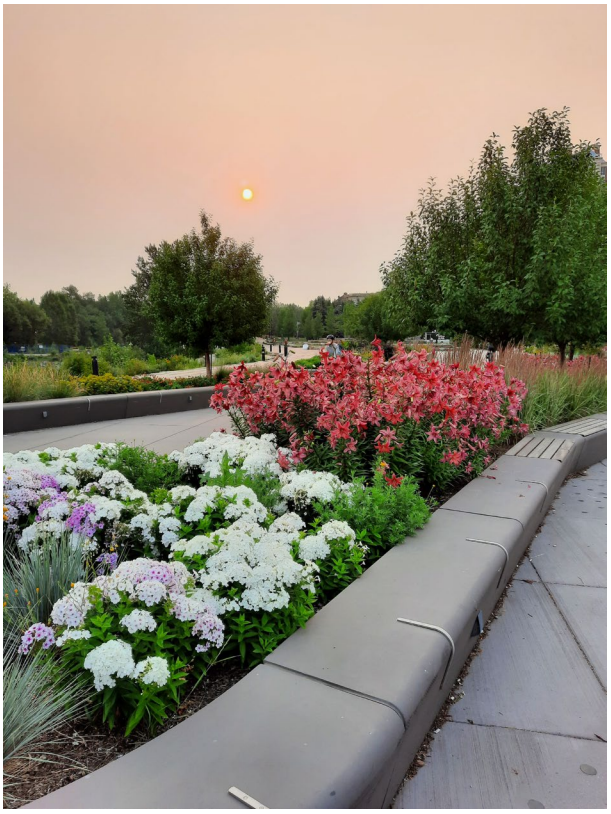


WHAT WE HEARD REPORT PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT CONNECT: CALGARY'S PARKS PLAN

Spring 2023

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT REPORT BACK

For Project Teams and interest-holders this contains a summary of the engagement process, emergent themes, and verbatim input from Phase 1.

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Executive Summary

By 2024, 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 2003 and will determine how Calgary's parks are managed, developed, and redeveloped over the next 20 years. The process of creating this Plan includes three phases of engagement. This report summarizes the findings of the first phase of engagement between April – June 2023.

The Goal

The goal of phase 1 engagement was to explore three key areas of Parks' core service delivery and what will be the foundational pillars of the updated plan. The three areas were Connecting You to Nature, Connecting You to Wellness, and Connecting You to Culture. This phase of engagement aimed to understand participants' perspectives on the benefits, concerns, and opportunities for improvement in the core service areas. In addition, questions were asked about economic sustainability, equity within parks, and a set of draft guiding principles.

Feedback

Feedback from the three key areas gave the project team a clearer understanding of respondents' expectations regarding how parks should be managed now and into the future. This information will help to guide the policy direction, ultimately resulting in a 20-year plan that reflects the values and visions of Calgarians.

Equity

As parks are seen to be a common good, an equity lens was placed on the engagement plan and how the feedback has been reported. Great effort was placed on ensuring that historically equity-denied[1] Calgarians were included in engagement. To effectively gather feedback from a wide variety of interest groups, various methods of engagement were used, and tactics were tailored to overcome potential barriers to participation.

Tactics

Phase 1 Engagement included: three unique online surveys tailored for Calgarians, businesses, agencies and organizations, and youth. The portal page received over 13,712 views, 8,944 visitors and 835 contributions. Two virtual information sessions were held; four open houses; 12 pop-up events in parks, libraries, and recreation centers; a Connect event series with six public events with over 300 attendees; four online workshops; consultation with nine advisory committees; 150 paper questionnaires completed; and partnerships with community organizations. Over 800 promotional postcards were distributed.

Themes

Participants' feedback illustrates misunderstandings about the types of parks and the level of maintenance and amenities that The City should consider for each. Regardless of what type of park or topic of engagement, there are very clear themes outlining what respondents want and envision for the future of Calgary's parks. Regardless of age, gender, race, ability, or income, the following themes consistently emerged from what we heard in this phase of engagement.

[1] Equity-denied groups are those who identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation. (Source: Glossary, Canada Council for the Arts (external link)).

Presented in no specific order, these key themes are:

1. Create more parks and green spaces.
2. Prioritize conservation and support biodiversity.
3. Support and increase Calgary's tree canopy.
4. Address safety and security concerns.
5. Manage user conflict between dogs, cyclists and pedestrians.
6. Create multi-use spaces for everyone with generation-specific activities and considerations.
7. Improve maintenance to keep parks beautiful, clean, and functional.
8. Improve education and communication.
9. Increase connectivity between parks to improve transportation networks and wildlife corridors.
10. Increase equitable access to parks through park distribution and public transportation.
11. Improve accessibility of parks during winter and for those with mobility considerations.
12. Add and improve amenities to increase user experience.
13. Use parks to build community and social unity.
14. Create economic opportunities for small businesses.

Preservation, conservation and sustainability. This includes but is not limited to the creation of more parks and green spaces, growing Calgary's tree canopy, and prioritizing conservation and supporting biodiversity for both flora and fauna.

Safety and security. This includes but is not limited to addressing safety and security concerns, as well as the management of user conflict between dogs, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Amenities and infrastructure. This includes but is not limited to the improved maintenance to keep parks beautiful, clean, and functional, as well as the addition and improvement of amenities and infrastructure to increase user experiences.

Placemaking/Gathering spaces. This includes but is not limited to the creation of multi-use intergenerational, accessible and diverse spaces for people to use. Respondents want to use parks to build community and instill social unity.

Education and enforcement. This includes but is not limited to increased learning surrounding the environmental, cultural and historical landscapes of Calgary parks. As well as education about appropriate use of parks such as littering, staying on designated pathways and the protection of flora and fauna.

Accessibility and connectivity. This includes but is not limited to increasing equitable access to parks through park distribution and public transportation, as well as year-round access to parks and pathways to consider both mental and physical accessibility.

Equity concerns. While the above themes were commonly shared by engagement respondents, there were a few notable instances of inequity that emerged from the feedback. These include but are not limited to the following:

- **Accessibility.** Concerns regarding accessibility were common amongst seniors and respondents experiencing disabilities.
- **Racism.** Racialized and newcomer participants shared they have directly experienced or have witnessed instances of direct racism in Calgary parks.
- **Communication.** Racialized and newcomer participants shared there is a lack of information and communication in their preferred language.

- **Access.** Lack of access to nearby parks and availability of diverse activities among those living in the NE.

Precariously housed and unhoused[2] respondents shared the same benefits, concerns and opportunities for improvement in Calgary's parks as others. They experience the benefits of physical and mental well-being from Calgary's parks. They too, have concerns about safety, crime, and drug use. Engagement with unhoused respondents exposed inequity as their desire for washrooms and access to drinking water fills a gap in basic needs, as opposed to other respondents who view this as being an inconvenience.

A common theme from respondents was the increase in the unhoused population and encampments, and associated concerns about safety, litter and vandalism in parks.

Guiding Principles

Following this, engagement questions relating to the guiding principles highlighted a few key areas of sensitivity, conflict, and tension. It is important to note that most respondents agreed the draft guiding principles reflected their values. However, several respondents suggested changes to one or more principles and others completely disagreed with one or more. A common suggestion was that 'Climate Resilience' be incorporated into 'A Healthy Environment' as many stated these concepts are the same. Others would like to see physical wellness and a reference to sports and active living explicitly stated in the principles, as they feel this is the core purpose of parks.

Tensions

One area of tension was having a nature-first principle and people-first principle, with a belief they cannot exist in equal balance. Many feel that a nature-first approach and a clear focus on conservation of parks should be the priority.

For those who disagreed, another issue presented was the concept of equity itself. Some respondents shared that they do not understand the connection between equity and parks, and some comments highlighted a misunderstanding about the meaning of equity.

Another area of tension was the reference to celebrating culture. Respondents shared concerns about which culture would be celebrated as Calgary is so diverse, and the risk of increasing divisiveness in Calgary. Others felt that park spaces should be culturally neutral to allow individuals to choose how they want to use spaces.

Much of the feedback that emerged from the guiding principles engagement, revolved around specific language used in the principles. Even for those who agree with the principles themselves, many preferred to use words like inclusion, belonging, community, unity, and gathering when speaking about them.

[2] In recent years advocates and activists have begun to use the word *unhoused* or *houseless* to describe individuals without a physical address. However, government agencies and research institutions continue to use the word *homeless* when reporting on people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

Project overview

Project background

Calgary's original Parks Plan was referred to as the Open Space Plan (OSP) and was the foundational policy document providing the framework for the future development and management of the city's parks. The OSP was approved by Council in 2002 and amended in 2003 but no review or update has been conducted since that time.

Over the last twenty years Calgary has gone through significant demographic and geographic changes, as well as major provincial regulation changes such as the Municipal Government Act, South Saskatchewan River Regional Plan, and Wetland Policy, as well as corporate policy development including imagineCalgary, the Sustainability Principles for Land Use and Mobility, the City's Municipal Development Plan, and Calgary Transportation Plan. As a result, many policies in the existing OSP are outdated and do not adequately inform and support future park and open space provision and management. Additionally, the existing OSP does not address key issues affecting modern park and open space planning and management, including climate resilience, equitable provision and management, accessibility, reconciliation, and financial sustainability.

A comprehensive review and update of the OSP is therefore necessary and timely. This project is a significant undertaking with a projected three-year time frame for completion. The new updated plan will be referred to as Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan.

Project goals

- Develop modern best practices policy in open space planning and development.
- Develop policy that is proactive and supports imagineCalgary and Municipal Development Plan (MDP) policies in the development of complete communities, responds to Council priorities, and maintains a Calgarian focus.
- Develop policy which can focus on the efficient use of land and resources ensuring an economical parks and open space network that is resilient and accessible for all Calgarians.
- Review and organize existing policy, strategy and plan library that guide the work of Parks and remove redundant documents no longer required with a clear and up-to-date Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan.
- Develop plain language, easily legible content and layout that clearly and concisely outlines a plan that will guide planning, design, (re)development, as well as the function of parks and open space for the next 20 years.
- Align and integrate considerations of The City of Calgary's declaration of Climate Emergency and the 2022 Climate Strategy and Action Plans
- Explore all components of the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan through an equity lens to embed considerations and solutions into the update.

Project decision

By fall 2024, The City of Calgary will develop and approve Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan which will outline how Calgary develops, redevelops, and manages parks over the next 20 years. The plan will respond to Council Priorities, updated regulations and requirements, and maintain a Calgarian focus that reflects the values and priorities of Calgarians.



Figure 1 *Feedback from The Mayor's Environmental Expo 2023*

Engagement overview

At The City of Calgary, decisions are made that impact more than one million people. Input from Calgarians and other interested and impacted parties help The City better understand the perspectives, opinions, and concerns of people affected by City decisions. Public input is collected, where appropriate, and considered along with other factors (such as cost, environmental impact, technical limitations, and long-range plans/goals) before decisions are made.

Because of its open and accessible nature, engagement is virtually never positioned as the sole source of input into whether The City should do something but helps to ensure City decision-makers have access to a range of ideas and feedback. This feedback is not statistically representative of all Calgarians, and therefore participants will be referred to as respondents and not Calgarians. All the input collected for this project should be considered through the lens of what will work best in the Calgary context.

Engagement objectives

The intention for the following list of objectives was to create a foundation to build effective and publicly acceptable policies that balance the needs of Calgarians and Calgary's parks in the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan.

- To inform target groups about the current policy and its boundaries/limitations, such as what is City of Calgary mandate versus other levels of government and the reason why the plan is being updated.
- To consult target groups to understand what they value about parks.
- To identify target group's priorities for the future of park spaces.
- To identify target group's issues or concerns and current park spaces (or future parks).
- To identify target group's ideas about opportunities for improvement.
- To explore and understand equity/inequity as they relate to the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan.
- To understand if the Parks draft guiding principles reflect Calgarian's values and if anything is missing.

Objectives for equity and accessibility-focused engagement

Equitable engagement was a priority to ensure that we heard from a wide variety of Calgarians, especially those who may not experience the benefits of Calgary's parks equally. It was important to design engagement with accessibility in mind and to understand:

- Accessibility and inequity issues within the current park systems.
- Which groups of Calgarians are not experiencing the benefits that Calgary Parks provides the same way as others and the reasons why.
- Which groups of Calgarians are experiencing disproportionate burdens or challenges in the current park system.
- What equity-deserving groups need to overcome the previous two bullets.

Strategy

Different groups, whether they be contributors, partners, community members (the community), Calgarians, or Rightsholders have specific interests and can be impacted by the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan to varying degrees. This plan acknowledges those differences and creates opportunities for target groups to provide feedback in ways that are sensitive, appropriate, and effective. It recognizes that not all Calgarians or businesses will experience and value Calgary's parks similarly and those most at a disadvantage will have unique insight. Hearing stories of lived experiences will help the project team better understand how to incorporate equity into Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan and the policies associated with the plan.

Timeline

Spring 2023	Phase 1 Engagement: public feedback on guiding values and priorities for Calgary's parks (April 17-May 19, 2023)
Summer 2023	What We Heard Report for Phase 1 published
Fall 2023	Phase 2 Engagement: Public feedback on park policies (Oct 16–Nov 10, 2023)
Winter 2023	What We Heard Report for Phase 2 engagement published.
Spring/Summer 2024	Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan draft finalized. Phase 3 Engagement: Circulation of draft plan
Autumn 2024	Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan presented to City Council for approval

Audience and Methodology

Internal Groups

With the support of Engage, the project team led engagement with internal business units and technical advisory committees. This report only includes the findings from Engage-led engagement tactics, but this information is included to demonstrate the thorough nature of this engagement phase.

City of Calgary staff

This audience is defined as cross-corporation staff who are involved in planning and resource management.

Virtual workshops

June 2023

Internal technical advisory groups

- Climate Advisory Committee
- Biodiversity Advisory Committee

Virtual and in-person workshops

Tues, April 18 / 4 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Wed, April 19 / 4 p.m.-6 p.m.

Public

When providing equitable engagement, many platforms and tactics need to be taken into consideration to ensure all groups can participate and have their voices matter. By actively considering the needs of the groups noted below, access can be promoted leading to more inclusive and equitable decision-making processes. The questions asked in this engagement process, for all tactics, were customized for each group and the specific objectives of engaging with that group.

Businesses, agencies and organizations: This audience is defined as the business community who are participating in engagement to represent the interests of their business and industry.

Equity-denied Calgarians: This audience is defined as Calgarians who may currently experience increased barriers in the current park system and/or could be unfairly impacted by future park policy. This includes but is not limited to: Racialized groups; English language learners; people living with disabilities; seniors; youth; low-income and unhoused individuals.

General public: This audience is defined as individual Calgarians who are participating in engagement to share their personal interests and ideas.

Key groups: This audience includes regional partners, academia, special interest groups, and key industry and business groups.

Young adults: Defined as Calgarians 18-24 years of age, who are participating in engagement to share their personal interests and ideas.

NUMBERS DEFINED

Attendees: people who intentionally attended the event and came specifically to talk to us, provide feedback or gain more information.

Contributors: number of visitors who left feedback

Visitors: number of unique visitors to the portal page

Participants: number of people who engaged in meaningful conversations or left feedback with City staff but may have been part of a larger draw (e.g., Genesis Centre. Village Square Leisure Centre)

Points of Contact: people who did not give feedback but either chatted for a short time or handed a redirection postcard to the engage.calgary.ca/parksplan portal page.

Platform/Tactic/Tool	Dates	Numbers
Portal Page (www.engage.calgary.ca/parksplan)		
Calgarians	April 17-May 19, 2023	8,857 visitors
Businesses, agencies and organizations	April 17- June 14, 2023	20 contributors
Kids Zone	April 17-May 19, 2023	Not applicable
Virtual Open Houses		
MS Teams Live Q and A	Tues. April 25, Noon -1:30 p.m.	12 participants
MS Teams Live Q and A	Tues. April 25, 6 - 7:30 p.m.	15 participants
Open Houses		
Varsity Community Association	Mon. April 24, 4-7 p.m.	6 attendees
Genesis Centre	Wed. April 26, 4-7 p.m.	150 participants
Cardel South	Wed. May 3, 4-7 p.m.	130 points of contact
Southview Community Centre	Wed. May 10, 4-7 p.m.	30 attendees
Pop ups - Parks		
Prairie Winds Park & Marlborough Park	Sun. April 23, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.	40 & 45 participants
Peace Bridge, Prince's Island Park	Sat. May 6, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.	150 points of contact
Riley Park and Stanley Park	Sun. May 7, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.	92 & 75 points of contact
Bowness Park	Sun. May 14, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	200 points of contact

Platform/Tactic/Tool	Dates	Numbers
Pop ups - other		
Village Square Leisure Centre	Mon. May 1, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	61 points of contact
Seton Library	Tues. May 2, 4-6 p.m.	20 points of contact
Judith Umbach	Tues. May 2, 4:30-6:30 p.m.	0
Crowfoot Library	Mon. May 8, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	12 points of contact
Fish Creek Library	Tues. May 16, 4 – 6 p.m.	20 points of contact
Central Library	Wed. May 17, 3 – 5:30 p.m.	20 points of contact
Connect Events		
Connect to Nature: A barrier-free interpretive walk at Weaselhead Flats	Sat. April 22; 1-4 p.m.	75 attendees
Connect with Indigenous History: An interpretive walk at Nosehill Park	Sat. April 29, 1-4 p.m.	55 attendees
Connect to Engineering, Art and Insects: Family fun at Ralph Klein Park	Sun. April 30, Noon-3 p.m.	60 visitors inside 70 + in outdoor play
Connect with the Future: Parks planning party for young adults	Thurs. May 4, 5 – 8 p.m.	Not applicable
Connect through Play: Accessible Playground Playdate for Families (South Glenmore)	Fri. May 5, 2-5 p.m.	65 participants
Connect with Birds: Migratory Bird Day (Inglewood Bird Sanctuary)	Sat. May 13, 10-2 p.m.	25 points of contact
Connect: The Mayors Environment Expo	Tues. June 6 and 7, 2023	1500 attendees
Static Displays		
Sounding Boards	April 17 – May 19, 2023	Est. 1600 points of contact (200/ per site)
Central Library	April 17 – May 19, 2023	Est. 3,000 points of contact (100 / per day)
Equity-Denied Calgarians		
Action Dignity focus groups and 1:1 interviews	April 20- May 30, 2023	120
Fair Entry applicant questionnaire	Monday, May 1, 2023	21
Alpha House questionnaire	May and June, 2023	50
Workshops with key interest groups		
Joint Use Coordinating Committee (JUCC)	April 20, 2023 8:30 -12 p.m.	18
Development and Builder Workshop	May 9, 2023 1 -3 p.m.	16
Environment and Community Workshop #1	May 10, 2023 10 -11:30 p.m.	11
Environment and Community Workshop #2	May 11, 2023 2 -3:30 p.m	9

Table 1 *Engagement audience and tactic summary*

Rightsholders

Also of significance in this plan is the input of Indigenous people, who are important to our local landscape and national and local identity. They bring a level of context that is vital to developing the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan that reflects our local history and valuable knowledge about park spaces.

The Rightsholders in the Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta includes:

- The Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations.
- The Stoney Nakoda First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations.
- The Tsuut'ina First Nation.

The City of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Parks has undertaken a comprehensive land use study in collaboration with each Nation that will inform the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan. Throughout the engagement process, the project team and Engage will continue to work with the Indigenous Relations Office (IRO) to explore additional opportunities and timing for engaging with the Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to further inform the Plan.

Feedback from urban Indigenous Calgarians was also gathered through all tactics available to the public and incorporated into this report.

Advisory Committees

Committees	Dates	Participant Numbers
Social Wellbeing, Gender Equity Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI), Accessibility tables combined. (Virtual)	Wed. April 5, 4:30 p.m.-6 p.m.	10 attendees
Calgary Aboriginal Urban Advisory Council (CAUAC) (In person)	Tues. April 11, 5 p.m.-7 p.m.	12 attendees
Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (In person)	Mon. April 17, 12 p.m.-1 p.m.	8 attendees
Older Adult Advisory Table (OAAT) (In person)	Tues. April 18. 4 p.m.-6 p.m.	20 attendees

Racialized and newcomers

Feedback from Racialized and newcomer communities was collected by Action Dignity on The City's behalf. Community connectors were first trained by Engage staff about the engagement topic, before hosting group and 1:1 conversation in the languages that individuals felt most comfortable speaking. The engagement questions followed the same structure as the online portal page questions. In discussing these engagement questions with a familiar community member, respondents could speak freely.

Feedback was translated and sent back to The City for coding, theming, and reporting. Feedback collected by Action Dignity has been embedded in the What We Heard reporting and demographic data.

Low-income Calgarians

Feedback from low income Calgarians was collected in person at the Village Square Fair Entry application desk by Engage staff. A paper questionnaire that followed the same structure as the online portal page questions allowed respondents to complete the engagement questions onsite while having a staff member available to ask questions. By "piggybacking" on an activity that respondents were already doing, this engagement tactic helped to overcome inequities regarding time to participate, language barriers and access to technology.

Feedback collected by Fair Entry applicants through this method has been incorporated in the What We Heard reporting and demographic data.

Unhoused Calgarians

Feedback from unhoused individuals was collected by Alpha House, on The City's behalf. Respondents were asked about three theme areas to highlight values, what was most important to them and their concerns.

The questions were co-designed with Alpha House to ensure they would be clearly understood and sensitive to the realities of Alpha House staff and clients during the time of the interview.

Due to the unique nature of the question design, What We Heard from these individuals is reported separately here. The demographic information from these individuals has been included in the demographic data outlined in Appendix A.

What We Asked

Questions asked during this phase of engagement fell into six key areas, and optional demographic questions were asked in the final section. This demographic information is summarized in Appendix A.

1. Connecting You to the Environment
2. Connecting You to Wellness
3. Connecting You to Culture
4. Economic Sustainability
5. Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging
6. Guiding Principles
7. Tell us about you

The main engagement page is located at www.engage.calgary.ca/parksplan.

For the complete list of questions asked on the online engagement page, visit:

- Calgarians (https://engage.calgary.ca/parksplan/parksplan-calgarians)
- Businesses, agencies, and organizations (https://engage.calgary.ca/parksplan/connect-calgary-parks-plan-businesses-agencies-and-organizations)
- Youth (Kids Zone) (https://engage.calgary.ca/parksplan/connect-calgary-parks-plan-kids-zone)

Detailed What We Heard

Portal Page: Calgarians

https://engage.calgary.ca/parksplan/parksplan-calgarians

Section 1: Connecting You to the Environment- Calgarians

Benefits for Calgary

Question 1: Natural environment parks offer many benefits for the city of Calgary. Please rank the benefits of natural environment parks, in the order of what is most important to you.

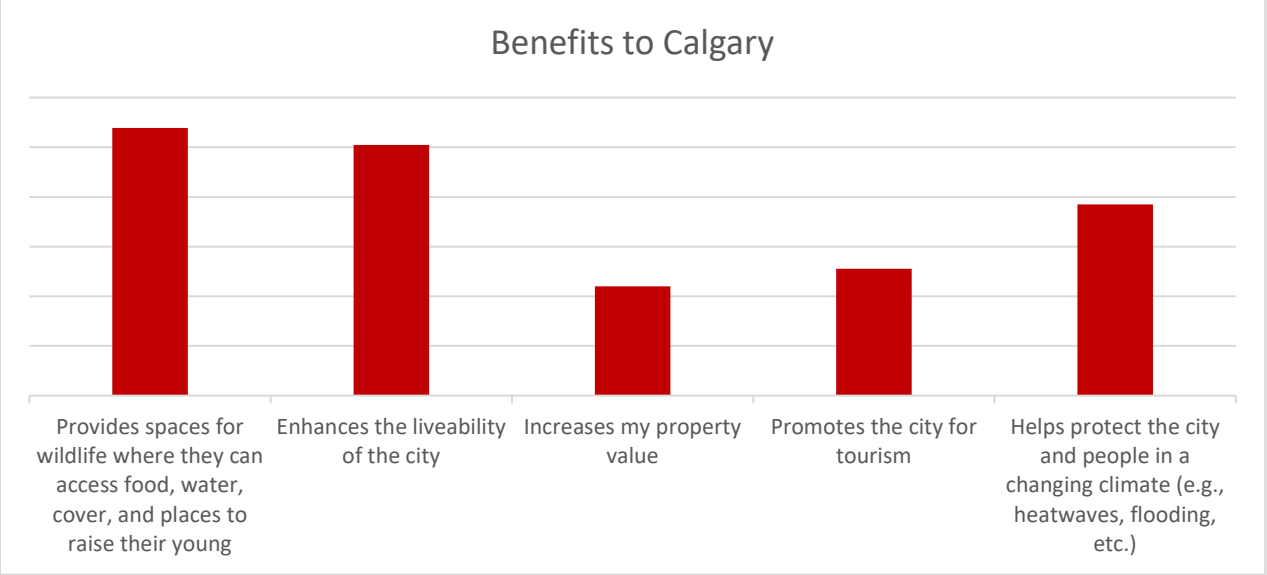


Figure 2 *Benefits of natural environment parks to Calgary.*

The data in Figure 2 represents the sum of respondent's ranking. For this question, respondents were asked to rank the options from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important option. To represent this data accurately in a visual graph, the weighting of 1 to 5 have been reversed. This results in the most important option appearing in the graph with the highest weight and the least important option appearing with the lowest[3].

[3] Therefore, the values in the vertical axis are not important to include in the graph, as the bars visually show what we heard from respondents.

Personal benefits

Question 2: Which personal benefits have you experienced in Calgary's natural environment parks? Select up to five.

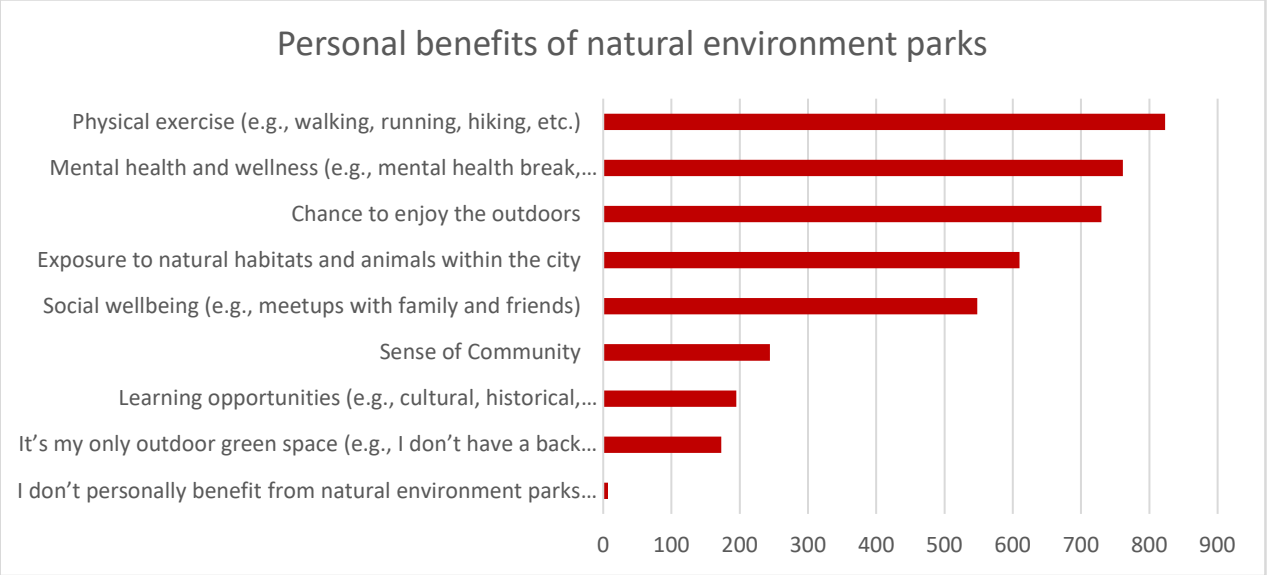


Figure 3 *Personal benefits of natural environment parks*

In addition to the prescribed options, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional input under 'Other'.

Most respondents did not take the opportunity to further explain personal benefits beyond their selections in question 1. When they did, additional benefits included the contribution to both mental and physical wellbeing of people and pets, providing locations for cycling and mountain biking, and education about the environment.

Fair Entry respondents

The Fair Entry paper questionnaire did not include the detailed list of options seen in Figure 3. These respondents reiterated the most common benefits shared online and shown in the graph above. Personal benefits included physical and mental health, connecting to and appreciation of natural environments allowing them time and space to experience and appreciate the natural world with friends and family.

Concerns

Question 3: Which concerns do you have about natural environment parks? Select up to five.

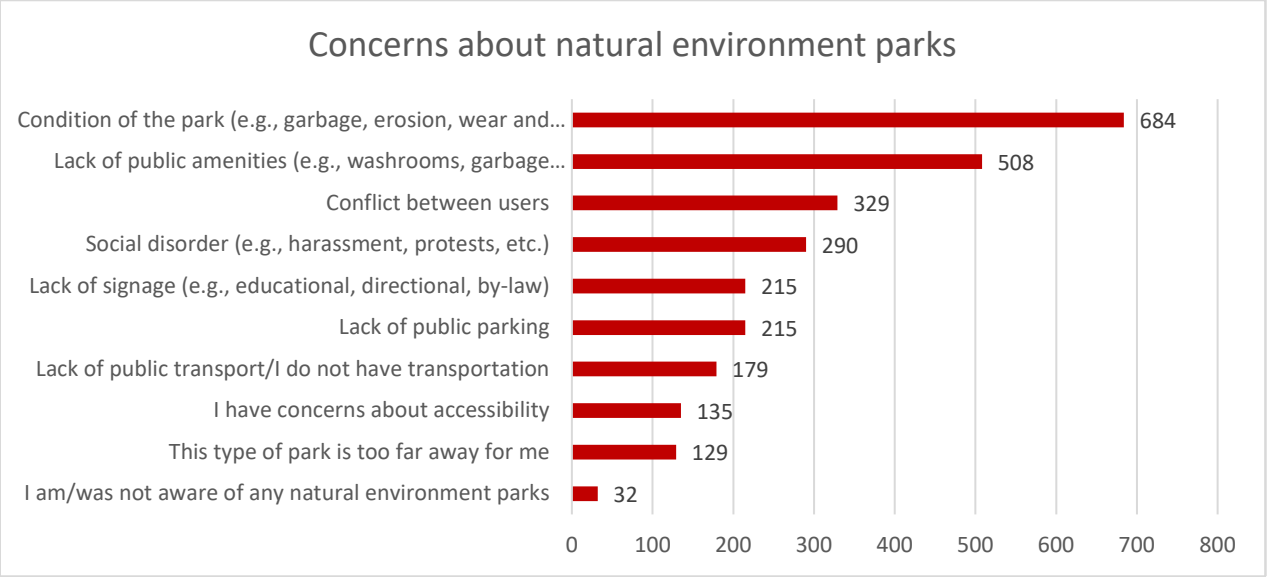


Figure 4 *Concerns about natural environment parks*

In addition to the prescribed options, respondents were also given the opportunity provide their own input under 'Other'. The high-level themes are presented below.

USER CONFLICT

This category of themes could also fall under the concept of 'conflict between users' and highlights the high level of concern that respondents shared about dogs in natural environment parks, especially off-leash dogs and owners who do not pick up and dispose of feces properly. Some respondents shared concerns about off-leash dogs scaring and chasing away wildlife and the negative impact this has on the protection of a natural environment. Respondents also commonly shared that there is a lack of education and bylaw enforcement among dog owners, creating further issues.

Verbatim comments

Park safety on Nose Hill is an issue: enforcement is essentially non-existent, as one bylaw officer explained to me that there are only 4 employed bylaw officers for all of Calgary! Therefore, there is blatant disregard of bylaws re on leash areas, picking up dog poop. […]

Worried about conflict between dog walkers and wildlife. I watched an off leash dog chase a young moose. Need no dog areas for wildlife.

Off-leash dogs are a threat to: wildlife, other pets that are on their leash, children and adults. Rules need to be established, signage posted and enforcement established/practiced to curb this growing threat.

HUMAN IMPACT (overuse)
Respondents shared that Calgary's natural environment parks are overused and can sometimes feel too busy or crowded and this ruins their ability to experience the benefits they are looking for, namely, peace, quiet and the ability to reconnect with nature.

Verbatim comments

Natural feeling of park is being ruined by too many users. Calgary needs more green space. Lots of people have dogs - you cannot cram everyone into the same space. River Park is a disgusting mud pit because of overuse. The solution is not more fences or adding food trucks. Leave the natural space alone and create more green spaces so people are not driving from across the city to come here. I can walk to River Park but often drive to Nose Hill or Edworthy Park because River Park is too crowded. I would rather walk to my local park.

How busy and crowded they have become, it's a double edged sword as it is wonderful that so many people are getting outside but the result is the condition the park is left in by some users and the impact on certain outside nature wellness types of activities (forest bathing, eco yoga) where it is challenging to find a space conducive for the intent of the experience (so loud, busy etc).

SAFETY
Safety made up a large portion of respondents' concerns regarding natural environment parks. Concerns relating to increased unhoused populations and encampments, social disorder and vandalism were interrelated in respondent's feedback. Many respondents feel that there has been an increase in the unhoused population living in natural environment parks and shared concerns about their safety and the safety of others as a result. For many, the presence of unhoused Calgarians is directly related to increased drug use, vandalism, garbage and general misuse of the park space.

Verbatim comments

Homeless encampments make for a dangerous environment in city parks and should be a top priority to clear them all out.

Sadly many natural areas have become areas where encampments have sprung up. The result is debris, deification, and can, at times, make it uncomfortable and feel unsafe to use.

Drug users and associated drug paraphernalia left in parks, also erosion of trails and some spaces

PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY
There was a strong sentiment from respondents about the lack of protection of natural environments parks. Many shared concerns about ensuring that no existing spaces are lost through development. This idea was closely associated with concerns about the overall health of plants and animals. Respondents shared that they are worried about native species being overtaken by invasive weeds, creating a lack of biodiversity and affecting the availability of pollinator plants. Others commented that there is a lack of wildlife corridors between park spaces and existing ones are threatened by development. Some respondents felt these parks should be guided by a 'nature first' mentality. Finally, others feel that a lack of enforcement of bylaws and rules contributes to an increase in behaviour that damages the parks.

Verbatim comments

Human values prioritized over ecosystem service requirements. Partly, this is due to poorly informed users interacting in non-preferred ways (e.g. building rock bridges in streams altering stream flow, pestering wildlife, cutting their own paths through sensitive ecosystems).

A lack of general education and a lack of emphasis by the city means they are hard to upkeep because no one knows enough to care.

Lack of enforcement of the rules leading to lack of respect to parks and those who care about them.

The city of Calgary has rented Broadview Park—the second largest park in our community to a long term renter and closed it to the community. That is worong on every level.

Natural environment parks are isolated from each other. Green wildlife corridors should link these parks to each other.

Additional Concerns

Outside the previously mentioned themes, respondents shared the following concerns: Lack of bathrooms, especially all-season ones; Lack of bike/walking connectivity; Too much signage/or not enough; Lack of trees/shade/parks too ugly; Fear of wildlife encounters; and Inadequate funding of Calgary parks. Among equity-denied groups, the following concerns were common: Paths were not accessible due to poor design, maintenance, or erosion; No access to drinking water; and too many weeds and invasive plants. However, these comments were not mentioned to an extent that they could be considered themes but we are including them for transparency.

NOTE: In the first few days of the survey launching, there was a glitch that made 5 selections mandatory. This resulted in a high number of comments criticizing the survey itself and lessening the validity of the responses. This error was remedied quickly, but we are noting it in this report for transparency.

Ideas for improvement

Question 4: Please share your ideas for how The City of Calgary can improve natural environment parks either now or in the future?

Most mentioned themes

There were many common themes from respondents who shared written comments about what they would like to see in the future with regards to Calgary's natural environment parks.

Some responses to this question indicate that not everyone understands the purpose of natural environment parks and have various levels of expectations about overall maintenance of pathways, availability of amenities and trees and landscaping.

AMENITIES

Respondents shared that they want an increase in amenities of all forms in these parks. Washrooms that are open year-round was mentioned often, as well as the availability of all waste management facilities that would help park users to keep the park clean. Some mentioned that increasing garbage cans might encourage dog owners to pick up after their dog and dispose of waste properly.

Other amenities mentioned were benches to rest along longer trails, tables for picnics, BBQ's and fire pits. Stairs were mentioned to manage trail erosion, as well as add exercise opportunities. Others mentioned the desire for "natural" play spaces for children that blend into the natural landscape. Some would like to see fresh drinking water available for themselves and for their dogs. A few respondents would like more consideration of extreme weather events, providing shaded areas and even emergency shelter spaces in the case of severe hailstorms.

Verbatim comments

Leave bathrooms open during winter, many of us still enjoy the parks throughout the winter. More garbages/recycling and add compost bins and signage so people know which bins to use for what.

More facilities at the parks. I get a ton of trash cans is kind of ugly, but Nose Creek Pathway has virtually none. The amount of dog poop bags I see littered is really annoying and I would hope trash cans would alleviate the issue. Same thing with washrooms.

On paved paths in the natural areas, more park benches would be a good improvement. As my parents get older and have some mobility issues, they prefer the paved/accessable paths, but have mentioned that "ooo! It's far to the next bench for a rest!".

A lot of the natural environment parks lack shaded rest areas. Most of our natural parks are open grassland so it can be easy to get overheated, or if a hailstorm moves through it could provide emergency shelter

EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

This was a very common theme from respondents who feel that park users need to be educated about the value of natural environments and what respectful park user behaviour is. Several education topics were mentioned, including: pathway etiquette, erosion prevention (bikes and shortcutting), wildlife safety/sharing space with wildlife, the impact of human and pet activity in these areas, history, Indigenous knowledge of plants and land history, keeping dogs on leashes, importance of picking up dog feces, danger of feeding wildlife, invasive species, waste management for Calgarians living adjacent to natural environment parks.

Respondents shared they would like to see education occur in various ways, including signage, bylaw officers, summer students, park rangers/educators, pop-up education tents, in-person education sessions, and social media campaigns.

Many respondents want to see signage being used for the education topics mentioned above, as well as general wayfinding, identification of self-guided and accessible walks, and to prevent possible surprises around clothing-optional park spaces. Many respondents want to see increased enforcement of bylaws, namely cracking down on off-leash dogs and cyclists in unpermitted areas, dog poop littering, encampments, noise, illegal drug use, and tree removal.

Verbatim comments

More education - I think a city-wide campaign with social media and school presentations. More signage that explains the 'why's' - e.g. why shouldn't dogs be off leash

Review and update educational / interpretive signage to include the history of the indigenous peoples in the Calgary area. Their history are mostly invisible in present signage. A striking example is no mention of the Tsuut'na member Weaslehead who lived in this natural area prior to the land being purchased for the Glenmore reservoir. The settler Sam Livingston is mentioned though.

Information Signage for users with some of the following ideas:
Predator - Prey relationships are healthy and natural. The city encroaches on wild animal spaces and we must learn how to live together. Killing coyotes/bobcats to protect feral rabbits and/or small pets is not an acceptable management strategy. Cultural Invasive Species, such as coy/goldfish, are disastrous to our ecosystems

PROTECT AND KEEP NATURAL

Respondents were clear about their desire to see these natural park spaces protected. For many, this includes removing invasive species, protecting native species, restoring once developed areas, and protecting as much land and riparian areas as possible from future development. Respondents also shared that protecting the natural environment means protecting and maintaining existing trees and planting more.

in my opinion, our public natural environment parks need more attention in two overall areas: 1) focus on removing invasive species and improving the overall health of the natural ecosystem; and 2) focus on climate resilience and adaptability. how well are our environmental areas prepared to be resilience to a changing climate?

conduct surveys regularly to implement conservation plans, monitor plant and animal spaces allowing people to get more intrigued about the biodiversity of the parks. Restoration projects to improve the health and functioning of the ecosystem. Get engagement from the community. Volunteer programs - helps with innovation.

Make conservation of greenspace a number ONE priority, particularly as the inner city is densified and trees/yards are removed in large numbers! […]

Protect tons of greenspace from new development - especially riparian land. Rivers, riverbanks and land close is critical to healthy ecosystem and provides amazing pathways and park space near water.

USER CONFLICT

This category of themes is all related to improvements respondents would like to see around a wide variety of user conflicts, including pedestrian/cyclist, pedestrian/dog, and pedestrian/wildlife. The most common theme shared by respondents was a desire for natural environment spaces that are free from dogs and cyclists. Respondents shared that the peace and quiet that comes with these types of environments is ruined when they must share the paths and trails with cyclists and dogs. Along this same notion, some respondents referred to their desire for meditation, nature bathing, and naturalism activities to be uninterrupted. A smaller number of respondents shared they would like to see more off-leash areas and they are concerned about losing the existing natural spaces they are allowed to take their dogs due to bad behaviour of other dogs and owners.

Many suggestions were shared as ways to solve the conflicts mentioned. A common solution is to separate users with infrastructure and clear signage. Others think there should be designated off-leash areas away from natural environment parks. A few mentioned adding limits to the number of people who can use a park each day.

Verbatim comments

Parks in Calgary can be very busy with multiple users, many people need quiet spaces to connect to nature for their health and wellbeing. Designate lesser used parks or areas of parks for mindful practices ie forest bathing

As above regarding control of off-leash dogs in areas not designated as such. This is a growing problem and makes the parks unsuitable for general public use and is destructive to the wildlife and environment.

Living near the Glenmore Reservoir and the Weaselhead I think the city needs to do a better job of ensuring that the spaces are safe for all residents. The cyclists on those trails tend to make it unsafe to be on the paths, which causes people to create their own paths off trail.

Calgary can improve natural environment parks by separating pedestrians from cyclists as much as possible. Pedestrian ways can then have access to more terrain, educational signage and learning opportunities, and to amenities. The number of users on city paths is increasingly becoming crowded and separate infrastructure required.

ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

This theme has many interrelated sub themes all about the ability to get to and access a park. Many feel this issue is solved by increasing the amount of park spaces in Calgary, which would then increase the access and connectivity of natural park spaces. Many respondents are concerned about Calgary's increasing population and as a result the increase in use in natural environment parks. More park locations were a reasonable solution for many respondents.

Some shared frustration about large pieces of park spaces that have been privatized with limited access to the public and shared that natural environment parks should be physically and monetarily free to access. It is unclear if these respondents are referring to designated natural environment parks or ones that they just perceive to be natural environment parks but are in fact recreation parks. Respondents shared that increased access could also be achieved through better public transportation and more parking options. However, others felt that more parking at these parks defeats the purpose of the park.

The connectivity of these parks was also mentioned. Respondents shared that not only would this improve the active transportation network but would also provide much needed wildlife corridors.

Verbatim comments

More green spaces, more trees, and better connectivity overall throughout the city will alleviate the masses.

Green connecting 'alleys' between parks and green spaces should be a prime consideration that would benefit pedestrians, cyclists and wildlife. Looking at a city map shows many small patches of green spaces that should expand and coalesce in the future. I am an avid walker and would welcome walks that just go from one park/greenspace to the next without having to green 'voids'.

The parks in Calgary are great! They need to be expanded and maintained. Access to the parks via bike paths and public transportation needs to improve. They should all be easily accessible and connected. Remove parking lots to make more park space.

ACCESSIBILITY

The theme of accessibility within parks was common among respondents and included sentiments about snow and ice clearing in winter months, as well as paved pathway options for those using wheelchairs and strollers. Ideas to improve parks with greater accessibility was common for several equity-denied groups.

Verbatim comments

Decreasing the grade of pathways to make them more accessible to wheelchair users as well as cyclists.

I really appreciate that in the winter the parks have ploughed sidewalks and they do a great job of keeping them snow, and usually ice, free. It is a huge benefit to Calgarians to have the parks to walk in during the winter months as well as the rest of the year.

MAINTENANCE

While some respondents shared that they are happy with parks and their maintenance, this sentiment was common and refers to a wide variety of what respondents define as maintenance issues. Better maintenance includes upgrading signage, emptying garbage cans more frequently, organized clean ups, management of diseased and rotting trees, and continued assessment of accessibility. For many respondents, maintenance simply refers to keeping the parks clean with properly functioning amenities.

Many respondents referred to pathways and trails specifically in their reference to maintenance. This included fixing damaged and eroded trails and adding better designed trails that help to keep people on the trail, thereby protecting the environment.

Verbatim comments

I do appreciate the portapotties throughout the park. The garbage bins need to be emptied in the evenings on weekends, especially in the late summer because it attracts bears and scavengers.

Proper planning and design of single-track native soil paths (not paved or gravelled) that are routed to be fun, aesthetic, sustainable and which avoid areas that are important natural habitats. Failure to do so has led users to create their own desire lines, which may or may not be sustainable.

Monitor fragile areas where erosion occurs and block off trails where necessary to prevent more erosion Maintenance of pathways is important. Too often the paths have deteriorated because of erosion, or weeds poking through to make it somewhat hazardous.

SAFETY AND SOCIAL DISORDER
This theme was commonly mentioned and closely aligned to the theme of enforcement. Respondents are concerned about the increase in unhoused individuals and encampments in these areas, and shared concerns about garbage, drug use, needles and safety to others. Respondents sharing this sentiment would like The City to have encampments removed and greater enforcement regarding park hours and illegal activities.

A few suggestions to improve safety included increased patrolling and enforcement, coordinating with social service agencies, increased lighting where possible, CCTV cameras, emergency call buttons and enforced bylaws around park hours and closures.

Verbatim comments

we need more enforcement for encampments- there is a full tent village below the douglas fir trail complete with a ton of garbage and propane tanks scattered about- not safe and not okay for anyone.

I would like to see them patrolled more. I worry about after hours users even though they know they shouldn't be there. Example /The parties after hours.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
This theme includes sentiments about leveraging community volunteers and avid park users to help maintain, patrol, and protect Calgary's natural park spaces. Respondents mentioned volunteers could include students of all ages, seniors, specific communities, and recreation groups such as trail runners, mountain bikers and naturalist groups. Respondents shared that volunteer activities could include river and pathway clean ups, pathway maintenance, and weed pulling. One respondent also suggested a citizen steering committee to help manage complex issues such as user conflict of pathways.

Verbatim comments

We have plenty of opportunities for the city to involve & educate the community. Public libraries/community associations are touchpoints for education and awareness. People are always looking for free opportunities especially with children. Providing a proper framework could allow for more community engagement and volunteer opportunites. Teach what is native, what invasives do. Promote cooperation

To maintain a park that size more people should be involved with spring cleanups, group sizes from schools should have limits, education incentives to access parks. Tree planting options to assist in regrowth from environmental and weather damage.

INCORPORATE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND RIGHTS
Some respondents would like to see The City learning from and incorporating Indigenous ways of managing natural spaces, as well as acknowledging their right to harvest food from these parks.

Verbatim comments

Considering climate change impacts (wildfire risk) and traditional land management practices - controlled burns on Nose Hill! Bison or cattle grazing??

LOOK TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

A few respondents shared examples of parks The City should take inspiration from and model park policies after. Examples include international countries, Kerry Wood Nature Centre in Red Deer, Mount Royal Park in Montreal, and smaller municipalities such as Okotoks.

Verbatim comments

Look at Japan and how they do their parks/green spaces. They prioritize harmony in nature vs car centric infrastructure. A lot of parks in Calgary and green spaces in general are designed in the most bare minimum way; almost like someone tasked an intern and all they did was follow a checklist. There is no consideration for harmony, growth of flora, promoting and incentivizing health.

Section 2: Connecting You to Wellness - Calgarians

Benefits to Calgary

Question 5: Recreational parks offer many benefits for the city of Calgary. Please rank the benefits of recreational parks, in the order of what is most important to you.

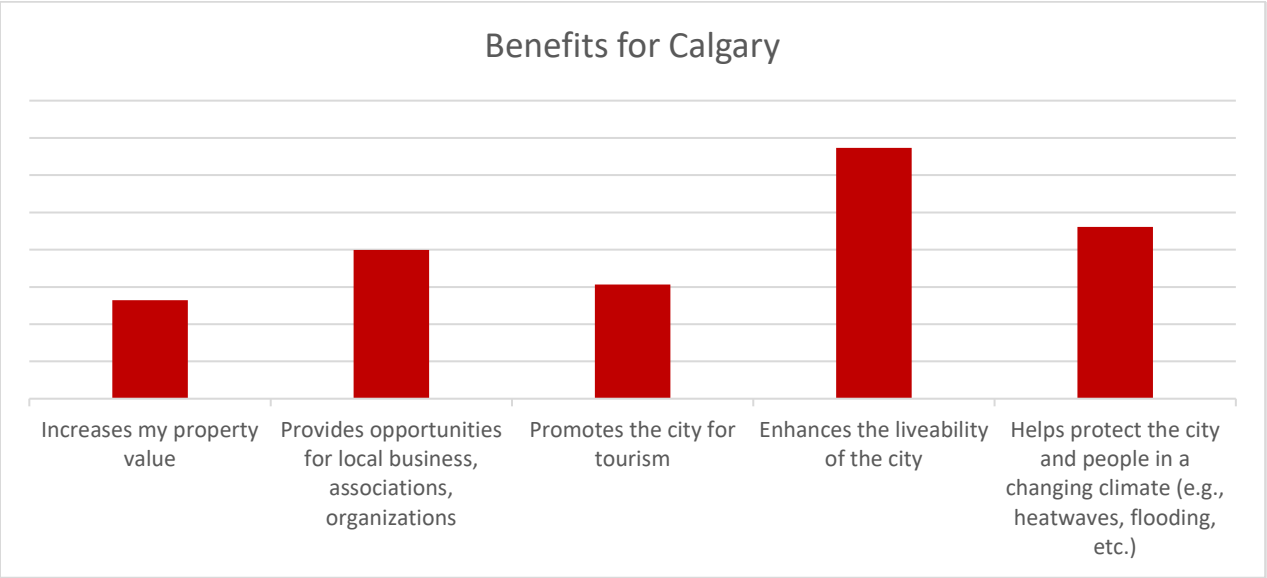


Figure 5 *Benefits of recreational parks for Calgary*

The data in Figure 5 represents the sum of respondent's ranking. For this question, respondents were asked to rank the options from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important option. To represent this data accurately in a visual graph, the weighting of 1 to 5 have been reversed. This results in the most important option appearing in the graph with the highest weight and the least important option appearing with the lowest.[4]

[4] Therefore, the values in the vertical axis are not important to include in the graph.

Personal benefits

Question 6: Which personal benefits have you experienced in Calgary's recreational parks? Select up to five.



Figure 6 *Personal benefits of recreational parks*

In addition to the prescribed options, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide their own input under 'Other'. The high-level themes are presented below.

There was a relatively small number of respondents who shared new personal benefits in addition to the options presented in Figure 6. The most common themes that people expanded on were the benefit of physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as recreational parks being good social gathering places for Calgarians of all ages and offering places to play unorganized sports. Some respondents felt that having spaces to play unorganized sports provided great personal benefits.

Concerns

Question 7: Which concerns do you have about recreational parks? Select up to five.

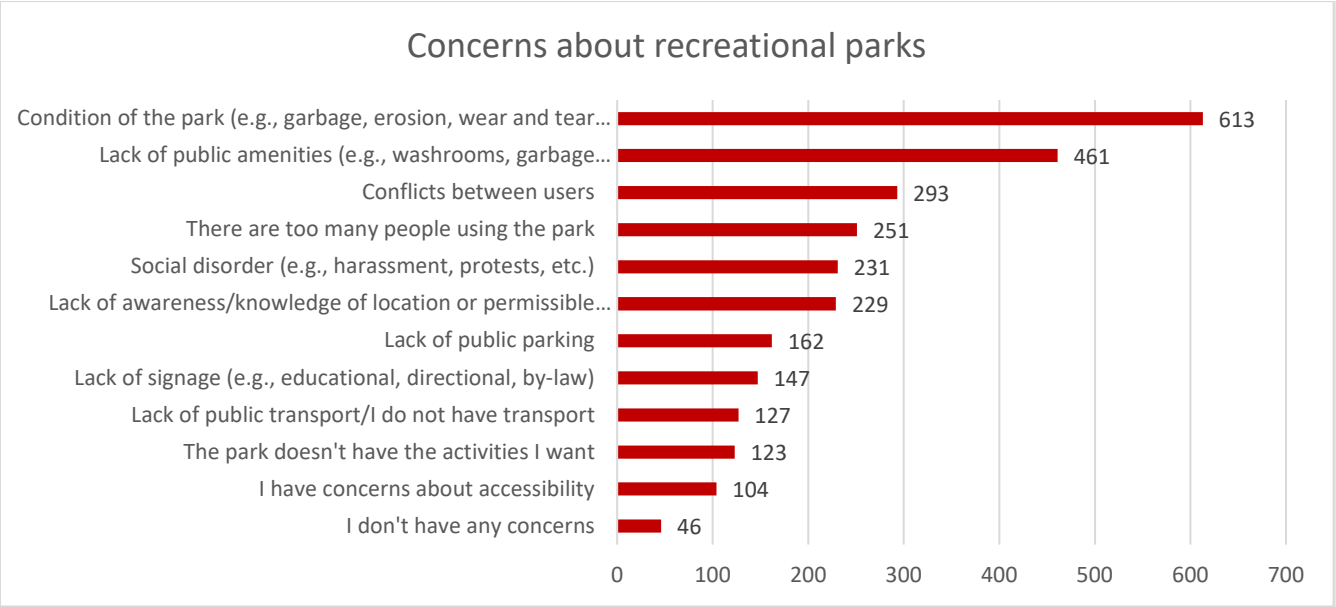


Figure 7 *Concerns about recreational parks*

In addition to the prescribed options, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide their own input under 'Other'. The high-level themes are presented below.

Safety was the biggest concern for respondents and includes multiple subthemes. In order of prevalence these include off-leash dogs and feces not being picked up, homeless encampments, drug use and needle paraphernalia, crime, lack of lighting, speeding cyclists and lack of security presence.

Equal access to recreational parks was also a concern for many respondents. For some, this means that recreational parks have restricted access, are not in their community or are too far away. Others shared concerns about the removal of some parks or park spaces being leased out privately, resulting in access to spaces becoming limited. A few inequities mentioned in this theme include the booking process for picnic sites that requires access to and knowledge of technology, as well as the financial means to pay for a picnic site.

Respondents shared concerns about the lack of park amenities available in recreational parks. Issues related to the availability of amenities in the winter were common among respondents and included comments regarding reduced access to washrooms and the need for fieldhouses and skating rinks. Others mentioned that there were simply not enough activities that interested them and there was a gap in activities for people of all ages, playgrounds, shaded structures, public access lakes, sports fields, and courts for pickleball and other sports were all mentioned.

Operational maintenance and upkeep of existing park amenities and vegetation was another theme that many respondents shared. They specifically mentioned lack of funding for City parks, improper landscaping, snow removal and gopher holes. Respondents also shared concerns that mature trees are not being maintained and watered, and more trees and pollinator plants should be planted.

Ideas for improvement

Question 8: Please share your ideas for how The City of Calgary can improve recreational parks either now or in the future?

Most mentioned themes

AMENTIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Respondents wanted more amenities for both active and passive recreation. For example, more soccer pitches, and more places for forest bathing or yoga. They want to be able to enjoy winter activities such as skiing or snowshoeing as well. They wanted more washrooms and greater access to those washrooms. Access manifested in both daily hours of operation as well as being open year-round.

Respondents wanted more gathering spaces, such as BBQ pits, fire pits, and picnic tables where they could enjoy parks with their friends and family. Some folks wanted to see more placemaking whether in the form of (accessible both in understanding and ability) public art, places to buy food and even a community garden.

Recommendations for infrastructure maintenance and improvement included lighting, pathways, water fountains, water parks, community gathering spaces, general upkeep and garbage cans – both emptying them and more of them. Respondents also wanted to see composting and recycling bins when possible. Subthemes are presented below.

Verbatim comments

It is good to maintain flexible use in parks. Some fixed equipment is good, but always have fields which can be used for various events.

Enhance the utility of existing natural walking paths with necessary low cost "pods" of infrastructure to support mindfulness activities like yoga, forest bathing, and shaman activities.

There are large parts of the city that don't have parks that are suitable for picnics etc. a good example is the northeast quadrant. As Calgary has grown in the past few decades these type of multi use parks has not kept pace with the growth.

[…] The city should ensure working water fountains are available within parks. This would support active transportation and exercise and help avoid new plastic water bottle waste.

[…] More free water parks in the deep south for the communities that don't have lake access. Park gardens and more environmental programs for kids, teenagers, and even adults.

We do not need more golf parks. We need parks where people can easily participate in groups recreation activities, like basketball, football, playgrounds for the small children, working with the communities to organize small tournaments involving the neighborhoods, and again educating the people about our responsibility of maintain the parks clean and good shape.

Turn key amenities to support community group events - stages / amphitheaters with power, ability to set up movies in the park or small concerts etc. areas for pop up events like food trucks, farmers markets and other community level events with low cost entry to use.

MAINTENANCE
Note: There is a strong crossover between the themes of 'Maintenance' and the aforementioned 'Amenities and Infrastructure'.

Overall, respondents wanted to see more maintenance and upkeep of city parks. Areas of concern centered around cleanliness (sanitation) and the waste left behind by both people and pets. Removals and monitoring of encampments were also top concerns. There were numerous mentions of the use of park stewards or rangers helping to address and help upkeep the maintenance of Calgary's parks. This theme also included landscaping and / or concerns over maintaining biodiversity.

Verbatim comments

Permanent, clean and accessible bathroom facilities that are open year round. More garbage cans and/or more active cleaning of garbage cans, especially on weekends.

Washrooms! Install year round public washrooms and maintain them daily. Also well-signed recycling/ trash cans. Maintain benches and picnic tables. I would rather we have beautiful, well-maintained parks and pathways than spend another cent on roads. Enforcement should focus on activities that affect others, like smoking or blasting loud music from a speaker.

BIODIVERSITY
(Includes conservation, preservation and both flora and fauna)
Respondents wanted more naturalized areas as well as more trees – both for tree canopy and for shade. There was concern about human impact and the overuse of parks. Respondents want parks to be less crowded and offered solutions of restricted access and the creation of more parks.

More garbage cans. Banning cyclists from certain areas and enforcing speed limits so pedestrians are safe.

City Parks are dirty. Tent camps, garbage, dog scat, vandalism, destruction. People misuse the space and the garbage (dog scat) is awful. There needs to be more fines implemented to those who don't clean up after themselves (or their dogs).

EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT
Providing further education to park users on proper policies and practices in City parks was a common theme shared by respondents and was closely related to increasing enforcement of bylaws with volunteers who could educate park users. Respondents also shared that enforcement of bylaws would contribute to the improvement of City parks in the future.

Provide more/larger garbage receptacles. After a busy weekend there is often excess garbage piled up next to bins in my local parks. Perhaps consider a "park stewards" program - stewards could be present in the parks on busy summer weekends to inform users about amenities and acceptable use.

More education on how to properly engage with city environment and WILDLIFE. Students/newcomers are always looking for opportunities to volunteer and build their resumes/fill requirements. Provide the framework. Why is there so much litter everywhere. Where is the city cracking down on unlicensed/unleashed dogs and dog feces everywhere. If existing rules were upheld, the fine money would pour in.

There needs to be active Bylaw enforcement to curtail homeless camps, drug use, out of control dogs, dangerous cycling, etc..

ACCESSIBILITY, ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

Accessibility was an area of improvement that respondents shared and included building accessible trails and playgrounds within parks, as well as between parks to increase connectivity. Additionally, respondents shared that providing greater options like trails, shuttle buses and transit would increase park users' ability to access parks in the future.

I'd like to see more trails built meet standards of accessibility, such as those developed by Kootenay adaptive cycling association.

It is hard to book any of the sites close to parking as they seem to always be booked, especially in Bowness Park. It was better when you drove to the farther away spots, especially if there are family members with mobility issues. Parking at Edworthy Park is hit or miss.

Enhance the pathway network with expanded infrastructure, better continuity, and higher levels of winter maintenance.

More diversity of activities, better awareness of what activities exist, and above all, better connectivity and visibility of park space via public transit and active transit corridors.

There should be a shuttle service offered directly to the more popular parks from certain transit stations or other hubs, to reduce the parking strain, which would run regularly and have space for things like bikes and strollers.

As before, I would like to see more separate multi-use pathways through the surrounding communities connecting people to the parks. This allows choice in how we access the parks rather than presuming everyone will drive (and thus forcing everyone to drive due to lack of other options).

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The issue of safety and security was once again common for many respondents and included issues relating to user conflicts between dog owners, cyclists, etc., as well as the issues posed by encampments and the resulting social disorder.

[…] Too many conflicting pathway uses in high traffic areas. Need to separate peds from cyclists in many areas, need to slow cyclists AND mono-scoots. Need to finish pathways in many areas. Need to maintain existing pathways in many areas. Need to make pathways safer eg north side of Bow passing the Zoo. Less grass, more active amenities.

Ease bike/walking conflict (my mum got hit by a bike - maybe more separation or education??); offleash dogs - sometimes unclear (eg Sandy Beach); need handicap parking and trails and washrooms; crowds - better behavior in terms of garbage, feeding wildlife (birds, deer),

Enforcement of dogs - control, protection of the environment, dog feces, leashes..lunging at people and children. Defacing Graves in parks with cemeteries.

There are lots of homeless camps around rec. parks and along pathways, esp. downtown. A lot of trash has ended up in the Bow River this winter, as well, as seen on the ice and now in the water. Both issues need to be cleaned up, then prevented in the future. This used to be a low-crime city and one of the cleanest in the world. I'm now living with more litter and more crime in downtown Calgary.

Do not allow encampments to linger in parks. It discourages many users including families from using the park when social disorder is allowed to linger.

Section 3: Connecting You to Culture- Calgarians

Important cultural aspects of parks

Question 9: Which of the following aspects of culture in Calgary's parks are most important to you? Select up to five.



Figure 4 *Important aspects of culture in parks*

Other

In addition to the prescribed options, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide their own input under 'Other'. The high-level themes are presented below with some verbatim comments.

Some participants felt culture was not an important aspect of Calgary parks and thought that parks should be neutral, natural spaces. Additionally, utilizing parks for physical fitness and wellbeing was an aspect that respondents felt was important. Other participants used this category for additional verbiage including the importance of our heritage, history and Indigenous roots.

I prefer to have natural outdoor spaces, free from any cultural events or components.

I feel nature doesn't need culture. Just good design to accentuate natures natural beauty

Boost peoples' fitness and general health by encouraging people to go outside.

I enjoy the parks mostly for lifestyle. Playing sports meeting up with family and friends, enjoying outdoors

A way to do take part in truth and reconciliation by recognizing the original caretakers of these spaces and honoring treaty 7 nations

Concerns

Question 10: Which concerns do you have about the cultural aspects of Calgary's parks? Select up to five.

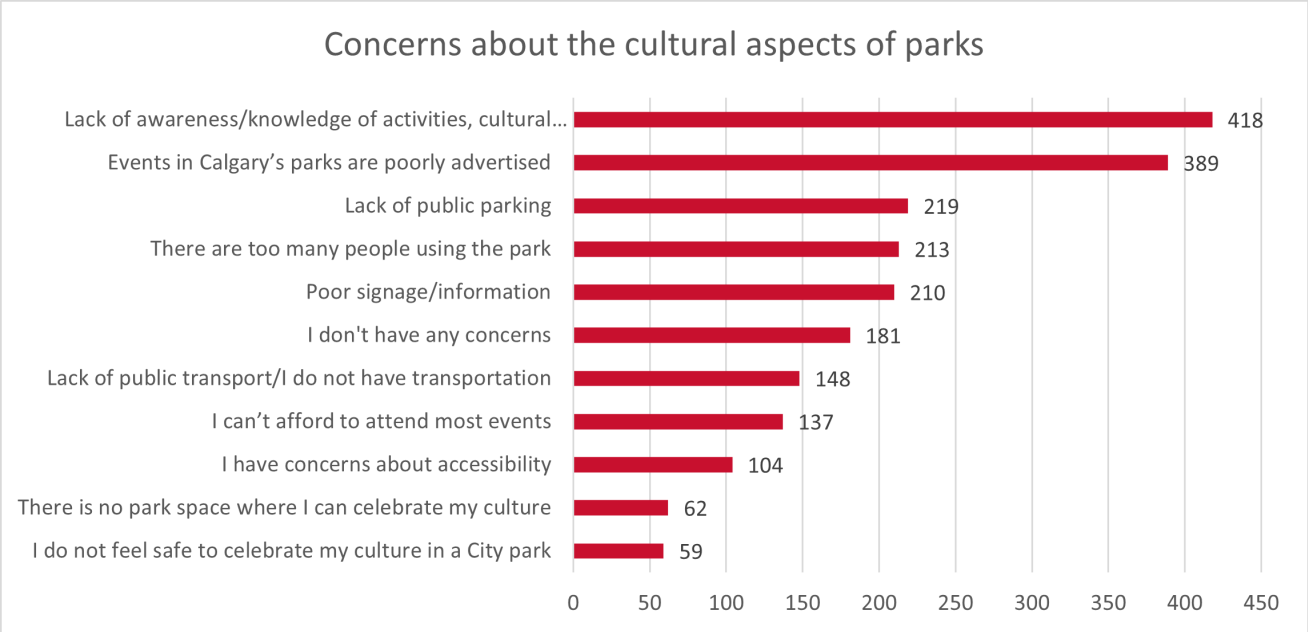


Figure 5 *Concerns about cultural aspects of parks*

Other

In addition to the prescribed options, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide their own input under 'Other'. The high-level themes are presented below with some verbatim comments.

Participants were concerned about human impact on parks, especially events and festivals held in the park where concerns ranged from levels of noise to impacts on the environment. Other themes included accessibility and affordability, safety and security, as well as lack of education and amenities.

Some activities such large music festivals hinder park use by other people for other activities.

Overall maintenance and wear and tear on the parks from cultural celebrations in park..

Affordability for all is an issue, events in city parks should be relatively affordable (if not free).

I feel accessibility issues could prevent elderly or mobility challenged individuals from participating in culture events.

Lack of information and awareness about important Indigenous landmarks, cultural sites, etc.

Ideas for improvement

Question 11: Please share your ideas for how Calgary can improve parks that connect you to culture- past, present and future?

Most common themes

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

The clear message from respondents was that events in Calgary parks need to be advertised much more effectively as many respondents shared that they either had no idea these types of events happened in parks, or they don't learn about them in enough time to attend. Many respondents suggested ways in which they would appreciate event advertising, which includes The City using social media, radio, community newsletters, TV, a central hub on City of Calgary website, a park app and flyers to the community. Many equity-denied respondents also mentioned the need for advertising through language and culturally appropriate channels.

Specific information about events that respondents would like to know include who the events are open to, when are they, where are they, what it's about, what is the event cost, how to get there, is there parking available, what accessibility considerations are there for the location, maps for alternative parking, and transit routes.

Similarly, respondents shared that they lack knowledge about cultural parks and sites in Calgary and would like more information. At these sites, they would like to see signage and information about the history of the site and their connection to any cultural groups.

Finally, respondents further suggested that City parks host a greater number and variety of events, and that these events are either free or have a reduced cost. Improving access to Parks through transportation and transit systems was also a commonly shared idea.

I believe multi-channel advertising is needed on a more frequent bases in order to capture the attention of Calgarians. There are too many competing events/ads so frequency of ads will help get the word out.

More publicity is needed for special events in parks. Various cultural events need to be promoted for the benefit of all Calgarians. It is important that all cultures be respected in Calgary. This will invite more touism. The city can promote more outdoor musical events.

Making the City website easier to search and navigate, posting City events in one easily accessed location, utilizing online event platforms (facebook, eventbrite, etc.) would help

A map of different cultural parks would be great. I'm not aware of very many in the city

In my view, First Nations culture is deserving to be highlighted permanently in our parks. The ancestors of current First Nations citizens lived on this land for ages. I am very interested in First Nations cultural legacy within Calgary and want to see this highlighted where it may be. Nose Hill Park is an example that I know of. I would also like to see the pioneers who built Calgary highlighted.

Section 4: Economic Sustainability- Calgarians

What is important?

Question 12: Rank the following in order of importance for you:

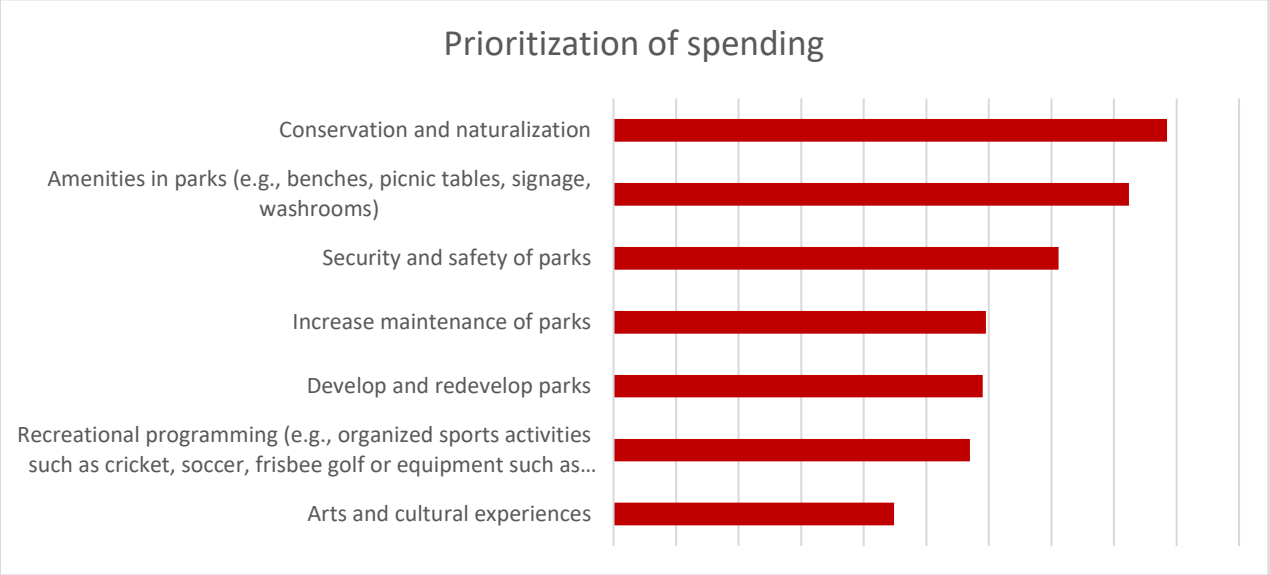


Figure 6 *Prioritization of spending*

The data in Figure 6 represents the sum of respondent's ranking. For this question, respondents were asked to rank the options from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important option. To represent this data accurately in a visual graph, the weighting of 1 to 7 have been reversed. This results in the most important option appearing in the graph with the highest weight and the least important option appearing with the lowest.[5]

[5] Therefore, the values in the vertical axis are not important to include in the graph, as the bars visually show what we heard from respondents.

Section 5: Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging- Calgarians

Level of agreement

Question 13: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

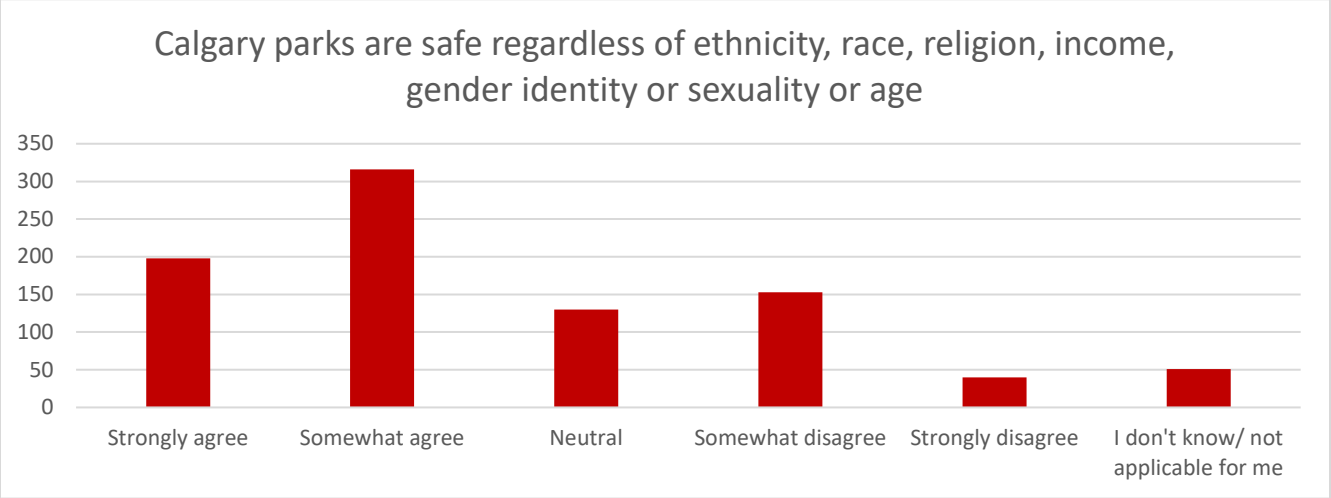


Figure 7 *Do you feel safe in Calgary parks?*

Additional comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated they have experienced racism and have safety concerns with Calgary's parks. There were specific mentions of racial slurs or comments, liquor in parks, as well as nudity and inappropriate behavior.

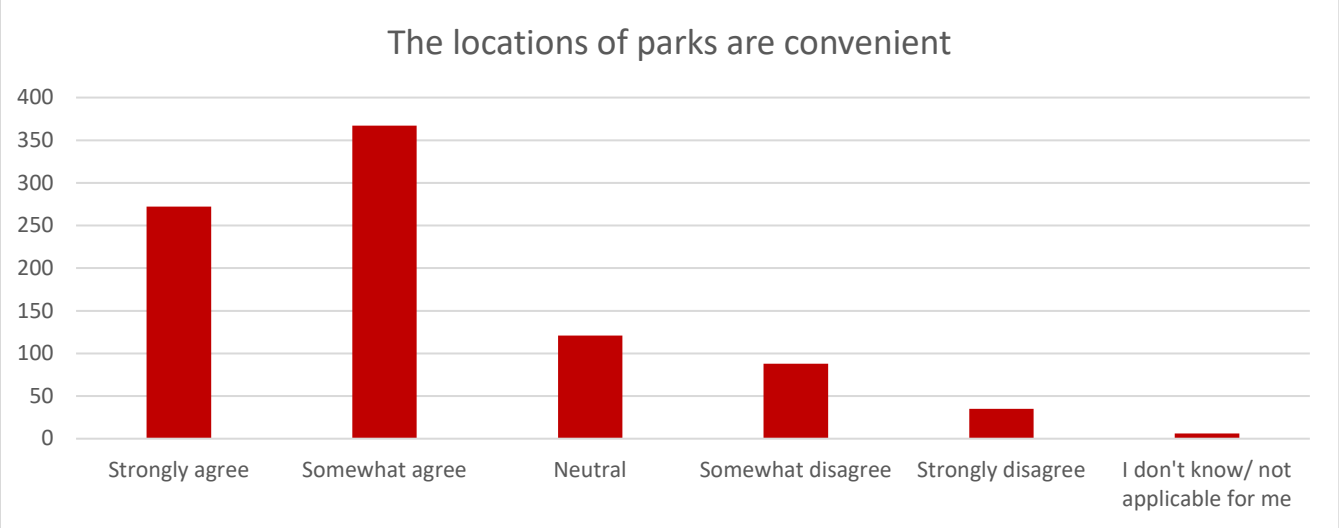


Figure 8 *Are Calgary parks convenient?*

Additional comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated that many of the natural environment parks were too far for them.

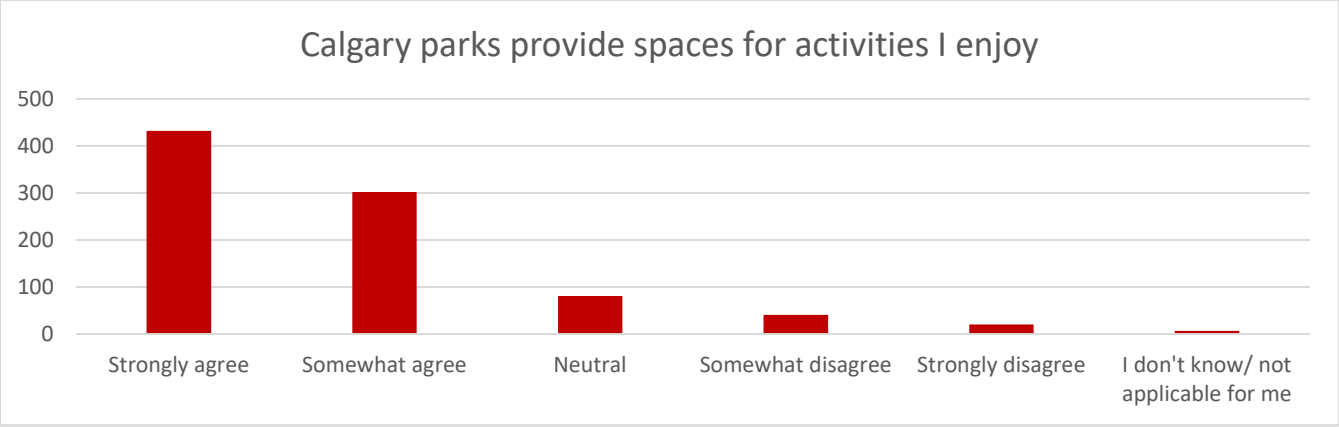


Figure 9 *Calgary parks provide enjoyable activities*

Additional comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated that they wanted more diverse activities in parks that could be enjoyed by more people.

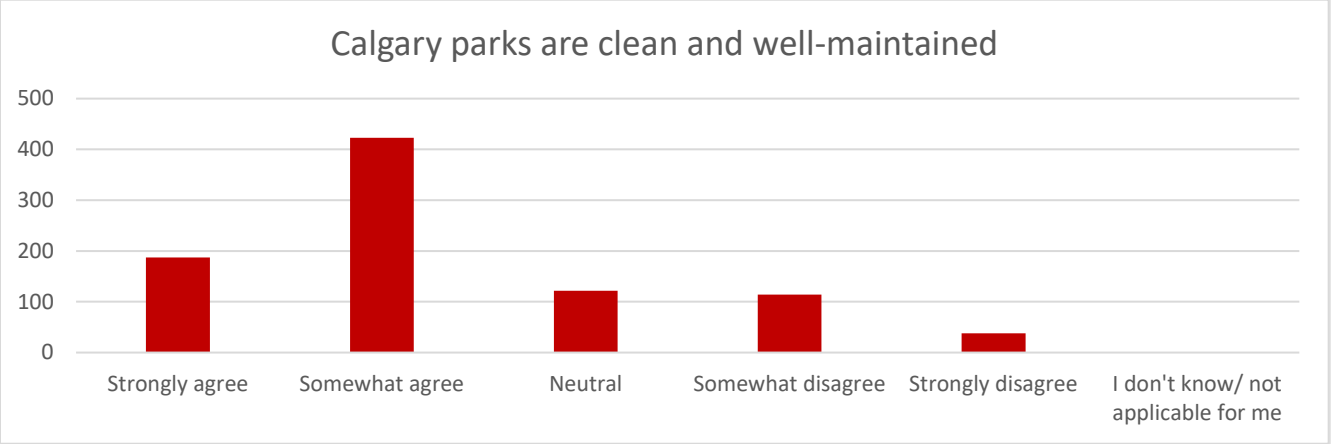


Figure 10 *Calgary parks are clean and well maintained.*

Additional comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated that many of Calgary's parks contained trash and needed to be cleaner.

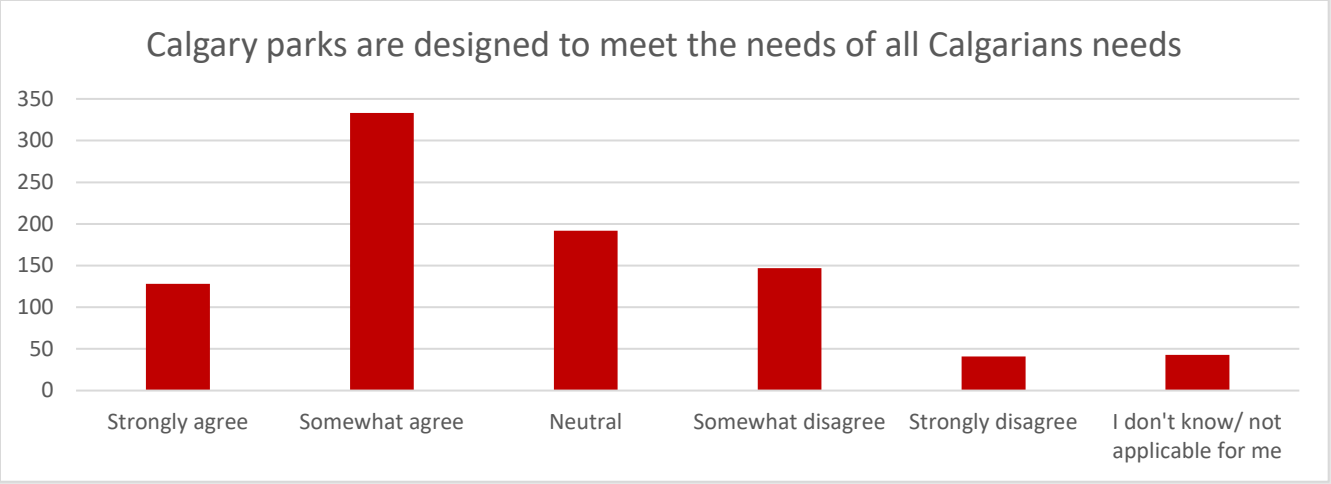


Figure 11 *Calgary parks meet Calgarian's needs.*

Additional comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated the need for more equitable distribution of amenities and infrastructure in their communities and throughout the city. Amenities and infrastructure included specific mentions of group sports, playgrounds and places to sit.

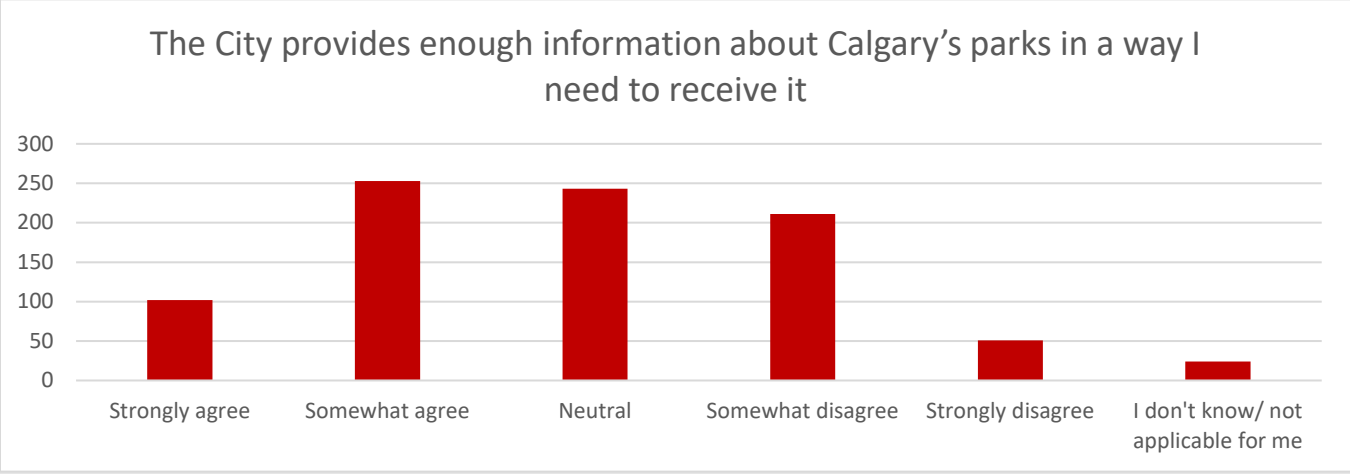


Figure 12 *The City provides enough information [...]*

Additional comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated that there is a lack of communication regarding parks in general, and inaccessibility due to technology constraints or language barriers.

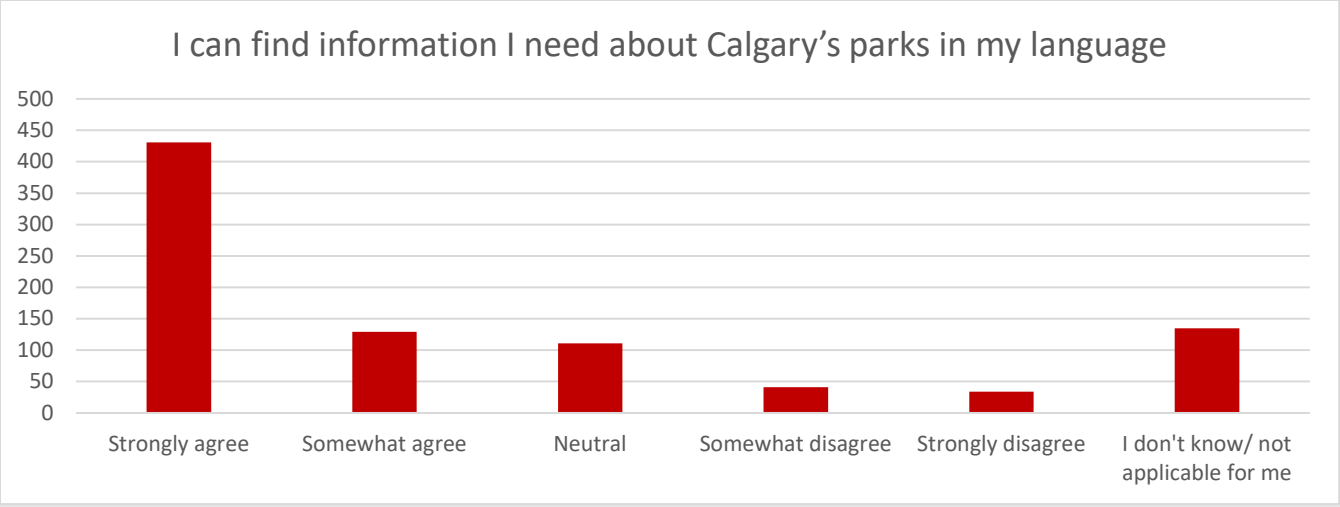


Figure 13 *I can find information […]*

Comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated that there need to be translations made available in additional languages, including Farsi and Malayalam, and the quality of the translations needs to be improved.

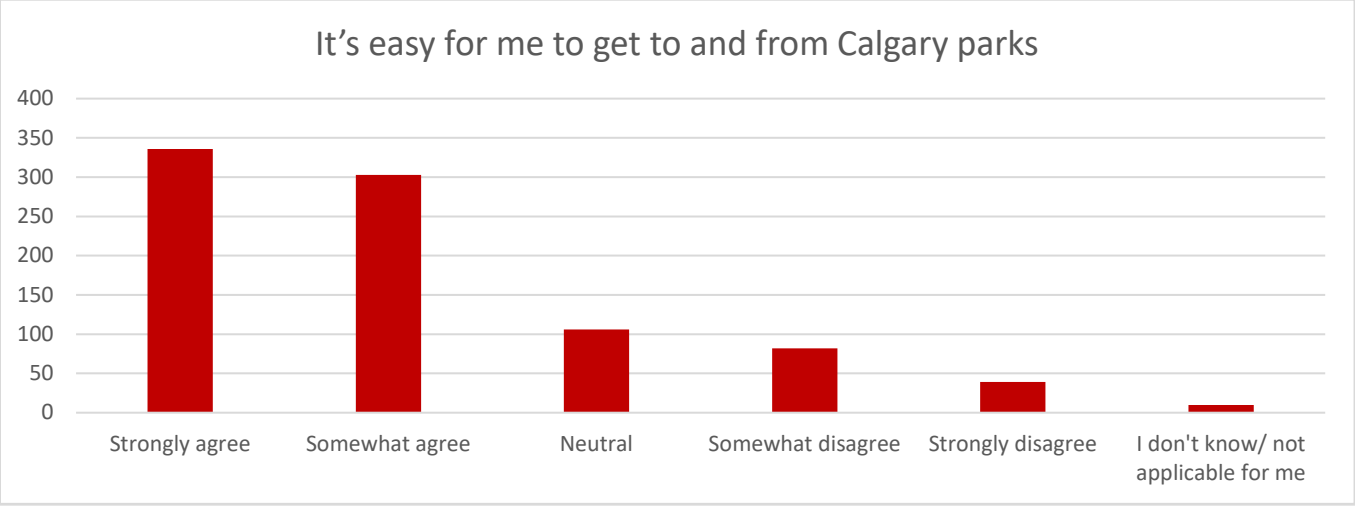


Figure 64 *Calgary parkas are easy to access*

Comments from Action Dignity respondents indicated that parks are too far away from their residency or inaccessible by transit.

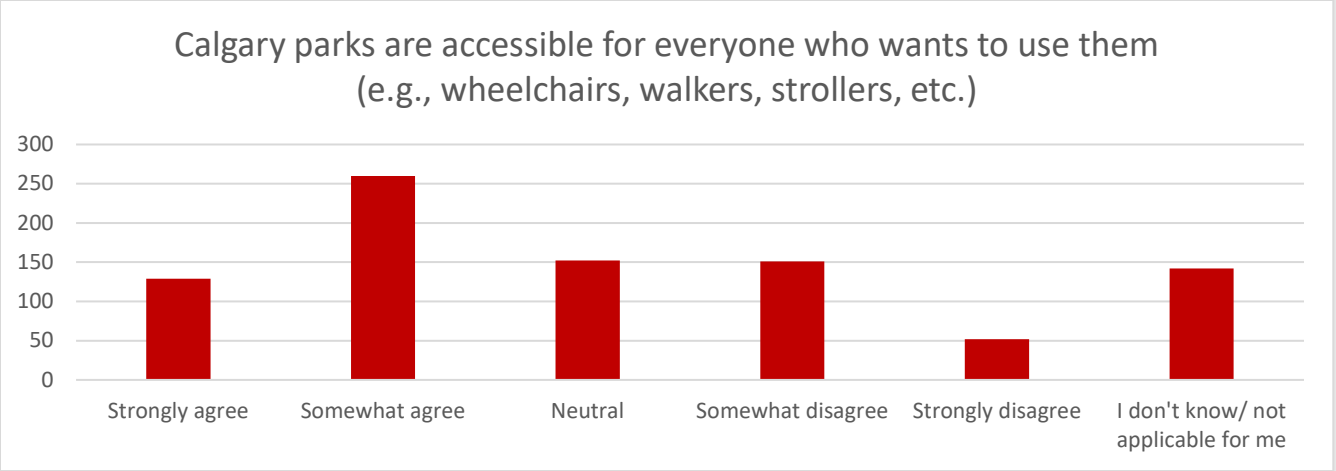


Figure 75 *Calgary parks are accessible.*

Additional comments from Action Dignity highlighted that not all parks are accessible by wheelchair and that some folks have had to carry a wheelchair to the desired location of their park activity.

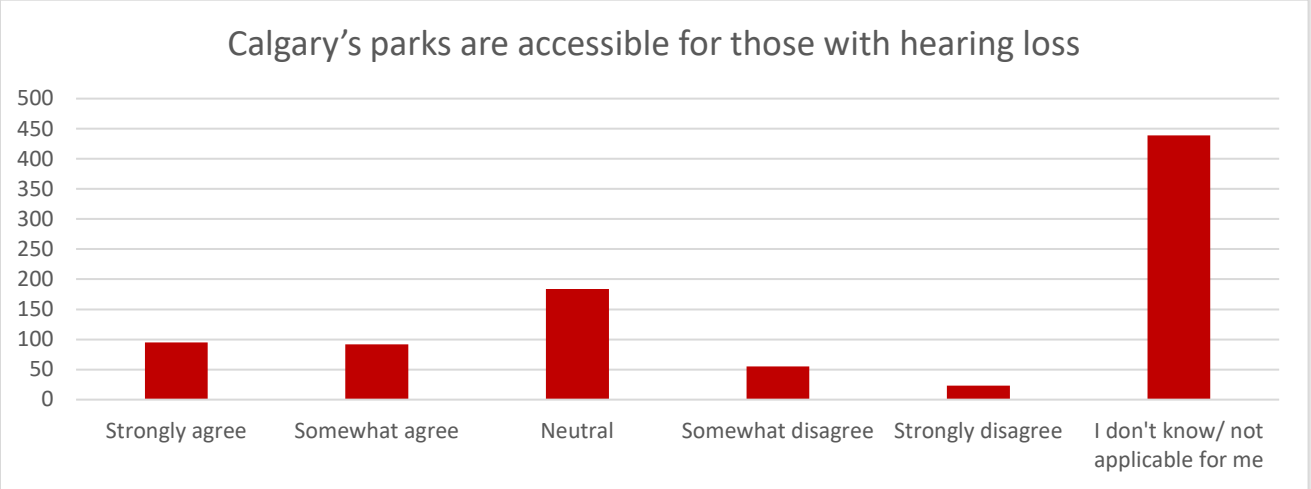


Figure 86 *Calgary parks and hearing loss*

No specific comments from Action Dignity respondents received.

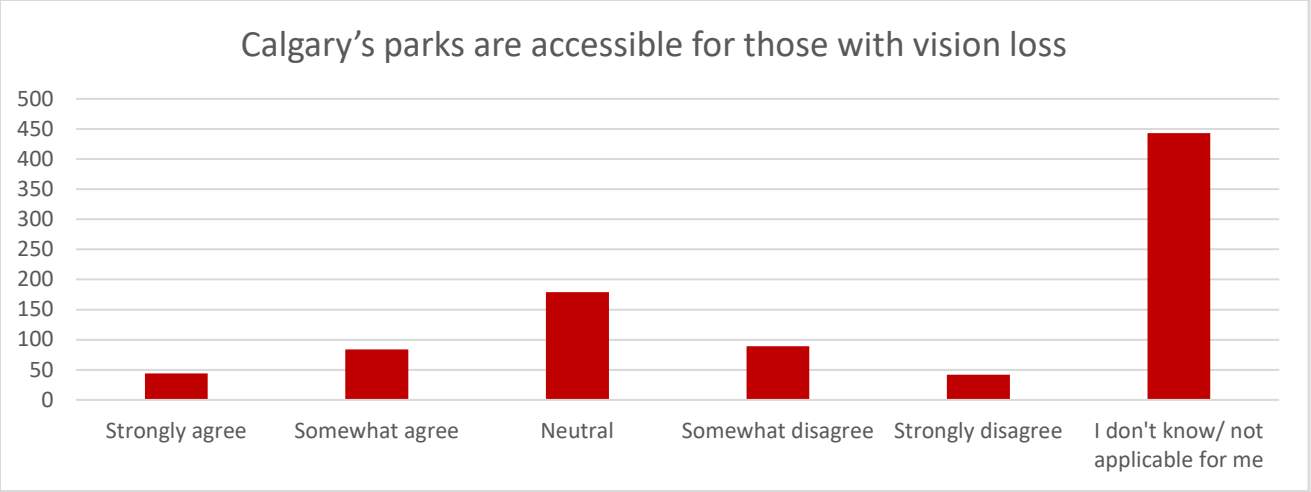


Figure 97 *Calgary parks and vision loss*

No specific comments from Action Dignity respondents received.

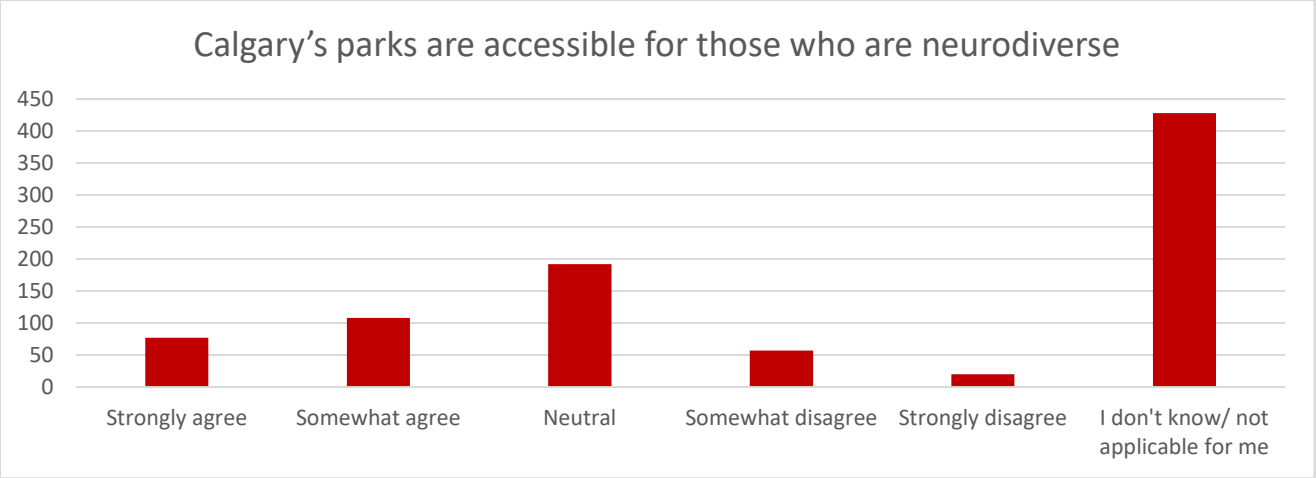


Figure 108 *Calgary parks and neurodiversity*

Additional comments from Action Dignity indicated that accessible amenities and infrastructure should be considerations through all city quadrants.

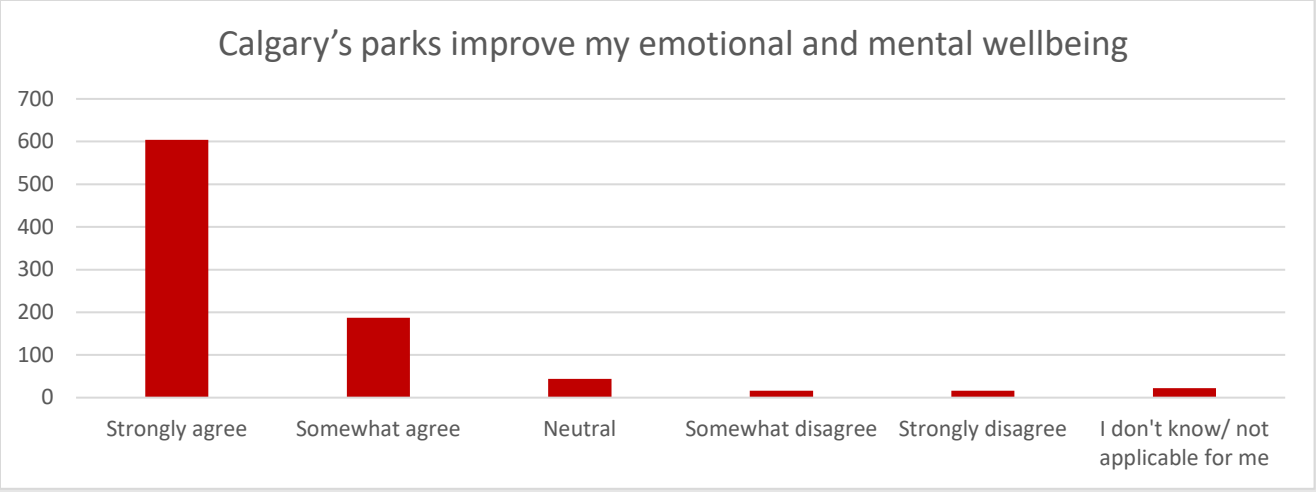


Figure 119 *Calgary parks and emotional and mental wellbeing*

No specific comments from Action Dignity respondents received.

Section 6: Guiding Principles- Calgarians

Participants were asked to comment on the following draft guiding principles for the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan. They have been identified to direct the future of park planning and decision making in Calgary over the next 20 years.

- **Climate Resiliency:** Identify and implement measures to reduce and combat the negative impacts of climate change.
- **Healthy Environment:** Improve the health and functionality of Calgary's natural environment through decision-making that puts the environment first.
- **Equity:** Increase inclusive and accessible opportunities city-wide by consistently reviewing and evaluating our services.
- **Calgarians Health and Wellbeing:** Take a people-based approach to the development of our parks which supports multidisciplinary planning initiatives and creation of complete communities.
- **Celebration of Culture:** Support the consistent pursuit and preservation of Calgary's history, culture and the principles of Truth and Reconciliation by weaving them into the fabric of our parks.

Guiding principles as a reflection of values

Question 14: Are the things most important to you for Calgary's parks reflected in this list?

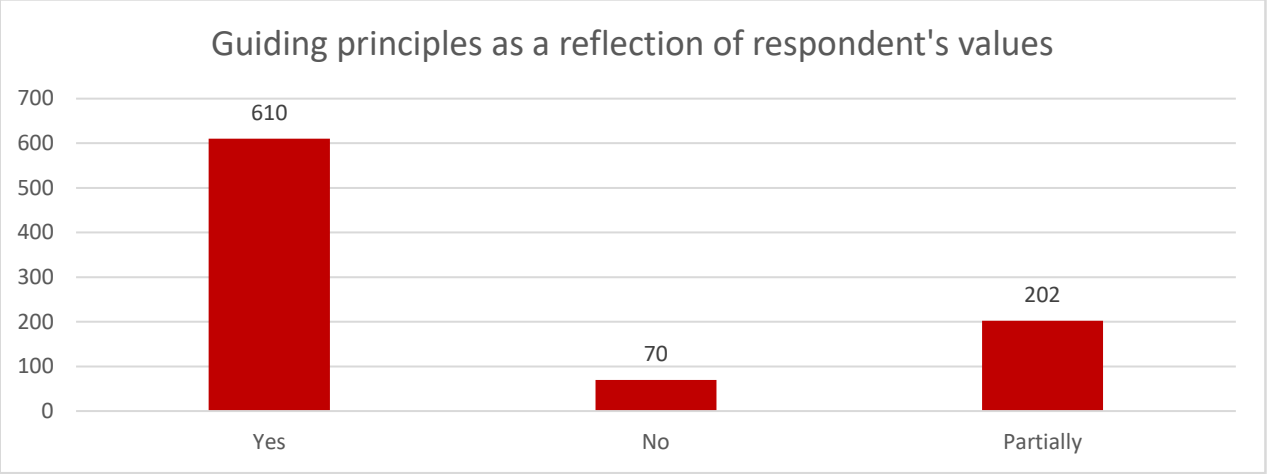


***Figure** 1220 Guiding principles as a reflection of values*

Disagreement with guiding principles

Question 15: For any guiding principle you do not agree with, would you mind telling us why?

Most respondents agreed with the list of guiding principles and shared that their values are reflected in them. For many respondents who stated they partially agreed with the draft guided principle, many shared one or two that they disagreed with, or stated their agreement with all the concepts but provided suggestions for ways the principle could be edited or modified.

GENERAL FEEDBACK FOR ALL PRINCIPLES

For those respondents that disagreed with the guiding principles, some felt that parks are not appropriate places to focus on social issues and inequity. Additionally, some felt that parks are solely meant to be outdoor spaces for everyone to enjoy and that the focus on these principles is either performative or the principles themselves are too vague, which will result in a lack of follow through and accountability.

Too many "woke" buzzwords, without any real substance.

Too many buzz words. Just focus on providing green spaces people can access. Too much focus on social issues that have nothing to do with 95% of what people use parks for. I am alarmed to see dogs not represented in your survey.

Parks should be a place for all calgarians to enjoy. A place that is well maintained and people are respectful. It seems like these principles are overthinking it.

All of these things can be found elsewhere, a park is somewhere to go to find nothing, just go and enjoy it.

I don't have any issue with the principles outlined, though I am skeptical & feel the process is likely a bit performative. Parks are grossly underfunded- how will the dept. reasonably follow-through with the feedback?

EQUITY

For respondents who disagree with one, or all the options presented, the guiding principle of Equity garnered the most amount of criticism. The main themes from those who disagree with this principle completely were similar to those from the general feedback as respondents felt that these principles were being too heavily influenced by left-leaning ideologies and that parks are not the places to focus on social issues. For others who do not completely disagree with the principle, they shared feedback that not all parks should be accessible or offer equal benefit, as that would run contrary to the point of certain natural areas. Some respondents did demonstrate a misunderstanding of what equity means in their feedback.

Diversity Inclusion and Equity is a false narrative. Public spaces are for all people regardless of these divisive social labels

I think that the city is too focused on equity, inclusion, and other social movements. The parks are important for recreation and wellbeing for everyone, and for maintenance of a natural environment where possible within the city.

Equity inappropriate, Calgarians are different and equity eliminates this, fairness is better.

I agree with the list but would state that not every area has to be available to everyone for everything.

Equity: I do not think every park of every park needs to be accessible to every person. ex, I enjoy the dirt pathways in Fishcreek which are not accessible to people with limited mobility.

CELEBRATION OF CULTURE

The principle that was challenged second most frequently was Culture as respondents stated that parks should be culturally neutral places and that this principle was heavily influenced by left-leaning ideologies, too politicized and could create further divisiveness. Some respondents felt that the principle of culture should be the responsibility of individuals and organizations, not the government. Others shared feedback on the principle of Truth and Reconciliation, stating that do not see the connection or value of it in the guiding principle or that they don't believe there should be a focus on it due to the diversity of Calgarians and the multitude of cultures to be celebrated in our city.

I worry that "equity" and "celebration of culture" will be co-opted to advance a woke agenda that undermines our sense of societal unity and harmony.

I don't feel celebration of culture needs to be a priority, especially for funding, as equitable access to space allows organizations/individuals to self-direct what the spaces are used for.

Enough of truth and reconciliation, how much is going to be enough? Is there going to be a time when you are satisfied?

While I do agree with the importance of recognizing Truth and Reconciliation in respects to the indigenous cultures that are deeply rooted in our land and peoples, however Calgary has a diverse community of cultures that also need support and recognition.

I don't agree that we should have a focus on Culture as it draws more attention to differences than encouraging harmony. We are Canadians. Don't continue to fragment us into splinter groups that highlight differences. Find ways to unite us into one.

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Participants who voiced their concerns regarding the Climate Resiliency principle demonstrated a misunderstanding about the role of parks and green spaces in climate resilience. Some respondents didn't disagree with the principle itself, but felt that it shouldn't be a guiding principle, while others felt climate should not be the focus of a parks plan or spending. Others expressed that climate resiliency is too narrow and believed this principle could be merged with Healthy Environment.

Where did you come up with the idea parks mitigate climate change? Floods have always happened and there's nothing like densifying an area (taking down trees, decreasing yards and shoving in more cement) to crank up the heat.

climate resiliency - I don't think there are enough trees and enough greenspace to really outweigh the local pollution in the city.

Climate resiliency. I partially agree but feel that shouldn't be the first thing we spend our money on.

Climate is too narrow, should not be its own category. It can go in healthy environment, which is sufficient to address conservation and natural infrastructure.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

There were a few concerns about this guiding principle. The less commonly mentioned themes include: Balance needed between closed areas for restoration and overuse; Worry about banning access; Better decisions about pest control; Nature-based approach should be priority. The main theme associated with the nature-based approach also ties directly to the Calgarians Health and Wellbeing principle. Many respondents feel that these two principles are at odds with each other.

Healthy Environment - reads like it would ban people access - if citizens do not have access does it count as a park?

For healthy environment, use federal regulations such as the pest control act to make decisions on use of chemical herbicides versus trying to make municipal decisions not based on science.

I agree with all of these, however, putting the environment first (healthy environment) seems it will be in conflict with also taking a people-based approach. Although, I suppose some parks are dedicated as natural area parks and some are recreation parks

I disagree with taking a people-based approach. We need to shift to a nature-based approach. Nature includes people and gives equal weight to the need to actively foster biodiversity.

CALGARIANS HEALTH AND WELLBEING

While this principle was the least concerning for respondents, a minor theme was that Calgary parks are not inclusive enough. However, respondents shared that this principle is at the heart of park use, with one respondent saying: "*Health and well being are reasonable. It's a park."*

Calgarians Health and Wellbeing: Parks in this city are designed for children and old people. Adults and teenagers are left out of the equation.

Missing principles

Question 16: Are there any guiding principles you feel are missing? If yes, please tell us what they are?

NATURE CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION

This theme was mentioned significantly more than any other by respondents. Multiple related topics are also included here including, protecting existing parks from development, including supporting and increasing biodiversity and tree canopy, live with and close to wildlife, increasing naturalization, planning more native and pollinator species and reducing pesticide use.

I feel like there isn't really much emphasis put on conservation and wildlife welfare, though I appreciate how it's perhaps indirectly addressed under "healthy environment"

What is most important to me is that flora and fauna should be protected and you are not addressing the protection of the flora and fauna at all. Calgary is terrible with such protections. Eg., the ring road has NO overpasses or underpasses for animals.

Biodeversity encouragement. Promote healthy and sustainable environment for various species to live in, mitigate habitat loss due to urban development and provide educational opportunities for all city residents.

Environment should include specific language that includes the planting of native plants and pollinator friendly gardens. These do not need to be maintained, and can provide a natural habitat for plants and animals.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety was the next most common theme and included sub themes of greater enforcement of bylaws, safety from unhoused individuals and public drug use, safety from off leash dogs and speeding cyclists, as well as some recommendations to help improve safety in parks.

Safety and security of Racialized community is not reflected here. With lots of incidents happening with people wearing Hizab, Turban and other religious symbols, residents safety should also be added in these principles

Safety and Protecting Peaceful Enjoyment - while police/social workers work on more serious issues, bylaw and peace officers (parks officers perhaps?) have a place in preventing litter, damage and intrusion.

Safety with visible enforcement by bylaw officers, possibly emergency location posts numbered when calling 911 for help[..]

Parks should a safe and welcoming environment for all. I shouldn't need to worry about homeless encampments or my kids finding used needles in parks

User interactions need to be considered. For instance, where a bike path goes along an off-leash area, the potential for a hazard with an off-leash dog is very high. I can say this from my own experience. Most off-leash areas are not secured properly.

Keep it safe above all. Parks should have lights on at night. Close up parks after dark so the young people don't go there to drink, do drugs and party. There should be signs that parks are closed after dark.

MAINTENANCE

Some respondents felt that park maintenance and investment should be part of the guiding principles in order to keep parks beautiful and well maintained.

Maintenance is not identified as a priority. Climate resiliency elements are useless if they are not maintained and improved with changing environmental conditions. Putting the environment first requires $ for mature tree watering and maintenance.

RECREATION, SPORTS, FITNESS AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Recreation and fitness was another theme that respondents felt should be outlined in the guiding principles.

The guiding principle is that park areas in Calgary exist to provide people with the opportunity to do things they enjoy in the outdoors. The parks should be promoting recreation, healthy activities, and enjoyment of the natural environment.

EDUCATION

Other respondents felt that educating park user of proper park practices, bylaws and the importance of green spaces should be reflected in the guiding principles.

I wish the city would take a bigger role in educating park users, especially in multi use parks.Again, I often feel unsafe because of off leash pets.I frequent these natural areas quite often, I have never seen bylaw available in these areas to assist

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY VS CULTURE

This theme included sub themes about parks creating unity, togetherness, opportunities for families, gathering and the enjoyment of food and music.

A stronger focus on parks being spaces that nurture community within our city. Spaces to meet and enjoy strangers.

CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS

This theme includes sub themes of increasing public transportation options, supporting active forms of transportation, adding to Calgary's transportation network and reducing vehicle use.

Connectedness - Calgary Parks should think of our parks as part of a whole active transportation network. How can park trails support bike and pedestrian commuting and travel for errands, not just for pleasure?

MORE PARK AND MULTIUSE SPACE FOR EVERYONE

This theme includes sub themes of ensuring enough park space for a growing population especially while densifying areas of the city. In addition, ensuring activities for people with a range of ages and abilities was included here.

There needs to be more about giving Calgarians more space to do the things they enjoy. As the city Densifies I'm worried there will not be enough space for everyone. Especially in inner city neighborhoods. Calgary should be the city of parks and pathways!

AMENITIES TO INCREASE USER EXPERIENCE

Some respondents shared that park amenities should be part of the guiding principles, including washrooms, fountains, parking, benches, picnic tables, and swimming pools.

Making users feel safe in parks. And basic amenities like running water and washrooms. This is important for all users of any park space. If you have to leave to use the washroom, that does not benefit the climate.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RESILIENCE

Finally, some respondents felt there should have been an economic component incorporated into the guiding principles. This concept was expressed in several ways, including: demonstrating fiscal responsibility and consideration of operating costs and utilizing parks for economic opportunities and growth through tourism, recreation and small businesses.

You need something about fiscal responsibility. These items are honourable goals but there needs to be consideration of costs as these are prioritized and implemented.

Economic resilience in terms of growing the parks network in a way that is manageable (capital and operating) and also in the sense of enabling economic opportunity through the parks system (local biz and tourism).

Unique considerations

Some respondents shared that Calgarians, groups, and other local organizations should play a stewardship role in the future of parks, with some stating that increased sense of ownership would result in increased attention and effort. One respondent also suggested that an advisory team for each guiding principle should be considered.

- *The guiding principals (not sure which category) should include citizen and local organizations care for the parks. Perhaps more proximal ownership may result in better care and more respectful usage by immediate/close locals using the space.*
- *Collective Contribution- encourage citizens to take a pride in a Calgary clean initiative, even visitors participate in collective clean up. This protects the environment and educates people on how litter can adversely impacts bears & other animals.*
- *Create "Friends of the Park"- individulas who volunteer time , discourage unwated behaviours, celean/maintain park areas, 2. Advisory teams matching each guidiing principle*

Portal Page: The Business Community

https://engage.calgary.ca/parksplan/connect-calgary-parks-plan-businesses-agencies-and-organizations

Section 1: Connecting You to the Environment- Business Community

Question 1: How would you describe your organization, business or agency?



Figure 2113 *Types of organizations, businesses & agencies*

Business mandate

Question 2: To what extent does your organization, business or agency's mandate include or consider natural environment parks?

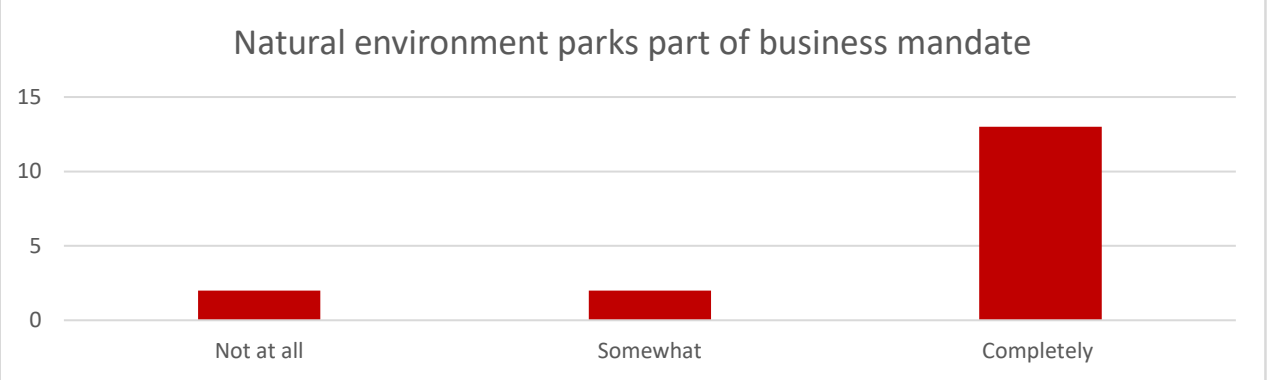


Figure 2214 *Natural environment parks part of business mandate*

Benefits for Calgary

Question 3: Natural environment parks offer many benefits for the city of Calgary. Please rank the benefits of natural environment parks, in the order of what is most important to your organization, business or agency's mandate.

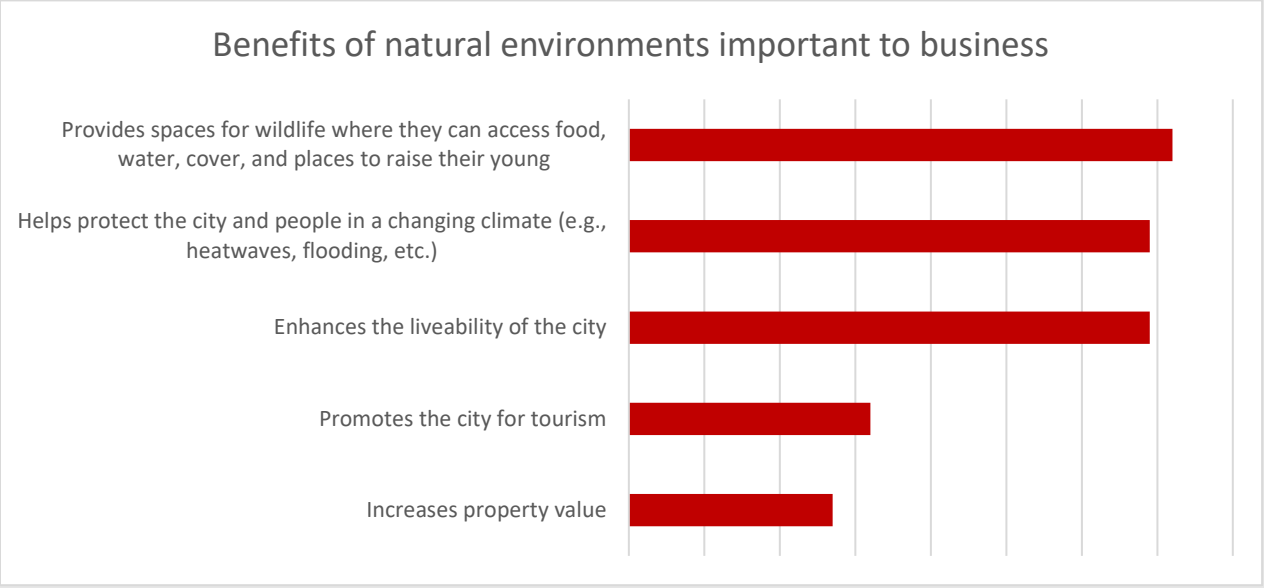


Figure 2315 *Benefits of natural environment parks*

The data in Figure 23 represents the sum of respondent's ranking. For this question, respondents were asked to rank the options from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important option. To represent this data accurately in a visual graph, the weighting of 1 to 5 have been reversed. This results in the most important option appearing in the graph with the highest weight and the least important option appearing with the lowest.[6]

[6] Therefore, the values in the vertical axis are not important to include in the graph, as the bars visually show what we heard from respondents.

Benefits for business, organization or agency

Question 4: Which benefits of natural environment parks does your organization, business or agency align with? Select up to four.

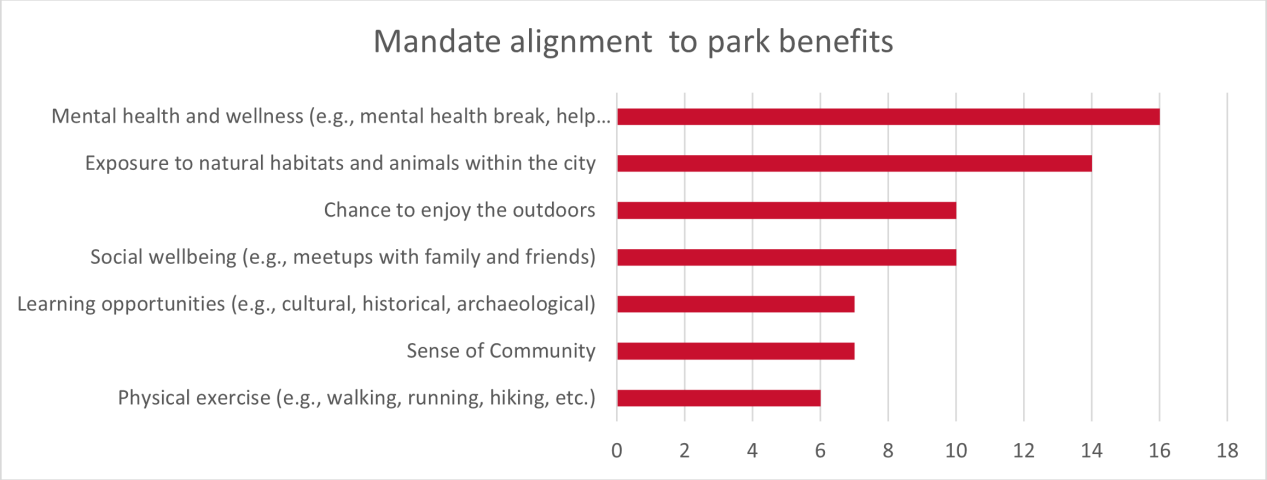


Figure 24*16 Business mandate alignment to park benefits.*

Concerns for business, organization or agency

Question 5: Which concerns does your business, organization or agency have about natural environment parks? Select up to five.

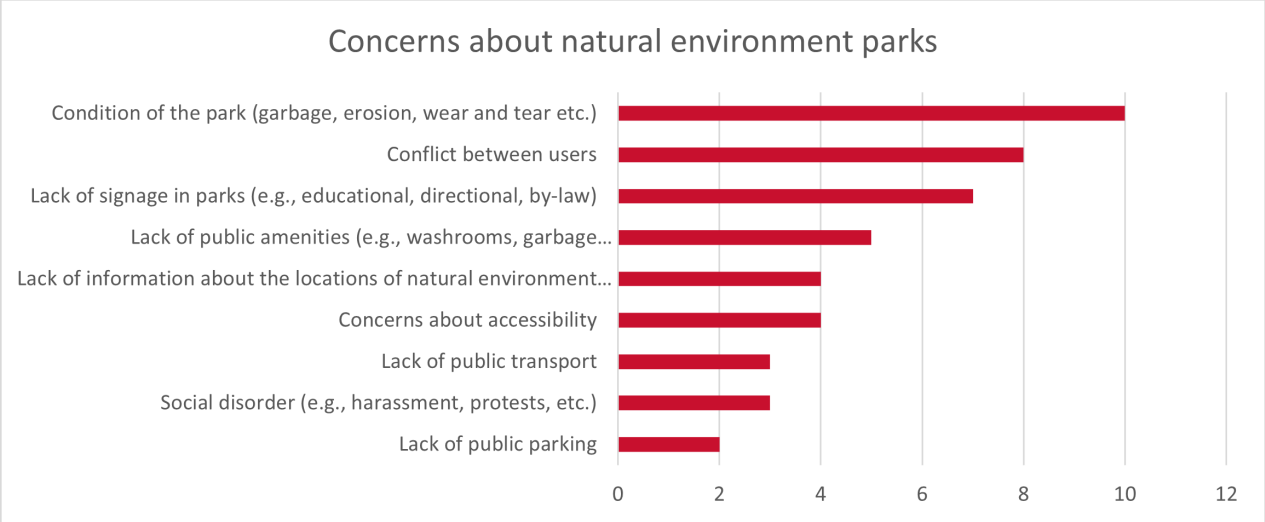


Figure 25*17 Concerns about natural environment parks*

Ideas for improvement

Question 6: Please share your ideas for how The City of Calgary can improve natural environment parks either now or in the future?

Respondents wanted specific planning documents and control measures in place. Control measures included signage, education, and limited access to protected areas. Concerns centered around human impact (e.g., overuse, garbage and dog activity). They wanted to be able to participate in both passive and active recreation in the areas. Wildlife corridors were also seen as important.

The top themes and associated verbatim comments are presented below.

PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

There is a critical need for a Park Master Plan and Park Management Plan for Paskapoo Slopes Natural Park. There needs to be clearly designated trails with signage and education. There needs to be appropriate development restrictions for the surrounding developable areas for setbacks and appropriate interface.

Nose Creek can and should become an Inter-Municipal Park System. A green-belt that connects both Calgary Communities and Calgary with other Municipalities. While also creating a wildlife corridor. Currently it is being used as a dumping ground and inner-city dirt bike track because the city does not own the land to enforce rules to protect the creek and threatened species habitats.

Use all open spaces (e.g. regular parks, storm water management facilities, right-of-ways) to create opportunities for naturalized areas (preserved AND created) to realize the multiple benefits of nature and ecosystem services especially in the face of climate change adaptation

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Designate areas within natural environments for use by those looking to meditate or do yoga or Force bathing type practices.

Parks in Calgary can be very busy with multiple users, many people need quiet spaces to connect to nature for their health and wellbeing. One suggestion is to designate lesser used parks (or areas of parks) for nature connection practices such as forest bathing, mindfulness, outdoor yoga, or herb walks. Having quieter spaces with less people can have a profoundly positive impact on mental health.

EDUCATION

Careful consideration is needed for managing use while also achieving protection of wildlife, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, ecological integrity, water quality, and sensitive riverbanks. As the city's population grows these challenges will intensify. Education, signage and access control tools are needed to protect sensitive areas. [..]

AMENITIES AND MAINTENANCE

From my experience the City does an amazing job managing and protecting the parks. The addition of toilets would help people from relieving themselves in the bushes. Also, closer monitoring of the port-a-potties to ensure they are clean.

It would be wonderful to have designated nature play spaces within these parks- it's important to educate about preservation and protection, but also important to have a space where kids can directly interact with nature in meaningful ways (for kids, that is through play!).

Provide opportunities for groups to gather, meet and collectively share thoughts, ideas and celebrate successes. Find ways to continue to educate through signage/activities. Provide grants or partnering support for private land reclamation/restoration projects. Continue to fund natural area maintenance and restoration, including requesting additional funding options to council/higher governments.

Section 2: Connecting You to Wellness - Business Community

Business mandate

Question 7: To what extent does your organization, business or agency's mandate include or consider recreational parks and overall wellness?

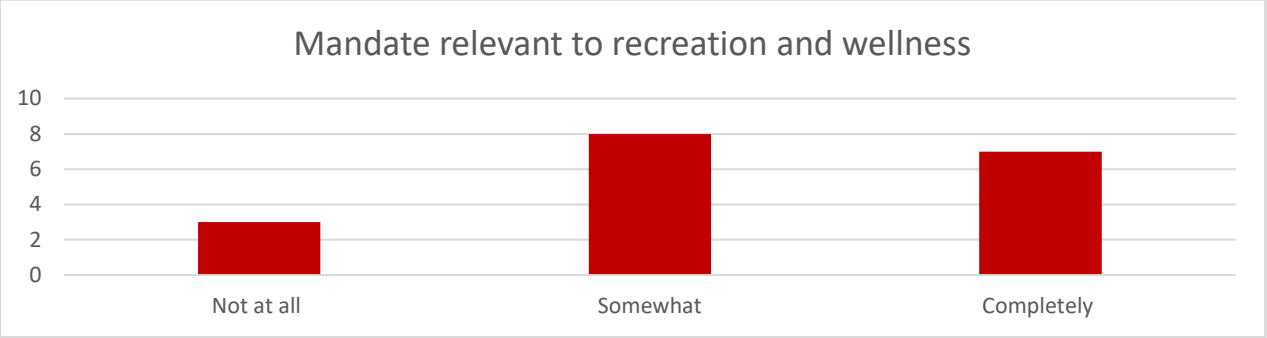


Figure 2618 *Mandate relevant to recreation and wellness*

Benefits relevant to business

Question 8: Recreational parks offer many benefits for the city of Calgary. Please rank the benefits of recreational parks, in the order of what is most important to your organization, business or agency's mandate.



Figure 2719 *Benefits of recreational parks to businesses*

The data in Figure 27 represents the sum of respondent's ranking. For this question, respondents were asked to rank the options from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important option. To represent this data accurately in a visual graph, the weighting of 1 to 5 have been reversed. This results in the most important option appearing in the graph with the highest weight and the least important option appearing with the lowest.[7]

[7] Therefore, the values in the vertical axis are not important to include in the graph, as the bars visually show what we heard from respondents.

Benefit alignment to business

Question 9: Which benefits of recreational parks does your organization, business or agency align with? Select up to four.

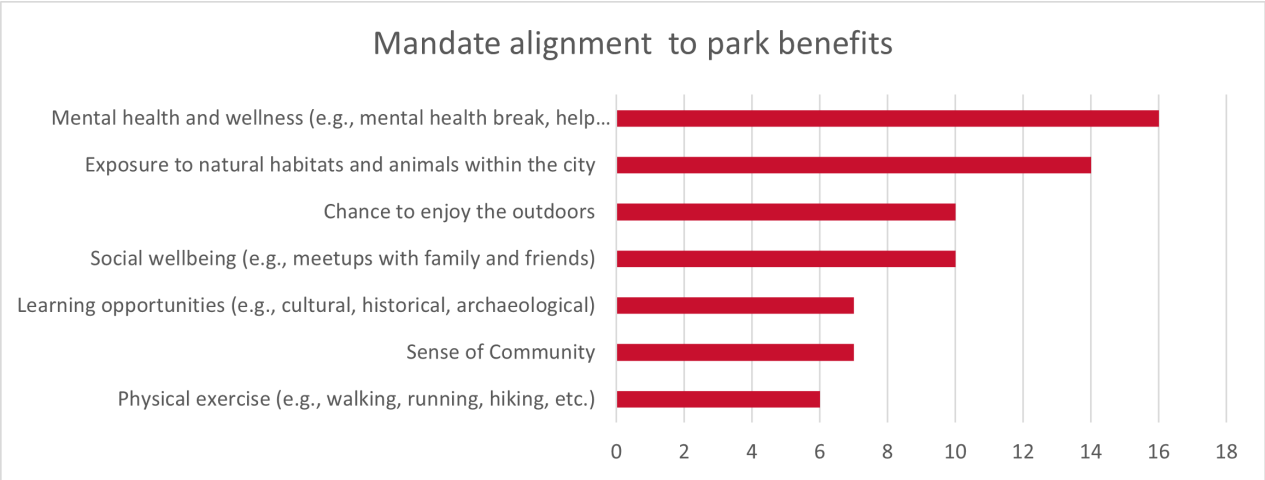


Figure 2820 *Mandate alignment to park benefits*

Concerns

Question 10: Which concerns does your business, organization or agency have about recreational parks? Select up to five.

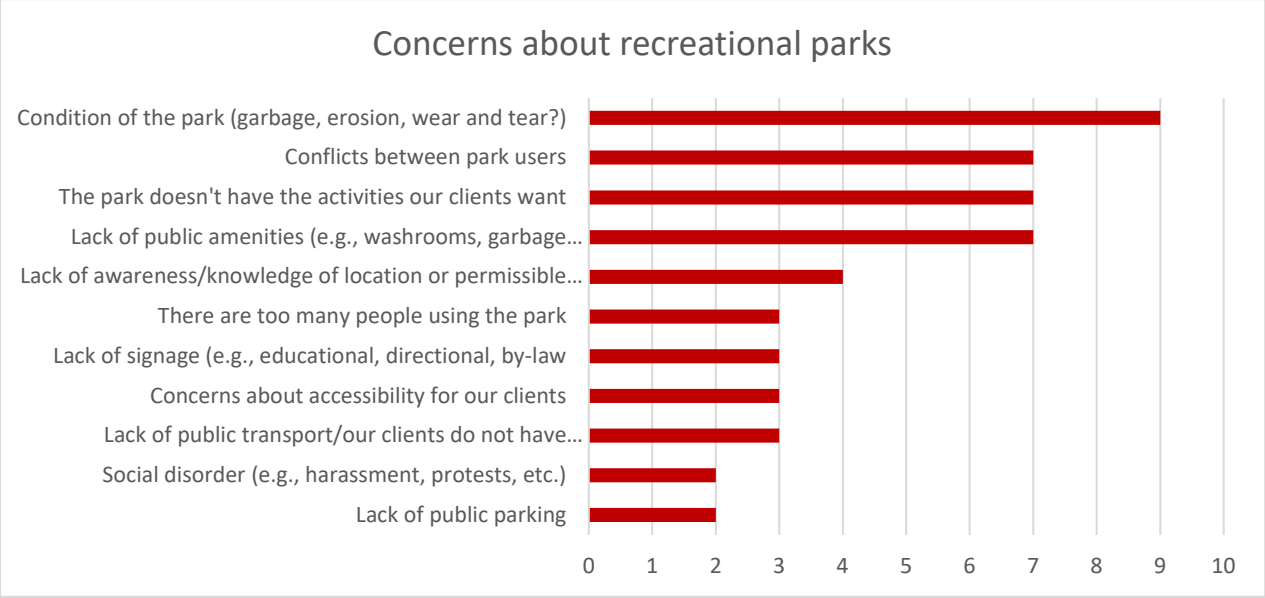


Figure 2921 *Concerns about recreational parks*

Ideas for improvement

Question 11: Please share your ideas for how the City of Calgary can improve recreational parks now or in the future?

Businesses, agencies and organizations wanted to see upgraded amenities and infrastructure in the parks. This included playground equipment as well as garbage bins. They felt the spaces could be better utilized and should be multi-functional to be enjoyed by a variety of users for both passive and active recreation. Accessibility (or connectivity) needs to be addressed for folks with limited mobility with a specific mention of transit and walking distances.

The top themes and associated verbatim comments are presented below.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Passive recreation and opportunities to connect with nature in the City need to be explored further.

Designate parks or areas of parks for quieter activities like forest bathing or mindfulness activities.

I think the edges of these spaces are under-utilized and could be enhanced with diverse plantings (also beneficial in providing shade, relaxation for sport users). I think there could be more multi-use spaces - e.g. playgrounds near fields and dog parks, habitat corridors etc. Parks don't need to be single-use (e.g. only sport fields).

AMENITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

At least one park in each community should be improved upon and offer amenities for all users. Many of the parks in established communities are run down and very unattractive.

We struggle with decrepit outdoor furniture and lack of garbage bins.

Pathways through Nose Creek would help direct traffic. Currently people are making their own paths which can harm the health of the wildlife, ecosystem and creek.

ACCESSIBILITY

While public transportation in Calgary is amazing. Getting from downtown to Baker Park is an arduous task. We get several complaints each season from guests who have tried to catch public transit to Baker. Usually around it takes too long and we had to walk too far.

Section 3: Connecting You to Culture- Business Community

Business mandate

Question 12: To what extent does your organization's mandate include or consider the cultural aspects of parks?

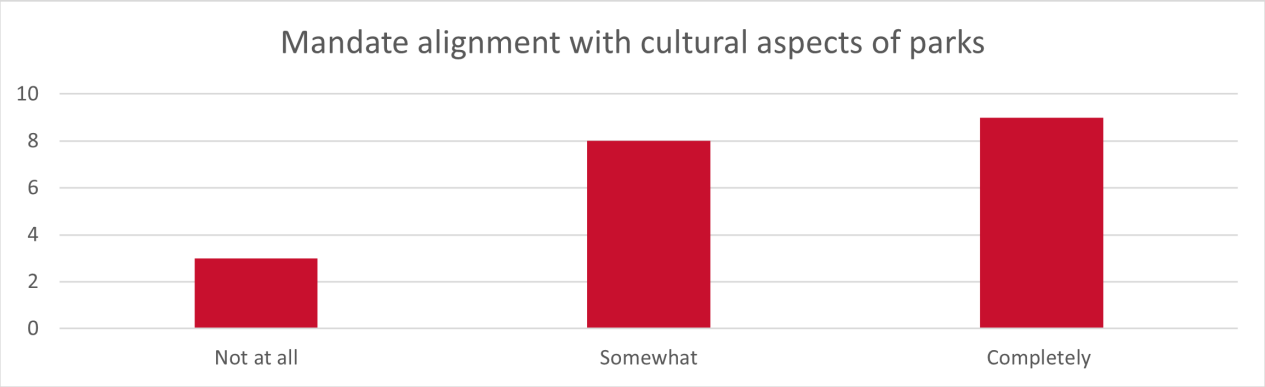


Figure 3022 *Mandate alignment with culture*

Business alignment with culture

Question 13: Which of the following aspects of culture in Calgary's parks align with your organization, business or agency mandate? Select up to four.



Figure 3123 *Mandate alignment with cultural aspects of parks*

Concerns

Question 14: Which concerns does your organization, business or agency have about the cultural aspects of Calgary's parks? Select up to five.

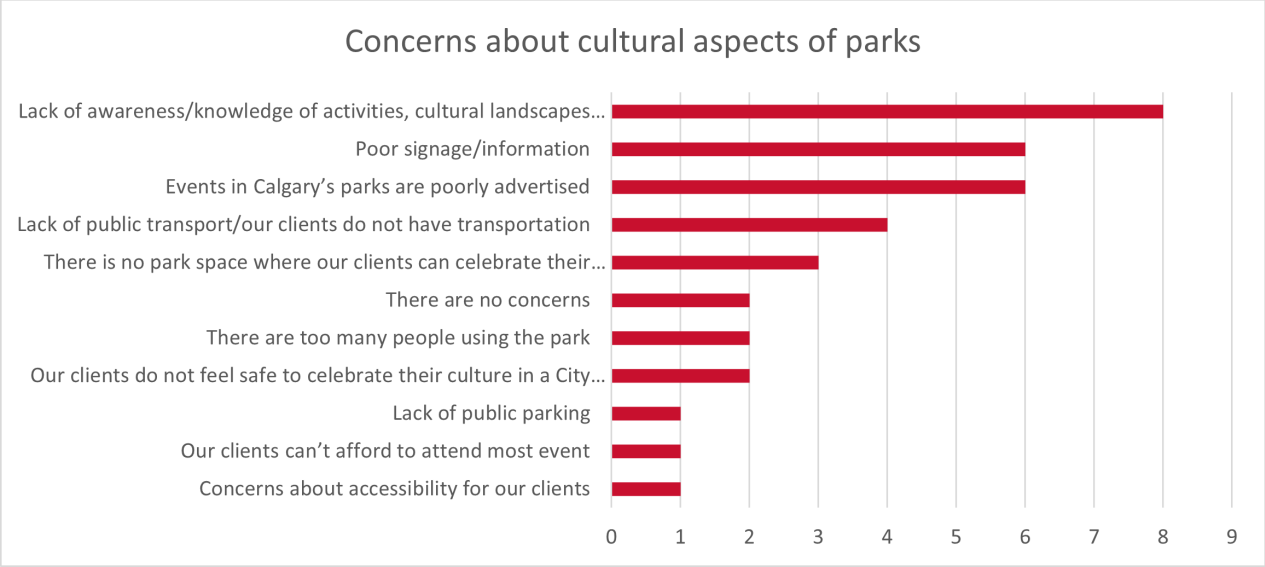


Figure 3224 *Concerns about the cultural aspects of parks*

Ideas for improvement

Question 15: Please share your ideas for how Calgary can improve parks that connect Calgarians to culture- past, present and future?

Responses to this question shared the theme of preserving Indigenous sacred spaces, artifacts and knowledge through protected areas, education, and Indigenous valued plants. In addition, respondents shared that Blackfoot Peoples should inform the plan to ensure opportunities for sharing stories about the land with other park users.

The Nose Creek Valley is filled with Tipi Rings / Bison Bones / Arrowheads and other signs of First Nations Artifacts. The Balzac Archeological Site is not marked and the last remaining undisturbed portion of the North Trail is at risk of being disturbed. We have so much First Nation History in the Nose Creek Valley that is not being told and needs a Park Created around it to preserve the history

There are few parks in Calgary that truly celebrate and honour traditional indigenous cultures and the historical cultural significance of our parks.

The Blackfoot are the most closely associated with this Park and should have a significant role in developing a plan that includes opportunities for them to re-connect with these lands and to share their stories and rich history with visitors to the Park.

signage, encouraging cultural events, utilizing edge-spaces of current parks (recreational) or green spaces to hold specific plantings (e.g. native plants, indigenous- valued plants).

Section 4: Economic Sustainability- Business Community

What is important?

Question 16: Rank the following in order of importance for your business, organization, or agency.



Figure 3325 *What is important for your business?*

The data in Figure 33 represents the sum of respondent's ranking. For this question, respondents were asked to rank the options from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important option. To represent this data accurately in a visual graph, the weighting of 1 to 7 have been reversed. This results in the most important option appearing in the graph with the highest weight and the least important option appearing with the lowest.[8]

Section 5: Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging- Business Community

Question 17: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

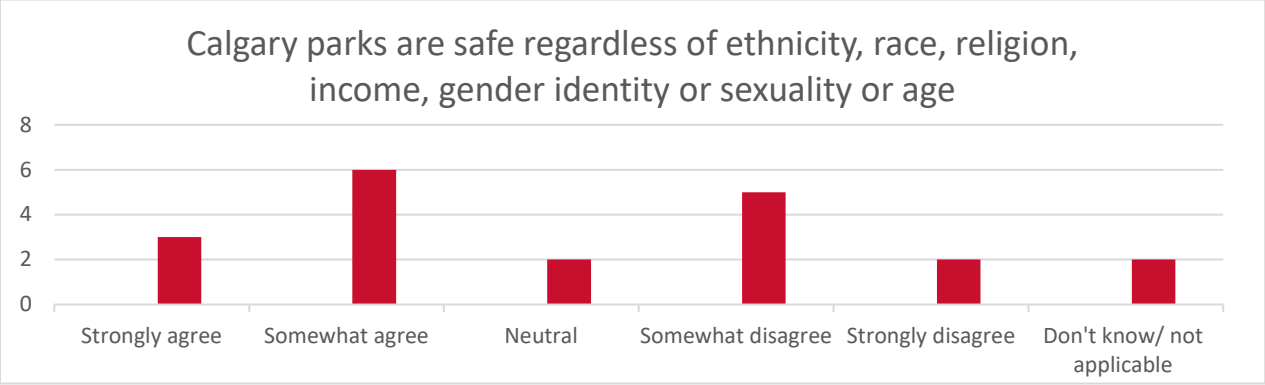


Figure 3426 *Calgary parks are safe [...]Connect: Calgary's Park Plan | Engage*

[8] Therefore, the values in the vertical axis are not important to include in the graph, as the bars visually show what we heard from respondents.

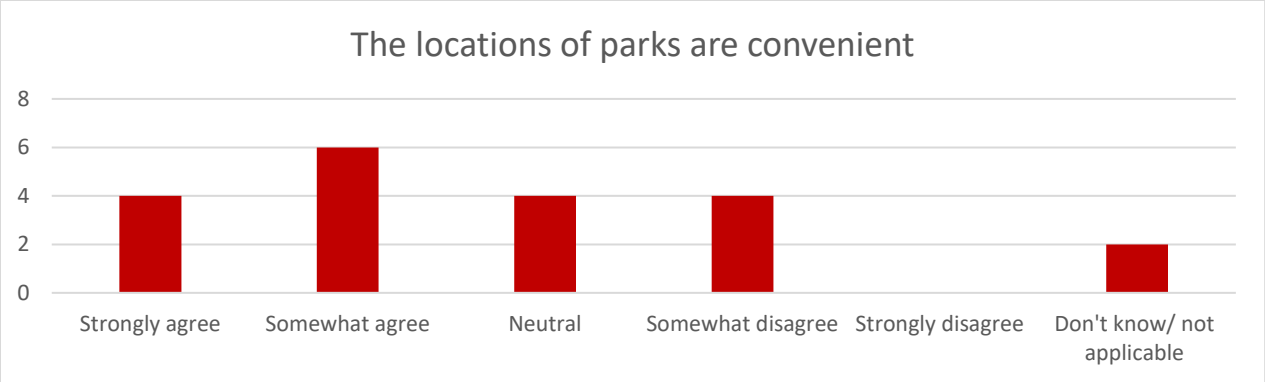


Figure 2735 *Calgary parks are convenient.*

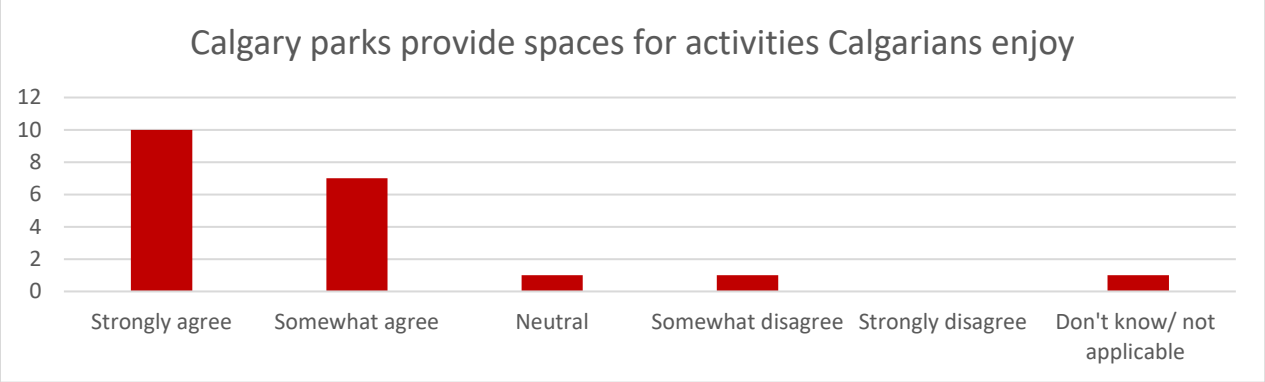


Figure 3628 *Calgary parks provide enjoyable spaces.*

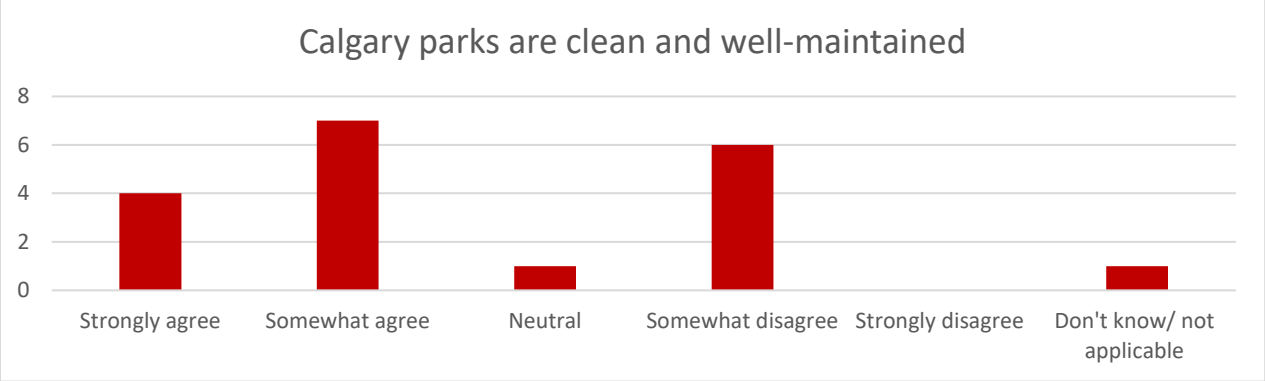


Figure 3729 *Calgary parks are clean [...]*

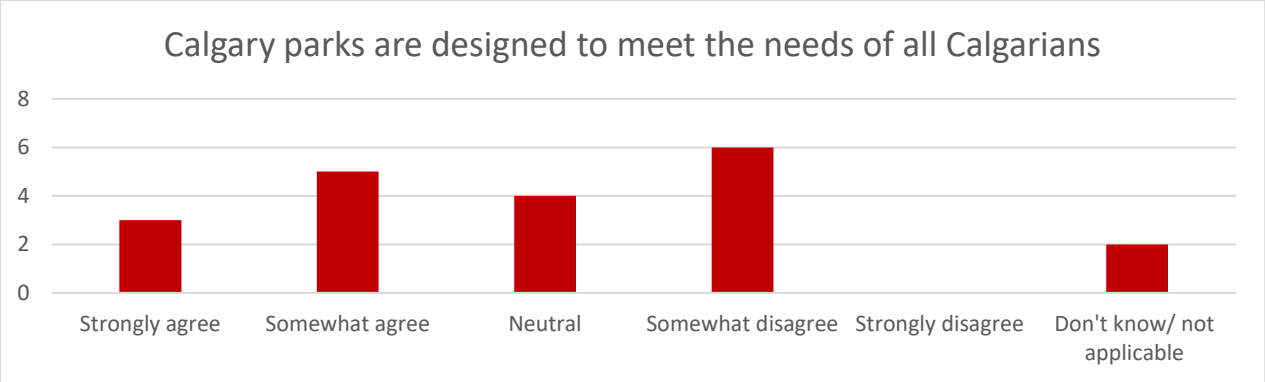


Figure 3830 *Calgary parks meet the needs of all Calgarians.*

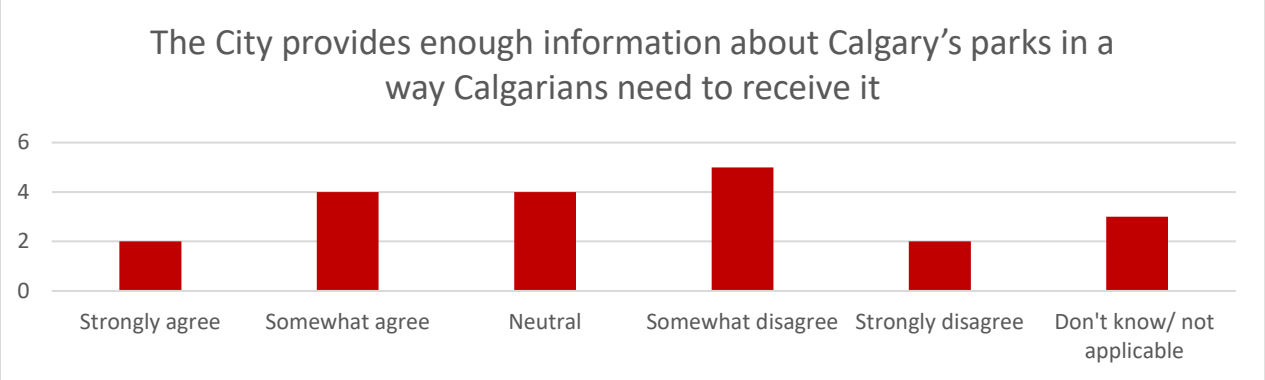


Figure 3931 *Calgary parks provide enough information [...]*

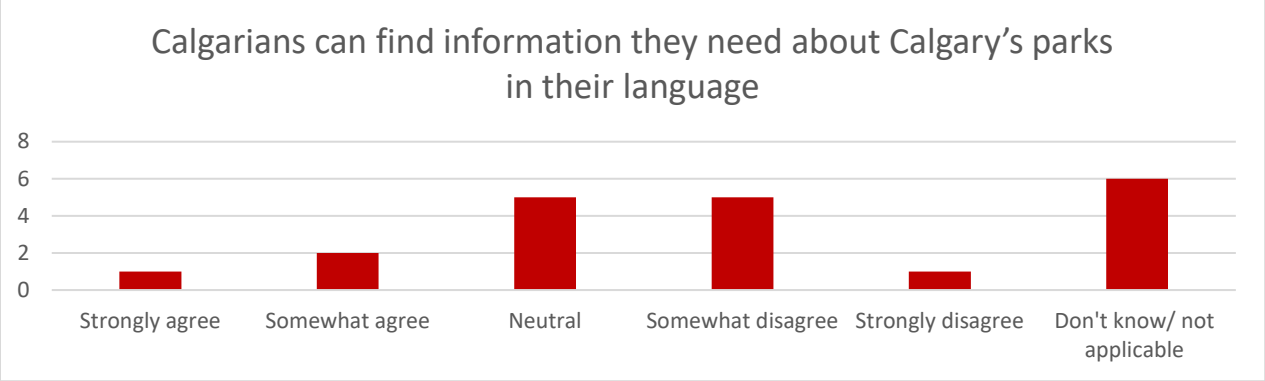


Figure 4032 *Information is available in different languages.*

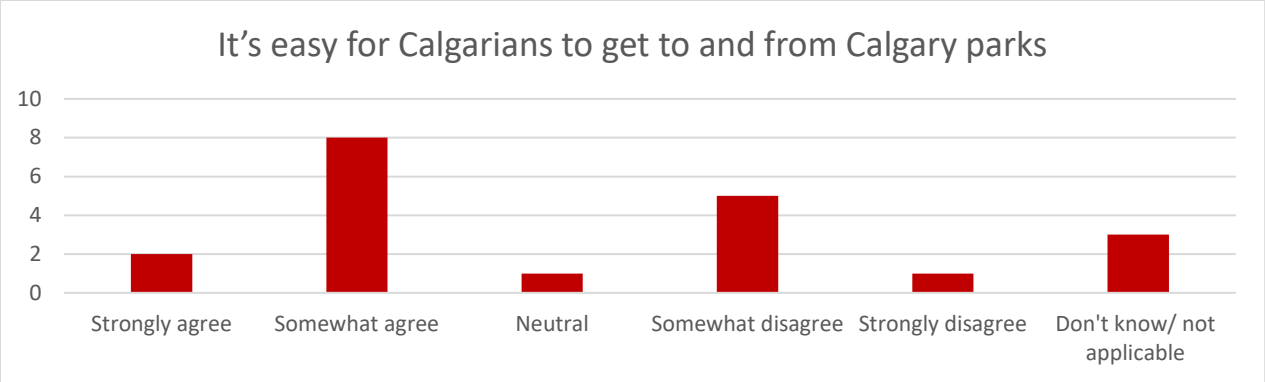


Figure 4133 *Calgary's parks are easy to access.*

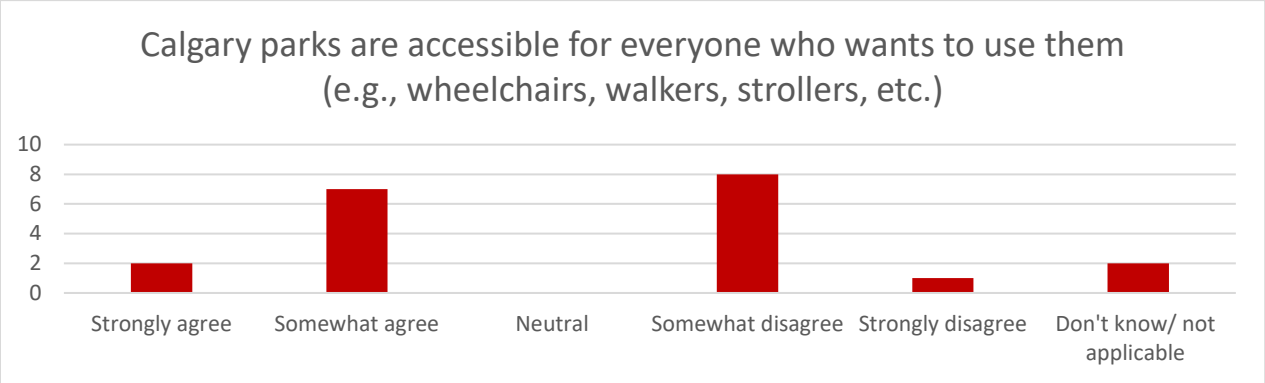


Figure 42 *Calgary parks are accessible [...]*

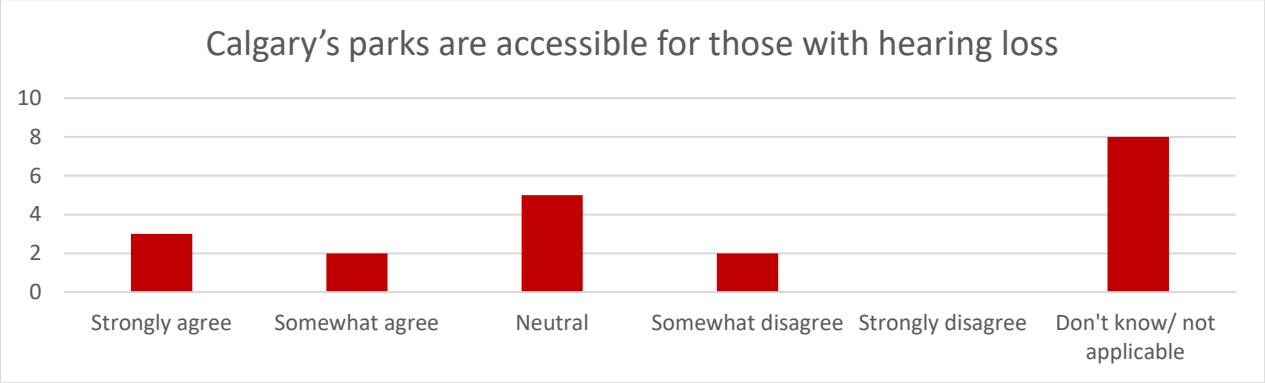


Figure 4334 *Calgary parks and hearing loss*

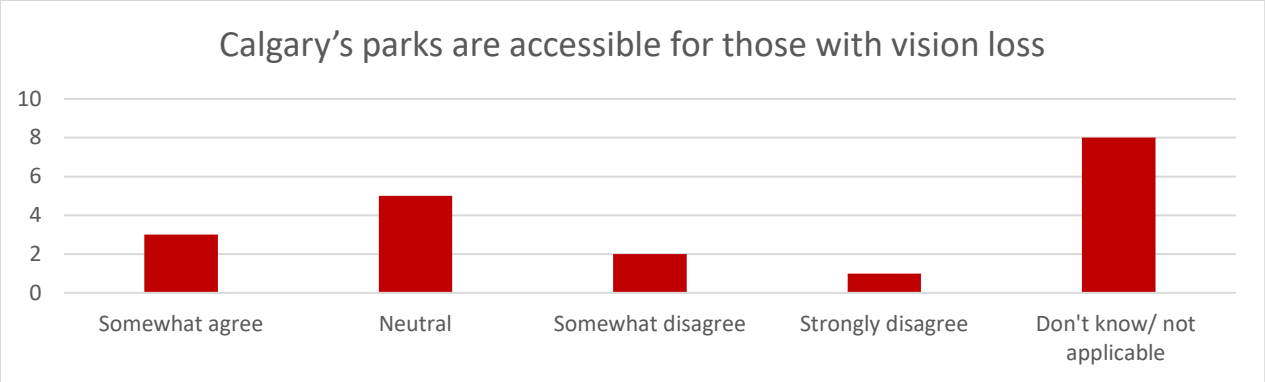


Figure 44 35 *Calgary parks and vision loss*

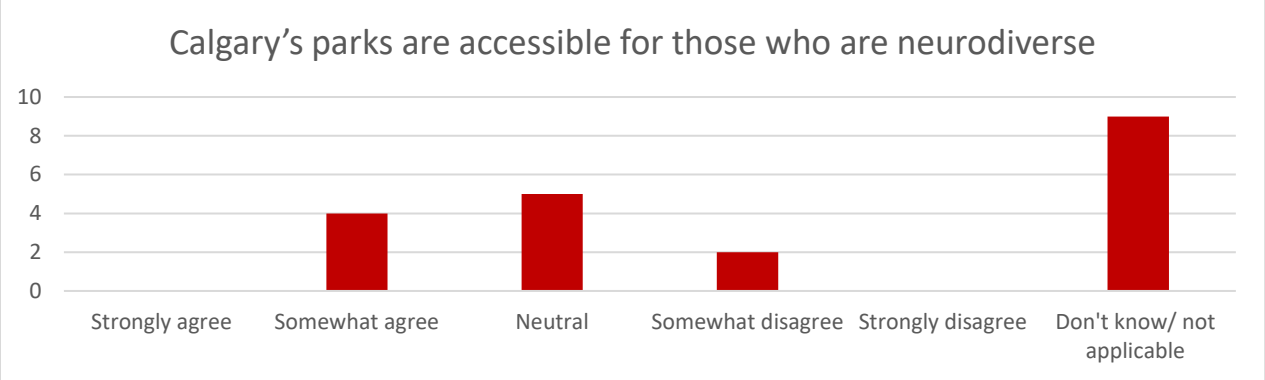


Figure 4536 *Calgary parks and neurodiversity*

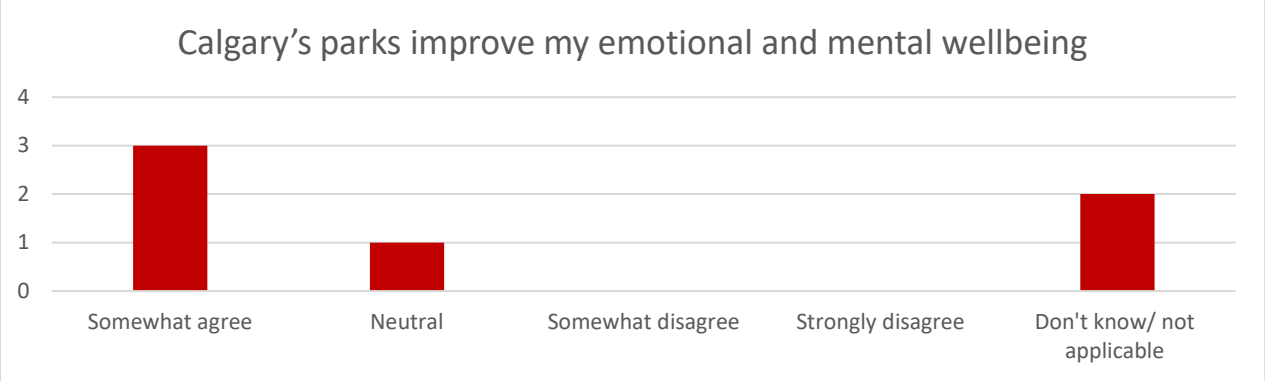


Figure 4637 *Calgary parks and emotional and mental wellbeing*

Section 6: Guiding Principles- Business Community

Participants were asked to comment on the following draft guiding principles for the Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan. They have been identified to direct the future of park planning and decision making in Calgary over the next 20 years.

- **Climate Resiliency:** Identify and implement measures to reduce and combat the negative impacts of climate change.
- **Healthy Environment:** Improve the health and functionality of Calgary's natural environment through decision-making that puts the environment first.
- **Equity:** Increase inclusive and accessible opportunities city-wide by consistently reviewing and evaluating our services.
- **Calgarians Health and Wellbeing:** Take a people-based approach to the development of our parks which supports multidisciplinary planning initiatives and creation of complete communities.
- **Celebration of Culture:** Support the consistent pursuit and preservation of Calgary's history, culture and the principles of Truth and Reconciliation by weaving them into the fabric of our parks.

What is important?

Question 18: Are the things most important to you for Calgary's parks reflected in this list?

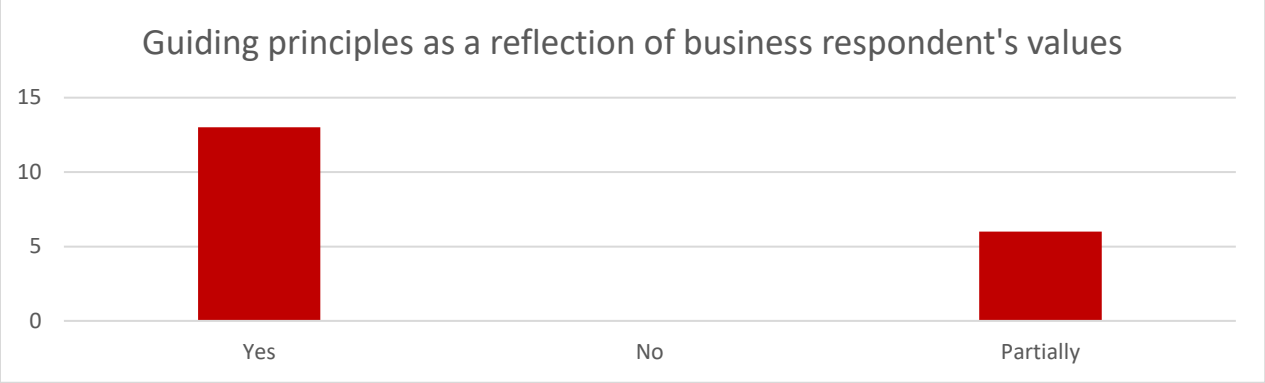


Figure 4738 *Guiding principles a reflection of business values.*

Disagreement with guiding principles

Question 19: For any guiding principle you do not agree with, please explain why.

Businesses, agencies and organizations were in general agreement with the principles. One participant felt that culture was not a priority. Another concern was in regard to quiet spaces and the need for more areas for passive recreation.

Equity, overall do benefit equal equity for park spaces within City of Calgary, both from parks and open space side and recreations (sports fields). The overall focus seems to outer edges of the city with new park development and less with older communities.

Maintaining a healthy environment sometimes requires hard choices like limiting or restricting high intensity activities. Some Calgarians can benefit from having parks that are quiet retreats but this doesn't seem to be criteria.

Missing guiding principles

Question 20: Are there any guiding principles you feel are missing? If yes, please tell us what they are.

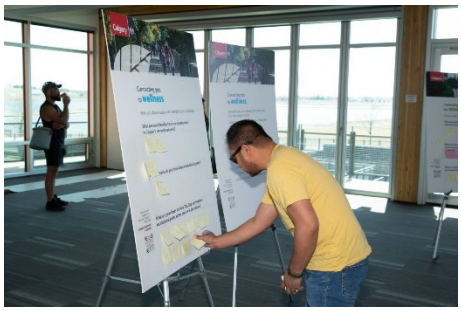


Figure 39 *Leaving feedback at RKP*

Respondents wanted a Funding Principle added to ensure the sustainability of parks as well as the incorporation of tourism tactics. They wanted the application of strategic foresight by using the 'Seven Generations Ahead' principle, where decision we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. There were also mentions of creating a sense of place and ecological connectivity. Integration of all guiding principles throughout the parks leading to multi-functional areas.

Verbatim comments

I would add under Celebration of Culture that the city also weave Indigenous peoples' thinking into the fabric of its decision making by planning seven generations ahead whether for parks or for urban development that destroys natural spaces.

I think "Properly Funded" should be added. What we are learning about Parks is that they don't have a revenue stream like other departments. Leaving the department to be reactive/passive and not proactive. Calgary needs more natural Parks, it takes money.

I would like to see a tourism principal. We host guests each year from around the world and they marvel at our parks and trails. I have lived all over the world and this is one of the best cities anywhere for parks and trails within city limits. Share it!

This plan sounds very Calgary-centred (which I understand). Some of the principles aren't captured in colonial borders. There is a need to factor regional decisions and plans to fully capture the end goal. This includes supporting neighbouring places.

Connect Event Series (includes open house, outdoor events, and pop-ups)

The following themes and subtheme were gathered via sticky notes from a series of five Connect events, four open-houses and twelve pop-ups. Top themes, explanation of what they mean and associated verbatim comments can be found in tables 3-5.

Table 2 – Emergent themes from Connect Event Series

Themes	***Sub-themes***	***Sub-sub-themes***
Accessibility & Connectivity	Ability	Mobility Multiple languages
	Affordability	No extra fees Keep fees low
	Location	Distance Transit No vehicles
	Parks network	Connectivity between parks
Amenities & Infrastructure	Equipment	Playgrounds, firepits, tables, benches, picnic sites
	Trails & Pathways	Maintenance of existing trails Development of new trails
	Washrooms	More washrooms Extended hours Maintenance of existing washrooms
EDIB (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging)	No subthemes	
Education (Learning) & Awareness	Park Etiquette	Cyclists Dogs Garbage Respect of people and property
	Indigenous Culture	History Signs in Indigenous languages Location specific information
Environment	Preservation / Conservation	Leave it natural, No more development
	Biodiversity	Flora Fauna
	Pollution	Light, noise, litter
Events	Live events	Theatre arts, concerts, etc.
	Programming	E.g. – cemetery tours
Health & Wellness	Mental Health	
	Physical Health	
	Social Connections	
Human Impacts/ Usership	Dogs	
	Cyclists	
	Development	

Themes	***Sub-themes***	***Sub-sub-themes***
	Overuse (crowded)	
	Pollution	Noise, litter, light
Indigenous Relations	Knowledge (Learnings)	
	Awareness	
	Acknowledgements	
Management Practices	Water management	
	Maintenance	
	Partnerships & Collaboration	
Recreation (Play!)	Play Programming - activities	
Public Art	No subthemes	
Safety & Security	Education	Park etiquette
	Enforcement	Encampments, dog feces, cyclists
	Design / features	Lighting, access to emergency lines

Table 2- Emergent themes from Connect Event Series

Table 3. Connecting you to the Environment. Feedback from Connect Event Series (sorted by quadrant)

Quadrant	***Top Themes***	***Further explanation of why the theme was selected***	***Verbatim comments***
NE	Amenities and Infrastructure	Respondents wanted more washrooms, playground equipment, as well as the upkeep of existing amenities such as picnic tables.	*"The benches and tables are infested with bugs and the paint is peeling off. You can also get a splinter."* *"Washrooms. Seniors and children need it most."*
	Human Impact	Areas of concern were garbage, further development, off-leash dogs and dog feces.	*"Assign more land in new subs for green space & parks"; 'People littering should be ticketed"* *"More trees & should be taken care of trees & water them. "*
	Management Practices	Management of trees, garbage removal and cleanliness of parks,	*"More frequent clean up of garbage and more garbage cans"*
NW	Amenities and Infrastructure	Respondents wanted more garbage, recycle, and compost bins, as well as nesting platforms and restoration of existing trails.	*"Restore Douglas Fir Trail"; "Enhancing a specific trail for biking. Acknowledge how it's being used."; "Put more garbage bins & compost bins & recycling bins."*

Quadrant	*Top Themes*	*Further explanation of why the theme was selected*	*Verbatim comments*
	Environment	Values included the enjoyment and maintaining of the biodiversity (flora and fauna) of natural environments, and planting more trees.	*"Environmental re-engineering due to erosion."; "Riverbend, Sandy Beach, Glenmore - love the birds"*
	Human Impact	Concerns centered around rough sleeping, littering, and destruction of habitat. Off leash and dog feces were also mentioned.	*"Shouldice Park needs clear signage for off-leash; also garbage recepticals"*
SE	Environment	Respondents wanted to see use of non-invasive plant species, the prioritization of parks over urban sprawl. They enjoy seeing wildlife and want to balance human use with naturalization.	*"Native plants, wild animals, vareity of birds, tranquility experience to escape urban life"; "I love seeing all the wildlife and cool plants. "*
	Human Impact	Concerns included cyclists, dogs, and garbage left behind. Participants also mentioned encampments in the parks.	*"NEP - no dogs. Keep natural, no recreation . Education for the public on use of spaces. Especially respecting NEPs"; Develop a strategy for how to deal with unhoused people living in the parks.*
	Health and Wellness	Values included mental health escapes and getting outside to be with nature.	*"It's comforting and very enriching to be able to detach from all the noise and bustle of the city."*
SW	Human Impact	This includes over usage, development, pollution, cyclists and dogs.	*"Mountain bikes and motorized bikes used inappropriately - conflict with pathway users." "No noise pollution"*
	Environment	Biodiversity and preservation.	*"Goal to have low key development of natural environment, picnic tables, firepits"* *Development as a threat for habitats and the natural environment."*
	Amenities & Infrastructure	Concerns centered around availability of washrooms and amenities that do not belong in a natural environment	*"Permanent washrooms (near the playground) should eb open twelve months of the year (North Glenmore Park)"; "Appreciate*

Quadrant	Top Themes	Further explanation of why the theme was selected	Verbatim comments
		park. Values included the ski/skate tracks.	*cross country skiing in South Glenmore and Maple Ridge."*

Table 3- Feedback from Connect Event Series about natural environment parks

Table 4. Connecting you to Wellness. Feedback from Connect Event Series (sorted by quadrant)

Quadrant	Top Themes	Further explanation of why the theme was selected	Verbatim comments
NE	Amenities & Infrastructure	Respondents wanted more playground, better equipment and maintenance on existing equipment. This also included BBQ pits, picnic tables and more places to sit.	*If you don't have your own big yard, the rec spaces where everyone can come together & do different things.*
	Health & Wellness	They valued parks for mental and physical reasons. Being able to connect with family and friends was very important.	*Specific areas for adults to play/exercise away from the kids (but with soft surfaces) - safety reasons*
	EDIB/Accessibility	Concerns centered around affordability of parks and any associated fees. As well as information in multiple languages. More accessibility around playground equipment.	*Activities for kids with disabilities & newcomers. Lack of knowledge on what's available. Townhalls geared to different ethnicities; Mobility challenges with the swings*
NW	Amenities & Infrastructure	Respondents were basically satisfied, commenting specifically on views and waterfront, but felt some amenities could be upgraded.	*Some playgrounds are older. Could perhaps add more splash pads? Multi-function fields?;*
	Recreational opportunities	Participants liked opportunities to play pickleball, and the ski/skate tracks. Some concern around damage to the environment from certain activities.	*Tree damage from disc golf*
	Human Impact	More concerns about dogs and social behaviours.	*Citizens not complying & city not enforcing dog-onleash signs :-(*

Quadrant	*Top Themes*	*Further explanation of why the theme was selected*	*Verbatim comments*
SE	Amenities & Infrastructure		*Rec parks, great to have paths, actvities and gazebos for community; Tables with shade so that parks can be enjoyed during any type of weather;* *Western Irrigation Canal. Hpw could City Parks gain recreation access for citizens. - skating, water use, like harvey passage, Senator Patrick Burns memorial rock gharden, great example of beautiful engaging spaces*
	Recreational (Play)	Wanted to see more activities / programming in parks.	*Events associated w/winter programming (sledding and skating events); Urban campgrounds pls & more BBQs; Went to a silen t chapel, while in Finland, Would love to see something simliar in one of our parks.*
	Safety & Security		*Drug use has gone up so making sure playgrounds are cleaned and maintained. Especially slides.*
SW	Amenities & Infrastructure		*Glenmore South - amazing especially spray park; Like accessible playgrounds; Portapotties on pathways; places for people to make food*
	Health & Wellness	This also includes Recreation/Play.	*Socialization - I live alone; Community feel. People are nicer*
	Accessibility & Connectivity	This includes connectivity between parks (e.g., bike paths), as well as considerations for seniors, mental and physical health.	*Fenced playgrounds for autism; keep accessible for seniors; Kids with ADHD - Glenmore is very good. The more things to do the better. Kids can spend two hours here.*
Downtown	Amenities & Infrastructures	Washrooms hours, locations, and maintenance were top of mind.	*Closing of washrooms when there are still many people on the park. Use changes with the season.*
	Safety & Security	Many folks are not visiting parks as they do not feel safe.	*I don't visit parks because I don't feel safe. I might step on something. Homeless people on drugs need rehab centres*

Quadrant	Top Themes	Further explanation of why the theme was selected	Verbatim comments
	Biodiversity	There were mentions of other locations in the city (e.g., North Glenmore Park) as well as access to wildlife (E.g., osprey sightings).	*Likes to go to Prince's Island after work to relax. Likes Reader Rock Garden because it's pretty and you can explore, Prairie Winds Park is closer to home but it is too busy .*

Table 4- Feedback about recreational parks from Connect Event Series

Table 5. Connecting you to Culture. Feedback from Connect Event Series (sorted by quadrant)

Quadrant	Top Themes	Further explanation of why the theme was selected	Verbatim comments
NE	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging	Respondents wanted respect for all cultures and to know more about their traditions. More Indigenous history and monuments.	*"I can respect cultures by knowing their traditions. We can add picnic areas to all the parks to make it easy for newcomers to enjoy their local community."*
	Public Art	It was important for artists to be local and that the artwork complements the environment.	*"[…] keep things natural."; "[…] hiring local is important"*
	Events (Live Music)	More live music on a smaller scale or community based was wanted.	
NW	Events	Events included live music, theatre arts, and tours.	*"The cemetery tours are fascinating & so well done"; "Ballet in the Park during covid could be permanent"*
	Education and Awareness	Participants liked the wayfinding in parks, as well as information provided at historic sites.	*"Right balance of wayfinding (e.g., Inglewood Wildlands or Nose Hill)"*
SE	Public Art	Respondents wanted to see more relevant, engaging and inclusive public art to activate spaces.	*"Appreciates how the art in the Journey to Freedom park preserves the history of the community."*
	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging	They want to use parks more often and in different ways to promote and encourage diversity and inclusion.	*"Being exposed to and learning about the different and vast amount of cultures of Calgarians, especially indigenous cultures of Calgary and surrounding areas (musical performances, lectures, interactive activities, and ways of learning). And more public art."*

Quadrant	*Top Themes*	*Further explanation of why the theme was selected*	*Verbatim comments*
	Events	More cultural events are wanted.	*"Spaces that invite the community to utilize host events."*
SW	Indigenous Relations	Respondents wanted to see more signage in Indigenous languages, as well as information on Indigenous culture and history.	*"signage in English, French and Indigenous languages"; "add signage on Indigenous culture & history"*

Table 5- Feedback about culture from Connect Event Series

EDIB Platforms (Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive and Belonging)

Advisory Committee Meetings

Accessibility, Social Wellbeing & Gender Committees

The team met with the following committees via ZOOM on Wednesday, April 17, 2023. This session was co-created with The City's Strategy Liaison of Accessibility, Social Wellbeing & Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Community Strategies. The preferred platform was ZOOM for accessibility. Due to engagement fatigue, it was recommended that we hold one session for all the committees instead of attending the specific committee's regular meeting.

Invitations were sent to the following committees:

- Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee
- Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Subcommittee
- Advisory Committee on Accessibility
- Access Design Subcommittee

We looked to gain input on the three areas of engagement: Environment, Wellness, and Culture. These are the notes from this meeting.

Environment

Benefits

People love natural parks, and they comprise many of their favourite experiences. Specific mentions included Weaselhead and Griffith Woods.

Concerns

One of the greatest concerns that participants shared was the need for greater information and signage in parks, especially regarding off-leash areas, amenities, entrances and accessibility. They also shared that this information needs to be easily accessible outside of parks by providing information online and in multiple languages. Participants thought that pathways need to be safer since parks can be very dense with many people on the pathways and conflict between users (E.g., cyclists, pedestrians, walkers, wheelchairs, strollers, etc.).

Ideas for Improvements

Participants shared several comments relating to increasing accessibility in and around parks through the use of signs in multiple languages, increasing seating, intergenerational activities, and pathways that are suitable for all users and can connect people to parks. Additionally, participants shared that every community should have an off-leash park that is close and accessible.

Wellness

Benefits

Participants shared the importance of large parks with various amenities and specifically mentioned Bowness, North Glenmore, Riley Park, and Edworthy Park. They thought the pandemic encouraged people to get outside more, especially in the winter, and parks can be a positive solution for social disorder.

Concerns

Participants shared a concern regarding overcrowding in parks and lack of amenities like Harvie Passage, as well as winter accessibility and communication regarding what is accessible. They also expressed the need for parks to consider changing climate and exposure to elements, especially the need for more shaded areas.

Ideas for Improvements

Committee wanted increased accessibility in parks for all ages, especially seniors and people living with disabilities. This can take many forms including clearing pathways, adding exercise equipment, increasing seating and by adding some accessible playground equipment to every park instead of having six fully accessible parks in Calgary. Participants also shared that The City should consider implementing cross-country skiing programs in golf courses during the winter and encourage developers to build parks that allow for ongoing programming and intergenerational activities.

Culture

Benefits

Participants believed that art in public spaces can help with social disorder. One participant attended an event in union cemetery and stated it was not very well advertised but well done with music and artists.

Concerns

Concerns ranged from limited parks with spaces that you can rent/book for larger family events, the need to be close to playgrounds for kids, washrooms, and limited parking and public transit.

Ideas for Improvements

The following improvements were shared by committee members: the need to better advertise events, using parks to celebrate our arts community, and land acknowledgement signs.

Older Adult Advisory Committee

April 18, 2023

General Discussion

Committee members shared that all parks should have features that broad demographics can enjoy since parks are people's getaway and they are free, the dry pond in Greyside was specifically mentioned. They would appreciate parks with accessible features that cater to the special needs of senior demographics, such as the dementia park. In order to improve accessibility, a rating system can be implemented like the one for provincial hiking trails and benches can be placed at the entrances of trails so everyone can enjoy the park. Regarding the

Parks website, they stated that it is not user friendly and it should provide better information about the type of park and what they offer and there should be an alert notification for parks of choice when events are happening. Additional ideas for improvement included mobile amenities, allowing people to 'buy' the name of a park or pay for maintenance, and increasing safety and security.

Environment
Participants felt that other vehicle types can go in once a year to provide access for people since maintenance vehicles go into parks. However, they expressed that budget will impact the implementation of ideas.

Wellness
Comments from committee members ranged from allowing sponsorship of park to the thought that there should be a schedule of activities per park per year and the City could encourage communities to promote activities in parks. Accessibility was mentioned as there was a need expressed for curbs at the borders and within parks, utilizing transit to travel to parks as well as intergenerational play equipment. Security was mentioned as an issue that needed to be address with an understanding that events with larger crowds allow for safety and security.

Culture
Participants shared several sentiments regarding culture and wanted to ensure that the Indigenous community was included in the plan and shared concerns regarding the protection and preservation of parks and green spaces from development. Additionally, committee members liked the use of signs, such as the coyote signs around the city, and websites that allow for information sharing and meet ups.

Calgary Local Immigration Partnership
The team met with the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP) on Monday, April 17th. CLIP works across sectors, organizations, and service systems to improve local capacity to welcome and support newcomers. This session was co-created with The City's Issue Strategist and Calgary Local Immigration Partnership Coordinator. This session took place over lunch and resulted in a more dynamic, unstructured conversation between participants.

Benefits of Parks
Newcomers shared that they enjoy parks because they are free, accessible, and an outlet for a break from the stress of being a newcomer. The city's accessible playgrounds are amazing, drawing in multigeneration for enjoyment, creating a holistic experience for everyone. Parks that provide spaces to connect and celebrate with each other was more important than just open spaces. Parks with multiple amenities close together create usable gathering spaces. Amenities for cooking and sharing food are important as well as parking accommodations.

Ideas for Improvements
Newcomers felt that there was a need for more education and outreach surrounding parks and open spaces, especially best practices, accessibility and amenities. This group also shared that there needs to be better connectivity (E.g., transit, pathways, etc.), spaces that are a mix of natural spaces and amenities, and more incorporation of universal designs as accessibility is going to be increasingly more important with multigenerational gatherings and aging populations. Finally, they shared a need for more flexible ways to secure park spaces and education on how to book these spaces, as well as more opportunities for spontaneous use of parks versus needing to book in advance.

Alpha House - Feedback from Unhoused Calgarians

Regardless of housing circumstances, feedback from unhoused mirrors feedback received on the portal by other Calgarians for the most part. They share the same benefits from parks as others and expect similar level of services.

However, a notable difference is the common theme of washrooms, water fountains, and to some degree access to power supply. For the unhoused, this is a response to filling basic needs, as opposed to other Calgarians who feel these reduce inconveniences.

Question 1: What is your favourite park, and why?

Respondents shared the benefits and what they love about their favourite parks. The main themes from their responses mirror the feedback received on the portal page. Notable parks that respondents mentioned included Elliston Park, Olympic Plaza, Prince's Island Park and Central Memorial Park. However, they also mentioned Bowness, Sandy Beach, Riley Park, Shouldice Park, Stanley Park, Montgomery Park, and Confederation Park. Respondents indicated that they enjoy their favourite parks for the following reasons: There are events and activities available that they enjoy; There is a river or other water features; It is quiet and peaceful; It is beautiful and scenic; They feel safe and there is a welcoming atmosphere; It is connected to wildlife and nature; and it is clean and well-maintained.

Question 2: What is the worst park in your opinion, and why?

Again, main themes from unhoused respondents mirror the feedback received on the portal page. Respondents mentioned Olympic Plaza, Stanley Park, East Village Park, Lion's Park, Ogden Boat Launch Park, Rotary Park, Edworthy Park, as well as general comments about parks in Forest lawn. The reasoning provided ranged from safety concerns and drug use, bad reputation, lack of enjoyable activities, and parks being too crowded.

Question 3: What IMPROVEMENTS would you like to see in Calgary's parks, now and in the future?

Feedback from unhoused respondents focused mainly on improving infrastructure in City parks. More washrooms and greater access to drinking water were mentioned more significantly than any other theme. However, respondents also mentioned several other potential improvements. In order of prevalence these include improving cleanliness of City parks, increased access to electricity and amenities, increasing safety and security, as well as improving the treatment of the city's unhoused population.

Portal Page: Kid's Zone

https://engage.calgary.ca/parksplan/connect-calgary-parks-plan-kids-zone

A series of activities were designed to engage youth of all ages. This page and engagement activities were communicated through the City Hall School teacher network, as well as distributed to the Scouts and Girl guide Calgary chapter leaders. We received no engagement from youth through this channel.

The Mayor's Expo

Tuesday, June 6 – Wednesday, June 7, 2023.

The definition of 'children's participation' is not rigid. Around the world, children are increasingly taking part in public decisions. They are speaking out at local, national and international forums, and working for common causes within different cultural traditions and political systems.[9] Children's participation makes sense, not only because it is their right, but also because it is both useful, and educational.

The Mayor's Environment Expo had more than 169 classes with 3,400 attendees at City Hall. We received over 400 wishes on the Wishing Tree and close to 100 on the Pledge Scroll where participants pledged to make parks a better place for everyone.

Wishes and pledges were divided into the following high-level themes:

The Environment
- Cleanliness – less litter
- Biodiversiy - more trees, flowers and animals

Infrastructure
- Playground equipment – zip lines and water parks

Happiness
- Spending time with family and friends



[9] Children's participation in decision-making: Why do it, When to do it, How to do it. | Save the Children's Resource Centre

Next steps

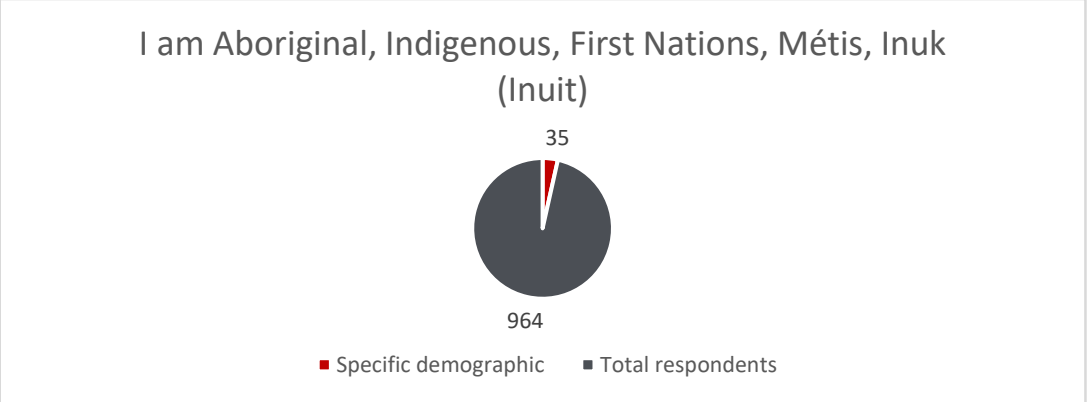
Phase 2 engagement will run from October – November 2023. The decision informed by Phase 2 engagement is as follows.

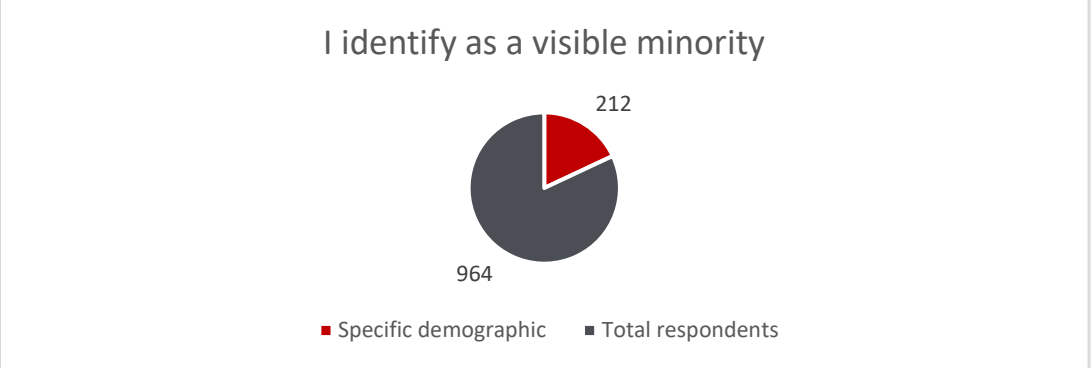
Which suite of policies will be included in the final Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan, that will achieve the guiding principles reflecting Calgarian's vision of future parks and the policy direction informed by phase 1 engagement?

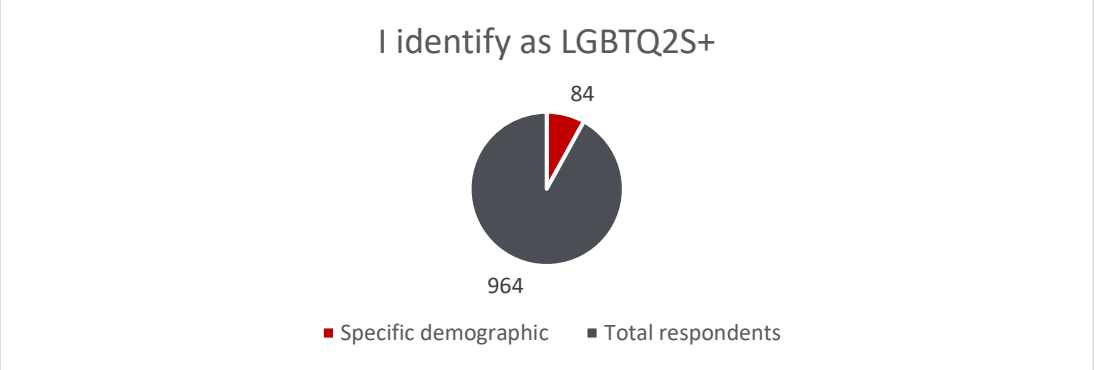
- Consult with internal Business Units for Capital, Planning and Operations approval.
- Inform Calgarians about how the guiding principles were modified based on their feedback by drawing a clear line of sight between 'What We Heard' and 'What We Did'.
- Understand if the modified Guiding Principles accurately reflect Calgarian values.
- Present the policy direction (key themes) and draw a clear line of sight between how they were informed by What We Heard in phase 1 engagement and other inputs (e.g., regulations etc.).
- Increase awareness and understanding of all the inputs that informed the policies being presented for feedback.
- Understand if the policy options presented for each direction are acceptable for Calgarians.
- Calgarians understand what policy options will mean for them and for The City in practice (tradeoffs, knock on effects, impacts, this is what it looks like in reality).

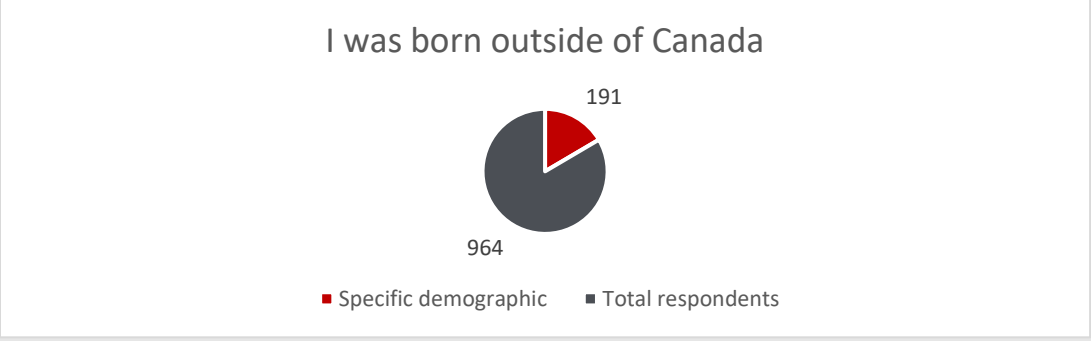
APPENDICES

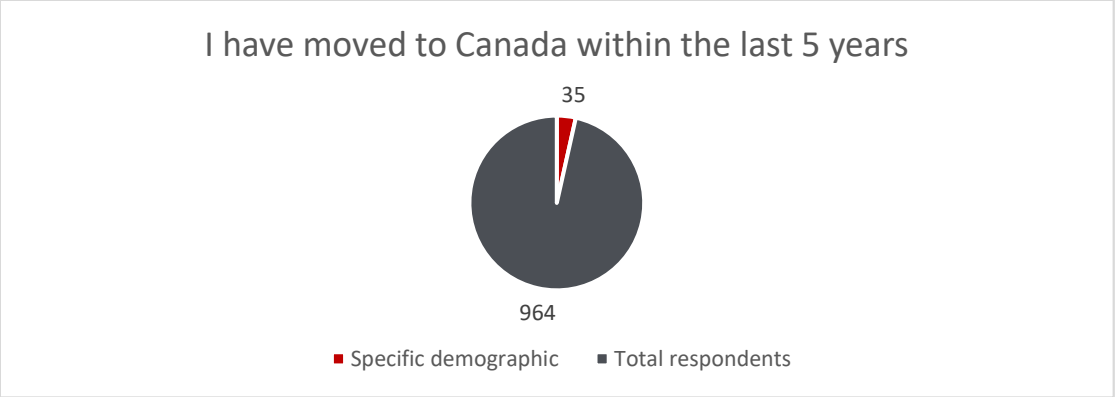
Appendix A: Demographics

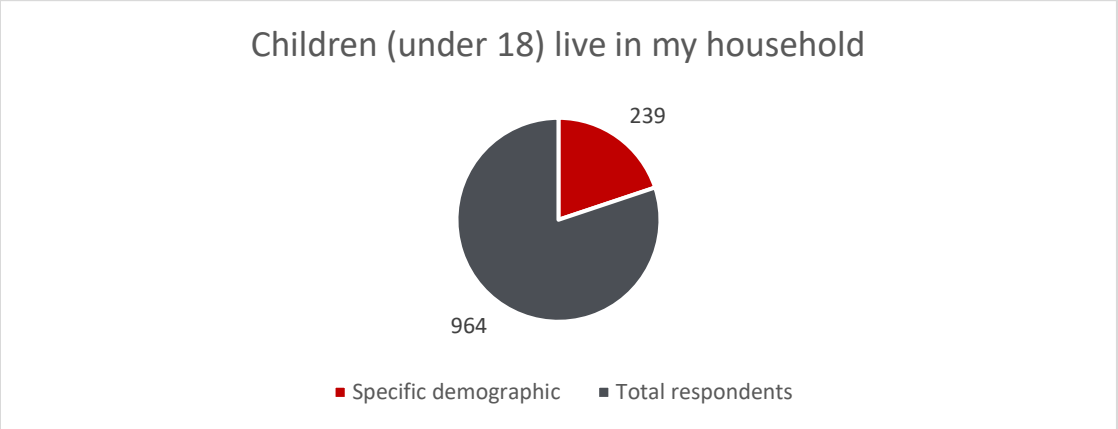


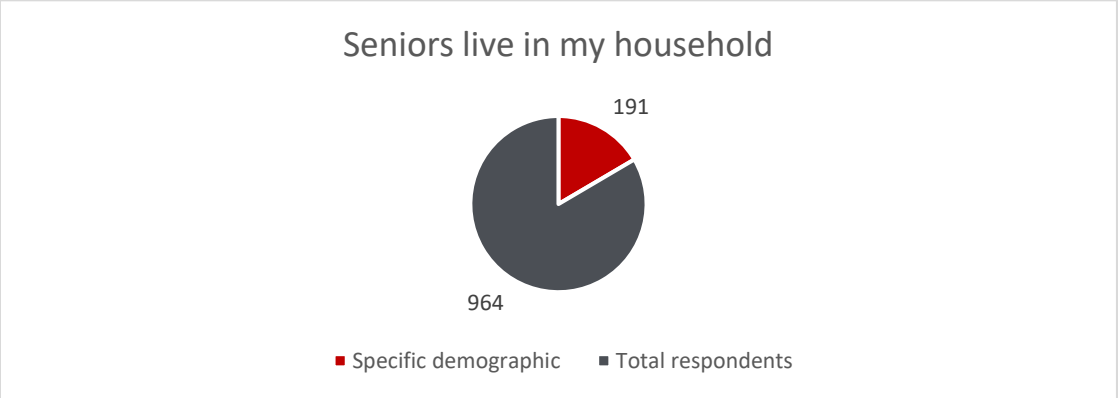


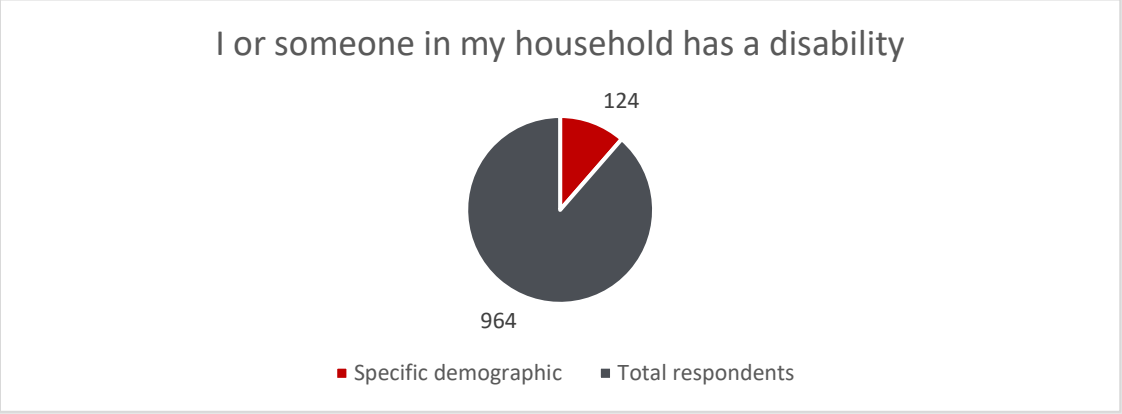


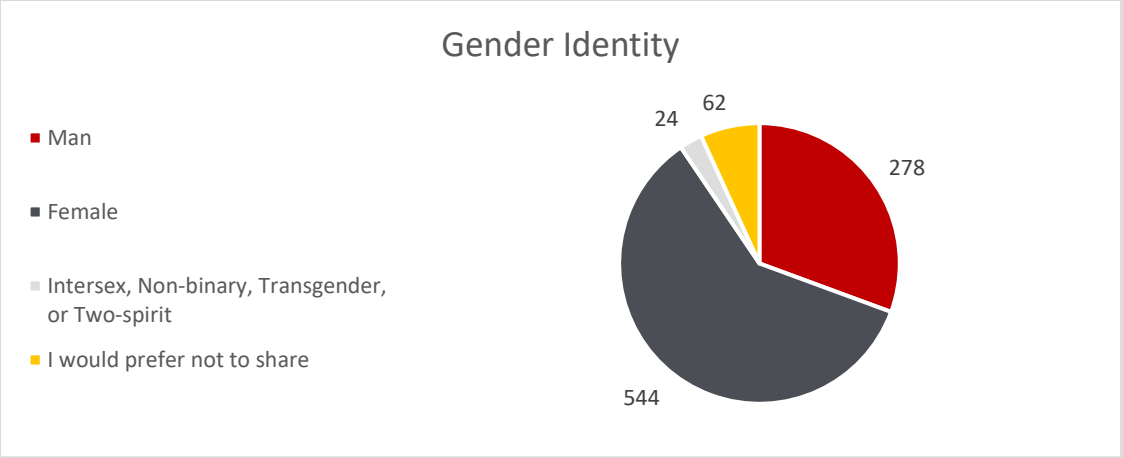


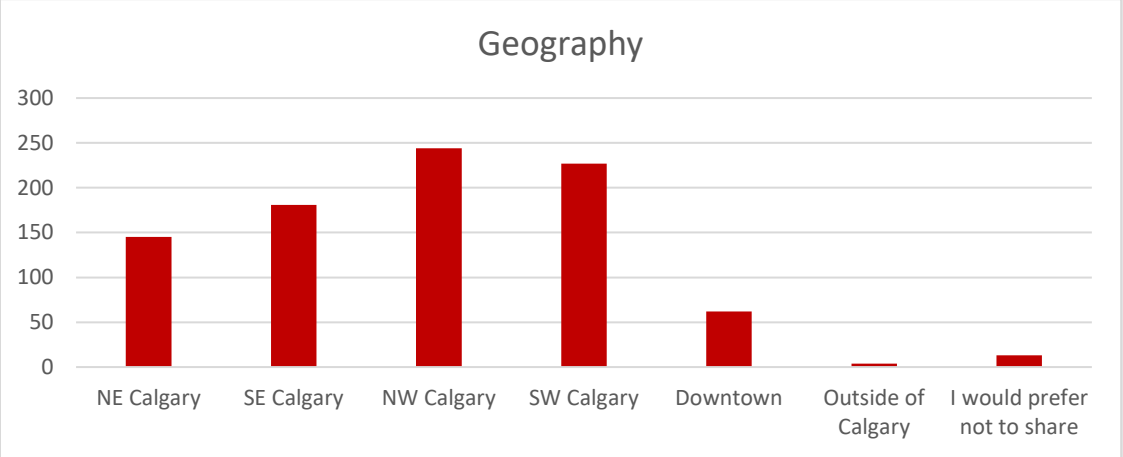

I have moved to Canada within the last 5 years
35
964
Specific demographic
Total respondents

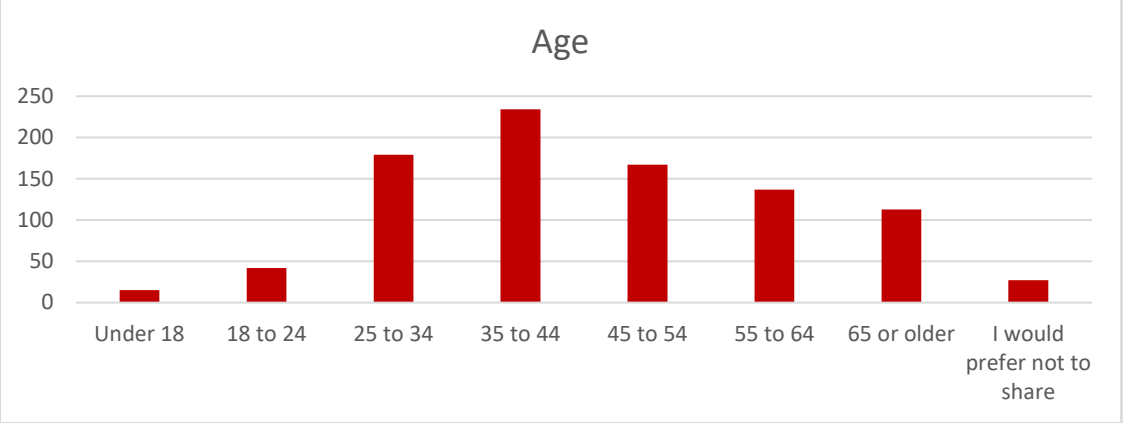

Children (under 18) live in my household
239
964
Specific demographic
Total respondents

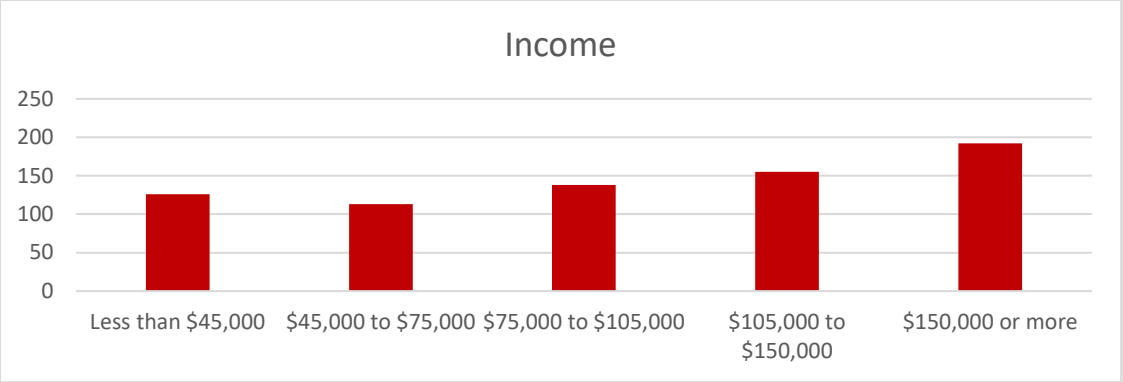

Seniors live in my household
191
964
Specific demographic
Total respondents


I or someone in my household has a disability
124
964
Specific demographic
Total respondents


Gender Identity
Man
Female
Intersex, Non-binary, Transgender, or Two-spirit
I would prefer not to share
62
24
278
544


Geography
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
NE Calgary
SE Calgary
NW Calgary
SW Calgary
Downtown
Outside of Calgary
I would prefer not to share


Age
250
200
150
100
50
0
Under 18
18 to 24
25 to 34
35 to 44
45 to 54
55 to 64
65 or older
I would prefer not to share


Income
250
200
150
100
50
0
Less than $45,000
$45,000 to $75,000
$75,000 to $105,000
$105,000 to $150,000
$150,000 or more

Appendix B: EXPLANATION - Verbatim comments and quotes.

Verbatim comments and quotes presented in this report include all feedback, suggestions, comments and messages that were collected online and in-person through the engagement described in this report. All input has been reviewed and provided to Project Teams to be considered in decision making for the project.

Any personal identifying information has been removed from the verbatim comments presented here. Comments or portions of comments that contain profanity, or that are not in compliance with the City's Respectful Workplace Policy or Online Tool Moderation Practice, have also been removed from participant submissions.

Wherever possible the remainder of the submissions remains. No other edits to the feedback have been made, and the verbatim comments are as received. As a result, some of the content in this verbatim record may still be considered offensive or distasteful to some readers.

Appendix C: EXPLANATION – Engagement at The City

"Engagement" at The City of Calgary is defined as: *Purposeful dialogue between The City and citizens and interest-holders to gather information to influence decision making.*

Engagement is:

- **Citizen-centric** - focusing on hearing the needs and voices of both directly impacted and indirectly impacted Calgarians.
- **Accountable -** upholding the commitments that The City makes to Calgarians and other interested and impacted parties by demonstrating that the results and outcomes of the engagement processes are consistent with the approved plans for engagement.
- **Inclusive -** making best efforts to reach, involve and hear from those who are impacted directly or indirectly.
- **Committed -** allocating sufficient time and resources for effective engagement of citizens and interest-holders.
- **Responsive -** acknowledging Calgarian's and other interested and impacted parties' concerns; and
- **Transparent -** providing clear and complete information around decision processes, procedures, and constraints.

The City's commitment to transparent and inclusive engagement processes is outlined in the Engage Policy (CS009).

Appendix D: EXPLANATION – Research versus Engagement

Engagement is a professional discipline that incorporates a variety of methodologies to gather people's opinions and views on specific issues or topics, to provide information for decision making. Engagement often involves two-way dialogues or conversations with the objective of gaining a deeper understanding of the issues.

Unlike Research, Engagement opportunities are inclusive and usually open to all interested parties who would like to have a say about the issue or topic at hand. The outputs of Engagement activities are descriptive and provide a deeper understanding of the views and sentiments of the participants. The nature of these inclusive techniques mean that information collected is directional and, as with qualitative research, cannot be generalized to the larger population.

Engagement at The City of Calgary is defined as purposeful dialogue between The City and interest-holders to gather information to influence decision making. More specifically, the Engage Resource Unit works with project teams at The City to meet project needs and ensure citizens have their say about those projects.

The City has a six-step process for engagement with citizens:

1. Assess the need for engagement.
2. Develop a plan – determine engagement roadmap and budget.
3. Tell the story – create content to inform and educate interest-holders.
4. Raise awareness – promote opportunities for interest-holders to participate.
5. Connect – open opportunities for interest-holders to provide input.
6. Report back and evaluate – loop back to share what was heard and what was done with stakeholder input.

- Unlike Research, Engagement opportunities are inclusive and usually open to all interested parties who would like to have a say about the issue or topic at hand. The outputs of Engagement activities are descriptive and provide a deeper understanding of the views and sentiments of the participants. The nature of these inclusive techniques mean that information collected is directional and, as with qualitative research, cannot be generalized to the larger population.
- Engagement is not meant to be a representative sample of interest-holders while quantitative Research methodologies are designed so that the data collected from a randomly selected sample of individuals is considered to be statistically representative of the larger population.
- Research seeks answers to questions that are important to The City and looks to represent the views of Calgary's population using analytical and statistical methods. Engagement seeks feedback on issues that are important to citizen groups and looks to reflect perspectives of those citizens that are most interested or impacted by City activities.