

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



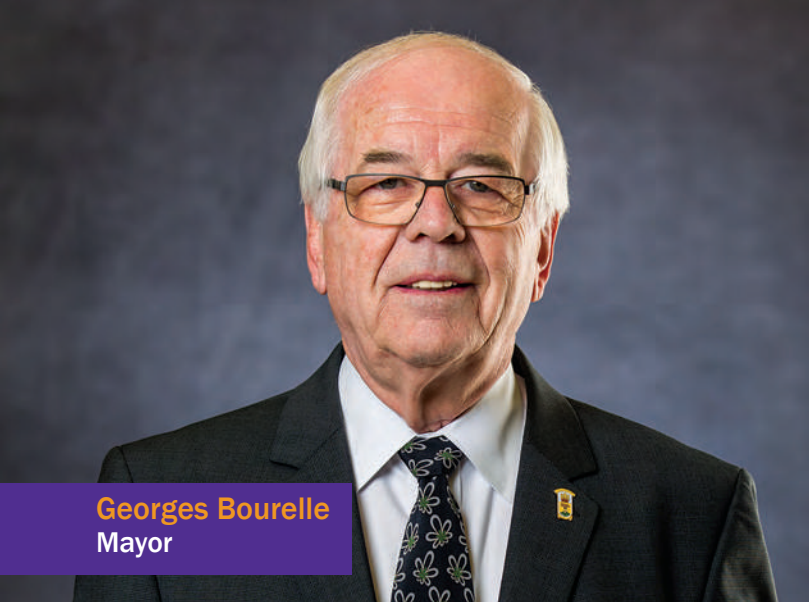
beaconsfield.ca

Presented by the
Steering Committee for the
Reimagining SPACE project
2019-06-14

Table of Contents

MAYOR’S MESSAGE	iii
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
MANDATE.....	1
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.....	2
BACKGROUND	3
Centennial Park	3
Centennial Hall	4
The Lord Reading property.....	4
CITIZEN DIAGNOSTIC.....	5
Global objectives for the public consultation process	5
Centennial Park	5
Centennial Hall	6
Lord Reading Property	6
Library.....	7
Global Portrait.....	7
CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 1 – Centennial Hall.....	8
Objectives for workshop	8
Findings of the City.....	8
Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic.....	8
Workshop activities.....	8
Results of Workshop no. 1	9
CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 2 – Multipurpose Centre.....	10
Objectives for workshop	10
Context from prior consultations and studies	10
Findings of the City.....	10
Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic.....	11
Workshop activities.....	11

Results of Workshop no. 2	11
CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 3 – Waterfront, marina, recreational activities	13
Objectives for workshop	13
Context from prior consultations and studies	13
Findings of the City	13
Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic.....	14
Workshop activities.....	14
Results of Workshop no. 3	14
CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 4 – Green spaces and Mobility	15
Objectives for workshop	15
Context from prior consultations and studies	15
Findings of the City	15
Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic.....	16
Workshop activities.....	16
Results of Workshop no. 4	16
RECOMMENDATIONS	18
Existing buildings	18
Lord Reading property	19
Marina	19
Boat Storage	20
Multipurpose Centre	20
Active mobility and universal accessibility.....	22
Parking needs and access to the site	22
Green spaces	23
Playground equipment and park furniture	23
Amphitheatre	24
Cohabitation with the neighborhood	24
CONCLUSION.....	24
APPENDICES	25



Georges Bouelle
Mayor

From dream to reality!

We have completed the first step of a landmark undertaking for Beaconsfield that will allow us to turn a dream into reality, by making decisions together for the benefit of our whole community and for current and future generations alike: to revitalize Centennial Park and the Lord Reading property.

It was well understood by everyone that this is a major structuring project for our City and its residents. I would like to thank the citizens, nearly 150 people, who participated for months at the various consultation sessions where they debated the merits of the ideas shared.

The outstanding contribution of nine citizens serving on the Steering Committee permitted an analysis of all proposed suggestions, in the company of two Council members who are particularly devoted to this project; Councillor Karen Messier supported her colleague Robert Mercuri who admirably presided over the Committee. Throughout this challenging process, they were also accompanied by a team of dedicated City employees determined to contribute to the success of this community project. I wish to thank them for their exemplary civic commitment.

We are reviewing the usage and design of the space as a whole to create an attractive and popular destination of choice that will satisfy the entire community – from youth to seniors, families to leisure enthusiasts, artists to walkers, boaters to dreamers. The project reveals itself to be both exhilarating and challenging!

The consultation process has allowed everyone, without any restriction, to dream of designs and uses for this waterfront space with the best possible ideas, without financial constraints at first. That was the goal of the process for all of us: to imagine the best uses and designs in order to meet our needs and desires, from the most conventional to the most innovative.

In this report you will find lucid findings and serious proposals, all equally interesting, to define the best public uses for the overall space, for the benefit of our community in a vision of the future.

As responsible public administrators, we need to transform the dreams of the community into reality while respecting the taxpayers' ability to pay and adopting a sustainable approach, in order to provide the best solutions. From the outset of this inspiring exercise, all Council members have been involved in this process with these dual requirements in mind.

You can count on us to listen to your proposals and determine the best choices.



Robert Mercuri

President of Reimagining SPACE Committee
Councillor - District 3

The Reimagining SPACE project launched the City of Beaconsfield's goal to revitalize Centennial Park, its cultural centre and the adjacent property, the Lord Reading Yacht Club. Its vision to collaborate with Beaconsfield residents to redesign more than seventeen acres of land along the shores of Lac St. Louis, aims to meet current and future needs for cultural, leisure and community services, while respecting the natural beauty of this distinct waterfront location.

Central to the success of this significant undertaking is the need to inspire and capture the ideas of our residents. The decision to embark on a public consultation process began with the selection of nine residents to form a Steering Committee, supported by two elected officials. To the talented members of the Committee, thank you for your generosity of time and unwavering commitment to achieving this phase of the project.

The Committee determined how best to engage our fellow neighbours. We developed an extensive programme comprised of a resident diagnostic session and multiple workshops, including a session for youth. We encouraged constant resident feedback at every opportunity. We met with interest groups and received written deposits. Throughout the process, we provided regular updates in the form of press releases and statements at Council meetings. The extent of the Reimagining SPACE public consultation process was, in and of itself, a first in the history of Beaconsfield.

The consultation successfully brought together residents from all areas of the City. The level of participation surpassed expectations, signaling residents' desire to help shape the future of Beaconsfield. All participants willingly shared their thoughts. No idea was too big, too small or too far-fetched. All comments were listened to, reflected upon and documented. Whereas for the most part resident ideas aligned to provide clear

recommendations, the Committee also recognizes that not all suggestions will come to fruition within the Reimagining SPACE project. Importantly, the consultation process achieved a respectful debate of ideas and opinions that helped identify the shared themes that unite us.

The residents of Beaconsfield place high importance on environmental responsibility. We are defined by our strong sense of community. Our enjoyment of living in Beaconsfield is emphasized by our desire to participate in a wide array of cultural and recreational activities. To achieve this, we recognize the need for new and improved facilities, both man-made and through the natural beauty of our park. We desire to maintain a high quality of living and have set high standards for ourselves and our City. Our willingness to accomplish in our time the vision set by Reimagining Space, is strengthened by our desire to ensure future generations continue the enjoyment of living in Beaconsfield.

The Committee recognizes that the end of this phase of consultation, signals the beginning of the next. The success of Reimagining SPACE relies on the continued engagement of all stakeholders. The deposit of this report charges Council with the responsibility of ensuring that the path forward reflects the expressed will of the residents of Beaconsfield.

On behalf of the Steering Committee for the Reimagining SPACE project, it is a great pleasure to submit this "Report on the Public Consultations and Creative Workshops for the Revitalization of Centennial Park and Lord Reading Properties".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Mercuri', with a horizontal line underneath it.

INTRODUCTION

The *Reimagining SPACE* project was launched to revitalize Centennial Park, its cultural centre and the adjacent property, the Lord Reading Yacht Club. Following a call for candidates from the community, the Steering Committee for the project was formed at the request of City Council at its regular meeting in January 2019. Council wishes to consult the population by giving them full latitude on the possibilities to revitalize the site, while preserving its beauty, enhancing waterfront access, and imagining a multipurpose centre that serves Beaconsfield's needs for community and cultural activities. All this must be done in a context of sustainable development. The Council's vision for this site, which will guide the Committee throughout its work, is defined as:

“Develop a project to revitalize Centennial Park and the Lord Reading property with the collaboration of Beaconsfield residents that combines culture, leisure and nature.”

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.

MANDATE

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.

The City of Beaconsfield's objectives by establishing the Committee:

- Give stakeholders and interest groups in Beaconsfield the opportunity to actively contribute to the development of the project
- Develop a project that reflects the aspirations of the citizens
- Establish a common and shared understanding of the preferred concepts

More specifically, the Committee's mandate is to:

- Develop a common understanding of the needs and the preferred scenario(s) for the revitalization
- Analyze and evaluate the opportunities for redesigning the space, and the citizens' contributions emerging from the public consultation activities
- Cover specific issues and opportunities arising from this project
- Make recommendations to Council before summer 2019

The contribution expected from Committee members includes the following:

- Review existing information distributed prior to meetings
- Assess research material and files
- Analyze citizens' contributions resulting from creative workshops
- Make consensus-based recommendations to Council

To do this, the Committee invited the population to five (5) public events during the spring of 2019. A general presentation (Citizen Diagnostic) and four (4) creative workshops per theme were carried out. Over the five public consultation activities, more than 140 different citizens participated at some point in the process. The Committee also met 7 times in working sessions for a total of 12 meetings. A youth workshop was also held where residents aged 7 to 12 were invited to share their ideas and aspirations for the project. Finally, the Committee met with members of the executive committee of the *Lord Reading Yacht Club* and the president of the *Beaurepaire-Beaconsfield Historical Society*. Having deemed that these two groups are project stakeholders, the Committee felt that more formal meetings were warranted to hear their opinions and ideas.

This report and the Committee's recommendations are the culmination of this collaborative process.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Council would like to thank the members of the Steering Committee for their time and dedication in this endeavour. The Committee is composed of nine (9) citizens and two (2) elected council members. These people are:

Mr. Robert Mercuri, City Councillor and Committee Chair

Ms. Karen Messier, City Councillor and Committee Member

Citizen members Ms. Mary Allen, Mr. André M. Bergeron, Ms. Katherine Crewe, Mr. Geoffrey Kelley, Ms. Anna Polspoel, Ms. Daniele Bouchard Serhan, Mr. Wade Staddon, Mr. Sam Watts, and Ms. Lena Zahnan

In addition, the Committee was assisted by a consultant specializing in public consultation, and three (3) members of the administration:

Mr. Cédric Bourgeois of the firm *Transfert Environnement et Société* acted as consultant and facilitator for the entire consultation process

Julia Levitin, Assistant City Clerk

Andrew Duffield, Director of Sustainable Development

Denis Chabot, Director of Urban Planning and Municipal Patrol

BACKGROUND

The City of Beaconsfield covers an area of 11 km², with a population of approximately 20,000. Located on the shores of Lake Saint-Louis, the city has 8 parks or properties providing access to this magnificent body of water. Centennial Park and the adjacent Lord Reading property constitute the city's largest green space with waterfront access. Centennial Park covers an area of 48,877 m², while the Lord Reading property covers an area of 20,381 m², for a total of 69,258 m² or 6.93 hectares (17.1 acres).

Centennial Park

The park consists essentially of three different zones: the banks and shoreline, mature and extensive vegetation, and a "mixed" area (shrubs and large deciduous trees) left in a natural state. The topography is mostly flat with a slight slope towards the lake. This slope is however more pronounced on the East side of the park.

The banks and shoreline are composed of a small sandy area (not open to swimming) and a largely artificial shore (concrete) including a jetty. A shore naturalization plan has been submitted to the *Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques* for approval. It should be noted that no work is planned for the shoreline for the sandy area. A playground for young children is located nearby; the equipment located there is several years old. Finally, in 2018, a shed was installed near the sandy area for light watercraft rentals (kayaks, pedal boats, and paddle boards).

The West side of the park consists of a flat and landscaped topography, mature trees, and a one-way vehicular access to Centennial Hall. A 32-space parking lot is located near the building. Finally, a performance space, equipped with bleachers, is located on the south side of the building, looking onto the lake. The jetty completes this section and is certainly one of the most beautiful observation points in the park.

On the East side, a slight slope towards the lake offers an interesting view of the site from Beaconsfield Boulevard. Two sections near the boulevard are left in a natural state. The section where some of the most beautiful deciduous trees are located is also the site of a large paved area that lacks form and structure, surrounding the trees in this sector. This design is not recommended for the health of the tree root system. Finally, the exit for vehicles is also located on the East side.

Centennial Hall

The original building (1906) was destroyed by fire in 1940 and rebuilt the following year. Without going into the entire history of the building, it was built by Léonide Perron, who was the first mayor of our city. After his death, the building was acquired by Léo Dandurand, owner of the *Montreal Canadiens* (1921 to 1935) and founder of the *Montreal Alouettes* football club (1946). The building was then sold to a religious congregation and finally acquired by the municipality in 1965. It has been used as a cultural centre since 1968.

Because of its original function as a residence, the building, which is in a general state of disrepair, does not meet today's need for a cultural space.

With a surface area of 451 m² (4,855 ft²), Centennial Hall is not in good condition. Effectively, any attempt to bring the building up to standards, without increasing the surface area, would result in costs exceeding its replacement value. According to the building audit conducted in 2018 by the firm *Planifika* for the municipality, the replacement value of Centennial Hall is \$1,146,370, while the cost of required repairs and work to bring the building up to standards totals \$1,741,090.

The Lord Reading property

Operated as a private club since 1945, the Lord Reading property has one of the best marinas on Lake Saint-Louis. Deep and well protected from the elements, the marina's harbour can accommodate approximately 120 boats of various sizes.

The topography consists of a slope from Beaconsfield Boulevard to the lake. Most of the site is cleared, with gravel or grass surfaces. Rows of trees and some isolated mature trees adorn the site. Finally, along the fence bordering the Lord Reading property and the park, there is unmaintained native vegetation that is in need of upkeep.

The buildings and equipment of importance on the site are as follows:

- The hangar (1948)
- The clubhouse (1949)
- The swimming pool and tennis courts (around 1955)

These buildings and equipment are either in fair or poor condition, some are even unusable (the tennis courts). According to the building audit conducted in 2018 by the firm *Planifika*, the replacement value of the Lord Reading clubhouse is \$2,115,952, while the cost of required repairs and work to bring the building up to standards totals \$3,226,311.

CITIZEN DIAGNOSTIC

Global objectives for the public consultation process

- Reflect on the overall layout of the SPACE
- Rethink the uses and functions in order to renew the offer
- Redefine the SPACE in the image of the community and its needs
- Create a source of pride and cohesion, that fosters a sense of belonging
- Allow the community to reclaim the SPACE

Participants at the first consultation activity were presented with an overview of the features of the overall space. The principal elements of the project were introduced by providing a summary of the issues and opportunities for each theme. For the five thematic stations provided for participant feedback, the following is a summary of the ideas and comments received. The full list of comments received is provided in the Appendix.

Centennial Park

- What I like the most
 - Waterfront, beach
 - Trees, natural setting
 - Open spaces
- What I like the least
 - Cars parked using prime park space
 - Not enough seating
 - Outdated and worn playground equipment
- What I would like to see
 - Amphitheatre
 - Space for kids to play
 - Walking paths, highlight access to shoreline

Centennial Hall

- What I like the most
 - Picturesque place to hold cultural activities
 - Country feel surrounded by nature
 - Must preserve view of water
- What I like the least
 - Obsolete and not functional building, uninviting and small pokey rooms, no kitchen
 - Bathrooms not accessible to public
 - Exterior activities disrupted by inclement weather
- What I would like to see
 - New building with space for events, big windows onto lake – like to see library here
 - Convert building with noble materials meeting LEED criteria
 - Multipurpose building, energy efficient, incorporating architectural elements of Centennial Hall

Lord Reading Property

- What I like the most
 - The boat ramp is very useful and in good condition
 - The slips for boats, the site, and the facilities
 - The breakwater is a huge asset
- What I like the least
 - Asphalt / gravel
 - Private club
 - Boat storage
- What I would like to see
 - Make it a public marina
 - Boardwalk
 - Performance hall

Library

- What I like the most
 - The people who work there
 - We find everything we need and more, even some "rare" books
 - The warm atmosphere
 - All the activities that are organized for the community
- What I like the least
 - Outdated location and look
 - Lack of space, very limited space for the book collection
 - Room for activities and exhibition is very removed: we forget it exists
- What I would like to see
 - Many find the idea of a combined cultural centre & library interesting: 1 stop rather than 2
 - Some suggest to modernize the current space and enlarge it (ex: add 2nd floor)
 - One person felt that the waterfront is not a good place for the library – “wasted space”

Global Portrait

- Culture
 - Structure and space with facilities for all ages in harmony with green space
 - Installation to permit outdoor shows, activities that generate income
 - Cultural centre with a performing arts space
- Leisure
 - Open access all along the shoreline for all of the community
 - Nautical activities must be considered as a priority
 - Provide facilities to create a destination for activities in winter
- Nature
 - Landscape the SPACE to promote and enhance the natural features, define activity areas
 - Unify the various areas of SPACE
 - Incorporate climate change mitigation measures in landscaping and building design

CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 1 – Centennial Hall

Objectives for workshop

- Better understand usage and perception of the building
- Identify main needs and expectations for the building
- Identify problems and issues
- Identify where there is consensus or where not

Findings of the City

- Rebuilt in 1941, acquired by the city in 1965
- Does not meet norms for design without obstacles
- Kitchen condemned by the Fire Department
- 2018 audit of buildings – major investments required
- Restricted space limits the overall offer of cultural activities

Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic

- Attachment to the historical character of the place and the view
- Importance of maintaining architectural elements / having an architectural design
- Lack of space and functionality
- Character obsolete and inaccessible
- Desire to have a spacious and functional building as well as ecological and sustainable facilities
- Improve services and activities (coffee, amenities, kitchen, room rental, etc.)
- Place to enjoy the park and its view at all times
- Varying opinions on renovating or building a new building

Workshop activities

- Activity 1 - Share your Centennial Hall memories
- Activity 2 - Take ownership of the diagnostic and build consensus points
- Activity 3 - Establish a clear problem statement
- Activity 4 - Transition from identifying problems to creating solutions for the user

Results of Workshop no. 1

"The community of Beaconsfield needs ..."

"... to create a space with an optimally designed, low-footprint, green building that responds to the needs of our kids and seniors alike."

"... a new, multipurpose, accessible complex that maintains the picturesque nature of the park and which is sustainable, both environmentally and financially; it attracts and accommodates community groups and citizens of all ages."

"... an ecofriendly and versatile multipurpose building for cultural activities, accessible for all generations, that is integrated into the landscape."

"... to demolish Centennial Hall and build another building somewhere else to accommodate cultural activities."

"... to provide a space that is accessible and serviceable to more of our residents without drastically increasing the footprint or impacting the green space and character of the park."

"... a larger cultural and multipurpose event centre, and an outdoor concert venue with water view for attendees."

Common elements from workshop participants:

- ❖ The space must be reimagined as a whole and considered as one large property.
- ❖ The view and character of the site are highly valued, but there is no general attachment to the building of Centennial Hall.
- ❖ A new facility is required to meet the current and future needs for cultural activities, which integrates into and respects the natural setting of the site.
- ❖ The building should be physically accessible to all members of the community.
- ❖ The activities should be cultural in nature and appeal to all generations.
- ❖ The space should be attractive for social exchanges, both planned and impromptu.
- ❖ The facilities should serve various interests, and be flexible to support the activities of local organizations and associations.

CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 2 – Multipurpose Centre

Objectives for workshop

- Brainstorm on a facility that meets the community's needs in terms of culture, leisure and nature, in order to identify the best project for Beaconsfield.

Context from prior consultations and studies

Culture & Leisure study (2015)

- Of all the activities offered, only 20% are cultural in nature
- Space limitations and limited accessibility at Centennial Hall and the Library
- Survey - 43% of respondents did not frequent Centennial Hall in 2014
- Need to modernize and adapt Library to citizens' evolving needs
- A multipurpose facility would fill a significant need and provide the flexibility and options to enhance the programming of activities

Findings of the City

Centennial Hall usage

- 9 associations use facilities for 1 to 4 meetings per month
- 5 to 60 people per meeting – if more than 50 must sit on stairs
- Limited storage available for associations
- Facilities not adequate given popularity of some groups

Library usage (annual)

- Visits on site: 82,568 - average over last 3 years
- Active users: 5,127 - 15% increase since 2016
- Number of activities: 429 - 117% increase since 2016
- Activity participants : 8,061 - 101% increase since 2016
- High demand for intergenerational and technological programs

Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic

Centennial Hall

- See summary for Workshop no. 1

Library

- Like the people who work there, the warm reception
- We find what we need, even "rare" books
- Enjoy the activities organized for the community
- The location and look are obsolete
- Great lack of space (ex: collection)
- The activity / exhibition room is very set back - we forget it
- A combined cultural / library centre is compelling - 1 stop
- Modernize the current space and enlarge it (ex: 2nd floor)

Workshop activities

- Activity 1 - Visualize: Invite the community to celebrate the opening of a new centre
- Activity 2 - Provide a detailed "picture" of the future building in terms of materials, ergonomics, uses, equipment, proportions, and visual aspects
- Activity 3 - Reach a consensus on a detailed and realistic project that takes into account the global needs of the community and the site as a whole

Results of Workshop no. 2

Users of a new facility and their respective needs:

- Schools - activity rooms
- Students – tutoring rooms, technology centre
- Library - Media space
- Artists – creative space, exhibition gallery
- Associations – dedicated and configurable space, storage for equipment
- Rentals – reception hall with kitchen facilities
- Theatre – indoor and outdoor space, performance space
- Workshops / presentations – conference space with up to date audio/visual equipment
- Museum – highlight heritage of Beaconsfield, and specifically the history of the SPACE

- Seniors (affiliated or not with MADA and Club 55+) – meeting space and social events
- Accessibility – all features of new facility fully accessible to all
- Parking – adequate spaces located near road, with reserved spaces for the disabled next to centre
- Teens – dedicated space, developed with their input, configurable for different interests
- Residents not part of organized group – unplanned activities, auditorium, catering facilities

Concepts proposed by the majority of the tables of participants:

- ❖ Establish a multipurpose centre on the Lord Reading property
- ❖ Incorporate the library into a design with 2 storeys
- ❖ Include a cafe / bistro, and an auditorium with reception facilities
- ❖ Offer versatile and flexible spaces, accessible for all
- ❖ Design an open glass architecture, opening onto an expansive view of the lake
- ❖ Provide an amphitheater in Centennial Park

CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 3 – Waterfront, marina, recreational activities

Objectives for workshop

- Reflect on the overall layout of the waterfront
- Rethink the uses and functions in order to renew the activities
- Bring the community closer to the waterfront

Context from prior consultations and studies

Culture & Leisure study (2015)

- The City should evaluate the possibility of recovering land from one of the marinas to make a more accessible waterfront park

Citizen Forum (2015)

- “Improved access to water for citizens at the forefront of the negotiations, evaluate other management models”

Report on land use planning and evolving housing needs (2016)

- Committee recommends that LR property “should be used exclusively for public recreational purposes, so that the entire community can enjoy its use”

Sustainable Development Plan (2017)

- Action 9.2 “Protect and enhance appreciation of the waterfront, preserve views on water bodies”
- Action 13.1 “Enhance waterfront facilities and infrastructures and encourage initiatives to increase the number and quality”

Findings of the City

- In Centennial Park, naturalization of the shore planned
- Offered for first time in 2018, 425 boat rentals in July and August
- Lord Reading property acquired by the City in 2001
- Facilities are operated by the yacht club, a not for profit organization
- Management agreement defines the City’s and LRYC’s responsibilities
- No physical connection to Centennial Park
- 2018 audit – major investment required for buildings

Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic

- Make the Lord Reading site public, access to all citizens
- Condos on Lord Reading property
- Keep access to the lake with boats but with public programs
- Develop possibility for non-boat owners to try waterfront activities
- Call on expertise of LRYC members to develop various boating experiences for all citizens
- Rental of kayaks, canoes, pedal boats, paddle boards
- Provide boardwalk along the shoreline

Workshop activities

- Activity 1 - How does the community see the waterfront and marina
- Activity 2 - Interview questions following completion of the revitalization project

“The revitalization of the waterfront is a great success. Can you tell us why and give us a few examples?”

“It is too bad that the project to revitalize the waterfront did not go forward. Can you tell us why?”

Results of Workshop no. 3

Elements from the majority of tables:

- ❖ Maintain marina with public access to site
- ❖ Give priority to Beaconsfield residents for boat slips
- ❖ No condos
- ❖ Offer activities year round, rentals for non-motorized boats
- ❖ Provide splash pad
- ❖ Provide boardwalk on waterfront

CREATIVE WORKSHOP NO. 4 – Green spaces and Mobility

Objectives for workshop

- Visit the site from the standpoint of the current use and potential of the SPACE
- Assess the site taking into consideration what has been “imagined” during the public consultation process and creative workshops

Context from prior consultations and studies

Citizen Forum (2015)

- Leisure - No. 1 priority : refurbishment of Centennial Park and building
- In waterfront parks, offer both passive (relaxation) and active (physical) spaces

Report on land use planning and evolving housing needs (2016)

- “The Committee recommends that the site (LR) be amalgamated to Centennial Park and be redesigned to create a very creative and innovative landmark for the public use of this waterfront.”

Tree Policy (2001)

- “Improve the forest ambiance and shade in parks while maintaining open or sunny areas, according to their functions and uses”

Sustainable Development Plan (2017)

- Action 4.1 “Recognize the exceptional contribution of trees to the quality of life of the community”

Active Mobility Plan (2019)

- “Modes of active transportation are healthy, soundless and non-polluting”

Findings of the City

Centennial Park

- The largest public green space on the waterfront in Beaconsfield
- No public access to toilets with running water
- Seen by the public as a place mainly for one-off events
- Current landscaping does not highlight the beauty of the green spaces
- Overabundance of paved surfaces in the park
- Physical barrier between the park and the Lord Reading property

Findings from the Citizen Diagnostic

Centennial Park

- Maintain expanse of green space – natural, peaceful, serene
- Natural trails for walking, maintained during the winter
- Comfortable sitting areas, with more benches along paths
- Playground for children of all ages
- Improve the lighting within park
- Minimize parking in the park

Workshop activities

- Activity 1 - Exploratory visit: Opportunity for participants to visit SPACE first hand
- Activity 2 - Enhance the green space and promote mobility to and within the SPACE
“Following the on-site visit, what types of landscaping and site usages are appropriate to meet the project’s vision that combines culture, leisure and nature?”

Results of Workshop no. 4

Exploratory visit

- ❖ Parking closer to road, underground parking
- ❖ Majority see Multipurpose Centre closer to road near parking, leaving land sloping to water
- ❖ Drop-off points for people with reduced mobility for areas away from road
- ❖ Elevate playground or move to higher ground
- ❖ No boat storage
- ❖ Restrict entry to marina, provide security perimeter near boat operations

Questions following exploratory visit

“Considering your site visit, your knowledge of the overall SPACE, as well as the project vision that combines culture, leisure and nature, where specifically should a new multipurpose centre be located and why?”

- ❖ Great majority say Multipurpose Centre should be located on Lord Reading property
- ❖ Reasons: preserve green space of Centennial Park, build on LR property where there are few trees
- ❖ Most see the building located near the road, to be close to parking
- ❖ Some propose building in middle of LR property, others propose different buildings depending on need

“How would you encourage active forms of transport (cycling, walking) to get to and within the SPACE?”

- ❖ Paths that provide access throughout space (perimeter), that are accessible to all
- ❖ Bicycle path proposed by several, some promote bicycle infrastructure to get to, but not within space
- ❖ No cars within park, limit parking in park

“How could we better plan parking? How could we be creative about it?”

- ❖ Great majority say parking should be near to Beaconsfield Boulevard, provide drop-off zones
- ❖ Some suggest shuttle from City Hall parking, some suggest underground parking
- ❖ Use “green” alternatives instead of asphalt

“What kinds of other infrastructure, landscaping, or use of green space meet the objectives of the project vision?”

- ❖ Maintain natural elements of park, keep “Zen” areas separate from the play areas
- ❖ New playground for people of all ages, splash park/pad, skating rink
- ❖ Amphitheatre
- ❖ Public bathrooms

RECOMMENDATIONS

The site as a whole is in a certain state of decline such that the municipality will have to quickly intervene on all the buildings, equipment, and the general layout of the site. 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. This jewel is just waiting to be polished in many ways. First, the crumbling banks and shoreline will be naturalized over the next two years. The mature and omnipresent vegetation is a defining feature of the natural character of the space. While located south of Highway 20, the site is situated in the centre of the municipality and close to other municipal facilities and services. Finally, the site offers the largest waterfront park in the city. 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 recommendations that follow aim to meet these collective needs, framed by the structuring vision of the project.

Existing buildings

According to the city's findings, the building audit from 2018, and the observations from the exploratory visit in the last creative workshop, all buildings and facilities are in poor condition, no longer meet the needs of the population or are obsolete.

The cost to upgrade these installations exceeds their residual value, without increasing the functional surface area to meet the needs of citizens.

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.

Lord Reading property

The most prominent feature for the entire space is the physical divide between the park and the Lord Reading property. The vegetation, the location of the buildings, and the fence are all insurmountable barriers. Yet the entire site has a similar topography. In addition, the site as a whole is designated as "Park" according to the City's zoning by-law.

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.

Marina

The term marina refers here to the breakwater, docks, and equipment directly related to navigation. The Committee considers the marina to be an important and attractive infrastructure for the municipality. The link between the water and citizens is undeniable. In addition, the dismantling of such an infrastructure would be costly and counterproductive. In the case of the future management of the marina, the Committee considers that it does not fall within its mandate and leaves it to the municipality to define the mode of management that best meets its needs.

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.

Boat Storage

The storage of boats on the Lord Reading property poses several challenges that seriously interfere with the proposed new vocation of the site.

First, the storage of private boats on public property without revenue for the municipality is unfair to taxpayers. In addition, widespread public access requires a means of securing stored vessels, as well as for the safety of site users. Finally, the storage of boats uses large areas of land that could be better used, by the entire population for all 12 months of the year. It should be noted that many marinas do not offer services for the storage of boats, including the *Port de Plaisance de Lachine*, the *Yacht Club Montréal*, and the *Club de Yacht Laval-sur-le-Lac*.

Recommendation no. 4

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

Multipurpose Centre

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 City's findings for both these facilities reveal that the size and functional organization of the space greatly limit the capacity to meet the current and future needs of the community. The building audit of Centennial Hall concludes that the costs to upgrade exceed its replacement value, for a municipal building with limited accessibility and means to attract all members of the community. With a twofold increase in the participation at activities since 2016, the design and available space at the Library can no longer support the demand and the varied uses that the residents call for.

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.

Anne Goulding (2009) in “Engaging with community engagement: public libraries and citizen involvement” states that the public library is:

not just ... a place to borrow or read books or even to access digital material, but ... a key community resource and facility which can act as a venue for community events and as an access point connecting individuals with one another, connecting people with their local communities, and connecting communities with wider society.

The library of today is indeed a multipurpose centre for municipalities. The integration of the Library within the Multipurpose Centre will strengthen the residents’ attachment to what is already one of 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.

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

Active mobility and universal accessibility

These two components constitute an essential requirement of a redevelopment project for land or buildings. In this context, active mobility and universal accessibility must be central considerations for the revitalization of the space.

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.

Parking needs and access to the site

The location of parking spaces must be reviewed taking into account efficiency, sustainable development, and optimization of space on the site. Given these considerations, the main parking lot should be located near Beaconsfield Boulevard, the Multipurpose Centre, and the main access to the park.

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.

Green spaces

Although there is an abundance of vegetation on the site, the layout is very poorly organized. In this sense, the redevelopment of the site should serve to better define the space and its uses.

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.

Playground equipment and park furniture

In general, the playground equipment and park furniture are obsolete. The park's current furniture consists of benches and picnic tables. The playground is located at the lowest point of the park near the sandy area, which is affected by spring floods. The Committee considers that due to the issues of water quality, the condition of the lake bed, and the need for supervision, swimming should not be permitted at this site.

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.

Amphitheatre

The terrace of Centennial Park is very popular especially during the summer season. Several shows and outdoor events are held in the park.

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.

Cohabitation with the neighborhood

The site is located in a residential area. The neighbours are accustomed to the protection afforded by the significant vegetation around the park.

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.

CONCLUSION

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, which we hope will meet the needs of our community for today, tomorrow, and the generations to come.

APPENDICES

No. 1: Mandate of the Steering Committee

No. 2: Meeting notes of the Steering Committee

No. 3: Summary of the activities from the public consultation process

- Citizen Diagnostic
- Workshop no. 1 – Centennial Hall
- Workshop no. 2 – Multipurpose Centre
- Workshop no. 3 – Waterfront, marina, recreational activities
- Workshop no. 4 – Green spaces and Mobility

No. 4: Graphic tools produced for the consultation activities

- Presentations
- Placemats with summary of findings for participants
- Posters presenting results of the workshops

No. 5: Youth workshop – report of brainstorming activities

No. 6: Excerpts of plans and reports framing the project *Reimagining SPACE*

- Sustainable Development Plan (2017)
- Citizen Forum (2015)
- Table de Quartier Sud de L'Ouest de l'Île, Forum Beaconsfield (2014)
- Culture & Leisure study (2015)
- Report on land use planning (2016)
- Tree Policy (2001)
- Active Mobility Plan (2019)

No. 7: Documentation

- Property assessment role for the lots in question
- Technical data sheets for building evaluations
- Statistics relating to usage of facilities

No. 8: Articles from the Contact magazine

No. 9: Press releases issued following consultation activities