

Queen's Park North Revitalization

Presentation to the 2SLGBTQ+ Council Advisory Committee (CAC)

May 13, 2026

Why we're here today

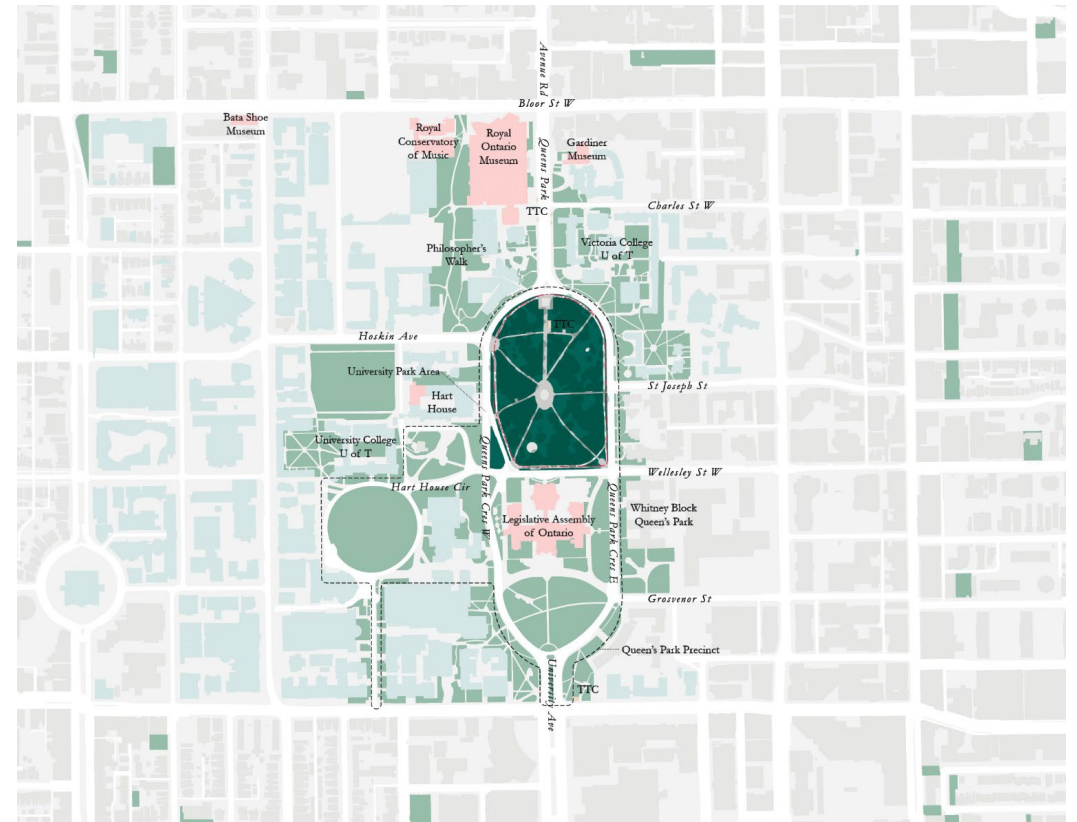
- Receive feedback and share an update on the Queen's Park North Revitalization project process to date and how it has informed concept design. We will:
 - Introduce the Queen's Park North Revitalization
 - How we have engaged with to-date
 - High level what we have heard through engagement
 - Background of the donation terms and stewardship
 - Presentation of the design evolution
 - Next steps

****A member of the project team will be taking notes on your feedback today****

Project Background

In 2024, the City was approached by the Weston family with an offer to donate \$50 million to improve the park, plus additional funding for long-term maintenance and programming.

In response to City Council direction regarding the donation, City staff are advancing to a project comprising:



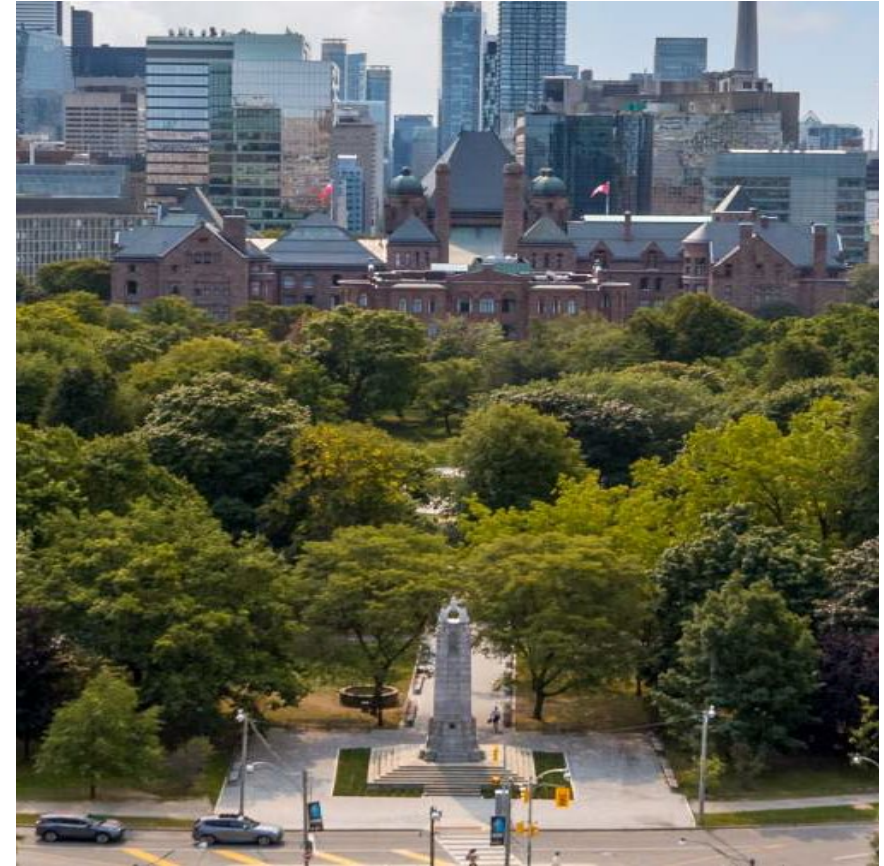
Council Direction – March (2025-CC28.1)

Negotiate and sign a donation agreement with the Weston Foundations to undertake a **first phase of community engagement and preliminary design** that will inform the scope of the larger donation acceptance agreement, and the staff report directed in Part 2.

Status: COMPLETE

Report back to Council in Fall 2025 with project update and recommend terms of phase two donation acceptance agreement to fund final design/delivery of park enhancements and provide funding for ongoing programming and maintenance.

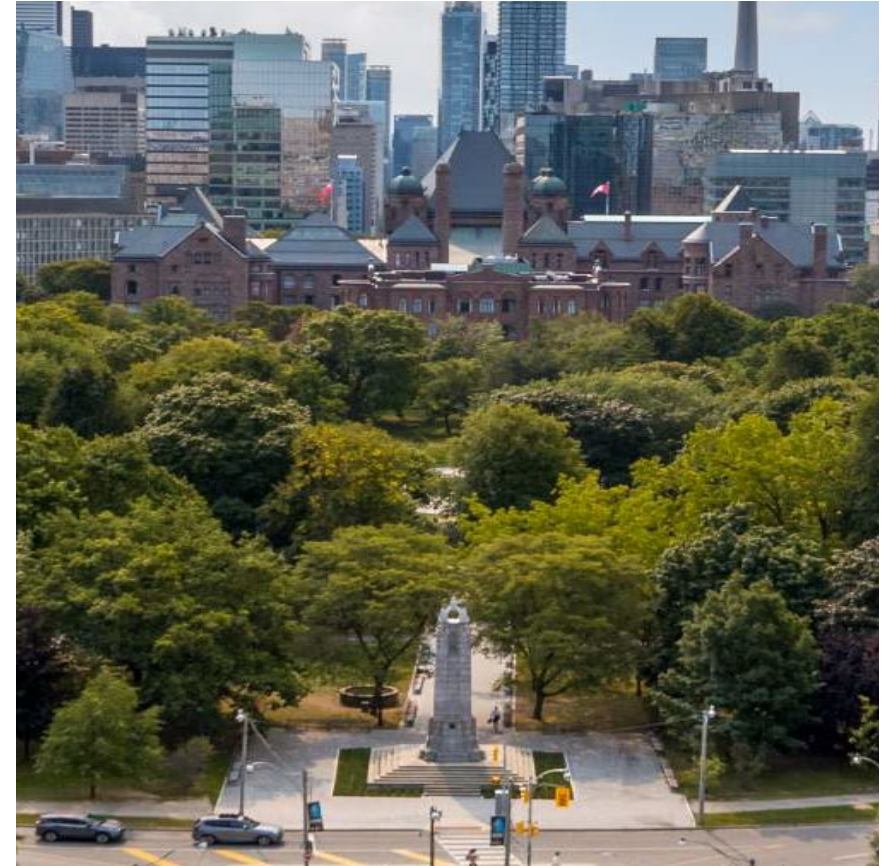
Status: COMPLETE – March 10, 2026



Council Direction – March (2026-EX29.3)

Report back to Infrastructure & Environment Committee

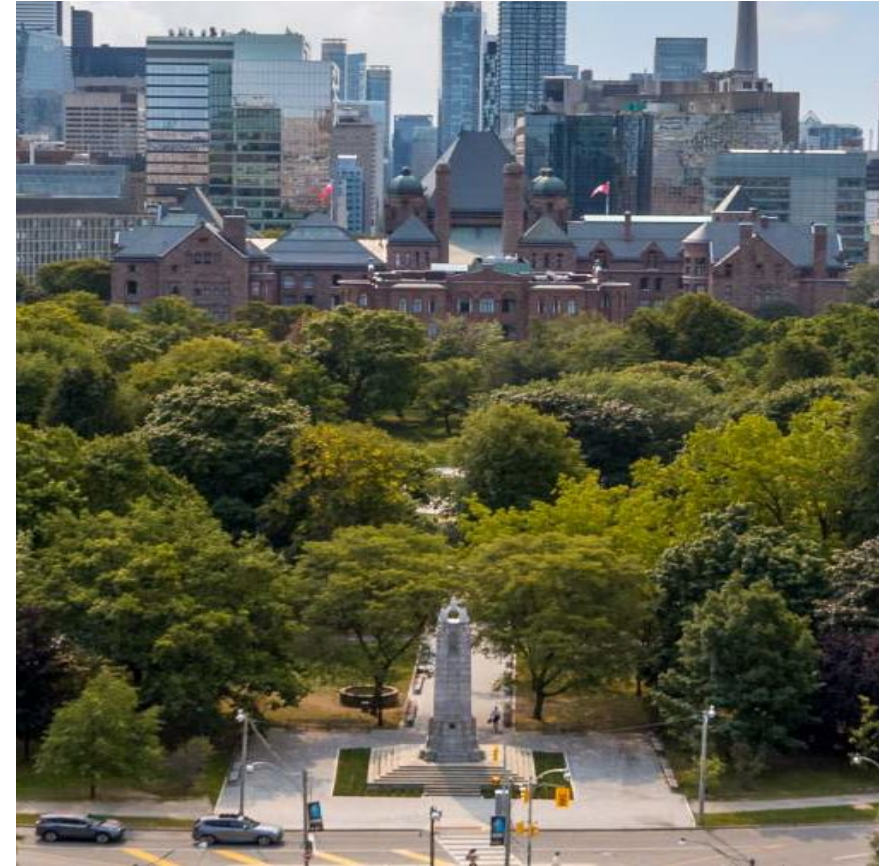
9. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation and the Executive Director , Environment, Climate and Forestry to seek City Council approval of the concept plan for the revitalization of Queens Park North at the June 10, 2026 meeting of the **Infrastructure and Environment Committee** and to ensure the plan is done in collaboration with the Donor, the University of Toronto, Urban Forestry, Heritage Planning and the Ward Councillor, and in consideration of the public input received and the comments of the Design Review Panel and ensure no construction is tendered until City Council approves the plan.



Council Direction – March (2026-EX29.3)

Report back to Infrastructure & Environment Committee

10. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, in collaboration with the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, to include in the update report to Infrastructure and Environment Committee in **Recommendation 9** above the proposed draft terms of reference for the Queen's Park North Advisory Board to be chaired by the Ward Councillor, a schedule and a summary of other proposed advisory, engagement and communications activities in the next phase of the project.



Project Timeline

(Mar – Jun 2025)

Setting the Stage

Inventory & analysis, Pre-Engagement

(Spring 2026)

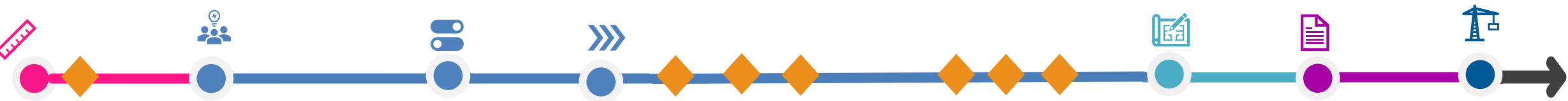
Design Development

Detailed design development

(2026+)

Construction

Community Design Process
(July 2025 – April 2026)



March 25, 2025
Council Direction – CC28.1

March 2026

- Staff Report at Executive Committee
- City Council
- Design Review Panel

June 2026

- Staff Report
- City Council
- Meeting with Infrastructure & Environment Committee

Construction Docs, Tender & Award

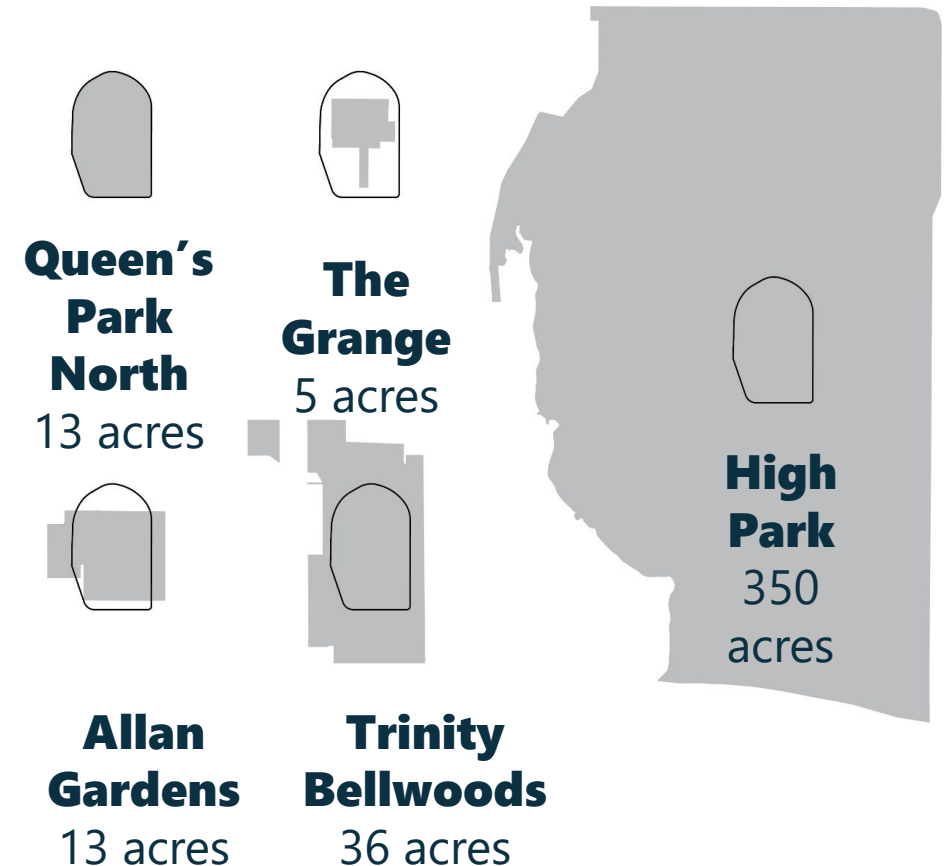
Prepare working drawings & specs, issues tender & award contract

Park Designation & Conditions

Queen's Park North is a 5.2 hectare park, located north of the Ontario Legislature and was officially opened in 1860 as Canada's first municipal park, named in honour of Queen Victoria.

Recognized in the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan Public Life Study (2018) as a high-potential location for investment.

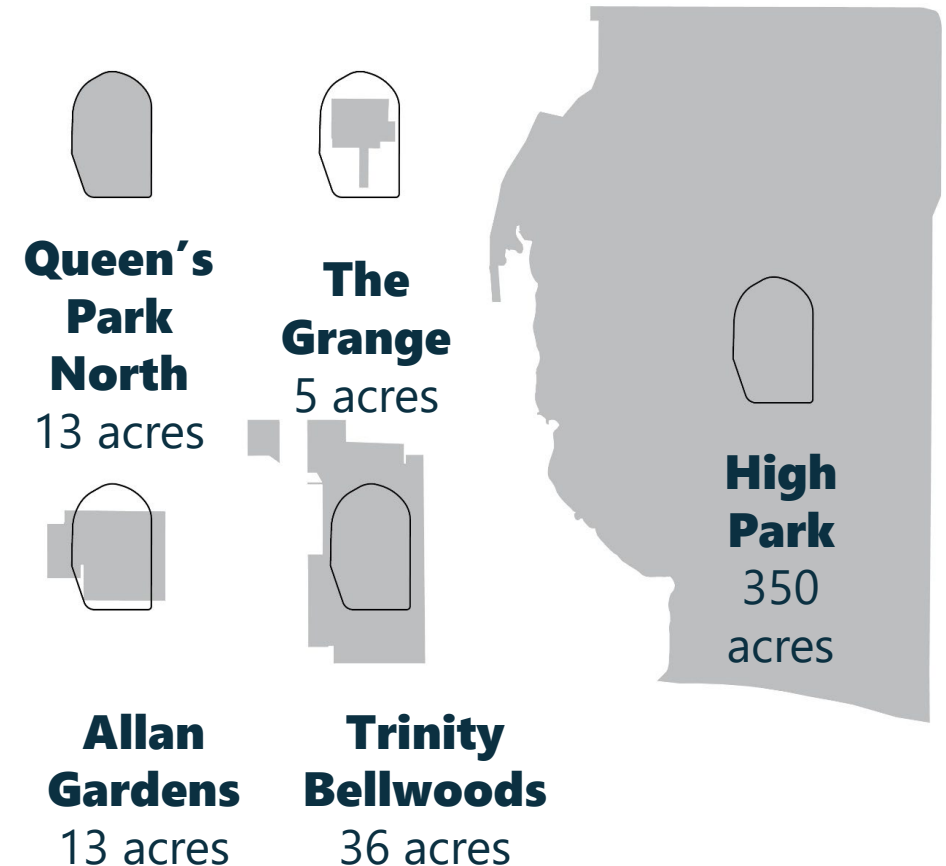
Designated as a City Park through the Parkland Strategy (2019)



Park Designation & Conditions

Assets currently available in the park:

- Tree canopy and urban green space
- Picnic tables / benches
- Bottle filling station
- Walking paths
- Recreation perimeter path
- Public art
- TTC entrance (Museum Station, opened in 2024)



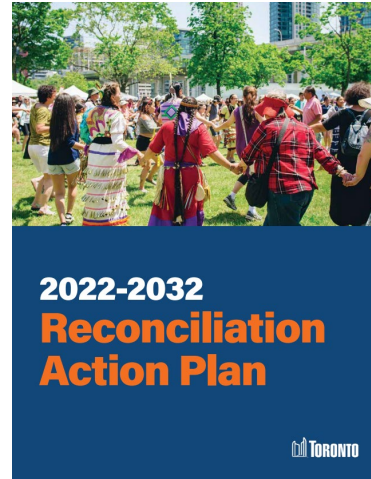
Park's Significance to the 2SLGBTQ+ Community

- ERA Architects prepared a Historic Context Statement (HCS) exploring the past and current uses of the park
- **Early History & Challenges**
 - Park served as both a meeting place and a site of police surveillance
 - Despite partial decriminalization in 1969, queer presence remained heavily policed
- **Pride, Resistance & Visibility**
 - Queen's Park evolved into a site of pride and public visibility (70s)
 - Toronto's first Pride Week concluded with a march to Queen's Park
 - A symbolic space for queer rights, protest, and celebration

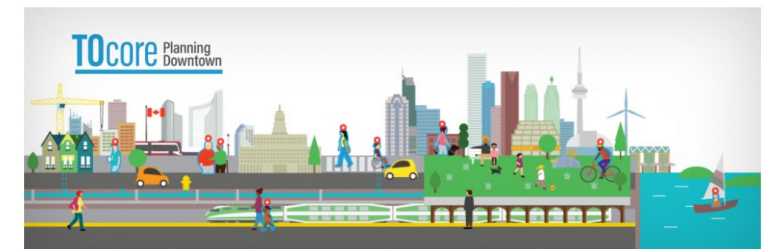


City Policies & Strategies

The project is informed by City policies, programs, and strategies to ensure the project reflects the City's planning framework and future vision for Toronto's parks system and the downtown core.



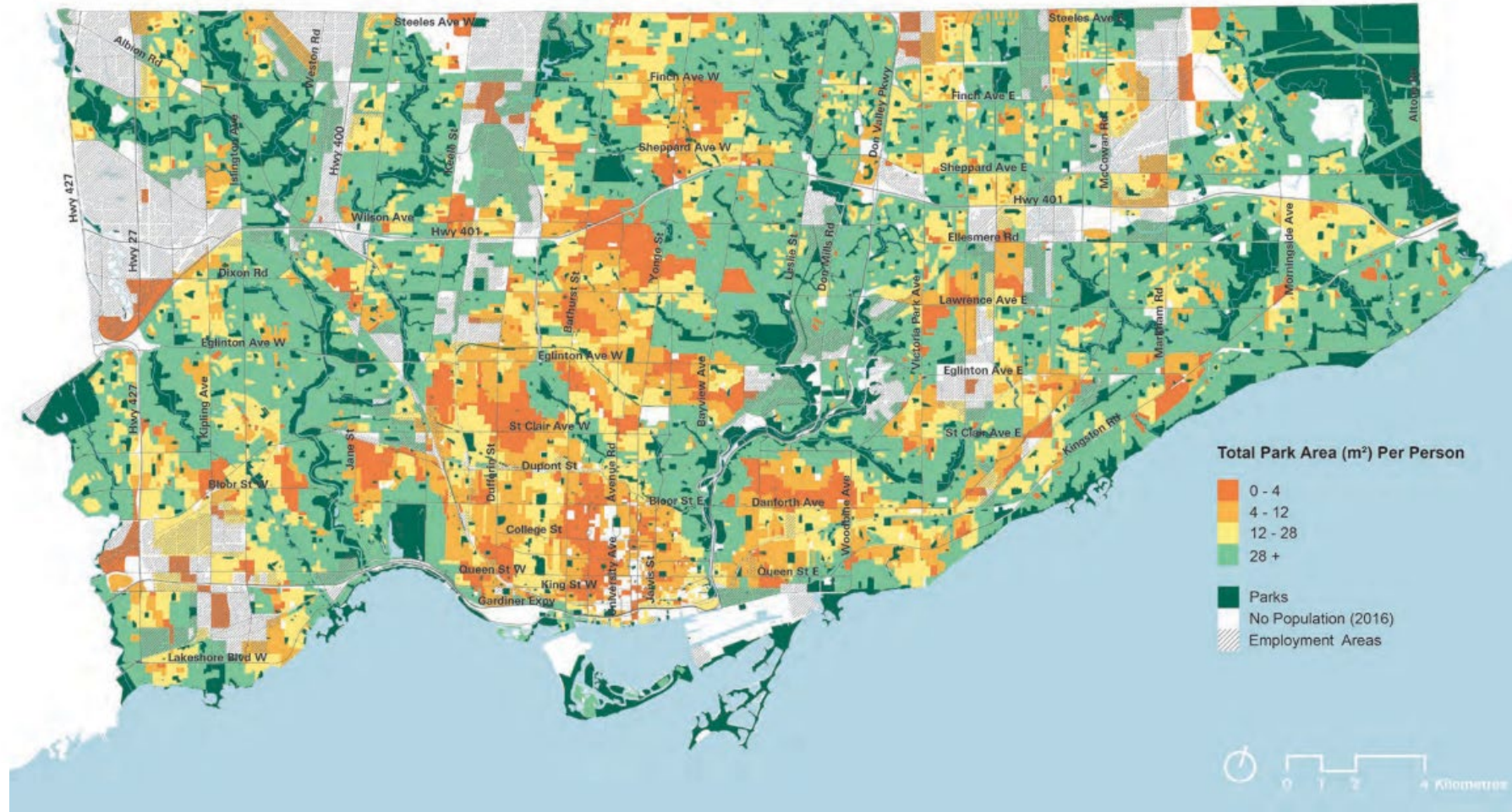
TOcore: Planning Downtown



The [University Avenue Cultural Heritage Landscape Study](#) is now complete and was presented to the [Toronto Preservation Board](#), along with [reference materials](#), at its [December 10, 2025 meeting](#).

Impact of Growth

Figure 08: Toronto Parkland Provision (2016)



Planning for Growth

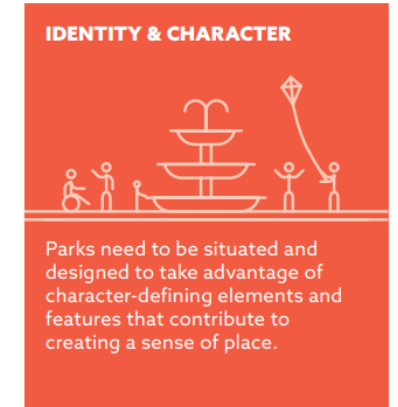
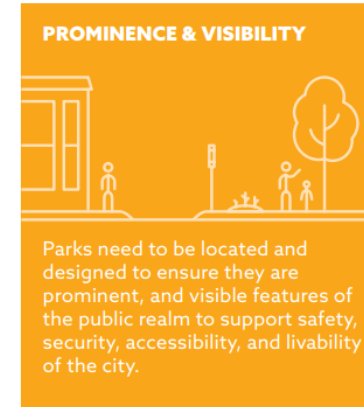
Parks and Recreation has a number of important considerations for ensuring high-quality parks:

- Prominence and Visibility
- Identity and Character
- User Experience
- Physical Characteristics and Thermal Comfort

In Queen's Park North, **creating a high-value park means** supporting a range of overlapping experiences and uses.

This is achieved through an integrated design approach that:

- Protects and enhances the park's trees, landscape, and character
- Carefully introduces amenities that support learning, gathering, and everyday use



Toronto Parkland Strategy 2019, p.11

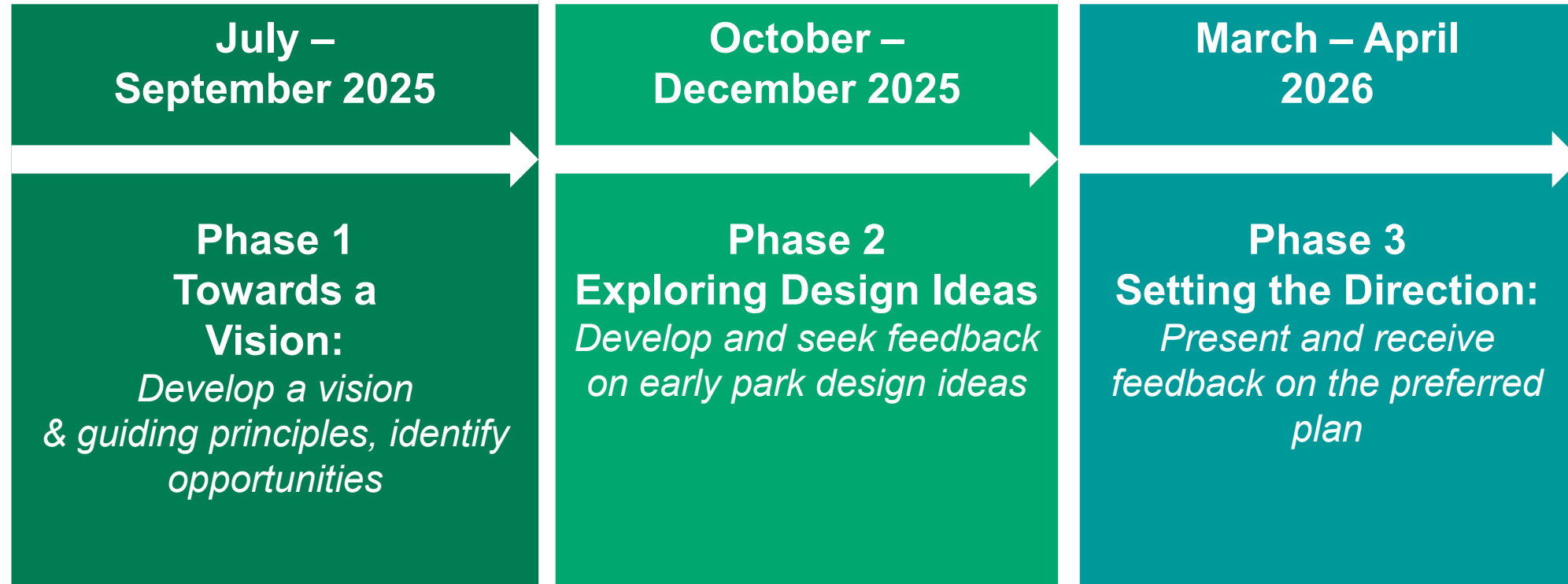
Project Vision Statement

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.

Guiding Principles

1. Protect and enhance the trees
2. Respect the cultural and natural heritage of Queen's Park North.
3. Enhance the visitor experience and animate the park year-round through improved amenities and modest programming
4. Incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
5. Implement ecological and sustainable practices that restore the land, support plant and animal life, and enhance and expand ecological health and biodiversity.
6. Maintain Queen's Park as a public space and a place for respite and civic life, welcoming to all.
7. Strengthen relationships between public space and institutional and community partners.

High-level Engagement Timeline



Engagement Activities

Pre-Engagement

BIAs, Cultural Institutions, Resident Groups, Academia

5 Technical Advisory Meetings

3 public meetings
(164 attendees)

3 Online surveys

(2,312+ responses, ~25% 2SLGBTQ+)

Urban Indigenous communities & First Nations engagements *(ongoing)*

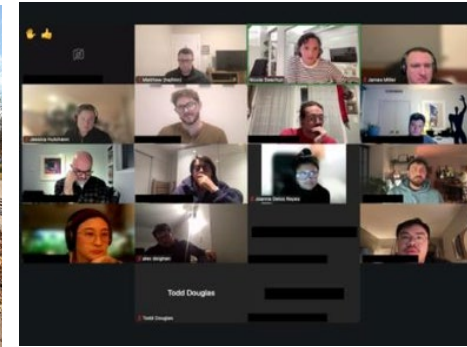
16 Focus Group Meetings

(~130 people engaged)

5 Neighbouring institution working group meetings

Pop-Ups

(1,160 interactions)



Snapshot of what we heard

2SLGBTQ+

- **Support for many elements of the draft design concept**, particularly the balance between respite and activity, the tree walk, washrooms, and lighting
- Participants expressed the importance of having a presence on the **advisory body**
- One of the **few places where members of the queer community can be themselves** without having to pay to use the space
- **Understanding and respecting the range of park uses and users** (day and night uses, sightlines, lighting, and planting strategies at the base of trees) and recognizing 2SLGBTQA+ significance

Across all engagement

- There continues to be a range of perspectives about this project, the ideas proposed, and the draft design concept shared
- **Strong support for the increased planting** proposed for the park
- Interest in seeing **Indigenous art integrated throughout the design.**
- **First Nations, Rights Holders and Urban Indigenous community voices shared support for the project and the draft design concept** (tree walk's interpretive opportunities, understory plantings, preservation of the tree canopy, care paid to the trees and tree protection zones)

Donation Key Terms

- **Donation Size** - Up to \$50 million for revitalization
- **Design Oversight** – City will oversee design finalization in consultation with donor
- **Capital Delivery** – City will take carriage of revitalization work in the park
- **Tri-Party Maintenance Operations and Funding Agreement** – a new shared operating model for the park
- **Lease** – City to secure any required changes from University
- **Donor Recognition** – any recognition to be approved by GM Parks and Rec. in line with typical parks donor recognition

High Level Overview of Enhanced Shared Stewardship Structure

- A new shared model for delivering on the vision and principles of the park
- Significant funding from the Donor for ongoing care
- Enhanced maintenance funding, including:
 - UofT to perform enhanced maintenance and capital repair/works on revitalized park elements
 - A dedicated Executive Director role
 - Appropriately scaled programming within the park
- Establishes a:
 - Indigenous Leadership and Stewardship Circle
 - Steering Committee (City, University, Donor, ED)
 - Executive Director role
 - Park Advisory Board

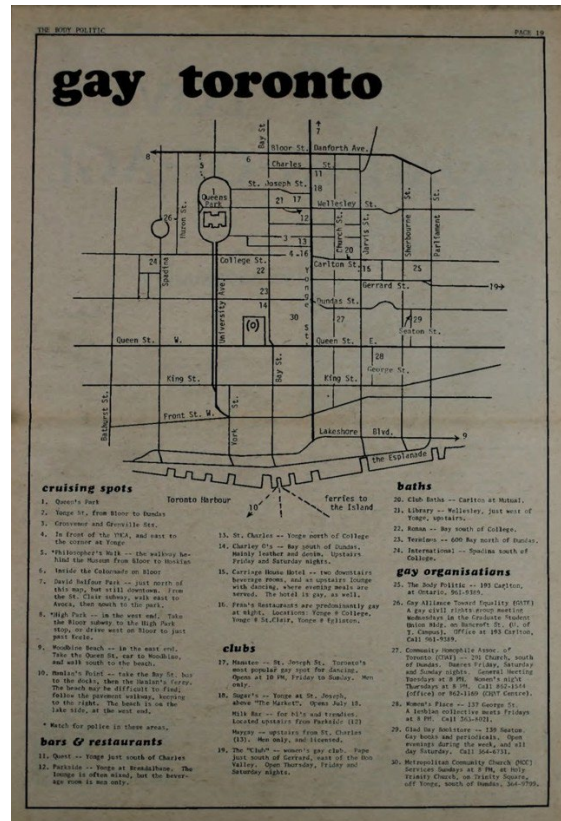
What does this donation and new model mean for the Park?

- Improved park assets, natural areas, and supports for existing and new experiences
- A maintenance, operations, and programming model built specifically for Queen's Park North, grounded in the vision and principles
- An executive director providing additional eyes on the park, and coordinating activity with a level of intentionality not existing today
- Purpose built forums for community, neighbour, and indigenous input into the parks use and operations
- More money and resources for taking care of this park than exists today

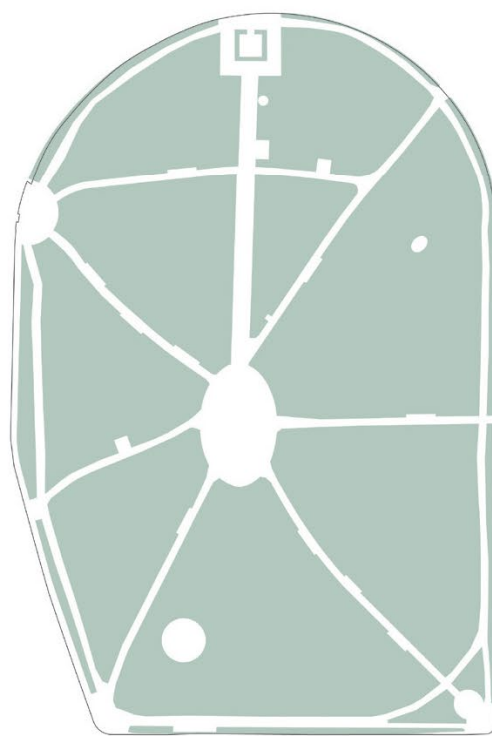
Design Evolution: Cultural History

1974 Map of Gay
Toronto Locations
from The Body
Politic. (left)

Queen's Park North
as a gathering
space for the Queer
community in the
1970s. 1978. Queer
Catharsis. (right)

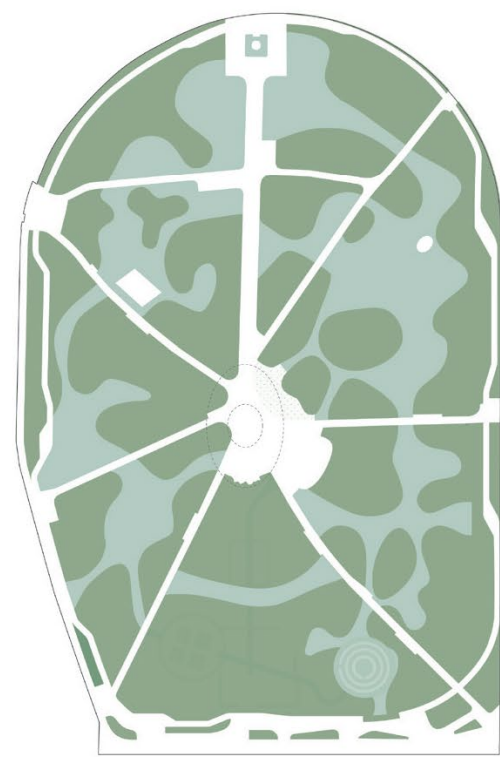


Design Evolution: Amount of softscape



Existing

total softscape	88%
lawn	88%
meadow / understory	0%



Proposed

total softscape	89%
lawn	25%
meadow / understory	56%



Proposed

total softscape	86%
lawn	41%
meadow / understory	41%
commemorative garden	3%
enhanced planting	1%

Design Evolution: Conditions of the largest red oak



Design Evolution: Contributions & Recognitions

The following groups and individuals contributed to the design development of Queens Park North in some way, and the team thanks them for their advocacy and assistance:

- Participants in the 2SLGBTQAI+ Focus Groups, Public Workshops, and online survey
- The work of Marcus McCann
- Candid discussions with cruising advocates
- The work of Rick Bébout
- The Body Politic archives
- Statues Also Die project by Ameen Ahmed

Overview of Key Project Milestones

Late April

- April 28 - Update on emerging Urban Forest Management Plan and Draft Statement of Significance

Late April – Early May

- UFMP Phase 1 draft recommendations
- Draft Heritage Statement of Significance

Late May

- May 27 - Clerk's Agenda Close and Staff Report deadline

June

- June 10 - Infrastructure & Environment Committee
- June 25 - City Council

Hearing from you:

- Are there key perspectives you feel are missing from what we heard?
- Are there any priorities or considerations we should be especially mindful of for 2SLGBTQ+ communities as we move toward a preferred design and stewardship approach?
- Do you have any other feedback for the team?

Next Steps

If you have additional feedback, please email:

Shannon Lawrence

Senior Project Manager

Shannon.Lawrence@toronto.ca

More information about this work is available on the project webpage:

<http://toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth>

Thank you