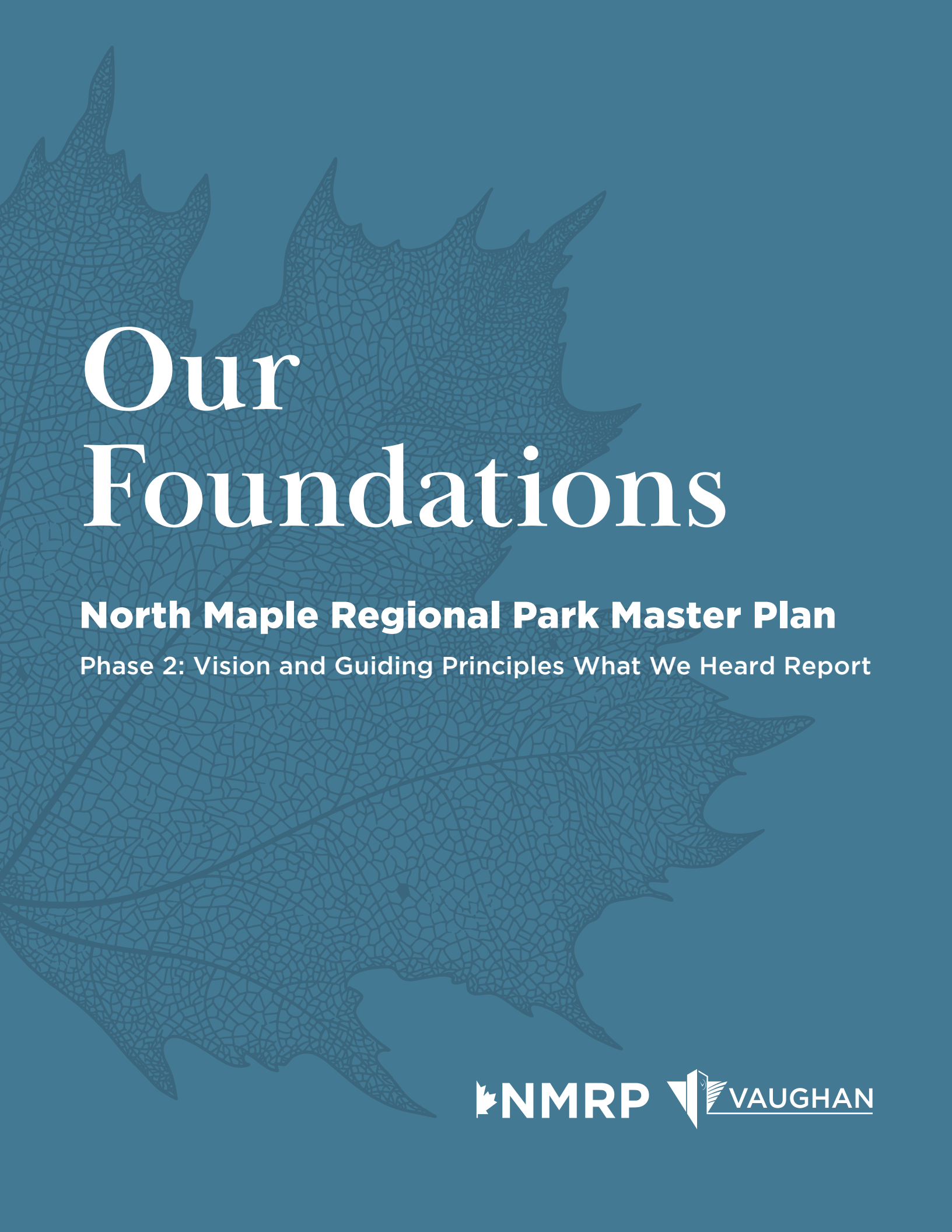




Our Foundations

North Maple Regional Park Master Plan

Phase 2: Vision and Guiding Principles What We Heard Report

Acknowledgments

Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge that the City of Vaughan is situated in the Territory and Treaty 13 lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee. The City of Vaughan is currently home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people today. As representatives of the people of the City of Vaughan, we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live in this territory.

Community Acknowledgment

Special thanks to the Vaughan community and many interested parties who took the time to participate in our engagement events and activities. Your insights, contribution and commitment are an integral part of this journey and the development of North Maple Regional Park.



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Project Background

In December 2023, the City of Vaughan (City) initiated a process to develop the **North Maple Regional Park (NMRP) Master Plan** to help guide the site’s development into a major destination, while protecting and strengthening its natural features.

The plan will help guide the decision-making process for the site’s ongoing and long-term development, programming and level of service, and management.

Phase 2 Engagement Overview

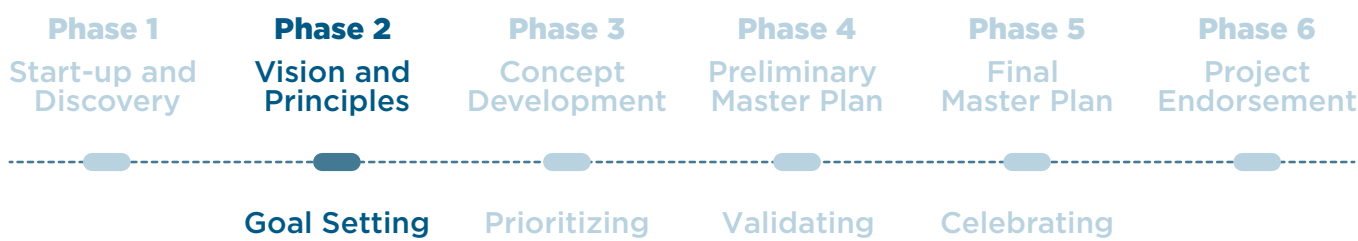
Community insights will help shape the future of NMRP and ensure that it reflects the needs and priorities of the Vaughan community. This report provides an overview of this round of engagement. Feedback gathered helped the project team to validate the vision, refine guiding principles and inform park-wide strategies to guide the design process.

Project History

Decades in the making and at 364 hectares (900 acres), NMRP is the most ambitious park development to date for the City.

The NMRP team has a vision to transform what used to be open space and former landfills into a signature park and legacy project for future generations under the guiding pillars of **Restore**, **Engage** and **Play**.

Project Timeline



Phase 2 Engagement Snapshot

July 2024 to January 2025

Engagement Purpose

The objective of this engagement was focused on **raising awareness** about NMRP while collecting input on the **vision**, **values** and **guiding principles** to establish a strong foundation for the planning process.

Who and How We Engaged

Approximately **1,000** residents, including:

595 pop-up attendees

187 survey respondents

11 workshop attendees

150 community event attendees

27 Community Advisory Committee members

57 youth campers

NMRP Vision Statement

To create a signature park focused on activities related to restoring nature, sharing culture and promoting active living and building community.

What We Heard

Most number of mentions

Restore

Top 2 amenities

141 accessible trails

110 calm areas to enjoy nature

Top 2 programs

187 wildlife protection programs

126 seasonal nature walks

Engage

Top 2 amenities

97 farmers' market

94 boardwalk

Top 2 programs

86 community festivals

70 outdoor movie nights

Play

Top 2 amenities

94 outdoor ice rinks

81 outdoor pool

Park Context

Park Size Comparison



High Park - Toronto
161 hectares (398 acres)



Central Park - New York
341 hectares (843 acres)



NMRP - Vaughan
364 hectares (900 acres)

Oak Ridges Moraine

NMRP is part of the Oak Ridges Moraine, a significant natural feature and source of water for the region. It is home to thousands of unique species and provides clean water that flows into nearby watersheds and rivers.

Quick Facts:

160 km

from Trent River to Niagara Escarpment

1,000+

unique plant species

1,900 sq. km.

of land across Southern Ontario

65 rivers

connect within the Don River Watershed

Key Site Features

Vaughan's most ambitious park currently has:



Significant ecological features



Heritage building



Sports fields and amenities



Parking, pavilion and washrooms



Open space and pathway system

Park Components



Vegetated Areas
115 hectares (284 acres)

Open Space
117 hectares (289 acres)

Rehabilitated Landfills
132 hectares (326 acres)

Park Goals

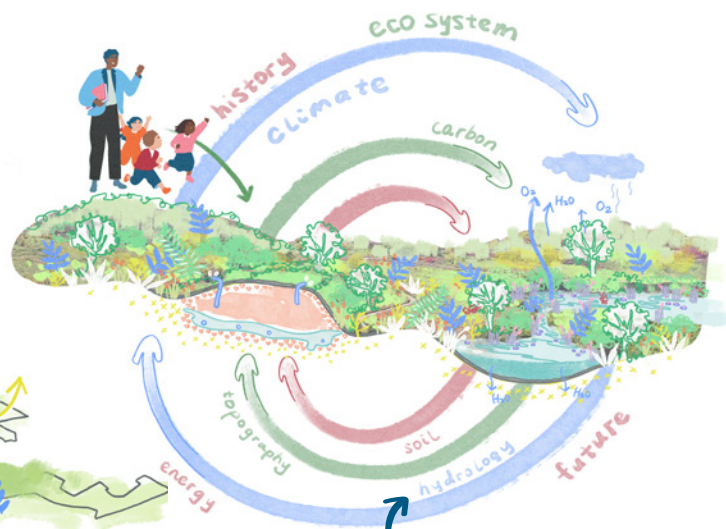


Nature: A park designed with **everything in nature**

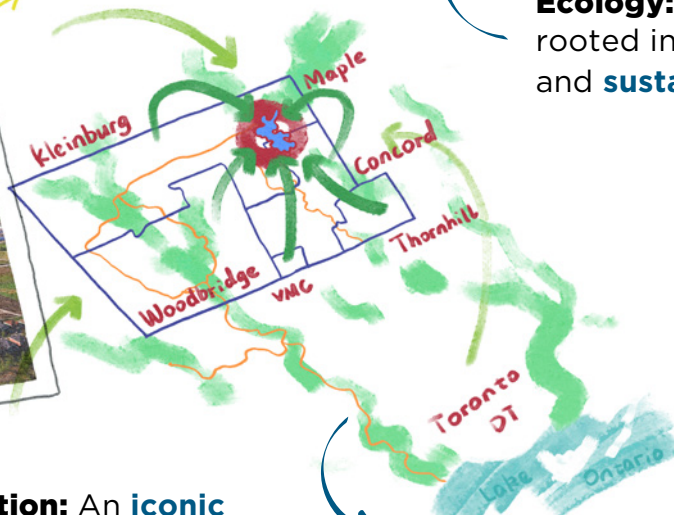


Community: A park that is **responsive** to city needs

Engage:
A park to engage with **diverse spaces** and **landscapes**



Ecology: A park rooted in **science** and **sustainability**



Destination: An **iconic park** organized as a unified space

Connection: A park that **connects communities**, the city and region

Public Engagement



Engagement Approach

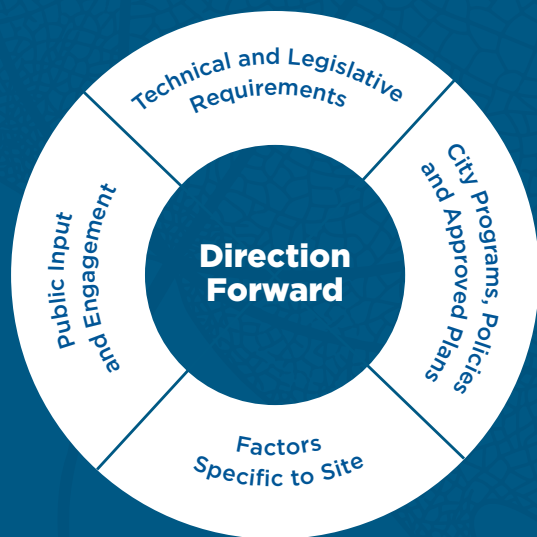
Purpose

Community input plays a vital role in shaping the NMRP Master Plan that will lead to the development of a dynamic, sustainable and welcoming destination for generations to come.

The objective of this round of engagement was focused on raising awareness about NMRP while collecting input on the vision, values and guiding principles to establish a strong foundation for the planning process.

A variety of engagement methods were used to ensure that a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data was collected. Some engagement activities were tailored to a specific audience, while others were designed to engage the broader public.

Foundation



Principles

These principles were designed to ensure the project team’s engagement approach was intentional and thoughtful.

Informative

Build awareness of the NMRP Master Plan project and the park itself as a place of pride for the city.

Accessible

Be responsive to the community’s engagement preferences and meet people where they are.

Inclusive

Lower barriers to participation and invite a diversity of voices and perspectives to the table.

Diverse

Invite feedback from various interested parties, ensuring that a range of lived experiences is represented in the development of the NMRP Master Plan.

Forward

Gather feedback to inform the next phases of work in the master planning process, and to shape a legacy park for generations to come.

How and Who We Engaged

The project team engaged with over 1,000 community members through pop-ups, a community event, workshops and more.

Engagement at a Glance



Pop-ups
595 people engaged



Community Event
150 participants



Youth Summer Camp
57 campers
11 counsellors



Online Survey
187 survey responses



Community Advisory Committee
27 members onboarded



Deep Dive Workshops
11 participants

Communication Tactics

The public was informed about the NMRP Master Plan and ongoing engagement opportunities through various City communications channels, such as the website, eNewsletters, social media campaigns, signage and more.



Pop-ups

Four pop-ups were held across the city from July to August 2024. Pop-ups allowed the project team to engage the general public at major community events:

- Concerts in the Park at Mackenzie Glen District Park (Ward 1)
- Woodbrige Farmer's Market at Al Palladini Community Centre (Ward 2)
- Canada Day Celebration at Boyd Conservation Park (Ward 2)
- Concerts in the Park at North Thornhill Community Centre (Ward 4)

595 participants learned about the park and the NMRP Master Plan process, and were invited to share design, amenity and programming ideas for the park.

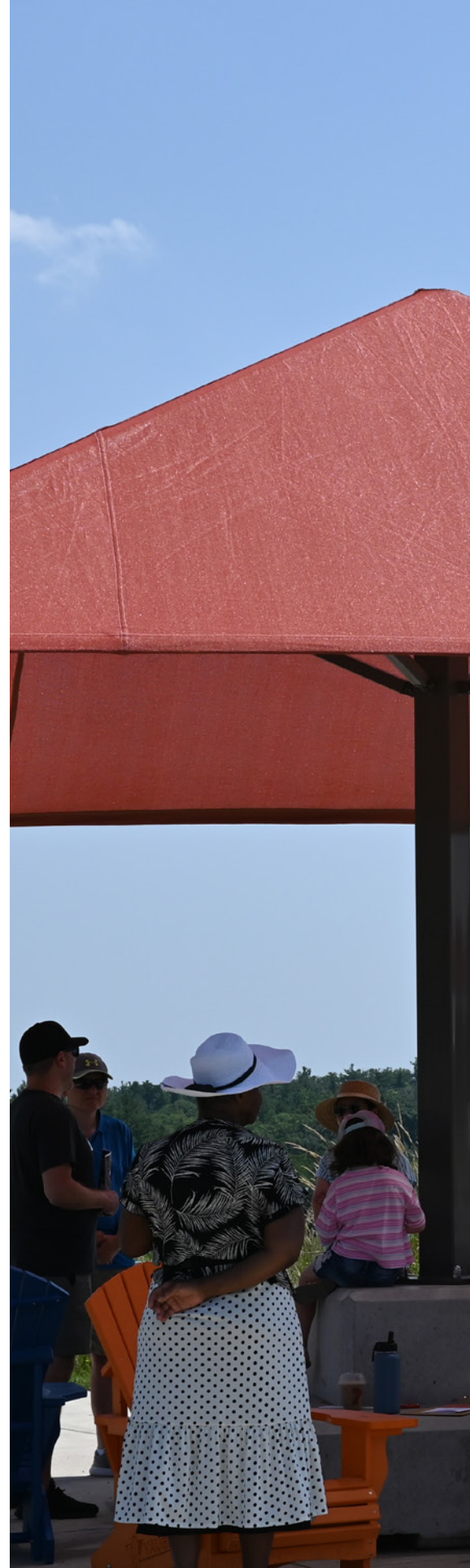
Online Survey

An online public survey enabled a broader reach to include as many voices as possible, reaching the Vaughan community and beyond. The survey ran from September to October 2024 and received 187 unique responses.

The survey helped to collect data and insights regarding the NMRP Master Plan's vision statement, guiding principles, and desired park amenities and programs.

Deep Dive Workshops

Smaller, detailed workshops were hosted to invite participants to act as co-designers, with creative tools like journey mapping, to help understand user experiences and insights on the three pillars of Restore, Engage and Play.





Community Event and Hikesops

In July 2024, approximately 150 people attended a community event at NMRP. Participants added ideas to a collaborative map and shared their vision for a dream day at NMRP.

At the event, two hikesop (hiking workshop) sessions were hosted for 20 community members. Participants were led on a guided hike around NMRP to learn more about the park, including its ecology, and contribute ideas for its development.

Community Advisory Committee

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed to help guide the development of the NMRP master plan. CAC members were selected in July 2024 through a public application and adapted civic lottery process to represent the Vaughan community and ensure the project team captured diverse and equity-deserving perspectives in the master planning process.

The CAC is made up of 27 members representing various wards, age groups, ethnicities, housing types and more. At the first meeting, CAC members had the opportunity to share their vision for NMRP. To further diversify the group and include more youth perspectives, four additional CAC members were recruited later in the year for a total of 27.

Youth Summer Camp

In coordination with the City's Recreation Services staff, camp counsellors and campers from eight City-run summer camps were engaged in August 2024 and asked to complete a visioning activity for the future of NMRP.



What We Heard



Park Vision and Guiding Principles

Statement Feedback

The NMRP team developed and shared this initial vision statement:

The 900-acre North Maple Regional Park is the City's most ambitious park development to date, with a vision to create a nationally significant signature park and legacy project for future generations.

Overall, the NMRP vision statement resonated with the general public. Building on the initial statement, the public shared their vision of NMRP as:

- **A place to gather:** There was strong support for free gathering spaces and an online booking system for reserving gazebos, barbecues, picnic areas and performance spaces.

- **A destination:** Participants believed unique attractions like ziplines and event spaces could boost tourism and make NMRP a place of pride that contributes to Vaughan's identity.
- **Accessible for all ages and abilities:** Many emphasized prioritizing accessibility and supporting the wellbeing and recreational needs of youth, seniors, people with disabilities and neurodivergent individuals.
- **A place to honour Indigenous history and culture:** Participants stressed acknowledging and honouring the Indigenous history of the land on which NMRP will be established.

The NMRP team also developed guiding pillars of **Restore**, **Engage** and **Play** to help shape the planning process. The public was asked to provide their thoughts on each statement, as presented on the following pages.

Updated Statement

The NMRP vision is to create a signature park focused on activities related to restoring nature, sharing culture, promoting active living and building community.



Guiding Principle: Restore

Statement Feedback

The NMRP team shared this initial statement for the principle “Restore:”

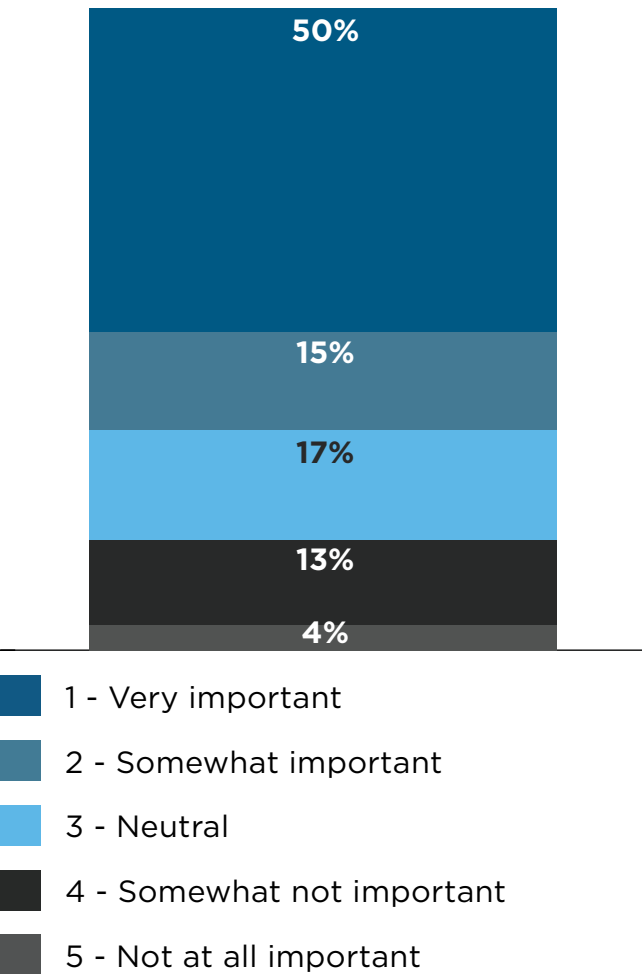
Ecological restoration and environmental sustainability are at the heart of the vision for NMRP, a park that is a natural and cultural asset.

This statement was shared with participants who were asked to provide feedback to refine it. Some participants expressed that the word “sustainability” is overused, and felt “longevity,” “resilience,” “learning,” “biodiversity” and “conservation” were missing from the statement.

The team also asked participants how important the principle of “Restore” was to them in guiding the master planning process going forward.

Importance of “Restore”

Participants were asked to rate how important the principle of “Restore” was to them on a scale from one to five.



Top 5 Amenities

Most number of mentions

- 141** accessible trails
- 110** calm areas to enjoy nature
- 84** biodiversity protection
- 72** butterfly conservatory
- 72** wildlife observation lookout

Top 5 Programs

Most number of mentions

- 187** wildlife protection programs
- 126** seasonal nature walks
- 63** eco-classroom
- 62** night hikes
- 55** ecological education programs

Restore-based Amenities

Participants were asked about their preference for amenities associated with the principle of “Restore.” It was found that many participants value access to nature and greenspaces. They suggested ideas like pollinator gardens, native plantings and opportunities for connection with nature through trails and hiking.

There was also a strong desire to preserve habitats for wildlife and refrain from overdeveloping or over-designing.

Restore-based Programs

Participants were asked about their preference for programs associated with the principle “Restore.” Participants suggested that natural attractions, such as cherry blossom trees, native plants, an aviary, a butterfly conservatory, a bee farm, a wildlife sanctuary and a petting zoo should be present within NMRP.

Updated Statement

Ecological and cultural restoration are at the heart of the NMRP vision. The park promotes biodiversity, climate resilience, environmental awareness and education.



Guiding Principle: Engage

Statement Feedback

The NMRP team shared this initial statement for the principle “Engage:”

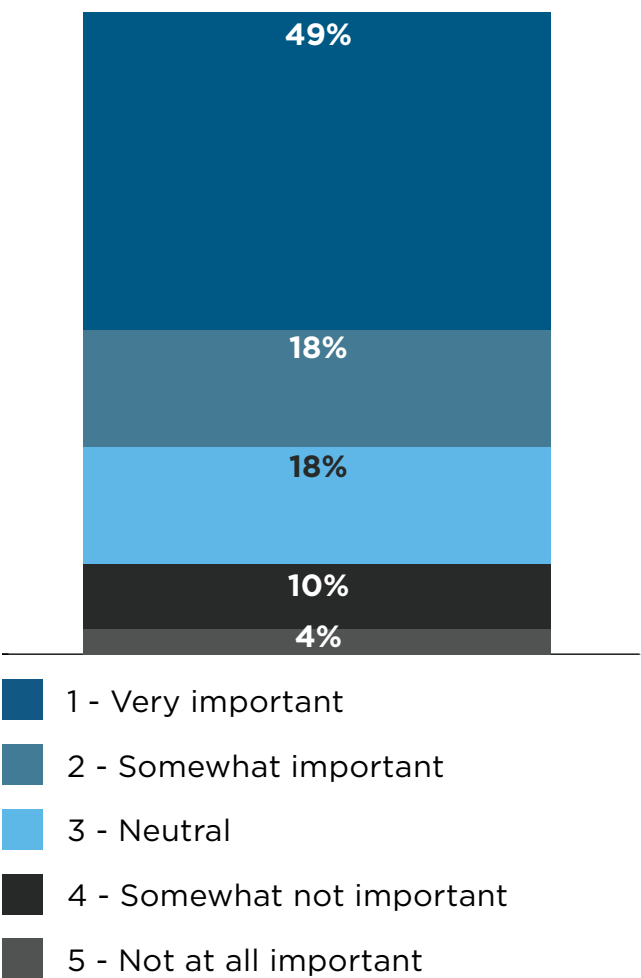
NMRP is the legacy of a group of Vaughan citizens determined to reclaim the former landfill sites and transform them into a place for all to enjoy. NMRP will be a place to build community.

This statement was shared with participants who were asked to provide feedback to refine it. Some participants suggested words like “rebuild,” “beauty,” “socialize,” “explore,” “connect” and “capacity” were missing from the statement.

The project team also asked participants how important the principle of “Engage” was to them in guiding the NMRP master plan going forward.

Importance of “Engage”

Participants were asked to rate how important the principle of “Engage” was to them on a scale from one to five.



Top 5 Amenities

Most number of mentions

- 97** farmers' market
- 94** boardwalk
- 91** cherry blossom trees
- 89** lookouts and viewpoints
- 76** picnic areas

Top 5 Programs

Most number of mentions

- 86** community festivals
- 70** outdoor movie nights
- 69** heritage trails
- 65** free parking for big events
- 63** activities for seniors

Engage-based Amenities

Participants were asked about their preference for amenities associated with the principle “Engage.” They emphasized essential infrastructure like accessible washrooms and drinking fountains and desired an extensive natural trail system with varying elevations and multiple entry points. Youth expressed interest in shops, quiet study spaces and multi-faith areas and asked questions about transit, parking and accessibility.

Engage-based Programs

Participants were asked about their preference for programs associated with the principle “Engage.” Community members envisioned NMRP as a learning hub focused on the natural environment, landfill reclamation and Indigenous history and culture through public art and guided programs.

They also saw the park as a venue for free public events and private gatherings, while viewing it as a community asset offering job opportunities and showcasing Vaughan residents’ diverse talents.

Updated Statement

NMRP will connect and build community. It is the legacy of a group of Vaughan residents determined to reclaim the former landfill sites into a place of culture, social gathering, learning and nature exploration for all.



Guiding Principle: Play

Statement Feedback

The NMRP team shared this initial statement for the principle “Play:”

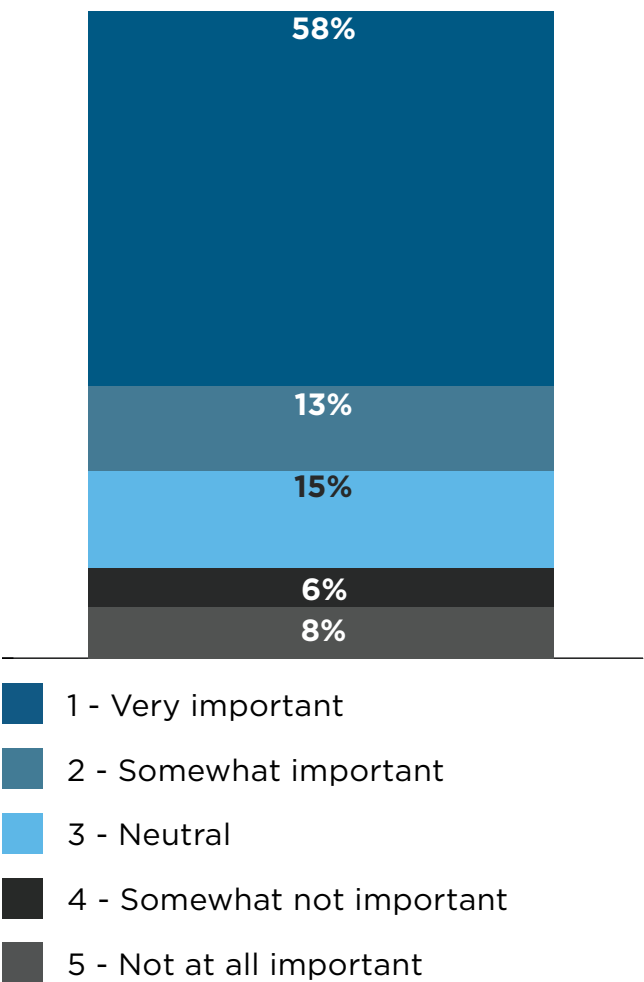
NMRP will be a place to play - whether it be on the trails, at the playgrounds or when using the sport facilities, or during active and passive recreational opportunities.

This statement was shared with participants who were asked to provide feedback to refine it. Some participants felt words and phrases like “learn,” “create,” “relax,” “community” and “amongst nature” were missing from the statement.

The team also asked participants how important the principle of “Play” was to them in guiding the master planning process going forward.

Importance of “Play”

Participants were asked to rate how important the principle of “Play” was to them on a scale from one to five.



Top 10 Amenities

Most number of mentions

- 94** outdoor ice rinks
- 81** outdoor pool
- 80** playground
- 75** cross-country skiing
- 71** tobogganing
- 69** splashpad
- 66** mountain biking trails
- 63** tennis courts
- 62** zipline
- 59** outdoor exercise

Play Amenities

Participants were asked about their preference for amenities associated with the principle “Play.” Participants envisioned accessible rentals for snowshoeing, snowtubing, cross-country skiing and ice skating to attract community members who may not have experienced winter sports or activities.

There was also significant interest in outdoor aquatic amenities, and a desire for facilities to support other recreational activities such as tennis, basketball and baseball. Youth participants were enthusiastic about unique recreation ideas such as ziplines, treetop rope courses and a trampoline park — as well as traditional recreation facilities such as basketball courts and soccer fields. There was also strong demand for designated bike paths with varying terrains.

Updated Statement

NMRP will inspire fun and curiosity year-round. Immersed in nature, the park is a place for passive and active recreation for all, with diverse opportunities for play and learning from playgrounds to sports facilities, interpretive walks and trail networks.



Conclusion

Most participants were initially unaware of NMRP and the master plan, but were excited to learn more about the possibilities for the park and eager to share ideas. In this round of engagement, participants were encouraged to dream big and provide aspirations for NMRP programming and development.

Themes

Educational Opportunities

In general, education and learning was frequently identified as a missing component from the guiding principles. Participants envisioned the future park offering opportunities to learn about the land's natural and human history, local plants and wildlife species and the landfill remediation process.

Natural Heritage Focus

Natural heritage preservation was a priority for many participants. They expressed a preference for more natural greenspace over development. Overall, there is a desire for features that facilitate appreciation for the natural environment.

Prioritizing Safety

Safety was a recurring theme in the feedback heard and identified as a top priority, with suggestions for clear sightlines on trails, lighting, blue light emergency phones and first aid kits. It is important that NMRP remains a safe and welcoming place to all.

Destination Value

Most participants shared the desire for NMRP to be a destination and a gathering space. Participants expressed a desire to see amenities that would allow them to spend an entire day at the park, including food and drink vendors, event spaces, picnic areas, rest areas throughout the park and accessible washrooms that are open year-round.

All-Year Active Recreation

Participants were excited about opportunities for active recreation within the vast natural landscape of NMRP. People also listed different types of trails (e.g. through different terrains, separate trails for cycling) and various sport facilities (e.g. tennis, pickleball, basketball, baseball) as enjoyable amenities in NMRP. Winter activities, such as skating, snowshoeing and tobogganing, were suggested in support of NMRP as a year-round destination.

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who participated!

Community input plays a vital role in shaping a master plan that will guide NMRP into a dynamic, sustainable and welcoming destination for generations to come.

Now that Phase 2 is complete, the project team will start developing park concepts for NMRP, informed by the feedback provided in this phase. The public will be given an opportunity to view and comment the park concepts during Phase 3 in spring 2025.



Appendix

Appendix A

Online Survey Responses

This appendix outlines all sociodemographic information collected from the Phase 2 online survey.

How familiar are you with the NMRP?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Know NMRP well.	37%
Know a little about NMRP.	23%
Know a fair amount about NMRP.	20%
Have never heard of NMRP.	12%
Have heard of NMRP.	8%

In the past two years, how many times have you visited NMRP?

Options	Number of times selected
Eleven or more times	44
Two to five times	37
Once	23
Six to ten times	18
Zero times	19

What are the first three digits of your postal code?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
L6A	61%
L4J	11%
L4H	10%
L4K	9%
L4L	3%
L4E	2%
L6C	2%
L4C	1%
L4S	1%
L6T	1%
M2K	1%

What is your racial identity? Select all that apply.

Options	Percentage of Respondents
White	53%
East Asian	12%
South Asian or Indo Caribbean	8%
Black	3%
West Asian	3%
First Nations	2%
Southeast Asian	2%
Central Asian	1%
Latin American	1%
Not sure	2%
Prefer not to answer	17%

What best describe you residency in Canada?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
A second generation Canadian	49%
A first second generation Canadian in 2016 or earlier	28%
Being born in Canada and whose family has been in Canada for multiple generations	14%
A first generation Canadian who arrived between 2017 and now	3%
Prefer not to answer	7%

What is your religion, if any?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Christian	48%
Having no religious affiliation	9%
Agnostic	6%
Jewish	6%
Atheist	5%
Muslim	4%
Practicing Indigenous spirituality	2%
Hindu	1%
Spiritual	1%
Prefer not to answer	18%
Prefer not to answer	16%

What best describes you gender?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Cisgender women	39%
Cisgender men	30%
Not listed	4%
Two-spirit	2%
Gender non-binary	1%
Prefer not to answer	24%

What best describes your sexual orientation(s)?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Heterosexual	66%
Asexual	3%
Not listed	3%
Bisexual	1%
Gay	1%
Not sure	1%
Pansexual	1%
Queer	1%
Questioning	1%
Two-spirit	1%
Prefer not to answer	24%

Do you consider yourself to be a person with a condition and/or disability?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Not having a condition and/or disability	82%
Living with a condition and/or disability	9%
Prefer not to answer	9%

What best describes your living situation?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Own the home where they live	77%
Live in a home owned by someone else	7%
Rent the home where they live	5%
Prefer not to answer	10%

What best describes your current type of housing?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
A single-detached house	68%
A townhouse/rowhouse	8%
A semi-detached house	5%
Apartment in a mid-rise building (six to 12 storeys)	3%
Apartment in a low-rise building (up to five storeys)	3%
Apartment in a high-rise building (13 or more storeys)	1%
A secondary suite (e.g. basement apartment)	10%

What is your total household income?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
\$200,000+	23%
\$100,00-\$124,999	11%
\$150,000-\$199,000	9%
\$20,000-\$39,999	4%
\$80,000-\$99,999	4%
\$125,000-\$149,000	4%
\$60,000-\$79,999	3%
\$40,000-\$59,999	2%
Not sure	1%
Prefer not to answer	39%

Are you personally or professionally affiliated with any community groups? If so, which ones?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	26%

How did you hear about the survey?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
Vaughan News eNewsletter	25%
An email from the NMRP project team	15%
City of Vaughan social media	13%
Word of mouth	13%
City of Vaughan website	11%
Councilor office communications	9%
Vaughan Engagement eNewsletter	9%
Signs at NMRP	8%
NMRP eNewsletter	6%
Roadside signs	5%
Other social media account	3%
Not listed above (please describe)	3%
Table at an event	1%
Digital signs at a community centre	1%

What language(s) do you prefer to speak at home?

Options	Percentage of Respondents
English	81%
Italian	13%
Mandarin	6%
Spanish	4%
French	4%
Russian	4%
Cantonese	3%
Anishinaabemowin / Ojibwe	3%
Hebrew	2%
Persian	2%
Urdu	2%
Arabic	1%
Gayogohó:nq' / Cayuga	1%
German	1%
Hungarian	1%
Kanien'kéha / Mohawk	1%
Macedonian	1%
Malayalam	1%
Onqda'gegá' / Onondaga	1%
Onöndowa'ga:' Gawë:no' / Seneca	1%
Onlyota?a:ka / Oneida	1%
Portuguese	1%
Punjabi	1%
Ska:rù:rë' / Tuscarora	1%
Tagalog	1%
Vietnamese	1%
Wandat / Wendat	1%

