

County to gather public input at Orangeville Home and Garden Show for Outdoor Community Hub design

Following a call for initial ideas, the County of Dufferin is excited to unveil the first draft of designs for the pilot Community Hub.

The Community Hub will be an outdoor space designed to support emergency preparedness and enhance community well-being, where residents can meet new people, and connect with old friends. Residents are now invited to review and provide feedback on the proposed design options to help shape the future of the project.

The outdoor Community Hub is envisioned as a welcoming, multi-functional space where residents can connect with one another, participate in workshops, and enjoy elements such as shaded seating, local art installations, and native plants.

In addition, the hub will incorporate emergency preparedness features, including drinking water, personal device charging stations, connection to 911, and access to emergency supplies. Research shows that strong social networks play a critical role in disaster recovery efforts, enabling neighbours to support one another and reducing strain on emergency services.

“The Resilience Hub is not meant to replace or replicate the services offered by emergency shelters,” explains Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy for the County of Dufferin.

“It is designed to be a daily gathering space that strengthens community ties long before a crisis occurs. By creating a space that fosters connection, learning, and preparedness year-round, the hub helps build a more resilient and self-sufficient community.”

Throughout 2024, the County engaged 26 local organizations, 4 advisory committees, and connected with 300 community members to hear what features the hub should include. Informed by these insights, a team from Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Urban and Regional Planning developed two design concepts for the hub called “Circles for Intergenerational Learning” and “Kit of Parts.”

In both designs, all areas will be connected by accessible walking paths, providing a seamless link to the Edelbrock Centre, Orangeville transit bus terminal, and Centre Street.

Circles for Intergenerational Learning features a large cone-shaped gathering space, a middle area for community activities or workshops, and two planting areas for community gardening.

Kit of Parts features a series of modular pavilions to create a versatile community space. The pavilions include a flexible gathering space for meetings and social events, a dedicated area for learning and intergenerational activities, and spaces focused on community gardening, and recreational activities.

The County is seeking community input to help refine the designs to ensure the Hub serves them and their neighbours effectively

Feedback can be provided at the Orangeville Lions Home & Garden Show, held from April 4th to 6th at the Orangeville Fairgrounds.

The Home & Garden Show runs from 5 to 9 p.m. on April 4, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 5 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 6. The annual event is put on by the Orangeville Lions Club.

“I am excited to see this project getting one step closer to creating a space that builds strong social connections. We know that in times of crisis, the heroes swooping in with long capes blowing in the wind aren't always going to be emergency personnel – the heroes are more likely to be your neighbours. The input we have received from across the County, by people of all ages, has been inspiring and meaningful,” said Steve Murphy, County of Dufferin's manager of preparedness and 9-1-1.