

Queen's Park North Donation - Concept Plan Update Report

Date: June 8, 2026

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks and Recreation and Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry

Wards: 11 - University - Rosedale

SUMMARY

Queen's Park North is one of the largest and most significant green spaces in Toronto's downtown core. As Canada's oldest municipal park, it is defined by its extensive tree canopy, cultural heritage landscape including generous pathways and open spaces, and its long-standing role as a place of gathering, expression, contemplation, and commemoration. At its core, the park is a vibrant urban forest and green oasis and it is important that the character and the sense of place are maintained and enhanced as the city evolves around the park.

This report provides an update on the planned revitalization of Queen's Park North. In response to March City Council direction (EX29.3), City staff have made several changes to the project's Concept Plan. Key areas of change include:

- Development of an Urban Forest Management Plan that will guide all aspects of park revitalization;
- Increased focus on maintaining and emphasizing the heritage of the park through a Draft Statement of Significance;
- Assessment of a feasibility study and business case to inform the next steps of the food and beverage offering;
- Proposal to introduce a time-limited working group to inform detailed design as the project proceeds to the next phases.

These proposed changes are outlined in this report and reflected in the revised Concept Plan.

Staff are seeking Council approval of the Concept Plan with parameters to guide the next phase of detailed design and execute project agreements that were authorized by City Council through EX29.3, subject to consideration of this update on the Concept Plan.

The vision for Queen's Park North is a comprehensive revitalization strategy combining:

- Proactive tree care and urban forest management,
- Enhanced maintenance and proactive operations,
- Education, interpretation and appropriately scaled programming,
- Improvements to visitor experience for all ages,
- High-quality, inclusive design, and
- A collaborative stewardship model.

The analysis, information, and recommendations consolidated through the latest phase of work have been used to meaningfully revise the Concept Plan to balance passive and active uses of the park while furthering the project vision. Key Concept Plan changes since draft directions were presented publicly in March include:

- **Urban Forest Protection and Enhancement:** An Urban Forest Management Plan is being advanced by an independent urban forest consultant to guide all aspects of the project, from concept design through construction and long-term stewardship. Phase 1 of the plan is complete and has provided clear directions that have been incorporated into the updated Concept Plan to protect existing trees, including minimizing impacts to root systems. Subsequent phases will inform any further changes during detailed design and establish a long-term strategy to expand and strengthen the urban forest in Queen's Park North.
- **Learning Forest:** The Learning Forest proposal for the western quadrant of the park, home to several distinctive and rare trees, has been revised in response to the Urban Forest Management Plan, public input and design development. The revised proposal introduces a shorter, lower elevated walkway than previously proposed that is designed to protect root zones from compaction and to use existing hardscape to minimize new impacts to the trees, in particular distinctive trees. The area will include a low enclosure to support the planting of native understory plants, reflecting Indigenous principles of companion plantings.
- **Central Building:** The proposed building at the centre of the park has been reduced in size and footprint and carefully sited to minimize impacts on existing trees and root zones. The revised approach separates the public washrooms from the café building to further reduce environmental impacts and allow for more flexible operations. The building program is proposed to host a viable year-round café at a scale supported by initial staff and third-party reviews of the food and beverage business case and operating model and subject to further review and due diligence. The building will also provide a hub for the staff team dedicated to park operations. Its central location, with outdoor seating and public washrooms nearby, will provide a gathering space for the community, University users and park visitors.
- **Commemorative Garden:** The footprint of the commemorative garden has been reduced in size and its configuration reoriented to avoid key tree protection areas, responding to public feedback and the Urban Forestry Management Plan. These changes improve pedestrian circulation, reduce paved surfaces, preserve more open lawn space, and better integrate the garden within the existing park landscape.

- **Indigenous Design and Programming:** A key project principle is to embed Indigenous cultural values, history and storytelling in both the physical landscape of the revitalized park as well as its stewardship approach. The project team is advancing dedicated scopes of work with First Nations to develop culturally specific design, interpretation, education, and programming elements, alongside broader engagement with Indigenous communities. The recommended Concept Plan foregrounds opportunities for Indigenous placekeeping and authorship, and identifies key locations for integration, with details to be further refined through collaboration during detailed design.
- **Workshop:** The Workshop, as a stand-alone structure, has been removed from the Concept Plan, reducing the number of proposed structures in response to feedback received. The plan will provide space and amenities to support community and educational activities with the Learning Forest, Commemorative Garden and other areas of the park.
- **Public Art Framework:** A public art framework is being developed, informed by public feedback and Council direction, to guide the integration of both permanent and temporary works throughout the park. This approach enables the thoughtful placement and curation of art that reflects the park's cultural significance and enhances interpretive opportunities.

The revised Concept Plan reflects a balanced and responsive approach to the revitalization of Queen's Park North. Through the integration of the Urban Forest Management Plan, technical analysis, and engagement feedback, staff have refined the design to further reduce impacts to trees, appropriately scale built elements, and strengthen the park's ecological resilience. The updated Concept Plan emphasizes the protection and long-term health of the urban forest while introducing carefully sized amenities, emphasizing opportunities for education and interpretation, and enhancing spaces for gathering and everyday use.

This recommended Concept Plan builds on extensive engagement (July 2025 - May 2026) with thousands of park users and stakeholders over multiple phases. Feedback has been carefully considered throughout the process, with particular attention to concerns related to tree protection, the scale of proposed changes, and the role of programming within the park. The revised Concept Plan reflects a deliberate effort to respond to these perspectives, refine key elements, and identify a balanced approach that can serve the park's diverse users and functions.

Pending Council's direction, staff will execute the donation agreement and other project agreements and advance the development of detailed designs for all park elements. Detailed design will be guided by further development of the Council-directed studies as well as ongoing engagement with project stakeholders, including a project working group to support decision-making on detailed design in advance of formally establishing the longer-term advisory structure. City staff will secure permits, procure construction services, and oversee the phased delivery of the plan to minimize disruptions to the park. Staff will report back to City Council regarding project progress in early 2027, in 2028 and on a biennial basis for the remainder of the term of the donation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks and Recreation and the Executive Director, Environment, Climate, and Forestry recommend that:

1. City Council approve the Concept Plan included in Appendix 2 as the basis for detailed design, procurement and delivery of the Queen's Park North Revitalization Project.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation and Executive Director, Environment, Climate, and Forestry to establish a Queen's Park North Detailed Design Working Group composed of no more than ten members representing the City of Toronto, University of Toronto, the donor, residents, neighbouring institutions and other experts appointed by the City, consult with the Working Group with respect to finalizing the design details of the Concept Plan included in Appendix 2 as well as the Queen's Park North Advisory Body Draft Terms of Reference, and provide community updates at key milestones.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation and Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, to conserve the cultural heritage values of Queen's Park North through refinement of the Draft Statement of Significance in Appendix 1 into a Description of Cultural Heritage Values which will guide decision-making through detailed design, construction, and ongoing park management, programming and operations.
4. City Council endorse the Queen's Park North Advisory Body Draft Terms of Reference in Appendix 6 and direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation to incorporate the Draft Terms of Reference in the negotiation and execution of the tri-party agreement with Weston Foundation and the University of Toronto to govern the maintenance, operations and funding of the revitalized Queen's Park North (the "Tri-Party Agreement").
5. City Council amend the 2026-2035 Capital Budget and Plan for Parks and Recreation to create a dedicated project account for the Queen's Park North Revitalization Project with project cost of up to \$50.0 million (inclusive of relevant costs incurred by the Donor to date) and projected cash flow commitments of \$8.7 million in 2026, \$16.5 million in 2027, \$21.0 million in 2028 and \$3.8 million in 2029, fully funded through donations from the Weston Foundation, subject to the execution of, and in accordance with, the donation agreement and any other agreements required to implement the project.
6. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation and the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, to report to Infrastructure and Environment Committee with a project update report in the first quarter of 2027, including relevant updates on detailed design, construction and the development and implementation of the governance model.
7. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation to report to Infrastructure and Environment Committee within 18 months of the new tri-party

maintenance, operations, and funding model being put in place, with regular biennial reports to City Council thereafter.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report will result in an increase of up to \$50.0 million (less relevant costs incurred by the Donor to date) to the 2026-2035 Parks and Recreation Capital Budget and Plan for the Queen's Park North Revitalization Project, with projected cash flows of \$8.7 million in 2026, \$16.5 million in 2027, \$21.0 million in 2028 and \$3.8 million in 2029. This funding will be reflected in a dedicated project account and will be fully funded through donations, subject to the execution of, and in accordance with, the donation agreement and any other agreements required to implement the project.

As the project is fully funded through donations, no additional debt financing is required from the City for the capital design and delivery of the project.

The City will continue to provide core municipal services within the park. Under the proposed model, the University of Toronto will assume responsibility for enhanced maintenance and operational elements associated with the revitalized park, subject to the execution of the required agreements. As a result, the City's operating costs are anticipated to remain generally consistent with current expenditure levels.

Any future changes to the scope of the project, operating model, or funding arrangements that may result in additional financial implications for the City will be subject to future Council consideration and approval.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information as presented.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on April 22 and 23, 2026, City Council adopted recommendations for the *Refreshing Food and Beverage Offerings in Park and Recreation Spaces* and approved the park mobile vending program. City Council also authorized the General Manager, Parks and Recreation to enter into licence agreements with non-profit groups and concession operators for food and beverage services in parks, with defined terms and renewal options. Additional recommendations included direct consultation with Ward Councillors, local BIAs, and park user groups in location selection, inclusions of a kiosk pilot in select parks, and directed Parks and Recreation to report back in 2027 on program performance and the broader food and beverage strategy.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.EC27.7>

At its meeting on March 25 and 26, 2026, City Council adopted recommendations for the *Update on the Weston Foundation Donation for Queen's Park North Revitalization* that authorized staff to negotiate a donation agreement of up to \$50 million with the Weston Foundation and a tri-party agreement with the University of Toronto, subject to approval of an updated Concept Plan. City Council also directed staff to report to

Infrastructure and Environment Committee in June 2026 with an updated Concept Plan, draft terms of reference for the Queen's Park North Advisory Board, and additional information on the business plan for the proposed food and beverage component. Further direction included advancing an Urban Forest Management Plan and a Public Art Plan.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.EX29.3>

At its meeting on March 26 and 27, 2025, City Council authorized staff to negotiate and execute agreements with the Weston Foundation to support community engagement, design, and delivery of improvements to Queen's Park North, and directed staff to report back in Fall 2025 with an implementation update and recommended terms of a donation agreement.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.CC28.1>

At its meeting on June 14 and 16, 2023, City Council authorized the City Manager to negotiate and execute a donor agreement to fully fund environmental assessment, preliminary design, and related studies for University Park. City Council also directed staff to pursue additional partnership opportunities to support further studies along the University Avenue corridor.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM7.11>

At its meeting on May 10, 11, and 12, 2023, City Council directed the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services and Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services to report to the Executive Committee on the status of planning for University Park, including opportunities related to Metrolinx's Ontario Line construction and improvements to the University Avenue and Queen Street intersection.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.TE4.70>

At its meeting on July 19, 20, and 21, 2022, City Council directed Parks and Recreation, in consultation with other divisions, to report on options to accelerate the delivery of priority downtown parks and public realm projects, including the University Avenue corridor, with consideration of phased implementation.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.4>

At its meeting on July 19, 20, and 21, 2022, City Council adopted the use of Secondary Plan policies and Urban Design Guidelines and directed that they be used to inform development within the University of Toronto St. George campus precinct, including Queen's Park North. Council also directed staff to advance block-specific design guidelines for the University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan Area.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.TE34.8>

At its meeting on October 1 and 4, 2021, City Council adopted the TOcore Implementation Strategy, directing staff to advance priority downtown parks and public realm improvements, pursue partnership and funding opportunities, and integrate projects such as University Avenue into the 10-year Capital Plan. Council also directed staff to undertake related public realm improvements and coordinate with Metrolinx infrastructure projects.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.IE24.7>

At its meeting on February 2, 3, and 5, 2021, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to undertake a cultural heritage landscape study of the Queen's Park precinct.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.MM28.35>

At its meeting on May 22, 23, and 24, 2018, City Council directed City Planning, Transportation Services, and Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consider prioritizing the redesign of University Avenue through the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.PG29.5>

COMMENTS

Overview

Following City Council direction in March 2026, staff advanced a series of Council-directed studies and engagement activities to inform an updated Concept Plan and future operating model for Queen's Park North. This work included the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), a draft Statement of Significance, public art framework, and food and beverage (F&B) feasibility assessment, alongside a third phase of City-led public and stakeholder engagement.

The findings from these work streams, together with input from the Design Review Panel and 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee, have informed revisions to the Concept Plan. These changes focus on reducing impacts to trees, scaling built elements appropriately, and strengthening the long-term ecological health, heritage conservation, and overall function of the park.

1. Council-Directed Studies

Urban Forest Management Plan

The urban forest in Queen's Park North represents a unique ecological asset, characterized by a diverse mix of distinctive (as defined by 61 cm diameter at breast height) and younger trees, including native and non-native species. Protecting and strengthening this urban forest has been a central focus across all phases of engagement, with strong and consistent feedback emphasizing its importance to the identity and function of the park and neighbourhood.

The Urban Forest Management Plan will establish a comprehensive and ongoing framework to guide the protection, management, and enhancement of the urban forest at Queen's Park North. It is being delivered by Urban Forest Innovations, an independent urban forest consultant to the project, reporting to Urban Forestry and University of Toronto (U of T). The UFMP will provide a framework that will detail the protection, preservation, restoration, and maintenance of the trees, tree canopy and natural ecology of Queen's Park North and inform the proposed park revitalization elements, including the Concept Plan, siting, staging, construction, and park asset use and servicing, and will include a short, medium, and long-term tree maintenance and stewardship plan. The plan responds directly to City Council direction to prevent adverse impacts to distinctive trees and to minimize impacts to tree root systems, soils,

and the broader natural environment throughout the design and implementation of the revitalization project.

The UFMP is being delivered in three phases and will inform all stages of the project:

- Phase 1 (Concept Plan Stage - completed):
Phase 1 work has informed the revised Concept Plan through detailed analysis of existing conditions, including the mapping of tree inventories and the establishment of enhanced tree protection zones. As a result, the Concept Plan has been refined to prevent encroachment into critical root zones, minimize impacts to all existing trees, and reposition or scale back key elements such as the commemorative garden and Learning Forest.
- Phase 2 (Detailed Design and Construction Planning):
Pending Council approval, Phase 2 will focus on developing tree protection strategies for servicing, staging, and construction activities as detailed design advances. This will include the tree preservation plan, tree permit applications and construction supervision as required by the City's tree by-laws.
- Phase 3 (Long-Term Stewardship):
Phase 3 will establish a long-term management framework for the park's urban forest, including ongoing maintenance, monitoring, and succession planning to support canopy renewal and resilience over time.

In response to March Council direction, Phase 1 of the Urban Forest Management Plan produced a Potential Tree Impact Zones map (Appendix 3). This analysis maps all 358 existing trees (including 88 Distinctive Trees) in Queen's Park North and captures them into three zones to guide tree protection decisions:

- Red: Critical root zone, defined using a diameter-at-breast-height multiplier of two, where impacts are considered unacceptable.
- Yellow: Expanded tree protection zone, applying a higher standard than typical park requirements, where interventions must be carefully managed to minimize impact.
- Green: Areas outside of tree protection zones, where there are no anticipated tree-related constraints.

This mapping has provided a clear, site-wide framework to guide the integration of new elements into the existing landscape. The revised Concept Plan has been shaped directly by this analysis, resulting in the repositioning and/or reduction of elements to avoid critical root zones and minimize impacts to existing trees. This is illustrated on the Overlay of Concept Plan and Potential Tree Impact Zones Mapping in Appendix 4. This overlay demonstrates that the Concept Plan is acceptable from a tree protection perspective, avoiding critical root zones (red), and taking caution in tree protection zones (yellow), including one identified candidate for transplant.

As the project advances, the Potential Tree Impact Zones map will continue to inform detailed design, servicing, construction staging, and implementation. Subsequent

phases of the Urban Forest Management Plan will build on this foundation by establishing detailed tree protection measures for construction activities, opportunities to enhance ecological conditions within the park and a long-term stewardship approach to support the health, resilience, and renewal of the park's urban forest.

Draft Statement of Significance

The Draft Statement of Significance (Appendix 1) articulates the cultural heritage significance of Queen's Park North. This will be used to establish a framework for assessing the impacts of proposed changes. It provides the heritage lens through which the Concept Plan has been developed. It also includes an attachment containing a "Community Statement" about the sense of place of the park.

The Draft Statement of Significance identifies the park's tree canopy, lawns, and interconnected pathway system as defining heritage features of the landscape. It also recognizes the park's long-standing role as a civic space for gathering, expression, and public life. The revitalization project, supported by the donation and the Urban Forest Management Plan, presents an opportunity to protect and strengthen these defining elements while also enhancing ecological conditions and supporting long-term stewardship.

As the park is not designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, the Draft Statement of Significance will be further refined and renamed in Phase 2 of the workplan as a Description of Cultural Heritage Values, which will be used to provide a guide to decision-making through detailed design, construction, and ongoing park management, programming, and operations. The Description of Cultural Heritage Values will emphasize the importance of recognizing and incorporating Indigenous histories, knowledge, and presence within the park. Ongoing work with First Nations and Indigenous communities will inform culturally specific design elements, interpretation, and programming, contributing to the advancement of Truth and Reconciliation within the project.

The revised Concept Plan reflects a contemporary interpretation of the park's historic design principles. In particular, the renewed focus on the centre of the park as a gathering space builds on earlier design precedents, including the historic presence of a bandstand and public amenities, while introducing a new organizing structure for public life within the park. Opening and animating the centre creates additional space for gathering and everyday use, while also supporting opportunities for interpretation of the park's layered history and cultural significance.

Phased Workplan:

- **Phase 1: Draft Statement of Significance (completed)**
Heritage Planning and the project team have completed the Draft Statement of Significance (Appendix 1) to define the park's heritage values and inform the evaluation of proposed changes. The document was developed through engagement with the project's Heritage Focus Group and other engagement activities. These values have informed the revised Concept Plan and will continue to guide design evolution.

- **Phase 2: Description of Cultural Heritage Values**
The Draft Statement of Significance will be refined, in consultation with the project team and the University of Toronto and renamed as a Description of Cultural Heritage Values to distinguish it from the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act. Following Council approval, detailed design work will further refine the park revitalization to conserve and enhance identified heritage values, in consultation with Heritage Planning.
- **Phase 3: Statement of Heritage Impact**
The project's heritage consultant will prepare a statement of heritage impact that will identify the impact of proposed changes to the cultural heritage values of the park. Heritage Planning will review the document to ensure that the heritage values have been maintained and, where possible, enhanced. Future changes to the park program should be undertaken in consultation with Heritage Planning staff to ensure long-term conservation.

Public Art Plan

The project team, in collaboration with the Economic Development and Culture Division (EDC) and the donor, has developed a high-level framework to guide the integration of new public art within Queen's Park North, aligned with the overall revitalization vision. The Public Art Plan will explore opportunities for both permanent (one or two pieces) and temporary artworks. It will be closely aligned with the park's broader design vision, engaging with artistic permanent landscape and architectural elements as integral components of the overall aesthetic experience. In doing so, the plan will situate new artworks within a cohesive design framework while also complementing the park's existing art and historic monuments.

The initial phase of work establishes the vision, guiding principles, curatorial approach, and site-wide themes, and identifies a range of potential public art opportunities. It also confirms a commitment to engaging a Canadian public art curator. A provisional budget of a minimum of one per cent of construction costs has been identified, consistent with the City's Percent for Public Art Program.

Following Council approval of the Concept Plan, the project will retain a curator and advance a Public Art Implementation Plan. This plan will identify specific potential artwork locations, define commissioning and selection processes, outline budgets, timelines, and delivery approaches and establish governance roles and responsibilities. The donor will work with the City and partners at the University of Toronto to ensure the public art commissioning process is conducted in accordance with aesthetic and technical criteria outlined in the City of Toronto Public Art and Monument Donations Policy and applicable University policy.

Food and Beverage Feasibility Assessment

Economic Development and Culture, in consultation with Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM), has completed a comprehensive review of the business case for the proposed café. This review was informed by the revised Concept Plan, a business case prepared by project consultants, applicable City strategies and Council direction, and an independent third-party assessment commissioned and overseen by EDC.

CREM has been consulted and engaged through this process, drawing on its experience delivering food and beverage offerings at major City sites such as City Hall, St. Lawrence Market, and Union Station. In addition to its role supporting real estate strategy and transaction considerations, CREM has provided high-level input to help inform key operational and feasibility considerations.

EDC's review of the F&B business case identified alignment with broader City objectives related to the public realm, including recent Council direction to expand access to food and beverage offerings in parks where appropriate. To support evidence-based decision-making and provide an additional layer of due diligence, EDC retained an independent hospitality consultant to undertake a third-party review.

The third-party review evaluated the proposal across several key areas, including:

- Strategic rationale, including identification of market demand and public value within the park and surrounding area,
- Feasibility, including the operational viability of the café in a park context with site-specific constraints,
- Appropriate scale and form, through analysis of multiple operating models ranging from a seasonal kiosk to a full-service restaurant,
- Operational and governance considerations, including delivery models, servicing requirements, and long-term management, and
- Long-term sustainability, including financial performance, seasonality, and the ability to support a year-round presence.

The purpose of the review was to assess the suitability of the proposed F&B concept, including its market fit, scale, facility servicing, and operating model, and to inform implementation considerations for subsequent design and delivery phases.

The review determined that a modestly-scaled, year-round café at Queen's Park North is feasible and supportable in principle and could provide meaningful public realm and visitor experience benefits as a year-round amenity and community anchor, subject to several conditions. These conditions include ensuring that the F&B offering and building are appropriately scaled, that servicing and operational requirements are carefully integrated into the design, and that governance and operating models are clearly defined and aligned with the tri-party agreement. Consistent with input received through the third-party review and CREM's advisory role, the success of the F&B offering will be heavily influenced by key operational considerations, including servicing, logistics, seasonality, and alignment between design and operating requirements.

The revised Concept Plan reflects these findings by reducing the scale and footprint of the central building and carefully locating the building to minimize impacts on the park's trees, landscape, and overall character, while supporting a viable year-round operation. The concept will benefit from ongoing refinement and evaluation to ensure the strongest possible alignment between the business case, physical design, operating approach and character of the park to help ensure long-term sustainability.

Pending Council approval of the Concept Plan, City staff will continue working with the project consultants, the University of Toronto and the proposed Queens Park North

Detailed Design Working Group to refine the F&B governance, operating, design, and implementation framework. This work is anticipated to proceed in two phases.

- **Phase 1: Governance and Operating Framework**
As an initial next step, project partners will lead additional market validation activities to review and inform the governance and operating framework required to support the F&B delivery and long-term operations. Led by the U of T, in consultation with the City and project consultant, this phase will include:
 - a market sounding exercise to further test key assumptions and assess interest among established F&B operators,
 - refinement of the operator selection criteria and operating requirements, and
 - development of a preferred operator procurement and go-to-market approach.
- **Phase 2: Operator Procurement and Integration**
Building on the completion of Phase 1, U of T will advance the operator selection in consultation with the City. This phase will include:
 - the release of a competitive tendering process, with City representation on the evaluation panel, and the selection of a preferred operator, and
 - finalization of the third-party licencing agreement and operating arrangements required to support long-term café operations.

The F&B operator will be engaged at an appropriate stage of the project to provide operational input into the detailed design of the central building and supporting infrastructure, helping to ensure alignment between the facility's design and long-term operating requirements. This phased approach will help mitigate implementation and operational risks while ensuring continued alignment between the café design, operating model, governance framework, and broader public realm objectives. An update on F&B implementation will be included as part of the 2027 progress report.

Additional details regarding the F&B feasibility assessment are provided in Appendix 5.

Terms of Reference for Advisory Body

The proposed governance model for Queen's Park North, including key elements of the tri-party maintenance, operations, and funding agreement between the City, University of Toronto, and Weston Foundation, was presented to and approved by City Council in March 2026.

The governance structure includes the following components:

- a Steering Committee, composed of representatives from the City, University of Toronto, and the donor, responsible for oversight of park maintenance and operations, approval of programming, monitoring performance, and providing overall strategic direction, including oversight of the Executive Director
- an Executive Director, responsible for day-to-day leadership of the park, including operations, programming, long-term planning, and performance management

- a proposed Indigenous Leadership and Stewardship Circle, to be further defined through ongoing engagement with First Nations and Indigenous communities
- an Advisory Body, intended to provide input and guidance on park initiatives to support implementation of the park vision.

Since March, staff have engaged with the community and advanced discussions with the University of Toronto, donor, and the Ward Councillor, in accordance with Council direction to refine the draft Terms of Reference for the Advisory Body.

Based on these discussions and input, the Advisory Body is proposed to be co-chaired by the Ward Councillor and the Queen's Park North Executive Director, and to include approximately 20 individuals representing local institutions, the University of Toronto and other local stakeholders, including students, Indigenous communities, the 2SLGBTQ+ community and nearby residents.

The Advisory Body is intended to serve as a consultative forum to support park stewardship by providing feedback and recommendations to the Executive Director and Steering Committee. While not a decision-making body, it is designed to ensure that a broad range of perspectives inform the ongoing management and programming of Queen's Park North.

The Advisory Body is proposed include designated representatives of the University of Toronto, nearby institutions and residents' associations as well as positions filled through the City's public appointments process. During the initial two-year period, the Advisory Body is expected to meet a minimum of three times per year, with meetings to be held at least twice per year thereafter. In addition, one general community meeting will be held annually.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Advisory Body are included in Appendix 6.

2. Community Engagement and Review

Design Review Panel

The project and draft Concept Plan were presented to the City's Design Review Panel on March 11, 2026. The Panel expressed overall support for the project's vision and direction, while providing constructive feedback focused on balancing programming with ecological integrity, enhancing accessibility and user experience, and ensuring long-term resilience and stewardship of the park. The Panel supported the overall direction toward a more social and program-rich park, with particular appreciation for the diversity of ceremonies and activities proposed. The Panel emphasized the importance of balancing programming with the park's role as an oasis for quiet reflection, and taking care not to overburden the park with interventions, and ensuring that spaces for stillness and respite remain central.

The Panel voted in support of the proposal, with the condition that the project return for a subsequent review, and with support contingent on the continued refinement of the park program and advancement of a comprehensive forest management strategy.

[Minutes of the meeting](#) are attached as Appendix 8.

Phase 3 Engagement Feedback Summary

Phase 3 community engagement was conducted between March and May 2026. The purpose of this phase was to provide updates on the project and to seek feedback on the draft Concept Plan, including refinements made in response to prior engagement phases.

This phase included 11 engagement activities, with participation from approximately 463 individuals representing local communities, neighbouring institutions, park users, community organizations, and members of the public. The project team also provided a presentation to the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee on May 13, 2026. In addition, focused meetings were held with the Friends of Queen's Park North (FOQPN) and key stakeholders between April 16 and May 11, 2026 to support ongoing dialogue and provide updates leading up to the June Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting.

Feedback received during Phase 3 reflected a range of perspectives:

- Local resident and community associations, as well as the Friends of Queen's Park North, initially expressed significant concern about specific elements in the draft concept, the amount of proposed physical change and the extent to which their voices had influenced the design work.
- The online public survey feedback generated more positive public feedback, with about half of the respondents indicating that the design concept was moderately aligned, aligned, or very aligned with the six Guiding Principles for the revitalization of Queen's Park North.
- Participants at the 2SLGBTQIA+ focus group shared support for many elements of the draft design concept, particularly the balance between respite and activity, the tree walk, washrooms, and lighting. There is interest in strengthening the recognition of the 2SLGBTQIA+ heritage in the park and support for seeing the Park's new Advisory Body membership include a range of interests.
- Participants at the Heritage focus group shared strong support for the extent to which their knowledge and concerns had been genuinely heard by the Queen's Park North team. It was suggested that the Draft Statement of Significance could be strengthened by clearly articulating the urban forest character as a defining feature of the park. The proposed approach to completing Heritage Impact Assessments (Statements of Heritage Impact) was considered thorough and appropriate.
- Participants at the Trees and Nature focus group focused on the importance of a Forest Management Plan as foundational to documenting the baseline conditions in the park and determining what is appropriate in Queen's Park North. There was strong concern that the revitalization process was too rushed and risked undermining the long-term protection of the trees and urban forest. There was interest in seeing a comprehensive construction impact analysis, assessment of soil health and structure, and guidance received regarding tree planting, regeneration, and future canopy expansion. There was also interest in guidance related to education and interpretation of the urban forest and long-term intergenerational stewardship.
- The Neighbouring Institutions Working Group members (representing the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the University of Toronto, Trinity College, University of St. Michael's College, Victoria

University, and the Gardner Museum) expressed appreciation for a thoughtful design that they felt incorporated feedback received to date. They shared excitement about the programming opportunities in the park.

Indigenous Engagement

Meetings have continued between the project team and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Wendat Nation. In addition, a third Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting was held as part of Phase 3 engagement.

Feedback indicated strong support for the revitalization initiative and for several elements within the draft Concept Plan, including the Learning Forest and associated interpretive opportunities, the introduction of understory planting, and the emphasis on protecting and strengthening the park's tree canopy. There is also support for the project's emphasis on integrating Indigenous art, language, and cultural knowledge throughout the design.

Participants emphasized the importance of meaningful participation in decision-making, reinforcing a "nothing about us without us" approach. In response, the project team has advanced scopes of work with the three First Nations, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Wendat Nation, shared in March 2026, to support direct involvement in key areas of the project. These scopes of work are intended to provide opportunities for authorship and input into site interpretation, visitor experience planning, interpretive materials, and the integration of Indigenous language and cultural plant knowledge. They also include opportunities to participate in processes related to commissioning Indigenous public art, including potential role in artist selection or advisory panels.

The updated Concept Plan identifies key locations, including park gateways and the central gathering space, where these elements can be meaningfully integrated into the final design, public art program, heritage interpretation, and broader visitor experience.

Engagement with First Nations and Indigenous communities will continue through detailed design, including independent consultation meetings aligned with key project milestones. In addition to design elements, engagement will also continue to focus on programming and stewardship opportunities.

Staff's report back in 2027 will include updates on the advancement of the scopes of work with the First Nations, detailed design, and stewardship approach.

For a full list of engagement activities across all phases, see Appendix 7.

3. Concept Plan Update

Design Rationale

Through the robust City-led engagement process (July 2025 - May 2026), the City of Toronto has developed a vision for Queen's Park North as an extraordinary public space for people and nature throughout the seasons that respects the existing trees and heritage of the park, fosters a welcoming environment, and showcases excellence in design, ecological stewardship, education, animation and collaborative governance.

To achieve this vision, the revitalization project brings together several interrelated areas of work:

- proactive tree care and urban forest management
- enhanced maintenance and proactive operations
- education, interpretation, and appropriately scaled programming
- improvements to visitor experience for all ages
- high-quality, inclusive design
- a collaborative stewardship model

Through this philanthropic partnership, the project focuses on both near-term improvements and long-term stewardship. The enhanced maintenance and operating model, supported through the donation and partnership with the University of Toronto, is intended to improve the park experience while sustaining its natural and cultural heritage.

Queen's Park North is one of the largest and most significant green spaces in Toronto's downtown core and is an essential civic and ecological asset. Maintaining the status quo presents risks to the long-term health of the tree canopy and does not respond to the growing demand on limited public space in downtown Toronto. The proposed renewal is intended to strengthen the park's resilience while maintaining its core functions as:

- a vibrant urban forest, green oasis and place of respite and reflection in the centre of the city,
- a space of cultural significance, gathering, and celebration, including for Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities,
- a setting for democratic expression and ecological education,
- a space for everyday use by residents, students, and workers,
- a destination for Torontonians and visitors reflective of contemporary Toronto, and
- an important green corridor within the University of Toronto St. George Campus.

The Concept Plan provides direction for the physical changes recommended to achieve the project vision. The Concept Plan establishes the elements proposed to be included in the park (existing and new) and illustrates their general layout and relationship to each other and existing features such as the park's tree canopy. In this way, the plan provides a framework for more detailed design development specific to each element (such as the Learning Forest or pathways) to be developed following Council

consideration, through further community engagement, as the vision progresses from concept to construction-ready drawings.

The Concept Plan, revised based on the feedback and analysis outlined in this report, presents a more focused and integrated approach to achieving the project vision. Proposed changes in the park are carefully located and scaled in response to the Potential Tree Impact Zones to minimize impacts on existing trees and the landscape. The changes are concentrated on natural elements that support the resilience of the tree canopy, including the Learning Forest, commemorative garden, and understory restoration zones. These elements are designed to be integrated into the existing landscape using native planting and to support ecological and cultural education.

The Concept Plan also re-establishes the centre of the park as a flexible public gathering space. By placing the Equestrian Statue of Edward VII in a prominent location closer to the Legislature, the plan returns the heart of the park to broader public use, while connecting the statue more directly to the seat of government as part of a comprehensive park-wide approach to interpretation and storytelling.

Across the Concept Plan, there is a consistent emphasis on education, interpretation, and storytelling, with the intent of making the park's ecological and cultural significance more visible and accessible.

Design Directions

Staff have refined the Concept Plan based on Phase 3 engagement feedback, as well as findings from the UFMP, Draft Statement of Significance, F&B feasibility assessment, and public art framework and additional meetings with key stakeholders over late April and May. This work has informed the evaluation of design options and guided changes to better balance the park's natural character with its role as a public space.

At the Concept Plan level, staff have assessed the overall scale and impact of proposed elements and identified areas where changes were required to reduce impacts, protect the urban forest, and maintain an appropriate balance between passive and active uses.

Key updates to the Concept Plan include:

Central Building

The building footprint has been reduced and carefully located to avoid impacts to mature and distinctive trees and root zones. The overall building program, tested through early schematic design by the project's architects, remains modest while supporting a viable year-round café and improved visitor amenities. Public washrooms are provided as a separate smaller structure to focus building footprints, minimize impacts and allow independent operation.

Parameters to guide detailed design of the café and washroom building include:

- Locate café and public washroom in two separate buildings in the vicinity of the southeast edge of the Heart. Locate the buildings in close proximity to each other to coordinate servicing and utility connections.

- Site café building, public washroom, and any new paved areas to avoid adverse impacts to Distinctive trees and to minimize impacts on all other trees, as guided by the enhanced tree protection zones in accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan and Environment, Climate and Forestry division.
- Continue to ensure that the café building and public washrooms are located and designed in a manner that is in keeping with the draft Statement of Significance and carefully integrates these elements into the existing landscape and character of the park.
- Limit the gross floor area of the central building to a maximum of approximately 2,700 square feet at grade level.
- Incorporate a multi-purpose staff touch-down space for dedicated park staff and explore opportunities for its use for small community gatherings (e.g. ecological education sessions, tour meeting place).
- Locate the central building's ground floor and basement to avoid the subway tunnel below the park and expedite TTC approvals and construction schedule as appropriate.
- Limit the gross floor area of the public washroom building to a maximum of approximately 500 square feet.
- Locate the public washroom building proximate to an existing pathway.
- Identify underground servicing infrastructure locations and routes based on minimized impact to existing trees and root zones, in particular Distinctive Trees.
- Develop the construction plan to ensure trees can be adequately protected in accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan and tree preservation plan as required by the City's tree bylaws.
- Explore opportunities for public seating and/or viewing on the building roof, in conformity with accessibility requirements and in conjunction with green roof elements.

Learning Forest

The western quadrant of the park, home to several distinctive and rare trees, has been reimagined as a Learning Forest with enhanced opportunities to protect existing trees, support ecological restoration, improve biodiversity and increase learning opportunities. A realigned, lower and shorter elevated tree path is proposed to be integrated within the landscape in accordance with the enhanced tree protection zones in accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan. The elevated tree path has been located to utilize existing hard surfaces for the proposed footings and reduce continued impacts due to compaction on root systems. The area will include a low enclosure and dense native understory planting that reflects Indigenous principles of companion plantings.

Parameters to guide detailed design of the Learning Forest include:

- Ensure the siting of the elevated tree path and associated footings result in no adverse impacts to Distinctive Trees and minimize impacts on all other trees, in accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan and the City's tree protection bylaws.
- Continue to ensure that the Learning Forest is designed and laid out in a manner that is in keeping with the draft Statement of Significance and carefully integrates its elements into the existing landscape and character of the park.

- Ensure the elevated tree path is designed using robust materials, taking seasonality, park operations and maintenance, and public safety into consideration.
- Limit the total length of the elevated tree path to a maximum of 150 metres.
- Limit the maximum height of the elevated tree path at its highest point to 2.9 metres (to the walking surface) and refine the detailed design and elevations to maximize accessibility, safety, and integration with the surrounding Learning Forest.
- Develop the construction plan to ensure trees can be adequately protected in accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan and the associated tree preservation plan as required by the Environment, Climate and Forestry, and the City's tree protection bylaws.
- Enclose the Learning Forest with a barrier or low fence on the perimeter and explore opportunities to reduce the barrier as the understory plantings mature.
- Create a native dense understory planting plan collaborating with Indigenous knowledge keepers on companion plants.
- Provide appropriate setbacks between the enclosure edge and existing pathways to minimize sightline obstructions and safety risks.
- Incorporate Indigenous language and ways of knowing in the design and development of interpretive and educational signage as part of the elevated tree path.

Commemorative Garden

The footprint of the garden has been reduced in size and its configuration reoriented to avoid key tree protection areas and better integrate the garden within the existing park landscape. The four individual garden rooms and associated pathways are sited to minimize tree impacts, improve circulation, preserve more open lawn space, and reduce paved areas.

Parameters to guide detailed design of the commemorative garden include:

- Adjust the footprint of each garden room as necessary to respond to the Urban Forest Management Plan.
- Refine the garden layouts, size, design, and planting selection to better integrate into the existing landscape and character of the park, as well as ensuring no adverse impacts to Distinctive Trees and minimizing impacts to all other trees in accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan and Environment, Climate and Forestry division.
- Continue to ensure that the garden is designed in a manner that is in keeping with the draft Statement of Significance and that it is carefully integrated into the existing landscape and character of the park.
- In the proposed planting palette, prioritize native species selection and reduce reliance on non-native plantings where possible.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate Indigenous ecological knowledge and design principles into the garden approach overall.
- Locate the garden rooms adjacent to existing pathways to minimize the development of new pathways and paved areas and provide for improved circulation.
- Develop detail for the water features in response to operational, maintenance and safety considerations.

- Identify underground servicing infrastructure locations and routes based on minimized impact to existing trees and root zones, in particular Distinctive Trees.

Indigenous Placekeeping

A key project principle prioritizes embedding Indigenous cultural values, history, and storytelling in the physical landscape of the revitalized park as well as the stewardship strategy. The project team is advancing dedicated scopes of work with three First Nations to develop culturally specific design, interpretation, education, and programming elements.

The Concept Plan includes identified locations for elements being developed through collaboration with First Nations and Indigenous communities, including design features, public art, and interpretive and programming opportunities. These elements represent an important layer in the emerging design and will be further defined and integrated during detailed design.

Workshop

The Workshop, as a stand-alone structure, has been removed, reducing the number of proposed structures within the park. Inspired by the ideas developed as part of the Workshop concept development, the project team will continue to integrate community and educational activities in the park's detailed design and programming, including Learning Forest tours, self-guided graphics and QR codes throughout the park, ecological learning opportunities, and Commemorative Garden activities for all ages. Innovative programming and collaboration with neighbouring cultural institutions will be further supported by the new Executive Director role.

Gateways and Pedestrian Crossings

Gateway locations have been identified as key points for public art and improvements to pedestrian safety, including at the Museum Subway Station. Enhancements are being explored in coordination with Transportation Services to improve pedestrian crossings and access on all edges of the park.

Several elements presented in the March 2026 draft Concept Plan remain in the updated plan without substantial changes, including:

- ecological restoration zones
- the central gathering space (“The Heart”), including flexible seating and interactive features
- the running path
- seating and lighting
- repositioning and interpretation of the Equestrian Statue of Edward VII

The Concept Plan has also been evaluated to ensure strong integration with adjacent public spaces, including nearby University of Toronto open spaces. The Concept Plan has also been developed in coordination with preliminary concepts prepared for the emerging University Park initiative, envisioned to expand green space in the Queen's Park Crescent and University Avenue corridor and support a more connected and cohesive green space network in downtown Toronto.

The Concept Plan will continue to be refined through detailed design, including further technical analysis, review and refinement of the location and scale of program elements within the park, with a continued emphasis on ecological enhancements and integration with the existing park landscape.

4. Next Steps

Agreements

Should Council approve the Concept Plan, staff will finalize negotiations and execute a series of agreements required to advance the revitalization and establish the long-term maintenance, operations, and funding model for Queen's Park North. These include:

- Amendments to the lease between the City and the University of Toronto for Queen's Park North,
- A donation agreement between the City of Toronto and the Weston Foundation to fund the revitalization,
- A tri-party maintenance, operations, and funding agreement between the City, University of Toronto, and Weston Foundation, and
- A licence agreement with the University of Toronto to enable fulfillment of their responsibilities under the tri-party agreement, including oversight of the F&B operations.

The final tri-party agreement will incorporate City Council direction on the draft Terms of Reference for the Advisory Body, as outlined in Appendix 6.

Following execution of these agreements, the parties will advance implementation of the operating model, including recruitment and appointment of the Executive Director, and establishment of the advisory governance structure.

Ongoing Engagement

The project has followed the City's Capital Projects Design and Development Process to inform community engagement and establish a preferred conceptual design. Following Council approval, the project will move into detailed design and construction documentation, led by the City in consultation with the donor, in accordance with the approved donation agreement.

City staff will continue to lead community engagement and provide community updates throughout detailed design and construction on specific project elements and as comprehensive project updates.

As an interim step in advance of the formal establishment of the Executive Director position and Advisory Body, staff recommend composing a Queen's Park North Detailed Design Working Group composed of no more than 10 representatives from the City of Toronto, University of Toronto, donor, local resident associations, nearby cultural institutions, and other relevant stakeholder groups and experts appointed by the City to inform the forthcoming phases of detailed design development. This will include focused engagement with respect to finalizing the design details of the Concept Plan (Appendix 2).

In addition, staff intend to provide regular design updates to the project's focus groups and the broader public including at the 30 per cent and 60 per cent detailed design stages related to both phase 1 and phase 2 workplans. Meetings with the First Nations and Urban Indigenous Community members would also align to these design milestones as well as regular updates to the project website.

As part of ongoing work with First Nations and Urban Indigenous Community staff would like to present the project to the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee once scopes of work with the Nations have advanced. The timing of this will be established through the next phase of meetings.

The City's Design Review Panel has requested the project return at a later stage of design; staff are planning for that presentation at the 60 per cent detailed design milestone. This timing will allow the project to provide a meaningful update and response to the DRP's previous comments, while ensuring there is an opportunity for the DRP to share feedback for incorporation into the final design.

Over time, engagement will transition to the advisory governance structure described in Appendix 6, including annual community meetings.

Staff will also present updates during the detailed design phase, the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee.

Detailed Design, Procurement and Construction

Following Council approval, the project team will confirm an updated project and construction schedule, advance detailed design for all project elements, define scopes of work for construction phases, secure required permits and approvals, and initiate procurement of construction services.

Construction is anticipated to proceed in two phases, with planning informed by the Urban Forest Management Plan to minimize impacts on trees and maintain an east-west pedestrian access route through the park during the construction of each phase.

- Phase 1 is proposed to focus on the northern portion of the park and will include landscape improvements such as lighting, horticulture, pathway upgrades, and arboricultural work. This phase is anticipated to begin in late 2026 and continue through the 2027 construction season, subject to required approvals.
- Phase 2 is proposed to focus on the centre and southern portions of the park and will include construction of new buildings, servicing, water features, the commemorative garden, the Learning Forest, central gathering areas, signage and wayfinding, and additional arboricultural work. Phase 2 will begin after Phase 1 is complete and reopened to the public; the timeline for completion will be determined, subject to required approvals.

Parks and Recreation has engaged the Purchasing and Materials Management Division to develop and implement a strategic, competitive procurement approach for this complex, two-phase construction project, ensuring effective delivery while meeting accelerated timelines.

In parallel with construction, where possible, staff will explore opportunities for early visitor experience improvements that advance the project vision and support education, interpretation, and public engagement.

Reporting

Staff will report back to Infrastructure and Environment Committee in the first quarter of 2027 with an update on the project schedule, detailed design, construction, governance, and implementation progress. Staff recommend a further update report in 2028 once the governance structure is firmly in place and regular biennial reports to City Council thereafter.

Summary

The next phase of work will focus on advancing the recommended Concept Plan through detailed design, implementation, and the establishment of a long-term stewardship model for Queen's Park North. Through the execution of agreements, continued engagement with Indigenous partners and the community, and a phased construction approach, the project will move from conceptual design and planning into detailed design and delivery while maintaining a strong focus on protecting the urban forest, integrating cultural and public realm elements, and ensuring a high-quality and inclusive park experience. This approach is intended to ensure that the revitalization is delivered in a coordinated, transparent, and sustainable manner, positioning Queen's Park North as a resilient, welcoming and well-managed park for the long term.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 - Draft Statement of Significance
Appendix 2 - JRS Revised Concept Plan
Appendix 3 - Potential Tree Impact Zone Mapping
Appendix 4 - Overlay of Concept Plan and Potential Tree Impact Zone Mapping
Appendix 5 - Café Feasibility Assessment

Appendix 6 - Queen's Park North Advisory Body Draft Terms of Reference
Appendix 7 - Engagement Summary
Appendix 8 - March 11 DRP Meeting Minutes

Appendix 1 - Draft Statement of Significance

Description

Queen's Park North is a public park in downtown Toronto located just north of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, within the University of Toronto St. George Campus and on the ancestral homeland of many nations, including the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg (Mississaugas), the Haudenosaunee and Wendat. Shared use of the land by Indigenous Peoples was governed by diplomacy and accords between nations and, to this day, Indigenous Peoples remain closely connected to this land whose oldest trees hold cultural meaning and serve as an important connection for Indigenous peoples to memory and to the past. The nearby Royal Chapel Ziibing and Gi-Chi-Twaa Gimaa Kwe Mississauga Anishinaabek AName AMik (The Queen's Anishinaabek Sacred Place St. Catherine's Chapel at Massey College) also signals the historic and ongoing relationship between the Crown and many nations in this area. The property is part of the Toronto Purchase of 1805 (Treaty 13) between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Purchased by King's College for use as a campus, the lands were leased to the City of Toronto in 1858 by the University for use as a public park, while maintaining its role as an important institutional connection through the campus. During her last visit to Canada, on July 6, 2010, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II unveiled an Ontario Heritage Trust provincial plaque to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Queen's Park in Toronto.

The park is framed by Wellesley Street and Queen's Park Crescent, which in its shape bears evidence of Taddle Creek and McCaul's Pond. Queen's Park North, the portion of Queen's Park located north of the Ontario Legislative Assembly building, comprises a landscape containing natural features including trees, lawns, glades and plants, as well as built features including pathways, gateways, public art and commemorative monuments. The park forms part of the broader historic University of Toronto landscape precinct adjacent to the Ontario Legislative Assembly building and functions as an ongoing public park and civic space associated with those institutions as well as recreational space for the general public.

(See Attachment 1 for community statement that further elaborates on the intangible values of Queen's Park North.)

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Queen's Park North is a significant evolved cultural heritage landscape located in downtown Toronto.

Since the 1820s and before becoming a public park, the lands known today as Queen's Park, including the Queen's Park North portion, have served as a landmark organizing feature of Toronto. These lands are directly associated with the original location of King's College (relocated to 15 King's College Circle as University College), and with the city's ceremonial boulevard, University Avenue, of which the Queen's Park lands were established as the northern terminus. By 1892, the central portion of the Queen's Park lands became the current location of the Ontario Legislative Assembly building.

Queen's Park North is also valued as a landmark civic space in Toronto. The landscape comprises Canada's earliest municipal public park upon establishment of that use in

1860. Its unique context, form and history of public use is representative of the public park movement, which advanced ideas and practices about public health and recreation, identity and citizenship within Toronto as a city and as the provincial capital.

The subject cultural heritage landscape has also functioned over time as an important space for formal public assembly in Toronto, serving as a venue for parades, celebrations and demonstrations. The landscape's size, quality, and adjacent institutional nodes related to education and government have made it a suitable and prominent space for gatherings that express identity and celebrate and exercise fundamental rights related to freedom of assembly and speech, including for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and early Pride Day marches. The public performance of these rituals is an important element of citizenship in Canada and democratic society, and imbues the cultural landscape of the park with additional meaning as a civic space.

As a repository of public art and commemoration, the Queen's Park North cultural heritage landscape contributes to public identity at multiple governmental levels. The site is a place for collective colonial settler public memory with numerous monuments and works of public art being located within the cultural landscape. The works contribute to public memory by commemorating individuals and events relevant to municipal, provincial and national identity. Despite the ad hoc development of public art and commemorations within the cultural landscape, their inclusion confirms the site's status as a high-profile, public place with an inherent civic function. The monuments and public art also contribute to the character of the park, providing focal points, nodes of interest, and contributing to its monumentality.

The Queen's Park North cultural heritage landscape is also valued for its historical associations with the significant landscape gardeners, Andre Parmentier, William Mundie, and Edwin Taylor, who contributed to the park's design in the early to mid-19th century, as well as the prominent architectural firm of Cumberland and Storm, who ultimately realized much of those earlier design efforts. Alongside their work on Queen's Park North, Cumberland and Storm are significant for their commission to design landmark buildings on the early University of Toronto's St. George campus, including the Stewart Observatory (1856) and the University College building at 15 King's College Circle (1856-1859) that replaced King's College on the Queen's Park lands.

The design of the Queen's Park North cultural heritage landscape reflects an early example of Public Park Movement planning principles derived from Great Britain and as applied in a North American context in the 19th century. Originally located at the north edge of town, the formerly undeveloped Queen's Park lands provided an opportunity for residents to experience much-needed social and gathering space within a natural refuge with the associated aim of addressing public health concerns related to the negative urban conditions of industrialization. Defining features of this design approach at the subject property, which incorporates elements of the associated Public Park Movement, which is based on a park-like setting of lawns and trees. The several "glades" described as lawn areas exposed to sun and sky created by larger openings in the park's tree canopy are also likely by design.

Queen's Park North, framed by the University of Toronto's academic buildings to the east and west and the Legislature complex to the south, defines, maintains and

supports the lands historic character as one of layered institutional evolution. Shaped by historic topography and successive infrastructural interventions, its landscape reflects the historic separation between Queen's Park North and the rest of the University property. The park is a significant surviving green space from the area's broader historic landscape precinct now located in an increasingly urban context.

The Queen's Park cultural heritage landscape is historically, physically and functionally linked to its surroundings. Queen's Park North is valued as a central open space within a larger district of civic, educational, and cultural institutions where the park acts as a connective landscape, maintaining long-standing physical and visual connections to the University of Toronto, the Legislature complex, and University Avenue.

Heritage Attributes

Landscape Features:

- "Distinctive" trees
- The natural topography and soils
- The trees, the tree canopy, lawns, and glades

Built Features:

- Public Park Movement features, including:
 - Gently curving pathways punctuated by gateways whose locations are defined by their connection to crossing points of the adjacent road network
 - Monuments as focal points
- Public art and commemorative monuments, often monumental in scale, including:
 - The 48th Highlanders Regimental Memorial (1923)
 - The Alfred Purdy monument (2008)
 - The King Edward VII monument (placed at QPN in 1969)
 - The Modernist water fountain by landscape architect, J. Austin Floyd (1950s)

Circulation Systems:

- The historic axial layout and access to the Ontario Legislative Building adjacent to the landscape's southern edge and University Avenue beyond
- The physical, visual, and programmatic connectivity with neighbouring educational and governmental institutions including the University of Toronto, the Legislature buildings via the park's network of gateways and paths

Views:

- From Queen's Park at Charles Street West, looking south to the 48th Highlanders Regimental Memorial and across the park to the Ontario Legislative building

Attachment 1 to Draft Statement of Significance

Queen's Park North Community Statement: An Impressionist Sense of Place

We often don't see the extraordinary in life, and it's even harder to describe. In the case of Queen's Park North, its extraordinary nature is paramount to understanding its

unique value within Toronto. What is it like to actually be there? What is “there” about it? What are the characteristics that amount to its sense of presence?

Being in Queen’s Park feels different than being in any other park in the city. Why?

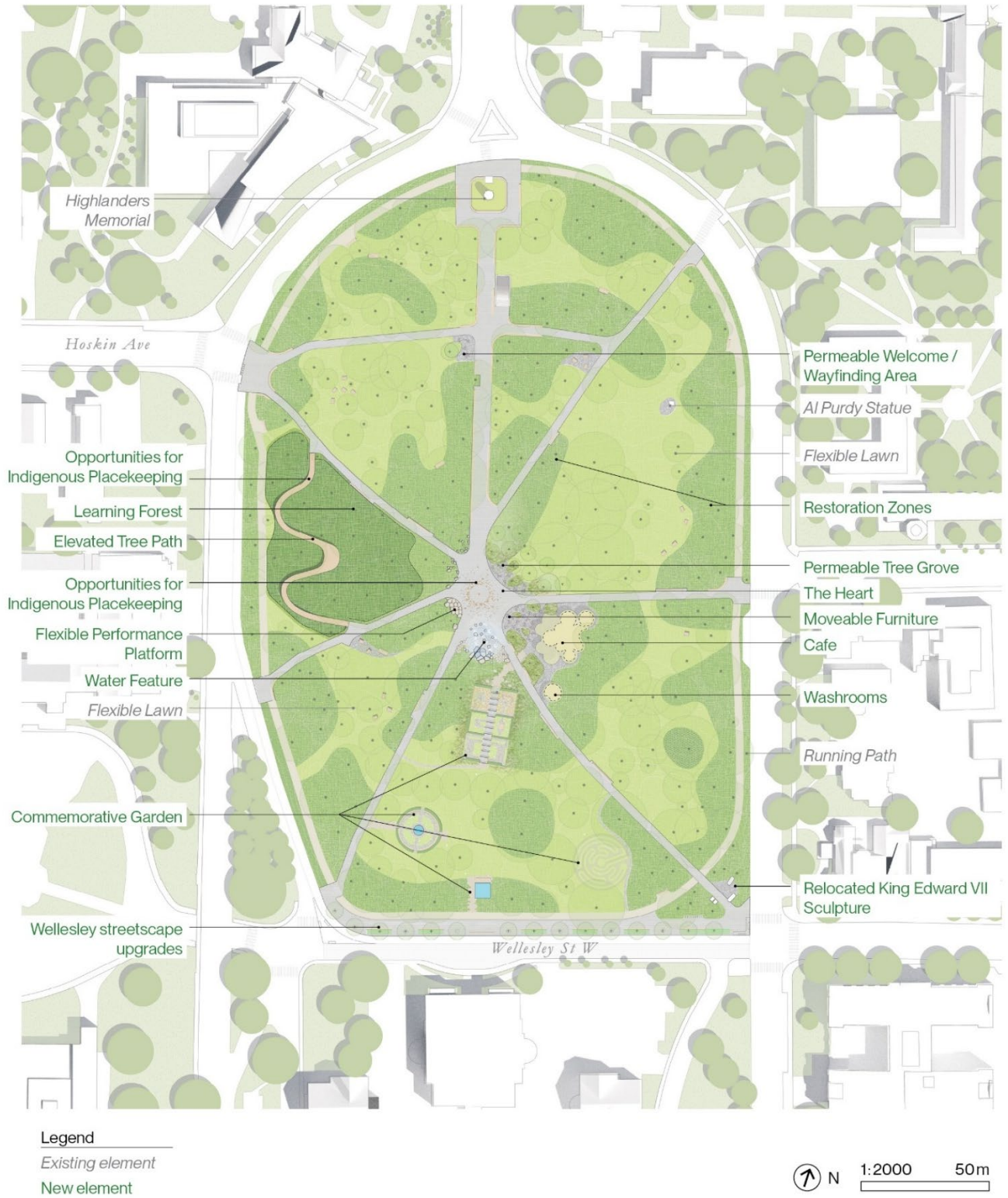
The existing Statement of Significance for Queen’s Park North provides a sense of history, but it’s missing a sense of place. It doesn’t capture the feeling and presentation of the landscape and the elements that make it up. It doesn’t express the magic combination of gentility, strength, natural animation, and escape that the forest provides. It seeks to govern in prose and omits the poetry that’s the essence of the park.

The park you see today is the result of decisions made forty years ago. This is a park of evolution, not revolution. We have all been witness to some of the events of life, but it is the nature of trees to be in the presence of time writ larger than any one individual. They will endure, withstand, survive, and compete. Trees are generous, collaborative, and have lessons to teach us.

And that may be beyond the capacity of City staff, of any of us, to deal with or to capture in regulatory language. But we would be abrogating our responsibility if we didn’t try. Indigenous consultants in this and other recent University of Toronto processes have spoken eloquently to the values of trees, not simply as a response to colonialization, but as stewards and links to life itself. Their insight into the role of trees in their culture and value system, their life system, should find a prominent place in the Statement of Significance.

What’s distinctive about the landscape of Queen’s Park North is a balance between human history and natural history. It’s the notion that generations have sat under these trees. The park has become a place and you can see that place in the public expressions of respite, repose, and rest, of chipmunks, nesting birds, ladies doing tai chi, parents with kids in strollers, people going about their lives, enjoying this rare fragment of natural heritage that’s nonetheless substantial enough to escape into. Without its intangible magic, unquantifiable and largely ineffable in the metrics of reports, Queen’s Park North would cease to be the place that it is.

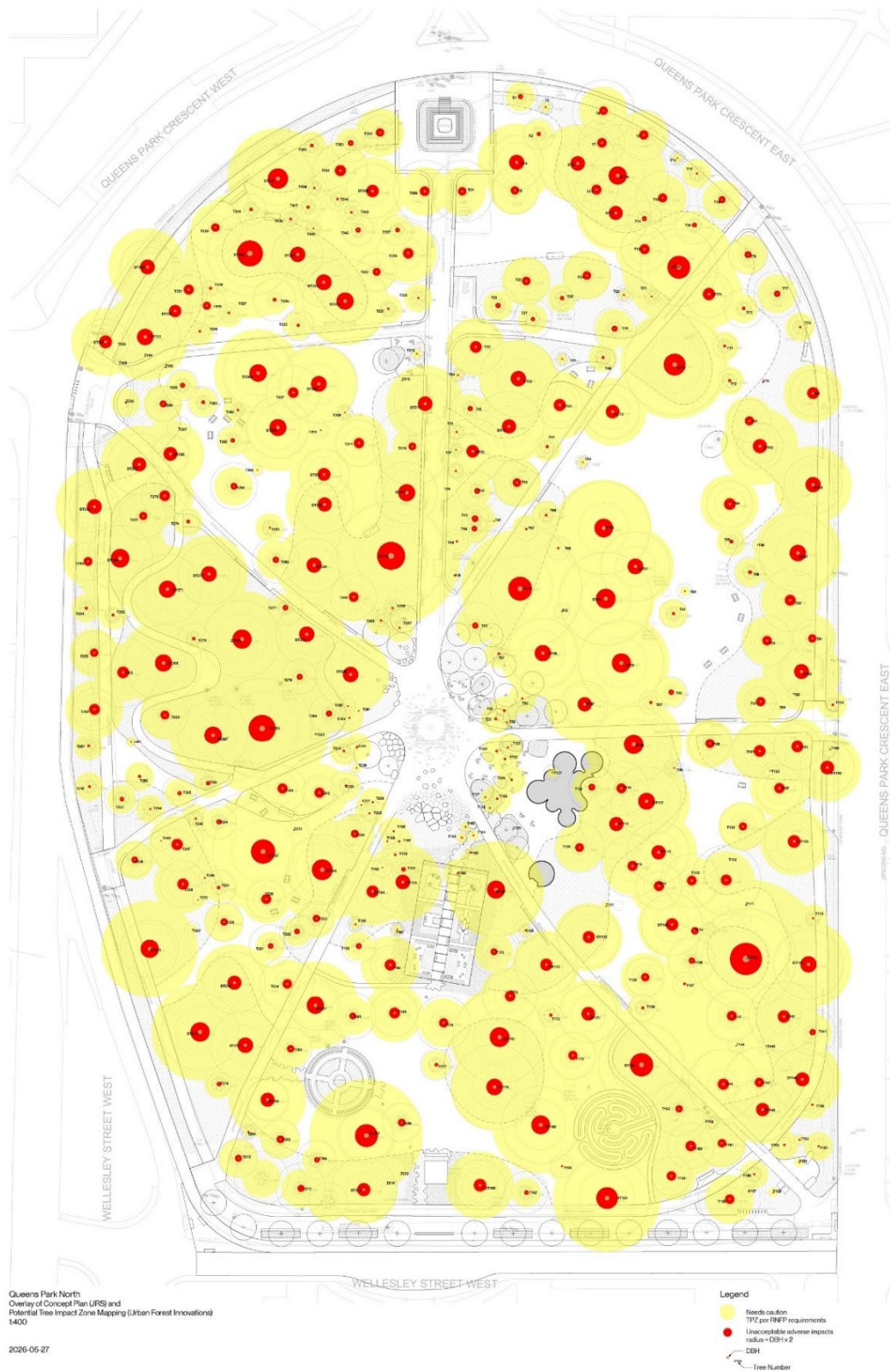
Appendix 2 - Concept Plan



Appendix 3 - Potential Tree Impact Zones Mapping



Appendix 4 - Overlay of Concept Plan and Potential Tree Impact Zones Mapping



Appendix 5 - Food and Beverage Feasibility Assessment

Executive Summary

This summary provides an overview of City staff's assessment of the food and beverage (F&B) component of Queen's Park North revitalization project recognizing that the setting for such an operation would be unique and would pose specific challenges not traditionally faced by a F&B operation. This assessment has included reviews by Economic Development and Culture, Corporate Real Estate Management, University of Toronto and The Fifteen Group, an independent third-party retained by the EDC. The assessment was intended to inform internal due diligence, support evidence-based decision-making and guide subsequent phases of planning and design.

The assessments concluded that:

- a modest, carefully-scaled, year-round café is feasible and supportable in concept as a core park amenity;
- a café located at the centre of the park can be an anchor for significant public realm and visitor experience benefits;
- site conditions and market context indicate gaps in the local market and potential demand;
- the funding structure and operating model can mitigate financial risk;
- there is strong alignment among key partners, including the City, University of Toronto and donor, to support successful design and delivery of the F&B operations; and
- the project timeline allows for further validation and risk management.

A café operation at Queen's Park North designed and constructed by way of the donation is supportable in principle and can enhance the visitor experience, support year-round park activation, and contribute to broader city-building objectives related to the public realm, tourism, culture, and downtown vibrancy, if implemented with appropriate operational, infrastructure, environmental, and governance safeguards in place.

CREM was consulted, drawing on its experience delivering food and beverage offerings at major City sites such as St. Lawrence Market, Union Station and City Hall. In addition to supporting real estate strategy and transaction considerations, CREM provided high-level input to inform key operational and feasibility considerations.

A summary of the City-led third-party assessment including key findings and high-level considerations is outlined below.

Background and Review Scope

As part of the Queen's Park North revitalization, a café is contemplated as part of the planned enhancements, with design and construction costs to be funded out of the project donation. The café is envisioned as a central anchor in the heart of the park, providing an enhanced visitor experience year-round.

The proposal assessed market gaps, operating models, appropriate scale of the café and viability. Multiple formats were evaluated, including temporary and permanent

options at varying scales (small, medium, large). Ultimately the small scale and permanent model was recommended as the minimum viable, year-round business, while mitigating impact to the park's natural environment. To provide an independent analysis, staff retained the Fifteen Group, a leading Toronto based hospitality consultant, to evaluate the proposal and conduct additional research, including:

- Market assessment and service gaps based on the unique characteristics of the park (e.g. including seasonality),
- Assessment of the appropriate operating (including scale) and governance model,
- Financial and operational viability based on industry benchmarks and unique servicing requirements, and
- Operational, logistical and implementation considerations.

Key Findings – Market Gaps, Scale and Operating Model

In reviewing the market gaps, the consultant confirmed the proposed café responds to a lack of year-round food and beverage amenities within the park and immediate surrounding area and limited opportunities for park-based gathering. The consultant recommended a minimum scale of approximately 204 square metres, with up to 40 indoor seats and 80-100 outdoor seats. This size was recommended to meet minimum operational, accessibility, servicing, and regulatory requirements necessary for a viable year-round business. Specifically, this proposed footprint enables scalability during peak periods over the summer season while mitigating lower volumes during winter months, enables adequate revenue generation, accommodates expanded storage and inventory management needs and meets the regulatory requirement for patron washrooms.

The consultant assessed five operating models and scales, including the pros and cons of each model and concluded that any model offering more than 40 indoor/100 outdoor seats was too large for the park setting. A temporary structure was assessed but not recommended based on challenges with profitability, limited quality F&B offerings, staffing logistics and inability to convene visitors year-round. The consultant also evaluated operating models - e.g. conservancy, community enterprise and third-party operators - identifying the third-party operator model as the most appropriately positioned to handle complex logistics presented by operating in a City park, such as restrictions on vehicle deliveries.

Consistent with input received through internal consultation, including CREM's advisory input, the success of the café will depend on key operational considerations such as servicing, logistics, seasonality, and alignment between design and operating requirements.

In addition, the U of T has reviewed the project consultant's proposal, including viability, revenue/operating assumptions and concept definition, as well as considered the benefit and utility of the café to the surrounding University community, particularly during the academic term and is satisfied that the proposal presents a credible foundation for a café operation, subject to continued refinement of the financial assumptions, operating model, concept development, and implementation considerations through subsequent stages of design.

Overall, the review identified that the F&B operating assumptions aligned with industry norms. Given the F&B sector's inherent competitiveness, future design phases will necessitate a more detailed and achievable business plan recognizing that this operation would be unique, operating in the middle of a park, with no parking, and would need to be serviced in a non-traditional way. The café itself is not meant to be a destination, but to enhance the park visitor's experience and to draw more visitors to the park. The detailed design phase will further explore how the café will be integrated into the broader park experience including programming, education and visitor experience strategies.

Governance

The initial F&B proposal recommended a third-party operating model managed by U of T through a licencing agreement, a finding confirmed by the consultant's review. U of T operates an extensive campus-wide portfolio of food and beverage services. Informed by its F&B expertise, U of T will undertake a robust go-to-market strategy for the successful identification of a third-party operator. The operator selection process will be based on criteria mutually agreeable to U of T, the City and the Donor.

In addition, U of T's involvement, beyond expertise successfully managing licensed F&B operators, brings additional benefits in terms of alignment with its educational programs and, importantly, involvement in the University's student food services program (e.g. food plan, flex dollars) that will create an additional market segment for the F&B operations, supporting early-stage financial opportunities, especially in mitigating anticipated seasonal trends in park visitation.

Additional Considerations

The concept requires continued refinement to address key considerations listed below and ensure strong alignment between the business case, physical design, and operating approach. The consultant identified additional considerations regarding the F&B implementation, which will be addressed through the next phases of the project, including through the input of the newly established Queens Park North Detailed Design Working Group:

- *Operator selection criteria*: prioritization of experienced operators with demonstrated high-volume hospitality and complex logistics expertise is critical for success (e.g. off-peak hour deliveries, limited site servicing, no public roads).
- *Sustainability and Reusables*: a compostable-first model, supported by sufficient space and equipment, is feasible to manage high visitor volumes while allowing opportunities to progressively scale reusable and circular initiatives over time. A reusable pilot can be considered once operations are stable.
- *Refinement of infrastructure, servicing and operational requirements*: ensuring alignment with all respective parties and operator prior to finalizing design concept and implementation. It will be important to maintain flexibility with operator needs informing space requirements.

Appendix 6 - Queen's Park North Advisory Body Draft Terms of Reference

Principles

Queen's Park North represents a unique opportunity to implement a collaborative stewardship model for the programming, operation and maintenance of an extraordinary City park in the context of a historic donation.

The tri-party agreement to be entered into between the City of Toronto, the University of Toronto, and the Weston Foundation establishes a shared operating, maintenance, and funding framework designed in part to ensure ongoing public and key stakeholder involvement for years to come. This ensures that a multitude of voices and expertise are involved in bringing the established vision for the park to life. This framework provides an ongoing avenue for engagement, communication, collaboration, and advice.

The parties share the following vision for the park: *an extraordinary place for people and nature throughout the seasons, which respects the existing trees and heritage of Queen's Park North, fosters a safe and welcoming environment, and showcases excellence in design, ecological stewardship, education, animation and collaborative governance.*

The framework to achieve this vision includes the following decision-making and advisory structure:

Steering Committee: A committee composed of one representative of each of the City of Toronto, the University of Toronto, and the Weston Foundation, responsible for oversight and strategic direction of Queen's Park North, including oversight of the Executive Director.

Executive Director: An individual appointed by the Steering Committee, responsible for day-to-day coordination, programming, and stakeholder relations for Queen's Park North. The Executive Director reports to the Steering Committee and co-chairs the Advisory Body together with the Ward Councillor, as described below.

Advisory Body: A consultative body established to provide input, guidance, and recommendations on matters relating to Queen's Park North, as described below.

Indigenous Leadership and Stewardship Circle: The role of this body has been described in engagement conversations to date with Rights Holders and Indigenous communities and will be further developed through continued consultations with First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous groups.

Details of the Advisory Body

Purpose: The Advisory Body (formerly referred to as Advisory Board) is intended to serve as a consultative forum: an important space for community input, feedback, and recommendations to help guide the park's stewardship in accordance with the tri-party agreement and established Park Vision. The Advisory Body is advisory and consultative only; it is not a decision-making body. It is designed to give local institutions, Indigenous

communities, nearby residents, and other stakeholders a consultative role in fulfilment of the Queen’s Park North vision.

The Advisory Body will advise on the implementation of the park vision, including input to the Executive Director and the Steering Committee that is informed by and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the public, local community, key stakeholders, and Indigenous communities, and that fosters community engagement and animation.

Role and Mandate: The Advisory Body exists as an advisory and consultative body to support the fulfilment of the Queen’s Park North vision, to provide informed feedback, advice, and recommendations to the Executive Director and Steering Committee on park maintenance, operations, programming, and the interests of the surrounding community, and to keep the surrounding community informed of key issues affecting Queen’s Park North. Key responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and commenting on programming proposals or proposed alterations to the park on request, with a view to reflecting the vision and principles for the park, the Description of Cultural Heritage Values and the Urban Forestry Management Plan.
- Serving as a forum for engagement with Indigenous communities, nearby cultural institutions, neighbourhood, community and business associations and other stakeholders.
- Identifying opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and community engagement.
- From time to time, the Advisory Body may conduct a review of these terms of reference and recommend amendments for consideration in accordance with the terms of the tri-party agreement.

Composition: The Advisory Body will be comprised of the Executive Director and ~20 members, representing stakeholders in the immediate vicinity of Queen’s Park North with an interest in the park. There is no compensation for membership. Organizations identified below will designate a representative to participate in the advisory body. Positions for members of the public will be filled through the City's public appointments process. Membership comprises:

| # | Stakeholder | Notes |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Ward Councillor | Co-chair with the Executive Director |
| 1 | Speaker of the Legislature | |
| 7 | University of Toronto | Appointees to represent views of administration, operations, academic leadership, students and staff and Colleges |
| 1 | Royal Ontario Museum | |

| # | Stakeholder | Notes |
|-----------|---|--|
| 1 | Gardiner Museum | |
| 1 | Royal Conservatory of Music | |
| 1 | City of Toronto - Parks and Recreation | |
| 1 | City of Toronto - Environment, Climate and Forestry | |
| 1 | Bay Cloverhill Residents Association | |
| 2 | Friends of Queen's Park North | |
| 3 | Members of the Public | To be selected by City of Toronto staff through the public appointments process. Selected members to represent urban Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+ and other relevant voices, residents' associations and community groups, and other members of the public with an interest in Queen's Park North. For candidates seeking appointment, endorsement by a recognized residents association in the vicinity of Queen's Park will be an asset. |
| 20 | TOTAL | |

Leadership: The Advisory Body will be co-chaired by the Ward Councillor and the Executive Director. The Co-Chairs preside over meetings, set agendas with input from members, and ensure that the Advisory Body's discussions and recommendations are communicated to the Steering Committee and to the public.

Meeting Frequency and Procedures:

- For the first two years, the Advisory Body will be scheduled to meet at least 3 times per year, with both in-person and virtual attendance options. In subsequent years, the Advisory Body will be scheduled to meet at least twice a year.
- The Advisory Body will hold one general community meeting every year.
- The Co-Chairs may convene additional meetings as required, with not less than 14 days' notice.
- Agendas and relevant materials will be circulated at least 7 days in advance.
- The Co-Chairs may invite subject matter experts, such as arborists, foresters, and other relevant professionals, to participate in Advisory Body discussions.

- There is no formal quorum requirement, however, if a majority of members are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the Co-Chairs may in their discretion consider rescheduling the meeting to a later date.
- Members of the public may observe Advisory Body meetings virtually and submit written comments, but participation is limited to observation and written input only, except in respect of the annual general community meeting.
- The Executive Director will take and keep minutes of all Advisory Body meetings and deliver such minutes to the Steering Committee and the Advisory Body. As well, board and community meeting minutes will be posted on the City's Queen's Park North website.

Service Term: Advisory Body members serve at the pleasure of their appointing entity or individual and may be removed and replaced from time to time. However, it is generally expected that members will serve a minimum term of two years to balance continuity with renewed perspectives. Members selected through the City of Toronto public appointments process will be subject to a maximum term of six years. The Ward Councillor serves for so long as they hold the office for the ward in which Queen's Park North is situated.

Appendix 7 - Engagement Summary

About the engagement

To date, community engagement has taken place over three phases, from July 2025 to May 2026. The engagement process reflects a broad, multi-layered effort involving more than 22 organizations and six distinct engagement formats, including in-person sessions, focus groups, pop-ups, surveys, open houses, and both in-person and online working groups.

Engagement reached a wide cross section of communities, including meetings with First Nations and Urban Indigenous participants, Resident and Community Associations, 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, heritage groups, environmental and nature organizations and major neighbouring institutions such as the University of Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum, Gardiner Museum, Royal Conservatory of Music and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Demographic and geographic representation was captured through survey data, with detailed breakdowns available in the appendices of the integrated reports available on the project page on toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth.

Summary across all phases:

- Approximately 3,400 participants engaged (Phase 1: ~1,750; Phase 2: ~1,200; Phase 3: ~ 463)
- Online survey responses: 2,312 (Phase 1: 1,089; Phase 2: 888; Phase 3: 335).
- Pop-ups in the park drew an over an estimated 1000 additional participants across seven dates

How we reached people

The City used a variety of outreach methods to invite community participation in the process, including direct outreach to organizations, groups, and community leaders; emails to individuals who signed up for updates; social media; the project website; the local Councillor's newsletter; and posters at local businesses and residential buildings around the park.

How we engaged

To ensure a meaningful and inclusive process, engagement included different methods of engagement which included: pop-ups, an online survey, focus groups, an Indigenous sharing circle, meetings with First Nations-Rights-holders, and community working session and open house.

List of community engagement activities per phase

Community Engagement: Pre-Engagement

- Pre engagement conversations: resident groups, cultural institutions, BIAs, special interest groups - June 2025

Community Engagement Phase 1: Confirming the Vision

- Online survey – July 15 to August 31, 2025 – 1,000 participants
- Pop-ups in the Park (3) – July 19, 23, 30, 2025 – 600+
- Neighbouring Institutions Working Group Meeting 1 – July 23, 2025 – 11

- Community Workshop and Open House – July 28, 2025 – 45
- Focus Group: Residents and Community Associations – August 5, 2025 – 10
- Focus Group: Heritage Groups (2) – August 7 and September 4, 2025 – 11
- Focus Group: Heritage Groups (2) – August 12, 2025 – 8
- Focus Group: University Students (2) – August 26, 2025 – 30
- Focus Group: 2SLGBTQ+ (organizations) – September 5, 2025 – 8
- Indigenous Engagement: Wendat Nation – October 2, 2025 – 2
- Neighbouring Institutions Working Group Meeting 2 – October 2, 2025 – 12
- Indigenous engagement: Six Nations of the Grand River – October 20, 2025 – 5
- Indigenous Engagement: Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation – October 21, 2025 - 5
- Indigenous Engagement: Indigenous Sharing Circle – October 23, 2025 – 1

Community Engagement Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

- Community Workshop – November 4, 2025 – 65
- Online survey – November 14 to December 14, 2025 – 888 participants
- Pop-ups in the Park (4) – November 15, 18, 19, and December 4, 2025 – 200+
- Neighbouring Institutions Working Group Meeting 3 – November 3, 2025 – 12
- Focus Group: Residents and Community Associations – November 12, 2025 – 11
- Focus Group: Cultural Heritage Groups – November 17, 2025 – 4
- Focus Group: Trees and Nature – November 19, 2025 – 3
- Focus Group: 2SLGBTQ+ Community Members – November 24, 2025 – 11
- Indigenous Engagement: Wendat Nation – December 2, 2025 – 2
- Indigenous Engagement: Indigenous Sharing Circle – December 9, 2025 – 4
- Indigenous Engagement: Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation – December 10, 2025 - 3
- Indigenous engagement: Six Nations of the Grand River – December 18, 2025 – 4

Community Engagement Phase 3: Setting the Direction

- Meeting with Friends of Queen's Park North - Monday, February 23 - 3
- Neighbourhood Institutions Working Group Meeting 4- Wednesday, March 4 - 12
- Community Meeting - Thursday, March 5 - 57
- Focus Group: 2SLGBTQIA+ Groups and others - Thursday, March 12 - 4
- Focus Group: Resident and Community Associations - Tuesday, March 17 - 13
- Focus Group: Cultural Heritage Group - Monday, March 23 - 7
- Focus Group: Trees and Nature Groups - Tuesday, March 24 - 17
- Meeting with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation - Monday, March 30 - 3
- Meeting with Wendat First Nation - Tuesday, March 31 - 3
- Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting - Tuesday, March 31 - 8
- Meeting with Six Nations of the Grand River - Wednesday, April 1 -4
- Online survey - March 5 to April 7 - 335

Community Engagement Post - Phase 3

- Meeting with Friend's of Queen's Park North (FOQPN) - April 16, 2026

- Meeting with FOQPN and Focus Group Participants - April 28, 2026
- Meeting with FOQPN and Focus Group Participants - May 11, 2026

Community Engagement Phase 1: Confirming the Vision

Community Engagement Phase 1 (July–October 2025) focused on understanding the park today, confirming a draft vision, and refining a set of guiding principles to reflect community values, and City policies and Donor input.

Approximately 1,700 participants contributed input across different engagement activities, including approximately 1,000 online survey responses and over 600 park pop-up participants.

The section below shows how community feedback from this phase of engagement helped shape each of the guiding principles and vision statement of the project. The vision and guiding principles have been foundational in informing the design concepts developed to date.

Final Vision Statement

An extraordinary place for people and nature throughout the seasons, that respects the existing trees and heritage of Queen’s Park North, fosters a welcoming environment, and showcases excellence in design, ecological stewardship, education, animation and collaborative governance.

How feedback shaped the vision statement

Overall, participants in the first phase of engagement were supportive of the draft vision, with most comments suggesting small adjustments. Overall, participants in Phase 1 engagement were supportive of the draft vision, with 57 per cent of survey respondents indicating they either loved it (21 per cent) or felt it was mostly good (36 per cent). Qualitative feedback focused on refining the language rather than changing the overall direction. Most feedback related to highlighting the park’s trees and heritage more prominently, clarifying how ongoing care will be ensured, and defining “partnerships” and “programming” to avoid concerns about crowding or tree impacts.

Guiding Principles

Final guiding principle: Protect and enhance the trees.

The draft guiding principle read as "Protect and celebrate the trees". Feedback collected during community engagement strongly supported this principle, 87 per cent support, making it the most strongly supported principle. Feedback also highlighted the need for clarity on what “celebrate” means in practice and stressed that trees must remain a key focus, with future decisions assessed for their impact on the park’s trees and landscape as a result “celebrate” was removed.

Other feedback also emphasized that protecting the urban forest should also go beyond just preservation, but to include proactive forest management. Participants supported selective interventions, such as managing declining or invasive species and planning for long-term tree succession, where these actions strengthen overall ecological health. Feedback also revealed that all new amenities, programming, and uses should be

evaluated based on their potential impacts on trees, root systems, and the surrounding landscape.

Final guiding principle: Enhance the visitor experience and animate the park year-round through improved amenities and modest programming.

The draft guiding principle read as "Enhance the visitor experience and animate the park year-round through creative programming and improved amenities". Many participants supported improving the visitor experience and saw value in amenities that make the park more comfortable and welcoming throughout the year. Participants raised questions about the scale and intensity of programming implied by the word "animate." Feedback recommended that the principle be reworded to remove reference to "animation" a "creative programming" and add "with limited impacts on the treed landscape".

In the online survey, a majority of respondents supported this guiding principle. In response, the word "modest" was added to reflect feedback that programming should introduce amenities carefully and at an appropriate scale, supporting learning, gathering, and everyday use, while allowing for a range of overlapping park experiences.

Final guiding principle: Incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being

No changes were made to this guiding principle, as feedback across engagement activities consistently demonstrated strong support for its intent and content. Majority of participants expressed strong support for incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into the park's stewardship approach. Many respondents supported initiatives such as mapping native species and integrating Indigenous knowledge into long-term environmental management. Participants also noted interest in learning more about the site's layered cultural and ecological history, including Taddle Creek.

Online survey results on this principle demonstrated that a majority of respondents indicated support, with 48 per cent stating they strongly support it and an additional 20 per cent indicating they somewhat support it (68 per cent total support). Given the consistency and strength of feedback across both qualitative and quantitative engagement, the guiding principle was retained without modification.

Final guiding principle: Implement ecological and sustainable practices that restores the land, supports plants and animal life and enhances and expands ecological health and biodiversity.

The draft guiding principle read as "Implement ecological and sustainable practices and ensure a high standard of operations and maintenance with appropriate funding and expertise". Participants expressed strong support for this guiding principle. Feedback collected revealed the importance of ecological health, biodiversity, and long-term sustainability in the care and management of the park. Several participants suggested minor wording changes such as adding "ensuring forest health". The final principle is "Implement ecological and sustainable practices and ensure a high standard of

operations and maintenance, ensuring forest health with appropriate funding and expertise”.

Online survey results demonstrate that a majority of the online participants said they support the fifth principle, with 70 per cent strongly in support. The principle was refined to include a direct reference to ensuring forest health, clarifying its commitment to sustainable stewardship supported by appropriate funding and expertise.

Final guiding principle: Maintain Queen’s Park as a public space and a place for both respite and civic life, welcoming to all

The draft guiding principle read as "Maintain Queen’s Park as a public space and place for gathering and civic life welcoming to all". Participants expressed support for maintaining Queen’s Park as a public and welcoming space. There was further clarity needed around the meaning of “gathering. The terms "natural treed" as well as "respite and relaxation" were added and "gathering and civic life" removed to provide clarity. Participants also raised questions about how “public space” and “welcoming to all” should be understood in practice, including how this principle relates to a range of park uses. In response, the guiding principle has been refined to better reflect the balance between active and passive park uses.

Online survey results report that a majority of participants support the principle. This feedback supported refining the language to better articulate balance and clarity rather than making any major changes to the principle.

Final guiding principle: Strengthen relationships between public space and institutional and community partners

No changes were made to this guiding principle, as overall feedback indicated support in recognizing the importance of sustaining relationships with the neighbouring institutions in the area. These institutions have a longstanding presence within and adjacent to Queen’s Park North and include the Royal Ontario Museum, Royal Conservatory of Music, Gardiner Museum, and the University of Toronto. Collaboration with these institutions is intended to support small-scale activities, classes and performances.

The guiding principle was kept as written, with the understanding that clarity around partner roles and an emphasis on transparency and community-based collaboration will be addressed through implementation

Community Engagement Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

During Community Engagement Phase 2 (November – December 2025), approximately 1,200 participants contributed input across different engagement activities. The objective of Phase 2 focused on introducing early design ideas and exploring how the vision and guiding principles could be expressed within Queen’s Park North.

Key design ideas included opening the heart of the park, relocating and reinterpreting the King Edward VII statue within the park, enhancing the visitor experience through new amenities such as a café, kiosk, washrooms, and additional seating, and

introducing ecology-focused features including a tree walk, planting strategy, and a workshop space.

What we heard

Feedback was gathered through multiple engagement formats, including workshops, focus groups, pop-ups, and an online survey. Overall, feedback reflected strong interest in improving the visitor experience while protecting the park's natural character, alongside differing perspectives on the scale and number of proposed elements. It is important to note that pop-up conversations yielded different feedback than focus groups.

New guiding principle was added: "Respect the cultural and natural heritage of Queen's Park North"

Phase 2 feedback highlighted the importance of having a dedicated heritage guiding principle. Although cultural and natural heritage were reflected in the overall project vision, community input showed the need to state this more explicitly. In response, a new guiding principle has been added to acknowledge the park's heritage significance.

The Heart of the Park

Participants generally supported opening the heart of the park to create a more flexible and accessible central space, noting benefits such as improved circulation, visibility, and opportunities for informal gathering. Feedback on relocating and reinterpreting the King Edward VII statue to support this change was mixed.

Across the engagement, there was general support for the relocation, including some who would not mind if the statue was removed from the park altogether. Others saw the relocation as an opportunity to recontextualize the statue, particularly in relation to Truth and Reconciliation. For those unsure, concerns were raised about relocating the statue specifically to the southeast corner entrance, with participants noting that corner is an important gateway.

Enhancing Visitor Experience

There was consistent support for enhancing visitor experience, particularly washrooms and seating. Online survey results indicated that 75 per cent of respondents supported introducing new all-season public washrooms (57 per cent strongly, 18 per cent somewhat), and 75 per cent identified accessible and welcoming seating as contributing to a successful redesign.

Feedback on food and beverage amenities varied across engagement activities. Focus group participants and survey respondents looked for greater clarity on operations, maintenance, and potential impacts. Some participants supported introducing a modest food and beverage option to help animate the park and support everyday use. Others raised concerns related to commercialization, servicing impacts on tree roots and lawn areas, and compatibility with the park's natural character

Trees and Ecology

Participants expressed very strong support for protecting the park's tree canopy and enhancing overall ecological health. Across all engagement, many participants

emphasized that protecting the health and longevity of mature trees should remain the project's highest priority.

The proposed Tree Walk captured many people's imaginations, but cautions were also raised, along with some objections. Survey results showed 54 per cent support for the tree walk and 31 per cent opposition, while focus group feedback raised practical questions related to safety, accessibility, impacts on trees, and whether this feature added too much to the park.

In relation to feedback collected related to planting and ecological restoration, survey results showed strong overall support, with 80 per cent of respondents supporting enhanced tree maintenance practices (63 per cent strongly support, 17 per cent somewhat support) and 79 per cent supporting understory planting and ecological restoration (60 per cent strongly support, 19 per cent somewhat support). There were some who expressed concern that moving from 88 per cent lawn in the park today to 25 per cent lawn in the future is too large a shift, encouraging the City to protect more lawn for park users.

Community Engagement Phase 3: Setting the Direction

Phase 3 of community engagement took place from March to May 2026, building on engagement completed in Phases 1 and 2, the primary objective of Phase 3 was to provide an update on the revitalization planning process and to present the draft design concept based on feedback from Phase 2.

Engagement activities were consistent with previous phases, and included a hybrid open house and public meeting, an online public survey with 335 respondents, four focus groups, and Neighbouring Institutions Working Group meeting. Ongoing Indigenous engagement continued throughout the phase, including meetings with First Nations Rights Holders, an Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting, and the development and issuance of three Scopes of Work with the Huron-Wendat Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to support continued engagement and collaboration beyond Phase 3.

Updates to the draft design concept based on Phase 2 feedback:

- The stand-alone kiosk concept was removed.
- The washroom and café building continued to be developed and refined to balance the interests and needs of diverse park users
- More analysis was undertaken around the workshop concept, and the project team indicated that they would seek feedback to understand how and if the concept would add value and community benefit
- Community feedback revealed that reducing the lawn area to 25 per cent felt like too significant a change. In response, the updated design presented in the Phase 3 shows a plan with an increased lawn area to 41 per cent
- Plant communities were simplified to provide better sight-lines through the park, while still providing a buffer the roadway
- Increased tree planting was included in the updated draft design concept
- A guiding principle related to cultural heritage was added to shape current and future considerations for Queen's Park North to make sure all current and future

undertakings related to the planning, design, and management of Queen's Park North will be guided by the development of a Description of Cultural Heritage Values, and the conservation and enhancement of the site's character-defining elements

- In Phase 2, only the concept and location of the Commemorative Garden was shown. While feedback was supportive, many asked for more detail. Additional design work was completed and was shared
- Additional details related to the water feature, workshop program and form, café feasibility, tree walk feasibility, draft lighting strategy, seating typologies, King Edward VII relocation and reinterpretation, and commemorative garden were shared

What we heard:

Feedback received during Phase 3 reflected a range of perspectives on the proposed revitalization and draft design. Community associations expressed concerns related to potential changes to the park's character, the scale and number of proposed design elements, and the need for clearer information regarding potential impacts on trees, the urban forest, and heritage values. In contrast, feedback collected through the online public survey was generally more positive, with approximately half of respondents indicating that the design is moderately aligned, aligned, or very aligned with the project's Guiding Principles.

Survey results showed that approximately half of respondents identified the latest updated to the draft design concept as moderately aligned, aligned, or very aligned with the project's guiding principles. The strongest areas of alignment with the guiding principles related to maintaining the park as a space for both respite and civic life (60 per cent aligned to very aligned), protecting and enhancing trees (60 per cent), and enhancing the visitor experience through improved amenities and modest programming (51 per cent).

Feedback on Process, Governance, and Transparency

During this phase of engagement, there was also feedback captured as it related to the revitalization planning process. Key themes are summarized below.

- There was a strong interest for meaningful, empowered governance, emphasizing that stewardship structures should have real influence over decisions rather than function as symbolic or token advisory bodies. This included an approach to stewardship and advisory structures that endures beyond a single project phase or planning cycle, so that governance, care, and accountability continue over the long term.
- There was interest in the establishment of regular, transparent mechanisms for public accountability, such as an annual public meeting or forum where the community can ask questions, receive updates, and see how feedback has informed decisions.
- Concerns were raised about the process being rushed, with repeated comments that advancing decisions too quickly risked undermining trust, urban forest protection, and the integrity of the work. It was important that there be transparency in how feedback from different audiences was synthesized, reported back, and reflected in decisions, noting that understanding how input is carried forward is critical to maintaining confidence in the process.

Post-Council Phase 3 Engagement

On March 10, 2026 City Council approved moving forward with the donation, subject to Council's approval of the proposed design for the revitalization of Queen's Park North at the June 10, 2026 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee. City Council also directed that additional information be reported back on the following priorities:

- Cultural heritage values and attributes
- Adverse impacts to distinctive trees, root systems, and the natural environment
- Business plan for the proposed café, including additional operational details,
- A public art plan
- Terms of reference for the Advisory Board

In response to the direction from Council, City staff held focused working sessions from April 16 to May 11 with FOQPN representatives and key stakeholders from the project focus groups. These sessions were intended to share and discuss updates on work underway, including the development of a Draft Statement of Significance, an Urban Forest Management Plan, a public art plan, a review of the café business case and proposed operating model, and the draft terms of reference for the advisory body, as well as other supporting technical analysis and due diligence.

The sessions provided a forum for ongoing engagement, transparency, and dialogue with key stakeholders, and an opportunity to seek feedback to inform the refinement of this work as it progressed.

Appendix 8 - March 11 DRP Meeting Minutes

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 2 – March 11, 2026

The Design Review Panel met in-person and virtually on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 12:30 pm.

Members of the Design Review Panel

Gordon Stratford (Co-Chair): Principal – G C Stratford Architect
Michael Leckman (Co-Chair): Principal – Diamond Schmitt Architects
Meg Graham (Co-Chair): Principal – superkül
Dima Cook: Director – EVOQ Architecture
Ralph Giannone: Principal – Giannone Petricone Associates
Jim Gough: Independent Consultant, Transportation Engineering
Jessica Hutcheon: Principal – Janet Rosenberg & Studio
Olivia Keung: Associate – Moriyama Teshima | Architects
Paul Kulig: Principal – Perkins & Will
Joe Lobko: Partner – Joe Lobko Architect Inc.
Anna Madeira: Principal – BDP Quadrangle
Jim Melvin: Principal Emeritus/Advisor – PMA; Owner – Realm Works
Juhee Oh: Director, Climate Strategy – Choice Properties
Heather Rolleston: Principal, Design Director – BDP Quadrangle
Eladia Smoke: Principal Architect – Smoke Architecture
Sibylle von Knobloch: Principal – NAK Design Group

Design Review Panel Coordinator

Maria Mokhtariesbouei: Urban Design, City Planning Division

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting, which was held on February 11, 2026, by email.

MEETING 2 INDEX

1. Queen's Park North Revitalization (1st Review)

Queen's Park North Revitalization

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION First Review
City project – Concept Review

PRESENTATIONS

CITY STAFF Shannon Lawrence, Program Manager Urban Design
David O'Hara, Project Manager SIPA

CONSULTANT Jessica Hutcheon, Partner Janet Rosenberg & Studio
Todd Douglas, Senior Associate, Landscape Architect Janet
Rosenberg & Studio

VOTE Support

Conditions (revisit the composition of programming; further
advance forest management strategy)

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS

CHAIR Heather Rolleston

PANELISTS Gordon Stratford, Michael Leckman, Dima Cook, Ralph
Giannone, Jim Gough, Olivia Keung, Sibylle von Knobloch,
Paul Kulig, Jim Melvin

DRC MEMBERS (UofT) Pat Hanson, Marc Hallé

CONFLICTS Jessica Hutcheon, Juhee Oh

Introduction

City staff outlined the project history, existing and future context, and planning framework. Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following key issues:

- General input or advice on concept as the team moves into detailed design
- Input or advice on the washroom/café location
- Input on degree to which the proposal considers the civic nature and use of the park for public gathering/demonstration
- Input on degree to which the proposal responds to and integrates the parks cultural heritage
- Input on concept and location of tree walk structure

Summary of Project's Key Points

Panel members expressed strong appreciation for the quality of the presentation, noting its evocative, immersive, and thoughtful approach. The project was recognized for its ambition in rethinking the park as a more social and inclusive space, with meaningful programming and strong cultural and ceremonial potential. The following key points highlight areas for further refinement:

Park Vision and Programming

The Panel supported the overall direction toward a more social and program-rich park, with particular appreciation for the diversity of ceremonies and activities proposed. The café and restaurant uses were seen as valuable additions, though it was suggested that the café could engage more lightly with the ground and consider its presence from all sides.

At the same time, members emphasized the importance of balancing programming with the park's role as an oasis for quiet reflection. Care should be taken not to overburden the park with interventions, ensuring that spaces for stillness and respite remain central.

Public Realm and Access

Concerns were raised regarding the park's accessibility, particularly given its current condition as an "island" surrounded by fast-moving traffic. The Panel encouraged further study of safe and intuitive crossings, potentially integrated with key elements such as the café.

Movement within the park was generally supported, though suggestions were made to introduce additional loops and moments for pause, encouraging visitors not only to pass through but to linger and engage with the space.

Landscape, Ecology, and Tree Strategy

The Panel strongly emphasized the importance of tree health, soil conditions, and long-term ecological resilience. A comprehensive forest management strategy was recommended, alongside continued focus on regeneration and the protection of significant "hero" trees.

While the tree walk was appreciated as a concept, some concern was expressed regarding its potential impact and intrusiveness. Refinement may be needed to ensure it integrates sensitively with the existing landscape.

Opportunities to incorporate sustainable approaches—such as low-carbon strategies and reclaimed materials—were also encouraged

Commemoration and Cultural Expression

There was appreciation for the project's respectful approach to commemoration and its intention to evolve beyond traditional colonial narratives. The commemorative garden was discussed as an important element, with suggestions to explore more abstract or flexible interpretations that allow for future evolution.

The Panel encouraged continued exploration of public art and interpretive elements, including the possibility of ongoing and adaptive forms of commemoration over time.

Design Refinement and User Experience

Panel members encouraged further refinement of spatial scale and sequencing, noting that some program elements are separated by large distances. Introducing more cues, moments of interest, or intermediate spaces could enhance the user experience.

Additional considerations included accessibility (e.g., widening areas of the tree walk), opportunities for elevated experiences such as roof access, and creating quieter zones oriented toward contemplation rather than activity.

Operations, Maintenance, and Long-Term Stewardship

The Panel highlighted the importance of maintenance, servicing, and long-term stewardship, including waste management and operational considerations for programmed elements.

Strong support was expressed for partnerships, innovation, and community stewardship models, including the potential role of “friends of the park” or similar groups. The idea of the park as an evolving, adaptive landscape was seen as a positive direction.

Overall, the Panel expressed strong support for the project’s vision and direction, with constructive feedback aimed at balancing programming with ecological integrity, enhancing accessibility and user experience, and ensuring long-term resilience and stewardship of the park.

Panel Vote

The Panel voted in support of the proposal, with the condition that the project return for a subsequent review. Support is contingent on further refinement of the programming composition and advancement of a comprehensive forest management strategy.

Panel Commentary

Project Vision and Design Approach

Panel members expressed strong appreciation for the clarity, depth, and evocative quality of the presentation. The proposal was recognized for its immersive storytelling and layered approach, successfully conveying the experiential qualities of the park. The project was seen as ambitious and complex, with a strong overarching vision that links ecology, culture, and social use.

At the same time, several panelists encouraged a more focused approach, suggesting that not all ideas need to be fully realized at once. There was a general recommendation to prioritize key moves and avoid overdesigning, allowing the park to evolve over time.

Balance Between Programming and Respite

A key theme across the discussion was the importance of maintaining the park as a place of quiet reflection and respite. While the proposed programming and social activation were widely supported, panel members cautioned against overloading the site.

The park's role as an "oasis" within an increasingly dense urban context was emphasized, with recommendations to ensure that passive, contemplative spaces remain central. Clustering program elements were generally supported, though refinement may be needed to balance activity with stillness.

Landscape Strategy, Tree Health, and Long-Term Resilience

Panel members strongly emphasized that the trees and overall ecological health of the park are its defining asset and long-term legacy. A comprehensive forest management and soil strategy was identified as critical, going beyond standard arborist reporting to address the health of the landscape as a system.

There was encouragement to take more decisive and potentially bold actions in the short term to ensure long-term canopy success, including soil remediation, selective tree replacement, and prioritization of "hero trees." The regeneration approach was widely supported, though it should more clearly inform design decisions moving forward.

Circulation, Access, and Movement

Concerns were raised about the park's accessibility, given its condition as an "island" surrounded by high-traffic streets. Panel members encouraged further exploration of safe and legible arrival points, with clearer hierarchy and improved pedestrian connections.

Within the park, there was support for enhancing circulation by introducing more loops and varied pathways to support different types of users, including families, seniors, and those seeking longer walking routes. The need to encourage both movement and lingering was highlighted.

Built Elements and Programming (Café, Pavilion, Facilities)

The inclusion of a café and public washroom facility was broadly supported, particularly in response to the growing residential population. The central location was seen as logical in terms of pedestrian flows, though some panelists suggested further study of siting, orientation, and servicing requirements.

Operational considerations—including waste management, servicing access, and long-term maintenance—were identified as critical and should be carefully integrated into the design. Some panel members suggested testing food-related programming (e.g., temporary or mobile options) before committing to permanent built form.

Tree Walk and Elevated Structures

The proposed tree walk generated mixed responses. While its intent to connect people with the canopy was appreciated, several panelists raised concerns regarding accessibility, safety, maintenance, and long-term viability.

Questions were raised about its width, usability in winter conditions, and potential impact on root systems. Some panel members suggested reconsidering its necessity or exploring alternative ways to achieve similar experiential goals with less intervention.

Commemoration, Heritage, and Cultural Expression

Panel members supported the project's respectful approach to cultural heritage and evolving narratives, particularly the shift toward a more social and inclusive park. The variety of ceremonial and commemorative opportunities was appreciated.

However, there were suggestions to further rethink traditional elements—such as the commemorative garden—toward more contemporary, flexible, and inclusive interpretations. The positioning and treatment of existing monuments were also discussed, with differing views on their role as gateways or symbolic features.

Public Realm Experience and User Behavior

The importance of designing for real user behavior was emphasized. Panel members encouraged the team to study how the park is used at different times and conditions, and to reflect these patterns in the design.

Issues such as safety, visibility, and intuitive wayfinding were raised, particularly in relation to enclosed or inward-facing elements. The need to create inviting destinations and clear visual cues to draw people into the park was also highlighted.

Sustainability and Material Strategy

There was strong support for integrating sustainability more explicitly into the project, including low-carbon materials, reuse strategies, and educational components. Panel members encouraged the project to demonstrate leadership in sustainable design and to communicate these strategies clearly to the public.

Operations, Maintenance, and Stewardship

Long-term operations and maintenance were identified as critical to the success of the project. Panel members stressed the importance of robust planning for waste management, servicing, and seasonal use.

The idea of stewardship—through partnerships, community involvement, and ongoing management—was strongly supported. The project was seen as an opportunity to establish a long-term model for adaptive, evolving landscape management.

Design Development and Implementation

Panel members encouraged the next phase of work to more clearly connect the vision with technical strategies, particularly in relation to landscape systems, infrastructure, and implementation.

Further refinement is needed to resolve tensions between formal and informal elements, and to ensure that design decisions are grounded in long-term ecological and operational realities.

Overall, the Panel expressed strong support for the project's vision and ambition, with recommendations focused on prioritizing ecological health, refining program balance, strengthening accessibility and user experience, and ensuring long-term resilience and stewardship of the park.

Future Review

The Panel recommends that the project return for a subsequent review. The next submission should demonstrate a more resolved park organization and progress at the Design Development stage, while maintaining flexibility to address Panel feedback.

Forest Management Strategy

City staff clarified that the forest management work will be advanced as an Urban Forest Stewardship Plan / Forest Management Plan, informed by City Forestry guidelines and ongoing technical and public consultation.