

GALLAGHER PARK CONCEPT PLAN WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

PHASE 1: GATHERING IDEAS

MAY 2019

Photo Credit: Mack Male, mastermaq.ca

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Project Overview

The purpose of this project is to ensure a long-term strategic approach for the development and use of Gallagher Park through the development of a 20-year concept plan.

A concept plan builds on existing plans, policies and initiatives while identifying public needs and priorities for the park. The plan also provides direction for environmental protection and recommends civic, cultural and recreational uses that are appropriate to the area.



Today, Gallagher Park is home to several amenities including the **Muttart Conservatory**, an indoor botanical garden that is housed within four glass pyramids; the **Edmonton Ski Club**, which includes a facility, ski hills, parking lot and supporting infrastructure; the **Cloverdale Community League**, which includes a building, ice rink and shack; and a City-operated playground and spray park. The park also includes a public toboggan hill during the winter months and is home to the **Edmonton Folk Music Festival** during the summer.

Other park amenities include a multi-use trail that crosses a portion of the park, connecting Mill Creek Ravine to the south and the future LRT/footbridge that leads across the river to Louise McKinney Riverfront Park to the north. Trails through this area are important for commuters and recreational users. The project area also includes the treed slope commonly referred to as the 'camel humps' east of Cloverdale Hill Road. Some industrial remains in this area have interpretive value. By 2021 the park will be serviced by the new Valley Line LRT, with a stop located near Muttart Conservatory in the northwest corner of the park.





Planning Context

Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River Valley is known as the largest urban park in Canada, with more than 160km of maintained pathways and 20 major parks.

The City of Edmonton takes a specific approach in planning and maintaining parks in the River Valley. Development is restricted and recreational activities and uses are balanced with the protection of the natural ecosystem.

The recognition of the natural value of the River Valley was first noted in 1915 when the City of Edmonton adopted a report by Frederick G. Todd, a Landscape Architect from Montreal, to protect the River Valley for recreation. Sixty years later, the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP), Bylaw 7188, was passed and reinforced the value of the River Valley landscape in City policy. The ARP seeks to protect the North Saskatchewan River Valley and ravine system as part of Edmonton's valuable open space heritage and establishes the principles for future implementation plans and programs for parks development.

We want the future Gallagher Park to improve the quality of life for those who visit and enjoy the space. That's why, along with considering existing plans and policies, talking to YOU is so important to this process.

Related City-Wide Plans and Policies

CAPITAL CITY RECREATION PARK CONCEPT PLAN (CCRPCP), 1975

CONNECT EDMONTON

PARKLAND BYLAW (C2202), CONSOLIDATED 2003

BREATHE: EDMONTON'S GREEN NETWORK STRATEGY

LIVE ACTIVE

EDMONTON EVENT STRATEGY

APPROACH TO COMMUNITY AND RECREATION PLANNING IN EDMONTON

BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN, 1992, UPDATED IN 2009

FOR THE LOVE OF WINTER: STRATEGY FOR TRANSFORMING EDMONTON INTO A WORLD-LEADING WINTER CITY, 2012

DOGS IN OPEN SPACES STRATEGY, 2016

RIBBON OF GREEN

NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER VALLEY AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (BYLAW 7188), 1985, CONSOLIDATED 2014

RIVER ACCESS GUIDING PRINCIPLES POLICY C586, 2015

DEVELOPMENT SETBACKS FROM RIVER VALLEY/RAVINE CRESTS (TOP OF BANK POLICY C542), 2010

CLOVERDALE ARP

Adjoining the Site

VALLEY LINE LRT LINE AND STATION

MILL CREEK DAYLIGHTING

Engagement Plan

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

The role of the public in each phase of engagement is to work with the City to **Refine** these 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 two possible concept plans 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.



Phase 1 Engagement: Gathering Ideas

Development of a Proposed Vision Statement & Guiding Principles

WHAT WE DID

The City of Edmonton hosted an engagement event on March 6, 2019, at the Cloverdale Community Hall from 4:30–7:30PM.

The focus of this event was to gather public input on a proposed vision and draft guiding principles for the future parks, as well as peoples insights, experiences and knowledge of the park site that would assist in the development of draft concept plan alternatives. These alternatives will be made available to the public for comment during the next phase of engagement.

Participants contributed to the planning process in four ways:

1. A comment form at the public engagement event
2. Sticky notes posted on display boards at the engagement event
3. Feedback through the online survey
4. A similar survey was offered to the City of Edmonton's Insight Community for broader input

PARTICIPATION

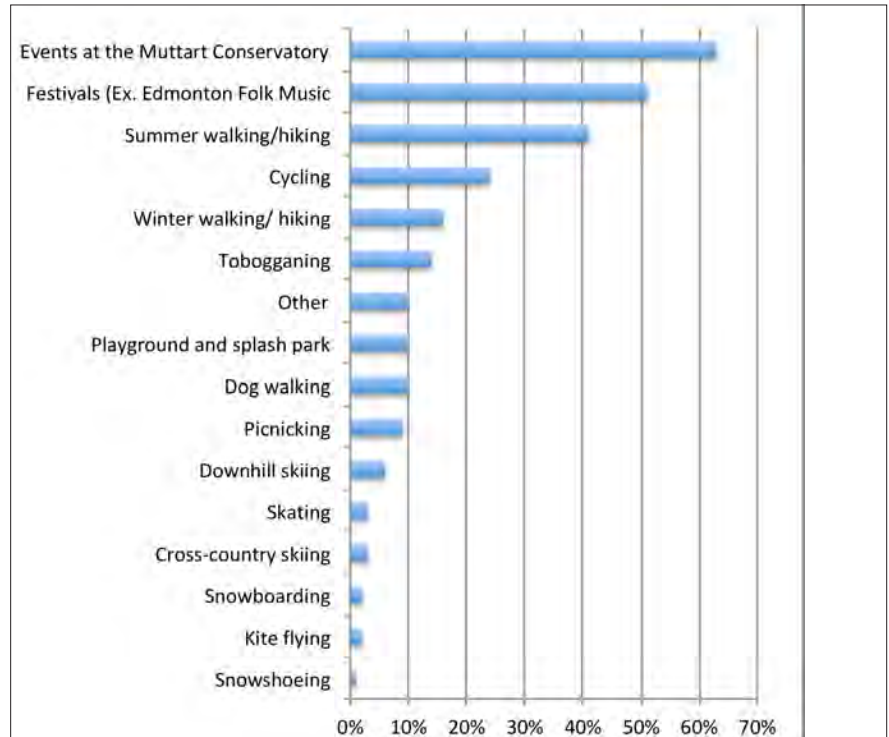
Individuals attending the Engagement Event	91
Submitting comment forms on site	30
Responses to the Open Link online survey	177
Responses from the Insight Community	2,328
TOTAL RESPONSES	2,626

In addition, the Steering Committee and Project Team composed of the site partners, City, and design team have met on a total of nine occasions along with individual focused interviews with each site partner.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

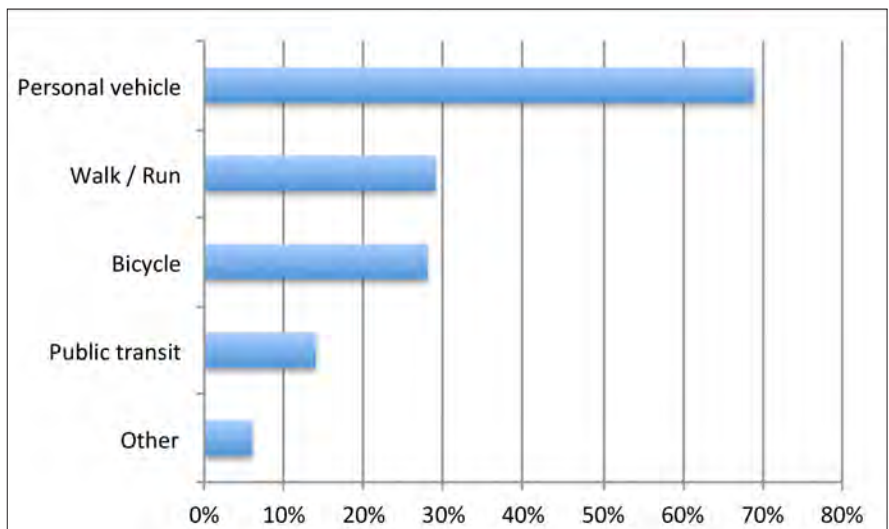
How do participants currently use Gallagher Park?

Participants provided information on how they currently use Gallagher Park...



How do participants currently get to Gallagher Park?

...and how participants currently access Gallagher Park.



Site Inventory and Analysis

Gallagher Park has always been a cherished and well-used river valley park. 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 topping its banks. As a river valley park, its environmental assets are protected and, with careful planning, enhanced for the enjoyment of both Edmontonians and visitors. The spectacular viewpoints are some of the best our City has to offer, and attract photographers and those who simply want to enjoy the panorama.

The following are examples of the Idea Gathering Panels which attendees were asked to provide comments on to inform our site analysis and understanding.

Site History

Tell us what you know about Gallagher Park.

A few significant points in Gallagher Park's history:

- + Indigenous settlements were common along the North Saskatchewan River.
- + Gallagher Park was created and named in 1958 after Cornelius Gallagher.
- + The Edmonton Ski Club was established in 1911.
- + Cloverdale Community League was established in 1920.
- + The Muttart Conservatory was built in Gallagher park in 1976.
- + The Edmonton Folk Music Festival was first held in Gallagher Park in 1981.

Have we missed anything?

Learn more by going to: edmonton.ca/engagement

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REFINE

Access and Circulation: Major Shared-Use Paths

Tell us how you currently get to Gallagher Park.

- Project Boundary
- Existing Shared-Use Path or Shared-Use Lane
- Major Park Entry Points
- Future LRT Line and Station
- Existing LRT Line and Station
- Existing Funicular

Have we missed anything?

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REFINE

Access and Circulation: Walking Distances

Tell us how you currently get to Gallagher Park.

- Project Boundary
- Within 0.5 km walking distance
- 0.5-1 km walking distance
- Major Park Entry Points
- Existing LRT Line and Station
- Future LRT Line and Station
- Existing Funicular

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Environmental Considerations

Tell us what you know about Gallagher Park.

The Environmental Overview for this project will investigate local environmental conditions including:

- + Surface and groundwater
- + Past contamination
- + Soils and terrain stability
- + Vegetation communities, weeds, and rare plants
- + Wildlife species, connectivity, and species at risk
- + Historical resources

Have we missed anything?



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Character Areas

Tell us what you know about Gallagher Park.

- 1 **Cloverdale Community League:** Existing playground and spray park along with half court basketball and Community League building and skating rink. The area is landscaped and partially enclosed with a wrought iron fence.
- 2 **Muttart Conservatory:** The scale and the placement of the Conservatory building and its ancillary buildings separates the northwest corner of Gallagher Park. This area is primarily oriented to access the Conservatory.
- 3 **Parkland Use Area:** The grassed hillside and the bottom of the slopes are used as a tobogganing and skiing facility in the winter. In the summer, it serves as amphitheater seating for the Edmonton Folk Music Festival. The slopes are defined by existing tree stands. It contains a main building, service and storage facilities, along with tow rope and T-bar support systems. It also contains the Peace Dove.
- 4 **Strathearn Park / Camel Humps Forested Area:** The forested area provides a physical backdrop and edge to Gallagher Park while providing a variety of walking and mountain biking trails connecting the Park with Strathearn neighbourhood. Many formal and informal viewpoints can be found along the eastern boundary.



Have we missed anything?

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Viewpoints

Tell us your favourite viewpoints.

-  Project Boundary
-  Future LRT Line
-  Viewpoint

Have we missed anything?



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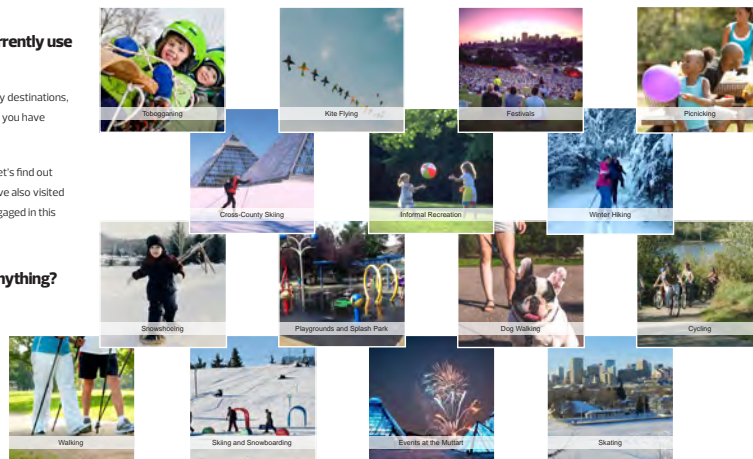
Current Uses

Tell us how you currently use Gallagher Park.

We want to know about any destinations, activities and festivals that you have participated in at the park.

Mark them with a dot and let's find out how many other people have also visited this destination or have engaged in this activity or festival!

Have we missed anything?



Learn more by going to: edmonton.ca/engagement

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REFINE

Phase 1: What We Heard

A Proposed Vision and Guiding Principles for Gallagher Park

The current site partners including the Cloverdale Community League, Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Edmonton Ski Club, and the Muttart Conservatory have worked together to share future plans and aspirations, and to develop a proposed Vision and Guiding Principles for the Concept Plan.

Our vision for Gallagher Park, the only river valley park accessed 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



What We Heard: Vision and Guiding Principles

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

In addition to the proposed guiding principles, participants also identified the following as important considerations in the development of the concept plan:

- . Access and accessibility
- . Environment and heritage
- . Recreational activities
- . Amenities
- . Safety and security

“I like that the park will be more accessible to all Edmontonians.”

“...sounds good...”

“I like the enhanced ecological values. It’s good. I agree with all of them.”

“LRT access will be a very positive asset.”

“... off to a great start!”

Breathe: A Multi-Functional Green Network

Edmonton's Green Network Strategy examined how open space in the City of Edmonton functions as an integrated network of public spaces that provide real, measurable value to Edmontonians. Open spaces contribute to human health and wellness, improve the urban environment, and provide places for people to come together. These contributions are the central themes of the Green Network Strategy, and provide the organizing framework for assessing open space.

These central themes provide a useful framework for organizing the input we received through the Phase 1 Engagement.

The central themes of Breathe are the following:

WELLNESS	Promotes healthy living. Fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation and mobility.
ECOLOGY	Supports and enhances the environment. Sustains healthy and resilient ecosystems by providing and enhancing ecological services.
CELEBRATION	Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place. Places for communities to thrive, gather, and celebrate.

Using this structure, participant comments were analyzed to identify consistent themes and suggested ideas. Phase 2 of the Concept Planning process will include a quantitative analysis of support for proposed park enhancements.

Wellness

Access & Accessibility

By far the most frequent theme mentioned by participants was access to and accessibility within Gallagher Park. Most frequent within this category were support for the unique concept of accessing Gallagher Park by LRT and improving connections for cyclists, skiers and pedestrians.

Participants identified the unique opportunity for access to the Park by persons with disabilities and seniors with mobility impairment. Participants were also very supportive of improving access to the Park by active transportation modes. Issues and alternatives regarding parking were also discussed.

LRT

Participants were generally very supportive of access to Gallagher Park by LRT and the opportunities it creates. LRT access should enable a broader proportion of Edmontonians to enjoy the river valley, access the Folk Festival, ski/toboggan hills and Muttart Conservatory, and providing a central location for outdoor activities. While supportive, participants noted that the park has a limited capacity and should not be overcrowded, impact on surrounding communities must be considered, and facilities will be necessary to support increased use.



PARKING

Participants raised parking as a critical issue but differ on how to address the problem. Some participants requested adequate parking to meet the needs of enhanced activities.

Some suggested that not everyone will access the park by LRT or active modes, nor would this be suitable for seniors, persons with disabilities or those requiring bulky equipment. The needs of community residents should be respected suggesting a permanent restricted parking program. Disabled parking will be necessary.

Others were concerned that providing more parking will be at the expense of recreational and green space. A range of options are necessary to ensure that additional parking is not required.

Recreational Activities

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

Participants indicated a long history and connection to downhill skiing, cross-country skiing and snowboarding in Gallagher Park and identified these sports as preferred future uses of the park with modernized facilities and amenities. Generally, participants indicated that any changes should take into consideration the impact on the Folk Festival, and that additional snow sports should be considered such as free style, fat biking, tubing, ice climbing, and ski jumping.

Participants viewed the Edmonton Ski Club as a valued resource for the City of Edmonton, an important part of our history, and a unique location for a learning facility for skiers, but also in need of revitalization and new facilities.



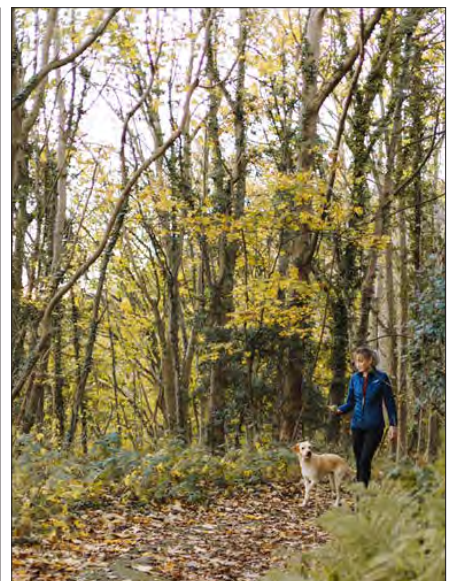
CYCLING

Participants identified cycling as a popular traditional use of the park. Those discussing this topic generally felt that trails for walking and biking should be a priority use in the park in the future. Suggestions included ensuring connectivity of trails to the river valley network with signage, enhanced mountain bike and single track trails specifically in the Camel Humps, year round cycling opportunities, and appropriate bike racks and secure storage.

TRAILS

Participants identified walking, biking, and ski trails as an important component of planning for the park. Given the location, connections to the river valley trails system, adjacent neighbourhoods, and Mill Creek Ravine were often identified as critical. Trails do not currently provide for a flow through the park and often end abruptly.

Many participants indicated that current trails need repair or improvement before new trails are established. Trails should enable access by persons with disabilities and, where possible, bicycle and walking trails should be separated. Paved trails suitable for use by the Folk Festival could connect the key features of the park. Trail users would benefit from amenities such as washrooms, a coffee shop, and program areas. Some participants also identified the Camel Humps as good terrain for mountain biking. Stairs would facilitate access from communities adjacent to the river valley and create easier access between the top and bottom of the hill.



CHILDREN & PLAY

Most references to children and play were in relation to their current use of the park or reminiscences of how they have used the park in the past. Participants referred to learning to ski or their children learning to ski, picnics or general enjoyment of the park.

Some suggestions for future design included continuation of ski facilities and programs, and child-friendly activities adjacent to existing facilities such as the Muttart.

SKATING

Skating was frequently mentioned in lists of existing and potential winter uses of the park along with other sports such as downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, tobogganing/sledding, and ice climbing. A very popular reference within this theme was to a possible skating path in the park.

Participants identified the need for new or renovated change room facilities to support these activities.



VIEWPOINTS

Participants recognized the unique views of the downtown skyline and river valley available from Gallagher Park, and that these views should be preserved, enhanced and utilized in future facilities. Equally, participants indicated that these views should not be obstructed or reduced.

TOBOGGANING & SLEDDING

Those who use Gallagher Park for sledding and tobogganing would like these facilities to remain as the hill is viewed as safe, open and accessible, with an adequate run-out. LRT access may not be useful, as users would be carrying bulky equipment, so parking is a consideration. Some facilities are recommended such as washrooms, warming shelters and refreshments.



Ecology

Participants were in support of the proposed principle of enhancing the ecological values of the park. Ensuring and maintaining the natural state of the river valley and availability of green space continue to be priorities in planning the future of the park.

A wide range of opinions on environmental options

Opinions varied from ensuring the preservation of existing natural areas, to protecting and enhancing green space as a key component, through to increased restoration and naturalizing of the Park.

Some participants accepted that this was already a disturbed area but had retained a natural beauty. New facilities should preserve what green space currently exists and any new facilities should build upon an appreciation of the natural areas.

Others suggested keeping the area as natural as possible noting that recreational uses did not necessarily need to impact natural features.

Still others suggested reclaiming the area to a natural state, returning native vegetation and increasing tree coverage.



Celebration

Muttart Conservatory

The Muttart conservatory is the primary reason why participants currently visit Gallagher Park and participants showed considerable pride and support for these facilities. Many participants suggested that visits by both residents and visitors would be increased with access to LRT.

Edmonton Folk Music Festival

As the second most common current use of the Park, participants showed strong support for continuing to locate the Edmonton Folk Music Festival (EFMF) in Gallagher Park. Again there was encouragement for accessing the EFMF by LRT. As long standing users of the Park, some noted the need for permanent facilities including drainage, electrical and facilities, others were concerned about increased development in the Park for a short-term use. There are also concerns regarding the impact resulting from the Festival on the environment and natural space, and neighbourhood residents. As a natural amphitheatre and convenient gathering space, some participants suggested that other music, cultural and recreational festivals could also make use of the Park.

Indigenous Peoples

Participants recognized the significance of Indigenous Peoples traditional use of these lands as gathering places. They indicated a preference for honouring the importance of Indigenous heritage through the incorporation of educational or interpretive features in the Park.

Amenities

Participants identified that new or renovated facilities would need to be considered to support these activities. Participants offered a range of views on expanded amenities and commercial development in the concept plan, equally divided between limited development, balanced development, and development of appropriate facilities.

Those supporting limited or no commercial development cited the general need to preserve the natural spaces within the river valley. Concerns were expressed that any increase in development would

increase traffic and congestion, and impact the quality of life in the adjacent neighbourhoods.

Those suggesting balanced development indicated that if commercial or recreational facilities were necessary, any development should balance the purpose of the facility with maintenance of the natural surroundings, and ensure environmentally responsible design, construction and operation.

Those encouraging the incorporation of appropriate facilities suggested that facilities such as washrooms, warming huts, change rooms, coffee shop, dining, and a ski club would be necessary to support activities in the park. There was a recognition that the needs of local residents must be taken into consideration in selecting and locating commercial development.

Safety & Security

Some participants identified increased access, particularly by LRT, would require increased security to protect park users and community residents. Increased access to the river valley could result in drug use, illegal camping, and littering, and create issues for personal safety and damage to the environment, residences and facilities.

Lighting

Participants also discussed the need for enhanced lighting in the park to promote year around and evening activities, ensure safety and security, and enable safe pedestrian access.



Going Forward

As a Result, What Has Changed in the Project?

A strong majority of participants told us that we are on the right track, and we have a clear idea of the priorities of Edmontonians.

The ideas that we have received through the engagement process will inform the evolving vision and design options for Gallagher Park that will be included in the alternative concept plans. The project team will consider the ideas that we have received through the engagement process to inform the development of alternative concept plans.

What's Next

The next step in the Gallagher Park Concept Plan Project is to work with the site partners to develop alternative concept plans for consideration, including summer and winter programming and recommendations for site improvements and facilities.

The next round of public engagement will take place during the fall of 2019, and will focus on public and user preferences and reasons for those preferences.

Thank you for participating in sharing your voice and shaping our city.

For more information on City of Edmonton public engagement, please visit www.edmonton.ca/publicengagement

