Big Marlborough Park Master Plan
What We Did Summer 2025

Report Back: WWHR & WWDR

Project Overview

The Big Marlborough Park Master Plan aims to revitalize the park by enhancing community engagement, social inclusion, and park amenities. The park, established in the 1970s, is an important greenspace in northeast Calgary, surrounded by schools and community facilities. The project addresses the urgent need for updated park facilities to serve the growing and diverse population in the northeast quadrant.

Engagement Process

Engagement was open from March 20 to April 21, 2025. Platforms and tactics included the Engage portal page (https://engage.calgary.ca/BMPmasterplan), an open house, park pop-ups, Coffee and Conversations, 3 school workshops and 4 community events. Posters and postcards were also distributed throughout the community. A sounding board was placed in front of the Marlborough Park Community Association, which was updated regularly, and bold signs were deployed telling communities about the opportunities to provide feedback. We had 2,810 online visitors to 92 participants at our in-person events, 62 at our school workshops and 116 at community events for a total of 3,080 participants.

Key Themes from Community Feedback

Inclusivity and Accessibility: Ensure the park is accessible and inclusive to people of all abilities.

Amenities and Infrastructure: Provide more and better park amenities.

Gathering Spaces: Create places for gathering that facilitate relaxation, social connection, community building.

Nature: Create more opportunities to enjoy nature.

Recreation: Enhance and diversify active and passive recreation.

Safety and Security: Ensure the park is safe, clean, and well-maintained.

Community Priorities

Values and Priorities: Physical exercise, enjoying the outdoors, mental health, social wellbeing, and a sense of community were highly valued.

Sports and Recreation: Walking, dog walking, racquet sports, and cycling were popular activities. There is a desire for more sports fields and amenities and organized events.

Concerns: Lack of washrooms and water, park condition, and safety issues were major concerns. Suggestions included better maintenance, more amenities, and increased security.

Future Vision

Participants envision a park that remains a vibrant, safe, and inclusive space for all community members, with enhanced natural beauty, diverse recreational opportunities, and strong community engagement.

Theme	Details (What We Heard)	Project Team Response and Details
Key Themes		
Inclusivity and Accessibility	Ensure the park is accessible and inclusive to people of all abilities.	Enhancing the accessibility of Big Marlborough Park is a priority for all future improvements, as this is essential in creating parks that are more inclusive and welcoming for those of all ages and abilities. **What We Did – Preferred Master Plan:** - Identified inclusivity and accessibility as a key priority to guide all decisions and future design efforts. - Focused on providing clear connections to and through the site, including: 1) connecting points of arrival (including transit!) with park destinations, 2) creating an enhanced pathway network that offers more variety of experience, and 3) providing greater connectivity among park spaces and amenities. - Re-aligning problematic areas of the pathway network to improve accessibility by reducing the slope park users must navigate and create safer conditions in the winter in areas where ice build-ups on the pathway. - Identified areas dedicated specifically for play within the overall park site, to complement the existing playgrounds located at each elementary school and within the surrounding community. **What We Will Do – Future Detail Design and Beyond:**

Theme	Details (What We Heard)	Project Team Response and Details
		- Inclusivity and accessibility will guide design decisions. - Play features will offer opportunities for those with mobility (and other) challenges. - Develop a pathway network with a clear hierarchy, with primary multi-modal pathway connections as part of the area's 5A Network and dedicated connections to/through the park's high-use areas. - Create welcoming gateways (for all modes of arrival) into the park from the surrounding community, coordinating with Calgary Transit for the integration of transit stops. - Apply best practices and City accessibility standards when designing the park pathway network. - Provide diverse opportunities for play, considering the unique needs of those with mobility and sensory challenges, as well as neurodiverse individuals and those with a range of cognitive abilities.
Amenities and Infrastructure	Provide more and better park amenities.	Amenities and infrastructure support the enjoyment of our park spaces, encouraging visitors to explore different activities, stay longer, and visit more often. They help to promote a strong park identity and contribute to the overall comfort for users. **What We Did – Preferred Master Plan:** - Publicly accessible washrooms have been identified as a key element in the park's transformation. - Planning for public washroom facilities in the centrally located Community Hub, south of the Community Association, to provide reasonable access from all areas. - Gathering spaces, like picnic areas, have been included, either as dedicated zones and/or integrated with other park areas. - Provide an idea of the type and location of some key site furnishings, to illustrate the design intent. **What We Will Do – Future Detail Design and Beyond:** - Park amenities, such as benches, waste bins, bike racks, and signs, will be included in the final design, making the park more comfortable and exciting to visit. - Finalize all materials and site furnishings. - Provide details for integrating all amenities and site

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		furnishings within the overall layout. - Review the site servicing needs and provide details for the design and integration of washroom facilities, water access, lighting, and power.
Gathering Space:	Create places for gathering that facilitate relaxation, social connection + community building	Gathering spaces – of all sizes – provide opportunities for social connection, which are vital in building a strong sense of community. These spaces also create opportunities for celebration, cultural expression, and all kinds of programming to encourage participation and enjoyment of parks. **What We Did – Preferred Master Plan:** - Social connection has been identified as a key priority. - Picnic areas have been included, either as dedicated zones and/or integrated with other park areas. - Lots of opportunities for social seating and gathering throughout the park, including space and amenities for group picnics. - The Community Hub has space for a variety of events and social seating which is close to the sports courts and playground. **What We Will Do – Future Detail Design and Beyond:** - Design edges between functional spaces to accommodate places of pause, suitable for small-scale gathering. - Confirm size requirements for event spaces, and any service and infrastructure needs. - Ensure seating areas are strategically located to provide comfort in a wide range of conditions (including shade for sunny, hot conditions!). - Ensure seating accommodates both intimate and small group gatherings. - Create spaces that can accommodate school groups for outdoor learning, classes, or other programming. - Create picnic areas of different sizes, with a range of amenities such as shelters, fire pits and/or grills, and site furnishings. - Provide amenities that encourage gathering in all seasons, such as communal fire pits or shelters for the winter.

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Nature:	Create more opportunities to enjoy nature.	Trees and natural areas are important in our park spaces. They provide habitat for wildlife, support biodiversity, help us manage the adverse effects of climate change, and enhance mental health and wellbeing for visitors. **What We Did – Preferred Master Plan:** - As many trees as possible are maintained, and more trees will be planted. - Naturalized areas will be incorporated into the park. - Gathering spaces, pathways, and seating will provide opportunities to enjoy nature and encourage visitors to explore. **What We Will Do – Future Detail Design and Beyond:** - Thoughtfully integrate trees and other plantings to create definition and edges between spaces, provide screening where needed, and to enhance the park's various gathering spaces. - Use trees and other plantings to create visual interest in all seasons, create comfortable microclimates, and contribute to wayfinding and legibility. - Develop plant material lists that enhance the park's biodiversity and are appropriate for the local climate. - Develop a succession plan that encourages thoughtful replacement of trees over time, as they reach the end of their lifecycle or become hazardous to visitors. - Consider ongoing maintenance regimes required to support the long-term success of all vegetation and soils on site. - Explore opportunities to use planting design as art or cultural expression. - Design pathways of different widths and materials to offer visitors a range of experiences.
Recreation	Enhance + diversify recreation offerings.	Recreation – formal, programmed sports as well as informal, casual activity – is a core offering in the current park. Big Marlborough Park in the future will continue to prioritize recreation, diversifying the range of opportunities as well as focusing on the integration of flexible, multi-use spaces. **What We Did – Preferred Master Plan:** - Significantly reduced the amount of park space dedicated to baseball diamonds as these are single-use

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		spaces that no longer suit the needs of the community. - Included a wide range of recreational amenities. - Proposed recreation-focused spaces that can accommodate different uses (including uses in both summer and winter) and can be repurposed in the future as needs/desires change. - More options for different recreation, sports, and play. - The dry stormwater pond will continue to function as a large open space in summer and a dynamic activity hub in the winter. **What We Will Do – Future Detail Design and Beyond:** - Less park space will be dedicated to baseball. - Confirm size, access, and buffer requirements. - Select materials and develop details that optimize the functionality of these spaces and allow for varying intensities of use. - Coordinate management requirements including booking versus casual use.
Safety and Security	Ensure the park is safe, clean and well maintained	Safety and security are high priorities for any public space. The safer people feel visiting the park, the more opportunities they will have to enjoy the park, try different activities, connect on a social level, and build community. **What We Did – Preferred Master Plan:** - More gathering spaces, with a wider variety of things to do will encourage more people and more activity which results in greater 'natural surveillance' and a deterrent to criminal activity. - Prominent gateways, logical pathway connections, and clear sightlines make it easy to navigate the park. - Recommendation to relocate the west parking lot closer to Maidstone Dr. NE for better visibility and revisit pathway connection from the street to the existing pathway for better alignment. - Recommendation to install automatic gates at the north, west and east parking lot to restrict access to a certain timeframe. - Commitment to improve lighting throughout the park and parking lots. **What We Will Do – Future Detail Design and Beyond:** - Prioritize clear sightlines through the park.

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		- Develop a lighting strategy that provides adequate and consistent lighting along pathways and in parking lots, and to enhance key landmarks within the park. Avoid over-lighting and light pollution. - Develop a pathway hierarchy, supported by wayfinding signage where helpful, to promote clear navigation. - Establish ongoing maintenance protocols that prioritize rapidly addressing broken fixtures or amenities, vandalism, and visibly show that the park is well-cared for. - Encourage community partners to activate the park with local events. - Explore creative operational and programmatic strategies for enhancing security in the long-term.
Community Priorities		
Values and Priorities	Physical exercise, enjoying the outdoors, mental health, social wellbeing, and a sense of community were highly valued.	Key values and priorities for a future Big Marlborough Park are captured in the Priorities Summary: - Inclusivity & Accessibility - Flexibility & Adaptability - Social Connection - Wellbeing - Access to Nature - All Seasons - Local Community
Sports and Recreation:	Walking, dog walking, racquet sports, and cycling were popular activities. There is a desire for more sports fields and amenities and organized events.	Desired Sports & Recreation Features: - Pathways - Sports fields - Sports courts - Spaces to accommodate organized events The preferred master plan includes a wide variety of active uses, as well as spaces to accommodate organized events.
Concerns:	Lack of washrooms and water, park condition, and safety issues were major concerns. Suggestions included	Desired Amenities: - Washrooms - Water availability The preferred master plan includes public washrooms in the centrally located Community Hub south of the Community

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	better maintenance, more amenities, and increased security.	Association. Providing access to drinking water in this location will also be considered during future design phases. Desired Outcomes: - Greater sense of safety - Improved park maintenance - More park amenities The preferred master plan includes more opportunities for social and event gatherings, as well as the spaces and amenities to support a much wider variety of uses and activities. This is intended to respond to diverse needs and desires, encouraging more visitors to visit more often, and for longer periods of time. More activity within the park is the best way to increase safety and security. The plan also includes a recommendation to relocate the west parking lot closer to Maidstone Dr. N.E. for better visibility, improve lighting throughout the park and parking lots and to install automatic gates at the north, west and east parking lots. The finer details of a lighting strategy, security and surveillance, and the ongoing maintenance required will be addressed more fully in future design phases and long-term management strategies.