

Robertson Davies Park Improvements

Phase 2 - Preferred Concept Design

Survey Summary Report

June 2021

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Project Background

Robertson Davies Park is located at 275 Avenue Road near Macpherson Avenue in Toronto East York. The park features open space and seating. As part of the nearby development at 281-289 Avenue Road, the developer must provide improvements to the park.

In February - March 2021, the City presented the early concept design for feedback, which included upgraded lighting, and an additional accessible pathway, and ornamental tree planting. From this round of consultation, staff heard from the community that preserving green space, additional fencing along Avenue Road, and reorganizing the layout of the new accessible pathway as key priorities. Using stakeholder and community feedback collected, staff conducted a second online survey on the final concept designs in spring 2021.

This project is unrelated to the public consultation completed by Hydro One in 2016-2017, which involved tree removal, pathway upgrades and tree plantings to the park.

Project Timeline

- Winter 2021: Design development and community engagement
- Spring 2021: Park design finalized
- Summer/Fall 2021: Construction

The timeline is subject to change.

Notification

The online survey was promoted through the following channels:

- A community mail out to residents living near the park
- An eFlyer that was circulated to future residents of the nearby 281-289 Avenue Road development
- Councillor Josh Matlow's social media and newsletter
- Project webpage: www.toronto.ca/robertsondaviespark
- Signage in the park

Online Survey – May 14 to June 7, 2021

An online survey was hosted from May 14 to June 7, 2021, and asked for feedback the preferred design concept for the new park which had been informed by previous stakeholder and community input. Feedback from the online survey will help the design team to develop a final design for the park improvements.

The survey received a total of **172 survey responses**, which included input from **298 individuals**.

Preferred Concept Design



The preferred design concept features:

- Updated accessible pathway layout
- New iron fence along Avenue Road
- Proposed automatic irrigation for all planting beds
- Proposed new light post standards along the pathways
- Proposed accessible picnic table seating and additional benches
- Ornamental tree planting
- Planting beds which include native plant species

Existing bike rings and all existing trees are to remain in the new park. In addition, the park improvements will also include an updated commemorative plaque to the park's namesake - Robertson Davies. The details of this plaque are still to be determined, and will be communicated on the project webpage when available.

Online Survey - Key Feedback Highlights

On Survey Respondents

- The survey received a total of **172 survey responses**, which included input from **298 individuals**.
 - The majority of survey respondents were in the 40-55, 65-74, and 56 to 64 years old age categories.
- **The majority of survey respondents found out about the survey from:**
 - A community postcard/mail out to their home (49%)

- Park signage (22%)
- Email from project team (16%)
- Communications from the local Councillor's Office (8%)
- Social media advertisements (7%)
- Word of mouth (3%)
- Project webpage (2%)
- **The majority of respondents identified as homeowners (68%)**
 - 24% of respondents identified as renters.
 - 4% of respondents preferred not to answer the question.
 - 2% of respondents identified as permanently living with parent(s) or other family member(s).
 - 1% of respondents identified as temporarily staying with others (no fixed address).

On the Preferred Concept Design

- **When asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the following statement:**

Overall, I am satisfied with the proposed park improvements including new accessible pathway, wrought iron fencing, maintaining existing healthy trees, new planting beds and benches/picnic tables.

- **58%** of respondents agreed with the statement
- **33%** of respondents strongly agreed with the statement
- **6%** of respondents were neutral towards the statement
- **4%** of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement
- **When asked respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the following statement:**

Overall, I like the Preferred Concept Design for the park improvements, and it will meet the needs of the community.

- **56%** of survey respondents agreed with the statement
- **33%** of respondents strongly agreed with the statement
- **9%** of survey respondents felt neutral towards the statement
- **3%** of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement
- **When asked if respondents had any additional comments to add on the Preferred Concept Design for the park improvements, top comments and suggestions included (number of respondents sharing this sentiment included in parentheses):**
 - Adding more picnic tables, benches and seating to encourage greater use of the park (16 respondents)
 - Additional garbage and recycling bins to the park, particularly near park entrances (3 respondents)
 - Adding a dog off-leash area (3 respondents)
 - Important to have fence along Avenue Rd (3 respondents)
 - Ensuring the park receives scheduled and frequent maintenance from Parks staff (3 respondents)

- **Comments related to the planting sheet/park horticulture included in the survey included:**
 - Planting native plants (2 respondents)
 - Adding plants such as explorer roses and apple trees (1 respondent)
 - Adding butterfly garden (1 respondent)
 - Including environmentally friendly trees (1 respondent)
 - Adding herbal garden (1 respondent)
 - Removing hydrangea and blanket flower (1 respondent)
 - Leveraging the automated irrigation to include additional planting beds in the future at the entrance to the park (1 respondent)

Next Steps

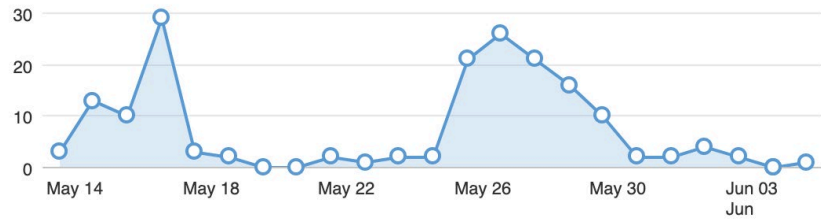
The results of this survey will be shared with the project team and local Councillor's office, and will inform the park's final concept design. This design will be available on the [project webpage](#) in summer 2021.

Appendix A: Quantitative Response Summary

Respondents



Response timeline



N 172

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statement: Overall, I am satisfied with the proposed park improvements including new accessible pathway, wrought iron fencing, maintaining existing healthy trees, new planting beds and benches/picnic tables.

	Count	% of responses	%
Strongly agree	56	<div style="width: 33%;"></div>	33%
Agree	100	<div style="width: 58%;"></div>	58%
Neutral	10	<div style="width: 6%;"></div>	6%
Disagree	5	<div style="width: 3%;"></div>	3%
Strongly disagree	1	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	1%

N 172

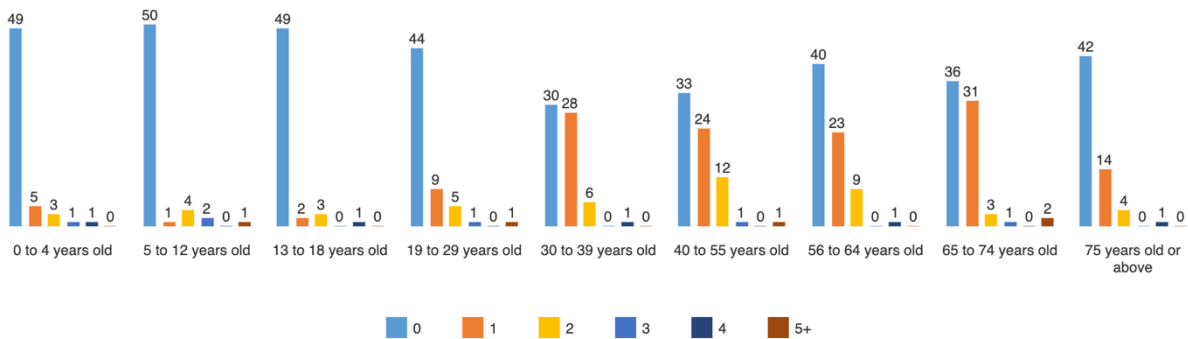
Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statement: Overall, I like the Preferred Concept Design for the park improvements, and it will meet the needs of the community.

	Count	% of responses	%
Strongly agree	56	<div style="width: 33%;"></div>	33%
Agree	97	<div style="width: 56%;"></div>	56%
Neutral	15	<div style="width: 9%;"></div>	9%
Disagree	3	<div style="width: 2%;"></div>	2%
Strongly disagree	1	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	1%

N 172

Demographics

How many people of each age group participated in this survey?



N 157

Total responses per age group include:

- 18 respondents age 0 to 4 years old
- 20 respondents age 5 to 12 years old
- 12 respondents age 13 to 18 years old
- 27 respondents age 19 to 29 years old
- 44 respondents age 30 to 39 years old
- 56 respondents age 40 to 55 years old
- 45 respondents age 56 to 64 years old
- 50 respondents age 65 to 74 years old
- 26 respondents age 75 years old or above

Sexual orientation describes a person's emotional, physical, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to other people. What best describes your sexual orientation?

	Count	% of responses
Heterosexual or straight	118	76%
Prefer not to answer	29	19%
Bisexual	4	3%
Gay	3	2%
Not listed, please describe	3	2%
Lesbian	1	1%
Queer	0	
Two-Spirit	0	
Don't know	0	

N 156

People often describe themselves by their race or racial background. For example, some people consider themselves "Black", "White" or "East Asian". Which race category best describes you? Select all that apply.

	Count	% of responses	%
White (e.g. English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian)	101		65%
Prefer not to answer	29		19%
East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)	8		5%
Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian (e.g. Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)	7		4%
Other, please describe	7		4%
Southeast Asian (e.g. Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese)	5		3%
Latin American (e.g. Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)	3		2%
South Asian or Indo-Caribbean (e.g. Indian, Indo- Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)	3		2%
First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit or Métis	1		1%
Black (e.g. African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)	0		

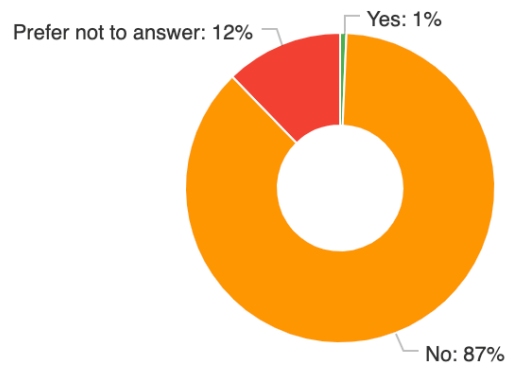
N 156

What language do you prefer speaking?



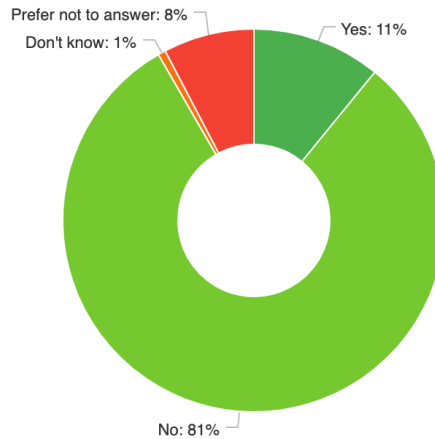
N 148

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



N 155

Disability is understood as any physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, learning, communication, sight, hearing or functional limitation that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society. A disability can be permanent, temporary or episodic, and visible or invisible. Does anyone participating in this survey identify as a person with a disability?



N 156

What best describes your current housing situation?

	Count	% of responses	%
Home owner	107		68%
Renting	38		24%
Permanently living with parent(s) or other family member(s)	3		2%
Temporarily staying with others (no fixed address)	1		1%
Unhoused (staying outside, in a shelter, in a 24-hour respite)	0		
Prefer not to answer	6		4%
Not listed, please describe	2		1%

N 157

Appendix B: Playground Layout and Additional Features

Robertson Davies Park- Early Concept Plan



Robertson Davies Park- Preferred Design Concept



The preferred design concept features:

- Updated accessible pathway layout

- New iron fence along Avenue Road
- Proposed automatic irrigation for all planting beds
- Proposed new light post standards along the pathways
- Proposed accessible picnic table seating and additional benches
- Ornamental tree planting
- Planting beds which include native plant species

Existing bike rings and all existing trees are to remain in the new park. In addition, the park improvements will also include an updated commemorative plaque to the park's namesake - Robertson Davies. Details still to be determined.

Planting Palette

The park improvements will also feature a planting palette of some native species and pollinator plants.



Appendix C: Text Responses

Do you have any additional comments to add on the Preferred Concept Design for the park improvement? (71 Respondents provided additional comments).

- From the plan, it looks like there is only one picnic table. Adding a second one might be nice. The addition of benches is great. Personally, I prefer when seating options are slightly off the path rather than right on. In other parks when they are right on the path, things like strollers (or even crossed legs) protrude into the path and there's little personal space between bench users and path users which isn't very enjoyable. Either moving them back a bit from the path (and that space could be paved for accessibility) or scattering some in the green area would be welcome.
- one ping pong table would be great. ramsden is too busy for us. we prefer the quiet of this park.
- Water fountain should be in the Avenue Rd side
- The flowers don't really go together that well, I like the vast selection though
- not sure about the water fountain, I see many fountains currently in parks not working and not very appealing.
- I would not include the iron fencing. People let their dogs off leash in this park and just want to keep their dogs away from Avenue Rd. traffic.
- Automated irrigation was a great idea. With that in place, could the design be enhanced to include future planting beds at the other entrance to the park and at the confluence of the paths. Perhaps a planting bed could be added annually over the next 2 years. When the irrigation is installed, the extension to the other 2 planting beds could be roughed in.
- Could some of the juniper and yews be replaced with maple or other Cndn. environmentally friendly trees?
- Would like to see ' A Herbal Garden', also some Flowers: a rose garden would be welcoming. A few Cherry Blossoms trees! Some Jasmine trees would be change the ambiance.
- Please ensure trees are kept and even more trees and native plants to be planted. With global warming we urgently need more trees in cities to help provide shade and to cool down/prevent heat islands in the summer.
- Lose the hydrangea and blanket flower. Add in Explorer roses and asters. Service berry is lovely, but how about an old fashioned apple tree? (I'm trying to think about reading Davies, the Ontario of yore.)
- Maybe we could have more than one picnic table.
- very important to have a fence all along Avenue Road
- Has water fountain been relocated closer to Avenue or removed?
- More picnic tables is an excellent idea. Having a portion of the picnic tables 'accessible' is also an excellent idea although I would not see the point of this unless the tables are carefully positioned near a walkway (no pun intended). The planting of the attractive shrubbery and various plants are an excellent visual addition; however, they detract from the utility of the open space, a rare-ish commodity. Additional lighting will be an excellent addition as would a designated area for frisbee, ball games, etc. to ensure their success in conjunction with the picnic areas, etc.

- trees and shrubs along or over the main path will make it less friendly to women walking in the evening or dawn, despite the overhead lamp posts. A good line of eye to see along the paths would be helpful.
- I find the design a bit unambitious, but it's fine. Is there any way to add a Bike Share stand? (There are three parks at or near Avenue Road and Dupont and yet the closest Bike Share stand is half a km away. BTW, the existing bike rings NEVER get used, though I am not suggesting removing them. Part of this city's war on bicycles is the lack of available places to lock them up.)
- It is a place where artists have chosen to paint and illustrate in the past. As long as the park is not designated for another building I happy.
- Can the light posts be more traditional/historic/old looking like the ones you see on Chestnut Park
- I believe there should be more picnic benches to encourage greater use of the park
- I like that in Dovercourt park there are fire pits with large stones in a circle around the pit, to be rented. Could this be another location for a fire pit? or just more seating in general. Also what about bathrooms?
- i like that there's a fountain i hope you don't cut down too many existing trees
- Benches along new path & either benches or picnic tables in the green space, both north side and south green spaces
- Need as much seating as can
- Would like to see Monarch butterfly food included.
- Remove existing stairs and use area for more green space or additional table
- How many benches are there? Toronto parks never have sufficient seating. With an aging population and with more people walking, seating is very important.
- It is unclear how many picnic tables and benches are proposed - it appears that there is only 1 picnic table. This seems insufficient to meet the needs of the community.
- Since the plan includes water in the park, it would be great to have some kind of fountain for the birds. It would also make the park more interesting. The rock sculpture fountain off the laneway behind One Balmoral attracts a lot of different birds to bathe and drink.
- Would like to see a Dog Off-Leash Area, even a small one. People are using the school nearby as an offleash, and it would be better to direct people and their pets to a proper local DOLA
- Dogs are running OFF leash through entire park, as in all Toronto parks. I would love to see dog-free fenced off area.
- This is a nice plan, but not as forward thinking as could be for one of the world's top cities. Should have more than one picnic table. At least one accessible and at least one other standard picnic table, if not more. Accessible is a great idea, but a standard picnic table will get more use and seat more people. Should also ensure placement of garbage cans for refuse. Should also include some kind of focal point, feature, ie. fountain, statue, artwork, perhaps consult private industry or community groups for ideas.
- There should be more native plants. I don't see why it couldn't be 100% native plants.
- I really like/hope for the drinking water fountain. Washrooms would be nice too if possible.

- Neighbourhood is lacking in enclosed small dog parks.
- I live in the Apartment building at 291 Avenue Rd. I won't be able to see the park from my window, thanks to the hideously ugly condo now built 14 feet from my bedroom _ I used to look upon two 11 story high trees that were killed to build the hideous condo. I used to see the park. Make the Developer pay the most for this crime and make the park a blooming paradise.
- What about the water bottle refill station that was mentioned in the first proposal? Why has it been dropped?
- I hope that the butterflies and humming birds will like the flowers.
- Yew is a bad idea -- the berries are poisonous and most people don't know that they are poisonous. Kids might eat them.
- A swing for children or a small area for children to play
- I did not see any garbage bins.... a priority in the city right now
- Care of grass in parks like this requires closer attention to the scheduling of cutting services. The RDpark is loaded with dandelions which has just seeded. A green space with many dandelions is not attractive nor is it good as a playing surface for children . If the City cannot attend to lawn care then consideration needs to be given to some other surface options.
- I think there should be a water feature or at the very least water fountain for people and dogs
- Any chance for some playground structure(s), even basic ones. Would complement what is existing at parks in the area but would also provide options for neighborhood kids. No play structure at Jay Macpherson Green for example.
- With the water drinking fountain I would like to see it have an integrated bowl at the bottom for a dog fountain. Other seating options for conversation - semicircular benches
- I hope the current tables will remain. And we do not lose benches. A lovely park. People relax, read, chat and children play.
- I am glad to se that all the existing trees will be retained
- The fence should be next to the Avenue Rd. sidewalk and have vines growing on it and not need painting. Plants should be of the type that does not need watering. The pathway should not flood or become ice covered and have low pathway lights. Some lights should be along the railway line fence. All lights should only be just bright enough to make out figures of people and animals.
- Why is does the new Ave. rd. fence run inside the park borders , instead of along the outer perimeter , as does the original portion ?
- please ensure that the new pole standard lighting in the park does not shine up to new apartment building - ruining their nighttime privacy If light shines down onto walkway, that would be great - but please do not create any additional light pollution.
- looks very nice
- Over all I like the design. I do like the benches but think that the park is too small for picnic tables and am not in support of picnic tables in this park.
- Our overall agreement is based on the assumption that the fencing on the North side between the park and the Davies apartments will be wood and the design consistent with other residential fencing around the park.

- The lighting and Yews are a great addition to the park. A TREKIT Fitness Circuit, such as found in Greenfield Park in Etobicoke or even just one pull-up bar would be welcome.
- I don't like the iron fence. The shrubs are enough of a buffer to Avenue Road, iron fencing is expensive to buy, install and in upkeep. Also fences tend to gather trash and other detritus. Also, where are the garbage bins going to be placed?
- I'd rather have a second bench instead of picnic table
- I think that at least one bench should be placed in the shade under a tree.
- Steps need to be improved - they are uneven and a falls risk. I would also encourage you to make the park safe and accessible for skateboarders.
- Thank you for including the extension of the wrought iron fence along Avenue Road. Based on the apparent infrequent maintenance at the park, I would think that all plantings should be of the low maintenance variety
- We need to better understand the maintenance schedule for this park. Also, fewer picnic tables and NO scrubs along the walkway. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the park is used by lots of kids and dogs and the shrubs will be in the way and not a smart move.
- please make sure there are more than one picnic table
- I like the new proposal. I am happy you took away the water fountain on Sidney Street. I would like there to be NO plants along the walkway because when the community uses the park it is mostly kids running around and we don't want to take space away for them to play that is so needed (especially as we saw during this pandemic). I also question the number of picnic tables that are being proposed. [REDACTED] Last year alone we had to call the city around 12 times to pick up needles. Any shaded area/corner is used this way.
- Please add more garbage/recycling close to the picnic bench and the entrance from Sydney. People litter a lot, let's not give them an excuse :)
- More picnic tables! People need places to socialize outdoor more and the elderly can't sit on the ground.
- The rendering is not reflective of the current tree plantings along the CNR tracks.
- Emphasize the focus on a naturalized landscape along the fence line of the train tracks similar to the trail along Marlborough PI. Additional butterfly gardens would appeal to all in the neighborhood.
- Emphasis on a natural, less manicured butterfly and bee garden closer to Sydney st. Or or train tracks fence line. Some less manicured more 'natural' esthetic would be really nice to see aside from the typical park planted seasonal gardens?
- We need confirmation that the plantings will be maintained and weeded. I see automatic watering is proposed which should deal with watering. We also need confirmation the path will be maintained in the winter along with the steps going down to Avenue Road. This has not been cleared in the past
- I am presuming/hoping that the proposed water fountain is not to be included in the new plan.
- Is there only one picnic bench? If so, I'd suggest a few others.
- I don't think the extra pathway is necessary as it takes away from the grass area which allows for kids to play freely.