

What We Heard Report

William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Pathway Design

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Edmonton

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A. Project Overview

William Hawrelak Park opened in 1967 and is one of Edmonton's largest and most well-used parks. At over 50 years old, much of the infrastructure within Hawrelak Park is aging and requires repair and/or replacement. Investing in the park's infrastructure allows the City to maintain what is already here and support increased park use as the City grows.



The [rehabilitation plan](#) guides the renewal of the park in areas that affect public services and programs, safety, accessibility and circulation. A key objective of the project is to provide a new pathway system in the heart of the park that improves safety and provides accessible connections to amenities.

The goals for a new pathway system in Hawrelak Park are to:

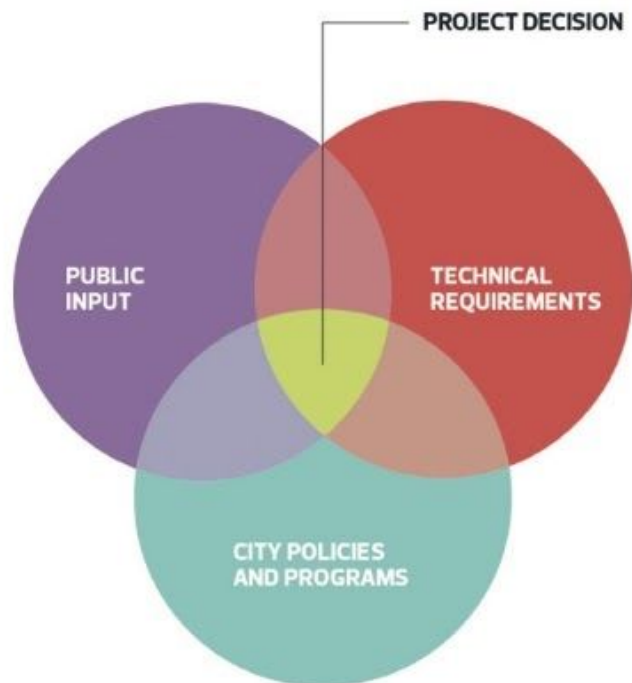
- make use of existing paths where possible;
- provide access to the street, trails and bus stops;
- balance the needs of service vehicles and park users;
- provide a paved bicycle commuter connection which is also part of the Trans-Canada Trail;
- provide an enhanced pathway along the lake's edge; and
- ease vehicle congestion and pedestrian-vehicle conflicts by reconfiguring the road and trail near the main entrance.

B. Public Engagement

[Public and stakeholder engagement](#) held in 2018 invited members of the public to advise on the rehabilitation of William Hawrelak Park through online, intercept and drop-box surveys and a neighbourhood in-person event. Festival and event stakeholders were also invited to engage through a focus group session.

When asked to share ideas about the pathway system, participants identified the need to create better connections, safer circulation and improve accessibility. Participants shared that the greenspace and main features of the park should be maintained and suggested the need for a paved, multi-use pathway around the park to support moving pedestrians and bikes from the road, where traffic congestion and safety are a concern.

The input received was consistent with the findings from the functional and physical assessment completed by the project team. This input, along with City policies, programs and technical requirements, was used to develop two options for pathway design to enhance how people get around and move through the park.



The public is consulted by the City to share feedback and perspectives.

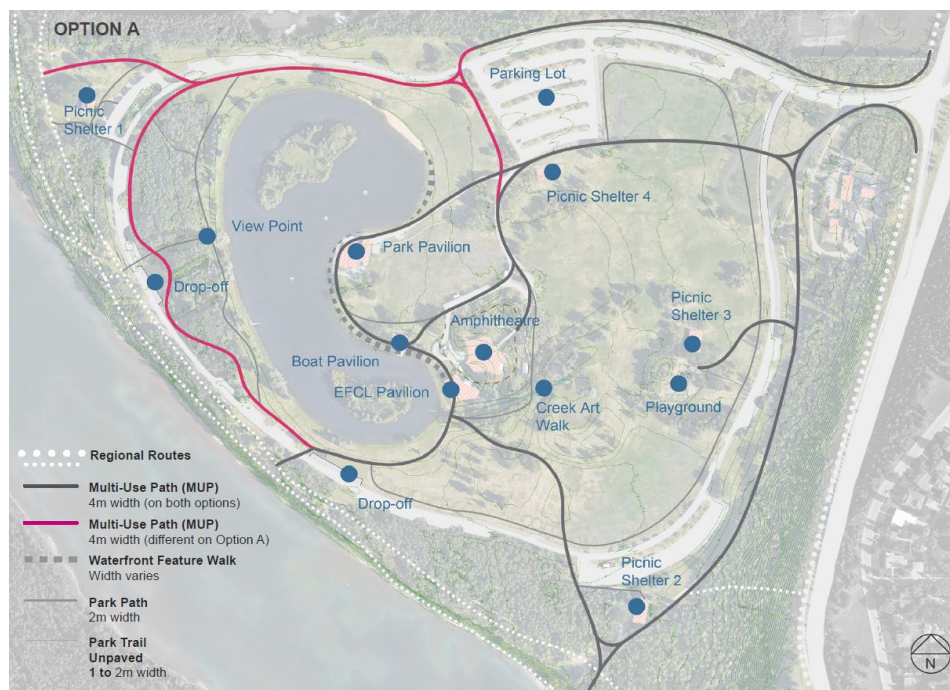
ADVISE

In consideration of the input received, both options were designed to:

- allow uninterrupted movement, minimizing conflict between vehicles and cyclists;
- provide connections to major park facilities;
- share the same circulation pattern on the east side, with the outer east loop doubling as a regional trail;
- create a commuter link between the pedestrian bridge and Groat Road;
- provide a new lake edge connection;
- create an enhanced pathway connecting the three waterfront facilities; and
- celebrate the distinct park centre core.

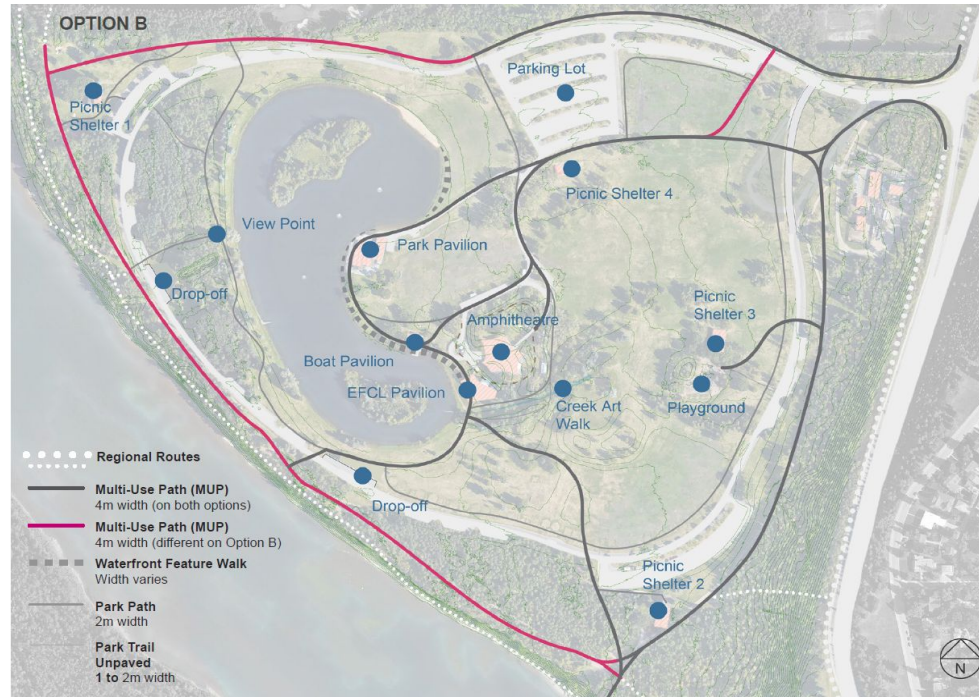
Option A: Internal Pathway Design

This option places the majority of the primary routes (four-metre shared-use paths) on the inside of the ring road, along with new two-metre park paths. This option allows for more direct connections and access to different areas and facilities. It includes a new pathway located in the forested area west of the lake that connects to the informal picnic area.



Option B: External Pathway Design

This option places all of the primary routes (four-metre shared use paths) on the outside of the ring road, along with new two-metre park paths. This option provides the required accessible connections to different areas and facilities. It provides a new pathway along the north-edge of the park that connects directly to the regional trail system.



C. How and Who We Engaged

While in-person public events are paused and physical distancing is a priority during COVID-19 pandemic, we remain committed to delivering project information and meaningful public engagement opportunities effectively and safely.

Between January 11 - 26, 2021, we invited the public to advise on the two pathway options using the Engaged Edmonton online platform. Road signs, social media, public service announcements and notifications to stakeholders were used to invite feedback. A total of 3,918 people visited or contributed to the [Engaged Edmonton project page](#).

Engaged Edmonton Participation*

Description	Quantity
People who shared input	250
People who viewed a video or photo, downloaded a document, visited the key dates page, contributed input, and/or visited multiple project pages	729
People who visited the project page	2,939

**A single engaged participant could perform multiple actions.*

D. What We Asked

Better connections, safer circulation, and improved accessibility were important factors in the design of the two options. Participants were asked to contribute their ideas about what they liked about the designs, whether anything was missing and to suggest any changes to improve the designs.

Participants also had the option to like or share comments about ideas offered by other participants.

E. What We Heard**OPTION A: INTERNAL PATHWAY DESIGN**

Participants indicated they liked:

- the visibility and sense of security of the internal pathway;
- the paved paths because they provide safer access and connection for those who currently use the road, especially in the winter;
- the direct connection points to the lake, amenities and routes in the park, especially for people with mobility challenges;
- how the internal path provides access to grassy areas and open spaces;
- the ability to interact with nature by travelling on pathways through the park; and
- the reduced impact on the natural landscape, river and wildlife in comparison to Option B.

Participants also offered suggestions on how Option A could be improved. These ideas involved:

- better connections to regional routes when travelling through the park;
- providing alternative regional routes for cyclists that avoid off-leash areas;
- having safe vehicle entry and exit to the park and making sure the right of way is given to pedestrians and cyclists when entering and exiting the park;
- adding blue emergency phones and improved lighting to increase personal safety;
- enhancing connections to park amenities, picnic sites and other paths in the park and adding pathways through the central east side of the park;
- enhancing the multi-use path that connects the wooden staircase on the southeast corner of the park;
- adding a path that circles the lake and connect it to the west path; and
- not adding the new western path along the lake to limit environmental impact.

OPTION B: EXTERNAL PATHWAY DESIGN

Participants indicated they liked:

- the circulation on the external multi-use path;
- the connection with existing pathways and regional routes;
- the limited road crossings to help reduce the interaction between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles;
- how the external path helps people travel through and around the park, or connect with other regional routes;
- how paving the multi-use path provides safe access for people of all abilities;
- the addition of a multi-use path on the northside to create a full loop around the park;
- the limited impact to other park activities, vegetation, wildlife and the lake in comparison to Option A;
- how the external path gives a better view of the river and park; and
- the paved and expanded multi-use path because it allows more people to access and move around the park.

Participants also offered suggestions on how Option B could be improved.

These ideas involved:

- putting in a physical barrier separating the road and external multi-use path to reduce interaction of cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles.
- enhancing the pathway on the southeast side and northside so that cyclists and pedestrians do not have to use the road;
- considering how use of the external pathway might negatively impact the existing cross-country ski trails; and
- decreasing the multi-use path to a two or three metre width to limit the impact on the natural landscape.

FEEDBACK FOR BOTH OPTION A and B

Participants also shared feedback related to both Option A and B.

Designated Pathways

Participants advised that cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles should have their own path systems. They suggested that this would allow the pathway design to better address the needs of different users. They also suggested that this would provide:

- safer movement for people to access park amenities;
- better circulation for cyclists and pedestrians by having a continuous loop; and
- better connections to regional routes.

Participants suggested this could be done by:

- having the internal loop for pedestrian use only and the external loop for cyclist use only;
- requiring cyclists to use the roadway;
- considering different cycling needs of leisure riders, bike commuters, performance road cyclists and mountain bikers;
- requiring performance road cyclists to use the internal path;
- converting the road to divided multi-use paths; and
- limiting vehicle traffic to the main parking lot only, where people who travelled to the park in a vehicle would access the different types of pathways.

Pathway surface

Participants advised that both Option A and B should try to reduce the use of pavement to help limit the impact to the natural landscape, wildlife, and vegetation. They also suggested keeping the woodchip, gravel, and dirt paths instead of paving.

No changes

Participants suggested that the pathway system should not be rehabilitated at this time in order to:

- decrease impacts on the natural landscape;
- decrease costs for the City;
- preserve the park as an open space; and
- maintain the unique features and qualities of the park.

Participants also offered alternatives to pathway rehabilitation including:

- adding signs for way finding and to show the types of use allowed on the pathways;
- painting lines on the pathways or adding dividers;
- reducing vehicles on the roadway; and
- adding traffic calming techniques to support shared use of the road.

Winter Activities

Participants suggested the pathways design should consider:

- how to access existing Nordic cross-country ski trails and create interlocking circuits, double tracks and, meet grooming requirements;
- access to skating on the lake; and
- adding skating pathways throughout the park.

Maintenance

Participants advised of the need for ongoing maintenance and clearing of the pathways all year long specifically, making sure snow is cleared from Buena Vista Park bridge to the base of the stairs at Groat Road.

GENERAL REHABILITATION PROJECT FEEDBACK

Participants also shared feedback about the overall William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation project.

Lake

Participants suggested making the lake available and safe for swimming, recreation and non-motorized sports and adding a public beach to encourage people to stay in the City during the summer months instead of travelling to lakes outside of Edmonton. They also shared the need to enhance the lake so it could support athletic training, particularly for swim clubs and the ITU World Triathlon. However, others suggested that the lake should not be transformed because it provides a natural space in an urban area and is a natural nesting habitat for geese and other migratory birds.

Bathrooms

Participants advised of the need for more bathrooms throughout the park. They suggested upgrades to the existing bathrooms to promote safety and adding things like lockers, air pumps and drinkable water stations where bathrooms are located.

Landscaping

Participants suggested adding gardens and different landscaping with plants and flowers throughout the park and along the pathways. They advised of a need for restoration and vegetation improvements, enhancing the wetland buffer, and increasing the tree canopy.

Transit

Participants advised of a need to improve bus service to and from the park. They suggested adding a new transit station at the park to enhance accessibility and decrease vehicle use. They also suggested that providing free transit use during major park events would help decrease vehicle use in the park.

Buildings

Participants suggested that the historic buildings in the park should be preserved, especially the amphitheatre because it is a unique landmark.

Park Activities and Amenities

Participants also offered ideas for activities and amenities that should be encouraged or added to the park such as:

- live music in the park
- increasing the use of the amphitheatre and other buildings
- adding more food and beverage vendors
- a winter light festival
- a fly fishing golf course
- a gondola ski chair ride from the top of hill to the pond
- a zip line
- tipi rentals
- more space for gathering between the amphitheatre and pavilion
- running distance markers
- disc golf course
- enhancing park features through lighting, lampposts and, garbage receptacles
- renaming the park to “Mayfair Park”
- annexing the Royal Mayfair Golf Club
- allowing on-leash dog walkers to use multi-use paths
- adding bike ramps to the staircases
- removing unnecessary lighting to reduce light pollution

G. What Happens Next?

The feedback received, along with technical requirements and City policies and programs, will be used to develop a final pathway design. This is scheduled to be completed in Fall 2021. As details progress through the design phase, more information will be posted to edmonton.ca/HawrelakParkRehabilitation.