

Neighbouring Institutions Working Group Meeting 3 Summary

Revitalization of Queen's Park North

Phase: Phase 2

November 3, 2025



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Introduction

On November 3, 2025, the City hosted the third Neighbouring Institutions Working Group (NIWG) online via Teams. The meeting was part of Phase 2 (of 3) of the community engagement process to help inform the Queen's Park North Revitalization. Phase 2 of the engagement process was focused on presenting and seeking feedback on the draft big moves and early ideas for park programming and asking for feedback to support further refinement.

The purpose of the meeting was to update neighbouring institutions on the Queen's Park North Revitalization process and to share and seek feedback on emerging design ideas. Feedback from participants is summarized below

Attendance

Royal Ontario Museum, Victoria University, Trinity College, University of Toronto, Legislative Assembly of Ontario, University of St. Michael's College, Hart House, The Royal Conservatory of Music, City of Toronto Queen's Park North Team, Wittoning Investments

For more information about the project and to review summaries from previous community engagement activities, visit the project webpage:
toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth

Meeting Summary

This summary was written by Third Party Public and shared for participant review before being finalized and posted on the project website: toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth.

Overall, participants appreciated the presentation – the level of detail, compelling imagery and visual concepts.

Participant expressed appreciation and support for the guiding principles and the big moves, in particular, the trees-first approach, the proposed savannah and treescape, bringing people back to the centre of the park with the relocated horse, the elevated tree walk and interpretative signage.

In relation to the design ideas shared some said they really liked the proposed design of the running track, and others suggested rethinking the track to better integrate with the potential future connections to/from the west side of the park. Questions focused on operations and maintenance considerations related to the proposed design ideas, along with a keen interest in when the team would be in a position to share their thinking on how to improve east-west crossings to and from the park (a high priority for students).

Maintenance, operations, and governance

- **Working Group Member: How will the development of Savannah be protected? How is it going to be enforced beyond the basic fencing?** How would people know that these are the spaces that are not supposed to be trodden on? Also, it seems that cleaning up leaves in the fall and picking up trash in the developing Savannah might be challenging.

Project Team: We are not at the stage to be able to provide answers to operations and maintenance questions, but it is very helpful to hear this feedback and think proactively about how a governance and operations model will address these questions.

- **Working Group Member: Moveable furniture was mentioned. How would it work?** Will it be put away at certain hours? Does it live in the park 24/7?

Project Team: We have moveable furniture in several parks now. The most recent example is Love Park, where we work closely with the BIA to store the furniture. In other parks, the furniture is tethered, which is not ideal, but it is an option we can look at. In this case, we'll be looking at the governance model to help inform our thinking on questions like this.

- **Working Group Member: Are feature spaces going to be bookable in advance? What happens if there are conflicts among users?**

Project Team: We are still thinking about the governance model, but at a high level, we are investigating a shared stewardship model where the City, the university, the donor, the community, and Indigenous Nations manage and create an operational framework. A lot of governance pieces will be shaped by the final design of the park – daily and ongoing maintenance, and capital repairs.

There will be a Queens Park North solution put in place, and there will be dedicated people whose core job will be to coordinate calendar events, programming partnerships in the space, etc.

Connections & wayfinding

- **Working Group Member:** Queen's Park North sits at this key corner and serves as an important east–west connector across the University of Toronto campuses. In the way the design is currently presented, east–west connections are not a core part of the design ideas or narrative shared.
- **Working Group Member:** Consider changing the design of the running path in a way that breaks the formality and the enclosure of what is in the park right now, in anticipation of a future potential connection across the park to the east side in the corner where the tree walk meanders. Explore an ecological narrative where the running path is better integrated with the trees and the new landscape, where the path breaks and turns in between the trees.
- **Working Group Member:** Consider additional east-west pathways through the park that do not go through the centre of the park. A lot of students move east–west through the park. It might be intimidating for students to approach the centre with a big crowd. There is potentially one on the north side, but there is nothing on the south side.

Project Team: The point that there is interest in a new desire line in the south is well-taken. The proposal is to maintain the existing paths and upgrade some of them. The intention is to have people flow through the sod areas, like today. So, if there is an interest in avoiding the centre, you can walk through the sod.

- **Working Group Member:** Has there been a consideration around wayfinding signage in the park to direct people where to go?

Project Team: We agree, this is an important consideration that we have heard from others before. This is not something we have gotten to yet, but we are certainly interested in layering it in as the detailed design develops.

Safety & accessibility

- **Working Group Member: Ensure that the elevated tree walkway is fully accessible, particularly for people using mobility devices.** A similar approach was taken at [UTSC](#), and based on that, we know that the elevated tree walkway with interpretative signage will be a significant experience. It is important that people with mobility devices are able to experience the tree forest this way.
- **Working Group Member: Ensure that the washrooms are accessible for different mobility devices.** Consider the size and the weight of mobility devices. For example, scooters have a weight differential with other mobility devices and would require a different rotation space. It is also important to consider when these washrooms are open, how and when they are maintained, etc. For institutions looking to have activations in the park, this would be an important consideration that they would need to communicate to participants in advance.
- **Working Group Member: Views into the park are an important consideration from the Ontario Legislative Assembly security team.**
- **Working Group Member: How do you think about security at the elevated walkway, particularly in the hidden areas under the walkway?**

Project Team: The idea is that the park evolves throughout the day, taking on different personalities or attributes at different times. During the day, it functions as a space used by students and commuters. At other times of the day or in different seasons, other specific functions or activities may emerge, so it always feels secure and safe.

Design & programming partnership considerations

- **Working Group Member: Consider incorporating operational and maintenance needs for Council Fire as part of the design.** For example, Hart House is proud to work closely with its colleagues at First Nations House to provide support for the use of the ceremonial fire at Ziibiing, such as wood storage, safety kit, disposal of ash, etc. Avoid putting a plastic shed in a beautifully designed space.
- **Working Group Member: An interpretative aspect for spaces could be a partnership opportunity and an easy connection to institutional programming.** For example, Interpretive signs about the trees could be connected to ROM's collections and programming ideas like ROM walks and camps. Decentering colonial aspects would also make communities feel more welcome in the space. Developing interpretive signage could be an opportunity for collaboration with neighbouring institutions.

Project Team: As Indigenous engagement unfolds, there will definitely be opportunities that arise from the historical context. The door is open to exploring opportunities to work together.

- **Working Group Member: Could you elaborate on opening up Wellesley Street to a shared street?**

Project Team: We are not looking to open up Wellesley to a fully shared street; rather, we are looking at opportunities to strengthen the relationship and the linkage in the public realm between the edge of the park and public realm improvements along Wellesley Street. For example, it can be extending materials or plantings in a way that creates more of a blend between these two spaces.

Indigenous governance

- **Working Group Member: How do you reinterpret moving the King Edward statue to a more prominent location at the entrance of the park?** What does it mean contextually for the park, and how are you building Indigenous relations with that?

Project Team: Our interest is in recontextualizing the statue. We would consider its location today as the most prominent in the park, being centred and elevated. In our proposal, we are moving it down to grade, placing it more as a gateway feature at the entrance of the park at the southeast corner. To us, the relocation de-emphasizes the statue's placement.

The statue was purchased in the 1960s from India, donated and placed in the park. By moving the statue, the idea is to transform a place of colonial imposition, centred and elevated, into one of Indigenous governance that provides a counter-narrative, a dialogue, and an opportunity to democratize the space.

- **Working Group Member: Is there a commitment for an ongoing Fire Keeper for the Council Fire? Will Nations need to book the space? Do communities get to book the space?**

Project Team: We are still early in the discussions, and the intention is to co-develop a vision with the Nations and Indigenous community organizations. It is meant to be a gathering place for the community to meet, for dialogue, and a place for demonstration. It is meant to be a place for Indigenous people to make determinations for themselves on how they can relate to the legislature. So ideally, it would be a stewardship model, a governance model, a council model, where Indigenous people determine how Council fire is used, when, etc. It could be a civic space that is activated and utilized when needed by Indigenous communities – for political purposes, for demonstrations, ceremony (e.g., an Indigenous leader lying in state), etc., without necessarily a standing Fire Keeper.

Next Steps

The project team thanked members of the working group for participating in the meeting and committed to sharing a draft summary of the discussion with participants for review before it is finalized. They also noted:

- The upcoming Community Workshop
Date: November 4, 2025
Time: 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Location: Metro Central YMCA (20 Grosvenor St), Auditorium
- Survey will launch in mid-November, closing on December 14, 2025.
- The next City Staff Report, focused on the donation acceptance terms, is planned to be in front of Council before the end of the year (Note: The City has updated this timing to early in 2026).