

Report on the Public Consultations and Creative Workshops for the Revitalization of Centennial Park and the Lord Reading Property

Executive Summary



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Launched in the fall of 2018, the *Reimagining SPACE* project is framed by Council's vision to develop a project to revitalize Centennial Park and the Lord Reading property with the collaboration of Beaconsfield residents that combines culture, leisure and nature. Council wishes to consult the population on the possibilities to revitalize the site, preserve its beauty, enhance waterfront access, and imagine a multipurpose centre that serves Beaconsfield's needs for community and cultural activities. Through this collaborative approach, the Council fervently hopes that a large number of citizens will participate throughout the project and, above all, that they will embrace and imagine a space that meets the needs of all.

Following a call for candidates from the community, the Steering Committee for the project, comprised of nine resident members and two elected officials, was formed at the request of City Council at its regular meeting in January 2019. Aligned with the project vision, the Committee's mandate is to evaluate the ideas submitted by residents during creative workshops and to propose project scenarios to Council that combine culture, leisure and nature. For the five public consultation activities held in the spring of 2019, the citizens of Beaconsfield were called on to imagine an attractive space for the park and the waterfront, starting with a general Citizen Diagnostic followed by four creative workshops by theme, at which more than 140 different citizens participated at some point in the process. A youth workshop was held for residents aged 7 to 12 to share their ideas and aspirations for the project. The Committee also met with members of the executive committee of the *Lord Reading Yacht Club*, as well as the *Beaurepaire-Beaconsfield Historical Society*. Over seven working sessions, the members of the Committee analyzed the citizens' contributions emerging from the public consultation activities and evaluated the opportunities for redesigning the space. The Committee's recommendations are the culmination of this collaborative process.

Centennial Park and the adjacent Lord Reading property constitute the city's largest green space with waterfront access, covering a total area of 6.9 hectares. Given the state of decline of the buildings, equipment, and the site as a whole, doing nothing is no longer a viable option in the short term. Fortunately, the site offers exceptional potential because of its location, its green spaces, and its proximity to Lake St. Louis. The municipality and its citizens have a duty to unite and create an imaginative and attractive space for current and future generations of the community.

The consultative process provided an opportunity to understand how the community views and uses the facilities that support the cultural services provided by the City. While residents truly appreciate the activities held at the Library and Centennial Hall and the services offered at these facilities, many workshop participants stated that the space limitations, obsolescent design, and accessibility were principal concerns.

The consultative process also provided an opportunity for Steering Committee members to better appreciate the issues facing the city's facilities, the underserved need for cultural activities, and the tremendous potential of the *Reimagining SPACE* project. A multipurpose centre provides the means to address the shortcomings of the existing cultural spaces, as well as the prospect to grow the offer of the cultural activities to accommodate community groups and citizens of all ages. The Committee's understanding of the issues and possibilities of the project evolved over the course of the consultations, and the members now see that the Library must be part of the Multipurpose Centre, as an essential element at the heart of culture in the community.

The integration of the Library within the Multipurpose Centre will strengthen the residents' attachment to what is already the city's most used and popular service. The Library will serve as the anchor that attracts and supports both structured and unstructured use by the full range of residents. The Library ultimately serves as the foundation to give life to the Multipurpose Centre and the *Reimagining SPACE* site and to provide residents a sense of community. To ensure the residents of Beaconsfield have the opportunity to appreciate the potential of the Multipurpose Centre with the Library situated at its core, the Committee recommends that Council continues to engage with the members of the community throughout the development of the project.

The recommendations that follow aim to meet the community's collective needs, framed by the structuring vision of the project.

Recommendation no. 1

- i. That all buildings (Centennial Hall, the hangar, clubhouse) and all amenities (tennis courts and swimming pool) be deconstructed according to the principles of sustainable development;
- ii. That certain interior components of Centennial Hall be retained for inclusion in the development of a building to be determined on the site.

Recommendation no. 2

- i. That the entire site in question remains the property of the City for the benefit of all citizens of the municipality;
- ii. That the redevelopment of the site be conceived such that it seamlessly integrates the Lord Reading property with Centennial Park to form a whole.

Recommendation no. 3

- i. That the marina be kept in its present form;
- ii. That a functional building (harbourmaster's office, repair workshop, full bathrooms with shower, centre for rentals of non-motorized boats) be constructed near the water to serve the users of the marina, as well as those of the park.

Recommendation no. 4

- i. No longer allow the storage of boats on this site.

Recommendation no. 5

The Multipurpose Centre must serve the widest variety of clientele possible and become a destination of choice for all members of the community. The Multipurpose Centre should be conceived to incorporate the following considerations:

- the library fully integrated into the design of the Multipurpose Centre
- located on the east side of the site
- built according to LEED criteria for energy-efficient buildings
- a café bistro
- a versatile auditorium capable of holding various types of events
- integrated into its environment, taking into account the views, the topography of the site, and the existing built environment

Recommendation no. 6

- i. Encourage people to travel to the site using active modes of transportation instead of using cars. The site must be equipped with pedestrian paths, and access by bike will be via the service road of the site. The paths must be designed to be maintained and used year-round.
- ii. The site must be equipped with the necessary infrastructure to ensure full access to the site for people with reduced mobility. This includes access ramps for wheelchairs and other aids, reserved parking areas, drop-off zones, etc.

Recommendation no. 7

- i. The site should be equipped with a parking lot located near Beaconsfield Boulevard, serving all users of the site.
- ii. The site should offer an access road which will provide access to the marina, a parking area reserved for the disabled, and a drop-off zone.
- iii. In order to substantially reduce the paved surfaces, provide a single bidirectional access for vehicles. This road should be on the east side to minimize the distance over the site for users of the marina.
- iv. Access via Beaconsfield Boulevard must be served by a pedestrian crossing equipped with appropriate signage for the site.

Recommendation no. 8

- i. The redevelopment of the site should minimize tree removal by using spaces that are cleared or have few trees.
- ii. Reduce driveways and parking lots in the park and locate these site uses near Beaconsfield Boulevard. The zones thus liberated would serve to increase the areas of green space.
- iii. Design paths with materials that promote the percolation and natural absorption of water. The design should provide for year-round use. A winter skating circuit should also be considered.
- iv. Landscaping of the site should enhance biodiversity, increase the canopy, and prioritize native species requiring low maintenance.

Recommendation no. 9

- i. Provide a playground with equipment that integrates into the natural character of the park. The location should be outside the area affected by spring floods.
- ii. Offer a variety of furniture that takes into account the location and type of use, as well as attractions situated nearby.

Recommendation no. 10

- i. Develop an outdoor amphitheater that respects the natural topography of the site. A covered stage should be included in the design.

Recommendation no. 11

- i. The redevelopment of the site must be planned to minimize the negative impacts on the neighborhood. Mitigation measures will need to be incorporated into the site design.

The participatory consultations conducted over three months demonstrated the appetite of the citizens of Beaconsfield to participate in the improvement of municipal services in a collaborative context. The ideas submitted illustrate the community's desire for diversified and imaginative cultural activities within the city's largest waterfront park. The coming months will serve to formalize this vision that combines culture, leisure, and nature for the *Reimagining SPACE* project, to meet the needs of our community for today, tomorrow, and the generations to come.

