

# Toronto Island Park Plan Community Advisory Committee Summary Report

Toronto Island Park Plan  
Implementation  
June 25, 2025





# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Toronto Island Park Plan Community Advisory Committee Summary Report..... | 0  |
| Introduction .....  | 3  |
| How We Reached People.....  | 3  |
| Meeting Themes .....  | 4  |
| Discussion Highlights (by Theme) .....                                    | 5  |
| Next Steps.....   | 10 |
| Acknowledgements .....  | 11 |
| City of Toronto .....   | 11 |
| Community Advisory Committee.....   | 11 |
| Consulting Team.....  | 12 |

# Introduction

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025, the City of Toronto's Parks and Recreation Division hosted a meeting with the Toronto Island Park Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The purpose of the meeting was to reconnect with CAC members to provide an update on the City's work with the Toronto Island Park Plan, understand CAC members' interest in continuing to stay involved as the CAC transitions and expands to the Toronto Island Working Group, and to discuss the group's priorities and how to work together moving forward.

20 of 42 CAC members participated in the meeting in person and online. Tom Davidson from Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik's Office also attended the meeting. Netami Stuart (Senior Project Manager, Toronto Island), Annely Zonena (Director, Strategic Project Implementation and Community Engagement), and Andrea Chow (Manager, Parks Operations Waterfront District) participated in the meeting on behalf of the City's Parks and Recreation Division to provide an overview presentation and answer participants' questions. Nicole Swerhun and Yulia Pak from Third Party Public facilitated the meeting.



## How We Reached People

---

Invitations to the meeting were emailed to all participants on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for the development of the Toronto Island Park Plan (previously referred to as the "Master Plan").

# Meeting Themes

The following points summarize key take-aways and themes of the feedback shared during the meeting. They are meant to be read as part of the more detailed summary that follows.

- Participants said they were interested in continuing to be involved in the process, as CAC evolves to the Island Working Group, to celebrate and protect the Island's unique character -- its culture, natural environment, and the stories of its many different users; to balance the diverse needs of public access, residents, and ecology; to improve connection to and around the Island; to connect to others and to engage in the process meaningfully through learning, collaboration and stewardship.
- The topics the group is interested in exploring further together include: understanding and managing capacity to keep the Island “magical”, protection and stewardship of nature and natural habitats, mobility and pedestrian safety, community safety and by-law enforcement, and visitor experience. This feedback will help inform meeting agendas moving forward.
- Advice on how to work together as a group includes the need for clarity on mandate, roles and responsibilities; diverse membership and inclusive representation, including voices that are currently missing from the CAC; ideas on data and information sharing; and advice for the format, scheduling and location of future meetings. This advice will help inform the Draft Terms of Reference for the group.
- Next Steps include piloting a [Draft Feedback Tracking Tool](#) and reconvening in September, where all working groups will be invited to participate together in a full-day meeting to get to know each other and discuss a broader engagement process.

# Discussion Highlights (by Theme)

---

## PART I. WHY WE ARE HERE

Following the acknowledgements and the agenda review, the meeting began with introductions and discussions of why CAC members were interested in continuing to participate, as the group evolves into the Island Working Group.

In introducing themselves, many shared their deep care for the Island and a desire to be good stewards and ambassadors to preserve, continue, and celebrate “the magic” of the Island – its culture, natural environment, and the stories of its many different users - as the Toronto Island Master Plan gets implemented over the next three decades.

Highlights of why people are interested in staying at this table

- **To celebrate and protect the Island’s unique character.** Many participants shared their desire to see the park’s essence and wonder safeguarded for generations to come. Shared reasons included keeping the island public, celebrating and protecting the “Islandness” of the park, and recognizing Hanlan’s Point as a site of global importance for 2SLGBTQ+ communities and naturists. “So that this magical place can be even more magical for all in the future”.
- **To protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological integrity.** Many participants discussed the importance of preserving and enhancing the Island’s unique habitats, biodiversity, and ecological integrity. Some emphasized the value of the park as “a place of refuge for people in the city” and the need to protect and enhance the park and the beaches.
- **To engage meaningfully through learning and collaboration. Many shared a sense of responsibility for the Island and their desire to be good stewards and ambassadors of the Island. Many noted that it was important to work together, with different Island users and the City, to support a process of ongoing learning for all that includes monitoring changes, plans, and progress.**
- **To represent and build connections across the Island communities and users.** Many participants discussed their active roles in their communities and that they were looking to represent their communities’ priorities and concerns – whether that be a small family-owned business, to Island residents, to kayakers, to boaters, to different Park and beach users, to the organization running Park attractions. There’s also interest in connecting to others on the Island and the City’s Parks and Recreation staff.
- **To balance the diverse needs of public access, residents, and ecology.** Some participants were interested in an inclusive approach that honours all users and the Island’s character – “a sensitive way for the islands to develop”, “balancing the demands of public space and a quiet tranquil place of nature”, “balancing the need to preserve the island’s natural environment with the need to provide better public

access”, “balancing improving the guest experiences on the Island with the needs of the local islanders”.

- **To enhance access for all user groups.** Some participants said they were interested in improving connectivity to and on the Island, including access to the islands for non-powered crafts.

## **PART II. FACILITATED DISCUSSION**

After the introductions, Netami Stuart from the City of Toronto provided a quick overview of actions and initiatives that have taken place on the Island to date, explained the concept of a deliberative process, and outlined the next steps.

Following the presentation, participants had discussions in small groups focused on which tasks, projects, or initiatives were of greatest interest to them as a group and how the group should work together. Each group identified two or three key priority areas, which were reported to the broader group by group representatives and discussed further in a facilitated plenary discussion. The facilitator captured key points of discussion on a “white wall” for participants to follow along. The points from the white wall and the small group discussions are summarized below.

### **Content Priorities**

#### **1. Understanding and managing capacity**

Many participants expressed interest in understanding the capacity to “keep the Island magical”, to ensure that the existing natural heritage and infrastructure can support the anticipated visitor growth, and how to manage accessibility and crowding. One participant asked, “What is the ideal number of people on the Island, not to kill the golden goose?”

#### **2. Stewardship of nature and natural habitats**

Many participants emphasized the need to protect the Island’s natural environment and natural habitats. Many also emphasized the need to address beach erosion and prevent flooding. Some suggested robust park management plans are needed to ensure the Island remains a living refuge within the city.

#### **3. Mobility and pedestrian safety**

Many participants were interested in discussing the need to reconcile the growing number of bike and pedestrian safety concerns. With the new Bike Share stations on the Island, it will be important to understand how to ensure pedestrian safety. Even today, pedestrians need to be careful walking from the ferry docks to the beach. Many visitors are also not aware of the many seniors living at the Island’s seniors centre. Some suggested a mobility study to prevent congestion for bicycles, vehicles, and goods. The mobility study could also look at the year-round access to the Island.



#### **4. Community safety and by-law enforcement**

Some participants noted that with up to 20,000 daily visitors anticipated, it will be important to consider the role of by-law officers in patrolling the Island for better oversight of vending, fire risks, and a general sense of safety for park visitors, residents and businesses. Some participants noted that currently the by-law officers can only be dispatched by calling 311.

#### **5. Enhancing visitor experience**

Some participants noted that it was important to tell Island stories to deepen visitor understanding of the park's ecological, cultural, and historical significance. Another idea was to improve the visitors' experience by allowing the consumption and the sale of alcoholic beverages on the Island, which could include "pedal bars", a variety of vendors, and the ability to enjoy an alcoholic beverage at a picnic. This should come with a SMART-certified enforcement.

### **Process Advice**

Participants shared the following points to help inform the Draft Terms of Reference for the Island Working Group:

#### **1. Mandate and roles**

Many participants highlighted the need for clarity around the Island Working Group's purpose, mandate, and role, including:

- Start with the vision and the goal of the Toronto Island Park Plan.
- Be clear on the group's function, including what kind of power the group has and what role it plays in decision-making.
- Identify the "go" and "no-go" zones – be clear on what is open for the group's influence and what is not.
- Connect feedback to decision-making, with clear timelines.
- Identify roles and responsibilities of all participants, including the City.
- Determine if consensus is important, and if so, how to achieve it.
- Be clear on the expectations for the term in terms of length and consistency of participation.

#### **2. Membership and representation**

Some participants emphasized the importance of understanding who is "at the table" and the need for diverse representation of many different park users. *Nicole noted that there will be a civic lottery held to supplement existing CAC membership, with diverse selection criteria to ensure inclusive representation.* Participants shared the following feedback and advice:

- It will be important for Working Group members who represent organizations to communicate to and from their memberships.



- Consult organizations individually before coming to the Working Group, so the issues and priorities are understood.
- Consider creating sub-groups of the Working Group to deal with issues needing specific expertise.

Participants also identified the following voices to consider including on the Island Working Group:

- Academics
- Birds + Animals: Toronto Ornithological Club, Birds Canada
- Destination Toronto
- Friends of Gibraltar Point
- Indigenous communities
- New Canadians
- Toronto residents living outside downtown
- TRCA
- Young international students

### 3. Data and Information Sharing

There was some discussion about the importance of sharing information and data. In particular, participants recommended:

- Meeting records and outcomes to be shared and made public.
- Connect with and exchange information with other relevant divisions and groups in the City (e.g. Technical Advisory Committee involved in the Toronto Island Park Plan development).
- Bring in expert guests – for example, Toronto Water to discuss water treatment, etc.
- Consider crowdsourcing the Island usage data over the summer from Beasley, Toronto Island Marina, etc., to help inform discussions in the fall. *Netami to talk to P&R staff about how to best structure data sharing.*
- Consider a place where IWG member events on the Island could be shared with the rest of the group. *The City has put together a calendar of events for the Island, and the member events could be added there.*

### 4. Advice for Future Meetings

Participants shared the following advice for future meetings:

- Clarify the frequency and the schedule of the meetings. The more advanced the notice, the better. Consider meeting quarterly.
- A hybrid experience creates opportunities for better attendance and representation. Some noted a preference for meeting in person for the All-Island Meeting.

- Consider hosting meetings on the Island with tours of the Island.
- Provide food for a 6 to 8 pm dinner time meeting.

### **Questions of Clarification**

- **Can the wi-fi access on the Island be improved?** *The City's business transformation team who are working on adding fibre-optic cables to the Centre Island and ferry landings right now. Additionally, Bell and Rogers are putting up a new tower for stronger cellular access.*
- **Will island businesses have access to the fibre-optic internet?** *The answer likely depends on where you are located. Our suggestion is that you email your interest to the person at the City who is responsible for your lease and copy Netami Stuart.*

# Next Steps

Third Party Public walked participants through a [draft Feedback Tracking Tool](#) as a pilot to help keep track, in a transparent and accountable way, of all the communication received in between meetings, from members of this working group, the Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group, the Indigenous Advisory Circle, and the City.

Third Party Public will update the draft tracker every two weeks. Members of all Island Park Master Plan Implementation Working Groups will have a link to the tracker with the ability to comment. Third Party Public will check in on the usefulness of the tracker with the groups, as the process unfolds over time and refine/adjust as necessary.

Netami thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and reminded participants to keep an eye out for more information about the All-Island Meeting that is currently being planned for September. The purpose of the meeting is to bring the Island Working Group, Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group, and the Indigenous Advisory Circle together to get to know each other, discuss the broader engagement process.

# Acknowledgements

## City of Toronto

---

### **City Council**

Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik's Office, Tom Davidson

### **Parks, Forestry & Recreation**

Netami Stuart, Senior Project Manager, Toronto Island

Annely Zonena, Director, Strategic Project Implementation and Community Engagement

Andrea Chow, Manager, Parks Operations Waterfront District

## Community Advisory Committee

---

### **Organizations Participating**

Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association (Ingrid van der Zande)  
Centreville Amusement Park (Lori Kirk)  
East Waterfront Community Association (Michael Bethke)  
Friends of Hanlan's (Rhys)  
Island Bike Rental (Priya Rao)  
Gibraltar Point Centre for the Arts (Janet Hinkle and Olga Schellenberg)  
Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association (George Hume)  
Ontario Appellate Counsel & Research Lawyer (Peter Simm)  
Queen City Yacht Club (Dan Smith, Commodore)  
Sunshine Senior's Centre (Jacquie Buncel)  
Toronto Field Naturalists (Ellen Schwartzel)  
Toronto Island Community Association (Tony Farebrother)  
Toronto Island Marina (Gordon Ballantyne)  
Toronto Islands Residential Community Trust Corp (Joanna Kidd)  
Toronto Island SUP (Julian Ganton and David Steele)  
Waterfront BIA (Oliver Hierlihy and Dorsa Alizadeh-Shabani)

Waterfront for All (Anna Prodanou)

## **Regrets**

Cycle Toronto  
Harbourfront Community Association  
Huron-Wendat Nation  
Island Café  
Island Public / Natural Science School  
Island Public School Council  
Island Yacht Club  
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation  
Nishnawbe Homes  
Ontario Appellate Counsel & Research Lawyer  
Pirate Life Theatre  
Pride Toronto  
ProtectNatureTO  
Shadowland  
The Pirate Taxi by Water Taxi Now  
Toronto Island / MNCFN Friendship Group  
Toronto Island Canoe Club  
Toronto Island Disc Golf Course  
Toronto Public Space Committee  
Trans Lobby Group Toronto Trans Coalition  
Trinity St. Paul's centre for Faith Justice and the Arts  
Urban Minds  
Waterfront Montessori Children's Centre  
William Beasley Enterprises Limited  
York Quay Neighbourhood Association

## **Consulting Team**

---

Nicole Swerhun and Yulia Pak, Third Party Public Inc.