

# Community Advisory Committee Meeting 1 and 2 Summary Report

Ramsden Park Community Recreation Centre

Phase 1: Towards a Vision

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# Introduction

The City of Toronto is working with the local community near Ramsden Park to develop a vision and design for a new Community Recreation Centre (CRC) coming to 1010 Yonge Street. The new CRC will be a 75,000 square foot facility located across from Rosedale subway station and south of Ramsden Park. This space is currently a City of Toronto-owned parking lot beside the Solid Waste Yard.

As part of the engagement process, the City formed a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to obtain local input on the CRC’s design, recreational functions, and community amenities, which will inform outcomes of the draft designs. The Ramsden Park CRC CAC consist of 23 community members and 12 community representatives from local stakeholder groups. The committee will convene at least once during each phase.

This report summarizes conversations and outcomes from CAC meetings 1 and 2, which were held at Belmont House, located at 55 Belmont Street.



Figure 1. Aerial image of the current parking lot area at 1010 Yonge Street. The new Ramsden Park CRC is located south of Ramsden Park and adjacent to the City of Toronto Waste Yard. The project site boundary is outlined in dashed lines.

# Phase 1: Towards a Vision

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The purpose of this phase was to develop a vision for the new Ramsden Park Community Recreational Centre (CRC) together with the local community. In this phase of the engagement process, the project team collected feedback to develop a draft vision statement for the new CRC, a series of guiding principles and building program, which will guide the development of design options.

On June 12, 2025, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met in person for an orientation meeting to gain more insights about the project, understand their role, and discuss the community engagement process for the new CRC. The second CAC meeting took place in person on June 23, 2025.

The first two CAC meetings focused on the following objectives:

- Getting to know one another.
- Establishing a shared understanding of the CAC's role and design process.
- Clarifying the current context and constraints associated with the future CRC site.
- Reaching a consensus on the way forward in terms of the engagement process.
- Drafting a vision statement for the new CRC.
- Developing initial draft guiding principles to inform the design process.

The following sections of this report provide a summary of the discussions from the first and second CAC meetings. For more detailed information on project phases and the community engagement process, please visit the project web page at: [toronto.ca/RamsdenCRC](https://toronto.ca/RamsdenCRC).

# CAC Meeting 1: Orientation

On Thursday, June 12, 2025, the first Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting took place at Belmont House.

The agenda included:

- A hands-on group ice breaker activity
- Official welcome and project presentation from City staff
- Establishing the purpose and mandate of the CAC
- Discussing the shared values for the CAC engagement process
- Reviewing the CAC Terms of Reference (TOR)
- Wrap-up and next steps

## Meeting Highlights

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The orientation meeting focused on clarifying project details, explaining the design framework and engagement process, and establishing the purpose and mandate of the CAC. Participants engaged in hands-on ice breaker activities and discussed their shared values on how they would like to work together moving forward as a CAC throughout the engagement process.

Participants also reviewed the draft TOR document together and reached consensus on the roles and responsibilities of the CAC and the City's project team.

# Ice Breaker: Memory of Belonging

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Figure 2. Photo taken at the first CAC meeting. A few CAC members are seated around a table and sharing their personal stories about memories of belonging to the whole group using the found object models they built.

During the ice breaker activity, CAC members participated in a group exercise using found objects. Staff provided an assortment of loose, random objects for participants to manipulate and creatively assemble.

Each member had 10 minutes to create a small structural piece on coloured cardboard paper, representing a time when they felt a deep sense of community, belonging, creativity, or joy in a shared space. This hands-on activity was designed to encourage participants to get to know one another better, while also uncovering common values that could underpin and contribute to later conversations.

A link to the full activity can be found [here](#).

## Common Themes

CAC members shared various themes that resonated with the group. Some shared common themes included:

### **Social Connections:**

- Family
- Friends
- Children
- Childhood
- Play
- Risky Play
- Joy
- Journeys
- Exploring
- Games room
- Celebrations

### **Nature & Wildlife:**

- Nature
- Green space
- Trees
- Grass
- Ocean
- Water
- Beach
- Park
- Cottage
- Forest
- Green roof
- Garden
- Bird
- Pets

### **Community Building:**

- Community
- Festival
- Socializing
- Neighbourhood
- Volunteering
- Holiday
- Parade
- Fundraising
- Culture

### **Art & Culture:**

- Music
- Fashion
- Dancing
- Space to support the arts
- Theatre & multipurpose space

### **Learning & Self-growth:**

- Networking
- Career
- Learning
- University
- School

### **Sports Activity:**

- Water sports
- Soccer
- Running

# Breakout Session: Shared Values

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## Shared Values Exercise

In this breakout session, CAC members worked in small groups to identify shared values for how they want to work together throughout this project. The goal was to reach an agreement on a common set of values that would help shape how the CAC collaborates and interacts as a group moving forward. Each CAC member began by writing down a word or short phrase that reflected a value they felt should guide the CAC engagement process.

In small groups, members discussed and selected the top three values that best represented their collective perspective, which they then shared with the larger group. The project team then organized the values, grouping ones that were similar. Each value was then reviewed by the larger group, with support measured by hand voting.

The final set of values identified by the CAC was:

### **Inclusivity:**

We value everyone's input, embracing lots of different ideas and perspectives. The CRC will reflect and respond to the needs of all members of the community.

### **Collaboration**

We are open-minded and encourage a free flow of ideas and creativity. Our vision will be a true reflection of the collective.

### **Thoughtfulness**

We listen to others' ideas and opinions because that's how we learn. We are committed to thinking about the benefit to the entire community and leaving no stone unturned to ensure the CRC is the best it can be.

### **Cohesion**

The new CRC should fit in well with the surrounding neighbourhood and contribute positively to its surroundings.

### **Boldness and Innovation**

We imagine the future we want and express those desires boldly. We expect a CRC that is architecturally excellent, environmentally sustainable, and forward-thinking.

## Common Good

We value the process, the community, and each other, and advocate for a CRC that serves the most people.

## Storyboard



Figure 3. Storyboard with the initial draft values that CAC members wrote and selected from their small group discussions.

# Breakout Session: Terms of Reference

## Reviewing the Terms of Reference (TOR)

In this breakout session, CAC members reviewed and discussed items outlined in the draft Terms of Reference (TOR). The TOR outline the roles and responsibilities of the project staff and CAC members.

CAC members were asked to provide any feedback or suggestions on the TOR terms. They were encouraged to reflect not just on whether the proposed language works, but also if it aligns with the values identified in the shared values exercise. All members must agree to these terms in order to serve on the CAC.

The draft TOR was collaboratively reviewed and edited by the CAC, and an updated TOR was circulated after the meeting.

# CAC Meeting 2: Vision & Guiding Principles

On Monday, June 23, 2025, the second Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting took place at Belmont House.

The agenda included:

- Recap on the first CAC orientation meeting and shared values
- Project presentation from City staff
- Thought Exchange and school engagement activity result summary
- Breakout session: Vision Statement workshop
- Breakout session: Guiding Principles workshop
- Wrap-up and next steps

## Meeting Highlights

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The second CAC workshop focused on developing a draft vision statement and a set of guiding principles for the new Ramsden Park CRC. City staff also shared feedback from the broader community, including input gathered through an online Thought Exchange activity and a school-based classroom engagement.

During breakout sessions, participants engaged in a hands-on visioning exercise and worked in small groups to build models that represent their ideal new CRC. This activity helped identify shared themes and important values, which guided the discussion in creating a vision statement and guiding principles that resonated with the community.

# Breakout Session: CRC Visioning

## Visioning Exercise

In this breakout session, CAC members were asked to work in small groups to build a larger model using the found objects. The goal was to collaboratively build a model that represents their highest hopes for what the new CRC could mean to the community. They then worked to identify any overlap between their ideas and discuss which themes resonated the most with their group.

Members of each group shared what they built with the larger team, and city staff led a group discussion to identify common themes and elements across all built models.

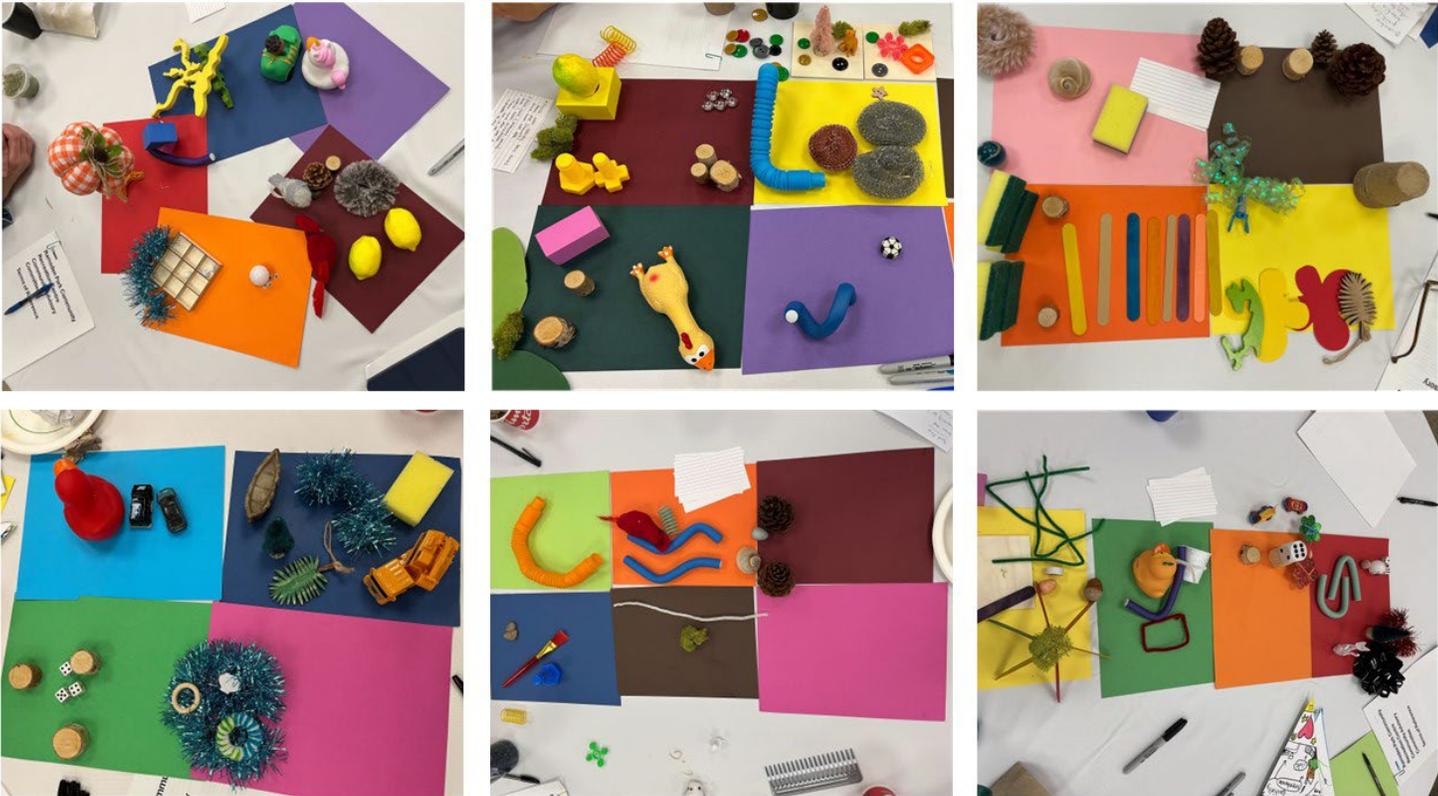


Figure 4. Visioning models of the new CRC built by each CAC member group using found objects.

## Common Themes

CAC members shared various themes from the visioning exercise that resonated with the group. Some shared common themes included:

### **Creativity & Culture**

- Arts, music, performance, and public expression
- Opportunities for learning and developing creative skills

### **Flexibility & Innovation**

- Multi-purpose spaces that evolve over time
- Program diversity and unprogrammed areas for spontaneous use

### **Nature & Sustainability**

- Green roofs, gardens, and natural materials
- Strong integration with Ramsden Park and the outdoors
- Long-term, adaptable, and sustainable design

### **Accessibility & Safety**

- Clean, safe, and accessible for all mobility needs
- Strong connections to transit and the surrounding community

### **Community & Belonging**

- Inclusive and welcoming to all ages and backgrounds
- Spaces for gathering, celebration, and connection
- Recognition of Indigenous culture and neighbourhood heritage

### **Play & Recreation**

- Kid-friendly areas, games, and recreation opportunities for all age

# Vision Building

After the model-building exercise, CAC members received a set of vision cards, including cards with printed phrases drawn from the earlier Thought Exchange feedback and blank cards for writing down new ideas. Building on the themes that emerged during the model-building activity, participants discussed and wrote additional key visioning phrases and concepts on the blank cards.

Each group then selected four to six visioning cue cards that best reflected their collective vision. At least two of the selected cards were drawn from the pre-identified Thought Exchange outcomes, ensuring that broader community feedback was incorporated into the discussion.

The prompt provided to inspire the exercise was:

***"The new Ramsden Park Community Recreation Centre should be a place where..."***

The visioning phrases selected and agreed upon by CAC members in their small groups are presented below.

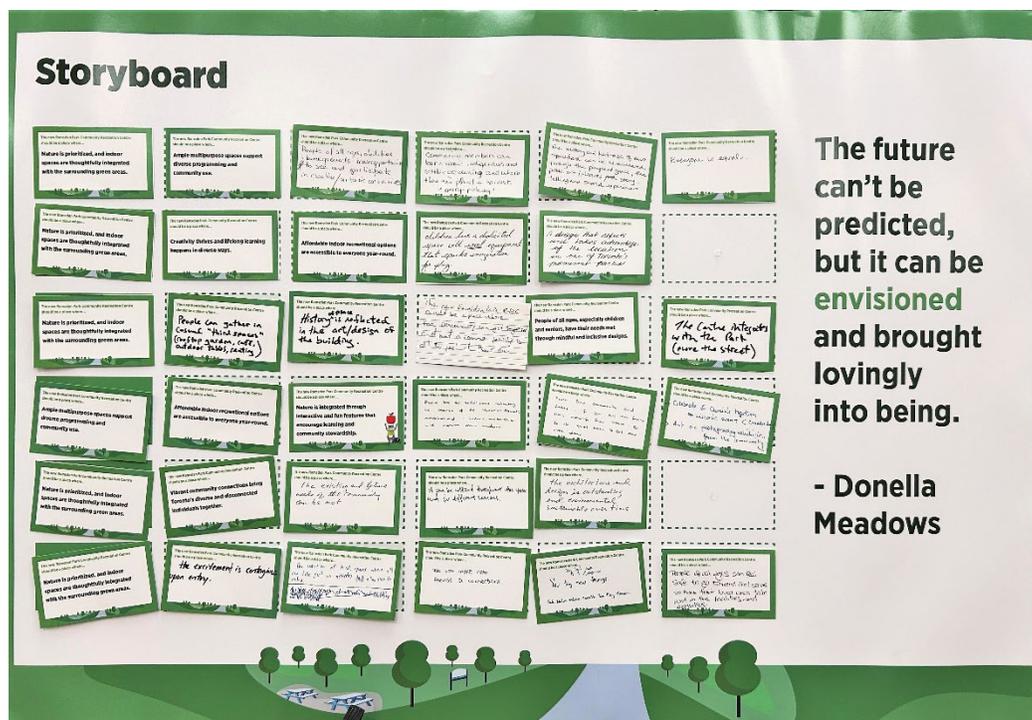


Figure 5. Storyboard with the vision cards that CAC members wrote and selected from their small group discussions.

## Collective Vision Statement Creation

The project team employed Artificial Intelligence (AI) to integrate each group's selected vision cue cards into a single, cohesive draft vision statement for the new recreation centre. The following prompt was used by the project team:

***Synthesize the visioning ideas (contributed by the Ramsden CRC CAC) into 3 clear, inspiring, and inclusive vision statements for the new Ramsden Park Community Recreation Centre. The statements should reflect the advisory committee's shared aspirations, highlight what will make this CRC special, and tell a compelling story about how the space will serve the community. Ensure the tone is positive, hopeful, and accessible. The statements should begin with "The new Ramsden Community Recreation Centre will be..." and use the group's own language as much as possible. Do not make anything up. If you are unsure about what something says, please ask for clarification.***

This approach emphasized recurring phrases and themes, reduced potential selection bias from the project team, and ensured that the CAC's own language and ideas remained at the core of the statement. The team then asked the AI to strengthen the statement by emphasizing the most common ideas, refining the draft to better reflect the CAC's collective vision.

The resulting draft vision statement, developed through this process, was presented to and received support from CAC members:

*"The new Ramsden Park Community Recreation Centre will be a vibrant, inclusive hub that brings people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds together to connect, create, and thrive.*

*Through outstanding architecture and design, the centre will honour Ramsden Park's unique history — including its role as the source of Toronto's distinctive yellow bricks. Art, storytelling, and cultural expression woven throughout the building and park grounds to celebrate community memory and creativity.*

*The centre will prioritize nature, with abundant natural light and use of natural materials. Indoor and outdoor spaces will be thoughtfully integrated with surrounding green areas, including gardens with Indigenous plants. Interactive elements will encourage learning about the environment, Indigenous and settler gardening, and community stewardship, while supporting sustainability and seasonal use year-round.*

*Children will enjoy both dedicated spaces and unprogrammed play areas with novel equipment that sparks imagination. People of all ages will have their needs met through mindful and inclusive design. The centre will support creativity and lifelong learning, offering opportunities for people to participate in and experience artistic and cultural activities.*

*Ample multipurpose spaces and informal 'third spaces' that support gathering will provide affordable, year-round recreation. Quiet areas will offer calm and reflection, while flexible designs will adapt to changing community needs over time. Direct and accessible connections to Ramsden Park, nearby transit, and surrounding streets will knit the centre into the neighbourhood, creating a place where community connections and friendships can flourish for generations."*

## Breakout Session: Guiding Principles

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### Guiding Principles Discussion

In this breakout session, city staff reintroduced the definition of guiding principles and how they will guide the development of design options in the next phase. CAC members were asked to develop and write down a series of principles that address the draft vision statement and incorporate themes identified in the earlier exercise.

Each group prioritized their cards and selected three to five guiding principles to share back with the whole team. City staff led a group discussion to identify common themes and determine if there was consensus around the outcome.

The following edited guiding principles were initially drafted by and agreed upon by CAC members.

All draft guiding principles follow the prompt ***"The new Ramsden Park CRC should..."***

- reflect the personality of the neighbourhood, including its energy, history, and beliefs.
- feel like an extension of your home that is warm, welcoming, and grounded in community.
- have lots of good energy and excitement.
- support and enable community events by providing resources and hosting opportunities.
- serve as a third space for a variety of different activities.

- reflect the needs of the existing community and not contribute to gentrification.
- foster a feeling of safety for all users.
- connect people in the community and invoke a sense of pride and co-ownership.
- reflect meaningful Indigenous stories and values that foster reconciliation.
- include child-focused spaces and activities designed for children and youth.
- reflect history and nature through the materials used.
- reflect the diversity of the neighbourhood and support newcomers and marginalized groups.
- welcome people of all backgrounds and cultures.
- encourage participation from multiple communities by being multi-use and inviting.
- avoid looking too modern, too plain, or like a shopping mall.
- should be designed in a way that is architecturally gorgeous and relevant now and 75 years into the future.
- have an outdoor space where youth feel safe, comfortable, and protected from nearby streets.
- include a small library space for kids and youth with books and story time programming.
- should have a design that explores opportunities for using natural materials that reflect the park and the existing 1930s building.
- should have a design that respects the neighbourhood by reflecting the identity and values of its people.
- have unique architectural and spatial features that feel vibrant rather than institutional.
- be an intergenerational space that supports programs for all ages and abilities in an equity-driven way.
- honour and recognize the land, the people, and the local community.
- support the delivery of programs and services in collaboration with Indigenous communities.
- continue to offer existing programming such as swimming, skating, gym activities, and multi-use classes.
- use planting or furniture to create zones of refuge and zones of activity.

# Building on What We Heard

Following CAC meetings 1 and 2, the project team shared a survey with CAC members to confirm the vision statement, guiding principles, and building program. The survey was available from August 11, 2025, to September 8, 2025. 25 CAC members participated.

CAC members were asked if the vision statement and guiding principles accurately reflected what they wanted the Ramsden Park CRC to become. They were also asked to rank which guiding principles should be prioritized when designing the CRC. They were then asked how important each building program area was at the new CRC, and given the opportunity to share ideas for any new facilities that should be included.

The following draft vision, guiding principles, and building program were directly developed from the feedback received in the first phase of engagement, in particular the second CAC meeting on June 23, 2025, and the online survey of CAC members.

Feedback from this phase consistently emphasized the importance of:

- Establishing an inclusive and vibrant **community hub** that welcomes people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to connect, create, and thrive together/
- Honouring the local **history and heritage** through architectural design and storytelling, reflecting upon the uniqueness of Ramsden Park.
- Integrating **nature and sustainability** into the design, emphasizing natural light, natural materials and Indigenous planting.
- Creating **flexible, accessible and intergenerational spaces** that encourage creativity, lifelong learning, and community engagement.
- Building **strong neighbourhood connections** through providing seamless connections to Ramsden Park, public transit and surrounding streets.

# Draft Vision Statement

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Feedback from the online survey of CAC members emphasized:

- Elevate identity pieces that are specific to Ramsden Park and the surrounding area e.g. park, ravine, yellow brick history, and local context.
- Re-balance focus toward recreation, sports, health, and third spaces.
- Strengthen sustainability with explicit reference to leading-edge green design.

The following vision statement was drafted using themes from CAC meetings 1 and 2. It then evolved further to incorporate feedback from the model-building exercise, vision cue card prioritization, and online survey:

***The new Ramsden Park Community Recreation Centre will be a vibrant, inclusive hub that brings people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds together to connect, create, play, and thrive.***

***Through outstanding architecture and design, the centre will honour Ramsden Park's unique identity, including its role as the source of Toronto's distinctive yellow bricks, its ravine landscape, Indigenous heritage, and the diverse communities that have shaped the neighbourhood. Art, storytelling, and cultural expression woven throughout the building and park grounds will celebrate community memory, creativity, and belonging.***

***Recreation, health, and play will be at the heart of the centre. Children will enjoy both dedicated spaces and unprogrammed play areas with novel equipment that sparks imagination, while people of all ages will have their needs met through mindful and inclusive design. Multipurpose spaces and informal "third spaces" will support affordable, year-round recreation, sports, fitness, cultural expression, and lifelong learning, while quiet areas will offer calm and reflection.***

***The centre will be recognized for its leading-edge sustainable design, making extensive use of natural light and materials. Strong integration with Ramsden Park and surrounding green spaces, including gardens with Indigenous plants, will support environmental learning, seasonal use, and community stewardship, while ensuring the building remains adaptable and resilient for generations.***

*Together, these elements will create an iconic, park-integrated community home, a place where creativity, wellbeing, and belonging can flourish for generations.*

## Draft Guiding Principles

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The following guiding principles were drafted using themes from CAC meeting 2 and the online survey, where CAC members could vote on how accurately the guiding principles reflected what was most important for the design of the CRC, and where they could rank their top choices for which guiding principles should be prioritized. All guiding principles received a minimum of 91% agreement.

The guiding principles appear in order of how they were ranked by CAC members.

**1. Inspire and Energize**

The CRC should promote active living, creativity, and wellness through bold and dynamic design that will spark imagination and endure for future generations.

**2. Be a Community Oasis**

The CRC should serve as a public space that offers a retreat from the dense urban environment through collaborative activities, relaxation, and community gatherings.

**3. Reflect Neighbourhood Identity**

The CRC design should reflect the unique identity and history of the Yorkville–Rosedale neighbourhood.

**4. Ensure Safety and Belonging**

The CRC should feel safe, inclusive, and welcoming for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, fostering a strong sense of belonging and security.

**5. Enable Participation through Versatility**

The CRC should support a wide range of programs and uses, with versatile spaces that respond to changing community needs and seasonal activities.

## **6. Embrace Nature and Ramsden Park**

The CRC should connect seamlessly with Ramsden Park and its natural surroundings, with design elements that honour the park's history and enhance indoor-outdoor flow.

## **7. Family Friendly**

The CRC should offer accessible, year-round programming for children and caregivers, encouraging longer and more frequent family visits.

## **8. Foster Meaningful Connections**

The CRC should be designed to support meaningful social interaction and a sense of shared ownership through flexible, inclusive, and adaptable spaces.

# Draft Building Program

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At CAC meetings 1 and 2, City staff shared precedent images showing programs and features from other recreation centres in Toronto. While some CAC members offered their ideas and aspirations for the new centre, there was not enough time to complete the planned workshop on program areas.

The following building program was drafted using through the online survey, where CAC members could rank how important each program area was at the new recreation centre. They could also share additional ideas or features that may not yet be captured by the project team.

The building program areas appear in order of how they were ranked by CAC members.

### **1. Aquatics (96% ranked very important or important)**

Leisure Pool, lane pool, diving board, water slide and interactive play features, warm water therapy pool, sauna/steam room.

### **2. Fitness and wellness (96% ranked very important or important)**

Gyms, weight room, yoga studio, group exercise space, running track, dance and aerobic studios.

- 3. Age-friendly spaces and programs (82% ranked very important or important)**  
Indoor play space, after-school activity room, teen space, seniors space.
- 4. Community building and social spaces (77% ranked very important or important)**  
Meeting rooms, event halls, lounge areas, and co-working spaces, café and snack bar, community kitchen.
- 5. Arts and culture (72% ranked very important or important)**  
Dance studio, art room, music rehearsal space, performance theatre.
- 6. Outdoor connections (68% ranked very important or important)**  
Integration with Ramsden Park, connecting with nature, trees and plantings.
- 7. Sports facilities (64% ranked very important or important)**  
Indoor courts for basketball, volleyball, badminton, and pickleball, plus outdoor fields for soccer, baseball, and other sports.

Additional ideas shared by CAC members through an open-ended question included:

- Pottery kiln
- Splash pad or water play area
- Rock climbing wall
- Cold plunge pool
- Space that promotes active, creative collaboration and brainstorming
- Multipurpose room to support local entrepreneurs and community initiatives (for arts, culture, community building)
- Music performance space
- Squash court
- Sauna
- Winter season indoor activities
- Varied music programs
- Dance studio with wooden floors and mirrors
- Fitness and wellness facilities
- Quiet room
- Pickleball courts
- Indoor soccer facilities

# Next Steps

## Phase 1: Towards a Vision

To conclude Phase 1 of the community engagement process, the draft vision statement, guiding principles, and building program will be presented to the broader community through an online survey to confirm they align with their respective preferences and priorities.

## Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

In this next phase, the project team aims to:

- Launch a design competition inviting local and international design teams to submit their qualifications to be considered for the short-list
- Gather community feedback through public workshops, an online survey, and potentially an open house or outdoor pop-up event during favourable weather conditions.

This collaborative effort will guide the design competition. Community reviews and feedback on the designs will ensure transparency and inclusivity, bringing the community's vision to life.

## Appendix: Meeting Attendance

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29 CAC members attended the first meeting, and 27 attended the second meeting. The following project team members were in attendance at one or both meetings:

- City of Toronto, Parks and Recreation
  - Katy Aminian – Acting Program Manager
  - Christie Pearson – Senior Project Coordinator
  - Daniel Fusca – Manager, Community Engagement
  - Joshua Bowman – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator

- Stella Zhou – Public Consultation Coordinator
- Jill MacLachlan – Supervisor, Community Engagement
- Vivian Goulas – Supervisor, Community Engagement
- Kim Behrouzian – Supervisor, Community Engagement
- Alex Lavasidis – Project Officer
- Annie Ding – Public Consultation Coordinator

Representatives from the following community organizations attended one or both meetings:

- Annex Residents' Association (ARA)
- Asquith-Collier Association
- Avenue-Bay Cottingham Ratepayers' Association (ABCRA)
- Bloor Street East Neighbourhood Association (BENA)
- Deer Park Residents' Group (DPRG)
- Greater Yorkville Residents' Association (GYRA)
- North Rosedale Residents Association (NRRA)
- Rosedale Mainstreet Business Improvement Area
- South Rosedale Residents Association (SRRA)
- Summerhill Residents' Association (SRA)
- The Memphis Condos
- Yorkville Run

Seven CAC members were absent from the first meeting, and nine were absent from the second meeting.

We appreciate all the community members who engaged with us during CAC meetings 1 and 2. Your questions, insights, and feedback have been invaluable in refining our materials and enhancing the overall experience for all participants.