

Vaughan POPS Guidelines

Public Survey #1 Results

Submitted to
City of Vaughan
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Submitted by
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1. Purpose of Report

The City of Vaughan has initiated a study to create Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS) standards and guidelines (“the study”). The Study will be a toolkit for the City of Vaughan to help shape POPS. This initiative responds to upcoming legislative changes from Bill 23 and aims to integrate POPS effectively into the city's open space network. The study aims to be forward-looking, incorporating extensive research, design best practices, and legal frameworks to create equitable, accessible, and well-maintained POPS. The study will serve as a critical tool for the development community, guiding design development within the private realm and outlining the City’s expectations for a quality interface with the public realm and regarding maintenance and operational standards.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the key takeaways that have emerged through the first Public Engagement Survey.

2. Results

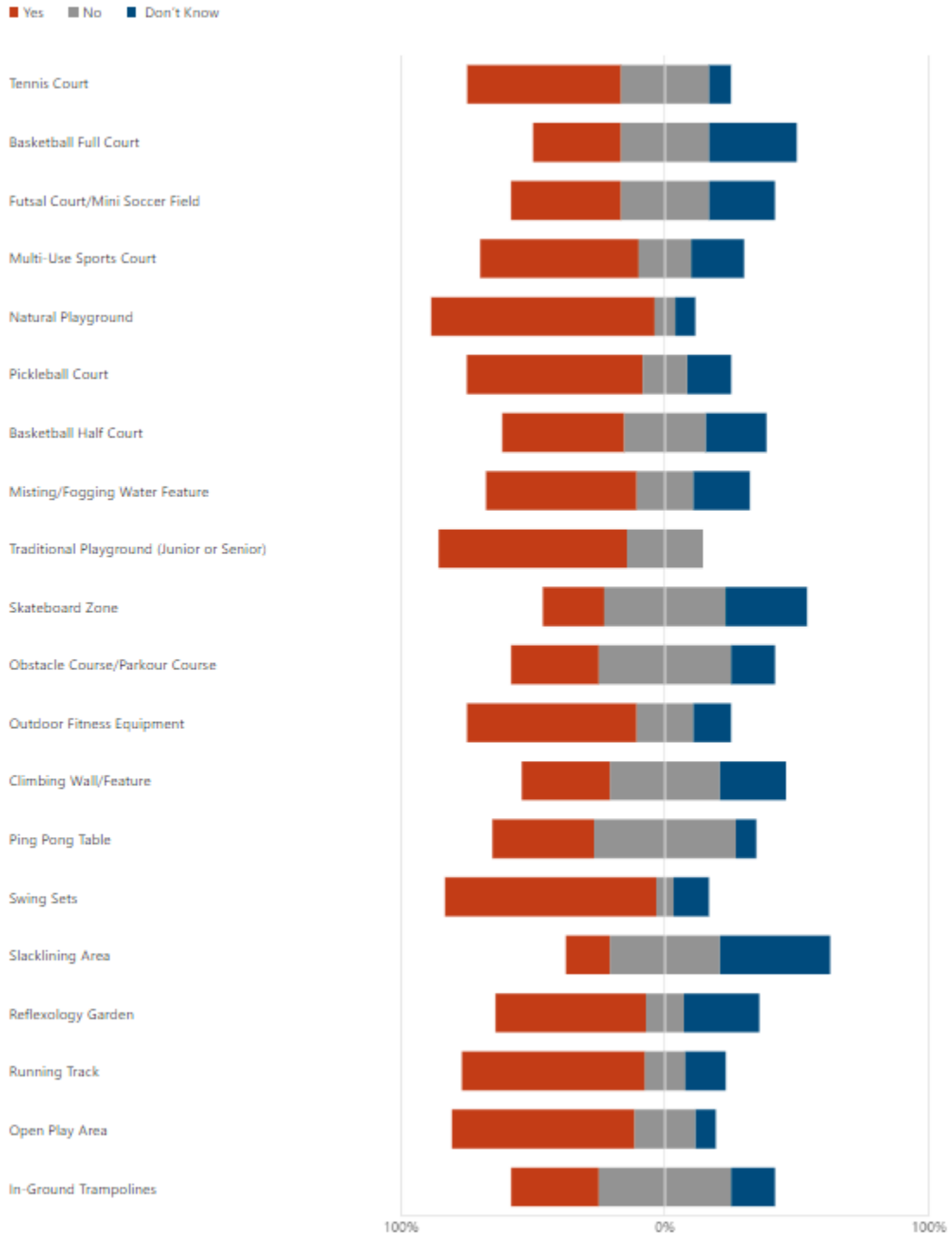
The first public engagement was hosted virtually for three weeks between September 26 and October 17, 2024. The engagement consisted of a recorded presentation and a survey.

The recorded presentation introduced the project to the public by defining what POPS are, providing a project overview and summarizing what was completed in phase 1. The online video was hosted on the City’s YouTube channel. As of October 18, the video was viewed 95 times, received two thumbs up, no thumbs down and no comments.

To accompany the video presentation, a survey was posted on the City’s project webpage (Vaughan.ca/POPS) to collect feedback. The four questions included in the survey were intended to better understand what features participants believe are most compatible with POPS and whether they had other considerations or concerns regarding POPS. The full set of questions and responses are included in the appendix.

A total of 16 respondents provided feedback via the survey. Responses indicate that participants are the most interested in using natural playgrounds (85% yes), swing sets (80%) and traditional playgrounds (71%) in POPS. Ping pong tables (54% no), in-ground trampolines (50%), obstacle course/parkour course (50%) and skateboard zones (46%) demonstrated the least interest. The figure below summarizes the results.

Figure 1: Interests for active features in POPS



Public feedback on what would make POPS spaces most exciting emphasized a desire for both active and passive recreation opportunities. Many respondents highlighted the importance of sports facilities such as basketball, pickleball, and multi-sport courts, as well as outdoor fitness equipment. Others valued the integration of nature, with requests for green spaces, reflexology or Zen gardens, and quiet, relaxing environments. Accessibility, picnic areas, and amenities like seating, washrooms, and shelters were also mentioned. Some expressed concern about overdevelopment and the need to preserve existing spaces.

Some of the keywords mentioned in the responses include:



Figure 2: Graphic representation of keywords associated with responses for question 2

Public feedback on making POPS inviting and welcoming emphasized the need for spaces catering to diverse age groups and interests. Key suggestions included areas for seniors to relax and exercise, off-leash dog areas, and spaces for children to play and adults to exercise. Accessibility and safety were prioritized, with calls for enhanced lighting, regular maintenance, and good signage to ensure people know POPS are open to all. Green spaces, walking paths, community gardens, and seating were frequently mentioned, alongside amenities like washrooms, drinking fountains, and shelters. Visibility from the street and proximity to active uses were also highlighted as important factors.

Some of the keywords mentioned in the responses include:



Figure 3: Graphic representation of keywords associated with responses for question 3

Lastly, public concerns regarding existing or new POPS focused on several key issues. There were worries about long-term use, with some questioning if trends like pickleball would

remain popular and if POPS would adapt to changing needs. Vandalism, property abuse, and insufficient maintenance were highlighted, with suggestions for security measures and volunteer involvement. Concerns were raised about the governance and long-term control of these privately owned spaces, especially regarding future developments and their public accessibility. Liability for injuries, lack of awareness about POPS locations, and the need for sufficient shade, green spaces, and inclusive amenities for seniors were also noted. Lastly, some felt the city was overdeveloping and altering its character.

Some of the keywords mentioned in the responses include:



Figure 4: Graphic representation of keywords associated with responses for question 4

Appendix: Public Engagement #1 Survey Questions and Responses

*Note that responses are taken verbatim. No spelling or grammar has been edited for readability.

Question 1

New POPS will be designed with “active features” that encourage physical activity and interaction. These features are intended to engage people in active, physical use of the space, in contrast to passive features like seating or gardens, which promote relaxation. Examples of active features are listed below. Which *Active Features* would you be interested in using in POPS? (Yes/No/Don't Know)

Responses

Table 1: Summary of responses for question 1 relative to interests towards various active features in POPS

Active Feature	Yes	No	Don't Know
Tennis Court	58% (7)	33% (4)	8% (1)
Basketball Full Court	33% (4)	33% (4)	33% (4)
Futsal Court/Mini Soccer Field	42% (5)	33% (4)	25% (3)
Multi-Use Sports Court	60% (9)	20% (3)	20% (3)
Natural Playground	85% (11)	8% (1)	8% (1)
Pickleball Court	67% (8)	17% (2)	17% (2)
Basketball Half Court	46% (6)	31% (4)	23% (3)
Misting/Fogging Water Feature	57% (8)	21% (3)	21% (3)
Traditional Playground (Junior or Senior)	71% (10)	29% (3)	0% (0)
Skateboard Zone	23% (3)	46% (6)	31% (4)
Obstacle Course/Parkour Course	33% (4)	50% (6)	17% (2)
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	64% (9)	21% (3)	14% (2)
Climbing Wall/Feature	33% (4)	42% (5)	25% (3)

Active Feature	Yes	No	Don't Know
Ping Pong Table	39% (5)	54% (7)	8% (1)
Swing Sets	80% (12)	7% (1)	13% (2)
Slacklining Area	17% (2)	42% (5)	42% (5)
Reflexology Garden	57% (8)	14% (2)	29% (4)
Running Track	69% (9)	15% (2)	15% (2)
Open Play Area	69% (9)	23% (3)	8% (1)
In-Ground Trampolines	33% (4)	50% (6)	17% (2)

**Note that percentages are rounded to the nearest unit.*

Question 2

Which design feature(s) would make POPS the most exciting for you? What would draw you and your friends or family to these spaces?

Responses

- For my family the basketball and Pickelball.
- Relaxing visually stimulating space, quiet area
- A Reflexology Garden or Zen Garden
- Gardening space
- Outdoor Fitness Equipment/ Running Track/Reflexology Garden
- Picnic tables, benches, shelters, washroom, multi sport court
- Lots of green space and nature areas with places for sitting.
- Seeing things not being changed! There is no room for more people! So please stop
- Easily accessible by vehicle and public transit.
- Skate park
- sport courts/fields
- Trees, naturalized spaces intertwined with amenities and destinations that could be adjacent businesses or the features.
- outdoor fitness equipment. They are very rare and I haven't found any in all of Vaughan

Question 3

What should the City consider including in its guidelines to ensure POPs are inviting and welcoming for everyone?

Responses

- An off leash area for dogs for run. doesnt have to be big but people letting tehirdogs off leash anyways and may as well make secure.
- an area for seniors to relax, play scrabble or chess, sit and chat plus an area for seniors to exercise
- Flowers, fountains, walking paths
- REGULAR MAINTENANCE. ENHANCED LIGHTING DURING THE EVENING AND OVERNIGHT. AESTHETIC APPEAL WHICH INCLUDES PLANTINGS & SIGNAGE. ONLINE RESERVATIONS TO AVOID CONFLICT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. LIMITED TIMES ALLOWED PER GROUP IF THERE IS HIGH DEMAND. Maybe ask for volunteers in the community to visit the POPs daily to take photos of areas needing immediate attention, outside the normal maintenance cycle. Everything in the POPs needs to be secured in an organic fashion so items are always intact and can be used. If you include a ball court, then participants have to bring their own playing supplies. IF you include a sign-up sheet on-line that is self monitored, then you can ensure individuals can get a specific amount of guaranteed time to use a place. IF no one has registered for the spot, then it's first come, first served. Time limits would also need to be assigned. Again, IF, no one is waiting for a court, then the players can continue to play. RECYCLING STATIONS & GARABGE STATIONS THAT ARE ATTENDED TO DAILY.
- Signage to ensure the public knows it's open to the public and not only residents of the nearby buildings
- Space for Community Gardens
- Need to have the equipment kept in good repair and clean/Make it accessible
- Washroom, drinking fountain, winter shelter enclosure ie w glasses for winter use, outdoor gym equipment for seniors use (ie parks in Korea)
- Ample green space.
- You are placing more people in a city that cannot fit any more people!
- Areas for children to play, adults to exercise and seniors to keep fit or relax.
- Make sure it is visible from the street. If a building is blocking then no one will use it. Or do some way finding for it
- located near active uses, shaded areas, active uses
- Natural Heritage
- enough seating - for parents, grandparents and caregivers

Question 4

Do you have any concerns or foresee any issues with existing or new POPS?

Responses

- no
- that pickleball will be a fad and that courts wont be used in years to come
- They need to consider seniors both active and those with mobility issues. Options to have space for arts and craft sale/shows, reading , and movies
- Yes. Abuse of property. Having working, albeit highly mounted and inaccessible cameras in the area could help to discourage Vandalism and Misconduct. Offer Citizen Awards for those who go out of their way to help keep the POPS in good working order. Advertise for Volunteers and give them School Credit, or an Honorarium for spending time caring for the POPS. Offer students a part-time summer job working for the City of Vaughan be a part of the POP Patrol, checking out all the POPS in Vaughan and reporting back to the City.
- 1. Will the size of the POPS be governed by the number of condo units in the condo development? 2. How long will the developer / owner be required to maintain the park area after completion of construction. I.e., will they have the opportunity to develop more condos on the parkland after (e.g.,) 5 years post completion of the condo development?
- Given the space is held privately, what control in the long run will you have as needs change?
- That it will increase property
- That there are not enough of them
- You have RUINED this city!
- Liability for any injuries due to not properly designed or maintained landscaping and equipment. Who is responsible, owner of land or city (who should be approving/monitoring)?
- I don't even know that they're there. Way finding is important
- too hot/sunny/ little green area with shrubs and trees
- Yes they are privately owned not public. It's an oxymoron. Can you negotiate a POP in perpetuity. What if folks want to exercise there democratic right to protest? Will they be allowed or not really b/c it's not really public land?
- many are unused and I fee the playgrounds not a good use of resources