

# Design Workshop

## 70 Croatia Street Park – Phase 2: Exploring Options

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June 2024





COFFEE DRINKER  
WALKER  
WHEELCHAIR USER

BASE PLAN FOR NEW PARK AT  
UNITED STATES  
PROSPECTIVE

Play Area

Public Plaza

Quiet Pocket  
Quiet Pocket  
Quiet Pocket  
Entrance to Park  
Performance Platform



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## Summary

In this phase of the community engagement process, the City and the design consultant team are working from the outcomes of the first phase of community engagement to develop two design options for the new park coming to 70 Croatia Street. An in-person design workshop was the first event to begin Phase 2.

The in-person design workshop was held on Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, from 6:00-8:30pm at The Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse with members from the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the general public.

During the workshop, the project team:

- Provided an overview of the project and the site limitations.
- Provided an overview of community feedback heard as part of Phase 1, including Phase 1 outcomes such as the draft vision statement, big moves, and guiding principles.
- Led the design workshop.
- Facilitated the sharing of each table's park vision.

The document that follows provides an overview of the design workshop.

## Overview of Design Workshop

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This section provides a detailed overview of the design workshop, including feedback heard.

The meeting agenda and attendance list can be found in **Appendices A and B**. The full presentation slides can be found on the [project webpage](#).

## Project Presentation

- At the onset of the meeting, Andrey Pravosoudov (City of Toronto), provided a land acknowledgment and reviewed the agenda.
- All project team attendees participated in a round of introductions, stating their names, their organization and role for the project.
- Andrey Pravosoudov provided opening remarks to thank Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members and the members of the public for their participation in this important process and provided contextual information about the project.

- Andrey Pravosoudov explained the project timeline along with an overview of engagement activities to come in Phase 2 and 3 of community engagement.
- Yvonne Battista (STUDIO tla) then presented visuals comparing this park to other parks within walking distance in the neighbourhood to provide important context of the park's surroundings.
- Yvonne Battista presented the different amenities available in Toronto parks of similar size and explained the site limitations for the space at 70 Croatia Street, including the 10-metre easement that crosses the site.
- Roxanne D'Onofrio (StrategyCorp) shared a summary of the various tactics used to reach community members including promotional activities. Roxanne D'Onofrio also provided an overview of feedback heard as part of Phase 1 and how it supported drafting the vision statement, guiding principles, and big moves.
- To introduce the workshop portion of this meeting, Yvonne Battista presented two concept boards along with two different layout options to guide the design workshop activity at each of the five tables with CAC members and members of the public.

## Questions of Clarification

During the presentation, CAC members and members of the public had an opportunity to ask the project team questions. Below is the list of questions received and the responses provided.

### **Q: Will there be greenspace for Bloor Collegiate Institute?**

**A:** The development of the new Bloor Collegiate Institute building and grounds are not part of the project or process for the new park at 70 Croatia St. It is a completely separate project being led by Toronto District School Board.

### **Q: Will there be connectivity from the historic Kent School to the new Croatia Park?**

**A:** Yes, the public will be able to access the park through the Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) to the north and south of the Kent school to then cross the private road to the park.

### **Q: What would a "quiet pocket" look like in the new park?**

**A:** The "quiet pockets" will likely look and feel differently within the park and we are seeking community input to shape what they will look like. They will typically have an accessible connection to a pathway or larger plaza space, have vegetation around the majority of the sides, and include different kinds of seating. All or a portion of the seating will include seating with backs and armrests for accessibility (not for defensive design).

The seating arrangements will support social congregation spaces (facing each other) as well as allow for more individual seating options.

**Q: Why will there be a ramp/stairs between the park and the new Bloor & Dufferin retail area?**

**A:** The private retail area to the north will be approximately 60cm higher than the park grade. The ramp/stairs will provide an accessible connection to the retail stores and private patios and could help to support an informal amphitheater to a park open space. The retail stores will be accessible from the sidewalks to the east and west, which will have stairs and a ramp as well.

**Q: Are firepits possible to add to the park?**

**A:** There is already a firepit in Dufferin Grove Park (across the street) which suits that park's size much better than our new park. For sacred fire purposes, a mobile fire pit may be a good alternative that we can investigate a location for.

**Q: How does the easement placement through the park impact design options?**

**A:** To allow for future maintenance access to the infrastructure or pipe below the park surface, the design will need to avoid any structures that require footings below grade (such as light poles or play equipment) as well as tree planting and service crossings within the easement. This means hard surface pavement is permitted, such as concrete, asphalt, pavers, and plant materials such as shrubs and perennials are permitted. Any washroom, drinking fountain, and misters would need to be installed south of the easement and connect to the public street.

**Q: Why can't all seating areas (e.g., picnic benches) be directly on the grass or under trees?**

**A:** After some discussion with Parks maintenance staff, the idea of picnic benches on the existing tree protection zone and grass may be considered as the design progresses and after assessment. Picnic benches that are not mounted to the ground may be stolen and misused, especially with the proximity of the street. Mounting the picnic benches would require anchors to avoid damaging the existing tree roots. We will assess the possibility of the picnic benches and if there will be any impact to the trees with Urban Forestry and Parks Staff as the design develops.

**Q: What kind of retail will be beside the park?**

**A:** This has yet to be determined by the developers. The developers are working to finalize their approach to retail.

# Design Workshop Activity

CAC and community members attending were divided amongst five different tables, each having approximately six participants. Each table had 75 minutes with the support of a design team member to draw a park design on a paper base plan of the park.

At each table, a large plan of the park was provided along with various cut outs of design feature and/or park amenities at the same scale as the plan. These cut outs could be placed on the large plan of the park, allowing participants to visualize where and how different features could be integrated. Each table was also provided with reference images for amenities, sticky notes, and markers for additional design notes.

At each table, a design consultant facilitated the discussion and assisted the participants in thinking through the design of the park. As community members articulated their ideas, the designer at each table drew and adjusted the park's plan in real-time, incorporating the suggested shapes and elements. Some tables used multiple sheets of paper, discarding their previous design iteration.

At the end of the workshop period, each table presented their design to the larger group. The project team recorded detailed notes to ensure that the feedback heard would inform the initial design options developed by the project design team after the meeting.

**Appendix C** details each tables discussion and design direction.

## Summary of Design Elements Identified in Community Feedback:

### *Quiet Areas and Seating*

- Create quiet pockets with inclusive seating options:
  - Circular and face-to-face seating
  - Incorporate greenery

### *Play and Educational Spaces*

- Establish a distinctive non-traditional play area/structure:
  - Designed by an Indigenous artist with colourful accents
  - Inclusive of all ages
  - Located away from high traffic areas – preferably closer to the private street.
- Include a park “landmark”:

- Possible mascots or sculptures (e.g., fish, plants, horse)
  - Integrated into the play structure or shade structure
- Provide a shaded fitness area and equipment near the play structure
- Include Indigenous educational signage throughout the park

### *Pathways and Accessibility*

- Leverage the easement to create pathways
- Design pathways inspired by Denison Creek:
  - Incorporate art features showing water movement (e.g., waves, blue elements)
- Position a misting corridor at the park entrance
- Ensure park features are safe and accessible for all:
  - Public washrooms
  - Nighttime lighting
  - Signage
  - Accessible pathways and seating

### *Sustainability and Natural Elements*

- Prioritize sustainable greenspaces with native species
- Maintain open views and sightlines
- Use natural features and materials (e.g., wood, trees)

### *Multiuse Spaces*

- Create a shaded public plaza for multipurpose community events
- Develop a multiuse plaza at the north entrance:
  - Utilize the seating terrace with ramps and stairs for activities like community storytelling and dancing
- Incorporate fire pits around seating areas

The design concepts developed by each table at the Design Workshop can be found in **Appendix C**.



## Next Steps

Upon conclusion of the agenda items, Roxanne D'Onofrio (StrategyCorp) thanked all members for their participation and time. It was noted that participants are welcome to submit additional questions and feedback via email.

The next public engagement activity in Phase 2 will be an online survey in Summer 2024 for the community to provide further feedback on two park design concepts. These concepts will be developed by the design team using the community feedback received at the Phase 2 Design Workshop and upcoming Indigenous Advisory Circle Meeting.

# Appendix A – Agenda

## 70 Croatia Street Park

### Design Workshop

Date: April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

Time: 6:00PM – 8:30PM

Location: In Person, The Dufferin Grove Park Clubhouse - 875 Dufferin St.

Time	Agenda Item
6:00pm	Welcome and introductions
6:10pm	Presented an overview of the project process and context
6:20pm	Answered questions from CAC members and members of the public
6:30pm	Reviewed community feedback received in Phase 1 community engagement activities
6:35pm	Discussed park layouts and design options for the park
6:45pm	Design workshop activity
7:55pm	Design workshop activity group presentations
8:25pm	Shared next steps and adjourn

## Appendix B – Attendance

**Individual CAC Members:** 14/18 present

**Three of the CAC Members represented groups/organizations:**

- Bloor Collegiate Institute Eco Club
- Bloor Collegiate Institute (TDSB)
- Friends of Dufferin Grove Park
- Building a Better Bloor Dufferin
- Community Spaces Land Trust

**Total Public Attendance:** 19 people

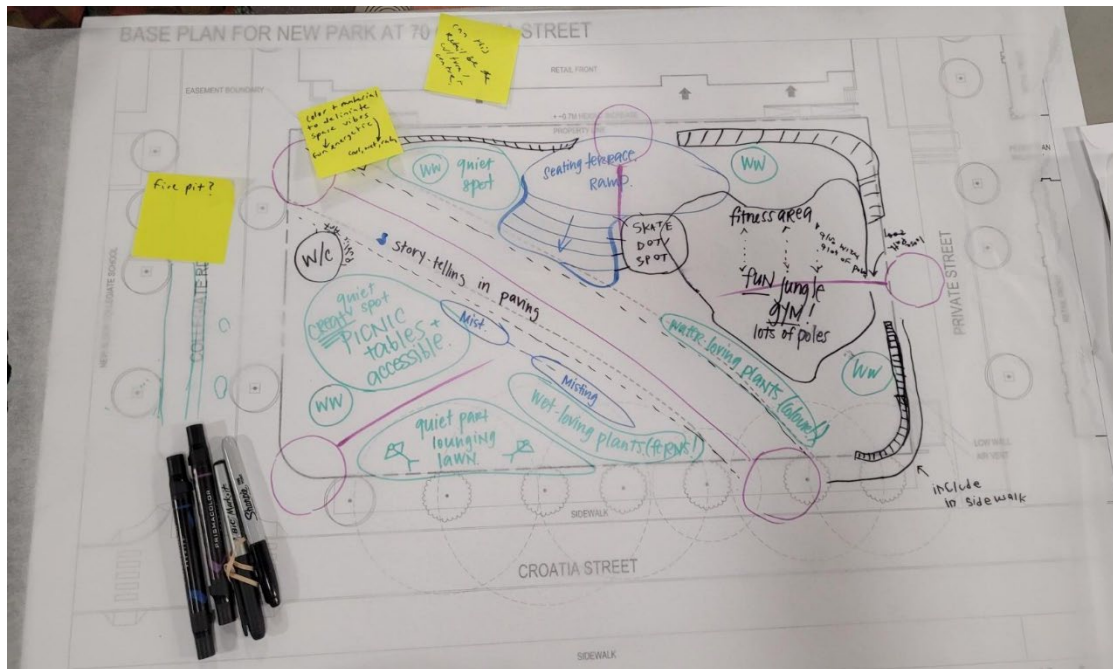
**Grand Total:** 33 community members

**Project Team Attendance:**

- City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry and Recreation
  - Helen Luu – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
  - William Skura – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator (Indigenous)
  - Andrey Pravosoudov – Project Coordinator Landscape Architect
- Trophic Design
  - Agata Mrozowski – Landscape Designer
- STUDIO tla
  - Yvonne Battista – Principal, Landscape Architect
  - Tim Chan – Project Manager
  - Heider Alward – Associate
  - Kamyar Abbasi - Associate
- StrategyCorp Inc.
  - Roxanne D’Onofrio – Senior Engagement Consultant
  - Cassandra MacLellan – Engagement Consultant
- Hazelview Investments
  - Chloé Valcin-Wright – Associate, Planning & Real Estate Development

## Appendix C – Designs

Table A



### Key Design Elements:

- Centering the theme of the park around the channelized Dennison Creek.
- Pathway with incorporated story telling design and native plant species.
- Paving pattern to reflect water themes such as flowing water, fish, and fish scales.
- Proposed misters would benefit park visitors but also serve wet-loving plants adjacent to the south-western portion of the main path.
- Weeping Willows suggested next to each entrance of the park.
- North-east section of the park to incorporate active programming, while south-western portion to provide passive programming.
- West side of park would include space for youth from neighbouring high school to hang out.
- Picnic benches to be unique and custom rather than standard park furniture.
- Fitness area with play structure in northeast corner integrating the adult fitness area and the children's play area.
- Quiet pockets in the north, south, and west.
- Seating terrace with ramp and stairs in the north that incorporates a skateboarding spot.

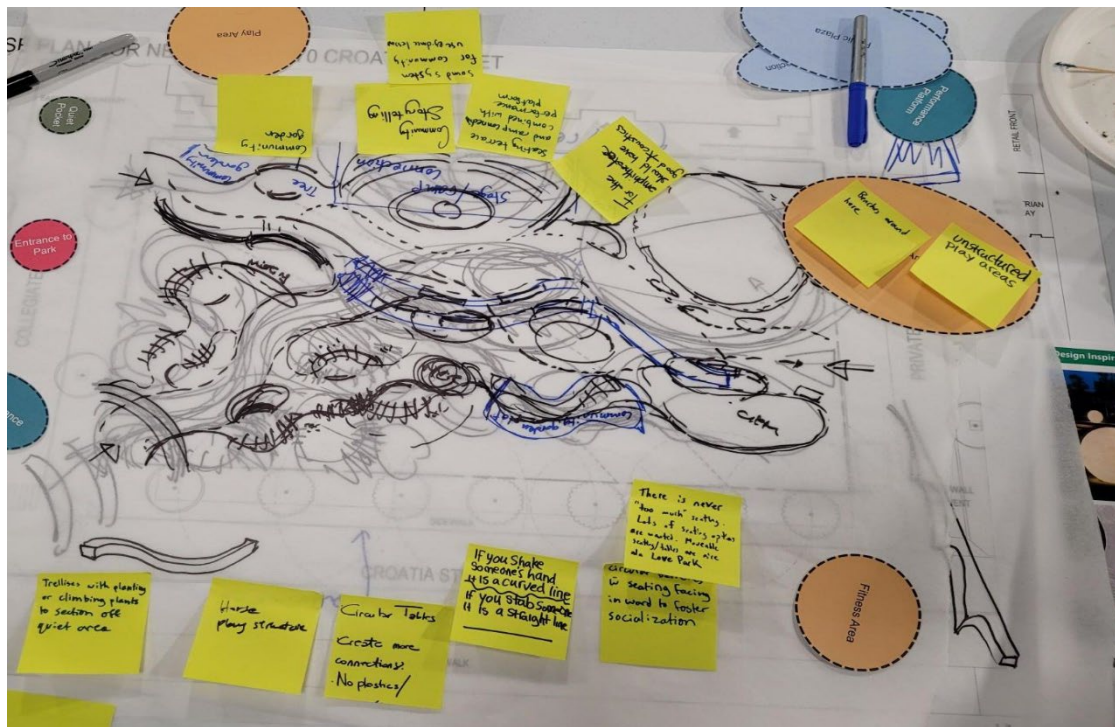
- Edges of the park to the north and east incorporate CIP concrete with more curvilinear forms to reference water theme.
- Suggestion to name the park 'The Dufferin Drip'.

### Yellow Sticky Note Text:

*\*Note - The feedback received on sticky notes/stickers during the Design Workshop are listed below.*

- "Fire pit?"
- "Color + material to delineate space vibes."
- "fun energetic."
- "Cool, wet, relax."
- "Can this retail be the cultural centre?"

**Table B**



### Key Design Elements:

- Unstructured play area in the northeast corner.
- Stage in the north of the park.
- Lots of seating options in quiet pockets and community areas.

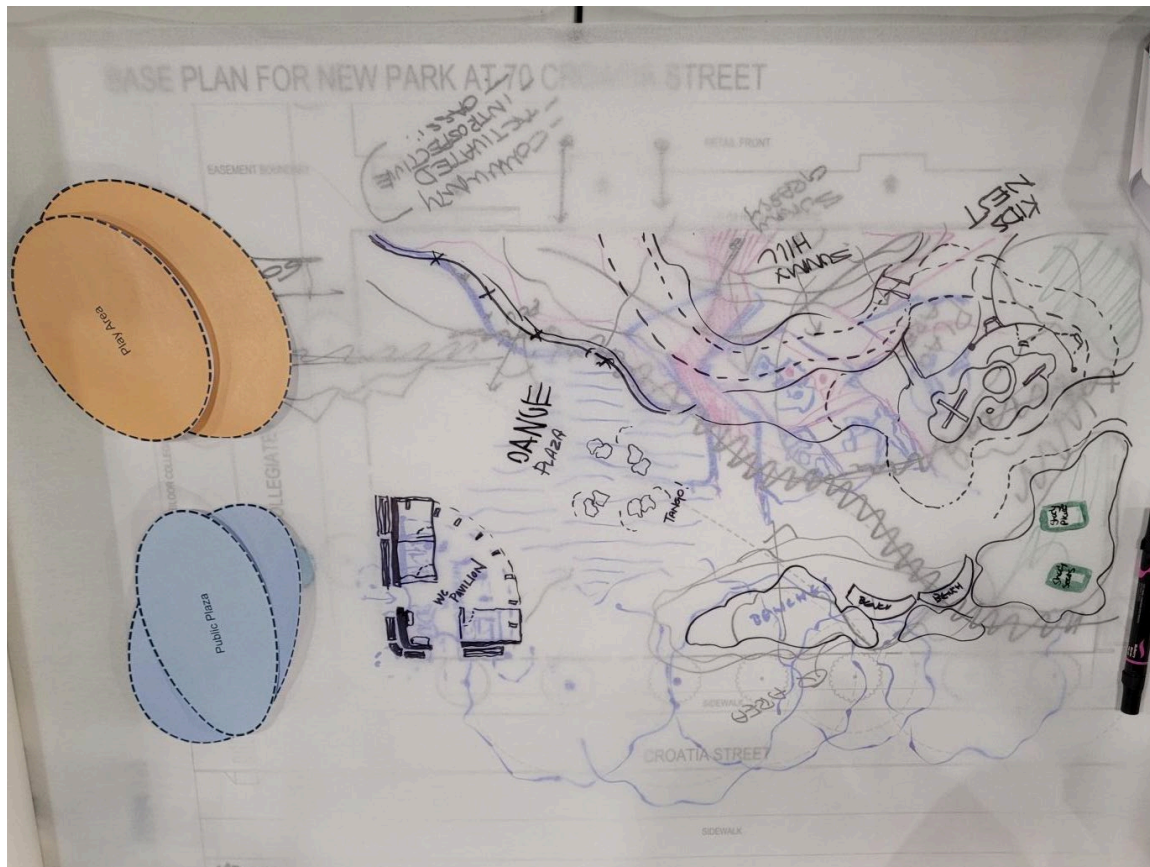


## Yellow Sticky Note Text:

*\*Note - The feedback received on sticky notes/stickers during the Design Workshop are listed below.*

- “Trellises with plating or climbing plants to section off quiet area.”
- “Horse play structure.”
- “Circular tables, create more connections, no plastics.”
- “If you shake someone’s hand it is a curved line, if you stab someone it is a straight line.” (*make the park friendly with curved lines*)
- “Circular benches with seating facing inward to foster socialization.”
- “There is never “too much” seating.”
- “Lots of seating options are wanted, moveable seating/tables are nice aka Love Park.”
- “XXXX with seating facing inward to foster socialization.”
- “Unstructured play areas.”
- “Play area suitable for BCS students to hang out.”
- “Can we have cherry tree? Edible fruit and cherry blossoms.”
- “Benches around here.” (*northeast play area*).
- “For the amphitheater should have good acoustics.”
- “Seating terrace and ramp connection combined with performance platform.”
- “Sound system for community uses – dance lessons.”
- “Community storytelling.”
- “Community garden.”

**Table C**

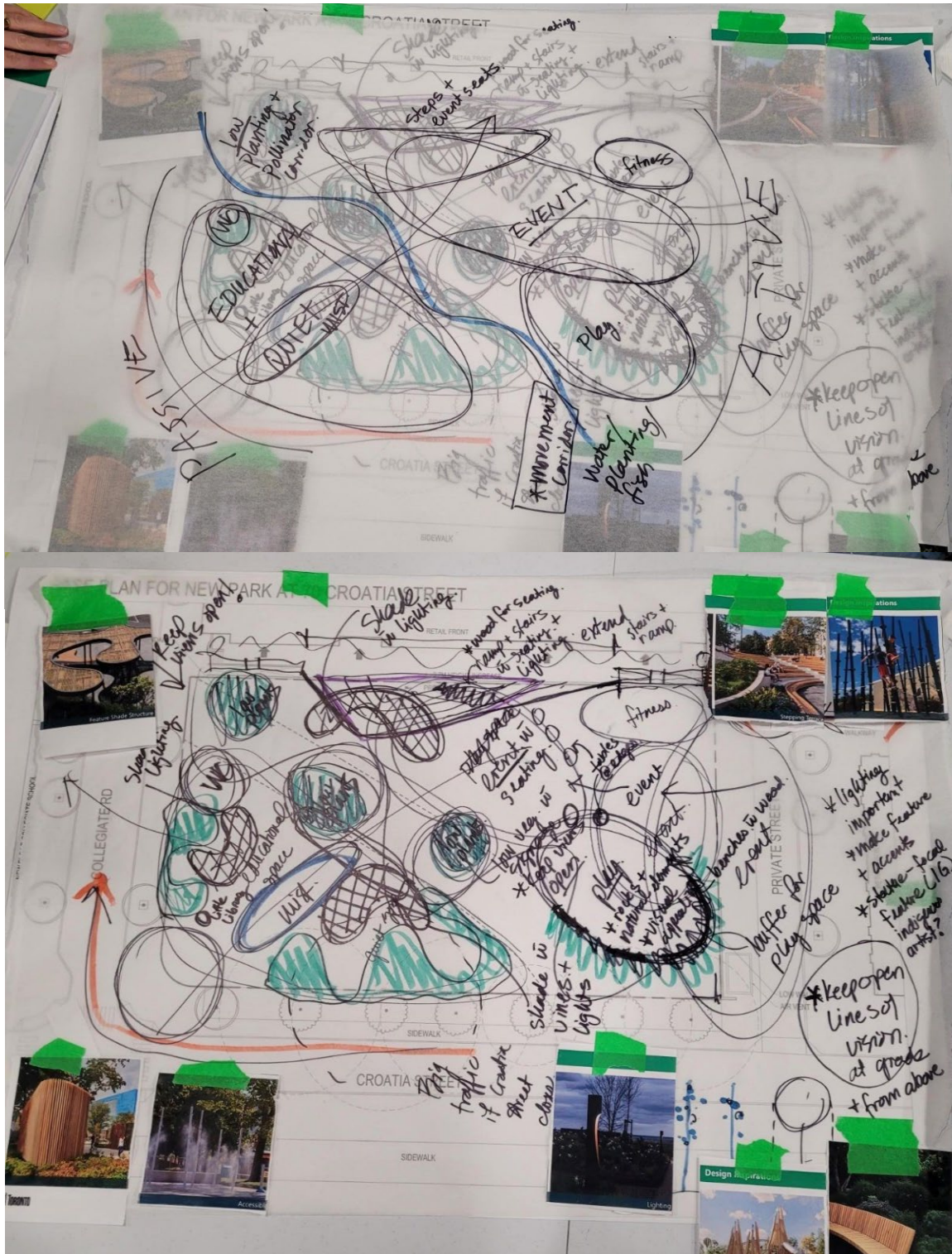


**Key Design Elements:**

- The Sunny Hill (North): A hill with tall grasses and lounging chairs provides a sunny, elevated viewing platform.
- Kids Nest Play Structure (Northeast): Active kids play area connected to the sunny hill with pathways, steps, and slides, surrounded by well-lit benches.
- Dance Plaza (Center) central attraction, featuring a dance space and animated lighting fixtures, serve as a focal point.
- Patio Space (Northwest): Overlooking the dance plaza serves as an extension of the retail frontage and a gathering area with tables and chairs.
- Integrated Pathway and Viewing Platforms: A gentle pathway and elevated platforms connect Sunny Hill, The Patio, and The Nest, providing views, security, and seamless transitions between different park areas.
- Benches (South): Positioned carefully under the dripline, offering quiet relaxation spots.
- Accessible Washrooms (Southwest): Located near the park's southwest entry, ensuring convenience and accessibility.

- Quiet Art Space (Southeast): not just for relaxation but also a peaceful escape for artists and dreamers from the busy city.

**Table D**

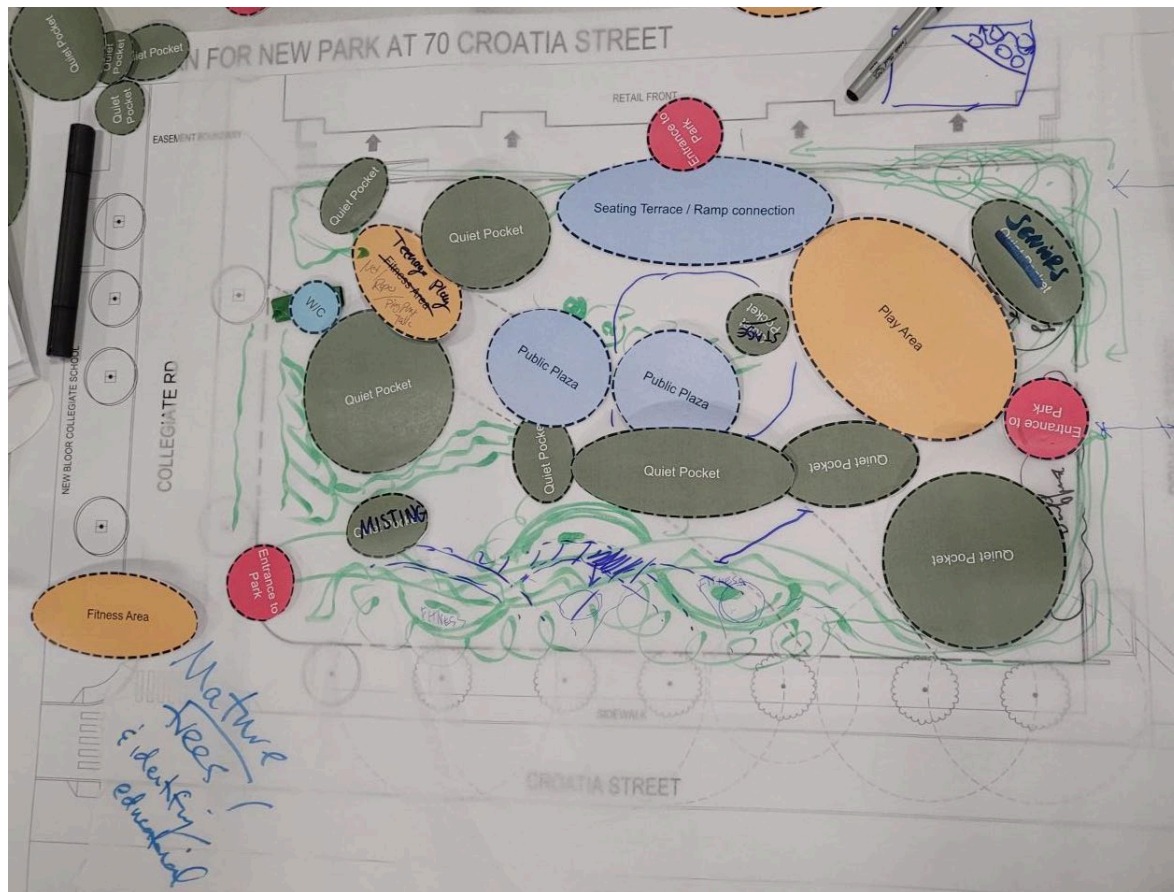


## Key Design Elements:

- At a high level, passive spaces to the south of the easement and active spaces to the north.
- Play structure in southeast corner because it is close to the Private Street which will be less busy and the kids and parents will have shade.
- Event space linking to the Private Street, which will be closed for pedestrian focused social events. This would lead into a central event space.
- The central event space can take advantage of the stair / ramp seating. Wood seat tops are preferred.
- The stairs / ramp should stretch as far as possible and meet the top of the east and west ramp on the private terrace. A curvy shade structure should be included in this area.
- Fitness equipment in the northeast corner including equipment for teens.
- Washroom and mist corridor south of the easement.
- Educational space across the street from the new high school with a Little Library. Include a curvy shade structure in this area.
- Quiet pockets throughout the park.
- Planting pockets throughout the park including on top of the easement.
- Lighting is important, both lighting accents in the shade structures as well as security lighting.
- Thinking about Dennison Creek, the design elements should speak to water and fish.
- There should be a park mascot like a fox!



**Table E**



**Key Design Elements:**

- Three entrances were considered: southwest corner, east (center) and north.
- Quiet seating pockets throughout the park.
- Public plaza in center of the park.
- Washroom to be located closer to the northwest corner.
- Utilizing the north steps as seating terrace, overlooking the public plaza in center
- Consideration for elderly users: locate seating areas closer to the NE corner, assuming the senior users coming down the High Street mostly. Seating areas to be buffered from the street and provide tables for board games and similar activities for their social interaction.
- Play area to be located also in northeast corner, to be buffered from ten road and for elderly to watch and even interact with children.
- When selecting play equipment, use sculptural shapes, create experiential engagement and target multi-age groups.



- Green-buffering from the surrounding streets, especially the east side of the park along the private street, given the roadway would be mainly used as a servicing route.
- Fitness stations to be located in the south, taking advantage of existing shade trees for screening/privacy. The equipment can be in a staggered manner, north and south of the connecting pathway, respecting the tree protection zones.
- A misting archway to be located in the southeast corner and may continue further along the pathway towards the fitness stations.
- Preference for picnic tables to be located under the existing shade trees in the south. Should there be an issue with the tree roots and installation of the picnic tables, park users can also bring their own chairs if they desire to sit within the trees drip zone (or tree protection area).
- Plant as many larger shade trees as possible!
- Shade trees are preferred for shade in the park as well as shade structures with vines or naturalized treatment.
  - If shade structures are installed, incorporate wood structures with trellis for vines and plants to grow to add green to the structure.
- Trees in tree grates (with soil cells to ensure healthy tree growth under hard surface) may be required for open plaza areas.
- Flowering plants should be included, specifically around seating areas.
- Public plaza to have open lawn and no dog facility to be provided in this park.
- Use dense / evergreen planting to keep dogs away, rather than using a fence, from planting beds.
- Seating arrangements to promote socialization.
- If there's room, include teenage play in the northwest corner. There should be some climbing structures.

# Acknowledgements

## City of Toronto

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### **Parks, Forestry & Recreation**

Helen Luu – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

William Skura – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator (Indigenous)

Andrey Pravosoudov – Project Coordinator Landscape Architect

## Consulting Team

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### **Engagement Specialist: StrategyCorp Inc.**

Roxanne D'Onofrio – Senior Engagement Consultant

Cassandra MacLellan – Engagement Consultant

## Design Team

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### **Landscape Architect: STUDIO tla**

Yvonne Battista – Principal, Landscape Architect

Tim Chan – Project Manager

### **Indigenous Design Advisor: Trophic Design**

Terence Radford – Principal, Landscape Architect

James Miller – Indigenous Project Specialist

Agata Mrozowski – Landscape Designer

**Developer: Hazelview Investments**

Chloé Valcin-Wright – Associate, Planning & Real Estate Development

## Community Members

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We appreciate all the community members who engaged with us during the Design Workshop. Your questions, insights, and feedback have been invaluable in refining our materials and enhancing the overall experience for all participants.

To learn more about the project, visit the [project webpage](#).