



# Surfacing Solutions

THE CANADIAN CITY PARKS REPORT

**How addressing conflict and reframing challenges as opportunities can create more equitable and sustainable parks.**

park people  
ami·es des parcs

 2023

PRESENTED BY PARK PEOPLE

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## Established in 2011, Park People works with others to advance parks as an essential part of the transition to equitable cities where people and the rest of nature thrive.

At a time when we need to radically reimagine how we live in cities, Park People supports and connects Canada's city park changemakers, influences decision-makers to invest in city parks and amplifies the programs, practices and policies that inspire the transformative power of parks for cities.

### Park People works with the following key park changemakers:

**Community leaders:** The 1000+ community park groups across Canada are run by community leaders who contribute with their hands and hearts to ensure parks connect people to each other and the rest of nature, right in communities.

**Park NGOs:** The current and emerging non-profit park organizations that operate in Canada's large, nature-rich urban parks, delivering vital public programs that connect people to each other and the rest of nature.

**Park Professionals:** The government and professional decision-makers who recognize parks as essential health, environmental and social infrastructure for cities.

Our programs and events, funding, resources, research and professional services, are designed to help changemakers to realize the power of parks to build strong communities, healthy environments, and resilient cities.

Through support from the Weston Family Foundation, we're able to bring you the fifth edition of our annual Canadian City Parks Report.

The report tracks challenges, trends, and opportunities in Canadian city parks both through numbers and the stories that inspire action, progress, and shared learning.

### COULD YOU USE PARK PEOPLE'S SUPPORT IN ACTIVATING THE POWER OF PARKS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Whether you're a park professional, a non-profit organization, or city staff, check out our [professional services](#) to learn more.

Or you can [email us to chat](#).

### ARE YOU A PARK PERSON? THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

[Sign up for our Newsletter](#)

[Join the Park People Network](#)

Use our [Research and Resources](#) to help you make awesome things happen in your park

## In 2023, urban green spaces enhanced the livability of our cities.

**Parks serve as essential havens for physical activity, mental well-being, social cohesion, and connecting with nature in communities across Canada.**

**City parks stand as sanctuaries, nurturing crucial bonds with nature and championing urban biodiversity.**

The Canadian City Parks Report is an invaluable resource, shedding light on the state of these precious spaces while emphasizing the profound impact of urban biodiversity on our overall well-being.

At the Weston Family Foundation, restoring and protecting biodiversity lies at the core of our mission to enhance and enrich the lives of Canadians. Biodiverse ecosystems act as nature's resilient shield against climate change and safeguarding them demands a profound connection with the natural world. Urban parks, as more people migrate to cities,

offer an unparalleled opportunity to advance biodiversity and climate resilience while fostering a deeper human-nature relationship.

Thank you to the Park People team for their dedicated efforts in crafting this pivotal resource for park planners and park professionals. The Foundation proudly supports this research and celebrates Park People's commitment to promoting equity, inclusivity, and fostering strong bonds with urban parks across Canada.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the numerous municipal staff and park professionals whose invaluable contributions brought this report to life—a powerful tool that shares best practices and fosters dialogues to elevate our parks and cities to new heights.

Together, we are witnessing an inspiring wave of commitment from volunteers, staff, and city leaders to enhance parks and greenspaces in our cities. As parks thrive, they become true champions for all communities, nurturing our collective well-being and pointing the way to a brighter, greener future.



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**GARFIELD MITCHELL - CHAIR**  
WESTON FAMILY FOUNDATION



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# A report this size is a team effort.

**First, huge thanks to the dozens of city staff that worked with us to compile city data, answer our questions, and respond to interview requests.**

We know this takes a tremendous amount of work and this report is not possible without you.

We'd also like to thank the park professionals, community members, non-profit staff, and academic researchers who provided their time and expertise to contribute to the report.

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# Key Insights



**Over the past five years of the Canadian City Parks Report, our goal has always been to tell a story—the story of where city parks are going and where they need to go.**

**This year, we took an even deeper approach to gathering these stories.**



We sat down for interviews with 44 senior parks staff across 30 municipalities, who generously shared with us the challenges they are facing, the projects and people inspiring them, and their vision for the future of city parks.

Here, we weave together the themes we heard from those conversations with the data we gathered from our surveys of 35 municipalities and over 2000 residents of Canadian cities.

This report comes at a moment when Park People will soon be releasing our own updated theory of change—the roadmap that outlines our vision for making an impact in the world. In this vision, we see parks as an essential part of the transition to equitable cities where people and the rest of nature thrive.

We are committed to working with vital changemakers, like government staff and other park professionals, to get there. With this in mind, we aim not only to share our learnings, but also offer strategic policy directions, inspiring solution stories, and concrete tools to help us collectively advance change.

## Plan for higher park use

**Over the past three years, we've reported on the sharp uptick in usage of city parks across Canada.**



In the depths of the pandemic, people sought out parks as a way to stay connected safely, exercise, and de-stress.

These new patterns of use have since solidified into a new baseline of park use higher than pre-pandemic.

In the early days of the pandemic, 55% of cities we surveyed reported increased park use—a significant, but not surprising finding considering many indoor spaces were closed during this time.

***"The pandemic has increased usage of parks dramatically. And with the use of parks, which is great, we can see the abuse of parks as well."***

***"We're seeing higher demand on our open space than ever before. Which causes, on an operation side, extra maintenance. But also just changing needs."***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEES



However, that use has not declined in the intervening years—it has increased.

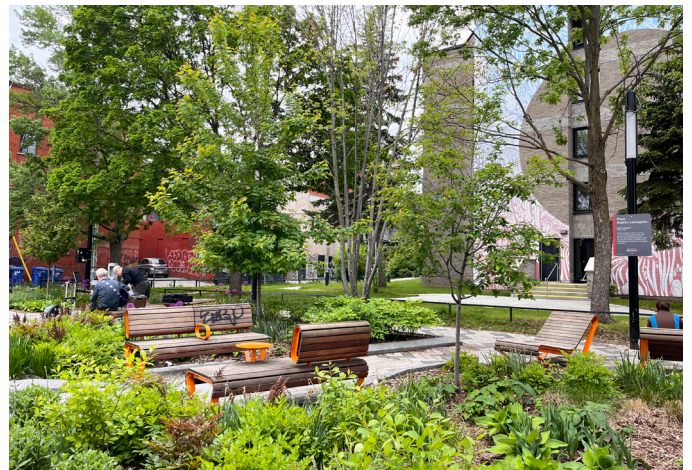
Between 2020 and 2022, park use increased a further 15% above 2020 pandemic levels.<sup>1</sup>

1. Google Mobility datasets report percent change of park use per day. Therefore, the average annual percent change from baseline was determined for 2020, 2021 and 2022 for all of Canada.

While people spending time in parks is a positive story, it is also putting increasing pressure on parks departments already strapped from years of austerity budgets. It may also be leading to more conflicts between park goers over sharing space.

***"Parks are not just a priority, they're as important as any other municipal service."***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



Andrée Lachapelle Park, Montréal (Clémence Marcastel, Park People, 2022)

### KEY STATS

**15%** increase in park visitation from 2020 to 2022 across Canada.

**64%** of city residents said they visit parks 2-3 times per week or more, including 29% that visit every day or almost every day.

**51%** of city residents said they'd like to spend more time in parks than they do currently.



## Refocus on park quality

### Measures of parkland are often steeped in quantity metrics.



For example, measuring how many residents live within a five minute walk of a park or how many hectares of park space a city has per thousand people.<sup>2</sup>

While measuring quantity comes with its own complications, it's much easier to measure than the more amorphous park quality. And yet quality can have just as much, if not more, of an influence on park use and experience.



Wexford Bloom (Stephen Bambo, PlazaPOPS, 2023)

If a park is within a five minute walk, but it has none of the amenities you need, or you don't feel safe, or everything feels run down—well, you may be disinclined to use it much.

Indeed, the top barrier to visiting parks reported by city residents in our survey was a lack of appropriate park amenities.

The condition of those amenities is another factor that greatly impacts park quality. And every single Canadian city is struggling with aging infrastructure.

**“When we're designing [parks], we're designing for the maintenance as well. Because if we have something that's really impressive, but it's going to require a significant amount of day-to-day upkeep, it's not a sustainable model.”**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



There are a few key challenges. One is funding. Current systems of park funding privilege growth-related park spending over investing in the existing park system. Funding mechanisms like development levies are often dedicated to land acquisition or new park amenities. The idea behind this system makes intuitive sense—growth pays for growth. However, the result is that new parks are being built, while existing parks and park amenities fall into further disrepair.

As one park director told us 80% of development levy funding goes towards “shiny new things” while just 20% of funding goes towards existing assets.

**“We have ample funds to build new, right? But we're exacerbating our issue by building more new beautiful parks and yet not having**

2. Statistics on parkland quantity from participating cities in the 2022 Canadian City Parks Report are available on the [City Profiles](#).



***the money to replace and not putting money aside to replace the new ones either in time.***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



However, another challenge is data. While most cities set quantity-based targets for parkland, few collect data on park “quality.” When quality data is collected, it’s often simply about the presence and distribution of park amenities like water fountains, soccer fields, and benches. While this is critical data, it’s arguably quantity metrics in another form.

And yet the largest challenge cities say they face is asset management. If cities don’t fully understand the quality of assets, how are they supposed to strategically invest in park quality?

***“We’re faced with now not having money to replace [park amenities] and potentially having to remove them, which is going to be very difficult for the public to come to terms with if they start losing assets.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



Taking this further, most cities also do not apply an equity-based lens to their park planning that considers factors such as income, race, age, and historic levels of investment in different neighbourhoods.

Understanding the quality of parks and park amenities and coupling that with equity-based mapping would allow cities to more strategically allocate funds toward the areas where the needs are greatest, and the improvements most relevant to residents.

#### KEY STATS

ONLY **43%** of cities said they collect data on park “quality.”

**100%** of cities said aging infrastructure and asset management is a challenge, including 74% that said it is a major challenge.

**39%** of city residents said that a lack of appropriate park amenities is a barrier to visiting parks, making it the top barrier identified.

#### CASE STORIES

- [A Focus on Quality](#)
- [Measuring and Maximizing Health Equity](#)

## Explore new park typologies & funding arrangements

**As municipalities intensify, new types of parks are needed to serve denser communities—particularly for cities transitioning from a suburban to more urban form.**



More municipalities are experimenting with linear parks and greenways, encumbered parkland (e.g., parks over parking garages), and privately-owned public spaces (POPS).

These spaces, however, come with unique challenges. Repairs to an underground parking garage can impact parkland above, while POPS come with concerns regarding private security monitoring (and often restricting) the use of public space.

Converting streets to parks is another area of interest for cities looking to leverage existing city-owned land to create new public space. This action is broadly supported by city residents. This could be an effect of the pandemic where streets were used in many cities for outdoor dining and some instituted “slow streets” that calmed traffic to allow for exercise and play.

***“One of the most critical changes that we’re facing right now is this very, very strong drive for high intensity, high rise, urbanization. This changes how we design parks ...I look at it as a window of opportunity to come up with some really creative park designs in the future, partly out of***

***necessity, partially because of the appropriateness of changing our design philosophy.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



Using land already in the public space system, like streets, is likely to become more tempting, particularly when acquiring land is challenging from a scarcity and cost perspective in many places. In most cities, street space vastly outstrips park space—for example, in Vancouver 10% of the land is dedicated to parks, while 28% is for streets.



Hives for Humanity, Vancouver (Park People, 2019)

***“That acquisition process is, for me, the challenging thing because where a lot of really peak population growth is occurring is not the place where there’s spare land available.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



While some projects may convert streets to permanent parks, others could include temporary or flexible spaces that respond to changing needs. These projects come with new management challenges, however. While the public may not care whether the space is under the jurisdiction of a transportation or parks department, as one parks planning director pointed out, it does mean the city itself has to figure out those spaces from a funding and operations perspective.

***“Privately owned public spaces will eventually become a reality for parks ... We see more private space taking the role for public use, which at a social level has its implications.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



New funding tools and collaborative arrangements are needed in many of these new park spaces where there may be intersections between public and private space, city departments, and different levels of government.

## KEY STATS

**66%** of cities agreed that the current system of parkland dedication policies makes it challenging to meet parkland provision goals; higher at 84% for large cities of over 500,000 people.

**80%** of cities said it is a challenge to advocate for more park space when other public goods such as affordable housing, child care space, and transit also require land area.

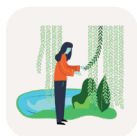
**77%** of city residents said that they would like to see more streets converted to parks and/or pedestrianized.

## CASE STORIES

- [Understanding the Role of Privately Owned Public Spaces](#)
- [Connecting Parkland Through Partnerships](#)
- [Stronger Together: Municipal-led Advocacy](#)

## Prioritize public education along with naturalization

**We might think of parks as natural spaces but many are highly manicured and geared towards human recreational needs, including sports fields, mowed grass picnic areas, ornamental flower beds, and other amenities.**



In the 2022 Canadian City Parks Report, for example, cities reported that slightly less than half of overall parkland was deemed “natural” areas.

However, in the last two years we’ve seen a growing trend towards increasing natural areas, including introducing “micro” naturalized spaces within existing neighbourhood parks.

***“A lot of the landscape design here was developed with a real colonial bend to it—a lot of non-native species, ornamental gardens. We’re really shifting that urban design and going back to a more naturalized landscape in our park spaces.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



One reason is that naturalized parkland helps cities meet both climate resilience and biodiversity goals by reintroducing native species’ habitat and creating more complex understory growth as a way to mitigate the urban heat island effect.

Some cities mentioned that naturalized areas require less maintenance and can present an opportunity to save on operational budgets, while others pointed out that certain naturalized elements, particularly green infrastructure

like bioswales and rain gardens, require specialized staff training and maintenance to ensure they are working effectively.



Don River Naturalization Project, Waterfront Toronto (Sean Brathwaite, Park People, 2023)

***“We are trying to introduce more naturalized components in our parks. Where the challenge lies in getting a public acceptance... there is still this attitude that parks need to be manicured, they have to be pristine... And so there’s a strong educational component that needs to be considered in this.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



These spaces are also growing in popularity with residents, our survey results show. This is not surprising because, as we’ve reported before, many residents increased their use of natural spaces during the pandemic—a habit that has stuck around.

As with the high use of parks in general, however, there are challenges that come with increased popularity and use of natural areas. Cities are dealing with damage to environmentally sensitive areas, including people blazing their own trails.

**"The number of [informal bike] trails that have popped up is incredible. And parallel trails leading to the same place that are 15 feet apart from each other... I think the solution is education and maybe even timing—maybe certain periods of the year we close it and allow wildlife to migrate through it."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



In some cities this has also led to a noticeable change in wildlife behaviour, pushing animals into neighbouring areas and causing conflicts. Strategies such as formalized trail building and educational signage to increase public awareness can help minimize impacts on sensitive habitats.

#### KEY STATS

**92%** of city residents said they support naturalization efforts in parks.<sup>3</sup>

**63%** of cities said tensions between natural protection and recreational use of parks are a very (26%) or somewhat (37%) significant source of conflict.

**63%** of city residents said they'd like to see more native plant gardens and naturalized spaces in parks, making this the second most requested amenity, behind public washrooms.

#### CASE STORIES

[➤ Planning Through the Lens of Nature](#)

3. The survey question defined naturalization efforts as follows: "Naturalized areas are spaces in parks where the city has stopped mowing grass to allow native species to grow. Naturalized areas increase biodiversity, provide natural habitat, and promote climate resilience."



## Systematize climate resilience park improvements

### Climate change is not coming —it's here.



Canadian cities are experiencing the impacts of these changes on a day-to-day level in parks through increased extreme weather damage and

“historic” storm events that now come with a terrifying regularity.

**“With the urban heat, people will need to use our parks as places of respite from heat, for cooling and escape.”**

**“We know that we have problems with lack, or reduced, tree canopies in the most vulnerable communities.”**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEES



Discussions of extreme weather impacts on parks often centre around heat, drought, and flooding, but another highly damaging aspect comes from wind.

We heard from a number of cities that increased and sustained high wind speeds during storms is causing increasing damage to tree canopies—which is also bad news for cities trying to increase canopy cover as part of their climate change mitigation strategies. While some proactive actions, such as regular monitoring of tree health, can help, damage from wind unfortunately cannot be protected against in the same way that flooding can be mitigated through design.

This means that while proactive strategies are critical to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather, Canadian cities will also face the reality of increasing operational budget pressures for clean-ups and restoration efforts after storms.



*A tree in High Park after a wind storm (Clémence Marcastel, Park People, 2022)*

Nearly all cities noted addressing the impacts of climate change as a challenge, but just over half reported they felt equipped with the knowledge and tools to address the impacts through their work in parks.

This is a troubling disconnect on one of our most critical challenges, but perhaps not a surprising one given the gargantuan and complex challenge posed by climate change. Part of the solution involves working collaboratively with other city departments that have their own specialized knowledge and jurisdiction over city spaces.

All of this is not to say that Canadian cities are dragging their feet on climate change adaptation through parks. Although almost half of cities disagreed that the majority of their parks were well-designed to withstand the impacts of



climate change, they also listed a number of current climate resilience park improvements. These include increasing green infrastructure to manage stormwater, increasing native plantings to better adapt to changing climates, and heat mapping to ensure investments in greening are made where they are needed most.

***"We are seeing a lot of change in storm intensity and our shorelines are getting beaten up for it...we're taking advantage of repairing our shoreline to create better public space. I think there are some great opportunities to address climate impact on public space and make the space better and safer, but also maybe jazz it up a bit while you're at it."***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



All of these elements are critical, but we have also found that many cities are engaging in these climate resilience park projects in an ad hoc project-by-project manner rather than as part of an overall strategy. More must be done to enshrine these elements into park construction standards and staff training to ensure that specialized knowledge is not lost when staff move on. Additionally, we found few cities are collaborating with Indigenous communities to integrate traditional knowledge into climate resilience approaches in park design and planning.

#### KEY STATS

**94%** of cities said addressing impacts from climate change/extreme weather is a challenge.

**60%** of cities said they feel equipped with the knowledge and tools to address climate change through their work in parks.

**57%** of cities agreed that the majority of their parks are well-designed and planned to withstand the impacts of climate change, but only 3% strongly agreed.

#### CASE STORIES

- [Reconfiguring our Relationship to Water](#)
- [Planning Through the Lens of Nature](#)

## Deepen the focus on park equity

**Despite increased awareness and dialogue about equity in the past three years, many parks departments still think of equity narrowly as the distribution of amenities and parkland.**



While access to quality parks is a key part of equity, this limited vision overlooks inequities in how park space is experienced along socio-economic lines such as race, age, ability, income, and gender. These can have important implications for how park space is designed and programmed, as well as barriers and usage.

Not everyone experiences the same park the same way. For example, in our [2021 report](#), we found that residents who identified as Black, Indigenous or a person of colour were far more likely to report that concerns about policing, ticketing, and social judgment were a barrier to park use.

Canadian data also shows that poorer and racialized neighbourhoods have less access to green space, which has implications for park use and climate resilience. Many of these neighbourhoods are also listed as urban heat islands where the [lack of green space translates into higher temperatures especially during extreme heat events](#), which can have fatal consequences. However, there is a strong desire from city staff to dig deeper on this issue, particularly in developing more robust data-driven equity responses that layer socio-demographic data with heat mapping and park access metrics.

**"I need demographic [data]. I need to look at things differently rather than just a ratio of [parkland] hectare per thousand—well which one thousand are we talking about, right? I think we need to zoom down and look at other factors that should lead us to prioritize our distribution...I need that depth of data to help us address the idea of equity."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



*Arts in the Parks, Little Avenue Memorial Park, Toronto, 2023*

When asked their perspective on which urban issues the parks sector has a role in addressing, city staff placed reconciliation, anti-racism, houselessness and green gentrification at the bottom of the list. Interestingly, these same issues were the ones city staff reported feeling least knowledgeable about.

Our interviews suggest many city staff recognize systemic inequities exist and are a key challenge for parks, but lack the tools to address these issues or relate them to their own work.

**"The similarity I'm seeing between other cities and us on social equity issues. I didn't realize that until I met with these other parks and rec managers—we're all facing the same issues—unsheltered people, food security, lower income, high needs areas. This is the first time I've experienced this—and it's a good thing—that people are actually thinking a lot about [this]."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



Even if they have the tools, most city staff reported that the overwhelming amount of work on their plate means it's challenging to prioritize embedding an equity lens. We also heard that staff hired for equity-focused roles are at risk of experiencing burnout faster due to carrying the weight of being both the public face of challenging equity issues as well as being relied on for cultural translation roles within the city. While it's a positive sign that cities are hiring for these roles, the responsibility of addressing inequities must be shared across staff.

**"The city has a hard time keeping its staff [specializing in reconciliation] ... it just puts a lot of strain on them to constantly be trying to educate and mentor."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



There is a need for stronger training and support for park staff to apply strategies for unpacking inequities within parks, including planning and design, community engagement, by-law enforcement, and maintenance.

#### KEY STATS

**71%** of cities said that developing equity-based tools to guide park investments is a high (47%) or medium (24%) priority in the next year.

**83%** of cities said since the start of the pandemic in 2020, there has been increased dialogue about systemic inequities in their parks department.

**69%** of cities said it can be difficult to prioritize embedding an equity lens in their park work as they are overwhelmed with managing day-to-day operations.

#### CASE STORIES

- [Embedding Equity in Park Planning](#)
- [Stewarding Parks, Stewarding Community](#)

## Adopt rights-based encampment strategies

**The increased visibility of the houselessness crisis since the start of the pandemic has pushed encampments into the public spotlight.**



As we have written about in our [2020](#) and [2022](#) reports, parks departments have lagged in adopting human rights-based responses, often feeling ill-equipped to ethically engage with the reality that parks are often homes.

We heard that encampments remain top of mind for cities. In our conversations, we observed a growing sentiment among city staff that houselessness is more complex than a “housing issue,” and the parks sector has a role in contributing to collaborative solutions.

***“We have had some encampments in our parks, the houseless population uses our parks. And so we’re exploring how best to create spaces that do serve vulnerable segments of the population, have water and that sort of thing. But also, creating a space where people belong.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



After many ad hoc and harmful responses during the early stages of the pandemic, we are also seeing an intention among municipalities to prioritize more informed, consistent, human rights-based strategies moving forward.

***“With houselessness ... we find our park staff are doing things they never thought they were ever going to have to do. And we’re not really trained in that area... It’s really hard, heartfelt and very emotional.”***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



*Housing is a right, not a commodity, Montreal (Clémence Marcstel, Park People, 2022)*

However, cities remain challenged in putting this into practice. Some parks staff noted a need for clearer direction to come from senior leadership and the corporate level to support them in making this shift.

Others felt lost in the logistics. Some mentioned feeling unsatisfied with the effectiveness of their interdepartmental collaboration structures, overwhelmed by the volume of public complaints, and unsure how to support front-line parks staff handling mental health concerns and burnout. Due to the politically sensitive nature of encampments, there is little

information-sharing between municipalities, leaving many parks departments with a sense of isolation and uncertainty in navigating this work.

**"We can't remove an encampment from a park unless these people have homes to go to."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



Importantly, for a second year in a row, our public survey shows that the majority of city residents who observe encampments in their local parks are not personally impacted by their presence. This underscores the need for cities to prioritize informed, rights-based encampment response strategies, rather than complaint-driven displacement tactics that do not contribute to long-term solutions.

#### KEY STATS

**79%** of cities said developing an encampment response policy is a high (50%) or medium (29%) priority for the next year.

**26%** of parks departments feel equipped with the knowledge and tools to respond to houselessness.

**60%** of cities see a role for the parks sector in addressing houselessness.

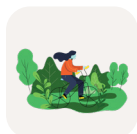
#### CASE STORIES

[➤ Making Washrooms Work](#)



## Experiment with flexible designs and policies to manage conflicting use

**One of the top areas of conflict in parks is competing visions for how parks should be used.**



Are they calm spaces for relaxation and connection to nature?

Recreational spaces for sports? Social spaces for community events?

Productive spaces to grow food? Increasingly, the answer is yes, all of these—and often within the same space.



Melanin Skate Crew, Toronto (Ksenija Hotic, *Park People*, 2022)

There are a lot of factors at play—many of which we've written about. These include increasing and changing use of parks driven by demographics and a culture shift during the pandemic, growing

populations and intensification, and scarce land for new parks—especially larger ones that can more easily accommodate multiple uses.

**"We are finding it difficult to provide everything for everyone."**

**"For us, as parks people, we're really trying to balance all of these needs, and listen to the community... but there's only so much land, and loud voices tend to dominate."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEES



City staff find themselves playing catch up to new trends, which often clash with older ways of using parks. For example, the rise in pickleball has sent cities scurrying to find space for courts to satisfy demand, often turning to underused tennis courts, which then cause conflict with tennis players.

Long the "third rail" of park design, dog parks are also high on the list of amenities that cause conflict. As we've written before, these conversations can get extremely heated. Cities have tried various avenues, such as deeper community engagement and community involvement in dog park operations to try to bring the tension down.

**"Everyone needs more space. And there's not enough land to give ... There's lots of emerging and unique sports that are coming out like spike ball and pickleball and disc golf ... when new ideas come we can't squeeze them into**



***parks because it's just squeezing somebody else out—and that we deal with a lot right now."***

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



At the heart of it, however, is often an issue of both restricted physical space and different cultural norms—and an increasing need to engage in public conversations about what it means to share space in ever-densifying cities. Sometimes sharing space actually means ceding space to prioritize the needs of equity-deserving groups, while other times it's about finding the right balance or designing spaces flexibly to accommodate multiple uses.

For example, off-leash dog areas that are open during certain hours or courts designed to accommodate multiple sports. More and more, park design is going to become an exercise in layers that can support multiple uses at different times and in different seasons. Many cities simply do not have the space to afford to let areas of parks, such as outdoor courts, become dormant in the "off season."

These types of designs are, again, an example of focusing on park quality. As one park director pointed out, designing spaces for flexibility is a marker of designing high-quality parks for the future.

#### KEY STATS

**86%** of cities said that competing park amenity preferences (e.g. tennis courts vs. cricket pitches) are a significant source of conflict in their work.

**80%** of city residents said that they appreciate seeing people use parks differently than they do personally.

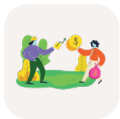
**91%** of cities said that tensions between stakeholders with competing interests/visions for parks are significant in their work at a strategic level.

#### CASE STORIES

- [Unleashing a New Dog Park Strategy](#)
- [A Focus on Quality](#)

## Increase funding and supports for community involvement

**This year continued a trend of residents reporting they don't feel they have the ability to influence what goes on in their local park.**



But the good news is that the majority of residents are interested in some kind of involvement—whether advocacy or community events. While not having enough time to participate was the main reason, three of the other top reasons were related to lack of information or support from the city.

**"We've had a lot of asks from community groups ... they want dedicated facilities, they want funding for events and programs... And it would be really nice if we could do it all, but we're really resource-challenged in terms of human resources, funding ... so I think that is somewhat limiting the amount of work that we can do with the community."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



This comes down to staff time and funding. While there is rising interest from residents in being involved in parks, this hasn't been followed by a rise in funding to support increased volunteer programming. Interestingly, while the majority of city staff said they feel they have strong relationships with community park groups, they also said the city did not have adequate resources to support these groups. Meanwhile, our survey of over 100 community

park groups found the majority of groups did not feel they had a strong relationship with their city. Clearly there is a disconnect.



*This could be a park, Toronto (Wes Reibeling, Park People, 2022)*

When asked how city staff supported community groups, many mentioned ad hoc processes and one-off projects rather than a sustained or systematic approach. Much of the funding support for community groups is based on capital grants and co-funding arrangements rather than ongoing operational or programmatic support. While these programs may be effective at building new

amenities, they are less effective at sustaining community groups over time, which can lead to burnout among volunteers.

**"The work that [community groups] are doing fills a void that is really important to us, whether it's people who have adopted spaces and are doing cleanups or cleaning up the natural areas where we really don't have enough staff to get to, that's really important. So we do as much as we can to support them."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



Creating more sustainable community involvement programs would require more resources, but it would also create stability for community groups while providing a more equitable playing field. In ad hoc systems or ones that rely on co-funding agreements, it can often be communities that are already well-connected or able to raise funds that reap the greatest benefits.

Supporting community groups is not just important for local park activities and volunteer natural stewardship programming, which can positively impact a park's social and natural environment. City staff also recognize the important role that community members play as advocates—often voicing loudly the things that city staff aren't able to say in public.

**"What we need is a strong advocacy group that comes in and goes to council and complains about this stuff to make a change. It's very often not us that makes the change, but the public that makes change."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



This includes advocating for more public funding for parks, better amenities, and pointing out gaps and issues with current systems. Some city staff said that community advocacy is one of the most effective avenues to get support for park initiatives and projects, including residents raising the issue with their local councillor or organizing public campaigns.

While advocacy-based community groups do exist in some cities, as one city staff person pointed out, they are often focused on single issues, such as dog parks or pickleball. This person mentioned it would be helpful to have more general park advocacy groups that raised issues around overall budgets and park development. While the city cannot create such a group itself, it can support more actively involved residents by investing in volunteer programming, grants, and in-kind supports.

#### KEY STATS

**69%** of cities said the parks department has a strong relationship with community park groups, yet only 39% of community park groups reported having a strong relationship with their municipality.

**69%** of cities said they do not have adequate resources to support the needs of community groups.

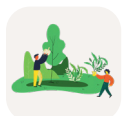
**34%** of city residents feel they have the ability to influence what goes on in their local park (i.e. decision-making).

#### CASE STORIES

- [Connecting Parkland Through Partnerships](#)
- [Stewarding Parks, Stewarding Community](#)
- [Demystifying Co-management Models](#)

## Find the internal collaboration sweet spots

**In the last five years, the narrative about the myriad benefits of parks has grown louder.**



What hasn't grown, however, is funding for parks departments to achieve these benefits through park systems that keep pace with growth, include high quality materials, and provide support for sustained community involvement.

This lack of appropriate funding has had numerous deleterious impacts on parks and park staff, including delayed projects, unmet maintenance standards, reduced community programs, and inadequate staffing levels which can in turn lead to staff burnout.

**"Day-to-day for us is just finding the time to deal with all the issues we have coming at us. My actual planning time is 10% or maybe 20% of my job—and I would have it opposite if I could. I would be 80% planning and 20% reactive."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



The reality is that budget cuts to parks are not immediately felt in the same way that cuts to other city services are felt. When you cut the library budget, reduced operating hours mean you encounter locked doors at your local library.

But cuts to parks often take months or years to materialize before residents start to encounter fields that look mangier, benches that have gone unrepaired, broken water fountains, and overflowing garbage bins.

How can we ensure one of our most important resources—public space—has the financial support needed for these spaces to thrive?

We heard from city staff that more cross-departmental and jurisdictional partnerships are needed to combat siloed funding and decision-making. Whether it's housing, public health, community development, economic development or another city department, there is likely an opportunity where a park project aligns with their own strategic goals.



*An Indigenous ceremony during the Park People Conference in High Park (Ksenija Hotic, 2023)*

The structure of parks departments can also have an impact. Every city we spoke to structures their parks department differently. Some are housed all together in the same department, while some split planning and capital staff up from operational staff and still others have recreational staff in other departments. While there is no one right way to structure things, we did hear from staff that having



planning, capital, and operational staff in different departments can have an impact on internal culture, priorities, and collaboration opportunities.

**"The folks in transportation that we collaborate with are really well aligned with the direction that we're going with parks and open spaces, and we're finding common goals."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



A bright spot in this area has been growing relationships between transportation and parks departments, which together oversee the vast majority of public space in cities between roads and parks.

Multiple city staff we spoke with mentioned increasing collaboration between these departments has led to innovative projects that realize multiple benefits. For example, Vancouver pointed out that collaboration between the Park Board and City Engineering on the Rain City Strategy has led to projects that reduce stormwater runoff while creating new green space for people and wildlife habitat.

In Toronto, collaboration between Transportation Services and Parks has led to redeveloped parks, like Berczy Park, that include redesigning adjacent roadways as flexible public spaces to help visually and physically expand public space, while also calming traffic.

These collaborations result in spaces that are more functional and beautiful, while also helping achieve the goals of both departments. While we should be advocating for increased park budgets, cities also need to support more collaborative projects between city departments where goals overlap and budgets can be shared.

**"Almost every department that I work with is running at 110% capacity. They're trying to move whatever project is on their plate. Sometimes that's the biggest challenge ... Everyone is going very, very fast, and trying to be the most courteous and respectful to get the best quality final solution that is most sympathetic to all of your colleagues."**

CITY STAFF INTERVIEWEE



The work of parks will not become simpler over time—it will become even more complex. There is much work to be done to live up to the long-proclaimed idea that parks are the democratic spaces of our cities where all people can come together to celebrate our commonalities and our differences. Building internal cultures of support and collaboration within parks departments and with other city departments is critical to realizing that potential.

#### KEY STATS

**89%** of cities said an insufficient operating budget has been a challenge in the past year, continuing a steady trend since 2020.

**65%** of city residents consider their city's parks and green spaces well cared for, steady from 66% last year but a sharp decline from 78% in 2021.

**57%** of cities noted that burnout and overwork of parks staff is a challenge.

#### CASE STORIES

[➤ Stronger Together: Municipal-led Advocacy](#)

# Canada-Wide Data



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**A round-up of data from our national surveys of 35 municipalities and over 2000 residents of Canadian cities.**

To learn more about our process, check out the [Methodology](#) section.



## Vision & Systems

### **Municipal leaders and city residents alike recognize that parks intersect with some of the most pressing challenges of our time.**

Beyond their traditional role as places of leisure, parks are now understood as essential to public health, climate resilience, and community connection.

However, a vision for parks in addressing social equity lags behind, with issues like anti-racism, houselessness, and green gentrification receiving less focus.

This is true although 83% of cities noted that there has been increased dialogue about systemic inequities in their parks department since the start of the pandemic in 2020.

This gap in vision mirrors a gap in skillsets, as parks staff were less likely to feel equipped with adequate knowledge and tools to engage with these same topics.

It is also reflected in intragovernmental collaboration patterns, with parks departments working more closely with departments that manage physical infrastructure (e.g. planning, engineering) than those focused on social issues (e.g. anti-racism/equity office, Indigenous affairs).

#### **SURVEY INSIGHTS**

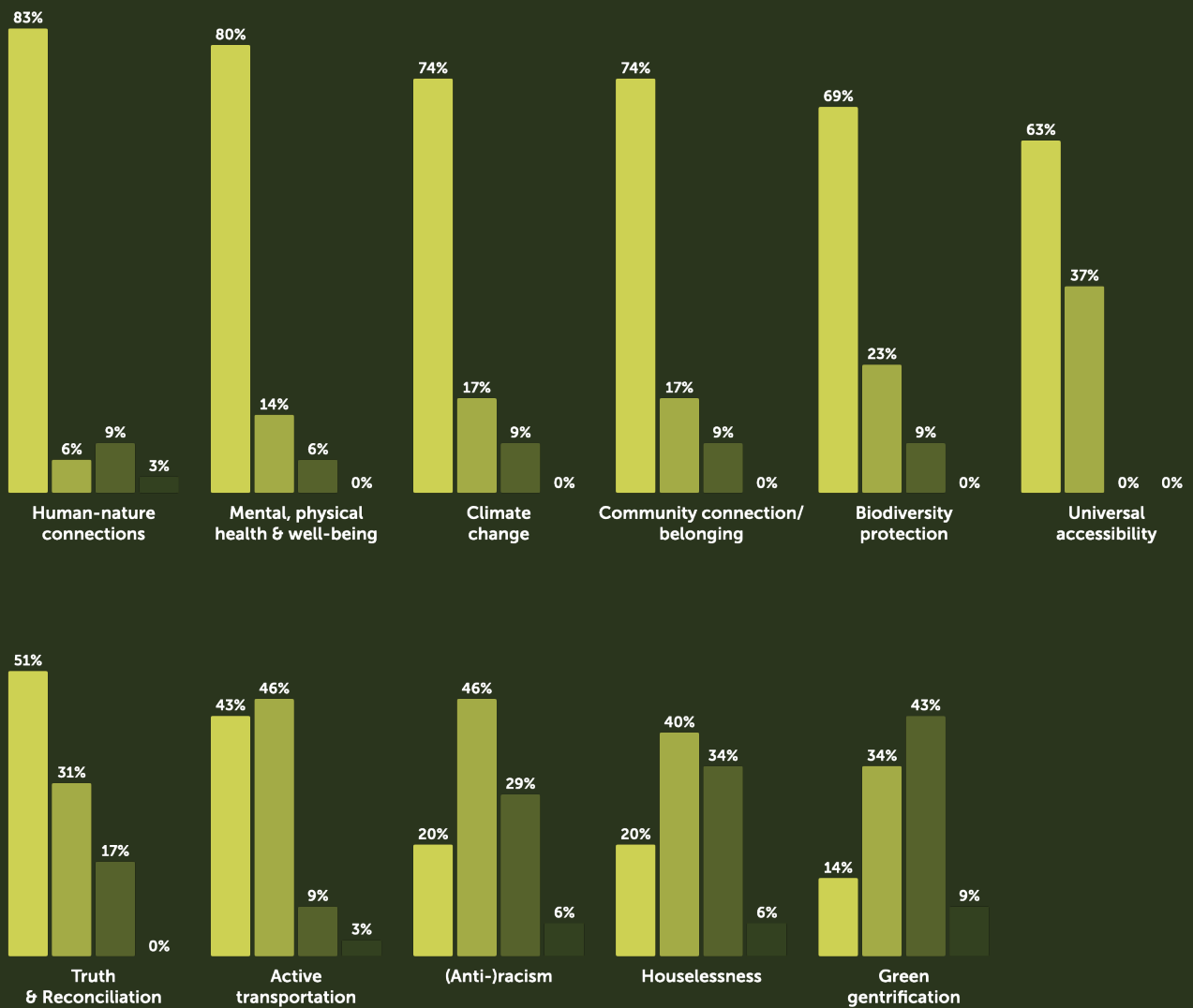
- \* [Strong vision for parks supporting health, climate, connection – on page 28](#)
- \* [City staff need greater support to address inequities – on page 29](#)
- \* [Collaboration focused on built infrastructure – on page 30](#)
- \* [City residents continue to report well-being boost – on page 31](#)
- \* [Parks seen as more than leisure spaces – on page 32](#)

MUNICIPAL SURVEY

# Strong vision for parks supporting health, climate, connection

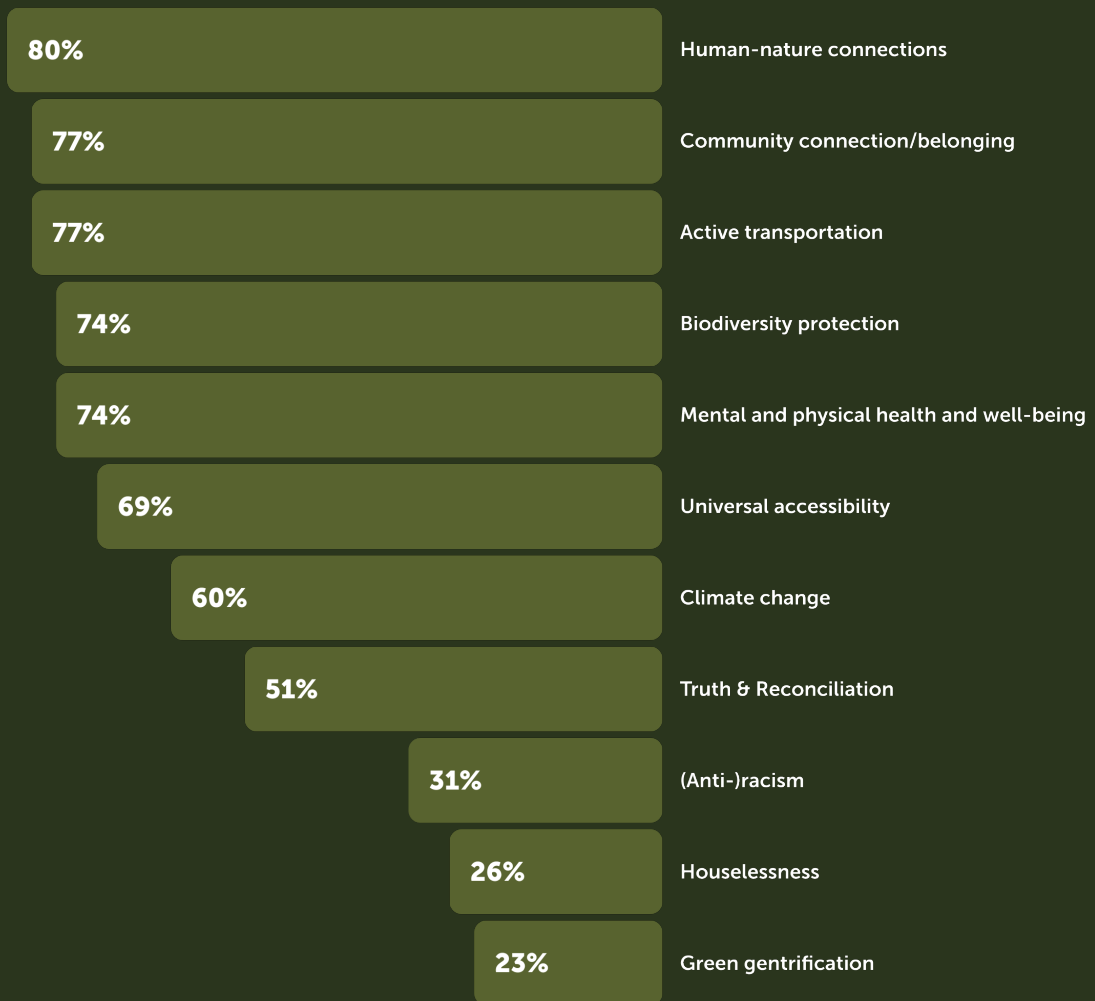
WE ASKED: To what extent do you see a role for the parks sector in addressing the following issues?

Very Important Role    Important Role    Little Role    No role



## City staff need greater support to address inequities

WE ASKED: Of these issues, which do you currently feel equipped with the knowledge/tools to address through your work in parks?



MUNICIPAL SURVEY

# Collaboration focused on built infrastructure

**WE ASKED:** Please indicate the extent to which your parks department has collaborated with the following departments/divisions within your municipal and/or provincial governments in the past year.

Collaboration may be informal (e.g. seeking input from staff in another division on a park project) or formal (e.g. an interdepartmental working group).

- Close collaboration (e.g. meet more than 5 times per year or have a formal working group)
- Some collaboration (e.g. brief or infrequent touchpoints, no formal structure for collaboration)
- No collaboration



**PUBLIC SURVEY**

# City residents continue to report well-being boost

**WE ASKED:** In the past year, parks have had a positive impact on my...

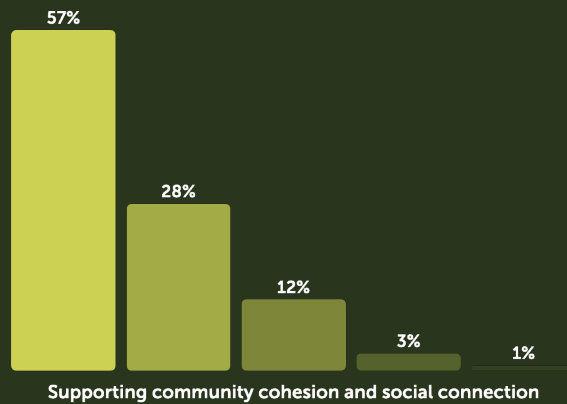
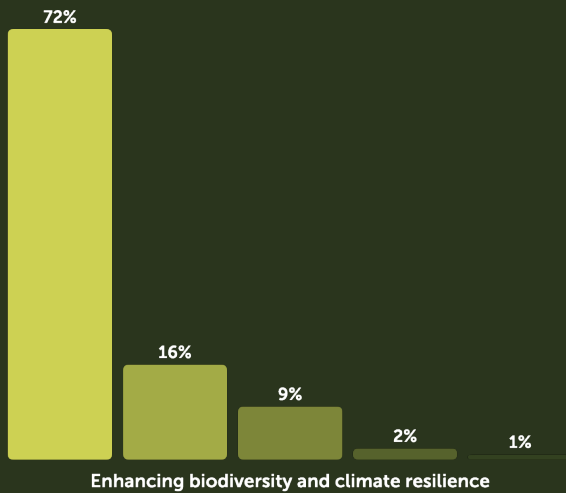
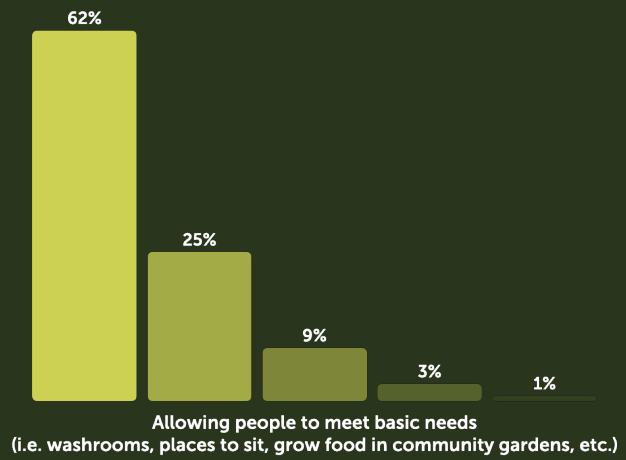
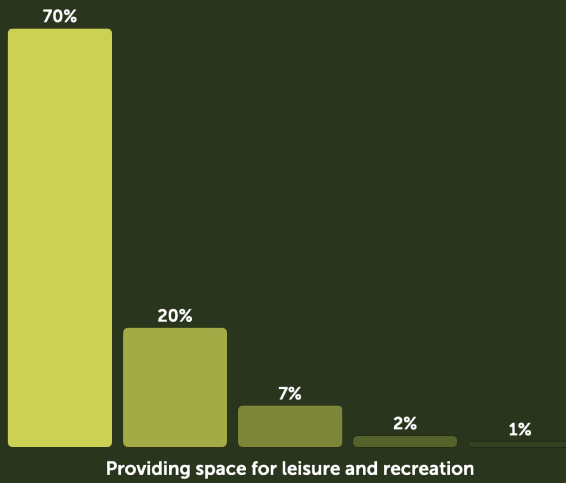


PUBLIC SURVEY

# Parks seen as more than leisure spaces

WE ASKED: In thinking about the different benefits parks provide, how would you rate each of the following elements on their importance in cities?

Very important   Somewhat important   Neutral   Not very important   Not at all important





## Policy & Planning

**This year, we heard that priority issues for park planning include ensuring both quantity and quality of parkland meet community needs, planning proactively for a changing climate, and developing informed responses to encampments.**

### DEMAND FOR LAND

Cities are feeling a parkland pinch. This year we saw a significant bump in cities reporting challenges keeping pace with population growth.

We also heard new concerns about the implications of provincial policy changes, particularly in Ontario, which limit municipalities' ability to secure adequate, quality green space into the future.

However, strong support from residents for initiatives like street-to-park conversions points to possibilities for creative solutions.

**85%** of cities said acquiring/expanding parkland to meet growth needs has been a challenge in the last year, up from 69% in 2022.

**46%** of cities said that they face significant tensions between different levels of government (e.g. municipal vs. provincial) in their strategic work (e.g. drafting policy, planning parks).

**75%** of large cities (over 500,000 people) *disagreed* that the municipality is on track to have enough quality green space for people and other species by 2050.

**66%** of cities *agreed* that the current system of parkland dedication policies makes it challenging to meet parkland provision goals; higher at 83% for large cities of over 500,000 people.

**80%** of cities agreed that it is a challenge to advocate for more park space when other public goods such as affordable housing, child care space, and transit also require land area.

**77%** of city residents said they would like to see more streets and roadways converted to parks and pedestrian-friendly spaces.

### ENHANCING AMENITIES

Park amenities—their presence, absence, type, location, condition, and so on—have a significant impact on how people experience their local park, or even if they visit it at all.

As cities struggle to maintain existing assets and adapt to changing needs, residents continue to look for essential amenities, like washrooms, seating, and shelter from the elements.

**80%** of cities said revitalizing/redesigning parks to meet changing needs has been a challenge in the last year.

**100%** of cities said aging infrastructure and asset management has been a challenge in the last year.

**39%** of city residents said that a lack of amenities, like washrooms and seating, is a barrier to visiting parks.

### SURVEY INSIGHTS

- \* [Washrooms and native plantings top priorities for residents, 2nd year in a row – on page 35](#)
- \* [Universal accessibility, sports infrastructure, and trails top priorities for cities – on page 36](#)

## CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Planning parks for climate resilience is top of mind this year, as hurricanes, ice storms, and wildfires have left their mark on parks from coast-to-coast.

Naturalizing park spaces with native plantings is a strategy popular among cities and residents alike.

However, there remains work to be done to embed climate resiliency in citywide park plans, ensure the work is informed by an equity lens, and integrate traditional knowledge of Indigenous communities.

**94%** of cities said addressing impacts from climate change and extreme weather damage (e.g., flooding, fires, droughts) has been a challenge in the last year.

**43%** of cities *disagreed* that the majority of their parks are well-designed and planned to withstand the impacts of climate change.

**86%** of cities said protecting/enhancing biodiversity has been a challenge in the last year.

**80%** of cities said that promoting stewardship and reciprocity with the natural environment is a key priority in their park programs and policies.

**51%** of city residents say naturalized or "wild" green spaces are a type of park they visit most often, similar to last year's 54% but up significantly from 34% in 2021.

**92%** of city residents support naturalization efforts in parks, including 66% who strongly support.

### SURVEY INSIGHTS

- \* Green infrastructure and Native plantings most common strategies for climate resiliency – on page 37

## ENCAMPMENTS

Adopting human rights-based responses to encampments remains a major challenge for cities. After many ad hoc responses during the early stages of the pandemic, we are seeing an intention among municipalities to prioritize more informed, consistent strategies moving forward.

Despite high volumes of public complaints regarding encampments, our data shows that these voices do not represent the majority. For most city residents, the presence of encampments has not disrupted their personal use of parks.

**89%** of cities said encampments and houselessness have been a challenge in the past year, including 60% that said it's a major challenge.

**79%** of cities said that developing an encampment management strategy is a high (50%) or medium (29%) priority for the next year.

**59%** of city residents said that although they've noticed an encampment(s) in their local park(s), it has not negatively impacted their personal use of parks.

## STRATEGIES & PLANS INVENTORY

% of participating cities have strategies in place on the following topics that address parks and have been updated in the past 10 years:

**60%**  
Park system master plan

**49%**  
Accessibility

**60%**  
Biodiversity\*

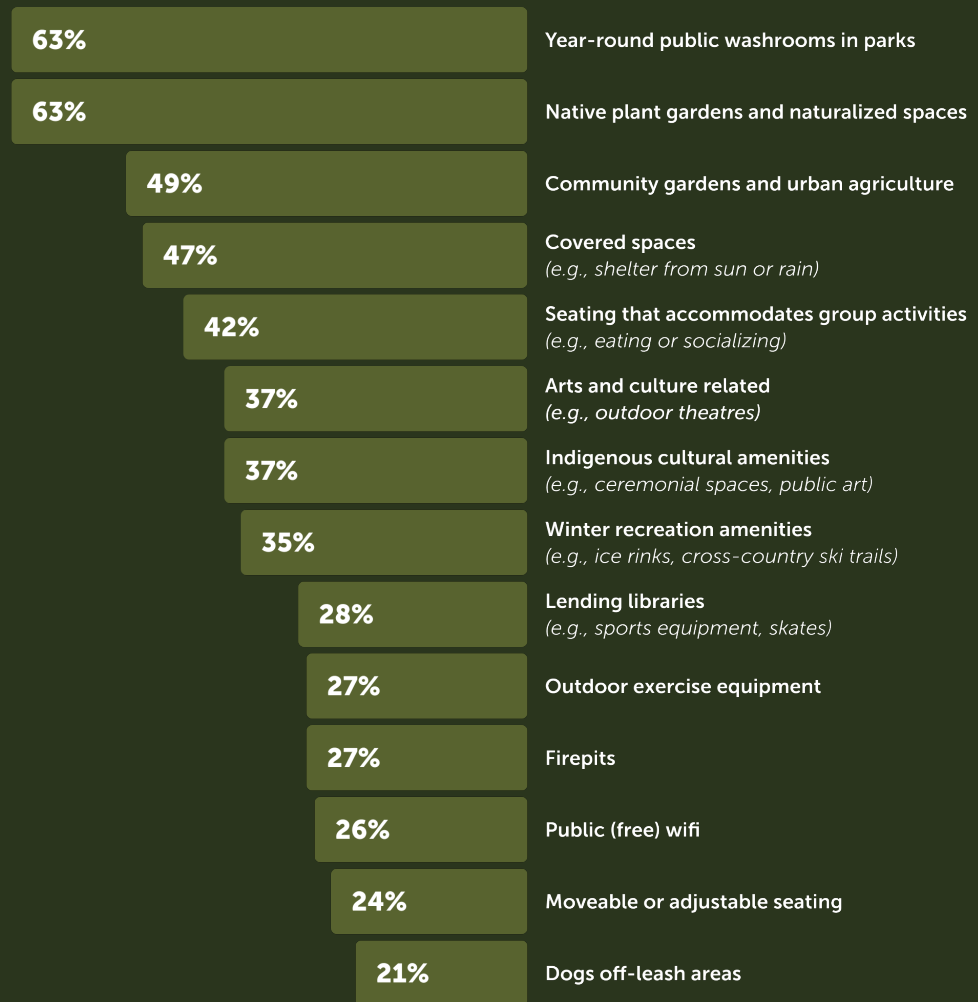
**23%**  
Dog parks

**66%**  
Climate action/resilience

\*Note: Includes 20% of cities that have a standalone biodiversity plan, and 40% of cities that have a broader environmental plan that addresses biodiversity and parks.

## Washrooms and native plantings top priorities for residents, 2nd year in a row

WE ASKED: In the following list of amenities, please indicate which you would like to see more of in parks and green spaces?



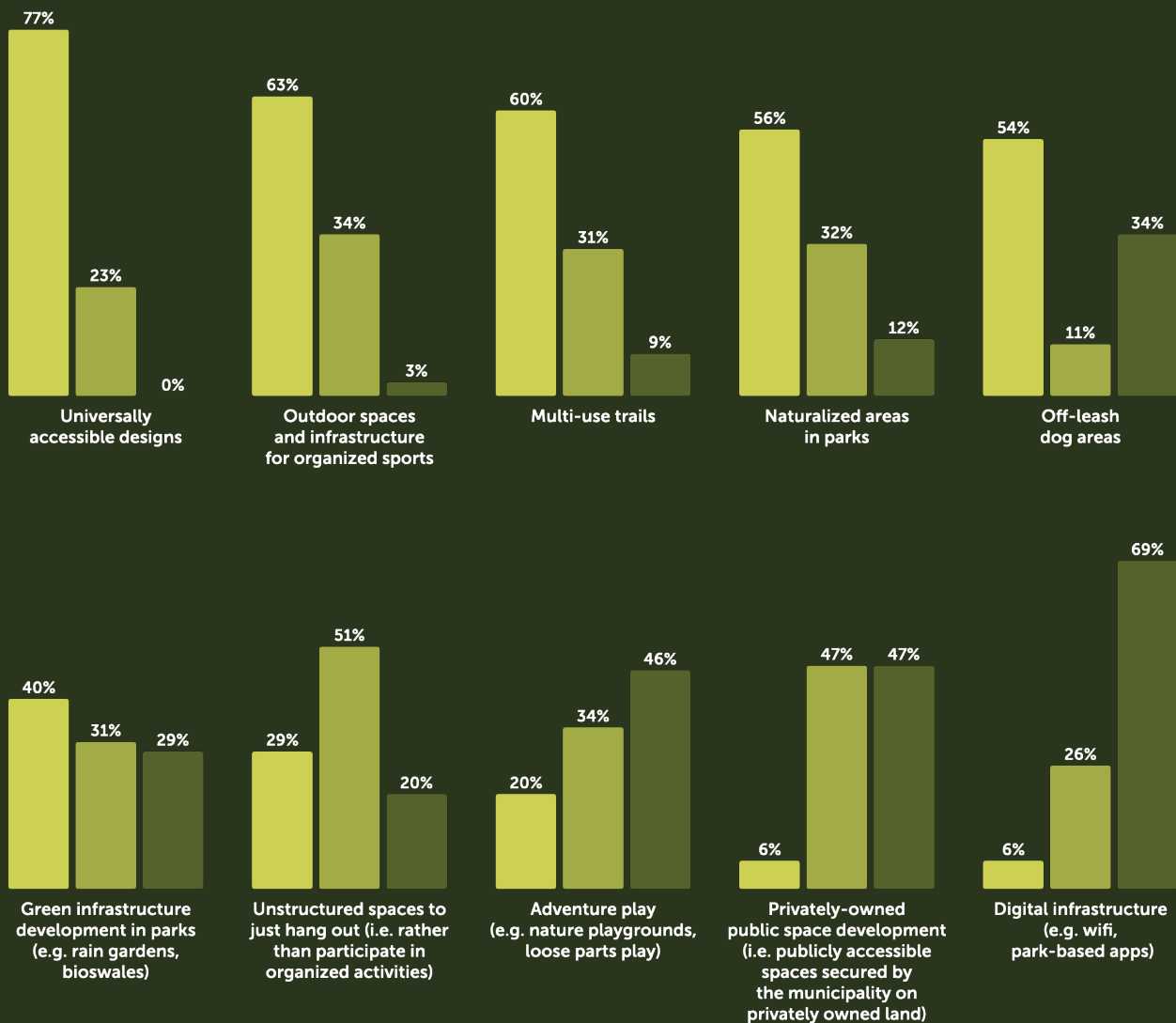
MUNICIPAL SURVEY

# Universal accessibility, sports infrastructure, and trails top priorities for cities

WE ASKED: Thinking of the park projects and initiatives your municipality has planned for the next year, please rate whether each of the following is a high, medium, or low priority in 2023.

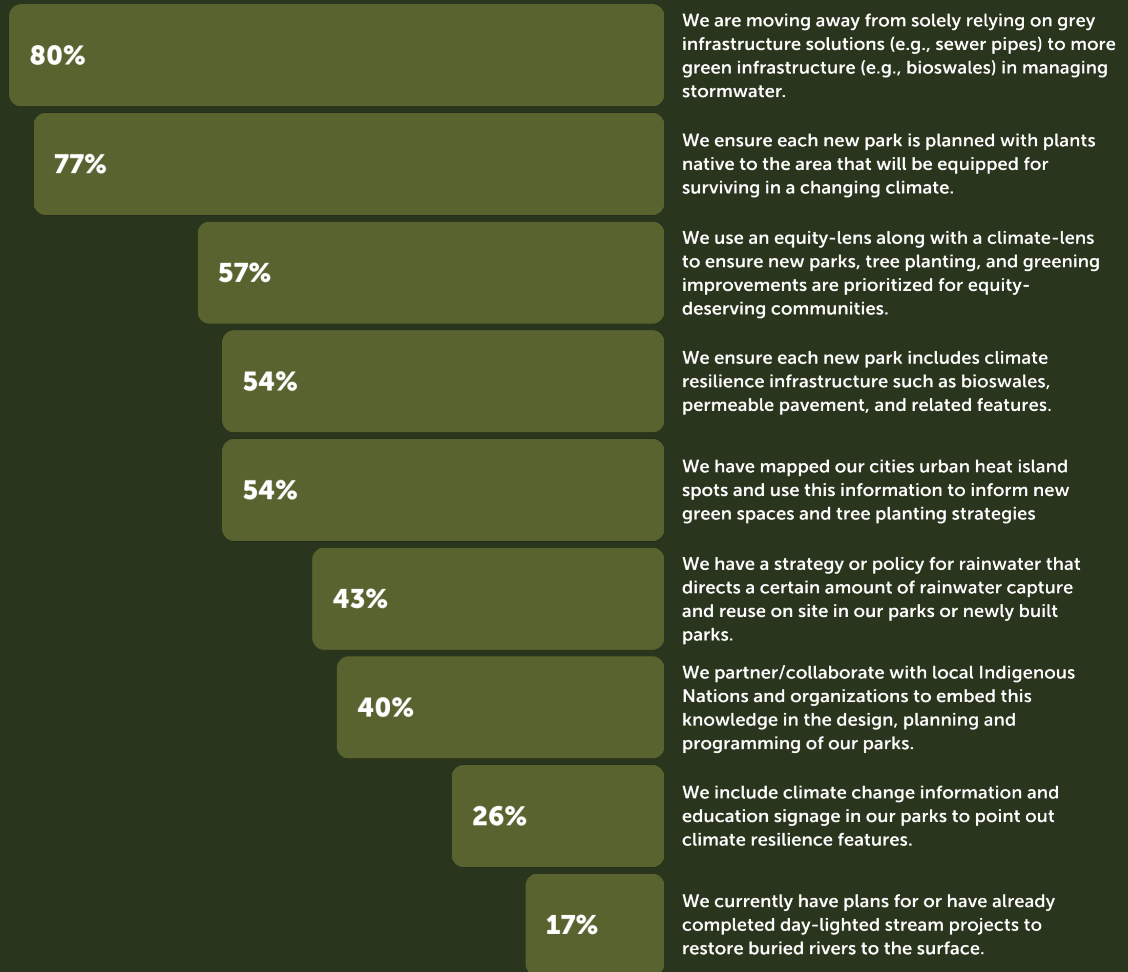
Developing more...

■ High Priority ■ Medium Priority ■ Low Priority



## Green infrastructure and Native plantings most common strategies for climate resiliency

WE ASKED: What strategies does your municipality currently use to plan parks for climate resilience?



## Resourcing & Operations

**Ensuring park budgets keep pace with elevated park use is a persistent, overarching challenge with far-reaching impacts, both within parks and within municipalities.**

City residents are less likely to perceive their parks as well cared for compared to two years ago, and some city staff are facing burnout and overwork in the absence of adequate resourcing.

However, the public places high value on investing in green space, with the vast majority of city residents in favour of boosted park budgets.

**15%** increase in park use in Canada from 2020-2022.

**89%** of cities said an insufficient operating budget has been a challenge in the past year, continuing a steady trend since 2020.

**80%** said the operating budget is not sufficient to allow the municipality to deliver on all park-related priorities.

**69%** of cities *agreed* it can be difficult to prioritize embedding an equity lens as they are overwhelmed with managing day-to-day operations.

**65%** of city residents consider their city's parks and green spaces well cared for, steady from 66% last year but a significant drop from 78% in 2021.

**22%** said that a lack of park maintenance is a barrier to them visiting parks in their neighbourhood.

**86%** of city residents would like to see more public funding invested in improving city parks and green spaces, stable from 87% in 2022 and 85% in 2021.

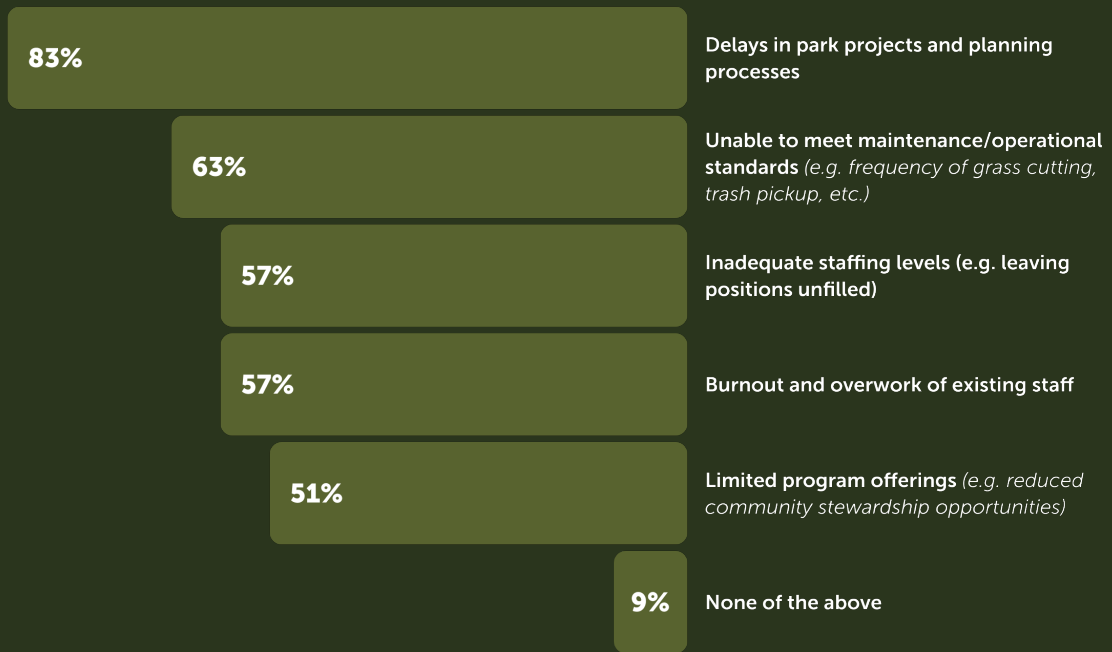
### SURVEY INSIGHTS

- \* Insufficient budgets causing delays, reduced maintenance – on page 39
- \* Maintenance is the top public priority – on page 40



# Insufficient budgets causing delays, reduced maintenance

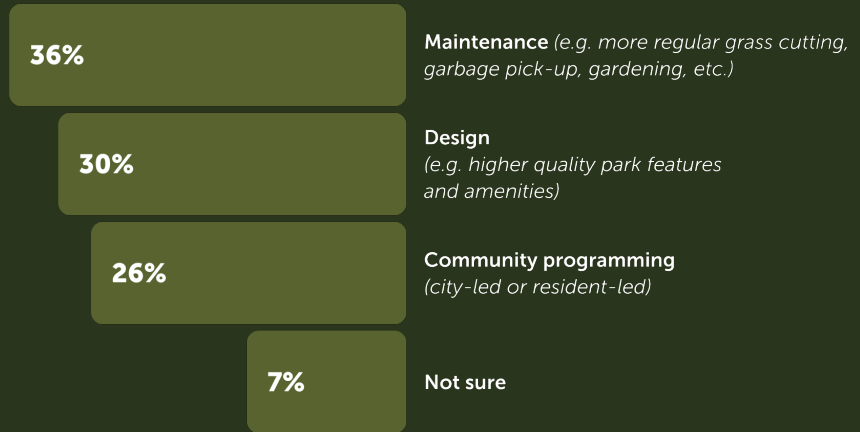
WE ASKED: If your operating budget is insufficient, how does this impact your parks department?



**PUBLIC SURVEY**

# Maintenance is the top public priority

**WE ASKED:** If city park budgets are limited, where would you prefer municipalities prioritize resources and funding?



## Community, Programming & Engagement

### City residents are passionate about shaping their parks.

Harnessing this passion while balancing competing visions for parks presents challenges for city staff, but also critical opportunities.

As systemic barriers restrict city residents' ability to enjoy parks and participate in planning processes, it is vital that cities develop thoughtful engagement strategies to ensure decision-making is not just guided by the loudest (and often most privileged) voices.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Most city residents do not feel they have the ability to influence decision-making about their local park, with many reporting barriers related to the opacity of city engagement processes.

While cities acknowledge that engaging hard-to-reach groups is challenging, the majority also reported that they are satisfied with their current engagement efforts.

This highlights a disconnect between how municipalities and city residents are perceiving the success of park engagement strategies. More work is needed to remove barriers to participation, particularly for equity-deserving communities.

**83%** of cities said that engaging hard-to-reach groups is a challenge.

**72%** of cities said they feel satisfied with the quality and quantity of engagement they do with equity-deserving communities.

**37%** of cities *disagreed* that the internal processes and culture within the municipality/parks department allow them to experiment with new approaches and quickly respond to emerging needs.

**34%** of city residents feel they have a voice or the ability to influence decision-making about their local park, 43% do not, with the remaining unsure.

#### SURVEY INSIGHTS

\* Lack of time and opaque processes top barriers to community engagement – on page 43

#### PARK GROUPS & PROGRAMMING

City residents have a strong desire to be more involved in parks, whether through attending park programs or engaging in advocacy.

However, cities face resourcing challenges in meeting demand for park programs directly.

Community park groups that organize events and activities in local parks play a vital role in expanding opportunities for residents to get involved, but many of these groups are not feeling adequately supported by their municipalities.

Investing in building relationships with these groups to better meet their needs is one way to address this challenge and create more avenues for residents to get involved.

**69%** of cities said they have a strong relationship with community park groups, while only 39% of community park groups said they have a strong relationship with their municipality.

**69%** of cities said they do *not* have adequate resources (staffing, budget, knowledge) to support the needs of community park groups.

**54%** of cities said they've observed increased community demand for park stewardship programs in the past year.

**66%** of cities said they do *not* have adequate resources (staffing, budget, knowledge) to meet demand for park programs.

**87%** of city residents are interested in becoming more involved in their local park(s)

**56%** are interested in advocating for park improvements or green space protection

**50%** are interested in participating in park events/activities organized by others

**33%** are interested in organizing park events/activities (e.g. community BBQ, park clean-up,

#### SURVEY INSIGHTS

★ Indigenous programming top priority for cities – on page 44.

#### CONFLICTING USES AND EXPERIENCES

Parks are contested spaces.

Our individual park experiences are shaped by aspects of our personal identity (age, race, gender, disability, etc.), our activities, the formal and informal rules of the space, and so much more.

This means there are often conflicting visions for parks, and this conflict all takes place within a context of systemic inequity that privileges certain uses—and users—of parks over others.

The challenge for cities is to ensure that they are not simply listening to the loudest voices or adopting complaint-driven responses, but rather planning proactively to balance conflicting needs through an equity lens.

**95%** of cities said that community complaints (e.g. through 311 or elected officials' offices) influence priority-setting in the parks department, with 49% noting they have a strong influence

**74%** of cities said addressing systemic inequities and discrimination in parks is a challenge, but 59% classified it as a minor rather than major challenge

**15%** of city residents said that they don't feel safe or welcome in their neighbourhood parks, 13% said they fear ticketing or policing, and 13% said they fear harassment or discrimination.

**43%** of cities collect data on perceptions of park "quality" and 20% on socio-demographic identities of park visitors, highlighting a gap in understanding parkgoers' experiences

**71%** of cities said that developing equity-based tools to guide park investments is a high (47%) or medium (24%) priority for the next year.

**80%** of city residents said that they appreciate seeing people use parks in different ways than they do personally (e.g. variety of activities).

**84%** of city residents believe people experience parks differently based on aspects of their identity, like age, gender, race, or culture—a slight increase from 77% in 2021 and 2022.

## Lack of time and opaque processes top barriers to community engagement

WE ASKED: What barriers (if any) prevent you from becoming more involved in park planning processes led by your municipality (e.g., engagement sessions about upcoming park projects, feedback surveys, etc.)?



MUNICIPAL SURVEY

# Indigenous programming top priority for cities

**WE ASKED:** Thinking of the park projects and initiatives your municipality has planned for the next year, please rate whether each of the following is a high, medium, or low priority in 2023.

Creating more opportunities for...





# Dive into this year's Canadian City Parks Report



Read all the stories or head straight to the data from our  
national surveys of municipalities and city residents.

## Process

**This year's report contains 35 Canadian cities, including 30 returning cities, and five new cities.**

We aimed for diversity in size, geography, and official language, and prioritized cities that were returning from 2022, contacted us to participate, or filled a gap.

To collect data on national trends, we distributed a confidential survey to each municipality, available in both French and English, that included mostly closed-ended questions on challenges, policy and planning priorities, and park projects and practices.

To complement the quantitative data gathered through the survey, we conducted individual semi-structured interviews with senior staff (i.e. parks managers and directors) in 30 municipalities, in which a total of 44 city staff participated. The interview transcripts were then analyzed to identify common themes in challenges, priorities, and strategies municipalities are encountering in their work.

Finally, we created and launched a public survey in May 2023 to collect data on park use, perceptions, and preferences among people living in Canadian cities. This survey was open to residents of Canadian cities and was promoted through our newsletter, social media, and partner networks. We received over 2,000 responses from across the country.

## Challenges and Limitations

### MUNICIPAL SURVEY PROCESS

One survey was submitted per municipality. We suggested that the survey be completed by a senior staff member with a more holistic view of departmental priorities and challenges, however left this at the discretion of each participating city. This means that the survey responses reflect the perspective of a limited number of staff within each municipality.

### PUBLIC SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

For the public survey, the distribution of respondents across sociodemographic variables is worth noting: 65% identified as women, 46% were between the ages of 30-54, and 73% were white. This means that these demographics are overrepresented when compared to the general Canadian population.

If you have a suggestion or a comment, [please get in touch](#).



## We didn't write the Canadian City Parks Report so it can sit on a virtual shelf—we want it to be used.

To help put the report's learnings into practice, we have developed a [training session](#) designed for municipal staff teams and park professionals, and will be hosting [webinars](#) and [other learning opportunities](#) centred around the stories in this report in 2022.

To stay in touch about these, please subscribe to our [newsletter](#). You can also follow us on Twitter at [@park\\_people](#). If you're interested in a custom workshop, you can find more information [here](#).

You can find video recordings as well as key take-aways from past Canadian City Parks Report webinars on our website, including sessions on climate justice, houselessness, community programming, small-scale biodiversity projects, and more.

If your city was not included in this year's report and you would like to see it included in 2023, please [get in touch](#). We're always looking for new cities to join.

Finally, we'd love to hear from you, whether you're a community member, city staff, or park professional. How have you used the report? What stories or data resonated most? What could we improve for next year? Please take 5 minutes to fill out this [feedback form](#), or [send us an email](#) to book a conversation with our research team.

**—Thank you for reading!**



park people  
ami·es des parcs

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Park People helps people activate the power of parks in order  
to improve quality of life in cities across Canada.

REPORT DESIGN BY HYPENOTIC

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