

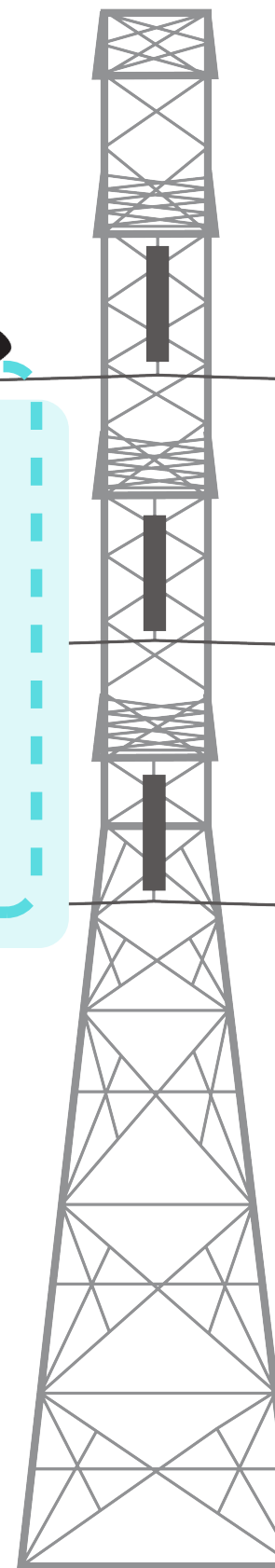


Green Line Implementation Geary Avenue Park Expansion

What We Heard

Phase 2 – Preferred Concept Plan

January 2021



Executive Summary

The City of Toronto is proceeding with plans for the implementation of the Green Line, starting with the Geary Avenue Park Expansion. This report summarizes the feedback received over the fall of 2020 on the second stage of concept design, the Preferred Concept Plan for the expansion to Geary Avenue Park.

In response to COVID-19 public health guidelines, Parks, Forestry and Recreation held an online community meeting to discuss this park attended by 58 community members. The meeting was followed by an online questionnaire that received over 300 submissions, email communications with the project team, and a family-friendly activity book. This summary includes feedback from the virtual public meeting held on November 4, 2020, and subsequent feedback received through the online questionnaire and emails to the project team.

We heard the following key messages from the community about what they supported within the Preferred Concept Plan. Participants strongly supported:

- Trees and meadows.
- Lawns and open spaces.
- Balance of park spaces for various uses.
- Streetscape improvements and lighting.
- Accessible pathways.

In addition, seating and the off-leash area were supported but received several recommendations for enhancement or improvement. Participants identified opportunities to improve some elements of the Preferred Concept Plan, such as:

- Continuing to consider pathway surfaces that both meet accessibility standards and are permeable for stormwater.
- Creating a unique sense of place and identity for the park by drawing on elements of the area's Indigenous, immigrant, and industrial heritage.
- Creating more opportunities for group seating.
- Consider alternate surface materials to pea gravel in the Off-Leash Area and enhance proposed amenities such as seating, shade, and interactive features.

This feedback and the additional details provided in this document will help shape the detailed design for the expansion to Geary Avenue Park, which will also be reviewed by Hydro One before approval and construction.

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1 Introduction

The Green Line is a proposed linear park system in an active hydro-electric corridor that will connect neighbourhoods and expand the broader open space network in midtown and west Toronto. Following the completion of an implementation plan for the entire 5-kilometre long park system ([read the Green Line Implementation Plan](#)), the City of Toronto has begun the implementation process through the design and consultation on an expansion to Geary Avenue Park near Dovercourt Road and Geary Avenue.

The two parcels of land on the west and east sides of Dovercourt Road, south of Geary Avenue, and north of the Canadian Pacific rail line are included in the scope of this project, as well as the sidewalk along the south side of Geary Avenue between Salem Avenue North and Delaware Avenue North. These lands are beneath an active hydro corridor owned by the province, operated by Infrastructure Ontario and managed by Hydro One Networks Incorporated (Hydro One). As a result, the design of the Geary Avenue Park Expansion must be approved by Hydro One following their guidelines on secondary uses in hydro corridors.

[Read Hydro One's Secondary Land Uses guidelines.](#)

The following summary documents the feedback received during the Preferred Concept Plan phase of consultation on the Geary Avenue Park expansion design.



Figure 1. A rendering of the expanded Geary Avenue Park concept plan, east of Dovercourt Road showing the meadows and trees, pathway, and open lawn area.

2 What We Heard

This summary is organized by overall feedback on the Preferred Concept Plan (Figures 2 and 3). It provides additional detail on what we heard from participants on design elements they liked and elements identified for further consideration or refinement.

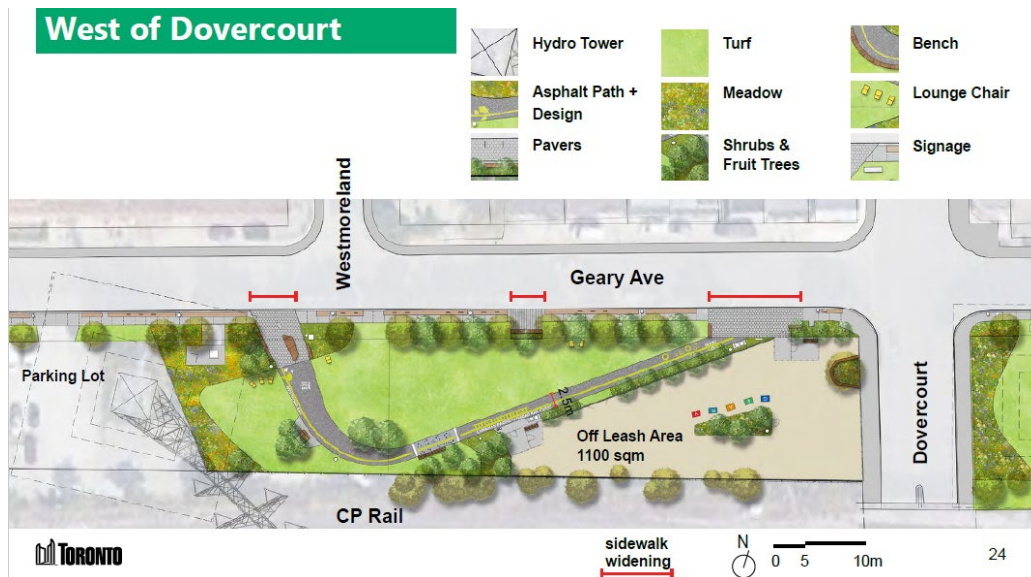


Figure 2. Preferred Concept Plan for the expansion of Geary Avenue Park west of Dovercourt Road.

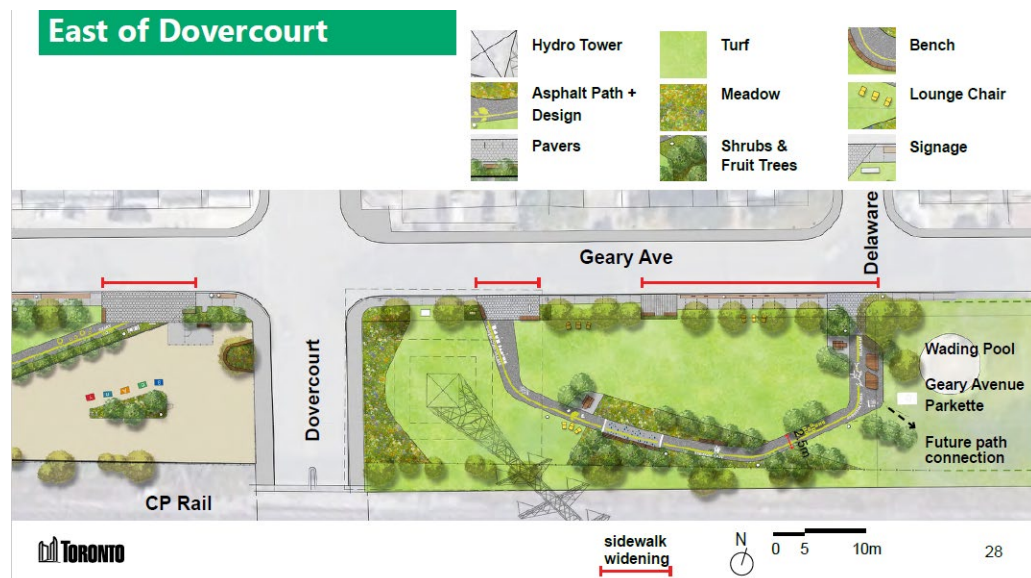


Figure 3. Preferred Concept Plan for the expansion of Geary Avenue Park east of Dovercourt Road.

2.1 Supported Elements within the Preferred Concept Plan

Participants provided feedback on various elements of the preferred concept plan for the west and east portions of the expansion to Geary Avenue Park (Figures 4 and 5). The elements that received the most support were:

- Trees and meadows.
- Lawns and open spaces.
- Balance of park spaces for various uses.
- Streetscape improvements and lighting.

In addition, seating and the off-leash area were supported but received several recommendations for enhancement or improvement.

The following section provides more feedback on the Preferred Concept Plan's park elements incorporating feedback received from the online questionnaire (**Appendix A**), polls conducted during the virtual community meeting (**Appendix B**), and other written and oral comments through the consultation process.

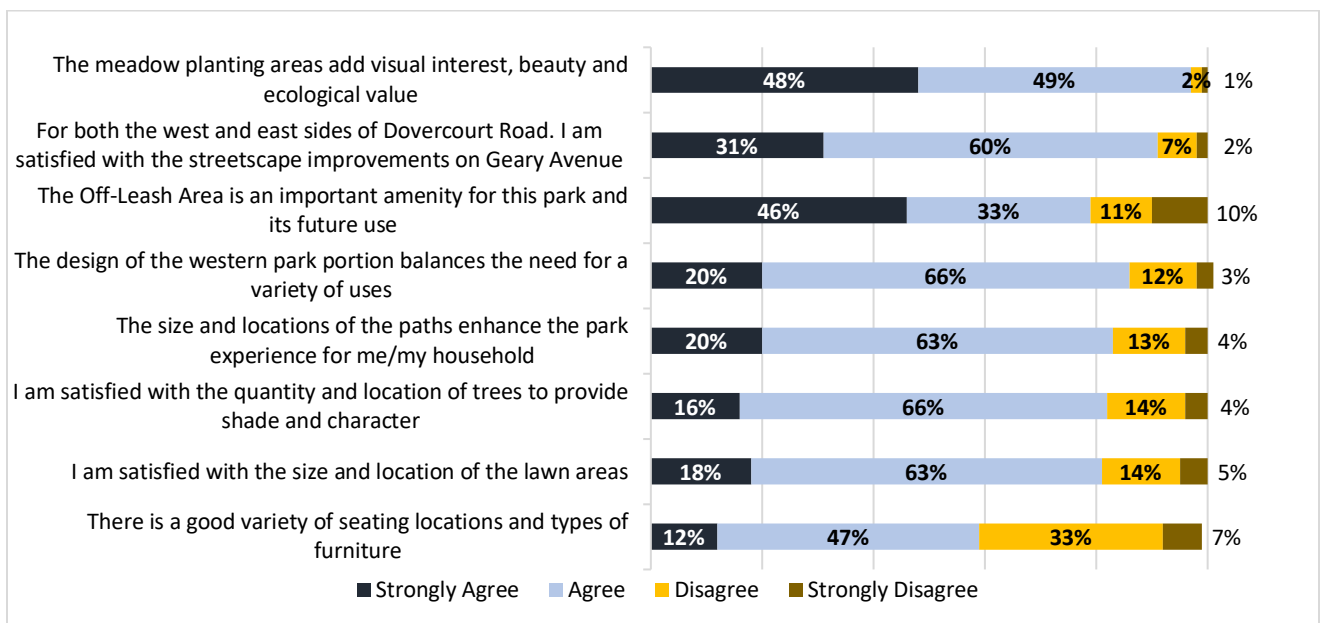


Figure 4. Chart showing questionnaire participants responses to park features they agreed or disagreed with in the expansion of Geary Avenue Park **west** of Dovercourt Road.

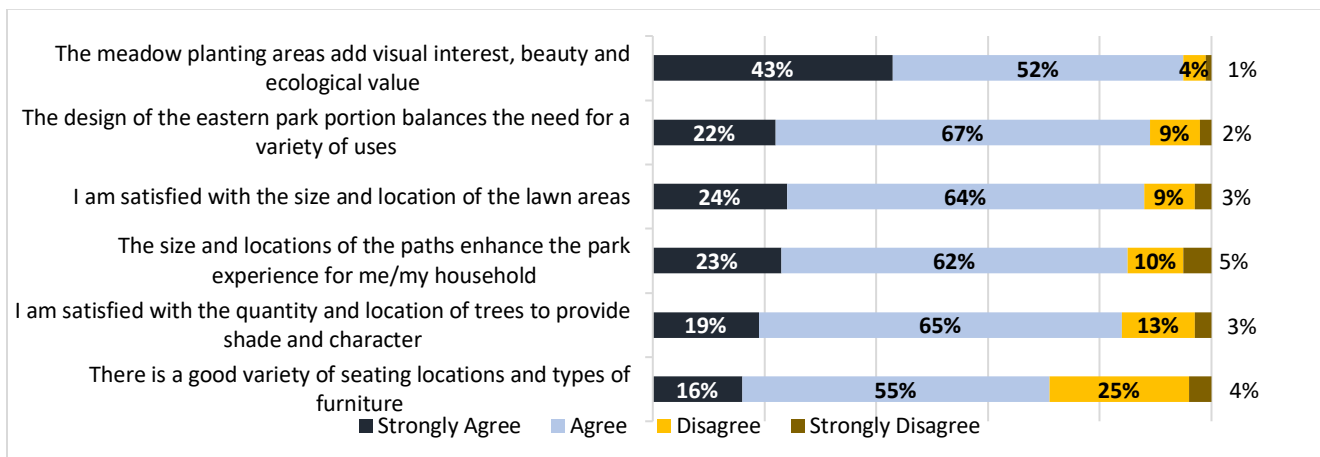


Figure 5. Chart showing questionnaire participants responses to park features they agreed or disagreed with in the expansion of Geary Avenue Park **east** of Dovercourt Road.

2.1.1 Trees and Meadow Plantings

- Almost all questionnaire respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that the meadow planting areas add visual interest, beauty and ecological value on the east (95% of respondents) and west (97% of respondents) portion of the park.
- The majority of questionnaire respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that considering the Hydro One restrictions on tree heights, they were satisfied with the quantity and location of trees to provide shade and character on the east (84% of respondents) and west (83% of respondents) portion of the park.
- Participants in the public meeting and through the questionnaire indicated that:
 - They support emphasizing native perennials, trees, and shrubs in the planting beds to promote biodiversity.
 - They support the inclusion of fruit trees and opportunities for other plants that provide food.
 - There are opportunities to enhance pollinator habitats.

2.1.2 Balance of Needs for Various Uses

- The majority of questionnaire respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that the park design balances the need for various uses on the east (89% of respondents) and the west (86% of respondents) portion of the park.

2.1.3 Lawn and Open Spaces

- The majority of questionnaire respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the lawn's size and location on the east (88% of respondents) and the west (83% of respondents) portion of the park.
- Some participants highlighted opportunities for group or individual fitness activities as compatible with the proposed lawn areas.
- Some respondents suggested that the design explore opportunities to reduce the lawn area and replace a portion with meadows.

2.1.4 Streetscape Improvements and Lighting

- Most questionnaire respondents (91%) indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the streetscape improvements on Geary Avenue. Respondents specifically supported:
 - Sidewalk widening where possible
 - Maintaining existing healthy trees
 - Adding bike parking
 - Providing benches
 - Specialty paving at park entrances
 - New plantings along the sidewalk and edge of the park fronting on to Geary Avenue on both the west and east sides of Dovercourt Road.

- Pathways and destinations such as the Off Leash Area (OLA) should be well lit to provide a sense of security.
- Some participants suggested the design could consider historical styles of lighting fixtures.
- Lighting in the park is essential but should be sensitive to neighbouring homes.
- Traffic on Geary Avenue has increased, leading to more noise and safety concerns.

Note: This community feedback has also been received through the Geary Works planning study consultations. The Geary Works planning study report is intended to include recommendations for mobility and public realm improvements along the full extent of Geary Avenue, which can include traffic calming features. The report will also indicate how implementation will be scheduled. The possibility of including additional improvements to the streetscape along Geary Avenue is currently being explored as a possible scope change for this park project and/or future roadworks. Ideas and objectives for the streetscape are being gathered through the Geary Works planning study public realm plan, as well as this Geary Ave Park expansion process.

Learn more by visiting the [Geary Works project website](#).

2.2 Design Features to Refine or Improve

Although very well supported through the questionnaire, the following areas received several suggested improvements.

2.2.1 Accessible Pathway

- Most questionnaire respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that the paths' size and location enhance their household's park experience on the east (85% of respondents) and the west (83% of respondents) portion of the park.
- Carefully consider all paved pathways and their width to preserve as much unpaved area as possible in the park. Consider permeable pavement to the greatest extent possible.
- While the majority of participants expressed their support for a continuous accessible path, a few community members thought that the route through the park is unnecessary given the park's size.

Staff comment: A continuous accessible park path is necessary to provide access and a full park experience for park users of all abilities. The path width must also support Parks operations vehicular access and Solid Waste pick-up vehicles on a regular basis.

2.2.2 Seating and Site Furnishings

- Most questionnaire respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that there is a good variety of seating locations and types of furniture on the east (71% of respondents) and the west (59% of respondents) portion of the park.

- Seating should prioritize views into the park rather than towards Geary Avenue and should be set-back from the street to reduce the impact of street noise.
- Seating areas should provide opportunities for people to gather and socialize. Participants noted benches are good for a brief stop to rest, but picnic tables offer a more social space.
- Forty percent (40%) of questionnaire respondents indicated there should be a greater variety of seating opportunities in the park west of Dovercourt Road.
- If Hydro One permits, some participants suggested considering the creation of a fire pit and seating area.

2.2.3 Off-Leash Area

- Feedback on the Off-Leash Area generally favoured its inclusion in the Preferred Concept Plan, with 79% of questionnaire respondents identifying the OLA as an important amenity for the park and its future use. Furthermore, 67% of questionnaire respondents indicated they were satisfied with the OLA features, while 19% were not satisfied. Fourteen percent (14%) did not want an OLA in the park. Participants in the virtual community meeting and online questionnaire identified elements that would continue to improve the design, including:
 - Providing green bins to dispose of dog waste conveniently;
 - Creating more places for dog owners to sit and shaded areas for both dog owners and dogs; and
 - Consider alternatives to pea gravel surface material if possible.

2.2.4 Place-making

- Feedback from both the virtual community meeting and online questionnaire emphasized the importance of place-making.
- Place-making features should highlight the significance of the area to Indigenous Peoples and their history, the Lake Iroquois shoreline and lost rivers, as well as immigrant community histories, the railway, industry and native plant species.
- Participants suggested symbols such as fossils or shells, Portuguese calçada motif, large gears, dog paws near the Off-Leash Area, directions to nearby landmarks, and uplifting messaging as imagery.
- Participants suggested various materials that could be explored to connect the park to the neighbourhood's heritage, including recycled canoes and railway ties.
- Markings should consider opportunities for individuals to interact with them through the use of chalk.
- Consider the commissioning of plaques to provide information about the significance of the area and engaging local artists.

2.3 Additional Out of Scope Feedback

- Participants in both the virtual community meeting and online questionnaire raised concerns about traffic, speeding, and pedestrian/cyclist safety on Geary Avenue.

Note: The possibility of including additional improvements to the streetscape along Geary Avenue is currently being explored as a possible scope change for this project and/or future roadworks. Ideas and objectives for the streetscape are being gathered through the Geary Works planning study public realm plan, as well as this Geary Ave Park expansion process. Learn more by visiting the [Geary Works project website](#).

- Suggestions were made to include curb bump-outs, zebra crossings, and other traffic calming interventions.
- There was a suggestion for the City to consider a future rail path along the south side of the Canadian Pacific rail tracks.
- Participants identified the need for public washrooms in the area.
- There was a suggestion to include a water feature.
- Consider widening the sidewalk on the north side of Geary Avenue from Ossington to Dufferin.
- There was discussion and interest in the creation of a community garden.
 - At the meeting, City staff explained that the process to create a community garden must be initiated by residents who form a group and make an application to the City's community garden program. Visit the [City of Toronto's community gardens webpage](#) to learn more.

3 How We Engaged

Due to COVID-19 and following Toronto Public Health's recommendations, the City conducted community engagement on the Preferred Concept Plan using a mix of digital and print media to ensure appropriate physical distancing requirements were met.

3.1 Communication Methods

Printed Media: Project information was displayed on eight (8) notice boards placed on City-owned property in the existing Geary Avenue Park and Bartlett Parkette and the future sites of the Geary Avenue Park expansion.

These notice boards provided information about the project, the date and how to join the virtual community meeting, and information on accessing additional project information on the Green Line website. Notices of the virtual meeting were incorporated in the local Councillor's newsletters leading up to the virtual meeting.

Social Media and Digital Ads: The City of Toronto used its Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote the virtual community meeting and online questionnaire from October 26 to November 13, 2020. The unique project hashtag #GreenLineTO was used to categorize



Figure 6. A virtual community meeting notice board posted along Geary Avenue




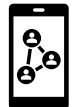
and promote information on social media. LURA Consulting and DTAH's Twitter accounts supported additional social media outreach.

Project Webpage: The City's website acted as a communications portal to inform the public about the Green Line Implementation Plan. A landing page, <http://toronto.ca/greenline>, hosted all information regarding the project, including general information, project updates, a link to the online questionnaire, and an option to subscribe for plan-related e-updates.



Figure 7. One of several tweets advertising the online questionnaire.

Table 1. Outreach methods for consultation on the Geary Avenue Park Expansion Preferred Concept Plan

Outreach Method	Outreach Activities	Reach
Project Webpage 	A dedicated webpage was developed within the City of Toronto's website to act as an integrated platform for all project related information. Through the webpage, interested people could also subscribe to receive updates and information about the project.	Reached <i>Data unavailable</i>
Mail Outs 	A flyer advertising the online meeting and website was delivered to 5,000 addresses in the neighbourhood. The virtual meeting notice was included in the local Councillor's newsletters leading up to the November 4, 2020, virtual meeting.	Reached Over 5,000
Posters 	Posters displaying information about the virtual community meeting were placed in key locations near Geary Avenue Parkette.	Reached <i>Data unavailable</i>
Social Media 	The virtual community meeting and online questionnaire were promoted through the City of Toronto's Facebook and Twitter accounts with additional outreach support from DTAH and LURA.	Reached Over 25,000
Total Reached		Over 30,000

3.2 Engagement Methods

Community consultation on the Geary Avenue Park Expansion engaged members of the local community and individuals interested in the development of the Green Line.

3.2.1 Virtual Community Meeting

The community meeting was held virtually using WebEx Events on November 4, 2020 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The event began with a presentation from DTAH (the landscape architecture consultants), followed by a Question and Answer period. Participants posed their questions and comments in the meeting chatbox. Questions were read out loud and answered by members of the project team.

The presentation slides were made available online following the meeting for review. [Access the virtual meeting presentation](#) on the City's webpage.

3.2.2 Online Questionnaire:

An online questionnaire was made available on the City's project webpage from November 4 to 22, 2020. The online questionnaire asked for feedback on the Preferred Concept Plan presented in the virtual public meeting. A link to the presentation slides was included in the questionnaire for easy reference. **Appendix A** includes the questions from the online questionnaire.

4 Who We Engaged

4.1 Who Did We Hear From?

In total, 58 individuals attended the virtual community meeting, and 319 people responded to the online questionnaire.

4.2 Questionnaire Demographics



Participants from the online questionnaire were asked to voluntarily provide demographic information to better understand who was participating and whether particular groups in the community were missed as part of this engagement phase. Of note, participants were predominantly white (75% of respondents) and homeowners (56% of respondents). Additionally, 53% of respondents indicated they have exclusive access to either a front/back yard or balcony/patio.

Compared to Dovercourt-Wallace Emerson Junction's neighbourhood profile, where the park is located, proportionally, there were slightly more white respondents to the questionnaire than the neighbourhood population (65%). Questionnaire respondents were closely aligned in their household tenure to the neighbourhood population (50% of neighbourhood residents own their home).

4.2.1 Email

In addition to attending meetings and completing the questionnaire, participants could communicate via email to Nancy Chater, the City's Senior Project Coordinator leading this project (nancy.chater@toronto.ca)

Table 2 Engagement and feedback opportunities for the Geary Avenue Park Expansion Preferred Concept Plan.

Engagement Method	Engagement Activities	Engagement Reach
Virtual Community Meeting 	A virtual community meeting was held on November 4, 2020 to present the Preferred Concept Plan for the expansion to Geary Avenue Park, answer questions, and gather feedback from community members on the designs.	Engaged 58
Online Questionnaire & Email 	An online questionnaire was developed to gather detailed feedback on participant's impressions of the Preferred Concept Plan presented at the virtual public meeting.	Engaged 319
Total Engaged		378

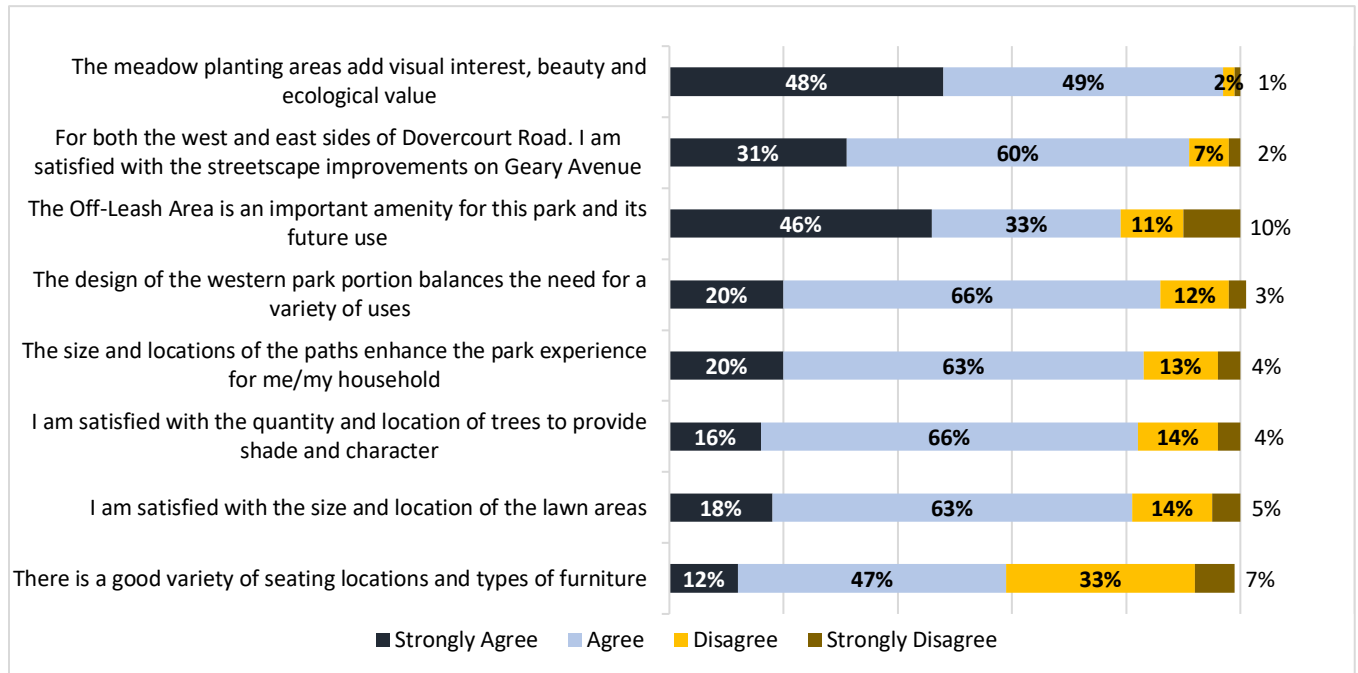
5 Next Steps

The feedback received through Phase 2 of concept design will inform the next stage of design for the expansion of Geary Avenue Park. Community input will be considered together with input from internal City stakeholders, project budget and the review and approvals by Hydro One (which are necessary to move forward into construction).

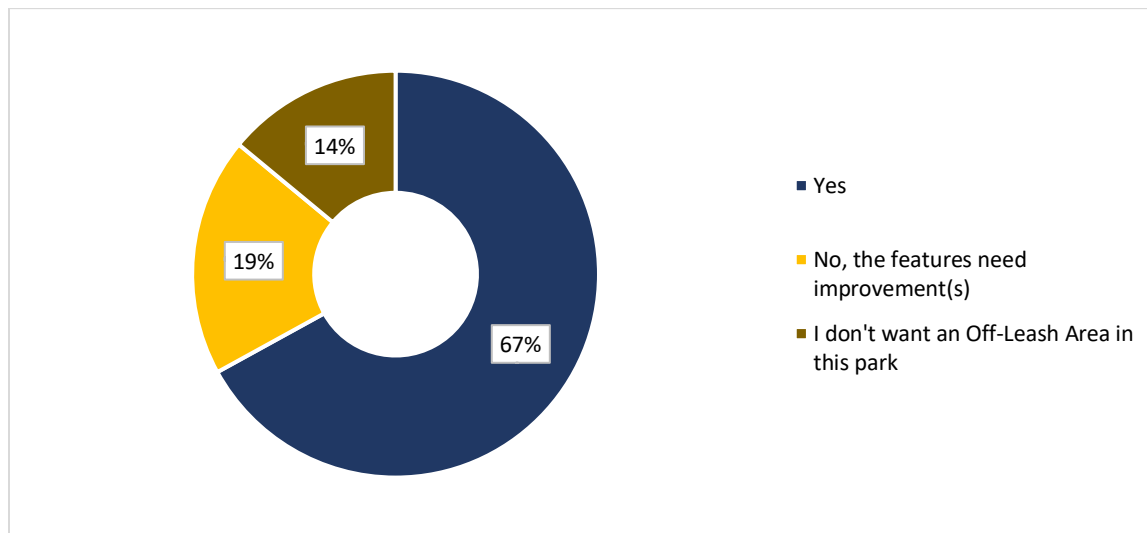
If you have any additional questions or wish to speak to City of Toronto staff, please contact Nancy Chater by email at nancy.chater@toronto.ca.

Appendix A – Online Questionnaire Questions

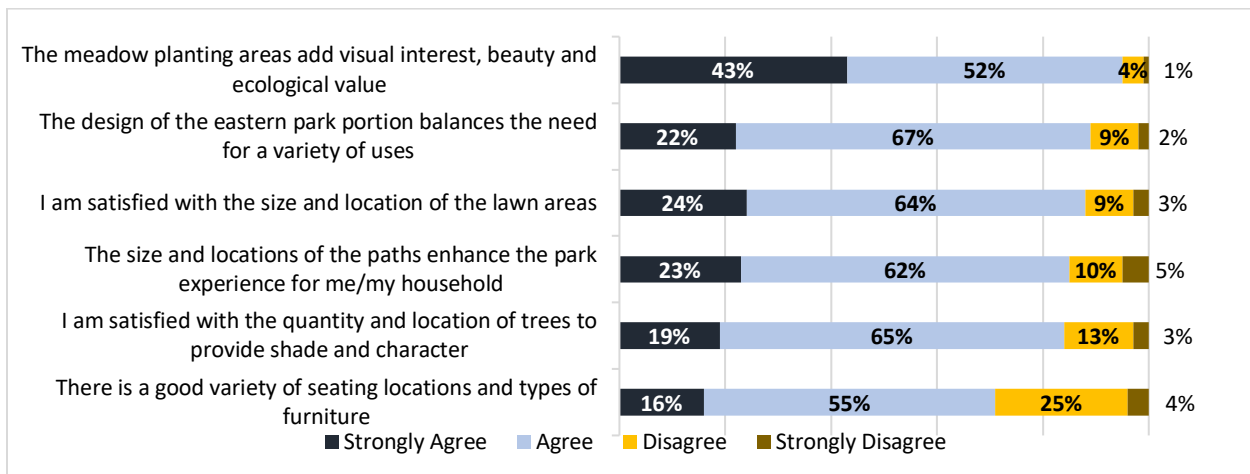
1. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about portion of Geary Avenue Park **west of Dovercourt Road** and south of Geary Avenue.



2. I am satisfied with the features in the Off-Leash Area such as surfacing, seating, lighting, trees for shade, fencing/gates, drinking fountain, and play features.



3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about portion of Geary Avenue Park **east of Dovercourt Road** and south of Geary Avenue.

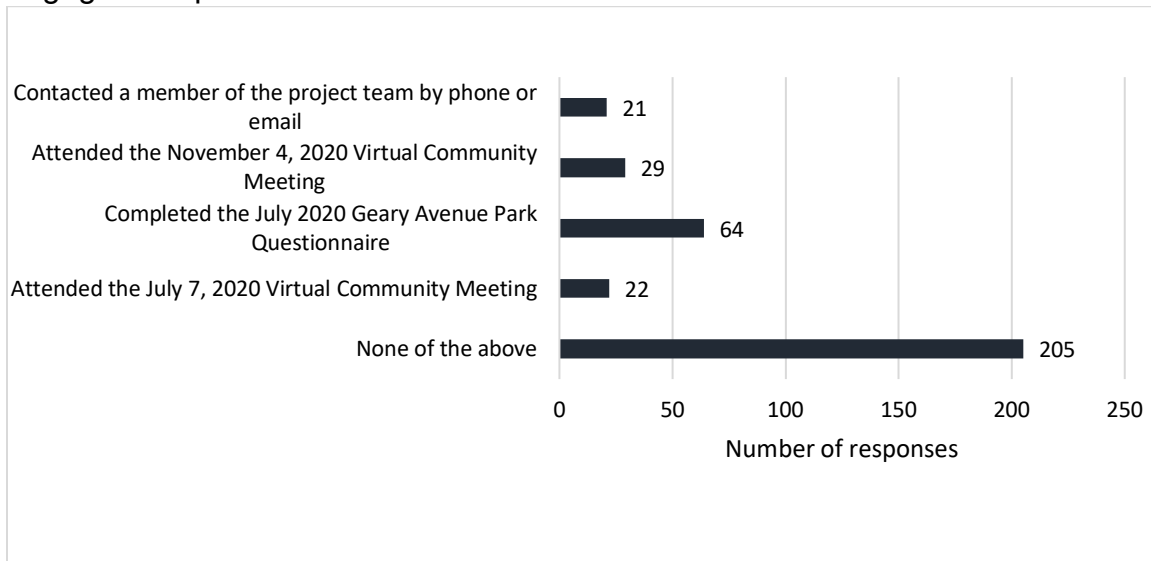


4. For both west and east sides of Dovercourt Road. I am satisfied with the streetscape improvements on Geary Avenue such as sidewalk widening (where possible), maintaining existing healthy trees, adding bike parking, benches, specialty paving at park entrances, and planting.
5. Do you have any suggestions on pavement marking features that could enhance the park by highlighting and celebrating the history of the area and character of the neighbourhood?
6. Do you have any additional comments to add?

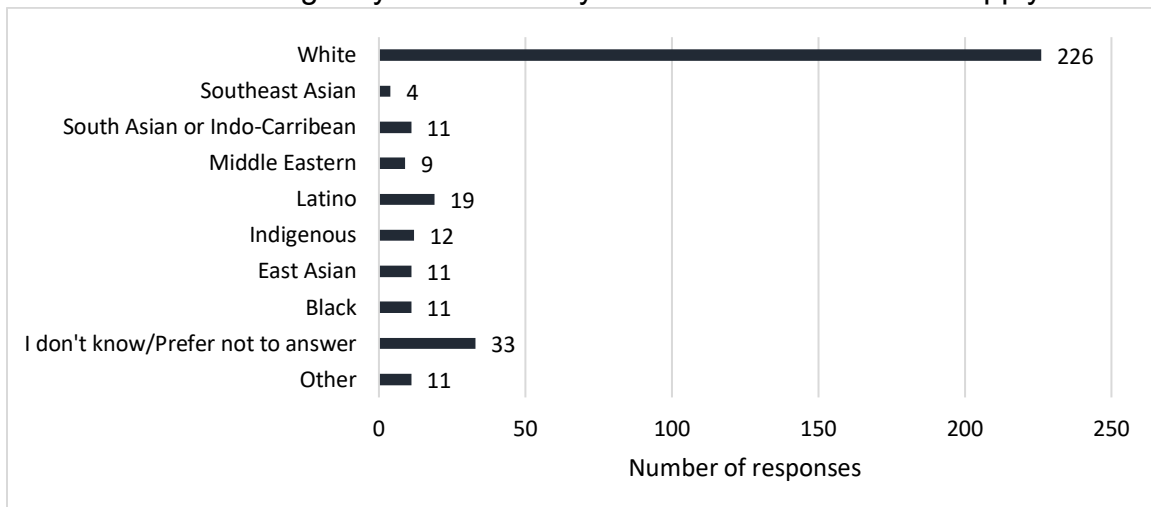
Additional Questions

The following questions are intended to help the City of Toronto understand who is completing the questionnaire.

7. Please let us know how you have participated in the Geary Avenue Park engagement process.



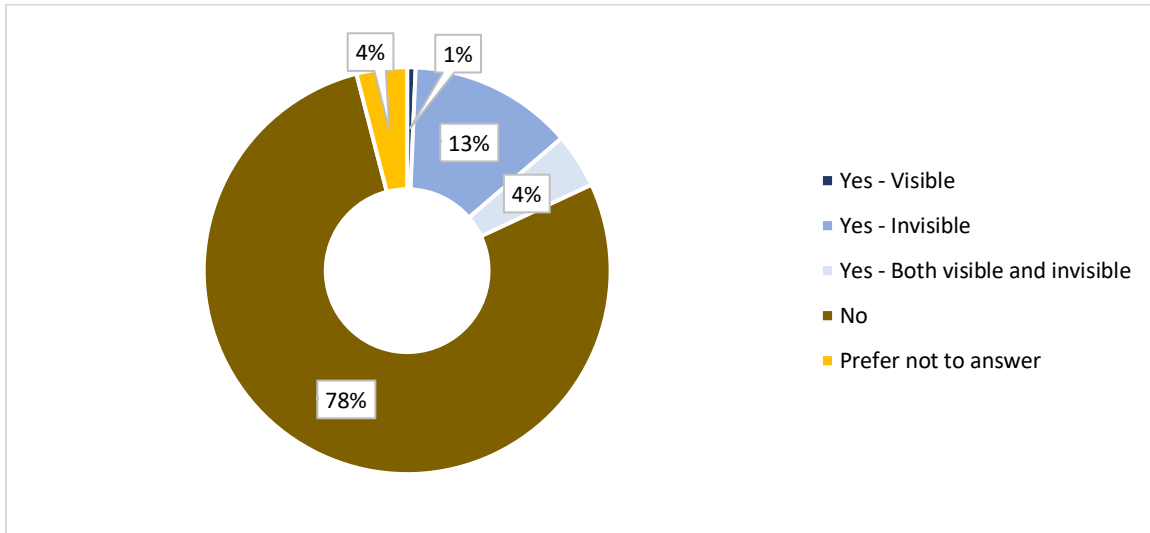
8. Which of the following do you self-identify as? Please select all that apply.



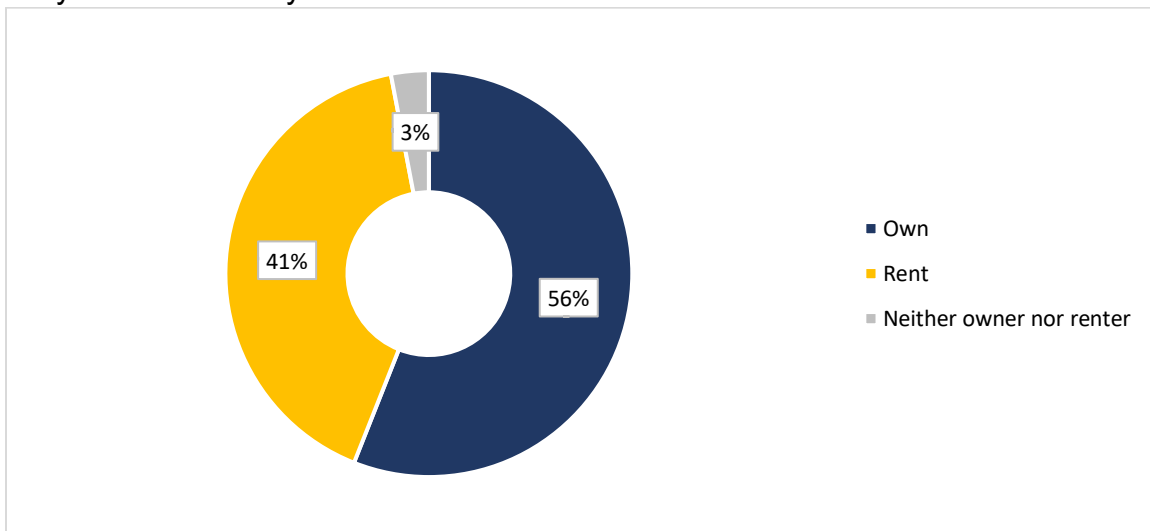
9. Indigenous people residing in Canada are those who self-identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, Métis, Aboriginal, Native or Indian. Does you -self-identify as Indigenous to Canada?

- Yes – 5%
- No – 95%

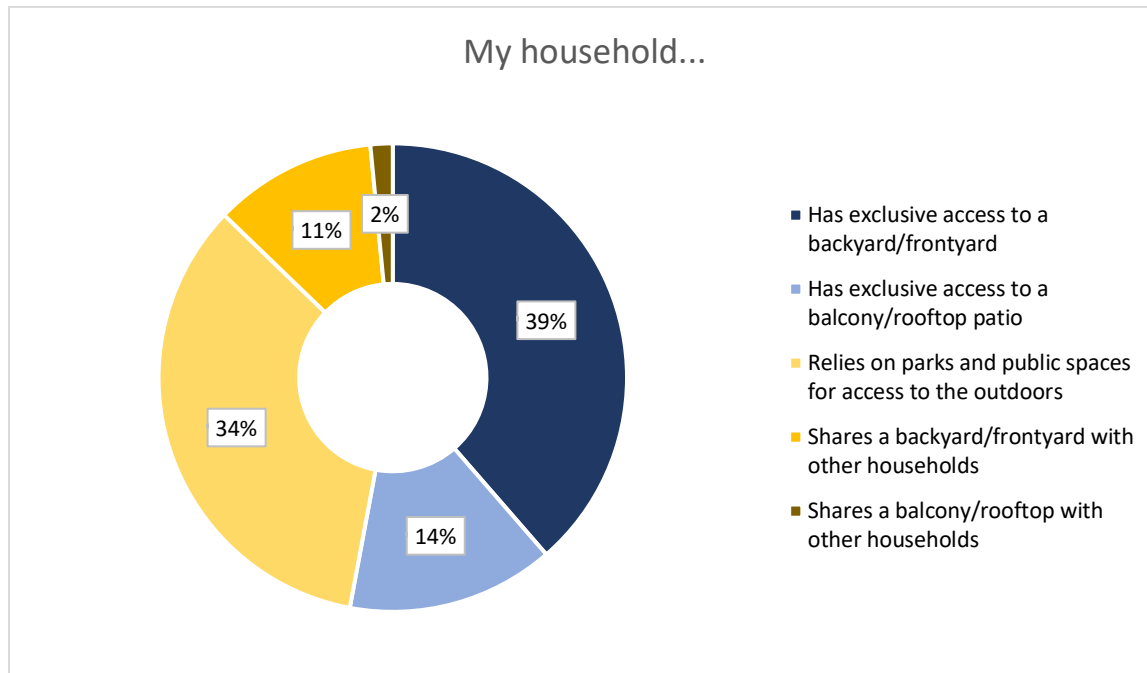
10. Do you identify as a person with a disability? Disabilities, both visible and invisible, include physical, hearing, seeing, developmental, learning or mental health conditions, chronic illness and addictions. Disabilities may be from birth, caused by injury or accident, developed over time, or result from the combination of a person's condition and barriers in society.



11. Do you rent or own your home?

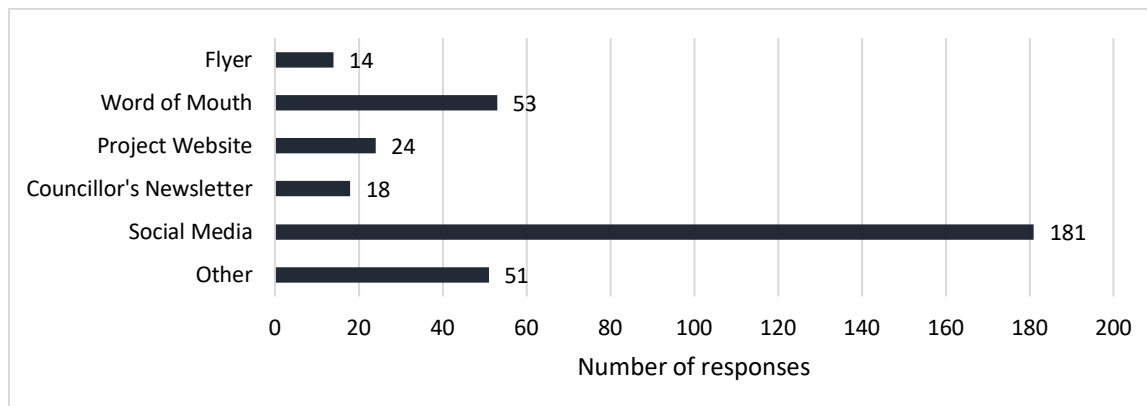


12. How does your household access the outdoors?



13. What are the first three digits of your postal code?

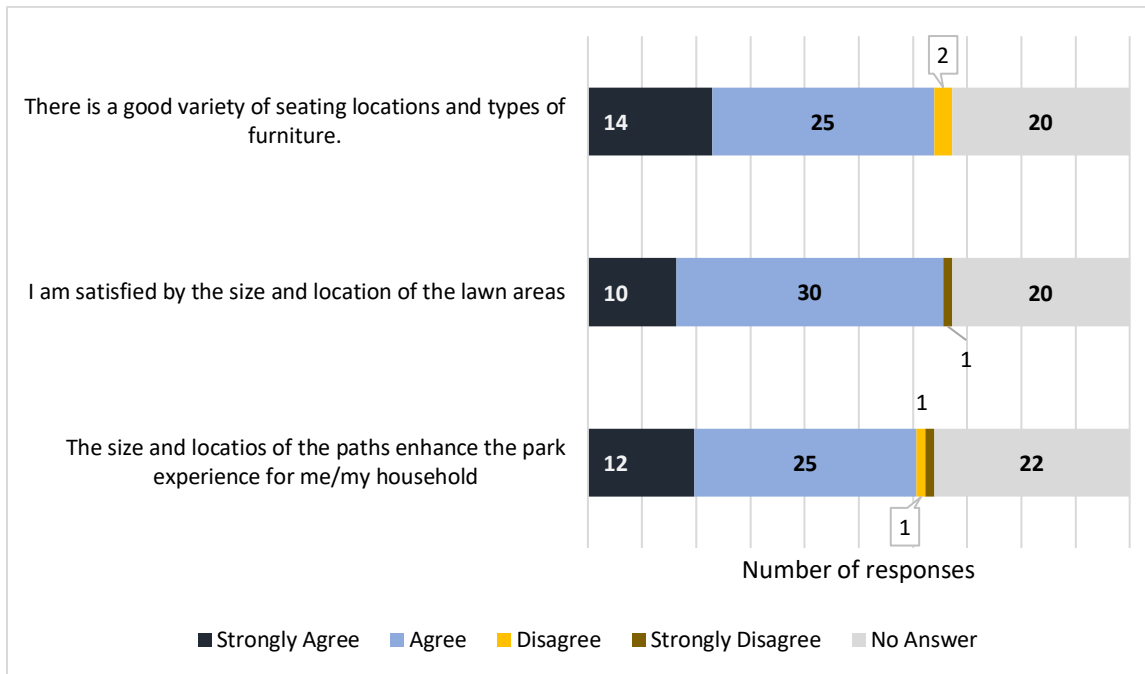
14. How did you hear about this event



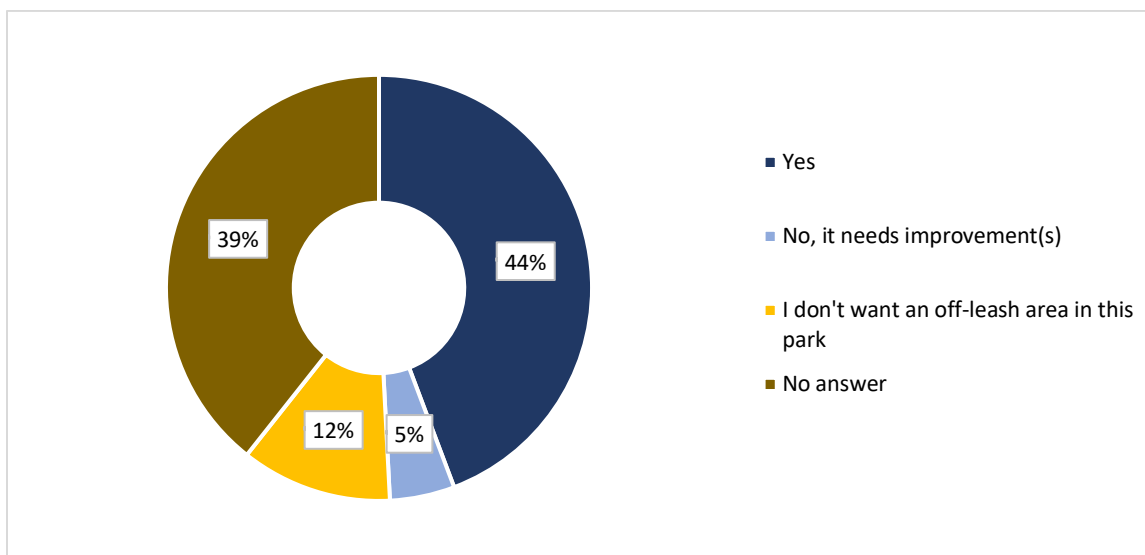
Appendix B – Virtual Community Meeting Poll Questions

During the virtual community meeting, participants were polled on some of the questions asked in the online questionnaire to prompt discussion about these park elements. The poll questions from the meeting and their responses are as follows:

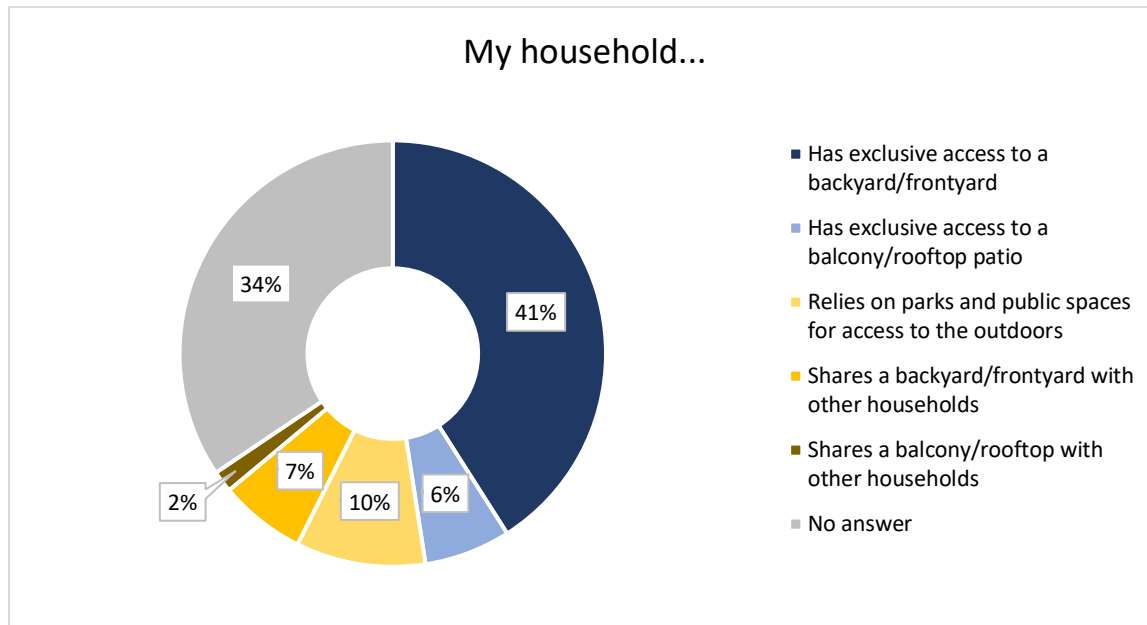
1. Participant perspectives on seating, lawn areas, and park paths.



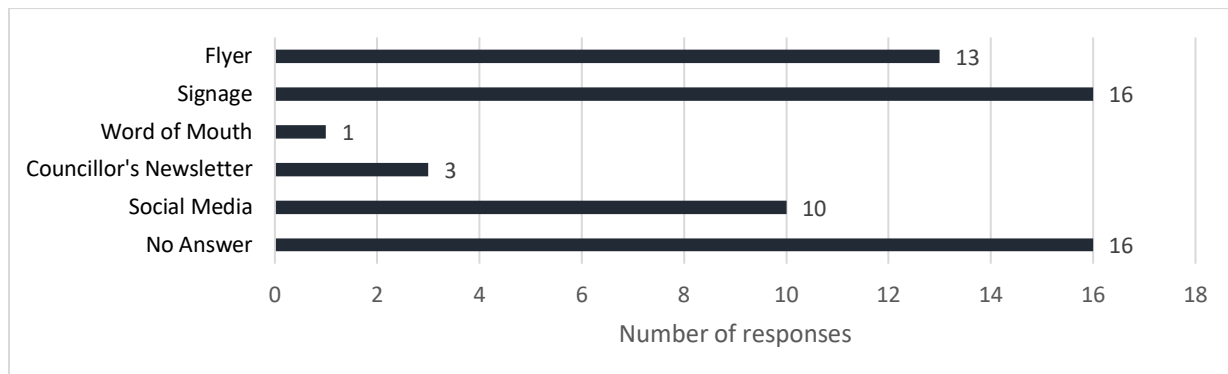
2. The Off-Leash Area is an important amenity for the park and its future use, and I support the size and location



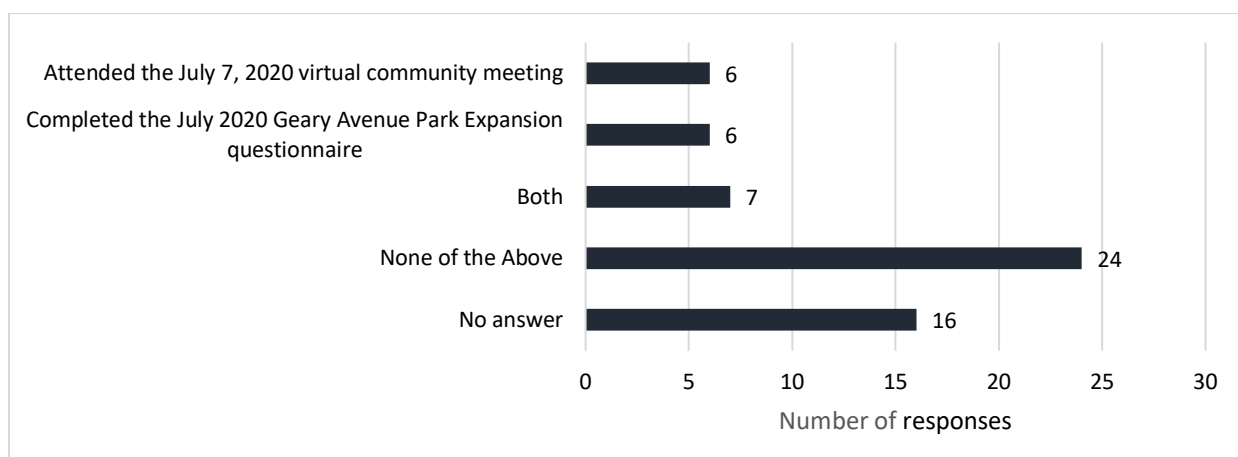
3. How does your household access the outdoors?



4. How did you hear about this event?



5. Please identify how, if applicable, you have participated in the Geary Avenue Park Expansion consultation process so far



Appendix C – Questions of Clarification

The following questions were received through the virtual community meeting and add to the list of questions and responses addressed in Phase 1 of the design development for the expansion to Geary Avenue Park. To review these questions and answers, [access the Phase 1 What We Heard summary for the expansion of Geary Avenue Park](#).

Question - If Hydro One needs 6-metre access for vehicles, will there be areas of the park where Hydro vehicles may need to cross lawns or straddle paths leaving behind ruts?

Answer – Hydro One vehicles may need to travel on to lawns to service the hydro wires above to ensure the safe and efficient transmission of electricity.

Question - If the permeable asphalt pilot is a success, will this feature be expanded in this or other parks:

Answer – The City will monitor the permeable asphalt pilot and consider its application in future park improvement projects following further evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses.

Question – Can power hook-ups be included to help support local events?

Answer – Yes, power hook-ups will be provided for this purpose.

Question - Does it make sense to build the stub of a path to connect to the existing park to the east now?

Answer – The proposed connection from the new park is meant to demonstrate that future connectivity to the existing park has been prepared for in the new park design. The connection from the path in the new park area to the existing park will need to be addressed holistically when the design for improvements to the existing parkette are being developed. The timing of future parkette improvements is yet to be determined, so the City does not want to create a path "stub" prematurely without a clear vision for the future park development.

Question – Has the Green Line planning process been connected to the various development along Dupont (such as 840 and 888 Dupont, and the Galleria redevelopment)? How was it determined that the Green Line should provide an Off-Leash Area and not these developments as part of their master plans?

Answer – The Off-Leash Area is proposed in response to both existing and future demand in the area. At present the plans for the park associated with the Galleria/Wallace Emerson Community Recreation Centre do not include an off-leash area. The development at 840 Dupont includes a small parkette which cannot accommodate an off-leash area. There is no park associated with 880 Dupont.

Question – What is the edge condition of the CP rail line?

Answer – Currently, there is no barrier between the hydro corridor and the CP rail line. As part of the park design, a fence will be introduced to restrict access to the rail line, which is a mandatory requirement