

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

# Anniversary Park Improvements

## Phase 1: Building a Vision Vision, Design Principles and Survey Summary Report

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## Introduction

The City has engaged the local community to develop a new park vision for Anniversary Park, located at 410 Parliament Street, on a triangular shaped parcel at the intersection of Gerrard Street East and Parliament Street. The objectives of the new design are to enhance the park infrastructure and amenities in order to support its current and future use, and to improve park accessibility and safety.

### Phase 1: Building a Vision

The purpose of this phase is to create a new community-led vision that will serve the project team as they prepare design options for the park. The following sections provide the draft vision and design principles for the park improvements, and a summary of what we heard through the online survey. To learn more about the outcomes of the in-person engagement activities in Phase 1 including the community stakeholder workshop and pop-up at Yonge Street Mission, visit the project webpage: [toronto.ca/AnniversaryPark](https://toronto.ca/AnniversaryPark).

## How We Reached People

The community was informed of engagement activities through print and social media:

### Print Media

#### Community Flyers

Flyers advertising the project webpage and online survey were shared with organizations and local businesses within 500m of Anniversary Park.

#### Signage On-Site

Notice boards placed near the park displayed information about the project, details about the online survey, and how to access additional information on the project webpage.

### Digital Media

#### Project Webpage

A webpage ([toronto.ca/AnniversaryPark](https://toronto.ca/AnniversaryPark)) was set up to act as a communications portal to inform the public about the park improvement project. The webpage hosts all up to date information regarding the project.

#### Social Media and Digital Ads

The City of Toronto used its Facebook and Instagram accounts to promote the online survey through paid advertisements from April 6 to April 23.



## What We Heard – A New Vision for Anniversary Park

The project team created a vision for the future Anniversary Park that builds on all of the input, shared experiences, and learnings gathered from the local community in Phase 1 engagement. The following vision statement and design principles were developed based on the input received from community members and City Staff during the visioning phase.

### Vision Statement

***"Anniversary Park will be a green and calm urban oasis that supports community safety and comfort. It will be a welcoming place for people of different backgrounds, ages, and interests to meet and spend time, creating a vibrant new entrance to the Cabbagetown neighbourhood."***

### Design Principles

#### Community Safety and Belonging

Support community safety, comfort and accessibility for all ages and abilities as a top priority.

#### Balance space for socializing and relaxation

Enhance amenity options, while balancing space for socializing and relaxation.

#### Champion resilient approaches

Enhance green spaces through plantings that provide shade and environmental benefits.

#### Integrate with neighbourhood

Improve entrances and park edges, creating a design that connects with surrounding areas and feels less isolated.

***Vision shapes the proposed improvements***

**Phase 2: Exploring Options** will work off the outcomes of Phase 1 to develop two to three design options for the proposed improvements. These will be presented to the community for feedback at a later date. Stay tuned for updates.

## Online Survey

120

Respondents

**120 people** responded to an online survey between April 6 to April 23, 2023 providing feedback to inform the park vision, character, and program.

The full results can be found in Appendix A.

## Anniversary Park Today

- When asked what respondents **liked** about the existing park:
  - Popular responses included:
    - The nature and green space (68%)
    - The central water fountain feature (56%)
    - The boulder seating (33%)
    - The sightlines and visibility from the street (29%)
  - Some of the **additional responses** included:
    - "The old wrought iron fencing."
    - "The trees need to be saved."
    - "The only place to sit in the immediate area."
- When asked what respondents **disliked** about the existing park:
  - Popular responses included:
    - The fence(s) surrounding the area (40%)
    - The boulder seating (28%)
    - The sightlines and visibility from the street (23%)
  - Some of the **additional responses** included:
    - "It's very dangerous as a pedestrian to get to the library with the two roads that surround this park."
    - "Low maintenance and cleaning of the park."
    - "Surrounded by traffic, run-down feel."
    - "Right now the park is mainly used by people to drink and shout at each other during the day. It's not much used in other ways, perhaps because of this this."
    - "Boulder seating is not comfortable and does not have back support."
    - "Lack of native species." "While I like having a fountain, I dislike how this one looks. Would love to see something prettier like the fountain at Berczy Park."
    - "Don't like the water fountain but like the idea of having water."
    - "It's wildly underutilized by the BIA - it is a great opportunity for a holiday lights display, pop up food vendors, cafe tables + lights in the summer in

the empty lawn space on the west side, small weekend events where it would be easy to close down the slip street to accommodate a crowd, etc. It feels like it's not a part of the neighbourhood, there were fake parks dropped in on the literal street between Carlton and Winchester last summer instead of reimagining Anniversary park.

- "The park doesn't feel like a quality social space (safe and welcoming); feels too much like a traffic island, and doesn't play up heritage enough, it should encapsulate the late 19thC vibe of Cabbagetown."
- "Lack of washroom, lack of play structure for kids to play."
- "The park is useless and unsafe as it is, due to being jammed into a tiny triangle in the middle of busy traffic. Eliminating the slip lane on the north side of the park and connecting it to the sidewalk and NW corner of Parliament/Gerrard is essential to making the park welcoming and useful."

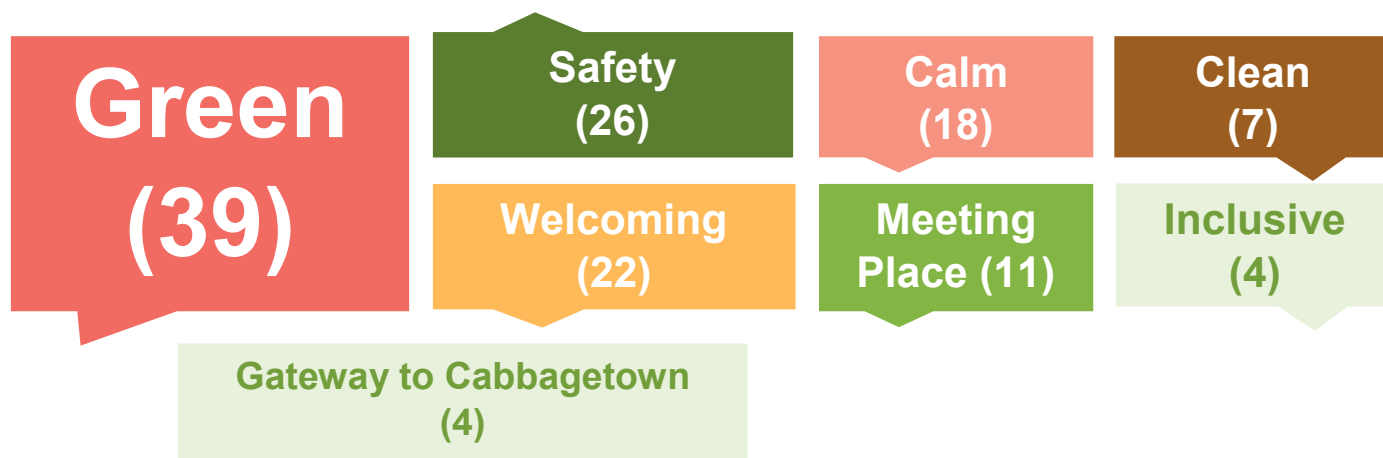
Feedback received regarding a washroom and improvements to Gerrard Street East has been noted and will be shared with the appropriate City Staff and will remain **outside the scope of the park design and construction project**.

### Visioning: Anniversary Park

- When asked who respondents would visit the future park with:
  - Popular responses included:
    - Alone (58%)
    - Spouse (38%)
    - Friends (32%)
  - Some of the additional responses included:
    - "Coworkers because I work in the area and I would be inclined to sit there during lunch."
    - "Bike tour stop."
- When asked what mode of travel respondents would use to visit the future park:
  - Popular responses included:
    - Walking (88%)
    - Bicycle (31%)
    - Public transportation (20%)

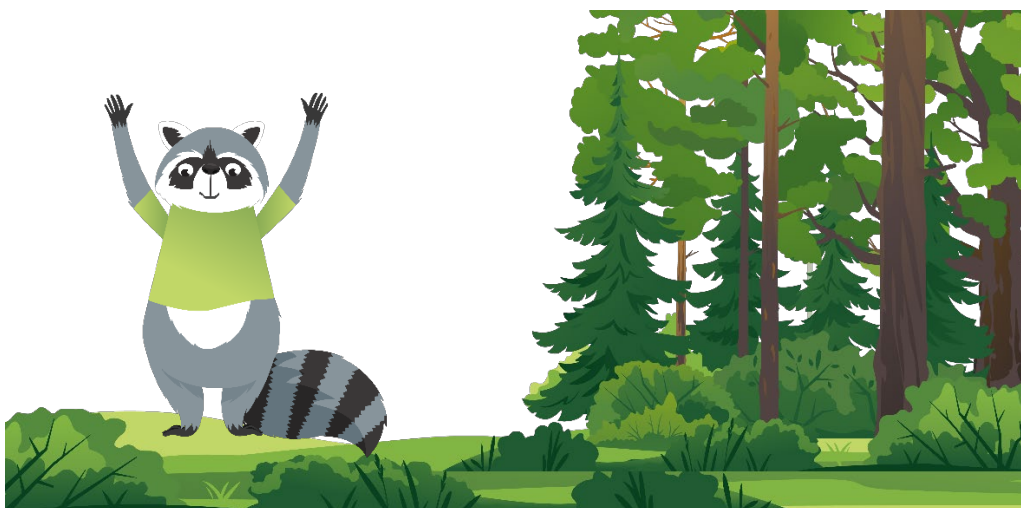
## Park Vision

Participants were asked to share words that reflect their **vision** for the future Anniversary Park. The words provided have been used to assemble a vision shared by community members. The following words were the most frequently used words with the total number of responses shown in brackets:



## Park Character

- **Park character** ranked as the top three choices included:
  1. **A Green Place:** Lush with trees and plantings to connect people with nature, contributing to physical and mental wellbeing (33%)



2. **A Calm Place:** A place to sit, linger, eat lunch and relax (21%)
3. **A Meeting Place :** A space for meeting and gathering (e.g., different seating opportunities) (17%)

## Park Activities

- **Park activities** ranked as the top five choices included:
  1. Spending time alone (17%)
  2. Traveling through the park (16%)
  3. Spending time with others (16%)
  4. Enjoying and observing activities on the street (15%)
  5. Relaxing in a shaded seating area (15%)
- Less popular responses included:
  6. Attending community events (e.g., pop up markets, installations or performances) (11%)
  7. Eating at a table or picnic area (e.g., picnic tables) (6%)
  8. Walking a pet (5%)
  9. Playing at a game table (1%)

## Additional Feedback

Participants were asked if they had additional ideas for creating a welcoming and accessible new park design at Anniversary Park. The following major themes emerged in the responses of community members with the total number of thoughts per theme shown in brackets:

- Green Space (16)
- Park Maintenance (8)
- Water Feature (7)
- Seating (5)
- Accessibility and Inclusivity (3)
- General Park Design (3)
- Safety (2)
- Lighting (1)
- Event Space (1)
- History and Education (1)

Responses by theme can be found in Appendix B.

## Who did we hear from?

Participants were asked to provide demographic information. This helps the City better understand who participated and whether particular groups in the community were missed during the engagement process. A summary of the findings can be found in Appendix A.



## Next Steps

The feedback received from this phase of community engagement will confirm priorities for the design options. To be notified about upcoming engagements for the new park, visit the project webpage at [toronto.ca/AnniversaryPark](https://toronto.ca/AnniversaryPark) to sign up for e-updates.

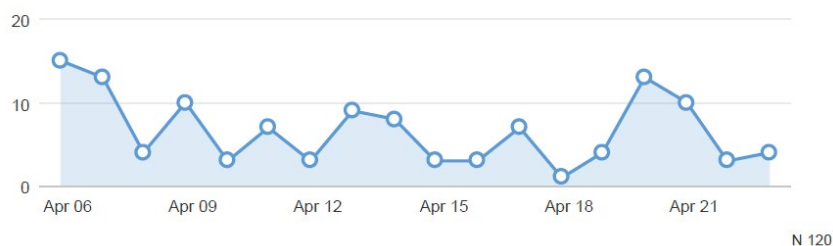


## Appendix A: Quantitative Response Summary

Respondents



Response timeline



### Survey

What do you like about the existing Anniversary Park? Select all that apply.

	Count	% of responses	%
The nature and green space	81	<div></div>	68%
The central water fountain feature	67	<div></div>	56%
The boulder seating	39	<div></div>	33%
The sightlines and visibility from the street	35	<div></div>	29%
The pathway connections	27	<div></div>	23%
The fence surrounding the park	18	<div></div>	15%
None of the above	13	<div></div>	11%
Other:	12	<div></div>	10%







N 120

What do you dislike about the existing Anniversary Park? Select all that apply.

	Count	% of responses	%
The fence surrounding the park	48	<div></div>	40%
Other:	39	<div></div>	33%
The boulder seating	33	<div></div>	28%
The sightlines and visibility from the street	27	<div></div>	23%
The pathway connections	14	<div></div>	12%
The central water fountain feature	13	<div></div>	11%
All of the above	8	<div></div>	7%
The nature and green space	6	<div></div>	5%






N 120

**When visiting the new Anniversary Park, who do you see yourself going with most often? Select all that apply.**

	Count	% of responses	%
Alone	63		58%
Spouse / Partner	41		38%
Friends	35		32%
Child(ren)	21		19%
Pet	17		16%
Other:	10		9%







N 108

**When visiting the new Anniversary Park, what mode of travel do you see yourself using most often? Select all that apply.**

	Count	% of responses	%
Walk	95		88%
Bicycle	34		31%
Public Transportation	22		20%
Mobility Device	4		4%
Other:	3		3%










N 108

**What would you like the character of the new Anniversary Park to be? Rank your top 3 choices from the following options, with 1 being the most important.**

	% of responses	%
A Green Place: Lush with trees and plantings to connect people with nature, contributing to wellbeing		33%
A Calm Place: A place to sit, linger, eat lunch and relax		21%
A Meeting Place: A space for socializing and gathering (e.g., different seating opportunities)		17%
A Sustainable Place: Design that conserves resources and increases plant and animal habitat		12%
A Whimsical Place: Colourful design and winding walking paths		9%
A Historic Place: A place to recognize and celebrate local heritage, including Indigenous Placekeeping		7%

N 108

**What activities do you see yourself doing in the new Anniversary Park? Rank your top 4 choices from the following options, with 1 being the most important.**

	% of responses	%
Spending time alone		17%
Traveling through the park		16%
Spending time with others		16%
Enjoying and observing activities on the street		15%
Relaxing in a shaded seating area		15%
Attending community events (e.g., pop up markets, installations or performances)		11%
Eating at a table or picnic area (e.g. picnic tables, or chairs and tables)		6%
Walking a pet		5%
Playing at a game table (choose one game type):		1%

N 108









**What activities do you see yourself doing in the new Anniversary Park? Rank your top 4 choices from the following options, with 1 being the most important. - Playing at a game table (choose one game type):**

Playing at a game table (choose one game type):	
3	Chess
4	Chess
1	ping pong

N 3







## Demographics

**What is the age of the person filling out this survey?**

	Count	% of responses	%
0 to 4 years old	0		
5 to 12 years old	0		
13 to 18 years old	1		1%
19 to 29 years old	9		8%
30 to 39 years old	26		25%
40 to 55 years old	37		35%
56 to 64 years old	18		17%
65 to 74 years old	10		9%
75 years old or above	3		3%
Prefer not to answer	2		2%








N 106

**Gender identity is the gender that people identify with or how they perceive themselves, which may be different from their birth-assigned sex. What best describes the gender of the person filling out this survey?**

	Count	% of responses	%
Woman	49		46%
Man	40		38%
Prefer not to answer	11		10%
Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous)	6		6%
Not listed, please describe	3		3%
Trans man	1		1%
Trans woman	0		
Two-Spirit	0		












N 106

**Sexual orientation describes a person's emotional, physical, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to other people. What best describes the sexual orientation of the person filling out this survey?**

	Count	% of responses	%
Heterosexual or straight	47		44%
Prefer not to answer	20		19%
Gay	18		17%
Bisexual	11		10%
Queer	11		10%
Lesbian	2		2%
Not listed, please describe	2		2%
Two-Spirit	0		
Don't know	0		




N 106

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 the person filling out this survey? Select all that apply.

	Count	% of responses	%
White (e.g. English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian)	57		54%
Prefer not to answer	14		13%
South Asian or Indo-Caribbean (e.g. Indian, Indo- Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)	7		7%
Other, please describe	7		7%
East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)	6		6%
Southeast Asian (e.g. Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese)	5		5%
Black (e.g. African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)	4		4%
More than one race category or mixed race	4		4%
Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian (e.g. Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)	3		3%
First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit or Métis	3		3%
Latin American (e.g. Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)	2		2%





N 106

Indigenous people from Canada identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, Métis, Aboriginal, Native or Indian. Does the person filling out this survey identify as Indigenous to Canada?

	Count	% of responses	%
Yes	3		3%
No	87		82%
Prefer not to answer	16		15%





N 106

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 the person filling out this survey identify as a person with a disability?

	Count	% of responses	%
Yes	18		17%
No	74		70%
Don't know	2		2%
Prefer not to answer	12		11%







N 106

### Excluding yourself, does anyone in your household identify as a person with a disability?

	Count	% of responses	%
Yes	16		15%
No	76		72%
Don't know	5		5%
Prefer not to answer	9		8%

N 106

### What best describes your current housing situation?

	Count	% of responses	%
Home owner	56		53%
Renting	37		35%
Permanently living with parent(s) or other family member(s)	2		2%
Temporarily staying with others (no fixed address)	1		1%
Unhoused (staying outside, in a shelter, in a 24-hour respite)	1		1%
Prefer not to answer	9		8%
Not listed, please describe	0		

N 106

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

	Count	% of responses	%
I have access to private outdoor space like a yard	47		44%
I have access to semi-private/shared outdoor space	18		17%
I only have access to public spaces like parks (I do not have access to private or semi-private outdoor space)	36		34%
Prefer not to answer	5		5%

N 106

## Appendix B: Additional Ideas

**Question:** Do you have any additional ideas for creating a welcoming and accessible new park design at Anniversary Park?

### Responses by popular theme:

- Green Space (16)
  - It should be greened and pollinator friendly. As a centre point, it should offer navigational aids like map columns, and a place for walking tours.
  - Possible installing a barbeque/wood oven, have picnic tables with open air concept (where people can bring umbrellas if they want shade or trees provide shade).
  - Design should open up Cabbagetown and be a green spot that continues on Parliament Street.
  - Please plant more trees and stop destroying public green spaces.
  - Close north side lane to motor vehicles. Trees that will grow big!
  - Lots of greenery, plantings, natural environment
  - Anniversary Park is an essential traffic circle. It cannot function as a recreational park. Please just make it ornamental and landscaped.
  - No more central fountain, more green space, use trees and hedges to fence it in and beautify it, benches and chess tables.
  - Please grow native clematis up lights or fences if retained. It would be wonderful to have a blooming native flower display that people can enjoy as they walk/bike/drive eastbound on Gerrard Street East. A water collections would be great to give a sense of clean space.
  - Replace the existing dense trees with more suitable trees with taller and more open canopy. Existing Norway Maples are oppressive.
  - Trees lots of them.
  - Create gardens that educate about the environment.
  - It could be a place to pilot new ideas, both as a green space and how it functions as a public space. An example for other neighbourhoods of what a small green space can be. I like the rain garden idea.
  - Make it a green oasis, lots of trees, expand it, keep the fountain but make it work this time!
  - Green it up – plants/trees over concrete/brick/steel.
  - Large shade trees.
- Park Maintenance (8)
  - No garbage in the park.
  - Needs to be clean.
  - A sign DO NOT LITTER.
  - Regularly cleaned and landscaped.
  - Make sure the grass cutting is good for maintenance crews.
  - Maintain the park properly!



- More street light, trash and recycling, cameras for suspicious activity, happy, bright colours. Outdoor permanent tall sculptural street art and traffic car barricades for safety.
- Water Feature (7)
  - Make the fountain smaller and surround it with raised garden plots.
  - Be sure to keep the fountain and water feature.
  - Please keep the fountain.
  - Ornate/grand water feature.
  - Updated water feature.
  - Triple water fountain for upright people, wheelchair/younger users and dogs at the bottom. I would really enjoy the fountain if you can keep it operational.
  - Misting station for kids like at St. James Park.
- Seating (5)
  - Picnic tables instead of boulder seating.
  - Seating for a streetcar stop.
  - Potentially adding a grassy bowl type seating area and a small naturally designed stage. This can be used a multitude of ways (musical acts, community groups, camps, pop-ups, etc.).
  - The space is very small and the central fountain, despite its uniqueness, is occupying a large space that could be repurposed for more seating and greenery. Shaded seating areas are a great idea especially to accommodate older populations living in Regent Park. This space is too small for pet-walking, people would rather go to Regent Park for a dog park.
  - Real benches would be great, as well as extending the use of the space to the full triangular strip of land (rather than just the fountain).
- Accessibility and Inclusivity (2)
  - A way to honour all different ethnicities and cultures of everyone in the area including 2SLGBTBQ+ peoples.
  - Ensuring that Indigenous people have consultation and lead the direction of their parkette.
- General Park Design (3)
  - Integrate the TTC stop and surrounding public buildings in the design because the park is small and often a transitory space. It needs to be distinct and have attractive or unique anchor features that will invite people to stop and check it out instead of just walking by. It definitely needs more flowers and have features that engage people in the winter because being so small, it often looks barren in the winter.
  - Viewing platform to see Yonge/Gerrard skyline.
  - Have a coffee truck or patio on site. Easier access through traffic to the island nature of the park.
- Safety (2)
  - Ensuring public safety (concern about drug use/homeless people).
  - The Parliament and Gerrard intersection is unsafe, noisy, trafficky, and gray with concrete and blacktop. The park should be a green and natural space, a well

maintained place of respite connected on the north perimeter to the sidewalk, eliminating the slip lane.

- Lighting (1)
  - Decent lighting at a lower level so as not to disturb neighbours.
- Event Space (1)
  - Allow space for events (e.g., small wedding).
- History and Education (1)
  - Naming trees and plants for educational purposes.