

# Make a Place for People

BERCZY PARK, TORONTO



**8-80  
Cities**®

Parks Streets Public Places for all





# Make a Place for People

## BERCZY PARK, TORONTO

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*8-80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. We are dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit and visit vibrant parks and public places.*

*Our approach is to engage communities at all levels and across multiple sectors to inspire the creation of cities that are easily accessible, safe, and enjoyable for everyone. We have working experience in urban areas across Canada, the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.*

## Why 8-80?

We are convinced that if everything we did in our public spaces was great for everyone from 8 years old to 80 years old, we would end up with healthy and vibrant communities for all.



## What Is an 8-80 City?

- 8-80 cities reflect social equality in the public realm and promote people's happiness.
- 8-80 cities nurture our need to be physically active by providing safe, accessible, and enjoyable places for everyone to walk and bike as part of their daily routine.
- 8-80 recognize that people are social creatures and prioritize human interaction by fostering vibrant streets and great public places where people can rest, relax, and play.
- 8-80 cities encourage sustainable and healthy lifestyles for people regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, or economic background.





## Our Partners

**GEHL ARCHITECTS**  
URBAN QUALITY CONSULTANTS

*Gehl Architects focus on the relationship between the built environment and people's quality of life.*

Gehl Architects is an urban research and design consultancy. We address global trends with a people-focussed approach, utilizing empirical analysis to understand how the built environment can promote human flourishing. We apply this analysis to strategic planning and human-centred design to empower citizens, decision makers, company leaders, and organizations.

## The St. Lawrence Market BIA

The St. Lawrence Market Business Improvement Area is a non-profit organization whose membership includes every business and commercial property owner within the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood. We work cooperatively to improve the public realm, promote the neighbourhood and events, and support local business. The BIA boundaries extend from the east side of Yonge Street to the west side of Parliament Street, and from Lakeshore Boulevard up to just South of Queen Street.



This project is partially funded by the Ontario Government's Healthy Communities Fund.

## The Make a Place for People Project

Make a Place for People is a project based on the idea that community participation is key to the creation of vibrant and healthy public spaces.

The overall goal of the project is to inject new life into currently under performing public spaces in order to encourage physical activity and promote mental health while also contributing to creating more sustainable and people-friendly communities.

# CITIES FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES



## How to use this report

By working closely with local partners in identifying community stakeholders, 8-80 Cities has endeavored to tap into the imagination of the diverse people who use or would like to use the space. This document is the culmination of those efforts.

The recommendations and visualizations are a representation of what we heard from the various stakeholders we engaged.

We see this report as a tool for community members, elected officials and public sector staff alike to generate action and to help sustain community participation in the space.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides a description of the Make a Place for People project methodology, as well as an overview of the Berczy Park Neighbourhood.







### What is the Make a Place for People Project?

We know that parks and public spaces play an vital role in our communities; they create nodes where people meet, relax, and play. But many parks and public spaces in Ontario are under performing, with very few uses and activities, and a lack funding, management, and community participation.

The goal of the Make a Place for People project is to educate and empower communities across the province with the tools to transform underperforming parks and public spaces into vibrant and active destinations that promote social interaction, mental health, and well being for all.

8-80 Cities was thrilled to partner with the Danish architecture firm, Gehl Architects on two of the Make a Place for People project sites. In an effort to contribute to their goal of creating cities for people around the world, Gehl Architects volunteered to collaborate on this project, contributing their expertise in public space assessments, public realm strategies ,and concept design.

### Our Goal

To develop vibrant public spaces that encourage physical activity and promote mental health while contributing to more sustainable and people-friendly communities.



Thorncliffe Park, Toronto



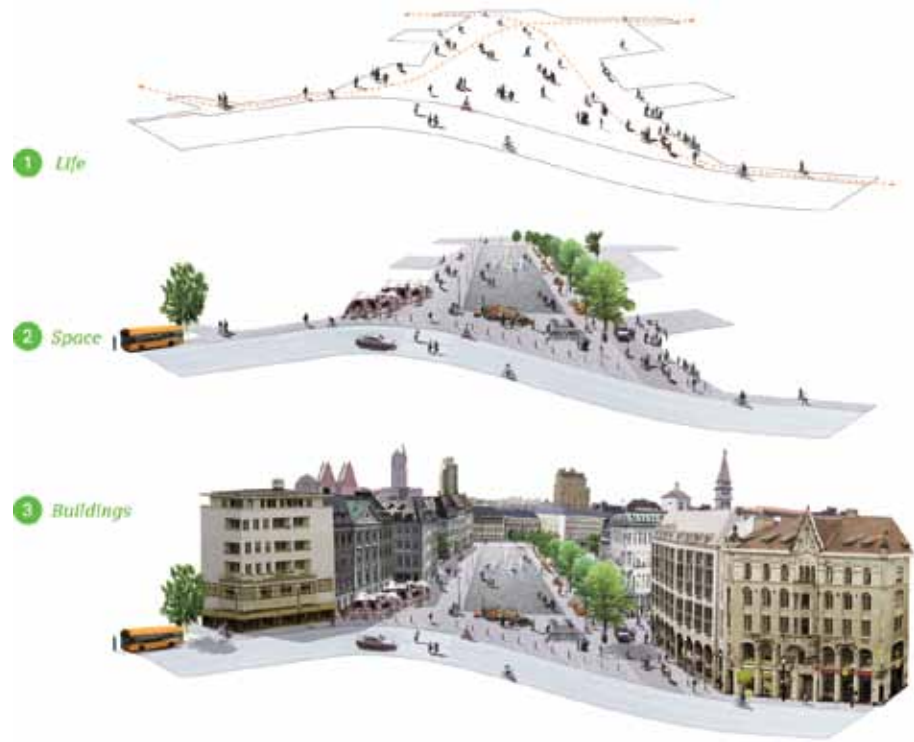
Washington Sq., NYC

## Our Partners:

### Gehl Architects, Approach:

#### LIFE - SPACE - BUILDINGS

Gehl Architects have developed a work process that ensures the highest standards for city development. The study of people's well-being lays the foundation for the formation of strategic planning and design work. In our work, we utilize the empirical survey and mapping methods that Professor Jan Gehl has developed, which explore the way urban areas are used. These empirical and analytical methods inform our work throughout the process.



The study of people's well-being lays the foundation for Gehl Architects strategic planning and design. Life first – then space and finally buildings.

### The St. Lawrence Market BIA

8-80 Cities issued a call for partners in December 2011, to communities across Ontario to nominate currently underperforming public spaces to participate in the project. We received over 30 applications from communities from across Ontario and were delighted to receive an application from the St. Lawrence Market BIA for Berczy Park in Downtown Toronto.

From January to August, 2012 8-80 Cities worked with the St. Lawrence Market BIA to develop a strategy for the design, programming, and management of Berczy Park through a process of community engagement.

*“It is a public space in our community that has the potential to be an even greater focal point and prominent destination. Designed many years ago, the layout did not take into account the increasing density and gentrification of the neighbourhood and the often-competing interests of a growing business and residential community.”*

*“As the community grows, its public spaces need to adapt and grow with it, engage its citizens, and add to the neighbourhood fabric.”*

*- St. Lawrence Market BIA*



## Berczy Park Overview

Berczy Park is a small green oasis located in the bustling St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood in downtown Toronto. The park's boundaries are formed by Front St., Scott, and Wellington Streets and the iconic Flatiron building. The amenities within the park feature a fountain encircled with aged seating, several tall trees, a drinking fountain, and four intersecting pathways from every direction.

The park derives its name from William Berczy, co-founder of the Town of York (now Toronto) in 1794.



**BERCZY PARK IS BOTH  
A NEIGHBOURHOOD  
AND A DESTINATION  
PARK; IT'S A PLACE  
WHERE TOURISTS REST,  
BUSINESS PEOPLE  
LUNCH, AND RESIDENTS  
PLAY AND RELAX**



Overlooking Berczy Park, the Flatiron Mural was painted by Canadian Artist, Derek Besant in 1980. The mural is a 'trompe l'oeil', and incorporates the historic building's windows into the art piece. The mural draws people into the park to take a closer look and is a popular photo opportunity for visitors\*

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\*The Grid TO

# HOW HEALTHY ARE TORONTONIANS?

26%  
feel  
stressed\*\*

15%  
have high  
blood  
pressure\*\*

43%  
are overweight  
or obese\*\*

58%  
are not  
physically  
active\*\*

## St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood

The St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood is part of the original Town of York, and therefore boasts many historic buildings along-side modern commercial sites and residential towers.

In recent history, there has been a significant increase in the number of residential units, adding a greater number of children, seniors, and young professionals to the neighbourhoods.

The population surrounding Berczy Park includes more seniors living alone and a significantly higher rate of renters in comparison with the City of Toronto as a whole. These factors highlight the need for high-quality, multi-functional green spaces that facilitate active, healthy lifestyles.



Berczy Park's fountain is a natural gather place and a favorite feature among children.

\*Toronto Health Unit, Health Profile June 2012



## MAKING THE MOST OF BERCZY PARK

Some people have referred to Berczy Park as a “jewel” or “oasis” in the heart of Toronto’s dense urban centre. It is superbly located only a few blocks from the city’s largest transit hub, Union Station, it’s flanked by historic, human-scale facades on Front Street, and is directly behind Toronto’s most photographed building, The Flatiron Building. The park is ideally located to be a favorite destination among local residents, tourists, and business people alike. Unfortunately, the park isn’t living up to its potential as a vibrant hub of healthy lifestyles and social interaction.

### Current Problems

Years of inadequate maintenance is evidenced by broken and derelict infrastructure. A lack of programming and activities does little to animate the park, especially in the winter months. Many local residents have expressed dismay over the general lack of attention and care given to this special little green space in one of Toronto’s most iconic neighbourhoods. It’s time to truly make the most of Berczy Park and strengthen the role it can play in people’s experience of visiting and living in the St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood.

*“I think there is a lot of love for the park; it’s just that it hasn’t been safe, it hasn’t been cleaned, and it hasn’t been looked after.”*

*“I wish there was something for children to do here. There are more and more kids living in the area.”*

*“It’s almost pathetic how little green space there is here. We need to optimize these spaces. Berczy could be such a jewel.”*



Voices from the  
Community



Photos exemplify community member’s key concerns:  
1. Rusty, broken seating and cigarette butts show a lack of maintenance.



2. Pigeons represent a significant pest problem.



3. Losing trees to disease has negatively impacted the original design of the park, especially the area around the fountain.

## BUILDING ON EXISTING STRENGTHS

Creating a strong sense of community ownership and stewardship is vital for the success of any public space. Berczy Park has a strong base of community members and organizations concerned with this important park. Encouraging increasing and sustained community participation through partnership and stewardship development is key to the success of Berczy Park.

### Community Organizations

Toronto has an active and engaged civil society. Community-based organizations such as the Friends of Berczy Park, The Parent Network, and The St. Lawrence Market Residents Association have shown a strong interest in supporting and improving Berczy Park. And these groups are doers! This summer they coordinated the implementation of a child-friendly mural, and recently added movable tables and chairs to the park.

The St. Lawrence Market BIA's Parks Committee, which is composed of representatives from the City, business, as well as community organizations, is an excellent step towards building a strong, vibrant, and sustainable park system in the neighbourhood. Working together to implement the recommendations in this report, with a focus on improved management and programming, will be key to making Berczy Park a vibrant, multi-functional green space.

### Community Members

8-8o Cities was encouraged by the enthusiasm and generosity of community members who participated in the Make a Place for People project. Finding ways to harness this energy to build stewardship in the park will determine the long-term success of Berczy Park.

*"Creating a health-promoting park system requires greater expertise and resources than any park agency can provide alone. What's needed are partnerships with other public agencies, as well as with private foundations, corporations, citizens' groups, and volunteers."*

*- Sustainable Cities Collective*



Parent Network and Friends of Berczy Park member, Sybil Wa, shows off the group's latest child friendly initiative— an interactive mural by local artists Mike Parsons, that kids can play hopscotch on or colour with sidewalk chalk.



Kids at a nearby condo draw pictures of what they would like to see at Berczy Park.



## ABOUT THE PROJECT



Kids fueled by free cookies think hard about what the future of Berczy Park should be.

Three workshop participants discuss the site during an assessment of Berczy Park's current infrastructure, maintenance and condition.



*The Make a Place for People process aims to tap into the imagination of the diverse people who use a public space in order to create a vision and cultivate a culture of community participation in the space. The process involves 3 phases:*

### **1. Participatory Planning**

Working with the local project partner to identify stakeholders to be involved in the project and develop a strategy for engagement.









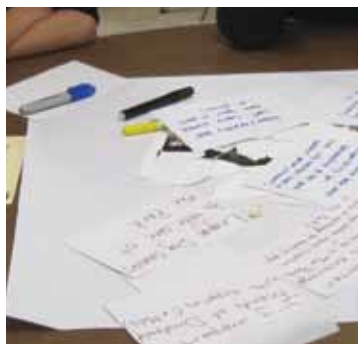
### **2. Site Assessment and Community Engagement**

Assessments of the existing site including both “hardware” (physical infrastructure) and “software” (uses, activities, and management). Community engagement with diverse stakeholders through a variety of activities such as workshops, focus groups, interviews and on-site conversations.

### **3. Vision Development and Action Planning**

Data collection and analysis to inform the creation of the Make a Place for People report. Reporting and action planning synthesizes the data collected into a user-friendly format that reflects the community's vision of the space

# Berczy Park Project Time Line

1 Planning	2 Site Assessment & Community Engagement						3 Vision & Action Plan
JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Site selected through application process</li><li>- Identification of stakeholders</li><li>- Site research and context assessment</li><li>- Development of schedule and coordination of events logistics for first on-site visit</li><li>- Outreach and promotion of events and activities for first on-site visit</li><li>- Development of content and materials for community engagement sessions</li></ul>	<b>1st On-Site Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Winter site assessment</li><li>- Community engagement sessions</li><li>- Media engagement</li><li>- Collection of data from community engagement sessions</li><li>- Debrief of first on-site visit and planning for 2nd on-site visit</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Analysis of data and documentation of initial findings</li><li>- Development of schedule and coordination of logistics for 2nd on-site visit</li><li>- Outreach and promotion of events and activities for 2nd on-site visit</li><li>- Development of content and materials for second on-site community engagement sessions based on 1st on-site visit .</li></ul>		<b>2nd On-Site Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Summer site assessment &amp; volunteer training</li><li>- Community engagement sessions</li><li>- Media Engagement</li><li>- Review of findings from previous on-site sessions and site assessment</li><li>- Collection of data from community engagement sessions</li><li>- Debrief of 2nd on-site visit</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Analyze data and document findings from community engagement and site assessments</li><li>- Develop initial vision and recommendations for site</li><li>-Draft report issued to local partner</li><li>- Feedback incorporated into final report</li><li>- Launch of final report</li></ul>	
							
8-80 Cities assesses Make a Place for People applications.	Feb. 27, March 1 & 5, April 24 : Winter Community Engagement & Capacity Building , 134 Direct Participants		May 22, 23, 29, and July 3, 4: Summer community engagement 172 direct participants		Data analysis and report development 315 ideas collected 		
							
On-going communication and planning with the St. Lawrence Market BIA	Jan. 31, Feb. 27 & March 1st : Winter site assessment		July 2-6: Summer site assessment with Gehl Architects		Development of project report		



## 2. PLACES FOR PEOPLE

*This section includes international research, evidence and tools to support improving parks and public spaces in Ontario.*

*We hope that the people of the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood and beyond will be inspired to use this report to help “make the case” for improving parks, squares and streets so that we can create healthier, happier and more sustainable neighbourhoods across the province.*









## GREAT PLACES HEALTHY COMMUNITIES HAPPY PEOPLE, VIBRANT CITIES

*Parks and public spaces define our greatest cities and shape our most vibrant communities. Imagine Ottawa without the Rideau Canal, Montreal without the cobble stone streets of the Old Port, Toronto without the St. Lawrence Market, or Vancouver without the seawall at Stanley Park.*

### Putting the public back in public space

Public spaces are our community's most valuable assets, and they belong to all of us. We have a right and a responsibility, to be involved in decisions related to their use, management, and design. But in many cases the public has been left out of this decision-making process and we've stopped asking to be involved.

Our experience shows that the best parks and public spaces have a high level of community involvement, foster a sense of stewardship and ownership, and are sensitive to the changing needs and desires of the community they serve.

1. The idea for NYC's renowned Highline Park was originally conceived by two community members who objected to the destruction of the elevated rail bed where the park now stands.
2. While not technically a park, Guadalajara's weekly open streets program "Via Recreativa" was spearheaded by three successful business leaders that are now known as the NGO "Guadalajara 20/20". Every week the program sees more than 300,000 people use the city streets to bike, run, walk, and play.
3. Dufferin Grove Park in Toronto is one of the city's unique and most successful public spaces, thanks to the on-going coordination and partnership between the "Friends of Dufferin Grove" and the City of Toronto.





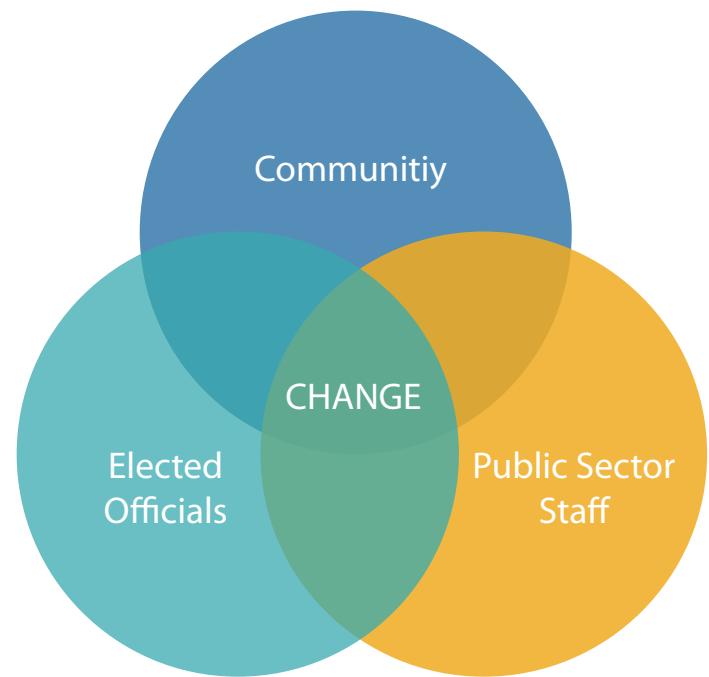
## TAPPING THE COLLECTIVE BRAIN

Engaging people in decisions related to their parks and public spaces is what 8-80 Cities strives to do. We never cease to be impressed by the creativity, knowledge and know-how community members possess about their communities. The great diversity of people and perspectives in any community is its greatest resource. Finding creative ways to “tap the collective brain” is the first step in creating public places that are people-focused, and people-friendly.

By understanding what the community wants and needs, decision makers can work together to offer appropriate programming, infrastructure, and design.

## THE THREE LEGGED STOOL

The most effective management of parks and public spaces involves what we call “the three-legged stool”—a balanced combination of elected officials, public sector staff, and the local community (including residents, businesses, non-profit organizations and community groups).



*8-80 Cities works to bridge the gap between these actors to facilitate a process of meaningful and successful change. We use reports like this one to articulate the community’s vision and work with decision makers to develop strategies for implementation.*



## FOCUS ON THE MOST VULNERABLE

*Often it's the people who have the most to gain from parks and public spaces that are the most removed from the decision-making process. Children, older adults, newcomers, and people of low-income often need to be given special attention in the engagement process.*

While they may not be the loudest voices in the room, their opinions and ideas are no less valuable. We need to move beyond the idea that an evening public meeting hosted at the local city hall is sufficient public consultation – we need to be more creative!

## HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY?

- Use social media to connect with people in their living rooms.

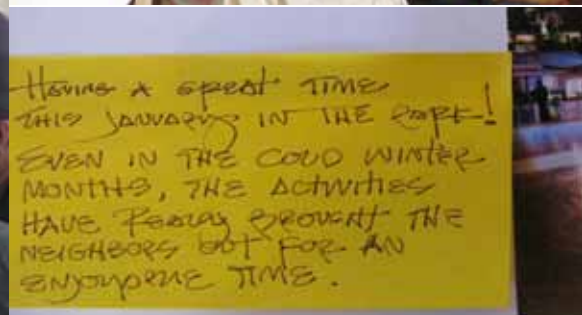
- Get kids to draw a picture of what they would like to do in their park.

- Talk one-on-one with older adults about what they need in the park.

- Meet with a small group of newcomers and find out what they think makes a successful place.

- Use cameras to help youth show you what they like and don't like in the park.

- Host an idea sharing session in a park. Free food always draws a crowd!





## Making the Case for Parks

*Too often our parks and public spaces are undervalued by decision makers and community members alike, and this is reflected in the state of many parks and public spaces across Ontario.*

Did you know that, according to a recent report by Parks and Recreation Ontario about the state of recreational facilities in Ontario, more than 50% of public recreation facilities in municipalities of all sizes are more than 50 years old? The vast majority of community recreation and sports facilities were built between 1956 and 1980, during a time when there was dedicated funding for municipal sport and recreation facilities.\* This is indicative of the general state of parks and recreation services in Ontario – we have lost sight of the important role these public facilities play in our communities, and they seem to be sliding farther down the political priorities list year after year.

We need to talk about how great places do more than just provide a nice place to spend a sunny afternoon; they play a vital role in the health of our economy, environment, society, our bodies, and our minds.

**ACCORDING TO A STUDY  
CONDUCTED BY PARKS AND  
RECREATION ONTARIO IN 2009, 67%  
OF ONTARIANS WOULD BE WILLING  
TO PAY MORE FOR IMPROVED  
LOCAL SERVICES.**

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\*Parks and Recreation Ontario. Investing in Healthy and Active Ontarians through Recreation and Parks Infrastructure



Breakwater Park, Kingston



Berczy Park, Toronto



Flemingdon Park, Toronto

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2007, a study conducted in Philadelphia, where there are more than 100 “friends of parks” groups estimated that the total value of volunteer hours donated to parks in the city was \$8,600,000\*\*\*

According to American Forests, trees in Atlanta remove 19 million pounds of pollutants annually, a service worth \$47 million.\*\*

In Fort Worth, Texas, crime dropped by 28% within a 1.6km radius of community centres with a midnight basketball program. During the same period, in areas around five other community centres where the programs were not offered, crime rose an average of 39% during the same period.\*\*\*\*

New York City’s Highline Park is predicted to bring \$4 billion in private investment and \$900 million in revenues to the city over the next 30 years. \*

\* The New York Times. *Taking a Stroll Along the Highline*. November 28, 2008

\*\* The Trust for Public Land. *The Health Benefits of Parks*

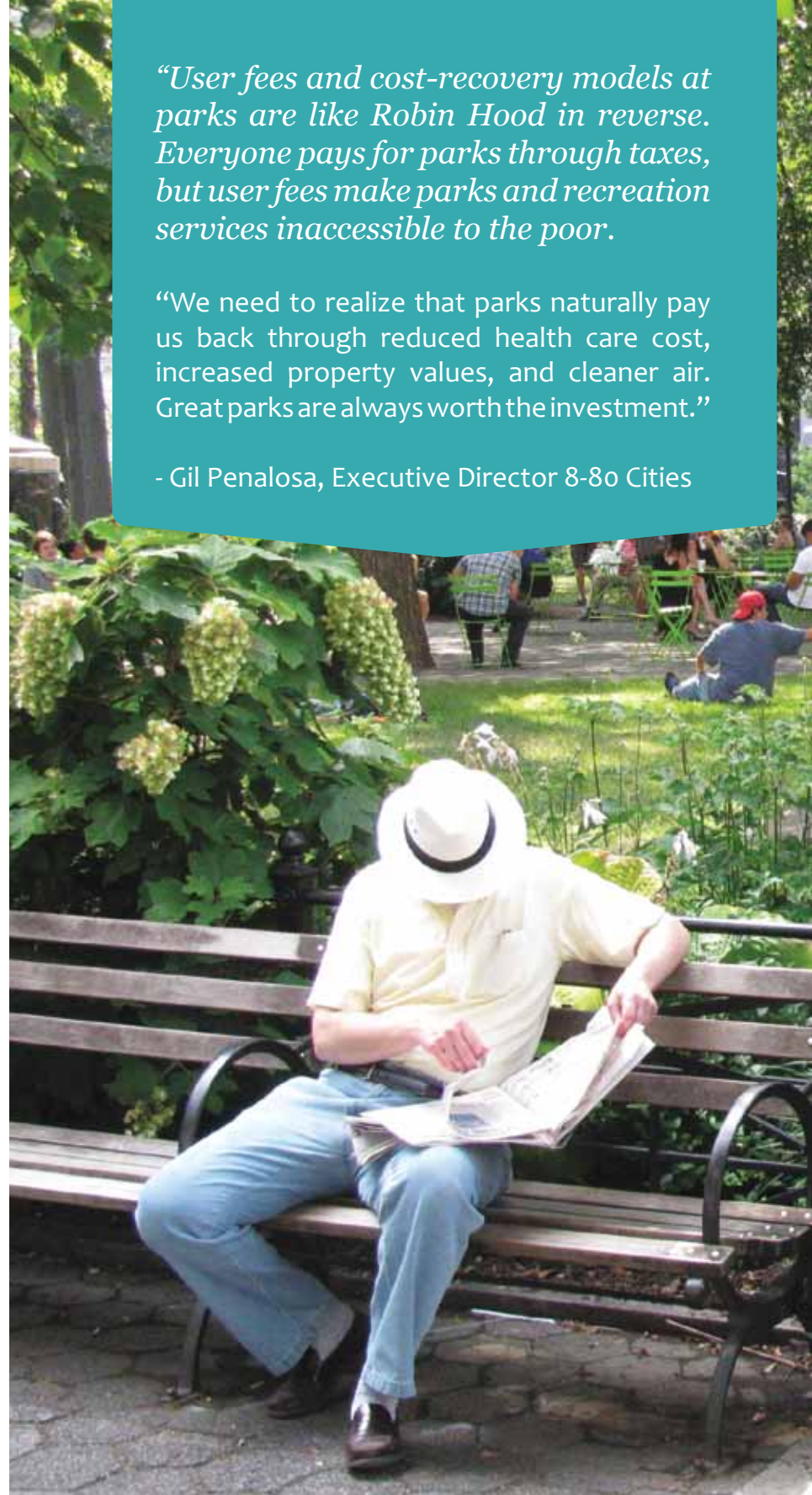
\*\*\*The Trust for Public Land. *Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System*

\*\*\*\* The Trust for Public Land. *The Benefits of Parks*

*“User fees and cost-recovery models at parks are like Robin Hood in reverse. Everyone pays for parks through taxes, but user fees make parks and recreation services inaccessible to the poor.”*

*“We need to realize that parks naturally pay us back through reduced health care cost, increased property values, and cleaner air. Great parks are always worth the investment.”*

- Gil Penalosa, Executive Director 8-80 Cities





## Active Places, Healthy People

*According to the 2012 Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services known as the Drummond Report, Ontario's health care system needs to be dramatically reformed.*

Health care is the Ontario government's single biggest spending program. In 2010-11, the province spent \$44.77 billion on health. This is equivalent to 40.3% of its total spending on programs, and health care costs are only projected to increase in the future.\* Nevertheless, even with massive investment in health care, Ontarians are only getting sicker. We are more overweight, less active and more susceptible to chronic disease than ever before.\*

It is also important to note that, as a nation, we don't seem to be spending our health care dollars very wisely. According to the Fraser Institute, Canada spends more on health care than any other industrialized country in the OECD save Iceland and Switzerland, but ranks seventeenth in the percentage of total life expectancy that will be lived in full health. It is clear we need a new approach to creating healthy communities, that focuses on keeping people healthy, rather than fixing them after they are sick.

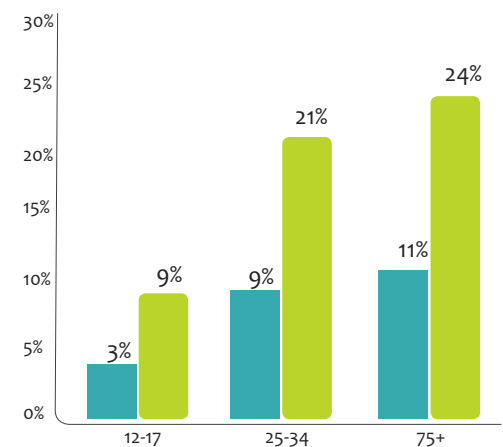


Bogota, Columbia

**"HEALTH IS  
MUCH MORE  
THAN PATCHING  
UP PEOPLE ONCE  
SOMETHING HAS  
GONE WRONG."**

- The Drummond Report

**Canadian Obesity Rates on the Rise**



According to Statistics Canada, obesity rates have increased dramatically in the past 25 years. The chart above represents results from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), which directly measured the height and weight of respondents.\*\*

\* Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services, 2012  
 \*\* Statistics Canada. The Canadian Health Measures Survey, 2009

# PARKS PRESCRIPTIONS PROVIDE EXERCISE AND REDUCE STRESS!



Improvements in neighbourhood design, combined with health promotion and programming, is gaining increasing traction internationally among health professionals and patients alike. In the U.S., health care providers have begun to partner with parks and are issuing “park prescriptions” to get people walking, biking, hiking, and swimming in nature more often. These prescriptions are also combined with incentive programs that include lower user-fees, fitness classes, and guided walking tours.

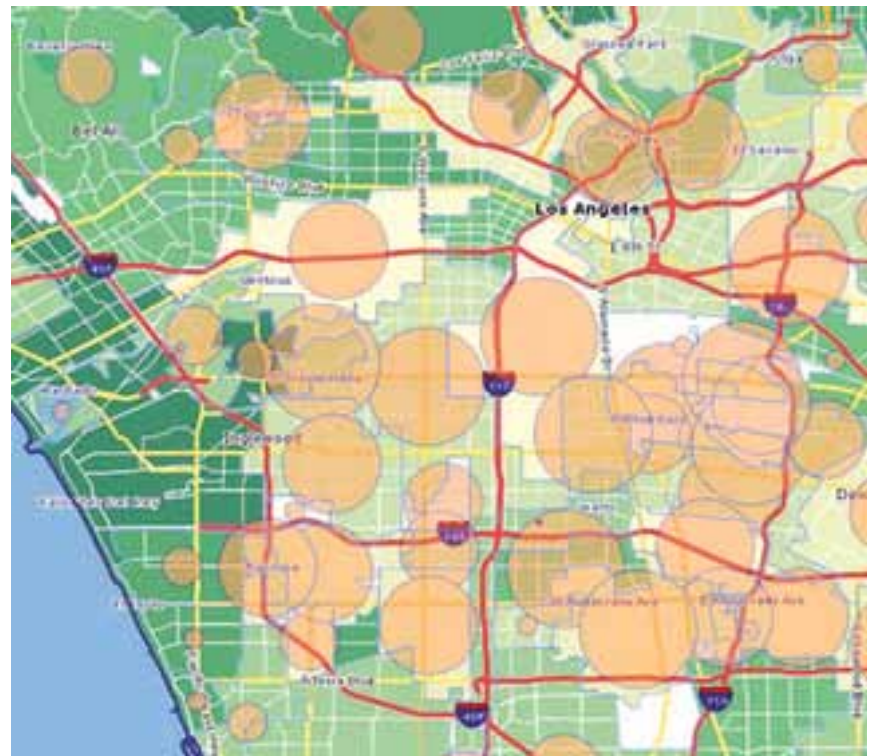
The value of parks and a quality public realm for exercise is conclusive. Good quality public spaces encourage people to make short journeys on foot or by bike; they also encourage participation in physical activity and help to reduce stress.\* A study by the UK organization CABE, also showed that improving the quality of neighbourhood green spaces will encourage more active use and exercise. Overall, the study found that if parks were made more pleasant, people would use them more.\*

Despite their extensive value, parks are often the first item on the chopping block when budget time comes. Short-sighted, siloed planning has relegated parks to a “nice to have” feature of communities rather than a “must have” element of any healthy and sustainable community.

\*CABE, *Using Community Green Spaces to Tackle Inequality and Improve Health*

\*\*The Economist. *Mapping a Better World*, 2009

LOS ANGELES  
STUDY: AREAS  
WITH FEWER  
PARKS (LIGHTER  
GREEN) HAVE  
HIGHER RATES  
OF CHILDHOOD  
OBESITY (LARGER  
CIRCLES)\*\*



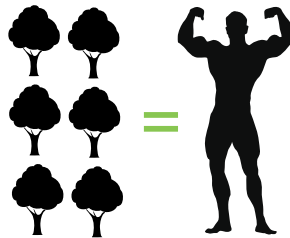


## ACTIVE PLACES, HEALTHY PEOPLE FACT SHEET



### ELDERLY AND YOUTH

in large cities seem to benefit more from the presence of green areas in their living environment than any other group.\*



“Health inequalities” refers to the general trend that people living in poorer areas are more likely to be unhealthy, and die earlier. Researchers found that living near parks, woodland, or other open spaces helps to reduce health inequalities.\*\*

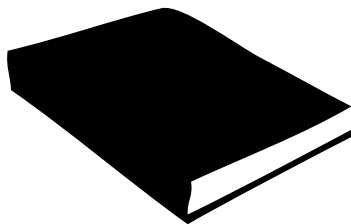


Children with Attention Deficit Disorder can concentrate better than usual after taking part in activities in a green setting, such as walking or playing in a park.\*\*\*

Research shows that residents of neighbourhoods with greenery in common spaces are more likely to enjoy stronger social ties than those who live surrounded by barren concrete.\*\*\*



A study in Japan showed that seniors living in cities with access to walkable green spaces helped them live longer regardless of socioeconomic status.\*



Studies show that when people can’t access parks, they often go without exercise. This is especially true of low-income people, who often can’t afford gym memberships.\*\*\*

\* CABI, *Using Community Green Spaces to Tackle Inequality and Improve Health*

\*\* Mitchel & Popham, *The Lancet. Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study*

\*\*\* The Trust for Public Land. *Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System*

"HAVE DOCTORS  
ADDRESS DIET  
AND EXERCISE  
ISSUES BEFORE  
REACHING FOR  
THE PRESCRIPTION  
PAD WHEN  
DEALING WITH  
HEALTH ISSUES  
SUCH AS  
CARDIOVASCULAR  
DISEASE AND  
LATE-ONSET TYPE  
2 DIABETES."

- A RECOMMENDATION FROM  
THE DRUMMOND REPORT





## The 8-80 Rule

*8-80 Cities has come up with a simple rule to evaluate public spaces called the “8-80 Rule”*

The most basic characteristic of any public space is that it is open and accessible to everyone regardless of their age, ability, background, or social status. Public space design, management, and programming should reflect this philosophy.

**PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES ARE  
SYMBOLS OF DEMOCRACY AND EQUALITY**



8-80 / 365

*It's a common sight in Ontario's urban parks; October rolls around, washrooms and facilities are locked up, events and activities come to a halt, and walking paths fill with snow and ice.*

*"Parks are unofficially closed in the winter."  
Ontario Municipal Parks Employee*



Create Excitement!

Create Energy !



Create Heat

Create Warmth

## THE BEST PUBLIC SPACES ARE ACTIVE 365 DAYS A YEAR.

It's easy to get people outside on a sunny summer day, but creating active public spaces in the colder months requires more creativity and ingenuity. In terms of health, people tend to be less physically active in the winter and spend more time indoors. Vibrant public spaces can help to draw people out of their homes to exercise and interact with friends and neighbours.



# 3. RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

*This section includes a summary of the results of the site assessment as well as the ideas and recommendations generated by the community about how to improve Berczy Park. The visualizations in this section are used to help people re-imagine Berczy Park and to highlight specific recommendations, programs, or improvements.*

*In addition to countless focus groups, meetings, interviews, and casual conversations with community members, more than 300 specific recommendations and ideas were collected during the project. Trends, priorities, and compatible best practices are highlighted in this section. To find a complete list of results from the project please visit:*

*[www.8-80cities.org](http://www.8-80cities.org) ➤ Resources ➤ 8-80 Tools ➤ Community Reports*







### Results Overview

#### If you don't count, you don't count!

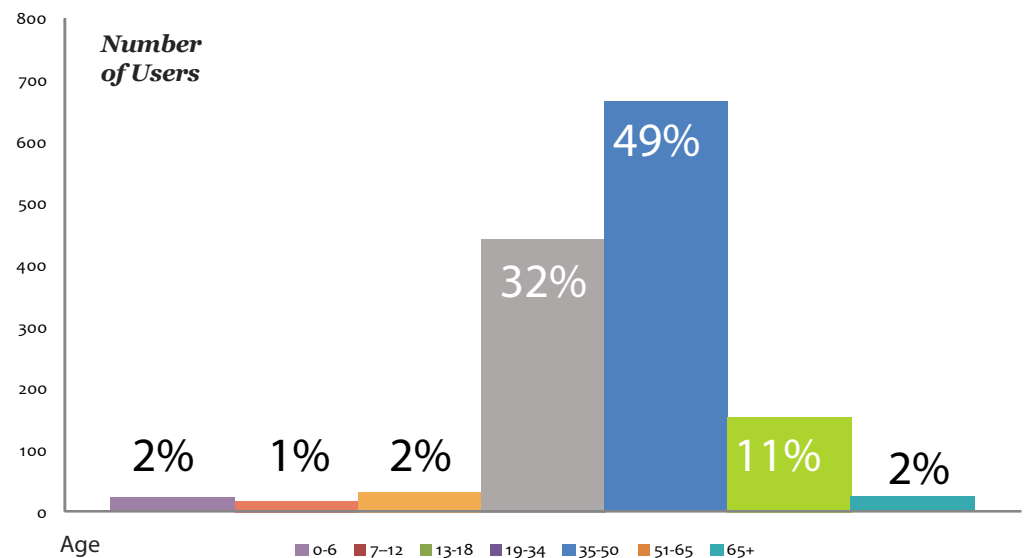
*Collecting information about how public spaces are used is critical to their improvement. Understanding who is using the space and, often, more importantly, who's not using the space, helps to shed light on what improvements need to be made. Data helps to build the case for why investment and improvements need to be made, and creates a "baseline" of information from which you can measure your success.*

### Berczy Park Site Observations

With the help of community volunteers, site observations were conducted at Berczy Park in both the winter and summer, and more than 2,300 users were recorded. A simple social observation chart (which is available in the Toolbox section of this report) was used to record who uses the park, how they use it, and when.

### Users

During the site assessments, 8-80 Cities estimated the age of park users. Compared with demographic data from the neighbourhood, the most underrepresented user group was older adults. While people over 65 make up approximately 9% of the local population, they only represented 2% of users at Berczy Park. Children and youth were also underrepresented at the park.



“In God we trust,  
all others  
bring data.”

- One of NYC Mayor Bloomberg's favourite phrases

THE LACK OF WOMEN AND OLDER ADULTS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN AT BERCZY PARK IS EVIDENCE THAT THE PARK NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED.

Average percentage of men and women at Berczy Park



### Women are an “indicator species”

When it comes to assessing public spaces, women are an excellent indicator of how well a place is working. Women tend to be more discriminating and have a lower level of tolerance for spaces that are disorderly, dirty, or unsafe. In Berczy Park, we consistently observed more men than women in the park by a significant percentage.

### Did you know...

*In NYC’s Bryant Park, staff takes a daily count of users of the park. If they observe less than 50% females, they take action. Some strategies used to attract women include offering immaculate public washrooms, with fresh-cut flowers, yoga classes, and knitting classes.*

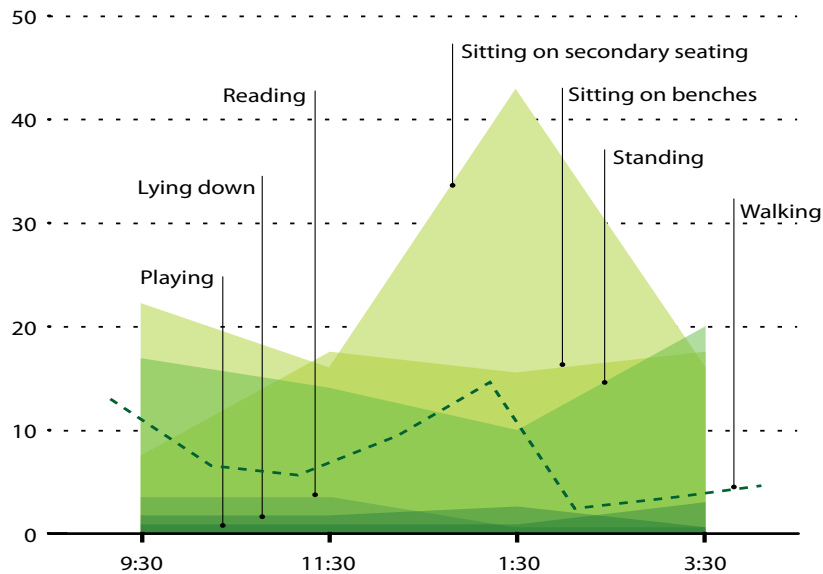




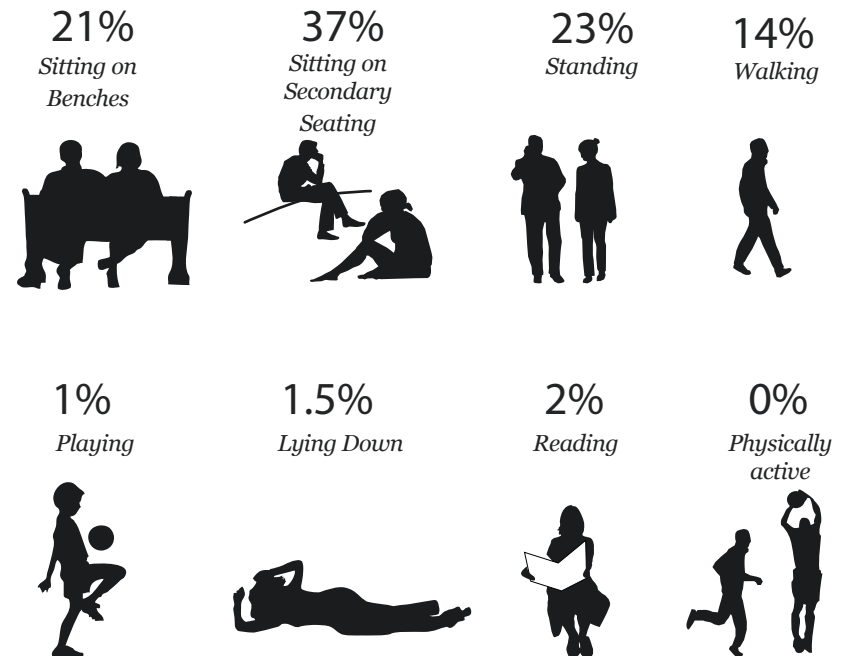
## Too few seating possibilities

A majority (58 %) of the staying activity that takes place in Berczy Park is sitting. During the weekday lunch hour, the number of people sitting in the park almost triples. Berczy Park needs to offer higher-quality and a greater variety of seating options such as moveable tables and chairs, benches, and secondary seating.

Based on surveys made 4 July 2012 between 9:30-15:30. Good weather conditions: 23 degrees, sunny with a light breeze.



“A GOOD PUBLIC SPACE IS LIKE A GOOD PARTY, YOU STAY LONGER THAN YOU INTENDED TO.”  
- JAN GEHL



Average number of people staying at any given time is 56

1% of the activity is people being physical active or playing

58% of the staying activity is sitting



### Under-utilized for activities and play

Most activity in Berczy Park takes place along the edges of the walkways where there is a good view of people passing by and where there are secondary seating possibilities as well as benches.

The green areas are mostly used for sitting on the grass or standing and talking. Zero physical activities and only 1% of play activities were observed. Currently there is no invitation to encourage that type of activity.

Even though there are almost 300 people/hour walking along Front Street, few staying activities were observed along the street edge. Very little invitation is given to passers by to enter the park.



“WE DON’T WANT  
DUNDAS SQUARE.  
WE DON’T JUST  
WANT PAVEMENT  
AND A STAGE.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

## Recommendations and ideas

Recommendations and ideas were collected from community members through mapping activities, facilitated group conversations, interviews, and idea sharing activities. 8-80 Cities recorded and analyzed the data in order to create the summary of the findings which are presented below.

The chart below is based on 315 specific ideas or recommendations collected by 8-80 Cities through the process of community engagement. The chart indicates trends in themes related to the recommendations in order to help identify and set community priorities.

### Safety

Ideas specifically related to interventions to improve safety in the park, such as improved lighting and interventions to reduce injury.

### Communication and Engagement

Ideas related specifically to improving communication and engagement with the public in relation to Berczy Park (such as a community board, or a Berczy Park website)

### Accessibility and Connectivity

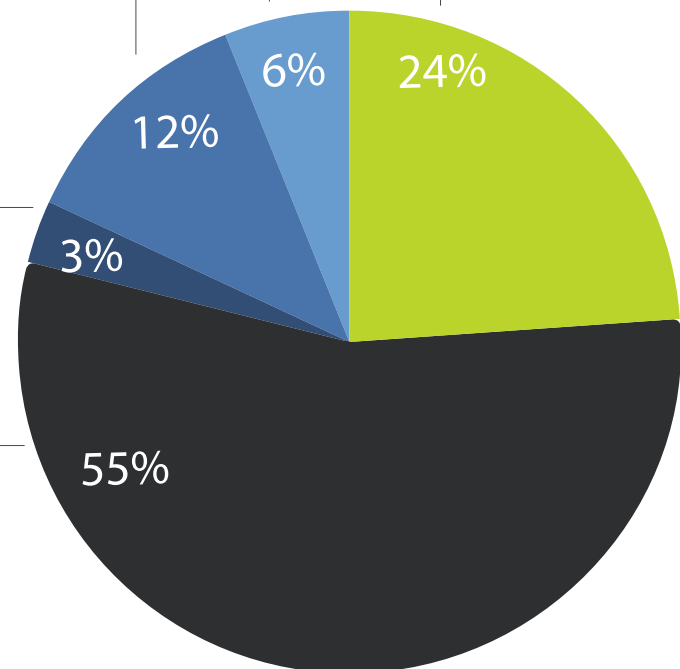
Ideas related to improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the park.

### Infrastructure and Facilities

Ideas related to the addition or improvement of physical infrastructure or facilities

### Community Events and Activities

Ideas related to the development of activities, programmes and events to engage community members in the park.



*Certain types of ideas stood out in the data, such as those related to beautification, seating, children, and entertainment.*

## 14% Beautification and Greening

Suggestions related to improving the aesthetics of the park through the addition of more plants and flowers, painting, and signage



## 16% Seating

Ideas related to the improvement and addition of seating areas, including new benches, tables, and chairs



## 7% Children's Equipment

Suggestions related to the addition of child-friendly play equipment



## 7% Entertainment Programming

Ideas related to animating the park through entertainment programming such as music, dance, and performance arts





## THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

8-80 Cities worked with the non-profit organization Focus on Nature to get children's perspectives on Berczy Park. We used cameras and brainstorming activities to help the grade 4/5/6 students from Toronto's Downtown Alternative School (DAS) tell us about what they liked, didn't like, and would like to see improved at the park. The photographs to the right were all created by DAS students. Three resounding themes emerged from the session:

### 1. More things to do!

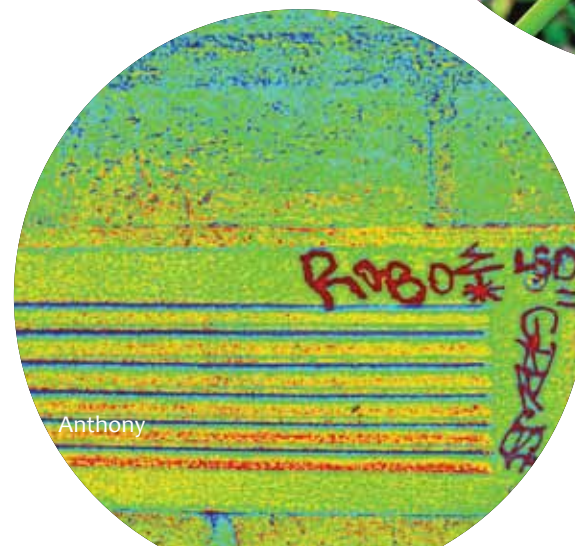
The students found that there were very few things for kids to do at the park. Almost all of the students were interested in a playground, climbing structure, or swing set. Other ideas included sports facilities and an ice-skating rink.

### 2. More flowers and greenery!

The students' lenses told the story of being fascinated by the natural world. Every tiny flower, insect, and animal was photographed. The students felt the park would be enhanced with more flowers and plants, and an active preservation and encouragement of wildlife.

### 3. Food and Entertainment!

Many of the students thought Berczy Park would be a great place to get a snack, like ice cream in the summer and hot chocolate in the winter. They also thought entertainment, such as music or theatre, would make the park more exciting.







Mahlet



Faith



Ryan



Jessica J



Abby H



Paren



Amissa



## CREATING A PUBLIC SPACE NETWORK

*A public space is not an island. It is set within the context of the adjacent streets, the local neighbourhood, and the city. It should be thought of as part of a network of public spaces related to the greater picture. How the public space is linked to surrounding destinations is part of the experienced quality of the space. If connections and accessibility can be improved, more people will be able to benefit from the public space.*

The more attractive and safe the connections, the longer the distance people will choose to walk or bike.

### Berzcy Park is close!

Berzcy Park is very close to a number of Toronto's most popular destinations. Within only a five-minute walk away you find St James Park, David Crombie park, the Financial District, Union Station, St. Lawrence market and many of the city's premier business, restaurants, and theatres.

The Toronto waterfront is just a 10 minute walk away, but the mental distance is further and few people choose to walk there because of poor links, and unsafe and unwelcoming pedestrian and biking environments. Improving connections to the waterfront would strengthen the entire public space network in the City.





St. James Park - 5 min walk



David Crombie Park - 5 min walk



St. Lawrence market - 3 min walk



Financial District- 5 min walk



Union Station - 6 min walk



Toronto Waterfront - 10 min walk

### Berzcy Park can get closer!

Strengthening key connections to local destinations will form a stronger network of attractive public spaces and will contribute to a more vibrant and people friendly neighbourhood as a whole.





## IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

*Many public spaces in Toronto are surrounded by roads and exist as islands in a sea of traffic. Crossing traffic to get to a public space makes for a difficult and unsafe journey. The placement and quality of pedestrian crossings are important to evaluate, as well as how the traffic affects the space in relation to increased noise levels and exhaust.*

### Berczy Park -- hard to get to

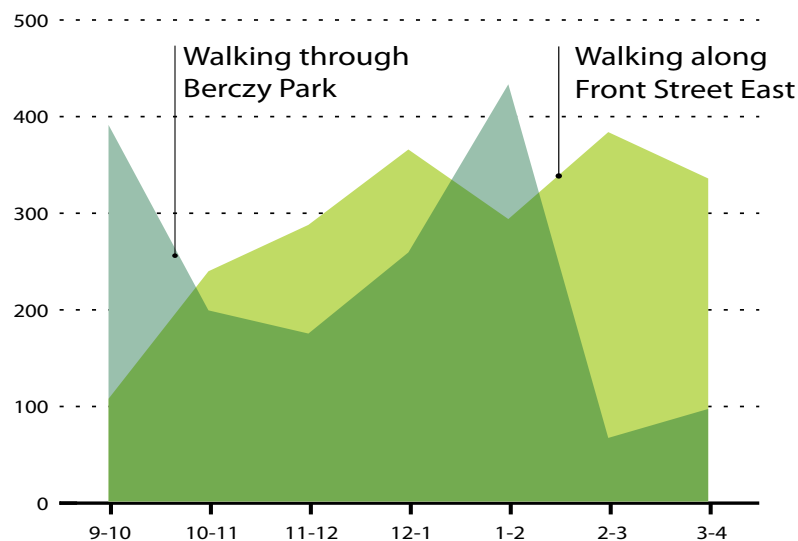
Berczy Park is surrounded by traffic on all four sides. Safe pedestrian crossings are missing along Front Street where pedestrians naturally cross, causing a significant amount of jaywalking and unsafe crossings. As many as 357 people/hr were counted jaywalking across Front Street and Scott Street.

Berczy Park is used as a cut-through for pedestrians to get to other destinations, which adds to the vibrancy and safety of the park. Identifying and improving important connections to surrounding destinations would improve the use of the space.

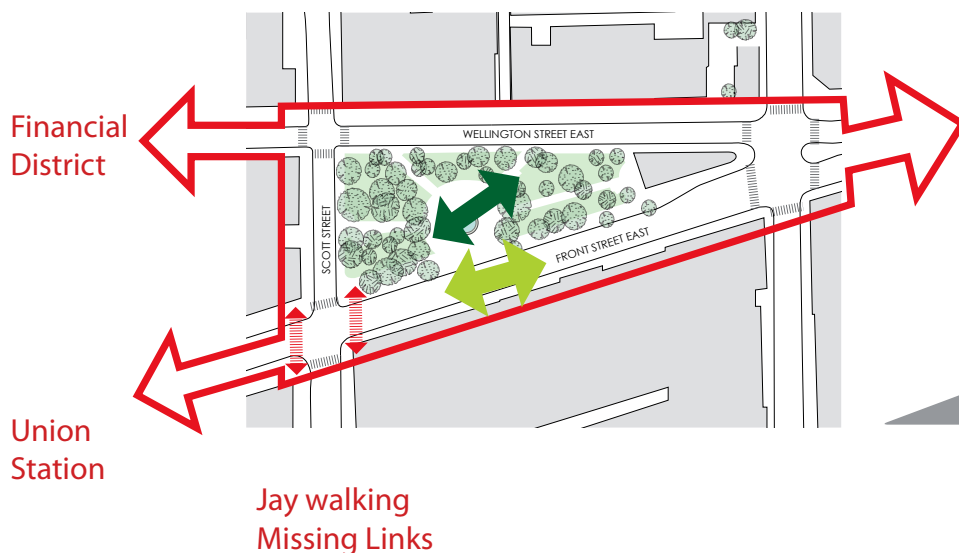
Average number of people walking through the park: **220/hr**

Average number of people walking along Front Street: **288/hr**

Pedestrian survey



Based on surveys conducted on Wednesday, July 4th between 9:00-17:00



St. Lawrence Market  
St. James Park  
David Crombie Park

Jay-walking is a clear indication of misplaced or lacking pedestrian crossings.

An average of **357** people per hour jay-walked at Front Street East and Scott Street

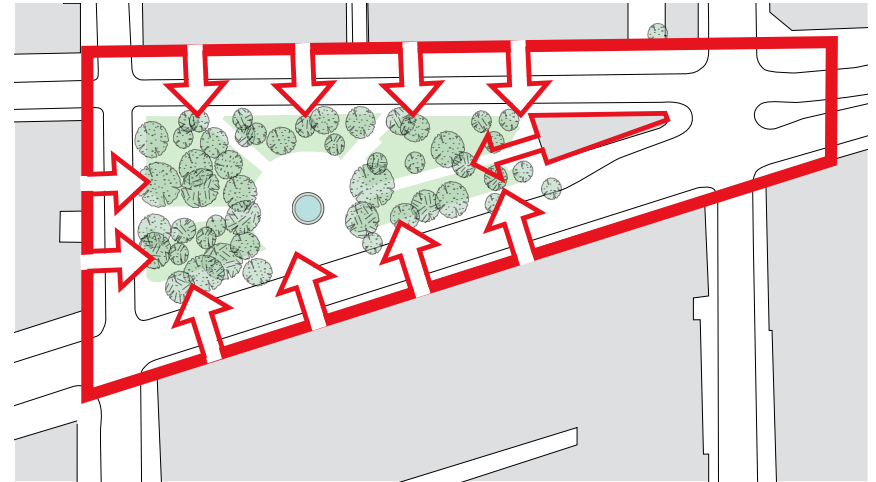
Jay walking survey conducted wendsday 4 July between 15:00- 17:00

The boundaries of a park

*The boundaries of a space should be seen from wall to wall and not from curb to curb. The relationship between a public space and the surrounding building facades is an important factor in the success of the space. Where there is good interaction between the buildings and the space, activities inside can spill out and help to activate the space.*

### **Berczy Park - A jewel surrounded by traffic**

The fine grain and detailing of the buildings surrounding Berczy Park is a great asset to the space, adding to the ambiance and quality of the park.



Active frontages such as adjacent restaurants, bars, theatres and retail shops can play a greater role in the vibrancy of the park if the use and design of surrounding roads was improved using a more people-friendly approach.





## Using Community Action Planning

*Creating a doable plan is the key to turning an idea into reality. 8-80 Cities uses a simple community action planning framework to help community members focus on one idea and brainstorm a plan for implementation. The idea highlighted below was developed as a way to 'extend the boundaries of the park. Other ideas from the action planning process have been incorporated directly into the report, such as animating the park in the winter, making the park more welcoming to children and bringing arts and culture to the park.*

### THE IDEA:

Expand the park onto adjacent streets. Close Front St. and Scott St. to traffic, add raised pavers, and make Wellington Street two-way to accommodate traffic needs.

**Step 1.** Use temporary street closures to “pilot” the idea. Do it on the weekends in the summer; use tables, chairs, planters, or paintings to make it feel like a public space. Collect before and after data.

**Step 2.** Evaluate the pilot with the community.

**Step 3.** Do a longer pilot, perhaps for a full season.

**Step 4.** Further evaluate the impact. Develop a long-term plan with community.

**Step 5.** Create a capital project.





## Software

### Uses, Activities, and Identity

*Parks can be so much more than just pretty places; they can actually help individuals and communities be healthier and happier. Unfortunately, many of our parks are under-used and not living up to their potential. How can we do better? It turns out that research suggests that, aside from proximity, having activities is one of the greatest predictors of park use.\**

That is why, when evaluating and planning for parks and public spaces, it is important to not only focus on the physical qualities of the space; after all a great park is so much more than the grass, trees, benches, and other features it may contain. Looking beyond the “hardware” and focusing also on the “software” of the place—the uses, activities, and unique character, is equally and, in some cases, even more important for creating a vibrant and healthy park.

## WHEN IT COMES TO SOFTWARE, ASK YOURSELF...

What makes this park unique?

Are there events and activities that will attract people of different ages, ethnicities, income levels?

What do people want to do in the park?

What kind of local cultural activities could be supported in the space?

What kind of social capital is or could be harnessed in the park?

Are there different things to do throughout the day? Week? Year?

By answering and understanding the types of activities that people would like to do in the park, you can then start to think of the specific infrastructure that can support those functions, and not the other way around. This is the difference between creating a great park versus a great design.

\* Cohen, Marsh, Williamson, Derosé, Martínez, Setodji, & McKenzie. *Parks and physical activity: Why are some parks used more than others?*



72% of people  
felt Berczy Park  
was not well  
programmed\*

\* 56 people surveyed



Bryant Park, NYC



## Berczy Park Software Program Calendar

Based on ideas from the community, this conceptual calendar uses images from around the world to exemplify the different layers of activity that can take place at Berczy Park through-out the year.

In collaboration with community organizations, service providers, and the City, the St. Lawrence Market BIA can develop a calendar of events based on the ideas below that appeal to a wide range of users.

### Entertainment



### Winter Festival

### Movie in the Park



### Theatre and Dance Performance



### Community Building

### Hot Chocolate



"We think that a play structure would be a modest request for the families and children that live in this area or visit this area"

- Workshop Participant



### Community Art

### COMMUNITY Gardening



### Spontaneous Activities



### FOOD KIOSK



### WATER PLAY

### Formal Activities



### Maple syrup Fest



### Yoga and Tai-Chi in the Park



January

February

March

April

May

June



Focusing on consistent, weekly events and activities is key to creating a vibrant public space, that people want visit again and again.



**= Don't wait!**  
These activities don't need any additional infrastructure or a high-level of planning---they can be done right away!



Woof Stock Festival  
Music in the park



"All ages and abilities should feel welcomed at Berczy. This should be done through community focused activities and events. Oh, and it should be FUN!"  
- Workshop Participant



Christmas Celebration



Neighbourhood  
Picnics  
Music Talent Show



Community  
Garage Sale



COMMUNITY  
Clean-up



Pumpkin Sale



Chess



Free wifi in the Park



Snowman Making



Dance lessons



Lunch Hour Stretch



Shoe Shine Station



Story Telling



Winter Choir

July

August

September

October

November

December



## Hardware Design & Physical Infrastructure

*Well-maintained infrastructure or “hardware” that supports a park’s uses and activities is an important component of creating a successful and well-used park.*

Great parks offer a balance of natural “green infrastructure” that allows people to absorb natural beauty and tranquility, while also providing the infrastructure to support a variety of uses that serves the needs and desires of the community.



## SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN THINKING OF HARDWARE...

- Are there some basic amenities?  
( e.g., washrooms, water fountains etc.)
- Is there infrastructure to support activities by all ages?
- Are there attractive places to sit and stay?
- Is there good lighting?
- Are there flexible and adaptable spaces and features that can support a variety of activities throughout the day/seasons?

“It is so clear that parks provide amazing benefits to everyone: the young, the old, the rich, the poor, but nevertheless funding for parks keeps getting cut.

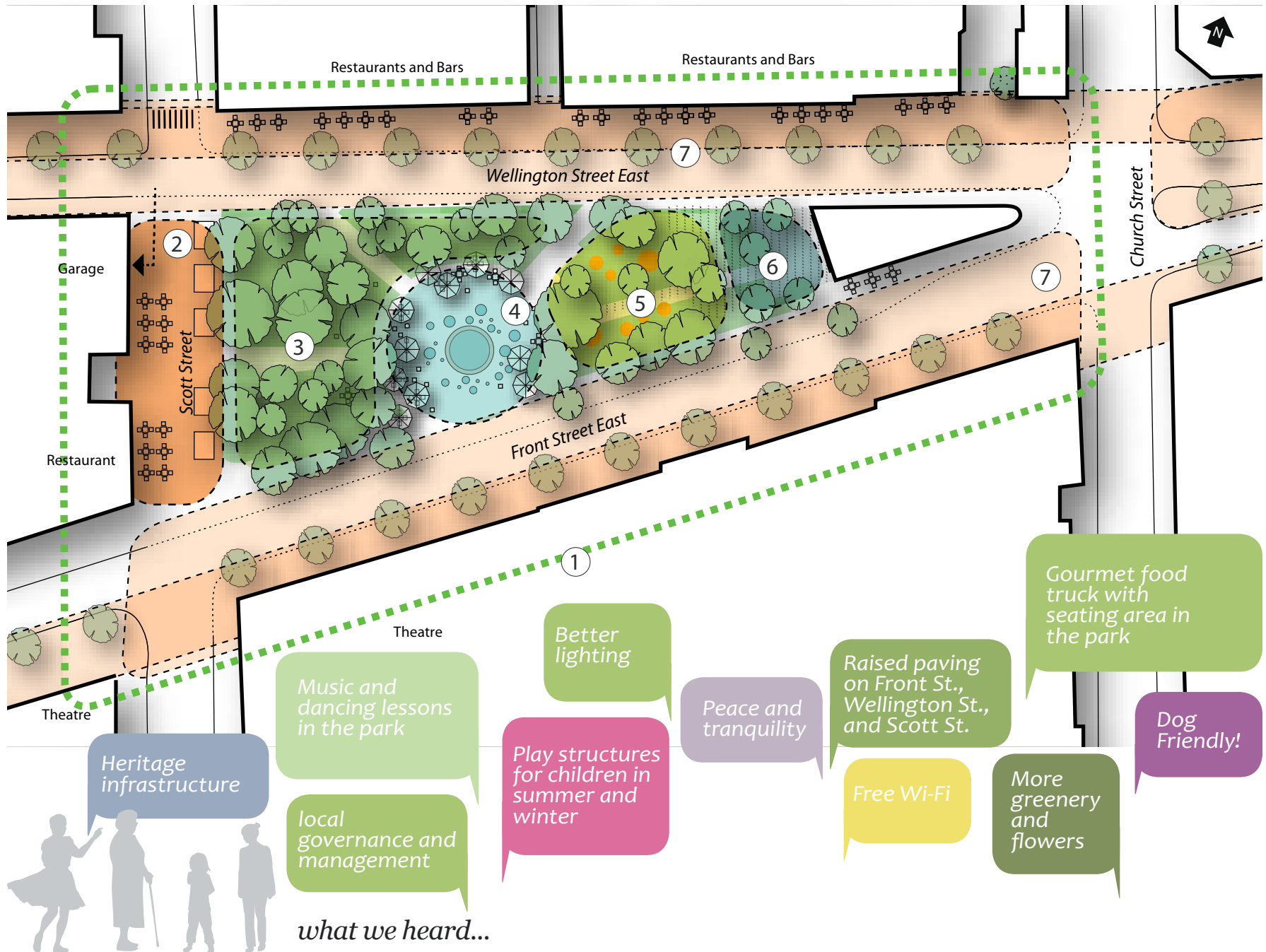
“Why is it that if a playground is broken the community is asked to go do some fundraising, but if there is a pothole on the road, it gets fixed? Is the pothole more important than the playground?”

- Gil Penalosa, Executive Director 8-80 Cities





## Concept plan for Berczy Park



<b>1</b>	<b>The aminity park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautify and capitalize on amenities – water, views, heritage buildings, art.</li> <li>• Improve maintenance</li> <li>• Celebrate water — Introduce more water in the park though interactive water features.</li> <li>• Green the park by adding trees and flowers within the park and on surrounding streets.</li> <li>• Improve lighting. Sensitive and ambient lighting along paths and activity/seating areas, indirect lighting from lit facades and historic buildings, trees, and water features.</li> <li>• Upgrade paved surfaces.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Gastronomic experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the park towards the west – pedestrianize Scott St. (preserve access to parking lot) and create a space for café/ restaurant outdoor seating as well as space for food kiosks or temporary markets. Add public seating opportunities as well as commercial café seating. Boundaries for the outdoor seating should be minimized and sensible designed.</li> <li>• Develop gastronomic experiences---attract workers on lunch breaks with a café or food kiosk that offers high-quality, healthy lunch options.</li> <li>• Provide plenty of tables and chairs for people to eat at.</li> <li>• Expand sidewalks on Wellington Street to make space for outdoor seating.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>The pause</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasure the green space and make it more accessible for seating. Add a variety of seating opportunities; secondary seating on the grass, traditional benches, lounge seating.</li> <li>• Add dog-friendly amenities (i.e., a water fountain with lower level for dogs, doggie bag dispenser)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Where everyone meets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded water feature by including interactive water play</li> <li>• Changing functions in winter; introduce bond-fires/fire feature, lighting displays, snow sculptures</li> <li>• Provide flexible seating along the edge: moveable chairs and tables with umbrellas.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Family living room</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce infrastructure for families – play structures for children that stimulate physical activity and are well integrated into the character of the park.</li> <li>• Provide seating overlooking play areas.</li> <li>• Provide space for community activities and interaction; possibilities for school exhibits, temporary physical installations, sports activities.</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>The event and stage space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an area suitable for events and performance. Capitalize on the local theatres and create a stage for small outdoor theatre, films, and music events.</li> <li>• Add robust ground material: gravel and paving</li> <li>• Tourist information and wayfinding to neighbourhood destinations should be available, as well as information on park events and maintenance.</li> <li>• Celebrate the Flatiron building with lighting at night. Consider opening the back of the building to spill into the park.</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>The boundless park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the park to create better and safer pedestrian access. Improve interaction with surrounding buildings and functions.</li> <li>• Add safe pedestrian crossings on the Front Street and Scott Street corner</li> <li>• Improve bicycle access by introducing more bicycle parking.</li> <li>• Introduce textured, raised paving on Front Street and Wellington Street for slower traffic movement.</li> <li>• Expand sidewalks on the north side of Wellington Street and south side of Front Street to allow for outdoor seating</li> <li>• Investigate different options to expand the park onto Wellington and Front Streets e.g., driving lane reduced to one, removal of parking, lowering of speed and volumes, temporary street closings to vehicular traffic, one of the streets permanently closed to vehicular traffic.</li> </ul>



# Re-Imagine Berczy Park....

## ① THE AMENITY PARK

The natural amenities of the park are preserved and enhanced with new trees, paving, and ambient lighting at night. The park is continuously well maintained, making it feel safe and inviting. The design of permanent inventory such as lampposts, furniture, and waste bins is inspired by the history of the park.

## ②

**GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE**  
Berczy Park — a place to enjoy lunch, an evening dinner, or cosy up with a hot chocolate. Café and restaurant outdoor seating spill out in to a pedestrianized Scott Street. Café pavilions and market stands along the edge allow lunch guests to buy take-away to enjoy in the park.

## ③

### THE PAUSE

Grass areas are made more suitable for seating with informal and traditional benches. Moveable chairs and tables can be freely placed in the sun or shade. Dog-friendly amenities are provided in the green area.

## ④

### WHERE EVERYONE MEETS AT THE EDGES

Along the edges of the central meeting place, there are new seating opportunities. Moveable chairs and tables with umbrellas that can be used for lunch, a chess game, an informal business meeting, a family pic-nic, or just a pause while watching the kids play with the water feature.

## ④

### WHERE EVERYONE MEETS IN THE CENTRE

The natural meeting point and multifunctional gathering space. The fountain is transformed into a water play space in the summer where children can play while parents have a seat at the tables nearby. In the winter, bon-fires are lit or an ice rink placed around the Christmas tree. A place for all ages and seasons. With the natural backdrop of the city, this will be the best “Kodak moment” in the city!



## ... A VIBRANT LOCAL LIVINGROOM FOR ALL AGES AND A TOURIST DESTINATION...

- ⑤ THE FAMILY LIVING ROOM  
Innovative and intriguing play features for children and adults that encourage physical activity are placed in a green area shaded by trees. There is space for the community to interact and create temporary interventions with the park such as murals, exhibit school projects or yoga classes.

- ⑥ THE EVENT AND STAGE SPACE  
Making the most out of its location with proximity to theatres, the park can offer more suitable spaces for events, performances, outdoor theatres and films. A stage with a fantastic backdrop of the Flatiron Building. Levelled grass and gravel floor makes the space flexible and robust for pop-up events and happenings. Historic information about the park and surroundings, information on activities and maintenance of the park as well as direction and information for tourists.

- ⑦ THE BOUNDLESS PARK  
The park expands towards all sides of the building frontages. Improved and new pedestrian crossings making it safe and secure for all users to access the park. Traffic calming measures such as cobble stone paving as well as widened footpaths and temporary street closures allows building functions to interact better with the park, and connections to surrounding destinations are improved.





## IT'S BEEN DONE BEFORE! EXAMPLES FOR BER CZY PARK

### ➤ Flexible and Diverse Seating Options

Community members expressed an interest in flexible seating, like the bistro style tables and chairs used at Bryant Park. Moveable tables and chairs have begun popping up in public spaces around Ontario as well as Kingston's Market Square and Dundas Square in Toronto. With proper management and storage capabilities, moveable chairs would be an excellent addition to Berczy Park. Lounge chairs add to the ambiance of an outdoor living room, and invite people to stay and relax for longer periods of time (fig. 1,4-6).

### ➤ Building Community with Food

Food is an excellent way to bring the community together and draw people to the park. Montreal has recently undertaken a pilot project that helps to bring healthy food to downtown residents. Bike-mounted carts, designed by a Université de Montréal student, deliver locally grown organic produce to parks, as well as local hospitals, which often have limited healthy food choices. These carts could also be adapted to provide healthy brown-bag lunches and hot beverages, as suggested by community members (fig. 9).

### ➤ A Place for Active Play

Playgrounds have come a long way from the traditional plastic slide and swing set. Playgrounds that use natural materials and reflect the natural environment help kids connect with nature while participating in active play (fig. 3 & 4).

## Taking a Step Forward

### ➤ Wayfinding Signage

Berczy Park is the gateway to Old Town Toronto and it's a natural resting place for tourists walking from Union Station. The park is an ideal location for wayfinding signage that directs people to local destinations such as the St. Lawrence Market, various theatres, parks, and attractions. Wayfinding signage can also add to the character of the park by reflecting a historical aesthetic and telling people about the neighbourhood.

### ➤ Building a Connection to the Community

Could the City of Toronto learn from this example at the New York City Subway (fig.7)? Knowing that their passengers are the most in-touch with daily issues on the subway, NYC has taken a zealous approach to connecting with its users in order to provide a higher level of service and care.

The NYC Parks Department is also highly aware of the importance of positively communicating with the public about appropriate conduct and usage in parks (fig. 6).

- 
1. Lounge Chairs, Highline Park, NYC
  2. Children's Playground, Denmark
  3. Natural Playground, Toronto
  4. Children's reading room, Bryant Park, NYC.
  5. Moveable Chairs, Bryant Park, NYC
  6. Signage at Carl Schurz Park, NYC
  7. Sign at Union Square subway station, NYC.
  8. Wayfinding Signage, Northfield, Minnesota
  9. Fruixi Bike-mounted food cart, Montreal







## Key Recommendations

### 1 Maintenance

In the short term, the City of Toronto should improve the overall maintenance of Berczy Park and fix what is broken. The City should also set a higher standard for ongoing maintenance in relation to litter (including cigarette butts), pest-control (including necessary by-law enforcement of pigeon related policies), repairs, and snow removal.

### 2 Increase Programming

The St. Lawrence Market Parks Committee should focus on developing consistent, weekly events, activities, and entertainment that appeal to a wide range of users by:

- Partnering with local service providers and community groups to implement the ideas highlighted on pages 43 and 44.

The City of Toronto should make it easier for community members to do programming by:

- Making the permitting process more accessible, affordable and streamlined, i.e., information about how to attain a permit should be posted in the park.

### 3 New Management Method

The City of Toronto should explore new management approaches at Berczy Park. Working with service providers such as the St. Lawrence Market BIA may be an effective way to implement some of the recommendations in this report, such as moveable tables and chairs, local food kiosks or carts (not just hotdogs) and consistent events and activities.

### 5 Designing a Multi-functional Green Space

Many different needs and preferences can be addressed in our limited parks and green spaces. Berczy Park needs to be flexible and multifunctional, addressing the needs of several user groups in the same space. Using this report as a guide, the future detailed design process must take this into careful consideration. A wide range of users must be actively welcomed into the park (including children and dog-walkers) in a way that allows for maximum flexibility, while maintaining the space as a green oasis.

### 4 Strengthen Friends of Berczy Park

“Friends of” groups can be the lifeblood of a neighbourhood park, and Friends of Berczy Park is no exception. This dedicated group should seek out a wider range of members from across the St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood in order to enhance the strength and sustainability of this important group.

### 6 Public Space Network

In collaboration with city departments, a public space network plan should be developed in order to create a more accessible city, linking destinations and key public spaces and improving the pedestrian and bicycle experience. A holistic strategic public space plan would assure the development of streets and public spaces that contribute to neighbourhood vibrancy and are greater than the sum of their parts.





# It's time to raise expectations

At 8-80 Cities, we couldn't tell you the number of times we've heard the phrase "We're worried about raising expectations." Our response is usually "Well, that's the whole idea." If we continue to have low expectations for our parks and public spaces, we will continue to have public spaces that are poorly managed, underfunded, and underused.





# 4. PLACE MAKING TOOLS

*This section contains a variety of simple tools that can be used by the community to continue assessing and improving Berczy Park.*

*We also hope the Make a Place for People Project at Berczy Park will inspire other communities to use these tools to develop community-led improvement strategies at other parks and public spaces across the province.*





Jungle Gym  
Water Park / Skating Park  
★ Food Stand  
★ Stage  
Picnic benches  
★ Camper and motorhome  
More flowers! 🌸  
birdhouses! 🏠  
Gardener!  
★ Elderly Helper

THE POWER OF 10

1000000	1000000
100000	100000
10000	10000
1000	1000
100	100
10	10
1	1



Place Survey

Please circle the answer that best describes you. Site: \_\_\_\_\_



1. Parks and public spaces contribute to my overall

Physical health	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Mental health	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree

2. I visit this place...

Never	Once a year	2-5 times a year	More than 5 times a year	On a weekly basis	Every day
-------	-------------	------------------	--------------------------	-------------------	-----------

If you answered "never" skip to question 4.

3. This place is...

Safe	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Comfortable	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Well used	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Accessible	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Well programmed (with events/activities)	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Active in the winter	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree

4. Gender: Male Female

5. Age: 0-12 13-18 19-34 35-50 51-65 65+



## Public Space Observation Table

This tool can be used to assess the people and activities at any park or public space. By analyzing the data, you can begin to identify trends and build a picture of how the space is working.

[illegible]



## Action Planning Instructions

Creating a doable plan is the key to turning an idea into reality. In your group, come up with a plan for how your idea can be implemented within the next year or two.

The majority of your planning time should be spent on the HOW? question.

### 1. What?

In the space below briefly explain what your idea is.

### 2. Why?

Briefly explain why your idea is important.

### 3. Who?

Who needs to be involved in the project? What partnerships need to be established for it to be successful?

### 4. When?

When will it be implemented? When will it be used?  
How frequently? What season? What day of the week? What hours?

### 5. Where?

On the map provided indicate where your idea will take place/be located

### 6. How?

Without writing anything down, take a few minutes to discuss as a group what needs to be done to implement your idea. After you have discussed your plan, try to break it down into manageable steps. It might be easiest to think in chunks of time, but it is up to you. You can add more steps if necessary, but try to limit yourselves to no more than six steps.

STEP 1


STEP 2


STEP 3





# Share an Idea

One of the simplest ways to collect information about a park or public space is by asking community members to “share an idea”. Provide small sheets of paper and a bunch of colourful markers and let the ideas flow!

Share an Idea 

Share an Idea 

Share an Idea 

Share an Idea 





## Simple Site Evaluation Tool

When thinking about any park or public space, from a small neighborhood square to a large urban park, ask yourself the questions below. By thinking carefully about how people will get to the place, what they'll do when they get there, what kind of infrastructure exists, and who manages or takes care of the space, you can start to assess what's working, what's not, and what could be improved.

### WHO TAKES CARE OF THIS PLACE?

Is there evidence of volunteerism?

Do you see any maintenance workers or staff?

Is there a contact information so you can reach someone in charge of the space?

Is there an active or passive security presence?

### WHAT'S THERE TO DO?

Is there a mix of stores and services nearby?

Are there opportunities for people to be physically active?

Are there inviting places for people to rest or relax?

Is there a diversity of people?

Are there activities for people of all ages?

### HOW DID I GET HERE?

Is the place visible from a distance?

Is it accessible to wheelchairs and strollers?

Can you easily walk or bike to the place?

Is there a paved path?

Is the path clear of snow, debris, and water?

Are there "desire lines" or beaten paths?

### WHAT'S HERE?

Are there comfortable places to sit?

What kind of lighting is there?

Is there a paved or gravel path?

Are there public washrooms? Are they clean and inviting?

Is there somewhere to get a snack or drink?





# Software Program Calendar

Use this template to plan an effective range of activities, events, and programming for your public space throughout the year.

Entertainment

Community building

Spontaneous Activities

Formal Activities



8-80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. We are dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit and visit vibrant parks and public places.

Our approach is to engage communities at all levels and across multiple sectors to inspire the creation of cities that are easily accessible, safe and enjoyable for all.



#### CONTACT US

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