

Thought Exchange Summary Report

New Parks near Dundas Street West and Thomas Riley Road – Phase 1
(Toward a Vision)

March 2024

Elijah Bawuah, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
Leigh Lichtenberg, Project Coordinator



Contents

- Introduction..... 3
- How We Reached People..... 3
- Who We Heard From..... 4
- What We Heard 5
- Next Steps 8
- Appendix: Participant Demographics..... 9





Introduction

During Phase 1 of community engagement for the New Parks near Dundas Street West and Thomas Riley Road, the City of Toronto conducted an online thought exchange activity from November 8 to December 6, 2023. The goal of the thought exchange was to define an overall vision for the new parks, including a set of guiding principles, which will guide the development of park design options in Phase 2.

A thought exchange is an interactive platform that allows community members to share their thoughts and ideas and read and rate those of other participants in a collaborative, two-way process. This tool gives the project team and the public a better understanding of the community's priorities than a typical survey would allow.

This document provides a summary of what we heard through the thought exchange.

Project Background

Two new parks are coming to the Etobicoke City Centre neighbourhood as a result of a mixed-use development project. One park (Park A) will be 4,054m² (approximately the size of a baseball field and two basketball courts), and the other park (Park B) will be 2,568m² (approximately the size of six basketball courts). Park B will not be included in the engagement process for this project due to matters requiring confirmation and direction related to the site.

The parks will be located southeast of Shorncliffe Road and Dundas Street West, near [Cloverdale Park](#), and will be separated by a new road that will be constructed as part of the development project. The park designs are being developed through a multi-phase community engagement process that began in summer 2023.

How We Reached People

In general, the community was informed of the thought exchange through digital media and the local Councillor's office.

Print media

Digital media

Project webpage

The webpage (toronto.ca/DWTRParks) provided up-to-date information about the project, details about the thought exchange, and a sign-up button for community members to subscribe to the mailing list and receive email updates.

Flyer

A digital flyer was circulated to the local Councillor's Office.

Mailing list

An email update was sent to the project mailing list notifying subscribers of the thought exchange, including relevant dates, links, and other details.

Social media advertisements

The thought exchange was promoted through paid advertisements and organic posts on the Parks, Forestry and Recreation division's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) accounts.

Who We Heard From

The thought exchange collected **50** thoughts and **690** ratings from **70** participants of various ages and backgrounds. The majority of participants were between the ages of 19 and 39 (**70%**), women (**63%**), and homeowners (**69%**). A full summary of participant demographics can be found in the appendix.

Participants were asked to provide demographic information to help the City understand who participated in the thought exchange and ensure that we receive feedback that reflects the local community.

What We Heard

Overall, community members would like the new parks to provide green space with grass and trees, seating and picnic areas, fitness and exercise opportunities, and open space or fields. The following section provides a more detailed summary of what we heard through the thought exchange.

“The community has become cement walls. We need more green space to encourage families to get out.” – Participant

Participants were asked, “**What park features or amenities would you like to see in the two new parks? One park is envisioned to be a dog off-leash area and the other a new park with programming opportunities.**” Of the 50 thoughts that participants shared, the ten highest rated thoughts were:

1. The community has become cement walls. We need more green space to encourage families to get out. Exercise is important for all ages. (4.4 rating)
2. Should be a park where children can play and families can go to. We need outdoor spaces for families to enjoy and children to get exercise. (4.4 rating)
3. Trees. (4.3 rating)
4. Grass and trees. Important to have nature in an urban area. (4.2 rating)
5. I was very excited! There aren't enough parks in the area for younger families, young adults, pet owners and everyone really. (4.2 rating)
6. Green space where most people can enjoy nature fresh air and walking Lots of people live in buildings where the air quality is bad and is so small hardly space to move. A park would allow for healthier living (4.2 rating)
7. Seating areas for both eating and relaxing. Activate the ground plane along Dundas and have places to sit while kids play. (4.2 rating)
8. Bench and green field. Relax and comfortable. (4.1 rating)
9. Looking forward to having these amazing parks in the neighborhood! Parks will provide opportunity for outdoor gatherings, dog walks and socializing. (4.1 rating)
10. Adequate seating area. Allows place to relax outdoors. (4.1 rating)

The thoughts were organized into 20 themes. Ranked by the total number of thoughts within each theme, the top five themes were:

1. Playground and/or splash pad (8 thoughts)
2. Seating (8 thoughts)
3. Off-leash area (7 thoughts)
4. Fitness and/or exercise (6 thoughts)
5. Trees (6 thoughts)

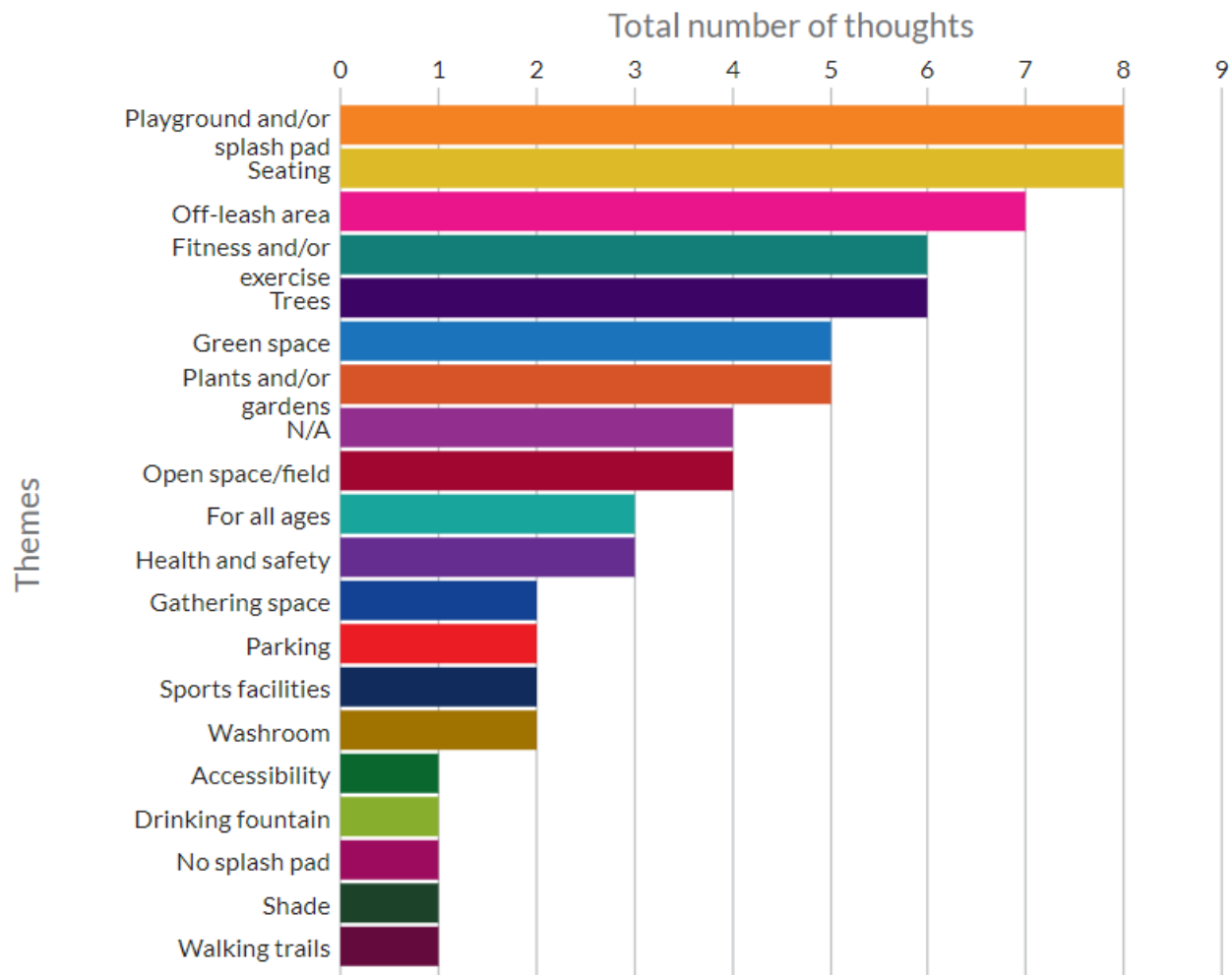


Table 1: Themes organized by the total number of thoughts within each.

However, a different set of priorities emerged when taking into consideration how participants rated each other’s thoughts. When ranked by the average rating of thoughts within each theme, referred to as the star score, the theme “Playground and/or splash pad” moved from 1st place down to 13th place, “Off-leash area” moved from 3rd place down to 18th place, “Green space” moved from 6th place up to 1st place, and “Trees” moved from 5th place up to 2nd place.

Ranked by their star score, the top five themes were:

1. Green space (**4.4** star score)
2. Trees (**4.3** star score)
3. Fitness and/or exercise (**4.2** star score)
4. Open space/field (**4.2** star score)
5. Drinking fountain (**4.1** star score)

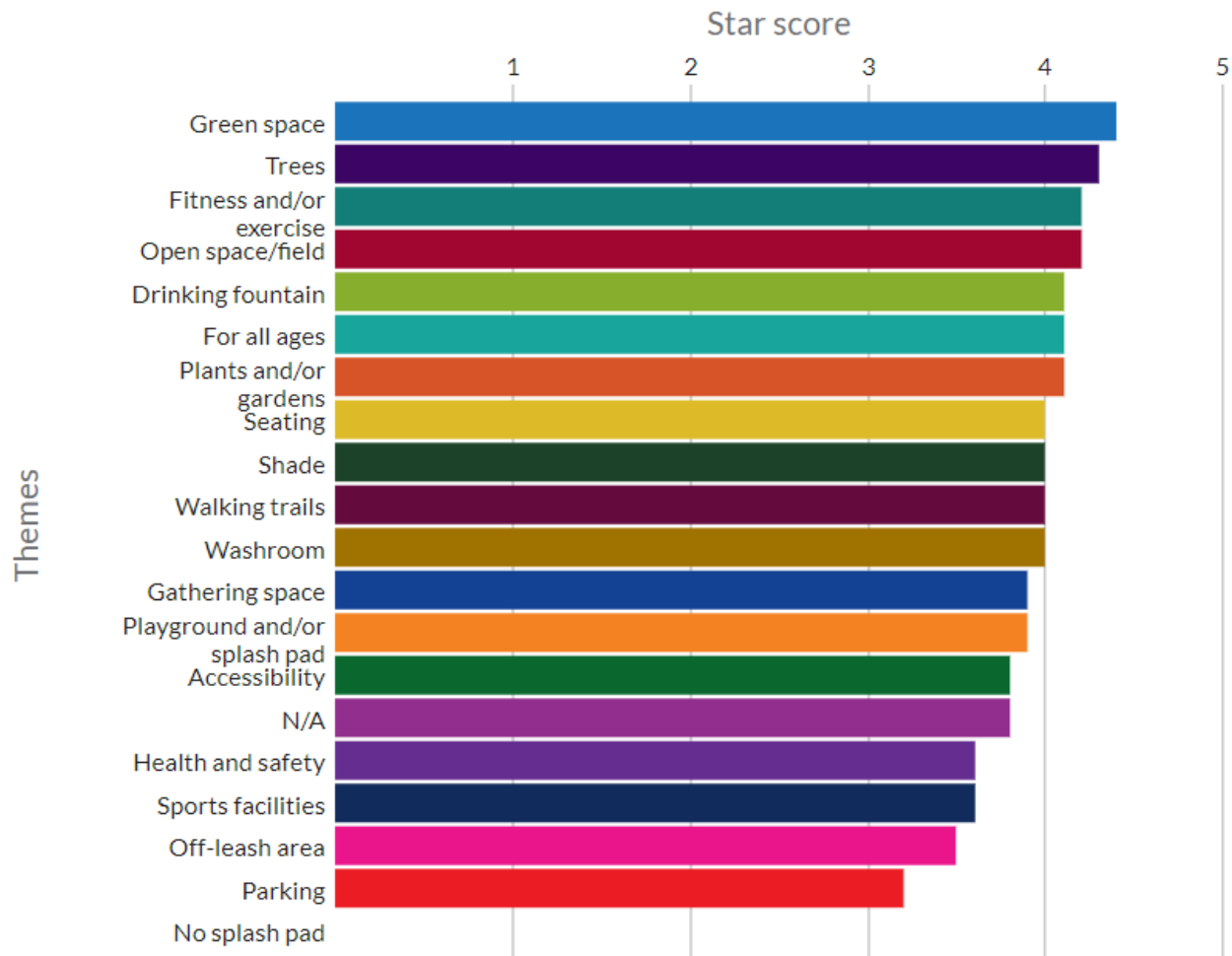


Table 2: Themes organized by the average rating of thoughts within each.

In addition to sharing and rating each other’s thoughts, participants were posed a series of survey questions.

Participants were asked, **“What park amenities would you like to see in the park? Select all that apply.”** The six most popular amenities were:

1. Seating area such as benches (**80%**)
2. Trees and green spaces (**77%**)
3. Picnic tables to eat lunch outdoors (**64%**)
4. Playground area (**59%**)
5. Shade structure (**58%**)
6. Water bottle filler (**58%**)

Participants were asked, **“What park features do you feel are most important? Select all that apply.”** The five most important features were:

1. Trees and green spaces (**73%**)
2. Seating area such as benches (**64%**)

3. Shade structure (**48%**)
4. Playground area (**44%**)
5. Picnic tables to eat lunch outdoors (**42%**)

Participants were asked, “**What playground elements do you feel are most important? Select all that apply. Note: accessible playground features will be included in the playground.**” The five most important playground elements were:

1. Swing (**62%**)
2. Senior play for ages 5 to 12 (**60%**)
3. Junior play for ages 1 to 5 (**56%**)
4. Overhead climbing features such as monkey bars (**43%**)
5. Climbing wall (**43%**)

Participants were asked, “**What types of seating would you like to see in the park? Check all that apply.**” The five most popular types of seating were:

1. Benches (**78%**)
2. Café-style tables and chairs (**49%**)
3. Low walls or "seatwalls" (**37%**)
4. Lounge chair (**30%**)
5. Open lawn seating (**19%**)

A full summary of the thought exchange, including all thoughts and ratings, can be viewed [online](#).

Next Steps

The City will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to secure a design consultant who will work with the community’s feedback to develop design options that reflect their needs and expressed interests. Existing park amenities, site limitations, and public spaces within the area will be considered as the consultant progresses the designs.

Once the design options are prepared, the City will meet with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) to obtain their feedback on the designs through a facilitated discussion. Additionally, a public survey will be developed to obtain feedback on the design options from the wider community.

Visit the [project webpage](#) to learn more and sign-up for e-updates.

Appendix: Participant Demographics

What are the ages of the people participating in this survey?

- 4 years old or younger = 0%
- 5 to 12 years old = 8%
- 13 to 18 years old = 3%
- 19 to 29 years old = 30%
- 30 to 39 years old = 40%
- 40 to 55 years old = 19%
- 56 to 64 years old = 10%
- 65 to 74 years old = 5%
- 75 years old or older = 2%
- Prefer not to answer = 2%

(63 responses)

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

- Woman = 63%
- Person of colour = 21%
- Man = 16%
- Prefer not to answer = 16%
- Immigrant, newcomer or refugee = 14%
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) = 8%
- Person living with a disability = 6%
- Black = 3%
- None of the above = 3%
- Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous) = 2%
- Indigenous to Canada = 0%
- Trans woman = 0%
- Trans man = 0%
- Two-Spirit = 0%

(63 responses)

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

- Yes = 10%
- No = 87%

- I don't know/Prefer not to answer = 3%

(63 responses)

What best describes your current housing and access to outdoor space? Select all that apply.

- Homeowner = 69%
- I have access to small private outdoor space like a balcony = 29%
- Renting = 21%
- I have access to private outdoor space like a yard = 13%
- I only have access to public spaces like parks (I do not have access to private or semi-private outdoor space) = 11%
- I have access to semi-private/shared outdoor space = 8%
- Permanently living with parent(s) or other family member(s) = 5%
- Temporarily staying with others (no fixed address) = 0%
- Unhoused (staying outside, in a shelter, in a 24-hour respite) = 0%
- Prefer not to answer = 2%

(62 responses)