

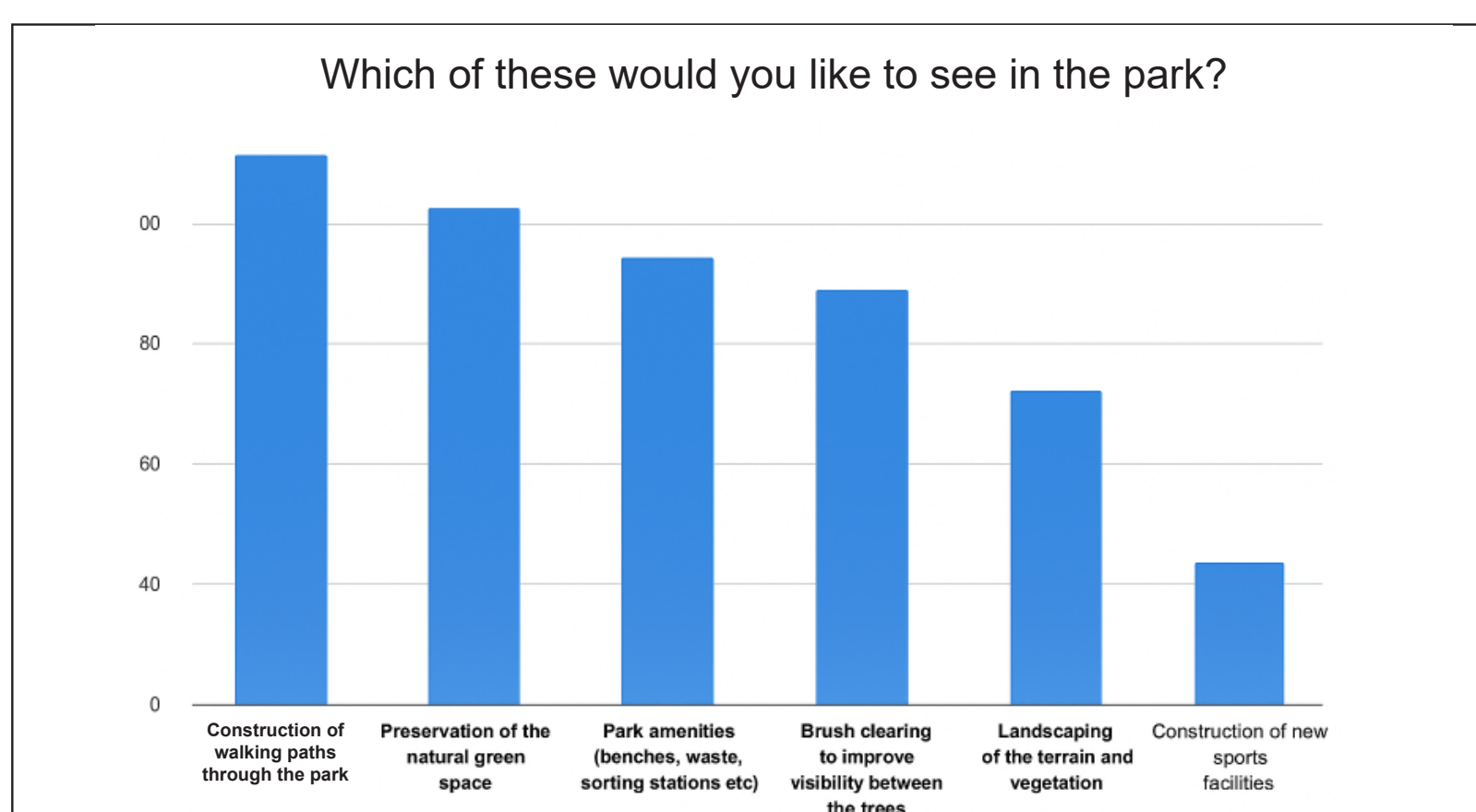
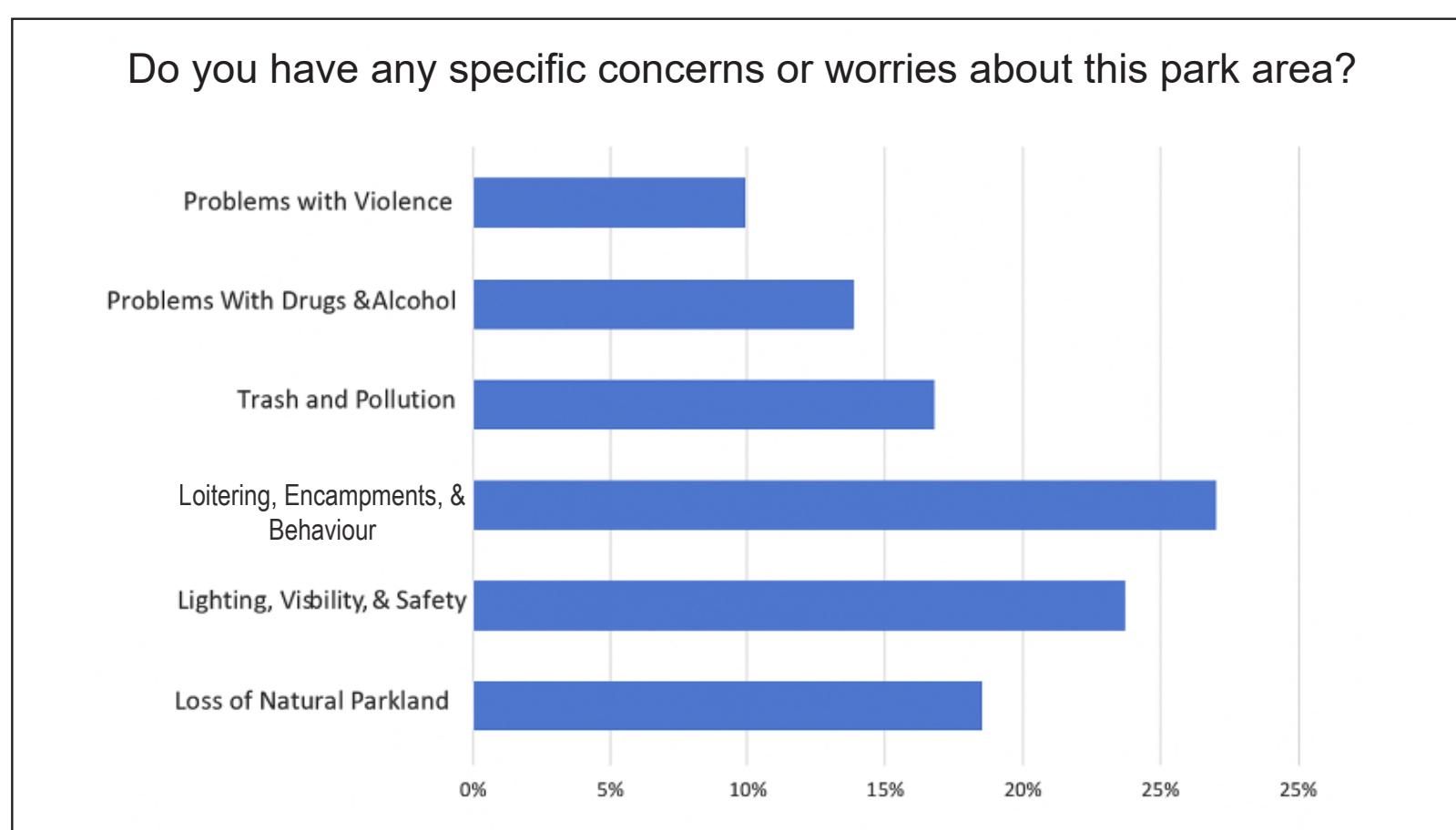
WHAT WE HEARD

Community Survey — October 2023

On December 7, 2023, Harbour East Marine-Drive Community Council (HEMDCC) received a joint presentation from the Pleasant Woodside Neighbourhood Association, the North Woodside Community Centre, and Homebridge Youth Society. These organizations expressed a shared interest in improving the North Woodside Community Centre Park. They undertook a community survey in October 2023 to seek input and ideas with an emphasis on an underused wooded area that occupies more than half of the park parcel.

The presentation focused on the results of the survey, which included the following:

- Most survey respondents are daily or weekly users of the park.
- While most respondents feel safe walking in or near the park during the day, more than half of the survey respondents reported feeling unsafe after dark.
- The top three park concerns among respondents are:
 1. The presence of encampments and occasional antisocial behaviour.
 2. Inadequate lighting, poor visibility, and overall safety after dark.
 3. The loss of natural spaces within the park.
- The top three desired improvements for the park are the:
 1. Development of walking paths.
 2. Protection of natural space and vegetation.
 3. Additional of amenities to support park use (i.e. benches, garbage cans).



Park survey results (Pleasant Woodside Neighbourhood Association, North Woodside Community Centre, and Homebridge Youth Society, 2023).

Past planning initiatives

On October 11, 2012, the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee endorsed a community vision for Woodside. The development of the vision was facilitated by municipal Community Development employees and included participation from the public and the Woodside Community Liaison Group. While not specific to the North Woodside Community Centre Park, the community vision included actions to encourage:

- Improved connections from Pleasant Street to the Dartmouth waterfront.
- Attention to accessibility for all ages and abilities.
- Solutions for improved park safety.
- Orientation through park and trail wayfinding.
- Activation of space through events and other community uses.
- Stewardship of outdoor spaces by volunteers.
- Enhancement and protection of natural spaces.

The 2013 Urban Forest Master Plan identified site-specific recommendations for the North Woodside Community Centre Park, including:

- Increasing tree canopy cover to approximately 40 per cent.
- Focusing efforts on shading recreation facilities such as play lawns and playgrounds.
- Including community organizations in the planting of trees.

Although this plan has been updated for a 2025–2050 timeline, the recommendations are still relevant.

As part of the *Making Connections: 2014–2019 Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan*, the North Woodside Community Centre Park was identified for an active transportation greenway to connect Pleasant Street to the Dartmouth Harbourfront Trail. This pathway connection is a typical sidewalk width of approximately 1.5–1.8 m, rather than the multi-use pathway width of approximately 3–4 m that would be more capable of satisfying the needs for this connection.

There is a long-standing interest from the community centre to expand the facility to improve community space functionality, access and parking. However, there is no defined building plan in place.

A motion from the January 2019 HEMDCC meeting indicated staff respond to a proposal from the Maritime Disc Golf Association for use of the wooded portion of the park for a disc golf course. On May 6, 2021, staff responded. The proposal had implications for the naturalized landscape and capital budgets that required more investigation to understand the overall feasibility of the proposal and the park. The staff recommendation was to take no further action on the proposal for a disc golf course and explore a disc golf pilot project and future recreation programming elsewhere in the municipality. Ultimately, the Dartmouth Common became home to this course.

The North Woodside Community Centre Park was identified as one of 30 potential naturalization sites in a September 13, 2022, Naturalization Strategy report to Regional Council. Specifically, the site-specific recommendation was for the enhancement and implementation of Acadian forest plantings.

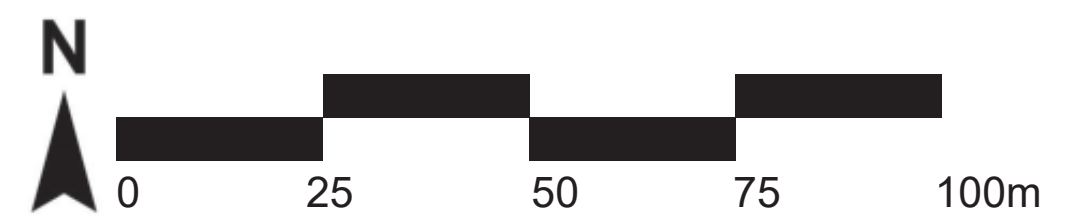
The 2025 Park Lighting Strategy proposes lighting along a pathway within the North Woodside Community Centre Park that connects Pleasant Street and the Dartmouth Harbourfront Trail.

The Downtown Dartmouth Waterfront Renewal Project is underway and includes the waterfront trail along the foot of the park. Although the planning scope does not include the North Woodside Community Centre Park, it may have implications for waterfront trail access, connectivity to the park, safety considerations and signage and wayfinding.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- park safety
- nature promotion and protection
- user comfort
- accessibility
- active lifestyle
- connectivity
- supportive amenities
- signage and wayfinding
- community programming
- community stewardship
- climate comfortability
- space flexibility

EXISTING PARK



PARK CONCEPT



PLAZA LOOK-OUT



CHADWICK STREET ENTRANCE



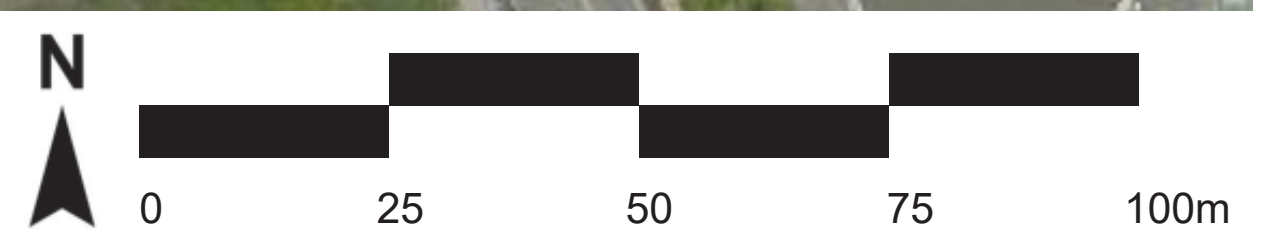
CRUSHER DUST PATHWAYS WITH SEATING



NATURE PLAY



PLAY LAWN AND WALKING TRACK



WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

Pruning and thinning

The forested area within the park has been left to naturalize with minimal ongoing maintenance. To encourage safe public use of this space, more intentional management is required. This includes the removal of dead, damaged, or declining trees and overhanging branches along pathways. Tree thinning, as well as the pruning and removal of large shrubs, will help create clear sightlines along designated pedestrian routes.



Pathway development

Several informal footpaths have emerged through the forested area, suggesting a demand for pathway connections. However, these routes lack clear organization and management. This park concept proposes the introduction of formalized crusher dust and paved pathways to connect key destinations, guide foot traffic, and help protect the surrounding natural environment from further damage. A lighted route from Pleasant Street into the park will be considered.



Invasive species control

A handful of invasive species are occupying a significant portion of the forested area perimeter where species have migrated from the surrounding landscapes. Norway maple, Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose and goutweed are some examples of invasive species within the park. A vegetation control program will help to remove some of these species and provides an opportunity to introduce native plants in the spaces that become available.



Nature play

Beyond more traditional play features within the park, nature play in the forested area would encourage children and families to engage with the natural environment through unstructured and imaginative activities. Integrating elements like logs, rocks and stumps, help to foster creativity, physical development and environmental awareness.



Community stewardship

With guidance from municipal staff, community stewardship can play an important role in managing invasive plant species and restoring native vegetation. Through organized volunteer events, such as invasive species removal days, native planting initiatives and educational workshops, community members can actively participate in the care of the park ecosystem.



KEY QUESTIONS

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the proposed park concept?
2. What are your thoughts on the proposed balance of developed park to natural woodland?
3. What are your thoughts on the proposed balance of formalized recreational facilities and unstructured leisurely uses?
4. As the surrounding community grows, do you believe the plan provides enough direction and recreational opportunities to accommodate increased park use over time?
5. To accommodate increased park use, do you think a portion of the wooded area should be used for parking or recreational facilities?
6. Thinking about accessibility, do you think the park concept address access for all ages and all abilities?
7. If the proposed park concept is built, do you think the way in which you use the park would change?
8. If you could make changes to the park concept, what would you change?

WHAT'S NEXT?

