

# TP4DP (Toilets Please for Dundonald Park) Project:

## Community Organizer Contract Report

Kristina Ropke  
September 2015



*A toilet in England designed by HealthMatic*

### **Project Partners:**

GottaGo! Campaign  
Dundonald Park Working Group  
Somerset West Community Health Centre  
Community Foundation of Ottawa

**TP4DP (Toilets Please for Dundonald Park) Project:  
Community Organizer Contract Report**

**by**

**Kristina Ropke**

*Toilets Please for Dundonald Park (TP4DP) is a community effort to get a public toilet for this downtown thriving park. The community consultation was funded by the Community Foundation of Ottawa. It began in March 2015. TP4DP is on-going although the paid community organizer contract carried out by Kristina Ropke has now ended. This is her report.*

**Project Partners:**

GottaGo!  
Dundonald Park Working Group  
Somerset West Community Health Centre  
Community Foundation of Ottawa

**Project Goals:**

Consult with neighbourhood residents, community groups, and service providers to:

1. Raise awareness of the need for safe, clean and accessible toilets for Dundonald Park and how toilet facilities will benefit the Centretown community.
2. Acknowledge and address safety concerns of neighbourhood residents and community stake holders.

Resolve design, funding and location issues for the proposed toilet facilities

**Research and data collection:**

Researched and prepared a discussion paper outlining the importance of vibrant public green spaces which included:

- Gathering data on the Centretown community and community residents.
- How parks promote our physical and mental health and also contribute to a more sustainable, equitable and inclusive community.

- Identifying which community members have specific toilet needs, such as seniors, children, those with disabilities, those who suffer from intermittent or chronic medical conditions, and homeless community members.

This discussion paper was distributed to community residents, program providers and community health centres. It was also shared with members of the Dundonald Park Working Group, Friends of Dundonald Park and also on the Dundonald Park Facebook page. Discussion paper is attached. (Appendix 1.)

### **Community Survey:**

Designed a survey to gather information about who uses Dundonald Park, how often and for what purposes. Information gathered on how long, on average, community members spent in the park, who they are in terms of gender and age, the types of activities they enjoy at the park, and any concerns they have with respect to, for example, personal safety. The survey also measured which community members were in favour/not in favour/undecided on adding safe, clean and accessible toilet facilities to Dundonald Park. All completed surveys are stored with Gotta Go! (Survey- Appendix 2.)

Several key points stand out from this exercise:

- All together there were a total of **282** community members surveyed.
- Centretown community residents took a great interest in the TP4DP project.
- An overwhelming number of community members (**81%**) surveyed are in favour of a safe, clean and accessible toilet facility for Dundonald Park.
- The Survey analysis that follows is broken down into several specific groups.
- Survey was available in English, French, Arabic, Chinese, and Somali.

### **Community Consultation and Meetings:**

- Co-facilitated two general community meetings for the TP4DP project. Invitations to attend the Community meetings were posted on the Dundonald Park Facebook page and sent out through the Dundonald Park Working Group and to members of the Friends of Dundonald Park. Flyers were also posted in the neighbourhood and emails sent to all neighbourhood residents that I spoke to in my initial door-to-door consultations.
- Chinese interpreter attended second meeting to help with translation for the Chinese seniors who attended.
- Discussed the community benefits of having safe, clean and accessible toilets added to Dundonald Park.
- Addressed community concerns on the safety of having public toilet facilities added to Dundonald Park.
- Discussed design ideas including possible interior/exterior and location.

### **Community Concerns for the TP4DP project:**

- Will the toilets be properly maintained by the City of Ottawa -- who will do it and how often?
- Who will decide the hours of operation -- the City of Ottawa or Community residents?
- Possibility of vandalism.
- Possibility of homeless community residents sleeping in the toilets.
- Possibility of drug use in the toilets.
- Possibility of the toilets being used by community members to have sex.
- Will there be needle disposal drop boxes available in the toilet facilities?
- Design of the toilet facilities -- will the toilet facilities be designed to blend in well with the heritage buildings surrounding Dundonald Park?
- Will the toilet facilities be designed to be fully accessible for community members who use wheel chairs?
- City budget for the proposed toilet facilities -- what will the cost be?

### **Design/Location of Proposed Toilet Facilities:**

- Community consensus on both the design of the facilities and also the location of the facilities.
- Toilet to be located next to the bus shelter on the north east corner of Lyon and Somerset. 1. High traffic area. 2. Well lit. 3. Furthest away from the majority of neighbourhood residences. 4. Pedestrian cross walk.
- The toilet facility model that was created by Industrial Design students from Carleton University was favoured by the majority of community members. A small building with a fully accessible toilet facility. The exterior to be done in red brick with wood trim that will blend well with the neighbouring residences.
- The interior of the toilet facilities to be finished in stainless steel and ceramic tile. The design will also include a needle drop box. The materials favoured for the interior of the public toilet facility are easy to keep clean and also difficult to vandalize.

### **Targeted Outreach:**

- Door-to-door consultations were held with neighbouring households to the park.
- Spent many hours at Dundonald Park at different times of the day to engage park users in discussion about the TP4DP Project.
- Held information booths at 5 Ottawa Community Housing Buildings (415 Maclaren, 453 Cooper, 395 Somerset West, 380 Somerset West, 450 Laurier)
- Discussed the importance of Dundonald Park as a public green space. Many residents refer to this park as Somerset Park.

- Each session was joint facilitated by an OCH community developer and ran between 1 1/2 hours to 2 hours.
- 2 hour meeting with Chinese senior residents of 395 Somerset West to discuss the project in greater detail. 17 Seniors attended as well as an Aging-in-Place worker and a translator.
- Meetings with Councillor Catherine McKenney's office, who fully supports the TP4DP initiative.

## **Survey Analysis:**

### **General Park Users:**

155 surveys were gathered from the general public by spending time in the park and engaging park users to discuss the TP4DP project and to fill out the survey. 110 women, 44 men and one who identified as 'other' completed the survey.

### **Some comments from Community residents:**

"I bring my children to the play ground almost every day in the summer. We **always** need to cut the fun short as one of my kids needs to use the toilet."

"This is such a beautiful park to sit and read a book. I would spend more time here if there were toilets."

"I have three friends who live very close to this park but are unable to really relax and enjoy this green space as they are always worried about needing to get to a toilet, fast!"

- 50% of the survey respondents were between 21-40 years old, 27% were between 41-60 years of age, 19% identified as 61 and older and 4% were younger than 20 years of age.
- 55% of those surveyed have children under the age of 12 in their care and 44% did not.
- 27% of those surveyed spend time in Dundonald Park daily, 30% weekly, and 20% rarely spent time in Dundonald Park.
- 77% of the survey respondents live within a 20 minute walk of Dundonald Park.
- 48% of the respondents like to take part in community events, 48% bring children to the playground, 58% of those surveyed like to walk through the park, and 37% like to relax in the park either alone or with friends.
- 49% of survey respondents feel Dundonald Park is very safe, 48% feel the park is somewhat safe and 3% of those surveyed feel the park is not at all safe.
- 61% of the community members surveyed have left the park earlier than they planned because there are no toilet facilities available.

- 67% of those surveyed would spend more time in Dundonald Park if there were toilet facilities available.
- 41% of the survey respondents have family members or know community members that are unable to enjoy community events at the park because they have health needs that require access to toilet facilities.
- 74% of those surveyed agree that Dundonald Park should have safe, clean and accessible toilet facilities; 12% are not in favour; 14% are undecided.

### **Highlights of surveys from the outreach conducted at Ottawa Community Housing Buildings:**

64 surveys were completed by OCH residents at the information booths held at 5 OCH buildings within a 20-minute walk of Dundonald Park. The general results of these surveys are as follows:

#### **Some comments from OCH residents:**

“I am on ODSP and have no extra money for entertainment. I want to go to the park and enjoy myself more often. I don’t go there as much as I want to because there are no toilets.”

“We don’t have air conditioning and our apartment is really hot in the summer. I want go to the park and have a picnic with my family, but there are no toilets.”

“ I want my kids to spend more time playing outside. Dundonald Park is safe and has a nice playground. Why doesn’t the park have a toilet?”

- Age range: 47% of respondents were 41-60 years of age, 27% were between the ages of 21-40.
- 38 females, 25 males and 1 ‘other’ filled out surveys.
- 20% of respondents have children under the age of 12 in their care while 80% of the survey respondents do not.
- Average time spent in the park was less than one hour (35%) while 41% just walk through the park. Another 13 respondents (20%) spend between and 1 and 2 hours per week on average at the park.
- 65% of those who responded only walked through the park, 34% attended community events or took part in programs, 17% of respondents brought children to playground and 51% of those surveyed enjoyed relaxing in the park either alone or with friends.
- 50% feel the park is very safe, 34% feel the park is somewhat safe and 16% of those surveyed feel the park is not at all safe.
- 67% left the park earlier than they had planned because there are no toilet facilities available.
- 74% of the survey respondents would spend more time at the park if there were toilet facilities available.

- 45% of the survey respondents knew of family members or community members who are not able to enjoy Dundonald Park because they have special needs for toilet facilities.
- 86% of those surveyed believe that Dundonald Park should have a safe, clean and accessible toilet.

### **Survey Results from Chinese Seniors living at 395 Somerset West:**

#### **Some comments from the Chinese Seniors:**

“I want to spend more time at Dundonald Park socializing with my friends. I live alone and feel lonely in my apartment. Being at Dundonald Park makes me feel like I belong to a community.”

“I want to be able to spend more time outdoors in a green space. I don’t drive anymore, and I don’t have any family members living in Ottawa. I am 80 years old and I love to spend time at the park to meet with other seniors and also enjoy the children.”

“We live in this community. We pay taxes. We want, and need, to have access to toilet facilities in Dundonald Park. Having toilets in the park will benefit everyone in our community.”

29 seniors filled out surveys- 19 women and 10 men. The general findings are as follows:

- 76% of those surveyed are more than 61 years of age.
- 31% visited Dundonald Park daily, 29% visited the park weekly.
- Amount of time spent at the park: 20% just walk through, 41% spent less than 1 hour, while 34% of those surveyed spent on average from 1 to 2 hours per day several times a week.
- 69% responded that they like to exercise at Dundonald Park, 41% like to take part in community events and also to relax either alone or with friends.
- 45% of those surveyed feel very safe at Dundonald Park, 41% feel somewhat safe and 14% of the seniors do not feel safe.
- 83% of those surveyed have left the park earlier than planned because they need to access toilet facilities.
- 79% of those surveyed would spend more time at Dundonald Park if there were safe, clean and accessible toilet facilities.
- 82% of those surveyed have family members or knew of community members who are unable to enjoy events at Dundonald Park because they have special toilet needs.
- 93% of those surveyed are in favour of a safe, clean and accessible toilet facility being added to Dundonald Park while 7% were undecided.

## **Surveys Gathered on the opening night of Centretown Movies at the screening of 'Selma' on Friday July 24<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Some comments from audience members:**

"All my friends love Dundonald Park, such a perfect little park in the middle of downtown. We always wonder why there are no toilets. We would hang out here more often if there were toilets."

"If Dundonald Park had toilets, more people would be able to enjoy the park. I would definitely come here more often and relax if there were toilets."

"Most of the movies that play in the park are two hours long. All the movies that play on Saturday nights in the summer are family friendly. Funny, there aren't any toilets. That's not family friendly!"

34 surveys completed by audience members before the film. The general findings are:

- Age range: 67% of respondents were 21-40 years of age, 17% were between 41-60 years of age.
- 23 females and 11 males filled out surveys.
- 91% of respondents do not have children in their care under the age of 12.
- Average time spent at the park was less than one hour (62 %) followed by 1-2 plus hours (38%).
- 79% of those surveyed frequented the park in order to take part in community events or programs.
- 53% felt very safe at the park while 47% felt somewhat safe.
- 68% of those polled left the park earlier than they planned because there are no toilet facilities available.
- 91% of those polled responded that they would spend more time at Dundonald Park if there were safe, clean and accessible toilet facilities.
- 38% had family members or knew community members who did not visit Dundonald Park specifically due to the lack of toilet facilities.
- 94% of those surveyed were in favour of safe, clean and accessible toilets being added to Dundonald Park.

### **Overall Comments and Observations:**

- Many people who filled out the survey and with whom I spoke to about the TP4DP Project were unaware that so many community residents (26%) who live within a 20 minute walk of Dundonald Park, live below the LICO (low income cut off).
- Many community residents who are in a low income bracket feel that they are not included in the planning process of their neighbourhood -- that their needs for having access to an outdoor space and to take part in a variety of

community events are not taken into account by city planners and other Centretown community members who are in a more privileged position.

- Although there is overwhelming community support for the TP4DP project, there are a small number of neighbours (approximately 9 households) living close to the park who are completely opposed to the project. Their concerns are noted in the 'community concerns' section.
- A surprising number of community residents with whom I spoke were unaware of how important spending time in green space is for their physical and mental health as well as to contribute to a more sustainable, equitable and inclusive community.
- The community members who spent the most amount of time at Dundonald Park felt that it was a very safe park.
- The most vulnerable members in the community -- seniors and those struggling to make ends meet -- expressed that having a safe, clean and accessible toilet facility will help create a community space where people can meet as equals, i.e. everyone can equally enjoy this public space regardless of their social economic background.
- Chinese seniors would like to spend more time at Dundonald Park taking part in community activities, socializing and exercising but feel restricted to spend shorter amounts of time at the park because they need to have quick and convenient access to toilet facilities.
- The Chinese seniors at 395 Somerset West, the majority who are unable to speak English, feel limited in asking to use the toilet facilities at coffee shops and other business establishments.
- Community members living in Ottawa community housing buildings are often living without air conditioning, so being able to spend more time outdoors at Dundonald Park during the hot summer months is very important to them.
- There are a high number of rooming houses located in West Centretown. Community members living in these rooming houses expressed the need to take part in normal park activities in order to reduce stress and feelings of isolation.

## **Appendix 1. Research Paper**

### **Centretown, Dundonald Park and the Need for a public toilet:**

#### **TP4DP (Toilets please for Dundonald Park)**

Vibrant public spaces encourage physical activity and promote mental health while contributing to a more sustainable and people-friendly community. Dundonald Park is a gem within Centretown and plays a key role in contributing to the physical, mental and social health of all those who live, play and visit our community. However, one crucial thing that everyone can appreciate is missing from Dundonald Park: public toilets.

As outlined later in this report, green spaces and parks that are accessible to everyone play a significant role in promoting our physical and mental health while contributing to a more sustainable, equitable and inclusive community. Yet, often the people who have the most to gain from green spaces and parks are not included in the planning of how these spaces will be designed and managed. Specifically, the needs of children, seniors, people of low-income, people with disabilities and marginalized communities such as the homeless must be considered in the planning for a public space that we can all enjoy and benefit from. Due to the considerable impact on our quality of life, it is imperative that all community members have access to toilet facilities. Having safe, accessible public toilets added to Dundonald Park will encourage more people to participate in park activities, the length of time they will spend there, and the quality of that time.

Rather than discouraging or limiting access to public toilets because of worries about vandalism and misuse, for instance, it is essential to focus on developing accessible, safe and well-designed solutions to address the toileting needs of all people.

#### **Accessible toilets will improve quality of life for all Centretown Residents:**

##### **Age:**

A lack of clean, safe and accessible public toilets greatly interferes with many seniors ability to actively take part in community activities. Many seniors are wary of going out because of concerns about being able to conveniently – and quickly -- access toilet facilities. This can lead to loneliness, social isolation, and depression. Public toilets are essential for seniors, helping them to maintain their independence and lead active lives. Many seniors live close to Dundonald Park and would like to take part in more activities but feel limited by the lack of access to toilet facilities. The number of seniors living alone in Centretown (50.6%) is high — i.e. more than double the Ottawa average of 24% -- so these are real concerns that can be addressed.

**Children:**

As any parent will tell you, young children have very limited bladder and bowel control. When they need to use toilet facilities, they have to be able to do so quickly, or risk having an accident. For children who attend programs or enjoy the playground at Dundonald Park, the addition of a safe and accessible public toilet will increase the amount of time they can enjoy playing outside. As overall obesity rates in Canada climb for all age groups, having increased opportunities for physical activity is very important. With the high percentage of neighbourhood residents inactive in their leisure time, adding a public toilet will encourage more active use of the park and lead to a healthier lifestyle. Also with a higher than average number of children in Centretown living in lower-income households, Dundonald Park may be their only opportunity for outdoor recreation.

**Disability:**

Without having access to adequate public toilets, people with disabilities are prevented from taking part in many everyday community activities that others may take for granted. Many people living with disabilities feel isolated in their homes, thus unable to enjoy a variety of community activities. Fear of having an 'accident' in public not only interferes with a disabled person's independence and lifestyle, but can seriously affect their physical health. It is not uncommon for people to limit their intake of liquids when out in public. This lack of fluids can lead to dehydration, and also increase urinary infections. Toilet facilities in Dundonald Park will help to improve the physical, emotional and mental health of people with disabilities living in Centretown.

**Intermittent or chronic medical conditions:**

As in any community, there are also residents who suffer from invisible disabilities. A number of intermittent or chronic medical conditions require increased use of toilet facilities. Some of these conditions are urinary tract infections, an overactive bladder and chronic digestive illnesses such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) and diverticular disease. Furthermore, people who suffer from depression also benefit from spending time in parks.

**Homeless:**

Those who live in apartments or houses have access to toilet facilities, yet homeless people are often left searching for a public toilet. Providing homeless people access to safe, clean and accessible public toilets not only shows respect for them but also does wonders for restoring their dignity. As many public establishments and community businesses prohibit the homeless from using their toilets, Centretown's homeless population has an acute need for toilet facilities. Providing a public toilet in Dundonald Park will improve the cleanliness and safety for all park users.

**Centretown at a glance:** Centretown is bound by the Ottawa River to the North, the Queensway to the South, Queen Elizabeth Drive to the East, and Bronson Avenue to the West. It is a great community, but:

- Community residents have limited access to green space;
- The amount of park space within the borders of Centretown is well below the average for the rest of Ottawa;
- Centretown between Bank and Bronson has only 3 parks. Moreover, given that Arlington Avenue's park is a small pocket park, there are high expectations on McNabb Park and Dundonald Park to contribute positively to resident's health;
- Below average opportunities for outdoor recreation for residents of all ages;
- Higher than average number of low-income status residents live in Centretown, and also many apartment towers;
- 44.2% of Centretown residents are inactive in their leisure time;\*
- 46% of Centretown adults are overweight or obese.\*  
(\*Source: Ottawa Neighbourhood Study).

**Low Income Cut Off:** LICO is a measure developed by Statistics Canada that establishes an income threshold below which a family will likely need to spend a larger share of its income on necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing than the average family. A high number of Centretown residents struggle to make ends meet.

- Percentage of neighbourhood residents living below the LICO: 26% (Ottawa average: 14.1%);
- Percentage of children living below the LICO: 35% (Ottawa average: 11.1%);
- Percentage of seniors living below the LICO: 10% (Ottawa average: 2.8%);
- Percentage of neighbourhood residents that spend more than 30% of household income on housing: 33% (Ottawa average: 12.9%).

### **| The importance of green spaces and parks:**

"A good public space is like a good party, you stay longer than you intended to." Jan Gehl, World famous urban planner and advocate of public spaces for all.

Research shows that residents of neighbourhoods with shared green spaces have stronger social ties. Studies have shown that if low-income people are not able to access parks they often do not get any exercise. In sum, the benefits of parks and public green space include:

- Promoting people's well-being (physical, mental, and social) which in turn leads to healthier, happier and more sustainable neighbourhoods;
- We need to provide spaces in the community that are open and accessible to everyone regardless of their age, ability, ethnicity or social status;
- Overall obesity rates are on the rise (all age groups) in Canada and have increased dramatically over the past 25 years (statistics Canada);
- A park that offers a variety of activities and toilet facilities encourages more active use and exercise by all community members;

- Research studies have shown that spending time in green spaces and parks reduces stress;
- Spending time in green spaces, either walking or playing, has proven beneficial to children with Attention Deficit Disorder. Doing so improves their concentration and focus;
- Parks break down feelings of social isolation. This is very important for Centretown where a high percentage of seniors live alone (50.6%) -- more than double the Ottawa average of 24%;
- New research indicates that exercise can delay or even prevent Alzheimer's disease (if all Canadians who are currently inactive were to start to exercise on a regular basis more than one in seven cases of Alzheimer's disease could be prevented); Regular exercise also significantly lowers depression in those suffering from Alzheimer's disease, thereby leading to better quality of life;
- Parks reduce the costs on health care.

Vibrant public spaces encourage physical activity and promote mental health while contributing to a more sustainable and people-friendly community. Dundonald Park plays a key role in contributing to the physical, mental and social health of individuals and the Centretown community.

### **Resources:**

8-80 Cities: <http://www.8-80cities.org/images/tools-community-reports-articles/dundonald-park-report.pdf>

Centretown Community Association Trees and Greenspace Committee:  
<http://centretowncitizens.ca>

The Wellesley Institute: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/>

Pamis: <http://pamis.org.uk/>

GottaGo! <http://ottawapublictoilets.ca/2014/04/08/the-gottago-rational/>

Cities Centre: University of Toronto: <http://www.citiescentre.utoronto.ca/>

### **TP4DP Community Organizer:**

Kristina Ropke

Email: [tp4dp2015@gmail.com](mailto:tp4dp2015@gmail.com)

Telephone: 613- 355- 6567

## Appendix 2. Community Survey

### TP4DP (Toilets Please for Dundonald Park) Community Survey

1. How often do you visit Dundonald Park?
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  
2. Is Dundonald Park in your neighbourhood (20 minute walk from your home)?
  - Yes
  - No
  
3. How long on average do you stay at Dundonald Park?
  - Just walk through
  - Less than 1 hour
  - 1-2 hours
  - More than 2 hours
  
4. What is your postal code? \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. How old are you?
  - 20 and under
  - 21-40
  - 41-60
  - 61 and older
  
6. Are you:
  - Female
  - Male
  - Other
  
7. Do you have children in your care under the age of 12?
  - Yes
  - No

8. What do you like to do at Dundonald Park? (Check as many as apply)
- Just walking through
  - Attend / take part in community events or programs
  - Bring children to playground
  - Fitness / Exercise
  - Relax alone or with friends
  - Walk dog
9. Do you feel safe at Dundonald Park?
- Very safe
  - Somewhat Safe
  - Not safe
10. Do you ever leave the park earlier than planned because there are no toilet facilities?
- Yes
  - No
11. Would you spend more time at Dundonald Park if toilet facilities were available?
- Yes
  - No
12. Do you have family members or know community members who are not able to enjoy Dundonald Park because there are no toilet facilities?
- Yes
  - No
13. Should Dundonald Park have a safe, clean and accessible public toilet?
- Yes
  - No
  - Undecided

Thank you for taking the time to fill out our survey.

Kristina Ropke- Community Organizer for the TP4DP (Toilets Please for Dundonald Park) Project.

Email: [tp4dp2015@gmail.com](mailto:tp4dp2015@gmail.com)

## Appendix 3. Support Letters for the TP4DP Project.



July 16, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

55 Eccles Street  
Ottawa, Ont. K1R 6S3

Tel:  
General 613-238-8210  
Health 613-238-1220

Fax:  
General 613-238-7595  
Health 613-235-2982

[www.swchc.on.ca](http://www.swchc.on.ca)

Somerset West Community Health Centre fully supports the aim of the *Gotta Go* campaign to create a network of safe, free, clean and environmentally responsible public toilets and water fountains that are accessible to everyone in the community. Lack of convenient access to a no cost, safe toilet in Dundonald Park limits its ability to be used by people with small children, the elderly and those suffering from chronic illnesses.

Vibrant public spaces encourage physical activity and promote mental health while contributing to a more sustainable and people-friendly community. Dundonald Park plays a key role in contributing to the physical, mental and social health of individuals and the Centretown community.

Sincerely,

Jack McCarthy  
Executive Director





Centretown Community  
Health Centre  
Centre de santé  
communautaire du Centre-ville

420 rue Cooper Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2N6  
T: (613) 233-4443 F: (613) 233-3987 info@centretownchc.org  
Charitable Registration/Organisme de charité enregistré: # 10690 3073 RR0001

June 22, 2015

Kristina Ropke, Community Organizer  
TP4DPproject

Dear Ms. Ropke;

Centretown Community Health Centre (CCHC) would be pleased to act as a supporter for the *Toilets Please for Dundonald Park* (TP4DP) community project. CCHC serves residents of Centretown, the Glebe and Old Ottawa South through its health and social services. Our mandate is to improve the health and well-being of the residents and the community by addressing the social determinants of health.

Vibrant public spaces, such as Dundonald Park encourage physical activity and promote mental health while contributing to a more sustainable and people-friendly community. Dundonald Park is a gem within Centretown and plays a key role in contributing to the physical, mental and social health of all those who live, play and visit our community. However, one crucial thing that everyone can appreciate is missing from Dundonald Park are public toilets.

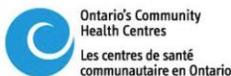
Due to the considerable impact on our quality of life, it is imperative that all community members have access to toilet facilities. Having safe, accessible public toilets added to Dundonald Park will encourage more people to participate in park activities, the length of time they will spend there, and the quality of that time.

The status quo of discouraging or limiting access to public toilets is not OK. It is essential to focus on developing accessible, safe, environmentally responsible and well-designed solutions to address the toileting needs of people of all abilities – young and old. Other capital cities are doing it and so can Ottawa.

Accessible toilets will improve the quality of life for all Centretown residents.

Sincerely,

Simone Thibault  
Executive Director



Every One Matters.  
Chaque personne compte.

August 26, 2015

To whom it may concern:

This is a letter of support for the TP4DP (toilets please for Dundonald Park) project. I am the Aging in Place Community Support Outreach Coordinator who serves approximately 300 seniors at 395 Somerset West senior building. I work in partnership with Ottawa Public Health and CCAC to connect seniors with the community resources they need and also to provide health promotion programs.

The majority of the seniors living at 395 Somerset try to remain active and live a healthy life. As tenants living in a high-rise apartment complex, the seniors especially welcome the opportunity to spend time outdoors. With Dundonald Park only a short walk from their home, it provides an easily accessible green space for many seniors. Attending fitness classes, practicing Tai Chi, and taking part in community events are some of the activities the seniors enjoy.

Many seniors are currently limited to spending short periods of time at Dundonald Park due to the lack of accessible toilet facility. They are concerned that they may have an accident. Fear of having an accident interferes with their ability to fully lead active lives and also maintain their independence. Furthermore, more than half of these seniors are not able to communicate in English- to ask to use toilet facilities at a neighboring business.

The addition of a safe, clean and accessible toilet facility added to Dundonald Park will encourage more seniors to participate in park activities, spend longer time in the park, and improve the quality of their active life. Being able to spend more time at the park will not only benefit their physical health but also increase their sense of independence and the ability to connect with other community residents socially.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ze Ling Jiang  
Community Support Outreach Coordinator  
Ottawa West Community Support  
395 Somerset Street K2P 2G6  
613-298-3284

August 19, 2015

To whom it may concern,

Please consider this a letter of support for the Dundonald Park Public Washroom Initiative from the tenant circle at 415 Maclaren, an Ottawa Community Housing building in the Centretown community.

As tenant circle leaders, we believe that many of our neighbours would benefit from safe and accessible washrooms in the Dundonald Park. We believe this would be an asset for the park and the community surrounding this area.

During the summer months, we have many neighbours use the park on a regular basis. This is a place where a lot of residences of Centretown go to have their lunch or socialize with friends. Unfortunately, without the washrooms, some of them with medical conditions aren't able to stay for a long period of time. We believe having a public washroom would greatly increase participation and encourage those with medical issues, small children, and seniors to enjoy Dundonald Park and the various activities put on by the broader community. This will also help tenants of 415 Maclaren connect with other members of the community and participate in free or low-cost activities.

The tenant circle at 415 Maclaren is in full support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

George Francoeur



Yvonne Villeneuve



**Centretown Community  
Health Centre**  
**Centre de santé  
communautaire du Centre-ville**

420 rue Cooper Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2N6  
T: (613) 233-4443 F: (613) 233-3987 info@centretownchc.org  
Charitable Registration/Organisme de charité enregistré: # 10690 3073 RR0001

June 24, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of support for the Dundonald Park washroom initiative. I am a Health Promoter at Centretown Community Health Centre, and as well as working with seniors, I am now approaching my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday and will soon officially be one!

Issues of incontinence and "leaking" increase as we age. In particular, I hear older women talking about this. It often starts in a joking way but the conversation becomes serious as people mention that access to public washrooms becomes a factor in the choices they make to participate in activities outdoors. I see many seniors who are 80+ and who live alone. It is easy for them to become isolated as health issues increase and it becomes more difficult to get out. Going to a local park such as Dundonald to be in nature and/or to engage in activities with others is so important for their wellbeing. Worrying about not being able to access a washroom quickly is one more barrier that can make the difference between staying at home and going out. And of course, a public washroom not only benefits seniors but many other population groups.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Donna Munro  
Health Promoter  
Centretown Community Health Centre  
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Every One Matters.  
Chaque personne compte.



日健高齡康樂中心  
YET KEEN SENIORS DAY CENTRE  
*A Program of*  
Somerset West Community Health Centre



September 8, 2015

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter of support for the Toilets Please For Dundonald Park (TP4DP) project. I am the Program Coordinator of Yet Keen Seniors' Day Centre which is run by Somerset West Community Health Centre.

At Yet Keen, we strive to improve our seniors' quality of life by providing them a safe and welcoming environment that fosters physical and social wellbeing. A significant number (44%+) of our seniors are unable to communicate in English. This hinders their ability to remain independent and active in society. Staff of Yet Keen often encourage our seniors to take part in the many outdoor activities and community events held at Dundonald Park. However, the lack of toilet facilities at the park has always been a concern. For this reason many seniors are uncomfortable participating in the events and activities. Having safe, clean and accessible toilet facilities at Dundonald Park will definitely benefit everyone including our large group of seniors.

Yet Keen hosts approximately 60 seniors daily from Monday to Friday (9:30 am - 3:30 pm) in a variety of programs. We are also considered the second-home to over 250 seniors. The age range of our members is 60-90 plus years, with the average age at 73. They enjoy taking part in our health improvement programs as well as social and leisure activities. Since a significant group (39%) of Yet Keen seniors live in solitude with no family members close by, it is vital to provide them with opportunities to socialize with others at community events and programs.

It is a widely recognized fact that loneliness and social isolation are linked to depression and an overall unhealthy quality of life. Yet Keen is motivated in supporting the seniors to be healthy and active members of society. The outdoor activities, programs, and events held at Dundonald Park are a valued part of our initiative. Providing safe, clean and accessible toilet facilities in Dundonald Park will have a very positive impact on the health and social wellbeing of the senior members in our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Anna Yip

Program Coordinator, Yet Keen Seniors' Day Centre, SWCHC

(613)238-8210 ext 2265



**Centretown Community  
Health Centre**

**Centre de santé  
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June 12 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of support for the Dundonald Park Public Washroom initiative. I am a frontline worker at Centretown Community Health Centre, serving people living with homelessness and/or extreme poverty.

Many businesses in the Centretown have washrooms that are available for customers only, making low-income clients who cannot afford to purchase something unable to use a washroom. People without homes also cannot afford to use washrooms in businesses, and are further constrained in that they do not have their own toilet to use. People often have no choice but to resort to public urination, which is unhygienic for the community. Also, it can result in taxpayer's dollars being wasted on police/bylaw issuing public urination fines (a counter-intuitive economic approach for the City, since the offender is too poor to pay the fine).

Women who are menstruating depend on the use of a bathroom to prevent medical ailments, such as bladder infections or toxic shock syndrome. Being able to have access to washing ones hands, especially during flu-season, is essential for community health. People living in poverty and/or homelessness have poorer physical health than the average population, resulting in a greater need to use the washroom due to bowel related conditions like IBS, or medications that increase urination.

People living in poverty and/or homelessness are already excluded by society and pushed to the margins – the example of not being allowed to use the washroom unless you pay for something is a minor illustration of this constant reminder that they are considered to be 'less than'. We can respect people equally by providing a washroom that is accessible to all. Societal inclusion is an important social determinant of health - the more people feel like a valued part of their society, the healthier they are. Providing public washrooms benefits many populations as it is universally accessible and assists people living in poverty and/or homelessness who otherwise cannot use bathrooms when out in the community.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Snow, BSW, MSW  
Community Engagement Worker  
Centretown Community Health Centre  
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lsnow@centretownchc.org



Ontario's Community  
Health Centres  
Les centres de santé  
communautaire en Ontario

Every One Matters.  
Chaque personne compte.

July 10, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of support for the Dundonald Park Public Washroom Initiative.

Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC) serves a large multicultural area in Ottawa's centre west, including Dalhousie, Hintonburg, Mechanicsville, and West Wellington, with a population of approximately 35,692 persons. Nearly 47% of the Somerset West community's population is currently living below the Low Income Measurement threshold, compared to the rest of the City of Ottawa at 19%.

As a Community Developer at SWCHC, I have come to appreciate the importance of vibrant and inclusive public spaces. Since the West Centretown area has few park spaces, Dundonald Park is a crucial resource to the community. Although Dundonald Park plays an important role in contributing to a healthy community, public toilets is a missing element in making it a space that would support the inclusion of all community members.

Because there are limited public toilets in the area, it is challenging for particular populations to make use of the park. For example, many seniors may be uneasy in taking part in activities at the park due to concerns with being able to easily access toilet facilities. Parents with young children also have to plan their outdoor activities based on where toilet facilities are available. Since there are few parks in the Centretown area and many families do not have their own yard, this means that young children have more limited opportunities for outdoor play. People with disabilities and chronic medical conditions that require more regular use of toilet facilities may also feel that a lack of public toilets serve as a barrier to accessing parks. Homeless people are also left searching for public toilet facilities. Offering safe, clean and accessible toilets supports all people in our community, demonstrating that all people deserve dignity and respect.

In my community work, it has become clear that shared green spaces are critical to a strong sense of community. It provides a free gathering place for the diversity of the community where neighbours can connect with one another, participate in community events and activities, and share in healthy and active living.

Sincerely,

Emilie Hayes  
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