

Alcohol Consumption at Designated Sites in Parks

What We Heard Report Report

FEBRUARY 2023



Created by Intelligent Futures

Submitted to The City of Edmonton



| SHARE YOUR VOICE
| SHAPE OUR CITY



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Executive Summary

The 2022 engagement process for the Alcohol Consumption at Designated Sites in Parks (ACaDSiP) project was designed with a special focus on the GBA+ process and to capture the thoughts and ideas of those who were not previously aware of the pilot project or who might not have been engaged during earlier phases of the project. It was not meant to be an exhaustive approach to garnering feedback from Edmontonians at large, but rather a chance to hear from those who are harder to reach and often go unheard in public processes, such as this. For the purpose of this project, the GBA+ process focused on the quality of conversations rather than quantity, to gain a deeper understanding of minority and equity seeking groups' perspectives.

While the GBA+ work primarily engaged those in opposition to the program, a parallel marketing research process undertook engagement with a more representative sample of the overall population in Edmonton. Using the list of 'Disapprovers' as identified in the Advanis marketing results report, the GBA+ process intentionally sought the feedback and insights of those who more broadly made up the 'Disapprover's' group by socio-demographic markers. This allowed the GBA+ process to focus on the experience of public spaces from the lens of those with less dominant identities, who were typically in greater opposition to the pilot.

The ACaDSiP engagement process gathered feedback from 149 participants. The opportunities for these individuals to share their comments, questions and insights on alcohol consumption at designated sites in parks were through the following:

- A. An online workshop with Alberta Health Services and Edmonton Public School Board, two organizations who have previously expressed interest in the project. (4 participants)
- B. Intercept surveys with members of the public who are marginalized or under-represented as identified through the GBA+ process (134 participants)
- C. In-depth interviews with individuals representing a cross-section of identities including mothers, Muslim, Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ persons. This included one CSAB member (11 participants)

The full set of feedback acquired from this engagement process can be found in *Section 3* of this Report.

In general, there was less support for the ACaDSiP program from these targeted groups than was heard from the broader public (as collected in the Advanis marketing report for ACaDSiP). Although the feedback was not entirely negative or in opposition to alcohol consumption in parks, most respondents had some fears or unease associated with the potential of ACaDSiP being a full fledged program of the City.

There were also differences in feedback between the organizations and groups who were identified for workshops and interviews, versus those who were randomly selected for intercept survey participation. Where intercept surveys saw a mix of opinions and perspectives, workshop and interviewee participants were far more critical of the initiative.

Intercept Survey Response Highlights

Overall, 39% of respondents said that the designated sites for alcohol consumption in parks would negatively affect their use of parks. When asked why it would have this effect, responses were tied to both real experiences and anticipated threats. These concerns, whether real or perceived, varied. An overall emphasis on safety, with fear of undesirable behaviours including public disturbances from intoxication (i.e. fighting and noise) to the impact on children as alcohol becomes commonplace.

Ideas for limiting negative impacts included the implementation of security and monitoring sites, restricting use and enforcement, improved signage, isolation of alcohol designated sites within the park, as well as more presence of garbage and recycling receptacles. That said, 12% of respondents don't believe risks can be mitigated and are completely against alcohol being allowed anywhere in parks.

Interview Response

Interviewees expressed that existing in public can already be a difficult experience for marginalized individuals, without the added stress of how intoxicated people might perceive and interact with them. Most interviewees spoke to the struggle of wondering 'what intersectionalities or identities they can safely express in public space'. With the prevalence of racism and sexism, among other bigoted views, those with minority identities or intersectionalities feel an enhanced sense of vulnerability in public as it is. Many suggested that adding alcohol consumption at parks would further increase their likelihood of being a target of violence and hate, leading them to avoid parks altogether.

Other major reasons for avoiding park use due to alcohol consumption included the exposure of alcohol to children, particularly the normalizing of such activity around kids and the concern of inadequate monitoring of parks with designated sites, feeling that there are not enough measures in place to keep everyone safe.

While most interviewees fully disapprove of the program and do not see it as a tool for supporting responsible drinking, they did offer some insight on how it could be improved to limit negative impacts. Some improvement suggestions from interviewees included:

- Provide porta-potty access at or near designated sites
- Provide drinking water fountains at or near designated sites
- Display clear signage with simple direct language (consider digital-access only a barrier)
- Connect this initiative to the Boyle Street Program
- Provide an after hours monitoring program
- Delineate specific areas of the park for alcohol consumption, isolate those from other non-alcohol related park activities
- Ensure public transit serves all designated parks

Organizational Representatives Workshop Response

In the workshop conversation, similar concerns were raised around the increased risk of undesirable behaviours and activities, especially around school sites, and the negative influence that alcohol consumption has on youth and children who use public parks. The organizational representatives who participated wearing their public service provider hats, highlighted that public park spaces should continue to promote healthy lifestyles and recreation and that there could be some

municipal liability for the impacts of alcohol use in a public space. For instance, it was noted that there is major misalignment between the ACaDSiP program and public health research regarding the harms associated with alcohol and alcohol consumption.

Despite the group being against the adoption of ACaDSiP as a full-fledged program, they offered some ideas to mitigate concerns. These suggestions mostly involved municipal interventions such as strengthening policies, installing signage, increasing municipal staff/security presence, and offering public education on the harmful impacts of alcohol consumption. Ultimately their preference is discontinuing the ACaDSiP program.

1.0 Introduction

The first Alcohol Consumption at Designated Sites in Parks (ACaDSiP) pilot project was conducted in the summer of 2021 at 47 picnic sites in seven river valley parks. While a jurisdictional scan was completed and operational and survey data were collected during the pilot, a GBA+ analysis was not specifically sought due to constrained timelines.

Council has since instructed City Administration to run a second pilot to expand the number of picnic sites and parks. This pilot has been supported by several evaluating factors, including but not limited to a public engagement process that focused on a GBA+ approach to engagement. More specifically, at the January 21, 2022 Community and Public Services Committee motion was as follows:

Motion: That Administration provides a report outlining the implications, including best practices, of an expanded and/or permanent Alcohol at Designated Sites in Parks program, including fulsome engagement with public health experts, key stakeholders, and further GBA+ analysis.

The public health experts and education stakeholders, though not a distinct group based on personal identity, were part of the targeted segment sought for feedback in the GBA+ approach. These individuals have previously expressed interest in the project and were invited into the process to share their unique perspectives as health, community and education professionals.

GBA+ Engagement

The 'plus' in Gender Based Analysis plus or GBA+ represents a variety of non-dominant identities that individuals may have beyond gender. GBA+ is a process for capturing the many different views and experiences when developing or revamping policies, programs, initiatives or other directives that impact the public.

The application of the tool strongly surrounds the acknowledgment and consideration of various individual identities as well as their intersectionality.

- Status of Women Canada

This equity work ensures that diverse and seldom heard voices are being considered when the government proceeds with work that has the potential to impact any member of its community. Given the jurisdiction of the ACaDSiP program is public parks, feedback was sought from folks who both fund these spaces through their taxes, but may also not use these public resources in the face of alcohol consumption being a permitted use there.

While the process allowed the team to gather thoughts about drinking in parks from individuals representing non-dominant groups and identities, these opinions had both common ground and unique nuances depending on each person's experience. Applying these alternative views to the ultimate recommendation for the program will determine how minority and equity seeking groups function and participate in parks.

2.0 Public Engagement Process

2.1 How We Engaged

The GBA+ engagement process was designed to capture the thoughts and ideas of those who were not aware of the pilot project or possibly not engaged during earlier rounds of engagement on the topic. It was not meant to be an exhaustive approach to garner feedback from Edmontonians at large, but rather a chance to hear from those who are harder to reach and often go unheard in public processes such as this. Therefore, the GBA+ process focused on the quality of conversations rather than quantity to gain a deeper understanding of minority and equity seeking groups' perspectives.

The ACaDSiP engagement process gathered feedback from 147 participants. The opportunities for these individuals to share their comments, questions and insights on alcohol consumption at designated sites in parks were through the following:

- D. An online workshop with Alberta Health Services and Edmonton Public School Board, two organizations who have previously expressed interest in the project. (4 participants)
- E. Intercept surveys with members of the public who are marginalized or under-represented as identified through the GBA+ process (134 participants)
- F. In-depth interviews with individuals representing a cross-section of identities including mothers, Muslims, Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ persons. This included one CSAB member (9 participants)

The feedback from this engagement process can be found in *Section 3* of this report.

Key Stakeholder Workshop (online)

An online workshop was conducted with a series of stakeholders who had expressed particular interest in the topic due to the overlap with their professional roles as public health care and education providers. This group of participants have been engaged with the project since the first pilot in 2021 and spoke in opposition to the program at the January 21, 2022, Community and Public Services Committee meeting.

A total of nine individuals were invited of which seven indicated they would join. Ultimately, four attended, representing two organizations - Alberta Health Services and Edmonton Public School Board. For one individual representing CSAB there was a scheduling conflict and they were able to provide feedback in an interview with the project team after the workshop. These conversations allowed the project team to dive deeper with these professionals who had a relatively opposing view to the pilot. They contributed to the session by providing details and nuances on the subject matter as well as exploring what the next steps could look like.

The key stakeholder workshop was held Wednesday, October 12 from 9:30am to 12:00pm.

Intercept Surveys

A series of in-person and on-location intercept surveys were conducted at strategic locations throughout the city to ensure that targeted groups of individuals representing different identities and intersectionality have a voice in the ACaDSiP project. Further, this provided an opportunity to ensure that communities without adequate access to digital tools or awareness of the project can meaningfully participate in the engagement process.

The intercept surveys consisted of a member from the project team meeting participants where they typically go (e.g. their neighbourhood recreation centre) and administering a five to ten-minute survey with interested participants. The team also led intercept surveys at the Boyle Street Shelter and in their managed alcohol program, in order to capture the voice of the unhouse and street involved individuals.

The intercept surveys were conducted at the following times and locations:

- Clareview Recreation Centre, common area (49 participants)
 - September 27 from 3:00 - 6:00pm
 - October 5 from 3:30 - 6:30pm
- The Meadows Recreation Centre, common area (57 participants)
 - September 28 from 3:00 - 6:00pm
 - October 4 from 3:30 - 6:30pm
- Boyle Street Community Services Centre and the Managed Alcohol Program Centre (28 participants)
 - September 29 from 9:30am - 12:30pm

The chosen locations provided an opportunity to hear from a wide range of stakeholders, many of whom were unaware of either the pilot project or the engagement process. A total of 134 participants were engaged during these intercept surveys. More on how these locations were selected in Section 2.2 *Communication Approach*.

Experience Interviews

Throughout the engagement process, a series of nine (9) interviews were conducted with participants of marginalized communities. These one-on-one and small group conversations provided a chance to learn about the experiences and perceptions of individuals surrounding alcohol consumption in parks. The participants that were engaged in these interviews reflect specific intersectionalities that may not have been captured through the initial phase of engagement. This included mothers, Indigenous persons, LGBTQ2S persons, Muslim persons and more.

The user experience mapping was one form of interview format used with participants. This method allowed the project team to go deeper into the nuances surrounding perceptions of alcohol consumption at designated sites in parks. The process includes not only sharing a recent experience surrounding alcohol consumption in parks (or experiencing others doing so) but also diving into the decisions, thoughts and emotions being felt throughout that experience.

The representative experience interview was a second form of interview used in this process. This was for individuals and small groups who were engaged through their organizations and were asked to reflect on their own experiences as well as those of the broader community they represent. The questions were a hybrid of the user experience mapping and intercept survey approach.

2.2 Communication Approach

The team conducted an extensive communication campaign to generate interest in the project and gather participants for the GBA+ engagement conducted in this phase. The complexities and sensitivities involved with engaging minority groups paired with the attempt to reach a small segment of the population meant the communication design had to be unique to the project itself. Due to these layers, the project consultants were advised by City staff, along with their internal and external contacts, on who to initiate contact with, in the search for keen GBA+ engagement participants.

This communication design meant the first point of contact came from a known entity or individual which immediately increased the odds of a response, versus purely cold-calling. City staff provided introductions to different City departments and non-government organizations. The project team offered briefs to some of these community connectors and leveraged their existing relationships to target stakeholders by getting a 'foot-in-the-door'. In some cases these connectors provided the project team with the names of people and organizations they recommended talking to. They also offered insight on cultural communication norms and other nuances to consider when conducting interviews with those from non-dominant identities.

Although the project team spent significant time and energy contacting different groups and individuals to engage in the process, there was a relatively low uptake from those who were contacted.

Representative Organizations

The project team approached 24 City and non-City contacts between August and October 2022 as locations for engagement events. These groups and organizations reflect the intersectionalities of those whose opinions on alcohol at designated sites in parks we were seeking. The 24 that were contacted are as follows:

- City of Edmonton Departments
 - Community Services (Social Development Liaisons from Indigenous Relations, Multicultural Office, and Social Identity/Inclusion Office)
 - Employee Services (chaplin)
 - Community Safety (homelessness prevention)
- City of Edmonton Committees
 - Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB)
 - Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC)
- Boyle Street Community Services
- Edmonton Public Library
- The Meadows Community Recreation and Seniors Centre
- Clareview Community Recreation Centre
- Chin Yin Temple and Cultural Society
- Bhartiya Cultural Society of Alberta
- Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities
- Eisa Edmonton
- Edmonton 2S Society
- Bent Arrow
- INT Faith
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- Gurdwaras' Joint Committee
- Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bail-Ul_hadi Mosque
- Pride Corner
- Hindu Cultural Centre

From this list, the project team was able to organize engagement events with seven. Boyle Street Community Services, an Indigenous Elder, CSAB, The Meadows Community Recreation Centre, Clareview Community Recreation Centre, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women and Edmonton 2S society. The low uptake from the other groups was due to a variety of reasons including those discussed above.

Interviews

Throughout both the outreach with representative organizations and the intercept surveys conducted on location at recreation centers, the project team collected contact information from, and followed up with individuals who might be interested in participating in an experience interview. In total there were 28 intercept survey participants that indicated interest and were contacted in an attempt to schedule an interview. In the end, four individuals scheduled a time to share further insights with the team in an interview format. Another six interviews were conducted with organizational representatives from the aforementioned list of contacts that responded to inquiry for participation.

3.0 Key Findings

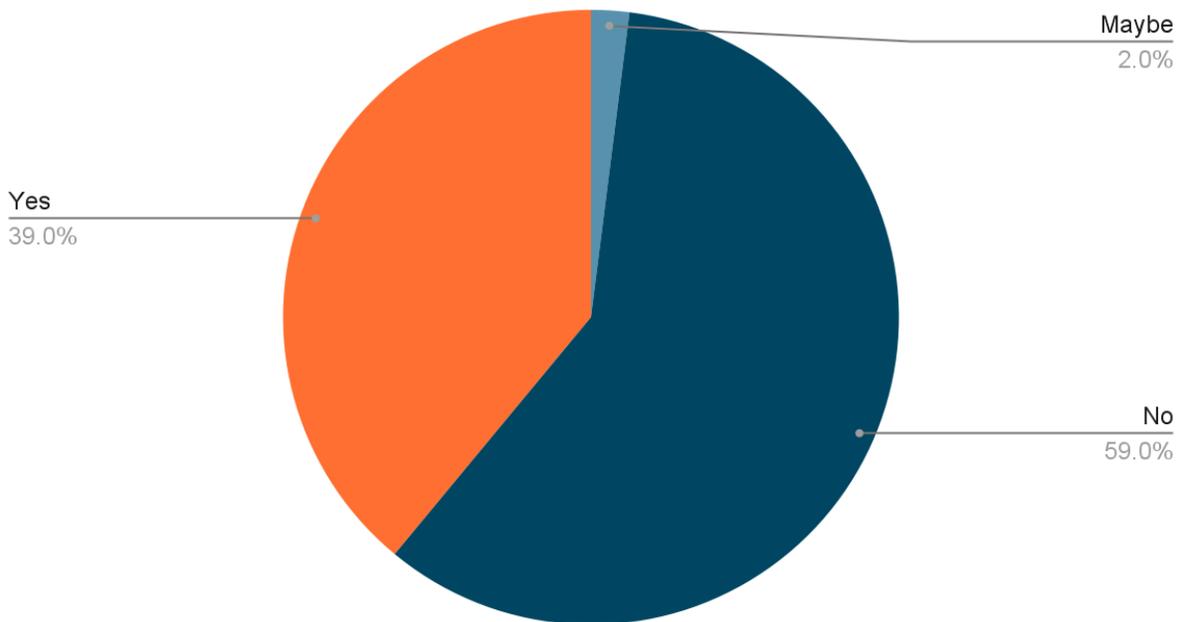
3.1 Intercept Surveys

Over a two week span, between September 26 and October 7, intercept surveys were conducted at various locations in the City. In total 134 surveys were completed during this time. The survey served two purposes 1) to understand general sentiments regarding alcohol consumption in designated parks, and 2) to collect extensive demographic data to better understand how different intersections affect perceptions of alcohol consumption. Overall, survey respondents expressed a range of preferences; questions and key takeaways from the discussions are detailed below.

Question 1 - Pilot Project Awareness

The City of Edmonton is running a pilot this summer that allows adults to drink alcohol in parks. In this next section, we would like to better understand how familiar you are with this pilot. Before today, were you aware that the City of Edmonton is conducting this pilot? (n=134)

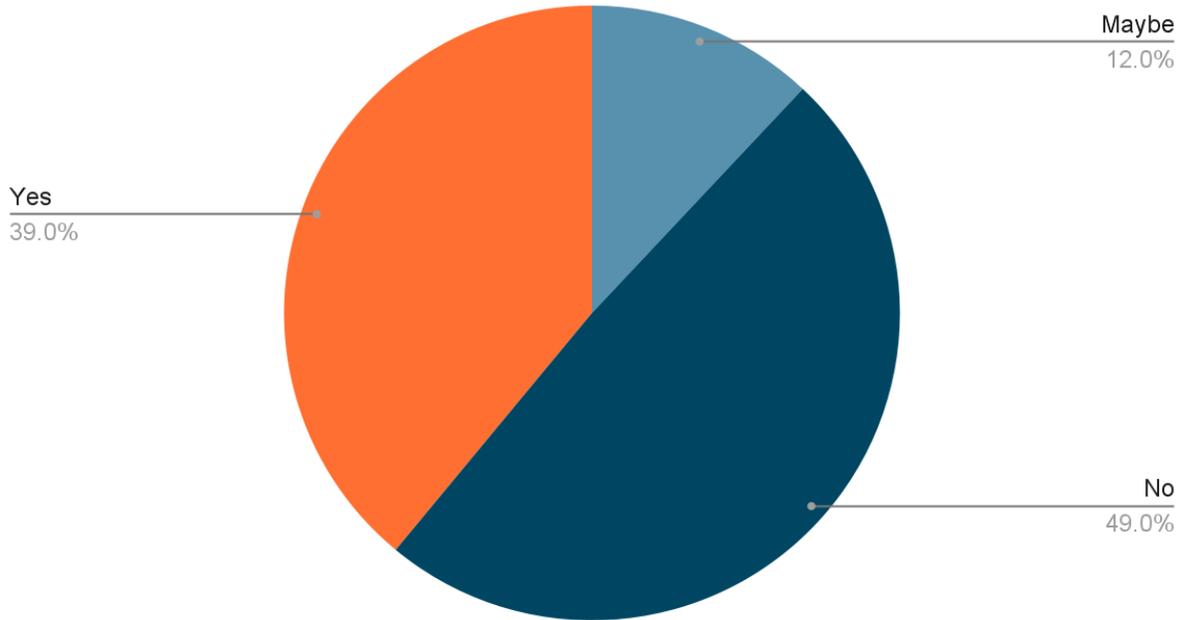
Pilot Project Awareness



Question 2 - Pilot Affect on Park Use

Does being allowed to drink alcohol in designated city parks affect how often you (would) use those designated parks? (n=134)

Affect on Park Use



Question 3 - Reasons for Affect on Park Use

Why? What are the main reasons for why drinking alcohol at designated sites in city parks would affect how often you would use the parks? (n=121)

The following are top themes that surfaced as a result of the open responses to this question, along with occurrences (number of times participants raised this theme), and notes related to the theme. Themes are based on both real experiences as well as perceptions of how one might be impacted by the presence of alcohol at parks.

Theme (# of Occurrences)	
Safety (39)	By far the largest deterrent against park use to survey respondents was safety. Parks are a public place where they can go to enjoy the outdoors, but many are concerned for their and their loved one's safety. This brought up concerns related to regulations of the designated sites. Who is responsible for monitoring these sites to ensure the safety of all park users? Some concerns include: the safety of women and children; littering and broken glass; disorderly behavior; etc.

Theme (# of Occurrences)	
Behaviour of Intoxicated Persons (37)	Respondents are generally concerned with the negative effects that alcohol consumption can have on an individual's behavior if they don't drink responsibly. Some individuals mentioned that they would have no issues with alcohol consumption in parks as long as people drank in moderation and did not disturb other park users. However they also mentioned that this would be hard to monitor. Examples of potential behavioural issues participants are concerned about monitoring include: littering, fighting, harassment of other park users, drinking and driving, etc.
Exposure of Alcohol to Children (22)	Exposure of children to alcohol was identified as a deterrent against park use for multiple reasons. Parents don't want to expose their children to alcohol consumption, including cultural and religious reasons. Additionally, many are concerned with the negative influences that alcohol can have on children and youth. Some think that allowing alcohol consumption in parks will have a negative consequence on youth, resulting in underage drinking and other undesirable outcomes.
Doesn't matter (22)	Alcohol consumption in parks will not affect how these individuals use parks/how often they use parks/ these folks don't use parks regularly.
Decreased use of parks (13)	These individuals typically don't drink and would stop or decrease how often they go to parks if alcohol consumption were permitted.
Increased use of parks (12)	These individuals do drink, and would likely use park facilities more often if they were allowed to consume alcohol.

Verbatim Quotes

"I would likely use certain parks more often. There are times I would like to get together with friends for a picnic which might involve a bottle of wine or a couple beers. In the past, we always ended up just going to someone's backyard instead of enjoying the beautiful parks in our city."

"As I have kids under 18 I would not be comfortable to go to these sites. I feel like it would leave a negative impression."

"I am a foster parent, some of those kids have a very traumatizing relationship with alcohol, I don't want to expose them to those situations... We don't even drink in front of them at home"

Question 4 - Survey Location

Did this survey occur at Boyle Street? (n=134)

- 21% of the completed surveys were administered at Boyle Street
- 79% of the completed surveys were administered elsewhere

Question 5 - A series of statements about influence of alcohol on parks

Please rate the following on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree, based on your position.
(n=134)

Statement	Response	
Drinking in parks makes picnics more enjoyable.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	5%
	<i>Agree</i>	33%
	<i>Neutral</i>	24%
	<i>Disagree</i>	25%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	13%
Allowing drinking in parks allows the City to better regulate an activity that is already happening.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	11%
	<i>Agree</i>	35%
	<i>Neutral</i>	14%
	<i>Disagree</i>	34%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	8%
Drinking in parks supports a healthier, more moderate drinking culture.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	22%
	<i>Agree</i>	18%
	<i>Neutral</i>	17%
	<i>Disagree</i>	43%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	0%
Allowing drinking in parks leads to more damage to parks.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	16%
	<i>Agree</i>	42%
	<i>Neutral</i>	25%
	<i>Disagree</i>	14%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	3%
Allowing drinking in parks leads to more personal injuries related to park usage.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	18%
	<i>Agree</i>	34%
	<i>Neutral</i>	26%
	<i>Disagree</i>	19%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	4%
Allowing drinking in parks leads to more disorderly behaviour.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	22%
	<i>Agree</i>	45%
	<i>Neutral</i>	15%
	<i>Disagree</i>	16%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	22%

Statement	Response	
Allowing drinking in parks leads to more people drinking and driving.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	23%
	<i>Agree</i>	39%
	<i>Neutral</i>	19%
	<i>Disagree</i>	16%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	2%
Allowing drinking in parks encourages underage drinking.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	23%
	<i>Agree</i>	34%
	<i>Neutral</i>	17%
	<i>Disagree</i>	21%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	5%
Allowing drinking parks will lead to more positive benefits for residents and the city than negative issues.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	4%
	<i>Agree</i>	15%
	<i>Neutral</i>	28%
	<i>Disagree</i>	36%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	17%

Question 6 - Concerns about alcohol consumption in parks

Based on your most recent visit to a park, what concerns, if any, do you have regarding drinking alcohol in designated parks? (n=126)

The following are key themes that surfaced as a result of the open responses to this question, along with occurrences (number of times participants raised this theme), and notes related to the theme.

Theme (# of Occurrences)	
No Concerns (49)	These respondents had no concerns when it came to drinking alcohol in designated parks.
Damage, Waste, Behaviours, and Safety (74)	<p>General negative sentiments related to undesirable behavior often associated with alcohol consumption. Again, respondents are concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall safety of park users, particularly women and children. • Increases in litter and loitering due to increased consumption of alcohol. Broken glass was also indicated as a concern • Damage to public and private property • Disorderly behavior caused by over consumption of alcohol. Many respondents were unaware of how much alcohol is permissible for consumption at a designated site.
Children and Alcohol Free Public Spaces (42)	Concerns regarding children’s safety and wellbeing were apparent and front of mind for many. Additionally, many folks indicated that parks should be alcohol free public spaces, and that people should not be allowed to drink regardless of proposed rules and regulations.
No Regulations (15)	<p>Some individuals are concerned with the lack of apparent rules and regulations regarding the program. Many respondents were concerned about how the City plans to monitor and regulate these activities to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residents are safe • Parks are welcoming to people of all ages, races, genders, abilities and religions • Parks remain clean and in good condition <p>More clear and visible communication with residents regarding rules and regulations would be well received by residents who are on the fence.</p>

Verbatim Quotes

“Drinking and driving. Alcohol being offered to underage kids. Underage drinking & drugs go hand in hand.”

“Safety of children. Damage to facilities. More accidents. Violence.”

“I don’t like drinking in parks - I’m especially concerned about the safety of girls.”

“The only concern I really see is a possible increase in some injuries or damage from people trying one on a bit too hard. But honestly, disorderly behavior is already happening, so I think continuing to have a bylaw presence is a good idea either way .”

Question 7 - Ideas to limit negatives consequences of alcohol consumption

What ideas do you have to address and limit any negative consequences of allowing drinking in designated parks that you think the City should consider? (n=102)

The following are key themes that surfaced as a result of the open responses to this question, along with occurrences (number of times participants raised this theme), and notes related to the theme.

Theme (# of Occurrences)	
Security, monitoring & patrolling (43)	Respondents indicated that designated sites should be monitored or patrolled to ensure that any disorderly behavior caused by alcohol consumption is minimized. Increased security measures will help make more park users feel at ease using parks. Other measures to consider include proper lighting at parks to increase safety during dark. Additionally, respondents indicated that individuals tasked with patrolling these areas should have adequate training so they know how to work with difficult patrons.
Regulations, restrictions & enforcement (37)	Rules, regulations, and restrictions need to be made clear from the get-go so patrons know what is and isn’t allowed when it comes to drinking parks. Some regulations indicated by survey respondents include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time limits when alcohol consumption is permitted ● The number of drinks allowed per patron/amount of alcohol allowed ● Pre-booked picnic sites Survey respondents also indicated that while regulation, rules and restrictions are important, they won’t matter if there isn’t a mechanism to enforce them. If patrons act inappropriately, they should be fined.
No Alcohol in Parks (16)	These respondents are completely against alcohol in parks.
Communication with public through signage (13)	Adequate signage with clear instructions and rules at designated park sites was indicated as important by respondents. Again clearly communicating what is and isn’t allowed with the public will be key. Additionally, signage can also work to inform the public on the program so that more citizens are properly informed on what is going on, so they can make informed decisions on how they chose to spend their time at a park.

Theme (# of Occurrences)	
Designated sites (11)	Alcohol consumption should be permitted only at predetermined designated park sites. Some respondents indicated that these sites should be fenced off or separate from other park activities.
Garbage and recycling (9)	Ensuring that there is adequate garbage and recycling receptacles near these designated sites to minimize the amount of litter produced.

Verbatim Quotes

“I think it goes WAY beyond just drinking in parks. North America has a terrible relationship with alcohol and if we encourage everyone to drink more moderately and responsibly then something like having a beer in a park wouldn't be a big deal.”

“More education surrounding when and where it can happen, and how to act properly. Could be a bad influence on kids seeing people do that.”

“There should definitely be City staff more frequently making visits taking note of long visiting / continuous drinking.”

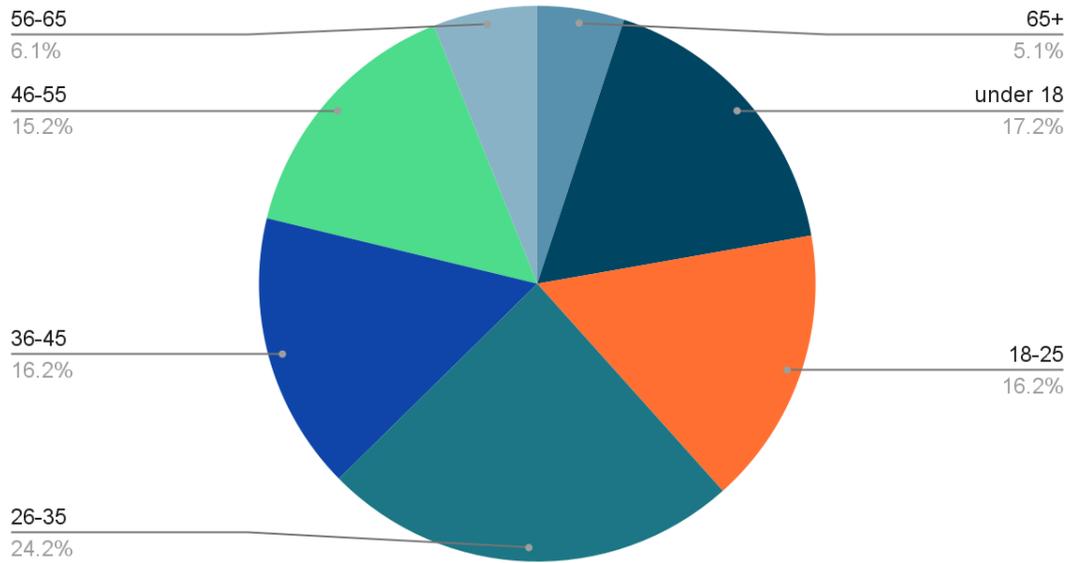
“More enforcement, proper enforcement. Education: What are the rules? Provide signage, market via social media.”

“Have more peace officers or security. Better signage, more education & awareness for individuals.”

Question 8 - Age of Respondents

What age range do you belong to? (n=132)

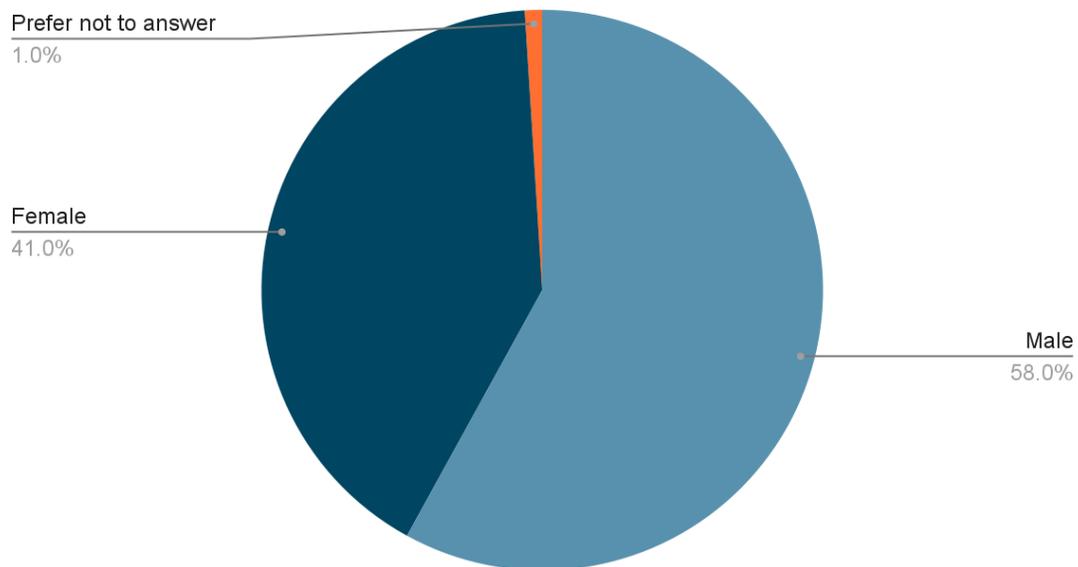
Age of Respondents



Question 9- Gender Identity of Respondents

Which of the following genders do you identify most closely with? (n=134)

Gender Identity of Respondents



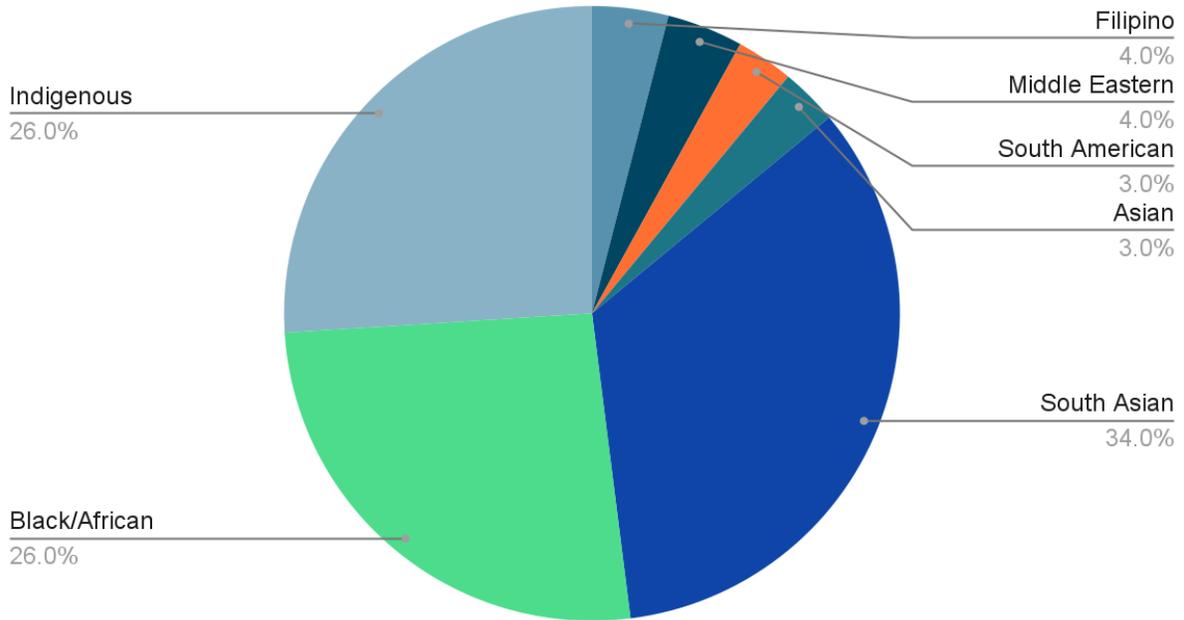
Question 10- Ethnicity of Respondents

Do you identify as an ethnic or racial minority? (n=133)

- 55% of respondents indicated that they did identify as an ethnic/racial minority
- 45% of respondents indicated that they did not identify as an ethnic/racial minority, or choose not to answer the question

If yes above, which ethnic or racial minority do you belong to? (n=73)

Ethnicity of Respondents



Question 11- Private Outdoor Space

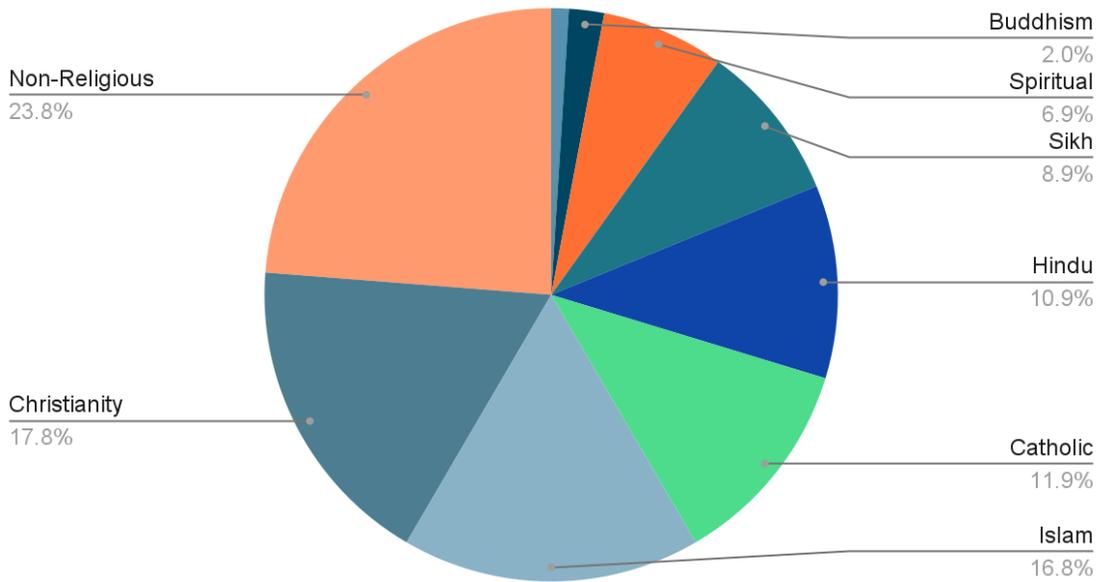
Do you have access to a private, outdoor space such as a backyard, building courtyard or a balcony?(n=109)

- 93% said 'Yes'
- 7% said 'No'

Question 12 - Faith of Respondents

What is your current religion or faith, if any? (n=114)

Faith of Respondents



*not shown on the chart is the 1% of respondents that indicated they are Jehovah Witnesses.

Question 13 - Children in Household

Are there any children under 18 in the household? (n=126)

- 55% said 'Yes'
- 45% said 'No'

Question 14 - Interest in Follow-up Interview

Are you interested in sharing more thoughts on alcohol consumption in parks?

- 28 respondents said 'Yes'

Question 15 - Sexual Orientation of Respondents

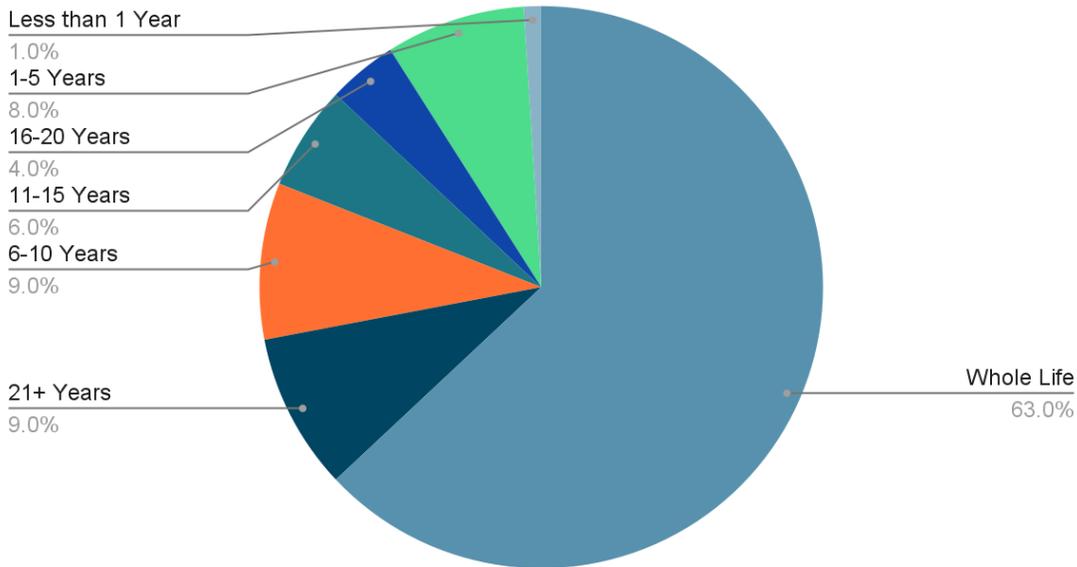
Do you consider yourself to be a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community? (n=121)

- 92% said 'No'
- 8% said 'Yes'

Question 16 - Respondent by Tenure in Canada

How many years have you been a resident of Canada (n=123)

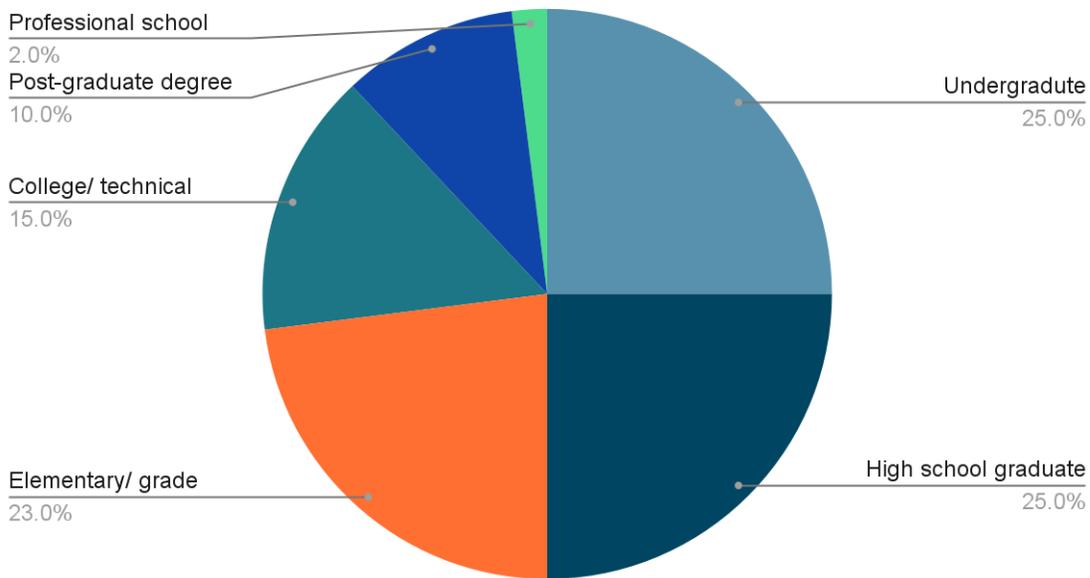
Years in Canada by Respondent



Question 17 - Respondents Level of Education

What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (n=110)

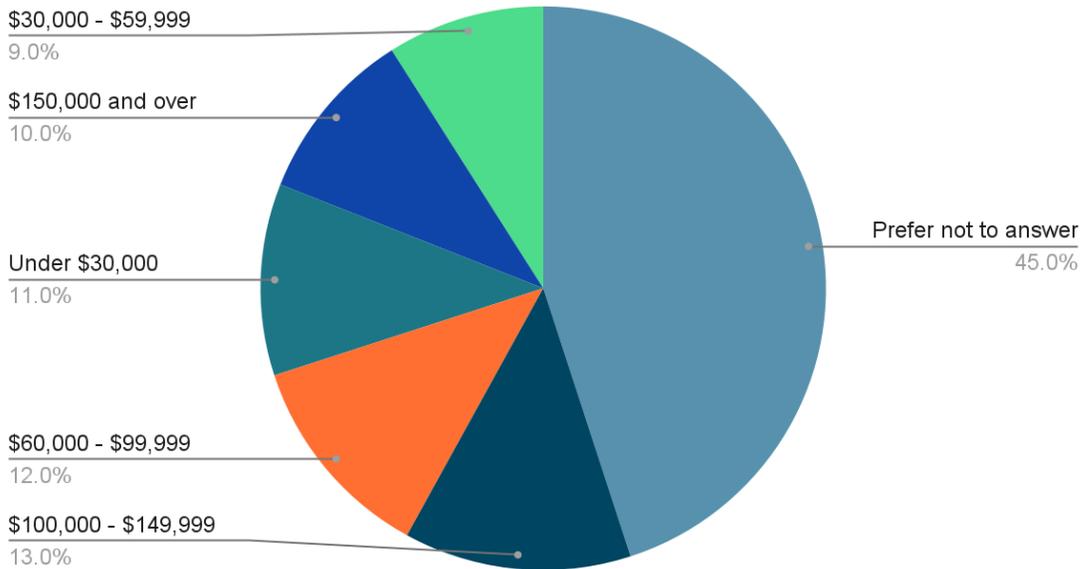
Respondents Level of Education



Question 18 - Respondents' Household Income

Which of the following categories best describes your total household income in 2021 before taxes? (n=109)

Respondents' Household Income



Question 19 - Housing Tenure of Respondents

What is your current housing situation? (n=123)

- 45% said 'I own'
- 28% said 'I rent'
- 15% said 'I'm unhoused'
- 8% said 'Prefer not to answer'
- 5% said 'Other'

Intercept Survey - Response Differentiation

When looking at responses from unique identities and socio-economic markers, there were several interesting findings.

- Those with no private backyard or green space with children in the household made up just 5 of the overall responses. In that group one chose to share their income (which was in the \$30,000 - \$59,000 range), the rest preferred not to answer. This group did also have lower education overall with high school completion or less.
 - This group has lower awareness of the alcohol consumption at designated park sites pilot project (80% did not know vs 59% overall)

- Reasons it might affect the experience ranged from not bothered to fear of safety around intoxicated individuals
- In response to the closed-ended questions this group's answers differed slightly, as follows:
 - **Allowing drinking in parks encourages underage drinking.** This group had somewhat more agreement to the statement than across all participants (80% agreement versus 57%)
 - **Allowing drinking in parks leads to more damage to parks.** This group had somewhat more agreement to the statement than across all participants (80% agreement versus 52%)
 - **Allowing drinking in parks allows the City to better regulate an activity that is already happening.** This group was twice as likely to disagree with this statement.
 - **Drinking in parks supports a healthier, more moderate drinking culture.** This group was twice as likely to disagree with this statement.
 - **Allowing drinking in parks makes the parks more welcoming to a wider variety of people.** This group was three times as likely to disagree with this statement.

B. There were four respondents who have been in Canada 5 years less and identify as non-Christian the groups. All 4 respondents preferred not to answer the question on household income. This group did also have lower education when compared to all respondents. Half of this group were high school graduates while the other half were elementary/ grade school graduates.

- This group has lower awareness of the project (100% unaware vs 59% overall)
- Reasons it might affect the experience was related to intoxicated individuals and their behaviours
- In response to the closed-ended questions this group's answers differed slightly, as follows:
 - **Drinking in parks makes picnics more enjoyable.** This group was twice as likely to disagree with this statement.
 - **Allowing drinking in parks allows the City to better regulate an activity that is already happening.** This group had significantly more disagreement to the statement than across all participants (100% disagreement versus 42%).
 - **Allowing drinking in parks makes the parks more welcoming to a wider variety of people.** This group had significantly more disagreement to the statement than across all participants (75% disagreement versus 17%).
 - **Allowing drinking in parks encourages underage drinking.** This group was 100% in agreement with this statement.
 - **Allowing drinking parks will lead to more positive benefits for residents and the city than negative issues.** This group was 100% in disagreement with this statement.

C. From the list of ten individuals identifying as LGBTQ2S+ only four shared that they identify as an ethnic or racial minority. All four identified as Indigenous. In response to how it would affect their use of these parks, the response varied from more use to less use. In response to the closed-ended questions this group's answers differed slightly, as follows:

- **Allowing drinking in parks makes the parks more welcoming to a wider variety of people.** This group had significantly more disagreement to the statement than across all participants (50% disagreement versus 17%).

D. When looking at particular closed-ended questions through the lens of religion, we found the following

When asked - **drinking in parks supports a healthier, more moderate drinking culture** - the most disagreement to this statement came from Christians/Catholics, followed by Muslims along with Hindus and Sikhs, in that order. There were also individuals who don't identify with a faith group expressing disagreement.

When asked - **allowing drinking in parks encourages underage drinking** - the most agreement to this statement came from Muslims, then Christians/Catholics, Sikhs, Spiritual individuals (including Indigenous respondents), and Hindus, in that order. There were also individuals who don't identify with a faith group expressing agreement with this statement.

When asked - **allowing drinking in parks will lead to more positive benefits for residents and the city than negative issues** - the most disagreement to this statement came from Christians/Catholics matched by Muslims, with a number of Hindus and Sikhs also disagreeing. There were also individuals who don't identify with a faith group expressing disagreement.

3.2 Interviews

3.2.1 User Experience Mapping Interviews

These were conducted with four members of the public between October 14 and October 19. This engagement method encouraged participants to share their typical park experience to understand how their activities may be affected by the introduction of alcohol consumption at a designated site at the park. Interviewees expressed a range of preferences; questions and key takeaways from the discussions are detailed below.

Where might your experience be changed/influenced by drinking at designated park sites?

Interviewees expressed that the way they planned the trip to the park and the activities they chose to partake in would be influenced by the presence of drinking in designated sites. They would reconsider their driving arrangements and potentially avoid the playground area or monitor their children more closely when using the playground to ensure they have limited interactions with any patrons under the influence of alcohol. Other notable actions that the introduction of the ACaDSiP program would influence are as follows:

- Where they choose to eat/drink
- Meet family to picnic or barbeque
- Pack up the picnic/get ready to leave

Please share how it might change or influence that experience.

Respondents indicated that alcohol consumption in designated sites at the park would influence their behaviour because knowing that they are allowed to drink alcohol makes it feel like the city trusts patrons to use the parks responsibly while relieving some of their stress with a drink. Interviewees also reflected on the need to decide who would be a designated driver to ensure that nobody in their group would drink and drive if they had plans to consume alcohol at the park. Other interviewees also considered how this might affect the children they bring to the park. They expressed that they would plan to avoid interacting with anyone drinking at the park by being more selective about their seating/picnic area and potentially leaving the park early if they could not avoid patrons who were consuming alcohol at the designated park sites.

Ideas to limit negative impacts of alcohol consumption in parks

Interviewees shared their ideas about minimizing the potential for negative impacts of the ACaDSiP program. The key solutions discussed included city staff patrols or monitoring of the designated sites, clear signage to indicate the rules and regulations in the designated areas and additional amenities such as water refill stations, and only implementing the program at parks with ample space to avoid interactions with drinking if desired. Other mitigation ideas included recycling reciprocals, time restrictions and physical barriers around the designated sites.

3.2.2 Representative Experience Interviews

In some instances, organizations who were approached with the intention of connecting to their broader networks or memberships, were unable to do so and alternatively offered up staff to share feedback. These organizations included the Edmonton Two-Spirit Society and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women. Additionally, the City of Edmonton's Indigenous Relations representative also connected the team with an Indigenous Elder from the community. A Community Services Advisory Board member participated in an interview in lieu of the workshop, which they could not attend.

The following represent their views, with some extrapolation to the communities they identify with and/or represent.

What are the main reasons why drinking alcohol at designated sites in city parks would affect how often you, or your community, would use the parks?

Interviewees expressed that existing in public can already be a difficult experience, without the added stress of how intoxicated people might perceive and interact with them. Most interviewees spoke to the struggle of wondering 'what intersectionalities or identities can I safely express in this space'. With the prevalence of racism and sexism, among other bigoted views, those with minority

identities or intersectionalities feel an enhanced sense of vulnerability in public. This is already a question in public space, but adding alcohol increased the odds of becoming a target for violence and hate.

The effect on persons who are vulnerable to discrimination is that they are left to navigate “how am I perceived here? And will I be safe here?” Questions that could and have led to these groups avoiding park use altogether. It makes accessing City resources like parks a barrier, due to the compounding conflict of everyday experiences in their skin and the challenge of unpredictable behaviour from those who are intoxicated.

Other major reasons for avoiding park use due to alcohol consumption included the exposure of alcohol to children and the implications of normalizing such activity around kids. Also, the inadequate monitoring of parks with designated sites, feeling that there are not enough measures in place to keep everyone safe.

What was clear across interviewees is that these experiences are not universally agreed to and intersectionality plays a large role in how individuals feel about being free to be themselves both in public, but also in the presence of alcohol.

Experiences unique to specific minority communities included:

- In Indigenous communities
 - Alcohol is seen as a weapon against their community, it's been historically used by colonizers to suppress them. In turn, alcohol is a trigger for many Indigenous Canadians.
 - Indigenous truth and reconciliation means learning and understanding traditional ways of doing, part of these ways of doing include being stewards of the land to take care of it and making it inviting and welcoming for others - this program does not achieve/support that (see above re: weaponization), alcohol has been destructive to the Indigenous community, but also to Canadians at large, as it's a major factor in poverty and homelessness
 - For Indigenous groups and individuals who use public fire pits for traditional ceremony, nearby alcohol consumption of others is found to be disruptive, it disconnects from the spirituality, particularly in the face of alcohol being associated with so much loss of life for this community
- In the Muslim community
 - Public drinking causes undue pressure to partake in drinking alcohol. Alcohol can become a norm, nudging some to drink despite the act going against religious values of avoiding self-harm
 - Islamophobia was also mentioned. In Edmonton, many Muslim women in the community are fearful of how they will be treated when they go out into public spaces
 - For many Muslims, racism is a daily experience

What concerns (if any) do you, or your community, have when it comes to drinking alcohol in designated parks?

Respondents indicated that safety and security were of the utmost concern. Mechanisms to keep people safe and ensure responsible consumption and actions from those who partake in alcohol

consumption being held to account for the behaviour. The concern over rowdy and disorderly actions tied to noise, litter, and the overall enjoyment of these public spaces by others, who are not drinking. Safety also translated to personal safety and the threat of violence. Most respondents felt that what is fun for one group would very much create unease for others.

Some respondents also felt this program sends the wrong message about consumption in the face of a growing mental health and addictions crisis. There were many questions around why the City would allow and normalize alcohol when actively responding to an opioid epidemic? The City's work in suicide prevention was noted as being in contradiction to the allowance of alcohol in public spaces. Mentions of misuse of alcohol as a tool to self medicate and numb pain was also of major concern. Particularly the difficulty this might cause for those recovering from alcohol addiction as it is said to be hard to find spaces that are free from alcohol without parks being added to the list.

The exposure and possible impression on children was a notable concern. Respondents believe that children mimic adults and they are learning that alcohol consumption is acceptable behaviour when it's in their regular purview. The fear that this can lead to early uptake in alcohol consumption, specifically by teens who might now see it as more accessible. This tied more broadly to the impact of the industry and its ability to promote, and ultimately influence, children and teens. One participant shared a recent experience of their child being given swag by an alcoholic beverage representative that was promoting their product in public space over Heritage Days. Like tobacco, this group believes we need to be wary of what the alcohol industry is allowed to say and do in our public spaces.

Other concerns that were raised by one or more participant include:

- Public urination
- Overconsumption, personal harm from over drinking
- People don't abide by rules - drinking happens along pathways and away from picnic sites
- It could open the door to widespread marijuana consumption in parks
- Increased risk of drinking and driving incidents (counter to the Vision Zero work)
- Similar to Vision Zero, the City is putting effort into other processes that create a safer and more inclusive community - how does this program fit into the broader City systems work?

Ideas to limit negative impacts of alcohol consumption in parks

While most interviewees fully disapprove of the program and do not see it as a tool for supporting responsible drinking, they did offer some insight on how it could be improved to limit negative impacts. These ideas include, but are not limited to:

- Provide resources for all people who may be looking for support to stop drinking
- Provide porta-potty access at or near designated sites
- Provide drinking water fountains at or near designated sites
- Display clear signage with simple direct language (consider digital-access only a barrier)
- Support adults in finding alternative activities and happenings in City's public spaces (that don't involve consuming alcohol)
- Connect this initiative to the Boyle Street Program
 - A way to monitor sites, with a roaming outreach team to connect to the unhoused population and check-in as well as offer support and information on alternatives such as the managed alcohol program
- An after hours monitoring program

- Install CCTV with regulation violation tickets sent by mail (like photo radar for speeding)
- Delineate specific areas of the park for alcohol consumption, isolate those from other non-alcohol related park activities
- Ensure public transit serves all designated parks
- Limit e-scooter parking/availability at parks with these designated sites
- Do not provide designated sites in parks situated within low income neighbourhoods

It was also posed to the project team that a strictly mitigation-oriented approach might now be enough. They posed that the City should recognize that it's designing a program for persons of privilege. For some, they continue to ask the question of what harm will others consuming alcohol publicly have on me? For some, even the suggestions of increased monitoring and security to manage behaviour leaves them feeling uneasy, as minority and equity seeking groups have a historically ill defined relationship with such power structures.

3.3 Workshop

During the engagement process, the consultant and City project team held one stakeholder workshop. Despite a broader invite, the workshop attendees represented just two stakeholder groups - Alberta Health Services and the Edmonton Public School Board. The workshop provided rudimentary information on the pilot and project purpose, but the emphasis was on interactive exercises that garnered input on the real and perceived benefits and concerns related to the ACaDSiP program.

In contrast to the many concerns identified by participants, they believed there was just one benefit. This benefit was that the ACaDSiP program allows for a variety of social activities that are not usually enjoyed in a public setting; an example of this would be a celebration with friends.

Key concerns related to the program include misalignment between the ACaDSiP program and public health research regarding the harms associated with alcohol and alcohol consumption, the increased risk of undesirable behaviours and activities around school sites, and the negative influence that alcohol consumption has on youth who use public parks. Respondents highlighted that public park spaces should continue to promote healthy lifestyles and recreation and that there could be some municipal liability for the impacts of alcohol use in a public space. Other concerns and comments that were discussed during the workshop can be found below.

What concerns do you have when it comes to drinking alcohol in designated parks?

- The most important public health interventions are those that create environments supportive of healthy habits, which is not reflected through the implementation of ACaDSiP
- Existing research shows that there is no safe amount of alcohol consumption
- If the City chooses to permit/accept alcohol consumption in public parks, what services are being scaled back as a consequence - could the City provide childcare services instead?
- The City's work in preventing domestic violence and providing safe spaces conflicts with the promotion of alcohol consumption at designated sites in parks
- Alcohol is the leading risk factor for death and disability for 15 to 49 years old, and promoting alcohol consumption in parks can contribute to/increase that risk

- Increased exposure to alcohol by children and youth has been shown to increase the likelihood of alcohol addiction or alcohol use disorder in adulthood

Ideas to limit negative impacts of alcohol consumption in parks

Strategies to mitigate concerns or remove alcohol consumption at designated sites in parks were proposed by workshop participants. Key strategies involved various municipal interventions such as strengthening policies, installing signage, increasing municipal staff/security presence, discontinuing the ACaDSiP program and public education on the harmful impacts of alcohol consumption. Below are the other strategies suggested during the workshop based on the concerns they address.

Modeling drinking behaviours to youth sends a message that alcohol is needed to enjoy and relax instead of sending a message to youth to adopt healthy habits.

- The best practice is to develop a municipal alcohol policy to supplement public education efforts. Reducing alcohol availability is supported by the World Health Organization SAFER Program.
- A combination of education and monitoring of underage consumption and advanced intervention initiatives.

The program is misaligned with the latest public health research to reduce harms related to alcohol: the most important public health interventions are those that create environments supportive of healthy habits.

- Increased public education efforts and/or exposure to up-to-date public health research

Increased potential for unsafe/undesirable activities and behaviours around school sites.

- Increased security presence in parks. Ongoing monitoring of sites to determine if some should be removed from the program.
- Removal of ACaDSiP locations near schools as there is a strong link between alcohol consumption and sexual violence.

Cumulative number of drinks beyond the Alcohol and Health Guidelines coming from Health Canada.

- Installation of prominent signage at park entrances outlining the new Alcohol and Health Guidelines.
- Warning labels at each picnic site informing park-goers that alcohol is linked to 7 types of cancer.

Alcohol is the leading risk factor for death and disability for 15 to 49 years old.

- More alcohol-free spaces; there are already many licensed restaurants and bars in the city.

4.0 Conclusion

During this GBA+ engagement process the sentiment toward alcohol consumption in parks was primarily negative. This was not entirely surprising as the GBA+ process intentionally sought feedback from those in opposition to the program, including those who were generally identified as ‘Disapprovers’ in the Advanis marketing results. This means those who more broadly made up the

socio-demographics of a Disapprover (i.e. BIPOC, female, etc.) were more likely to weigh in on the conversation.

Despite some respondents feeling there is little to no impact on them personally, most believe the program is misguided and an overreach by the municipality. Alcohol was discussed broadly as a personal choice, a choice that comes with potential for harm to oneself and those around them. Allowing such consumption in public parks was mostly said to be undesirable and in some cases a reason to stop visiting parks altogether.

Although there appears to be just a small subset of the community who may be most negatively affected by public alcohol consumption, it led some participants to raise the question of - who is the City here to serve? With that, it is strongly recommended that future work on this and related project don't simply mitigate potential risks and issues, but rather proactively address community concerns related to addictions, recovery, underage drinking, and discrimination in Edmonton. A safe and inclusive City is the real hope from those Edmontonians who shared in this process.