

Summary Report: Second Indigenous Sharing Meeting

Queen's Park North Revitalization

Engagement Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

December 9, 2025



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Introduction

On December 9th, the City of Toronto held the second Indigenous Sharing meeting focused on the Queen's Park North revitalization project. Individuals as well as representatives of Indigenous-led, Indigenous-serving organizations serving a range of sectors were invited to participate (e.g., education, business, social services, and housing). This summary was written by Third party Public and was shared with participants for review before being finalized.

Attendance

There were 14 people at the meeting, with 5 Indigenous participants (including a representative of The Indigenous People's Garden Inc.) along with representatives from the City of Toronto Parks & Recreation (Queen's Park North team), Trophic Design (Indigenous engagement and Landscape Architecture), Janet Rosenberg & Studio (Landscape architects), and Third Party Public (Engagement)

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

Meeting Summary

The Queen's Park North team presented slides reviewing the feedback received through the consultation process to date, the final vision and guiding principles for the park (that have been updated based on feedback received), the status of reporting to City Council, and the emerging design ideas.

In response to the ideas shared, participants at the meeting shared the following feedback:

Note that text in italics represents comments shared by the Queen's Park North Revitalization team.

- 1. There were participants who said they were supportive of most of the ideas shared**, particularly the focus on the trees, plantings, and creating a landscape that is different than what is offered in average parks today. Support was also shared for specific elements of the design, including:
 - The open space in the middle/centre of the park.
 - Getting closer to the trees by using the treewalk, including the opportunities to consider what could happen underneath it (e.g., artistically designed place to shelter from the rain).
 - The proposed Fire in the gathering place is a good idea as a Sacred Fire in Ceremony or as a warming fire to gather around.
 - Seating shown in the winter picture, specifically that it doesn't include the arm rests that make it difficult to sleep. It's good that people can lay down.
- 2. Opportunities for Indigenous presence in the park were suggested**, including:
 - By tradition the Indigenous People come to Queens Park Legislative Assembly to carry on their dialogue and relations with the Crown or Representatives. The People also come to the grove of mature forest to lay down their Tobacco and send their prayers beneath the tallest trees. This has happened through Sacred Ceremonies at Queen Park and when the Hawks and Eagles fly over our Ceremonies it is good, as they carry prayers to the Creator. The People are grateful and encouraged to see their messengers who watch over them.
 - A sculpture garden with an Indigenous focus by contemporary Indigenous artists to balance out the narrative of the King on the horse. Consider a statue of Tecumseh since without the Indigenous Allies in the War of 1812 there would be no jurisdiction of Ontario.
 - Storytelling posts throughout the park that explain who the original caretakers of the land are (Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Métis in Toronto). The post

could provide a short teaching about the peoples' connection to the land; how the river systems shaped travel, trade, and relationships; and the meaning of stewardship and teaching about the four sacred medicines. There could also be a post dedicated to Cedar, Sage, Sweetgrass, and Tobacco that explains the role of each medicine, how they're harvested respectfully, and why they matter.

- A Wampum / Covenant Path or feature could be embedded in the park to create a visual "path" or walkway referencing the symbolic agreements that Indigenous Nations made, with reference to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt (a treaty of shared stewardship and peace). This could be a mosaic, a series of plaques, or inlaid stones – as a metaphor for respectful sharing of land. Seed sharing wampum belts could also speak to relationality through knowledge sharing. This also keeps the voice of ecology elevated and in focus.
- There could be inlays or contemporary statues or artistically designed seating done in collaboration with Indigenous artists and industrial designers.
- Use of Indigenous languages (Anishnaabemowin, Wendat, Haudenosaunee, etc.) in signing or naming for places, plants, and features. This honours living languages, reaffirms presence, and teaches visitors a bit of Indigenous language and worldview.
- Representation of the doodemag, their teachings, and their relationship to stewarding land, in Indigenous language(s).
- The treewalk could include QR codes linked to recordings from Elders or Knowledge Keepers telling stories or songs connected to the trees.
- It would be a great place to do Moon ceremonies.
- Walking paths and meeting places could be used for sharing knowledge around governance and civic connection.
- It would be meaningful for Indigenous community members to be included in the grand opening (e.g., Indigenous participation, acknowledgment, or cultural presence during that event, refer to the opening of the new Centennial College building which included an awakening ceremony for the building).
- Supporting the training and hiring of Indigenous youth to care for the park. Specifically, the Earthkeepers Employment and Training program should be renewed at Queens Park North, whereby The Indigenous Peoples Garden Inc. trainees are hired by the City's Parks & Recreation Division to plant and care for the ecological restoration plantings.

3. There were participants who expressed concerns about the design ideas, including:

- Concern that too much is being put into the park. The essence of the site is a grove of mature hardwoods in downtown Toronto North of Queen Park

Legislature. It's a naturalistic Landscape Park like Central Park or Mount Royal on a small scale. It brings back memories of Mount Royal Park, brushing the snow off a park bench and sitting for a quiet moment in a mature wood.

- Concerns about introducing commercial activity such as a café to the park since it changes the essential experience of what the park is. People can bring their coffee with them to the park or bring a picnic. This is an opportunity to focus on bringing back the ecological heritage of the province in this park, which can be part of the natural landscape connecting the lake all the way up to the Spadina Museum.
- The proposed raised tree walk is too busy for the small park and distracts from the Oak Savannah experience which is the essence of the site. People just want to experience the mature trees and lay on the grass, kick around a ball and fly kites.
- It is what it is and does not need any infrastructure beyond a central gathering place for musical events etc. and a set of washrooms nearby. Concerns about proposed opportunities for entertainment and activities. *The idea is not to make the park a place of large performance but instead create the opportunity for sensitively programmed small events that draw people into the park.*

4. There was interest in more information about:

- How the Council Fire would be managed and what it would look like. *The team explained that the idea is to have a physical location for fire that is below grade in the ground. When not in use, there would be a cover over the fire location and it would be locked. The thought is to explore how Indigenous people can be part of the ongoing governance.*

5. Additional thoughts and advice for the Queen's Park North team were shared, including:

- Thanks to the team putting effort into the project and the Weston's generosity in providing funding.
- The proposed naturalized area is a good idea however a practical installation plan is needed. Paul Martel Park at 10 Madison could be a model for the ecological restoration of Queens Park North. It has four habitats, including Prairie Grasses, Meadow flowers, Wetlands, and Shady Woodland plants. The naturalized area must have controlled access to prevent trampling of plants and dogs must be kept out if the Indigenous botanical plantings are going to thrive and survive.
- Queens Park North is scarce downtown greenspace that is underutilized due to heavy rush hour traffic on Avenue Road and University Avenue which surround the site making it an island as there are insufficient crosswalks for pedestrian access. Suggested improving pedestrian access on the North end by lowering the road grade and providing an overhead walk. This would encourage

integration of pedestrians to visit the park from the ROM and Gardiner Museums and University of Toronto campus.

- Suggest an Earthship design into a naturalized mound for the washrooms. The hill could be used for a children's Toboggin slide. Also, a seasonal Winter skating rink could be installed near the washrooms and central gathering place.
- Think about opportunities for using the park after dark, since community use of the park is one of the best ways to support safety. Consider access to electrical power especially for earlier nights in the winter to help support activations throughout the year.
- Support the vital role of insects and pollen producing plants for the bees, hummingbirds, butterflies, etc.
- Prioritize space for live theater or performances over inclusion of a café, including seating that is circular with performers in the middle of the circle.
- Consider opportunities to introduce/strengthen reference to Taddle Creek, highlighting the importance of water and using water to inform programming (e.g., World Water Day). Consider sinking the creek in a shallow ravine with a controlled walkway that follows the stream through the length of the park. *The Queen's Park team noted that the future University Park is likely to include reference to Taddle Creek.*
- Ensure institutions do not take over the park space, suggesting that smaller events could happen in Queen's Park North and larger events could be planned outside the park (e.g., at U of T).

Next Steps

The Queen's Park North team will be refining the design ideas informed by engagement feedback and additional research and study. The refined design thinking will be shared in February 2026. The City looks forward to ongoing discussions with urban Indigenous voices.