radford, Trophic Design Inc

Yulia Pak, Third Party Public

Khly Lamparero, Third Party Public

This summary is not intended to provide verbatim accounts of discussions. Rather, they summarize and document the key points made during the discussions, as well as the outcomes and actions arising from the CRG meeting.

Introduction

On Thursday, May 11, 2023, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PF&R) at the City of Toronto hosted the sixth Community Resource Group (CRG) Meeting for the new Wabash Community Recreation Centre. Representatives from eight local organizations, a staff member from Councillor Gord Perks' Office, as well as members of the project team and a number of City staff attended and participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, CRG members expressed interest to share more detailed feedback on the proposed building and landscape design. Responding to this request, the City hosted two additional virtual follow-up meetings so CRG members could share more detailed feedback:

- Additional Meeting A:
 - June 8, 2023, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
 - Focus on landscape feedback
 - CRG Members Attending:
 - Friends of Sorauren Park
 - Garden Avenue Junior Public School Parent Council
 - Roncesvalles-Macdonell Residents Association
 - Sorauren Farmers' Market Association
- Additional Meeting B:
 - June 14, 2023, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
 - Focus on building feedback
 - CRG Members Attending:
 - Roncesvalles-Macdonell Residents Association
 - Parkdale Residents Association
 - Sorauren Farmers' Market Association

Both of these additional meetings were optional for CRG members to attend. Summary of feedback received from these follow-up meetings have also been included here.

Meeting Goals

The purpose of the meeting was to debrief on feedback received in Phase 4 from local communities and other stakeholders and discuss proposed refinements to the draft preferred design.

Overview

The summary is structured to reflect key topics of discussion:

1. What participants liked about the design
2. Feedback on the building design
3. Feedback on the landscape design
4. Other feedback
5. Additional detailed feedback on the building and landscape design

This summary was written by Third Party Public, a third-party facilitation firm retained by the City to help support community engagement for this project. This summary is not intended to be a verbatim transcript; rather it summarizes key points of discussion shared by participants during the meeting. This summary was subject to participant review before being finalized.

Key Themes of the Discussion

The following key themes were shared by CRG members during the discussion. These key themes are intended to be read along with the more detailed feedback that follows in the remainder of the summary.

- **Participants like the overall design of the new CRC and are pleased with the community consultation process that informed the design.** Participants said that the project team has done a beautiful job of designing the new centre. They also said that they've seen so much community consultation and community feedback go into informing the design. They particularly liked the Sacred Fire space, the steps around the Town Square, and that the location of the mechanical room between the two studios has been moved.
- **Most of the discussion focused on details of the design**, including questions about how the multi-purpose rooms can be combined with the kitchen for a larger place to gather, how parking will function during the farmers' market, use of the Sacred Fire space, and how small dogs will use the off-leash area.
- **Participants shared a variety of key considerations**, including privacy in the pool, requests for places to skateboard, configuration of the expanded Town Square for various activities, having a café/serving window in the lobby area, storage space for equipment used for community-run events, connection to the West Toronto Rail Path, and improvements to the broader Sorauren Park.

Summary of Discussion

The following is a summary of comments, suggestions, and questions shared at the meeting. **Responses from the project team (where provided) are noted in *italics*.**

What participants liked about the design

- **Participants like the overall design of the new CRC and are pleased with the community consultation process that informed the design.** Participants said that the project team has done a beautiful job of designing the new centre. They also said that they've seen so much community consultation and community feedback go into informing the design.
- **Sacred Fire space.** Participants said they like everything about the Sacred Fire space and that it has an opportunity to be a great educational piece for the community.
- **Little steps around the Town Square.** Participants said are really good for spectating baseball games, as normally you wouldn't be able to get to these places watching from the diamond.
- **Location of the mechanical room.** Participants said it is great that the mechanical room between the two studios has moved to the north end (which was a suggestion participants shared in the last round of engagement).

Feedback on the building design

Large indoor places to gather

- **It would be great if the studios are connected so it could be a large studio space that could also be subdivided.** The studios are still separated even though the mechanical space has moved. Participants thought the idea of moving the mechanical space to the north was that there could be one large studio space that could also be subdivided. It would be great to have one large space as an option. *The studio spaces were always in the program as being two separate spaces because there is a high demand for the studio spaces. Two studio functioning separately from each others provides more programing opportunities. A moveable wall cannot be placed between the two rooms, because given the louder nature of programs running in these spaces, the moveable wall would not be able to acoustically separate the spaces enough for programming on each side. Another. When a large space is needed, the gymnasium can be used and accommodates up to 300 people for larger events.*
- **Can the multi-purpose rooms around the kitchen on the first floor be combined into one large space?** Yes, these spaces are very flexible and can be individually separated from one another or combined with the kitchen into one. Each space has its own adjacent storage space. The spaces also have access to the Town Square. In terms of capacity, you're able to have about 215 people in the combined multi-purpose rooms and about 60 people in the kitchen standing (without furniture).

Value engineering

- **You have done some value engineering; can you clarify if you are on target with the budget now?** Yes, we are. For a bit more context, when we went through the exercise what we found was we were able to trim down from the service and mechanical areas primarily and also right size some of the circulation space. The change is hardly noticeable. The big move is that the whole angled aquatics wing is moved south in its entirety, fully intact. The lobby space has become a little smaller but we were able to keep the feature stairs and all the program elements of the central space. We were also able to find some savings with the basement area. That's how we were able to create quite substantial savings. So, a big credit to the consultant team to find that find those savings without sacrificing the program area.

Privacy

- **Creating privacy is important.** Many women and girls are not participating in sports because they don't feel comfortable being watched, especially in the bathing suits. *The pool and all the active spaces will incorporate moveable shades and blinds. The type have yet to be determined but the spaces can be made private for programing when needed (e.g. women-only swim times).*

Café, serving window in the reception area

- **Consider a serving window tied to the reception area or a small space for a café,** that could be run by volunteer groups to sell snacks, hot chocolate, etc.

Other

- **Why do the swimming pool lanes stop on the rendering behind a text box?** *It's just covered by a text box / graphic. The lanes don't actually stop.*

Feedback on the landscape design

Sacred Fire space

- **Will it be open to all the members of the public or is this space intended just for Indigenous ceremonies only?** *The Indigenous communities members we have spoken to so far provided feedback that they were very open and amenable to the space being open for public when it's not being used for ceremonial uses. Part of the request was the integration of signage and protocols at two entry points on the paths that identify it as a ceremonial fire space and also outline the particular protocols for the public use of this ceremonial space, and how to be respectful in the space. More discussion with Indigenous communities will take place to determine how the space will be used.*

Farmers' Market parking

- **How would parking function during the Sorauren Farmers' Market?** *The Farmers' Market currently gets a permit to park on Wabash Avenue. We have on a Monday between 1 and 8 pm approximately 40 to 42 vendors – small trucks and other vehicles that park along Wabash Avenue. Will the limited parking at the back be open for use to others? With this being such a big development and with the area already experiencing a lot more pressure, it'd be great to have any additional spaces for parking. *There are seven parking space on the site. They are typically for staff as well as for those who need barrier-free parking. What you have now in terms of parking on Wabash Avenue will not change. We are having a traffic study done and will be reviewing how deliveries and drop-offs are done with the planning and transportation departments. The farmers' market will certainly be a topic that gets discussed and, if there are ways of improving upon what happens now, we'll certainly look at that.*
*Parking outside of the site is not within the scope of the project. Given the site constraints, the only option was to explore the below-grade parking, which was too expensive.**

Places to skateboard

- **Disappointed that there are no places to skateboard.** *A participant who is a member of the Toronto Skateboarding Committee said that the original vision for the CRC (developed years ago) included a small recreation centre and a skateboard park. The participant said that after 20 years of advocacy for a skateboard park, they do not see it included in the space. They want to know why skateboarding interests are excluded especially given the original plan had the space carved out for it, and the scope of this project has expanded to include more areas around the building. The skateboard park does not need to be big – it could be skate dots. *We tried create a space that would be useful for multiple purposes. Skateboard parks are quite specific as to their program requirements. We will revisit notes from previous meetings on how we've considered skateboarding spaces, and double check what influenced this decision and get back to you.**
 - **Post Meeting Note:** *Earlier in the project, it was confirmed that a skateboard park is not within the scope of this project. The inclusion of a skate dot, which is a small skateable feature that can be integrated into the landscape, may be included if feasible.*

Town Square size and configuration

- **Based on what's depicted in the presentation, the new layout of the Town Square can only accommodate 30 tents. We have 40-42 vendors. Currently the tents also go into the now-Harvest area that has a long table. Will the new Town Square layout be able**

to accommodate all the 40-42 10x10 tents with the appropriate amount of space between the tents and space to accommodate queues for people to move freely? Yes, we are confident that with the larger size of the square we will be able to accommodate all the vendors. These are conceptual drawings. We will go back to redo this diagram to show that the space can accommodate all the vendors given the placement of fixed furnishings.

- **Disagree that the current configuration of the Town Square is better for accommodating larger events.** From the renderings it looks like the trees on the Town Square are about the same level as the north end of the Fieldhouse. This could mean that 15-20 feet of the bottom part of the Town Square will be taken up by trees and might not be convenient for people to see the screen in the configuration that you've shown. Usually, people sit in the grass when we run movie nights, but then the dog park is right there. *This could be solved with a different configuration perhaps. Appreciate the comment around the trees, but ultimately, we see the square still as expanding because the spaces under trees are viiiiccupyable. Also, the viewing experience is expanding a little bit to the north toward the ceremonial space, as the off-leash area is shrinking and positioned toward the north of the building. The capacity for people to watch movie nights would be comparable to what currently exists.*

Dog park fencing

- **What kind of considerations are there for smaller dogs in terms of fencing?** It is easy for the smaller dogs to run off the off-leash area if the fencing type has big spaces in between (e.g. log fence). Yes, *the whole off-leash area will be enclosed. The post and paddle fencing has finer fencing between the posts so small dogs cannot slip through.*

Other feedback

Storage for community-run events

- **What happens to the shipping container that is now being used for storage?** *The storage container will be kept – we recognize the need for the shipping container to remain. Although we may have to adjust its location slightly during construction. If it needs to move, we will consult on the best place to move it.*
- **We don't need the shipping container itself, but we need a storage space.** It'd be great to find creative ways to accommodate storage needs – for the movie night equipment, the hoses for the rinks, other events and programming stuff. For example, an underground bunker or a storage room in the building that could only be accessed from outside, the use of the Fieldhouse. There is a need for a new place to hook up the hoses to flood the rink and a warm place to store them after. *We are aware of the storage need and we do need to be creative with it. There might be possibilities with the Fieldhouse, but we need to do more due diligence on that piece.*

Connection to the West Toronto Rail Path

- **Continue to keep in mind the connection to the West Toronto Rail Path.** We have heard from the Friends of West Toronto Rail Path that they think the bridge of the Barrie line could land somewhere around the north corner of the building. Could it land on top of the building to provide the connection with the path? If the bridge is going to be built there, then the path between the dog park and the community center might be a little bit more of a thoroughfare. *In the last communication with Metrolinx, the landing for the connection was*

nowhere near the building; it was well north of the building closer to the limits of the rendering. We've never heard of the proposition of the bridge landing on top of the building. The plan as it is does not prevent a potential future connection to the West Toronto Rail Path.

The rest of the park

- **Consider fixing up the rest of the park**, including the well used baseball diamonds, soccer field, and tennis courts. It all should be part of one big project. *Approximately half of the park is included in the scope – everything to the east of the first baseline to the diamond and south of the third baseline. We do see an opportunity for upgrading the rest of the park as well, particularly lighting so that that's all unified. And if there are areas of paving, let's say the pathways or things of that nature, we think we'd be able to accommodate it. We are hoping to incorporate what we can but do have a limited scope and budget.*
- **Consider having exterior bathrooms in the Fieldhouse.**

Feedback on the process

- **Will there be other opportunities to share?** *Yes, there will also be public engagement happening over the summer in the form of pop-ups and a community townhall.*
- **Consider giving Friends of Sorauren Park** its own stakeholder bubble in the presentation on the slide that shows many different interests. As we held previous community consultations and did a lot of work and put in a lot of the effort, with the Sorauren Farmers' Market, to run the park on a weekly basis.
- **Friends of Sorauren Park would love to share ideas about smaller considerations, such as the bake oven, wiring for movie nights, etc.** *We are happy to have a meeting to talk more about the ideas you have. A lot of the ideas you've shared today can actually be accommodated. We are looking forward to discuss these further.*

Additional detailed feedback on the building and landscape design

Due to the interest from CRG members to share detailed feedback on the proposed building and landscape design, the City hosted two additional follow-up meetings so CRG members could share more detailed feedback. See below for the summary of feedback from these additional meetings, which have been organized by space.

Feedback on the landscape design

Parking Pick-up and Drop-off

Participants expressed support for:

- The curb is not extended or "popping out" as it keeps parking available.

Participants shared concerns about:

- **The area between the pedestrian trail and the parking lot wall.** Concerns dog poop and garbage will gather here, and there will be loitering.

- **Limited future parking during peak hours and events in the park.** During events there are a lot of people parking along local streets. Many people are ticketed and many local residents with permits cannot find a spot to park on the street. Consider parking spaces for park visitors as many people would not walk or ride their bikes to the CRC.

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Consider maximizing bike parking as much as possible.** Consider adding a secondary rack for bikes by the field house. *City response: We are looking to include bike parking beyond the City standards and are currently looking to include 65 spots. We also need to ensure bike parking doesn't block the flow of people.*
- **Consider including public art on the heritage brick wall and chimney.** Suggestions shared were a mural or a 3D structure.

Participants had questions about:

- **The berm height between the building and rail line, and what the City can change, or whether it could be filled.** *City response: we are limited on what can change based on Metrolinx's berm requirements. The wall needs to be 2.5 metres to keep any plantings from going over the wall. Additionally, on top of the parking area, there will be a PV shade structure supported by that wall. Building the wall closer to the train track would make it much more expensive than having a flat surface. There will be a guard on top of the wall to prevent people from falling into the parking lot.*

Town Square

Participants expressed support for:

- **The existing three picnic tables lined up along the skate dot,** as people like to sit there in the shade and close to the pizza oven.

Participants shared concerns about:

- **The proposed plan having too much concrete and not enough of the cozy nature-like feeling of the existing Town Square.** The plan demonstrates less green space than what currently exists, which is an issue for those who like to sit in the grass. Existing shade and grass are important to the area and should be maintained. People particularly like to sit where the serviceberry field is.
- **The proposed circular seating areas.** One participant said the circular benches get in the way of the linear design for the farmers' market. They'd like to know if there is a possibility to move the northern circular seating based on flow of people. *City response: The circular seating is moveable by a small forklift, so it is possible for it to be moved periodically, but not as easily as a picnic table.*
- **The skateboarding and harvest table are too close to the memorial Owen Fountain.** The harvest table blocks circulation in the area, and would be too close to a skate dot here. Too much is placed at this one busy path intersection.

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Suggestions for vehicle access for the farmers' market include:**
 - Having vehicles enter through the sidewalk area (#7) and exit through the farmers market vehicle access point (#9).
 - Discussion over whether bollards should be installed to prevent people from entering the park with their vehicles, while there was also a request to provide vendors vehicle access into the Town Square for drop-off activities.
- **Provide outdoor access to the pool/aquatic space from the Town Square.** *City response: There would be concerns over security and controlled access into the pool deck, and the floor layout has been set up to meet safety and security requirements, including visibility and control of access points from the pool office.*
- **Orient the table by the pizza oven so that one side is open** for people with their wheelchairs or to bring their own chairs.
- **Do not move the existing trees along the Fieldhouse entrance as it provides shade.**
- **Move the makeshift garbage coral near the Fieldhouse washroom as it doesn't allow market tents to be put up in that location.**
- **In future designs, show where the plugs and electrical hookups will be.** Additionally, ensure there are plugs where the movie night screen is- located.

Participants had questions about:

- **The existing trees and whether they would be preserved or moved to other places around the park.** *City response: The team is making a list of where certain trees can be moved to other areas of the park, and making a list of what can be preserved or transplanted. One idea is to move some trees to the west of the off-leash area. In general, the team is proposing to plant trees to provide shade are around the Fieldhouse.*
- **If the northern section of the Town Square with the long bench is further north than the existing Town Square boundary.** *City response: Yes, slightly.*

Sacred Fire

Participants had a question about:

- **If there would be storage for wood near the Sacred Fire feature.** *City response: Yes, we are working with the City to ensure we meet city-wide standards to provide wood storage.*

OLA and Social Seating

Participants expressed support for:

- **The proposed materials for the off-leash area (OLA) as they make the OLA nicer.** Participants said that the existing OLA surfacing is not enticing, and people don't want to bring their dogs there.

Participants shared concerns about:

- **The off-leash area (OLA) in terms of the reduced size, as well as having the OLA in general.** There was concern that making the OLA smaller would make using the space less effective. Others said that the OLA shouldn't be included at all as there are a lot of challenges around how dogs use the park. Some said it's difficult to bring small dogs into the off-leash area because of conflict with big dogs.

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Consider adding a hose hookup for the outdoor rink** from the drinking fountain, bottle filler and dog water bowl station (#9).
- **Consider placing the relocated trees from other areas in the park in the shade tree grove and social seating area** (#10 and #11).
- **Consider making the off-leash area's main entrance where the maintenance access feature is currently shown** (#3).

Participants had questions about:

- **If the planting features help with the wind issue around the off-leash area.** *City response: Yes, the planting and the building will help.*

Rooftops

Participants had questions and suggestions about the proposed rooftop plans including:

- **Consider including beehives.**
- **Will there be event space, as previously mentioned?** *City response: The City's PFR team is open to event programming in this space.*
- **What happened to the idea of an Indigenous community garden?** *City response: Community gardens must be located on the ground floor, as rooftop gardens are maintained by City Recreation staff. The plants that will go into the Green Roof are low maintenance for easy care.*

Lighting

Participants shared mixed opinions on the following:

- **Lighting poles in the middle of the Town Square.** Some suggested the team coordinate the layout of the poles for the farmers' market tents and ensure it wouldn't block the movie screen. Others said they don't want big poles in the centre of the square. Some like the idea of having power outlets mounted directly on the poles and suggest it have a lockable feature for the outlets.
- **Under-bench lighting.** Some like this design feature and others do not, including due to concern it would be difficult or costly to maintain or be too bright.

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Add lights to the baseball diamond**, preferably on the fence by first base. This can have a dual feature for lighting the baseball diamond and the pathway.
- **Add lights to the outdoor, community ice rink** as only half the rink is well lit, meaning hockey players use the lighted area and other kids are unable to share that space.
- **Lighting features should be as standard as possible** so that it can be well maintained for the long term.
- **Add lighting at the pizza oven.**
- **Include USB charging ports at light posts.**
- **Allow for separate, community-accessible controls for lighting during community events (e.g. movie nights).**

Feedback on the building design

Building Design – Ground Floor

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Add a dog tethering and water station area for dogs on the ground floor.** This can look like hoops attached to the wall.
- **Consider adding a highspeed dishwasher for farmers' market vendors to reduce waste.** The residential dishwasher is not enough. *This equipment is not specified in the design but will take that use need into consideration.*

Participants had questions about:

- **How many outdoor access washrooms are there?** *There will be 2 universal washrooms.*
- **What is the indoor storage area going to be used for in the multi-purpose space?** *This will store tables, chairs, and other equipment for the multi-purpose room.*
- **What is the 3.5 labeled on the map?** *This pertains to the pool storage facility which is below grade and not for public access.*

Building Design – Second Floor

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Consider creating some sort of wayfinding signage and maps on the main floor to tell people what is happening in the different spaces throughout the building.** It is hard to know what is happening in community centres, especially for new members. Consider digital interactive screens and/or a directory at each elevator.

- **Consider creating a place to promote community activities that FOSP is coordinating, such as movie nights.** *The team will follow up with recreation staff to understand how that could work. We don't want to over program the front lobby but are earmarking areas that could be used for things like events or displays.*
- **Consider installing facility-wide speaker systems tied to the front desk, that can be controlled from the front desk.** *Yes, a PA system will be installed.*
- **Consider using the Second Floor lobby on the east as a space for an art feature that connects to multiple stories.**

Building Design – Third Floor

Participants expressed support for:

- **A small kitchen to be installed outdoors.**

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Consider having fitness equipment such as a full weight room in this community centre.** *One participant wanted to know if the outdoor fitness areas would move inside during the winter, and another said they are in support of equipment being installed on the roof. City response: Where there isn't high demand for a weight room, we do not provide it. In this case, there wasn't a high demand, so it is not included. Fitness equipment would be fixed in place if it were installed.*

Participants had questions about:

- **What is the north roof capacity?** *It has capacity for 60 people.*
- **What is the rainwater management on site?** *The goal is to capture rainwater with two systems below grade, one below the pick-up and drop off area and one below the town square. The water captured would only be used for irrigation.*
- **What is the environmental plan for the whole site?** *This will be designed to meet Toronto Green Standard Version 4. The goal is a net zero energy building.*
- **Are there VOCs capped at the Town Square?** *We are aware of the chemicals in the soil and groundwater on the site. We have been doing extensive testing and management of this is part of the site plan application. A VOC mitigation strategy will be employed that is reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Environment that includes capping.*

Building Design – Fourth Floor

Participants shared the following suggestions:

- **Consider involving the community with the art plans for the building.** *For example, there is a local glass artist in the area that could produce art for the walls or floors. Public art procurement will go through the standard process established by the public art office.*

Participants had questions about:

- **Does the team know the order for construction of the different components?** *Not sure yet, but likely working on the Linseed building first. The team also has to consider where staging will take place.*
- **Why is there a glass wall between running and fitness?** *This is to meet the building code. The running track is not actually a floor, it's a mezzanine, so there is a limit to the occupancy in that space. Additionally, there needs to be a fire separation.*
- **Is there an intentional use of the open space between levels?** *The community centre was designed with a 4 story space a linking hub that connects the 4 levels, anchors the building, and helps with wayfinding. It will also be used for natural ventilation. We are testing to understand how we can open windows in the building to funnel air into and out of the building to reduce energy demand.*
- **What is the sound barrier between the mechanical features and other areas?** *We have an acoustic consultant and will insulate the walls to provide sound attenuation.*
- **Will there be public Wi-Fi?** Yes.

Next Steps

The project team thanked participants and committed to sharing a summary of the meeting. They reminded participants to hold on sharing any presentation with their network as the contents of the presentation are still in draft and there may be changes to what will be presented to the public in the public consultation.

Contact Us

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

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Appendix A – Meeting Agenda

Wabash Community Recreation Centre

Phase C – Setting the Direction

Community Resource Group Meeting 6

Thursday, May 11, 2023, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Via Zoom



Meeting purpose: To present and seek feedback on the proposed final building and landscape design for the new Wabash Community Recreation Centre.

AGENDA

6:30 pm Land Acknowledgement, Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review

Alex Lavasidis, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City of Toronto

Yulia Pak, Third Party Public

6:40 Presentation: Proposed Final Building and Landscape Design

- **Project Overview / Inputs**

Ashley Wilson, Parks Development & Capital Projects, City of Toronto

- **Engagement / What We Heard**

Alex Lavasidis, PFR

- **Building Design**

Jarle Lovlin & Marcin Sztaba, Diamond Schmitt Architects

- **Landscape Design**

Leslie Morton & Dylan Cassidy, PMA Landscape Architects

Terence Radford, Trophic Design

- **Next Steps**

Alex Lavasidis, PFR

7:45 Questions of Clarification and Discussion

1. What are your thoughts on the proposed final building and landscape design?
2. How well does the proposed final design reflect community feedback?
Is there anything missing?
3. Do you have any advice as we prepare to present the proposed design to the broader community?
4. Do you have any other feedback or advice for the project team?

8:25 Next steps

8:30 Adjourn

Appendix B – Participant Submission After the Meeting

After sharing a draft of the summary with CRG members for review, the project team has received additional feedback from a CRG member over email. The unedited feedback is included below, along with responses from the project team in *blue italics*.

The feedback has been organized in the order of the conversation progressing.

From Friends of Sorauren Park - May 15, 2023

Drawings for potential future Metrolinx bridge over rail tracks towards Sorauren Park provided.

From Friends of Sorauren Park - May 23, 2023

A couple of us met on Thursday to discuss the current plans - here is some of our feedback. Since we only had a week between seeing the proposed plans and presenting our feedback we don't have a proper presentation prepared but this is some of our initial comments distilled into email form. We would love to have additional opportunities to meet with the design teams and comment on designs as the project progresses. We would have liked to do a markup of the drawings but lacked the time so we're hoping this can be just the first meeting of many others to get everything tweaked just the way we want it. By incorporating some of our suggestions, we can actually make some of the events and activities happening in the park (not just by FOSP) easier to plan and execute. We can make things easier for the volunteers and in turn make the jobs of city PR&R staff get easier too. Its a win win win situation!

FOSP Feedback

We're grateful for the opportunity to meet with designers this week to discuss the plans for the upcoming Community Centre at 40 Wabash. By the way has there been any discussion of the name?

The New Community Centre

The design of the building itself is great and seems to align very well with "what we heard" from the community during our many independent consultations. We were strong supporters of the Angler option due to the fact that it left much of the town square intact. The architects have done an amazing job of retaining the heritage of the building and complementing it quite well with the additions and enhancements. While the design of the building (interiors) is also immensely important to us, this particular round of feedback is focused on the exterior aspects.

FOSP Feedback

The goal of this feedback goal is to ensure that the proposed landscape plans are geared towards an overall vision for the whole of Sorauren Park. The Friends of Sorauren Parks (FOSP) has been animating and advocating for this area for a long time now. Given our familiarity with the nuances or particularities of the space, we'd like to help ensure that anything designed will support or enhance what we're already doing. At the same time, we need to make sure that we're not encouraging or exacerbating conflict or existing conflict (example dog park). FOSP want to ensure that our well loved common grounds, including the whole park and the land around new building, is preserved in way that it continues the tradition of community, cooperation, and creativity that make Sorauren Park such a dynamic and well loved space. We strongly feel the whole of the park should be considered with regards to design impacts but for ease, we have separated our comments into two main heading: The space within the zone (part of project) and The space outside the zone (rest of park).

SPACE WITHIN Town Square

- The large square shape with a hill to the north (bowl feel) and service berry grove to the west (shaded space with grass) is very well suited to the wide ranging activities that occur there. The scale of the landscape plans does not work.
- keep as large as possible
- What is fate of existing memorial benches - show those instead of circular one-offs
- Round benches. Why... Regular benches better. Show Memorial benches instead. Keep things standard.
- Market, sports swap, movies, shows (tragically hip), sporting events, dances
- Town Square uses - skateboard, surf, scoot, learn to bike, jump rope, tai chi, ball hockey, pickle ball
- reuse of pavers? Move elsewhere instead of trying to reuse in place
- lots bike parking Standard bike rings
- Why expand trees north? Are the trees show here our actual trees or will everything be moved/transplanted?
- Well intended features that can withstand the level of use we can see in this park.
- park furniture is the standard benches, the stands for the sports fields and a whole bunch of picnic tables. Picnic tables are ideal because they are too heavy really to steal; but not too heavy to move around to where they are needed, i.e. over to the rink for putting on your skates; underneath a tree for a picnic; onto the courtyard for a pizza party; or a meeting.
- Lighting plan remarks - don't need lights under benches - we question the cost, longevity and necessity for this. (we'd much rather ball diamond lighting)
- Lighting needs to be accessible (controllable) from exterior. - we shut off lights for movie nights.
- The grassy hill provides excellent seating. Is there actually room for all the proposed?
- the original park design included a swale, dogs seemed to get sick drinking the water that collected there. the new ceremonial space seems to be suggesting a swale. seems like a lesson from the past has been forgotten because unless some super remediation occurs this is likely to happen again.
- Carbon consideration - like the new seating around the town square but it's a lot of concrete and people do like the lawn, think of how they congregate there during movies.

Fieldhouse Plaza (space north of building)

- This space supports the oven use.
- Fountain not shown!!! "Owen's Fountain"
- Beautiful tree already there
- No fixed Harvest table - Make tables moveable (picnic).
- maintain access to public bathroom - harvest table would block
- remove all garbage storage along west side of Fieldhouse - unsafe, unsightly, - store elsewhere

Trees

- Existing trees? Already nice.
- 3 nice cherries with beautiful blossoms. Service berry grove. Princeton elms along wabash doing great
- What about trees on island on centre of wabash?
- What is the reasoning for moving all the trees? Does it have to do with construction staging?
- When can we see the tree inventory which was done in 2022?
- Memorial Trees?

Storage

Rink Stuff
Event Stuff
Market Stuff

Sorauren Sports Association Stuff (soccer and baseball)
Our two sheds
Is shipping container the best option? - Buried bunker?

Programming - A great deal of programming occurs in the park (by city and by community groups). We must consider how the new landscape will affect Movie Nights/Events, The Farmers Market, and our Outdoor Rink. And specifically we need to consider how the Fieldhouse can and should function as part of the new plan.

Movie Nights/ Events

power bollards
screen and tent tie downs
access to lights to turn off - outdoor panel (with breakers) (switch box)
exterior network plugs (cat 6)
Number of people at movies and events

Rink - Although the rink is built on the ball diamond (outside zone) there is a need for storage (which occurs within the zone) and a need for access to water and a warm space to store hoses. We need storage for boards, scrapers/shovels, hoses and hose parts, hockey nets. We need an interior hose bib and warm room for hose storage

Farmers Market - We recommend additional meetings about this and including Helen and/or other Market volunteers to get specific feedback about how to enhance their operations. We would like to offer to facilitate this process not only with the Farmers Market but with other repeat park users.

Fieldhouse in the future

The FOSP sees the Fieldhouse as a perfect community hub which could foster even more uses than it currently serves. To name a few:

- Public bathroom for park goers - full time access
- Community hub for meetings and events.
- A home for the farmers market (storing tables, tents, etc in the basement)
- Kitchen to complement the bake oven - regular use for baking - kitchen could be expanded and cut off from rest of space with a partition.
- A hub for Sorauren Park Sports Association - gear, meetings, administration
- Storage and access to water (all infrastructure already existing) for the winter Rink.

SPACE OUTSIDE (rest of park)

WTRP

- Landing location - SEE IMAGES - OVERLAY.
- Major affect on main traffic or desired paths
- We are currently in meetings with the Friends of the West Toronto Railpath to ramp up the advocacy for this.
- In hindsight, their group should definitely have been a part of the CRG.

Dog Park

- In way, needs to be relocated
- Dog owners are asking for a separate area for small dogs. Could we move dogs to along the fence?
- That would actually give more space for the ceremonial fire pit which could go kind of where the dog park is right now
- Dog space and ceremonial space much too close and need space for WTRP bridge landing

- They should have had a rep in the CRG as well.

Pizza Oven

- Firewood storage
- Ash tip
- Needs power run to it
- Needs fence around it
- Should have veggie garden closeby - fresh herbs

Ball diamond

- Needs supplemental lighting. There's no lighting at 1st base.
- Additional lighting would be helpful for the rink in the winter as well.
- Do the baseball stands still fit?
- Everything seems very tight to east of ball diamond

NEXT STEPS?

Need staging plan

- The sooner we have information the better we can plan to keep the park active and animated during the construction phase.
- will construction activities go outside that red zone? (for example will ball diamond be temporarily shut down?)
- storage for our stuff during construction (we wouldn't want to have any years without movies or rink)
- For the time during the construction, the shipping container will be our only option (no access to fieldhouse and to sheds right?)
- sp if its shipping container for now - moved to where?
- Will sheds be torn down?
- Dogs - communicating with dog owners about alternatives? - we can help with communication and outreach
- Use of another space for market?
- Will baseball still happen?
- How many years will the park be affected?
- Alternate arrangements for the next 4 years?
- plan maintain functionality and flexibility to allow everything to continue during construction
- market among other things would be devastated if not supported throughout construction.
- Reiterate that throughout the construction we can be a great partner for communication to the neighborhood

Working together - FOSP wants to be involved. We've been waiting for this build for over 20 years and are super excited about the vast changes coming up but want to ensure we preserve the well loved space we already have. With this community centre... its not a case of "build it and they will come". Quite contrarily, we're here already, and what we need is improvements and enhancements, not reinvention.

Looking forward to the meeting,

[From City of Toronto:](#)

[Upon reception, this email was passed onto the design team. Its contents were discussed in a follow-up meeting with FOSP and two additional CRG meetings \(7&8\).](#)

From Friends of Sorauren Park – May 29, 2023

I'd like to introduce you to Scott and/or Mark who would be interested in representing the West Toronto Railpath at the next two community centre meetings.

From City of Toronto – May 31, 2023

After further discussion with the project team, and communications with Metrolinx and the City's Transportation Services, we can confirm that the design of the potential future railpath pedestrian/cyclist bridge is outside the scope of this project. There are no firm designs or timelines from Metrolinx about the potential bridge. The presence of the planned Community Recreation Centre (CRC) does not prohibit the construction of a railpath bridge. As with all existing infrastructure, Metrolinx will design the rail bridge to fit the existing conditions of the new CRC (of which the location/massing was decided through extensive public consultation in 2021). Reflecting this, we will not have representatives of the West Toronto Rail Path at the upcoming Community Resource Group meetings, as discussion about the potential bridge is not applicable to the CRC designs.

Scott and Mark thank you for volunteering your time and I encourage you to take part in the broader community engagement activities for this project which are set to begin next week. You can [sign up for project updates on the website](#) under the "Get Involved" tab to be notified once these engagement opportunities are live.

From West Toronto Rail Path – June 1, 2023

We believe that our involvement is in fact directly related to the project insofar as any future bridge connection would have to land somewhere at Sorauren Park, likely in close proximity to the amazing new community centre. It seems prudent to ensure that any planned elements (e.g. dog parks, installations) do not accidentally preclude the future installation of a bridge.

The community has worked so hard to land the community centre, which we have cheered from our side of the tracks. But we believe that same community will want to access the West Toronto Railpath in order to get downtown (or to head north!) safely in a non car-dependant way. Any intervention from the Friends of the West Toronto Railpath would only pertain to ensuring that the future connection is incorporated into final site design considerations.

There are many groups in the crg. I'm not sure if I understand the criteria why one group would qualify to be part of the consultation and another wouldn't. For example I know there's a representative from a local school. On a side note, Is there a publicly available list of all the current CRG members? How many of us are there?

From Friends of Sorauren Park – June 5, 2023

Thanks for your note Mark. I would echo the same sentiments and definitely think that your group is a huge stakeholder here and should have been included in meetings from the start.

The FOSP has been calling attention to this footbridge at every opportunity but it seems to me having an expert from this group involved in the CRG would have been appropriate. I'm not sure of the exact criteria a local group must meet to be considered but even without the future footbridge idea, you would think that a "Friends of" group that operates along the whole eastern boundary of this new community centre would be given a voice at the meetings. I don't think the intent here is to add the bridge design to scope of work but simply to consider it as part of the landscape design. Since the landscape is being redone all around this area, why wouldn't we at least consider the landing point of this bridge. This shouldn't affect the design of the building but might affect the redesign of the dog park.

When the angler option was chosen, this affected the design of the dog park or Dog Off Leash Area (DOA). So now the DOA design is being incorporated into the scope of the work of the community centre. This would be a great opportunity to "get it right" in an area of the park that

has seen much disagreement and is in bad need of redesign. Why was nobody from the DOA consulted about this until now?

We think that the users of the DOA should have been consulted about this. Consulting with them would bring to the forefront a great deal of issues. Rather than shrink the DOA to a smaller size than it already is, we need to consider relocating and if possible enlarging the DOA. Perhaps there's a way to keep a small dogpark in that same area and have a second dog park for larger dogs up along the berm at the north east end of the park? Many DOA users would support a separate corral for small and large dogs. This would require altering the circular gravel trail that goes north of the DOA.

If we alter the circular trail that goes around the park, there must be a way to shift the DOA far enough north to give more room for the ceremonial fire circle and the future bridge landing point. From Wabash Avenue to the soccer field at the north end, the proposed landscape does not fit. The future addition of the bridge will only exacerbate the problem. This NEEDS to be planned for.

It's important that the stakeholders from the West Toronto Railpath and the Sorauren Park DOA have a seat at this table.

The community consultation has been lacking over the past year. All this progress on the design (interior and exterior) was made without much consultation and now there seemed to be a rush to push things through and end the consultations. I think it's important that these issues get the attention they deserve and am grateful that an additional two meetings have been added.

Looking forward to the meeting this week.

From City of Toronto – June 7, 2023

*Thank you for your email. I want to reiterate that the design team hears your concern to ensure the CRC and associated landscaping does not prohibit a future connection to the West Toronto Rail Path. **To confirm, the design team has and continues to actively communicate with Metrolinx and the City's Transportation Services to ensure that the new CRC does not prohibit the construction of a rail path bridge in the area.***

Over 1,200 community members to-date have participated in the five-phase engagement process for the new CRC. Impacts and changes to the off-leash area (OLA) were discussed with community members throughout this process and will continue to be discussed in this final phase of community engagement. To ensure we get feedback about the OLA from a diverse range of OLA users, we are hosting an in-person pop-up event at the OLA location to collect feedback about the layout and features. We are also collecting feedback in an online survey, virtual public meeting, and other community pop-ups. I have directly spoken with the community member you connected me to who is involved in the OLA to get more information on the OLA and to inform the date and time for the OLA pop-up event.

The design team heard the request for separate areas for small and large dog OLAs and requests to expand the OLA in earlier phases of community engagement. The design team investigated this and considered the following key factors:

- New building footprint reduces open park area and OLA (the angler option was the community's preferred building massing option, despite the impacts to the OLA)*
- Sloping topography along railway fence (required for crash safety) does not allow for an OLA in this location*

- *The need for accessible pathways to connect various parts of the park limited the OLA location options*
- *Other parts of the park are already occupied with other park uses, and from the start of the project, Sorauren Park as a whole was identified as not being within scope (budget) of this project*
- *The available space for the OLA is too small for separate small/large dog facilities (each enclosure would be too small, thus underutilized)*

With these considerations in mind, there is not enough space on-site to expand the OLA, which also means separate areas for small and large dog cannot be included in this project. Instead, there will be one new OLA with improved drainage, groundcover, features and amenities. We are collecting feedback on the proposed OLA features in this next phase of community engagement.

From Sorauren Farmers' Market – July 23, 2023:

My board has asked for kitchen specs for the centre. Are you able to direct me to these?

From City of Toronto – The project team will be using City of Toronto standard specifications for the kitchen equipment, however these have not been finalized yet and will be confirmed in the next phase of detailed design development. If there are any specific requests regarding the kitchen space, please share them for the design team's for consideration.

From Friends of Sorauren Park – December 7 and 8, 2023

Nancy says:

I'm glad to see that lots of FOSP's concerns have been brought up and are noted in the summary.

One thing that is not is the question of how they are going to stop dogs from going into the swale at the sacred fire area.

Also who from the FOSP is going to follow up with them in regards to that extra meeting they are open to with just the FOSP?

I have a concern that the dance lessons will be kicked out of the fieldhouse courtyard because of the inclusion of that big unmovable long picnic table. And I would like that concern voiced at that extra meeting.

Also, the discussion about the round seating on the town square. So they admit it has to be moved with a forklift, so therefore is basically unmovable. But there doesn't seem to have been any follow up. We would like the seating to be movable, so are they going to change the design so it is movable? How are they going to address the concern about the seating getting in the way of the market set up and movie nights? Are they going to bring out a forklift every Monday and Saturday movie nights and move the things?

That's all I've got. Thanks for sharing Kathy.

Stephen says:

I like many of the notes from others and have nothing to add other than the requirements for movie nights

Chander says:

Totally for movable furniture for the town square. The city got all kinds of grief for the wide open space of dundas square, is immovable furniture their response to this?

The square should be as free from permanent fixtures, except lighting, as possible for it to be as multifunctional as possible

dog park, is it not possible to have more than one enclosure within the entirety of the fenced in area, one for large dogs and one for small ones. perhaps if such existed the dog owners fearful of their little and medium sized dogs getting mauled would be more inclined to use the space

town square. it seems like a bad idea to install an immovable large object i the middle of the square, it totally takes away the versatility of the space

reiterate the need to provide outdoor control access for town square lights etc.

Anonymous says:

Thanks for sharing. Great to see all our points on the record. Some items that stand out for me (may require reiterating):

maps showing the electric bollard locations and tie-towns for the movie screen

maps showing relocation of the existing 7 benches in the Town Square for which the community contributed over \$10,000

I'm still not sold on the big harvest table, seems to make the space less flexible for programming like World Dance, Market. Picnic tables that can be move into the space much better. And we've been able to set up the indoor portable tables to get the harvest table effect, like our Volunteer Pizza Night

loss of the grassy areas by the Town Square (serviceberry/cherry grove), so popular with parents who can put their babies on blankets on the grass comfortably

Joël rough notes:

There is mention of a traffic study. Can we get a copy of that?
what about vehicle access in the park? Is that even allowed?

page 11 - orient table

- garbage corrals on west side of fiedlhouse need new location

ask again about tree study or tree inventory. We'd like a copy

page 11 - need firewood strage for bake oven as well as fire pit.

Ask about further consultation to refine ideas. When can we be included.

Ask about tree relocation. Can we identify specific places in the park where we would like the trees that are being relocated to be put. Rather than have them relocated to somewhere outside of the park....

That's it for now

Additional email sent by FOSP on December 10, 2023

I may have forgot to mention that one of the biggest concerns for me the the off leash area. I meant to include a comment about that in my section. There are ongoing violations in the park

by dog owners and we hope that the OLA is designed with the idea to fix our current problems. Please include that too.

From City of Toronto – December 15, 2023

The questions FOSP sent in December have been compiled below, along with the response from the City (see in blue italics):

- How is the City going to stop dogs from going into the swale at the sacred fire area? *Through the public consultation, we've heard that this is a concern, and we will be addressing it during the detailed design phase.*
- We would like the round seating on the town square to be movable (which seems to be unmovable because it has to be moved with a forklift). Is the City going to change the design so it is movable? How is the City going to address the concern about the seating getting in the way of the market set up and movie nights? Is the City going to bring out a forklift every Monday and Saturday movie nights and move the things? *During the detailed design the seating will be selected. Based on community feedback received, we will select seating that is more easily moveable by community members (e.g. picnic tables or similar).*
- There is mention of a traffic study. Can we get a copy of that? *We are not able to provide a copy of the traffic study.*
- What about vehicle access in the park? Is that even allowed? *Vehicle access is for Parks maintenance vehicles only. There may be an exception for public vehicle access for Farmer's Market drop-off/pick-up at the Town Square only, subject to City Planning and Transportation review and approval.*
- Can we get a copy of the tree study or tree inventory? *The tree study is not available to circulate at this time but will be shared upon completion.*
- Regarding tree relocation, can we identify specific places in the park where we would like the trees that are being relocated to be put (rather than have them relocated to somewhere outside of the park)? *Relocation of existing trees will be on site only, within Sorauren Park and only to the extent possible. If existing trees are invasive or diseased, they cannot be relocated. The Landscape Architects are working to provide a comprehensive planting plan, including the tree relocations.*
- Are there further consultation to refine ideas? When can we be included? *The community consultation for the Wabash CRC is now complete, except for ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities regarding placekeeping initiatives. As shared in the last Community Resource Group (CRG) meeting, the CRG has transitioned to an information-sharing body, where project updates are shared. CRG members will be invited to a virtual meeting following detailed design, once a general construction plan is available. Future project update meetings will be arranged on an as-needed basis. These will be information-out meetings, not consultation meetings.*