

# Phase 1: Community Working Group Summary Report

New Park at 200 Sterling Rd.

Phase 1: Towards a Vision

June 2026



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# Introduction

As part of the engagement process, this project has a Community Working Group (CWG) made up of 20 local residents and five stakeholder group representatives, with the aim of representing the neighbourhood's diverse experiences and perspectives.

The CWG meets at least once during each phase of community engagement and serves as an advisory group for the new park's design. Members review key project elements and share their insights to help guide the design development. CWG members also act as project ambassadors by sharing information and encouraging people in their networks and communities to participate in public engagement activities.

Resident members were selected through a civic lottery. Using census data, City staff identified demographics that should be included in the CWG to proportionally reflect the diversity of the neighbourhood surrounding the park (within an approximate 1km radius), including age, gender identity, race, disability, family status, housing tenure, and household income. To run the lottery, these demographic criteria were input into a civic lottery tool called Panelot, along with anonymized information from applicants. Participants were randomly selected, while ensuring that the group as a whole reflects the neighbourhood's demographic diversity, with a specific focus on fair representation from equity-deserving communities.

A total of 102 people applied to the lottery and 20 were selected to participate in the CWG. In addition, the CWG consists of five community representatives from local stakeholder groups. Only one representative from each group may attend each meeting.

This report summarizes activities and outcomes from CWG Meeting 1 (orientation) and CWG Meeting 2 (visioning).

# Phase 1: Towards a Vision

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The purpose of this phase was to develop a community vision, guiding principles and big moves for the new park at 200 Sterling Rd., which will guide the development of design options.

On April 29, 2026, the Community Working Group (CWG) met in person for an orientation meeting to learn about the project, understand their role as CWG members and discuss the community engagement process for the new park. The second CWG meeting took place in person on June 10, 2026 and was focused on visioning for the new park design.

The first two CWG meetings focused on the following objectives:

- Getting to know one another.
- Establishing a shared understanding of the CWG's role and design process.
- Clarifying the current context and constraints associated with the future park site.
- Reaching a consensus on the way forward in terms of working together as a CWG.
- Drafting a vision statement for the new park.
- Developing initial draft guiding principles and big moves to inform the design process.

The following sections of this report provide a summary of the activities and discussions from the first and second CWG meetings. For more detailed information on project phases and the community engagement process, please visit the project webpage at [toronto.ca/200SterlingPark](https://toronto.ca/200SterlingPark).



# CWG Meeting 1: Orientation

On Wednesday, April 29, 2026 from 5:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., the first Community Working Group (CWG) meeting took place at Family Service Toronto's Sterling Rd. office.

The agenda included:

- A hands-on group ice breaker activity
- Welcome and project presentation from City staff
- Establishing the purpose and mandate of the CWG
- Discussing the shared values for the CWG engagement process
- Reviewing the CWG Terms of Reference (TOR)
- Wrap-up and next steps

## Meeting Highlights

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The orientation meeting focused on clarifying project details, explaining the design framework and engagement process, and establishing the purpose and mandate of the CWG.

Participants engaged in a hands-on ice breaker activity and discussed their shared values on how they would like to work together as CWG members throughout the engagement process.

Participants also reviewed, suggested edits, and confirmed the draft TOR document which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the CWG.

# Ice Breaker: Park Memory

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During the ice breaker activity, CWG members participated in a group exercise using found objects. Staff provided an assortment of loose, random objects for participants to manipulate and creatively assemble.

Each member had a few minutes to create a small structural piece on coloured cardboard paper, representing a time when they felt a deep sense of community, belonging, creativity, or joy in a park. Members then shared their memory and the group briefly discussed common themes. This hands-on activity was designed to encourage participants to get to know one another better, while also uncovering common values that could underpin and contribute to later conversations.

A link to the full activity can be found [here](#)

# Breakout Session: Shared Values

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In this breakout session, CWG members worked in small groups to identify shared values for how they want to work together throughout this project. The goal was to reach an agreement on a common set of values that would help shape how the CWG collaborates and interacts as a group moving forward. Each CWG member began by individually writing down three words or short phrases that reflect a value they felt should guide the CWG engagement process.

In small groups, members discussed and selected the top three values that best represented their collective perspective, which they then shared with the rest of the CWG. City staff organized the values, grouping ones that were similar. Each value was then reviewed and discussed by the entire CWG. After CWG Meeting 1, City staff emailed all members a draft of the shared values the group discussed in a revised version of the TOR, which was later reviewed and confirmed at CWG Meeting 2.

## **The final set of shared values identified by the CWG are:**

**Inclusivity** means practicing empathy and making sure both people and the natural world are included and respected. We recognize and value the different perspectives and experiences each person brings and approach our work together in a way that is welcoming, respectful and supportive. We are also mindful of our connection to nature and consider how our decisions can support and reflect the natural environment.

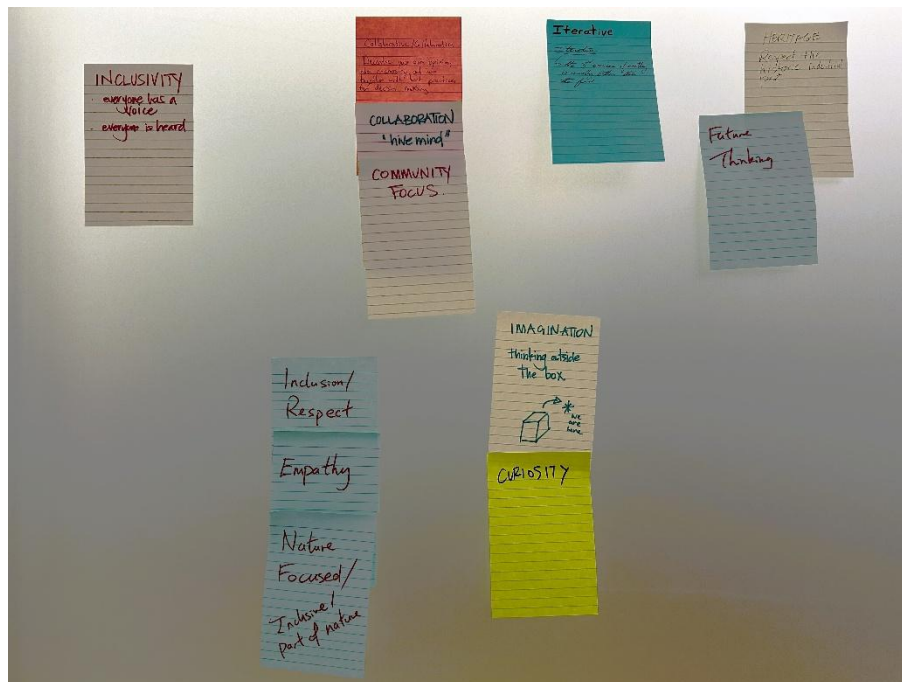
**Collaboration** means recognizing that we are all part of the same team, working toward shared goals and contributing our individual strengths to a common purpose. We prioritize the collective good over individual interests, aligning our efforts and combining our ideas to create something stronger, more meaningful and reflective of the needs and interests of the broader community.

**Curiosity** encourages us to think openly and creatively as we approach our work together. By staying curious and open to new ideas, we expand how we imagine possibilities and solutions. This mindset supports us in responding thoughtfully to the diversity of our group and the neighbourhood we represent.

**Iterative** means embracing a process of continuous learning, reflection and improvement. We build on each step through ongoing feedback and discussion, and revise our ideas as they evolve. This approach encourages openness to different

perspectives, a willingness to revisit and adapt our ideas when presented with new information, helping us to move forward towards better outcomes.

**Future thinking** guides us to honour the past and present while being mindful of the future, with care for both community and the environment. We respect the history and character of the area—recognizing the original and ongoing stewardship of the land by First Nations, and its industrial and arts heritage—while ensuring our work is thoughtful and relevant for future generations.



## Reviewing the Terms of Reference

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CWG members reviewed and discussed items outlined in the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) as a whole group. The TOR outline the roles and responsibilities of the project staff and CWG members. CWG members were asked to provide any feedback or suggestions on the terms.

All CWG members must agree to these terms to serve on the CWG. CWG members discussed and offered suggestions for edits to the TOR. A draft was then circulated after the meeting.

# CWG Meeting 2: Visioning

On Wednesday, June 10, 2026 from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the second Community Working Group (CWG) meeting took place at Family Service Toronto's Sterling Rd. office.

The agenda included:

- Confirming the group's shared values
- Project presentation from City staff
- Thought Exchange activity result summary
- Breakout session: Vision Statement workshop
- Breakout session: Guiding Principles workshop
- Breakout session: Big Moves workshop
- Wrap-up and next steps

## Meeting Highlights

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The second CWG workshop focused on developing a community vision to guide the design for the new park. City staff also shared input from the broader community that was gathered through an online Thought Exchange activity, which ran from March 23 to April 13, 2026.

During breakout sessions, participants worked in small groups to identify shared themes and important values, which then guided the creation of a draft vision statement, guiding principles and big moves that reflect the community's overall vision for the new park.

# Breakout Session: Vision Statement

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## Vision Theme Card Creation

In this breakout session, CWG members were asked to individually write down three to four brief statements on separate cue cards that reflect their vision for the new park at 200 Sterling Rd. They then worked in small groups to identify any overlap between their ideas and discuss which cards resonated the most with their group. The goal was to collaboratively select cards that represent their highest hopes for what the new park could become for the community.

## Vision Statement Creation

After the card-writing exercise, CWG members received an additional set of nine vision cards with printed phrases drawn from the community input gathered during the earlier online Thought Exchange activity. Combined with the cards from the previous individual writing activity, each group selected six visioning cue cards that best reflected their collective vision. At least three of the selected cards were drawn from the pre-identified Thought Exchange outcomes, ensuring that broader community feedback was incorporated into the discussion.

Each group then created their own vision statement based on the six visioning cue cards they selected. The prompt provided to inspire the exercise was:

**"The new park should be a place where..."**

Each vision statement followed the following format:

- *Opening: Start with "We envision"*
- *Verb: Use an action verb in the future tense*
- *Future: State your desired future*
- *Impact: Description of future impact on the local community*

**The following are the vision statements created by each group:**

**Group 1:**

We envision that park to be biodiverse, green, calm, quiet, with art integrated into the design, is welcoming to families, and everyone that is delightful and with dynamic uses.

**Group 2:**

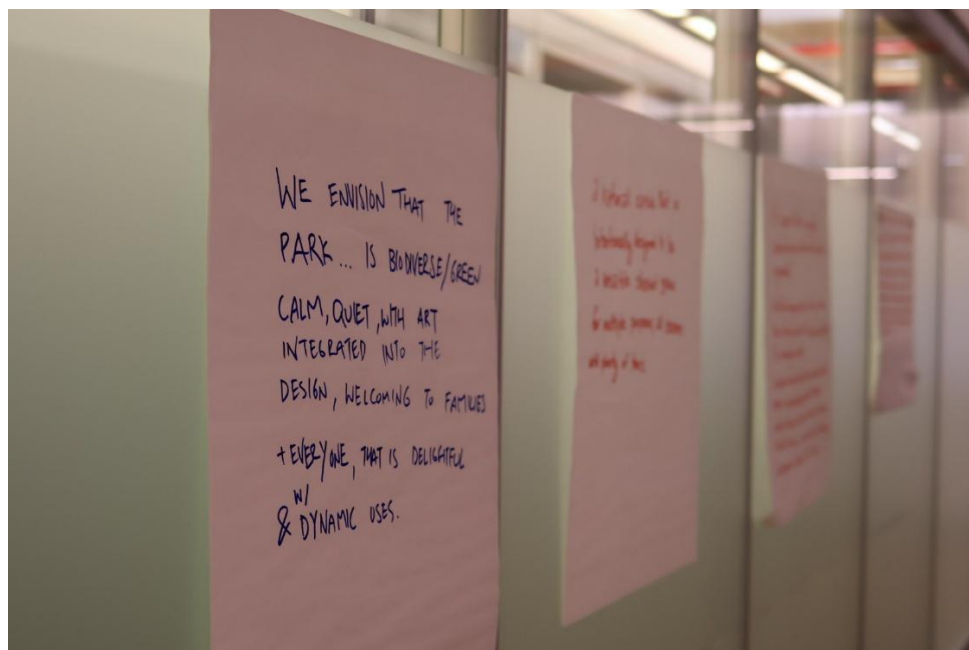
We envision that the park will be a peaceful escape for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to build community and connect through a multi-use built environment and a biodiverse green space that honours the natural and human made heritage of the area to continue to foster connectivity into the future.

**Group 3:**

We envision that the park should be a natural oasis that is intentionally designed to be a versatile shared space for multiple purposes, all seasons with plenty of trees.

**Group 4:**

We envision the park should be a space that is equally social, ecological cultural and functional organically. Artfully designed space taking from the history and art of the area, reflecting its developing identity. A nature focused design that grows with the area – treed, pollinators, garden, flowers, native to Ontario. Based on natural design it should operate as a space for all ages, background, abilities at all times.



## Collective Vision Statement Creation

City staff combined each group's vision statement into one overall vision statement for the new park. CWG members were then asked to discuss and review this draft vision statement while it was edited live on the projector screen, with CWG member deliberation.

**The following draft vision statement was edited lived and received consensus from CWG members at the meeting:**

*"The new park at 200 Sterling Rd. will be a natural oasis that is artfully designed as a biodiverse, green, peaceful space with plenty of trees, pollinators, gardens and flowers indigenous to the region. A calm and welcoming place for everyone to build community and connect. An accommodating, versatile, multi-use built space for all seasons that is equally social, ecological, cultural and functional, reflecting the natural and human-made history of the area. A nature-focused space that grows with the community, honours its developing identity, and continues to foster creativity into the future."*

This draft vision statement will be further edited by City staff for readability after the meeting and will be sent to CWG members to confirm that it captures what was agreed at the meeting. It will then be shared on the project webpage.

## Breakout Session: Guiding Principles

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In this breakout session, City staff re-introduced the definition of guiding principles and how they will guide the development of design options in the next phase. CWG members were asked to develop and write down a series of five to six principles each that address the draft vision statement and incorporate themes identified in the earlier exercise.

Each group was asked to prioritize their cards and select three guiding principles to share back with the entire CWG.

## **The following are the guiding principles created by each group:**

### **Group 1:**

- Support: The park should support the community and environment through a designated space that provides shade, pollination, seating, biodiversity, gathering space, amenities like garbage cans and water fountains.
- Accessibility: The park design should incorporate elements that support access by people of different abilities. Incorporate accessible design features, for example: Not picnic tables. Accessible walkways and seating. Access ramps. Lighting.
- Multi-use: The park design should be multi-use and multi-functional, offering structures that are creative, dynamic and ambiguous, open for different uses such as platforms, seating, gathering. Example: well covering circle platforms on the railpath.

### **Group 2:**

- Balanced: The park design should have human and natural elements balanced. There should be a mix of built, natural and unbuilt fixtures/spaces. The natural elements should encourage biodiversity and engagement, in tandem with the built and unbuilt space.
- Heritage: The park design should incorporate historical elements to preserve the legacy of the area during a period of rapid change and into the future.
- Ubiquity: The park design should encourage meaningful engagement with others and community experiences, through natural and man-made infrastructure that supports play and meeting.

### **Group 3:**

- Lighting, low kelvin (warm lighting) – i.e. more pleasant lighting, less cold hue
- Durable, resilient to play – i.e. amenities should be able to withstand weather, wear and tear, play, etc. for a long time
- Soft medium walking path made of recycled material – i.e. sustainable materials
- Sustainable water usage, rain barrel, bio swale, pollinator rain garden – i.e. ensure park design considers sustainable ways to use water, such as redirecting rain water to gardens

### **Group 4:**

- All seasons usage: shelter, rain, snow, sun
- Intentionally accommodating multiple use purposes

# Breakout Session: Big Moves

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In this breakout session, CWG members were presented with a deck of cards. Ten of the cards had big moves that were pre-populated from the online thought exchange activity. Three of the cards were “wild” cards, on which participants could write their own big moves. Participants were asked to prioritize cards that would implement their group’s previously established vision statement and guiding principles.

Each group prioritized three big moves that they would like to see, representing each table’s “best hand”. Scores were then tallied to show how often each card was played.

**The following are the guiding principles created by each group:**

## **Group 1:**

- Add trees
- Add drinking fountain
- Add flexible space for events and gatherings

## **Group 2**

- Add trees
- Add flexible space for events and gatherings
- Wild card: “Smart” shade structure (can open and close) – i.e. creative, interesting shade structure

## **Group 3**

- Add trees
- Add pollinator garden
- Wild card: Ambiguous furnishings/structures (seating/tables) – i.e. creative, interesting, multi-use

## **Group 4**

- Wild card: Flexible lawn seating areas
- Wild card: Add well designed artistic shade structure with art features and drinking fountains
- Wild card: Add trees and pollinator gardens

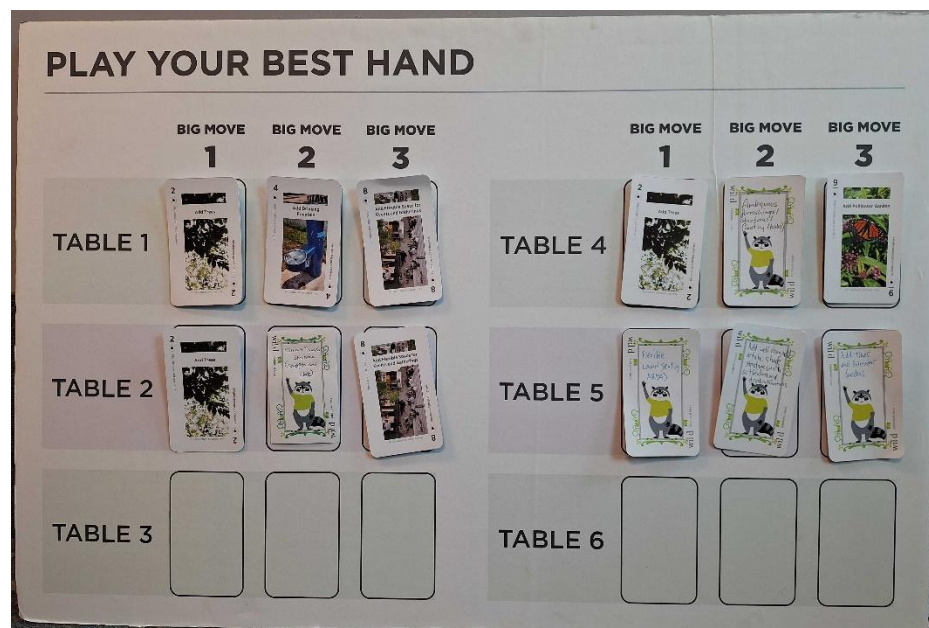
Most frequently used big move cards:

- **Played four times:** Add trees
- **Played two times:** Add drinking fountain
- **Played two times:** Add flexible space for events and gatherings
- **Played two times:** Add pollinator garden

Most frequently used wild cards:

- **Played two times:** Interesting/creative/artistic shade structure
- **Played once:** Ambiguous furnishings/structures
- **Played once:** Flexible lawn seating areas
- **Overall sentiment played three times (by 3 out of 4 groups):**  
Furnishings, features and structures that are interesting, unique, creative, flexible, well-designed

As there was not enough time to complete the discussion during the meeting, the guiding principles and big moves will be combined into one set of big moves by City staff. This draft will be shared with CWG members to confirm that it accurately reflects the discussion. Once finalized, it will be posted on the project webpage.



# Next Steps

## Phase 1: Towards a Vision

In this phase, the project team collected input from the community through an interactive online Thought Exchange activity and convened a Community Working Group. The outcomes of Community Engagement Phase 1 are the vision statement, guiding principles and big moves, which will be shared on the project webpage. These will then guide the development of design options in Community Engagement Phase 2.

## Phase 2: Exploring Design Options

In this next phase, the project team and CWG will work off the outcomes of Community Engagement Phase 1 to develop two or three design options for the new park. These will be presented to the community for feedback, which will be used to develop a preferred design for the new park.

The anticipated outcome of Phase 2 is the selection of a preferred design, which will then be shared for a final round of community feedback during Community Engagement Phase 3.

To learn more about the project, visit [toronto.ca/200SterlingPark](https://toronto.ca/200SterlingPark).

# Meeting Attendance

18 CWG members attended the in-person orientation meeting (Meeting 1), five attended the virtual orientation meeting\* and 21 attended the in-person visioning meeting (Meeting 2).

The CWG includes representatives from the following local organizations:

- Junction Triangle Community Action Network
- Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto (MoCA)
- Gallery 1888
- BGC Dovercourt Club
- South Junction Triangle Grows

The following City of Toronto staff attended one or both meetings:

- Danielle Charlton – Senior Project Coordinator (Project Lead)
- Helen Luu – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator (Engagement Lead)
- Stella Zhou – Public Consultation Coordinator (Engagement Support)
- Celina Chong – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
- Joanna Delos Reyes – Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
- Kim Behrouzian – Program Manager
- AJ Visneski – Senior Project Manager

*\*Note:* A second orientation meeting was held virtually on Tuesday May 26, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for several members who were unable to attend the in-person orientation meeting. This virtual meeting focused on presenting orientation material and answering questions.