

Victoria Memorial Square Park Improvements

Phase 1A: Draft Drivers of Change

The draft Drivers of Change, which will be confirmed with the community in Phase 1B, are as follows.

A rich colonial history

Victoria Memorial Square is a unique park site with a rich cultural heritage that dates back to the founding of the city of York. It is part of the Fort York National Historic Site and the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District and is the site of Toronto's first settler cemetery, which includes burials of military personnel and their family members. There is an opportunity to further enhance the heritage of this site while bringing forward new heritage interpretations.

A rich Indigenous history

Victoria Memorial Square is a site steeped in colonial history, but the story does not start there. There is also a rich and ancient Indigenous history to the site that is tied to its adjacency to Taddle Creek and the former Lake Ontario shoreline, in addition to the roles of First Nations in the War of 1812. This presence is not adequately represented in the current space.

A growing and evolving neighbourhood

The neighbourhood surrounding the park has seen dramatic increases in population growth in recent years, thanks to new development. There is a need for the park to support changing demographics as well as intensified use in this rapidly-changing area of the city. This will mean making park improvements that allow for a wider range of uses at various times of the day, and that are durable, sustainable and can withstand high traffic usage patterns.

Out-of-balance park uses

As the community has grown around the park, the balance of users has changed. This has led to conflicts between user groups, including dogs and their owners, children and their caregivers, and others who use the space as a place to rest or hang out. There is a need for park improvements that enhance the existing park programs through the lenses of inclusivity, safety and accessibility to ensure that all park users are able to enjoy this public space.