

3.0 Terwillegar Park Concept Plan

Once the initial program statement was completed, the design team began developing concept plan options for the future of Terwillegar Park. Initially four concept plan options were prepared by the design team and then reviewed with the City Project Team and the Terwillegar Park Citizen's Advisory Committee. Based on input and ideas provided by these groups, the design team revised and refined the four concepts into two concept plan options which were then presented to the public at two open house events in March 2008.

Following the open houses, the Terwillegar Park Citizen's Advisory Committee met with the design team and members of the City project team. The ideas, comments and suggestions received from the public during the open houses and through the project website were discussed and used as a foundation for developing the final concept plan. Based on the input received, the design team recommended that Concept Option 2 be used as the base for developing the final concept plan (Section 3.3), which was then refined and presented to the public at an open house in May, 2008.

3.1 Four Concept Plan Options

Each of the four initial concept plan options contained a mix of the various program elements with varying levels in terms of the number of elements, the relationship between elements and the proposed level of overall development. The design team's goal was to have a balance of program elements between the four concepts so that there was not a concept with virtually no development, and no single concept that included all of the proposed program elements. In general, all of the concepts included some level of natural area restoration, enhanced gravel (walking) and mountain bike trails, a regional trail through the site, and paved access road and parking.

At this point in the process the primary objective was to test whether the various program elements fit within the vision for the park with specific location, amount (size) and relationship being of less importance. A brief summary description of the four concept plan options, the illustrated concept plans and a matrix comparing the key program elements of the four concepts is provided in Appendix D.

3.2 Two Concept Plan Options

Based on the input and ideas of the project team and the Terwillegar Park Citizen's Advisory Committee on the four concept options, the design team prepared two draft concept plans for further review and discussion. In preparing the two concepts, the design team pulled together the strongest ideas related to the characteristics and qualities for each of the program elements to ensure that they fit within the vision of a "unique natural park" while meeting the needs of current and future users.

In reviewing the two draft concepts, a decision was made that the program elements should be the same in both concepts. This would allow the public to be able to make a direct comparison between the size, location, and relationship of the various program elements. Based on the input from the project team and the Terwillegar Park Citizen's Advisory Committee, the two concept plan options were finalized and then presented to the public at two open house events. A description and illustrations of the two concept plan options, as well as a summary of the public input, are provided in Appendix D.

3.3 Final Concept Plan

Following the open houses where the two concept plan options were presented, the Terwillegar Park Citizen's Advisory Committee met with the design team and members of the City project team. The ideas, comments and suggestions received from the public during the open houses and through the project website were discussed and used as a foundation for developing the final concept. Based on the input received, the design team recommended that Concept Option 2 be used as the base for developing the final concept. During the meeting options for refining Concept Option 2 into the final concept were proposed and discussed, and a high level of consensus was achieved. The following key changes to Concept 2 were suggested as the framework for the final concept plan:

- Paddling Lake – since there was support for the larger lake that was illustrated in Concept 1, it was suggested that the lake be located roughly as per Concept Option 2, but enlarged to better meet the needs of paddlers.
- “Beach” Trail – to accommodate the larger lake, it was suggested that the main trail connecting the parking lot and the “beach” be shifted to the west to provide a more direct connection and clear line of sight. This trail would also provide a clear edge for the designated on-leash area.
- Pond Restoration Zone – a restoration/habitat zone surrounding the existing ponds to the west and south was suggested as a means to improve the water fowl habitat. This zone would include shoreline grading and riparian/upland planting of native species.
- Designated On-Leash Area – with the enlargement of the lake the designated on-leash area was also enlarged to include approximately 16% of the total Park area. It was agreed that the main parking lot should be designated as an on-leash area for the safety of dogs and people. Since the activity area was clearly defined it was suggested that the balance of the east part of the park as defined by the area east of the “Beach” trail and north of the park entrance road should also be included in the designated on-leash area. In addition, it was suggested that the pond restoration zone also be part of the designated on-leash area although this could be considered as a management item with the on-leash only being required during establishment and perhaps seasonally in support of bird nesting.
- Roof lines – it was agreed that with all of the sheltered viewpoints, group picnic sites and washrooms that there were going to be too many rooflines in the park. To reduce this potential impact on the visual environment only three sheltered viewpoints are proposed (down from 6) and only two group picnic sites are proposed.
- Group Picnic – it was suggested that only two group picnic sites be provided (rather than 3), and that the sites be a simple open shelter surrounded by 6 picnic tables.
- Picnic Sites – it was suggested that the picnic sites designated as a picnic table on a gravel or grass area, but that no concrete pads or firepits/barbeques be provided.

- Sledding Hill – it was suggested that a sledding hill should be included in the park and that it should be designed and located for use by families i.e. a smaller hill located close to the parking lot, inside the on-leash area.
- Park Intersection – it was suggested that stop signs be included at the intersection of the park entrance road and the activity area access. This location is also where the regional trail is proposed to cross the road. The stop signs and a trail cross walk would improve safety for all users.
- Control Gates – to assist with the management of the park, control gates should be included at the entrance to the park (end of Rabbit Hill Road), at the secondary access road, off of the main and satellite parking lots (4 total). The control gate at the entrance to the park would be closed by park staff on a nightly basis. The other gates would be used by staff for maintenance or special program/event access.
- River Access – it was suggested that a popular location at the very west end of the park where people stop for access to the river's edge be maintained and improved (grading, surface treatments) to ensure that it is sustainable.

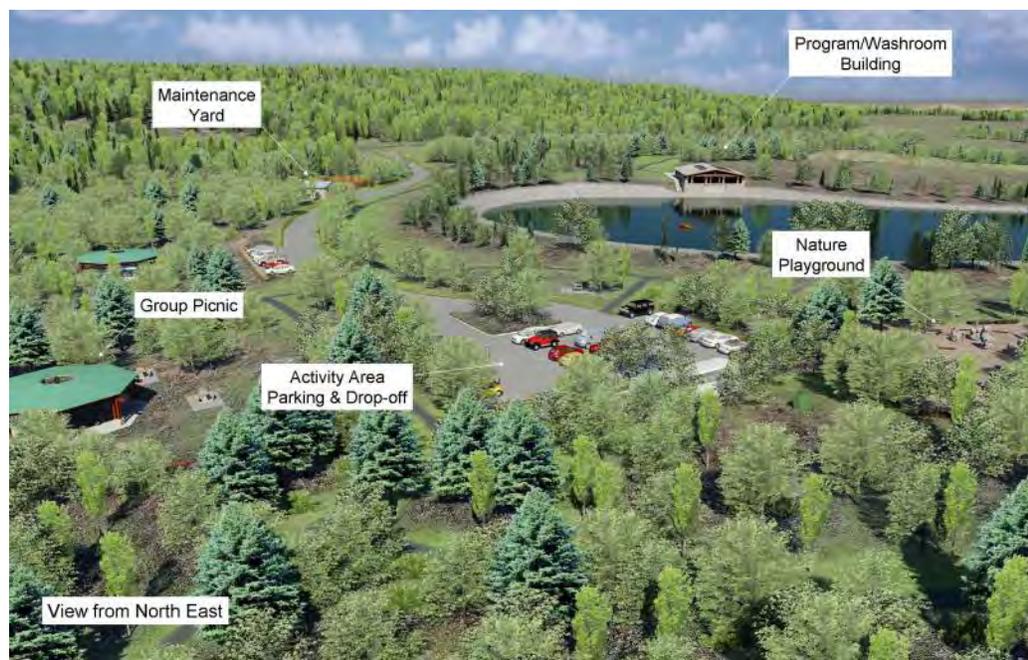
Following the meeting, the design team prepared a draft of the Final Concept Plan utilizing Concept Option 2 as the base and incorporating the suggested changes. The Final Concept Plan was then presented to the City project team and reviewed by the Terwillegar Park Citizen's Advisory Committee. Following refinement, the Final Concept Plan was presented to the public at an open house at the end of May 2008. Based on feedback from the public, the plan was finalized and included in this report.

A description of the final concept plan is provided below and illustrated on Figures 3.1-3.4. The numbers correspond to the numbers in the legend of the Figures. Program elements that are proposed but not numbered in the legend are described at the end of this section. Please note that for a detailed description of the program elements, the reader can refer to Section 2.4.

1. Regional Trail – from the west bridge along the base of the forest on an existing gravel trail, passing to the south of the parking lot through the edge of the forest, crossing the entrance road, along the old road and then through the forest to the north bridge.
2. Pedestrian Bridges – future pedestrian bridges providing access from the west (EL Smith/Cameron Heights/Anthony Henday) and providing access to the north (Country Club/Fort Edmonton Park). These bridges are not considered to be part of the Terwillegar Park development, but rather as part of the Capital Region River Valley Park (River Valley Alliance – www.rivervalley.ab.ca).
3. Paved Parking Lot Expansion – expansion of the existing parking lot to approximately 150 stalls. This expansion could be phased.
4. Paved Park Entrance Road – the park entrance road would be constructed to City standards for park roads.
5. Lighting – lights would be provided along the entrance road, at the parking lot and by the program building. Power service would be provided to meet event needs near the beach (Raft Race) and external to the program building.



6. Overflow Parking – a designated overflow parking area for approximately 300 vehicles.
7. Paved Activity Area Access – a paved park road with access off of the entrance road through the existing forest to a central location between the paddling lake, the picnic area and the canoe/kayak launch. The road would provide access to three satellite parking areas (with a total of 110 stalls) with turn-around's by the picnic area and by the program/washroom building.



8. Program / Washroom Building – located on edge of the lake, adjacent to the one of the satellite parking lots. Location and orientation towards the central open space makes it well suited as a venue for event coordination. The washrooms would be accessible from the outside and a location would be provide to leash a dog. A water fountain and a “doggy fountain” would also be provided on the outside of the building.
9. Remote Toilets – two are proposed – one at the west end of the park close to the future bridge on the main trail and one by the picnic area with proximity to the proposed canoe/kayak launch.

10. Entrance Node – one entrance node off of the main parking lot

11. Enhanced Walking Trails – approximately 8.5 km of existing informal trails will be enhanced by creating an even, compacted, fine granular surface and by eliminating drainage and erosion problems. One main trail loop around the outside of the park will be enhanced and maintained at 3.0m wide for service and emergency access. Generally, the other trails will be enhanced and will remain at their existing widths.



12. Universal Access Trail – approximately 1.2 km of paved, 1.5 m wide asphalt trail designed to universal standards and providing access from the program/washroom building, through the forest at the east end of the park and to viewpoints at the “beach”.

13. Enhanced Mountain Bike Trails – approximately 4.5 km of single track trail enhanced for sustainability of the trail surface (elimination of problem areas for erosion) and surrounding forest as well as for safety and user experience

14. Viewpoints – a total of 7 providing river and park views. Three of the viewpoints would also include a roof for shelter.



15. Group Picnic Site – 2 group picnic sites with a shelter (24’ dia.) and six tables will be developed and will be designed as ‘bookable’ facilities.

16. Interpretive Nodes – approximately 10 interpretive node locations and potential themes have been proposed and are illustrated on Figure 4.4. Additional locations and defined interpretive storylines would be developed during detailed design. Some of the proposed interpretive themes include:

- Succession – much of the park is becoming naturalized after the surface disturbance caused by gravel extraction activities in the 1970's
 - Wildlife movement – Terwillegar Park, being an “end destination” for large wildlife in south Edmonton, provides a venue for many visible species, particularly in the south end of the park
 - White spruce-dominated forest – the stand of spruce in the central part of the site is the only example of this type of habitat in all Terwillegar Park
 - Parkland forest and the habitats of the river valley
 - Old gravel pits – explaining how gravel extraction and its subsequent reclamation and regrading of the land has resulted in the series of open water ponds prevalent today
 - Grasslands – the uniqueness of the grasslands, its origin and range of species present
 - Valley overlook – the North Saskatchewan River valley is a cherished landmark for Edmontonians, and demonstrates a unique landform that relates to the geology of the region
17. Designated On-Leash Area – approximately 28.4 hectares (16% of the total park area. The recommended area includes around the paddling lake, the activity area, the main parking lot, and the balance of the east part of the park as defined by the area east of the “Beach” trail and north of the park entrance road.
18. Canoe / Kayak Teaching Area – a graded and seeded area (7:1 slope) on the edge of the lake designed for easy access into the water for teaching canoe/kayaks groups.
19. Picnic Area – 20 picnic sites – tables on gravel pads
20. Nature Playground – a designated playground area of approximately 450 square metres.
21. Sledding Hill – a small sledding hill designed for use by young families – located adjacent to the main parking lot, inside the designated on-leash area, and constructed from excavated material from the paddling lake.
22. Dock & Canoe / Kayak Launch – constructed by grading in an existing natural drainage channel in the forest, located approximately 75 m east of the proposed satellite parking area. A control gate would allow paddling groups (eg. Voyageur Canoes) to access the launch location for loading and unloading.
23. Maintenance Garage & Yard – a maintenance yard with garage tucked into the edge of the forest at the east end off of the activity area access road.
24. Stormwater Infiltration Dry Pond – adjacent to the parking lot to store and infiltrate stormwater coming off of the entrance road and the parking lot
25. Buffer Planting – locations throughout the park.



26. Control Gates – at the entrance to the park (end of Rabbit Hill Road), from the main parking lot to control access to the overflow parking, by the maintenance yard to control access to the activity area and by the canoe/kayak launch road to provide seasonal access control along this path.

27. Paddling Lake – a 2.0 hectare lake located east of the expanded parking lot on the edge of the existing forest. With the graded slopes and surrounding berms restored with native forest, the lake would blend into the park environment. The lake would be part of the designated on-leash area



The program elements that are included in the Final Concept Plan but are not numbered on Figures 3.1 to 3.4 are defined below:

- Mowed Open Space – central part of site to be mowed 1-2 times per year to maintain weed control and to provide for event use.
- Forest Restoration – areas of native tree and shrub planting to increase the amount of forest cover in the park and to improve habitat area.
- Buffer Planting – planting of native tree and shrub species in large beds in different areas of the park will be used to create visual or physical buffers between use areas and in the parking lot reduce the scale and improve the fit with the natural environment.
- Cross country ski trails – approximately 8.0 km of designated cross country ski trails are proposed originating from the program/washroom building which will be heated for dressing and warm-up. An 1.1 km loop is provided around the lake and to the east along the universal trails; a 2.4 km loop is provided out into the off-leash area, and a 4.0 km loop is provided around the entire park. A 1.7 km loop is also proposed in the upland area. The open space area adjacent to the program/washroom building and inside of the designated on-leash area is suitable for the development of a lit cross country ski teaching area
- Utility Servicing – as defined in the program statement (Section 2.3) and in the Access and Servicing Review (Appendix B), water, gas and power services will be provided into the Park.. Sustainable design alternatives should be considered and implemented where practical to reduce servicing requirements and to meet LEED objectives.
- Amenities – as identified in Section 2.4, there are a number of amenities proposed for the park as part of the program including benches, trash and recycling, drinking fountains, dog bag dispensers and bluphones. Key amenity locations have been proposed and are illustrated on Figure 4.4. Additional amenities may be required and can be specified at detailed design.