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Improving Cooksville Parks Phase 1 Public Engagement Closing the Loop Summary

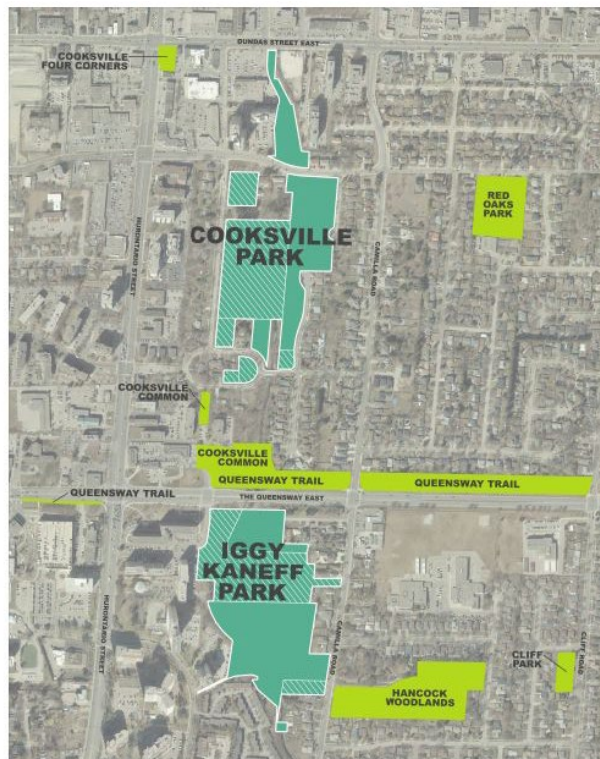
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**PARKS, FORESTRY
& ENVIRONMENT**

Project Overview

As part of the [Cooksville Parkland Long Term Acquisition](#), the City has been acquiring properties for parkland in the Cooksville area to help address the parkland deficit. To date, the City has acquired 17 properties totaling approximately 8 hectares (20 acres). The newly acquired properties will be added to Cooksville Park and Iggy Kaneff Park creating larger, more connected parkland. These two expanded parks are now ready for redevelopment. Ongoing negotiations for acquisition of additional properties continue, which will further expand Cooksville Park, Iggy Kaneff Park as well as Cooksville Common. Future phases of redevelopment will be required as the parks continue to expand.

The City completed Phase 1 of the Improving Cooksville Parks public engagement to understand what amenities or features residents want prioritized in Cooksville Park and Iggy Kaneff Park, and validate input from previous studies, including the [Downtown Hospital, Fairview and Cooksville Policy Review \(2022\)](#), [Parks and Forestry Future Directions Master Plan \(2019\)](#), and [Vision Cooksville \(2016\)](#). The feedback received will inform the preliminary park program and the conceptual park design.



Cooksville Parkland Public Engagement: Iggy Kaneff Park and Cooksville Park

-  New Parkland
-  Cooksville Park and Iggy Kaneff Park
-  Other Parks in Cooksville Area



Phase 1 Public Engagement Strategy

The City launched the first phase of the Cooksville parkland public engagement in Q2 2023, from May 25 to July 14, 2023. Residents had access to an online survey for seven weeks, creating a 24/7 community meeting where the public could review materials at their leisure. The feedback is informing the preliminary park program recommendations and a conceptual park design. Here are the engagement highlights:

- 1,850 postcards with the survey link and project information were mailed out to nearby residents and businesses
- 3,937 total visits to the website
- 538 completed online surveys
- 278 individual comments captured through the online survey
- Pop-up events at Cooksville Park and the Cooksville Library
- Project presentation at the Ward 7 Town Hall
- Outreach to 11 external groups with interest, including Indus Community Services and Cooksville Community Hub

Key Survey Findings

The majority of the survey respondents were from the Cooksville area and visit Cooksville area parks weekly. 64% of respondents walk to the parks, while 12% bike, 2% take a bus, and 21% drive.

The respondents' most visited Cooksville area parks included:

1. Cooksville Park (59%)
2. Iggy Kaneff Park (49%)
3. Hancock Woodlands (42%)
4. Red Oaks Park (16%)
5. Ashwood Park (13%)
6. John C. Price Park (11%)
7. Richard Jones Park (11%)

Other parks visited by respondents included Brickyard Park, Cliff Park, Floradale Park, and Gordon Lummiss Park.

65% of respondents visit the Cooksville area parks during winter. 36% of respondents cited the cold weather and safety (e.g. icy and snow covered trails), lack of amenities and other parks being closer to their home as factors impacting winter park use in Cooksville.

Respondents ranked passive experiences such as trails, picnic, seating, and open grass space as most important, while destination experiences such as

gathering spaces and special features were ranked as least important. The purpose of gathering spaces and special features is to provide unique and memorable park experiences. While special features did not rank highly, during the second phase of public engagement, specific ideas for special features will be shared with the community to understand if public interest. Here is summary of the priority park experiences by importance for Iggy Kaneff Park and Cooksville Park:

Table 1: Park Experiences

	Not Important	Important	Very Important
Active experiences such as playgrounds, spray pads and sports activities	23%	28%	49%
Passive experiences such as trails, picnic, seating and open grass space	5%	25%	70%
Destination experiences such as gathering spaces and special features	38%	34%	28%

The top five amenities and features for the Cooksville parkland ranked by respondents were:

1. Trees and natural areas (44%)
2. Multi-use trails (44%)
3. Public washroom at Cooksville Park (36%)
4. Playground (27%)
5. Winter activities such as skating (26%)

The bottom five amenities and features for the Cooksville parkland ranked by respondents were:

1. Special site feature (4%)
2. Beginner level skateboarding (5%)
3. Small soccer facility (8%)
4. Public art (9%)
5. Basketball (9%)

The survey results were also analyzed by looking at the responses across various age groups. There was consistency in the most popular and least popular amenities and features selected across most of the respondent age groups, with a few exceptions. Public washroom at Cooksville Park ranked in the top five park amenities for all age groups. Trees and natural areas and multi-use trails ranked highest for all age groups with the exception on the 12-18 age group. Playground ranked as a top amenity for all except the 65 or older age group. Shade structure ranked in the top five amenities for 12-18 year old and 65 and over age groups. While basketball ranked in the bottom

five amenities in this survey, it did rank in the top five for respondents in the 12 to 18 age group.

Recommendations

The results of the first phase of the Improving Cooksville Parks public engagement support recommendations from previous studies. Passive experiences such as trails, picnic, seating, and open grass space were most preferred by the survey respondents. In addition to other park amenities based on public feedback and previous studies, the newly expanded Iggy Kaneff Park and Cooksville Park should prioritize:

- Trees and natural areas
- Open grass areas
- Multi-use trails
- Public washroom at Cooksville Park
- Playground
- Winter activities such as skating

Further consideration should be given to the purpose of the special site feature. During the second phase of public engagement, additional information and ideas for a special site feature will be presented to the public, to further gauge interest.

Additional features and amenities to be considered in the parks include native pollinator plant and medicinal herb garden, and improved connections between the parks, with potential bridges over Cooksville Creek. Recommendations to address safety and security concerns will also be developed.

Next Steps

The feedback gathered from Phase 1 of Improving Cooksville Parks public engagement and recommendations from previous studies will inform the preliminary park program and conceptual park designs.

Please note the public engagement is still ongoing. The City will be reaching out to seek feedback on the conceptual park designs in 2024. To be notified of future engagements, including opportunities to see park designs, please subscribe to updates on the [project website](#).