

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

70 Croatia Street Park

Phase 1: Towards a Vision

Thought Exchange Summary Report

February 2024



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Introduction

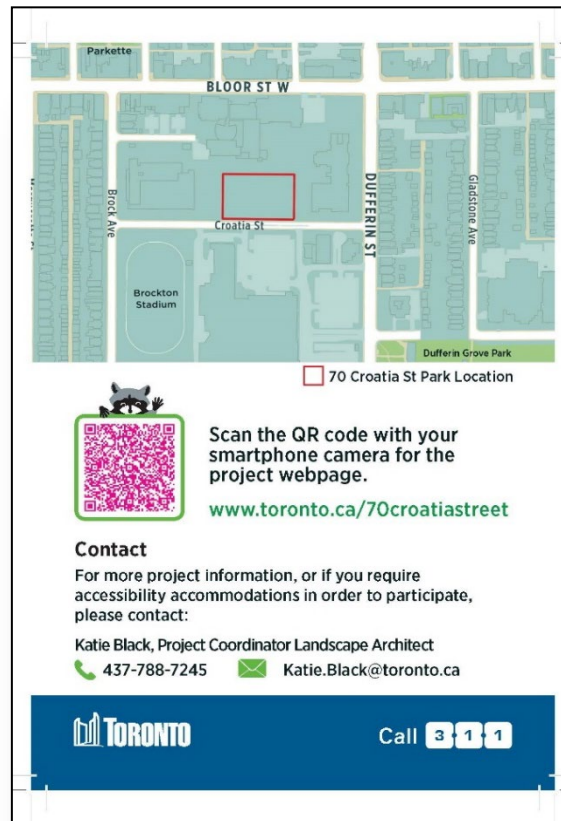
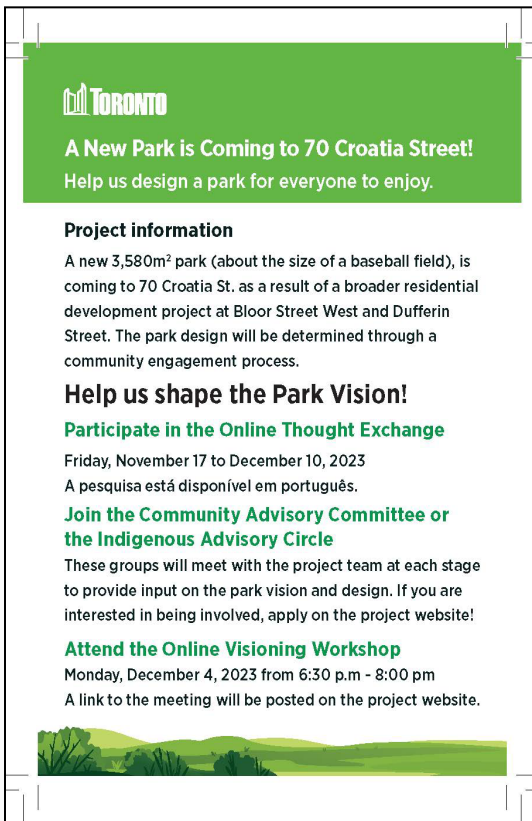
The City of Toronto is engaging the community to develop the vision for the new 3,580 m² park (about the size of a baseball field) coming to 70 Croatia Street.

This new park is a result of a broader residential development project at Bloor Street West and Dufferin Street. The park will be located on Croatia Street and will be bordered by a residential development to the north, a new public street to the west, and a new private street to the east.

How We Reached People

Community Mail Outs (Postcards)

6,100 postcards advertising the project webpage, online conversation, community popups, and how to join the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) were delivered to all addresses in the neighbourhood within 500 meters of the park site. The postcard included specific dates and locations of engagement activities:



Digital Flyer

A digital flyer was circulated to community groups and the local Councillor's Office for additional distribution.

Social Media and Digital Ads

The City of Toronto used its Facebook and Instagram accounts to promote the engagement activities through paid advertisements and organic posts for two weeks.

Thought Exchange (Online Conversation) Summary

Overview

Thought Exchange is a tool for hosting asynchronous conversations online. It asks participants to share thoughts related to a single open-ended question and then prompts them to rate the thoughts of others, creating a dialogue that leads to a deeper understanding of overall community priorities.

From November 17th to December 10th, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted an interactive Thought Exchange activity so that community members could help shape the vision for the new park at 70 Croatia Street.

208

Respondents

208 people provided their comments, thoughts, and preferences to inform the park's vision, character, and amenities and features. In total, we received **176 Thoughts** and **4,336 Ratings**. The full summary of the results is available in [this interactive report](#). Detailed results can also be found in **Appendix A**.

**Note - Everyone participated in the Thought Exchange in English, although the option was available to respond in other languages including Portuguese.*

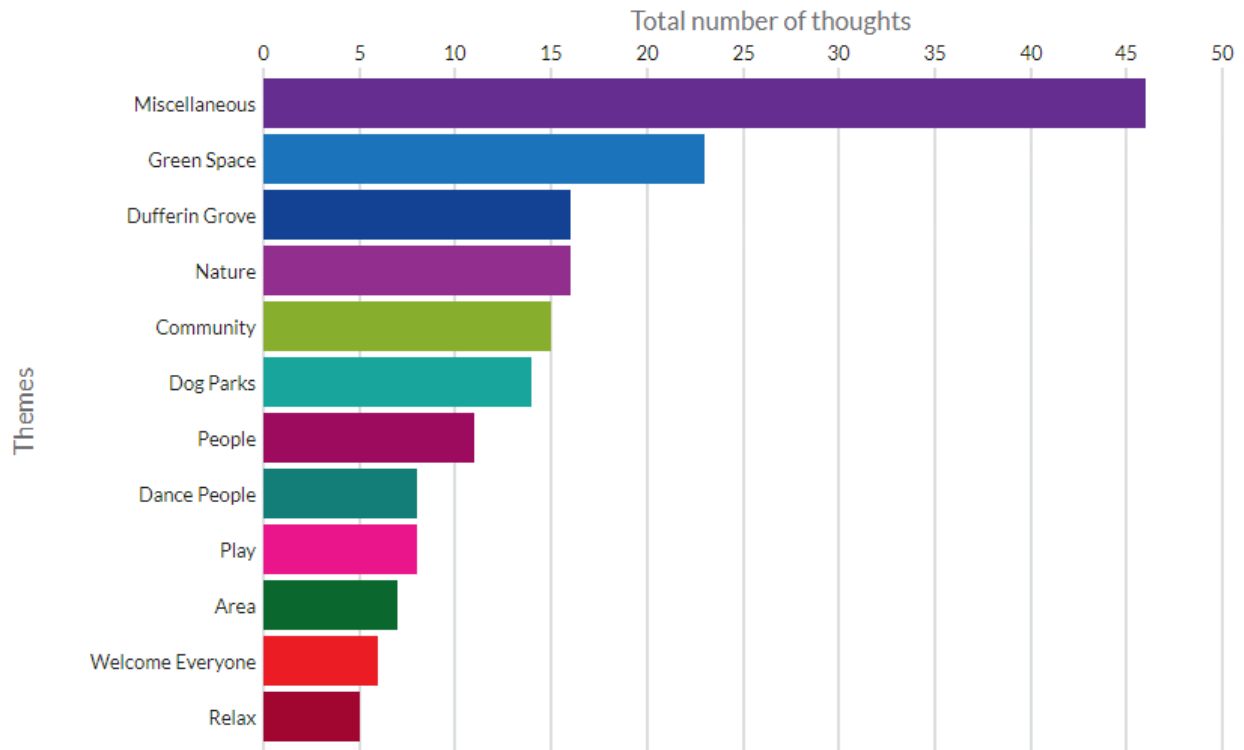
The top five thoughts are listed on the next page. A full list of all thoughts by participants can be found on the online [Thought Exchange report](#).

Top five thoughts: Participants were asked to complete the following statement: "The new park at 70 Croatia Street will be a place where..."

- The neighbourhood can take a break** There's a lot of concrete and commerce nearby so a green space just to relax is key 4.3 ★★★★★ (35 👤)
Ranked #1 of 176
- people of all ages can mingle and enjoy a quiet, natural space in a busy neighbourhood** 1000s of new residents in new buildings need outdoor space 4.3 ★★★★★ (32 👤)
Ranked #2 of 176
- I can rest from the busy streets of Bloor and Dufferin** green places are therapeutic in our densely built neighbourhood 4.2 ★★★★★ (34 👤)
Ranked #3 of 176
- we can meet and relax with community** we can be safe 4.2 ★★★★★ (33 👤)
Ranked #4 of 176
- We have trees and natural space to hang out in the city** There is so much concrete and so many buildings - we need natural options to gather and breathe 4.2 ★★★★★ (24 👤)
Ranked #5 of 176

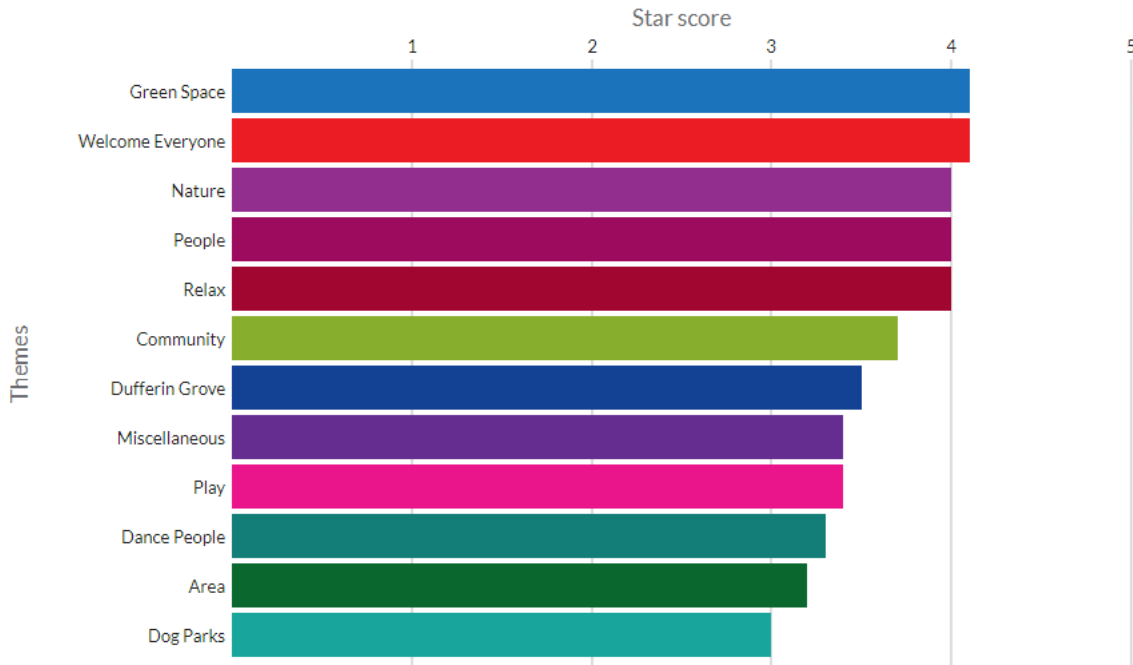
What We Heard

Participants were asked to think about the kind of character the new park should have to best serve the community. Participants were also asked to share any features or amenities they value most in a park that they think would best support the character of the new park. Participants' ideas were then coded into six high-level themes for the purpose of understanding and reporting on the data. Figure 1 below shows the themes associated with responses and total number of thoughts associated with each theme:



70 Croatia Street Park – Thought Exchange Summary

Organizing themes according to the average rating of thoughts in each as opposed to the number of thoughts allows for a better overall understanding of community priorities. Figure 2 below shows the high-level themes according to the average rating given to the thoughts within them by participants:



Key Feedback

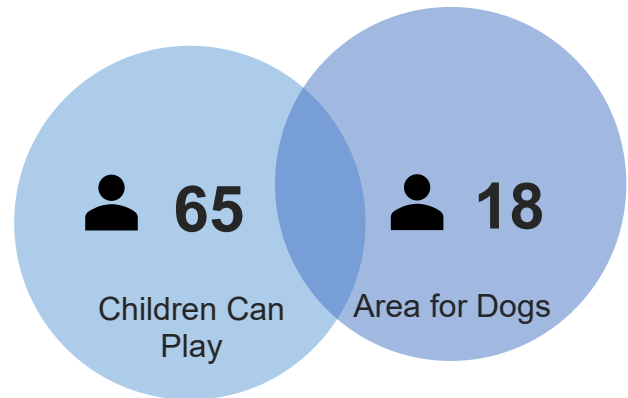
- When asked what respondents would like the **character** of the new park to be, the top five responses included:
 - Green and sustainable: A place lush with trees and plantings, designed to conserve resources and create animal habitats (74%)
 - Eventful: A flexible space for small, local, outdoor events (such as community markets, performances, outdoor movie nights), that can change based on community needs (52%)
 - Social: A space for meeting and gathering (43%)
 - Playful: A space for people of all ages to play and be together (39%)
 - Peaceful: A calm oasis with places to sit and relax (36%)
- When asked what the project team should **keep in mind while designing** the space, the top five responses included:
 - Importance of creating more green spaces/natural areas (73%)
 - Importance of creating spaces for people to gather (58%)
 - Importance of creating habitat for birds/insects (51%)
 - Importance of creating an inclusive space for all (46%)

Common Ground & Differences

A Thought Exchange identifies areas of polarization or division among participants and areas where those same participants are aligned, based on their rating patterns. The following section shows the groups of ideas that people have polarized thoughts around and where there were consensus ideas.

Children Can Play / Area for Dogs

In this Exchange, we saw a group of people wanting to prioritize spaces for children to play and another one wanting space for dogs. They found consensus on the importance of having green space in the park and creating opportunities for people to gather with shaded seating options.



People who expressed concerns with an area for dogs identified issues such as dog waste and noise. People who advocated for a dog-friendly space noted the lack of dog parks in the area.

Summary of What We Heard

- Create a park that contrasts the urban neighbourhood by providing relaxing areas with greenery.
- Create green spaces that offer gathering and playful areas that are inclusive to all ages.
- Integrate shade features with seating options.
- Create a flexible space for small, local, outdoor events (such as community markets, performances, outdoor movie nights, farmers markets), that can change based on community needs.

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 demographic findings can be found in **Appendix A**.*

Appendix A – Thought Exchange Full Responses

Survey

 Participants

208

Last activity: 0 days ago

 Thoughts

176

0.8 thoughts / participant

 Ratings

4,336

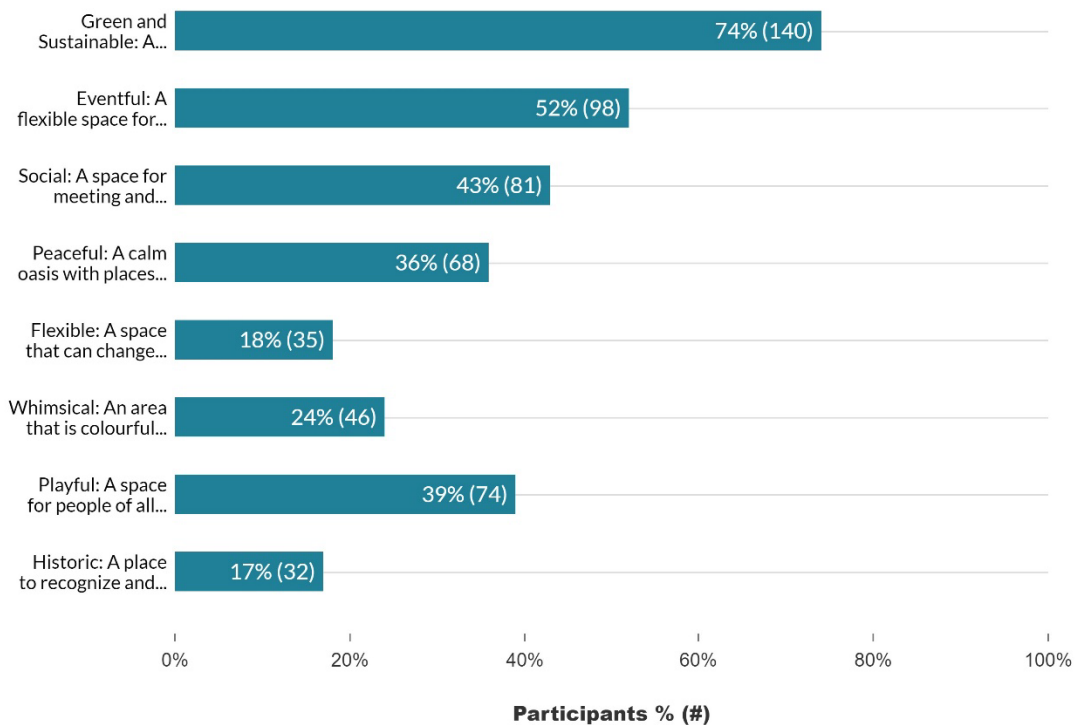
20.8 ratings / participant

Q1

**What would you like the character of the new park at 70 Croatia Street to be?
Select your top 3 choices.**

Answered: 190

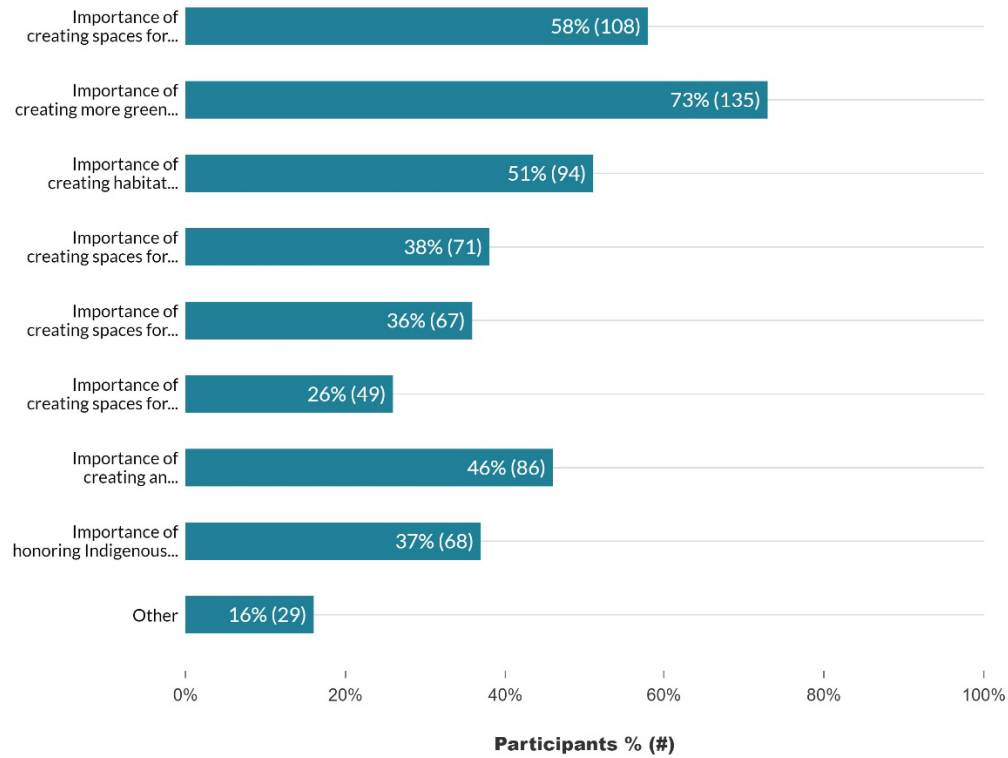
Not answered: 18



Q2 | **What should the project team keep in mind while designing this space?
Select all that apply.**

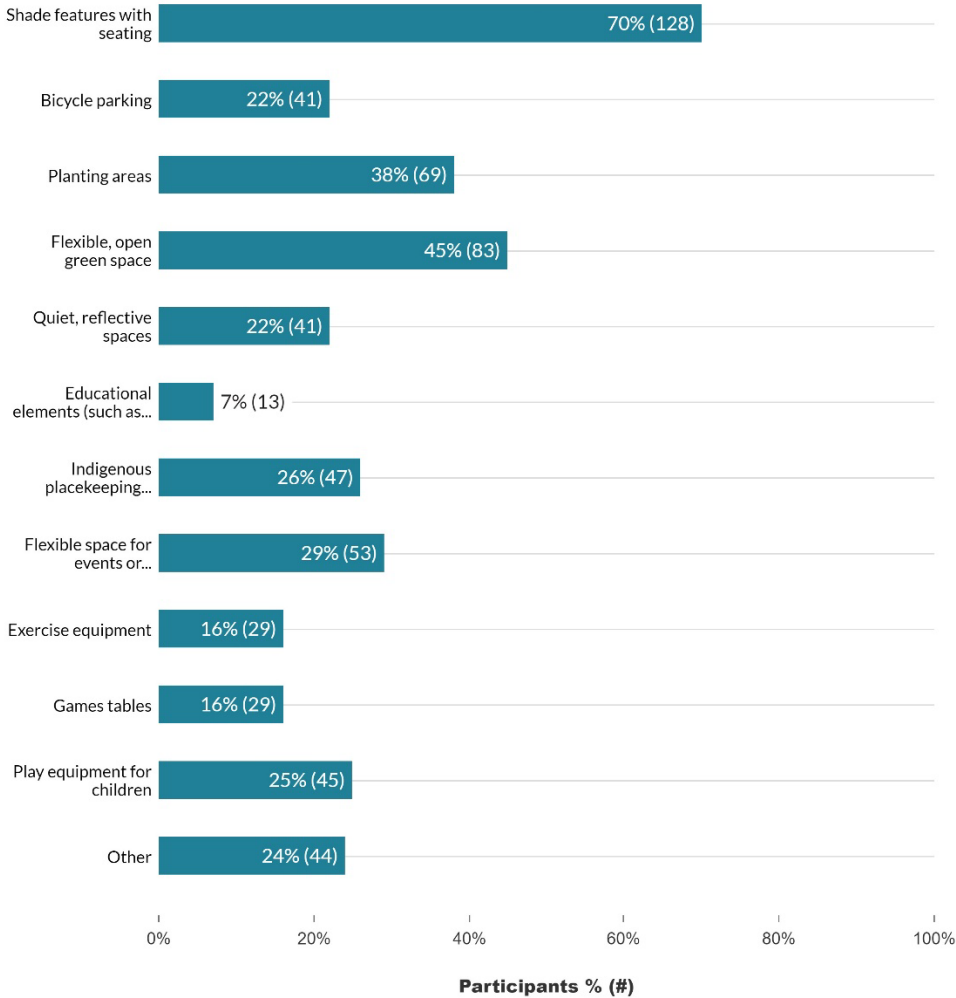
Answered: 186

Not answered: 22



Q3 | When you think about using this new park, what park features do you feel are most important? Select your top 3 choices.

Answered: 183
Not answered: 25

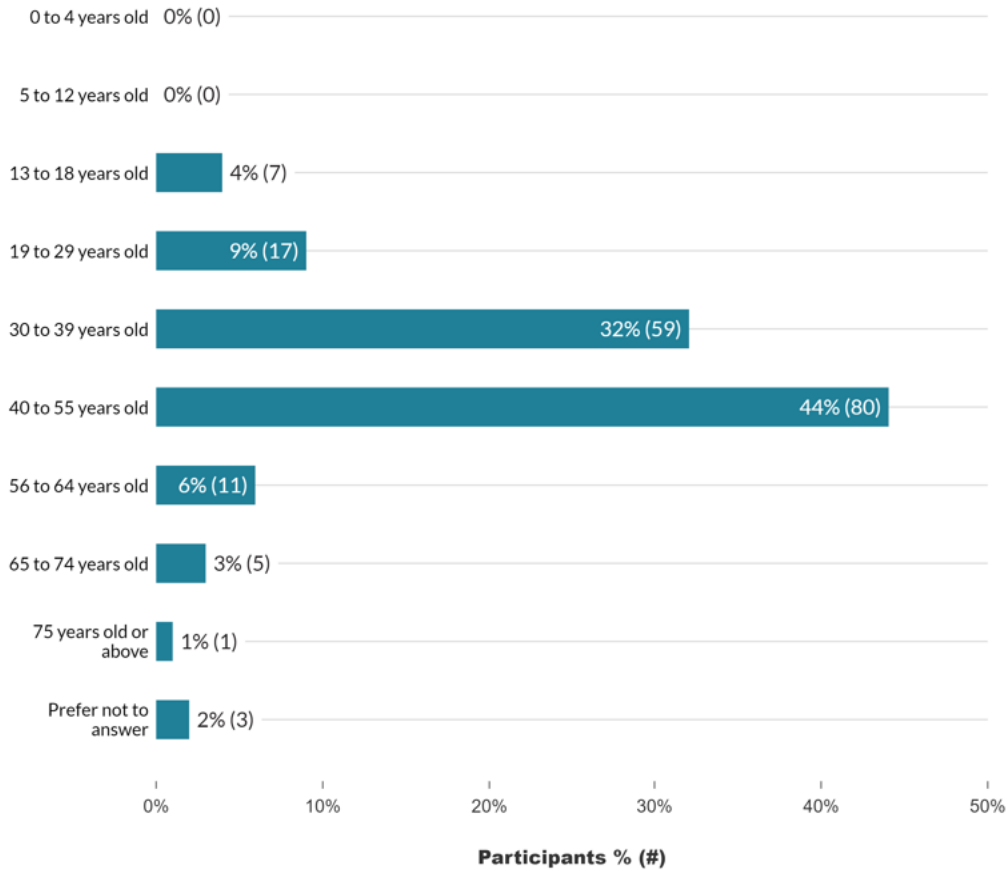


Demographics

Q4 | What is the age of the person filling out this survey?

Answered: 183

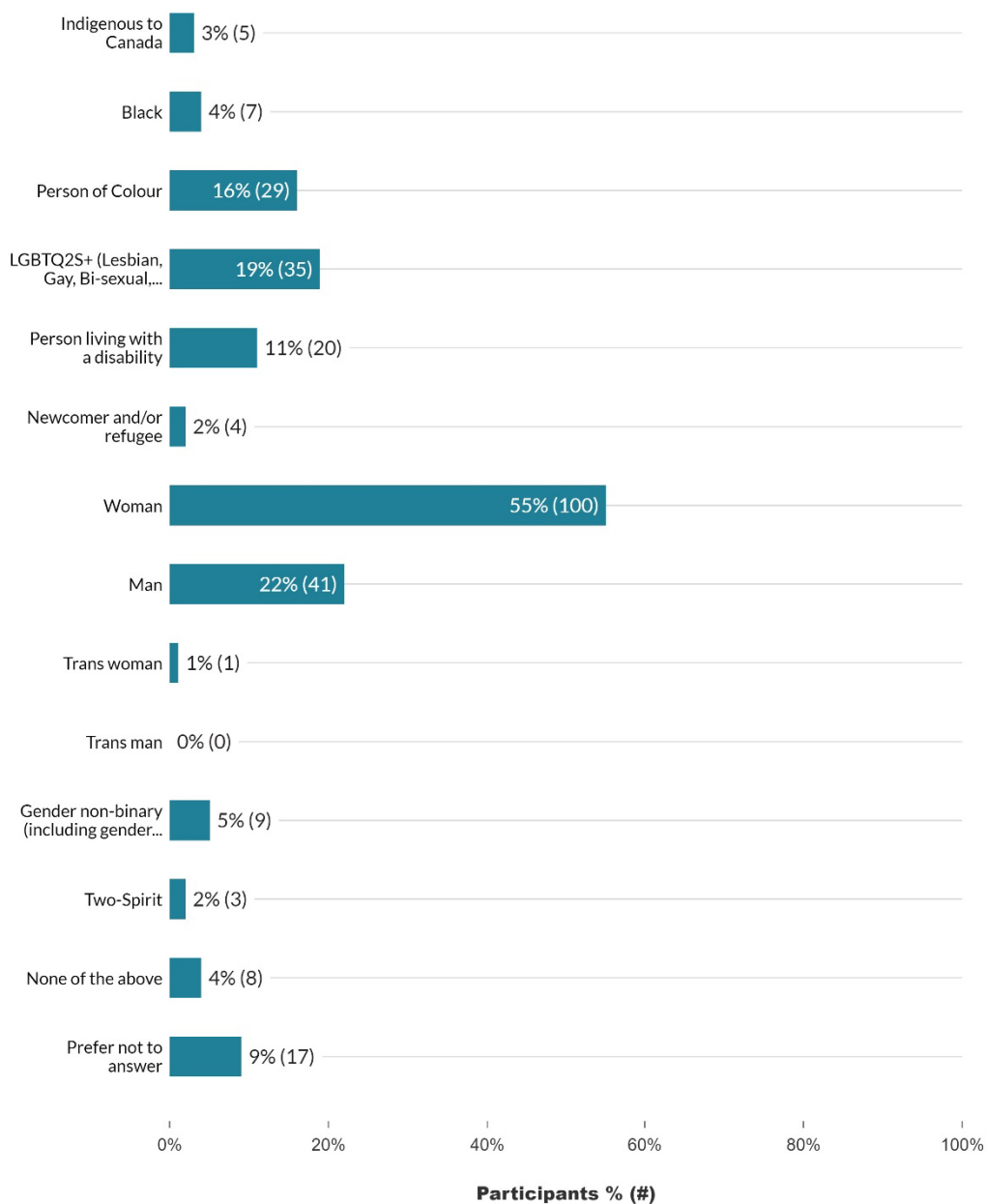
Not answered: 25



Q5 | **Do you identify as belonging to any of the following communities? Select all that apply.**

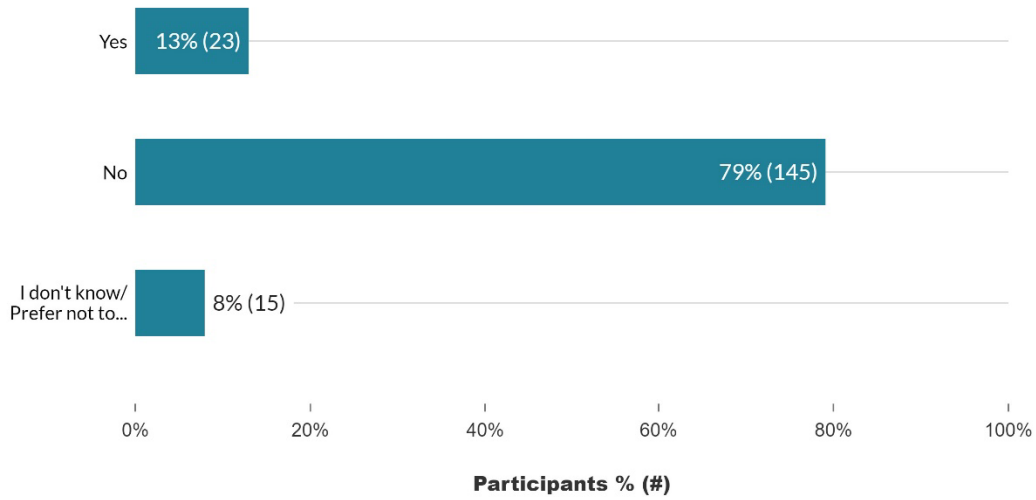
Answered: 183

Not answered: 25



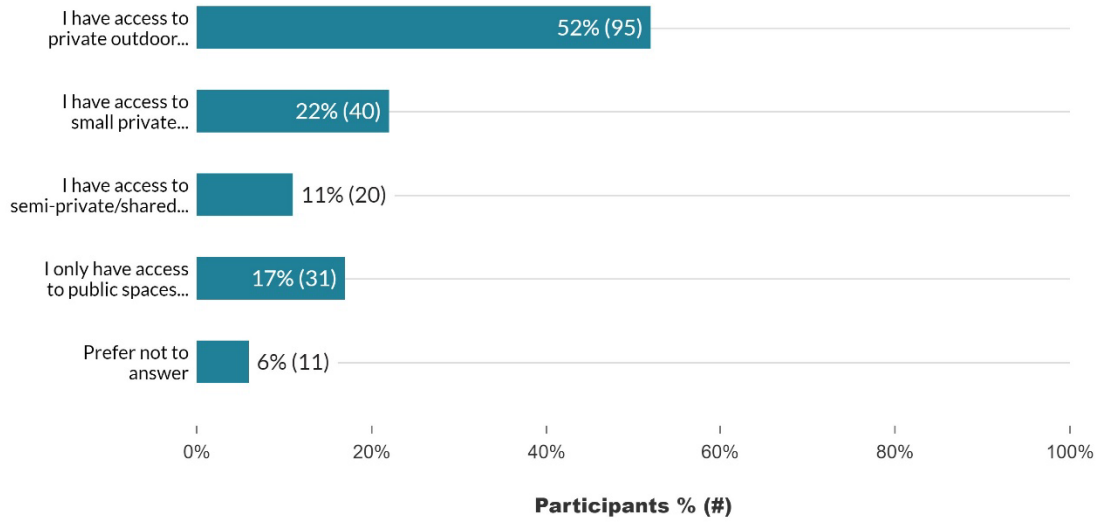
Q6 Excluding yourself, does anyone in your household identify as a person with a disability?

Answered: 183
Not answered: 25



Q7 | What best describes you and your household's access to outdoor space?

Answered: 183
Not answered: 25



Q8 | How did you find out about this survey? Select all that apply.

Answered: 183

Not answered: 25

