

Summary: Community Justice Centre Forum: August 10, 2017

Moss Park Community Justice Centre Needs Assessment

Aug 28, 2017

On Thursday, August 10th, 2017, 110 people met at Artscape Daniels Spectrum to attend the first Moss Park Community Justice Centre Forum. The forum was hosted by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

This first forum was convened to introduce the Community Justice Centre model, and to begin exploring with representatives of justice, health, and social service providers how such a Centre could serve the needs of vulnerable individuals apprehended for low-level crimes in Moss Park. The Forum is one part of the Moss Park Community Justice Centre Needs Assessment. Information about the assessment can be found here: toronto.cjc-ccj.ca.

The forum involved approximately one hour of presentations, followed by a short question & answer session. Participants then turned to small table conversations, where they were asked to discuss nine questions over the course of approximately 90 minutes. Following table discussions, highlights from the discussion were shared with the other participants.

[Slides from the forum can be found here.](#)

Notes were taken at each of the tables by participants as well as designated note-takers and then synthesized into the summary below.

Participants were given the opportunity review a draft of this report and inform the team if they noticed an error, omission, or needed clarification.

This summary was written by staff at MASS LBP, an independent firm retained to support the Moss Park Community Justice Centre Needs Assessment. This summary is not a verbatim transcript. It is meant to capture the range of perspectives and ideas that were shared on August 10, 2017. In writing this summary, the research and collaboration team has not assessed the merit or accuracy of these ideas, nor does the inclusion of any content indicate an endorsement from the Ministry of the Attorney General or the Province of Ontario.

Section 1: Discussion of Current Outcomes in Moss Park

Which initiatives or factors are contributing to better outcomes for vulnerable individuals apprehended for low-level crimes in Moss Park?

Frequently Mentioned

- Health care organizations that collaborate to serve the needs of Moss Park residents and approach care with a harm-reduction focus, such as the City of Toronto’s mental health network initiative, the Mental Health and Justice Network, Street Health, Sherbourne Health Centre, the South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Health Access St. James Town, the TCLHIN Mid-East Toronto Health Table, the Regent Park Community Health Centre, and specialized sex trade supports.
 - “There’s an existing mindset in the Moss Park area around harm reduction.”
- Justice initiatives that take a non-traditional approach to criminal justice, such as the FOCUS 51 Situation Table, the SPIDER (Specialized Interdivisional Enhanced Response) Program, the pre-charge diversion program and embedded Crown Attorney at 51 Division, the mental health court based out of Old City Hall, and the Case Manager based in the Salvation Army. These initiatives are working hard to reroute vulnerable individuals out of the justice system and into appropriate services.
- Organizations that provide a suite of services for vulnerable individuals, such as the Adelaide Women’s Centre legal clinic, the St. Michael’s Hospital Health Justice Clinic, and Sound Times’ crisis prevention program and short-term housing program.
- Housing organizations that connect vulnerable individuals with accessible, supportive housing such as HouseLink and Fred Victor.

Sometimes Mentioned

- Community initiatives and services that strengthen relationships between individuals in the community, such as community gardens and parks.
- Family and youth-focused services based in the Moss Park neighbourhood, such as Family and Youth Services at 311 Jarvis, and youth outreach work done through the John Innis Community Centre.
- The many organizations that work to serve the Moss Park neighbourhood collaborate with one another to provide holistic services for vulnerable individuals who require a suite of services to address their needs.
- Post-incarceration services.
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre.

Which barriers or service gaps are contributing to poorer outcomes for vulnerable individuals apprehended for low-level crimes in Moss Park?

Frequently Mentioned

- A lack of shelters, supportive housing, and affordable long-term housing that allow vulnerable individuals to focus on recovery. Vulnerable individuals who are convicted of a crime are often evicted. Supportive housing is inaccessible for those who need it.
 - “How integrated is the province with City developers? There’s a crisis right now, but it takes a while for the Province and City developers to catch up.”
- Vulnerable individuals often struggle to navigate the service system without someone who is familiar with the range of services available in the Moss Park neighbourhood.
- Some services cannot be accessed until the vulnerable individual is charged or has pled guilty to a crime.
- Vulnerable individuals often struggle to attend court or meet attendance requirements for court-mandated programs.
 - “If someone doesn’t have a place to sleep, showing up on time to court is a not a priority.”
- Lack of ongoing support for individuals who are not in crisis.
- Siloed care between systems that should ideally work together to provide wrap-around services for vulnerable individuals, namely the health care system, the court system, and the police.
- Vulnerable individuals may not seek services that could benefit them, due to a lack of respect and dignified treatment when receiving treatment. This may be one reason why, despite a high number of health care providers in the Moss Park neighbourhood, health care outcomes are still poor in this area.
 - “People who don’t see themselves as ill need other options -- build a plan to work with them in a more holistic way.”
- Lack of food services.
- Moss Park has a diverse population of vulnerable individuals that may experience multiple issues at once. Some of these issues may include poverty, poor health outcomes, and a lack of healthy food.
- Moss Park has a population of transient vulnerable individuals who, although they spend time in Moss Park, do not necessarily have a fixed address in the neighbourhood.
 - “There’s a very transient population in the changing neighbourhood of Moss Park.”

Sometimes Mentioned

- Many agencies in the Moss Park neighbourhood are underfunded, understaffed, and overworked. Some high-needs individuals exhaust services available to them and move from service to service, where they can fall out of the system.
 - “High needs individuals can burn out service providers and get passed around.”
- A lack of mental health services for vulnerable individuals.
 - “There is a need to better integrate trauma-based treatments with mental health and addictions services.”
- A lack of central spaces that the community can gather in.
- A lack of youth-focused services.
 - This includes mental health services, which could identify the early onset of mental health issues often seen in youth.
 - This also includes pre-charge diversion programs that could prevent young people from repeat interactions with the justice system.
- Moss Park is in the midst of a “revitalization” due to public and private investments, which could force vulnerable individuals out of the neighbourhood and the catchment area of services they need.
 - “This has brought a lot of new services, funding, and attention to the area, but at the cost of less available housing for vulnerable individuals.”
- A lack of understanding from service providers on systemic issues that impact Indigenous people.
- Jails and holding centres are often not fully-staffed on evenings and weekends, which keeps recently released individuals in a transient state as they wait to access their personal items.
- Decision-makers in the justice system are more risk-averse than other systems, which can slow needed change.
 - “Risk aversion when a new model is embedded in the justice system, even if there’s more risk with sticking to the status quo.”

How could these barriers or service gaps be overcome?

Frequently Mentioned

- Provide a system navigator for individuals when navigating through their appointments and court appearances. Ideally, this person would be a peer with lived experience, rather than a service provider. Although this position would be expensive, it is crucial to enabling access of services.
 - “Recognize the importance of having someone attend with the client to programming, court, etc.”
- Provide services that have clear referral procedures and use accessible language in their delivery.
- Respond to the whole person. Provide cohesive, wrap-around, coordinated services for vulnerable individuals that address mental health and addictions issues. Provide continuous case management throughout the life of the individual that prevents gaps forming between services. Services should provide holistic care that addresses the full suite of needs of vulnerable individuals.
- Provide housing options for vulnerable individuals in the justice system, and for individuals exiting the justice system. This includes bail beds, shelters, supportive housing, and affordable long-term housing.
- Provide food to vulnerable individuals.
- Provide consistent, collaborative programming that addresses the specific needs of Indigenous people. Recognize that these needs often stem from oppression and racism.
- Work to ensure that vulnerable individuals can avoid getting a criminal record in the first place, which often keeps them from participating fully in community life.

Sometimes Mentioned

- Provide youth-focused programs, with a focus on mental health.
 - “Remember the transitional age, it’s important to help youth who are transitioning into adults.”
- Given that Moss Park is diverse, provide culturally-appropriate services in a variety of languages.
- Break down the distance between “service” and “the served”. Work to integrate justice partners and service providers into the community and connect them to the Moss Park neighbourhood.

Section 2: Discussion of the Community Justice Centre Model

What are the advantages of the Community Justice Centre Model; how could the CJC Model address the needs of vulnerable individuals apprehended for low-level crimes in Moss Park?

Frequently Mentioned

- Could provide seamless transitions between a variety of service providers, which could close the gaps between services that vulnerable individuals often fall through.
 - “Coordinated care plan with inclusive accountability of programming to client.”
 - “Tears down silos between service providers.”
- Could provide a personalized approach to justice that fits the need of each vulnerable individual.
 - “[Justice is] not one size fits all.”
- Could connect individuals to services in a safe environment.
- Could shift perspective of those who believe that the justice system is only adversarial and does not provide support for vulnerable individuals.
 - “Removes the adversarial aspect of the justice system.”

Sometimes Mentioned

- Could provide a community-focused approach to improving justice and well-being.
- Could address the stigma that vulnerable individuals face when accessing specific services, and could provide services that the entire Moss Park community can access.
- Could provide police officers with an alternative to charging an individual with a crime or taking them to the hospital’s Emergency Department, rather than forcing vulnerable individuals into the justice system when they may be better served outside of it.

What are the disadvantages of the Community Justice Centre Model; how might the CJC Model be inappropriate when seeking to address the needs of vulnerable individuals apprehended for low-level crimes in Moss Park?

Frequently Mentioned

- The catchment area may be too restrictive. The revitalization of Moss Park may be pushing vulnerable individuals out of the area. If vulnerable individuals do not live in Moss Park, they should still be able to access services. Eligibility is unclear, and residency should not be required to access services.
 - “The catchment area is not uniform and we want to ensure the most vulnerable populations have access to services.”

- Some essential services remain completely absent from the Moss Park neighbourhood.
- Does not address the long wait times for existing services in the Moss Park neighbourhood.
- If a CJC is forceful in requiring charged individuals to complete services, this model could be counterproductive in the treatment it provides.
 - “Relationship between access to services and sentencing is unclear.”
- Service providers may hesitate to share client information with criminal justice providers, as service providers are not interested in “getting clients in trouble,” which would limit the impact of the CJC.

Sometimes Mentioned

- The creation of a new Centre requires a lot of financial and personal investment from service providers. The Centre would have to be effective and efficient enough to justify its creation, given the many needs of the Moss Park community.
- Many times, services have stringent, inflexible eligibility requirements. If the CJC does the same, then will not solve the actual problems faced by vulnerable individuals.
- Providing services for both youth and adults could be challenging, as the two groups should be separated.
- The safety of all may be in tension with access for those in crisis. Allowing continued access to a CJC is integral, and vulnerable individuals cannot be banned from the Centre if they are to receive continued care, yet there may be the impulse to “ban” if they are disruptive or a threat to others.
- Concern about further concentrating services for street-involved people with mental health and addictions issues in the Moss Park area. For a few, they felt this concentration undermined quality of life for others in this one neighbourhood, while others in the city do not have the same concentration of services. For others, there was a concern that other areas of the city might in fact need services more than Moss Park since many services are already located here. Questions about how and why this location was chosen were also raised.

If a CJC was created in Moss Park, what specific features and focus should it have?

Frequently Mentioned

- Commit to the principles of harm reduction. Provide harm reduction supplies, and have appropriate harm reduction strategies regarding substance use, sex work, etc.
 - “Consider the many pieces that would go into a CJC: e.g. harm reduction, sex positive, youth-inclusive, safe injection site.”
- Extended hours beyond 9-5, ideally 7 days a week with select services offered 24 hours a day.
- An efficient intake and assessment process that is context-based rather than charge-based to determine what specific services should be available to the individual.
 - “A CJC can’t be all things to all people. We will need to strike a balance between providing services and referrals.”
- A dedicated system navigator that will help individuals navigate the justice system, the health system, and service providers.
- Peer support workers and peer support so that individuals with lived experiences are part of the team.
- Extensive housing access services which succeeds in getting people into the housing they need, such as shelters, transitional and supportive housing, and long-term housing for individuals within and at risk of coming into conflict with the justice system.
- Onsite mental health and addictions services that integrate trauma-based treatments.
- Work in true partnership with the Indigenous community to build Indigenous restorative practices into the model.
 - “Restorative practices (especially from Indigenous communities) should be baked into the design.”
 - “Have an Indigenous elder onsite to manage cultural barriers.”
- Services for youth, especially programs that focus on early diversion from the criminal justice system and education programs. It is important that if included, these services be both specialized to youth and separate where possible from adult services.
 - “Youth have particular vulnerabilities and needs which require a more restorative service model, such as a CJC. Whether youth should be included in this particular project depends on several factors, including: whether the CJC will be housed in a single, physical building, or will be a broader service model; and the relationship between the CJC and other justice facilities, such as the New Toronto Courthouse.”

- Be accessible to those at risk of coming into conflict with the justice system, and those already in conflict with the justice system.
 - “There needs to be a delicate balance between focusing on those who are in the criminal justice system versus those who may end up in the criminal justice system.”
- Should be welcoming to individuals from diverse backgrounds, especially individuals who identify as Indigenous, racialized, and LGBTQ+. Should offer culturally appropriate services for newcomers to Canada in a variety of languages.
- Service providers should collaborate on services, especially for high-needs individuals to provide relief for one another on challenging cases.
- Do not limit services to individuals who live in the Moss Park area.
 - “There should be continuing supports outside of a specific neighbourhood (continuity of care).”

Sometimes Mentioned

- Diversion programs, especially pre-charge diversion programs for adults and youth.
- Services that are part of the CJC should have the necessary funding and resources to operate effectively.
- Allow for and support clients to define their own goals, and use these client goals as one important metric of success at the CJC
- Some services should be accessible through phone and video.
- A library.
- Provide timely services to a broad range of individuals, not only individuals with acutely elevated risks.
- Provide food programming, such as a community garden or kitchen. This would provide a community food resource, as well as a positive mental health impact.
- Create a community-focused space that is inviting for individuals who are not part of the justice system. A CJC should be designed by the community it serves.
 - “So necessary to educate the wider public about the benefits of a Community Justice Centre because there is a lot of pushback from people who are not aware of the model.”

- Provide community-focused services that work to build trust between the community and the justice system.
 - “Focus on rebuilding trust and relationships. A CJC existing in itself won’t overcome people’s fear or concerns.”
- While some participants suggested a CJC should include services and programs for families, especially the families of vulnerable individuals within the justice system, at least one other participant recommended a CJC should be located away from children-focused community services. Others still suggested that the needs of families with children could be met by separating the spaces for children and families from those aimed at serving adults.
- Established in such a way that service design can be changed depending on needs.
- Dedicated staff that work with individuals recently released from jail to reconnect them with social benefits, especially income support and housing.
- Community and user oversight of the CJC to ensure the Centre is well-managed, functions properly for individuals accessing the services and is meeting goals and targets.
- Services located within the CJC should host regular critical incident reviews following an incident to create accountability, learn from failures; this is the only way to truly ensure wrap-around services.
- City of Toronto Employment Services, Ontario Works, and Ontario Disability Support Programs.
- Walk-in and drop-in services that don’t require case manager referrals.
- Crisis services.

Where do you think a CJC in Moss Park should be located?

- Toronto Public Library branches in the Moss Park neighbourhood
- John Innis Community Centre
- Family Court space at 311 Jarvis
- Moss Park Armory
- Salvation Army Lighthouse at 160 Jarvis Street
- Artscape Daniels Spectrum
- George Street School House

- Seaton House
- Regent Park Community Health Centre
- Regent Park Community Centre at 402 Shuter St.
- Use the community to identify an appropriate space
- Avoid buildings that would further stigmatize those entering/using services
- Consider spaces that are familiar for the individuals that would be served by a Community Justice Centre

Section 3: Discussion of the Community Justice Centre Needs Assessment

Who else do we need to involve during this assessment process?

- Housing-focused organizations such as the Toronto City Planning Office, Toronto Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation.
- Health organizations such as the Sherbourne Health Centre, St. Michael's Hospital, and the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network.
- Victims
- Developmental Service Ontario
- Family services, such as the Children's Aid Society, Catholic Children's Aid, Native Family Services, Jewish Family Services
- Downtown Safety Committee
- Higher education providers such as Ryerson University, George Brown College, and the University of Toronto
- Indigenous service providers and those working within the Gladue Court (e.g. Gladue Report Writers)
- Community members: Moss Park residents, former residents who have been priced out of the neighbourhood
- The LGBTQ+ communities
- Local business organizations
- The 519
- United Way
- Social Justice Tribunals
- Immigration services
- Anti-Racism Directorate
- People with lived experiences, especially those who are over-represented in the justice system (racialized people and Indigenous people)

- Collective Impact to Reduce Incarceration Group
- The Federal Government
- Religious organizations

What reports, research, and data should we consider?

Reports

- The Access Group on Access to Justice Reports
- Roots of Violence Report

Research

- “Ideas Program” -- a Quality Improvement project from the Centre for Urban Health
- Reports on Post-Incarceration Syndrome
- Cost-savings that would be delivered by a CJC model

Data

- Population data from health providers such as the LHIN, CAMH, the Centre for Urban Health, and the Wellesley Institute
- Statistics on provincial jail remand population
- Statistics on pre-charge diversion
- Crime analysis on the Moss Park neighbourhood

Organizations Present

- Aboriginal Legal Services
- African Canadian Legal Clinic
- Anti-Racism Directorate, Cabinet Office
- Cabbagetown South Residents Association
- Cabinet Office
- Canadian Civil Liberties Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division
- Central Neighbourhood House
- Centre for Addictions and Mental Health
- City of Toronto
 - Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division
 - Shelter, Support & Housing Administration
 - Employment and Social Services
- CMHA Ontario
- Community Hubs Secretariat, Cabinet Office & Ministry of Infrastructure
- ConnexOntario
- Correctional Services of Canada
- COTA Health
- Covenant House Toronto
- CRC
- Criminal Lawyers' Association
- ELTO, SJTO, SLASTO
- Fred Victor
- Garden District Residents Association
- Gerstein Crisis Centre
- Greenwood Lam LLP
- Haven Toronto
- Justice Canada
- Law Society of Upper Canada
- Legal Aid Ontario
- Loft Community Services
- Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Ministry of the Attorney General
 - ATRD
 - Criminal Law Division
 - Victim/Witness Assistance Program
- Native Women's Resource Centre
- Neighbourhood Legal Services
- Nikki Knows/Project LUCID
- Office for Victims of Crime
- Office of the Commissioner of Housing Equity

- PASAN
- Peacebuilders Canada
- Provincial Aboriginal Services Advisory Council
- Public Legal Educator
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada
- Regent Park Community Health Centre
- Riverdale Probation & Parole Office
- Salvation Army
- Scarborough HSJCC
- Sherbourne Health Centre
- Social Justice Tribunals Ontario
- Sound Times Support Services
- South Cabbagetown Residents Association
- Springboard
- St. James Town Community Corner
- St. Michael's Family Health Team
- St. Michael's Hospital
- Street Health
- The Advocates' Society
- The John Howard Society of Toronto
- The Neighbourhood Group/ CNH
- The Salvation Army Maxwell Meighen Centre
- The Yonge Street Mission
- Toronto Bail Program
- Toronto Central LHIN
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Kiwanis Boys & Girls Clubs
- Toronto Police Services
 - SPIDER
 - FOCUS 51
- Toronto Public Library
- Toronto South Detention Centre
- United Way Toronto & York Region
- WoodGreen Community Services