

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

# 25 Oakcrest CAG

## Community Advisory Group Meeting 1

Meeting Summary

June 12, 2023

Sam Bietenholz, Senior Project Coordinator  
Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator



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## Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting that was held virtually on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

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

## Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Welcome and introduce CAG members & the project team
- Confirm Terms of Reference
- Present a project overview and history
- Gather CAG members' feedback on preliminary findings, site studies and draft preliminary design options
- Share next steps

## Attendance

### CAG Members Present

- 22 CAG members were in attendance

### Project Staff Present

- Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
- Sam Bietenholz, Senior Project Coordinator, Capital Projects
- Katy Aminian, Senior Project Manager, Capital Projects
- Zori Petrova, Serdika Consulting

## Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference was shared in advance of the meeting for CAG members to review and sign. Members made no suggested edits or comments. The Terms of Reference was signed and approved by all CAG members present.

CAG members absent from the meeting will review and confirm the Terms of Reference through email.

## Presentation

Project staff presented:

- A summary of what the engagement team has heard throughout the visioning engagement activities (three pop-ups).
- An overview of the 25 Oakcrest engagement and design process.
- An overview of the project timeline, feasibility study, project history and existing site conditions.
- A detailed explanation of the draft preliminary design options

The full presentation is available on the [project webpage](#).

## Discussion

An open discussion period followed the presentation. Questions (**Q**) and comments (**C**) from CAG members are included below, as well as responses (**R**) from City Staff present at the meeting. During the meeting, questions, comments, and responses have been carefully recorded to ensure their accuracy. For the purpose of this report, they have been reviewed for grammatical and text formatting improvements.

**Q:** Is the "#6 Accessible Walkways / Ramps" only within the park and towards Oakcrest Ave? Could it be added in addition to the "#11 Existing Stairs from Oakcrest to Woodbine? Based on what was presented, are there any leading down to Woodbine?

**R:** No, the slope to woodbine is too great for an accessible path within the property limits of 25 Oakcrest. The existing footpath (desire line) is not accessible and cuts across Metrolinx lands at the bottom of the hill.**C:** Aging population, and parents with strollers - I would happily lose park space if it needs an S shape. An accessible path would be amazing.

**C:** The green space would be great for programming, however, given the close proximity to GO train, it will be very loud. And in the future, it will be more frequent GO train.

**C:** There already is a path from the top of the path. It would be a good idea to retain and uplift that path. The other side of the stairs might be more useful on Danforth and Woodbine.

**C:** Formalize the footpath people have created. And it's given that people take that path. Incorporate seating along the walls of the switchback.

**C:** The existing stairs are extremely steep and are a hazard in the winter. The objective should be to improve accessibility. But as seen, people are using a man-made footpath because there is a need for better accessibility - if we can do anything to improve it even if it is not perfect - I think that should be a priority. We would like to see an option that does work in the parameters we have.

**R:** *Parks objectives are to connect users to new recreational facilities. The stairs and pedestrian accessibility from sidewalk to sidewalk is Traffic Services responsibility.*

**Q:** How could the 2 designs be better connected to 1) the West side of Woodbine (closest walking option is to walk down to Gerrard and around (450m) vs across the street (14m)), 2) the sidewalk on Woodbine south of the rail corridor (unpleasant walk under the bridge), and 3) the existing Oakcrest Parkette?

**R:** The objective of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation is provide recreational facilities, parks and open spaces. Providing pedestrian connections, walkways and sidewalk would be a project

for Transportation Services plans, who oversee transportation infrastructure within the public right-of-way, including the public realm, sidewalks and roads.

**Q:** What is the approx. square footage of the proposed flat space at the top of the design?

**R:** For both Option A and B – the flat spaces (seating, exercise and walkway areas) are approximately 100m<sup>2</sup> (1,100ft<sup>2</sup>).

**Q:** Are there proposed lights going in?

**R:** No, there are no lighting in the current proposals.

**Q:** With the possible increase in trains and therefore noise, wouldn't it make sense for this plot to be used as more of a pollinator garden rather than a meeting/play area?

**R:** There should be enough space to have both.

**Q:** Of the two plans, I prefer the one with the more circular flat area, it feels like it would fit better with a natural space. Is it possible to include a small fitness center in that format?

**R:** The concepts are very preliminary and trying to identify program ideas. The aesthetic (square vs. round shapes) would be adjustable when detail design exercise is undertaken.

**Q:** The CN area south of the park is overwhelmingly dog strangling vine (DSV), which spreads like crazy (25 Oakcrest is also full of it, but less so). What can we do (e.g. solid fencing) to prevent DSV seeds from spreading into the park, which they do at present?

**R:** This issues requires a maintenance plan, once an appropriate concept and use for the space have been developed.

**Q:** Could gardens be accommodated over the storm sewer?

**R:** No infrastructure, permanent structures or trees are allowed on the storm sewer easement. Some planting might be okay, but not recommended because it would have to be removed at PFR's expense should Toronto Water have to undertake any maintenance.

**Q:** What about shared community garden space as opposed to allotments?

**R:** The space and area is not suitable to allotment gardens.

**C:** Noise - we could start to have some sort of soundproofing along the fence.

**C:** Switchback sounds terrible, they are all concrete, and no one uses it - if we can see a live example, it will help us make a decision. The switchback would be similar to the path in UTSC that goes into the ravine.

**C:** They are not interested in a fitness area.

**C:** More fruit trees would be ideal.

**C:** Dog strangling vine? Spray the area to get rid of the DSV. The slope is very steep to pick fruit, and the noise problem is from the cars and not the trains.

## **Recommended Design Priorities for the new green space at 25 Oakcrest**

The following provides a summary of the CAG members' discussion about priorities and suggestions for the new green space, as well as other conversations that emerged during the meeting:

### **General Summary:**

The recommended design priorities for 25 Oakcrest, a new green space, should prioritize **accessibility, noise mitigation, community programming, and addressing invasive species**. Providing accessible walkways, addressing concerns towards the existing stairs, as well as train and traffic noise are key aspects to consider. The project team should work towards mitigating these issues, if possible. Additionally, measures to prevent the spread of dog strangling vine (DSV) and creating pollinator gardens are important considerations.

Recommended Design Priorities for 25 Oakcrest:

### **Accessibility:**

- Provide accessible walkways and spaces within the park, considering the needs of the aging population and parents with strollers.

### **Noise Mitigation:**

- Solutions for noise mitigation must come from side the transportation as they must be continuous along the entire corridor to be effective.

### **Community Programming:**

- Design the green space to accommodate various community programs and activities.
- Formalize and incorporate existing footpaths used by the community, adding seating along the switchbacks for convenience.

### **Plantings and Invasive Species:**

- Take measures to prevent the spread of dog strangling vine (DSV) from the surrounding areas, considering solid fencing or working with the relevant authorities to control it.
- Consider creating a pollinator garden in the park as an alternative, given the potential challenges with maintaining traditional gardens.

### **Connection to Surrounding Areas:**

- 

### **Flat Programmable Space in Preliminary Design Options:**

- Provide approximate square footage of the proposed flat space at the top of the design to better understand the available area.
- Explore the possibility of incorporating small fitness facilities in the circular flat area, which aligns well with a natural space.

### **Community Garden Space:**

- Consider shared community garden space as an alternative to individual allotments, providing opportunities for collaborative gardening and fostering community engagement.

These recommended design priorities have been created based on feedback and insights shared by CAG members. They aim to create a vibrant, accessible, and environmentally

conscious green space at 25 Oakcrest. The revised draft designs should consider the varying needs of residents, enhance connectivity to the surrounding areas, and incorporate sustainable practices for long-term maintenance and enjoyment

**Issues that are important to the Park Space, but require other Sections to address:**

- Consider adding accessible pathways in addition to existing stairs from Oakcrest to Woodbine, improving overall accessibility.
- Provide a design option that includes a switchback ramp or meandering path with native plants along the edges that could serve as pollinators and provide habitat for birds and bees.
- Improve connectivity to the West side of Woodbine, the sidewalk south of the rail corridor, and the existing Oakcrest Parkette.
- Plan pathways and walkways that enable convenient and pleasant access to these neighboring areas.
- Address the potential noise issue from the nearby GO train tracks, considering the increasing frequency of trains in the future.
- Explore soundproofing options along the park's fence to reduce noise impact.

## Next Steps

- Members can send additional ideas, comments, or suggestions to [Elijah.Bawuah@toronto.ca](mailto:Elijah.Bawuah@toronto.ca).
- Members will have one week to provide suggested edits to the draft summary, after which the summary will be finalized.
- The design teams will consider feedback from the CAG meeting and other community engagement events to create revised draft designs for the new green space at 25 Oakcrest.
- The second CAG meeting is planned to take place in November 2023.
  - Members will receive an email to confirm a meeting date and time at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date.

## Contact Us

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

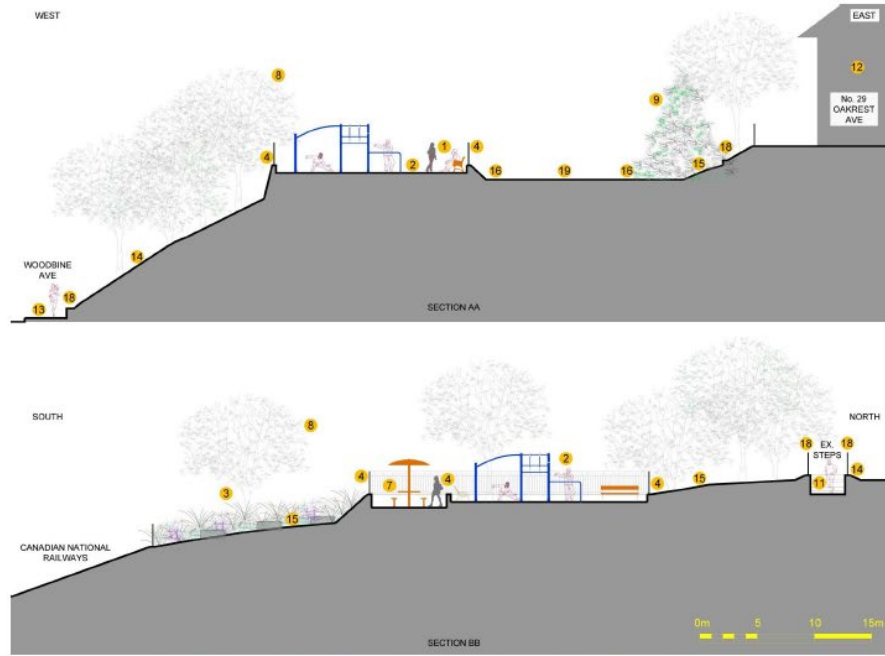
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# Appendix A: Draft Design Options

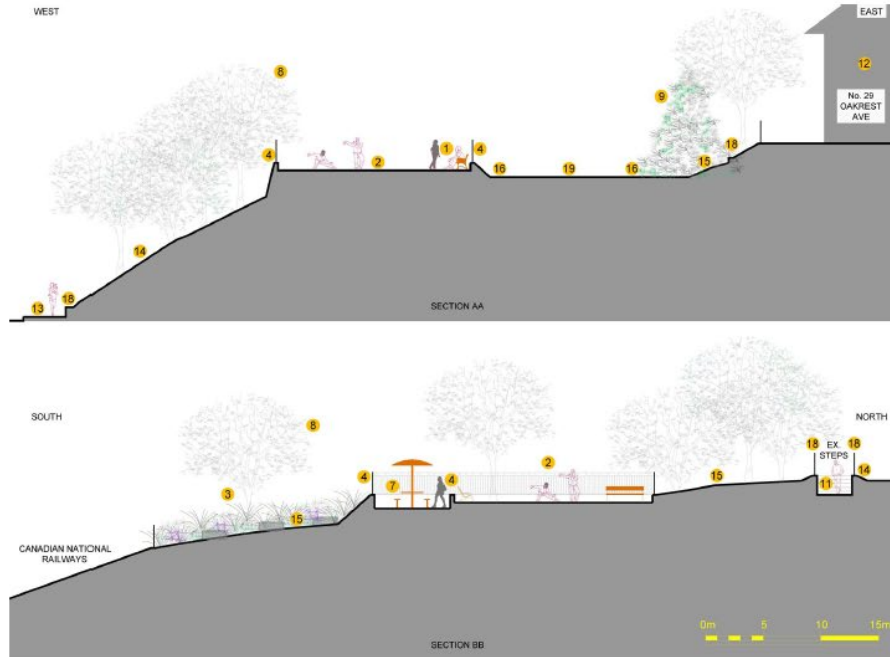
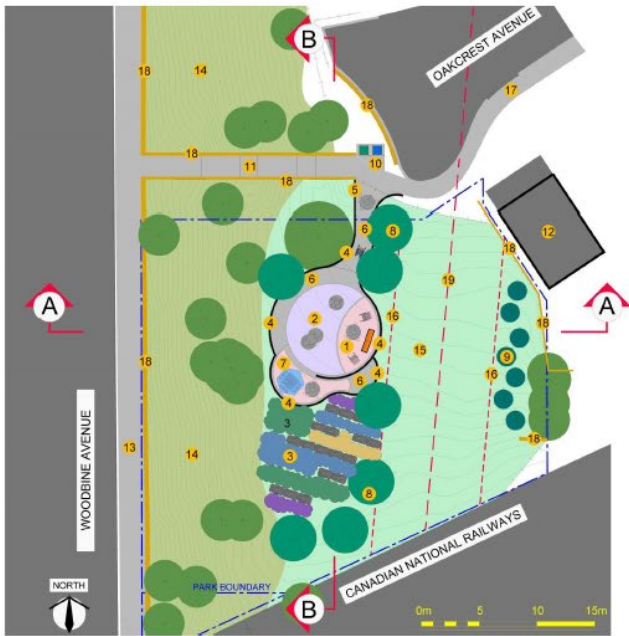
## Design Option A



### Key Legend—option A

- |  |  |   |                              |
|--|--|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Seating Area                        | 6. Accessible Walkways / Ramps   | 11. Existing Stairs From Oakcrest To Woodbine | 16. Storm Sewer Setback 9m   |
| 2. Fitness Area With Synthetic Surface | 7. Lookout Toward Pollinator Planting With Interpretive Sign And Seating | 12. House at No. 29 Oakcrest                  | 17. Oakcrest Avenue Sidewalk |
| 3. Pollinator Planting On Slope        | 8. New Shade Trees   | 13. Woodbine Avenue Sidewalk                  | 18. Existing Retaining Walls |
| 4. Retaining Walls With Guardrails     | 9. New Privacy Trees   | 14. Very Steep Slopes                         | 19. Storm Sewer              |
| 5. Park Sign Wall                      | 10. Waste Bins   | 15. Steep Slopes                              |                              |

## Design Option B



### Key Legend- option B

1. Seating Area
2. Open Play Area With Synthetic Surface / No Equipment
3. Pollinator Planting On Slope
4. Retaining Walls With Guardrails

5. Park Sign Wall
6. Accessible Walkways / Ramps
7. Lookout Toward Pollinator Planting With Interpretive Sign And Seating
8. New Shade Trees
9. New Privacy Trees

10. Waste Bins
11. Existing Stairs From Oakcrest To Woodbine
12. House at No. 29 Oakcrest
13. Woodbine Avenue Sidewalk
14. Very Steep Slopes

15. Steep Slopes
16. Storm Sewer Setback 9m
17. Oakcrest Avenue Sidewalk
18. Existing Retaining Walls
19. Storm Sewer