



PORT

Public Meeting
Dec 4, 2:30–4:30 p.m.
Port Lands 2024

LANDS

**December 4, 2020, Public Meeting
Summary Report**

Prepared by Mira Shenker and Michela Comperey, Waterfront Toronto, January 2021.

Overview:

We held a Public Meeting in December 2020 to learn more about the Port Lands Flood Protection project. Due to COVID-19, the meeting was held online: presentations were made available in advance, and over 80 people joined us for a live screening and Q&A on December 4. The [webpage](#) that hosted the presentations and meeting information received 1,555 pageviews over November and December and pre-recorded presentations received 6,655 views. The high number of video views is partly due to a BlogTO article that embedded one of the videos within the article.

Participants were invited to submit questions in advance or following the live meeting, and to complete a survey that accompanied the materials. Presentations and the survey remained available until December 18. 44 people responded to the survey.

The purpose of the meeting was to present the final design update for the river and parks in the Port Lands and to present the designs for proposed public realm improvements on Lake Shore Boulevard East. We also sought feedback on some of the elements of the Lake Shore Boulevard East design.

At the live meeting, Mira Shenker introduced the three presentations:

1. Netami Stuart presented a project update, specifically an update on our work with Indigenous Communities and the Indigenous Design Collective, MinoKamik.
2. Don McKinnon (Dillon), Jonathan Ho (Entuitive), and Shelley Long (West8) presented a design update for public realm improvements on Lake Shore Boulevard East. This includes modifications to the Lake Shore Bridge required for the Port Lands Flood Protection project as well as the reconstruction of Lake Shore Boulevard East as part of the City of Toronto's Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard Reconfiguration (Gardiner East) project.
3. Herb Sweeney presented a final design update on the river valley and parks, including programming and design features in Promontory Park and River Park and how public feedback has shaped the final designs.

The [webpage](#) for the meeting included links to a construction update, upcoming construction, and background information on the Port Lands such as the project timeline and feedback received during consultation to date.

Please see Appendix A for the list of questions and answers during the meeting.

Survey Results

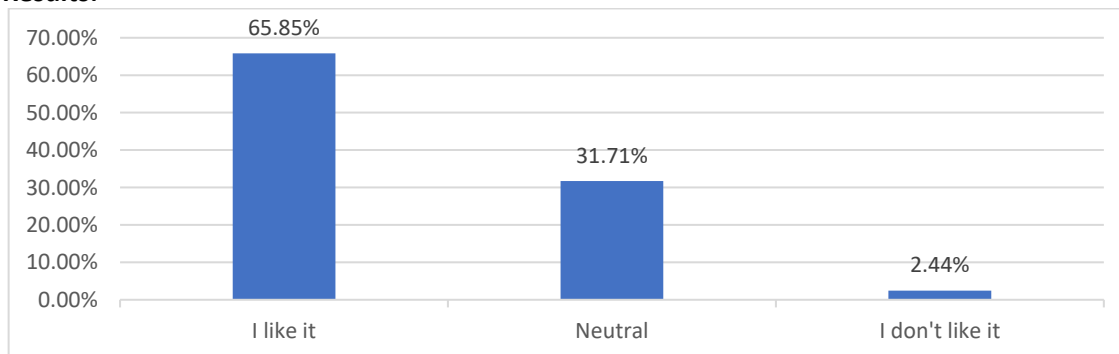
44 people completed the survey, which was hosted on the third-party platform Survey Monkey and distributed by Waterfront Toronto. We raised awareness about the public meeting starting on November 23rd. A link to the survey was available starting on November 30th and remained open until December 18th. It was shared in the Waterfront Toronto newsletter and on social media platforms during that period.

Survey Findings:

Q: Do you have any feedback about the approach to landscaping in the streetscape shown here, including the median? This area is proposed to be planted as a meadow, which should be low-to-no maintenance.



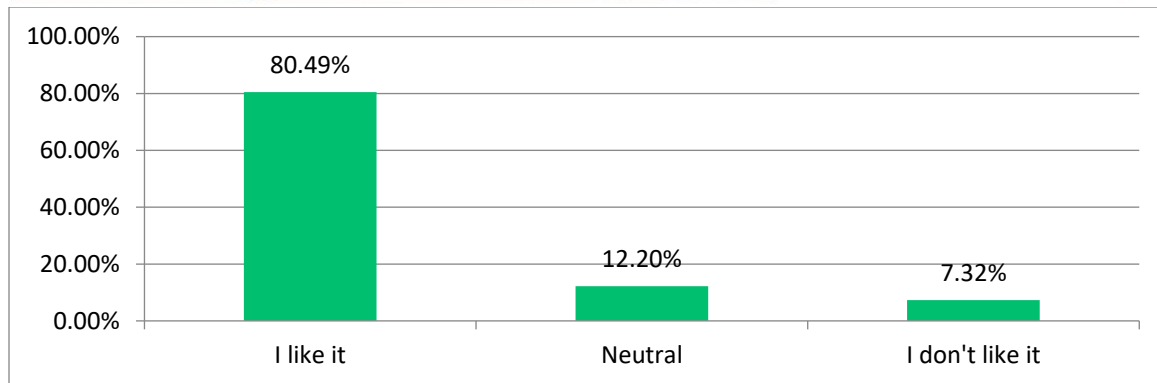
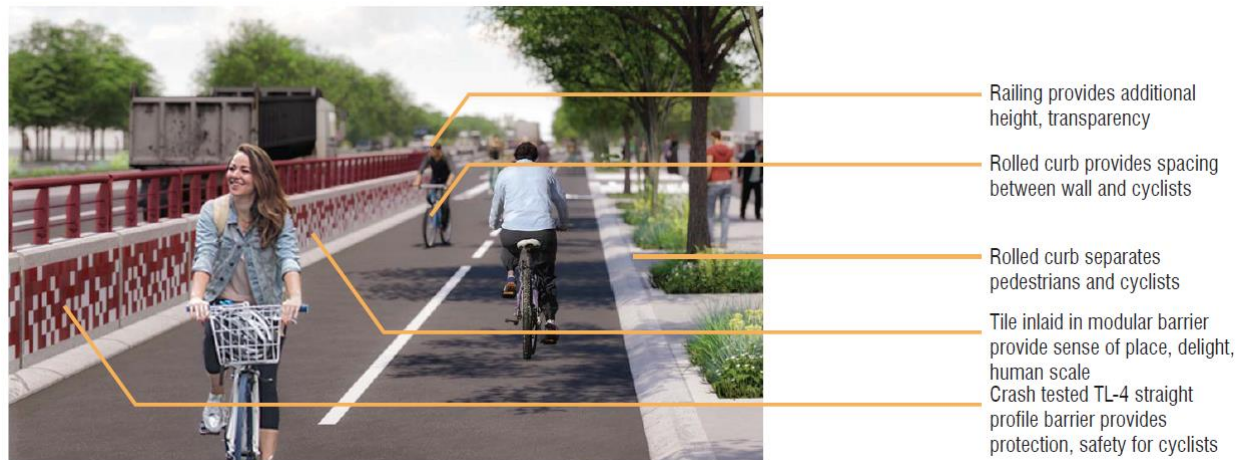
Results:



Tell us why, summary of comments:

- People liked the approach to planting, noting it was pleasant, sustainable and easy to maintain. They supported the use of native species and wanted to include lots of trees.
- People thought that it was safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

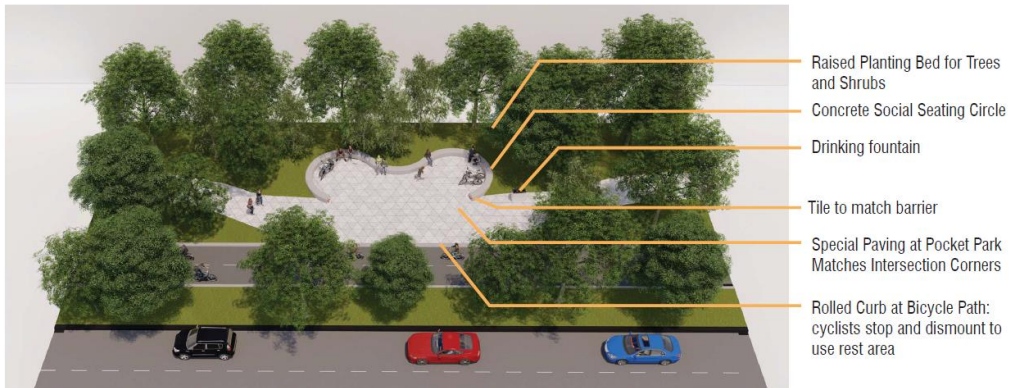
Q: What do you think about this preliminary design for a protective barrier for cyclists? This is a proposed design based on past feedback from stakeholders and members of the public, as well as City input.



Tell us why, summary of comments:

- People supported the separation of modes of transportation and emphasized the importance of safety.
- People suggested different colours or designs for the barrier or encouraged us to consider public art like a mural instead of tiles.
- People commented on the width of the cycle path, some commenting that it looked too wide and some raising concerns that there is not enough space to overtake slower cyclists.

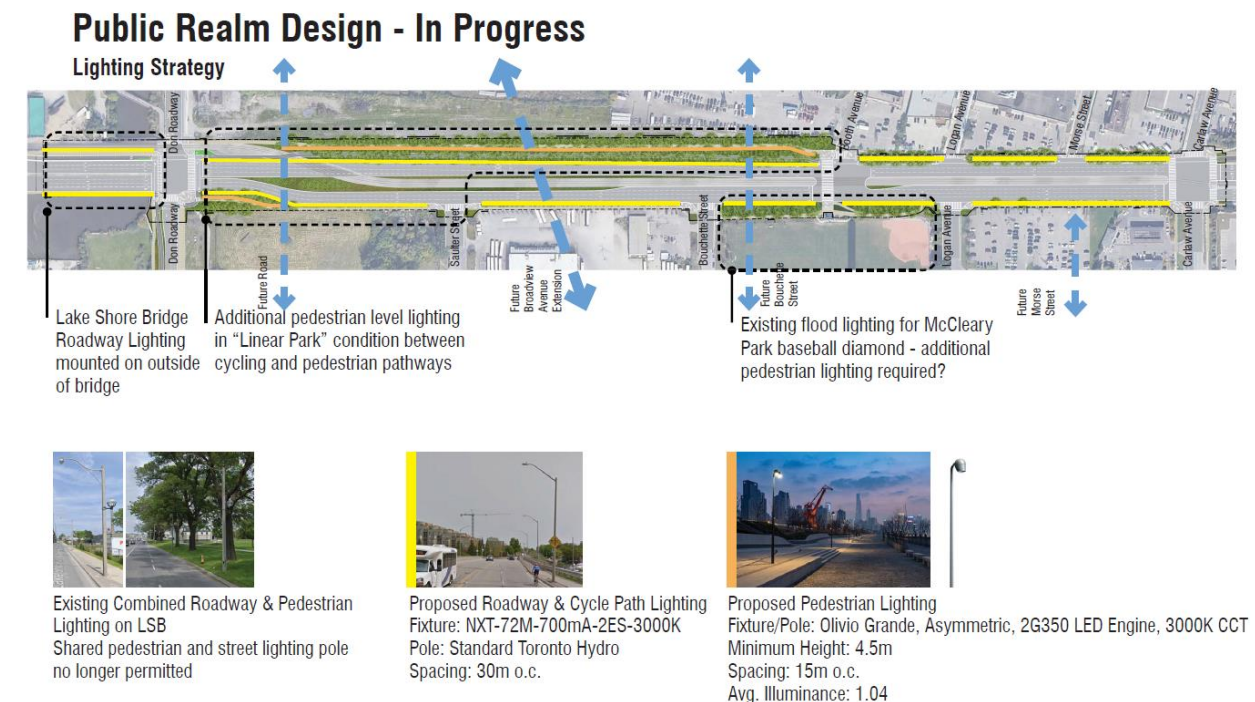
Q: The map below identifies the locations for two new pocket parks along Lake Shore Boulevard East. Is there anything you would change about this park design? Consider the approach to plantings, the seating, material choices and access of the cycle track.



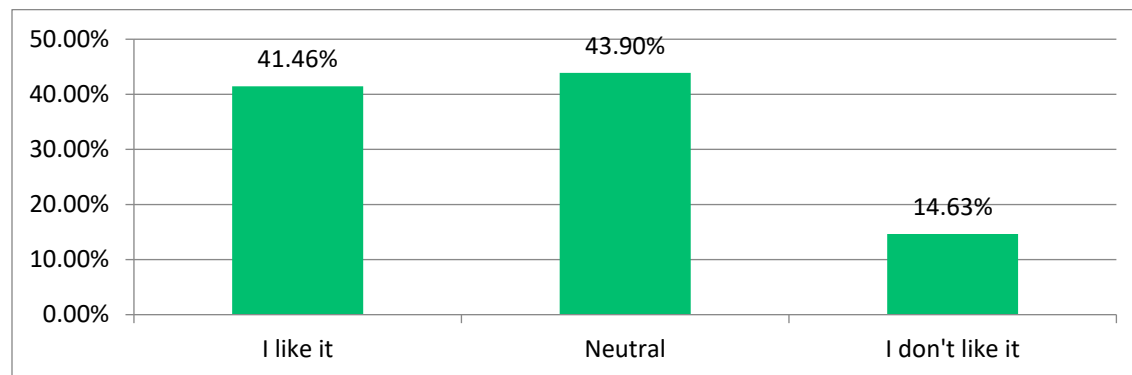
Summary of Comments:

- Many people commented on the importance of the pocket park being well-lit.
- Concerns about safety of a secluded area included lighting, visibility from the road and tree cover.
- People suggested changes to accommodate cyclists who may use the parks as a meeting point and noted that seating should be comfortable and accessible.
- People were supportive of infrastructure such as water fountains and washrooms.
- People suggested changes to the aesthetics of the park including decorative paving, paintings, lighting and iconic public art.

Q: Tell us what you think about the proposed lighting. In particular, we're interested in hearing from cyclists, pedestrians and park users.



46



Tell us why, summary of comments:

- The importance of good lighting for safety was clear, and also the need to balance enough lighting with reducing light pollution and impacts on wildlife.
- Some suggestions on ways to make the lighting more aesthetically pleasing, for example: different colours, specific light poles, using string lights, and encouragement to make it more 'artistic'.

Summary of General Comments about Lake Shore Boulevard:

- Plan for all times of days and seasons, including in the selection of materials and plantings.
- Comments suggested considering infrastructure that will be ‘future-proof’ for higher usage in the future, including the ability to integrate an LRT as well as water fountains and bathrooms along the parks.
- People wanted the cycling paths to be as connected as possible to other trails in the city.

Summary of General Comments about Port Lands Flood Protection:

- People commented that new public spaces and parks should appeal to the broadest possible demographic and can become tourist destinations. In this context, commenters noted the importance of integrating arts and culture into public spaces and encouraged the team to design for year-round animation and live performances.

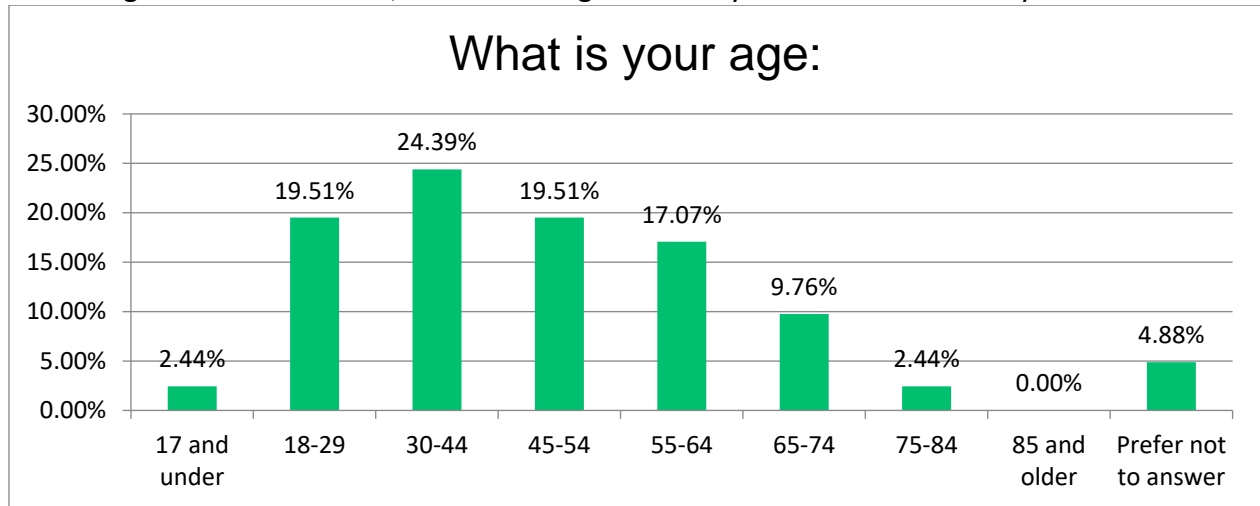
Survey Respondent Demographics:

The survey asked all respondents to complete an optional demographic survey in order to better understand how representative the survey sample was when compared with the population of the city of Toronto. We appreciate that Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world, with a broad spectrum of social and economic experiences, and we hoped to capture the input of as many Torontonians as possible.

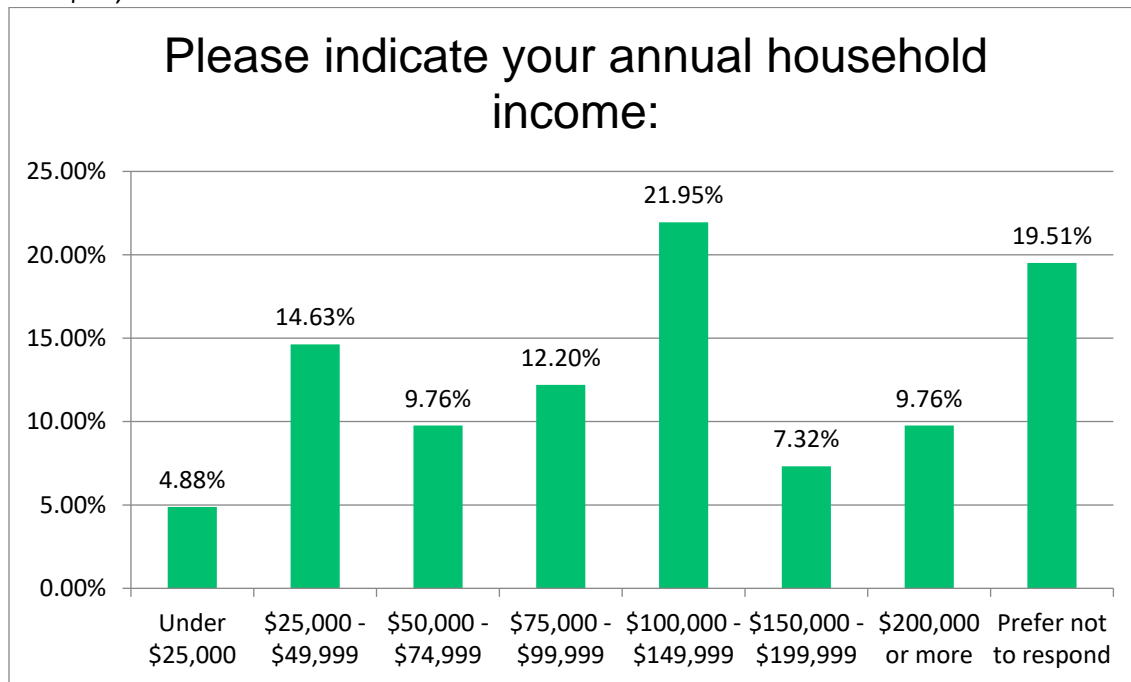
This demographic data was collected so that, moving forward, Waterfront Toronto can develop more focused strategies for reaching under-represented voices. In particular, we looked at key demographic indicators such as age, education, race and household income of survey respondents against the reports from Statistics Canada in 2016.

Age:

According to the 2016 census, the median age in the city of Toronto was 39.3 years.

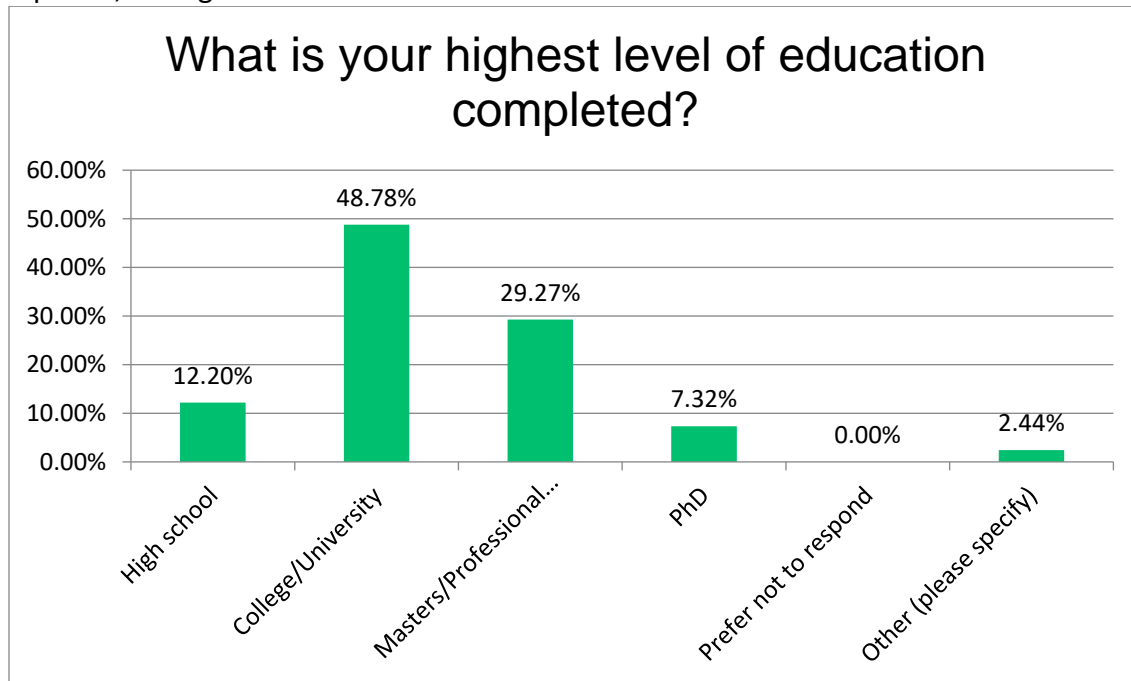
**Household Income:**

According to the 2016 census for the city of Toronto, the average (median) household income was \$65,829.



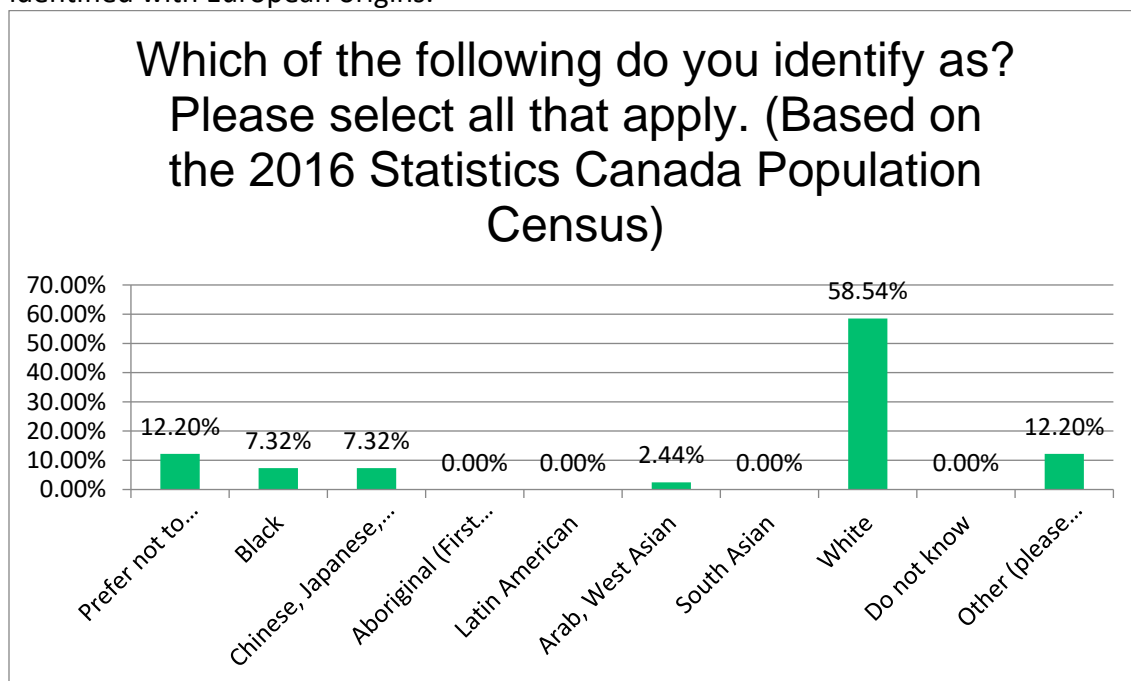
Education:

Sixty-nine percent of Toronto residents aged 25 to 64 have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree.



Racial Identity:

In the 2016 census, 51.5% (or 1,385,855 people) identified as belonging to a visible minority group, 0.9% (or 23,065 people) identified as Indigenous, and 45.7% (or 1,288,850 people) identified with European origins.



Other, please specify:

- Canadian
- European Ancestry
- Mixed race, visible minority (Chinese/German/Polish)

Geographic Area of Respondents

- 33% live in the Designated Waterfront Area
- 42% live in central Toronto
- 6% live in East York/Scarborough
- 8% live in North York
- 5.6% live in the GTA
- 5.6% live outside of the GTA (Hamilton and Kitchener)

Promotion:

Promotion began on November 23rd, 2020. It included 6 posts on Facebook, 4 on Instagram, 5 on LinkedIn and 12 on Twitter. In total, these posts earned 56, 615 impressions and 2,923 engagements for an average engagement rate of 4.8%.

It was included in the Waterfront Toronto Newsletter on November 30th, which had a 29.3% open rate and 4.8% click rate.

Appendix A: Port Lands Flood Protection Public Meeting - Dec 4, 2020

Questions and Answers

General Questions:

Q: Has Waterfront Toronto or others involved made provisions in construction contracts to stop all construction, temporarily, in the case of a major financial crisis? For example, due to the tremendous debt the Country, Province and City of Toronto are facing because of the Pandemic.

A: We appreciate there is a lot of anxiety and concern around the pandemic and how budgets are being spent. This project has many long-term benefits including open green spaces that have proven to be critical during this time, as well as long-term economic benefits for all our government partners. Our contracts allow for us to stop work, although there has been no suggestion from our stakeholders that this is a consideration.

Funding for capital projects is planned several years in advance. For Port Lands Flood protection, there was a tripartite agreement signed in 2018 and each level of government committed their third of funding for the project, so the monies are already available.

Q: Has Waterfront Toronto's position regarding the Gardiner realignment project changed, given the unprecedented budget issues facing the city, province etc.? Especially given the section to be rebuilt has yet to move ahead and the limited time to halt it?

A: Waterfront Toronto is proceeding consistent with the approved Environmental Assessments.

Q: In the areas designed and meant for commercial and retail uses, is there forward-thinking approaches to block and limit chain and formulaic retail? Creating a truly unique area will require not homogenizing it with another Starbucks, Shoppers, A & W, etc.

A: We referred this question to our planning and design department following the live meeting, as it relates not only to the Port Lands but to all the neighbourhoods we plan.

As we develop new areas of the waterfront, we want to create unique retail opportunities that serve the needs of the people who live/work/visit in the area. One of the challenges we face in attracting unique small businesses to the waterfront is the fact that the waterfront is typically only busy enough to support small businesses during the warm months of the year. The addition of a large cultural anchor that attracts visitors year-round could help sustain other uses such as restaurants. We will continue to engage with the public and small businesses as well as develop ways to bring people down to the waterfront all year round to alleviate this issue.

Port Lands Parks and River Design:

Q: Could the new park (and all other projects) use the signature Waterfront Toronto light instead of utilitarian ones? This would create a sense of place and would continue the existing waterfront's identity. I am referring to the 'Olivio' light standards found on Queens Quay and other WT projects

A: The Olivio light was selected for the Central Waterfront. As part of the design review for the parks in PLFP, it was reviewed, however for a variety of technical and aesthetic considerations, another light was chosen. The Ouray, which is from the same manufacturer, responds to the unique conditions of the new

parks and will be a signature fixture for that area. The Parks in the Port Lands will have a distinct identity from the Central Waterfront.

Q: Have you considered locations for public washrooms? How would the city accommodate so many visitors to these public spaces without providing adequate facilities?

A: In the Port Lands, the Firehall-30 building is planned as a park building that will have six unisex public washrooms to service day-to-day use of the park. For large events and programming, the City of Toronto department of Parks, Forestry and Recreation would require organizers to provide temporary washrooms for the expected number of attendees.

Q: Where is the Firehall-30 currently, and where is it being moved to?

A: Currently the building sits on the edge of the sidewalk of Commissioners Street. Commissioners Street will be widened to make space for a future light-rail transit extension, so the building needed to be shifted south, into the park, and will have a similar relationship to the edge of the revitalized street.

Q: Is Promontory Park still on track for a 2024 opening?

A: Yes. Promontory Park South is included in the scope of this project and will be open in 2024. Promontory Park North, on the site of the Cherry Street Lakefilling Project, will be completed in lockstep with future development on Villiers Island. The basic (schematic) design for this park was included in the scope of the Port Lands Flood Protection project to ensure that when it is built, there will be a cohesive design with the existing parks being completed as part of Port Lands Flood Protection.

Q: Heard a rumour about a pedestrian bridge from Villiers Island to the Toronto Islands – any truth in that?

A: That is not currently contemplated in any Waterfront Toronto plans. We are not aware of any plans for such a bridge.

A pedestrian bridge from Villiers Island to Parliament Slip is currently being studied but is not yet funded.

Q: Regarding the Villiers Island bridges, how is installation going to work for the two additional bridges being delivered? The four bridges in Phase 1 are being floated into place on barges, but the later two will be blocked from floating in by the Cherry South Bridge #1 previously installed, so how will they get past that? Also, what will be done with the future alignments for these bridges between Phases 1 and 2? The renderings show a kind of greyed out area but it's a bit vague what will be in place there.

A: Four bridges are included in the project scope of Port Lands Flood Protection: two bridges on Cherry Street spanning the Keating Channel (one reserved for future transit connections) one bridge spanning the future mouth of the Don River, what is currently Polson Slip, and one bridge on Commissioners Street, spanning the future river, between Munition Street and Don Roadway.

The full vision for the Port Lands, which is beyond the scope of the Port Lands Flood Protection project, also includes dedicated transit bridges at the site of Cherry Street South crossing the new river mouth, and at Commissioners street, to accommodate future light-rail transit. These bridges are not yet funded and would come in lockstep with future development of Villiers Island.

In 2024, Toronto Transit Commission will continue to run bus service into the Port Lands using the vehicular bridges along Cherry Street North and South. The greyed out areas in the project map represent areas that will be in an interim condition when work on Port Lands Flood Protection is completed in 2024. The map below shows where space is being reserved for future dedicated transit lanes (shaded in purple). In the interim, these spaces will be meadow.



Q: Have there been any extra measure to account for the increased volume of dogs to the area and, for example, how their waste will impact user areas and surrounding soil/water? Have any sustainable improvements been considered for the impact of excessive garbage, dog waste and impacts from wildlife?

A: Two dog off leash areas are planned for within the River Valley Park North area at the east and west entrances where crossings into the adjacent neighborhoods have been provided. Physical barriers have been provided through a variety of fence types to prevent intrusion of dogs and visitors alike into the naturalized habitat.

The project team is working with Parks, Forestry and Recreation at the City to implement operation and maintenance strategies for waste and recycling collection in the park.



Q: What provisions are being made for the acknowledgement of the industrial heritage of the site, apart from reuse of the Marine terminal girders and the Atlas Crane?

A: As a result of the consultation process with Heritage Preservation Services, a commemoration strategy for the MT-35 building will include vertical light columns where the MT-35 building previously faced the waterfront (the west face of the building). In addition to recognizing the scale of the building's height and relationship to the waterfront, the existing foundation will be maintained and interpretive signage provided to identify the importance of the MT-35 building. There is an interpretive signage program site-wide that will address other features ranging from industrial heritage to habitat creation and Indigenous content.

Q: What happened to the idea of canoe and kayak storage?

A: The design of the parks provides access to the water's edge at several locations where a canoe, kayak or other small craft could be launched. The design creates space to accommodate potential canoe/kayak storage or rentals as part of future projects. Building new storage was not included in the scope of the Port Lands Flood Protection Project.

Q: Will the planting be mature on Day 1 (in 2024), just as was done for Corktown Common?

A: The project area is large and, given the long duration of construction, some green spaces will be more established than others by 2024. Some planting will begin as early as next year, in 2021, while some areas will not be planted until the end of 2023. So there will be varying levels of planting establishment when the parks and green spaces open in 2024.

Q: Will you be providing the species list for each of the different planting zones?

A: For the Port Lands, there is a diverse list of plant species based on the varying conditions, micro-climates and hydrology (whether plants are within the flood plain or above top-of-bank). Several hundred species are planned over the park area.

The full species list can be found here: <https://portlandsto.ca/wp-content/uploads/Port-Lands-Flood-Protection-planting-list.pdf>

Q: Are any fruiting trees being considered?

A: The planting approach incorporates both native and ornamental trees within the park areas. The trees selected exhibit many different characteristics including flowering and fruiting to provide seasonal landscape value as well as value to wildlife.

Q: Are the Cherry / Sakura Trees on current Cherry Street meant to be protected in the long term, and any plans to add more Cherry / Sakura Trees in the area? Feels fitting.

A: The existing trees located along Cherry Street and at the edge of the Keating Channel are not within the project site and will not be impacted by the flood protection project. There is no plan to remove those trees.

A number of Sakura (Cherry) Trees will be planted in the parks, including *Prunus x yedoensis*, Yoshino Cherry and *Prunus serotina*, Black Cherry.

Lake Shore Boulevard East Questions:

Q: There was a reference to thermo plastic in the road crossings. What is thermo plastic?

A: Thermo plastic is a common paint material used for crossings. It is the standard, economic material that is typically used at crosswalks and street crossings.

Q: If the Harbour lead rail line is moved to the centre of Lake Shore Boulevard, at what point will it connect to the main rail line?

A: The Harbour Lead Rail Line will connect to the main rail line at the same location as it does currently, which is west of the Don River. That connection will not be changed.

Q: Is there any planned future used for the central rail line down the middle of Lake Shore Boulevard?

A: There are no plans for expansion and additional use for the line. It continues to be a low-use line.

Q: Why are there planned to be trees planted in the spaces where future streets will go? It feels like kind of a waste when the trees could instead be planted in places where they aren't destined for early removal.

A: In those areas where you do see future road crossings that are likely to be confirmed, we're using understory trees or shrubs rather than more robust canopy trees that take longer to mature. On some future roads that are still to be determined, we are planning to plant quick-growing trees. Even trees that are in place for shorter periods of time (approximately four years) provide benefits including stormwater management, cleaner air, and more pleasant public realm. Our goal is to enhance the area as much as possible while plans related to future developments are still being determined.

Q: Will only native tree, shrub and plant species be used in all the plantings? It was presented that the species will need to be resilient to wind and salt, but also support biodiversity and provide pollinator and colour interest. Native plant species can satisfy all of these conditions. This will also be in line with Toronto's official Biodiversity Strategy.

A: We have relied on exclusively native species for tree and shrub selections but have included some native varieties at the perennial level. They provide largely the same pollinator and habitat benefits, and in some cases, have advantages such as the ability to self-seed and spread. We focused on survivability and resiliency, and we've been able to expand the colour palette by using varieties of the species.

Q: Will you be providing the species list for each of the different planting zones? Specifically, for Lake Shore Boulevard public realm, and the Promontory Park South & River Valley?

A: For Lakeshore Boulevard we have proposed 24 large tree and shrub species, prioritizing the most resilient species adjacent the roadway. Our primary driver for species selection was plant survival followed by diversity for long-term resilience, canopy coverage, and promoting native species. We also have 30-40 perennial and grass species included in the plan.

The full species list can be found here: <https://portlandsto.ca/wp-content/uploads/LSBE-Public-Realm-Plant-Species.pdf>

Q: Traffic barrier height should consider cyclist don't get blinded by on coming car headlights?

A: The design is evolving to limit the areas where the bike path is adjacent to the curb lane with no planted buffer. In the areas with tighter constraints, the design team is considering a modular barrier design that is approximately 0.8 metres high with an additional cyclist height railing. This should minimize the impact of oncoming car headlights, which are typically about 0.5 metres high. Additionally, the bike path will be separated from the road by a 1-metre-wide buffer at these areas, which will further reduce the impact of oncoming car headlights.

Q: At the Don Roadway intersections, all the cycle crossovers are bi-directional except on the west side. I would think this west one be helpful to be bi-directional also.

A: The Don Roadway intersection is in a very constrained space with limiting existing conditions such as the edge of the Don River and Harbour Lead line. The design team is further reviewing and refining the intersection design in coordination with the City to balance the accessibility of the street crossings with the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in addition to maintaining the functionality of the intersection for vehicles, particularly the turning movements of large trucks.

Q: Have we considered grade separation/pedestrian tunnels/bridges in each road crossings (e.g. Morse/Logan) to protect cyclist and pedestrian safety? Are there any plans for pedestrian bridges over Lake Shore Boulevard to limit waiting times at cross walks and provide safety from rogue drivers / cyclists?

A: Tunnels or bridges have not been considered for the road crossings. Improvements to pavement markings, vehicle stop bar locations, and sidewalk and bike path layout have been included in the design

to improve the safety of the crossings. Additionally, a safety review is underway to identify further improvements to the design for all users of Lake Shore Boulevard.

Q: Are there any plans for sound barriers along Lake Shore Boulevard to reduce noise of traffic?

A: Noise was assessed as part of the Gardiner East Environmental Assessment (Gardiner East EA) that examined changes along Lake Shore Boulevard and has been approved by the Province and City Council. There were no recommendations made for noise barriers as a result of that study.

Q: What impact assessment has been done on traffic volumes on residential streets north of Lake Shore Boulevard and Eastern Avenue?

A: As part of the South of Eastern and Port Lands Transportation Study Master Plan (TSMP) Environmental Assessment (EA), traffic modelling considered the impact of planned development in the area, including the East Harbour Development on the Unilever Site and future development in the Port Lands.

Traffic modelling was also undertaken to support the Gardiner East EA.

Finally, there is also additional traffic modelling work being undertaken to support the Broadview and Eastern EA that is building on the work of the TSMP.