

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

**SUMMARY REPORT:
Public Meeting #4**

Meeting Held: June 29th, 2023



Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Project Context	4
1.2 About this Report	8
2.0 Engagement Overview	9
2.1 Engagement Objectives	9
2.1.1 Engagement Approach	10
3.0 What We Heard	11
Appendix A: Raw Data from Discussion Tables	
Appendix B: Question & Comments	

1.0 Introduction

The City of Toronto is leading a redesign of Moss Park and replacement of the 70-year-old John Innes Community Centre. The goal is for these spaces to serve the current and future needs of all of the diverse Moss Park community including vulnerable and equity-deserving populations in the area, the many new community members, and support the population growth in the area.

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

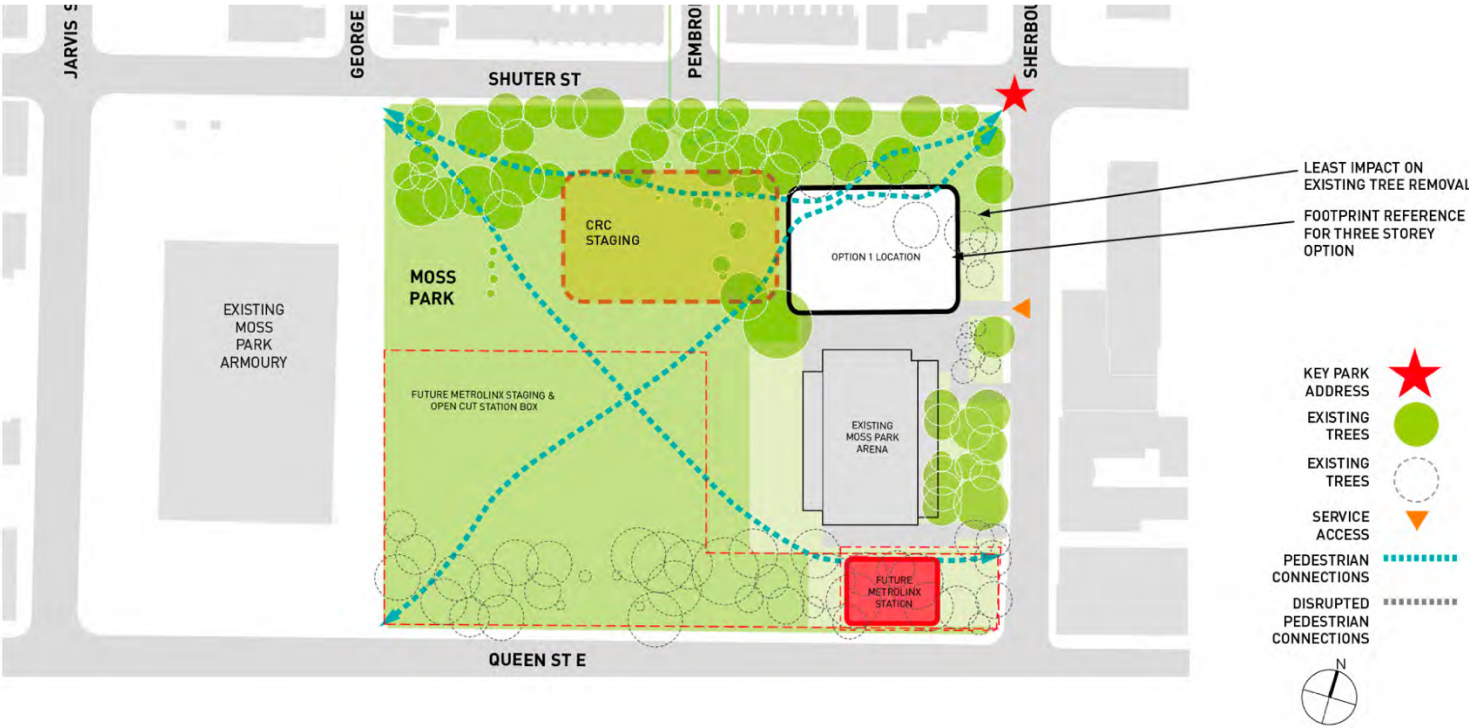


FIGURE 1: Map of the proposed location of the new Community Recreation Centre in Moss Park

1.1 Project Context

In 2015, the project *More Moss Park* aimed to redevelop the park and replace the community recreation centre with a new facility that centered LGBTQ2s+ communities and expanded the services offered. The project was a partnership between the 519 and the City of Toronto. In 2016 the project was deemed not feasible and it was determined that it would not move forward. The community and stakeholder engagement program for More Moss Park was extensive. The scope of the current *Moss Park Park* Improvements and John Innes Community Recreation Centre replacement project are different with the community recreation centre retaining a recreation mandate. However, the insights, knowledge and data gathered through the *More Moss Park* consultation and engagement laid the groundwork that this project will build on.

1.1.1 Project Goals

Launch a new initiative to replace the John Innes Community Recreation Centre with a new Community Recreation Centre and make extensive improvements to the park through a consultation process that is informed by the insights of the *2015 More Moss Park* project, with the following key project goals:

1. Replace the John Innes Community Recreation Centre with a bigger facility that meets the standards set out in the City's Recreation Facilities Master Plan and that can better meet the community's needs.
2. Redesign the park to meet current and future needs.
3. Build on the park's long-standing role as a hub for the diverse communities and people of Moss Park.
4. Ground the project by honouring local communities and by building on the assets of the park and community and the experiences and goals of diverse park users.
5. Build on the input received from the previous *More Moss Park* community consultation process.
6. Deliver an accessible and welcome place for all members of the Moss Park and John Innes Community Recreation Centre community.
7. Work closely with the community throughout the project.

1.1.2 Key Project Components

Every project component will be shaped by public input collected throughout the process. The following is a detailed list of project components, features and opportunities for which the City wants to collaborate with the local community.

Major Park Improvements

- Extensive Park improvements with passive and active recreation amenities
- Support equity-deserving groups in park and recreations programs
- Integrate Indigenous placekeeping elements
 - Opportunities for park improvements, including walking, seating & gathering areas
 - Opportunities for recreation and park amenities, such as playground, splash pad, walking paths, tennis, basketball, dedicated dogs off leash area etc.
 - Indigenous placekeeping (to be identified with Rights Holders and local Indigenous communities)
 - Opportunities for key safety features, such as sight lines & lighting
 - Improve community gardens area in the park to align with initiatives to support food security and urban agriculture
 - Initiatives to support ecological & social sustainability & resilience of the park

New Community Recreation Centre

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

Upgrades to Arena

- Exterior Upgrades

CONFIRMED Design Principles

The following eight *Design Principles* serve as guidance to steer the vision of the project. They have been workshopped with public input and confirmed with the public throughout this Phase of the project.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 1: Ensure the design of the Community Recreation Centre and park supports equity, belonging and inclusion.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 2: Ensure the Community Recreation Centre and Park are accessible to all.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 3: Create a space that makes safety for all users a priority.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 4: Design an open, permeable, and transparent environment.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 5: Maximize, enhance, and improve green spaces.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 6: Celebrate and share information about the Indigenous history and character of Moss Park.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 7: Contribute to food security.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE 8: Be sustainable and carbon neutral.

CONFIRMED Big Moves

The Project team compiled thirteen *Big Moves* that describe priority actions that the City intends to take. They have been workshopped with public input and confirmed with the public throughout this Phase of the project.

BIG MOVE 1: Maintain a large area of open parkland with frontages onto Queen and Shuter by building the new Community Recreation Centre along Sherbourne St., over the existing footprint.

BIG MOVE 2: Establish a strong and cohesive design language between the Community Recreation Centre and the Arena buildings as well as the public realm.

BIG MOVE 3: Optimize opportunities for rooftop access to the new Community Recreation Centre.

BIG MOVE 4: Incorporate spaces for prayer and ceremony in flexible spaces.

BIG MOVE 5: Ensure washroom access from the outside of the building.

BIG MOVE 6: Create pedestrian connectivity to the park, arena and the Community Recreation Centre from the new Moss Park station in anticipation of a large volume of new users.

BIG MOVE 7: Work with local indigenous partners and first nations to ensure that indigenous placekeeping, knowledge, ways of knowing are reflected in the process and design, park improvements and Community Recreation Centre redevelopment.

BIG MOVE 8: Establish a renewed urban canopy of trees on Queen to match the Shuter edge. Wood from trees removed during construction will be used in the project in various ways.

BIG MOVE 9: Maintain and enhance key pedestrian pathways and access points into the park with lighting and sightlines.

BIG MOVE 10: Maintain and enhance existing permeable park edges and protect the existing urban canopy along Shuter.

BIG MOVE 11: Maintain the strong Sherbourne urban built edge and enhance the relationship between the Community Recreation Centre/Arena/Park and Metrolinx Station with improved visual and physical connectivity and accessibility.

BIG MOVE 12: Remove the baseball diamond to accommodate a wider range of park uses.

BIG MOVE 13: Add a fenced, dedicated dogs off-leash area to the park to support the growing number of residents with dogs in the intensifying neighbourhood, and to protect other park amenities and park users from conflicts with dogs.

1.1.3 Project Schedule

- Spring 2021: Procurement of architect and landscape architect design services and community engagement consultant
- June 2022: Project Kick Off
- Summer to Fall 2022: Community engagement – Building on the Vision
- Fall 2022 to Spring 2023: Community engagement – Early Design Ideas
- **Spring to Winter 2023: Community Engagement – Preferred Design**
***WE ARE HERE**
- Spring 2024: Procurement of construction services
- 2026 to 2028: Construct community recreation centre
- 2028 to 2030: Park construction

1.2 About this Report

This Public Meeting summary report, prepared by SAFFY, summarizes the key findings that emerged through the Public Meeting #3 Moss Park park Concept Options Design Feedback, as part of the Moss Park Improvements & John Innes Community Recreation Centre Replacement Project held on June 29 2023. This report summarizes the feedback and input collected from the public meeting:

WHEN: June 29th 2023

WHERE: John Innes Community Recreation Centre, Gym

ATTENDEES: Session #1, 14 attendees
Session #2, 23 attendees

PROJECT TEAM: City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division
SAFFY (Public and Stakeholder Engagement)

The Planning Partnership (Landscape Architecture)
Two Row Architect (Landscape Architecture & Indigenous Lens)
MJMA (Community Recreation Centre Architecture & Design)

2.0 Engagement Overview

2.1 Engagement Objectives

The meeting's focus was to present the John Innes Community Recreation Centre (CRC) Final Schematic Design, the Preferred Park Design and gather feedback related to the presented designs for both the Park and CRC.



Figure 1: Photo from the gym entrance showing the Public Meeting welcome sign.

2.1.1 Engagement Approach

The meeting was held in-person at the John Innes Community Recreation Centre gym. There were two time slots to provide more opportunities for the public to participate and accommodate different schedules. The first session was held in the afternoon from 1:30pm to 3:30pm and the second session was held from 6pm to 8pm.

Meeting Structure: The City of Toronto, SAFFY, The Planning Partnership (TPP), Two Row Architect and MJMA ran two-hour Public Meetings which guided participants through a detailed presentation of the final concept design for the Community Recreation centre and preferred concept design for the Park. After the presentation a discussion-table activity was facilitated by different members of the project team that sought to gather further feedback, and thoughts on the design presented.

As part of the meeting introduction, Councillor Chris Moise delivered opening remarks and the Engagement team followed with project updates related to the anticipated schedule and the progress of community consultations. This update provided a broader context for the community feedback and input process that has brought the team to their current stage.

After the project introduction and updates, the majority of the meeting was dedicated to a detailed presentation of the design elements for both the Park and Community Centre. These designs were based on the latest feedback gathered from previous stages of community consultations (which included Pop-Ups, meetings with Indigenous communities meeting, survey, Public Meeting #3). Following the presentations by the design team, the meeting participants split into separate discussion tables—one focusing on the Park and the other on the Community Recreation Centre. Each table had members of the project team facilitate discussions and gather additional feedback on the designs. Attendees had approximately 20 minutes at each table, but they were also free to stay at one table if they were more interested in either the park or the community centre. After the discussion tables, key findings and major themes were shared with the larger group. The meeting closed with a reminder about the final public survey which will remain open until July 17th. Additionally, attendees were informed about upcoming Pop-Up events and that dates will be announced soon.

3.0 What We Heard

The following section contains a summary of the feedback received during Public Meeting #4. See [Appendix A](#) for the raw data of notes written during decision table sessions and [Appendix B](#) for complete documentation of comments and questions shared during the Q&A session of the meeting.



Figure 2 (left): Photo of the CRC design table with a participant writing feedback on a sticky note.
Figure 3 (right): Photo of the Park design table.

3.1 Key Insights

Overall feedback of the preferred CRC and Park options were met with positive reception, and generally the designs resonated with meeting participants. Feedback collected during the session not only confirmed the suitability of the proposed elements but also offered valuable suggestions regarding the utilization and programming of specific features within the Park and CRC.

Key insights from Public Meeting #4 are categorized into two sections: Park-specific feedback and Community Recreation Centre (CRC)-specific feedback. The following are the most popular emerging themes identified within each category:

Park

Continue to incorporate Moss Park Creek

Participants recognized the need to showcase the creek and honor water, both its historical and present-day significance to the site. They suggested incorporating water elements and embracing the creek concept in the selection of materials and furnishings.

Accommodating different uses of the large field

Conversation mainly revolved around assessing the infrastructure needed for a flexible and adaptable open space that can accommodate various activities, including both sports and arts. Participants asked if/how the City intends to permit this space to ensure a balanced use across community groups and to prevent activities like organized sports from taking over.

It was suggested that the field should be versatile enough to accommodate both sports activities and outdoor performances. There was interest in ensuring there were quiet reading spaces within the park as well. Additional ideas were put forward, such as the inclusion of a shade structure gazebo and a designated area for hosting movie nights or similar gatherings.

Community Garden

There was strong support for the community gardens, and the additional garden plots were well-received. Concerns were raised regarding the importance of establishing a clear transition plan for existing plot users. The selection of trees near the community garden was also another area of concern, with an emphasis on ensuring ample sunlight.

Meeting the needs of different park users

Ensuring an inclusive park environment that caters to the needs of various user groups, including seniors, children, families, and the unhoused population, emerged as a central theme. Participants were eager to hear how diverse communities and park users had been included throughout the design process, and were pleased to hear about the deep consultation that informed the designs. Most of the recommendations regarding the needs of diverse park users revolved around the locations and type of tables and seating, and pathways.

Tables and Seating

Various suggestions were made to enhance the seating options within the park. Suggestions included having seating placed under the shade of trees, as well as considering age appropriate seating. One meeting participant mentioned paying

attention to the aging population and providing seating options for seniors. Another participant shared a desire for seating areas that are accessible to the neighborhood crossing guard on Sherbourne, recognizing their valuable role in the community. Public tables that encourage communal seating was also included as a suggestion. These tables would serve as gathering spots where park visitors can come together, share meals, engage in conversations, and forge connections with one another.

Pathways

There were mixed feelings about the west pathways connections, some finding them useful while others deemed them redundant. Meeting participants brought up the importance of making sure pathways accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and even skateboarders, and also emphasizing the proper maintenance of the pathways year round. There was support for the wider sidewalk and gathering areas proposed for Queen Street. This particular location is frequently utilized by service providers and community groups to distribute meals and supplies to individuals experiencing homelessness in the community.

Community Recreation Centre

Animating the presence of Indigenous Placekeeping throughout the site

Building upon one of the key Design Principles which aims to celebrate and share information about the Indigenous history and character of Moss Park there was a strong interest in increasing the visibility of Indigenous Placekeeping elements throughout the project. Participants expressed a strong desire to bring an educational aspect to Indigenous placekeeping. Suggestions included incorporating informative signage and plaques both inside and outside the CRC. The inclusion of ceremonial and medicinal plantings as part of the project was also brought forward by participants.

Shower Facilities

Showers generated a lot of discussions and input from meeting participants across the discussion tables. The proposed design includes two universal change rooms within the building, each equipped with two private showers, as well as an additional shower accessible from the park outside. Below, we highlight the three most prevalent themes that emerged from the discussions around showers:

Hygiene

Meeting participants recognized the significance of offering shower access to the unhoused population and highlighted the frequent use of showers by individuals experiencing homelessness to clean their clothing. Taking this into account, some participants proposed the integration of laundry facilities into the design

and programming of the space as a practical solution to address and alleviate this particular need.

Maintenance

Participants expressed concerns regarding the maintenance of the showers and whether the outdoor accessible showers and washrooms would be locked during specific times. The inquiry about the locking of washroom and shower doors fell outside the scope of the design team's responsibilities. However, it was clarified that the locking of showers and the adjacent outdoor accessible washrooms would be managed by Parks and Recreation operations.

Regarding the maintenance of the washroom, meeting participants were reassured that the park, being a significant capital project for the City, had already taken into account maintenance needed for the shower and washroom facilities.

Inclusive and safe shower spaces

Many people were in support of universal change room facilities. However, there were some who emphasized their preference for private gendered showers, citing the need to feel comfortable while showering nude. Notably, there was a significant focus on the private shower stalls, with an interest in having more options for individual shower stalls. A member of the project team clarified that change-rooms will include two barrier-free private stalls with showers to accommodate private individual showering.

Several community members pointed to the York Recreation Centre as good example. They emphasized that the centre successfully incorporates a combination of universal change rooms and showers, along with separate gendered shower and change room stalls.

Sharing the Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) office space with other local organizations

Many participants wanted to ensure that the unhoused population and street-involved people could access services, amenities and supports within the CRC. Some suggested that the SSHA office space that is planned for the CRC could partners with local harm reduction, food security, and grassroots organizations. Members of a local organization expressed the difficulties they currently encounter in finding affordable office space in close proximity to the community members they serve and suggested that the CRC could provide space to enhance their service delivery to the people in the Moss Park neighborhood. Furthermore by sharing an office space, they anticipated improved collaboration among support and frontline workers, ultimately enhancing their ability to serve the unhoused population effectively.

Additional design and programming considerations

In the meeting, we also heard examples for how different CRC spaces, including the pool, can be better equipped. These examples included ensuring there is enough light in the activity rooms, more storage space in the weight room and incorporating a pull-out stage for performances in the multi-purpose rooms so it can host more local community theater events and performances.

There was also a meeting participant that stressed the importance of making sure lanes for the lane swim are wide enough to comfortably accommodate two swimmers swimming side by side, reducing the 6 lanes seen in the proposed floor plan to 5. Meeting attendees were provided with additional clarification regarding programming and requests from Park and Recreation staff, such as the division of lanes. However, these considerations offer a nuanced understanding of the specific needs of park users to provide the best overall experience and gain further insight and understanding related to the space specific preferences of different park user.

Appendix A

Public Meeting #4, Raw Data from Discussion Tables

Community Recreation Centre

- Provide a variety of seating options (chairs with arms) for older users
- Confirm if walking track material can withstand the use of mobility aids such as walking poles, walkers, etc.
- Separate/stand alone ventilation is provided in the current facility and should be provided in the new
- Couple of requests for a separate hydrotherapy pool or steam room
- Consider providing an apiary or bee habitat. Could be a learning experience for youth and the elderly
- Provide hooks or cubbies for people bringing their bags and towels
- Review size of current weight room against the proposed
- Weight room should have more glazing into/out of the space for safety and to be welcoming for all
- Provide PV art or coloured PV's to make the roofscape more interesting to the surrounding buildings
- Shared office space for local harm reduction, food security and social support organizations (Building Roots)
- Office space for general use?
- Office space to be used by other organizations aside from SSHA, opportunity to collaborate and coordinate services
- Parking not important in the space, disagrees that more parking is a priority, wants more park and rec space (x2)
- Shower cubicle with curtains (privacy)
- Use Black Creek Community Centre [York Recreation Centre] as a reference for shower facilities. 1 large universal change room and 2 small change rooms
- Washroom maintenance
- Washroom maintenance and monitoring by staff. Staff involvement is a must
- Signage inside CRC and outside that explains the Indigenous history of the area
- Didactic signage eg. provide sign, learning opportunity
- Ceremonial + medicinal planting throughout
- More outdoor shower access
- Laundry (x2)

Park

- Provide cistern
- Provide a pollinator garden
- Provide a bee farm (if the bylaws allow)
- Provide a stage with a retractable roof for performances
- Fence for the community allotment garden should not be climbable
- Current concerns around community allotment garden
 - Dog and human waste/urination
 - Needles inside the garden
 - People pull vegetables from the garden
 - Wants to be allowed to use the garden plots creatively
- Provide needle disposal stations in the park
- Larger gathering areas
- Western path could be emergency services access, would need to be wider
- Reduced need for western pathway, redundant fencing
- Clear sightlines
- Like the elimination of curbs. Better for people with strollers
- Winter maintenance
- Great winding/fluid pathways mimicking water
- Heated sidewalk
- Honour the creek
- Respecting and honouring the water and the history, plus current uses of the space
- Memorial plaques
- Shade structure or gazebo
- Designated area for movie nights/ concepts
- What if soccer takes over this open space
- Have an outdoor workout space
- Great use of valley to separate open space from walkways
- Outdoor workout space (bar for exercises using body weight)
- Can we direct people away from walking through the lawn?
- What about a stage or elevated place
- More garden plots is good!
- People shouldn't lose access to the community garden for 5+ years
- Public tables
- I love the current crossing guard
- Can the crossing guard have a locker or bench
- Seating under trees
- Need a bench here by Shuter st. and Sherbourne St.

Appendix B

Public Meeting #4, Questions and Comments

PARTICIPANT QUESTION/COMMENT	PROJECT TEAM RESPONSE
<p>Wondering about the location of the community garden- it seems to be in the middle of the mature tree growth. How will the garden have enough sunlight?</p>	<p>This is something that we have considered, the location of the garden will actually be located a little further away from the mature trees, so the garden will not be shaded. There will be greenery around the garden plots, but it will not interrupt with the sunlight.</p>
<p>I want to make sure the Park will be usable all year around, what is the plan for the park all season round?</p>	<p>With heightened maintenance we will ensure the park continues to be an accessible park that is enjoyed year-round. It is top of mind to make sure it will be a 4 seasons park. There will be a small hill for tobogganing walking park so it could be walked all year long. The plan does not have a skating rink in place but there are a lot of nearby skating trails.</p>
<p>I want to ask if the Dog park will have a water fountain?</p>	<p>Yes, the dog park will have a water fountain.</p>
<p>When will the building be torn down and how were people with housing challenges been consulted? Is there a way this building will be kept open during construction?</p>	<p>The CRC and Park has been designed with the input of service providers and individuals with lived experience. There are also local Project Champions that are local residents and work to get the input from hard to reach populations to make sure we reach different park users. The community centre will remain in operation until 2026.</p>
<p>Where is parking, I want to make sure people who drive to work at the community centre will have a place to safely park?</p>	<p>In this new plan parking will be reduced, but pick-up and drop off areas have been added. The decision to reduce parking spaces is in compliance with the City's transportation goals of promoting alternative modes of transportation and supporting sustainability strategies (outlined in the Toronto Green Standard and CaGBC ZCB energy efficiency benchmark, aiming for net-zero energy).</p>

PARTICIPANT QUESTION/COMMENT	PROJECT TEAM RESPONSE
	<p>Pay & Display type parking are available within walking distance at several adjacent buildings, such as 275 Shuter Street, 323 Richmond Street, and 137 Jarvis Street. Additionally, they mentioned that one future adjacent residential rental apartment (261 Queen E.) will include paid underground parking with 79 spaces, and a future residential condo (225 Queen E.) may potentially offer public parking as well.</p>
<p>What is the budget ?</p>	<p>The global budget is \$107 million.</p>
<p>As my unit faces the park, I have concerns regarding its design. I am particularly looking at it from a safety aspect, as many of the walking paths do not prioritize safety. Additionally, I am not comfortable with the outdoor washroom being situated near the kids' area. I believe it should be more inclusive and considerate of all residents.</p>	<p>Integration of social infrastructure, including designating the CRC as a warming/cooling centre, is being discussed with the City . Enhancements such as additional seating, wider sidewalks, and improved lighting aim to make the park a usable and inclusive space with better visibility. However, a challenge remains regarding the proximity of the playground to the public washrooms, which the City is actively addressing to ensure convenience and comfort for parents.</p>