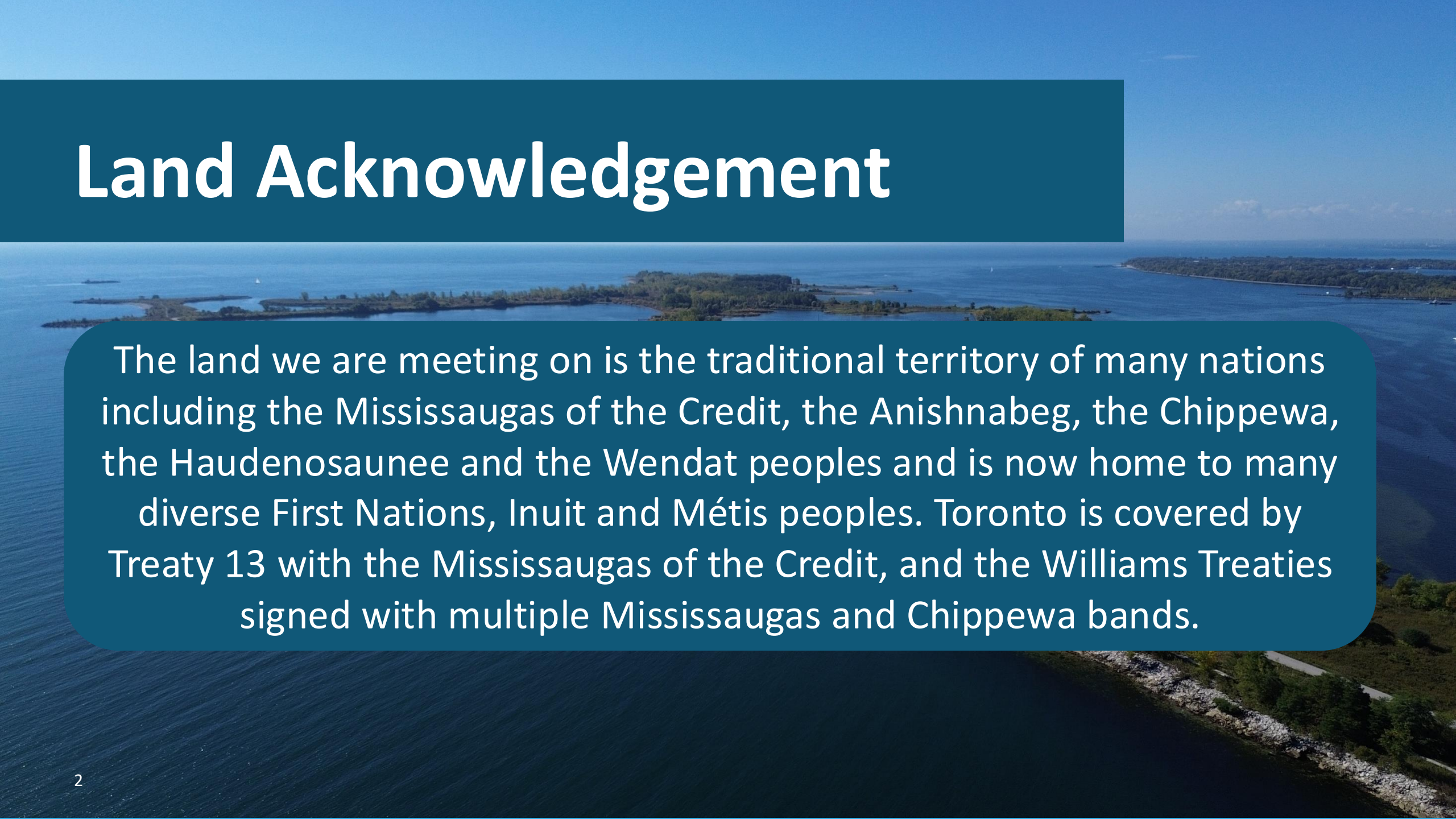


Tommy Thompson Park Visitor Experience Plan

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee
May 4, 2026



Land Acknowledgement



The land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



TOMMY THOMPSON PARK



What is the focus of Tommy Thompson Park?

- Environmental education programs
- Bird research
- Ecological restoration & stewardship
- Recreation & nature appreciation

BACKGROUND

In 2021, Toronto City Council adopted a Tommy Thompson Park Update that included the following recommendations:

1. Establishment of a Joint Management Committee (with City, TRCA, and CreateTO, PortsToronto and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) for the management of the Park and the rest of the Leslie Street Spit
2. Direction to staff supporting the Joint Management Committee to:
 - a. Develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the operations, and maintenance and visitor experience across the lands
 - b. Create a **Visitor Experience Plan** that strikes the balance between public access and ecological integrity
 - c. **Undertake a community and stakeholder consultation process**, including engaging with the broader Indigenous communities, to inform the visitor experience plan
 - d. Develop coordinated policy and enforcement approaches related to filming, dogs, trail conflicts, and similar issues



BACKGROUND

Based on the 2021 direction from Toronto City Council:

The TRCA and City of Toronto are jointly moving ahead with the creation of a **Visitor Experience Plan** (VEP) to address the ultimate goal set out in the Toronto City Council report, which is to:

“...ensure that Tommy Thompson Park’s user experience befits its unique and signature status as a regional destination where visitors can experience an urban wilderness on Toronto’s waterfront.”



BACKGROUND

The ultimate decision makers related to adoption and implementation of the Visitor Experience Plan are the respective owners of the lands at the Leslie Street Spit, of which Tommy Thompson Park is one part.

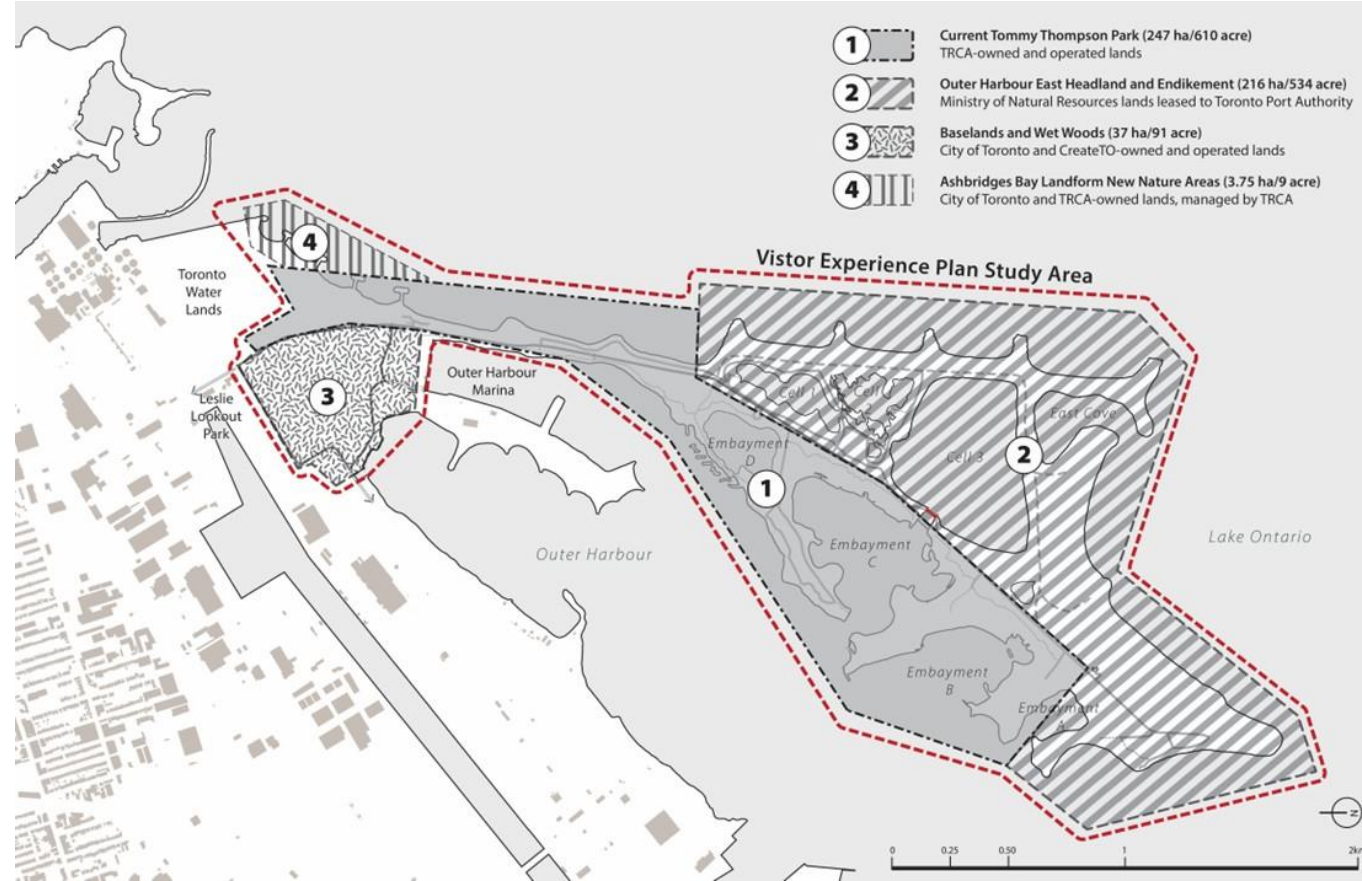
The Leslie Street Spit includes lands owned by:

- **TRCA (1 on map), jointly managed by TRCA and the City of Toronto**
- **Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (2), whose lands are leased to Toronto Port Authority**
- **City of Toronto and CreateTO (3)**
- **City of Toronto and TRCA (4)**

The Study Area for the Visitor Experience Plan will focus on the Spit as a whole. Implementation of the VEP will be focused on TRCA-owned and City-owned lands until such time as the lands owned by the Province are transferred to the TRCA.*

**The timeline for this transfer is dependent on several factors, including completion of lease exit activities by the Toronto Port Authority.*

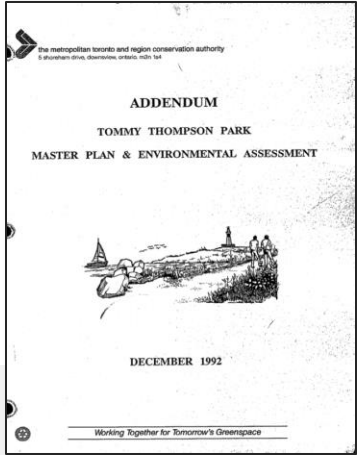
As referenced in the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan, following the transfer of these lands, Tommy Thompson Park will be considered complete.



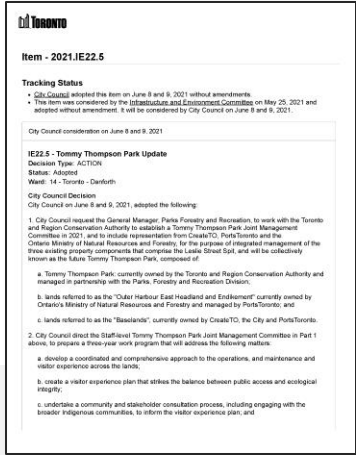
WHY A VISITOR EXPERIENCE PLAN?



ABOUT THE VEP



The **1992** Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan & Environmental Assessment is a foundational document guiding what happens in Tommy Thompson Park and the broader Leslie Street Spit.



The **2021** City Council direction and **2026** Visitor Experience Plan will support and advance Master Plan objectives with a focus on low-impact, light-touch interventions to satisfy the recommendations of the 2021 City Council direction.

MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES



Preserve significant species



Protect environmentally significant areas



Enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat



Enhance recreational opportunities

ABOUT THE VEP



The VEP is a study to identify projects and priorities that will improve visitor experience at the park in a way that aligns with and further realizes the TTP Master Plan.

The VEP will include implementation planning that prioritizes the recommendations pre- and post-land transfer.



The VEP is not an update to the Master Plan nor an invitation to suggest major changes to the physical or operational priorities of the park.

This means, for example, that the VEP **will not** contemplate new buildings or servicing infrastructure south of the Nature Centre, **will** ensure free access is maintained, **will** maintain the ban on pets, etc.

MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES



Preserve significant species



Protect environmentally significant areas



Enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat



Enhance recreational opportunities

VISITOR EXPERIENCE PLAN (VEP)

- A VEP is a framework that guides how people will enjoy, navigate, and connect with a park while protecting its natural and cultural features.
- The TTP VEP will identify priorities and projects that balance recreation, conservation, and visitor needs to create meaningful, welcoming experiences for all.

IT CONSIDERS:

- Environment
- Activities
- Interactions
- Learning Opportunities
- Comfort
- Access

AREAS OF FOCUS

Areas where the VEP process will consider ways to improve people's experiences when they visit the park:



- Natural environment
- Entering & moving through the park
- Accessibility
- Safety & wellbeing
- Operations & maintenance
- Branding & communications
- Facilities & amenities
- Equity & inclusion
- Programming, events, recreational opportunities

Elements of the visitor experience that may be considered for the VEP:



- Interpretive and educational signage
- Wayfinding and trail mapping
- Nature viewing points / lookouts
- Seating, waste receptacles, shade, bikeshare, bike parking
- Website, newsletters, or social media
- On site staff / programming
- Site security / bylaw enforcement / emergency response
- Accessibility features

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

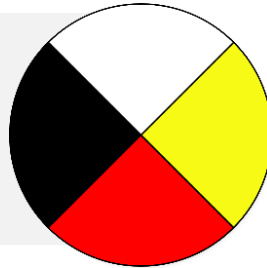
Share, learn, and seek feedback from Tommy Thompson Park advocates and users, as well as others



Bring transparency to the decision-making process



Engage with, share, learn, and seek feedback from Indigenous voices



Respect time and efforts of participants by coordinating with other relevant waterfront public engagements and City Advisory Committees



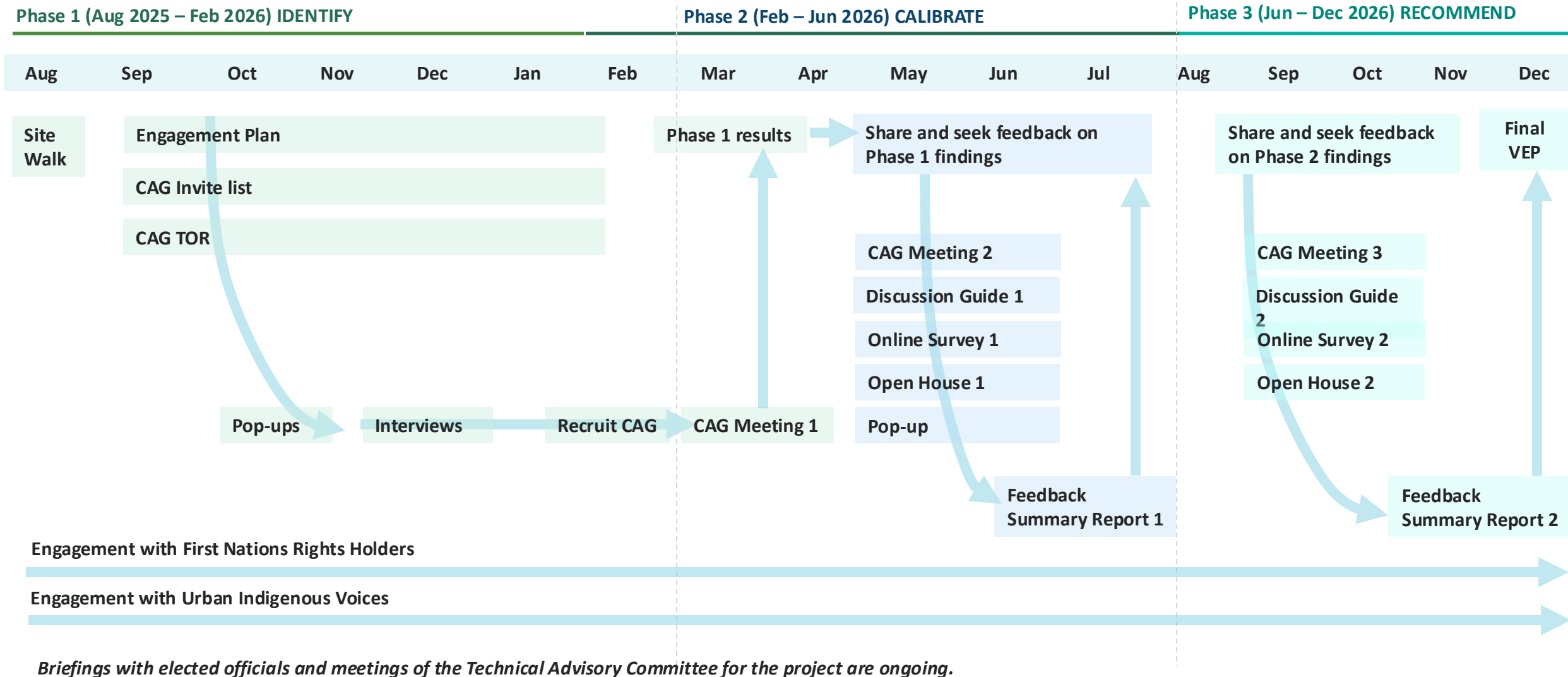
Create and hold space for a range of perspectives to emerge



Leave a strong foundation for ongoing positive working relationships between participants in the engagement process, TRCA, and the City

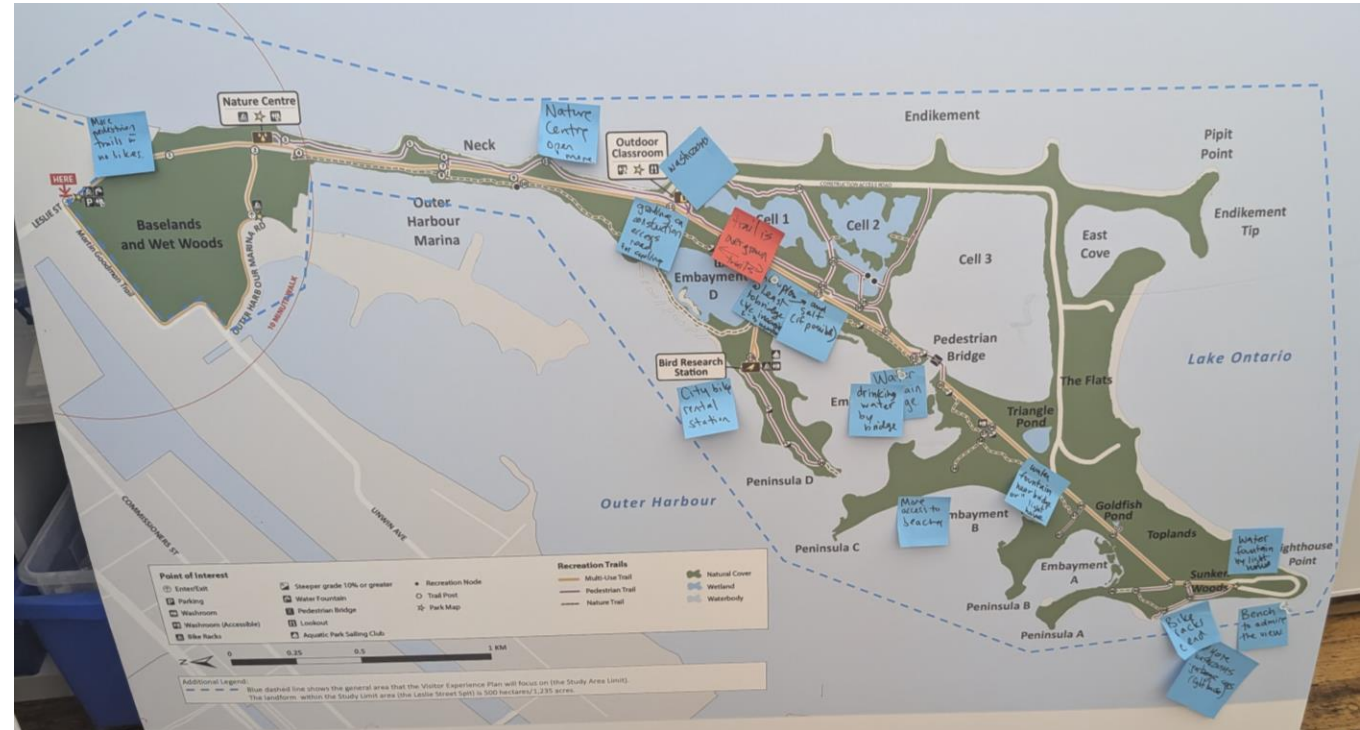


ANTICIPATED TIMELINE



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Held 2 pop-up engagement events in October 2025
- Asked the questions:
 - “What do you like about your experience as a visitor in the park?”
 - “What don’t you like about your experience as a visitor in the park?”
 - “What opportunities would you like to see TRCA and the City consider for the future of visitor experience in the park?”

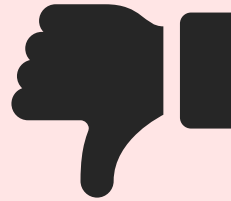


FALL ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK



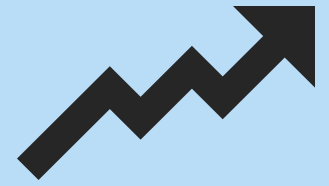
Common likes:

- View nature
- Love the park like it is
- Like running in the park
- Like cycling in the park
- Like that there are no cars
- Access and proximity to the City



Common dislikes:

- Lack of maintenance/garbage and/or lack of garbage bins
- Speeding bikes, conflicts between users, bikes on trails



Common opportunities:

- Better signage (so people know where they are when they're on the Spit, and clearer names)
- Drinking fountain at entrance (not just bottle filling station)

CORE ELEMENTS OF ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

KEY PARTICIPANTS

- Local Councillor
- Current park advocates and users
- Indigenous voices
- Acknowledged experts and academics
- General public
- City Advisory Committees
- Adjacent landowners
- TRCA and City Staff

VEP-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

- Key Informant Interviews
- Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting
- Onsite Pop-Ups
- Community Advisory Group
- Community Open Houses
- Online Surveys
- Connect with City Advisory Committees (e.g., Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee, Toronto Seniors' Forum)
- TRCA/City Technical Advisory Committee
- Connect with existing contacts through existing mechanisms

MATERIALS

- Display Boards
- Discussion Guides
- Webpage
- Worksheets
- Online survey
- Feedback Summaries

OTHER SUPPORTS

- Onsite signage
- Outreach through existing networks (e.g., contact lists from Councillors, TRCA TTP, Waterfront Secretariat, Waterfront Toronto, requests to other non-profit and community networks and organizations)

Third Party Public has been retained as part of the Lord Cultural Resources team to deliver the engagement scope identified by the TRCA and City



ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We would love your input!

Participate in on-site engagement at The Spring Bird Festival

Saturday May 9 @ Tommy Thompson Park

Attend a public meeting

Tuesday May 12, 6:30-8:30 PM, Ralph Thornton Community Centre

Join our mailing list for updates

<https://tommythompsonpark.ca/visitor-experience-plan/>

Comment using an online mapping tool + survey

<https://haveyoursay.toronto.ca/tommy-thompson-park-visitor-experience-plan> [April 21 - May 19, 2026]



THANK YOU.

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