Project Background

By early 2025, The City of Calgary will develop and present the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan to Council for approval. This Plan will replace the original Open Space Plan approved by Council in 2002 and will determine how Calgary's parks are managed, developed, and redeveloped over the next 20 years. The process of creating this Plan included three phases of engagement.

Phase 1 engagement took place from April 17 - May 19, 2023. Phase 2 engagement took place October 13 - November 12, 2023. A draft plan was produced in late Fall 2024 Phase 3 engagement took place from October 8 - 30, 2024. Outreach and engagement for this project is now complete.

Engagement Objectives

Through extensive and in-depth engagement and research, Calgarians provided guidance to inform the development of Connect by identifying what they valued, what is working and what could be improved in the city's park system.

Informed by Calgarians, 'Connect' provides updated policy and operational actions to guide the planning, design and management of the park system for the next 20 years. These actions have been developed to respond to the significant growth and demographic changes occurring in Calgary and ensures the park system serves the social, recreational and environmental needs of all Calgarians.

Phase consisted of the draft Connect plan being shared with the public and partners ahead of seeking Council's approval in early 2025.

Participants

Participants included the general public, BILD, internal City of Calgary staff and business units, the Climate Advisory Committee and the Social Wellbeing Advisory Commitee (SWAC) (comprised of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA), Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC), Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (GEDI), Calgary Urban Aboriginal Committee (CUAC) and Older Adults Advisory Table (OOAT).

Engagement Overview

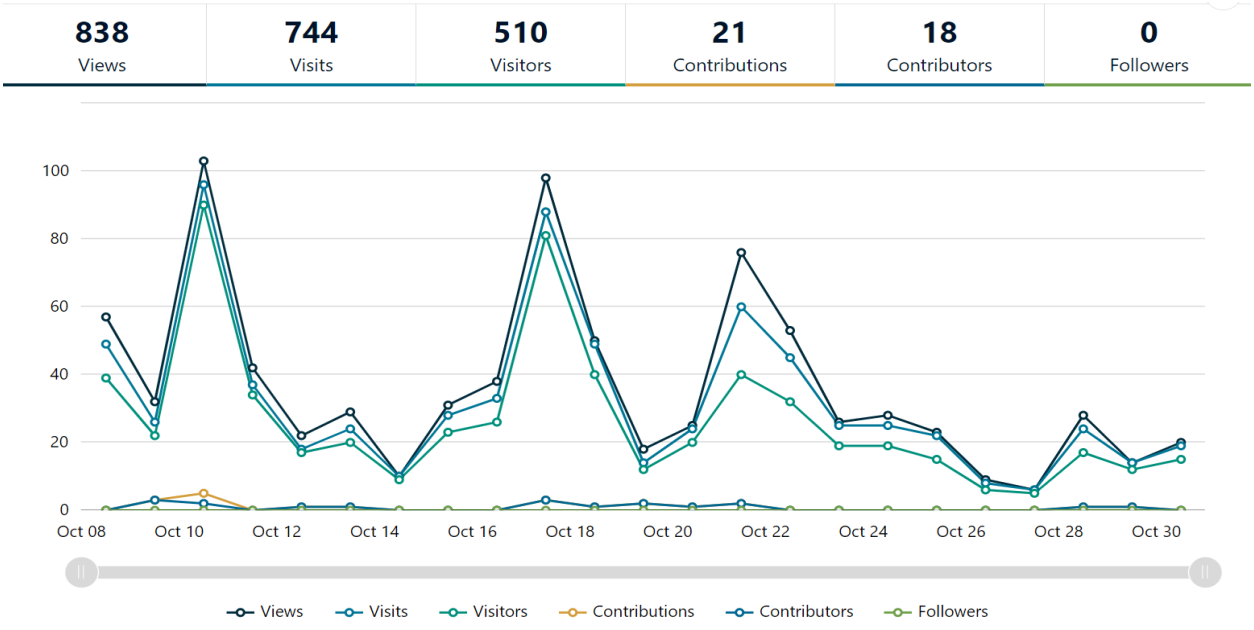
1. Online feedback could be provided on the Engage portal page from October 8 – 30, 2024 https://engage.calgary.ca/parksplan. Participants could review the draft Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan and answer the following question:

   Do the policies and operational actions in the final draft of Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan align with your top priorities for park management, development, and redevelopment?

2. Meetings and workshops were held with the participants mentioned in the previous particpants section.

Online Feedback

As per the image below. The portal page had 838 views (every time a page is seen), 744 visits (individual browsing sessions), 510 visitors (unique users) and received 21 contributions (number of responses) through 18 contributors (users who left feedback).



The question we asked was:

Do the policies and operational actions in the final draft of Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan align with your top priorities for park management, development, and redevelopment?

Sentiment Analysis: Positive (8), Neutral (7), Mixed (4), Negative (2)

Verbatim

Verbatim comments presented here include all feedback, suggestions, comments and messages that were collected online through the engagement described in this summary report. All input has been reviewed and provided to Project Team to be considered in decision making for the project. Wherever possible the remainder of the submissions remains. No other edits to the feedback have been made, and the verbatim comments are as received.

1. "Where are the wildlife corridors?

   The city is eating away at greenspace, wild grass areas, and unpopulated spaces and yet we have creatures that live in these areas and need to move to safe shelters, have access to water sources, and be able to mate and breed. We are lacking safe passage and areas for these animals that are not accessible to dogs and that provide safe habitation and movement for animals and humans. Skunks, coyotes, fox, birds, bob cats, are just a few of the animals that are losing valuable roaming, breeding, sleeping, and living spaces."

2. "The permit requirement for drones over 250g in parks adds unnecessary administrative burden, contributing to backlogs in the City's permit office without improving safety or privacy. Canada's federal regulations, including licensing and flight restrictions, already provide robust oversight. Duplicating these efforts at the municipal level creates redundant bureaucracy, discouraging responsible drone use while offering no tangible benefit. Streamlining this policy would align better with efficient park management by reducing unnecessary delays and focusing resources on areas with clearer value for public safety and privacy."

3. "In past community ARPs the City has separated greenspace/park areas in four subcategories, referencing the MDP and 2002 Open Space policy documents which mention the metric of 2 hectares per 1000 residents. An example of these four

subcategories can be found on page 43 of the Bowness ARP and they include Active, Passive, Non-Functional, and Regional. The ARPs describe clearly which subcategories contribute to metric and which don't.

2024 Connect: Calgary Parks Plan does not mention subcategories, leading to a false narrative with use of the map on pg30. The important subcategories are not mentioned in the most recent South Shaganappi ARP either, so it's clear between documents residents will have no data to ensure the metric is upheld."

4. I like the ideas, but they are a tall order. Our residents want our parks maintained and your data shows how much we need improvements in our community. We have difficulty getting volunteers. I support better funding for parks in general as they are so important for quality of life. You need enforcement of our existing rules about trees including replacements for redevelopment. Only 14 days to review this report with multiple competing major City zoning and LAP on our plates. Not enough publicity for this important topic. I support increasing the parks profile & giving you decent funding! I still grieve the loss or Richmond Greens as I used the golf course. Please save our greenspaces & enhance our park system.

5. Overall, a good plan. Need to have much more bylaw enforcement. Create incentives for developers to retain trees on private lands. The marked deforestation of inner-city neighbourhoods due to densification needs to be acknowledge. Revise restoration target upward. The target for % of people feeling safe while visiting a park should be 90% not 60%!! Reconstitute the Biodiversity Advisory Committee. Provide much more educational programing and opportunities for Calgarians of all ages to learn about and appreciate Calgary's biodiversity. The Inglewood Bird Sanctuary needs to be provided with the resources and expertise to play a leadership role in the educational arena and not just for kids.

6. "I feel there should be a full 18 hole disc golf course added near the south east end of 52 St SE., this is slated to be a highly populated area with the nearest privately operated course approx. 11km away (Southview Links) and the nearest City course, approx. 22km away, which is the Forest Lawn course, slated to be closed in the near future.

   By providing a full 18-hole disc golf course within walking or biking distance of this highly populated area, the course will provide year-round low cost enjoyment to the area."

7. Would like to see bathrooms on the west end of Confederation Park. Near the Rosemont community centre.

8. So far so good. A timeline of actual changes to which parks would be nice to see and what the changes will be.

9. Yes

10. Yes. Thank you for all of your work in developing a strategic direction for the flourishing management of our City's Parks and Open Spaces. It has been a pleasure partnering and contributing to this plan so far. Please let the Calgary Disc Golf Community (CDGC) know how it can continue to be an ally to the City to help enhance year-round, multi-use, passive recreation for Calgary.

11. I would like to see a full 18 hole disc golf course in the far SE corner of the city / near south health campus to help grow the sport in that area.

12. "Good Day,

    The Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan is a thoughtful and thoroughly written document that not only sets the strategy, but the tactical actions that can deliver the vision of parks and open spaces to the city and its residents. I am buoyed by what is written in here, as our Symons Valley Park project has characteristics of being a regional, neighbourhood, and plaza typologies. This document also highlights many of our shared challenges and goals, and we see our project helping the city accomplish these goals, like being inclusive, walkable/wheelable in 400m, drivable in 5km, increase canopy growth, reduce water. I want to continue the conversation; please contact [personal information removed]"

13. There are disturbing signs that park space is being threatened by the Gondek regime's densification/blanket rezoning fixation. Other Canadian cities - Saskatoon for example - are increasing parks and green space. Calgary is losing them. A very contentious issue currently is a small community park in Bowness (6623 Bowness Road) being sold to the Trellis Society to build a 5-story, 50-unit complex. There are several other large infills planned for the immediate vicinity, vastly increasing the population infusion...while eliminating one of the few accessible parks in our community. Bowness Park, heavily used by people from across the city, does NOT provide citizens with the kind of uncongested space needed. Hands off existing parks!

14. We need more public washrooms in all the parks. It seems that some parks are cherry picked to receive public washrooms and others ones absolutely ignored. Rosemont Community Assoc is paying out of their own money because Confederation only has 1 and repeated requests from residents and the CA have absolutely been declined, with

the reason that "too hard to maintain, no money in the budget, please tell the people to stop emailing us". Ridiculous, this city at every turn. But please - put more bike lanes in, while little kids pee their pants in the park, adults are left running to the bushes and CAs do the city's job.

15. There is a cultural shift towards MR = good / PUL = bad it appears with Calgary Parks. If we perhaps revisit how a road ROW is created, would this culture say ?m wide is MR / ?m wide is PUL as it cannot be a "shared space". As all departments are one City, suggest revisiting what can go in an MR and what cannot, provided the value is there to program it to a level required for public benefit. [personal information removed]

16. Parks as open spaces in communities may be best location for placement of shallow utility hardware, with strategic screening and planting. An example is a school site, where JUCC of Parks may not understand how electrical, gas, communication services a large building. Including with three phase power. Shallow utilities are a terrific part of modern society where a school enjoys electricity, heat, fiber optic, but yet the hardware to service this, is seen negatively or "bad" from a culture perspective with Parks. Recommend allowing this in open spaces more, especially as it is safer when needing to do O&M. [personal information removed]

17. It is perhaps not appropriate to define in this Plan "green infrastructure" as that must be done by an engineer. it also can create division of "good" and "bad" infrastructure for stormwater management, as that also needs to be defined by an engineer. Recommend removal of all references to "green infrastructure" as that is subjective, and could be at odds with whatever stormwater management is appropriate as per Provincial Guidelines, City of Calgary Stormwater Management Guidelines, and professional engineering input. Only refer to "stormwater infrastructure" of which there are many types. A stormwater wet pond for example is perhaps the greatest LID possible. Is such a thing considered "green" by Parks (?). [personal information removed]

18. Improvement can be made if Open Spaces are not seen as a "battle ground" between Parks and Water Resources. All MR's surrounding Ponds WILL NEED deep utilities with URWs. This can be accomplished without detriment to the MR, with strategic and thoughtful programming by Developer and City Parks. At present a growing divide is occurring where Land Use Decisions on what is PUL versus what is MR is decided by what City sub department will operate that space. It is creating conflicting policy and difficulty where Consultants must act as the mediator or arbitrator between Parks and Water Resources for internal City decisions. It is all ONE City, and whether PUL or MR will be operated by ONE City. [personal information removed]

19. Yes, the draft plan looks great. Thank you for the amazing work.

20. The MDP states this: "Parks and open spaces must not be disposed of unless the land meets criteria defined in The City's parks and open space policies." so, I went looking for that criteria in the park plan and can't find it. What, exactly, is your criteria to sell and develop our parks. Cause its a free for all right now.

21. You are STILL missing the point. We want playgrounds, greenspace, recreation space AND ecological areas conserved and protected in perpetuity, not just the significant ecological areas! You are purposely missing the point to enable more development and allow the sale of playground, recreation and park spaces (Richmond Green, Glenmore Landing, Nose Creek, Bowness!) No reduction in greenspace, no reduction in recreation space, no development on those areas! Come on, get it right this is the third round of "engagement" and you keep ignoring that Calgarians want their neighbourhood playground, feilds, school sites and parks SAVED and conserved!

Outcome

This feedback will be used to make any final adjustments on the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan before sending it to Council for final approval.