

What We Heard Report

Callingwood Off-Leash Area Enhancement

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Public Engagement Summary and Results

Project Overview

"I think it is a great idea and would create a safer community for the humans and their dogs in the neighborhood. But having a couple additional access points and fully enclosed would be ideal." (Survey respondent)

Off-leash areas are seen by many citizens as a valuable community asset. Ensuring that these areas are safe for both dogs and humans is the key priority behind enhancements. From the [Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy](#), it was recommended that all off-leash areas contain standard amenities including:

- Signage with relevant bylaws clearly explained
- Dog waste bag dispensers
- Waste receptacles
- Treed open space
- Clear delineation of physical boundaries, either hard (fencing) or soft (landscaping or other landforms)

Strategy

Concept

Design

Build

Operate

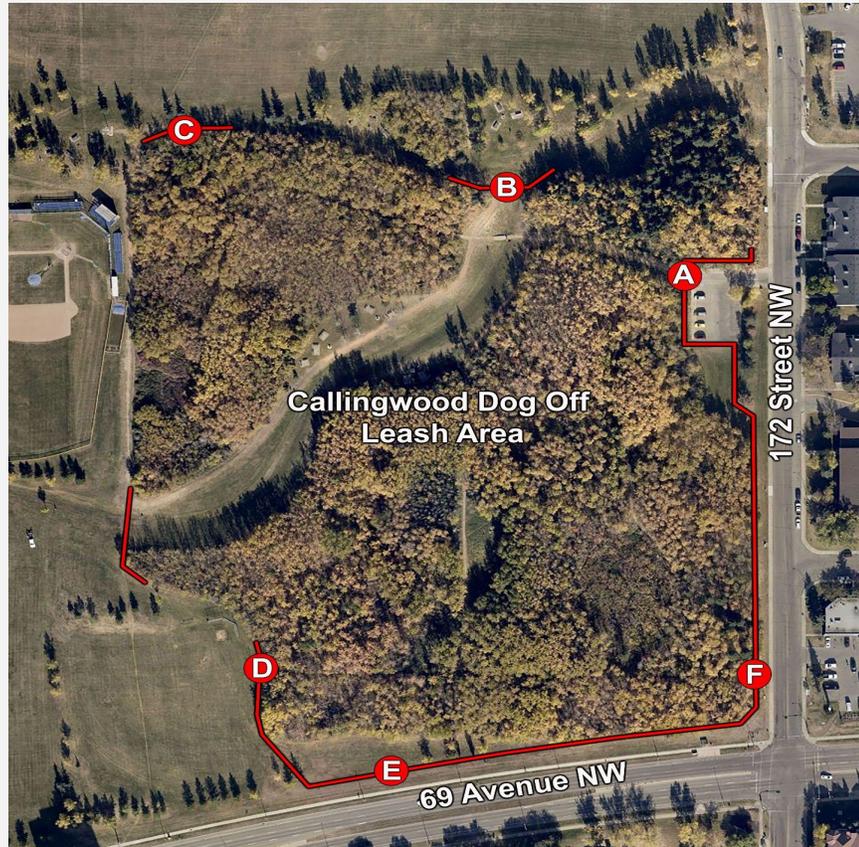
Currently, funding is available for a concept design for improvements to standard amenities for the Callingwood Park Off-Leash Area Enhancement project. The off-leash area is being enhanced with additional fences and access points to help manage pathways and safety for dog walkers and sports field users. Most enhancements will be designed based on the Dogs In Open Spaces Strategy and City safety guidelines (for example to address fallen trees and to upgrade an older trail). Park enhancements such as lighting and additional parking, however, are not included within the scope of the project.

In October and November 2021, the project team promoted an online survey (through onsite signage and a Public Services Announcement) to invite people in the area to share their

feedback and to ADVISE the project team on the number and locations of the various access points proposed for the off-leash area as well as on the overall concept design.

The proposed concept design for the Callingwood Park Off-Leash Area shows the fencing and access locations being considered:

*“Having a fenced gated off-leash dog park in the west end of Edmonton is a needed enhancement.”
(Survey respondent)*



LEGEND

- Proposed 1.2m height black chainlink fence
- Proposed gate / access point



Note: Grading improvements to promote positive drainage and maintenance access gates are not shown. Design is subject to change based on the detail design process.

Public Engagement Approach

How We Engaged

“Feels very limiting. I like being able to walk around the park on the trails on the edge of the trees. I have smaller dogs and sometimes there are big dogs in the middle play area, so it's nice to be able to get away and let the smaller dogs run around the outer areas. Sad to see the fence blocking off the openness of the park. It would be nice if the fence encompassed walking areas all around the west and north side of the park.”
 (Survey respondent)

To gather input from residents on the number and location of the access points into the off-leash area as well as on the proposed concept design, an online survey was promoted (through on-site signage and a Public Services Announcement) to people who live in the area and use the park. The survey was live from October 28 to November 12, 2021. People accessed the survey from the [City of Edmonton Off-Leash Areas](#) web page.

While in-person public events were paused and physical distance has been a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has remained committed to delivering project information and meaningful public engagement opportunities effectively and safely.

Engagement was at the ADVISE level on the Public Engagement Spectrum.



Who Was Engaged

"This is a popular off leash park for people of all ages and it is used by numerous seniors and their dogs. Easy access to parking that leads into the centre of the park on trails that are well maintained, open and safe is extremely important for everyone." (Survey respondent)

The project team focused on gathering input from dog owners and park users from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Most survey respondents (36%) lived in neighbourhoods close to the off-leash area such as Callingwood North, Callingwood South and Lymburn. Another third (31%) of respondents live in the neighbourhoods of Glastonbury, Thorncliff, Oleskiw, Ormsby Place, Westridge, Donsdale, Gariepy, and Jamieson Place.

166 people responded to the survey:

- **148 (89%) own a dog**
- **112 (67%) visit the park daily or weekly**
- **60 (36%) live in Callingwood North, Callingwood South and Lymburn**
- **143 (86%) use access point A and drive to visit the park**
- **412 comments were received**

What We Asked

"I've been using the park for 12 years. I love it. A fence around the parking lot would be nice but otherwise I don't think it's necessary and it would change the vibe of the park." (Survey respondent)

The online survey invited participants to share feedback on the proposed design. This included consideration of the number and location of the various access points into the off-leash area as well as on the proposed concept design. Respondents were invited to share their thoughts about whether there was anything else that they would like the City to know about the park and the proposed design.

What We Heard

The majority of survey participants (53%) expressed overall support for the project, although many comments indicate that people would prefer some adjustments to the design. One of the major concerns shared was the lack of an access point on the proposed plan between C and D on the map, that would allow a connection to the off-leash area from the library parking lot.

A summary of the survey feedback and information about the common themes that were shared by participants is below:

Level of support for access points in the design:

In explaining the access points that participants were most likely to use, the majority of respondents (62%) mentioned parking as being most important to where they would usually access the park. Most participants (86%) use access A from the parking lot adjacent to 172nd Street. Many (40%) also use access D, because of its accessibility to the library parking area.

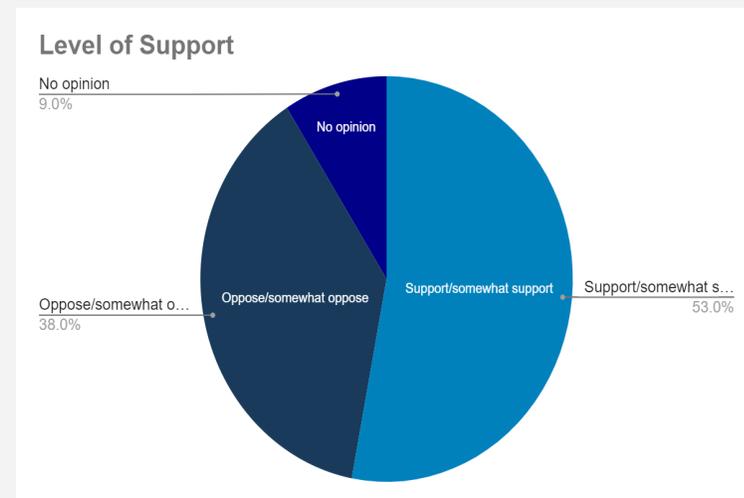


Some people (21%) access the park from various locations, for example from different locations in summer and winter.

Access points that may have been missed in the design:

When asked whether there are any locations of potential access points that we have missed in the proposed plan, just over half (52%) of the participants requested access on the pathway to the library parking lot, south of the baseball field (between C and D on the map). Other suggestions included a broad mix of various locations.

Level of support for the overall concept design:

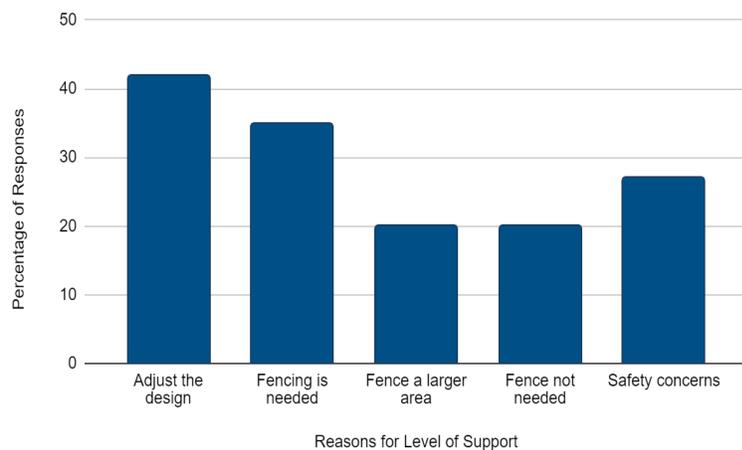


Overall, the survey participants' level of support for the proposed design are:

- 53% support or somewhat support
- 38% oppose or somewhat oppose
- 9% were neutral or had no opinion

When respondents explained their reasons for their responses they mentioned a variety of themes (shown as percentages):

Reasons for Level of Support Main Themes

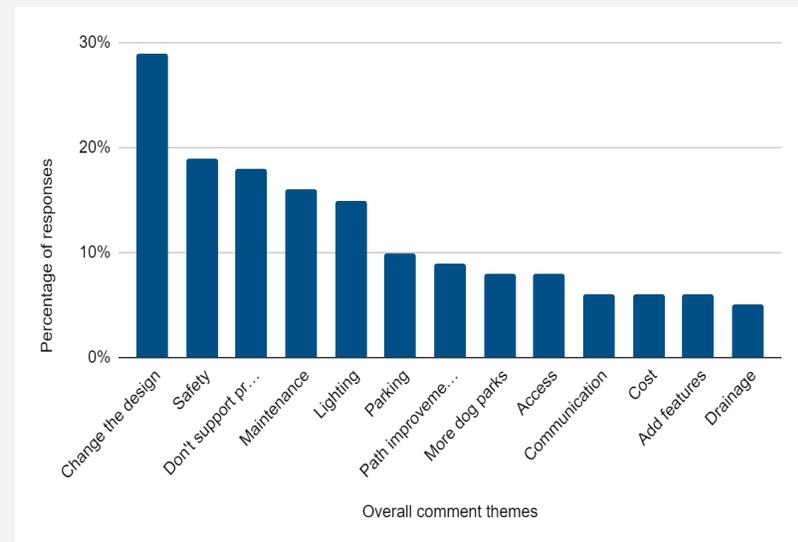


Many people (42%) indicated that they would prefer adjustments to the proposed design and some people (20%) thought that the off-leash area should be larger. Over a third of participants (35%) said that fencing is needed, while some (20%) felt that fencing is not needed. Nearly a third of people (27%) explained that they gave the response that they did because they felt that safety in the park is a concern for a variety of reasons. Some explanations for the level of support suggested that the proposed fencing will affect the existing use of the park (16%), and that there should be more consideration of the trees (18%) and perimeter paths (11%).

Overall comments about the project:

At the end of the survey participants were invited to share any further general comments that they had about the project. The general comments received ranged from dog and people safety to not having the fence at all. Other themes that were mentioned include the need for improvements to maintenance and drainage, lighting, parking, and paths. Some respondents asked for additional features such as water fountains for dogs, while others had concerns with the cost of the proposed fencing and suggested spending funds on other park improvements.

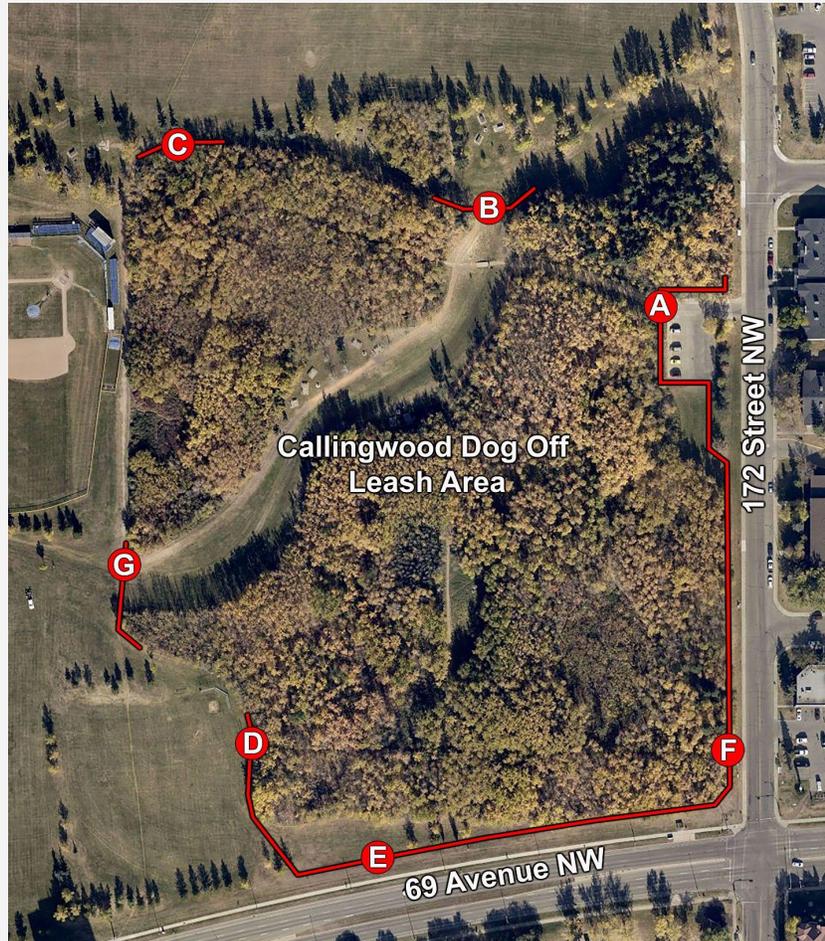
The following bar graph shows the the most common themes shared in response to this question and the percentages of frequency:



What We Did with What We Heard

The Fall 2021 online survey public engagement on the concept design for improvements to the Callingwood Park Off-Leash Area will result in refinement of the concept design by the project team.

After hearing feedback, all of the fence gate accesses that were planned will be retained. An additional access 'G' is being considered and will be added during the preliminary design phase of the project. The illustration below indicates the location of the additional proposed access point (G).



LEGEND

- Proposed 1.2m height black chainlink fence
- Proposed gate / access point



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The project will be submitted for consideration for capital funding to proceed to preliminary design and construction in the 2023-2026 capital budget cycle.

What Happens Next?

The project team is reviewing the design to consider how public input may be used to refine the concept within the established budget. Once the concept design is revised it will be shared with the public.

Construction on the Callingwood Park Off-leash area is dependent on approval of funding in the next Capital Budget Cycle.

The What We Heard report will be available on the City Dogs off-leash area, which can be found at edmonton.ca/OffLeash.