

March 23, 2026

To: Toronto City Council

Re: 2026.EX 29.3 – Update on Weston Foundation Donation for Queen’s Park North Revitalization

Dear Councilors,

The March 10th Executive Committee meeting marked a turning point in the thought process of design of Queen’s Park North.

You received many letters and heard many depositions admonishing the lack of consideration of the ecological environment, old growth forest and stating alarm at the overly grandiose plans for activation in the delicate landscape. A forest management plan was requested to provide necessary details prior to developing a concept design. There was general agreement at the Executive Committee meeting.

Queen’s Park North was recognized as a profound historical, cultural, ecologically significant area with old growth forest and mature tree canopy. Historically it has been a place of respite and democratic expression. Everyone at that meeting agreed that it is a much-loved historic public asset with its own distinctive sense of place and character.

The next day the City’s Design Review Panel echoed the same comments, indicating that a forest management plan should be the starting point for design, and that design elements should be reconsidered, questioning the extent of the robust program.

We are engaged in the consultative process but progress is slow. Comparing plans first unveiled in November 2025 and those shown at the last consultation meeting we see no change. All design elements remain, notwithstanding comments from Councillors, the DRP and public consultation. A forest management plan is essential in the process to responsibly assess the design proposal. No details are known. Our outline of what is to be expected in a thorough forest management plan has been forwarded to the project team and is an appendix below. You can see the complexity of this undertaking. We are hopeful that it will be fully discussed.

There is no good reason for the May 6/2026 deadline. This is viewed as the finish line that staff and consultants are racing to meet. It is an artificial deadline, unnecessary and will result in shortcuts and limit the necessary research and investigation to properly understand the ecology before making the final decisions.

I urge you to reconsider the May 6th deadline and allow the time necessary for thorough and complete work to be done.

**Sincerely,
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- 1. Evaluate the recent impact and condition of trees and soil using the tree survey (July 2-29, 2014) prepared by Michael Ormston-Holloway and Tyler Bradt to the tree inventory prepared by Cohen and Master Tree and Shrub Services (October 21, 2024).**

The comparison will demonstrate any impact and decline to the trees during the 12-year period and decline to trees as a result of the 2+ year construction of the new subway entrance in Queen's Park North as well as recorded decline and change over the 10-year period.

- 2. Provide mapping to illustrate the trunk location and drip-line of all existing trees in the park.**
- 3. Provide mapping to illustrate the extent of the estimated root spread of trees.**
- 4. With information from the TTC, provide mapping to illustrate the zone of construction including staging space that was necessary for the subway entrance project to the north.**
- 5. Determine required protection zones that will ensure no harm for all trees identified in the tree inventory. This will vary from the City of Toronto Minimal tree protection information guidelines including extended protection zones to the drip-lines or beyond for older trees.**
- 6. Provide mapping that illustrates zones where there should be no interference: no construction, no additional pathways, no design alterations.**
- 7. Identify ecologically sound tree care and maintenance practices, establish regular pruning cycles, pest control, yearly tree mitigation plantings, community involvement opportunities, and recommended policies and procedures.**
- 8. Identify trees, that due to their history or condition, warrant permanent protection from foot traffic such as ornamental fences and/or dense native understory plantings.**
- 9. Provide recommendations on the enhancement of the ecological health and functions of the urban forest considering opportunities and constraints evident in the QPN.**
- 10. Complete a thorough investigation of the impacts to trees that could result from any and all aspects of proposed designs for the park, such as excavation, soil compaction, conversion from soft to hard surfaces, changes in grade, alteration of runoff patterns, etc.**
- 11. Provide a management plan with key benchmark dates over the period of time of the maintenance agreement: 5/ 10/ 15/ and 20 years, with surveys every three years for unexpected events.**

This should include identified long term goals including staffing recommendations for:

- the expansion of the tree canopy by setting achievable tree planting targets
- the special protection and stewardship needed for the signature trees and evaluation of soil conditions which may change because of increased activities in QPN