

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Don Mills Community Recreation Centre

Phase 3: Setting the Direction Public Meeting #3 Engagement Summary

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

A new Community Recreation Centre (CRC) is coming to the Don Mills community, near the intersection of Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road.

This large, integrated, and multi-component facility will offer the diverse and growing communities of the Don Mills Corridor and beyond a range of year-round programs and services. Located at the former Celestica Lands site at 844 Don Mills Rd., the new CRC will be next to a new large park and all within walking distance of a planned Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (ECLRT) station and is part of the ongoing implementation of the [Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan](#).

1.2 Project Context

Previous Community Engagement: Recreate Don Mills

In early 2019, community and stakeholder engagements were conducted to determine the CRC location that would best meet community needs. Two location options were presented to the community.

The results indicated that locating a large ‘one-stop’ community recreation centre with arena, aquatics facilities, full gymnasium and multipurpose room uses at the former Celestica Lands (844 Don Mills Road) was preferable to two separate facilities.

Based on the outcomes of the 2019 community engagement and recommendations by City staff, City Council directed the City to [proceed with the Preferred Facility](#) on the former Celestica Lands site.

The community engagement and design process for the Don Mills CRC will consider only the amenities, programs and services within the CRC located on the former Celestica Lands. Separate community engagement processes will be held for the design and programming of the one-hectare park next to the Don Mills CRC.

1.3 Project Timeline

The anticipated schedule for this park project is as follows:

- Fall 2021 – Hire a design team
- Winter 2022 – Community engagement process starts
 - December 2022 - April 2023: Community Engagement Phase 1: Building a Vision
 - Spring - Summer 2023: Community Engagement Phase 2: Exploring Design Options
 - Fall 2023 - Winter 2023/2024: Community Engagement Phase 3: Setting the Direction
- Winter 2023/2024 – Detailed design
- Spring 2026 – Hire a construction team
- Summer 2027 – Construction starts
- Winter 2030 – Construction complete, Community Recreation Centre opens

The timeline is subject to change.

1.4 Phase 3 Engagement Activities

Building upon what we heard in Phases 1 and 2, Phase 3 focuses on sharing the preferred option for the design of the Don Mills CRC, with feedback collected to help finalize the design, set the direction and inform future programming. Anticipated engagement activities in this phase include:

- Youth Ambassador Meetings
- Interested Party Meetings
- Online Survey
- Community Advisory Group Meeting
- Indigenous Advisory Group Meeting
- Technical Advisory Committee Meetings (Internal)
- Recreation Staff Meetings (Internal)

At the end of Phase 3, the final design will be refined and prepared for detailed design and approval, so that the City may move to tendering and construction.

2.0 Community Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries

This document provides a summary of the third virtual Public Meeting for the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre project held in Fall 2023. The summary of feedback is provided in Section 3.0.

2.1 Public Meeting #3

A third Public Meeting for the Don Mills CRC project was held virtually on Tuesday, June 25th, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

2.1.1 Meeting Participation

WHEN: Tuesday, June 25th, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 WHERE: Virtually on Webex
 ATTENDEES: Approximately 55 members of the community
 PROJECT TEAM: City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division
 MJMA Architect (Landscape Architect)
 SAFFY (Engagement Consultant)

2.1.2 Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to:

1. Provide a recap of the role of the Community Advisory Committee and an overview of the Don Mills CRC project
2. Present the Preferred Design Option
3. Provide an opportunity for the Community Advisory Committee to ask the Project Team questions about the Design Concept Options
4. Gather feedback to inform the final design for the Don Mills CRC.
5. Next Steps

3.0 What We Heard

The following section contains a summary of the feedback received during the Phase 3 virtual Public Meeting.

3.1 Key Insights

Generally community members were pleased with the proposed designs, sharing detailed questions, concerns and ideas to continue to enhance the final details of the designs. What we heard from community members has been summarized into the key topic areas and spaces below.

Universal Changerooms

Many participants shared concerns about the universal changerooms included in the aquatics facility, however through discussion and after sharing additional details, most concerns were abated. Concerns initially centred around privacy and safety, and many were happy to hear there would be individual and family change stalls and shower stalls to maintain privacy and safety. Accessibility for those with mobility devices was raised as an important consideration, as well as designs that consider young children. One participant expressed a dissatisfaction with similar washroom designs at other recreation facilities, and explained long wait times for individual stalls pose challenges.

Ice Pads

Participants wanted greater clarity about available arenas in the area, and asked about the closure of the Don Mills Civitan Arenas. Some were concerned that the facility focused too much on the ice pads, while others were eager to propose flexible use of the space. Many suggested that that one ice pad be available as a flexible dry space for other recreational activities in the summer months, suggesting roller skating, ball hockey and lacross.

Rooftop

Participants were pleased with the newly introduced rooftop spaces for both community programming and sustainability initiatives. Some expressed a desire to see community garden or planting spaces on the roof, while others preferred natural green spaces with native plantings. Some were skeptical of the city views. We heard a desire for ample shade and ideas for programming including yoga and fitness classes.

Food and Beverage

We hear a desire for food and beverage services, such as a cafe or snack bar, available to visitors of the CRC. Some suggested this be included on the rooftop, while others suggested incorporating social enterprise elements in food provision, to support community programs.

Aquatics

Participants asked detailed questions to gain clarity on the specifications of the aquatics area, including the pool depths, number of diving boards and number of lanes. Some suggested that the leisure and lane pool be combined for a larger and more flexible single-lane pool, hoping to see a 50m pool or an 8-lane pool. Others shared their appreciation for the current design, and suggested that the leisure pool include features such as hydrotherapy jets. Diving boards were raised, with some swimmers expressing that they are an unnecessary feature. One participant hoped to see additional amenities that would support the facilitation of larger aquatic events

like competitions. Generally participants understood the decisions that had been made to date and appreciated the constraints and balance the proposed design offers.

3.2 Public Meeting #3 Summary

The following section provides a summary of comments and questions provided by participants throughout the virtual meeting. All questions were asked via the chat, and were addressed throughout the presentation. Q means a question was asked, while R indicates the response provided by the city and project team. C is used for comments, which in some cases did not require a response.

- **C. Great work Councillor Burnside for pushing this project. Let's get it constructed sooner**
- **Q. A very good feature, as seen in other arenas, is an indoor walking/jogging track above the ice rink. It is very useful, especially in the winter or very hot and humid summer. Would you consider including that?**
 - R. There is a track on the second floor and one on the rooftop. They are not directly above the arena, but you'll see them when we share the plans in the presentation.
- **Q. Does the EMS station have access to the interior of the facility? I couldn't see that option in the drawing.**
 - R. This is a collocated EMS service station, to support EMS better serving the surrounding area, not just the community centre. It does not have an opening into the community centre, as EMS access it from the exterior.
- **Q. Are there areas for other activities, dance, yoga, weight training etc.? Also, will there be an indoor cycling track, similar to that at Variety Village??**
 - R. Yes, on the second floor there are additional fitness spaces and there are also opportunities for programming on the rooftop. There will be an indoor walking/running track on the second floor, but no indoor cycling track is planned at this time.
- **Q. What are the plans for the outdoor spaces outside the multipurpose rooms**
 - R. The multi-purpose spaces open onto the park, and the park will be designed in a future phase, so we don't have any additional details right now.
- **C. Nice that there's a leisure pool plus a lane pool!**
- **Q. What do you mean by universal change rooms? Are there no considerations for young children?**
- **Q. Can there be men and women changerooms as well? Wouldn't feel comfortable with the opposite gender in the same changeroom (see response below)**

- **Q. I am disappointed that there is not a ladies' changeroom. Women socialize while changing at other pools. All the current pools already have a universal change room. (see response below)**
- **Q. The changeroom in this community is going to be an issue. Sadly you guys seemed to be out of touch with this community on that issue. (see response below)**
- **Q. Young children will not be comfortable with the opposite gender, especially with older individuals. (see response below)**
- **Q. How do we request the "flexibility"? (see response below)**
- **Q. It is disappointing that the showers are all public and so require people to keep their bathing suits on. Many people who swim have mobility issues and this is their accessible shower. Other pools have a universal change room, but also a men's change room and a ladies' change room. It is a far superior setup to this one. Agincourt is another example of a good setup for pools that have both accessibility and universal/privacy. (see response below)**
- **Q. There are private showers in individual stalls? (see response below)**
- **C. Several people have commented that they do not like the changerooms at Ethennonnhawahstinehneh Community Centre, which are designed to be the same as the ones proposed here. Please do not again build something that people do not like. My experience at the new pool is that there is always a long, cold wait for a changeroom when the swim ends. (see response below)**
- **C. I noticed at one community centre - the family - gender neutral change room has father/mother & child or who feels more comfortable there - in the change room at the same time - 2 other change rooms for specific male or female. (see response below)**
- **Q. Are there individual stalls in the universal change rooms? I think this would help with it being gender neutral, similar to a family change room design, where all genders and ages use at the same time. Just an idea. (see response below)**
 - R. There are definitely individual stalls, private stalls. The only thing open would be things like lockers and benches. The showering and undressing will happen in fully private individual stalls. Our gender-neutral change rooms are city standard. The aquatic change rooms are universal or gender-neutral. This is important for the inclusivity of all genders as well as of all family types, as there will be family stalls etc. We will also include fully enclosed washrooms with showers. There are two spaces that can be configured for standard gendered washrooms if required, and so that one can remain open should maintenance be required in the other.
- **Q. What happens when people decide not to use the stalls?**
- **Q. There was talk at the earlier stages that a therapy pool was being considered - is this still being considered?**
 - R. A portion of the leisure pool can have hydrotherapy jets.

- **Q. How deep are the 2 pools?**
 - R. Depends on the height of diving boards, if those are installed. Without diving boards, we would be around 2.2 to 3m.
- **Q. There was talk at the earlier stages that a therapy pool was being considered - is this still being considered?**
 - R. portion of the leisure pool could have hydrotherapy jets, yes this is still being considered.
- **Q. Was a 50 m length pool size considered?**
 - R. We are constrained by space and the facility cannot accommodate 50m length pool size.
- **Q. where do you keep the Zamboni? Where is the zamboni going to unload?**
 - R. There is a storage area towards the back of the building that connects to both arenas.
- **Are the two NHL sized ice rinks at the Don Mills Recreational Centre "in addition" to the Angela James Arena Ice rink at Flemington Park or, will these two rinks be a "replacement" for the Angela James Arena ice-rink (which means, Angela James Arena gets demolished)?**
 - R. The Civitan centre is closing but the Angela James Arena is not.
- **Q. Are there bathrooms in the lounge spaces?**
 - R. Yes, on the first and second floor there are publicly accessible washrooms within the public spaces. On the second floor there are universal washrooms right next to the universal changerooms.
- **Q. Is this community centre the only one or will there be one also at The Shops at Don Mills?**
- **Q. Are these rinks replacing Don Mills Civilian Rinks? Is Angela James Arena going to close?**
 - R. Angela James will not be closed. Civitan is scheduled to be closed.
- **Q. Would the track be warm and humid with the opening to the lap pool below?**
 - The aquatics area is entirely enclosed from the second floor. You can see in from above, but it is a separate space so the moisture or humidity will not impact the second floor.
- **Q. What about ramps vs stairs? The large staircase in the atrium could be a large ramp be accommodating for all & open concept with rinks and pool visible from the ramp.**
 - R. We explored that idea, and it is a great idea. Unfortunately there isn't enough space to accommodate the required slope for an accessible ramp, so we've opted for a beautiful staircase and elevators to ensure accessibility.

- **Q. Will activities in gym be subject to user fees as currently in school gyms?**
 - R. The facility will have memberships for the fitness facilities.
- **Q. Is that cityscape view realistic? Aren't the high rises going up going to prevent that view?**
 - R. We anticipate at this time, based on the location of the building and the planned development around that the view of the city will likely be maintained.
- **C. Would be great to have a concession or coffee shop on the rooftop.**
- **C. A snack bar or something for the people using the facilities or use of the community kitchen to provide people with food or beverages would be nice.**
- **C. Incorporating some kind of social enterprise with respect to food provision would also be a nice touch.**
- **C. A Cafe space to support the users they could rent the space to support their community programs would be nice.**
 - R. This is something we've heard from others as well, and the city is working with their internal partnerships divisions to explore this opportunity.
- **Q. What are the plans for a barrier between the open space and the track on the roof?**
 - We haven't started detailed design, but typically different ground materials and colour are used to create a visual separation between the spaces. This is something we've had success with on other projects.
- **Q. Could there be community plantings on the roof? (see response below)**
- **Q. Maybe a community garden on the rooftop? (see response below)**
- **C. Indigenous teaching gardens (see response below)**
- **C. I like a community garden up there also. (see response below)**
- **C. I would like to see native paintings. (see response below)**
- **C. Don Mills CI has a Green Industries program - maybe they could get involved in a rooftop garden. (see response below)**
 - R. A community garden would likely be more suitable in the adjacent park, which will be a separate project with more community engagement. The rooftop is more suitable to native plantings for greenery and sustainability goals.
- **C. Consider lawn bowling on the roof.**
- **Q. If there is an ambitious sustainability target, will the building or interior achieve LEED Certification?**
 - R. Most of our projects are moving away from LEED Certification. The certifications we're going after, like the Toronto Green Standard, are more rigorous and sustainable than LEED.

- **Q. Are the pools chlorine or salt?** *(see response below)*
- **C. Love the idea of a salt pool!** *(see response below)*
- **C. I'm highly allergic to chlorine pools** *(see response below)*
- **C. If they are chlorine, I won't be able to use these pools either, I'm allergic. There needs to be an alternative to chlorine. Private fitness clubs have salt pools, why can't the City?** *(see response below)*
 - R. The City has decided on a chlorine pool. As a municipal community, the standard is to use chlorine.
- **Q. Has there been any thought on expanding the pool size (to 8 lanes) and including space for spectator seating to support competitive aquatic events (similar to what has been done on the arena sides)**
 - R. We have explored various sizes and options for the pools, but unfortunately there isn't additional space for an 8-lane pool. This space could still support some aquatics events.
- **Q. Will there be a diving board for the lane swimming pool?**
 - R. We are still considering whether there will be 1 m or 3m diving boards. but we are open for suggestions. If there is a demand for them, they could be added.
- **C. Swimmer here. Not interested in diving boards.**
- **C. I would think combining the leisure and lane pool is more flexible, as you that way you can get your 50 m length competition pool when needed, and then barricade sections as needed for other uses as needed.**
 - R. Both pools will cater to activities and programming for all ages, and intended to provide flexibility for children, seniors and aquatic programming like aquafit etc.
- **C. Thanks for the presentation. It looks very nice!**
- **Q. Any ability to set up a large screen for folks sitting in the park can view a documentary or movie?**
 - R. This is a great idea, but one that will have to be considered as a part of the park development which is not a part of this project or phase of work.
- **Q. Has there been any consideration to provide any programming / legacy space to the abruptly shuttered Ontario Science Centre - it would be fitting having the buildings address as Moriyama Drive.**
 - R. At the engagement and planning of this project has been going on for some time, it has not directly responded to the closing of the Ontario Science Centre. However, the flexible programming spaces can hopefully meet growing and changing community needs.
- **Q. Is there an entrance to the building from Don Mills Road? For people who might be coming south from the centre of Don Mills**

- R. The main entrance is on Moriyama Dr. and another entrance on the park side. These both have vestibules. If we have an entrance from Don Mills Rd, it will lose space from the ice rinks and we would lose some visibility from the reception area. The reception is designed to have views of both doors to support safety and security of the space.
- **C. I really like the roof enhancements**
- **Q. That type of trellis doesn't really provide much in the way of shade. Will there be an actual covered area?**
 - R. We have not yet done our detailed design, so we are still considering the coverage and material for the trellis and will take the provision of shade and your feedback into consideration.
- **C. Really glad to see the plan for some native plants.**
- **Q. How did Hockey take priority over swimming?**
 - R. The inclusion of two-ice pads was outlined in the Facilities Recreation Master Plan, and responds to the area need.
- **Q. Any thoughts to an outdoor rink, for pleasure skating? There isn't an outdoor rink in this area. Or turn the rooftop trail into a skating trail in the winter?**
 - R. It likely isn't possible to include an outdoor skating trail on the roof.
- **C. One year-round ice pad and one dry pad would be great.**
- **C. There could be roller skating in the summer.**
- **C. In the warmer months, lacrosse or floor hockey, perhaps in the ice pad.**
- **C. Why not just have both arenas flexibility for use, and adjust as per demand from year to year?**
- **C. Agreed - ask the youth committee about how to use the second arena.**
- **Q. Are the hydro jets in the leisure pool warm like a hot tub?**
 - R. Typically, leisure pools have a warmer temperature compared to a lap pool, but it is not a hot tub.
- **Q. Will there be membership options similar to Variety Village?**
 - R. We do offer fitness membership, I assume it would be included in some of the programming at the facility.
- **Q. Soundproof music rooms? Squash/racket ball courts? Why not have a basement level for such facilities, where windows are not mandatory? What about some park space for a turf field bubble – can be a source of revenue via leasing to team recreational sports.**
 - R. For below-grade space, the challenge is not just digging down, but the engineering required to hold up the building and arenas above, it becomes

- extremely costly. The flexible multi-purpose rooms are soundproof and could support music programs.
- **Q. Will the park of the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre connect to the Don Mill Trail (old railway), ideally continuing with a dedicated Eglinton crossing E.T Seton Park**
 - R. IT would be part of the future park project, if it were to happen. It would work with the Conservation authority as well.
 - **Q. Does access to the fitness area upstairs require that one crosses the track?**
 - R. Yes. The track will be coloured and rubberized. This has been successful at other similar projects.
 - **Q. The building's envelope is glass. How can you manage to make it operationally [carbon] neutral?**
 - R. Will be using the latest triple-glazed glass technology. We do extensive energy modelling and have a consultant on the team to ensure that we finetune the solid-to-glass ratio to hit sustainability targets.
 - **Q. Is there a pedestrian crossing across Don Mills at Mike Palmateer Road?**
 - R. Not sure at the moment. We'll be mindful of sidewalks, bike lanes, and bicycle parking. This area will be massively developed for the next 10 years, and we don't know all of the details just yet.
 - **C. Would be great if there was at least a pedestrian/bicycle connection between Mike Palmateer Rd. & Price Andrews Pl. (crossing the railway).**
 - **Q. The underground parking garage below refrigerated rinks could be a maintenance nightmare. Why not place the parking for the facility under the future park?**
 - R. It's efficient to have the parking under the building, since we need to excavate for the engineering for the pool and ice rinks. Having parking under the park would push out the timing, as it is a separate project set to begin later, to more than would be desirable. We need parking to serve the building when it opens.
 - **C. I think the parking below the future park should be studied.**
 - **C. Parking facility under a park may be more efficient not to worry about transfer beams etc.. Those spaces could become over 100k each**

4.0 Next Steps

The feedback received in Phase 3 of community engagement will be used to refine and finalize the design of the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre.

Visit the [project webpage](#) to learn more about the project and to sign up for e-updates.