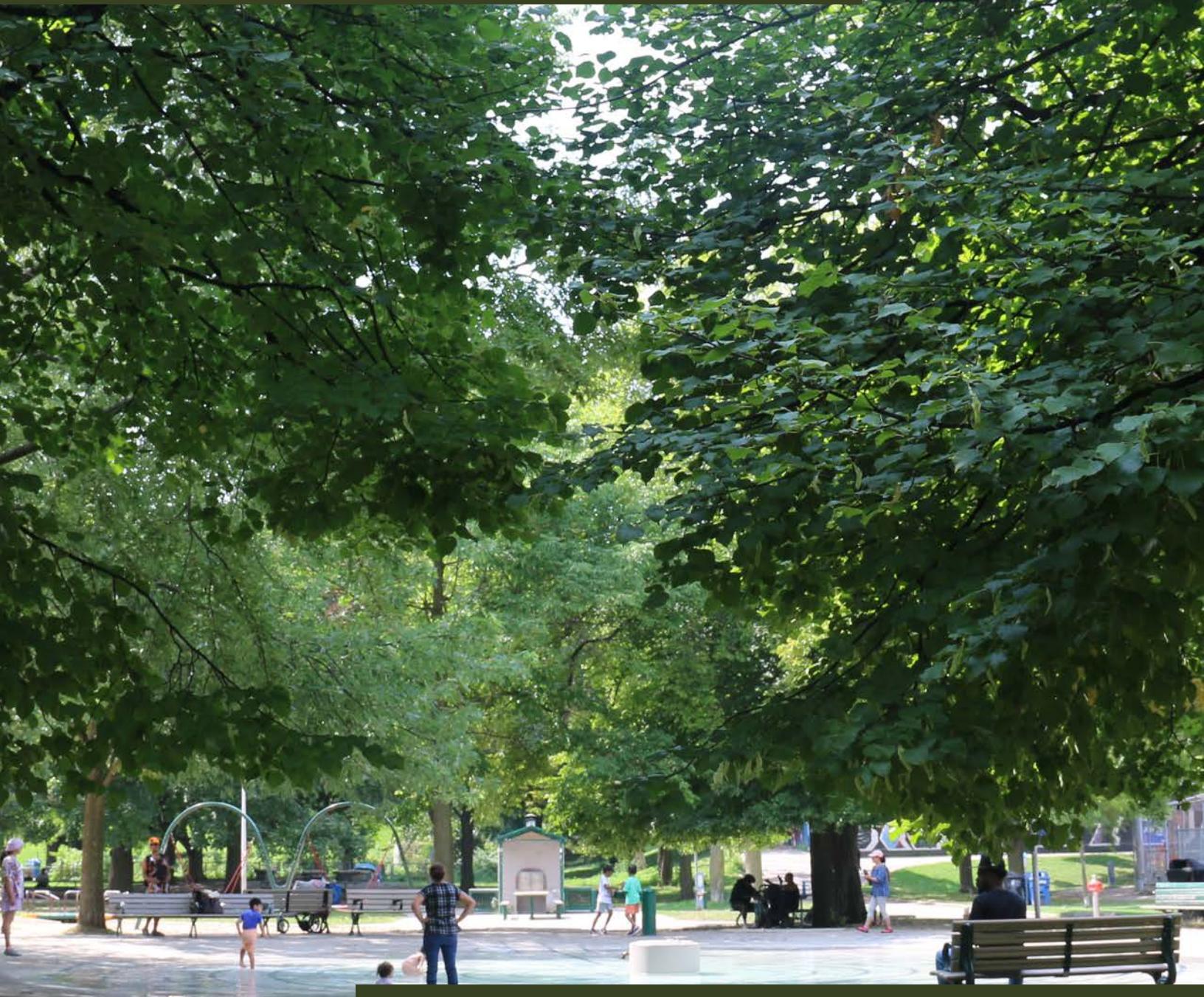


PITS PARK DISTRICT PUBLIC LIFE STUDY

Final Report



Prepared by: Park People

Prepared for: Parks and Recreation Division,
City of Toronto

April 2025

CITY OF TORONTO LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Toronto gratefully acknowledges that the land we call Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was led by Park People, a national charity that connects people and communities with the tools they need to create great parks for everyone.

Thank you to the dedicated team of student and volunteer surveyors whose time, expertise, and insights made this study possible.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



“I enjoy walking through all three parks and they are an important part of my regular exercise.”

- Survey Respondent

The *Pits District Public Life Study* was conducted to better understand how people use and experience Christie Pits Park, Bickford Park, and Art Eggleton Park. Commissioned by the City of Toronto's Parks & Recreation Division and led by Park People, the study provides a snapshot of public life in these spaces to inform future improvements and ensure they remain accessible, welcoming, and vibrant for all.

Public life refers to the energy and activity created by people in shared spaces. Observing how people move through parks, where they choose to stop, and what activities they engage in is essential for understanding both the successes and challenges in the planning and design of public spaces. This study identifies patterns of movement, user demographics, peak activity times, and the features that draw people in and encourage them to stay.

The study used a combination of on-site behavioural observation methods and surveys to capture data during the summer and winter. Parks were divided into six zones to analyze how different areas are used. The study included movement counts, demographic trends, stationary activity tracking, and non-human observations, such as dog activity. An online survey provided additional insight into visitor perceptions and motivations.

Findings from this study contribute to broader city planning efforts and align with key municipal strategies, including the [**Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan**](#), the [**Parkland Strategy**](#), and the [**Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan**](#) and [**Implementation Strategy**](#).

KEY FINDINGS:

- The Pits Park District is multi-use and multi-season.
- Dogs and dog owners are an important park user group.
- Christie Pits, Bickford, and Art Eggleton are essentially neighbourhood parks used mostly by local residents.
- Priorities for improvement are park amenities and maintenance across all three parks.
- The parks play an important role in health and wellbeing and connection to nature.
- Park users report feeling safe in all three parks.

These findings highlight opportunities to improve park infrastructure, enhance accessibility, and ensure that these public spaces continue to support the diverse needs of the community. This report provides actionable recommendations to inform future park planning and programming.

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INTRODUCTION



“I love how these parks are interconnected. In a way I use Bickford more than I use Christie because Bickford is much more peaceful and natural. Christie is more energy, recreation and activity. Art Eggleton is more for young families. I like how each park has its own personality.”

- Survey Respondent

STUDY CONTEXT

The city-wide Parkland Strategy, adopted by City Council in November 2019 ([2019.EX10.3](#)), is a 20-year plan guiding long-term park development, expansion, and improved access to existing parks. This strategy aids in decision-making and prioritization of investments in parkland across the city. The guiding principles of the Parkland Strategy are as follows and will inform the areas of inquiry, methodology, and deliverables for this study:

Expand: Create new parks to support growth and address gaps in the system to ensure it remains adaptable and supports a livable, diverse city.

Improve: Enhance the function of existing parks, promoting community cohesion, ecological sustainability, and well-being through active living, nature access, and spaces for rest and leisure.

Connect: Improve connections between parks and open spaces to ensure seamless access for people, communities, and wildlife.

Include: Remove barriers to create parks that are equitable and accessible for people of all ages, cultures, genders, abilities, and incomes.

These principles have been included as context to guide the study's objectives and ensure that the recommendations align with the city's broader goals for parkland development and accessibility.

WHY STUDY THE PITS PARK DISTRICT?

The 'Pits Park District' Public Life Study—aims to deepen our understanding of how residents and visitors interact with the parks in this vibrant urban area. This study, commissioned by the Toronto Parks and Recreation Division, focuses on Christie Pits Park, Bickford Park, and Art Eggleton Park, offering a comprehensive snapshot of public life within these spaces.

Park People's work has involved gathering insights into user demographics, movement patterns, and park dynamics through surveys and on-site observations. This approach has helped identify the types of people who visit these parks, their modes of travel, and the factors that encourage engagement. The study has also pinpointed peak usage times and explored ways to improve the parks' welcoming nature, accessibility, and equity for all community members.

The study provides a thorough assessment of movement counts, demographic trends, stationary activities, and even non-human observations. These insights have informed recommendations for improving the public realm and contributed to broader objectives set out in the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan, the Parkland Strategy, and the Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan.

Specific goals for the Pits Park District include recognizing the unique topography associated with Garrison Creek, improving connections to the broader cycling network, enhancing park edge conditions and access points, and fostering better integration between public spaces to create a cohesive district.

WHAT IS A PUBLIC LIFE STUDY AND HOW ARE THEY USED?

Public life refers to the collective energy and activity of people spending time in public spaces. Measuring public life—such as how many people pass through, who stops to sit, and what activities take place—helps assess the successes and challenges of these spaces.

A Public Life Study employs a specific methodology that combines behavioural observation and surveys to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach captures how a space is used on particular days and at specific times, offering a snapshot of public engagement.

While public life is dynamic and constantly evolving, the insights gained from a Public Life Study can uncover trends, assess the impact of design changes, evaluate amenities and programming, and identify gaps in user experience. This research highlights who is present, who is missing, and points to areas that may require further study or public consultation to improve the space for all users.

Public life studies play a critical role in informing urban planning, design interventions, and policy-making, ensuring that public spaces meet the needs of diverse communities and are continuously enhanced for accessibility, equity, and engagement.

METHODS



“We live close by and have enjoyed all three parks for the past 25 years. They are a very special part of this city. Thank you for getting our feedback about them.”

- Survey Respondent

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The study area includes three parks within the 'Pits' Park District: Christie Pits Park, Bickford Park, and Art Eggleton Park. As shown in Figure A (Map of the Pits Park District study area showing boundaries and zones), the boundaries of the study area are roughly Barton Avenue to the north, Christie Street and Grace Street to the east, Shaw Street and Montrose Avenue to the west, and the southern property line of Art Eggleton Park to the south. These parks are situated in a mixed-use neighborhood with both residential and commercial buildings surrounding the parks. The district is characterized by a mix of green spaces, recreational facilities, and community areas, creating a diverse urban environment.

To facilitate a comprehensive analysis, the study area was divided into six zones, as shown on the map. The division of these zones was based on park size, usage patterns, and distinctive features within the parks. This approach enables targeted observations across different types of spaces, ranging from quieter, green areas to more active, recreational zones.

Observations were only recorded for publicly accessible park spaces and did not include activity on private properties. The study focused on movements from streets to and from parks rather than movement that passed by parks, and was not intended to serve as a technical traffic study.

The surrounding community is diverse, and this mix of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces influences how people use the parks. Each park offers different amenities and features (Table 1), which contribute to varying levels of park engagement. Asset maps to understand the specific locations of facilities and amenities is provided in Appendix A.

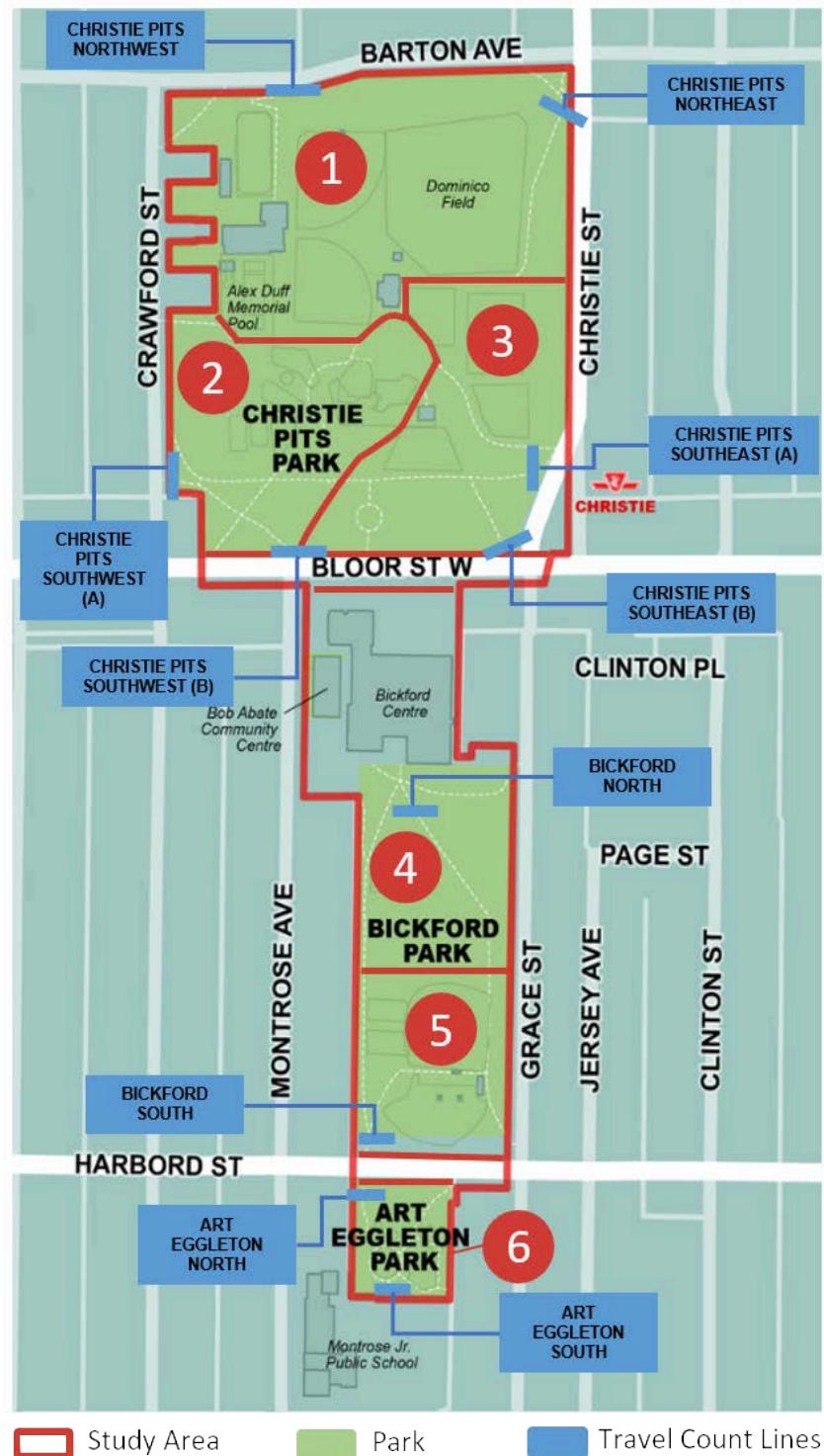


Figure A, Map of the Pits Park District study area showing boundaries and zones.

PARK AMENITIES

Christie Pits Park (8.9 ha): Known for its large size, sports fields, playgrounds, and green spaces. It is the largest of the three parks and serves as a key community hub.

Bickford Park (2.8 ha): A smaller park with sports facilities, dog park, picnic areas, and open green spaces, offering a more intimate recreational environment.

Art Eggleton Park (0.81 ha): A small family-friendly park adjacent to a school field, this park provides green space, a playground and a wading pool that contribute to the area's overall recreational offerings.

Table 1, Park Facilities at Christie Pits, Bickford and Art Eggleton Park.

FACILITIES	CHRISTIE PITS PARK	BICKFORD PARK	ART EGGLETON PARK
Amphitheatre	1		
Artificial Ice Rink	1		
Ball Diamond	3	1	
Bike Trail	3		
Bottle Filling Station	1	2	1
Changeroom Facility	1		
Dog Fountain			1
Dogs Off-Leash Area		1	
Dressing Room	1		
Drinking Fountain	2		
Firepit	1		
Indoor Kitchen (inside Alex Duff Memorial Pool building)	1		
Outdoor Basketball Court	1		
Outdoor Pool	1		
Outdoor Oven	1		
Outdoor Table Tennis	3		1
Outdoor Volleyball Court	1		
Parking Lot	1		
Picnic Shelter	1		
Playground	1		1
Picnic Site	5		
Skateboard Area	1		
Snack/Concession Stand	1		
Sport Field	1		
Sports Pad Area	1		1
Wading Pool	1		
Washroom Facility	1	1	

RESEARCH TOOLS AND MATERIALS

IN-PARK OBSERVATIONS OVERVIEW

In-park observations include travel counts, behavioural mapping, and perceived age and gender counts and were conducted in weather that was representative of Summer and Winter (including a day with extreme heat in the Summer and a day with a snow event in the Winter), during variations in day of the week and time of day. The schedule generally avoids times with major construction or other activities that may impact the patterns of day-to-day use typically experienced in the parks. Similarly, if a major event (e.g. outdoor festival, sports tournament) is happening during a scheduled assessment, this was clearly described in the recorded data.

On the Summer observation dates, for the duration of the study on Saturday, August 24, 2024, the temperature reached a high of 25°C and a low of 20°C. It was sunny with some clouds. For the duration of the study on Tuesday, August 27, 2024, the temperature reached a high of 31°C and a low of 24°C.

On the Winter observation dates, for the duration of the study on Saturday, January 18, 2025, the temperature reached a high of 4°C and a low of -6°C. There was rain and snow during the afternoon and clouds throughout the day. For the duration of the study on Thursday, January 23, 2025 the temperature reached a high of -4°C and a low of -9°C.

Some notable events in the Summer include an outdoor picture show held by Toronto Outdoor Picture Show in Zone 3 and a Maple Leafs baseball game in Zone 1, both on the evening of Saturday, August 24, 2025 in Christie Pits Park.

Each observation day consisted of 3 three-hour shifts (8am - 11am, 1pm - 4pm and 6pm - 9pm). In the Summer, there were 9 observers per shift, totalling 27 observers and 9 observed hours per observation day. In the Winter, there were 10 observers per shift, totalling 30 observers per observation day. In addition, there were also 2 Park People staff participating as supervisors for a total of 13 hours per observation day.

Observation instructions and grids used to record data can be found in Appendix B. For each 3-hour shift, travel counts were conducted for 10 minutes at the top of each hour, followed by 40 minutes of behavioural mapping and age and gender counts or intercept surveys. Travel counts, behavioural mapping, and age and gender counts do not have observers interact with their subjects whereas intercept surveys do.

TRAVEL COUNTS

Travel counts are a tally of people crossing a 'count' line at one of the 10 entrances. Observers are stationed at an entrance and count all dogs and people crossing their count line, categorizing them into the following groups:

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists and Rollers (Electric and Non-electric)
- Mobility Device Users
- Dogs (On-leash and Off-leash)

BEHAVIOURAL MAPPING

Behavioural mapping is a 'snapshot' of people's position and activity at the park. This is specifically to record activities of people who are stationary in the park as opposed to passing through. Observers are stationed within a zone and record all stationary activities and positions on observation grids.

Positions are categorized by:

- Standing
- Formal Sit (sitting on a structure made for seating eg. a bench or picnic table)
- Informal Sit (sitting on a structure not made for seating eg. a rock or a ping pong table)
- Lying

Activities are categorized by:

- Socializing
- Eating/Drinking
- Active Recreation (activity that would make one sweat)
- Passive Recreation (activity that would not make one sweat)

OBSERVED AGE AND GENDER COUNTS

Observed age and gender counts aid in determining who park users are. Observers conducting behavioural mapping are recording the perceived (i.e. visually-approximated) age and gender of stationary people in their designated zone simultaneously.

Age categories are:

- 0-4 (babies & toddlers)
- 5-14 (children & preteens)
- 15-24 (teens & youth)
- 25-44 (young & mid adults)
- 45-64 (adults)
- 65+ (older adults)

Gender is categorized by:

- Male
- Female
- Other

Observers also counted dogs that were stationary in the parks, categorized as on-leash and off-leash.

PARK INTERCEPT AND ONLINE SURVEY

The survey (Appendix C) was conducted through in-person intercepts during summer and winter park observation days. Random sampling throughout each zone was conducted to gather information directly from park users. The survey was also offered through an online platform (Medallia) to provide an asynchronous option for self-reporting. The online survey was open from August 23, 2024 - January 31, 2025.

Promotion of the survey was supported by:

- In-park signage with QR code available for scanning
- Announcement from Ward Councillors office at in person events
- City of Toronto website

The survey included baseline demographic and self-identification questions and asked park users about park access and usage patterns including:

- Which park(s) within the Pits District are visited
- How much time is spent in the parks
- How often the park is visited in different seasons and at what times of day
- Forms of transportation to parks and access to park (e.g. formal pathway)

Additional questions asked park users about:

- Purpose of their visits (e.g. recreation)
- Feelings of safety
- Improvements to park experience

The intercept survey had 69 completed surveys and the online survey had 399 completed surveys for a total of 468 complete surveys. The online survey had 58 partial surveys for a total of 526 respondents. The online survey had a completion rate of 89%. The intercept and online surveys were combined for data

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Targeted outreach was made to university and college departments in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area that align with urban planning, urban studies, and environmental science with student volunteers participating from the University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University, and York University. Additionally, Park People utilized social media to recruit volunteers by posting on LinkedIn, Instagram, X, and Facebook.

Virtual volunteer training sessions for both Summer and Winter observations were held 2 days prior to the first observation dates of each season. Volunteers were equipped to understand how to do travel counts, behavioural mapping, age and gender counts, and intercept surveys. In addition, volunteers were provided with direction regarding the Indigenous sacred fire at Christie Pits Park and how to record general observations for qualitative data.

For the four observation dates over the Summer and Winter, we utilized a total of 52 volunteers who worked a total of 261 hours (divided into 87 three-hour shifts). Two Park People staff were also on-site to troubleshoot and support volunteers throughout the observation days.



LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

This study provides valuable insights into public life at Christie Pits Park, Bickford Park, and Art Eggleton Park. However, as with any Public Life Study, there are some limitations to consider when interpreting the findings.

Despite these constraints, this study offers a strong foundation for future planning and improvements, providing valuable data to enhance park accessibility, inclusivity, and overall user experience.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT & TIMELINE

The short project timeline made it difficult to recruit and train volunteers. While this did not significantly impact data collection, a longer recruitment period could have expanded surveyor capacity and coverage. The shorter timeline also led to slight additions to the data collection in the Winter, including the addition of "On-Leash" and "Off-Leash" categories to the stationary dog counts (they were not specified as either in the Summer, resulting in the "Unknown" category) and the addition of the Art Eggleton South Entrance observed by an additional volunteer.

OBSERVATIONAL & SURVEY BIAS

Data was collected through direct observation and self-reported survey responses. These methods provide important insights but may not fully capture long-term trends or reflect the experiences of all park users.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Park use can be affected by weather conditions, special events, and seasonal variations. These factors may have influenced observation periods and should be considered when interpreting the results.

SURVEY DATA

Completing an online survey requires at least some access to technology (mobile phone or computer) this may be a barrier to some people and skew survey results towards those who are more comfortable with and have better access to various online platforms.

ZONE PROFILES



“I have used all parks this year more than other years, for personal relaxation and mental health needs. Being able to bike to them and then walk around and enjoy them, at different times and finding spots simply to sit and be ... it has brought great joy and peacefulness to my days. I have surprised myself too with events I didn't know were going on and turned my days at the park even more fun. Being at the parks... makes me feel alive and grateful.”

- Survey Respondent

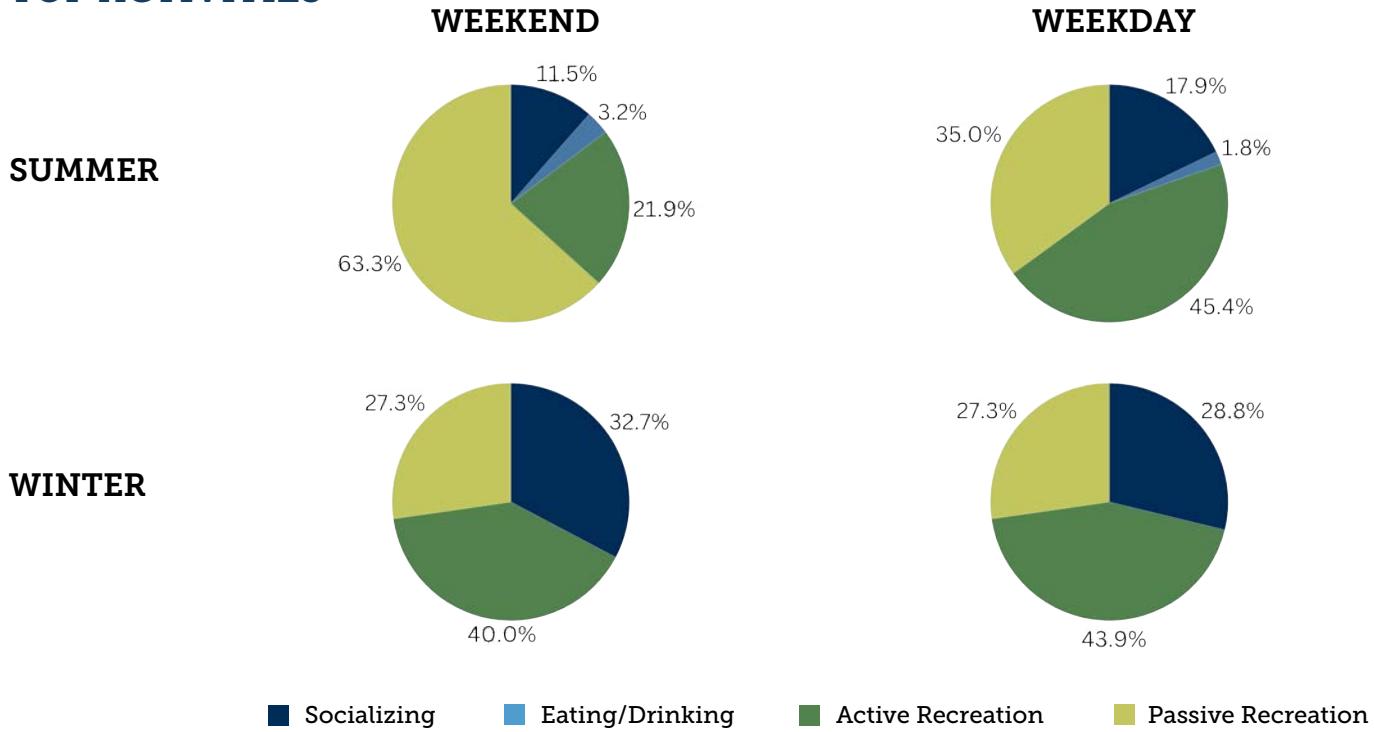
ZONE 1 - CHRISTIE PITS PARK

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS



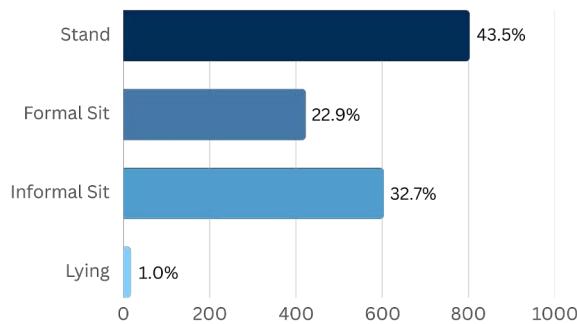
- The sports facilities in this zone attracted people consistently throughout the study, namely the outdoor swimming pool in the summer, the artificial outdoor ice rink in both seasons (pickleball and tennis in the Summer and skating in the Winter), and the two baseball diamonds in both seasons (baseball in the summer through minor league games and camps and as an informal off-leash dog area in the winter).
- The complete absence of non-electric cyclists and rollers and mobility device users in the wintertime may indicate that paths are not well maintained when there is snow and ice.
- Stationary off-leash dog activity was highest in the wintertime because people preferred to use the two baseball diamonds as off-leash dog parks when there were no other park users there.

TOP ACTIVITIES

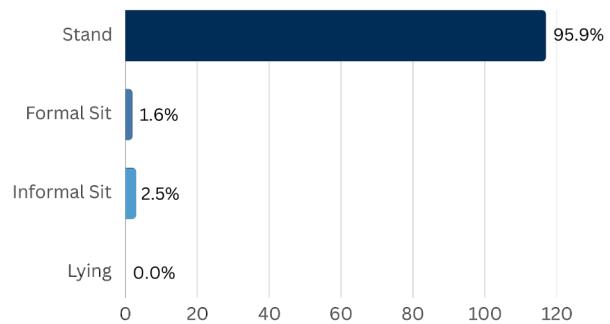


POSITIONS

SUMMER (n=1848)



WINTER (n=122)



MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

		SUMMER	WINTER
🚶	WALKING	93.1%	76.4%
🌿⚡	ELECTRIC CYCLING/ ROLLING	0.9%	23.6%
🚲	NON - ELECTRIC CYCLING/ ROLLING	3.0%	0.0%
🛴	MOBILITY DEVICE	3.0%	0.0%

ENTRANCES

CHRISTIE PITS NORTHWEST ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- Combination of ramps and steps
- Handrail on one side
- No significant slope of approximately 4°
- This entrance leads to the Sid Smith Artificial Ice Rink

IN THE SUMMER:

This entrance is consistently the least used entrance, although traffic peaks in the evenings on both the weekend and the weekday.

IN THE WINTER:

This entrance is relatively well maintained with minimal ice and snow buildup.

CHRISTIE PITS NORTHEAST ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No steps
- Handrail on one side
- Slope of approximately 7°
- There is a bus stop at the top of this entrance on Barton Ave

IN THE SUMMER:

Even without ice and snow, this entrance is the steepest of all ten entrances causing cyclists to dismount and stroller users to be apprehensive.

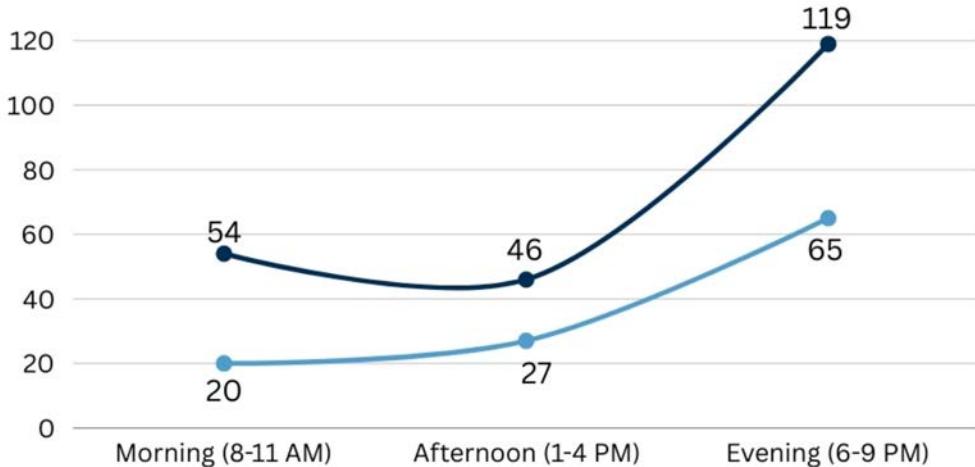
IN THE WINTER:

This entrance is not well maintained. There is a lot of ice and snow buildup, making it very slippery with the slope.

TRAVEL COUNTS

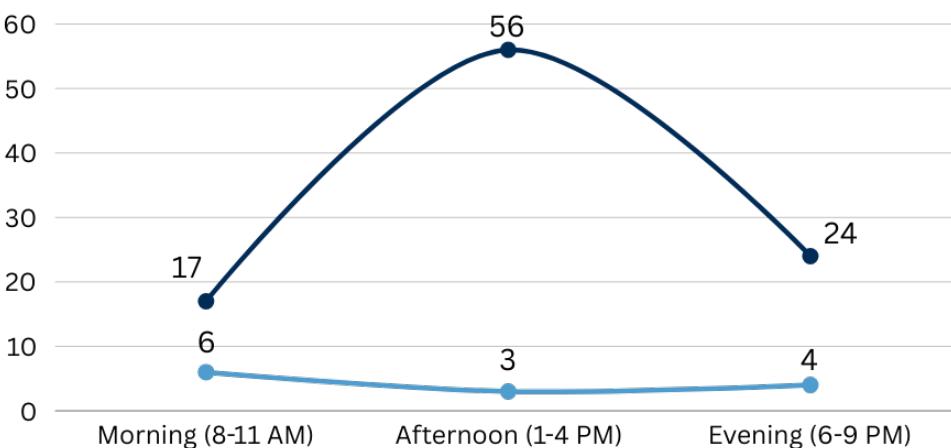
SUMMER

WEEKEND
 WEEKDAY



WINTER

WEEKEND
 WEEKDAY



DOG ACTIVITY

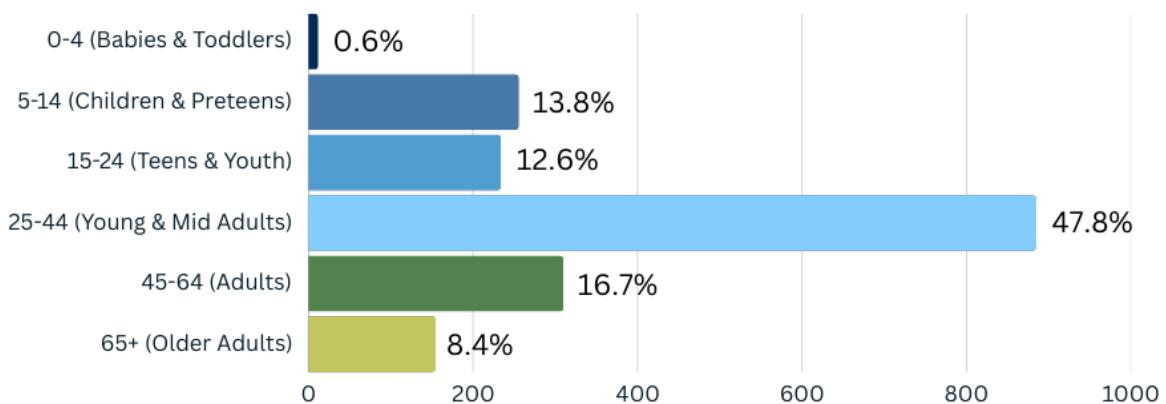
	MOVEMENT	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	UNKNOWN*
SUMMER	Travel	95.3%	4.7%	100%
	Stationary			
WINTER	Travel	93.8%	6.3%	
	Stationary	37.3%	62.7%	

*Dogs were not differentiated as "On-Leash" or "Off-Leash"

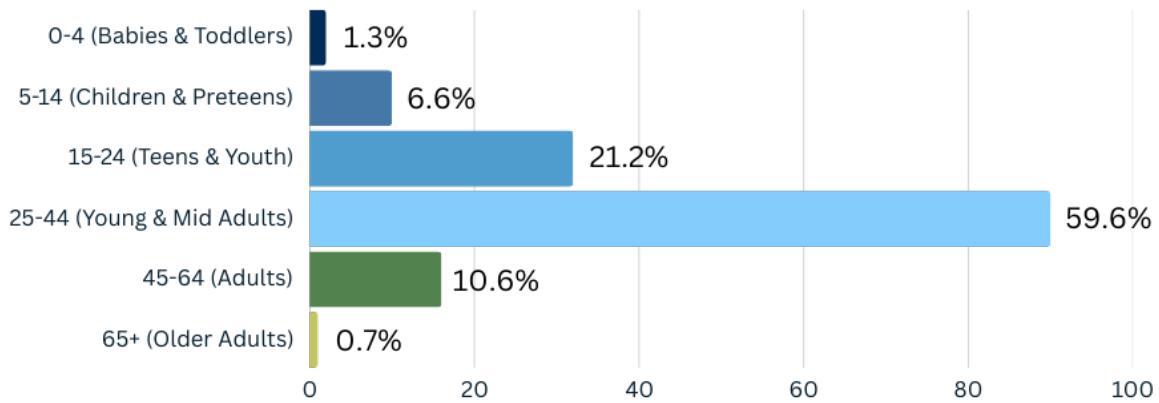
OBSERVED AGE AND GENDER PRESENTATION

OBSERVED AGE

SUMMER (n=1852)



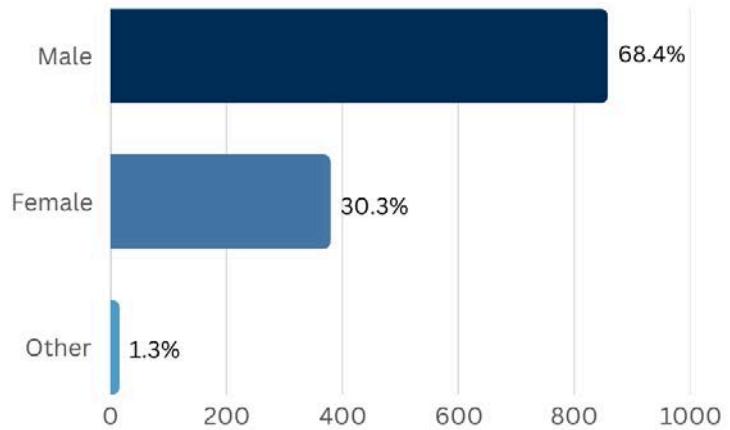
WINTER (n=126)



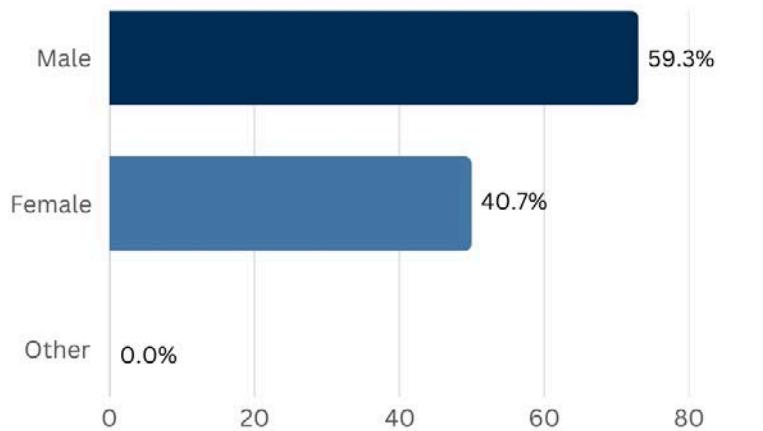
- 0-4 (Babies & Toddlers)
- 5-14 (Children & Preteens)
- 15-24 (Teens & Youth)
- 25-44 (Young & Mid Adults)
- 45-64 (Adults)
- 65+ (Older Adults)

OBSERVED GENDER

SUMMER (n=1848)



WINTER (n=126)



■ Male

■ Female

■ Other

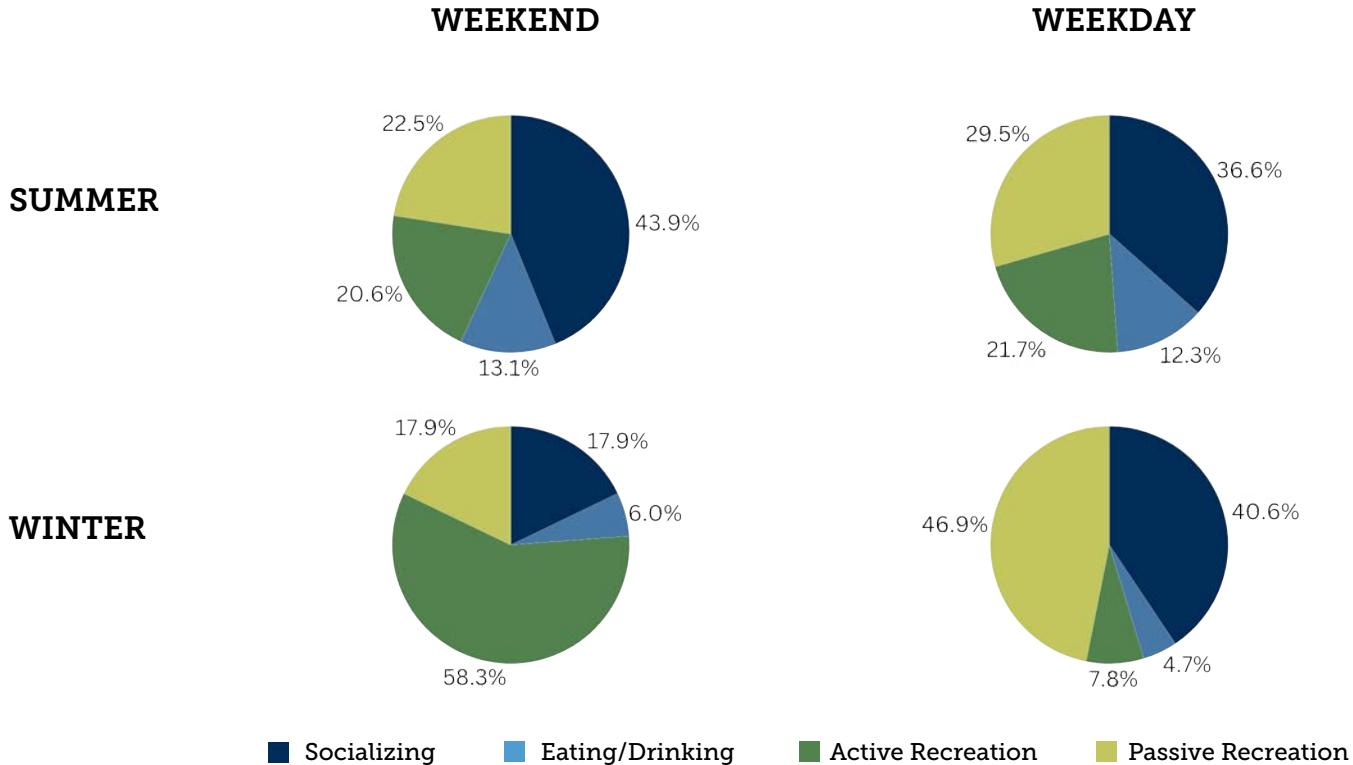
ZONE 2 - CHRISTIE PITS PARK

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS



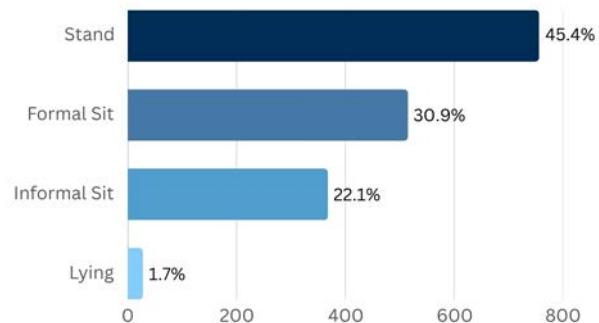
- In the Summer, the basketball court, wading pool, and playground were popular areas in this zone where people would socialize, play and watch basketball, play in the playground and wading pool, and supervise kids.
- This zone has the most mobility device users in both Summer and Winter in Christie Pits Park. This may indicate that this zone has the most accessible and well maintained entrances.
- In the Winter, dog activity increased with many park users walking and playing with their dogs in this zone. Although there was more off-leash dog activity than on-leash in the Winter, it was not as much as in Zone 1, which can be due to less open space in this zone.

TOP ACTIVITIES

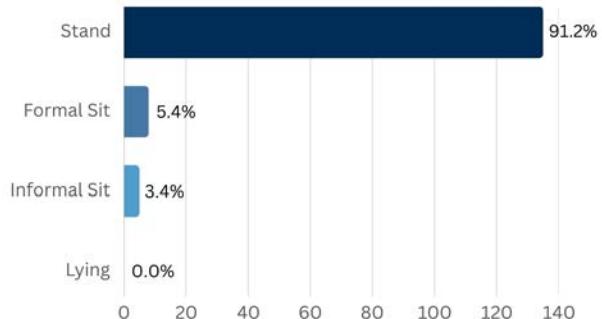


POSITIONS

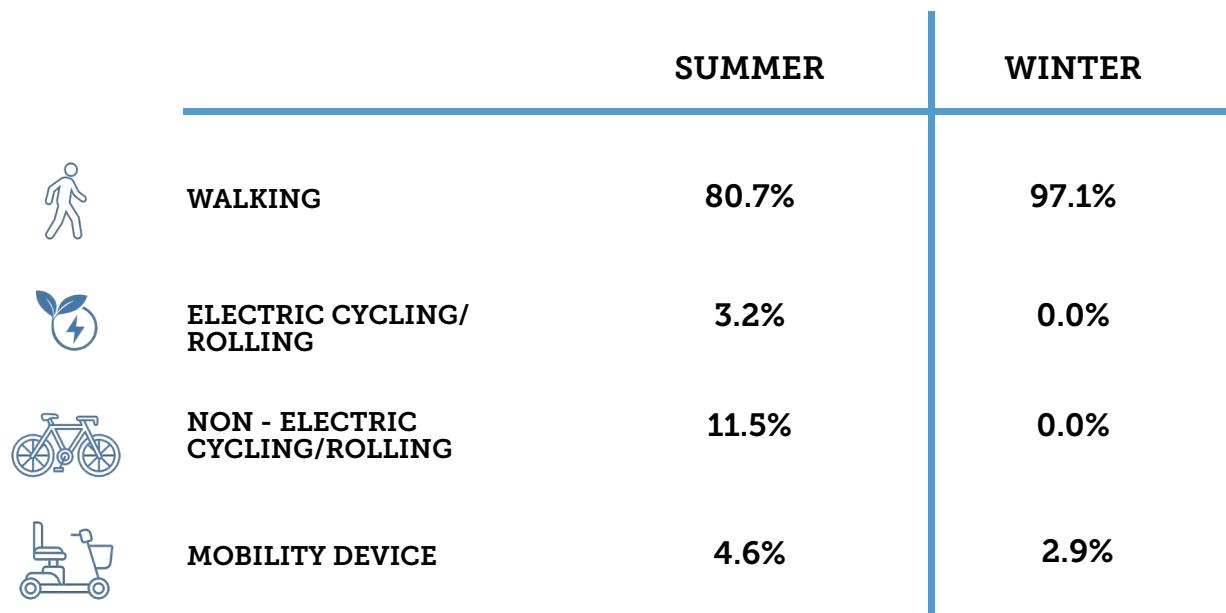
SUMMER (n=1667)



WINTER (n=148)



MODES OF TRANSPORTATION



ENTRANCES

CHRISTIE PITS SOUTHWEST A ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No steps
- No significant slope
- This entrance splits into two paths, one leading North and the other leading East

IN THE SUMMER:

This is the most used entrance during weekends and weekday mornings.

IN THE WINTER:

The path that splits leading North is more well maintained than the path that splits leading East.

CHRISTIE PITS SOUTHWEST B ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No steps
- No significant slope
- There is a crosswalk that leads into this entrance on Bloor St. This entrance also splits into two paths, one leading North and the other leading West

IN THE SUMMER:

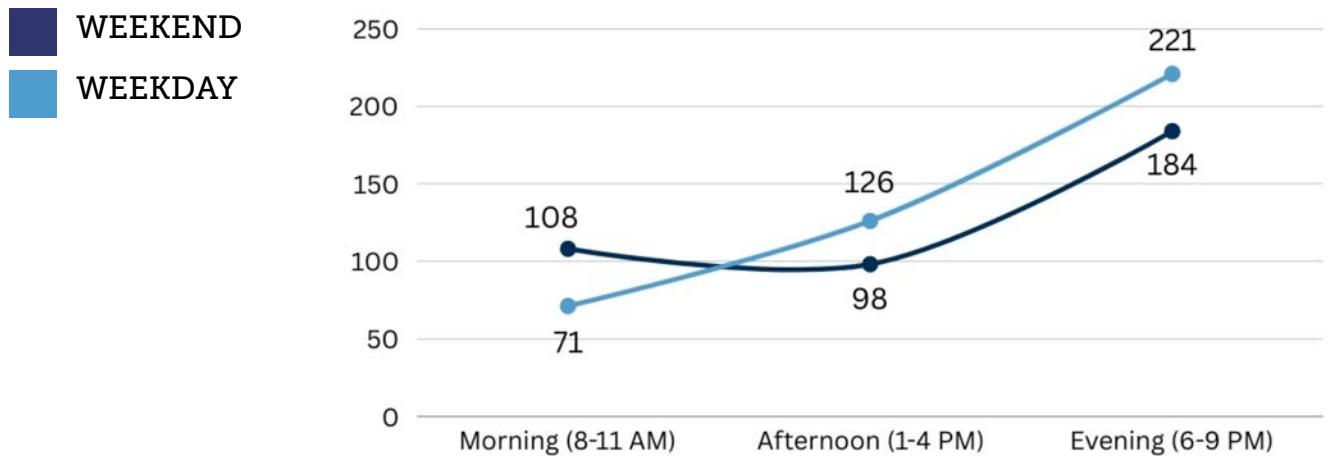
This is the most used entrance during weekday evenings.

IN THE WINTER:

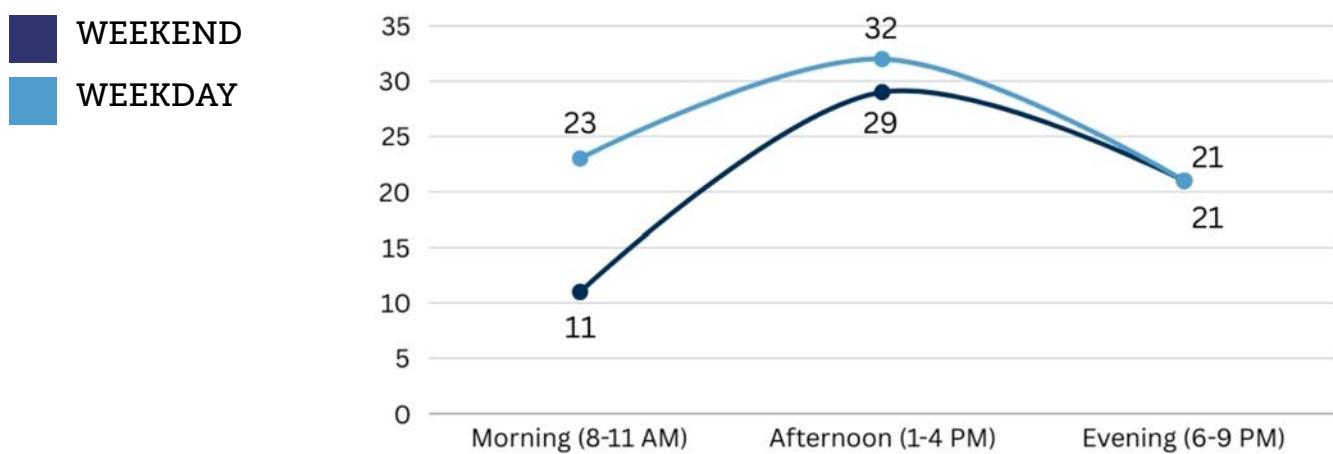
This entrance is well maintained nearest to Bloor St. with no ice or snow buildup, but is less maintained further up the path.

TRAVEL COUNTS

SUMMER



WINTER



DOG ACTIVITY

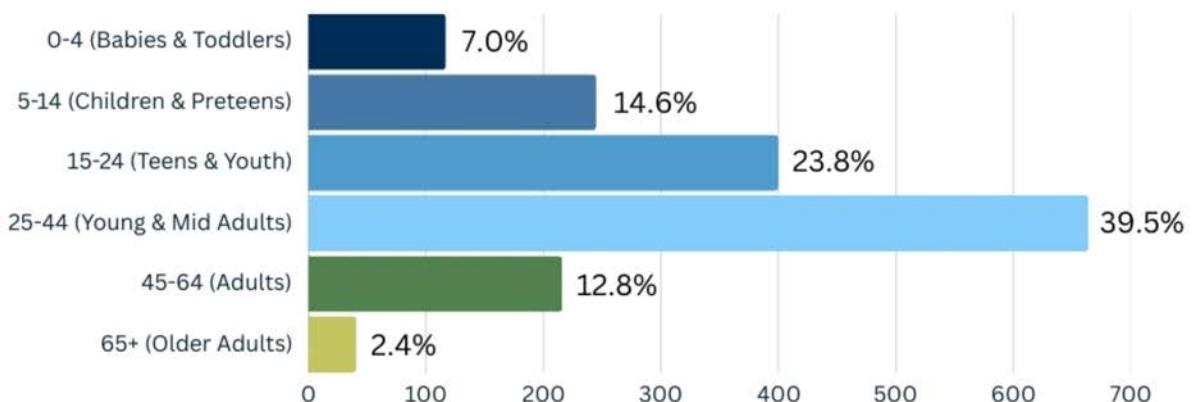
	MOVEMENT	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	UNKNOWN*
SUMMER	Travel	92.3%	7.7%	
	Stationary			100%
WINTER	Travel	97.2%	2.8%	
	Stationary	48.9%	51.1%	

*Dogs were not differentiated as "On-Leash" or "Off-Leash"

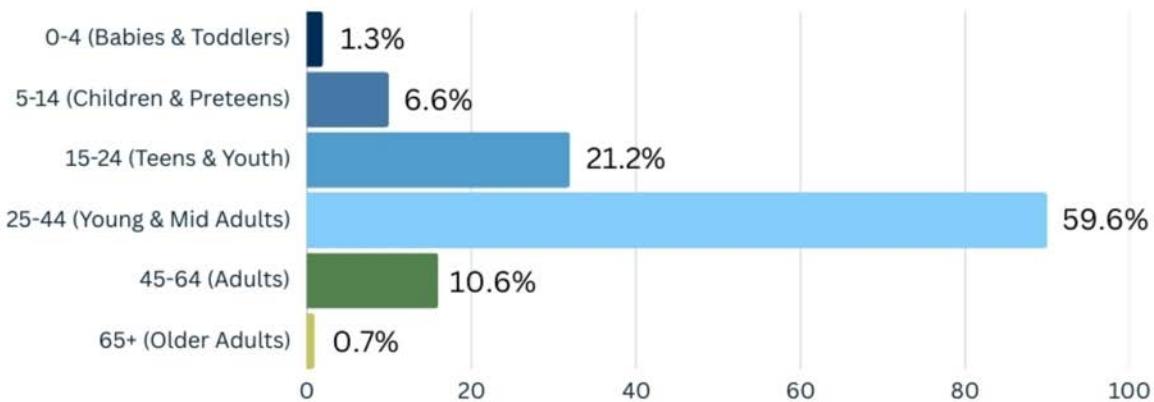
OBSERVED AGE AND GENDER PRESENTATION

OBSERVED AGE

SUMMER (n=1683)



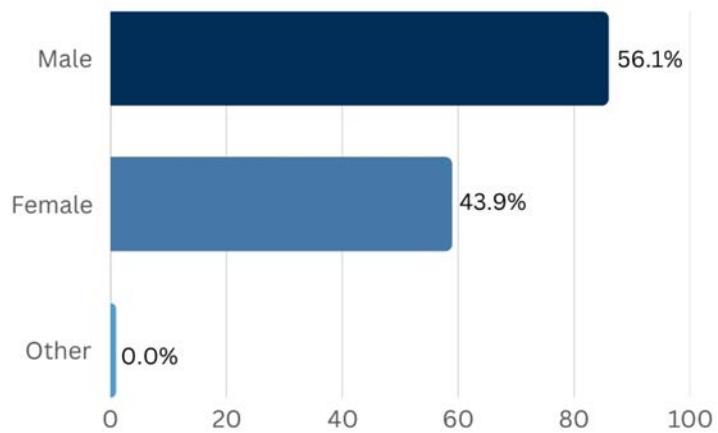
WINTER (n=151)



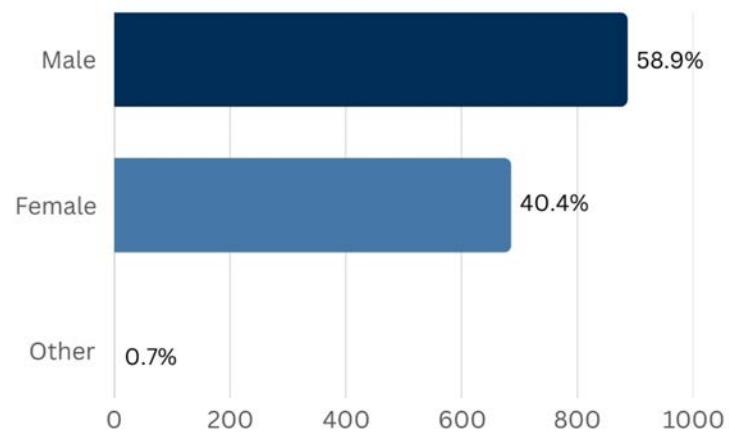
- 0-4 (Babies & Toddlers)
- 5-14 (Children & Preteens)
- 15-24 (Teens & Youth)
- 25-44 (Young & Mid Adults)
- 45-64 (Adults)
- 65+ (Older Adults)

OBSERVED GENDER

SUMMER (n=1563)



WINTER (n=146)



■ Male

■ Female

■ Other

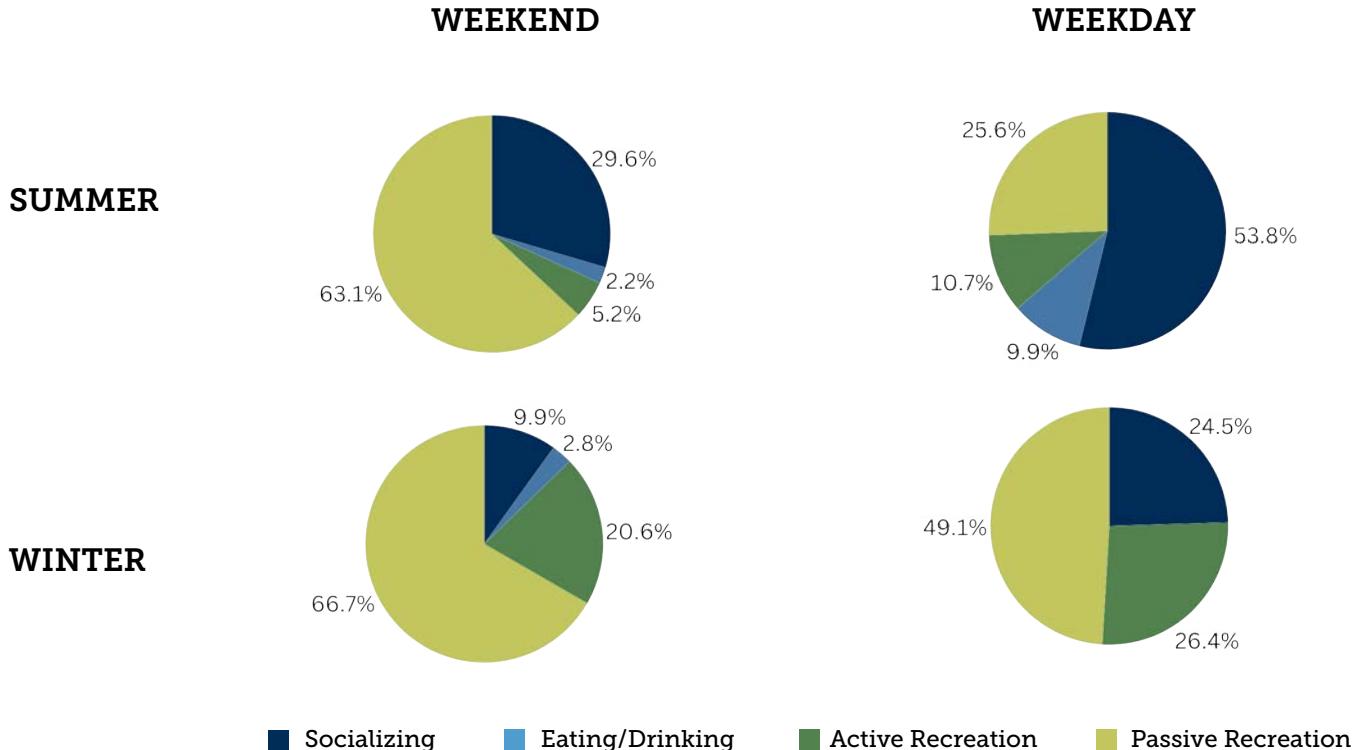
ZONE 3 - CHRISTIE PITS PARK

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS



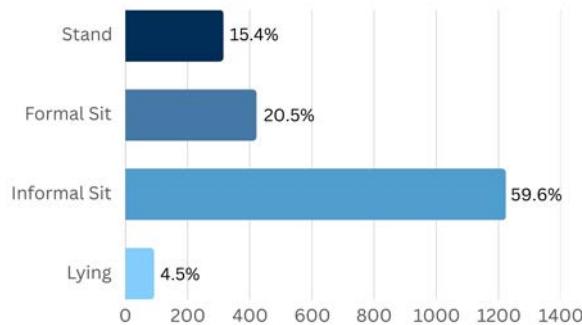
- The open grassy area in this zone allowed park users to utilize this space creatively with activities like painting, a clothing swap, and picnics. Other popular activities in this zone include skateboarding, socializing, and exercising.
- This zone consistently has more on-leash dog activity than off-leash dog activity compared to the other zones in Christie Pits Park. This could be due to higher traffic in this zone.
- This zone is the only zone in Christie Pits Park where informal seating is the most popular position with many people opting to sit on blankets or on the grass.

TOP ACTIVITIES

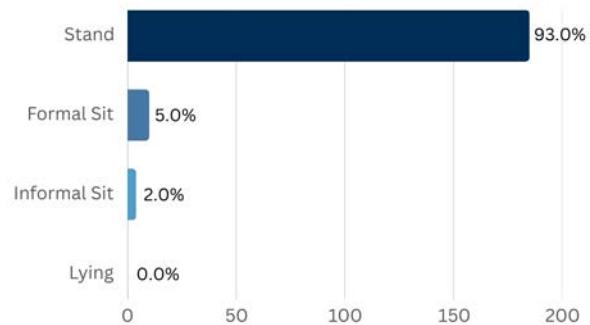


POSITIONS

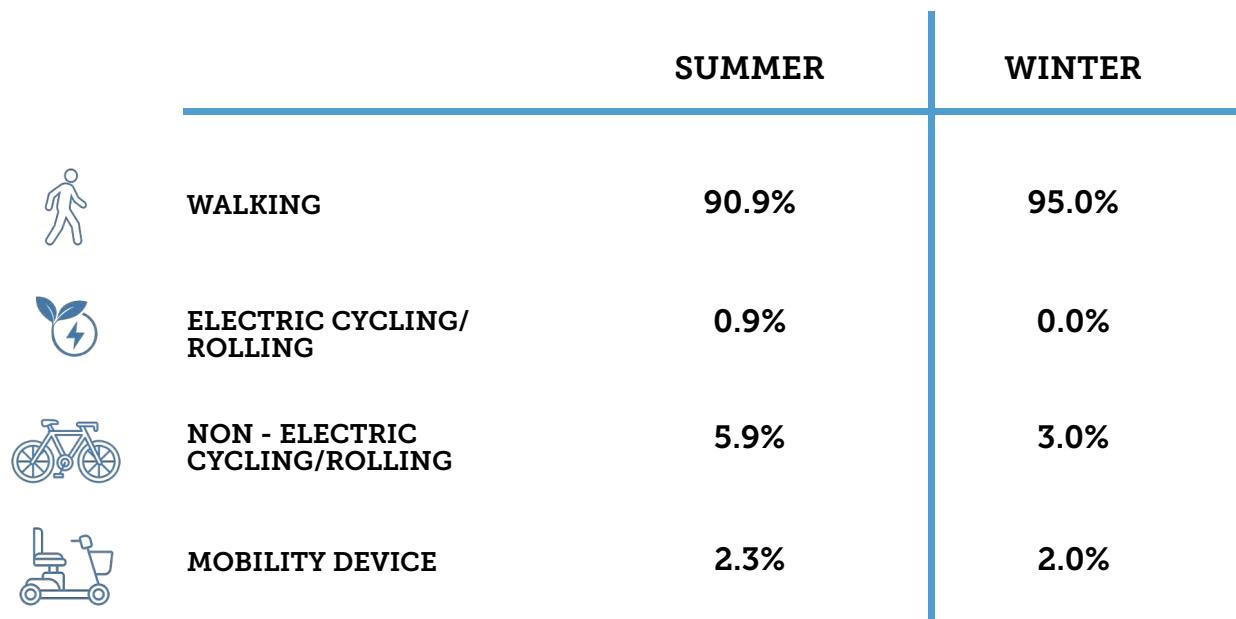
SUMMER (n=2055)



WINTER (n=199)



MODES OF TRANSPORTATION



ENTRANCES

CHRISTIE PITS SOUTHEAST A ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No significant slope
- No Steps
- This entrance is also across from the Christie TTC subway station

IN THE SUMMER:

Motor vehicles use this entrance when there are events or if there is maintenance being done.

IN THE WINTER:

This entrance is well maintained with no ice or snow buildup.

CHRISTIE PITS SOUTHEAST B ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No steps
- No significant slope
- This entrance leads into two crosswalks on Bloor St and Christie St. There is also a Toronto Bikeshare station located by this entrance and is across the street from the Christie TTC subway station

IN THE SUMMER:

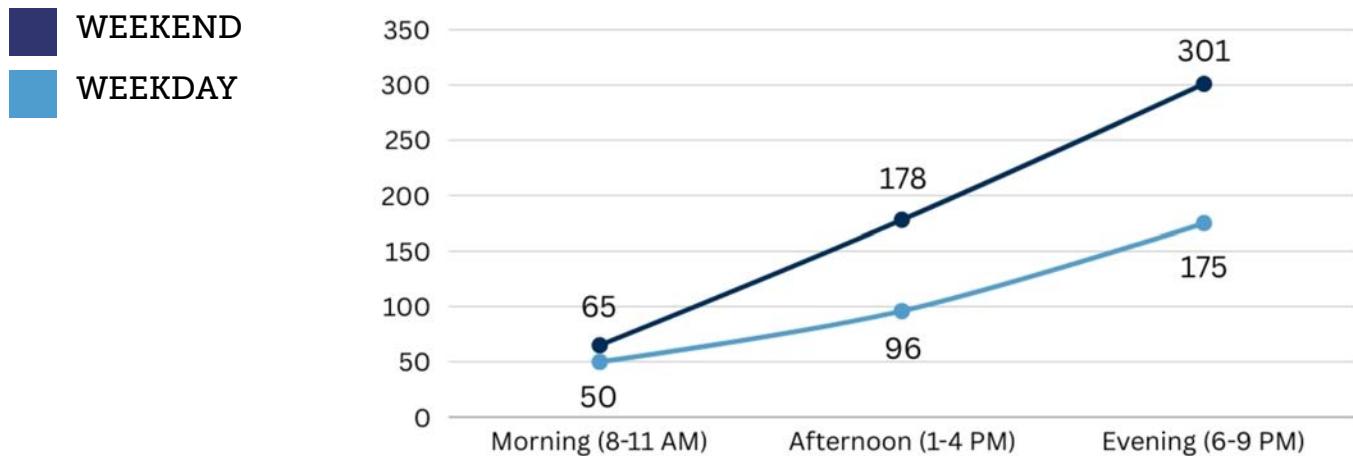
There is a Toronto Bikeshare station located by this entrance, which can contribute to more traffic in the Summer.

IN THE WINTER:

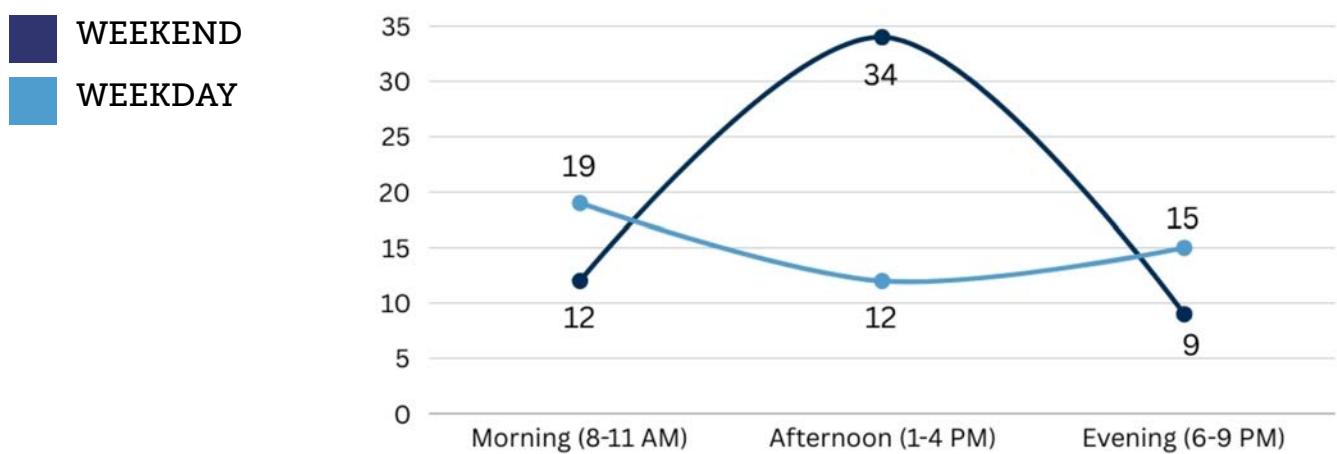
This entrance is not maintained in the wintertime with snow and ice build-up making it difficult to walk on and distinguish between the entrance path and the grassy area around it.

TRAVEL COUNTS

SUMMER



WINTER



DOG ACTIVITY

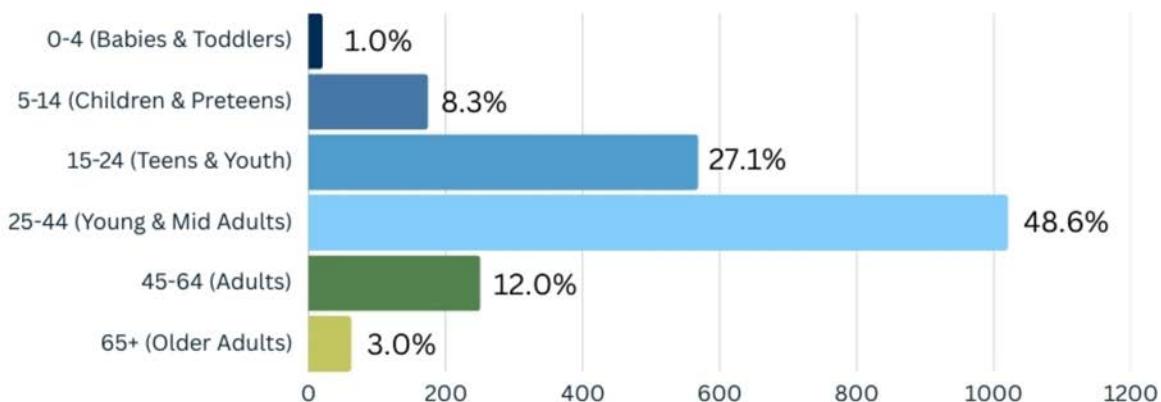
	MOVEMENT	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	UNKNOWN*
SUMMER	Travel	93.3%	6.7%	
	Stationary	68.4%		31.6%
WINTER	Travel	93.5%	6.5%	
	Stationary	52.1%	47.9%	

*Dogs were not differentiated as "On-Leash" or "Off-Leash"

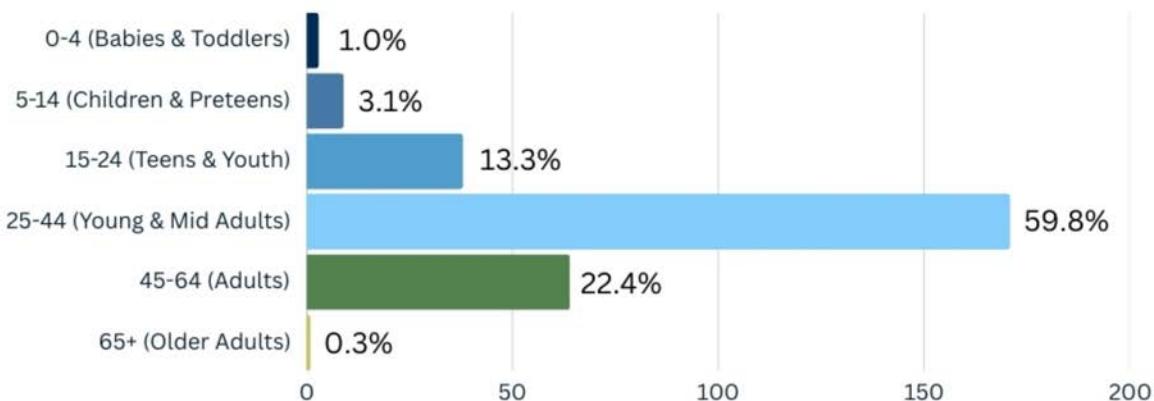
OBSERVED AGE AND GENDER PRESENTATION

OBSERVED AGE

SUMMER (n=1450)



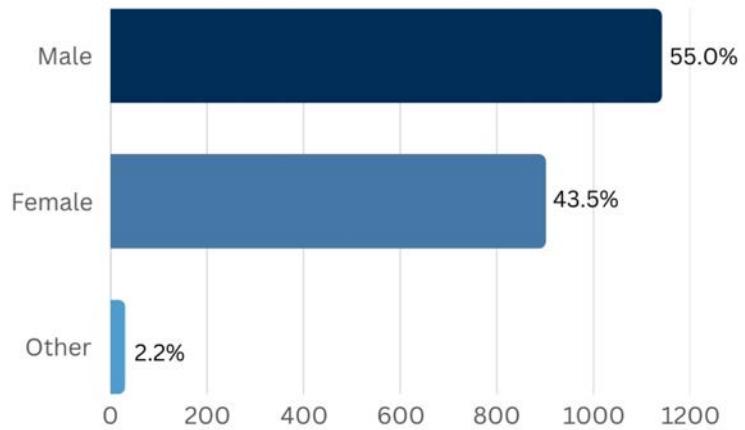
WINTER (n=286)



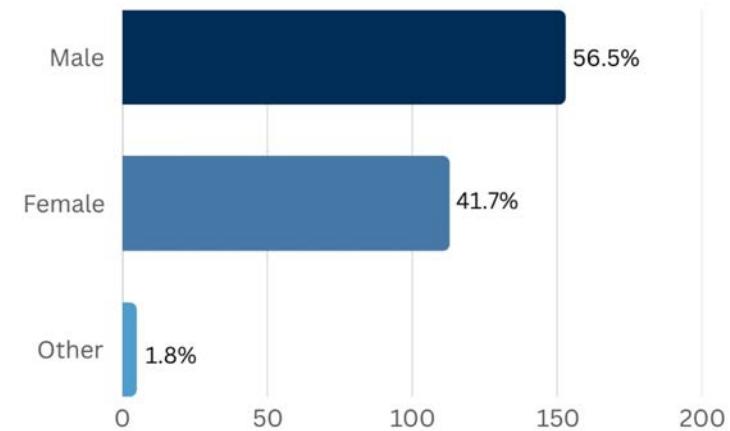
- 0-4 (Babies & Toddlers)
- 5-14 (Children & Preteens)
- 15-24 (Teens & Youth)
- 25-44 (Young & Mid Adults)
- 45-64 (Adults)
- 65+ (Older Adults)

OBSERVED GENDER

SUMMER (n=1425)



WINTER (n=271)



■ Male

■ Female

■ Other

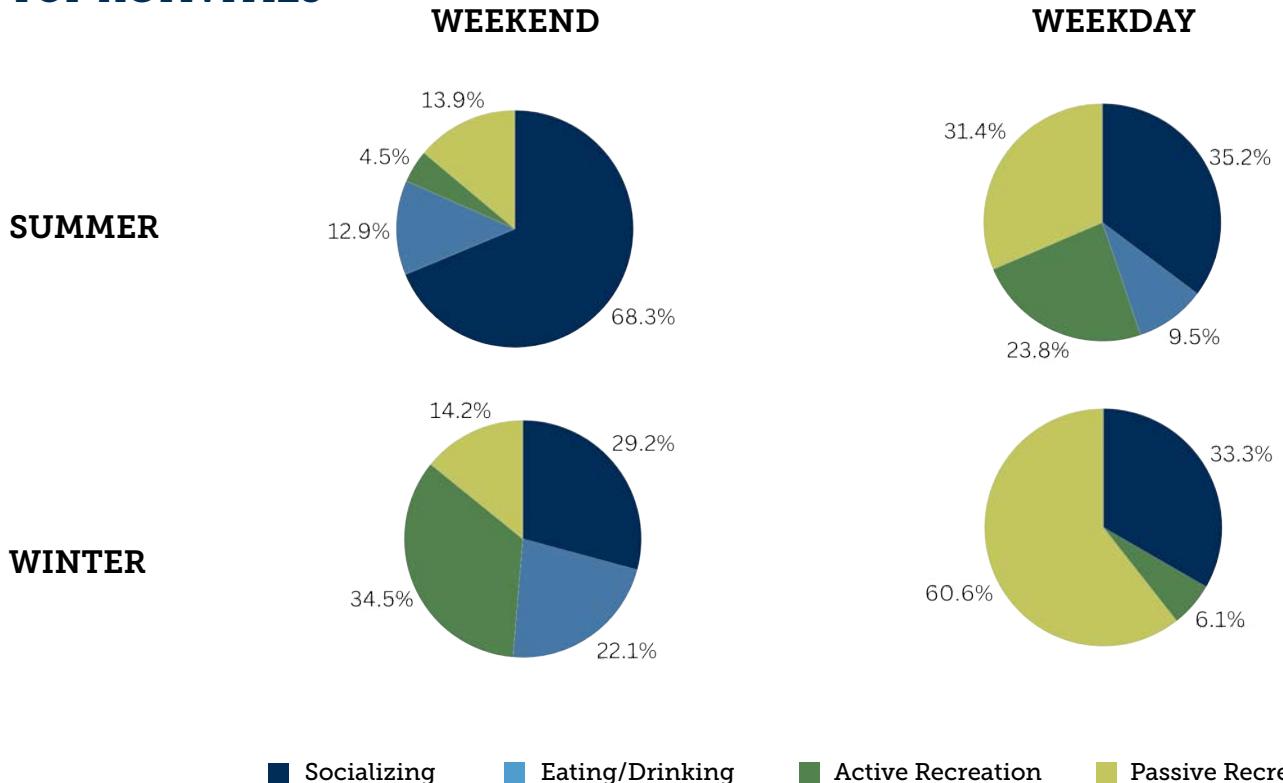
ZONE 4 - BICKFORD PARK

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS



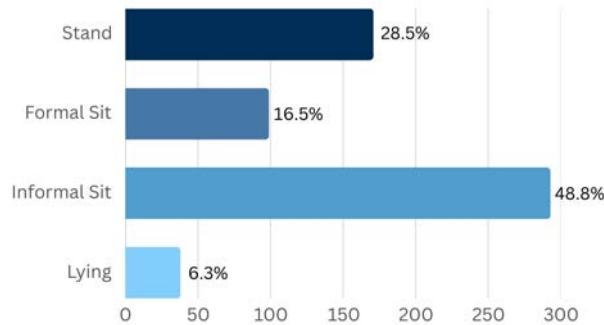
- Socializing was the most popular activity in this zone during the Summer with park users opting to relax, enjoy the weather, and spend time with their dogs here.
- The most popular position in the Summer for this zone is the informal sit, which can be due to the open grassy space and lack of formal seating.
- In the Winter, this zone was mostly used by park users who were exercising or taking their dogs out. There was more off-leash dog activity in the Winter than in the Summer, which is likely due to less people being in the park during the Winter.

TOP ACTIVITIES

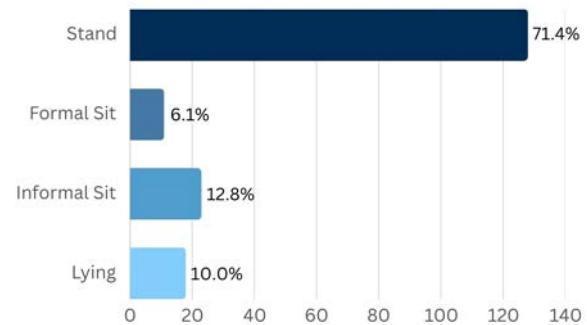


POSITIONS

SUMMER (n=601)



WINTER (n=180)



MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

		SUMMER	WINTER
	WALKING	92.1%	100.00%
	ELECTRIC CYCLING/ROLLING	1.1%	0.0%
	NON - ELECTRIC CYCLING/ROLLING	6.2%	0.0%
	MOBILITY DEVICE	0.6%	0.0%

ENTRANCES

BICKFORD NORTH JUNCTION OF PATHWAYS



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No steps
- This entrance leads into an intersection of five paths shown in the photo.
- Path 1 leads to/from the breezeway in the Bickford Centre, no slope

- Path 2 leads to/from Grace St, with a significant slope to/from street level
- Path 3 leads to/from the park, no slope
- Path 4 leads to the path that runs the perimeter of the park's western side, with a significant slope to/from street level
- Path 5 leads to/from Montrose Ave, with a significant slope to/from street level

BICKFORD NORTH ENTRANCE



North entrance looking into the park on path 3.

IN THE SUMMER:

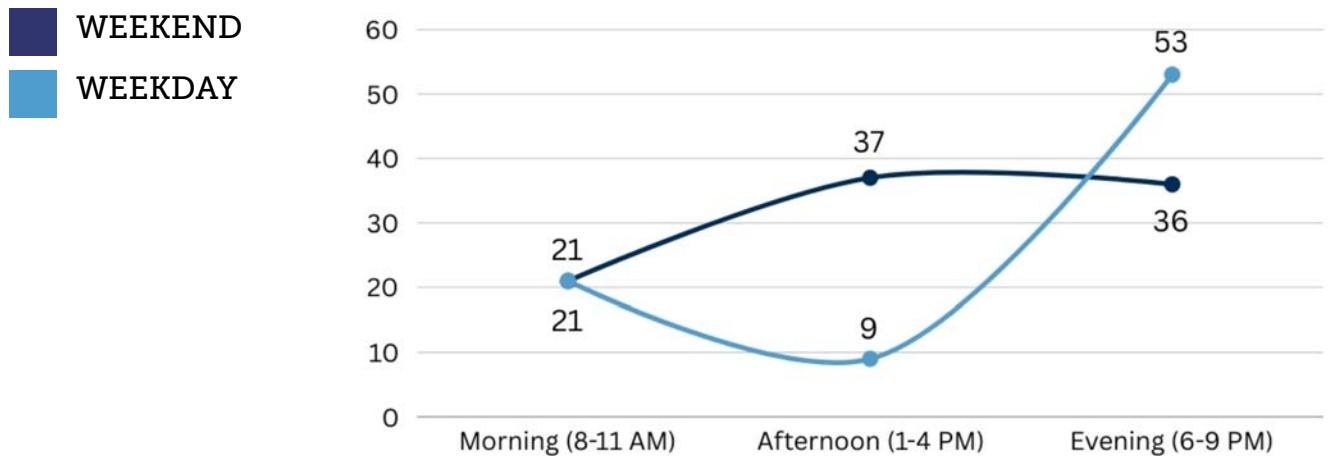
There was construction near this entrance which may have deterred people from using it.

IN THE WINTER:

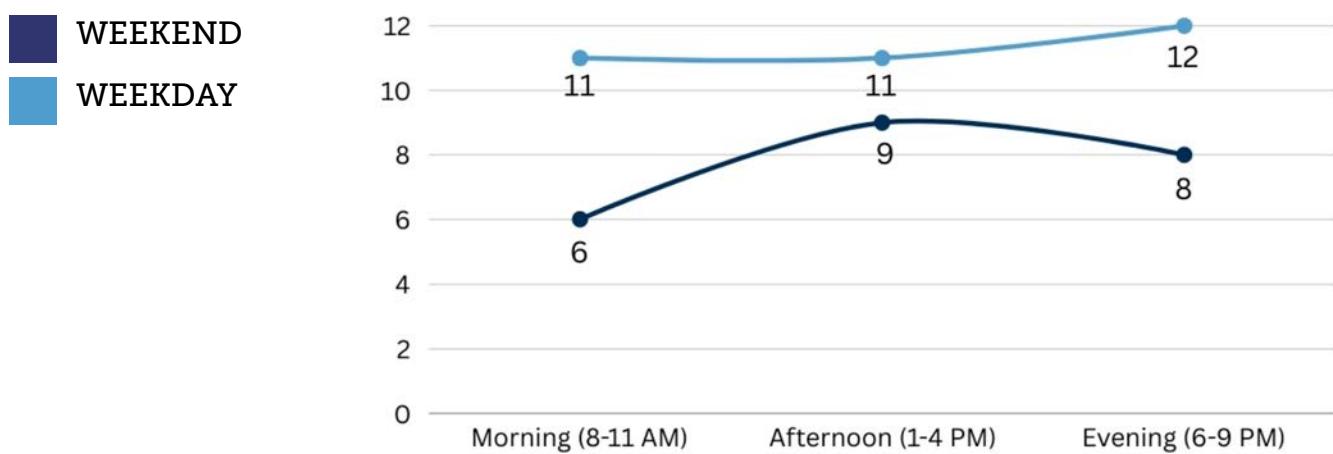
This entrance was relatively well maintained with minimal ice and snow buildup nearest to the breezeway.

TRAVEL COUNTS

SUMMER



WINTER



DOG ACTIVITY

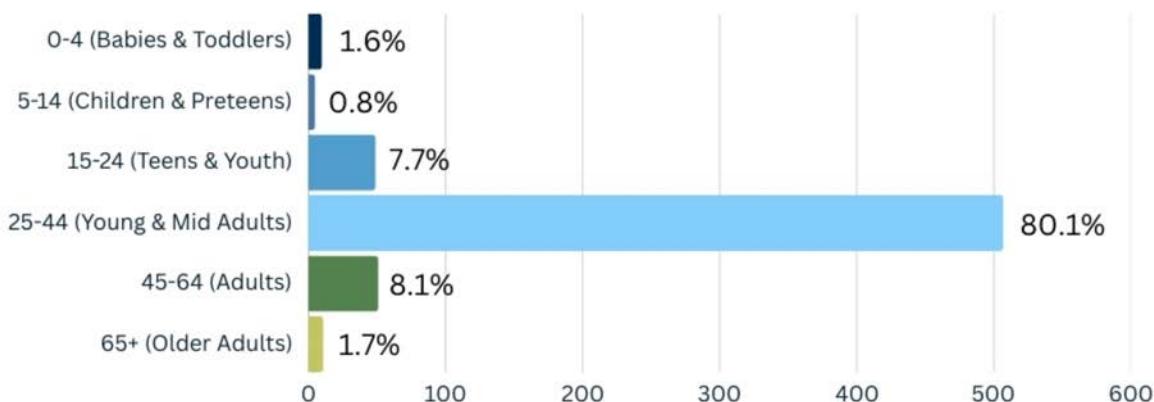
	MOVEMENT	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	UNKNOWN*
SUMMER	Travel	63.3%	36.7%	
	Stationary	20.4%	18.4%	61.2%
WINTER	Travel	45.2%	54.8%	
	Stationary	38.6%	61.4%	

*Dogs were not differentiated as "On-Leash" or "Off-Leash"

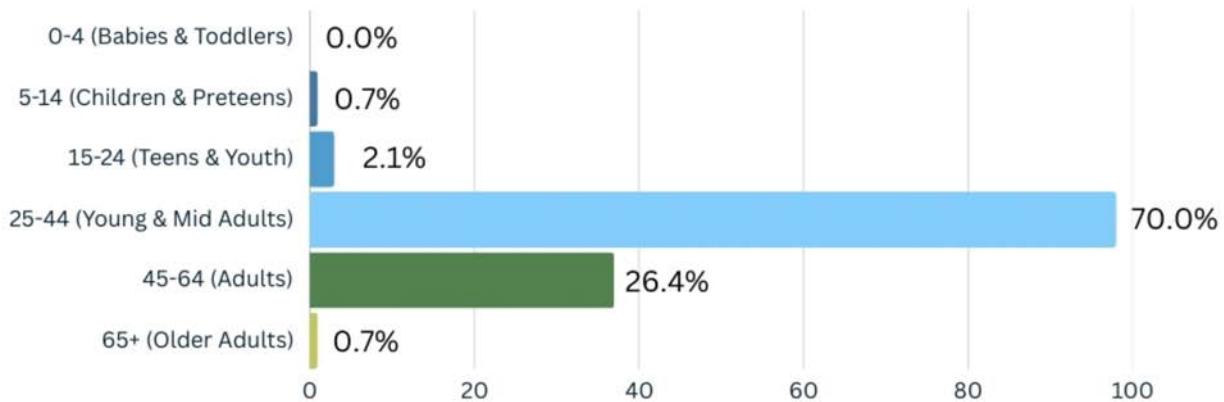
OBSERVED AGE AND GENDER PRESENTATION

OBSERVED AGE

SUMMER (n=633)



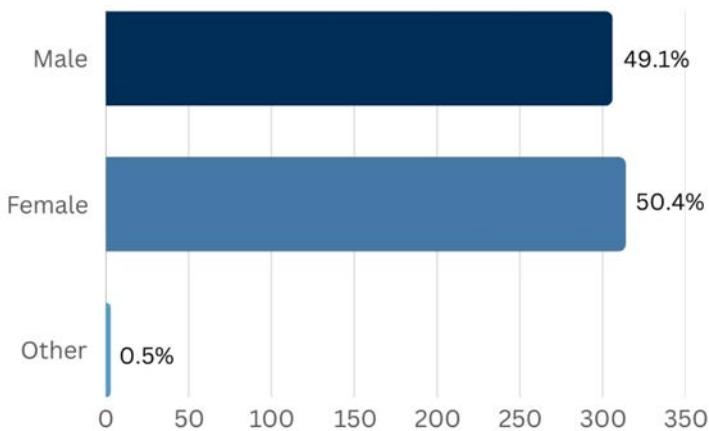
WINTER (n=140)



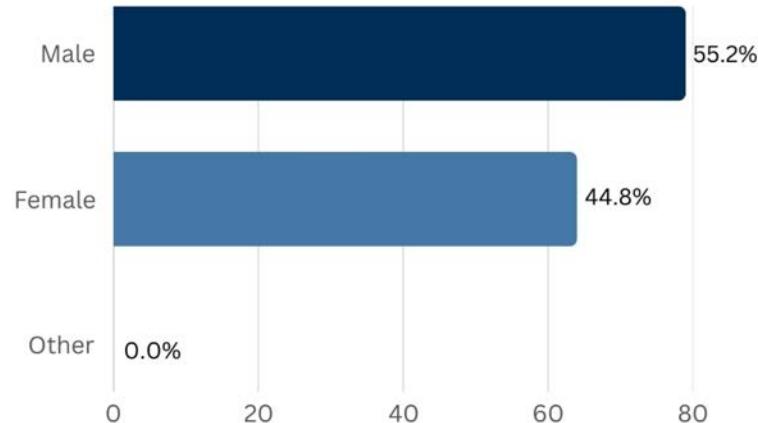
- 0-4 (Babies & Toddlers)
- 5-14 (Children & Preteens)
- 15-24 (Teens & Youth)
- 25-44 (Young & Mid Adults)
- 45-64 (Adults)
- 65+ (Older Adults)

OBSERVED GENDER

SUMMER (n=623)



WINTER (n=143)



■ Male

■ Female

■ Other

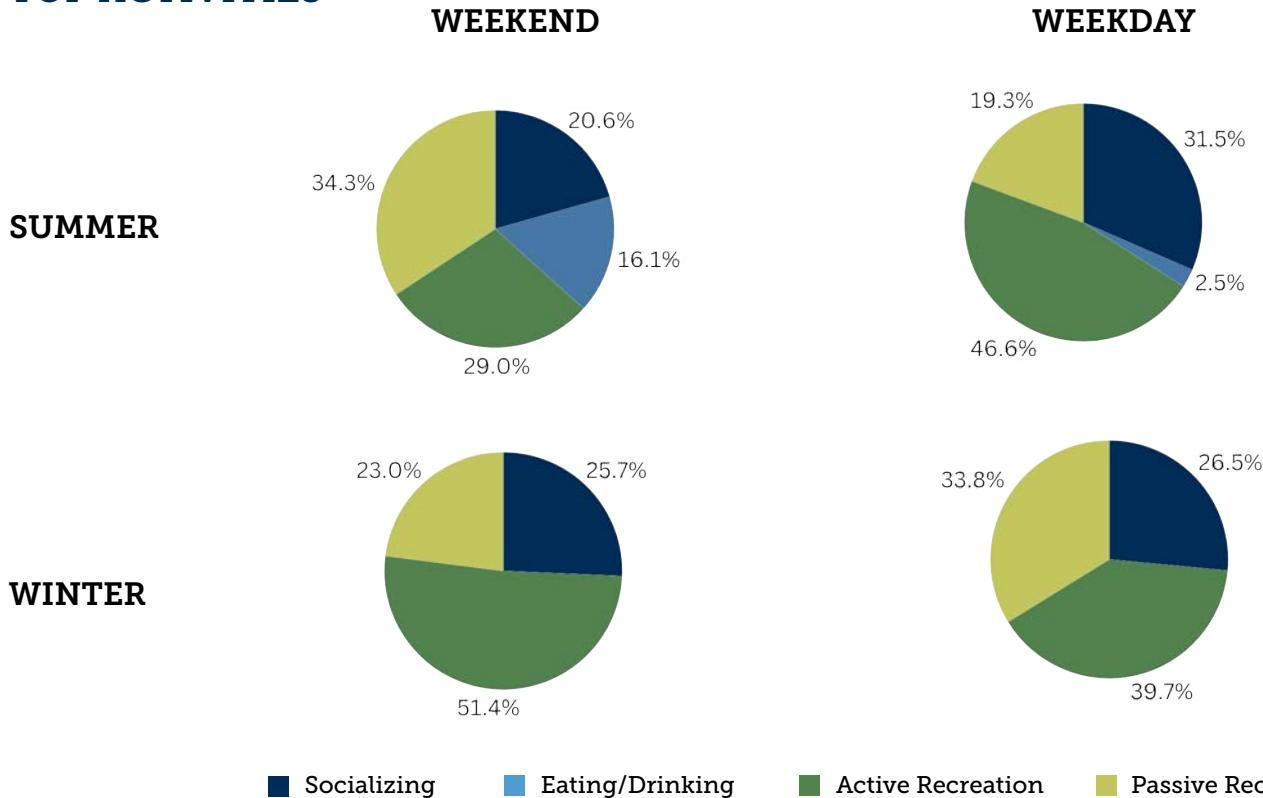
ZONE 5 - BICKFORD PARK

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS



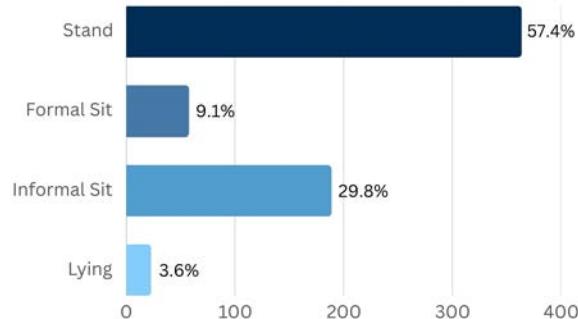
- Active recreation is the most popular activity in this zone which includes playing soccer, playing with dogs, and playing baseball.
- The complete absence of non-electric cyclists and rollers and mobility device users in the Winter may indicate that paths are not well maintained when there is snow and ice.
- This zone includes an off-leash dog park in the South end of the park. This could be the reason there is the most stationary dog presence in this zone compared to all six zones and three parks. Off-leash dogs were noted both inside the dog park, 'Off Leash Area' (OLA) and outside. In the winter, when there are less other park users present it was common to observe off-leash dogs outside of the OLA.

TOP ACTIVITIES

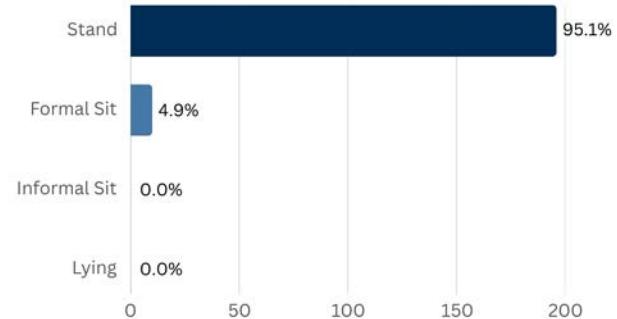


POSITIONS

SUMMER (n=634)



WINTER (n=206)



MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

	SUMMER	WINTER
	WALKING	86.1%
	ELECTRIC CYCLING/ ROLLING	5.2%
	NON - ELECTRIC CYCLING/ROLLING	8.7%
	MOBILITY DEVICE	0.0%

ENTRANCES

BICKFORD SOUTH ENTRANCE IN THE SUMMER



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No steps
- No significant slope for paths running the circumference of the park, significant slope leading into the 'basin' of the park
- This path crosses Harbord St connecting Bickford Park and Art Eggleton Park

BICKFORD SOUTH ENTRANCE IN THE WINTER



IN THE SUMMER:

This is the most used entrance at Bickford Park on weekdays and weekend evenings.

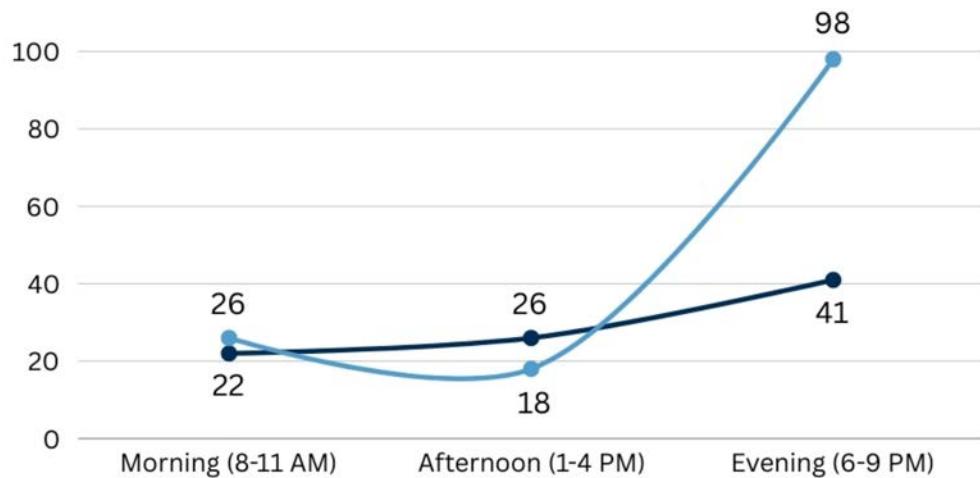
IN THE WINTER:

This entrance experiences a build up of snow and ice as the path descends into the basin of the park.

TRAVEL COUNTS

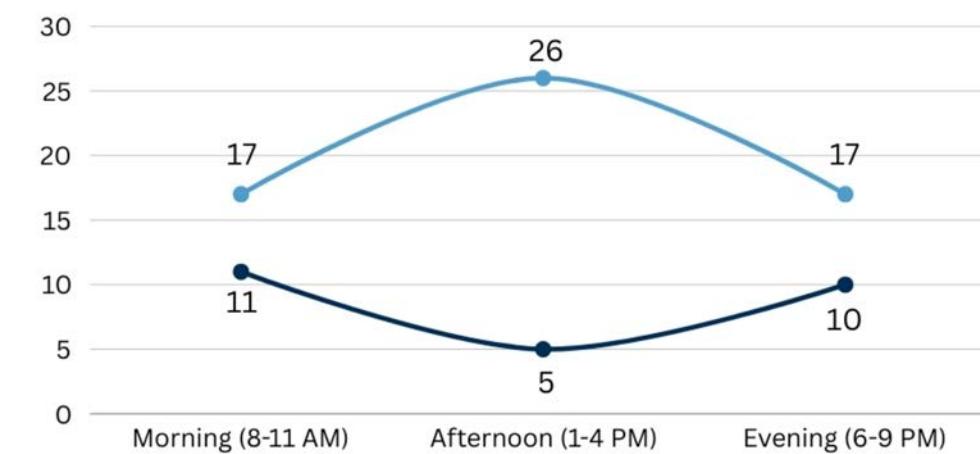
SUMMER

WEEKEND
 WEEKDAY



WINTER

WEEKEND
 WEEKDAY



DOG ACTIVITY

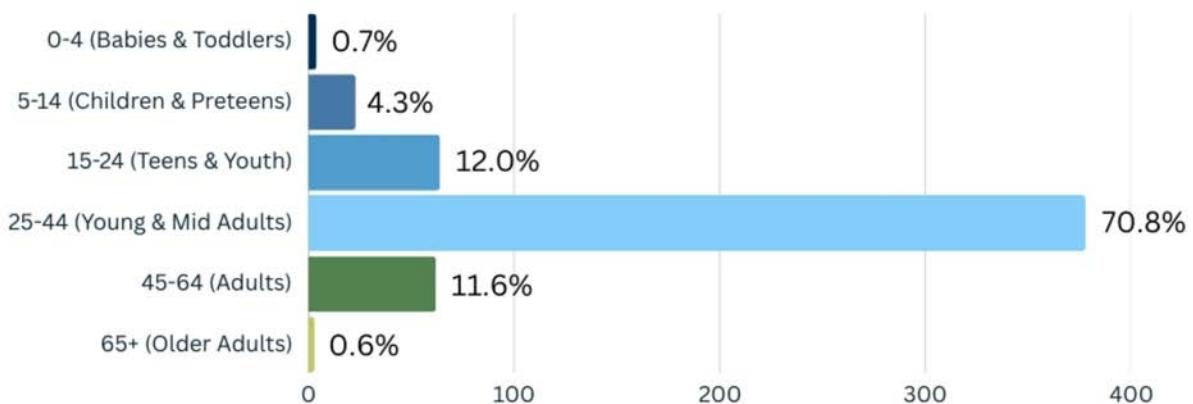
	MOVEMENT	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	UNKNOWN*
SUMMER	Travel	81.0%	19.0%	100%
	Stationary			
WINTER	Travel	79.2%	20.8%	3.3%
	Stationary	21.4%	75.3%	

*Dogs were not differentiated as "On-Leash" or "Off-Leash"

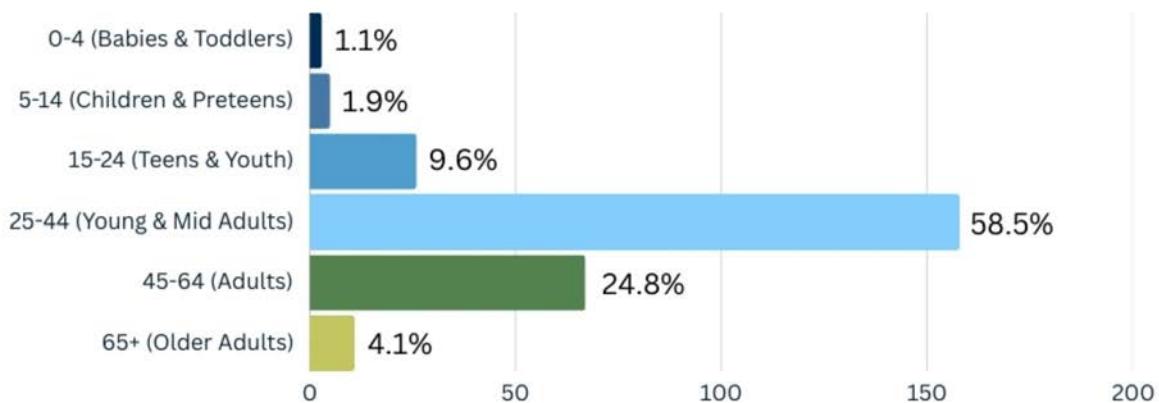
OBSERVED AGE AND GENDER PRESENTATION

OBSERVED AGE

SUMMER (n=534)



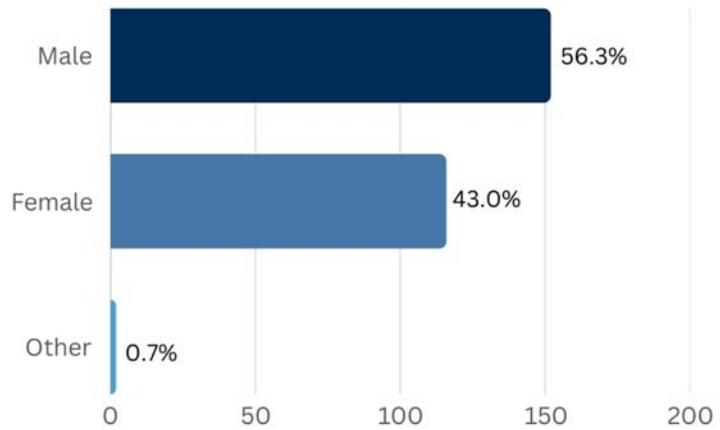
WINTER (n=270)



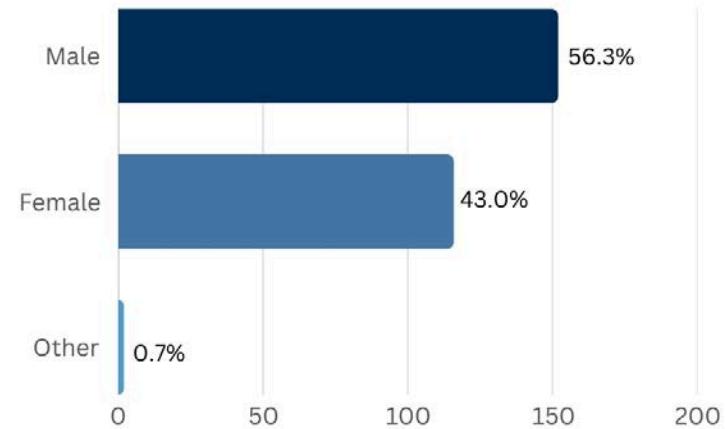
- 0-4 (Babies & Toddlers)
- 5-14 (Children & Preteens)
- 15-24 (Teens & Youth)
- 25-44 (Young & Mid Adults)
- 45-64 (Adults)
- 65+ (Older Adults)

OBSERVED GENDER

SUMMER (n=529)



WINTER (n=270)



■ Male

■ Female

■ Other

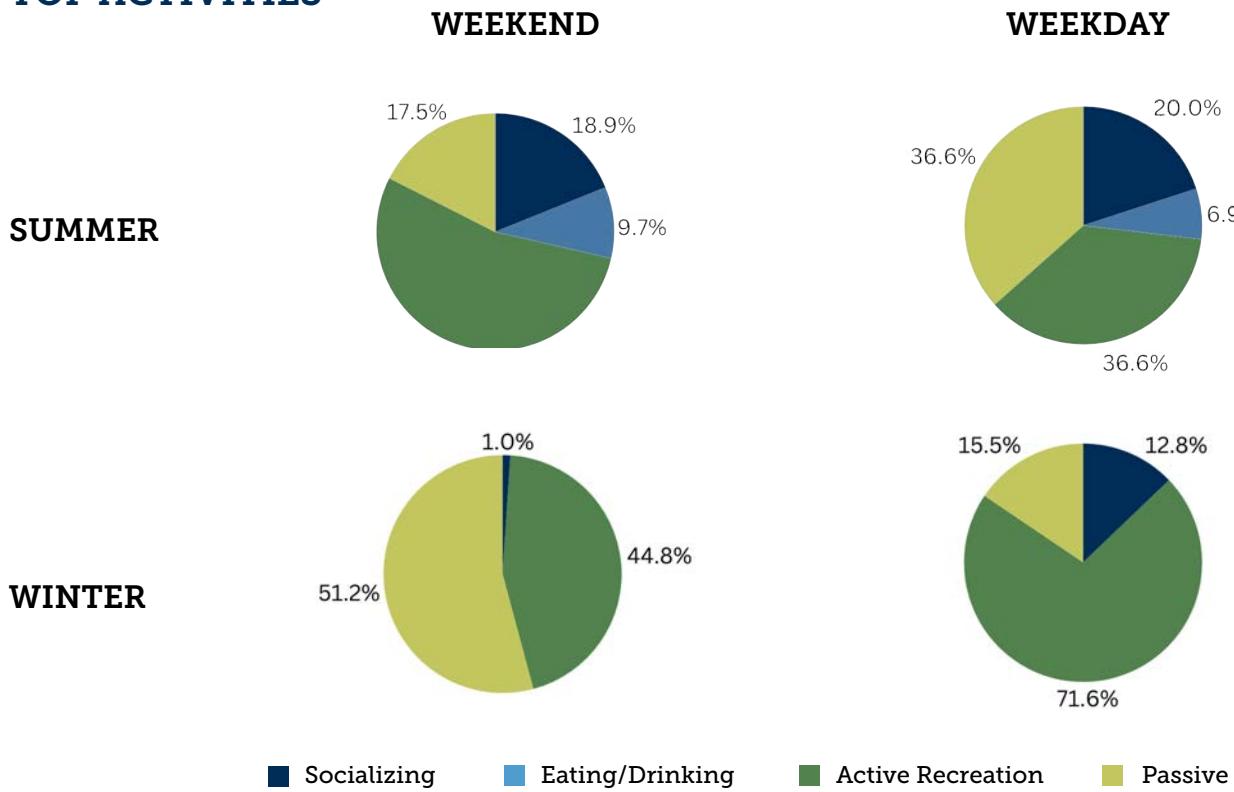
ZONE 6 - ART EGGLETON PARK

HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS



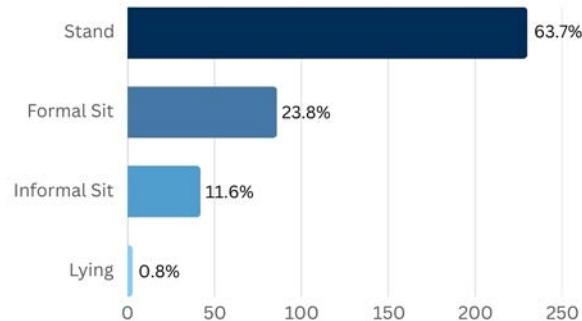
- This zone is next to Montrose Junior Public School, which may be the reason that babies, toddlers, children, and preteens are most represented in this zone and park out of all six zones in the Pits Park District.
- This is the only zone and park where women are represented more than men. This could be due to the fact that more women are caregivers for children and children are highly represented in this zone. It could also be an indicator that there is a higher sense of safety at this park compared to the other two parks.
- This zone had less dog activity and on-leash dog activity was always greater than off-leash dog activity. This could be due to the size of the park as well as the large presence of children.

TOP ACTIVITIES

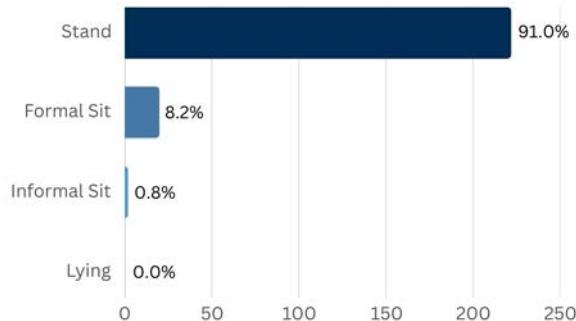


POSITIONS

SUMMER (n=361)



WINTER (n=244)



MODES OF TRANSPORTATION



WALKING

SUMMER

87.1%

WINTER

95.9%



**ELECTRIC CYCLING/
ROLLING**

0.3%

0.0%



**NON - ELECTRIC
CYCLING/ROLLING**

7.7%

2.5%



MOBILITY DEVICE

4.9%

1.6%

ENTRANCES

ART EGGLETON NORTH ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No significant slope
- No Steps
- This entrance is gated on both sides, which does not allow for desired paths

IN THE SUMMER:

This entrance was busiest weekend evenings and weekday mornings.

IN THE WINTER:

This entrance is fairly maintained with minimal ice and snow buildup.

ART EGGLETON SOUTH ENTRANCE



FEATURES:

- Paved
- No steps
- No significant slope
- This entrance is by Montrose Junior Public School

IN THE SUMMER:

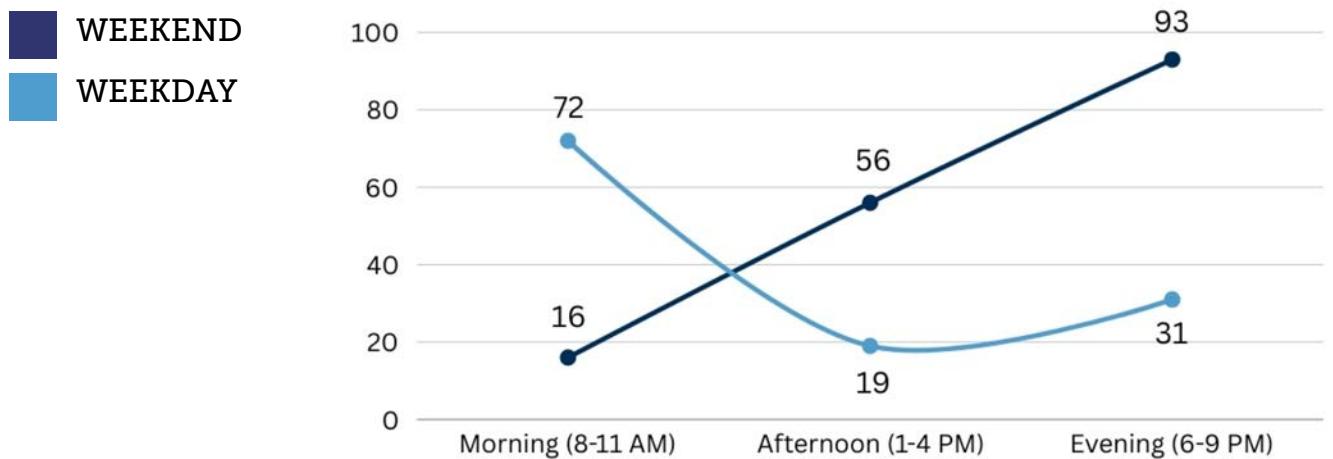
This path was not originally included in the study, but was added in for the Winter observation dates after we increased the number of volunteers.

IN THE WINTER:

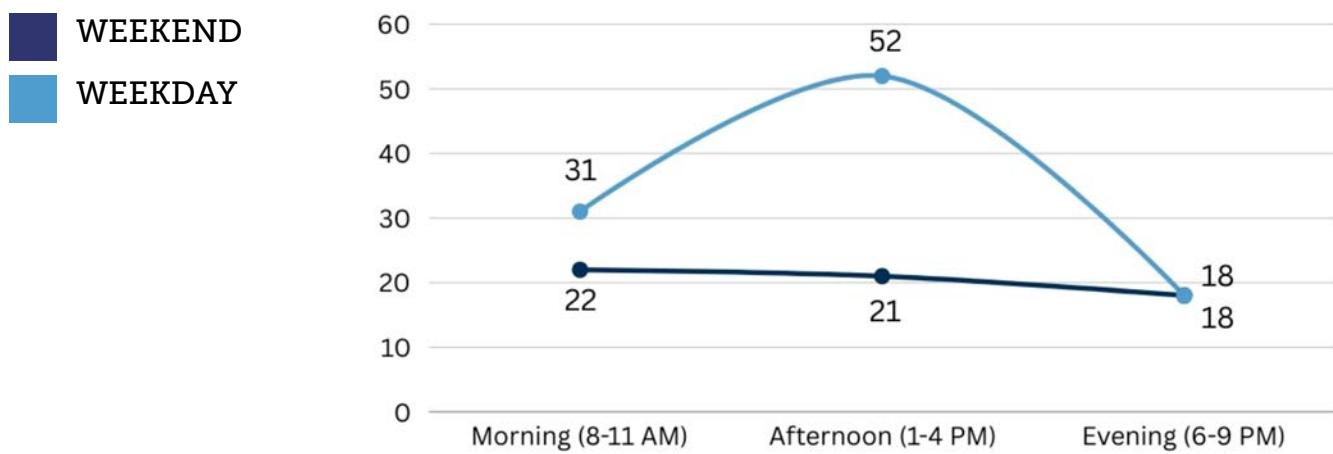
This was not very well maintained with some ice and snow buildup.

TRAVEL COUNTS

SUMMER



WINTER



DOG ACTIVITY

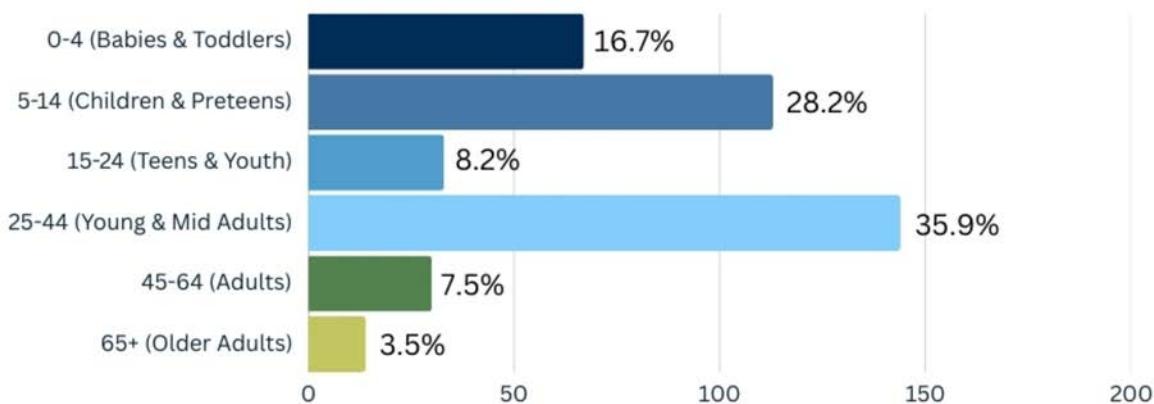
	MOVEMENT	ON LEASH	OFF LEASH	UNKNOWN*
SUMMER	Travel	75.6%	24.4%	100%
	Stationary			
WINTER	Travel	88.9%	11.1%	28.6%
	Stationary	71.4%		

*Dogs were not differentiated as "On-Leash" or "Off-Leash"

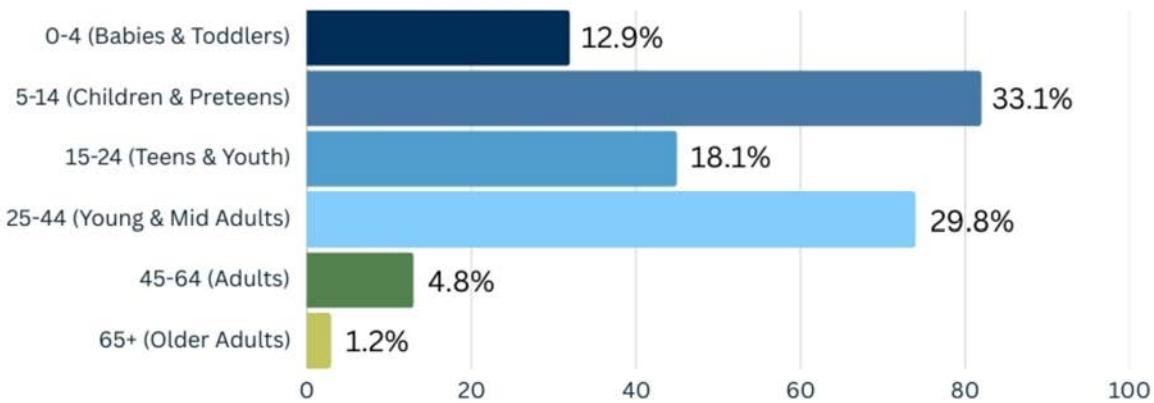
OBSERVED AGE AND GENDER PRESENTATION

OBSERVED AGE

SUMMER (n=401)



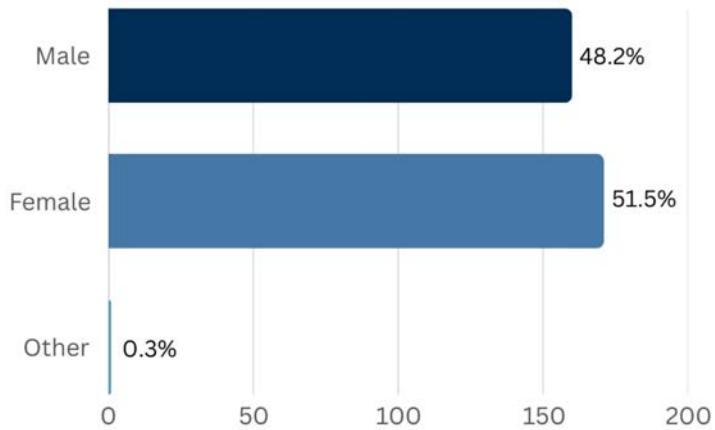
WINTER (n=248)



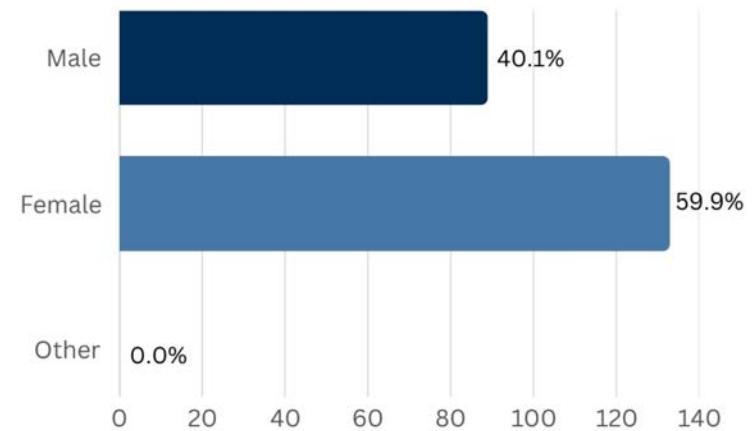
- 0-4 (Babies & Toddlers)
- 5-14 (Children & Preteens)
- 15-24 (Teens & Youth)
- 25-44 (Young & Mid Adults)
- 45-64 (Adults)
- 65+ (Older Adults)

OBSERVED GENDER

SUMMER (n=332)



WINTER (n=222)



■ Male

■ Female

■ Other

SURVEY DATA



“I greatly value all three green spaces. They enrich my life and provide quiet spaces.”

- Survey Respondent

PARK USE

The majority of park visitors are returning to the parks with 96% stating it was not their first time visiting the Pits Park District.

As shown in Table 2, Christie Pits is the most heavily used park in the area, with Bickford second and Art Eggleton third (n=526).

Table 2, Park use data, including park visited or passed through and time spent, for Christie Pits, Bickford and Art Eggleton Park.

PARK	Park Visited or passed through on most recent visit	Most time spent during most recent visit
Christie Pits	82%	62%
Bickford	5%	28%
Art Eggleton	29%	10%

SEASONAL USE

Two questions aimed to understand seasonal park use including how often people visit the parks in different seasons (daily, multiple times per week, multiple times per month, once or twice per season and never) and at what times of day people visit the parks and how that might vary across seasons. For all parks (n=478) across all seasons most people visit multiple times per week.

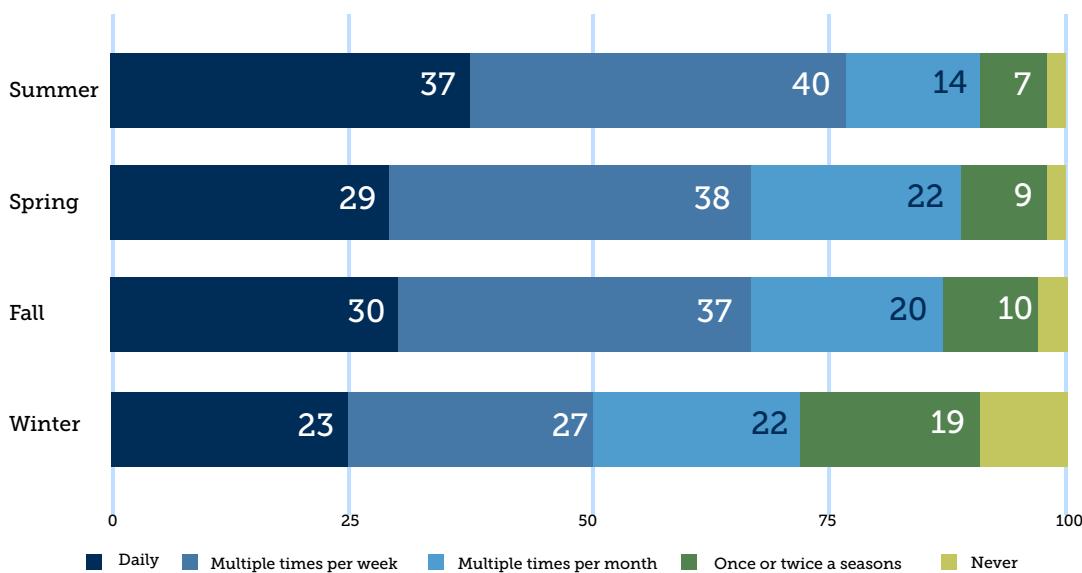


Figure B, Frequency of visits (daily, weekly, monthly or seasonally) based on season across all 3 parks (n=478)

There is some variation between parks:

Christie Pits Park: Throughout all seasons most people visit multiple times per week.

Bickford Park: In the summer and fall most people visit daily; while in the spring and winter results are evenly distributed between people who visit daily and multiple times per week.

Art Eggleton Park: In the spring most people visit multiple times per week and in the summer most people visit daily. In the fall and winter results are evenly distributed between people who visit daily and multiple times per week.

A visitor frequency of 'multiple times per month' and 'once or twice per season' had the lowest level of responses across all seasons and all parks.

TIME OF DAY (Seasonal)

The data is fairly consistent across all parks (n=478) with peak usage times during spring and summer being evenings (4pm-8pm). In the fall peak usage remains in the evenings (4pm-8pm) for Christie Pits and Bickford Parks. In comparison, Art Eggleton Park experiences peak usage in the afternoon (noon-4pm) in the fall and peak usage in the afternoon and evening in the summer. In the winter peak usage across all parks is in the afternoon (noon-4pm) as shown in Figure C below. The shift in peak usage in winter to an earlier time of day is likely related to shorter days and darkness.

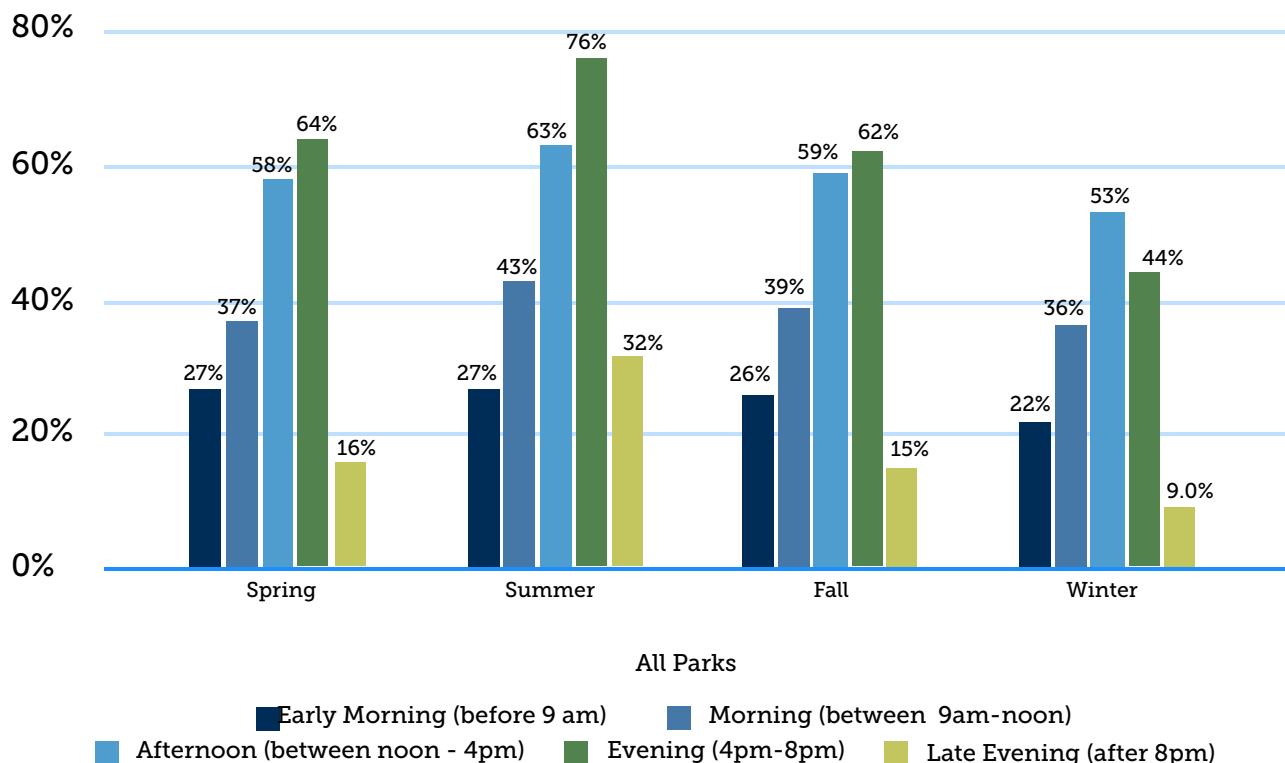


Figure C, Frequency of visit based on time of day and season for all parks (n=478)

Different use patterns at Art Eggleton (Figure D) most likely reflect increased use during school drop off and pick up at the adjacent school which is connected to the park. Additionally, the playground and wading pool at Art Eggleton are geared towards young families and this is reflected in the usage.

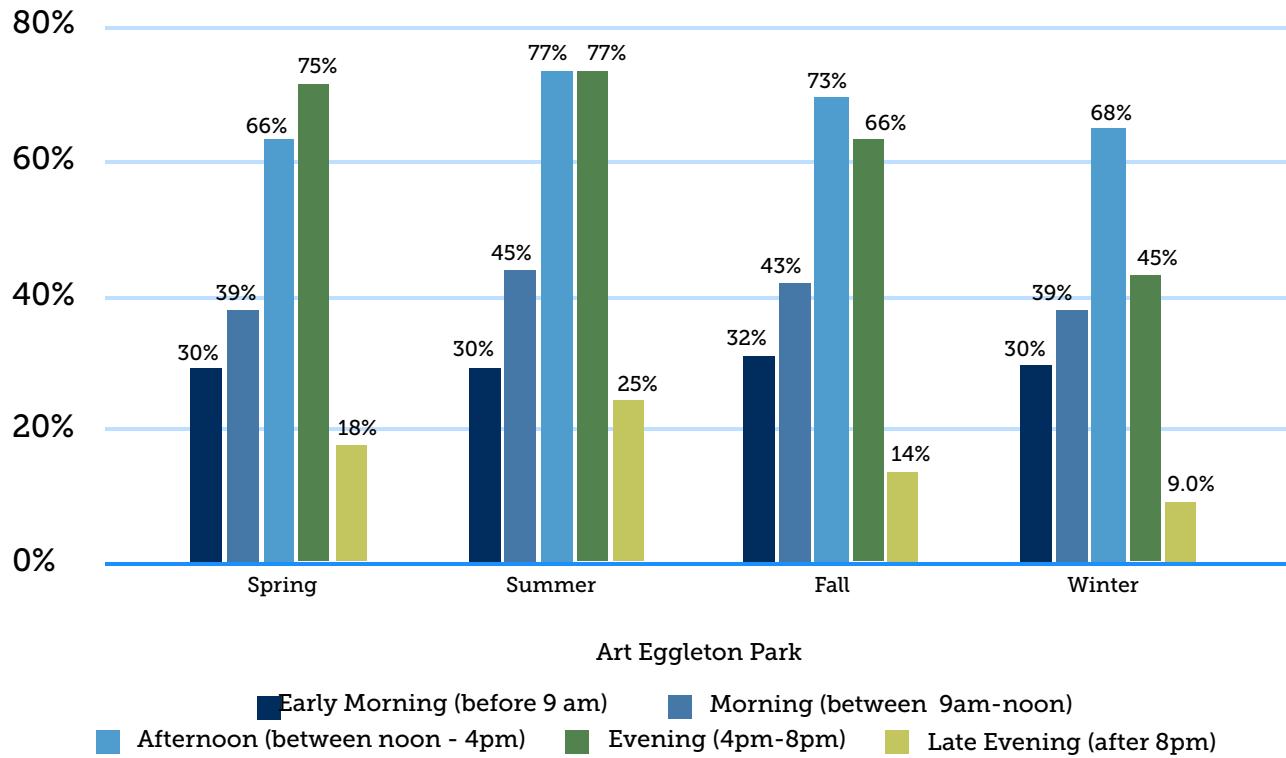


Figure D, Frequency of visit based on time of day and season for Art Eggleton Park (n=44)

PURPOSE OF VISIT

For all parks together (n=507) the main reasons cited as the 'purpose of visit' are:

- 50% of visitors visit for mental health, rest and relaxation
- 48% visit to enjoy nature and,
- 47% visit to spend time with family/friends.

There is some variation between parks however, as shown in the Figures below. Christie Pits is a destination for organized sports, fitness and recreational activities, Bickford attracts dog walkers and Art Eggleton is a destination for people visiting with children, using the playground and wading pool.

CHRISTIE PITS
(n=312)

50% Mental health, rest and relaxation

50% Spending time with my family and friends

45 % Enjoying nature

30% Organized sports (e.g. soccer, basketball, baseball)

26% Fitness or recreational activities (e.g. yoga, running, swimming, skateboarding)

BICKFORD
(n=146)

61% Enjoying Nature

53% Walking my pet

58% Mental health, rest and relaxation

39% Spending time with my family and friends

27% Just passing through, part of my commute

ART EGGLETON
(n=49)

53% Visiting with children (e.g. playground, splashpad)

33% Enjoying nature

24% Mental health, rest and relaxation

51% Spending time with my family and friends

22% Just passing through, part of my commute

MOVEMENT WITHIN AND TO/FROM PARKS

The majority of visitors to the parks travel to and from the parks by walking (79%) and use the paved pathways (82%) to access and move around in the parks with some variation between parks on use of informal pathways and walking through grassy areas (Table 3).

Table 3, How park users travel around parks.

TRAVEL	Paved Trails	Walking through grassy areas	Informal or unpaved trails
Christie Pits (n=132)	78%	58%	61%
Bickford (n=146)	90%	51%	45%
Art Eggleton (n=49)	84%	37%	31%

FEELINGS OF SAFETY

48% of visitors to Christie Pits feel 'very safe' with 41% feeling 'safe'. Bickford and Art Eggleton rate fairly high on visitors' feelings of safety with 71% and 64% respectively feeling 'very safe'.

The data was disaggregated by gender to determine if feelings of safety would be different for different genders. Data was available for women, men and gender non-binary individuals. It was found that there is no significant difference in feelings of safety based on gender.

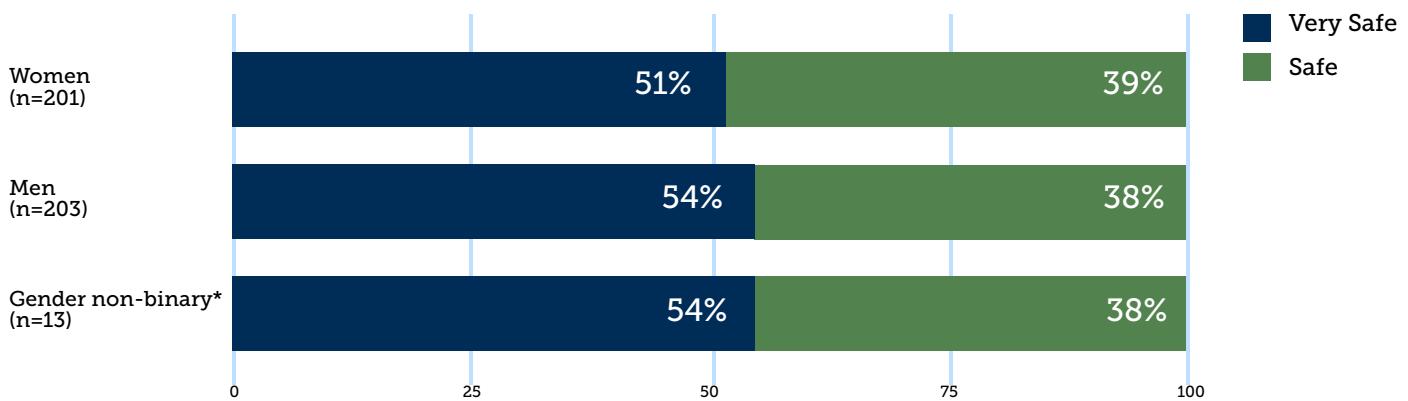


Figure E, Feelings of safety across all 3 parks disaggregated by gender.

*gender fluid, gender queer, androgynous

The survey asked if there are any barriers to feelings of safety and/or feeling welcome in the parks and found that for all 3 parks the biggest concern was lighting and off leash dogs.

- 23% poorly lit at night
- 22% off leash dogs
- 19% fear of crime
- 15% park is not well maintained or clean

The fear of crime and poor park maintenance does fall into the top 3 barriers to a feeling of safety/welcome for some of the parks and is therefore noted here.

For Christie Pits (n=297) the top 3 barriers to feeling of safety and/or feeling welcome are:

- 22% fear of crime
- 21% poor lighting
- 20% off leash dogs

For Bickford (n=137) the top 3 barriers to feelings of safety and/or feeling welcome are:

- 28% poor lighting
- 25% off leash dogs
- 15% fear of crime

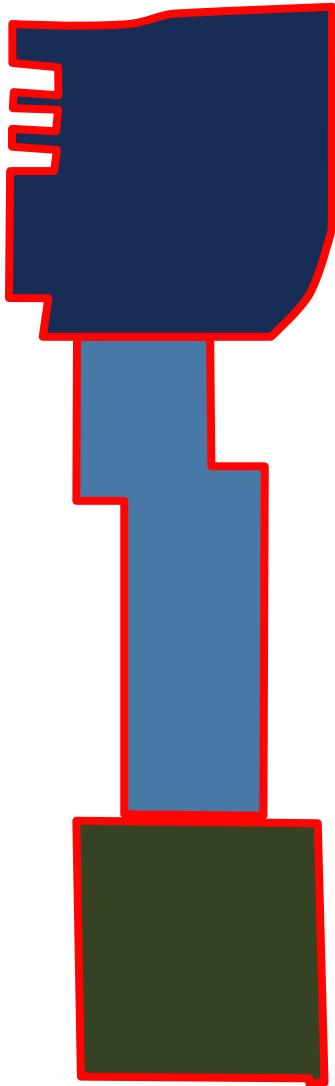
For Art Eggleton (n=44) the top 3 barriers to feelings of safety and/or feeling welcome are:

- 23% off leash dogs
- 20% poor lighting
- 18% park is not well maintained or cleaned



PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The top two priorities identified for improving all 3 parks (n=478) are park amenities and maintenance. The third priority for improvement varies between parks including recreational facilities and accessibility.



Survey results found that the top 2 priorities identified for improving all 3 parks (n=478) are:

57% Park amenities (e.g. shade areas, washrooms, drinking fountains)

48% Maintenance (e.g. repairing facilities, servicing waste bins, mowing lawns)

For Christie Pits (n=297) survey results found the 3rd priority identified for improving the park is:

41% Recreational facilities (e.g. sport courts, outdoor exercise equipment)

For Bickford Park (n=137) survey results found the 3rd priority for improving the park is:

27% Accessibility (e.g. ramps, paved trails, winter maintenance, rest areas)

For Art Eggleton Park (n=44) survey results found the 3rd priority for improving the park is:

32% Accessibility (e.g. ramps, paved trails, winter maintenance, rest areas)

Accessibility may be a greater concern for Bickford and Art Eggleton parks during winter when there is no winter maintenance of paved trails. In addition the paved trails leading into Bickford Park at the northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest corners are all steep and in slippery winter conditions most people were observed walking next to the paved paths as opposed to on them.

There were 87 'other comments' in response to the question on identifying priorities for park improvements. Analysis of the text reveal other priorities including:

- Improving recreation facilities, specifically the basketball courts at Christie Pits including the surfacing and seating.
- Improving the dog park at Bickford, with upgrades suitable for small dogs, reducing mud by adding more wood chips and increasing the overall size of the off-leash dog park.
- Increasing and improving natural areas.

Question 13 was an open ended question asking for 'anything else' survey respondents would like to share. Analysis of the 223 comments found that much of the feedback provided focused on improvements park users would like to see and current areas of conflict.

A major issue that arises from within the comments are the number of off-leash dogs (mentioned 29 times) and improvements that are needed for the existing dog parks (mentioned 18 times). Off leash dogs contribute to park-users feeling unsafe or unable to do activities (e.g. yoga, use playground with young children). The quotes provided below illustrate both sides of this issue.

"There is no enforcement of off leash dogs and there are so so many dogs off leash. This is especially ridiculous since there is a dog park in Bickford yet unleashed dogs running directly outside the dog park. I'm not sure why there is no enforcement but it really reduces the enjoyment of the park."

"Dog owners are still treated as a problem when the reality is that we use the park 12 months/year, every day. I can't think of any other group that uses these parks so heavily. Yet the facilities for dog owners are pitifully small and inadequate. All three parks should have off leash enclosures with cedar mulch base and water sources. That might help to curb the "off leash" problem."

- Survey Respondents

Areas of concern that arise from conflicting desired use of park space include:

- Organized sports taking up 'too much' space leaving no space for sitting and an emphasis on baseball diamonds over soccer fields.
- Youth (teenagers) use of the playgrounds and washrooms as 'hang out' and/or smoking and vaping locations conflicts with young children and family use of playgrounds and washroom facilities.
- Noise associated with special events that have grown in popularity over time and are considered by residents surrounding the park as 'too large' for the park (Christie Pits).

"Summer rave parties are getting out of control and noise from bands is becoming a problem."

"I attended the Christie Cross Cyclocross race and had an amazing time watching the race. Would love to see the event happen again next year and have an opportunity to purchase food and drinks in the park during the race."

- Survey Respondents

Other observations from park-users:

- The presence of anti-semitic graffiti and time that it takes to have it removed
- More bike parking is needed at Christie Pits pool (also mentioned in other parks South end Bickford)
- Lack of cleanliness in facilities (washrooms and change rooms)
- Overall litter in parks and too few and/or overflowing garbage bins that are not emptied frequently enough in particular in the summer months
- Improved connectivity between parks (tunnel connections to avoid crossing roads, signs)
- Christie Cross (cycling event) is well loved and Toronto Maple Leafs Baseball (Dominic Field)
- Resurfacing of Garrison Creek
- Improved maintenance of pathways in winter, playground structures, basketball courts (mentioned 23 times)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Baseline demographic questions were included in the survey to gain a better understanding of who park users are. The Pits Park District falls within the University-Rosedale Ward and more detailed demographics can be found through the [City of Toronto Ward Profiles](#) based on the 2016 and 2021 National Census. The majority of survey respondents (52%) have access to private outdoor spaces, like a yard, 22% have access to semi-private/shared outdoor spaces and 26% only have access to public spaces like parks.

The 2021 Census found that 80.5% of residents in the University-Rosedale ward live in apartments buildings (detached duplex, apartment building with less than 5 storeys and apartment buildings with more than 5 storeys) and 18.6% are in single detached, semi-detached or row house homes. Although the majority of people living in this ward do not have access to private outdoor spaces the survey shows that this is not the main group using the parks. The east end of the Ward is higher density with the University of Toronto and many students, whereas housing adjacent to the parks in the immediate surroundings are low-rise single family housing and are shown to be the main users of the parks. There is however, an opportunity to attract more apartment-dwellers to use the park spaces.

Survey respondents were largely between the ages of 30-39 years old (34%) and 40-55 years old (31%) which are a higher representation than the 2021 Census (Table 4). This shows that compared to the general population of the Ward more people between the ages of 30-55 years use the park space. Some overrepresentation may be attributed to the increased likelihood that this age group is the most likely to complete an online survey compared to youth and/or seniors.

Table 4, Comparison of age groups for park survey respondents and 2021 census.

PIT PARK SURVEY		UNIVERSITY-ROSEDALE 2021 CENSUS	
Age Groups (years)	% Of responses	Age Groups (years)	% of population
0-18	2%	0-19	12.2%
19-29	16%	20-29	22.6%
30-39	34%	30-39	19.8%
40-55	31%	40-54	16.7%
56-64	8%	55-64	11.2%
65-74	4%	65-74	9.4%
75 years +	2%	75 years +	8.4%

The park survey asked respondents about household composition. The park survey found that 29% of respondents have a member of their household under the age of 12 and 67% do not. In comparison, the 2021 Census found that 20.9% of households have a child under the age of 6, and 30% of households have children between 6-14 years old. This suggests that households with children are slightly underrepresented in the park survey.

The majority of people do not identify as a person with, nor have anyone in their household with a physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, learning, communication, sight, hearing or functional limitation that may hinder their full and equal participation in society (Table 5).

Table 5 Identification of persons with a disability.

PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY	YES	NO
Do you identify as a person with a disability?	11%	82%
Does anyone in your household identify as a person with a disability?	12%	80%

Out of the park survey respondents 2% identify as Indigenous people from Canada including First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit and Métis. In comparison the 2021 Census found 0.9% of the population in University-Rosedale Ward identify as Indigenous and 0.3% identify as a Registered or Treaty Indian.

The 2021 Census found 37.5% of the population in the Ward to be a visible minority, the park survey found 28% of respondents identifying their race or racial background as a category other than White (Table, 6). Chinese is the most represented ethnic or cultural origin at 8.4% and most represented visible minority at 14.4% according to the 2021 Census. This roughly corresponds to the park survey results that found East Asian (including Chinese, Japanese and Korean) as the most represented race or racial background of respondents after White (65%).

Table 6, Race or racial background as identified by park survey respondents (n=456).

PARK SURVEY RACE OR RACIAL BACKGROUND (n=456)	% OF RESPONDENTS
White (e.g. English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian)	65%
Prefer not to answer	14%
East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)	7%
Latin American (e.g. Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)	5%
Black (e.g. African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)	4%
Not listed, please describe*	4%
South Asian or Indo-Caribbean (e.g. Indian, Indo- Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)	3%
Southeast Asian (e.g. Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese)	2%
Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian (e.g. Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)	2%
First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit or Métis	2%

*most 'not listed prefer to describe' respondents identified themselves as Jewish or mixed-race

The park survey asked about gender identity and sexual orientation. Gender is almost evenly represented with 44% of respondents identifying as Women and 44% identifying as Men and 13 % identifying as gender non-binary (including gender fluid, gender queer, androgynous). The majority of respondents identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual (65%), bisexual (6%), queer (6%), gay (2%) and lesbian (2%).

Gender and sexual orientation data is unavailable for the 2021 census.

KEY FINDINGS



"I love Bickford park a lot! I prefer it over Christie Pits in the spring and summer, especially if I'm meeting friends or family, or planning to linger on benches or blankets. Christie Pits is great for TOPS Toronto outdoor picture show. I live closer to Christie Pits, so I go there in colder weather more. Art Eggleston is also a nice park, very family friendly."

- Survey Respondent

FOR ALL 3 PARKS

1 The Pits Park District is multi-use and multi-season.

All 3 parks are used throughout the year multiple times a week although Christie Pits, the largest park with the most amenities and facilities sees the heaviest use. There is general support for multi-use green spaces that host a variety of activities (programmed and unstructured) across all parks.

3 Christie Pits, Bickford and Art Eggleton are essentially neighbourhood parks with local residents representing the majority of park users.

Park users are equally represented by men and women, 96% are returning users and 52% have access to their own outdoor spaces.

5 The parks play an important role in health and wellbeing and connection to nature.

The top reasons for visiting parks are mental health, rest and relaxation and to enjoy nature and to spend time with family/ friends.

2 Dogs and dog owners are an important park user group.

Dog owners are a key user group for all parks but current dog park facilities are not meeting demand. The lack of dog parks and small size of the existing dog park at Bickford Park increase human dog conflicts in other park areas (both off leash and on leash interactions).

4 Priorities for improvement are park amenities and maintenance across all 3 parks.

The general cleanliness and maintenance of parks facilities is a concern (e.g. basketball courts at Christie Pits, dog park at Bickford). Attention should be paid to specific seasonal maintenance (e.g. winter path clearing, summer litter and garbage collection). Increased seating such as benches and picnic tables would also be appreciated by park users.

6 Park users feel safe.

Women, men and gender non-binary park users feel safe to very safe with little variation between/among these groups. The biggest barriers to feelings of safety identified across park users is poor lighting and off-leash dogs.

PARK SPECIFIC FINDINGS

CHRISTIE PITS

- Sports, recreation and events are important uses of this park in both the Summer and the Winter.
- The basketball courts in particular elicited strong feedback from survey participants emphasizing the role the courts play in the community as well as the need for improvement and maintenance.
- Winter increased activity of off-leash dogs in the baseball diamonds since there were little to no people using the space. Proximity and size of the space were also incentives for dog owners to use this space.
- There is a love-hate relationship between residents and large events; nearby residents appreciate events but do not like the noise and garbage that comes from them.
- Eating and drinking is the consistently the least popular activity in this park throughout Summer and Winter. This could be an indicator that there is a lack of a feeling of comfort (ie. seating and shelter) and hygiene (ie. maintenance and cleanliness).

BICKFORD PARK

- Dog walkers are a main user group but have expressed that the dog park needs improvement which would help decrease off-leash dogs in the rest of the park.
- People visit Bickford for the naturalized/forested areas and the feeling of being in nature.
- This park is often used as an overflow for Christie Pits, especially when people are looking for a quieter place to relax and enjoy the outdoors.
- In winter this park experiences a build up of ice and snow, likely due to the majority of the park sitting below street level allowing run-off water and snow melt to drain into the park. Improved drainage potentially using naturalization to increase water absorption could address some of these issues.

ART EGGLETON PARK

- This park has the highest representation of babies, toddlers, children, and preteens as well as women, which can indicate a certain level of safety park users feel here. This is also partly due to its proximity to the neighbouring school, acting as an extension to it.
- Although this park attracts families, eating and drinking is consistently the least popular activity at this park, which could indicate a lack of seating and shelter such as picnic tables and pavilions or facilities such as drinking fountains and washrooms.
- Year round use washrooms would be a welcome amenity to this park or nearby at Bickford.

RECOMMENDATIONS



"I visit for sledding, swimming and skating and visiting the playgrounds with my kids, as well as just to walk in a green space. They're great parks. A priority for me is to preserve the green spaces rather than paving it over to add more amenities."

- Survey Respondent

As stated in the Parkland Strategy the overall goals for parks in the City of Toronto are to:

- **Expand:** Create new parks to support growth and address gaps in the system to ensure it remains adaptable and supports a livable, diverse city
- **Improve:** Enhance the function of existing parks, promoting community cohesion, ecological sustainability, and well-being through active living, nature access, and spaces for rest and leisure
- **Connect:** Improve connections between parks and open spaces to ensure seamless access for people, communities, and wildlife
- **Include:** Remove barriers to create parks that are equitable and accessible for people of all ages, cultures, genders, abilities, and incomes

Emergent priorities were identified based on the survey and observational data. Emergent priorities often arise from areas of conflict and/or dissatisfaction but are also informed by pressing social and environmental issues.

The Pits Park District Public Life Study does not address park expansion but does reveal insights that address the other goals.

IMPROVE ecological functions and access to nature.

“They are the only spaces where a lot of people can get out into “nature” in this part of the city. I would like to see them naturalized more, not paved and with more amenities.”

- Survey Respondent

1 Plan for seasonal flooding, increasing drainage to reduce mud and water in summer and ice accumulation in winter in Bickford Park.

3 Increase public awareness of **Garrison Creek**. Garrison Creek was mentioned by only 2 survey respondents when asked about priorities for improving the parks - this suggests that the creek is relatively unknown in the area and specific engagement related to the resurfacing of Garrison Creek would be required to increase public awareness.

2 Increase access to nature through more naturalized areas through native plants, pollinator gardens and trees in Bickford and Christie Pits Parks.

IMPROVE well being through active living.

“For the last 10 years or so, the basketball courts at Christie have been a home away from home for me; a place where people of all ages and skill sets, from all walks of life can hang out, hoop and take part in a very special and unique community. I’ve made close, lasting friendships at the park, been exposed to some amazing people that I otherwise would have never met and have spent so many amazing evenings playing the sport I love. I hope the city will consider investing in the much needed renovations the court needs for all the people who really need it.”

- Survey Respondent

- 4** Immediate and ongoing maintenance of sports and recreation facilities that are heavily used and very important to local communities.
- 5** Investing in improving and expanding dog park areas to decrease conflicts with off-leash dogs in the parks.
- 6** Address cleanliness and maintenance of parks, related to litter, garbage collection and maintenance of facilities.

IMPROVE community cohesion through parks.

“I LOVE IT and I really like how there are community gardens, skateboarding, people just jamming out to music, people enjoying takeout from local restos and the overall vibrancy of Christie Pits especially adjacent to Bloor.”

- Survey Respondent

- 7** Ensure that large multi-day events abide by noise bylaws and that extra support is provided for litter and garbage collection after large events. This will address the needs of local residents who largely support park events.

CONNECT parks and open spaces to encourage wildlife.

“More native plant gardens! More pollinator pockets, please!
More indigenous medicinal gardens! Community gardens!”

- Survey Respondent

8 Create more spaces for native plants, gardens and nature to encourage ecological connectivity between parks.

CONNECT to create better access for the community.

“In the summer I frequently bike to the pool with my child and there is never enough bicycle parking.”

- Survey Respondent

9 Increase bike lanes on Bloor St to access the park, increase bicycle parking at the pool at Christie Pits, and south end of Bickford. Improve bike share opportunities and parking in the parks.

INCLUDE all people by creating parks that are equitable and accessible.

"Don't over program, more garden/beautification at entrances would be nice, year-round washrooms are a basic requirement. People use the park in the winter and kids and grandparents in particular need access to toilets."

- Survey Respondent

10 Understand barriers to park use for apartment dwellers in the area. The main park users are people who have access to private outdoor spaces; however the majority of residents in the ward live in apartments. Apartment-dwellers are therefore underrepresented as park users. This would suggest that there are barriers to park use for those living in apartments and more attention should be given to understand what those barriers or challenges are to address equitable access to green space.

11 Maintain current and add new year-round washroom facilities to increase access for families.

12 Improve winter maintenance of pathways to reduce barriers for seniors and individuals with mobility aids.

The 'Pits Park District' includes three parks, Christie Pits, Bickford and Art Eggleton. Future improvements of the parks will need to balance multiple park users and types of use, for example dog walkers and non-dog walkers; organized sports with informal use; and large events in Christie Pits could be better managed with attention to noise and garbage. Residents appreciate the ability to 'be in nature' the parks provide and in general wish to see more naturalization in the parks. Understanding that increased park use also requires increased park maintenance, future plans should take into consideration operations, staff and budgetary needs. The parks are well-loved and well-used greenspaces with each park occupying a niche for local residents providing recreation, connection to nature, mental health and well being and place to spend time with friends and family.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

ASSET MAPS

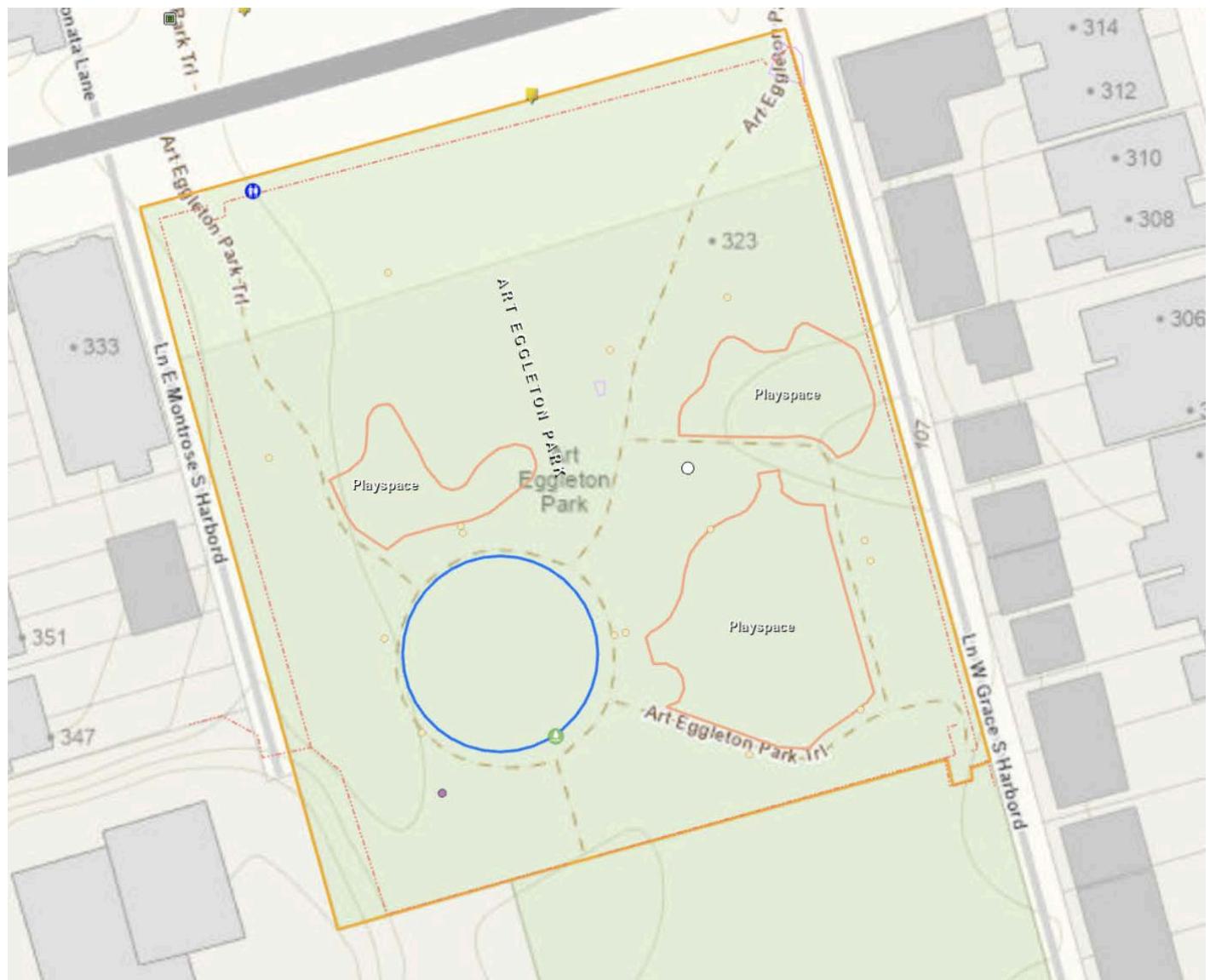
CHRISTIE PITS PARK



BICKFORD PARK



ART EGGLETON PARK



APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION INSTRUCTIONS

You are (circle one):

Mapper

Surveyor

SHIFT SCHEDULE + TASKS

1. Travel Counts (10 minutes):

Both Mappers and Surveyors will count pedestrians, cyclists, and dogs crossing the "finish line" (blue line) at the location on your map for 10 mins at the top of each hour.

2. Behavioural Mapping + Age & Gender Presentation (40 minutes):

Mappers will count and map stationary activities by walking around your zone, and recording a "snapshot" of the people you see as you go after finishing travel counts. See instructions below

Mappers will count the age and gender make-up of people stationary in your zone. Can be done at the same time as behavioural mapping, or as a separate walk.

3. Intercept Surveys (40 minutes):

Surveyors will approach park users in your zone to answer the prepared survey after finishing travel counts. The goal is to fill out 5 surveys/hour or 15 surveys/shift.

4. Break! (10 minutes):

Both Mappers and Surveyors will take a 10 minute break after they are done with their 40 minutes of observation. Remember to stay hydrated!

Mark their location on the map using an "X" plus any activity symbols

If more than one person is doing the same thing—e.g. three people socializing together—you can use a number next to the symbol: 3Xs. Otherwise just mark the symbol for a single person (e.g., Xs for a person socializing)

BEHAVIOURAL MAPPING INSTRUCTIONS

- **Observe everyone within your zone boundaries.**

Use the Behavioural Mapping grid to tally peoples' activities and positions. Remember, there should only be one tally per person counted (i.e. one person cannot be marked as both "Social" and "Active Rec")

- **Mark their location on the map using an "X" plus any activity symbols.**

If more than one person is doing the same thing—e.g. three people socializing together—you can use a number next to the symbol: 3Xs. Otherwise just mark the symbol for a single person (e.g., Xs for a person socializing)

ACTIVITIES	
Social	People talking with one another.
Eat/Drink	People eating and/or drinking.
Active Rec	People engaged in physical activity, but <i>staying in a general area</i> (i.e. not jogging through). Examples: yoga, frisbee, soccer, fitness classes, etc.
Passive Rec	People engaged in a recreational activity that wouldn't make them sweat. Examples: reading, playing board games, doing photography, playing an instrument or enjoying live music/a performance.

INTERCEPT SURVEY PROMT

"Would you have a few minutes to answer a quick survey to help us improve local parks?"

If people want to know more:

"We are with Park People, a national non-profit working to advance city parks across Canada. As part of the City of Toronto's TOCore Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan, there was a vision to improve the Pits Park District which includes Christie Pits Park, Bickford Park and Art Eggleton Park. In partnership with the City, we are conducting a study to understand how the parks are being used and how they might be

SAFETY & AWARENESS

- 1. If you ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe** during your shift, please contact your shift supervisor _____ at _____. You are not required to stay in your zone or continue observation activities under these circumstances.
- 2. If someone you're interacting with has specific park questions** or complaints during your shift, you can direct them to contact 311 to access non-emergency City of Toronto services
- 3. There is a sacred fire marked on the map** (red dot on the southwest corner of Christie Pits Park) as well as an area with two encampments marked on the map (red dot on the western edge of Christie Pits Park). We have noted these activities already, so you do not need to include them in the Behavioural Mapping or Intercept Surveys. Please remember to be respectful.
- 4. Washrooms are marked** in blue dots on the map.
- 5. At the end of your shift**, wait near your travel count location for a supervisor to meet you to pick up your materials and give you your gift card.

OBSERVATION GRID

Time of day: _____

Weather conditions: _____

Observer: _____

BEHAVIOURAL MAPPING						
Position	Activity				General Observations	
	Social s	Eat/Drink e	Active Rec a	Passive Rec p	Total	General Activities
Stand X						
Formal Sit <input type="checkbox"/>						
Informal Sit <input type="triangle"/>						
Laying ----						

AGE & GENDER PRESENTATION			
0-4 Babies & Toddlers)			
Dogs	On-Leash:	Off-Leash:	Unknown:
	M	F	O
5-14 (Children & Preteens)			
15-24 (Teens & Youth)			
25-44 (Young & Mid Adults)			
45-64 (Adults)			
65+ (Older Adults)			

TRAVEL COUNTS						
Time	Pedestrians	Cyclists/Rollers		Mobility Devices	Dogs	
10-min count at top of hour	Including those walking bikes	Electric e-scooters, e-bikes, hoverboards, etc.	Non-electric skateboards, rollerblades, bikes, etc.	Strollers, wheelchairs, etc.	On-leash	Off-Leash
Hour 1						

Hour 2:						

Hour 3:						

APPENDIX C

4. Have you been to this park before this visit?

Yes

No

a. [If yes] How often do you visit this park in different seasons? (check all that apply)

Season	Early Mornings (6-9am)	Morning (9-12pm)	Afternoon (12-5pm)	Evenings (5-9pm)	Late Evening (9-1am)
Spring					
Summer					
Fall					
Winter					

b. What time of day do you tend to visit the park in different seasons? (check all that apply)

Season	Daily	Multiple times per week	Multiple times per month	Once or twice per season
Spring				
Summer				
Fall				
Winter				

5. How much time did you (/do you plan to) spend in the park during this visit?

Less than 30 minutes	30 - 60 minutes	1-2 hours
3-4 hours	More than 4 hours	

6. How safe* do you feel in this park? *your perceived safety

Very Safe	Safe	Neither Safe or Unsafe
Unsafe	Very Unsafe	

7. Which factors (if any) are barriers to feeling safe and/or welcome in the park? (check all that apply)

Park is not well maintained or clean	Park is poorly lit at night
Park is not accessible for people with disabilities	Off-leash dogs
Fear of crime (i.e. assault, theft)	Fear of harassment or discrimination
Fear of ticketing or policing	Fear of wildlife

Unsure of rules on what I can and can't do

Park doesn't have the amenities I need access to (i.e. features like washrooms, seating, etc.)

Other: _____

None of the above

8. On this visit, what modes of transportation will/did you use to get to the park? (check all that apply)

Personal bike	Bikeshare / Bike rental	TTC
Personal Car	Uber/ Rideshare	Walking

Mobility Device (i.e. wheelchair, walker, etc.)

Rolling (i.e. Skateboarding, rollerblading)

Electric-assisted devices (i.e. e-scooters, hoverboards, e-bikes, etc.)

Other (please specify): _____

9. On this visit, how did you enter the park?

On a paved path

On an informal path (i.e. unpaved trail, over the grass)

Unsure |

10. What would improve your experience at this park?

Better wayfinding and/or lighting

Better maintenance of existing amenities

Better enforcement

More food and drink options

More shade

More seating

More washrooms

More drinking fountains

More organized events and activities

Improved physical accessibility (e.g. ramps, paved roads, handrails, etc.)

Improved bike facilities (i.e. bike parking, Bikeshare stations)

Other: _____

The last few questions ask about who is filling out this survey. These questions help us understand who this survey reached, and whose feedback we may be missing. It will also better inform us of equity issues relating to parks and determine if our survey sample is representative of Toronto's population.

Responses to these questions are entirely voluntary. You can skip or select "prefer not to answer" for any questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable.

11. What are the first three digits (letters and numbers) of your postal code?

(If you do not know your postal code, please provide the major intersection or town/city)

First 3 numbers of postal code: _____

Or major intersection: _____

Or city / town: _____

Prefer not to answer

12. Please tell us about your access to outdoor space at home.

I have access to private outdoor space like a yard

I have access to semi-private/shared outdoor space

I only have access to public spaces like parks (I do not have access to private or semi-private outdoor space)

Prefer not to answer

13. What is your age?

12 years old or under

13-18 years old

19-29 years old

30-39 years old

40-55 years old

56-64 years old

65-74 years old

75 years old or above

Prefer not to answer

14. Are there other members of your household under the age of 12?

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

15. 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. Do you identify as a person with a disability?

Yes

No

Don't know

Prefer not to answer

16. Does anyone in your household identify as a person with a disability?

Yes
Don't know

No
Prefer not to answer

17. 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?

Yes
Don't know

No
Prefer not to answer

18. 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.

Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian (e.g. Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)

Black (e.g. African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)

East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)

First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit or Métis

Latin American (e.g. Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)

South Asian or Indo-Caribbean (e.g. Indian, Indo- Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)

Southeast Asian (e.g. Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese)

White (e.g. English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian)

Prefer not to answer

Not listed, please describe: _____

19. 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 your gender?

Woman

Man

Trans woman

Trans man

Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous)

Two-Spirit

Prefer not to answer

Not listed, please describe: _____

20. 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?

Heterosexual or straight

Bisexual

Gay

Lesbian

Queer

Two-Spirit

Don't know

Prefer not to answer

Not listed, please describe: _____

Thank you for participating in the survey.

The data collected from this survey will be used to inform a report to the City of Toronto on current park usage trends in the 'Pits' Park District. The report will help guide future investment and improvements to the park.

The findings from this report can be found _____

All data will be stored by the City of Toronto in a secure and confidential database.