

## Libraries and City-run Community Spaces

### Locations & Indoor Access: Winter 2019/20; December 2020; January 2021

*Learn more about this project:*

[Changes in informal access to selected indoor public spaces in Toronto](#)

## What these maps capture

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**WINTER 2019/20:** All Toronto Public Libraries and city-run community recreation spaces. Information reflects information from 2019.

**DECEMBER 2020:** All open Toronto Public Libraries and city-run community recreation spaces. Information was captured in mid-December 2020, before enhanced restrictions were introduced on December 26. Sites were classified as open if they had, at minimum, bathroom access.

**JANUARY 2021:** All open Toronto Public Libraries and city-run community recreation spaces. Information was captured in late January 2021. Sites were classified as open if they had, at minimum, bathroom access.

[How to read the maps](#)

## Quick information

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### *Libraries*

**DECEMBER 2020:** Most libraries were open, but offered only computer access (normally 1 hour of time), and brief bathroom access. Some libraries also offered printing and scanning.

**JANUARY 2021:** All libraries were closed to indoor access.

### *City-run community recreation spaces*

#### **DECEMBER 2020:**

- In total, 60 per cent of Toronto's community centres were closed in December 2020.
- Etobicoke had the greatest proportion of closed sites – 80 per cent, followed by North York at 50 per cent, Toronto at 50 per cent and Scarborough at 17 per cent.

- With very few exceptions, most open sites offered only bathroom access.
- Twelve community centres had confirmed showers available.
- At least three community centres offered some lobby or lounge access.

#### **JANUARY 2021:**

- Most sites that were open in December 2020 remained open in January 2021.
- The sites that remained open were listed online as open for bathroom facilities only.
- Of the 12 sites with confirmed open showers in December 2020, 10 were still offering showers in January 2021.
- No community centre was officially offering lobby or lounge access.
- It was not possible to find out online which sites had access to showers or other facilities beyond washrooms – this required a phone call.

#### *What else we found*

- In December 2020, some people answering the phone at libraries and community centres told us that they had nowhere to direct people who came in looking to warm up. Some were interested in finding out more about how to support and direct people who came in looking for indoor access.
- Almost all libraries were easy to reach by phone, and the information available for them online was consistent. Some community recreation spaces were also easy to reach. At others, however, we could not get through to a person, even after multiple calls, and answering machine messages were out-of-date.

## **Methods**

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**WINTER 2019/20:** We used a combination of City websites and City data sets to establish a list of libraries and city-run community recreation spaces.<sup>1</sup>

**DECEMBER 2020 & JANUARY 2021:** We used a combination of City websites and City data sets to establish a list of libraries and city-run community recreation spaces.<sup>1</sup>

We called each location in mid-December 2020, before enhanced restrictions were introduced on December 26. We asked about what people could access if they just dropped in. We did not ask about registered programs that were still running (e.g. after-school care). We did not ask about how welcoming specific locations would normally be to people looking to come in out of the cold. We know that this will vary significantly from location to location.

There were multiple community recreation sites we were not able to reach by telephone in December, or during follow-up calling in January 2021. For these sites we used online hours as listed in January 2021. We assumed that if a site was listed as open in January 2021 that it was also open in December 2020, and that if it was listed as closed in January 2021 that it was also closed in December 2020. Most of the closed sites were small pools and arenas that have likely been closed throughout the pandemic.

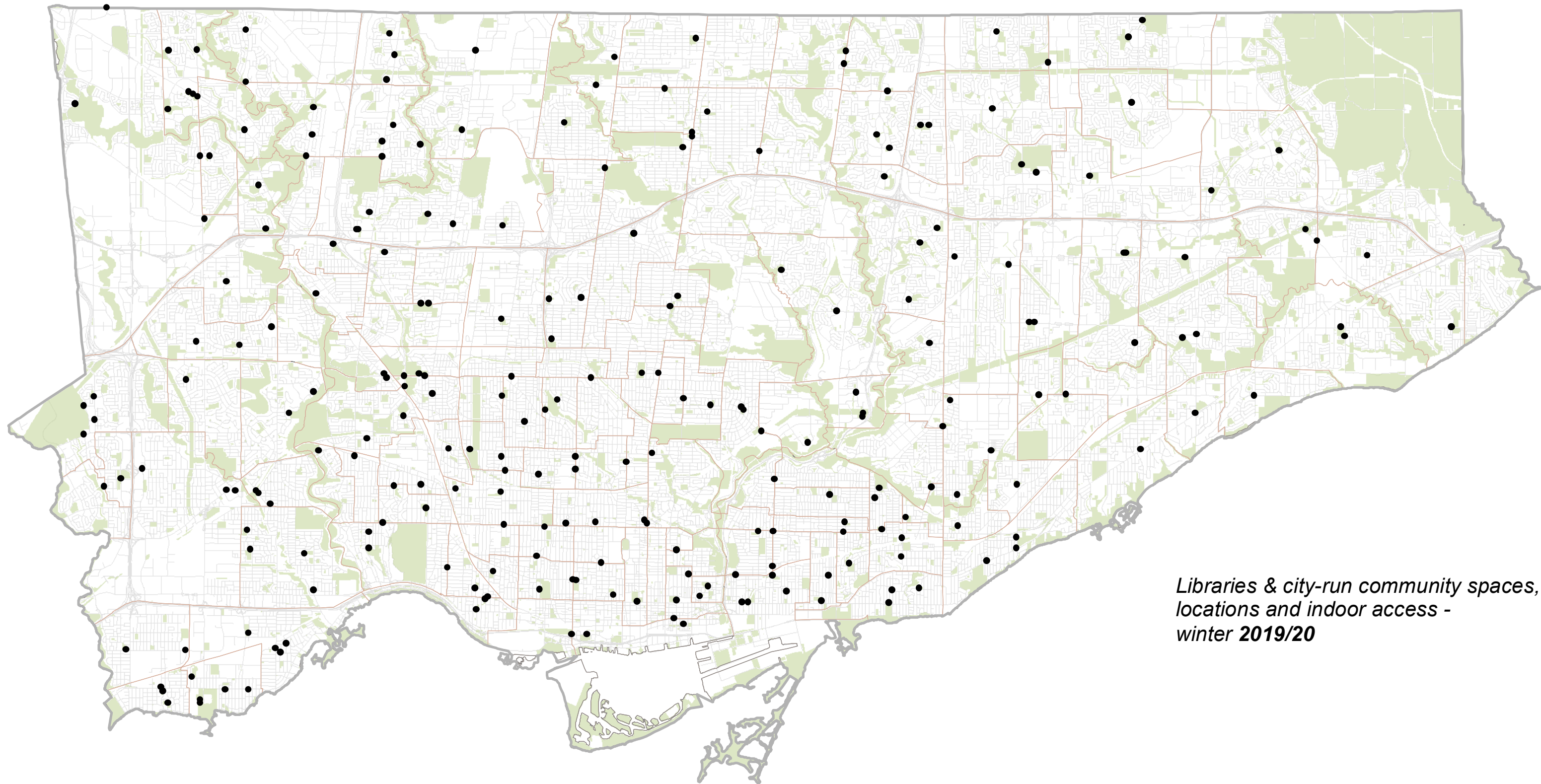
However, there may be a small number of locations that were misclassified, and we welcome corrections at: [info@maphealth.ca](mailto:info@maphealth.ca)

In January 2021, we largely used web resources to characterize access to library and recreation centre facilities. We also polled a sample of sites across the city by phone to confirm that sites listed as open online were, in fact, still open and offering bathroom access. There were some discrepancies between what we were told over the phone versus what was available online, however these were minor (i.e. closing times that differed by 30 minutes). We called all sites that offered additional services such showers and lounges to clarify whether these services had changed.

## Notes

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1. For the library sites we used information from <https://open.toronto.ca/open-data-license> Data last refreshed: Jul 23, 2019. Accessed: December 18, 2020. As community centre data had not been refreshed since 2012, we relied on City websites for information.

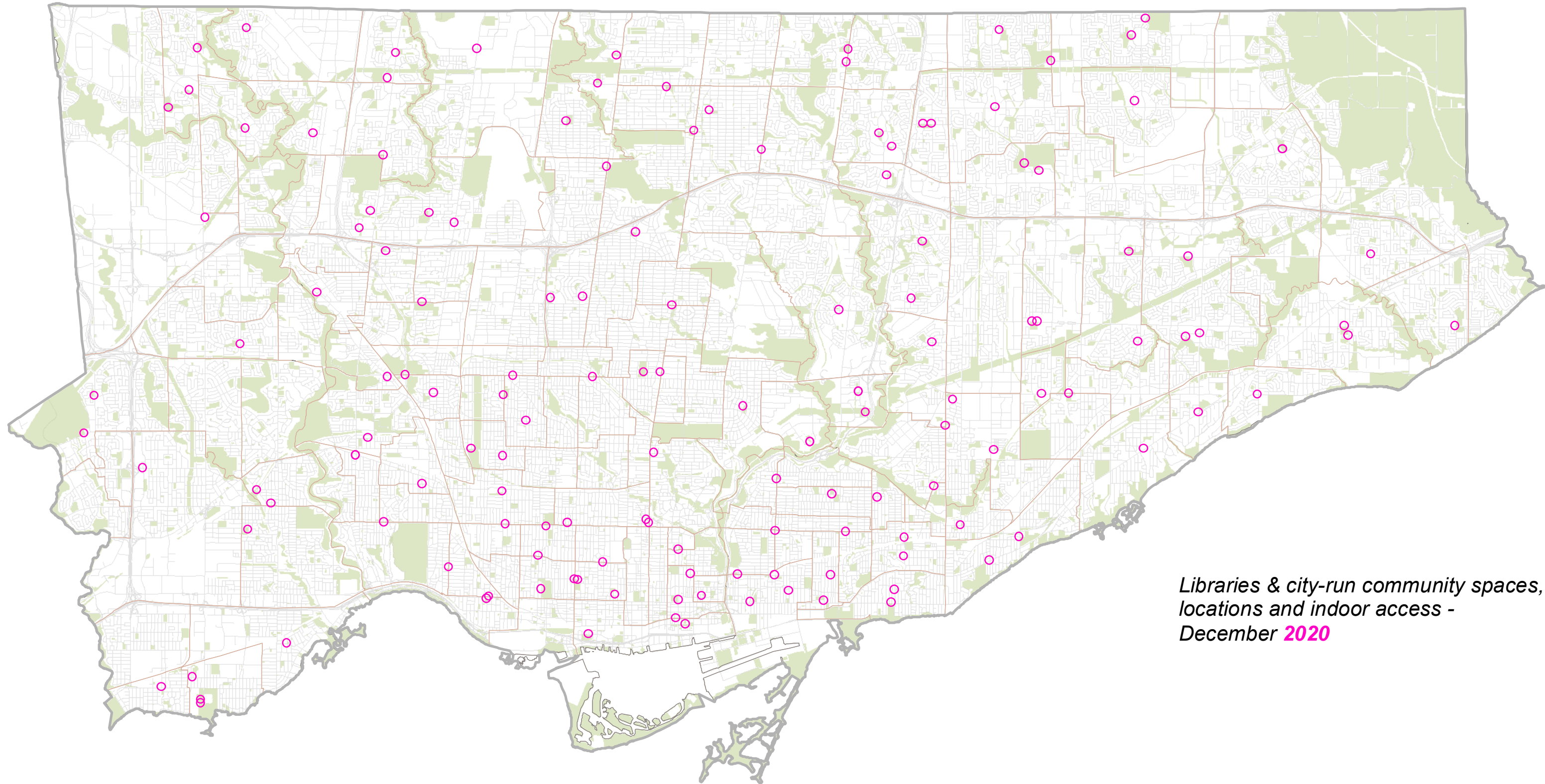


*Libraries & city-run community spaces,  
locations and indoor access -  
winter 2019/20*

Locations open  
to indoor access: **258**

- (1) What this map captures: Drop-in, indoor access to libraries and city-run recreation spaces.
- (2) Data snapshot taken 2019. For data sources, please see fact sheet.
- (3) We did not look at how welcoming specific public spaces are or were to people looking to come in out of the cold. There will be significant variation between sites.
- (4) This map is not intended as a resource and will not be updated.

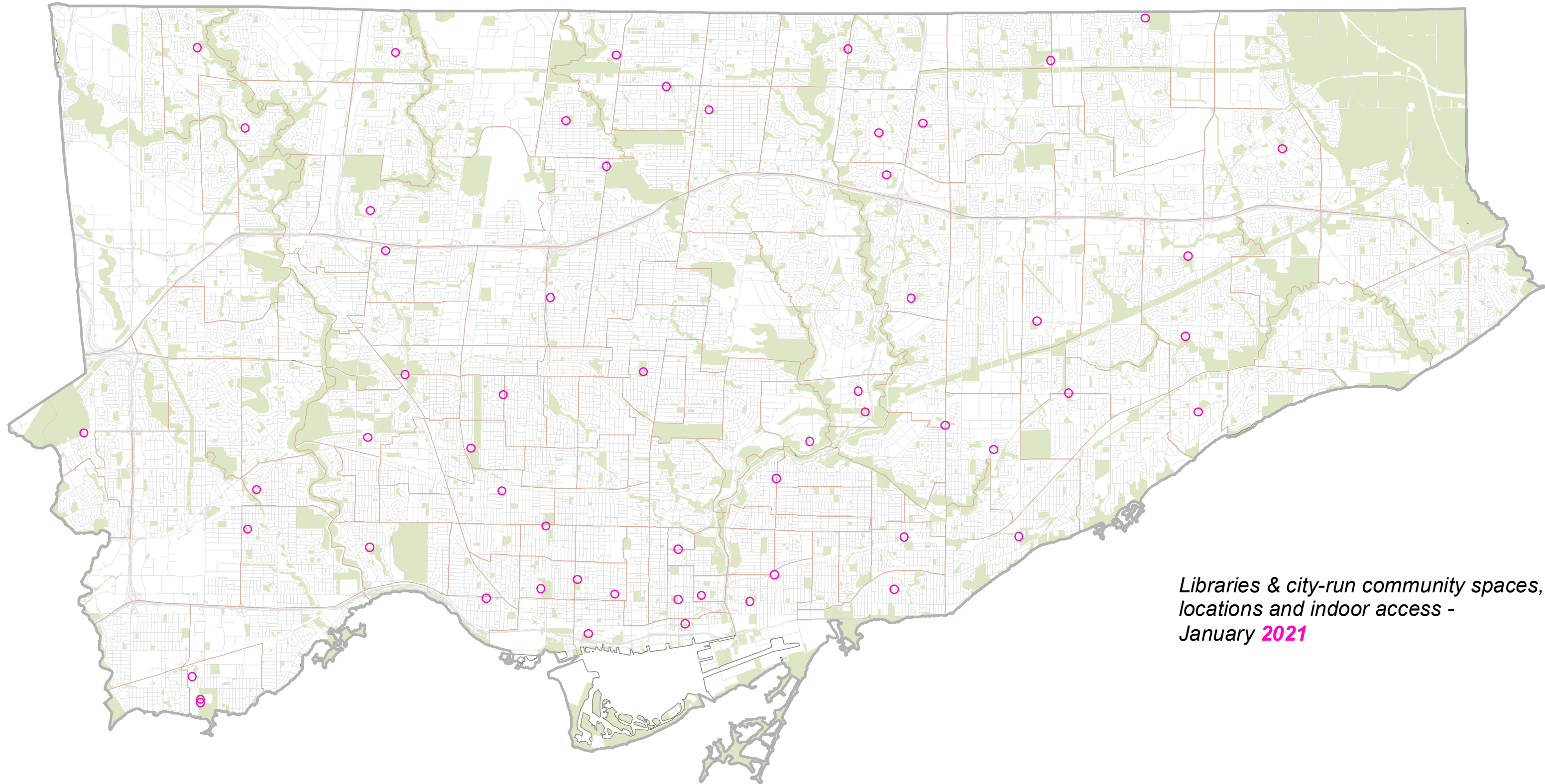




*Libraries & city-run community spaces,  
locations and indoor access -  
December 2020*

Locations open  
to indoor access: 146

- (1) What this map captures: Drop-in access to libraries and city-run recreation spaces. In Dec. 2020 this access was severely limited, and generally only included bathrooms and computers at remaining libraries, and bathrooms at remaining community centres. For details, please see fact sheet.
- (2) Data snapshot taken: mid-December, 2020.
- (3) We did not look at how welcoming specific public spaces are or were to people looking to come in out of the cold. There will be significant variation between sites.
- (4) This map is not intended as a resource and will not be updated.



*Libraries & city-run community spaces,  
locations and indoor access -  
January 2021*

Locations open  
to indoor access: **58**

- (1) What this map captures: Drop-in access to libraries and city-run recreation spaces. In Jan. 2021 this access was severely limited, and generally only included bathroom access at remaining community centres. For details, please see fact sheet.
- (2) Data snapshot taken: late-January, 2021. For data sources, please see fact sheet.
- (3) We did not look at how welcoming specific public spaces are or were to people looking to come in out of the cold. There will be significant variation between sites.
- (4) This map is not intended as a resource and will not be updated.