

Focus Group Summary: 2SLGBTQIA+

Queen's Park North Revitalization

Community Engagement Phase 3: Setting the Direction

March 12, 2026



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Introduction

On March 12, 2026, the City hosted the third focus group with 2SLGBTQIA+ interests via Zoom. The meeting was part of Phase 3 (of 3) of the community engagement process to help inform the Queen’s Park North Revitalization.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide updates on the City’s process, review feedback from the recent meetings (November 24 focus group, March 5 Community Meeting, March 10 Executive Committee deputations, and March 11 Design Review Panel), share and seek feedback on the draft design concept and core elements, and provide inputs to the Advisory Group Terms of Reference. Feedback from participants is summarized below.

Attendance

Participating organizations: Friends of Hanlan’s, LGBT YouthLine, The ArQuives, Toronto Society of Architects - Pride Initiative.

Queen’s Park North Revitalization Project team: City of Toronto, Janet Rosenberg & Studio, Third Party Public.

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

Meeting Summary

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

Feedback on the draft design

1. **Support for many elements of the draft design concept, particularly the balance between respite and activity, the tree walk, washrooms, and lighting.** Participants said the draft design is beautiful, with several elements receiving specific support:

- Tree walk: Liked the added access point, accessibility features, and alignment with the running path.
- Washrooms: Seen as essential public infrastructure, especially given the lack of public washrooms in Toronto. Users benefiting from washrooms could include park visitors as well as students, people cruising in the park, and people experiencing homelessness. Consider having gender-inclusive, ideally degendered, washrooms.
- Lighting: Liked darker, quieter plans along the north and east sides. Consider installing waist-height path lighting and capped overhead fixtures to reduce light pollution.
- The Heart: Liked the concentration of structures in this area, particularly the café/washroom location, which was seen as family-friendly.
- Protest accommodation: Appreciate that the design team measured demonstrations to ensure the space can accommodate protests.
- Water feature: Liked the shape and form.

2. **The most important elements to protect in the draft design concept are:**

- Understanding that the park does not have to do everything for everybody. Right now, it is a good balance between respite and activities.
- Combination of increased lawn, simplified understory planting, and reduced number of structures. “Right now, everything feels very natural and beautifully designed.”
- Connection to the land and trees.
- Indigenous representation in the plan.

3. **The café, workshop, and labyrinth were seen as unnecessary, though participants were open to them under certain conditions:**

- Café: Considered non-essential due to the number of nearby cafés. Concerns included noise and garbage impacts. If café is included, participants preferred it be attached to the washroom to provide oversight and be operated by an Indigenous contractor.
- Workshop: The concept was seen as interesting, but many operational questions raised that needs to be clarified, including access, booking process, eligibility, fees, seasonal use, permitting criteria, and equipment storage.
- Commemorative garden, including the labyrinth: Not strongly opposed, but participants preferred open space. If included, it should be designed for accessibility, including for people with partial or full blindness (see discoverlabyrinths.com/inclusion). If the donation/revitalization of the park by the Weston Family is contingent on the garden, then participants were able to overlook some of their objections.

4. **There were suggested changes and considerations to the design**, including:

- Reduce the scale of the commemorative garden and soften its rectilinear edges to better align with the rest of the design.
- Add an access point to Wellesley so that people can walk south from the reflecting pool so they are not trapped and to prevent vegetation damage from pedestrian shortcuts.
- Consider about where and when food and other deliveries would be made to the café. For example, if trucks end up using the new lay-by on the east side of the park (as included in the draft design) for late night deliveries, there may be conflicts with other park users. Consider another location for servicing the café (e.g., potentially from Wellesley).
- Design the café with limited porosity and access via the southeast façade.
- Ensure the park is future-ready and adaptable, including exploring a shared responsibility model (e.g., between UofT and local organizations) to support long-term management beyond donor funding. Think about what this design will mean in the park 100 years from now.
- Reduce seating along the pathway between the café and the relocated statue to minimize conflict between people sitting and cruising in the park.

5. **Improve recognition of the 2SLGBTQIA+ heritage in the park**. There was a concern raised that although recognition of 2SLGBTQIA+ heritage was identified as a key consideration in the presentation, nothing was present in the draft design. Another participant suggested to create a version of the design visuals that show how queer communities could use and experience the park.

Feedback on the Advisory Group Terms of Reference

1. **Strong suggestion that a City Councillor does not chair the future Advisory Group to avoid potential power imbalance**. Participants preferred a PF&R staff as

chair to ensure the committee's voice is respected and safeguarded. They were concerned that if a Councillor's political position differed from that of Advisory Group members, the Councillor's perspective could override the group's input due to their role on Council. A third-party facilitator was also suggested to facilitate the Advisory Group.

2. **The composition of the Advisory Group membership should include a range of interests**, including neighbouring institutions (e.g., UofT, museums); student groups focused on health and wellness, climate justice, or ecological engagement; University faculty with expertise in ecology, biology, or Indigenous history; employee representatives; queer community; houseless community (e.g., homeless union, shelter service users, or peer workers); Indigenous community; Executive Director staff involved in day-to-day park maintenance and can speak to on-the-ground realities; and an advocate for the trees and the land (similar to [volunteers supporting marine animal conservation in Hawai'i](#)). Explore partnerships with organizations like LEAF (Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests) to bring in volunteers who want to have a hands-on role in caring for the park and educating the public about the trees.
3. **Advise that the City host an annual public event to provide an ongoing opportunity to hear and answer questions from the community.** The event could be 4-hours long, with opportunities for participants to speak, submit questions in advance (e.g., 2 weeks), and get a guaranteed response from staff.

Next Steps

The City thanked the participants for their thoughtful, pointed feedback and committed to sharing a draft summary of the discussion with participants for review before it is finalized.