BRIDGING PARKS AND PEOPLE

Creating Inclusive Spaces through Cross-cultural Community Participation

By Japjot Singh

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ABSTRACT

In the present time, even the best-designed parks go to waste if no one uses them. Understanding how different cultural and ethnic groups value and use urban parks is crucial in developing appropriate design and management strategies for urban green spaces (Özgüner, 2011, p. 600). Parks are the places which can be used as a bridge between different communities by creating an atmosphere of unity and diversity, hence promoting communal harmony (Business Standard, 2017). Urban parks must respond to the needs of visitors from diverse cultural groups and be designed and managed by people from different social and cultural backgrounds. To address this issue of disconnect between people and public spaces, a people-centered approach has to be used to plan, design, and manage public parks. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential to create parks that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being (What Is Placemaking?, 2007).

Hence the primary research question is how might we create a process that promotes cross-cultural community participation in the design and management of public parks? Since the members of the community need to be part of the planning and design of public parks, Martin and Boaz (2000) defined a spectrum of activities ranging from communication through consultation to co-production – the latter referring to the active and direct involvement of individuals or communities in policy debates, strategy formulation, and the design and delivery of local services. From the viewpoint of this present study, the concept of public participation through various participatory activities represents community involvement towards the higher end of this spectrum. The chosen methodology for this research is that of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 1–3). This is an inductive method of generating new theory through simultaneous collection, coding, and data analysis. The outcome of the research would be to form a design toolkit to inform others on the methods to make their park and its design and management process more inclusive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Furthermore, I would like to thank Park People for connecting me with Jason Ash and Safia Parveen who are the community leaders of grassroot community group - Friends of Thorncliffe Park and the Thorncliffe Wellness Cafe respectively. Their participation in the research workshops has been crucial to achieve these results.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this project

This paper is part of the Major Research Project (MRP) for OCAD University's Inclusive Design Program. It aims to define a set of activities as a toolkit that community members can utilize to design and manage their public parks. Such practices of co-design and co-creation aim to foster inclusion, unity and harmony among the community members towards their community park. Research has established that parks are the places that are perceived as beneficial for promoting positive health outcomes, improving emotional and mental well-being and also building a stronger sense of community within neighbourhoods. Research also suggests that a community's perception and use of a public space is different from what local authorities and planners think. Hence this work seeks to explore, examine, summarize and build upon this to inform planners and authorities about how to develop public parks by including the local community members in the decision-making process regarding design and management of parks.

1.2 Why inclusive public parks are important?

Public parks are the centre of public life and are an important part of our urban environment. Parks provide the community with various physical and mental health benefits, a space for social gathering and recreation along with fostering a sense of unity and belonging among the community members. Hence it is important that public parks are inclusive not in terms of just equal access but also in terms of decision-making authority regarding the design and management of these public parks.

As urban populations rise and density increases, access to quality green spaces (and the mental and physical benefits that accompany them) will continue to diminish for marginalized communities, further widening the disparities in access to parks and public spaces and the accompanying public health implications (Past, Present, Future: Who Gets to Write Urbanism's next Chapter?, 2020). Identifying the needs of the current and predicted future communities is considered practical and proactive for planners to achieve Inclusive Public Parks.

Parks are the places which can be used as a bridge between different communities by building upon the sense of trust and unity among the community members to create a collaborative atmosphere where the needs of the whole community can be incorporated into the design process excluding no one. It is crucial that urban parks respond to the needs of visitors from diverse cultural groups and be designed and managed with people from different social and cultural backgrounds, along with keeping different user groups in mind.

Hence, social inclusion, as well as equitable and fair engagement in public space activities and decision making should be a primary concern. As individuals should feel empowered and encouraged to participate fully in various activities, programming, and stewardship processes regarding park use. Only then can everyone take full advantage of the various benefits and opportunities provided by public parks (Zhou, 2019).

1.3 Research objective

Parks and green spaces offer urban residents' vital resources and services, hence the participation of park users is necessary in order to utilize the park to its utmost potential. Different communities need to be incorporated in the planning process because residents are familiar with their locality, cultural values, and knowledge which professional planners may lack. The communities around the park must act in a partnership with the local authorities responsible for park planning and management to create a collaborative atmosphere where needs of the whole community can be incorporated in the design process excluding no one because if parks are ever going to serve residents to the best of their ability, policies and plans regarding parks should be made in response to the voices of those residents.

Hence the primary research question is -

How might we create a process that promotes cross cultural community participation in design and management of public parks?

Additional research question that supports the main research objective is also discussed in this project -

How might this process increase the opportunities for diverse communities to be vocal in the decision-making process of parks?

1.4 Key terms

Accessibility - It is the concept of whether a product or service can be used by everyone—however they encounter it. It can also be viewed as the "ability to access" and benefit from some system or entity.

Co-design - Co-design is a design-led process that uses creative and participatory methods. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, there are patterns and principles that can be applied in different ways with different people. Co-design is about designing with, not for people.

Collaboration - Collaboration is the process of two or more people, entities or organizations working together to complete a task or achieve a goal.

Community - It is a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings.

Community engagement – It is a strategic process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest, or affiliation to identify and address issues affecting their well-being.

Community Participation – It is a social process whereby specific groups with shared needs living in a defined geographic area actively pursue identification of their needs, take decisions and establish mechanisms to meet these needs.

Cross-culture - It refers to a an effort to ensure that people interact effectively with individuals from other backgrounds. It implies a recognition of national, regional, and ethnic differences in manners and methods and a desire to bridge them.

Diversity - The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

Environment – It simply means 'surroundings', hence the environment of an individual, object, element or system includes all of the other entities with which it is surrounded.

Equity - It refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

Focus group – it is a group interview involving a small number of demographically similar people or participants who have other common traits/experiences.

Iterative process - It is a sequence of procedures that facilitates the creation of a more refined product or application.

Place-making – It is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. It capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. It is political due to the nature of place identity.

Social exclusion - It is the phenomenon and process that the needs of a person for belonging, and relationship are hindered due to being rejected or excluded by someone or a social group.

Social inclusion - It is defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.

Spatial stewardship - Spatial stewardship treats the public realm as a public resource and promotes the responsible use, management and maintenance of this space by communities.

Toolkit - A toolkit is a collection of adaptable resources for individuals that enables them to learn about an issue and identify approaches for addressing them. Toolkits can help translate theory into practice, and typically target one issue or one audience.

Workshop – It is a period of discussion and practical work on a particular subject, in which a group of people share their knowledge and experience

CHAPTER 2: PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Importance and benefits of public parks

Parks are an integral part of city life. They provide the community with various physical and mental benefits and other social goods underneath the surface to have wide, open space in your neighbourhood. Along with numerous individual benefits, parks do provide various community benefits as well -

1. Promoting community wellness

Parks and green spaces provide the community with healing spaces for individuals by giving them direct access to natural greenery promoting physical activity and improved mental health. Parks also provide opportunities for fitness, especially for low-income families who could probably not afford a gym or pool membership.

2. Centre of community

Public parks serve as a fantastic place for community residents to meet and socialize. They are also great spaces for events and for people to engage in recreational activities. This allows people to develop a sense of community. A park is a perfect spot for community gatherings or a farmer's market, providing a safe space for the community to come together and giving them a reason to leave their homes.

3. Community safety

Green spaces within city parks attract people and act as a gathering place where neighbours form social ties that produce stronger, safer neighbourhoods. This building of community not only increases safety but also increases the sense of citizenship that people hold to their communities.

Increasing the number of parks and recreational facilities in a neighbourhood also reduces crime rates, especially among youth. By giving young people a safe place to interact with one another they keep them off the streets and out of trouble. Similarly, when parks are used by many people, there are more eyes on the street, creating a safer environment for everyone.

2.2 Defining inclusion

In general terms, an inclusive public space is often seen as a "public space for all". It suggests that everyone should feel welcomed, included, and not discriminated against by their gender, age, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, socioeconomic status and/or personal values when being in a public space (Zhou, 2019).

For this project, along with this definition, inclusion would also be defined as allowing people to participate in the process, essentially truly listening and incorporating their stories, feelings, history, and dreams in the design of open space (Geiger, 2020). Such an approach promotes designing with people as compared to designing for people.

2.3 Elements of public park inclusion

Akkar Ercan and Oya Memlük (2015) conclude in their paper 'More inclusive than before - The story of a historic urban park in Ankara, Turkey' that public space inclusiveness is complicated since public space concerns are diverse, site specific and interrelated. As a result, there are various factors that can shape and affect inclusion in public spaces.

After extensive study and analysis, this research indicated that public park inclusion can be divided into three distinct yet interrelated elements.

1. Built environment

A public park's physical layout and design influences our physical behaviours and interactions with the built environment. Various built environment features that affect these interactions are -

Physical accessibility - Using elements like accessible routes, curb ramps, parking and passenger loading zones, signage and restroom accommodations etc., that allow individuals of all ages and abilities to use the place.

Social accessibility - Having a public park that fosters a welcoming environment for all, regardless of their socioeconomic condition their cultural or religious orientation, gives the community a sense of security, comfort, and empowerment. Such spaces should promote social inclusion by accommodating various activities and gatherings that promote community harmony and togetherness.

Connectivity - Another feature of the built environment that affects people's use of a park is transportation and the walkability of a park. Such spaces should be accessible by foot and connected through a good transportation network so that it's easier for people to visit the park regularly and participate in various activities that it hosts.

2. Individual's experience

Even when two people use the same public park, their perspectives and perceptions of its inclusivity might be vastly different. So, it's crucial to capture a wide range of personal experiences rather than generalizing the opinion. Many times an individual's experience is overlooked by a shared public opinion. Hence, individuals who aren't part of that shared public opinion are often driven out of the decision-making process and feel excluded from that space.

3. Process and procedures

Aside from the built environment and an individual's experience in a public park, the process and procedure regarding the design and management of the park is also a crucial factor determining the inclusiveness. Individuals should feel included in the decision-making process as it provides a sense of belonging to their community park. Communities should promote the idea of spatial stewardship among their members as it encourages the community to utilize, manage and maintain a public park responsibly (District of Columbia Public Space Activation & Stewardship Guide, n.d.).

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research aims to gain insight into the relationship between communities and public parks. A literature review was conducted exploring quantitative and qualitative research, which focused on various aspects and key themes related to parks, their stakeholders, and their day-to-day usage. In the present day scenario, even the best designed parks lack the balance to account for the diverse needs of different social groups.

For the literature review, various databases were searched – Jstor, Taylor and Francis, SAGE Publications – for academic journals using the search items "parks", "inclusion", "community", "participation", "stewardship" and "activation". A wide range of information was also collected from reports and documents published by various government websites and NGOs. These sources were chosen because of the availability of in-depth qualitative research regarding the built environment of parks and various other aspects related to its users, diversity and management. 45 articles from 2005-2021 were screened for content through the keyword search.

Ultimately 35 articles were reviewed as they highlighted the day-to-day issues associated with parks and exclusion in the design practices. The goal was to source articles that reflected inclusionary and exclusionary practices while designing public parks across the globe. Papers not conforming to such an approach were excluded.

3.1 Common methods and practices

Inclusive parks should foster racial equity and social diversity among their users as it is essential to utilize the power of parks to its utmost potential. Various researches have considered racial/ethnic variation in park use, but these studies do not consider whether people across race/ethnicity interact in parks. In research by Lee and Scott, a local community member detailed that many local African Americans had no interest in visiting the Cedar Hill State Park as the park did not do anything to encourage their use of the space and that it was mainly visited by White individuals and was viewed by community members as a "White space" (Lee and Scott, 2016, p. 432).

In such spaces, the presence of people of colour can be perceived as out of the ordinary, dangerous, or criminal (Public Space, Park Space, and Racialized Space, 2020). Instead of avoiding this friction, creative strategies can be used as parks could act as a bridge between communities to understand each other and strengthen relationships.

Unlike the issues raised in the patronage of Cedar Hill State Park, the Les Jardins Gamelin continues to attract large numbers of Montrealers and visitors who enjoy the Jardins' unique design and daily program of cultural and citizen-oriented activities which address challenges related to citizen participation and peaceful coexistence with marginalized groups. The organization has developed an original approach to making urban agriculture accessible to all, to make this type of gardening a unifying and inclusive social activity (Quartier Des Spectacles | Urban Agriculture Is Alive and Well in Les Jardins Gamelin, 2017).

In racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse neighbourhoods the importance of integrating community voices into park planning needs to be highlighted. Urban parks and green spaces provide various physical, social, environmental, and health benefits improving the quality of life in the urban environment. Hence, it is crucial that urban parks respond to the needs of visitors from diverse cultural groups.

Smiley et al. (2016, p. 4) conducted two separate surveys in Houston, one of the country's most racially diverse and heavily segregated cities. The survey was regarding park improvements, one from the white neighbourhoods and the other from African-American and Latino neighbourhoods. The researchers identified huge priority gaps between the two surveys - the white population preferred building hiking trails, biking paths for the park overhaul, whereas the African-American and Latino neighbourhoods envisioned a diverse set of new or improved amenities - most prominently, restrooms and water fountains, and an array of recreational activities while ranking hiking trails, biking paths among the last of the priorities. Hence, it is crucial to acknowledge voices from across the socioeconomic and racial spectrum and especially include voices from marginalized populations that are often missed.

Since parks and green spaces offer urban residents vital resources and services, park users' participation is necessary to utilize the park to its utmost potential. Different communities need to be incorporated into the planning process because residents are familiar with their locality, cultural values, and knowledge which professional planners may lack (Huang, 2010, p. 555). The communities around the park must partner with the local authorities responsible for park planning and management. Such partnership creates a collaborative atmosphere where the needs of the whole community can be incorporated into the design process, excluding no one because if parks are ever going to serve residents to the best of their ability, policies and plans regarding parks should be made in response to the voices of those residents (Smiley et al., 2016, p. 2).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research design

For the overall research, an approach using grounded theory is used as it seeks to find a solution via an iterative process for communities that live around Thorncliffe Park in Toronto, who use or wish to use that park regularly. A potential park user will be determined on various factors like the proximity of their home or business from the park, their daily visit, involvement or usage of the park space, or even their desire to use the park in the future.

4.1.1 Understand and define

The first phase of the research focuses on understanding the issue by creating a shared knowledge base among all the participants to establish focus and define desired outcomes. For this a conceptual framework that has been posited by Cohen et al. (2016, p. 240) has been used to consider the factors that influence the frequency of use and non-use as influenced by two broad categories: the characteristics of potential park users and the environmental attributes of parks themselves. Environmental factors include park features (size, facilities, and programming), condition (maintenance and incivilities), accessibility, aesthetics, safety (perceived and objective), and policies (management and budget). User characteristics such as age, gender, race-ethnicity, socio-economic status, and residential location can influence park use at intra- and inter-personal levels (Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005).

4.1.2 Study area

Data for this study will be collected at Leaside Park, located in the Thorncliffe neighbourhood in Toronto, Canada. This park is chosen because it better represents typical municipal parks of the city through their various recreational facilities and easy access and intensive use by all segments of urban people. It is a densely populated, multicultural neighbourhood in central-east Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in the former Borough of East York. In 2001, immigrants constituted 66% of the population of the Community Planning Area, and recent immigrants constituted 87%. The Median household income for this neighbourhood is around $55,966 (areavibes, 2021). Twenty-eight percent of the residents spoke a language other than English or French at home, with the most frequent being Urdu and Gujarati (Toronto Life, 2013).

4.1.3 Non-participant observation

To initially articulate the problem park users might be facing, a non-participant observation based on the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) (McKenzie et al., 2006) which is a valid and reliable systematic protocol for measurement of population-level PA and utilization, has been used to collect some key outcome measures: (a) park utilization, (b) the number of people engaged and (c) various purposes the place solves. SOPARC was designed to obtain direct information on community park use, including relevant concurrent characteristics of parks and their users. It provides an assessment of park users' physical activity levels, gender, activity modes/types, and estimated age and ethnicity groupings. Additionally, it provides information on individual park activity areas, such as their levels of accessibility, usability, supervision, and organization.

4.1.4 Questionnaire design & administration

For this research, questionnaires were handed out to different community organizations around the Thorncliffe neighbourhood to investigate people's use of and attitudes towards urban parks. These questionnaires also acted as a recruitment form for further activities planned. Such surveys provide the researcher with some fundamental insights, into the diversity of the neighbourhood and the willingness of people to join various focus groups which are part of the research. The survey consists of mainly open-ended questions providing qualitative data to the researcher. To develop an adequate and accurate set of attributes to measure respondents' attitudes and identify the reasons for their answers, the researcher also engaged in dialogue with the community, providing the questionnaire in different languages like Hindi and Urdu, which are prevalent around Thorncliffe.

4.1.5 Participants

Any individual who is a potential user of the neighbourhood park would be considered viable for the research. A potential park user will be determined by various factors like the proximity of their home or business from the park, their daily visit, involvement or usage of the park space, or even their desire to use the park in the future. Since the research is focused on cross-cultural community participation, participants would be from different cultures. The study is focused on adults aged 20-65.

4.1.6 Procedure

This research involved a total of 12 participants. A small sample size is needed due to the study's qualitative nature. A sample size of 12 participants provided diversity and was a decent number for the researcher to conduct focus groups and co-design sessions. Such a sample size lets the researcher focus on conducting the workshop by providing personal assistance to the participants during the whole process.

This is a staged research study. In the first stage, the participants recruited via the organization - park people were asked to fill a survey that gave the researcher insight into how the participants think about their current local park and what changes they would like to see in the future. The survey took between 10-15 minutes to complete. All participants were sent a consent form before any research begins to confirm their participation in the study. The survey results were analyzed and coded to help inform the second stage of the research study, which is the focus group.

In the second stage, focus groups were conducted with 12 participants which were divided in 2 groups, the session lasted for 90 minutes. This was an in-person activity where the researcher asked questions regarding park use to understand the behaviour and attitude of the participants towards their parks. This session ended with a small introduction to the third stage, a co-design session.

In the third stage, a co-design workshop was conducted where the participants were divided into two groups. This session also lasts for 90 mins as well. In this workshop, participants participated in various participatory methods to identify and solve the design and management problems they face during park use. At the start of the co-design workshop, a photo release form was distributed to everyone. Photos were only taken of participants who had signed the photo release form. All participants were informed of their right to opt out of the co-design at any time.

The fourth phase was a feedback session. In this phase, semi-structured questions were asked from the participants and their community leaders to gain feedback on activities performed during different stages of this research and the park's design proposed by the researcher.

4.2 Toolkit development process

The toolkit provides a collection of tools and procedures to support the facilitators in carrying out focus groups and co-design sessions with the participants by engaging them in dialogue about park use, their experience, issues faced, suggestions etc.

The toolkit itself is divided into four stages or activities, which were carried out across the span of 4 days -

1. Day 1 - Online survey (15 mins)

In the first stage, the participants were asked to fill out a survey that will give the facilitator insight into how the participants think about their current local park and what changes they would like to see in the future.

2. Day 2 - In-person focus group (90 mins)

In the second stage, focus groups were conducted with 12 participants divided into two groups and the session lasted for 90 minutes. This was an in-person activity where the facilitator would ask questions regarding park use to understand the behaviour and attitude of the participants towards their parks.

3. Day 3 - In-person co-design (90 mins)

In the third stage, a co-design workshop was conducted where the participants were divided into two groups. This session lasts for 90 mins. In this workshop, participants participated in various participatory methods to identify and solve the design and management problems they face during park use.

4. Day 4 - In-person feedback session (90 mins)

The fourth stage was a feedback session. In this phase, a semi-structured evaluation matrix was used to evaluate the outcome of the workshop and the process on which the sessions were based. This helps the facilitator gain feedback on the proposed solutions and improve the procedure for future use.

4.2.1 Toolkit goals

This toolkit is intended to assist individuals, groups, communities or organizations interested in developing and designing their local parks to benefit the neighbourhood. It provides direction for both an inexperienced community leader and an experienced government planner on engaging with the local community through various participatory methods to create a dialogue between them which helps the leaders understand the community's needs and desires.

It is aimed at someone who wants to engage the community but needs some direction. This toolkit includes a summary of effective participatory methods and product and outcome evaluation checklist to help people work together to construct improved parks and better, healthier, and more connected communities.

CREATING PARKS FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE CROSS-CULTURAL
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AROUND THORNCLIFFE

INCLUSIVE PUBLIC PARKS

TOOLKIT FOR
FOCUS GROUPS & CO-DESIGN SESSION

RESEARCH SITE – LEASIDE PARK, TORONTO

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FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 1

About the Study

This research is meant for every individual who uses or wishes to use public green spaces and wants to understand how incorporating various cultures in the design process is crucial for developing such urban green spaces.

Parks are the places which can be used as a bridge between different communities if they respond to the needs of visitors from diverse cultural groups and be designed and managed with people from different social and cultural backgrounds. To address this issue of such disconnect between people and public spaces, a people-centered approach has to be used to plan, design, and manage public parks. Place-making capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating parks that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being (What Is Place-making, 2007).

Parks and green spaces offer urban residents vital resources and services, hence the participation of park users is necessary in order to utilize the park to its utmost potential. Different communities need to be incorporated in the planning process because local residents are familiar with their locality, cultural values, and knowledge which professional planners may lack (Huang, 2010, p. 555). The communities around the park must act in a partnership with the local authorities responsible for park planning and management to create a collaborative atmosphere where needs of the whole community can be incorporated in the design process excluding no one because if parks are ever going to serve local residents to the best of their ability, policies and plans regarding parks should be made in response to the voices of those residents (Smiley et al., 2016, p. 2).

Map of Leaside Park

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 2

Consent Form

Date: xxxxxxxx
Project Title: Inclusive Public Parks

Principal Advisor: Researcher/Facilitator:
xxxxxxxx   xxxxxxxx
Designation   Designation
Contact information   Contact information

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to identify the needs/wants of different people belonging to various cultural groups for park use. The research focuses on cross-cultural participation to engage the community in the planning and designing of parks around Thorncliffe.

WHAT'S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be involved in (1) filling out an initial 10 question survey and participating in a (2) focus group, (3) co-design session with other participants, and (4) a one-on-one interview with the researcher for the final remarks. The research is divided into 3 in-person activities (Focus groups, Co-design sessions, One-on-one Feedback interviews) spread across 3 days, having one activity per day. Participants will be taking part in all the activities which will take approximately 90 mins per day. We will be using various participatory methods to engage the participants in the research. All the sessions will be video recorded and photographed for data analysis of research findings.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
Your participation in this research can potentially improve the day-to-day experience of an individual in their public park by providing them with the required representation or say in the planning and designing of their neighbourhood park.

There are a few social risks one might encounter while participating in this research study. Participants' responses might negatively impact others' perceptions of the participant and can also jeopardize the individual's reputation and social standing. To mitigate this, the researcher would try to create an atmosphere for healthy dialogue between the participants to help identify social risk before it manifests as a threat or crisis. Also, the participants would have an option to talk to the researcher in private if they feel hesitant to speak in open.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All information you provide while filling out the survey and participating in one on one closing interviews will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. However, with your consent (see the second page), some of the video/photographic data may be used in class presentations to illustrate our findings. Also, the confidentiality aspect couldn't be guaranteed during focus groups or other group activities. Hence participants should not share any information they feel is too sensitive and keep it to themselves.

All raw data collected individually during this study (i.e., interview responses, individual photo/video/audio data) will be considered confidential and de-identified using coded names to ensure confidentiality. The data will be stored safely on a password-protected computer inside a password-protected encrypted folder. Confidentiality will be asked of the co-design participants in not sharing information with anyone who isn't part of this research.

Data will be kept till the end of xxxxxx after which time any paper documents will be shredded and digital documents erased. Access to this data will be restricted to the principal advisor and the student researcher. If we decide to continue the research after this period, we will contact you again for your permission. We will do so, only if you give us permission to contact you in the future.

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 3

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may choose not to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw participation from this study at any time or to request withdrawal of your data. You can withdraw participation and data at any time, but any data collected through focus groups and co-design sessions will remain in the study as anonymized data. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, OCAD University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. As stated earlier, any data that has already been analysed can not be withdrawn.

INCENTIVES
Participants will receive incentives in the form of xxxxxxx at the end of their participation in the study. All the participants who agree to be a part of all 4 activities that is (1) filling out an initial 10 question survey and participating in a (2) focus group, (3) co-design session with other participants and (4) a one-on-one interview with the researcher for final remarks, will be eligible to receive the gift card. Even if the participant wish to withdraw from the study they will remain eligible to receive their incentives, as well as future updates on the study if they desire.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be shown in classroom presentations. In any such presentation, the collected data will be presented without your name. Video and photographic recordings will not be presented without your permission.

If you wish to receive results about this study, please contact the researcher – xxxxxxx at xxxxxxxxxx

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact xxxxx at xxxxxxxxx when applicable using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at xxxxxxx. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact xxxxxxx.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

I wish to receive feedback about this study (e.g. news about presentations of our results.):
Yes: _ _ _ No: _ _ _

I agree to let whole or parts of video/photographic recordings from the study be used for presentation of the research results:
Yes: _ _ _ No: _ _ _

I wish to be contacted for the future research:
Yes: _ _ _ No: _ _ _

Name: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Signature: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   Date: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 4

Survey

Your input will shape a new shared vision for Leaside Park. This research will involve community participation to create a design tool-kit to increase the opportunities for cross cultural community participation .

1. What are your dreams for Leaside park? (Infrastructure, accessibility, events)

_____

2. What are your priorities for Leaside park? (Recreational activities, sports,safety)

_____

3. How many times do you visit Leaside park in a week?

_____

Name -   Contact Information -

Gender* -   Ethnicity* -

Age* -   Primary Language* -

Postal Code -

                                                              * Optional

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 5

Leaside Park

Map of Leaside Park

Current Elements or Amenities in the park -

Parking
Tennis
Baseball
Football
Chess boards
Swimming Pool

Community Garden (Summers)
Swings/Slides
Ice Skating (Winters)
Viewing Deck
Chair Installation

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 6

Focus Group

A focus group is a group interview involving a small number of demographically similar people or participants who have other common traits/experiences. Their reactions to specific researcher/evaluator-posed questions are studied. The discussions can be guided or open.

1. How often do you go to the Leaside Park?

_____

2. Who goes with you on your visits to Leaside Park?

_____

3. How do you, or members of your household, get to the park most of the time?

_____

4. For what all activities you visit Leaside Park?

_____

5. Please rate the importance of the following activities in Leaside Park?

Playground equipment
for ages 2 to 5

Playground equipment
for ages 5 to 12

Having a gathering place
(grouped seating, picnic area)

Outdoor ice-skating rink area
in the winter

Community Garden

Please mention any other activity that you would prefer to have or upgrade in your park

_____

_____

_____

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 7

Focus Group

6. What would make your visit to Leaside Park more enjoyable or comfortable?

Shade   Paths   Seating   Picnic Tables   Infrastructure   Fitness

_____

7. What types of colours below you'd like to see around Leaside Park?

_____

8. What is your opinion on the current facilities in the park?

Tennis   _____

Chess   _____

Pool   _____

Ice Rink   _____

Play Area   _____

Community Garden   _____

9. Please outline any ideas for improvements, special park features, services or programming you would like to see at Leaside Park that you feel would benefit the neighbourhood.

_____

10. Please provide a brief explanation regarding any features you would NOT like to see in the new park development and explain why.

_____

11. Playgrounds are a great place for people of all ages, not just children. Are there any activities at Leaside Park that you feel would be fun for those ages 12 and over and/or adults to participate in?

_____

12. Is there any specific culture oriented element that you would like to add in the park that might benefit the neighbourhood?

_____

Please add any additional comments or suggestions on the next page.

Additional Comments

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 9

Co-design

Co-design is an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders in the design process to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable. Participatory design is an approach which is focused on processes and procedures of design.

Following participatory activities would be performed as part of this co-design with addition to few optional activities -

1. Affinity Mapping

2. Affinity Clustering

3. Rose, Thorn, Bud

4. Personality Slider

5. Rumble or All in one

6. Solution Sketch

Optional Activities -

1. Dot Vote

2. Round Robin

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 10

Affinity Mapping

Affinity Mapping is a method that is used to categorize different ideas into themes. This is a way to share the opportunities the team has identified thus far in the activity. This activity is intended to look for opportunities, not problems or solutions.
.
Directions -

1. One at a time, each team member reads all of their idea notes and places the sticky notes on the board.

2. Team members can write down more notes if they get inspired by what others share.

3. From there, add notes to the categories as each person reads.

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 11

Affinity Clustering

Affinity Clustering is a graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity. Patterns are revealed when teams sort items based on perceived similarity, defining commonalities that are inherent but not necessarily obvious. In this way you are able to draw insights and new ideas out of otherwise disparate pieces of information.

.

Directions -

1. Have one person describe, then place, an item.

2. Invite others to place similar items in proximity. Repeat the pattern until all items are included.

3. Discuss and rearrange items as groupings emerge. Look for opportunities to create sub-groupings.

4. Label the clusters that finally take shape.

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 12

Rose, Thorn, Bud

Rose, Thorn, Bud is a technique for identifying things as positive, negative, or having potential. This structure provides an opportunity to analyse a set of data or help scope a problem by revealing focus areas, allowing you to plan next steps.
.
Directions -

1. Give each participant a pen and 3 sticky note pads. Explain the topic and the color key.

2. Rose = Pink (indicates things that are positive).
Thorn = Blue (indicates things that are negative).
Bud = Green (indicates things that have potential).

3. Include one issue, insight, or idea per sticky note. Tell participants to write multiple items per color.
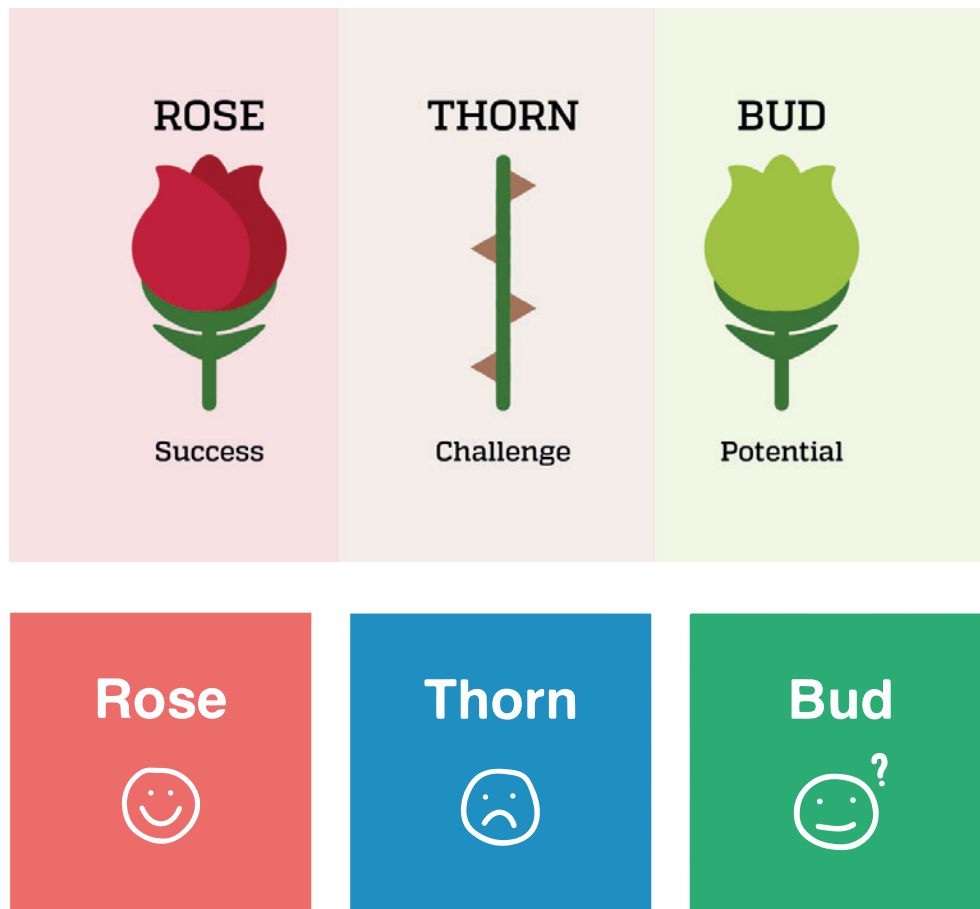
ROSE — Success
THORN — Challenge
BUD — Potential

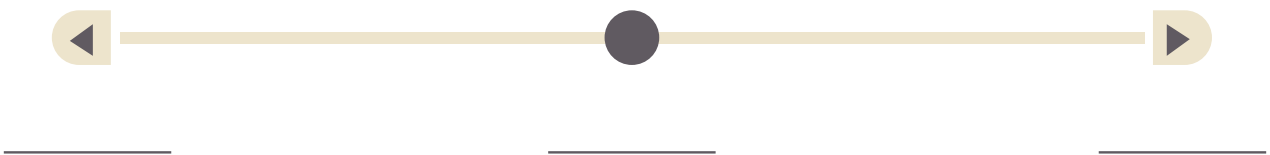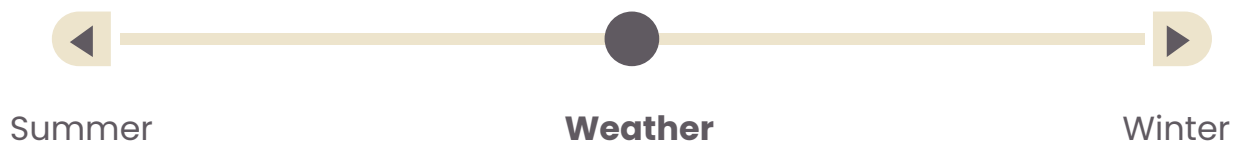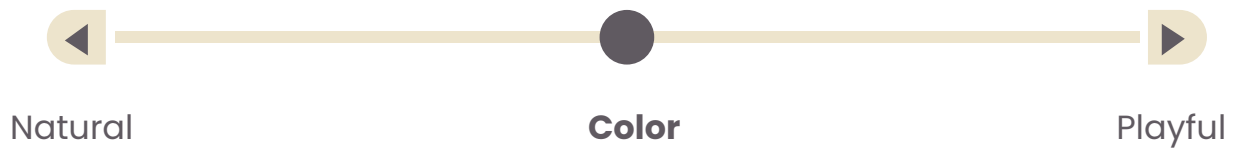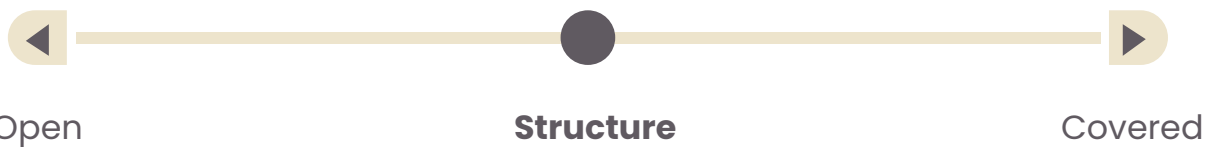Rose
Thorn
Bud

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 13

Personality Slider

Personality sliders is a strategy exercise that helps set the tone for your communication. This exercise is really valuable when designing new spaces or while redesigning the existing one.

It can be used as a decision making factor for voice and tone, look and feel and any other external communication. The way it works is simple. You position your company between pairs of extremes. Typically, you want to be either end of the spectrum for at least a couple traits.
.
Directions -

1. Position the park between the pair of extremes.

2. At-least 2 of the given options should be at the either end of spectrum.

◄━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━⬤━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━►

Open   **Structure**   Covered

◄━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━⬤━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━►

Natural   **Color**   Playful

◄━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━⬤━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━►

Summer   **Weather**   Winter

◄━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━⬤━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━►

_____   _____   _____

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 14

Rumble or All in One

The Rumble or All-In-One method is useful when there is more than one winning solution.

Directions -

1. Decide as a group if you want to combine the winners into a single prototype (All-In-One) or develop two different ideas and test them against each other (Rumble).

It's often possible to combine a number of ideas into one prototype.

2. If you choose a Rumble, you will need to consider how to present the two opposing ideas to each other.
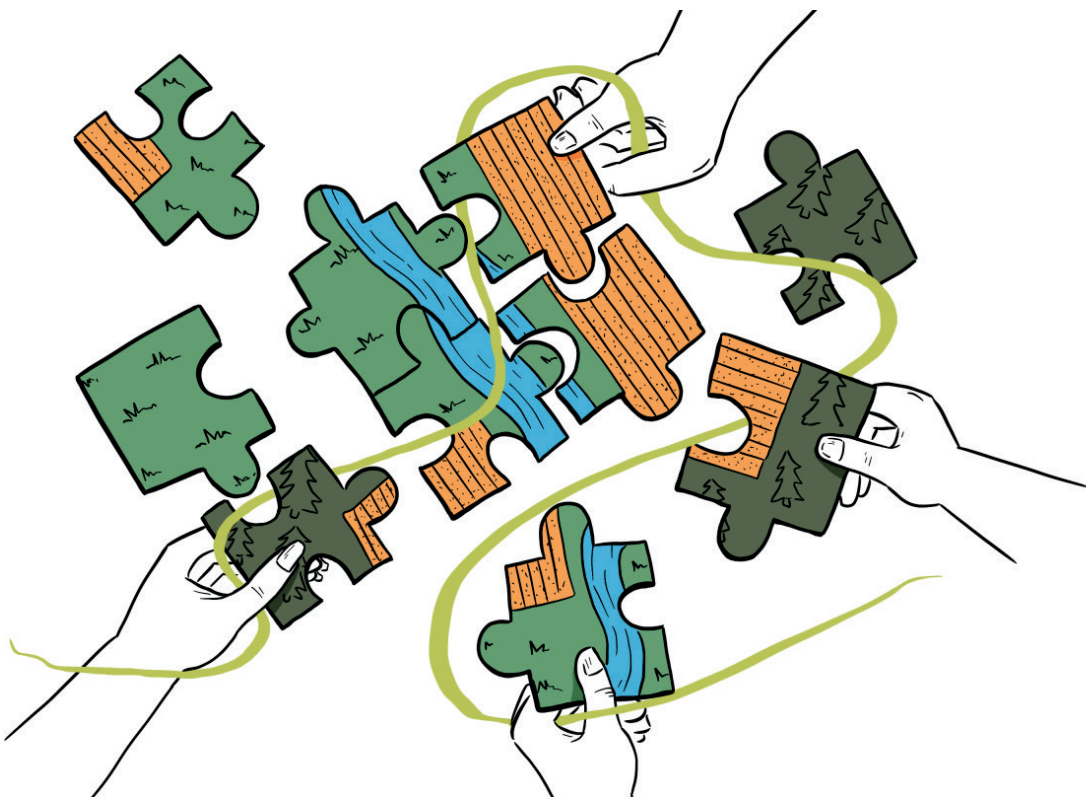
Solution Sketch
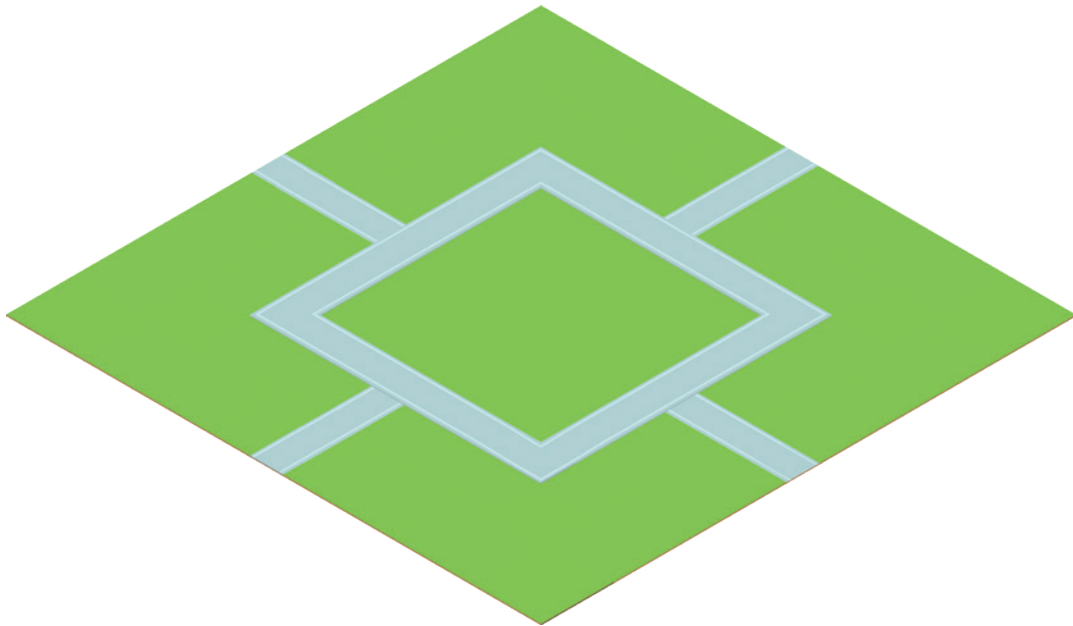
The Solution Sketch is a method used to expand upon a solution idea. Each team member creates their own detailed Solution Sketch.

Directions -

1. Select the ideas from your own or others you think is the best.

2. Flesh out the idea in a sketch.

3. Use multiple frames, pictures, and words in your sketch. This will help you communicate your thoughts to the team

Create your own park space

Round Robin

Round Robin is an activity in which ideas evolve as they are passed from person to person.

Round Robin allows for the generation of fresh ideas by providing a format for group authorship. As an idea is passed from person to person, it can grow and change in unexpected ways to uncover some wonderfully original concepts.

Directions -

1. Instruct each person to write down the challenge and an unconventional solution.

2. Instruct everyone to pass each worksheet to the left.

3. Ask them to write a reason why the proposal will fail.

4. Instruct everyone to pass each worksheet again.

5. Ask them to write down a way to resolve the critique.

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 17

Dot Vote

Dot Vote is a method to achieve group consensus around a single idea to address the focus. Before voting begins, review the criteria for selecting an idea to prototype.

Directions -

1. Paste all the solutions up on a wall.

2. Review the problem, goals, and success metrics so everyone knows what the voting criteria is and remind the team this is a deciding vote.

3. Give each team member three votes.

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 18
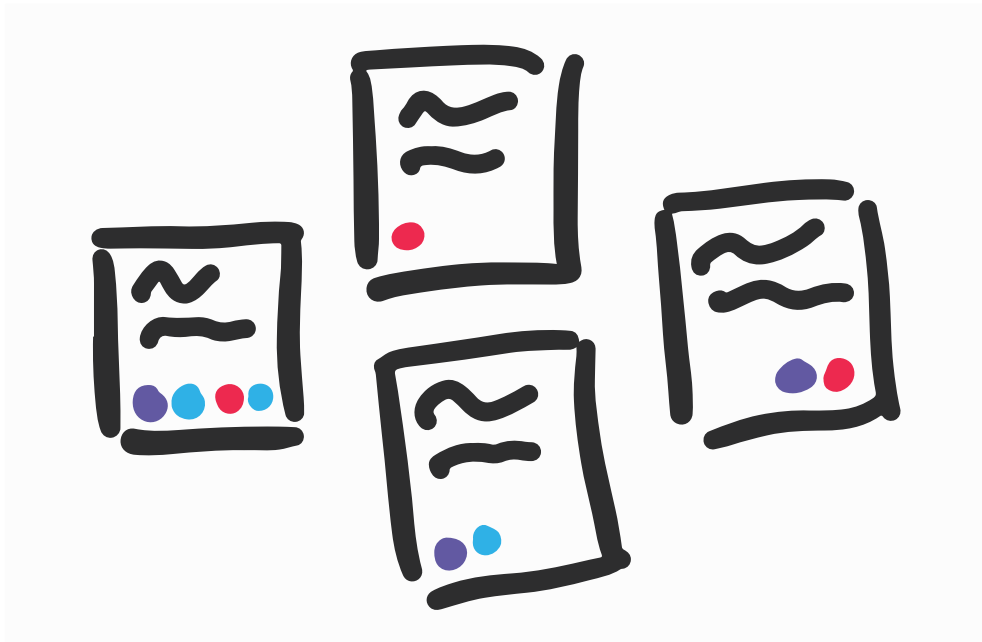
CHAPTER 3: COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

To get information about park utilization from participants, the toolkit employs a variety of collaborative research methodologies and instruments. These techniques aid the researcher in gaining a better understanding of the community's difficulties, problems, goals, possibilities, challenges, wishes, and even dreams for their local park.

5.1 Focus groups

A focus group is a group interview with a limited number of persons who are demographically similar or who share other common features or experiences.

Once the participants were recruited, focus groups were conducted with the recruited participants. This was an in-person activity where the researcher would ask open-ended questions regarding park use to understand the behaviour and attitude of the participants towards their parks. Designing a focus group with open-ended questions can offer insights into why people believe the things they do and is useful for gathering information about their feelings and experiences of the places visited. These types of questions also encourage richness and depth in answering (Özgüner, 2011, p. 608). The discussions were guided or open.

Thorncliffe Wellness Cafe   Friends of Thorncliffe

Figure 2: Focus groups conducted with two
community groups on 24th February 2022

4.3 Draft toolkit

The following pages contain the initial toolkit that was developed to engage local communities in focus groups and co-design sessions held on 24th and 25th of February 2022.

Figure 1: Snippets of the toolkit

5.2 Co-design sessions

Co-design is an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders in the design process to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable (Humphrey, 2020). It is an approach focused on processes and procedures of design.

This phase of the workshop helped the participants to engage in generating and sharing a broad range of ideas not only as individuals but also as a group. The research aims to try different participatory methods to understand which methods work with a specific group of participants and how the methods can be improved to get better results.

Thorncliffe Wellness Cafe   Friends of Thorncliffe

Figure 3: Co-design session conducted with two
community groups on 25th February 2022

Various participatory activities were performed as part of this co-design to identify the issue and to design a solution for the same -

1. Affinity mapping

Affinity mapping is a method used to categorize different ideas into themes. This is a way to share the problem and opportunities the participants have identified thus far during the focus group (Design Sprint, n.d.)

2. Affinity clustering

Affinity clustering is a graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity. Patterns are revealed when teams sort items based on perceived similarity, defining common traits that are inherent but not necessarily obvious (Design Sprint, n.d.).

3. Rose, thorn, bud

Rose, thorn, bud is a technique to understand what's working, what's not, and areas of opportunity. This structure also provides an opportunity to analyze a set of data to scope out the solutions that can be easily achieved (Rose), challenging to achieve (Thorn) or have potential (Bud) (Design Sprint, n.d.).

4. Personality slider

Personality sliders are a strategy exercise that helps set the tone for your design solution. This exercise is really valuable when designing new spaces or redesigning existing ones. It can be used as a decision-making factor for voice and tone, look and feel and any other design decision (Design Sprint, n.d.).

5. Rumble or all in one

Rumble or all-In-One method is useful when more than one winning solution. It would let you decide as a group if you want to combine the winners into a single prototype (All-In-One) or develop two different ideas and test them against each other (Rumble) (Design Sprint, n.d.).

6. Solution sketch

Solution sketch is a method used by individuals to combine all the ideas on one page and see how well they would work with each other. Each participant would create their detailed Solution Sketch by either listing down features/design solutions they would want in their dream park or drawing them on a blank paper sheet (Design Sprint, n.d.).

7. Dot vote

Dot voting is a simple tool used to prioritize items or make decisions in a group setting democratically. It is an easy, straightforward way to narrow down alternatives and converge on a set of concepts or ideas (Design Sprint, n.d.).

8. Round robin

Round robin is an activity in which ideas evolve as they are passed from person to person. Round Robin allows for the generation of fresh ideas by providing a format for group authorship. As an idea is passed from person to person, it can grow and change in unexpected ways to uncover some wonderfully original concepts (Design Sprint, n.d.).

All the above-mentioned participatory methods were part of the initial toolkit. Some tools, if not all, were used in actual scenarios and the final toolkit, according to the nature and engagement of the participants. This is done to keep the toolkit as flexible as possible by allowing it to adapt to different scenarios. While conducting the participatory session, the researcher kept track of which activity should be improved, modified or even removed from the process to have an inclusive toolkit to achieve results.

5.3 Feedback session

Once the co-design was over, the workshop moved toward its validation and evaluation stage. An evaluation matrix was created, which acted as a tool for evaluating public participation and results achieved (Speller & Ravenscroft, 2005b, p. 48). This helped the researcher assess the process against criteria by putting a structure that kept the research in check. This session occurred a few days after the previous session as the researcher needed to analyze the data collected and develop a solution based on the community's needs and demands. This session helps the researcher gain feedback on the final design and the procedure involved. This led to an evaluation of public participation in the design process and the results achieved.

Figure 4: Feedback session conducted with two
community groups on 26th March 2022

The evaluation matrix had various questions which acted as a criteria checklist.

Outcome evaluation matrix

1. Have your hopes and goals for the park been addressed?

2. Do you think the group's decision has impacted the park's design?

3. Do you feel that this has been a worthwhile experience?

4. Do you think this outcome was a group collective rather than an individual's work?

5. Have you learned from this experience?

Process evaluation matrix

1. Do you think the group represents a diverse community?

2. Do you think you were engaged in discussions with enough opportunity to speak?

3. Did you feel the group worked as a team and did you feel a sense of cooperation?

4. Do you think this process has helped the group develop possible solutions?

5. Has the process changed your perception of the whole problem?

6. Has the whole activity been fun for the group?

Figure 5: Feedback session conducted with two
community groups on 26th March 2022

CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Understanding park user's needs

It is essential to consider perspectives from all racial and cultural groups, especially those from underprivileged populations who are frequently overlooked.

Based on the focus group session held for this research on the 24th of February, the following problems, challenges and desires were identified for Leaside park -

1. Lack of seating space in and around the park.

2. Less number of trees or structures that provide shade.

3. No access to clean drinking water.

4. No place for buying a take-out meal or refreshments.

5. Outdoor swimming pool is not viable to use in the winters.

6. Outdoor swimming pool restricts women with hijabs from using the facility.

7. Just one washroom for a vast park.

8. Fewer swings for kids.

9. No place for community gathering or recreation.

9. A small space for praying indoors is preferred.

10. Lack of garbage bins around the park.

11. Fewer flowers in the park area.

12. No storage option for tables and chairs used for community events.

13. The park is not night friendly.

14. No decorative artwork or murals present in or around the park.

15. No signage or boards regarding park history present.

All the issues raised during the focus groups were discussed in the co-design session to develop a solution for the same.

6.2 Community's vision for Leaside park

According to the community's requirements and expectations for Leaside park, it was evident that the present park amenities were not built or available for utilization in the community. The residents of Thorncliffe desired their local park to reflect their community, culture and unity, and as such, it should be welcoming to all residents.

Because of either restricted member access with hefty membership costs or more extended occupation by sports leagues, the current park condition is more centred on sports like baseball and tennis. Also, due to a lack of basic facilities such as shade, washrooms, drinking water, and security and safety problems such as low lighting and dark corners, which encourage criminal activities such as drug sales and abuse, the current park infrastructure does not promote community meetings.

Community members that use or wish to use the park regularly want their park to be a safe space for them and their young ones and create a balance between recreational and sports activities rather than focusing heavily on sports. They also want the park to meet the requirements of the community's elderly by providing basic facilities such as transportation to and from the park, extra seats, washrooms, and a walking lane.

After speaking with various community members, it was discovered that they desire the park to serve as a hub for community gatherings and events where diverse groups and organizations may engage with one another. However, the current status of the park does not support such aspirations.

6.3 Improvements to the toolkit

Following the focus group and co-design session, participants provided comments on how the toolkit might be improved and what information should be added to make it easier to comprehend and use by community members on their own.

These adjustments in the toolkit were necessary as a result of their comments -

1. Adding an overview/brief outline to support the workshop facilitator.

2. Providing a clear layout of when and how the activities have to be performed.

3. Using simple and accessible language.

4. Tweaking the questions to be more precise and more straightforward.

5. The co-design section needs to be improved to provide clear and straightforward instructions.

6. Removing a few of the participatory methods that were complicated to use.

Based on the mentioned recommendations, the toolkit was updated with accessible language and clear instructions, as well as dividing the co-design procedure into three phases:

Phase 1 - Idea generation

Idea generation is the process of creating, developing and communicating abstract, concrete or visual ideas. It focuses on finding possible solutions to perceived or actual problems and opportunities (Kylliäinen, 2022).

Phase 2 - Idea selection

Once an idea generation session has finished, it's time to collect, categorize, refine and narrow down the best ideas, solutions, or strategies (How to Select the Best Idea by the End of an Ideation Session, 2021). The basis for effective selection of ideas is good documentation of the ideas. Similar ideas should be combined and duplicate ideas can be sifted out.

Phase 3 – Solution ideation

This workshop phase gives participants the opportunity to collect all the information gained in the previous sections, assess it, and utilize it to work individually on ideating their dream park solution. This phase aims for participants to develop new ideas or combine different ones in a safe space. It doesn't matter if these ideas turn out to be plausible or not; what's important is that the participants venture beyond the obvious, already-been-done solutions or ideas (Stevens, 2021).

CHAPTER 7: CONCEPT DESIGN AND VISION

7.1 Existing site - Leaside park

Figure 6 : Map of Leaside Park

Leaside Park is a 3.4-hectare park near Millwood Road and Overlea Boulevard that features a lit ball diamond, six lit tennis courts, a multi-purpose sports field and a children's playground. The park is also home to the Leaside Outdoor Pool (City of Toronto, n.d.-b). According to the new Facility Classifications and Rating Criteria (City of Toronto, n.d.-a) provided by the City of Toronto, the Ball Diamond and Multi-purpose Field has a "C" rating, the lowest ranking in the table.

The park's medium-sized parking lot, accessible from the north entrance, can accommodate 18-22 automobiles at any given time. A baseball diamond is located in the park's north section, with an area for a football field in the park's south section. There is a small swing area close to the football goal posts and a water hose to create an ice rink in the winter. The park's south end features a viewing platform overlooking the ravine with no illumination and is surrounded by shrubs and trees. As random people utilize this place for drug misuse, it instils terror in the neighbourhood. The west end of the park has a Muskoka chair installation done by the Friends of Thorncliffe community group.

There are six open lawn tennis courts on the park's east side, which are operated by a tennis club that charges hefty membership fees, making them inaccessible to most of the population

There is an open space on the west side of the tennis court where chess tables have been installed. However, most community members are either unaware of this or are unwilling to use the tables. There is an outdoor swimming pool to the south of the chess tables, which is quite popular during the summer but is rendered useless during the winter. There is a little patch of community garden beneath the swimming pool that a few community members only utilize during the summers since the size of the community garden is insufficient to accommodate even half of the community members who wish to use it.

An L-shaped route that extends from the north end to the southwest end of the park is found in the park. Individuals who wish to jog, stroll, or bike in the park utilize this trail. There are 3-4 benches in the park area, with just one waste bin located close to the swimming pool facility. The swimming pool building also hosts the only water station in or around the park. It also has a toilet which is generally locked for the winters due to security reasons.

These are the current elements or amenities provided by the park -

Parking

Tennis

Baseball

Football

Chess boards

Swimming Pool

Community Garden (Summers)

Trees (Shade)

Swings/Slides

Ice Skating (Winters)

Viewing Deck

Chair Installation

Figure 7: Leaside park during different seasons

7.2 Proposed design for the park

Based on the focus group and co-design sessions held on the 24th and 25th of February, the following additions and improvements were suggested for Leaside park -

1. Benches

2. Shade

3. Drinking Water Fountain

4. Restaurant/ Cafe

5. Swimming Pool (Weather accessible/female swimming pool)

6. Washrooms

7. Better swings with grass area

8. Community Hall

9. Prayer Room

10. Garbage Bins

11. Flowers

12. Storage

13. Night Friendly

14. Murals

15. Signage

16. Gathering Area

Figure 8: Marked space depicts the area utilized for redesigning suggestions
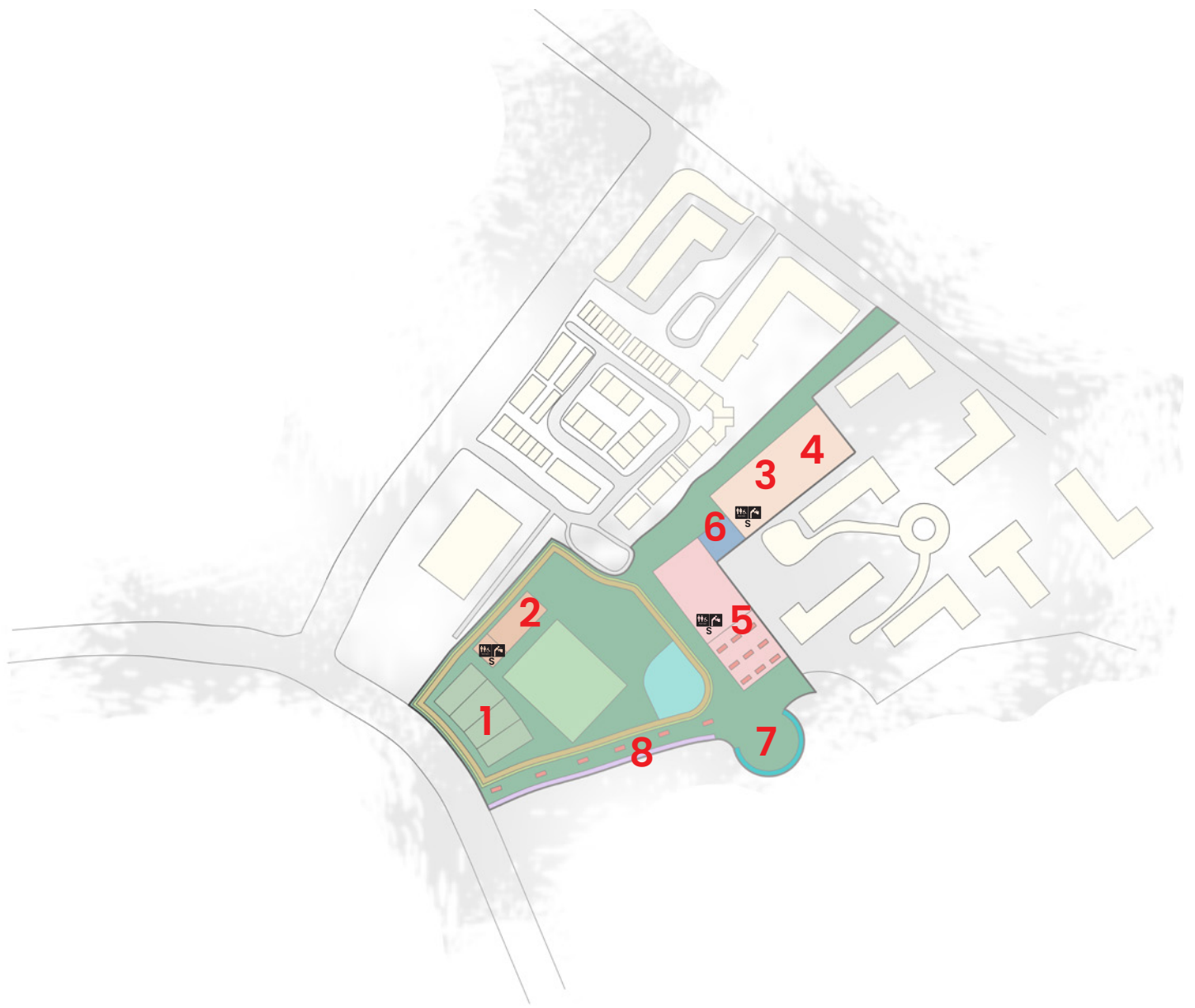
Figure 9: Redesigned layout of Leaside park

Legend -

🟩 Walking path		🟥 Cafe & community hall	
🟫 Cycling path		🟦 Ice rink	
🟩 Cricket/Baseball nets		🟧 Sports complex	
🟧 Open seating		🚻 Washroom	
🟩 Central area for misc. activities		🚰 Drinking water	
🟦 Swings		**S** Storage	

The baseball pitch on the north side of Leaside Park, which is usually utilized by baseball leagues run by other nearby communities, will be dismantled, and baseball and cricket training nets will be installed on the park's west side. This modification keeps the notion of being active in sports while also allowing the community to use the area for community-required activities. An open sitting area will be offered next to the cricket and baseball training nets and a small building for storage and essential services such as drinking water, waste bins, and a washroom. This will allow parents to be closer to their children whether they play in the park's central area or in the practice nets.

The tennis court, which is located towards the park's east end, will be transformed into a multi-level indoor facility that can accommodate indoor tennis, swimming, a gym, and various other indoor sports activities as desired by the community. The indoor sports facility will encourage year-round use of these facilities, as well as allow Muslim women in the community who wear hijab to use the indoor swimming pool with added privacy, as they are hesitant to remove their hijab in an open swimming pool, which could compromise an individual's privacy.

The old swimming pool and community garden area will be transformed into a big community centre with a small cafe with indoor and shaded outdoor seating. Locals will be encouraged to utilize the park as a picnic location or even a place to take an evening stroll due to the café and community centre. This area will also have the necessary facilities, such as waste bins, drinking water, and restrooms.

The location previously utilized just for outdoor chess will be used for outdoor board games during the summer and an ice rink during the winter due to the indoor sports complex and the community café hall. These types of places provide the park with seasonal flexibility that encourages visitors to visit throughout the year.

So that there is no interruption, the core part of the park will be enclosed by separate walking and bicycling lanes that surround the playing field and even the practice nets. The current playground will not be relocated, but it will be expanded to include additional swings for children of various ages.

Figure 10: Cricket/Baseball nets - 1

Figure 11: Open Seating - 2

Figure 12: Indoor tennis court - 3

Figure 13: Indoor swimming pool - 4

Figure 14: Cafe with outdoor seating - 5

Figure 15: Ice rink - 6

Figure 16: Open gathering space - 7

Figure 17: Garden Patches - 8

The area near the viewing deck on the south side of Leaside Park will be turned into an open gathering space for the community, with enough lighting for night activities. This contributes to the transformation of a gloomy place with safety and security concerns into a space that can be used at any time to organize community gatherings and serve as an active space for engagement.

Garden patches will be created along the ravine valley to encourage the notion of communal gardening and farming and make use of areas that would otherwise be squandered. These planting sections can be turned into flower beds if the community desires.

The following solutions will be provided in terms of usage -

a. Swimming pool time allotment for females with Hijab.

b. Small prayer room to be provided in the community hall.

c. More bus stops to be requested from government authorities.

d. Preference should be given to residents of Thorncliffe for using the utilities around the park.

e. Storage options should be provided in all the buildings.

f. Accessible washrooms to be added to all the buildings in or around the park.

7.3 Final Toolkit

The following pages include the redesigned version of the toolkit based on the suggestions provided during the focus group and co-design sessions.

About the Study

This research is meant for every individual who uses or wishes to use public green spaces and wants to understand how incorporating various cultures in the design process is crucial for developing such urban green spaces.

Parks are the places which can be used as a bridge between different communities by building upon the sense of trust and unity among the community members to create a collaborative atmosphere where the needs of the whole community can be incorporated into the design process excluding no one.

To address this issue of such disconnect between people and public spaces, a people-centered approach has to be used to plan, design, and manage public parks. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating parks that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being (What Is Placemaking, 2007).

Parks and green spaces offer urban residents vital resources and services, hence the participation of park users is necessary in order to utilize the park to its utmost potential. Different communities need to be incorporated in the planning process because local residents are familiar with their locality, cultural values, and knowledge which professional planners may lack (Huang, 2010, p. 555). The communities around the park must act in a partnership with the local authorities responsible for park planning and management to create a collaborative atmosphere where needs of the whole community can be incorporated in the design process excluding no one because if parks are ever going to serve local residents to the best of their ability, policies and plans regarding parks should be made in response to the voices of those residents (Smiley et al., 2016, p. 2).

Map of Leaside Park

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 2

Overview

This toolkit provides a collection of tools and procedures to support the facilitators in carrying out focus groups and co-design sessions with the participants by engaging them in dialogue about park use, their experience, issues faced, suggestions etc.

The toolkit itself is divided in 4 stages or activities which should be carried out across the span of 4 days. Each stage can be held during a four-day period or spread out depending on time required for recruiting and scheduling the work sessions.

1. Day 1 - Online Survey (15 mins)

In the first stage, the participants are asked to fill a survey which will give an insight to the facilitator about how the participants think about their current local park and what changes they would like to see in the future.

2. Day 2 - In-person focus group (90 mins)

In the second stage, focus groups are conducted with 12 participants who are divided in 2 groups and the session lasts for 90 minutes. This is an in-person activity, where the facilitator asks questions regarding park use to understand the behaviour and attitude of the participants towards their parks.

3. Day 3 - In-person co-design (90 mins)

In the third stage, a co-design workshops are conducted where the participants are be divided in two groups. This session lasts for 90 mins. In this workshop participants take part in various participatory methods to identify and solve the design and management problems that they face during park use.

4. Day 4 - In-person feedback session (90 mins)

The fourth stage is a feedback session. In this phase semi-structured evaluation matrix is used to evaluate the outcome of the workshop as well as the process on which the sessions were based. This helps the facilitator gain feedback on the solutions proposed as well as to improve the procedure for future use.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 3

Consent Form

Date: xxxxxxxx
Project Title: Inclusive Public Parks

Principal Advisor: Researcher/Facilitator:
xxxxxxxx   xxxxxxxx
Designation   Designation
Contact information   Contact information

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to identify the needs/wants of different people belonging to various cultural groups for park use. The research focuses on cross-cultural participation to engage the community in the planning and designing of parks around Thorncliffe.

WHAT'S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be involved in (1) filling out an initial 10 question survey and participating in a (2) focus group, (3) co-design session with other participants, and (4) a one-on-one interview with the researcher for the final remarks. The research is divided into 3 in-person activities (Focus groups, Co-design sessions, One-on-one Feedback interviews) spread across 3 days, having one activity per day. Participants will be taking part in all the activities which will take approximately 90 mins per day. We will be using various participatory methods to engage the participants in the research. All the sessions will be video recorded and photographed for data analysis of research findings.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
Your participation in this research can potentially improve the day-to-day experience of an individual in their public park by providing them with the required representation or say in the planning and designing of their neighbourhood park.

There are a few social risks one might encounter while participating in this research study. Participants' responses might negatively impact others' perceptions of the participant and can also jeopardize the individual's reputation and social standing. To mitigate this, the researcher would try to create an atmosphere for healthy dialogue between the participants to help identify social risk before it manifests as a threat or crisis. Also, the participants would have an option to talk to the researcher in private if they feel hesitant to speak in open.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All information you provide while filling out the survey and participating in one on one closing interviews will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. However, with your consent (see the second page), some of the video/photographic data may be used in class presentations to illustrate our findings. Also, the confidentiality aspect couldn't be guaranteed during focus groups or other group activities. Hence participants should not share any information they feel is too sensitive and keep it to themselves.

All raw data collected individually during this study (i.e., interview responses, individual photo/video/audio data) will be considered confidential and de-identified using coded names to ensure confidentiality. The data will be stored safely on a password-protected computer inside a password-protected encrypted folder. Confidentiality will be asked of the co-design participants in not sharing information with anyone who isn't part of this research.

Data will be kept till the end of xxxxxx after which time any paper documents will be shredded and digital documents erased. Access to this data will be restricted to the principal advisor and the student researcher. If we decide to continue the research after this period, we will contact you again for your permission. We will do so, only if you give us permission to contact you in the future.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 4

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may choose not to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw participation from this study at any time or to request withdrawal of your data. You can withdraw participation and data at any time, but any data collected through focus groups and co-design sessions will remain in the study as anonymized data. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, OCAD University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. As stated earlier, any data that has already been analysed can not be withdrawn.

Incentives
Participants will receive incentives in the form of xxxxxxx at the end of their participation in the study. All the participants who agree to be a part of all 4 activities that is (1) filling out an initial 10 question survey and participating in a (2) focus group, (3) co-design session with other participants and (4) a one-on-one interview with the researcher for final remarks, will be eligible to receive the gift card. Even if the participant wish to withdraw from the study they will remain eligible to receive their incentives, as well as future updates on the study if they desire.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be shown in classroom presentations. In any such presentation, the collected data will be presented without your name. Video and photographic recordings will not be presented without your permission.

If you wish to receive results about this study, please contact the researcher – xxxxxxx at xxxxxxxxx

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact xxxxx at xxxxxxxxx when applicable using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at xxxxxxx. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact xxxxxxx.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

I wish to receive feedback about this study (e.g. news about presentations of our results.):
Yes: _ _ _ No: _ _ _

I agree to let whole or parts of video/photographic recordings from the study be used for presentation of the research results:
Yes: _ _ _ No: _ _ _

I wish to be contacted for the future research:
Yes: _ _ _ No: _ _ _

Name: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Signature: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   Date: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 5

Survey

Your input will shape a new shared vision for Leaside Park. This research will involve community participation to create a design toolkit to increase the opportunities for cross-cultural community participation as well as a park design that will maximise its use.

Map of Leaside Park

Above mentioned map states the current elements or amenities in the park -

Parking
Tennis
Baseball
Football
Chess boards
Swimming Pool

Community Garden (Summers)
Trees (Shade)
Swings/Slides
Ice Skating (Winters)
Viewing Deck
Chair Installation

Using the above map of Leaside park, please answer the questions given on the next page.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 6

CREATING PARKS FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE CROSS-CULTURAL
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AROUND THORNCLIFFE

INCLUSIVE PUBLIC PARKS

FOCUS GROUPS
&
CO-DESIGN SESSION

RESEARCH SITE - LEASIDE PARK, TORONTO

GRADUATE RESEARCHER
JAPJOT SINGH
M.DES INCLUSIVE DESIGN
OCAD UNIVERSITY, TORONTO
japjot.singh@ocadu.ca

24TH – 25TH FEBRUARY 2022

DRAFT TOOLKIT PAGE 1

1. What are your priorities for Leaside park? (List the things that need immediate attention like shade, accessibility, safety etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What are your priorities for Leaside park? (List the things that you feel can be fulfilled in near future e.g. having a small cafe in the park)

_____

_____

_____

3. How often do you visit Leaside Park? (Daily, weekly, monthly)

_____

_____

_____

Name -   Contact Information -

Gender* -   Ethnicity* -

Age -   Primary Language -

Postal Code -

* Optional

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 7

Focus Group

A focus group is a group interview involving a small number of demographically similar people or participants who have other common traits/experiences. Their reactions to specific questions are studied. The discussions can be guided or open.

1. Who accompanies you on your visit to Leaside park? (No one, partner, parents, kids etc.)

_____

_____

3. How do you, or members of your household, get to the park? (On foot, bike, car, transit, etc.)

_____

_____

4. What activities do you do when you visit the park?

_____

_____

5. Please rate the importance of the following activities in Leaside Park? Use a rating system of 1 (Least important)- 5 (Very important).

Playground equipment
for ages 2 to 12

Sports

Swimming Pool

Having a gathering place
(Grouped seating, picnic area)

Chess

Outdoor ice-skating rink area
in the winter

Community Garden

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 8

6. What would make your visit to Leaside Park more enjoyable or comfortable? Please add other options according to your own preference

Shade   Paths   Seating   Picnic Tables   Fitness

_____

7. What types of colours would you like to see around the park?

_____

8. What is your opinion on the current facilities in the park?

Tennis   _____

Chess   _____

Pool   _____

Ice Rink   _____

Play Area   _____

Community Garden   _____

9. Please outline any ideas for improvements, special park features, services or programming you would like to see at Leaside Park that you feel would benefit the neighbourhood.

_____

_____

10. Please provide a brief explanation regarding any features you would NOT like to see in the new park development and explain why.

_____

_____

11. Playgrounds are a great place for people of all ages, not just children. Are there any activities at Leaside Park that you feel would be fun for children and adults over 12 year old to participate in?

_____

_____

12. Is there any specific activity or tradition from your culture that you would like to add to the park that benefit the Leaside community?

_____

_____

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 9

Co-design

Co-design is an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders in the design process to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable.

Following participatory activities should be performed in 3 phases as part of this co-design to identify the issues discussed during focus groups and to design a solution for the same. The toolkit user can use any mix of activities to achieve the desired result. Description for the activities are provided on following pages.

Phase 1 - Idea Generation

1. Affinity Mapping

2. Affinity Clustering

Phase 2 - Idea Selection

1. Rose, Thorn, Bud

2. Dot Vote

Phase 3 - Solution Ideation

1. Personality Slider

2. Solution Sketch

Materials Required for the activities -

White Board, Sticky Notes, Colourful dot stickers, Markers, Pens, Pencil, Writing Paper.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 10

Phase - 1
Idea Generation

What is idea generation and why it's important?

Idea generation is the process of creating, developing and communicating abstract, concrete or visual ideas. It focuses on coming up with possible solutions to perceived or actual problems and opportunities.

Succeeding with Idea Generation

1. Define the problem or opportunity clearly

The more accurately the facilitator or the participants are able to describe the current or perceived problem or opportunity, the better chances they have of actually generating useful ideas.

Before the facilitator starts, try to gather as much information about the problem as possible to get to the heart of the problem. Identify what you already know about it and what information is still needed.

2. Set constraints

One way to get more creative ideas from your audience is to set constraints. Without constraints, people typically come up with small suggestions for improvement with little or no creativity.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 11

Affinity Mapping

Affinity Mapping is a method that is used to categorize different ideas into themes. This is a way to share the problem and opportunities the participants have identified thus far during the focus group.

Instructions -

1. The facilitator hands out post it notes and pen/markers to the participants.

2. Label different sections of the board into various themes like activities, buildings, people, nature, sports etc.)

3. Ask participants to note one idea, problem, suggestion etc. per post-it note and then place it under the associated theme on the board

3. Participants can use their answers written during focus groups as a reference point for this activity.

4. From there, add notes to the themes as each person goes through their notes.

5. Continue till all the points/ideas are on the whiteboard categorized by different themes.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 12

Affinity Clustering

Affinity Clustering is a graphic technique for sorting items according to similarity. Patterns are revealed when teams sort items based on perceived similarity, defining common traits that are inherent but not necessarily obvious. In this way you are able to draw insights and new ideas out of otherwise disparate pieces of information.

Instructions -

1. For this exercise, the facilitator selects and reads out a category and the notes under it from the mapping exercise.

2. After this, participants are invited to place similar items in proximity e.g. problems regarding sports would be one cluster, solutions/ideas regarding sports category would be another cluster.

3. Repeat the pattern until all post-it notes under all the themes are categorised.

4. Discuss and rearrange items as groupings emerge while looking for opportunities to create sub-groupings.

5. Label the clusters that finally take shape.

6. The facilitator should encourage participants to not only take part in dividing the post-it notes, but also add more post-it notes, if required, regarding the solutions that can be used to solve the problems on the board.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 13

Phase - 2
Idea Selection

Once an idea generation session has finished, it's time to collect, categorise, refine and narrow down the best ideas, solutions, or strategies.

Before starting the selection of ideas

The basis for effective selection is a good documentation of the ideas. Similar ideas should be combined and duplicate ideas can be sifted out.

Ideas on post-its or cards have proven to be the best method. In this way, they can be quickly pushed back and forth or selected. They are particularly suitable for working in groups, as they are visual and can be edited visibly on a pin board. It is important that the ideas are written legibly and comprehensively enough.

Idea Selection Criteria

The idea selection criteria will help you at this stage to provide a guide for choosing ideas which fit well into the community's goals, their needs, and desires. The given criteria is a thought-starter that can be tailored to a specific project

1. Does it fit with people's needs? Is there demand?

2. Does it really meet the goals set initially?

3. Does it meet the requirements set by the community?

4. Is it different enough from what exists to add additional value?

5. Do we have access to the budget—enough to implement even partially?

6. Can we get approval from decision makers?
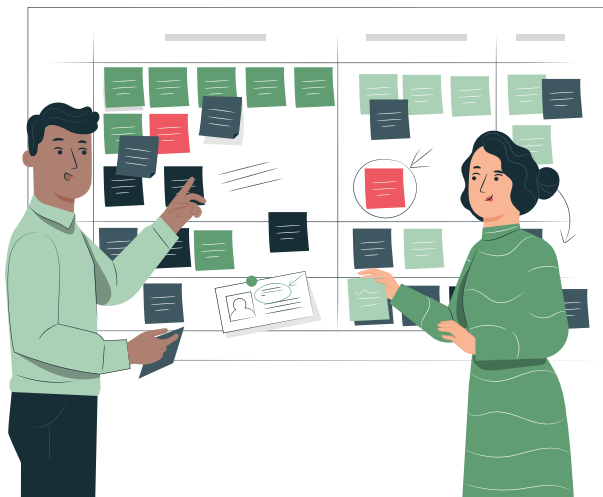
FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 14

Rose, Thorn, Bud

Rose, Thorn, Bud is a technique to understand what's working, what's not, and areas of opportunity. This structure also provides an opportunity to analyse a set of data to scope out the solutions that can be easily achieved (Rose), tough to achieve (Thorn) or have potential (Bud).
.
Instructions –

1. The facilitator gives each participant a pen and 3 coloured sticky note pads (Pink, Blue, Green).

2. The facilitator then explains the exercise which is to label all the clusters formed into Rose, Thorn or Bud and the color key.

Rose = Pink (indicates ideas/problems that are easy to achieve or solve).

Thorn = Blue (indicates ideas/problems that are tough to achieve or solve).

Bud = Green (indicates ideas/problems that have a potential to achieve or be solved).

3. Once all the clusters are labelled into 3 color segments, the facilitator should encourage discussion on how the elements under Thorn section can be brought towards Rose or Bud section, by either toning down the idea or finding an alternative.

For example: Creating a separate swimming pool for females might be categorised under thorn because of budget as well as space constraints, but this can be solved by proving a female only time slot for the swimming pool which can be easily done (Rose).

| ROSE | THORN | BUD |
| Success | Challenge | Potential |

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 15
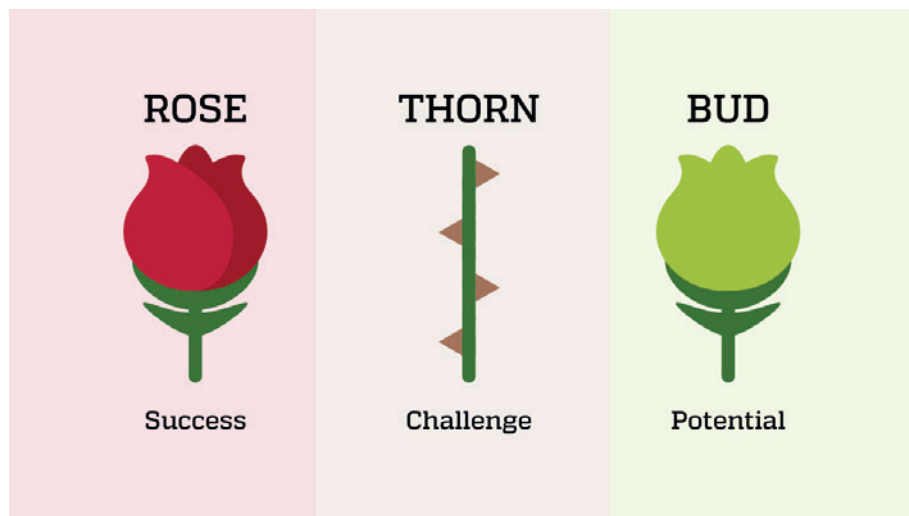
Dot Vote

Dot voting is a simple tool used to democratically prioritize items or make decisions in a group setting. It is an easy, straightforward way to narrow down alternatives and converge to a set of concepts or ideas.

Note - This exercise should only be used by the facilitator when there is a conflict in terms of which solution to go for, or only one solution needs to be prioritized currently over the others.

Instructions -

1. The facilitator pastes the solutions up on a wall that need a consensus vote.

2. After that, colourful dot stickers should be provided to all the participants.

3. Before the vote, participants should be reminded the purpose and value of the voting exercise. Why are they voting and how will the outcome be used?

4. The facilitator should then tell participants how many votes they will have. As a rule of thumb, give each individual roughly a number of votes equal to roughly a quarter of the total number of options available.

5. The participants should place their votes quietly. Conversation should not resume until all participants have placed their dot or mark.

6. Once all participants have voted, they can gather and discuss the outcome. Depending on the goal of the dot voting, participants can discuss why they have voted for particular options.

7. If there is a tie among top options or further prioritization is needed, the group can vote again to establish a clear winner. The facilitator reissues the same number of votes to each participant, but only allows votes on the top options (usually 2–4) that emerged from the previous vote.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 16
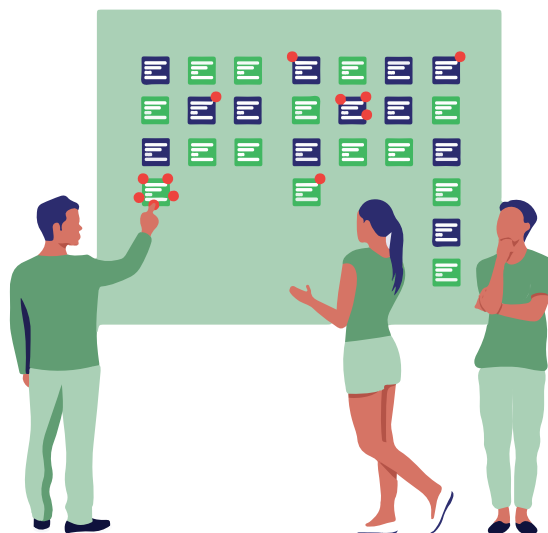
Phase - 3
Solution Ideation

This phase of the workshop gives participants' an opportunity to collect all the information gained in the previous sections, assess it, and utilize it to work individually on ideating their dream park solution.

If carried out properly, an ideation session is where innovation thrives; it should help the facilitator stumble upon that ground-breaking solution that your participants have been missing while working in groups.

The purpose of this phase is for participants to come up with new ideas or combine different ones in a safe space. It doesn't matter if these ideas turn out to be plausible or not; what's important is that the participants venture beyond the obvious, already-been-done solutions or ideas.

How to prepare for this session -

1. Introduce a change of scenery

If the facilitator wants to encourage outside-the-box thinking, it's important to move away from the usual setting. It might seem like a minor detail, but the physical space in which you hold your ideation session can have a major impact. A new environment introduces new stimuli, which in turn can help to trigger fresh thinking. In light of this holding this phase in the park itself would be a great option.

2. Create a relaxed environment

The best ideation sessions are those where the participants feel at ease. The ideation phase should be a safe space where participants feel comfortable sharing their wildest ideas. Have some initial questions prepared to bring the group together, relieve any tension, and get people warmed up.
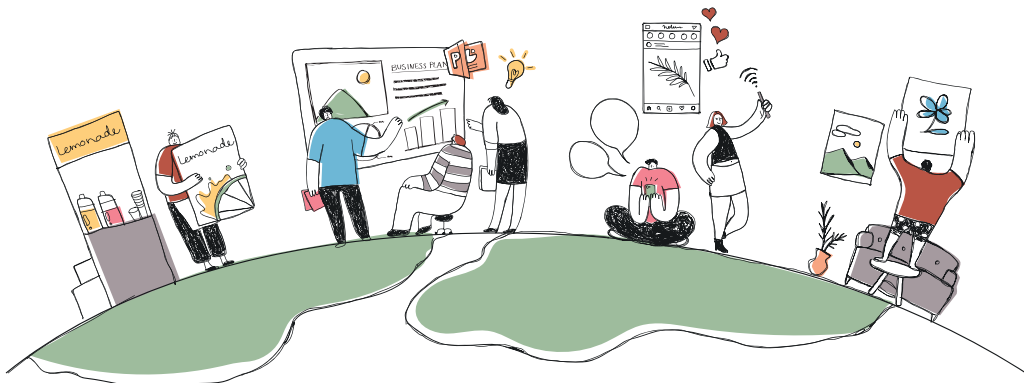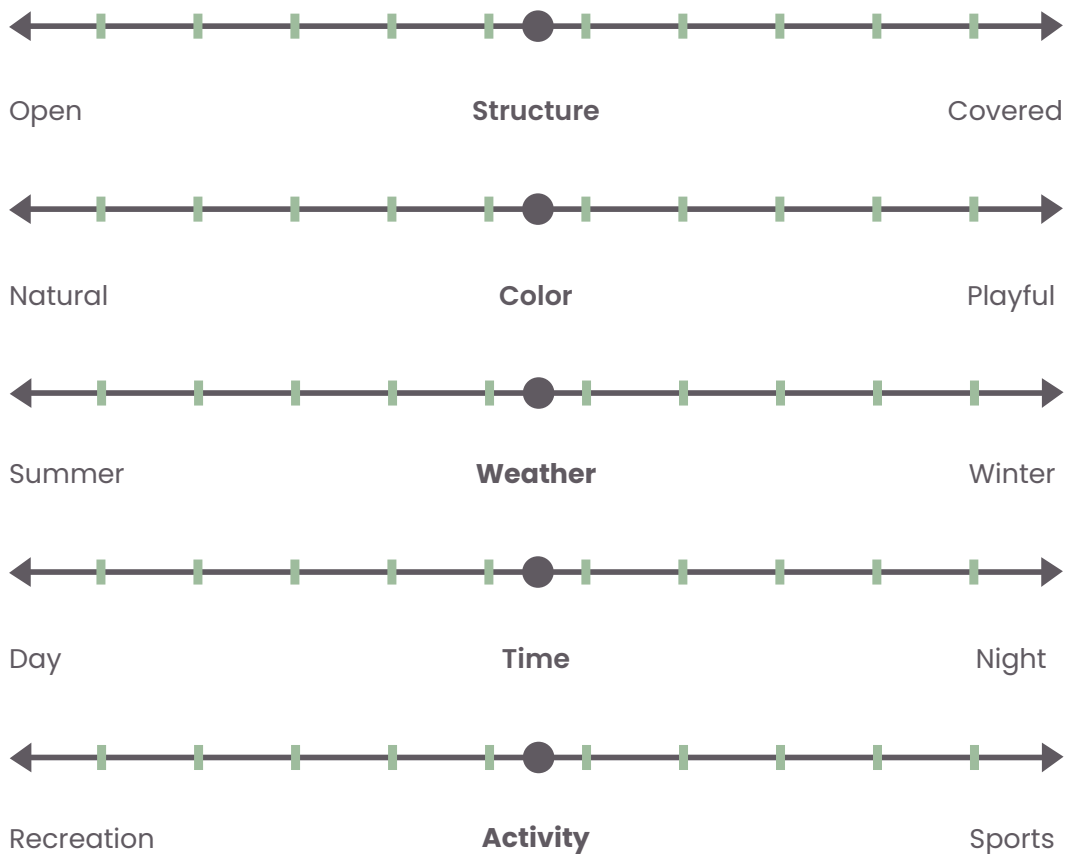

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 17

Personality Slider

Personality sliders is a strategy exercise that helps set the tone for your design solution. This exercise is really valuable when designing new spaces or while redesigning the existing one.

It can be used as a decision making factor for voice and tone, look and feel and any other design decision. The way it works is simple. You position your design between pairs of extremes. Typically, the participants should select either end of the spectrum for at least a couple traits.

Instructions -

1. The facilitator asks the participants to rate the park along the slider from one extreme to the other.

2. The centre of the slider signifies a neutral zone.

3. The participants can use various symbols like circle, tick, cross etc. to signify their choice.

4. At least 2 of the given options should be at the either end of spectrum.

Open	**Structure**	Covered

Natural	**Color**	Playful

Summer	**Weather**	Winter

Day	**Time**	Night

| Recreation	**Activity**	Sports

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 18

Solution Sketch

The Solution Sketch is a method used by individuals to combine all the ideas on one page and see how well they would work with each other. Each participant should create their own detailed Solution Sketch by either listing down features/design solutions they would want in their own dream park or by drawing them on a blank paper sheet.

Instructions -

1. The facilitator hands over pens, markers, color pencils and a blank paper to the participants.

2. The participants would then select an idea of their own or from others that you think is best and would try to create their own dream park.

3. The facilitator should remind the participants that they could use various methods to perform this activity for e.g. sketching, listing down the features, finding images from the web and letting the facilitator know about the same.

4. This activity aims to ensure the participants the sense of ownership over the park and its design.
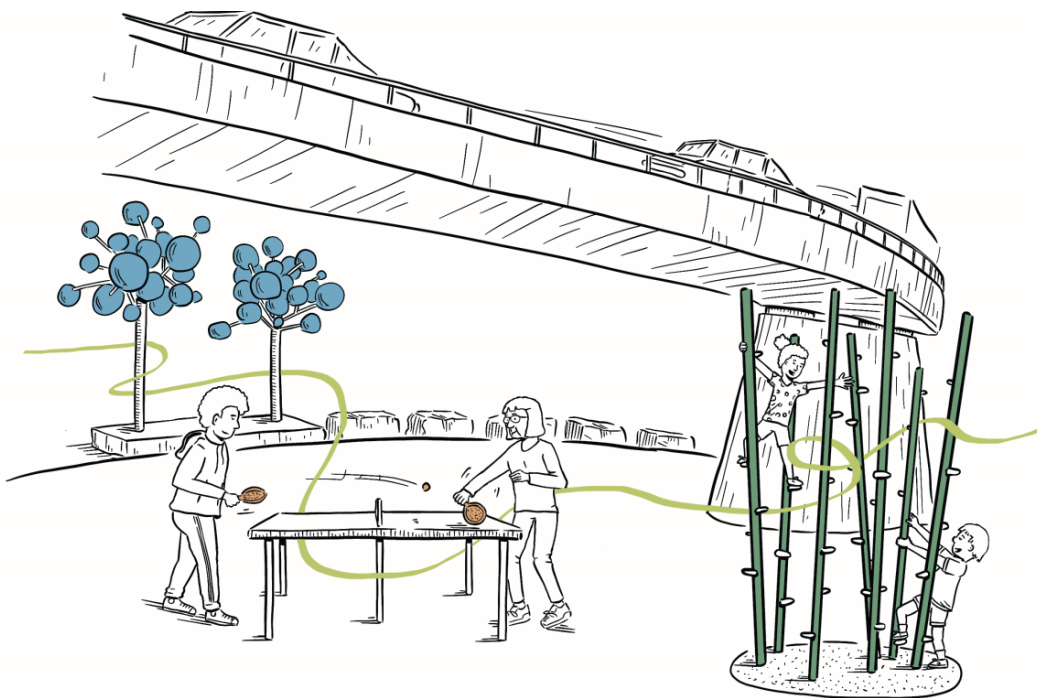
Feedback Session

After co-design , the workshop moves towards the feedback session. This session would probably occur after a few days from the previous session as the facilitator would need to analyse the data collected as well as come up with a solution based on community's needs and demands.

This session will help the facilitator to gain feedback on the final design as well as procedure involved. This would lead to an evaluation of public participation in the design process as well as results achieved.

Instructions -

1. The facilitator hands out the process and outcome evaluation matrix to the participants.

2. Participants are asked to fill in the semi-structured evaluation matrix using Yes or No and would write additional feedback for the elements that need to be improved.

3. Facilitator needs to make sure that participants are conveyed that the outcome based evaluation matrix is for the park design proposed by the facilitator and the process based evaluation matrix is to evaluate the workshop itself and how different elements of the workshops can be improved.

Evaluation Matrix

Outcome Evaluation Matrix

1. Have your hopes and goals for the park been addressed ?

_____

_____

2. Do you think the group's decision has impacted the design of the park?

_____

_____

3. Do you feel that this has been worthwhile experience?

_____

_____

4. Do you think this outcome was a group collective rather than an individual's work?

_____

_____

5. Have you learned from this experience?

_____

_____

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 21

Evaluation Matrix

Process Evaluation Matrix

1. Do you think the group represents a diverse community?

_____

_____

2. Do you think you were engaged in discussions with enough opportunity to speak?

_____

_____

3. Did you feel the group worked as a team and did you feel a sense of cooperation?

_____

_____

4. Do you think this process has helped the group come up with likely solutions?

_____

_____

5. Has the process changed your perception of the whole problem?

_____

_____

6. Has the whole activity been fun for the group?

_____

_____

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 22
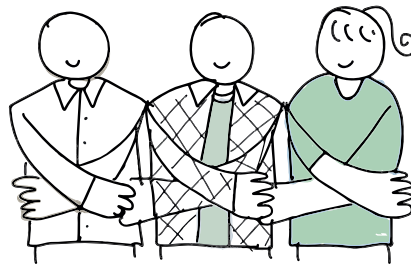
Additional Comments

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank You.

FINAL TOOLKIT PAGE 23

CHAPTER 8: FURTHER STEPS

9.1 Leaside park design iteration

Achieving public park inclusivity is a never-ending goal. Hence the suggested design should be iterated using a broader community group to make the park design more inclusive. Considering public park inclusivity as a process, local communities should be engaged during the early planning processes instead of waiting to seek their feedback towards the end. The proposed design should be refined and reiterated until it helps to meet the requirements and wants of the whole community.

There may be some disagreement among community members about some design choices. Still, the community should prefer to choose options that help uplift the marginalized or support voices that are generally unheard while remembering that the park is a place for all, where everyone feels included and not discriminated against because of their gender, age, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, socioeconomic status, and/or other factors.

9.2 Flexibility and adaptability of the toolkit

The toolkit's final version contains six participatory design methodologies organized into three phases: idea development, idea selection, and ideating solutions. Such a framework allows the facilitator and the participants to employ a variety of activities depending on how and in what way they wish to include the community group. More activities may be added to the toolkit, or current ones can be replaced with a method that works well with the set of participants with whom the facilitator is interacting. Since not all community organizations are the same and different tactics may be necessary to engage a specific audience, this gives the toolkit enough flexibility and adaptation.

When considering a broader picture, the tools in the toolkit may be somewhat updated or tweaked to produce a toolkit that can be used in other public areas besides parks, such as community centers. A toolkit with this flexibility and adaptation allows the community to change the process to extract the required results based on their needs.

9.3 Promoting participant lead research

During this research study, a researcher-led workshop was organized with the initial version of the toolkit. The researcher moderated and supervised all of the sessions to gain information from the participants. The revised version of the toolkit, on the other hand, is designed to allow community members to conduct the workshop with the assistance of a community leader who may serve as a facilitator for the group. By giving the toolkit an inherited essence of flexibility and adaptation, the researcher may shift away from organizing toolkit-driven workshops and instead serve as a mentor if needed. Since this toolkit is designed to provide community members with a sense of power, belonging, and ownership over their community park, participant-led research, would be a more viable option than a researcher-led method.

Another advantage of participant-led research is that it allows the community to adapt the toolkit so that it may be used in situations that the researcher would not have considered. Allowing people to utilize the tools with creative freedom might lead to discovering a new frontier of public space inclusion.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION & FUTURE RESEARCH

10.1 Conclusions

The notion of public space inclusion is undoubtedly challenging since it is based on various elements ranging from an individual's viewpoint to the needs and wishes of the whole community. After organizing all of the focus groups and co-design sessions, it became evident that the community is eager to participate in activities that would promote their well-being and help them make better use of their communal space.

As a result, as researchers, government officials, or local planners, we should strive to create inclusive communities by incorporating residents in the planning and design process early on and then building on that foundation piece by piece to realize the vision of creating an inclusive city.

This will undoubtedly be a difficult task, as attaining public space inclusion involves providing local communities total control over their communal spaces and recognizing the systemic barriers of negligence to decision-making. This would assist in elevating the community's under-represented or unheard voices by highlighting their overall absence from the decision-making process, which is the first step toward achieving public space inclusion.

10.2 Reflections

As previously stated in the research, incorporating public space inclusivity is unquestionably a challenging endeavour. This research project involved two separate community groups and 12 different participants. They all contributed valuable insights into how the community views their public park and how they intend to use it.

However, it was often difficult to steer the debate away from divisive religious or cultural practices that may impact the public park throughout the information collecting process. Such discussions about adopting certain religious or cultural features, such as a prayer space in the community hall, may take the discussion from a humanitarian ground to a religious one.

Although a small prayer room is a simple architectural feature that can be readily put into a structure, the community should be aware that some individuals might utilize such components to create a sense of community separation based on religious differences. However, if the community determines that a prayer space should be established, they should make sure that it is fully inclusive, with open access to people of all faiths.

10.3 Future research: challenges & opportunities

A second study may be conducted with the participation of more community groups to make the process more inclusive, but this would need more resources and funding. The toolkit itself presents us with a multitude of untapped possibilities, and it would be fascinating to investigate the many ways in which the toolkit may be applied.

'Budget' is one of the essential topics that this study hasn't addressed. Because cost is a significant consideration while modifying and improving a space. A future study with a financial constraint will undoubtedly be required since it adds a dimension of reality to the study and allows the group to examine the issue more closely.

Also, the current research methodologies are relatively basic, which helps to provide solid findings; nevertheless, with more time and effort, more innovative means of involving community people might be explored in future iterations to capture the spirit of public space inclusion effectively and efficiently.

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