

LAKE ONTARIO PARK SURVEY REPORT

The survey of Kingston residents completed in the late summer of 2006 provides clear direction to the Lake Ontario Park Revitalization Advisory Group as to the preferences of those who responded.

Essentially, residents want a natural park with access to the water, together with a beach and a minimum number of facilities, but including picnic areas and a children's playground. On the other hand, they do not want too much new development in the form of rides, pavilions or a dance hall. There is little interest in boat launching or docking.

The survey reports on the preferences of 323 respondents.

Natural Areas

In the section on planning principles in the questionnaire, 96.6% of respondents agreed that improvements to the park will support environmental enhancements through habitat restoration, and 96% agreed with the statement that activities should promote enjoyment of the natural environment. Furthermore, under potential park elements, the two that relate directly to the question of 'naturalness' scored very high, with natural areas collecting an average score of an astounding 4.84 out of 5 and habitat restoration following close behind at 4.55. Given that such alternatives as ornamental gardens, merry-go-round and a youth recreation area scored considerably lower, it is clear that the park should be a natural retreat in an urban environment.

Waterfront Access

Almost 99% of those surveyed agreed that waterfront access should be improved, conserved and rehabilitated. A swimming area, specifically a beach, scored the second highest on the 5-point scale with 4.57. However, not all water activities fared as well, with both launching areas and short term docking for small watercraft being largely rejected by respondents. In the section called "Park Improvement Scenarios", waterfront emphasis outscored both camping and event emphasis. This is also borne out by the comments written on the returned questionnaires which generally supported swimming and beach but were less enthusiastic about any boating facilities at the park.

Facilities

The questionnaire listed over 20 elements that could be considered 'facilities' for the park, ranging from picnic areas to an interpretive center. Of these, only five scored at 4.0 or above. They are:

- Picnic areas with BBQ
- Events area (e.g. for dog shows)
- Pavilion for group activities
- Children's playground
- Camping (tenting)

Consideration should be given to these elements in the design of the park in a manner that they do not interfere with the 'natural' feeling of the park.

Argument could be made in favour of several other possibilities such as a café or canteen, an outdoor performance area and a splash pad for children if these fit in to the overall vision of the park.

Other Options

Most other facilities listed did not score highly enough to merit inclusion. Beside some already mentioned, these include a midway, a dance hall and an off-leash area for dogs. Camping in the form of RV's or permanent structures also did not garner a great deal of support. In the case of RV's, it may be difficult to have dog shows and the like without allowing the dogs' owners to camp on the property.

However, a number of other elements, which are not strictly facilities, did score within the acceptable range. These all deal with improvements to the park infrastructure and include improved walking and cycling trails with better lighting, provisions for winter activities such as snowshoeing and cross country skiing, improved public transit to the park as well as a live-in supervisor.

LAKE ONTARIO PARK COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The City of Kingston received feedback on proposed principles and three concept scenarios for Lake Ontario Park. The principles and concepts were developed by a stakeholder group that has been working closely with a team lead by City of Kingston staff in conjunction with a local consultant firm, Bray Heritage, in the development of a vision for Lake Ontario Park. The results below are based on respondent answers to the survey.

Vision

"Lake Ontario Park will be maintained and enhanced as publicly owned parkland in support of its role as one of Kingston's primary waterfront open spaces."

<i>Planning Principles</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	
Waterfront access will be improved and the waterfront conserved and rehabilitated	4	322	98.8%
The park will provide facilities suitable for both local and regional residents as well as visitors	7	325	97.9%
The contrast between the park's two main character areas of tableland and waterfront will be celebrated	15	298	95.2%
The park will remain accessible to people of all means and backgrounds	2	335	99.4%
Vestiges of past uses will be conserved and interpreted	27	286	91.4%
All improvements to the park will support environmental enhancement through habitat restoration and sustainable development practices	11	312	96.6%
Revenue generating uses should be considered in support of ongoing park operation and improvement, but not as a primary focus	24	306	92.7%
In determining appropriate uses for the park, priority should be given to:			
• family activities	20	292	93.6%
• cultural/community activities	38	270	87.7%
• activities that promote enjoyment of the natural environment	13	310	96.0%

Respondents were asked to provide an opinion on *their concept* of the future of the park.

LIST OF PREFERRED USES

A list of potential uses was compiled from meetings of the study advisory group and its component organizations. Each suggestion was intended to be a practical one, capable of being built and maintained by the City or by the City in partnership with other agencies. The list presupposed that the City will improve park maintenance above the current level.

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “fully agree”, respondents were asked to indicate which of the following uses should be included in any plan for improvement of Lake Ontario Park using the proposed vision and planning principles for the park to guide their selections.

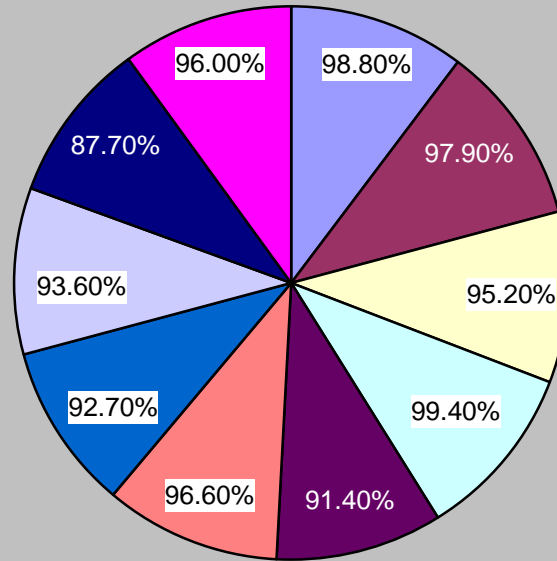
POTENTIAL PARK ELEMENTS	1	2	3	4	5	Avg
Swimming area (beach)	7	5	25	38	231	4.57
Natural areas (treed and open)	2	2	5	25	272	4.84
Picnic area (with barbeques)	4	2	37	60	195	4.48
Launching area for small watercraft	50	35	76	61	84	3.31
Short term docking for small watercraft	73	54	78	42	55	2.84
Off leash area for dogs	115	32	51	35	73	2.74
Events area (e.g. for dog show)	15	19	52	42	136	4.00
Food services (café/canteen)	18	21	49	52	91	3.77
Pavilion for group activities	13	13	46	73	158	4.16
Dance hall	85	40	68	51	73	2.96
Provision for winter uses (cross-country skiing, skating, snowshoeing)	15	14	31	62	175	4.24
Camping (RV)	49	19	64	59	120	3.59
Camping (tenting)	20	9	66	67	144	4.00
Camping (simple roofed shelters, yurts)	63	41	74	51	76	3.12
Outdoor performance area (waterside bandshell/stage with amphitheatre seating)	23	21	51	61	136	3.91
Children’s playground	3	4	33	70	193	4.47
On-land water play area (splashpad)	33	22	41	69	145	3.87
Merry-go-round	72	43	54	39	92	3.12
Midway (commercial operation similar to previous one)	125	41	44	29	65	2.57
Youth recreation area (e.g. basketball court, soccer field)	76	31	48	61	82	3.14
Improved trails (walking, cycling)	18	12	44	63	170	4.16
Day-use programs (e.g. swimming instruction)	23	22	55	79	130	3.88
Live-in park supervisor	23	21	62	60	134	3.87
Interpretive signage (park history and environment)	15	22	66	74	116	3.87
Interpretive displays (same)	32	34	71	69	86	3.49
Interpretive centre (building)	60	45	88	55	80	3.45
Ornamental gardens	70	51	79	64	84	3.12
Improved public transit access	26	23	55	60	171	3.98
Improved lighting on pathways						
Habitat restoration (e.g. treed areas, wetland, shoreline)	6	11	16	62	240	4.55

PARK IMPROVEMENT SCENARIOS

The following plans illustrate three ways of meeting the planning principles for the Park. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is least favourite and 5 is favourite, respondents were asked to assess the three plans shown here.

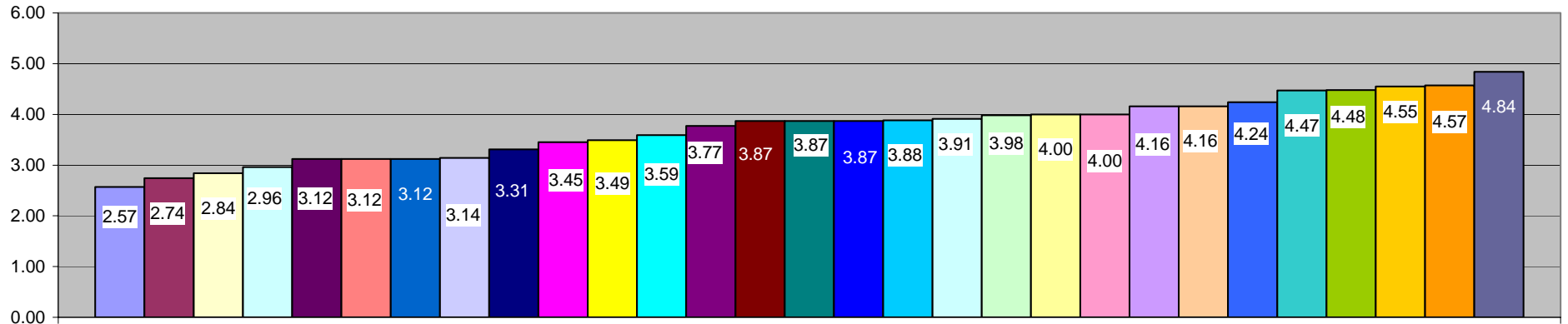
PARK IMPROVEMENT SCENARIOS	1	2	3	4	5	
Camping Emphasis	101	50	64	41	67	2.76
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camping as major activity and revenue source • Development of new RV campground (100+ spaces) • Minimal upgrades to existing facilities in remainder of park 						
Events Emphasis	37	28	97	69	79	3.40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events spaces, with camping (minimum standard RV and tenting) • Limited park programming • Some upgrades to park to support events 						
Programmed Waterfront Emphasis	47	26	65	51	121	3.60
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed spaces throughout park, with minimum camping in support • Limited events programming • Significant upgrades to park to support programming 						

Planning Principles - Percentage Agreed

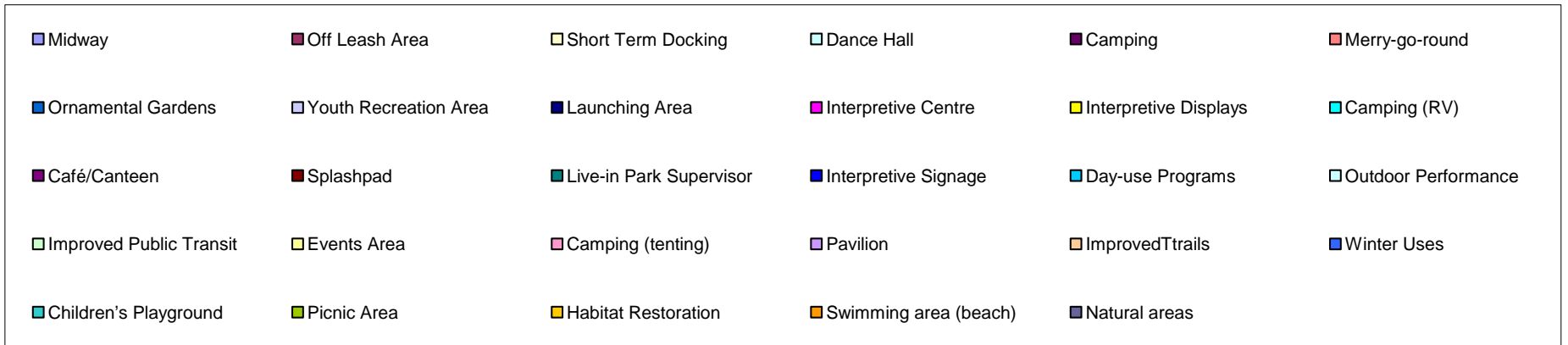


- Waterfront access will be improved and the waterfront conserved and rehabilitated
- The park will provide facilities suitable for both local and regional residents as well as visitors
- The contrast between the park's two main character areas of tableland and waterfront will be celebrated
- The park will remain accessible to people of all means and backgrounds
- Vestiges of past uses will be conserved and interpreted
- All improvements to the park will support environmental enhancement through habitat restoration and sustainable development practices
- Revenue generating uses should be considered in support of ongoing park operation and improvement, but not as a primary focus
- family activities
- cultural/community activities
- activities that promote enjoyment of the natural environment

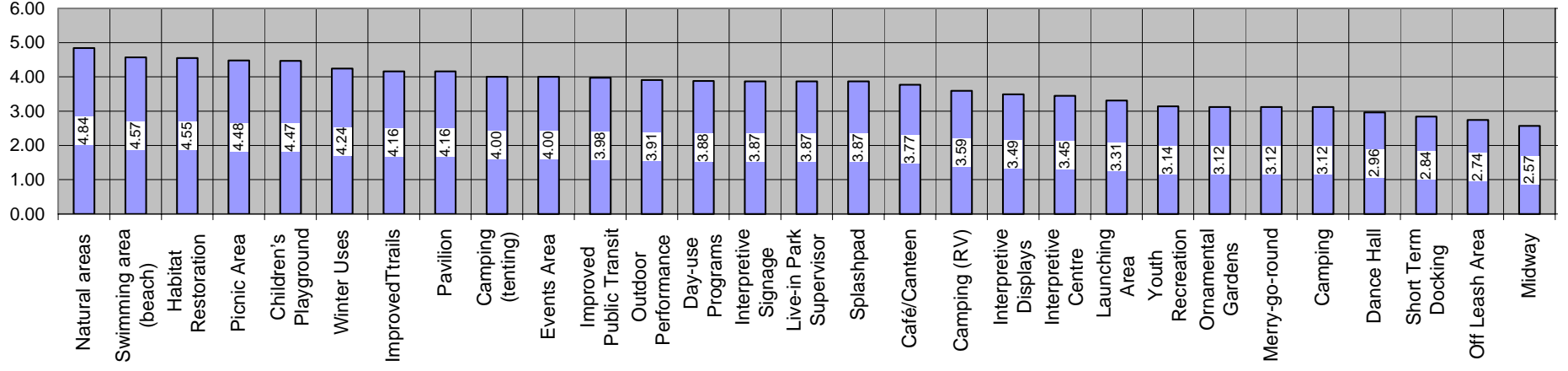
POTENTIAL PARK ELEMENTS



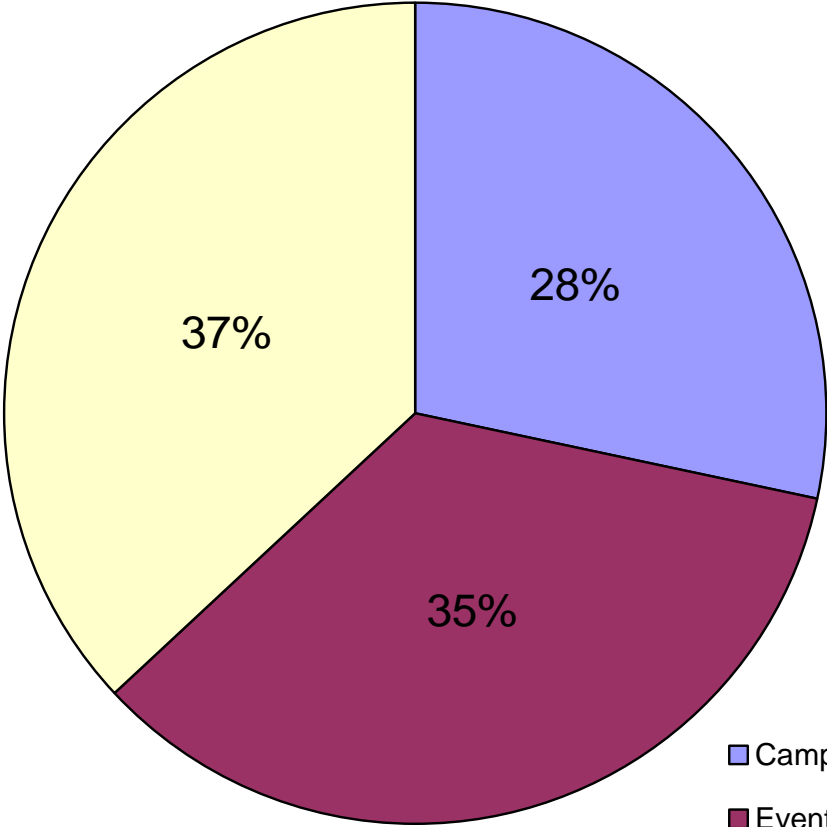
AVERAGE



POTENTIAL PARK ELEMENTS



PARK IMPROVEMENT SCENARIOS



- Camping Emphasis
- Events Emphasis
- Programmed Waterfront Emphasis