

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

New Park at Spadina Pier

In-Person Pop-Up Summary Report

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Introduction

A new 6,500 m² (about the size of two soccer fields) park is coming to Spadina Pier, located at 539 Queens Quay West in the Bathurst Quay neighbourhood. The improvements are unfolding in two stages, including an interim park with a range of public uses and programming (planned to open in 2025), followed by the development of a long-term plan for a permanent waterfront park.

Overview

The in-person pop-up took place from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on September 23, 2023. It was scheduled to coincide with Nuit Blanche Toronto, an annual all-night celebration of contemporary art. Located at the northeast corner of Spadina Pier, the pop-up was setup next to a Nuit Blanche installation that projected visuals onto the Canada Malting Silos across from the Portland Slip. Over the course of the evening, at least 150 people of various ages and backgrounds attended the pop-up. City staff members were present to discuss the project and to gather ideas and feedback on potential park uses and programming opportunities.

The pop-up featured large information boards that presented a project overview, the project timeline, the site's history and size, as well as instructions for how to provide feedback.

Feedback opportunities included:

- a postcard writing activity in which participants were invited to share a message from the future about the activities they enjoyed doing at the park;
- a voting activity in which participants used popsicle sticks to indicate their preference for four suggested interim park uses; and
- suggesting another interim use or idea by writing it on a post-it note and then sticking it on a large board.



From left to right: The pop-up site looking southwest toward the Canada Malting Silos, and the pop-up site looking northeast toward the CN Tower.

How We Reached People

The community was informed of the engagement activity through the following digital media:

Project Webpage

A webpage (toronto.ca/SpadinaPier) was created to serve as a communications portal to inform the public about the new park project. The webpage hosts up-to-date information regarding the project, including a project timeline.

Social Media

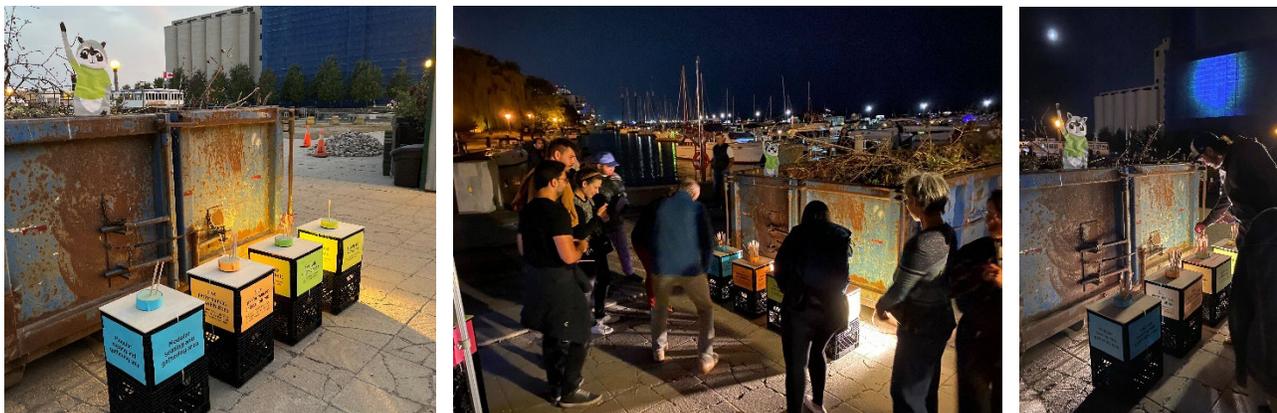
The City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry, and Recreation division used its Instagram account to post stories promoting the pop-up over the course of the evening.

The evening's Nuit Blanche installation was also broadly promoted across multiple City and third party platforms, thus helping to ensure a robust and engaged audience for the in-person pop-up.

What We Heard

Through multiple activities and conversations with participants, City staff members heard a desire for a variety of interim and long-term park uses and amenities, including several recurring themes. When participants were asked to indicate their preference for any of four suggested interim park uses using popsicles sticks, festivals and markets was the most popular use (61), followed by live performances and exhibits (45), sports and recreation (27), and modular seating and gathering areas (16). In total, participants cast 149 votes.





From left to right: Voting stations constructed from milk crates and labeled with brightly coloured paper, a group of participants examining the options, and a father casting his vote at one of the stations.

In total, participants left 48 postcards and 50 post-it notes on display. Postcards asked participants to imagine they were on the redesigned pier in the future and complete the following sentence:

“Can’t believe this is what Spadina Pier used to look like! Glad it’s changed, because today on the pier I enjoyed....”

The most frequent ideas shared on postcards or post-it notes were:

- Food and drink options (14) such as:
 - Coffee shop (4)
 - Food trucks (2)
 - Ice cream shop (2)
- Plantings (13) such as:
 - Gardens (8) including a community garden (2)
 - Trees (5)
 - Flowers (5)
- Art exhibits, installations, or spaces (7)
- Outdoor movies and movie nights (7)
- Farmers’ markets (6)
- Green space (6)
- Live performances (5) including music (4)
- Arts and crafts markets (4) including x-mas markets (2)
- Gathering spaces (4)
- Picnic areas or tables (4)
- Bonfire or fire pit (4)
- Free wifi (4)



Other suggestions included providing different seating options, shade structures, swings, a boardwalk, and a water feature such as a fountain or waterfall. All responses can be found in the appendix.



From left to right: Postcards displayed on a wire frame, two friends clipping their postcards to a wire frame, and a mother and son reading comments left on post-it notes stuck to a large board.

Next Steps

The feedback received at the community pop-up will help inform the programming that will take place at Spadina Pier once base park construction is complete.

To be notified about upcoming engagement opportunities for the new park, visit the project webpage at toronto.ca/SpadinaPier.

Appendix

Postcards asked participants to imagine they were on the redesigned pier in the future and complete the following sentence:

“Can’t believe this is what Spadina Pier used to look like! Glad it’s changed, because today on the pier I enjoyed....”

Responses written on postcards:

- A fountain!!!
- Open community spaces for study dates, get togethers and for fun community gatherings! Including rooftop nature study spots, food, cafes, wifi, etc.
- Off leash dog area
- A place for a picnic – tables/grassy area
- An outdoor play (like “Shakespeare in the park”)
- A food festival
- Picnic!!
- Pop-up activities for the season (e.g. In winter, smores, cider and x-mas market)
- Live music!
- Movie night!
- A community garden
- Picnics with my kids
- Movie nights
- Nuit Blanche installations
- Playground
- Walking along the water with friends!
- Artwork to support Ukraine to end the war. Many countries do this
- Green space and gathering spaces
- Running
- Hearing live music with friends and dogs by the water
- More benches facing the lake and trees
- A closer view of the lake
- Free wifi and more Starbucks
- Hanging out with friends and watching movies
- Activity by day and theatre by night
- Sitting above a below grade art space
- The art installations and farmers market showcasing Toronto’s multicultural composition
- Watching fishes in fresh water
- Biking on the amazing bike paths
- Watch the unique flora and fauna
- Flowers
- Elephants
- Bubble tea
- Interactive art or stamp stations for collecting (touristy!)

- Trees and beaches and flowers
- Ice cream
- Boat cruises to still be able to exist so people are able to enjoy a beautiful cruise in the harbour
- Open collaboration spaces, gathering spaces
- Local shops
- Local events
- More trees
- Maybe swing set with a view of CN Tower
- Small water fountain
- Spot for outdoor movies or local events
- Spot for local musicians
- Movie theatre
- Community art exhibit... bonus if it's interactive
- Playground
- A lovely flower garden for pollinators!
- Nature – plants!
- BBQ spot/grills
- Bonfire spot
- Fishing
- Farmers/flower seasonal market
- Respect the land, pick up your garbage, honour the beauty of our waterfront?
- Fishing
- Farmers markets

Ideas for the new park written on post-it notes:

- Public park and rec area!!!
- Pools heated by solar panels
- Bonfire pits
- Concert stages powered by clean energy batteries
- Farmers and art markets
- Conservatory – even good in winter
- More farmers markets showcasing local producers/growers
- Surf skateboard pumping course (closest is in Ajax!)
- Book fairs
- Swings
- Waterfall
- Green space
- Extend music garden
- Animal centre
- Smores and firepit in the winter
- X-mas market

- Free wifi!
- Swings
- Restaurant and coffee shops
- Festivals and markets
- Food truck
- Shade and trees and flowers
- Rec area!
- More green space for play!!
- Old black and white movies
- Outdoor yoga!!
- Large outdoor “picnic” event
- Music festivals and art shows
- More pandas
- Popcorn and drink shops
- I want to see beautiful gardens
- Live performances
- Community garden
- Ball pit
- Splash pad
- Food truck
- Food
- Animal rehabilitation centre for wild city creatures such as squirrels, birds and fish
- Movies!
- Ice cream shop
- Coffee shop
- Free wifi
- Fire pit rental
- Activities for kids
- Local artists market on weekends
- Outdoor exercise station
- Color and lights
- More urban
- Utilize the parking structure to create some covered/enclosed space
- Build a vertical garden like the one in Zurich and bring lake water into it as a feature
- Overnight camping
- Some covered areas?
- Patios and restaurants!!!
- Create a space to teach kids gardening
- Music Garden daily
- Murals and art
- More seats!
- Dog water station
- Swimming area

- Outdoor public swimming complex like Kastrup Sobad in Copenhagen
- Green space with lots of trees or something similar to Trillium Park
- Farmers market!
- Board walk look out point like being down at Peggy's Cove or in Alberta
- Outdoor amphitheatre