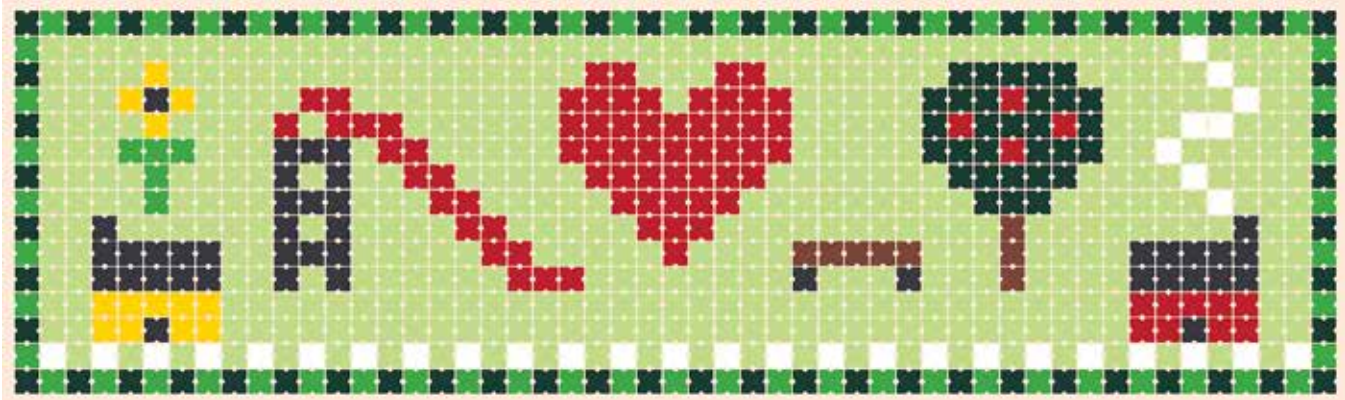


Margaret Ave Park Project
**Community Engagement Summary
Report #1**

Engagement period: March 20 – May 12, 2025



Visual identity graphic created for the Margaret Ave Park project.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Waterloo, in partnership with SHIFT Landscape Architecture, is bringing a brand-new park space to the Lincoln Heights Neighbourhood, creating important parkland and adding a variety of activities and features to the community. To ensure this new park space best serves the community, the project team will aim to incorporate the ideas and needs of local residents and stakeholders through an ongoing, extensive engagement process. This engagement is a fundamental part of the process that will guide the final park design.

The project includes several phases: collection of background information, development of multiple concepts, delivery of the final concept plan, preparing the project for construction, and finally, construction of Margaret Ave Park. During this process, there are multiple opportunities for outreach and engagement. The first stage of engagement was completed in April 2025 and was focused on learning about the community's needs and perspectives on the project. The following report outlines the methods, process, and results of the first engagement effort.

METHODS

A variety of methods were used to inform and engage with the public and stakeholders about the project. As a starting point, a visual identity was created to form a consistent 'brand' for the project. Inspired by cross-stitching, the design of the identity reflects how the project will weave together ideas to shape the park. A green rectangle represents the park, while simple illustrations highlight trees, neighbourhood homes, and future possibilities like a playground (an example of the identity is shown at the top of this page). Along with the visual identity, a number of different engagement and outreach activities and events have been held to-date. These are described below.

1. Margaret Ave Park project page

The Margaret Ave Park web page was launched on Engage Waterloo, the City's public engagement online platform. The specific [Margaret Ave Park page](#) was launched as the first aspect of public engagement and outreach. This page served as the main method for providing information and receiving public input. Over a three-week public input period, the page was promoted on the City's website, via social media platforms, and through promotional materials. It was important to establish an online destination for people to visit to receive project information and to stay updated throughout the process. On the Margaret Ave Park page, visitors can view key dates, the project timeline, photos, and information about the project site.

Visitors to the web page had the opportunity to publicly post ideas and comments through the 'Ideas' tool. Participants were encouraged to share any local stories, history or ideas for the future park. The contributions shared to-date have been reviewed by the project team and will help influence and guide the park design.

The Margaret Ave Park page was the primary access to the online survey supporting the first community grounding event. The survey was live for a two-week period and received **135 responses**.

Remove driveway, add bike parking

Posted by 11 days ago

I love that this space is becoming a park! Given that there is ample street parking on Neilson, I would love to see the park space itself, including the driveway, dedicated entirely to play and green space, including leaving the existing trees and adding more. The park could benefit from good bike parking, and benches in shade, as other ideas have mentioned!

IDEA

0 Comments

Add a rock wall and low basketball nets

Posted by 15 days ago

Could you add low basketball nets for the kids in jk-grade 3 who can't reach typical ones but love to play? Also low monkey bars Also a larger scare rock wall

IDEA AND STORY

0 Comments

Park with a Math theme

Posted by a month ago

Waterloo is known globally for technology, engineering, computer science, and mathematics. And yet if you walk around town, there is barely any references to our world-class status and reputation. I have a dream! I envision a series of outdoor installations (hardscape, plantings, play structures, interactive structures) which would activate and engage both residents and visitors around the theme of Mathematics. I For example, one park could be dedicated to the idea of prime numbers,...

IDEA

1 Comments



Redbud trees

Posted by a month ago

Hopefully, we will be able to keep most of the mature trees currently existing on the site. This idea is to propose a grove of redbud trees as a defining feature of the park, which would bring very beautiful spring time flowers to the area. Eastern...

IDEA

0 Comments

Mini stage

Posted by Anonymous a month ago

Community events could be hosted at the park for outdoor music or performances. Having a platform at the park can be a great addition for community building.

IDEA

0 Comments

Sample of comments posted through the online 'Ideas' tool.

2. Social media

The project team worked with the City of Waterloo's Corporate Communications team to share news of the new park project publicly on multiple social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, TikTok). The social media posts were published five days before the first open house event. Through the posts, people were invited to attend the open house with event details conveniently provided in the captions. Additionally, viewers were encouraged to visit the Margaret Ave Park web page to learn more about the project and participate in the survey.

3. In-person events: project open house and public events

The first open house for the project was held on April 10th, 2025 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the in the community room of the Moses Springer Community Centre. This first in-person kick-off was treated as a project grounding event to meet community members and share/gather information about the park and its local context. The open house welcomed approximately 25 attendees. Five project team members were present for the event to answer any questions from community members and to collect feedback. Information boards showcasing existing site conditions, site photos, and local history were displayed at the event. Images of the information boards are attached in appendix A. In addition to the boards, a voluntary activity was offered to attendees where they could post their comments on available aerial photos of the park. Photos of the comment boards are included on page 11 of this report.

The City of Waterloo and SHIFT Landscape Architecture also coordinated an engagement event with the local Bluevale Collegiate Institute to speak with high school students about the new park. The Civics and Careers class was engaged as an educational opportunity to demonstrate the importance of public space, the significance of community engagement, and understand how high school aged teenagers could benefit from the new park. The class was tasked with designing a park that they could imagine themselves using while meeting certain parameters, such as including a space for creativity, environmental features, accessible pathways, and interest for all ages. The class was divided into four groups and as a result, four diverse park designs were presented. Photos of the designs are included on the following pages.



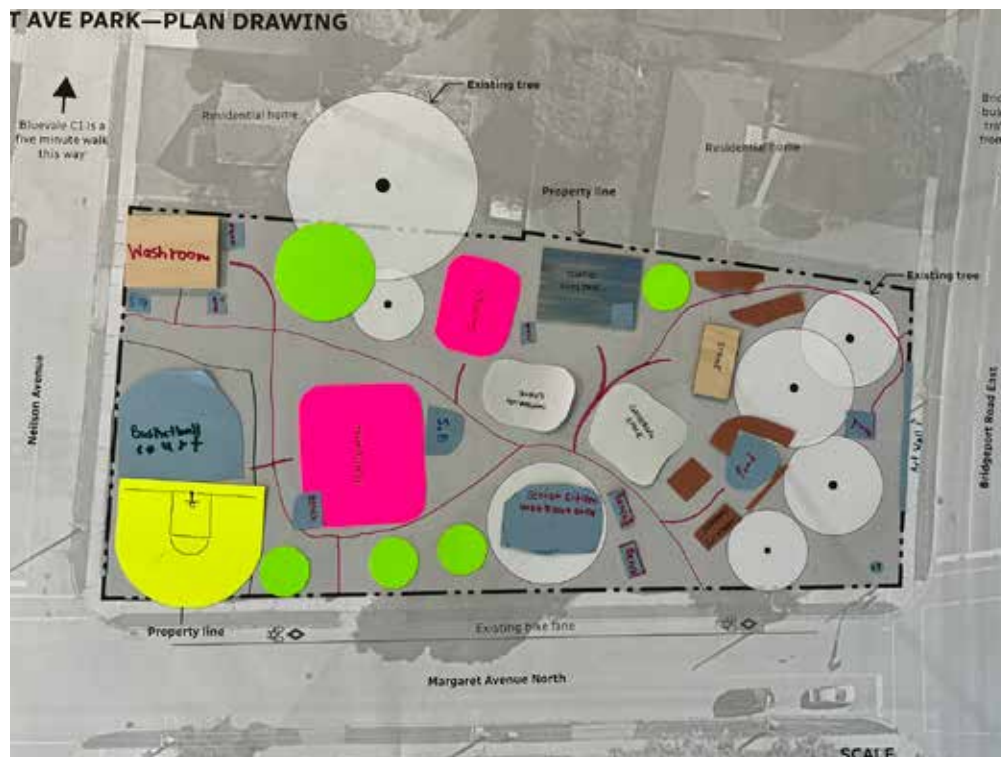
Park design charette with a local Civics and Careers class.



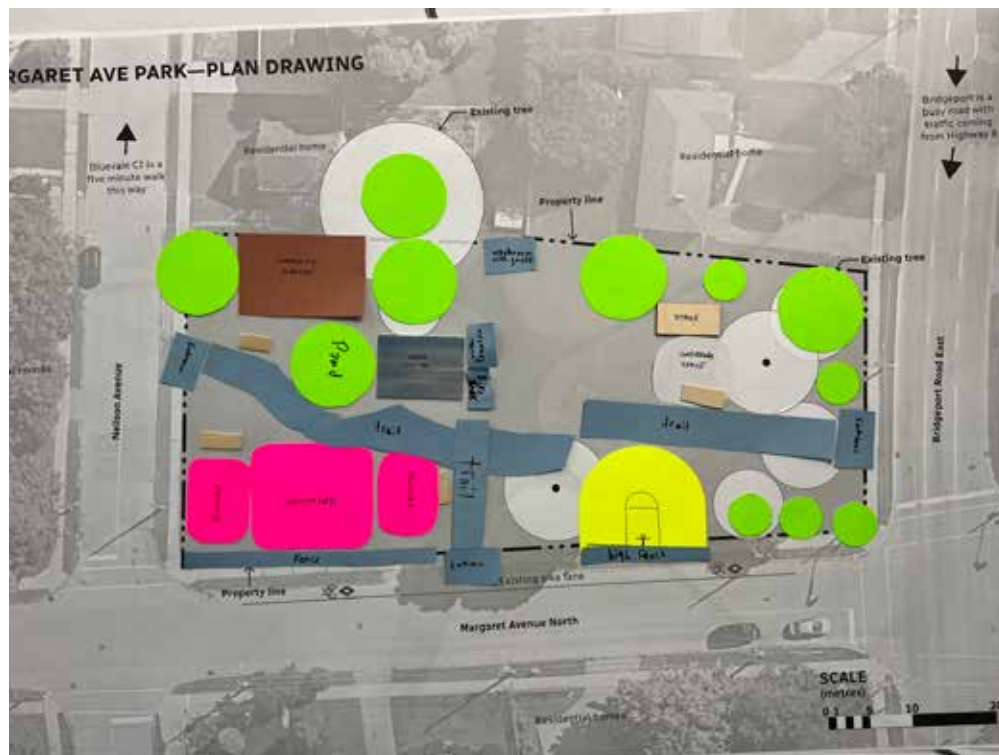
Students working through design ideas for Margaret Ave Park.



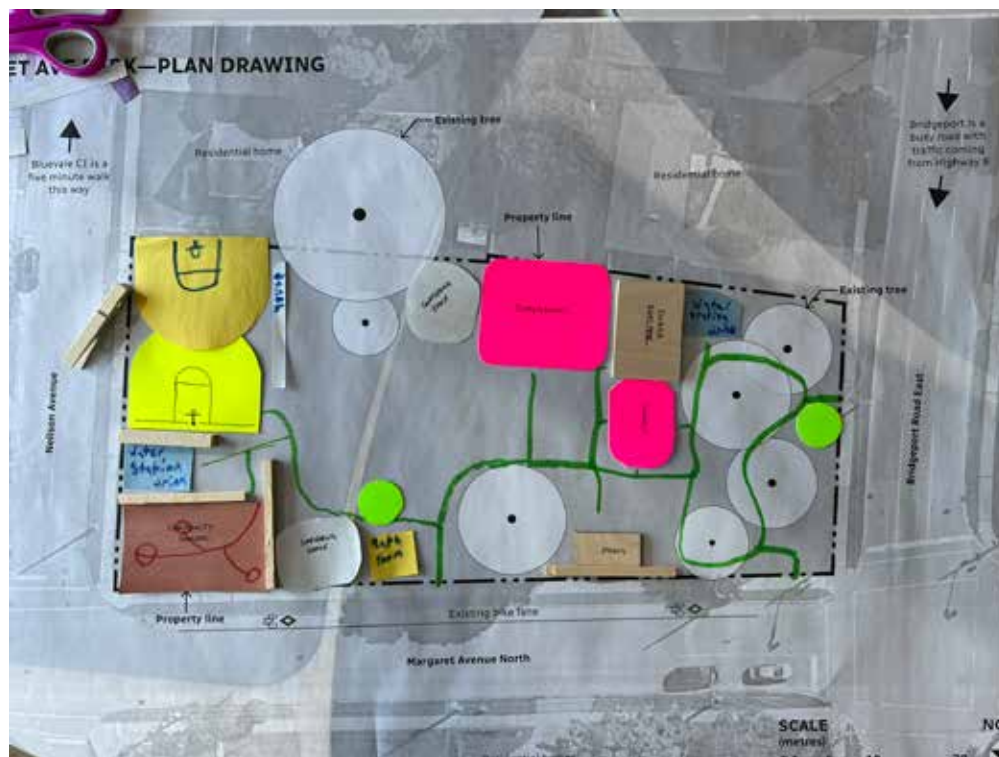
Class design charette: design 1



Class design charette: design 2



Class design charette: design 3



Class design charette: design 4

4. Additional outreach and engagement

To spread the word about the new park project, postcards, flyers and a large park sign were created, incorporating the visual identity of the park. The postcards were distributed door-to-door to 350 houses within a 5 kilometre radius of the park. Several flyers were delivered to local schools, community spaces and religious centres to post on their message boards. A large sign (1 x 1.8 metres in size) was installed at the corner of Margaret Avenue North and Neilson Avenue to identify the park site within the neighbourhood. All of the marketing materials included introductory information on the project along with QR codes that linked to the Margaret Ave Park web page. A call to action was included to encourage people to get involved and stay updated during the public engagement process.

The City of Waterloo Neighbourhoods Team was also informed of the project, and information was shared to the local Lincoln Heights Neighbourhood group for distribution through community events and social media. The Councillor for Ward 5, Councillor Vasic, was also active in sharing information about the project.

The project team met with the Region of Waterloo and were informed of the planned multi-use trail along Bridgeport Road East, directly adjacent to Margaret Ave Park. The plans are in the preliminary stages with possible construction no earlier than 2030. Communication with the Region will be maintained throughout the duration of the Margaret Ave Park project.

A summary of the input received through all engagement and outreach to date is included below under the **Community Voices: Themes & General Input** section of this report. The input from all sources was analyzed and summarized to capture the most recurring feedback received during the Spring 2025 engagement period inclusive of completed surveys, in-person event input and direct engagement with the school.



1 x 1.8 metre sign installed in Margaret Ave Park.

Flyer



Postcard (front and back)



Open discussions during the Margaret Ave Park open house.



Information boards presenting project background and local context at the open house.

COMMUNITY VOICES: THEMES & GENERAL PROJECT INPUT

This section provides an overview of general outcomes of the engagement period by incorporating the submitted survey responses in addition to feedback from in-person engagement. All survey responses submitted via the Engage Waterloo page have been reviewed by the project team and have informed the themes noted below. The full survey report, based on results collected through the Engage Waterloo project web page and survey, is attached in appendix B.

Overview of Survey Participants

Of the 135 survey respondents, 91 indicated that they live within a 10 minute commute of the future park. 127 respondents noted that they would travel by foot, 59 by bicycle, and 22 by personal vehicle. The options of using a mobility device, using public transportation, and other, received 5 votes or less. When asked which parks participants visit in or around the Lincoln Heights Neighbourhood, 93 said Moses Springer Park and 91 said Roselea Park, with the options of Vermont Park and no parks receiving 35 votes or less each.

What We Heard: Major Themes

- **Shade and seating**

The need for shade and seating was an apparent theme in the survey data. Participants were asked which elements were the most important to them out of a list of 12 options, and ranking first was shaded areas. The second most important element was seating that accommodates diverse ages and abilities.

Both seating and shade were often linked together in conversations and comments, requesting that there are seating refuges in the shade. Some possibilities for shade coverage that were noted included an overhead shelter structure, trellis, or canopy trees.

There was a strong push for a variety of seating elements which could include areas for conversation, sun loungers, tiered seating, picnic tables, or benches. Enough seating should be incorporated into the park design to support a playground while offering seating spaces away from play areas.

- **Play opportunities**

One of the most prominent themes throughout public engagement was the request for a play area. The survey asked about the most important elements to include and the option of play equipment or play features was selected by 85 respondents, ranking it as the third most important element. Several comments expressed the need for toddler-friendly play features.

The desire for uniqueness in a play area was repeated through several conversations and comments. There was a general sense of support for a play area that connects to the overall park design and feels integrated into a natural setting. There were specific remarks of nature-inspired play, such as the inclusion of a sensory garden, natural wood elements and/or sand play. Inclusive play options for all ages and abilities is important, while finding ways to inspire adventurous and imaginative play. Similarly, during the open house some attendees requested monkey bars, climbers, tunnels, slides, swings (including tot seats), a two-level structure and interactive/creative play features.

There was some opposition to a playground but this was limited to a small number of responses and comments relative to those in favour of a play area.

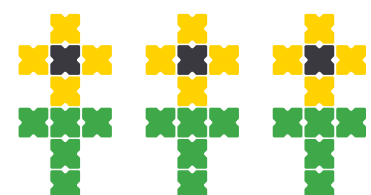
- **Opportunities needed for all ages**

Many people from a wide range of age groups identified the need for activities they can participate in, as well as spaces suitable to their needs. This highlights a desire for multigenerational design. Many open house attendees emphasized the interest of spaces for seniors where they could gather to socialize, play games, or a space to enjoy being outside. Some see the park as an opportunity to coordinate walking groups where the park could serve as a starting or destination point that is supported by group seating, shade coverage, and a hydration station. Some ideas for senior/adult focused activities could be table tennis, games tables, walking paths, exercise equipment, bocce, croquet, and spaces for yoga, meditation, tai chi, or reading.

Many caregivers voiced the need for seating and gathering spaces or amenities to engage with while the children they are supervising are using the park. Some suggestions included comfortable seating and walking paths.

There is a strong desire for play features suitable for toddlers and the 2-5 age range. Open house attendees and survey respondents explained that there is a lack of available and age-appropriate play spaces locally, especially during the day when access to school playgrounds is restricted through school hours.

When looking at the results, different age groups expressed similar desires, specifically having spaces to sit and gather. Design development will look at how spaces within the park can be designed to satisfy multiple groups while delivering a public space that provides opportunities for community connection and generations to engage.



- **Safety-focused design**

Numerous discussions and comments expressed the concern of designing a park space that is safe and separated from the adjacent busy roadways (specifically Bridgeport Road East and Margaret Avenue North). Bridgeport Road East is a high-volume road where drivers tend to travel at fast speeds as they exit the ramp from Highway 7/ Highway 85. There were many suggestions of fencing or naturalized barriers, especially along Bridgeport Road East, as well as a large separation buffer between play areas and roads. During design development, the project team will carefully consider placement of play spaces and amenities, and the implementation of safety measures such as planting buffers, berms, fencing and/or walls.

- **Nature-based design**

Through in-person discussions and survey results, participants expressed that they would like to see tree planting and native plants be a priority. There is strong interest for a nature-based design and the desire to integrate more natural spaces in the park. The responses noted a number of considerations, including the addition of trees to create shade and canopy, integration of natural materials, providing nature/sensory play areas for kids and all ages to explore within the park, and adding garden spaces with native species and habitat areas. Many agreed that they would appreciate having access to quiet areas within the park to sit and enjoy nature. Ecological features could be integrated such as bird houses or educational opportunities (signage about nature, interpretive features) in relationship with pollinator gardens, rain gardens, and/or sensory gardens. There is enthusiasm to “bring nature back” with this park space.

- **Water-based amenities**

Many participants showed interest in a variety of water features, ranging from decorative fountains that enhance ambiance to splash pads and cooling stations that offer relief from the heat. It is important to note that the Margaret Ave Park space could not support the required auxiliary amenities that are needed for a traditional splash pad (including on-site parking and washrooms). However, there is potential for a small water feature in the space which can be explored further during design development. Drinking fountains for both people and pets were also frequently mentioned. Altogether, the requests received reflect a broader theme of wanting access to water in different forms.

- **Arts and culture**

Engagement revealed an interest in both public art and celebrating community culture. Community members expressed a deep sense of connection to the area and a desire for the park to reflect the spirit of the community. The local heritage was a recurring topic of discussions during the open house. The more commonly known historical elements of the area are the Seagram Stables and 5/8 mile training track once located a short distance away from the Margaret Ave Park site. The building of the former Waterloo isolation hospital for tuberculosis, built in 1914, is also located nearby on Lincoln Road. Additionally, many “victory homes” in the style of “strawberry box” homes stand in the neighbourhood that were built after World War II. The culture and heritage of the area could be reflected in the park through the integration of distinctive features and public art that are meaningful and iconic to the community. These elements could draw inspiration from the area’s history, stories, and identity, serving as visual representations of what makes the community unique. By incorporating such features, the park becomes not only a shared space but also a place that honours and strengthens the sense of community and pride among residents.



Aerial photo of the Margaret Ave Park site.

ADDITIONAL INPUT

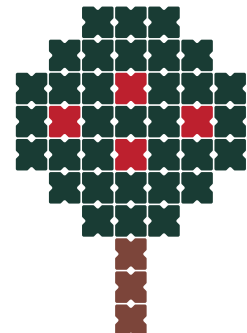
At the open house event, attendees were invited to share their comments and ideas collectively with others by noting them on comment boards available at the event. Photos of the comment boards are included on the following page.

In responding to the survey, participants had the opportunity to provide additional input through open-ended questions that allowed for custom write-in responses. These questions asked which elements respondents felt were most important in the park as well as which other (unlisted) activities respondents would want to be able to do in Margaret Ave Park. Responses were not mandatory. Of those who responded, some of the most frequent elements and items noted included:

- Splash pad (10 responses)
- Trails and paths (4)
- Skating rink (3)
- Waste receptacles (3)
- Variety and uniqueness (2)
- Skateboarding/ pump track (2)
- Little library (1)
- Hammocks (1)
- Table tennis (1)
- Bocce (1)
- Croquet (1)
- Creative photo zone (1)
- Pet related: Dog waste receptacles (3), fenced off-leash areas (8)
- Play equipment: swings (9), accessible swing (1), monkey bars (1), climber (2), hills (1), zipline (2), rock wall (1)
- Trees: plant new trees (2), keep mature trees (1), save the apple tree (1)
- Sports courts

Note: Based on several factors, including park size and location, Margaret Ave Park is not a suitable location for sports courts.

Note: Based on several factors, including park size and location, Margaret Ave Park is not a suitable location for off-leash areas.





SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Summary: how feedback is shaping the park

The next step of the project will be to develop a design brief that will inform and guide the conceptual design for Margaret Ave Park. Two preliminary concepts will be developed in response to the background work to-date, the input collected through engagement, as well as information collected through other ongoing studies. Feedback gathered from public engagement sessions and outreach will inform the development of the concepts. Some of the possibilities based on what was heard are, shade, seating, play opportunities, opportunities for all ages, safety-focused design, nature-based design, small scale water elements, and arts and cultural features.

Following the preliminary concepts, the next stages of the project will include additional engagement opportunities to review concepts, the selection of a preferred concept option, and the development of detailed design for the park. The consultant team will continue to work with City of Waterloo staff to review, consider, and integrate feedback as appropriate.



Aerial photos of the Margaret Ave Park site.

APPENDIX A: MARGARET AVE PARK PROJECT

Open House Information Boards

Images of the information boards presented at the April 10th, 2025 open house event are included on the following page.

APPENDIX B: MARGARET AVE PARK PROJECT

Engage Waterloo Survey Response Report

The quantitative survey summary report is included on the following pages.

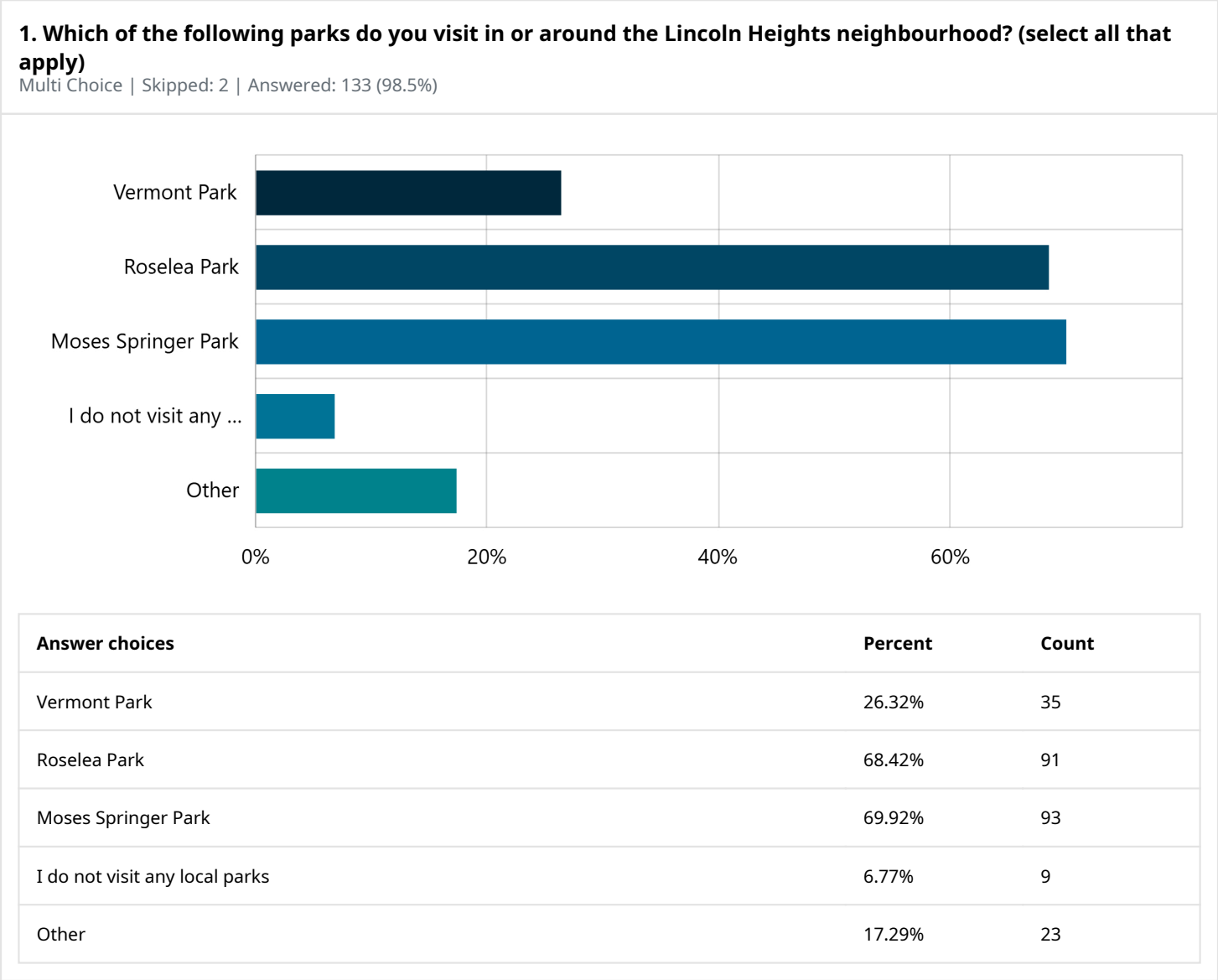
Closed

Let's welcome Margaret Ave Park
Margaret Ave Park

127
Contributors

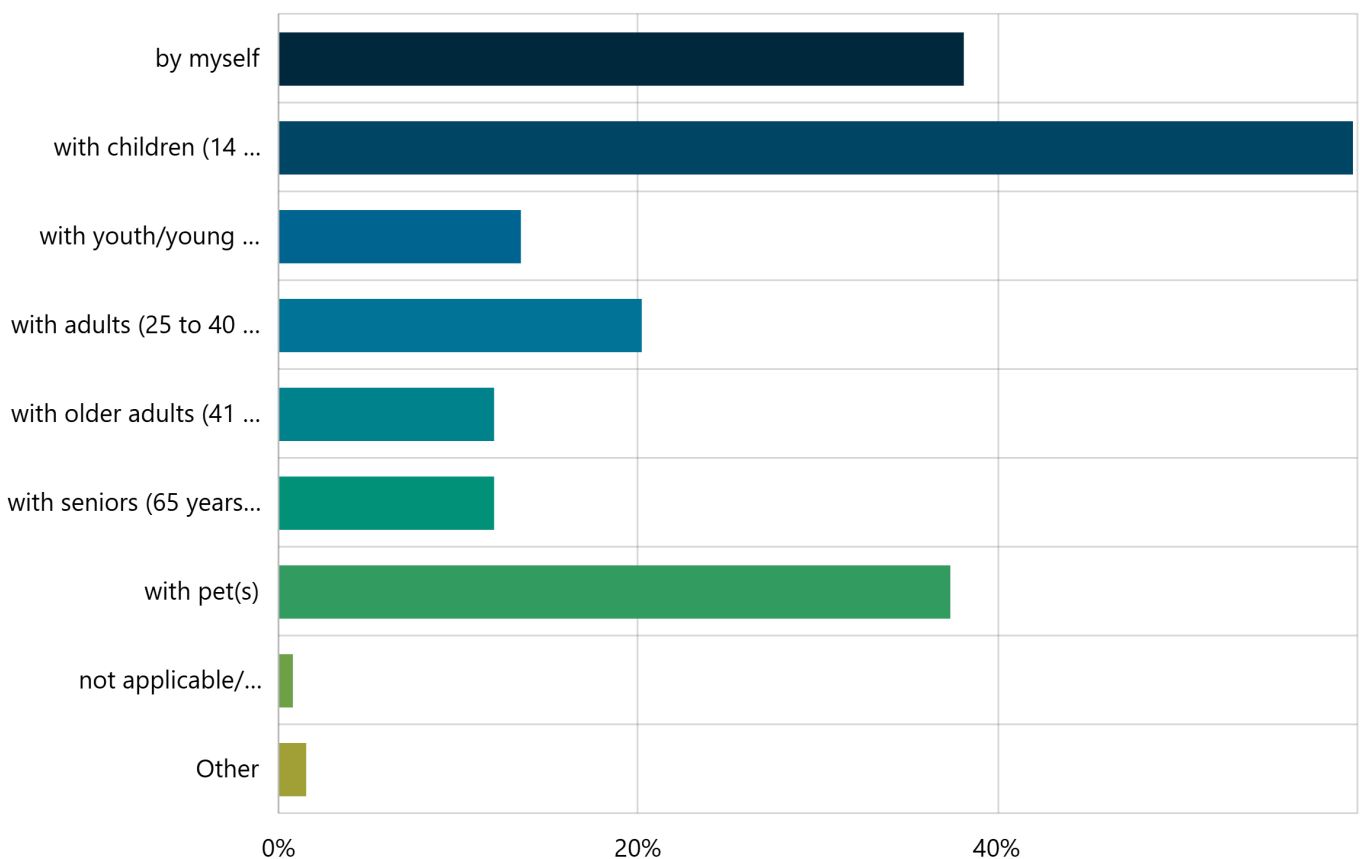
135
Contributions

Contribution Summary



2. I would likely visit Margaret Ave Park... (Select all that apply)

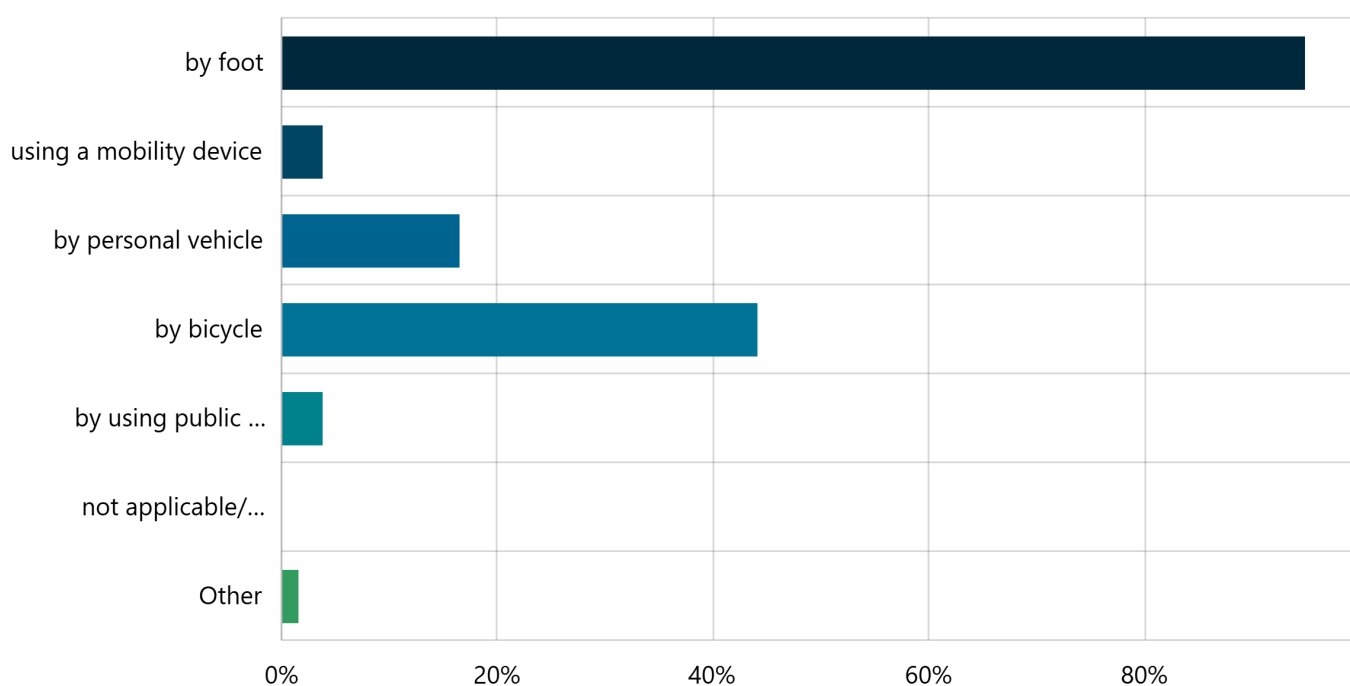
Multi Choice | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 134 (99.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
by myself	38.06%	51
with children (14 years or under)	59.70%	80
with youth/young adults (15 to 24 years)	13.43%	18
with adults (25 to 40 years)	20.15%	27
with older adults (41 to 64 years)	11.94%	16
with seniors (65 years or older)	11.94%	16
with pet(s)	37.31%	50
not applicable/prefer not to answer	0.75%	1
Other	1.49%	2

3. I would travel to Margaret Ave Park... (Select all that apply)

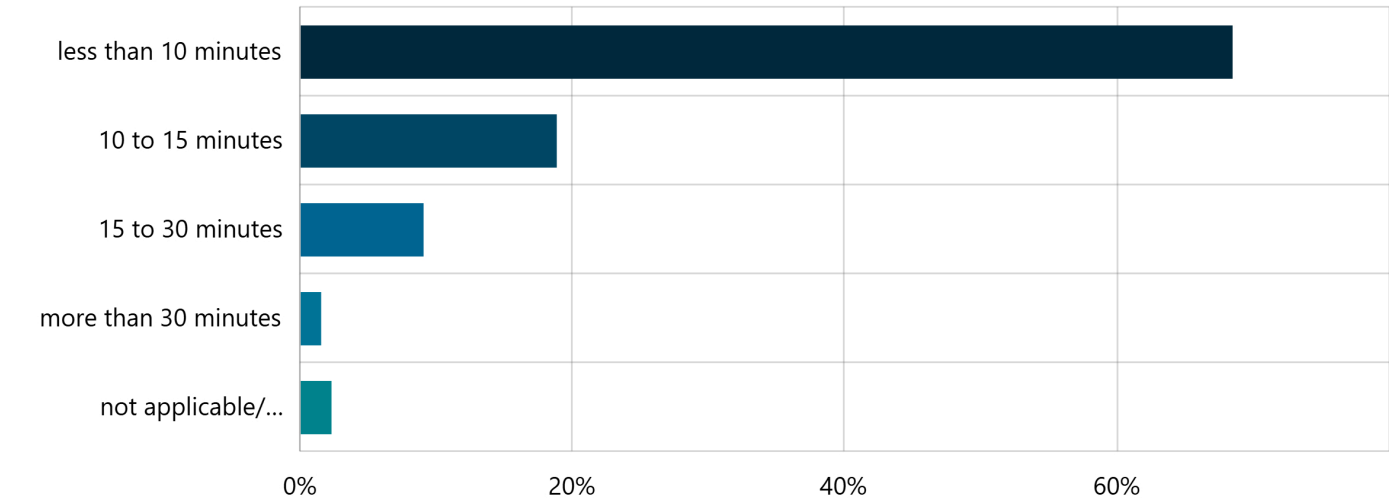
Multi Choice | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 134 (99.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
by foot	94.78%	127
using a mobility device	3.73%	5
by personal vehicle	16.42%	22
by bicycle	44.03%	59
by using public transportation	3.73%	5
not applicable/prefer not to answer	0%	0
Other	1.49%	2

4. To get to Margaret Ave Park (Margaret Ave and Neilson Ave), it would take me...

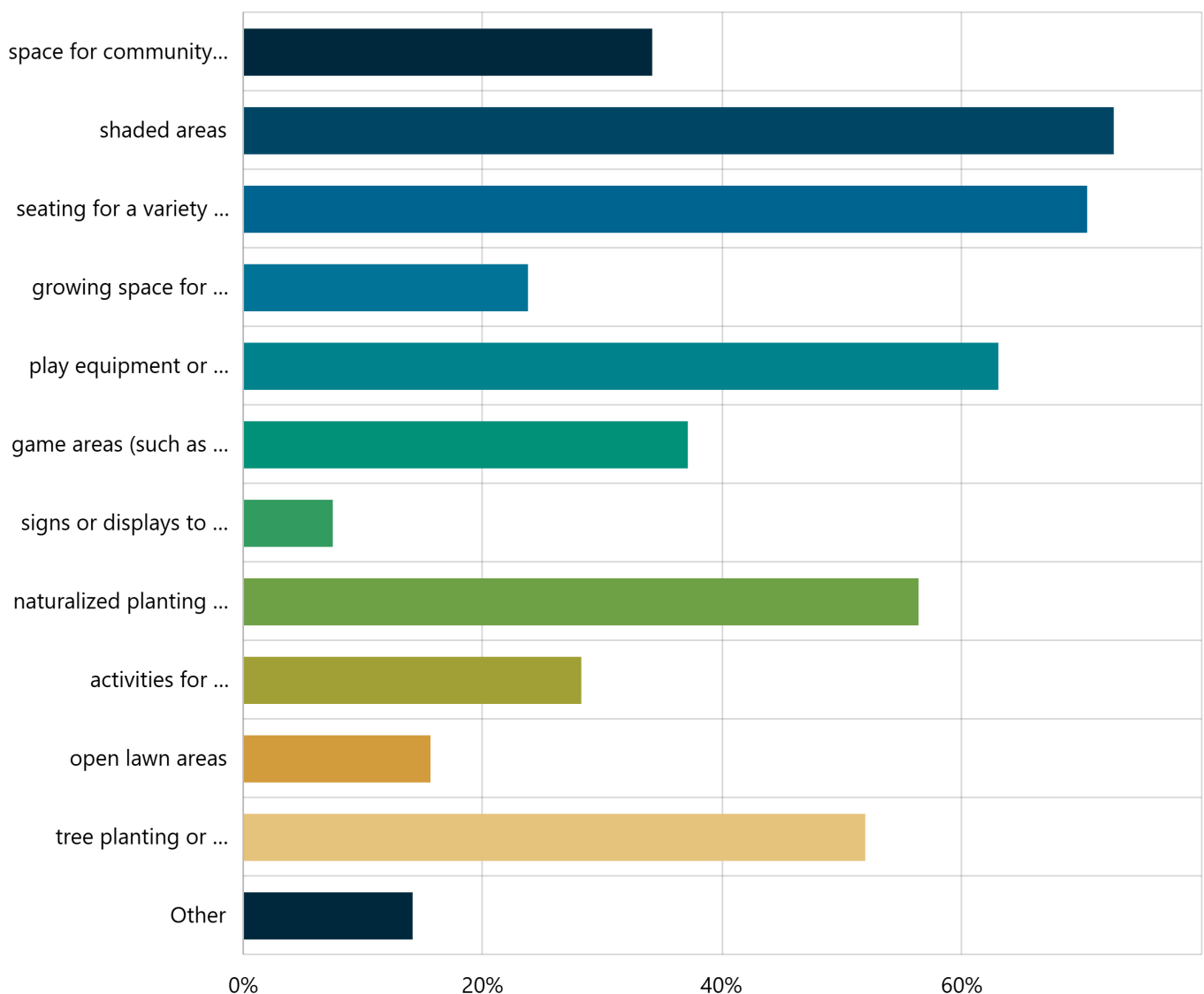
Multi Choice | Skipped: 2 | Answered: 133 (98.5%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
less than 10 minutes	68.42%	91
10 to 15 minutes	18.80%	25
15 to 30 minutes	9.02%	12
more than 30 minutes	1.50%	2
not applicable/prefer not to answer	2.26%	3
Total	100.00%	133

5. Which of the following are important to you in Margaret Ave Park? (Select up to six)

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 135 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
space for community gatherings and events	34.07%	46
shaded areas	72.59%	98
seating for a variety of ages and abilities	70.37%	95
growing space for small community gardens	23.70%	32
play equipment or play features	62.96%	85
game areas (such as table tennis, chess, tetherball, etc.)	37.04%	50
signs or displays to share about local history	7.41%	10
naturalized planting areas (pollinator gardens, native species)	56.30%	76

activities for teenagers (include play space, gathering areas, etc.)	28.15%	38
open lawn areas	15.56%	21
tree planting or shade and habitat	51.85%	70
Other	14.07%	19

6. Are there any other specific features or activities that would encourage you to visit Margaret Ave Park?
Short Text | Skipped: 61 | Answered: 74 (54.8%)

Sentiment

No sentiment data

Tags

No tag data

Featured Contributions

No featured contributions

7. Are there any features that should not be considered for Margaret Ave Park?

Short Text | Skipped: 95 | Answered: 40 (29.6%)

Sentiment

No sentiment data

Tags

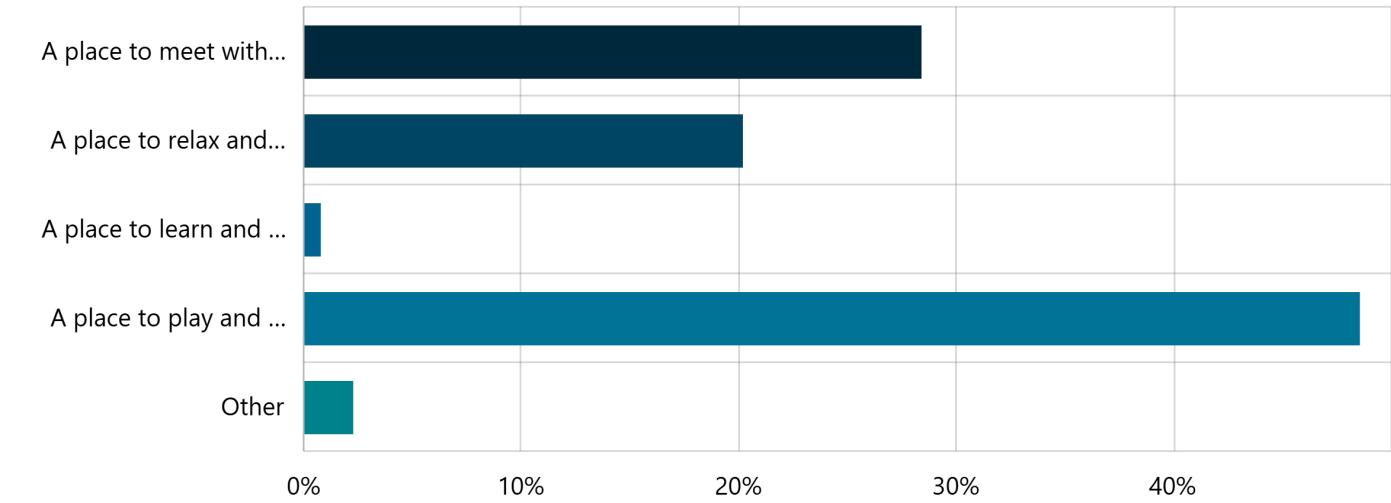
No tag data

Featured Contributions

No featured contributions

8. Which of the following statements best describes the kind of park you'd like Margaret Ave Park to be?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 134 (99.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
A place to meet with friends and neighbours.	28.36%	38
A place to relax and unwind.	20.15%	27
A place to learn and reflect.	0.75%	1
A place to play and have fun.	48.51%	65
Other	2.24%	3
Total	100.00%	134

9. Do you have any additional input related to Margaret Ave Park?

Short Text | Skipped: 87 | Answered: 48 (35.6%)

Sentiment

No sentiment data

Tags

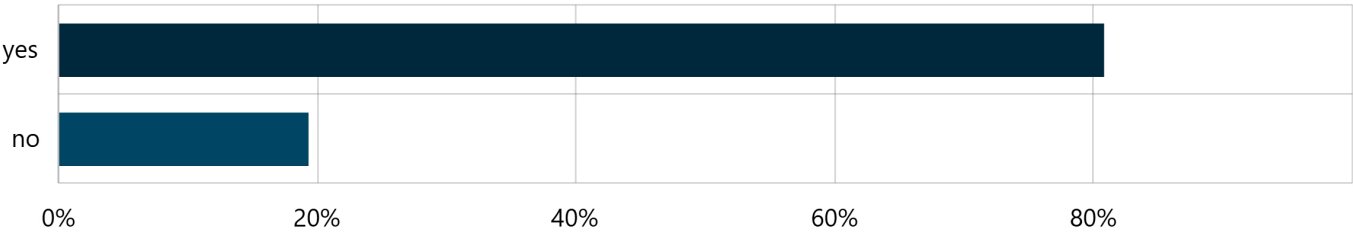
No tag data

Featured Contributions

No featured contributions

10. Do you wish to answer the demographic questions? Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 135 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
yes	80.74%	109
no	19.26%	26
Total	100.00%	135

11. What year were you born?

Short Text | Skipped: 40 | Answered: 95 (70.4%)

Sentiment

No sentiment data

Tags

No tag data

Featured Contributions

No featured contributions

12. What are the first three digits of your postal code? (e.g., N2G). This will help us identify which Ward you live in.

Short Text | Skipped: 34 | Answered: 101 (74.8%)

Sentiment

No sentiment data

Tags

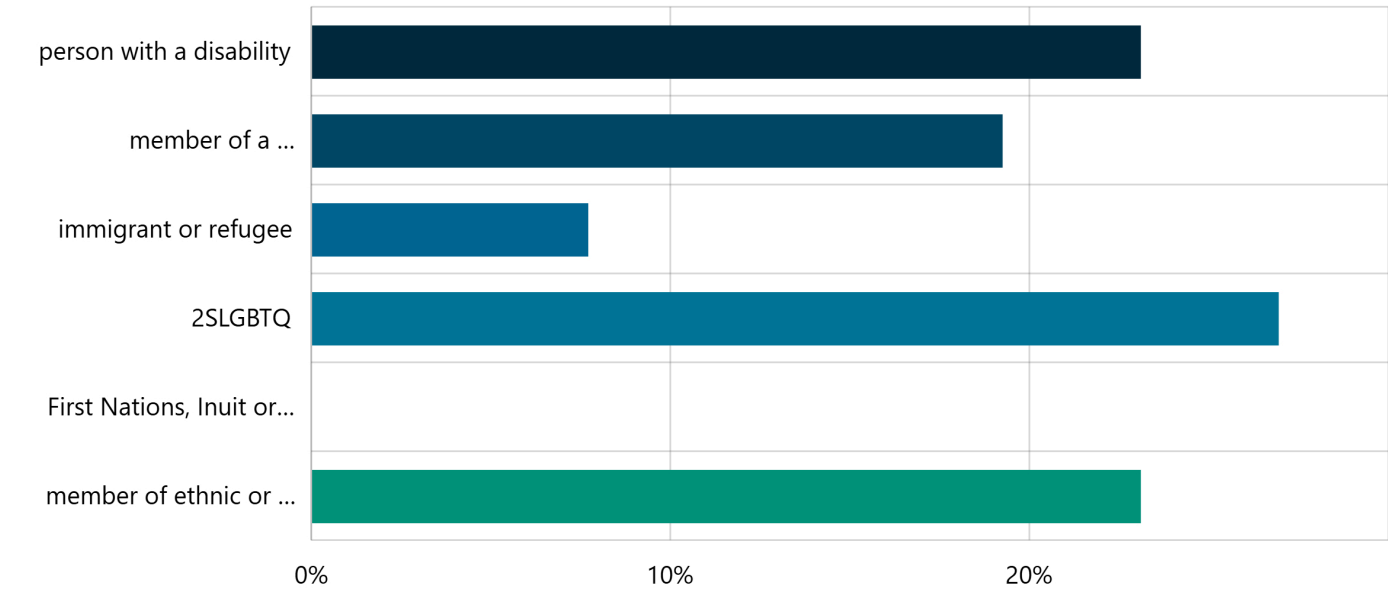
No tag data

Featured Contributions

No featured contributions

13. Do you identify as a member of any of the following groups? (Select all that apply)

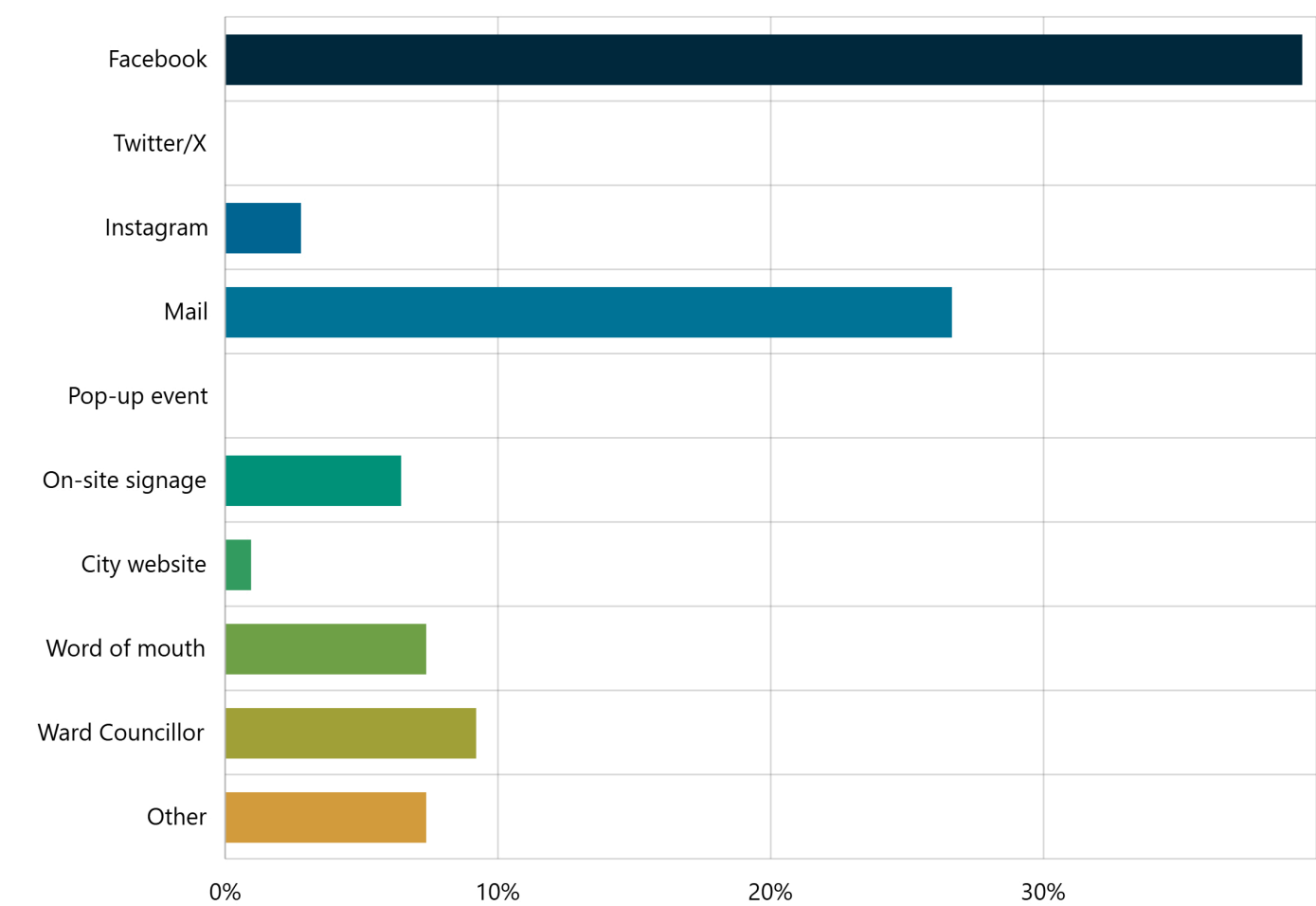
Multi Choice | Skipped: 109 | Answered: 26 (19.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
person with a disability	23.08%	6
member of a Racialized group	19.23%	5
immigrant or refugee	7.69%	2
2SLGBTQ	26.92%	7
First Nations, Inuit or Métis	0%	0
member of ethnic or cultural group	23.08%	6
Total	100.00%	26

14. How did you find out about the project and survey?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 26 | Answered: 109 (80.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Facebook	39.45%	43
Twitter/X	0%	0
Instagram	2.75%	3
Mail	26.61%	29
Pop-up event	0%	0
On-site signage	6.42%	7
City website	0.92%	1
Word of mouth	7.34%	8
Ward Councillor	9.17%	10
Other	7.34%	8

Total	100.00%	109
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