

Kidstown Water Park

Community Resource Group Meeting 1

September 23, 2020

Feedback Summary

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the first Community Resource Group Meeting for the Kidstown Water Park Redesign that was held on September 23, 2020.

More information about the project can be found on [the project webpage: toronto.ca/KidstownRedesign](https://toronto.ca/KidstownRedesign)

Community Resource Group (CRG) Meeting 1

The purpose of this first meeting was to confirm how the water park is used now and to identify some overall goals and objectives that will establish priorities for the park's renovations.

The meeting was held on Zoom and facilitated by Jane Farrow from the Department of Words & Deeds. Following a land acknowledgement by Kaila Johnson from the City of Toronto, introductions were made and an overview of the consultation process and schedule were presented. Then, after a review of the Community Resource Group Terms of Reference, PMA Landscape Architects' Fung Lee presented an overview of the project background, site analysis and preliminary design goals with precedents. In discussion, Resource Group members were asked to share what is currently working and not working, how the site functions and what they want to see in the future.

The Dept of Words & Deeds produced this summary of key points and themes from the video conference discussion, and group chat. It will be circulated to the Community Resource Group for review before being finalized and posted to the project webpage.

Meeting Attendees

Community Resource Group Members

Oren Leung, local resident

Chris Lee, lives downtown

Rose Patrick, local resident

Vera Puckrin, local resident

Simone Grant-Lewis, frequent user of the park over many years

Nadia Persaud, STYLE Program Coordinator, Learning Disabilities Association, Toronto District

Ramla Abukar, Coordinator, Advocacy and Community Engagement (GTA), CNIB Foundation

Clara Chen, local resident

Kimberly Stevens

Rima Dib, parent and local resident, unofficial representative for local community of parents

Cate Monteiro, work with Autism Services of Toronto

Saira Oslam, long-time user of the park and used to go when she was a kid

Tarah Hamilton

Absent

Dorothy Tsui
Houri
Ken Gilbert
Kristine
Manosh

Caroline
Nicole
Nisha Noble
Teddy Ramaroson
Eric Panganiban

City Staff**City of Toronto**

Kaila Johnson
Alex Lavasidis
Katy Aminian

Design Team - PMA Architects

Fung Lee
Mehran Ataee
Waiyee Chou

Facilitation Team - Dept of Words & Deeds

Jane Farrow
Mia Hunt

Videostream Technical support

Andrea Bennett

Terms of Reference

CRG members did not suggest any changes to the Terms of Reference, nor was any email feedback provided to request any changes to the Terms of Reference. Therefore, the Terms of Reference are now considered Final and agreed to by the Community Resource Group members. A copy of the Final Terms of Reference is available in Appendix A.

Feedback Summary

Summary of Key Points

- The water park should remain a water park – as opposed to a splash pad – with opportunities for dynamic play including “cause and effect” features and a shallow pool area.
- The diverse needs of kids and their care-givers must be taken into account in the redesign, including those on the spectrum and those with visual and mobility impairments.
- A wide range of ages should continue to be catered to.
- As well as the design of the waiting area, the current line-up system should be re-examined to determine ways to increase efficiency/decrease line-ups and queueing.
- Opportunities to increase the size of the water park and improve connection to the broader L'Amoreaux park amenities should be considered.
- Attention should be paid to the safety of future surface materials.
- The park would be more comfortable with warmer water and more shade.
- Opportunities should be pursued to meaningfully incorporate Huron-Wendat culture and narratives in the redesign because of the close proximity of Kidstown to the Alexandra Site (a nearby 14th century Huron-Wendat Village, unearthed in 2000). Environmental impacts should be minimized wherever possible.

Detailed Feedback by Theme

Opportunities for Dynamic Play

Participants stressed that the water park should remain a water park, and not become a splash pad. A water park was defined, in part, by its dynamic play opportunities. It generally has large interactive water features, including slides, structures, jets and spouts. Participants want the redesign to include opportunities for sensory play, with noise, dynamic levels and features that explore cause and effect. Many precedents were raised, including Great Wolf Lodge – which has waves pools and, like Kidstown, had places where kids can cycle to make water squirt – and the Science Centre – where kids can build dams on water tables.

Participants also suggested adding narrow spouts where water balloons can be filled and having the ability to control the flow of water in a canal-and-lock type system. A couple of participants encouraged cognitive and interpretive features that could get kids thinking and provide options for both passive and active play; there could be opportunities to include STEM approaches and education. A couple of participants also suggested a story path along a stream of water, so smaller kids and those with sensory needs can follow parts of a walkable story. More than anything else, the giant bucket was celebrated by participants. “Don’t get rid of the bucket,” we were told.

Providing for All Abilities

Participants included disabled parents and parents of kids with disabilities. Many stressed that the water park needs to be inclusive. Kids with mobility impairments should be able to participate, not just watch others. Suggested ideas included wide slides and ramps, providing water wheelchairs, wheelchair-accessible swings or sway gliders and extra-wide vestibules in the changerooms. Interactive water tables were another idea to provide accessible waterplay without getting wet. Furnishings in the picnic and general seating areas need to be more accessible.

Participants told us they would like the park design to consider the needs of kids on the spectrum. This includes making equipment accessible to parents so they can support kids without safety awareness. The current line-up system could be made easier for kids who cannot stand for long periods of time and for kids on the spectrum who have challenges with delayed gratification and find it difficult to wait.

Participants shared their perspectives as disabled parents as well. They could better support their kids if spaces around play structures were more open and if there were large accessible gender-neutral change rooms. Accessible seating areas were also discussed, as picnic tables are challenging for wheelchairs users.

For those with visual impairments, one participant suggested including tactile surfaces and high contrast colours to distinguish between different zones. Big print on signage and brail on changerooms was also discussed as an asset.

Note: A City of Toronto representative noted that all upgrades will be compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Providing for all Ages

The current park design was lauded for providing something for all ages. A number of participants discussed how their kids had “graduated” from the small wading pool to more dynamic and challenging areas of the park. This was discussed as important to continue in the future design. The water park needs to provide a space for kids to grow.

Access and Entry

Arriving at the water park was discussed by most participants as fairly easy – with ample parking and pedestrian access. It was described as more challenging for those coming by wheelchair, especially those arriving by WheelTrans. A pathway from the sidewalk has proven difficult for users of non-motorized wheelchairs. Interlocking bricks and uneven paths are also challenging to wheelchair users. Participants questioned if the bus stops are accessible, if there are accessible pedestrian signals at the local crossings, and if the sidewalks are AODA compliant. The school bus drop-off area requires a more expedient and functional solution.

Participants shared a range of experience with entry wait-times. Some told us that the line generally moves quickly and never waited for more than five minutes, while others told us they regularly wait for an hour. We heard that the queueing process needs to be more efficient. The area was described as exposed and lacking adequate seating. Participants suggested

implementing a ticketing system, so they could get in the queue and then receive a text message five minutes before a space is available. Another participant suggested reserving spots online with time limits on park use, so that there is a quicker cycle of users through the water park.

Connections and Surroundings

Participants like that the water park is surrounded by other park areas and natural features. One noted the benefit of the basketball court being nearby to accommodate families with younger and older children. A number would like to see the park expand to take advantage of the expansive space around.

Note: A representative from the City of Toronto told participants that there is an opportunity to expand the footprint of the water park up the large hill to the east of the site. Though it is uncertain how that will unfold, it is something they are looking at.

Safety and Comfort

A number of participants noted concerns about the safety of current surface materials. The cement is slippery and abrasive and has caused twisted ankles and many scrapes. The flooring in the washrooms was also described as dangerous when wet and cramped conditions have created safety concerns with older children knocking down small children when sharing these spaces.

Note: A representative from PMA noted that they are thinking about materials. For areas with water, durability is a factor. Rubber has advantages but has a limited life span. The design team may consider a mix of rubber and concrete, but all options are being considered.

Elsewhere, the water control wheel at the back of the bucket dump was described as a safety hazard by one participant. They suggested that the swinging feature could be put lower down so it was not a hazard.

The low temperature of the water was discussed as limiting participants' time at the park. Some participants wanted the water to be warmer.

Note: A representative from the City of Toronto told the group that water temperature relates to water circulation, which is provincially regulated. Whereas now, the water is coming straight from water system, in a new design, there will be opportunity for warmer water. To be compliant with health, safety and Toronto Water, they will look at a sanitization and circulation system. The water could be filtered, treated and recirculated instead of new water – like in a swimming pool.

Participants asked for more shade. In areas without trees, they suggested the addition of sails or umbrellas to provide cooler places to gather, rest and picnic.

One participant noted that the water park would be more comfortable without big kids from summer camps. This results in overcrowding, which is challenging for smaller kids and those with sensory needs. They suggested that perhaps there could be one day a week without summer camps, or a first hour of the day when it could be calmer.

Indigenous Component

Participants were excited about the potential to include Huron-Wendat content and narratives in the future design. They wanted to see Indigenous people included in the planning process for the park. The use of water – as one of the four sacred elements – was discussed as a way to meaningfully connect to Indigenous traditions. This would not "tick off a box," as one participant said, "but highlight how water is so important, so we can do justice to how precious the material is and acknowledge that we are settlers."

Note: A City of Toronto representative shared that they are already working with individuals from the Huron-Wendat Nation who are enthusiastic and interested in this project. The City is also doing work to understand the meaning of ravines and water elsewhere. They are developing a draft report on how that relationship can manifest itself and about how First Nations communities use ravines.

Next Steps

Offer email feedback and comments to Jane Farrow, facilitator until October 5, 2020 at jane@janefarrow.ca

Publicize the public meeting, presentation, survey and project website through local networks.

Appendix A: Final Terms of Reference

Kidstown Water Park Redesign and Replacement Community Resource Group Draft Terms of Reference

1. Project Overview

L'Amoreaux Kidstown is the City's only owned and operated waterpark. It is the most popular outdoor aquatic facility in the City, enjoyed by kids and families from all across Toronto. It has come time to replace this iconic destination and revitalize its surroundings to ensure the water park is in good working order for many summers to come. The redesigned water park will be a dynamic, accessible, safe, and exciting space that will better serve existing and new park users.

The project will include the following:

- Redesign and replacement of the water park/splash pad
- Expanded parking and queueing areas
- New and improved changing facilities and washrooms
- Enhanced spaces for permit use
- Shade structure(s)

The City will be leading this project and has procured a local firm, PMA Landscape Architects, to act as the primary consultant undertaking the design and construction administration.

The general project timeline is:

- Summer 2020 to Winter 2021: Design and public consultation phase
- Winter 2021 to Spring 2021: Construction procurement phase
- Summer 2021 to Summer 2022: Construction phase

2. CRG Mandate

The mandate of the CRG is to provide a forum for feedback, guidance and advice to the Project Team (City staff and design consultants) at key decision points during the public consultation process. Specifically, the role of the CRG is to:

- Act as a sounding board for the Project Team to share and discuss ideas and findings;
- Provide guidance, constructive feedback and suggestions on proposed project approaches, concepts and materials, including materials to be presented at public meetings;
- Provide a sense of the broader community's reactions and concerns, and explore how these might be addressed;
- Relay meeting discussions and outcomes back to community members, and any organizations or constituencies CRG members belong to;
- Promote public consultation activities and events with fellow community members and any organizations or constituencies CRG members belong to; and
- Provide feedback on any other relevant matters that the Project Team refers to the CRG for comment.

3. CRG Work Plan

There will be three CRG meetings.

Early Fall 2020: The first CRG meeting will introduce the project, design team, and engagement process. CRG member will provide feedback to inform the development of a vision for Kidstown and design options for the site.

Late Fall 2020: The second CRG meeting will present and review emerging ideas and design options. CRG members will provide feedback on draft design options, and lead to the development of a single proposed design option for Kidstown.

Winter 2021: The third CRG meeting will present a proposed design for Kidstown. CRG members will provide feedback to refine the proposed design.

Meetings will take place online through Zoom instead of in person, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

4. CRG Membership

The CRG is a non-political advisory body composed of community members who have an interest in the project, a familiarity with Kidstown Water Park, and are 18 years old or above. Members can live anywhere in the City of Toronto. The Community Resource Group strives to represent a diversity and balance of perspectives including:

- Those who work with or care for children and youth
- Local community members
- Camp/recreation programmers who may take children in camps to Kidstown
- Representation from a wide range of age groups (18 years old and above)
- Representation from a wide range of racial groups, reflecting the diversity of the Kidstown community

CRG membership is voluntary and no compensation is provided.

Membership in the CRG is for the duration of the consultation portion of the Kidstown Redesign, approximately 6 months. The membership will be automatically dissolved after the last CRG meeting.

5. CRG Recommendation-Making

The CRG is an advisory group, not a decision-making body. As an advisory group, the CRG will operate using a consensus-based approach, where members seek general agreement on guidance and advice to the Project Team. A consensus-based approach assumes that participants can openly discuss ideas, perspectives and viewpoints, and are willing to work together to develop common ground and minimize areas of disagreement to the best of their ability. Differing viewpoints and opinions will be documented in the CRG meeting notes.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The CRG reports its advice and recommendations to the Project Team (who will attend CRG meetings) with the assistance of an independent facilitator.

All CRG members, the Project Team and the facilitation team will:

- Review and agree to these Terms of Reference;

- Attend CRG meetings and participate in constructive and positive discussion;
- Treat each other with respect and take an active role in the work of the CRG;
- Work to understand and represent the varied perspectives of participants.

CRG members will:

- Provide advice, feedback and perspectives on proposals/reports tabled by the Project Team, CRG members, or others;
- Attend the CRG meetings whenever possible;
- Review the results of CRG discussions to ensure the meetings are accurately recorded;
- Maintain confidentiality of privileged documents/information provided through CRG meetings;
- Relay meeting discussions and outcomes back to community members, and any organizations or constituencies CRG members belong to; and,
- Promote public consultation activities and events with fellow community members and any organizations or constituencies CRG members belong to.

Project Team members (including City staff and Consultant team) will:

- Identify from the onset of the consultation process what is open for community influence and what is not (and why);
- Strive to provide accurate, easy to understand information to CRG members, such that they can contribute informed advice and recommendations;
- Help the CRG function effectively by providing suggestions and alternatives to issues, concerns and problems being discussed;
- Ensure that appropriate Project Team representatives (or other resources) are present at discussions on specific issues or components of the process;
- Listen carefully to the advice and perspectives of members and, where feasible, incorporate advice into the project; and where not feasible, provide a clear explanation of how the feedback was considered and why it is not feasible;
- Provide material for review in advance of CRG meetings where possible; and
- Post summary reports of each CRG meeting, as well as other relevant documents and notifications, on the project website.

The facilitation team will:

- Develop meeting agendas in consultation with the Project Team and the CRG; and,
- Facilitate, take notes, and produce summaries for each CRG meeting.
- Host and organizing CRG meetings including distributing meeting e-notices and materials; distributing draft CRG meeting summaries for CRG members' review; and managing a CRG membership list.

7. The point of contact for all CRG correspondence is:

Jane Farrow

Department of Words and Deeds

18 Allen Avenue

Toronto, ON

M4M 2T4

Phone: 647-500-0385

E-mail: jane@janefarrow.ca

Website: www.toronto.ca/KidstownRedesign

8. Resources

The Project Team will provide the resources needed to support operation of the CRG, including facilitation and administrative support; online meeting software; and meeting materials (if any).

9. Reporting Relationship

The CRG is acting in an advisory capacity to the Project Team, and is not responsible for the decisions made by the Project Team or City Council. By participating as members of the CRG, members are not expected to waive their rights to participate in the democratic process, and may continue to participate through other channels.

10. Media Contact

Individual CRG members' opinions are not necessarily representative of the views of the entire CRG. In the event that CRG members receive media enquiries about the Kidstown project, its process, and feedback shared in CRG meetings, all inquiries should be referred to Daniel Fusca, Manager, Stakeholder Engagement, City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation Division at Daniel.Fusca@toronto.ca. CRG members may speak to the media about their individual perspectives about this Project.

11. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Please note that all information will be used in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all information provided through the CRG process will form part of the public record including the names of CRG member organizations.

12. Approving and Amending the Terms of Reference

These draft terms of reference will be reviewed and finalized at the first Community Resource Group (CRG) meeting. This document may be amended as the project progresses. Any amendments to the Terms of Reference (ToR) will be made in consultation with the Project Team and CRG members.