

Focus Group Summary Report: Leaders from Resident and Community Associations

Queen's Park North Revitalization

Community Engagement Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

November 12, 2025



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Introduction

On November 12, 2025, the City hosted a second online focus group with leaders from resident and community associations as part of the Queen's Park North Revitalization project. The meeting was part of Community Engagement, which focused on presenting and seeking feedback on the draft big moves and emerging design ideas.

Feedback from participants is summarized below.

Attendance

Resident and Community Associations: Annex Residents' Association, Bay Cloverhill Community Association, Harbord Village Residents' Association, Friends of Queen's Park North, Federation of South Toronto Residents' Association, McGill-Granby Village Residents' Association, Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association

Queen's Park North Revitalization Project team: City of Toronto, Janet Rosenberg & Studio, Trophic Design, Third Party Public

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 shared with participants in draft for review before it was finalized.

The leaders from resident and community associations that spoke at the focus group said they appreciated the presentation and said it was a lot of information to digest. There was some common ground among participants but big differences too. Participants raised a number of points for the City, the donor, and design team to consider related to the emerging design ideas shared. They are summarized here and ordered for ease of reference only. The numbering does not reflect an order of importance.

| Issues and Opportunities | Comments and advice from participants for the City, the donor, and design team to consider |
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| 1. Protecting and enhancing the trees | Everyone supported paying attention to the trees to ensure they are protected and enhanced. |
| 2. Understory/plantings | Some shared support, others are very concerned about maintenance, trampling, and limits to habitable area for people. One participant said additional plantings / horticulture would greatly improve the park and connect to Hilary Weston's interest and past experience with horticulture. |
| 3. Proposed structures (café, kiosk, washrooms, and workshop) | <p>Several participants expressed concerns about the proposed structures and the centralization of structures in the park. One participant supported a washroom building but would prefer it is moved to the edge of the park. Another participant suggested having food trucks on the perimeter of the park instead of a central café or kiosk. Another participant said the washrooms, Council fire space, café and bandstand, obstruct the democratic use of the centre of the park.</p> <p>To clarify the various elements participants were concerned about, Terence from Trophic Design noted that the Council Fire is for democratic space and would likely not be in use 90% of the time. Todd from JRS explained that the design team sees food and beverage</p> |

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| | in the park as a welcoming gesture – the intention is that the cafe serves the park, not the other way around. The City also reiterated that they are not approaching this revitalization to commercialize the park. |
| 4. Commercialization of the park | A few participants expressed significant concern that the kiosk and café and the overall park design would lead to commercialization of the park. They said that “commercialization” to them means the City/donor did not hear or respect the community interest in maintaining a calm place of serenity without animation, without branding, without trucks and supply vehicles coming in and out of the park to serve the café and kiosk (while damaging the trees), without purchasing souvenirs or snacks. Participants made reference to a poor track record of the City managing concessions in parks (e.g., the Beaches). |
| 5. Simplify the vision: make the exclusive focus on Indigenous presence and protecting the trees | A few participants encouraged the team to focus energy on two core ideas only, which they saw as creating space for an Indigenous presence and preserving the trees. They suggested removing all other proposed ideas from the plan. They said focusing on these two core ideas would help create the best civic and ecological park in North America. |
| 6. Treewalk | Participants shared some concerns about the treewalk, including it will feel isolated and claustrophobic and will require buttresses, which could impact drainage and compact tree roots. One participant said it was a great idea but should be located somewhere else besides Queen’s Park North. Another participant said it could become a jumping / suicide risk and made reference to the interactive landmark called “The Vessel” In New York City that had to close because of this. |
| 7. Place for people to gather and protest | One participant expressed concern that the design ideas limit open spaces available to accommodate civic action / mass protests (up to 1000 people) and having a speaker address this type of large gathering. They referenced this as an important historical and ongoing use of the park and opportunities for this should continue. Another shared concerns that having space for large protests would |

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| | endanger the trees and suggested people could demonstrate/protest on the other side of the legislative buildings. |
| 8. Vision Statement | A few said they are strongly against the revised Vision Statement. They see “animation and partnerships” as in conflict with the park as a place for respite. They said, “this isn’t a place to be all things to all people”. |
| 9. Maintenance | There was strong support for better maintenance of the park. |
| 10. Interest in the lease document | <p>A question was raised about whether there’s any reason the City of Toronto’s lease from the University of Toronto supporting the use of Queen’s Park North as a public park isn’t a public document.</p> <p>In response to the question regarding the lease, the City explained that they typically do not publish lease documents.</p> |
| 11. Moveable furniture | Some participants expressed strong support for the moveable furniture. |

Next Steps

The project team thanked participating leaders from resident and community associations for participating in the focus group and committed to sharing a draft summary of the discussion with participants for review before it is finalized. They also noted:

- Survey will launch on Friday, November 14 and will close on December 14, 2025.
- Pop-ups will take place on:
 - Saturday, November 15, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Park and Museum Subway)
 - Tuesday, November 18, 2025, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. (inside Hart House)
 - Wednesday, November 19, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Park)
- The next City Staff Report, focused on the donation acceptance terms, is planned to go to Executive Committee on January 27, 2026, followed by City Council on February 4, 2026. The Staff Report will be publicly available one week before Executive Committee.