

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Don Mills Community Recreation Centre

Phase 3: Setting the Direction Community Advisory Committee Phase 3 Meeting 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 the Phase 3 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting held in June of 2024 to present and receive feedback from the CAC on the preferred design option. The summary of feedback is provided in Section 3.0.

2.1 Phase 3 Community Advisory Committee Meeting

A second Community Advisory Committee Meeting for the Don Mills CRC project was held in person on Tuesday, June 11th from from 6:00 - 8:00pm.

2.1.1 Meeting Participation

WHEN: Tuesday, June 11th from from 6:00 - 8:00pm.
 WHERE: TNO Youth Hub, East York Town Centre, 45 Overlead Blvd.
 ATTENDEES: 14 committee members
 PROJECT TEAM: City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division
 City of Toronto - Recreation Staff
 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 Community Advisory Committee Meeting.

3.1 Key Takeaways

Participants were overwhelmingly pleased with the preferred design, and expressed an appreciation for seeing their feedback and suggestions incorporated into the design. Below we've summarized what we heard into key takeaways.

Food Programming

Participants continue to express pleasure over the inclusion of the community kitchen and suggested that programming support and reflect the community. Participants shared ideas including social enterprise programs and pop-ups or prep space for local entrepreneurs and small businesses. Participants also expressed a desire for food and beverages available for purchase on-site to compliment the restful lounge spaces and early morning hockey players and viewers. Suggestions of a coffee shop, vending machines or local business partnership were made.

Flexible Ice Pad

We heard a desire for flexible use and programming of the ice pads. Participants shared a local need for ball hockey spaces, as the sport has seen a rise in popularity, especially amongst newcomers, as it required very little equipment to play. Currently, youth play ball hockey in parking lots our doors, and more recently, thanks to Councillor Burnside, they have access to Angela James Arena in the summer months, providing a safe place to play. Generally, they were eager for ice pads to be available for flexible programming to meet changing community needs.

Parking

CAC members were very happy to see that their concerns had been heard with a 50% increase in available parking spaces in the below-grade lot. However, some shared that the current number would still be insufficient for hockey or swimming tournaments and events. They were happy to hear that the city was continuing to explore parking options and understood the budget trade-offs and various engineering constraints in adding more below-grade parking.

Wellness and Aquatics Features

Participants were curious about the potential wellness features and amenities to be included in the aquatics facilities. One participant expressed a desire to see a sauna space included, while others raised the possibility of hydrotherapy jets in the leisure pool. Participants emphasized the importance of wellness features for an aging and senior population.

4.0 Next Steps

The feedback received in Phase 3 of community engagement will be used to refine the final design of the Don Mills Community Recreation Centre, and will inform future programming decisions.

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

