

## Attachment 2: Public Consultation Overview & Data

### Public Consultation Overview

On March 17, 2025, the City launched public consultation on a proposed bylaw. The City undertook a multi-pronged approach for public consultation to maximize opportunities for public input and enable broad participation and inclusive representation.

The nature of the subject matter of the public consultation required careful consideration of the most appropriate spaces and methods to facilitate safe and constructive discussions. The consultation approach prioritized inclusivity, safety, access and privacy. Third-party consultant services were procured to support the consultation and to ensure the comfort and safety of all participants in providing input to the City.

The consultation gathered input and feedback through the following methods:

- Survey: an anonymous online survey was available between March 17, 2025 and May 1, 2025
- Written Submissions: comments via email were accepted between March 17, 2025 and May 1, 2025
- Public Sessions: two virtual public sessions took place on April 22, 2025 and April 30, 2025
- Community-Focused Discussion Sessions: small group discussions took place with individuals from and organizations representing Indigenous, Black, equity-deserving groups, 2SLGBTQ+, racialized communities, newcomers, youth, seniors, as well as legal and civil liberties groups, human rights organizations, faith-based groups, environmental sector, unions and labour organizations, public transit and climate justice advocates

### 1. Consultation Methods

#### 1.1 Survey

An anonymous online survey was available between March 17, 2025 and May 1, 2025 that included:

- multiple questions to gather an understanding of the public's experience with and perspectives on demonstrations and vulnerable institutions;
- open-text questions for resident's ideas on important considerations, bylaw implementation and open comment;
- optional demographic questions;
- availability in 18 languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese-Simplified, Chinese-Traditional, English, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Urdu and Vietnamese.

#### *Participation Metrics*

- 42,747 respondents.
- More than 130,000 responses were received for open-text questions.
- 536 surveys were completed in a language other than English.

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### *Rationale*

Surveys hosted online have generally increased response rate (as compared with other traditional survey methods), are accessible to a wide audience and from many digital devices, have a low cost, design flexibility, and allow for ongoing, real-time analysis. The survey was open for the entire consultation period to allow respondents to complete at their convenience.

### *Process*

The survey questions were drafted by and with feedback from City staff in divisions with the applicable subject-matter expertise, including the City Manager's Office, Legal Services, and Social Development, as well as review from People and Equity and the City Clerk's Office Information Collection Unit. The survey was hosted on Medallia which is a digital tool used widely by the City of Toronto. The survey questions are included in Attachment 3.

### *Limitations*

#### *Location-Based Information*

It cannot be determined with confidence that all respondents to the survey reside in Toronto. The survey did not collect location-specific data to ensure anonymity and privacy and is aligned with City Clerk's Information Management recommendations and the City's Data for Equity Strategy, which state that the minimum amount of data should be collected in demographic questions and that demographic questions be optional for respondents. IP addresses are considered personal information and were not collected for this survey.

#### *Multiple Responses Per Individual*

It cannot be determined with confidence that individual respondents did not complete the survey more than one time. The survey did not restrict submissions to only one response per IP address as this may unfairly restrict participation from those accessing the survey from locations such as libraries, as well as more than one member of the same household. IP addresses are considered personal information and were not collected for this survey.

### *Accessibility*

While online surveys are accessible on most digital devices, the City recognizes that surveys can privilege those with trust, access, and time.

### *Mitigation*

The online survey is not the sole source of input for this consultation and is balanced with the other public consultation methods of data collection. To ensure Toronto voices were included in the consultation, the public sessions required registrants to enter a Toronto postal code, and the community-focused sessions were with Toronto-based groups and organizations. Reflection on the survey data received to-date was done in the public sessions and the community-focused sessions to ensure representativeness. Finally, the survey was available in 18 languages to improve accessibility, as well

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alternative formats to online were offered upon request, however no requests were made.

### 1.2 Written Submissions

Residents and organizations were invited to provide written comments on a proposed bylaw from March 17, 2025 to May 1, 2025. Written submissions were sent via email to [engagement@toronto.ca](mailto:engagement@toronto.ca).

#### *Participation Metrics*

- 108 written submissions were received.

### 1.3 Public Sessions

Two virtual sessions for the public in Toronto took place on April 22, 2025 and April 30, 2025 that included:

- poll and open-ended chat questions to gather input on public's experience with and perspectives on demonstrations and vulnerable institutions;
- reflection on the online survey response data received to-date;
- open-ended questions on important considerations for the City in developing a proposed bylaw;
- the requirement that registrants have a Toronto postal code.

The sessions were hosted and facilitated by the third-party consultant. Staff from the City Manager's Office attended each session for the last quarter of the meeting to hear a summary of the session, answer questions and provide comments.

#### *Participation Metrics*

- April 22, 2025: 123 registered; 61 participated
- April 30, 2025: 251 registered; 131 participated

#### *Rationale*

The nature of the subject matter of the public consultation required careful consideration of the most appropriate spaces and methods to facilitate safe and constructive discussions. The public consultation approach prioritized privacy and providing safe spaces for the public to provide feedback. The virtual format of the public sessions was determined as the optimal approach to ensure a safe, inclusive and constructive space for the public to provide feedback.

Due to the high volume of interest in the consultation, the virtual sessions used a *MegaGroup Virtual Meeting Methodology* as defined by the third-party consultant. MegaGroups are best suited for studies that aim to achieve broad level engagement from a diverse group of individuals where there is high interest in participation and for projects that are:

- complex in nature where explanations may be required;
- include visuals or new concepts that need to be assessed; and,
- aim to gather more in-depth feedback than what would be provided on an online survey, but less in-depth than a full focus group.

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### *Limitations*

To ensure privacy and safety of participants in a virtual meeting of this nature, participants were unable to view the names of other participants and the chat responses from other participants. This limited dialogue between participants and the ability to hear perspectives from others. The poll responses were provided only in verbal summary at the April 22 session; this was altered for the second session and the poll summary was provided visually and verbally immediately following completion to allow for better engagement and reflection with participants during the April 30 session.

### **1.4 Community-Focused Discussion Sessions**

Community discussions were held with directed outreach to Indigenous, Black, equity-deserving groups, 2SLGBTQ+, racialized communities, newcomers, youth, seniors, legal and civil liberties groups, human rights organizations, faith-based groups, environmental sector, unions and labour organizations, public transit and climate justice advocates. Some groups reached out directly to the City of Toronto to be included in a discussion. These sessions were:

- hosted and facilitated by the third-party consultant with City staff in attendance only by request from the group. The consultant collected unfiltered feedback without offering policy responses or recommendations
- either in-person or virtual, depending on the preference of the group
- open conversations through a co-developed Discussion Guide with open-ended questions on the following topics:
  - demonstrations
  - safety
  - vulnerable institutions
  - barriers and access to certain locations
  - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

### *Participation Metrics*

- 16 Community-Focused Discussion Sessions took place.
- 70 community groups or organizations were represented at the sessions.

### *Rationale*

Community discussions were hosted as a part of this consultation in consideration of the complexity and sensitivity of the topic, and to ensure that the diverse concerns of communities were heard. To ensure the comfort and safety of participants, the third-party consultant was used for all community-focused sessions.

### *Limitations*

The timeline of the consultation did not allow for engagement of some groups due to scheduling availability, as well as an inability to host follow-up conversations if needed. Many (more than half) groups expressed that the timeline of the consultation was too short for adequate consultation on a topic of this nature.

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Qualitative techniques are used in consultation research as a means of developing insight and direction, rather than collecting quantitatively precise data or absolute measures. As such, results from the public and community-focused sessions cannot be necessarily applied to the overall population under study and must be used as directional insight only. Caution must be used when reviewing tallies across sessions given the small sample sizes.

## 2. Survey Results

### 2.1 Summary of Findings

#### *Frequency of Encountering Demonstrations:*

- 60 per cent of respondents indicated that they encounter demonstrations Occasionally or Often in Toronto.
- 36 per cent of respondents indicated that they Never or Rarely encounter demonstrations in Toronto.

#### *Feelings When Encountering Demonstrations:*

- A majority of respondents had Often or Always felt appreciative and supportive when encountering a demonstration in Toronto.
- A majority of respondents Never or Rarely felt inconvenienced, uncomfortable, scared or have a concern for their safety.
- 71 per cent had Never or Rarely not been able to access the building/program/service that they want.

#### *Vulnerable Institutions:*

- The top three responses were Child care centres, Places of worship, and Faith-based schools, chosen by over 40 per cent of the respondents.
- None of the above ranked as the 4th highest choice, chosen by 33 per cent of respondents.

#### *Support for Toronto Adopting a Bylaw Similar to Other Municipalities:*

- 63 per cent of respondents were either Strongly unsupportive or Somewhat unsupportive.
- 32 per cent of respondents were either Strongly supportive or Somewhat supportive.
- Respondents were deeply polarized as the top two responses by a wide margin were either Strongly unsupportive or Strongly supportive.

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### *Appropriate Distance for a Bylaw, if Adopted:*

- There was no strong choice of distance.
- A third of respondents chose "Other" distance mostly writing in distances from greater than 100 metres, to kilometres away, or 0 metres.
- Less than 10 metres was the 2nd highest choice.
- 10 metres to 50 metres was the least desired choice.

## 2.2 Summary of Respondents

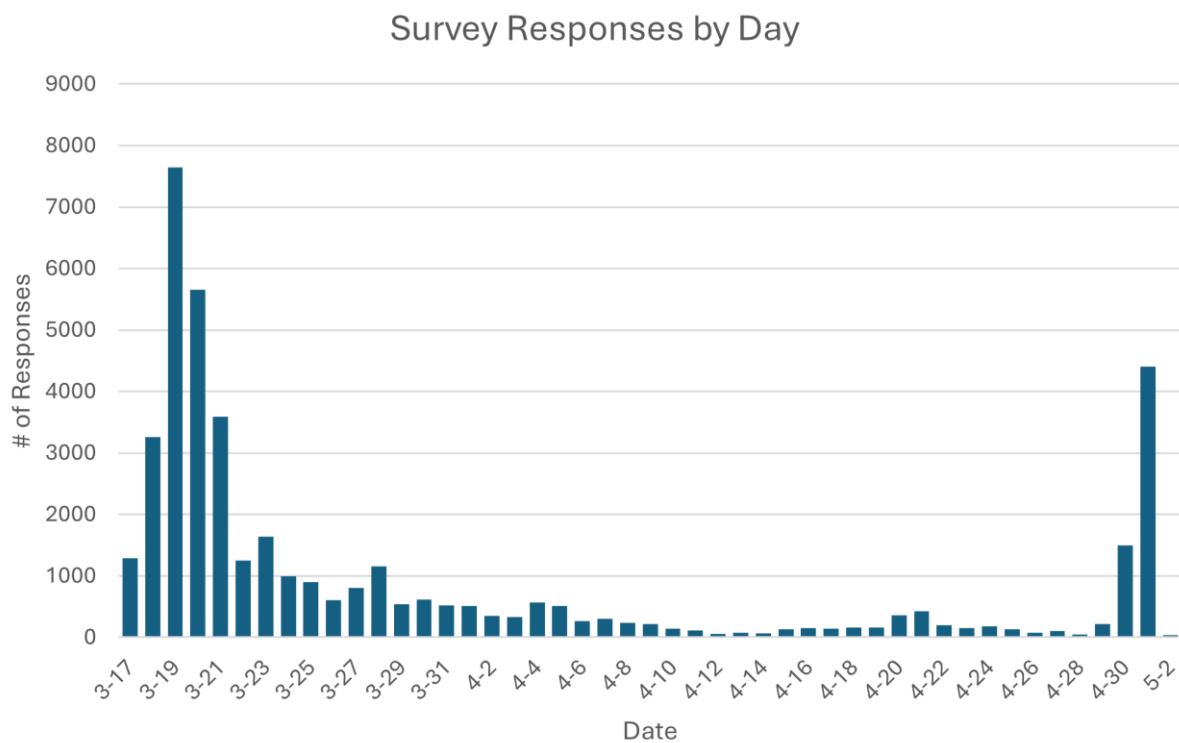


Figure 1: Survey Response Rates Per Day, to a total of 42,747 respondents, March 17 - May 1, 2025

### Demographics Summary

- The survey responses reflected a variety of gender identities and racial backgrounds indicating a broad demographic engagement.
- The responses included a diverse range of age groups, with significant overrepresentation from the 30-39 age bracket and significant underrepresentation from the 10-19 age bracket. Older adults 55-64 and 65+

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were underrepresented. This is based on the general population of Toronto as according to the 2021 Census.

- More respondents identifying as female responded to the survey compared to the general female population of Toronto, as according to the 2021 Census.
- Fewer respondents identifying as a visible minority (as defined by the Census) responded to the survey compared to the general population of Toronto, as according to the 2021 Census.
- Respondents identifying as having a disability were slightly underrepresented compared to the general population of Toronto, as according to the 2021 Census.
- Respondents identifying as Indigenous were sufficiently represented compared to the general population of Toronto, as according to the 2021 Census.
- A significant number (more than 25 per cent) of respondents chose not to provide their racial background or religion.
- Respondents identifying their religion as Judaism (Jewish) religion were extremely overrepresented by over five times its proportion of the Toronto population, as compared with the 2021 Census.
- Respondents identifying their racial background as Arab were significantly overrepresented by three times its proportion of the Toronto population, as compared with the 2021 Census.
- 45 per cent of those that responded “Not listed” to the Racial background question identified themselves as Jewish or Israeli in the “Other” text.
- As recommended by the City’s Data for Equity Strategy, all demographic questions are optional. The total number of respondents per question were those who did not skip the question.

What is your age? (Please select one only.)

*Table 1: Age as Reported by Respondents*

Age Group	Count
10-19	297
20-29	5,865
30-39	9,103
40-54	8,905
55-65	3,804
65+	3,988
Prefer not to answer	2,301
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,263</b>

8,454 respondents did not provide a response to this question.

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Gender identity is the gender that people identify with or how they perceive themselves, which may be different from their sex assigned at birth. What best describes your gender? (Please select one only.)

*Table 2: Gender Identify as Reported by Respondents*

<b>Gender Identity</b>	<b>Count</b>
Woman	17,240
Man	10,580
Trans woman	150
Trans man	158
Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous)	1,266
Two-Spirited	81
Prefer not to answer	4,347
Not listed, please describe:	245
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,067</b>

8,680 respondents did not provide a response to this question.

Indigenous people from Canada identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, Métis, Aboriginal, Native or Indian. Do you identify as Indigenous to Canada? (Please select one only.)

*Table 3: Indigenous Identity as Reported by Respondents*

<b>Identify as Indigenous</b>	<b>Count</b>
Yes	739
No	28,248
Prefer not to answer	4,388
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,375</b>

9,372 respondents did not provide a response to this question.

People often describe themselves by their race or racial background. For example, some people consider themselves 'Black', 'White' or 'East Asian'. Which race category best describes you? (Please select one only.)

*Table 4: Race as Reported by Respondents*

<b>Race Category</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White (examples: English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian)	14,763	43.9%
Prefer not to answer	8,383	24.9%
South Asian or Indo-Caribbean (examples: Indian, Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)	2,235	6.6%
Not listed, please describe:	1,931	5.7%
More than one race category or mixed race, please describe:	1,656	4.9%



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Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian (examples: Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)	1,567	4.7%
Black (examples: African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)	938	2.8%
East Asian (examples: Chinese, Japanese, Korean)	863	2.6%
Latin American (examples: Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)	595	1.8%
Southeast Asian (examples: Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese)	420	1.2%
First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit or Métis	289	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,640</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

9,107 respondents did not provide a response to this question.

Religion refers to an individual's self-identification or affiliation with any religious denomination, group, or other religiously defined community, system of belief or spiritual faith practices. What is your religion or spiritual affiliation? (Please select one only.)

*Table 5: Religion as Reported by Respondents*

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Prefer not to answer	9,003	26.7%
Judaism (Jewish)	6,191	18.4%
No religion	4,415	13.1%
Christianity (Christian)	3,529	10.5%
Agnosticism (Agnostic)	2,693	8.0%
Atheism (Atheist)	2,689	8.0%
Islam (Muslim)	1,879	5.6%
Spiritual	1,512	4.5%
Not listed, please describe	630	1.9%
More than one faith or religion	415	1.2%
Buddhism (Buddhist)	264	0.8%
Hinduism (Hindu)	231	0.7%
Indigenous spirituality	144	0.4%
Sikhism (Sikh)	73	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,668</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

9,079 respondents did not provide a response to this question.

Disability is understood as any physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, learning, communication, sight, hearing or functional limitation that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. A disability can be permanent, temporary or episodic, and visible or invisible. Do you identify as a person with a disability? (Please select one only.)

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*Table 6: Identify as a Person with a Disability as Reported by Respondents*

<b>Identify as a Person with a Disability</b>	<b>Count</b>
Yes	5,207
No	23,307
Don't know	386
Prefer not to answer	4,917
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,817</b>

8,930 respondents did not provide a response to this question.

Surveys completed by language.

*Table 7: Surveys Completed by Language*

<b>Language</b>	<b>Count</b>
English	42,211
Arabic	113
French	79
Hebrew	76
Chinese (Traditional)	56
Spanish	45
Russian	39
Farsi	36
Urdu	29
Gujarati	14
Portuguese	13
Bengali	12
Chinese (Simplified)	10
Italian	5
Filipino	3
Tamil	2
Korean	2
Vietnamese	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,747</b>

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### 2.3 Survey Question Data

#### How frequently do you encounter demonstrations in Toronto?

60% of respondents indicated that they encountered demonstrations Occasionally or Often in Toronto while 36% of respondents indicated that they Never or Rarely encountered demonstrations in Toronto.

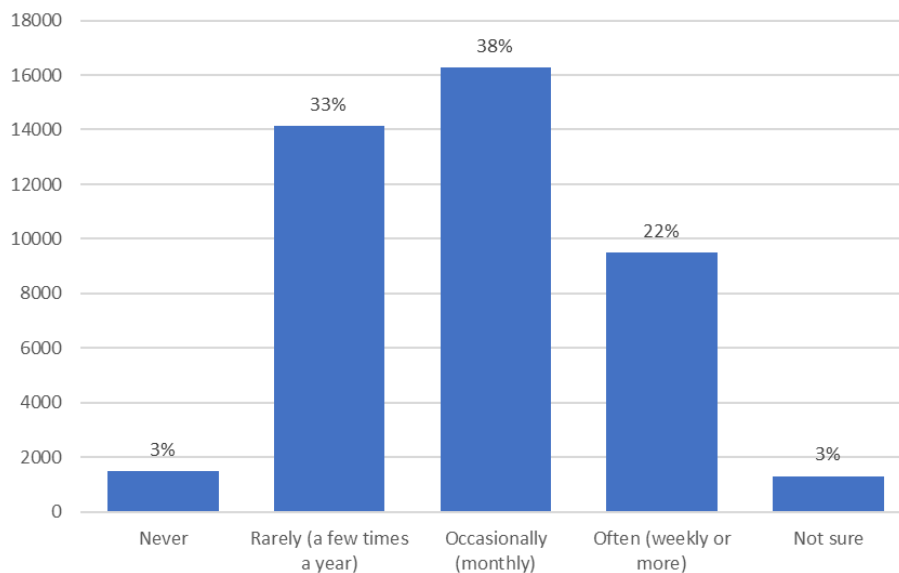


Figure 2: Respondent counts for How frequently do you encounter demonstrations in Toronto?

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### How frequently have you experienced and/or felt any of the following when encountering a demonstration in Toronto?

A majority of respondents Often or Always felt appreciative and supportive when encountering a demonstration in Toronto. A majority of respondents Never or Rarely felt inconvenienced, uncomfortable, scared or have a concern for their safety. 71% Never or Rarely had not been able to access the building/program/service that they wanted.

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
I am appreciative	14%	9%	12%	30%	34%	1%
I am engaged	16%	13%	27%	26%	17%	1%
I am inconvenienced	28%	30%	18%	11%	12%	1%
I am scared	54%	16%	8%	11%	11%	0%
I am supportive	11%	10%	19%	33%	25%	1%
I am uncomfortable	42%	24%	9%	10%	15%	1%
I have concern for my safety	52%	18%	8%	9%	13%	0%
I have not been able to access the building / program / service I want to	55%	16%	14%	8%	5%	2%

*Figure 3: Respondent counts for How frequently have you experienced and/or felt any of the following when encountering a demonstration in Toronto?*

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### Which of the following do you consider as a vulnerable institution in Toronto?

The top three responses were Child care centres, Places of worship, and Faith-based schools chosen by over 40% of the respondents. None of the above ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> highest choice.

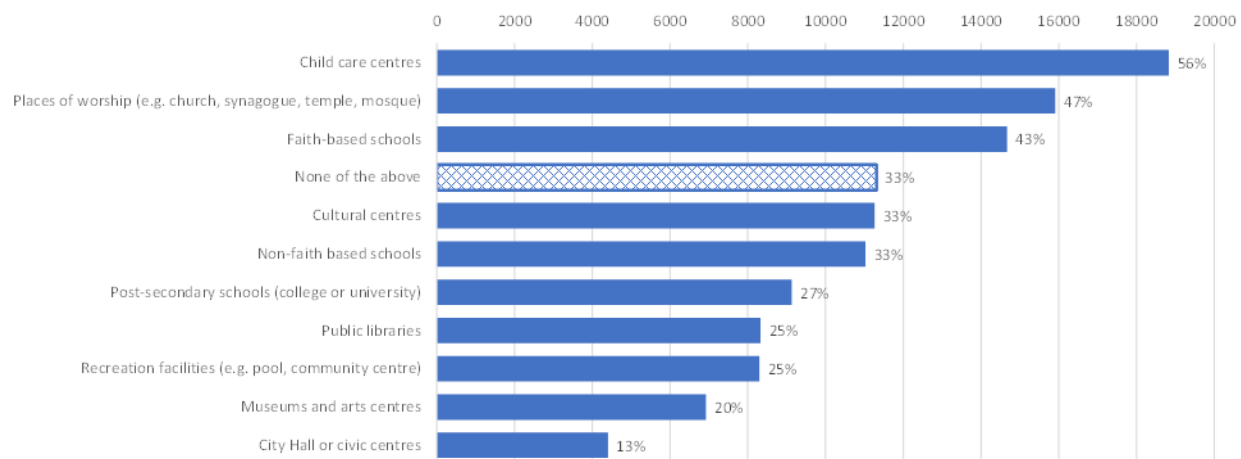


Figure 4: Respondent counts for Which of the following do you consider as a vulnerable institution in Toronto?

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### Support for Toronto adopting a bylaw similar to other municipalities

63% of respondents were either Strongly unsupportive or Somewhat unsupportive. Respondents were deeply polarized as the top two responses were either Strongly unsupportive or Strongly supportive. 32% of respondents were either Strongly supportive or Somewhat supportive.

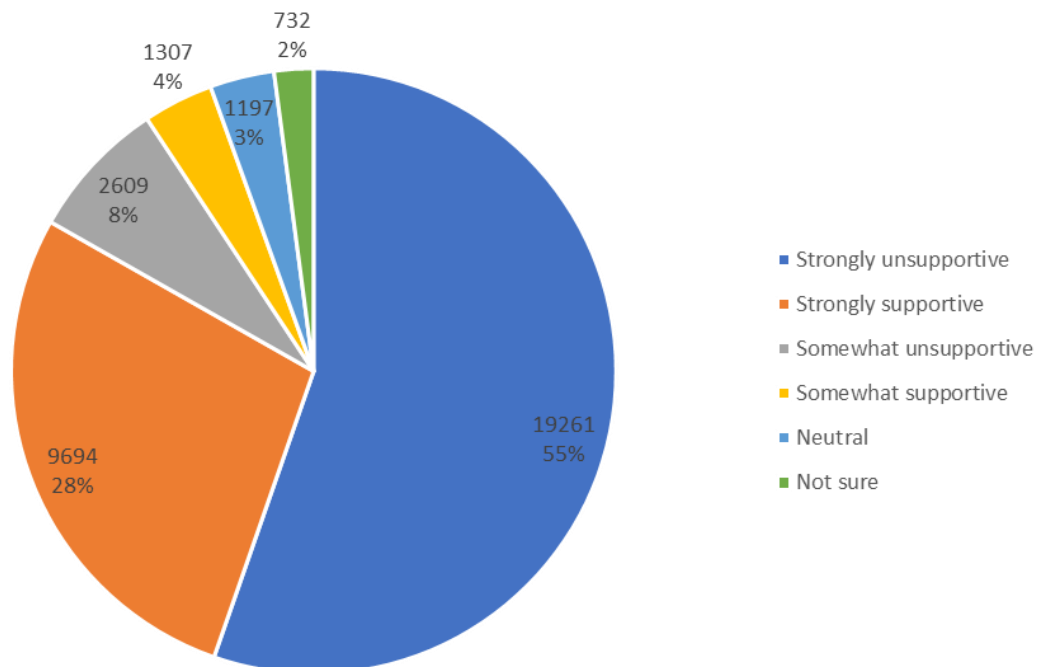


Figure 5: Respondent counts for Support for Toronto adopting a bylaw similar to other municipalities

- Respondents who were Strongly unsupportive indicated that they Never, Rarely or Occasionally encountered demonstrations in Toronto while respondents who were Strongly supportive indicated that they Often encountered demonstrations in Toronto.
- Respondents who were Strongly unsupportive were generally younger in the 10-19, 20-29, and 30-39 age brackets while respondents who were Strongly supportive were generally in the 65+ age bracket.
- There were no significant differences by Woman or Man, however transgender and non-binary gender were more Strongly unsupportive and less Strongly supportive.
- Respondents who identified as Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian and First Nations respondents were more Strongly supportive than other race categories while

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respondents who identified as Black, Asian, and Latin American were more Strongly unsupportive than other race categories.

- Respondents who identified their religion as Judaism (Jewish) were mostly Strongly supportive while all other Religion groups were Strongly unsupportive.

### If Toronto adopted a bylaw, what distance do you think would be most appropriate?

A third of respondents chose "Other" distance mostly writing in distances from greater than 100m to kilometres away or 0m. There was no strong choice of distance. Less than 10 metres was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest choice while 10 metres to 50 metres was the least desired choice.

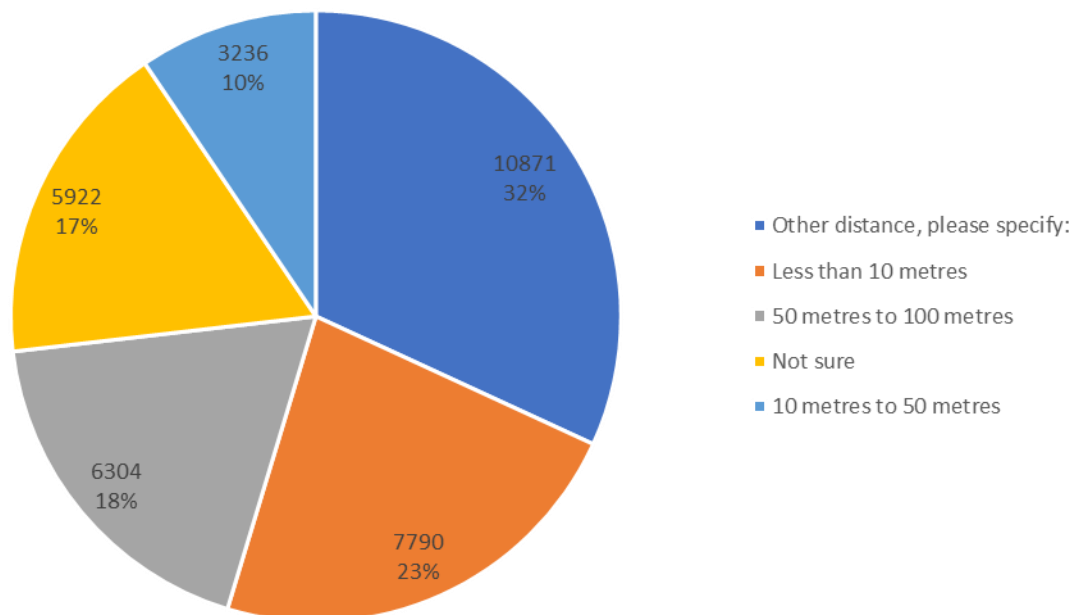


Figure 6: Respondent counts for If Toronto adopted a bylaw, what distance do you think would be most appropriate?

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### 2.4 Text-Based Responses - Qualitative Analysis

#### Qualitative Analysis Methodology

The text-based responses were analyzed through thematic content analysis. Qualitative coding analysis is a method of systematically categorizing and labeling segments of qualitative data to identify themes and patterns.<sup>1</sup>

Steps:

- Familiarization with the data (in-depth content review of the data by the analyst)
- Selection of keywords (code development)
- Code application
- Theme development

166 keywords and key phrases were applied to the digital survey data through Medallia to form the theme development.

#### Major Themes from Online Survey

More than 130,000 written comments were provided by respondents over 8 open-text question opportunities. Analysis of these text-based responses was through thematic content analysis where keyword and key phrase coding was digitally applied to all responses. Five high-level themes were formed through this analysis, including:

##### *Freedom of Expression, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Democracy*

Many respondents commented on demonstrations being an important part of democratic society and that people have a right to participate in demonstrations in Toronto under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Respondents expressed pride in living in a country that allows for freedom of expression for all and concern that Charter rights may be violated with a potential proposed bylaw.

##### *Support for Demonstrations*

Many respondents expressed their support for demonstrations, whether participating actively or encountering as a non-participant, in addition to supporting or not supporting the particular demonstration topic. Some respondents commented that demonstrations are an expression of community and civic engagement in Toronto and an important part of ensuring that marginalized voices are heard.

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<sup>1</sup> Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>



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### *Concern for Individual and Public Safety, Fear, Discomfort*

Some respondents reported that they feel unsafe, fearful and uncomfortable when encountering demonstrations in Toronto according to the text responses. Respondents commented on hate speech and threatening or violent behaviour occurring at demonstrations. Some respondents commented that discomfort and disruption may be the purpose of the demonstration.

### *Targeted and Vulnerable Groups, Institutions*

Respondents who commented on particular demonstration activity in Toronto that they have encountered, expressed that members of the Jewish community and Jewish institutions are targeted by demonstrations. Respondents who specified institutions that may be considered vulnerable expressed that buildings with children present or provide health care services (hospitals, clinics) should be included.

### *Enforcement of Bylaw and Existing Regulations*

Many respondents expressed that the City should consider enforcing existing laws to address concerns about demonstrations such as hate speech, threatening or violent behaviour and property damage. Some respondents called on the City to implement and enforce a bylaw to protect targeted communities, such as the Jewish community.

## 2.5 Sample Respondent Comments

The table includes a sample of text-based responses submitted through the online survey categorized by theme.

*NOTE:* table includes comments as they were submitted by survey respondents and represent the range of feedback and concerns submitted. Comments are noted verbatim, as submitted by respondents.

*Table 8: Sample Verbatim Comments from Survey Respondents*

Theme	Sample Verbatim Comments
Freedom of Expression, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Proud to be a Canadian where it is our democratic right to demonstrate/protest for what we believe in.</i></li><li>• <i>Freedom of speech also means freedom of peaceful protests.</i></li><li>• <i>Depends on the demonstration, everyone should have the right to protest though.</i></li><li>• <i>They're an important exercise of democratic Charter rights and make Toronto the diverse city it is.</i></li><li>• <i>I feel proud to live in a country/city where citizens can exercise their rights to protest and free speech without fear from police/military</i></li><li>• <i>I think it's great that City of Toronto residents and members of the public can exercise their Charter Rights protected under the Canadian Constitution</i></li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>i appreciate peoples right to voice their concerns - its a fundamental right that should be protected.</i></li> <li>• <i>I think they are an important part of citizens' right to freedom of organization and that taking action to limit them is a huge stepping stone toward the stripping away of fundamental rights</i></li> <li>• <i>I think it is a strong indicator of a good democracy. I am proud to see young people standing up for what they believe in. The issues that are being highlighted deserve our attention.</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel proud that we have the Democratic right to speak out. I feel proud that we allow people with opposing views to confront these in the public square. This is instrumental to the health of a democracy even if it is inconvenient.</i></li> <li>• <i>It's fine. People are exercising their freedom of expression.</i></li> <li>• <i>Even if I disagree with the purpose of the demonstration I believe in the rights of individuals to demonstrate</i></li> <li>• <i>It's people's right to protest and part of the political process.</i></li> <li>• <i>A demonstration in Toronto is a reflection of the fundamental rights and freedoms protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Peaceful protests are an essential part of a democratic society, allowing individuals and groups to voice their concerns, advocate for change, and hold institutions accountable. In situations where serious human rights issues, such as genocide, are at stake, it is especially important that people have the ability to speak out and raise awareness. Ensuring that diverse voices are heard, WITHOUT SUPPRESSION or MISREPRESENTATION! Which is a key part of maintaining a just and transparent society.</i></li> <li>• <i>I think they are important part of being able to demonstrate or freedom of speech as long as They aren't racist or discriminatory.</i></li> <li>• <i>Generally glad to see citizens exercise our rights and see community come together.</i></li> <li>• <i>Possibly a little inconvenienced sometimes, but that is a small price to pay for the right to peaceful assembly.</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel like this is a city that cares about human rights, and as a strong believer in the right to protest they make me like I'm living in a place that represents my values. Also, white supremacy and nazi rallies have no right to exist because that is not free speech, it's hate speech.</i></li> <li>• <i>While they can be inconvenient, I feel happy that we are afforded freedom of protest in the city. The state should not be able to limit people's ability to demonstrate.</i></li> <li>• <i>It's our right to organize for protests and demonstrations, it's what helps create change.</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel uplifted to see people passionate about a cause (even if at times I don't agree with the cause) and exercising their right to protest!</i></li> <li>• <i>I love to see it, I believe marginalized / targeted communities have a right to make their voices heard.</i></li> <li>• <i>Protesting is an act of civil engagement, and the right of every person in society.</i></li> <li>• <i>I support people's right to peaceful protest even if I sometimes do not support the same ideas.</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel that demonstrations are a fundamental part of a healthy democracy. Public protest is one of the few ways people can visibly</i></li> </ul>
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	<p><i>and collectively express dissent, advocate for change, and hold those in power accountable. While demonstrations may sometimes be disruptive, that disruption is often necessary to draw attention to urgent social and political issues. Any attempt to restrict protests would be an infringement on free expression and democratic rights.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• I am happy to see people exercising their right to freely speak out especially if it's about a cause I also believe in. I fully support them!</i></li> <li><i>• Largely, I feel safe and empowered knowing that protest is welcomed in our communities. Protest is an essential element of democracy, and a city that facilitates the right to protest is a more just place.</i></li> <li><i>• I believe in the fundamental right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly afforded to us in the charter and protections in the human rights code. So regardless of what is being protested or demonstrated I'm grateful this is our right in this country.</i></li> <li><i>• Demonstrations are important parts of a democratic society. We have so little freedoms left, this one should be maintained. Repression won't actually make this city better.</i></li> </ul>
Support for Demonstrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Makes me question and think critically on a deeper level, and encourages me to research on different topics. It makes me appreciate the freedom of speech when people are protesting for what they believe in to make positive changes in their lives and those of the communities at large.</i></li> <li><i>• If it for a cause I believe in, I'm happy that people are speaking out. If not there's usually a counter-protest I can support.</i></li> <li><i>• I am supportive, even for issues that I do not agree with. Toronto is a place where people of many backgrounds come together and support each other and learn. Demonstrations can encourage community ties across Toronto.</i></li> <li><i>• Feel good people are concerned about important issues</i></li> <li><i>• I think it's a great way for people to speak up for their beliefs and educate or be educated.</i></li> <li><i>• Demonstrations are often held for a good cause and are a non-violent form of spreading awareness.</i></li> <li><i>• I am always happy to see engagement and public demonstrations.</i></li> <li><i>• I feel glad that Toronto is a city where people can freely assemble to advocate for causes that they care about, even if I disagree with the particular cause</i></li> <li><i>• It's a heartwarming moment to experience a group of people coming together and fight for the good cause.</i></li> <li><i>• I like seeing people in the community work together.</i></li> <li><i>• I feel good when I encounter demonstrations, because people are speaking up against injustice and fighting for less privileged groups.</i></li> <li><i>• I feel incredibly proud of my city and its people for being able to peacefully voice their concerns, whether they're about social, political, environmental issues, or injustices. It shows a strong sense of community and civic engagement</i></li> <li><i>• It depends on the content, of course, whether I feel inspired or dismayed, but in general I am always happy to see demonstrations because they are exercises of collective power.</i></li> <li><i>• I generally feel interested and excited. Whether I support the protest's goal/subject or not, I am always curious as to why people are protesting and support their being able to use their right to protest.</i></li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I feel safe and like my voice is being heard or others are able to speak their voice.</i></li> <li>• <i>Positive, they are organized and necessary</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel good to see people passionate about an issue or cause, taking to the streets and hoping to make a change.</i></li> <li>• <i>It makes me proud. I'm glad people get together to speak up about the issues that matter to them.</i></li> <li>• <i>Happy that people are able to express their views.</i></li> </ul>
Concern for Individual and Public Safety, Fear, Discomfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Afraid of the potential for to getting OUT OF CONTROL and for people getting assaulted or targeted</i></li> <li>• <i>Like it is good to see people exercising their rights. I feel unsafe around anti-abortion demonstrations, anti-vaccine convoys, and anti-Trudeau demonstrations.</i></li> <li>• <i>They are often aggressive, antisemitic, hate filled events that are out of control.</i></li> <li>• <i>Not good and scared of potential violence.</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel unsafe and intimidated- lots of hate is involved</i></li> <li>• <i>Very uncomfortable and threatened by the hatred being chanted even in "supposedly" peaceful demonstrations.</i></li> <li>• <i>I'm fed up. I'm scared and want the city to finally do something.</i></li> <li>• <i>Scared. Upset. Many protests are not peaceful and cause significant disturbance to Torontonians and tie up police resources as well (who dont seem to be doing much besides controlling traffic).</i></li> <li>• <i>I am proud of the Canadian right to free speech but I am saddened by hate speech and I fear violent outbreaks</i></li> <li>• <i>Until recently, I felt safe. Now many of the demonstrations have people wearing masks and carrying placards that are anti-semitic with people screaming anti-semitic statements. As someone who has participated in many demonstrations, it is sad that there are people who are making it uncomfortable to protest.</i></li> <li>• <i>Extremely uncomfortable, vulnerable and sad. These demonstrations sound angry, hateful and threatening. I avoid going downtown Toronto for over a year.</i></li> <li>• <i>Unsafe. Unprotected by law enforcement. Discriminated against. Feel like I don't recognize my Country anymore. So full of hate, antisemitism and violence.</i></li> <li>• <i>Extremely scared, uncomfortable. They are usually hold antisemitism symbols and aew masked. They threaten and tell people to get out of Canada. When I see Terririst organization flags - I don't understand how it's permitted. There are peaceful protests that I know are organized- working with police, and asking Canada and Toronto to step up. I don't feel safe in Toronto anymore.</i></li> <li>• <i>I do not feel safe with the energy of the pro Palestine demonstrations. I am not Jewish but I still feel that there is a great deal of hostility and danger if you disagree with them vocally or had a flag of Israel. And this is completely unacceptable! I know many Jewish people who are terrified and do not feel safe in Toronto especially the seniors.</i></li> <li>• <i>Threatened. Very angry people are threatening. Screaming, yelling, vitriolic swearing. None of it is good.</i></li> <li>• <i>If it's pro Canada or freedom I feel good if it's pro Hamas or BLM I feel scared and irritated.</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel threatened and unsafe. I have seen outright violence being conducted by protestors. It makes me want to leave Toronto permanently, and I've lived here for 25 years.</i></li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scared, in danger, unprotected, ashamed to be Canadian, confused as to why our city has become this way and why nothing is being done to prevent and stop it.</li> <li>• Apprehensive, concerned for my own safety and others, annoyed and inconvenienced, worried it will escalate to violence.</li> <li>• I am scared of pro Palestinian demonstrations and allowing them on the street creates so much fear. I do not feel safe. Bylaws should apply to ALL public areas not just select properties.</li> <li>• When there is hate speech involved, which there is most of the times, I feel upset and uncomfortable. I am anxious that it will escalate to violence against me.</li> <li>• I am tired and I am scared. Almost every week for over a year there was at least one demonstration that blocked my ability to leave my home, where people were actually yelling and cheering for the destruction of an entire ethnic group that has lived peacefully in this country for decades, and the police did nothing (except maybe threaten to arrest the odd person who the crowd deemed an issue for "disturbing the peace"). I do not feel safe in this city and I do not feel protected by the authorities.</li> <li>• Very unsafe! These protests are full of hatred and endorsing violence.</li> <li>• Scared Don't trust the police will protect me.</li> <li>• We are fearful and scared for our safety. We are two Seniors who live in the immediate vicinity of these 'demonstrations'. They have included threats against The Jews (my husband and I are Jewish in our 70's).</li> <li>• If it's peaceful I'm ok but if it has hate speech and throngs of people yelling I'm scared.</li> <li>• Afraid, uncomfortable. There is yelling, noise, smoke, swearing, angry people carrying terrorist flags and shouting racist remarks and swearing, and nothing is done about it. It's not peaceful.</li> </ul>
Targeted and Vulnerable Groups, Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel threatened as many of these demonstrations are promoting hate towards the Jewish community.</li> <li>• Hate rallies promoting antisemitism based on lies and intimidating the Jewish community.</li> <li>• Angry that they are blocking traffic, praying in streets to show power over others, and are often chanting inappropriate things ( intifada, racial slurs and intimidating others who might not have the same views as them). I don't feel safe being in the city with my children.</li> <li>• These protests are dangerous, hateful, loud and prevent people from accessing help or care from hospitals and medical offices.</li> <li>• We shouldn't be protesting around children.</li> <li>• Institutions specifically made for children/ minors are personally considered vulnerable.</li> <li>• Protect vulnerable neighborhoods and residents that have been targeted. By-law against theses demonstrations near places of worship. Schools and other community &amp; public areas where people gather.</li> <li>• Recently, as a Jewish person I have felt intimidated and scared.</li> <li>• Anywhere there are groups of children, anywhere that would disturb others' right to work, study, or sleep for prolonged periods of time, places with elderly or ill people (eg senior's home, hospital)</li> <li>• Only schools should be protected under the bylaw to protect students. Any other place should not be included as it a charter right for people to demonstrate peacefully.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recently I have encountered anti-Israel demonstrations in front of my children's school and I feel scared and angry.</i></li> <li>• <i>I see hatred towards Jews constantly. I feel vulnerable. I see that our city does not care and does not want to protect Jews. I feel my kids will not be safe in Canada. I worry about where we will go next.</i></li> <li>• <i>Healthcare settings like hospitals and clinics providing abortion care</i></li> <li>• <i>Hospitals or locations that are required to be cleared for safety</i></li> <li>• <i>Demonstrations against Israel and the Jewish community need to stop, demonstrations need to be dispersed, charged as a crime</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoid protests around Jewish areas or places of worship. Not allow terrorist symbols and antisemitic caricatures/ symbols at protests</i></li> <li>• <i>Attempts to thwart Canadian's right to peaceful protest should not be infringed on by excessive policing. That said, young children and sick/injured citizens should we awarded a "bubble" that ensures no disruption.</i></li> <li>• <i>Don't appreciate it. Its disruptive to the general public getting to work, home and cost the city thousands of dollars in resources for police officers. And when people protest, you know it's targeted anti-semitism in front of a synagogue. How is this even allowed to happen?!</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel that elementary schools, daycare, library programs for children etc should have more protection. There isn't many causes that would require protesting at those sites</i></li> <li>• <i>In the past it did not bother me but it has felt in increasingly unsafe since oct 7. There is hate speech and signs and advocacy to hurt and kill people of my religion and race.</i></li> <li>• <i>It depends on the demonstration. If it's a cause I support, I'm energized. If it's a cause about which I'm neutral, I have no feelings one way or the other. If it's a cause that is negative towards my beliefs or my identity I am angry, I often feel threatened and unsafe, I am afraid for my children.</i></li> <li>• <i>Establishments for minors should receive special care but only if the protest isn't being held by the staff or the student parents. The parents and the teachers should still be given the right to peacefully protest as long as it doesn't negatively affect minors. Given that these bylaws look to specifically target anti genocide protests - the city should watch how it handles itself carefully.</i></li> <li>• <i>Demonstrations should occur in front of city hall in designated areas. No other places, especially places frequented by children and the vulnerable should be allowed. The city must remain peaceful safe and accessible to all.</i></li> <li>• <i>Child care centres should have security if their is protest to ensure every child is accounted for but every individual should have the right to protest anywhere.</i></li> <li>• <i>Anywhere specifically catered to children, youth and families with young children, or those peacefully practicing their religion.</i></li> <li>• <i>Afraid. Terrified. Being Jewish it is not safe. Hearing "death to Canada, death to Jews" is not something I ever thought possible. The police do nothing.</i></li> <li>• <i>Protect vulnerable institutions from demonstrations. Do not allow demonstrations in neighbourhoods.</i></li> </ul>
Enforcement of Bylaw and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Please just follow existing laws. Protests are fine. Harassment, intimidation, and discrimination are not. If an activity is illegal individually (ex. sitting in the middle of the road, blocking a building</i></li> </ul>

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Existing Regulations	<p>entrance, screaming in a person's face), then that activity should not be allowed for groups. You can protect free speech and people's safety by just applying our existing laws. This absolutely does not take more time or tax money to figure out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you actually persecute hate speech, including when "protestors" chant antisemitic and violent rhetoric such as calling for "intifada" and chanting to eradicate an entire country or group of people.</li> <li>• The City needs to be consistent and hold people accountable when they break the law. Arrests, if warranted need to be made immediately. Protestors need to know that there will be consistent consequences for their actions- every time. Protests should never occur in front of schools, daycares, religious institutions... I really believe that City officials need to be seen as involved and they need to be heard. Strong statements are needed to call out hate speech, incitement to violence and spread of lies.</li> <li>• These institutions already have the protections being investigated by the City of Toronto under various tripartite criminal and legal statutes.</li> <li>• Let the police make arrests like they're supposed to when it involves hate speech.</li> <li>• Damaging property is already against the law.</li> <li>• Should limit any demonstration that allows for hate speech. Should not allow any demonstration that does not have a permit. Should not allow demonstrations around places of worship, schools, essential service institutions.</li> <li>• The City must continue to protect freedom of expression, irrespective of their agreement with what is being expressed. Toronto Police Service has more than enough purview to prevent property damage, hate crimes and violence as-is</li> <li>• Let all demonstrations happen. Police should only be there to direct traffic to protect demonstrators.</li> <li>• Establishing buffer zones: Local or national legislation could create designated no-protest zones around locations such as schools, religious institutions, hospitals, and community centers, especially when they serve marginalized groups.</li> <li>• Harassing calling for violence is already illegal just enforce the law.</li> <li>• Use existing laws to protect people from hate speech and violence instead of introducing new law that suppresses Torontonians' ability to gather publicly around issues that matter to us. I genuinely believe that enforcement of this law will weaken democracy and make Torontonians much less safe due to exposure to policing for Charter-protected activities.</li> <li>• You have existing laws that would protect these facilities, what you need to do is enforce these laws. We don't need more laws, we need the existing ones to be enforced!</li> <li>• Bubble zones to protect places of worship and cultural centres. Better enforcement against those who contravene laws already in place.</li> <li>• Enforce the laws. Set expectations for unbiased application of enforcement by officers. Educate all, including officers on the difference between free speech and hate speech. Remove officers with conflict of interests from duty on specific sites/ demonstrations.</li> <li>• Police need to enforce the laws. Pro Palestinian rallies should be in front of the Israeli consulate, and not in Jewish areas or Jewish businesses or religious institutions or schools. The intent is obviously</li> </ul>
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	<p><i>to intimidate populations that are not directly involved in an over seas conflict.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Ban terrorist symbols and flags. Start enforcing laws against hate speech.</i></li><li>• <i>The City should take no action because municipal government has no role in the issues at hand and should not be restricting one's right to protest, there are already laws in place that are intended to protect against harm i.e. the Criminal Code, etc</i></li><li>• <i>As long as it follows the law, doesn't obstruct traffic</i></li><li>• <i>I have no problem with people bringing awareness to issues and believe in the freedom of speech. But when protesting becomes a weekly event with terrorist flags, paraphernalia and intimidation I believe that steps over the line. Permits should have to be obtained and areas that are away from hospitals, buildings and high traffic areas should be designated. The money we are paying police officers for these protests are insane as well. Permit fees could help cover costs.</i></li><li>• <i>There is no need for the City to take any action. There are laws in place - if laws are broken then of course the police should get involved.</i></li><li>• <i>None my feelings aren't your problem. What you need to do is enforce the law and protect all residents equally. We are tired of seeing our Jewish community harassed and abused.</i></li><li>• <i>In my opinion, the City should uphold and protect the right to peaceful protest while also ensuring the safety and dignity of all community members — including those who may feel uncomfortable or targeted by a protest's message. This means creating clear guidelines for protest and counter-protest activity that prioritize non-violence, de-escalation, and access to public space. The City should also invest in public education and dialogue that helps residents understand the role of protest in a democratic society — including its history in driving social and legislative change. Encouraging respectful conversation, even in moments of disagreement, can help build a more inclusive and resilient city. Finally, the City should listen — really listen — to the voices being raised. Protests often reflect deep-rooted issues that need policy attention, and a willingness to engage with those concerns is essential to building trust and making meaningful progress.</i></li></ul>
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### 3. Written Submissions

A total number of 108 written submissions were received, of which 25 were from various organizations.

#### Summary of Findings

- 63 per cent of written submissions expressed concerns about proposing a demonstrations bylaw to protect vulnerable institutions, 22 per cent expressed support, and 15 per cent provided general feedback or questions.
- Those in support of a proposed bylaw described experiencing frequent demonstrations in close proximity to social infrastructure they use or operate such as places of worship and faith-based schools.
- Operators of sites with frequent demonstrations expressed that they were feeling targeted, threatened and unsafe, and that community members are unable to freely access their sites. This has resulted in significant increased costs of security, and a decline in program participation and lost revenue.

Key themes in the written submissions expressing concerns include:

- The risk and danger of infringing Charter rights, freedom of expression and democracy.
- The lack of clear definitions in reference to a proposed bylaw, resulting in an overarching proposal which could prevent demonstrations from happening in many public spaces across the city and negatively impact equity-deserving groups and labour unions.
- The overlap with existing laws, which can be better enforced to achieve the goals of protecting vulnerable institutions and allowing peaceful demonstrations.
- The risk of over-policing and diverting City resources from other priorities such as housing and transportation.
- The challenge of implementing the bylaw, given the difficulty of informing the public where this bylaw applies.

Key themes in the written submissions expressing support include:

- The need to protect vulnerable communities from hateful and intimidating demonstrations.
- The need to take action against hate crimes, expressions of hatred and harassment targeting groups based on their racial or religious identity, such as implementing new regulations and ensuring better enforcement.
- The need to protect public spaces from excessive noise, nuisance and disrupted traffic.

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*Table 9: Written Submissions by Organization*

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Number of Submissions</b>
ACORN	1
Alliance of Canadians Combatting Antisemitism (ALCCA)	1
Arab Canadian Lawyers Association	1
Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto	1
Black Action Defense Committee (BADC)	1
Canadian Civil Liberties Association	1
Canadian Organization for Hindu Heritage Education (COHHE)	1
Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' (CIJA)	1
Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO)	2
CUPE Local 79	1
Free Speech Union of Canada	1
Jane Finch Action Against Poverty	1
Legal Clinic Programs Lincoln Alexander School of Law Toronto Metropolitan University	1
Ontario Council of Hospital Unions/Canadian Union of Public Employees (OCHU/CUPE)	1
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU/SEFPO)	1
Osgoode Hall Law Union	1
Secure Canada	1
The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO)	2
The Coalition for Charter Rights and Freedoms	1
Toronto Board of Rabbis	1
Toronto Palestinian Families (TPF)	1

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Toronto York Region Labour Council Toronto Environmental Alliance Social Planning Toronto Progress Toronto	1
Workers' Action Centre	1
TOTAL	25

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### **4. Councillor-Led Sessions**

Staff from the City Manager's Office were invited and attended to observe sessions organized by some City Councillors with residents, community groups and organizations convened to provide feedback on a proposed bylaw. The list of organizations represented at these meetings is outlined below.

#### **4.1 Roundtable – Proposed Demonstrations Bylaw, April 8, 2025**

Hosted by Councillor Bradford and Councillor Pasternak

At this roundtable, participants expressed support for a proposed bylaw and expressed its necessity to protect targeted communities. Several participants commented on the negative impacts on community safety from demonstrations and expressed the measures that have recently been taken to protect community members have been at a high cost to the community. Examples of negative impacts on individuals and organizations included significant increase in security costs, decrease in attendance at community programming located at specific locations, and lost revenue from declining program registration. Several roundtable participants provided written submissions and participated in other community-focused sessions, and their feedback is included in those summaries.

Organizations represented:

- B'nai B'rith Canada
- Bernard Betel Centre
- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
- Cooper, Sandler, Shime & Schwartzentruber LLP
- End Jew Hatred
- Kehilat Shaarei Torah
- Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre
- Pride of Israel Synagogue
- Yeshiva Yesodei Hatorah

#### **4.2 Protecting Our Charter Rights: A Conversation on Toronto's Proposal for a Demonstrations Bylaw, May 8, 2025**

Hosted by Councillor Bravo

This session included a panel of speakers that presented their perspectives on the subject. The panel and participant discussion was focused on the legal aspects of a proposed bylaw. Several participants commented on the existing regulations that would address concerns of demonstrations. Participants discussed other jurisdictions that have adopted similar bylaws and the critical nature of demonstrations in Toronto which

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would be negatively impacted with the adoption of a bylaw. Several participants of this meeting provided written submissions and participated in other community-focused sessions, and their feedback is included in those summaries.

Organizations represented:

- ACORN
- Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO).
- Canadian Civil Liberties Association
- Centre for Free Expression, Toronto Metropolitan University
- CUPE Local 79
- Maytree
- Progress Toronto
- Social Planning Toronto
- Toronto and York Region Labour Council
- Toronto Environmental Alliance
- TTC Riders
- UNIFOR
- Workers' Action Centre