

Ice Facilities Strategy

Virtual Public Meeting Summary

Community Engagement Phase 1

Meeting Date: December 11, 2025





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Background

The Ice Facilities Strategy

The City of Toronto is developing an [Ice Facilities Strategy](#), a long-term plan to maximize use and guide future investment in both indoor and outdoor ice facilities where residents skate, play hockey, curl and more. The Strategy will be integrated into the [Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan](#) five-year review, which helps guide future investments in all City recreation facilities, including rinks, sports fields, sports courts, pools, community recreation centres and other amenities.

The Ice Facilities Strategy is planned to identify:

- How the City's ice facilities, including indoor arenas, curling rinks, outdoor artificial ice rinks and skating trails are used year-round.
- Trends in how other cities provide and use their ice facilities.
- Current and future demand for all types of ice facilities.
- Gaps in where ice facilities are located and what types are available, considering population growth and changing recreation habits.
- Ways to improve access to ice facilities for local communities
- Ways to make better use of off-peak times and increase year-round use (including for dry pads when there is no ice).
- Which ice facilities should be improved or repurposed and where new ones should be added.
- New partnership opportunities to help the City fund, program and/or provide ice facilities.
- How community feedback has shaped the priorities and outcomes of the Strategy.

This virtual public meeting was part of the first of two phases of city-wide community engagement that will inform the development of the Ice Facilities Strategy. A full description of the engagement approach can be found on the project webpage: toronto.ca/IceFacilitiesStrategy.

Community Engagement Phase 1: Exploring Options

This phase of community engagement took place from fall 2024 to winter 2025. In this phase, feedback on what is working well with ice facilities and how they can be improved was collected from community members and ice users. This feedback will help set draft priorities and goals for the Strategy. The community engagement activities in this phase included:

- Online surveys
- In-person pop-up events
- Equity-focused advisory group meetings
- Virtual public meeting

This document summarized the Phase 1 virtual public meeting.

Community Engagement Phase 2: Setting the Direction

In this phase, feedback on the draft priorities and goals for the Strategy will be collected from community members and ice users. This feedback will help finalize the Strategy.

The community engagement activities anticipated in this phase are planned to include:

- Online surveys
- In-person pop-up events
- Equity-focused advisory group meetings
- Virtual public meetings

Virtual Public Meeting

Overview

On December 11, 2024, the project team held a virtual public meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. 33 community members attended the meeting.

The meeting included an overview of the Ice Facilities Strategy and Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan. Meeting slides will be posted to the project webpage. Following the presentation, participants engaged in a question-and-answer session and small group discussions to share their needs and priorities for the future of the City's ice facilities.

Summary

Question and Answer Session

This section provides summaries of questions and responses, and is not verbatim. Responses(R) are provided by City Staff.

Q. One of the curling slides notes that the delivery model prevents broader participation. Could that be revised to say that facility availability affect broader participation?

R. This note came out of the City's work on the Curling Strategy. Lack of ice availability reduces options and opportunity for broader participation in curling. In the engagement with curling clubs, we heard they would like to offer more opportunities for new players/learn-to-curl programs, but do not have the facility capacity do it. Through the Curling Strategy work we also understand that curling groups have and are engaging in ongoing efforts to increase diversity in the sport.

Q. I understand the City is considering building new multi-pad indoor rinks in the near future. Is it anticipated that these new facilities would be constructed on existing arena sites, or on new sites (or a combination thereof)?

R. New arenas can be on both existing and new sites. These decisions are based on timing and availability of funding, and what opportunities are present, including specific site characteristics. There are limitations on space, especially in dense areas. For example, with community recreation centres, we increasingly see these integrated into the base of tower developments. Opp to build 1 while other is being revitalized minimizes impacts.

Q. How many rinks do you estimate you will either be renovating or rebuilding by 2038?

R. The purpose of the Ice Facilities Strategy is to reevaluate the recommendations provided in the original Facilities Plan, which was to redevelop two twin pad arenas, consider two single pad arenas for potential conversion to other uses, add five new outdoor rinks, and two new outdoor skate trails. We will also be reevaluating provision levels in areas that currently have low ice provision, such as Scarborough.

Q. Public-private partnerships were alluded to in the presentation. What is the mechanism for the private end of that to become involved? Who are the people to talk to and how do you involve private investors in these initiatives? My group has been involved in these types of partnerships and we would like to be involved in Toronto. There are other models than the City currently uses, that can be successful in leveraging existing assets, such as outdoor rinks.

R. The original Facilities Plan left room open to for the City to consider other models than those currently in place. We have a partnerships team that work on investigating and building partnership opportunities. As part of Phase 2 of the ice Facilities Strategy work, we will host a partnership session to discuss what is working well, challenges, and opportunities moving forward in regards to partnerships for ice facilities. You can reach out to facilitiesplan@toronto.ca if you would like to connect about a specific partnership opportunity or proposal.

Q. Board of Management arenas - why do only certain arenas have this? Have they been in place since the 70's? The arena in my area isn't like other publicly accessible arenas.

R. The Board of Management (BOM) arrangements were the council-approved structure for the former City of Toronto, pre-amalgamation. The BOM structure is outside the scope of the Ice Facilities Strategy. However, since PFR operates BOM arenas, we are interested in hearing feedback about them. We can use feedback to help us understand how we should build an Ice Facilities Strategy that maximizes use of all existing ice facilities.

Q. At the new Wallace-Emerson Community Recreation Centre is the city keeping the existing rink or is the city creating a skating pad or a mixed-use ice rink instead? We signed a petition related for the previous Councillor, about community members not agreeing with the design because the area planned was more for pleasure skating on one side and shinny hockey on one side. We are concerned about the fact that there are no boards for safety reasons. We did not receive a response from the Councillor or the City.

R. Our understanding is that the plan is for a skating trail and shinny pad outside the new Wallace-Emerson Community Recreation Centre, but I need to confirm that's still the case. I will get an answer from the staff planning the project and get back to you.

Q. Why aren't there more options for adults to learn how to skate outside of weekdays in Etobicoke?

R. There are adult programs for learn to skate that occur during the day but very few

because of the low demand. Unless there is greater demand, there won't be more added. Phone our call centre, an agent can help you narrow down exactly what program you need and where available ones are located.

Small Group Discussion Session

1. What is working well with City of Toronto indoor and outdoor ice facilities today, that you would like to see more of?

- **Facilities:**
 - Multi-anchor facilities are good for exposing new potential participants to ice activities. For example, at centers with multiple facilities like ice, a pool and a gym, people can be exposed to and take part in many types of activities.
 - Separate hockey and skating pads adjacent to each other (e.g. West Mall), or rinks that have enough space for both activities at once.
 - Ice condition (indoor and outdoor).
 - Upgrading/revitalizing facilities (e.g. Humber outdoor rink; Wallace Emerson Artificial Ice Rink).
 - Plentiful outdoor rinks.
 - Support amenities at some outdoor locations such as water bottle fillers, pizza oven, canteen/snack bar, vending machines, skate rental, lights.
 - Gender inclusive washrooms.
- **Programs / Use:**
 - Skate lending libraries.
 - Skate programs for 6–8-year-olds where the ice is divided with foam dividers and smaller nets, as this allows for higher use of the space.
 - Year-round use of ice pads (ice, and dry use).
 - Shinny and ringette at outdoor rinks (so people can try these sports).
 - Providing prime-time hockey programming.
 - Ice that serves local neighbourhoods, so kids and others do not have to travel far from home.
- **Funding / Management Models:**
 - Curling facility ownership/management structure, where the city owns the facility and a board of management runs the facility, works well and existing users like this model.
 - Municipal funding/support for to keep programming costs economical.

2. What suggestions do you have for maximizing the use of indoor and/or outdoor ice facilities?

- **Operations:**
 - Operate facilities year round. There is demand for summer ice programming.
 - Operate facilities longer (e.g. 24 hours)

- Allow use of outdoor facilities later into the night. Do not remove people using outdoor rinks after hours.
- **Programs / Use:**
 - Reconfigure use (permits/programs) at underutilized facilities to ensure more efficient use.
 - Work closely with organization trying to find ice permit time, especially for youth programs.
- **Capital Improvements:**
 - Add roofs over outdoor ice to protect from inclement weather and prevent melting by providing shade.
 - Build multi-use ice facilities that can be adapted for various sports and levels of play.
 - Ensure well-designed drainage to enable higher use of ice pads (to quick-freeze in winter and to drain for summer use)

3. How can we make off-peak use (mornings, daytime, and late night) more appealing or easier to access for various user groups?

- **Partner with schools, especially if ice facilities are near a school**
- **Provide more weekday early-morning ice time.**
 - This is not offered often, as some ice facilities are not open weekday mornings. However, there are programs (e.g. figure skating, especially more competitive participants) that would use early ice time if the facilities were open.
- **Invest in targeted advertisement to encourage off-peak use, especially by seniors and students.**
- **Reconsider expectations for off-peak use.**
 - Libraries are not expected to always be full, why should ice facilities.

4. How can we use dry pads in the off season?

- **Suggestions include** (in alphabetical order):
 - Ball hockey
 - Basketball
 - Bike polo
 - Community funded or general community events
 - Community use
 - Farmers' markets
 - Lacrosse
 - Off-leash areas
 - Pickleball (e.g. at the High Park tennis and curling club)
 - Roller Skating
 - Skateboarding

- Tennis
- **To facilitate dry pad use, consider proper design of:**
 - Arena ventilation and cooling
 - Drainage (especially outdoor rinks)
 - Pad surfacing (for safe dry-pad sport/activity use)
- **Consider separating areas in dry pads** to accommodate multiple sports/activities
- **Use revenue** from dry-pad use to supplement operations/activities

5. How can we encourage more local use of ice facilities?

- Provide more drop-in programming
- Partner with local schools to set up programs for local students
- Increase local awareness of the ice facilities and programs available in the neighbourhood
 - Provide simplified communication about activities taking place
- Build more local facilities, close to public transit
- Enable quick and easy facility booking of dry-pads
- Add automatic lights to outdoor facilities to encourage daily/nightly use of dry-pads

6. What are your top priorities for improving the future of City of Toronto ice facilities? Consider suggestions for improving the overall visitor and user experience and for making City of Toronto ice facilities more safe, welcoming and inclusive for all.

- **New Facilities:**
 - Build net new, multi-use, multi-anchor ice facilities to serve prime-time demand
 - Especially needed in areas of the city with fast-growing populations
 - Ensure the ice can be adapted for various sports and levels of play
 - Provide dual pads to support multiple activities is ideal
 - Include off-ice/dry-land training areas (e.g. for warmup)
 - Include support facilities like cafes, community spaces/multi-purpose rooms, viewing areas, and large lockers
 - Build a curling facility in the west end of the city (none currently exist)
 - Consider conversion of an underutilized arena
 - Outdoor Ice:
 - Plan to replace natural rinks with AIRs, due to climate change
 - Build large and unique skating trails to attract people from all parts of the city
 - Build clubhouses to accompany outdoor rinks to provide somewhere to change, a snack bar, and community space. This will help foster a sense of community.

- Consider dry-pad needs when designing facilities (e.g. surface texture, drainage, etc.)
- Consider public-private partnerships to unlock new facilities opportunities
- **Existing facilities:**
 - Increase use:
 - Bubble outdoor ice for year-round use
 - Roof or cover outdoor ice for a longer season (e.g. Greenwood, North Toronto Memorial)
 - Allow for use of outdoor ice later into the night
 - Do not lock outdoor dry pads, and allow them to stay open for community use
 - Improve use:
 - Renovate old washrooms/changerooms
 - Include more storage capacity as multiple organizations need to share space with each other (and also share equipment)
 - Include large personal lockers at existing facilities
 - Provide adult-sized skate assist tools
 - Ensure there are enough Zambonis for heavy use
 - Employ more staff:
 - To ensure safety of users
 - To welcome people to rinks and explain to new users how the rink works, where to go to change, etc.
 - There is often insufficient parking available. Suggestions to improve this include:
 - Provide more parking
 - Work with community to find surrounding areas where ice users can park their cars outside of lots
 - Prevent area residents from parking in ice facility lots
 - Consider transit improvement and on-site storage improvements to reduce the need for users to drive to ice facilities
- **Programing:**
 - Costs/Fees:
 - Keep programing costs low/free
 - Need more cost effective options for more competitive kids that require more room to practice.
 - Coordinate with ice users:
 - Work closely with organization trying to find ice permit time, especially for youth programs.
 - Connect with schools to improve daytime use of facilities (ice and dry pads)
 - Specific programs:
 - Provide adult skating lessons during leisure hours
 - Accommodate shinny on downtown rinks (not just leisure skate)

- Provide programming for all genders, and ensure girls programming is accommodated (e.g. as girls hockey grows)
- Prime time use:
 - Permit prime time less to private groups, use prime time for more city programming to increase equity of use
 - Provide prime time permits to underrepresented groups (women, LGBTQ2S+, families)
- **Location Specific:**
 - Bubble the outdoor rinks beside North Toronto Memorial Arena
 - Build new facilities to keep pace with growth (e.g. Golden Mile, Portlands, Liberty Village)
 - Consider Downsview Park for a new, large, skating trail
 - Roof or cover outdoor ice at Greenwood or by North Toronto Memorial arena for a longer season
 - Including boards on the Wallace-Emerson outdoor ice so that hockey can be played (not just shinny)

Next Steps

All feedback collected through community engagement Phase 1 will be summarized. This information will be used to inform the development of the Ice Facilities Strategy draft directions. The draft directions will be shared with community members in Phase 2 of the community engagement process for review and feedback.

Appendix A:

Participant Overview

At the start of the meeting, **optional** polls were used to get a sense of who was in the virtual room. Results are as follows:

What is your age?

- 5-12 years: 0
- 13-18 years: 0
- 19-29 years: 3
- 30-39 years: 2
- 40-55 years: 6
- 56-64 years: 4
- 65-74 years: 3
- 75+ years: 0

What area of Toronto do you live in?

- Etobicoke: 10
- York: 2
- Downtown: 2
- East York: 1
- North York: 0
- Scarborough: 3
- I live outside of Toronto: 0
- I don't know: 1
- Prefer not to say: 0

During the ice season, how often do you use City of Toronto ice facilities?

- Daily: 2
- Multiple times a week: 8
- Multiple times a month: 4
- A few times a year: 4
- Once a year or less: 1
- I do not use City of Toronto ice facilities: 2

Are you attending this meeting as a representative of an organization?

- Yes: 9
- No: 12

Organizations listed include:

- West End Curling Committee
- North Toronto Hockey Association
- ProtectNatureTO
- Etobicoke Ringette
- Toronto Curling Association
- Bike Polo Toronto
- Silver Blades Skating Club
- The Good Guides

Rank up to 3 ice activities that are most important to you or your household:

- Curling: 6
- Drop-in skating/Public skate: 13
- Figure skating: 4
- Hockey: 7
- Learn to skate: 7
- Ringette: 0
- Shinny (informal pick-up hockey): 5
- Dry pad activities (no ice): 6