

# Summary: Third Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting

Queen's Park North Revitalization

Community Engagement Phase 3: Setting the Direction

March 31, 2026



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# Introduction

On March 31, 2026, the City of Toronto hosted a third Urban Indigenous Sharing Meeting via Microsoft Teams. The purpose of the meeting was to share and discuss updates on the Queen's Park North revitalization planning process, including the proposed operations and maintenance framework, the draft design concept and core elements, including the workshop, tree walk, café and washrooms. Key points shared by participants are summarized below. Text *in italics* reflects responses from the QPN Project Team, where provided.

## Attendance

There were 16 people at the meeting, with 8 Indigenous participants, 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 (JRS) (Landscape architects), and Third Party Public (Engagement).

For more information about the project and to review summaries from other community engagement activities, visit the project webpage: [toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth](https://toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth)

# Meeting Summary

*This summary was written by Third Party Public and was shared with participants in draft before being finalized.*

- **Support for many elements of the draft design concept, particularly the relocation of the King Edward VII statue, the workshop, the tree walk’s educational opportunities, and permanent washrooms.** Participants said the draft design concept was done well, with several elements receiving support, along with suggestions for how they can be improved:
  - Relocation of the King Edward VII statue: Participants raised King Edward VII's role as Queen Victoria's son and as a proponent of residential school expansion, and suggested de-centering the statue – or preferably, completely removing it from the park and relocating it to Queen's Park South of University of Toronto grounds – especially given the Indigenous focus being placed on this park. A participant said that the park name, “Queen’s Park North,” already carries sufficient colonial construct without the need for the statue’s presence. *The project team asked participants about the idea of keeping the horse without King Edward, noting it was purchased for the horse’s artistic merit.* A participant found the idea of only having the horse interesting and suggested creating a more prominent Indigenous sculpture by Indigenous artists to overshadow or respond to the horse statue if it remains.
  - Workshop: The concept of the workshop was described as extremely engaging for the community. It activates the space beyond just a running track and makes the park less elitist and more accessible beyond Monday-to-Friday university and government users. There were a few suggestions for the workshop including:
    - Commit to employing Indigenous people for any Indigenous programming housed at the workshop.
    - Incorporate Indigenous architecture, such as a longhouse structure.
    - Reach out to High Park’s Colborne Lodge for programming models that combine indoor workshops with outdoor park use, noting the synergy with tree canopies, walking paths, and the knowledge present in the surrounding landscape.
  - Tree walk’s educational opportunities: The tree walk presents opportunities for Indigenous voices to share teachings about the land and trees, Indigenous harvesting in the area, and significant stories within the cultures that represent the area. This could be done through interactive QR codes (similar to the ROM's Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibit), where the information is recorded and

available in audible form so listeners can hear Indigenous voices and bring teachings back to life. Participants also suggested year-round community-led tours, creating job opportunities.

- **Permanent washrooms:** There was strong support for permanent, heated washrooms over porta-potties, noting that pandemic-era outdoor space usage highlighted this need across all parks. While the central location of the washrooms was disliked, as it seems to disrupt park sightlines, participants agreed that the proposed location was the best option after learning it would result in the least impact on existing trees.
- **Thoughts on the café were diverse.** One participant felt that having a café in the park makes sense, as it encourages wintertime park use and noted that many beautiful parks in Europe include cafés. However, they shared concerns about Weston family influence – such as requiring it to be a President’s Choice or Loblaws café or limiting products to their brand. Another participant questioned the appropriateness of a café when a huge number of the urban Indigenous community are food insecure. They suggested providing support services for food insecurity in the space instead. *The City confirmed that no stipulation exists for President’s Choice branding and no such discussion has occurred. The vision is for food and beverage to align with the park’s overall vision, following standard City procurement processes for selecting an operator.*
- **Concern about the Council Fire governance and confusion about the fire’s designation and relationship to the City’s Indigenous Sacred Fire Project within the City’s Indigenous Affairs Office (IAO).** Language at a previous meeting suggested the fire would only be open for specific dates, which prompted clarifying questions from some participants. Participants emphasized the need for clarity and stressed that decision-making power and operational control of the Council Fire space must be by Indigenous Nations to ensure appropriate access and sovereignty, rather than limiting use to particular days. *The project team explained the Council Fire for Queen’s Park North would have its own governance structure and agreement, distinct from ceremonial fires elsewhere in the city, though acknowledging the concepts are interrelated. They said the IAO is having separate conversations with Sacred Fire hosts. They also clarified that the Council Fire proposed for Queen’s Park North is not affiliated with the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (organization), explaining it represents a cultural context for public governance, demonstration, and a place for visiting Indigenous nations or protestors to speak truth to power.*

In response, a participant expressed confusion about the fire's designation, noting that it sounds like an "interrelational but racial type fire" intended for use by many Nations, yet also sounds like it's not for sacred fires, finding this approach "very obscure" and "misleading." The participant asked who was being consulted and if engagement extended beyond the IAO and Toronto Aboriginal Support Services

Council (TASSC) to include the broader six communities and relations. *Trophic further explained that the fire is intended for Nations engaging with the provincial government and legislature, providing space to maintain connection during negotiations, or for other gatherings such as honoring Indigenous leaders lying in state. Preliminary conversations around governance of the Council Fire site have been had with (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Wendake, and Six Nations. The Nations, particularly MCFN (on whose territory the site sits) and Six Nations expressed interest in being part of said governance. Trophic acknowledged that the concept can be confusing and that this is likely because it's not a finished conversation, with governance discussions involving the three traditional territorial occupants ((Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations, Wendake) plus urban Indigenous representation still evolving.*

- **It is important to have Indigenous voices at the governance table, with enforcement power and not just advisory capacity.** Participants said, "nothing about us without us at the table," and shared concerns that advisory committees often lack power to ensure suggestions matter, requiring extensive effort to convince the IAO to improve experiences.
- **Securing employment for Indigenous youth was identified as a priority.** The project team was invited to present at upcoming Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) meetings before municipal elections to continue discussions on Indigenous employment opportunities at Queen's Park North.

### **There were a range of questions of clarification asked including:**

- **Would the pathways along the tree walk be wide enough to accommodate bidirectional traffic flow, and how would support structures be designed to allow for this movement without disturbing tree roots?** The design needs to support bidirectional traffic flow from two entry points, groups stopping to read interpretive materials or scan QR codes, and sufficient space for people to move around stationary groups. *JRS said that they are planning for the tree walk to be 2 metres wide to create an accessible path. Detailed design will continue to evolve as routes are finalized and engagement continues. The City also shared that the tree walk received substantial feedback including at Executive Committee, with concerns about root impact. The City emphasized the core intention of the tree walk is to create interaction and experience with trees, and to explore the relationship between tree life and human life.*
- **Who is being commemorated in the garden, and were specific measurements requested by the Weston family for the commemorative garden?** *The garden commemorates Hilary Weston, mother of the donors and former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. The commemorative garden was outlined as one of the terms*

*in the donation agreement to recognize Hilary Weston as former Lieutenant Governor and the Weston family's sizable donation. No specific measurements were requested.*

## **Other comments**

A participant shared their work as an activist supporting the 215 Shoe Memorial at Queen's Park South by the Sir John A. Macdonald statue since 2021 and provided a [video link explaining the memorial to first-time visitors](#). Regarding the Sir John A. Macdonald statue, they said that it is ultimately up to the Indigenous peoples of Tkaronto to decide whether the statue remains in place or is relocated to a museum or other setting.

# Next Steps

The project team thanked participants for their time and feedback and reminded them that the online public survey remains open until the end of this week. 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 reviewed by City Council on June 24–26.