



# **The Future of Lamport Stadium**

**Results of  
Community Round Table Dialogue**

**Held October 5, 2006  
At Allan A. Lamport Stadium**

## 1.0 COMMUNITY INCLUSIVENESS



Lamport Stadium, located at 1151 King Street West near Dufferin Street, is a large open-air facility with a seating capacity of 9,600. It was built in the late 1970's and has been used mainly for soccer, field hockey, Caribana festivities, and some local events. Due to structural neglect and weathering, the aging venue has fallen into disrepair and its' fate is currently being determined by local City of Toronto elected officials and representatives.

During a community consultation meeting headed by the current City Councilor for Ward 14, Sylvia Watson, the residents were advised that the City of Toronto plans to rebuild the structure into a sports and recreation complex. However, there has been little opportunity for public discussion or a consensus to be formed on this issue from the people who live around the stadium, and would thereby be most affected by the choices made for Lamport's future. Some community members have expressed that they would prefer to see the lot turned into a public green space, while others would like to see mixed-use housing on the site; but many who attended the community consultation meeting on September 20, 2006 feel that their voices have not been adequately heard.

In the document distributed by the City of Toronto on September 20, 2006, the Public Consultation requirements appear to have been met. The following **Key Activities Timeline** is taken from this document.

<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Public Consultation	September 2006
Market Sounding	September 2006
Request for Qualifications or Request for Expressions of Interest	Issued: October 2006 Closed: November 2006
Shortlist bidders (in the case of RFQ)	November 2006
Request for Proposals	Issued: January 2007 Closed: March 2007
Select proponent Obtain council approval	April 2007

In order to create an opportunity for dialogue on the future use of this site, the Parkdale Liberty Economic Development Corporation hosted a **Roundtable Community Forum** on **October 5<sup>th</sup> 2006 at Lamport Stadium**. Two sessions were held on that day: 4:30pm-5:30pm & 6:00pm-7:00pm.

Prior to the roundtable, PLEDC notified area residents and community associations, business improvement areas, volunteers connected with the organization in the past and representatives of local and regional athletic organizations and franchises. In total, twenty-eight concerned community

members attended the Roundtable, facilitated by three PLEDC staff. Ranging from single persons to parents, sports users to local business owners, all those who attended felt genuine concern for the future of Lamport Stadium, and wanted their concerns addressed This report is an attempt to make their voices heard.

### 1.1 Transparent Process

Following a mandate of community inclusiveness and with the goal of building consensus sounding community concerns, the Parkdale Liberty Economic Development Corporation distributed the following guidelines to participants of the Lamport Stadium Community Round table:

- Meet with all interested community members and stakeholders in the Lamport Stadium redevelopment, including but not limited to:
  - Business Improvement Areas
  - Residents and Community Associations
  - Non-affiliated residents of Parkdale and Liberty Villages
  - Sports, recreational, and event users of Lamport Stadium\* However no members of government were invited to participate as representatives of local, regional, or federal bodies.
  
- Allow attendees to interact and generate ideas through:
  - Small break-out groups (no larger than eight per group)
  - Artistic
  - Written
  - Verbal discussions
  
- Direct two questions to attendees:

What would you like to see if the Stadium was maintained as-is?  
1. What would you like to see if the Stadium was removed?

The ideas generated from the Roundtable have been compiled into one document, which describes the preferred outcomes of the stadium redevelopment. In the next steps in the process of Community Inclusiveness, PLEDC will forward this document to the Roundtable Participants and appropriate municipal planning and executive authorities. This document is made public knowledge, and is available online from [www.parkdaleliberty.com](http://www.parkdaleliberty.com)



## 2.0 ROUND TABLE RESULTS

The results of this community meeting came in many forms, including visual drawings, verbal presentations and written responses. The two main questions - What would you foresee if the building was maintained as is; and conversely if the building were removed - generated a diversity of opinions. The responses were grouped into four categories: sports related usage of the entire property; parking-related issues; the actual stadium building and the facilities therein; and green spaces and their availability to the public.

### 2.1 Sports Usage

“Playground-to-podium athletic opportunities” as described in the City of Toronto: Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2004, was a point of contention amongst attendees who had read the *Our Common Grounds* document. The lack of adequate funding for programs that would facilitate this goal was identified as the chief obstacle to achieving this goal, according to the participants in the round table.

“We have worked hard to break down gender barriers: many more girls now play ice hockey, but we haven’t built a new arena in 20 years. There is no prime ice time available in the city. We can’t pull youth into our programs if we don’t offer them facilities they want to use.”

“Our Common Grounds.” Page 48 - 2004 City of Toronto Forestry, Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan.

Available online from:

<http://www.toronto.ca/parks/reactivate/ourcommongrounds/OCG3.pdf>

The future use of the entire property for a variety of sports activities simultaneously punctuated most of the discussions surrounding the kinds of sports, and overall usage of the property.

The community members in attendance presented many options for future recreation and athletics. The list of desired features for utilization of the property included:



- Multipurpose main playing field – with special attention to field hockey, which by most estimates is the frequented sport currently in the stadium;
- Ice surfaces in the winter for recreational hockey and other skating activities, may be used as a regional hockey school similar to those in other parts of the country;
- Playing fields outside of main arena which may be used for soccer and other sports;
- A swimming pool;

- Tennis courts;
- Basketball courts;
- Wading pool for children – can double as winter skating area;
- A large playground with jungle-gym and swings;
- Track - for competitive as well as recreational running;
- High quality ice rinks.

## 2.2 Parking

The main source for operational costs for the property with an estimated \$200,000 in City of Toronto revenues annually; this is an important facet to the funding mix for the stadium. Participants of the community round table had near-consensus discussions in regards to the future of the parking lot, as the majority of responses indicate public parking is a necessity in Liberty Village, and such a necessity will only become scarcer in the future. Any renovations to the current parking allocations will require a reallocation of space for current users of the Lamport Stadium parking lot; choices regarding parking will ultimately affect local businesses and users of the surrounding community.



The prospect of creating underground parking dominated most of the discussions. Tied into the desire for more green spaces in the Liberty Village district, a vast majority of forum participants saw subterranean parking as the most ideal method for freeing up valuable above-ground spaces which could then be used as playgrounds, or playing fields. Much discussion ensued in regards to amount of underground parking that might be provided. The most adventurous of the groups suggested three stories deep, with each underground floor having an area as large at the current parking lot.

## 2.3 Building and Facilities

The attendees of the Lamport Community Round Table brought forth several ideas involving the aspects of the building and facilities, which require special attention. In general, the participants viewed the building as outdated architecturally. The design did not allow for visual and functional inclusion with the community that surrounds it. In addition, respondents voiced concern that the building and facilities do not meet current needs of the community and lack a multi-sport playing surface. What is needed is a facility that could be used for various purposes all year round.

- *Visual Inclusiveness*: a curtained, plexi-glass wall along King Street to replace the weathered wooden fencing that currently exists. This will allow for the playing surface to be seen while passing by during practices, but may be screened to preserve the ticket sales guarantees for competitions and paid entrance events.



- *Year Round Usage*: to address concerns about under-usage of Lamport Stadium, it was suggested that a sports bubble be applied over whatever playing surface and/or grandstands that result from the renovations to the building. Participants voiced concerns about structural integrity of the grandstands, and noted that supporting beams need replacement if an overhead structure is to be built.
- *Playing surface*: amongst the community participants there were several sports users in attendance. The general consensus of those in attendance was the deplorable quality of the playing surface, and need to have a turf installed that can address the needs of the many users of the stadium. Included in the yearly usage of Lamport is an estimated 600 hours for Field Hockey. Other estimates include 160 hours/year for Soccer and 200 hours for Frisbee.

## 2.4 Parks and Green Spaces



A keynote in discussions concerning the final design for the property was the inclusion of park and/or green space that would be available for family and individual use. The attendees visualized the future of Lamport Stadium to be one with:

- *Preservation of the existing tree cover*. Those in attendance, who had read the *Our Common Grounds*, cited the document, and its goal to allow the overall canopy to grow from its current 17% at the time of publishing to the desired 30% -40% of the city. The Lamport Stadium renovations would be an ideal opportunity to implement this goal while working towards larger green spaces.



- *Creation of community gardens.* Current Liberty Village residents and future residents of the new condominiums being built to the east of the Lamport property, and the town houses on the north side of King St., would be able to enjoy and grow a variety of vegetables and flowers, further beautifying the area.
- *Mixed use recreational playing areas.* The example of Stanley Park located at 845 King Street West was introduced as a model for the desired outcome of a new park for the residents of the Liberty District and South Parkdale.

## 2.5 Summary of Results

The following table and diagram summarizes respondents' suggestions for usage of Lamport Stadium and its' immediate surroundings within the lot:

Sports Usages	Parking	Buildings and Facilities	Green Spaces
Multi-purpose main playing field	Underground – up to three stories	Bubble cover for stadium	Preserve trees
Ice surface in the winter; Regional hockey school	Ensure income from the parking facility is used towards stadium overhead	Turf facility to allow for multiple usages	Mixed recreational park – Stanley Park on King West
Playing fields outside of main arena		Use curtained plexi-glass wall - instead of wooden fencing along King St. - to allow the community in	Safety consideration in new children's playground
Soccer field			Community gardens
Swimming pool			
Tennis courts			
Wading pool area for children			
Basketball court			
Track			



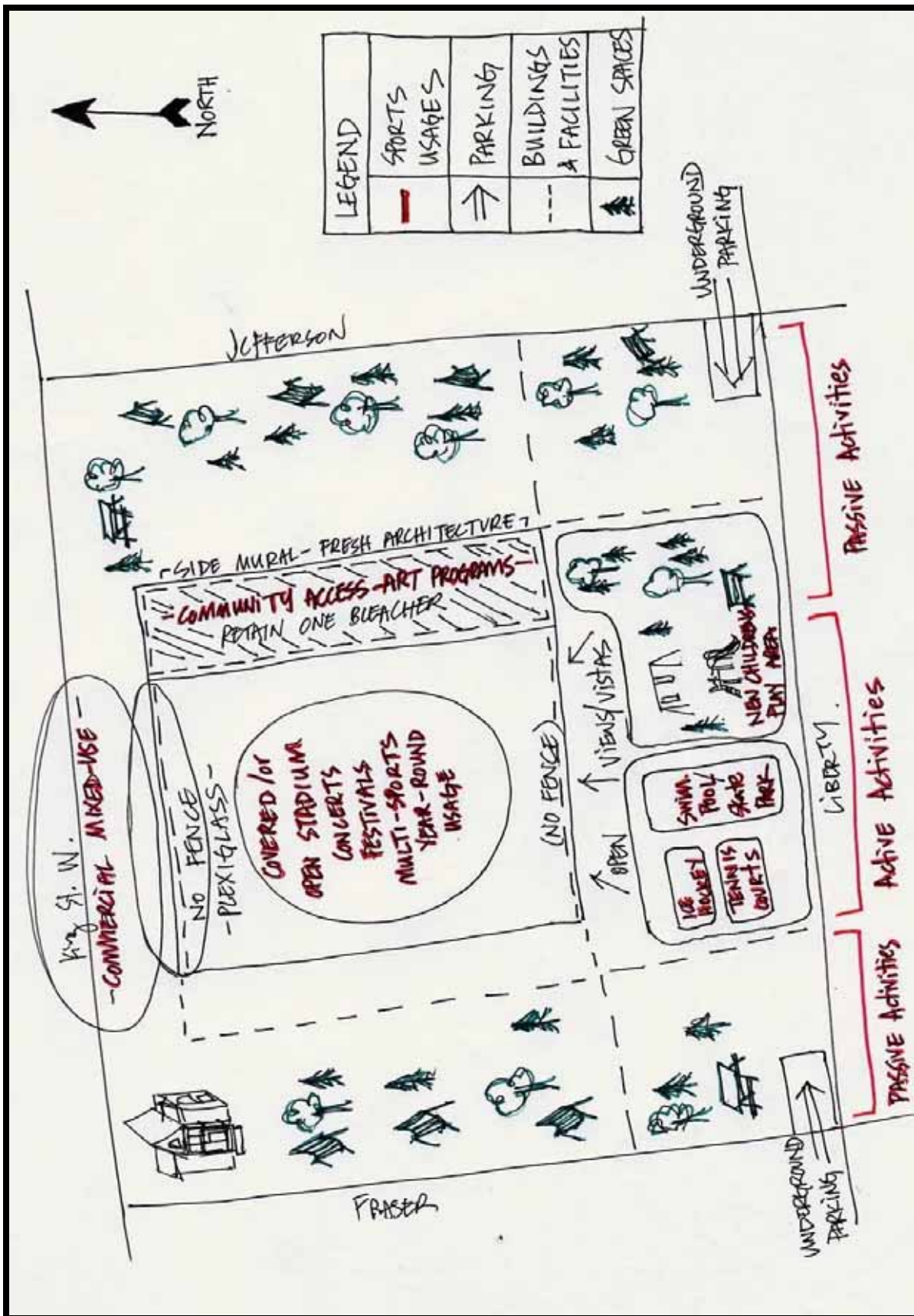


Figure 1: visual summary of results

### 3.0 CONCLUSIONS

The discussions that took place during the Community Roundtable Forum centered on the need for more neighbourhood spaces in which people can interact with others and use in both passive and active activities. The attendance at the forum encompassed a range of professions, ages, and economic means with almost equal representation of both genders. The main cohesive factor within this group was their desire to see the proposed renovations of Lamport Stadium result in a public space that is usable by all members of the local and regional community, without extraneous costs to the individual user.



The suggestions raised by participants on the potential features and uses of the new Lamport Stadium reflect a public who wants to see more common spaces specifically for the enjoyment of the local community as well as providing quality facilities to service regional sport activities. The resulting mixed use can have a positive impact in a number of ways:

- Draw visitors to Parkdale and Liberty Village, stimulating local business, through regional and provincial level sporting events.
- Encourage the development of athletic ability in local children and youth.
- Celebrate the arts and architecture in an historically significant building.
- Provide a venue for local and regional cultural activities, such as Caribana.
- Provide green space and recreational facilities for the local community

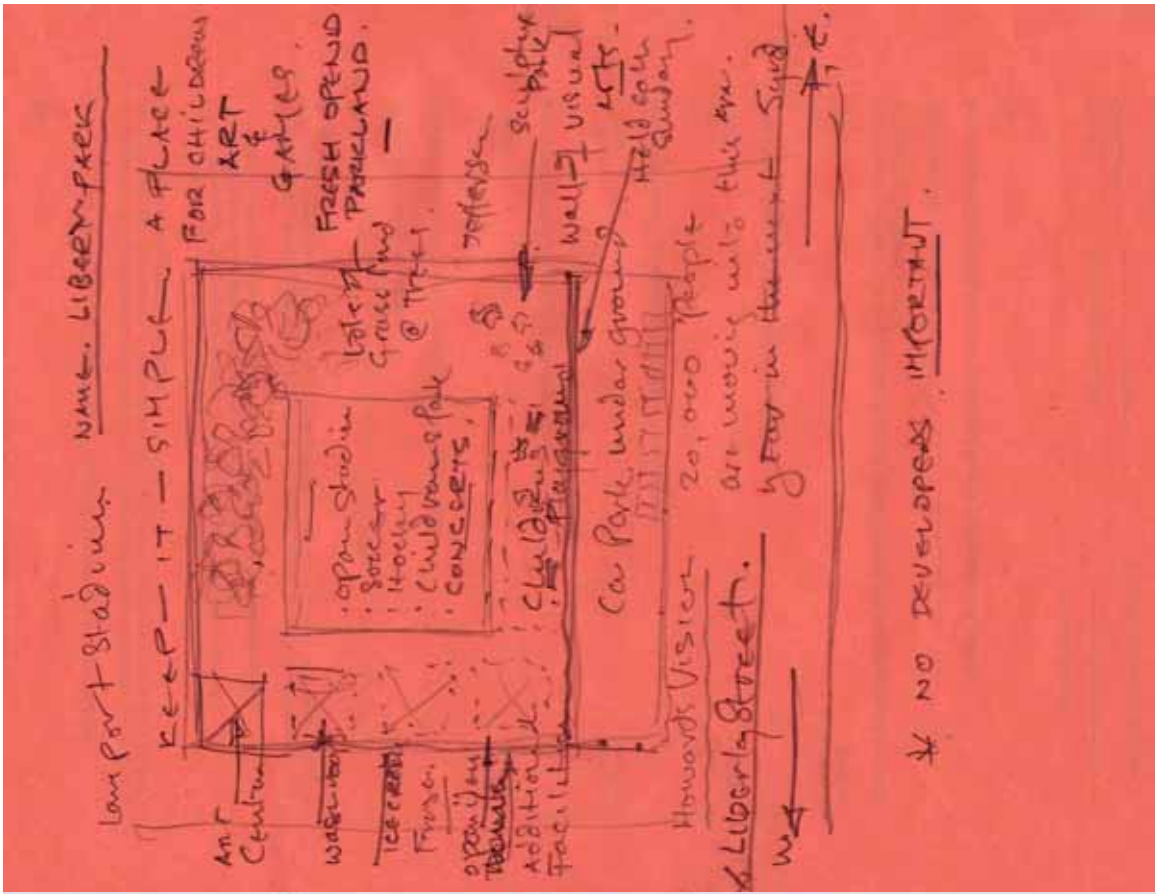
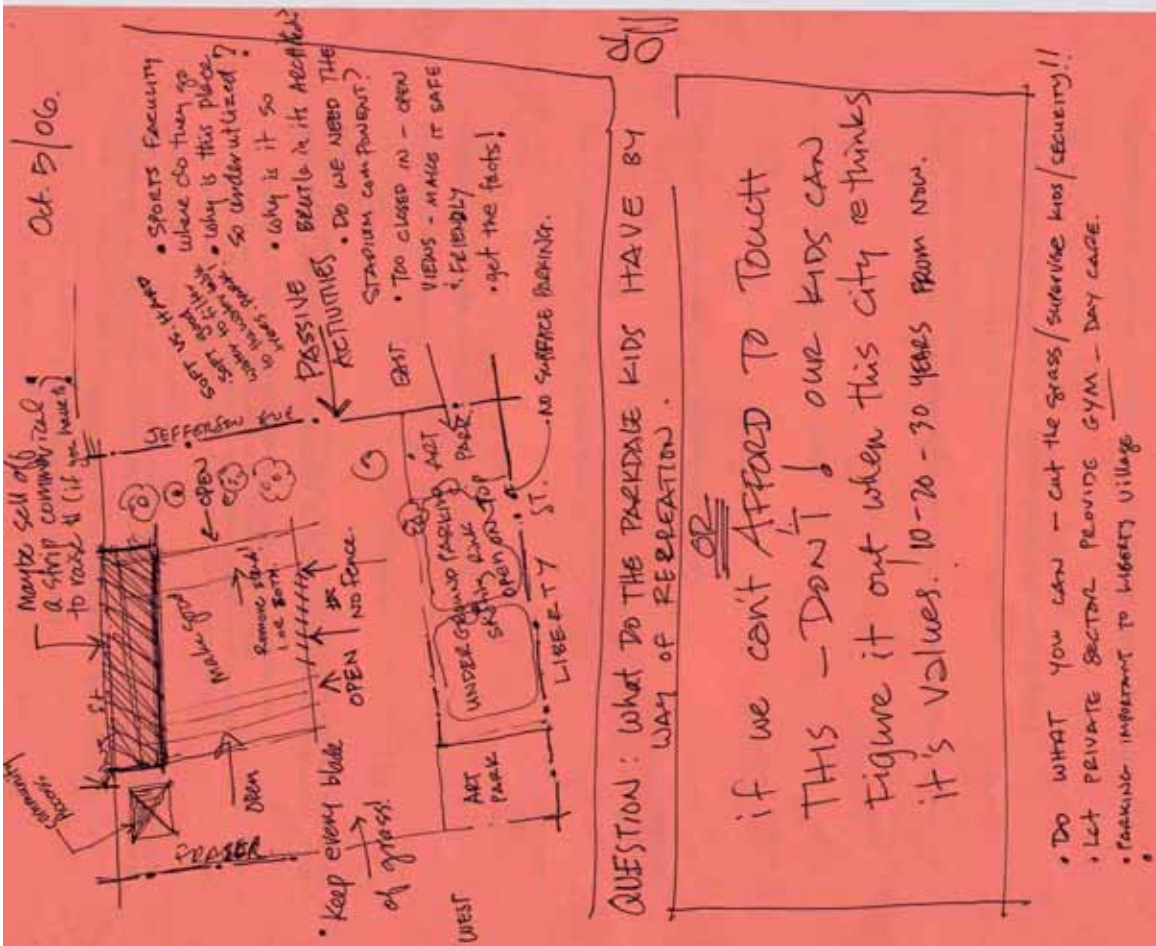


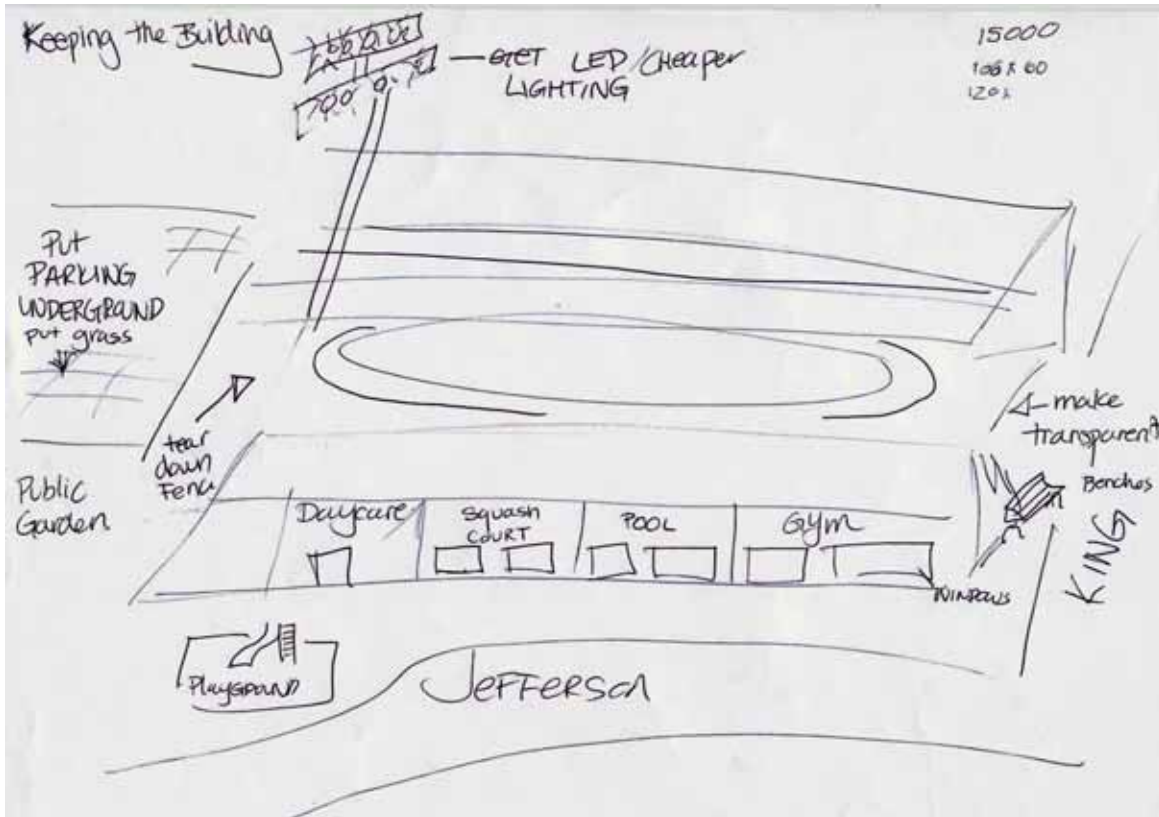
Lamport Stadium has the potential to become an important civic resource if its' future is managed with care.

*Photographs courtesy of Wilson Lee.*

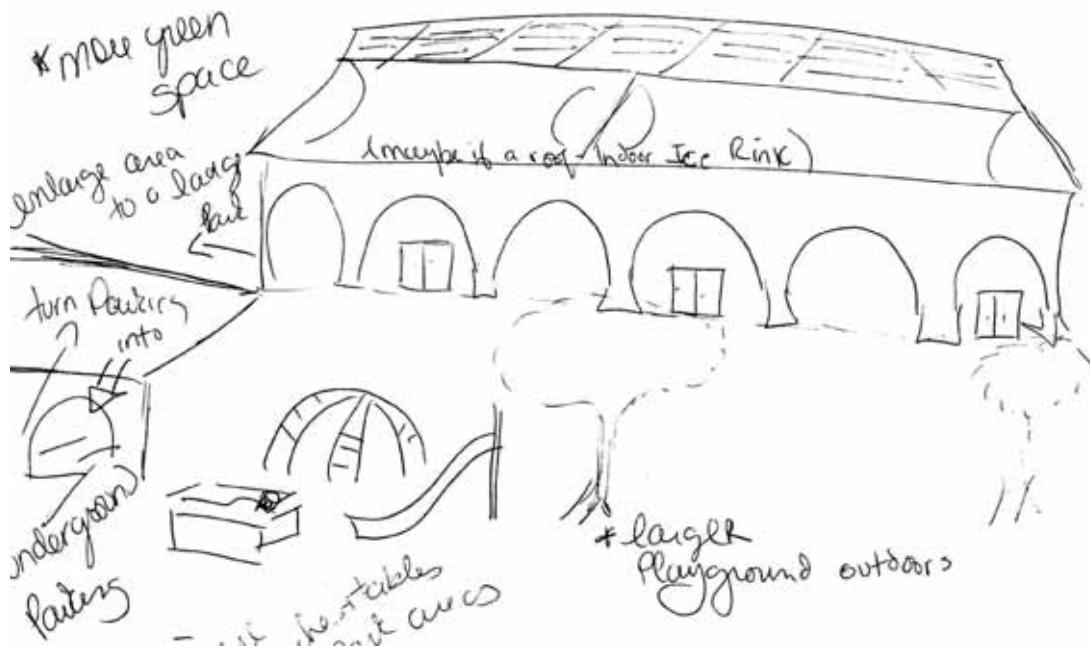
# **Appendix**

## Roundtable Process Participant Drawings





- upgrade around (ie) roof over top for more indoor sports + activities throughout yr



option 1 - we keep it?.. what does it look like / used for / going.

