



City of Kitchener Victoria Park Master Plan

Community Engagement

Final Report

March 2026



In partnership with Take Consulting and Urban Minds

Acknowledgements

This report reflects the valuable time, effort, and insights shared by the Kitchener community during the Victoria Park Master Plan engagement process, from April to September 2025. Participants offered a wide range of perspectives, providing valuable insights that will be instrumental in shaping the future of Victoria Park. This summary also includes an overview of what we heard through sessions with City Staff and Committees of Council.

The City of Kitchener and Dillon Consulting sincerely thank everyone who contributed by participating in the community visioning session, targeted roundtable, youth focus session, walking tour, and by providing feedback through the project website and interactive map. Your feedback and expertise have provided essential guidance as we work to create a shared vision for Victoria Park that reflects the needs and values of the community.

How to Read This Report

This report provides an overview of the engagement objectives and process and provides a summary of the key themes and insights shared by participants. It highlights areas of alignment while acknowledging the diversity of perspectives shared.

The report is not intended to serve as a verbatim record of discussions, prioritize any viewpoint, or diminish the importance of perspectives that may not be fully detailed here. It is also important to note that this document does not evaluate the accuracy or validity of the feedback provided during the engagement process, nor does it imply the City of Kitchener's endorsement of any specific perspective.

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1.0 Introduction

The City of Kitchener is creating a new Master Plan for Victoria Park to guide its evolution over the next decade. This plan will create a roadmap for how the Park is improved, maintained, and operated to meet the needs of a growing and diverse community. The community engagement is Phase 2 of an overall project process to develop the Master Plan:

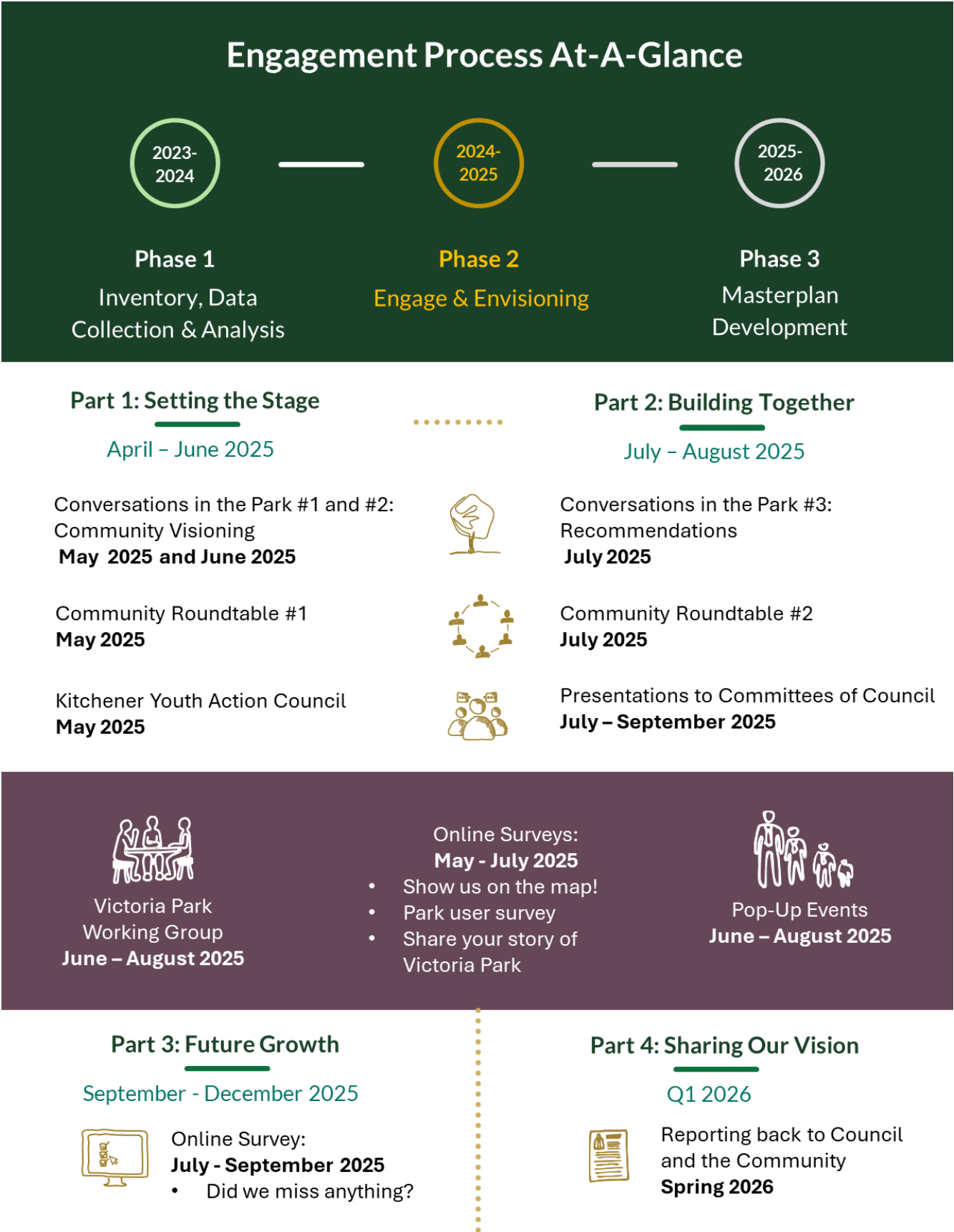


Figure 1 Victoria Park Master Plan Project Phases

To help inform a Master Plan that reflects a shared vision for the Park, the City of Kitchener and Dillon Consulting (in partnership with Urban Minds and Take Consulting) undertook a four-part community engagement process. This structure allowed the project team to build on feedback at each stage and adjust engagement activities as needed. The four parts were:

- + **Part 1 - Setting the Stage:** Focus on introducing the project scope and themes for consultation with the public and internal staff. This stage included the launch of in-person engagement.
- + **Part 2 - Building Together:** Building on dialogue and relationships, returning to residents with recommendations to-date to discuss and further expand on.
- + **Part 3 - Future Growth:** Finalizing priorities and recommendations for the Master Plan.
- + **Part 4 - Sharing Our Vision:** What We Heard Report back to Council, staff and the community (this report).

This “What We Heard” report is the output of Part 4, and summarizes the feedback from Parts 1, 2, and 3 of the process. The data represents a snapshot of the engagement period running from May to September 2025.



1.1 Overall Engagement Goals

The following provides a list of overall engagement goals for the Victoria Park Master Plan creation. These goals serve as overall guides for the engagement process, outlining key aspirations we aimed to achieve through our collaboration with the community and stakeholders:

- + Understand current and future Park use to inform recommendations.
- + Gather the community's vision for spaces and amenities to guide future investment.
- + Identify key concerns and opportunities to shape the Master Plan's priorities.
- + Involve a broad and diverse range of participants through accessible and varied engagement methods.
- + Define the scope of each activity to manage expectations and focus discussions.
- + Build trust with the community by being transparent and accountable with their feedback.

To facilitate a thorough exploration of perspectives and to structure our dialogues, the engagement process was designed around four key Master Plan themes:

- + **Connectivity:** How people access and move through the Park.
- + **Community:** How the Park is used for social gatherings, events, and recreation.
- + **Natural Systems:** The role of nature, water, and wildlife in the Park.
- + **Growth:** How the Park can adapt to the changing needs of a growing city.

It is important to note that as the project progressed, the themes were maintained; however, in some cases the potential initiatives and recommendations were identified to address multiple themes. As such, the project team moved to more initiative-focused engagement and outreach while maintaining the connection and threads to the themes, where applicable.

1.2 Engagement Objectives

The engagement process was guided by a series of objectives that the City identified in advance of each stage. The objectives were used to guide the types of questions and activities that were designed, as summarized below.

■ Part 1: Setting the Stage

Part 1 of the Master Plan engagement, Setting the Stage, introduced the community and internal stakeholders to the Victoria Park Master Plan project. Initial engagement also gathered feedback on the current state of the park and aspirations for its future, centered around the project's four key themes. The specific engagement objectives related to each theme, including the guiding discussion questions that structured the community dialogues are listed below.

Part 1 Engagement Questions

- + **Connectivity** focused on the physical links to and within Victoria Park, including transportation, pedestrian movement, and connections to surrounding green spaces. It also encompassed fostering a sense of place and belonging for all park visitors. Questions included:
 - What are your thoughts on off-site green space connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and other mobility devices, as well as vehicular movement through the park, Gaukel Block connectivity, and transit and broader mobility connections?
 - How are park users predominantly accessing the park space (including walking, cycling, personal mobility devices, and vehicles), and how might we anticipate those modes of access changing in the future?
 - What green space connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and other forms of mobility could benefit the park, in your opinion?
 - From an accessibility standpoint for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those using mobility devices, how could movement through the park be improved?

- + **Growth** addressed the impact of Kitchener's increasing population and development on Victoria Park. This theme considered how the park can adapt to changing demographics and increased usage, and how its amenities can remain relevant in the future. Questions included:
 - How should the Victoria Park Master Plan consider current and future growth in downtown Kitchener?
 - What role should Victoria Park play in the context of the City's Places & Spaces Strategy?

- How can the Master Plan account for the Boathouse development and its relationship to the park?
 - As more development happens downtown, how do you think this increased activity and population will affect how you use Victoria Park?
 - What programming would people like to see in the park?
 - How would people re-imagine the physical space or repurpose existing spaces?
 - As Kitchener continues to grow, what should be the priorities for Victoria Park to best serve the needs of the community?
- + **Natural Systems** encompassed the ecological aspects of Victoria Park, recognizing its evolution from a "Romantic Victorian-Era Landscape" into a blend of natural elements and man-made structures. This theme explored the park's biodiversity, opportunities for naturalization, and the balance between conservation and recreation. Questions included:
- What are your thoughts on how the City manages the mature trees in Victoria Park and plans for new trees in the future?
 - How important is it to consider stormwater management within Victoria Park?
 - What aspects of the park's gardens and landscaping are important to you?
 - How do you think park visitors can help care for and protect Victoria Park's natural features?
 - How do you feel about wildlife living in the park? What do you think about efforts to create more natural areas within Victoria Park?
 - What aspects of Victoria Park's nature, like the trees, plants, or water features, are most important to you? Are there any natural elements in the park that you are concerned about?
 - How can the City better share information with the public about the nature within Victoria Park and how we can all help take care of it?
- + **Community** explored Victoria Park, which for over 100 years has been a central gathering place, and its ongoing role in fostering social interaction and well-being. This theme considered how the park is currently used and how it can become more inclusive, safe, and responsive to the diverse needs of the community.
- What kinds of activities or gatherings do you imagine taking place in Victoria Park in the future?
 - How could the park better meet the future social needs of the community?
 - What changes could make Victoria Park feel more welcoming and inclusive for everyone?
 - What specific features or improvements to the park's washrooms, trails, events, lighting, or programming could enhance safety for all users?

- Are there specific concerns related to safety or inclusivity for different groups within the park, and what actions could address these?
- What are some of the key needs of the community that Victoria Park could better support?
- Do you think the park currently has the right infrastructure (e.g., power, gathering spaces) to support community needs and events? What improvements might be needed?
- What specific actions can the City take to ensure that equity, diversity, and inclusion are consistently considered in the planning and management of Victoria Park?
- How can the park better reflect the diverse identities and experiences of the Kitchener community?

■ Part 2: Building Together

Part 2 – Building Together aimed to move from the broad understanding gathered in Part 1 towards the development of specific ideas and recommendations for Victoria Park. This phase focused on synthesizing the initial feedback and presenting it back to the community and stakeholders for further discussion and refinement. The overall objective of Part 2 was to collaboratively develop and refine draft recommendations based on the findings from Part 1. The result was a set of recommendations that addressed the four key themes and was grounded in the collected data.

Part 2 Engagement Questions

For each of the four themes, the project team prepared a map highlighting what we had heard during Part 1 (May-June), and asking participants to share if there was anything else missing relating to the central question for each theme:

- + **Connectivity:** How can we improve on the way that people are able to arrive at and move through the Park?
- + **Community:** How can we make the Park more welcoming and inclusive, and provide spaces for a range of events and types of gatherings?
- + **Natural Systems:** How can we support biodiversity and connections to nature, and foster environmental stewardship in the Park?
- + **Growth:** How can we design for a growing and diverse community, and cater to the needs of different groups?

The maps formed the core activities for the Targeted Roundtable #2 and Conversations in the Park Session #3, and helped shape the content for Part 3.



■ Part 3: Future Growth

Part 3 – Future Growth centered on incorporating a long-term perspective into the emerging recommendations for Victoria Park. This stage emphasized building a Master Plan that is adaptable and can effectively guide the Park's evolution in response to future needs and growth within the city.

The project team summarized the main ideas that we heard through Part 1 and 2 engagement, bringing together the common threads in issues and opportunities for each of the four themes listed above and adding the key recommendations from the Data Inventory stage of the project that was conducted in 2024.

The categories for the recommendations were:

- + **Play Areas**
- + **Pathway Network**
- + **Gathering and Rest Spaces**
- + **Visitor/Event Facilities**
- + **Park Design and Stewardship**

Participants at the in-person events (Community Roundtable #2 and Conversations in the Park Session #3, as well as the pop-up events) had the opportunity to use sticky dots and

notes to vote on the recommendations that they thought should be prioritized. The project team updated the recommendations following Community Roundtable #2 to share an updated version at the Conversations in the Park session, and once again before creating the online version of the activity.

The intended outcomes of Part 3 as the final stage of engagement included:

- + A clear articulation of the key issues, opportunities, and priorities identified during Part 1 engagement, summarized through the activity materials for Part 2 and Part 3
- + A well-defined set of finalized priorities and recommendations that reflect community input and a forward-thinking approach to the development of Victoria Park.
- + Meaningful engagement with the community to gather feedback on the draft recommendations, testing their feasibility and alignment with community values.
- + Further exploration and refinement of the four key themes, building upon the initial discussions in Part 1 and incorporating new insights gathered during the review of draft recommendations.
- + A critical review of the draft recommendations to identify any gaps or areas where future growth and adaptability have not been adequately considered.
- + Open dialogue with the community and interest holders to gather additional feedback and address any remaining conceptual ideas or topics related to the Park's future.
- + Incorporation of insights related to future trends, potential challenges, and opportunities to enhance the long-term relevance and effectiveness of the Master Plan recommendations.
- + A shared understanding between the City and the community regarding the potential future direction of Victoria Park, setting the stage for finalizing the Master Plan.

Part 3 Engagement Questions

- + The main activity in Part 3 asked participants to review the ideas for the Master Plan, identify the ones that resonated most, and share any that were missing.

2.0 Part 1 Engagement Overview

The engagement activities of Part 1: Setting the Stage were designed to introduce the Victoria Park Master Plan project to the community and internal stakeholders. The intended outcome was to establish a base understanding of the opinions on the current state of the park and aspirations for its future.

A series of activities were held to provide multiple opportunities to gather feedback, including both in-person and online methods as listed below. These engagement events and techniques were selected to meet the overall project engagement goals and specific objectives for Part 1. The following sections describe these events and techniques in further detail.

- + **Engage Kitchener Project Page:** The project page on Engage Kitchener was updated to provide a one-stop portal for all engagement updates and online activities.
- + **Youth Idea Jam:** In-person workshop with members of the Kitchener Youth Action Council
- + **Digital engagement** via Engage Kitchener project page, which included:
 - Interactive map
 - Park user survey
 - Story-sharing
- + **Victoria Park Working Group Walking Tour:** In-person walking workshop with members of the Victoria Park Working Group and local Neighbourhood Association
- + **Community Roundtable Session #1:** In-person workshop with invited representatives of community-based organizations and Indigenous community members
- + **Conversations in the Park #1 and #2:** Two in-person drop-in information and engagement sessions open to the general public
- + **Pop-up Events:** The City also conducted additional engagement through a series of pop-up events to raise awareness about the project, gather feedback and encourage community members to subscribe to the project page for updates and attend upcoming in-person events.

As part of internal engagement with City staff, a working group was convened comprising of staff members across multiple departments including transportation, heritage, public works, facilities management, and park design, among others. In Part 1, the first Working Group meeting was held, as summarized in Section 6 of this report.

2.1 Engage Kitchener Project Page

A dedicated information and participation webpage for the Victoria Park Master Plan was hosted on the Engage Kitchener platform (www.engagewr.ca/VictoriaParkMP). This project page served as the main hub for project information, providing background resources, updates, and opportunities for feedback.

Victoria Park Master Plan
We are updating our plan for how Victoria Park is improved, maintained and operated

Home / Victoria Park Master Plan

Help shape the next chapter for Victoria Park

Established in 1896, Victoria Park is one of Kitchener's most cherished public spaces. We're updating its Master Plan to guide how the park's spaces, amenities, and infrastructure evolve over the next 10 years.

By reassessing current conditions, usage patterns and future needs, we'll create a data-driven roadmap for improving, maintaining and operating the park.

We need to hear from you!

Help us make Victoria Park better for everyone. Your contributions will help us ensure Victoria Park's infrastructure better serves Kitchener residents now and into the future.

Explore opportunities to get involved and provide your feedback on this page. Click 'Follow' for email updates and to see how community input shapes the future of Victoria Park.

All comments will be carefully reviewed, and we'll report back on how your input influenced the final Master Plan.

Upcoming events

Join us in person at an upcoming event to help shape the future of Victoria Park.

Event Title	Date	Time	Location
Conversations in the Park #1: Community Visioning	May 23, 2025	6 to 8:30 p.m.	Victoria Park Pavilion (80 Schneider Ave)
Conversations in the Park #2: Community Visioning	June 17, 2025	1 to 3 p.m.	Victoria Park Pavilion (80 Schneider Ave)
Conversations in the Park #3: Recommendations	July 18, 2025	6 to 8:30 p.m.	Victoria Park Pavilion (80 Schneider Ave)

Lifecycle

- Phase 1: Inventory, data collection and analysis**
We are completing our inventory of park amenities and infrastructure, and using sensors to gather information on how the park is used. (Comments remain active until Sept. 2025.)
- Phase 2: Engage and envisioning**
Help shape the future of Victoria Park! We are holding community conversations to make Victoria Park even better. Attend an event, participate online, or meet us in the park. We are gathering your feedback now!
- Phase 3: Master plan development**
We are reviewing community contributions, analyzing data, and developing the plan.
- Report to Council**
We are preparing the final Master Plan document, staff report, and recommendations to Council for review and approval.
- Project complete**
This project is now complete and the outcomes are documented on this page.

[See less](#)

Important Links

- About park development and improvements
- About Victoria Park

Who's Listening

	Karen Leasa Landscape Architect VictoriaPark.MP@kitchener.ca 519-741-2345 (TTY: 1-866-969-9994)
	Meghan MacKinnon Parks Engagement Liaison VictoriaPark.MP@kitchener.ca 519-783-7877 (TTY: 1-866-969-9994)

Share your feedback!

Use these digital tools to share your feedback on the Victoria Park Master Plan.

	Park user survey We are gathering feedback from park users like you to help shape the future of Victoria Park through its new Master Plan. Answer the survey >
	Show us on the map! What do you love? What would you change? Explore our map of Victoria Park and let us know! View the map >
	Share your story of Victoria Park What makes Victoria Park special to you? Share your story or a photo! Share your story >

Project updates

We post regular updates about the project here. To get updates by email, click the 'Follow' button above.

	Help shape the future of Victoria Park May 12, 2025
	Phase 2 Engagement Update February 25, 2025

The project page received **5,088 unique visitors** between February and October 2025. The page hosted several feedback tools, including a park user survey, a story-sharing tool, an interactive map, and a survey on the ideas for the Master Plan.

2.2 Youth Idea Jam

The engagement program kicked off with a Youth workshop, intended to ground all subsequent engagement in the ideas and perspectives of future community leaders in Kitchener. The project team held a "Youth Idea Jam" with the Kitchener Youth Action Council (KYAC) on **April 3, 2025**. The session, facilitated by City staff, Dillon Consulting, and Urban Minds, brought together **14 youth members (ages 14-19)** to share their vision for the future of Victoria Park.

Following a brief overview of the project, participants engaged in two interactive activities. The first, a "Roses, Thorns, and Buds" exercise, allowed them to identify what they currently enjoy about the park, what they dislike, and what opportunities they see for the future. The second activity was a hands-on vision boarding session where youth used images to build their ideal version of Victoria Park, with their ideas organized around the four key themes of Connectivity, Growth, Natural Systems, and Community.



Youth participants noted a number of space improvements and activities that would bring interest and meet the needs of younger visitors to the park, including a skate park, playground incorporating organic materials, mini golf, paddleball/pickleball, and climbing structures, along with a fire pit and more picnic tables/shaded seating areas. They also suggested improving wayfinding and accessibility, and providing bike and golf cart rentals

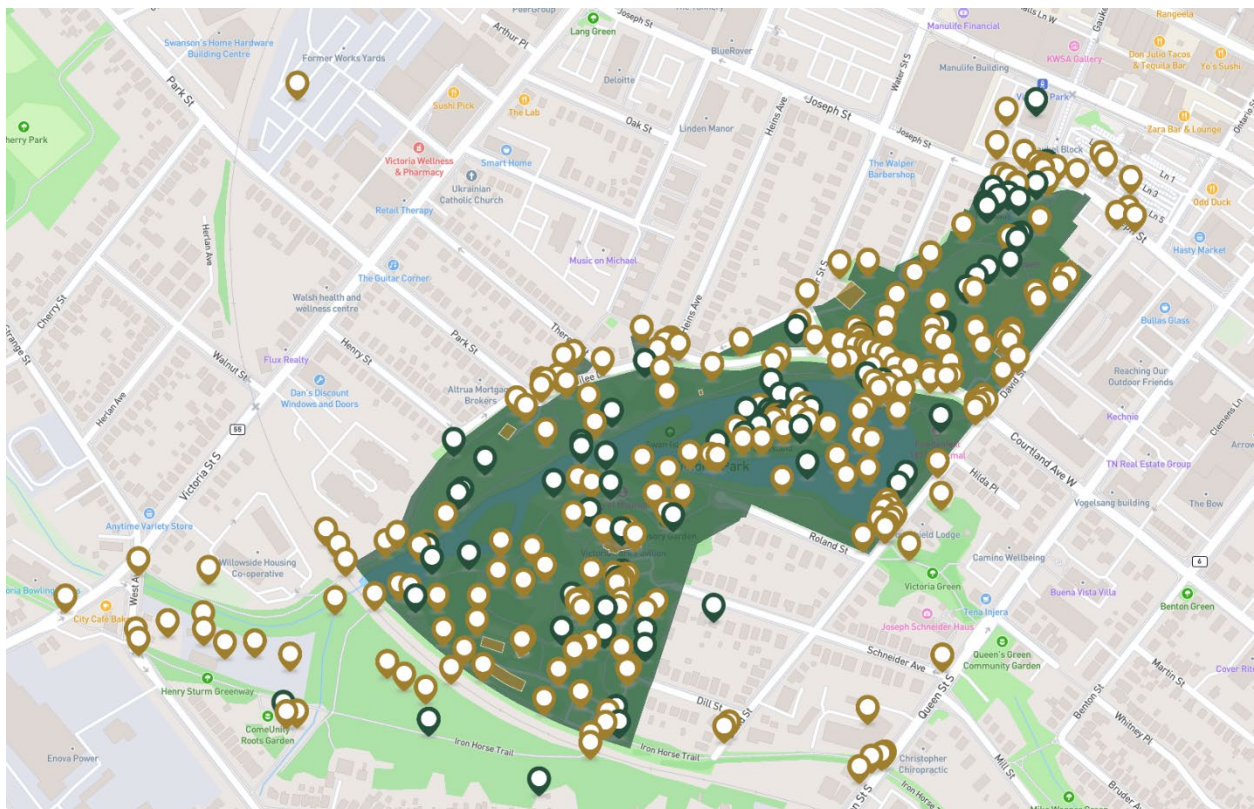
for people to navigate the park, as well as electric car charging stations. Natural space suggestions including community gardens, greenhouses, and a conservatory. Safety and comfort was raised as a key concern, with suggestions of lighting and improved visibility.

2.3 Digital Engagement

■ Interactive Map

An interactive map was hosted on the Engage Kitchener project page. This tool invited participants to drop pins on specific locations within Victoria Park to highlight spots they love or to suggest areas where they envision changes or improvements. The goal was to understand what matters most to the community in specific, geographic locations within the park.

In total, **323 pins were added to the map by 85 unique participants** during Phase 1 engagement. This included 75 "Love" pins highlighting cherished aspects of the park and 248 "Change" pins suggesting improvements or new ideas. A full record of the comments can be found in Appendix A.



- + **'Love' category:** included the trails, trees, gazebo, clock tower, picnic areas, community events, splash pad, outdoor fitness area, creek and bridges, Boathouse, and art installations.

- + **'Change' category:** included the need for drinking water fountains/bottle filling stations and 24hr washrooms, bicycle parking, shaded pathways, traffic calming and improved pedestrian safety particularly along feeder streets into the park, general maintenance, cleaning, and upkeep, signage to promote smoke-free zones, improved separated facilities for cyclists, and lighting in peripheral areas of the park.
 - Suggestions for new facilities included expanded playgrounds, tennis courts, paddle boat/kayak rentals, permanent food truck space, dog park, frisbee golf course, sensory garden, permanent bandshell, and barbecue pits. Several comments also suggested expanding the park.
 - Relating to concurrent projects that the City is undertaking, there were also a number of comments suggesting the removal of the Victoria Park Statue, and renaming of the Park to honour Indigenous heritage.

■ Park User Survey

A park user survey was activated to gather feedback on how people visit the park, what is important to their experience, and their ideas for the future. The survey included questions about park usage, amenities, accessibility, natural features, and overall maintenance, along with optional demographic questions to help understand who was being reached.

The survey was available online through the Engage Kitchener project page and was also promoted in-person with hard copies at the Community Visioning Sessions and various pop-up events.

A total of **181 responses** were received from Park users. There was a wide range in the age groups represented among participants, with the 30-39 year old group being the largest.

Overall, there was a broad mix in how often participants said they visit the park, with the most common responses being a few times per week and a few times per month. The duration of a typical visit was most commonly under an hour, with the primary reason for visiting most often cited as walking, jogging, or exercise, followed by relaxing/enjoying scenery, attending an event, passing through, or meeting friends/socializing. The park trails were by far the most commonly selected feature in the park that is used frequently, followed by park seating or benches, lawn space or the Victoria Park commons, and the playground/splashpad.

Approximately half the survey participants said that they visited the park on foot, compared to one-third who drove. The majority noted that it is very easy or easy to get to and move around the park. Natural features were almost unanimously rated as being very important or important to the experience of the park. In general, participants had mixed views on whether the park fosters a sense of community and belonging. Park maintenance was rated as 'excellent' or 'good' by the majority of participants.

Some of the key suggestions for the City to consider as Kitchener grows included increasing the size and accessibility of the park, adding more passive recreational areas and shade, addressing parking limitations, managing the geese population in the park, and improving safety and maintenance.

■ Story-sharing

The project page also featured a story-sharing tool that invited the community to answer the question, "What makes Victoria Park special to you?". This tool allowed participants to share personal stories, photos, and memories of the park, as well as read, comment on, and "like" stories submitted by others.

In total, **14 stories** were received, highlighting the importance of the park to building community and providing a space for families to spend time outdoors together in the city.

Overall, this activity was more of a space to celebrate the strong connection with and experiences within the Park by those who live in and around the area. It ranged from those who had lived in the City of Kitchener for decades to those who had only just made Kitchener their home. Stories acknowledged the strong history of the Park recounting past experiences and opportunities for activity such as skating to current day to day experiences and documentation of what people see. The following are some of the stories shared:

Skating

Posted by Anne Marie | a month ago

The snow is thick, but the ice is smooth. Skaters who have long lost their warm coats are skating around the lighted post in the middle of the pond with speakers playing "Close to You" by the Carpenters. The boys playing hockey are respectfully off to the side. The boathouse is full of chatter and laughter and hot chocolate. I remember going to Victoria Park every night after school to skate and always coming home a little later than I was allowed. It was fun and flirtatious and probably good...

♥ 2 Likes 💬 0 Comments

Love at First Sight

Posted by Tom | a month ago

The first time I saw Victoria Park, I knew I wanted to move to Kitchener. It's a beautiful and historic part of the city that allows you to connect to nature even though you are still in the centre of town. I will soon be moving into a condo off of the Iron Horse Trail and I'm so excited to have this picturesque landscape as my back garden. Victoria Park has also similarly impressed my family when visiting from the UK, they remarked it bares a striking resemblance to other great green spaces in...

♥ 3 Likes 💬 0 Comments



Canoeing on Victoria Park Lake

Posted by Matt Morris | a month ago

I've had great fun paddling in Victoria Park. I tow my 25lb canoe behind my bicycle down the Iron Horse Trail, paddle once or twice around the lake and then hook back up to my bicycle and ride home. The installation of a dock along with removal...

♥ 5 Likes 💬 0 Comments

Beautiful Green Space

Posted by Eastwood Resident | a month ago

I love Victoria Park. I used to live near there and enjoyed walking through the park often. I would change how many times Jubilee and surrounding roads are closed for special events. These closures made it very hard - and sometimes impossible - for me to leave or enter my driveway.

♥ 2 Likes 💬 0 Comments

My Backyard

Posted by JeremyDTK | a month ago

I live in one of the nearby condos and Victoria Park is my replacement backyard. Use the path as a running track most days spring, summer and fall. Also enjoy the Christmas lights in Winter. For improvements, I would love to see the grounds crew start to phase out dirty/loud gas powered equipment and set a great example for the neighbourhood!

♥ 2 Likes 💬 0 Comments



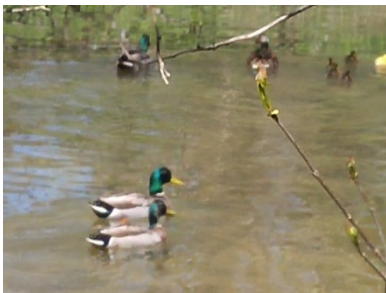
Wedding and Walks

Posted by DTKresident | a month ago



"For me, Victoria Park has been an essential part of finding home in Canada. I arrived in KW seven years ago and found this park to be a rare green gem in the asphalt cityscape. I love to bring my family here and see the seasons' march mirrored back at me through the park's changing colours, the trees, the flowers, even the layers of clothing park-users wear! The park and paths are well-maintained, and I often think people are calmer and kinder within this sanctuary space-taking a breather from the tougher side of urban living."

"I've had great fun paddling in Victoria Park. I tow my 25lb canoe behind my bicycle down the Iron Horse Trail, paddle once or twice around the lake and then hook back up to my bicycle and ride home. The installation of a dock along with removal of some of the trees and limbs that are minor obstacles in the water might encourage more to try. In addition, I believe bringing back a boat rental service would be very popular."



"We loved walking over from West Ave to the park. My son enjoyed the park and splashpad, a friend got married at the Pavilion, my husband walked through the park daily to work. I enjoyed the people watching and seeing the ducklings every spring."

2.4 Victoria Park Working Group Walking Tour

On May 8, 2025, a walking tour was held with **5** members of the Victoria Park Working Group and the local neighbourhood association. The tour was designed to gather location-specific feedback and to hear the personal connections and experiences participants have with the park.

The tour was structured around the project's four key themes, with each theme being the focus of a dedicated stop. At each stop, facilitators led a discussion guided by specific questions. Examples of these questions included:

- + **Connectivity:** Are there specific pathways that feel disconnected or could be improved? How can we make it easier for people to find their way through the park?
- + **Growth:** As downtown Kitchener grows, what is needed within the park to support more visitors? What role should Victoria Park play in the city's broader open space network?
- + **Community:** What aspects of the park contribute most to a sense of community? How can we improve on feelings of safety and comfort at all hours of the day in the park?
- + **Natural Systems:** Are there specific areas that would be well-suited for naturalization? How can we expand on naturalization and connections to nature?

Participants were also given a guidebook and encouraged to take photos of aspects of the park they loved or thought needed improvement.

Walking Tour Map



2.5 Community Roundtable Session #1

On May 14, 2025, a “Community Conversations” roundtable session was held to gather feedback from invited community members with a diverse range of interests and expertise. In total, **24 participants** attended, including representatives from social services and housing organizations, schools, businesses in and around Victoria Park, cycling and active transportation groups, heritage and historical preservation, climate change action, and Urban Indigenous organizations.

The two-hour session, held in the rotunda at Kitchener City Hall, began with a presentation providing an overview of the Master Plan process and engagement objectives. Following the presentation, participants engaged in a “World Café” style workshop. They rotated between four themed tables (Connectivity, Growth, Natural Systems, and Community) each



guided by a facilitator. To encourage detailed feedback, large maps of the park were available at each table for participants to add location-specific notes.

The discussions were guided by prompts tailored to each theme, some of which were informed by feedback from the earlier Youth Focus Session. Examples of these prompts included:

- + What physical connections both to the park and within the park do you think are working well?
- + What do you think Parks staff should be focusing on to allow Victoria Park to adapt to growth and meet the changing needs of our community?
- + How do you feel about the number and types of community events held in the park? What can we do to improve on these?
- + How can we improve on feelings of safety and comfort at all hours of the day in the Park?
- + How can we expand on naturalization and connections to nature?



To capture immediate thoughts, the online tool “Mentimeter” was used at the beginning of the session for participants to share what they love about the park and to pose initial questions.

The feedback heard at the Roundtable event highlighted some of the key areas for improvement as well as features that are working well in the park, and need to be maintained into the future. Participants shared their reflections at the outset on the history of the park, incorporating Indigenous heritage and alignment with the City’s commitments to reconciliation, and making the park an inclusive and welcoming space for everyone. The input heard at each of the tables is summarized in Section 3.0.

2.6 Conversations in the Park #1 and #2



Two public “Conversations in the Park” visioning sessions were held at the Victoria Park Pavilion to introduce the Master Plan process and gather feedback from the community. An evening session was held on May 23, 2025, attended by **60 people**, and two sessions were held on June 17, 2025 (afternoon and evening), with a combined attendance of **57 people**.

Both events followed a drop-in, open house format where participants could view informational panels and visit four stations, each focused on one of the key themes. Large table maps of the park were provided at each station, and participants were encouraged to add location-specific feedback on sticky notes (a fifth station included a large map to collect general comments). At each event, staff from the City of Kitchener and the consultant team

were on-hand to facilitate discussions, answer questions, and engage directly with participants.

The discussions at each station were guided by the following prompts:

- + **Connectivity:**
 - What physical connections both to the park and within the park do you think are working well? What do you think could be improved?
 - How can we make it easier for people to find their way through the Park or locate particular features?
- + **Growth:**
 - What do you think Parks staff should be focusing on to allow Victoria Park to adapt to growth and meet the changing needs of our community?
 - Are there amenities that we are missing that would better serve the community and those who visit the Park? How can we make Victoria Park more interesting and inviting to different groups, including youth?
- + **Community:**
 - Are there certain spaces within the park that you feel are particularly welcoming and inclusive? Are there any areas that you think could do better at this?
 - Are there any specific areas in the Park that feel unsafe? How can we improve on feelings of safety and comfort at all hours of the day in the Park?
- + **Natural Systems:**
 - How can we encourage visitors to feel connected to nature when visiting the Park?
 - How can we expand on naturalization and connections to nature? Are there any natural features or areas in the Park that you think should be expanded or enhanced?

Digital and hardcopy versions of the Park User Survey were provided at the visioning session to further collect feedback. The feedback from participants reflected several of the key themes heard in the Targeted Roundtable session, including relating to the need for improved maintenance, perception of safety, park space constraints, washroom and drinking water access, and overall accessibility. The input heard is summarized in Section 3.0.

2.7 Pop-Up Events

City staff brought the conversation on the four themes and opportunities to improve Victoria Park to the Tri-Pride Summerfest, where suggestions included:

- + Renaming the park to Willow River Park
- + Adding more bike racks

- + Adding drinking water fountains
- + Providing access to more electrical outlets and facilities for events
- + Growing the population of swans
- + Desire for more community-organized events like Pokemon GO meetups
- + Creating a faux beach/shore area, similar to Waterloo Park
- + Support for more trees, naturalized habitat and pollinator gardens to foster wildlife in the park
- + Improvements to the management of the geese population
- + Support for more water-based recreation/programming, including boating
- + Desire for gender neutral bathrooms
- + Support for more sheltered areas and improved seating to encourage more social interaction in the park
- + Support for improved play and feature areas including the playground, splashpad, a pagan firepit, skating area, and basketball courts.

2.7 Part 1 Feedback Summary

All comments, notes, and transcriptions from the Part 1 engagement activities were analyzed to identify key themes and priorities. This involved a detailed review of **thousands of separate comments** submitted through the online engagement page, interactive map, surveys, and at in-person workshops and events. Team members assigned each comment to one or more of the four key themes (Connectivity, Community, Natural Systems, and Growth) and further categorized comments by sub-theme to identify patterns and priorities in the feedback.

The themes and summaries provided below reflect both shared priorities and areas of disagreement among participants. While this section offers a high-level overview of key insights, it simplifies the breadth and nuance of the diverse perspectives gathered. Representative quotes chosen from the comments received are included at various points to illustrate the themes.

■ Theme 1: Connectivity

Connectivity was a dominant theme throughout the Part 1 engagement process, with participants frequently discussing how they access and move through Victoria Park. Feedback highlighted the park's role as a critical link in the city's active transportation network and as a space that needs to be safe, accessible, and easy to navigate for all users. While many appreciate the existing network of paths, there was a strong desire for significant improvements to pathways, entrances, and wayfinding to meet the needs of a growing community.

Key areas of focus included strengthening connections to city-wide transportation routes, improving circulation within the park, addressing vehicular access and parking, debating the future of Jubilee Drive, and enhancing signage and wayfinding.

- + **Linkages to the Surrounding Active Transportation (AT) Network:** Participants view Victoria Park as a vital hub in Kitchener's transportation network, but feel its connections to the broader system could be significantly improved. The park's link to the Iron Horse Trail is highly valued and frequently used. There is a strong desire to formalize and improve connections to other key destinations, including:
 - Downtown: A better connection between the park and the downtown core, including Gaukel Block and City Hall, was a common request.
- + **Public Transit:** While the park is close to the LRT, participants requested better and more direct signage from all nearby ION stations to guide visitors to the park.

“Victoria Park is a direct connection to Downtown when coming from the Iron Horse Trail or Henry Sturm, but it's hard to use for this purpose as space in trails is shared with leisure users. Waterloo Park has separated cycling and pedestrian paths. It would be great to have something similar, or at least wider paths/bridges.”

Survey Respondent

- + **Circulation Within the Park:** Feedback on movement within the park was extensive, with many participants calling for significant upgrades to the path network. Some expressed concern that pathways are too narrow and in poor condition, making it difficult for the increasing number of users to share the space safely. Key suggestions for improving internal circulation include:
 - Wider and Separated Paths: Some suggested widening major pathways and separating users, particularly cyclists from pedestrians, with Waterloo Park cited as a successful model.
 - Pathway Repair and Maintenance: Some comments pointed to the need to repair and repave existing walkways, some of which are described as uneven, cracked, and having sinking edges.
 - Accessibility: Participants stressed the need to improve accessibility throughout the park, pointing out that uneven trails are difficult for those using wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
 - Safety and Lighting: Many feel that poor lighting creates unsafe conditions at night. Obscured sightlines near the splash pad and between activity areas were also noted as a concern.
- + **Parking Availability and Access:** Parking was a significant source of conflict identified in the feedback. On one hand, many visitors and event attendees find parking to be insufficient, leading to congestion and frustration. On the other hand, residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods report that the high demand for

parking results in illegal parking and blocked streets. Suggestions for managing parking were varied:

- Many suggested encouraging visitors to park in larger, underutilized lots nearby (e.g., Manulife) and providing a shuttle service during major events.
 - Residents called for expanded parking restrictions (extending the dates and times) and a permit system for local streets.
 - Other ideas included implementing paid parking in certain lots, eliminating the parking lot in front of the Boathouse entirely, and better monitoring of accessible parking spaces to prevent misuse.
- + **Jubilee Drive:** The role of Jubilee Drive as a vehicular route through the park was an important topic of conversation. A number of participants advocated for closing the road to through traffic entirely or in part. Proponents of this idea argued that removing cars would unify the park, enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and align with the principle that “parks are for people and pets, not cars”. Other suggestions included converting the road into a pedestrian-priority “woonerf”, making it a dead-end street, or adding speed bumps to slow traffic.

However, this view was not unanimous. At least one participant noted that recent changes have already increased traffic flow and that vehicles need a way to access Victoria Street, suggesting that any closure of Jubilee Drive must be considered in the context of the broader street network.

“Assess feasibility of making Jubilee focused on active transportation.

Jubilee feels like a barrier when moving through the park.”

Community Visioning Session comment

- + **Signage and Wayfinding:** A number of comments indicated that wayfinding in and around the park is inadequate. Some participants feel that a lack of clear signage makes it difficult to navigate the park, find amenities, and understand the park’s layout and offerings. One youth participant noted, “You wouldn’t know it is a park”. Specific suggestions included:
- Installing more maps and directional signs at major entry points and key junctions within the park.
 - Adding signs to guide visitors from nearby transit stations (like the ION) and other downtown landmarks.
 - Improving signage for amenities like washrooms, which are reportedly hard to find.
 - Using signage for educational and cultural purposes, such as through storytelling plaques and information boards, with some requesting this information be available in multiple languages.

■ Theme 2: Community

For over a century, Victoria Park has served as Kitchener's central gathering place, and its role in fostering social connections and well-being was an important focus of feedback. Participants shared their appreciation for the park as a space for events, family time, and recreation. However, there were extensive discussions about how the park could become more inclusive, safe, and responsive to the diverse needs of a growing city. The feedback revealed a desire for improved amenities to support social gatherings, a need to carefully balance formal and informal uses, and a complex conversation around safety and inclusion for all members of the community.

- + **Picnic Areas and Dedicated Gathering Spaces:** There is a strong desire for more and better-quality spaces for informal social gatherings. Participants frequently requested more picnic tables, shelters, and benches throughout the park. The idea of adding permanent, reservable barbeque pits was popular, with participants envisioning them as a way to enhance community gatherings. However, at least one participant raised concerns about the potential for fire risk and the smoke being offensive to some user groups. To manage these dedicated spaces, suggestions were made to create a booking system, potentially online, to allow residents to reserve picnic shelters and other areas in advance.

"I would like to see intentional programming of activities in the park".

Community member comment at tri-Pride Summerfest pop-up engagement

- + **Splash Pad and Play Opportunities:** The splash pad is a much-loved feature, particularly for families with young children. However, a significant amount of feedback indicated a strong consensus that the facility is outdated and in need of major improvements. Participants described the splash pad as "tired" and called for it to be revitalized and modernized to better serve the high volume of users. Key recommendations included making the splash pad larger, adding more diverse water features, and installing more seating for parents and caregivers who are supervising their children. Beyond the splash pad, youth participants expressed a desire for more exciting and "risky" play elements in the playground to make it more engaging.

"The splash pad is looking tired. It's so popular that it could be much larger. Parents/caregivers need a place to sit while they watch their kids".

- Online Interactive Map comment

- + **Creating a Space for All:** A complex theme emerged around ensuring the park feels welcoming and safe for everyone. A number of participants emphasized the need for the park to be an inclusive space for all, including the 2SLGBTQIA+

community and unhoused residents. One youth workshop participant explicitly stated their opposition to hostile architecture like “anti-homeless benches”, and others critiqued the City's past responses to encampments in the park.

Simultaneously, feedback raised serious concerns about personal safety. Many participants, particularly women, reported feeling unsafe due to observed drug and alcohol use and “antisocial behaviour” in the park, leading one Park User Survey respondent to avoid it altogether. This highlights a critical tension between the desire to support vulnerable populations and the need to address the safety concerns of all park users.

- + **Rethinking Bathroom Design and Access:** While the existence of public washrooms is valued, their current state and accessibility are a point of concern. Feedback called for significant improvements. The most frequent suggestions were to keep washrooms open year-round and extend their hours, with some advocating for 24/7 access. There was also a call for more gender-neutral washroom options to be provided. Participants also noted the need for improved cleanliness, better lighting for safety, and upgrades to make facilities more child-friendly and accessible.
- + **Play Spaces for All:** Accessible play structures and recreational facilities was noted as a key need, also connected to the need for shade structures incorporated into the playground to improve usability in hot weather and rainy days.
- + **Balancing Formal and Informal Events:** The park's role as a venue for events is highly valued, but participants expressed a desire for a balance between large, formal events and opportunities for informal, spontaneous community use. Large festivals are popular, and there are calls to improve infrastructure to support them, such as adding more electrical access. However, some feel that large events have “outgrown the park,” creating issues with noise and congestion. Alongside programmed events, there is a desire to preserve the park's character by avoiding “overcommercializing” it and ensuring there is always space for community-led activities that do not require payment. There were suggestions to support stewardship of the park through clean-up, gardening, tree planting, and other environment-oriented events and activities.
- + **Drinking Water Fountains:** Access to drinking water and bottle filling stations was frequently cited as a missing amenity, and an essential aspect of improving accessibility and comfort in the park.
- + **Public Art:** More areas of visual interest were suggested, including art installations and public displays that could be incorporated with signage or along pathways/crosswalks in the park.

■ Theme 3: Natural Systems

The Natural Systems of Victoria Park were a focus of much discussion, with at least one participant expressing a deep appreciation for its existing “Romantic Victorian-Era Landscape” while many others expressed a strong desire for enhanced ecological health and stewardship. Feedback highlighted the importance of the park’s mature trees, gardens, and water features. The conversation revealed a clear call for more naturalization, improved water quality, and a better balance between manicured spaces and wilder habitats. There was also significant interest in seeing the park’s natural features better reflect Indigenous history and provide more opportunities for education and interaction with nature.

- + **Indigenous History and Plantings:** A number of participants expressed a desire for the park’s natural spaces to better recognize and honour Indigenous history and culture. Suggestions included moving beyond “anglo-feeling” spaces to create permanent, dedicated Indigenous areas within the park that could be used for art or gatherings. Specific ideas included creating raised beds for medicinal Indigenous plants and ensuring Indigenous communities are consulted on local history interpretation. This desire for Indigenous placemaking is also connected to calls from some community members to rename the park to “Willow River Park” to better reflect the natural heritage and Indigenous history of the land.
- + **Dedicated Space for a Naturalized Area:** There is significant vocalized support for increasing naturalization within Victoria Park. Participants frequently requested more native plants, pollinator gardens, and dedicated wildlife habitats to enhance biodiversity. The idea of a “naturalized play area” for children was also suggested. Alongside this enthusiasm, some participants asked for better education about what “naturalization” means to help the public understand its purpose and benefits. Many see underutilized parts of the park as ideal locations for these initiatives. Additional suggestions included creating nesting platforms for birds, reducing mowed lawns, and managing rainwater collection to reduce pooling of water.

“I love the work that the parks staff put into the gardens here! I would love to see more native pollinator meadow patches added!”

Online Interactive Map comment

- + **Balance of Maintenance Needs:** Feedback revealed a tension between the appreciation for manicured spaces and the desire for more natural ones. Some participants praised the park’s “beautiful” gardens and others the “great maintenance staff”. However, others lamented the removal of historic gardens and what they perceived as poor landscaping choices.

A dominant maintenance issue raised across all engagement activities was the overwhelming amount of goose droppings on paths and grass, which many feel makes large areas of the park unusable. Litter and the cleanliness of garbage cans were also frequently mentioned concerns, with many pointing to trash accumulating in and around the waterways.

- + **Interaction with the Water:** The park's lake and creek are cherished features, but their current state is a major concern. Many participants described the water quality as poor, "smelly and unclear". There is a very strong desire to increase interaction with the water. A common request was to bring back boat rentals, such as kayaks, canoes, or paddle boats, which were a much-missed former activity. Other suggestions included adding more docks to make accessing the water easier for personal watercraft, and naturalizing the creek to improve its ecological health.

"Paddle boats and canoe/kayak rentals. This was a great addition and very missed!"

Online Interactive Map comment

- + **Impact of Events on Natural Systems:** While events are a valued part of the park's community function, some participants raised concerns about their impact on the natural environment. The use of fireworks during holidays was identified as a problem that negatively affects birds and other wildlife. More broadly, some participants feel the park is suffering from "overuse," which places a strain on the green space and its natural systems.

"Fireworks are a problem." Targeted Roundtable comment

■ Theme 4: Growth

The theme of growth was an important undercurrent in many discussions about the park's future. With downtown Kitchener experiencing rapid intensification, participants consistently framed their feedback within the context of a growing population and increased development. There is a widespread recognition that these changes will place new and greater demands on Victoria Park. Feedback centred on the need to proactively manage this increased use, with suggestions ranging from expanding the park's physical footprint to adding new amenities while carefully preserving the park's essential character.

- + **Managing Increased Demand and Overuse:** A primary concern among participants is that Victoria Park is already feeling the pressure of a growing city, with many describing it as "overcrowded" and "overrun with users", particularly in the playground area and during peak summer periods. Many feel the park is being "over used", which puts a strain on its infrastructure and natural systems. To

manage this, some participants suggested the City should invest in other local parks to help distribute demand more evenly across the entire parks system.

"I love having a park [in] such close vicinity to where I live, and I love to see how much use people make of it. We need more parks throughout the city as populations increase in density so that everyone can access without overwhelming any one park."

Park User Survey respondent

- + **Expanding the Park's Footprint:** One frequent suggestion for accommodating growth was to physically expand the park's boundaries. The idea of acquiring the former Charles Street bus terminal property and transforming it into an extension of the park was mentioned. Participants see this as a critical opportunity to add much-needed green space in proportion to the city's population growth.
- + **New and Improved Amenities for a Growing City:** As the city grows, so does the desire for a wider range of amenities to serve a more diverse community. Participants offered many suggestions for new features and upgrades to better support a larger number of users. Requests included:
 - More sports and recreation facilities, such as additional basketball courts, tennis courts, and pickleball courts.
 - A wider variety of food and drink options, such as spaces for food trucks or revitalizing the old concession stand.
 - More places for passive enjoyment, including significantly more benches and shaded areas.
 - Features to engage different age groups, particularly youth and teens, with suggestions for a skate park and more "risky" or exciting play elements.
 - Upgraded infrastructure to support modern uses, including more electrical outlets for events and public phone charging stations.
- + **Climate Resilient Spaces:** Shading, cooling/misting stations, splash pads, and other heat resiliency features were suggested to support park use in hot weather and provide spaces for people to cool off outdoors.
- + **Preserving Park Character Amidst Growth:** While there is an appetite for new features, there is also a strong counter-sentiment to protect the park's unique character as the city intensifies around it. Some participants urged the City to focus on "retaining the nature and sentimentality" that makes it special. Others emphasized the importance of ensuring the "green spaces stay green" and that the park is maintained as a "beautiful heaven between buildings, roads, and concrete".

“That Victoria Park be maintained as a heritage jewel in DTK. Is there any way to expand the size of the current park? It is overcrowded at times in the summer. It is almost too popular!”

Park User Survey respondent

3.0 Part 2 Engagement Overview

The engagement activities for Part 2 were designed to continue the conversation from Part 1 and to evolve the emerging recommendations and strategies identified based on the four themes and focus areas.

The following activities were undertaken to inform Part 2 and 3 of the engagement program:

- + **Community Roundtable Session #2:** An in-person workshop with invited representatives of community-based organizations and indigenous community members.
- + **Conversations in the Park #3:** A drop-in session for the community to participate in the engagement activities at their convenience and discuss their input with the project team. The session included a conversation space in the Pavilion at Victoria Park, as well as a pop-up booth near the playground beside the Pavilion.
- + **Committee Presentations:** Sessions with various Committees of Council, including DAC, ACAC, ATTAC, EARAC, EDAC, GRAAC, MACKS, and Heritage Kitchener.
- + **Heritage Walk:** City staff hosted members of the City's Heritage Committee to discuss their ideas and perspectives on improvements to the Park, recognizing its status as a Heritage Conservation District.
- + **Thrive Walkshop:** Members of THRIVE HIV Prevention and Support went on a tour of Victoria Park with Kitchener Staff, to discuss harm reduction, inclusive design, safety, and access for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, people who use drugs, and other marginalized groups in Downtown Kitchener.
- + **Pop-Up Events:** City staff attended a series of events at local community centres and had a booth at the Kitchener Market to engage the community on the early ideas for the Master Plan.

The project team also conducted internal engagement with City staff, to share what we were hearing from the community and discuss any additional technical considerations in developing the recommendations for improvement. This included three Internal Working Group sessions as well as a Transportation Charette, all of which included cross-departmental discussions with City of Kitchener staff.

As the project team worked through the engagement work plan, there were additional engagement activities that were identified which were either requested by staff or the public or identified as a necessary opportunity or audience to engage with. City staff

proactively coordinated those engagement opportunities and attended / documented input as part of the project record.

Additional Engagement included:

- + **Pop-up Events** at locations within the city, including:
 - Youth-focused Drop-In Sessions: Victoria Hills Community Centre, Mill Courtland Community Centre, and Chandler Mowat Community Centre;
 - City-wide engagement at the Kitchener Market
- + **Victoria Park Engagement Thank You Event:** A drop-in session near the splash pad in Victoria Park, held in partnership with Agnes Niewiadomski from Mindful Makers.

Each of these activities is described in further detail in the sections below.

3.1 Community Roundtable #2

The second Targeted Roundtable session was held in the Victoria Park Pavilion on July 16th, 2025. The session brought together invited participants from local organizations, including social service organizations, Indigenous organizations, accessibility and equity-oriented advocacy, business and tourism in the Park, groups involved in active transportation and activities in the park, and members of the Victoria Park Neighbourhood Association. A total of 12 participants attended the session, and shared over 70 comments and over 170 votes on the recommendations.

3.2 Conversation in the Park #3

The Conversations in the Park #3 session was held in the Victoria Park Pavilion on July 18th, 2025. The session was open to the public, and featured tables for each of the four themes as well as a table with the recommendations for input. The team also set up a pop-up tent adjacent to the Pavilion, to support drop-by discussions with community members.

The focus of this third Conversation in the Park was to continue the dialogue with the community about future visioning for the Park. The intent was to specifically focus on the four themes while also providing opportunities to consider future initiatives and recommendations – similar to what was identified as part of the online interactive engagement activity. The community shared over 60 comments and close to 1000 votes on the recommendations as part of this event.

3.3 Committee Presentations

City staff delivered a total of eight presentations to various Advisory Committees of Council throughout the engagement program. The following is a summary of those committee presentations and the input received.

■ Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)

City Staff presented to EDAC on May 28th, 2025 to discuss the approach to engagement on the Master Plan and input from an economic development lens. Suggestions from the Committee included:

- + Importance of connecting to Downtown Kitchener and leveraging the Park for entertainment and using data gathered through the Master Plan to formulate programming to attract visitors to the Downtown year-round.
- + Opportunity to leverage the Business Improvement Area ambassadors to promote safety and encourage connections to the Park.
- + Opportunity to expand businesses in the Downtown into available vendor spaces in the Park.
- + Suggestion to promote Park amenities to be more well-known and provide more accessible ways to book/reserve them, such as the Pavilion and Commons as a community space.
- + Need for more youth-focused programming.
- + Importance of managing traffic and different modes of mobility in the Park.
- + Focus on the Park as a key public space for a growing Downtown population.
- + Opportunities to improve programming of less used spaces like the picnic area in the rear of the Park.
- + Consideration of ways to grow the Park, while also managing stormwater and reimagining the boundary areas of the Park for more creative uses.

■ Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener Seniors (MACKS)

City Staff attended a MACKS meeting on June 5th, 2025, to share the early findings from public engagement and the approach to Master Plan. Suggestions from Advisory Council members included:

- + Importance of pedestrian safety and improvements to Jubilee Drive to add crossing points, as well as surface paving improvements to the Commons track and other walkways to support users of mobility devices.
- + Cross-checking the routes to key destinations in the Park on Google/Apple maps to ensure accuracy.

- + Improvements to wayfinding for both pedestrians and motorists travelling through the Park.
- + Need for improved lighting in parking lots and peripheral areas of the Park.
- + Suggestion to support parking reservations for Seniors or people with accessibility needs, as well as a potential shuttle from nearby parking lots.
- + Suggestions for more storytelling and community building through branding of the Victoria Park Pavilion.
- + Need for more shaded accessible seating areas, including for families and larger groups, and on the Commons.
- + More learning/education programming for the Island and through signage in the Park.
- + More targeted programming for Seniors in the Park and skating trails around the Park.
- + Importance of year-round washroom access, with management to keep the space safe, clean and accessible to Park users.
- + Safety-related improvements such as emergency call boxes.
- + Suggestions for signage connecting to Indigenous heritage and storytelling, as well as potential food forest planting to support food gathering in the Park.

■ Active Transportation and Trails Advisory Committee (ATTAC)

City Staff presented to the ATTAC on June 10th, 2025 and discussed opportunities relating to supporting active transportation in the Park. Highlights from the discussion included:

- + Need for improved active transportation connections and separation between modes in the Park to reduce conflicts, particularly along Jubilee Drive and David Street. Suggestion to make Jubilee Drive a one-way street or pedestrianize the Park.
- + Improvements to the Splashpad and need for a larger space to accommodate growth.
- + Suggestions for wayfinding to support different travel needs, including those trying to get across the Park for a shorter route as well as those aiming to travel through the length of the Park.
- + Need for improved sightlines at Park entrances where visibility is reduced due to the pillars/entrance features.
- + Desire for more cycling infrastructure including secure bike parking in visible, well lit locations within the Park.
- + Suggestions for cycling-related programming in the Park, particularly for children and youth.
- + Need for more better equipped and accessible washrooms.
- + Desire for more programming to attract people to the Park, including smaller concerts.
- + Suggestion for a skating rink or paths in the Park in the winter, such as in the Commons, and addition of some benches or seating to accommodate visitors.

- + Need for improved surface paving for cycling and pedestrian paths.
- + Desire for a bigger kitchen to support catering for large events.

■ Equity and Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (EARAC)

City Staff presented to EARAC on June 24th, 2025, and had a discussion on the equity-related considerations for the Master Plan. The following key elements were highlighted:

- + Need to balance access and safety for all mobility modes, and find ways to increase space available for active transportation.
- + Importance of more long-range planning beyond a 10-year timeframe.
- + Desire to see a realistic, practical plan with clear metrics to evaluate success that would be reported on to share progress and track change.
- + Importance of connecting the various initiatives relating to the Park including discussions around the Queen Victoria statue and Park renaming, and centrality of these initiatives to Indigenous relationship-building and reconciliation.
- + Need for a focus on sustainability in the Master Plan.
- + Concern about the impact of retaining the Queen Victoria statue on visitor perception of how welcoming the Park is.
- + Importance of ongoing engagement with Park visitors and users to reflect community changing needs over time.
- + Support for integration of native plantings across the Park.

■ Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)

City Staff presented to GRAAC on June 26th, 2025, and invited comments relating to Accessibility to be considered in the Master Plan. The feedback from the Committee included:

- + Need for more accessible play features for both children and adults.
- + Support for more accessible parking
- + Need for accessible washrooms, with adult-sized changing tables, and security/management to keep these amenities safe and clean.
- + Improved accessible signage in different languages, and additional educational signage e.g. relating to different tree species in the Park.
- + Traffic calming with guidance to motorists to reduce speed in the Park.
- + Suggestion for drop-off areas around the Park.
- + Desire for further engagement with the Committee on the design details of recommendations once the Master Plan is further developed.

■ Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC)

City Staff presented to the DAC on June 26th, 2025 and discussed the approach to the Master Plan and received early input on key themes, as highlighted below:

- + Need for improved parking connections and wayfinding to guide visitors to where to park.
- + Improvements needed to the surface condition of walkways and paths.
- + Suggestion for a more purposeful and intentional approach to accessibility within the Park.
- + More formal and informal seating and gathering areas throughout the Park.
- + Understanding that demographics and population size in Downtown Kitchener are changing, and alternative venues to Victoria Park will be needed for large events while also considering ways to grow the capacity of the Park.
- + Consideration of ways to support natural planning/reforestation in the Park while also generating revenue e.g. through memorial dedication plantings/benches.
- + Support for smaller pollinator gardens throughout the Park, and opportunity to leverage existing City grant programs for this.
- + Opportunities to support improved access and use of the lake in the Park.
- + Support for a stewardship program and more community-involved caretaking of the Park.
- + Need for more event-friendly and programmable spaces, music-related events, and more food access locations and ways to integrate accessible places for food trucks/refreshments in the Park.

■ Heritage Committee

City Staff presented to the Kitchener Heritage Committee on November 4th, 2025, sharing an overview of the project, outcomes of engagement, and approach to next steps. Committee members shared the following feedback to inform the Master Plan:

- + Importance of physical connections and comfortable ways for pedestrians to access the Park from adjacent neighbourhoods.
- + Suggestion for traffic calming along Jubilee Drive, and consideration of materials for paving to reflect history and heritage elements of the Park.
- + Considerations for how to repurpose less-used amenities such as the summer kitchen and gallery, and replace them with more suitable programming.
- + Need for more sheltered, accessible pathways and seating areas and usability of the Park during winter and off seasons.
- + Importance of connections to the waterfront, including seating/gathering areas.
- + Opportunities to support more accessible and weather-proof play areas for children.
- + Support for naturalization of stormwater management features leading out of the park and potentially some smaller pollinator garden pockets within, with the need to balance this with the 'romantic landscape tradition' of the park and suitability with the heritage aspects of design.
- + Suggestions to incorporate more native flora in keeping with the overall look of the Park design.

- + Support for dedicated spaces for Indigenous communities, with the importance of co-creation and relationship building highlighted.

■ Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (ACAC)

City Staff presented to the ACAC on n July 15th, 2025, and heard input on the key considerations for supporting arts and culture in the Park. The discussion included the following key points:

- + Importance of connecting Jubilee Drive to cycling paths and being more pedestrian friendly and safe for cyclists, with improved surface paving along adjacent paths and more roadway crossings.
- + Need for improved wayfinding, to reduce confusion for newcomers and new visitors.
- + Suggestion to add a concrete base/footing for art installations to make installation easier.
- + Desire for new additions that incorporate romantic landscape themes but could be used for other purposes.
- + Need for improved waste management and design of garbage collection receptacles in the Park.
- + Need for more accessible and large group seating in the Park, with integration of artistic elements.
- + Consideration of changing the Park name to Willow Park, and if the Queen Victoria Statue will be removed.
- + Suggestion to expand the use of the Commons for other types of programming and to attract different types of visitors to the Park.
- + Suggestions for use of plain walls to integrate art as temporary installations.
- + Dedicated spaces for pollinator gardens and integration of native planting.
- + Importance of improving water quality in the lake and restoring usability for water-based activities, including with respect to managing geese and accumulation of their waste along the shoreline.

3.4 Heritage and History Walk

On July 7th, 2025 City staff hosted a Heritage and History walking tour of Victoria Park with members of the Kitchener Heritage Committee and local residents with knowledge of the Park's original design and evolution through time. The discussion yielded the following key considerations for the Master Plan:

- Need for the overall layout of the park to be considered, and improvements to connectivity, integration between different transportation modes, logical flow, and functionality made.
- Importance of preserving the summer kitchen as a community resource.

- Safety considerations and importance of seeing the park through the eyes of residents with different perspectives.
- Celebrate the park as a key destination, the periods of crowding are a sign of its success as a key community anchor.
- Desire to see the general character of the Park maintained, while also being adaptable to meet evolving community needs.
- Some improvements needed to basic infrastructure, including waste management, washrooms, and drinking water access.
- Appreciation for the clock tower as a prominent feature in the Park.
- Need for broader consideration of heritage and an understanding of what elements of history need to be maintained and which can be changed.

3.5 THRIVE Harm Reduction Walkshop

City Staff invited members of THRIVE Waterloo on a walking tour of Victoria Park on July 18th, 2025. As an organization actively involved in harm reduction and in advocating for safety and inclusiveness for the 2SLGBTQIA community, members of THRIVE were engaged to share their input on the issues and opportunities for the Master Plan. The key takeaways from this discussion included:

- Importance of Victoria Park as a safe ‘third space’ for the 2SLGBTQIA community, including those who engage in cruising; recognition that the Park is less welcoming for those who are unhoused or suffering from mental health or addiction issues.
- Consideration of the different ways that people use public space, and less scrutiny and heavy handedness from private security.
- Support for the Downtown Ambassadors program, and potential extension to create a park ranger program with training on Naloxone use.
- Suggestion to provide sharps containers integrated with garbage bins/washroom stalls to manage needle debris and keep it out of the water and land.
- Need for greater clarity around the regulations related to drug use in the park, and a suggestion to adopt a ‘no glass’ policy in the Park as opposed to a ‘no drugs’ policy.
- Importance of cycling infrastructure including dedicated paths and bike parking.
- Support for gender neutral washrooms and changing rooms.
- Suggestion to remove the Queen Victoria stature and replace it with a community garden.

4.2 Pop-Up Events

City staff brought the recommendations activity to a range of events over the late summer, including Youth Drop-In sessions at the Victoria Hills Community Centre, Mill Courtland Community Centre, and Chandler Mowat Community Centre; the Kitchener Market; and the Thank You Event in the park.

Youth input on the recommendations gathered at the Drop-In sessions highlighted the desire for upgrades to the basketball court, as well as washroom improvements and parking.

3.6 Part 2 Feedback Summary

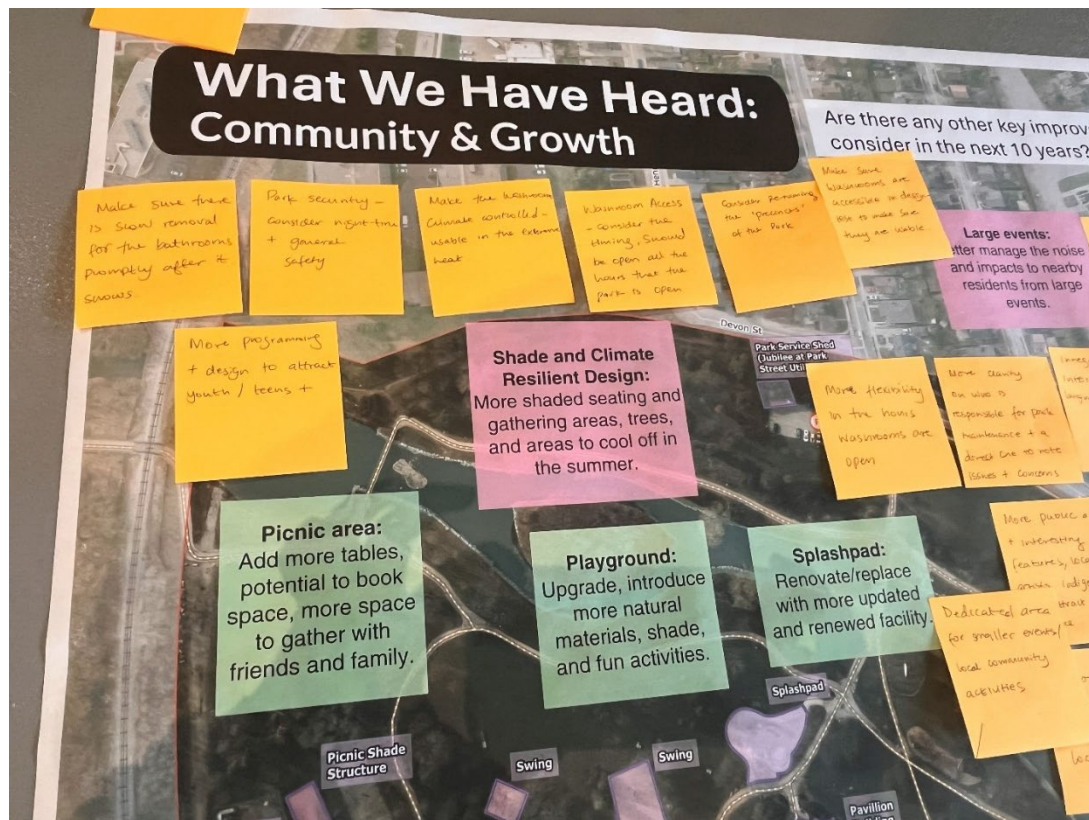
The feedback heard in Part 2 is summarized below.

■ Activity #1 – Theme Commentary Confirmation & Addition

The first activity at the in-person events in Part 2 included a series of four theme area maps which presented information about input that had been provided and major emerging considerations. Attendees were asked to mark-up the mapping with additional comments and considerations and any refinements to the previous comments provided. The following is a summary of what emerged from this activity.

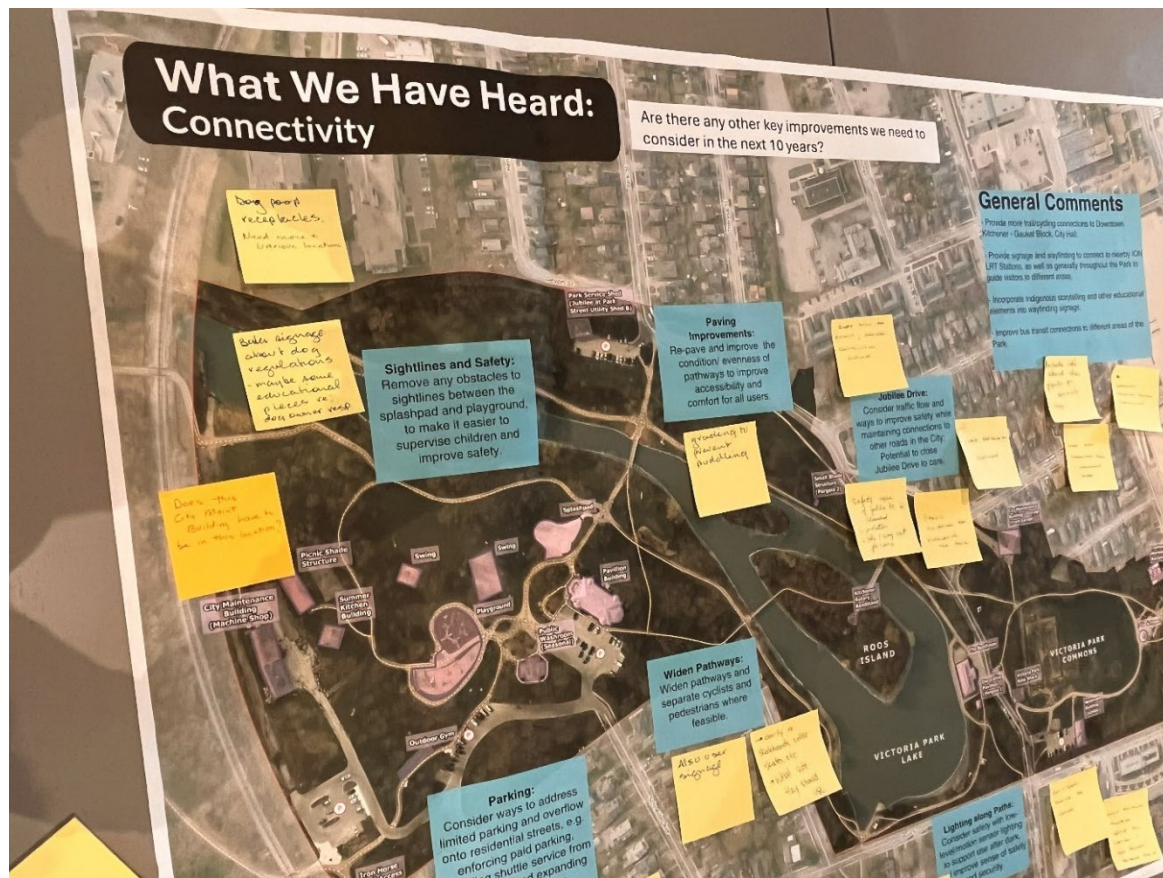
Natural Systems

- Support events that foster engagement with the natural areas in the Park and how to conserve them.
- Consider wildlife in the design of any lighting systems.
- Manage the geese population, including waste removal and number of geese in the Park; consider ways to design planting schemes and other mechanisms to deter geese from preferring the Park to other more suitable habitats.
- Expand the natural planting/native species areas of the Park.
- Create more educational and immersive experiences in the Park relating to nature.
- Address flooding/infiltration concerns to avoid future major issues from storm events, as well as areas of concern that could be slippery near pedestrian pathways on Roos Island.
- Support Park stewardship and responsible practices, provide more waste sorting areas, organize community clean-up events, and provide signage on who to contact to report issues or concerns.
- Improve the landscaping of gardens and grassy areas that have been neglected.
- Create a permanent arbor in partnership with Indigenous advisors.
- Address water quality issues in the lake, and consider automated/robotic cleaning devices.



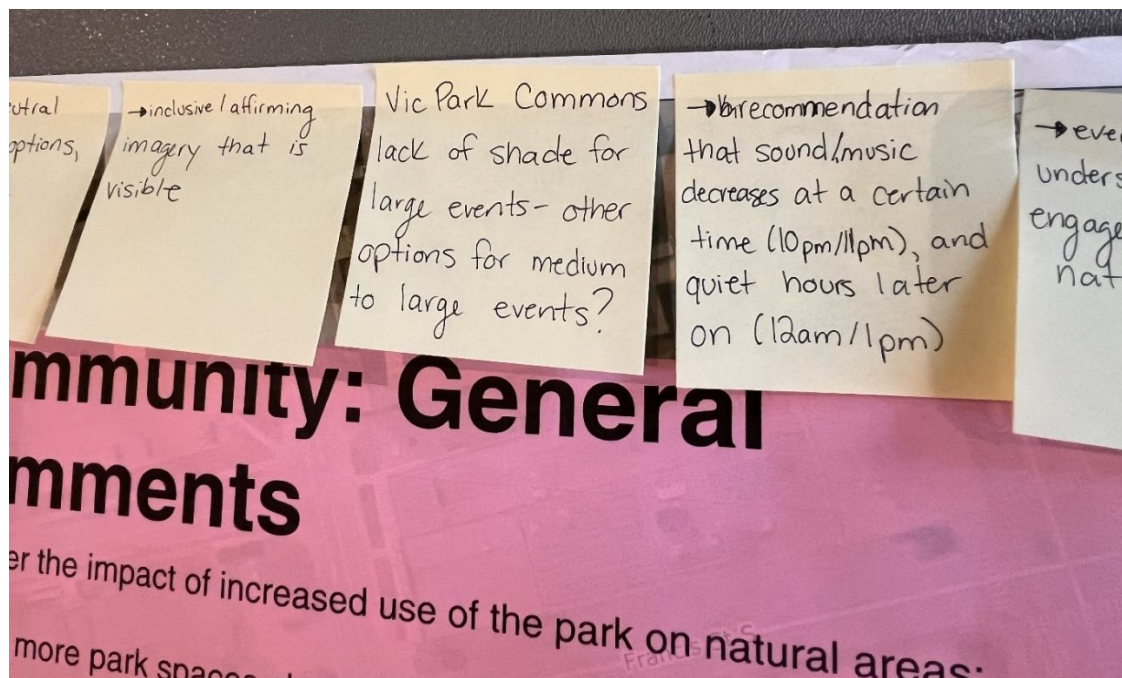
Growth

- Improve how people use the Park with their dogs, including providing more dog waste receptacles and signage to encourage responsible behaviour.
- Provide EV charging stations in parking lots.
- Provide more free parking or signage guiding visitors to where they can park nearby.
- Provide drinking water and bottle filling stations; some concern over the introduction of water fountains and ability to maintain them.
- Generally improve the regularity and standards for Park cleanliness and waste removal from both land and water in the Park.
- Prioritize snow removal along pathways and area around washrooms.
- Consider opportunities to acquire more property to expand the Park, including potentially through expropriation if needed to support stormwater management.



Connectivity

- Improve signage and create separated facilities for people using different types of mobility devices, including slower moving modes and faster devices.
- + Improve active transportation routes through the park.
- A mix of perspectives on closing Jubilee Drive, including some in support and others concerned about the impact on local traffic, access for residents within the Park, and access through this area of the city.
- If Jubilee Drive is to be closed, consider emergency evacuation/emergency vehicle access, and other contingencies for how people move through the Park.
- Provide more pedestrian crossings on Jubilee Drive.
- Provide a shuttle service between the Park and nearby transit stops, and increase the number of buses servicing routes to the Park from different areas of the city.
- Provide wayfinding within the Park to direct visitors to other nearby parks during high traffic periods, and support better connectivity between public spaces in the city.
- Create dedicated areas for Indigenous cultural space, art, and activities in the Park.
- Correct the signage on Schneider Avenue to eliminate confusion on how to use this street and where to park.



Community

- Support representation from different cultural communities/religious groups in the way the Park is decorated at different times of year.
- Provide more active play spaces, including a volleyball court, checkers/games tables, low impact/light weight exercise, lawn bowling, tennis courts, and age-friendly play areas to encourage inter-generational activity.
- Create a dog-friendly play area, with a water feature and water station.
- Improve access to the waterfront, including a dock and boat launch area, providing paddle boats/kayaks for visitors, and skating in the winter.
- Integrate more public art, through collaboration with Indigenous and local artists to create space to display their work.
- Create a dedicated area for smaller events/local community activities, and include clean-up duties as part of the event booking agreement.
- Improve signage and wayfinding, and support accessibility through integration of different languages, braille, and symbols as well as words.
- Develop programming to cater to a wider range of audiences, including children and teenagers.
- Create a shared community calendar that is publicly accessible, to support coordination and encourage event attendance.
- Re-name the Park precincts to reflect local history and heritage.
- A range of perspectives on Park safety, with some concerns about potential illicit drug use, as well as other comments noting that this concern was not consistent with their experience of the park. Opportunity to partner with harm reduction

groups and consider a range of tools and approaches including low-level/pedestrian lighting and presence of Park safety staff.

- Foster an inclusive approach to park design and a welcoming environment for all visitors.
- Improve washroom accessibility and design, make them available year-round, design to be gender-neutral and include changing room space, and test the design to ensure it is accessible in practice.
- Provide more seating including accessible formats and shaded spaces that can cater to a range of group sizes, particularly during medium sized and large events.
- Provide Wi-Fi access to Park visitors.
- Review the quiet hours to manage noise for residents in and around the Park.
- Comments encouraging removal of the Victoria Park Statue.

■ Activity #2 – Potential Master Plan Recommendations

To solicit input on potential recommendations and initiatives for the master plan, a series of major topics were identified with potential opportunities for improvement. The following is a summary of what was presented, and the number of votes added to each suggestion from participants at Community Roundtable #2, Conversations in the Park #3, and the pop-up events.



Category	Initiative	Votes
Play Areas	+ Playground: Expand the playground, add new accessible equipment designed for a range of people of different ages and disabilities; upgrade existing equipment; consider additional small play areas in the park	140
	+ Splashpad: Replace with new equipment; expand the area for the splashpad; make this feature friendly to people of all ages	115
	+ Upgrade Basketball Court: Upgrade court; consider adaptability for other sports	178
	+ Boating: Facility for boat launch and access to water	77
	+ Pet Play Area: Create a dog friendly area with water feature (not off-leash)	47
Pathway Network	+ Maintenance & Connections: Repair pathways, widen, and repair surface to improve accessibility and transitions between surfaces; improve connections to Victoria Green	53
	+ Lighting: Add pedestrian-level lighting to improve safety and security	64
	+ Wayfinding & Signage: Provide signage to help navigate the park; integrate different languages and educational elements into signage.	43
	+ Roos Island: Re-paving existing asphalt walkway on island with concrete (to match bandstand renovations)	24
Gathering and Rest	+ Accessible Seating: Provide more seating and accessible benches throughout the Park	57
	+ Picnic Shelter: Replace picnic shelter; expand seating and tables	64
	+ Furnishing Design: Upgrade design of all park furniture to match a cohesive look for the Park	48
	+ Gardens: Introduce pollinator/native species gardens	98
Visitor / Event Facilities	+ Events: Upgrade electrical access for events in the Commons	81
	+ Art / Features: Integrate public art displays and features throughout the park	39
	+ Summer Kitchen: Explore options for use of the facility - e.g. additional vendor near active play area	42

Category	Initiative	Votes
	+ Parking: Develop a parking strategy; potential to acquire land for parking; manage parking on side streets; add bike parking	161
	+ Drinking Water: Add drinking water fountains and bottle filling stations	88
	+ Washrooms: Expand and re-design to be accessible; make available year-round and extend hours to be 24/7	126
Park Design & Stewardship	+ Indigenous Placemaking: Integrate Indigenous storytelling and placemaking within the design of the Park	49
	+ Tree Planting: Develop successional tree planting strategy	66
	+ Stewardship Program: Develop a 'park ranger' program to include community members in stewardship; center youth in the development of this program	18
	+ Jubilee Drive: Potential for closing Jubilee Drive to cars; making it a flexible street	23
	+ Park Expansion & Connections: Opportunities to acquire land to expand the park to natural area/neighbouring community; make connections to neighbouring green spaces to reduce pressure on the park	61
	+ Waste Management: Add more recycling and garbage collection spots; more maintenance and removal of waste from the land and water	45

4.0 Part 3 Engagement Overview

The engagement activity for Part 3 was designed to evolve the discussion around the emerging recommendations and strategies identified in Part 1 and 2. The categories for the recommendations were:

- + **Play Areas**
- + **Pathway Network**
- + **Gathering and Rest Spaces**
- + **Visitor/Event Facilities**
- + **Park Design and Stewardship**

There were two main activities in Part 3:

- + **Digital Engagement via Engage Kitchener:** The 'gather' tool on the project page was set up to share the ideas for the Master Plan through an activity titled 'Did we Miss Anything?'. The activity was designed to collect public input on which ones ideas were most supported, identify concerns, and provide space for participants to suggest any missing ones.
- + **Victoria Park Engagement Thank You Event:** A drop-in session was hosted by City staff near the splash pad in Victoria Park, held in partnership with Agnes Niewiadomski from Mindful Makers.

The project team also conducted internal engagement with City staff, to discuss how the recommendations could be prioritized and identify additional considerations relating to heritage, infrastructure, or other aspects of feasibility.

4.1 Digital Engagement via Engage Kitchener

Posted on July 18, 2025, and closed on September 14, 2025, the online activity included an overview of potential improvements to Victoria Park that represented key asks and suggestions from the public, local interest groups and staff. The list of potential improvements was not considered firm or final recommendations but merely as a transparent way of making the connection between the information gathered in Part 1 and the outputs of Part 2 and 3 which will ultimately inform and shape the development of the master plan. Instructions were provided which helped to guide the types of comments and input that was provided by those contributing:

- + **Review the improvements.** Use the 'Filter by' drop-down menu to view them by category.
- + **Click the 'heart' button** on the ones that resonate with you.
- + **Comment** on any benefits or drawbacks you see.
- + **Add anything** important we missed to "Did we miss anything?"

A total of 33 improvement topics were identified on the project page. More detailed descriptions of each of the initiatives was provided as part of the information online used to help clarify the intent and purpose of the initiative. The following is a summary of the expressions of interest (as indicated by the hearts) as well as highlights of the comments received regarding each of the initiatives identified.

Share your feedback
Note: Photos are examples only and may not reflect actual improvements.

Closed Activity closed 2025-09-14 at 11:59 PM

Filter by: Category

Search Sort by

Did we miss anything?
Posted by VPMP Project Team 5 months ago
Is there something important missing from this list? Add a comment and tell us what that is.
0 Likes 8 Comments

New parking strategy
Posted by VPMP Project Team 5 months ago
Develop a parking strategy for the park that considers: 1) potential to acquire land for more parking, 2) managing parking on side streets, and 3) adding bike parking.
8 Likes 22 Comments

Park safety audit
Posted by VPMP Project Team 5 months ago
Undertake a park safety audit to confirm what improvements can be made to support safety in the park for all.
16 Likes 6 Comments

Improve sightlines
Posted by VPMP Project Team 5 months ago
Remove any obstacles to sightlines between the splashpad and playground, to make it easier to supervise children and improve safety.
4 Likes 6 Comments

Geese waste management
Posted by VPMP Project Team 5 months ago
Develop a strategy to address the increase in the geese population and waste material that accumulates on pathways and landscaped areas.
37 Likes 10 Comments

Additional waste management
Posted by VPMP Project Team 5 months ago
Add more recycling and garbage collection spots. Increase maintenance and removal of waste from the land and water.
25 Likes 8 Comments

Table 1. Summary of Online Engagement Activity #1 – Did we Miss Anything

Initiative	# of Likes	# of Comments	Comment Summary
New parking strategy	8	22	+ Leveraging existing parking in surrounding areas and other municipal lots – where parking is currently available as opposed to providing more parking taking up valuable park space + Emphasis on the inclusion of accessible parking + The inclusion of bike parking throughout the Park with improved access to transit
Park safety audit	16	6	+ Consideration of the implementation of lighting to improve sense of safety and security within the Park + Mitigation of issues related to substance use and conflict + Consideration of safety measures used on university campuses
Improve sightlines	4	6	+ Improved sightlines are needed most where there are both adults and young children who require supervision – these locations should be prioritized + Concern around the removal of trees to improve sightlines
Geese waste management	37	10	+ Consideration of changes to the waters edge including naturalization with riparian habitats to discourage goose use and increase biodiversity + Look to examples like Waterloo Park to identify measures for management of the population in addition to the waste produced
Additional waste management	25	7	+ Consider including a number to contact to report when waste needs to be emptied for more responsive measures + Consider measures to keep trash out of the water + Pet waste specific cans provided throughout the Park
Explore multi-use options for Jubilee Drive	22	6	+ Closure of Jubilee Drive to better manage the volume and speed of vehicles + Consideration of the use of traffic calming measures barring closing

Initiative	# of Likes	# of Comments	Comment Summary
			+ Implementation of better crossing support and signalization to control vehicle and support pedestrians
Park expansion and connections	44	13	+ Consideration of Park expansion but also capacity management needs and opportunities + Supporting growing populations and greater density within the downtown core by providing green space and recreation + Consideration of publicly owned lands or acquisition in surrounding areas to grow the Park space + Improved access for higher needs communities and the most vulnerable
New stewardship program	17	8	+ Consideration of the engagement of “neighbourhood teams” to support with cleanup and species management + Support involvement of young people within the area or at local schools + Consideration of the Ontario Stewardship Youth Ranger Program
Tree planting strategy	37	8	+ The importance of replacement and diversification of trees within the Park space + More trees and less lawn with consideration of riparian plantings along the water + Education and awareness through signage and wayfinding of species + Maintenance as well as management
Washroom accessibility	26	8	+ Varying opinions regarding recommendations to keep the washrooms open 24/7 + Additional supervision and management is needed around the spaces specifically related to substance use and violence + Cleanliness and safety should be a priority with this initiative
Indigenous placemaking	20	4	+ Critical for education, awareness, history and culture which many people do not know about

Initiative	# of Likes	# of Comments	Comment Summary
			+ Prioritize the needs of current indigenous people who have an ongoing relationship to the land through tangible actions and ongoing conversations and dialogue
Summer kitchen	11	5	+ Some interest to provide greater range of opportunities for food access and options within the Park
More drinking water facilities	28	2	+ Locations identified including at the Clocktower field, near the playground and basketball courts – anywhere people are physically active
New event strategy	5	2	+ Consideration of crowding and overuse with more events and opportunities explored in other Parks within the City + Very happy with the degree of events provided but management and maintenance is needed
Add new public art features	12	4	+ Consider programming like Art in the Park, Stratford, ON on the weekends
More small-scale events	10	0	N/A
Reduce event disruption	6	5	+ General disagreement found within the comments regarding reducing and limiting events and participation within the space but acknowledgement that there should be ongoing monitoring and management
New gardens	30	4	+ Demonstration rain garden + Consider where gardens were previously removed + Native plant garden consideration
Upgrade electric access	3	1	+ Specifically at the picnic shelter
Replace picnic shelter	6	1	+ Consider complementing the new shelter with a reservation system that could help with management of use
Park furniture upgrades	7	1	+ Support for the iron benches along the Iron Horse Trail and their inclusion in other locations within the Park

Initiative	# of Likes	# of Comments	Comment Summary
Roos Island asphalt walkway	1	3	+ Repair of existing asphalt along the pathway system as opposed to implementation on the Island + Consideration of other surface types and permeable features
More accessible seating	11	2	+ Shade along the accessible seating and avoidance of the use of hostile architecture
Lighting for safety	22	3	+ Interest in the use of lighting for safety but consideration of increase to ambient lighting + Acknowledging the difference between real and perceived safety and what types of treatments or interventions that could be used to address safety concerns
Wayfinding and signage	10	3	+ Use of multiple languages
Pathway repairs and improvements	9	3	+ Permeable paving to reduce puddling and runoff + Consideration of the maintenance, repair and expansion of the trail / pathway system in other locations to improve mobility and suitable transportation options for cyclists throughout the Park
Better access for all types of transportation	10	3	+ Reduction of car congestion in and around the Park by managing parking expectations (see previous comments on parking plan) + Other suggestions / comments reiterate previous comments about bike parking, pedestrian linkages and links to transit
Add boat launch	11	2	+ Varying opinions expressed with some speaking to past use of the "lake" by canoes and kayaks while others think it could detract from the natural beauty of the space
New pet play area	8	1	+ Positive but interested in understanding what some of the drawbacks would be if it were to be provided
Splashpad replacement and expansion	11	4	+ General improvement to the existing space that does not necessarily include expansion of the space

Initiative	# of Likes	# of Comments	Comment Summary
			+ Interest in improvements to the seating areas for parents and caregivers as well as control and management of the space to keep geese out
Basketball court upgrades	16	3	+ Broaden the range of recreational offerings beyond basketball with reference made to tennis or padel courts + Consideration of improved lighting of the spaces
Playground upgrades	8	2	+ Consider more naturalized features for more creative play, the metal can be challenging for some to use
New play area for young children	11	1	+ More shade and seating for caregivers with some options for improved fencing and space control for younger children playing

Of the initiatives identified on the page the following are the top five (5) that received the most “likes”:

1. **Park expansion and connections (44 likes)** – exploring opportunities to acquire land and expand the Park to nearby natural areas. Make connections to neighbouring green spaces to reduce pressure on the Park.
2. **(Tied) Geese Waste Management (37 likes)** – Develop a strategy to address the increase in geese population and waste material that accumulates on pathways and landscaped areas.
2. **(Tied) Tree Planting Strategy (37 likes)** – Develop a strategy for planting trees in phases to ensure long-term canopy health and renewal.
3. **New Gardens (30 likes)** – Introduce gardens featuring native and pollinator-friendly plants.
4. **More Drinking Water Facilities (28 likes)** – Add drinking water fountains and bottle filling stations.
5. **Washroom Accessibility (26 likes)** – Expand and re-design the washrooms to be more accessible. Make them available year-round and extend the hours to be 24/7.

The following is a summary of the remaining initiatives in order of “likes”.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6. Additional Waste Management | 12. Basketball Court Upgrades |
| 7. Explore multi-use options for Jubilee Drive | 13. Add new Public Art Features |
| 8. Lighting for Safety | 14. Summer Kitchen Improvements |
| 9. Indigenous Placemaking | 15. More Accessible Seating |
| 10. New Stewardship Program | 16. Add Boat Launch |
| 11. Park Safety Audit | 17. Splashpad Replacement and Expansion |

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 18. New Play Area for Young Children | 25. Playground Updates |
| 19. More small-scale Events | 26. Park Furniture |
| 20. Wayfinding and Signage | 27. Replace Picnic Shelter |
| 21. Better Access for all types of Transportation | 28. Reduce Event Disruption |
| 22. Pathway Repairs and Improvements | 29. New Event Strategy |
| 23. New Parking Strategy | 30. Improve Sightlines |
| 24. New Pet Play Area | 31. Upgrade Electric Access |
| | 32. Roos Island Asphalt Pathway |

In addition to the initiatives presented, the City also included another option asking contributors if there was anything that had been missed. Of the eight comments received in response, half were related to recognizing Indigenous history and culture, specifically in favour of the removal of the Queen Victoria statue and renaming of the park to Willow River Park. One comment suggested keeping the statue. The remaining comments included suggestions for a water fountain and more flower beds, and adding Christmas lights in the winter time.

The thank you event to those who had participated in the Victoria Park Master Plan engagement program was held on **August 30th, 2025** from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Victoria Park near the splashpad. The event was used to acknowledge the feedback provided and considerable efforts of those who had participated in the engagement process and provide acknowledgement of that contribution.

The event was held in partnership with Agnes Niewiadomski from Mindful Makers who – along with other volunteers – shared a free class of weaving willow leaves to engage those who attended and support interactive learning and participation. Some graphics of the event are provided below including an image of a drawing of one of the project graphics by a young participant.



5.0 Overall Highlights, Reflections and Key Takeaways



5.1 Reflections on the Engagement Program

The input received throughout the engagement process highlighted the range and diversity of perspectives of Kitchener residents and Park users. On key issues like park safety, active transportation, landscaping, and space for pets, we heard comments that both supported and opposed various recommendations as presented in this report, highlighting the need for a closer review of needs and taking an equity-based approach to design.

The Park is a central space in the city close to the Downtown, and as such attracts visitors from all walks of life and backgrounds. The downtown area is a space where those who do not have a backyard or access to large private spaces come to gather and is an important asset in supporting social connection in an era when the number of people living alone is at the highest it has been in history. Cultivating a safe space is crucial to the health and sense of belonging that all visitors feel.

The engagement tactics used were beneficial in reaching a broad audience. With a limited duration for engagement, the use of the spring and summer months when the Park received its highest volume of visitors was important to capturing a diverse range of perspectives. Some participants noted that it was a challenge to attend the in-person engagement sessions due to limited parking availability on the dates that the events were held. In addition, there was limited opportunity to explore the fall and winter use of the Park and capture visitor experiences or sentiments in real time during the colder months.

Overall, the experience of engaging directly with a wide range of park visitors, supporters, and custodians was highly valuable in guiding the direction of the Master Plan. The City invested in an upfront engagement process to establish a wealth of community-informed considerations that could be merged with other data collection and asset analysis to inform an evidence-based approach to planning.

5.1 Summary of Theme-Based Comments

An overall summary of key comments heard consistently throughout the engagement program relating to the four core themes is provided below.

■ Connectivity

- + Improve signage and wayfinding, and create separated facilities for people using different types of mobility devices, including slower moving modes and faster devices.
- + Improve active transportation routes to and through the Park.
- + Review the use of Jubilee Drive, and carefully consider access needs in the event of closure to vehicles.
- + Provide more pedestrian crossings on Jubilee Drive.
- + Improve transit access to the Park
- + Support connections to other nearby public spaces.
- + Correct the signage on Schneider Avenue to eliminate confusion on how to use this street and where to park.

■ Growth

- + Design for dog-friendly spaces.
- + Provide more waste sorting and easy disposal receptacles.
- + Provide EV charging stations in parking lots.
- + Review parking needs and improve access to free parking spaces.

- + Provide access to drinking water through bottle filling stations.
- + Improve park maintenance and waste removal particularly from the lake.
- + Prioritize snow removal along pathways and area around washrooms.
- + Consider opportunities to acquire more property to expand the Park.

■ Community

- + Celebrate and showcase local history and different cultures in the Park.
- + Create dedicated areas for Indigenous cultural space, art, and activities in the Park.
- + Provide more active play spaces and age-friendly play areas to encourage inter-generational activity.
- + Create a dog-friendly play area.
- + Improve access to and use of the water, including for boating.
- + Integrate more public art from Indigenous and local artists.
- + Encourage more small and medium sized events.
- + Prioritize accessibility and barrier-free design.
- + Develop programming to cater to a wider range of audiences, including children and teenagers.
- + Improve the sense of safety and comfort in all areas of the park.
- + Foster an inclusive approach to park design and a welcoming environment for all visitors.
- + Improve washroom accessibility and design
- + Provide more shaded seating areas and bookable spaces.

■ Natural Systems

- + Foster education, stewardship and connection to nature.
- + Consider wildlife in lighting and overall park design.
- + Manage the geese population.
- + Plant native species.
- + Design for resiliency to flooding.
- + Partner with Indigenous community members, youth, and others in park design.

- + Address water quality issues in the lake.

5.3 Recommendations for the Master Plan

The overall tally of votes for the recommendations across the in-person and online channels produced the following results for the top ten out of 25 total recommendations:

	Recommendation	Number of Votes
1	Upgrade Basketball Court: Upgrade court; consider adaptability for other sports.	178
2	Parking: Develop a parking strategy; potential to acquire land for parking; manage parking on side streets; add bike parking.	161
3	Washrooms: Expand and re-design to be accessible; make available year-round and extend hours to be 24/7.	126
4	Playground: Expand the playground, add new accessible equipment designed for a range of people of different ages and disabilities; upgrade existing equipment; consider additional small play areas in the park.	140
5	Gardens: Introduce pollinator/native species gardens.	98
6	Splashpad: Replace with new equipment; expand the area for the splashpad; make this feature friendly to people of all ages.	115
7	Drinking Water: Add drinking water access to bottle filling stations.	88
8	Waste Management: Add more recycling and garbage collection spots; more maintenance and removal of waste from the land and water.	45
9	Park Expansion & Connections: Opportunities to acquire land to expand the park to natural area/neighbouring community; make connections to neighbouring green spaces to reduce pressure on the park.	61
10	Tree Planting: Develop a successional tree planting strategy.	66

5.2 Overall Online Engagement Statistics

The Victoria Park Master Plan page received a total of 5,088 unique visitors over the course of the engagement program. The participation for each of the tools is summarized below:

- Show us on the map! – 364 contributions from 104 contributors
- Did we miss anything? 197 contributions from 46 contributors
- Park user survey – 181 contributions from 176 contributors
- Share your story of Victoria Park – 14 contributions from 13 contributors

The online mechanisms were a key part of making the engagement activities accessible to the wider community and highlighted the importance of transparent ways to engage where participants could see one another's comments and offer either confirming or opposing views.

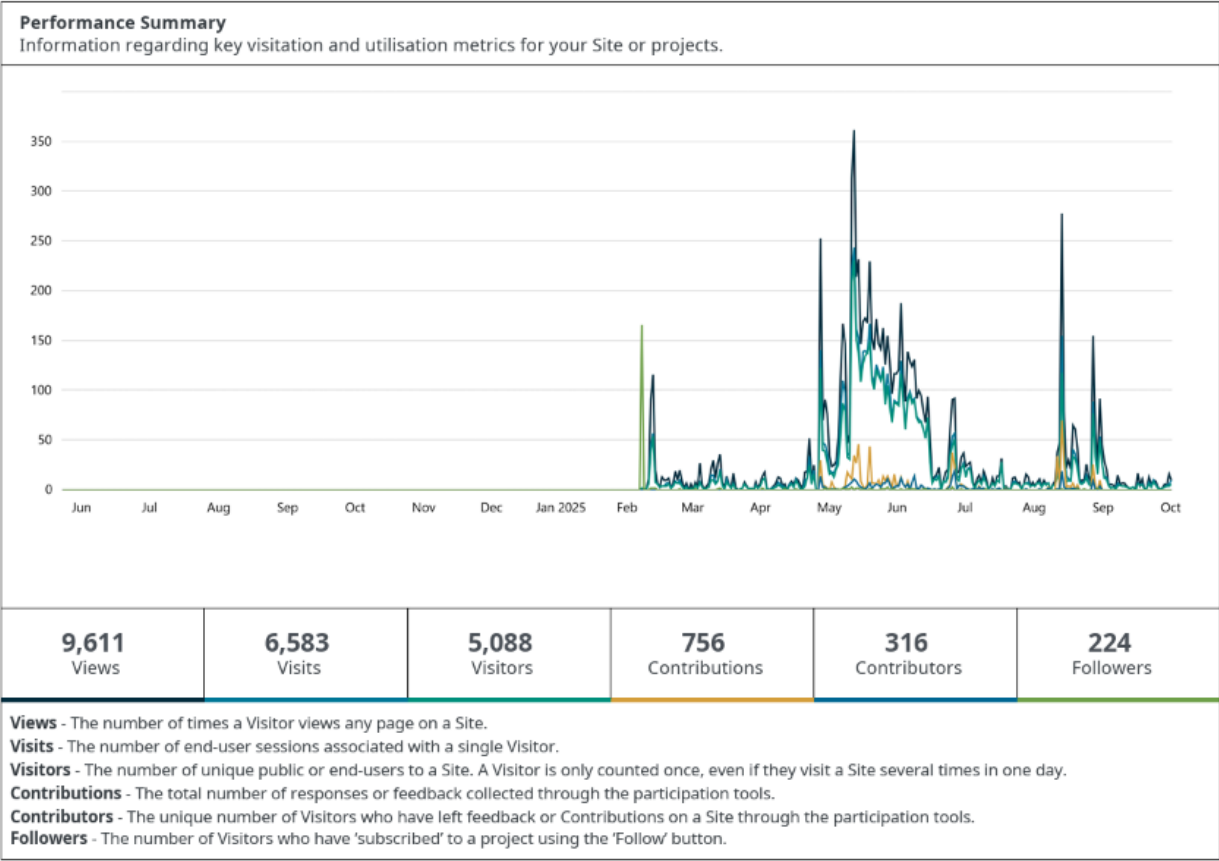


Figure 2 Engage Kitchener Project Page - Overall Performance Summary

6.0 Internal Engagement

In addition to the robust community engagement and outreach that was undertaken as part of this project, internal staff consultation and engagement was undertaken. There were two types of internal engagement which were facilitated within Part 2 of the project including:

- + **Internal Working Group Sessions:** Four facilitated workshop sessions with City staff working through confirmation of themes and consideration / context, potential opportunities master plan strategies, and lastly implementation considerations.
- + **Transportation Charette:** a facilitated conversation with transportation staff members to establish a better understanding of ongoing transportation related work impacting or influencing the park and / or input and considerations on potential transportation improvements as part of future planning efforts in coordination with the City's transportation master plan.

The information gathered through these sessions was kept separate from the community input and information and has not been included within the key themes and summaries provided above. It is being considered separately to clearly document and consider the input from community members and interest groups without influence from staff.

6.1 Internal Working Group Sessions

■ Working Group Session #1

The first Internal Working Group Session was held on June 25th, 2025 from 1:30 to 3:30pm. The session was conducted as a hybrid meeting with some participants joining in-person from the Kitchener Operations Facility (KOF).

Participants were engaged on the key themes of Community and Natural Systems, as they relate to staff roles, responsibilities, and challenges they face in their day-to-day work. The topics for discussion and the feedback heard are summarized below. For all the suggestions, it will be important to consider alignment with the Heritage Plan for the Park, as well as safety and sightline considerations.

Community

1. Accessibility Barriers
 - + Different expectations of Park use from different groups/types of visitors.

- + Need for more accessible washrooms for visitors year-round, as well as changing rooms and bathrooms near active play areas (to be designed to comply with Heritage designation requirements).
- + Need for more accessible parking.
- + Need for improved and accessible wayfinding to connect to public transit and to guide visitors through the Park, including braille maps and signage.
- + Lack of adequate lighting in some areas, like the basketball court.
- + Need for areas that allow for ceremonial fires for Indigenous communities.
- + Balancing user needs with compliance with the Victoria Park Area Heritage Conservation District Plan.
- + Need for more accessible play features and equipment.
- + Lack of accessible seating.
- + Need for drinking water bottle filling stations.
- + Improvements to trails and paths to accommodate different types of mobility devices.

2. Special Events and Programming

- + Challenges with accommodating visitors who want to park in the Park.
- + Accumulation of garbage and overflowing receptables, need for improved waste storing system.
- + Damage to turf after large events, need for improved management and vendor and visitor education.
- + Need for improved communications with Operations staff relating to snow removal or other maintenance needs.
- + Need for wayfinding signage to guide visitors on where to Park nearby, and arrangement of shuttle service to nearby parking lots and garages.
- + Opportunities for City-run programming in the Park, including:
 - Concerts and plays
 - Fitness and sports related classes and events
 - Programming for youth, seniors and older adults
 - Culturally-focused programming to support newcomers
 - Gardening workshops
 - Summer camps
 - Incorporation of library and community center programs

3. Safety

- + Desire for improved appearance of fencing in the periphery of the Park
- + Improvements needed to support sense of safety for washrooms and to add a bus stop in the Park.
- + Suggestion for call boxes with a direct line to Park security.
- + Improved lighting and signage in the periphery of the Park.

Natural Systems

1. Improved Naturalization

- + Opportunities for native planting and pollinator species, and removal of invasive plants.
- + Create a learning garden relating to native species.
- + Install a community garden.
- + Add a formal rose garden, aligning with the Heritage Plan for the Park.
- + Consider less used areas of the park for naturalization and educational elements, as well as along roadways, edges of gathering areas, and along the lake edge and south and west boundaries of the Park.

2. Education

- + Opportunities for community and visitor education in the Park on key topics including:
 - Plant and animal species
 - Indigenous history and heritage
 - Local history relating to the Park
 - Bird-watching and local bird species
 - Information for users of different mobility devices, e-scooters and e-bikes, etc. to improve safety and comfort for all.
 - Placement of signage in high traffic areas like playgrounds, in a numbered sequence along paths, and in formalized installations to improve longevity.

3. Balance

- + Suggestions to balance City staff and operations work in the Park with natural heritage included:
 - Being mindful of requirements to monitor nesting and wildlife movement before removing trees or making modifications to natural areas.
 - Preserving and protecting wildlife habitat, and balancing that with park maintenance.
 - Providing signage and education to visitors on 'leave no trace' practices and not leaving garbage or waste behind.
 - Creating protected zones within the Park for wildlife with reduced visitor access.
 - Balancing naturalized areas with the 'romantic landscape' heritage of the Park.

■ Working Group Session #2

The second internal working group session was held on Tuesday July 22nd, 2025 between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. The meeting was facilitated as a hybrid-style meeting using online tools and in-person activities with the same format.

The purpose of the second internal working group session was to review and discuss the community, and natural systems themes and comments as previously provided for the master plan. More specifically, the groups were asked to focus on key considerations, potential opportunities, challenges and limitations as well as contextual impacts which could be reflected in the master plan. Comments and discussion were documented by marking up maps as well as post-it notes. The following is a detailed summary of the input that was provided organized by the two themes discussed.

Community

- + Shade rest areas. i.e. benches/tables. Spread out throughout path of travel
- + Queen Victoria Statue: why not highlighted; makes some members of community feel unsafe; controversial
- + Look at event plans through equity-lens, esp. challenging fenced-in set ups with security at entrance; entrance / signage - no blocking off a park that 1500 people use daily
- + Ensure reconciliation equity, diversity and inclusion is incorporated embedded in plans and not as an afterthought, once plans have been completed.
- + Forestry Programming - popular with older adult programming. Forest walks, urban walks
- + Separate power from the boathouse power panel
- + Additional power or infrastructure to support major special events.
- + Power - 200 amp on each end of the commons
- + Bike only route from Iron Horse to Gaukel
- + Knock down and rebuild maintenance shop or relocate
- + Wayfinding signage if it could include whole park maps and 'you are here'
- + Waste collection?
- + Pet waste collection?
- + Transit access to rear of park
- + Ceremonial fire infrastructure (all seasons)
- + Additional parking area near Victoria Park Pavilion
- + Close Jubilee to vehicles
- + Sidewalk/path infill along Jubilee
- + Bike parking
- + Signage pointing to washrooms and drinking water during events
- + Entrance features more integrated with Gaukel Block (and cycling grid)

Natural Systems

- + Educational signage, not just words. Raised tactile surfaces for those who cannot see to read.
- + Create opportunities to collaborate with Indigenous knowledge keepers on these educational elements/storytelling as education.
- + Food forests
- + Make sure not to naturalize useable space
- + Introduce new LID features. Consider pilot programs.
- + Improve drainage in saturated areas - park space/naturalization
- + Low maintenance gardens? What does this mean
- + Proper naturalization maintenance plan = required incl. signage/comms
- + Seasonal lighting plan - enhanced lights during the holidays
- + Consider contracted service over internal efforts
- + Ensuring not to remove or restrict regular park use!
- + Additional storage for parks and events team. Could serve as break area as well.
- + Transition matting - to protect the grass from load - in/out
- + Lighting strategy - along the path? Clocktower? In the commons?
- + Show power 200 AMPs at each end of the commons area
- + Edible plants- Food security
- + Prioritize shade
- + Prioritize drainage; big rains; freeze/thaw; freezing rain

■ Working Group Session #3

The third internal working group session was held on Tuesday September 16th, 2025, between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. The meeting was facilitated as a hybrid style meeting using online tools and in-person activities with the same format.

The purpose of the third internal working group session was to start to review and discuss opportunities for master plan initiatives related to connectivity and growth based on the previous input provided with the goal of refining and confirming potential recommendations. Through the session, questions related to growth and connectivity were posed to the group to prompt discussion and generate input. The following are the questions that were posed:

- + To adapt to and meet the changing needs of our community, what should we do differently in Victoria Park?
- + Are there amenities that we are missing that you think would better serve the community and those who visit the park?
- + How can we make Victoria Park more interesting and inviting to all ages and abilities?

- + What do you think we can do to enhance the experience and connection to the park from Gaukel Block, Victoria Green, and Henry Sturm Greenway?
- + What physical connections both to the park and within the park do you think are working well? What do you think could be improved?
- + What challenges do you see regarding parking and lack of accessible parking in / adjacent to the park? Do you have any suggestions for alternatives?
- + What is missing that would better connect the park users to the park space via transit options?
- + How do you feel about the option of transitioning Jubilee into a 'Green Street' or 'Woonerf' that is more pedestrian-friendly?
- + Would you support the closure or partial closure of Jubilee?

A series of maps were provided which illustrated conditions and considerations related to growth and connectivity to help prompt discussion. The following is a summary of those comments in response to the questions provided above:

- + The sacred circle and fire space has already been determined and should be reflected in the plan
- + Safety considerations within the back area of the park impacts staff and current users
- + Consideration for maintenance related programming and cyclical changes and impacts throughout the year
- + Future engagement would need to consider all land owners and holders
- + There is a large space between the swings and the play area which is underused
- + The space between the play area and the water seems poorly managed without clear purpose
- + Consider how best to use space considering there is the largest demand for both the public and staff members
- + Consider bylaw safety ambassadors within the park space
- + More on-site customer service provided
- + Consider better maintenance of the existing buildings within the park to support in-park presence
- + Consider the implementation or use of multi-seasonal uses to support wider use throughout the year e.g. croco curling
- + Informal trails on Roos Island and surrounding areas could be made into more of a gathering space
- + Victoria green consider area for a dog park but consider impact on local residents
- + Explore more effective park booking system
- + Determine and communicate service level expectations for the various areas of the park to increase use
- + Development and design of the edges of the park for more common and cohesive design to bring the park "together"

- + Wayfinding and signage should be explored including the identification of flora and fauna
- + Consider the way in which the demand on the park will change with more density within the City
- + Consideration of accessibility through and within the park as opposed to just considering accessibility to the park
- + Management tactics for e-bikes and e-scooters relative to other users especially those that are younger
- + Consider a broader mapping exercise to illustrate and depict the surrounding areas and impacts of the park
- + Enforcement currently is limited when it comes to conflicting users
- + Emphasis on the need for maintenance of the park and of the various areas
- + Wayfinding and education is critical particularly the parks context to other areas and the broader parks network
- + Consideration of the cost of maintenance and the need to consider broader operational budgets
- + Explore the under used space in and around the commons specifically for connectivity and programming
- + Consider the City owned parcels in and around the park for expansion and connectivity needs
- + The turnaround proposed along Jubilee may have more negative impacts on the overall cohesion of the park
- + Consideration of the VPAHCD is necessary for all improvement elements
- + Management of local parking options especially in high demand areas. Consider limiting times and access e.g. to 15 minutes with more of a focus on drop off and pick up
- + Consideration of broader accessibility when it comes to washrooms
- + Consider the equity of access, specifically when it comes to bookings of the park space for events
- + More dispersed picnic areas and shelters to reduce the bottle necks that an occur
- + Don't sacrifice the space for parking and encourage other modes of travel
- + Parking wayfinding should be considered and prioritized with a wider catchment and options for parking in and around the park
- + Explore permit types for difference activities especially those where alcohol is available – Council direction and decision may be needed
- + Improved event management with consideration for the threshold for events in the park
- + Put QR codes onto signage and wayfinding for more dynamic information
- + Explore opportunities to improve information gathering and sharing to support long-term planning needs

In addition to the mapping, preliminary opportunities were identified in the following categories:

- + Play Areas
- + Pathway Network
- + Gathering and Rest
- + Visitor / Event Facilities
- + Park Design & Stewardship

Under each of the categories, 33 more detailed opportunities were identified. Attendees were encouraged to look through the opportunities to understand what is being considered through the master plan process. The following table provides a summary of the opportunities identified and presented. No comments were provided to the opportunities through the session.

Topic	Opportunity
Play Areas	Playground Upgrades
	New Play areas for Young Children
	Splashpad Replacement & Expansion
	Basketball Court Upgrades
	Add Boat Launch
	New Pet Play Area
Pathway Network	Pathway repairs and improvements
	Park safety audit
	Wayfinding and signage
	Roos island asphalt pathway
	Lighting for safety
	Better access for all types of transportation
Gathering and Rest	More accessible seating
	Replace picnic shelter
	Park furniture upgrades
	New gardens
	Add new public art features
Visitor / Event Facilities	New event strategy

Topic	Opportunity
	Summer Kitchen improvements
	New parking strategy
	More drinking water facilities
	Washroom accessibility
	More small-scale events
	Reduce event disruption
	Upgrade electrical access
Park design and Stewardship	Indigenous placemaking
	Tree planning strategy
	New stewardship program
	Explore multi-use options for Jubilee Drive
	Park expansion and connection
	Additional waste management
	Improve sightlines
	Geese waste management

Overall, the input provided at the session acknowledged the considerable impact of future growth and development on the Park, specifically related to increased demand and variation of use. Much of the input provided focused on operational issues and considerations specifically related to maintenance and management of the park with changes to programming and allocation of space. Circulation and movement of people to and through the park was a major topic acknowledging the importance of a range of modal opportunities and improved wayfinding and signage for those walking and cycling throughout the park.

■ Working Group Session #4

The fourth and final internal working group session was held on Monday September 22nd, 2025 between 9:30 and 12:30 p.m. The fourth workshop was held in-person but a virtual option to gather input was provided after the session for those who could not attend.

The purpose of the fourth internal working session was to review and identify priority recommendations which could be considered for inclusion in the master plan. A series of preliminary recommendations were identified by City staff and included on working sheets in four categories:

- + Strategies / Studies
- + Programming / Placemaking
- + Play and Recreation Facilities
- + Visitor / Event Facilities

Attendees were asked to review each of the potential recommendations and identify their top 5 using dots – which were placed beside the recommendation. In addition, they were asked to provide thoughts and comments on those recommendations for future consideration. The following is a summary of the input provided.

Topic	Opportunity	# Dots	Comments
Strategies & Studies	Water Recreation Strategy	1	+ None
	Active Transportation Strategy	2	+ Consideration for HCD policies
	Park Safety Audit	1	+ With more density comes more people and more potential for issues
	Wayfinding & Signage Strategy	1	+ Alignment with the Victoria Park HCD plan
	Multi-use Options for Jubilee Drive	3	+ Potential challenges with overall City Circulation and need to protect the asset as outlined in the HCD
	Successional Tree Planting Strategy	1	+ None
	Geese Waste Management Strategy	3	+ None
	Park Expansion & Connections Strategy	3	+ None
Programming / Placemaking	Park Furniture Standards	3	+ Supported by the HCD
	Event Strategy	7	+ Better direction for how to manage events within the place i.e. maintenance
	Parking Strategy	2	+ Consider map illustrating parking supply and overflow
	Indigenous Placemaking	2	+ None
	Stewardship Program	2	+ None
Play & Recreational Facilities	Playground Upgrades	7	+ Envisioned as one large cohesive play area + Consider alternatives to traditional playground to

Topic	Opportunity	# Dots	Comments
			match the play needs with overall aesthetic of the park
	Splashpad Replacement & Expansion	5	+ None
	Basketball Court Upgrades	2	+ Is this really the right park to meet this need?
	Pet Play Area	4	+ Maintenance, cleaning and enforcement issues + There are other options throughout the City that may be more appropriate
	Upgrade Pedestrian Lighting	4	+ Wrong park for this amenity + Need to align the lighting standards with the HCD
	More Accessible Seating	1	+ None
	Replace Picnic Shelter	5	+ Reimagine with summer kitchen facility
	Native and Pollinator Species	2	+ None
	Public Art Infrastructure	2	+ Temporary art
Visitor / Event Facilities	Summer Kitchen	2	+ Who will be responsible / manage the maintenance and cleaning
	Drinking Water Facilities	1	+ Difficulty managing safety – maybe a misting station + Could integrate with washrooms if maintenance is consistent
	Washroom Accessibility Upgrades	1	+ None
	Park Welcome Centre	3	+ Opportunity to connect washroom upgrades with the welcome centre
	Additional Waste Management	4	+ None
	Improve Sightlines	0	+ None
	Electrical Infrastructure	2	+ Event strategy and electrical to go together in the same strategy

Based on the information gathered the highest “ranked” recommendations included:

- + Event Strategy
- + Playground Upgrades
- + Splashpad Replacement & Expansion
- + Replace Picnic Shelter

Following the identification of preferred recommendations, the group was asked to work through another work sheet which was intended to dive deeper into implementation considerations for a selection of recommendations. The recommendations were previously determined by City staff and reflected recommendations that were considered to be of high interest based on previous input provided. The activity asked the groups to identify key considerations (for implementation) as well as policy / procedures that would be involved in “making the recommendation happen”. Six recommendations were highlighted including:

- + Event Strategy
- + Washroom Accessibility & Upgrades
- + Electrical Infrastructure
- + Wayfinding & Signage Strategy
- + Active Transportation Strategy
- + Parking Strategy

The following is a summary of the comments provided. The content has been organized by the two groups that provided input. In addition, within the group “sections” there are two tables the first is related to the key considerations and the second pertains to the policies and procedures.

Group 1 Input

Topic	Key Considerations
Event Strategy	+ There is a heavy event schedule in the summer which reduces the ability to do major maintenance + Redistribute events to allow time for maintenance + High quality design and materials used in the park to withstand high volume events and longevity + Look at the hours and number of visitors as a means of making decisions about events + Consider tourism and economic development perspective making sure the City remain attractive but the impacts are managed
Washroom Accessibility & Upgrades	+ Rebuild maintenance facility and add bathrooms with no public access to the maintenance + Changing rooms for splash pads + All gender washrooms

Topic	Key Considerations
Electrical Infrastructure	+ Consider “plug and play” to access storage can and electrical equipment with connections to an event strategy + Prioritize the commons for electrical upgrades + 2nd priority would be to test locations in the park e.g. for holiday décor and lights + Create a mapped set of power sources that can be used throughout the park not only within the commons + Allow traffic to be better distinguished + Make sure the amperage supports more growth / use than currently needed
Wayfinding & Signage Strategy	+ Ensure visibility and accessibility + Who has the oversight of the wayfinding and signage city-wide – ensure coordination + Create a consistent City standard for signage style and colour, etc. or tie into what exists + Simple, visual language that is easier to read and understand + Consider placement and content for storytelling elements + Be mindful – telling a ‘settler’ story on City-owned property + Indicate walk / cycle distances on the wayfinding and signage or time + Connecting City hall to the park + Minimize potential for vandalism e.g. no use of LEO signs
Active Transportation Strategy	+ Consider how maintenance staff and users share the path together + Wider paths to accommodate multi-modal traffic + Life cycle maintenance considerations + Consider peripheral route – incorporate connected routes to form a loop around the park
Parking Strategy	+ Provide guidance on how the events should handle parking + Consider tab on the website that shows “how to get to park where to park” + Consider the impact of Boathouse staff on current parking + Provide signage to indicate alternate opportunities for parking if lots are full

Topic	Policy & Procedure Considerations
Event Strategy	+ Create a bookable space and supporting policy / procedure + Manage parking in the park with deterrent to parking on the grass for major events

Topic	Policy & Procedure Considerations
	+ Review similar municipal parks – Windsor, Barrie, London, etc. to better understand their standards and policies + For special events coordination – consider revenue generating opportunities with more equitable options
Washroom Accessibility & Upgrades	+ Washrooms strategy per parkland strategy – see the Vancouver example
Electrical Infrastructure	+ Consider security during high volume seasons and plan to mitigate vandalism + Select high quality materials
Wayfinding & Signage Strategy	+ Align with current CTMP wayfinding approach and elements + Coordinate design per the HCD
Active Transportation Strategy	+ Consider the sustainable urban forest strategy – do not create negative impacts to plants and trees
Parking Strategy	None provided

Group 2 Input

Topic	Key Considerations
Event Strategy	+ Ensure engagement with broader groups including the Boathouse and businesses as well as neighbours + Temporary installations to larger event considerations which require upgrades + Consider impacts to the park users not involved in the events + Provide requirements to maintain public access to the park as a priority in the selection process + Increased demand requires improved communications plan and education for Council + Provide a range of event styles including free to use events as well as paid options + Better infrastructure is required to support the events e.g. washrooms and electrical + Consider definitions of event types + Provide event selection guidance and collaboration with the events committee + Consider the need for a strategy versus a policy

Topic	Key Considerations
	+ Consider a temporary and permanent event facility + Always consider safety and security + Consider a park activation strategy
Washroom Accessibility & Upgrades	+ Overall washroom strategy identified for 2026 + Include access to drinking water at washrooms + Bottle filling and change facilities that are family friendly with stroller storage – provide design solutions that are based on the location within the park + Increase the number of staff within the park for improved security within the space + Improved considerations for access and accessibility + Explore grant opportunities + New facilities impacts to facilities management and capital planning considerations + Explore the need for more FTEs
Electrical Infrastructure	+ Maintain or include public power GFIs throughout the park and gathering areas + Electrical investments are potentially tied to the temporary public art and events strategy and policy + Wifi opportunities within the park + Collaboration with economic development – Enova operations volunteers + Need to consider budget availability and money + Consider impacts to facilities management operations staff with potential impacts to capital planning + Ensure drawings are updated and accessible
Wayfinding & Signage Strategy	+ Consideration of the overarching branding and heritage direction + Defer to the hierarchy already established for signage and wayfinding + Relative of indigenous language and other languages + Merge with the City-wide but have something unique about the park + Use iconography within signage and ease of use + Incorporate online information including an App and QR code – something more than a hard copy map that can be dynamic + Consider lighting and ease of visibility + Repurpose the existing gallery for accessibility and information sharing

Topic	Key Considerations
	+ Use natural features such as planting to complement the wayfinding and signage and education around natural environment
Active Transportation Strategy	+ Common surface type along the trail where possible and transition to surrounding facilities – no interlocking + Maintenance and level of service need to be considered + If there is a cycling only linkage what would be the enforcement of the space + Education and awareness needed of safe use and routing + Heritage impacts and challenges along with committee buy-in + Cross-section of different trail types and facilities to be considered + Consideration of 4 season maintenance
Parking Strategy	+ Need to include an information sharing component to get the information out to the community + Zoning minimum for the park + Resident considerations and parking needs + Emerging services + Bike land – both short and long-term types + Road closures or one way options as a way of finding capacity in the system + Data driven approaches to management + Other parking options to build capacity beyond the park

Topic	Policy & Procedure Considerations
Event Strategy	+ Garbage management and provision + Consider staff knowledge and capacity as well as consistency of approach + Guidance should be provided for external maintenance providers outside of the City + Consider overtime requirements relative to union expectations + Consider contracted security services and what they provide + Consider blockades to protect event attendees – where needed + Consider bylaw impacts and update requirements e.g. noise
Washroom Accessibility & Upgrades	+ GAAC audit of existing facilities + Heritage impacts should be assessed of any building amendments + Times of opening should be considered for broader access which would require bylaw changes + AODA legislation currently under review by the province and should be addressed once confirmed

Topic	Policy & Procedure Considerations
Electrical Infrastructure	None
Wayfinding & Signage Strategy	+ AODA compliance and considerations
Active Transportation Strategy	+ Bylaw enforcement and changes with singular uses
Parking Strategy	+ Consideration of a long-term parking strategy + Coordination with parking and the City's TMP with clear impacts and outcomes

6.2 Transportation Charette

The **Transportation Charette** was held on Thursday September 11th, 2025, between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. at City Hall. The intent of the workshop was to engage in conversation about transportation specific topics impacting Victoria Park and for future consideration as part of the master plan process or ongoing City efforts. A presentation was given and supporting maps of the Victoria Park area were provided. The map presented existing conditions and routing, desire lines and other transportation features / potential preliminary recommendations for consideration. Specifically, the topics discussed included:

- + Jubilee Drive access and design
- + Surrounding street and active / public transportation networks including access and transition / connectivity
- + Parking and traffic concerns
- + The potential use of technology to support active transportation and park integration.

Major themes that emerged from this discussion were used to help refine and improve potential connectivity related recommendations including:

- + Support for the potential closure of Jubilee Drive but with consideration for enhanced design solutions that encourage more walking and cycling.
- + Potential for pilot closure or seasonal closure of the roadway.
- + The need for dedicated spine cycling trails or loop routes through the park to reduce conflict between users.
- + The closing of parking facilities – with the exception of accessible parking – within the park encouraging people to use parking in surrounding areas.
- + Improved connectivity to transit including enhanced wayfinding and signage.

- + Removal or restriction of on-street parking with the potential reallocation of space for active transportation infrastructure.
- + Monitoring and evaluation of success of facilities to determine appropriate circulation needs and improvements.
- + Enhanced crossings and transitions for improved safety especially at the entry and exit points of the park.

Generally, there was a sense of strong support for transportation related changes and improvements to provide access to Victoria Park but to also improve circulation through and to the park. There was considerable interest in the way in which Jubilee Drive is designed and used as a corridor within the City and acknowledgement that there are a number of different influencing factors which would need to be considered and tested before a firm and final solution is implemented. Most specifically, the impacts of the HCD policies and guidelines and the opportunities or barriers associated with changes to roadway design and alignment as well as facility design.

The following is a more detailed summary of the information shared at the transportation charette session.

Topic	# Comments	Comments
Jubilee Drive	14	+ Maintenance needs would change with new materials and treatment on Jubilee + Avoid bisecting the park-explore gated options and closures + Closures are possible but signage is a challenge in the park + There is a requirement to conserve the park road as part of the historic plan policy + Materiality should be considered but turning movement needs @ 20m to maintain the alignment (in terms of a closed loop on Jubilee) + There is the perception of speeding on Jubilee but it does not reflect the reality of the situation + 7500 vehicles come through the park every day-if Jubilee was closed to traffic where would they go? + Data collected indicates that the average car speed through the park is between 30-40KM/hr + The benefit of closing Jubilee drive would be the activation of space and connections of space through trails

Topic	# Comments	Comments
		+ Green streets change the characteristics of the street and traffic management--change the form of the street which could be a challenge with regard to heritage requirements + in terms of the heritage district plan, less sidewalks is better and sidewalks should not be running alongside Jubilee + Tree locations impact the pathway for sidewalks
AT & Transit Access	15	+ Each pedestrian crosswalk requires 8 signs-avoid sign pollution and overuse + Sightlines and PXO locations could have raised crossings for traffic calming + Green space connections to Gaukel could provide a linear park and access of experience + Lighting gaps with the park help to keep pedestrian scale main corridors defined + Dedicated active transportation route with a separation of bikes and pedestrians is needed + Commuter cycling route should only be around the periphery of the park + The heritage framework discourages pathways + Pedestrian/cyclist conflicts with speed data for ebikes/Scooters would be useful to better understand conflicts and near misses + Can signage be consistent for wayfinding with existing and emergent trail signage with the same language and format used + David street parking is problematic consider wholesale prohibition + Buses will not work on a green street + GRT stop at or near the boat house useful + Consider gates at either end of Jubilee within the summer months for maximum pedestrian access + Explore the integration of connectivity with Gaukel and Ion Station + Ensure that there is more bike parking at transitions points in park are required
Parking & Traffic	13	+ Provide enhanced crossing by boathouse

Topic	# Comments	Comments
		+ Consider the crossing needs and a conflict area by Heinz and Jubilee + Enhance gateway at the north end of VP with better circulation (Jubilee and Park) + There should be on road and off-road mix but a need to design for more seamless transportation experience + Special Event parking designated area e.g. "Big Music Fest" + Special event signage bylaws as opposed to energy of staff putting up 100 signs through neighbourhood + Prohibit parking altogether on David + Have a one-way system on Schneider and Dill to address ownership and lessen chaos + Events use the Jubilee parking lots for set up but then the spots are accessible for the duration of the event + There is the possibility of parking at the corner of Joseph (for a monthly lease fee) but education would be better than more parking + Explore the underutilized parking on David, Jubilee to Joseph + Designated parking for bikes in all main area with removal of spaces + No electric vehicle charging/parking within the park
Technology	3	+ Passive areas not lit to align with the closed hours of the park--there is an online system for this + new technology needs to be compliant with the romantic design for heritage--There may be a LED option with globes + Map of restrictions and emergency no parking

Other comments were provided beyond the 'transportation' topic but pertaining to the future planning and design of the park. Comments included:

- + How would you address the Pavilion as an event space if the park is bisected by Jubilee, with the commons as a dedicated event space and a strict division?
- + Consideration of the use of softscapes to delineate various areas within the park
- + Road rage and violence within the area of Dill, Schneider, David, and Roland
- + Park needs a dedicated wayfinding strategy - signage with indigenous language on them

- + People in Victoria Park have issues getting to their properties
- + Determine the way in which the park invites ppl from a mobility driving destination and the ways in which it can be more of a mobility support.
- + Understand where people are coming from and how they get here (reach out to Steve Roth for Endless Summer data and see if he can share any info on a non-event weekend in the park in the summer.

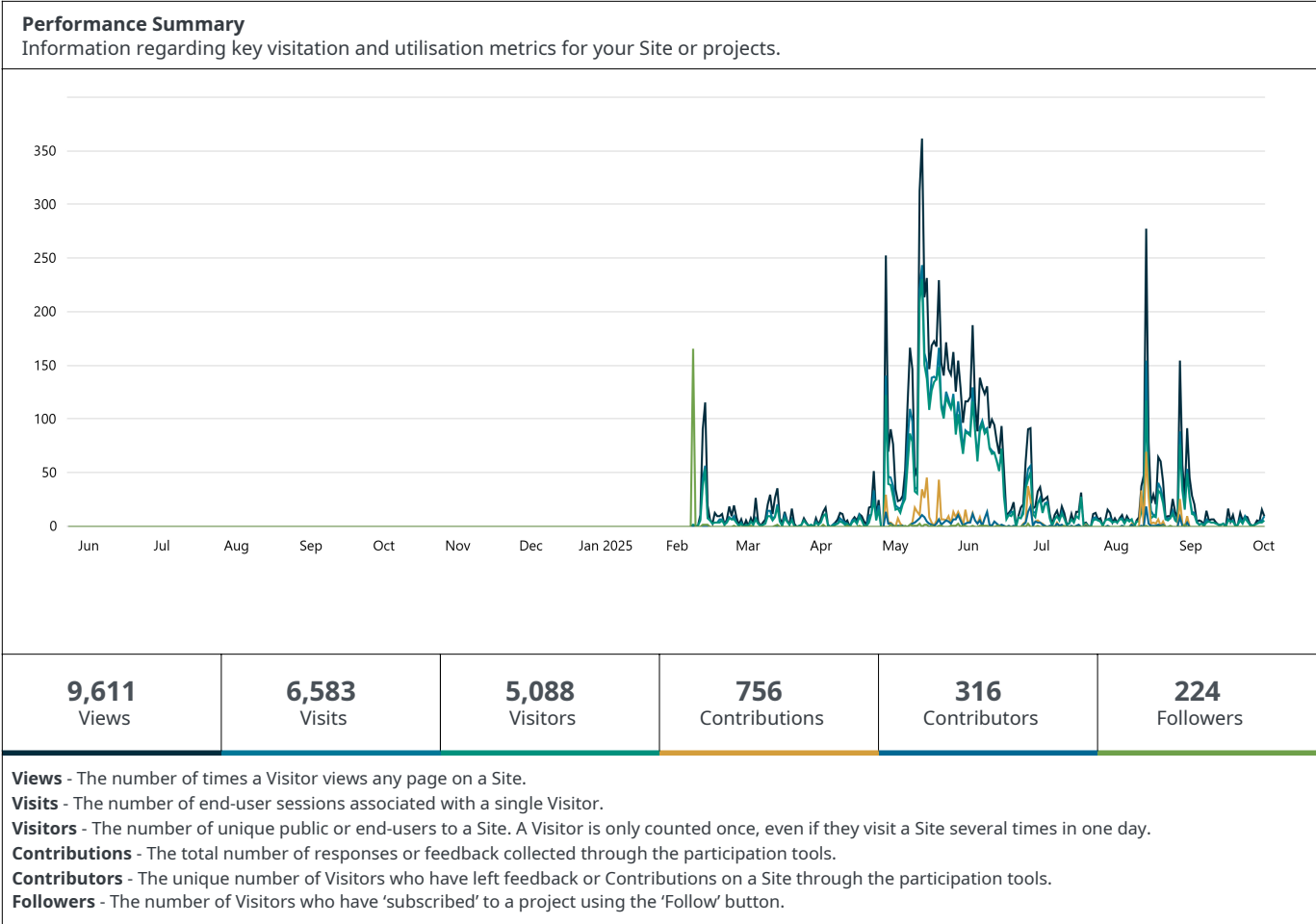
7.0 Next Steps

City Staff will be bringing forward the feedback from the overall Engagement process to it's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), and Heritage Kitchener Committee in winter of 2026, will be developing the Master Plan over the winter and spring, and will then update Council on draft recommendations. The Master Plan concepts and design will be shared with the community and interest groups that were involved throughout the process via the Engage Kitchener project page and external communications.



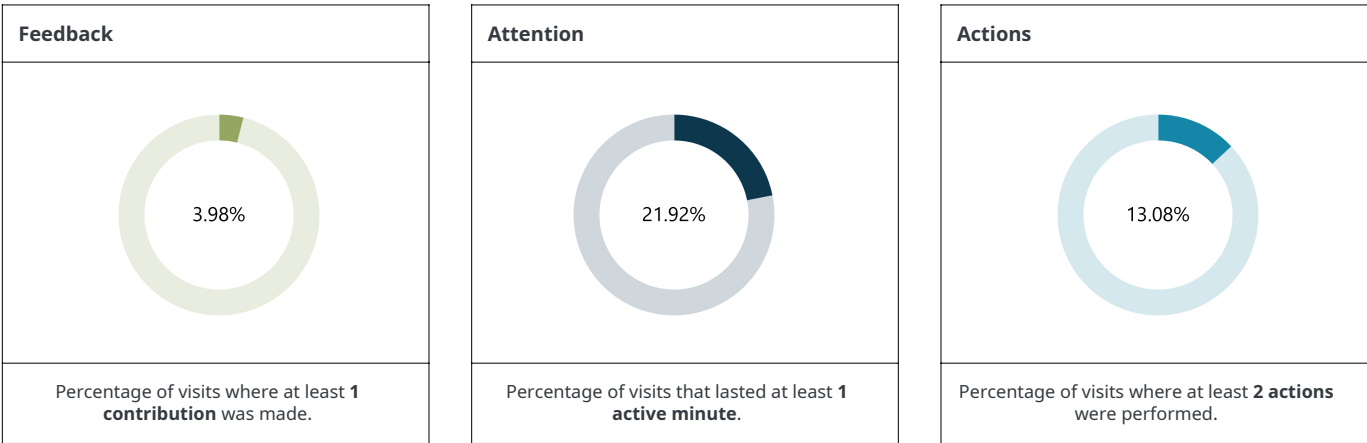
APPENDIX A:

Engage Kitchener Project Page – Statistics



Conversions

Information regarding how well your engagement websites converted Visitors to perform defined key actions.



Participation

Information regarding how people have participated in your projects and activities.

Contributions by Activity				
Contributions by Activity is a breakdown of contributions across each tool				
Activity		Contributions		%
	Social Map	364		48.15%
	Gather	211		27.91%
	Form	181		23.94%

Top Activities				
Top Activities is the top 5 tools that received the highest contributions				
	Activity	Page Name	Contributions	Contributors
	Social Map	Show us on the map!	364	104
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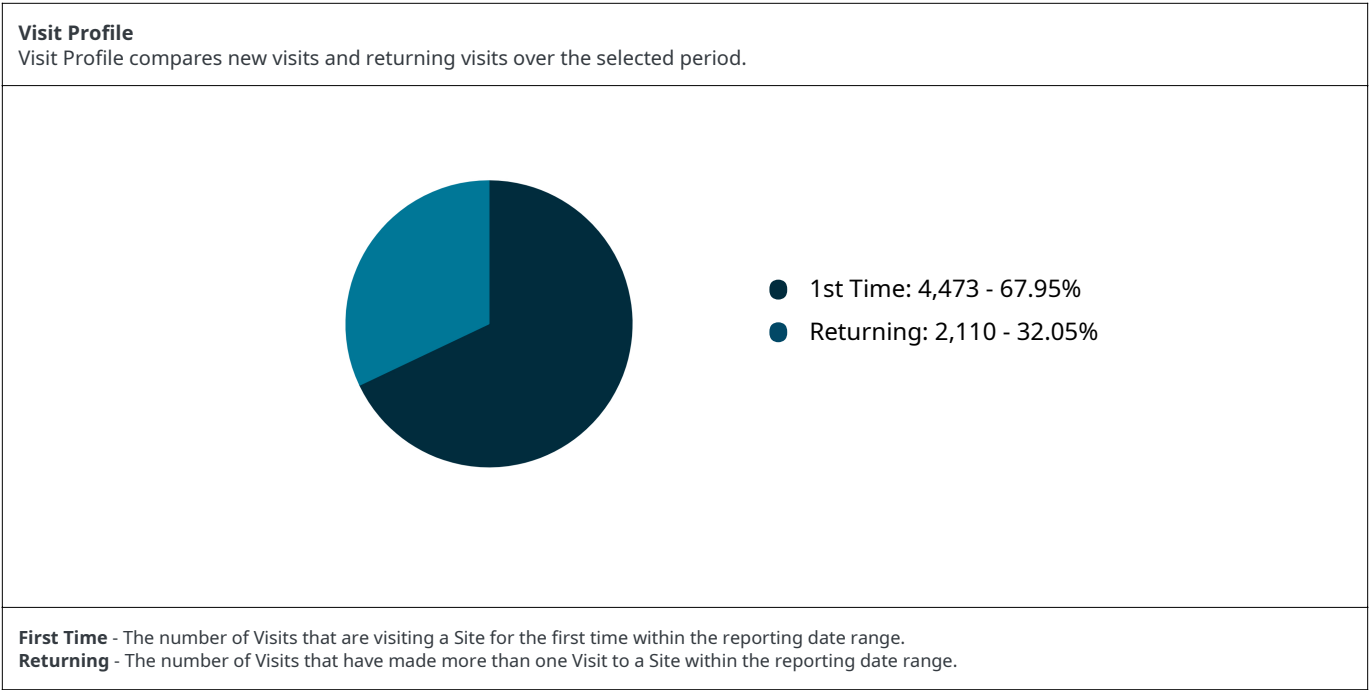
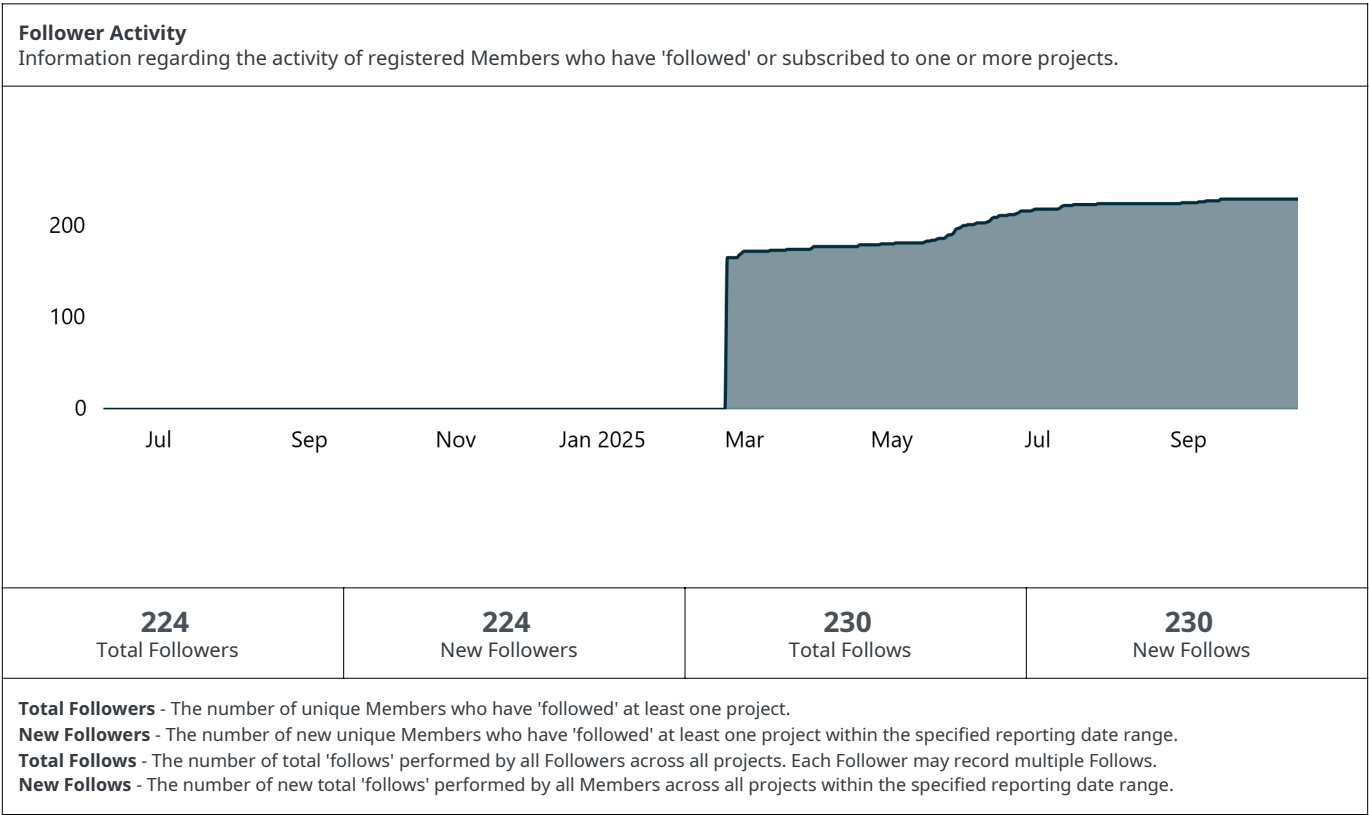
Projects

The current number of published projects on your site

Engagement Time			Top Visited Pages			
5 Days 19 Hours 46 Minutes			Summary information for the top five most visited Pages.			
			Page Name	Visitation %	Visits	Visitors
			Victoria Park Master Plan	90.1%	5,922	4,771
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Aug 28th 2025 Peak Visitation Date		Thursday Peak Visitation Day				

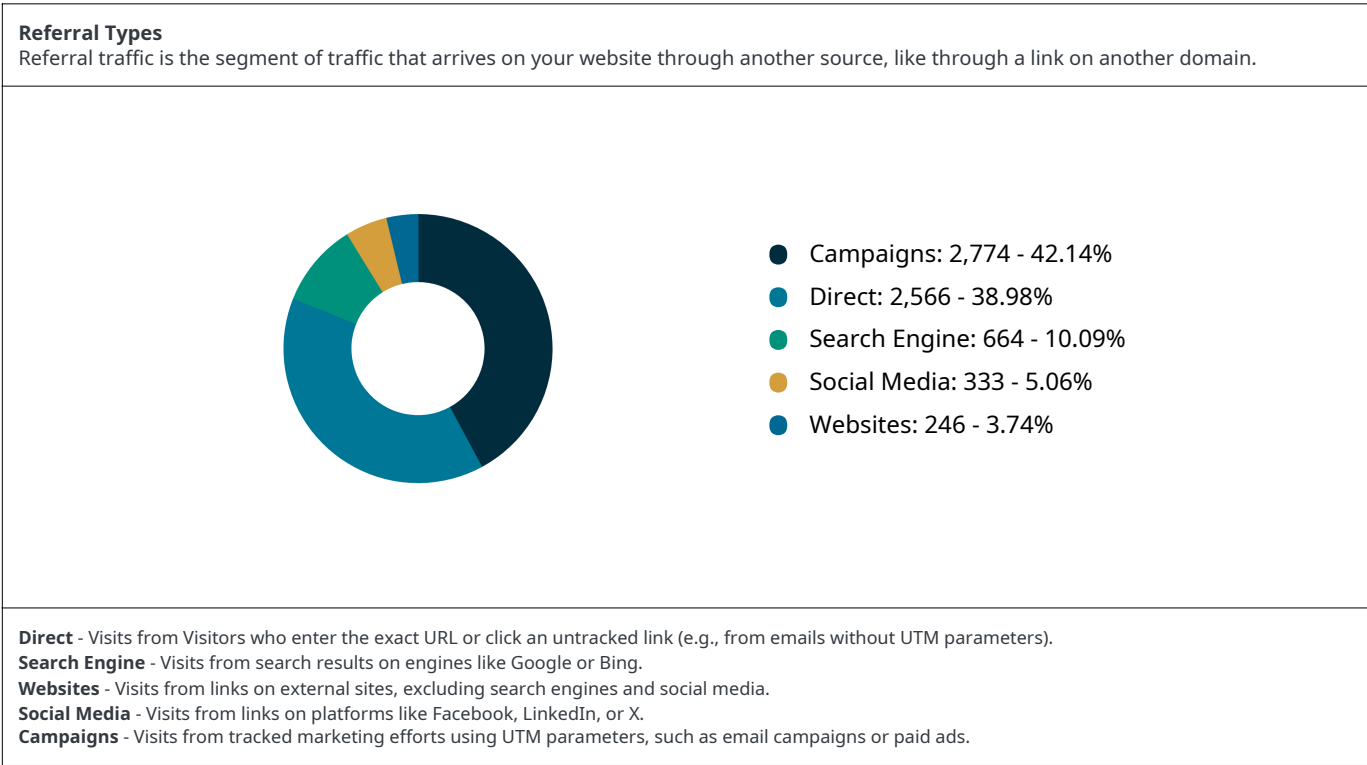
People

Information regarding who has participated in your projects and activities.



Acquisition

Information regarding the method by which Visitors arrived to your Site or projects.



Downloads

Information regarding your downloads, the total set of unique documents downloaded, total downloads of all files, and your top downloads.



0

Total Downloads

No Data Available

Email Campaigns

Information regarding your email campaigns, your total campaigns, the total number of recipients, and your top campaigns by click-through rate (clicks as a percentage of total recipients).



5

Email Campaigns Sent



972

Total Recipients



34.06%

Click-through Rate

Top Campaigns			
Top email campaigns that have activity in your selection, ordered by click-through rate (clicks as a percentage of total recipients).			
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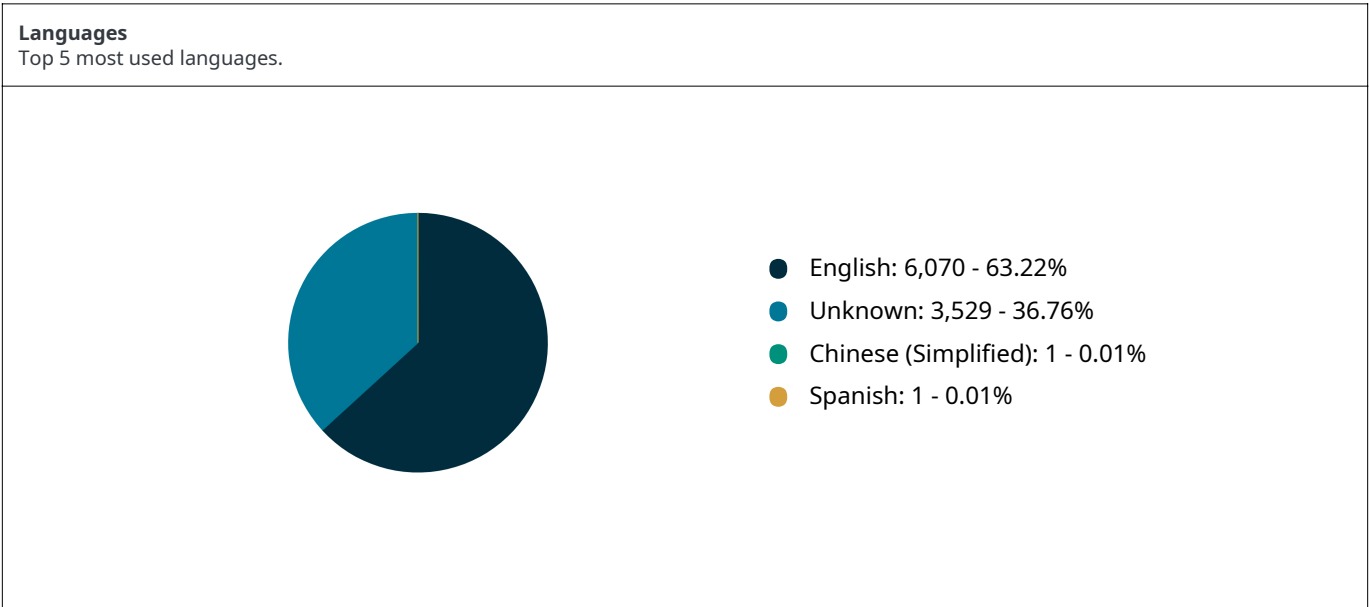
 socialpinpoint

EngageWR - Project Report (07 Jun 2024 to 16 Oct 2025)

Page 5 of 6

Translation

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Top Languages Top 5 languages with the number of page views	
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APPENDIX B:

Kitchener Youth Action Committee Idea Jam Summary

VICTORIA PARK MASTER PLAN

KYAC Idea Jam Summary



Event Overview

- City of Kitchener staff, Dillon Consulting, and Urban Minds hosted an “Idea Jam” visioning session with the Kitchener Youth Action Council (KYAC) on Thursday, April 3, 2025, from 6:00-7:30 PM, at the Downtown Community Centre.
- 14 youth members of KYAC (ages 14-19) attended the session.
- Following an overview presentation of the Victoria Park Master Plan, KYAC members participated in two interactive activities.



Group Activity 1



Roses, Thorns & Buds

Group Activity 1: Roses, Thorns, & Buds

- Participants worked in groups of 2 or 3 to identify the areas of the park that they liked (roses), disliked (thorns), and would like to see improved upon (buds) in Victoria Park on a large printed map.
- Discussions were facilitated by the project team members and notes were taken on sticky notes and placed accordingly on the map.
- The following is an aggregated summary of what we heard from the participants and read from their sticky notes.

Roses



- The park's large size and central location
- Walking trails
- Scenic and beautiful, e.g., trees and islands
- Outdoor gym and swings
- Washrooms
- Activities, events, and festivals
- Landmarks, e.g., clock tower and lights on Gaukel St.

Thorns



- Safety concerns regarding obscured sightlines and isolated areas (east of the pavilion and west of Roos Island)
- Lack of shade
- Lack of activity at the Rotary Bandstand and outdoor gym
- Waste management (trash and pet waste)
- Anti-homeless benches

Buds



- Indigenous art
- More interesting and fun opportunities for play, e.g., sports courts, playgrounds, exercise equipment
- Winter activities
- Water-related features, e.g., lighting, fountains, swimming area, paddle boats
- Wayfinding signage
- More washrooms
- More wildlife
- Access to food, e.g., street vendors, barbecue grills



Labelled maps with colour-coded sticky notes

Group Activity 2

Vision Board



Group Activity 2: Vision Boards

- Participants worked in the same groups to create a collage based on the question: “How would you like to see Victoria Park change over the next 10 years?”
- Participants were asked to organize their ideas into the four themes of the Master Plan: Connectivity, Growth, Natural Spaces, and Community.
- Curated images and old magazines donated by the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects were provided to aid the creative process.
- The following is an aggregated summary of what we heard from the participants and saw in their vision boards.



Connectivity

- Protected bike shelters
- Paved walking and cycling paths varying in elevation
- Accessible pathways between attractions to make it more comfortable and safe for families
- More organized layout
- Golf carts to travel from place to place
- Bike rentals
- Electric car charging stations

Growth

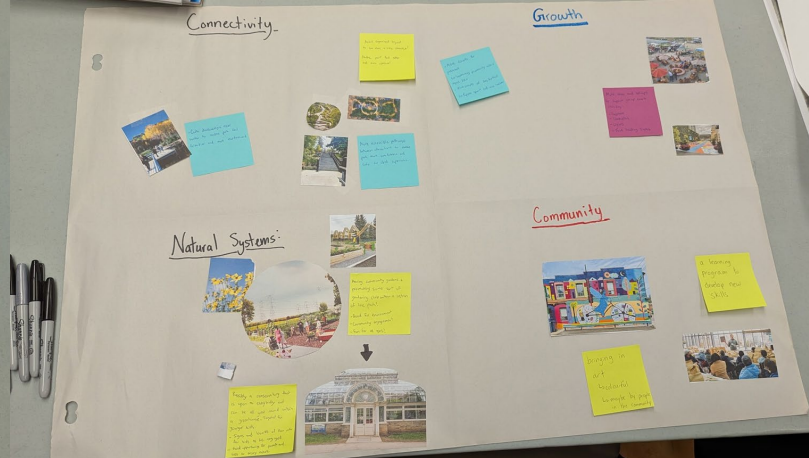
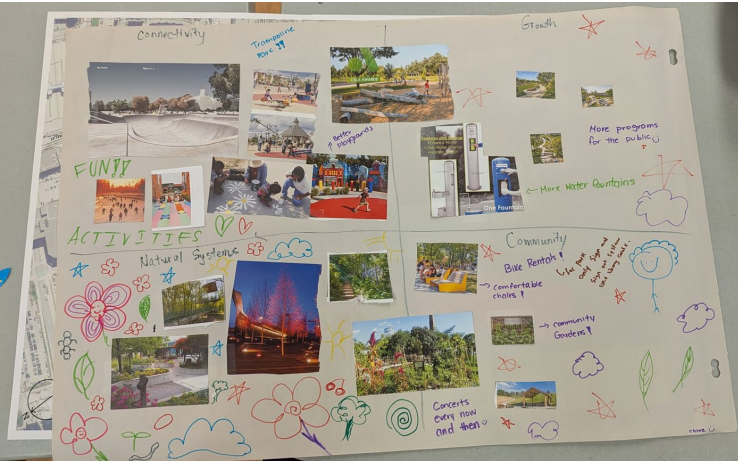
- Water fountains and benches
- More variety of play spaces:
 - Trampoline park
 - Skate park
 - Skating rink
 - Playground made of organic materials
 - Hopscotch
 - Mini golf
 - Splash pads and swimming pool
 - Paddleball / pickleball
 - Climbing structures
- More programs for the public
- Access to food: hot dog stand

Natural Spaces

- Trees and plant beds along paved pathways
- Colourful flowers and a variety of other plants
- Bridges or walkways at various heights for exploring through an area with tall trees
- Community gardens
- Greenhouses
- Beaches, piers, and docks
- Conservatory for families

Community

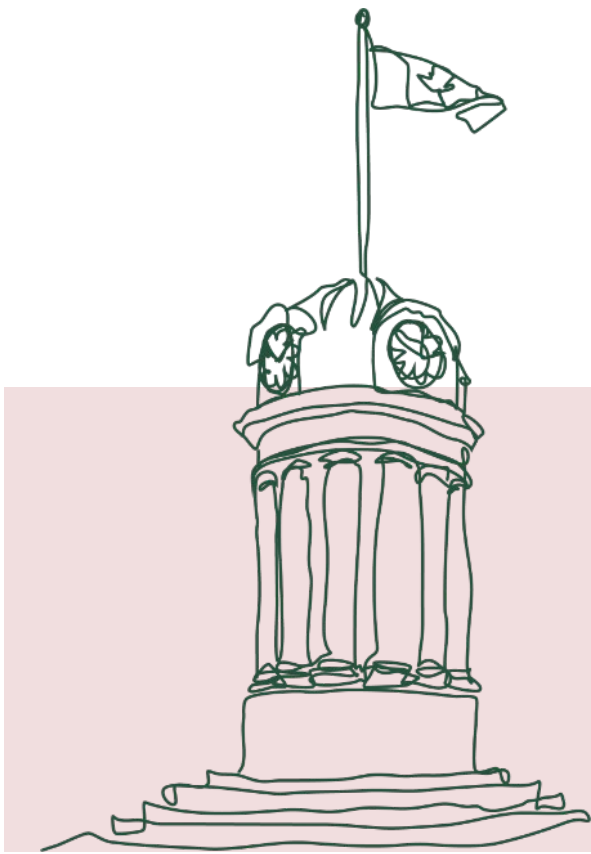
- Incorporate public art in various ways:
 - Sidewalk chalk art
 - Murals and sculptures
 - Interactive art
 - Water fountains
 - Bench designs
- Community gathering spaces: public square, large fire pit, picnic tables, umbrellas
- Comfortable seating
- Safety for families and children at night
- Concerts and busking
- Festivals and events
- Learning programs and workshops





APPENDIX C:

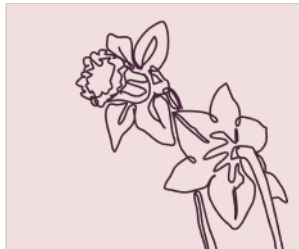
Conversations in the Park Display Boards



Victoria Park Master Plan

WELCOME!

[engagewr.ca/
VictoriaParkMP](http://engagewr.ca/VictoriaParkMP)



Help shape the next chapter for Victoria Park

Established in 1896, Victoria Park is one of Kitchener's most cherished public spaces. We're updating its Master Plan to guide how the park's spaces, amenities and infrastructure evolve over the next 10 years.

By reassessing current conditions, usage patterns and future needs, we'll create a data-driven roadmap for improving, maintaining and operating the park.

Community input is a vital part of this process, with opportunities to provide feedback in-person and online between over the spring and summer.



Conversations in the Park

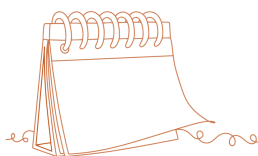
Spring: Friday May 23rd, 2025, 6pm-8:30pm

Summer: Friday July 18th, 2025, 6pm-8:30pm



Share Feedback Online

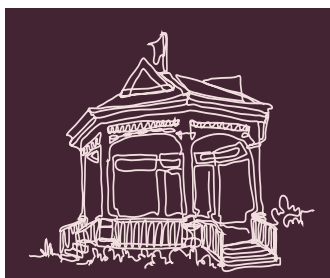
[engagewr.ca/ VictoriaParkMP](https://engagewr.ca/VictoriaParkMP)



Pop-up Events

May-August

In Victoria Park and across Kitchener



What is the Master Plan about?

The Master Plan is...

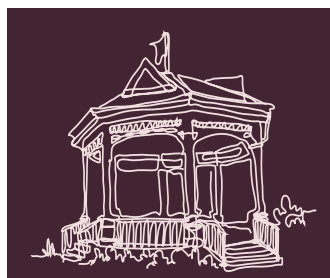
- a 10-year vision for the park to help shape the future for its users
- an opportunity for you as community members to share your experiences
- a set of recommendations informed by data and community input
- a way to determine what the priorities are for improvements in the near future, and not a full redesign of the park



Additional Conversations

The City is also conducting separate processes apart from the Master Plan to more deeply explore key issues that matter to the community relating to the Park:

- Permanent Indigenous Space
- Commemorative Installation related to the Queen Victoria Statue



What we have learned so far

From our background analysis

- Condition assessment completed for park features, infrastructure, furnishings, utilities, and play structures
- Prioritization for repairs based on core characteristics, environmental impacts, financial viability, and health, safety, and recreational potential

From engagement to date

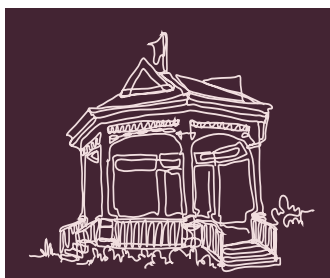
- Workshops held with Kitchener Youth Action Committee, and with invited participants from organizations/ agencies/ groups involved in planning and serving a diverse range of communities in Kitchener
- Walking tour with the Victoria Park Working Group and Victoria Park Neighbourhood Association

Considerations:

- Playground, splash pad and fitness area footprints could be increased
- Splashpad upgrades
- Addition of accessible seating throughout the park
- Pedestrian pathway network repaving, increasing pathway widths, and review of slopes for accessibility
- More pedestrian level lighting to increase safety and visibility
- Creation of a cohesive family of site furnishings
- Develop wayfinding signage strategy

Highlights:

- More fun and interesting spaces and activities for youth
- Better wayfinding in the park
- Cleaning and upgrading of washrooms
- Better maintenance and removal of waste
- More connections to naturalized spaces and educational opportunities
- Opportunities to improve accessibility and sense of safety along trails and pathways, through lighting and improvement of materials and condition of paving
- Integration of Indigenous cultural space, storytelling, and events in the park
- Consideration of a range of smaller naturalized areas and fostering ways for native species to thrive



Four Stations: Share Your Thoughts on Each



Connectivity

How can we improve on the way that people are able to arrive at and move through the Park?



Growth

How can we design for a growing and diverse community, and cater to the needs of different groups?



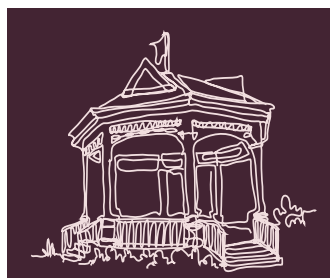
Community

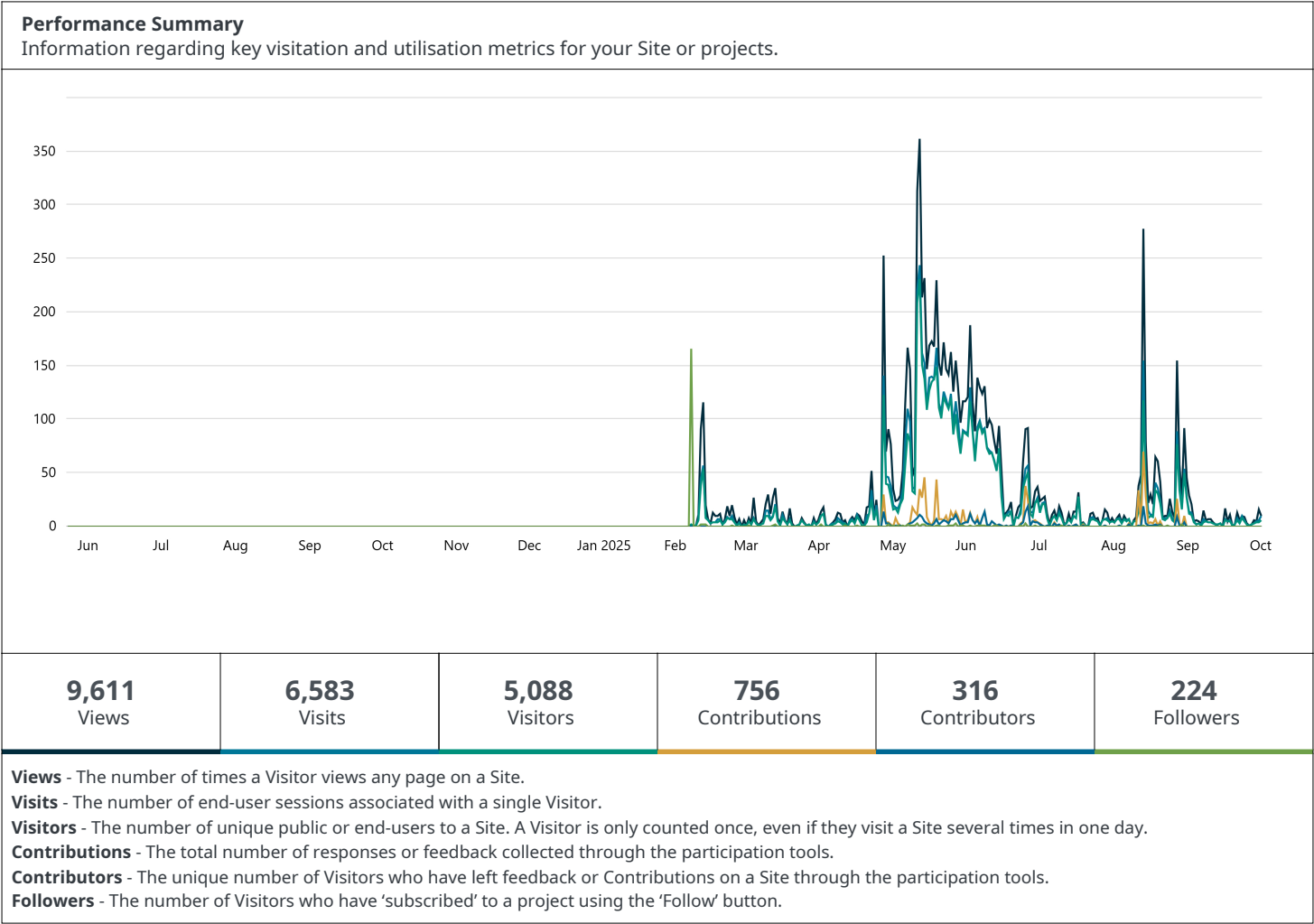
How can we make the Park more welcoming and inclusive, and provide spaces for a range of events and types of gatherings?



Natural Systems

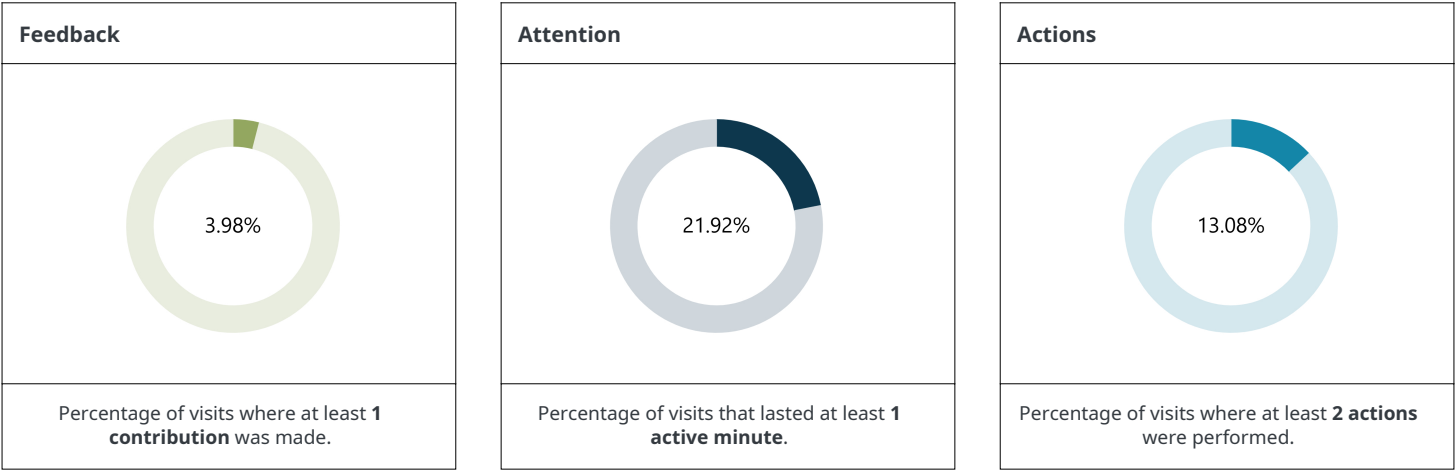
How can we support biodiversity and connections to nature, and foster environmental stewardship in the Park?





Conversions

Information regarding how well your engagement websites converted Visitors to perform defined key actions.



Participation

Information regarding how people have participated in your projects and activities.

Contributions by Activity				
Contributions by Activity is a breakdown of contributions across each tool				
Activity		Contributions		%
	Social Map	364		48.15%
	Gather	211		27.91%
	Form	181		23.94%

Top Activities				
Top Activities is the top 5 tools that received the highest contributions				
	Activity	Page Name	Contributions	Contributors
	Social Map	Show us on the map!	364	104
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Projects

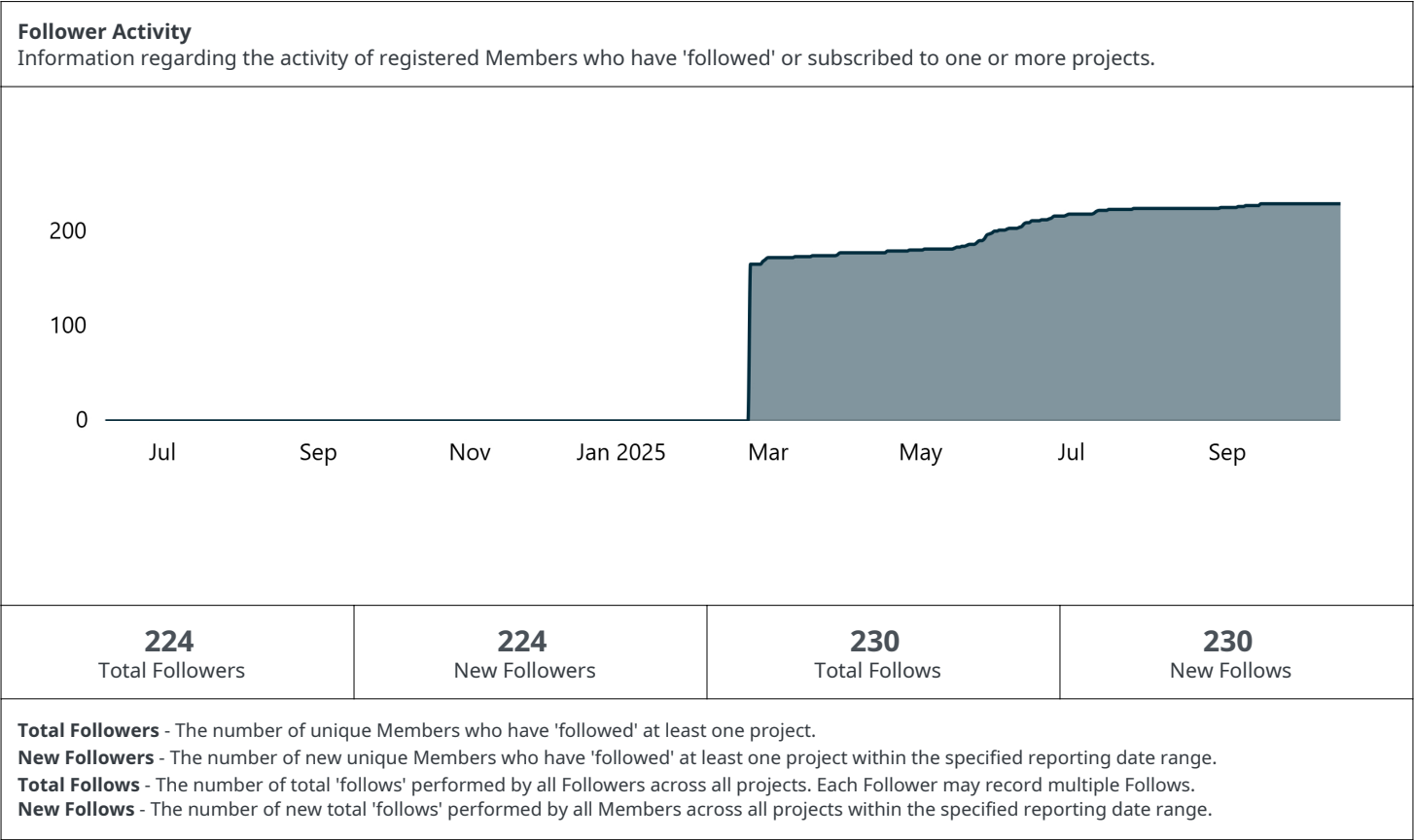
The current number of published projects on your site

Engagement Time	
5 Days	19 Hours
46 Minutes	
Aug 28th 2025 Peak Visitation Date	Thursday Peak Visitation Day

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Summary information for the top five most visited Pages.			
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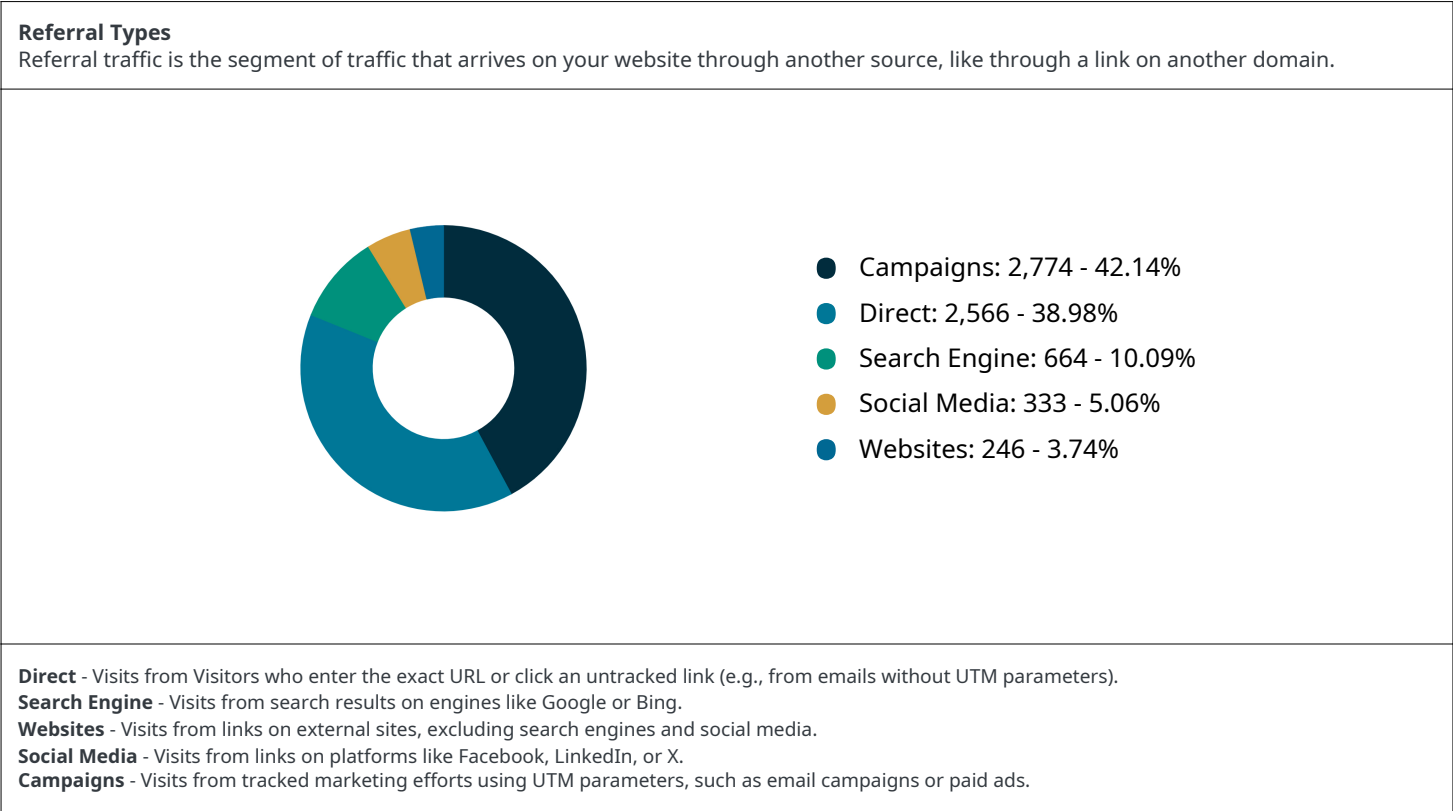
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Information regarding your downloads, the total set of unique documents downloaded, total downloads of all files, and your top downloads.



0

Total Downloads

No Data Available

Email Campaigns

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5

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972

Total Recipients



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Click-through Rate

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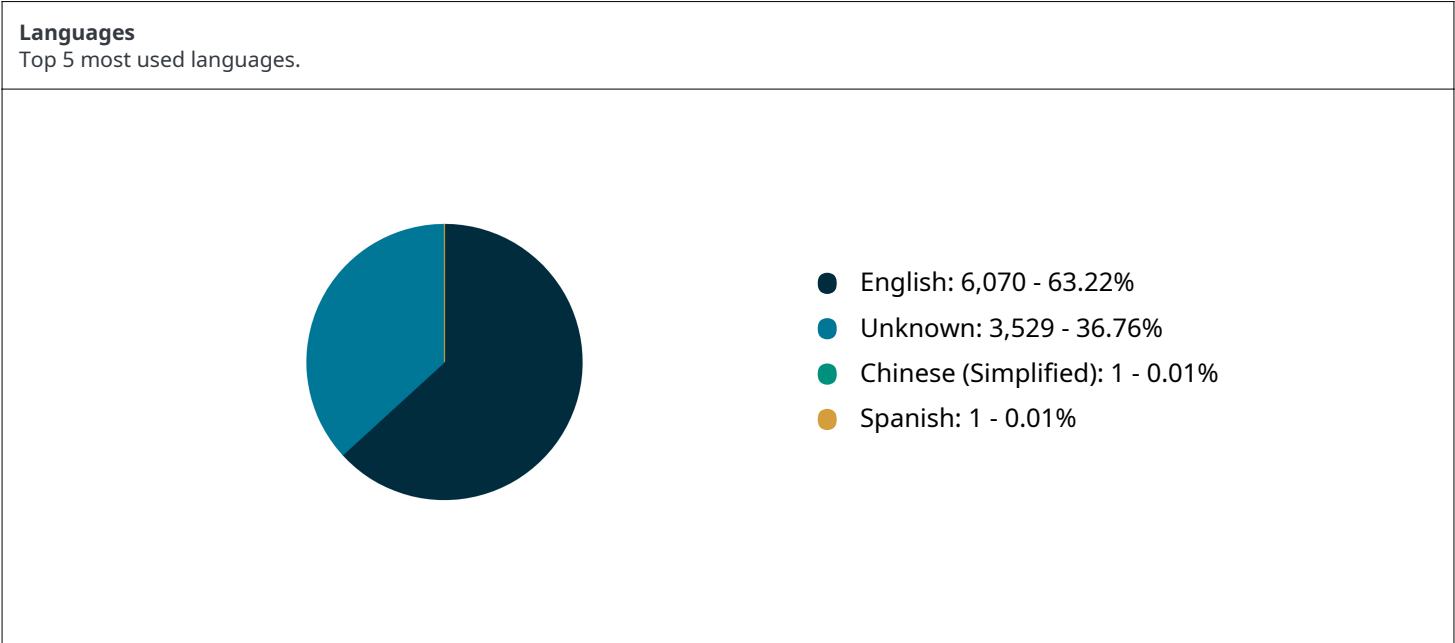
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EngageWR - Project Report (07 Jun 2024 to 16 Oct 2025)

Page 5 of 6

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VICTORIA PARK MASTER PLAN

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Labelled maps with colour-coded sticky notes





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Vision Board



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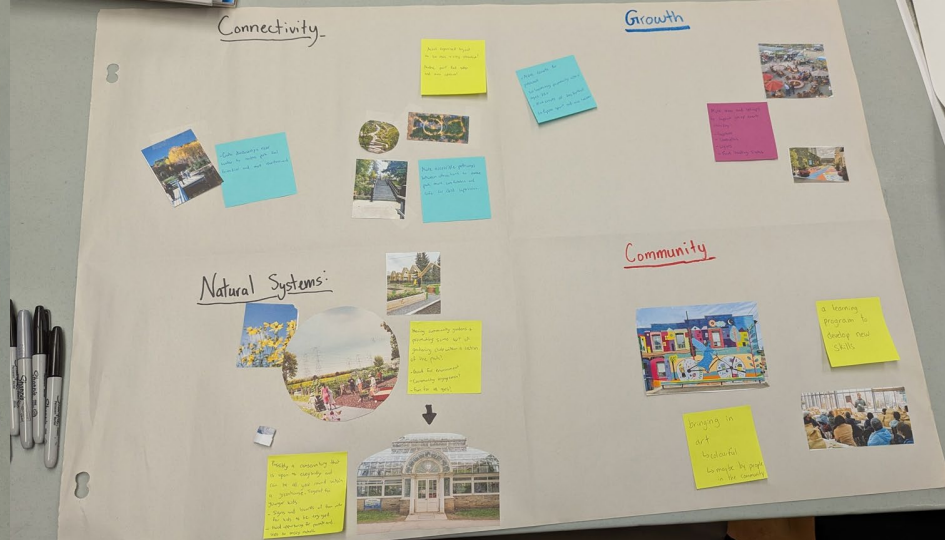
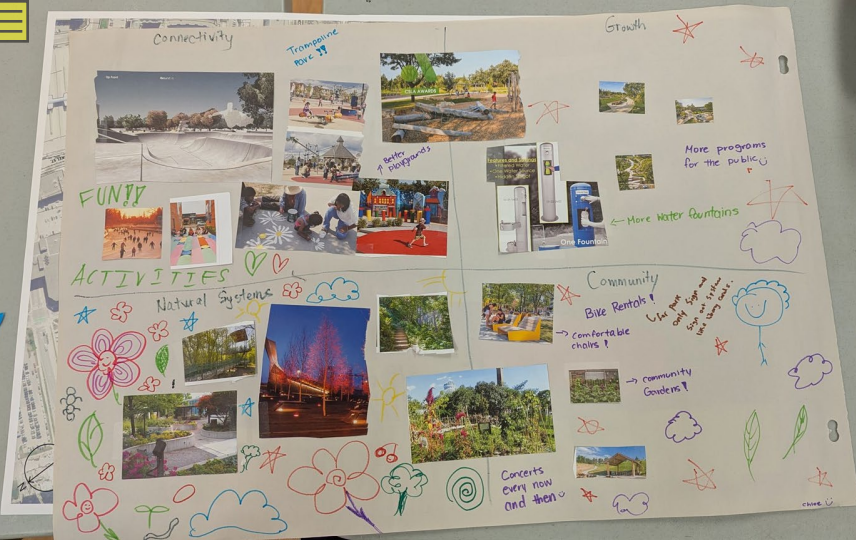


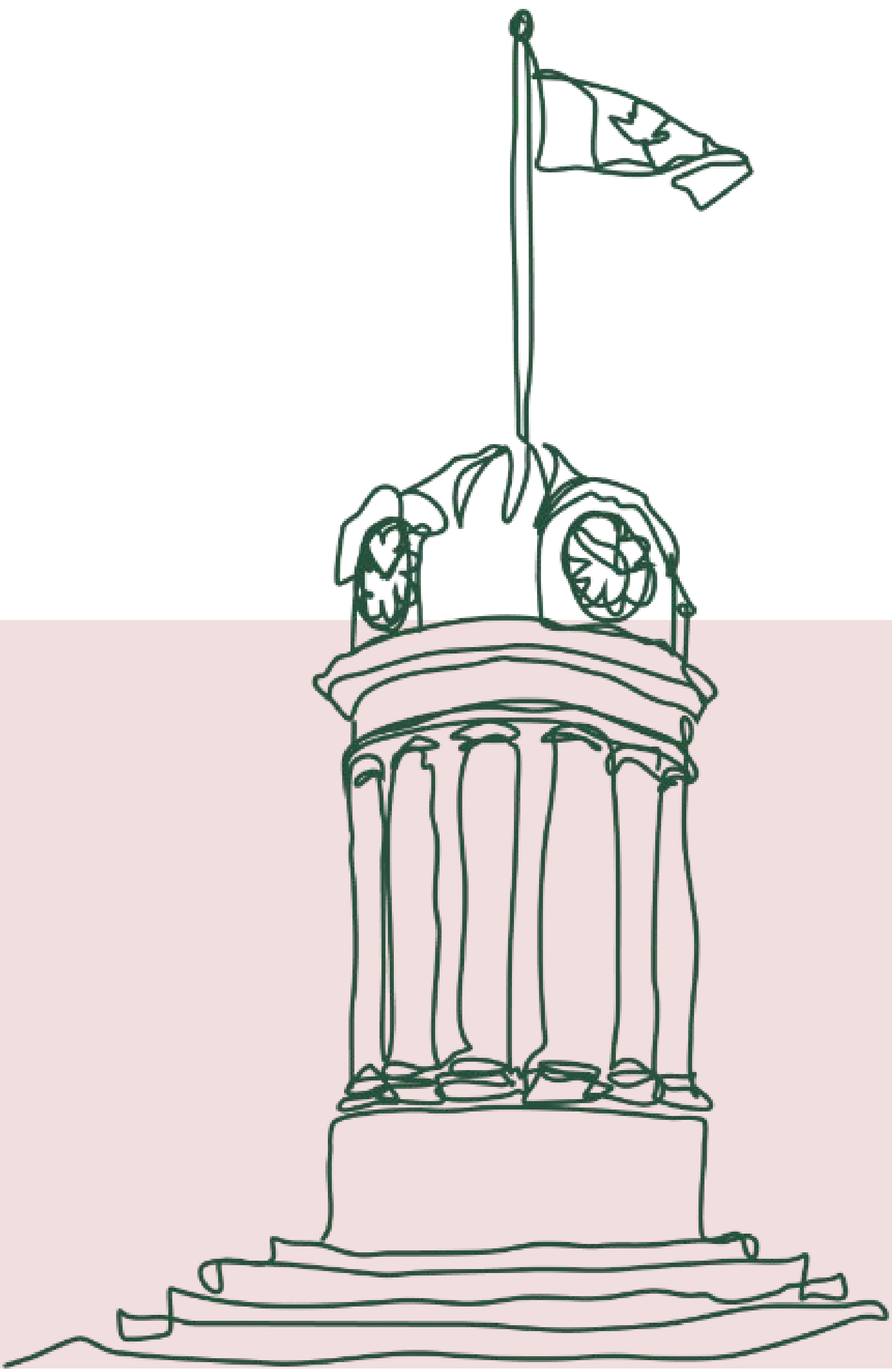
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Victoria Park Master Plan

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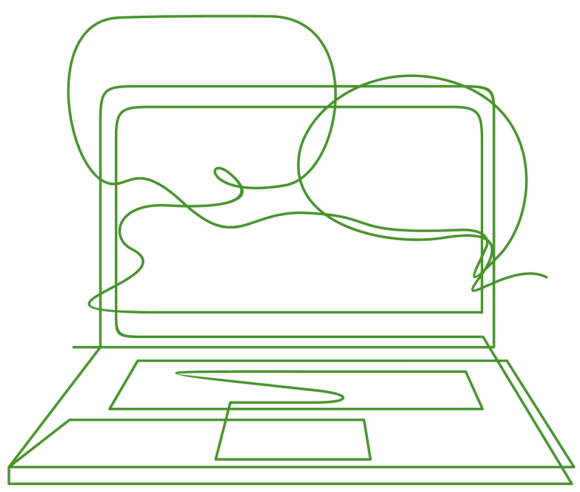
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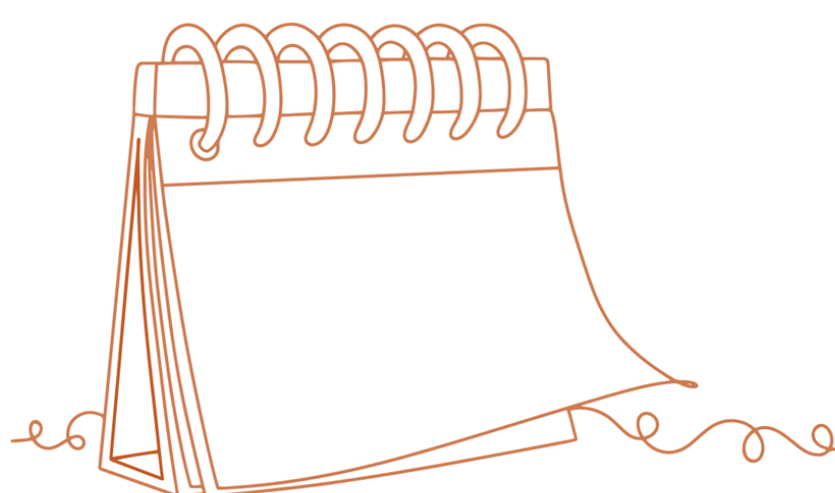
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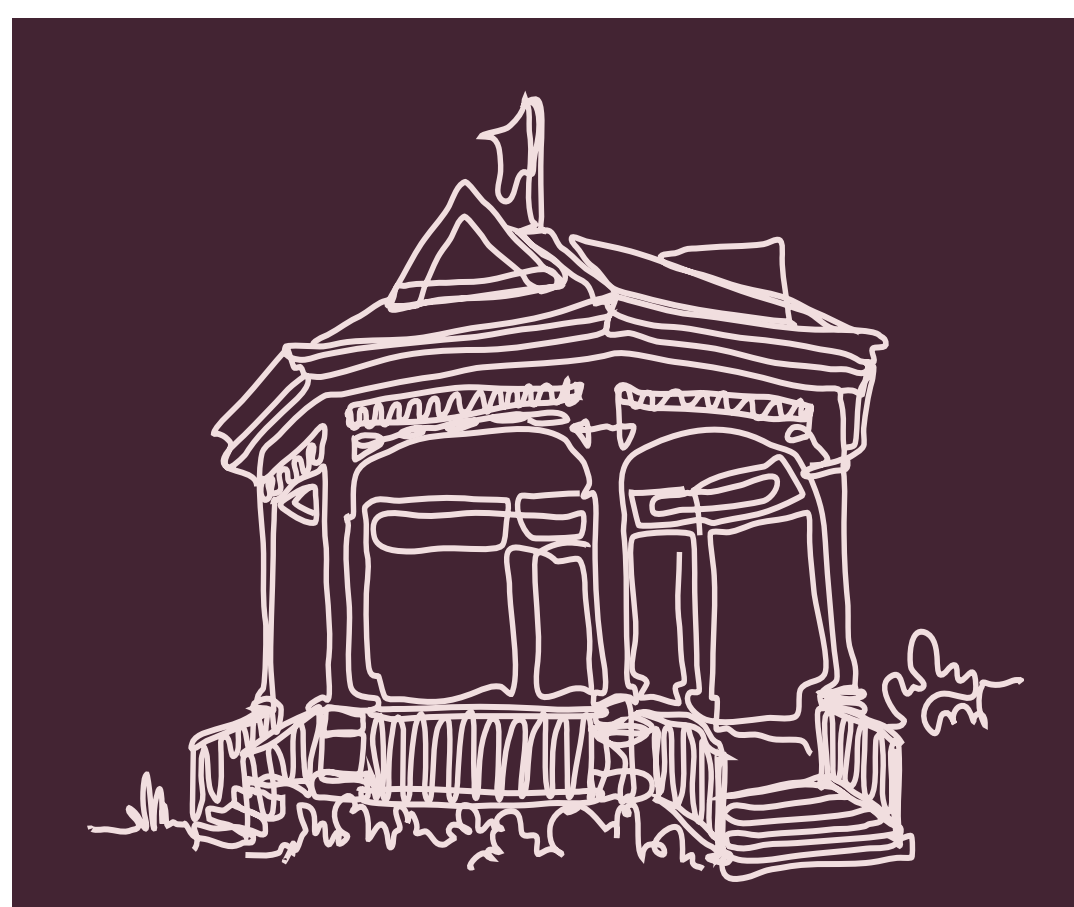
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May-August

In Victoria Park and across Kitchener



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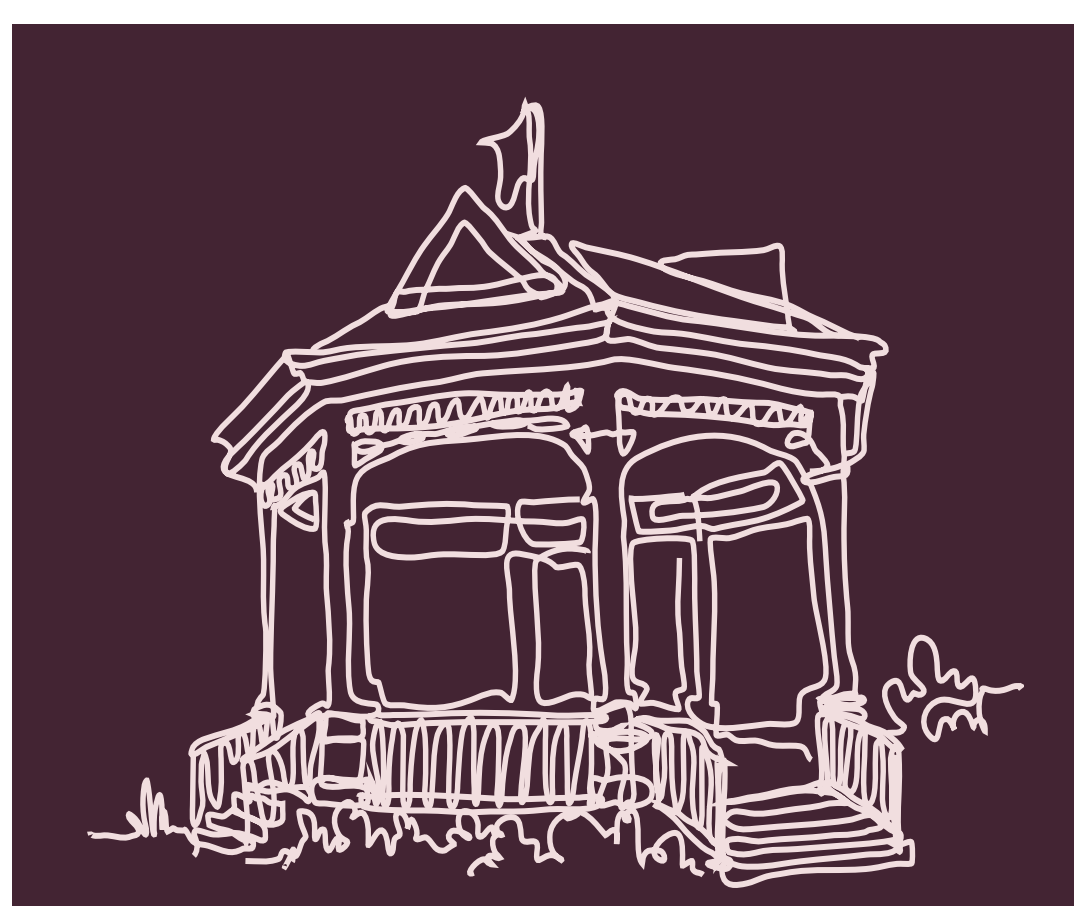
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Growth

How can we design for a growing and diverse community, and cater to the needs of different groups?



Community

How can we make the Park more welcoming and inclusive, and provide spaces for a range of events and types of gatherings?



Natural Systems

How can we support biodiversity and connections to nature, and foster environmental stewardship in the Park?

