

Friends of the Spit

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NEWSLETTER

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Public Meeting and Survey:

As you all are no doubt aware, the City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) have embarked on a Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) for The Spit.

They now wish your input on the **DRAFT Visitor Experience Plan** (VEP) developed for Tommy Thompson Park and The Spit. They note that the public feedback from the Fall of 2025 and Spring 2026 have directly informed this draft.

The **public meeting** is:

Tuesday, September 29

6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre

870 Queen St. East

The **survey** has opened and runs through **October 4, 2026**. The survey can be accessed from the following link (CTRL + Click):

tommythompsonpark.ca/visitor-experience-plan/.

Please make your views known by completing the survey *and* by attending the meeting.

From our attendance at the three Citizen Advisory Committee meetings, we have observed, and commented on, the whole range of issues affecting The Spit. Although the VEP scope is limited and does not deal with aspects of the Spit that do need attention, such as the ecology, issues of staffing, and issues of deterrence and enforcement regarding detrimental behaviors, many of the other suggestions are worthy of your review and your comment. Please participate. Make your voice known, to influence the Consultants.

“What’s in a name?”

All names carry connotations, and we have always felt that calling The Spit a “park” was misleading – misleading to visitors who might have been expecting a manicured place like High Park, with all those amenities, and – misleading to municipal and TRCA staff who might perceive it just like any other park.

The Spit is unique on Toronto’s waterfront, and deserves a name that reflects the fact that Nature rules, and that our use of the space must co-exist with the environment and all the species that inhabit The Spit. We are there to be a part of Nature.

The ongoing Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) consultants heard loud and clear from all the Citizen Advisors, and from the public at large, that a better name was needed. At last Thursday’s VEP meeting, it became clear that a name change had both political and institutional support.

Councillor Paula Fletcher, who has attended all the Citizen Advisory meetings, supported this, and “ran” with it, and the next day (Friday, September 18th) at the Executive Committee of the TRCA, proposed a motion to rename TTP “**Tommy Thompson Nature Reserve**”. Her motion was unanimously approved. This executive motion will next go to the full TRCA Board for its approval in two weeks’ time.

This change to use the title “**Nature Reserve**” is the culmination of years of work initiated by a very active TRCA volunteer, and friend, *Ian Sturdee*, which continued with his energies and with the support of Friends of the Spit and other allied organizations.

This name change is seen as a proactive way to clearly state the purpose of The Spit and assist first-time visitors in understanding that a nature reserve is very different from a regular City park. Protection and enjoyment of Nature is the primary purpose along with low impact recreational activities such as walking and leisurely bike rides.

Thank you to all who weighed in on this process. Thanks again to Councillor Fletcher for all her support. Let’s all hope this motion passes at the full TRCA Board meeting in two weeks’ time.

And, as always, have a great time on The Spit. Enjoy!