

Make a Place for People

BREAKWATER PARK, KINGSTON





Make a Place for People

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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 to 80 years of age, 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 cities 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



The City of Kingston is an eclectic mix of old and new “where history and innovation thrive”. It is known for its heritage limestone buildings, access to waterways and post-secondary institutions.

The City has a work force of 900+ persons whose mission is to enhance the quality of life for all present and future generations by providing progressive, professional services and leadership that reflect the needs of those who work, live or play in the City of Kingston. Kingston has a population of 123,363.



KFL&A Public Health is an accredited, local public health agency with over 200 staff and 150 volunteers who deliver public health programs and services to the people of the KFL&A area. The underlying goal of its services and programs—from immunization, healthy communities, nutritious eating, physical activity, active transportation, raising healthy babies and children, tobacco use reduction, and many other public health topics—is to promote and protect the health of the more than 180,000 residents of the Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington area.



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 underperforming 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.

01 INTRODUCTION

What Is the Make a Place for People Project?
Our Partner
Breakwater Park
Project Timeline

11 PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Putting the Public Back in 'Public Space'
Making the Case for Parks
Active Places, Healthy People
The 8-80 Rule
Keep it Simple: A Tool for Place Evaluation

27 RECOMMENDATIONS & RESULTS

Results Overview
Accessibility
Software (Programming & Management)
Hardware (Design & Infrastructure)
Key Recommendations

59 TOOLKIT

Place Survey
Public Space Observation Table
Action Planning
Share an Idea
Simple Site Evaluation Tool
Software Program Calendar

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 Breakwater Park and its neighbourhood.





What is the Make a Place for People Project?

We know that parks and public spaces play a vital role in our communities—they create nodes where people meet, relax and play. But many parks and public spaces in Ontario are underperforming with very few uses or activities, and they 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.

Our Goal is:

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

- COMMUNITY
- EMPOWERMENT
- IMAGINATION
- TRANSFORMATION

“The City of Kingston has a strategic plan with sustainability as a primary objective. The principles of active healthy living are key to this plan. Creating vibrant, accessible and welcoming public space is critical to getting the community out, active and using active transportation.

Creating exciting and programmable destinations for the community is strongly endorsed by The City, KFL&A Public Health and local neighbourhood associations.”

- The City of Kingston

Our Partner: The City of Kingston and KFL&A Public Health

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 City of Kingston and KFL&A Public Health for Breakwater Park in downtown Kingston.

From January to August 2012 8-80 Cities worked with the City of Kingston and KFL&A Public Health to develop a strategy for the design, programming and management of Breakwater Park through a process of community engagement.



Stephanie Sciberras, KFL&A Physical Activity Specialist, enjoys a sunny afternoon with project volunteers during the summer site assessment at Breakwater Park.

Breakwater Park

Breakwater Park is a waterfront park in the historical downtown of Kingston. It is located on King St., along Ontario's Waterfront Trail, and boasts of a wonderful, unobstructed view of Lake Ontario and Wolfe Island. Breakwater Park also features a double row of century-old trees and an art installation entitled "Time" by artist Kosso Eloul that was installed in 1973.

Breakwater Park was named after Kingston's original breakwater that can now be seen on the ground running parallel to the park's paved recreational trail.



Built In honour of Kingston's Tercentenary (300th birthday), Russian-born artist Kosso Eloul was commissioned to produce "Time" in 1973. Since it was erected, the meaning of the sculpture has been the subject of rumour. Many people believe that the sculpture was built on a fault line and that the two rectangles would eventually touch, which is not true.*

*The Kingstonist, Time

**KFL&A Health Unit, Health Profile June 2012

HOW HEALTHY ARE KINGSTONIANS?

26.9%
FEEL
STRESSED**

18.7%
HAVE HIGH
BLOOD
PRESSURE**

36.6%
ARE NOT
PHYSICALLY
ACTIVE**

57.7%
ARE
OVERWEIGHT
OR OBESE**

A Neighbourhood and Destination Park

Breakwater Park has a wide range of current users. As Kingston General Hospital is located at the eastern end of the park, its patients, visitors and staff frequently visit the park. Queen's University students enjoy warm spring days studying and relaxing by the water's edge, and staff from the university enjoy a respite for lunch. The Sydenham District Neighbourhood residents also make use of the space year-round for recreation.

In addition, Breakwater Park serves an important function for the greater Kingston area by providing incomparable access to the water within the City as well as a significant area of green space that can be harnessed for relaxation and physical activity. It functions as both a neighbourhood park as well as a destination park that is of interest and concern to residents across the city.



Mum, infant and toddler enjoy a morning walk and take in the view of Lake Ontario and Wolfe Island's wind farm.

MAKING THE MOST OF BREAKWATER PARK

Breakwater Park is a stunning exhibit of some of Ontario's greatest natural gifts. Located at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, Breakwater Park offers a wide view of Lake Ontario and the beginning of the 1000 Islands, which proves a stunning backdrop for what could be considered a world-class urban park. Unfortunately, the park isn't living up to its potential as a centerpiece of Kingston's waterfront, or as a hub of recreation and social interaction.

Current Problems

Years of inadequate capital funding for maintenance is evidenced by the park's deteriorating infrastructure. A lack of programming and activities does little to draw residents even at the height of the summer. Poor access to the water was a constant complaint among community members, and unsafe or inconvenient access for pedestrians and cyclists was cited as a reason people didn't use the park.

In its current state, Breakwater Park simply doesn't attract as many users as it should. It's time to make the most of this precious resource and strengthen the role it can play in people's health and well-being.

"For me to go there, there would have to be an activity in the park like a BBQ or Tai Chi---whatever! It would be great to have more parks where we actually have things to do and make it a place where people will stay for a while."

"The path isn't wide enough and it's in very bad shape."

"I don't think it's truly a kid-friendly park because they are going to want to use the water and it's not entirely safe."



Photos exemplify community members' key concerns:
01. Poor access to Breakwater Park within the park system as well as by road
02. Difficult and unsafe access to the water
03. Insufficient and poorly maintained pathway system

Building on Existing Strengths

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

Community Organizations

Kingston has an active and engaged civil society. Community-based organization such as the Sydenham District Association, the Water Access Group, the Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation, and Kite Boarding Kingston have shown a strong interest in supporting and improving Breakwater Park. By developing partnerships between these groups and many others, the City of Kingston & KFL&A Public Health can begin to effectively animate and improve the park.

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 Breakwater Park.



Fig. 1. The Water Access Group shows their support for improving Kingston's waterfront with a Mass Swim. Fig. 2. A group of Queen's University students endure an afternoon of cold weather to share their ideas about how to improve Breakwater 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

A project volunteer enjoys a sunny afternoon measuring park activity during the summer site assessment.

8-80 Cities and its project partners engaged the community with free snacks and activities such as hoola-hooping and bubble blowing while community members shared their ideas about transforming the park.

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.









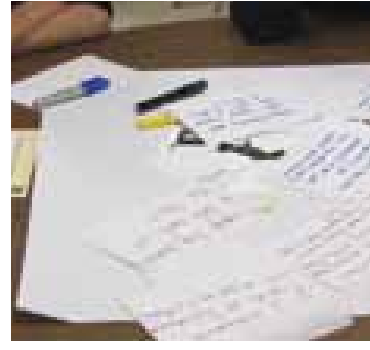
2. Site Assessment & Community Engagement

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 & 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.

Breakwater 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"> - Site selected through application process - Identification of stakeholders - Site research and context assessment - Development of schedule and coordination of events logistics for first on-site visit - Outreach and promotion of events and activities for first on-site visit - Development of content and materials for community engagement 	1st On-Site Visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winter site assessment - Community engagement sessions - Media engagement - Collection of data from community engagement sessions - Debrief of first on site visit & planning for 2nd on-site visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of data and documentation of initial findings - Development of schedule and coordination of logistics for 2nd on-site visit - Outreach & promotion of events & activities for 2nd on-site visit - Development of content & materials for second on-site community engagement sessions based on 1st on-site visit . 			2nd On-Site Visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer site assessment - Community engagement sessions - Media Engagement - Review findings from previous on-site sessions & site assessment - Collection of data from community engagement sessions - Debrief of 2nd on-site visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze data and document findings from community engagement & site assessments - Develop initial vision and recommendations for site - Draft Report issued to local partner - Feedback incorporated into final report - Launch of final report
						
<p>8-8o Cities assesses Make a Place for People applications.</p>	<p>Feb. 15-18: Winter Community Engagement & Capacity Building , 16o Direct Participants</p>				<p>June 16: Pop-up Activities and community engagement at Breakwater Park</p>	<p>Data annalysis & report development</p>
						<p>352 ideas collected </p> 
<p>Ongoing communication and planning with the City of Kingston & KFL&A Public Health</p>	<p>Feb. 15, 17 & 18: Winter site assessment</p>				<p>June 6 - 10: Summer Community Engagement, 22o Direct Participants</p>	<p>Development of project report</p>

2. THEORY

This section includes international research, evidence and tools to support the improvement of parks and public spaces in Ontario.

We hope the people of Breakwater Park 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.





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, and 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 now known as Guadalajara 20/20. Every week the program sees more than 300,000 people use the city streets to bike, run, walk and play.
3. Dufferine Grove Park in Toronto, is one of the city's most unique and successful public spaces thanks the ongoing coordination and partnership between Friends of Dufferin Grove and the City of Toronto.



01



02



3.

03



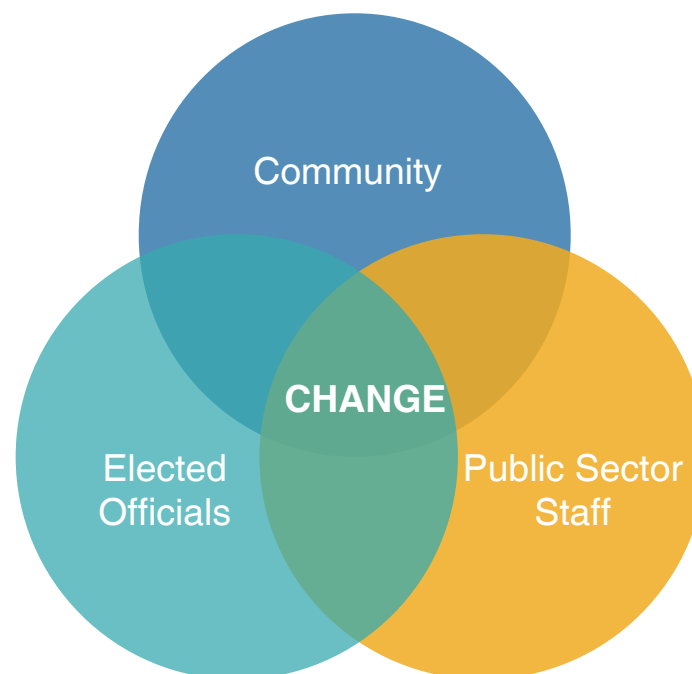
Tapping the Collective Brain

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, business, 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 voice 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.

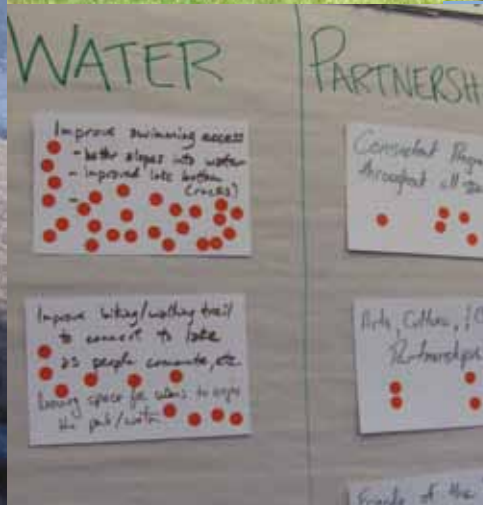
- Get kids to draw a picture of what they would like to do in their park.

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

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

- 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!



ENGAGING THE KINGSTON
COMMUNITY

Making the Case for Parks

Too often our parks and public spaces are undervalued, 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 reflected by 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.

*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 \$8,6000,000.***

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

New Yorks 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

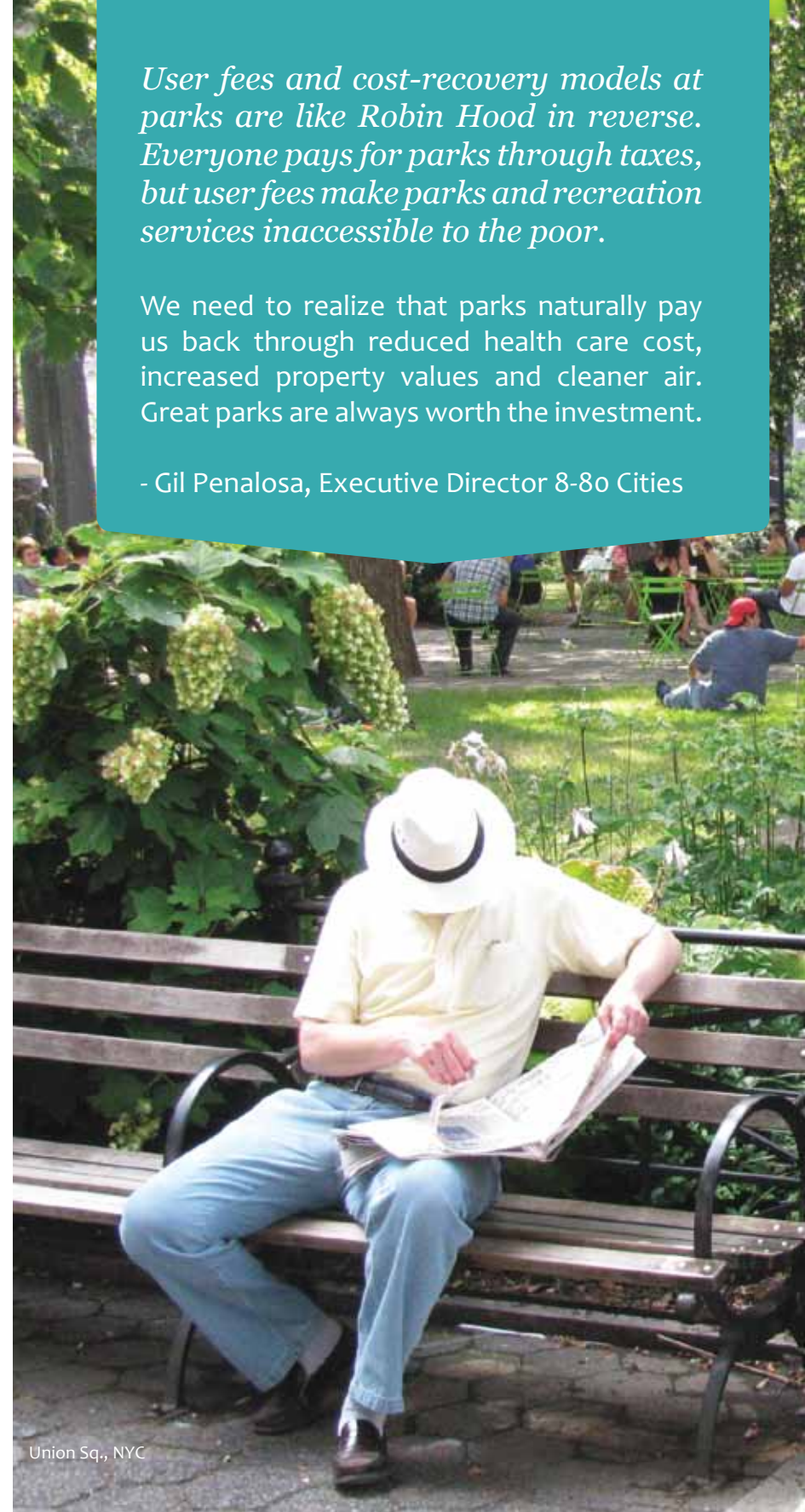
***The Trust for Public Land. Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System

**** 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



Union Sq., NYC

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 per cent of its total spending on programs, and health care costs are only projected to increase in the future.* Nevertheless, even with massive investment in healthcare, Ontarians are only getting sicker. We are fatter, 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 that we need a new approach to creating healthy communities that focuses on keeping people healthy, rather than fixing them after they are sick.

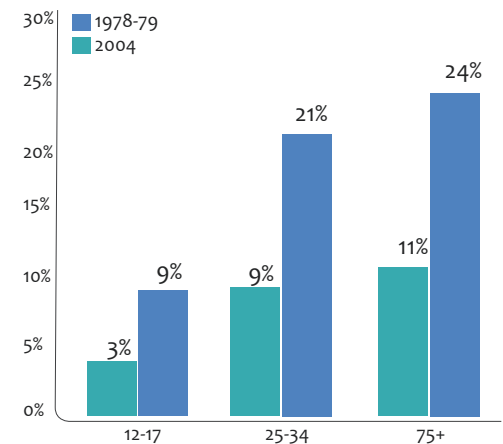


Bogota, Columbia

“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 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & 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 recreation user fees, fitness classes, and guided walking tours.

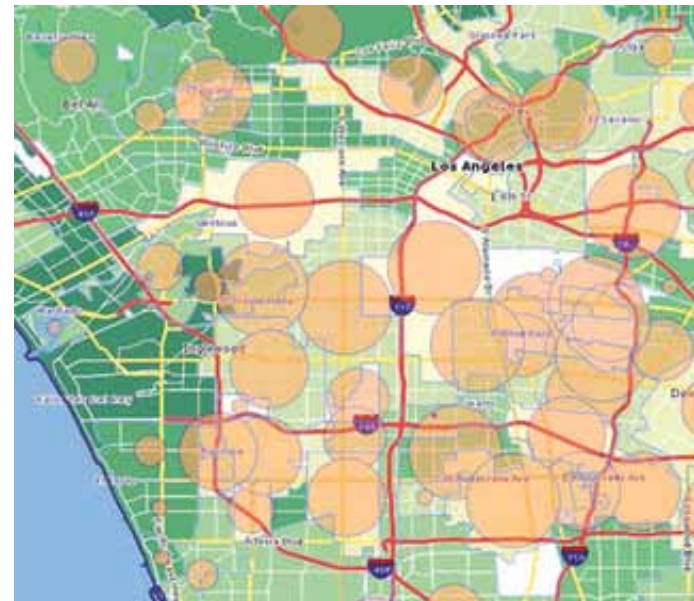
The value of parks and quality public realm for physical activity is conclusive. Good quality public spaces encourage people to make short journeys on foot or by bike; they also encourage participation in physical activity and help to reduce stress.* A study by the UK organization CABI also showed that 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.

*CABI, *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)**

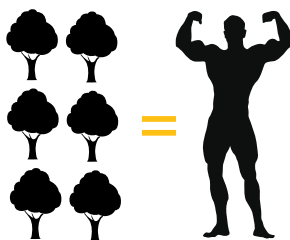


ACTIVE PLACES & HEALTHY PEOPLE FACT SHEET



ELDERLY & 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 positively influenced them and helped them live longer regardless of socioeconomic status.*



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

* CABE, *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.”

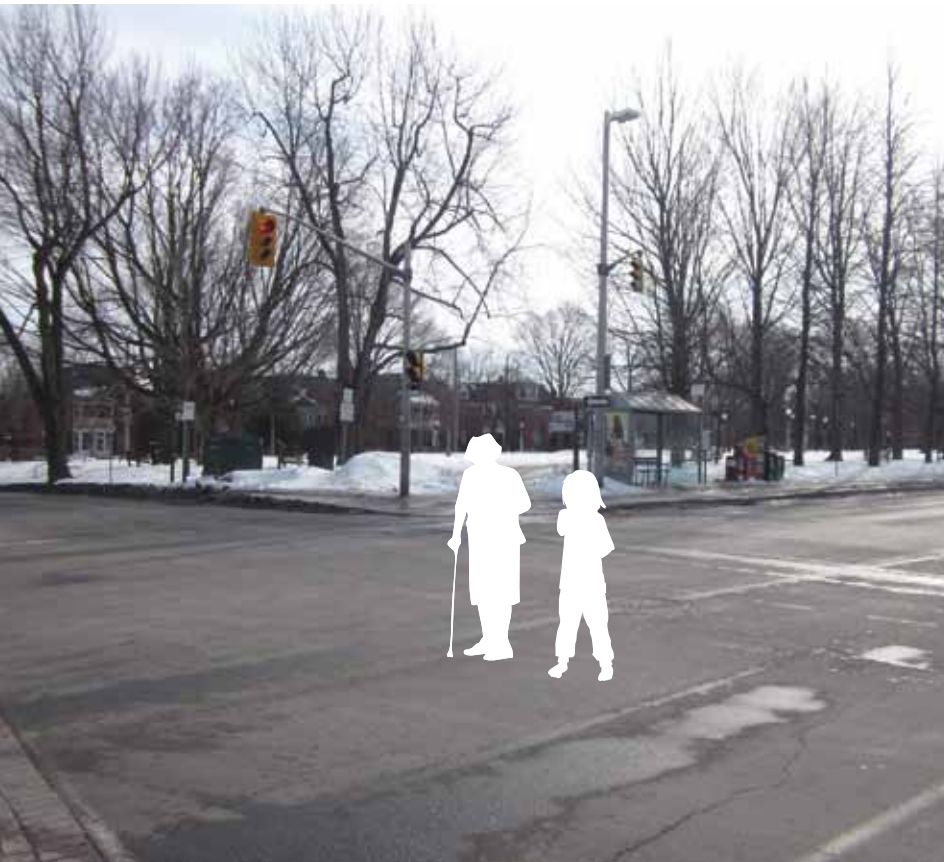
- A RECOMMENDATION FROM
THE DRUMMOND REPORT



BREAKWATER PARK
SUPPORTS HEALTHY
LIFESTYLES

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 & PUBLIC SPACES ARE SYMBOLS OF DEMOCRACY & EQUALITY

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.



Create Excitement!

Create Energy !

Create Sparkle!



Create Heat

Create Warmth

*'The parks are unofficially closed in the winter'
- Park Employee from an Ontario municipality*

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.

Keep it Simple

Great public spaces don't have to be complicated. A fancy design cannot make up for a space that's boring, inaccessible, uncared for or unsafe.

When thinking about any park or public space from a small neighbourhood square to a large urban park, ask yourself the five basic questions below. By thinking carefully about how people will get to the place, what they'll do when they will get there, what kind of infrastructure there is, 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.

Invest More in Management!

"About 80% of the success of any public space can be attributed to its management. No matter how good the design of a space is, it will never become a true place unless it is cared for well."

- Project for Public Spaces



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 bike parking? Is it close to transit?
Are paths clear of snow, debris or water?
Are there “desire lines” or beaten paths that should be formalized?

What’s here?

Are there comfortable places to sit?
Is there good, quality lighting at night?
Is there a paved or gravel path?
Are there public washrooms? Are they clean and inviting?
Is there somewhere nearby to get a snack or drink?
Is there evidence of history or identity?

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? In all seasons?

Who takes care of this place?

Is there evidence of volunteerism?
Do you see any maintenance workers or staff?
Is there any contact information so you can reach someone in charge of the space?
Is there an active or passive security presence?

How do I feel?

Do you feel safe and comfortable?
Do you feel a sense of identity or history?
Is there something that makes this place feel unique?
Do you feel relaxed, energized or bored?
Do you want to stay and linger?



3. RESULTS AND 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 Breakwater Park. The visualizations in this section are used to help people re-imagine Breakwater 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.8-8ocities.org ➤ Resources ➤ 8-80 Tools ➤ Community Reports





Results Overview

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.

Breakwater Park Site Observations

With the help of community volunteers, site observations were conducted at Breakwater Park in both the winter and summer, and more than 1100 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.

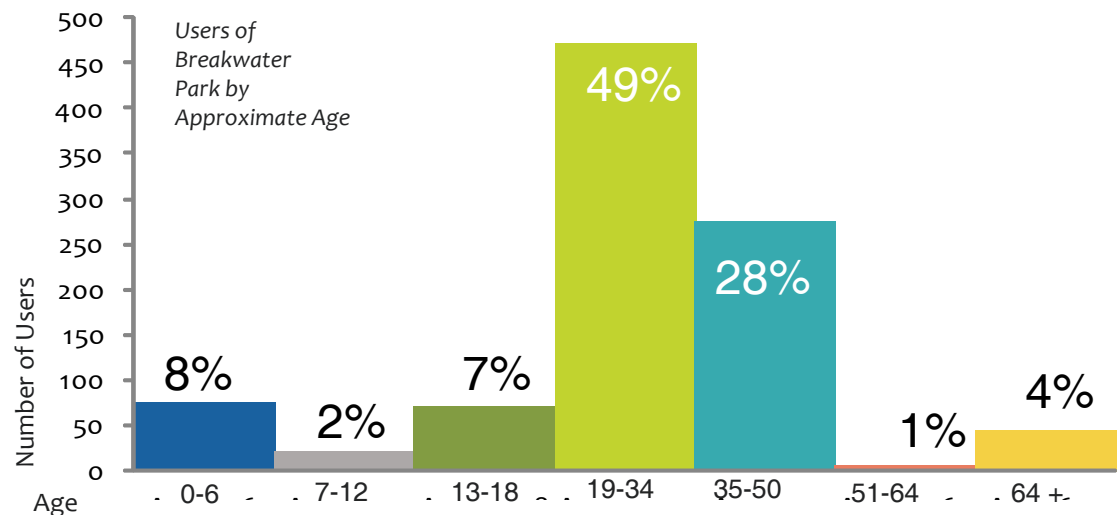
“In God we trust; all others bring data”

- One of NYC Mayor Bloomberg's favorite phrases

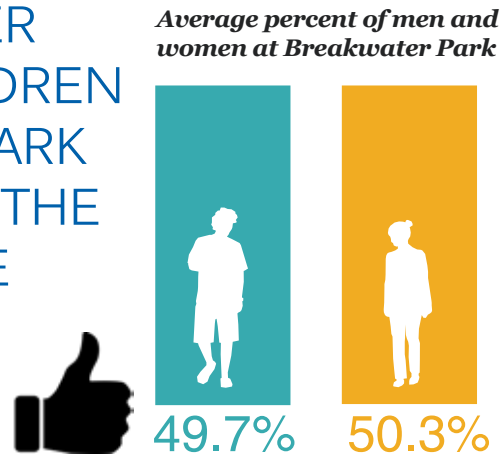
IF YOU DON'T COUNT, YOU DON'T COUNT!

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 is older adults. While people 50 and older make up approximately 34% of the population, they only represent 5% of users at Breakwater Park.



THE LACK OF OLDER ADULTS AND CHILDREN AT BREAKWATER PARK IS EVIDENCE THAT THE PARK NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED.



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.

At Breakwater Park, we observed a balanced proportion of men and women, indicating that the space is generally perceived as safe by both genders. Continued monitoring of the age and gender user share is an important tool for measuring the success of a space and any future changes that should be made to the site.

Did you know...

In NYC’s Bryant Park, staff takes a daily count of park users. 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.



Bryant Park, NYC

Time Spent in Breakwater Park

Our observations showed that walking through the park is the most popular activity in both the summer and winter.

Significantly more staying activity was recorded in the summer, and there was a greater diversity of activities; however, the overall user count per hour in the remained low, and the winter user count was dismal, even though the weather was mild.

Observed Activities

Focusing on activities and infrastructure that invite and entice new people into the park will help improve usage and bring vibrancy to the park. Additional seating, such as benches and picnic tables that are closer to the water will also help satisfy the demand for more formal seating.

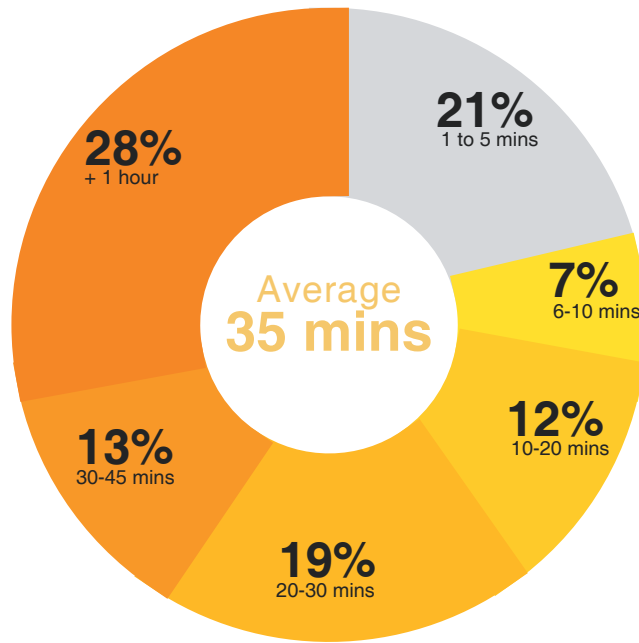
> 61% FELT BREAKWATER PARK WAS NOT ACTIVE IN THE WINTER*

**147 USERS PER HOUR
WERE OBSERVED
DURING THE SUMMER**

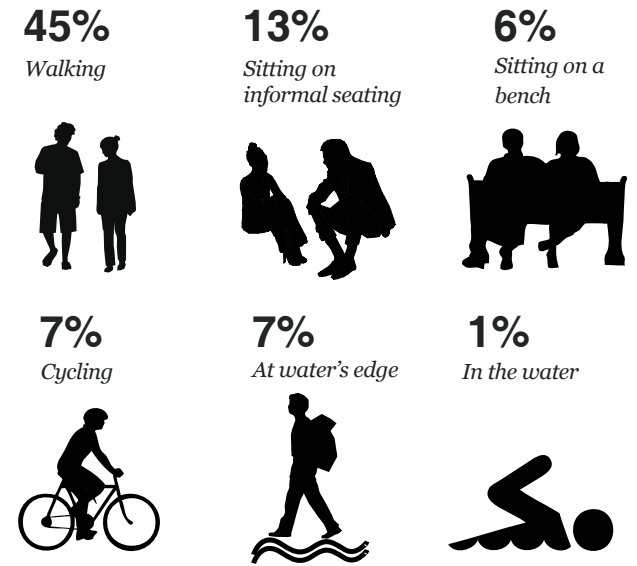


**11 USERS PER HOUR
WERE OBSERVED
DURING THE WINTER**

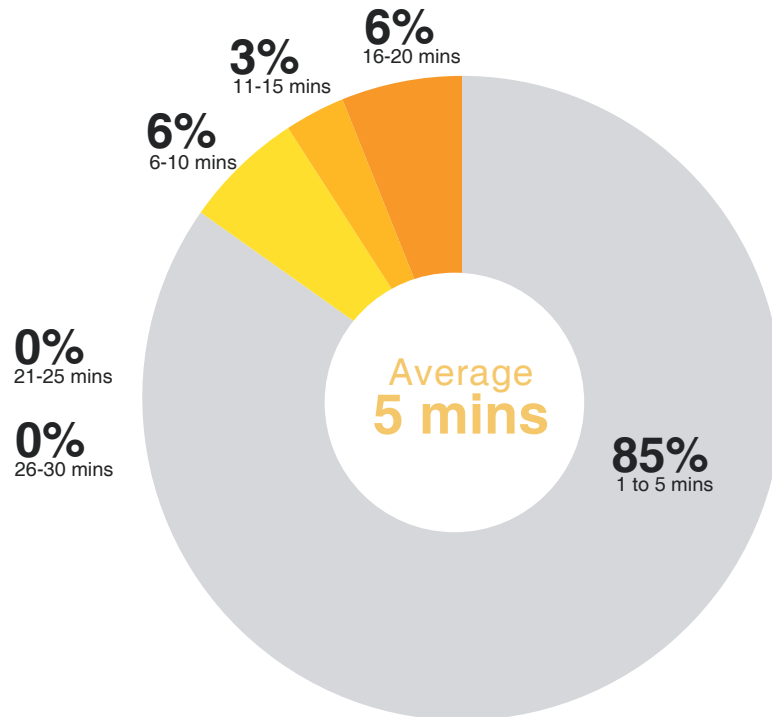




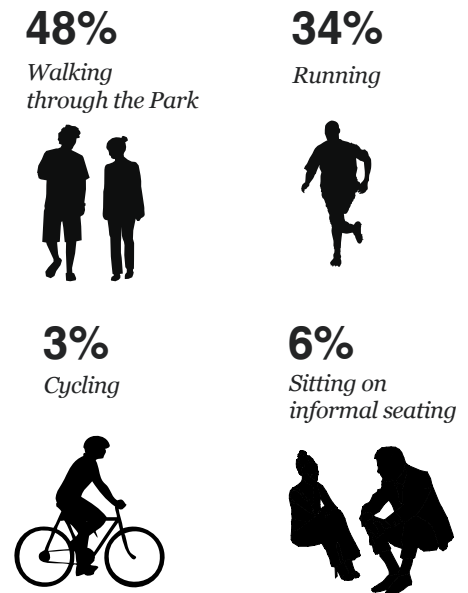
Time Spent in Breakwater Park in Summer
 * Percent of 1161 people surveyed



Activities observed in Breakwater Park in summer



Time Spent in Breakwater Park in Winter
 * Percent of 142 people surveyed



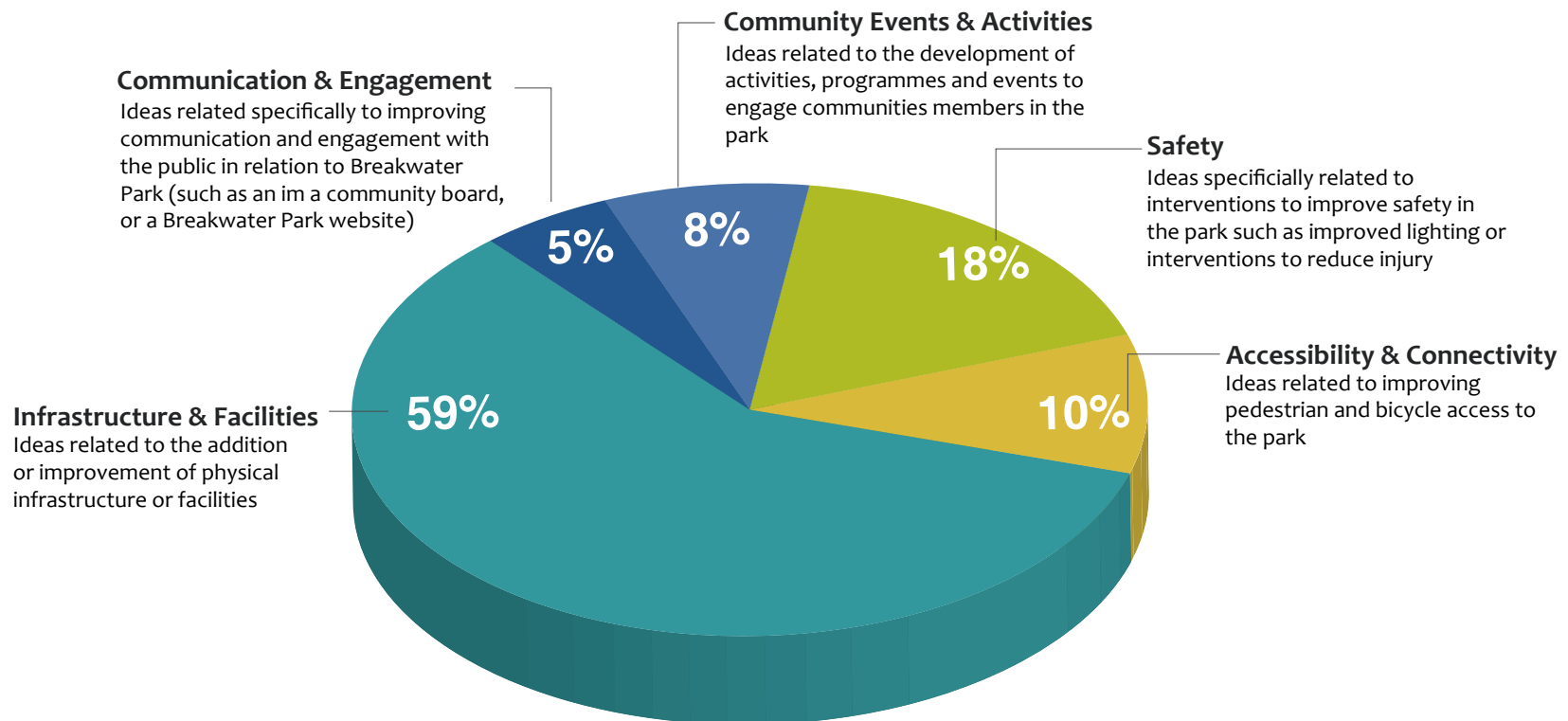
Activities observed in Breakwater Park in winter

Ideas & Recommendations

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 that are presented below.

Recommendations by Themes

The chart below is based on 352 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.



11%

Beautification & Maintenance

Suggestions related to improving the aesthetics of the park through improved maintenance and greenery



18%

Improved Facilities for Pedestrians & Cyclists

Ideas related to improving or adding infrasture to improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users such as increasing the path width, adding bicycle parking and improving transit shelters



SPECIFIC TYPES OF RECOMMENDATIONS STOOD OUT IN THE DATA, SUCH AS THOSE RELATED TO IMPROVING THE AESTHETICS OF THE PARK, CREATING BETTER WALKING & CYCLING CONDITIONS, AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE PARK BY ROAD AND WITHIN THE PARK SYSTEM.

9%

Improved access to the park

Ideas related to getting people comfortably and safely to the park



CONNECTING TO THE WATER

The waterfront is part of Kingston's identity. It is part of why residents take great pride in their city and why tourists flock to it. The waterfront adds to Kingstonian's quality of life, and it should be celebrated and invested in. While Breakwater Park provides a beautiful vista of the Lake Ontario, it fails to really connect people to the water.

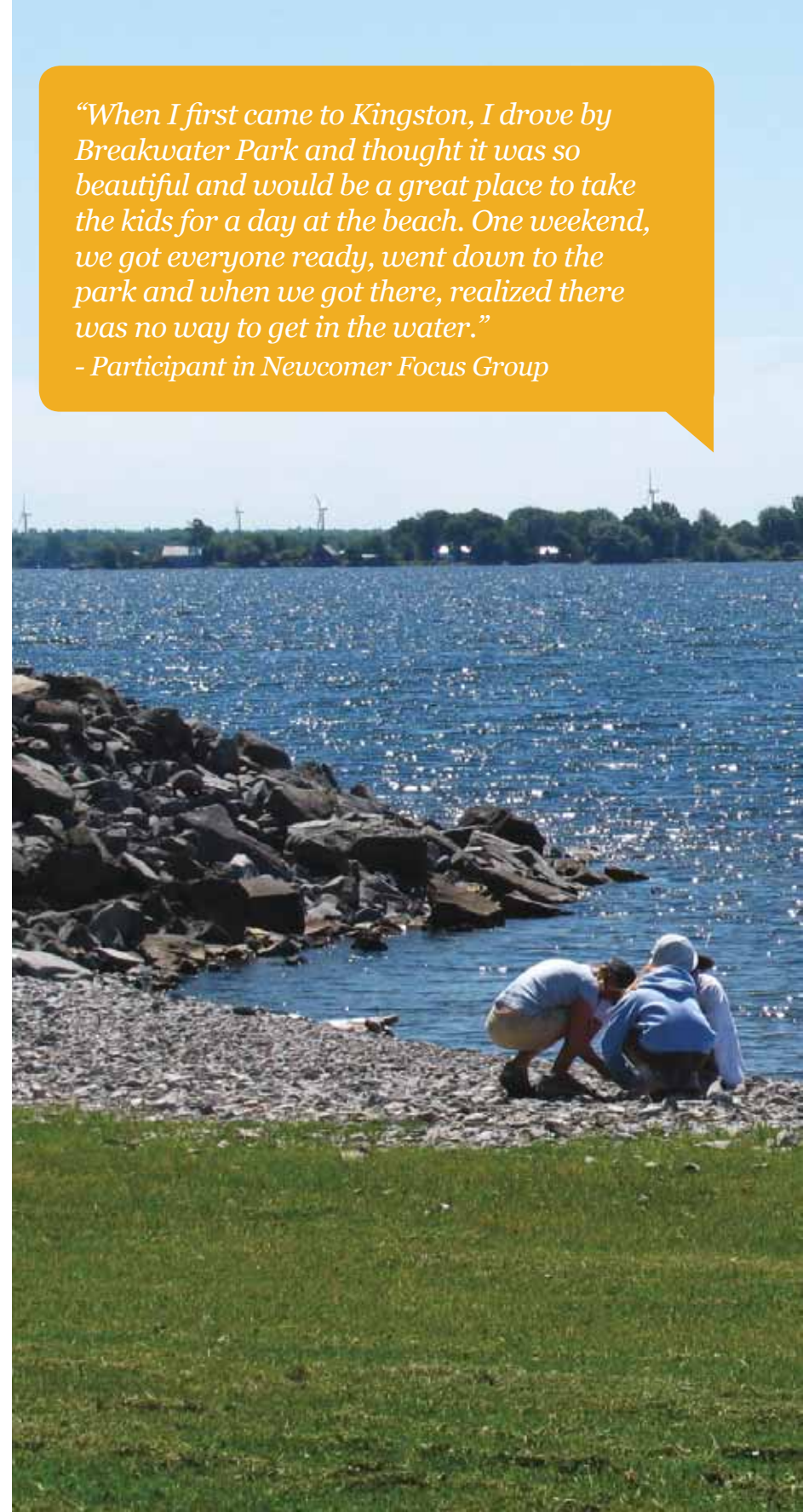
Of the total recommendations collected for Breakwater Park, more than 16% were related specifically to improving people's access or connection to the water. This desire to connect with the water was reiterated in conversations with community members of all ages as well as current park users and potential park users.

Research relating to "blue space" (places with lakes, rivers, pools or fountains) also shows that waterfronts provide important mental health benefits such as stress reduction and a feeling of restoration and peacefulness.

16% of all ideas were related to connecting to the water.

"When I first came to Kingston, I drove by Breakwater Park and thought it was so beautiful and would be a great place to take the kids for a day at the beach. One weekend, we got everyone ready, went down to the park and when we got there, realized there was no way to get in the water."

- Participant in Newcomer Focus Group



INDULGE OUR DESIRE TO TOUCH

By focusing on improving the three sensory experiences below, Breakwater Park can truly become a place that indulges our natural instinct to connect with water.

TOUCH

Providing safe access to the water should be a priority of any re-design or investment at Breakwater Park. Currently, touching or entering the water is difficult and potentially unsafe due to sharp rocks and uneven surfaces. Community members expressed a very strong desire to improve access to the water by creating safe, comfortable access points along the water's edge.

SEE

Conversations with community members, as well the site assessments, showed that people wanted to sit closer to the water. Additional seating close to the water's edge will help to accommodate this experience. Additional design elements should also be sensitive to preserving the view of the water.

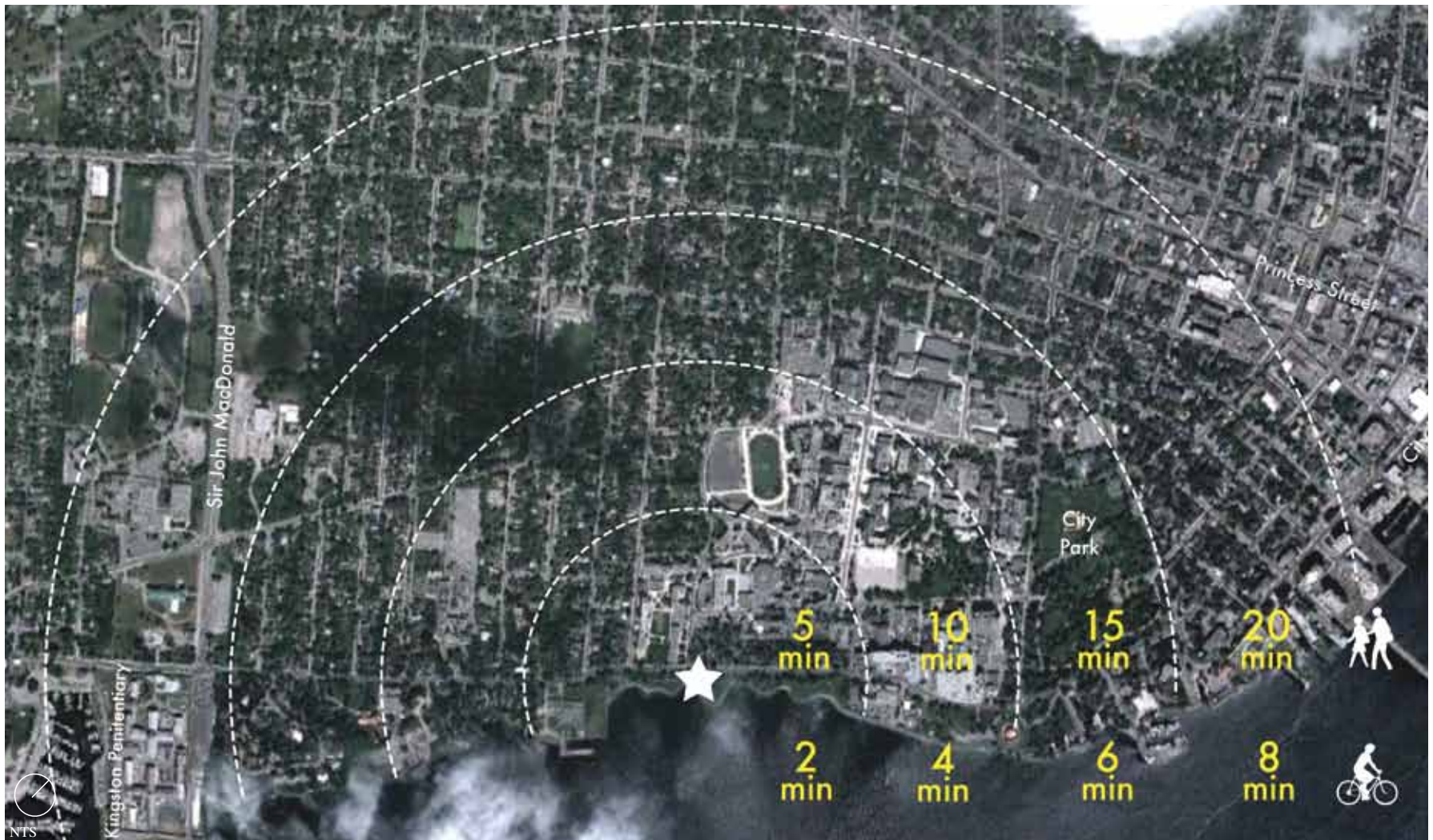
HEAR

The sound of water is soothing and relaxing. Getting people closer to the water with seating and safer access points will allow people to enjoy the water with all of their senses. The sound of the water is also one of the few features of the park which is enhanced at night.



ACCESSIBILITY

Pedestrian, cycling and transit access to Breakwater Park is a crucial issue. Improvements to design and programming within Breakwater Park should be undertaken in tandem with access improvements or the success of these projects may be jeopardized. Breakwater Park is a walkable and bikeable distance from downtown Kingston, as well as many residential neighbourhoods. Currently, there are three key access problems that need to be addressed:



1. ROAD ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS & CYCLISTS

The west end of Breakwater Park is a gateway into downtown Kingston.

The presence of Kingston General Hospital, the Cancer Centre, Queen's University residents, as well as residential homes, justifies the need for slower speeds along King St. and a high-quality pedestrian environment.

- Signalized crossings should be installed to improve pedestrian and cycling access across King St. at both the west and east ends of the park.
- Traffic-calming measures should be used to reduce traffic speeds on King St. such bump-outs, speed humps and visual cues such as attractive pavement resurfacing.

2. CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS WITHIN THE PARK SYSTEM, ESPECIALLY ALONG THE WATERFRONT

Breakwater Park is part of the waterfront trail and is adjacent to McDonald Park; unfortunately, there is very poor connectivity between the chain of green spaces along Kingston's waterfront and the opportunity to create a magnificent connected waterfront system has yet to be capitalized on.

- In the short-term connectivity with McDonald Park along the waterfront should be improved, and the water pooling problem by the helicopter pad should be addressed. The experience for park users can be improved by implementing low-cost improvement such as colorful planters and surface improvements along the connecting pathway system.
- In the longer term, creating a seamless, connected waterfront greenway system would be of incomparable value for the city. Expanding and improving the green space connection between Breakwater Park and McDonald Park will be an important step in this process.

3. TRANSIT ACCESS

The current bus rider experience to access Breakwater Park is extremely poor. In order to provide current riders with a safe and positive user experience and to encourage transit use, significant improvements at the transit stops must be made.

- Create a high-quality, dignified transit user experience by installing attractive, comfortable and well maintained transit shelters.
- Locate these transit stops at new signalized crossings ,and connect transit shelters with paved path system.



Software Uses, Activities & 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; afterall 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 are equally and in some cases even more important for creating a vibrant and healthy park.

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

WHEN IT COMES TO SOFTWARE, ASK YOURSELF...

What makes this park unique?

Are there events & activities that will attract people of different ages, ethnicities and 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 determining 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.

Endless activities: Bryant Park

Bryant Park in New York City is the most meticulously managed park in the world. The “software” at Bryant Park provides endless activities and experience for people of all ages, morning, noon and night. Activities range from chess and ping-pong, to knitting, yoga, language classes, juggling and much more.



Breakwater 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 Breakwater Park throughout the year.





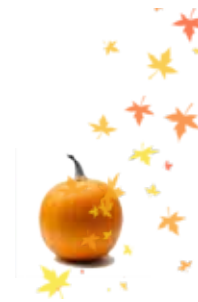
Music
Dragon Boat Racing
in the park!

FREE WIFI

71% felt
Breakwater Park
was not well
programmed.
(% of 130 people surveyed)



COMMUNITY
Gardening



People tend to be less
physically and socially
active in the winter.
Parks need to offer
something fantastic to
get people off of their
couches and out of the
houses!



Play
Horseshoe &
Bocce Ball



outdoor
classroom
Swimming lessons
Kite Boarding
Yoga
in the Park

Kayak Lesson
Hoop
Lessons



SNOWSHOE
LESSON



July

August

September

October

November

December

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 encourage partnership at Breakwater Park. Other ideas from the action planning process, such as improved water access, a wider multi-use path, and the promotion of slower speeds on King St., have been incorporated directly into the report

THE IDEA:

Incorporate flexible and multi-purpose infrastructure for arts, culture and culinary groups in order to increase vibrancy and animate Breakwater Park.

Step 1.

Who should be involved?

Arts council, the Downtown BIA, Post Secondary Institutions, The City of Kingston

Step 2.

Engage the arts community
test the appetite for the idea.

Step 3.

Develop an
implementation &
funding strategy

Step 4.

Connect the users with the
available infrastructure and
manage programming and
activities.

Step 5.

Advertise & promote
the activities to the
public.





WATER

PART

Improve swimming access

- better slopes into water
- improved lake bottom (cracks)

Improve biking/walking trail
to connect to lake
as people commute, etc.
leaving space for users to enjoy
the park/water

Drinking fountains
to connect people to
the water we drink
and swim in.

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 serve 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



Zones, Improvements & Additions

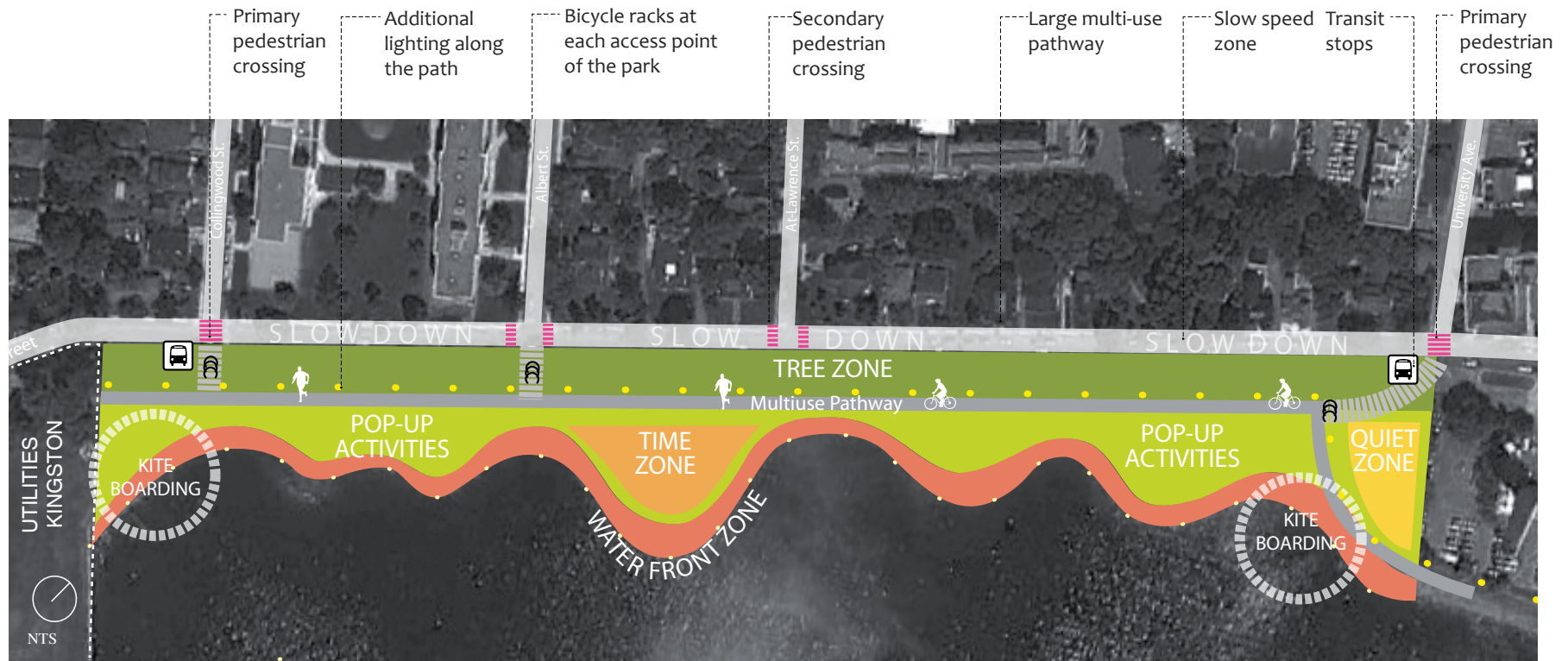
59% of the total recommendations and ideas collected for Breakwater were related to the addition or improvement of physical infrastructure and facilities.

The multi-use pathway and the waterfront zone were two key areas of concern for participants. For additional information about improvements to these areas, please see pages 49-52.

It's also important to note that the area marked "Utilities Kingston" is not part of Breakwater Park. However, many community members did not differentiate between the two spaces. Community members felt that if an agreement could be reached between The City and Utilities Kingston, it would be an excellent opportunity to improve recreational opportunities for the community and to enhance Kingston's waterfront.

"What if near the hospital there was a quiet place, a designated quiet place...where you can read a book and haven't got children running around. It's so much space, I'm sure that would be do-able, and it would draw a certain amount of people there that want to just quietly sit by the water and read."

- Seniors Focus Group Participant



MULTI-USE PATHWAY

The multi-use pathway is one of the key design features and the most used facility in the park. It is well used by walkers, runners, pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, as well as roller bladers and people with strollers.

- Widen Path
- Improve surface
- Signage on pavement and at entry points indicating that it is a shared space
- Bicycle Parking
- Improve lighting
- Improved maintenance
- Improve connections to MacDonald Park and to road crossings

WATERFRONT ZONE

The Waterfront zone extends along the length of the park and is the area that directly connects people to the water.

- Additional seating
- Improved maintenance
- Improved lighting
- Additional shade
- Improved access to water

TREE ZONE

The Tree Zone is the area between and around the double row of trees. It can be used for barbecues and recreational games such as bocce ball and horseshoes. It is also the most shaded area of the park and should have ample and diverse seating options.

- Improved maintenance
- Improved lighting
- Additional tables and seating for people in groups
- Improved and additional barbecues

POP-UP ACTIVITY SPACE

The Pop-up activities zone is considered as a flexible zone capable of accommodating a wide range of activities such as yoga, frisbee, relaxing, and picnicking.

- flowers & plants
- Improved maintenance
- Improved lighting

Additional Facilities:

- Washrooms
- Children's play area and structure
- Fitness equipment

TIME ZONE

The Time zone is the area that is most influenced by 'Time', the large sculpture on the central headland

- Improved maintenance
- Improved lighting
- Replacement of damaged plaque
- Enhanced experience of viewing sculpture through design features (i.e. strategic seating or pathways)

QUIET ZONE

The Quiet zone is located close to the hospital and is a place for rest and relaxation.

- Flowers & plants
- Signage indicating it is a "quite zone"
- Seating

KITE BOARDING

These two areas very important for the sport of kiteboarding in Kingston. They are the only areas in the park that can be used for safe landing and need to remain free of obstructions (such as sign posts and seating) in order to keep the sport alive in Kingston.

THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

8-80 Cities worked with non-profit organization Focus on Nature to get children's perspectives of Breakwater Park. We used cameras and drawing activities to help the grade 6 students from Central Public School tell us about what they liked, didn't like, and would like to see improved at the park. The photographs and illustrations to the right were all created by 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 the students were interested in a play structure, sandbox or swing set. Other ideas included food vendors, a newspaper or library stand and publicly available sports equipment.

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. Safer access to the water!

The water was a natural draw for the students. As soon as they got their cameras, they made off for the water's edge; unfortunately they didn't think it was very safe for swimming or playing.





IMAGINE BREAKWATER PARK....



AS A PLACE TO CONNECT WITH WATER IN DOWNTOWN KINGSTON

Breakwater Park is one of Kingston’s greatest opportunities to connect with the water and should be a place that is safe, enjoyable, interesting and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.



1	A rich, colourful experience	A variety of flowers, grasses and plantings would add a layer of rich texture and colour to the park. Partnerships with community groups could be established to help maintain the plantings and build a sense of stewardship.
2	Water’s edge seating	Bringing people closer to the water with a variety of seating options will do much to improve the sensory experiences of being in the park, playing on people’s desire to see and hear the water close-up.
3	Safe and inviting beach access	Breakwater Park should have at least one excellent beach access point to the water. Sharp stones should be removed and replaced with a comfortable alternative such as smooth gravel or pebbles.
4	Accessible water ramp	The water should be accessible for people of all abilities. The Kingston Accessibility Committee should be consulted to determine a suitable option to help people with mobility challenges safely access the water.
5	Food & Drink	Many community members expressed an interest in exploring food and drink opportunities at the park. A small coffee kiosk or healthy snack car creates an additional layer of activity, and a reason for people to meet and stay at the park.
6	Sand & Water	A sandbox is a natural fit for Breakwater Park and was a popular idea among community members. David Rockwell, founder of the Imagination Playground, says that the simple combination of sand and water are “like magic” for children.

IMAGINE BREAKWATER PARK....

- 1

Multi-use Pathway

The pathway system at Breakwater Park was a key area of concern for community members---currently, it is too narrow and in a state of disrepair. A wider pathway with a high-quality surface that can adequately accommodate pedestrians and cyclists would greatly enhance the recreational and aesthetic qualities of the park.
- 2

Pathway Signage

A multi-use trail should include signage that indicates appropriate behaviour on the path. Signage should be welcoming and positive while clearly indicating that it is a shared space for cyclists and pedestrians and that people on wheels should be mindful of their speed.
- 3

Connections to roadway

Connections to pedestrian crossings and transit stops along King St. should invite people into the park with attractive signage and plantings. Entrance points should be easy to navigate with a stroller, wheelchair or bike and provide a direct connection to the pathway system.
- 4

Bicycle Parking

As indicated in the access map on page 37, Breakwater Park is a short bike ride from many destinations and neighbourhoods in Kingston. Ample, well located, high quality bicycle parking should be available at all entrance points to encourage this healthy and sustainable form of transportation.
- 5

Improved Lighting

High-quality, sensitive and attractive lighting can unlock a new dimension of the park, adding to the ambiance and making it an enjoyable destination in the evenings, especially in the short days of the winter.



A PLACE FOR CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY AND CREATING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

By carefully balancing the natural gifts of the park with physical improvements as well as creative programming and activities, Breakwater Park can truly become a hub of recreation, healthy living, social interaction and sustainable lifestyles.



IT'S BEEN DONE BEFORE! EXAMPLES FOR BREAKWATER PARK

> Creating a “Quiet Zone”

Many patients and visitors from Kingston General Hospital and the Cancer Centre find respite at Breakwater Park. Community members suggested creating a designated “Quiet Zone” like Strawberry Fields at New York’s Central Park. Strawberry Fields, which is a living memorial to John Lennon, is an area for quiet rest and reflection and prohibits amplified music, bikes, rollerblades, skateboards, as well as organized recreation and sports (fig.1).

> 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 have hot and cold beverages, which was a suggestion among community members (fig. 9).

> A Place for Active Play

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

> Outdoor exercise equipment

Gaining popularity in parks across North American, the presence of outdoor fitness equipment is an easy way for cities to promote physical activity that is accessible and affordable. According to the Trust for Public Land, locating the equipment near playgrounds is a great way to encourage physical activity among parents. Providing basic signage about the benefits of physical activity and how to use the equipment will also encourage use (fig.2).

> Wayfinding Signage

Signage is an excellent way to improve the connections between Breakwater Park and other recreation areas or services in Kingston. Signage can also be used to encourage physical activity through activity prompts (i.e. 15mins of walking burns XX number of calories), which can be implemented in partnership with health organizations such as KFL&A Public Health (fig. 5).

> A new experience illuminated

Sensitive, thoughtful lighting can be used to provide a new user experience. In Mission Creek Park in San Francisco low-level lighting is used to draw people to the waterfront while not obscuring the view of the water (fig. 8).

> Building a connection to the community

Could the City of Kingston 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 their 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. Community bake oven, Dufferin Grove Park, Toronto.
 2. Outdoor exercise equipment, Huntingdonshire, UK.
 3. Bienenstock Playground, McLeary Playground, Toronto
 4. Imagination Playground, NYC.
 5. Wayfinding Signage, XXX
 6. Signage at Carl Schurz Park, NYC
 7. Sign at Union Square subway station, NYC.
 8. Waterfront Lighting, Mission Creek Park, San Francisco
 9. Fruixi Food Cart, Montreal



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Improve water access

The opportunity to safely and comfortably connect people with the water should be capitalized on. Breakwater is the longest waterfront park in downtown Kingston and represents an unparalleled opportunity to provide a safe, comfortable connection to the water for both locals and visitors.

2 Programming

The City of Kingston should make it easier for community members to do programming that encourages physical activity and community building in the park by:

- Making the permitting process more accessible, affordable and streamlined.
- Actively seeking out and partnering with community groups and service providers such as KFL&A Public Health to help animate the park.

3 Implement design improvements in tandem with access improvements

The success of Breakwater Park is dependent on safe, comfortable and inviting access, both by road and from within the park system. Work with relevant departments and partners to create safe crossings along King St. and an improved user experience between MacDonald Park and Breakwater Park.

4 Working Group

Establish a Breakwater Park Working Group that has representation from the City of Kingston, KFL&A Public Health, community-based organizations and other interested groups with the purpose of working collaboratively to implement the community-led recommendations, actions and visions of this report.

5 Continue investing in the waterfront

Few other cities boast such extensive publicly owned waterfronts. Leverage successful design and programming initiatives at Breakwater Park to continue investment and improvement along Kingston's waterfront system. Work to create an interconnected, high-quality blue and green edge that functions as a recreation and active transportation corridor.



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". And, our response usually is "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 Breakwater Park.

We also hope the Make a Place for People Project at Breakwater Park will inspire other communities to use these tools to undertake developing community-led improvement strategies at other parks and public spaces accross the province.





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.

	Site									Target Area/Sub Unit												
	Name																					
	Date				Time of Arrival						Time of Departure											
	Weather																					
	Directions: Each observation recording session should be no less than 1hr long. Sessions should be conducted in the morning, afternoon, evening and night on both a weekday(s) or weekend. If the site is too large or too busy to observe effectively, the site should be broken into smaller sub-units. If people are in groups, fill in the user information individually then circle the members of the group. Feel free to add new codes in the 'other codes' section if you feel it is important.																					
	Ethnicity Codes: B = black, W = White, A=Asian, SA = South Asian, L=Latino U= undetermined																					
	Other Codes: Homeless = H, Disabled = D																					
	Gender		Age							Codes		Activity										
	Male	Fem	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-34	35-50	51-65	65+	Ethni city	Other codes											time spent at public space
1																						
2																						
3																						
4																						
5																						
6																						
7																						
8																						
9																						
10																						



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 6 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 neighbourhood 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 will get there, what kind of infrastructure is, 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 any 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 or water?

Are there 'desire line' 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.



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