

To inform the design planning for a new purpose built therapy pool on the Pearson Dogwood site, VCH Community Engagement supported 3 information discussion sessions with 35 pool users. This compilation of their feedback provides their perspectives and ideas for what they feel are important elements to ensure the new pool meets the needs of users. This input will be provided to the project design team to inform decisions that will ensure that the pool will be, as much as is possible within the framework of space and budget allocated, an environment that is warm and welcoming for pool users. Not all of this feedback may be possible to implement, but we are looking for every opportunity to ensure that the new Pearson Dogwood Therapy pool meets the needs of our pool users.

What we heard ...

Access to the pool

- Provide enough space at the entrance to the building and in the elevators for motorized chairs
- Ensure the distance to walk from entry to pool is not too far and a barrier to accessing
- Provide parking nearest to the elevator for pool users
- Ensure the access hours to the pool via the Community Health Centre are the same as or longer than the pool hours
- Provide more and larger parking spaces for those in wheelchairs
- Provide larger parking spaces for side loading vans
- Provide free parking for pool users
- Provide adequate room for HandyDart drop off; several buses at a time

Universal Change Room

- Need to ensure there are options for privacy in the change room for different genders
- Provide adequate space for individual with large motorized chairs to move in the change room showers and toilets
- Provide enough room for mothers with children to change as families and ability to have different genders of a family all together
- Ensure there are adequate and thoughtfully planned locations of benches in the change room. Need adjustable benches that flip up/down as needed.
- Ensure showers are fully accessible and functional for people with all levels of mobility issues
- Consider adding a toilet stall in showers or right next to for access to toilet before dressing into or after removing bathing suit. Privacy issue as some women take off their bathing suits in the shower and walk to the washroom in a towel only or naked
- Add urinals
- Have movable walls and sections so as to have options for privacy
- Consider how to monitor shower time and put limits on the time via automated on and off. If automatic not so sensitive that if you walk by they come on. Some shower control that is more specific and directed.

Pool

- The pool should be larger overall and more funding should be found
- Plan for the deepest end of the pool to be deeper . For people that are taller the depth is not sufficient when standing in the deep end of the pool to exercise as their shoulders are above the water level and this results in their upper body being cold.
- The distance from the pool to the lockers and vice versa is too far
- Consider a pool floor that is adjustable in an area of the pool to accommodate various heights of users

Pool equipment and fixtures

- Plinths are too high they should be adjustable and easy to move to desired height
- Consider lockers in the pool area that are reachable and easy to access if you have a cane or walker in your hands
- Research moveable lockers or portable units
- Size of lockers needs to accommodate large amount of items or larger size of bags
- Have adequate grab bars and steps in the pool to ensure access and safety
- Locate pool transfer chairs in convenient locations
- Consider how to create good flow of people into the change rooms and pools and then out again.

Areas surrounding the pool

- Ensure there are adequate grab bars around the pool
- Consider the ceiling height and the potential for noise absorption. Important to hear people while in the pool
- Design a way to track progress via a mark on ceiling for swimmers (back swimming)
- The deck space is inadequate- 4 ft is not enough
- Consider area for social events
- Security of personal items are a concern can there be lockers in pool area so I can see my locker
- Need space and seating for guests and helpers
- Design to include window glass that users can see out of but people outside cannot see in

Staffing and Programming

- Staffing and programming should not change and if anything increase to meet demand

Communication methods

- Details on info board
- Annotated notes and details on plans and drawings
- More in person consultations and discussions in future
- Distribute plans that will be discussed ahead of time via email; so we can note questions and concerns
- Put more details on the plans
- Update drawings and outline the changes that have been made
- Provide handouts that people can take away and study