



# David Crombie **Park**

## Revitalization Design

*Public Life Study Summary of Findings by 8 80 Cities*

## ***David Crombie Park Public Life Study Analysis Report***

Public Life Studies provide a snapshot of the daily rhythms and patterns of a public space. This will help us to understand who visits David Crombie Park, when they go, and what they do there.

### **Methodology**

The Public Life Study in David Crombie Park uses three tools:

- *Travel counts* to quantify the number, age, and gender of people who walk, bike, or use mobility devices to pass through a specific area of David Crombie Park. Travel counts are conducted for 15 minutes every hour. The results are multiplied by four to produce an estimated travel pattern for each hour of the day.
- *Activity Counts* to quantify the number, age, and gender of people who spend time in a specific area of the park and what they do there. Activity counts are conducted for 15 minutes every hour.
- *Intercept Surveys* to collect detailed demographic data and qualitative feedback from people who are in the park. In total 375 people responded to the survey.

### Dates:

We conducted three rounds of public life studies. Each round consisted of a weekday count and a weekend count. The three rounds took place in Summer 2018, Fall 2018 and Winter 2019.

### Locations:

There were six travel count locations and six activity count locations throughout the study area (see page 3). The activity count locations corresponded with the six “rooms” in the park, whereas the travel count locations corresponded with strategic entry/exit points.



## Public Life Study Locations



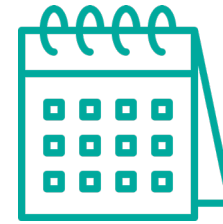
## *Public Life Study by the Numbers*



**6**  
counting  
locations



**3**  
seasons  
observed



**6**  
days of  
counting



**90**  
volunteers



**104**  
public life  
study shifts



**432**  
volunteer  
hours



**375**  
intercept  
surveys  
collected



**1,477**  
ideas  
received



**50**  
hours of  
public life  
data entry

## *Key Findings & Implications*

### 1. STEADY TRAFFIC THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

**Finding:** Foot/bike traffic in and around David Crombie Park increases by 10 percent on the weekends compared to the weekdays (Figure 1). This is a relatively small spike given the popularity and role of the market as a citywide destination.

**Design implication:** Are there opportunities to enhance David Crombie Park's role as a pedestrian/bike connection between St. Lawrence Market and other nearby destinations? Is this desirable?

### 2. SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN FOOT/BIKE TRAFFIC IN THE WINTER

**Finding:** Compared to the summer, weekday foot/bike traffic decreases by 26 percent in the fall and 42 percent in the winter. On the weekend, foot/bike traffic decreases by 20 percent in the fall and 44 percent in the winter (Figure 1). Similarly, we observed the lowest levels of activities taking place in the park on winter weekends (Figure 7).

**Design implication:** What are the opportunities to make the park and adjacent streets more winter-friendly so that the space is more inviting and well-used year-round?

### 3. HIGHEST LEVELS OF FOOT/BIKE TRAFFIC AT LOCATION 1

**Finding:** Location 1 (Jarvis and The Esplanade) is both the busiest location and the one that sees the largest increase in foot/bike traffic on the weekend, compared to the weekdays (Figure 2).

**Design implications:** How can Location 1 be redesigned to better reflect its role as the main gateway between David Crombie Park and the St. Lawrence Market?

### 4. OLDER ADULTS ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED

**Findings:** On average, adults ages 65 and older consist of 6 percent of foot/bike traffic on the weekday and 8 percent of foot/bike traffic on the weekend, despite representing 12.6 percent of the residential population in the St. Lawrence-Distillery neighbourhood (Figure 5). Similarly, when we look at activity counts in the park, adults ages 65 and older consist of just 7 percent of users on the weekday and 8 percent of users on the weekend (Figure 8).

**Design implication:** What are some design and programming interventions that would make it more inviting for older adults to access the park?

### 5. FEWER WOMEN AT NIGHT

**Findings:** On average throughout the year, there is a fairly equal gender distribution among those travelling through the study area (Figure 5) and among those spending time in the park (Figure 9). However, in the evenings from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, both the percentage of women passing through the area and the percentage of women spending time in the park drops to 45 percent on both the weekday and weekend (Figure 6 and Figure 10).

**Design implication:** How can design interventions make women feel more comfortable walking/biking through the park in the evening hours?

### 6. SEASONALITY OF DIVERSITY OF ACTIVITIES

**Findings:** Summer sees the most diversity of activities in the park. In winter, there are significantly lower levels of standing and sitting activities (Figure 7).

**Design implication:** What interventions might make it possible and



## Key Findings & Implications

more inviting for people to engage in a greater variety of activities in the park during winter?

### 7. DOG-WALKERS ARE CONSISTENT

**Finding:** Dog-walking activity remains constant on the weekdays and weekend and throughout all three seasons (Figure 7).

**Design implication:** Dog-walkers regularly use the park no matter what. How can the park be designed to accommodate this fact, while also ensuring the comfort of other users?

### 8. DAVID CROMBIE PARK FOR LOCALS

**Finding:** David Crombie Park is well-used by the local community. 7 in 10 survey respondents visit the park at least a few times a week or more (Figure 11). This coincides with the fact that 7 in 10 survey respondents also identify as neighbourhood residents (Figure 14). In addition, over half of respondents spend upwards of thirty minutes in the park (Figure 13).

**Design implication:** How can the revitalization of David Crombie Park continue to centre the needs and preferences of the park's most loyal user group –the residents?

### 9. PEDESTRIANS FIRST

**Finding:** 84 percent of survey respondents walked and 7 percent of respondents biked to the park (Figure 12). This is not surprising given the very local character of the park.

**Design implication:** Are there opportunities to make the park and the street network surrounding it even more pedestrian-friendly?

### 10. EVERYDAY REASONS FOR VISITING

**Finding:** Survey respondents' reasons for visiting David Crombie Park reflect its role as an everyday part of people's lives (Figure 15). Few respondents cited sightseeing or a cultural event as a reason for coming to the park.

**Design implication:** How can the revitalization of David Crombie Park ensure that the daily needs of the local community are accommodated?

### 11. POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF THE PARK

**Finding:** 91 percent of survey respondents feel "positive" or "very positive" about David Crombie Park (Figure 16). When asked why they feel this way, respondents highlight the sense of community, that it is a relaxing oasis that offers lots of green space, family-friendly activities, and space for dog-walking (Figure 17). Similarly, when asked what they like most about the park, the top theme was the access to nature/greenery (Figure 18).

**Design implication:** How can the new design of David Crombie Park retain and enhance what people like most about the area?

### 12. IMPROVE EXISTING ELEMENTS

**Finding:** When asked what about the park could be improved, the top two themes that stood out were: 1) better overall maintenance of the park, and 2) improved play structures (Figure 19).

**Design implication:** How can the revitalization plan for the park reflect these community preferences?

## *Key Findings & Implications*

### 13. SAFETY IN THE PARK

**Finding:** 73 percent of people feel “safe” or “very safe” in the park. 16 percent feel “neutral” and 10 percent feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe” (Figure 20). The most popular proposed solution for improving safety is to improve lighting in the area (Figure 21).

**Design implication:** How might we design pedestrian-level lighting to make people, especially women, feel safer and more welcome in the park at night?

### 14. A CONSISTENT EMPHASIS ON GREEN

**Finding:** When asked to describe David Crombie Park in three words, the most popular response was “green”, with 53 mentions. This was followed by “friendly” with 48 mentions, then “clean” with 39 mentions (Figure 22).

**Design implication:** How can the revitalization of David Crombie Park maintain the park’s role as a beloved green oasis?

### 15. DESIRE FOR A DESIGNATED DOG PARK

**Finding:** When asked to list two things people would like to do in the park that they can’t do now, the most popular theme among respondents was access to a designated area for dogs (Figure 23). This was closely followed by “more diverse play options” for all ages, accommodating both very young children and adults.

**Design implication:** What are the opportunities to better accommodate dogs and to enhance play opportunities for all throughout the park?

### 16. MAINTAIN OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

**Finding:** 45 percent of respondents say that they sometimes or often participate in activities to maintain or improve the neighbourhood (Figure 24). While there is no comparable data from other neighbourhoods, at first glance this figure indicates a fairly engaged population.

**Design implication:** How can the local community continue to access stewardship opportunities in the park after the revitalization process?

### 17. DIVERSIFY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

**Finding:** Survey respondents were predominantly female (56 percent), white (64 percent), and possess a bachelor’s degree or higher (65 percent). While this may have been a result of people self-selecting to do the intercept survey or perhaps even unintentional bias by the volunteers who were administering the survey, it may also indicate a lack of diversity among visitors to the park (Figures 24 through 31).

**Design implication:** Next rounds of the community engagement should target groups that have so far been under-represented in the community engagement process.

## TRAVEL COUNTS

### *How many people pass through the park each hour of the day?*

These charts compare the total number of people passing through David Crombie Park in the summer, fall and winter.

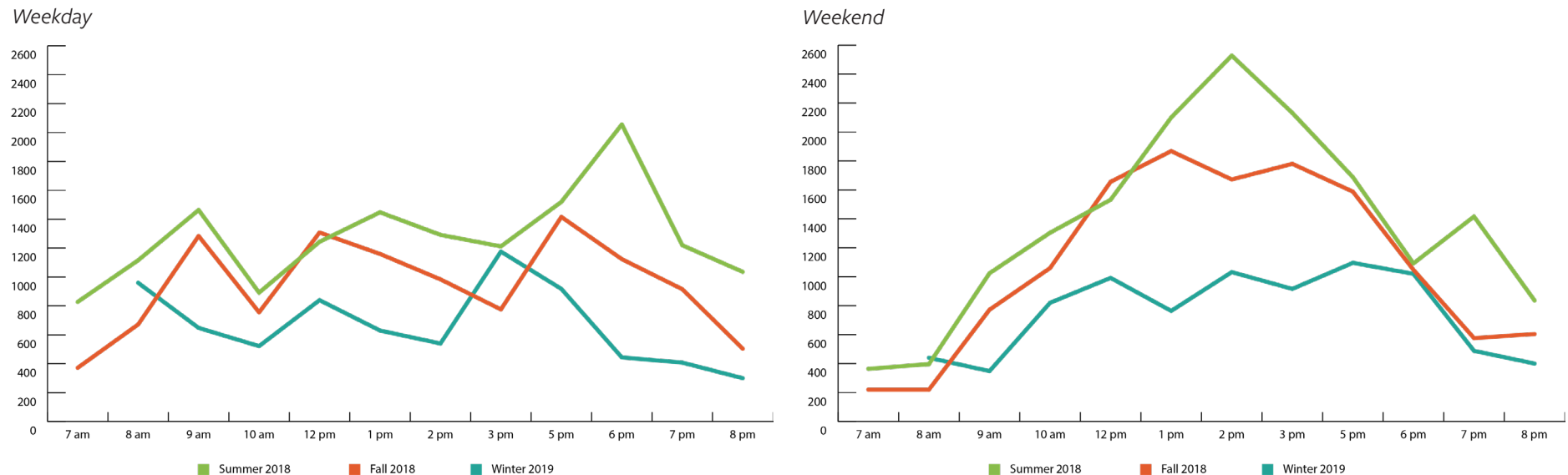


Figure 1

#### Observations:

- During the weekdays, there are three peaks during the day coinciding with early morning, lunchtime, and early evening.
- During the weekends, there is typically one longer peak that occurs in the early afternoon. This effect is most dramatic in the summer.
- On average throughout the year, David Crombie Park sees 10 percent more foot and bike traffic on weekends than on weekdays.

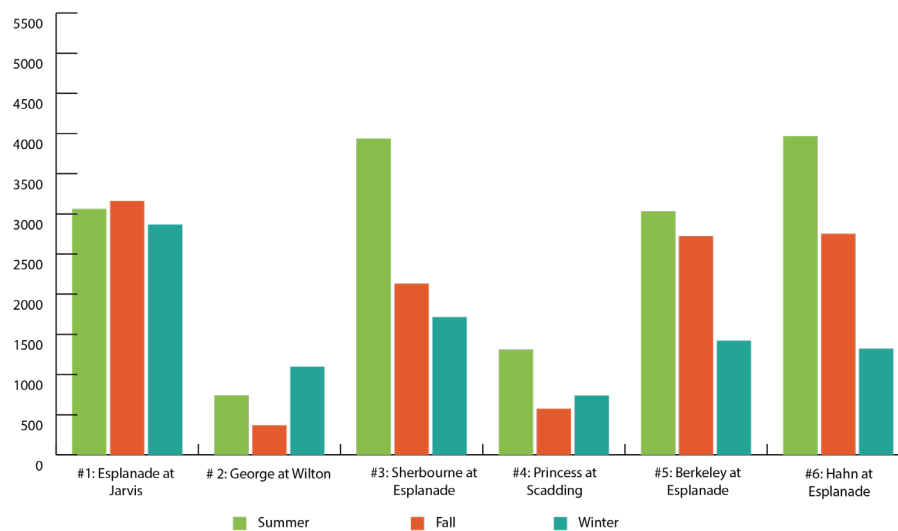


## TRAVEL COUNTS

### Where do people pass through?

These charts compare the total number of people passing through each of the six travel count locations in the summer, fall and winter.

Weekday



Weekend

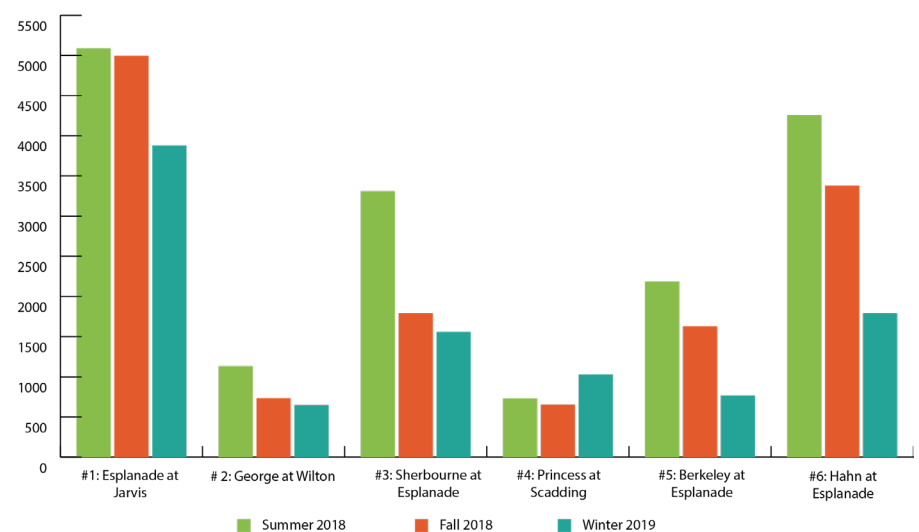


Figure 2

#### Observations:

- On the weekday, Locations #1 #3, #4, and #6 are the busiest sites.
- On the weekend, Locations #1, #3 and #6 are the busiest sites.
- Location #1 has the steadiest levels of foot/bike traffic throughout the year.

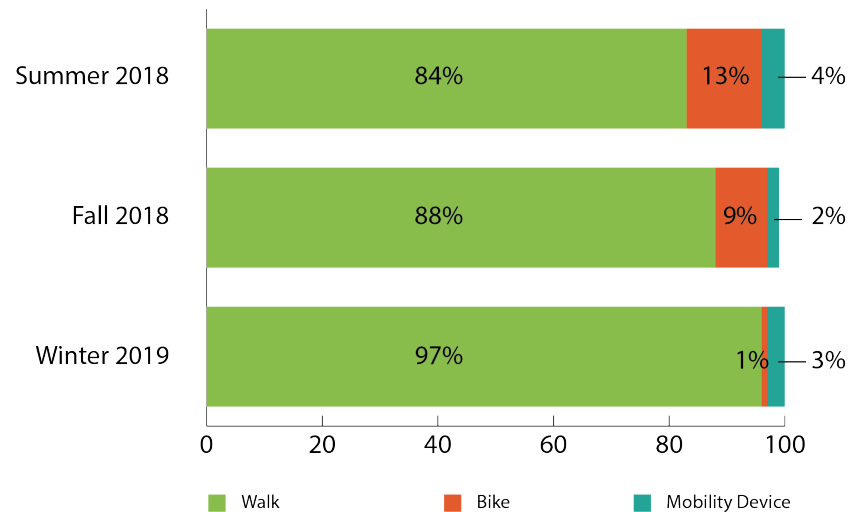
- Location #6 sees the greatest drop in foot/bike traffic between summer and winter.
- Location #1 sees the largest increase on the weekend compared to the weekday.

## TRAVEL COUNTS

### *How do people pass through the park?*

These charts compare the rates of walking, biking and use of mobility devices to access the park over summer, fall and winter.

*Weekday*



*Weekend*

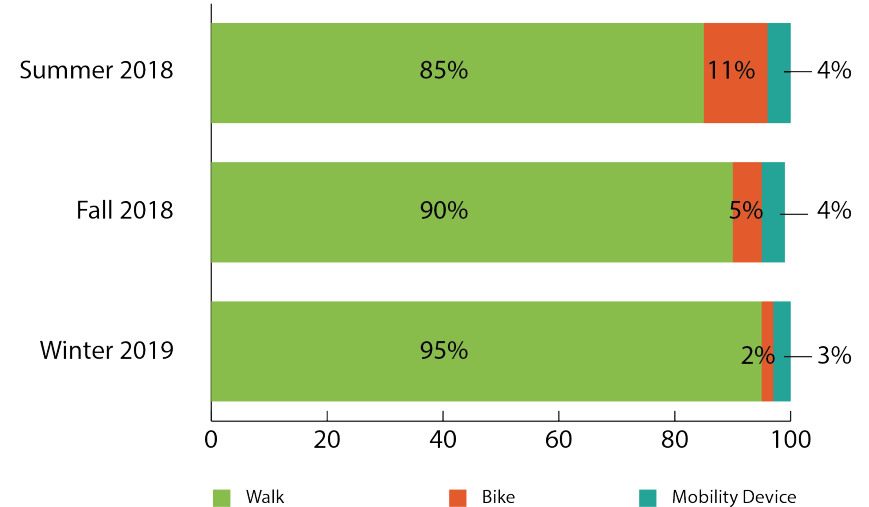


Figure 3

#### **Observations:**

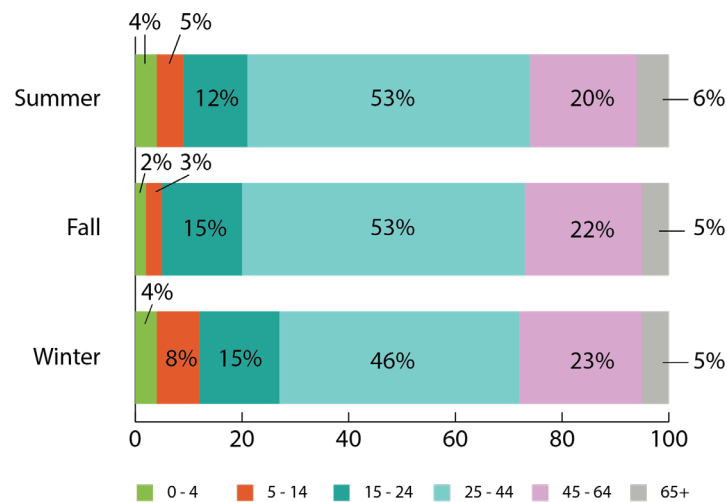
- There are slightly higher rates of cycling during the weekday compared to the weekend, except during winter.
- Cycling rates plummet as the temperature drops.
- Rate of people using mobility devices remains relatively constant throughout the seasons and days of the week.

## TRAVEL COUNTS

### *What are the ages of people passing through the study area?*

These charts compare the age distribution of people passing through David Crombie Park in the summer, fall and winter.

Weekday



Weekend

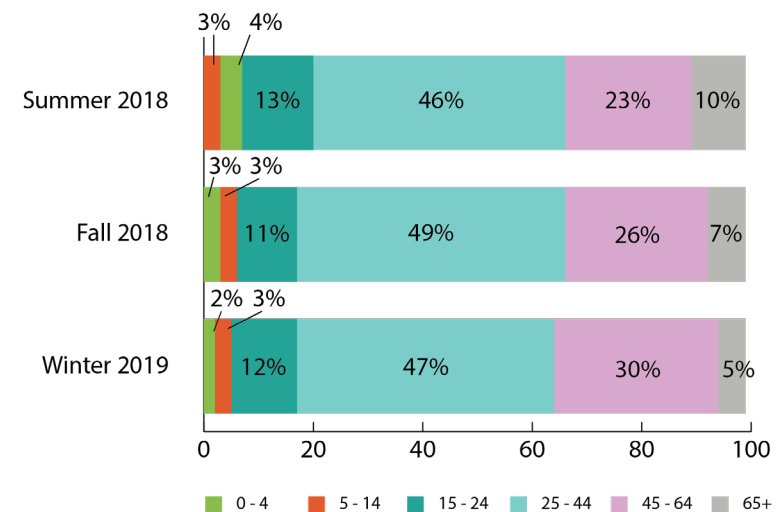


Figure 4

#### Observations:

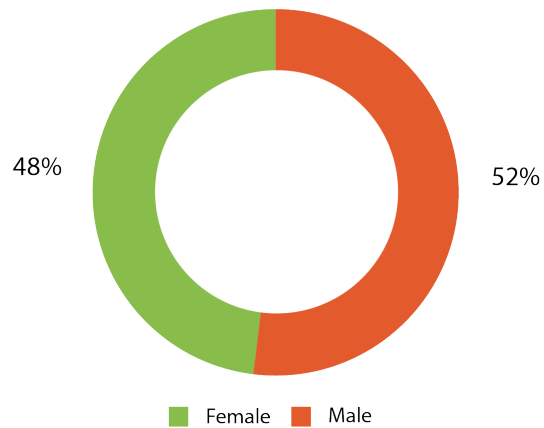
- The ages of people passing through the study are typically younger during the weekdays and older during the weekends.
- The 25 - 44 age group is, by far, the most common demographic in all seasons and on both weekdays and weekends.

## TRAVEL COUNTS

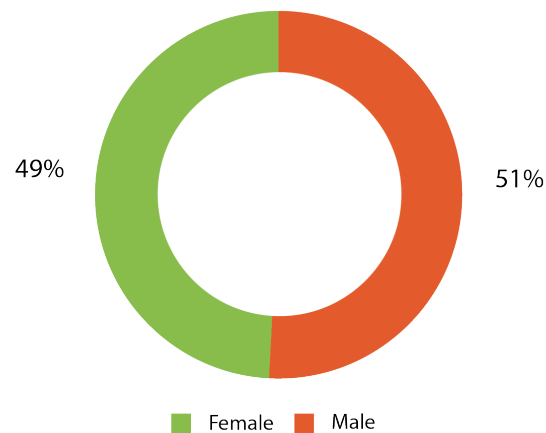
### *What is the gender distribution of people passing through the park?*

These charts demonstrate how the gender distribution of people passing through the park changes in the evening hours.

*Weekday average from 7:00 am - 9:00 pm*



*Weekend average from 7:00 am - 9:00 pm*

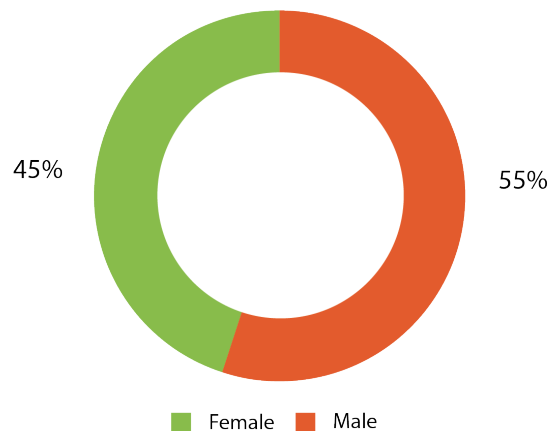


#### **Observations:**

- On average throughout all three seasons, there is a roughly even gender split among those walking/biking through the study area between 7:00 am - 9:00 pm.
- In the evenings between 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, there is a slight increase in the proportion of males passing through the study area.

Figure 5

*Weekday average from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm*



*Weekend average from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm*

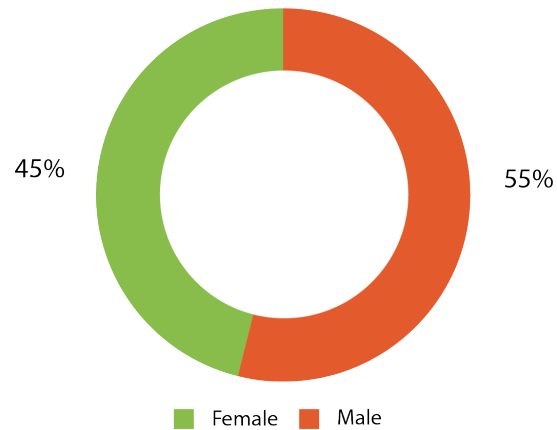
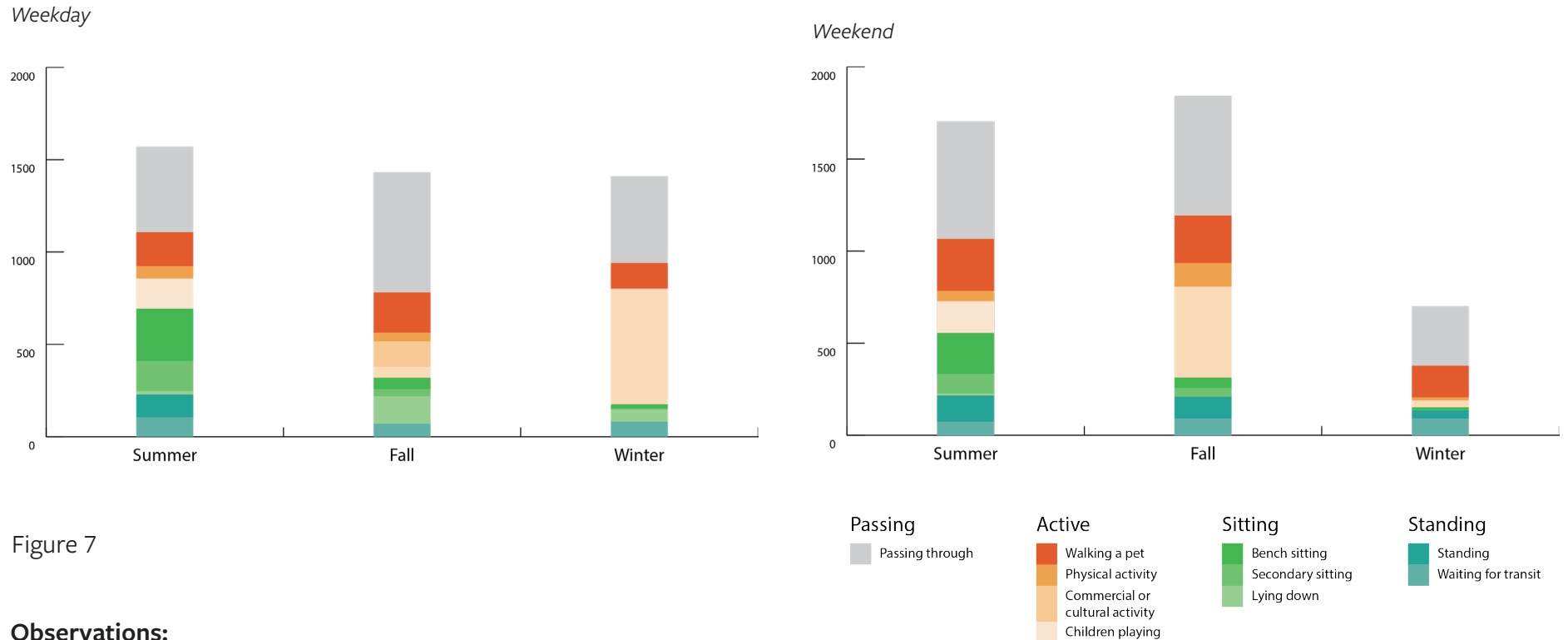


Figure 6

# ACTIVITY COUNTS

## How do activity counts vary throughout different seasons?

These charts compare the total types of activity that take place in the park in the summer, fall and winter.



### Observations:

- There is a 93 percent decrease in sitting activities going from summer to winter.
- In winter, there was a spike in the number of children playing in the park on the weekdays. This can be attributed to the two schools who use the park for recess.
- Children were not let out for recess during the fall counts but we can assume that typically, the number of children playing in the park in the fall would be comparable to the winter figures.

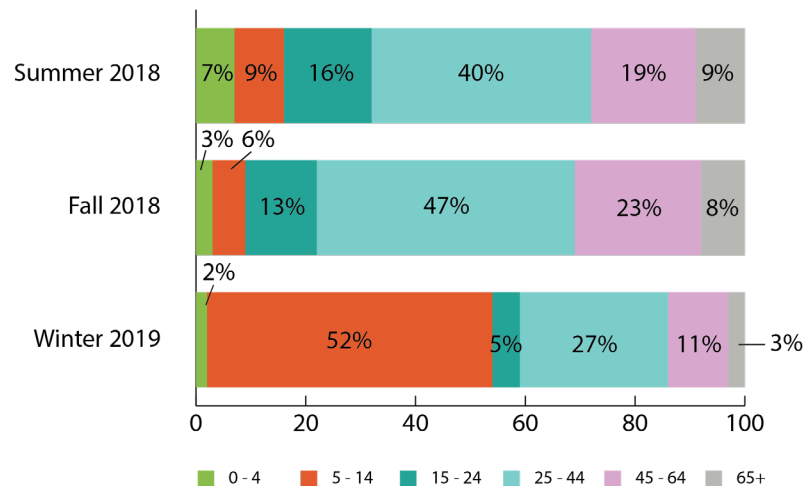
- The number of people walking a pet is relatively constant throughout all seasons.

## ACTIVITY COUNTS

### *What are the ages of people spending time in David Crombie Park?*

These charts compare the age distribution of people spending time in David Crombie Park in the summer, fall and winter.

*Weekday*



*Weekend*

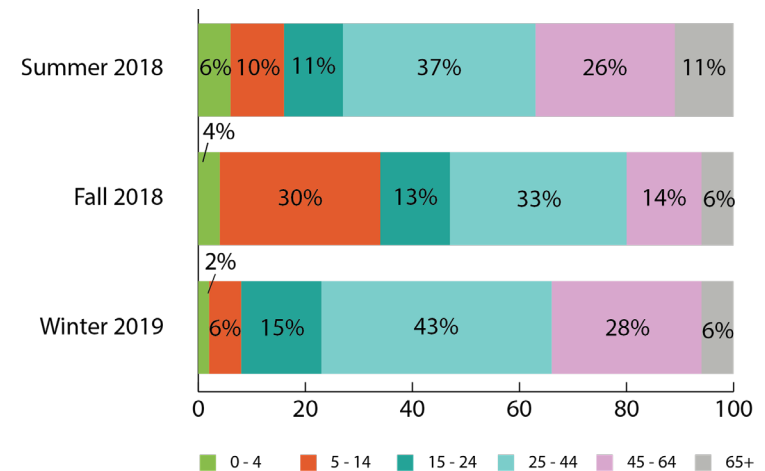


Figure 8

#### Observations:

- Throughout the summer, there is a relatively balanced representation of ages of park users.
- On winter weekdays, children make up the majority of park users. This is attributed to the two schools that use the park for recess and the relatively low number of non-students spending time in the park.
- Important to note is that schools did not hold recess during our fall counts which was unusual. We estimate that on an average fall weekday, children ages 5 - 14 would typically make up a much higher percentage of the park users.

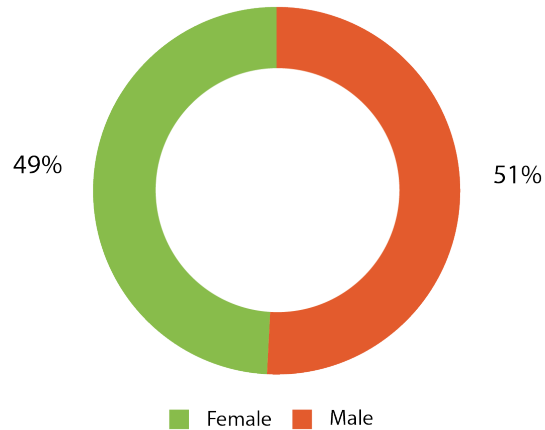


## ACTIVITY COUNTS

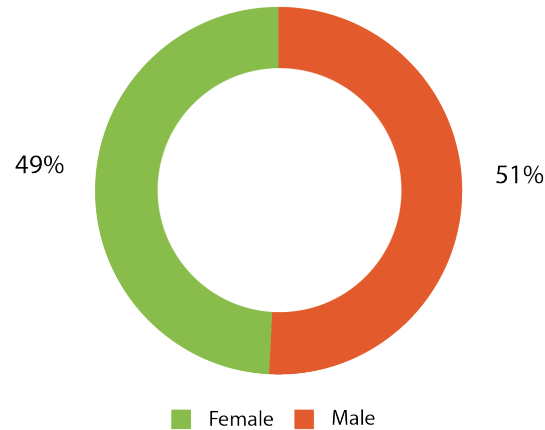
### *What is the gender distribution of people spending time in the park?*

These charts demonstrate how the gender distribution of people spending time in the park changes in the evening hours.

*Weekday average from 7:00 am - 9:00 pm*



*Weekend average from 7:00 am - 9:00 pm*

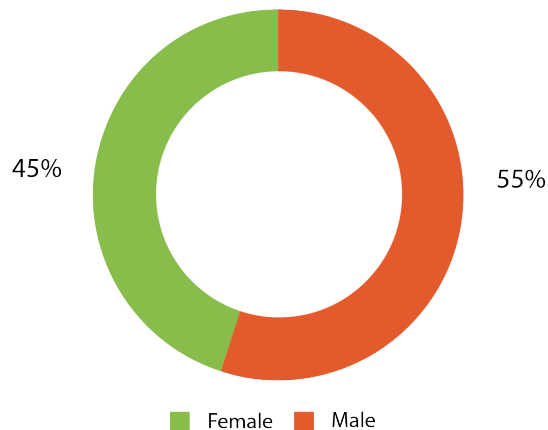


#### **Observations:**

- On average throughout all three seasons, there is a roughly even gender split among those spending time in the park on weekdays and weekends.
- In the evening hours of 7:00 pm - 9:00pm, there is a slight increase in the proportion of males spending time in the park.

Figure 9

*Weekday average from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm*



*Weekend average from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm*

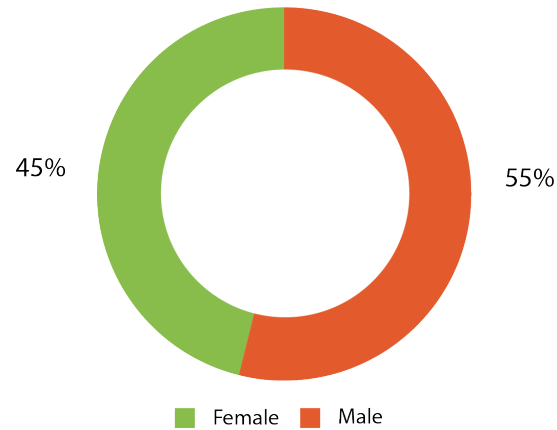


Figure 10

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

### *How often do you visit David Crombie Park?*

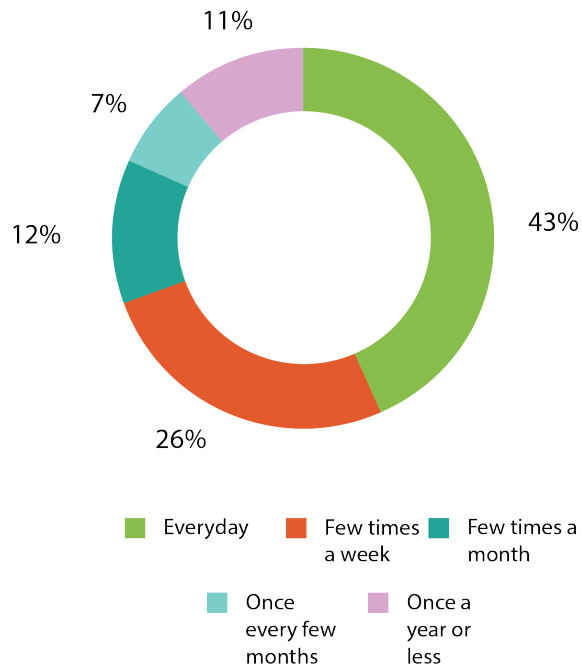


Figure 11

#### Observations:

- Nearly 7 in 10 respondents visit the park a few times a week or more.

### *How did you get here today?*

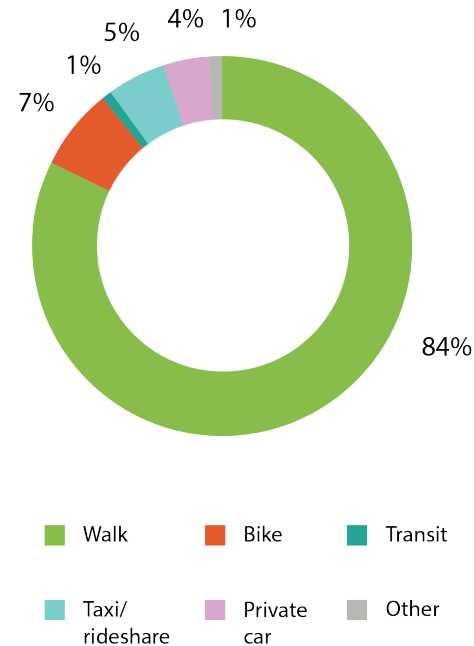


Figure 12

#### Observations:

- Active transportation (walking, bicycling, and public transit) accounts for 92 percent of responses.
- Vehicular modes account for 9 percent of responses.
- Percentages add up to more than 100 percent because people were allowed to select more than one answer.

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

### *How much time will you spend here?*

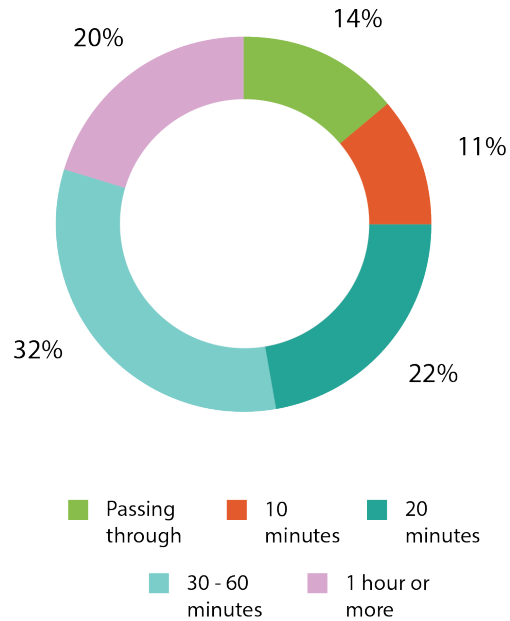


Figure 13

#### **Observations:**

- More than half of respondents spend more than 30 minutes at the park.

### *What best describes your relationship to this neighbourhood?*

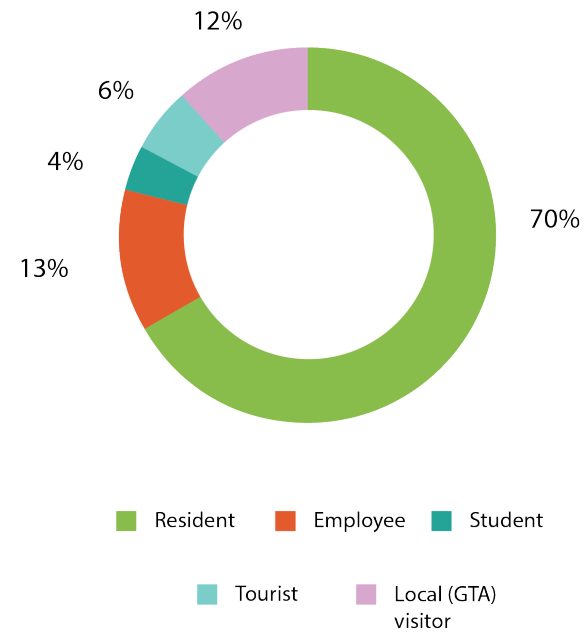


Figure 14

#### **Observations:**

- 7 in 10 respondents identify as residents of the neighbourhood. This figure corresponds with the rate of respondents who say they visit the park a few times a week or more.
- The response total is above 100 percent because respondents were able to select all options that applied to them.

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

### *What brings you to David Crombie Park today?*

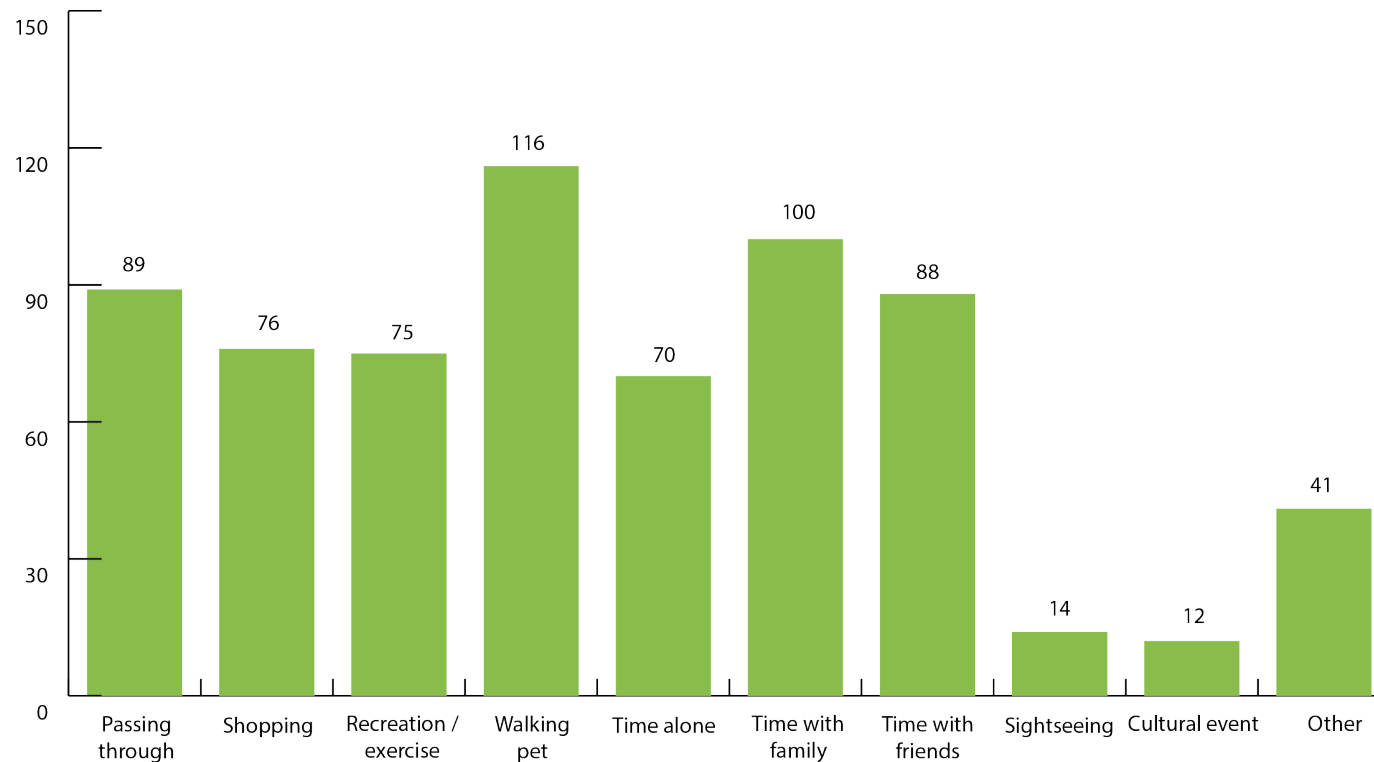


Figure 15

#### **Observations:**

- The most popular reason among respondents for visiting the park was for walking a pet.
- Overall, the reasons that people visit David Crombie Park are varied and for everyday purposes.

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

### *How do you feel about David Crombie Park?*

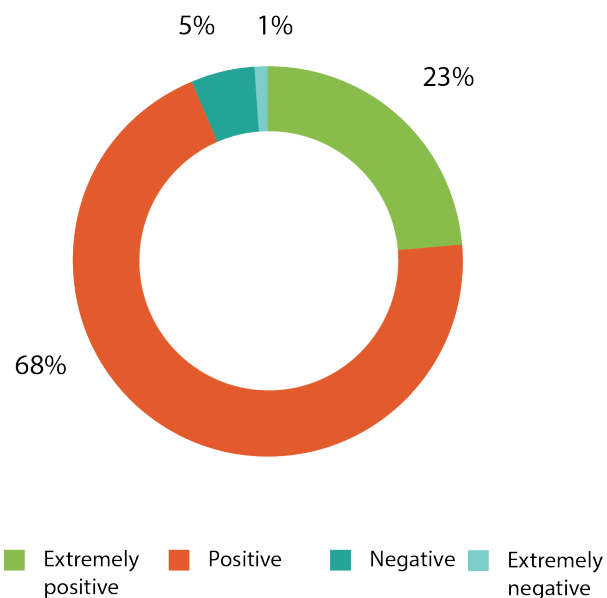


Figure 16

#### Observations:

- 91% of survey respondents feel “positive” or “extremely positive” about the park.
- Only 6% feel “negative” or “very negative”.

### *Why do you feel this way?* (Open-ended question)

#### Top five themes

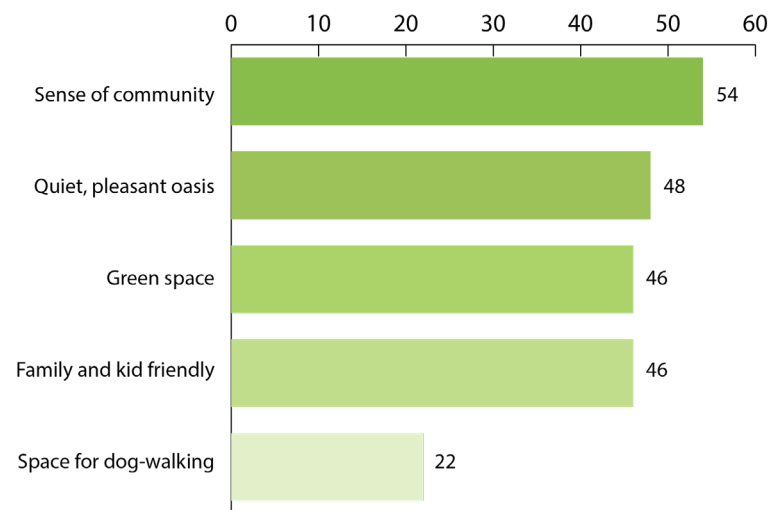


Figure 17

#### Observations:

- People love the friendly, welcoming, and community-oriented nature of David Crombie Park.
- Access to a quiet green space in the middle of the city is important to the respondents.

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

### *What do you like most about David Crombie Park?* (Open-ended question)

#### Top five themes

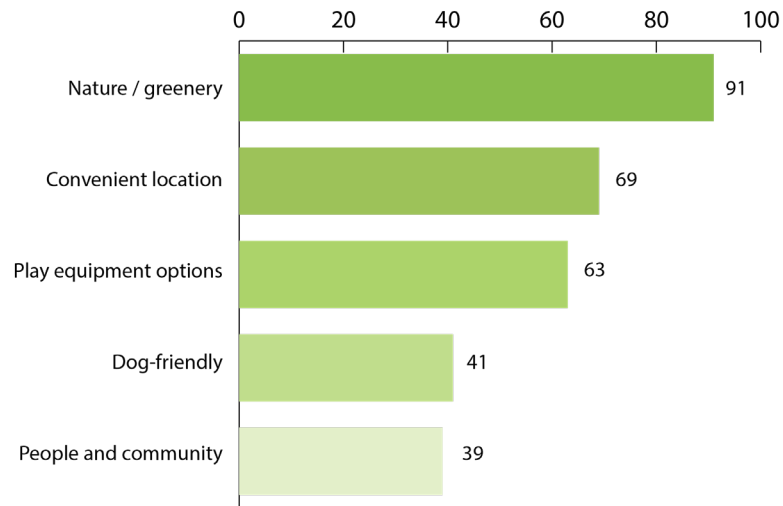


Figure 18

#### Observations:

- People love the natural elements of David Crombie Park most.

### *What are some things about the park that could be improved?* (Open-ended question)

#### Top five themes

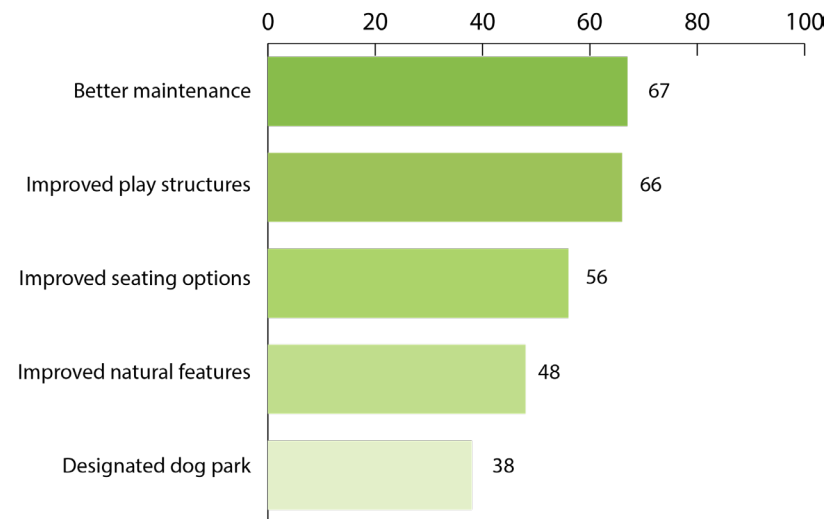


Figure 19

#### Observations:

- Improving the overall maintenance and cleanliness of the park is the top priority as well as updating the current play and seating facilities.
- When it comes to improving natural features, respondents would like to see more shade trees, better maintained grass, and an updated water fountain/feature.
- The most popular “new” feature that people suggested to add was a designated dog park.



## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

*How would you rate your feelings of safety in this space right now?*

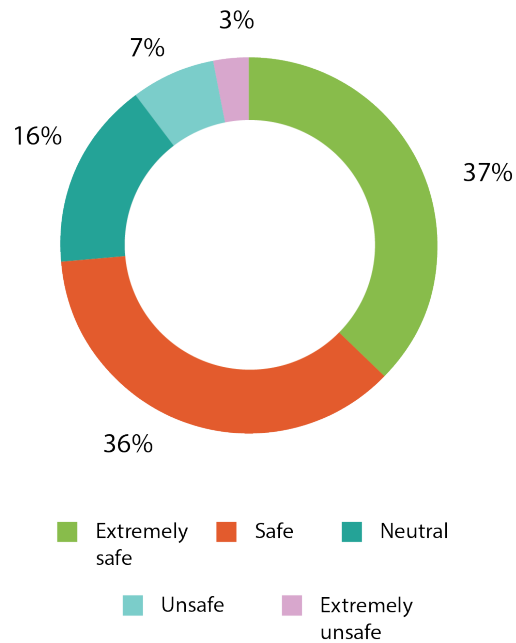


Figure 20

### Observations:

- Nearly three-quarters of respondents feel “extremely safe” or “safe” in the park.
- There was very little discrepancy among gender or age categories in the responses to this question.

*What would make you feel more safe in this space?* (Open-ended question)

### Top five themes

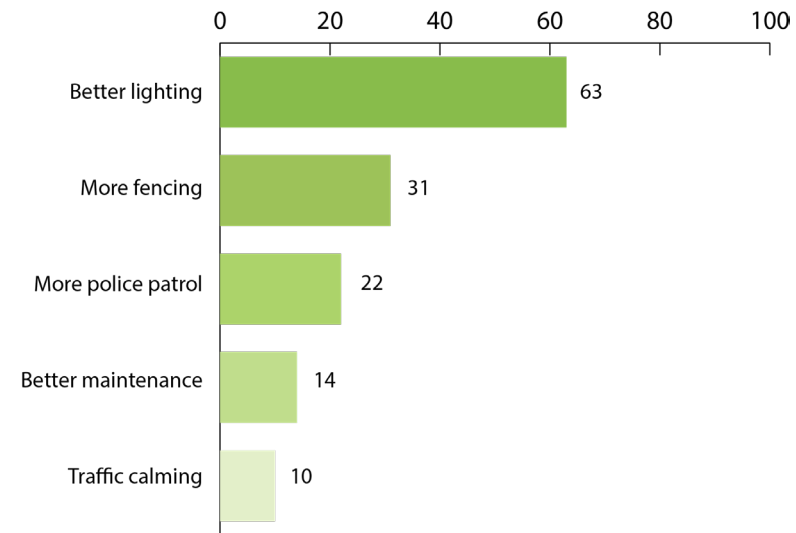


Figure 21

### Observations:

- When it comes to safety, better lighting is by far the most endorsed improvement.
- The desire for more fencing in the park stems primarily from the fear of children and dogs running out onto The Esplanade.

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

***What are three words you would use to describe David Crombie Park? (Open-ended question)***



Figure 22

**Observations:**

- The top three words that were used to describe the park were:
  1. Green (53 mentions)
  2. Friendly (48 mentions)
  3. Clean (39 mentions)

***What two things would you like to do in David Crombie Park that you can't do now?***  
(Open-ended question)

### Top 5 responses

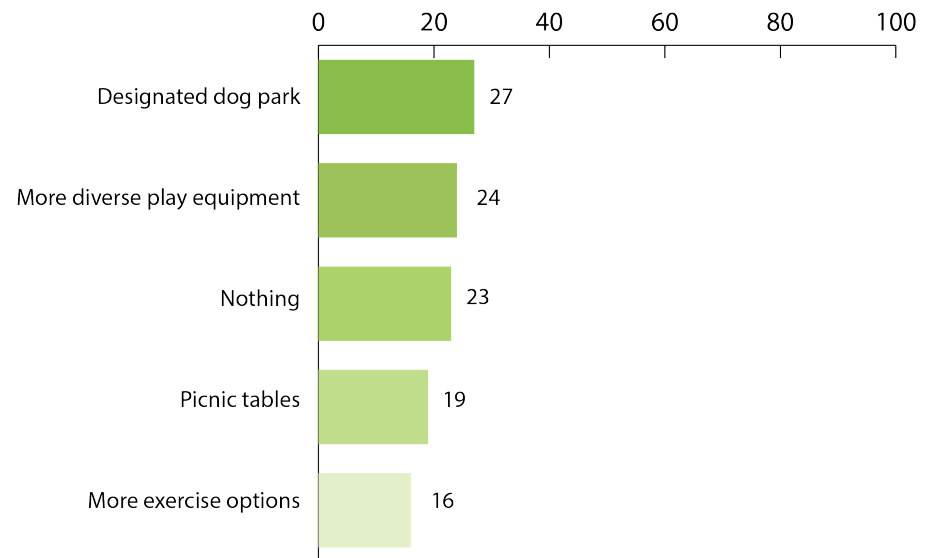


Figure 23

**Observations:**

- When it comes to new additions to the park, the top theme was once again a designated dog park.
- Respondents would like to see play equipment that accommodates the full spectrum of ages, from young toddlers to adults.
- A popular answer was to not change anything about the park and to leave it as it is.

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

*How often do you participate in activities to maintain or improve this neighbourhood?*

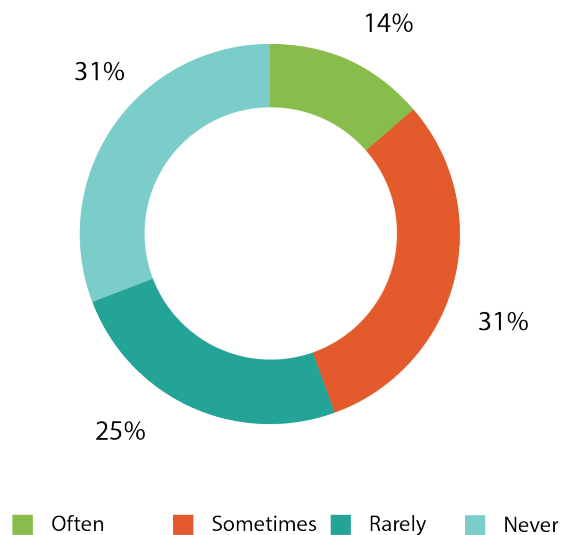


Figure 24

### Observations:

- 45 percent of respondents often or sometimes participate in activities to maintain or improve the neighbourhood.

*What is your age?*

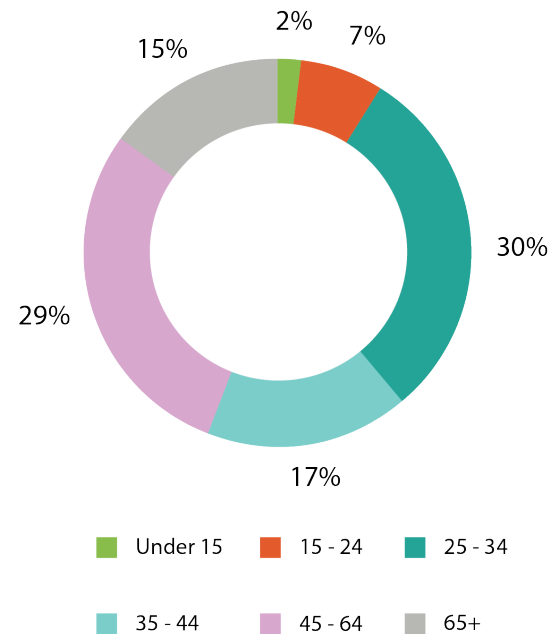


Figure 25

### Observations:

- Survey respondents are predominantly over the age of 35.

### *What gender do you identify as?*

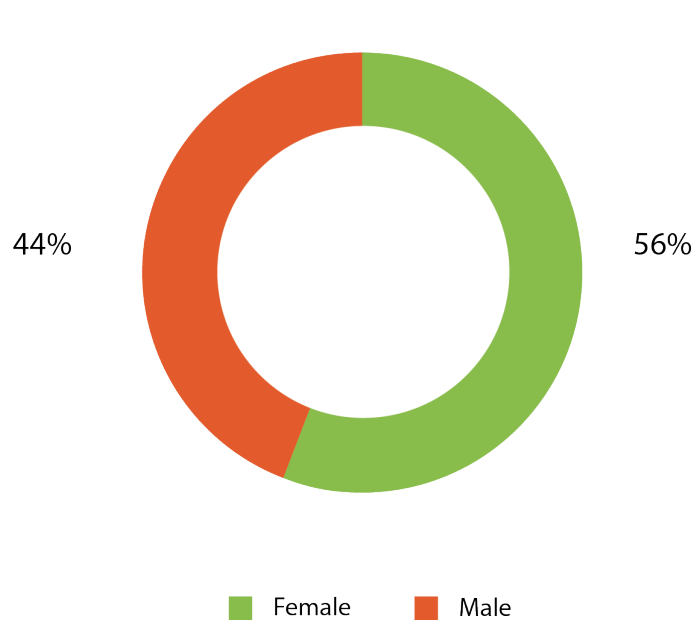


Figure 26

#### **Observations:**

- Survey respondents are predominantly female.

### *Do you identify as LGBTTIQQ2S?*

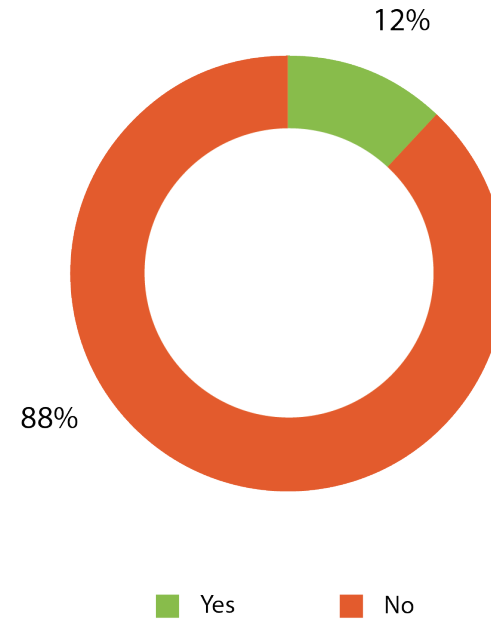


Figure 27

#### **Observations:**

- Slightly more than 1 in 10 survey respondents identify as LGBTTIQQ2S.

## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

*Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?*

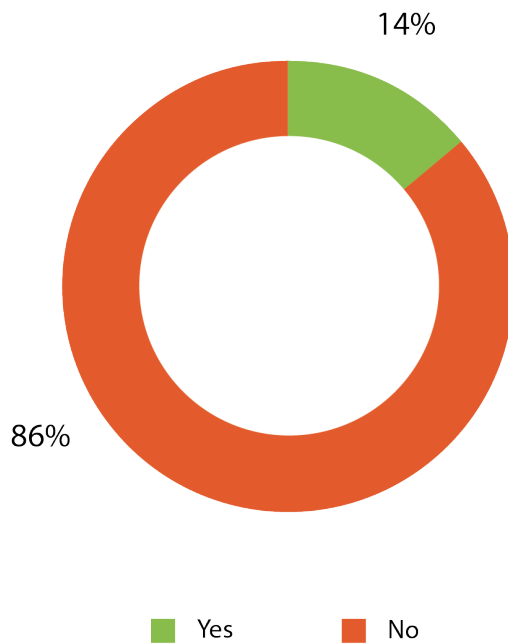


Figure 28

### Observations:

- Roughly 1 in 7 survey respondents live with a disability.

*What is the highest level of education you have completed?*

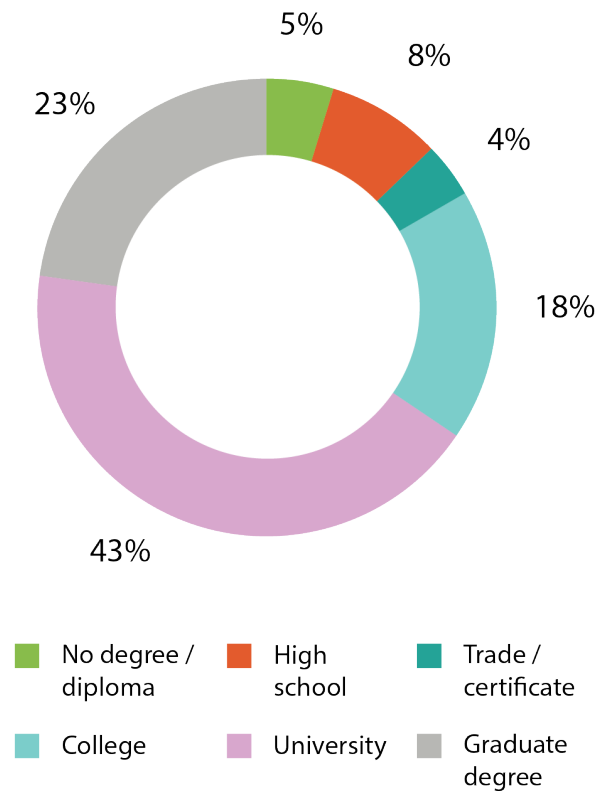


Figure 29

### Observations:

- 66 percent of survey respondents have a university degree or higher, which is much higher than the City of Toronto figure of 44 percent.

### *What is your annual household income before taxes?*

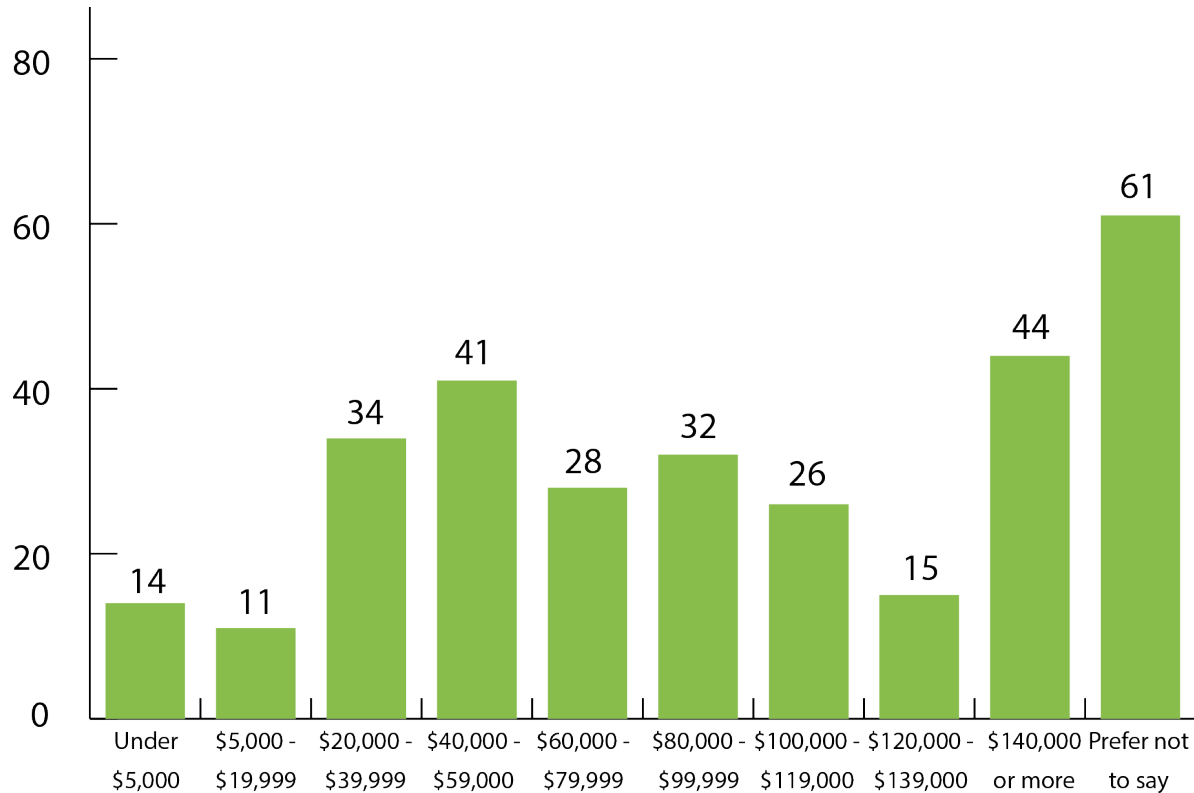


Figure 30

#### **Observations:**

- There is a fairly balanced distribution of household incomes represented among the survey respondents.



## INTERCEPT SURVEYS

### *What race/ethnicity do you identify as?*

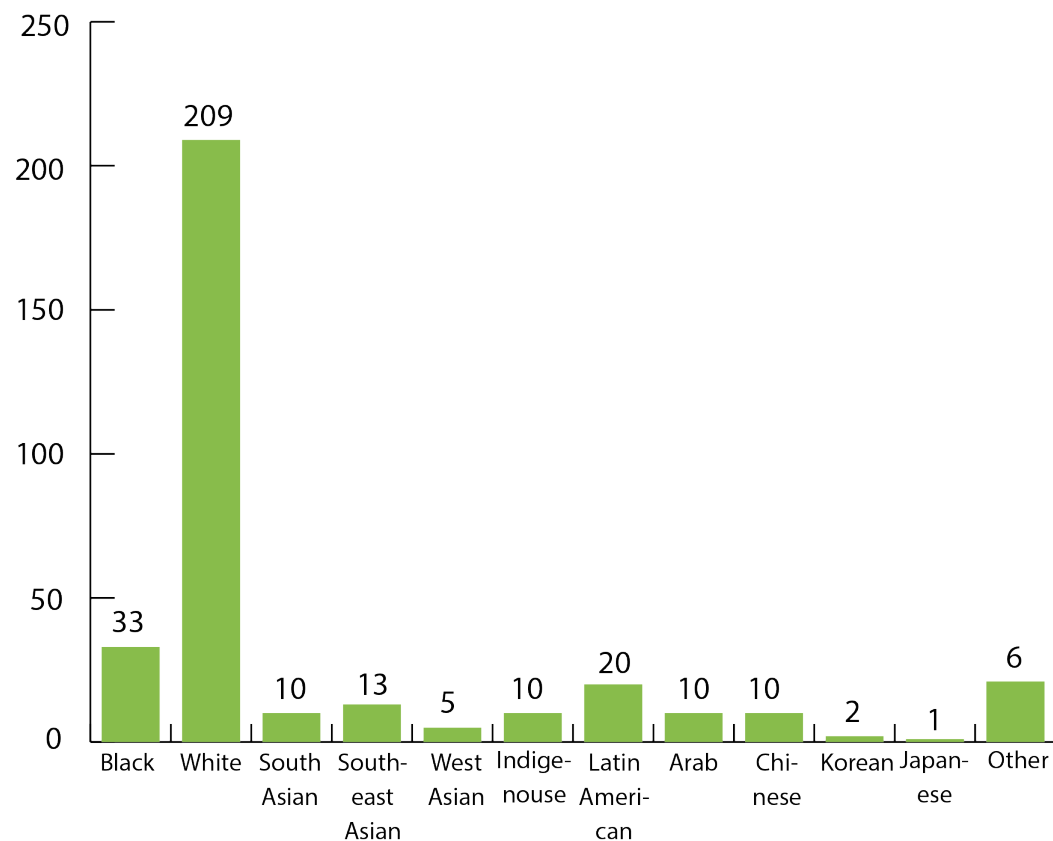


Figure 31

#### **Observations:**

- Survey respondents are predominantly (64 percent) white.