



October 2020



Community Voices Pave the Road to Recovery

What 1,400+ Torontonians told us they want to see in the City's recovery and rebuilding process

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	1
<hr/>	
TORONTO OFFICE OF RECOVERY & REBUILD CONSULTATIONS	1
FOCUS ON EQUITY-SEEKING GROUPS, INDIGENOUS, AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS	1
SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS	1
COVID-19 HOT SPOTS	2
SOCIAL PLANNING TORONTO'S RESIDENT CONSULTATION REPORT	3
ABOUT THE SPT-SUPPORTED CONSULTATION PROCESS	3
WHAT WE HEARD	5
<hr/>	
PERSONAL IMPACT OF COVID-19	5
ACCESS TO PROGRAMS, SUPPORTS, AND SERVICES BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	6
URGENT SUPPORTS NEEDED	6
CHANGES IN SERVICES NEEDED	7
LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS	8
TOP FOUR ISSUE AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9
UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES	10
SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS TO BUILD UPON	12
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS	13
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	13
REDUCING CLIMATE CHANGE	14
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	15
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS	17
Appendix 1: Participant Demographics	18
<hr/>	
Appendix 2: Survey Questions	26

BACKGROUND

Toronto Office of Recovery & Rebuild Consultations

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Toronto has received input on how best to respond, recover, and rebuild our city. The Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force kicked off the consultation process at the start of the year, along with issue-specific conversations with key stakeholders convened by the Mayor's Office. Key inputs were also provided through the Community Coordination Plan (a joint initiative of the United Way Greater Toronto and the City of Toronto). In addition, residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations voluntarily and proactively reached out to the Mayor's Office, Councillors, and City divisions.

As part of this process, the City established a temporary Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR) in Spring 2020. TORR's role was to coordinate engagement and research to inform city-wide recommendations for rebuilding and reimagining how the City delivers programs and services. TORR organized several initiatives aimed at consulting with key stakeholders to inform its final report. This included a partnership with the Toronto Board of Trade and the Urban Land Institute to lead working groups on a wide range of city-building priorities, as well as offering a resident survey on its website from June 1–July 15, 2020.

Focus on Equity-Seeking Groups, Indigenous, and Vulnerable Populations

TORR's work had five main theme areas, one of which was **Community and Strategic Alliances**. One of the priorities under this theme was to develop an engagement plan for residents from Indigenous populations, equity-seeking groups, and vulnerable populations, many of which have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of this work, the City engaged Social Planning Toronto (SPT) as a partner to coordinate a **grassroots resident engagement plan**, which involved designing and delivering a city-wide consultation process to engage these populations. In parallel, the City consulted with hundreds of community-based agencies through the Community Coordination Plan (CCP). The findings from the consultations supported by SPT and the CCP were to be considered in a final report by TORR to the City Manager's Office in September. The City Manager will make recommendations informed by the TORR report to the Executive Committee in October 2020.

In addition, our partners at the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) designed an independent consultation process to engage their member agencies in a submission that will be delivered directly to the Mayor and City Council in the Fall.

Selected Demographics

Since May 20, 2020, Toronto Public Health (TPH) has been collecting socio-demographic data from people infected with COVID-19. This [data confirms that low-income groups, racialized populations, and those living in larger households](#) have been disproportionately affected by the virus.

Recognizing the need to amplify the voices of communities highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, SPT's consultation initiative was structured around supporting Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and vulnerable populations to lead their own consultations with residents in their communities. Those who identify with one or more of these categories are often historically disadvantaged and/or systematically marginalized by multiple systems of oppression. They face considerable barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources. The list below provides examples of the specific communities and populations we prioritized in this consultation process. However, it is not meant to be a complete list of who was engaged.

- Black
- Indigenous
- racialized
- youth
- women
- seniors
- two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and gender non-confirming (2SLGBTQ+) people
- newcomers (less than 5 years in Canada), refugees, migrants, undocumented people
- people with disabilities (physical or mental and/or with pre-existing medical conditions)
- low income/fixed income, precariously employed, underemployed, or unemployed
- people experiencing homelessness
- underhoused or precariously housed
- consumer survivors
- people facing addiction challenges
- gender-based violence survivors
- incarcerated or formerly incarcerated people
- persons facing religious/cultural discrimination

COVID-19 Hot Spots

Additionally, SPT prioritized supporting applicants that were working with residents in [neighbourhoods with disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 cases](#) identified by TPH. At the time of the selection process (June 23–28), these neighbourhoods were:

- Black Creek
- Downsview-Roding-CFB
- Glenfield-Jane Heights
- Islington-City Centre West
- Newton Brooke West
- York University Heights
- West Humber-Clairville
- Weston
- Woburn
- Scarborough Rouge
- Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown
- Wexford-Maryvale

Social Planning Toronto's Resident Consultation Report

This report exclusively summarizes the input gathered through the SPT-supported consultations representing over 1,457 voices from Indigenous populations, equity-seeking groups, and vulnerable populations. It is crucial to give special attention to the findings that emerged from the SPT-supported consultations, as the communities who participated are often underrepresented in decision-making processes.

About the SPT-Supported Consultation Process

The Vital Role of Consultation Leaders

Through our partnership with the City, SPT offered honorarium support to Consultation Leaders: leaders representing community-led groups and community-based agencies interested in hosting their own recovery consultations. A call for applications to receive for honorarium support was launched on June 22, 2020, with a special focus on supporting Consultation Leaders engaging with Indigenous, equity-seeking groups, vulnerable populations. A total of \$48,725 was distributed to 60 Consultation Leaders as honorarium for their time in leading and documenting discussions and offering survey support; to provide participants honorariums; and to cover the cost of accessibility and technology support (e.g., to boost internet or cellphone plans, use accessibility tools).

Applicants who did not receive honorarium support were still welcome to engage in consultations, and all support materials were available to the public on SPT's website. Input from everyone who participated in the consultations, regardless of whether they received honorarium support, was analyzed by SPT staff and submitted to TORR.

Activities

To increase participation, SPT provided four different methods to receive input:

1. Survey for individuals
2. Group discussion
3. Written submission
4. Shared story

We use the term "consultation" in this report to describe one or more of the above activities. Consultation input could be gathered through any of the four methods using technologies best suited to the groups or individuals including phone, online video applications (e.g., Zoom), social media, and mobile apps. Consultation data were gathered online via SurveyMonkey forms and submitted to SPT. Questions in the individual survey were replicated in the group discussions. Due to tight deadlines to submit the data to the City, SPT was unable to accept handwritten consultation input.

To overcome barriers to digital access and literacy, the online individual survey could be filled out with the support of a Consultation Leader. Consultation Leaders also had the option of calling residents and filling out their survey on their behalf if residents were unable to use a computer or digital device to type their responses.

Group discussions were delivered as small focus groups or virtual town halls. SPT gave participants free access to a Zoom account dedicated to running recovery consultations.

Written submissions were sent directly to TORR and to SPT; input from these submissions was included in our data submission to TORR.

Those choosing to share or capture stories used an online “story form,” which included spaces for case studies, direct quotes, and free writing about how participants had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Capacity-Building Tools and Support

SPT developed a [Consultation Guide](#) to engage residents and spark important conversations. A capacity building tool for Consultation Leaders, the guide provided tips for collecting individual surveys, conducting group discussions, and summarizing notes. It also assisted Consultation Leaders in creating a safe space for residents facing pandemic-related stress and challenges.

SPT also developed a webinar on “[How to Lead Resident Consultations](#)” and “[How to use Zoom for Consultations](#).” The webinar was presented live to allow participants to ask SPT staff questions and was also available for anyone to access online afterward.

SPT’s Community Planners were available throughout the consultation period to provide support and answer questions for anyone leading consultations with community members. SPT’s [website for the recovery consultations](#) contained all materials necessary to lead the consultations, as well as an FAQ page.

Timeline of Consultations

June 22–28, 2020	Call for applications for honorarium support
July 3–24, 2020	Consultation period
July 25–31, 2020	Data coding period
August 6, 2020	Coded data submitted by SPT to TORR



WHAT WE HEARD

Through the SPT-supported consultation process, we heard from more than **1,457 individual participants** through four data collection activities.

- **967** individual surveys were completed, representing **967** participants
- **40** group discussions were conducted, representing **378** participants
- **10** story forms were completed, representing **105** participants
- **7** written submissions were received, representing **7+** participants*

[Appendix 1](#) summarizes information from 1,059 participants who completed the voluntary demographic questions as part of the individual survey or group discussion. [Appendix 2](#) lists the questions that were used for the individual survey and to guide the group discussions.

The following section summarizes what we heard through the consultation process.

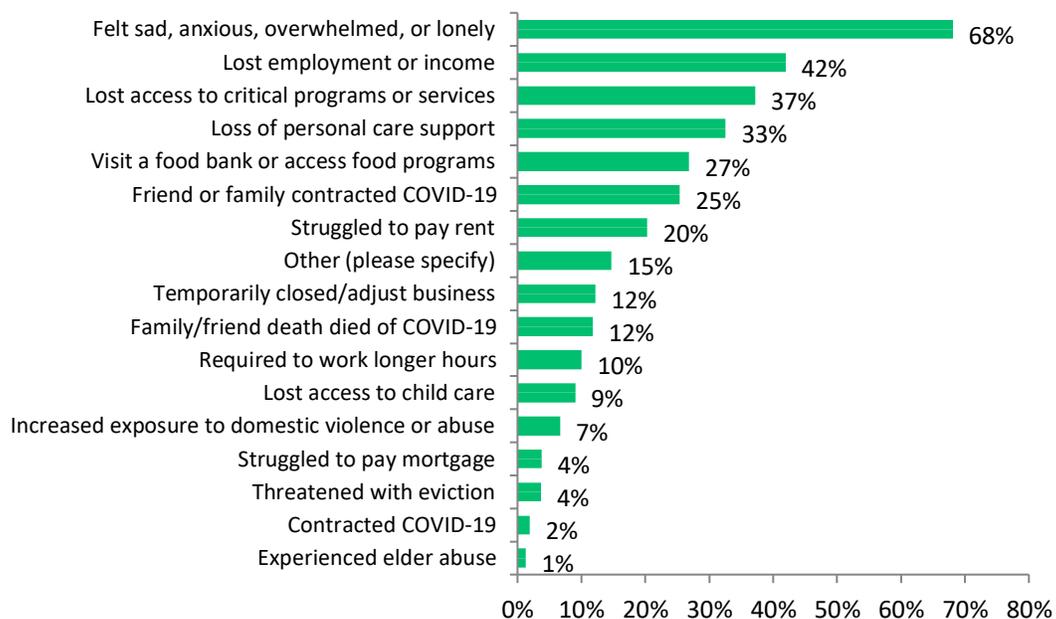
Personal Impact of COVID-19

Participants were asked if and how they had been personally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As seen in **Figure 1**, based on 918 individual survey responses:

- almost 70% of respondents indicated that they felt sad, anxious, overwhelmed, or lonely
- 42% indicated that they had lost employment or income
- 37% lost access to critical programs or supports
- 33% experienced a loss of personal care support from family, friends, neighbours, or a community agency due to physical distancing requirements
- 27% had to visit a food bank or other food security program

Figure 1: If you have been personally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in any of the following ways, please select all that apply.



* Written submissions represented both individuals and groups. For those written submissions provided by groups, the number of participants was not specified.

Qualitative responses from group discussions, written submissions, and the story form presented similar themes, including an overwhelming number of people reporting feeling anxious, often because of loss of employment and limited income. Loss of employment and/or income left many people struggling to pay for rent and utilities, groceries, transportation, medications, and other essential items.

Qualitative information also highlighted the challenges and impacts of staying home and limiting outings; many people reported feeling lonely and isolated.

Access to Programs, Supports, and Services Before the COVID-19 Pandemic

Participants were asked what programs, supports, and services they accessed before the pandemic.

Based on 928 individual survey responses, the most commonly accessed programs, supports, and services pre-pandemic included:

- parks and public spaces (70%)
- library and library services (56%)
- recreational facilities or programming (48%)
- reliable and safe transit (46%)
- space for people to meet safely in communities or to deliver important community programs and services in person or virtually (44%)

In the group discussions, recreation facilities, community centres, and social services and programming were also frequently mentioned.

Urgent Supports Needed

Participants were asked to what services, supports, and programs they need urgently in the next 0–6 months.

Drawing from the same list as the previous question, 932 individual survey respondents identified:

- parks and public spaces (62%)
- reliable and safe transit (53%)
- access to libraries and library services (52%)
- space for people to meet safely in communities or to deliver important community programs and services in person or virtually (48%)
- income supports (47%)
- recreational facilities or programs (47%)

Among the group discussion participants, the most common urgent services and supports identified were employment, health services (including mental health supports), and food security.

In addition to the answers listed above, participants often noted that the government should provide more information to the public, in non-official languages, about COVID-19, the proper use of masks, other public health guidelines, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), etc.

Changes in Services Needed

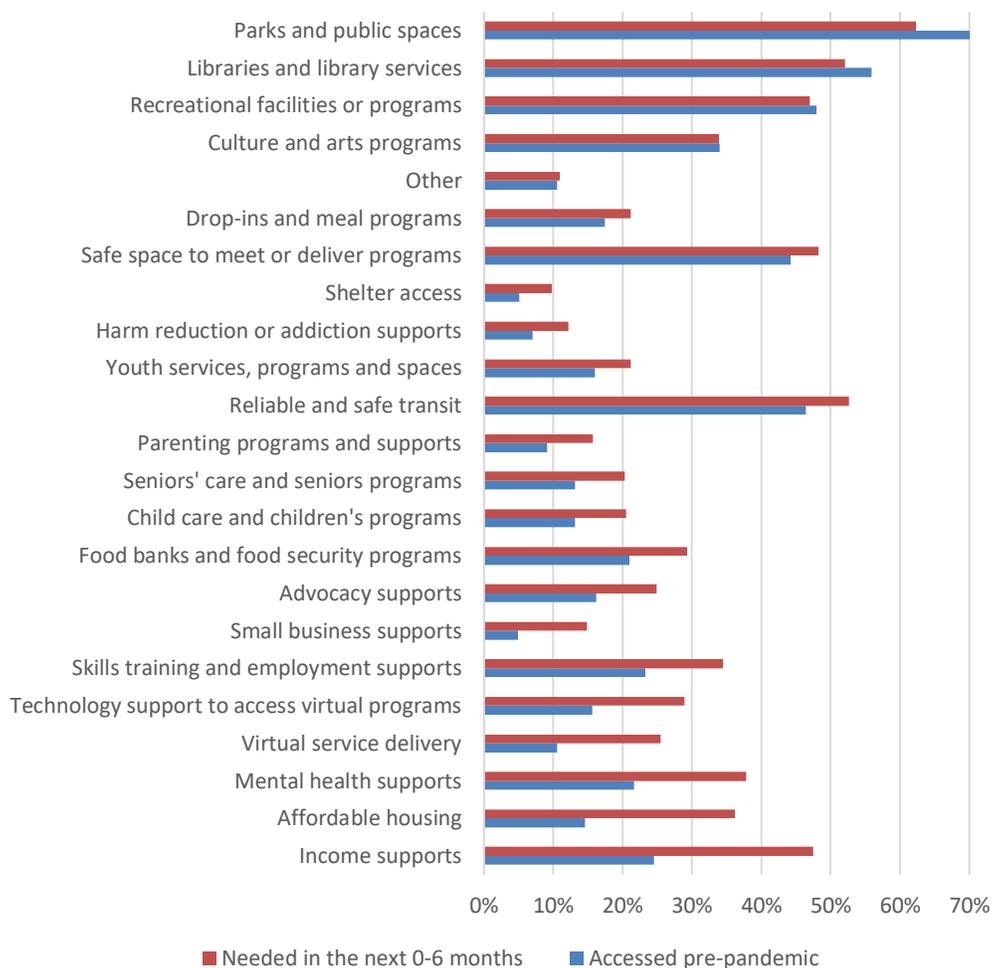
Notably, there were several shifts in the services accessed pre-pandemic and those that participants need immediately:

- While only 24% of respondents indicated that they accessed **income supports** before the pandemic, 47% identified this as a priority for the next 0–6 months.
- A similar trend was noticed for **affordable housing**. While 15% accessed affordable housing pre-pandemic, 36% indicated that this would be a priority for the next 0–6 months.
- While 22% of respondents indicated that they accessed **mental health supports** and/or supports to address social isolation before the pandemic, 38% of respondents suggested these were urgently needed in the next 0–6 months.

At the same time, an overwhelming number of participants used parks and public spaces, as well as libraries and library services before the pandemic and identified these services as an urgent priority.

- **Every effort should be made to keep libraries, community centres (City of Toronto and non-profit operated) and public spaces open as essential services.**

Figure 2: Services accessed pre-pandemic and urgent services needed

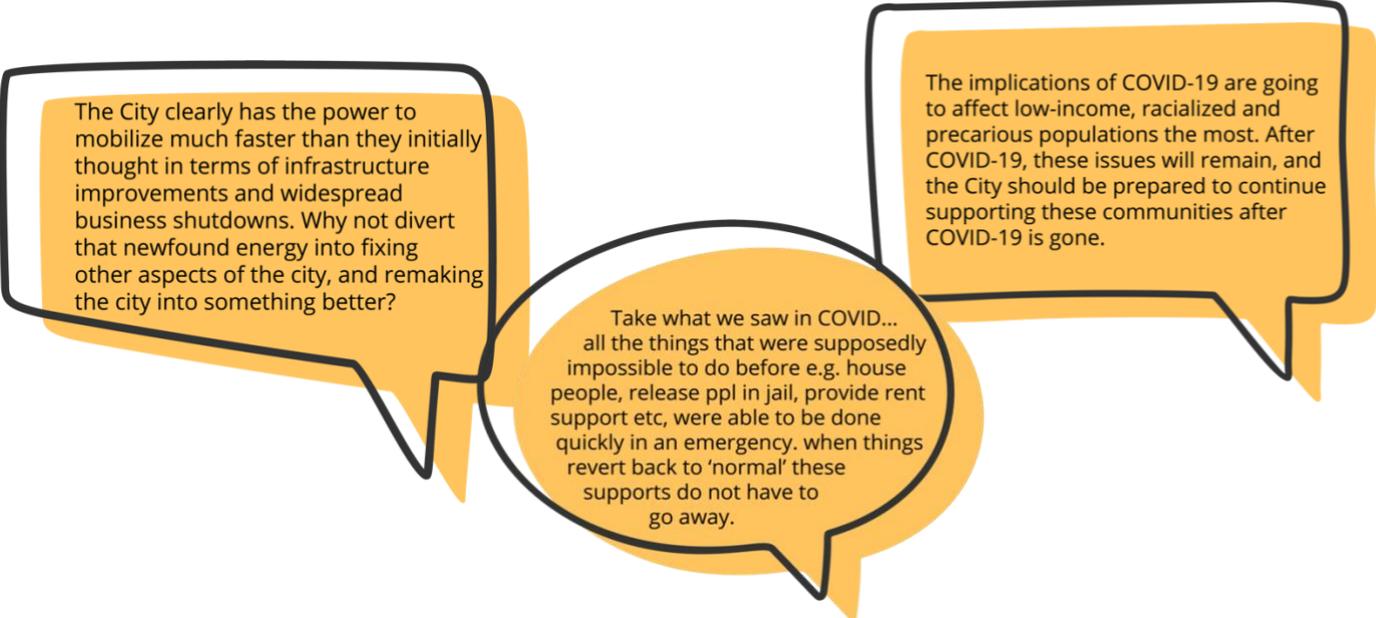


Long-Term Recommendations

Participants were asked where they saw opportunities for the City, other levels of government, and community partners to make improvements to programs or services that did not work for them or their community before COVID-19. They shared their ideas to strengthen programs or services over the long-term. Below are the recommendations that came forward.

The overall approach for recovery and rebuilding should be based on:

- **Investment**
Investment is needed in services, programs, and communities. Funding for police services should be reallocated to other important social services provided by grassroots groups, and community-based and non-profit organizations.
- **Equity**
Inequity in Toronto has worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and needs to be addressed through the recovery process.
- **A bottom-up model**
Those with lived experience should be actively involved in decision-making, including by having greater access to elected officials and civic engagement processes.
- **Intergovernmental collaboration**
Many residents recognized the need for support from the provincial and federal governments. Specifically, the City of Toronto should work with provincial and federal counterparts on:
 - affordable housing,
 - employment,
 - health, and
 - reliable public transit.



The City clearly has the power to mobilize much faster than they initially thought in terms of infrastructure improvements and widespread business shutdowns. Why not divert that newfound energy into fixing other aspects of the city, and remaking the city into something better?

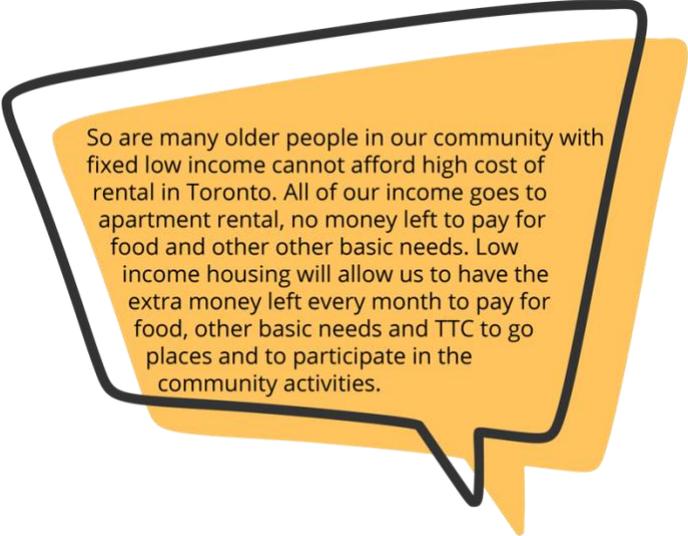
Take what we saw in COVID... all the things that were supposedly impossible to do before e.g. house people, release ppl in jail, provide rent support etc, were able to be done quickly in an emergency. when things revert back to 'normal' these supports do not have to go away.

The implications of COVID-19 are going to affect low-income, racialized and precarious populations the most. After COVID-19, these issues will remain, and the City should be prepared to continue supporting these communities after COVID-19 is gone.

Top Four Issue Areas and Recommendations

1. Housing

- **Halt evictions** during the entirety of the pandemic for renters and people living in encampments, and work towards long-term eviction prevention after the pandemic.
- **Apply rent control** towards all housing and strengthen existing rent control.
- **Provide rent relief** and rent subsidies, and ban late fees for nonpayment of rent.
- **End homelessness** by increasing funding and expanding deeply affordable, transitional housing and shelters for people experiencing homelessness.
- **De-commodify housing** by regulating the financialization of housing (e.g., implement more restrictions on foreign investment and private short-term rentals).
- Expand housing options to introduce **more “missing middle” housing**; review zoning restrictions to enable more affordable housing development options.
- Develop more **affordable, accessible and supportive housing for seniors and people with disabilities**.
- Increase **subsidized and co-operative housing** options for low-income residents.
- Review/revise the **definition of affordable housing** to be based on income level, not on average market rent.



So are many older people in our community with fixed low income cannot afford high cost of rental in Toronto. All of our income goes to apartment rental, no money left to pay for food and other other basic needs. Low income housing will allow us to have the extra money left every month to pay for food, other basic needs and TTC to go places and to participate in the community activities.

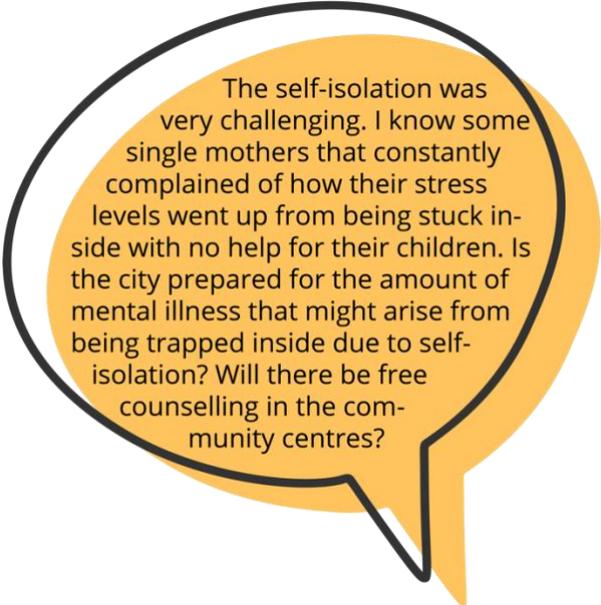
2. Employment

- Offer more **programs, support, and entry-level positions to allow youth and recent graduates who have limited experience to find employment**.
- Provide **more decent work opportunities, along with increased access to those opportunities** (e.g., job banks, offering supports and resources in multiple languages). These were frequent suggestions, with specific reference to supporting skilled immigrants, newcomers, and other equity-seeking groups.
- **Increase minimum wage** so that workers receive a liveable wage that recognizes the high cost of living in Toronto.
- **Provide second career opportunities** and assistance to those looking to change careers or who need additional support returning to the workforce after a certain age.

3. Mental Health

- **Provide more funding to expand mental health services** — especially for seniors, post-secondary students, Black youth, people with disabilities, and those who have been providing formal/informal care during the pandemic — and improve waiting lists for mental health services.

- Increase accessibility of mental health services by **expanding information, outreach, and publicity for those programs.**
- **Increase recreational, fitness, and outdoor opportunities** as a key component to supporting mental health and wellbeing.
- **Use a community-driven approach that is more culturally relevant** to improve mental health services. For example, have more practitioners who reflect the needs and identities of their clients, increase peer support roles, and involve those with lived expertise in delivering and designing services.
- Improve **police interventions in mental health crises.** Many concerns were raised about this process and how it could be improved, e.g., by establishing an alternative unit with first responders specifically trained to work with people with mental health challenges.



4. Income Supports

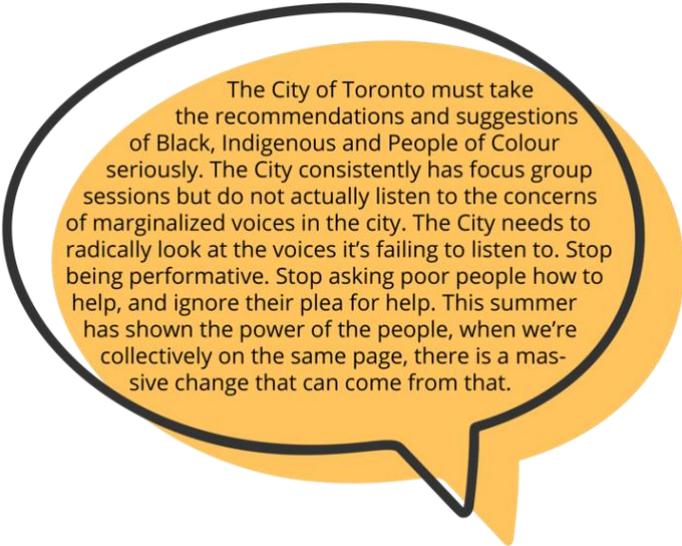
- **Enhance existing programs to provide a liveable benefit that increases annually with inflation** — especially Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, but also Employment Insurance, Old Age Security, and CPP Disability. Notably, many respondents highlighted the discrepancy between the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), which offers a monthly allowance of \$2,000, and OW and ODSP, which provide significantly less income support.
- **Expand coverage of income supports** to ensure that everyone — including temporary workers, migrants, and international students — has access.
- **Implement a universal basic income program** to provide income security to residents even after the pandemic.
- **Simplify and streamline the process** for applying and receiving income support programs.

Underrepresented Voices

Consistent with our commitment to raising the voices of historically marginalized groups, this section outlines additional recurring recommendations (that were not included above) that address the needs and challenges of underrepresented groups and vulnerable populations.

- **Take immediate action to combat systemic racism — specifically anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism — in workplaces, government, child welfare, and the healthcare system** through policies, trainings, education, and additional measures to ensure Black, Indigenous, and racialized people hold positions of leadership.
- Support **alternatives to policing led by Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities.**
- Recognize **status for all.** Undocumented, migrant, and temporary foreign workers need to be better supported, with access to healthcare, income support, etc.
- Offer permanent, affordable housing and income **supports for incarcerated and previously incarcerated individuals.**

- Increase access to **employment programs and career pathways for people with criminal records.**
- **Decriminalize drug use and invest in harm reduction programs** to provide overnight access and expand the number of safe injection sites.
- **Decriminalize sex work:** End repressive regulations, enforcement, and over surveillance of spas, holistic centres, and massage parlours and issue clear and specific guidelines to law enforcement on COVID-related laws.
- Increase wraparound **supports for women, trans women, single mothers, and sex workers** facing additional stresses due to the pandemic (e.g., isolation, gender-based violence, increased care-work, household and emotional labour).
- Increase access and funding to **subsidized childcare for low-income families.**
- Improve government **supports for caregivers** during and after the pandemic (specifically those who are caring for family members and children with illnesses and/or disabilities).
- Offer more **accessible, culturally relevant, and adequately funded programs and spaces for Indigenous peoples,** especially Indigenous youth.
- **Improve services and opportunities for people with disabilities:** increase “work from home” opportunities for people with disabilities, provide more accommodations/accessibility supports for people working from home, make safety and service improvements to TTC Wheel-Trans, provide ASL/Braille services and improve online access to public meetings, and prioritize consulting with people with disabilities in City strategies and plans.
- **Sustain engagement with two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and gender non-confirming (2SLGBTQ+)** persons and communities to understand their urgent and long-term needs.
- Seriously **address the inadequacies of long-term care homes and senior services** exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic through financial investment, regulatory changes, and more support for in-home and community care.
- Take **additional precautions to safeguard seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income people who are at increased risk of severe health outcomes** by providing them with free PPE and sanitizer, and access to grocery delivery services.

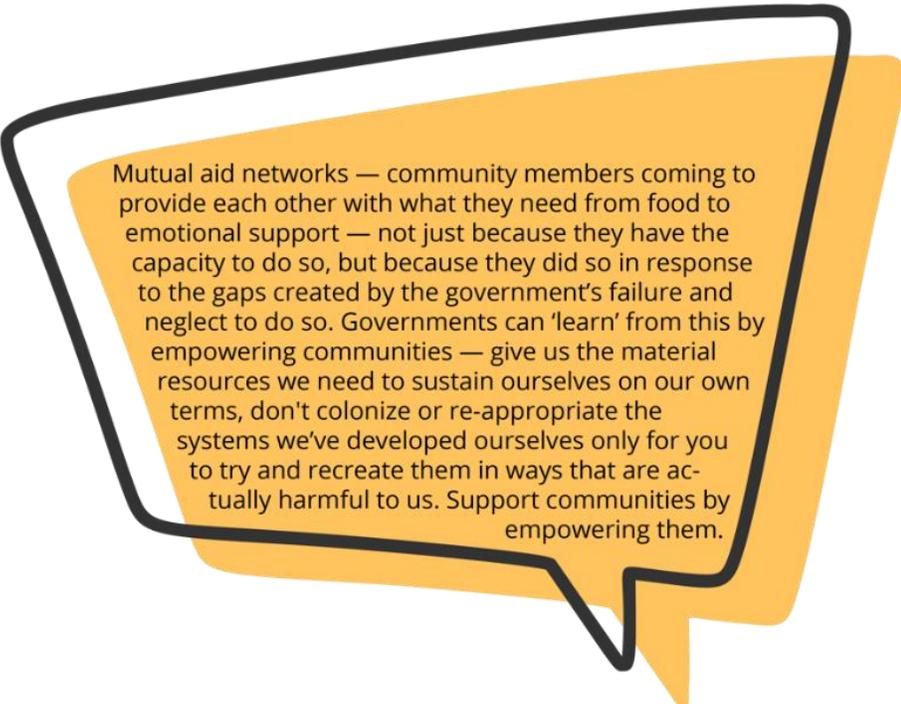


The City of Toronto must take the recommendations and suggestions of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour seriously. The City consistently has focus group sessions but do not actually listen to the concerns of marginalized voices in the city. The City needs to radically look at the voices it's failing to listen to. Stop being performative. Stop asking poor people how to help, and ignore their plea for help. This summer has shown the power of the people, when we're collectively on the same page, there is a massive change that can come from that.

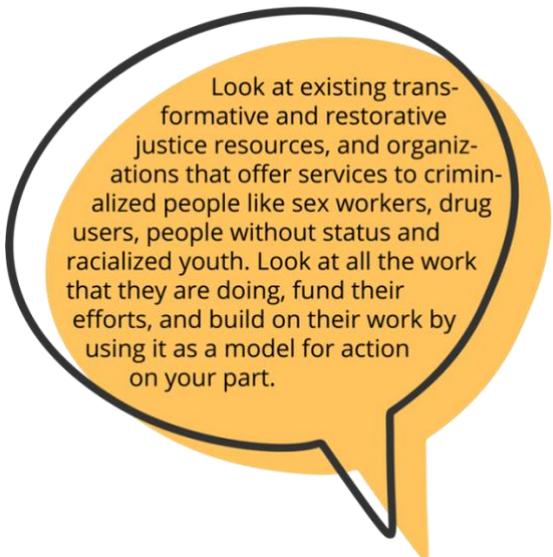
Successful Initiatives and Actions to Build Upon

Participants were asked to share successful actions that they, their business, their community, or their neighbourhood have implemented in response to the pandemic. The City and other organizations are encouraged to build upon these suggestions. Common ideas shared included:

- **Mutual aid networks** (based out of various neighbourhoods) were frequently mentioned as a way that communities came together to support each other, work collectively, and break isolation. Mutual aid networks often delivered food, medication, and other basic needs to elderly and immuno-compromised residents, distributed resources on how to access various supports in the community, and offered emotional support to those experiencing isolation.
- Throughout the city, **grassroots groups quickly took initiative to fill noticeable gaps in services** in their communities, as established organizations adjusted to major shifts in operations (i.e. working from home and remote service delivery).
- Many respondents discussed the use of **virtual and tele-communication methods** (such as Zoom meetings and online social groups) to stay in touch, access programs, and work remotely.
- **Public health measures** put in place, such as sanitizer in common areas, wearing masks, thorough cleaning protocols, social distancing, and social bubbles were also recognized as essential.
- Themes of **community building and community organizing** emerged as residents made collective efforts to support causes and take political action (e.g., actions supporting the homeless population and encampments, addressing police violence and anti-Black racism, and eviction prevention).
- Many people found **sharing information and resources** through community newsletters, translated public health materials, and other supports to be valuable.



Mutual aid networks — community members coming to provide each other with what they need from food to emotional support — not just because they have the capacity to do so, but because they did so in response to the gaps created by the government's failure and neglect to do so. Governments can 'learn' from this by empowering communities — give us the material resources we need to sustain ourselves on our own terms, don't colonize or re-appropriate the systems we've developed ourselves only for you to try and recreate them in ways that are actually harmful to us. Support communities by empowering them.



Look at existing transformative and restorative justice resources, and organizations that offer services to criminalized people like sex workers, drug users, people without status and racialized youth. Look at all the work that they are doing, fund their efforts, and build on their work by using it as a model for action on your part.

Opportunities for Service Improvements

Participants suggested the ways in which the design and delivery of programs can be improved to increase participation from equity-seeking and vulnerable populations. Emerging themes included:

- Programs and services need to **support and empower service users**. Programs should be co-designed by service users and/or led by service users.
- Increase **awareness, flexibility, and accessibility of programs**. This should include investment in and implementation of accessible and inclusive technologies and communications.
- Ensure **culturally relevant and language-specific programming**.
- **Continue virtual and remote program options beyond the pandemic, but address internet accessibility and gaps in technology literacy**, specifically among seniors.

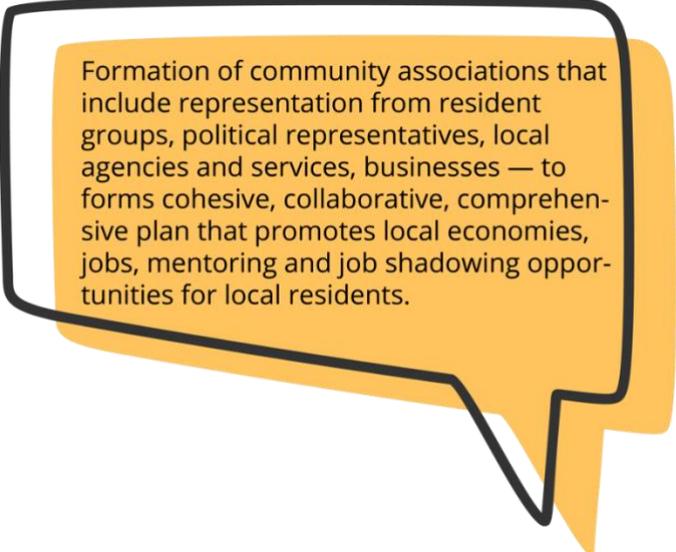
Local Economic Development

Participants were asked to share their recommendations on how to create jobs, support small businesses, and boost local economic development in their community.

- Provide **financial support to small, local businesses** to stay afloat, as well as support to those wanting to start new businesses (loans/grants/start-up funds).
 - This could include **lowering monthly recurring payments for small businesses** (i.e., taxes, utilities, rent) or providing them with rebates to offset these costs.
- Take additional measures to stimulate local business activity, such as helping with **advertising and promotion** (e.g., business directories easily searchable by neighbourhood, local business markets, and buy local campaigns).
- Provide **more job opportunities**, especially for young people and equity-seeking groups. The City could offer incentives for small business to hire locally/hire youth, and provide more entry-level jobs, free training, and paid internship opportunities. At the same time, there needs to be increased promotion/access to available jobs through job boards, websites, employment counsellors, etc.
- Provide government supports, funding, and protections for **Black-owned small businesses and Black business owners**.



I think once a month they should have a young business market that can showcase all the youth's business ideas or have a program about the marketing business and more.

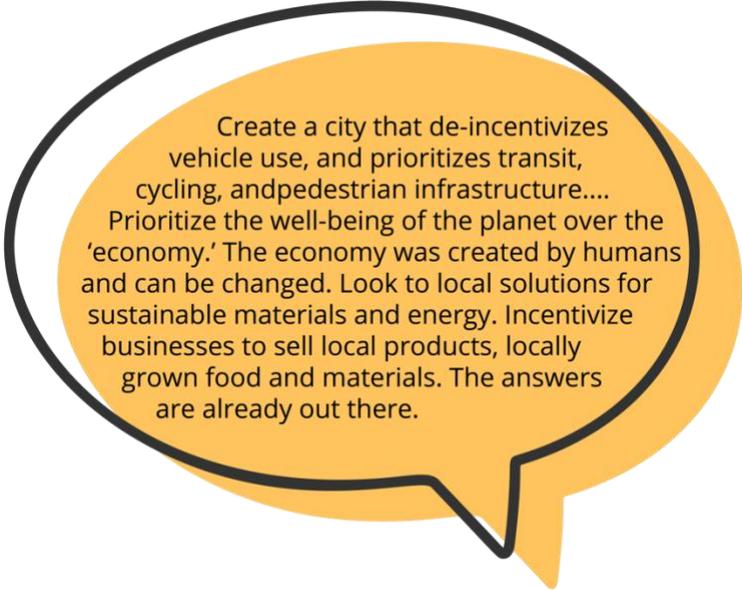


Formation of community associations that include representation from resident groups, political representatives, local agencies and services, businesses — to form a cohesive, collaborative, comprehensive plan that promotes local economies, jobs, mentoring and job shadowing opportunities for local residents.

Reducing Climate Change

Participants were asked to share their ideas on how the City, other levels of government, community partners, and organizations can support their community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and be better prepared to face the impacts of climate change.

- Use **transportation** as a main vehicle to address climate issues; providing **affordable and reliable public transit** was the most commonly cited way to address climate change. Other ideas included:
 - To encourage **active transportation**, the City could provide free bikes and invest in infrastructure to support biking and walking. Many participants wanted more bike lanes and wanted temporary bike lanes made permanent, as well as wider sidewalks for pedestrians.
 - To shift towards more **electric vehicles**, the City could invest in more electric buses and provide financial incentives or subsidies for residents to purchase electric automobiles. Providing more charging stations was also mentioned.
 - To reduce emissions from commuting, the City should continue to encourage/incentivize **working from home and providing virtual services**.
- **Plant more trees.**
- **Prioritize sustainable building and development** by constructing fewer condos; those that are built should use sustainable materials and be environmentally friendly/energy efficient and include green spaces. The idea of the “15-minute” city was mentioned.
- Ensure that new and existing buildings have proper and simple **waste management** systems that allow for organic waste collection and recycling.
- Use **public education, awareness, and engagement** to increase residents’ understanding of what greenhouse gas emissions are, how they contribute, and actionable steps they can take to reduce them. This should include public education on how to properly sort waste - including disposal of masks - and reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Use **financial incentives and penalties** to encourage appropriate behavior among individuals and businesses. Some examples mentioned included a carbon tax, taxes on driving in the downtown core, and fines for littering.
- **Support local businesses, local farms, community gardens, and growing food.**

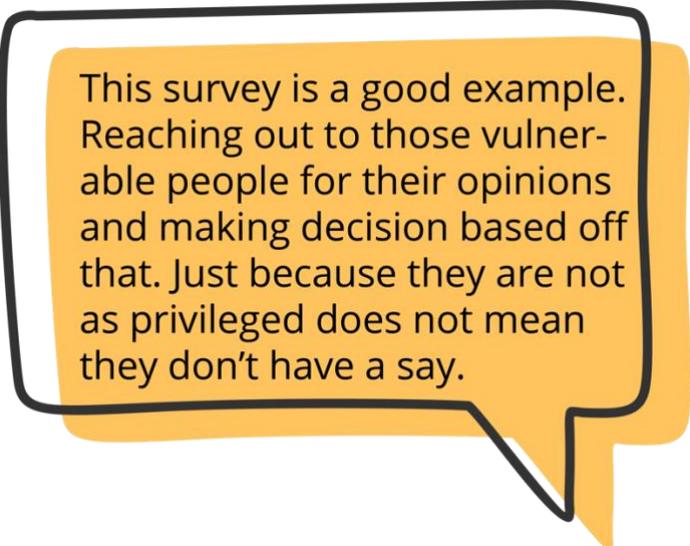


Create a city that de-incentivizes vehicle use, and prioritizes transit, cycling, and pedestrian infrastructure.... Prioritize the well-being of the planet over the 'economy.' The economy was created by humans and can be changed. Look to local solutions for sustainable materials and energy. Incentivize businesses to sell local products, locally grown food and materials. The answers are already out there.

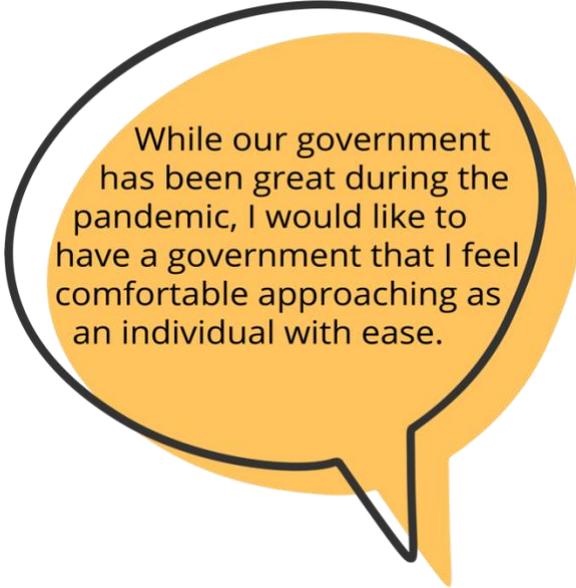
Civic Engagement

Participants were asked to describe the supports they need to easily share their concerns, ideas, and solutions with decision-makers at City Hall. Below are the most common recommendations to enhance the participation and inclusion of equity-seeking groups and vulnerable populations in the City's decision-making processes.

- **Consistent, ongoing involvement and direct access to City Councillors and City Hall.** This could be through the creation of a “resident liaison” position in communities that is responsible for bringing forward the issues/concerns raised by residents in the community. Community caucuses, advisory committees, or resident tables that report directly to City Councillors were also mentioned.
- **A variety of consultation media.** To ensure everyone can have a voice, a variety of media should be utilized including social media and online platforms, such as virtual polling stations, surveys, and virtual town halls. Not everyone has access to technology, however, so the use of snail mail, phone calls, and suggestion boxes should continue.
- **Outreach to resident leaders, grassroots groups, and community organizations.** Whenever possible, consultations should be done in partnership with resident leaders and grassroots groups who have strong connections in the community.
- **Civic and political education** to help residents understand how aspects of their lives are impacted by decisions at City Hall; provide updates on current, relevant issues being debated; and offer training to support civic participation.
- **Accessibility supports** including the use of plain language, translation/interpretation services, ASL interpretation, and technical/access support as needed. Consultations should also include honorariums, transit support, child care and food to facilitate participation. When conducting virtual meetings, the City needs to consider size, format, and platform to ensure everyone can actively participate.
- **Increased number and diversity of City Councillors and political staff.** Elected officials and staff should represent the diversity of their constituents.
- **Action on resident input.** Many respondents expressed frustration that the input they previously shared has not been acted on. The City must listen to, acknowledge, and trust people's life stories and ideas, and act on them.
- **A presence in community.** Many residents want to see people from City Hall have a presence in their community, and not just during elections.
- **Outreach to equity-seeking groups, Indigenous, and vulnerable populations.** Many respondents cited this



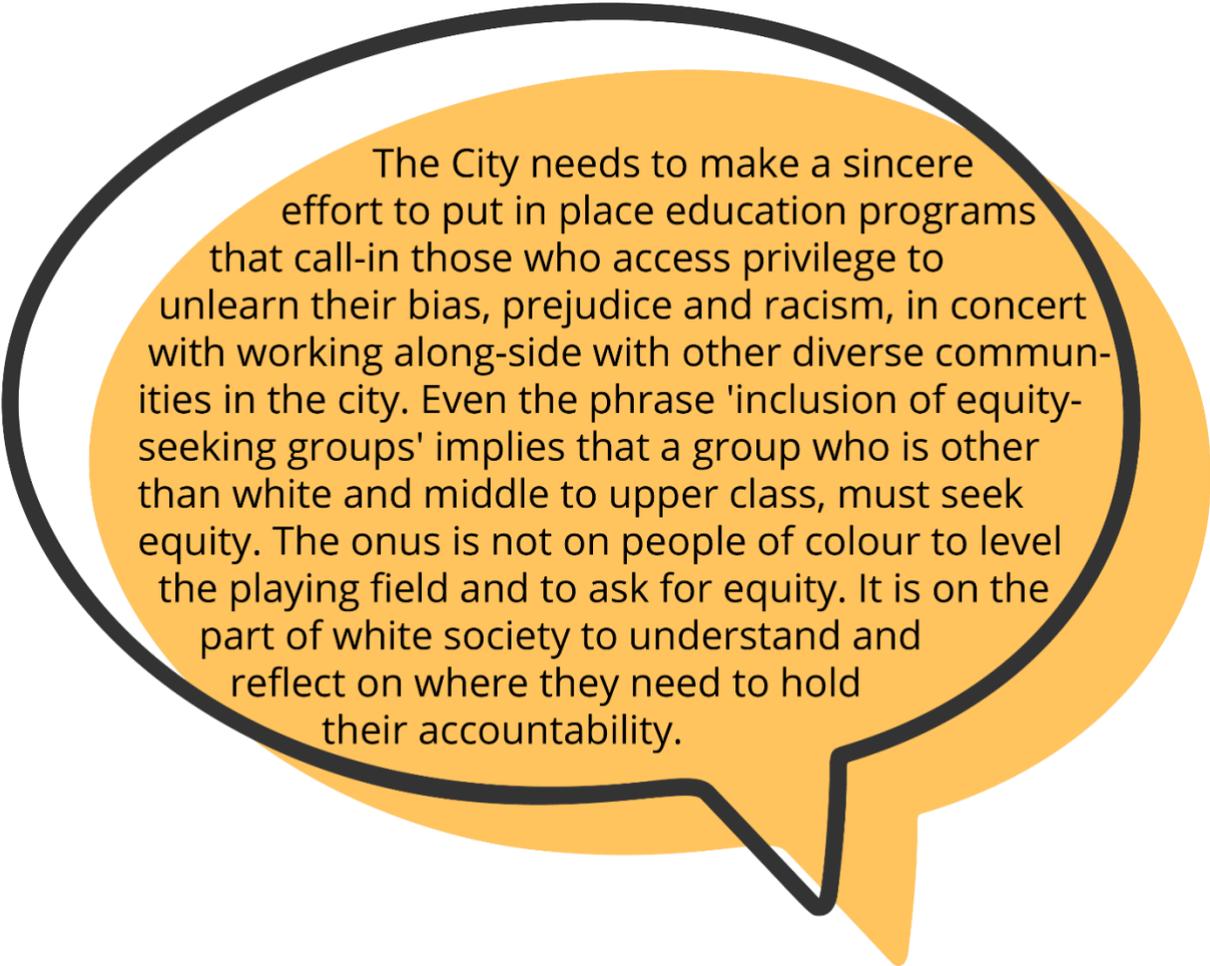
This survey is a good example. Reaching out to those vulnerable people for their opinions and making decision based off that. Just because they are not as privileged does not mean they don't have a say.



While our government has been great during the pandemic, I would like to have a government that I feel comfortable approaching as an individual with ease.

survey as a good example of what to do and a good place to start.

- **Build leadership, mobilize participation, and ensure representation of underrepresented groups.** Actively involving different groups—including Black and Indigenous peoples, racialized populations, newcomers, immigrants, migrants and sex workers, seniors, people with disabilities, youth, and other underrepresented groups—in all civic processes is necessary to address systemic injustices.



The City needs to make a sincere effort to put in place education programs that call-in those who access privilege to unlearn their bias, prejudice and racism, in concert with working along-side with other diverse communities in the city. Even the phrase 'inclusion of equity-seeking groups' implies that a group who is other than white and middle to upper class, must seek equity. The onus is not on people of colour to level the playing field and to ask for equity. It is on the part of white society to understand and reflect on where they need to hold their accountability.

Concluding Thoughts

Recovering from and rebuilding after the COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to make our city better than it was before. This consultation, which engaged a wide audience of historically underrepresented and vulnerable populations, is an example of that.

The following section highlights final thoughts and ideas that residents wanted to share with the City.

- **Reopening needs to happen slowly and safely.** Many cautioned against rushing things, and expressed the need to ensure the wellbeing and safety of residents first. Many said they felt reopening was happening too fast.
- Recovery and rebuild provides an **opportunity to make this city better than it was before by applying an equity lens, listening to the voices of those with lived experience, and focusing first and foremost on those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic** (including seniors, people with disabilities, and Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities).
- It is important to address the issues that have surfaced directly from COVID-19 — but also **the issues that existed before.**
- The City must **protect both the economic and physical wellbeing of residents.** Many participants reiterated the financial impact of the pandemic (including the need for income supports and supplements/bonuses for those with low income who don't qualify for CERB and other benefits, and the need to create employment opportunities and increase minimum wage) and the health precautions that need to be taken and enforced (including mandatory masks, limited social gatherings, accessible testing sites, etc.)
- The City can **foster hope** that we will get through this together. While many participants felt fearful of leaving their house or of a looming second wave, sentiments of hope also came up, as well as recognition of the important role the City can play in encouraging hope.



Each community is unique. One size will not fit all. Some unique challenges will require unique solutions. Community engagement is very important. Empower the community leads, take feedback from the community and then the community also has to own its problems and work for its solutions.

I truly believe this is an opportunity for 'disruption' of the way we have always done things in many areas of city life and life everywhere in Canada. However, many of the 'disruptive' ideas are going to cost a tremendous amount of money, so that has to be figured out. The great majority of Canadian citizens have to learn that 'taxes' is not a dirty word. If we're all in this together, then maybe each of us can give a little more (& those who can afford it, a lot more) so that Canada is a better place for all of us & for future generations.

You've asked huge questions in this. I recommend listening to what people are saying: renters are struggling, homeless people need shelter and support, and Black and Indigenous lives are threatened by the police. These are all connected by the cracks in the system COVID-19 has exposed. You can only help in the recovery by listening to those who aren't ever heard.

Appendix 1: Participant Demographics

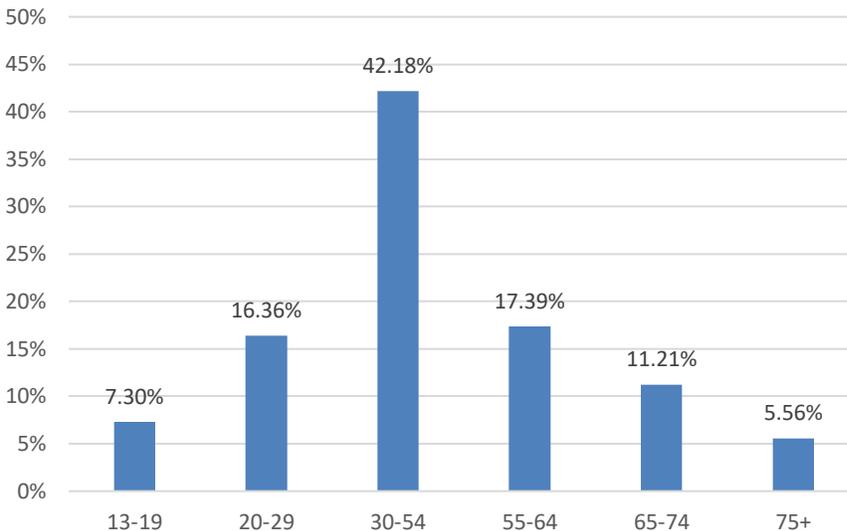
1,059 participants — approximately 72% of the total consultation participants — filled out the voluntary demographic questions as part of the individual survey or group discussion.

Age

972 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *What is your age?* Participants were asked to choose one of six age categories.

- 7% were aged 13–19
- 16% were 20–29
- 42% were 30–54
- 17% were 55–64
- 11% were 65–74
- 5% were 75 and older

Figure 3: What is your age?

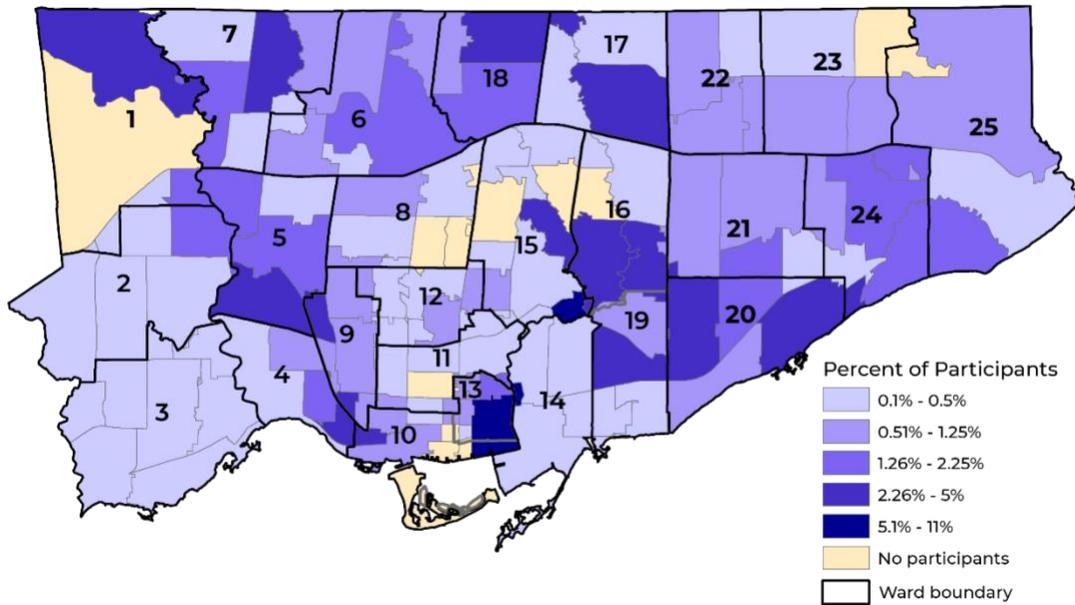


Postal Code

901 consultation participants answered the question: *What is your postal code?*

- 73% shared their postal code
- 21% preferred not to answer
- 5% didn't have a fixed address
- 2% didn't know their postal code

Figure 4: Percent of Participants by Forward Sortation Area



Note: Forward sortation area is a geographical region in which all postal codes start with the same three characters

Ward Number	Ward Name	Ward Number	Ward Name
1	Etobicoke North	14	Toronto-Danforth
2	Etobicoke Centre	15	Don Valley West
3	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	16	Don Valley East
4	Parkdale-High Park	17	Don Valley North
5	York South-Weston	18	Willowdale
6	York Centre	19	Beaches-East York
7	Humber River-Black Creek	20	Scarborough Southwest
8	Eglinton-Lawrence	21	Scarborough Centre
9	Davenport	22	Scarborough-Agincourt
10	Spadina-Fort York	23	Scarborough North
11	University-Rosedale	24	Scarborough-Guildwood
12	Toronto-St. Paul's	25	Scarborough-Rouge Park
13	Toronto Centre		

Language

895 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *What language do you prefer speaking? Please select one only.* The majority of respondents indicated that they prefer to speak English.

Figure 5: What language do you prefer speaking?

Language	Percentage
English	70.73%
Bengali	5.59%
Chinese—Mandarin	5.03%
Farsi	3.13%
Tamil	2.79%
Urdu	2.01%
Other (please specify)	2.01%
Spanish	1.23%
Arabic	0.89%
Somali	0.78%
Indigenous—Ojibway	0.67%
Punjabi	0.67%
Amharic	0.56%
Portuguese	0.56%
Hindi	0.45%
Tagalog	0.45%
Chinese—Cantonese	0.34%
Prefer not to answer	0.34%
Chinese—Other Dialects	0.22%
Italian	0.22%
Russian	0.22%
American Sign Language (ASL)	0.11%
Armenian	0.11%
French	0.11%
Greek	0.11%
Indigenous—Cree	0.11%
Indigenous—Mohawk	0.11%
Indigenous—Other	0.11%
Korean	0.11%
Serbian	0.11%
Tibetan	0.11%

Born in Canada

888 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *Were you born in Canada?*

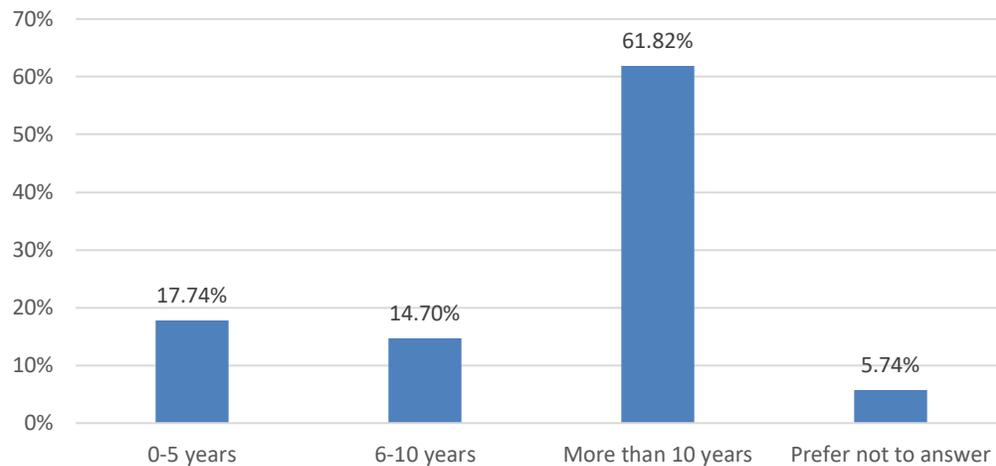
- 59% of the respondents were not born in Canada
- 38% were born in Canada
- 3% preferred not to answer

Time in Canada

592 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *How long have you been in Canada?* Of the respondents who answered:

- 62% had been in Canada for more than 10 years
- 15% had been in Canada for 6–10 years
- 18% had been in Canada for 0–5 years
- 6% preferred not to answer

Figure 6: How long have you been in Canada?



Indigenous Identity

914 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *Many Indigenous peoples from Canada identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, Métis, Aboriginal, Native, or Indian. Do you identify as Indigenous to Canada?*

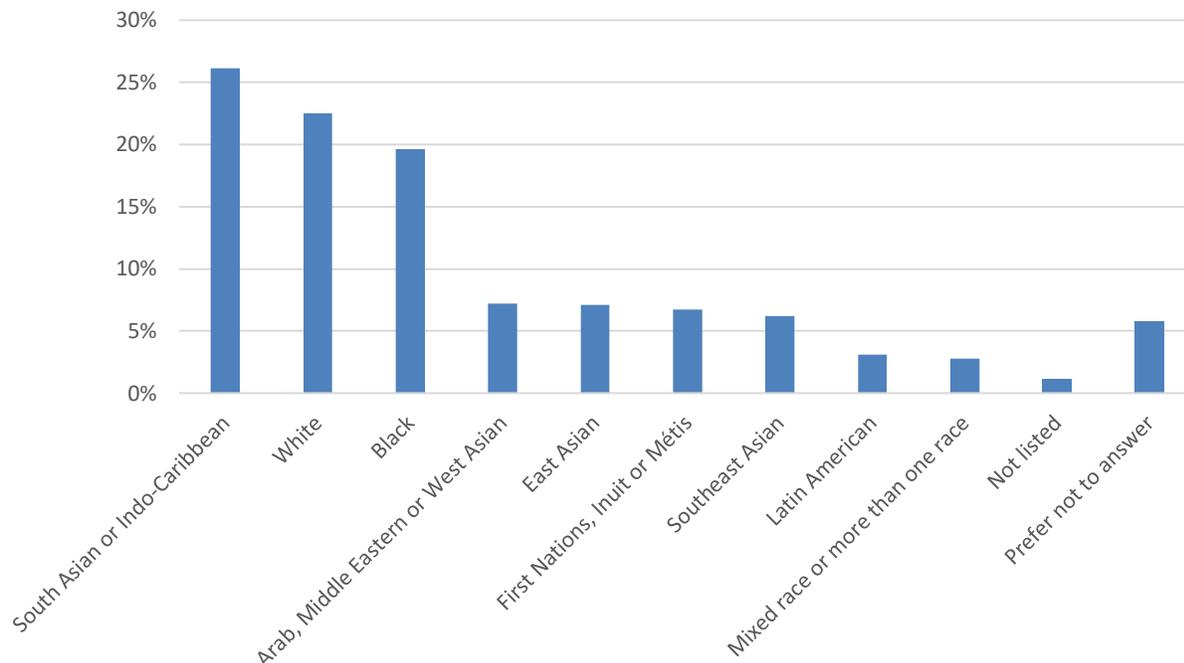
- 90 respondents — 10% of those who answered the question — identified as Indigenous to Canada

Race

969 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *Please select the racial background(s) you identify as*. Respondents who indicated that they identified as mixed-race or more than one race, were able to select more than one category. Note that although 90 respondents identified as Indigenous to Canada in the previous question, only 65 respondents selected *First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, Métis, Aboriginal, Native, or Indian* in this question.

- 26% identified as South Asian or Indo Caribbean (e.g., Indian, Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi)
- 23% identified as White (e.g., English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian)
- 20% identified as Black (e.g., African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)
- 7% identified as Arab, Middle Eastern, or West Asian (e.g., Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)
- 7% identified as East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
- 7% identified as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty, or non-treaty), Inuit, or Métis
- 6% identified as Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese, Laotian)
- 3% identified as Latin American (e.g., Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)
- 3% identified as mixed race, or as more than one racial category
- 1% selected *not listed*
- 6% preferred not to answer

Figure 7: Self-identified race



Disability

933 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *Do you identify as a person with a disability?*

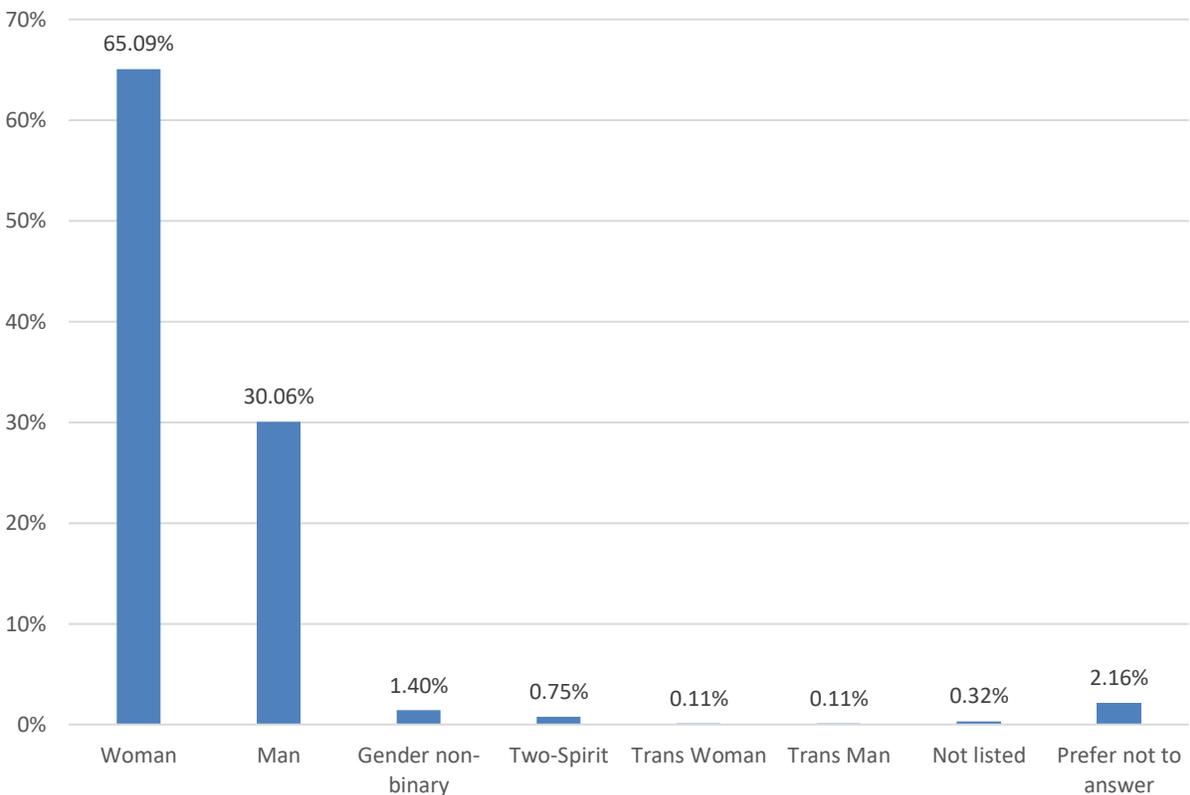
- 27% of respondents identified with having a disability
- 65% did not identify with having a disability
- 6% preferred not to answer
- 3% answered *don't know*

Gender

928 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *What gender do you identify as?*

- 65% identified as women
- 30% identified as men
- 2% preferred not to answer
- 1% identified as gender non-binary
- 0.75% identified as two-spirit
- 0.3% selected *not listed*
- 0.1% identified as trans women
- 0.1% identified as trans men

Figure 8: What gender do you identify as?

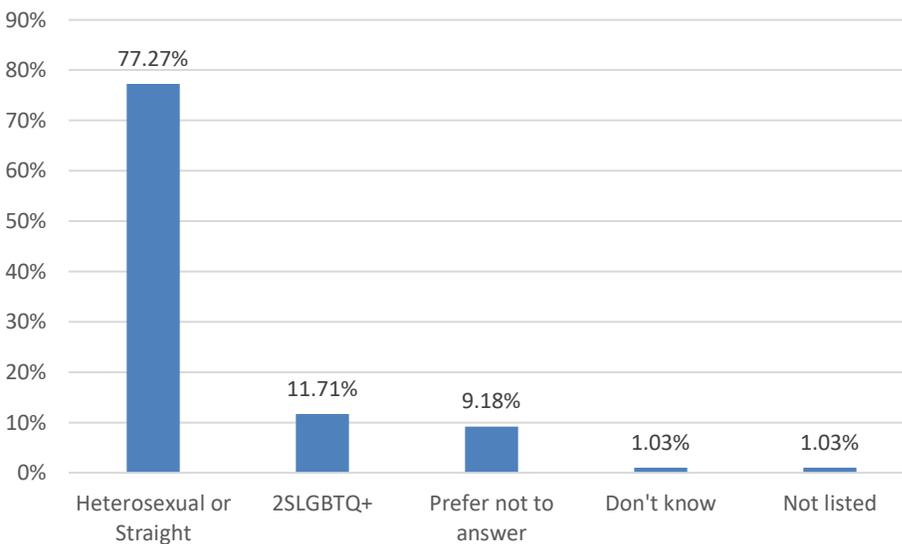


Sexual Orientation

871 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *What best describes your sexual orientation? Please select one only.*

- 77% identified as heterosexual or straight
- 12% identified as two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or gender non-confirming (2SLGBTQ+)
- 1% selected *not listed*
- 1% answered *don't know*
- 9% preferred not to answer

Figure 9: What best describes your sexual orientation?



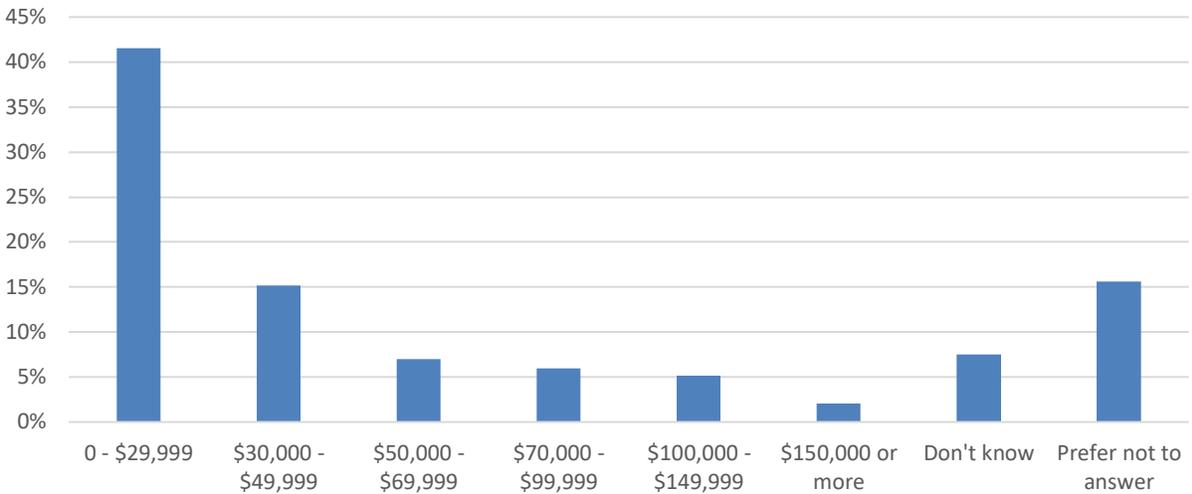
Note: 2SLGBTQ+ includes two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and gender non-confirming participants

Household Income

889 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *What was your total household income before taxes last year? (based on best estimate)*

- 42% earned \$0–\$29,000
- 15% earned \$30,000–\$49,000
- 7% earned \$50,000–\$69,999
- 6% earned \$70,000–\$99,000
- 5% earned \$100,000–\$149,000
- 2% earned \$150,000 or more
- 8% selected *don't know*
- 16% preferred not to answer

Figure 10: 2019 Total household income



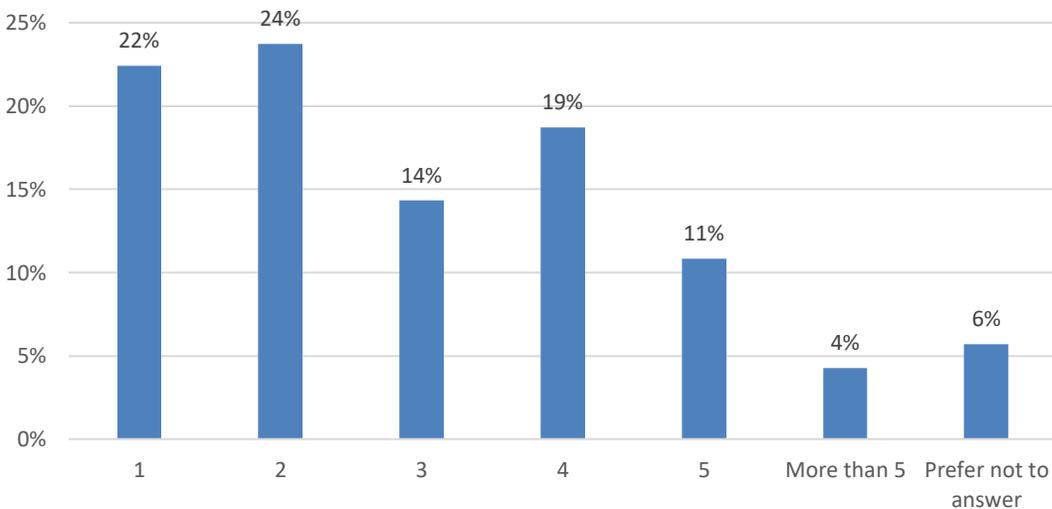
Household Size

914 consultation participants answered the multiple-choice question: *Including yourself, how many people live in your household on a regular basis?*

- 22% lived alone
- 24% lived in a two-person household
- 14% lived in a three-person household
- 19% lived in a four-person household
- 11% lived in a five-person household
- 4% lived in a household of 5 or more people
- 6% preferred not to answer

Note that the 36 respondents who live in a household of 5 or more people specified occupancy numbers ranging from 6–50 people. These numbers may represent survey respondents living in rooming houses, shelters, and prisons.

Figure 11: Household size



Appendix 2: Survey Questions

The following questions were used for the individual survey and to guide the group discussions.

1. If you have been personally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in any of the following ways, please select all that apply. *(Multiple-choice question)*
2. If you wish to provide additional comments related to your choices above, please share here.
3. What supports, programs and services did you access before COVID-19? *(Multiple-choice question)*
4. What urgent supports (i.e. in the next 0–6 months) do you need as the city begins to reopen? *(Multiple-choice question)*
5. If you wish to provide additional comments related to your choices above, please share.
6. Over the longer-term, where do you see opportunities for the City, other levels of government, and community partners to make improvements to programs or services that did not work for you or your community before COVID-19? How can these programs or services be strengthened for you and your community?
7. What three priorities would you like to see the City work on with the Provincial and Federal governments?
8. Please share your recommendations on how to create jobs, support small businesses and boost local economic development in your community? How can the City and/or other levels of government support these solutions?
9. What supports do you and members of your community need to easily share your concerns, ideas and solutions with decision-makers at City Hall? What can the City do to enhance the participation and inclusion of equity-seeking groups and vulnerable populations in decision-making processes?
10. Please share any ideas on how the City, other levels of government, community partners and organizations can support your community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and be better prepared to face the impacts of climate change.
11. Please share any successful actions that you, your business, your community or your neighbourhood have implemented in response to the pandemic that the City, other residents, and community organizations can learn from and build on by working together?
12. Please share any other comments or input that you would like the City to consider in planning for the COVID-19 recovery and rebuild process.