

1.5 Campus and Community Engagement

Effective public engagement and communication is a critical driver of the TLNAP and spanned all phases of the process. Throughout all phases of the project, the TLNAP applied a unique approach to First Nations and Indigenous engagement, described in more detail in Section 1.6.

Phase 1 Engagement Process

During Phase 1, engagement activities ran from March 2019 to May 2019 and captured over 700 individual respondents. The purpose of these activities was to gather insights from participants on opportunities and areas of concern at Trent University's Symons Campus. The team utilized a multi-method approach that included formal and informal in-person meetings as well as online engagement. Early engagement with faculty focused on taking students out of the classroom and providing them with first-hand experience of cultural values, environments, and the lands surrounding the university campus. "Pop-up" engagement events were held at various locations on- and off-campus to capture participants who may not have been able to participate in the open house sessions.



Phase 1 Engagement Summary: [trentu.ca/trentlandsplan/sites/trentu.ca.trentlandsplan/files/documents/2020-01-28_TLNAP_Phase1_BackgroundReport_DRAFT.pdf](https://www.trentu.ca/trentlandsplan/sites/trentu.ca.trentlandsplan/files/documents/2020-01-28_TLNAP_Phase1_BackgroundReport_DRAFT.pdf)

Phase 2 Engagement Process

In early 2020, Phase 2 was launched through a series of engagement activities, each organized to share the results of Phase 1 work and solicit feedback on the vision and guiding principles, identify campus and community needs, and explore initiatives that could enrich the Symons Campus. Engagement activities varied and included an online survey, on- and off-campus pop-up sessions, and a public town hall. The process captured a diverse audience, including campus faculty, staff, and students; local community

(residents, civic groups, alumni, business owners, and community leaders); municipal governments and regulatory authorities; campus administration and advisory committees (including the Trent Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee); and potential donors and partners.



Phase 2 Engagement Summary: [trentu.ca/trentlandsplan/sites/trentu.ca.trentlandsplan/files/documents/201116%20Phase%20%20Engagement%20Summary%20Report.pdf](https://www.trentu.ca/trentlandsplan/sites/trentu.ca.trentlandsplan/files/documents/201116%20Phase%20%20Engagement%20Summary%20Report.pdf)

Phase 3 Engagement Process

The draft TLNAP was released for review and comment in October 2020, amidst a global pandemic. The University adapted its outreach model to strictly an online platform, hosting small group sessions for key participants through video calls, and sharing updated materials and providing opportunities for input through the dedicated project website and e-mail. Upon receipt of early requests to extend the comment period, the draft Plan was made available for review for a 12-week period, ending on January 4, 2021. A virtual Town Hall took place on November 18, 2020, which attracted more than 60 attendees and included a facilitated 45-minute question and answer period. Regular updates to the project website included releases of newsletters and responses to frequently asked questions.



Phase 3 Engagement Summary: https://www.trentu.ca/trentlandsplan/sites/trentu.ca.trentlandsplan/files/documents/210129%20Phase%203%20Engagement%20Summary%20Report_AODA.pdf

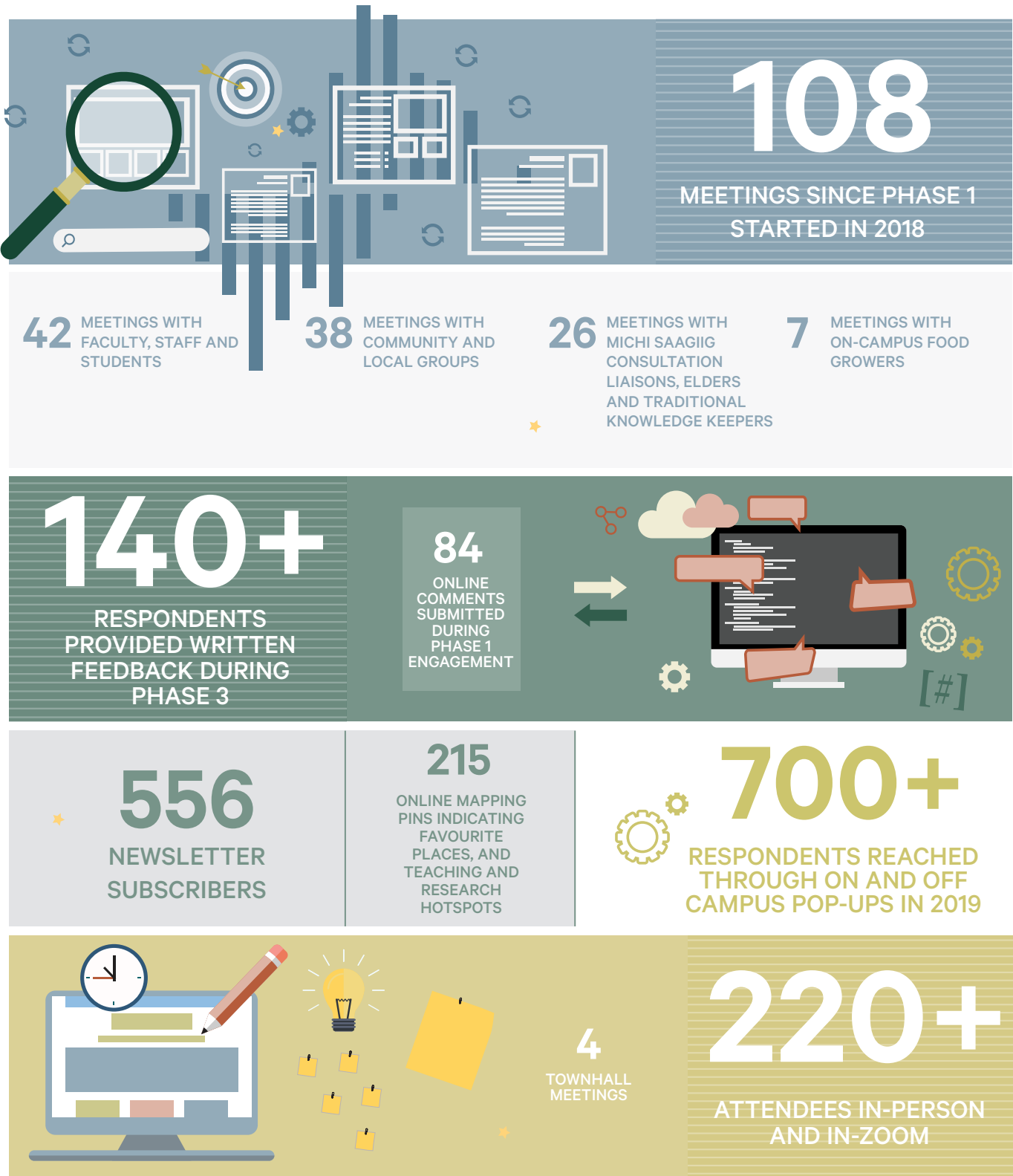


Figure 2: Engagement Activities



Key Messages from Campus and Community

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 engagement activities laid the groundwork for the draft TLNAP. The following is a summary of the key takeaways from all of the engagement events leading up to the release of the draft TLNAP in October 2020.

Trent as a Leader

Trent University is a recognized institution of higher learning and is encouraged to take a solid stance on environmental protection, climate change, social inclusion, and economic security and development. Campus initiatives should be implemented through a transparent and value-driven development process that meets campus, community, and environmental needs.

Participants identified a desire to revisit the Symons Campus vision and guiding principles to one that is actionable and demonstrates Trent University's unique opportunity to showcase as a global example of environmental stewardship. With a history rooted so deeply in the land, the TLNAP should seek ways to commemorate the pluralistic story of the land and be more inclusive to reflect Michi Saagiig values through collaboration.

The future decision making on the Symons Campus must serve various student interests, extend to support the surrounding community, and recognize Michi Saagiig rights. This should consolidate into a clear, balanced, and principles-driven approach that allows all vested groups to participate within the framework of The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan.

To maintain its relevance, a 5-year review should be integrated into the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process, with consultation being a core component of the reviews.

Valuable Natural Assets

The Trent Nature Areas are used for educational, wellness, and recreational purposes. They provide ideal views of the landscape and campus, and are used as an escape; an area to recharge and meditate. The biodiversity of the Symons Campus was highlighted as a significant consideration in developing the TLNAP. Wetlands, meadows, and successional forests, are among some of the ecological assets on the Symons Campus that are identified for preservation. The environment must be integrated in all aspects of the Plan, not just stewardship.

The biodiversity of the campus with its varied ecological communities is an asset to the many classes that take their learning out of the classroom and into the campus. Participants, from both the campus and the community, value the many ways that they are able to interact with the Trent Nature Areas, and voiced concerns over the lack of signage along trails, disturbance from overuse of trails, and dogs allowed off-leash.

Pursuing Campus Opportunities, Responsibly

Campus and community participants demonstrated excitement over the prospects for Trent University's future. An innovative approach to development that highlights and prioritizes the natural environment will allow Trent University's rich natural heritage assets to be preserved, protected, and enhanced while still complementing the goals and needs of the University as it grows.

Common themes to guide the evolution of the Symons Campus are listed below:

- 1. Naturalize underutilized sites, and enhance the biodiversity of the campus** through new campus initiatives, incorporating vegetable gardens, rain gardens, and pollinator gardens, and contributing to the urban tree canopy and health of the watershed.
- 2. The vegetable garden, the Trent Farm and the Seasoned Spoon** are valued assets to the University – there is an opportunity to expand these programs in a secure location and be a leader in sustainable and urban agriculture, and farm-to-table practices.
- 3. Enhance the Indigenous presence on campus** – the Tipi and other Indigenous sites are already valued areas of the Symons Campus. More space is needed to enable certain ceremonial or cultural gatherings, learning, and a sense of belonging.
- 4. Housing** – there is an opportunity to optimize existing infrastructure on the Trent lands and introduce housing that will contribute to the City of Peterborough's efforts to offset the current housing shortage.
- 5. Innovation in building and infrastructure, including the integration of building technologies** (e.g. regenerative concepts, living buildings, and carbon neutrality) and adaptable infrastructure (e.g. roads that can accommodate autonomous vehicles). Construction and management practices should minimize impact on hydrology and habitat, and should include long-term monitoring.

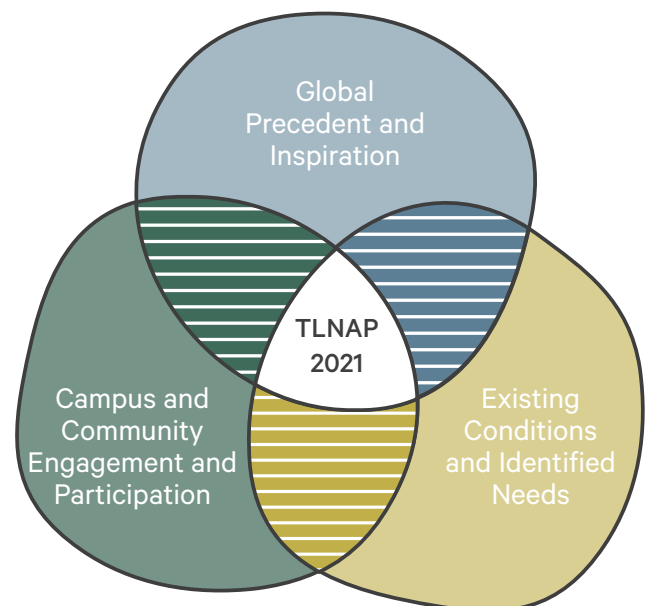


Figure 3: Collection of Inputs for the TLNAP

Responses to the October 2020 Draft TLNAP

The primary focus of the Phase 3 engagement was to share the results of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 work, and solicit feedback on the draft TLNAP (Parts I, II, and III). The following summary captures some of the recurring messages we heard from participants but is not intended to be an exhaustive list of feedback received. The complete Phase 3 Engagement Summary Report is available as a separate document.

Vision and Guiding Principles

Many expressed general agreement with the overarching goals of the Plan and were pleased to see Trent taking such a thorough approach to planning.

Clarity on the Role of the TLNAP

Questions were raised about the role of the Plan and how it will be used to guide future decision making. Much of the input gathered reflected the desire for specific information on details and timelines that will be established at a later stage in the planning process.

- » Many of these comments will be addressed in Part IV, Towards Implementation, which will be circulated for public review in February 2021, prior to approval by the Board of Governors and inclusion in the final TLNAP (anticipated March 2021).

Nature Protection

Nature protection and habitat preservation was a reoccurring theme of significance (as seen throughout the Phase 1 and Phase 2 engagement activities). Students spoke about their choice of Trent as a school with a beautiful natural setting and reputation for environmental studies, and their hope to remain proud of Trent. Others stated their expectation that Trent will consistently set new standards, and wanted to see more explicit commitments in the Plan about environmental matters.

- » The final TLNAP addresses these comments by adding clarity to its commitments and stewardship initiatives (Parts III and IV), as well as by elaborating on guidelines

to promote nature-inclusive development (Part II). Additional review and discussion with the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee and the School of Environment also confirmed that the areas of “potential deletion, pending further assessment” from the October 2020 Draft Stewardship Plan (Part III) can be released, and maintained as part of the Trent Nature Areas.

Celebrating Farm Assets

It is clear that students and community members value existing farms and gardens on campus. Farm assets are used for education and research, community networking spaces, employment, and volunteer opportunities for students, and provide a source of fresh seasonal food for the Trent community. While the larger, permanent location for the Trent Farm is seen to have many benefits, also having a smaller farm within or close to the Campus Core was a key interest of respondents.

- » The potential for, and location of, a smaller farm within the Campus Core will be explored, concurrent with the planning for the Trent Farm to relocate.

Presentation of Information in the Plan

Some participants felt that the language/ terminology, mapping, and data reporting in the TLNAP was confusing.

- » The maps in the final TLNAP have been re-oriented to true north, with scales and less colour/content to make them more accessible.

Beyond Placemaking – to Reconciliation

Many positive comments were received about the integration of Indigenous elements into the TLNAP. There were calls to ensure that engagement to-date follows through with actionable outcomes.

- » Section 1.6 has been added to the final TLNAP to elaborate on Trent’s approach to Michi Saagiig and Indigenous engagement. Additionally, Part IV, Towards Implementation, will clarify Trent’s commitment to on-going engagement with First Nations through future initiatives.

Housing, Land Use and Development

Participants expressed an urgent need for student housing, and while many agreed with the University's role in helping to alleviate the regional demand for housing (especially for seniors), some participants were concerned about the impact of development and wanted to see the lands left in their natural state.

- » Refinements to Part II Campus Vision and Framework, specifically the University Districts section (Section 7.0), have been implemented in the final TLNAP to clarify the University's intent to advance leading edge, regenerative and sustainable initiatives that contribute to Trent's core mission of teaching, learning, and research.

Mobility and Access

Some community members and stakeholders were happy with the improved active transportation and cycling infrastructure but wanted to see more efforts to reduce the use of cars and address growing traffic volumes and safety issues for cars, pedestrians and cyclists. There was strong support for the proposed removal of the automobile traffic along the Nassau Mills Road (along the eastern shore of the Otonabee River) but questions arose about access and impact of a new road to natural features and species.

- » The final TLNAP includes an expanded mobility section in Part II of the Plan, which captures the principles and goals communicated by the public. Part IV, Towards Implementation, will a recommendation to conduct future studies on transportation and trails to inform the layout of circulation routes on campus.

Engagement Approach

While appreciation was expressed for broad engagement activities, concerns were raised about whether the opportunity to review the Plan had been widely communicated and whether timelines for feedback were sufficient.

- » The 12-week comment period provided for review of the draft TLNAP far exceeded typical consultation windows for similar exercises, and was extended from the original 3-week window to account for difficulties associated with the current global pandemic. The engagement plan was designed to allow for fair input into the Plan, while ensuring timely approval to ensure the Plan could inform critical City and County planning processes. Future consultation opportunities will also be advertised to encourage continued engagement through future initiatives and studies.

Phasing and Planning Horizons

Some requested more information on the future plans and next steps for the TLNAP. Participants addressed the need to examine the Plan on a regional scale considering planning within the greater region and municipality. Participants looked forward to a more robust implementation section of the TLNAP.

- » Section 7.0 of the final TLNAP includes updated descriptions, mapping and categorization of the University District to distinguish between, the Campus Core, planned University initiatives, and lands reserved for future use (with flexibility built in to address changing needs). Additional references to adjacent property owners, municipalities, and coordination efforts have been added to Part IV, Towards Implementation.