

Green Line Implementation New Park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road

What We Heard

Phase 1 – Concept Plan Options

February 2021



Executive Summary

The City of Toronto is proceeding with plans for the implementation of the Green Line, including a new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road. This report summarizes the feedback received over the fall of 2020 on the Concept Plan Options for this new park.

In response to COVID-19 public health guidelines, Parks, Forestry and Recreation held an online community meeting to discuss the new park, which was attended by 47 community members. The meeting was followed by an online questionnaire that received nearly 270 submissions and email communications with the project team. Additionally, the City of Toronto engaged with its community stakeholder group, and conducted an Indigenous engagement meeting. We heard the following key messages from the community about what is important to them:

- **Green Spaces** including shade trees, meadows, pollinator species and creating flexible open lawn spaces.
- **Walking on the pathways** to exercise, experience nature, and travel to areas to sit, gather, or meet people.
- **Seating** to offer a variety of comfortable and durable options to enhance vibrancy in the park.
- **Lighting and clear sightlines** to provide a sense of security to enjoy the park including after dark.
- **Place-making** elements, such as rocks, art, and place-keeping/place-making elements to create connections between the park and the local community's story.
- **Indigenous Place-Keeping** elements such as the narrative in the path markings, interpretive signage, medicinal plants and story-circles and other features.

This feedback and the additional details provided in this document will help shape the Preferred Concept Plan for the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road, on which the City will consult with communities again in Winter/Spring 2021.

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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. After completing 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 a new Park near the Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road intersection. A name for this park is still being determined.

The parcel of land south of Macpherson Avenue, west of Davenport Road, and north of the Canadian Pacific rail line is within this project's scope and a small portion of the sidewalk on the south-side of Macpherson Avenue next to the park. These lands are beneath an active hydro corridor that includes sections owned by the province and sections owned by the City of Toronto. Where there are hydro wires overhead and where portions of the park are close to hydro towers and the Macpherson transformer station, the design of this new park 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 Concept Plan Options phase of consultation on the new park's design at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road.

2 What We Heard

This summary is organized by general park elements that participants identified as important (Section 2.3) and features in the plan for refinement and improvement (Section 2.4). Section 2.5 includes additional feedback differentiating the Concept Plan Options. Feedback documented in the following section represents groups of similar comments received through the engagement process.

The landscape architecture team will use the feedback to refine the concept plan and work to incorporate strongly supported elements, address areas of improvement, and incorporate additional ideas where possible.

Appendix A includes the questions from the online questionnaire.

2.1 Intended Park Uses

Participants identified how they planned to use the new park, including uses such as walking on the paths and for exercise, sitting in the park by themselves or with a group of people, and enjoying lunch/coffee. Participants indicated they would be less likely to

use the park to play on the open lawn areas and learn about pollinators and pollinator-friendly plants (Figure 1).

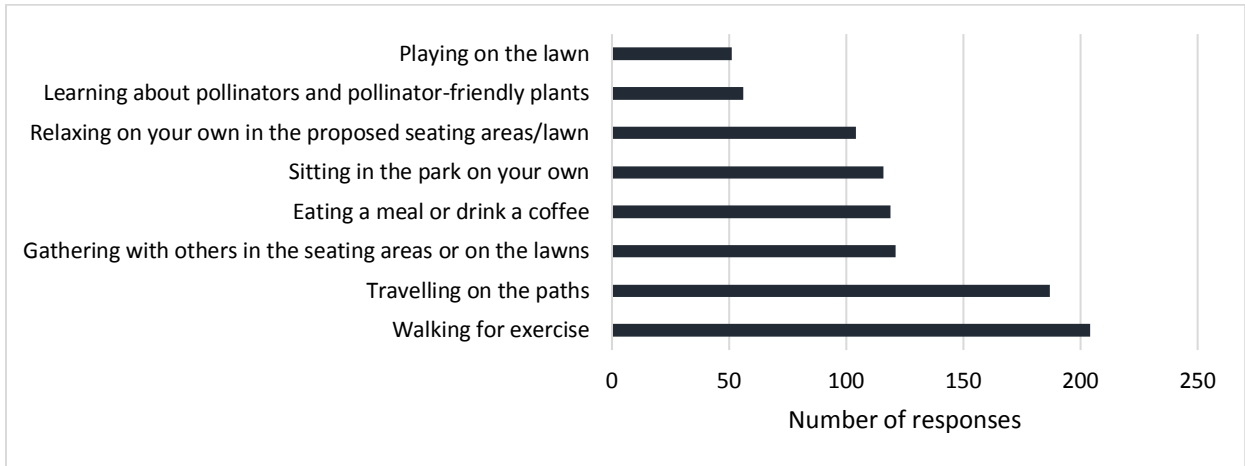


Figure 1. Activities participants indicated they are likely to participate at the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road.

Participants also identified additional ways they would use the new park, including:

- Watching the trains.
- Skateboarding.
- Walking with a household pet.
- Other forms of exercise, such as yoga.
- Outdoor office workspace.

2.2 Ways People Will Access the Park

Over 90% of participants indicated they would travel to the park by walking or cycling (Figure 2).

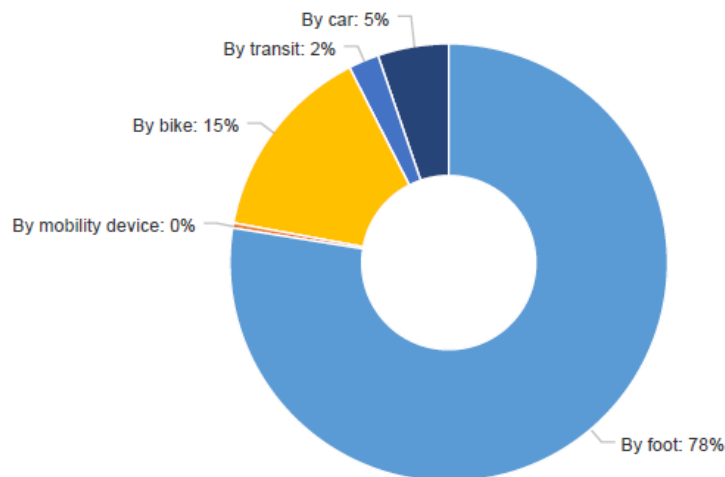


Figure 2. Participants indicated they are most likely to visit the new park on foot or by bike.

2.3 Important Concept Plan Elements

Participants provided feedback on what elements were most important in the park concept plans. Over 85% of participants in the online questionnaire indicated that the following were either "very important" or "important" to them:

- Presence of trees, shrubs and fruit tree areas and meadow plantings.
- Accessible pathways.
- Lighting.
- Seating options.
- Open lawn area.

Additional elements, including pavement enhancements, placemaking features, and community gathering spaces, were also recognized as important. The only element that did not have majority support among questionnaire respondents was the adult fitness equipment, with 37% finding it important/very important. (Figure 3).

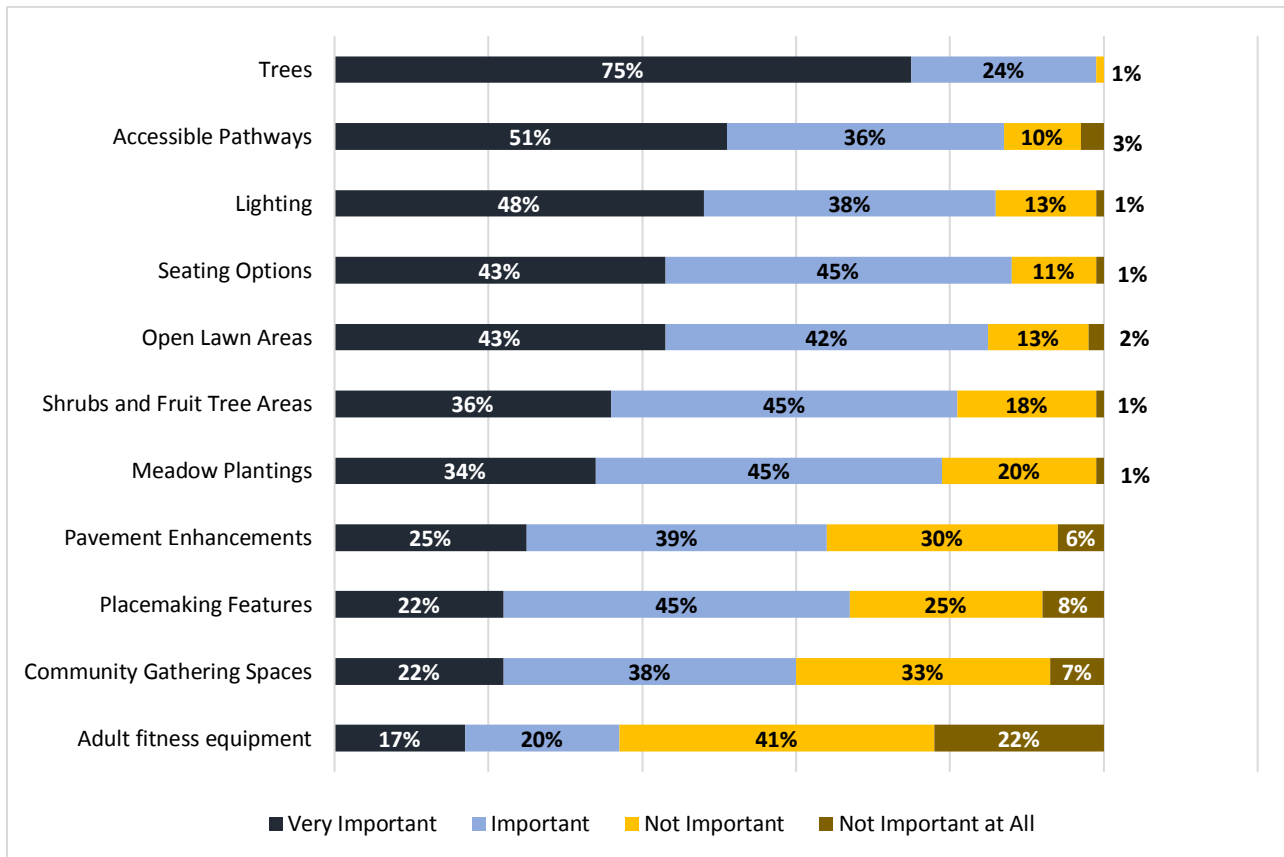


Figure 3. Design features identified as important by online questionnaire participants' households.

The following section provides additional insights into what we heard related to each of these concept elements from both the virtual community meeting and the online questionnaire.

2.3.1 Trees, Fruit Trees, Shrubs and Meadow Plantings

- Between 79% to 99% of participants indicated trees are important aspects of the park designs.
- Create habitats for small animals, insects, birds, etc...
- Consider including more trees in the next iteration of the plan with more generous spacing to provide clear sightlines for safety.
- Consider planting edible (greens and herbs) and Indigenous medicinal plants for the community to enjoy.
- Consider screening the CP tracks with vegetation such as evergreens placed along the fence line to provide added colour in the winter.

Staff comment: Depending on their location, evergreen trees can pose issues with creating clear sightlines across parks.

2.3.2 Accessible Pathways and Pavement Enhancements

- 87% of participants indicated accessible pathways are important.
- Consider opportunities to reduce the total amount of paved surfaces in the park by eliminating side paths off the main pathway through the park.
- Pavement markings and pavers in both options were well supported for adding a different texture to the park.

2.3.3 Seating, Site Furnishings, and Lighting

- Most participants (88%) of indicated seating options are important.
- Benches and picnic tables are important seating features that should be well-supplied in the design.
- Natural materials such as wood and stone are preferred materials as long as they are long-lasting and can be maintained.
- Consider adding a water fountain and water bottle refill station.
- Explore creative lighting options to create a welcoming space in the evening and winter months.
- Seating should provide opportunities that include tables to work, eat, play games, and gather.
- Consider opportunities for bike parking at the entry points.

2.3.4 Open Spaces

- Open lawn areas allow flexibility for community members to use the space to fit based on their individual needs.
- Consider opportunities for an Off-Leash Area in another nearby park or in the Green Line west of the transformers when that portion of the park is developed.

2.4 Design Features to Refine or Improve

Some participants identified the following features and park elements in the concept plan options as requiring additional thought or improvement by considering:

2.4.1 Amphitheatre

- Consider the amphitheatre's utility in the winter compared to additional open green space given how much space this feature occupies.

2.4.2 Place-making

Indigenous Placemaking

The City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation division is undertaking an Indigenous place-making initiative in City parks, with the intent to integrate park elements that are welcoming to the City's estimated 70,000 Indigenous residents, reflect and support current Indigenous cultural practices and acknowledge and honour the history of traditional territories in the City of Toronto.

Through Indigenous engagement for this project, the team met with local Indigenous community members and professionals gather feedback on the concept plan options.

- Participants noted that place-keeping/place-making features should consider opportunities to represent Indigenous culture and history including features such as the Davenport trail/Gete-Onigaming and Lake Iroquois shoreline, trails and the ravine system and the habitat it creates in urban areas.
- The community stakeholders and members of the public also supported Indigenous place-keeping/place-making and suggested design features could go beyond pavement markings where possible be developed in collaboration with local Indigenous community members and organizations
- The public questionnaire respondents suggested consideration for an Indigenous place-name for the park's final name.
- Other ideas we heard included carving information or interpretive text into the rocks.
- Consider adding public art in future phases of park development that represents the neighbourhood's diversity.

Other Opportunities for Place-Making

Participants identified several other opportunities for placemaking, including:

- Celebrating the history of industry and railway, or the history of development from rural to urban settings.
- Recognizing significant architecture and buildings such as the Annex and Casa Loma.
- Recognizing the importance of raccoons and wildlife of nearby ravines.
- Consider signage, maps, place names, and information about the area in the park.

2.4.3 Adult Fitness Equipment

- Thirty seven percent (37%) of participants indicated adult fitness equipment is an important aspect of the park design.
- Consider creating opportunities for fitness activities that do not require occupying valuable park space with single-use equipment. Think about fitness activities that can use park elements such as open lawns, benches, and rocks for multiple purposes.

2.5 Concept Plan Options Feedback

The following feedback was received on the concept plan options for the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road (Figure 4). This feedback was obtained through the virtual community meeting and the online questionnaire and provided detailed feedback on the two concept plan options presented to the community.

Overall, participants were receptive to both concept plan options (Figure 5), expressing a preference for the overall arrangement of Option 1, including the organic flowing paths, with the incorporation of some of the features found in Option 2, such as the use of rocks and wider spacing of trees.

Option 1 - Flow



Option 2 - Striations



Figure 4 Concept plan options for the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road.

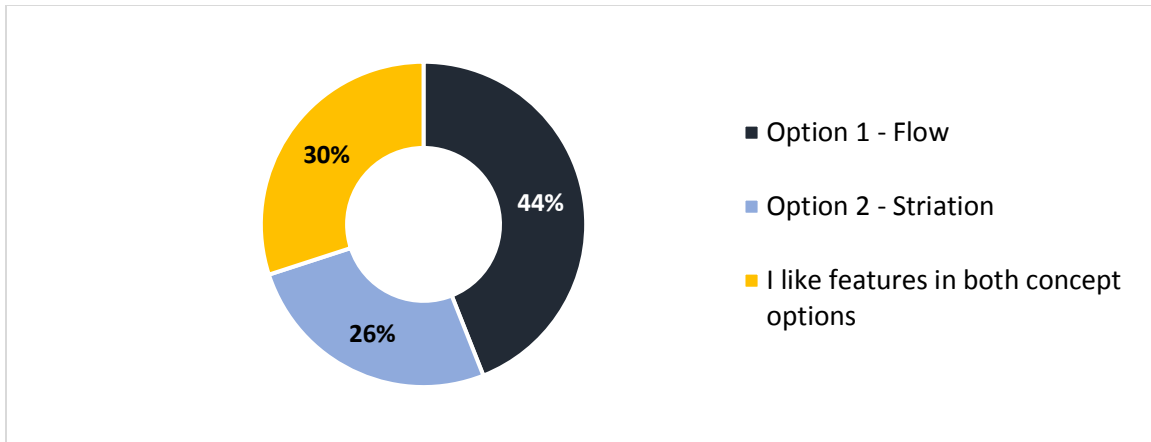


Figure 5. Participant preference for each concept plan option.

2.5.1 Option 1 – Flow

Specifically, in Option 1, participants indicated the following:

- This option's overall organization provides a more organic experience and is unique compared to the angular arrangement of Option 2.
- The amphitheatre is appealing and a unique feature for the park but should be carefully considered for its utility given how much space it takes up.
- This option creates two distinct "rooms" with apparent uses for the amphitheatre and open lawn area.
- The dense patch of trees in this option presents a potential safety hazard after dark by reducing sightlines.
- The arrangement of benches in this option creates small private spaces for people to sit.

2.5.2 Option 2 – Striations

- The overall organization of this option is less unique than Option 1 but has better sightlines.
- There is a better balance of tree and meadow areas and seating throughout the park in this option than Option 1. Trees spread-out throughout the site will provide better sightlines and safety.
- The scattered boulders provide an interesting and creative way to connect the area's geological history to the park while giving the flexibility for various uses such as seating, play, and visual intrigue.
- Ground-level lights could be used to light the areas with the rocks.
- The wider T-intersection in this option and striation paving pattern helps open up this part of the path.
- The pavement loop near Davenport and the CP tracks in the southeast corner paves over valuable green space for an additional lawn or meadow space.

3 How We Engaged

Due to COVID-19 and following the recommendations of Toronto Public Health, community engagement on the Concept Plan Options was conducted using a mix of digital and print media to meet appropriate physical distancing requirements.

3.1 Communication Methods

Printed Media: Six (6) public meeting notice signs were placed on City-owned property on the site of the future park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road, at Glen Edith drive Parkette, and near the Casa Loma steps displayed project information. 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. The local Councillor's newsletters incorporated notices of the virtual meeting leading up to the event.

Social Media and Digital Ads: The City of Toronto used its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts to promote the virtual community meeting and online questionnaire from November 23rd, 2020 to December 2nd, 2020 through paid and organic advertisements. LURA Consulting and DTAH's Twitter accounts supported social media outreach activities.

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




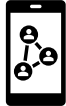


Figure 6. One of six signs advertising the virtual public meeting posted near the future park.



Figure 7. A City of Toronto Instagram post advertising the online questionnaire.

Table 1. A list of community outreach methods to notify the community about engagement opportunities

Outreach Method	Outreach Details	Reach
Project Webpage 	<p>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.</p>	<p>Reached <i>Data unavailable</i></p>
Mail Outs 	<p>A flyer advertising the online meeting and website was delivered to addresses in the neighbourhood within 1-kilometre of the site.</p> <p>The virtual meeting notice was included in the local Councillor's newsletters leading up to November 17th, 2020 virtual meeting.</p>	<p>Reached Approximately 8,000</p>
Public Meeting Signage 	<p>Six (6) public meeting notice signs displaying information about the virtual community meeting were placed in highly-visible locations near Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road.</p>	<p>Reached <i>Data unavailable</i></p>
Social Media 	<p>The virtual community meeting and online questionnaire were promoted through the City of Toronto's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts with additional outreach support from DTAH and LURA.</p>	<p>Reached Over 15,600</p>
Total Reached		Over 23,600

3.2 Engagement Methods

Community consultation on the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road engaged members of the local community and individuals interested in the development of the Green Line, including a community stakeholder group and Indigenous engagement.

3.2.1 Community Stakeholder Group

A meeting with representatives from local community stakeholder groups, including resident and ratepayer associations, building associations, and the Dupont by the Castle BIA was held on September 10th, 2020. During this meeting, the design team

presented an overview of the site's existing conditions, history, and design constraints. Following the presentation, community stakeholders and the project team discussed design ideas and possible park amenities to consider the concept plan options in development.

3.2.2 Indigenous Engagement

An Indigenous Engagement meeting was organized with invited members of local Indigenous organizations on October 21st, 2020. Representatives from the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto and Two Row Architect attended the meeting to provide feedback on the concept plans and discuss Indigenous place-making/place-keeping opportunities through the new park's design.

3.2.3 Virtual Community Meeting

The community meeting was held virtually using Zoom on November 17th, 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 engaged in smaller group discussions to provide feedback on the concept plan options. A closing group discussion summarized the key points from each small group discussion and outlined the project's next steps.

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

3.2.4 Online Questionnaire:

An online questionnaire was made available on the City's project webpage from November 17th, 2020, to December 6th, 2020. The online questionnaire presented a series of questions asking participants for their feedback on the concept plan options shown in the virtual meeting. The presentation slides were available on the City's project webpage to provide context for those completing the online questionnaire.

4 Who We Engaged

4.1 Who Did We Hear From?

In total, 47 individuals attended the virtual community meeting, and 270 people responded to the online questionnaire.

4.2 Questionnaire Demographics

Participants from the online questionnaire provided demographic information to help the City better understand who participated, and whether particular groups in the community were missed in the engagement phase.

Of note, 79% of respondents self-identified as white, and 57% identified as homeowners in the area. Half of all respondents indicated they rely on some form of shared space for their access to outdoors, with 36% of all participants relying on parks and public spaces for their access to the outdoors (Figure 6).

Racial background was somewhat proportionate to the neighbourhood's demographic profile. According to [Casa Loma's neighbourhood profile](#), 83% of the neighbourhood population identify as white. However, homeowners were over represented in survey respondents, compared to the neighbourhood population, where 40% of residents own their home.

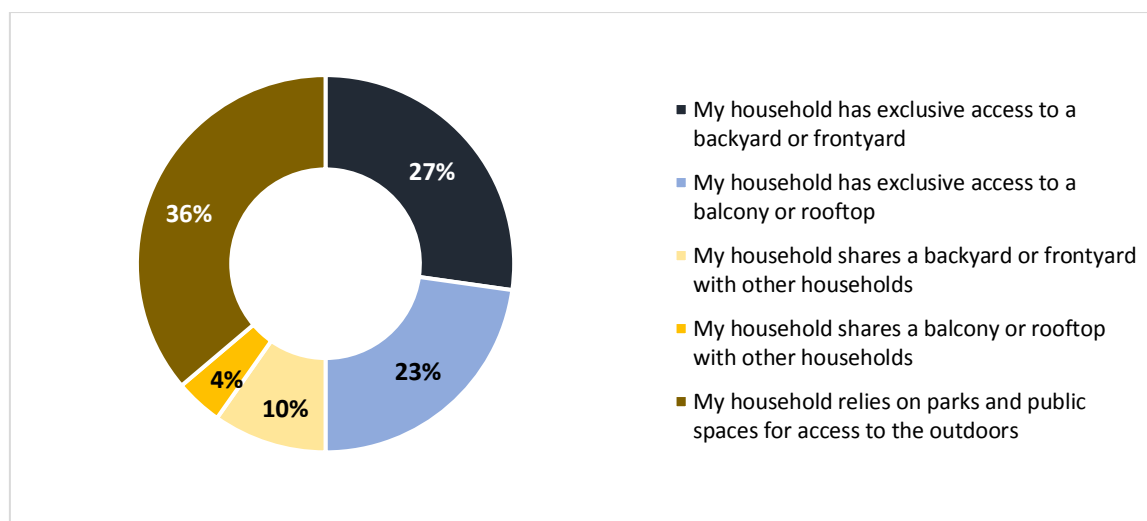


Figure 8. Participants' household accessibility to open space.

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. A list of community engagement activities undertaken by the project team

Engagement Method	Engagement Activities	Engagement Reach
Community Stakeholder Meeting	A meeting with community stakeholder was held on September 10 th , 2020, to provide an overview of the future park site and gather ideas on opportunities for the concept plan option designs.	Engaged 7
Indigenous Engagement	A meeting with representatives of Indigenous organizations was held on October 21 st , 2020, to discuss opportunities for Indigenous place-making/place-keeping in the emerging concept plan options and provide feedback on the plans.	Engaged 2

Engagement Method	Engagement Activities	Engagement Reach
Virtual Community Meeting 	A virtual community meeting was held on November 17 th , 2020, to present the concept plan options for a new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road, answer questions, and gather feedback from community members on the designs.	Engaged 47
Online Questionnaire & Email 	An online questionnaire gathered detailed feedback on participants' impressions of the Concept Plan Options presented at the virtual public meeting.	Engaged 270
Total Engaged		326

5 Next Steps

The feedback received through Phase 1 will inform the development of a Preferred Concept Plan. The preferred Concept Plan will consider the feedback on the various concept plan options to create one plan for the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road. As with the concept plan options, the preferred concept plan will be mindful of Hydro One's technical design guidelines, which may limit the inclusion of certain park features and their placement in the park.

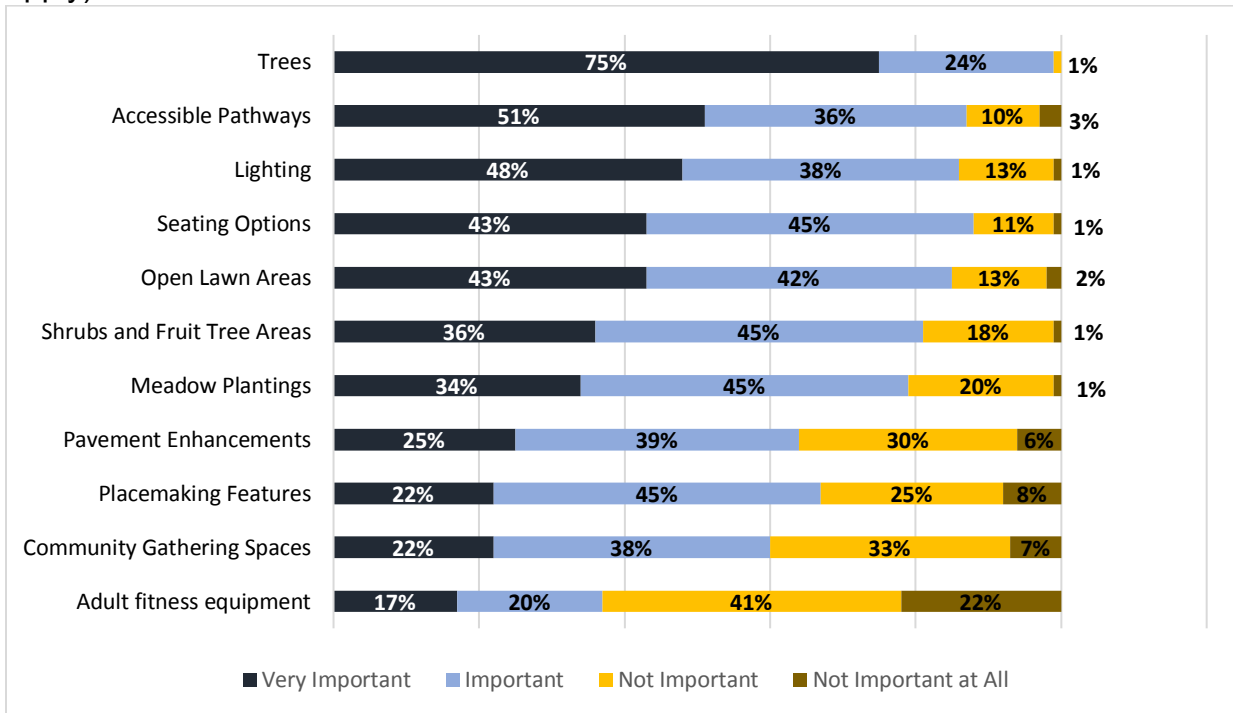
The City of Toronto will return to the community to consult on the Preferred Concept Plan design on **February 25, 2021**.

To be notified about upcoming consultations for the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road, please sign up for email updates at toronto.ca/macphersonavenuepark

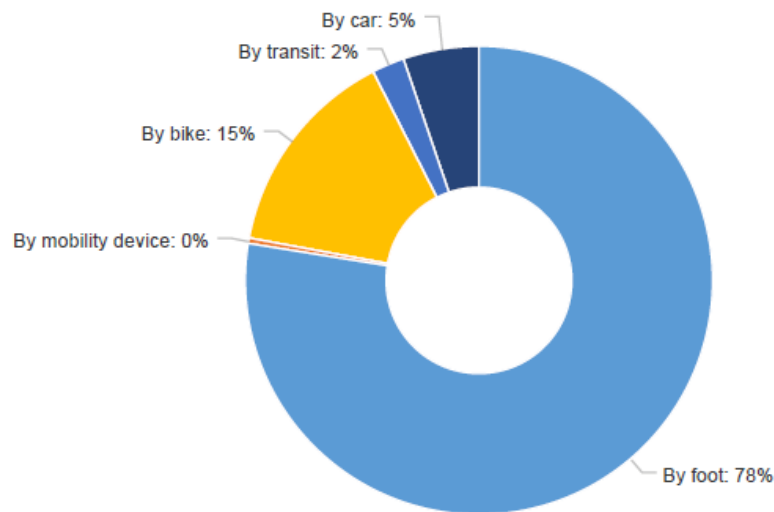
Appendix A – Online Questionnaire and Questions

SECTION 1: GENERAL PARK DESIGN QUESTIONS

1. What activities do you see yourself doing most often at the park? (Select all that apply)



2. How will you be getting to the park most of the time?

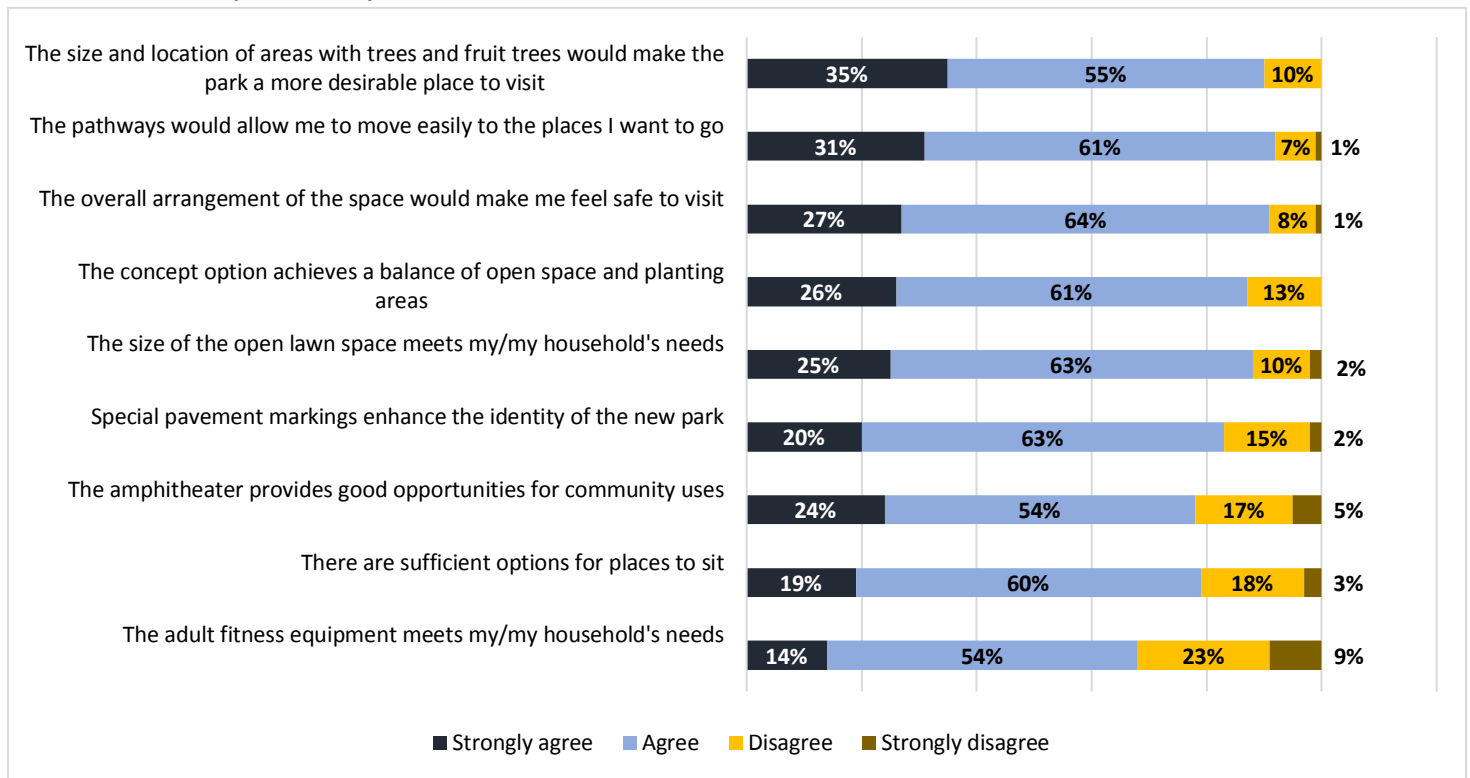


3. How important are each of the following design features to you and your household in the new park at Macpherson Avenue and Davenport Road:

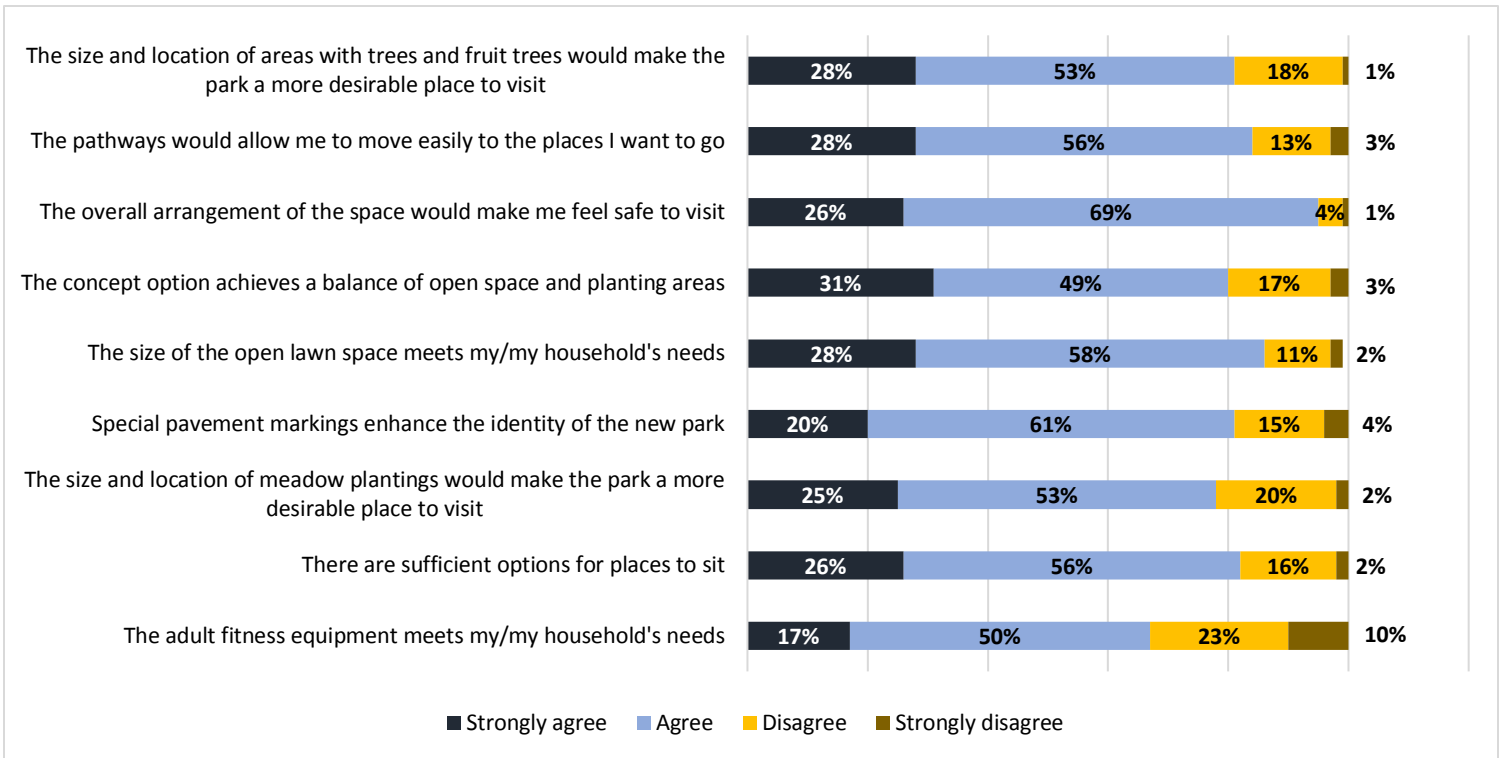
4. One of the Green Line's key design features is the continuous, accessible path that connects different parks and neighbourhoods. Pavement markings on the path will highlight and celebrate the heritage and character of the neighbourhood. What do you think is special about your neighbourhood (in the present or the past) that you might want to see depicted through the park or pavement design?
5. Davenport Road follows an important route across Toronto and is known as The Old Portage or *Gete-Onigaming* in Ojibwe, connecting the Humber River to the Don River. This route began as an Indigenous travel route before colonial settlement, and it continues to connect the Humber River to the Don River. Do you have any suggestions on how to reflect this specific history on the park?

SECTION 2: Concept Plan Options

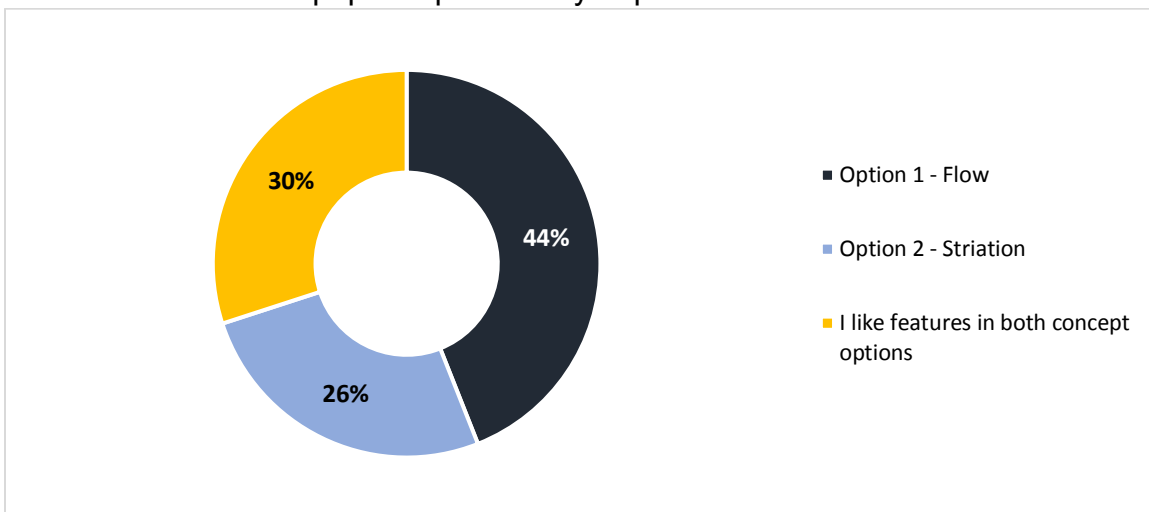
6. Concept Plan Option 1 – Flow



7. Concept Plan Option 2 – Striation



8. Which of the two concept plan options do you prefer?



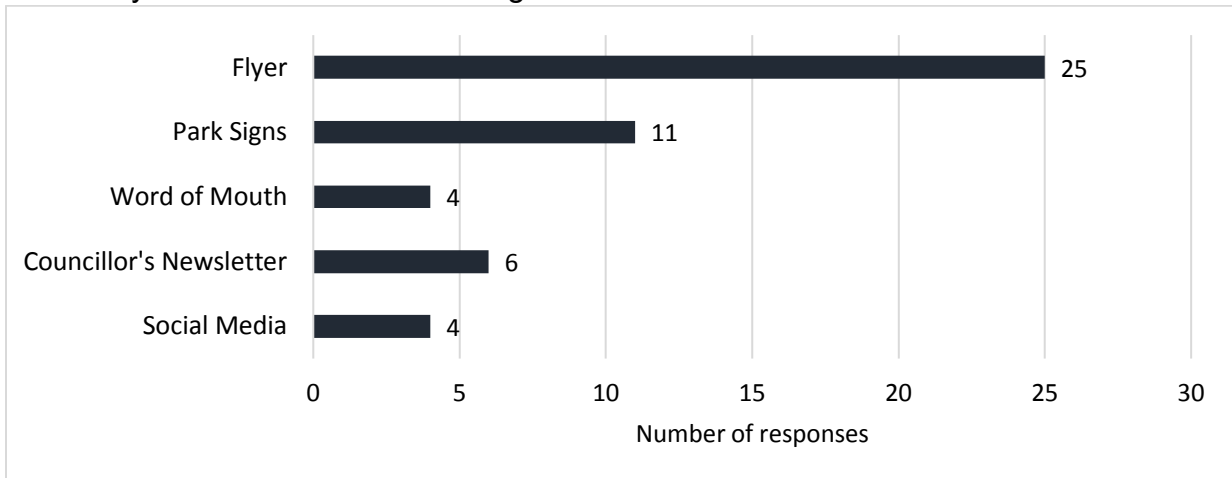
9. Please explain your choice.

10. Is there anything else not mentioned in the two concept plan options you would like to be considered in the preferred plan option?

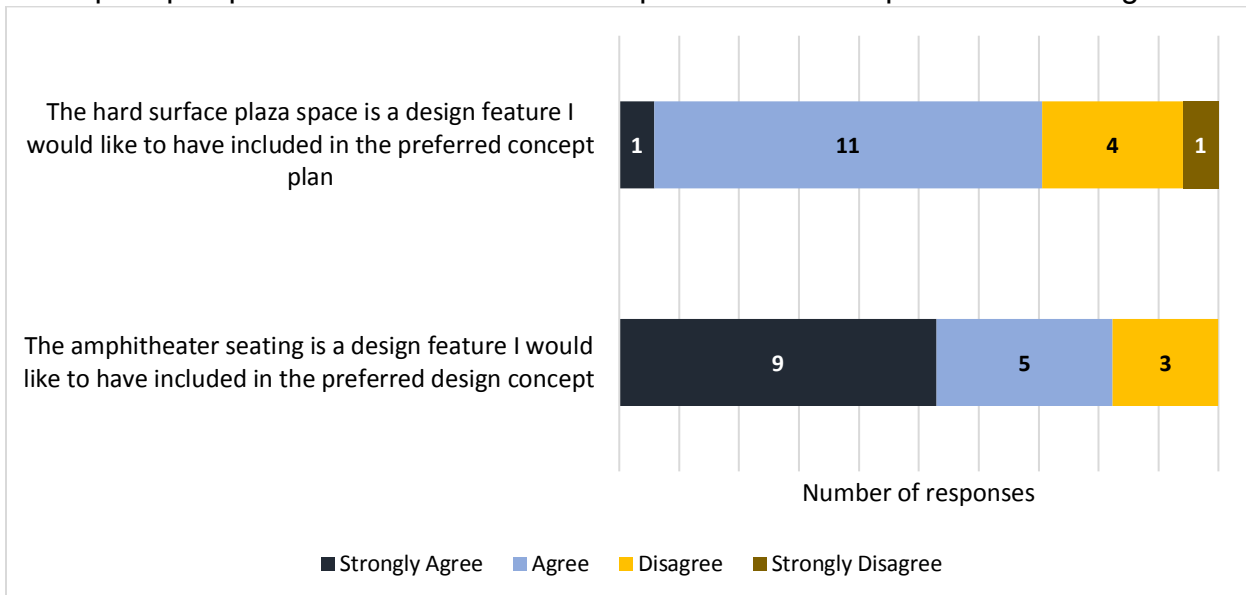
Appendix B – Virtual Community Meeting Poll Questions

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

1. How did you hear about this meeting?



2. Participant perspectives on the hard surface plaza and the amphitheater seating.



Appendix C – Questions of Clarification

The following questions were received through the virtual community meeting and questionnaire.

Q: The Green Line Implementation Plan proposed creating small mounds in this area; could they still be incorporated?

A: The revised design can consider small mounds. More soil would be added to provide enough space for tree roots to grow. These mounds and trees can only be considered where Hydro One requirements are not a limiting factor.

Q: Was an edible garden considered?

A: An edible garden was not considered for this park. Creating opportunities for edible landscapes is generally managed through the community gardens program, which requires community members to prepare a proposal to the City, including a commitment to ongoing maintenance.

Q: What consideration has been given to the noise presented by the CP rail tracks?

A: Sound barriers were not within the scope of the project, given that [*Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations, 2013*](#) specify these mitigation efforts are only required for "intensive uses" such as residential land uses within rail corridor buffer zones, and would generate significant cost constraints trade-offs in the design, as well as taking up valuable space.

Q: How long does Hydro One need the asphalt ramp in the section of Green Line near Spadina Road?

A: Hydro One has stated that the asphalt ramp will be in use periodically until 2027 to perform deliveries of infrastructure equipment and maintenance. The City of Toronto will revisit developing new park space in this area in the future.

Q: Is CP rail involved in this process?

A: CP rail is not involved in this process as the new park and safety fence will be entirely located within the City of Toronto and Infrastructure Ontario's property line.

Q: Are upgrades to the rail bridges' appearance being considered through this process or a separate one?

A: Improving the rail bridge appearance is not in the scope of the park design. It would involve a separate process with the City of Toronto and CP Rail.

Q: Would it be possible to have a beehive in the pollinator meadow?

A: The inclusion of a beehive requires ongoing maintenance from trainer beekeepers and is generally managed similarly to community gardens. Beehives are for the

European introduced honey bee. There are many native bee species local to the area and they do not require hives. The planting plan will incorporate species that support local native bees, many of which are ground-nesting.

Q: Given Hydro One's restrictions, is it possible to include a small water feature?

A: The design team can explore options for a small water feature where Hydro One restrictions do not pose an issue.

Q: Can a diagonal shortcut through the park to the southeast corner (closest to Dupont) be considered to create a shorter route?

A: A diagonal shortcut is not recommended for the park's southeast corner, given its small size and the necessary grade change. It would require the construction of steps that would generate additional cost constraints and trade-offs in the design.

Q: Can public washrooms be considered on this site?

A: No. Structures, including washrooms, are not permitted anywhere in the hydro corridor right-of-way as specified by Hydro One.