

Community Advisory Committee Meeting 1 and 2 Summary Report

New Park at 464–470 Queen Street West

Phase 1: Towards a Vision

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Introduction

A new 820 m² park is coming to 464-470 Queen Street West, at the corner of Queen Street West and Augusta Avenue in the Alexandra Park neighbourhood. The park design will be shaped through community engagement and is proposed to include lighting, seating areas, plantings and more.

As part of the engagement process, the City formed a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to obtain local input on the park's design, features, and community amenities, which will inform outcomes of the draft designs. Members of the CAC were selected primarily through a civic lottery process. A civic lottery randomly selects individuals from specific populations to participate in an advisory or decision-making body. The process controls for demographic factors to ensure members represent the community as best as possible, with a specific focus on fair representation from equity-deserving communities.

For this lottery, we controlled for age, gender identity, ethnicity, Indigenous identity, disability and other key community demographics. To maintain the integrity of the process and protect applicants' privacy, names and email addresses were removed during selection. A total of 177 people applied to the lottery and 21 were selected to participate in the CAC. In addition to community member participants selected via civic lottery, the CAC consists of 7 community representatives from local stakeholder groups. The committee will convene at least once during each phase.

This report summarizes activities and outcomes from CAC meetings 1 and 2, which were held at It's Ok* Studios, located at 468 Queen Street West.

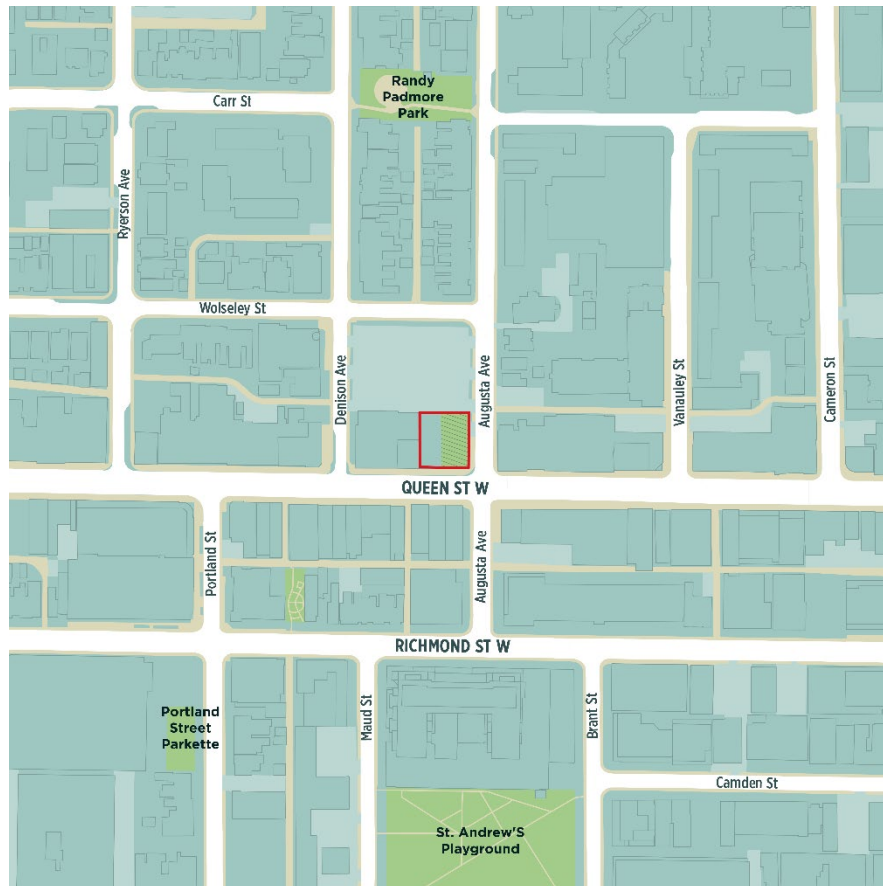


Figure 1. Map of the project area, located on the northwest corner of Queen Street West and Augusta Avenue. The project site boundary is outlined in red.

Phase 1: Towards a Vision

The purpose of this phase was to develop a vision for the new park at 464–470 Queen Street West together with the local community. In this phase of the engagement process, the project team collected feedback to develop a draft vision statement for the new park, a series of guiding principles and big moves, which will guide the development of design options.

On June 25, 2025, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met in person for an orientation meeting to gain more insights about the project, understand their role, and discuss the community engagement process for the new park. The second CAC meeting took place in person on August 6, 2025.

The first two CAC meetings focused on the following objectives:

- Getting to know one another.
- Establishing a shared understanding of the CAC's role and design process.
- Clarifying the current context and constraints associated with the future park site.
- Reaching a consensus on the way forward in terms of the engagement process.
- Drafting a vision statement for the new park.
- Developing initial draft guiding principles and big moves to inform the design process.

The following sections of this report provide a summary of the activities and discussions from the first and second CAC meetings. For more detailed information on project phases and the community engagement process, please visit the project web page at toronto.ca/464QueenStreetPark.

CAC Meeting 1: Orientation

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025, the first Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting took place at It's Ok* Studios.

The agenda included:

- A hands-on group ice breaker activity
- Official welcome and project presentation from City staff
- Establishing the purpose and mandate of the CAC
- Discussing the shared values for the CAC engagement process
- Reviewing the CAC Terms of Reference (TOR)
- Wrap-up and next steps

Meeting Highlights

The orientation meeting focused on clarifying project details, explaining the design framework and engagement process, and establishing the purpose and mandate of the CAC. Participants engaged in hands-on ice breaker activities and discussed their shared values on how they would like to work together moving forward as a CAC throughout the engagement process.

Participants also reviewed the draft TOR document together and reached consensus on the roles and responsibilities of the CAC and the City's project team.

Ice Breaker: Memory in an Outdoor Space



Figure 2. Models built by each CAC member at the first CAC meeting, representing a time when they felt a deep sense of community, belonging, creativity, or joy in a shared space.

During the ice breaker activity, CAC members participated in a group exercise using found objects. Staff provided an assortment of loose, random objects for participants to manipulate and creatively assemble.

Each member had 10 minutes to create a small structural piece on coloured cardboard paper, representing a time when they felt a deep sense of community, belonging, creativity, or joy in a shared space. This hands-on activity was designed to encourage participants to get to know one another better, while also uncovering common values that could underpin and contribute to later conversations.

A link to the full activity can be found [here](#).

Common Themes

CAC members shared various themes that resonated with the group. Some shared common themes included:

Green:

- Plants
- Trees
- Grass
- Flowers

Nature & Wildlife:

- Seasonal change
- Butterflies
- Birds
- Year-round plants
- Connection to Indigenous land

Community:

- Defying traditional norms in community space
- Helping others
- Feeling of belonging

Food & Drink:

- Pizza
- Fruit punch

Art:

- Public art
- Music

Movement:

- Biking
- Walking
- Running
- Dog walking

Gathering & Socializing:

- Seating and tables
- Shaded area; break from the heat
- Shade
- Celebration / party
- Meeting new people
- Spending time with family

Play:

- Place for fun
- Dancing
- Children's playground
- Shade
- Place for art and expression (outdoor experience)

Breakout Session: Shared Values

Shared Values Exercise

In this breakout session, CAC members worked in small groups to identify shared values for how they want to work together throughout this project. The goal was to reach an agreement on a common set of values that would help shape how the CAC collaborates and interacts as a group moving forward. Each CAC member began by writing down a word or short phrase that reflected a value they felt should guide the CAC engagement process.

In small groups, members discussed and selected the top three values that best represented their collective perspective, which they then shared with the larger group. The project team then organized the values, grouping ones that were similar. Each value was then reviewed by the larger group, with support measured by hand voting. The final set of values identified by the CAC was:

Accountability:

We build trust by showing up, being reliable, and following through, strengthening the process and helping to ensure the park meets community needs.

Constructive Criticism:

We believe disagreement can lead to stronger outcomes. When we take the time to understand where conflict comes from, we make wiser, more inclusive choices.

Creativity:

We value storytelling and expression, celebrating local culture and giving space for artistic and cultural experiences to thrive.

Empathy:

We aim to treat others how we want to be treated and make space for different needs and perspectives.

Equity and Inclusion:

The new park should welcome everyone and reflect a wide range of voices, identities, and experiences.

Foresight:

We offer feedback with both today and tomorrow in mind. The park should be relevant now and ready for the needs of future generations.

Open-Mindedness:

We stay open to new ideas and are willing to change our minds when presented with new information, leading to better, more thoughtful decisions.



Figure 3. Storyboard with the initial draft values that CAC members wrote and selected from their small group discussions.

Breakout Session: Terms of Reference

Reviewing the Terms of Reference (TOR)

In this breakout session, CAC members reviewed and discussed items outlined in the draft Terms of Reference (TOR). The TOR outline the roles and responsibilities of the project staff and CAC members.

CAC members were asked to provide any feedback or suggestions on the terms. They were encouraged to reflect not just on whether the proposed language works, but also if

it aligns with the values identified in the shared values exercise. All CAC members must agree to these terms in order to serve on the CAC.

The draft TOR was collaboratively reviewed and edited by the CAC, and an updated TOR was circulated after the meeting.

CAC Meeting 2: Vision & Guiding Principles

On Wednesday, August 6, 2025, the second Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting took place at It's Ok* Studios.

The agenda included:

- Project presentation from City staff
- Thought Exchange activity result summary
- Breakout session: Vision Statement workshop
- Breakout session: Guiding Principles workshop
- Breakout session: Big Moves workshop
- Wrap-up and next steps

Meeting Highlights

The second CAC workshop focused on developing a draft vision statement and a set of guiding principles and big moves for the new park at 464–470 Queen Street West. City staff also shared feedback from the broader community, including input gathered through an online thought exchange activity.

During breakout sessions, participants engaged in a hands-on visioning exercise and worked in small groups to assemble cards that best reflected their vision for the new park. Each small group then prioritized six cards, with a minimum of two from the thought exchange. Using their six cards, each small group prepared their own vision statement for the new park. This activity helped identify shared themes and important values, which guided the discussion in creating a vision statement and guiding principles that resonated with the community.

Vision Statement Creation

After the card-writing exercise, CAC members received an additional set of vision cards with printed phrases drawn from the earlier thought exchange feedback. Combined with the cards from the previous activity, each group selected six visioning cue cards that best reflected their collective vision. At least two of the selected cards were drawn from the pre-identified thought exchange outcomes, ensuring that broader community feedback was incorporated into the discussion.

Each group then created their own vision statement based on the six visioning cue cards they selected. The prompt provided to inspire the exercise was:

"The new park at 464 – 470 Queen Street West should be a place where..."

Each vision statement followed the following format:

- *Opening: Start with "we envision"*
- *Verb: Use an action verb in the future tense*
- *Future: State your desired future*
Impact: Description of future impact on the local community

Group 1:

We envision the future park at 464-470 Queen Street West being a break from the streetscape to foster relaxation, interaction and connection between people of all different ages, interests, different cultural and economic backgrounds that will lead to a sustainable place for the next 7 generations to enjoy.

Group 2:

We envision the future park as a space for people to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the city, a place for reprieve and space to find a moment of peace. The park will offer a connection to nature. The impact of the park will support a sense of community, encourage connection with oneself, nature and community.

Group 3:

We envision the future park being a year-round destination for communities where people of all ages and abilities can find an escape from the busyness of Queen Street by connecting with nature and art in all seasons.

Group 4:

We envision the new park being a clean, green space, a respite for humans and animals alike, with a beautiful pollinator garden, native plants, and long continuous

benches with opportunities for protection from sun, rain, and snow. We envision the park as a place of refuge for people of all ages and abilities, a place for socializing and resting.

Group 5:

We envision the future park as an accessible and inclusive green third space where people can gather, eat, enjoy, and connect with nature. The design of this park will be aesthetically pleasing with modular design that incorporates the vibrant arts and culture of Queen West.

Collective Vision Statement Creation

The project team combined each group's vision statement into one clear and compelling draft vision statement for the new park, emphasizing phrases that were repeated. CAC members were then asked to review and confirm the draft vision statement.

The following draft vision statement received widespread support from CAC members:

The new park at 464-470 Queen Street West will be a clean, green, and accessible "third space" that offers a much-needed break from the hustle and bustle of the city. It will be a place of refuge and reprieve: a peaceful, inclusive, and vibrant destination where people of all ages, abilities, interests, cultural and economic backgrounds can come together to rest, reflect, and connect. The park will foster meaningful relationships between people and nature, while celebrating the rich arts and culture of Queen West through thoughtful and aesthetically pleasing design. With native plants, gardens, and adequate seating and shade from the elements, the park will support the well-being of both humans and animals year-round. This will be a sustainable, welcoming space for today's communities and for future generations to enjoy.

Breakout Session: Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles Discussion

In this breakout session, City staff reintroduced the definition of guiding principles and how they will guide the development of design options in the next phase. CAC members

were asked to develop and write down a series of five to six principles each that address the draft vision statement and incorporate themes identified in the earlier exercise.

Each group prioritized their cards and selected three guiding principles to share back with the whole team. City staff led a group discussion to identify common themes and determine if there was consensus around the outcome.

The following guiding principles have been edited for clarity and were initially drafted by and agreed upon by CAC members.

All draft guiding principles follow the prompt “The new park design should...”

- incorporate flexible, durable, multi-use furniture/infrastructure which is easily maintained and accessible.
- have a clear purpose for use, with all seasons considered.
- have amenities suitable for year-round enjoyment i.e. snow, rain & sun.
- be long-lasting, with low-maintenance/up-keep in structure design w/ sustainability.
- have a minimalist's mindset, easy to maintain, doesn't require too much energy to upkeep, sustainable. Doing one or two things and doing it well!
- be welcoming and include everyone.
- be designed in a way that offers shelter from the elements and the busy streets.
- be a comforting place to sit, to reflect, and retreat.
- be unique, drawing people from across Toronto to visit Queen West.
- have design features that stand out and incorporate art that represents Queen West.
- have thoughtful incorporation of plant design using native species that replicate the Indigenous environment.
- offer connection to native plants & history, offering a nurturing environment and a place of coexistence between humans, plants, and animals.
- be a place where friends + strangers come together.
- be a space where people of all ages, abilities, and background can come together.
- include furniture such as tables/bleachers, and spaces to eat and socialize.

Breakout Session: Big Moves

Big Moves: Play Your Best Hand

In this breakout session, CAC members were presented with a deck of twelve cards. Six of the cards had big moves that were pre-populated from the online thought exchange activity. Six of the cards were “wild” cards, on which participants could write their own big moves. Participants were asked to prioritize cards that would implement their group’s previously established vision statement and guiding principles.

Each group prioritized three big moves that they would like to see, representing each table’s “best hand”. Scores were then tallied to show how often each card was played. City staff led a group discussion to identify common themes and determine if there was consensus around the outcome.

Responses by table:

- **Table 1:**
 - Add trees
 - Add seating areas
 - Add drinking fountain
- **Table 2**
 - Add shade structures
 - Add seating areas
 - Add accessible path
- **Table 3**
 - Add trees
 - Add seating areas
 - Add water feature or misting station
- **Table 4**
 - Add seating areas
 - Warm, pleasant lighting (not floodlights)
 - Lush, native plants. Mature trees as well
- **Table 5**
 - Add trees
 - Add seating areas
 - Add washroom (universal/more than one)

Most frequently used big move cards:

- **Played five times:** Add seating areas
- **Played three times:** Add trees

Most frequently used wild cards:

- **Played once:** Warm, pleasant lighting (not floodlights)
- **Played once:** Lush, native plants. Mature trees as well
- **Played once:** Add washroom (universal/move than one)

Building on What We Heard

The following draft vision, guiding principles, and big moves were directly developed from the feedback received in the first phase of engagement, in particular the second CAC workshop meeting on August 6, 2025.

Feedback from this phase consistently emphasized the importance of:

- Establishing an inclusive and vibrant **community hub** that welcomes people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to connect, create, and thrive together.
- Honouring the local **history and heritage** through architectural design and storytelling, reflecting upon the uniqueness of the Queen West neighbourhood.
- Integrating **nature and sustainability** into the design, emphasizing natural light, natural materials and Indigenous planting.
- Creating **flexible, accessible and intergenerational spaces** that encourage creativity, lifelong learning, and community engagement.
- Building **strong neighbourhood connections** through providing seamless connections to the new park, public transit and surrounding streets.

Draft Vision Statement

The new park at 464-470 Queen Street West will be a clean, green, and accessible public space that offers a much-needed break from the hustle and bustle of the city. It will be a place of refuge and reprieve: a peaceful, inclusive, and vibrant destination where people of all ages, abilities, interests, cultural and economic backgrounds can come together to rest, reflect, and connect.

The park will foster meaningful relationships between people and nature, while celebrating the rich arts and culture of Queen West through thoughtful its design and use. With native plants, gardens, and adequate seating and shade from the elements, the park will support the well-being of both humans and animals year-round.

This will be a sustainable, welcoming space for today's communities and for future generations to enjoy. and backgrounds together to connect, create, and thrive.

Draft Guiding Principles

1. Resilience through Flexibility and Simplicity

The park should feature durable and multi-use infrastructure that is accessible and easy to maintain. The design should support year-round enjoyment and embrace sustainable, long-lasting materials that reduce upkeep.

2. Create a Calming Sanctuary

The park should provide a retreat from the busy streets, offering shelter from the elements and a comforting atmosphere where visitors can sit, reflect, and recharge.

3. Celebrate Queen West

The park should serve as a destination that draws people from across Toronto, with distinctive, innovative features and public art that reflect and celebrate the creative spirit of Queen West.

4. Nurture Green Connections

The park should integrate native plants and landscapes that honour Indigenous environments and histories. This connection to nature should foster coexistence between people, plants, and wildlife.

5. Ensure Inclusion and Accessibility

The park should welcome people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. It should be a gathering place where friends and strangers alike feel a sense of belonging and community.

6. Support Social Gathering and Dining

The park should provide space and amenities for eating, dining, and socializing, including tables, seating, and gathering areas that encourage people to connect and spend time together.

Draft Big Moves

Big moves are the main priorities for the design of the park. They are specific directions to the design team that flow from the vision and principles and help to make them a reality.

In no particular order, the big moves for the new park at 464–470 Queen Street West are:

- 1. Add plentiful seating areas**
- 2. Plant more trees**
- 3. Introduce shade structures**
- 4. Install a drinking fountain**
- 5. Create accessible paths**
- 6. Add a water feature or misting station**
- 7. Provide warm, pedestrian-scale lighting**
- 8. Plant lush, native vegetation and mature trees**
- 9. Build a universal washroom**

Next Steps

Phase 1: Towards a Vision

To conclude Phase 1 of the community engagement process, the draft vision statement, guiding principles and big moves will be presented to the Indigenous Sharing Circle at a virtual meeting and to the broader community through an online survey to confirm they align with their respective preferences and priorities.

Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

In this next phase, the project team aims to:

- Gather community feedback through public workshops, an online survey, and potentially an open house or outdoor pop-up event during favorable weather conditions.

Community reviews and feedback on the designs will ensure transparency and inclusivity, bringing the community's vision to life.

To learn more about the project, visit toronto.ca/464QueenStreetPark.

Appendix: Meeting Attendance

23 CAC members attended the first meeting, and 23 attending the second meeting. The following project team members were in attendance at one or both meetings:

- City of Toronto, Parks and Recreation
 - Kaila Johnson – Senior Project Manager
 - Ainee Shanta – Program Manager
 - Joshua Bowman – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
 - José Ramón Martí – Public Consultation Coordinator
 - Rosemary McManus – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
 - Celina Chong – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
 - Annie Ding – Public Consultation Coordinator
- Janet Rosenberg & Studio
 - Wayne Swanton – Managing Principal, Landscape Architect
 - Matt Perotto – Senior Associate, Landscape Architect
 - Sophie Smith – Junior Designer
- Trophic Design
 - James Miller – Indigenous Projects Specialist

Representatives from the following community organizations attended one or both meetings:

- Chinatown Land Trust
- DROM Taberna
- It's Ok* Studios
- Long Time No See Art Collective
- Queen Street West Business Improvement Area
- St. Felix Centre
- Waterworks Food Hall
- We Clean Toronto

Five CAC members were absent from the first meeting, and five were absent from the second meeting.

We appreciate all the community members who engaged with us during CAC meetings 1 and 2. Your questions, insights, and feedback have been invaluable in refining our materials and enhancing the overall experience for all participants.