



What kind of city are we?

It was 40 years ago that Toronto created the Central Area Plan. For the first time, policies and zoning were designed to encourage residential development in the Downtown. Those policies have been extremely successful, but our parks and public realm have not kept up. In the face of unprecedented intensification, Downtown's public realm success will depend on our ability to create great public spaces, and to connect them together in a meaningful way.

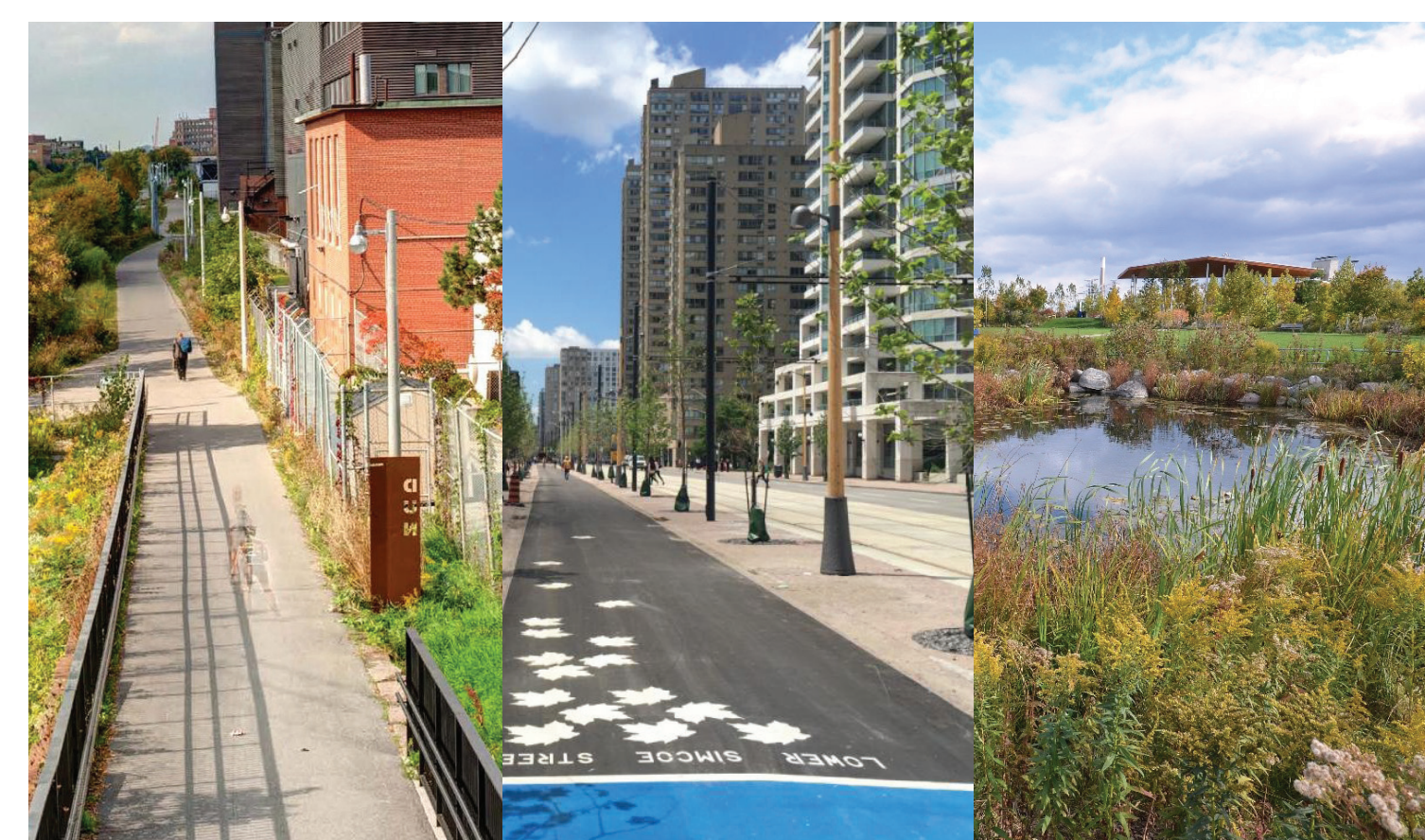
TOcore will bring forward a Parks and Public Realm Plan that will be implemented through the new Downtown Secondary Plan. This Plan will:

- Prioritize areas for new parkland acquisition, park expansion and improvements with a Park Provision Assessment
- Provide a framework that can be implemented over time through development review while guiding capital funding
- Consider partnerships that the City should foster to fully implement the plan

In addition, TOcore will:

- Consider additional strategies and funding options to address the specific challenges of acquiring parkland Downtown
- Examine ways to make off-site park dedication more effective by encouraging developers to work together
- Follow up on the Public Space Public Life Study, and recommend a methodology for continued assessment of public life over time to measure success and identify areas of improvement

HOW CAN PUBLIC SPACE CONNECT COMMUNITIES?



MAKE NEW CONNECTIONS

Promote active lifestyles through a system connected with streets, trails and signage. Explore opportunities to connect people to the Don Valley and the Toronto Islands.



CELEBRATE DIVERSITY & HERITAGE

Reinforce the diverse characteristics that make each street and district unique. Protect and respect natural and cultural heritage: from pre-contact to the modern period.



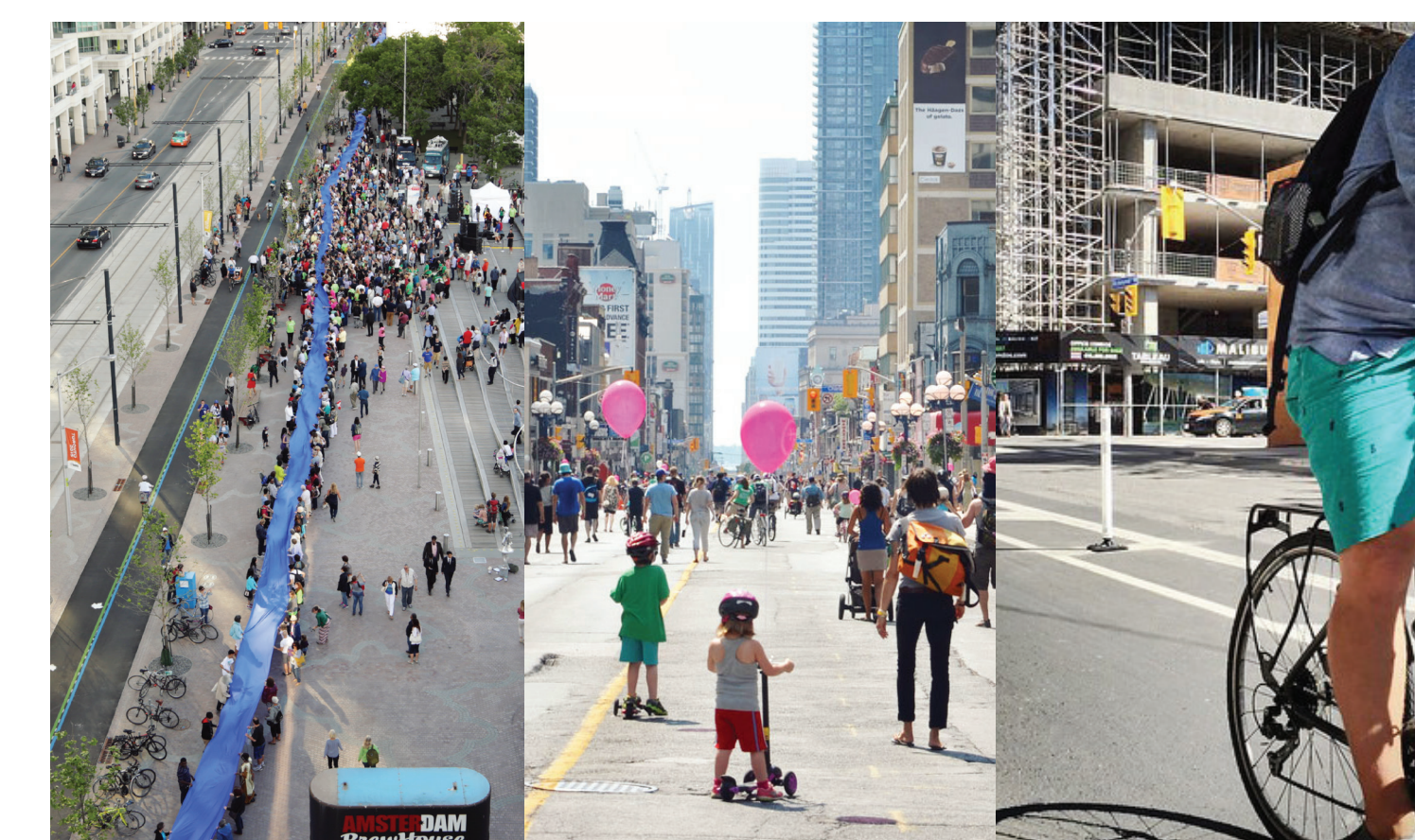
RANGE OF SCALES

Prioritize pedestrians on our main retail streets with public realm improvements. Celebrate and enhance Toronto's lanes and other small-scale connections.



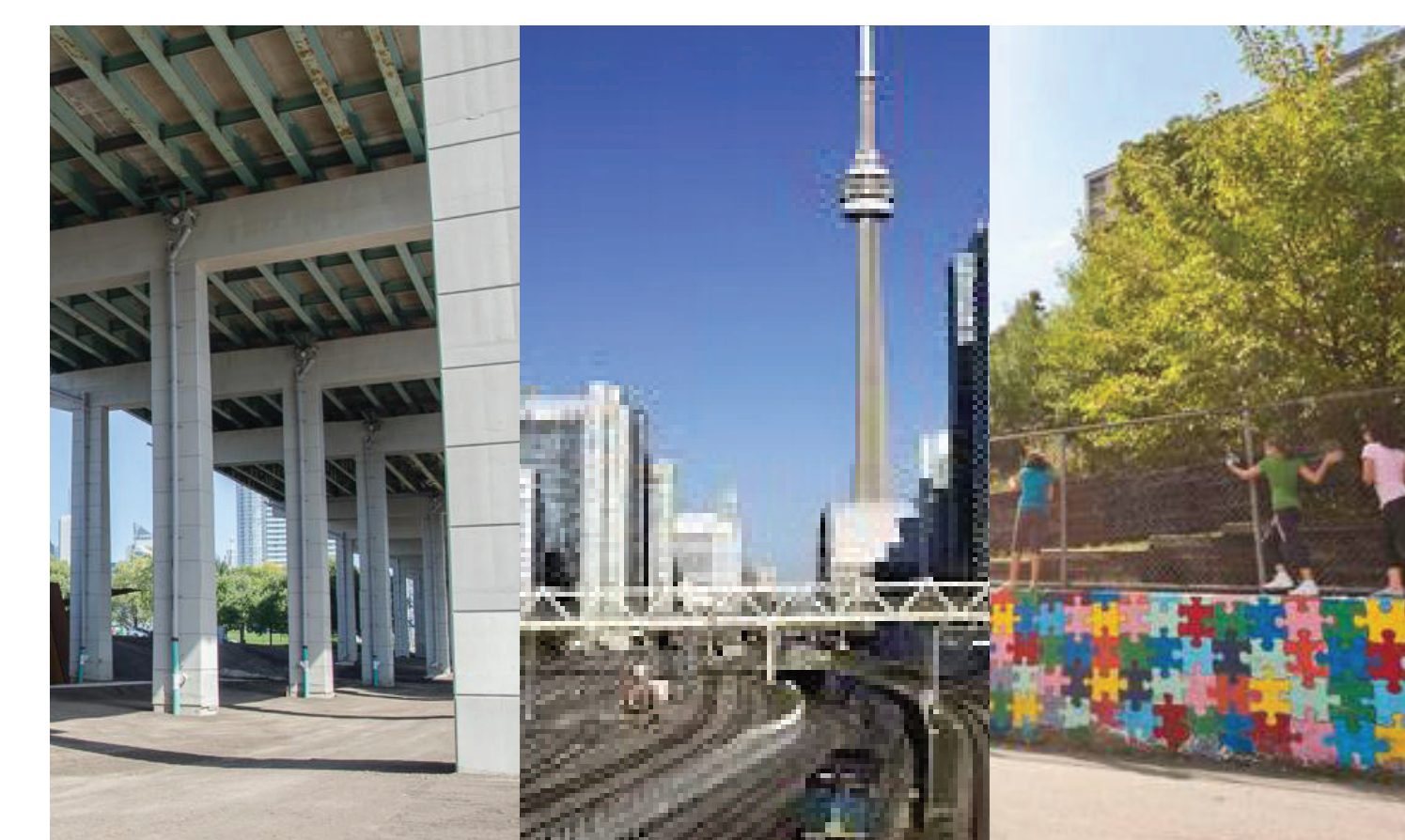
MAKING A 'CITY FOR PEOPLE'

Determine where park improvements, expansions or acquisitions are required. Activate spaces to bring people together through arts, culture and activity.



REBALANCE STREETS

Create the right balance of space for pedestrians, cyclists, transit and vehicles. Our streets bring together public realm experiences to create a cohesive whole.

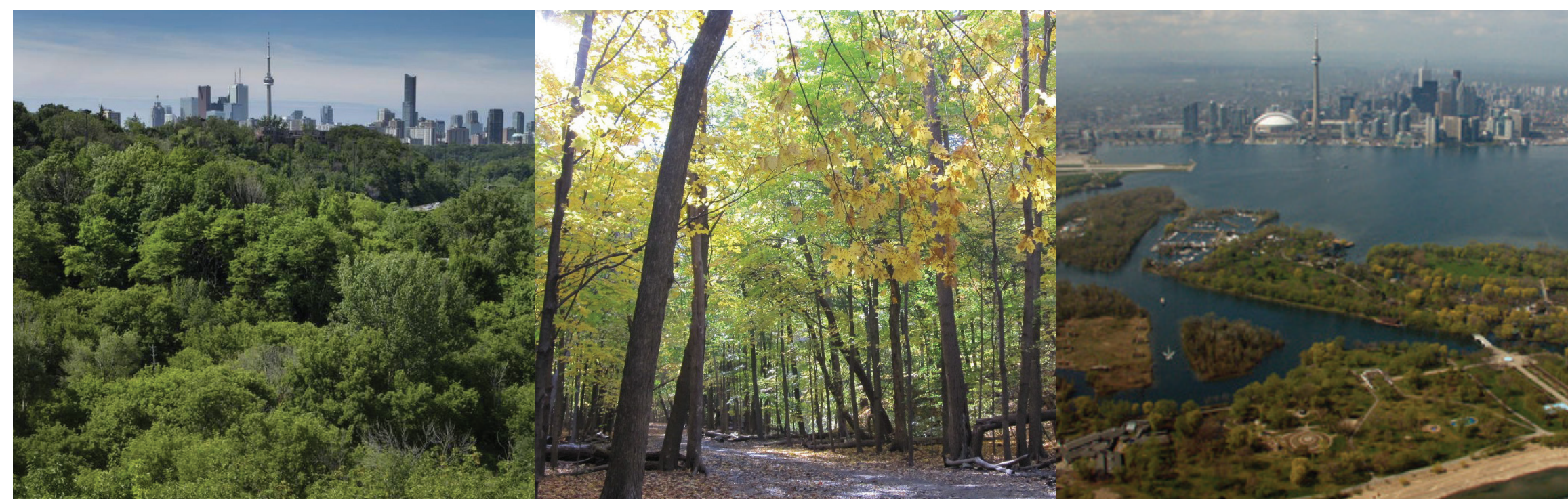


CHANGING THE GAME

Creative community partnerships generate new forms of public space. Spaces must be multi-functional to serve more than one purpose or user group.



Can public space redefine Toronto's Downtown?



URBAN WILD - THE 'GREEN LOOP'

Cities are exploring new assemblies of public space – stitches that run through the very fabric of the city, latching onto larger open spaces, and bringing together local places as a cohesive whole. Through connecting the 'urban wild' with smaller scale public spaces, the 'Green Loop' exemplifies Downtown Toronto's signature experiences.



What are Toronto's signature experiences? How can Toronto's urban wild contribute to its public realm? What if Toronto could take all the elements of a world class park, and embed them throughout our City in a fully connected, coherent civic experience?





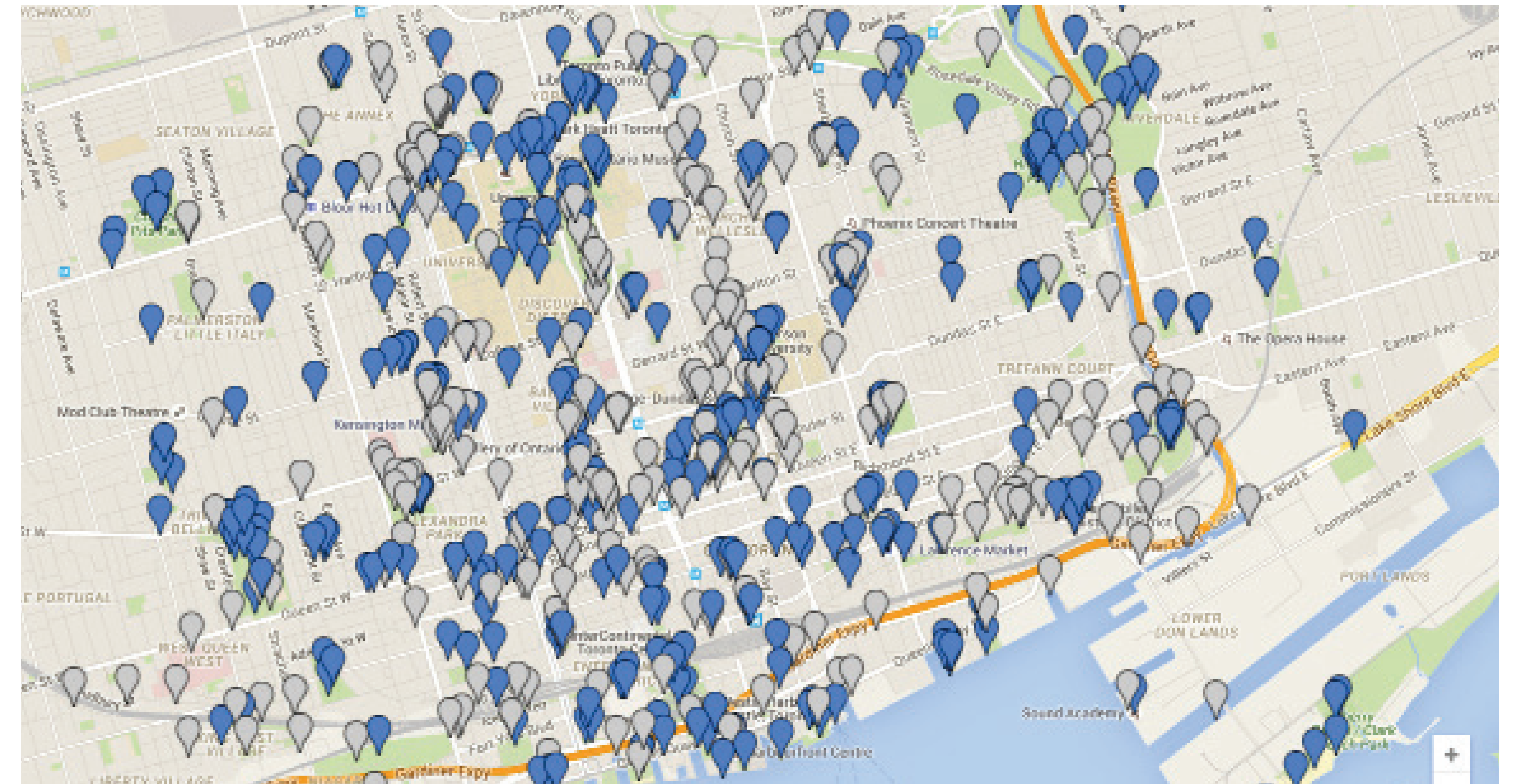
We asked about your favourite places and the qualities you cherish most in public spaces. This is what we heard.

“I love small pedestrian alleyways that connect streets – Toronto needs more of these! It’s also great to have patios that overlook pedestrian lanes instead of car lanes.”

“The flower gardens here are incredible. I wish more of our parks had spaces like this.”

“I love the seclusion and enclosure of this space [Philosophers Walk], and I love that you can sometime hear music escaping from the walls of the surrounding buildings.”

“Kensington is the most friendly, welcoming, and fun place in the city. The food, coffee, and entertainment (especially in the summer) make this the best spot in Toronto.”



FAVOURITE PLACES

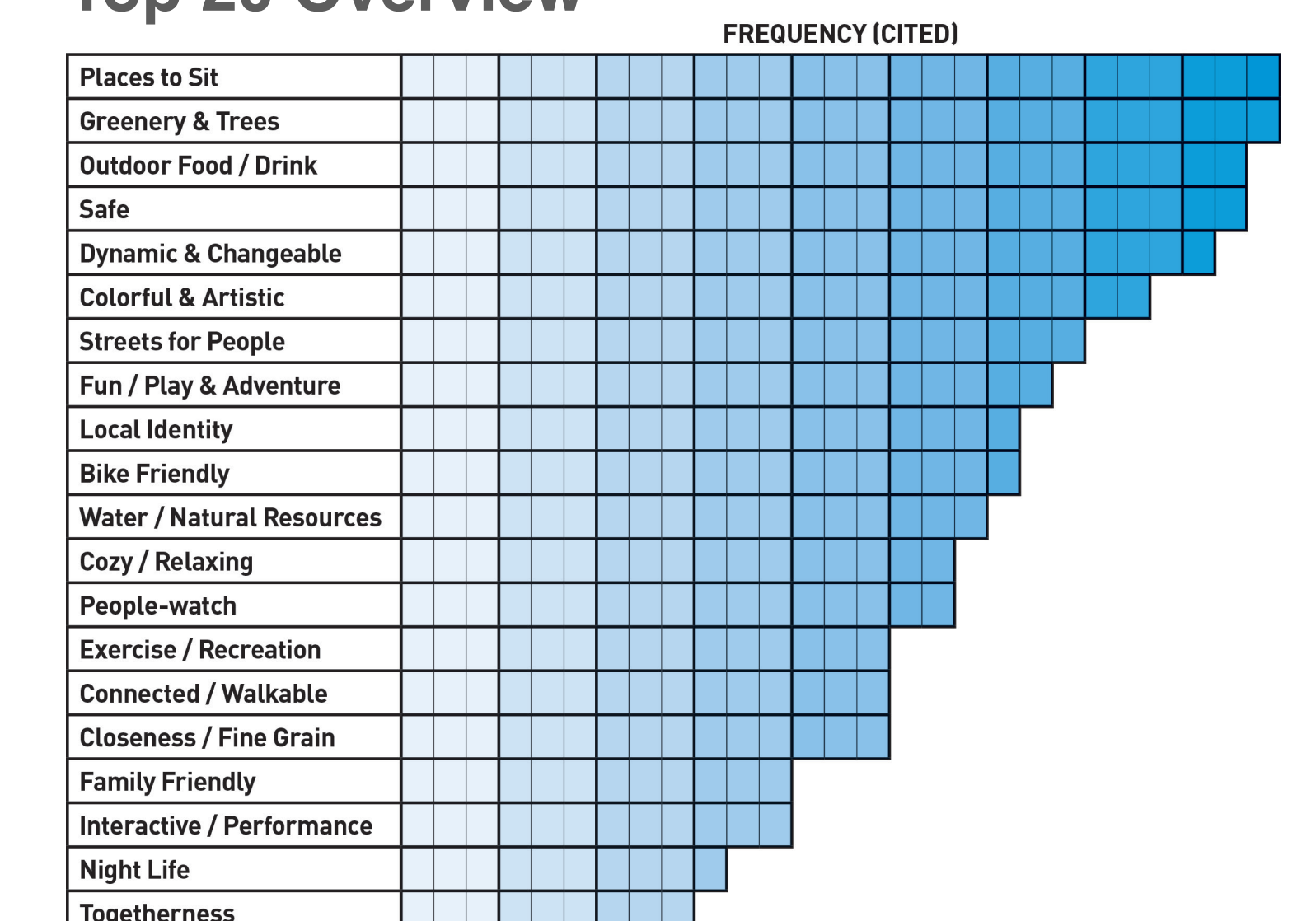
We received almost 1500 responses from a series of pop-up workshops and online mapping engagement. Key clusters and recurring themes emerged.



QUALITY CRITERIA

Synthesizing this feedback, certain public realm qualities rose to the top. Left: examples of feedback. Right: ranking of the top qualities Torontonians want in their public realm.

Top 20 Overview





Public Space for Public Life

HOW DO PEOPLE MOVE AND STAY IN PUBLIC SPACE?

Over the past year, Parks, Forestry & Recreation partnered with Ryerson University to survey all of the Downtown parks in four seasons. All 121 Downtown parks were surveyed during the summer of 2015, and almost 27,000 people were observed.

Building on this, the City, with support from Gehl Studio, will carry out a Public Space and Public Life (PSPL) Study in 16 zones in the Downtown during the summer and again in late fall of 2016. The PSPL Study will:

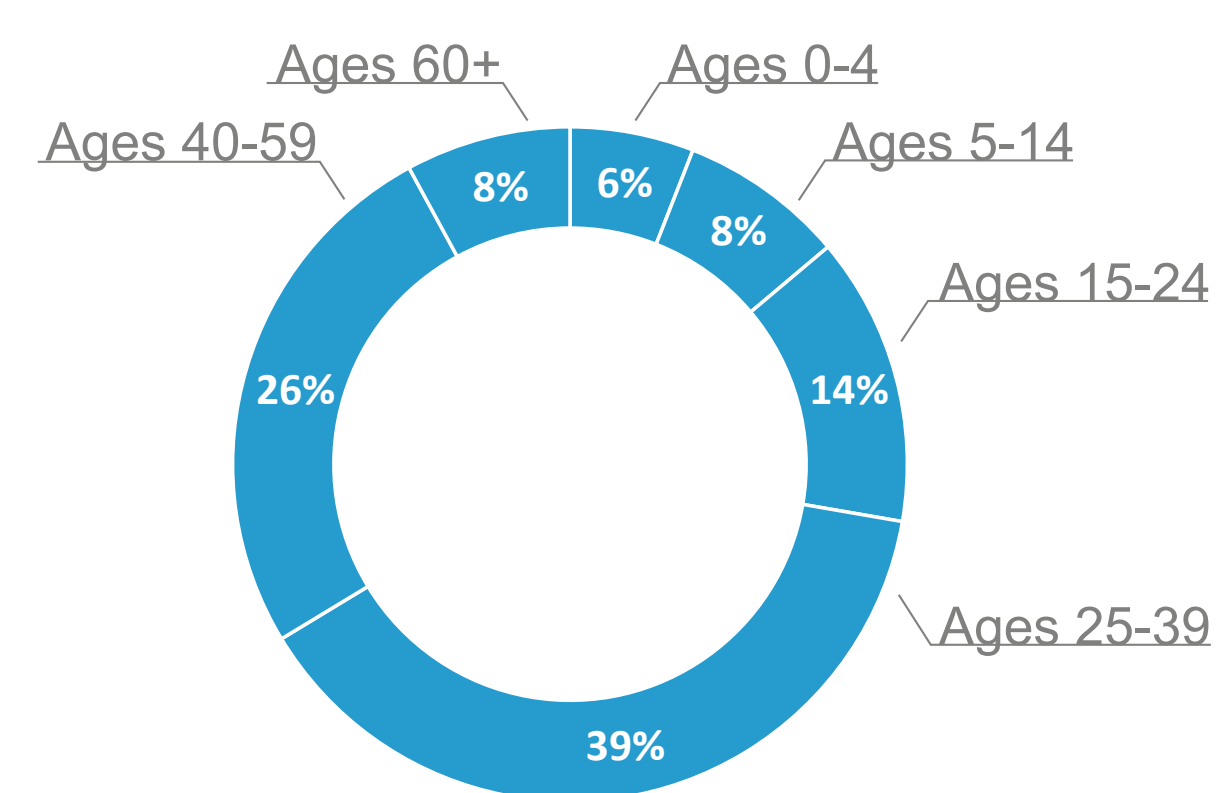
- Observe how people use public space
- Engage the public in assessing the quality of public spaces
- Provide insight on how public life can be fostered through the design of public spaces
- Establish set of metrics to measure effectiveness of investments in the public realm over time

Top 5 Activities in Downtown Parks	
	Walking (33%)
	Sitting (24%)
	Children Playing (5%)
	Walking Dog (5%)
	Standing (5%)

These were the top 5 activities observed in 123 downtown parks during summer 2015.

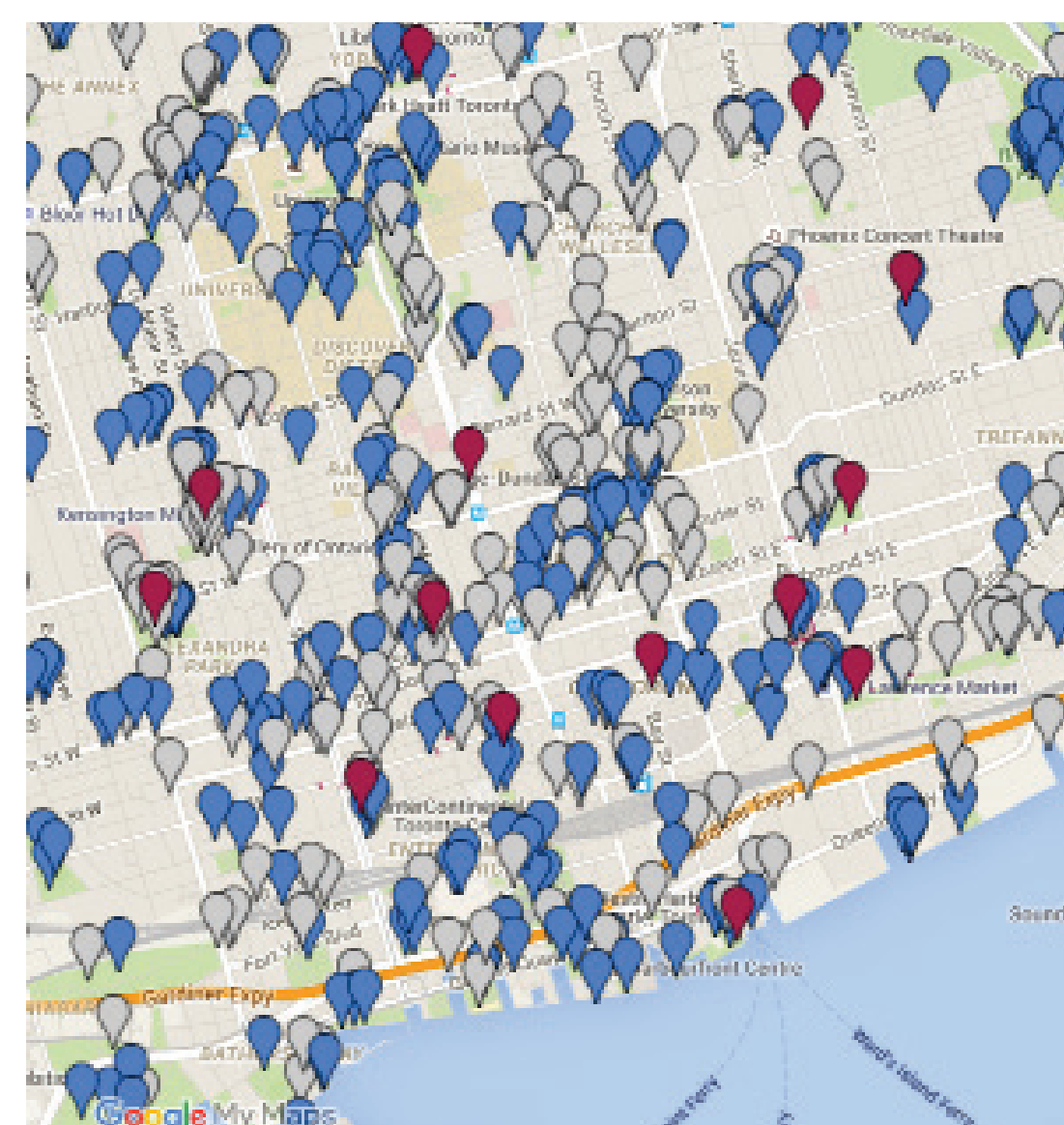
TOP ACTIVITIES

Observations from the park user survey.



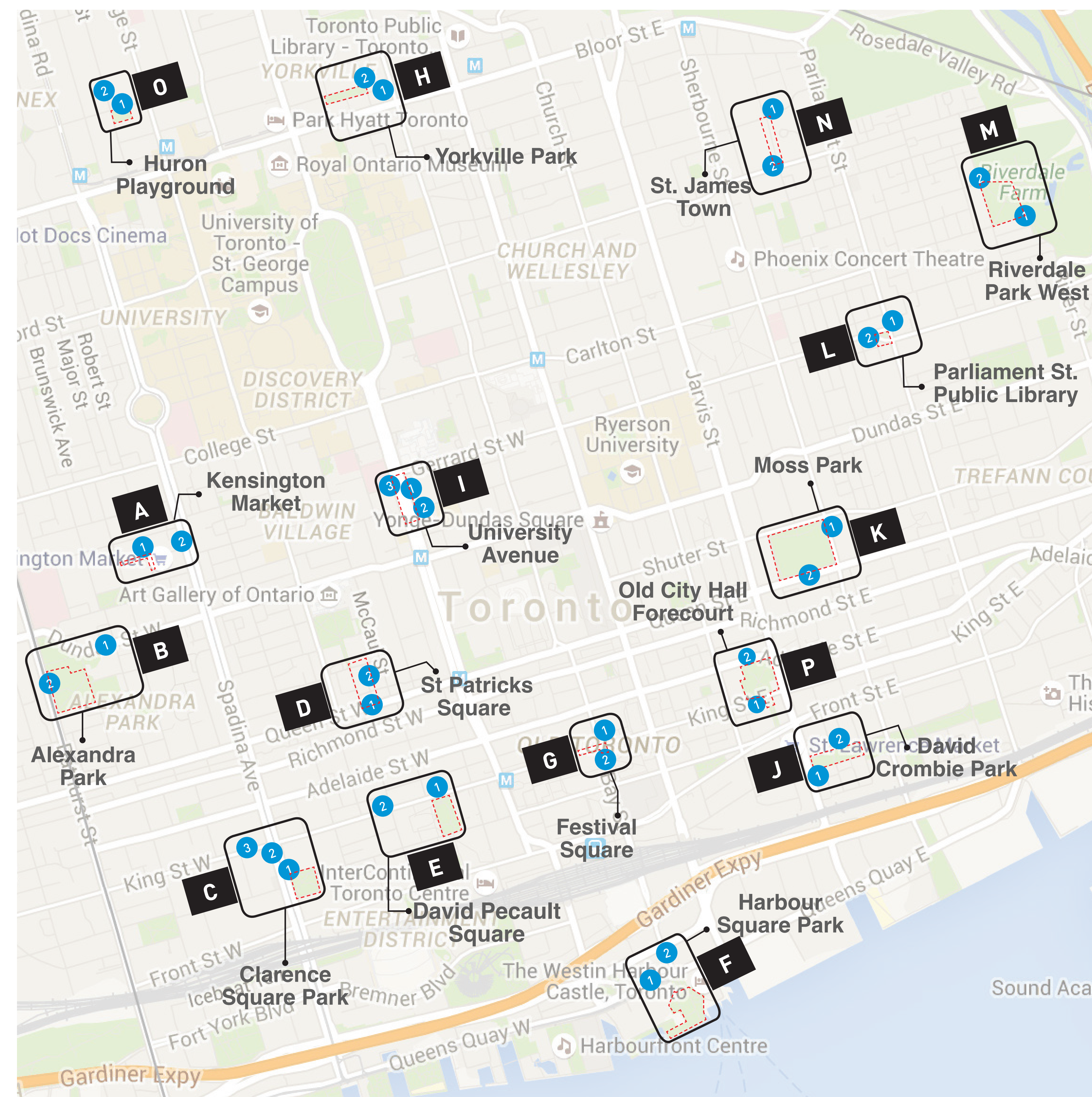
PARK USERS

Age breakdown of surveyed park users.



PICKING OUR SITES

Favourite places provided a tool to help pick our PSPL locations.



PSPL ZONES AND COUNTS

Over 50 volunteers will help measure how people move through space on foot and bicycle, document age and gender, and map stationary activity in 16 zones and over 45 specific spaces in the city.