



**OURCITY**  
**OURFUTURE**

**TORONTO OFFICIAL PLAN AND  
MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEWS**

## Stage 1 'Fast Feedback Survey' Summary

November 2011



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Thousands of ideas and opinions were submitted to City Planning as part of Stage 1 of the Official Plan and Municipal Comprehensive Reviews. People of all ages and from across Toronto shared what they feel are key elements of a liveable city and their ideas on city building. Respondents are generally pleased with the direction Toronto is taking in city building, but they do have suggestions for improving how Toronto will grow in the years ahead. Survey responses will be considered along with other Stage 1 consultation feedback.

*I like the direction the City is taking toward protecting neighbourhoods and directing growth to areas that can support it. I support the Avenues and Centres strategy*

*Continue to protect parks and green spaces*

*I want stronger historic building and heritage preservation*

*I want a vibrant city where people can work and play where they live*

*Tall buildings are great and I support intensification. However, I'm concerned about building design standards, and the loss of views of the lake*

*Housing should be more affordable*

*The text in the grey call out boxes is paraphrased from responses to open-ended questions in the survey. **Over 1000 ideas were submitted for Question 10 alone!***

# Executive Summary

The Official Plan is a statutory document which sets out **where and how Toronto will grow to the year 2031**. As a long-term comprehensive vision for the city, it is important to conduct regular ‘check ups’ on its progress. This year marks the beginning of the Official Plan’s 5-year review (required by the Province). Concurrently, City Planning is conducting a Municipal Comprehensive Review under the Provincial Growth Plan. Collectively, City Planning refers to these processes as the ‘Reviews’.

In August 2011, City Planning staff launched a ‘Fast Feedback’ survey to supplement a series of open house and stakeholder consultations as part of the engagement process for the Reviews. This summary highlights findings from the survey, including public feedback on city building, and suggestions for making Toronto better. The survey is one tool among many for obtaining public feedback in conducting the Reviews. Surveys are an important **piece of the public engagement strategy**.

The Fast Feedback survey was available online or on paper, for a period of approximately 7 weeks; commencing in late August, and closing on October 17, 2011. A total of 731 completed **surveys were received from people of all ages, and from all across the city**. Survey questions included pre-filled options and open text boxes, with all responses transcribed to a database, organized by category, and analyzed. Results of the survey are consistent with responses received from the open houses. Additionally, **there is strong consensus** across the city, with only limited variation in response from different geographic areas.

Overall, **respondents support the growth strategy of the Official Plan**, and support the protection of neighbourhoods, but do offer suggestions for improvement. They believe that the best places in Toronto have great transit access, are busy and walkable, with nearby parks and green space. **They also believe that transit, housing affordability, and development / infrastructure investment are the key opportunities for Toronto** to improve going forward. Respondents also overwhelmingly suggested that transportation should be a focus in the Reviews, with a high number of respondents requesting improvements for transit and cycling. In suggesting improvements, many respondents offered ideas and examples from other cities from which Toronto could learn or benefit.

The responses to the Fast Feedback survey will be considered in conjunction with all other feedback in Stage 1 of the Reviews process, with the aim of developing options as part of Stage 2 in 2012. City Planning will seek out public feedback on these developed options as part of the engagement process in Stage 2 of the Reviews. Visit [www.toronto.ca/opreview](http://www.toronto.ca/opreview) for more information on the Reviews.

# Introduction

The Official Plan sets out the vision for where and how Toronto will grow to the year 2031. That's a fairly long time, so it is important to do regular 'check-ups' to ensure the Official Plan is working to fulfill its vision. This review and survey summary are part of those check-ups.

We know that Toronto is growing, but we need to make sure this growth happens in a way that **builds on Toronto's strengths**, and improves the quality of life for all its citizens. We all want Toronto to be a great place to live, work, invest, and play.

To do this, we need to know **what's important to Toronto residents**, employers and visitors, and how they want to see the city grow. Among several ways City Planning will learn what is important is through a **public survey** that asked questions about aspects of respondents' favourite areas of the city, and **encouraged respondents to offer suggestions for making Toronto better**. A copy of the survey is included as Appendix C.

The survey was intended to be anonymous, which provides a level of comfort to all groups potentially interested in providing feedback. It was also designed in plain language, exclusive of jargon, and accessible to all potential respondents, regardless of their understanding of planning processes and systems. The survey did not ask questions about Official Plan policies, but rather **asked respondents** about their experiences and to think about **what contributes to a great city**. City Planning staff can then evaluate collective responses and relate them back to the Official Plan with the aim of addressing any gaps between responses and city building processes. It is expected that many Official Plan policies will be re-affirmed by this exercise, while others will require further review and evaluation.

# Promotion and Basics

The website offered the survey in two formats: an online version that could be directly submitted to City Planning, and a downloadable document which could be printed and mailed or faxed in. The survey was also made available on paper and via wifi-connected laptop computers at each of the 6 open houses held across the city in September. Staff actively encouraged all meeting participants to complete the survey.

**The survey was promoted using a number of traditional and new-media methods to reach a wide audience, and to encourage public engagement** in the Reviews process. The goal was to have as many respondents as possible complete the survey, to ensure robust results and analysis that reflect the needs, desires, likes, and dislikes of both visitors and residents of Toronto. Further information about promotion of the survey and statistics is available in Appendix A.

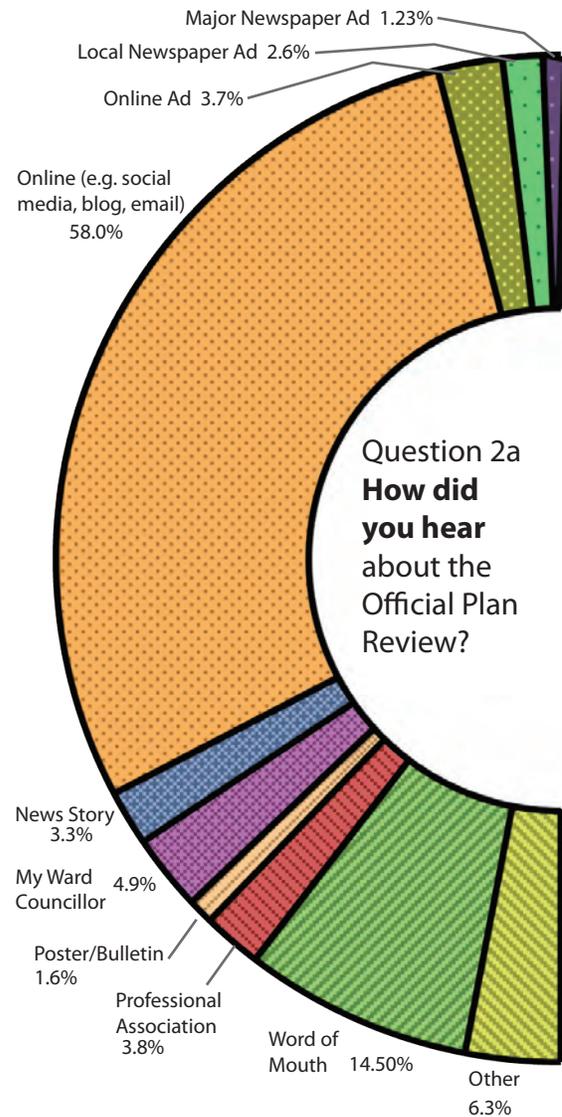
**Stakeholder groups**, such as the Toronto Board of Trade, faith groups, the development industry, school boards, and Toronto Industry Network were also sent open house flyers which encouraged completion of the survey. Finally, Councillors were sent the flyers, with some posting the information as part of their constituency newsletters.

Reminders to take the survey were sent out to subscribers of the Official Plan Review e-update account. A link to sign up to this account is included on the Reviews website under the 'Sign Up Here' button.

In total, **731 completed surveys were received from across the city**, either online, at a consultation event, on paper, or via email (see Appendix A for detail). All surveys, were entered into a common database for analysis and inclusion in this summary.

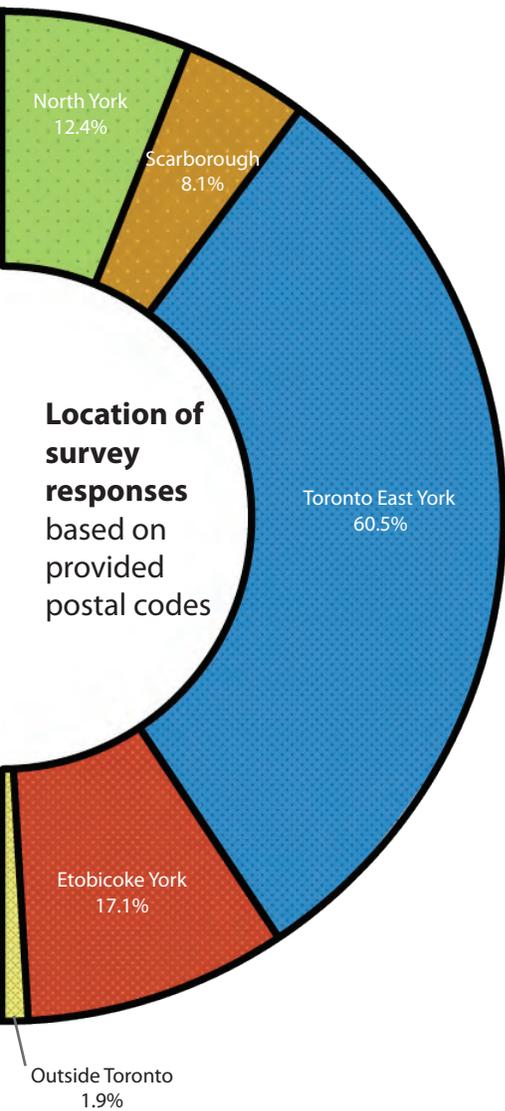
The survey asked respondents to indicate how they heard about the Official Plan Review, as City Planning is interested in the effectiveness and efficiency of advertising outlets to help inform future public engagement. A majority of **respondents heard of the survey via electronic methods**, as the results at right indicate. The top three responses were: 'on-line (e.g. social media, blog, email)', 'word of mouth', and 'from my Ward Councillor'. The 'other' category includes hearing about the Reviews via the radio advertisement, as part of a school project, and other means.

**731** completed surveys



# Demographics

54% Male / 46% Female

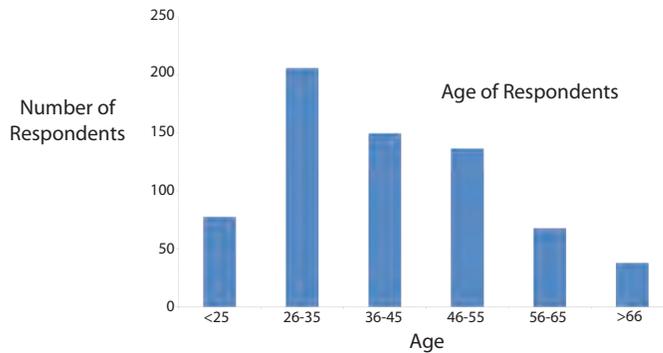


All questions in the survey, including questions about demographic information, were optional. However, most respondents did opt to complete these components, which is useful in understanding the comments, and the experience of respondents from different areas of the city. The results of the demographic questions of the survey are included below.

A total of 91.2% of the 731 surveys included information on gender. The **gender split in the survey is fairly even**, with:

- 306 female respondents (46%)
- 361 male respondents (54%).

The split among age groups was not as even as that of gender, though a sufficient number of **surveys were received from each age group** to evaluate differences among these groups. In total, 92.6% of respondents included age information.



A total of 84.8% majority of respondents provided the first 3 digits of their postal code, and results indicate that **responses to the survey came from across the city** (and a small number from outside the city). Results are expressed via the City’s four Planning Districts of Toronto–East York, Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke–York. As results are derived from the first 3 letters of postal codes, an exact match with these planning districts was not possible, though the boundaries do mostly align (see Appendix B for detail). A breakdown of results is shown at left.

# General Results

In general, survey feedback has been consistent with that received through discussion at the Open Houses. **Survey respondents respect and accept that growth is occurring**, and want most of this **growth to be directed to appropriate areas** of the city (generally away from stable neighbourhoods). Respondents want to be able to get around their city quickly and efficiently, have great public spaces and parks, and have their city be a model for economic development and environmental stewardship. They also want high-quality buildings and architecture, protection and celebration of heritage resources, and local and world-class arts and culture. These desires were consistent across the city. Despite this rather tall order, **respondents are generally pleased with how Toronto is progressing**.

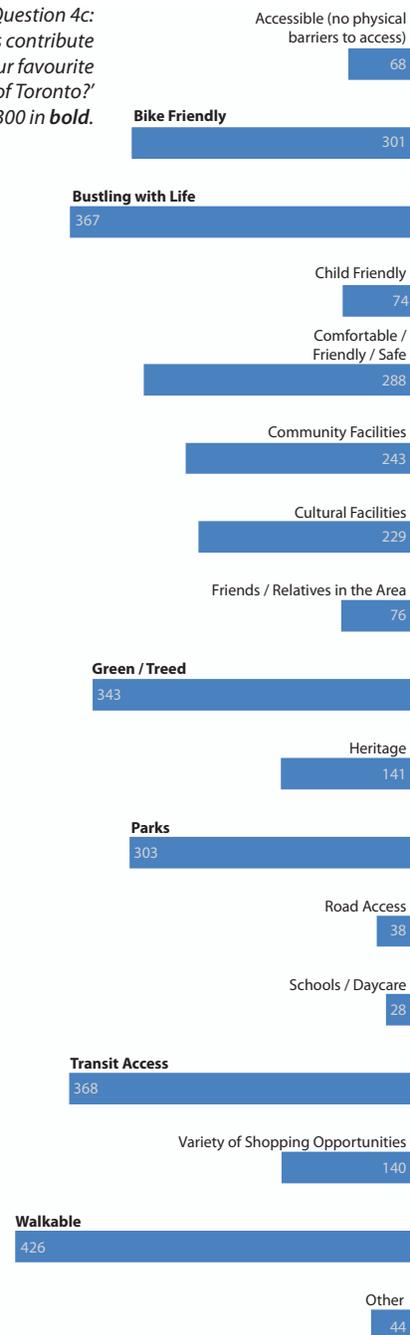
Respondents were asked what their favourite area or part of Toronto was, and whether they lived or worked nearby. Respondents **identified areas from all across the city**, including parks, shopping districts, ethnic neighbourhoods, public squares, natural features, streets, and universities. There was only limited repetition. When asked whether respondents lived or worked in their favourite area, 78.8% said they did. This finding demonstrates the **pride that Torontonians have in their neighbourhoods** and emphasizes Toronto's claim to being a 'city of neighbourhoods'.

City Planning staff were also interested in determining what aspects contributed positively to respondents' favourite areas, and offered 16 categories to choose from (and an open-ended 17th option). Respondents could select as little as 1 or as many as 5 options. Results are displayed at right, with all results selected 300 times or more highlighted in bold.

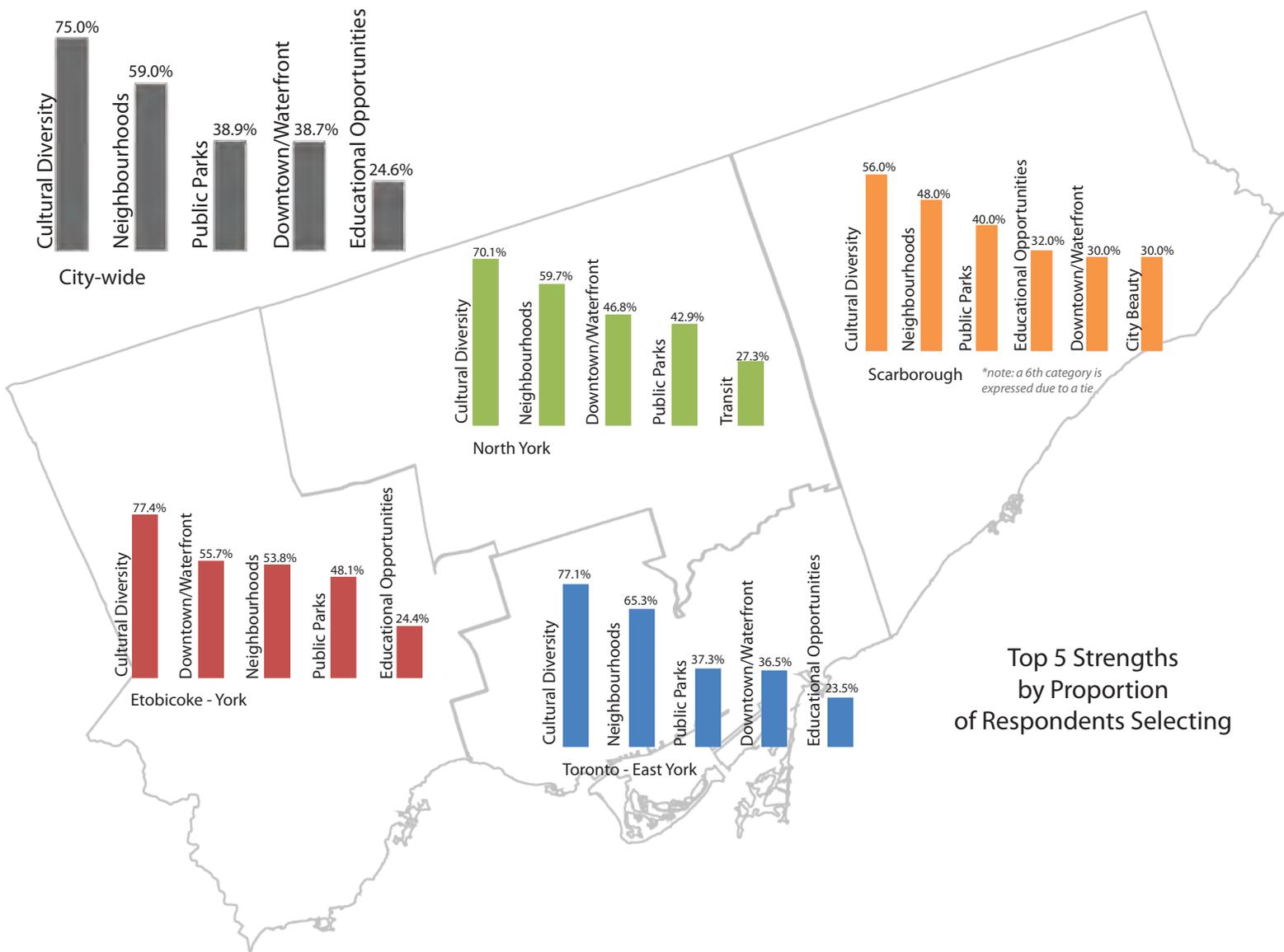
**Respondents also expressed concerns and ideas for improvement.** They cited examples of best practices from other cities from which Toronto could learn, and commented on the pros and cons of recent developments.

- **Transit infrastructure and investment was the most common concern**, with many expressing frustration with a lack of expansion of the TTC, limited support for bicycle infrastructure (especially for commuting), and the resources put into plans that are not implemented.
- **Housing options and affordability are a concern**, though respondents commended developments at 60 Richmond Street and the YWCA Elm project.
- Respondents want to see more **protection of heritage buildings** (versus 'facadism'), and adaptive re-use of older areas of the city, and cited the Distillery District, Wychwood Barns, and Evergreen Brickworks as good examples.
- There was concern about the loss of public spaces and places, though there was much **support for the recent Waterfront developments** of Sugar Beach, the Wavedeck, and Sherbourne Common.
- Finally, there was concern about the design of buildings and especially the design of tall buildings. Respondents commented that there are areas where there are too many tall buildings, and that some of them block important views. Others commented that they like tall buildings, but wished for **stronger design standards**.

Results of Question 4c:  
 'What features contribute positively to your favourite area or part of Toronto?'  
 Results over 300 in bold.



# Toronto Strengths



## City-wide Full list

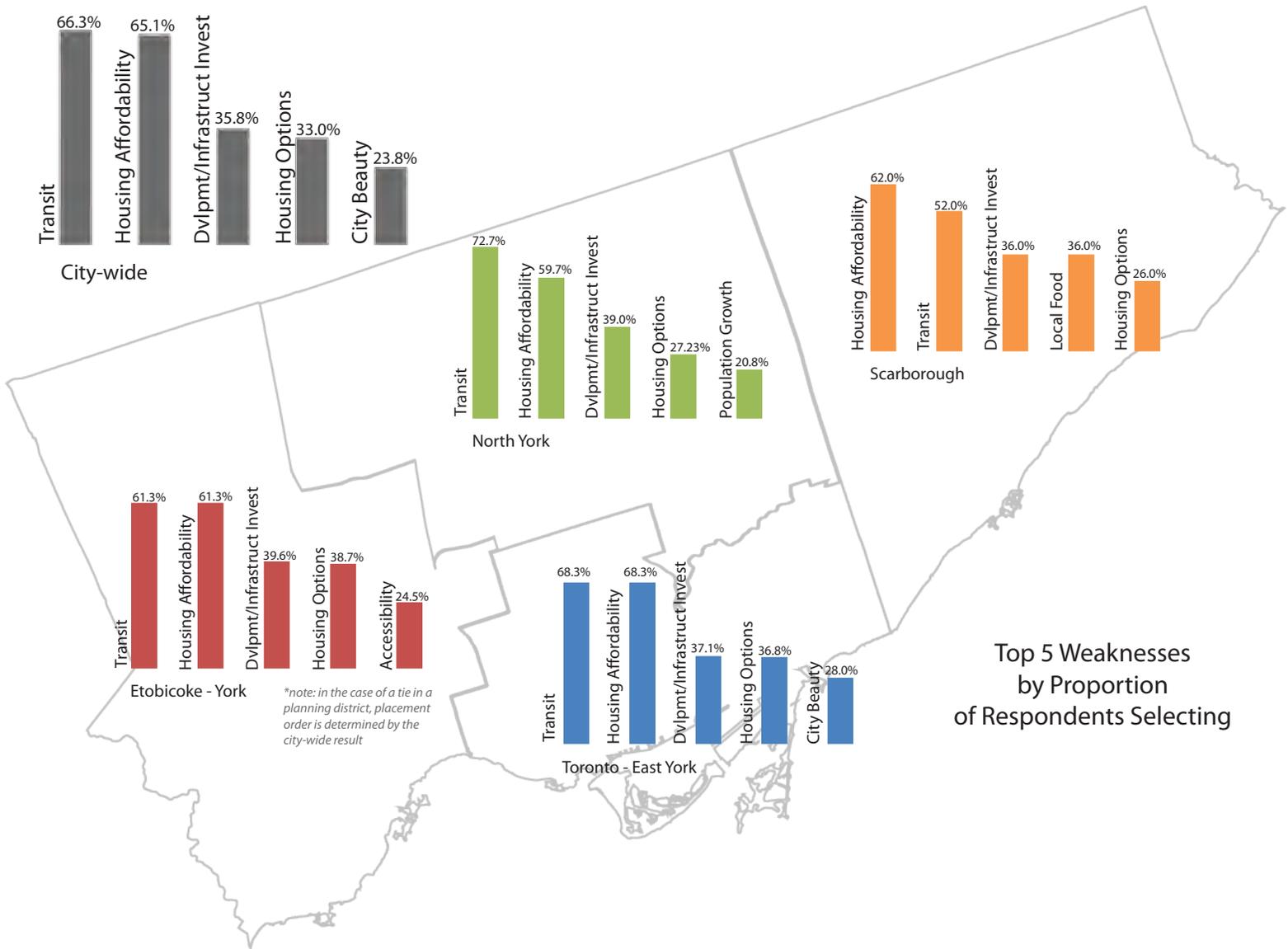
### by Proportion of Respondents Selecting

1. Cultural Diversity - 75.0%
2. Neighbourhoods - 59.0%
3. Parks and Recreation - 38.9%
4. Downtown and Waterfront - 38.7%
5. Educational Opportunities - 24.6%
6. Employment Opportunities - 22.8%
7. Transit - 20.2%
8. Community Services - 19.2%
9. Special Events - 17.5%
10. Community Involvement - 17.4%
10. Economic Opportunities - 17.4%
12. Natural Environment - 17.1%
13. Main Streets - 17.1%
14. City Beauty - 15.3%
15. Healthy Communities - 9.6%
16. Local Food Production - 5.3%
16. Development / Infrastructure Investment - 5.3%
18. Population Growth - 3.7%
18. Other - 3.7%
18. Housing Options - 3.7%
21. Accessibility (no physical barriers) - 2.6%
22. Housing Affordability - 1.5%

City Planning staff are interested to learn of Toronto **resident and visitor opinions on the city's greatest strengths**, and asked this question as part of the survey. Respondents had a choice of 21 pre-filled options, and a 22nd open-ended box. Respondents had the opportunity to select as many as 5 options. On average, 4.4 selections were made by each respondent.

The **top results were consistent across the city, with cultural diversity, neighbourhoods, public parks and recreation, and the downtown and waterfront making the top 5 list across the city.** These four categories were cited far more frequently than any of the other options, as expressed in the above charts. However, there are some differences among the four Planning Districts. For example, educational opportunities was a top 5 strength in all districts except North York. City beauty and transit were also in the top 5 strengths for Scarborough and North York respectively, but were not in the top 5 in any the other two Planning Districts.

# Toronto Weaknesses



Survey respondents were also asked to select as many as 5 weaknesses using the same 22 options. On average, 4.0 selections were made per respondent.

**Consensus among respondents was strong on this question with transit and housing affordability standing out.** Across the city, 66.3% of respondents identified transit as a weakness, and 65.1% of respondents identified housing affordability as a weakness. Next, development/infrastructure investment, and housing options (ex. housing for seniors, single persons, families, etc) have response rates of 35.8% and 33.0%, respectively. Examining responses from more open-ended questions reveals that these four responses are related, as **respondents expressed much frustration over the lack of development and investment in both affordable housing and transit.** Additionally, a fair number of respondents wished to see the development of family-sized units in new condominium projects. Differences among the planning districts include local food in Scarborough, population growth in North York, city beauty in Toronto-East York, and accessibility in Etobicoke-York.

- City-wide Full list by Proportion of Respondents Selecting
1. Transit - 66.3%
  2. Housing Affordability - 65.1%
  3. Development / Infrastructure Investment - 35.8%
  4. Housing Options - 33.0%
  5. City Beauty - 23.8%
  6. Local Food Production - 23.7%
  7. Downtown and Waterfront - 17.8%
  8. Accessibility (no physical barriers) - 17.2%
  9. Employment Opportunities - 15.0%
  10. Natural Environment - 13.4%
  11. Other - 12.2%
  12. Population Growth - 11.9%
  13. Healthy Communities - 11.6%
  14. Community Involvement - 10.9%
  14. Community Services - 10.9%
  16. Main Streets - 9.6%
  17. Public Parks and Recreation - 8.1%
  18. Economic Opportunities - 7.8%
  19. Neighbourhoods - 2.1%
  20. Educational Opportunities - 1.5%
  21. Cultural Diversity - 1.4%
  22. Special Events - 1.1%

# Learning from Other Cities

*"Montreal and Paris tend to have corner shops on side streets and not just on the main streets. As a young woman, I would feel safer having those kinds of 'eyes on the street' getting home late at night."*

*"I like downtown Amsterdam where you have separated streetcar lines, car lanes and bike lanes so perhaps some sections of streets in Toronto could be developed that way."*

*"Development and transportation infrastructure should be planned together; perhaps we should emulate Hong Kong, where the MTR is a significant property developer in addition to transit operator."*

*"Look at Chicago's waterfront and Millennium Park; their public transit, and their beautiful historical buildings that are being restored not demolished, and new buildings have a respect for their surrounding architecture."*

*These text bubbles contain direct quotes from responses to question 9 of the survey*

Cities everywhere are adapting innovative approaches to city building. With this in mind, the survey asked respondents if they could **provide examples of best practices or ideas from elsewhere** that Toronto could learn from. A great idea need not be popularly known, and responses were therefore categorized by theme, but not by frequency. Some of these ideas will work well in the context from which they came, but may not work as well in Toronto; while other ideas may offer valuable solutions to challenges faced by Toronto. Some ideas will have applicability in the context of the Reviews, while others will not.

As with previous questions, **transportation was a key theme**. Many ideas about improving transit, cycling, walking, light-rail, trams, and streetcars were submitted. There were further ideas put forth about dedicating lanes for transit only, or for car-only or car-free streets, or for larger transit vehicles. Cities cited include New York, Montreal, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Vancouver, Singapore, and many others.

Unlike the issue of transportation, there were few submitted ideas about housing, despite housing being a popular issue. Four cities were mentioned as inspiration on housing: Amsterdam and its mixed social and market housing, Glasgow and its tenement housing, and Vancouver and Melbourne with their laneway housing.

Other ideas that were put forward include:

- city beauty, for which Chicago, Singapore, and Paris were mentioned (among others);
- heritage, for which European cities, and Boston, New York, and Chicago were mentioned;
- parks, for which Chicago, Paris, San Francisco, New York, and Vancouver were mentioned;
- public realm, for which Copenhagen, San Francisco, Chicago, Paris, and Tokyo were mentioned;
- building design standards, for which Chicago, Paris, Edinburgh, Brussels, Budapest, Copenhagen, and Vancouver were mentioned.

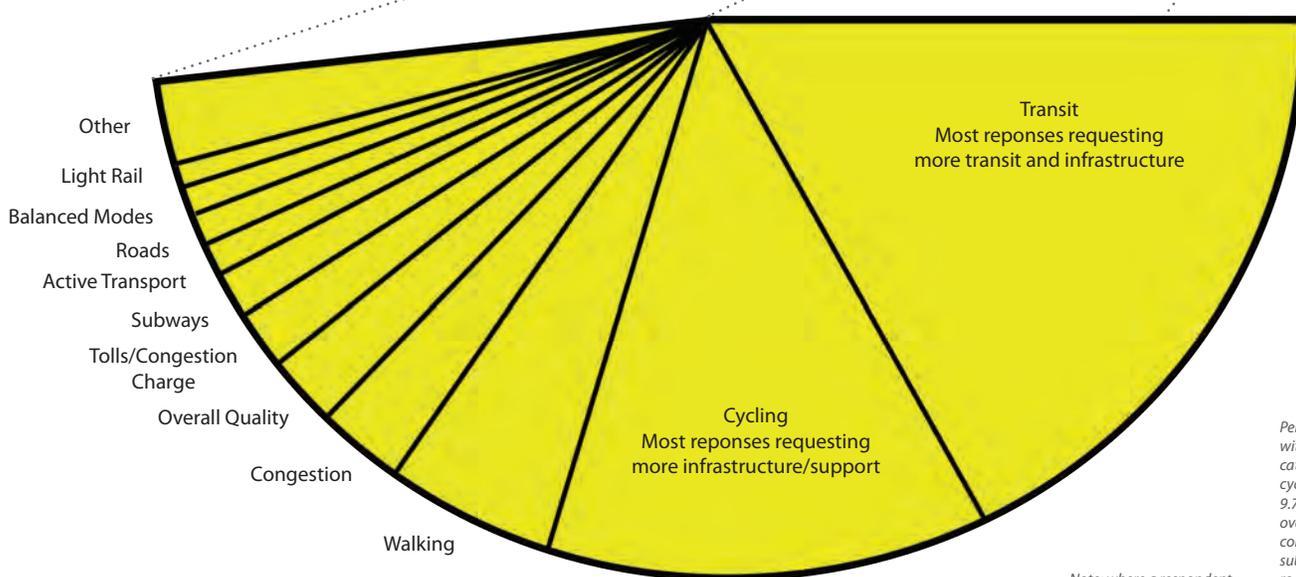
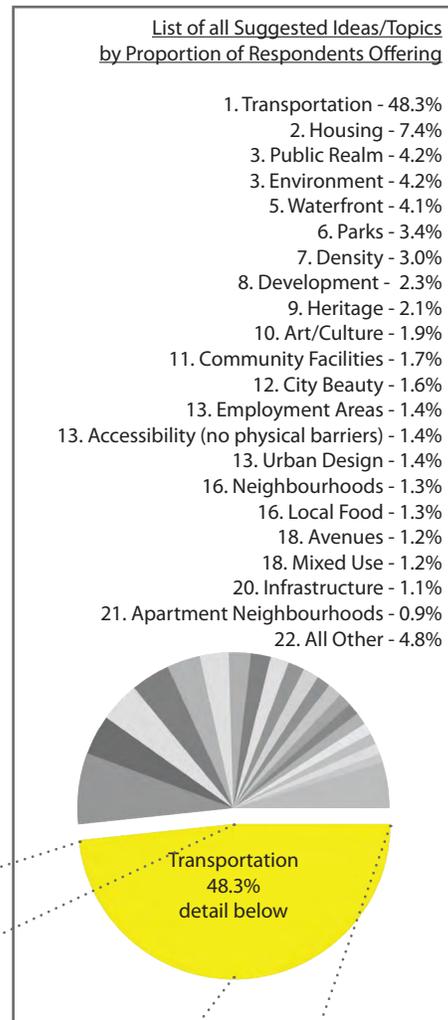
**Best practices and ideas from many other locations were put forward** for City Planning staff to consider in the Reviews. A few highlights of the suggestions made have been placed on this page exactly as they were received from respondents.

# Considerations

Among the open-ended questions in the survey was question 10: 'What topics/issues would you like the City to consider as part of the Official Plan Review?'. The responses to this question were open-ended, which offered respondents the opportunity to offer any suggestions they desired. Responses were categorized based on each idea presented. In total, **over 1000 topics or ideas** were received from the 731 surveys submitted.

Of the topics or ideas received, **48.3% were related to transportation**. This was by far the most common response, with **housing coming second with 7.4%** of responses (see the chart at right for a full breakdown of all topics/issues mentioned). Being open-ended, the responses in each category are varied, and yet a summary of each is possible by looking for themes and general consensus. For example, a breakdown of responses related to transportation illustrates the diversity of responses in this category. Of the 535 transportation-related responses, 194 are related to transit, 140 related to cycling, 52 related to walking, 28 to congestion, and 20 to tolls/congestion charging. These 5 items make up 81.1% of transportation-related responses.

Generally, **respondents want to see more transit infrastructure and investment, want a cycling network with infrastructure and support, better walkability throughout the city** with some pedestrianization of streets, and less traffic congestion. All 20 of the tolls/congestion related responses were calling for either road tolls for major highways into Toronto or for a congestion charge zone for cars to enter downtown Toronto. Categories that were mentioned 10 or less times include roads, parking, light rail, intermodal, downtown relief line, and transportation demand management.



Percentage breakdown within the Transportation category: transit 39.3%, cycling 26.2%, walking 9.7%, congestion 5.2%, overall quality 4.1%, tolls/congestion charges 3.7%, subways 2.6%, active 1.9%, roads 1.9%, balance 1.9%, light rail 1.5%, other 5.1%

Note: where a respondent mentioned 'transit', this response was incorporated into the 'transit' category. Specific responses such as 'subway' or 'light rail' were categorized individually

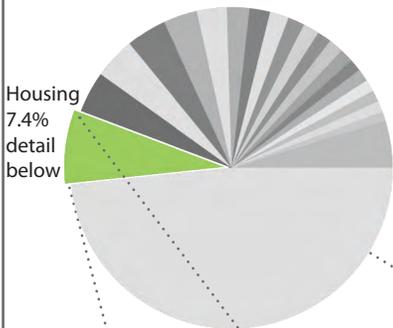
Note: both positive and negative responses were placed in the same category.

## Detail of Question 10 Transportation Related Responses

# Considerations (continued)

List of all Suggested Ideas/Topics  
by Proportion of Respondents Offering

1. Transportation - 48.3%
2. Housing - 7.4%
3. Public Realm - 4.2%
3. Environment - 4.2%
5. Waterfront - 4.1%
6. Parks - 3.4%
7. Density - 3.0%
8. Development - 2.3%
9. Heritage - 2.1%
10. Art/Culture - 1.9%
11. Community Facilities - 1.7%
12. City Beauty - 1.6%
13. Employment Areas - 1.4%
13. Accessibility (no physical barriers) - 1.4%
13. Urban Design - 1.4%
16. Neighbourhoods - 1.3%
16. Local Food - 1.3%
18. Avenues - 1.2%
18. Mixed Use - 1.2%
20. Infrastructure - 1.1%
21. Apartment Neighbourhoods - 0.9%
22. All Other - 4.8%

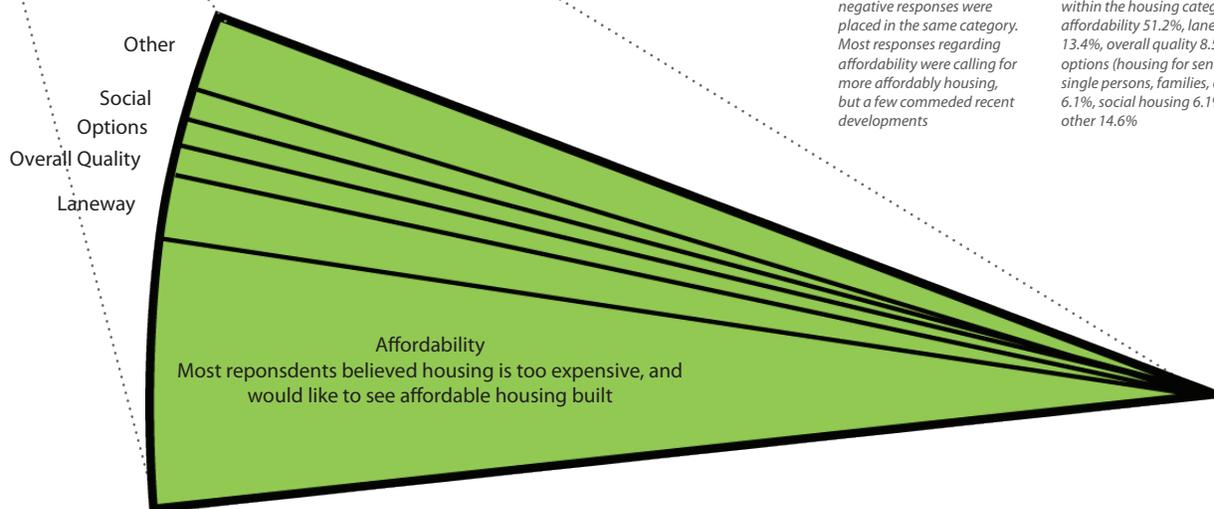


**Housing was the second most common response** in question 10. Within this housing category, the top two topics or ideas presented are **affordable housing and laneway housing**. Respondents want to see more affordable housing built in the city (and for housing to be more affordable in general), and to encourage laneway housing in the city where appropriate. Further detail on the category is expressed in the image below.

**Rounding out the top 5 categories of responses in question 10:**

- respondents who mentioned the **public realm** had general comments about making **improvements** to it, though a number mentioned a desire for an improved/increased tree canopy;
- respondents who mentioned the **environment** want to see **greater protections** for Toronto’s natural environments, and for a focus on sustainability; and
- respondents who mentioned the **waterfront** want to ensure that it **remains publicly accessible**, partially returned to a natural state, and to be developed as a neighbourhood (rather than commercialized).

Other responses as they relate to the Reviews include **a call for more density** (32 of the 33 responses about density were advocating greater levels of it, though some cautioned that it needs to be allowed considerably), a call for **greater protection of employment areas**, and a call for **further mid-rise development on Avenues**. Altogether, over a thousand topics and ideas were submitted, covering a wide breadth and scope of city building.



Note: both positive and negative responses were placed in the same category. Most responses regarding affordability were calling for more affordably housing, but a few commended recent developments

Percentage breakdown within the housing category: affordability 51.2%, laneway 13.4%, overall quality 8.5%, options (housing for seniors, single persons, families, etc) 6.1%, social housing 6.1%, other 14.6%

Note: across the survey, transit and housing are the top two stand out issues. For this reason, transit and housing are elaborated on this and the preceding page

## Detail of Question 10 Housing Related Responses

# Suggested Actions

The final question to cover in this summary is: ‘What actions can the City of Toronto take to make Toronto a wonderful place to live, play, invest and work?’ Like the question on page 7, this question is more about finding a great idea than determining which ideas are most popular.

Many **suggestions were made, but not all will be applicable** to the Official Plan and Municipal Comprehensive Reviews process. City Planning staff read every suggestion made in this section and divided responses into 4 categories based on their applicability to the Reviews process: related, indirectly related, of note, and unrelated. In total, there are **89 suggestions related to the Official Plan, and 285 that are indirectly related**. There are a further 390 suggestions that are of note, and to keep in mind for a future city building process. A total of 167 were unrelated (many of these were simply left blank). Here are a few paraphrased examples of ideas provided from respondents in each category:

Related:

- develop creative policies to **encourage more affordable housing**
- allow **greater intensification** on major streets to support future public transit infrastructure
- **do not allow retail in employment areas**
- **protect natural areas** and green spaces
- develop **stronger heritage preservation** policies

Indirectly related:

- find ways to alleviate congestion (indirect as the Official Plan identifies roadways and transit corridors, but does not directly address traffic demand and management)

Of note:

- protect cyclists from road rage (suggests an interest in the cycling network, but not related to the Official Plan)

Unrelated:

- increase property taxes in order to maintain current service levels (the Official Plan does not deliver services, nor does it regulate tax collection)

## Next Steps

Overall, **survey respondents are generally pleased with the direction Toronto is taking in city building, but they do have important suggestions for improving how Toronto will grow in the years ahead**. These suggestions will be considered in conjunction with all the other feedback in Stage 1 of the Reviews, with the aim of developing options as part of Stage 2 of the Reviews. For further information on the Reviews and this process, please refer to [www.toronto.ca/opreview](http://www.toronto.ca/opreview)

# Appendix A - Promotion Statistics

The survey was made available to potential respondents starting in late August, on a page called 'Your Say' within the dedicated Reviews website at [www.toronto.ca/opreview](http://www.toronto.ca/opreview). The survey was available up to and including October 17, 2011. Over this time period, the front page of the website hosted 7,367 unique visitors and 11,780 total views, with the entire site (including sub-pages) tallying a grand total of 28,427 page-views. The survey was mentioned on the front page of the website under the 'News' heading, which contained a hyperlink to the 'Your Say' page (where the survey was housed). A tab called 'Your Say' was placed on the opening page.

The survey was promoted using a number of traditional and new-media methods to reach a wide audience, and to encourage public engagement in the Reviews process. The goal was to have as many respondents as possible complete the survey, to ensure robust results and analysis that reflect the needs, desires, likes, and dislikes of both visitors and residents of Toronto. Promoting completion of the survey was done in conjunction with promotion of the Reviews, which was carried out via:

- City media releases, and posting on the City's main page;
- tweets via the City's Twitter account;
- posting videos on YouTube;
- radio ads (on Virgin Radio 99.9, 1010 Talk Radio, and Boom 97.3);
- online ads (on [www.spacing.ca/toronto](http://www.spacing.ca/toronto));
- ad in a major newspaper (the Toronto Star); and
- ads in local newspapers (all Metroland newspapers, the York, and Etobicoke Guardians, and the Mirrors of Scarborough, East York, North York, and City Centre).

In total, 731 completed surveys were received, of which:

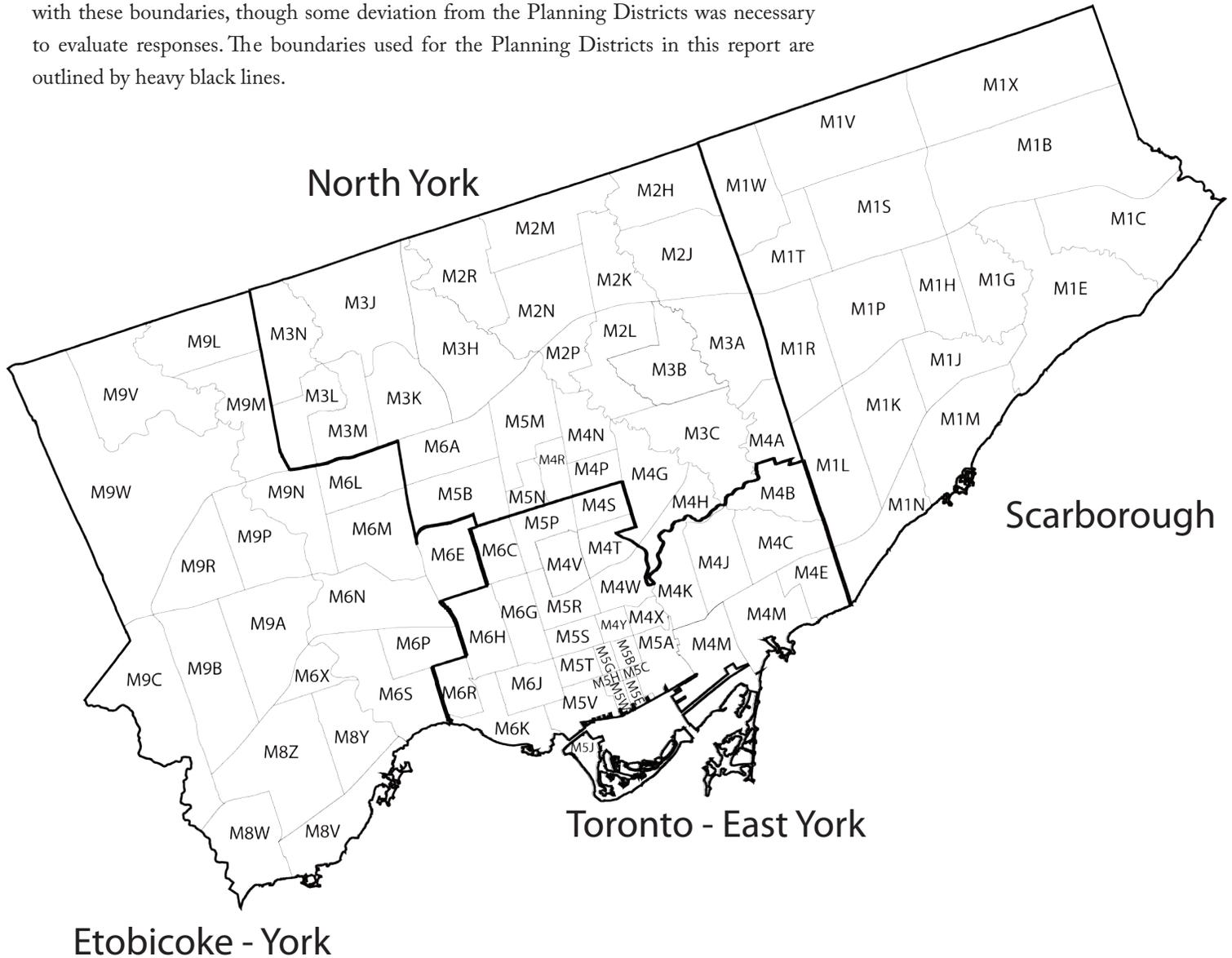
- 625 were completed online;
- 105 were completed at an open house (99 online, 6 on paper); and
- 1 was emailed to City Planning.

The survey reached a wide audience from across the city, in different age groups, and there was a relatively even gender split.

**The survey results have a margin of error of 3.6%, 19 times out of 20.**

# Appendix B - Districts Map

The map below shows the 3 digit postal code locations used to determine the location of survey responses (light black lines). The City of Toronto Planning Districts closely align with these boundaries, though some deviation from the Planning Districts was necessary to evaluate responses. The boundaries used for the Planning Districts in this report are outlined by heavy black lines.



# Appendix C

Appendix C is a copy of the paper-based 'Fast Feedback Survey'. It is available as part of the 'Stage 1 'Fast Feedback' Survey Summary' on the Official Plan and Municipal Comprehensive Reviews website under 'Bulletins' on the 'Documents and Information' page at: [www.toronto.ca/opreview/docsandinfo.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/opreview/docsandinfo.htm)