

## Summary

### Community Justice Centre Autumn Forum, held Oct. 5, 2017

#### Moss Park Community Justice Centre Needs Assessment

On October 5, 2017, 112 people met with the Ministry of the Attorney General's Research and Collaboration Team to discuss the emerging elements of a potential Community Justice Centre in the Moss Park area.

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](http://toronto.cjc-ccj.ca).

This forum was convened to share the emerging elements of a potential Community Justice Centre in the Moss Park area, as informed by a first forum held in early August, along with a range of interviews and focus groups conducted by the Research and Collaboration Team between August and October.

The Autumn forum commenced with approximately one hour of presentations from the Research and Collaboration Team, followed by a perspectives panel of speakers that included representation from police, defense counsel, the supportive housing sector, and community service providers. After a question and answer session with the audience, participants turned to small table discussions, during which each table was asked to discuss five questions over the course of an hour. Following these table discussions, tables shared highlights of their discussion with the other attendees.

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

Notes were taken at each of the tables, by participants and designated note-takers, and 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 by the Ministry of the Attorney General 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 October 5, 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.

## Highlights

- It is essential that the CJC be committed to a trauma-informed, harm-reduction philosophy, one that recognizes an individual's potential and builds connection and community. Peer workers are essential in helping to achieve this vision.
- A CJC in the Moss Park area should be truly restorative in its approach to justice. This element needs to have greater emphasis in the emerging model. The process of addressing criminal cases should seek to repair relationships and build a basis for more harmonious interactions in the future. In order to do this, the CJC needs to provide substantial supports for victims.
- Mental health, addiction, and housing services were seen as the most important services to have onsite. ServiceOntario and food were also seen as important. There was hesitancy about locating any essential services off-site, since this may act as a barrier to vulnerable clients who have difficulty navigating the social service and justice systems.
- Daily operation with extended hours is crucial. Weekend hours are especially important to vulnerable clients as many service providers in the Moss Park area do not offer services on weekends.
- Appointment times often act as a service barrier for vulnerable clients who struggle to arrive at a specific time. Flexible service times would best serve vulnerable clients in a CJC in the Moss Park area.
- More supportive housing in Toronto is essential. Waitlists are extremely long, and CJC clients will struggle to succeed without it. Creative solutions are needed, including, for example, expanded rent supplements and mobile support teams.
- New funding for service providers is integral to the success of a CJC in the Moss Park area. Many social service providers are unable to extend themselves further to service a new CJC without new funding.
- There was some variation in views as to whether a CJC in the Moss Park area should serve youth, particularly in light of the plans for a consolidated courthouse in Toronto. Given the uncertain future of 311 Jarvis, some thought a CJC should include youth services; others wanted greater investment at, and protection of, 311 Jarvis, along with the creation of an adult-focused CJC. However, it was broadly agreed that transition-aged youth (those aged roughly 18-25) are not well served, and that a CJC, if one was created, must work to ensure that youth transitioning smoothly from one age category to another.
- Some questioned whether investing in a CJC was the most effective investment, given the importance of and need for supportive housing and other key services, as well as the value of a pre-charge diversion program.
- Some questioned the selection of 51 Division and whether other areas of the city could benefit more from such an approach.

- The CJC should have a community-based governance structure. A steering committee of service provider representatives and diverse community members, including people with lived experience of vulnerability, should guide the design of a CJC in the Moss Park area. Once the CJC is established, community members and service providers should continue to play a governing role that guides the operation and evolution of the CJC.
- The support, involvement, and funding from other government ministries as well as the judiciary is necessary for the CJC to succeed.
- A CJC in the Moss Park area should be regularly and closely evaluated to assess if the goals of the CJC are being met and to identify areas where improvement is needed. The CJC must have sufficient flexibility to incorporate suggested changes.

## Detailed Summary

Five discussion questions were posed to participants:

1. *What elements do you agree should be taken forward as a necessary component of any initial CJC in the Moss Park area? What elements need major revision & how can we improve them?*
2. *Have we missed any essential elements that, if overlooked, will undercut the value of any initial CJC in the Moss Park area?*
3. *Which services do you agree should be co-located in the CJC? Which services should remain off-site?*
4. *Are there important elements that you believe could be implemented at a later stage after a potential CJC is operational?*
5. *What role should residents, users, and community agencies play in designing and managing the CJC?*

This summary re-organizes all advice provided into seven sections: responses to each of the six emerging elements, and a section that covers suggestions about important missing elements for a potential CJC in the Moss Park area.

### ***Response to Emerging Element 1, “The CJC should be located in 51 Division, operating daily with extended hours”:***

Participants generally agreed that:

- Daily operation with extended hours is crucial. Weekend hours are especially important to vulnerable clients, as many service providers in the Moss Park area do not offer services on weekends.
- Extended hours should serve the needs of the community, not only justice-involved clients, and not duplicate extended-hour services offered by other service providers nearby.
- The CJC would not necessarily need to be in Moss Park specifically, but could be elsewhere in 51 Division.

In addition:

- Some participants noted that although many service providers exist in the Moss Park area, there are very few safe spaces for vulnerable clients to go when they are not receiving services. The CJC could act as a safe space for vulnerable clients to spend time and avoid unsafe situations.

- Some questioned whether 51 Division was the best location for Toronto's first CJC.
  - Many agreed that a CJC in 51 Division could be beneficial, as many vulnerable, justice-involved individuals spend time in the broader Moss Park area. Some participants also suggested that this area is an appropriate location since it has service providers that are ready and capable of innovating, as well as a population that is relatively welcoming when it comes to providing services to the most marginalized.
  - On the other hand, some participants voiced concerns that the vulnerable clients who would be best-served by a CJC may exist in other parts of the city where there are fewer services, and that in the future, there may be fewer and fewer clients in this area, since Toronto's eastern downtown continues to rapidly gentrify. It may be wiser, they suggested, to make this investment elsewhere in Toronto, given the concentration of services in this area. Some participants suggested that South Etobicoke may be a more appropriate location for Toronto's first CJC. South Etobicoke was described as an area that is under-served, has a large remand population, and is also home to the Toronto South Detention Centre and the John Howard Reintegration Centre.
- Some suggested that a CJC in the Moss Park area could, in the long-term, be integrated into the eventual George Street Revitalization facility, but that it should be initially planned to work with pre-existing community services. Others suggested looking at existing multi-service community health organizations.

***Response to Emerging Element 2, "The CJC should be the automatic 'first stop' for most adults accused of eligible crimes in 51 Division; others could be referred in from College Park and Old City Hall":***

Participants generally agreed that:

- Those arrested in 51 Division must have the choice to consent to referral into the CJC, or have the option to be referred out. They must be given access to counsel so they understand their rights and the implications of their decisions. If they choose to have their case heard at College Park or Old City Hall, they should still have access to services offered through the CJC.
- Pre-charge diversion programs should be included in the CJC, and greater integration with Toronto Police Service's Mobile Crisis Intervention Team.
- The range of potentially eligible crimes should go beyond Class 1 charges.

In addition:

- There were differing views as to whether a CJC in the Moss Park area should serve youth in light of the plans for a consolidated courthouse in Toronto.

- Generally, participants agreed that the services and approaches at the Toronto Youth Court located at 311 Jarvis serves youth who are under 18 years old fairly well, although there are some service gaps.
  - If 311 Jarvis is to be moved into the new consolidated courthouse, then some suggested instead that youth cases be heard at the CJC, with separate spaces and processes.
  - Many agreed that transition-aged youth are not well served. While the justice system defines youth as 13-17, and 311 Jarvis focuses on serving this population, youth often continue to need youth-focused services beyond the age of 17. Some argued that investment in transition-aged youth was important, whether at 311 Jarvis or at a new CJC — keeping more young people out of the justice system was seen as a cost-effective, preventative investment well worth considering.
  - Some participants suggested that the CJC initiative should include investments in the Toronto Youth Court at 311 Jarvis, since it embodies many of the principles of the Community Justice Centre model. This could include investments that allowed this facility to better serve transition-aged young adults.
  - Others suggested that the new CJC should include focused dedicated services for these transition-aged young adults who are aging out of 311 Jarvis.
  - Broadly, participants agreed that 311 Jarvis and the CJC, if one was created, must work together to ensure that youth transitioning from one age category to another are adequately serviced and experience minimal service disruption when transitioning between 311 Jarvis and a CJC.
- Some participants were concerned about who would screen people into the CJC. They suggested that it should not be driven solely by the police and Crown. Service providers and defence counsel should be involved in the screening process.
  - Some thought screening should be flexible and sensitive to the unique context of the individual's needs, rather than being based primarily on eligible types of crime. Consensus was also not achieved about who specifically the target clientele should be.
  - For a CJC to be an automatic first stop, it would likely need capacity to perform bail hearings, and thus would need a sufficient number of holding cells. There was disagreement about whether this was appropriate. Some participants stated that cells in the CJC would stigmatize the space and make it less welcoming for many clients, while others felt the benefit may outweigh the downsides if managed appropriately.
  - Planning should also consider the way the CJC would interact with the new consolidated Toronto Courthouse that is being created.

***Response to Emerging Element 3, “The CJC should include a Justice Team and a Service Team. These teams can include staff from a range of organizations.”:***

Participants generally agreed that:

- Both the Justice and Service Teams should be co-located in the same space.
- The success of a CJC in the Moss Park area relies heavily on having the right people chosen to perform various positions. All staff must understand the experiences and cultures of the populations served at the CJC, and be appropriately trained to provide services. Justice and Service Team staff should have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and receive appropriate training for the variety of clients they will work with. The staff of the CJC area should, whenever possible, be community residents who reflect the area’s diversity.
- It is essential that the CJC be committed to a trauma-informed, harm-reduction philosophy, one that recognizes people’s potential and builds connection and community.
- It’s essential that some CJC staff are ‘peer workers’ with lived experience of various forms of marginalization. They are often best placed to help people navigate service systems in an empowering way. These peer supports should be appropriately compensated for their work as a member of the CJC team.
- The standard language typically used in the justice system should not be used in the CJC, as it stigmatizes those involved in the justice system. People charged or convicted of a crime should not be labelled “the accused” or “an offender”.
  - Some participants suggested the term Community Justice Centre may not be welcoming for vulnerable clients who have negative experiences with the justice system. These alternative names were suggested: Community Resource Centre, Community Access Centre, the Ted Ormston Centre.
- Participants noted that victims should play an important role at a CJC. In order for victims to be beneficiaries of the CJC, they must be offered specific services and supports. They should also be supported to play a role in the court process, as an essential element of truly restorative justice. Coordinating the safety of everyone in the building could be challenging, especially with a flexible drop-in approach to services.
- Armed security officers and police that are often seen at traditional courthouses would make a CJC less welcoming to some vulnerable clients, and deter some people from seeking walk-in services. However, security of some form was deemed necessary.
  - It was suggested that CJC staff members should receive de-escalation training to create a safer environment for all CJC clients.
  - Changing the behaviour of police, and creating better relationships between police and vulnerable individuals, will be both an important factor for success as well as an important outcome of a CJC in the Moss Park area. Some suggested including a Police officer acting as a community liaison in the Justice Team.

- Mental health and addictions services should definitely be available onsite for clients of a CJC in the Moss Park area.
- Housing services should definitely be available onsite for clients of a CJC in the Moss Park area. These services should help clients find housing that meets their needs, including safe beds & crisis beds, supportive housing, and community housing. Some short-term housing could be provided on-site.

In addition:

- Participants recognized that personal privacy will be a challenge with multiple service providers working with the same client. Appropriate measures must be in place to preserve the privacy of all clients served by a CJC.
- Some participants suggested that the CJC could also have a Council of Elders comprised of respected community members, who act as part of the Justice Team. The Council would advise the sitting Judge and provide a variety of perspectives on cases.
- Some participants voiced concerns about vulnerable clients who already have service providers in the Moss Park area, and how these services would be coordinated with services offered through the CJC.

***Response to Emerging Element 4, “The Service Team should work to quickly secure access for justice-involved clients to critical off-site services”:***

Participants generally agreed that:

- A comprehensive intake process is crucial to the experience of a vulnerable client being served by the CJC. Services should be truly integrated so vulnerable clients do not have to repeat their stories and relive past trauma when providing context for service providers. There must be an appropriate balance between quick access to services and properly assessing the needs of the client.
- Locating some essential services off-site may act as a barrier to vulnerable clients who have difficulty navigating the social service and justice systems. A skilled navigator could potentially bridge these gaps, but services should be co-located as much as possible to best serve vulnerable clients. Only a few participants suggested limiting the services available on-site. Many suggested including safe beds, detox beds, and/or short-term transitional housing on-site.

***Response to Emerging Element 5, “Drop-in services should be offered to the wider community, by the Service Team and by visiting service providers”:***

Participants generally agreed that:

- Both justice-involved clients and other vulnerable community members should be able to access the services they need at times that are flexible and convenient for them. Appointment times often act as a service barrier for vulnerable clients who struggle to arrive at a specific time, and flexible service times would best serve vulnerable clients in a CJC in the Moss Park area.
- Services should be provided in a variety of languages that are spoken in the Moss Park area, and services should be provided in a culturally-appropriate manner for clients. Some participants suggested that a CJC in the Moss Park area should have capacity to host smudges.
- Food and showers should be available at a CJC in the Moss Park area. Food is especially valuable in changing the atmosphere and drawing people in.
- ServiceOntario should be located on-site to provide identification services.

In addition:

- Consensus was not reached on how much the CJC should provide services to those who are not justice-involved, at risk of justice involvement, or significantly marginalized. Creating safe space for different communities can become overly complicated when serving a highly mixed clientele.
- Some participants recognized the importance of community reintegration as part of a CJC in the Moss Park area. They suggested that a CJC-based employment service could build partnerships with local businesses who would agree to employ CJC-trained clients looking to reintegrate themselves into the community and gain work experience.
- Some participants noted that childcare and family services should be available at the CJC.
- Some participants suggested that computers and Internet access should be available at the CJC.

***Response to Emerging Element 6, “Local organizations, justice-involved individuals, and other local residents need to play a strong role in implementation planning and evolution”:***

Participants generally agreed that:

- A range of community members must be involved in every step of implementation planning, creation, and evolution of a CJC in the Moss Park area.

- A CJC should have a community-based governance structure. A steering committee of service provider representatives and diverse community members, including people with lived experience of vulnerability, should guide the design of a CJC in the Moss Park area. The steering committee must have meaningful impact on the design of a CJC, and not be a token gesture of community involvement. Once the CJC is established, community members and service providers should continue to play a governing role that guides the operation and evolution of the CJC.
- The broader Moss Park community must be educated on what a CJC is, who could use it, and what value it serves. The community will not feel ownership or see the benefit of a CJC without insight into what exactly a CJC is and does.

In addition:

- Some participants suggested that community members should also hold staff and volunteer positions in a CJC in Moss Park. This will help build social connections between different segments of the local population.

***Have we missed any essential elements that, if overlooked, will undercut the value of any initial CJC in the Moss Park area?***

- A CJC in the Moss Park area should be truly restorative in its approach to justice. This need should have greater emphasis in the emerging model. The process by which resolution is achieved should seek, whenever appropriate, to meaningfully include the close community of the person who is accused, as well as the victim and their community. The process should seek to repair relationships and build a basis for more harmonious interactions in the future. In order to do this, the CJC needs to provide supports for all individuals involved, including victims.
- More supportive housing in Toronto is essential. Waitlists are extremely long, and CJC clients will struggle to succeed without it. Creative solutions are needed, including, for example, expanded rent supplements and mobile support teams. Prioritizing access for justice-involved individuals is not good enough, since that takes a bed away from someone else who needs it. Greater emphasis on this issue is needed.
- New funding for other service providers is also integral to the success of a CJC in the Moss Park area. Many social service providers are unable to extend themselves further to service a new CJC without new funding, and must be funded appropriately if they are to staff the CJC or receive referrals from the CJC. A new facility and new pathways for people accused of

crimes in 51 Division would likely provide only limited added benefit without new funding for service providers.

- Some participants were concerned about the resources needed to create a CJC in the Moss Park area, and wondered if resources should instead be directed towards increasing existing services in the Moss Park area, or focused on other opportunities (like a large scale pre-charge diversion program) rather than building a new facility focused more pathways for people accused of crimes in 51 Division. These participants argues that directing funds upstream into preventative services and supports could create greater public value.
- The support, involvement, and funding from other government ministries as well as the judiciary is necessary for the CJC to succeed.
- A CJC in the Moss Park area should be regularly and closely evaluated to learn if the goals of the CJC are being met and to identify areas where improvement is needed. A research team should be considered. Evaluation should involve both qualitative feedback from clients, as well as analysis of outcomes. The CJC must have sufficient flexibility to incorporate suggested changes from clients and partners, and to respond to evaluation results.