



West Humber River Restoration and Water Infrastructure Protection Study

Public Consultation Report

May 2025

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Executive Summary

The City of Toronto is carrying out a study to identify storm sewer and watermain infrastructure within West Humber River that is at risk of damage due to erosion impacts as a result of high flows from storms and snow melt.

The study looks at how the City's storm sewer and watermain infrastructure can be protected within the creek to ensure the City's infrastructure continues to operate and service residents and businesses. The solutions will be part of a West Humber River Geomorphic Systems Master Plan (GSMP) to be implemented over a multi-year period.

This report details the activities and feedback received during public consultation that took place between March 3 and April 4, 2025. Members of the public and interest groups were provided with information about current risks to City water infrastructure and a summary of the recommended solutions to address those risks. People were invited to ask questions and provide feedback on the recommended solutions for creek restoration and water infrastructure protection.

Public consultation included a virtual public event on March 19, 2025, with 19 participants, an online survey on the project webpage which was completed by 23 respondents, and comment submissions via email and phone from two residents.

Overall, there is support for the recommended projects and the priority assessment of the projects, which identifies projects #1, #2 and #3 as high priority. Concerns in relation to the recommended projects focus on construction impacts to trees, vegetation, and wildlife, as well as access to the trails and pedestrian routes during construction. Participants expressed a desire to see the area restored with native plant species following construction. Participants noted the presence of turtle nesting areas near two of the recommended projects.

Information about the study was also shared with First Nations, government agencies and utilities. However, feedback from these groups extends beyond the public consultation period and will be captured in the GSMP study report.

Study Summary

In the West Humber River, there are 83 sewer and water infrastructure sites and over 11 kilometres of sanitary sewer lines. Infrastructure sites include 21 sanitary sewer sites and 19 sewer crossings, which carry wastewater to treatment plants. There are 9 watermain sites, all of which are watermain crossings, which carry drinking water, and 34 storm sewer outfalls where stormwater runoff enters the river.

The intention of the study is the protection of City water and sewer infrastructure within the West Humber River that is at risk of damage as a result of erosion caused by high flows from storms and snow melt.

A risk analysis was done for the 59 infrastructure sites closest to the river. Following the risk analysis, an evaluation of alternative solutions was carried out for the 15 infrastructure sites identified as the most 'at-risk'. Finally, through the study, 10 projects to stabilise the channel bed and banks of the creek are recommended to protect the 15 most at-risk sites. This includes:

- Seven channel engineering projects with work in a segment of the river less than 100 metres in length, referred to as 'local works'
- Three channel engineering projects with work in a segment of the river greater than 100 metres in length, referred to as 'sub-reach works'

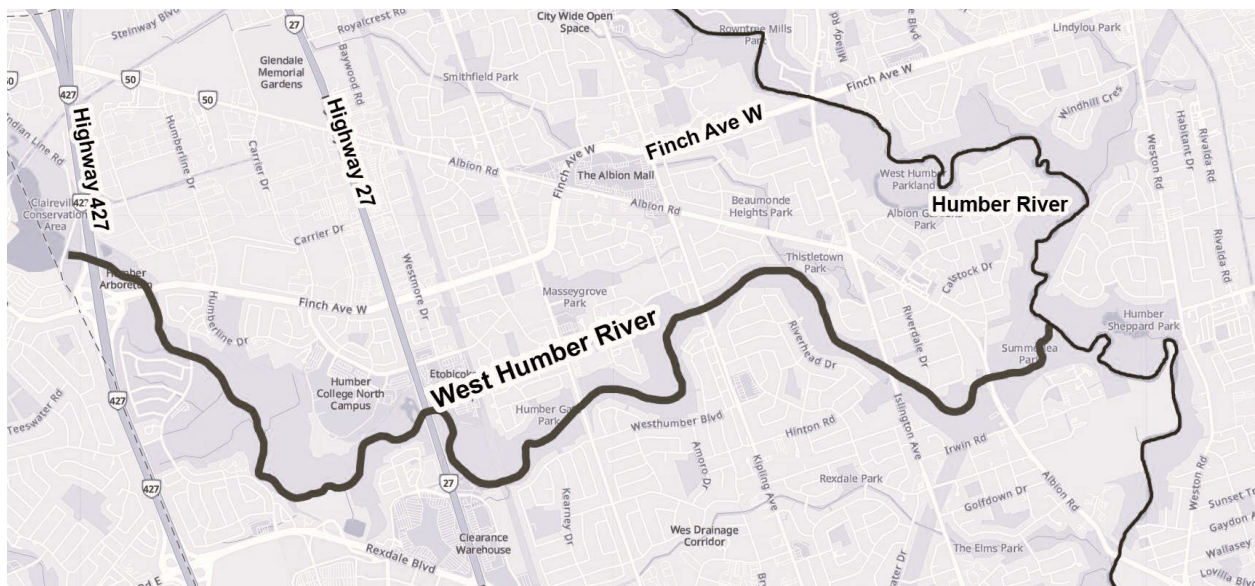
The 10 recommended projects were assigned priority levels for implementation. Exposed sanitary sewers are the highest priority projects, as they pose greater negative impacts, if broken, as compared to broken storm sewer outfalls or watermains.

- Three projects are high-priority (implementation in 2 to 5 years)
- Three projects are medium-priority (5 to 10 years)
- Four projects are low-priority (10+ years)

Implementation of projects will be prioritised city-wide among all creek and river restoration studies.

Study Area

The study area includes the 10 km length of West Humber from west of Hwy 427 and Disco Road at the Clareville Reservoir to where it meets the Humber River in the east.



Notification & Consultation Activities

The study follows the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process for Master Plans. A variety of communication tools were used to notify the public and groups with an interest in the study area about the West Humber River Restoration and Water Infrastructure Protection Study.

In parallel to public consultation, there was consultation with other levels of government, First Nations government agencies and utilities. Feedback received from these groups will be summarized in the final study report.

Public Notification

A Public Consultation Notice providing information to the public about study details, recommendations and opportunities for feedback was circulated the week of March 3, 2025, through the following methods:

- Notices were sent via Canada Post direct mail to 26,828 addresses in the study area
- An emailed notice was circulated to 29 community groups, organizations, institutions and elected officials and 51 government agencies and utility companies
- Signage was placed in public areas along the West Humber multi-use trail
- The project website was updated to include public consultation materials and a link to the feedback survey: toronto.ca/WestHumberRiver

Public Consultation Activities

Public consultation activities are an opportunity for the public to learn about the study and provide feedback. Feedback was received during meetings, via email and phone and through an online survey:

- A virtual public meeting, March 19, 2025, from 6 to 8 p.m. was attended by 19 people.
- An online survey, available March 3 to April 4, 2025, received 23 responses. Participation was anonymous.
- Email comments were received from two residents.

Feedback Summary

Among those who provided feedback, there is concern with current erosion and riverine flooding along the West Humber River. Feedback on the recommended projects was generally supportive. Survey respondents echoed the need for the higher priority projects #1, #2 and #3.

Respondents have observed turtle nesting areas in project areas, #7 and #9.

There is an interest in tree and vegetation restoration post-construction and a desire to see the area restored with native plant species. Requests were made to minimise impacts to trees and vegetation and maintaining access to trails during construction.

Additional concerns shared by participants, but outside of the study scope, include concerns for the impacts of new building and development in the area on riverine flooding.

Public Event

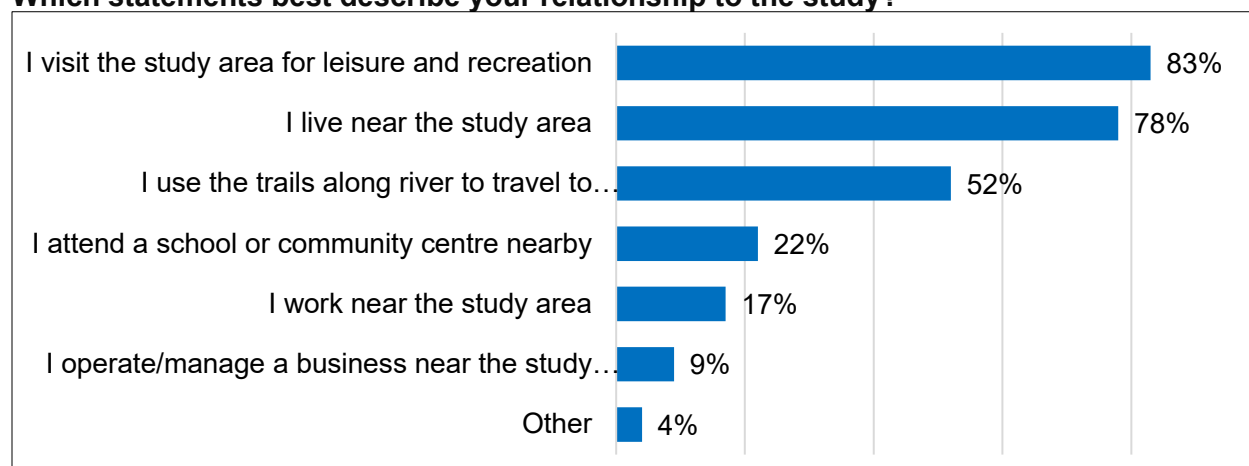
Questions and comments from the virtual public meeting on March 19, 2024, are themed and summarized below. A meeting summary is available on the project webpage.

Topic/Focus	Topic/Focus
Erosion and flooding	• There is concern for erosion along the river and increased flooding. • There are areas of erosion within the river that would not be addressed by the recommended projects • Detailed questions were asked about water flow levels, increases in flooding and monitoring activities.
Development projects	• There is concern for the impacts of increased hard surface area near the river and the impacts of development on stormwater management. • Questions were asked about the approval process for new projects and future buildings such as high rises and whether the City's approval processes adequately considers the potential impacts of development on flooding. • Meeting participants noted the need for coordination and oversight for development projects with different levels of government
Recommended project impacts & Construction impacts	• Participants wanted more information about potential impacts on vegetation and tree loss. • Concern was expressed for the impact on wildlife. – One participants reported that they have seen the impacts of a deteriorating natural environment on wildlife over the past 20-30 years • There was an interest in plans for replanting and restoration after construction, with a request for details on plant species. • Those who gave feedback would like continued access to the trail and alternate pedestrian routes during construction.

Survey

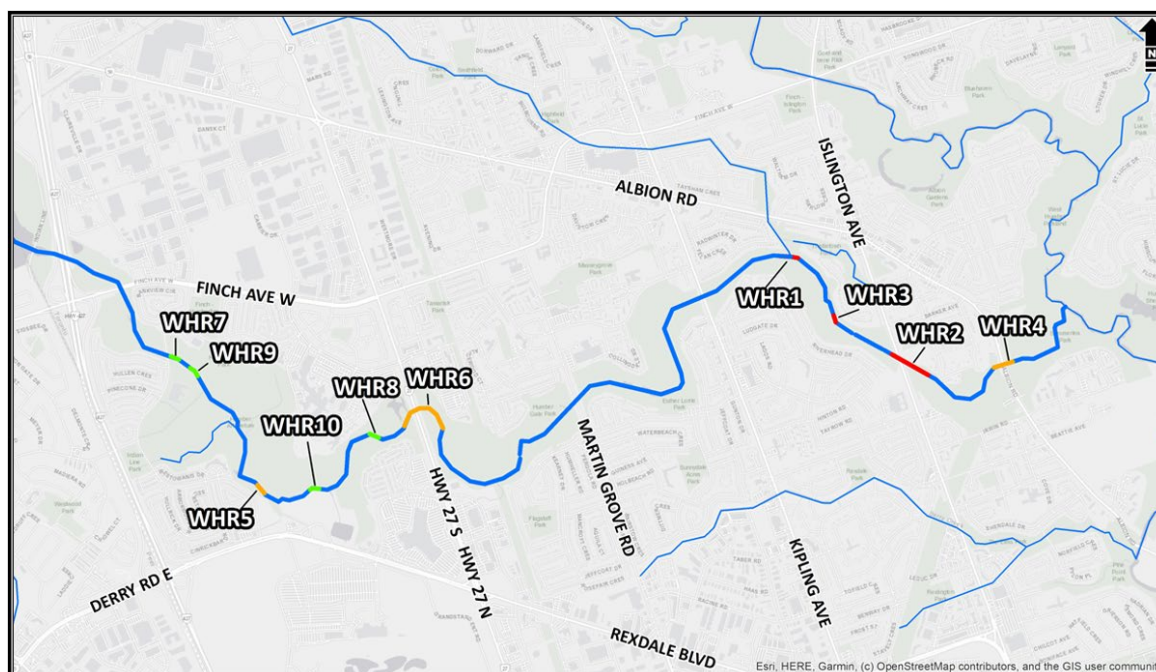
Responses received to each question in the online survey are described in this section. Survey responses were anonymous.

Which statements best describe your relationship to the study?



A total of 23 responses were provided for this question. Most of the respondents (83%) visit the study area for leisure and recreation or live near the study area (78%). Among survey respondents 52% use the trails along river to travel to destinations, 22% attend school or daycare the study area, 17% work near the study area, 9% operate a business and 4% cited other relationships.

Do you have specific comments about any of the recommended projects?



Recommended project locations are identified on a map of the study area.

Recommended Project	Comment Summary
Project #1 – Alternative 2, Local works	Identified as urgently needed
Project #2 - Alternative 3, Sub-reach works	- Identified as urgently needed - Concern for water pooling that develops odor in mid to late summer

Project #3 - Alternative 2, Local works	• Identified as urgently needed • Suggested implementation with Project #1
Project #4 - Alternative 3, Sub-reach works	• Suggested priority after projects 1-3 • Concerned new developments will impact the riverine flooding
Project #5 - Alternative 2, Local works	• Suggested priority after projects 1-3
Project #6 - Alternative 3, Sub-reach works	• Suggested priority after projects 1-3
Project #7 - Alternative 2, Local works	• Turtles nest in the area • Suggested monitoring and only implement projects if conditions worsen
Project #8 - Alternative 2, Local works	• Suggested monitoring and only implement projects if conditions worsen
Project #9 - Alternative 2, Local works	• Turtles nest in the area • Suggested monitoring and only implement projects if conditions worsen
Project #10 - Alternative 2, Local works	• Suggested monitoring and only implement projects if conditions worsen

Do you have any general feedback about the study recommendations?

- General support for the projects, viewed as important to protect the environment and homes.
- Recognition of the urgency for projects #1, #2 and #3.
- There are a number of concerns with current conditions and future development in the areas
 - Concern for the number of stormwater outfalls that go directly into the river
 - Concerns with current conditions including increased riverine flooding
 - Concern with the impacts of continued private development on the environment
- Concerns in relation to recommended projects focus on construction impacts to trees, wildlife and trails
- Suggestion for an overflow pool on the east side of the river near Islington Avenue
- Interest efficient implementation of recommended project with minimal impacts
- Support for post-construction restoration with native species
- Desire for continued access to trails during construction, or detour routes

Suggestions to improve recreation facilities are outside the scope of this study.

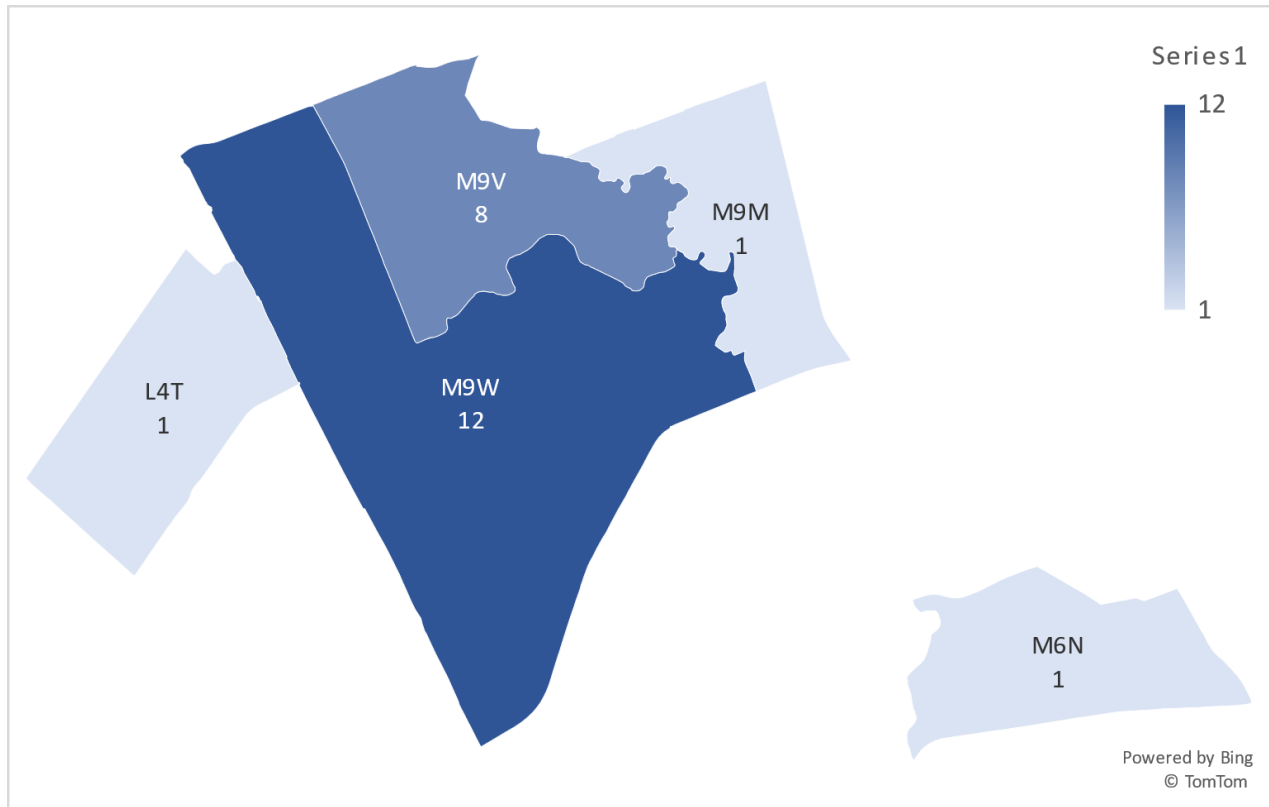
Phone & Email

Comments questions received from the public via email focused on potential construction impacts to roads and traffic in the area and the post construction restoration plans. There was support and interest in ensuring native species will be planted during restoration and for more information on the City's native species plant list.

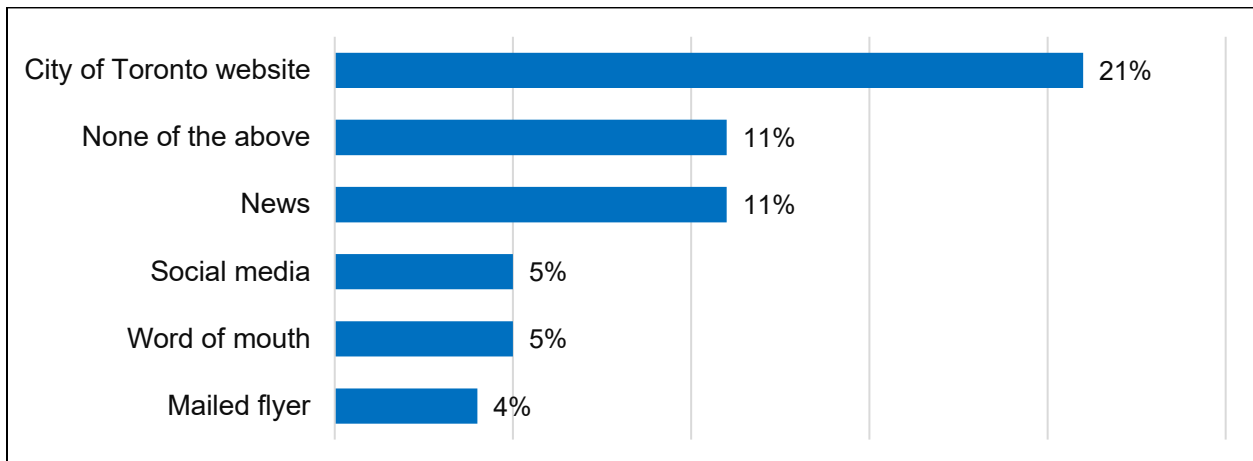
Appendix A – Survey Respondent Profile

What are the first three digits of your postal code?

A total of 23 responses were provided for this question. Postal code data is requested to understand where in the city respondents who have an interest in the project are coming from. The responses indicate that most respondents live close to the project area.



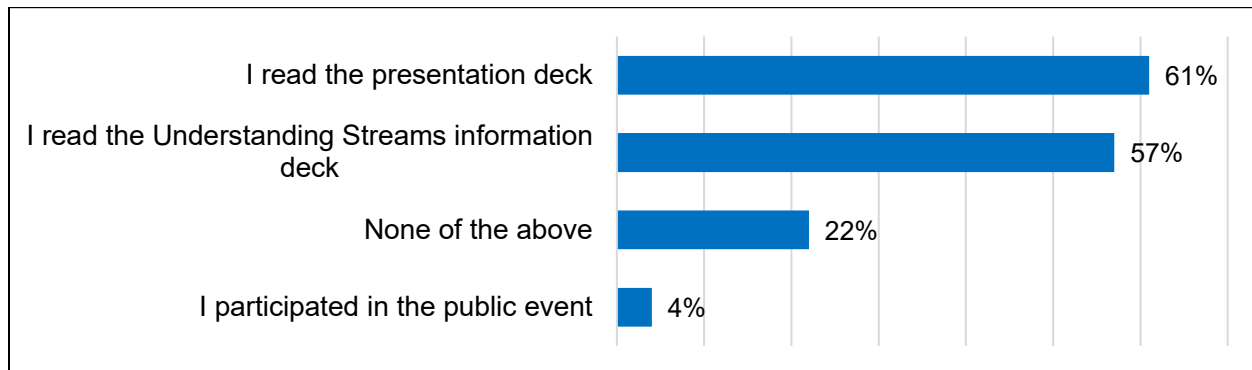
How did you hear about this study?



A total of 21 responses were provided for this question. Respondents heard about the study through a variety of sources. The most common source of information was the City Website. Other sources included the news, 11%, social media, 4 %, word of mouth, 4% and from the flyer

which was circulated through Canada Post, 4%. “None of the above” was selected by 11% of respondents

How did you review project information?

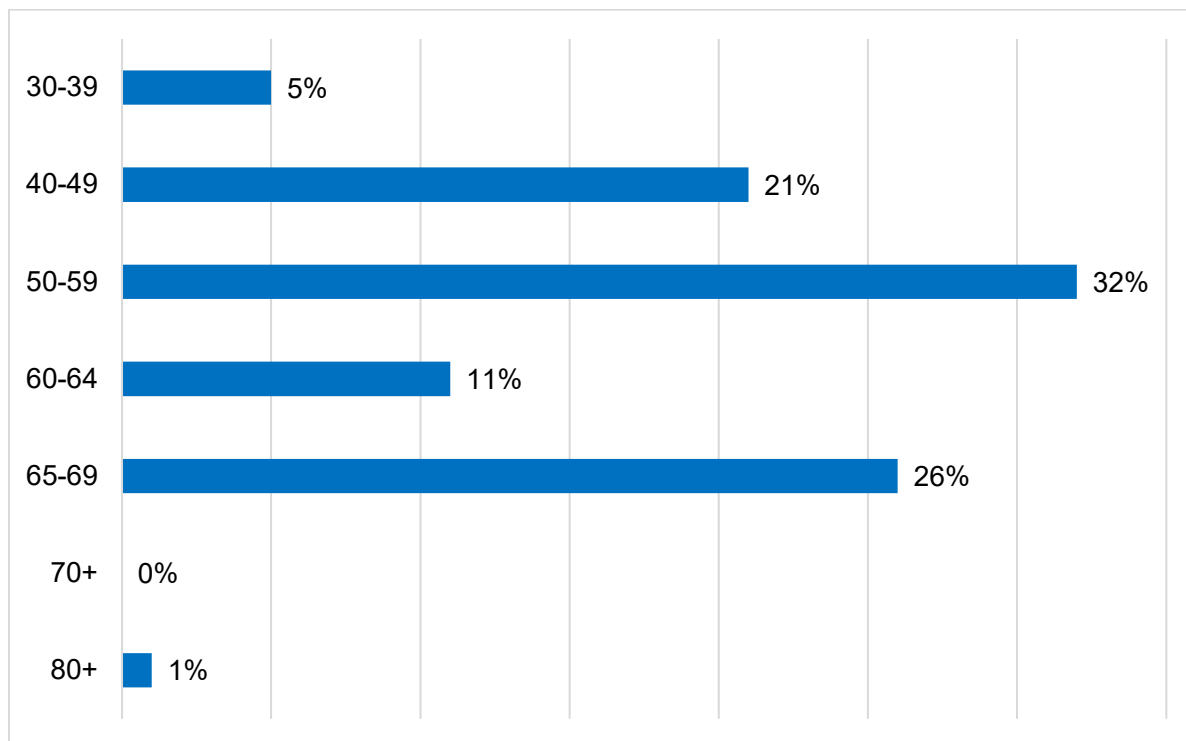


A total of 23 responses were provided for this question. Respondents were encouraged to attend the virtual meeting or read project information prior to giving feedback. Of the respondents 61% indicated they read through the presentation deck, 57% read through the Understanding Streams information deck, 4% participated in the virtual public event. Among respondents 22% did not review materials before responding to the survey.

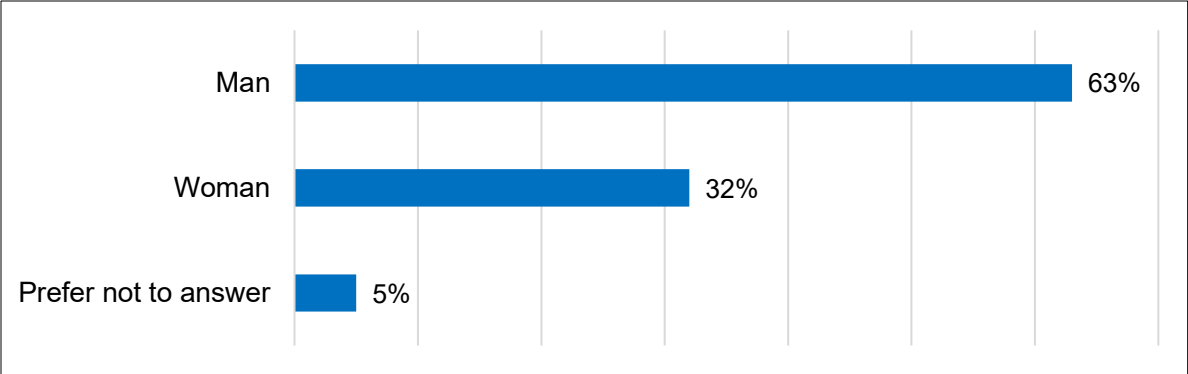
Demographics

This information is used to help City staff recognize general trends among those who participate in public consultations. A total of 19 responses were provided for the following questions.

What is your age category?



What is your gender identity?



Do you identify as a person with a disability?

