



What We Heard: Anti-Displacement and Presence of Black Communities in Weston Roundtable

Addendum to the Phase 2 Engagement Summary

July 2026

Attendees

Project Team

- Robert Walter Joseph, Principal, Gladki Planning Associates
- Natalie Barcellos, Planner, Gladki Planning Associates
- Nicholas Deibler, Planner, Development Review

City of Toronto Staff Attendees

- Yao Togobo, Community Development Officer, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit
- Jedrek So, Senior Project Manager, Community Development Unit, Social Development
- John Smith, Manager, Community Development Unit, Social Development
- Lindsay Parsons, Heritage Planner, City Planning
- Jamilla Mohamud, Planner, Policy and Research (Housing), City Planning

Community

- Nemoy Lewis, Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning TMU
- Anyika Mark, Black Urbanism Toronto
- Abdirashid Duale, Resident, Member of Weston in Gear Local Advisory Committee
- Spencer Phillips, Executive Director, Urban Arts
- Cristian Nieto Pertuz, For Youth Initiative

Purpose of the Roundtable

As part of the Weston in Gear Planning Study, a roundtable discussion was held to further explore housing affordability, displacement, and the continued presence of Black communities, organizations, and businesses in Weston. The session built on conversations held in April 2026 between Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving organizations in Weston and the City's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, where displacement and the impacts of growth and development emerged as key concerns requiring additional discussion.

The roundtable brought together members of the planning study team, representatives from Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving organizations, and individuals with experience and expertise related to gentrification, housing affordability, and anti-displacement work.

Session Overview

The discussion focused on the continued presence of Black communities in Weston and considered opportunities for anti-displacement strategies and planning approaches that may support Black communities in the context of anticipated growth, change, and development in the area. Attendees shared experiences, concerns, and observations related to housing affordability, displacement, and changing neighbourhood conditions. The session also explored lessons from other communities across Toronto experiencing similar pressures and considered potential strategies, tools, and approaches that may help mitigate displacement and advance social development objectives.

The roundtable was structured in three parts:

1. Presentation of the draft development concept for the Weston in Gear Planning Study.
2. Discussion of experiences, challenges, and concerns related to growth, change, and displacement in Weston.
3. Discussion of opportunities, tools, and strategies that may help address displacement and support community stability, both within and beyond the scope of the planning study.

Thematic Summary

The following summary reflects key themes, ideas, concerns, and perspectives raised during the roundtable discussion. Notes were taken by members of the project team and have been organized thematically. The summary is not intended to be a verbatim record of the discussion, nor does inclusion of a comment imply endorsement by all Attendees.

Staying in Place: Understanding Displacement in Weston

Generally, Attendees echoed concerns heard during other engagement events regarding housing affordability and displacement, adding that displacement is not a singular event but a process that unfolds over time. Many of the people around the table noted that the intersection of Weston Road and Lawrence Avenue, the stores along the main street along Weston Road, and Weston Lions arena are significant places of community life and are used and visited by those living within the study boundary but also by those within the broader community and area.

Several Attendees emphasized the importance of understanding how displacement happens, particularly before redevelopment occurs. Dr. Nemoy Lewis noted that displacement is not limited to formal processes such as Landlord and Tenant Board proceedings. It can also occur “informally” through mechanisms such as “cash for keys” agreements, above-guideline rent increases (AGIs), residents voluntarily leaving due to building neglect or disputes, and/or housing-related issues and concerns linked to citizenship status. Other factors contributing to displacement include increased development interest due to transit investments, rising housing costs, and changes in property ownership that is enabling higher rates of eviction, noting that the latter is particularly prominent in Weston.

There was discussion about the broader impacts of gentrification and neighbourhood change, including residents relocating to other parts of Toronto or leaving the city altogether. Attendees emphasized that displacement can occur even when residents are not formally evicted, and noted the importance of understanding how affordability pressures, deteriorating housing conditions, and changing neighbourhood dynamics contribute to residents leaving the community.

The Continued Presence of Black Communities, Organizations, Businesses, and Community Spaces

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was about the continued presence of Black communities in Weston and the impacts that growth, development, and displacement may have on residents, organizations, businesses, and community spaces. Attendees emphasized that displacement extends beyond housing and affects the social, cultural, and community infrastructure that supports residents and contributes to the vitality of the area. Several Attendees discussed the loss of community-serving spaces, small businesses, and places of worship, noting that these spaces often serve as important gathering places, sources of support, and centres of community life. The mosque on South Station Street was discussed as an example of an important piece of community infrastructure that is under threat of displacement due to development.

Attendees also discussed the importance of third spaces, youth spaces, and Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving organizations in supporting community well-being.

Concerns were raised about the impacts of funding reductions on programming and services, particularly for Black youth, and the implications that the loss of these spaces may have for social development objectives within Weston.

Attendees also discussed opportunities to recognize and preserve both tangible and intangible cultural assets, including community stories, cultural gathering spaces, public art, and design elements that reflect the diversity and experiences of Black communities and the broader diaspora.

Planning, Development, and Anti-Displacement Approaches

Attendees discussed the role of the planning framework in responding to displacement and shaping future growth in Weston. Several Attendees expressed concern that development pressures are advancing more quickly than community-led responses and questioned whether existing planning tools are sufficient to address the social and community impacts associated with growth and redevelopment.

Discussion highlighted the tension between community interests and private-sector development objectives. Attendees noted the importance of ensuring that growth occurs through processes grounded in equity, partnership, and accountability, and emphasized the need to consider how residents, organizations, and businesses can continue to remain in place as redevelopment occurs.

Rental Replacement was identified as one of the only anti-displacement policies and tools currently available through the planning system but noted the absence of replacement policies for non-residential uses, such as community spaces or small local businesses.

Several Attendees discussed opportunities to strengthen accountability through measures such as equity-based evaluation frameworks, stronger policy language, and greater collaboration between developers and community organizations. Attendees also emphasized the importance of considering reconciliation, equity, partnership, and community resourcing as guiding principles for future planning work.

Understanding and Monitoring Displacement

Attendees emphasized the importance of improving the monitoring of displacement in Weston. Several Attendees noted that existing data and community experiences are already revealing concerning trends related to redevelopment, housing affordability, and neighbourhood change.

Discussion focused on the need to better understand the various pathways through which displacement occurs, including forms of informal displacement. Attendees discussed opportunities to leverage and connect existing data sources, including RentSafeTO, 311 service requests, and other municipal datasets. There was interest in making information more accessible and using data to better understand neighbourhood conditions, identify emerging trends, and monitor displacement pressures over time.

Attendees discussed the importance of better understanding the role of the private sector in shaping growth and change in Weston, noting that development pressures have been building over time and that there is a need to better understand how development decisions, property transactions, and investment patterns contribute to neighbourhood change.

Community Development Plans and Partnerships

The need for a tool to reconcile land use planning, development, and social development was discussed by attendees. Community Development Plans (CDPs) were discussed as one potential model, however, City staff identified that CDPs may not be suitable for Weston. They noted that CDPs require community leadership, robust community involvement, as well as funding to properly resource the development and implementation of the plan. Examples from other neighbourhoods were discussed and whether elements of similar approaches could help support community priorities in Weston.

Attendees questioned what opportunities there were to strengthen community involvement in decision-making and implementation processes related to growth and development in Weston. Several Attendees expressed interest in models that would provide communities with a stronger role in shaping priorities, monitoring outcomes, and advancing community-led initiatives. Some Attendees reflected on feelings of exhaustion and resignation and expressed that they felt disconnected from the study.

Discussion also focused on the importance of partnerships and collaboration among community organizations, residents, developers, funders, and different City divisions. Different methodologies were discussed to foster dialogue and centre community voices. These includes things like funders tables, civic assemblies, lived experience tables, resident leadership tables and revitalization actions plans to support ongoing dialogue, coordination, and accountability. The importance of creating accessible engagement processes, including consideration of meeting formats and scheduling, and ensuring that communities have the capacity and support needed to participate effectively in planning and decision-making processes was mentioned by attendees.

Response to the Proposed Policy Direction and Development Concept

The presentation delivered by Robert Walter-Joseph at the beginning of the Roundtable prompted discussion about the scale of anticipated growth and change shown in the 3-D demonstration of the pipeline and projected build out, with several participants expressing concern about the intensity of redevelopment and its potential impacts on existing residents, organizations, businesses, and community spaces. Some participants also noted that the effects of growth and displacement pressures may extend beyond the study area boundary and be felt in neighbouring communities.

Participants also discussed the importance of ensuring that growth is supported by community infrastructure and amenities. In particular, participants raised questions about



access to parks, open space, and outdoor gathering areas, and whether there are opportunities to expand or enhance green space in Weston as the community grows. There was a concern that Black communities within Toronto in particular are underserved as it relates to access to green space.