Revitalization of Queen's Park North
Focus Group with Residents and Community Associations

Summary of Discussion

Online via Zoom
Tuesday, August 5 2025; 7:00 – 8:30pm

Participants: Annex Residents Association, Bay Cloverhill Community Association, Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association, FOSTRA, Friends of Queens Park, Grange Community Association, Harbord Village Residents Association, McGill-Granby Village Residents' Association

This summary was written by Third Party Public and was shared with participants for their review prior to being finalized and suggested edits have been incorporated. If you have any questions about the summary, please email Nicole Swerhun at nicole@thirdpartypublic.ca.

Participants opened the meeting by expressing their condolences over the passing of Hilary Weston over the weekend and asked the City's project team to pass this on to the Weston family.

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."

1. Concern about reference to "**programming and partnership**". These words introduce uncertainty about what they refer to. "Programming" is unclear – and there's a concern it could refer to
2. events that draw large crowds, which participants do not want. "Partnerships" is unclear – does it mean institutional, commercial, community, donor, or other partnerships? Do any obligations come with these partnerships?

3. Consider including "**sustainability**" in the draft vision. Sustainability is enshrined in City guidelines and should be reflected in this project.

4. Consider adding "**openness**" so it reads "respects the existing beauty and openness".

5. **The landscape, and especially the trees, should be at the centre of the vision**. It should focus on the enhancement, protection, and rhythm of the landscape, and serve as the standard from which all future decisions flow – a "test" that ideas need to pass before moving forward. Programming and partnerships should be limited to what the tree landscape can tolerate, with every decision judged based on its impact on the landscape. If there is a committee that emerges to maintain the park, then they would make decisions limited by the founding principal.

The following suggested edits for the City to consider were emailed by a participant during the meeting:

Queen's Park North is an extraordinary place of respite for people and nature throughout the seasons, that respects the existing beauty and heritage of Queen's Park and showcases excellence in design, ecological stewardship, with programming and partnerships limited to what the treed landscape can tolerate.

Feedback on the Guiding Principles

1. There's a tension between planning future uses and doing what is necessary to heal the ecology of the park. To address this, create a statement / firm guiding principle / **test to assess how any decision about the future of the park would affect the trees and landscape**.

2. Make protecting and celebrating the **trees** the guiding principle (currently it is the third among several).

3. The **openness** of the park and the ability to see across the park is something special and there's interest in seeing this maintained.

4. Clarify what "**public space**" means in the guiding principles. Does this mean that all uses are permitted, including legal and "illegal uses"?

5. **Accessibility** should be explicitly mentioned in the guiding principles. Toronto uses AODA and Ontario Disability Act, and as such should be reflected in Queens Park North guiding principles. Amenities like washrooms are a basic accessible feature needed for seniors and children.

6. The **2019 priorities** are seen as a "Trojan Horse". Because they include other considerations, including them would open up the potential for ideas that are extraneous to this initiative. Suggest removing this Guiding Principle.

7. Consider adding "**place keeping**" to the language on the Indigenous principle.

The following suggested edits for the City to consider where emailed by a participant during the meeting (in red), with suggestions from the meeting added by the facilitation team in green:

- *Protect and celebrate the trees*
- *Celebrate and elevate Queen's Park North as a distinct calm and treed urban green space ~~and signature Toronto destination~~*
- *Maintain Queen's Park as a natural treed public space and place for ~~gathering and civic life~~ respite and relaxation welcoming to all*
- *Enhance the visitor experience ~~and animate~~ of the park year-round ~~through creative programming and~~ including improved amenities with limited impacts on the treed landscape*
- *Implement ecological and sustainable practices and ensure a high standard of operations and maintenance ensuring forest health with appropriate funding and expertise*
- *Incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being*
- *Strengthen relationships between public space and institutional and community partners*
- ~~*Address outstanding priorities from the 2011 project and respect that project's goals and City policies dating back more than a decade*~~
- *Connect the park to existing and emerging open spaces in the area, including the University of Toronto and the University Park project*

Other considerations

1. Trees should take priority in any long term design strategies. It is important to protect trees as they provide the community with an urban habitat. Design and maintenance of trees should include an educational piece to share with the community.

2. Consider the potential of the trees in Queen's Park North, along with the trees on the U of T lands, to collectively represent a mini arboretum.

3. A long-term maintenance fund/endowment is necessary for the future of Queen's Park North.

4. Consider how to reanimate the southwest corner of Queen's Park North. There's an opportunity to rejuvenate the fountain and potentially connect it to a garden or special flowers to honor Hilary Weston.

5. The overpass on Wellesley Street East is highway-like infrastructure that would benefit Queen's Park North and its connection to U of T if it were to be leveled and become a 4-way intersection.

6. Consider the consultation expand its engagement with park users by hosting a pop-up late at night. You would then reach a different audience from 9 pm to midnight.

7. There's interest in reviewing the lease between the City and U of T for the park – there's a request that it be made available to the public.

8. Consider any opportunity to work with hard surfaces adjacent to the park to support the revitalization (e.g., Wellesley Street).