

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

Eglinton Park Master Plan Implementation Community Advisory Group Meeting 2

Meeting Summary

April 4, 2023

Tonya Crawford, Senior Project Coordinator
Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator



This report was prepared by:



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Summary	5
Meeting Minutes	5

1.0 Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting that was held virtually on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The CAG is made up of local representatives from residents groups and associations, schools, sports associations and other community groups and organizations.

More information about the project can be found on the [project webpage](#).

1.1 Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Review the Eglinton Park Master Plan and components included in Priority Area #1
- Share what we heard through Stage 1 engagement activities around the location of the dogs off-leash area and skate spot, and impacts to the soccer fields and baseball diamonds
- Present a revised version of the Eglinton Park Master Plan that maintains the existing permitted sports fields

1.2 Project Scope

The scope of the project is summarized below:

- Confirm the Direction
- **Exploring Options — We Are Here**
- Setting the Direction
- Procurement & Construction

1.3 Project Timeline

- Phase 1 — Confirm the Directions
 - Park Pop-Up Event(s)
 - Social Pin-Point & Survey
 - Community Advisory Group Meeting
 - Indigenous Community Meeting
- Phase 2 — Exploring Options
 - **2 Community Advisory Group Meetings - We Are Here**
 - Community Advisory Group Meeting Survey
 - Public Survey
 - Indigenous Community Meeting
- Phase 3 — Setting the Direction
 - Public Survey
 - Indigenous Community Meeting

1.4 Community Advisory Committee

A Community Advisory Committee has been established for this project with the primary objective of guiding the design of the implementation of Phase 1 of the Eglinton Park Master Plan to align with community needs.

The first meeting of the Community Advisory Committee occurred in November of 2021, conducted virtually. A comprehensive summary report for the first Community Advisory

Committee Meeting #1, including the presentation materials that were shared, has been published on the project webpage.

CAG Members Present

- Billy W
- Blaine L
- Brenda H
- Dave M
- Debbie T
- Jacquelyn W
- Jean P
- Jim L
- John G
- Katherine C
- Migs B
- Thomas W

Project Staff Present

- Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
- Cristian Lukaszyk, Senior Project Manager, Capital Projects
- Tonya Crawford, Senior Project Coordinator, Capital Projects

2.0 Summary

During the meeting, CAG members expressed their opinions regarding the changes made to the Eglinton Master Plan to provide more balanced approach to various users and user experiences. Discussions primarily focused on proposed changes to the park layout, particularly the relocation of the dog off-leash area (DOLA) and its potential impact on other park activities. Concerns were raised about the impact of moving the dog park on toboggan runs, which are popular despite not being officially sanctioned. The preferred location for the DOLA was chosen for its flatter terrain. Members expressed reservations about the perceived compromises in accommodating adult baseball, emphasizing the need for a full-size diamond and expressing concerns about the proposed fencing. Additionally, concerns were voiced about the marginalization of the skate park and the perceived dominance of soccer interests in the park planning.

Some members advocated for a return to the original plan to maintain a balance between different park activities. Residents expressed satisfaction with the decision to maintain open green spaces and avoid the installation of a 10-foot fence that could restrict access. The revised plans for two baseball diamonds without outfield fences were discussed, with questions raised about potential future improvements such as seating. Questions about the ground material for the dog park, the fate of a legacy dog fountain, and the urgency of west stairs replacement were also addressed. Despite concerns about the deteriorating stairs, immediate action was deemed challenging due to budget constraints and procurement standards, and the matter was included in the broader Phase One scope of work.

3.0 Meeting Minutes

- **Questions/Comment:** If the dog park is going to move South a bit, how is that going to impact the toboggan runs? Because that's one safe place where there are no trees in the way. I know tobogganing is not officially allowed, but everybody brings their kids there.
 - **Response:** The location for the dog off-leash area (DOLA) was the preferred location because it has a flatter terrain. We don't know if the fence of the DOLA will interfere with toboggans, but it is not a sanctioned tobogganing hill.
- **Questions/Comment:** It seems to me that public participation interpretations are a little bit qualitative, and I'm hearing some real changes tonight over interpretation from the entire process. The first one is, baseball needs a full size diamond, they don't need a small diamond. And one of the features of the plan was accommodating adult baseball, which is short on facilities. I'm hearing that being compromised. Second one is the role of the fence and separating baseball from the rest of the park. And that low fence was not to be a barrier of entry or crossing or using the park, but it was to provide a safe separation. Loss of that would seem to be really compromising baseball. This three point is what I would say is a marginalization of the skatepark. We've moved the skate park up next to the basketball court. The only winners from all this is North Toronto Soccer. And a substantial portion of us have said there's just too much soccer in the park. And yet here we are contracting baseball, moving the skate park at the behest of North Toronto Soccer.
 - **Response:** The inclusion of the 10-12 foot tall fence on the baseball diamond would segment the possibility of the green space and limit the openness for all

park users. In our lens that was really about a space for everybody. And that's why it's maintaining the existing space for soccer, baseball, and the general park users. For the skate spot, we didn't just identify the new Location D along Eglinton Avenue to make sure that the soccer fields are available. What we heard from the last CAG meeting was it was also going to impact the green space.

- **Questions/Comment:** How does making the baseball diamond smaller, reduce the area you get to hit to if you have the same hitters. The fence as I understood it was to have openings in it so you could still get through during non-baseball periods and close them and protect safety, so a high fence would not be a problem if gated.
 - **Response:** We're not necessarily shrinking the baseball diamond. We're shrinking something that was proposed in concept and when we looked at it again in detail through the space a larger baseball diamond is a non-City standard, it's for Premier League.
- **Questions/Comment:** I like the idea of going back to the original plan. That's going to work. Other members have made comments that most of us have concerns about soccer, but I don't, from Lytton Park Residents' Organization. Please don't speak for us on that regard. I welcome soccer and I think it's great having this plan accommodate soccer as it is.
- **Question/Comment:** I know that a lot of the kids in the park they are they use that green space even when there's no there isn't any soccer or baseball going on. You know they like to run through it. Cutting off that entire area with a 10 foot fence, even with openings in it, would have greatly hampered the space. I'm really happy that we've gone back to the status quo. I think it's a really good way to share the space. So thank you for taking that into consideration.
- **Question/Comment:** We're quite pleased to see the open space remaining open. This park hosts people through all four seasons. There are organized sports and I understand some sensitivity around soccer, but there's so many users that are not doing sports. They're just taking walks and people like myself and families just walking and having this open space is precious. It's amazing that we are capable of keeping that and I salute us going back to try to accommodate as many people as possible and to see the diamonds remaining the way they are and keeping it open.
- **Question/Comment:** The revised plans to two baseball diamonds means no fence in the outfield. Just to comment on the original plan was just the one diamond 400 feet where the fence line is. Fenway Park in Boston was 400 feet to the wall. So that would have been a very large diamond. I'm just wondering if you could have had the full soccer field and still a fence with doors, but I was just curious about that.
 - **Response:** We looked at many different studies looking at the various soccer fields and changing the orientation and to see how we could maximize the use of the green space. But really it was knowing that anything larger than what we had now would require a safety fence, and a very tall safety fence, that would bisect through that green space and through the park and that was something that we as design consultants didn't recommend and also City staff were not in favor of. And that's just about usability of the park for all people for all sports, and making it as accessible as possible to the variety of community members who use the park.
- **Question/Comment:** Now that you have the two diamonds instead of one, will they be updated at all by putting in seating places? Because I know the new one was going to be quite nice with lights and seating arrangements, whatnot.

- **Response:** This work will not be slated until future phases of implementation. So this phase will include the improvement of some sort of fence along that path that connects the stair across to the main path. And that's a protective measure for people from baseballs. Beyond that, no improvements during this phase of work and it can be looked at in more detail in future phases as funds are allocated to the project.
- **Question/Comment:** What is the size of the dogs off-leash area? What will that be in terms of length and width?
 - It's shown on the map as a rectangle and that's to scale, but it doesn't have to be a rectangle. It's most likely going to be some sort of organic shape. These are the kinds of details we can talk about at the next CAG meeting.
- **Questions/Comment:** ARECA (Avenue Road Eglinton Community Association) does not support the dogs off-leash area, but that's another story. ARECA does not support having a dog park but we voiced our position for several reasons, but I see it's there and it looks like it's going to stay there. The smaller, the better. It's not going to solve the original issue of having dogs outside of the park. Concerns were raised about kids going down the hills and the smell in the summertime is a concern.
 - Does ARECA not support the location or the design? The dogs off-leash area will stay there, but it's still important to note your opposition so we appreciate you raising that. One of the new standards for dogs off-leash areas is to look at having an irrigation system that will rinse off the off-leash area. So that is something that we'll be looking at, which should help with those concerns.
- **Question/Comment:** There's a legacy dog fountain that's currently in the park. Will that be staying or maybe moved to the dogs off-leash area?
 - **Response:** The intent is to move it so it'll be kind of in conversation with the dog park. We're thinking currently that it will be outside of the dog park, but adjacent to the dog park.
- **Question/Comment:** Even though the skate park is not technically in Priority Area #1 anymore, will the construction still be taking place at the same time as Priority Area #1?
 - It will be included in this phase of work even though it's located within Priority Area #2.
- **Question/Comment:** What's the ground material for the dogs off-leash area? Is it going to be dirt or will there be some sort of specialized material?
 - **Response:** We don't know at this stage. The city is working on putting out new guidelines and they'll make recommendations. So it'll be a conversation with the community, as well as the parks operation and maintenance to determine what the best possible ground cover is for that area.
- **Question/Comment:** On the west stairs replacement, that's really urgent. What's the time frame? Any possibility of doing anything quite quickly? I'm not sure the stairs will be able to go for another year. They're really bad.
 - **Response:** That was a consideration. We had hoped that that was something that's possible, but based on the current budgets that are coming in on the cost of it is not possible to quickly roster to hire a contractor, based on Toronto's procurement standards. So it's best to roll it into the entire Phase One scope of work. We'll bring this to the park supervisor and review it. We're doing our best. It's going to be great once we get it done, but in the meantime, we'll inspect that location and I don't want to say we'll close the stairs, but we'll do our best and see if there's minor repairs that we can do.



prepared by Saffy

April 4, 2023