

Scadding Court Community Centre Redevelopment Community Consultation Report



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Scadding Court Community Centre Redevelopment Community Consultation

Public Interest undertook a consultation process for the Scadding Court Community Centre (SCCC) redevelopment by consulting staff at SCCC, developing a survey and two public meetings where the general public could speak to their concerns.

The feedback from the staff consultation, survey and public meetings are summarized in the following document. While there were interesting trends that emerged from this consultation process, this should be just the beginning of the public consultation process for the redevelopment process.

Staff Response

From November 2010 – January 2011, the staff of SCCC was interviewed on their thoughts for redevelopment. Of the 26 staff at SCCC, we were able to reach 23.

Many of the staff were happy with the local facilities and services available in the neighbourhood. Some indicated that Dundas St. between Bathurst St. and Ossington Ave. didn't have many amenities or services. However, staff felt that the local services and facilities in the neighbourhood and in SCCC are well used by local residents. Staff were concerned that there needed to be more space for programs and services in SCCC. The staff seemed particularly proud of the innovative programs that SCCC is pushing forward.

When staff were asked what they disliked about the local facilities and services, a few issues were brought up. Accessibility was seen as a barrier to people with disabilities and parents with small children. The ramp and door were not adequate for the needs of people visiting the center. Since the programming at SCCC caters to children, one staff person pointed out that the washrooms weren't accessible for small children. Also, many staff noticed that there needed to be more services for seniors, and the homeless. Another concern was that there wasn't enough space available for all programs and staff.

The staff suggested some changes to the local services and facilities including increasing services for seniors, and extending the hours of operation for SCCC and the swimming pool. Expansion of green space and gardens were brought up multiple times. One staff person found that the SCCC building was not aesthetically pleasing.

The staff felt strongly that the outdoor space including the pool, skating rink and all of the park space should be protected. None of the green and outdoor space should be sacrificed.

Staff felt that there should be new services for seniors, people with disabilities, and the homeless. One staff person suggested that there should be intergenerational programming including program catered to families. A few of the staff members indicated that there should be mentorship programs for adults, youth and people with disabilities.

Many of the staff wanted to see an expansion of space in SCCC and an increase in sports for both adults and youth. One staff person identified that many newcomers and seniors don't have access to affordable housing in the neighbourhood.

In addition to an increase in services for seniors and people with disabilities, a growth of services for women and newcomers was also necessary. In particular, one person felt that the settlement services available to newcomers were focused on the Chinese population, but weren't as effective for other immigrant communities.

When asked what new partners should be included in the process, the responses were divergent. Some wanted public and private funds to finance the redevelopment. Some were opposed to private funds. One staff person felt that no one should be turned away from being included in the partnership. It seems that this issue deserves more investigation.

There was some consensus on the questions on linking the processes and how SCCC, the library and the park are linked and SCCC's visibility from the street. Almost all felt that the planning for redevelopment and revitalization should be linked. Most felt that the linkage between the library, park, and SCCC were positive. A significant number of staff people said that safety, security, and cleanliness of the area were brought up when the staff was asked what they disliked about the area.

SCCC staff thought that the library was very visible from the street but that most people don't know where SCCC is located. The staff suggested better signage to point people to SCCC. One staff person brought up that there is not enough parking for people who want to visit SCCC.

Only half of the staff were aware of the Atkinson Co-Op revitalization. Of all the staff, most were concerned that there should not be any service duplication.

The staff seemed split on the barriers that might impede Atkinson Co-Op revitalization and the SCCC redevelopment. Some felt that the processes would not be able to work together because of past events. Some felt that both processes have to work together.

All of the staff agreed that partnering with the local hospital would be good for the community. Many emphasized that the hospital should be bringing services into SCCC and that services in the hospital should be more accessible.

New ideas proposed by staff:

- More newcomer programs
- Homework club for youth
- Recreational programs and sports for Sri Lankans
- Warmer more welcoming space
- More bike racks

Best ways to reach people in the area:

- Events
- Flyers and posters
- Door-to-door canvassing
- Social media
- Traditional, ethnic media and local papers
- Website
- Community sessions
- Email
- Word of mouth

Survey Respondents

Selected SCCC staff were trained by Public Interest on administering the consultation survey and were able to gather 48 responses to the 13 question survey.

Many respondents were happy with the local facilities and services available in the neighbourhood. Most liked that the area had a high density for facilities and services.

Overall, accessibility is important for respondents. Many said that it's great that so much is close together and within walking distance. However, there were some concerns around accessibility for people with disabilities. In particular, infrastructure for people with disabilities is not very well developed. Many respondents wanted to see basic things like accessible doors, and a covered Wheel Trans stop.

Some gaps emerged in local facilities and services. While most respondents were satisfied with the local options for buying groceries, one respondent was concerned that there was not a grocery store in the neighbourhood and that there is a concentration of fast food. One respondent was concerned that local facilities and services were shrinking instead of growing. Another was concerned about the costs involved with using services and facilities and wants to see more free programs. Some also indicated that there was not space for parents to watch their children while they were participating in the programming.

Most respondents would like to see services and programming expanded. Respondents asked for an expansion in settlement services, employment services, swimming pool hours, and more programs for youth and seniors. Some indicated that they would like to see the SCCC be more environmentally friendly and green. A few asked for changes to the infrastructure including a new elevator for SCCC and a new crosswalk on Dundas St. that would lead to SCCC.

Safety in the neighbourhood was brought up in a few instances by some of the respondents. Some saw the park as a potentially unsafe place.

When asked what groups or issues weren't being addressed currently, some respondents wanted to see more services for the homeless and seniors.

Many respondents were fine with the current link between the library and community centre. However, some had the following suggestions: more joint programming outside, a covered walkway, bigger signs and more green space and walking paths. One respondent answered that there should be more bike lanes for the area.

Some respondents did not know about the Atkinson Co-Op revitalization. A few respondents were concerned that the two revitalizations should be linked in order for there to not be a duplication of services. Some respondents asked that both revitalizations should be proactive about informing area residents about what's happening.

Most of the respondents were interested in seeing the hospital becoming involved with the SCCC redevelopment. Some suggested that some co-sponsored programs be available for residents in the area.

There were many new ideas for the redevelopment. However, a few respondents clearly indicated that public input needs to be taken seriously and that the public needs to be informed of what happens.

New ideas for SCCC redevelopment:

- Multi faith worship center
- Community members should have access to jobs
- Community building opportunities for residents
- More services for seniors
- More accessible supermarkets
- Make the parks more safe
- Mini amusement park
- New dance studio
- Another pool

Public Consultations

Two public consultations were held with the local City Councillors, Councillor Adam Vaughn and Councillor Michael Layton. 75 local residents attended the public consultations to voice their interests and concerns for redevelopment. The feedback from both consultations are summarized in the following section.

Local residents were happy with the vibrancy of SCCC and their related programs and facilities. The park, library and other amenities in the area were also highly rated by local residents.

Residents identified that they would like to see more SCCC programs devoted to youth, adult fitness, arts and entertainment, and affordable day care. In addition, they would like to see intergenerational programming. In terms of facilities, local residents would like an expansion on the space available, including seating in the lobby and café, and more accessible spaces.

Residents felt strongly about the importance of including Ryerson Public Elementary School in the redevelopment of the area. Many residents identified the school as a core component of building a healthy and safe community and want to see it remain in the community, as a resource and partner for programs and services. Residents identified that they want to see the school more involved in the redevelopment process.

Many find that the park can feel unsafe, and that the park is not well lit. Residents also felt that the area is hard to navigate especially through the Atkinson Co-op area. Some asked for a new cross walk or a way to make the Bathurst St./ Dundas St. intersection be more safe.

Residents of the neighbourhood want to see the new SCCC building become a more accessible, inviting, and open feeling place. An emphasis on green energy and green design is desirable, a covered atrium, as well as more affordable housing.

While residents were interested in the new building, they were also interested in keeping programs and services affordable and if possible free. None of the residents wanted to see any of the programs or facilities cut. Similarly, residents wanted to see the park and outdoor space remain the same. In particular residents felt that the pool and rink should remain where they are.

Residents raised some concerns about potential new housing development in the area. Residents expressed apprehension in the potential emergence of high rise buildings. Residents identified the preference to see new buildings constructed of similar height to what is currently in the neighbourhood.

Residents were very clear to say that none of the green spaces or services or facilities should be cut or reduced in favour of large scale commercial development. Smaller scale development of local businesses, food vending and farmers markets are more desirable for local residents.

When asked about the link between the SCCC, the library and the park, many wanted more signs for the services at that corner. As well, they would like to see more green space including a community garden and flower boxes. Making the pool more open was also raised.

Suggestions for how the SCCC redevelopment should relate to the Atkinson Co-op revitalization included making sure that at least one of the community centres is open during construction. Overall coordination and communication between the two projects was suggested by local residents.

In terms of partners for redevelopment, residents thought that SCCC should partner with the library, Ryerson Public School, Alexandra Park, City of Toronto, St. Stephen's Community House, Artscape, Red Pepper, TCHC, Atkinson Co-op, Kensington BIA, Richmond Street Community Group, youth programs in the community, Trinity Bellwoods Community Association, local police precinct, service users, parents, private funders, local businesses and workers.

New facilities residents would like to see are:

SCCC:

- Rock-climbing wall
- Larger community centre
- Greater accessibility
- Larger daycare space
- More computers for use & wireless Internet access for all at SCCC
- Potential shared space between the library and SCCC
- More visible entrances
- Dance studio
- Indoor squash court
- New gym and equipment (fitness centre)
- Multimedia studio
- Game room
- Children's play room
- Youth lounge
- Table tennis

Park:

- Collapsible dome for the pool (increase swim season)
- Sauna & other swimming 'accessories'
- Larger & more modern children's playground
- Large sandbox
- Wading pool & sprinklers
- Outdoor fire pit
- Family picnic area (tables, barbecues, etc)
- Indoor space attached to skating rink with hot chocolate stand
- Tobogganing hill
- Draw more attention to the park (lighting & design)
- Inviting design that pulls you in (like Trinity-Bellwoods)
- A family-friendly park away from Bathurst St. traffic
- Community garden that is clearly defined and secure
- Community garden as an educational and intergenerational project
- Larger outdoor pool

- An 'entrance' to the park
- Better / more consistent maintenance of trees
- Baseball diamond
- Soccer/football field
- Tai-chi garden

- "History of the park" (educational piece/component)
- Public washrooms
- Amphitheatre
- Naturalized pools
- More trees

Other:

- Underground parking
- Bigger library
- Modern building design for library/SCCC (glass or other open feeling)
- Spaces that are accessible & inviting to all demographics
- Greater connection between Alexandra Park housing to the surrounding community
- Better connection between daycare, school, etc.
- Benches, raised flower beds, & other concerns for people living with disabilities
- Crosswalk at Dundas St. or other method of making it a safer intersection

- Separation between the park & school
- Separation of the park from the hospital
- Separation of the park from the street
- Bicycle path
- Larger facility for APNLC
- Neighbourhood name (contest for best idea?), annual event to identify the community
- Public, open space (ex. Dundas Square)
- More health clinics or other day-to-day health access
- More affordable housing
- Geothermal and other green design
- Covered atrium
- Café in the park
- Art studio / gallery