

Engagement Summary



Phase 1



December 2025



This report was prepared for the City of Toronto by Gladki Planning Associates.

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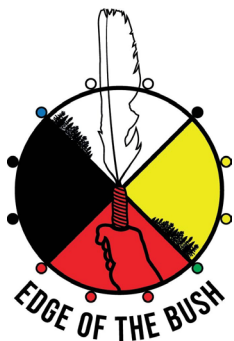


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Executive Summary

The Weston in Gear (WIG) planning study is a City of Toronto-led initiative that will culminate in a Site and Area Specific Policy (SASP) to be added to the Official Plan, along with Urban Design Guidelines that will provide direction for built form, streetscapes, and space. The study is aimed at creating a planning framework that supports complete communities, sustainable growth, and public space improvements in Weston, and will guide future growth and change in the community. The framework focuses on how the elements of a great community come together, including buildings, housing, businesses, heritage, public spaces, transportation, and community services and facilities, while reflecting the City's objectives related to equity, reconciliation, sustainability, and inclusive engagement.

This Engagement Summary documents Phase 1 engagement for the Weston in Gear Planning Study. Phase 1 engagement focused on building a shared understanding of Weston, identifying key opportunities and challenges, and gathering early input to inform the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles. Engagement activities during this phase were designed to capture lived experience, local priorities, and technical perspectives before any development directions were established. Future engagement phases will build on this foundation by testing emerging development directions with the community and advisory bodies, and later confirming how community feedback has informed the final SASP and Urban Design Guidelines.

This report summarizes the engagement activities completed during Phase 1 and presents a synthesis of what was heard. Engagement methods included community consultation meetings (CCM #1 and #2), Advisory Committee meetings (Local Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee), pop-up outreach at the Weston Farmers' Market, online survey, child-focused "Map Your Weston" activity, and a dedicated Urban Indigenous gathering. Feedback from all activities was reviewed through a structured thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, areas of alignment, and key concerns. The findings outlined in this summary will guide how engagement is structured in subsequent phases and how community input continues to shape planning decisions as the study moves forward.

Across these engagements, people shared what they value about Weston, what concerns them, and what they hope to see in the future. Many spoke about Weston's strong sense of community, village-like feel, cultural diversity, and historic buildings as key strengths worth protecting. Access to the Weston GO/UP Station was repeatedly highlighted as one of the neighbourhood's biggest assets.

At the same time, residents raised concerns about personal safety, maintenance, traffic, and mobility issues, especially around Weston Road and the Weston and Lawrence intersection. People want safer sidewalks, better crossings, improved cycling connections, and more welcoming

public spaces. Parks and the Humber River are well-loved, but participants noted gaps east of the rail corridor, poor maintenance, and the need for better shade, washrooms, and seating. Indigenous communities stressed the cultural and spiritual importance of the Humber River and emphasized the need to protect and restore it.

Housing affordability and displacement emerged as major worries. Many residents expressed fear that new development could push out long-time community members and small businesses, or change Weston's character. People asked for buildings that fit the scale of the neighbourhood, include more family-sized units, and improve rather than overshadow the main street. The decline of small, independent shops and the lack of a grocery store were also repeated concerns.

Children, through the "Map your Weston" activity, shared candid insights about places they love, places they avoid, and what they want to see in Weston. They strongly emphasized safety, clean streets, fun activities, better parks, and easier travel.

Throughout the study, participants also asked for clearer communication and more transparency from the City, especially around how feedback is used, how decisions are made, and what planning tools like the Official Plan and zoning can and cannot do. Across all engagement methods, several strong points of consensus emerged:

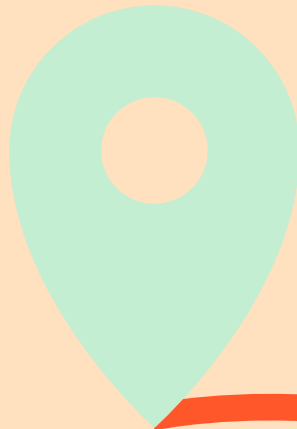
- Protect and strengthen Weston's historic identity, village feel, and cultural diversity.
- Build a safer, cleaner, more inclusive public spaces that supports comfort and wellbeing.
- Leverage transit strengths while improving local

mobility and connectivity across all modes.

- Enhance and expand public spaces, parks, and the Humber River corridor as cultural, recreational and ecological anchors.
- Address affordability, prevent displacement, and ensure development supports the needs of existing residents.
- Fill major gaps in essential retail and community services, especially groceries, youth programming, and senior supports.
- Build on the history of Weston Road as a vibrant, welcoming main street and economic centre.
- Ensure transparent, equitable, and ongoing engagement throughout the study.

These insights form the foundation for the next phase of the Weston in Gear planning study, where the City and consultant team will refine the vision, update the guiding principles, and develop planning directions for the future SASP and Urban Design Guidelines.

Introduction



Project Overview

The Weston in Gear (WIG) planning study is a City of Toronto led initiative aimed at creating a planning framework that supports complete communities, sustainable growth, and public space improvements in Weston. The study will culminate in a comprehensive planning framework to guide future growth and change in the Weston community. The framework will focus on how the elements of a great community come together: buildings, housing, businesses, heritage, public spaces, transportation and community services and facilities. The study will also reflect the City's objectives related to equity, reconciliation, sustainability, and inclusive engagement, including tailored methods for working with Indigenous communities, children and youth, seniors, newcomers, businesses, and local human service organizations.

To implement the study outcomes, the City will prepare a Site and Area Specific Policy (SASP) to be added to the Official Plan, along with Urban Design Guidelines (UDG) that will provide direction for built form, streetscapes, and public spaces. To undertake the planning study, the City of Toronto has retained a multidisciplinary consultant team, led by Gladki Planning Associates (Planning), working in partnership with DTAH (Urban Design), Transsolar (Thermal Comfort), Edge of the Bush (Urban Indigenous Engagement), and Co-Effect (Graphic Design + Engagement Materials).



Image 1-2: (top right) View of the study area looking north along Weston Road from Lawrence Ave; (bottom right) Weston sign

Timeline

The Weston in Gear Planning Study is being carried out through a multi-phase process that integrates technical analysis with ongoing community engagement. Phase 1: Background Review of the study is complete, which focused on understanding existing conditions and gathering early input regarding the strengths, challenges and opportunities as well as draft vision and guiding principles from the

community and key stakeholders. As the study moves into Phase 2: Emerging Development Direction, engagement will continue through advisory committees, Indigenous engagement, and broader community consultation to test and refine development directions before recommendations are finalized in Phase 3.

The diagram illustrates the full study timeline, including key milestones, deliverables, and engagement touchpoints.

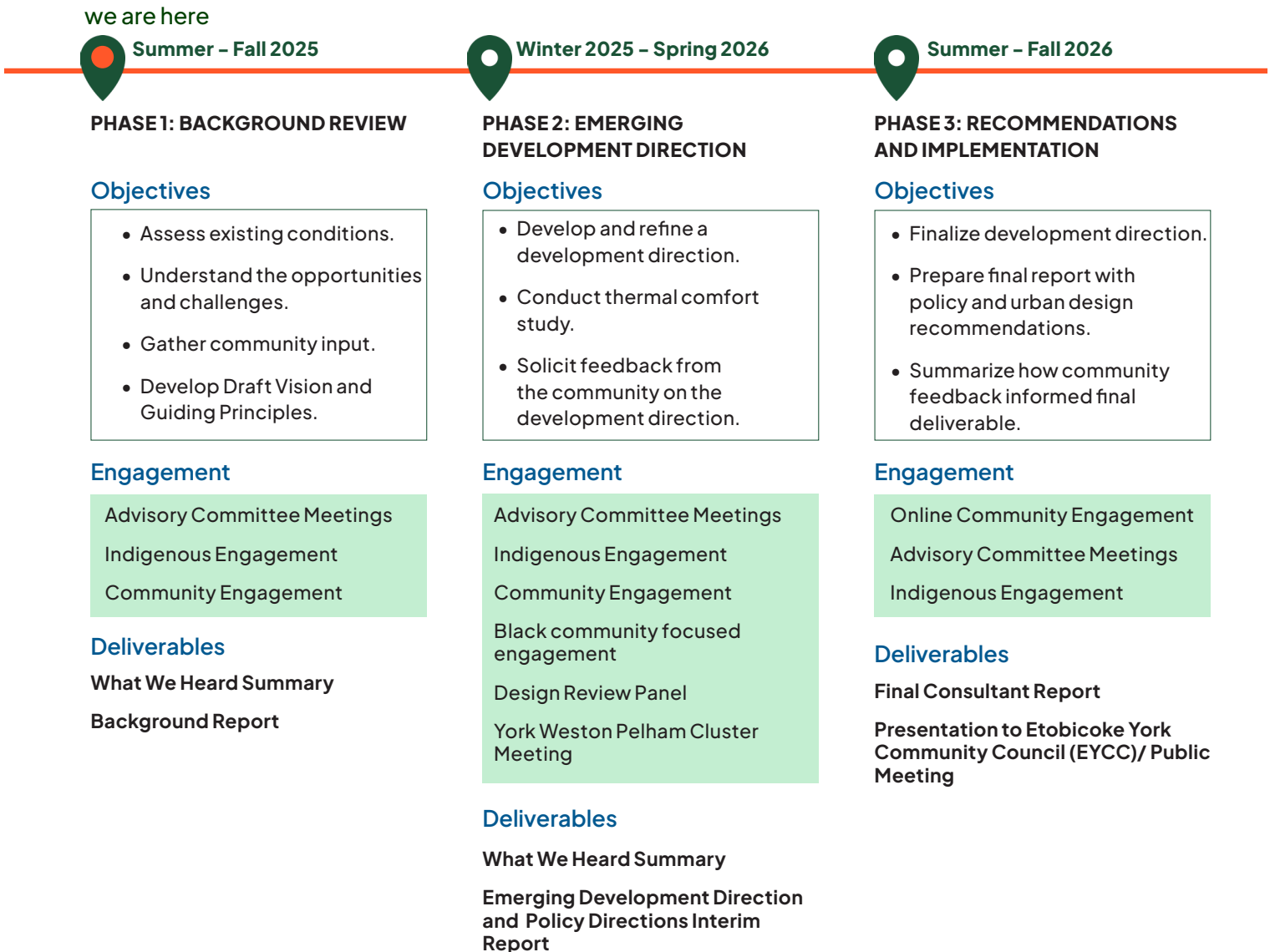


Image 3: Timeline

Report Overview

This report summarizes Phase 1 engagement as part of the Weston in Gear (WIG) Planning Study. It documents the consultation activities completed to date, outlines what was heard from community members and stakeholders, and describes how these insights have informed the development of the Study's emerging directions.

Types of Engagement Activities to Collect Feedback

Feedback for the Weston in Gear Planning Study was collected through a range of in-person and online engagement activities designed to reach diverse groups across the community. Activities included:

1. Community Open House (In-person engagement)
2. Local Advisory Committee (LAC) (Virtual)
3. Gathering with Urban Indigenous community (In-Person)
4. 'Map Your Weston' Activity through CampTO for Children Online Survey
5. Online Survey

As part of early engagement, the City also initiated events such as Planners in Public Spaces (PIPS) at the Weston Farmers' Market. Those who could not participate in any of the activities, were encouraged to share their thoughts by contacting the City Project Manager.

How will the Feedback be used?

All feedback collected throughout Phase 1 was reviewed by the consultant team to identify themes, areas of agreement and disagreement, and issues requiring further study. This input is being used to refine the vision, adjust the guiding principles, and inform the emerging land use, built form, mobility, and public realm (public space) directions that will form the basis of the future Site and Area Specific Policy (SASP).

All of the feedback received has been recorded as part of the public record and used to inform the study's recommendations that will be considered by Council and adapted by City staff into a SASP and UDG. Feedback received as part of the engagement which is beyond the scope of this project has been recorded so that it may serve to inform concurrent studies being undertaken by the City and/or ongoing City-wide strategies and discussions.

Promotion

A range of outreach and promotion methods were used during Phase 1 to raise awareness of the Weston in Gear Planning Study and encourage broad participation in engagement activities. Promotion was designed to reach residents, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders through multiple channels, including direct mail, on-the-ground distribution, digital platforms, and email lists. This multi-channel approach helped ensure that information about engagement opportunities was widely shared and accessible across the community.



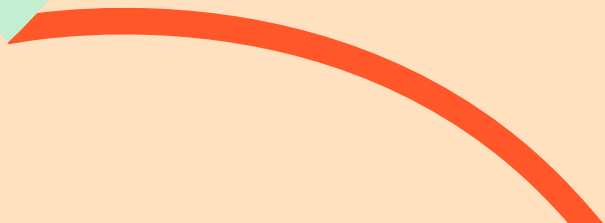
Promotion Channel	Details
Project Webpage	Posted on October 14, 2025 Sent on October 16, 2025 to 6,908 households*
Official City Notice (Mailout)	<i>*Impact of Canada Post Strike: Mailout delayed (normally 2-3 weeks in advance); supplemental flyer distribution undertaken</i>
Flyer Distribution	400 flyers distributed across the community (hydro poles, shop windows, message boards, apartment lobbies, library, service organizations, businesses, places of worship)
Social Media – Instagram	2 posts (Oct 21 and Oct 28) 
Social Media – Bluesky	2 posts (Oct 21 and Oct 28)
Email Mailing List (ListServ)	CCM was promoted by sharing notice directly with 13 people via the email mailing list
Councillor’s eNews	Flyer included in October 16 edition Ward 5 eNews (16th October 2025) 
Community Organizations (Business Improvement Area, Weston Village Community Association)	Flyer emailed to organizations
Planners in Public Spaces (PiPS)	80 people engaged in-person and informed about the CCM

Table 1: Various initiatives for promotion of the engagement activities for Phase 1

What we Heard



Previous Engagement and Public Consultation By The City (CCM#1 and PiPs)

As part of the early phases of the Weston in Gear (WIG) Planning Study, the City delivered a series of public engagement touchpoints designed to raise awareness, share information, and gather initial community input. These activities included two Planners in Public Spaces (PiPS) events at the Weston Farmers' Market and the first Community Consultation Meeting (CCM #1).

The Study's first major public meeting, Community Consultation Meeting #1 (CCM #1), was an open house held on September 24, 2024, at C.R. Marchant Middle School from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Attendees were invited to learn more about the study and the planning process. Attendees were also invited to provide input on the study area boundary, transportation modes and travel patterns, cultural heritage features, key opportunities and constraints, and needs related to community services and facilities. The meeting was well attended, with over 100 participants, including City staff and the local Councillor. During the session, staff also gathered names of residents interested in joining a Local Advisory Committee to support ongoing consultation throughout the study.

The first Planners in Public Spaces (PiPS) event took place on October 5, 2024, at the Weston Farmers' Market. City Staff shared more about the planning study and were available to answer questions. Approximately 80 residents were engaged through informal conversations, helping build early awareness and interest in the study.

A second Planners in Public Spaces (PiPS) event was held on October 25, 2025 at the Weston Farmers' Market. City staff spoke with 80 people, promoting the upcoming second Community Consultation Meeting and collecting feedback on the challenges and opportunities in Weston.

Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

The first Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Meeting for the Weston in Gear Planning Study was held virtually on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., bringing together approximately 17 community members, City staff, and the consultant team to formally launch the committee's role in the study. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the City-led planning study, ground the committee in the objectives and scope of Phase 1, and begin gathering early insights on community strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The session also presented the draft vision and guiding principles for initial feedback. Through introductions, presentations, and a facilitated discussion, the meeting established a shared foundation for ongoing collaboration and ensured that local lived experience would directly inform key directions of the study.

Key Findings:

- 1. Weston's identity and sense of community are central strengths.** Members repeatedly emphasized Weston's welcoming, diverse, and village-like character. The neighbourhood's rich history, the gateway to the Humber Valley's 74 acres of natural space, and its "small-town

within a big city” feel were described as foundational elements that contribute to a distinct sense of place and community cohesion.

- 2. Housing pressures are creating concern about residential stability and the future of established communities.** Participants noted that Weston has been one of the few remaining relatively affordable areas in Toronto, but rising housing costs are creating uncertainty for residents with long-standing ties to the neighbourhood. Members expressed concern that increasing financial pressures may make it difficult for existing households to remain in place, particularly those who rely on affordable rental options or community supports.
- 3. Several essential community-serving organizations face vulnerability within the current development context.** Participants identified that multiple youth-serving, cultural, social-support, and faith-based organizations operating along Weston Road rely on rented commercial or institutional spaces that may be at risk as redevelopment occurs. The groups identified by LAC members included Frontlines Toronto, Crossroads Theatre, Urban Arts, Al-Rowda Mosque, and ENAGB (Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying), all of which play important roles in providing social, cultural, and community-building services. Members emphasized the need for approaches that can help retain these organizations as part of Weston’s social fabric.
- 4. Support for small businesses and main-street vitality is critical.** Members stressed the importance of retaining Weston Road’s independent shops and maintaining the

character and economic diversity that these businesses provide. The absence of a grocery store was noted as a significant gap, and participants highlighted opportunities to foster a more vibrant mix of uses, including restaurants, cultural spaces (such as a theatre), and evening activities, that would support a more active and complete main street.

- 5. Public space, safety, and mobility improvements are needed.** Participants highlighted the need for safer and more comfortable walking and cycling conditions, especially for families. Opportunities for improved pedestrian infrastructure near schools, safer crossings, and child-friendly spaces near major destinations such as Weston Station were mentioned, alongside interest in better east-west connectivity and access to the Humber River trail system.
- 6. Community services and amenities must keep pace with growth.** LAC members raised concerns about the capacity of childcare services, youth programs, schools, and community amenities to meet the needs of a growing population. They emphasized that new development should be accompanied by strengthened community services, ensuring that essential supports remain accessible to residents of all ages.

Engagement with Urban Indigenous Community

On Thursday, October 30, 2025, an Urban Indigenous gathering was held in the evening at the Wiigiwaam behind 2700 Eglinton Avenue West (York Civic Centre). The session was facilitated by Dr. Hopi Martin of Edge of the Bush and brought together 15 attendees. Additionally, two members of the consulting team and one City staff person were in attendance. The gathering took place at the lodge around the Sacred Fire, following Ojibwe Anishinaabe Protocols of the Sacred Circle, and grounded in Chi Gete Anishinaabe Inaakonigewin (Very Old Anishinaabe Law), which has long governed this land. The gathering followed the Four Teachings of the Ojibwe Sacred Circle, creating space for multiple worldviews and supporting a decolonized approach to engagement for planning studies. Meeting at the “edge of the bush,” at the Traditional Meeting Place by the Sacred Fire with Asemaa (Sacred Tobacco) in hand, participants shared their visions, concerns, and hopes for the future of the Weston community.

The gathering was conducted according to Oral Tradition, with no recordings or notetaking permitted. The City staff person and the consulting team were given an Asemaa (Sacred Tobacco) Tie after the gathering and asked to reflect on what they heard around the Sacred Fire. A summary of these reflections is found below.

Key Findings:

1. Deep Connection to the Humber River.

Participants consistently emphasized the cultural, historical and personal significance of the Humber.

Key points included:

- » Regular use of the Humber for walking, gathering, ceremony, and access to nature.
- » Concerns that intensifying development (e.g., 17–storey buildings) may negatively impact the Humber River.
- » Strong calls to protect, preserve and clean up the Humber, and ensure long-term access for Indigenous communities.
- » Recognition that the river’s ecological health is inseparable from its social, spiritual and cultural functions for Indigenous communities.

2. Cultural Practice, Ceremony, and Community Infrastructure.

Participants highlighted the need for:

- » Dedicated spaces that could be used for ceremony, Sacred Fires, cultural practices, grieving, healing, and gathering.
- » Access not only to ceremonial spaces but to the materials and medicines required for ceremony that can be accessed along the Humber (e.g., wood, water, berries, medicines).
- » Recognition that Indigenous uses of the river and area have been happening since time immemorial and will continue regardless of municipal planning frameworks or policy.

- » Acknowledgement of Indigenous cultural spaces and practices as critical community infrastructure.

3. Impacts of Development and Historical Harms.

Participants raised concerns about:

- » The cumulative effects of infrastructure development on the health, wellbeing and lives of Indigenous Peoples.
- » The prioritization of economic advancement over Indigenous health and wellbeing.

4. Language, Place Names and Cultural Interpretation.

Discussions emphasized

- » The importance of accurate naming and understanding of place, including Gabekana-ziibi (the river at the end of the trail).
- » Alignment with Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action related to language, culture and commemoration, and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) Article 13.
- » The need to engage with Rights Holding First Nations and honour treaty rights throughout the planning process.

5. Inspiration and Precedents for Indigenous Design.

Participants shared examples of spaces that they liked and had successfully integrated Indigenous design and culture and were welcoming, including:

- » Richmond Green in Richmond Hill.
- » Tsa tsa ke k'e (Iron Foot Place) at Ford Hall, Rogers Place.
- » The Forks and Oodena Celebration Circle in Winnipeg.

"Map your Weston" Activity with Children

The Map Your Weston activity engaged children ages 6–13 through both school-based and community-based programming to ensure that younger voices contributed meaningfully to the Weston In Gear Planning Study. The activity was conducted throughout the months of August and September and was distributed at:

- After School Club (Weston Library Program), and
- CampTO sites: York Community Centre, Pelmo Community Centre, Amesbury Community Centre, and Falstaff Community Centre.

Each box known as “Engagement in a Box” invited children to:

1. Identify places they love,
2. Highlight places they avoid or find uncomfortable, and
3. Draw or describe what they imagine for the future of Weston.

This low-barrier format introduced planning concepts in an accessible way while generating creative, candid insights from an often underrepresented age group. The key findings

below represent over 200 responses from children.

Key Findings

- 1. Children most frequently identified parks, the library, and familiar community spaces as places they love.** Across the After School Club and CampTO sites, children consistently pointed to Cruickshank Park, Weston Lions Park, Memorial Park, Elm Park, the Weston Library, and the UP/GO Station as places they enjoy. These locations were associated with play, nature, comfort, and freedom of movement, reinforcing the significance of parks and civic amenities in children’s daily experience.
- 2. Children identified several places they avoid because of traffic, crowding, or uncomfortable social behaviour.** Children demonstrated a clear awareness of safety and stress in public spaces. They frequently avoided busy portions of Weston Road, transit areas with unpredictable behaviour, and locations with heavy traffic that delay or worry them during daily travel.
- 3. Children’s improvement requests focused on more activities, better parks, fun destinations, and safer streets.** Children asked for more things to do, especially active recreation such as skate parks, splash pads, sports fields, swimming pools, and water slides. They also requested fun indoor hangouts like arcades, trampoline parks, and well-known food/treat places where they can enjoy their favourite food. Park improvements, including more trees, better playgrounds, and spaces for kids and

dogs, were frequently mentioned. Cleanliness and safety were core concerns, with repeated requests for “cleaner streets” and “no violence.”

- 4. Children imagine a future Weston that is vibrant, playful, and supportive.** Children envisioned a Weston with rollercoasters, tall colourful buildings, waterfalls, bold play structures, and imaginative public spaces.



Image 4: Engagement in a box comprising of a guidebook, “Map your Weston” activity, pencils and crayons



Image 5: Children participating in the “Map Your Weston” activity, identifying places they love, avoid, and imagine for the future.

Their responses expressed both creativity and emotional aspirations, revealing hopes for happiness, kindness, peace, and reduced poverty in the community.

Community Engagement Meeting (CCM) #2

Community Consultation Meeting #2 (CCM #2) for the Weston in Gear Planning Study was held on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at Artscape Weston Common and brought together over 100 residents, youth, local businesses, and community stakeholders.

The purpose of the event was to:

- understand community perspectives on what makes Weston unique;
- ground-truth and further elaborate the strengths, opportunities, and challenges identified through the existing conditions analysis;
- gather input on the draft vision and guiding principles;
- create excitement and buy-in for the project; and
- build planning literacy among attendees.

Delivered in an interactive open-house format, the meeting invited participants to explore display boards, speak with members of the study team, listen to a short presentation, and take part in hands-on activities, such as a community values quilt. Facilitators from the City of Toronto, GPA, and DTAH supported one-on-one conversations, collected feedback through sticky notes and

written comments, and encouraged dot-voting on strengths, challenges, opportunities, and guiding principles. The event also showcased a “Map Your Weston” gallery featuring artwork from earlier children’s engagement, reinforcing the study’s commitment to inclusive and multi-generational participation.

Key Findings

1. **Residents want the study area boundary expanded to include the parts of Weston they regularly use.** Participants noted that the current boundary excludes areas they consider fundamental to Weston’s identity and daily activity. These include lands east to Jane Street, areas north up to Highway 401, portions east toward Denison Road, and institutional properties such as Weston Memorial School, which residents feel could face redevelopment pressure. They also pointed out that the rail corridor north of the site up to Oak Street remains part of the lived neighbourhood and should be recognized in the study.
2. **Preserving Weston’s low-scale heritage character along Weston Road, Church Street, and Fern Avenue is a major priority.** Feedback showed strong interest in maintaining the low-rise main street fabric on Weston Road between Lawrence Avenue and Church Street, where older storefronts, narrow building frontages, and heritage buildings define the area’s identity. Residents shared specific examples, such as the heritage value of buildings near Church Street, the small-town feel between Fern Avenue and Lawrence Avenue, and the importance of keeping towers set back from Weston Road. Concerns were raised about

tall buildings creating shadows on parks and sidewalks and diminishing views and vistas down streets like John Street and Church Street toward the Humber Valley.

3. Community members want growth that supports affordability and opportunities for local residents. Residents expressed concerns that redevelopment could change the character of Weston if it leads to smaller units or rising costs. They specifically requested family-sized units, policies for locals to access new housing, and protections for households near Weston Road and Little Avenue where rising rents were noted. Some comments pointed to the absence of 2- and 3- bedroom units in new buildings and suggested that developments include spaces for local businesses and community organizations, particularly on and around Weston Road.

4. Enhancing parks and public spaces, including Cruickshank Park, Weston Lions Park, and Little Avenue Memorial Park, is a shared priority. Participants referenced several key parks by name and provided specific improvement suggestions. Cruickshank Park was praised for its trails, but residents noted the “trail gap north of Cruickshank Park” that forces users onto city streets. Weston Lions Park was described as too hot in the summer, with playground equipment lacking adequate shade. Residents also requested washrooms along the Humber River Trail, better access to parks from nearby apartment towers, and improvements to Little Avenue Memorial Park, including its bandshell. Many stressed that future development should avoid casting shadows on parks along the Humber River.

5. Key mobility challenges were identified at Weston–Lawrence, on Weston Road, and within the rail corridor area. Mobility feedback pinpointed very specific issues. The intersection of Weston Road and Lawrence Avenue was repeatedly described as uncomfortable and in need of redesign; examples included interest in a roundabout, improved turning movements, or measures to slow traffic. Residents noted missing or narrow sidewalks near 22 John Street and Weston Common, as well as uncomfortable wind conditions between the Artscape buildings. People also requested protected bike lanes on Weston Road, safer access to the Humber River Trail, and additional Bike Share stations along major corridors. Several noted that bike lanes could be shifted off Weston Road to adjacent parks for safety.

6. Local community facilities, including libraries, arenas, daycares, and recreation centres, would benefit from upgrades and expanded services. Residents identified the Weston Library, Weston Collegiate, Weston Lions Arena, and local daycares as important assets needing modernization or additional programming. Many noted that the arena is a major community facility and future upgrades, potentially with partners like MLSE, should preserve its community-serving role. Comments also highlighted the need for more formal city-run daycares, youth programming, and senior spaces, and for better coordination across service providers. Specific mentions included improving washroom access in public facilities and considering additional amenities around York Recreation Centre.

7. Weston Road’s commercial corridor presents opportunities for diversifying retail, improving storefronts, and supporting local businesses.

Residents expressed a desire for a thriving commercial main street and noted specific areas needing attention. These include the plaza at 2013 Lawrence Avenue West, described as in need of cleaning; the lack of grocery stores within walking distance; and the prevalence of dollar stores rather than varied businesses. Participants also referenced the historic location of a former grocery store near where the Dollarama on Weston Road now stands, reinforcing interest in a full-service grocery store. People requested more restaurants, essential retail, and affordable commercial spaces along Weston Road to support independent businesses.

8. Enhancing comfort in public spaces through cleanliness, lighting, and stewardship would improve the everyday experience.

Residents named specific locations where environmental quality could be improved. These include John Street Bridge, Lawrence Avenue sidewalks, and specific plazas requiring upkeep. Comments emphasized litter cleanup, better maintenance of walkways leading to parks, improved lighting, and clearer sightlines to enhance the sense of comfort. Several participants noted recurring wind conditions near South Station Street and 34 John Street, suggesting opportunities for microclimate-sensitive design.

9. Participants voiced interest in clearer communication, transparent coordination, and visible follow-through on planning initiatives.

Participants expressed a desire for more clarity about the management of

community spaces and how Community Benefits Charge (CBC) is being used, improved alignment with parallel initiatives such as MLSE partnerships or Weston Loop, and meaningful implementation of study recommendations. Comments referenced past experiences with plans, such as the Weston Secondary Plan, that residents felt did not lead to visible outcomes. There was also interest in better communication between decision-makers and residents, and more accessible information online.

10. Feedback on the Draft Vision highlights the importance of preserving Weston’s identity while planning for thoughtful, connected, and community-serving growth.

Participants responded to the Vision by emphasizing that future planning must safeguard Weston’s defining qualities, its heritage character, sense of belonging, and natural assets, while strengthening connections across the study area. Comments reflected interest in a vision that reinforces Weston as a welcoming, community-oriented place where nature, parks, cycling connections, and social infrastructure remain central. Community members expressed that growth near transit should be balanced with housing affordability, small business support, and design approaches that protect sunlight, views to the Humber Valley, and the character of Weston Road. There was also interest in a more integrated understanding of Weston that connects the east-west sides of the rail corridor, supports local gathering spaces, and reflects the diverse populations who call Weston home.

11. Preserving village character, access to amenities, strengthening belonging, and

improving connections emerged as the community’s top guiding principles. As part of Community Consultation Meeting #2, participants contributed to a “Community Values Quilt,” a hands-on activity designed to illustrate which Draft Guiding Principles mattered most to the community. Each guiding principle was paired with a coloured fabric square, and participants selected the colours that best reflected their priorities before adding them to a collective quilt. The resulting mosaic provided a simple visual snapshot of shared values and areas of emphasis across the study area. The Community Values Quilt activity showed strong alignment around three major guiding principles:

- Red and pink squares were among the most frequently chosen, indicating strong community emphasis on Heart of the Village and Providing Community Services and Amenities.
- Light and dark blue squares also appeared prominently across the quilt, showing support for Belonging and Diversity and Living Public Spaces.
- Green squares were widely selected, reflecting strong alignment with the principle of Improving Connections.



Image 6 : Consultant team giving a walkthrough of the Community Values Quilt activity during CCM #2



Image 7: Weston in Gear Community Values Quilt

Online Survey

An online survey was available from Saturday, October 25 to Tuesday, November 11, offering an asynchronous option for community members who were unable to attend the in-person engagement activities. A total of 35 respondents participated, of which 28 (80%) completed the full survey.

Respondents represented a wide cross-section of people connected to Weston. The majority 63% identified as living within the study area, while others indicated they visit or shop in Weston (26%), or live nearby (17%).

The survey asked participants to evaluate the Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities identified through earlier engagement and to share additional items they felt were missing. Respondents were also asked whether the draft Vision statement resonated, and were invited to provide any final reflections on the future of Weston. This structure allowed participants to confirm areas of alignment, identify points of disagreement, and contribute new insights based on lived experience.

Key Findings

1. Strengths: Respondents identified access, natural systems, and community anchors as Weston’s most valued strengths. Survey results show very strong agreement that Weston’s mobility and natural assets are key strengths: 90% of respondents agreed that Weston GO/UP Express access is a major advantage, while 83% highlighted the Humber Valley park and trail system as a defining

feature. 87% supported the area’s variety of land uses, and 90% identified community hubs such as Artscape Weston Common, Weston Lions Arena, and the Weston Library as important strengths. Respondents also emphasized Weston’s historic character, diverse communities, cultural presence and strong sense of belonging.

2. Challenges: Pedestrian safety, lack of grocery access, and mobility gaps were the strongest areas of concern. Challenges that received the highest agreement included unsafe sidewalks and crossings (86%), especially at the Weston–Lawrence intersection, and heavy traffic volumes (79%). 71% of respondents noted few bike lanes, and 68% pointed to the absence of a grocery store within the study area, describing Weston as a “food desert” for residents without cars. Challenges also included limited pedestrian access to the Humber River south of Lawrence, missing sidewalks near Denison Park, and parking spillover from new developments into Weston Lions Park and Shoppers Drug Mart. Social challenges such as the east–west divide across the rail corridor and uneven distribution of amenities, were also frequently raised.

3. Opportunities: Respondents prioritized trail connections, vibrant main–street uses, and improved community infrastructure. Opportunities with the highest agreement included improving connections to parks and natural areas (96%), and creating safer streets that support independent movement for children and youth (93%). 89% supported preserving Weston’s historic character, while another 89% supported introducing active

street-level uses through community services, recreation, and small business activity. Additional opportunities identified through written comments included adding ambitious public art, enhancing Weston Road as a walkable destination, locating towers behind the main street buildings to preserve character, investing in small-format retail spaces, expanding bike and bus lanes, and exploring a Metrolinx tunnel to reconnect both sides of the rail corridor.

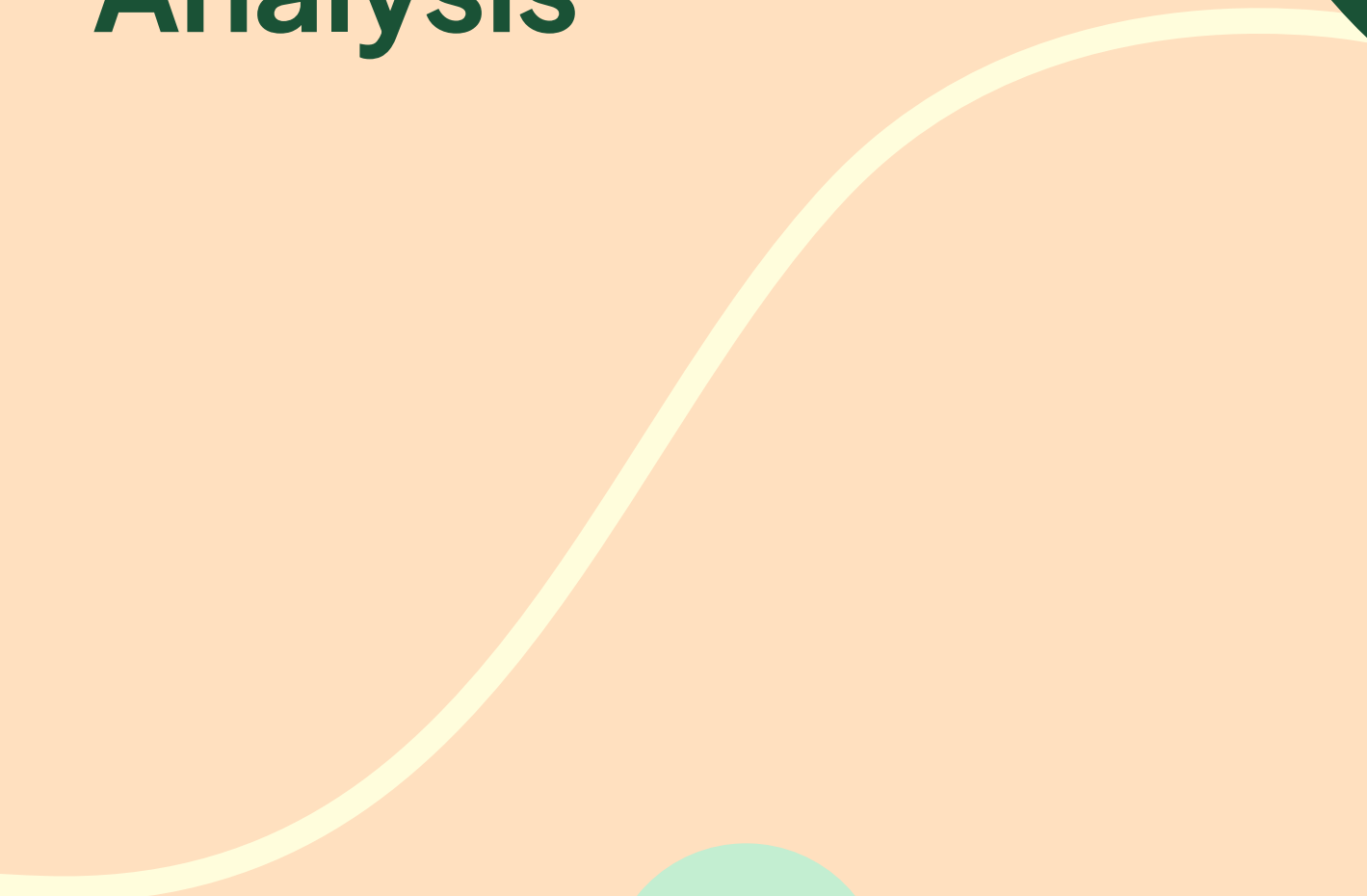
4. Mixed Support for the Draft Vision, with Strong Intent but Concerns About Clarity, Identity, and Equity. Online survey feedback showed that while many respondents felt the Draft Vision reflected Weston’s welcoming identity and aspirations, others expressed uncertainty about how it would guide real change. Half of respondents said the Vision resonated strongly and another third felt parts of it resonated, but written comments revealed concerns about the lack of specificity, fears that development could undermine Weston’s historic character, and skepticism about whether growth would deliver genuine affordability or community benefits. Several respondents noted that language distinguishing “longstanding” and “new” communities felt divisive, while others felt the Vision was too broad, too long, or not sufficiently action-oriented. Overall, respondents supported the Vision’s intent but emphasized the need for clearer commitments that protect identity, address inequities, and ensure development strengthens, rather than harms, the community.

Engagement with Treaty holder First Nations

On October 1, 2025 the City of Toronto provided notification to Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand, and the Huron-Wendat informing them of the planning study and inviting them to participate. On October 3 Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation responded and noted that they hold Indigenous and Treaty Rights specific to this location and its environs. They had no questions or comments at that time but asked to be notified of any future Study updates. Six Nations also provided a response on October 3 indicating that they would like to review a draft of the plan once available.



Thematic Analysis



The engagement activities for the Weston in Gear Planning Study brought together diverse and complementary perspectives from residents, advisory committees, Indigenous knowledge keepers, youth and children, local organizations, and technical staff. Collectively, these conversations generated a strong evidence base that reflects lived experience, professional expertise, and cultural knowledge. The themes below synthesize the most significant priorities and concerns that emerged and set out the forward-looking directions that will guide the development of the Plan.

1. Protecting and Enhancing Weston’s Identity, Heritage Character, and Village Structure.

Participants across all engagement streams emphasized that preserving and strengthening Weston’s identity is essential to shaping future growth. Residents consistently described Weston’s “village-like” environment, defined by its low-rise main street, narrow frontages, heritage façades, and close-knit social fabric, as a defining strength that must be reinforced

“There is a lot of rich history in Weston that has been lost due to recent years of development. It is imperative historical places are kept, but improved. NOT replaced.”

through planning policy. Many expressed concerns that intensifying development, if not carefully guided, could diminish the small-town character that distinguishes Weston from other parts of the city. The stretch of Weston Road between Lawrence Avenue and Church Street was repeatedly identified as the heart of this identity, with residents emphasizing that future development should scale gently, protect sunlight and views, and ensure that taller buildings do not overwhelm public spaces. This theme was echoed in the TAC meeting, where heritage staff highlighted the need to integrate heritage considerations early in the planning process and ensure that redevelopment enhances, rather than erodes, cultural and architectural value. The Indigenous Gathering expanded this perspective by framing the Humber River, Gabekana-ziibi, as a cultural and spiritual anchor whose protection is inseparable from preserving the identity of the land and community.

“Preserve the small town feel of Weston Rd”

“Create guidelines to protect views/vistas to the parks network.”

2. Addressing Housing Affordability, Stability, and the Risk of Displacement. Participants expressed significant concern about rising housing costs and the potential displacement of long-time renters, vulnerable households, and community-serving organizations along Weston Road. Feedback emphasized that future development must include family-sized units, protections for existing renters, and mechanisms that allow local residents to access new housing opportunities. Participants also highlighted the need to protect youth-serving, cultural, and faith-based organizations that rely on low-cost rental space and face vulnerability as redevelopment accelerates. Many respondents viewed affordability as essential not only for housing security but also for the continuity of Weston’s social networks, cultural vitality, and small-business ecosystem.

“I believe that the local citizens in this community are its (and the city’s) greatest asset. Local ideas, entrepreneurs and families know this place best and should be preferentially incentivized/encouraged to help grow Weston.”

“I feel very strongly that growth and development must contribute to diversity and improve the quality of life for the
 “More family sized units, create policies to enforce family sized units”

3. Ensuring Small Businesses, Cultural Organizations, and Community Assets Can Thrive. Participants stressed the importance of safeguarding Weston Road’s independent retail pattern, noting concerns about storefront consolidation, rising commercial rents, and limited access to essential services such as groceries. Residents expressed interest in revitalizing key areas, such as the plaza at 2013 Lawrence Avenue West, and creating conditions that allow small businesses, cultural organizations, and everyday services to remain part of the neighbourhood. Technical advisors also referenced precedents such as Church-Wellesley, where policy tools protect smaller retail units, underscoring the role of planning in shaping a resilient, community-serving main street.

4. Improving Public Spaces, Parks, and Access to the Humber River. Participants consistently identified parks, including Cruickshank Park, Weston Lions Park, and Little Avenue Memorial Park, as anchors of community life but noted several areas for improvement. These included completing the trail gap north of Cruickshank Park, providing shade at Weston Lions Park, ensuring new development does not cast significant shadows on parks, improving washroom access along the Humber River Trail, and upgrading aging park features such as the Little Avenue bandshell. These insights demonstrate the community’s desire for parks that are accessible, ecologically sensitive, and designed to support year-round comfort. The prominent role of the Humber Valley also reinforced the need for ecological protection and improved access throughout the study area.

“Knitting together small spaces to create a cohesive area that can accommodate all ages and multiple activities while serving as a safe conduit between major roads and amenities would present a safe, efficient and community-building asset.”

“Bike lanes located on main streets are cursed by motorists and do not particularly enhance the feeling of safety for the cyclists”

5. Strengthening Mobility, Street Safety, and Neighbourhood Connectivity. Mobility concerns were consistent and highly specific. Participants identified the Weston–Lawrence intersection as a priority for redesign, citing safety issues, visibility challenges, and uncomfortable traffic conditions. Narrow or missing sidewalks near John Street and Weston Common, difficult crossings, and unpredictable wind conditions were also frequently noted. Participants supported improved cycling connections, protected bike lanes, and better access to the Humber River Trail, with some proposing off-street routes for safety. Technical staff reinforced the need for new grade-separated crossings across the rail corridor, consistent with the Weston Cycling Connection Network Plan. Taken together, the feedback points to mobility strategies that make walking, cycling, and transit safer, more intuitive, and more equitable.

6. Expanding and Modernizing Community

Services and Facilities. Many comments highlighted gaps in community services and facilities that will become more acute with future growth. Participants pointed to aging infrastructure including the Weston Library, Weston Lions Arena, and local daycares, and emphasized the need for modernization, expanded programming, senior-friendly spaces, space for youth recreation, and more city-run childcare. The arena was noted as a major community hub whose future upgrades should protect its community-serving role. School board staff underscored the importance of synchronizing land use planning with capacity assessments for schools, recreation, and community facilities. They noted that growth areas must be supported by investment in services to maintain livability as density increases. There was also a concern about the loss and displacement of community agency space in the area.

“Dedicated Community / NGO Spaces in new developments – To build relationships among existing and new community members”

“Building design can be engineered to improve the micro-climate – Materials, shape, lower concrete use (eg. Natural drainage, heat island effect)” Look up St. George Rainway in Vancouver”

7. Enhancing Public Space Comfort, Cleanliness, and Microclimate.

Feedback highlighted several public space locations, John Street Bridge, Lawrence Avenue sidewalks, and plazas along Weston Road where maintenance gaps, lighting issues, or poor visibility reduce comfort and safety. Participants also noted persistent wind tunnels near Artscape Weston Common and 34 John Street, reinforcing the need for microclimate-sensitive design in new development. Public space improvements were widely viewed as essential to enhancing walkability, promoting stewardship, and ensuring that residents feel safe and welcome throughout the area.

8. Building Trust Through Clear Communication, Transparency, and Visible Implementation.

Across engagement activities, participants expressed a strong desire for more transparent and coordinated communication about planning initiatives, timelines, and how community feedback will shape decisions. Many referenced experiences with past studies, that did not result in visible improvements leading to skepticism about whether new plans will be implemented.

Residents requested clearer information about how community spaces are managed, how the Community Benefits Charge (CBCs) are being allocated, and how planning decisions link to broader initiatives such as MLSE partnerships or the Weston Loop. TAC members similarly emphasized the need for systematic sharing of engagement findings across divisions to support responsive and informed decision-making.

9. Embedding Indigenous Knowledge, Stewardship, and Cultural Responsibility in Planning.

The Urban Indigenous Gathering emphasized the importance of centering Indigenous worldviews, protocols, and responsibilities in the planning process. They highlighted the need for dedicated ceremonial and cultural spaces, access to natural materials (wood, medicines, berries, water), and recognition of long-standing Indigenous presence and land-based practices. The gathering also stressed the importance of accurate place names, alignment with Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and honouring treaty rights.

“LAC information should be publicly available on the Study webpage, including names of all the members”

Strongest Areas of Consensus

- Protect and strengthen Weston’s historic identity, village feel, and cultural diversity.
- Build a safer, cleaner, more inclusive public spaces that supports comfort and wellbeing.
- Leverage transit strengths while improving local mobility and connectivity across all modes.
- Enhance and expand public spaces, parks, and the Humber River corridor as cultural, recreational, and ecological anchors.
- Address affordability, prevent displacement, and ensure development supports the needs of existing residents.
- Fill major gaps in essential retail and community services, especially groceries, youth programming, and senior supports.
- Build on the history of Weston Road as a vibrant, welcoming main street and economic centre.
- Ensure transparent, equitable, and ongoing engagement throughout the study.

These broader themes represent the strongest areas of consensus and should guide the emerging vision, principles, and planning directions for the Weston in Gear Study.



Next Steps



Next Steps

With Phase 1 now complete, the study will shift into Phase 2: Emerging Development Direction (Winter 2025 - Spring 2026). Building on the insights gathered through advisory committees, Indigenous engagement, community consultations, children's input, and the online survey, the next phase will focus on translating community priorities, technical analysis, and policy drivers into a clear development direction for Weston.

Key action items include:

1. Refine the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles to reflect Phase 1 engagement themes, including heritage protection, affordability, belonging, mobility, natural systems, and main-street vitality.
2. Develop and refine a Development Direction, including land use scenarios, built form options, height and density approaches, and public space structuring elements.
3. Conduct the Thermal Comfort Study to evaluate wind, shade, and microclimate conditions in key locations and ensure built form recommendations improve pedestrian comfort.
4. Engage with advisory committees (LAC and TAC) to review emerging concepts, technical considerations, and interdivisional coordination needs.
5. Continue Indigenous engagements.
6. Undertake targeted community engagement, including Black community-focused engagement, open-house activities, and iterative feedback sessions to test and refine the emerging development direction.
7. Present emerging ideas to the Design Review Panel for urban design evaluation and integration of expert recommendations.
8. Coordinate with the York Weston Pelham Cluster to align local priorities with broader municipal initiatives, capital projects, and service planning.
9. Synthesize feedback and technical work into the Emerging Development Direction and Policy Directions Interim Report to guide the transition into Phase 3.

For more information about this Weston In Gear and this report, please visit toronto.ca/weston-in-gear-planning-study



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