

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

# Moss Park Park Improvements & John Innes Community Recreation Centre Replacement

## Pop-Ups: Preferred Design Summary Report

Engagement Dates:

July 29 and August 1, 2023

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## 1.0 About this Report

This report was prepared by SAFFY, third-party community engagement consultants hired by the City of Toronto to facilitate the community engagement process for the Moss Park Park Improvements and John Innes Community Recreation Centre.

This report summarizes key findings from the final round of Pop-Ups held for the Moss Park Park Improvements and John Innes Community Recreation Centre. The Pop-Ups were located at Moss Park Market (260 Queen St. East) Moss Park Park and John Innes Community Recreation Centre (CRC) conducted on July 29 and August 2, 2023.

This report includes a summary of key comments and input collected from the engagement activities and conversations with Pop-Up attendees.

More information about the project, including project timelines, an overview and summaries of previous engagement activities is available on the [project webpage](#).

## 2.0 Overview of Activity

On Saturday July 29 2023 and August 2, 2023, the engagement team conducted Pop-Ups in various locations around the Moss Park community. Pop-Ups are a form of public engagement that are interactive and informal consultations in which organizers ‘pop-up’ a table, booth, activity, etc., in various locations with the intention to reach the broadest audience possible, be accessible, and meet community members where they already are.

The first round of Pop-Ups took place on Saturday July 29, first at the Moss Park Market (260 Queen St. East) from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., then the engagement team relocated to Moss Park from 2 to 4 p.m. The second round of Pop-Ups happened a week later on August 2, 2023 from 12 to 5 p.m. at the John Innes CRC.

The primary goal was to collect public feedback on the overall satisfaction of the preferred design for the Park and CRC, and specific feedback was collected about Park elements such as the Pathways, Playground features and types of seating. This information will be used to inform the designers on refining the preferred design concept for the Park improvements and John Innes CRC replacement.

Large boards were on display (See Appendix A), the boards shared information, as well as plans and renderings of the latest Park and CRC designs. The boards also included questions and prompts for visitors to solicit further feedback. Members of the project team were on hand to facilitate conversations, guide people through the different design elements, and record feedback. Some Youth Mentees, Local Advisory Group Members and Project Champions also supported the Pop-Up facilitation.

### 3.0 Who We Engaged

Number of people engaged: ~75

Pop-Up were promoted on the project website as well as emails that were sent to stakeholders and individuals who had subscribed to the mailing list.

Effort was made to leverage existing community-led events to maximize engagement. Participation in the Moss Park Market and coincided with a Moss Park Coalition meeting. This approach allowed for a varied level of engagement, from casual interactions to more in-depth conversations. Members of the project team proactively engaged with attendees as they lined up for the market to gather input on the new Park and CRC design, as well as in introducing the project to some individuals for the first time.

The Pop-Ups were also carefully coordinated with John Innes CRC Parks and Recreation staff to coincide with youth weight-room sessions, camp counselor training, and summer camp activities. This deliberate scheduling facilitated meaningful interactions and generated valuable insights from youth, children, and their families.



*Photo: (Left) Members of the project team talking to a resident at the Moss Park Park pop Up; (Right) Pop-Up set up at Moss Park Market.*

## 4.0 What We Heard

Through this process, several key findings, common themes, and preferences emerged from the collected data. The analysis of the data yielded insights into various aspects of the Park and CRC design. Most popular themes are further described below. For a comprehensive list of comments taken from Pop-Up discussion can be found in [Appendix B](#).

### **Washroom Maintenance and Accessibility**

There were suggestions aimed at enhancing washroom access, particularly with regards to the high number of senior gardeners attending the community garden. Specific concerns revolved around the maintenance of outdoor washroom facilities, to the extent that there were even suggestions about implementing auto cleaning measures for these washrooms. Other participants also expressed their curiosity regarding the operational hours of the outdoor washrooms and pointed out that having designated timeframes for these facilities to be open could contribute to their effective maintenance.

### **Park Safety Features**

Attendees discussed their thoughts about their perceptions of safety within the park. Some suggestions included increasing the number of lights and the installation of emergency buzzers and pillars. These pillars serve not only as a form of wayfinding but also incorporate technological features, functioning as a means to quickly call for assistance in case of emergencies.

### **Programming and Functional Considerations**

Attendees suggested various functions for these spaces, including designated areas for board games, setting up public computer labs and spaces equipped for video-gaming and computers for youth.

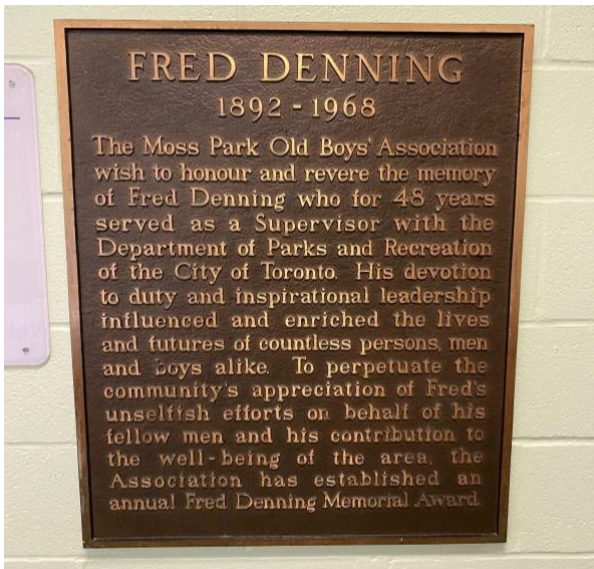
Regarding the sports areas, recommendations were made to enhance their functionality, ensuring proper storage for fitness equipment, and expanding equipment availability. Attendees expressed a desire for newer and well-maintained equipment.

Furthermore, the discussions led to specific suggestions around certain sports facilities, notably the weight room and basketball areas. Recommendations were put forth to optimize the layout of basketball courts, particularly by enhancing corner shot visibility. Additionally, the need for sufficient space within the weight room was emphasized, reflecting the input of weight room users.

## Consideration for Staff Spaces

The Pop-Ups also allowed members of the engagement team to connect to Parks and Recreation staff working at John Innes CRC. While the overall reception of the design was positive, staff members offered valuable insights regarding the administrative and office areas. They specifically recommended the inclusion of a dedicated staff lounge and a fully equipped staff kitchen complete with a refrigerator, sink, and stove. A dedicated staff kitchen would alleviate reliance on the community kitchen for staff to warm their meals etc. Staff lockers were also suggested as an important element to consider when building the administrative offices/staff areas. Staff also suggested incorporating a secure room with a lockable door positioned adjacent to the reception area. This space would serve as a storage area for staff belongings and also offer a secure space for staff members too, if required.

## Preserving history of John Innes CRC and Moss Park



Some patrons and staff of the CRC contributed valuable insights regarding the local significance attached to certain existing features of the CRC and Park. Notably, a staff member drew attention to the Fred Denning Commemorative plaque situated within the center. They emphasized their wish for the plaque to remain visible and not stored away in an archive. Additionally, they shared that a scholarship fund bearing the same name was previously awarded to community members, expressing curiosity about the reasons behind its discontinuation.

Another suggestion related to the lion statue positioned outside the CRC. Staff members shared that this lion is a symbol or mascot representing the center. There were mixed feelings about keeping the original but a staff member proposed the idea of incorporating a lion motif within the play structure.

## Need for accurate information about the Trees in Moss Park

There was some confusion and misinformation reaching certain members of the public concerning the trees in Moss Park. While the decision to remove trees is associated with the Ontario Line Construction, specifically the [Metrolinx Ontario Line Moss Park Station](#), there have been instances of incorrect information circulating, leading individuals to believe that all remaining trees are in jeopardy due to this park and community recreation centre project.



Attendees at the Pop-Up who raised concerns about the trees were offered information regarding the Park's tree strategy. It was clarified that any trees removed would be replaced with native tree species. Upon project completion, there will be more trees overall and more native trees in the park than before this project started. Attendees were guided to reliable sources for accurate information and directed to a specific display board further displaying the proposed tree strategy infographic, also available on the [project webpage](#).

## 5.0 Next Steps


The feedback received will be used to refine the preferred Park and CRC design. To review up to date project timelines and to be notified about upcoming engagements for the new park, visit the [project webpage](#) to sign up for e-updates.



# Appendix A: Display Boards


## Help finalize the design for the Moss Park Park Improvements & John Innes Community Recreation Centre Replacement

### About the Project



The City is improving Moss Park to better serve all community members. The project includes major park improvements which are being designed in coordination with the upcoming replacement of the 70 year old John Innes Community Recreation Centre (CRC) so that there will be direct connections between the CRC and the park enhance the community enjoyment of both spaces.

### Project Timeline



**2015 Initial reimagining of Moss Park** began as a partnership between the City of Toronto, The 519 and a volunteer partner. Engagement and feasibility study conducted.

**2019 City Council** adopted the implementation strategy for the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan with amendments.

**June 20, 2022** The City is analyzing which has been done to date, and is getting ready to begin and gather more local ideas and experiences. The project is led and funded by the Parks, Forestry and Recreation department, within the City of Toronto.

**Summer to Fall 2022** Confirm the community's vision.

**Fall 2022 - Spring 2023** Develop and present conceptual designs for feedback.

**Spring - Winter 2023** Finalize design and approvals.

**2023-2024** Construction.

**Spring 2024** Implementation of construction services.

**2024 to 2028** Opened community recreation centre.


**2028 to 2032** Park construction.

### Design Principles and Big Moves

The City Team has been working closely with members of the community to confirm an overall vision for the project, establishing a list of Design Principles (important considerations) and Big Moves (uses, features, and amenities) to guide the design process.

<b>Design Principle 1</b> Facilitate the design of the CRC and park supports equity, belonging and inclusion.	<b>Big Move 1</b> Maximize a large area of open parkland with strategic uses. Queens and Bloor by building the new CRC along the Bloorcar from the existing building.	<b>Big Move 8</b> Facilitate a renewed urban canopy of trees in Queens to reach the Waterfront.
<b>Design Principle 2</b> Ensure the CRC and Park are accessible to all.	<b>Big Move 2</b> Establish a cohesive design language between the CRC and the Arena and strong relationships between both buildings and the future Moss Park always station.	<b>Big Move 9</b> Maximize and enhance key pedestrian pathways and access points into the park.
<b>Design Principle 3</b> Create a space that makes liability for all users a priority.	<b>Big Move 3</b> Create opportunities for outdoor access for the new CRC.	<b>Big Move 10</b> Maximize and enhance existing accessible park edges and protect the existing urban canopy along Shuter.
<b>Design Principle 4</b> Bring in ecology, greenways, and transparent environmental.	<b>Big Move 4</b> Create opportunities for program and community.	<b>Big Move 11</b> Maximize and enhance key pedestrian pathways and access points into the park.
<b>Design Principle 5</b> Maximize, enhance, and improve green spaces.	<b>Big Move 5</b> Recreate outdoor spaces from the outside of the building.	<b>Big Move 12</b> Recreate formalized elements to accommodate a wider range of park uses.
<b>Design Principle 6</b> Link past and place information about the Indigenous history and character of Moss Park.	<b>Big Move 6</b> Create a new urban gateway at Queens and Sherbourne.	<b>Big Move 13</b> Place formal, dedicated dog off-leash areas to help parks support the growing number of residents with dogs, reduce existing dog-related, and to protect other park amenities and park users from conflicts with dogs.
<b>Design Principle 7</b> From Bloor to West Avenue.	<b>Big Move 7</b> Integrate Indigenous place-knowledge throughout the park.	

### Engagement Timeline



**Stage 1** Building a vision: Meeting with Indigenous representatives, Public Consultation, Public Meetings, etc.

**Stage 2** Community Co-design: Public Meetings, etc.

**Stage 3** Finalize the vision: Public Meetings, etc.

Legend:  Approximate Engagement,  Focusing on Design Engagement,  Significant Engagement

### Want to know more?

**Project Newsletter**

Scan to sign up for updates related to the Moss Park park improvements and John Innes Community Recreation Centre Replacement project or unsubscribe from the mailing list.

<https://311.toronto.ca/311/subscribe/311newsletter>

Call **311**

## Moss Park Park Improvements: Site Plan, Seating & Lighting



**LEGEND**

- 1. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 2. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 3. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 4. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 5. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
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- 12. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 13. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 14. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 15. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 16. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 17. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 18. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 19. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)
- 20. Community's existing landscape (existing building, existing trees, etc.)

### Seating

Linear benches (single red lines) are provided along walking paths and in paved areas set back from the sidewalk along both Queen St. and Sherbourne St. Tables and chairs (see 'X' shape) are provided in the Meeting Place and adjacent to the future transit station. Along the basketball courts are stepped seating areas (double red lines) for gathering and viewing the games.



### Lighting

Light poles (yellow dots) have been included along all walking paths and in each of the programming areas to provide consistent light levels across the park.



**Overall how satisfied are you with the park design?**

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
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**Do you have any other suggestions or feedback for the any of the Park Design elements?**



If you are a community member who is First Nations, Inuit or Métis, and would like to be involved in discussions about the proposed Sacred Fire Ceremonial Space, please let us know today or email [William.Skura@toronto.ca](mailto:William.Skura@toronto.ca)



Moss Park Park Improvements - Play Area, Off-Leash Dog Area, Community Garden & Tree Strategy

Play Area and Splash Pad Examples

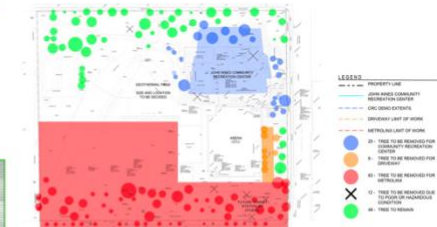


The children's play area is surrounded by a fence, and located close to the public washrooms in the CRC. The play structures include natural elements and incorporate a creek theme to reflect the buried creek which is also the inspiration for the overall park design.

Tree Strategy

Tree removal is required for the construction of John Innes Community Recreation Centre (CRC). To preserve trees and park space while also meeting the program requirements for a growing community, the footprint of the CRC was minimized by building up (four stories) rather than building out. Trees that are removed will be replaced with native tree species. When the project is complete, there will be more trees overall and more native trees in the park than before this project started. Efforts are being made to repurpose the removed trees in the design.

Overview of tree strategy in the preferred design (subject to change).



Please provide additional comments/ suggestions on the Park design.



Off Leash Dog Area



Community Garden Enlargement

The community garden area will be located in the northern portion of the park and includes a series of 4' by 8' garden plots, with walking paths around them, and a storage area for supplies. The community garden is surrounded by a fence and landscaped buffer with trees. Trees are located to avoid casting shadow on the community garden. There is a storage shed inside the fencing, in the southeast section of the community garden. Entrance to the community garden is from the east, across from the play area. The community garden will continue to be a park program run by recreation staff at John Innes CRC.



John Innes CRC Replacement: Level 1 and Level 2

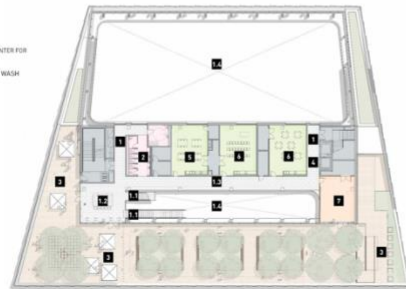
LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN

- ADULTS**
  - 1. CIVILIAN LAP POOL
  - 2. SHILLON LEISURE POOL
  - 3. TWO UNIVERSAL CHANGE ROOMS
  - 4. SHOWER
  - 5. WASHROOMS
  - 6. CHANGE STALLS
  - 7. DRESSING CENTER
  - 8. AQUATIC CENTER
  - 9. AQUATIC STAFF
  - 10. AQUATIC VENDING - IN DECK
- COMMON/ADMIN**
  - 11. AQUATIC VENDING - LOBBY
  - 12. ELEVATORS
  - 13. SIGN OFFICES
  - 14. MAIN ENTRANCE
  - 15. LOBBY
  - 16. LOBBY SEATING
  - 17. YEARLINE STAIR
  - 18. GENDER NEUTRAL PUBLIC WASHROOMS
  - 19. EXTERIOR WASHROOMS
  - 20. SIGN
- MULTIPURPOSE**
  - 21. ACTIVITY ROOM
  - 22. RECEPTION ROOM
  - 23. MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
  - 24. KITCHEN
  - 25. MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
  - 26. OUTDOOR TERRACE



LEVEL 2 FLOOR PLAN

- COMMON/ADMIN**
  - 1. PUBLIC CORRIDOR
  - 2. ELEVATOR STAIR
  - 3. BREAKOUT LOUNGE
  - 4. CORRIDOR WITH COUNTER FOR SEATING
  - 5. OPEN TO BELOW
  - 6. GENDER NEUTRAL PUBLIC WASH ROOMS
  - 7. PUBLIC ROOF TERRACE
  - 8. ELEVATORS
- MULTIPURPOSE**
  - 9. LEARNER/INACTIVITY
  - 10. ACTIVITY
- FITNESS**
  - 11. DANCE



Do you have any other suggestions or feedback for the any of the CRC elements?  
Write your thoughts on a sticky note and post it below!



John Innes CRC Replacement: Level 3 and Level 4

LEVEL 3

FLOOR PLAN

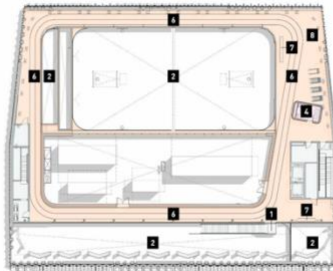
- COMMON/ADMIN
  - 1. PUBLIC CORRIDOR
  - 2. FEATURE STAIR
  - 3. OPEN TO BELOW
- 2. GENDER NEUTRAL PUBLIC WASH ROOMS
- 3. UNIVERSAL WASHROOM
- 4. ELEVATORS
- MULTIPURPOSE
  - 5. YOUTH ROOM
  - 6. BREAKOUT LOUNGE
  - 7. YOUTH MEDIA ROOM
  - 8. YOUTH STUDIO/COMPUTER ROOM
  - 9. ACTIVITY ROOM
- FITNESS
  - 10. WEIGHT ROOM
  - 11. GYMNASIUM
  - 12. FITNESS ROOM



LEVEL 4

FLOOR PLAN

- COMMON/ADMIN
  - 1. FEATURE STAIR
  - 2. OPEN TO BELOW
- 3. GENDER NEUTRAL PUBLIC WASH ROOMS
- 4. UNIVERSAL WASHROOM
- 5. ELEVATORS
- FITNESS
  - 6. WALKING TRACK
  - 7. BENCH
  - 8. STRETCHING



Overall how satisfied are you with the CRC design?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
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Do you have any other suggestions or feedback for the any of the CRC elements?

Write your thoughts on a sticky note and post it below!



John Innes CRC - Building Exterior



# Moss Park – Park Renderings





## Appendix B: Comment Log

\*As per the City's Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination policy, xenophobic, misogynist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-Indigenous, ableist, ageist or other forms of discriminatory, prejudicial, exclusionary, or hateful comments or questions have been removed in this document.

Some comments have been edited for clarity.

- Generally positive and excited reactions.
- People wanted to bring their little dogs into the community centre to sit and hang out in the lobby, specifically older people with little dogs.
- Support for pickleball.
- Excited about the terrace.
- Suggestions for a food forest on the terrace and within the community garden.
- Suggested enclosing the garden like a greenhouse.
- Language classes.
- Programs for at-risk youth.
- Financial literacy, games.
- Health programming (education, fitness, nutrition).
- Weights and conditioning opportunities made people happy.
- Idea for a video game space for youth.
- I don't want to see the trees cut down, but I appreciate the tree planting strategy and the consideration for the importance of shade.
- Positive feedback on the SSHA, with suggestions for expansion and more services.
- Want to see staff of all ages and abilities.
- Excited to use the new aquatics centre.
- The exterior design of the CRC should better reflect the community (in terms of the look and feel, bricks used, etc.).
- Love the food forest. Herbs could be added to the food forest. No crab apple trees. Use chestnuts instead. I would like to see flowering pedaled trees for beauty.
- The community centre should be moved over to where the arena is, and the arena moved elsewhere, as hockey is not well used by diverse communities.
- Add some picnic tables.
- Better garbage cans in the park as there is a lot of garbage cans on Queen Street.
- Don't want to see smoking or drinking in the park should consider autism or have designated areas.
- SSHA [Shelter, Support and Housing Administration] should be expanded or do more.
- Work with other departments so people in the area have places to live and it will not be challenging to have a beautiful park.
- More bike parking as people want to lock up close to where they are in the park.
- Bikes get stolen.
- Current park is full and they like the idea of an improved park.
- Park safety is important with improved lighting.
- Should add emergency buzzers or pillars with lights to call for safety in the park.
- Tables and chairs should be locked up, so they don't get stolen.
- Washrooms should have better access to garden for senior gardeners.
- Questions about the risk to the capital budget and the risk to the project as a result of the delays to the project.
- It's important to let people shower without swimsuits as a more sanitary option.
- I'm confused about which trees are coming down. I thought more trees would be removed.
- See the Indigenous group on the sign for Moss Park.

- Jimmie Simpson [Recreation Centre] has strong but timed showers which are better than Pam McConnell [Aquatic Centre] where the water pressure is so low, and you need to stand in them forever. Stronger showers = faster shower time for people (low flow showers take a long time) which is important if you're talking about efficiency.
- I'm confused about which trees are coming down. I thought more trees would be removed.
- See the Indigenous group on the sign for Moss Park.
- I'd like to see more picnic tables.
- We're a family with 3-year-old that doesn't come to this playground because it's unsafe or sketchy. We are happy to see safety improvements, connections to the playground and community centre, more animation for safety, etc.
- More picnic tables in the park!
- Place the new community centre over the arena so that the trees and parkland are not disturbed. Do not replace the ice rinks if there is no budget. Hockey and skating are not priority activities for the neighbourhood. Hockey especially is a spot for more privileged people as it has a high cost barrier to access. Sports like cricket, soccer and basketball are more priority for community members in this neighbourhood.
- Turtle Island Carers of Fire held a Sacred Fire to honor threatened trees.
- The "Marked For Death" signs on most of the trees all along Shuter Street lead the community to believe more trees are under threat.
- Very satisfied with the design and the park design.
- I like the CRC design and excited for the swimming pool.
- I went to the current CRC but was turned away sometimes. The staff needs to be kinder and more compassionate.
- I would use the CRC for swimming and like the design!
- Picnic tables to meet up and enjoy a meal outside.
- I would use the CRC but I'll be 80 when it's finished.
- I heard complaints about the tree removal, but I think it's more important to have more amenities and a safer park at the cost of some trees in the park. I'm happy to see the CRC will attract more kids and families. My 30-something daughter uses the arena now, but she makes sure that her husband picks her up because she feels unsafe in the neighbourhood.
- Perhaps rebuild the TCHC building across from the CRC.
- I'm a personal trainer working nearby and I'm excited to see more positive changes to the neighbourhood. I might use the pool. Will the tennis courts be renovated?
- What's happening with the trees being cut?
- Importance of non-gendered showers for sanitary purposes.
- I'd like to see a dedicated staff lounge and a fully equipped staff kitchen with a refrigerator, sink, and stove. Staff wouldn't need to heat up our meals in the community kitchen.
- Staff lockers would be great in the administrative offices/staff areas.
- There should be a secure room with a lockable door, next to the reception area to our belongings and also offer a secure space for staff members too, if required.
- Recommendations for the woodshop, including ventilation, sinks, and panic buttons.
- Ideas for the youth space, including a board games area, kitchenette, and computer lab.
- Keep the Fred Denning Commemorative plaque, situated within the center, visible and not stored away in an archive.
- A scholarship fund bearing the same name was previously awarded to community members, uncertain why it was discontinued.
- The lion statue outside the centre is a symbol or mascot representing the center. There were mixed feelings about keeping the original, but a staff member proposed the idea of incorporating a lion motif within the play structure.
- Need for storage and spaciousness in fitness areas.
- I'm concerned about the maintenance of outdoor washroom facilities. Could they be self-cleaning?
- When would the outdoor washrooms be open?



- There could be set hours for the outdoor washrooms, so that they could be effectively maintained.
- There needs to be proper storage for fitness equipment, more equipment available.
- Newer and well-maintained equipment.
- Optimize the layout of basketball courts, particularly by enhancing corner shot visibility.
- Weight room users said there is a need for sufficient space within the weight room.