

City of Toronto – Parks Development & Capital Projects

# New Parks in the Moss Park Neighbourhood Youth Engagement Phase 1 Summary

July 20, 2022

Kate Black, Project Coordinator Landscape Architect  
Laurel Christie, Senior Project Coordinator  
Alex Lavasidis, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator



## Table of Contents

Project Background.....	2
Youth Workshop Overview.....	2
Summary of Feedback.....	3
Appendix A - Park Feeling and Park Feature Visioning Board Card Options	
Appendix B - Activity Board Example	
Appendix C - Detailed Feedback	

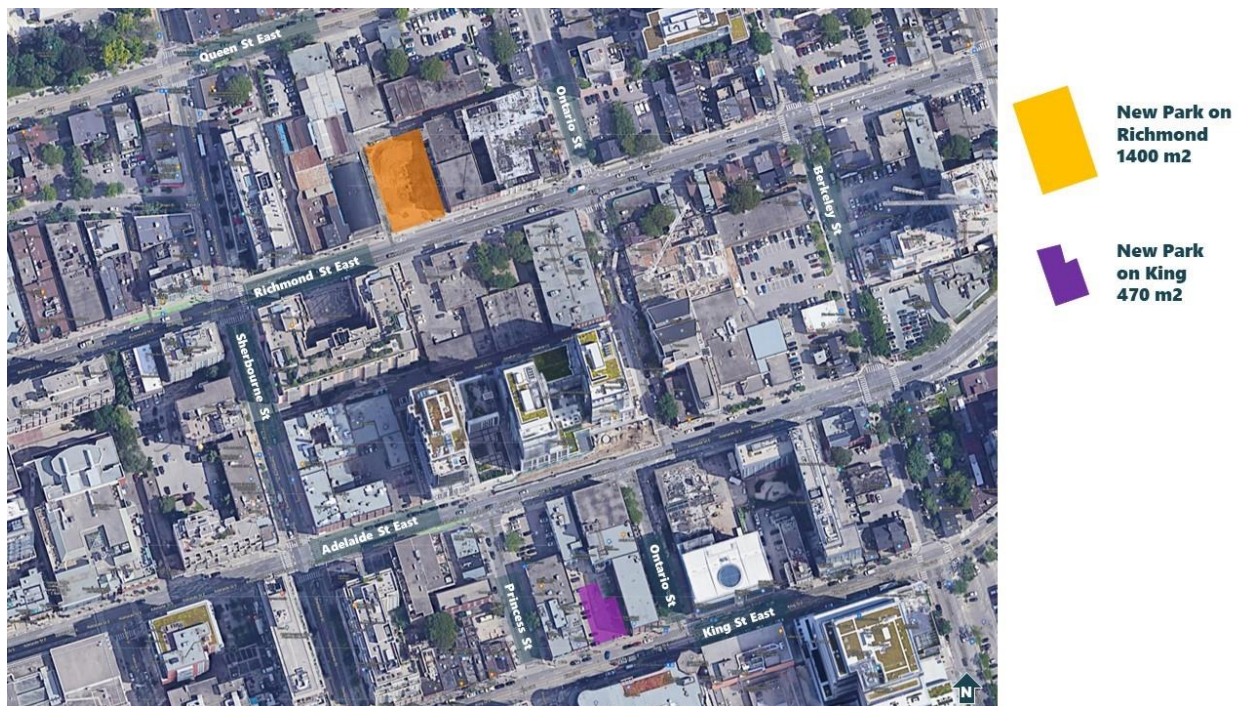
# Project Background

Two new parks are coming to the Moss Park Neighbourhood as part of mixed-use development projects:

- New Park on Richmond Street East: this park will be 1400 m<sup>2</sup> (about the size of a hockey rink), and will be located on the north side of Richmond Street East, west of Ontario Street. This park is being built as part of a development agreement at 261 Queen St. E.
- New Park on King Street East: this park will be 470 m<sup>2</sup> (about the size of a tennis court), and will be located on the north side of King Street East, west of Ontario Street. This park is being built as part of a development agreement at 254-260 King St. E.

Site Considerations include:

- Indigenous Placekeeping (an approach to design that focuses on Indigenous histories and futures while connecting ecological, historical and cultural relationships to a place) will be incorporated into the design of both parks.
- A dog off-leash area will not be included due to the parks' limited size.
- Both are small urban parks and cannot fit large sport features.
- Drinking fountains are planned to be included in both parks.



## Youth Workshop Overview

Youth are an important group of future park users. To ensure the park design considers the needs and preferences of local youth, two in-person youth workshops were held with local City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation-led youth groups. Participants ranged in age from approximately 10 to 16. Sessions included:

- Friday July 8, 2022: City of Toronto Youth Group at John Innes Community Recreation Centre (~10 participants)

- Wednesday June 29, 2022: City of Toronto Youth Group at Canoe Landing Community Centre (~15 participants)

Each workshop lasted approximately 1 hour and was hosted in-person at a nearby City of Toronto Community Recreation Centre. Project Staff facilitated the workshops, with assistance from Youth Outreach Workers. The workshop included:

- **Introductions and Warm Up:** To start each session, City Staff Members introduces the project and asked participants warm-up questions about their experiences and preferences in parks.
- **Park Visioning Boards:** Youth groups were divided into smaller groups of 4 – 8 to create a visioning board for each park. Each group was provided with a set of "Park Feeling" cards (illustrating the potential character of a park) and a set of "Park Features" cards (illustrating potential features to include in the new parks). These are available in Appendix A. Groups were tasked with prioritizing up to three "Feelings" for each park to share their vision for the park's character. They were then tasked with selecting the top "Features" to include in each park. Participants could add detailed notes and suggestions not included in the card sets provided using sticky notes.

## Summary of Feedback

The following provides a summary of top takeaways from the workshops. A more detailed summary of feedback is available in Appendix C.

### Key Takeaways for both Parks:

- Youth feel comfortable in parks that are popular, that provide spaces to be with friends, and that provide spaces to play and be active.
  - Providing social space (through varied and plentiful seating) is critical for both spaces.
  - It is important to provide spaces and activities for people of all ages in the park. This allows:
    - Siblings of different ages to visit the park together, while both having fun (especially when older siblings are watching younger siblings).
    - For older kids or teens to feel like they can spend time and play in sections of the park that are "for them", without feeling like they are taking away play space from younger park users.
- Youth feel comfortable in clean parks, free of litter.

### New Park on King St East

#### Top Takeaways:

- Making the King St East park a place to be **social** was a priority for every group's visioning board. To accomplish this, youth suggested providing a wide range of seating types (group and solo seating, places to eat, protections from rain and sun) and separate seating areas so different groups can be in the park at once.
- Most youth suggested the park also be **playful or whimsical**. To accomplish this, youth suggested providing playground equipment (swings were most popular) with rubber surfacing, games tables (chess was most popular) with bins for playing pieces, colourful and artistic park features (e.g. shade structures and seating), decorative fountains, colourful plantings, and art (both whimsical sculptures and beautiful, historic mural were suggested). Youth understood this park was smaller and could not fit as many playful/whimsical elements as the larger park in Richmond St East.

- Some youth valued open green space or open space for events, though this was a lower priority for the park. Some suggested using fake turf since grass would not survive due to heavy pedestrian traffic. Some suggested open space, or flexible event space provide activity options in all seasons.
- To keep youth in the park, include a drinking fountain/ bottle filler and places they can charge their phones (e.g. by games tables or seating areas).

## New Park on Richmond St East

### Top Takeaways:

- Most youth agreed that the larger park on Richmond St East should prioritize space for **events, play, and social gatherings**, with different areas of the park dedicated to different uses.
  - To accomplish a playful space, youth suggested including unique and whimsical play equipment. Some suggested the equipment be large enough for adults to play as well. The most important pieces of play equipment to include are swings, climbing features (structure or climbing wall), slides of all sizes, and monkey bars. Half of youth groups also suggested including fitness equipment, while another group suggested inclusion of a smaller multi-sport court.
  - As with the park on King St East, to accomplish a social space, youth suggested providing plentiful and varied seating that includes places to eat, shelter from rain and sun, and both group and individual seating areas. Youth also suggested providing a number of different seating areas to facilitate multiple groups using the park at one time.
    - Some seating areas could also be provided in quieter, calmer, greener settings, away from active spaces.
  - Youth wanted event space for music, movies, festivals, markets and other free events. Some youth suggested including shade over event space, while others suggested including a small stage with seating around it.
- Most youth envisioned **trees and plantings** (including colourful flowers) as an important part of this larger park, recognising that greenery can boost moods, provide shade, and help provide a beautiful community setting people want to spend time in.
  - Many youth valued open spaces that they could see into. Greenery and plantings should not obstruct views through the park or take away open space for play (e.g. locate greenery in planters along the perimeter of the park instead of the middle).
- To keep youth in the park, include a drinking fountain/ bottle filler, places they can charge their phones (e.g. by games tables or seating areas), lights, washrooms, and beautiful art to look at (e.g. a wall mural like in David Crombie Park, or an interactive "Welcome to the Moss Park Neighbourhood" wall).

**Appendix A:**  
**Park Feeling and Park Feature Visioning Board Card Options**

**Blue cards represent potential park "character" or "feel".**

**Green cards represent potential park features.**



**Eventful:** A space for small, local, outdoor events (e.g. community markets or performances)

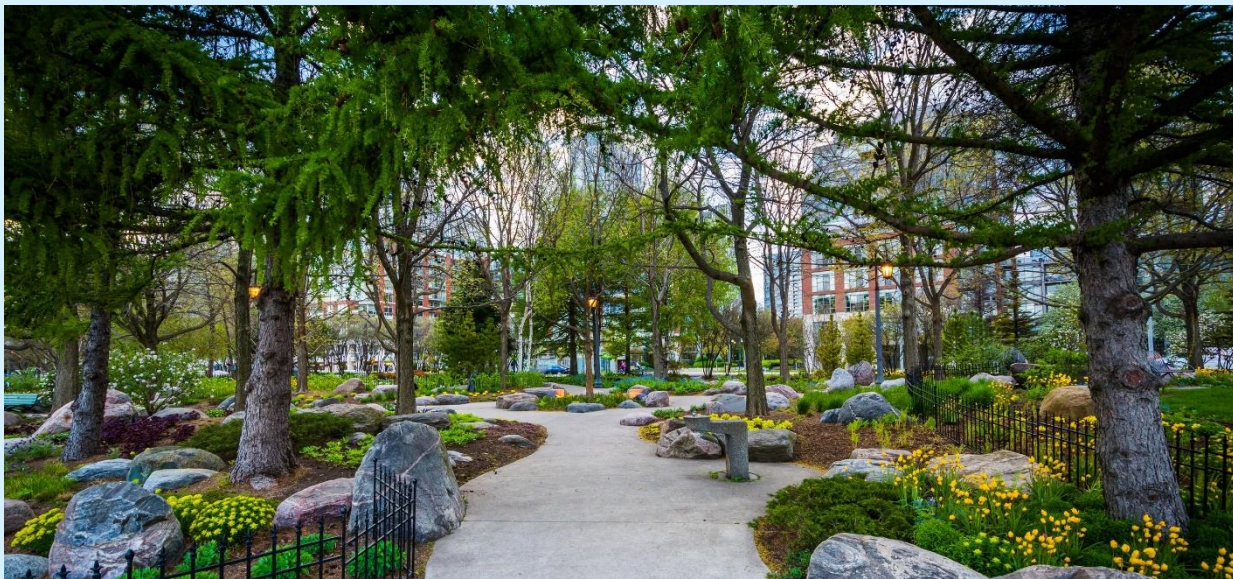


**Flexible:** A space that can change based on community need





**Green:** Lush with trees and plantings



**Historic:** A place to recognize & celebrate local heritage, including Indigenous Placekeeping





**Whimsical:** Colourful, fun, and unexpected



**Social:** A space for meeting and gathering





**Active:** A place to exercise



**Calm:** A place to sit, linger, and relax





**Playful:** A place for people of all ages to play and be together





# Playground Equipment

(what type?)



# Fitness Equipment





## Flexible Event Space (market/performance)



## Shade Structure





## Games Tables (pingpong, chess, mancala)



## Places to Eat





## Seating



## Trees and Plantings





## **Appendix B:**

### **Activity Board Example**



# New Park on Richmond St East

**Eventful:** A space for small, local, outdoor events (e.g. community markets or performances)



**Green:** Lush with trees and plantings



**Playful:** A place for people of all ages to play and be together



The Feeling



The Features



**Flexible Event Space**  
(market/performance)



Music +  
Festivals  
+  
Markets  
+  
Free things!

**Seating**



For groups  
&  
to be  
alone.

**Shade Structure**

**Places to Eat**



Table  
w/ shade  
beside  
plants + greenery

**Trees and Plantings**



Big + Shady  
Trees  
(Small trees are  
disappointing)

Flowers  
Colourful!  
Red!

**Playground Equipment**  
(what type?)



Climbing  
Structure

Swings!  
(big)  
Big + Shady  
(Climbing?)

Climbing  
Wade!

Water  
fountain

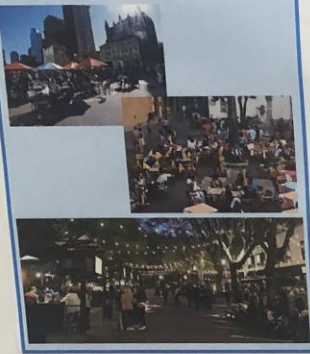
Washrooms  
↳ underground?

New Park on Richmond St East



# New Park on King St East

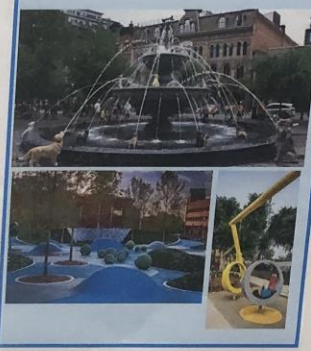
**Social:** A space for meeting and gathering



**Historic:** A place to recognize & celebrate local heritage, including Indigenous Placekeeping



**Whimsical:** Colourful, fun, and unexpected



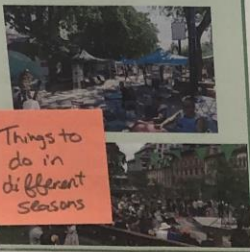
The Feeling



The Features



**Flexible Event Space**  
(market/performance)

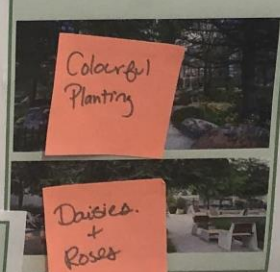


Things to do in different seasons

Winter:  
Play in snow

Theme =  
Seasons

**Trees and Plantings**



Colourful  
Planting

Daisies +  
Roses

**Places to Eat**



Whimsical  
Art!  
Large small things  
that bring things

Murals  
(Historic)

**Seating**



Group  
Seating  
3+

**Shade Structure**



Colourful  
+ Fun!

New Park on King St East



## Appendix C: Detailed Feedback

### General Park Feedback (Warm Up)

What is your favourite thing to do in parks?

- Swings (multiple)
- Seesaw (multiple)
- Basketball (multiple)
- Soccer (multiple)
- Hanging out and chatting with friends on benches (multiple)
- Playing Tag/Manhunt (multiple)
- Eating
- Trampoline

What makes you want to spend time in a park? What helps you feel comfortable, welcome, happy and safe in parks?

- Open space to run around
- The chance to be with friends
- Space to play sports/ activities
- When there are a variety fun activities for all ages available
  - So you can bring younger siblings to the park and still enjoy yourself
- Easy to get to
- The park is neat/ tidy
- The park is free from conflict/ arguing
- There are many people there/ it is a popular place to spend time
- There is a theme to the park

Does anything prevent you from spending time in local parks?

- Not wanting to take space away from/ impede on play space for younger kids
- Curfews and parents' rules
- Dirty, messy, or litter-filled parks are unappealing to spend time in
- Other responsibilities/ no time
- They are too far away (location)
- Nearby adults can make youth feel uncomfortable (e.g. adults watching youth, or adults being inappropriate or predatory around youth)

What do you think about parks in your community?

*(Asked in the workshop with youth at John Innes Community Recreation Centre)*

- Well-built
- Nice art (murals in David Crombie Park)
- They are places to be together and provide a sense of community space
- Balanced and have what we need
- Can have features that are too similar between parks (all slides and swings)
- Older parks are dirty

### Park Visioning

The following provides a summary of all four of the vision boards for each park. Numbers in brackets indicate if an idea or card was included in more than one group's vision board.



## New Park on King St East

### *Feeling of the Park*

- Social (4)
- Playful (2)
- Historic (2)
- Whimsical (2)
- Active
- Green

### *Features of the Park*

- Seating (3)
  - Lots of different types
  - Allows for separate seating areas, so different groups can be in the park at once, and so people can sit in groups or alone
  - Include artistic/themes/architectural seating
- Places to Eat (3)
  - Include a cover over these areas to protect from rain and sun
- Games Tables (2)
  - Chess tables
  - Bins for playing pieces
  - Some youth were hesitant about the tables because playing pieces needed to be brought by the players. Are there alternative games that wouldn't need players to bring pieces to enjoy?
- Trees and Plantings (2)
  - Fake turf (since grass will not survive here) and open green space
  - Medium sized trees and rocks (for landscaping)
  - Colourful plantings
  - Daisies and roses
- Shade Structure (2)
  - Colourful and fun
- Playground Equipment (2)
  - Swings (2)
  - Spinners
  - Monkey bars
  - Junior play equipment
  - Use rubber surfacing (don't use sand or concrete)
- Drinking fountain/ bottle filler
- Charging outlets (e.g. to charge phones)
- Fitness equipment
- Decorative fountains
- Open space
- Winter activities/space to play in the snow
- Flexible event space
  - That provides different things to do in different seasons
- Art
  - Whimsical art (e.g. large sculptures of tiny things, small sculptures of large things)
  - Murals (historic)
- A "seasons" themed park



## New Park on Richmond St East

### Feeling of the Park

- Playful (4)
- Social (3)
- Eventful (3)
- Whimsical
- Calm
- Green
- Flexible

### Features of the Park

- Playground equipment (4)
  - Make it big for adults to play too.
  - Unique and whimsical.
  - Most important to include swings, climbing equipment (structure or wall), slides (both big and small) and monkey bars.
- Shade structure (4)
  - Should also provide shelter from rain.
  - Include over seating areas.
- Places to eat (4)
  - Include shady places to eat (e.g. with umbrellas). (2)
  - Beside plants and greenery.
- Seating (4)
  - Benches.
  - Allows for separate seating areas, so different groups can be in the park at once, and so people can sit in groups or alone. (2)
  - A shady seating/eating area that is relaxing, away from areas for play.
  - Include artistic and architectural seating.
- Drinking fountain/bottle filler (3)
- Flexible event space (3)
  - Shade over the event space.
  - For music (2), movies, festivals, markets and free events.
  - Small stage (with seating around it).
- Trees and Plantings (3)
  - Good for the environment and to improve peoples' mood.
  - Flowers that are protected .
  - Big and shady trees (small trees are disappointing).
  - Colourful flowers (red!).
  - Along the perimeter of the park.
  - Planters.
- Fitness equipment (2)
- Games tables
  - Chess tables.
- Art
  - Wall Mural (e.g. David Crombie Park).
  - Interactive "Welcome to the Moss Park Neighbourhood" wall.
- Charging outlets (e.g. to charge phones).
- Lights.



- Multi-sport court that is fenced-off if required (e.g. for basketball, soccer, and other sports).
- Washrooms (Underground).
- Different areas for different types of uses (e.g. back is a stage/ event space, one area is a play space, and one area is a social and eating space).