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Kensington Safe Streets Phase 1 Consultation Report

November 2021

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Overview

Project Summary

State-of-good-repair work, including sewer and watermain replacements, road resurfacing, and road reconstruction, are scheduled in Kensington Market in 2022 and 2023. The Kensington Safe Streets project provides an opportunity to improve safety and accessibility for everyone and maintain access to all businesses, services and residences.

This report summarizes consultation activities and feedback received during Phase 1 consultation, taking place from September 21, 2021 – November 12, 2021.



LEGEND

Proposed Scope for 2023

- Watermain Replacement + Road Reconstruction
- Watermain Replacement + Road Resurfacing
- Road Resurfacing ONLY

Additional Transportation Scope

- Street and ROW Improvements
- Pedestrian Safety Improvements at Intersections

Map of the project area

Notification

A variety of methods were used to notify stakeholders and members of the public from October 14 to November 12 about Phase 1 consultation:

- Project Website www.toronto.ca/KensingtonSafeStreets
- Canada Post direct mail (18,359 addresses in study area) in English, with Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese translations available online
- Emails and phone calls to stakeholder list including residents associations, community groups, organizations, institutions and elected officials (51 contacts)
- Emails to urban Indigenous organizations active in the Kensington Market area (4 contacts)
- Postcards distributed by hand to businesses in Kensington Market to promote the online comment form (500 copies)

>>Appendix A: Public Event Notification: Notice & Postcard

Activities

One Window Commenting

Stakeholder representatives and members of the public were invited to share comments and ask questions via phone, email, or written letter. A total of 12 comment submissions were received from October 22-29, 2021. All comments were recorded and reviewed for consideration and response by the project team.

Stakeholder Meetings

An informal meeting was held on September 21, 2021 from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. via Webex with two representatives from Friends of Kensington Market to gather initial feedback from community members during the development of the project presentation.

A stakeholder meeting was held on October 25, 2021 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. via Webex. More than 50 stakeholders were invited to attend. Representatives from 8 organizations participated and are listed below:

1. Friends of Kensington Market
2. Kensington Market Action Committee
3. Kensington Residents' Association
4. Kensington Market Business Improvement Area
5. Kensington Market Community Land Trust
6. Walk Toronto
7. Deep Quong Non-Profit Homes
8. St. George's Evangelical Lutheran Church

The meeting was facilitated by Ryan Lo, Senior Coordinator in the Public Consultation Unit, and featured a presentation on the project by Maili Sedore, Senior Project Manager, Cycling & Pedestrian Projects, Transportation Services. Opportunities for questions and feedback followed the presentation. A note-taker recorded minutes.

An additional meeting was held on November 2, 2021 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. via Zoom with an Indigenous business owner in Kensington Market to gather feedback from an urban Indigenous resident's perspective.

Public Information Event

The public event took place on October 28, 2021 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. via Webex, and was attended by 41 people. A Cantonese and Mandarin was available at the event to translate questions and responses.

The materials prepared for the public event, including the presentation slides and comment form were posted to the project website on October 20, 2021, and hard copy materials were made available upon request. Traditional and Simplified Chinese translations of the materials were also posted on the project website.

Online Comment Form

To provide additional feedback opportunity, an online comment form was available from October 20 to November 12, which received 250 responses. Participation was anonymous and results were reviewed for duplicate and invalid responses before being analyzed for this report.

The comment form included background information on the project, and asked the 15 questions listed below. The questions provided opportunity for multi-choice or multi-select responses, in addition to open ended comment boxes, and optional demographic questions.

1. What best describes your relationship to Kensington Market?
2. What type of business do you represent?
3. What is the name of the organization or institution you represent?
4. Did you participate in one or more of these planning processes?
5. Are you an active 6c parking permit holder?
6. What is your age?
7. From conversations with residents and community members, we know people like Kensington Market for a variety of reasons. What do you like about the streetscape of Kensington Market today?
8. How important are the following proposed street design principles to you?
9. Are there other design principles that are important to you?
10. What are the most important features to you in Kensington Market?
11. How important is each of the following alternatives compared to on-street parking?
12. If all material options mentioned are feasible, how would you rank the options for sidewalks on Augusta Avenue, Baldwin Street, and Kensington Avenue?
13. If all material options mentioned are feasible, how would you rank the options for roadways on Augusta Avenue, Baldwin Street, and Kensington Avenue?
14. How supportive are you of the idea of Shared Streets in Kensington Market?
15. Do you have any other comments?

>>Appendix B: Online Comment Form

Feedback Summary

Stakeholder and Public Meetings

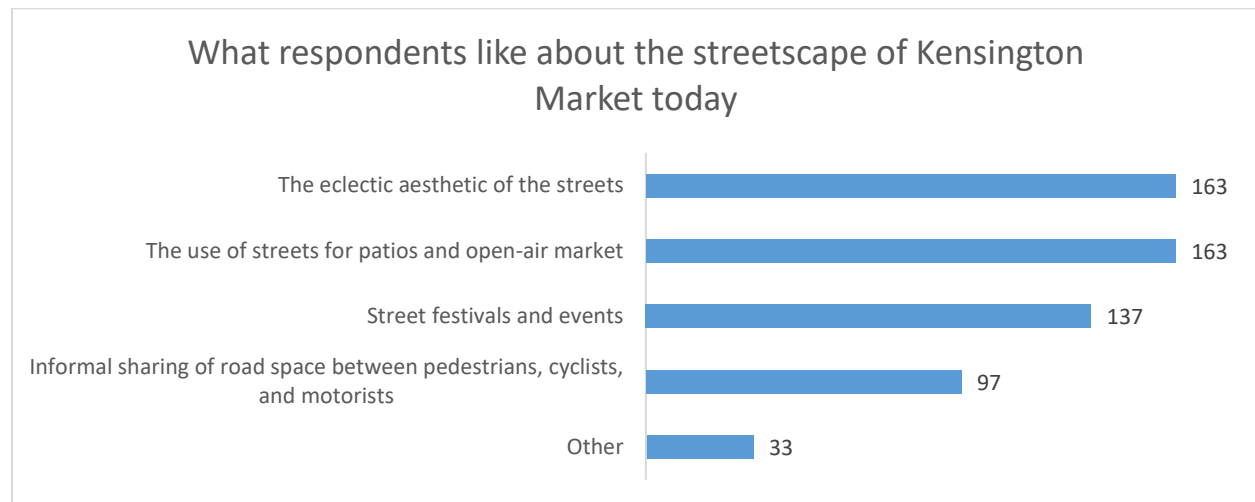
During the October 25 stakeholder meeting and October 28 public meeting, participants expressed questions and comments regarding each of the potential improvements, summarized below:

Topic	Question and Comment Summary
Bump-outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bump-outs and curb extensions should be located in areas where they do not require removal of on-street parking Where on-street parking is removed due to bump-outs or curb extensions, the loss should be offset by new parking on the opposite side of the road
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phased construction work and mitigation methods are needed to minimize the impact on businesses
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most small businesses cannot control when deliveries take place
Gentrification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community does not want a homogenized look in Kensington Market, not another Yorkville or a gentrified neighbourhood Residents are still waiting for the Heritage Conservation District plan as it is important for the preservation of the neighbourhood
Hydro poles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks are already very narrow and cluttered, the City should explore eliminating hydro poles where possible
Nassau Street and Augusta Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers are making illegal right turns at this intersection, a bump-out or other measures should be implemented to address this
Pedestrianization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian-friendly zones in many European cities have resolved delivery challenges and gentrification is not an issue – Kensington is a prime candidate for pedestrianization Kensington Market does not have extensive laneway access, therefore pedestrianization should not be a priority Kensington Market is not a space that needs transformation
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety in the market is a concern as there have been instances of public urination, defecation and physical assault
Shared Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street design should be intuitive, it should minimize the amount of thought required Curbless streets are not preferred because people need to figure out where the cars are A shared street on Augusta Avenue with lowered speed limits should allow contra-flow cycling without adding a dedicated lane
Street events and performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making space for more street events is going to cause unnecessary stress amongst residents There is a need to preserve street performance spaces during construction Noise from street events and performances have increased in the last few years
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste bins placed out in the evening make sidewalks difficult to navigate for people with wheelchair and accessibility needs

Online Comment Form

Responses received to each question in the online comment form are described in this section.

Q: From conversations with residents and community members, we know people like Kensington Market for a variety of reasons. What do you like about the streetscape of Kensington Market today?



This question was added at a later point to the survey in response to the feedback from participants in the stakeholder meeting that took place on October 25, 2021. Respondents were able to select all the options that apply to them. As a result of the late addition, there was a total of 206 respondents who completed the question.

Out of the five options provided, the majority chose the following two characteristics as what they like most about the current streetscape of Kensington Market:

1. The eclectic aesthetic of the streets
2. The use of streets for patios and open-air market

The following characteristics are listed based on the number of respondents selecting the option:

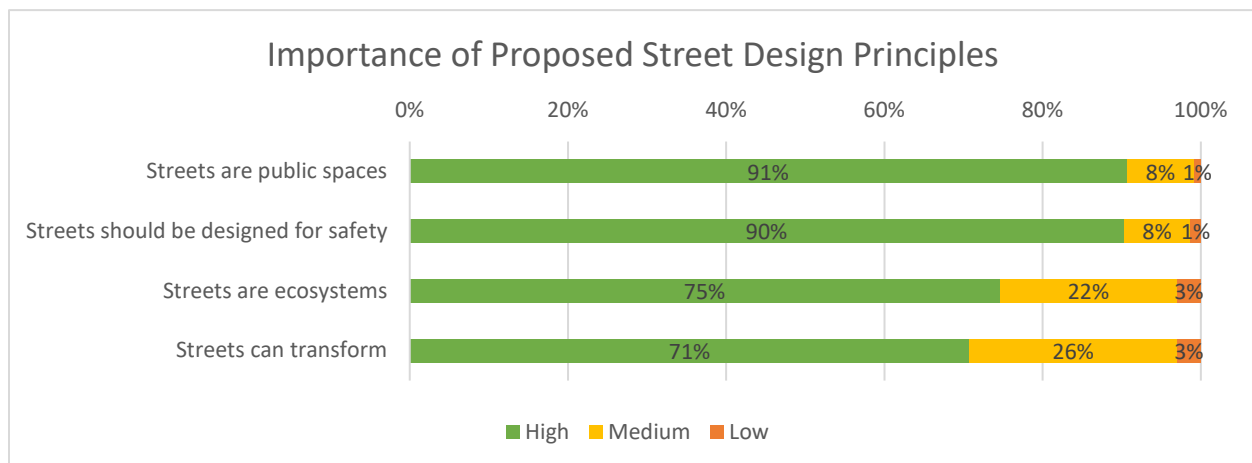
3. Street festivals and events
4. Informal sharing of road space between pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists
5. Other

Additional comments are summarized in the following chart:

Topic	Comment Summary
Pedestrian and cycling experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatively quiet streets and lower vehicle speeds and volume compared to other arterial roads nearby• The walkability and excitement of Kensington Market; the streetscape is much more of a public space than you find in much of Toronto• An amazing place for a stroll and would be better without cars• Dislike sharing road space with motorists• Narrow streets, not dominated by cars• Cyclist friendly and a high density of Bike Share locations• Pedestrian Sundays
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love frequently running into neighbours in the market

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable housing, community support for encampments and residents
Built form and public spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like the small scale of buildings Low building heights, green spaces, art installations Parks and community gathering spaces like corners and sidewalk space
Heritage, culture and character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a historic market and special neighbourhood that needs to be preserved The community's resistance to change Heritage buildings Slow pace, civil interactions Street performers
Small businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays in front of businesses and outdoor vending Continued existence of many small and varied storefronts Excellent restaurants, health food stores Independent businesses, no large chains Location, convenience and access to services Small businesses having a place

Q: How important are the following proposed street design principles to you?

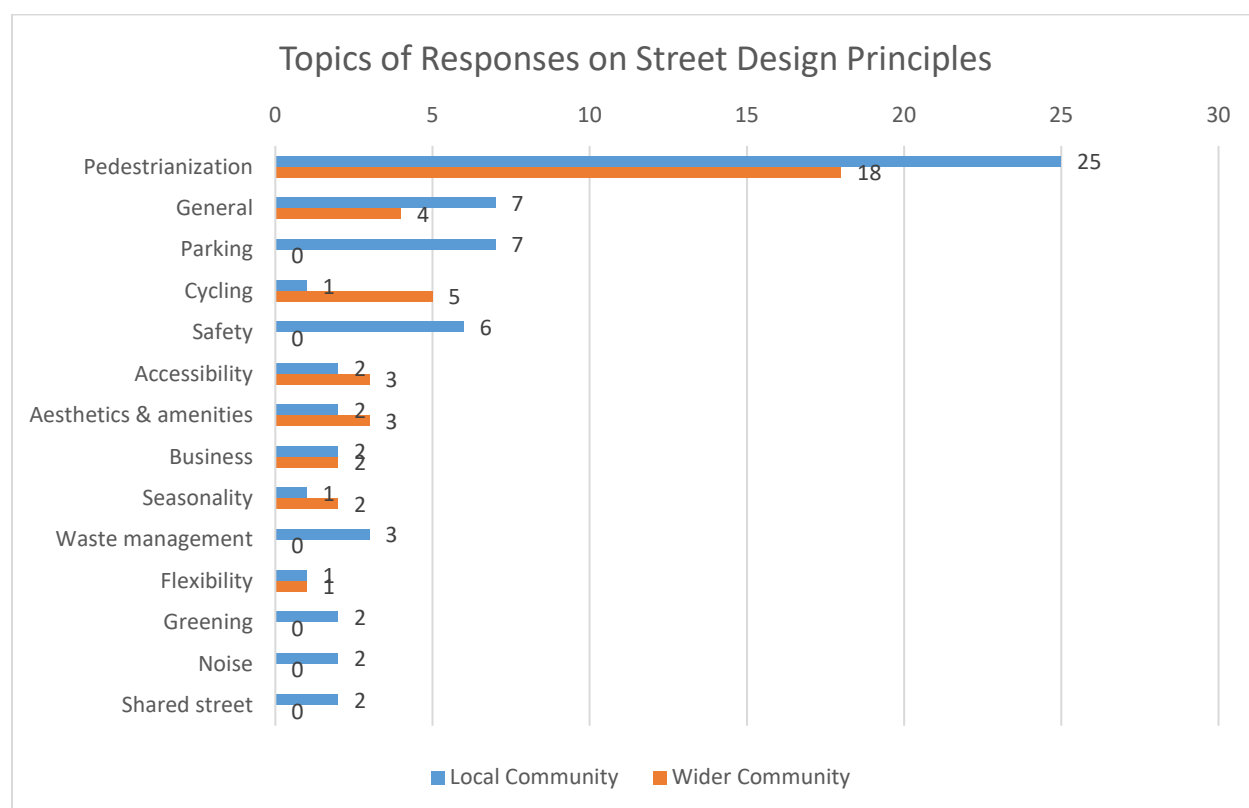


The respondents were able to select 'High', 'Medium', or 'Low' to indicate their perceived importance of each proposed street design principle. A total of 236 respondents completed the question.

While most respondents have rated all the proposed principles highly, there are some differences between them:

- "Streets are public spaces" and "streets should be designed for safety" were rated very highly in terms of importance (91% and 90%, respectively)
- In comparison, "streets are ecosystems" and "streets can transform" were rated less highly in terms of importance (75% and 71%, respectively)

Q: Are there other design principles that are important to you?



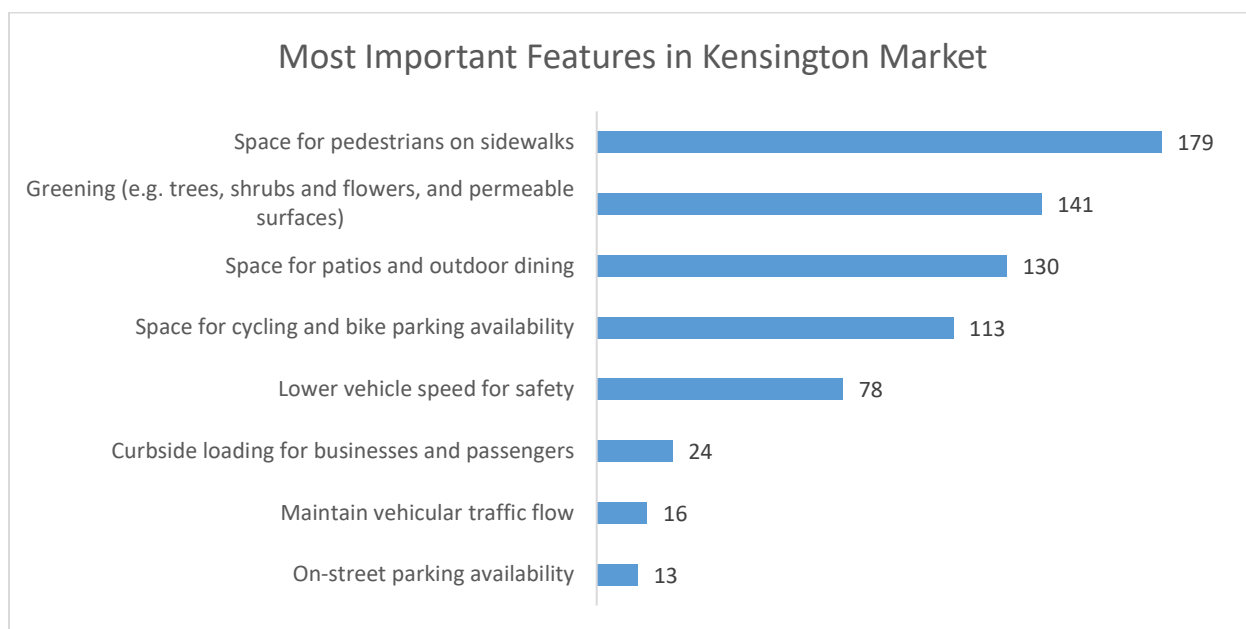
A total of 101 responses were received to this question. While not within scope of changes being considered for this project, responses related to the desire of pedestrianizing Kensington Market made up the highest share (43%) among other topics. Of the responses related to pedestrianization, 58% of the responses were from members of the local community, i.e. those who indicated they live, work, own a property, represent a business, and/or represent an organization in or very near Kensington Market.

All the responses are summarized below by topic, in the order of the number of responses received:

Topic	Comment Summary
Pedestrianization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streets in Kensington Market should be pedestrian only Remove or limit non-essential car traffic in the market Prioritize the safety of vulnerable road users, e.g. pedestrians and cyclists
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streets are for people and should be inviting and welcoming Make needed improvements while honouring the past and maintaining the soul of the market Streets should help us be our best selves and be part of what pulls a community together
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make street parking for permit holders only Maintaining parking and street accessibility for residents because of deficit of on-site private parking and lanes Stop large delivery vehicles from blocking intersections and parking in no-parking zones
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, designated bike lanes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage active modes of transportation such as biking • Streets that are two way streets for bicycles
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the street in a way that cars must drive slowly and remove bypass routes in the neighbourhood between arterial roads • Streets should be well lit and use CPTED design principles • Install barriers so that trucks and other vehicles cannot jump the curb and block pedestrian spaces
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets should be safe, inclusive, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities • Space for disabled, bike parking, strollers, and seating • Wider sidewalks for better walkability
Aesthetics and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets should be beautiful, not just ways of getting from one place to another • Amenities such as seating, art, seasonal drinking fountains • Aesthetic gates for barriers during events, enhance sidewalks
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets are spaces for small local businesses, e.g. open air spaces like patios and street sales • Vitality, city-building, and tourism • Joy to hang out and shop
Seasonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets should be designed for all four seasons, often the winter experience is overlooked • Create a comfortable microclimate • Streets should be dynamic and take on different lives between night and day, and from season to season
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets in Kensington Market seem dirtier than other streets • Garbage collection problem needs to be fixed • Kensington Market should have centralized trash removal underground, as waste bins are often leaking and releasing odours during garbage collection day
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets can be designed to be flexible, suiting different purposes at different times • Materials should allow for flexibility in maintaining and/or modifying them in the future
Greening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More trees • More greenery on Kensington Avenue as several trees have been cut down
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets don't have to be loud • Cars honking make it difficult to live here
Shared street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets should be shared • Only vehicles belonging to residents and businesses and delivery trucks can access the area

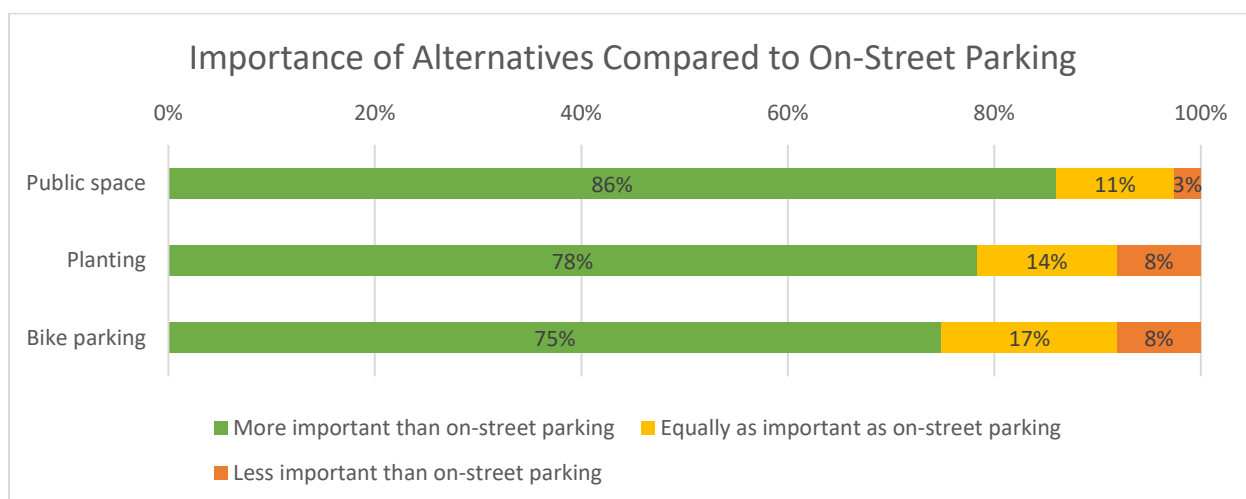
Q: What are the most important features to you in Kensington Market?



The respondents were able to select their top three features, and a total of 236 respondents completed the question. Based on the responses, the most important features in Kensington Market are ranked as follows:

1. Space for pedestrians on sidewalks
2. Greening (e.g. trees, shrubs, and flowers, and permeable surfaces)
3. Space for patios and outdoor dining
4. Space for cycling and bike parking availability
5. Lower vehicle speed for safety
6. Curbside loading for businesses and passengers
7. Maintain vehicular traffic flow
8. On-street parking availability

Q: How important is each of the following alternatives compared to on-street parking?



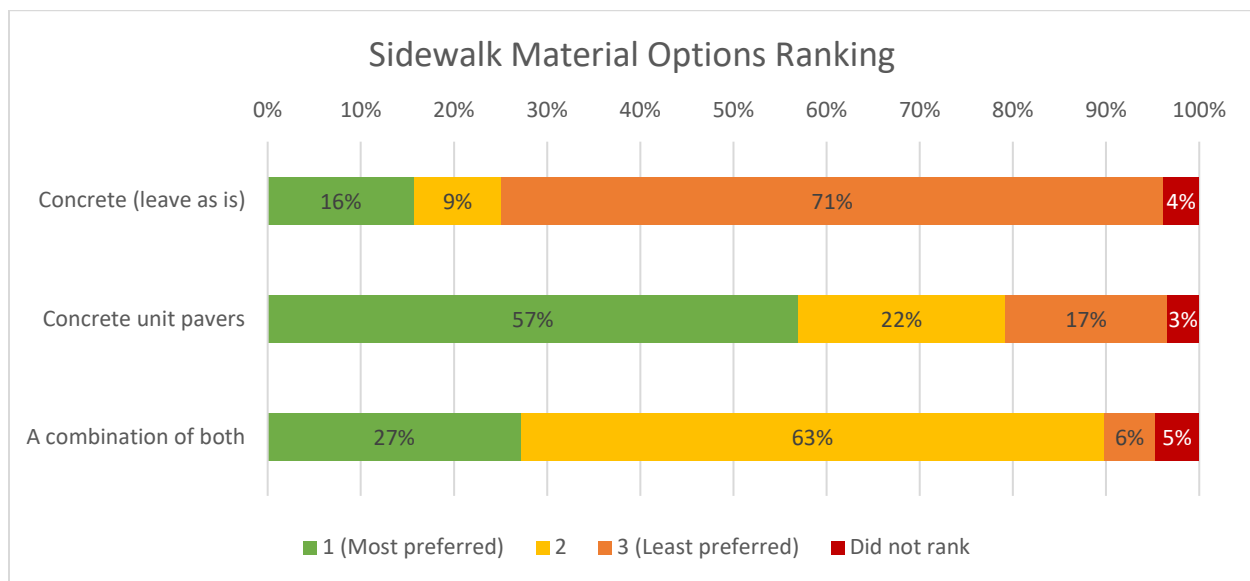
The respondents were asked to compare the importance of public space, planting and bike parking as alternatives to on-street parking. They were able to select one of the following for each alternative:

1. More important than on-street parking
2. Equally as important as on-street parking
3. Less important than on-street parking

A total of 235 respondents completed the question. A majority of the respondents rated the alternatives similarly, as more important than on-street parking:

1. 86% indicated public space is more important, 11% consider them equal in importance
2. 78% indicated planting is more important, 14% consider them equal in importance
3. 75% indicated bike parking is more important, 17% consider them equal in importance

Q: If all material options mentioned are feasible, how would you rank the options for sidewalks on Augusta Avenue, Baldwin Street, and Kensington Avenue?

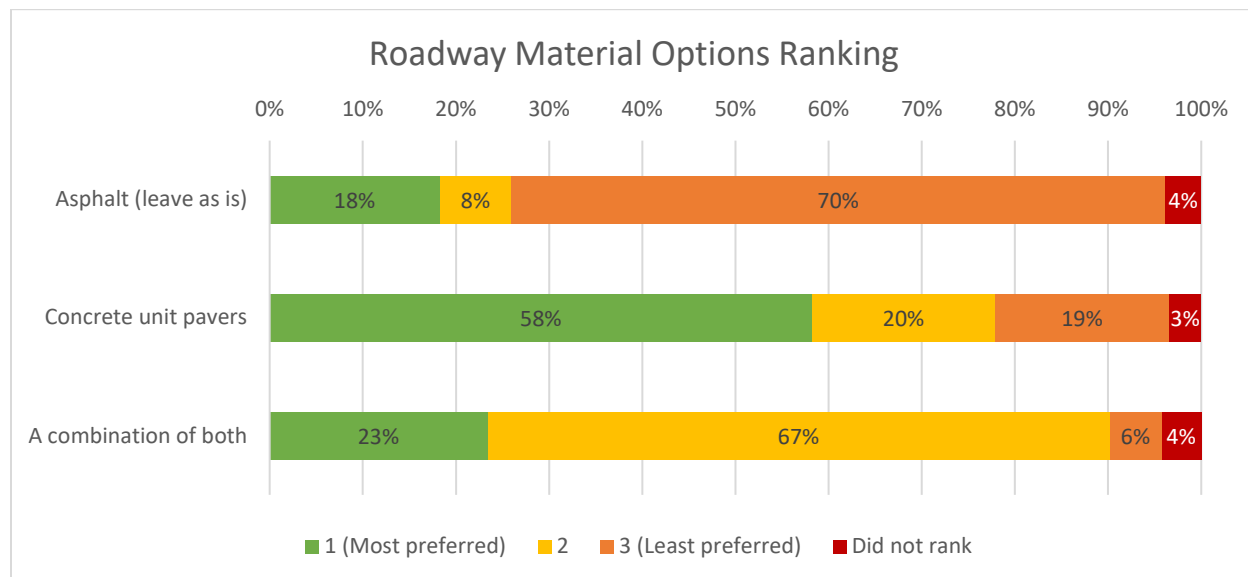


The respondents were first presented with the benefits and trade-offs of the two material options for sidewalks, concrete and concrete unit pavers. The respondents were then asked to rank the options based on their preferences, 1 being the most preferred, 3 being the least preferred. The respondents could also choose not to rank one or more of the options.

A total of 235 respondents completed the question. A majority of the respondents indicated their preference for concrete unit pavers or a combination of both material options:

- 57% ranked concrete unit pavers first compared to the 16% who ranked concrete first
- 27% ranked a combination of both first and 63% ranked this option second

Q: If all material options mentioned are feasible, how would you rank the options for roadways on Augusta Avenue, Baldwin Street, and Kensington Avenue?



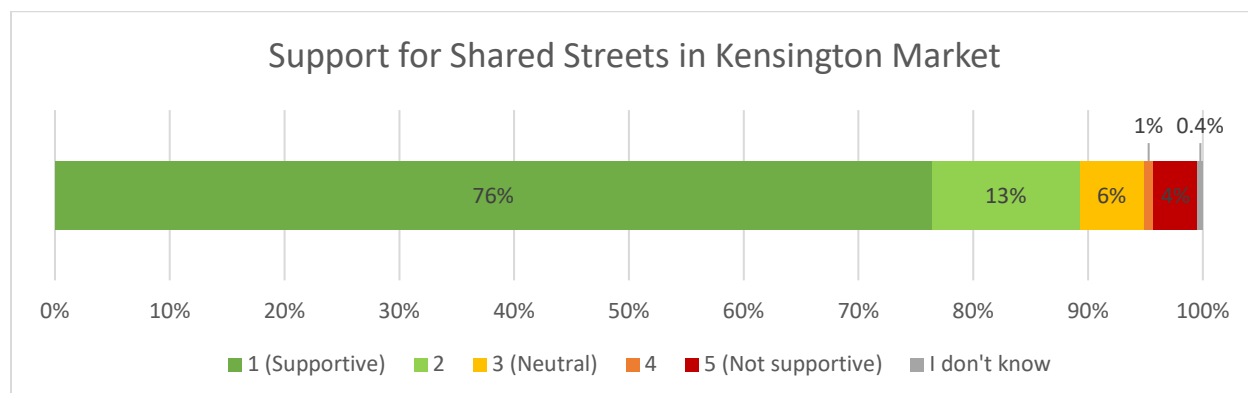
Similar to the previous question, the respondents were first presented the benefits and trade-offs of the two material options for roadways, asphalt and concrete unit pavers. The respondents were then asked to rank the options based on their preferences, 1 being the most preferred, 3 being the least preferred. The respondents could also choose not to rank one or more of the options.

A total of 235 respondents completed the question, and the results were also similar to the previous question. A majority of the respondents indicated their preference for concrete unit pavers or a combination of both material options:

- 58% ranked concrete unit pavers first compared to the 18% who ranked concrete first
- 23% ranked a combination of both first and 67% ranked this option second

While the survey did not provide any prompts in these two questions about not ranking a specific material option (i.e. leaving the drop-down menu of the ranking blank), some respondents might have opted not to give a ranking to indicate their disapproval of the option. Nonetheless, without an official prompt, it would be impossible to identify the exact reasons for respondents not ranking specific options.

Q: How supportive are you of the idea of Shared Streets in Kensington Market?



The respondents were first presented with a description and sample images to explain the idea of Shared Streets. They were then asked to indicate their level of support in the scale of 1-5.

A total of 233 respondents completed the question. 76% strongly supported and 13% supported Shared Streets in Kensington Market. 6% were neutral. Only 5% either opposed or strongly opposed the idea.

Q: Do you have any other comments?

A total of 142 responses were received to this question. Some responses contained multiple comments and were separated based on the corresponding topics, which resulted in 153 comments in total.

Similar to the responses received when asked about other street design principles, a majority of the comments (55%) were related to pedestrianization of Kensington Market. Of the comments related to pedestrianization, 55% were from members of the local community.

9% of the comments were related to parking, loading and delivery. The rest of the topics received less than 10 comments each.

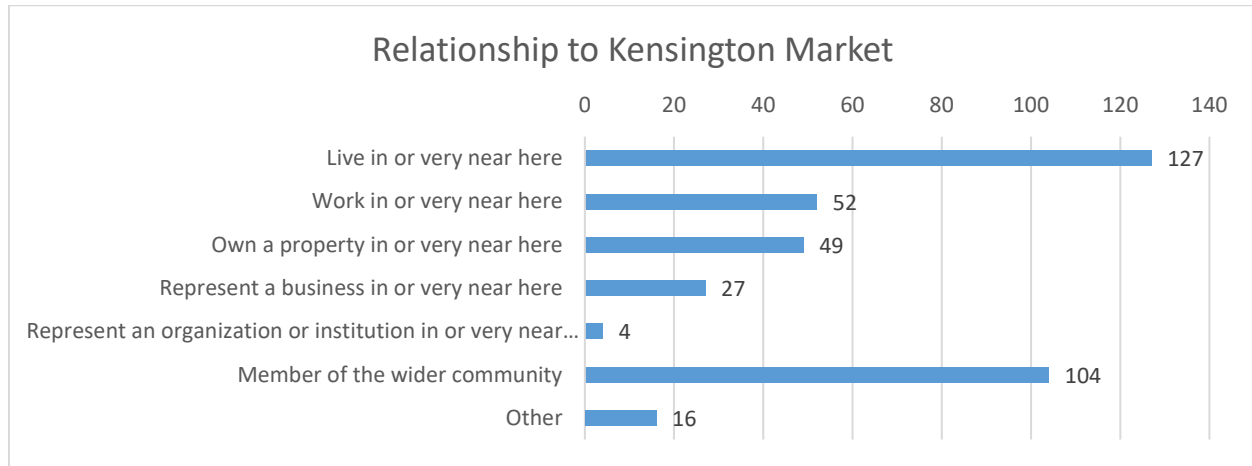
All the comments are summarized below by topic, in the order of the number of comments received:

Topic	Comment Summary
Pedestrianization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kensington Market is the ideal location for pedestrianization • There should be no vehicular traffic or on-street parking spaces • The notion of "shared streets" doesn't go far enough
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More parking enforcement is needed, issue of illegal parking by delivery trucks and rideshare vehicles • Space is needed for loading and delivery for businesses • Should use existing parking spaces for other uses such as sidewalks, green space, market stalls, or bike lanes
Accessibility and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers are parking on sidewalks, which block pedestrians from using wheelchairs, strollers, etc. • Sidewalks can be congested with bikes, patios, vegetables, and surfaces are uneven • Bump outs at intersections can help prevent large trucks blocking the way or obstructing sight lines and causing collisions
Shared Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining vehicle access is important to allow businesses to stock and deliver, but a strong bias towards pedestrians is needed • Shared streets will make room for businesses to expand and provide the flexibility for pedestrianization at certain times • Important to lower vehicle speeds and the number of cars
Materials and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer the aesthetic look of pavers but worry about their long-term maintenance as they can become a tripping hazard • Prefer the standard treatments because pavers never get fixed after utilities work • If pavers are used, they should be permeable
Gentrification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't try to make Kensington Market into a boutique, gentrified or homogenous area • Some of the changes proposed seem cosmetic and a "creepy" kind of gentrification

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be thoughtful and critical to ensure that the changes do not cause displacement
Speeding and enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower speed limits, install bump-outs and speeding cameras • Enforce idling by-law and street directions, drivers and cyclists are going the wrong way on a weekly basis
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any way traffic can be lessened is preferred • Instead of relying on NACTO guidelines, the City should look at cities like Oslo and Amsterdam for best practices to achieve Vision Zero
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorcycles and cars make a lot of noise, particularly honking • Bars and restaurants blast loud music all day and evening
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More waste bins is needed • There should be a centralized waste management facility for businesses
Greening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening sidewalks to create more space for greening • Replace parking spaces with green planting beds and bioswales to address the climate emergency and implement City policies
Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better lighting, fewer hydro poles but don't clean it too much • String light bulbs over each street to slow down traffic and provide ambiance
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating CafeTO is important for businesses
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling is not safe in Kensington Market • There should be better cycling connections within the Market

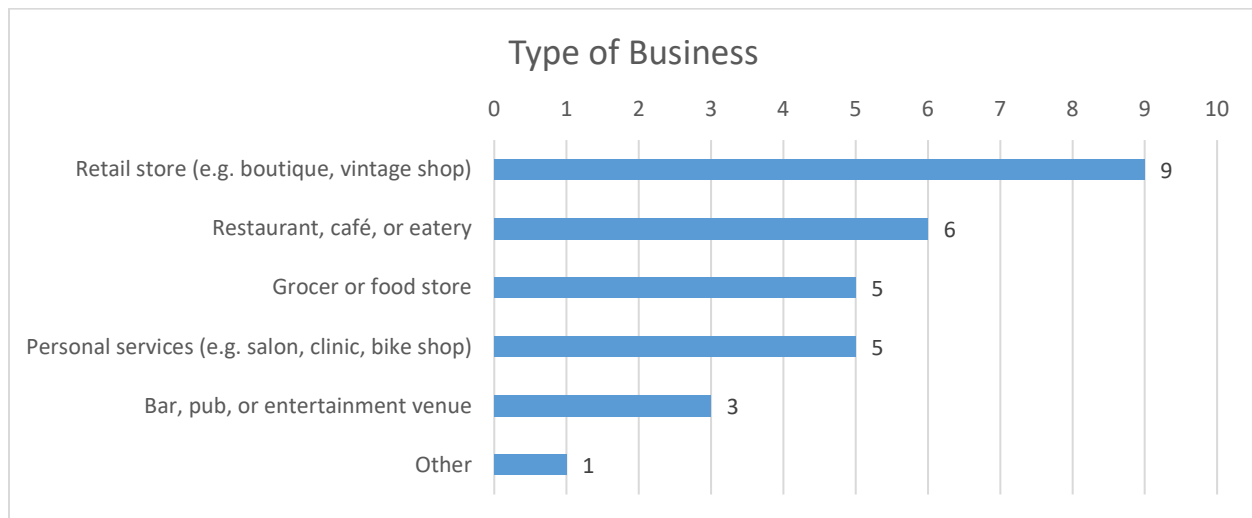
Demographics

A total of 250 respondents provided demographic information described below.



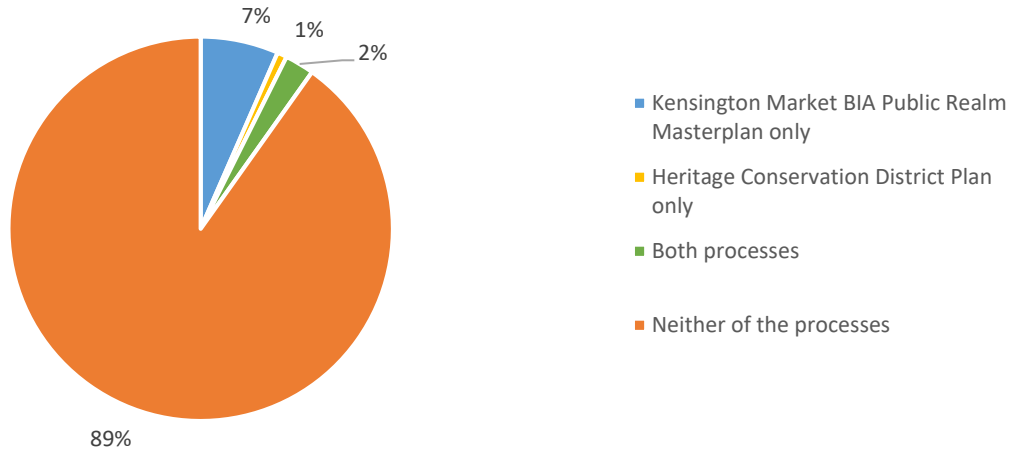
The majority of respondents live in the project area.

Of those who indicated that they represent a business in or very near Kensington Market, there are a variety of types of businesses represented.



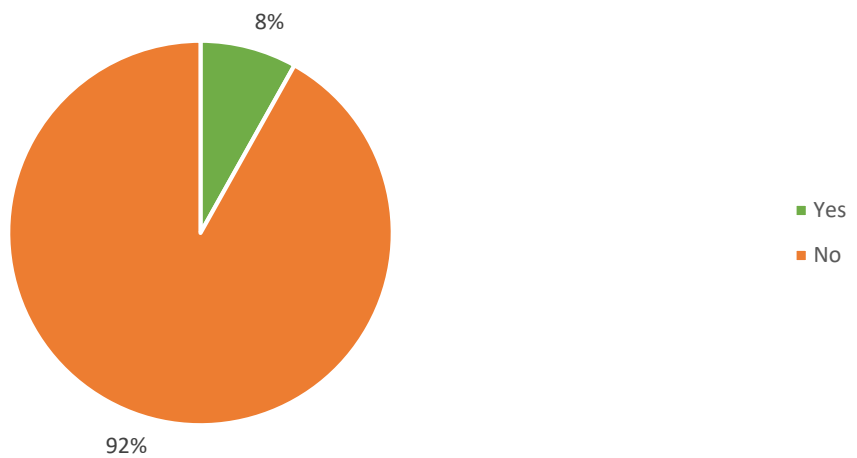
When asked about their previous participation in planning processes in the area, such as the Kensington Market BIA Public Real Masterplan and the Heritage Conservation District Plan, a majority (89%) of the respondents indicated that they have not been involved in any of the processes.

Participation in Planning Processes

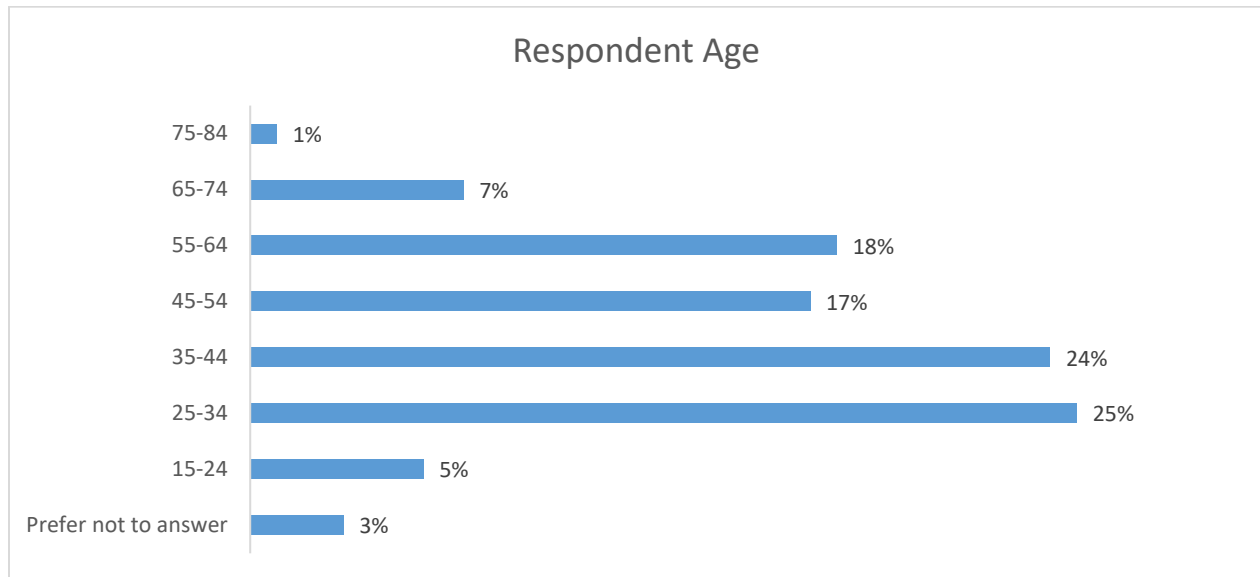


Only a small proportion of the respondents (8%) were active parking permit holders in the area.

Active 6c Parking Permit Holder



Age of Respondents



The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 – 64, with no responses provided from individuals over 85 or under 15 years of age.

Public Comments

Comments received via phone/email from members of the public are summarized below:

Topic	Comment Summary
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sidewalks are blocked by parked cars and trucks, which make them inaccessible for people who use mobility devices
Cycling on sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyclists are biking illegally and dangerously on sidewalks
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officers should enforce speeding, parking and idling violations in Kensington Market
Pedestrianization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kensington Market should be pedestrianized
Street trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City should carefully consider materials in relation to how they would help improve the growth and health of trees, and the types of trees being planted• The City should consider how trees and hydro wires can co-exist without injuring the trees

Summary

Improving the pedestrian experience

The feedback received showed a clear appetite to improve the pedestrian experience in Kensington Market. While there was strong support for shared streets among the survey respondents, many felt that the concept did not go far enough and that the City should explore pedestrianizing at least parts of the market. Even though it was not part of the scope for this project, there was a high volume of comments calling for pedestrianization from members of both the local and wider communities. Some felt that the ambiguity of the shared streets concept would be challenging for people to navigate; the design of such spaces shared between road users would need to be clear and intuitive.

Many respondents indicated accessibility of sidewalks as a major concern. Cars and trucks illegally mount the curb to park on sidewalks, obstructing space for pedestrians and sightlines for all road users. Waste bins, especially in the evening and on collection days, also block space on sidewalks which are already narrow, making it difficult for pedestrians with strollers or mobility devices. Some called for the need for better waste management solutions to mitigate this issue.

Road safety

The most common road safety concerns cited by respondents were speeding, illegal turns, illegal parking, and wrong-way driving. Many felt that there should be stronger traffic enforcement in the area. Some expressed that road designs that were being proposed, such as bump-outs and curb extensions, as well as better signage, would help address these issues.

On-street parking

There was strong support from the feedback received for removing on-street parking in the market area to create more space for wider sidewalks, greening, and amenities such as bike parking. Residents indicated that they still would need permit parking for accessibility as many of them cannot park on private properties or did not have access to laneways. Residents also requested stronger parking enforcement if on-street parking is removed in the market.

Delivery and loading

Business owners emphasized the importance of easy access to delivery and loading space in the market. Many small businesses do not have control over the timing of delivery, so a timed closure of streets might not be an appropriate approach.

Materials for sidewalks and roadways

The feedback on material options was more nuanced. While there was support among survey respondents to explore concrete unit pavers as a material option for both sidewalks and roadways, some respondents had concerns about the long-term maintenance of the material and the accessibility of the sidewalk or roadway when the pavers become unsettled.

Many respondents cautioned about the potential of radically transforming the character of the neighbourhood through a change of materials, leading to homogenization and gentrification of Kensington Market, and the possibility of displacing existing residents and businesses. The City should carefully study and consider the selection of materials.

Next Steps

The project team will review all feedback received, together with technical considerations, and stakeholder comments to develop preliminary design work for the streets within the project area in Kensington Market.

A second virtual public event will be held in Spring 2022, and the design will be further refined in Summer 2022 based on feedback received.

It is expected that the construction will begin in Spring/Summer 2023.

Appendix A: Public Event Notification: Notice & Postcard

Appendix B: Online Comment Form

Example of Planting

Example of bike parking

Example of a public space with planting and seating

*** 11. How important is each of the following alternatives compared to on-street parking?**

	1 It is less important than on-street parking	2 It is equally as important as on-street parking	3 It is more important than on-street parking
Planting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bike parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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The City's standard materials are concrete for sidewalks and asphalt for roads. They are economical to build and easy to maintain. Asphalt also provides a good colour contrast to the sidewalk for people walking with low vision.

There are sometimes other choices that can give a different look and feel, including concrete unit pavers. The trade-offs are cost and potentially additional maintenance in the future.



Example of a concrete sidewalk



Example of concrete unit pavers



