

# Shoemaker Greenway Park

Phase 1: Public Engagement Summary  
(July 30 - August 22, 2021)

**SHIFT**  
landscape architecture



# Shoemaker Greenway Park

Summary of public input to date (from July 30 to August 22, 2021)

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## Introduction

SHIFT Landscape Architecture, in coordination with the City of Kitchener, used the online Engage Kitchener platform and an in-person pop-up event, as well as outreach to Indigenous groups and equity-deserving groups to hear initial feedback about the Shoemaker Greenway Park project.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, engagement activities and tactics were impacted and largely adapted to online platforms. Where typically an indoor in-person Public Information Centre would be held, the Engage Kitchener website was used to gather feedback. In-person events were able to be held outdoors at the end of the summer with proper COVID-19 protocol including social distancing, PPE, hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes. As a result, the engagement took place online as well as in person.

Initial project information was posted online from July 30 to August 22 along with photographs of the park and a description of the project scope and process. The webpage was advertised with signs in the park, postcard mailouts in the vicinity, and targeted Facebook ads. Feedback was gathered online through the “Ideas” tool, a live online forum, and a survey. During the in-person event held on August 18 members of the project team from SHIFT LA spoke with the local community and gathered feedback in person.

The following represents a summary of responses received through online and paper surveys, online comments, and in-person conversation to highlight the common comments and main trends and themes in the feedback.

## Methods

### Survey:

The survey was available between July 30 and August 22. It was developed to discern how the park is currently being used and how it could better suit the local community. The survey questions asked about reasons for visiting the park, the most used park features, and the future of the park. It also allowed for people to indicate anything they would like to do in the park that is not currently supported by the park features. Questions requiring text responses allowed respondents to add information that wasn't directly prompted by the survey questions, providing further context about the park's current use and the desires of the community. A total of 30 surveys were completed, comprised of 23 online surveys and 7 paper surveys. The City of Kitchener's Demographic Questionnaire was included at the end of the survey.

### “Ideas” board:

The “Ideas” board tool on the Engage Kitchener website was used to allow any comment from the public visiting the website. Using this tool individuals could share their ideas for the park or respond and like other people's comments. This tool received 22 comments.

### Live online forum:

The live online forum was a weeklong period from August 2 to 6 where the public was able to ask questions or make comments using the Forum tool and receive a response from someone on the project team within a day. This tool was not widely used with only one individual providing comment.

### **In-person:**

On Wednesday, August 18 between 3-5pm members of the project team were at Shoemaker Greenway Park to provide information on the project and to speak with the community. Paper surveys were collected. Conversations with park visitors and observations made on-site were recorded in notes.

City Staff also conducted additional informal in-person engagement using tablets to gather survey responses and providing the Engage webpage address to park visitors. They attended Shoemaker Greenway Park on August 17.

### **On-site feedback boards:**

Blackboards with sharpies were left in each park for two weeks with the prompt: "my vision for this park is..." with room to write or draw. Any park visitors would have the opportunity to add their thoughts to this board.

## **Indigenous Engagement**

During the first phase of engagement, the consultant team coordinated with the City to reach out to a variety of Indigenous individuals and groups located or active within Kitchener. Guidance was provided by SHIFT's Engagement sub-consultant and by the City's community and parks engagement staff.

This outreach saw invitations to participate sent to a number of local and regional Indigenous individuals and special-interest groups with varied community focus. Of those who responded, meetings were set up to introduce and discuss the projects, starting a dialogue with the hope that it will continue to inform the designs of the parks themselves. The engagement was not park-specific at this stage and Alpine, Shoemaker, and the Wilson-Vanier-Traynor Network were mostly discussed together. A general guiding question was "how can these parks better support or serve the Indigenous community?"

Responses to the invitation and consequent discussion during the first phase included:

- In-person meetings at several outdoor park locations
- Video call meetings
- Email correspondence with some individuals and groups, which is still ongoing.
- Planning for a number of discussions and calls with various groups which are still ongoing.

During the initial conversations about Shoemaker Greenway Park, the stormwater work happening in the park was a main point of discussion. This work is not part of the park scope and is being administered by a stormwater project team, but all work will be coordinated with the design of the park.

Main points raised during preliminary conversations with Indigenous groups and individuals include:

- The creek restoration (stormwater scope) can create a natural space that should be left for nature (no people). The notion of seeing but not accessing was brought up. There was also discussion around whether this park is the right context for this approach.
- The creek could be an opportunity for the people to engage and get in touch with natural areas. This would need to be done in a way that still protects the ecological aspects of the creek.
- Additionally, specific questions came up about the stormwater work, which were referred to the stormwater project team (channel design, floodplain design, monitoring wells).

- The park could include educational elements that showcase the creek and the local area, including how it eventually feeds to the Grand River.
- Ecology can be supported throughout the park along the creek corridor.
- Disturbances should be limited to any existing vegetation in the park area.
- There is potential for the park (and all parks) to provide better access to natural space for all members of the community.
- In general, Indigenous organizations are limited around the land they have access to, and some park space may provide discreet opportunities for allowing that access. However, it was noted that this is probably a bigger discussion with the City.
- There may be opportunities to recall Indigenous history and present it in park spaces, acknowledging pre-colonial occupation.
- When developing the designs, care should be made to understand the impacts on all beings that the projects may have. This should be a key factor in weighing design decisions. (refer to Thanksgiving address for example).

The outreach to Indigenous individuals and groups located or active within Kitchener will continue through the Shoemaker Greenway project to build a mutual relationship that can inform the park design and construction at all phases.

## Outreach to Equity-Deserving Groups

The project team sought to reach members of equity-deserving groups as an important component of the public engagement process in consideration of the fact that individuals from these groups are often underrepresented in public engagement. This process was initiated through community centres, schools, and local community-focused organizations. This outreach is ongoing and will continue into the upcoming phases of the project.

For Shoemaker Greenway Park there was difficulty identifying and reaching local interested resident groups for more in-depth conversation. However, community partners aided in the distribution of project information and the link to the online feedback website. This information was also shared at food and clothing distribution programs.

There is an ongoing engagement effort with local organizations and community partners.

## Overview of Feedback

### General feedback and discussion from the in-person event:

Park visitors observed generally used the park to walk by and through. It was noted that the street is quiet and is used by pedestrians. One park visitor indicated they use the park multiple times a day to walk their dog through. Five surveys were completed on-site and only one park visitor stayed to use the space.

## How Is Shoemaker Greenway Park Currently Used?

To identify how Shoemaker Greenway Park is utilized, the public was asked how they and/or their family currently use the park. The results of the survey showed that most people are drawn to the park throughout spring, summer, and fall to **walk and enjoy nature**. People also commonly use the park to play with children, exercise a pet, or sit (alone or with others). Relatedly, all the existing park features, including the open lawn area, benches, trails, playground, and wooded area, appear to be frequently used, as illustrated in the survey polls. The results suggest that the park is **not used to host or attend picnics/BBQs** and is not used for social gatherings.

The survey inquired about the comfort of the park's visitors, indicating that 80% of respondents feel comfortable spending time in the park, while 20% shared that they do not feel comfortable. This relates to the trends in park usage based on the time of day, displaying a spike in the number of people visiting in the evening, followed by the morning or mid-day, then nightfall. Some of the people who do not feel comfortable at Shoemaker Greenway Park stated that their discomfort is due to the lack of cleanliness, lighting, and/or poor trail connections.

## Desired Programming and Park Elements

When the participants were asked to rank the top three park activities that were most important to them, the results showed that **walking, enjoying nature, and playing with children** were the most important to the highest number of people, followed by exercising a pet, sitting alone, or sitting with others. Hosting or attending picnics/BBQs or any organized events scored very low in importance.

The people were asked to think about the future of Shoemaker Greenway Park and consider what they would like to see incorporated in the design. Using the provided list, the respondents ranked the five features from most important to least important. The full ranking list is included below.

*\_Response to "Thinking about the future of Shoemaker Greenway Park, which types of features would you prefer? Rank in order of importance where 1 is most important and 5 is least important"*

- Most Important***
- \_ Features to relax and enjoy the park space (ex. walking paths, green space, enhanced natural areas)
  - \_ Features for children and for play (ex. playground)
  - \_ Social spaces (ex. picnic table areas)
  - \_ Additional shade

- Least Important***
- \_ Features so you can use the park to be active and exercise (ex. paved courts, equipment)

## "Ideas" board and on-site feedback board suggestions

There were few common themes among the ideas from the community using this online tool. Ideas raised in more than one comment include a natural playground and updated play structure, a community garden, an area to enjoy the creek, and better connections to nearby trail networks. Other ideas included waste bins, lighting, bike parking, gathering areas, and a maintained lawn.

"natural playground" "regular maintenance" "armourstone seating" "trail lighting"  
 "community garden" "trail connections" "access down to the creek"

The blackboard for feedback was left in Shoemaker Greenway Park for two weeks with permanent markers for park visitors to write their ideas and vision for the future of the park. During that time the front was nearly filled. The most frequently recurring comment was to preserve the willow trees. There were also many comments around upgrading the existing playground with new equipment, possible natural elements, swings, and safety surfacing. Several comments asked for more seating and picnic tables, a dog off-leash area, and a splash pad.

### Feedback on blackboard in Shoemaker Greenway Park



### Informing the Concepts

The final question of the survey allowed participants to provide personalized comments in their own words. The question asked whether they felt any features were not included in the design that they would like to see incorporated in their park. The responses heard are listed below with the corresponding number of times the suggestion was mentioned.

### Responses to "Is there anything you want to do at Shoemaker Greenway Park, but can't?"

- Picnic (4)
- Access to the creek (4)
- Community garden (4)
- Improved playground (more variety) (2)
- Dog off-leash area (2)

## Conclusion

Based on the feedback, Shoemaker Greenway Park currently serves as a green space that people use primarily for circulation or as a retreat in a passive setting. It is important to acknowledge that the park functions as a place to relax, walk through, and enjoy being in proximity to natural spaces. There is no evidence that the basic function of the space needs to be rethought, but thoughtful and sensitive design could enhance the positive aspects of the space. Responses highlighted the desire for improved access to the creek, either visually or physically, and play opportunities for children, potentially including a natural playground. Importantly any changes to the space must consider the health of the existing willow trees and exist within the constraints of the space given the separate creek restoration project (Stormwater scope). All the valuable community input gathered from this engagement will be taken into consideration during design development for Shoemaker Greenway Park.

Based on feedback and responses from the first phase of engagement, the project team intends to include translation of materials to other dominant languages in the neighbourhood. Materials to promote the Engage Kitchener page will also be created for sharing on social media by community partners.

# Shoemaker Greenway Park

Summary of responses to demographic questionnaire (from July 30 to August 22, 2021)

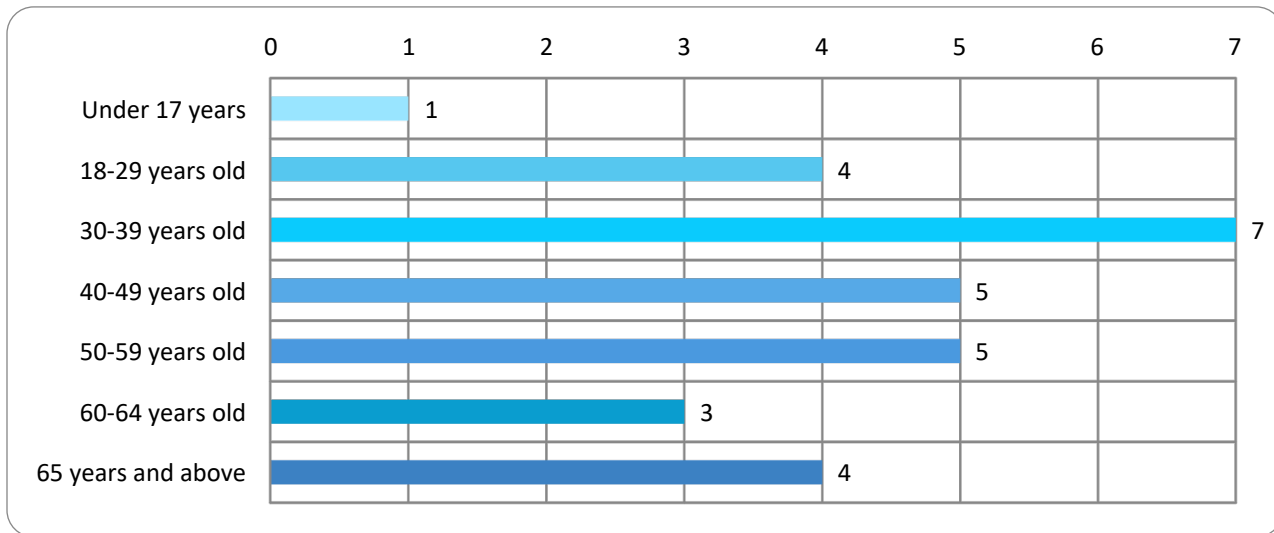
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## Introduction

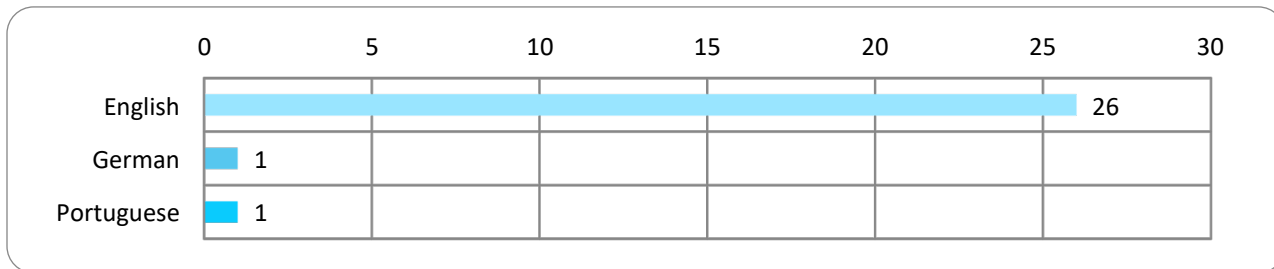
An optional demographic questionnaire was included in each survey. Responses included partially complete or incomplete information. It should be noted as well that the paper surveys allowed individuals to check multiple answers on questions requesting selection of one answer only. All responses were counted.

A summary of the responses captured follows.

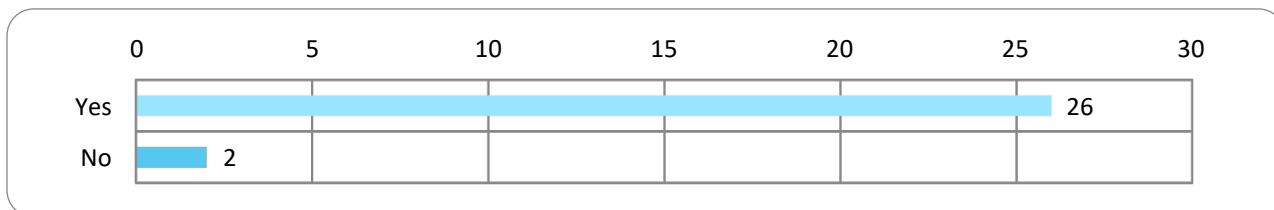
### \_Responses to "What is your age?" (29 total responses)



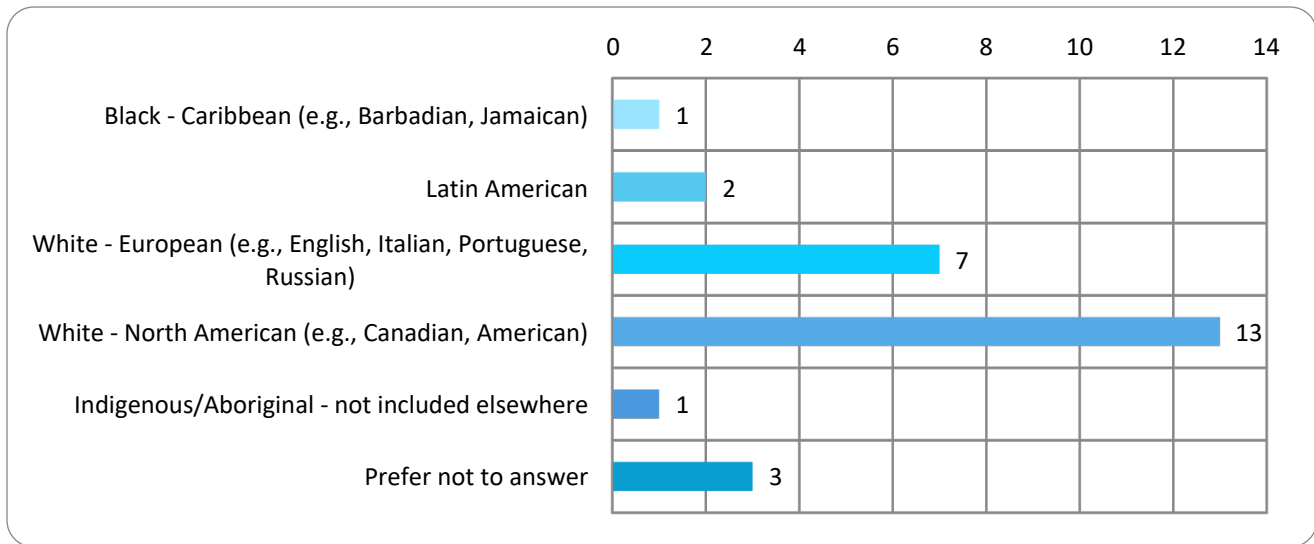
### \_Responses to "What language are you most comfortable speaking? (choose ONE only)" (28 total responses)



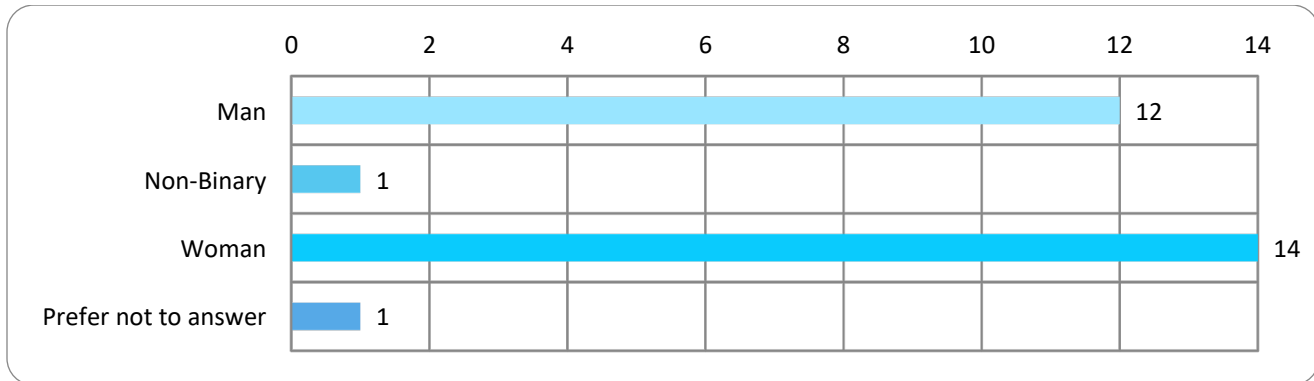
### \_Responses to "Were you born in Canada?" (28 total responses)



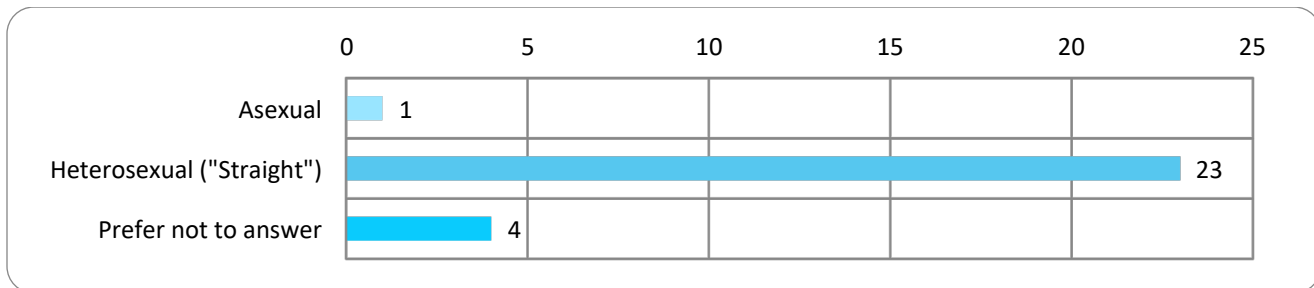
*\_Responses to "Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group? (choose ONE only)" (27 total responses)*



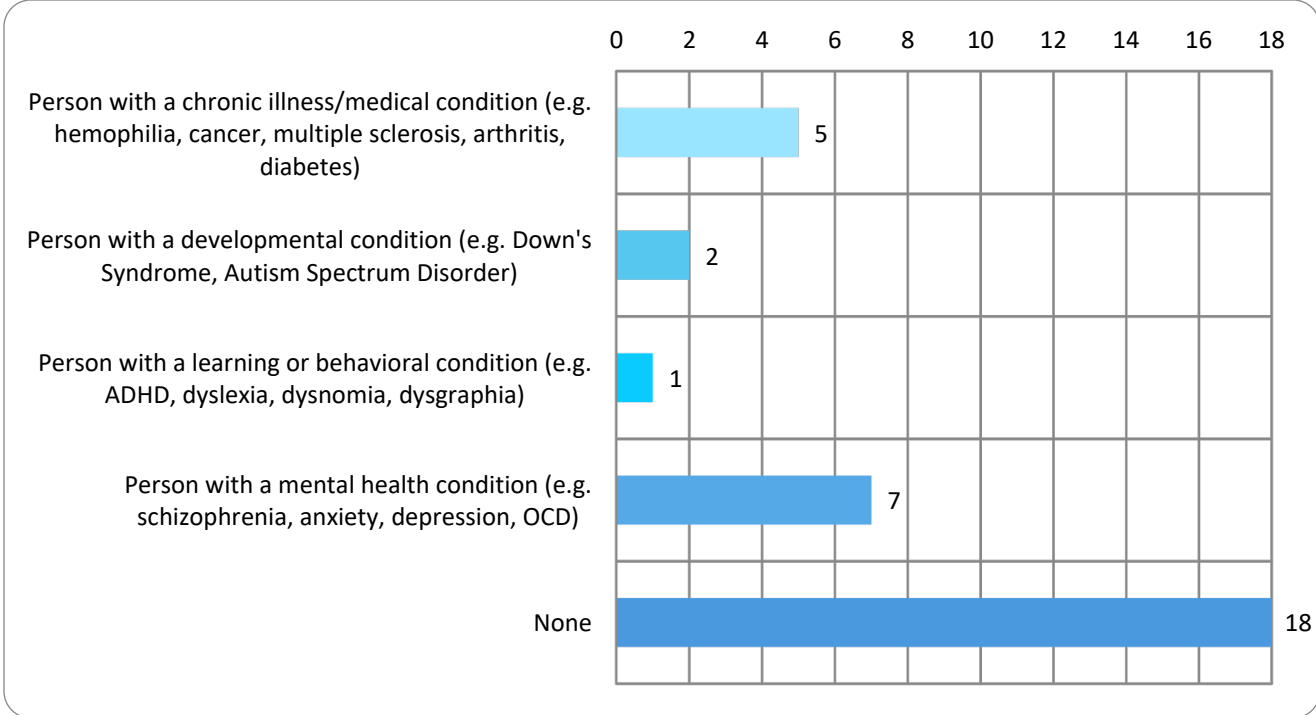
*\_Responses to "Please select the gender identity that best describes you: (choose ONE only)" (28 total responses)*



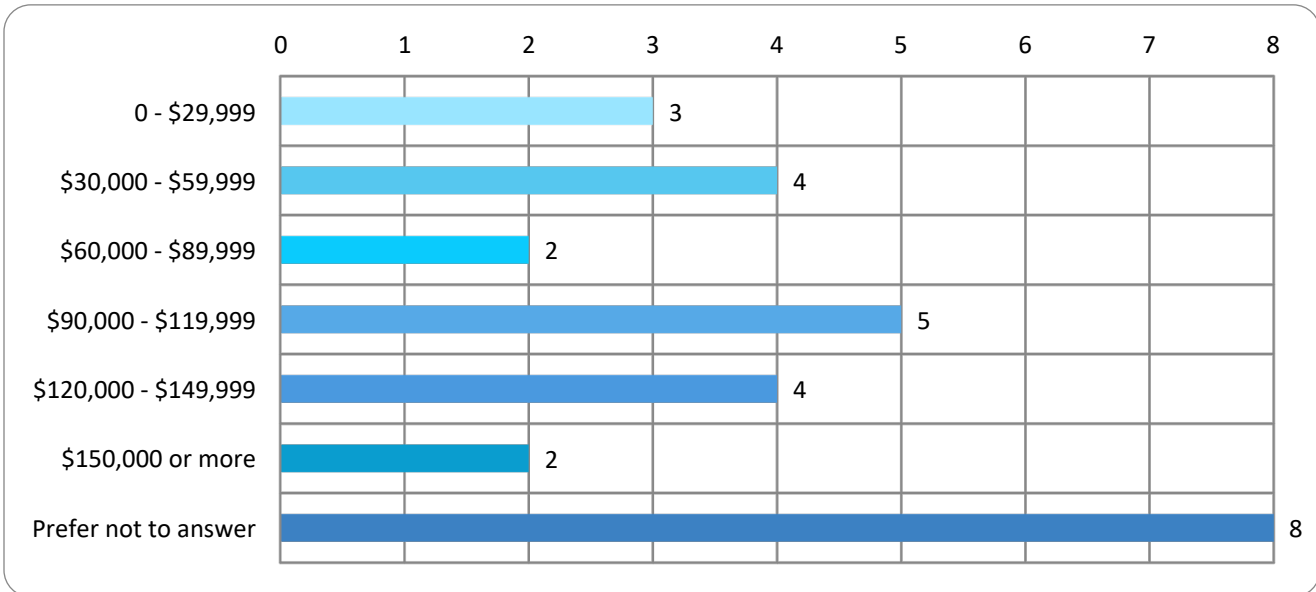
*\_Responses to "What is your sexual orientation? (choose ONE only)" (28 total responses)*



*\_Responses to "Do you identify with any of the following? (Select all that apply)" (33 total responses)*



*\_Responses to "What is your total household income before taxes last year?" (28 total responses)*



*\_Responses to "What is your current employment status? (choose ONE only)" (28 total responses)*

