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ISL Engineering and Land Services

# Buena Vista/Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park Master Plan

What We Heard: Stakeholder Interviews

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## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
SUMMARY OF INPUT FROM INTERVIEWS .....	2
Opportunities or Challenges to Consider in Master Plan for BVLP.....	2
Most important factors to consider in developing the Vision for BVLP .....	7
Suggestions for ways to improve your park experience: .....	10
Vision regarding Yorath House and Grounds .....	12
Other Community, Business or Institutional Initiatives To Consider .....	14
Other Organizations to Involve In Public Involvement Process .....	15
Other Comments Regarding The Public Involvement Process.....	15
Other Comments Regarding The Master Plan .....	16

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the telephone interviews with a sample of key stakeholders was to:

- Gather information to better inform the Public Involvement Process for the Master Plan.
- Inform participants about the upcoming Public Involvement Process, and the opportunities for input.
- Inform participants about the role of public involvement in the Master Plan process.
- Begin to build relationships for this project.

A list of key stakeholders was identified from the extensive list of stakeholders and groups potentially having an interest in the Master Planning process that was compiled in the Public Involvement Plan for the project. This included representatives of Community Leagues, recreational user groups, business interests, not-for-profit groups, and City departments and service areas.

Initial contact was made by email with 19 stakeholders, and follow-up attempts were made to contact individuals for the interviews. In a few instances, alternative or additional contacts were identified and contacted, either for interviews or to be informed about next steps in the process. A total of 17 interviews were completed.

## SUMMARY OF INPUT FROM INTERVIEWS

Responses to the questions in the interviews have been sorted into theme areas and are presented below, along with all the specific comments noted.

### OPPORTUNITIES OR CHALLENGES TO CONSIDER IN MASTER PLAN FOR BVLP

#### **Parking:**

- Parking is a challenge / Parking needed / Better parking
- Parking along the road is a problem.
- Parking is a problem –not enough, the road is in terrible shape, coyote problem  
From ranger perspective, would like to see better use of existing parking. There is more than ample parking on site with Zoo parking, but not enough parking for dog walkers; Many say they are not 'aware' they can park at the Zoo, often hop the curb and park on the turf
- LP – works really well, 3<sup>rd</sup> busiest picnic site in City, always been busy, but roadway and parking a big issue when it is busy for picnics; does this need to be redesigned? Probably, but not sure want to have giant parking lot in the middle of the green space
- BV parking – curbs disintegrating, pushed into the ground, no delineation of parking (e.g., around Yorath House); not provide deterrent to walk the extra distance from the parking lot – perhaps need upgraded curbing or fencing
- LP - can drive from parking lot to picnic site to offload, although there is a curb (too low)
- Better enforcement of parking at boat launch
- Rowers need designated parking
- Parking in large green area at bottom of road

### Zoo Parking

- Zoo parking lot should be more attractive / is in the foot print of the zoo
- Used by both the park and the zoo because there are very little parking for the actual park; s may cause an issue in the future because of expectation of increased attendance at the zoo
- Sometimes the zoo overflows into the open park on BV on special events
- When there is an event in Hawrelak the zoo parking lot is full
- No more parking in the park itself; there is parking at the zoo

### **Park Entrance**

- People come to Zoo looking for bathrooms, drinks, snacks. This is built into the new master plan.
- The park entry is not clearly defined
- An entry round about is a way of delineated as a destination

### **Distinct Areas**

- BV should be kept natural as possible / Leave natural as possible –become a bit run down and grungy over time
- Laurier Park – like the developed area close to the zoo parking lot. Like to maintain the rustic picnic area to the back end of the park.
- LP is nice as it is / Keep development in LP

### **Access / Maintenance**

- Laurier –make traffic two-way.
- Stairs-on west side of LP –gravel and treated wood is falling apart. Need to be upgraded
- Speed bumps on the road sometimes a problem
- Usage –a lot of residents are effected by amount of usage; traffic, safety could be issue with increased usage.
- Neighbours –are very vocal about after hours park use and after hours parking lot use. Gates and chains are a temporary solution to prevent this
- Need a way to secure the afterhours activity

### **Accessibility**

- Consider needs of people with mobility areas.

### **Safety /Security/ Policing**

- Security –deter
- Increase lighting in the park
- Railing needed on areas by the river –safety
- Needs to be more Family friendly –less drug deal
- More police presence -patrol
- Dimly lit. Bridge is a transportation corridor so it should be a through route and the park shouldn't be closed after a certain hour. Cyclists would have a need to go through the park at night; When Quesnel bridge was closed the high level bridge was the only way to get to the northwest side of the city.
- Safety is not a problem and opening the park at night would increase traffic and therefore increase safety and decrease nefarious activities.

### **Off Leash**

- Concerns with perceived boundaries of the off leash areas
- A few dogs visit the zoo
- Family helped start the off leash area / Like the off leash area
- Overall premise of off leash in city needs to be revisited as a whole; there needs to be opportunities for dogs off leash , but not sure need to be in river valley or natural areas
- Low level studies were started a few years ago by University Grad students to track wildlife in park, also to see how wildlife avoid areas of off leash or on leash. However, they found that there were dogs off leash everywhere that was supposed to be on leash, so couldn't find a control sample; but feel wildlife being significantly impacted, but no formal finalized document as couldn't find any area as a control
- Dog walkers are advocating for their dogs –that's maybe why they're so vocal

### **Shared Use / Conflicts Between Users**

- Off leash areas are also used bikes –this seems fine; Don't ban bikes or dogs
- Hazardous for cyclists and for dog owners
- Aggressive dog owners because they think that it's their park / Dog walkers- challenge
- Friction between parties –rowers and bikes and dogs
- Cyclists vs pedestrians/dogs on trails –problem -no bikes allowed
- People are not necessarily using the park as it is intended.
- Conflict b/w bikers and dog walkers –the bike path coming from Hawrelak goes right through the dog park, dogs chase the bikes which causes fights.
- Solution –corridor off the main road through the park with thick shrubs maybe;
- The dog swimming hole is also a problem because it is right by the bridge –the dogs see the bikes on the bridge and then chase them.
- It is important to understand dog behavior and the flow of recreational movement in the park. Education piece is needed regarding dog behavior and bikers.
- Bikes are on all the back trails this causes fights with dog owners
- Concerns should be based on proportional representation
- Respect and open communication –one party shouldn't get preferential treatment.
- Rowing club seems to be a private club –elitist
- More open communication

### **River Access / Boat Launch**

- Boat launch is good / very valuable for canoes. It's used a lot
- Upgrading the boat launch
- Better grading in boat launch
- Access to boat launch is a one way loop –widen road and better accesses
- Paddlers –use the park less
- Maybe move the water sports people to different location.
- Need for a storage facility –expand the White water paddlers yard for other groups to store gear
- They need to do more programming but storage capacity is needed
- Northwest voyagers could use space too.
- Controlling the river users –motorized vs. non-motorized. Restrict motorized use to upstream of Laurier and downstream of 50th. Leave other areas to non-motorized craft.

### **Washrooms**

- Increasing the washroom sites
- Washrooms –upgrades
- Add Composting toilets with solar panel
- BV – lot of people will want washrooms, suggest not a significant washroom building there, rather opportunity to upgrade washroom building on Hawrelak Park side that is only seasonal facility; upgrade washroom in LP itself as 4 season. Might need a small one in BV itself (handicap accessible), but not need a 3<sup>rd</sup> washroom building in that proximity; many who use BVLP come from Hawrelak & park there; probably better to spend money upgrading Hawrelak washroom
- City doesn't have a standard re: washroom facilities; what is reasonable expectation for location of washroom? Is there a level for disabled people? handicapped port a potties,
- BV – no utility service there, when houses went out the septic system taken out; pumpouts that require regular maintenance and pumping out would likely be required
- From a user perspective –the dog park needs proper washrooms, lighting.

### **Trails**

- No paved trail; Important to have paved connective trail
- Trail by the Yorath house –maybe a way to make two separate trails
- Separation of dogs and bikes
- Gravel is ok for some bikes but not all
- Trails are not in good condition
- Paved trail for wheeled sports
- Paved trail to access Hawrelak Park
- Upgrading the main path to a paved trail
- Maintain the main trail through the park
- Dog trail around the rowing club is needed.
- Looking at the path that runs through BV park (main spine trail), all trails that are part of the RV trail system are hard surface except this one. Question re: pave or not pave and if pave to what standard/width; look at people trying to access trails that are gravel (wheelchairs, etc.) a challenge from footbridge through BVPark to BV Road
- Trails have standards re: grades

### **Winter Use**

- Cross country skiing continuous path
- Consider cross country skiing
- Nordic Ski club –we need a ski trail that goes city wide.
- Need to open up LP as 4 season park, not close washrooms, replace washrooms with year round facility; might involve re-design of roadway to make it easier to plow
- There have been enquiries re: formalized x-country ski trails – realistically not sure Operations people have resources to do them
- Rides through the park in the winter; Open to 4 seasons

### **Playgrounds**

- More playground equipment
- Playgrounds need to be upgraded

### **Picnic Areas**

- Diverse group of people use picnic area
- Picnic area is not very inviting
- Picnic sites are great
- Need more picnic sites
- #1 request from users is the sheltered sites –need more; can never meet the demands of the bookings
- Larger group sites – you have to be there early to get sites that aren't booked in advance; Sign on each reserved site (picnic site #, reserved or open); if going to be there for a full day, it can be several hundreds of dollars a day to reserve
- Where the sites are situated needs some consideration –spacing between sites.
- Consider Site capacity; Reason that people book a site is because they are arranging a large gathering of people.
- Laurier is popular. Users like parking capacity, location on river, trail and large trees
- Proximity to Zoo is important for making it a day with kids –complement each other
- Corporate groups who book sites also include a visit into the zoo
- Site capacity is not sufficient –groups for 100-400 people; Maximum in Laurier is 150 capacity

### **Other Amenities / Facilities**

- Upgrading facilities
- A lot of people are looking for amenities; consider amenities
- The park is under-developed
- There should be more to do there
- Like watching balloon area
- Site preference –for spray park and climbing areas
- Consider adding a spray park and climbing areas
- Pond –might be nice –skating, boating in summer
- Further develop the site –more area for dog park, more benches,
- More amenities/actives –playground, sand, climbing equipment
- Small soccer field
- Wheeled sports strategy – mountain bike parks – a good idea but not in this location, this is a river valley site, needs less impactful activities
- Figuring out what the capacity or capabilities of the park are , and if any other user groups could be a good fit with current user groups
- Yorath house –opportunity
- Appropriate garbage containers

### **Events**

- Important to get input from events –we should still be able to facilitate the events and find out what supports they need.

### **Signage**

- Better & clear signage
- Sign posting is very confusing –complicated and small.

### **Landscaping / Natural Areas**

- Like it the way it is
- More staggered planting / Forest has a mature feel –it needs more staggered planting
- The plantings are all the same age –there needs to be newer plantings that are staggered
- More naturalization planting in BV; increase use of native plant material
- Natural landscaping / like natural area
- Big open areas in LP are good.
- It's beautiful forested and field areas

### **Drainage**

- Drainage –this is a problem
- Install a wetland treatment in Laurier Park at the south east side of the zoo parking lot.

### **Role of Parks**

- Large part of Parks role is to be stewards of park land
- Not sure all current uses are compatible with goal of stewardship and preservation
- Part of River Valley bylaw is to ensure protection for parks going forward
- Lots of opportunities –huge space, but finding compatible uses with the space is challenge
- Talked to Patrick at AC – when revisited Parkland Bylaw in 2003/2004, mountain bikes, inline skates, etc., were not known then – evolving recreation opportunities that we're not fully aware of yet that could be on this site

### **Other**

- Zoo/park layout works well.
- Water utility runs through the zoo to Laurier
- Rezoning of the Zoo and consolidation of 3 parcels

### **Communications**

- Local communities are really astute and can become really organized at the blink of an eye
- Keep the community really well informed –community newsletter is an excellent way of getting information out to the community - Laurier, Parkview
- Should connect with the communities / Advertise –in community newsletters

## **MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING THE VISION FOR BVLV**

### **Natural**

- Natural spaces are a great asset and let the natural part of the park be as natural as can be.
- Natural, connected to surrounding context, integrated into the river valley
- Natural / Natural landscaping / Not groomed
- Keep it natural in BV
- Keep the distinct areas- wild vs manicured / Keep differentiated landscapes –groomed and wild

### **Shared Use**

- Cyclist have to slow down in off leash area

### **Multi-Use**

- Balancing the needs of all of the needs of the users / Multi-use
- Mixture of people using the park is very nice.
- Multi-generational appeal

### **History / Interpretation**

- Preserved history
- They have a round earth wall inspired by the N. Sask river bank
- They are interpreting the N. Sask and having it flow out into Laurier
- Dialog plan –Entry wander design development.
- BV is very natural, dog park is good

### **River Access**

- Water access/ boat launch
- Boat launch; Boat launch –programs people from city use it, Jet boat and river rafting –it could use an upgrade. Problem with people parking in boat launch area.
- Capitalize more on river access area –to increase the amount of self-propelled water users
- Training area for kayaks –a run
- Rundle park- rental of paddle boats –maybe include.
- Because it is such a high use area –acknowledging the historical uses is important –kayakers and rowers have investments and formal and informal plans –we should be familiar with those plans and fit their plans into our plan.
- Remember the kayakers –communication has been not great and they aren't easy to communicate with.
- Boat storage

### **Trails**

- Make sure bike path is continuous
- Linked from west and east
- Keep link is important
- Trails need to be well maintained
- Paved and unpaved trails

### **Winter Use**

- Skiing trails
- Park is closed in winter –because of residents and no water in washrooms
- More accessible / accommodating in winter
- Skating rink like Victoria
- COE perspective –develop an all season park

### **Washrooms**

- Upgrade washroom facilities (x3)
- Potty at the notice board
- Potable water

### **Parking**

- Parking is needed

### **Multi-Generational / Family Oriented / Accessibility**

- Accessibility for everyone / accessibility (x2)
- Keep access to the foot bridge
- A place where people can gather –increased picnic sites and structures
- Safety –increased lighting
- Making designs more inclusive.
- Laurier still needs picnic sites- family oriented
- Very family oriented. It isn't now –playground is outdated. Doesn't have jazz to it anymore
- More conducive to young families –corporate picnics, birthday parties
- High use of the site by individuals, groups, events, Runs, family picnics,

### **Other Activities / Suggestions**

- Upgrading facilities, games built into venue –horse shoes, lawn bowling, ball diamond doesn't get utilized.
- More sporting activities outside of baseball
- Soccer
- Orienteering –don't over develop the park
- Access for wheeled sports
- Water feature

### **Off Leash**

- The dog park –it is a neighbourhood gathering place. People meet on a daily basis. It's a community building place.
- Other suggestions: Put in a dog wash; coin operated = make money. Seattle example.
- Need proper fencing and gating –at parking lot for safety of dogs and drivers
- The field –bordering Buena Vista road should be fenced to keep vandals out and possibly be an extension of the dog park.

### **Regional Park**

- One of biggest things – need to maintain its status as a City wide park
- It is there to serve residents around it, but also to fit within the overall RVA and Ribbon of Green
- It's a regional park; It's not a local park

### **Other Management**

- Wheeled Sports Strategy
- Fix run-off in big field
- Who uses the park? / Needs of the park users?
- Zoo is increasing in a positive way –they complement each other
- Consider the park all the way to Mackenzie ravine at least.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR PARK EXPERIENCE:**

### **Signage / maps**

- Signage at park entry
- Label off leash area
- Walkability –neighbourhood walking map
- Increasing signage and way finding
- Every trail should have a name; It's hard for people to know where they are when they are in the trail system unless they already know where they are.

### **Parking**

- Parking –use empty field off BV Rd.
- Parking is an issue at the rowing tank
- Not enough parking–rowing club has reserved parking stalls
- There was a plan for improved parking that incorporated the Yorath house driveway –additional parking along the one way road.
- “dog walkers park here” sign

### **Washrooms / Water Fountains**

- Washrooms; Upgrades to washrooms
- Washroom closer to boat house
- Decent washrooms at off leash area
- Outhouse at far end of the park –upgrade
- Accessible washrooms
- More water fountains.

### **Picnic Area**

- Better picnic shelters
- Picnic shelter in BV
- More covered shelters
- Like the private picnic sites

### **Playground**

- Better playgrounds (x2)
- Playground facilities for older people –stationary bikes, Canterbury Manor –destination for them

### **Trails**

- Operationally have main trail as commuter route that runs through it
- Paved trail
- Wood chip paths weren't good
- Prefer a natural path to a paved path
- Tiny gravel path is ok but not best
- Need to fill and grade paths –especially after it rains

### **Winter Use**

- Do snowshoeing, fire building
- Not x country skiing because there is enough in the city already
- Winterization of the park for 4 seasons
- Ski tracks / Groomed trails for cross country skiers

### **River Access / Rowing / Paddling**

- Boat launch should be maintained better
- Move rowing and paddling to Laurier park
- Possible upgrades to the dog swimming area –Seattle place had docks built with stairs, floating dock might be good. Mud and slipping

### **Other Activities**

- In LP –destination place –pond, water park, spray park, picnic tables on edge of off leash area
- Geo caching for trees as an activity for people to go there; educational.
- Hot air balloon –give more notice for launches or more launch site to Laurier

### **Off Leash**

- Have whole area off leash with extension to Mackenzie Ravine
- Austen, TX – every time do off leash area, they have to have a large area, separated into 3 fenced areas by size or open to anyone, electronic gates to get in and have swipe card; get swipe card register and license dog
- Other places – seasonal closures to off leash areas if other wildlife management issues (e.g., bird nesting, coyote mating, et)
- Number of requests recently, some related to rescue greyhound operations for fenced off leash sites, City has not been in favour of fenced areas in past, and also a study elsewhere that shows the experience was different and environmental damage greater if dogs concentrated in a smaller area

### **Separation of Uses**

- Personally won't take family into off leash areas, too many issues and headaches
- Commuting through off leash areas, sometimes are not off leash (e.g., if school kids access area to get to and from school).
- Separation of bikes and dogs
- Fencing to keep dogs out of houses
- All literature re: Risk Management - if have off leash areas, should give people option to enter it, or make a route through it so they aren't subjected to dogs off leash; currently don't have that option - you either ride through off leash area or go up and around on the roads
- If off leash is there, there need to be options for people to travel through the area
- Off leash areas shouldn't be in river valley, but if they are, the meadows at Terwilliger Park and good sight lines are okay, but problems when in wooded areas, not good sight lines
- Open area at BV works okay, but is it having a bigger impact on long term landscape and wildlife, maybe better in other location

### **Management**

- Consider the budget for staff to maintain the site after.
- Deterioration of the Yorath house for 20 years is a concern.

### **Access / Lighting**

- Two way traffic (x2)
- Nice access from Crestwood
- Maintain the gravel road in BV
- Lighting –more lighting in treed areas
- Public transit to the park

## **VISION REGARDING YORATH HOUSE AND GROUNDS**

### **Interpretive / Nature / Historical / Educational Centre / Museum**

- Interpretive center –operated by the nature center
- Educational center
- Historical interpretive site / Preserve for history sake / historical value in the old house.
- Monument at the East end of the yard toward the river that should be preserved.
- Museum
- Keep the house
- Great location

### **Programming**

- Park and river valley programming
- Kids on track (KOT) need it
- KOT –run day camps in the summer for kids in partnership with other river valley programs.
- House could also be used for youth development/ leadership development similar to kids in the hall on weekends.
- Not needed for programming

### **Grounds / Gardens**

- Reactivating the gardens -Keith Evans (now deceased) developed a plan to turn into the grounds into something like the Bucharth Gardens
- Like the grounds, but building is nothing spectacular; Don't see it as anything special
- Grounds would have been spectacular, if do something, need to include the grounds
- Outdoor wedding venues / Develop the grounds for weddings

### **Food Venues/Concessions**

- String of little cafés through the river valley
- Tea house / Seasonal tea house
- Tea house idea didn't work because of set up costs, septic fields have collapsed.
- Café is already at the zoo so no duplication
- Vision for café or artists to use
- Offer concession service

### **Multi-use**

- There is a need a public facility which could be a combined shared facility. It would require occupancy on a daily basis.
- Multi-use
- It could be leased for other things too.
- Meeting rooms, kitchen needed
- Meeting facilities and offices would be good. Yoga retreats, scouts, etc.
- Maybe not enough business traffic.
- Rental for special events –weddings? Party, reunion?
- Keep the house; Facility for rent for weddings or offices for non-profit usage
- Private parties
- Could be a wedding/anniversary for rental purposes like old timers cabin
- Could be used for small weddings, events – not so much as an everyday access; using the grounds when event coordinators “pretty” up the gardens, flowers is very nice; currently is a hollow shell of what it used to be (roof leaks, mice, etc)
- Gathering place for the community
- If it was converted into some office space, KOT could provide a presence and janitorial. Yorath house –Kids on Track (KOT) put in a proposal for the use of Yorath House. It entailed office space on the second floor for KOT.

### **Stopping Point / Staging Area**

- Very nice water front at the house–could be a stopping point for water users and skiers
- House could be a trail head/check in point/ starting point, Could also be a warming house and picnic shack with BBQ’s for cross country skiers.

### **Zoo Facility**

- The zoo wanted it for their own a long time ago –have the property for a quarantine facility.

### **Private Lease**

- B and B
- Venue subcontracted out

### **Tear it Down**

- Tear it down and make it natural.
- Yorath House should be bulldozed
- Maybe leveling the house
- Don’t think the value is there from the public perspective
- Not an ideal location

### **Operational Concerns**

- The house would need to be brought up to useable standard or be taken down and use the site for a different facility
- Hard to find a use for the space that fits in with the off leash area
- Area needed to leave dog if you go into the house

## **OTHER COMMUNITY, BUSINESS OR INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES TO CONSIDER**

### **Communities / Community Leagues**

- Laurier Heights CL is looking for a new facility.
- Crestwood Community league is looking to redevelop their playground.
- Glenora , Parkview, Laurier have redeveloped their parks.
- Rio Terrace Community is starting to develop a spray park.
- Walking trails made by Laurier, Parkview and Crestwood –linkage is good; Awareness of walking trails
- Consider the community (Laurier and Parkview) – traffic flow, Valley Zoo
- Safety committee –not sure it exists.
- Local residents are more impacted, but it is a city park & People choose to live beside park,

### **Water Based**

- Canoeheads
- Edmonton Canoe –[www.edmontoncanoe.com](http://www.edmontoncanoe.com)
- Edmonton Rowing Club

### **Bicycling**

- Bikes lanes are going in on 95 Ave.
- Bike shops

### **Winter Use**

- Ski touring association –looking for a place –cross county skiing hooked up to dogs.
- Cross country skiing in park.
- Warm up shelter would be needed.

### **Yorath House**

- Community based group should have access to the space –Kids on Track.
- Community plan –Yorath house
- Retreat facilities
- Parking increased if use the Yorath house

### **Facilities for Events**

- There are 25-30 scheduled events -runs and walks primarily; require good staging area – water, electrical, washrooms, emergency access, and good signage –better signage from arterial roads.
- 2 big areas –b/w the parking lots and the river. Water and washrooms are essential

### **Regulatory**

- Everyone should respect the boundaries / It should be harmonious
- Keep ribbon of green philosophy
- How does the bylaw that turns the zoo into a node effect the park in terms of putting restrictions or opening up opportunities? Work this into the plan –Tea house adjacent to the zoo or in the zoo. This impacts the level of fun of the special event. Spectators could go get coffee instead of having to bring coffee

## **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO INVOLVE IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

### **Sports Activities**

- Alberta Bicycle Association / Edmonton Bicycle Society
- Other racing clubs –their voice should be heard.
- Edmonton Overlanders –corporate challenge event
- Edmonton Nordic
- Orienteering Club

### **Water Based Activities**

- Edmonton Rowing Club –revamping their launch
- Boat launch people

### **Community Based**

- possibly someone from Glenora Community League
- Community newsletter ads / information in community newsletters
- Contact seniors groups

### **Utilities**

- Drainage and EPCOR re: water supply /Lift station at top of hill

### **Other**

- Who are the frequent users of Laurier Park?–churches and non-profit groups in summer
- Who books Laurier Park? and is using it for functions?
- Youth groups, churches, running groups, road bikers training on Buena Vista Road hill
- Try to find other groups that aren't currently users whose sports don't currently have a home; talk to sports consultants
- Model rockets group; did pilot in another park especially with dogs; not a good fit here or in any city park

## **OTHER COMMENTS REGARDING THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

### **Advertising**

- Community Newsletters –are a priority
- Edmonton FCL –advertising.

### **Good as it is**

- No, think process is good
- Have lot of historical concerns/questions – way to garner input
- This process very different from Queen Elizabeth Park process; should be cross sharing information re: stakeholders, user groups – wheeled sports strategy looking for trails etc coming out of this (where should something like this go?)

## **OTHER COMMENTS REGARDING THE MASTER PLAN**

### **Natural Area / Increase Visitor Numbers**

- Bring in more people to the park but in a natural way
- Stewardship/preservation always been important – sets Parks apart, current City re-organization is splitting up some of the recognition of this in the past; tenuously being held together by previous relationships;
- Maintained

### **Washrooms**

- Good washrooms
- Washroom facilities should be open year round

### **River Access**

- Access from top of bank to the river –kids can throw stones

### **Winter Use**

- Proper ski tracks / Cross-country ski trails
- Keep the dog walkers and skiers separated
- Look at Gold Bar example of dog walkers and ski tracks

### **Trails / Connections**

- Better connection between Laurier and the bridge to Hawrelak
- Preserving some of the old historic trails along the river; there is an old path right by the river.

### **Dogs off leash – Separation of uses**

- People who are afraid of dogs should have access through BV park to the foot bridge without being around dogs
- Education piece is needed for both sides.
- Benches in dog area
- High concentration of pet owners in that quadrant of the city. They want to walk to the park –ie walk through Laurier to Buena Vista.
- BV side – huge area, dogs off leash have excluded other uses

### **Picnic Area / Sites**

- Most popular sites are 7 and 8. Ball diamond is not the highlight
- Canopied sites-need more
- 453 bookings last year; Year previous was higher (Revenue is \$34,000 for last year)
- Laurier park picnic shelters are great
- Add shelter with for large group activities –large BBQs , covered cook shelter,
- Old fire pits should be removed
- Lots of new immigrants using the picnic facilities
- LP side – not sure much can be done to re-purpose it

### **Parking / Signage**

- Better parking & signage

### **Accommodating Special Events – Timing of Any Construction**

- Timelines are critical.
- When it comes time for the implementation of the master plan, and some sort of construction begins, it will be important to be sensitive to the historical use of the site by certain groups. For example, the Little Big Run is a kids run associated with the Edmonton Marathon. A million public school kids come to Laurier and do a big family fun day and the kids run the roads a couple of times. This event has been going on for a number of years, is heavily subsidized by the City, and the organizers expect the park to be available for the event. The site is most suitable for the nature of the event and at that time, most of the other parks are also/already booked by other historical users for their events. We're at a point where Civic Events Office can pretty much fit and accommodate all those historical uses/needs at the various parks, and continue to accommodate new events.
- It's like taking a twin arena out of commission to replace the ice plant. All those groups that traditionally base out of that arena must be relocated, which puts a tremendous stress on the system, even when such work is scheduled and we know its coming. With arenas, only X number of arenas can be down at any one time for maintenance/upgrades. With parks, no such operating procedure exists so it is quite conceivable that a number of parks are out of service at the same time, and that seriously restricts Civic Events in allocating space that is appropriate for the particular event.
- Shutting down Laurier for construction will have an impact on many groups, not just the few groups that would need to be relocated to other (hopefully available and suitable) for their historically scheduled event. Being sensitive to the traditional scheduling of Laurier-based events is important. Phasing the work such that appropriate staging areas (over the summer season) remain viable and available is an important consideration.

### **Access**

- Remove one of the lanes from Buena Vista Road and make a bike lane to make it more recreational
- ETS buses could go down to zoo –on city free days
- Look at what happens to neighbourhood during big events?
- Reduce Buena Vista Rd. to 2 lanes, add a bike lane and sidewalk all the way to the park
- Install a gate which is locked at 11 at bottom of road to gate all road accesses.

### **Safety Concerns**

- Increase in break and enters in houses bordering the park; people wandering up from park area.