

Feedback Summary Report 1

Tommy Thompson Park and Leslie Street Spit Visitor Experience Plan

October 2025 – June 2026



Thank you

...to the hundreds of people who participated in the process to date.

The insights, perspectives, ideas, and advice shared are critical to helping shape the Visitor Experience Plan (VEP).

This report was written by Third Party Public, part of the Lord Cultural Resources team that is working jointly for the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the City of Toronto to develop the VEP.

Third Party Public is working in collaboration with Nbisiing Consulting, who are leading the facilitation of Indigenous engagement. Our role as facilitators on the team is unique – we do not to advocate for any particular outcomes for this project nor write the VEP. Our focus is on creating the conditions where information-sharing and learning between the community, Indigenous voices, the TRCA, the City, and the consultants can help inform the development of the VEP.

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 Toronto and Region Conservation Authority or the City of Toronto.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Engagement Overview	3
Project Background.....	3
Overview of the Engagement Process	6
Engagement Activities and Participation	8
Feedback Summary	9
1. What's Working.....	10
2. What's Not Working	11
3. Opportunities to Consider	12
4. What's important to understand from Indigenous Perspectives	14
5. Tensions to consider / Balance to Find	15
6. VEP Scope and Process Feedback	16
Next Steps.....	17

Attachments

Due to the length of these documents, they are under separate cover

Attachment A. Community Advisory Group 1 Feedback Summary

Attachment B. Community Advisory Group 2 Feedback Summary

Attachment C. Public Meeting Feedback Summary

Attachment D. Indigenous Sharing Meeting Feedback Summary

Attachment E. Fall 2025 On-Site Pop-Ups Feedback Summary

Attachment F. Spring 2026 On-Site Pop-Ups Feedback Summary

Attachment G. Online Survey Feedback

Executive Summary

Tommy Thompson Park is one of Toronto's most distinctive and ecologically significant landscapes. Based on direction from Toronto City Council, the City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) are jointly creating a Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) to ensure that the park's user experience befits its unique and signature status as a regional destination where visitors can experience an urban wilderness on Toronto's waterfront. The VEP will identify projects and priorities that improve the visitor experience. It will not suggest major changes to the physical or operational priorities of the park, which continue to be guided by the 1992 Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan and Environmental Assessment.

This report summarizes public feedback shared between October 2025 and June 2026 that is informing development of the VEP. Roughly 500 people participated through pop-ups at the park, two meetings of the Community Advisory Group (CAG), key informant interviews, a public meeting, and an online survey. Indigenous engagement, facilitated by Nbsiing Consulting, included a meeting with Six Nations of the Grand River and an Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting.

The engagement process focused on understanding what is working well and not working well about the visitor experience today, and opportunities to consider when developing the VEP. There were clear themes in the feedback received, including:

- **People deeply love the park.** Many participants spoke about how much they love and appreciate the area's rugged nature and biodiversity, and how they treasure the calm, peace, and serenity they experience there – describing it as a sanctuary and one of the last truly wild places in the city. For some, this deep attachment also brings apprehension: the process of developing a VEP feels unnerving because of the concern that it will bring unwanted changes.
- **There is clear common ground for a light-touch approach.** Many participants asked that any improvements be very carefully considered, often seeing the VEP as an opportunity to focus on how to strengthen an “ethos of care” that turns visitors into stewards. It will be important to consider all potential VEP actions through the lens of the Master Plan and Environmental Assessment.
- **Communication, accessibility, and maintenance are among the most frequently raised challenges.** Many participants discussed confusing signage and park hours, a lack of wayfinding and visitor orientation, and expectations created by the word “Park” that do not match the area's character as an urban wilderness. Some also identified issues with the long distance a visitor must cover to access the entire area, limited mobility supports for seniors and people with disabilities, poorly maintained facilities, and a lack of enforcement of the rules that protect the park.
- **There is an important opportunity for the VEP to focus on helping visitors understand, respect, and care for the place, and on sustaining community involvement over the long term.** Suggestions included signage paired with education about the area's history, nature, and stewardship; managing visitor expectations about the urban wilderness; and regular on-site staff presence to inform and help people, which many preferred over overt enforcement. Participants also encouraged re-establishing an advisory group that meets regularly, expanding stewardship opportunities for users and volunteers, and securing dedicated funding to support implementation.
- **From Indigenous perspectives, the land is a living relationship, not just a place to visit.** Indigenous participants advised on culturally specific, rather than pan-Indigenous, presence and

interpretation; the importance of ceremony and sacred fire; acknowledging Indigenous histories, naming, and cultural narratives; accessibility for Elders and youth to support cultural continuity; and ongoing, diverse Indigenous involvement in the park, including advisory roles, Indigenous-led programming, and partnerships with First Nations Rights-Holders.

- **There are important tensions between users and uses that the VEP will need to balance.** These include conflicts between fast-moving cyclists and other trail users, a range of opinions about fishing and about boat access near bird colonies, and differing perspectives on amenities such as seating and shade – welcomed by some and seen by others as incrementally eroding the natural area. CAG members encouraged the City and TRCA to address these tensions directly and to be clear about which uses are considered incompatible with the park.

Feedback collected during this phase of engagement will help the City, TRCA, and the consultant team develop the core elements of the Draft VEP, which will be shared for further public input in the fall of 2026.



Pop-Up in Tommy Thompson Park, Saturday, May 9, 2026



VEP Community Advisory Group Meeting 2, Tuesday, April 28, 2026, Ralph Thornton Community Centre

Engagement Overview

Project background

Tommy Thompson Park (TTP) is one of Toronto's most distinctive and ecologically significant landscapes – it is a very special place.

In 2021, Toronto City Council adopted a Tommy Thompson Park Update ([2021.IE22.5](#)) that included the following recommendations:

1. Establishment of a Joint Management Committee for the management of the park and the rest of the Leslie Street Spit
2. Direction to staff supporting the Joint Management Committee to:
 - a.) Develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the operations, and maintenance and visitor experience across the lands
 - b.) Create a Visitor Experience Plan that strikes the balance between public access and ecological integrity
 - c.) Undertake a community and stakeholder consultation process, including engaging with the broader Indigenous communities*, to inform the visitor experience plan
 - d.) Develop coordinated policy and enforcement approaches related to filming, dogs, trail conflicts, and similar issues

**The VEP team is also engaging with Rights Holding First Nations*

Based on direction from Toronto City Council, the City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) are jointly creating a Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) to ensure that Tommy Thompson Park's user experience befits its unique and signature status as a regional destination where visitors can experience an urban wilderness on Toronto's waterfront.

TTP and the Spit exist within a multi-layered ownership and management context. The park is the largest component of the Leslie Street Spit, which has four distinct ownership and management areas. The City of Toronto, TRCA, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (which leases their land to the Toronto Port Authority), and CreateTO, each own and/or manage different component parts of the Spit. Despite this complexity, visitors experience the park and the Spit as one connected place.

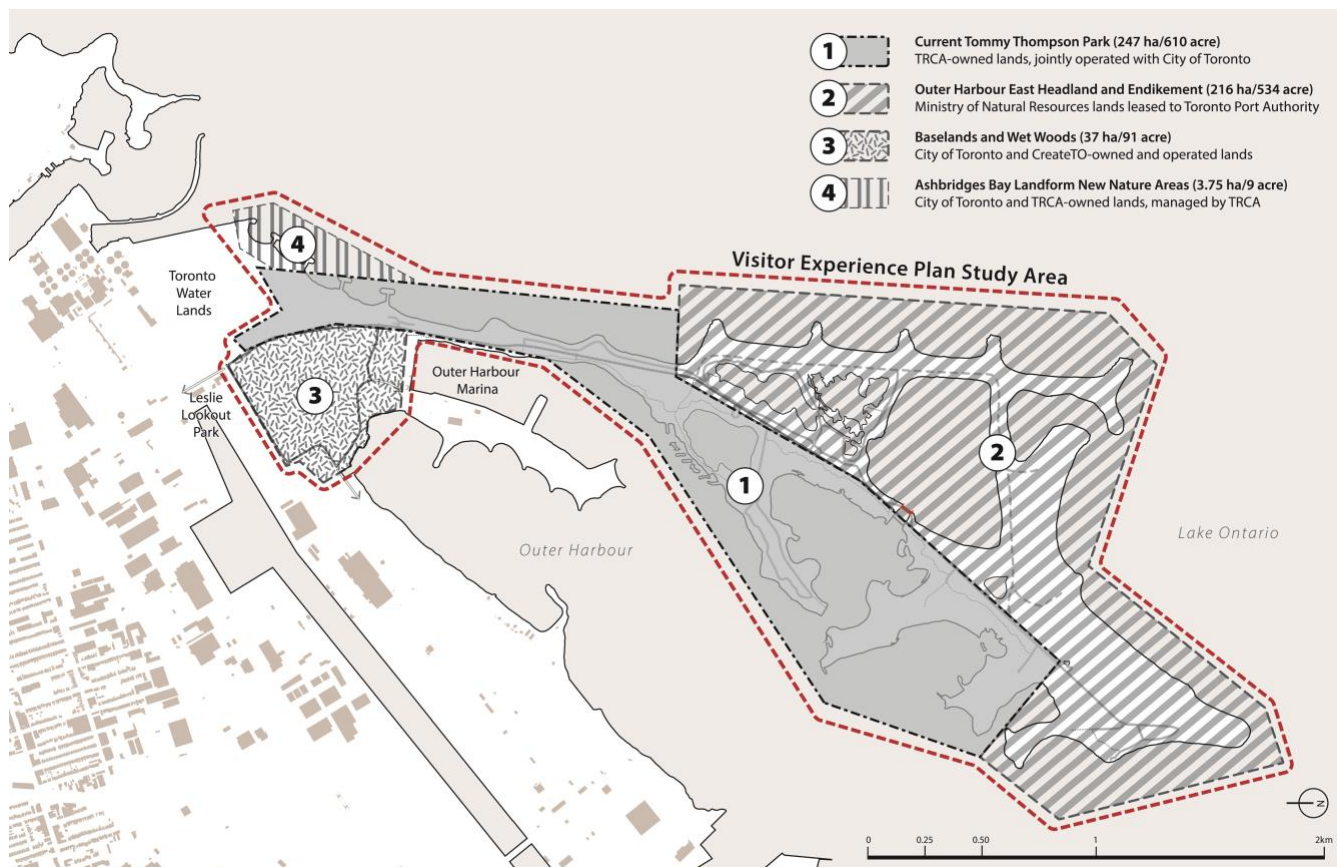
The Study Area for the Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) focuses on the Spit as a whole. Short-term implementations of the VEP will be focused on TRCA-owned and City-owned lands.

Recommendations for provincially owned lands will require discussion and cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Toronto Port Authority.

The Visitor Experience Plan is informed by community feedback at two important touchpoints:

1. In the fall of 2025 and the spring of 2026 to understand how people use the Spit today, including what's working well, what's not working well, and ideas for improvements, and;
2. In the fall of 2026 to share and seek feedback on core elements of the Draft Visitor Experience Plan.

Land Ownership on the Leslie Street Spit



What is a Visitor Experience Plan?

A Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) is a framework that guides how people will enjoy, navigate, and connect with a park while protecting its natural and cultural features. It considers the environment, activities, interactions, learning opportunities, comfort, and access. There are nine areas of focus for the VEP, including: natural environment; entering and moving through the park; accessibility; safety and wellbeing; operations and maintenance; branding and communications; facilities and amenities; equity and inclusion; and programming, events, and recreational opportunities.

The [1992 Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan & Environmental Assessment](#) is a foundational document guiding what happens in Tommy Thompson Park and the broader Leslie Street Spit. The Master Plan has four core objectives: preserve significant species; protect environmentally significant areas; enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat; and enhance recreational opportunities.

The VEP will identify projects and priorities that will improve visitor experience at the park. It will ensure free access is maintained, and it will maintain the ban on pets.

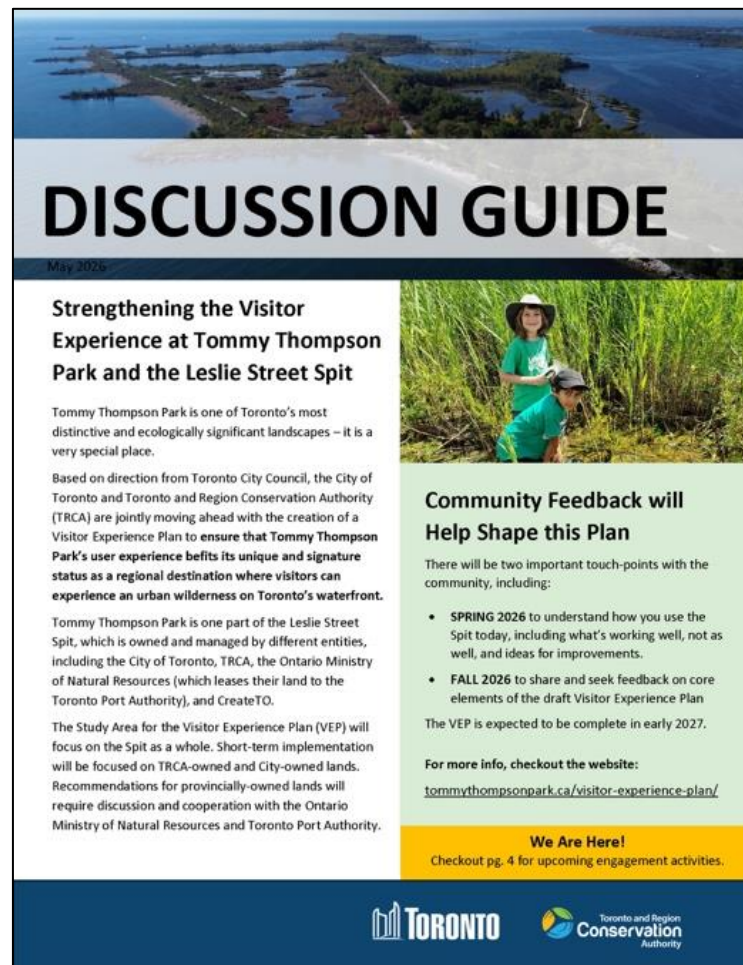
Things that may be considered in the VEP include:

- Interpretive and educational signage
- Wayfinding and trail mapping
- Nature viewing points/lookouts

- Seating, waste receptacles, shade, bikeshare, bike parking
- Website, newsletters, or social media
- On site staff/programming
- Site security/bylaw enforcement/emergency response
- Accessibility features
- Access to water

The VEP will not suggest major changes to the physical or operational priorities of the park. The VEP will not contemplate new buildings or servicing infrastructure outside of existing clearings, or south of the Nature Centre. The VEP will not drive the ecological work of the park.

Discussion Guide 1 shared with participants



DISCUSSION GUIDE

May 2026

Strengthening the Visitor Experience at Tommy Thompson Park and the Leslie Street Spit

Tommy Thompson Park is one of Toronto's most distinctive and ecologically significant landscapes – it is a very special place.

Based on direction from Toronto City Council, the City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) are jointly moving ahead with the creation of a Visitor Experience Plan to ensure that Tommy Thompson Park's user experience befits its unique and signature status as a regional destination where visitors can experience an urban wilderness on Toronto's waterfront.

Tommy Thompson Park is one part of the Leslie Street Spit, which is owned and managed by different entities, including the City of Toronto, TRCA, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (which leases their land to the Toronto Port Authority), and CreateTO.

The Study Area for the Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) will focus on the Spit as a whole. Short-term implementation will be focused on TRCA-owned and City-owned lands. Recommendations for provincially-owned lands will require discussion and cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Toronto Port Authority.

Community Feedback will Help Shape this Plan

There will be two important touch-points with the community, including:

- **SPRING 2026** to understand how you use the Spit today, including what's working well, not as well, and ideas for improvements.
- **FALL 2026** to share and seek feedback on core elements of the draft Visitor Experience Plan

The VEP is expected to be complete in early 2027.

For more info, checkout the website:
tommythompsonpark.ca/visitor-experience-plan/

We Are Here!
 Checkout pg. 4 for upcoming engagement activities.

Toronto **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority**

Overview of the engagement process

Engaging with, and seeking feedback from, a range of voices is an important part of developing the VEP. There are many passionate viewpoints about this special place and a long history of advocacy. Engagement creates an opportunity for the City of Toronto and the TRCA to retain and deepen relationships with park users. It's also an opportunity to identify, understand, and help resolve conflicts between user groups to make the overall park experience better for park users.

The engagement objectives for the VEP process include:

- Share, learn, and seek feedback from Tommy Thompson Park advocates and users, as well as others;
- Engage with, share, learn, and seek feedback from Indigenous voices;
- Create and hold space for a range of perspectives to emerge;
- Bring transparency to the decision-making process;
- Respect time and efforts of participants by coordinating with other relevant waterfront public engagements and City Advisory Committees; and
- Leave a strong foundation for ongoing positive working relationships between participants in the engagement process, the TRCA, and the City.

The first community engagement touchpoint informing the creation of the draft VEP started in the fall of 2025 with two on-site pop-ups (coinciding with peak season visitation on the Thanksgiving long weekend) and the creation of the project webpage. A spring 2026 pop-up (coinciding with the Spring Bird Festival at the park) was also held along with discussions with rights-holding First Nations, an Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting, discussions with experts on the Spit and Tommy Thompson Park, and an online survey.

The main questions asked during these engagement activities included:

- 1. What is working well about the visitor experience today in Tommy Thompson Park and the Leslie Street Spit?**
- 2. What is not working well about the visitor experience today in Tommy Thompson Park and the Leslie Street Spit?**
- 3. What opportunities would you like to see the City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority consider as they work to draft the Visitor Experience Plan?**

Participants were also invited to share any other feedback or advice for the Visitor Experience Plan team.

Community Advisory Group

A Community Advisory Group (CAG) was established as part of the VEP engagement process. It is jointly convened by the City of Toronto and the TRCA. The goal of the CAG is to help guide development of the VEP, with a particular focus on helping identify common ground among the range of interests of Park user groups and, where perspectives differ, helping identify the conditions under which those differences can be constructively managed. Input from the CAG is considered along with input from all other VEP engagement efforts (public, Indigenous, technical, and staff) as well as logistical / operational considerations that inform the draft and final VEP recommendations. Decision-making authority related to the VEP ultimately rests with Toronto City Council and the TRCA Board of Directors.

Participants in the CAG were selected by the City of Toronto and the TRCA, including organizations that represent core user groups and user types at the Park. Members include (listed alphabetically):

1. Aquatic Park Sailing Club
2. Artist Network
3. Cycle Toronto
4. Ekiden Relay
5. Friends of the Spit
6. Sunshine Centre for Seniors
7. Tommy Thompson Park Volunteer Naturalists
8. Toronto Entomologists' Association
9. Toronto Field Naturalists
10. Toronto Harriers
11. Toronto Nature Stewards
12. Toronto Ornithological Club
13. Toronto Urban Fishing Ambassador
14. Walk Toronto
15. Women's Art Association

The local Councillor has a standing invitation to attend all CAG meetings. Rights Holders also have a standing invitation to participate in all CAG meetings, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Wendat Nation.

Engagement activities and participation

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

Activity	Date	Numbers (approx.)
Fall 2025 Pop-Ups at Tommy Thompson Park	October 12 and 15, 2025	100 people (318 comments)
Key Informant Interviews*	November 13, 2025 – May 5, 2026	8
Online Survey	April 21 – May 19, 2026	145 respondents (358 comments)
Community Advisory Group Meeting 1	April 7, 2026	12
Community Advisory Group Meeting 2	April 28, 2026	14
Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee	May 4, 2026	13 members
Meeting with Six Nations of the Grand River – Lands and Resources	May 7, 2026	4
Pop-Up at Spring Bird Festival	May 9, 2026	130 people (238 comments)
Public Meeting 1	May 12, 2026	20
Indigenous Community Sharing Meeting	May 13, 2026	36
Toronto Seniors Forum	June 15, 2026	Up to 15 volunteers
Total Participants		497

**Key Informant Interviews were held with the Aquatic Park Sailing Club (2 people), the Friends of the Spit (2 people), Walter Kehm, Lorraine Johnson, Gail Fraser, and Paul Prior.*

Feedback Summary

The feedback summary on the following pages is a synthesis of the main points raised across all engagement activities.

This synthesis has been organized under the following topics:

1. What's working
2. What's not working
3. Opportunities to consider
4. What's important to understand from Indigenous perspectives
5. Priority tensions to consider / Balance to find
6. VEP Scope, process, and other feedback

Note that while there are many aspects of participants' experiences in the park and at the Spit where there is a lot of common ground among the perspectives shared. At the same time, there are also topics where perspectives and experiences differ. As a result, there are points raised in this feedback summary report under "What's working" that are also included in the section "What not working". Where these differences emerge, they've been captured in the section "Priority tensions to consider / Balance to find".

Also note that participants in the on-site pop-ups focused a lot more on what's working well in the park while those that completed the online survey shared many more comments on ideas for improvement. See summary table below.

High volume engagement activity	Total comments	Number of comments on what's working	Number of comments on what's not working	Number of comments on ideas for improvement
Pop-Ups (3)	556	267 (48%)	184 (33%)	105 (19%)
Online Survey	358	62 (17%)	128 (36%)	168 (47%)



VEP Community Advisory Group Meeting 2, Tuesday, April 28, 2026, Ralph Thornton Community Centre

1. What's working

The vast majority of people participating in the engagement activities could not say enough about how much they love and appreciate the park. Many said they love it the way it is.

It's important to note here that there were participants who said that they find the process of developing a Visitor Experience Plan a bit unnerving because of the concern that it will bring unwanted changes and that it suggests that human visitors are privileged over other nature, rather than interacting as unobtrusively as possible with the wildlife and plant life. More information, more conversations, and more of an ongoing role for community voices beyond the VEP-specific engagement process were raised as potential opportunities to address this discomfort.

People said that they love the Park and the Spit for many reasons. Things that are working well that were shared consistently across many audiences included:

- **Being in, around, watching, and experiencing nature.** People love the area because it has rugged nature, it changes naturally, and walking the trails makes visitors feel part of nature. People said they love the biodiversity, the birds, the plants, the bugs, the wildlife. The opportunity to see colonies of waterbirds is unique. Being surrounded by water and being able to look out across the lake to the south and not seeing any buildings is very special for many. People described it as “magical and unique”. It feels like one of the last truly wild places in the city.
- **People treasure the calm, peace and quiet, and serenity they experience in the park and on the Spit.** They describe it as a sanctuary, a spiritual place, and a sharing space to experience quietly and respectfully. The mental health benefits of visiting the park and the Spit were raised repeatedly, including the refuge that the area provided to people, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **It's so close and accessible from the city.** It's easy to get to.
- **The variety of users.** Visitors range in age and background, and also in how they use the park. Birding, cycling, running, walking, accessing the sailing club, enjoying nature, and some even swimming.
- **There are no cars* and no dogs.** This was regularly referred to as why Tommy Thompson Park and the Leslie Street Spit are special to users.
- **There's a year-round washroom beside the parking lot.** The addition of the washroom was specifically identified as an important part of the Park. The fact that they're open in the winter, including the warm hand dryers, was also seen as an important thing that's working well.

**Participants consistently said “no cars” when sharing their feedback on what they like about the area. Other participants noted that it would be more accurate to refer to “few cars” in the park and on the Spit.*

In addition to the above points, people also said there are many other things working in the park and on the Spit, including:

- It's a great place to run.
- It's a great place to cycle.
- It's a great place to keep a boat (the Aquatic Park Sailing Club).
- The lookouts.
- Helpful staff and volunteers.

- The nature programming.
- Fishing nodes, diversity of fish.
- The bridge.

1. What's not working

When participants identified what's not working in the park, they focused on:

- **Poor communication and signage**, which is confusing and/or unclear for visitors. A number of different related challenges were raised, such as:
 - The inclusion of the word “park” in the name “Tommy Thompson Park” creates expectations for visitors that this is just like any other City park, which it is not.
 - The park hours are confusing, since it says the park is only open weekday evenings, weekends, and holidays; however, it is open at all hours.
 - Lack of wayfinding signage.
 - Lack of clear information on what people can expect when they visit the Spit.
 - Entrance experience is functional but is lacking in overall storytelling or clear visitor orientation, especially at the secondary entrance.
- **Long distances and lack of mobility supports limit who can fully experience the park.** For example, elders, people with disabilities, those with limited mobility, and others. The TTC bus that gets closest to the base on the Spit is still far enough away that it acts as a barrier to park access, particularly for those who have mobility challenges.
- **Poor park maintenance**, including poorly maintained porta-potties, lack of garbage bins, and concerns about garbage in the park. Some expressed concern about poorly managed trails.
- **Speeding bikes** and bikes on trails that are for walking only. This leads to conflicts with people who are in the park, meandering, unscripted, watching and connecting to nature.
- **Lack of enforcement.** There is some frustration when people see rules not being followed without any consequence.
- **Limited visible Indigenous presence or acknowledgement.** This makes the experience feel incomplete.
- **Lack of places to sit and lack of shade.** This is especially true because of the long walking distances and the need for refuge from the summer heat.
- **Limited washroom facilities, the further you get out on the Spit.**
- **Promotion of fishing contrary to what some expect (or want to see) at the Spit.** There are participants who shared concerns about fishing, particularly the impacts of broken fishing line, hooks, and other related evidence of fishing that they see on the Spit and in the Park.
- **Lack of shade in fishing areas.** People fishing very much enjoy the park and are keen to see this use supported, including with consideration given to possible creation of shade structures in key fishing locations.

- **Makeshift paths, visitors wearing informal paths.** There are concerns about how this human activity negatively impacts nature.
- **No clear way to access help if injured in the park.** There have been reports of accidents, particularly in spots farthest away from the parking lot (i.e., by the lighthouse) that have been difficult to respond to and support given how far it is to get help and/or return an injured person to a place where they can get help.
- **Poor condition of the parking lot.** There are concerns about potholes and general lack of maintenance of the parking lot.
- **Lack of bike parking.** This is a concern because it is seen as a disincentive for people to park their bikes and walk (rather than ride) to areas dedicated for pedestrians only.
- **Increasing volume of people.** There's been a note that given how busy the park has become on the weekends, it's harder to see wildlife and creates an incentive for some visitors to avoid weekend visits.
- **Many participants expressed concern about visitors who do not respect the park's urban wilderness.** It was often suggested that not everyone understands the importance of nature in the area, and that there may be people who think it's an abandoned site where they can do anything (i.e., not take care). Examples of activities identified as conflicting with desired uses in the park and on the Spit included: bringing dogs, using motorized vehicles, leaving garbage, cyclists racing, cyclists riding on pedestrian-only paths, setting up of encampments, burning of illegal fires, police using the area for training, removing driftwood and plants, and using the park for races or marathons.

2. Opportunities to consider

Opportunities to consider in the VEP, as identified by participants, focused on:

- **Take a light-touch approach to the VEP.** There's also interest in ensuring that the potential consequences and impacts of VEP implementation are clearly and closely examined before implementation and viewed through the lens of the Revised Master Plan and EA.
- **Consider an "Ethos of care versus an ethos of management" with the VEP, with a focus on turning visitors into stewards.** Focus on how to best fit human use with nature, including how to minimize conflicts with nature and how to minimize conflicts between differing and sometimes opposing human uses.
- **Manage expectations of visitors to strengthen awareness and understanding.** Communication would help people understand, for example: the bridge is a moment where it's at least an hour's distance from the park entrance and visitors do not have access to drinking water and lights, and cell service is often limited; teach people about what they can expect, provide information on how the park can be experienced when / where it is not maintained (e.g., no snow removal in winter). This includes suggestions to remove the word "park" from the name of the area and replacing it with another term, such as "nature reserve".
- **Signage needs to be consolidated.** There's an opportunity to pair signage with educational materials on the website, include information on the history of park (how it came the place it is today, role of community advocates in significantly influencing how it came to be the place it is

today, wildlife, stewardship, conservation, and general education, consider “stay on path” signage, info in different languages through QR codes (to translate signs).

- **In terms of physical interventions**, suggestions included:
 - Ensure that any new interventions happen in locations that make sense. The area should be wilder the further you get from the entrance.
 - No new infrastructure.
 - Opportunity to improve the Nature Centre.
 - Consider a way to explore the redesign of speed bumps to address safety concerns.
 - Reinforce / strengthen the hierarchy of trails.
 - Formal viewing platform for cormorants and gulls.
 - Draw people from Leslie and Lake Shore. Think about the role of Leslie Street in shaping the visitor experience.
- **In terms of programming and service**, suggestions included:
 - Adequate staffing. On site seven days a week doing habitat restoration, maintenance, and to meet, inform and help people. This is also an effective deterrent of inappropriate behaviour, which is preferred instead of overt enforcement.
 - Re-introduce the shuttle for people to get from the entrance to the bridge.
 - Safety, clear protocols on EMS to respond to medical issues, and consider an emergency phone at the lighthouse
 - More opportunity for connecting people with educational information about nature, species, etc. Also, think specifically about how important it is to have children at the Spit to ignite their imaginations and love for nature.
 - Consider options for improving washrooms.
 - Consider options for more or better water-based programs
 - Improve maintenance of things already in the park.
 - Programming specifically for artists, such as a yearly art-based event.
 - Seasonal restrictions for anglers.
- **In terms of governance, funding, and consultation**, suggestions included:
 - Re-establish an advisory group that meets regularly. A culture of consultation, if allowed to resume, will again be the key to the long-term success of the Spit.
 - Increase stewardship opportunities for users and volunteers.
 - Dedicated proper funding.

3. What's important to understand from Indigenous perspectives

From the Urban Indigenous voices, the following points were shared as important to understand when working to develop the VEP:

- **Culturally specific presence (rather than pan-Indigenous) interpretation.** This includes land use history, indigenous languages in signage and education on First Nations harvesting rights and societal structure – dedicated programming and ceremony space, partnership opportunities with Six Nations of the Grand River-owned companies and co-management with First Nations rights-holders.
- **The land is a living relationship, not just a place to visit.** Participants said that living and non-living elements are relatives deserving respect and gratitude, and that visiting the park involves responsibility and care.
- **Ceremony and fire are important to Indigenous use of the park.** Sacred fires, ceremony spaces, sunrise ceremonies, fasting, and cultural gatherings were described as extremely important, with a need for safety, clarity, and permission to practice at different times of day. Overnight access to support fasting and ceremonial practices was also shared as a consideration.
- **History, naming, and cultural narratives matter.** Participants expressed the importance of acknowledging and educating park users about Indigenous histories of the land, pre-colonial ecosystems, wetlands, harvesting practices, and traditional knowledge. Some raised the possibility of renaming the park, or parts of it, or restoring Indigenous place names.
- **Truth and Reconciliation must be ongoing and a shared responsibility.**
- **Accessibility for Elders and Youth supports cultural continuity.** Elders being able to reach the water, move through the park, share knowledge, and reconnect with plants was described as vital, alongside opportunities for youth to learn history and heritage through direct land-based experience.
- **Cultural safety includes addressing substances, waste, and biohazards.** Participants identified the need for safe needle disposal, minimizing exposure to drugs and paraphernalia, and creating spaces that support healing, wellness, and family use.
- **Indigenous involvement should be ongoing and diverse.** Participants suggested Indigenous advisory roles, Indigenous-led programming, diverse knowledge holders from different nations and backgrounds, and rotating partnerships rather than relying on a single organization or voice.

4. Tensions to consider / Balance to find

There are some activities and uses where there are participants who have said that they think things are working well at the park and on the Spit, while other participants disagree and have flagged those activities and uses as examples of what's *not* working well. Opportunities to address these differences have also been suggested. The table below summarizes the points most consistently raised. There may also be other opportunities to address these tensions, to be considered during development and/or implementation of the VEP.

Current use	Support for this use	Concern about this use	Suggestions of potential opportunities to consider
Fast moving cyclists training along the main trail	Cyclists who use the main trail for training.	Other users of the main trail who have safety concerns about conflicts between fast cyclists, pedestrians, wildlife, and those who see speeding bikes and inconsistent with sanctuary-like serene environment.	• Reduce speed limit to 10 km/hr • Modify speed bumps to further slowdown cyclists (while also keeping in mind that speed bumps have also been identified as an accessibility barrier) • Separate cycling and walking on the main trail
Cyclists on trails for pedestrians only	None expressed in engagement process to date.	People who consider this use in conflict with the nature of the park and who have safety concerns about conflicts with people and wildlife.	• More signage • More enforcement • Bike locking facilities on main trail so cyclists have a place to leave their bikes
Fishing	People fishing who enjoy fishing.	People who are concerned this is inconsistent with activities they would like to see at the Spit and in the park, concerns with hooks and lines left behind and conflicting with birds and wildlife.	• Add receptacles for fishing-related waste • Restrict fishing (e.g., to certain seasons, certain locations, etc.)
Swimming	Some participants said they enjoy swimming at the Spit.	Underwater hazards (e.g., exposed twisted rebar and strong currents).	• Strengthen communication related to swimming
Access from the water / marine use	Boaters who enjoy exploring and appreciating the area.	People concerned about boat impacts on colony birds and other birds and wildlife.	• Restrict boats from certain areas

Current use	Support for this use	Concern about this use	Suggestions of potential opportunities to consider
Seating	Those who would appreciate a seat.	Concerned about incrementally eroding natural area with traditional park-like amenities (includes bike parking, garbage cans).	Have different types of seating as move further into the park
Shade	Those looking for shade.	Concerned about incrementally eroding natural area with traditional park-like amenities (includes bike parking, garbage cans).	Consider building places to sit in shade to watch birds and wildlife at cells one and two and three and embayment D lookout – seating could be made from wood, covered area for shade and bit of shade coverage

5. VEP Scope, Process, and Other Feedback

In addition to responding to the questions about what is and is not working well in the park and on the Spit, participants also shared other feedback related to the scope of the VEP, the engagement process, and other topics. Some of these have been addressed by the City and TRCA as part of the engagement process.

- Concern that the VEP natural resource management issues are outside the scope of the VEP.
- Concern that CAG discussions lacked sufficient debate about potentially controversial items, with interest in another CAG before the fall.
- Use of the interactive map as part of the online survey was far too complicated and complex; it will frustrate its intended purpose and reduce the amount and quality of feedback you get.
- Concern that the Spit is a location for environmental offsets and that natural succession would be lost due to over-planting, manipulation and grooming of the landscape.
- Strong opposition to the proposal to expand the Island airport and introduce jets. Don't like airplane noise.

Feedback collected during this phase of engagement will help the City, TRCA, and the consultant team develop the core elements of the Draft Visitor Experience Plan, which will be shared for public feedback in the fall of 2026. Engagement in the fall will include a meeting with the Community Advisory Group (CAG), an online survey, a public Open House, engagement with First Nations rights-holders, and engagement with Urban Indigenous Voices. See the full anticipated project timeline below, as shared during meetings to date.

