

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

New Parks in the Six Points Neighbourhood

Indigenous Advisory Circle 1 Meeting Summary

August 2023

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) meeting that was held virtually on Thursday, August 17, 2023 from 6:00 to 8 p.m.

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

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Welcome and introduce IAC members and the project team
- Provide an overview of the project background and history
- Discuss the project with IAC members, answer questions, and collect comments and ideas for the space

Attendance

Project Team Present

- Eli Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, City of Toronto
- William Skura, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator (Indigenous), City of Toronto
- Lara Herald, Senior Project Coordinator, City of Toronto
- Mary Tremain, Engagement Consultant Lead, Partner PLANT Architect
- Eric Klaver, Design Consultant Lead, Partner PLANT Architect
- Tanya Pande, Landscape Designer

IAC Members Present

- Six IAC members attended

Presentation

The project team presented:

- An overview of the project background and history
- Draft preliminary design options and precedents for each park

A discussion period followed the presentation for each park design.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Questions (Q) asked by IAC members and answers (A) from the project team. These are not written verbatim:

Q. What's the reasoning behind a new Civic Centre?

A. New building will replace the existing Civic Centre, which is aging and in need of significant repair. The new Civic Centre will be the centre of a community hub, connecting residents of the surrounding developments with services and connections to transit.

Q. Does the City do a survey or any demographic research of who will be using the park most of the time?

A. City of Toronto includes demographic questions in all their public surveys. We also obtain a Environics scan report for all our projects and this is sent to the consultant. All key demographic information is considered when identifying key priorities in the designs.

Q. Is there any opportunity to provide parking closer to the Six Points park?

A. The project team will raise concerns with Transportation Services (TS) and work to with TS to identify possible opportunities for additional parking within the area.

Q. Can we incorporate Marker Trees into the design? Marker Trees are an Indigenous way of noting directions and meanings in places and the tree is tended by a person who is a treekeeper. The few Marker Trees left in High Park are very beautiful and well cared for.

A. Marker Trees might be a possibility in Dunkip Park to note the direction of the Humber River.

Q. Will there be a community garden space where nearby schools and children's groups can have space to plant or help with the planting in Linear Park?

A. There is at least one school being planned for one of the blocks in the neighbourhood. Tall towers are planned to the north and south of Linear Park that would make it a fairly shady park. A community garden would work better and will be considered for Etobicoke Centre Park or Six Points Park.

What We Heard

A brief summary of discussion points and comments during the meeting.

Six Points Park Expansion

- Support for a community garden as other community gardens in the area have long waitlists.
- Parking should be addressed to improve accessibility of the parks. Currently there isn't any parking around the perimeter for people using a walker or other mobility device. Would love to see additional parking to improve accessibility of the park.
- Interest in a medicine wheel/walk, with the plantings of each of those four quadrants representing the medicine wheel, for people to use as a meditative walk. Example at Windowrock, the seat of Government for the Navaho Nation.

Etobicoke Centre Park

- Have an Indigenous designer for features like benches
- A washroom and offleash dog area

Dunkip/Gateway Park

- Have entire park as mixed nature and gathering, and scrap the skate park. People would like to have a nice natural gathering spot before or after visiting the Civic Centre

Linear Park

- Skate spot would be better suited to the Linear Park over Dunkip Park

Indigenous Placekeeping

- Find someone to complete a ceremony at Six Points Parks District to re-Indigenize the land.
- All plants need to be Indigenous plants.
- Giving land back means not just giving the land back, but helping to restore parts of Indigenous folks culture and ways of life into public space.
- Indigenous art is very important to incorporate into the Parks District.
- Provide signage to educate the public on the history of the Indigenous plantings.
- Every park should have some sort of Indigenous marker.
- Include plaques sharing Canadian Indigenous local history, with a focus on resiliency and contributions made to larger society, throughout the park or along trails.
- Consider also including information on the city's lost river system .

Next Steps

- Visions statement and guiding principal will be emailed to the IAC members for review and feedback.
- IAC members can email any additional ideas, comments, or suggestions to William.Skura@toronto.ca.
- The design teams will consider feedback from this IAC meeting and other community engagement events to create a preferred concept plan.
- The next IAC meeting is planned for early Fall 2023.

Contact Us

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

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