

Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) Meeting

70 Croatia Street Park – Phase 2: Exploring Options

June 2024





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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 at 70 Croatia Street. To ensure community members are involved at every step of the way, an in-person design workshop was the first event to begin Phase 2. The design workshop was open to the public with CAC members attending.

Following the design workshop, the project team held a separate design charrette with IAC members to discuss the high-level feedback heard during the first design workshop.

The “Phase 2 – Exploring Options” IAC meeting for the new park coming at 70 Croatia Street was held on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, from 6:00-8:30pm virtually on Webex. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Review project context and details.
- Review community feedback heard in Phase 1 engagement activities, including Phase 1 outcomes (draft vision statement, big moves, guiding principles).
- Answer questions about the project.
- Form initial design options for the new park with IAC members through a virtual design charrette activity.

The document that follows provides an overview of the IAC Meeting.

Overview of IAC Meeting

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

The meeting agenda and attendance 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, William Skura, City of Toronto, provided a land acknowledgment and reviewed the agenda.
- All project team attendees participated in a round of introductions, team members stated their names, their organization and role for the project.

- Andrey Pravosoudov, City of Toronto, provided opening remarks to thank IAC members for their participation in this important process and provided contextual information around the project.
- William Skura 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 context in understanding 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 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, STUDIO tla, presented two concept boards along with two different layout options to guide the virtual design charrette activity with IAC members on Miro (a digital collaboration tool).

Questions of Clarification

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

Q: Looking at the new collegiate road, is it the same pathway that used to be there?

A: No, it is in a slightly different location. The new roads align with the existing roads on the north side of Bloor Street (Russett Ave).

Q: What does easement mean?

A: An easement is a right to access land for a specific purpose. For the park site, the easement protects the area for maintenance and replacement access for a large City of Toronto infrastructure pipe below the surface. 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 lights 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 and pavers, and plant materials such as shrubs and perennials are also permitted. Any washroom, drinking fountain, and

misters would need to be installed south of the easement and connect to the public street.

Q: Is the park levelled?

A: The park slopes gently north to south, down toward Croatia Street. This means the private retail area to the north of the park will have an approximately 60 cm height difference from the park. There will be ramps and/or stairs to the north to provide accessible connection to the retail stores and private patios.

Q: Did the city remove trees that were on-site that could be recycled and used for other purposes (seating, play structure etc)?

A: There are no trees on the existing site that will be or have been removed. Trees fronting Croatia St. have been and will be preserved.

Q: Can we add trees?

A: Yes, trees will be added to the design as it develops. The intention is to maximize tree canopy within the park. The only exception is that trees can't be planted in the easement, but they can be planted everywhere else. There isn't a parking garage below the park.

Q: Can the misters be designed?

A: Yes, they can be customized with light, they have an angle, and we can be creative in the way they are placed.

Q: Can the name of the park be Indigenous?

A: Yes. People are encouraged to submit a name suggestion through the City's website. The ULR / QR is provided at the end of the presentation.

Design Charette

In the virtual design charette activity, IAC members were asked to use the park layout and design options presented to form their own preferred design and layout of the new park using Miro.

The groups feedback and design ideas were mapped out on a virtual park base plan in Miro. Colourful shapes representing park amenities, sticky notes, and markers were all used to develop the park design and illustrate IAC members' feedback.

The project team recorded detailed notes to ensure all feedback heard would inform the initial design options developed by the project design team after the meeting.

Summary of Design Elements Identified in IAC Feedback:

Park Accessibility and Safety

- Prioritize park features that ensure safety and accessibility for all:
 - Public washrooms (2 stalls, non-gendered)
 - Lighting at night
 - Signage
 - Pathways with ridges for visually impaired individuals
 - Ramps (e.g., stairs with ramp access)
 - Accessible and inclusive design features without anti-homeless measures
 - Favor dynamic lights
 - Sensory signage to accommodate smell and touch

Cultural and Artistic Elements

- Integrate Indigenous cultural elements into the design:
- Mix the two concept boards together (moon park and water braid theme)
- Use copper materials for their ceremonial significance
- Consider 13 copper pots or posts to relate to the 13 moon teachings
- Consider an art installation using the wall air vent to reflect wind movement and Two Spirit people
- Have shade structure with light and shadow interaction (elements of the moon and “kwewag”)
- Leverage the low wall air vent for a creative art installation

Green Spaces and Natural Elements

- Prioritize creation of greenspaces and use natural materials
- Gardens with native species, including pollinator plants, traditional medicine plants, and trees like paw paws
- Quiet pockets with circular seating and potential fire pits
- Ensure this park is inclusive for all ages
- Large copper garden planters
- Quiet pockets with circular seating and potential fire pits
- Tradition medicinal gardens at the northwest entrance with a “wild grass” approach
- Include more gardens if there’s empty space

Recreational Areas and Equipment

- Have multiuse performance space near seating and the public plaza in the northeast end of the park:
 - Preference for a platform with supporting open space
 - Shaded fitness equipment
- Non-traditional play area/structure:
 - Inclusive of all ages
 - Designed by an Indigenous artist with colorful accents
 - Located in a protected corner away from high traffic areas

Water and Historical References

- Position a misting corridor near one of the park entrances
- Design entrances and pathways to consider the historical creek flow through the site:
- Creek-inspired easement path with creek plants and animals (e.g., frogs)
- Water and moon connection

The Miro board used can be found in **Appendix C**.

Next Steps

Upon conclusion of the agenda items, William Skura, City of Toronto, thanked all members for their participation and time. It was noted that IAC members are welcome to submit additional questions and feedback via email (William.Skura@toronto.ca).

The next 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 IAC Meeting.

Appendix A – Agenda

70 Croatia Street Park

IAC Meeting

Date: April 30th, 2024

Time: 6:00PM – 8:30PM

Location: Virtual (Webex)

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

Appendix B – Attendance

Individual IAC Members: 3/7 present

Project Team Attendance:

- City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry and Recreation
 - William Skura – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator (Indigenous)
 - Andrey Pravosoudov – Project Coordinator Landscape Architect
- STUDIO tla
 - Yvonne Battista – Principal, Landscape Architect
 - Tim Chan – Project Manager
- Trophic Design
 - James Miller – Indigenous Project Specialist
- StrategyCorp Inc.
 - Roxanne D'Onofrio – Senior Engagement Consultant

put indigenous words along/under each step as like a ribbon

BASE PLAN FOR NEW PARK AT 70 CROATIA STREET

EASEMENT BOUNDARY

RETAIL FRONT

+0.7M HEIGHT INCREASE

Entrance to Park

Quiet Pocket

Seating Terrace / Ramp connection

Performance Platform

Quiet Pocket

Medicinal Planting Pollinator Gardens

Quiet Pocket

Public Plaza

Play Area

Entrance to Park

Entrance to Park

Public Plaza

Quiet Pocket

Quiet Pocket

W/C

W/C

Misting Corridor

Fitness Area

Quiet Pocket

Entrance to Park

LOW WALL AIR VENT

POTENTIAL ART INSTALLATIONS USING WIND FROM VENT

PRIVATE STREET

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

RETAIL FRONT

CROATIA STREET

SIDEWALK

Fire Pit

Paw Paw trees

Tactile sensory elements

Cardinal Flowers, Fire and Water, connection to the moon and the kurevrag

NEW BLOOR COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

Toronto

Scale: 0 10m

- Important to recognize the easement corridor where the creek use to run. Help to recognize the water movement by adding a south entry point which can be more casual.
- Water movement can be articulated with branches of water connections, represented through the walkways and pavement patterns.
- Seating terrace with ramp and stairs in the north with performance area to the northeast.
- Public Plaza in park centre.
- Play area on the east side.

- Quiet pockets around whole perimeter of the park including in the shade of the existing trees.
- Fitness area near southern entrance – take advantage of the shade from the existing trees.
- Two washroom facilities.
- Green edges around the quiet pockets.
- Larger quiet pocket across the street from the high school for the students to use.
- Misting corridor by the southwest entry. Good for all ages and abilities.
- Lots of green areas with native, pollinator and medicinal plants.
- Plant a lot of trees.

Yellow Sticky Note Text:

- “Fire Pit.”
- “Paw paw trees.”
- “Tactile sensory elements.”
- “Cardinal Flowers, Fire and Water, connection to the moon and kwewag.”
- “Potential art installations using wind from vent.”
- “Put Indigenous words along/under each step as like a ribbon.”
- “Medicinal Planting Pollinator Gardens.”

Acknowledgements

City of Toronto

Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Helen Luu – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

William Skura – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator (Indigenous)

Andrey Pravosoudov – Project Coordinator Landscape Architect

Consulting Team

Engagement Specialist: StrategyCorp

Roxanne D'Onofrio – Senior Engagement Consultant

Cassandra MacLellan – Engagement Consultant

Design Team

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

We appreciate all the community members who engaged with us during the Design Charette. 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](#).