

PARKS

MASTER PLAN



Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary

August 2022



Hamilton

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About the Project

Parks are important to our community. The Hamilton Parks Master Plan will guide the long-term planning of new parks and the expansion and improved access to existing parks across the city.

A Parks Master Plan is a guiding document that helps municipalities plan for and provide parks for residents. It is an important step in considering the development and enhancement of parkland over the short, medium and long term. It also aids in decision-making and helps prioritize investment in parkland across the city.

The Master Plan will focus on:

- All existing parkland within the City of Hamilton.
- City-owned properties that currently serve other uses but could serve as potential candidates for future parkland.
- Future growth areas, as identified by the City's [Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy \(GRIDS\)](#) currently underway.
- Public open spaces in Hamilton that are not owned by the City but are used by the public, such as school board properties, and utility corridor lands.

With the help of Hamilton residents, user groups, and other key stakeholders, this Master Plan will develop a shared vision for the future provision of parkland in Hamilton by listening and learning about what matters to the community. By aligning these values to policy and budget frameworks, the Master Plan will be a flexible working document that can adapt to changing values and emerging trends, recognize new opportunities, and identify new priorities for parkland provision.

The Parks Master Plan considers public and stakeholder input, demographic data and growth forecasts, park usage levels, parkland trends and best practices, ongoing planning initiatives, and more. In this way, the priorities and recommendations advanced in the Plan will be evidenced-based and respond to dynamic needs across the entire city.

Engagement Approach

The aim of the Hamilton Parks Master Plan public and stakeholder engagement is to develop a shared vision for the future provision of public park space in Hamilton by listening and learning about what matters to the community. In this phase, we wanted to learn if the public and stakeholders support the draft vision, strategic direction, and recommendations to improve the parks system. We also wanted to know if anything was missed that people feel is important.

Engagement & Project Timeline

The “Recommendations and Taking Action” phase of public engagement ran from **June 16 to July 11, 2022**. The input gathered will be used to further refine the draft strategic direction and finalize the Master Plan.

- **Phase 1: Background Review/Information Gathering | January to March 2022**
Review trends and best practices; analyze parkland supply, gaps and needs; prepare preliminary report and analysis. Collecting community input.
- **Phase 2: Strategic Direction | March to April 2022**
Develop and refine vision, goals and guiding principles. Provide the community with a progress update.
- **Phase 3: Recommendations and Taking Action | April to May 2022**
Develop parkland acquisition solutions; develop policy framework, recommendations and actions. Collecting further community input.
- **Phase 4: Report and Recommendations | June to September 2022**
Develop a final report to guide long term planning, prioritization and investment in parkland across the city.

Additional opportunities for public engagement will be available in upcoming phases of the project. Up-to-date engagement details are available at engage.hamilton.ca/parksmasterplan

Who We Engaged

Parks are for everyone, so involving a diverse range of Hamiltonians is essential to ensure a broad range of perspectives and experiences are represented. Targeted outreach to specific user groups, local experts, and potential partners also provides a depth of knowledge that will be essential to the success of the plan.

- Hamilton general public (including residents, park user groups, and equity-seeking populations)
- Community organizations (including environmental organizations, community groups, and business associations)
- Industry and agencies (including environmental authorities, development associations, and education institutions)
- The Project Team reached out to Hamilton's Indigenous groups (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Haudenosaunee Development Institute, Six Nations of the Grand River, Huron-Wendat Nation), notifying each group about the project and sending a workbook with questions to review with any comments.



67

PUBLIC SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

How We Engaged

Engagement Tools

To encourage meaningful participation, the engagement opportunities aimed to be accessible and easy to participate for everyone on their own time:

- **Public Survey:** An online survey acted as the primary tool to collect feedback in this phase. A printed version was available to those that could not participate online.
- **Stakeholder Discussion Guides:** Community organizations were invited to submit a discussion guide to share their feedback with the project team.



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STAKEHOLDER SUBMISSIONS

Communications Tactics

Several communications and outreach tactics were used to reach as many Hamiltonians as possible:

- **Social Media:** Seven advertisements and one post were shared on the City's Instagram and Twitter social media accounts.
- **Engage Hamilton:** A project-specific webpage was provided on the Engage Hamilton platform.
- **City Website:** A project-specific webpage for the Master Plan advertised engagement opportunities.
- **Email Invitations:** Stakeholders were invited to participate through targeted email invites.



Public Engagement Summary

The general public was invited to participate in an online survey to review and gather feedback on the draft plan directions. This survey received comments from 67 respondents.

The summaries on the following pages highlight the findings from the survey questions below:

Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals

- Overall, does the Master Plan's proposed vision capture the future you imagine for Hamilton's parks?
- Overall, to what extent do you feel the Master Plan's proposed Principles and Goals represent the main priorities for Hamilton's parks?
- Is anything missing from the vision, guiding principles, and goals?

Recommendations and Big Moves

- How supportive are you of each Area of Focus?
- What's missing? What could be improved?

Demographics

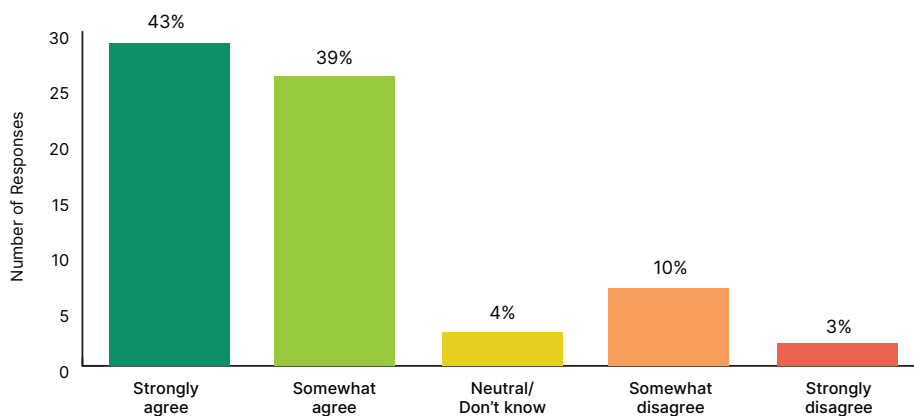
- Where do you live?
- Do you have access to outdoor space at home?
- What is your gender?
- How old are you?

Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals

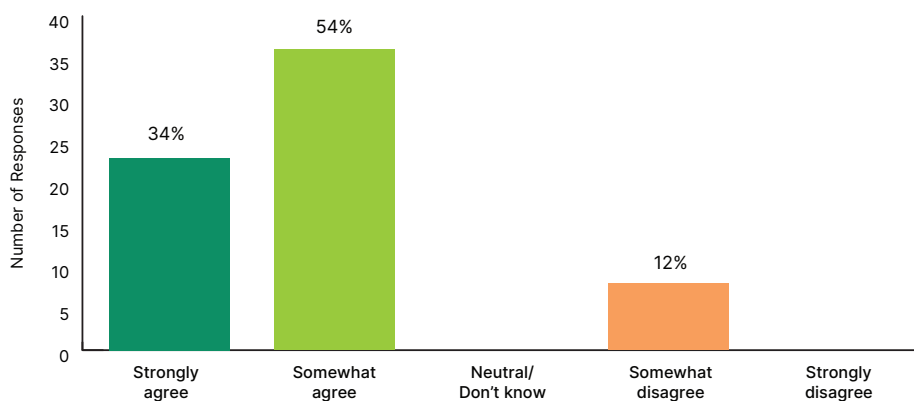
Overall, respondents strongly and somewhat agreed with the proposed vision, principles, and goals presented, as shown in the graphs below.

To help guide revisions to the draft plan, respondents provided comments on what was missing and how these guiding statements could be improved. These recommendations included improving maintenance and safety of existing parks, adding language about accessibility, and emphasizing the need for green space to improve health and wellbeing. These comments are summarized to the right.

Overall, does the Master Plan's proposed vision capture the future you imagine for Hamilton's parks?



Overall, to what extent do you feel the Master Plan's proposed Principles and Goals represent the main priorities for Hamilton's parks?



Comment Summary

(67 comments)

Main takeaways:

- Improve **maintenance** and management processes of existing parks to ensure clean and safe spaces for everyone
- Strengthen commitment to more **green space**, trees, naturalization, access to nature, and green infrastructure
- Include specific direction about barrier-free **accessibility** in parks
- Emphasize the importance of parks for **health**, wellbeing, and quality of life for all
- Simplify language for clearer intent/direction

Other considerations:

- Location-specific issues
- More/less emphasis on sports
- Variety of play opportunities for kids and teens
- Wifi
- Community input and activation
- Walkability, cycling, and creative movement
- Account for the difference between communities
 - Less affluent neighbourhoods have high reliance on parks
 - Older neighbourhoods have less green space
 - More outlying and rural neighbourhoods pay taxes for parks that are far from them

Recommendations and Big Moves

The recommendations proposed for each area of focus also received a high level of support from respondents, with all areas of focus receiving at least 78% strong or somewhat support. “Building, Connecting and Celebrating Communities” and “Funding the Parks Systems received the lowest amount of support, as seen in the graph below.

These insights are consistent with the comments shared in the following question, where respondents were invited to share what they felt was missing or could be improved. Some respondents indicated a desire to address maintenance issues in existing parks and strengthen commitments to taking action and building relationships. Comments are summarized to the right.

Comment Summary

(40 comments)

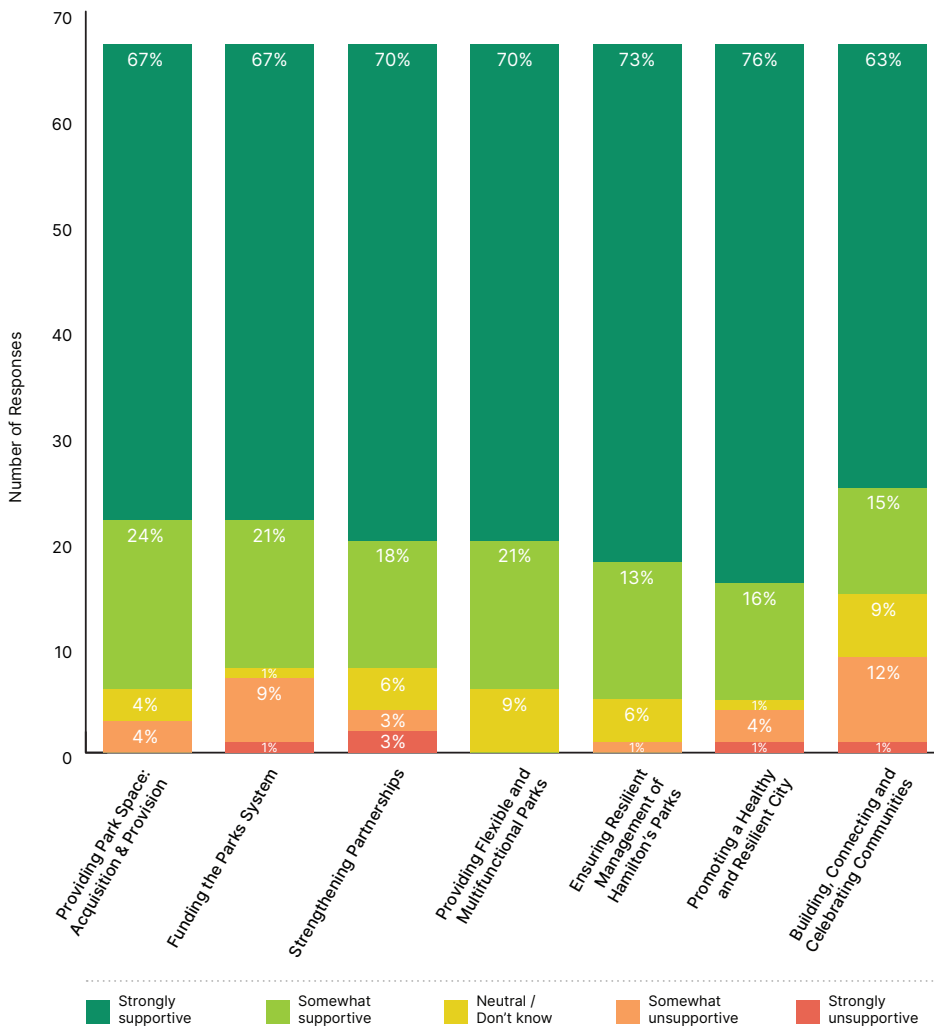
Main takeaways:

- Move beyond planning and take action
- Improve maintenance and self-sustainability of existing parks
- Strengthen direction to address homelessness in parks
- Emphasize commitment to engaging with communities and stakeholders
- Consider relationship with/ between different types of partners (e.g. schools, communities, conservation authorities, developers, industry)

Other considerations:

- Accessibility, diversity, and equitable use
- Provide basic functionality and less programming
- Strategy for the escarpment as a unique environmental and culture feature
- Temporary use of unused spaces
- Funding for green school spaces
- Budget implications
- Cold season park resources
- Bike amenities
- Simplify language and improve readability of park plans, signage and materials

How supportive are you of the following areas of focus:

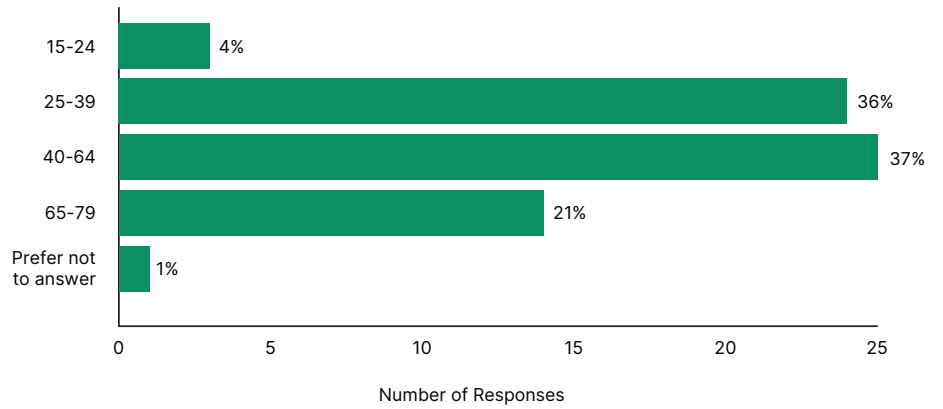


Demographics

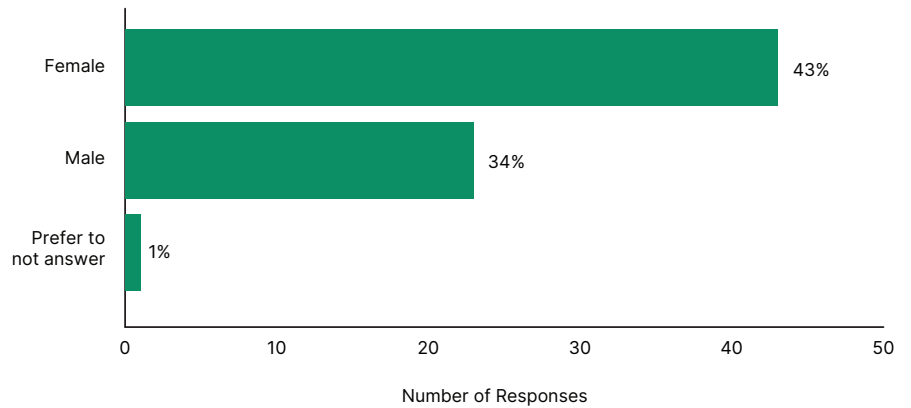
To better understand who is—and is not—participating in the public engagement process, this page highlights the demographics shared by respondents.

All questions were optional.

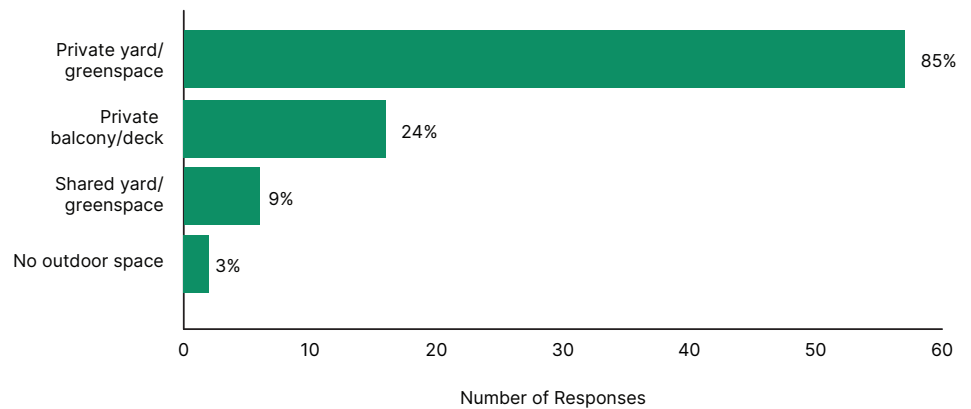
What is your age?



What's your gender?



Do you have access to outdoor space at home?
(check all that apply)



Stakeholder Engagement Summary

In follow-up to the first phase of engagement, stakeholder organizations were invited to complete a workbook to share their input and perspectives on the draft strategic direction, recommendations and actions with the project team.

Two stakeholder organizations completed a workbook during this phase of engagement:

- Environment Hamilton
- Hamilton Naturalists' Club

The following pages summarize the feedback received from stakeholder organizations.

Draft Vision

- Feel strongly that there should be direct reference to climate change adaptation and biodiversity
- Incorporate role of parks in support climate resilience/ adaptation and supporting habitat and biodiversity

Draft Guiding Principles & Goals

- Place even more emphasis on the climate emergency and biodiversity elements
- Reference the City's Climate Change Action Strategy
- More emphasis on how parks play an integral part in the emerging Biodiversity Action Plan and urban tree canopy, through reference to the Urban Forest Strategy

Draft Recommendations, Big Moves & Actions

Providing Park Space

- Add specific reference to 'repurposing' of existing uses in our parks to shift to more inclusive, universal uses
- General concern about issue of encroachment of private landowners onto public park property
- Suggest making the criteria and acquisition goals public as much as possible
- Have a range of park types in each neighbourhood where possible
- Linear corridors should be looked at to add natural features (e.g. like the Meadowway in Toronto)

Funding the Parks System

- Challenge to City to strike a good balance between prioritization of land acquisition for parks and the urgent need to provide more affordable housing
- Use of charges will need to be carefully considered to ensure it doesn't create a barrier
- Look at financial or tax incentives to promote donations for parks and park features (e.g. basketball court sponsorship)

Strengthening Partnerships

- Partnerships are essential to providing natural areas and parks for Hamiltonians to enjoy
- Exploring ways to effectively amplify these partnerships makes a huge amount of sense
- Ensure lands owned by school boards but effectively used as park space are not lost with school closures
- Consider an adopt-a-park type program for volunteerism and stewardship

Flexible and Multifunctional Parks

- Hope there is potential for extensive application of this recommendation
- Does the City need more input from stakeholders on how to implement this?
- How will this principle be applied to address current challenges with 'exclusivity'?
- Having parks easily be multifunctional helps to meet the needs of all
- Helps encourage creativity in the use of park spaces

Resilient Management

- Have on-going concerns about current maintenance practices in our parks and tree health
- Rapidly changing climate is forcing us to look at parks and open spaces differently, and could allow more functionality to be brought into parks as needed (e.g. stormwater management)

Healthy and Resilient City

- Opportunity to ensure that natural area remnants are preserved and enhanced in urban greenfield sites
- Potential to implement this approach through the creation of streetscape parkettes and depaving/greening efforts
- Organizations such as Hamilton Naturalists' Club would like to play a role, where possible, in the implementation

Building, Connecting, Celebrating Communities

- Supportive, but caution that this must be done in a balanced manner where physical facilities are concerned. City needs to consider the 'capacity' of these spaces
- Continue to be concerned about the city's practice of clearing out encampments in city parks and other community locations
- Storytelling through parks would also be a good way to help celebrate and maybe help to educate about Hamilton's biodiversity – opportunity for partnerships

Park Need Focus Areas

- Prioritize locations where the expectation is that urban growth will be accommodated at higher densities.
- In high growth areas, additional effort needs to be focused on ensuring that there is adequate greenspace/park space for people to enjoy
- Quality park space and natural areas are key for many important reasons (e.g. health and wellbeing)
- Greening as an adaptation/mitigation tool – build a climate resilient community that is able to cope with extreme heat (urban heat island, etc.) extreme storm events, extreme cold events
- Important City gets amount and location of park space along the east-west LRT route from Eastgate to McMaster University
- Map already illustrates areas where city does need more parks/green. Support the need to prioritize these locations

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who participated!

The insights gathered through this phase of engagement will help guide the final revisions to the proposed plan. Stay tuned to view the final Parks Master Plan in the coming months.

Visit engage.hamilton.ca/parksmasterplan for more information.

