

What We Heard – Winter 2023 in Idlewood Greenway

Summer 2023 Engagement Summary

Introduction

Project background

In 2026, the City of Kitchener will add an underground stormwater storage facility to Idlewood Greenway. This is part of a larger project to build climate change resilience and improve water quality in Kitchener creeks. The trail through Idlewood Greenway will also be upgraded as part of this project.

In 2016, the City of Kitchener completed an Integrated Stormwater Management Master Plan. This plan created a strategy to manage stormwater for the next 15 years. This plan taught us that only 25% of runoff in the city is managed through stormwater facilities. This means 75% of runoff from heavy rainfall and snow melt flows into storm sewers, washing pollutants into local creeks.

Through the 2016 plan, we identified Idlewood Greenway as a place to add an underground stormwater storage facility to collect runoff. This will help to:

- Improve water quality in Idlewood Creek and the Grand River;
- Reduce the risk of flooding;
- Reduce erosion in Idlewood Creek;
- Improve resilience against climate change; and
- Enhance community safety.

Engagement purpose

- To understand how the community uses Idlewood Greenway and what's important to their experience.
- To use feedback from the community to help the City plan for construction. This includes decisions on how to replant the surface over the underground stormwater storage facility.
- To build awareness of the need for stormwater measures to protect water quality and reduce future flood risks

Engagement approach

- So far, we have gathered community feedback using the following tools:
 - Engage Kitchener page Q&A's,
 - Direct email inquiries, and an
 - Online survey and social media ads.

- We plan to continue using those tools as well as additional consultation and collaboration engagement tools, such as:
 - Mailed notices, and
 - Public open houses

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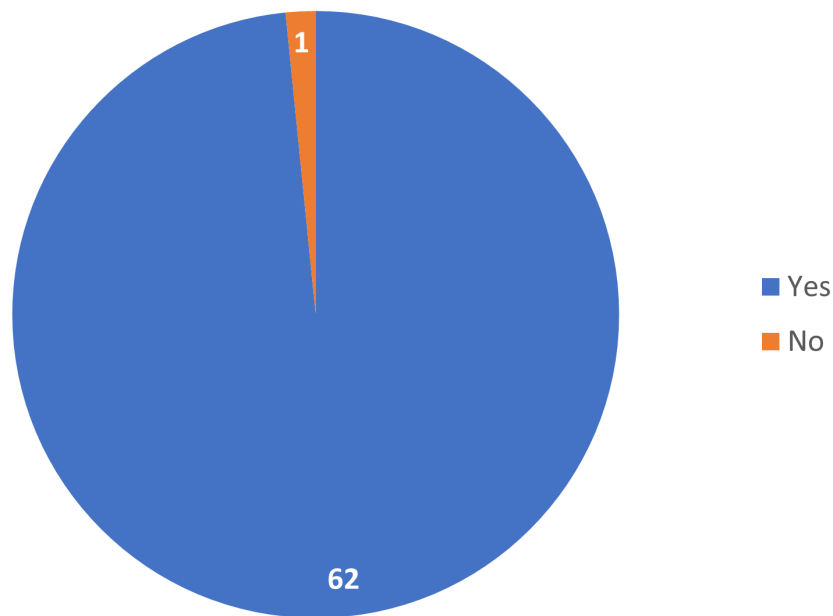
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Survey Feedback – "What You Told Us"

Survey details

The survey was active from January 5, 2023 to January 30, 2023. From 95 visitors to the online survey, we have received 65 complete submissions.

Do you ever spend time in Idlewood Greenway?



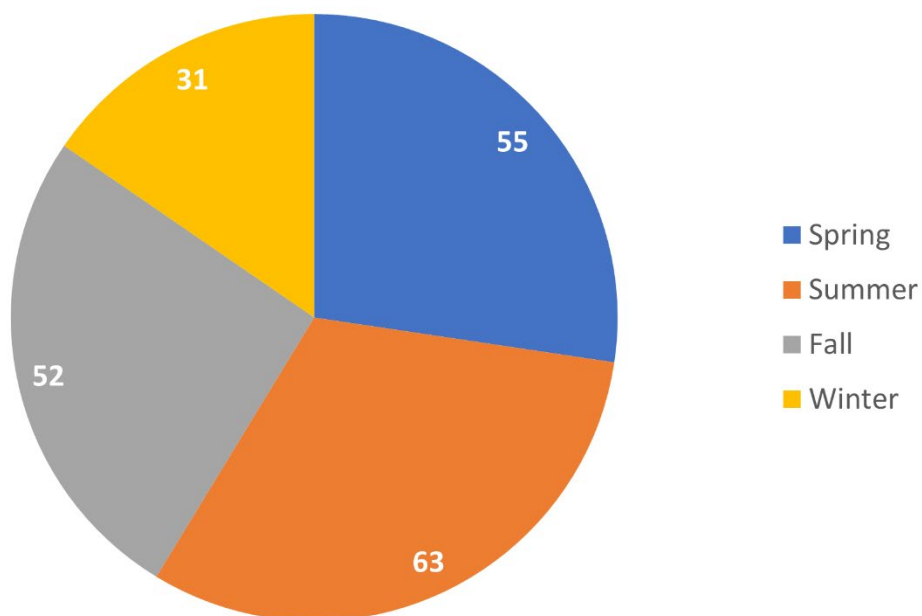
If someone asked you to describe this Greenway, what would you say?

The analysis of the survey responses identified several recurring themes and insights:

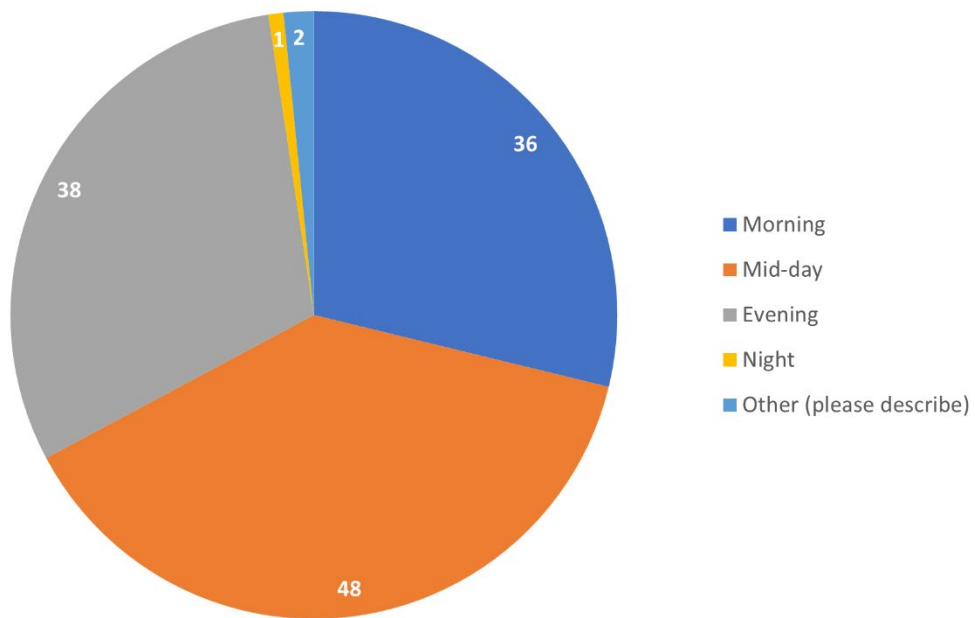
- **Peaceful and beautiful:** Most respondents commented on the quiet and scenic environment.
- **Large open green space:** Many respondents noted that the expansive patch of greenspace allowed lots of room for activities and personal space when traversing through.
- **Long trail:** Numerous respondents mentioned the trail that stretches between homes in the neighbourhood. This trail is well-used for walking, walking dogs, and biking.
- **Child-friendly space:** Some respondents described the area as a place for children to run, play, and be present in nature.
- **Barren and empty:** Some respondents mentioned that the large open space is under-utilized and has potential for development.

- **Drainage issues:** A few respondents commented on flooding during rainy seasons and suggested better water management on the trail. The icy conditions of the trail in winter were also a concern.
- **Trail maintenance issues:** A few respondents raised concerns about the uneven trail and the need for maintenance.
- **Trail proximity to homes:** A few respondents commented on how the trail can encroach on private property and how a boundary is unclear.

During what seasons do you spend time in this Greenway?

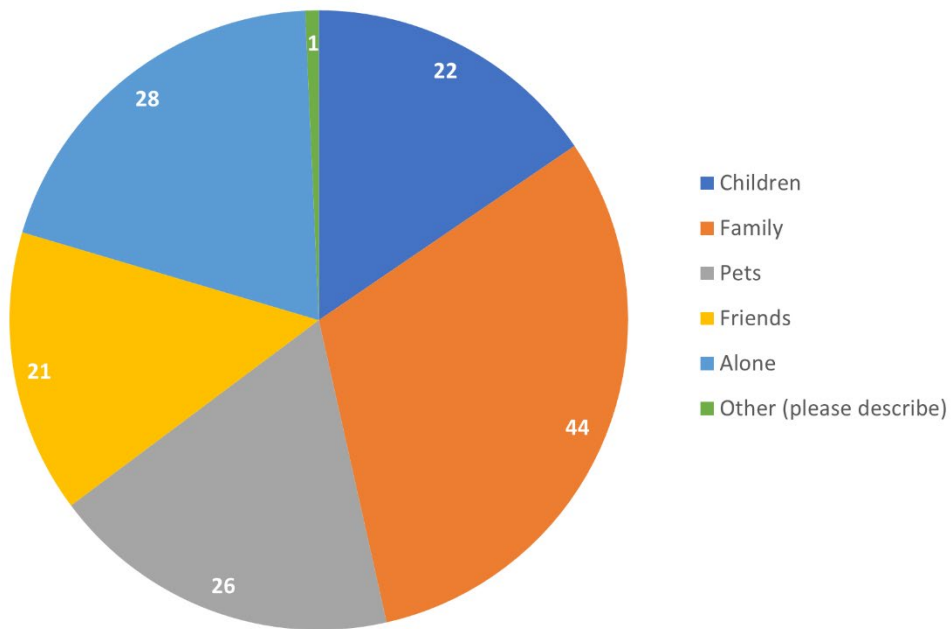


What time of day do you visit this Greenway?



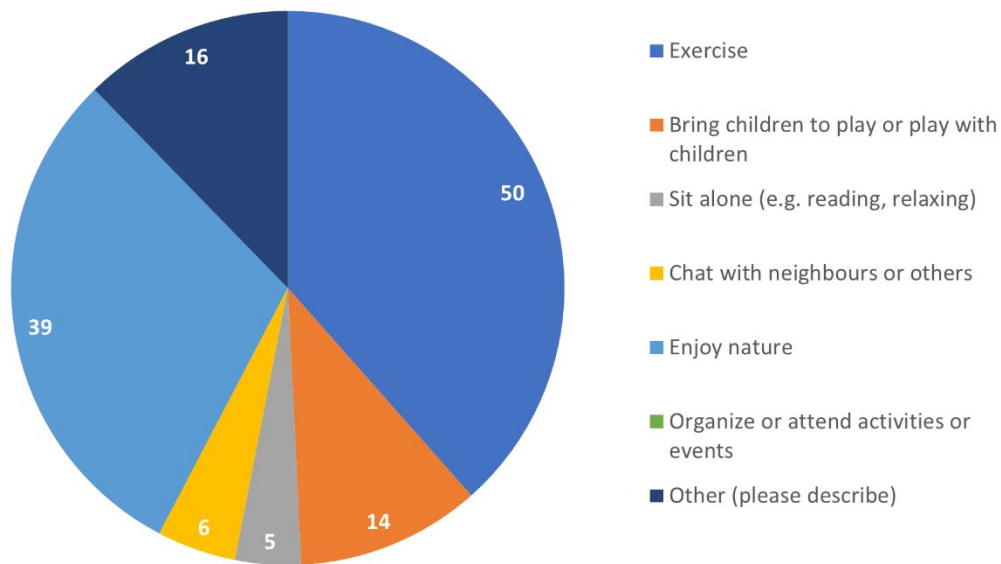
Other responses did not provide descriptive feedback.

Who do you visit this Greenway with?



Other responses did not provide descriptive feedback.

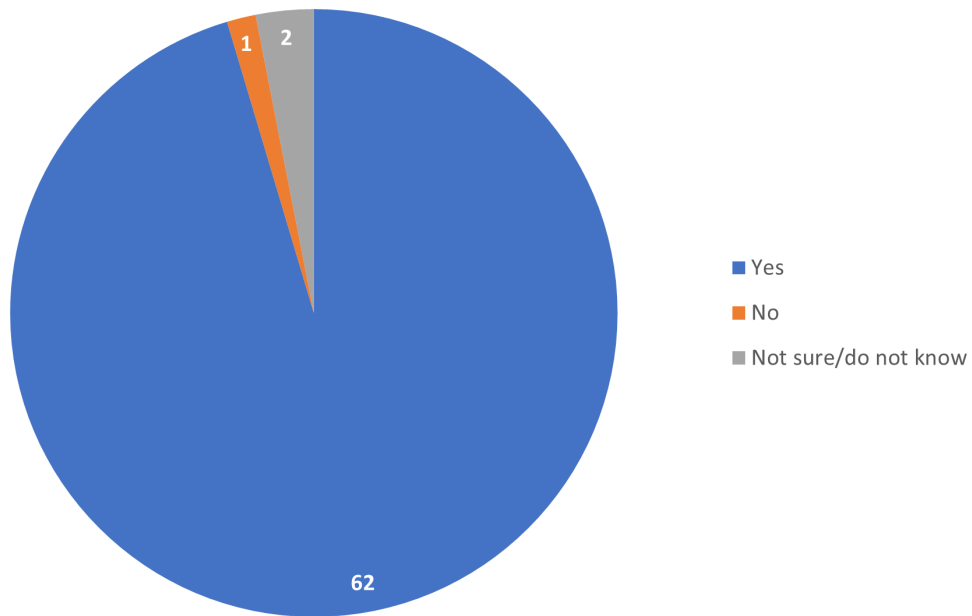
What do you and/or your family typically like to do when you visit this Greenway?



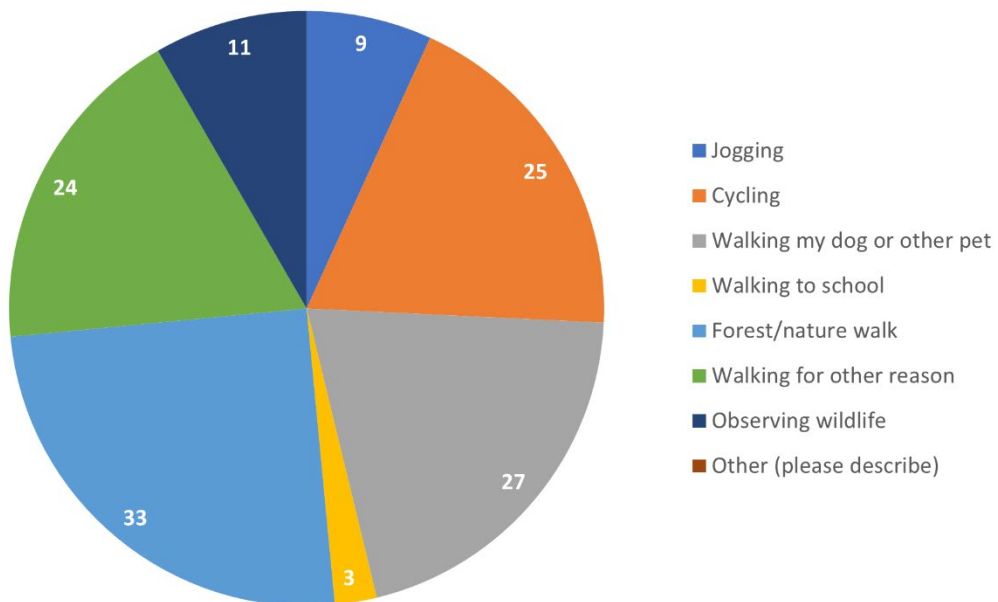
Other responses included the following:

- Walking through the trail
- Walking their dog(s) on the trail
- Running errands by bike
- Geocaching or playing Pokemon GO
- Sledding on the hills in the winter
- Enjoying the Mulberry tree along the trail

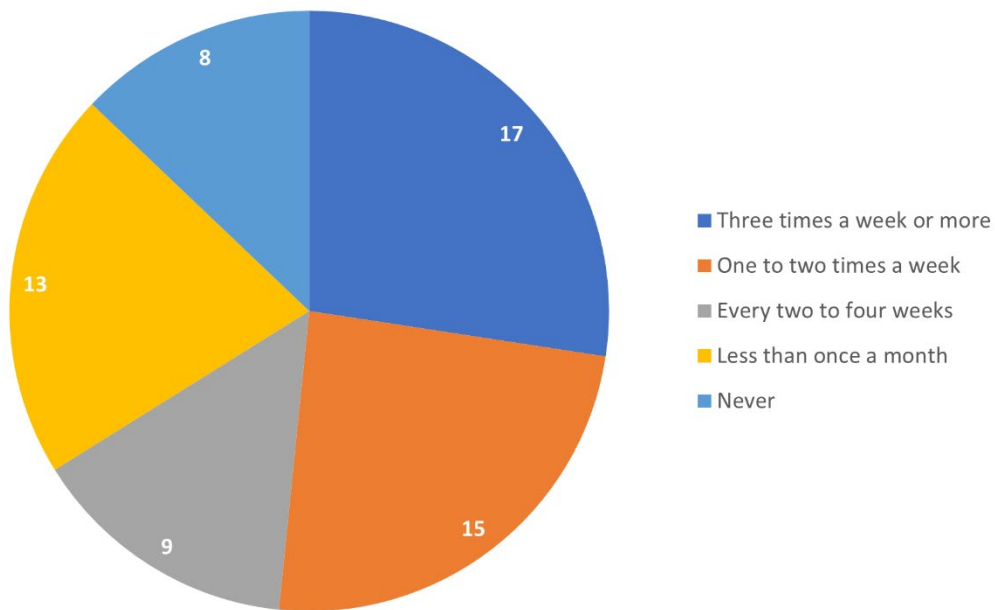
Do you or your family ever use the trail system through the Greenway?



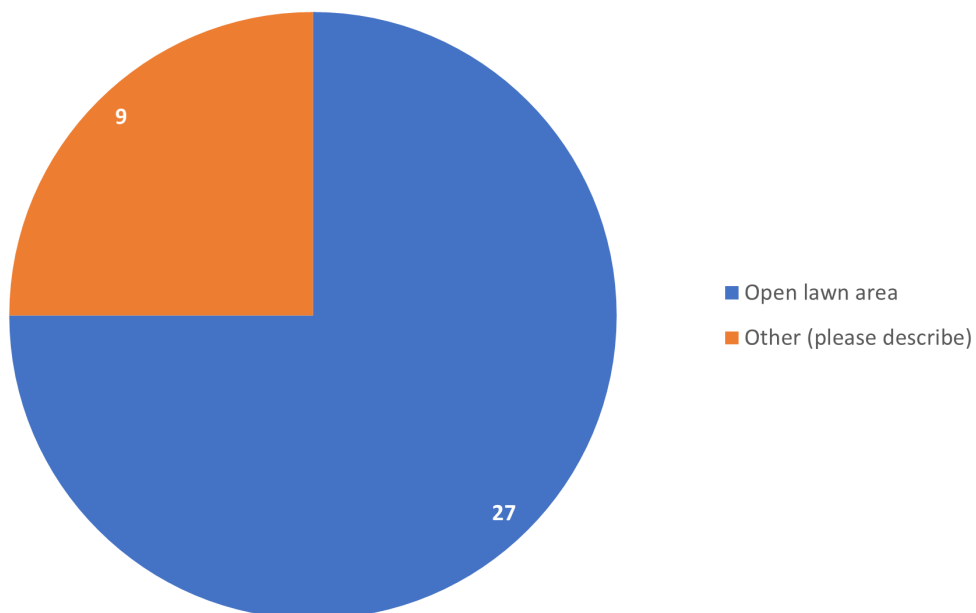
What are you typically doing when you use this trail system?



How often do you typically use this trail in the winter?



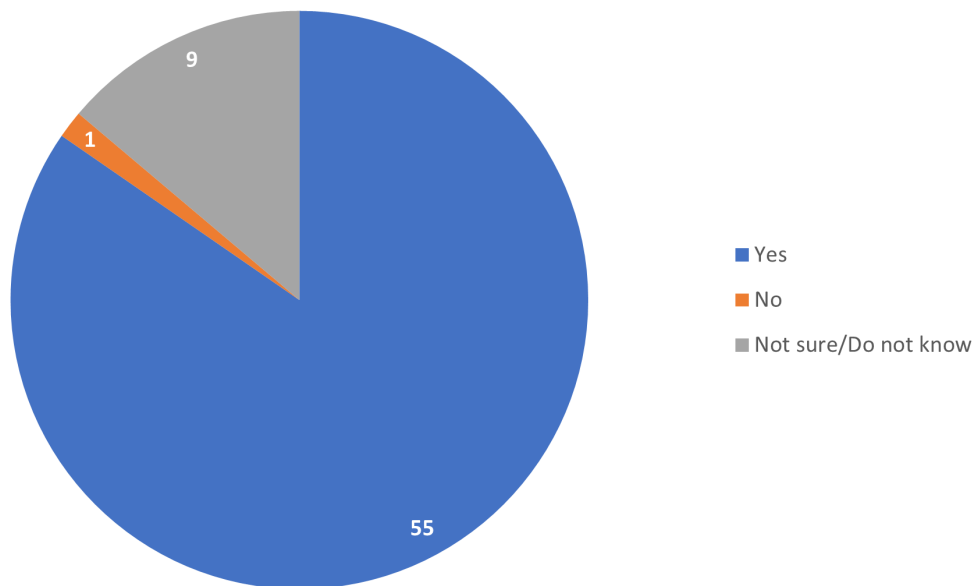
What other features do you and/or your family use at the Greenway?



Other responses included the following:

- Utilizing the tennis courts at Eby Park or the park in general
- Sitting on the Greenway benches
- Enjoying the wildlife and scenery
- Mentioning that there are no other features to use

Think back to the last time you visited Idlewood Greenway. Did you feel comfortable in this area?



Please tell us why you gave that answer.

It is evident that the majority of the respondents feel comfortable and safe in Idlewood Greenway for various reasons, such as:

- The Greenway is open and spacious, providing clear visibility and allowing people to monitor their surroundings.
- The Greenway is in a safe residential neighbourhood.
- The space is commonly quiet and not too busy. As a result, there are no unexpected disruptions and noise.
- There is a friendly community that uses the space. Most users of the Greenway will greet one another and chat.
- Pleasant past experiences with the Greenway have fostered a sense of trust and safety in the area
- The Greenway is clean, beautiful, and well-maintained, enhancing visitors' comfort.
- Natural areas help avoid the dangers of traffic and roads.

Some respondents mentioned aspects of the Greenway which made them uncomfortable, such as:

- People experiencing homelessness and drug use near the trails and in the area.
- A feeling that one cannot leave their kids at the Greenway alone.
- Stagnant water nearby and the growing mosquito population.
- Dogs being off leash.

A few respondents left suggestions and concerns:

- The trail could be upgraded.
- There are nocturnal animals in the area and their space should be respected.
- There is an opportunity to grow plants to manage flooding and add aesthetics.

If you could change one thing about the Greenway, what would it be and why?

- **Improve the trail:** Many respondents commented on the trail being uneven and needing repair and enhancement. Proposed changes included smoothing, repaving, lengthening, and widening the trail.
- **More trees and greenery:** Several respondents suggested planting trees and incorporating diverse plants, vegetation, and a pollinator garden.
- **No changes needed:** Numerous respondents thought no changes were required.
- **Install more garbage cans:** Many respondents mentioned the area's limited amount of garbage cans and requested more be installed throughout the Greenway.
- **Additional seating:** Many respondents suggested adding benches and tables along the Greenway.
- **Adding play areas for children:** Several respondents want to see activity areas for children and park equipment such as swings and slides.
- **Lighting:** Some respondents suggested adding lighting along the trail for the nighttime.
- **Enhanced drainage:** Some respondents noted water ponding on the trail and the need for better grading and drainage. Icy trails were also reported to be an issue during winter.
- **Better cycling infrastructure:** Some respondents want to see the trail connected to designated cycling routes that are protected from traffic.
- **Installing recreational facilities:** A few people would like to see recreational facilities such as a basketball court and a pickleball court
- **Add signage:** A few respondents want more informational signage. This includes signs providing directions, encouraging dogs to be on leash, and picking up after pets.

Demographic information

In this survey, most respondents (87.7%) were from the N2A postal code area (Idlewood, Stanley Park, and Grand River South). The age group was diverse, with the highest percentage being 40 to 49 years old (21.9%), 50 to 59 years old (21.9%), and 65 years old and above (21.9%). The remaining percentages were 30 to 39 years old (17.2%), 60 to 64 years old (12.5%), and 18 to 29 years old (3.1%). A small number of respondents identified as having a disability (1.6%) or being part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community (3.3%). No respondents identified as racialized or belonging to First Nations, Inuit, or Métis communities. Most respondents identified as women (60%), followed by men (29.2%), with a small percentage selecting non-binary or genderqueer identities or preferring not to answer.

Conclusions

- The community has expressed diverse concerns and interests about how Idlewood Greenway is currently used. Many people use the park for exercise, walking and biking along the trails, and connecting with nature.
- The community spends time in the greenway year-round and at all parts of the day.
- The community enjoys using the park with family and alone.
- Community members suggested improvements including pollinator plants and seating. Others would like the area to stay as it is.

Next Steps

- We want to make sure neighbours of Idlewood Greenway know about this project. We will mail a notice to residents living near Idlewood Greenway.
- We will organize an open house event for the next engagement stage, to share a design concept for your information.
- We will continue to post all project updates on the Engage page. Subscribe to receive updates on [the Idlewood Greenway Engage page](#).