

GALLAGHER PARK CONCEPT PLAN WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

PHASE 2: CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

MARCH 2020

Photo Credit: Mack Male, mastermaq.ca

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Edmonton



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Project Overview and Purpose

Gallagher Park has always been a cherished and well-used river valley park in Edmonton. This location has been traditionally used as a gathering spot and place of commerce by indigenous people and new settlers.



It now provides walking, cycling, and commuter access to river valley trails, the downtown core, and the adjacent neighbourhoods both in the river valley and the remainder of the city. As a River Valley Park, its environmental assets are protected and, with careful planning, enhanced for the enjoyment of both Edmontonians and visitors. Spectacular views from the park are some of the best the city has to offer.



The purpose of this project is to ensure a long-term strategic approach for the development and use of Gallagher Park and all its site partners' attractions and programming through the development of a 20-year plan. We want to improve the experience for those who visit and enjoy the park. As we build the 20-year concept plan, we will take into consideration existing plans and policies, opportunities and constraints, and the preferences of Edmontonians to meet a full range of needs.

Site History

Gallagher Park is at the centre of Edmonton's history.

- Indigenous settlements were common along the North Saskatchewan River.
- The Cloverdale Community League was established in 1920.
- The park has been home to the Edmonton Ski Club since 1922.
- The Muttart conservatory opened in Gallagher Park in 1976.
- The international renowned Edmonton Folk Music Festival has entertained crowds in Gallagher Park since 1981.

Edmonton's first LRT station in the river valley will open in 2020, providing access to the river valley park system for all Edmontonians.



Project Engagement Plan

Preparation of the Concept Plan is composed of three phases of investigation and public engagement.

The role of the public in the first two phases of the engagement has been to work with the city to **Refine** ideas and concepts by providing suggestions for adjustments as the planning evolves.

PHASE 1

Vision and Guiding Principles.

OBJECTIVES To gather ideas on the breadth of public uses, stakeholder objectives, site opportunities and constraints, and response to a proposed vision and guiding principles for development of the Concept Plan.

PHASE 2

Concept Plan Development.

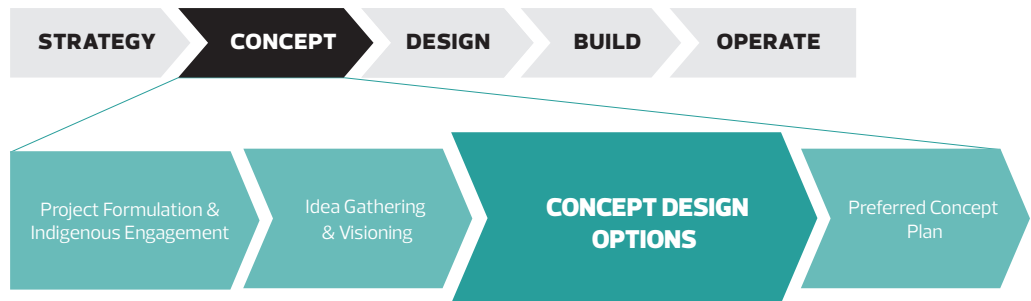
OBJECTIVES To develop concept plan options for consideration, including summer and winter overlays, and recommendations for all-season programming and site improvement.

PHASE 3

Draft Preferred Concept Plan.

OBJECTIVES To present a draft concept plan for public review.

The image below identifies the phase of this project that this report addresses.



Phase 1 – What We Heard and Observed

Phase 1 Engagement: Gathering Ideas and Development of a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

In support of citizen engagement in the first phase of development of this concept plan, the City of Edmonton hosted an engagement event on March 6, 2019 at the Cloverdale Community Hall.

The focus of this event was to secure input from the public on the proposed draft vision and guiding principles for the project and to gather additional ideas that would assist in the development of draft concept plan alternatives.

Input was obtained from site partners including Cloverdale Community League, Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Edmonton Ski Club, Muttart Conservatory, other external stakeholders such as the Bennett Centre, and from the public and stakeholders as summarized in the What We Heard report from Phase 1 of the project.

Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

OUR VISION

Gallagher Park, the only river valley park that will be accessible by LRT is a hub for distinctive year round recreational experiences that is integrated into the thriving city core and river valley system.

The **Guiding Principles** are:

- Facilitate enhanced access to both active and passive recreational activities
- Enhance the ecological values of the park
- Provide facilities and infrastructure that support and enhance existing recreation and complimentary uses
- Encourage LRT and active transportation access to the Park and its activities

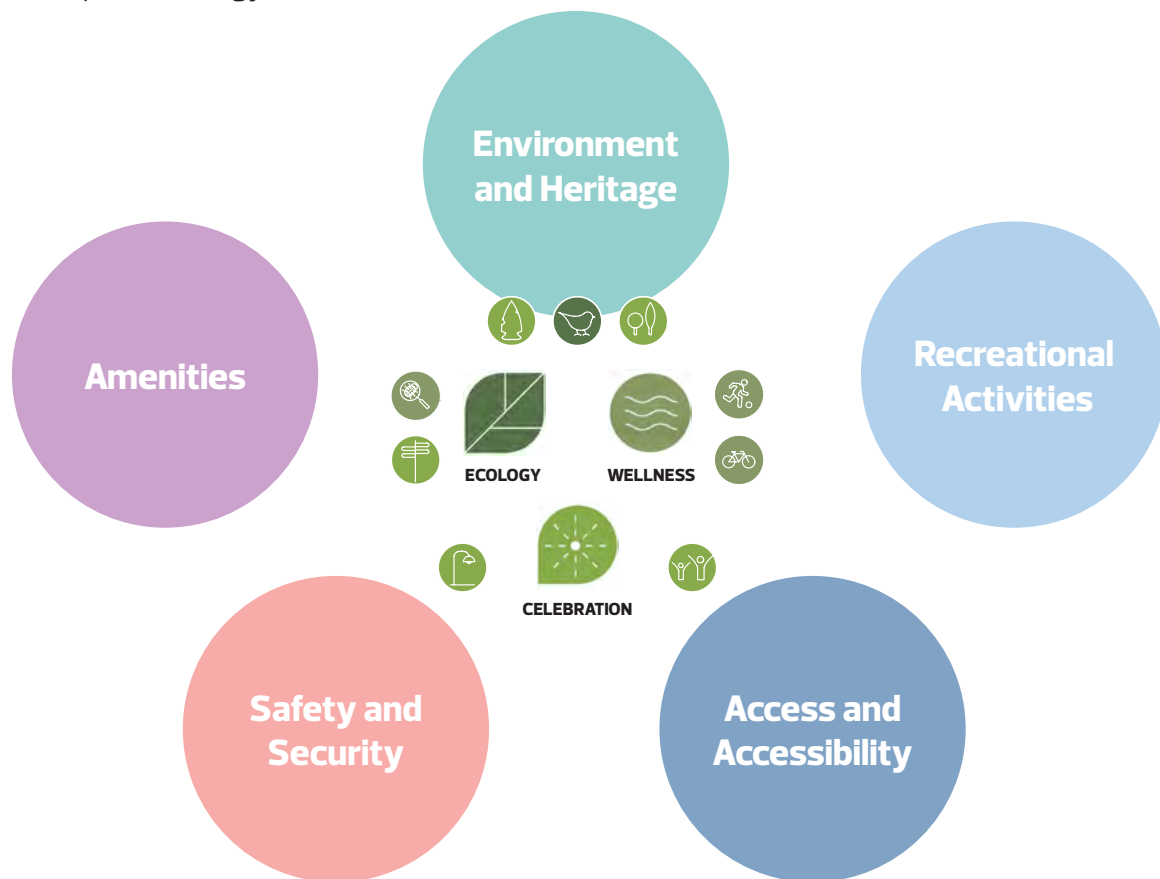
Participants and respondents in the Phase 1 Engagement were very supportive of the proposed vision and guiding principles, and in agreement with the various components. There was strong support for access by LRT, encouraging active transportation modes, access for persons with disabilities, and support for enhancing the ecological values of the park.

Major Themes from Phase 1

In addition to support for the proposed guiding principles, participants in Phase 1 engagement also identified the following as important considerations in the development of the concept plan alternatives for Gallagher Park.

- Amenities (e.g. washrooms, seating)
- Safety and security (e.g. park lighting, control of vehicle access)
- Access and accessibility (e.g. pathways, enhanced pedestrian entrances)
- Recreational activities (e.g. walkway, picnicking)
- Environment and heritage (e.g. planting, etc.)

The image below shows how these five major themes related to the three categories of Ecology, Wellness and Celebration as outlined in the City's open space strategy – Breathe.



Phase 2 Engagement: Concept Plan Development

The goal for this phase of the project was to develop concept plan options for consideration, including summer and winter overlays and recommendations for all-season programming and site improvements.

What We Did

In support of citizen engagement in the second phase of development of this concept plan, the City of Edmonton hosted an engagement event on September 18, 2019 at the Cloverdale Community Hall from 4:30–7:30 PM.

The focus of this event was to secure input from the public on a series of proposed enhancements to the park addressing access, amenities, safety, activities, environment and partner opportunities, and some optional enhancements in relation to landscaping, pathways, vehicle access, and winter sports.

Participants at the event were offered three alternatives for contributing to the planning process:

1. A survey and comment form was available at the engagement event for participants to record their preferences
2. Panels were available at each station of the engagement event to record ideas and comments on the alternatives and options
3. Participants at the engagement event (and site partners) were directed to an online Open Link survey to identify how important each proposed enhancement was to them and which options they supported.

In addition to the engagement event, a similar survey was offered to the City of Edmonton's Insight Community as an opt-in survey for broader input.

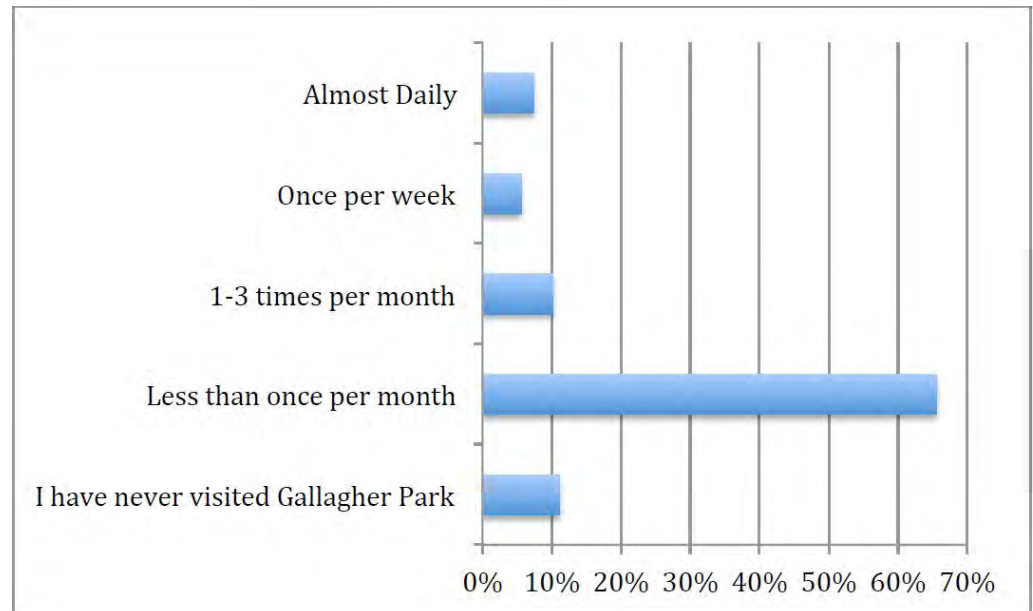
PARTICIPATION

The following summarizes the number of participants involved in the engagement opportunities outlined above.

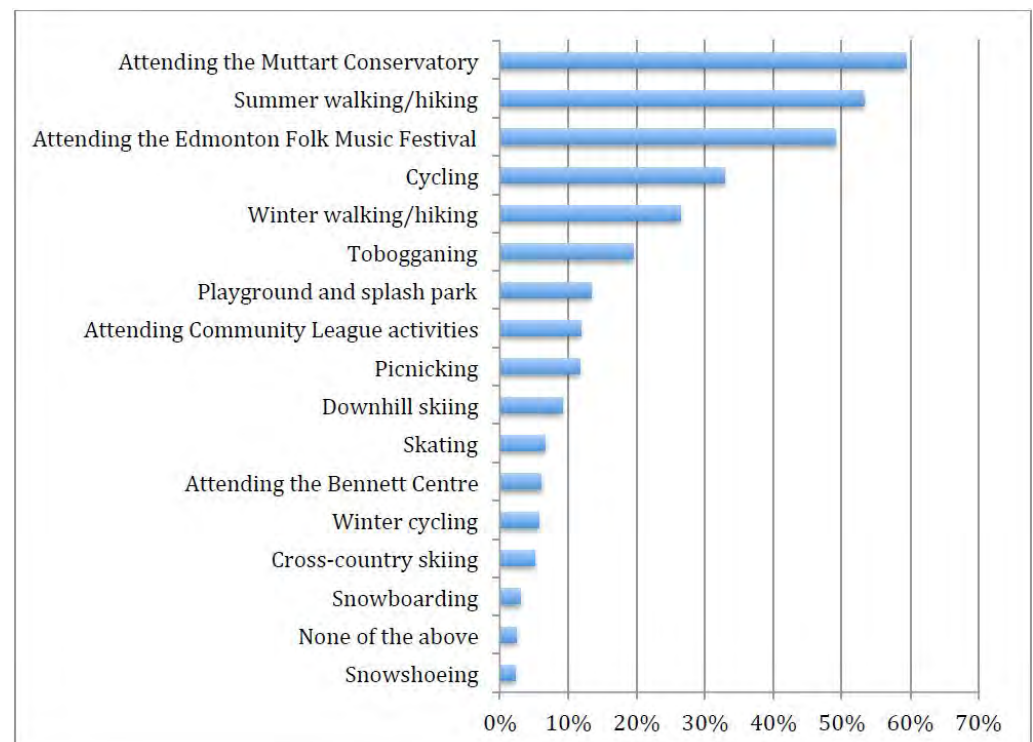
Individuals attending the engagement event	82
Comment forms from individuals attending the engagement event	41
Responses to the Open Link online survey	86
Responses from the Insight Community	477
TOTAL RESPONSES	686

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Participants provided information on how often they visited the park. Almost 90% of participants had previously visited the park.



They also identified how they currently use Gallagher Park. Attending the Muttart Conservatory was identified by participants as the most common reason for visiting the park. Snowshoeing was the least common use.

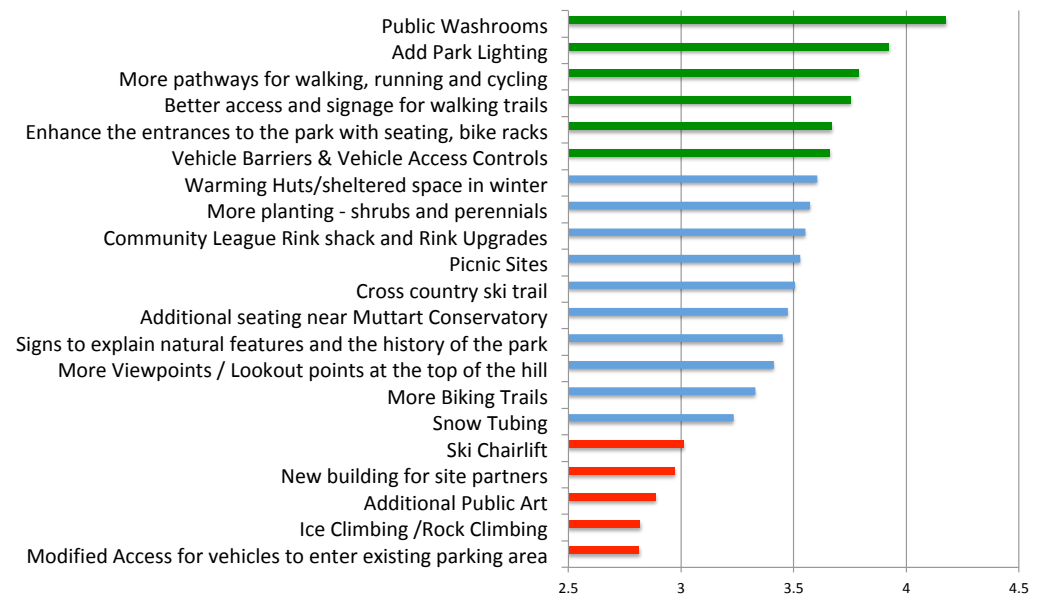


Phase 2: What We Heard

PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

A series of enhancements were proposed for summer and winter uses. These included both enhancements that the City could fund and others that could be funded by the site partners identified on page 4. All participants were asked to rate each of the 21 proposed enhancements using a scale from 1 (Not at all Important) to 5 (Very Important) within these categories. The following provides the average rating on the scale from 1 to 5 for each of the proposed enhancements.

Overall Response to Proposed Enhancements



Overall, the proposed enhancements that received the **greatest** average rating with high support were:

- Public washrooms
- Additional park lighting
- More pathways for walking, running and cycling
- Better access and signage for walking trails
- Enhanced entrances to the park with seating, bike racks and lighting
- Vehicle barriers & vehicle access controls

The proposed enhancements receiving the **least** support with low average ratings were:

- Ski chairlift
- New building for site partners
- Additional public art
- Ice climbing/rock climbing
- Modified access for vehicles to enter existing parking area (Average rating of 2.81 out of 5)

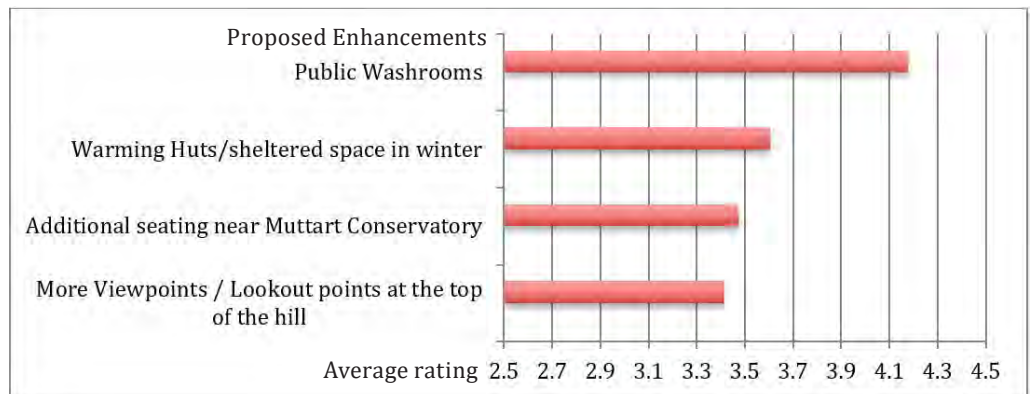
Enhancements were proposed within the following theme categories derived from the first phase of the project:

- Amenities
- Safety and security
- Access and accessibility
- Recreational activities
- Environment and heritage
- Possible partnership opportunities



Amenities

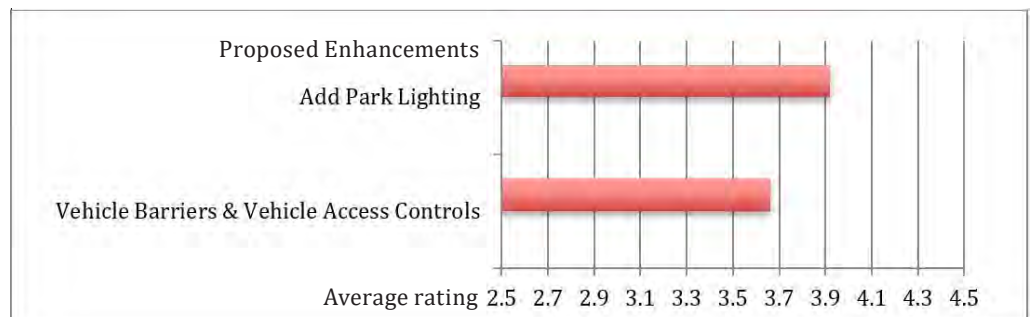
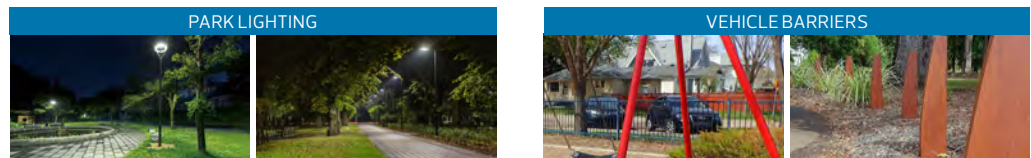
Support for enhanced amenities ranged from 4.18 out of 5 for washrooms to 3.41 for more viewpoints.



Out of the 4 proposed enhancements, public washrooms rated highest.

Safety and Security

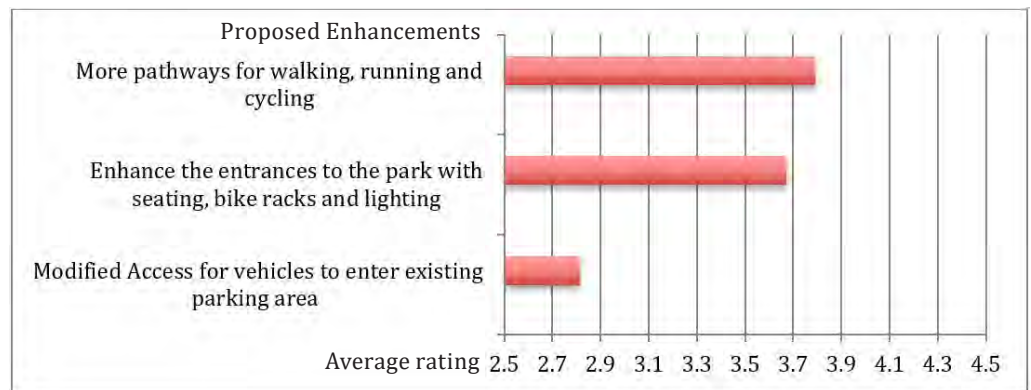
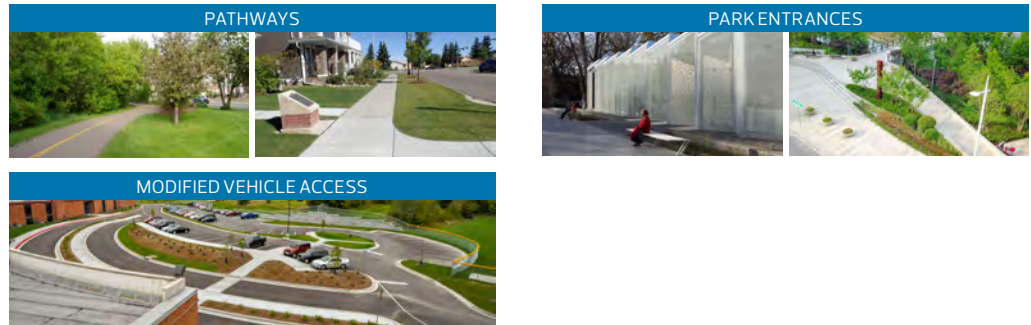
Support for enhanced safety and security ranged from 3.92 out of 5 for additional lighting to 3.66 for more vehicle access control.



Additional park lighting ranked highest in this category.

Access and Accessibility

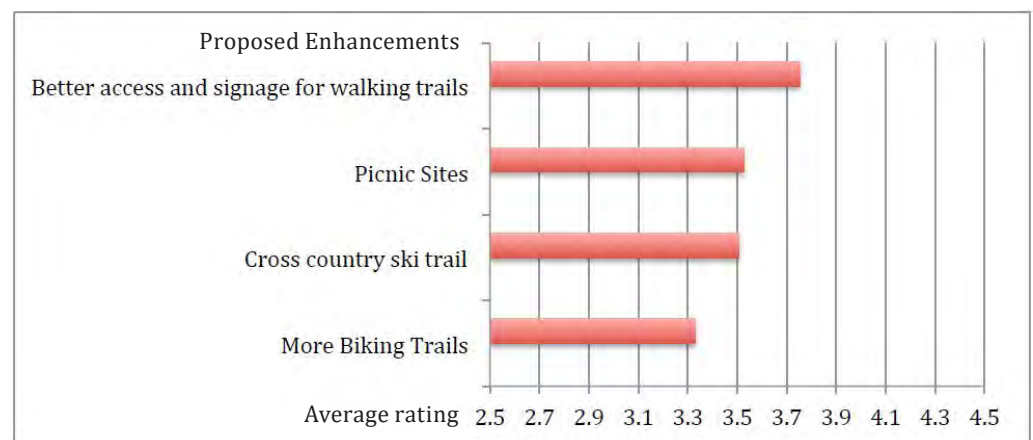
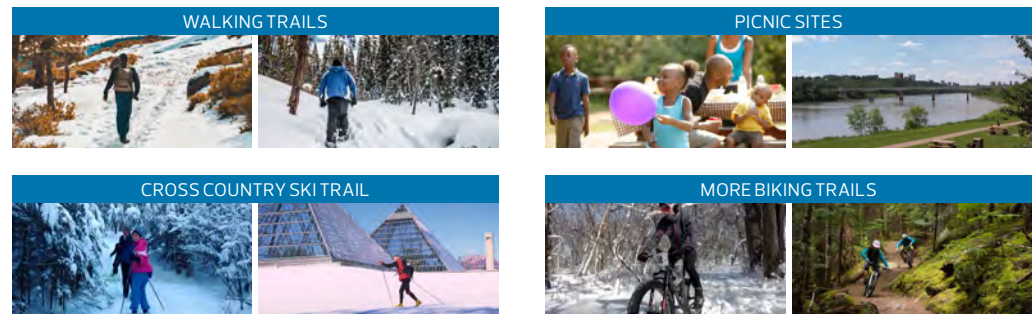
Support for enhanced access and accessibility ranged from 3.79 out of 5 for more pathways to 2.81 for modifications to vehicle access.



The addition of more pathways ranked highest in this category.

Recreational Activities

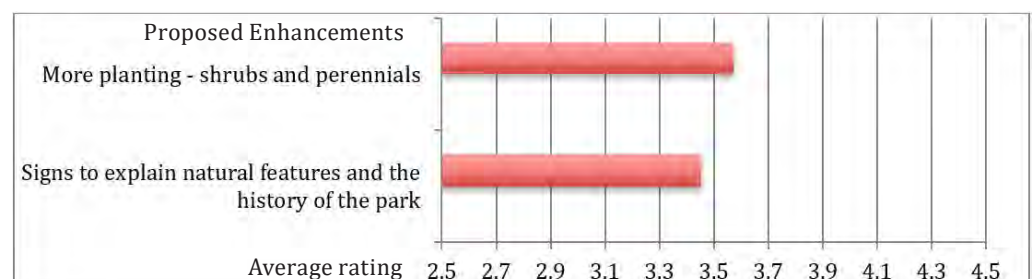
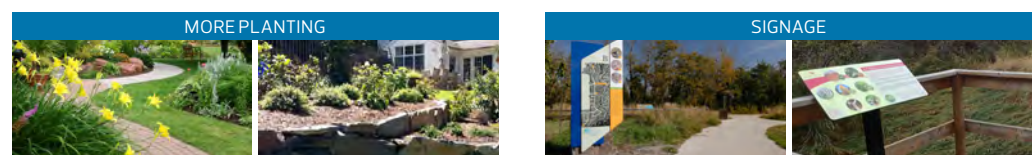
Support for enhanced infrastructure for recreational activities ranged from 3.79 out of 5 for walking trails to 3.33 for more biking trails.



Providing better access and signage for walking trails ranked highest in this category.

Environment and Heritage

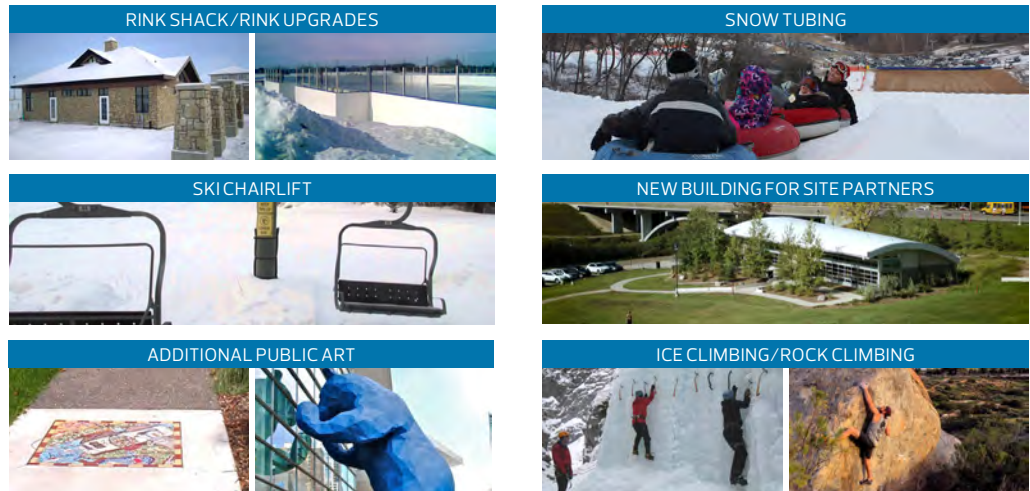
Support for more planting averaged 3.57 out of 5 and interpretive signage averaged 3.45.



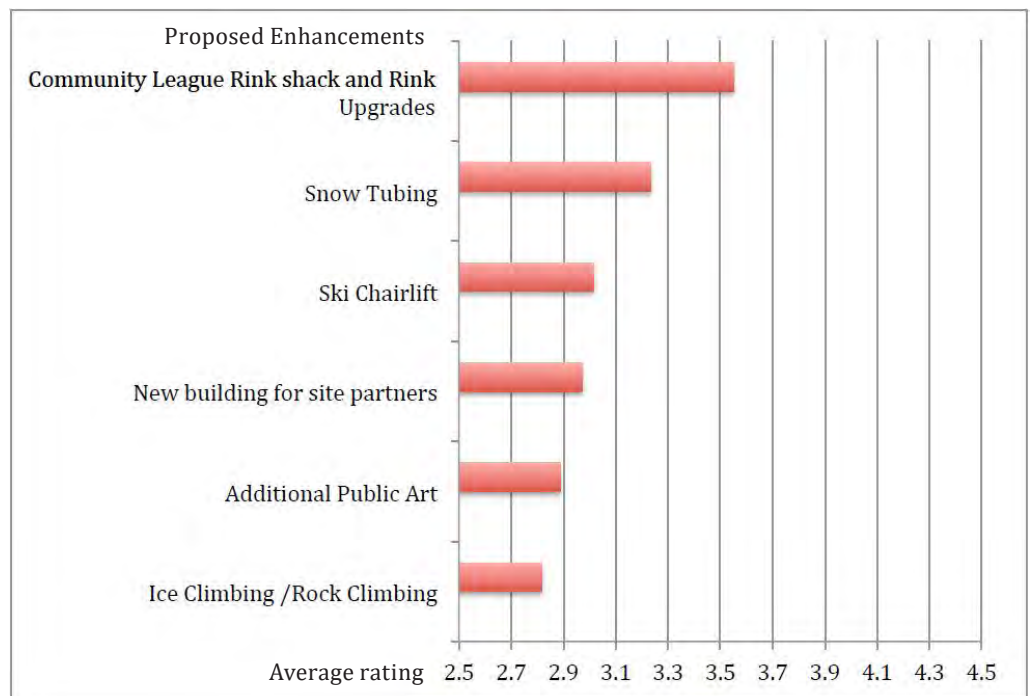
Providing more planting rated highest in this category.

Possible Partnership opportunities

The following possible enhancements could be funded by the site partners identified on page 4.



Support for these possible enhancements ranged from 3.55 out of 5 for an upgraded rink shack and rink for the Cloverdale Community League, the strongest supported item, to 2.82 for an ice climbing/rock climbing feature.

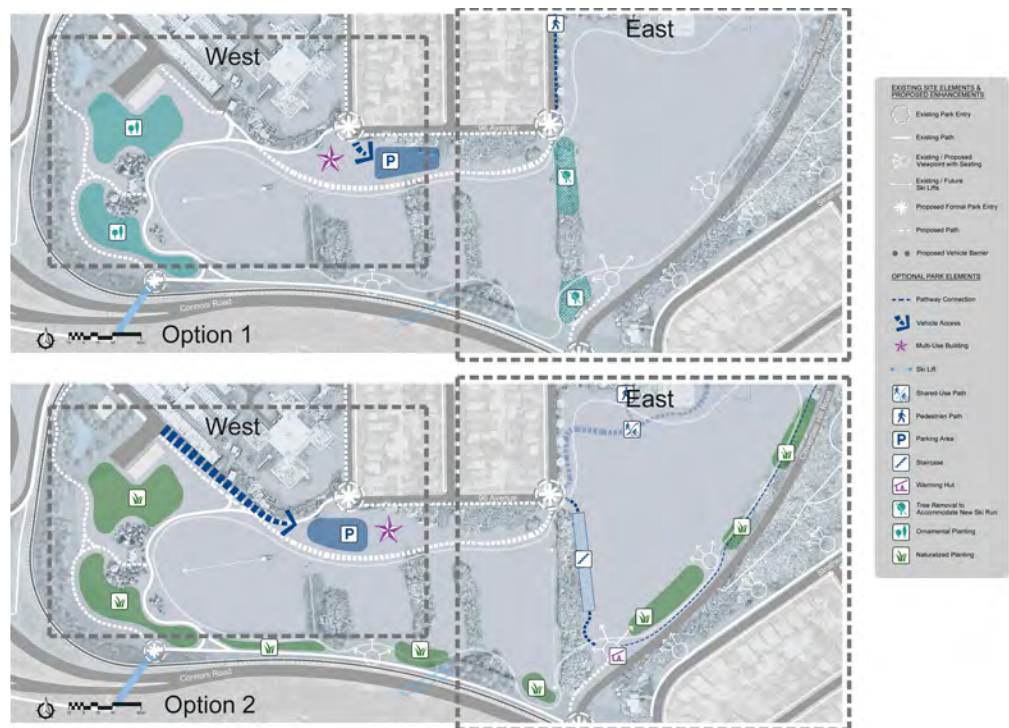


OPTIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

Options were presented to obtain an indication of preferences for four enhancements related to landscaping, pathway alignment near the community league area, vehicle access, and ski hill upgrades versus larger sledding area and staircase.

Optional Enhancement #1 – Landscaping

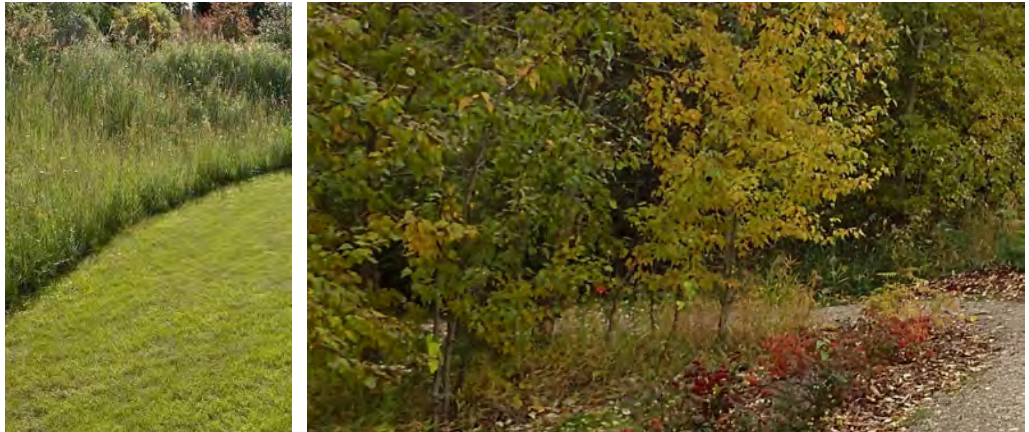
The future Gallagher Park could include either a predominantly ornamental landscape (Option 1) or a predominantly naturalized landscape (Option 2).



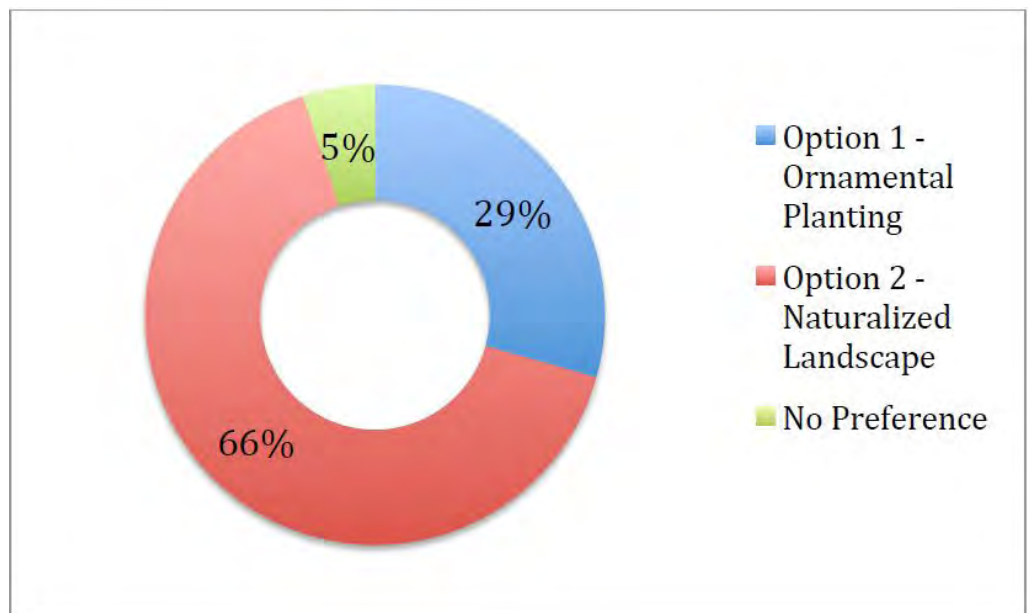
Ornamental landscapes include planted gardens and non-native species.



Naturalized landscapes include trees, shrubs and plants naturally found in an area. In naturalized landscapes, natural process of growth and change are less restricted and areas are allowed to return to a natural state.



PREFERENCES FOR OPTIONS REGARDING LANDSCAPING



There was more support for a naturalized landscape.

Optional Enhancement #2 – Pathways

The pathway options below would provide access from the corner of 96 Ave and 95 Street to the Community League facilities and 97 ave.



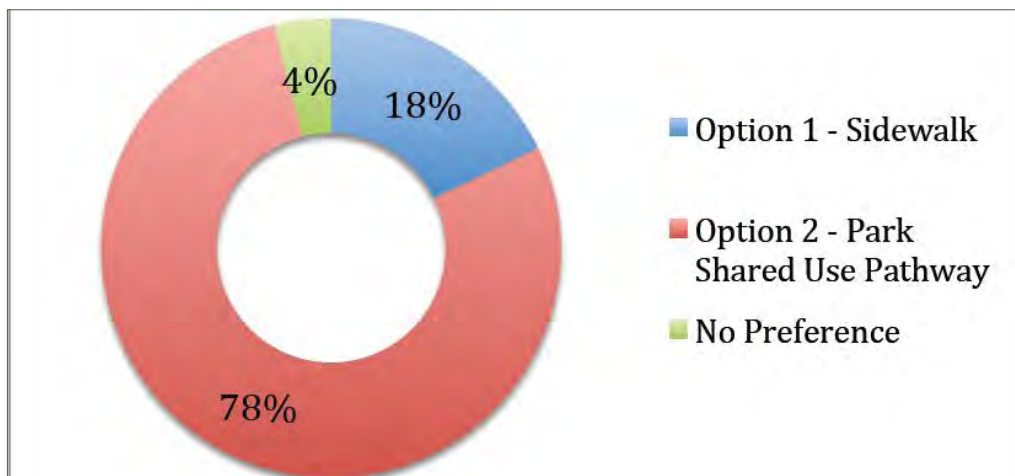
In Option 1, a sidewalk adjoining the curb would be created along the east side of 95 Street.



In Option 2, a minimum 3m wide shared use path would be created through the park. It would be located to avoid tent and stage locations for the Edmonton Folk Music Festival.



PREFERENCES FOR OPTIONS REGARDING PATHWAYS



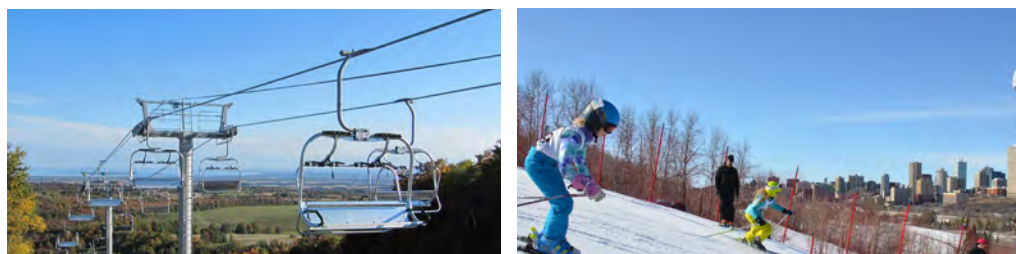
There was strongest support for a shared use path, however, this is constrained by current drainage problems.

Optional Enhancement #3 – Skiing Upgrades vs. Larger Sledding Area and Staircase

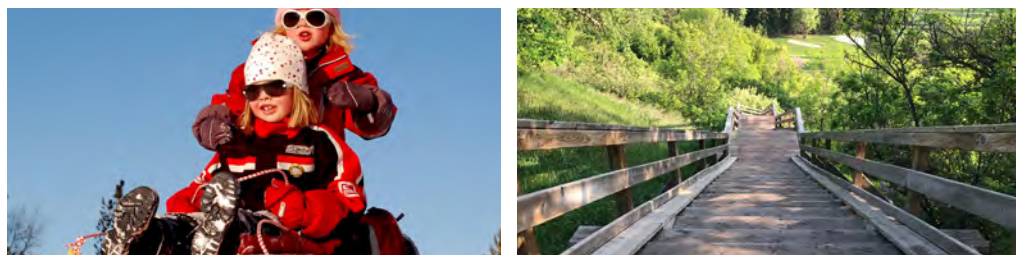
The options depicted in the plans below are located south of 95 Street. It is not possible to incorporate both Option 1 and Option 2 in this location.



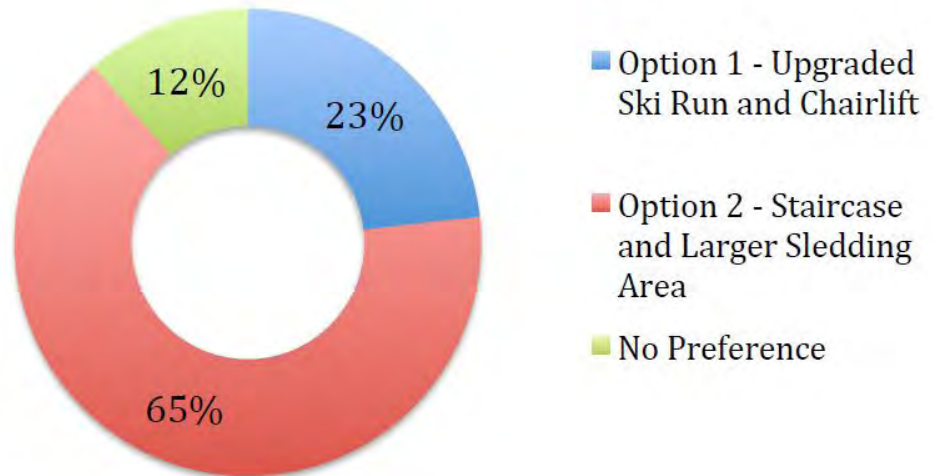
In Option 1, a partner organization could upgrade the existing t-bar to a chair lift to enhance skier experience. Tree clearing and regrading would be required.



In Option 2, a staircase would be created to enhance year round pedestrian access up and down the hill. The exiting T-Bar would remain as well as a large sledding area, but the eastern most ski run would be eliminated for skier safety.



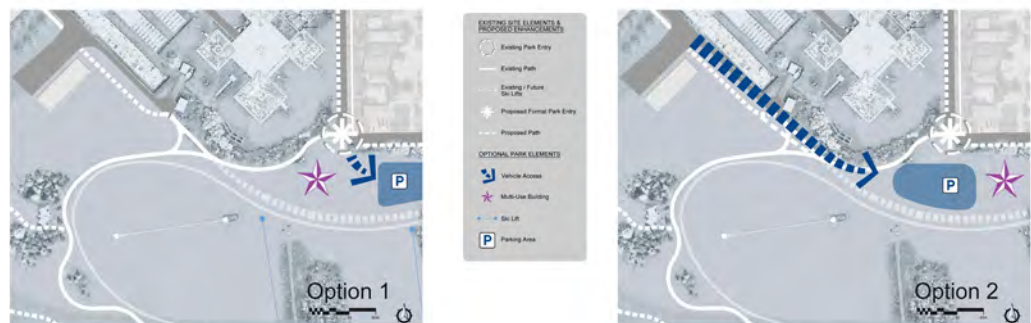
PREFERENCES FOR OPTIONS REGARDING SKIING UPGRADES VS. A LARGER SLEDDING AREA & STAIRCASE



There was more public support for the staircase and larger sledding area however the ski club lease currently restricts redevelopment of this area.

Optional Enhancement #4 – Vehicle Access

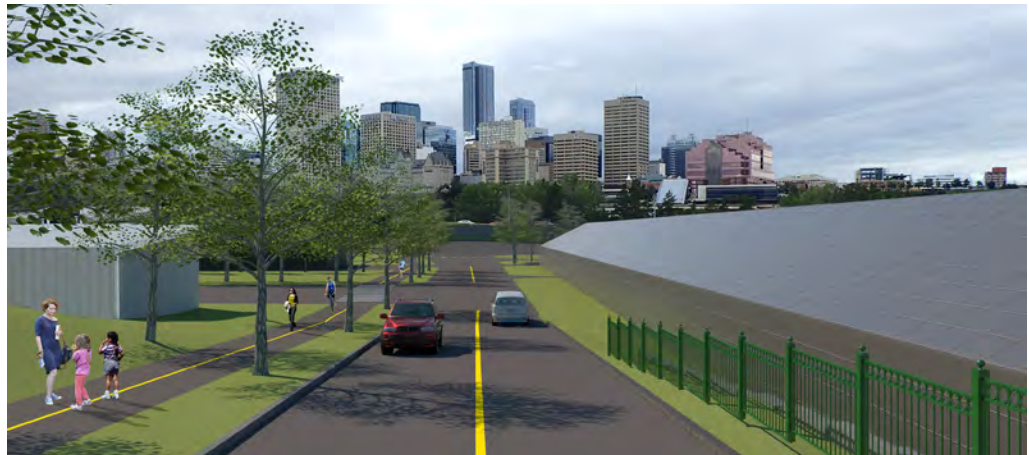
The plans below depict two options for vehicular access to the existing ski club parking area.



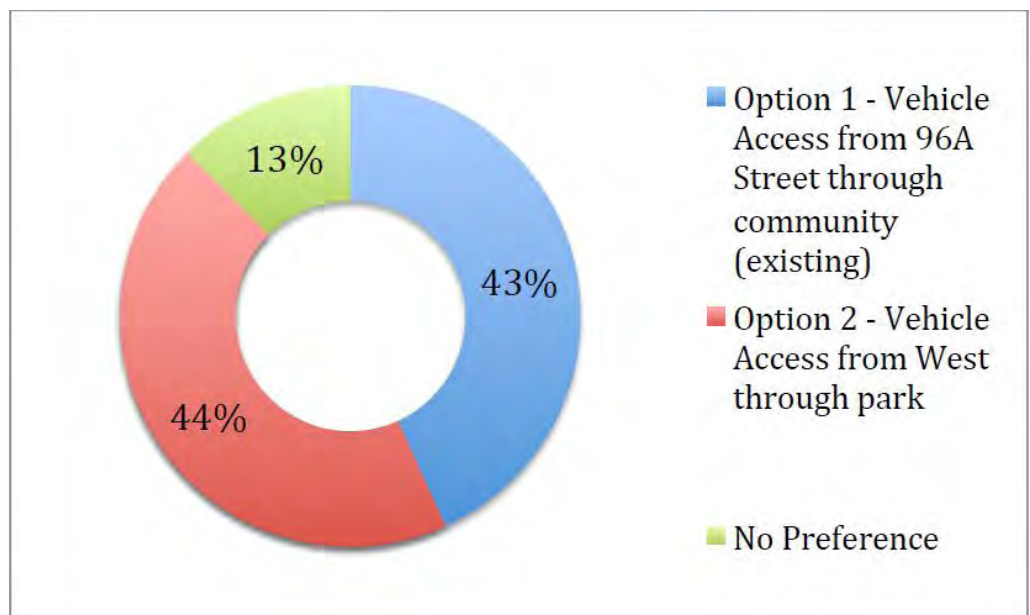
In Option 1, vehicle access would remain at the south end of 96A Street through the residential community within Cloverdale.



In Option 2, a roadway would be added from the west edge of the park. It would utilize the planned access across the new LRT line. This new vehicle access would reduce traffic on local streets in Cloverdale. It would be used to enter and exit the parking lot only.



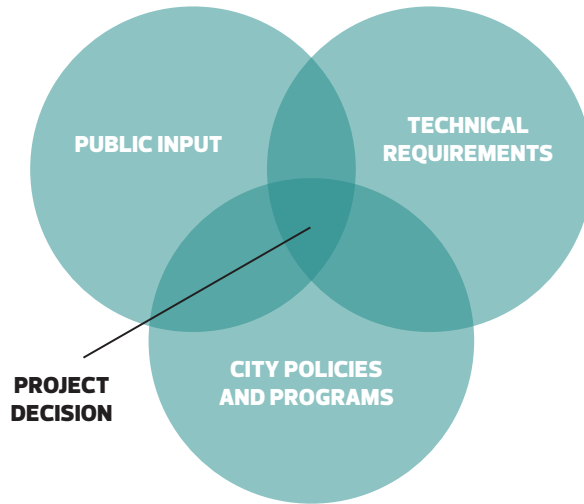
PREFERENCES FOR OPTIONS REGARDING VEHICLE ACCESS



There was no significant difference found between the options for vehicle access.

Going Forward

Phase 3 in development of the concept plan for Gallagher Park will include presenting a preferred concept plan for public review.



Concept plan development is a process of weighing the pros and cons of the preferences of the public and the various interests of stakeholders, and balancing them with technical analysis and City policies. As recommendations are refined, we will continue to ensure that the interests of site partners, the broader public, and the City of Edmonton on behalf of all Edmontonians are taken into consideration.

The next round of public engagement will take place in Spring 2020 in which a recommended 20 year concept plan for Gallagher Park will be presented for public review and comment.

