

ANALYSIS OF AURA LEE PLAYING FIELD SURVEY RESULTS

Richard Gilbert

This report on the responses to the multiple choice questions in a survey administered in January and February 2001 should be read in conjunction with a companion report by Angie Andreoli that analyzes responses to the one open-ended question in the survey (Question 6).

The survey was conducted by the Harbord Village Residents Association to enable HVRA to be better informed about residents' views as to what should be done about the land owned by the University of Toronto lying south of the supermarket at Bloor and Robert. This land is known as the Aura Lee Playing Field and also as the Robert Street Field. The University has indicated interest in upgrading the facility and in providing for some community use.

The survey (attached on Pages 3-5) was distributed to approximately 1,600 households in Harbord Village on about January 21, 2011. Respondents were encouraged to respond by January 31 preferably making use of a Web version of the survey form. A reminder was emailed to HVRA members (about 500 in total) on February 1. Results were accumulated until February 8. There were 194 responses using the Web and 52 using the printed form.

In response to the first question, 56 respondents indicated that they lived in sight of the Field; 182 indicated they did not, and 8 did not answer this question.

Several analyses were conducted as to whether there were differences in the other responses according to where respondents live or whether they responded by Web or hand. No differences were found among the responses of these groups to Questions 2, 3, and 5, which were multiple-choice questions. Accordingly, the analysis of these responses that follows is based on all responses made.

In respect of Question 6, the question inviting comments, respondents living in sight of the Field were more likely to make comments than those living elsewhere: 70% vs. 42%. The actual comments made are attached on Pages 6-26, arranged according to where the respondents reported living and how they responded (by Web or hand). These comments had not been analyzed at the time the present report was written, and what follows in respect of Questions 2-5 takes no account of them. (Several of the comments bear on Questions 2-5.) See the companion report by Angie Andreoli for analysis of the comments.

Responses to Question 4, a multiple-choice question, did vary with reported residence. Respondents in sight of the Field were somewhat more likely to indicate willingness to help maintain a temporary rink: 40% vs. 19%.

Respondents also differed by location of residence as to whether they wanted to be kept in touch about the Field. Of those who reported living in sight of the Field, 73% wanted to be kept in touch. Of the other respondents, 50% wanted to be kept in touch. (Email addresses can be provided for almost all who want to be kept in touch, and phone numbers for the others.)

Over 96% of respondents answered Question 2. Responses are on the next page.

2. How important is it to you to have an artificial ice skating rink as part of the revitalization?

Not important 22% Somewhat important 35% Important 29% Very important 32%

Thus, for Question 2 the middle answer is that respondents feel that having an artificial rink as part of the revitalization is between ‘somewhat important’ and ‘important’.

Responses to Question 3 are below. With each part of the question is the percentage of respondents who responded to that part. In each case, the most frequent answer. Is in bold and italic font. The middle answer is underlined.

3. If a rink of some sort were developed, how attractive would you find each of these four configurations?

	Definitely not	Probably not	Don't care	Probably yes	Definitely yes
Large rink with permanent boards suitable for hockey (83% responded)	30%	25%	<u>20%</u>	14%	12%
Small rink with no boards suitable only for family skaters and learners (84%)	8%	15%	12%	<i>49%</i>	26%
Large rink suitable primarily for free skating but also suitable for shinny hockey on a limited basis (87%)	5%	9%	12%	<i>46%</i>	37%
Rink with removable boards suitable as a summer tennis facility and as a free skating rink in winter (93% responded)	2%	3%	6%	33%	<i>75%</i>

Summarizing the responses to Question 3, the last option is the most popular and the first option is the least popular. The third option is the second most popular.

Responses to Question 5 are below, arranged in the manner of the responses to Question 3.

5. Please indicate how attractive it would be to you to have the following facilities and activities at the Aura Lee Playing Field:

	Definitely not	Probably not	Don't care	Probably yes	Definitely yes
Playground for small children (92%)	7%	9%	20%	<u>36%</u>	42%
Park/green space for leisure activities (reading, picnics, etc.) (96%)	3%	4%	6%	35%	<i>76%</i>
Field for baseball or other play (91%)	11%	19%	<u>19%</u>	32%	23%
Tennis courts (94% responded)	5%	4%	18%	<u>42%</u>	51%
Ball hockey court (89% responded)	12%	19%	<u>30%</u>	32%	16%
Dog run or 'off leash' area (94%)	34%	20%	<u>15%</u>	16%	25%
Community garden (93% responded)	8%	9%	15%	<u>32%</u>	50%
Beach volleyball area (93% responded)	21%	26%	<i>30%</i>	21%	15%

Summarizing the responses to Question 5: The second option is the most popular, followed by the fourth option and then the seventh option. The sixth and eighth options are jointly the least popular.

**HARBORD VILLAGE
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**



We want to know your views about the Aura Lee Playing Field (Robert Street Field).

Please complete the survey overleaf or – much better – go to the following Web page

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PVNQGZJ>

and complete the survey online.

Either way, it will take you less than 9 minutes and provide your residents' association with valuable input.

If you use the form on the next two pages, please complete it by hand and leave it in the mailbox at 256 Robert Street (north of Sussex).

If you can, please complete the survey – on the Web or by hand – before January 31, 2011.

Aura Lee Playing Field (also known as the Robert Street Field)

Please complete this short survey about the future of the Aura Lee Playing Field (the land between Sussex Avenue and the parking lot for the Metro supermarket at Robert and Bloor) — also known as the Robert Street Field.

The University of Toronto owns the land and is planning to reconfigure it, maintaining its use for sports and recreation and allowing community use (which could be supported by the City of Toronto).

The Harbord Village Residents Association (HVRA) will be involved in upcoming discussions. HVRA wants to know what you think. Please help by completing and returning the survey.

1. Is your home within sight of the Aura Lee Playing Field and related properties?

- No
- Yes

2. How important is it to you to have an artificial ice skating rink as part of the revitalization?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

3. If a rink of some sort were developed, how attractive would you find each of these four configurations?

	Definitely not	Probably not	Don't care	Probably yes	Definitely yes
Large rink with permanent boards suitable for hockey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small rink with no boards suitable only for family skaters and learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large rink suitable primarily for free skating but also suitable for shinny hockey on a limited basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rink with removable boards suitable as a summer tennis facility and as a free skating rink in winter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. For the short term, would you be interested in helping flood the old rink and maintaining it during the winter months? Yes No

5. Please indicate how attractive it would be to you to have the following facilities and activities at the Aura Lee Playing Field:

	Definitely not	Probably not	Don't care	Probably yes	Definitely yes
Playground for small children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Park/green space for leisure activities (reading, picnics, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Field for baseball or other play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tennis courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ball hockey court	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog run or 'off leash' area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beach volleyball area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please provide any other comments you may have about the future of the Aura Lee Playing Field. (They could include – but need not be restricted to – comments on the tennis courts, the space at the south end of the property where the City once managed a parkette, and the appearance of the chain link fencing around the property.) Continue on the last page if you need more space.

7. OPTIONAL. If you would like to be kept informed about what happens to the Aura Lee Playing Field, please tell us about you:

First name Last name

Email or phone (or both)

Comments by people living in sight and responding by Web

I would love a dog park in the neighbourhood. There is currently no where to take a dog to run in the Annex.

Community access is vital to any sort of future development of this site. There is no reason why future facilities cannot be shared by UofT and the community. The south end of the property (bordering on Sussex) is a disgrace. It is dirty and unused and just a hang out. Tennis courts are heavily used and in winter used for ball hockey and shoveled by those using them. People are also using the south court in winter as a dog run - we can only hope they are cleaning up after their pets. It is criminal that the ice rink is closed and unused in all seasons. This site has huge potential - as a place shared by UofT and the community. We'd like to see a skating/hockey rink, basketball courts, tennis court, small playground, and open field that can be used by all. Fencing should come down and some landscaping could make it more like a community/university common. Priority could be given to UofT, UTS teams but there are many hours when this space sits empty and locked. There could be space for a community garden and better landscaping. If the site were more open (take down the rink boards etc.) then there would be less opportunity for vandalism/gathering place for drinking etc. Some monitoring of dogs is necessary as there are always some owners who ruin it for all the rest by not cleaning up after their animals.

A dog park would be the most attractive to me, as well as many of our neighbours. The 3 largest condo/apartment buildings all within sight of the field have a ton of dogs living there. The annex has no dog park, and this would solve that problem, as well as keeping the community happy.

I have been troubled by the lack of availability of the area to the community in recent years. Growing up, it was a major part of my life. I would pleasure skate and/or play hockey almost daily. In the summer I would play baseball and soccer with other children in the community, and the weekly UK expat soccer game. I would also play tennis. I never used the playground structure much, because older kids/adults would hang out and smoke and drink. I prefer a separate ball-hockey court, because otherwise they take over the space. I am absolutely opposed to an off-leash dog area. There are already other dedicated off-leash areas, and (when I accompany my friends to walk their dogs) I find that the owners are generally both inconsiderate and irresponsible about reigning in badly behaved pets (where a large dog has a smaller one by the throat and the owner nonchalantly walks up). Dog owners often seem to feel entitled to space, but aren't good at sharing, or keeping dogs in check. There was a volleyball court for about 1 year, but after the summer it appeared I never saw it used again.

Well I am really against the dog run or off leash area. Actually, the tennis and hockey courses are already regularly used by dog's owner for this type of activity which is very inappropriate, disturbing and dangerous. I am living right in front of these fields and some dogs owners come to do this very early in the weekends and dog's barking awakes me and my child. We also would like to go on these fields with my 18 months old daughter but it would be too dangerous with the dogs and after they leave, they have often urinated on the fields and sometimes defecated which is not hygienically good at all, even when the dog owners try to clean the place afterward it is never clean. So my daughter and any other kids

and people using these fields for playing tennis or hockey can be harmed by these dogs and can get sick because of these dogs.

My priority is to have a community accessible tennis court for Summer and definitely a skating rink for Winter. If these two facilities can be combined with some sort of removable boards--fine. If not, then I would like two separate spaces for these. There would still be room for an open sitting/reading area and hopefully also a fenced dog off-lead area so that there will be no excuse for dogs to mess-up the green playing/reading area. The doggy area could have a small bleacher sitting area that would be great for chit-chatting with neighbours and would add greatly to the use. Thanks PS yes---I would help flood ...Also---if Palin can see Russia---I can see the space in question!

No other particular suggestions Does the survey include distribution to all local potential users? I am thinking of apartment dwellers along Spadina eg 666 Spadina

No point in having a chain link fence around the property unless it has lockable gates which would inhibit casual use by neighbours. One problem with the whole park (except for the playing field, is that it is not being kept up. The tennis courts are in poor shape, we all know about the existing rink, and the "volleyball" court is a disgrace, while the parkette is very unfriendly and barren. If the University of Toronto is still serious about allowing any sort of public access, it needs to put some serious money into making that not only just physically possible but attractive and safe. An alternate suggestion I would like to make is that the University lease back the "public areas" to the City for a nominal amount to show their acceptance of public use, but then urge the City, who are more experienced in this sort of thing, to take over installing improvements to the public spaces. I do not trust the University one bit; it is a fine University but a lousy neighbour.

I remember how important the playing field was for my kids: shinny hockey, ball hockey, tennis - fantastic outlet that kept kids fit, occupied, organized. Would love to see that back in the area. Given today's concerns with obesity, lack of fitness this seems a no brainer. We had neighbourhood ball games, family skates - the field provided a real community bonding experience. That can only help the neighbourhood. All these things foster community, decrease crime, engage families and children. Would be great to add an area for the little ones as well. Some benches, some climbing equipment - again this brings the community out, talking, and working together. That whole street has been a dead area for far too long.

Would be nice to see it upgraded and used by the community. There is lack of recreation space and is much needed. It is so important for the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, the chain link is necessary to keep the grounds free of dog fecal matter since it is impossible to totally clean up .. and not all dog owners do clean up. It would be nice if the city managed teh parkette

Fencing is not best but agree that it keeps dogs out; would be nice to find a solution to allow residents to use the field

It's been a disappointment to live in the area and to see the disused rink sitting there empty in an affluent downtown neighbourhood with lots of kids who could be using it. The existing rink could have a year-round surface on it, to minimize maintenance, and could be used for other activities. Or, it could remain an ice rink, with basketball hoops in the summer. The tennis courts are well-used in summer - both by genuine tennis players and by ball hockey enthusiasts. It would be better to have one of the courts resurfaced and used exclusively by tennis players, and the other can remain as is and be used for basketball and ball hockey. I think a small playground/picnic area would be wonderful for the neighbourhood. Think of all the great take-out food available on Bloor Street. A picnic area and playground would bring people here to eat, gather and enjoy the fruits of Bloor Street, and would create a community atmosphere at the same time. That said, I think it would also be nice to maintain a playing field as well, so soccer, field hockey etc can also happen here.

I am very keen for this important space to be used for "family space" - children, animals, gardens and relaxing.. It is a unique SUNNY spot in our area which has so few parks. The chain link fence is ugly, and it would be great to have it replaced with something (i.e. ART project fence ??? Speak to teacher ERIN in sculpture studio at Central Tech. Huge talent and enthusiasm there!!!) that would provide a shorter, lighter, barrier to protect children and dogs running into the street. I defer to the people who live opposite the parkette to recommend that to do about it. Now it is a one bench saloon. But there is never any sunshine in that spot so couldn't be a garden. Thanks for this opportunity to speak about a very lovely space in our very crowded neighbourhood. Thanks to U of T for keeping it, so far, free from highrises!!!! Jane Murdoch Adams

Please consider a dog run in this location. There is a serious shortage of dog-friendly spaces in the Annex, which is a shame considering how many resident dogs there are.

The tennis courts are very popular and well used and should be maintained in good working order. The parkette at the south end is very shabby and not made use of to the extent it could if it were more inviting. The bench is used on occasion by individuals to read or eat a lunch. However, very often it is a hang-out for young people to drink and get involved in other less desirable activities. The chain link fence around the property is an eye sore and should be replaced with something more attractive and weather resistant - that won't rust.

This area REALLY needs a DOG PARK, especially for dog owners who live in the many large apartment buildings.

I think it is horrible that this situation has allowed to remain unresolved for so long. The neighborhood is missing out on the services other city neighborhoods enjoy. We need a rink! and tennis courts. About the leisure space/dog run/volleyball courts--I think we have to be concerned about inadvertently creating a space for the homeless, with all the attendant debris that could involve. View the garbage at the south side of the rink currently. Dog runs remove park space for other uses and I am personally very annoyed at the inconsiderate dog owners who don't pick up after their pets (on the neighborhood sidewalks) and think the dog run AND beach volleyball areas could suffer from the toileting activities of animals (including cats which are generally not leashed and allowed to roam freely. I no longer have

small children so that doesn't add anything for us but a nice playground is always good, and can serve to anchor the space with families. There is a very good park literally across Spadina, though, so that isn't the primary thing the neighborhood needs Vera

It would be nice, if one could make the tennis court more attractive looking. If one had removable nets, it could serve for different types of entertainment in Winter and even in Summer.

I think a good example of another rink is the one on Dundas and Bathurst. They have the rink where they time slot hockey and other ice sport. Then next to it is an area where they have open to the public as a free skate. Great for little ones or first time skaters to get used to the ice.

As an immediate priority, I would like to see improved maintenance of the south parkette. I would like it to be a welcoming environment for children - clean, painted, swept, garbage pails installed and regularly emptied. Short-term, I would like to see the playing field open more hours, the tennis courts cleaned up, and the concrete rink pad used for ball hockey or basketball, etc. I would encourage good lights in the dark area to the north of the field house, to discourage it becoming a 'hang-out' or drug dealing area, as it was in the past. Longer term, I would like to see mixed use, with shared community access and university access. Although the University owns the land, UTS and the JCC childrens' programs use the facility currently. The U of T Sports Camp and U of T teams also use the tennis courts and playing field. When not in use for the above activities, I would like the community to have regular agreed-upon access to the rink, tennis courts and playing field. It would be an absolutely wonderful resource if the rink could be re-instated.

The chain link fence is a nuisance and not family friendly. If and when decided on a open style ice rink a indoor glass heated common area for parents to change there kids into skating gear and a glass wall allowing to sit and enjoy a cup of coffee while there child is skating in the winter months. Now that would be great.

I think the area should be turned into a public soccer field or park (or both) in the summer and a free public rink in the winter, but not restricted to a fenced in hockey rink. Hockey is an incredibly expensive sport that is not accessible to the majority of Torontonians and residents in this neighborhood. Soccer is far more popular and accessible, requiring limited equipment and set-up and can be changed into a park or something else quite easily.

The parkette as it is now is an eyesore - uncared for and deteriorating. It needs ground cover and a renewal of the brick and woodwork. There also needs to be a garbage disposal near-by. A short term suggestion for the beach-volley ball court would be a wild flower garden. This would entail little cost and just intial effort. The chain link fence gives an unfortunate impression. I would be very against too many lights as this area should not have any nosy activity after (probably) 9p.m.

A beach volleyball court would be a phenomenal addition!

The University developed a beach volley ball site and no one used it. A chain link fence is always ugly and should be removed to give a natural park feeling. The parkette is rarely used except for the street

drinkers and teenagers from Central Tech. The tennis courts are well used by the ball hockey crowd. It doesn't bother me, but it makes quite a lot of noise for the people across the street. If ball hockey is allowed, it should be located where the ice rink stands. Toilet facilities are needed to make the park complete.

My only concern regarding green space for leisure activities is that it encourages increase in outside traffic to the neighbourhood and kids hanging out late at night, increasing some of the vandalism already present in the area. Parkette could definitely be improved - low maintenance plants, evergreens, a few added benches facing the street., green it up. And the chain-link fence. Rip it down. What an eyesore. Tennis courts of course require the fence - but surrounding the park? On the assumption it retains its status as a sport field replace with tall wrought -iron and landscaped in keeping with the Victorian history, similar to what was done with Varsity Stdm .. Also create an entrance way with some weight / architectural detail.

This space needs to work for both the University and local community. There is no reason why it can't with creative thinking. It needs to remain flexible, as was done at Varsity. It needs to remain green, with a significant component of 'natural infrastructure' And, as one of the few green spaces in the HVRA and downtown area, it needs to allow for community engagement (leisure and garden use, etc) . Planning by the university here must include a truly sustainable view based on revitalized urban thinking that will help mediate pressing global challenges. The university has a unique opportunity to show how innovative and sustainable it can be (by drawing upon expertise from within) and HVRA needs to help it clearly understand that this is also its responsibility.

For community use, we have a wide range of ages in the immediate neighbourhood: from infants and toddlers to elderly with walkers. It would be beneficial if areas for team sports and those for pre-school/child play and more sedentary uses could be arranged so that all areas could be used at the same times.

Comments by people not living in sight and responding by Web

It's important for the space to be versatile accessible to all groups (families, kids, pets, sports teams). This area is in desperate need of a dedicated off-leash dog area, not only for the sake of pets but for the safety and comfort of non-pet owners and children who should be able to enjoy the other dog-free areas of the neighbourhood. Most dog owners in our area (including us) illegally use the Central Tech Playing Field because we have no other options. It's a shame that dogs are banned, because the space is relatively unused by the school in winter. We would be happy to participate in any discussions related to this matter. Thank you!

The city of Toronto has an official vision to double its tree canopy by 2050. This area could help with that by becoming a native, small, urban forest. These will be necessary to absorb carbon dioxide and other pollutants, and in the future, the community that thrives will be the community who has every available space planted with oxygen emitting trees.

Whenever I walk by the park, it feels like a dead zone if there is nobody there, except when the tennis courts are being used. The park feels a bit old and tired looking and it's mostly concrete from what I remember. I don't use the park because I don't play tennis, but if I did play, it would be great because it's free and close by. But the addition of a parkette or grass would be welcome. I think the chain-link fence isn't very attractive at the edges of the road -- not very inviting -- so I would suggest that if the park is being reconfigured, put the tennis courts and fence deeper into the park and leave the edges near the sidewalk open and more inviting.

We don't skate much, but it would be nice to have a skating rink closer than Dufferin Grove. We don't play hockey at all in this house, at least not yet. Maybe when my kids are older. For all that other "park" stuff, Margaret Fairley is our park, I doubt we'd go to Aura Lee.

Find the chain link most unattractive and unwelcoming.

My priority would be to make it a nice area. There would need to be trees or wooden fences to create a separate space from the supermarket, parking lot and tall buildings (it's really ugly around this area except for the houses on Robert street). Making the effort to make it green and beautiful would be my priority. It can have a combination of an ice rink and benches in the winter, with beautiful trees, and a field, with an area to sit and read or walk your dog, or have kids play around in the summer. The idea for me is the overall atmosphere. Toronto is usually extremely bad at creating this kind of atmosphere. I hope we succeed in this area.

A fenced-in dog park is a great idea. Brings people together.

The space needs to be functional, but in my mind that means primarily that it needs to meet the physical education and recreation needs of the landowner, the U of Toronto. It is too close to Bloor to be treated like an idyllic park in Rosedale or some other semi-isolated residential region. There should not be facilities and benches to attract overnight sleepers and other late night activities. Our neighborhood is short on parkland, but this playing field cannot compensate for that, except that it does

offer open space and sunlight where otherwise there would be a highrise. I am glad that there is no mention of infrastructure that includes permanent bleachers, nor is there mention of increasing parking lot space. Good.

Any chain link fence would best be accompanied by tall hedges to both hide the fence and provide some sound barrier between the street, houses and playing fields. Improving the tennis facility would be a FABULOUS improvement. I would support a community membership fee as well if required/viable. Given the high value of space in this neighbourhood providing a multi-season facility is an EXCELLENT pursuit. i.e. the proposed tennis court / skating rink. As a non-pet owner a dog run /off leash area is also a fabulous idea. There are many dog owners in the neighbourhood who currently have no choice but to take their pets to spaces shared with small children or other playing fields. I would give off leash areas priority over additional leisure (picnic/reading) areas, which - although always needed - are already significantly better served than our dog owning neighbours.

The chain link fence is necessary but it would be nice to plant a row of trees to offer shade and wind relief.

The removal of the chain link fence would be terrific! The existing fence is too high. Any future fencing, if necessary, should result in a park that is a visually integrated part of the community.

I think having a rink with boards for hockey does not need to exclude other uses. Novice and learning skaters love to have boards so there is something to hold onto. I would like to see the city buy enough land from UofT for an indoor rink that could operate year round and be used by everyone including the UofT. As far as what activities should take place on the ice rink with boards I think that should be left up to the users, It could be used for mens and womens hockey leagues, minor hockey leagues, pleasure skating, skills training-learn to skate etc. I suggest we let demand shown by potential users determine what happens with icetime.

Question 4 says, "As a short term solution, would you be interested...". A short-term solution to what? No problem has been stated. This leaves me wondering whether there's something I should be concerned about. It would be helpful to have some indication of what U of T's plans are.

My chief concern is for the noise that would be generated in a multi use sports park, noise that would negatively impact the homeowners across the street, especially from team sports such as hockey and baseball. The installation of a skating rink might also have a serious impact due to noise and night-time illumination. The increased use of the park for recreational activities might lower the value of the homes in closest proximity. The current tennis courts and a small green space area with benches, community garden, would best suit the neighbourhood. Even though we certainly do need more recreational facilities in our neighbourhoods, I don't think that this should be achieved by negatively impacting the people who live in the vicinity. Having taken this position, I must add that if the homeowners were supportive of a multi-use sports park, I would certainly support that decision.

Such a space and such a waste --right now--why not a splash/wading pool--badly needed in our area of the city

I am particularly interested in community green space for picnics, and gardening. I would also like to have our farmers' market relocated to this space.

Green space and communal gathering space are at a premium in our community, so above all else it would be good to have a facility that is welcoming, that invites community investment in care and programming, and that is versatile (examples of not-so-versatile use would be a baseball field or dedicated hockey rink). It would be a brilliant picnic space because of the proximity to Bloor Street takeout restaurants, Greg's Ice Cream, etc. -- but you'd want some picnic benches and attractive landscaping and plantings. The current fence sends a "keep out" message and the University signage kind of does too (which is odd because I'm a UofT student as well as a community resident, so I should feel welcome on at least the first count). Versatile fitness equipment such as benches and chin-up bars would not take up much space and could form part of the neighbourhood fitness circuit that some are interested in seeing. On the other hand if the University is determined to keep the space as a sports field, they will probably require a high chain link fence. In that case, they could invite more community use by running their Junior Blues recreation programs at this site -- for example tennis lessons, soccer skills etc. that neighbourhood children could participate in.

It would be perfect green spot in the City to sit, enjoy the green, watch the to 'to and fro' of the City and kids playing....in other words, a village green.

Please don't change the name. And of course don't forget that this is the school field for UTS.

I have lived on Robert St for 12 years + look forward to seeing the revitalization of the area to become a multi-functional park for residents of the area. It is important that it does function as a multifunctional area, suggest the following: - tennis courts with nets - beach volley ball - basket shooting court - children's play ground - small summer sprinkler basin pool - as per the one developed in the beaches across from Ashbridges bay -dog walking area - small skating rink

There are many small parks in the vicinity, which accommodate small children. It would be good to use the space as a sports area for children and adults. One consideration might be a diamond, which could also be used for T-Ball/Softball/Baseball. It would be great to have attractive benches and seating around so that adults/parents could relax and watch the play. It would be particularly valuable to have an accessible ice-rink to cover the winter months as families have to travel either to Christie Pits or pay large sums for membership at Varsity. The south area needs to be made more open and, therefore, safer for community use. At the moment it is dark and littered, which only serves to encourage further dumping and hanging out.

The area is such an eyesore. The courts and arena are so run down. It is a demoralizing blight on the neighborhood. Even if we don't get access, beautifying the area would be heartening and self respectful.

A basketball court somewhere in the property development would be great!

more greenery, please! a community garden would be a fabulous idea -- of all the different parks doing different things in the city, the one i am most impressed by is dufferin grove, particularly as a community-building project.

Chain link fencing is not very attractive or inviting.

I sincerely hope the tennis courts will be maintained and improved, perhaps with "club" facilities (even if small). By this I mean some organization including a sign-up board, a bulletin board for finding partners, etc. Also if a "back-board" (little wall) could be part of it, for practising, that would be great. There are no such community facilities in the area. The courts at College and Robert Streets have been taken over by basketball (a good thing for youth, but that makes it even more important to have the Sussex/Robert courts).

I would prefer there to be no chain link fence. An open parkette or garden would be wonderful!

I use the tennis courts about 4 or 5 times a year - the location is handy and there are few other options in the area for Tennis in the community. Also, I think a community ice skating rink should have boards to allow for pick-up hockey!

SPLASH PAD!! The community is full of young families with small/young children. The area doesn't need another wading pool or sandbox. It needs a fantastic splash pad like the one in High Park with some shaded/treed areas near the pad that can have seating. It would be great to have something like that in "downtown" Toronto. If an urbanized area like Dundas Square can have a version why not a great water park in a neighbourhood full of elementary and preschools? There may be a need for tennis courts and more ice surfaces but there are a lot more families that don't have access or are able to afford pool time or travel trips to splash parks in other parts of the city. What a great opportunity!

Hello from Bangkok, My dad emailed me this survey probably because I spent a great deal of my youth (5 hours a day for many a year) playing hockey either on the rink or on the tennis court (ball hockey). I learned how to skate at Robert Rink. It was FABULOUS to have this resource close by and I have been dismayed by the closing of the rink over the past number of years. I have a suggestion based on a model not too far away. Recently, when I was living in Toronto again from 2007-2010, I joined the men's hockey league at Bill Bolton Arena (<http://www.billbolton.ca/>). What makes this league so unique is that each participant signs up for a 30 games over the course of the year. The first 'season' of 10 games has players with one team. For the next 'season' of 10 games the players are rotated/mixed to another team. The final 'season' you play 10 games with yet another group of players. After 2 years, I knew and/or had played with everyone in the league. This got rid of the foolish animosity that often builds up when people stick with the same team for years on end. Another draw to this league is that the scheduled times are at a reasonable hour (6:30-7:30, 7:30-8:30, 8:30-9:30, and 9:30-10:30pm). The community does not allow bookings later than 10:30pm, so players are not a disturbance at late hours. As a result of this format and the agreeable schedule, people LINE UP on a Saturday morning in April at 7am to join a league that starts the following September. The positions available sell out by 11am after opening registration at 9am. The sign up is an event all on its own. My point to this suggestion? I would strongly recommend making Robert Rink a covered arena so that the facility can run from at least

September to April as a hockey/figure skating/recreational skating centre. I would also recommend some form of community centre be attached. This facility would be a huge draw for a number of different user groups (UofT, local schools (Lord Landsdowne, Huron, UTS, Central Tech, Harbord Collegiate, Eastern Commerce), JCC, the people living in the area, etc.). Key to the success of Bill Bolton and the Vermont Square park is that the community is involved with maintaining, operating, and scheduling the facilities. It is a wonderful nook of the city and Robert Rink (Aura Lee Playing Field) needs the same kind of love and attention. Part of the reason for the demise of Robert Rink is that the facility was rarely open and when it was it was hard to maintain due to weather. Having a closed in arena would ensure that a schedule could be maintained AND it could even generate income. The current situation presents a golden opportunity to do something with this space that really serves all aspects of the community. Whomever is involved with taking Aura Lee and Robert Rink forward, I implore you to take a 'field' trip to Vermont Square and Bill Bolton Arena (St. Alban's Boy's and Girl's Club) to see their success and ask about their challenges. Thanks for listening and I only wish I could be around to help with the steering committee. Cheers, Ivan Beeckmans Former long term resident (76 Sussex) Currently an International Teacher Bangkok, Thailand

We are in dire need of a safe, enclosed off leash area for the many dogs in our neighbourhood. Many of us have to resort to driving our dogs by car to an off leash park, not an environmentally benign solution, so that they may get the exercise they need & deserve. A large group of responsible dog owners are quite unhappy about losing the Central Tech field as a safe place to gather. As a property owner and long time tax payer in this community, I am puzzled by the \$100k+ spent on the Sally Bird Park on Brunswick Avenue, especially the installation of permanent exercise equipment, without any neighbourhood consultation. There are many, many parks in our area for picnics, children, reading, etc. that are off limits to dogs. As a tax payer & property owner I find this extremely punitive and discriminatory. I am as disgusted by abandoned mounds of poop as the next person (or non dog owner) and I have occasionally performed a "courtesy pickup" in a park, but the answer is not to ban dogs from all parks, but to offer solutions instead. In Amsterdam there are many signs reminding owners to pick up after their dogs, and in the parks the city has installed waste bag dispensers & hand sanitizers next to the garbage bins. The Aura Lee playing field has been very rarely used for actual sports and our neighbourhood could benefit greatly by an addition of an off leash area for dogs, as well as tennis and / or skating facilities, to reunite the community of dog owners in this area.

We have plenty of parks in this neighborhood for children and sporting activities. We are sorely lacking a fenced- in off-leash area for dogs. Many dog owners in our community have to drive their dogs to off-leash parks. This is not an environmental sustainable solution. The lack of a dog-friendly park has also fractured the community, because we no longer have a place to gather. There is a large group of responsible dog owners in this community who are very unhappy about losing our ability to use the Central Tech school grounds without having another viable area. We are a very environmentally conscientious group, many of us would even pick up the student- tossed litter in the Central Tech field. We understand that a school field is not the best place for dogs, however the Aura Lee field would be. As a property owner who pays taxes in this community, I am very disappointed by the amount of money

spent on the small Sally Bird parkette on Brunswick avenue. There you have your picnic / reading space, so why you are even suggesting this for Aura Lee field ?

Please have them re-instate the hockey rink together with open skating time. There is a shortage of available skating and shinny hockey locations, and demand is huge. (all you need to do is visit one of the other distant options). This was a well-utilized recreational area in an urban area. Let's keep it that way, particularly considering all the taxes we pay!

I probably would not use this park except to sit on a bench in the summer and winter to watch the activities. I think it very important that there be a place for our young people who are increasing by the minute in HVRA to have a place to safely gather and enjoy outdoor activities. I also feel it would be very nice to have a beautiful park which would afford an opportunity for people to enjoy meeting their neighbours in the summer and winter. Thus I think some landscaping around the activity areas is very important. We could have indigenous and drought resistant flowering plants and shrubs which residents might provide care. However, it is imperative that whatever is decided upon not intrude too much on the peaceful enjoyment of the immediate residents. For instance lighting should not shine into their homes. A park needs to have activities in place and a caretaker of some sort to prevent it turning into a place for the exchange of drugs. Such a caretaker could possibly run a kiosk selling coffee etc. Although, this park is in HVRA it will attract young people from the Annex and surrounding buildings.

In the immediate future use should be made of the former beach volleyball area as a wildflower garden. The tennis courts have proven themselves as a well-used multi-purpose area (tennis, pick-up hockey, etc. They should if at all possible be retained for those purposes. My house is not within sight of the field but it is within a stone's throw.

Remove the penitentiary style chain link fence. Take cues from Dufferin Grove Park: farmers' market and community kitchen facilities, performance space etc.

Tennis courts have most often been empty and even when in use are still only of use to a few people at a time - the space can be much more efficiently used by both students and community. The community is very good at donating plants and earth and seeds to spaces that have turned into gardens and a space that could be rented or used by area people to grow food would be great. The field gets good sun which is a problem for gardeners in the area with most houses being three stories high and densely placed. Lots of young people are interested in growing their own food but have no place to do it. The field is large enough that with plantings it could be a great space to have art shows, antique markets, Sunday yard sales and other community events. Instead of being used by a couple of tennis players the area could be used daily by many people. There is a shortage of off leash areas for dogs and many dog owners in the area. The dog park is a great meeting place for community members of all ages

keep the tennis courts open to unrestricted community access use the beach volleyball area for a community garden' use the Sussex St. exposure for a small children's playground cosmetic improvements to the Robert St. side (maybe hedgerows with wrought iron fences) avoid lighting and bleachers

The more green space the better, but I can see that a combined hockey rink and tennis court (if that is a feasible combination) would be attractive to the community. I also hope that any U of T playing field can be made accessible to the public, if only as a space to walk or run on. The small parkette should definitely be restored, unless that space can be integrated better into the rest of the area. Trees should be planted wherever possible as well.

Dear HVRA- I am really glad that something is being done about this under-utilized space. The UofT, as its its habit, allowed the facility to deteriorate as a prelude to redeveloping it. (It did the same thing with Varsity Stadium). It is not a very good caretaker of its athletic facilities. (Evidence: the unusable weed-ridden beach volleyball area beside the abandoned Aura Lee hockey rink). My primary interest in Aura Lee is playing shinny. During its hey-day, the rink was heavily used by young children learning how to play hockey. Dozens showed up at a time. The adult age hockey hours were even more heavily used, with up to 40 players in the rink at once. (four lines of eight in a game, plus numerous players practicing shooting). The players came from the neighborhood, the UofT and indeed from all over the city. Demand vastly exceeded the supply of ice time. In contrast, the non-hockey skating hours (which dominated the schedule) were badly under-utilized. In addition to numerous weeknight time slots, Sunday in its entirety was devoted to family or rec skating, yet in contrast to the shinny players, there were never more than a handful of rec skaters at a time. So in my opinion, the facility should be resurrected as a shinny/hockey rink, with a schedule that reflects actual use. I suppose that some people might object to the sound of the puck hitting the boards, but as city-dwellers we all have to live with sound from sirens, parades, traffic, late-night revelers and so on. After a while, you just block it out. Speaking as the father of a four year old, we probably do not need more play facilities for children in this neighborhood. We are already well-served by numerous parks and parkettes, including Margaret Fairley, Sibelius, Christie Pitts/Bickford, the excellent park on Huron just south of Bloor, and the largely unused park above the subway just north of Brunswick and Bloor. Most of these could benefit from re-investment and re-design, some of which are in progress, but they are adequate to the needs of the neighborhood's children. The ideas of a dog run and a community garden have merit. There is enough space at the facility for multiple uses, but my main interest is that the new facility deserves a proper shinny rink.

The chain link makes it unclear that it is a public space. A more attractive and perhaps lower fence would be better in terms of encouraging use but also keeping people from cutting across the field (if that is a concern for maintaining the turf). It is important to have recreational spaces that families with older children can use (ie: tennis courts, field, baseball diamond, community garden, volleyball area, and free skating.) Thank you for circulating the survey.

I would really like to see the ice surface back in operation. It would be a great recreational activity for my son and I. I am very opposed to the idea of an off-leash dog area. Experience elsewhere in the city shows dog owners do not respect the rules that are set up in these areas. For example: I coach children's baseball that takes place in Bickford Park each summer. There is an off-leash area there, but in summer months the dogs are supposed to be ON LEASH until 9:00pm. This is clearly posted on a sign. The rule is universally ignored by dog owners who attend the park. Bickford is full of off-leash dogs when small children are playing baseball nearby.

As long as the field remains available for community usage, anything developed from the above proposals would be a positive addition, particularly the area running along the Sussex side which is rather gloomy.

basically that whole section is ugly and companies like Metro, as well as the condo that went up on Spadina should be main contributors.

First of all it is great to hear this area will be revitalized and that the HRVA is actively involved in this project! Our priorities are 1. Tennis courts, 2. Ice surface for shinny, and 3. Off leash area for dogs.

The chain link fence is really ugly and exclusionary, there has to be a more attractive alternative if there has to be fencing at all, certainly lower with more gates. It should be family and all ages friendly, with recreational opportunities for all ages of people. There are no free, accessible recreational facilities in our neighbourhood at all, and no community centre. Where can parents or grandparents take their children to learn to skate, play tennis or play baseball or soccer? I don't think there is room for a fenced off dog area. I realize U of T needs to have space there for sports and recreation, but it is in the middle of a residential neighbourhood. My own children have attended U of T sports camps, and I played on teams when I attended U of T. However, we should be able to work out respectful, amicable shared use of this field and the above named amenities.

I don't want to seem anti-children, but there are plenty of other playground spaces in the neighbourhood. I would like to see this space developed for adult/sporting interests. Almost every day I see groups of adults/teens using the space for pick-up games, and I think it should be developed on that basis. Ball hockey, soccer, and an off-leash area for dogs would be my preferences. I wouldn't object to an ice rink but have no particular desire for it, either. Keep the chain-link to discourage casual crossing of the property and maintain the playing fields.

If you are counting votes by individual rather than household, this counts as two. Both Olivers agree on this. Having a landscaped park area with a kids' playground is ideal. We assume -- and therefore strongly support -- the removal of the fence as part of this development. We definitely do not want an area devoted to contact sports. Tennis as summer use of rink space is good; baseball requires more space than is available and conflicts with family use of park facility.

This is a wonderful idea. Fingers crossed it goes through. We really need an off leash dog area in the neighbourhood as the dog lovers are thrown out of everywhere they go.

We need non-designated green space primarily for families and leisure activities, particularly as development eats up increasingly more of our precious land (and air). Sports facilities are available at schools and community centres.

Install a public 400m running track (to take the load off the Central Tech track) with a lit forested park area to add to the city's tree canopy.

I think it should be an area that all members of the community -- young and old -- can make use of, and feel comfortable in.

I find the parkette on Sussex to be a very strange place. The signs say No Dumping and No Dogs but in reality it seems that the parkette is accepted as a place for highschool students to get high and homeless people to sleep and defecate. Doesn't make sense. Don't tell me what I can't do. Encourage me to use it! With so few dog off-leash parks in the area, a dog parkette would be wonderful. Seems to me that the beach volleyball court that existed was never used.

We should all keep in mind that, like it or not, the university owns the property and must fund its upkeep. Whatever plans are made for the field have to fit into the university's budget and we in the neighbourhood should be mindful of this. It isn't our nickel, nor do we want it to be. However, I think it is a good thing for the university to consult the community and to show us pictures of what might change.

Our family had been using this rink for two decades until they closed it. It was sadly missed. I would love to see it return once again. It would be great to see families out using the rink once again. Our sense of community has been lost in this area during the cold winter months. Bring it back and bring us out. It would be nice to skate in our own community. If money is an issue, maybe we should get some sponsors or The Toronto Maple Leafs on board?

Chain link fence must go! Could we have a green border? Maybe community garden, though it might need some attractive fencing. South end parkette is lovely spot (or used to be) for multiple uses, with compact play area. If children's play area is created elsewhere on the site (there must be one somewhere!), then this could be for sitting, reading, etc. It is visually and socially pleasant to have park or garden near the edges of the site.

We are managing the Sivananda Yoga Center at 77 Harbord St. In the summer we would like to have a nice flat green space for giving outdoor yoga classes. If this could be accommodated then we would love to bring people to enjoy the neighborhood and nature. Thank you.

Comment by person who did not indicate whether in sight and responded by Web

I would like the people who may use the rink to understand that it is a costly amenity and uses energy and other resources in a quite un-green way..If after considering this and they still want the rink - so be it.

Comments by people living in sight and responding by hand

We would LOVE a playground, a park green and a recreational ice skating rink! It would be AMAZING for the beauty and happiness of the neighbourhood.

We would love to see a playground and park green space. We would also love a skating rink that was for families. The field is useless to us now a public space.

Chain link fence should go, it is an eyesore. It would be great to maintain green park idea for revitalization, even if it endangers a rink in the winter. Landscaping important too.

It would be nice to see more public use of the property. Also make it more inviting so that people both from the community and university/high school can enjoy its facilities.

I am now 83 years old. I think younger people should make these decisions as they will live with the results.

The chain link fencing is very unattractive and the tennis courts should be better maintained. Toronto does have enough green space –many of the green spaces downtown are dirty and poorly maintained. It would be nice to have a lovely local park to enjoy.

Somewhere to skate/play shinny would be awesome! Any green space would also be welcome and would contribute to urban biodiversity. Space for kids to play is always a great addition to a community and may help physical activity levels in our youth.

Please, no hockey of any type. The players are noisy, as is the hitting against the boards. Thank you.

Added to 5.3: Not baseball. If they are absolutely limited in their budget, please leave all as is but make the repairs need to get the ice rink operational.

Layout is just as important as content. Must be for local community – not attract people who drive so don't want competitive sports leagues (except UoT intramural). Open along Robert with structures pushed back to laneway.

Comments by people not living in sight and responding by hand

Give us back our rink! I grew up walking by the rink in the evenings and watching the 'big kids' play shinny. By the time I was old enough to play, the rink closed!

Splash Pad with water park fountains would be great.

Not for me but for the youth of the area. Cannot have dogs if picnic area + playground for small children. It appears over the years the tennis courts are highly used –open up skating to public –take boards down –hockey time is important

[Emphasized baseball in response to 5.3]

The space needs to be more attractive with a pleasant park space, good tennis courts, an interesting kids space perhaps incorporated with the community garden area – as is the place is unattractive and sketchy. It would be nice to have a place to sit en route to Metro, etc. Also, a pleasant place to watch tennis. I think an educational garden or eco garden would be great!

I hope the playing field will remain as a green space for all to use.

–would like to see the chain link fence go – South end could be seating and garden

I really feel strongly about this area not becoming a free-for-all for dogs. I noticed that some owners are not cleaning up after their dogs as it is and this would just become a latrine for the dogs. I live further away from the park and it is probably not a place I would use.

Chain link fence certainly discourages community use; only useful for keeping errant balls from leaving

Added in response to 3.3: Also for regular hockey at specific times. Added in response to 5.3: e.g., soccer. Added in response to 5.4 and 5.5: Can be integrated. Added in response to 5.6: No, no, no. Until the park was built –families flooded a small corner of the park of which is now the tennis court, as the children learned to skate there, myself included. I no longer have a dog but because many dog owners come to this area and many come for the field. The U of T closing the field to community us because people did not clean up after their dogs and it was impossible for students to use the park. Have lived in my home since 1964 and have seen many changes –both good and bad in this area.

It's important that the land is put to use in all seasons, in all kinds of weather, in order to maximize its use by the public.

Added to 5.8: Very definitely not! Beach volleyball in a non-beach area is a profoundly crass idea. One tennis court has already been ruined because of this.

I participated in your survey, but unfortunately I think it will probably end up being a pointless exercise. Because of the current economic malaise, I do not think the Aura Lee Robert Street Playing Field will be redeveloped any time soon. I hope Harbord Village Residents Association members or anyone looking forward to it, do not get their hopes raised too high. I hope I am wrong, especially because my friends and I got to enjoy the field and rink when I was growing up in the area. (A sad consolation may be that

there are fewer kids in the area now and the current generation is supposedly much less physically active.)

I was very surprised to read that the U of T is even planning to reconfigure the field, especially since I was under the impression that it was very strapped for funds. In fact I thought they had assumed a cautious attitude towards undertaking new projects (such as reconfiguring non-integral sports fields on the periphery of campus) since their endowment fund plunged nearly 30% and their employee pension fund underfunding gap widened markedly during the stock market panic of 2008-9. In fact the only sizable project currently underway on campus is the expansion of the Rotman Business School building, but that is largely being financed by private sector donations.

Perhaps administrators are encouraged by the rebound in the markets since March 2009 which has reversed some of the losses. However, markets have been extremely volatile over the past decade and there is nothing to indicate that that will change, consequently it is probable that the recent lows will be retested and possibly exceeded. And this will probably take place as plans are being drawn out. In light of this, I would be very surprised if anxious administrators do not reconsider and postpone/cancel any redevelopment plans at some point due to financing concerns.

Perhaps the redevelopment could take place at some point as a partially government funded "make work" project instead. Even that is probably unlikely though, because the administrations (especially the Ford and Harper) at the various levels of government may not be very interested in being generous toward this downtown Toronto riding. Again, I hope I am wrong.

Sorry that I do not attach my name to this but what I have written is not very popular. People do not like pessimistic conjectures, however realistic they may be. Incidentally, flooding and maintaining the old rink on a volunteer basis during the winter months is a good and realistic idea. Creating an unenclosed dog run or off leash area is a very bad idea because there may be irresponsible dog owners who will not clean up after their dogs. This was one of the main reasons why the Lord Lansdowne public school playing field was closed to the public. As for a separate enclosed dog area, I cannot stomach the idea of sacrificing precious green park space for dogs.

I have observed that the tennis courts are very busy, and in the past the rink was also well used. The beauty of this property housing facilities such as this, in this location is that it affords 'overlapped' community participation between U of T and the residents.

Due to the activity off the laneway, a public sitting area would be better served if it was positioned on Robert St. This allows for more open sight lines and safety. [Also see Diagram 1 at end.]

There are already parks nearby for children and for leisure activities, but tennis courts and a skating rink are both important especially for families to enjoy.

I want to see this field to be used as similar as the one at Central Tech. Field would be open to the public, (jogging, playing ball etc.)

There is enormous potential with this space! I would love to help out as needed!

As a resident of Robert St. I miss skating at the rink. We could bring the kids up here to learn to skate and feel safe doing it. And also feel like part of the community. I miss those days. Night time skating is so enjoyable. I wouldn't mind working as a rink guard a couple nights a week.

The encouragement of hockey –serious hockey- as a passionate and healthy pursuit for local young people, can only be to the benefit of everyone in our community, long term.

I am 73. Chain link fencing need not surround the entire area; only around a ring/baseball/tennis courts section. Dog run or off leash area would be incompatible with a playground, park/green space, and community garden.

No chain link around parkette [See Diagram 2 at end.]

This could be an open community space for all ages. A playing field space for caregivers and young children should be restored. Seating away from the street. A place for people to skate and play ball. A place for neighbours to meet.

Diagram 1

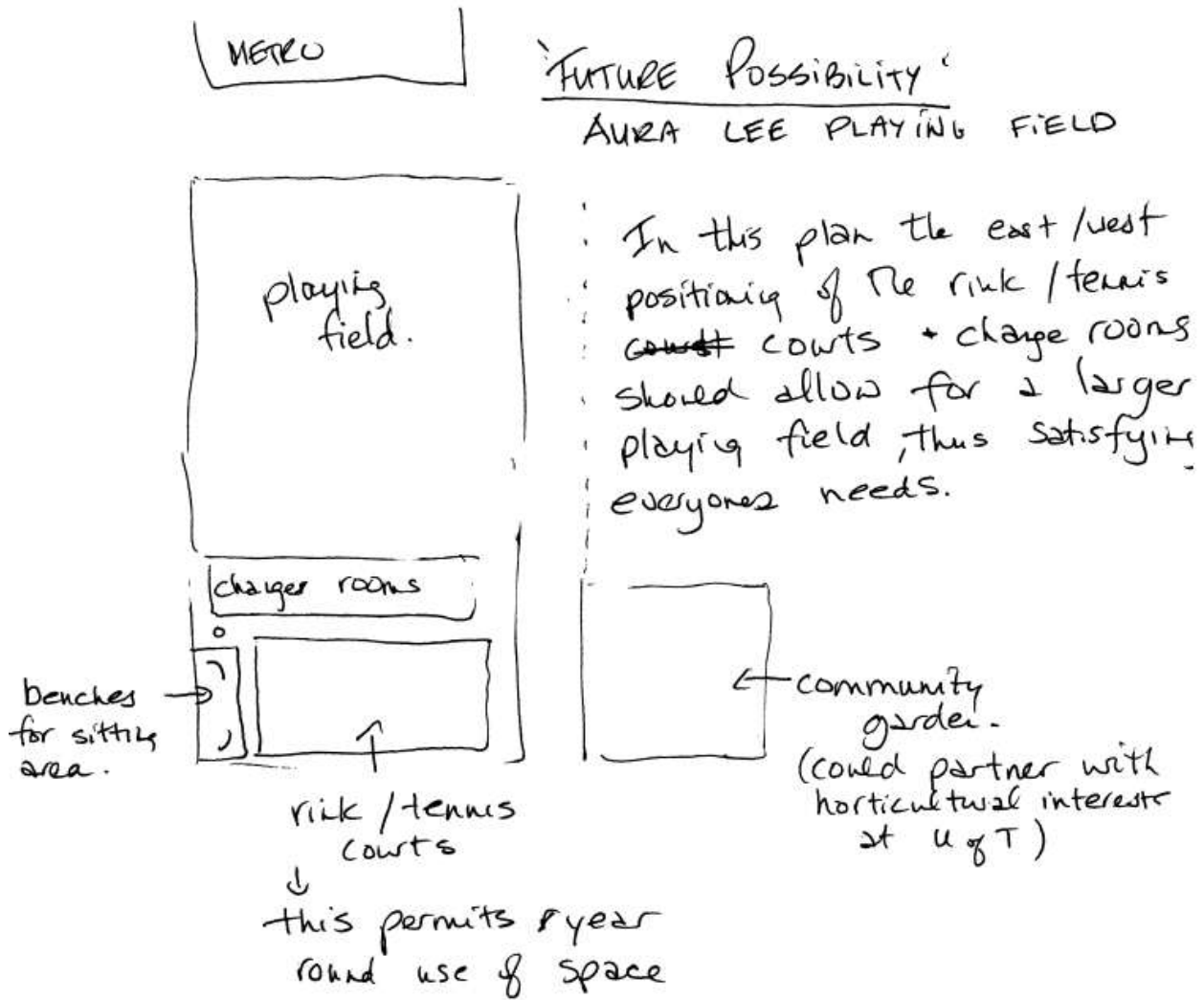


Diagram 2

