

EDWARDS GARDENS & TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN MASTER PLAN AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT 2



March 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 STUDY OVERVIEW

Reimagining the Gardens is an initiative led by the Toronto City Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, in partnership with the Toronto Botanical Garden.

In consultation with the public, stakeholders, other City departments and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), we will develop a:

Master Plan

- Address ravine degradation, accessibility, repairs and replacements
- Review feasibility of recommendations of 2015 TBG Study
- Recommend other capital assets as required
- Work with stakeholders and the public to compile a list of preferred potential new capital assets
- 10-year phasing strategy

Management Plan

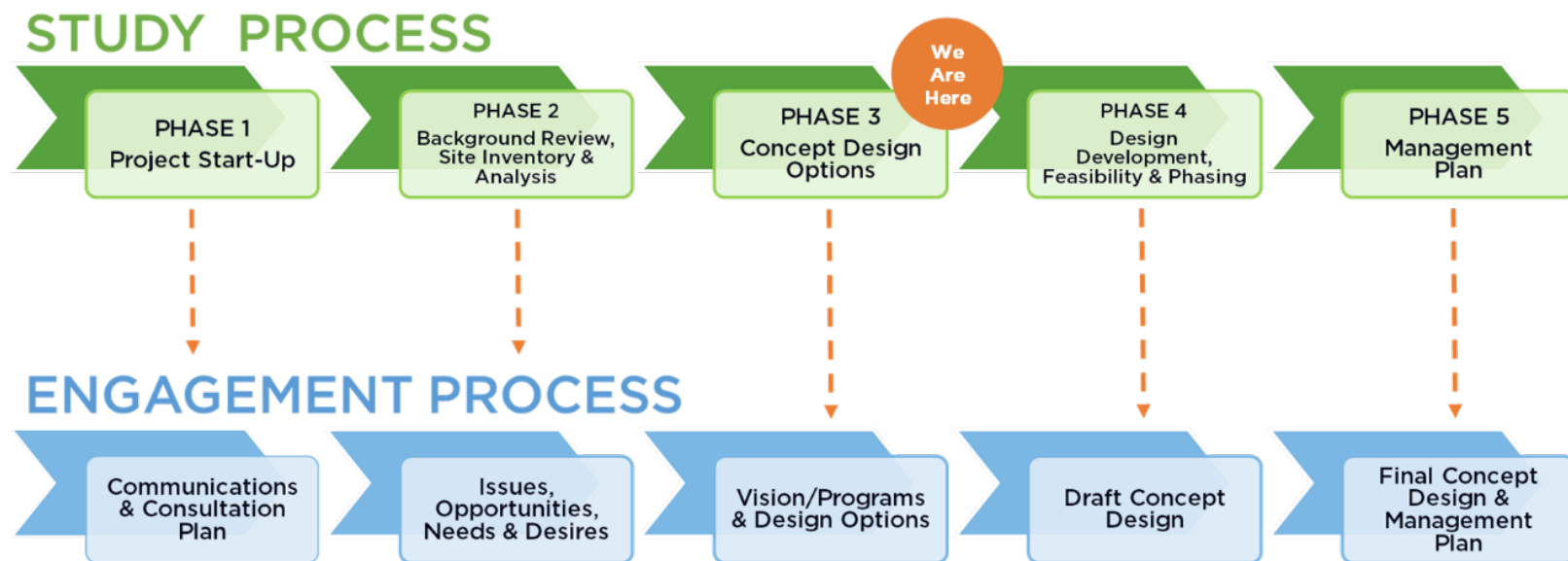
- General maintenance requirements
- Ravine restoration, forestry and storm water management regimes
- Review management agreements, programming and permitting, protocols and funding models
- Potential new volunteer/partnership opportunities, capital sources, funding strategies

1.2 PROJECT GOALS

The goals for the Master Plan and Management Plan are to:

- Think holistically about the long-term planning for the City parkland, the ravine system, and the Toronto Botanical Garden complex
- Elevate the Gardens to the level of other globally acclaimed gardens
- Promote the long-term ecological, operational and fiscal sustainability of Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden

1.3 STUDY AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



2. WHAT WE DID: THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

2.1 SUMMARY OF PHASE 2 CONSULTATION

The Phase 2 engagement process sought feedback and ideas from the public, stakeholders and the project group, to outline a vision for the future of Edwards Gardens and the Toronto Botanical Garden, as well as its core strengths, key issues and areas for improvement, future requirements, and any new opportunities for development. This concentrated on ecology and the landscape, facilities and amenities, as well as programs and the visitor experience.

Initial feedback gathered was translated into an overarching project vision and a set of 6 strategic priorities or guiding principles for the Master Plan and Management Plan to address.

PROJECT VISION

A Premier Destination in the City of Toronto

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Build a resilient ecosystem
2. Improve accessibility
3. Improve functionality
4. Upgrade amenities
5. Expand programmed activities
6. Enhance the visitor experience

This draft vision and design strategy was taken forward to Phase 3 for further testing and refinement, and was used to help structure discussions around the development of preliminary conceptual ideas.

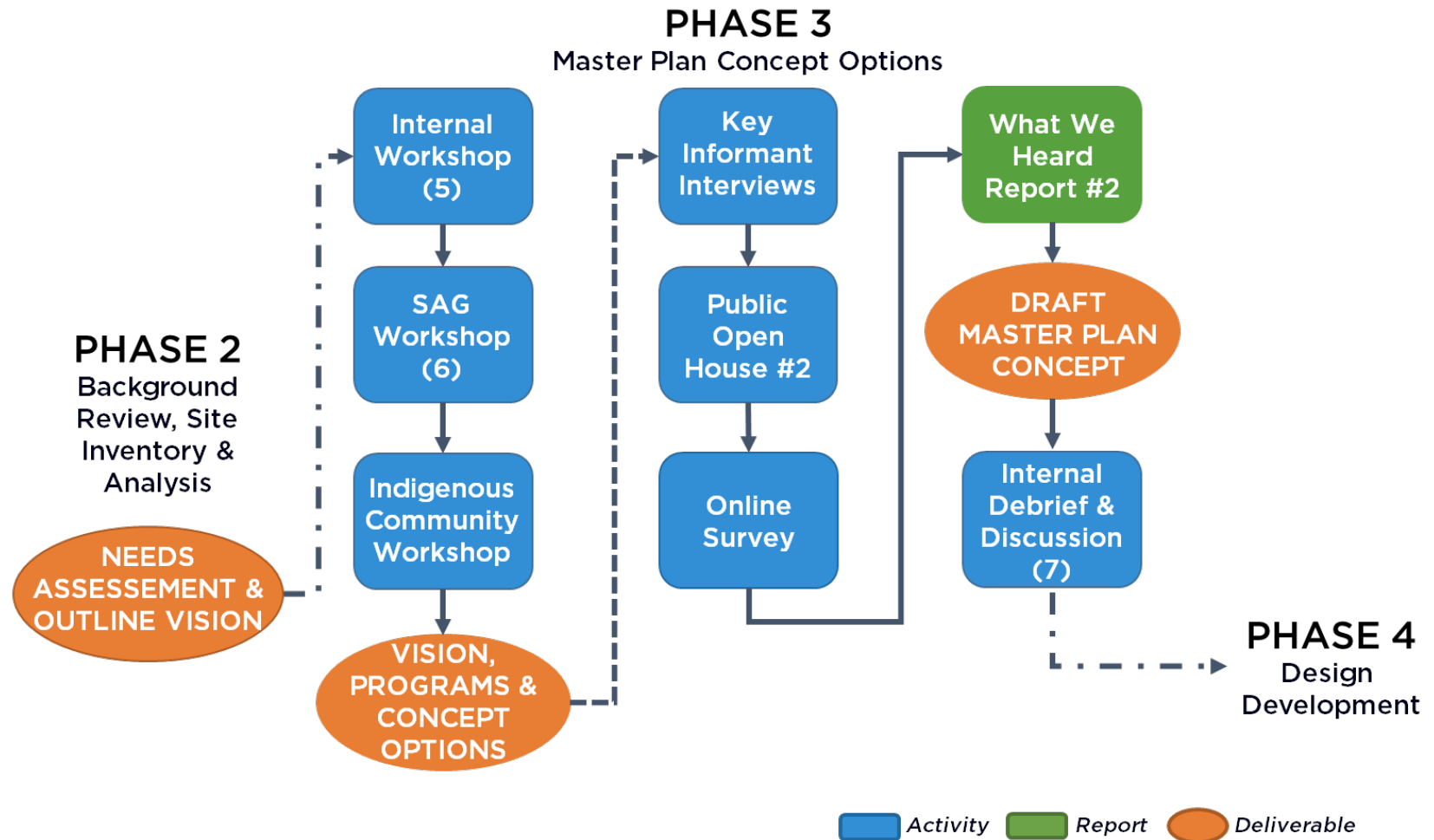
2.2 PHASE 3 – CONSULTATION GOALS

The purpose of the Phase 3 engagement process was to:

- Confirm the vision and guiding principles developed from the Phase 2 feedback
- Explore conceptual visions from three Botanical Garden perspectives:
 - Conservation
 - Education
 - Beauty and Display
- Test preliminary ideas and initiatives and gather feedback on potential design strategies

2.3 PHASE 3 – ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

Feedback gathered in this phase will be used to lead the consultant team to develop a draft master plan concept to be tested further in Phase 4.





Public Open House #2



Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) #2



Project Group Workshop #2



Indigenous Community Workshop #1



Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) #2



Project Group Workshop #2

2.4 REVISED PROJECT VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Following the initial consultation activities in Phase 3 with the Project Group, Stakeholder Advisory Group and the Indigenous community, the consultant team updated their understanding of the project vision, key opportunities and public needs as follows.

VISION	OPPORTUNITIES	NEEDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combined & expanded Botanical Garden Destination Beautiful displays & horticultural excellence Welcoming, community-oriented & inclusive Accessible Reflects Toronto's Indigenous heritage and diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural setting & connectivity of the ravine system Increase research, education, & conservation impact Growing demand for urban green spaces, gathering places & natural experiences East-end visitor attraction cluster Improved public transport links via Eglinton Crosstown LRT Elevate natural, cultural & historical characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heal the Land – revitalization, culture of stewardship Address Safety Issues – flooding, pedestrians & cyclists Improved Access – surfaces, inclines, distances, closures Indoor Experiences – particularly in winter months Improved continuity of visitor experience between gardens Improved wayfinding & signage Improved visitor amenities – washrooms, food service, seating

Using this updated understanding and additional feedback, the project vision and guiding principles were revised. The following revised statements were used as the basis to develop potential design concepts and both were then tested with key informants through interviews and with the public at the second open house and through the online survey.

PROJECT VISION	<i>To create an internationally recognized botanical garden in the City of Toronto.</i>
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Celebrate a Unique Sense of Place 2. Contribute to a Resilient Ecosystem to Enhance Ecological Services 3. Improve Accessibility 4. Establish a Culture of Stewardship to Reconnect with the Land, Exchange Earth Knowledge and Demonstrate Green Infrastructure 5. Improve Operational Functionality 6. Improve Amenities 7. Improve Facilities to Expand Programming, Education, Activities and Ceremonies 8. Enhance Visitor Experience

3. WHAT WE HEARD

3.1 WORKSHOP WITH PROJECT GROUP (11)

3.1.1 COMMENTS ON CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

The workshop was attended by 11 members of the Project Group. At the outset of the workshop, the Project Group were asked for comments and feedback on the Phase 2 report which outlined findings from the community engagement exercises and the analysis of the consultant team into a consolidated summary of the constraints and opportunities impacting Edwards Gardens and the Toronto Botanical Gardens. Comments gathered included:

- Concerns were raised about the proposal for a two-storey parking structure and whether this would only encourage more commuters to abuse the free parking available and exacerbate the existing problem. The potential for paid parking as a deterrent was also discussed. It was also questioned if in fact additional parking was required, as it seemed that parking congestion was not normally a regular occurrence, but was typically experienced only on event days or on good weather days. It was suggested that wording be changed to “parking improvements”.
- It was emphasized that the valley lands are all in a flood plain and that this is a regulatory area. Flooding

typically occurred 2-3 times per year and the area was prone to erosion, however there is currently no water flow monitoring system to provide more detailed evidence. A conservative approach to planning was favoured for these areas, in anticipation of flooding at least 4 times per year.

- It was also highlighted that the term “public garden” should be used carefully, as it gave the perception of manicured flower beds and might set a false expectation. It was reinforced that the strength of the Gardens was its situation in the ravine and that any future plans should include consideration for the natural areas.

3.1.2 FEEDBACK ON GOALS, KEY COMPONENTS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Four key components – a Resilient Ecosystem; Functionality and Accessibility; Amenities; and Programming and Visitor Experience – were outlined as an organizing structure for the Master Plan design strategy.

Core Components

- It was suggested that the consultant team consider adding fifth component, Management and Operation, given the need for:
 - Financial sustainability
 - A workable management agreement between the City and TBG
 - Earlier thinking about how to access/leverage funding to support investment as it will be the key to success and an important component for deliverability

- Integration with City-wide initiatives including trails, wayfinding, cultural, natural, ravine strategies (currently missing)

Functionality and Accessibility

- It was highlighted that there was a disconnect with perceived parking situation and actual parking situation. It was felt that the main parking issues were experienced on peak days, such as events and nice weather days, but not every day. However, public perception was that there is a parking problem because most tend to experience it on these days and not others. It was suggested that a parking analysis could help to confirm public feedback/perception and would help to provide greater evidence base for current needs and to support development of appropriate solutions.
- It was also suggested that the City and TBG should be reinforcing values of conservation by actively encouraging visitors to come by transport means other than car – public transport, by bike, etc. This would help reduce the need for parking.

Resilient Ecosystem

- It was preferred that the report use the phrase “species of concern” as a more appropriate term than “at risk”. Species at risk is a provincial designation for flora and fauna. Butternut is found in Wilket Creek Park further downstream and it would hold this designation. Also that the qualification of “many” species may be an over statement.
- The group was looking for more narrative or description around what the project will do to make the ecosystem more resilient.

Enhanced Visitor Experience

- The description of the collections should include the word “botanic”.
- Consideration should be given to whether this could be one of Toronto’s first designated cultural heritage landscapes.

Other

- An additional point raised in the discussion was that Sunnybrook Park and Edwards Gardens are currently being considered as potential candidates for a more detailed study of 7 City-owned green sites. This is a joint project between PFR, Planning and Toronto Water. The Master Plan and the Management Plan should take this into consideration and should be consistent.

3.1.3 MAPPING ACTIVITY

The group then participated in a mapping activity. Project group members were split into three groups:

- Conservation
- Education
- Beauty and Display

Each group was given a large scale base map of the Gardens, coloured paper and glue. Each was asked to explore various ways of thinking about their given theme by tearing and placing colours on the map. Afterwards, each group was asked to describe their ideas and maps back to the group.

Conservation



Ideas for conservation focused on both the natural and cultural heritage elements of the site. This included:

- Maintaining the natural areas in the ravine and on the west table land (green) and preserving the large old heritage trees across the site (brown).
- Creating natural buffer zones between the site and the road as both display and naturalization.
- Cleaning up the water course (blue) and adopting a better design for the visitor parking so that it helps to manage storm water runoff into the creek.
- Protecting and restoring the existing bridge features (black), the Milne cemetery (yellow) and heritage structures on site (red) including the visitor centre, Moriyma visitor centre and pavilion, the barn, and

greenhouses and expanding and adapting them for new uses.

- Creation of new expanded facilities (pink) designed as green infrastructure so that they help to contribute to the overall conservation of the site, including a new public greenhouse (west table lands small square), maintenance yard (west table lands large square), and a new entry way.

Education



The education group emphasized that everything across the Gardens provided ample learning opportunities and every aspect of the Gardens should have an educational component so that visitors can understand and learn about what they are looking at. Ideas included:

- Using the ravine slopes to teach ecology (brown) and creating a canopy walk to provide a new perspective.

Also, talking about what is being done to restore (green) the ravine and showcasing it as an example of best practice.

- Expanding the existing teaching garden (green circle) and providing opportunities for adult education in growing foods and plants, as well as schools education.
- Improving existing spaces such as the visitor centre (blue) to make more room for educational programs and to create new spaces ones such as a nature centre in the barn area (purple), a green permeable parking structure that was also a hanging garden (green square east at Leslie), and an education amphitheatre (pink square at 13).
- Other new features that could help provide important opportunities for learning included an arboretum of residential trees, a sensory accessible garden, pilot garden, apiary (bees), native plant garden, and a First Nations garden planted with the important aspects and teachings of the medicine wheel.
- The maintenance areas were also considered important to education to teach the public about the efforts required to manage and maintain a botanical garden. Access to the maintenance area would be done in a buffer zone around it (black) and in a controlled way for safety.
- Interpretive nodes/education stations were dotted throughout the gardens to provide additional points of interest and further education. These would be linked together by a thematic/interpretive narrative.
- The Gardens would also be WiFi enabled.

Beauty and Display



The group examining beauty and display emphasized a vibrant and colourful approach to plantings. Key ideas included:

- Ornamental perimeter plantings (orange) to alert people to the Gardens' presence and attract people to visit, including in the roadway medians at Lawrence and Leslie.
- An expanded creek as an attractive water feature (blue) with islands to calm the flood waters and bridges to cross. Also various new water features (blue squares with "W") around the Gardens.
- A planted sound buffer (red) to muffle noise towards the residential neighbourhood.
- Improvements to the children's garden.

- Restored historic buildings and features (yellow squares with “B” on the east plateau)
- New greenhouses which are both working production houses and also an indoor attraction for the visiting public. Seneca College greenhouses were highlighted as an excellent example of public access working greenhouses, and experimental processes.
- Improved plantings to minimize the amount of asphalt and the unsightliness of the parking lot.

3.2 WORKSHOP WITH STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP (18)

3.2.1 COMMENTS ON CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

The Stakeholder Advisory Group workshop was attended by 18 members who provided positive feedback on the initial constraints and opportunities report. They recognized it as being comprehensive and of a high quality.

3.2.2 FEEDBACK ON VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The draft vision and guiding principles were also presented. Feedback was as follow:

Identity and Mission

- Several members felt that the draft vision statement needed to be fleshed out more. Currently it did not answer key questions such as – what is it? what is the point? They also felt the statements had little mention

of research, or education, key aspects of a botanical garden.

- Participants recapped some key aspects they felt were missing from the vision statement:
 - Botanical should be #1 goal
 - A centre for excellence – research and botanical
 - A place to see growing all year
 - Sustainability
- Participants also discussed the word “destination” and that the Gardens should be:
 - A premiere cultural and botanical attraction – not just a destination
 - Able to attract non-plant enthusiasts through programming and an exciting visitor experience
 - Part of a new triumvirate of cultural attractions in the north east with Aga Khan Museum, and Ontario Science Centre
- Greater qualification of the visitor experience was also required. Participants stressed that it must be an inclusive experience and wanted to know:
 - What makes the Gardens unique? Why come here?
 - What makes it different that will allow it to compete with Royal Botanical Gardens or Montreal Botanical Garden?
 - Is there demand?

- The group also emphasized the need to outline who the target audience will be in order to determine how to prioritize development and how to position the Gardens. It was felt the Gardens had local, regional and global reach. Potential audiences included:
 - General public
 - Researchers
 - Enthusiasts
 - School groups
 - Tour bus groups

Core Components

- For this group “plants” seemed to be missing from the list of key components and it was suggested that this be added as a 5th component. They felt that plants were the core of the whole project, and that it was the curated collection that should be central to development plans.
- There was also concern about what would happen to “old plants” that were to be removed from certain areas to make way for development and suggested that the consultant team consider redeployment rather than disposal. It was also suggested that plans incorporate and reuse non-native plants.

Resilient Ecosystem

- Missing reference to aquatic animals – fish passage, wetland habitat

Accessibility

- Accessibility was considered a key issue. Not just physical accessibility through circulation, but that

Edwards Gardens and the Toronto Botanical Garden were one of the few places in the City to connect with plants and nature.

Amenities

- The point was made that most cosmopolitan cities around the world have a conservatory. Toronto is also a cosmopolitan city and should have one too. It was suggested that a dedicated contemporary conservatory space would be different from others – most are Victorian glasshouses – and could be something unique, an indoor ecosystem.

Missing Elements - Partnerships

- Participants suggested that a focus on partnerships was missing overall and that the Gardens must have a strong link with others to be successful. Recommendations for partnerships include educational institutions, higher education/universities and also proposed expanding the idea of partnerships and to develop new partnerships with complimentary organizations such as the Toronto Zoo.

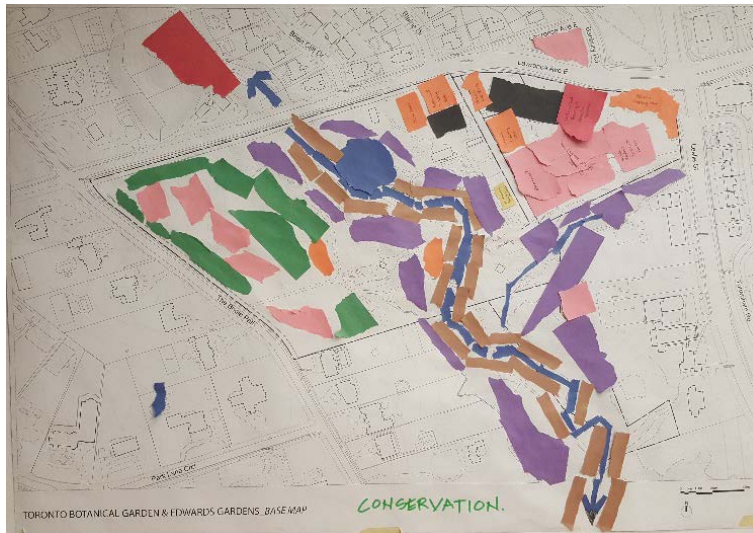
3.2.3 MAPPING ACTIVITY

The Stakeholder Advisory Group was then given the same mapping activity as the Project Group, splitting again into three groups:

- Conservation
- Education
- Beauty and Display

Each group was given a large scale base map of the Gardens, coloured paper and glue. Each was asked to explore various ways of thinking about their given theme by tearing and placing colours on the map. Afterwards, each group was asked to describe their ideas and maps back to the group.

Conservation



The conservation group identified a need to rehabilitate the natural areas rather than restore them to their original state. Ideas for conservation focused on both the natural and cultural heritage elements of the site. This included:

- Restoration of the woodlands (purple), flood plain (brown) and creek (blue) to create a contiguous natural area to promote better ecological health and better connections both north and south through the ravine and along Wilket Creek.
- Spreading native plantings to the table lands in the west, not just relegating them to the steep slopes which are prone to erosion. There should be a mix of woodlands for shade (green) and open sunny meadow (pink).
- Introduction of a pond or similar feature to help deal with floodwaters (blue circle).
- The current area devoted to parking was considered a waste of space considering how constrained the Gardens were instead an opportunity for a pollinator native meadow garden (pink) with greenhouses. Parking was relocated to other areas of the site (black).
- Additional horticultural therapy and demonstration garden (red), as well as botanic display and test beds were advocated in the east (orange), along with a rose bed and an ornamental display bed at the corner of Leslie and Lawrence to draw attention to the site from passing traffic. It was stressed that the area for horticultural therapy would need to be 100% accessible for all and close to parking.
- Protection of the historic cemetery (white) and consideration for moving the Moriyama Pavilion (yellow) to accommodate greater use of the lawn area for planting.
- It was not clear from the exercise if any consideration was given to where maintenance work areas or vehicles access would be placed.

Education



Like the Project Group before, it was emphasized that there were plentiful learning opportunities to be had and created across the Gardens. Ideas included:

- Indoor conservatory experiences (orange) positioned in the west table lands to draw people's attention over to that side where there is little activity. This was oriented around an amphitheatre (yellow) in the middle for programming to further activate the space. Conservatories were also focused in the north near Lawrence around the existing visitor centre and the barn complex and included an experimental conservatory and orchid house. All conservatories would be green structures using solar geothermal technologies. It was felt that the conservatories also presented an important opportunity for partnership with universities and other higher education institutions.
- Other new buildings and facilities identified include an aquatic centre, and a botanical research lab so that the Gardens could fulfill their role as a botanic garden. A key feature would be a range of seasonal plantings around the new botanic research lab and along a grand allée (red) which leads from Lawrence to the lab.
- Plans looked as creating more gardens (green) throughout, as well as incorporating more meadows and native plants (pink), native orchids (purple) and a series of forest/river water gardens with native plants and a pond for water conservation (blue).
- Expansion of the existing children's teaching garden with the addition of washroom facilities adjacent, and a new teaching garden for adult courses. This also included a teaching trail (yellow lines) which leads from the visitor centre to the teaching gardens so as to make the journey part of the learning experience as well.
- Interpretive signage and panels (brown dots) were scattered throughout the Gardens so that visitors would be able to know what they were looking at.
- Participants were also concerned about parking, noting that there was not sufficient parking, and that parking took up too much of the Gardens' limited space. Solutions focused on finding alternative ways to accommodate parking in order to free up current space occupied by asphalt. Ideas include two multi-storey car park structures with green roofs (brown, green and pink structures) in the west on the Bridal Path to support the new conservatories, and at the corner of Lawrence and Leslie for the botanical research lab. Also, the group suggested annexing Wilket Creek Park. By including it as part of the

combined Gardens and using its existing parking area it would relieve parking pressure in other areas.

- The group also emphasized better connections with the new LRT system at Eglinton. Ideas included pathways through Wilket Creek Park, a shuttle, and a 4 meter wide multiuse trail roadside to connect south to Eglinton.

Beauty and Display



The group examining beauty and display emphasized the need for working with what was in the Gardens already to naturalize areas, and that beautification should be focused in the existing TBG area. Key ideas included:

- Focusing on restoring the natural heritage beauty and education (green) on the table lands, including historical plantings (pink) along the Bridle Path.
- Creation of a large central water feature (purple) along Wilket Creek and photogenic bridges (yellow). The group also offered winter beauty program ideas including a skating path (blue) and an ice sculpture event.
- Suggestions for improved garden features included an enhanced teaching garden and a new garden which was planted to reflect the ethnic diversity of the cultures of Toronto.
- Along Lawrence, the group proposed a series of glasshouses, including a butterfly conservatory. Use of bird-friendly glass was highlighted.
- Better curb appeal at Lawrence and Leslie was also emphasized with a number of “magnificent entrances” (red), better signage and “wow” display gardens along the perimeter to draw attention from passing traffic.
- Expand parking lot vertically and add a building to it for more building space, ensure it has a green roof and outside and inside living walls (white).

3.3 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY WORKSHOP (14)

A workshop with the Indigenous community was held on February 15th, 2017 at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (NCCT). Elder Nancy Rowe, a Mississauga, Ojibwe of the Aamishinaabek Nation located at New Credit First Nation, opened the workshop and conducted a smudging ceremony. The session was also attended by several members from the City of Toronto and the consultant team. Two discussions were had over the course of the evening, one with adults from the Indigenous community, and another with a group of young people participating in the NCCT's youth program.

3.3.1 ADULTS (7)

Discussion with the adult group included 7 members of the Indigenous community, City of Toronto staff, and the consultant team.

Explore Reconciliation

- The restoration of human to human relations through interpretive and programming opportunities was suggested and supported by most participants as a way to explore reconciliation.

A Sacred Space

- Increasingly there is a need for a sanctuary or sacred spaces, currently there are none within Toronto that are private and fit for ceremonies.

Environmental Sustainability

- Participants suggested that the topic of restoration and environmental sustainability be linked and

explored with programming opportunities, space design and offerings, and be incorporated in the gardens' operational practices.

- Reconnecting and honouring the Land with plants original to the land and sustainable management practices such as natural filtering systems for water protection.
- Remove all invasive species.

Knowledge Exchange

- Use the garden as an opportunity to tell the history of the land and as a learning tool to connect visitors with the garden.

Garden as Therapy

- The garden can be a source for building the knowledge of the medicinal benefits of horticulture using natural areas that are "pure" from pollutants.

Garden as Convener

- This is an opportunity for the garden to be a leader as a convener that brings communities together.
- "All people must come together to share the land and heal the land"

Cultivating a Culture of Stewardship

- Bringing the garden to its original state and adopting its original language will help to enhance an understanding of its origins and history. It will also increase a sense of caring for the land, so as to inspire stewardship.
- Create an indigenous framework that focuses on balance, respect for nature, and helps establish a culture of stewardship.

- Develop programs that increase youth participation, harvesting, seed sharing, urban and community farming to increase community ownership and connection to the land.

Restoration and Indigenization

- Plan for the long term of the garden from an indigenous perspective, so as to enhance biodiversity, the ecology, environment of the garden and decrease toxins – in this sense purify the land so that it can be used to cultivate, harvest, educate, and to inspire stewardship.
- Honour pre-contact history, bring back traditional place names, plant names and language, and create a private gathering sacred place for ceremony and council.

Education

- There is an opportunity to offer educational programming that increases understanding and awareness of indigenous people, culture and practices as they connect to the land and its origin – guidance in this area is missing.
- Integrated learning and an educational exchange are opportunities that can be maximized with some of the following programs: ask Elders to share their wisdom and teachings; create paid internship opportunities for Indigenous youth; provide hands-on programs; focus on providing access to organic and healthy medicinal plants and foods.
- The ravines are a learning opportunity and something unique to the area that the garden should leverage as a learning tool.

3.3.2 YOUTH (7)

Discussion with the youth group started with 3 participants and grew to 7 participants by the end. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 25 years old and included NCCT youth program coordinators and members of the youth council.

Previous Visit

One of three early participants had been to Edwards Gardens and the Toronto Botanical Garden before, and cited the orchid show. Feedback was that this was an enjoyable event but every expensive. Features of most importance to this participant was the nature areas of the Gardens. It was emphasized that the Gardens were not physically accessible for those with mobility issues and more places to sit was desirable.

The other two participants had visited other botanical gardens and noted that what they enjoyed most about these experiences was being able to see plant varieties from around the world and that these places had spaces that were warm and green during the winter.

Indigenization

Participants emphasized the need for the Gardens to “indigenize”, or to infuse Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the design of the Gardens, the structural layers of the City and Toronto Botanical Gardens, and how the Gardens are managed in future. Simply planting native species was not sufficient.

It was suggested that the Gardens, through the Master Planning process, should adopt an Indigenous framework to work towards balance and help people develop a respect for the land and all creatures, and learn how to take care of it with love and affection. The framework would help all

people understand the interconnectedness of us all, from growing through to foraging, sustainable development, our relationship with the land and our responsibility as people.

Stories to be Told

Participants were asked what stories could be told at the Gardens and how they could best be told/communicated. The following were emphasized:

Indigenous History

- Opportunity to tell the Indigenous history of the Gardens and Toronto. What was this place before it was Edwards Gardens? What was its Indigenous place name? What happened here?
- Learn about land treaties and wampums such as the Dish with One Spoon.
- Seeing the native species that used to grow here could transport people back in time.

Indigenous Teachings

- Participants were very clear about the difference between the word “stories” and Indigenous teachings, emphasizing that the latter were considered truth and not mythology.
- Teachings and knowledge exchange were considered important for learning how to honour and be one with the land, particularly for urban youth, who had perhaps lost touch with nature (because of a lack of it in the city/ not living on the land) and thus their culture, as the two are inextricably linked.
- The keepers and communicators of these teachings are Indigenous Elders, these are oral traditions and they should always be the ones to deliver these

lessons. Having a staff position for an Elder at the Gardens was suggested.

- The Elders should also direct the Gardens on alternative ways to communicate teachings to the public, when an Elder was not present to give them. This could include booklets, videos, etc.
- Suggestions for teachings included:
 - Spirit of plants and their relationship with you, emphasize interconnectivity
 - Companion gardening – The Three Sisters
 - Sacred medicines – sage, tobacco, sweet grass, cedar
 - Moon cycle, respectful and sustainable harvesting
 - Taking care of the plants also helps to take care of the animals

Indigenous Language

- Language was highlighted as being a significant aspect of culture and the restoration of Indigenous language was considered important.
- This include the revitalization of Indigenous place names, as many had particular meaning, as well as plant names. Signage and plant labels were suggested as ways to do this.
- In Toronto, key Indigenous languages for consideration should be Ojibway and Haudenosaunee.

Programs and Activities

Participants were also asked what types of programs and activities that would like to be able to see or do at the Gardens. Suggestions included:

- Community Gardens – Food deserts were seen as a serious problem in Toronto. Community gardens would allow people, particularly those with lower incomes, to grow their own healthy foods rather than resorting to unhealthy options.
- Harvesting – It was important to learn how to harvest sustainably and the various moon cycles which govern the specific times and ways to do so. However, it was also highlighted that people should be allowed to harvest from the Gardens, even if it is just once or twice per year, but that a City by-law prevents this from happening. Helpers of the Earth was mentioned as a precedent within the City for harvesting sustainably, and the Creators Garden program was also highlighted as a good program/partner.
- Medicine Garden – A medicine garden was highlighted as something that would be of interest to the group, as would opportunities to learn about the medicine properties of plants and how to use them. Sumac, balsam, strawberries, Chaga mushrooms and willow were referenced. Harvesting and ceremonial tobacco were highlighted as being of interest as it would be more meaningful to grow your own tobacco, rather than having to purchase it from a shop.
- Plant Uses – Continuing in the same vein as the medicine garden, participants also wanted to learn about the use of other plants in daily life. Birch bark, spruce gum for glue were referenced. This also extended to cultural crafts such as making rattles, drums, and baskets, and should be led by Elders.
- Student Position & Internships – Strong interest in employment opportunities at the Gardens was expressed, particularly in land management practices. There was also the suggestion that youth could help to create booklets, walking tours or other materials to provide interpretation, or help through propagating seedlings
- Plant Exchange and Seed Library – Plant exchanges and seed libraries were highlighted as a way to encourage people to grow at home, and would be common ground between the Gardens, NCCT and other Indigenous groups. It also was highlighted as being important to conservation and could focus on sacred Indigenous medicine plants.
- Gathering Space – There was interest in having a dedicated gathering space for Indigenous use. Suggestions included a wigwam. However, this was not for public display and would require privacy.
- Self-Programmed Gardens – Participants suggested providing space/allotment for Indigenous groups, particularly youth programs to program on their own. This would allow them to grow plants of interest and explore topics of relevance to them. It could also be used as a way to publicly demonstrate skills and ideas.
- Partnerships – Connections to this integrated relationship with nature and a way of managing it should be learnt from and done in partnership with those who know. Potential partners included Elders, Native Learning Centres, and the NCCT Youth Council with 300 plus members.
- Multi-Cultural Programs – It was suggested that the Gardens also provide an opportunity to showcase the many diverse cultures living in Toronto.

Visioning Word Association

Participants were given a worksheet exercise that listed a variety of vision-related word and phrases that had been collected over the course of various Phase 2 and 3 engagement activities. Participants were asked to consider

their vision for the future of Edwards Gardens and the Toronto Botanical Garden, and then circle the words or phrases listed that connected most with them and what they would like to see guide the Master Plan and design concepts. If there were words or phrases on the list that participants disagreed with, they were asked to cross these out. Participants were also asked to add any words or phrases that they felt were missing from the list provided.

TOP 5 WORDS CIRCLED	TOP 5 WORDS CROSSED OUT	ADDITIONAL WORDS
1. Ecosystem (7)	1. Tourist Attraction (4)	1. Harvesting/ Growing (2)
2. Water (6)	2. Meaningful Place (2)	2. Traditional Languages
3. Ceremony (6)	3. Welcoming (2)	3. Teachings
4. Beautiful (5)	4. Ancestors (2)	4. Indigenous
5. Conservation (5)	5. Habitat (2)	5. Elders
		6. Traditional Medicine Garden

Further discussion of the exercise showed a distinct conflict between the words “ceremony” and “tourist attraction”. Indigenous ceremonies and councils were considered sacred and were not for public display or entertainment. If ceremonial spaces were included in the Master Plan, these spaces would need a high level of privacy.

3.3.3 SUMMARY

The following provides a summary of the key messages and vision heard from the Indigenous community discussions overall:

- Heal the Land – Return it to the state it was before, protect the water as an essential life-giver.
- Indigenize – Infuse Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the Master Plan by creating an Indigenous framework that prioritizes balance with and respect for nature, promotes stewardship, plans for the long-term (7 generations).
- Role as a Convener – Bring people together human to human to talk and share the land.
- Cultural Revitalization – Tell pre-contact history, revive languages through traditional place names and plant names.
- Sanctuary/Sacred Spaces – Provide private and secluded places for ceremony, council and consultation.
- Exchange of Earth Knowledge – Provide opportunities for Elders to share their wisdom and teachings regarding the spirit of plants, sustainable management practices, harvesting, etc. Provide paid internship opportunities for Indigenous youth.
- Reconnect with the Land /Therapy – Build knowledge and stock of medicinal plants, offer hands-on programs, create opportunities for seed sharing and space for self-directed programs and/or community/allotments.

3.4 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (8)

After the first revision of the project vision and the guiding principles, telephone interviews with a select group of 8 market and subject knowledgeable individuals were conducted to test the current vision and gather feedback on overarching ideas for the Master Plan and Management Plan. Interviewees represented the following organizations:

- Ward 25 Councillor
- Toronto Tourism
- Canadian Gardens Council
- Royal Botanical Gardens
- Toronto Arts Council
- Parks People
- Evergreen Brickworks
- National Healing Forest Initiative

The following are the key findings from all of the interviewees:

- *A world class botanical garden is an asset for our city:* Most interviewees believe that a new world class botanical garden is a great asset to have and that Toronto as a global city needs one. “Yes we need a botanical garden, it would help increase appreciation for nature, and it would be a source of beauty, as well as be incredibly important for Toronto and visitors - as a place of learning and reflection.”
- *What is a botanical garden?* A public institution that maintains a plant collection to museum standard for

the purpose of education, conservation, research and display.

- Some interviewees felt that the new garden should be driven by programming, and continue to *engage people in the city with programming that cultivates sustainable urban gardening practices*. This is a niche area that TBG has done well and should continue to focus on.
 - The garden can use its role to *promote Toronto as a livable city by being a conduit for these conversations and meetings*. The focus for the garden can be on how to make the environment of the city a better place to live in for everyone. Through this role the garden can make a big difference as an urban centre.
 - The garden can *create a nature network* with the objective of getting kids and youth outside to play.
- Some interviewees felt that the new garden has to *leverage its unique position and offerings* and focus on native plants in addition to display gardens.
- Many believe that the new garden should *combine beauty, industry events, culture and art*, to create a beneficial and unique offering that draws visitors and participation. *A natural, beautiful and cultural landscape* and context would be attractive to residents and visitors.
- The new garden has an opportunity to take a *leadership role as a thought leader and as a conservation authority*. This can be done with the garden taking the *role of a science centre* that utilizes horticulture, activities and educational programming to do so.

- *The operational model needs to be enhanced* to ensure the financial sustainability of the garden, this includes finding new revenue streams and increasing fundraising efforts.
- *People are using parks differently*, they need to have more events and opportunities for connecting – the *garden should take a leadership role in creating an eventful place* where partners, communities, and visitors can participate.
- Some interviewees felt that there is a *public interest with the ravines*, and that this is an opportunity for the garden to showcase the ravines.
- Many interviewees pointed to the importance of *creating a garden with excellent hospitality and a high quality guest service* and that these are a key aspects of a successful garden. To do this, many believe that the garden needs to have better amenities, places to sit and enjoy the garden and nature.
- *To be a successful destination, the Gardens must look and feel like a standalone attraction not a municipal park/agency* similar to the Toronto Zoo, AGO and ROM (all government agencies). The Toronto Botanical Garden already has a brand and identity that can be easily leveraged.
- Location is the single biggest hurdle of any attraction. The Gardens are not likely to get any more central to downtown unless moved. As “fly” markets increase and “drive markets” decrease, visitors are looking for more walkable destinations, *public transport links and improved visibility and accessibility from transit stops are essential*. Distance and transport cannot be solved by marketing and signage alone.
- Some noted that the garden has an *opportunity to increase newcomer participation, and to create a more*

eventful garden and city with partnerships that have synergies and are mutually beneficial. A series of events that connect with other institutions throughout the city would help with this.

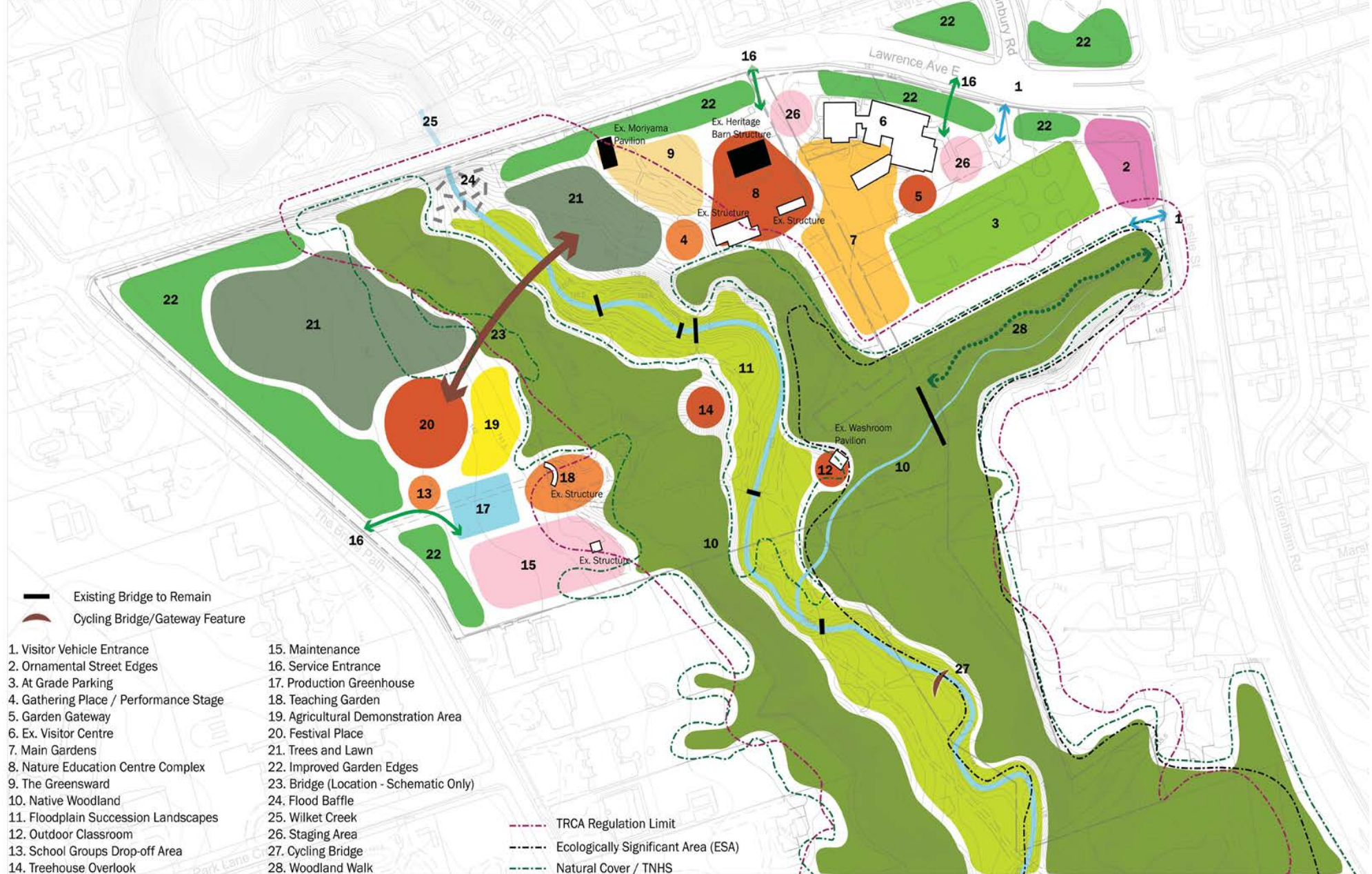
- Some felt that the garden should *create structures that reflect the communities engaged* so that they feel more welcome.
- Hands-on experiences and programs (such as farming and community gardens) are believed to be key to *increasing community ownership*.
- Many felt that they garden should *take a primary role in attracting and increasing student and youth participation* and provide them with training and educational opportunities.

3.5 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE (76)

A second public open house was held at the Toronto Botanical Garden Visitor Centre on February 23rd 2017. Approximately 76 attendees had the opportunity to view display boards of two potential concepts up close ahead of the start of the event.

The open house began with a presentation by the consultant team which presented an overview of the community engagement process to-date and showed how feedback collected throughout Phase 2 and early feedback from Phase 3 had been transformed into a draft vision and 8 guiding principles. The consultant team then presented two potential draft concepts which illustrated two different design approaches to the Gardens. Concept A was more focused on native plants and a natural aesthetic and Concept B focused more on ornamental plants and manicured beds.

PROGRAM CONCEPT A: NATIVE HABITAT FOCUS



PROGRAM CONCEPT B: ORNAMENTAL FOCUS



Participants were then asked to discuss amongst their table groups:

- What they liked or did not like between the two concepts;
- What concerns they had if any;
- If anything had been missed in this first iteration; and
- If they had any other ideas they would like to see included in the draft concept design.

Afterwards, each table nominated a speaker who reported their top comments back to the room. The following summarizes key findings.

3.5.1 LIKES

Participants expressed a like or support for the following:

- Hybrid Native and Ornamental Approach – There was clear support from all participants for a hybrid approach in the Gardens that mixed the qualities of both Concept A (native plants) and Concept B (ornamental beds), rather than focusing on one or the other. Although more emphasis on native plantings was preferred, it was suggested that ornamental beds could be focused on the east side of the ravine and the native plantings on the west and in the ravine. Ornamental beds were thought to be important to attract people to the Gardens and concentrated displays around the entrance was suggested to for higher visibility. A reduction in the amount of lawn area was also highlighted.
- Appropriately Address Parking Congestion – Several comments were made regarding parking proposals. Most were in favour of addressing parking congestion, especially on peak visitor days and when

film crews were on site. A parking structure was considered a favourable solution by most, although one group questioned whether the strategy to position it at the entrance had the right curb appeal. However there were others who questioned if additional parking was really needed and suggested that the Gardens should take a conservationist stance to encourage more people to visit using sustainable/greener transport options like walking, cycling or public transit. If a parking structure was to be built, it was emphasized that it should be attractive/well designed, unobtrusive (perhaps underground or disguised by a green wall) and/or demonstrated green building excellence.

- Support for proposed features included:
 - Treehouse overlook
 - Public glasshouses
 - Separate/self-contained maintenance entrance
 - Bridge (needs to be attractive and elegant)
- Support for key design principles included:
 - Better use of the west side to ease congestion in the Gardens
 - Inclusion of Indigenous ideals to heal the lands
 - Reduce conflict between cyclists and pedestrians
 - Increased biodiversity
 - Celebrating the uniqueness that is Toronto
 - Creating more space and a better visitor experience
 - Providing indoor and winter attractions

3.5.2 DISLIKE/CONCERNS

Participants expressed a dislike for the following:

- Proposed bike trails/access on the west side
- Circulation was very much focused on those moving southbound, and more thought needed to be given to those moving northbound
- Increased popularity will bring increased traffic resulting in more congestion and difficulties getting out of the parking lot onto Lawrence and Leslie. A traffic circle was suggested.
- Expansion does not extend far enough south – better connections to Wilket Creek Park and Sunnybrook Park needed

Participants expressed the following concerns/questions:

- What constitutes local species? When is it native vs invasive?
- What will be the impact on maintenance? Will it be increased to keep up with new investment? What are the resource implications?
- Will increased events and performances bring amplified music?

3.5.3 MISSING

Participants noted the following as missing from the concepts presented:

- Wetlands – a natural element, needed to absorb flood waters
- Better connections to the public transit system, particularly the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and

especially during big events when it is difficult to find parking. A shuttle service was suggested.

- More consideration for wildlife and insects. A butterfly corridor and indoor insect house were suggested.
- Consideration for pets
- Changes and improvements to the visitor centre. Heat regulation was highlighted as an issue.
- Space for art and performance
- Elements for children
- A good restaurant

3.6 ONLINE SURVEY (76)

A public survey was hosted online from February 24th 2017 to March 19th, 2017. The purpose of this survey was to further test the vision and guiding principles with the public, and to gather additional feedback on the two draft design concepts presented at the public open house.

Links to the survey were promoted from the website, through social media and at the Toronto Botanical Garden booth during the Canada Blooms event.

Approximately 76 responses were collected from the survey. Respondents were primarily female (66%) and over 50 years old (72%), representing a good mix of members (38%), non-members and volunteers (12%), as well as neighbours and non-neighbours. A summary of key conclusions and feedback are below:

3.6.1 PROJECT VISION

- There is consensus around the project vision, with 47% of respondents saying they “strongly agree” with the statement and 28% saying they “agree” (total 75%).
- Some respondents expressed concern regarding the vision to be “internationally recognized”. Some wanted greater clarification to as to what the term meant, and why Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden need this level of recognition.
- Others expressed concern as to whether the City and the TBG will be able to achieve this high standard, as well as whether the City and TBG will be able to achieve it within such a small space and also maintain it for the future.
- One respondent suggested developing Edwards Gardens as a location for Toronto-centric research issues and suggested finding a more appropriate and much larger site for a new botanical garden attraction to allow it to achieve international status.
- “Access” (3 comments) and “respect for nature” (2 comments) were two additional phrases that were suggested for inclusion in the project vision.

3.6.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- There was a high level of support for the 8 guiding principles outlined to underpin the design process, with approximately 78%-93% agreement or strong agreement with each of the principles.
- “Improve facilities to expand programming” received 78% and “enhance visitor experience” received 93%.

- Additional comments emphasized the importance of high quality design and cohesion (3 comments), and as well as celebrating plant biodiversity (2 comments) and helping to reconnect people with nature.

3.6.3 FEEDBACK ON CONCEPT A: NATIVE HABITAT FOCUS

Likes

A total of 29 comments were made regarding what was liked most about Concept A:

- Focus on native plants, wildlife and habitats (11 comments) and the more natural setting (5 comments). Respondents appreciated less emphasis on annuals, and developing sustainable ecosystems. It was suggested that this approach was a welcome contrast to Toronto’s urban environment and was more inviting and welcoming. It was also emphasized that this approach took advantage of the ravine and a Toronto characteristic to be more unique (2 comments) and was considered to be a less invasive intervention (2 comments) with less restoration and less structures added.
- Other features that were liked included:
 - Education centre complex near the barns (5 comments)
 - Revitalization of the woodland (4 comments)
 - Treehouse overlook (3 comments)
 - Cycling bridge (3 comments)
 - Outdoor classroom (2 comments)

Dislikes/Concerns

A total of 21 comments were made regarding what was of concern in Concept A:

- Respondents were concerned that this particular scheme was “underwhelming” and lacked the “wow factor” needed to draw people to the Gardens and to meet the vision for international recognition (4 comments). There was also a lament for the ornamental gardens (4 comments) and concern that an approach that was “too natural” could be considered too “wild” and “messy” to be of interest (2 comments). It was also suggested that a more creative and innovative use of native plants was required and that “native does not have to mean staid and predictable”.
- There was a desire for a better use of space (2 comments), given the constrained site. Too much of Concept A is being devoted to lawns and parking, and would be better utilized for gardens.
- Greater visibility and access from Lawrence and Leslie was also emphasized. Suggestions included a combined approach of “wow at the entrances and education and ecology in the interior”. A pedestrian gateway/access from the corner (2 comments) was also suggested.

Missing Elements

There were 9 comments received regarding features that respondents felt were missing from this concept:

- More attention to the bicycle/walking access at the south of the gardens, and transit access at the main entrance.
- Links and partnerships with educational institutions

- More flower beds in Edwards Gardens and the existing TBG gardens have not been expanded
- A lack of parking to support the teaching areas, especially for those with disabilities.
- The Lawrence edge is a missed opportunity to create a calling card for the Gardens

3.6.4 FEEDBACK ON CONCEPT B: ORNAMENTAL FOCUS

Likes

A total of 23 comments were made regarding what was liked most about Concept B:

- Respondents emphasized a preference for the ornamental focus of Concept B (8 comments), particularly the ornamental street edges (5 comments). It was felt that this approach would be more appealing to tourists and provided an experience of plants that you “can’t see anywhere else”. It was also emphasized that this approach better demonstrated what a traditional botanic garden should be (2 comments). Other respondents thought that this concept showed a better mix of both ornamental and natural elements (2 comments).
- Other elements that were liked included the greenhouses (3 comments) and better access (2 comments).

Dislikes

A total of 25 comments were made regarding what was of concern in Concept B:

- Many concerns pertained to the proposed multi-storey parking structure (9 comments). Comments

focused on the structure looking “out of place” and “out of scale” with the site, as well as it not being “in keeping with the natural setting”. It was again emphasized that too much of the Gardens’ limited space was devoted to parking.

- Other concerns were expressed regarding the level of maintenance required to manage the ornamental focus and keep up a manicured approach (5 comments) and whether this was sustainable operationally, financially and environmentally.

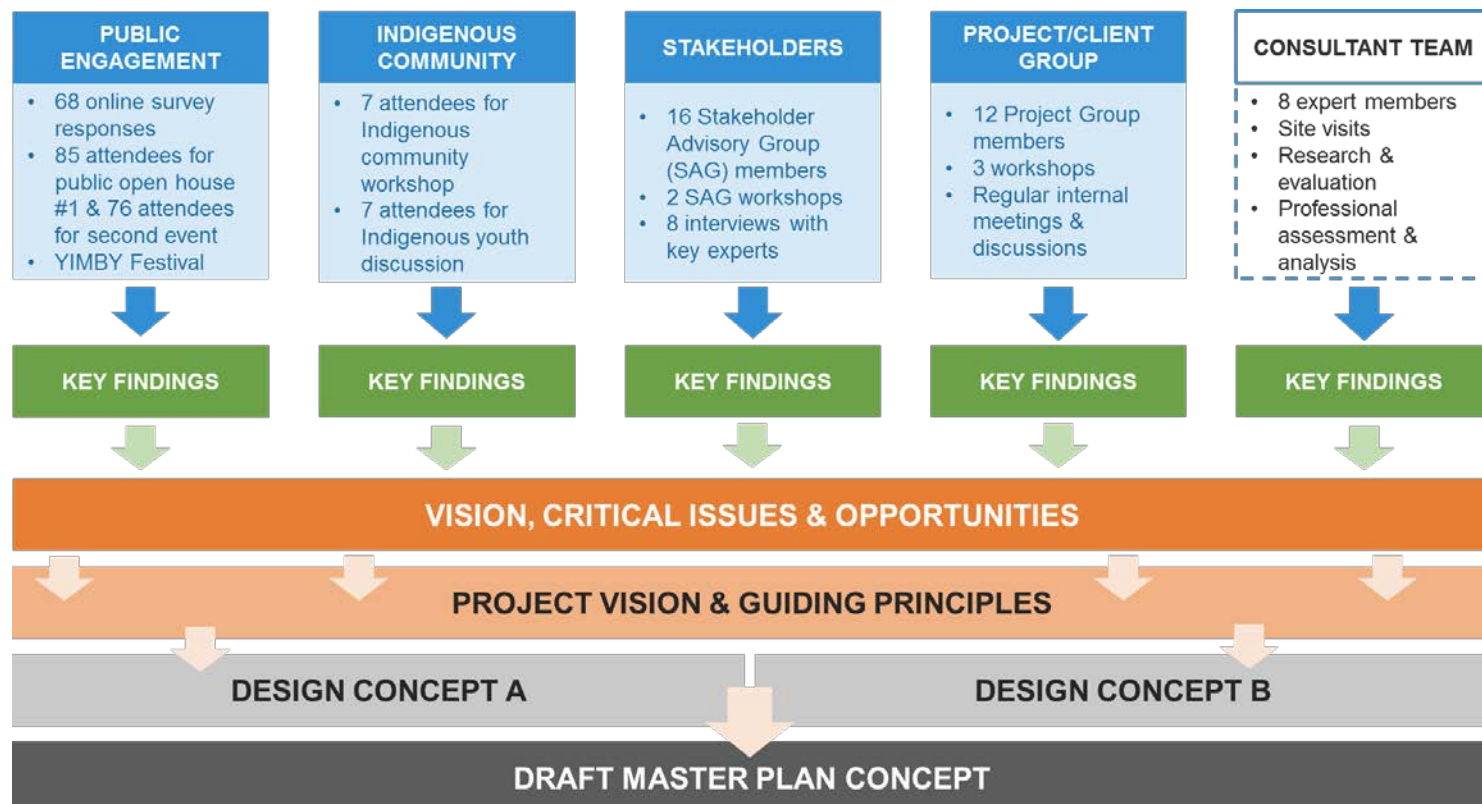
Missing Elements

There were 9 comments received regarding features that respondents felt were missing from this concept:

- A mixed approach between native plantings and ornamental gardens was emphasized (3 comments).
- More creative design to “think bigger” and make native planting exciting – “a world class botanical garden recognizes and defines this” (2 comments).
- Other elements included:
 - Treehouse overlook from Concept A
 - More seating and plant labels
 - Rock garden and crevice garden

4. KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASE 3

The design process adopted is iterative, constantly gathering feedback and refining the design strategy and concept ideas as we move forward towards a final Master Plan and Management Plan. The following diagram summarizes the engagement activities undertaken to-date, by audience and shows how key findings from each have been incorporated with the analysis undertaken by the consultation team in order to draft a project vision and a concise list of critical issues and essential opportunities that form the foundation of the design strategy and outline concept for the Master Plan.



The following synthesizes all comments, ideas and feedback into key values, directions and initiatives for the consultant team as they move forward with concept development and management planning:

4.1 VISION

- The project vision is well received and generally accepted. Many believe that *a world class botanical garden would be an asset* for the City of Toronto and is an essential component for any cosmopolitan city.
- *Central to this vision and any future designs and management plans must be a curated plant collection, display, education, research and conservation* – the tenants of which differentiate a botanical garden from other gardens. Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden *must live up to its name and public expectation*.
- In order to achieve the envisioned status of “internationally recognized” the Master Plan concept must be able to provide *a high level of horticultural excellence, hospitality and quality in the visitor experience, programming, facilities, and management* of the site.
- The Gardens must be a *cultural and botanical attraction for locals and tourists*, not just a destination. It will need to combine plants with *beauty, industry events, culture and art in order to create a more eventful garden and city*. Clustering other nearby restaurants, shopping and attractions will be essential to success as a destination.

- *The Gardens must look and feel like a standalone attraction not a municipal park/agency* similar to the Toronto Zoo, AGO and ROM (all government agencies). The Toronto Botanical Garden already has a brand and identity that can be easily leveraged.

4.2 UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE

- Future design concepts must *identify, enhance and leverage those unique elements of the Gardens in order to differentiate* it from other outdoor and botanical experiences and attractions, and *be uniquely Toronto*, fitting in with the city's DNA.
- A hybrid approach to design which provides a *mix of both native habitats and ornamental plantings* is preferred. Native elements could include meadowlands, native orchids, and forested areas and should be focused in the ravine and on the west table lands, where ornamental features should be focused on existing TBG lands. *Maximize available space for gardens, over built structures*.
- *Address the Garden's curb appeal* from Lawrence and Leslie – creating attractive ornamental perimeter plantings, and attention grabbing gateway entries, as well as improving signage and traffic circulation.

4.3 RESILIENT ECOSYSTEM

- A resilient ecosystem is reliant on a harmonious relationship between humans and nature, as well as human to human, and nature to nature. The future

gardens must *reconnect people to each other and the land, as well as cultivate a culture of stewardship.*

- Development in the ravine area should focus on *creating a continuous natural space and addressing key flooding and erosion challenges*, building in resiliency and *prioritizing natural and native plantings* over ornamental beds.
- *Focus on revitalization and renewal of key natural and cultural heritage assets to heal the land*, rather than trying to restore the landscape to a previous state.
- More emphasis on *increasing biodiversity*, specifically more attention is required for water and wetlands, as well as wildlife, butterflies and insects.
- Understand and take into consideration how interventions at the Gardens might *impact on the surrounding landscapes, neighbourhoods and businesses.*

4.4 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY & MANAGEMENT

- Indigenization¹ – It was clear from the Indigenous community engagement and reinforced by comments at the public open house that incorporation of Indigenous culture was supported. The Master Plan should *infuse indigenous knowledge and perspectives* into the design of the Gardens and the Management

Plan by creating a framework that prioritizes balance with and respect for nature.

- Take a strong thought-leadership role as an authority on conservation. This *culture of stewardships should permeate all management and maintenance practices, and should also extend to the behaviours and practices of all Garden visitors*, encouraging them to uphold these principles as well.
- *Ground all design concept proposals in what is deliverable/fundable, feasible and manageable/financially sustainable* in the future.
- Ensure appropriate *integration with City-wide initiatives.*
- *Further consideration for partnerships and shared facilities is needed*, particularly with educational institutions.

4.5 FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Parking is currently a perceived problem and will become further constrained as the Gardens develop and become more popular. *Solutions must address parking issues in a creative and innovative way* that:
 - Is evidence-based.
 - Prioritizes conservation and actively tries to encourage visitors to come to the Gardens by

it does mean that consideration of Indigenous issues comes "naturally".
Source: Camosun College, BC

- alternative, greener methods and provides necessary infrastructure to do so.
 - Utilizes existing facilities where possible and minimizes the footprint so as to prioritize land use for gardens and other features.
 - Employs green engineering and technology.
 - Is both aesthetically pleasing, as well as practical.
- Visitor infrastructure has to be in close proximity to all entrances and gateways.
- *Upgrade and improve to existing facilities* such as the visitor centre and prioritize *new features* such as:
 - A public access conservator/greenhouse
 - Indoor and outdoor winter experiences
 - Appropriately sized event spaces
 - Self-programmed spaces
 - Space for art and performance
 - Food service such as a café/restaurant
 - Improved washrooms
 - Elements for children
 - Treehouse overlook
- *Provide private and secluded spaces for gathering, sanctuary or sacred ceremonies.*

4.6 FUNCTIONALITY, ACCESSIBILITY & CIRCULATION

- The Gardens must be for everyone and *ensure that all Torontonians have the opportunity to actively engage with nature.*
- Location is the single biggest hurdle of any attraction. The Gardens are not likely to get any more central to downtown unless moved. As tourist markets are looking for more walkable cities, *public transport links and improved visibility and accessibility from transit stops will be essential* to the future success of the Gardens. Distance and transport must be tackled head-on and will not be solved by marketing and signage only.
- More thought to *connectivity both north and southbound* was highlighted, as well as *expanding the Gardens into Wilket Creek Park and Sunnybrook Park* in order to increase through flow of visitors and *better connect the Gardens to the new LRT stop* on the Eglinton Crosstown. A shuttle, particularly on event days was also suggested.
- Designs for paths, wayfinding, gardens and features, facilities, and interpretation should be *physically, intellectually and financially accessible to all.*
- Creatively *address the interface between cyclists and pedestrians* in the Gardens, ensuring that public safety is top of mind. Further consideration should be given to whether a bike access on the west side is appropriate.
- Create *more points of interest on the west table lands* to encourage more people to that side of the Gardens and help reduce congestion.

- *Any proposed bridging structure between the table lands needs to be attractive and elegant* so as not to detract from the natural beauty of the ravine.

4.7 VISITOR EXPERIENCE, INTERPRETATION & PROGRAMMING

- *Leverage programs and activities to expand audiences beyond garden enthusiasts*, particularly youth and newcomers. Ensure a multi-cultural approach and examine creative ways for incorporating language, particularly Indigenous language into the Gardens.
- Use the Gardens as an opportunity to exchange Earth knowledge by *incorporating formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the Gardens using a variety of perspectives and interpretive and communication methods*.
- Key interpretive themes include:
 - Plants, horticulture and life science
 - Landscape restoration, design and management
 - Green building and resiliency engineering
 - Wildlife and habitats
 - Cultural heritage, including Indigenous teachings
- *Upgrade and expand the teaching garden* for use by children and also adults.
- *Ensure opportunities for youth training and employment*, in a range of topics and interest areas.
- Give further consideration for pets across the Gardens.

4.8 KEY TAKE-AWAYS

The following summarizes the overall key take-aways going forward:

- *Plants, education, research and conservation must remain central* to the purpose of the Gardens and initiative that help to fulfill this should be prioritized.
- *A hybrid approach* which mixes both native habitat focus and ornamental plantings should be developed as it has the greatest appeal to locals and visitors and the potential to provide a unique visitor experience.
- The *visitor experience and associated visitor amenities must be updated and expanded* to achieve the high level of quality that local visitors and tourists have come to expect from botanic garden attractions.
- Plans should *create a variety of public and private spaces* across the Gardens (both indoor and outdoor) for programs, events and other engagement opportunities to encourage people to gather, learn and reconnect with nature.
- *Ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all*.
- *Expand for better connections with the ravine* to the north and south where possible, as well as *increase connections into the public transit system and other local area attractions*.
- Further consideration is required to *develop creative, realistic, and sustainable parking and cycling solutions* that address current needs, as well as perceived issues.

5. NEXT STEPS

The next steps in the engagement process are to review the draft concept with the Project Group and then test the concept with the Stakeholder Advisory Group, the Indigenous community and the public. Feedback received during Phase 4 will be incorporated into the final Master Plan concept and work will begin on drafting the preliminary Management Plan.

