

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

New Park at Dundas Street West & Thomas Riley Road

Community Advisory Committee
Meeting #1 Summary

January 2024

Leigh Lichtenberg, Senior Project Coordinator
Elijah Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator



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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Community Advisory Circle (CAC) meeting that was held virtually on December 12, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Visit toronto.ca/DWTRParks for more information about the project.

Project Update: As the project proceeds, focus will be placed on Park A as a budget and the delivery timing is unknown for Park B. The scope of this project will be changed as such to focus on Park A. Park B will be revisited in the future once delivery timing is understood by the developer.

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Welcome and introduce CAC members to the project team
- Provide an overview of the project
- Discuss design ideas and opportunities for the two new parks
- Answer CAC members' questions and collect their feedback

Attendance

Project Team Present

- Elijah Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
- Leigh Lichtenberg, Senior Project Coordinator

CAC Members Present

7 CAC members attended the meeting.

Presentation

The project team presented:

- An overview of the project background, engagement process, and timeline
- The location and size of the two new parks

A brief question and answer period followed the presentation.

Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

Based on the feedback received from the CAC and IAC, the following Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the new park were developed.

Vision Statement

The new park near Dundas Street West and Thomas Riley Road, will provide much needed green for the community, and honour Etobicoke's and the City's local Indigenous roots. The new park will be vibrant public spaces that weave together important community interests such as nature, fitness, gathering, and cultural heritage. This park will offer an inclusive and dynamic environment where community thrives, cultural roots can be learned, and natural elements are preserved.

Guiding Principles

1. Inclusive Design:

- **Fitness for All:** Equip the park with fitness areas or flexible open space, considering diverse age groups and abilities, ensuring inspiration is taken from Cloverdale Park, not duplicated.
- **Seating Variety:** Provide a mix of social and quiet seating options, accommodating the diverse needs of families, elderly, and youth, ensuring accessibility and comfort across seasons.
- **Water Elements:** Integrate splash pads or interactive water features that serve both aesthetic and practical purposes, offering relief in summer and serving as landmarks.

2. Nature-Centric Spaces:

- **Greenery and Shade:** Prioritize planting trees for shade, reducing paving, and emphasizing open green spaces for activities like Tai Chi, ensuring a strong focus on greenery and natural elements.
- **Native and Pollinator Plantings:** Encourage biodiversity through native and pollinator-friendly plantings, considering community gardens with both decorative and functional (e.g., vegetable, medicinal) plants.
- **Natural Materials:** Use natural materials in seating, playgrounds, and other park features, ensuring durability and aesthetic harmony with the natural surroundings.

3. Indigenous Placekeeping:

- Incorporate Indigenous placekeeping principles by integrating medicinal gardens, and native plantings, ensuring the design reflects Indigenous knowledge, stories, and symbols.

- Indigenous Cultural Elements: Embed cultural signifiers like the Medicine Wheel, traditional poems, and teachings throughout the park, ensuring interactive and educational experiences.
 - Community Programming: Design spaces for community events like festivals, ensuring the park serve as hubs for community engagement and cultural exchange.
4. Interactive and Educational Play:
- Dynamic Play Areas: Include play areas that cater to a range of ages, integrating natural materials and designs that encourage imaginative play and physical activity.
 - Educational Elements: Incorporate elements that educate about local flora, fauna, and cultural heritage, ensuring play areas are not only fun but also informative.
5. Sustainable and Seasonal Adaptability:
- Eco-Friendly Practices: Employ sustainable practices like rainwater harvesting for garden irrigation and the use of renewable materials in construction.
 - Seasonal Consideration: Ensure the park's design considers seasonal changes, providing shade in summer, wind protection, and seating that is comfortable year-round.
6. Safety, Accessibility, and Comfort:
- Lighting and Pathways: Ensure all pathways and program areas are well-lit and accessible, promoting safety and ease of navigation.
 - Noise Mitigation: Incorporate design elements to mitigate noise from nearby roads, creating a tranquil environment.
 - Safety from Roads: Ensure road safety is considered, especially in regard to the frontage along Dundas St W.

What We Heard

The discussion was facilitated using Miro, an online white board tool. As the anticipated outcomes of this phase, a vision statement and design principles were defined on the board. The board highlighted various park design ideas, including precedent images and questions related to types of seating, a shade structure, playground elements and themes, types of green space, an off-leash area, natural materials, game tables, a splash pad, and a fitness station.

The complete Miro board, including CAC members' feedback, is shown below and can be [accessed here](#).

5415 Dundas Street CAC

Towards a Vision



The feedback recorded on the Miro board has been summarized and arranged into themes below. These comments are not presented verbatim.

Comments about **fitness** included:

- Fitness equipment.
- Tens and young adults would use the fitness equipment. Consider future residents in nearby condos.
- Fitness area exists at Cloverdale Park.

Comments about **seating** included:

- A mix of both social and quiet/isolated seating, given the demographics of the local community.
- Social seating is beneficial to elderly and to encourage social interactions amongst residents/neighbours.
- Social seating provides a space for teens and kids to gather after school or play. New condos will have lots of kids living in them - seen with existing condos in the area.
- Food is available for purchase from the base of newer condos and a space should be provided for park users to eat and sit.
- Mix of backless and seating with back support.
- Seating options that can be used/maintained throughout all seasons.
- Considering the context of the area, lounge chairs may not be used often outside of the summer months.
- Lounge or Muskoka chairs for the isolated seating.
- Café-style seating.
- Seating that uses natural materials.
- Round picnic tables.

Comments about **water elements** included:

- Water feature that can help with cooling off during the summer months.
- Splash pads that are designed for adults and kids.
- Decorative water feature that provides relaxing sounds and can double as a splash pad.
- A water feature to define entrance to the park – may help with wind.
- Six Points has a splash pad.
- Two pools proposed for the nearby civic centre.
- Water fountains.

Comments about **trees and plants** included:

- Trees for shade. (2)
- Less paving. (2)
- Focus on greenery. (2)
- Shrubs (2) and bushes, including shrubs along Dundas St. W.
- Open lawn space (2) for community activities such as Tai Chi.
- Pollinator and native plantings.

- Small community garden.
- Emphasize nature in the design.
- Concrete planters to define entrance to the park – may help with wind.

Comments about the **off-leash area (OLA)** included:

- Seating, including isolated seating.
- Shade structure, if trees are not possible.
- Trees or plantings that can survive.
- Dog water fountains.
- Separate areas for small dogs and big dogs – safety concern.
- Use Cedervale Park as inspiration.

Comments about a **shade structure** included:

- Shade structure that can protect from rain.
- Larger shade structures.
- Shade structure can be designed with Indigenous elements.

Comments about **game tables or play activities** included:

- Lack of game/play activities in the area.
- Low-maintenance games tables.
- Cornhole would be of interest to adults and teens.
- Ping-pong – many can't play it in their condos.
- Games tables that can be converted into more than one game.
- Chess may not be used due to it requiring more pieces to play compared to other game table options.

Comments about the **playground** included:

- Consider having the traditional park include more amenities and elements that are preferred by teens and adults.
- If a playground is included it should be small.
- Natural building materials.
- Interest in natural playgrounds that are integrated into the physical landscape - multi-functional and allows for gathering and seating on the top.
- Swings and climbing structure.
- Existing condos next to the park (across the street) have a playground. (2)

Other comments included:

- The area needs more amenities and spaces for teens and young adults, beyond basketball courts. (2)
- Space for community programming/events such as festivals, food trucks, farmers' markets – West as a precedent for a farmers' market.
- All pathways and program areas will include sufficient lighting.
- Consider winds in the design of the park.
- Bike parking.

Next Steps

- A draft vision statement and design principles will be emailed to CAC members for review and feedback.
- CAC members can email any additional ideas, comments, or suggestions to Elijah Bawuah. His email address is listed below.
- The design teams will consider feedback from this CAC meeting and other community engagement activities to develop design options for the park.
- The next CAC meeting is planned for Winter 2024.

Contact Us

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

Elijah (Eli) Bawuah

Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

Elijah.Bawuah@toronto.ca

Leigh Lichtenberg

Project Coordinator

Leigh.Lichtenberg@toronto.ca