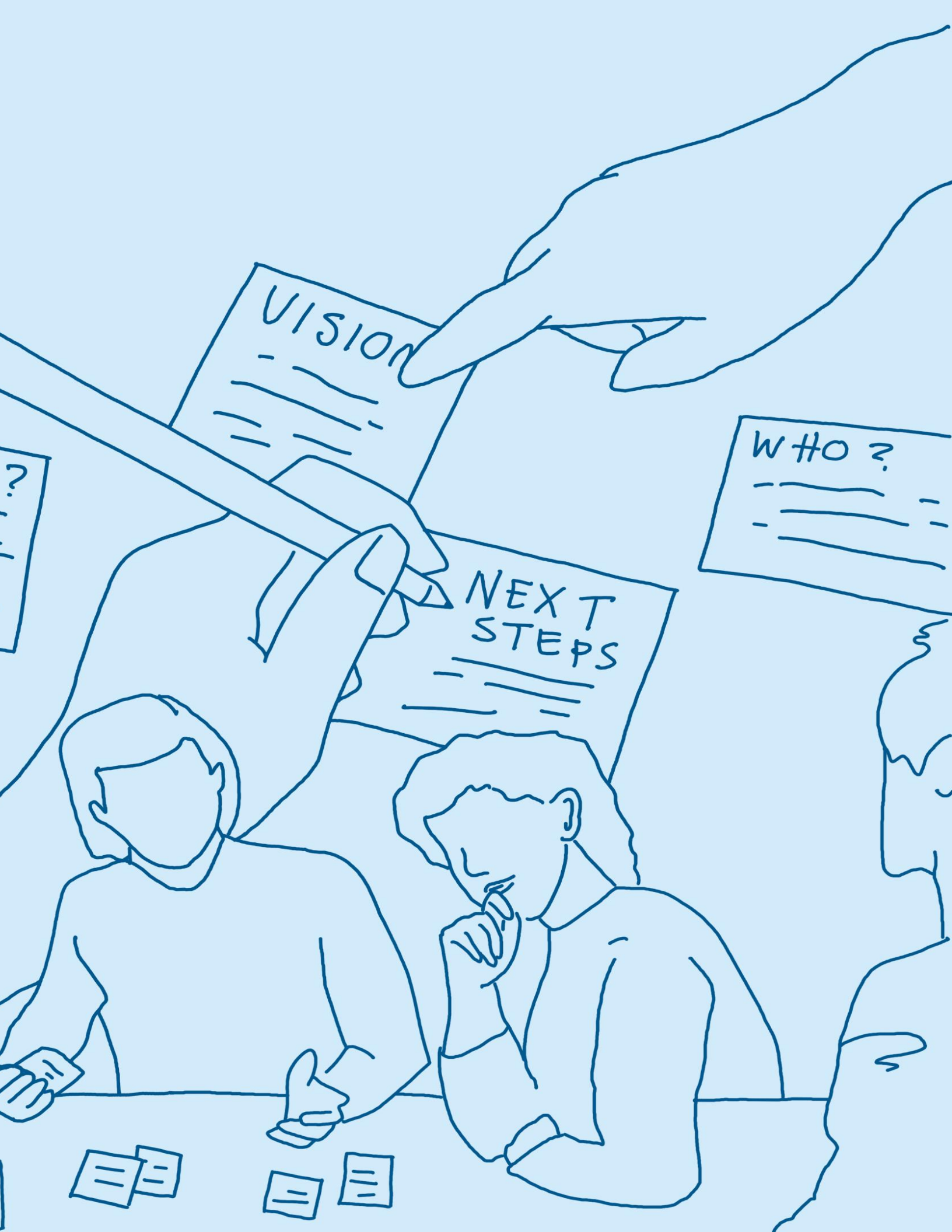


Online Survey Summary Report

Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone Pilot – Hanlan’s Point Beach
October 2025





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Pilot Overview

The Toronto Port Authority, in coordination with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Police Services Marine Unit, piloted a Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone (MWEZ) at Hanlan's Point Beach for the 2025 boating season. This pilot responded to community feedback received through the Toronto Island Park Plan process and reflects ongoing efforts by project partners to address the needs and priorities of island users.

The new safety zone extended 200 metres from the shoreline along the west side of the Toronto Islands. It was designed to enhance safety and improve the experience for all water users, providing a safe area for non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards, while helping boaters navigate more safely in a high-traffic area.

Motorized watercraft, including personal watercraft (PWCs such as Sea-Doos and Jet Skis), powerboats, and sailboats - are prohibited from entering the zone, which follows the natural curve of the shoreline. Buoys were installed, and the Toronto Police Marine Unit patrolled the area throughout the 2025 season.

In addition, there was a Reduced Noise Zone that extends 400 metres from shore. Sound carries much farther over water, and this initiative encouraged boaters to keep music and amplified sound at respectful levels to support a safe and enjoyable environment for boaters and beachgoers alike.

Purpose of this report

This report presents findings from the online survey conducted during the MWEZ Pilot, capturing community feedback to inform future planning and implementation.

2,354

Participants

Public Survey

Community members were invited to participate in an online public survey from May 20, 2025, to September 30, 2025.

How We Reached People

The community was informed about the online survey through the project webpage, a community meeting on the launch of the MWEZ, and communications shared by Toronto Port Authority and Toronto Police Marine Unit.

Hanlan's Point Beach Use

Participants were asked how they use Hanlan's Point Beach. The most popular descriptions were:

- I visit the beach (e.g. to swim, relax, or sunbathe) - (92 percent)
- I operate a motorized boat (e.g. powerboat, Jet Ski, Sea-Doo, motorized sailboat) - (15 percent)
- I use a non-motorized watercraft (e.g. kayak, canoe, paddleboard) - (13 percent)

Some participants (3 percent) described other uses:

Boating and Water Access

Some respondents described accessing Hanlan's Point by water, arriving by sailboat, powerboat, dinghy, or as boat passengers. Some anchor offshore and come ashore to enjoy the beach, while others spend time on their boats relaxing nearby.

Non-Motorized Water Recreation

Some respondents described engaging in a range of water-based activities, including open-water swimming, swim training, snorkelling, paddleboarding, and relaxing on inflatables or floaties.

2SLGBTQ+ Community and Cultural Connection

Some respondents described Hanlan's Point as an important gathering and social space for the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Respondents visit to connect with friends, family, and community, celebrate queer culture, and enjoy a space where they can be themselves freely and safely. Activities include socializing, relaxing, reflecting, meditating, and community gathering.

Nature and Quiet Enjoyment

Some respondents described coming to appreciate nature, birdwatch, or enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the island. The beach is also used as a quiet place to recharge and spend time outdoors.

Walking, Exercise, and Cycling

Some respondents described using the beach for walking, exercising, or cycling around the island.

Cultural and Spiritual Practices

One respondent identified as Mi'kmaw and visits the beach for ceremonial and spiritual connection with the land and water.

Other Activities

A few people mentioned picnicking, nude sunbathing, and spending time with visitors as part of their beach experience.

Impact on Visitor Experience

In the survey, participants were asked, "**Has the new Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone change your experience of Hanlan's Point?**"

The majority (95 percent) of respondents indicated that, yes, their experience has changed since the MWEZ was introduced. The following experience choices were the most popular among respondents:

- I enjoy visiting Hanlan's Point more now (82 percent).

 1. I feel safer in the water (78 percent).
 2. I visit Hanlan's Point more often now (57 percent).
 3. I visit Hanlan's Point less often now (10 percent).
 4. I find it harder to access the beach or water (10 percent).
 5. I have changed how or where I use my boat (9 percent).

6. I enjoy visiting Hanlan's Point less now (8 percent).
7. I feel less safe in the water (6 per cent).
8. I have changed how or where I used my non-motorized watercraft (5 percent).

If participants indicated that, 'yes', their experience had changed, they were asked to describe how. The following summarizes the described experience impacts:

Safer and More Comfortable Environment

Many respondents reported that Hanlan's Point Beach now feels safer and more relaxed. Swimmers, paddleboarders, and kayakers said they feel more confident entering the water without fear of close encounters with motorized boats or jet skis. The exclusion zone has made the beach environment more peaceful and secure, particularly for women and 2SLGBTQ+ visitors who noted fewer incidents of harassment, gawking, or non-consensual photography from boaters.

More Peaceful and Enjoyable Atmosphere

The reduction in nearby boat traffic has led to less noise, cleaner air and water, and a generally quieter, more natural experience. Many people described the beach as more serene, restorative, and visually appealing, with some noting an increase in wildlife presence. Visitors expressed greater comfort enjoying the clothing-optional and queer community aspects of the space.

Improved Sense of Privacy

Numerous participants emphasized feeling less "on display" now that boats are farther away. The change has enhanced feelings of privacy, dignity, and respect, allowing beachgoers to relax and enjoy the space without feeling watched or photographed.

Challenges for Boaters and Access

A smaller portion of respondents - primarily boaters - said their experience has become less convenient or enjoyable. Because anchoring now occurs in deeper water farther from shore, some found it harder or unsafe to swim between their boats and the beach, particularly for families with children or older adults. A few mentioned a loss of casual interaction between beachgoers and boaters that once characterized Hanlan's social atmosphere.

Overall Experience

Overall, most respondents described the MWEZ as having a positive impact on the beach environment - creating a space that feels calmer, safer, and more inclusive for swimmers and beach users. Challenges remain for boaters. The general sentiment among survey respondents (non-boaters) is that the change has enhanced enjoyment, safety, and community comfort at Hanlan's Point Beach.

Community Reflections

In the final survey question, participants were asked, “**Is there anything else you’d like to share about the new Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone?**”

These open-ended comments provide valuable insights into how community members perceive the broader impacts of the MWEZ - highlighting its influence on safety, access, enjoyment, and the overall atmosphere of the beach. The feedback captures a wide range of perspectives from swimmers, boaters, and visitors. The following list of comment themes is ranked in order of popularity, with #1 being the most noted by respondents and #12 being the least noted:

1. Strong support for making the MWEZ permanent (1,124 comments)
2. Request for additional buoys and large, permanent markers (867 comments)
3. Increased sense of safety in the water due to the MWEZ (186 comments)
4. Greater enjoyment of Hanlan’s Point Beach with the MWEZ in place (179 comments)
5. Suggestions to expand the MWEZ to other Toronto waterfront beaches (147 comments)
6. Need for stronger or more consistent enforcement of the MWEZ (123 comments)
7. Enhanced privacy and reduced boater voyeurism for beachgoers (90 comments)
8. Reduced noise and a more peaceful beach experience (74 comments)
9. Concerns that jet skis cause most safety issues and should be banned (65 comments)
10. Requests for improved signage and visual indicators for boaters (60 comments)
11. MWEZ may create unsafe conditions or excessive distance for boaters/swimmers to reach shore (52 comments)
 - General opposition to the MWEZ (47 comments)

The following further describes the open-ended responses shared:

Make the MWEZ Permanent

Most respondents support making the Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone permanent. They describe the pilot as a major improvement that makes the beach safer, quieter, and more enjoyable. Many highlight that it protects Hanlan’s Point Beach as a unique inclusive space, particularly valued by 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Respondents say the zone reduces harassment and restores a more relaxed, respectful atmosphere.

Add More and Larger Buoys/Pillars

Hundreds of comments call for more buoys (often “at least 14”) and larger pillar-style. Respondents feel the current markers are too small, too few, or poorly spaced, making it hard for boaters to recognize and respect the exclusion zone. Clearer, more visible boundaries are seen as key to improving safety and compliance.

Safety and Enjoyment

Many participants say the MWEZ has made the beach feel much safer and more peaceful. They note fewer close calls with boats and jet skis, less noise, and a calmer swimming environment. Some describe being able to swim farther and feel more comfortable using the beach again.

Expand the MWEZ to Other Beaches

Many respondents support expanding the MWEZ beyond Hanlan’s Point to other Toronto beaches, believing it would improve safety and enjoyment citywide.

A recurring concern is that boating and party activity displaced from Hanlan’s has shifted to Gibraltar Point Beach, creating new safety and noise issues there. Several comments specifically urge the exclusion zone extend to Gibraltar Point to prevent spillover. Other beaches frequently mentioned for expansion include Woodbine, Cherry, Ashbridges Bay, and Kew/Balmy, with respondents emphasizing that consistent protection across all swimming beaches is needed.

Harassment and Privacy Concerns

Many comments describe past harassment and voyeurism from boaters - including being watched, photographed, or shouted at. The MWEZ is said to have significantly reduced this behaviour, making visitors feel more comfortable and respected.

Calls for Better Enforcement

Several participants note that boats and jet skis still enter the exclusion zone and request stronger enforcement, including regular patrols, fines, or clearer signage. Improved visibility and enforcement are viewed as necessary to make the zone truly effective.

Ban or Restrict Personal Watercraft

A large subset of respondents calls for banning personal watercraft (e.g., seadoos, jet skis) or restricting their use, citing safety hazards, noise, and aggressive operation. Others distinguish between responsible boaters and jet ski users, arguing that enforcement should target the latter.

Opposition or Criticism

A smaller group of respondents oppose the MWEZ, describing it as overreach, unfair to responsible boaters, or harmful to access for families, older adults, or people with mobility limitations. Some argue that better enforcement of existing rules would be more effective than exclusion zones, while a few boaters say the distance now required to anchor creates safety challenges.

Reduced Noise Zone (RNZ) Feedback

Feedback on the Reduced Noise Zone is mixed. Some praise the quieter environment, while others say noise from party and charter boats persists, suggesting that enforcement or additional noise controls are still needed.

Accessibility and Environmental Benefits

A few respondents highlight ecological benefits, noting that reduced boat traffic helps protect shoreline habitats and reduce erosion. Others raise concerns about accessibility, particularly for those who previously reached the beach by boat.

Community Spotlight: Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ and Newcomer Considerations

This section highlights insights from equity-deserving communities, including Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+, newcomer/immigrant, and other historically marginalized groups. By centering voices that have often been excluded from traditional planning processes, we aim to support an approach that is inclusive, representative, and responsive to the needs of all communities.

Indigenous Community Spotlight

Indigenous participants expressed strong support for the MWEZ, noting that it improved safety, peace, and inclusion at the beach. They often framed their responses through values of stewardship and respect for the land and water, emphasizing the need to protect natural spaces from noise and pollution. Some also noted that Hanlan's Point represents a rare urban space where people can connect safely with nature,

aligning with broader Indigenous environmental and community well-being principles.

Top themes: safety, connection to nature, inclusion, respect for water, permanence of the MWEZ.

- “Hanlan’s feels like one of the few places in the city where we can still connect with the water in peace - please keep it that way.”
- “Protecting this beach is about respect for the water and for community. The boats were polluting and dangerous.”
- “The exclusion zone aligns with how we should care for the land and lake - shared, safe, and respected.”

Black Community Spotlight

Black respondents also largely supported the MWEZ, citing safety, relaxation, and freedom from harassment as major benefits. They described the area as feeling more inclusive and welcoming, with less intimidation from boaters and jet skis. A few mentioned the importance of equitable access to safe recreational spaces for Black Torontonians, highlighting how the exclusion zone creates a more balanced and respectful environment.

Top themes: safety, freedom from harassment, equitable access, inclusive public space.

- “It finally feels safe and welcoming. Before, the loud boats made it hard to relax or feel comfortable.”
- “This change helps everyone enjoy the beach equally - we deserve spaces that are peaceful and free from harassment.”
- “The vibe this year was calmer and more respectful. That’s how public spaces should feel for Black families too.”

2SLGBTQ+ Community Spotlight

This group offered some of the most enthusiastic support for the MWEZ. Many said it made Hanlan’s Point feel safe, affirming, and peaceful again, free from voyeurism and harassment from boaters. They emphasized that the zone helps preserve Hanlan’s as a unique 2SLGBTQ+ space in Toronto and urged the City to make it permanent and expand it to nearby beaches. Respondents frequently linked the exclusion zone to personal safety, dignity, and community belonging, seeing it as essential to protecting a historic 2SLGBTQ+ gathering place.

Top themes: safety, anti-harassment, 2SLGBTQ+ visibility, permanence, community protection.

- “As a historically queer space, it feels so important to maintain the safety that its users feel to exist and enjoy the beach freely and with the privacy we deserve.”
 - “Keep queer spaces safe please - the exclusion zone makes all the difference.”
 - “For once I didn’t feel watched or harassed from the boats. Hanlan’s finally felt like ours again.”

Newcomer & Immigrant Community Spotlight

Newcomers and immigrant respondents tended to see the MWEZ as a positive example of shared public space and good city management. They appreciated the sense of calm and order, noting that it made the beach feel safer and more accessible to families. A few commented on how Hanlan’s offered a welcoming and inclusive environment that reflected Toronto’s multicultural character. There were occasional concerns about understanding the rules or signage, suggesting that multilingual or clearer public communication could help.

Top themes: family-friendly safety, calm space, multicultural inclusion, clarity of information.

- “This made the beach feel more welcoming and calm.”
- “We felt comfortable swimming for the first time without worrying about jet skis or noise.”
 - “Clearer signs would help newcomers understand the rules, but it’s a great initiative.”

Lower-Income Community Spotlight (\$0 - 49,999)

Lower-income respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of the MWEZ, often describing Hanlan’s as one of the few free, safe, and enjoyable outdoor spaces available to them. They valued the exclusion zone for making the beach more accessible, less intimidating, and peaceful. Some noted that they could now swim, relax, or picnic without the disruption of boats or loud music. A small number raised concerns about transportation costs (e.g., ferry access) or lack of amenities, but overall, they saw the MWEZ as enhancing equity and enjoyment for all residents.

Top themes: free and safe recreation, peace and accessibility, reduced noise, equitable public space.

- “Hanlan’s is one of the only free, peaceful places left in the city. The exclusion zone keeps it that way.”
 - “It’s much safer and calmer - I can finally bring my kids to swim without worrying.”
 - “The beach feels respectful now, not taken over by boats. Please make this permanent.”

Cross-Community Themes

Across these communities, the dominant sentiment is strong support for keeping and expanding the MWEZ. Respondents view it as a tool that:

- Improves safety and comfort for marginalized communities
- Protects natural and social harmony at the beach
- Reinforces inclusivity and access for residents who might otherwise feel excluded from boating-dominated spaces

The key takeaway: the MWEZ is seen not just as a safety measure, but as a symbol of equity, respect, and community well-being across diverse groups.

The Community Spotlights demonstrate the MWEZ is seen not just as a safety measure, but as a symbol of equity, respect, and community well-being across diverse groups.

Next Steps

City staff have completed broader engagement related to Council's requested motorized watercraft exclusion zones (MWEZs) across the waterfront, along with other safety measures related to personal watercraft (PWC) rentals and have brought forward advice to Committee and Council. Next steps specific to Hanlan's Point Beach will depend on the Toronto Port Authority's decision regarding the proposed MWEZ pilot.

Appendix

Appendix A: Hanlan's Point Beach Use

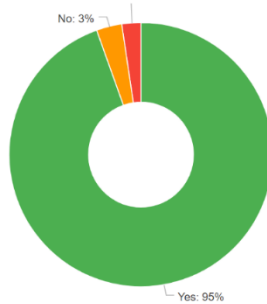
How would you describe how you use Hanlan's Point Beach? (select all that apply)

	Count	% of responses	%
I visit the beach (e.g. to swim, relax, or sunbathe)	2.2k		92%
I operate a motorized boat (e.g. powerboat, Jet Ski, Sea-Doo, sailboat)	358		15%
I use a non-motorized water craft user (e.g. kayak, canoe, paddleboard)	322		13%
Other, please specify	68		3%

N 2.4k











Appendix B: Has MWEZ changed your experience?

Has the new Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone changed your experience of Hanlan's Point?



N 2.4k

If yes, in what ways has your experience changed since the MWEZ was introduced?

	Count	% of responses	%
I enjoy visiting Hanlan's Point more now	1.9k		82%
I feel safer in the water	1.9k		78%
I visit Hanlan's Point more often now	1.4k		57%
I visit Hanlan's Point less often now	239		10%
I find it harder to access the beach or water	238		10%
I have changed how or where I use my boat	215		9%
Other, please specify	203		9%
I enjoy visiting Hanlan's Point less now	201		8%
I feel less safe in the water	152		6%
I have changed how or where I used my non-motorized watercraft	108		5%

N 2.4k

Appendix C: Demographics










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?

	Count	% of responses	%
White (e.g. English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Slovakian, Eastern European)	1.6k		68%
Prefer not to answer	240		10%
Latin American (e.g. Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)	108		5%
South Asian or Indo-Caribbean (e.g. Indian, Indo- Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)	102		4%
More than one race category or mixed race	84		4%
First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit or Métis	77		3%
Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian (e.g. Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)	74		3%
Black (e.g. African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)	73		3%
East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)	73		3%
Southeast Asian (e.g. Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese)	62		3%
Other, please describe	23		1%

N 2.4k

Appendix D: Survey Awareness

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

	Count	% of responses	%
Word of mouth (including non-City of Toronto social media account)	1.7k		71%
Ad or post from a City of Toronto social media account	303		13%
I don't know/Prefer not to answer	215		9%
The project webpage	108		5%
Email from the project team	82		3%
Councillor's Office communications	29		1%
Poster in the neighbourhood	24		1%
Park sign	21		1%
Mailer to my home	2		0%

N 2.4k