

What We Heard Report

Keswick East and Keswick West Park Development

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edmonton.ca/projects_plans/parks_recreation/keswick-east-and-west-park.aspx

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A. Project Overview

There are two sites in this one project - Keswick east park site and Keswick west park site.

This project includes planning, design and construction of base-level development for School and Community (Neighbourhood) Park sites. It bundles two independent standalone project sites in the Keswick Area:

Keswick East (1140/1110 Keswick Drive SW)

- Site to accommodate an Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD) Elementary/Junior High School
- Approximately 6.0 ha in size
- Located on the eastern boundary of the neighbourhood

Keswick West (1905/1707 182 Street SW)

- Site to accommodate an Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) Elementary/Junior High School
- Approximately 8.0 ha in size
- Located in the central portion of the neighbourhood

Both park sites are to be designed to reflect alignment with City strategies and policy, including Breathe and the Urban Park Management Plan (UPMP), and should include public and stakeholder input in alignment with the Public Engagement Policy C593.

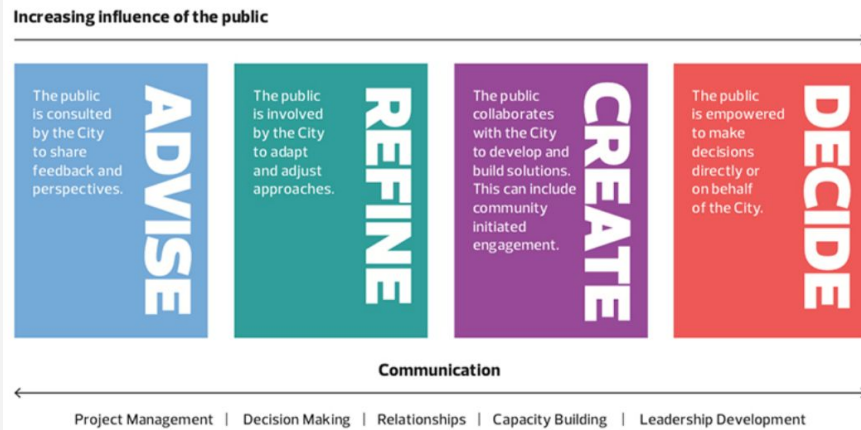
B. Public Engagement

Public and stakeholder engagement was guided by a Decision Map and a Public Engagement Plan was prepared with input from internal City stakeholders.

Following the City of Edmonton's Public Engagement process, we completed a Decision Map to determine if public engagement was required by outlining the project phases, decision makers, role of the public and if public and stakeholder input is required. The decision map concluded that public input was required but would be limited to the Advise level on the City of Edmonton's Public Engagement

Spectrum, where the public is consulted by the City to share feedback and perspectives that are considered for projects, see below. The Advise level was selected for public engagement due to the scope of the project, to provide only base-level park development to support the two schools under construction on the park sites.

The City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Spectrum.



The public's role in the public engagement is to ADVISE

The base-level development project scope is required to provide all amenities prescribed in the Urban Park Management Plan (UPMP) and required by the school boards. As such, there were little opportunities for the public to influence the decisions made for these basic amenities. Public feedback would inform the location of a future community league area and preferences for future enhanced-amenities such as a hockey rink or tennis courts.

While in-person public events are paused and physical distancing is a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain committed to delivering project information and meaningful public engagement opportunities efficiently and safely.

C. How We Engaged

In the fall of 2020, we shared the proposed concept plan for both the Keswick East and Keswick West Park Development projects and asked for the public's input on them.

We gathered feedback through virtual meetings with stakeholders. We invited the public to share their input on concept designs in November 2020 via an online survey on the Engaged Edmonton platform and collected their feedback.

D. Who Was Engaged

Internal and External Stakeholders

Key stakeholder involvement for Phase 1 – Concept Design included:

- External stakeholders: Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) and Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD)
- Internal stakeholders: City of Edmonton departments of Parks and Roads Services, Neighbourhood Services and Community and Recreation Facilities

Discussions were held with internal and external stakeholders in a total of four virtual meetings to obtain input on the site analysis, design program and draft site planning alternatives. These discussions took place in October and November 2020 with the EPSB, ECSD and City of Edmonton internal departments (Parks and Roads Services, Neighbourhood Services, and Community and Recreation Facilities). Alberta Infrastructure, who are managing the construction of the two schools, reviewed the draft concept plans and provided their feedback. The adjacent developers, Rohit Group, MLC and Cantiro Communities were invited to participate in the public engagement events.

Public Engagement

Due to COVID-19, the Decision Map and PEP focused on online engagement. An online survey was embedded in the Engaged Edmonton platform to gather feedback as part of Phase 1 – Concept Design. For the first public engagement event, the page was live from November 16 to November 30, 2020. Postcards with the webpage link were circulated to neighbouring communities and Keswick residents. The Greater Windermere Community League, that is the community league for Keswick, was also included in the public engagement notification.

E. What We Asked

The online survey asked the following questions:

- Choose three preferred amenities within the both park sites
- The location of a baseball diamond in both park sites
- What extent do the public support or oppose the concept plan for both park sites
- On which park site to locate the future community league building and the reasons why the West Park Site was preferred by the project team.
- Choose three enhanced amenities as part of the future community league.

Overall, to what extent do you support or oppose the concept plans for the East and West Park Sites?

F. What We Heard

Stakeholder Feedback

The first stakeholder meeting was with the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) where the school is scheduled to open in September 2022 on the west park site. The school board identified a placeholder for future modular classrooms on the south side of the school site and

confirmed that an outdoor classroom is likely not required. They would prefer separate vehicle access to the community league area. They were happy with the soccer field allocation and orientation; and that they may not need a ball diamond, but the public might.

The second stakeholder meeting was with Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD), who are building a K-9 school on the East Park Site. Their feedback included:

- The playground space north of the school site was identified as problematic because of poor pedestrian access for the public. The playground is within the school zone and thus exempt of City funding.
- The soccer fields are important and were deemed adequate as shown on the draft concept plan.
- The ECSD confirmed they do not require a ball diamond, but the public might.
- They welcome the addition of a skating rink as part of the future community league area but do not require one, nor contribute funding for it.

The City of Edmonton internal stakeholder meeting gathered the following feedback:

- Baseball diamonds in each park site are required to respond to the demand for baseball diamonds in the SW inventory.
- A 6-piece backstop would reduce likelihood of foul balls going into adjoining backyards. Also locate diamond an adequate distance away from backyards if possible.
- Soccer fields are in high demand in this part of the City. District Parks will continue to be the preferred location for adult/full-sized soccer fields.
- The community league (CL) area could be used for a lot of activities/events before a building is provided.
- The west site might be preferred for the CL area because it is more central in the Keswick Area.
- Locations for playgrounds will need to be identified – one for each site.

- Seating nodes should be added along Shared Use Paths (SUPs).
- Incorporation of areas of naturalized landscape is supported.
- Do not include ornamental shrub beds.
- Spray decks should only be considered in conjunction with the CL Licensed Area.
- Locate the community garden closer to the street on the west site.

Finally, a meeting was held with Alberta Infrastructure (AI) who are leading the construction of both schools. They did not have any comments on the West Park Site but expressed concerns with elements of the concept proposed for the East Park Site. AI noted the location of the playground north of their planned parking lot was not preferred, due to operational considerations. The City suggested AI consider reconfiguring the north parking lot per schematic plan provided by IBI Group. Discussions on alternatives will continue as the preferred concepts are reviewed.

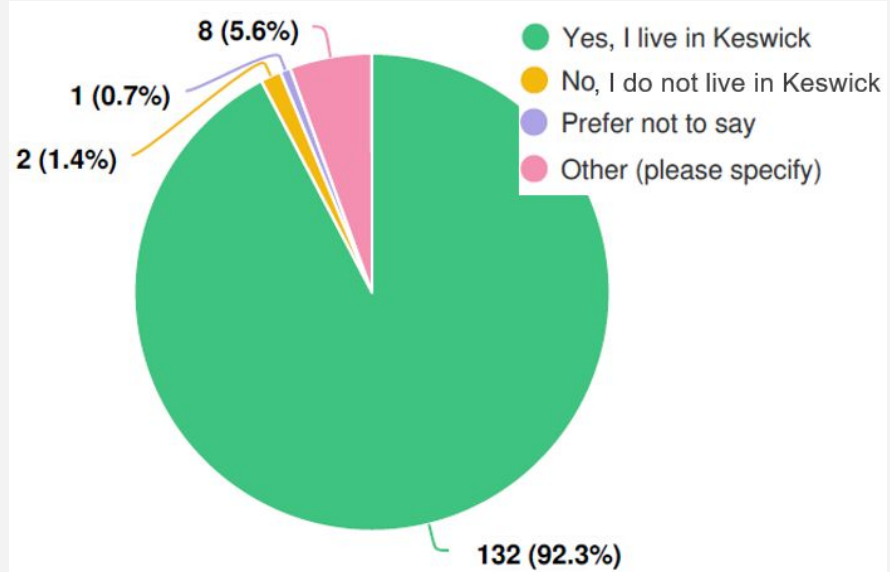
Communication with adjoining neighbourhood developers has been limited other than informing them of the projects and the first engagement events. There has been some communication with the developer for the west site related to the shared-use path to be built by the developer.

Public Feedback

There were 478 visitors to the project page on Engaged Edmonton, which included concept plans and related information for both park sites with 143 respondents completing the survey. This is what we heard:

- 92% respondents were residents of the Keswick community.

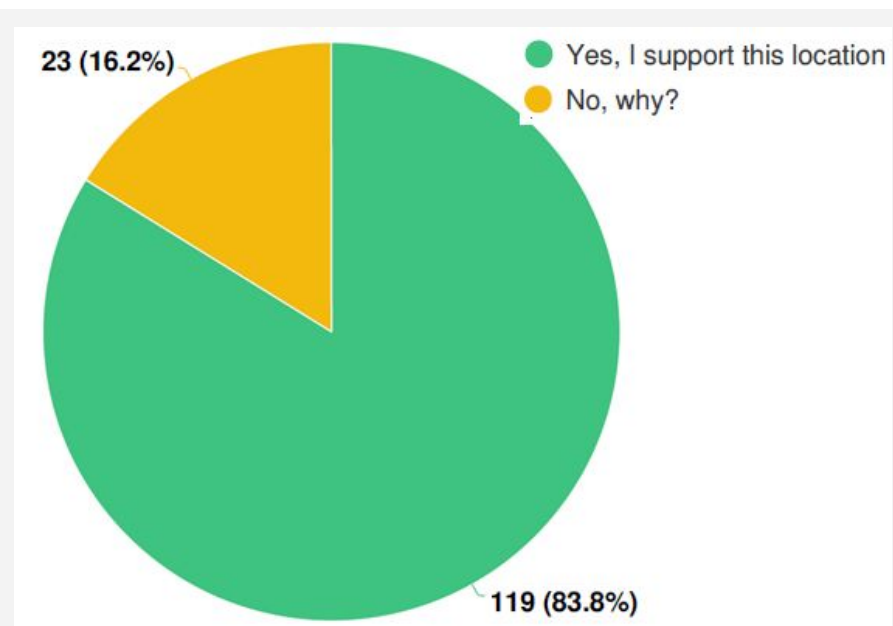
Soccer fields and baseball diamonds are in high demand in this area of the City.



- Adults (aged 19-65 years), young children (aged 2-5 years), infants/toddlers (aged under 2 years), and students (aged 6-12 years) were the most likely to use the park from the respondent's household.
- The majority of respondents were aged 26-35 years, closely followed by 36-45 years, forming a combined 81% of respondents, illustrating that this is a young community with young families

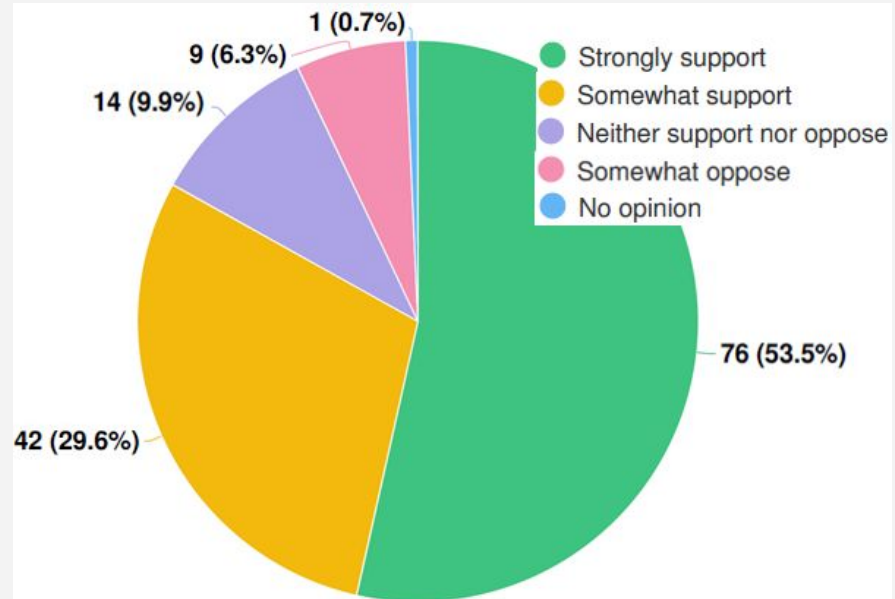
Comments Specifically Related to the East Park Site

- The top four preferred future amenities were: playground, free skate and walkways (with social gathering spaces coming in a close 4th place).
- 84% of respondents supported the location of the proposed baseball diamond located in the north portion of the site.



- Of the 16% opposed to the location of the baseball diamond, the three most common reasons were:
 - There are two baseball diamonds – one in each park site is too many.
 - Baseball is not popular, or the season is short, the space could be better used for other amenities.
 - Concern of fly-balls hitting the houses and backyards of the houses backing onto the park.
- 83% of respondents supported the concept plan (this includes the 53.5% who strongly support it and 29.6% who somewhat support it).

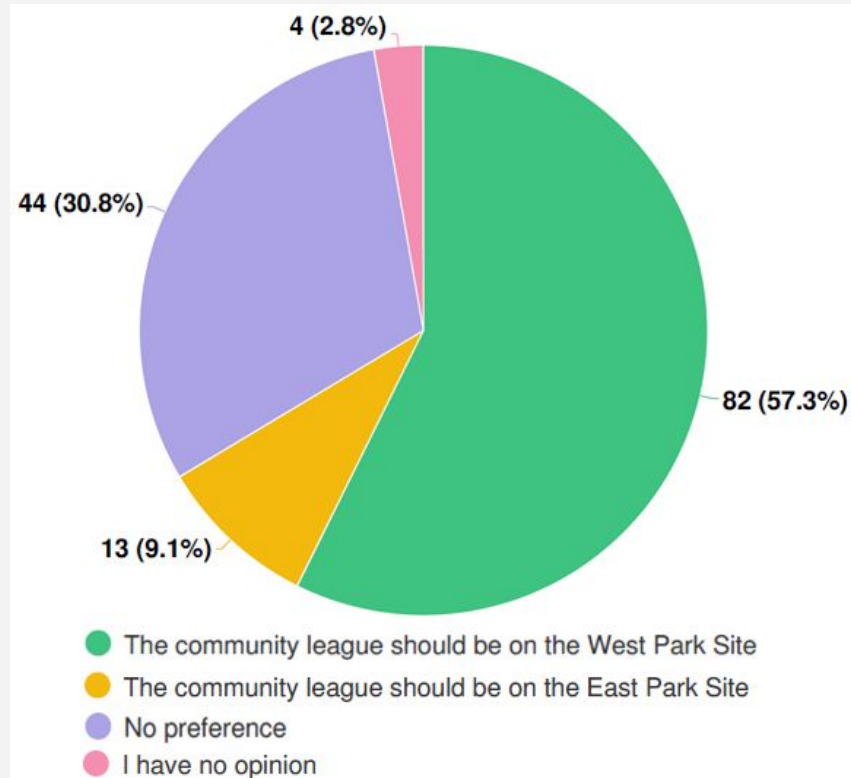
A significant number of respondents supported the concept plan for the East Park site.



- The majority of written comments came from those who supported the plan (70 out of 84 comments) with comments such as:
 - Keswick is a growing community of young families, therefore having an assortment of amenities available will be greatly beneficial for existing and future residents.
 - Great ideas for all ages and nice to see community spaces being considered. Great design.
 - Much needed.
 - Excellent for Health and wellness, gets everyone to go outside more, especially during winter. West Park Site.

Comments Specifically Related to the West Park Site

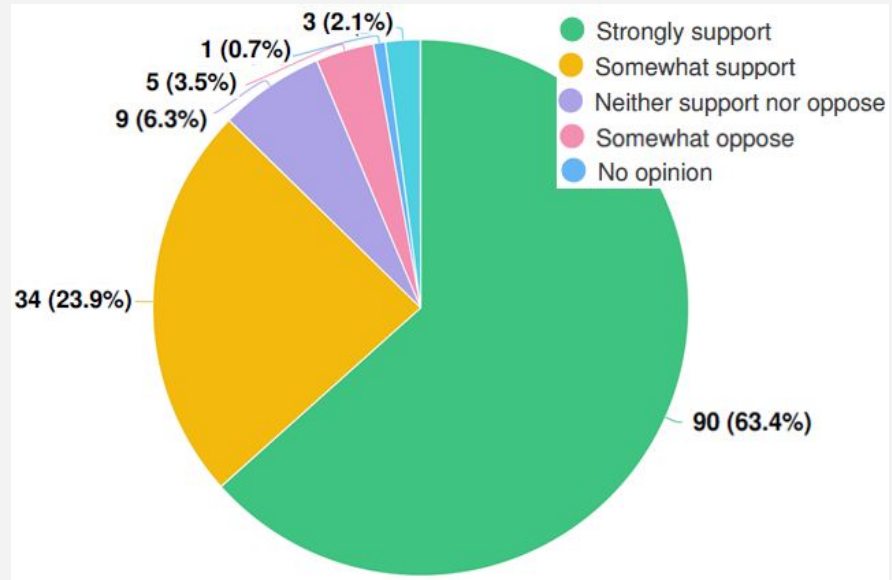
- The top four preferred future amenities were: splash deck, playground and free skate (with sand volleyball courts coming in close fourth.)
- 57% agreed the community league should be located on the west site, with 9% preferring the east site and 31% having no preference.



- The top four preferred enhanced-level development as part of the community league area included: outdoor skating rink with boards and lighting, free skate, space for covered picnic area and events and community hall (with parking). Followed closely with the community garden, as the fifth choice. The batting cages were the least popular amenity.
- 91% of respondents supported the location of the baseball diamond in the northeast corner of the site.

- Of the 13% opposed to the location of the baseball diamond, the two most common reasons were:
 - There is already a baseball diamond on the east location. This space can be better used for other purposes.
 - I don't think anyone wants to see a ball diamond behind their place. Also, there is risk of balls hitting homes.
- 87% of respondents supported the concept plan. With 63% offering strong support, and 24% only somewhat supporting.

87% support the concept plan for the West Park site.



- The majority of written comments came from those who supported the plan (59 out of 64 comments) with comment such as:
 - Love the space reserved for community league and splash pad.
 - Good design. Nice community spaces.
 - Much needed in this area of Edmonton.

Emailed Public Feedback

In addition to the feedback gathered through the Engaged Edmonton webpage, there were seven comments emailed directly to the project manager for the City. The inquiries directly related to the public engagement included:

- General questions about labels on the concept plan; and
- A concern about baseballs hitting homes of the houses backing onto the baseball diamond in the East Park Site.

Other inquiries were not related to the public engagement topic:

- The process of forming a community league;
- The status of Ellerslie Road from 170 Street to 182 Street and the opening of an east entry to Hiller Road in Keswick; and
- Request for a dog park to be included in the park concepts.

G. What Happens Next?

What We Did

Although 84% of respondents supported the location of the baseball diamond on the east park site, a concern of some respondents was how close the baseball diamond was to single family residences north and west of the baseball diamond. As a result, the baseball diamond was shifted south and east, away from the single-family residences, expanding the buffer area between the residences and baseball diamond.

Other changes to the concept plans include:

- The future amenity placeholders were revisited to align with the top four preferred amenities as identified by the survey respondents.
- On the east site the playground and free skate amenities remained, as they were the top two preferences.
- The community orchard/berry garden was replaced with an open space community gathering area that could include picnic tables, benches, and gaming tables.
- On the west site: the preferred amenities did not change, as the same amenities proposed on the concept plan were preferred by the survey respondents: snow bank rink, playground and splash pad.

Next Steps

The project team will create a preferred concept plan for each site as described above, based on the feedback gathered from the public and stakeholder engagement, and other technical and financial considerations. The EPSB, ECSD and AI will be consulted again to refine the preferred concept plan in January 2021. A second public engagement event will be held through Engaged Edmonton from January 18-29, 2021 to provide an opportunity for feedback on the refined concept plans. The feedback from all public and stakeholder

engagement events/opportunities will be captured in a second What We Heard report.