



# Market Lane Park

Improvements

## What We Heard Report #1

August 2021

The Planning Partnership  
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# Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction .....	1
2.0 What We Heard.....	2
2.1 Virtual Workshop Sessions.....	2
2.2 Community Resource Group .....	6
2.3 Emails.....	6
2.4 Online Survey.....	7
2.5 Social Media .....	11
3.0 Who Did We Hear From? .....	12
3.1 Virtual workshop.....	12
3.2 Online survey .....	12
4.0 How We Reached People .....	13
5.0 Next Steps .....	14



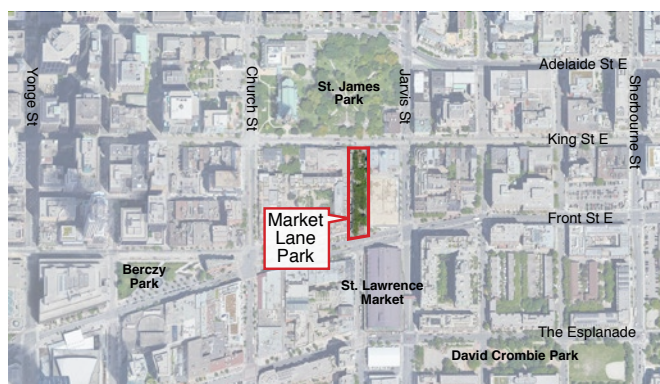
# 1.0 Introduction

The City of Toronto is undertaking a master plan and construction project for Market Lane Park. The scope of this work is to:

Improve Market Lane Park through a design and construction process that responds to heritage, maintain pedestrian connectivity from King Street to Front Street, connect with the new St. Lawrence North building, integrate Indigenous place-keeping, and enhance park amenities. It will reimagine the fountain and integrate the Return of the Magri-Stecchi public art feature.

The design will evolve through consultation with stakeholders, area residents, Indigenous communities and the general public to achieve design excellence and meet the current and future needs of the community.

Market Lane Park is located between King Street East and Front Street East, adjacent to the new North St. Lawrence Market building, just west of Jarvis Street. It is 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) in area.



This report documents the public input received during the first round of public consultations, including:

## June 29, 2021

### Virtual workshop

Web-based video conference with a presentation, followed by conversations with participants

## July 6, 2021

### Community Resource Group Meeting #1

Web-based video conference with a presentation, followed by conversations

## June 29 - July 16, 2021

### Online survey

Web-based survey questions

## June 2021 - ongoing

### Email comments

Emails from the public sent to the City of Toronto or The Planning Partnership

## June 2021 - ongoing

### Social media comments

Comments received by the City of Toronto's Facebook and Instagram accounts

The public consultation described above is in addition to ongoing consultation with specific groups including:

- representatives of the Indigenous community
- representatives of hard to reach and vulnerable communities
- a City of Toronto Technical Advisory Group.

## 2.0 What We Heard

### 2.1 Virtual Workshop Sessions

Three online public sessions were held for the first public workshop on June 29, 2021. In total, 113 people joined the sessions. Each began with a presentation by the team summarizing the design process, history and context of the area, early observations regarding existing conditions, and provided examples of great linear parks and the draft vision, principles and big moves (see presentation posted on the project webpage on the City of Toronto website).

Following the presentation, all meeting attendees were invited to share their thoughts on the draft vision and principles, opportunities for change and elements from other parks that should be considered for Market Lane Park. In addition, attendees were also asked to share their opinion on options for the existing public art installation.

The conversation in each session revealed many insights and ideas to consider for Market Lane Park. The following is a summary of comments made by participants. The comments are paraphrased. For the most part, each comment is unique. Where the same or a very similar comment was made by more than one participant, it is noted in brackets following the comment. Comments are grouped under headings by common theme.

During each session, a number of polling questions were asked to get a snapshot of those attending the online sessions. Most of the participants were residents living nearby to Market Lane Park. Only a few of the participants lived in the wider community and only two worked nearby. Most meeting attendees visit Market Lane Park at least once a week.

#### Vision and Principles

- clarify the difference between being a destination versus a throughway (1 respondent)
- we already have magnificent parks in the area, so Market Lane can play a dramatic role as a connector (4 respondents)
- need to add safety into vision statement (1 respondent)
- need to recognize Toronto's rich cultural heritage (1 respondent)
- people are keen to learn more about Toronto history, use Market Lane Park to describe the beginning of Toronto's history (1 respondent)
- remember the important French aspect to Toronto history (1 respondent)
- need to add park programming to the vision statement (1 respondent)

## Park Programming

Some people feel Market Lane Park is too saturated with events and programming:

- concern about programming – day and night (1 respondent)
- events are impactful to residents living directly adjacent to the park – noise from 4:00 am to 11:00 pm for market vendors to set up and take down (2 respondents)
- every last space in the City is taken up with events, no peace – this space could be more peaceful (1 respondent)
- no one to call at the City to complain about noise – response is not fast enough (1 respondent)
- lack of attention to the serious issues (1 respondent)
- the area is a bit saturated with events (1 respondent)
- why doesn't the City just leave us alone rather than continue to over-program the park with events? (1 respondent)
- not the place for events (1 respondent)
- the space is cavernous and noise is amplified (1 respondent)
- events disrupt mail delivery and emergency vehicles (1 respondent)
- other parks have other opportunities for entertainment rather than Market Lane Park (3 respondents)

Some people feel the events and programming in Market Lane Park are desirable:

- very lively and interesting part of the city (1 respondent)
- the past programming and use of the park really add to the ambiance (1 respondent)
- take advantage of food curiosity with programming (1 respondent)
- great place for small music performances (1 respondent)
- I live next door and face the park and I like the activity, these are happy sounds (1 respondent)
- programming has benefitted other public spaces in Toronto, e.g. College Park – helps bring families, kids, office workers (1 respondent)

Other ideas and questions about programming, events and animation of Market Lane Park:

- link and a pass through, some kinds of animation, spill over, create lovely places to sit (1 respondent)

"The area is a bit saturated with events."

"I like the activity. These are happy sounds."

"The park needs more life during winter."

- management of Market Building, a lot of commercial rentals in the building, may spill over – if you build the infrastructure for events, they will come; otherwise planters, cafes, tables, seating, all facilitate natural animation by people that walk by (1 respondent)
- clarification on the north Market Building – what days of the week for events? what kinds of activities? what are the hours? (2 respondents)
- what kind of programming will be specific to Market Lane Park, and what relation does it have to Berczy Park and St. James Park which already have spaces for programming (2 respondents)
- concern with heavy users of the space, people who are not housed, how can their use be reconciled? (1 respondent)
- the park needs more life during winter (1 respondent)

“Maintenance is as important as design.”

### Maintenance

- great to put in nice pavers and water features, but must recognize maintenance and upkeep is just as important (1 respondent)
- a big issue is everyone litters, there are not enough garbage bins; there is food waste, beer cans, drug paraphernalia – this is also a safety issue (1 respondent)

### Connectivity

- within just a few blocks, 50,000 people live in the area, people with strollers and dogs need space to get through (1 respondent)
- Market Lane Park is a pass through and link, more than Berczy Park (5 respondents)
- looking for a safer way to move through the park on a bike to avoid pedestrians (1 respondent)
- discussion with City’s cycling group to understand cycling infrastructure around the park (1 respondent)
- need more bike infrastructure (2 respondents)
- cargo bikes are exploding, really hard for cargo bikes to find bike parking near the market (1 respondent)

“The planting has never worked.”

“Comfortable benches.”

### Park Amenities

- the big planter box in the middle is a receptacle for garbage and rats (1 respondent)
- the planting has never worked; lacks sunlight (1 respondent)
- people love to buy food and eat it – provide for this function in the park (1 respondent)
- provide free WIFI – people come to Berczy Park just for this (1 respondent)
- benches in Berczy Park are too short (shallow),

“It can’t be everything to everybody.”

- benches in St. James Park are too square – please provide comfortable benches that you test (sit on) first (1 respondent)
- benches should have barriers to sleeping on (1 respondent)
- the moveable chairs in Berczy Park, provided by the BIA, are great (1 respondent)
- reduce the amount of concrete surface – brick paving adds to the design (1 respondent)
- consider attractions that are hidden gems, like the City of Toronto sign at City Hall, the shark girl in downtown Buffalo – could have vegetable statues here, or a fruit and vegetable fountain (1 respondent)
- lots of Indigenous communities are looking for places to plant and maintain sacred herbs and medicine plants (1 respondent)
- park could be used as the beginning of a Toronto museum (on Toronto's history) (1 respondent)
- must prioritize what's in the park – it can't be everything to everybody (1 respondent)
- need somewhere to wash hands and fill up water bottles (1 respondent)
- retain the existing trees (1 respondent)

### Lighting and Safety

- some people feel they can't go there at night (1 respondent)
- lighting, sight lines and safety were identified as priority elements for the park redesign (8 respondents)
- animation is important to increase the feeling of safety (1 respondent)
- be careful of lighting right next to the existing residents (1 respondent)
- consider safety first or risk of the design failing (1 respondent)
- the secret is to have many diverse users in the park, not overwhelmed by one group – parks should have 4 season interest, including times they are busy and times they are tranquil (1 respondent)

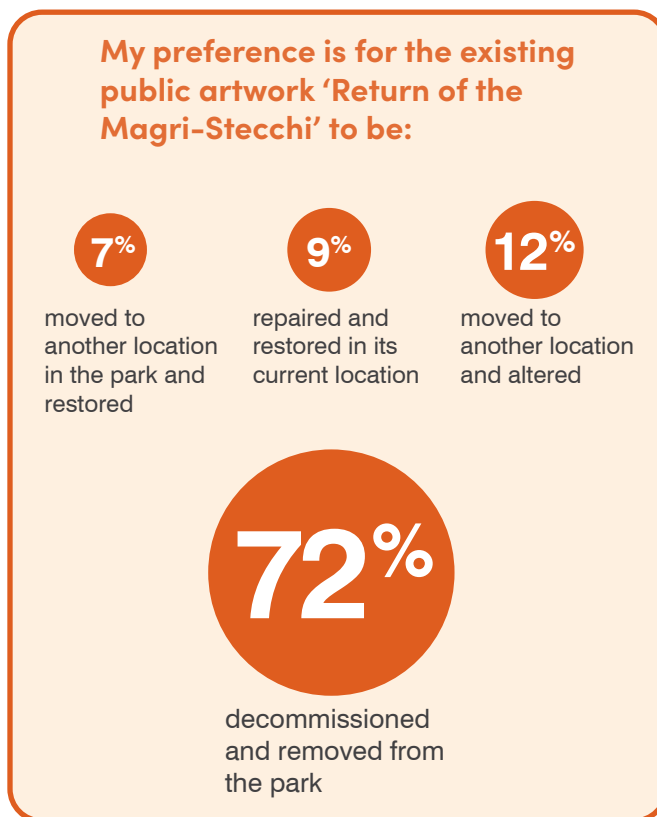
### Public Art

A polling question was asked with respect to the existing public art installation, Return of the Magri Stecchi. In total, 72% of the respondents to the question prefer the public art be decommissioned and removed from the park.

In addition, the following is a summary of comments shared regarding public art:

- art piece never had an interpretive sign – needs interpretive signs (1 respondent)
- a project water feature needs to ensure dignity to people, portable showers, a water feature that could double as a shower for the homeless (1 respondent)
- fire for a gathering and a meeting place and for warmth, for community (1 respondent)
- love the idea of Indigenous place keeping in consultation with Indigenous communities, with an idea of water flowing through the park (1 respondent)
- might be helpful to have a big sign (like the Toronto sign in Nathan Phillips Square ) that is a draw for people to fill the park with people that are positive (1 respondent)
- hard for people to act out around whimsical dogs (like at Berczy Park) and children's playgrounds (1 respondent)
- contribution of Indigenous community to our food, brings positivity to the area (1 respondent)

The following is a tally of the responses from meeting attendees:





## 2.2 Community Resource Group

The first Community Resource Group meeting was held July 6, 2021. Key themes of discussion included:

- coordination with paving and lighting renewal of the adjacent Market Square condominium site
- consideration of the connections to St. James Park and Market Street
- ensuring accessibility of the space and the provision of seating
- interest in having a spill-out space from the North Market building
- general support for the decommissioning of the public art feature Return of the Magri-Stechhi
- ensuring the park doesn't try to fit in too much in a small space

## 2.3 Emails

A number of emails have been received by the project team to date. The following is a summary of comments:

- like the elements in the park today
- could it be more green and naturalized?
- interesting views
- safety: clear sight lines and good lighting
- need a small playground feature
- needs to be wheelchair accessible
- nobody should be able to lie down on the benches
- the planter is an eyesore and collects trash
- use design themes from St. James Park
- please include washrooms
- keep the existing fountain
- keep the trees or plant new ones
- concern with increasing crime in the area
- remove the central planter and replace with a larger off-leash dog area
- need more grass
- picnic/food-eating area
- the design should engage all people in the local community, including vulnerable populations and be a model of inclusive community-building
- Greenacre Park in New York City is a good example



"The design should be a model of inclusive community building."

## 2.4 Online Survey

The web-based survey was available from June 29 to July 16, 2021, following the online public sessions. It asked people how they use Market Lane Park today, what the guiding vision for the park should be, and what design elements should be considered. There were 271 responses.

### Prior or during the COVID - 19 pandemic, how frequently would you visit Market Lane Park?

There was a fairly even distribution of the frequency of use throughout the year, from daily to a few times a year. 33% said they visit a few times a week.

Visiting Market Lane Park? Report

	Count	% of responses	%	% of res
Daily	40	<div></div>	15%	
A few times a week	89	<div></div>	33%	
Once a week	40	<div></div>	15%	
A couple times a month	49	<div></div>	18%	
A few times a year	53	<div></div>	20%	

### Prior or during the COVID - 19 pandemic, what did you do when visiting Market Lane Park?

Respondents described the activities they undertook in the park. Of the 50 responses, most respondents (42) described walking or moving through the park, with a handful of other responses.



Part 1 of 9

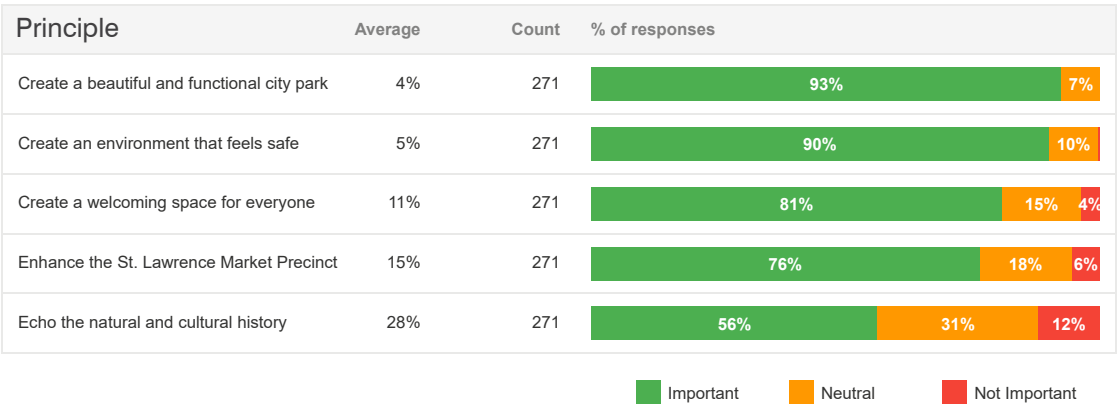
### When visiting Market Lane Park, who do you go with? Check all that apply.

68% of respondents said they visit the park alone. Many people said they also visit with a partner, family or friends.

of responses	Count	% of responses	%
Alone	183	<div></div>	68%
Spouse or partner	141	<div></div>	52%
Friends	78	<div></div>	29%
Family	31	<div></div>	11%
Pets	28	<div></div>	10%
Children	22	<div></div>	8%
Other, please specify	7	<div></div> co-workers, dogs, people currently homeless	3%

# How important are the following draft design principles to you and your household?

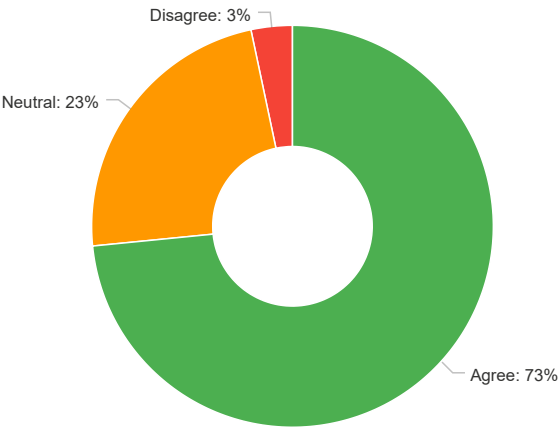
There is general agreement with the draft principles, but “echo the natural and cultural history” was perceived with lower importance.



## Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the draft vision statement:

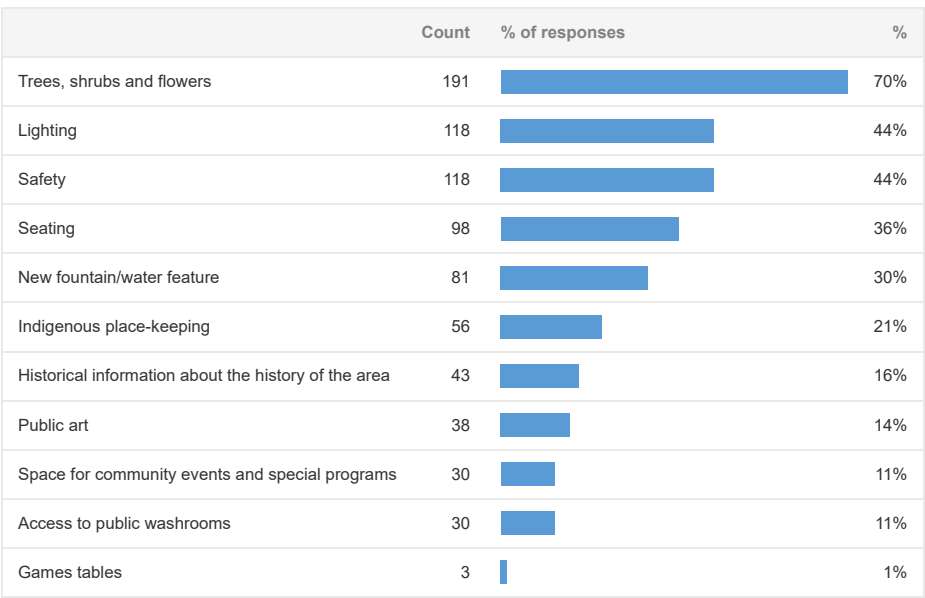
Market Lane Park will be a vibrant pedestrian space that supports the St. Lawrence Market Precinct and serves as both a meeting place and mid-block passage between King Street and Front Street. The park will integrate Indigenous place-keeping and reference the area’s rich cultural heritage.

Most respondents agreed with the vision statement; only a few disagreed.



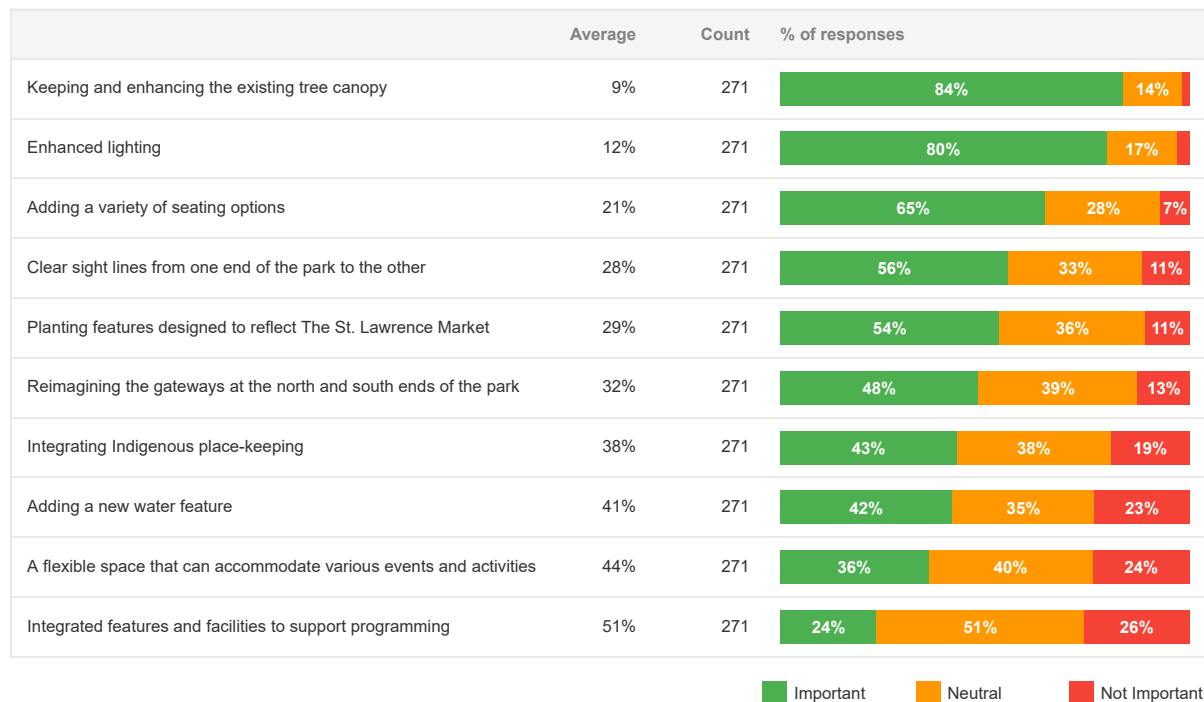
## What are the most important features and considerations for the Market Lane Park Improvements? Select up to 3 features.

Respondents selected trees, shrubs and flowers as the most important consideration. Safety and lighting were also important, followed by seating.



## How important are the following potential elements of the park design to you and your household?

Similar to the question above, people identified that maintaining the existing trees is important, followed by lighting and seating.





## Public Art: Return of the Magri-Stecchi

Installed in 1985, Return of the Magri Stecchi by Morry Edelstein and Brian McLaren is an artwork located at the north end of the park. It is comprised of a pink granite wall with openings that represent the pillory, whipping post and stocks of the early City jail, a hand pump that represents the original well of the City nearby, and a water basin. The pump and water basin have not been functional for some time. The park improvement project is considering a number of options for the artwork's future in Market Lane Park based on assessments of its condition, cost to refurbish, safety, views around the wall, pedestrian circulation in the park, accessibility, maintenance concerns related to the water feature, the feature's message about public punishment, and the artists' and City's preferences.



### My preference is for the public artwork to be:

Most people are in favour of decommissioning the artwork and removing it from the park.

	Count	% of responses	%
Repaired and restored in its current location	36	<div></div>	13%
Moved to another location in the park and restored	35	<div></div>	13%
Moved to another location and altered (no waterbasin or other changes for safety)	18	<div></div>	7%
Decommissioned and removed from the park	182	<div></div>	67%

### Is there anything else you would like to share about your own vision for the redesigned Market Lane Park?

- safety of the park is key (12 respondents)
- good maintenance is required (3 respondents)
- adequate lighting (2 respondents)
- new art and water features (3 respondents)
- move the Bike Share out to gain more park space (1 respondent)
- if Indigenous space is warranted, make it the whole space (1 respondent)
- don't erase the history of early Toronto (1 respondent)
- more greenery (7 respondents)
- preserve the trees (5 respondents)
- make it a pass through space, it is too small for community gatherings (2 respondent)
- not a space for programming (4 respondents)
- primarily a pedestrian passage (3 respondents)
- an extension of St. James Park to Market Street (4 respondents)
- minimal seating (2 respondents)
- places to sit (4 respondents)
- an adult recreational playground (1 respondent)
- places to eat (2 respondents)
- public washrooms (1 respondent)
- avoid impacts on adjacent residents (3 respondents)
- recognize and support the unhoused people (1 respondent)
- vibrant and welcoming for all (3 respondents)
- coffee and food vendors (3 respondents)
- low maintenance
- natural materials (1 respondent)
- carbon negative space (1 respondent)

## 2.4 Social Media

A few comments were posted in response to the Facebook ad promoting the workshop. The following is a summary:

- if a fountain is considered it needs to be maintained
- consider a cascading fountain on the slope
- it is dangerous to cross Front Street to access the park due to vehicular traffic
- needs better lighting
- do not include dogs off leash areas in the design as dogs are a noise nuisance

# 3.0 Who Did We Hear From?

113 people participated in the virtual workshop sessions and there were 271 online survey responses. Two workshop sessions were advertised to give people choice about when they could participate. A third workshop session was added due to public interest.

## 3.1 Virtual workshop

A voluntary polling question during the virtual workshop sessions identified that most respondents were residents living nearby.

### What best describes your relationship to Market Lane Park?

I am a resident living nearby	88%
I work nearby	4%
I am a member of the wider community	8%
Other	0%

## 3.2 Online survey

Participants from the online questionnaire were asked to voluntarily provide demographic information. This helps the City better understand who participated, and whether particular groups in the community were missed in the engagement phase.






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

0-4 years old:	13
4 to 12 years old:	12
13 to 18 years old:	1
19 to 29 years old:	34
30 to 39 years old:	84
40 to 55 years old:	54
56 to 64 years old:	58
65 to 74 years old:	46
75 years+:	13

There was a broad spectrum of people who participated in responding to the survey questions, with the exception of teenagers. About 62% of participants were between the ages of 30 and 64 years. Most participants (86%) identified that they are residents living nearby to Market Lane Park.





### What best describes your current housing situation?

69% of survey respondents were home owners and 25% renters.

	Count	% of responses	%
Home owner	183		69%
Renting	66		25%
Permanently living with parent(s) or other family member(s)	2		1%
Temporarily staying with others (no fixed address)	0		
Unhoused (staying outside, in a shelter, in a 24-hour respite)	0		
Prefer not to answer	9		3%
<b>Cooperative housing</b>	4		2%

### What best describes you and your household's access to outdoor space?

Respondents had a mix of outdoor amenity space options. 25% had access to a private outdoor space such as a back yard, 31% had access to a shared or semi-private space, and 40% rely on public space.

	Count	% of responses	%
I have access to private outdoor space like a yard	67		25%
I have access to semi-private/shared outdoor space	82		31%
I only have access to public spaces like parks (I do not have access to private or semi-private outdoor space)	106		40%
Prefer not to answer	8		3%



## 4.0 How We Reached People

All public and stakeholder meetings to date have been undertaken by measures appropriate for maintaining physical distancing in accordance with Toronto Public Health protocols for the COVID-19 containment strategy. Meetings and conversations have been held over virtual meeting platforms like Zoom.

### Webpage

The City's website has a specific webpage [www.toronto.ca/marketlanepark](http://www.toronto.ca/marketlanepark) to provide information about the Market Lane Park Improvements including an overall description, a project time line, project updates, a link to the survey, and an option to sign up for project updates by email.

### Social Media and Digital Ads

The City of Toronto used its Facebook and Instagram accounts to promote the virtual workshop and online survey through paid advertisements. From June 22-29, posts reached **16,685 people**, and from July 8-18 they reached **16,421 people**.

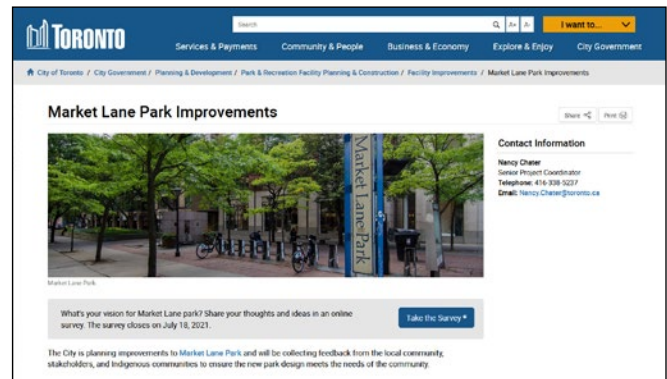
### Mail Outs

**11,400 postcards** advertising the project webpage and the virtual workshop was delivered to addresses in the neighbourhood within 1-kilometre of the site.

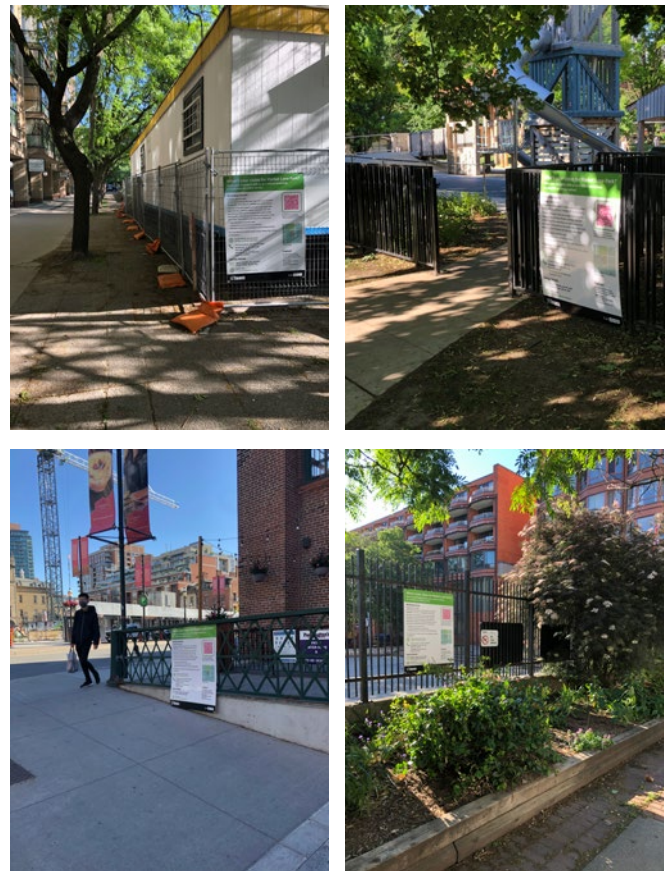
### Signs

Six large notice signs were placed on City-owned property to provide information about the project, the date and how to join the virtual workshop, how to access the online survey, and who to contact at the City of Toronto for further information. A scannable QR code provided a link to this information as well. The signs were located in Market Lane, along Market Street, in St. James Park and in David Crombie Park.

[www.toronto.ca/marketlanepark](http://www.toronto.ca/marketlanepark)



*The landing page on the City of Toronto's website*



*Notices posted in the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood*

## 5.0 Next Steps

The feedback received from the first round of consultation will inform the development of concept design options for Market Lane Park. The design options will suggest a number of different ways the park could be organized and used. The purpose of preparing options is to understand what features should be included in the preferred master plan by exploring a number of “what ifs.”

The City of Toronto will return to the community to consult on the concept design options in the fall of 2021. To be notified about upcoming consultations for Market Lane Park, please check the webpage at [www.toronto.ca/marketlanepark](http://www.toronto.ca/marketlanepark) and sign up for email updates.

### Contact

If you have any questions or comments regarding the summary report, please contact either:

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