



Parliament Slip Engagement 2021-2022 Summary Report

February 2024



Redpath Waterfront Festival

Overview

This summary reflects comments and data collected from about 2,310 people at 5 resident association meetings and 16 pop ups between April 2021 and October 2022.

The goal of the engagement was to raise awareness and share information about the preliminary vision for activating Parliament Slip and solicit feedback. Two different engagement opportunities offered a range of ways to get involved, from in-depth consultation at the resident association meetings to lighter consultation during the pop-ups. This feedback informed future phases of the design.

Resident Association Meetings

Waterfront Toronto attended meetings of five (5) resident associations, engaging approximately **260 participants**, between April and November 2021.

- April 27, 2021: West Don Lands Committee
- April 28, 2021: St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association
- May 10, 2021: Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association
- June 24, 2021: East Waterfront Community Association
- November 16, 2021: York Quay Neighbourhood Association

The project team presented an overview of the project, answered questions, and listened to feedback, comments and concerns.

Pop-ups

In 2022, Waterfront Toronto created an engagement activity related to programming ideas for Parliament Slip, which was used at a series of 16 pop-ups across the city throughout the summer and engaged approximately **2,000 people** (see full list in appendix A). In addition to participating in the pop-up activity, this prompted 56 people to sign up for the Waterfront Toronto monthly newsletter and 177 visits to the Parliament Slip [project page](#) via QR Code.

The pop-ups encouraged light consultation with a ball-toss game that asked people to weigh in on the types of waterfront experiences they might enjoy. By asking people to sign up for newsletters or visit the project page, the team created opportunities for deeper consultation in the future as design work progresses. Participants were also asked to vote on their favourite waterfront experience, and staff engaged participants in conversation to dig deeper into their experiences and needs when it comes to waterfront development.

Who We Engaged

The resident association meetings engaged neighbours and local community members. The demographics for the waterfront area show that typically these individuals are:

- University-educated
- Young adults
- Higher income
- English-speaking

- Diverse backgrounds

The locations chosen for each pop-up enabled staff to speak with a range of people, including individuals and communities typically underrepresented in public consultations as well as those who live outside the Designated Waterfront Area (DWA). Based on staff observations:

- Most were English speakers, though many spoke a second language
- Each pop up had an ethnically diverse crowd
- Approximately 50% of those engaged were estimated to live outside the DWA, which included the GTA and tourists
- The main age demographic was young families, with the second being seniors
- Participants included individuals who live in affordable housing and rental housing
- The predominant age group was mostly between 35-44 years old



Underpass Park Farmers Market

What We Heard

Consensus Comments (Parliament Slip)

Overall, the preliminary plans for Parliament Slip were well received. Many people supported the idea of a destination on the waterfront with many indicating this kind of attraction is currently lacking in the area. People described the need for a more animated, well-programmed waterfront, with various options for places to eat, consume art and culture, as well places for people to boat and swim.

Comments were recorded at each resident association meeting and pop-up. Resident association comments were grouped thematically. Comments from resident association meetings touched on the vision, water-based activities, mobility, environment and natural habitat, and hospitality.

The residents' associations were also very interested in the integration with Quayside development plans for Block 5, which is adjacent to this project.

Pop-up comments were measured quantitatively to highlight the most common and popular insights on the proposed Parliament Slip activation. Comments considered transportation access, affordability, lake views and green space, and amenities.

For the pop-ups we identified 150 consensus comments in the following areas.

Topic	Count
Affordability	9
Art/Culture	3
Boating	12
Entertainment	9
Family	7
Getting There	12
Green Space/ Lake Views	29
Inclusive Access	5
Programming	11
Restaurants	12
Retail	6
Swimming	11
Trails	9
Winter Activities	15
Grand Total	150



Redpath Waterfront Festival

Access and Accessibility

It was mentioned frequently that Parliament Slip should be accessible to everyone in a variety of ways, including how people get there, with features and amenities being accessible for people with disabilities, and affordable for families and low-income households.

Getting There

Comments ranged from the ability to access Parliament Slip by modes such as cycling, walking, driving and transit. Comments surrounding access to Parliament Slip were noted at all resident association meetings and pop ups.

Themes and sample comments:

- Strong transit and cycling connections to Parliament Slip are needed. Special attention was given to transit connectivity.
- “None of this building matters unless you solve the congestion of the roads” – from a 20+ year waterfront resident.
- Comments about the desire for parking or pick-up and drop-off areas, and storage areas to facilitate water-based recreation (i.e. canoeing, kayaking, etc.)

- Support for a better pedestrian experience getting to the area, through underpasses, at intersections, and at the top of the Slip.
- There was some concern around safety with the concentration of activities at the head of the Slip. “Consider safety barriers to prevent vehicles from entering the WaveDeck area.”

Inclusive Access

Other comments focused on the infrastructure and amenities being accessible to all waterfront users.

Themes and sample comments regarding inclusive access:

- People stressed that the amenities must be accessible for people with disabilities.
- People were supportive of improving accessibility by providing shaded areas and places to rest.
- It was recommended that any playground infrastructure at Parliament Slip be accessible to children with mobility constraints.
- It was recommended that small private rooms be provided that allow families to have privacy for praying, nursing, etc. while at the waterfront.
- Some asked the team to consider a gender-neutral approach for bathing facilities.

Affordability

Comments were recorded about the need for affordable amenities.

Themes and sample comments regarding affordability:

- More opportunities for family-friendly activities are needed
- “Free amenities are appreciated.”
- Affordable access to wellness, must be public and within reach, “we need more affordable things to do with facilities”.

Green Space + Lake Views

The desire for naturalized space around Parliament Slip was expressed frequently. A common comment was the need for more ‘green space’ or ‘parks’ that allowed public access.

Parks

Themes and sample comments regarding parks:

- Opposition to privatized parks for condo-only access.
- Need for dog parks.
- Desire for lots of parks, green spaces.

Green Space & Nature

Themes and sample comments surrounding naturalized spaces:

- Many people said they'd like to see more green space and shade at Parliament Slip and along the waterfront in general. "I live near Love Park but I wish there was going to be more grass. I live in a condo and I just want some grass to sit on."
- Gardens and space for seating and relaxation were suggested as attractive draws for seniors.
- People expressed support for floating wetlands and habitats for water birds.

Lake Views

Themes and sample comments regarding desired lake views:

- People want to maintain views to the lake down Parliament Street and urged the design team to think about the plans for the buildings and amenities at the head of Slip with this in mind.
- "Less buildings, more views."

Amenities

Much of the discussion at resident association meetings and during pop-ups was around the proposed amenities.

Swimming & Water-Based Activities

People were interested in the idea of open swimming near the lake. In the pop-up game, 'go for a swim' received the second most votes in total. The comments recorded included the need for more swimming pools, and the opportunity to swim all year round. There was also a lot of support for other water-based activities, like canoeing, kayaking, etc.

Themes and sample comments regarding swimming and water-based activities at Parliament Slip:

- Many participants expressed strong enthusiasm for year-round access to outdoor swimming.
- There were some comments on the location of the pools at the head of Parliament Slip "I would not go swimming there. I do not want to swim next to a busy road. It ruins the experience."
- Participants expressed support for infrastructure for canoes and kayaks but expressed concerns over motorized and non-motorized crafts sharing the same space.
- People urged the design team to consider safety. "Consider measures to mitigate waves/churn (i.e. breakwater), most renters of equipment are inexperienced."
- There was some concern regarding water-based activities and the sewage contaminated water coming down the Don River

Winter Activities

Another common theme when recording comments was the request for more winter activities on the waterfront. When mentioned, staff and facilitators probed people further about specific activities or activations that would be of interest. It was recorded that whatever is planned at Parliament Slip should be transferable into winter months, and not just designed for summer months.

Themes and sample comments regarding winter activities at Parliament Slip:

- “Winter swimming!” with suggestions to complement swimming in the colder months with saunas, hot tubs, hot chocolate, fire pits.
- People expressed interest in skating, Christmas markets, going for walks, ice sculptures, and other snow activities.
- One person suggested ice fishing.

Programming

The public also described the need for engaging the community through programming. Various forms of programming were mentioned, ranging from programming to meet specific demographic needs, to temporary events.

Themes and sample comments about programming at Parliament Slip:

- “Look at it like a community amenity, like Stakt Martket” or markets like Smorgasburg or “pop up” markets.”
- “Consider non-profits that offer programs for artists, musicians, workshops, for dance, artists, others.”
- “For such a multicultural city, there should be language programs (French is a no-brainer, but other languages should be offered). Stories could be told in other languages – a place for parents and kids.”
- One person asked if there would be programming for adults and seniors who don’t have kids.



Smorgasburg Open Air Market

Restaurants & Concessions

The desire for more restaurants and variety of food options were frequently recorded comments as well.

Themes and sample comments regarding restaurants and concession:

- Many participants emphasized food options as a foundational amenity for attracting visitors.
- There was support for concessions to feature independent small businesses.
- There were comments to consider logistics of concessions and food and beverage, including utilities and access for deliveries.

Other

There were many comments that were not specific to the preliminary vision for Parliament Slip, including comments on housing diversity and Quayside's Block 5.

Themes and sample comments regarding on other issues:

- "Important to build affordable housing and housing for seniors to age in their communities."
- There were requests for facilities on Block 5 to address resident needs, like a community centre, schools, daycare.
- There were concerns that the proposed school site on Block 5 and would get delayed and requests to find a way to speed up the process.

Appendix A

This table shows the date, location, event type, and visitor tally for each of the engagements.

Event	Location	Visitor Tally	Date
West Don Lands Committee	Virtual	34	April 27, 2021
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association	Virtual	50	April 28, 2021
Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association	Virtual	26	May 10, 2021
East Waterfront Community Association	Virtual	40	June 24, 2021
York Quay Neighbourhood Association	Virtual	110	November 16, 2021
Smorgasburg	7 Queens Quay E, Toronto, ON M5E 1E6	75	30-Jul-22
Smorgasburg	7 Queens Quay E, Toronto, ON M5E 1E6	90	6-Aug-22
College Park Farmers Market	444 Yonge St, Toronto, ON M5B 2H4	70	10-Aug-22
Smorgasburg	7 Queens Quay E, Toronto, ON M5E 1E6	220	13-Aug-22
Davisville Village Farmers Market	14 Acacia Rd, Toronto, ON M4S 2K	61	16-Aug-22
Underpass Park Farmers Market	29 Lower River Street, Toronto, ON M5A 1M6	43	18-Aug-22
Smorgasburg	7 Queens Quay E, Toronto, ON M5E 1E6	161	20-Aug-22
Smorgasburg	7 Queens Quay E, Toronto, ON M5E 1E6	187	27-Aug-22
College Park Farmers Market	444 Yonge St, Toronto, ON M5B 2H4	164	7-Sep-22
Smorgasburg	7 Queens Quay E, Toronto, ON M5E 1E6	113	10-Sep-22

Davisville Village Farmers Market	14 Acacia Rd, Toronto, ON M4S 2K	61	13-Sep-22
Taste of Regent Park	620 Dundas St E, Toronto, ON M5A 3S4	61	14-Sep-22
Underpass Park Farmers Market	29 Lower River Street, Toronto, ON M5A 1M6	43	15-Sep-22
Redpath Waterfront Festival	11 Dockside Dr, Toronto, ON M5V 1A2	353	17-Sep-22
Redpath Waterfront Festival	11 Dockside Dr, Toronto, ON M5V 1A2	274	18-Sep-22
Weston Village Farmers Market	34 John St, York, ON M9N 1J3	31	1-Oct-22

Appendix B

At the 16 pop ups, Waterfront Toronto team members set up and ran an activity about “Things to do on the waterfront.” The set up included an information panel describing the preliminary vision for Parliament Slip and a carnival-style game with nine (9) buckets, each with a different prompt about possible activities.

Participants were given a soft ball to toss at the activity of their choosing – an experience they would most enjoy on the waterfront – and three attempts to get in one of the buckets. Staff engaged in conversations asking if the ball landed where they were aiming. These picks were recorded into a tally sheet, with the final tally below. The tally below indicates each choice from every pop up where the Parliament Slip activation was used.



Table 1 shows the tally from the ball toss game and the Table 2 shows mailing list sign ups, total visitor tallies and [Parliament Slip Page](#) visits

Table 1

Buckets	Total
play games	176
take in some art	138
relax and unwind	167
enjoy lake views	181
eat by the water	309
shop and sightsee	156
go for a swim	263
boat on the water	228
get active	174
Total:	1792

Table 2

Mailing List Sign ups	Visitor Tally	Project Page Visits
56	2050	177

Appendix C

Detailed comments from five (5) resident association meetings are recorded below. The comments are organized across six (6) themes: vision, water-based activities, mobility, environmental/natural habitat, hospitality, and Quayside development plans for Block 5, which is adjacent to this project.

Vision (design and programming)

- Overall support for the project:
 - “Wonderful project, great!”
 - “Music Garden of the East!”
 - “Fabulous project”
 - “Love the concept, really thoughtful.”
 - “Love the winter swimming options.”
 - “Thanks for your spectacular vision for the future.”
 - “This is really exciting.”
- Thoughtful and magnificent in its scale. Together with the Distillery District this will become the **tourist zone** in the east.
- **Preserve views**: ensure the height of the facilities building doesn’t obstruct views from the north.
- Commercial/retail space is much needed, strong support for “mom-and-pop” concessions.
- Supply **shaded areas**
- **Facilities, change rooms and washrooms** – design facilities to accommodate the possible number of visitors. Look at Regent Park to consider a modern approach to **gender** in changing rooms design.
- Consider a **private partnership** to help make this happen
- Concern for the termination of Parliament Street at the WaveDeck – consider **safety barriers** to prevent vehicles from entering the WaveDeck area

Water-based activities

- Concerns over **motorized and non-motorized crafts** sharing the same space.
- Consider measures to **mitigate waves/churn** within the slip area, most renters of equipment are inexperienced.
- **Breakwater** to offer a corridor for small crafts and mitigate waves.
- Consider public **storage** for canoes/kayaks
- Concern regarding water-based activities and the sewage contaminated water coming down the Don River

Mobility

- Improvements to the railway underpasses, particularly at Parliament Street, are fundamental to making an effective connection between the city and waterfront

- **Pedestrian** crossings need to be safer. Pedestrianize Parliament Street south of Lake Shore.
- Support for the connection east and west over top of the slip which allows people to walk across Queens Quay without it being bisected.
- **Transit** is critical to success but need to plan for **access before the LRT is completed**, also consider that many construction projects will be underway simultaneously.
- Need for **adequate and secure bike storage**
- Ensure sufficient interim **public parking** while transit is built.
- Consider **drop-off and pick-up areas** for those bringing their own canoe/kayak (TTC doesn't accommodate personal watercrafts) as well as for tourist buses.
- Planning for kayak and canoe launches – suggestion of **car porting** and/or **kayak storage**.

Environment/Natural habitat

- Support for floating wetlands
- Provide spaces that are **hospitable for waterbirds**, places for them to get out of the water and rest

Hospitality

- Support for **independent small business concessions**
- Many residents showed support for more **restaurants** on the waterfront.
 - “As an Australian, good to see some swimming options/pools for families – this is what draws lots of people to Sydney's waterfront!”
- Consider shared facilities/utilities for concessions and ensure access for deliveries.

Block 5 (Cultural Centre)

- Requests for facilities for the many residents - **community centre, schools, daycare**.
- A suggestion for a **Marine Museum**.
- There were concerns that the proposed school site on Block 5 and would get delayed and requests to find a way to speed up the process.