

The Neighbourhood Outdoor-Rink Clubhouse Project

Toronto has 54 outdoor rinks, almost all of them with small, plain but solid, under-used buildings: potential no-fee wintertime social spaces for their varying neighbourhoods. For a few thousand dollars of city “minor capital” funds, almost any of the rink buildings could be turned into a place where neighbours can run into each other, sit and talk and be warm at a long table before or after skating or while they keep an eye on their kids (through a new window), maybe have a coffee or a bowl of soup from a small kitchenette, rent some skates from a moveable shelf unit – much like what used to happen at three Ward 9 rinks from 2009 on.



*The old Dufferin Grove rink clubhouse in the early 2000s: a place for neighbours to gather.
Photo by City Rinks Toronto*

Even with a good plan, only engaged city rink staff can make this work. This project needs a partnership of a new kind – including active mentoring of individual local rink staff by experienced front-line parks and rec staff, over the whole season. This project would have to be supported but not led by management staff, with a focus on four outdoor rinks to begin.

The Proposed Pilot Rinks

We have proposed low-cost modifications for the following four rinks:

1. Campbell Rink
2. Christie Pits/Sid Smith
3. Harry Gairey/Alexandra Park
4. Withrow Rink

These proposals are sketched out on the following pages with a floor plan diagram for each rink, followed by an illustration for each rink that shows how visitors might use the space. Important: in order for these minor renovations to be successful, the rinks need a new approach to staffing.

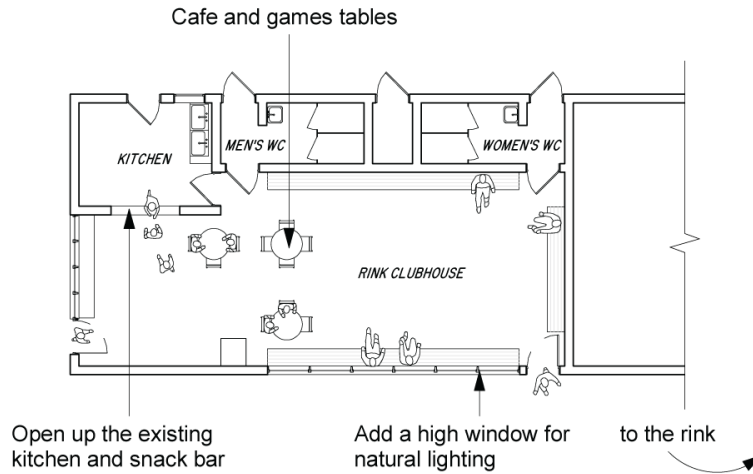
What we need:

- Four city councillors who may want to restore or begin a rink clubhouse in their ward: Councillor Bravo (Campbell Rink); Councillor Saxe (Christie/Sid Smith rink); Councillor Malik (Harry Gairey rink); and Councillor Fletcher (Withrow Rink)
- Staff from Recreation and also from Parks who want to help these rinks get better
- City staff from one or two other sections who want to be involved in building on the resources that are already there, e.g. the “Visitor Economy” office
- Local rink users who want a clubhouse so they can get warm and get to know their neighbours
- Lonely people who want to find friends – “*where have all the people gone?*”
- New arrivals in the city who want to learn how to enjoy winter

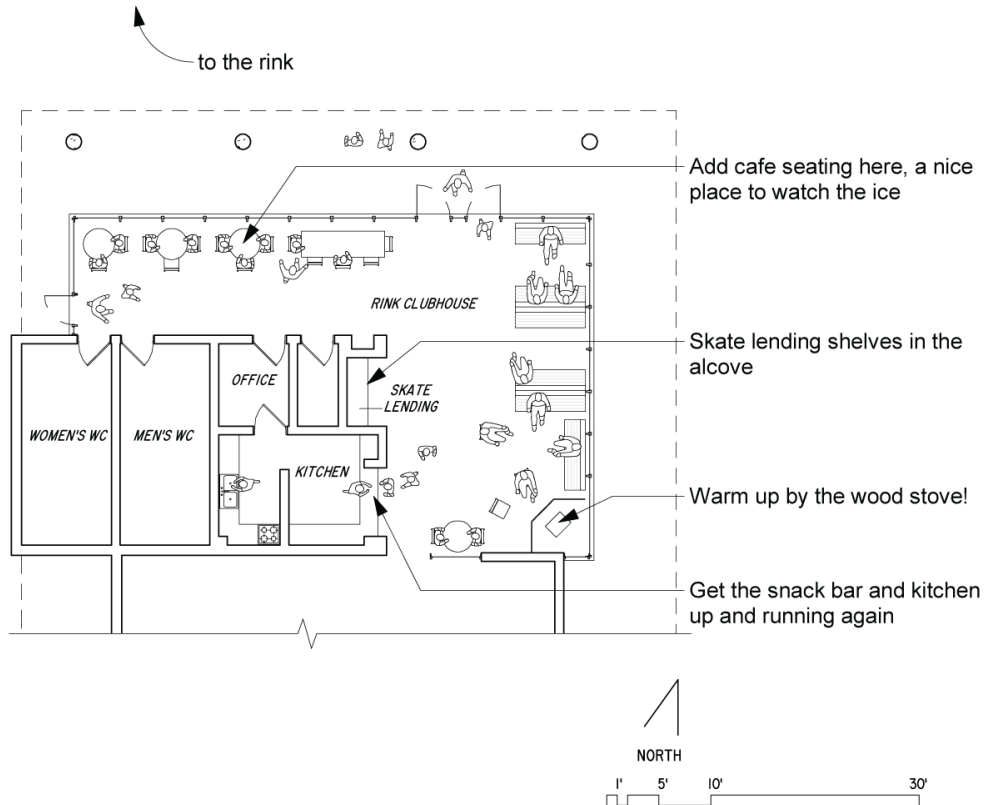
Are you in?

Four Pilot Rinks: Proposed Clubhouse Layouts

CAMPBELL

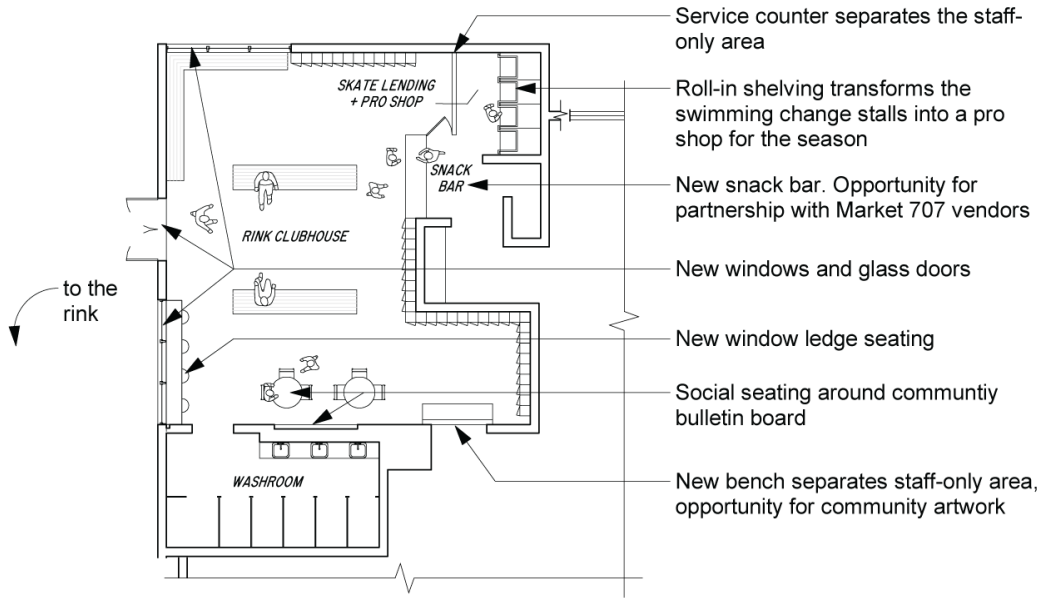


CHRISTIE PITS / SID SMITH

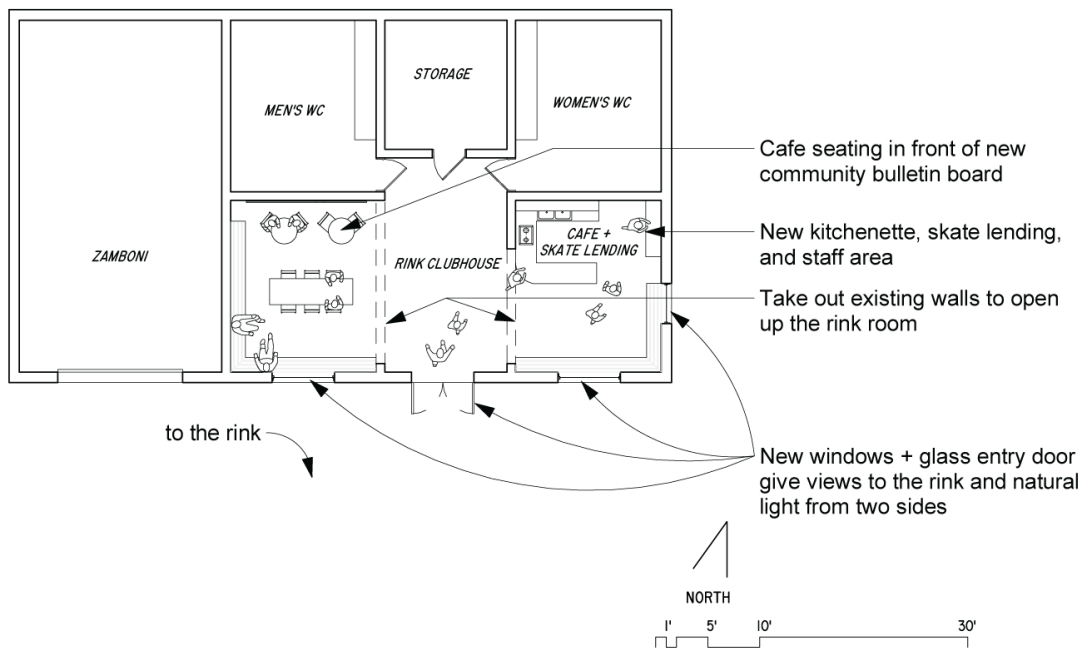


Four Pilot Rinks: Proposed Clubhouse Layouts

HARRY GAIREY / ALEXANDRA PARK



WITHROW



Four Pilot Rinks: Imagining the Clubhouses

Campbell Park



Christie Pits



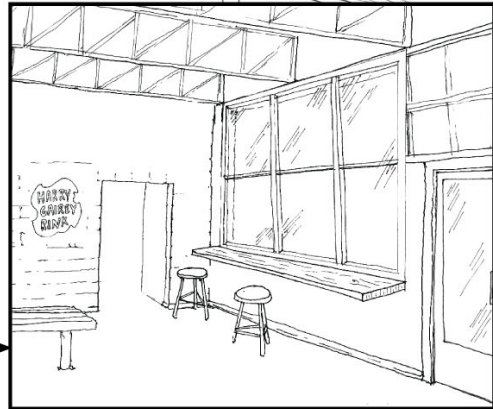
Four Pilot Rinks: Imagining the Clubhouses

Harry Gairey/Alexandra Park



Install seasonal snack bar + pro shop + staff area

Add cafe seating + better views with new windows and glass doors



Withrow Park



Take out the walls dividing the three changerooms to make one big community space. Add a kitchenette.