



Queen's Park North Revitalization

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Friends of Queen's Park North

Chair Development Committee
Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association

The Evolution of a Civic Spine: Queen's Park & University Avenue

Forging a Public Space (Pre-Colonial – 1900s)

An Ancestral Homeland
The land is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples.

British North America's First Public Park
Queen's Park officially opened in 1880 on land leased from the University of Toronto.



A Grand Processional Route
University Avenue began as "College Avenue," a grand, tree-lined approach to King's College.

Evolving a Civic Spine (1910s – Future)

Ringed by Civic & Cultural Institutions
The Legislature (1892) and Royal Ontario Museum (1914) solidified its civic character.



1961-62: Medians Redesigned by Dunington-Grubb
Twelve decorative median islands were created, blending Beaux-Arts formality with Modernist materials.



A Vision for a Linear Park
A city feasibility study is exploring reconfiguring University Avenue to maximise parkland potential.

Hilary M. Weston: A Journey of Leadership, Service, and Style

1960s – 1970s: Irish Roots and Early Success



Ireland's Top Model:
Began modeling in the 1960s to support her siblings' education, becoming Ireland's most prominent model and a recognizable face on international billboards.



Building the Penneys (Primark) Empire:
instrumental in the early days, personally overseeing the production of clothing for the in-house brand "Primark".



Immigrating to Canada:
Moved to Toronto in 1974 after marrying Galen Weston in 1966 and living in Ireland, eventually becoming a Canadian citizen.

1986 – 1996: The Retail Powerhouse



Leadership at Holt Renfrew:
As Deputy Chair (1986-1996), applied her creative vision and business acumen to Canada's luxury retailer.



Managing Brown Thomas:
Served as a prominent leader of the long-established Irish retailer after its acquisition by the Weston family.



Cultural Contributions:
Co-authored "In a Canadian Garden" and "At Home in Canada," focusing on domestic aesthetics and nature.

1997 – 2002: A Historic Vice-Regal Term



28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:
Installed January 24, 1997; second woman and first Irish Catholic to serve as the Queen's representative in Ontario.



Modernising the Office:
Introduced "The Drop In," making informal, protocol-free visits to shelters, hospices, and youth centers.

Vice-Regal Impact by the Numbers:

Official Events Hosted/ Attended	Formal Speeches Delivered
1,342	628
Guests Received at Queen's Park	Communities Visited Across Ontario
35,000+	87
Congratulatory Messages to Citizens	Individuals Honored at investitures
21,301+	454



Constitutional Duties:
Granted Royal Assent to 186 bills and signed 15,665 Orders-In-Council.

Advocacy & Philanthropy: A Heart for Service



The Hilary M. Weston Foundation for Youth:
Established shortly after her installation, funded by donating her entire gross vice-regal salary to support youth career development and job training.



Founding the Ireland Fund of Canada:
Founded to raise funds for community-led projects in Ireland supporting peace, culture, and charity.



Championing the Hospice Movement:
As Honorary Patron of the Hospice Association of Ontario, worked to raise the profile of volunteers providing dignity to the terminally ill.



First Connection Initiative:
Launched in 1998, provided bursaries and internships to 88 Grade 12 students at top Canadian companies.

Honors & Military Roles



Honorary Colonel in the Canadian Forces:
First female Honorary Colonel for the 437 Transport Squadron and the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment.



Chancellor of the Order of Ontario
In 2001, become the first Chancellor of the Order of Ontario and was invested as a member herself.

"Gentle in Manner, Vigorous in Performance"

– Reflects her approach to leadership and her commitment to balancing kindness with decisive action.

The 999-Year Legacy: The Legal Foundation of Queen's Park

Queen's Park is governed by a historic 999-year lease established in 1859, making the City of Toronto the steward of university-owned land. This partnership is defined by strict legal covenants ensuring permanent public access, academic preservation, and rigorous maintenance standards.



THE FOUNDATIONAL 1859 COVENANTS

999 YEARS

Guaranteed Universal Access

The park must remain free and open to the public and university members.



Exclusive "Public Park" Usage

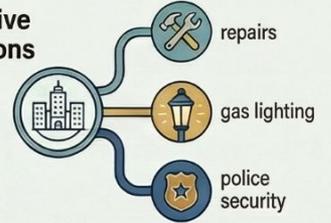
Lands are reserved strictly for park purposes and no other purpose whatsoever.



STEWARDSHIP AND EVOLUTION

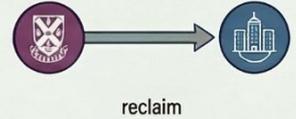
Comprehensive City Obligations

The City must manage repairs, gas lighting, and police security at its expense.



Right of Re-entry

The University may reclaim the land if the City neglects its maintenance duties.



Modern Infrastructure Adaptations

Agreements evolved to allow for subway easements and specific university building projects.

REVITALIZING QUEEN'S PARK NORTH: A LANDMARK PARTNERSHIP FOR TORONTO'S OLDEST PARK

TREES AS PRIMARY INFRASTRUCTURE

Advanced sonic tomography and air-spading vet all interventions to protect existing canopy.



DESIGN & ECOLOGICAL VISION

TESTING AND REFINEMENT

Draft concept subject to ongoing technical analysis and community feedback before final design approval.

INCLUSIVE HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Recontextualizes the park by centering Indigenous ways of knowing and 2SLGBTQ+ cultural history alongside colonial narratives.



STEWARDSHIP & GOVERNANCE FOUNDATION

FINANCIAL & TEMPORAL BREAKDOWN

CAPITAL INVESTMENT
Private donation fully funds redesign, public engagement, and construction.

TRI-PARTY AGREEMENT
Collaborative maintenance & programming model.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE:
Dedicated Executive Director and Community Advisory Board for long-term accountability.

CAPITAL DONATION:
\$50 MILLION

Design, engagement, construction

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE:
~\$2.15 MILLION

Enhanced operations & programming (20 years)

STEWARDSHIP TERM:
20 YEARS

Initial tri-party funding agreement length

Stewardship of a Green Oasis: The Queen's Park North Annual Fund

Annual \$2.15 Million Investment





Friends
Queen's Park North