

Revitalization of Queen's Park North
Focus Group with 2SLGBTQ+ representatives

Summary of Discussion

Online via Zoom

Friday, September 5, 2025; 2:30 – 4:00pm

Participants: LGBT YouthLine, The 519, The ArQuives – Canada's 2SLGBTQIA+ Archives, Friends of Hanlan's, Maggie's Toronto, The Public Great, Jane's Walk, AFTERparTy, Park People,

On September 5th, the City of Toronto hosted a focus group with representatives of 2SLGBTQ+ groups to discuss the process for the revitalization of Queen's Park North, including why Queen's Park North is important to the 2SLGBTQ+ community and if/how draft Vision and Guiding Principles for the park can be changed/updated to reflect this importance.

This summary was written by Third Party Public and was shared with participants in draft before being finalized.

Feedback on the importance of Queen's Park North to the 2SLGBTQ+ community

- **Queen's Park North is an important space for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.** Queen's Park North has been a meeting place for the queer community for more than a century. It is one of the few places where members of the queer community can be themselves without having to pay to use the space. Queer spaces on the whole are disappearing across the City of Toronto, especially free and public spaces. It is also an important place for students as it can be one of the first places where they explore gender and sexuality.

Feedback on use of the park and considerations for potential changes

- **Different community members use parks in different ways at different times.** Look at the design of parks in other parts of the world that are designed to support both daytime and nighttime uses. Some good examples to look at include: Park de Oeverlanden and Vodelpark, both located in the Netherlands.
- **There is a difference between actual risks to safety and the perception of risks to safety.** Publicly accessible crime data (available [here](#)) has shown there are very few major crimes (2 to 4 per year) that happen in this area of the City (i.e., the Bay Clover hill Neighbourhood). It is important that decisions about design, including lighting, are grounded in data not simply people's perceptions of safety. This also connected to potential prejudice against homeless people using the park, who should be able to continue to use the park in peace. See final page of this summary for data shared by a participant.
- **Lighting needs to be carefully considered.** Visibility does not necessarily mean safety. Lighting, especially bright lights (e.g., 4,000 kelvin and above) do not make everyone feel safe in a public space. Artificial light can also negatively impact the ecology / natural environment of the park. If new lighting is considered and installed, care needs to be taken to not over light the park. Creative lighting solutions should give consideration for different uses, such as lights that are installed along the ground or at hip height (i.e., bollard lighting) to ensure people can see as they walk along paths through the park but does not light up the entire park.

Feedback on process and governance

- **It is important there is adequate time for consultation.** Given the Mayor's direction for extensive public consultation and given the large donation being provided by the donor more time is needed for consultation. For the 2SLGBTQIA+ community's use of Queen's Park North, outreach is needed to people who may not otherwise come to a consultation process. *Members of the City's Queen's Park North team noted that a focus group specifically for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals is being planned. The engagement process overall for the Queen's Park North project is following the timeline directed by City Council, and 8-months is not the longest or shortest period of time for consultation. Council direction includes a checkpoint after the 8-months where Council will review and provide further direction.*
- **There's a need for strong, stable, community-based voices around the governance table for the park.** It's important that the park stays connected to community and not be overtaken by institutional or donor voices. Queen's Park North is surrounded by big institutions with a lot of power (City of Toronto, University of Toronto, and now the donation from the Weston family), and it is also a place where students, people that are homeless, the queer community, and others have used as an important historical meeting place to push back against that power. Ensure someone who can speak to cruising in the park is at the governance table.

Feedback on the Draft Vision:

"Queen's Park North is an extraordinary place for people and nature throughout the seasons, that respects the existing beauty of Queen's Park and showcases excellence in design, ecological stewardship, programming and partnerships."

- "Programming and partnerships" creates concern that a priority is being given to consumer capitalism.
- Consider a reference to day and night uses in the park that embraces both the culture during the day and vibrancy at night.
- Parks are alive – think about how they connect to communities, with a focus on how to have relationships with communities.

Feedback on the Draft Guiding Principles

- Appreciate inclusion of ecological stewardship (native plants, re-wilding, pollinateTO).
- Include reference to cultural history.
- Reference to "institutions" creates wariness, particularly due to historical lack of trust. Consider an exclusive focus on grassroots groups.
- Include reference to the culture of the park, and the importance of vibrancy supported by different uses during the day and at night. This is especially important for Queen's Park North because there are so few queer spaces left and where we have the freedom to be ourselves. This is an important historical meeting place and a place for political agitation. It's also a place where many people first start exploring gender and sexuality.

Other feedback

- Look at opportunities to create a buffer between park users and the street and help make the park even more of a reprieve from the traffic of the city.
- Think about ways to create different places and spaces within the park, so there are areas of privacy created in different ways (e.g., different levels, corners, shadows, plantings, water, bioswales, etc.).
- Especially in a time of climate crisis, the park is also an important refuge for our non-human relations. Look at opportunities to include non-native plants, shrubs, strawberries.

- Ensure programming and infrastructure in the park doesn't impede current non-structured, non-programmed and free play uses (e.g., like the stage in Barbara Hall Park).
- Look at ways to extend the funds dedicated to the revitalization of Queen's Park North also to the streetscapes surrounding the park.
- Recognize Taddle Creek.

Non-property Major Crime data in parks by neighbourhood and year (Assault, Homicide, Robbery, Sexual Violation). Comparable + neighbouring areas

This data was shared by meeting participant, link to data on the Toronto Police Services website is here: <https://data.torontopolice.on.ca/pages/major-crime-indicators>.

Neighbourhood	# of incidents		
	2025	2024	2023
Bay-Cloverhill (QP)	2	2	4
South Riverdale	33	24	24
The Beaches	28	11	3
Downtown Yonge East	19	10	8
Church Wellesley	16	11	8
Dufferin Grove	12	5	4
Trinity Bellwoods	12	2	4
Harbourfront	9	10	10
Yonge Bay Corridor	9	18	11
Annex	4	3	11
University	1	1	2