

# What We Heard Report

## Keswick East and Keswick West Park Development

Kevin Brygidy, Program Manager  
Open Space Planning and Design  
kevin.brygidy@edmonton.ca

[edmonton.ca/projects\\_plans/parks\\_recreation/keswick-east-and-west-park.aspx](http://edmonton.ca/projects_plans/parks_recreation/keswick-east-and-west-park.aspx)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Project Overview	PG 3
2. Public Engagement	PG 3
3. How We Engaged	PG 5
4. Who Was Engaged	PG 5
5. What We Asked	PG 6
6. What We Heard	PG 7
7. What Happens Next?	PG 13

## A. Project Overview

This report is for a set of projects for development of two independent sites - Keswick 'east' park site and Keswick 'west' park site.

This project includes planning, design and construction of base-level development for school and community (neighbourhood) park sites. It bundles two independent standalone project sites in the Keswick Area:

*Keswick East ( 1140/1110 Keswick Drive SW )*

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

*Keswick West ( 1905/1707 182 Street SW )*

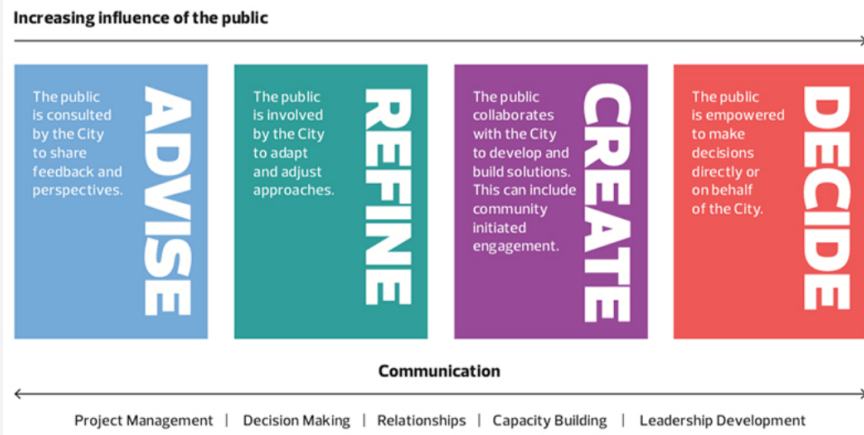
- Site to accommodate an Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) Elementary/Junior High School
- Approximately 8.0 ha in size
- Located in the central portion of the neighbourhood

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

## B. Public Engagement

Public engagement followed the Advise level on the City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Spectrum. The Advise level was selected for public engagement due to the scope of the project, to provide only base-level park development to support the two schools under construction on the park sites.

## The City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Spectrum.



The public's role in public engagement for these projects is to ADVISE

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

Public engagement events were adapted to online methods to align with COVID-19 public health restrictions on social gathering.

### C. How We Engaged

Two online public engagement events were held. The first was held in November of 2020 where we shared the concept options for both the Keswick East and Keswick West Park Development projects and asked for the public's input on them. We invited the public to share their input on concept designs via an online survey on the Engaged Edmonton platform and collected their feedback. We gathered feedback through virtual meetings with stakeholders, as well.

A second round of public engagement was held in January 2021. Concept plans for each site were presented through the Engaged Edmonton platform. The public was invited to share their opinion with others to inform a preferred concept plan for each site. This round of engagement was designed in a more interactive manner to encourage discussion with other community members.

Postcards with the webpage link were circulated to neighbouring communities and Keswick residents. The Greater Windermere Community League, which is the community league for Keswick, was also included in the public engagement notification.

Stakeholders such Alberta Infrastructure, who are managing the construction of the two schools, were included in the draft concept plan review, and adjacent developers: Rohit Group, MLC and Cantiro Communities were invited to participate in both public engagement events.

## D. Who Was Engaged

### External Stakeholders

Key stakeholder involvement for Phase 1 – Concept Design included:

- External stakeholders: Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) and Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD)

Discussions were held with external stakeholders in a total of four virtual meetings to obtain input on the site analysis, design program and draft site planning alternatives. These discussions took place in October and November 2020.

### Public Engagement

Due to COVID-19, the project team focused on online public engagement. An online survey was embedded in the Engaged Edmonton platform to gather feedback as part of Phase 1 – Concept Design. For the first public engagement event, the Engaged Edmonton

page was live from November 16 to November 30, 2020. The second event took place between January 18 to January 29, 2021 and presented the proposed concept plans and included a comment board with questions encouraging participants to share their feedback and “like” comments left by others.

## E. What We Asked

The online survey for the first event asked the following questions:

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

The comment board for the second event asked the following questions:

- What they liked most about the proposed plan.
- If anything was missing.
- Any changes they suggest to improve the Concept Plan.

What do you like most about the proposed plans?



Image: The three questions participants were invited to respond to during the second public engagement event.

## F. What We Heard

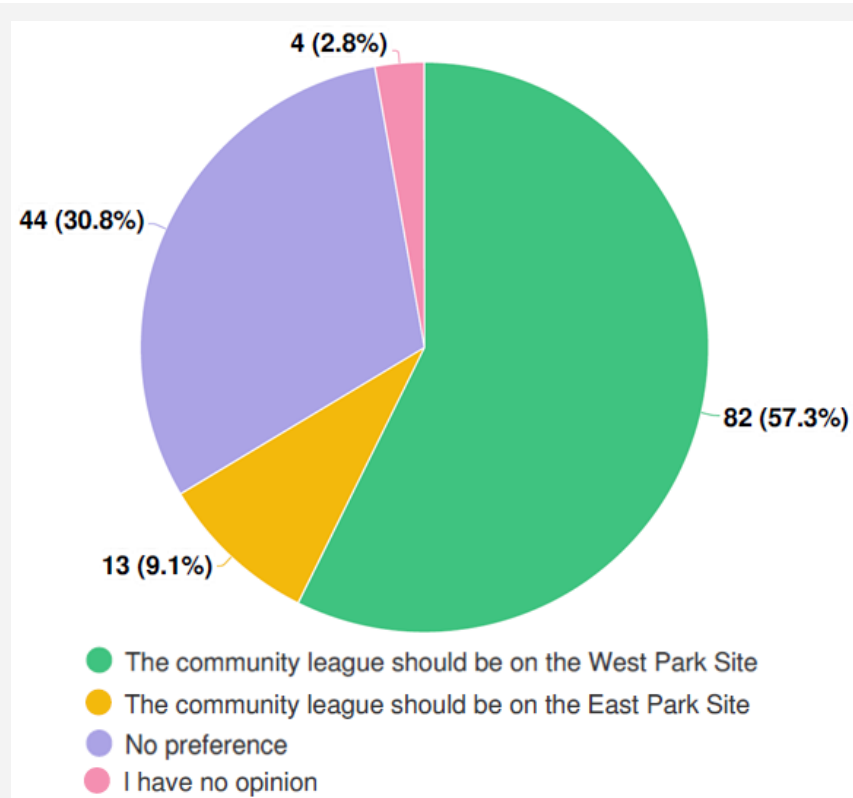
Feedback from the **first public engagement** event determined:

### East Park Site

- 83% of respondents (of how many participants if your focus is on the quantities) supported the concept plan (this includes the 53.5% who strongly support it and 29.6% who somewhat support it).
- The top four preferred future amenities were: playground, free skate and walkways (with social gathering spaces coming in a close 4<sup>th</sup> place).
- 84% of respondents supported the location of the proposed baseball diamond located in the north portion of the site.
- The majority of written comments came from those who supported the plan (70 out of 84 comments) with comments such as:
  - “Keswick is a growing community of young families, therefore having an assortment of amenities available will be greatly beneficial for existing and future residents.”
  - “Great ideas for all ages and nice to see community spaces being considered. Great design.”
  - “Much needed.”
  - “Excellent for Health and wellness, gets everyone to go outside more, especially during winter. West Park Site.”

### West Park Site

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



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

- The top four preferred enhanced-level developments as part of the community league area included: outdoor skating rink with boards and lighting, free skate, space for covered picnic area and events and community hall (with parking). Followed closely with the community garden, as the fifth choice. The batting cages were the least popular amenity.
- 91% of respondents supported the location of the baseball diamond in the northeast corner of the site.
- 87% of respondents supported the concept plan. With 63% offering strong support and 24% only somewhat supporting.

**Draft Concept Plan: What We Did**

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

Other changes to the concept plans include:



- The future amenity placeholders were revisited to align with the top four preferred amenities as identified by the survey respondents.
- On the east site the playground and free skate amenities remained, as they were the top two preferences.
- The community orchard/berry garden was replaced with an open space community gathering area that could include picnic tables, benches, and gaming tables.
- On the west site: the preferred amenities did not change, as the same amenities proposed on the concept plan were preferred by the survey respondents: snow bank rink, playground and splash pad.
- Feedback from the **second public engagement** event determined: The Engaged Edmonton page was viewed by 126 visitors, who shared 32 Ideas:
  - 12 Ideas for the East site
  - 20 Ideas for the West site

### Responses on the East Park Site Final Draft Concept Plan

The Ideas that received the most attention included:

- Requesting a spray park and tobogganing hill in either park
- Requesting an outdoor pool
- Requesting an outdoor tennis court
- Locate playground closer to school for student safety
- Replace soccer fields with basketball court
- Provide separate vehicle access to the teacher parking lot to avoid traffic bottleneck

People had diverse opinions about the proposed concept plan include:

- "Too many soccer fields"
- "Include a skating rink"
- "Convert a soccer field into a skating rink"
- "Add more amenities for adults"
- "Move the baseball diamond to the West site"
- "Replace the baseball diamond with tennis courts and skating rink"

Responses on the West Park Site Draft Final Concept Plan

There were a total of 20 Ideas submitted. The most popular Ideas included:

- “Replace the soccer fields with sports courts such as basketball, tennis courts, volleyball and badminton”
- “Add garbage cans and dog-waste bag dispensers on pathways”
- “Add a fenced-in off-leash dog park”

Other comments included topics such as:

- Tobogganing hill
- Community league and parking lot
- Outdoor pool
- Provide adequate lighting along pathways
- Make the soccer fields multi-purpose
- Splash pad
- Ensure there are play-structures for younger/toddler and older kids in the playground
- Prefer a skating rink with boards and seating area for skate changing
- Keep the soccer fields, they are in high demand
- Sand volleyball court

The dog park request received mixed support with two votes in favour, but two comments concerned about a dog park close to a school.

There were also mixed responses for sand volleyball courts with two votes in support, one in support only with a different surface in, one opposed.

### **Emailed Public Feedback**

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

- Location of the Hiller Road connection to 182 Street and the opening of an east entry to Hiller Road in Keswick;

Stakeholder feedback specific to the West Park Site Final Draft Concept Plan included the following topics:

- Extend landscape buffer for added privacy to residential lots backing onto the park in the south corner.
- Support walkway and lighting construction as part of this project to ensure coordinated effort and timing.

## G. What Happens Next?

Tobogganing hill was a popular amenity among participants.

### What We Did

Following the second public engagement event, the final concept plan was modified in response to the public feedback. The following changes were made:

1. **Tobogganing Hill** - The sledding hill on the East Park Site was relabelled to “tobogganing hill”.
2. **East Park Site Playground Location** - The playground location has to be located outside of the school lease area to qualify for the Neighbourhood Park Development Program. In collaboration with Alberta Infrastructure the most desirable location for the playground that was both close to the school and easily accessible to the surrounding community, is the chosen location on the Final Draft Concept Plan.

Considering the location constraint based on Alberta Infrastructure, City of Edmonton requirements, and public feedback asking for a different location, a second option for the location of a future playground was considered in the southeast corner of the park, next to the school. This locates the playground safely next to the school. However, it isolates the playground to the corner of the park, away from proposed community amenities. Because the playground is considered a community asset, this location is not preferred by the project team as it takes the playground away from other community gathering spaces, drawing parents away from the activity to supervise their children in the playground.

3. **Number of Sports Fields** - Soccer fields are identified as desirable infrastructure on both sites by the school boards. In addition, sports field allocations at the City of Edmonton indicates there is a shortage of soccer fields and baseball diamonds in this area of the city. This statement was supported by 2 comments on the West Park Site Final Draft Concept Plan that they have had difficulties booking sports

Dog parks are not part of base-level development and are informed through a specific strategy.

fields for practices. Therefore, the number of proposed soccer fields and baseball diamonds will not change in the Final Concept Plan for each park site.

4. **Dog Park** – Off-leash, fenced or other forms of dog parks are not identified as base-level amenities for a school park site in the Urban Parks Management Plan (UPMP). The scope of work for this project is limited to the design and delivery (construction) of base-level amenities. Considerations for future use, including shared and enhanced level amenities are identified in the design process as placeholders. Dog parks are referred to as off-leash sites at the City is currently working on a design [strategy](#) and [implementation plan](#) to guide development of more off-leash sites in Edmonton. Off-leash dog sites in neighbouring communities include: Paisley Dog Park at 3051 Paisley Green SW and Terwillegar Park Off-Leash Area 10 Rabbit Hill Rd NW.
5. **Partner-led Development** - The proposed future amenities such as the playgrounds, community league building, spray park, and etc. are not part of the base-level development project scope. The amenities require a community-led process, Neighbourhood Park Development Program (NPDP) and working with the Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator to initiate their construction. More information on the NPDP can be found [here](#).

### Next Steps

The public engagement phase for this project has now concluded. Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their input.

The project team will finalize the concept plan and move through the design process towards construction of the base-level infrastructure, including landscaping and sport fields.

Visit the [project webpage](#) for updates on the base-level construction.

