

Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group Summary Report

Re-Set Meeting

June 23, 2025, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Metro Hall, Room 308-309

55 John St, Toronto, M5V 3C6 and via Zoom





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Meeting Details

On Monday, June 23, 2025, the City of Toronto's Parks and Recreation Division hosted a Re-set Meeting for the Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group. The purpose of the meeting was to reconnect and reset the City's work with the Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group, share updates on members' interest in continuing to stay involved, review the City's actions and plans, and discuss the group's priorities and how to work together moving forward.

Sixteen (of 23) members of the working group 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. Yulia Pak, Nicole Swerhun, and Adrien Hall from Third Party Public facilitated the meeting. See Appendix A for a full list of Working Group members, including those who participated.

The meeting included participant introductions, an overview presentation and a combination of facilitated small group and plenary discussions. The meeting agenda is attached as Appendix B to this report. This draft summary report is structured to reflect key themes of shared discussions at the meeting. It includes:

- Part I. Introductions
- Part II. Facilitated Discussions
- Part III. Member Updates and Announcements
- Part IV. Next Steps
- Appendix A. List of Meeting Participants
- Appendix B. Meeting Agenda

Third Party Public prepared this summary; it is not intended as a verbatim transcript. It was subject to participant review before being finalized.

Discussion Highlights

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.

- Working Group members include a diverse group of long-time and new beach users, local residents, and advocates, many of whom have played important roles in shaping the beach's cultural and historical significance. In introducing themselves, many described Hanlan's Point Beach as a place of "deep personal meaning", identity, and legacy. Participants expressed a shared commitment to stewarding the history, culture, and environment of the beach and the Toronto Island as a whole. They also expressed a strong interest in stewarding this engagement process through accountability, collaboration, connections, learning and sharing their thoughts and experiences.
- The topics the group is interested in exploring further together include: a community safety plan; stewardship of the history, culture, and space; environmental management and naturalization; and accessibility. There were a few differences of opinion, including how to best approach discussions about community safety and whether to focus on discussing facilities' maintenance and improvements. This feedback will help inform meeting agendas moving forward.
- Advice on how to work together as a group includes the need to approach the process and feedback sharing in good faith and hold each other accountable with grace, avoid majority rules to ensure consideration of marginalized voices, have transparency from the City, and establish accountability mechanisms. This advice will help inform the Draft Terms of Reference for the group. Participants also provided suggestions on voices not currently represented in the group, as well as meeting logistics advice.
- 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.

Part I. Introductions

Following the acknowledgements and the agenda review, the meeting began with introductions. Each participant identified two key reasons why they were interested in continuing to participate in the Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group. Then, in pairs, participants shared their reasons, noting similarities and differences. Each pair then shared their reasons with another pair, and in a group of four, participants introduced themselves and shared their reasons with the broader group.

Participants included long-time and new beach users, both those who visit regularly and occasionally; prominent beach stewards and 2SLGBTQIA+ community advocates, including individuals who helped formalize the beach as “nudist” and those who have contributed to advancing the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada through legislation; as well as people who live and work on the island every day.

In introducing themselves, many shared that Hanlan's Point Beach holds a deep personal meaning, both as a space and as an experience. For many, it is part of their identities; for some, it represents their legacy; for others, it is a place where they have felt safe and welcomed. Many said they choose to participate in this process because they want to be (or continue being) good stewards of the beach's history, culture, and environment. Many also noted that they were in the room to stay informed, learn more, and share their knowledge and important stories about this special place with others who use the beach.

Highlights of Commonly Shared Reasons

- **To celebrate, preserve, recognize, and elevate the history and culture of Hanlan's Point Beach.** Many said they choose to participate in the working group because of the importance of Hanlan's Point Beach as a cultural landscape of inclusion, memory, and 2SLGBTQIA+ pride; a symbol of 2SLGBTQIA+ life in Toronto and across Canada; a space for 2SLGBTQIA+ expression, intimacy, and gathering; and a rare place that celebrates bodily autonomy and personal freedom as an officially designated clothing-optional beach. Some shared that it is important to keep it not just celebratory, but also political and build on what was started.
- **To see Hanlan's Point Beach flourish as a protected 2SLGBTQIA+ public space.** Many shared their interest in protecting the historic and current 2SLGBTQIA+ cultural use of the beach, keeping it a public space, expanding it as a cultural safe space, and using it as inspiration for more queer 2SLGBTQIA+ place-making in the city. Participants discussed the need to use this project as an opportunity to explore “bringing queer design to queer spaces.”
- **To promote environmental and ecological stewardship.** Many said they want to be part of the working group to promote awareness of and address the beach

erosion, protect and enhance the habitat, support the continuation of the Rewilding program, and address climate change. They noted that over the past 20 years, wildlife has almost disappeared, and the 3-meter dunes are gone.

- **To promote accessibility and safety for all.** Some said they were interested in seeing the Island and the beach become more accessible to people of all abilities. Some talked about the need to combat ongoing issues with safety on the beach; others noted that “safety” means safety for everyone, including those who are immunocompromised and have varying abilities.
- **To represent naturism.** Some shared that they were interested in this process to represent family naturism and continue to protect the clothing-optional space. Some pointed out that family naturism does not need to be at odds with adult nudist spaces. A concern was also raised that the Island Park Master Plan does not mention naturism in its priorities and actions.
- **To ensure accountability.** Some participants said they were interested in understanding how the process of sharing feedback to inform the City’s decisions works, and to ensure that truth and transparency are part of this process. Some noted that in the past, the process was challenging due to a lack of transparency. Others noted that they were in the room because Netami and Annely had done a lot of good work to earn back their community’s trust.
- **To stay connected, learn more, and share their thoughts and the thoughts of the communities they represent.** Many said they were interested in seeing Hanlan’s Point Beach strengthened by community input. Many also said they were there to connect with others, hear from different communities, learn more, and share their thoughts and experiences. Some said they were there to represent their communities and share the many important stories about the beach to provide a bigger-picture context for the Island Park Master Plan implementation discussions. It was also highlighted that it is important to remember the group is not one voice, and one representative cannot speak on behalf of everyone in the community or group they represent.
- **Other interests.** Other interests included improving connectivity to and from the Island, kayaking in the surrounding waters, and a desire for better facilities on the island (e.g., seating and shading around the docks, better food options, clean, beautiful outdoor showers and bathrooms).

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 representatives then reported to the broader group. There was considerable common ground in the following four areas of interest for Working Group discussion: Community Safety Plan; Stewardship of Hanlan's Point Beach History, Culture, and Space; Environment Management and Naturalization; and Accessibility

The priorities and ideas shared during these discussions, in the virtual chat, and in writing on the table cards, are summarized below, along with process advice. Before and after small group discussions and the report back, participants asked questions of clarification, which are also captured in this section.

Content Priorities

1. Community Safety Plan

Many participants expressed interest in addressing safety on the Island and at the beach, including the clothing-optional area. They raised the following ideas for further group discussion:

- Consider a no-photography by-law to address privacy and safety, particularly in the clothing-optional area. There was also reticence expressed about a by-law because of a reluctance to increase the presence of by-law enforcement officers patrolling the beach.
- Consider whether there would be value in identifying of spaces on the beach and the Island that have traditionally been used by different user groups (e.g., family naturism, women-only clothing-optional spaces).
- There was a strong difference of opinion about police:
 - Some participants felt that Toronto Police Service (TPS) involvement in this process would help improve safety for beach users.
 - Others shared that police have not historically kept 2SLGBTQIA+ and other marginalized communities safe, and that they should not be involved under any circumstances. Some stressed the importance of recognizing that there are many different voices and experiences. As an alternative, participants had suggestions that may be able to help inform future discussions related to community safety, including things such as hiring designated beach safety staff, not connected to TPS, trained in first aid, de-escalation, and conflict resolution. These staff could patrol the beach and only involve police if

requested by a victim. There could also be a shelter or clubhouse for safety staff, stocked with supplies such as water, N95 masks, a first aid kit, an AED defibrillator, dental dams, condoms, lube, information pamphlets, and a 24-hour phone for emergencies.

2. Stewardship of History, Culture, and Space

Participants want to maintain Hanlan's Point Beach as a unique place that elevates equality and belonging, while continuing to protect the unique queer and nudist cultures. They raised the following ideas for further group discussion:

- Honouring important stories about the Island and Hanlan's Point Beach.
- Conducting a cultural landscape study to inform cultural ways of using the space.
- Studying Hanlan's Landing as a gateway to the beach and park.
- Including different queer perspectives in RFP processes and ensuring queer design is prioritized for queer spaces.
- Increasing the beach's physical space and expanding the clothing-optional area.
- Including Indigenous and Black history.

3. Environment Management and Naturalization

Participants were interested in addressing beach erosion, ecological restoration, and environmental stewardship. Ideas for further group discussion included:

- Beach and dune restoration, especially in central and southern areas, and expanding the Renourishment Study to the rest of the beach.
- Reef relocation and extension.
- Addressing the increasing cormorant population on the island as well as the presence of geese on the beach.
- Monitoring water quality.
- Providing self-serve gloves and garbage bags available at all times to the public for beach clean-ups to tackle microplastics and items missed by mechanical grooming.

4. Accessibility

Improving accessibility was a priority for some to ensure the beach is usable for all, including those with varying abilities. Suggestions to consider included:

- Expanding accessible recreation options.
- Creating an accessible boardwalk, routes across the beach, and/or beach-specific wheelchairs to reach the water's edge with a wheelchair.

5. Park Facilities

There was discussion among some participants about if/how to include Park Facilities in the list of priority topics for the Working Group to focus on.

There were some participants who thought that the Working Group is an important place to discuss the state of park facilities (e.g., washrooms, showers, benches, water fountains, etc.) and other participants who thought it would be better to focus Working Group discussions on unique opportunities related to implementation of the Toronto Island Plan (as opposed to spending time discussing facilities).

Some participants stressed that any facility improvements should not be overdesigned and kept simple to support the culture and activities that are already present at the beach instead of introducing new activities or catering to new audiences.

For future discussions of the Working Group, ideas for consideration included:

- improving water fountains, bathrooms, and showers;
- adding more seating and shading at the docks;
- making the island a four-season destination (such as introducing new ferries); and
- improving food and beverage options. For example, some suggested leasing the Mermaid Café to a City-run organization like The 519 for renovations and maintenance to keep it a public space. This organization could then partner with different small local BIPOC business owners to run daily bars and/or food and beverage carts.

Process Advice

1. Advice on how to work together

Participants shared the following points to help inform the Draft Terms of Reference for Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group:

- Assume benign intent and approach all discussions in good faith.
- Make room for disagreement and generative conflict. People shouldn't feel like they have to walk on eggshells to participate in this Working Group.
- Have a goal of building consensus. Never have = majority rules, since there will be important initiatives that serve the minority. The opinions of people with the potential to be most negatively impacted by decisions should carry more weight.
- Consider forming subgroups to work in depth on specific topics, with regular updates to the larger group.
- The City should be transparent and honest about its intentions and decisions, especially if mistakes have been made.
- The City is responsible for ensuring the engagement process is worthwhile for the working group.
- Other suggestions included: staggering terms for Working Group members (with thought as to how long a term should be), absence from 2 consecutive meetings would result in member expulsion, and mandatory visits to the beach.

2. Missing Perspectives

Participants recommended several perspectives to be included in future discussions:

- Straight, cis-gender, white male naturists who use the beach
- Les Beach Girls
- Families including children
- Boating community
- Indigenous elders

Note provided by the City team after the meeting: A process for membership will be outlined in the Draft Terms of Reference and discussed with the group.

3. Advice for Future Meetings

Participants shared the following advice for future meetings:

- Provide updates from City staff on implementation progress between meetings.
- Provide more substantial food for 6 to 8 pm dinner time meeting.
- Provide a scheduled bio break.
- Consider safer COVID practices -- ventilation and filtration, provision of masks, etc.

Questions of Clarification & Other Feedback

- **Were the tennis courts removed to re-naturalize the area?**
- Answer provided by the City team: *No, there are no plans to re-naturalize the area at the moment. Preliminary cost estimates for repaving the courts are between \$1.4M-\$1.6M, which are not currently funded as part of TIMP. Advancing this repair would require redirecting funding from other outdoor sport court projects or result in the courts continuing to deteriorate until the repairs can be funded. Parks and Recreation had TRCA mobilized to do road construction and paving work at Hanlan's Point, permitting a low-cost removal of the facility.*
- **What is the relationship between this group and other groups engaged as part of the Island Park Master Plan implementation?**
- Answer provided by the City team: *There will be an All-Island meeting in September, where all groups will get to know each other. There are three groups as part of this process: Hanlan's Beach Point Working Group, Island Park Master Plan Community Advisory Committee, which will be formed into the Island Working Group over the next few months, and the Indigenous Advisory Circle. All groups will discuss topics relevant to the Island Park Master Plan implementation, focusing on issues that are most relevant to them. There will be full transparency among the groups and with the public, with meeting materials and summaries shared on the City's website. In addition, in between the meetings, Third Party Public will be using the Feedback Tracking Tool to document all questions, requests, and feedback shared in between the meetings.*
- **In thinking about how to improve connections to the Island, consider connecting with the Inner Harbour Task Force,** a City-led stakeholder group that is responsible for improving connectivity from the mainland to the Island across the Eastern Gap.
- **Consider integrating this Working Group into the discussions around the new ferries and the Ferry Terminal.**

Part III. Member Updates & Announcements

- “Queer Little Library” on the Island is accepting donations: books about nature, anything queer, swim safety, plant safety, art, and how-to. Art supplies are also accepted as donations to ensure that those who cannot read can still participate and use the library.
- Art Boxes are being built now, and suggestions for what art should be put inside the boxes.
- Naloxone Boxes locations: one at the entrance of the boardwalk to the Old beach, and one at the end of New.
- A First Aid box is the orange box at the end of the boardwalk to the Old Beach.

Part IV. 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 Island 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 Hanlan’s Point Beach Working Group, the Island Working Group, and the Indigenous Advisory Circle together to get to know each other, discuss the broader engagement process.

Appendices

Appendix A. List of Meeting Participants

City of Toronto

Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Annely Zonena, Director, Strategic Implementation and Community Engagement

Andrea Chow, Manager, Parks Operations Waterfront District

Netami Stuart, Senior Project Manager, Toronto Island

Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik's Office

Tom Davidson, Director, Waterfront Revitalization Initiatives

Facilitation Team

Third Party Public

Adrien Hall

Nicole Swerhun

Yulia Pak

Community Advisory Committee

*Note the organizations and individual members in **bold** have participated in the re-set meeting.*

Federation of Canadian Naturists – Stephane Deschenes

Friends of Hanlan's – Rhys and Travis

Hanlan's Collective – Jae Dela Cruz and Jess

Pride Toronto

The 519 – Curran Stikuts

Trans Lobby Group / Toronto Trans Coalition – Susan Gapka

Two-Spirit of the First Nations

Aditya Singhal

Anjali Iddamsetty

Alan Drummond

Atticus Hawk

Cappucine Ferguson

Cheri DiNovo

David McIntosh

David Rubio Gomes

Emilio Estevez

Faelix

Homa Parwana

Lisa Amin

Mikiki

Peter Gray

Peter Simm

Appendix B. Meeting Agenda

Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group

Re-set Meeting

Monday, June 23, 2025

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Metro Hall, Room 308-309

55 John St, Toronto, M5V 3C6 and via [Zoom](#)



Meeting purpose

To re-connect and re-set the City's work with the Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group, share updates on people's interest in continuing to stay involved, review the City's actions and plans, and discuss the group's priorities and how to work together moving forward.

Resources:

[Toronto Island Park Master Plan Project Website](#)

[Proposed Toronto Island Master Plan – Working Group Tracking Tool](#)

Proposed meeting agenda

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 6:00 PM | Land Acknowledgement

Welcome and agenda review
Netami Stuart, Senior Project Manager, Parks and Recreation, City of Toronto
Yulia Pak, facilitation team, Third Party Public |
| 6:10 | Why we're here
Why are you interested in continuing to participate in this process? Identify two reasons, putting each on a sticky note. |
| 6:45 | Update: Actions to date & what's next
Netami Stuart, Senior Project Manager, Parks and Recreation, City of Toronto

<i>Questions of clarification</i> |
| 7:00 | Small group discussions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What 3 tasks/projects/initiatives in the Toronto Island Master Plan are of most interest to you, and why?2. What's important to you about <i>how</i> this group works together that could be reflected in the Terms of Reference?3. Is anyone missing from this group?4. Any other suggestions or advice? |
| 7:25 | Report back and plenary discussion |
| 7:50 | Wrap-up & next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Tracking Tool |
| 8:00 PM | Adjourn |

DRAFT Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group Mandate

The Working Group is mandated to work collaboratively with City staff to advance the implementation of key Toronto Island Master Plan priorities associated with Hanlan's Point Beach; act as a sounding board on the desirability of other proposed projects associated with the beach; and provide P&R staff with a source of informed beach user perspectives on beach operations and management. This will ensure that the work of P&R as it relates to Hanlan's Point Beach is continuously informed by and considerate of the diverse needs of the beach's broad and complex user base.

To achieve their mandate, Working Group members are tasked to:

- Understand and represent the different values, perspectives, experiences, and priorities of Hanlan's Point Beach users broadly – especially those who are vulnerable, marginalized and/or equity-deserving – concerning Hanlan's Point Beach, the way it is managed, and the way it will evolve in the future.
- Work collaboratively to provide P&R with a source of informed beach user perspectives on the implementation of Toronto Island Master Plan directions, other projects relating to the beach and its immediate surroundings, and everyday beach operations and management.
- Act as a formal and sustained point of deliberative engagement for the City on projects (whether initiated by the Toronto Island Master Plan or not, and whether initiated by the City or not) related to Hanlan's Point Beach and its immediate surroundings.
- Provide recommendations regarding the appropriateness and desirability of advancing projects related to the beach that are not identified in the Toronto Island Master Plan and/or that have been conceived of or promoted by third parties, including businesses, community groups, private citizens, or other members of the Working Group.
- Provide recommendations related to how the City should advance projects related to Hanlan's Point Beach and its immediate surroundings.