

Community Engagement Phase 3 Summary Report

Queen's Park North Revitalization

Community Engagement Phase 3: Setting the Direction (Phase 2C)

March – April 2026



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Executive Summary

This is a summary of the feedback received during Phase 3 of the City of Toronto-led community engagement process informing the Queen’s Park North Revitalization, which was undertaken between March and April of 2026 with 460 participants. The objective of this phase was to provide updates on the revitalization planning process, including sharing and seeking feedback on the draft design concept.

There continues to be a range of perspectives about this project, the ideas proposed, and the draft design concept shared during Phase 3:

- *Local resident and community associations, as well as the Friends of Queen’s Park North* expressed significant concern about the draft design and the extent to which their voices had influenced the design work.
- *The online public survey feedback* generated more positive public feedback, with about half of the respondents indicating that the design concept was moderately aligned, aligned, or very aligned with the six Guiding Principles for the revitalization of Queen’s Park North. (Note that the survey results are summarized in a separate report, which can be accessed on the [City’s project website](#)).
- *First Nations Rights Holders and Urban Indigenous Voices* shared support for the project and many elements of the draft design concept, particularly the tree walk and associated interpretive opportunities, the introduction of understory plantings, the preservation of the tree canopy, and attention and care paid to the trees and tree protection zones. There is also interest in seeing Indigenous art integrated throughout the design. Indigenous engagement must include real decision-making authority rather than advisory-only roles, reinforcing “nothing about us without us.”
- *Participants at the 2SLGBTQIA+ focus group* shared support for many elements of the draft design concept shared, particularly the balance between respite and activity, the tree walk, washrooms, and lighting. There’s interest in strengthening the recognition of the 2SLGBTQIA+ heritage in the park and support for seeing the Park’s new Advisory Group membership include a range of interests.
- *Participants at the Heritage focus group* shared strong support for the extent to which their knowledge and concerns had been genuinely heard by the Queen’s Park North team and taken seriously. It was suggested that the proposed Statement of Significance could be strengthened by clearly articulating the forest character as a defining feature of the park. The proposed approach to completing Heritage Impact Assessments was considered thorough and appropriate.
- *Participants at the Trees and Nature focus group* focused on the importance of a Forest Management Plan as foundational to documenting the baseline conditions in

the park and determining what is appropriate in Queen's Park North. There was strong concern that the revitalization process was too rushed and risked undermining the long-term protection of the trees and forest. There was interest in seeing a comprehensive construction impact analysis, assessment of soil health and structure, and guidance received regarding tree planting, regeneration, and future canopy expansion. There was also interest in guidance related to education and interpretation of the forest and long-term intergenerational stewardship.

- *The Neighbouring Institutions Working Group members* (representing the University of Toronto, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Royal Conservatory of Music, Trinity College, University of St. Michael's College, Victoria University, and the Gardiner Museum) expressed appreciation for a thoughtful design that they felt incorporated feedback received to date. They shared excitement about the programming opportunities in the park.

Process feedback focused on:

- *Support for an ongoing stewardship and advisory group*, including a strong interest for meaningful, empowered governance, emphasizing that stewardship structures should have real influence over decisions rather than function as symbolic or token advisory bodies. This includes an approach to stewardship and advisory structures that endures beyond a single project phase or planning cycle, so that governance, care, and accountability continue over the long term.
- *Interest in the establishment of regular, transparent mechanisms for public accountability*, such as an annual public meeting or forum where the community can ask questions, receive updates, and see how feedback has informed decisions.
- *Concerns about the process being rushed, with repeated warnings that advancing decisions too quickly risks undermining trust, urban forest protection, and the integrity of the work*. It's important that there be transparency in how feedback from different audiences is synthesized, reported back, and reflected in decisions, noting that understanding how input is carried forward is critical to maintaining confidence in the process.

Feedback collected during Phase 3 of the engagement process informing the revitalization of Queen's Park North will help the City and Donor, as well as the design consultant, refine the draft design concept. A City Staff report will be submitted to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on May 27, presented to the Committee on June 10 (where there is also an opportunity for public deputations), and considered by City Council on June 24–26.

The draft design concept will continue to be refined through engagement feedback, Executive Committee direction, Design Review Panel input, and Council review.

Overview of this Third Phase of Engagement

Project background

[Queen's Park North](#) is a historic and culturally significant public green space in Toronto, located north of the Ontario Parliament Building. In late 2024, the City was approached by the Weston family with an offer to donate \$50 million to improve the park, plus additional funding for long-term maintenance and programming. In response, City staff were instructed by Council to undertake community and First Nations, Inuit and Métis engagement, along with design exploration, prior to the City entering into a donation agreement to fund the final design, delivery of park enhancements and ongoing operations.

This is a summary of the feedback received during Phase 3 of the City of Toronto-led community engagement process informing the Queen’s Park North Revitalization. Phase 3 engagement was undertaken between March and April of 2026. The objective of this phase was to provide updates on the revitalization planning process, including sharing and seeking feedback on the draft design concept.

Overview of the Phase 3 process

Over 460 people participated in Phase 3, representing local communities, neighbouring institutions, various park users, and community organizations, as well as members of the public at-large. Dialogue continued between the City of Toronto and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Wendat First Nation. In addition, a third Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting was held.

Overall, there were a total of 12 engagement activities held from March to April of 2026 as part of this phase.



Photo of the Discussion Guide shared with participants



Photo from the March 5 Community Meeting



Photo from one of the focus groups – March 24 Trees and Nature Focus Group

The City used a variety of outreach methods to invite community participation in the process, including direct outreach to organizations, groups, and community leaders; emails to individuals who signed up for updates; the project website; the local Councillor's newsletter; and posters at local businesses and residential buildings around the park.

The table below provides a list of all engagement activities and an approximate number of participants. The list is organized chronologically by date.

Activity	Dates (in 2026)	#
Neighbouring Institutions Working Group Meeting 4	Wednesday, March 4	12
Community Meeting	Thursday, March 5	57
Focus Group 3 with 2SLGBTQIA+ Interests	Thursday, March 12	4
Focus Group 3 with Resident & Community Associations	Tuesday, March 17	13
Focus Group 3 with Heritage Interests	Monday, March 23	7
Focus Group 3 with Trees and Nature Interests	Tuesday, March 24	17
Meeting with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation	Monday, March 30	3
Meeting with Wendat First Nation	Tuesday, March 31	3
Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting	Tuesday, March 31	8
Meeting with Six Nations of the Grand River	Wednesday, April 1	4
Online survey	March 5 – April 7	335
Total Participants		463

About this Report

This report provides a high-level summary of all public and Indigenous feedback received from March 4 to April 7 of 2026. The content of this report is based directly on the individual summaries of the engagement activities, which are available on the City’s website at www.toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth. It was written by Third Party Public, the organization retained to support the City-led engagement process for Queen’s Park North. Third Party Public is working in collaboration with Trophic Design, who are leading the facilitation of Indigenous engagement.

The intent of this report is to capture the range of perspectives shared, not to assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives. The inclusion of the feedback shared in this report does not indicate an endorsement of these perspectives by the City of Toronto.

Feedback Summary

Wide range of perspectives

There continues to be a range of perspectives about this project, the ideas proposed, and the draft design concept shared during Phase 3.

- **Through the community meeting and focus groups, representatives of resident and community associations, as well as the Friends of Queen's Park North, expressed significant concern about the draft design and the extent to which their voices had influenced the design work.** Their concerns focus on a design that will change the character of Queen's Park North, undermines the park's calm, civic nature, and introduces too many new elements into the park without sufficient rationale. There is concern about a lack of information on the potential impacts of the design concept on the park's trees and the urban forest and on the heritage attributes of the park.

These representatives also expressed concerns about process, trust, and the influence of donor priorities. Unease was expressed about a process that felt rushed, with participants questioning if and how earlier community feedback had informed the draft design. While participants consistently acknowledged the generosity of the Weston family donation, some expressed concern that the project felt donor-driven rather than community-led.

- **The online public survey feedback generated more positive public feedback,** with about half of the respondents indicating that the design concept was moderately aligned, aligned, or very aligned with the six Guiding Principles for the revitalization of Queen's Park North. Where participants provided written feedback, the comments focused on the preservation of green space, tree and ecological protection, caution about introducing new structures, with support conditional on factors like location and maintenance, with a preference for simplicity over complexity.
- **Participants at the 2SLGBTQIA+ focus group shared support for many elements of the draft design concept shared, particularly the balance between respite and activity, the tree walk, washrooms, and lighting.** They emphasized the importance of remembering that the park does not have to do everything for everybody. The café, workshop, and labyrinth were seen as unnecessary, though participants were open to them under certain conditions. There is interest in

strengthening the recognition of the 2SLGBTQIA+ heritage in the park and support for seeing the park's new Advisory Group membership include a range of interests.

- **Participants at the Heritage focus group shared strong support for the extent to which their knowledge and concerns had been genuinely heard by the Queen's Park North team and taken seriously.** It was suggested that the proposed Statement of Significance could be strengthened by clearly articulating the urban forest character as a defining feature of the park. The proposed approach to completing Heritage Impact Assessments was considered thorough, appropriate, and responsive to the significance of the site.
- **Participants at the Trees and Nature focus group focused on the importance of a Forest Management Plan and this plan must be the foundational document that documents the baseline conditions in the park and determines what is appropriate in Queen's Park North.** There was strong concern that the revitalization process was too rushed and risked undermining the long-term protection of the trees and the urban forest. There was interest in seeing a comprehensive construction impact analysis, assessment of soil health and structure, and guidance received regarding tree planting, regeneration, and future canopy expansion. There was also interest in guidance related to education and interpretation of the urban forest and long-term intergenerational stewardship.
- **The Neighbouring Institutions Working Group members** (representing the University of Toronto, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Royal Conservatory of Music, Trinity College, University of St. Michael's College, Victoria University, and the Gardner Museum) **expressed appreciation for a thoughtful design that they felt incorporated feedback received to date.** They shared excitement about the incredible programming opportunities in the park.
- **First Nations Rights Holders and Urban Indigenous Voices shared support for the project and many elements of the draft design concept, particularly the tree walk and associated interpretive opportunities, the introduction of understory plantings, the preservation of the tree canopy, and attention and care paid to the trees and tree protection zones.** There is also interest in seeing Indigenous art integrated throughout the design.

In terms of process, Indigenous engagement must include real decision-making authority rather than advisory-only roles, particularly for governance, stewardship, and culturally significant elements of the park. Indigenous participants said that "nothing about us without us" and that reconciliation requires clear and transparent communication, to avoid perceptions of performative engagement and to maintain trust. It is also important to create meaningful Indigenous employment opportunities through the project.

Design feedback

The following points provide a high-level summary of all the feedback received about the draft design concept. Many more thoughtful and detailed comments are captured in the individual meeting summaries.

1. **Trees, greenspace, nature.** Participants continue to express strong support for Queen’s Park North as a place that celebrates and preserves the trees and greenspace and supports nature. This includes strong support for protecting old and mature trees, planning for canopy succession, and long-term urban forest resilience as well as ecological thinking, native species, and restoration approaches that strengthen urban forest systems.

There is a strong interest from many local resident and community associations in understanding the baseline ecological conditions of the park, if/how the new elements proposed for the park impact those baseline conditions, and understanding how this information influences decision-making regarding those proposed new elements and the overall park design.

The “temple of trees” is a proposal that’s come forward from local resident associations to celebrate and honour the trees through innovative education, interpretation planning, and programming.

2. **Heritage.** Understanding the heritage value and attributes of Queen’s Park North is of keen interest to many participants.

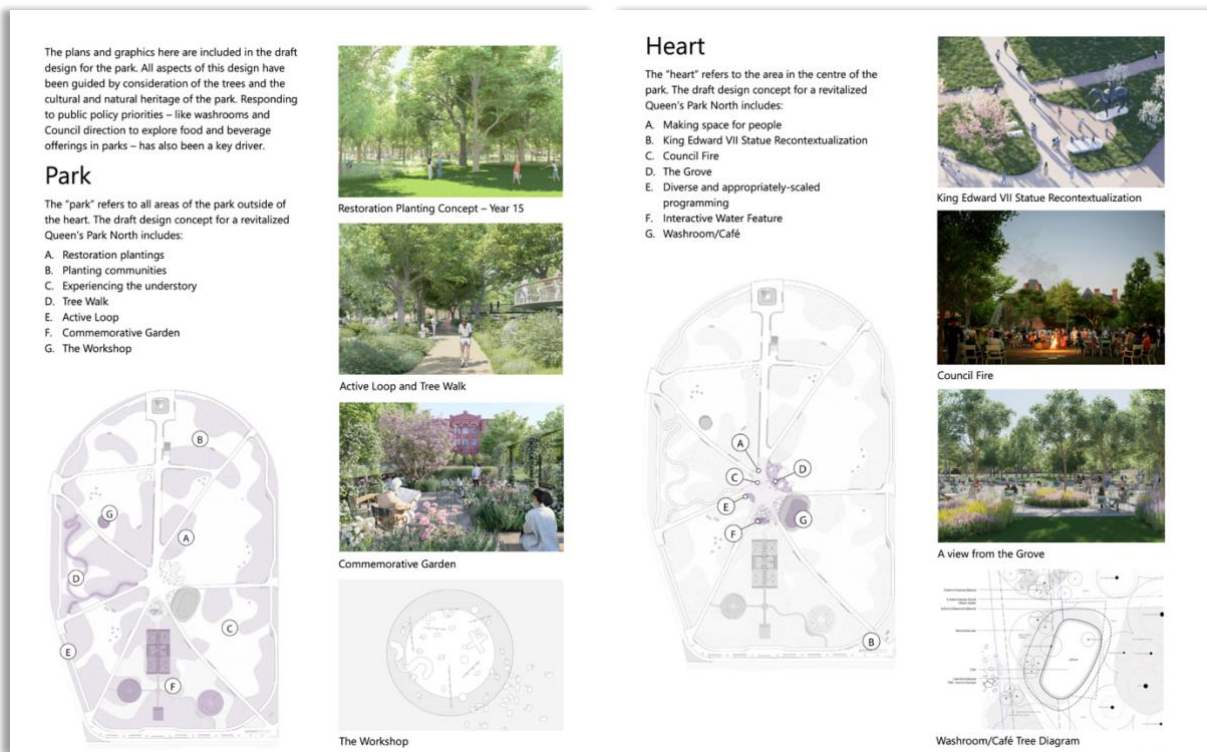
There is considerable support for relocating the King Edward VII horse statue away from the centre of the park, for celebrating the Indigenous history and presence in the area, and for including the Council Fire in the Heart of the park. There is strong support for the work underway to develop a Statement of Significance, and interest in how that Statement will influence decisions related to park design and revitalization.

Participants said there is a need for clearer mechanisms to identify and respond to future heritage impacts over time. There is also a need for clear governance, stewardship, and tracking systems to ensure heritage values are upheld as staff, priorities, or departments change.

There is also a need to more clearly reflect 2SLGBTQIA+ heritage, including visuals showing how queer communities use and experience the park.

3. **Education, interpretation, and art.** Participants said that interpretation plays a core role in how Queen’s Park North is understood, experienced, and cared for, noting that much of the park’s cultural and natural significance is currently not visible or well understood. There is strong support for the opportunities for education, interpretation, and art included in the revitalization of Queen’s Park North, including

collaboration with First Nations Rights Holders. Much more information about these opportunities, including the role of the community as well as neighbouring institutions, is of keen interest.



Contents of the Discussion Guide showing key elements of the draft design concept

4. Specific elements of the draft design:

- a. Location of amenities. Many participants are supportive of amenities like the café and washrooms being included in the Heart of the park. Some expressed a preference to see amenities located on the periphery of the park (e.g., to the south, closer to Wellesley) to avoid impacts on trees, avoid disturbing the serenity at the core of the park, have more “eyes on the street” and reduce the amount of foot traffic through the park.
- b. Moving to, from, and through the park. Revitalization should improve safety and functionality of circulation for pedestrians, runners, and other park users, while avoiding unnecessary structures that could complicate movement or introduce new conflicts. Concerns were also expressed about vehicle mitigation, including emergency access, servicing, and delivery routes for amenities.

There continues to be feedback that access into Queen’s Park North can be unclear and challenging, particularly given the park’s “island” condition surrounded by busy streets, with an interest in ensuring people safely and intuitively enter and move through the site. Participants, including neighbouring institutions, emphasized their interest in seeing impacts related to future

University Park and roadway changes anticipated, including traffic and crossings on the park's northeast edge.

- c. Tree walk. Participants are divided on their support for the proposed tree walk.

Some are strongly supportive and excited by the unique experience it creates and opportunities for interpretation and learning. They would like to see the tree walk design support safe and functional use, including bidirectional pedestrian flow, and sufficient width for accessibility.

Others said that they are strongly against the tree walk because of concerns that it is not an appropriate use for the park, could negatively impact the trees, would be difficult to maintain – particularly in the winter, and has too large a footprint for the size of the park and has too large an influence on the existing park character.

Some participants suggested prioritizing alternative or complementary approaches to education and interpretation, such as guided walks, digital tools, seasonal programming, or community-led tours, rather than investing in elevated or permanent infrastructure.

- d. Café. Participants are divided on their support for the proposed café. There are some who feel it is an appropriate addition to the park.

Others are concerned about its noise, garbage, servicing impacts, economic viability, the poor track record of food and beverage offerings in City parks, and its necessity given other nearby food and beverage offerings. Some see it detracting from the character of the park as place of serenity and calm. Concerns were raised about potential donor influence, including fears that a café could be branded or limited to specific products, contributing to perceptions of the project being donor-driven rather than community-led.

Urban Indigenous participants raised concern about the appropriateness of a café in the context of food insecurity experienced by many community members, questioning whether a commercial food outlet aligns with community priorities.

If a café proceeds, there were participants who suggested limiting offerings (e.g., simple beverages), or exploring a kiosk model rather than a sit-in café to reduce noise, garbage, and operational impacts.

- e. Washroom. There is considerable support for a washroom in the park. There is interest in seeing washrooms well-lit, well-maintained, and designed with safety and dignity in mind, including visibility, cleanliness, and ongoing operational accountability.

There was interest in washrooms being gender-inclusive and ideally degendered, reflecting safety, dignity, and accessibility considerations raised by 2SLGBTQIA+ and other users.

Some expressed support for having the washroom close to the proposed café, to have some supervision of the washroom.

There was some concern expressed about the washrooms becoming the central or defining feature of Queen's Park North, with interest in ensuring they remain clearly secondary to the park's landscape and civic role.

- f. Commemorative garden. Participants generally did not express strong opinions regarding the commemorative garden. Many emphasized that it should remain clearly secondary to open, flexible park space and not displace existing uses or diminish the park's openness.

Suggestions included: designing the garden with accessibility at the forefront, ensuring it can be experienced safely and meaningfully by people with a range of abilities; reducing the scale of the garden and softening rectilinear edges to better integrate it with the surrounding landscape and reduce visual and spatial dominance; and designing the space so it is navigable and meaningful for people with partial or full vision loss, as well as those with mobility or sensory needs.

There were concerns raised that introducing a formal garden could reduce the park's capacity for civic gatherings and public assembly, particularly if it introduces barriers, edges, or features that limit flexibility of use.

A range of views were expressed on the inclusion of water features, with some participants concerned about practicality, maintenance, noise, and issues such as coin-throwing, while others focused on whether water elements fit the character and use patterns of the park.

- g. Workshop. Urban Indigenous participants expressed strong support for the workshop, describing it as engaging, community-focused, and a way to activate the park beyond weekday university and government use, while making the space feel less elitist and more accessible.

Other participants were more cautious, emphasizing that support for a workshop depends on clear governance, operational details, and assurances that the space would not lead to over-programming, exclusion, or impacts on the park's quiet character. The City of Toronto survey during Phase 3 of engagement asked specific questions about the workshop, with 45% of online survey respondents said "yes" a workshop space would provide value to the community and to neighbouring institutions. 35% said they would support the idea of the workshop and the additional structure in the park, while 24% said they support the idea of the workshop but prefer no additional structures in the park.

- h. The Heart. The Heart was seen by some participants as a visually inviting space with the potential to function as an organizing or focal area within Queen's Park North, provided it remains flexible and responsive to different uses over time. There was also appreciation for the idea of concentrating built elements and activity within a defined zone, noting that this could help limit the spread of impacts across the rest of the park if carefully designed.

Different views were shared on the degree to which the Heart should be formalized as a central gathering space, with some supporting a more defined and active focal area and others preferring a looser, more organic space that remains adaptable and informal.

Some participants welcomed family-friendly elements and amenities in the Heart, while others raised concern that over-definition, added structures, or fixed programming could reduce openness, flexibility, or the park's ability to function as a neutral civic space.

There were some questions about how the Heart will function over time and whether it will retain adaptability for different uses without becoming overly programmed. Feedback related to circulation of park users through and around the Heart included ensuring clear movement routes, adequate capacity during large gatherings, and avoiding conflicts between stationary uses and through-movement. Some cautioned that adding too many defined features in the Heart could inadvertently politicize or constrain the space, underscoring the importance of preserving its neutrality in a park located adjacent to the Legislature.

- i. Statues, monuments and memorials. Participants across multiple meetings expressed strong support for relocating the King Edward VII statue from its current location in Queen's Park North, describing it as misaligned with the park's purpose, history, and evolving emphasis on Indigenous histories and presence.

There were different views on what should happen to the King Edward VII statue, with some supporting relocation within Queen's Park North, and others, particularly Indigenous participants, prefer complete removal from the park due to its colonial symbolism and associations with residential school expansion.

There was interest in understanding if or how Phase Two of the 48th Highlanders Memorial rehabilitation could be integrated into the revitalization project.

- j. Council fire / opportunity for fire in the Heart of the park. Any incorporation of fire infrastructure must be approached with care, respect, and appropriate cultural understanding, in recognition of the cultural significance of fire for Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous participants emphasized that stewardship, access rules, and authority for the Council Fire must be Indigenous-led, with decision-making power resting with Indigenous Nations rather than the City or an advisory body alone.

Some participants expressed concern about the proposed central location and walk-over fire pit design, questioning whether placing a fire feature in a high-traffic area is appropriate given its cultural significance, potential safety implications, and symbolic meaning.

- k. Water features (waterplay and fountain). Different views were shared on the value and function of fountain features, with some questioning their usefulness, seasonality, and overall relevance in Toronto's climate, while others appreciated aspects of the proposed fountain's shape and form as a potential civic or aesthetic element.

Some participants raised concerns about the long-term maintenance, operational costs, and winter practicality of water features, including questions about whether they would sit unused for significant portions of the year. There were suggestions that naturalized water elements or references to historical waterways (e.g., Taddle Creek), might better reflect the site's ecological and cultural context if water is to be interpreted at all.

Process feedback

The following points provide a high-level summary of all the feedback received about the process. Many more thoughtful and detailed comments are captured in the individual meeting summaries.

- Ongoing stewardship and advisory group. There is a strong interest for meaningful, empowered governance, emphasizing that stewardship structures should have real influence over decisions rather than function as symbolic or token advisory bodies. This includes an approach to stewardship and advisory structures that endures beyond a single project phase or planning cycle, so that governance, care, and accountability continue over the long term.

There is also support for the creation of a broad and representative advisory or stewardship body, with interest in including diverse perspectives such as neighbourhood residents, Indigenous communities, equity-deserving groups, institutional partners, ecological or forestry expertise, and individuals familiar with day-to-day park operations.

Strong preference from several groups that a City Councillor should not serve as chair due to concerns about power imbalance, political influence, and the risk that community or advisory input could be overridden. Alternative chairing or facilitation models were suggested, including City staff leadership or third-party facilitation, reflecting varied comfort levels with how authority, neutrality, and accountability should be structured.

Friends of Queen's Park North (FOQPN) expressed interest in direct resident representation on any future advisory or stewardship body, emphasizing the value of lived, place-based knowledge and continuity over time. Participants from the

2SLGBTQIA+ community also reinforced the importance of having a presence on the advisory body.

- Engagement with the broader public. It was suggested that regular, transparent mechanisms for public accountability be established, such as an annual public meeting or forum where the community can ask questions, receive updates, and see how feedback has informed decisions. It was also suggested that outreach and engagement be expanded to reach broader demographics over time, including younger people, newcomers, and immigrant communities who may not have been reached through existing engagement channels.
- Process, timing, and transparency. Several participants expressed concern that the process feels rushed, with repeated warnings that advancing decisions too quickly risks undermining trust, urban forest protection, and the integrity of the work.

Timelines should be driven by readiness of the design and supporting analysis – particularly urban forest and ecological work – rather than by fixed reporting or committee dates. Participants supported deferral as a legitimate and appropriate mechanism to allow time for meaningful analysis, integration of feedback, and responsible decision-making, noting that deferral is a common and accepted Council practice in complex projects.

It's important that there be transparency in how feedback from different audiences is synthesized, reported back, and reflected in decisions, noting that understanding how input is carried forward is critical to maintaining confidence in the process.

There were participants who acknowledged that some work streams can proceed in parallel however noting also that concurrent work must not compromise the integrity of foundational analysis or allow irreversible decisions to advance prematurely.

Clear communication is critical, particularly about the relationship between engagement activities, staff reporting, and Council decision points.

Next Steps

Feedback collected during this phase of engagement will help the City and the design consultant refine the draft design concept. The draft design concept will continue to be refined through engagement feedback, Executive Committee direction, Design Review Panel input, and Council review. A City Staff report will be submitted to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on May 27, presented to the Committee on June 10, and considered by City Council on June 24–26.