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A REPORT TO
CITY OF TORONTO

ATTACHMENT 4: RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL USE IN CITY PARKS – SURVEY 2

March 6, 2024

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

About the Research

METHODOLOGY



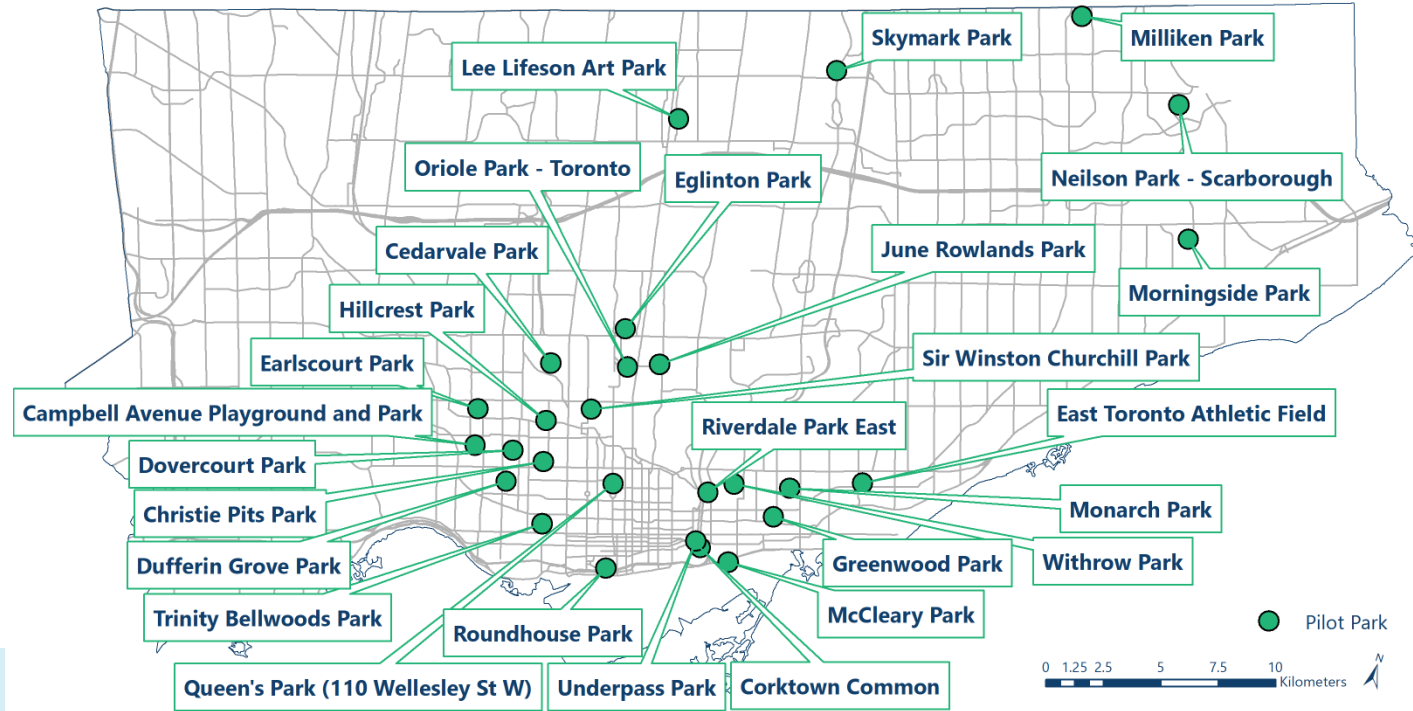
A total of n=1200 respondents completed the survey online. Respondents were drawn from an online panel. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of n=1200 would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.



The survey was undertaken between October 23rd -28th, 2023.



A sampling plan using quotas and weighting was developed to ensure a representative cross section of Torontonians by age, region and gender, reflective of the 2016 Statistics Canada data. The data was weighted by region back to the 2016 Census.



Alcohol in Parks Program Pilot Parks, City of Toronto

	2016 Census	2023 Unweighted Sample*	2023 Weighted Sample**
Region	%	N	n
Old Toronto/East York	31.7	531	379
Etobicoke/York	21.6	148	258
North York	23.6	298	282
Scarborough	23.1	222	276

*Interviews conducted across the City of Toronto by community.

**Weighted sample used in the reporting of findings.

BACKGROUND

- In January, 2023, The Strategic Council executed a study on behalf of the City of Toronto with the purpose of gauging public opinion surrounding allowing responsible alcohol consumption in City parks. The initial study examined support, reasons for support and opposition, expected impact of the policy on park attendance, and expectations of how the City would run the program. This first round of study was fielded between the 9th and 15th of January, 2023. Further detail about the initial research can be found here: [Alcohol in Parks Pilot Program - Attachment 5 \(toronto.ca\)](#).
- The pilot program began on August 2nd, 2023. On October 13th, 2023, the City of Toronto extended the 'Alcohol in Parks' pilot until March 31st, 2024. The City of Toronto commissioned TSC to conduct a second round of study mirroring the first round with the purpose of understanding if and how public sentiment had shifted as a result of the pilot program. The second survey includes a larger sample size which allowed us to look at differences between regions known as the City's 'Community Council Areas'. This report presents the major findings from the second round of study, highlighting areas where public sentiment has changed since January, 2023 as well as differences between regions.

OBJECTIVES

- The overall purpose of the research is to understand and identify shifts in attitudes towards allowing legal alcohol consumption in City of Toronto parks among Toronto residents since the launch of the pilot program, and to understand the changes in opinion on perceived risks, benefits, and conditions the public would expect to be imposed. Specific objectives are:
 - To provide an understanding of the changes in respondents' support or opposition towards allowing alcohol consumption in City of Toronto parks, including differences between regions;
 - To understand any shifts in respondents' attitudes towards the perceived benefits and risks of allowing drinking in parks;
 - To determine expectations of what limitations and regulations would be involved in allowing alcohol consumption in City parks after having run the pilot program; and
 - To assess changes in usage of City parks in light of allowing alcohol consumption.

Note to Reader – Statistical Testing

- Survey findings are not representative of immigrants, racial groups, etc.
- Throughout the detailed findings of this report, significance is shown at the 95th percent confidence level using up and down (↑/↓) arrows.
 - Green and red arrows (↑/↓) indicate findings that are significantly above or below the results from January 2023.
 - Grey arrows (↑) indicate findings that are significantly different from their comparator group within the findings of October 2023 (e.g., significantly more male respondents than female respondents).

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KEY FINDINGS

Key Findings

1 LEVEL OF SUPPORT

Support and opposition to the 'Alcohol in Parks' program is stable compared to before the pilot. Just under half (46%) are supportive, while three-in-ten (30%) are opposed. One-quarter are neutral on the issue (23%).

4 POST 'ALCOHOL IN PARKS' PILOT EXPECTATIONS

Just over half (53%) of Torontonians want the 'Alcohol in Parks' program to be continued in some form after the end of the pilot. One-third (34%) want it ended. Fewer than one-in-five (16%) say they have no opinion.

2 SUPPORT BY REGION

Support for the 'Alcohol in Parks' program varies by region. Those who live in Toronto-East York are substantially more supportive than those who live elsewhere in the city.

5 EXPECTATIONS OF RULES

There remains a clear expectation that public safety be maintained should alcohol be allowed in City parks. After the pilot, fewer are concerned about clear guidelines.

3 CONCERNS

Concerns with allowing alcohol consumption are generally stable, though Torontonians are less concerned about under-age drinking and disruptive behaviour than prior to the pilot.

6 PILOT EXPERIENCE

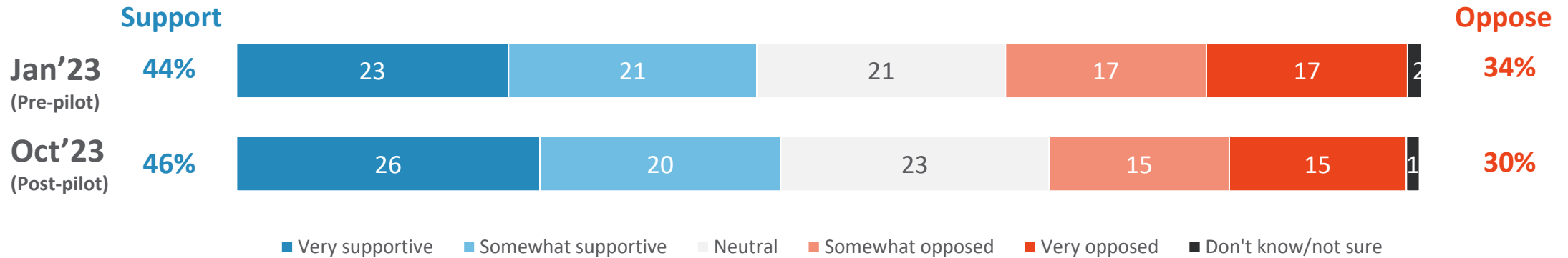
Torontonians who visited the pilot parks, regardless of whether they consumed alcohol or not are more supportive of the program than those who did not visit a park.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Support for the Alcohol in Parks program is relatively stable.

- Respondents who visited a park during the pilot are much more likely to be supportive of the program than those who did not visit (59%↑ and 40%, respectively) as are those who consumed alcohol in a pilot park during their visit compared to those who visited a park but did not consume (84%↑ and 48%, respectively).
- 58% of respondents are soft on the issue both in their support and in their opposition, which is similar to the 59% in Jan'23.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR CITY OF TORONTO ALLOWING PEOPLE TO RESPONSIBLY DRINK IN PARKS



Changes amongst those who support:

- Results amongst those who were supportive in Jan'23 generally did not see notable changes in Oct'23.

Changes amongst those opposed:

- Residents aged 18-34 32%↑, 35-54 28%↓, and 55+ 31%↓.
- Men: 26%↓.
- Toronto/East York: 19%↓.

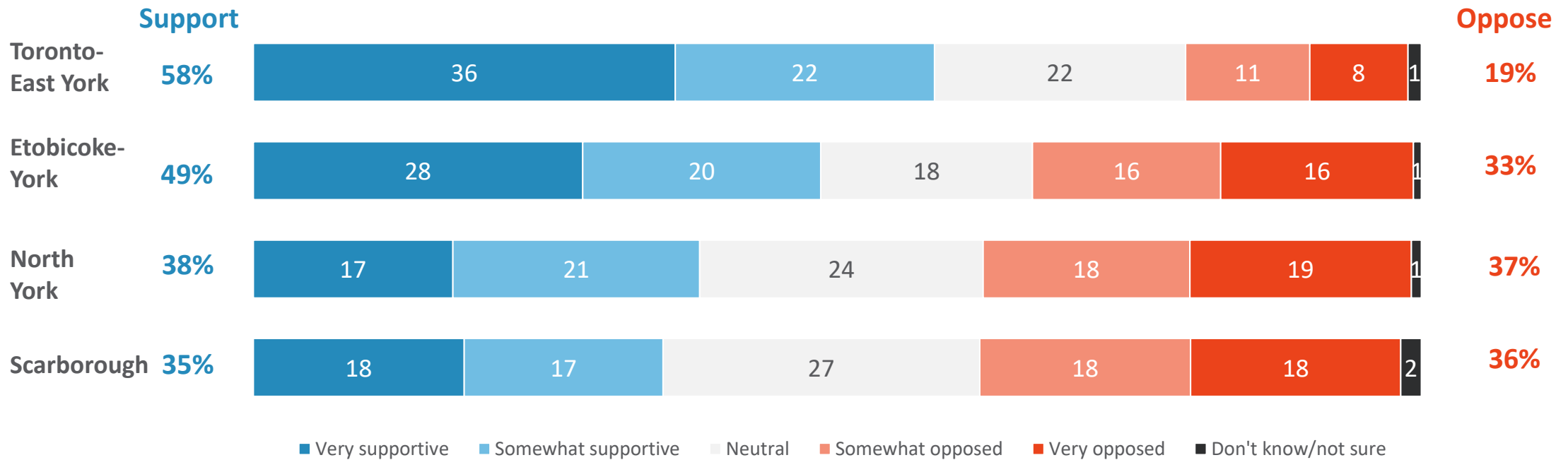
Q5. If the City of Toronto allows people to responsibly drink in parks, how supportive or opposed would you be to this change? (Jan '23 phrasing) The City of Toronto is considering allowing people to responsibly drink in parks. How supportive or opposed would you be to this change? (Oct '23 phrasing)

Base: Total sample Jan'23 n=800, Oct'23 n=1200

SUPPORT FOR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN PARKS BY REGION

Support amongst residents of Toronto-East York is substantially higher than in all other regions of the city. Likewise, Etobicoke-York residents are more supportive than those who live in North York or Scarborough.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR CITY OF TORONTO ALLOWING PEOPLE TO RESPONSIBLY DRINK IN PARKS



Q5. If the City of Toronto allows people to responsibly drink in parks, how supportive or opposed would you be to this change? (previous phrasing) The City of Toronto is considering allowing people to responsibly drink in parks. How supportive or opposed would you be to this change?

Base: Total sample Oct'23 n=1200

REASON FOR SUPPORT (OPEN ENDED QUESTION)

Among the 46% of Torontonians who expressed support to allowing alcohol in parks, most expressed no concerns about the program.

REASONS FOR BEING SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE (OPEN ENDED QUESTION)

	Oct'23 (Post-pilot)
Adults can be responsible/Free to do what they want/should be able to enjoy the outdoors and have a drink	27%
Generally like the idea	17%
Already happens and there are not issues/not a big deal	15%
People should be able to enjoy the outdoors and have a drink	15%
Needs to be done responsibly (proper enforcement, drink a reasonable amount)	13%
Fun/Good times/Socializing/Bonding/Being with friends	12%
Brings Toronto in line with other cities/countries	7%
Not everyone has outdoor space	6%
Don't know/not sure/Not Stated	9%
NET - SUPPORTIVE - Have no concerns	77%

- Residents 55 year of age and older are more likely to say that they support allowing alcohol consumption because it is already happening in parks (15%↑ vs. 6%).
- Those living in Toronto/East York are more likely to support the program because it brings Toronto in line with other cities/countries (11%↑).

Q5a. Why are you (RESPONSE FROM Q5) to this proposed change? (Open ended question)

Base: Those who are supportive of the change (Jan'23 n=360, Oct'23 n=552)

Showing responses of 5% or greater.

REASON FOR OPPOSITION (OPEN END)

Among the 30% of Torontonians who expressed opposition to allowing alcohol in parks, the primary explanation given being opposed is concerns about conduct.

REASONS FOR BEING **OPPOSED** TO THE PROPOSED CHANGE (OPEN ENDED QUESTION)

	Oct'23 (Post-pilot)
Public Drunkenness/Violence/Bad Behaviour	48%
Park should be focused on families (not exposing kids/young people to drinking)	23%
Park safety will decrease	20%
Generally dislike the idea	12%
Concerned about litter	8%
Not everyone wants to be around alcohol	7%
Other	5%
Don't know/not sure/Not Stated	8%

- Respondents who identify as South Asian/Indo-Caribbean are more likely to oppose the program because of reservations surrounding the decrease in park safety (41%↑).
- Torontonians aged 55 or older are more concerned about litter (14%↑), as are women (11%↑).

Q5a. Why are you (RESPONSE FROM Q5) to this proposed change? (Open ended question)

Base: Those who are opposed to the change (Jan'23 n=262, Oct'23 n=362)

Showing responses of 5% or greater.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN PARKS

Broadly, there has been little change in the cited benefits of the ‘Alcohol in Parks’ program versus prior to the pilot. Half (50%) continue to say it would provide a new space to socialize and gather.

BENEFITS OF ALLOWING PEOPLE TO RESPONSIBLY DRINK IN PARKS

	Jan'23	Oct'23
Provides a new outdoor space to socialize and gather	52%	50%
Provides an alternative to restaurants and bars for alcohol consumption	41%	40%
Responds to public's current park use trends and requests	28%	27%
Improves clarity on where people can drink alcohol	26%	27%
Enhances the park experience	26%	27%
Improves the sense of community	22%	25%
There are no benefits	29%	26%
Don't know/not sure	5%	6%

- People living in Toronto/East York are more likely to say that it would enhance the park experience than those living in other parts of the city (36%↑), as are those aged 35-54 (29%↑) as well as male respondents (32%↑).
- Those aged 18-35 cite ‘provides a new outdoor space to socialize and gather’ as a benefit of alcohol consumption in parks less often (49%↓) than in Jan'23.
- Respondents aged 35-54 are more likely to say that there are no benefits to allowing consumption (26%↑), as are those over 55 (33%↑) than those aged 18-34.
- People aged 18-34 are more likely to say that allowing consumption will improve the sense of community (29%↑) than those over 35.

Q6. If the City continues to allow people to responsibly drink in parks, what would be the benefits?

Base: Total sample Jan'23 n=800, Oct'23 n=1200

CONCERNS WITH ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN PARKS

Compared to January 2023, concerns for allowing people to responsibly drink in parks have largely stayed the same.

CONCERNS FOR ALLOWING PEOPLE TO RESPONSIBLY DRINK IN PARKS

	Jan'23 (Pre-pilot)	Oct'23 (Post-pilot)
Disruptive behaviour	70%	66%
Increased litter	61%	58%
Public urination	60%	57%
Drinking and driving	53%	55%
Underage drinking	59%	54%
Excess noise	50%	50%
Negative health effects of increased alcohol consumption	26%	27%
Loss of alcohol-free space in parks	28%	24%
Discrimination towards people drinking in parks who are Black, Indigenous, or are part of an equity-deserving group	24%	23%
Other (e.g., concerns about crime, gateway to worse behaviour, drinking near children/playgrounds)	1%	3%
I have no concerns	5%	6%
Don't know/not sure	2%	2%

- Women are less concerned about underage drinking in City parks than in Jan'23 (59%↓ vs. 66%), as are those over 55 years of age (61%↓ vs. 73%).
- Generally, concerns about drinking in parks has decreased for those over 35 years of age, especially regarding the loss of alcohol-free space in parks for those aged 35-54 (23%↓ vs. 31%).

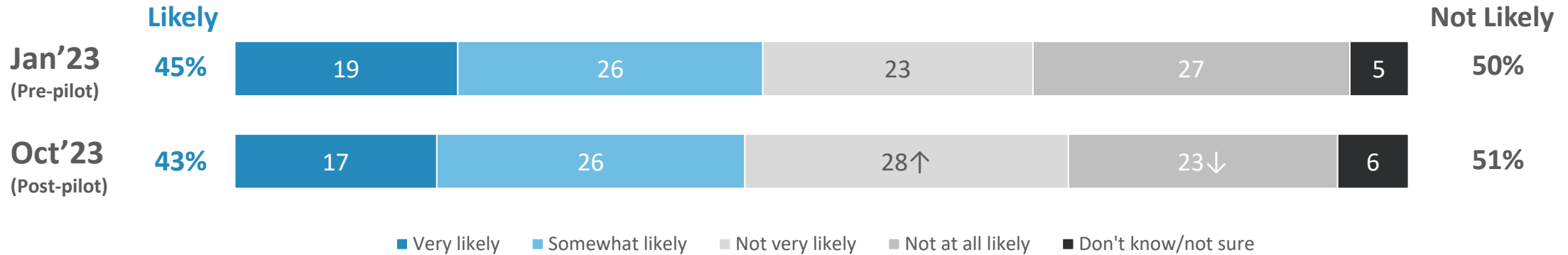
Q7. If the City continues to allow people to responsibly drink in parks, which of the following are concerns would you have?

Base: Total sample Jan'23 n=800, Oct'23 n=1200

LIKELIHOOD TO CONSUME ALCOHOL IN PARKS

Among those who consume alcohol, results continue to be mixed on whether they would consume alcohol in parks should it be allowed, as they were in January’23. Just over half (51%) continue to say it would be unlikely, while 43% say that they would, which is a slight decrease in likelihood from January’23.

LIKELIHOOD OF DRINKING IN A PARK IF IT WAS ALLOWED



Likely to Drink in a Park if Allowed:

- Respondents who live in Toronto/East York: 50%↑
- Younger Torontonians aged 18-34 48%↑ and 35-54 50%↑.
- Respondents aged 18-34 (48%↓ vs. 58%).

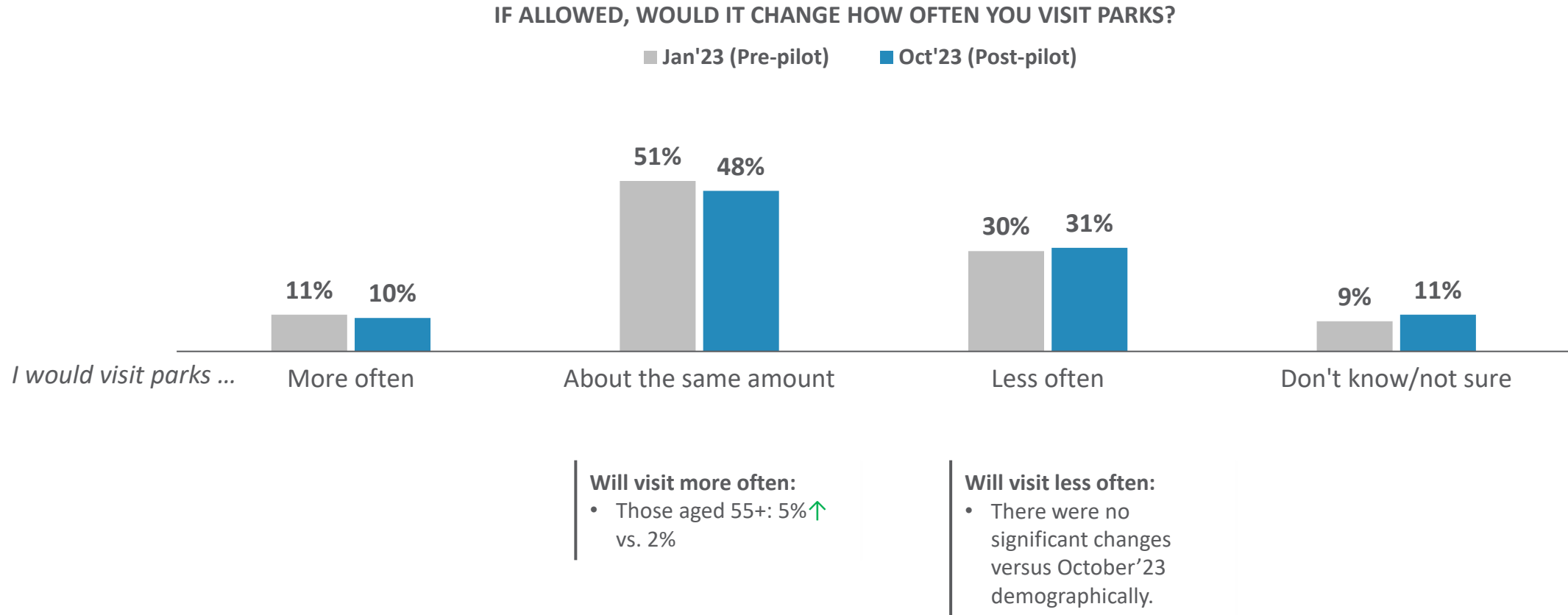
Not Likely to Drink in a Park if Allowed:

- Respondents aged 55+ 64%↑.

Q8. If the City continues to allow people to responsibly drink in parks, how likely would you be to drink in a park?
 Base: Those who consume alcohol (Jan'23 n=597, Oct'23 n=888)

CHANGE IN WILLINGNESS TO VISIT PARKS

Three-in-ten (30%) respondents say they would visit City parks less often should alcohol consumption be allowed there, on par with previous results. Half (51%) say that their frequency of visiting parks would not change.








Q9. If the City continues to allow people to responsibly drink in parks (including the park that you visit the most) would this change how often you visit parks?

Base: Visits a park in Toronto (Jan'23 n=771, Oct'23 n=1200)

53% of respondents want to retain the 'Alcohol in Parks' program in some form.
28% say that they want to see the program ended.

- At least half of respondents from each respective region of Toronto say that they support the continuation of the program in some form.

VIEWS ON ALCOHOL IN PARKS AFTER THE PILOT

	Oct'23
End the program, personal consumption of alcohol should NOT be allowed in any park	 28%
Permanently allow drinking at ALL parks	 17%
Expand the program to permanently allow drinking at more parks (potentially including near where you live)	 19%
Permanently allow drinking only at the SAME parks that were part of the pilot	 17%
Doesn't matter/don't really care about the issue	 16%

Retain the program:

- Pilot park visitors (67%↑ vs. 50%).
- Those who drank in a pilot park (95%↑ vs. 56%).
- Men (59%↑ vs. 52%).
- White-identifying Torontonians (60%↑ vs. 51%).

End the program:

- Non-drinkers (50%↑ vs. 20%).

QN3. What would you like to see happen with the "alcohol in parks" program in 2024, after the pilot ends (please select one response category only)?

Base: Total sample n=1200

As in Jan'23, maintaining public health and safety is the most important condition of allowing alcohol consumption in city parks.

IMPORTANT CONDITIONS IF CITY ALLOWED PEOPLE TO RESPONSIBLY DRINK IN PARKS

	Jan'23 (Pre-pilot)	Oct'23 (Post-pilot)
Maintaining public health and public safety	66	67%
Maintaining park assets and natural areas	56	55%
Clear communication and easy-to-understand rules and guidelines	63	54%
Promoting a positive experience for all	46	47%
Equitable access across Toronto	26	26%
Other (e.g., more enforcement, designated drinking areas, more garbage cans)	-	4%
Don't know/not sure	9	7%

- Those over 55 years of age more frequently cited maintaining public health and public safety (74%↑) and clear communication (62%↑) than younger residents as important conditions to drinking in City parks.
- Promoting a positive experience for all was more often cited by women (50%↑) and by those living in Toronto/East York (51%↑).

Q10. If the City continues to allow people to responsibly drink in parks, what conditions would be important to you?

Base: Total sample Jan'23 n=800, Oct'23 n=1200

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ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

Respondent Profile

GENDER n=1200

52%	Woman
47%	Man
1%	NET – Other
<1%	Prefer not to answer

AGE n=1200

31%	18-34
37%	35-54
32%	55+

PART OF CITY OF TORONTO LIVE IN n=1200

22%	Etobicoke York
24%	North York
32%	Toronto and East York (includes downtown)
23%	Scarborough
<1%	Don't know

TYPE OF HOUSING n=1200

35%	Single-family detached
15%	Single-family semi-detached, townhome, row house
2%	Duplex, triplex, or rooming house
48%	Apartment or condominium
1%	Other

HAVE OUTDOOR SPACE AT HOME FOR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION n=1200

86%	Yes
13%	No
1%	Don't know/Not sure

HOUSEHOLD INCOME n=1200

24%	NET - <\$50K
12%	\$0 - \$29,999
12%	\$30,000 - \$49,999
32%	NET - \$50K-<\$100K
14%	\$50,000 - \$69,999
18%	\$70,000 - \$99,999
33%	NET - \$100K+
19%	\$100,000 - 149,999
15%	\$150,000 or more
10%	Prefer not to answer
1%	Don't know

BORN IN CANADA n=1200

62%	Born in Canada
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LENGTH OF TIME LIVING IN CANADA (Not born in Canada n=437)

26%	0-5 years
12%	6-10 years
62%	More than 10 years
<1%	Prefer not to answer
<1%	Don't know

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING IN HH n=1200

74%	0
13%	1
8%	2
4%	3+
1%	Prefer not to answer

ETHNIO-RACIAL IDENTITY n=1200

4%	Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian
7%	Black
14%	East Asian
2%	First Nations
4%	Latin American
12%	South Asian or Indo-Caribbean
5%	Southeast Asian
53%	White
<1%	Canadian
<1%	Mixed
<1%	Jewish
<1%	Other
3%	Prefer not to answer

IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS TO CANADA n=1200

4%	Yes
94%	No
2%	Prefer not to answer

PERSONALLY CONSUME ALCOHOL n=1200

74%	Yes
25%	No
1%	Prefer not to say

HAVE VISITED ONE OF THE PILOT PARKS n=1200

35%	Yes
60%	No
5%	Don't know

CONSUMED ALCOHOL DURING VISIT (among those who have visited n=420)

28%	Yes
71%	No
2%	Don't know