



Research and Consulting Inc.

Urban Parks Management Plan: General Public Consultation

Report

The City of Edmonton
Community Services Department
Parkland Services Branch

July 2004

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings for one portion of a broadly based public and stakeholder consultation program designed to better understand the range of needs and views of the community for consideration during development of a comprehensive, long range management and planning framework, the Urban Parks Management Plan. It describes the results of a general public survey conducted with 606 heads of households residing in the City of Edmonton (maximum margin of error $\pm 4.1\%$ at the 95% level of confidence).

PARK USE

95% of households surveyed indicated that at least one household member had used a park in the City in the previous year. 87% had used the river valley and ravine system and 86% had used a park outside the river valley, located in their community or surrounding neighbourhoods (henceforth referred to as river valley system and neighbourhood parks respectively). More households used parks year round (68%) than only in spring, summer and fall, especially neighbourhood parks. The majority of households used a park once a week or more often in at least one season (60%), with such frequent users being found more often in neighbourhood parks.

Frequency of use of the river valley system appears to be strongly associated with close proximity to the system, higher income and higher education levels. There was above average year-round use by households with teenage and older children. Needs were for a safe, peaceful, natural area, with a reduction in trail use conflicts (walking/running and cycling especially), more space for dogs, better garbage control, shelters, fire pits/bonfires and better connectivity.

Frequency of use of neighbourhood parks was strongly associated with the presence in the household of pre-school and elementary-school age children. Key needs were for year-round daily access; being safe, without gangs/drugs or homeless people; being inviting and beautifying the community; and providing opportunities for exercise, supervised activities for children, playground equipment, rollerblading, skateboard parks and water play areas.

Non-users of parks were overrepresented among smaller, older households without children, particularly among empty nester and solitary survivor households, and households headed by seniors 65+ years, with the latter group often being widowed. They were also overrepresented among renters and households where a member had a health problem that limited the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity they could participate in, and were less likely to live in the SE quadrant of the City. While there were barriers and concerns to using parks in this group (accessibility; fear of youth and pets; desire for shade trees, washrooms, drinking water fountains and fire pits/bonfires in neighbourhood parks), parks were not seen as providing health benefits or a reason to get out of the house and even desired changes might not improve use in this group.

OPINIONS OF SELECTED PARKLAND SERVICES MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The public rated management of parks between "good" and "very good" on three measures. Ratings were higher for the river valley system than neighbourhood parks on: amount of parkland (3.95 vs. 3.38 out of 5); amenities (3.63 vs. 3.39); and quality of maintenance (3.53 vs. 3.30).

While over 80% rated all factors positively ("good" or better), relatively few respondents provided scores of "excellent" (from 9% for neighbourhood park maintenance to 27% for amount of parkland in the river valley system), indicating substantial room for improvement. This was reinforced by the number who rated each factor as only "fair" or "poor" (especially amount of parkland in neighbourhood parks - 17%).

With regard to **amount of parkland**, an insufficient number of parks on tableland was the biggest issue, followed by comments on a complete lack of any close/accessible parks in one's area (often a new area). Size of park, and lack of space for desired amenities, was also important, but not as important as not having a park nearby. There was also concern about encroachment of residential and/or commercial development and fear that parkland, existing and new, will be sold or reduced in size.

In both types of parks, key improvements to general **amenities** included washrooms and picnic areas/tables/BBQ pits. There was a desire for more amenities in general in neighbourhood parks along with the need to repair or replace equipment. Neighbourhood parks would benefit from more shade trees and benches set up for viewing and socializing, while there was demand for more off-leash space to run dogs in the river valley system. Although relatively few people spontaneously mentioned connectivity between parks and other spaces as desirable, a question on the topic showed that 75% of respondent were in favour of the idea of trails connecting parks and opens spaces to each other. Fewer, 59%, responded positively to the idea of a trail system linking one to places for day to day activities. In addition, 25% were actually opposed to the second concept, the remainder being neutral.

The need for amenities to support physical activity, sports and recreation was mentioned to the same extent in both park types, but the amenities themselves differed. The perception of the river valley system as a place for exercise and outdoor activities is wrapped up in the opportunities (especially walking/jogging/hiking and cycling) provided by the trail system ... and that system appears to need improvement: more trails, longer trails, wider trails, unpaved natural trails, trails for other specific purposes (cross-country skiing, mountain biking, rollerblading) and a greater variety of difficulty levels.

Trails and pathways were also desired by a substantial number of respondents in neighbourhood parks and both park types were seen to need lots of grass in large open green spaces. In the river valley system there was a desire for increased use of the river, including more and improved boat launches as well as other ideas, while the need for water play and cooling off areas (not just for children). was even more widely requested for neighbourhood parks.

Other summer activities for neighbourhood parks involved the use of sports fields and courts of various types and skateboard parks. Amenities for winter activities included skating rinks in particular, also sliding, sledding and tobogganing hills and more or bigger ski/snowboarding hills.

The need for playgrounds and playground equipment was intertwined with the vision and image of parks (especially neighbourhood parks) as a place for kids of all ages to play and exercise in safety while keeping out of trouble. Needs were stated for more playgrounds in the river valley system and more or larger playgrounds, especially for very small children, along with more or updated playground equipment, in neighbourhood parks. Playgrounds and playground equipment represent the defining amenity in these parks, in the same way as trails do in the river valley system.

The general public was divided in its views on how standardized amenities in neighbourhood parks should be. The largest number, 44%, chose a position which provided both equity of service between neighbourhoods and choice for community residents by agreeing that "local residents should be able to choose from a selection of standard activities, amenities and designs", while 34% favoured free choice: "local residents should be able to choose non-standard activities, amenities and designs if they like". The smallest segment, 20%, supported complete standardization.

Maintenance was the lowest rated of the three management responsibilities explored, with the presence of garbage, litter, dirt, dog poop and dangerous discards (needles, broken glass and others) proving to be the main factor in these ratings. In the river valley system, a secondary concern was trail maintenance and repair. In neighbourhood parks, grass cutting, weeds and field maintenance were an issue, with lack of equipment maintenance forming a lesser problem.

THEMES DESCRIBING OTHER FEATURES OF PARKS OF THE FUTURE

The most important theme describing neighbourhood parks of the future was that they should **be safe and feel safe**. This was also important for the river valley system. The responses received on this topic suggested that fear rather than experience was driving the need, since it was often associated with what was not wanted in parks: crime, vandalism and graffiti (which also encourages the perception that there are threatening people who have the run of the park); homeless people; gangs and drugs; drunks and smokers; youth bullying children and harassing families and seniors.

Safety prevention was the primary theme of the interventions proposed: noticeable presence of security personnel, video surveillance and emergency phones and improved lighting, especially in the evenings.

Conflict between different user groups (walkers and cyclists in particular, also skateboarders, rollerbladers and dog owners), was another safety theme, more so in the river valley system. Equipment safety was mentioned more often for neighbourhood parks.

The demand for a **natural environment** was another important theme, for both types of parks. Being a "natural" space (which could mean anything from being green or looking natural to being pristine and untouched) was an essential element of the public's vision for the river valley system, which includes trees/forests and wildlife and excludes such things as motor and motorized vehicles, roads and paved or concreted areas, pollution and pesticides.

In neighbourhood parks, the key need was for a more natural appearance with more trees.

A further exploratory set of questions established that 57% of households were in favour of having more natural spaces in areas of the city outside the river valley and ravines (37% said the same amount

as at present, and only 2% said less). 71% favoured a combination of some large and some small natural spaces, in preference to a few large spaces with more varied vegetation, wildlife and natural features within a 30 minute drive (14%), or many small spaces throughout the city, in walking distance from people's homes (12%). Finally, 66% wanted an equal amount of new neighbourhood park space allocated for natural space preservation and for amenities like sports fields, playgrounds and sliding hills. The next largest group, 20%, preferred that most new land be used for preserving natural spaces, while only 8% preferred that all or most new land be used for landscaped parks and fields.

Respondents raised **concerns about the development and commercialization** of parks and bordering areas. These were mentioned spontaneously for both types of parks, but twice as often for the river valley system. Many were concerned that there be no building in, or commercialization of, parks. Food vendors of every type were named for exclusion by at least some people. Others were interested in keeping advertising out of the parks or in keeping commercial development (stores) away from park borders. Their reasons ranged from going to a park specifically to escape this type of environment, to concerns about increased garbage and unhealthy fast food. Residential development was targeted as being intrusive too, particularly in the river valley: they did not want houses, condos or other high density housing surrounding or creeping into the parks. Some wanted the city to be more vigilant about this.

To explore where the general public stood on the issue of commercial development in the river valley system, respondents were specifically asked whether they agreed or disagreed with four concepts. It was found that 76% of the population agreed with the idea of having "mobile vendors selling fruit and vegetables, ice cream, sandwiches or other small items" and 62% agreed "small permanent structures like tea houses or cafés, or rental and servicing of sports equipment like bikes, rowboats or snowshoes" should be allowed. The public's tolerance ended there, with only a small minority supporting the idea of larger stand-alone permanent facilities or a building with several stalls and shops inside. The results suggest that how the opportunities are communicated will affect the perception of threat to the natural environment that is so highly valued in the river valley system. The survey provided a clear description of each purchasing opportunity, along with the benefit (explained here as complementary to activities one does in a park) and the limits that would be imposed (in designated locations, meeting design guidelines).

Accessibility was of similar importance in both types of parks. Ease of access (everything from wheelchair/stroller ramps, to transit or parking, to stairs down to the riverside or trails) was most important for the river valley system, while being close to one's home was most important for neighbourhood parks. Snow removal was seen as a way to increase year round access and use.

To investigate what level of top of bank access to the river valley was viewed by the public as being in their interest, respondents were asked a question on the topic. The majority, 58%, were open to having access to a "reasonable" number of top of bank viewpoints or access points alongside and down to the river valley or ravines. 31% did not want any potential access points or views blocked by development of homes and only 4% felt that people should be able to build where they like. It was further established that "reasonable" most often meant there should be public access to half the available access points (31%), with 14% choosing three-quarters and 13% one-quarter. The average for all responses was that the public should be able to access two-thirds of available access points.

Cost of an outing to a park (low or no cost) was seen as a minor benefit of having parks and for these people there was concern that there should be no user or admission fees.

Opinions were sought on how the cost of development or redevelopment of parks should be funded. Of five options presented, charging fees to affected property owners was significantly less acceptable than any other (11% vs. 18%-25% for community fundraising, a general tax increase, wait until funds are available and redirection of infrastructure funds). The results suggest that parks are viewed as a public good and that they should be funded by public monies or community endeavour. There were also indications that any community fundraising should be combined with another revenue source.

THEMES DESCRIBING THE CHARACTER AND OTHER OUTCOMES OF HAVING AND USING PARKS

The vision of the **ambience, atmosphere or mood** expected in neighbourhood parks of the future was predominantly of a welcoming or inviting, friendly, happy place to be, which is bright and comfortable looking.

The river valley system was more likely to be seen as a peaceful, calm, quiet place that offers a refuge from urban life; a place to relax and revitalize.

Both, however, provide somewhere to go and something to do that offers an opportunity for fun and enjoyment.

One of the benefits of parks is that they provide the setting for **people to enjoy nature and outdoor activities**. The open green space away from urban concrete offered by City parks, and especially the green belt and forested feel of the river valley system, offers Edmontonians a chance to enjoy the sense of being in the country without leaving the city.

In this setting, parks provide citizens with the opportunity to sit outdoors, appreciate nature and connect with a natural environment, including scenery, wildlife, vegetation, the sun and the weather. For those so inclined, they also provide the environment and amenities to enjoy outdoor activities.

One of the more frequently envisioned outcomes of having parks **was a healthy population**. They are thought to promote a healthy lifestyle and result in a physically fitter society by offering opportunities, particularly in the river valley system, for people to be more active. On the mental health side, parks provide the opportunity to reduce stress from everyday life and challenges in the city.

Parks give people a reason to get out of their houses, away from the television – considered to be most beneficial for households without outdoor spaces of their own.

Respondents described both neighbourhood parks and the river valley system as places for families (with kids of all ages, including teens), with an important role in **strengthening the family** unit and building family values by giving them something fun to do together.

Parks were also thought to benefit the City as a whole, its communities and citizens individually, and its visitors, by providing a better **quality of life**. Three aspects included under this theme were:

- They help create a better environment for children to grow up in and a more enjoyable lifestyle; enhance the appeal of the city to people thinking about moving there; and contribute to the city's reputation. The river valley system provides something unique that Edmontonians can be proud of and brag about, and this helps to attract tourists.
- Parks beautify the area they are in, and provide pleasure in the surroundings and a feeling of peace (views, colourful plantings, water features, landscaping all contribute and more were desired in neighbourhood parks).
- Neighbourhood parks offer a place for community residents to socialize and meet new people, provide a centre for community gatherings and help strengthen and stabilize the community by creating a sense of sharing and involvement. This, in turn, can increase community pride and unity. They make a community a more desirable place to live and increase property values in the surrounding area.

The final theme covered the **legacy** that would result from respondents' suggested improvements. Respondents felt both park types would be used by a wider range of people, more frequently and more regularly, more thoroughly or extensively, for longer periods. It was expected that neighbourhood parks in particular, would be better used by local residents, and busier and more active in all seasons,

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APPENDIX II: COMPARISON OF RESPONDENT PROFILES WITH POPULATION PROFILES

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

The City of Edmonton is in the process of developing an Urban Parks Management Plan. This will be a comprehensive, long range planning and management framework for the acquisition, preservation, development, animation and management of the City's parks and open spaces.

Five strategies will be addressed in the Plan:

- Parkland animation
- Parkland provision and resource management
- Parkland design and development
- Natural heritage
- Infrastructure management

Each strategy will ultimately include a comprehensive set of policies, guidelines and standards that will direct day-to-day decision making for both tablelands and the North Saskatchewan river valley system.

This report presents the findings for one part of a broadly based public and stakeholder consultation program designed to better understand the range of needs and views of the community as they pertain to these strategies. It describes the results of a general public survey conducted with heads of households residing in the City of Edmonton.

Methodology

Definition Of The Study Area

The City was sub-divided into four regions or quadrants, defined by Forward Sortation Area boundaries (FSA, the first three digits of the postal code). The divisions were as follows:

- North East (NE): North of the Saskatchewan River and east of 121st Street, (including all of T5X).
- North West (NW): North of the Saskatchewan River and west of 121st Street (excluding T5X).
- South East (SE): South of the Saskatchewan River and east of Calgary Trail North/103 Street (including all of T6E).
- South West (SW): South of the Saskatchewan River and west of Calgary Trail North/103 Street (excluding T6E).

Sampling

SAMPLE METHOD

A telephone survey was conducted in May/June 2004. The sample frame was made up of a computerized list of randomly selected currently active residential telephone numbers that were augmented by a constant. This method of random digit dialling ensures that non-listed, non-published numbers, which make up a substantial proportion of Edmonton's telephone base, are included in the sample frame.

Interviews were carried out with 606 male and female household heads. As a result, many of the questions could be asked to reflect the needs of all members of the household, including children, rather than that of the respondent alone. A 50:50 quota sample by gender was imposed in each quadrant to make certain that the views of both men and women were well represented in the survey.

In all, contact was attempted with 4,379 telephone numbers. Attempts were generally made to reach a household on a minimum of three occasions before the number was substituted. In many cases more than three (up to ten) contacts were attempted. Appendix I shows the disposition of attempted and successful calls, using the formula endorsed by the Professional Market Research Society.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample of 606 interviews had a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 4.1% at the 95% level of confidence for the City overall. This means that if the survey were to be repeated 20 times, on 19 of those occasions responses will lie within plus or minus 4.1% of the response received in this sample.

A minimum of 125 interviews was conducted in each quadrant to ensure that a reasonably comparable sample base was achieved for the three smaller quadrants, while leaving the largest proportionately based as a many members of sub-groups of interest were expected to be concentrated there. The obtained samples, and associated margins of error were as follows:

Quadrant	Sample Size	Margin of Error
NE	227	±6.6%
NW	125	±8.9%
SE	128	±8.8%
SW	126	±8.9%

The City was interested in obtaining information for a variety of sub-groups within the population. A target of approximately 100 interviews was established (maximum margin of error ±10%). Toward the close of fieldwork, this number had not been achieved among seniors aged 65 years and over, and among people not born in Canada. As a result, 38 interviews were conducted from the random sample frame which specifically targetted these two groups.

The final sample sizes achieved for the target sub-groups and their associated margins of error are shown below.

Target Sub-Group	Sample Size	Margin of Error
Low Income	112	±9.4%
Non-Canadian Born	106	±9.7%
Seniors	95	±10.3%
Mobility Limitation	114	±9.4%

In addition, the City was interested in Aboriginal views. 40 interviews were conducted where a household member was Aboriginal, with a margin of error of 15.8%.

Quality Control And Weighting

In addition to the high sampling quality provided by the use of random digit dialling and multiple callbacks, even to previous refusals, survey quality was enhanced by: thorough briefing of the interview team, monitoring of 20% of each interviewer's work, probing of open-ended questions, careful editing and coding at the data analysis stage. After coding, questionnaires were entered into a computerized database using 100% verification to minimize data transfer errors, before being tabulated.

At this stage the data were weighted to restore each quadrant to its true proportion in the City population, based on the number of households currently reported by Canada Post. The weights applied, and their effects, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Weighting of the Random Sample

Quadrant	Obtained Sample Size	Obtained Sample Distribution %	Household Weight	Weighted Sample Size	Weighted Sample Distribution %
NE	227	37.5	.9877	224	37.0
NW	125	20.6	1.1660	146	24.0
SE	128	21.1	1.0427	133	22.0
SW	126	20.8	.8144	103	16.9
City Total	606	100.0		606	100.0

Validation Of The Achieved Sample

As a final point of validation, it is useful to examine how representative of the population the final sample proved to be. Obviously, not all populations can be reached in a household telephone survey – for example, the homeless, residents of continuing care facilities, prisons and households without a land line.

A comparison of respondent-based information with available Census 2001 profiles or more recent City estimates is shown in Appendix II. These results suggest that the individuals surveyed closely resemble the population.

However, since the sample was based on household heads rather than individuals in the population, the most appropriate comparisons are with household measures. Four were available for the City: household structure, household size, household income and home ownership. The validating figures are based on the 2001 Census which had slightly different definitions; also some changes may reasonably be expected to have taken place since then. Furthermore, it should be remembered that since the survey is a sample, there is a range of error associated with each survey figure (in parenthesis in Table 2).

The obtained distribution suggests that the survey included a higher proportion of households with children and a lower proportion of single-person households than were actually in the population. There were also disproportionately more home owners than renters represented. As a result, and taking into consideration the impression that many people who refused to participate indicated disinterest because they were not park users, it may be prudent to regard the sample as a representative sample of user households, until further validation can be undertaken.

Table 2: Comparison of Survey Distribution with Census Data

Category and Definition	2001 Census %	Survey %
Household Structure		
Census: Married and common-law families with never-married children under 25 at home Survey: A married/couple respondent in a 2+ person household with children of any age	27	36 (±3.8)
Census: Lone parent families Survey: A non-married/couple respondent in a 2+ person household with children of any age	12	15 (±2.8)
Census: Married and common-law families without never-married children under 25 at home Survey: A couple without children of any age in the household	25	27 (±3.6)
Census: Other Survey: A group (household with 3+ persons, no children)	7	5 (±1.8)
Census: One person household Survey: One person household	29	17 (±3.0)
Average Household Size	2.51 ^e	2.87 (±0.12)
Average Household Income in 2003	\$61,819*	\$62,400 (±\$2,700)
Home Ownership		
Own	59	74 (±3.5)
Rent	41	26 (±3.5)

e = Estimate (Population / Households)

* Census data as reported by EDE are for 2000. Projected household income for 2004 is \$64,800 (Source: FP Markets – Canadian Demographics)

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed in conjunction with the client team to address the five strategies of interest.

After multiple revisions and two rounds of pilot testing, it was reduced to a 20 minute duration by focusing the originally delineated broad and diverse information needs on those which had emerged from the stakeholder consultation as pivotal issues, topics on which a variety of opinions had been voiced, and topics on which general public views were needed for comparison with stakeholder views.

Unlike the stakeholder consultations, the public consultation focused on two types of parks, the "river valley and ravine park system" and "parks in your community and surrounding neighbourhoods" (referred to for simplicity as the river valley system and neighbourhood parks respectively in the body of the

report). No distinction was attempted between what are referred to by Parkland Services as "neighbourhood" and "district" parks, both since the construct is not generally known to the public and for reasons of interview duration. The two concepts were introduced to the respondent in the following way:

"The next few questions will be asked first about the river valley and ravine system, including the parks, trails, natural areas and other amenities available in them. Then we will ask you to answer the same question for parks and school grounds outside the river valley that are located in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods, including playgrounds, sliding hills, community league sites and sports fields. "

The questionnaire used in the survey is shown in Appendix III.

Detailed cross-tabulations of the data are provided under separate cover. Any differences between charts or tables in this report are due to rounding of the numbers.

Report Format

The results of the survey are presented in the remainder of the report. The description of findings commences with an overview of park use in Edmonton. This is followed by a discussion of public opinions of park management on three broad topics – amount of parkland, amenities provided and quality of maintenance. Each topic was addressed on an aided basis and the discussion is further supplemented with relevant desires expressed relating to parks of the future, a set of questions asked on an unaided basis. These results point to gaps between what is being done currently and what is desirable in the view of the general public.

This section is followed by a discussion of each of the remaining themes identified through a set of core open-ended questions which were intended to stimulate thought on the functions, features and outcomes that would be generated by the "perfect" future park. They look at public needs and wants (and what is not wanted), at concerns and barriers and at benefits.

Responses to a variety of specific questions on key issues are presented under the relevant themes for ease of reference.

The final section of the chapter provides a detailed profile of various segments within the population

Findings

Household Use of City Parks Last Year

Respondents were asked how frequently they and other members of their households visited the river valley and ravine system and how often they visited parks in their communities or surrounding neighbourhoods, for any purpose. The questions were asked separately for two seasonal periods: in spring, summer and fall of 2003 and "last" winter (effectively winter of 2003/04) and were then combined in various ways to establish seasonal and year round use and non-use of any City parks.

The results stand on their own in describing household use of parks, but more importantly, will also identify such things as future-oriented needs, wants and desires of groups with year-round, seasonal, higher or lower usage levels.

City-wide seasonal results are shown in Chart 1. Overall, 95% of the households surveyed had at least one household member who visited a City park in the past year.¹ Two-thirds of households used a City park at least once in both seasons last year. One in four used parks only in the summer.

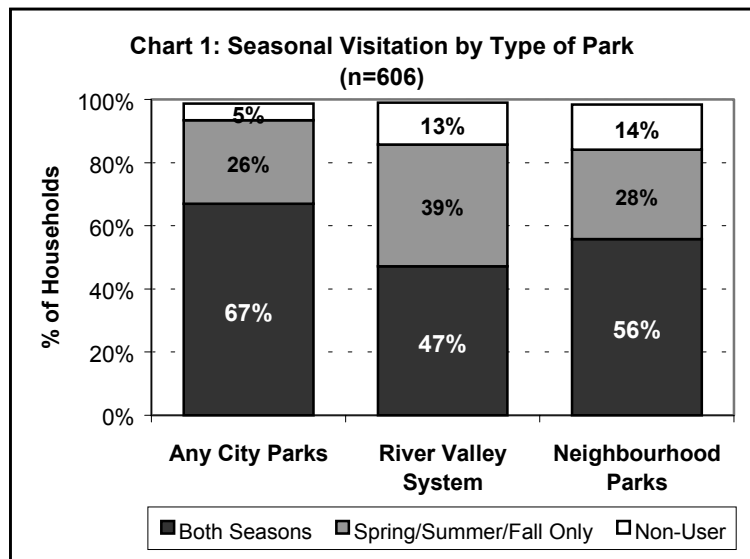
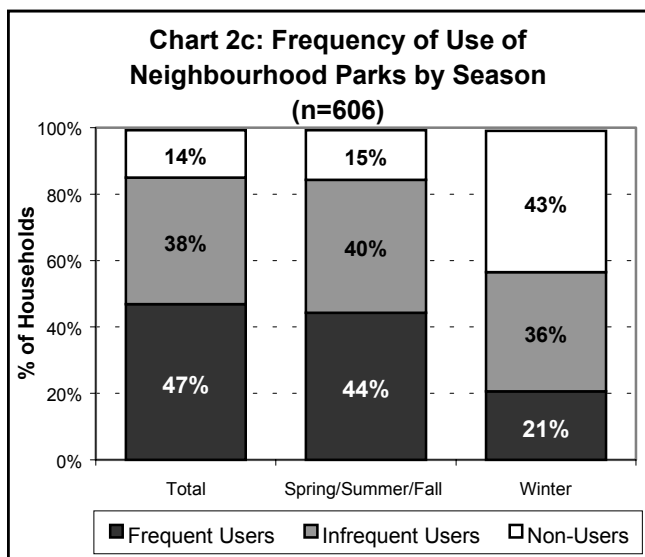
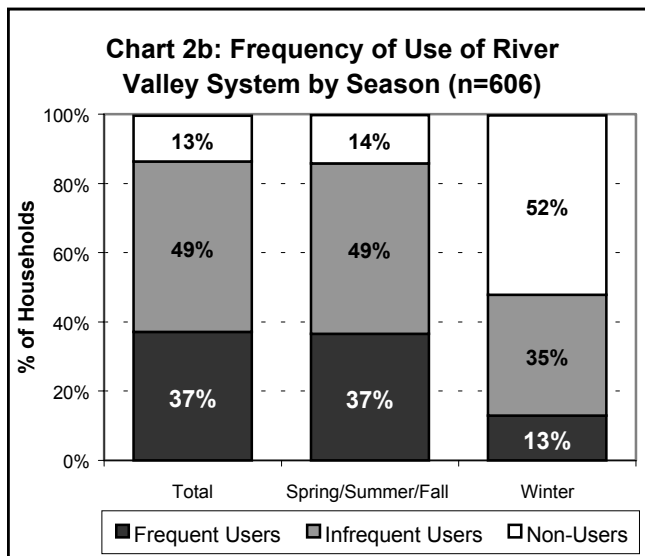
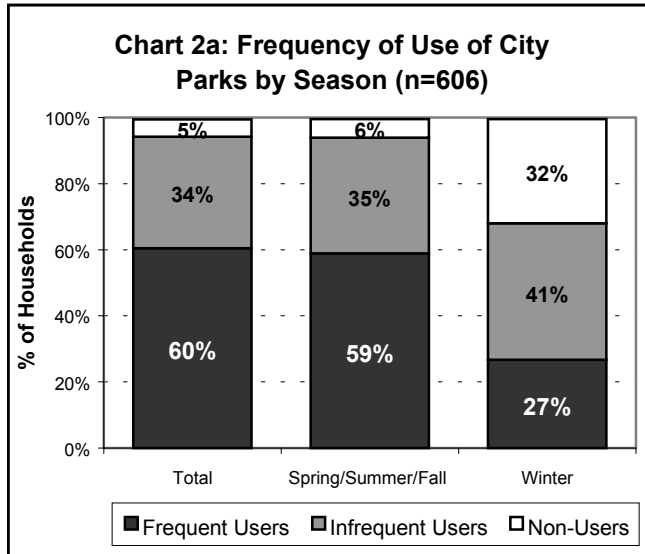


Chart 1 also shows that 87% of households had visited the river valley and ravine system, and 86% had visited a neighbourhood park in the past year. However, the difference in seasonal use of the two was statistically significant. River valley system visitors included a high proportion of summer-only users, while neighbourhood park users were more likely to visit year round.²

¹ Infact is not aware of any previous surveys which have attempted to identify use of any type of park (i.e., the river valley system and neighbourhood parks). A 1996 study (Harper J, Neider D, Godbey G, Lamont D. *The Use and Benefits Of Local Government Recreation and Park Services*), found that 75% of individuals aged 15 and older used a "park, playground or open space within walking distance of your home" or "in your community". A 1999 study (Advisory Group. *Participation and Pricing Survey*) found that 57% of 2,400 adults 18 years and older had "visited the River Valley trail system in the past 12 months" and 76% had "visited a City of Edmonton park including neighbourhood parks such as community league or school parks" in the past 12 months. Neither addressed household use, so the results are not directly comparable, and would be expected to be higher for households.

² Winter-only use is not shown in the graphs as it was extremely low (0.6%).



Turning now to frequency of use by season, Chart 2a shows that summer visitation to parks is far heavier than during the winter. While 32% of households did not use parks at all last winter, only 6% did not do so during the warmer season. Furthermore, frequent users (weekly or more often) were predominant in the summer period, while a greater number of infrequent users visited parks in winter (all differences significant).

The total line on this and other charts in the Chart 2 series, shows the highest level of frequency with which a household used a park in at least one season. It therefore tends to follow the same pattern as the summer period with its more frequent visitation.

Charts 2b and 2c show, respectively, the same information for the river valley system and neighbourhood parks. Some of the notable findings here were that:

- More frequent use is made of neighbourhood parks in both seasons. A detailed distribution of frequency of use is shown in Table 3 overleaf.
- More than half the households did not use the river valley system in winter, while more than half were users of neighbourhood parks in winter.
- Although a large proportion did not use each type of park in winter, since only one-third overall were complete non-users in this season (in Chart 2a), attempts to generalize from individual park types seriously underestimate the incidence of overall park use in this season.

Table 3: Detailed Distribution Of Frequency Of Use By Type Of Park And Season (n=606)

	River Valley System		Neighbourhood Parks	
	Spring/Summer/Fall	Winter	Spring/Summer/Fall	Winter
	%	%	%	%
Daily	11	4	17	7
4 or more times a month	26	9	27	14
1 to 3 times a month	24	13	21	14
Less often	25	22	19	22
Not at all	14	52	15	43
Don't know/Refused	+	+	1	1

+ = Less than 0.5%.

Opinions of Parkland Services' Management

OVERALL OPINIONS OF PARKLAND SERVICES' MANAGEMENT

To provide a baseline for understanding how the public regard key aspects of Parkland Services' management of the City's parks, respondents were asked three questions for each type of park:

- Would you say the amount of parkland in ... (the river valley and ravine system/ your community and surrounding neighbourhoods) is:
- Overall, are the amenities, such as ... (trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches/ playgrounds, sliding hills, community league sites, skating rinks, sports fields) and others available in ... (the river valley and ravine system/ parks in your community and surrounding neighbourhoods):
- Overall, is the quality of ... (parkland maintenance in the river valley and ravine system/ park and field maintenance in your community and surrounding neighbourhoods):

Each aspect was rated as excellent (5), very good (4), good (3), fair (2) or poor (1). If the response was fair or poor, the reason was further probed to identify more specifically where there may be existing delivery gaps. Average scores were as follows:

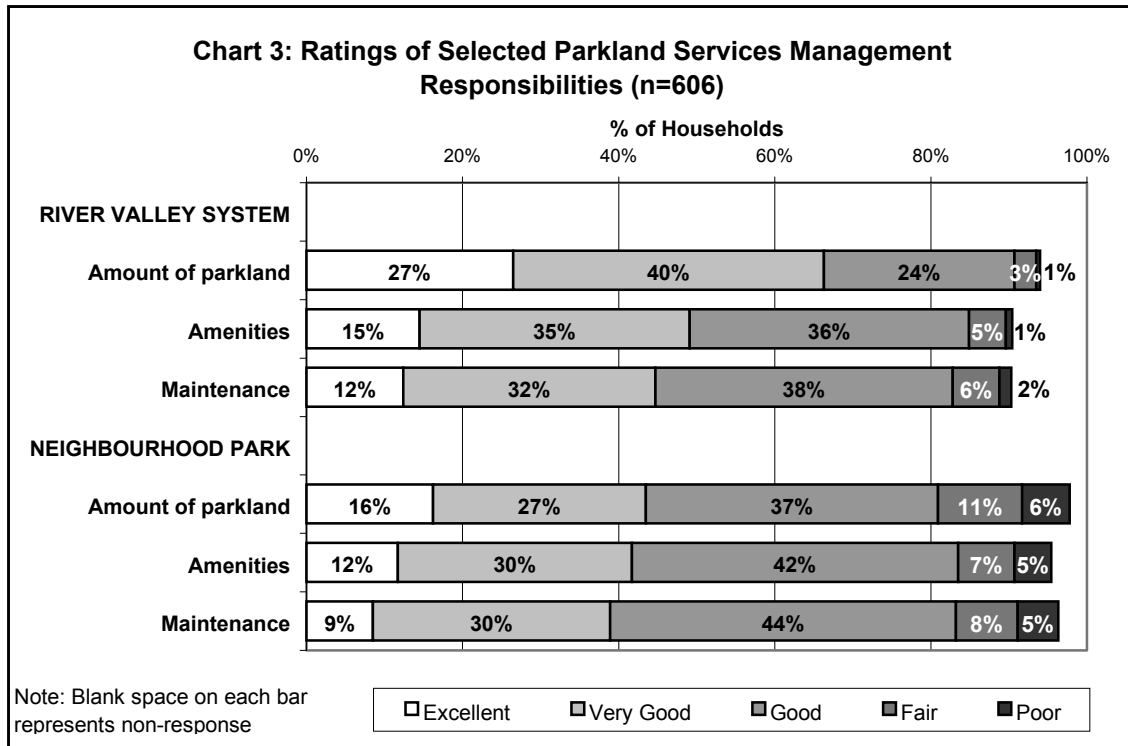
River valley system:	Amount of parkland	3.95
	Amenities	3.63
	Quality of maintenance	3.53
Neighbourhood parks:	Amount of parkland	3.38
	Amenities	3.39
	Quality of maintenance	3.30

The highest scoring attribute was the amount of parkland in the river valley system, with an average rating of "very good". All others fell somewhere between good and very good, with the river valley system being rated consistently better than neighbourhood parks on all service dimensions.

What is also notable here, is that there is considerable room for improvement – none of the dimensions was rated as being close to "excellent". In fact, only a small minority of the public rate the City as providing excellent service on these criteria. This may be seen in Chart 3, which shows the full distribution of responses received.

Again with the exception of the amount of parkland in the river valley system, the most popular (modal) rating was "good". Thus, although over 80% of respondents provided a positive response to all the dimensions, less than resounding approbation was expressed.

For neighbourhood parks, ratings at the opposite end of the scale (fair and poor) were as frequently found as ratings of excellence. Respondents are usually reluctant to use the negative end of a scale, so the percentage voicing criticism of neighbourhood parks is high – and particularly so on the amount of parkland available in communities.



So what are the gaps between expectations and what is being seen to be delivered? The tables and discussion which follow show a list of the main reasons respondents provided a rating of fair or poor, supplemented by relevant information from other questions in the survey.

REASONS FOR LOW RATINGS OF AMOUNT OF PARKLAND AND LAND-RELATED CONCERNS FOR FUTURE PARKS

With regard to amount of parkland, an insufficient number of parks was the most frequently mentioned reason for a low rating (refer Table 4), both for the river valley system and for neighbourhood parks - but was a far bigger issue for parks in one's community.

On the same theme, a complete lack of close/accessible parks was the second most frequently raised issue for neighbourhood parks, followed by complaints that "their" park was too small or did not have space or amenities for recreation.

Mentioned only for the river valley system (in this question, but as will be seen later, for both types in another question) were concerns about housing development that has encroached on parkland.

The need for more or different amenities that require land was also brought up for both park types.

Table 4: Reasons For Fair Or Poor Rating For Amount of Parkland

	River Valley System (n=20)	Neighbourhood Parks (n=102)
There aren't enough parks/few and far between/not many in RV/here/only one in my area/could be more parks/ravine/parks have been closed	5	36
Too much development/houses ruined the area/parks abused by City by annexing for development	3	0
Need other types/need trails and pathways/need trails in my community/a bike path/insufficient trails/woodland park/off-leash park/all we have are school grounds	3	7
There are none in my immediate area/new area, park not developed yet/nothing close by, have to drive/too far to go/not enough access	2	17
Too small/not much land/not much room in it/more greenspace/not many are big enough to get away from traffic	1	12
Not enough for recreation/room to play in/not much for kids/young kids/more playgrounds/not much to do/no recreational facilities/nothing but grass	0	9
Non-specific comments (not enough/there could be more)	3	15
Don't know/response off topic	4	10

Similar emphasis on the need for more parkland was found in response to the open-ended questions on needs associated with parks in the future. One of the categories of response, termed "More, Not Less Parkland" was mentioned by 6% of all respondents with regard to the river valley system and by 7% referring to neighbourhood parks. With over 5% of total households surveyed spontaneously mentioning this issue, it may be regarded as one with the potential to become contentious, even though it is not on the front burner at present.

The types of comments made are shown in Table 5 and show concern both for keeping parkland that is already there and an interest in having more parks.

Table 5: Desire For More, Not Less, Parkland (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning More, Not Less, Parkland (net)	6	7
No reduction in size of parks/rezoning/nothing sacrificed/torn down/for trails/land sold/destroy nature/lose open fields	4	4
Bigger/more parks/per population/in newly developed areas/more small parks	3	4

REASONS FOR LOW RATINGS OF AMENITIES AND AMENITIES DESIRED IN THE PERFECT PARK OF THE FUTURE

The explanations given by respondents who rated park amenities as fair or poor are captured in Table 6. A wide variety of amenities was mentioned by a few people each, depending on their current location. For example, the need for improvements to trails were associated with the river valley system and the need for skating rinks with neighbourhood parks.

Table 6: Reasons For Fair Or Poor Rating For Park Amenities

	River Valley System (n=34)	Neighbourhood Parks (n=72)
Need washrooms/more water (drinking) fountains	7	0
Not enough boat launches/could be improved	5	0
Not enough picnic tables/picnic and fire pit areas/rest areas/seats	5	1
Trails not maintained/need better signage/too narrow/more paved trails/trails go nowhere	5	0
Need more places for garbage disposal/dirty/too much garbage/not enough clean up of litter	3	3
Lack of accessibility/not easy to access/nothing ever open	2	1
Safety phones/areas that are dangerous	2	0
Not enough skating rinks/ice time/have to be a member	0	5
Other specific amenities mentioned: sports/soccer fields/skateboard park/arena/pool/for seniors (horseshoes, lawn bowling, mini-golf)	0	6
More for kids to do/not much in terms of playground/only one playground	0	5
Equipment in need of repair/needs things replaced/upgraded/run down	0	9
Non-specific comments (no amenities/not much/should be more/not enough/not a lot here/more development needed/only a community league/small school field)	6	30
No park [so no amenities]/not enough parks/only one/too far away/park undeveloped	0	12
Don't know/response off topic	3	5

Most notable in the list in Table 6, was the number of people who rated amenities low in neighbourhood parks because the existing park/s lacked any or many amenities; because there were no accessible parks (and hence no park amenities); or because the amenities were in need of repair or replacement.

General Amenities

The open-ended questions addressing future park needs generated a very extensive list of amenities that people considered desirable. 44% of respondents identified at least one general amenity they wanted in the river valley system and 41% did so for neighbourhood parks. Another category of amenities addressed the physical, sport and recreation activities that were mentioned (45% for the river valley system and 42% for neighbourhood parks). In addition, amenities were identified for kids, and within a variety of other themes. General amenities are discussed next.

Table 7: Desire For General Amenities (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning General Amenities (net)	44	41
Washrooms/convenient/along trails/clean/not smelly/portable	10	9
Drinking fountains/for people and animals/to fill bottles/along trails	4	3
Water fountains (type not specified)	1	2
Picnic spots/areas/BBQ pits/more picnic grounds and BBQs/secluded	10	9
Picnic tables	4	4
Area for fires/place to have winter fires/controlled area for bonfires	1	+
Shelter/from cold in winter/from rain/indoor rest area/gazebo for shade	1	1
Café/kiosk/mini shop for refreshments/tea house/concession stand/restaurants	5	2
Equipment rentals/bike/rollerblade/boat/canoe/kayak	1	+
Lots of/more trees/leafy/shady areas/around sports fields	7	13
Benches/resting areas/along the trails/green area w. benches/enjoy view	6	10
Place for dogs to run and play/long runs/area to walk dog/more off-leash areas/separate	6	3
Connect trails/to river valley from outer areas/to bus route/shopping/from parks/upper banks/to Ft Sk, Devon	3	1
Lots of bridges/footbridges/pedestrian bridges/over creeks	1	0
Directional signs/maps/interpretive plaques/about nature/history/notices	2	1
Multi-purpose complex/recreation/nature centre/amphitheatre/clubhouse	+	2

+ Less than 0.5%.

In Table 7 and similar tables showing responses to the open-ended questions about future parks, items mentioned spontaneously, without prompting, by 10% or more households, should be interpreted as

being of high importance. If they had been presented in a closed choice question, it is likely that they would have garnered support from a large majority of the population. Items mentioned by over 5% should also be carefully considered for future action. Using these criteria, it may be seen that in terms of general amenities:

- There is strong desire for space and facilities for picnics and BBQs in both types of parks.
- Also in demand in both park types are new, more or improved washroom facilities. In the river valley system a need was expressed for more washrooms along the trails; where there are existing or portable facilities, many specifically said they wanted permanent, clean, non-smelly ones. On the other hand, there were also some respondents who would be happy with portable washrooms or outhouses, or even prefer them as being consistent with nature.
- Along with washrooms, there was fair demand for water fountains, particularly on paths and trails. Both these amenities were thought to be likely to result in people staying longer in the parks they are visiting.
- Benches and shady trees were a key requirement for the neighbourhood park of the future. There was a sense that single benches, just placed anywhere, would not meet people's expectations. Benches should be set up as resting and relaxing areas, along paths/trails and in places where there may be a view so one can enjoy nature all around or watch kids at play, and perhaps in groups conducive to conversation (seniors) or hanging out (kids). Shade for the benches was essential and some people even went so far as to specify the types of trees they would prefer (leafy, not pines which have sticky sap).

While not mentioned as often for the river valley system, the supply of benches was also an important commodity there. For example, it was pointed out that the extent of use of trails by seniors can be limited by a lack of rest areas along the trails.

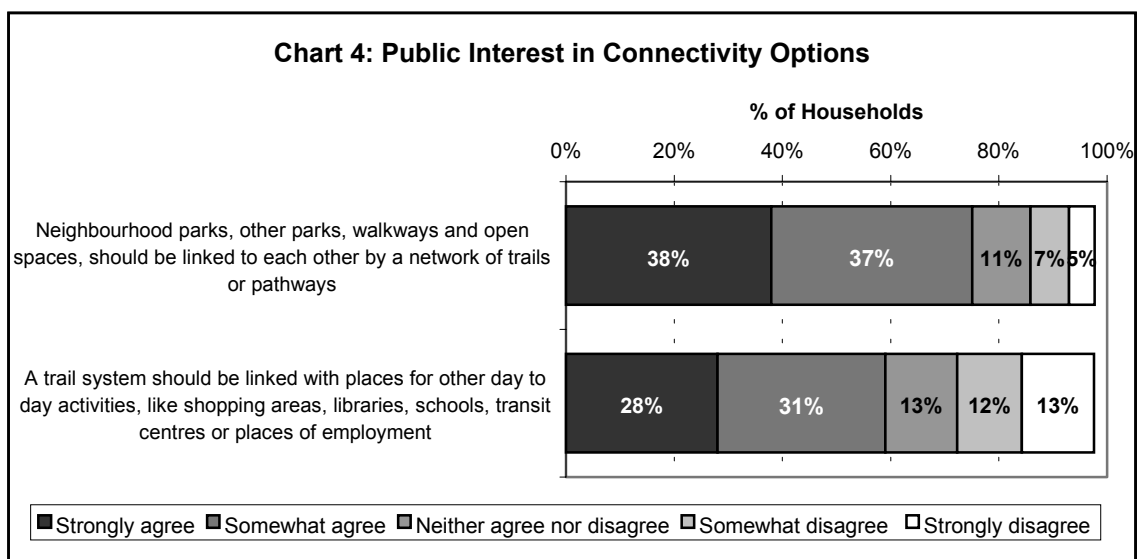
- A desire for places to purchase refreshments (cold drinks, food, ice cream) was mentioned quite frequently for the river valley system, less so for neighbourhood parks. Suggestions ranged from concession stands to restaurants. This topic was explored later in the survey through a closed-ended question that will be discussed further on in the report.
- The need to cater to dogs also generated a large number of suggestions – generally requests for more off-leash areas in the river valley system, for longer runs, or for a separate fenced dog area.

The category of general amenities included some suggestions for improving connectivity using trails and bridges within the river valley system, along the river, between the river valley and tableland, to other trails and parks and to the amenities of daily life. Connectivity was an important theme in the stakeholder consultations and two specially designed questions measured general public interest in the idea. They were:

Q: Keeping in mind all members of your household, do you think that the City's neighbourhood parks, other parks, walkways and open spaces, should be linked to each other by a network of trails or pathways.

Q: Do you think a trail system should be linked with places for other day to day activities, like shopping areas, libraries, schools, transit centres or places of employment.

Strength of agreement or disagreement was measured on a five-point scale, generating the answers shown in Chart 4.



There was considerable support for the idea of a network of trails linking the City's parks, paths and open spaces. 75% agreed with the idea, of whom 38% were in strong agreement. The average score was 3.99 out of 5, an overall score meaning "somewhat agree".

Although a somewhat lower approval rating was achieved for the concept of linking a trail system to places that are the focus of daily life activities, the majority of households viewed the idea positively (59%). However, a substantial proportion voiced disagreement with the idea, including strong disagreement (25% in total, 13% strongly). The average rating was 3.49, between neutral and somewhat positive.

The group that had spontaneously suggested a need for greater connectivity generated the highest approval ratings for these concepts (4.74 for connecting parkland spaces – sig; 3.98 for connecting to sites of daily activities). However, households that mentioned the need for more or better trails of any type (presumably existing and potential trail users), had average scores, suggesting that they were no more and no less enthused by the idea than the population in general.

Physical Activities, Sports and Recreation

Even though the perception of both types of parks includes physical activities, sports and recreation to about the same extent, when it came to specific amenities for these activities, needs from the two park types diverged in a major way. This may be seen in Table 8.

**Table 8: Desire For Physical Activities, Sports And Recreation
(n=606)**

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Physical Activities, Sports and Recreation (net)	45	42
Vision: Place for recreational activities/physical activities/sports	2	2
Trails Sub-Total (sub-net)	32	11
Extend trails/wider/longer/lots of paths/variety/different levels of challenge (non-specific trails)	12	3
Biking paths/more/longer/more pavement/more levels of difficulty/free flowing bike traffic	9	3
Walking/jogging/hiking trails/walkways/more walking areas/more challenging hiking/paved paths	10	5
Rollerblading pathways/area/more room/designed for blading	1	1
More natural trails/nature trails/off road/for mountain biking/quad trails/horse riding	2	+
Multi-use trails/multi-purpose trails	1	+
Cross-country skiing/more cross-country trails/hold cross-country ski runs/groomed	2	+
Open spaces/large green space/lots of grass/for kids to play in/ball/frisbee/teatherball	6	7
Boat docks/canoe launches/lake for boating/river used more/river races/sight-seeing boats	3	+
Water parks/spray parks/wading pools/outdoor pools/swimming pools/sprinklers to run through	1	8
Fields/Field Sports Sub-Total (sub-net)	1	7
More fields/better fields and sports areas/greener fields (general – nothing further specified)	1	3
Soccer field/baseball diamond/ball park/football/better/so kids not on teams can play	+	4
Basketball court/hoops/volleyball/tennis courts/badminton/better	+	3
Croquet/lawn bowling/horseshoe pits/some sort of game	1	1
More skateboard parks/separate place for skateboarding/like St. Albert	+	4
More skating rinks/hockey rinks/outdoor ice skating/pond skating/better access	1	4
Sliding hills/sledding hills/place for sledding/tobogganing hills	1	2
Skiing/snowboarding in winter/ski hill/more/bigger	+	1
More recreational activities/year round/winter activities/outdoor/lots/wide variety (general)	1	2
Fitness activities/fitness components (workout stations, high bars for chin-ups)/adult activities-yoga	+	+
Hold community events in the park/weekend/winter/farmers market/festival/walk-a-thon/sponsored/non-profit	1	2
<i>Outcome: Exercise/be more active/get a good workout/encourages outside activities</i>	12	8

+ = Less than 0.5%.

The perception of the river valley system as a place for exercise and outdoor activities is wrapped up in the opportunities provided by the trail system ... and that system appears to need improvement. Of the half dozen trail related items listed, the most frequently mentioned one suggested a desire for more trails, longer trails, wider trails and a greater variety of difficulty levels. The two trail types with greatest appeal were for walking, jogging or hiking and for bicycles. Others included, unpaved natural trails (for off-road biking, mountain biking, quadding, horses, nature observation, etc.), groomed cross-country ski trails, rollerblading trails or areas, and multi-use trails.

Although not as frequently mentioned, trails – or more often, paths – were also desired by a substantial number of respondents in neighbourhood parks, most notably pathways for walking.

Both park types were seen to need lots of grass in large open green spaces. For some, this was simply what a park is; for others it is a place where kids can play unstructured games.

The only other activity of note associated with the river valley system was a desire for increased use of the river, including more and improved boat launches as well as other ideas. The need for water was even more widely requested for neighbourhood parks, primarily in the form of water play and cooling off areas (and not just for children). Suggestions made were for water parks, spray parks, wading pools, outdoor pools, swimming pools and sprinklers to run through.

Other summer activities envisioned for neighbourhood parks involved the use of sports fields, including soccer, baseball and football. These were not necessarily seen as being for competitive use, but also to allow children who were not on teams an opportunity to play. Courts of various types were mentioned as well, primarily for neighbourhood parks. Suggestions included, basketball, volleyball, tennis and badminton.

Other amenities with a solid base of mentions for neighbourhood parks were skateboard parks (like in St. Albert) or separate areas for skateboarders,

Winter activities received some attention too, with requests for skating rinks in particular, also sliding, sledding and tobogganing hills and more or bigger ski/snowboarding hills – again primarily centred around neighbourhood parks.

Finally, it is of interest how few mentions there were of festivals and events in river valley parks. In fact, these types of suggestions were offered twice as often as activities that might enliven neighbourhood parks. Given the number, size and importance of events hosted in river valley parks, this "silence" is quite puzzling. It does not represent a rejection of parks as a place to hold such events. The reasons are open to conjecture, but could reflect a disconnect between the festivals (the attraction) and the parks that host them (merely the open space venue).

Kids' Play Amenities and Activities

The final set of amenities suggested for activities in parks was playgrounds and playground equipment, which involved a set of responses intertwined with the vision and image of parks as a place for children to play. These results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Desire For Kids' Play Amenities and Activities (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning For Kids (net)	10	40
<i>Vision:</i> Kid-orientated/place to play/all ages/youth/school kids/ little kids	2	10
Playground/Playground Equipment (sub-net)	6	26
Playground/larger/more/play areas/for small children/more variety	4	12
Playground equipment/traditional/slides/swings/monkey bars/updated equipment	2	12
Varied equipment/colourful/creative/adventure/to build with/climb/natural: logs-tires-ropes-tree swings-places to hide-explore	1	2
Activities for kids/more/wide range to keep kids busy	1	2
Supervision for kids activities/for older kids/groups/organized activities/green shack/day camps/crafts and sports	1	3
<i>Outcome:</i> Kids can play and exercise in a safer place/keeps kids busy/out of trouble and off the streets/fun for kids	3	14

While both types of parks were viewed as being a place for kids, neighbourhood parks were primarily positioned as places for children to enjoy. The public's vision was of a kid-friendly park designed for leisure activities for children of all ages represented in the community; the benefit was having an exciting place where they want to play and have fun, will exercise, not be bored, keep out of trouble and off the streets, and be safe while doing so.

Specific suggestions for achieving this vision centred primarily around the need for playgrounds in the river valley system and both playgrounds and playground equipment in neighbourhood parks. In fact, playgrounds and their equipment were the primary amenities identified for neighbourhood parks, equivalent in importance to trails in the river valley system and complemented by the wide variety of other amenities stimulating play and physical activities discussed previously (notably water play, open space for unstructured play, sports fields and courts, skating rinks and skateboard areas).

The call for playgrounds ranged from perceptions that this was a necessary feature of any park, to an explicit need for more, larger or more varied play areas and a shortage of playgrounds for very small children.

The type of equipment suggested was generally traditional – swings, slides, monkey bars; but there were some households that were clearly looking for something out of the ordinary, something that would challenge young imaginations. Other respondents specifically noted that the equipment in their parks was out of date and needed replacing.

The third play component identified was play activities, including supervised activities. These may or may not involve the use of equipment (not all respondents knew enough about children to make specific suggestions). Those who felt that supervision was needed often considered this as a way of keeping kids

out of trouble or bothering other park visitors. Some very specifically appreciated the opportunities provided and, in particular, held up the green shack program as a model of what was needed. Others suggested day camps, supervised crafts and sports, youth clubs, shelters or a drop-in centre.

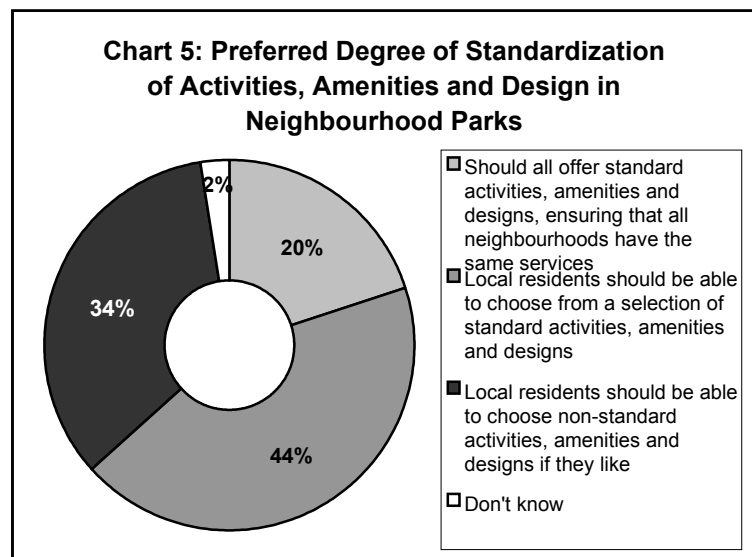
Equity And Choice of Activities, Amenities And Design In Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood park design has evolved over the years from an approach in which parks across the City had very similar activities, amenities and designs for reasons of equity, to the current policy which defines three standard development levels, depending on sharing of responsibility and funding contributions by a community group. Other changes in neighbourhood park development are starting to emerge which are not covered by this policy.

To investigate current public perceptions of the need for equity and the need for flexibility to address community needs, the following question was asked:

- Q: Thinking now about parks in neighbourhoods throughout the city, do you feel:
- That they should all offer standard activities, amenities and designs, ensuring that all neighbourhoods have the same services
 - That local residents should be able to choose from a selection of standard activities, amenities and designs
 - That local residents should be able to choose non-standard activities, amenities and designs if they like

The results are shown in Chart 5. The most popular selection was that community residents should be able to choose from a menu of standard options, allowing both equity and choice. However, fewer than half the households preferred this option, with another one in three looking for even greater flexibility. They preferred that local residents should be able to choose non-standard options if they so pleased.



REASONS FOR LOW RATINGS OF PARKLAND MAINTENANCE AND MAINTENANCE NEEDS IN FUTURE PARKS

Respondents who rated park maintenance as fair or poor provided the reasons for this answer, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Reasons For Fair Or Poor Rating For Maintenance

	River Valley and Ravine System (n=45)	Neighbourhood Parks (n=79)
Lot of garbage/too much litter/lying around/everywhere/ in the bushes/no/more trash cans/clean up more often/ regularly/year round	24	30
Dirty children's area (sand)/washroom/a dust bowl/dog poop/smells/spray painting not cleaned	2	5
Dangerous broken glass/needles/in sand/under slides/gun found by kids	2	8
Cut the grass/mow more regularly/overgrown/long/looks sloppy/along trails/overgrown paths	2	13
Weedy/weeds have taken over/don't get weeds out/dandelions out of control	3	4
Fields need better maintenance/divots/not cutting grass enough/may be dangerous	0	3
Trails deteriorating/playground/concrete/equipment run down/not maintained/need repairs/upgrading/repainting/ repair vandalism/repaint benches	6	7
Community/volunteers clean it/do maintenance/City don't do much	0	3
Other (dead and dying trees, garbage cans should be wind and bear proof)	1	1
Non-specific comments (not much maintenance/could be better,/needs improvement/beef it up/had cut backs)	6	14
No park to maintain/new area/still being developed	0	6
Don't know/response off topic	4	5

There is no doubt that it is garbage, dirt and dangerous discards that are at the core of dissatisfaction with park maintenance,

In the river valley system, a secondary concern was trail maintenance and repair. In neighbourhood parks, grass cutting, weeds and field maintenance were an issue, with lack of equipment maintenance forming a lesser problem.

In the requirements outlined by respondents for parks of the future, cleanliness and condition or state of repair were themes of intermediate importance. These findings are discussed next.

Maintenance In Parks Of The Future

As in the ratings of maintenance of the two types of parks, households expressed slightly greater concern about the condition of neighbourhood parks of the future than about the river valley system. This may be seen in Table 11.

Table 11: Desire For Well Maintained Parks (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Cleanliness (net)	28	34
<i>Vision:</i> Clean/tidy/less garbage/sanitary	10	12
Lots of garbage cans/regular pick-up/clean picnic areas/ recycle bins	4	3
Dog poop bags/dispensers/drop-off points/cleaner off-leash areas	1	1
No domestic animals/unleashed/unmuzzled pets/geese/horses/less dogs/no dog poop/smells/people not cleaning up	6	7
Not dirty/messy/garbage lying around/debris/baggies/broken glass	14	18
Total mentioning Condition/State of Repair (net)	10	16
<i>Vision:</i> In good repair/trails/equipment/pavement/pools/washrooms	1	2
<i>Vision:</i> Grounds maintenance/lawn cut/remove dead vegetation/clean water	2	4
Not poor maintenance/in disrepair/go to ruin/let things slide, run down/trails/paths/equipment/unsafe/glass in sand	3	6
Overall maintenance/well kept/taken care of (nothing else specified)	5	4

Once again, cleanliness proved to be the more important aspect of the issue of maintenance, with many envisioning the parks of the future as clean and tidy, with less garbage than at present. An even greater proportion saw lack of cleanliness as one of the things they did not want in their parks. For some people, the presence of dogs in particular – and their irresponsible owners – was a hygiene issue (for others, fear and safety were the driving concern).

Amenities requested to address these concerns included: more garbage cans and better (regular, daily) garbage removal and clean-up services; and, for dog owners, dog poop bags and dispensers, more drop-off points/garbage cans and better training of dog owners.

As with cleanliness, respondents did not want parks that were in disrepair, where facilities and equipment were allowed to get run down, trails look neglected and pavement is cracked. They also wanted green space where the lawn is cut and watered regularly and dead vegetation is removed.

Themes Describing Other Features Of Parks Of The Future

PARKS SHOULD BE SAFE

39% of the respondents spontaneously mentioned the need for being safe and – probably even more important – for feeling safe while using the river valley system. An even larger number, 50%, talked about safety needs in their community parks. This was the most frequently mentioned theme of all for neighbourhood parks. Safety was brought up in response to all four open-ended questions; a park needs to have a safe feeling or atmosphere; it needs safety features; if it is safe it offers the benefit of a safe place for recreation and play; and people do not want a park to be unsafe.

An examination of the types of responses made suggested that fear rather than experience was driving this need. The answers also suggested that concrete steps can be taken to alleviate the fear. Responses are described in Table 12 overleaf.

The vision of safety was quite broad. Respondents said they should not have to worry about people coming up behind them on a trail, about racial harassment, about individuals, kids and families needing to be safe 24/7.

Safety prevention was the primary theme of the interventions proposed: the noticeable presence of security supervision and personnel, police or community patrols, video surveillance and, for emergencies, emergency phones in parks and along trails. Lighting was considered a security component by some, to cut down on crime and especially in the evenings when one might feel afraid. (For others, more or better lighting was primarily mentioned as being needed along trails and paths so one can see at night, particularly in the fall and winter.)

Conflict between different user groups was an important theme, slightly more so in the river valley system. Safety solutions included: separation of user groups (primarily walking and biking, but also rollerblading and skateboarding) with different trails or lanes; restrictions on use and enforcement of existing restrictions or outright prohibition; and greater care and consideration on the part of cyclists.

Equipment safety was another theme, this time mentioned slightly more often for neighbourhood parks. A particular focus was on the materials used, with a preference being expressed for plastics over wood which splinters and deteriorates, and about the use of sand which is not resilient, hides needles and is perceived as being dirty. Water play areas were also thought to be unsanitary or hazardous by some and require better testing and supervision.

Table 12: Desire For Safety (n=606)

	River Valley and Ravine System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Safety (net)	39	50
<i>Vision:</i> Feel safe/not worry about safety	10	14
Security present/police/patrols/monitored/cameras/emergency phones	10	7
Lighting/for safety/reduce crime/in fall and winter/at night/on trails	5	3
Safer separate trails (biking-walking-rollerblading)/lanes/paved/enforce bylaws/restrict bikes/speed	3	1
Safer equipment/non-treated lumber/new plastics/recycled chipped tires not sand/test water regularly	1	4
Fire control/prevention	1	+
No vandalism/graffiti/crime/burned things/broken things/abused	8	13
No homeless/lowlifes/creepy people/panhandlers/roaming/living/sleeping/lying around/lurking in area/frightening	6	5
No gangs/drugs/drug dealers/drug paraphernalia/prostitution/junkie type people/gangs drinking, doing drugs	4	12
No domestic animals/unleashed/unmuzzled pets/geese/horses/less dogs/no dog poop/smells/people not cleaning up	6	7
No drunks/drinking/partying/liquor bottles/glass bottles/leaving broken glass/smoking/cigarette butts	4	5
Youth hanging out/teens hassling families/kids/bullies/rowdy teens/young hoodlums/harassing, rob seniors	2	6
Restrict/no mountain bikes on the trails (destruction)/no skateboarders/too many kids on rollerblades (safety)	2	2
No bikes/off paved trails/too many/no bike paths/no paved trails as used by bikes/don't widen/restrict	2	1
No water parks/wading pools/water sports (cause disease, need supervision)	+	1
<i>Outcome:</i> Safe place to go (general, not specifically kids)*	3	3
<i>Outcome:</i> Not as much juvenile crime-keeps community safer/cuts neighbourhood crime and vandalism	0	1

+ Less than 0.5%.

*References to a safe place for kids to play were included in the Table 9 Outcome response.

Then there were a whole slew of elements that were not wanted in City parks that had a safety implication. First was crime, vandalism and graffiti. This is not only destructive and unattractive (and ties in with earlier mentioned concerns about the state of repair of parks amenities), but encourages the perception that there are threatening people who have the run of the park. With a 13% spontaneous mention, it was a major concern for neighbourhood parks.

It is not a big leap, then, to see why many of the other unwanted elements were different types of people. The rich vocabulary used by respondents underlines the breadth of concern.³ Householders did not want:

- Homeless people, lowlifes, creepy people, panhandlers, weird people, riff-raff, vagrants, bums, undesirables or muggers anywhere in their vicinity while in a park, either in the river valley system or a neighbourhood park;
- Gangs, drug dealers, prostitutes or junkies selling or doing drugs in the parks, or leaving their various paraphernalia behind. This was a another big issue for neighbourhood parks;
- Drunks, smokers and people partying who leave behind broken glass (both park types); and
- Youth, teens, kids and young hoodlums who hang out in neighbourhood parks, bullying smaller children, hassling families and harassing or stealing from seniors – again a bigger issue in neighbourhood parks.

The final item, unmuzzled pets running around freely (with the implied threat to safety) was mentioned for both park types, but also includes previously discussed concerns about cleanliness.

PARKS SHOULD BE NATURAL AND LIMIT MAN-MADE COMPONENTS

The Demand For Natural Park Space

Over one-third of respondents either stated that the river valley system should be maintained as a natural area or identified elements or concerns that suggested something similar. For neighbourhood parks, the proportion spontaneously mentioning the need for naturalism was almost as high at one in four. The responses received are shown in Table 13.

With 19% mentioning a continuing vision of the river valley system as a "natural" area, this is a defining dimension for the system. While many respondents used descriptions that suggested a pristine natural environment (e.g., keep the wilderness, a true natural setting, preserve original growth, natural area, forest reserve) this does not necessarily mean that everyone's understanding of the terms was the same as that of a professional. This is clear when considering other phrases offered, such as, unspoiled places, more naturalization, keep as natural as possible, look natural, rustic, as close to nature as possible, more like forests. While some portion of the population wants preservation of the river valley, others simply want to feel they have a large piece of nature – pristine or not – in the City.

What is especially interesting is that, without any form of prompting, almost one in ten respondents had a similar vision for neighbourhood parks – again emphasizing that it is the end product (a natural environment) that is sought, not necessarily preservation of nature.

The types of park elements that help convey a natural environment included trees in particular, and its counterpart, not cutting down trees. For neighbourhood parks, the call for trees also involved another key need, that of shade and (to a lesser degree) provision of a wind break.

³ Note: All terms used below are direct quotations from the responses received.

A much less frequently mentioned natural element was the presence of, or enabling habitat for, wildlife.

Table 13: Desire For Natural Parks and Limitation of Man-Made Components (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Natural, Limit Man-Made (net)	34	24
<i>Vision:</i> Natural/unspoiled/untouched/as natural as possible/forested	19	9
Lots of/more trees/leafy/shady areas/around sports fields	7	13
Some wildlife/marshlands/wildlife habitat/birds/puddles, bogs, bugs and animals	3	1
No motorized vehicles-motorbikes/ATVs/snowmobiles/skidoos	4	1
No motor vehicles/cars/no more roadways/no/less traffic near park/no parking lots/big parking lots/traffic restrictions	3	2
No more paved areas/paths/concrete/not too much pavement/no fake looking structures/flush toilets/metal equipment	3	2
No cutting down trees/getting rid of trees/less trees/deforestation	1	1
No pollution/air pollution/waste going into the river	1	1
Not perfect and manicured, unnatural, leave underbrush for small animals/groomed	1	0
No herbicides/pesticides/not so much weed spraying/unnatural fertilizers/near river/children	+	1
<i>Benefit:</i> Place to go for fresh air/clean air/open air/fresh air in middle of the city	3	1

+ Less than 0.5%.

A few respondents each suggested a wide variety of exclusions that reinforced the notion of a natural environment in the parks:

- Banning motorized recreation vehicles, especially in the river valley system;
- Banning or reducing motor cars, traffic, parking and roads in, through and around the parks (both types);
- Limiting paved areas, the use of concrete, metal and other non-natural materials;
- Clean, unpolluted fresh air;
- No unnatural manicuring and not using herbicides/pesticides.

Preferences Relating To Natural Areas Outside The River Valley System

One of the issues chosen to be explored in greater detail with the general public was to identify current expectations relating to natural areas in the tableland. Following an explanatory introduction, a series of three questions was asked on the topic. The first was as follows:

"I'd like you to think now about natural spaces outside the river valley and ravines. By this I mean places with tree stands, wildflowers, grasses or open water marshland, with birds and wildlife, that are pretty much left to grow as they please. There is some management of natural spaces to limit damage from people visiting these areas.

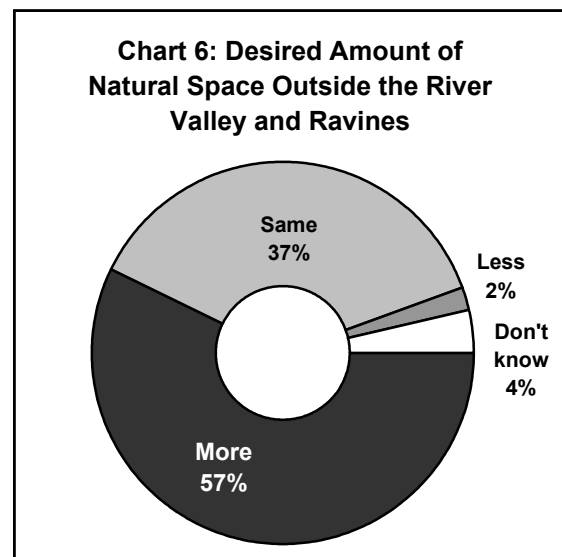
Q: Do you think there should be more, about the same, or less natural space in areas of the city outside the river valley and ravines?"

The answers to this structured question were entirely consistent with the finding that 24% had, of their own volition, suggested at least one idea relating to having a natural neighbourhood park.

When prompted, three in five households indicated that they would like to see more natural areas outside the river valley system, two in five wanted the same amount and only 2% felt there should be less(see Chart 6).

Support for more natural space in the community was strongest among those who had spontaneously mentioned a need for more parkland in their community (70% vs. 57% overall).

The second question in the series explored what size natural spaces would be preferred. The question asked was:



Q: When preserving natural spaces outside the river valley and ravines, choices must be made about their size, location and natural features. Do you think there should be:

- A large number of small natural spaces distributed throughout the city, in walking distance from people's homes
- A few large natural spaces, with more varied vegetation, wildlife and natural features, within a 30 minute driving distance
- or A combination of some large and some small natural spaces?

The large majority of households preferred a combination of quickly accessible small natural spaces and larger natural areas with more features within driving distance (Chart 7).

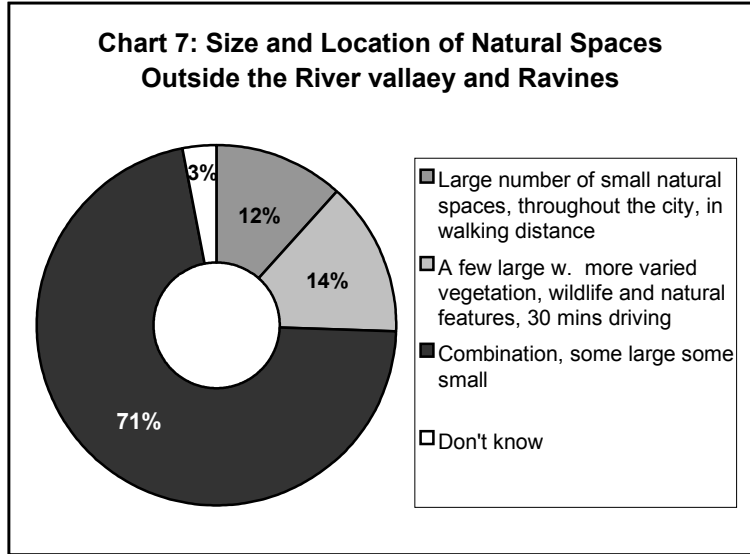
The final question in the series looked at the preferred balance between natural areas and landscaped parks and fields.

Q: When developing new parks outside the river valley and ravine system, park planners often need to make a choice

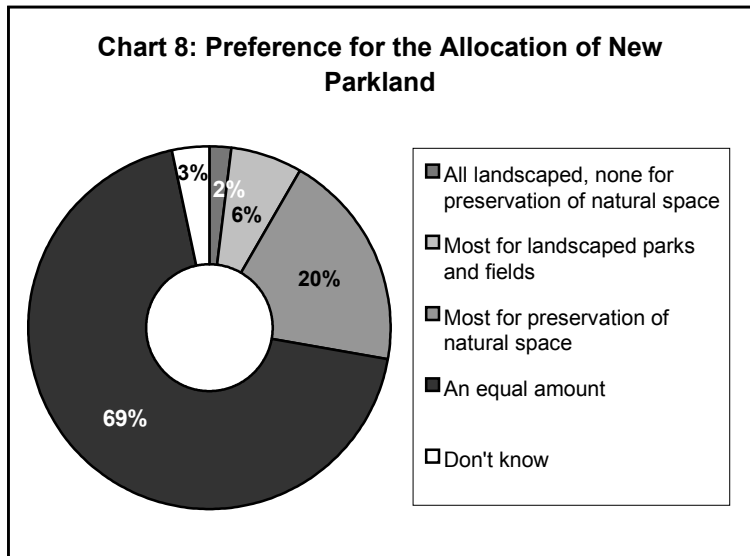
between preserving natural spaces, and providing land for park amenities like sports fields, playgrounds and sliding hills. Should new parkland outside the river valley and ravine system be used:

- All for landscaped parks and fields, none for preservation of natural space
- Most for landscaped parks and fields
- Most for preservation of natural space
- or An equal amount for landscaped parks and fields and for natural space preservation?

(Note: 'All for preservation of natural space' was not presented as an option as it was felt to be unrealistic at this time.)



Support for increased natural space being set aside in new parks, was overwhelming. Chart 8 demonstrates unequivocally that the vast majority of the population want more natural spaces outside the river valley system. Over two-thirds chose the option of an equal amount of natural and landscaped area in new parkland, with the next most frequent response being that "most" should be set aside for the preservation of natural space.



The greatest level of support for landscaped parks and fields came from people who had specifically mentioned the need for sports fields in neighbourhood parks in the open-ended questions (1% of households for the river valley system, 7% for neighbourhood parks – refer to Table 8). Even so, while 20% of this group wanted all or most space for landscaped parks and

fields, 72% preferred an equal division. So, even among the households that considered sports fields important, most wanted more natural space.

Examination of the group of households that viewed neighbourhood parks as a place for kids and identified kids' playgrounds and play equipment as necessary amenities in neighbourhood parks, showed a distribution similar to the population. 71% chose an equal division and 9% wanted all or most new parkland to be landscaped or for fields.

DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCIALISM SHOULD BE AVOIDED

Objections To Development And Commercialization

Another issue of great importance to households, especially for the river valley system, was a "not". Parks should not be developed, the area around them should not be built-up and commercialization should not be permitted. The comments provided are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Desire For Undeveloped, Non-Commercial Park Areas (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Undeveloped, Non-Commercial Parks (net)	35	16
No commercial development/of any kind/not too much commercialization/no vendors/businesses/industrialization	23	11
No development/buildings/construction/keep it parkland/no encroaching tall buildings/in or near the area (general)	10	4
No residential development/houses/housing development creeping into the park/no high density housing	7	2
No commercial development surrounding parks/close by/big stores near the park	+	1
No advertisements/advertising signs/billboards/lots of signs	2	1
Community development only-no private enterprise/not privatized so rich get better facilities/no developers running it	+	+

+ Less than 0.5%.

First and foremost in respondents minds was keeping parks free of commercial influences. While many simply stated broadly that they wanted no commercial development, no commercialization, no economic development, no businesses or no industrialization, others were quite specific. Their particular focus was food vendors of every stripe - from vending machines through snack bars, concession stands and booths to convenience stores. Their objections included that they go to a park to get away from just this environment, that junk food is unhealthy and that more garbage will be left lying around if food is sold in the parks. Some objected only to permanent commercial facilities, some wanted restrictions on the number allowed. Along with opposition to commercial ventures, there were individuals who

specifically signalled their aversion to seeing commercial signage (advertising, billboards, signs) in City parks.

The next category included all general intimations that there should be no or less development, both in (keep it parkland, no more development - leave it as natural as possible, less human development) and around the parks (no construction, no buildings). It also included references to prohibiting the encroachment of tall buildings and one person went so far as to admonish that "the City should be more adamant".

The third category encompasses comments specifically directed at nearby residential development – houses creeping into the parks, high density housing and condominium development which all intrude on the experience that is being looked for by going to a park.

Similarly, though mentioned relatively infrequently, was the desire to also keep commercial developments (shops and big-box stores) away from park borders, particularly that one should not feel surrounded by commercial development.

Clearly, development on the perimeter contributes to the attractiveness (or otherwise) of the park as well.

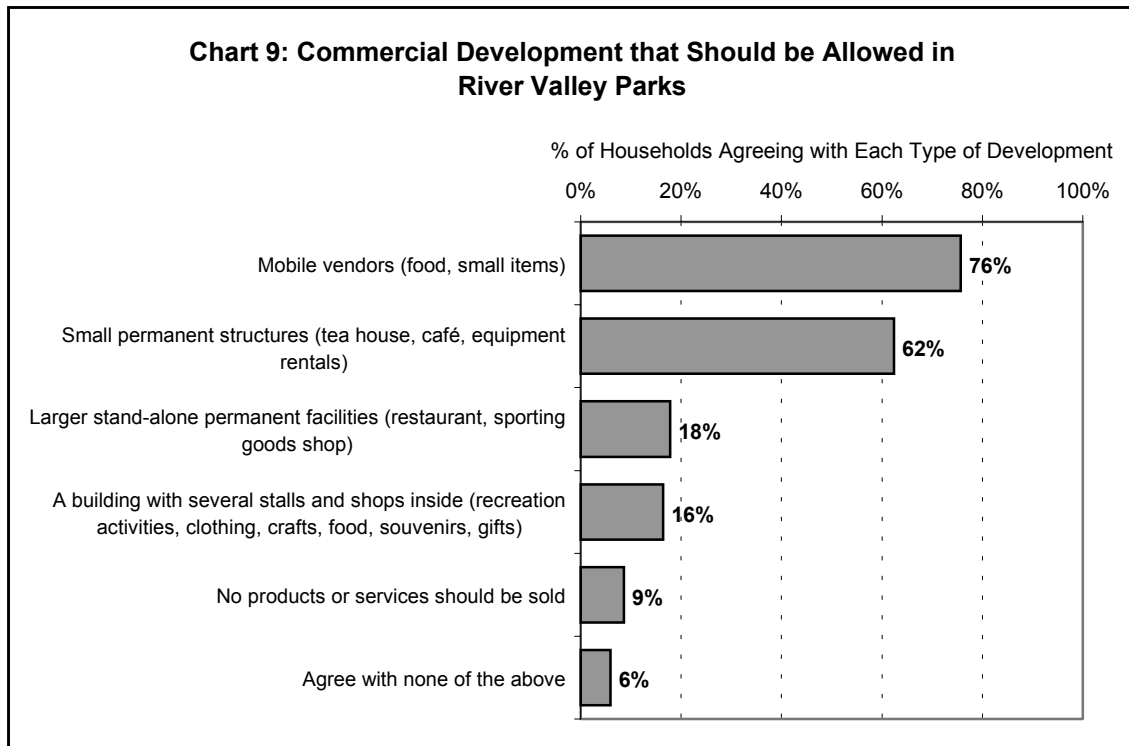
Reactions To Different Types of Vending Concepts

Since commercial development in river valley parks has long been under debate, a special question was asked to assess where the general public actually stood on the matter at the present time. The question was introduced with a preamble about the purpose of such development and the limitations that would be placed on it.

- Q: There have been discussions over the years about offering visitors to river valley parks the chance to purchase a variety of products and services that would complement the things people do in the parks. These would be allowed in designated locations and would have to meet design guidelines. Do you agree or disagree that:
- Mobile vendors, selling fruit and vegetables, ice cream, sandwiches or other small items should be allowed
 - Small permanent structures like tea houses or cafés, or rental and servicing of sports equipment like bikes, rowboats or snowshoes, should be allowed
 - Larger stand-alone permanent facilities like a full service restaurant or a sporting goods shop should be allowed
 - A building with several stalls and shops inside, where one could purchase a variety of goods and services, such as indoor recreation activities, sports and casual clothing, crafts, food, souvenirs or gifts should be allowed
 - IF ALL NO: No products or services should be sold in river valley parks

Given the strength of objections to development and commercialization that were voiced spontaneously, the responses may be found to be somewhat surprising. As shown in Chart 9, three-quarters of all households agreed that mobile vendors selling refreshments and small items (something

that is already occurring in a limited way) should be allowed. Furthermore, two-thirds also agreed that a small permanent structure offering refreshments or equipment rentals should be allowed.



However, the public's tolerance for development ends there; larger permanent structures were approved of only by a minority. Also of interest is that 15% were opposed to all options offered, though for some it appears that what would appeal to them was not captured in the array presented.

Evidence of support for the first two concepts was identified in the open-ended questions, where the perfect river valley system was seen as offering opportunities to purchase food and beverages or rent equipment (6% unduplicated – refer to Table 7).

However, this number fell far short of the proportion voicing opposition to development (Table 14). A further analysis of support for each development concept among people who had stated that they did not want development in the river valley system, showed that although there was a lower level of agreement with all of the concepts than in the population overall, the first option (mobile vendors) was still approved of by the majority of respondents in the group (67% vs. 76% overall), though the second (small permanent structures) had less than majority support (44% vs. 62%). Opposition to all of the concepts was higher in this group, but not overwhelmingly so (27% vs. 15% overall).

From these results it is apparent that a stated anti-development point of view may not hold when the right mix of circumstances is offered. In the survey, this mix included a clear description of each purchasing opportunity, the benefit (complementary to activities one does in a park) and the limits that would be imposed (in designated locations, meeting design guidelines). The results suggest that how the

opportunities are communicated will affect the perception of threat to the natural environment that is so highly valued in the river valley system.

Finally, it needs to be borne in mind that the question posed was a simple choice – either agree or disagree with the concept. The intensity of support and opposition to each idea remains to be explored.

PARKS SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE

Demand For And Appreciation Of Accessibility

The issue of park accessibility was of similar overall importance in both types of parks, being mentioned spontaneously by one in five respondents. However, the nature of the topics raised was slightly different. Comments made are captured in Table 15.

Table 15: Desire For Accessibility (n=606)

	River Valley and Ravine System	Neighbourhood Parks
	%	%
Total mentioning Access (net)	19	21
<i>Vision:</i> Easy to access/wheelchair accessible/from riverbank/ease of access by transit/parking	9	4
<i>Vision:</i> For older people in neighbourhood/seniors/disabled	2	3
<i>Vision:</i> Multi-user friendly/multi-purpose park/for everyone/adults and children	1	4
Open daily/in winter/all seasons/year round/snow removal	3	3
Close by/walking distance/convenient from all parts of city/less travel	1	5
Parking/vehicles/driving access	1	1
No fences/no chain link fencing around it/no barricades/roped off areas/just open	1	2
No restrictions/fewer rules/too many bylaws/where bikes/dogs can go/kids climb trees/no restricted areas	1	1
<i>Benefit:</i> Everyone can use/enjoy it/for the community/benefits all citizens/more access for the whole city	4	3

In the river valley system, the term "access" primarily signifies that its recreation and outdoor activities should be easy to reach. This could mean that there are ramps for people in wheelchairs or with strollers, that there is low floor bus service, that there are more ways down to the river valley, like stairs from the bank down to the riverside or to the trails – or something less dangerous than stairs, like a lift system. It also means better driving access and parking, so everyone can get there.

For neighbourhood parks, ease of access was important, but mentioned even more frequently was distance. The vision was of a park in every neighbourhood, close to one's home, within walking distance. It would be conveniently located for everyone in the neighbourhood. The benefit was that people would not have to drive, travel or even leave the City to enjoy themselves.

In commenting on neighbourhood parks, respondents were especially likely to mention that they should be designed and accessible to all ages and types of people in the community – adults and children, seniors and people with disabilities – so that there is something for everyone.

A small number mentioned a need for both types of parks to be open daily and for better access in the winter months. Year round access would be facilitated by snow removal – ploughing sidewalks and paths. This freedom of access was voiced by a few in a different way, by identifying what they would not like to see: fences of any type that would limit access, and rules and restrictions on how the park can be used.

One of the identified outcomes of having public parks was that they are available for use and enjoyment by all citizens, whenever they like.

Access to Top of Bank

It is interesting that spontaneously raised accessibility issues relating to the river valley system included a desire for a greater ability to get down from the top of bank to the river itself and the river valley trails, but not for greater visual access. It will also be remembered from Table 14 that encroachment, both by residential and commercial development, was frequently stated as something that should not happen around parkland, especially in the river valley system.

Since top of bank locations are highly desirable from a development point of view, it has been the City's role to ensure accessibility for the general public. To investigate what members of the public see as being in their interest, the following question was asked:

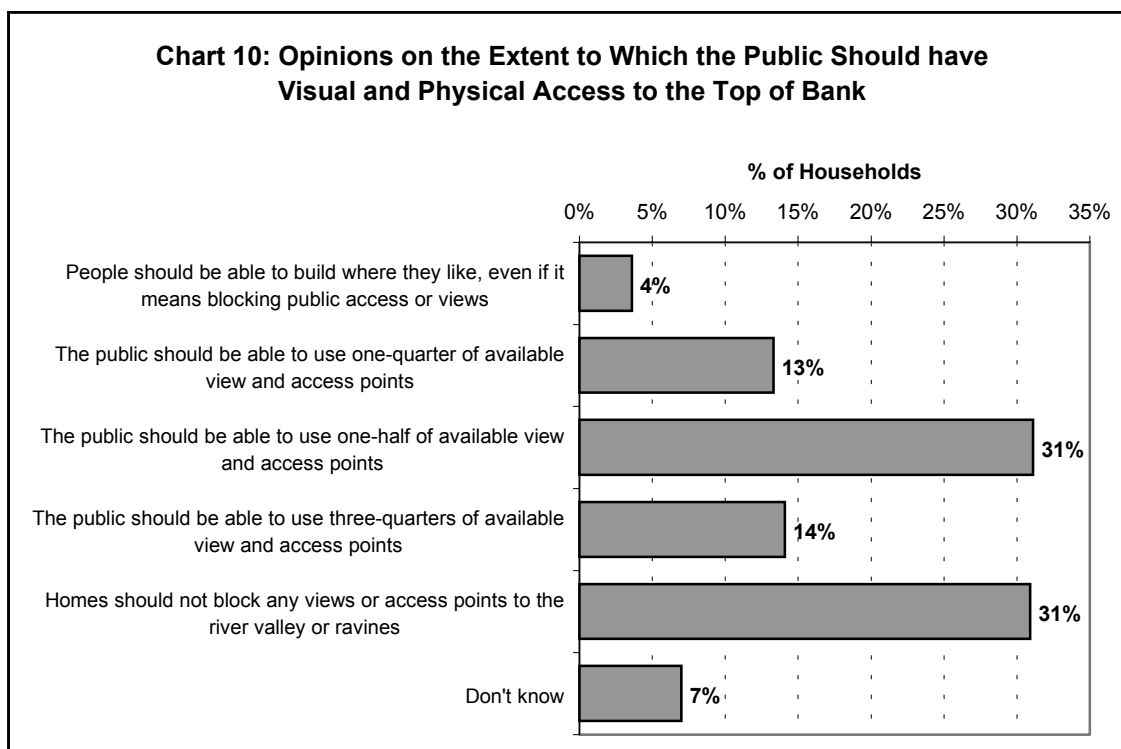
- Q: People like to live in houses, condominiums and apartments where they will have a great view of the river valley or ravines. However, for anyone who doesn't live in these homes, the buildings could block views and access to trails, walkways and roads alongside and down to the river valley or ravine. Do you think:
- People should be able to build where they like, even if it means blocking public access or views
 - Homes should not block any views or access points to the river valley or ravines
 - There should be a reasonable number of view and access points available to the general public

IF REASONABLE NUMBER: Would a reasonable number mean that the public should be able to use one quarter, one-half or three-quarters of available view and access points to the river valley and ravines?

The answers are shown in Chart 10. It is clear from these results that:

- The public do not want to see unfettered top of bank development that will restrict access;
- A substantial proportion, one in three, do not want any potential access points blocked by development;

- The majority (58%) do not view this as a black or white issue and are willing to see some



development, as long as there is also a "reasonable" amount of public access.

Further probing established that the concept of reasonable meant that at least half of potential access points should be available, with the average closer to two-thirds (65%). In real terms, this is likely to mean that if there is a perception in the community that local access is being impacted substantially (perhaps by reducing the number of potential access points by one-third or more), there is likely to be negative public reaction.

A look at the responses of individuals who had spontaneously indicated that they would not like to see development or commercialism in or adjacent to the river valley system, showed a similar distribution. Although there was slightly more opposition to any obstruction of access points (35%) the difference was not significant. Most likely to object, were people who mentioned concerns about residential development and encroachment, but again, the difference was not statistically significant (42%).

How Accessible Is The River Valley System To Edmontonians?

All respondents were asked how long it would take them "to walk to the viewpoint of the river valley or ravine that is nearest to your home". The answers provided are shown in Chart 11.

The majority of households, 58%, were located more than 15 minutes away from their nearest visual access point, with one in five within five minutes and almost one-third within ten minutes of the river valley system.

Households that visualized the perfect river valley system of the future as being accessible from all parts of the City, or used by all types of people, and specifically seniors and people with disabilities, were almost all (87-88%) located more than 15 minutes away from an access point, suggesting that some usage barriers are due to location.

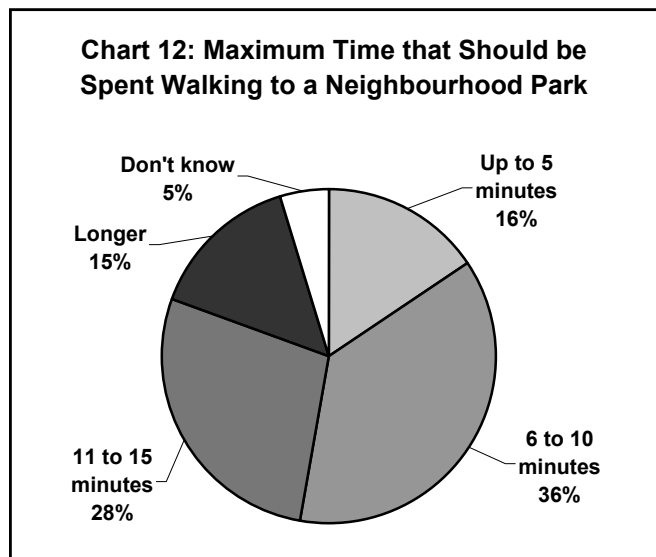
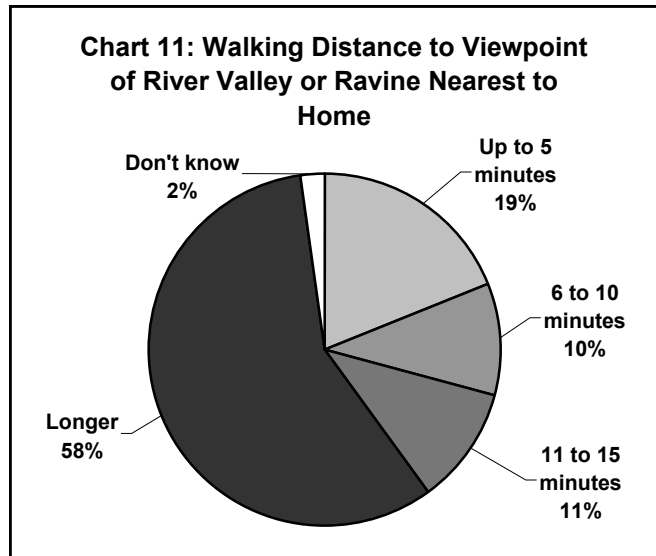
What Is A Convenient Distance For Neighbourhood Parks?

In an earlier section it was seen that one in six households were not satisfied with the amount of parkland in their communities and surrounding neighbourhoods and many wanted to see more parks developed (see Table 4). In their vision for parks of the future, some respondents also stated they wanted more parks or were concerned that available parkland not be removed (Table 5). Then, in the discussion on accessibility (Table 15) it was found that short distance and ease of access were other criteria mentioned in association with the perfect neighbourhood park of the future.

To investigate where a park meeting these criteria might be located, respondents were asked: "What is the most time people should have to spend walking from their homes to a park in their neighbourhood?"

The answers are shown in Chart 12. Over half the responses suggested that the maximum walking time should be 10 minutes and 80% felt that the maximum should be no longer than 15 minutes. The average was 10.4 minutes.

A finding of interest was that people mentioning a need for greater ease of access to neighbourhood parks (including wheelchair, stroller and transit access) were prepared to walk longer than average to reach it (13.7 minutes – sig.) Similar results were found for seniors (12.5 minutes – sig.), suggesting that the differences in expectations might be due to walking speed rather than location.



PARK COSTS AND FUNDING

Cost of Use

The cost of using, developing and maintaining City parks was not mentioned frequently for either type of park. In fact, of all the themes identified to describe parks of the future, this was the smallest.

When costs were mentioned, the point made most often was that parks offer a free or low cost opportunity to go out, a particular benefit to low income groups.

The few other comments were of the "not" variety: there should not be any admission charges or fees, and no more should be spent on them (see Table 16).

Table 16: Park Costs (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Park Costs (net)	4	4
No user fees/admission fees - will reduce access/tollgate/ no paid events/should not pay to use fields/rinks	1	2
Enough spent as is/nothing that wastes money/upkeep costs too much/taxed and spend enough/no more changes	1	1
<i>Benefit:</i> Somewhere to go at no cost/low cost/affordable/ benefits low income families/those who can't afford to travel	2	2

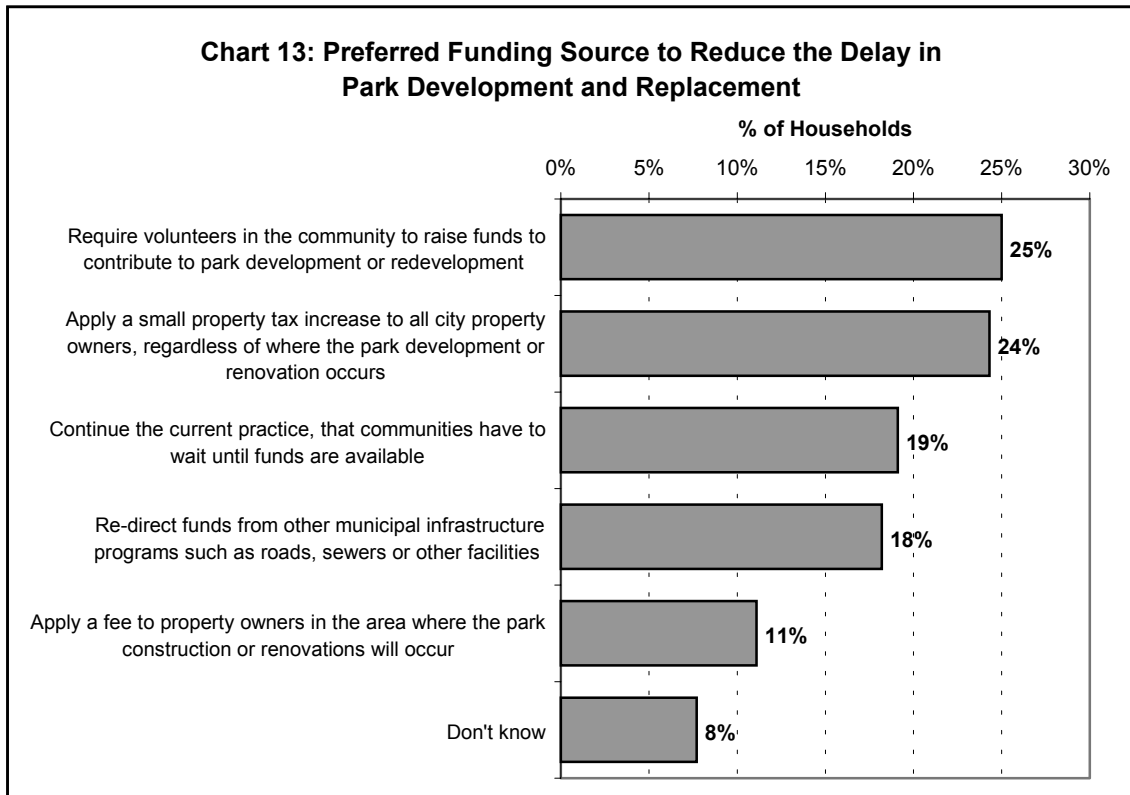
Cost of Development

Many more households want to see more parks being developed in their neighbourhoods than want to cap expenditures (at least on an unaided basis). Opinions about the preferred source of funding for development was explored in the following question:

- Q: The City is responsible for the construction and renovation of a wide range of infrastructure, such as roads, sewers and other facilities. Capital funding demands are high. As a result, park development in new areas, and the replacement of aging or out of date park facilities in older areas, is usually delayed several years. To reduce the delay, should the City:
- Apply a fee to property owners in the area where the park construction or renovations will occur
 - Apply a small property tax increase to all city property owners, regardless of where the park development or renovation occurs
 - Re-direct funds from other municipal infrastructure programs such as roads, sewers or other facilities
 - Require volunteers in the community to raise funds to contribute to park development or redevelopment

- Continue the current practice, that communities have to wait until funds are available

The range of answers received is shown in Chart 12.



The results indicate that:

- There is no one preferred approach to generating the requisite funds. Support for each of the first four items (community fundraising, a general tax increase, wait until funds are available and redirection of infrastructure funds) was about equal, since the differences were not statistically significant.
- Significantly less acceptable as an option was charging fees to affected property owners.

These findings suggest that parks are viewed as a public good and that they should be funded by public monies or community endeavour. It should also be noted that there may be limited support for funding by a community alone, since many who chose this option, insisted that funds should come from another source as well. In fact, almost all who wanted to choose more than one source had selected community fundraising as one of the methods.

There were directional indications that people who gave low ratings to the amount of parkland in their communities, or who raised the need for more parkland (or concerns about a reduction) spontaneously, were more likely than average to support community fundraising and a small increase in city-wide taxes.

Themes Describing The Character And Other Outcomes Of Having And Using Parks

The open ended questions designed to explore needs, wants, desires, barriers and concerns about parks in the City generated a number of other themes which described the "perfect" ambience, who parks should be catering to and the benefits or outcomes of having and using parks. Some of these have been discussed as part of topics already dealt with. The remainder are outlined in this section.

PARKS SHOULD PROVIDE AN INVITING, PEACEFUL, RELAXING PLACE TO GET AWAY AND ENJOY ONESELF

The vision of the ambience, atmosphere or mood expected in City parks was fairly consistent for both the river valley system and neighbourhood parks, though there was a difference in emphasis, as may be seen in Table 17.

Table 17: Desired Ambience (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Ambience (net)	27	29
<i>Vision:</i> Peaceful/tranquil/quiet/calm/serene	8	4
<i>Vision:</i> Inviting/friendly/happy/welcoming/pleasant/comfortable	7	12
<i>Vision:</i> Fun/enjoyable place to go/somewhere to go, something to do/place to spend a day/different	6	7
<i>Vision:</i> Relaxing/restful/place to mellow out	4	4
Not crowded/overrun/too many people/less busy	2	2
No noise/electric remote control cars/people there late at night/traffic noise	1	1
<i>Benefit:</i> Place to relax/de-stress/revitalize/escape hustle and bustle of city/getaway/relief/freedom/different world	8	5
<i>Benefit:</i> Place to study/sit and think/work	1	+

Neighbourhood parks of the future were predominantly visualized as being welcoming or inviting, friendly, happy places to be, which are also bright and comfortable looking. They, like the river valley system, were also viewed as a providing somewhere to go and something to do which would offer an opportunity for fun and enjoyment.

The river valley system was more likely to be seen as a peaceful, tranquil, calm, serene and quiet place that offers a refuge from urban life; a place to relax, revitalize, de-stress and gain relief and freedom from the monotony of city living – from busy streets, hustle and bustle, and the rat race. This is not to say that neighbourhood parks should not offer a similarly relaxing environment, but that this feeling was sought more often in the river valley system.

Other minor ambience dimensions identified were complementary to the theme of quiet and relaxation in both park types – not being overcrowded or noisy and a place where one might just sit and think, study or work.

PARKS ENABLE CITY DWELLERS TO ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS

One of the benefits of parks is that they provide the setting for people to enjoy nature and outdoor activities (see Table 18).

Table 18: Parks Enable Outdoor Enjoyment (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Outdoor Enjoyment (net)	11	8
<i>Benefit: Enjoy nature/enjoy outdoor activities/see wildlife and vegetation/enjoy the weather/sun</i>	8	7
<i>Benefit: Natural area/green space/open space in middle of a city/bit of country within the city/wilderness in urban area</i>	4	2

The open green space away from urban concrete offered by City parks, and especially the green belt and forested feel of the river valley system, offers Edmontonians a chance to enjoy the sense of being in the country without leaving the city.

In this setting, parks provide citizens with the opportunity to sit outdoors, appreciate nature and connect with a natural environment, including scenery, wildlife, vegetation, the sun and the weather. For those so inclined, they also provide the environment and amenities to enjoy outdoor activities.

PARKS STIMULATE THE WELL-BEING OF THE POPULATION

With the emphasis already seen that is placed on parks to enable relaxation and rest and provide amenities for outdoor recreation and physical activity, it is not surprising that one of the more frequently envisioned outcomes was a healthy population. The ideas put forward are captured in Table 19.

One outcome of having parks which meet the needs identified by respondents, is that it will promote a healthy lifestyle and result in a physically fitter and mentally healthier and happier society. This is primarily because of the opportunities offered, particularly in the river valley system, for the entire city to be more active – to exercise or do fitness activities outdoors or get a good workout.

Parks give people a reason to get out of their houses, away from sitting in front of the television and couch potato leisure time activities. The ability to do this was considered most beneficial for households without outdoor spaces of their own: central city residents, people in apartments and seniors, whose lives are enhanced by having a place to go outdoors.

On the mental health side, parks provide the opportunity to reduce stress from everyday life and challenges in the city.

Finally, parks offer a place to find fresh, clean air in the middle of the city.

Table 19: Parks Stimulate Well-being (n=606)

	River Valley and Ravine System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Well-Being (net)	29	23
<i>Benefit:</i> Exercise/be more active/get a good workout/ encourages outside activities	12	8
<i>Benefit:</i> Healthier society/physically and mentally/happier/ promotes healthy lifestyle	8	7
<i>Benefit:</i> Place to relax/de-stress/revitalize/escape hustle and bustle of city/getaway/relief/freedom/different world	8	5
<i>Benefit:</i> Get out of the house/away from televisions/ especially for central city residents/apartments/seniors	5	5
<i>Benefit:</i> Place to go for fresh air/clean air/open air/fresh air in middle of the city	3	2

PARKS PROMOTE FAMILY COHESION

The vision of parks, and especially neighbourhood parks, as a place for kids has already been described, along with the kid-oriented activities and amenities that should be offered. In addition to this, respondents described parks as a place for families (which includes kids of all ages), but unlike kids, the benefit was not a safe, fun place to keep kids out of trouble, but far more significant in building the health and strength of the community. The points made are shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Parks Promote Family Cohesion (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Family (net)	10	16
<i>Vision:</i> Family-orientated/family gatherings/family activities/ children and parents/mothers and babies	5	8
<i>Benefit:</i> Good place to take family/creates family values/ enjoy leisure time together/quality time/keeps family strong	7	9

The following may be observed from the data in Table 20 and comparisons with Table 9:

- The disparity between the river valley system and neighbourhood parks as a place for families is far lower than it was for children, suggesting that the river valley parks (as well as neighbourhood parks) need to provide activities and amenities for the whole family – parents and small children, teens and adults – to have fun doing *together*;
- Motivations for visiting a park as a family include things like family reunions or events, and being a place to take visiting family and friends;

- The benefits that accrue from families using city parks lie in building the family unit. Parks help strengthen families by offering the opportunity to do something together during their leisure time, to interact and spend quality time with one another. The outcome is strongly viewed as leading to the creation of family values and helps keep families together ("the family that plays together, stays together").

PARKS IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

Parks also benefit the City as a whole, its citizens individually and its visitors by providing a better quality of life. Three aspects included under this theme term are described in Table 21.

Table 21: Parks Improve Quality of Life (n=606)

	River Valley System %	Neighbourhood Parks %
Total mentioning Quality of Life (net)	23	25
Increases quality of life/more liveable city/attractive to people moving here/improves public image/an asset	7	5
Good tourist attraction/something to brag about/a showplace/generates tourism revenues	7	1
Beautifies the city/area/looks nice/attractive/appealing/pleasing to the eye	5	3
Flowers/shrubbery/gardens/more wild flowers/colourful/greater variety/more greenery	5	7
Water feature/pond/small fountain/small lake/soothing, peaceful/for pleasure	1	3
Add texture to flat land/hills/upgraded landscaping/more attractive landscape	+	1
Connect to community-place to congregate/people get to know each other/social atmosphere	1	6
Instill pride in neighbourhood/closer knit community/more stable/stronger/more involved/aware	1	4
Increase property values/selling point/makes community more desirable/would stay/entice young families	+	3

First is that parks make a city a nicer place to live, helping create a better environment for children to grow up in and a more enjoyable lifestyle. They enhance the appeal of the city, increasing its attractiveness to people thinking about moving there. They are an asset, contributing to city's public image and reputation and, in the case of the river valley system, provide something unique that Edmontonians can be proud of and brag about. This, in turn, helps to attract tourists and tourism revenue, with the river valley in particular being regarded as a showplace tourist attraction in its own right.

Secondly, parks beautify the area they are in and the city as a whole. They can be scenic, offer great views and are themselves pleasing to the eye. Desirable characteristics that contribute to the beauty of parks were gardens with colourful flowers (including wildflowers), rocks and varied plants, shrubs and greenery. Small ornamental fountains or other water features increase one's pleasure in the surroundings

and enhance a feeling of peacefulness. Landscaping that is not flat adds to visual interest. More of these decorative features were especially requested for neighbourhood parks.

Thirdly, neighbourhood parks should provide the opportunity for community building. They offer a place for community residents to meet new people and to get to know one another face to face in a social atmosphere. They provide a centre for community gatherings which will help strengthen and stabilize the community by creating a sense of sharing and involvement. This, in turn, will increase community pride and unity. Neighbourhood parks also benefit the community in tangible ways, by making it a more desirable place to live, providing a selling point, especially for young families, and increasing property values in the surrounding area.

THE LEGACY OF CHANGE

The final theme covers the legacy that would result from respondents' suggested improvements and changes in parks of the future that have not been captured previously.

As shown in Table 22, the predominant response was to predict increased animation. If the changes were made, respondents believed there would be more available that is user-friendly to encourage visitation, participation and enjoyment. The parks would be used by more people, more frequently and more regularly, more thoroughly or extensively, for longer periods. They would be used by a wider range of people, including all ages and interests, children and visiting grandchildren, minorities and people living in apartments. As a result, neighbourhood parks in particular, would be better used by local residents, and busier and more active in all seasons.

Table 22: Legacy (n=606)

	River Valley and Ravine System	Neighbourhood Parks
	%	%
Total mentioning Legacy (net)	25	22
Would use it more if .../more of an attraction to more people/stay longer/use more often, more thoroughly	23	19
Busy/active/used by local residents/not empty in winter	1	4
Preserve/ensure it for future generations	1	1
Teach teens/next generation/to respect living things/the parks/a better sense of community/to take care/be environmentally aware	1	1

Usage, Special Interest Population Sub-Groups And Life Stage Differences in Needs From Parks

DIFFERENCES IN USE

Differences in frequency of park use were found for different geo-demographic and lifecycle groups. While some reached statistical significance, most reported below were directional differences.

Non-Users Of Parks

Although there were relatively few households that did not use City parks at all in the previous year, non-users were overrepresented in smaller, older households without children, particularly among empty nester and solitary survivor households, and households headed by seniors 65+ years, with the latter group often being widowed. They were also overrepresented among renters and households where a member had a health problem that limited the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity they could participate in, and underrepresented in the SE quadrant of the City. (Refer to Table 23).

The types of activities, amenities and benefits that non-users were more likely than average to want in City parks included:

- A location close by, accessible to everyone, including seniors and people with disabilities;
- Concerns about youth and pets (bothering or attacking visitors);
- Offers a low cost opportunity to go out and relax;
- Viewed as a place to get fresh air, but less often mentioned to be providing health or fitness benefits, or a reason to get out of the house;
- Above average interest in having more washrooms and drinking water fountains, a place to make fires/bonfires/fires in winter, and trees in neighbourhood parks.

Non-users were more likely to feel people should have to wait their turn for funding for park development and redevelopment or that funds should be redirected from other infrastructure programs - and less likely to support new sources of funding.

Non-users were also more likely than average to support the option that all neighbourhood parks should offer the same services through the use of standard activities, amenities and designs.

These findings suggest that when people have little stake in the parks, they are less likely to support enabling options for others. As this group were also less likely to say they or others would use parks more if their ideas were implemented, it is unlikely that overall market penetration (i.e., household use at least once a year) can be increased in a major way.

Table 23: Profile of Park Users by Season

	Total (n=606) %	Used in Both Seasons (n=409) %	Summer Only Users (n=160) %	Non-Users (n=32) %
Household Life Stage*				
Young Couple/Single	20	19	22	15
Pre-School Family	14	16	11	6
Young Family	16	20	8	9
Older Family	19	21	17	7
Empty Nester	16	14	19	31
Older Single	12	8	22	29
Average Household Size	2.9	3.0	2.5	2.5
Respondent Age				
Under 18 years	3	3	1	0
18 to 24	11	11	14	3
25 to 34	19	19	18	9
35 to 44	22	25	15	18
45 to 54	19	19	18	20
55 to 64	11	9	14	16
65 and over	16	13	19	31
Activity Limitation				
Household member has a long term physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity that can be done	19	17	18	34
Marital Status				
Single (never married)	24	24	27	17
Married/living together as a couple	60	62	53	61
Widowed	6	4	8	16
Separated	2	2	3	3
Divorced	7	6	8	3
Gender				
Male	50	48	55	55
Female	50	52	45	45
Quadrant				
NW	24	25	21	22
NE	37	34	45	41
SW	17	17	15	21
SE	22	24	18	16
Distance to River Valley				
Close to RV (within 10 minutes walk)	29	33	20	35
Not close (longer)	69	65	78	64
Home Ownership				
Own	74	76	70	63
Rent	26	23	29	37

	Total (n=606) %	Used in Both Seasons (n=409) %	Summer Only Users (n=160) %	Non-Users (n=32) %
Household Income				
Low Income**	18	17	22	10
Under \$40,000	23	21	29	10
\$40,000 - \$70,000	31	30	33	38
\$70,000 - \$100,000	21	22	18	13
Over \$100,000	14	17	8	12
Average Income***	\$62,000	\$65,000	\$56,000	\$61,000
Ethnicity				
Non-Canadian born	18	15	23	27
Aboriginal	7	7	7	10
Canadian born	82	85	76	73
Respondent's Highest Level of Education				
High school	31	26	42	41
Post-secondary	25	24	24	26
University	42	47	33	26

* Age of youngest child in: Pre-school families = under 6; Young families = 6-12; Older families = 13+.

** Low income defined as under \$40,000 in 2003 for a married/couple household, and under \$30,000 for a single, separated, divorced, or widowed household head.

*** Mid-point of category assumed for calculation of mean.

Year Round Use Of parks

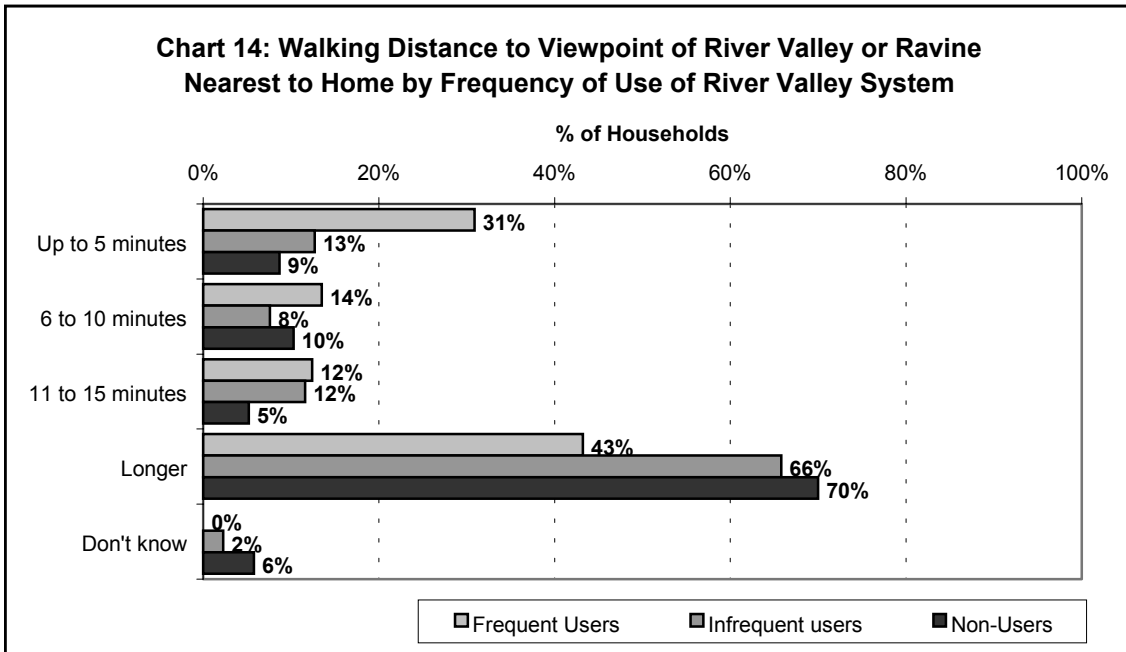
Households using parks in both seasons were larger in size, being likely to include children of any age, and especially children aged 6-12 years, with parents overrepresented in the 35-44 year age group. They were more likely to be from the SE quadrant, less from the NE, tended to be more highly educated than average and were more often Canadian born (refer to Table 23 above).

Year round users provided higher ratings of current amenities in both the river valley system and neighbourhood park and were stronger than average supporters of the idea of a network of trails connecting people to daily life activity destinations. Consistent with this, they were especially likely to want more natural space outside the river valley.

Frequent users of parks in winter had a similar profile. They were more appreciative than average of the amount of parkland in both types of parks and supported both the connectivity concepts tested at a higher than average level.

Frequency Of Use Of The River Valley System

The primary predictor of the frequency with which a household used the river valley system was proximity. Households closer to the river valley or a ravine were more frequent visitors to the river valley system, in both seasons (refer to Chart 14).



The profile of visitors to the river valley system is shown in Table 24.

Frequent river valley system users were overrepresented among older families, that is, where the youngest child was 13 years or older. They were also more likely to be found in the SE quadrant, live close to the river, have higher levels of education and a high household income.

Infrequent users were more often from the NE quadrant.

Needs relating to the river valley system that were mentioned with increasing frequency as the frequency of use of the system increased (i.e., more often by frequent than infrequent users, and more often by infrequent than non-users) included:

- A peaceful natural area where trees will not be cut down, there will be no more concrete and paving, no or limited motor cars and roads, no park development, no commercial development or advertising;
- Being a safe place to go, without gangs/drugs or homeless people;
- Reduction of trail use conflicts, with suggestions to restrict or ban bicycles or have separate trails;
- More garbage cans or better garbage removal service, a place to make fires/bonfires/fires in winter, shelters, and increased park and open space connectivity, including bridges.

Frequent users also wanted more space for dogs to run freely.

Table 24: Profile of Frequency of Use of the River Valley System

	Total (n=606) %	River Valley System		
		Frequent (n=225) %	Infrequent (n=298) %	Non-User (n=80) %
Household Life Stage*				
Young Couple/Single	20	22	19	11
Pre-School Family	14	14	14	13
Young Family	16	14	20	10
Older Family	19	25	18	9
Empty Nester	16	12	17	25
Older Single	12	8	11	29
Average Household Size	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.5
Respondent Age				
Under 18 years	3	3	3	1
18 to 24	11	12	13	5
25 to 34	19	20	20	8
35 to 44	22	26	20	19
45 to 54	19	20	18	17
55 to 64	11	9	11	16
65 and over	16	9	15	34
Activity Limitation				
Household member has a long term physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity that can be done	19	16	17	34
Marital Status				
Single (never married)	24	26	27	11
Married/living together as a couple	60	58	60	60
Widowed	6	3	5	16
Separated	2	3	2	1
Divorced	7	7	6	10
Gender				
Male	50	50	51	46
Female	50	50	49	54
Quadrant				
NW	24	20	27	25
NE	37	34	40	34
SW	17	17	16	20
SE	22	28	18	21
Distance to River Valley				
Close to RV (within 10 minutes walk)	29	44	20	19
Not close (longer)	69	56	77	75

	Total (n=606) %	River Valley System		
		Frequent (n=225) %	Infrequent (n=298) %	Non-User (n=80) %
Home Ownership				
Own	74	73	75	73
Rent	26	25	25	27
Household Income				
Low Income**	18	13	22	19
Under \$40,000	23	17	28	21
\$40,000 - \$70,000	31	27	32	36
\$70,000 - \$100,000	21	26	18	16
Over \$100,000	14	22	11	8
Average Income***	\$62K	\$70K	\$58K	\$57K
Ethnicity				
Non-Canadian born	18	17	16	23
Aboriginal	7	8	6	9
Canadian born	82	83	84	77
Respondent's Highest Level of Education				
High school	31	25	31	50
Post-secondary	25	26	24	23
University	42	47	44	22

Frequent= Once a week or more often in any season; Infrequent=Less often than once a week; Non-User=Did not visit in either season.

* Age of youngest child in: Pre-school families = under 6; Young families = 6-12; Older families = 13+.

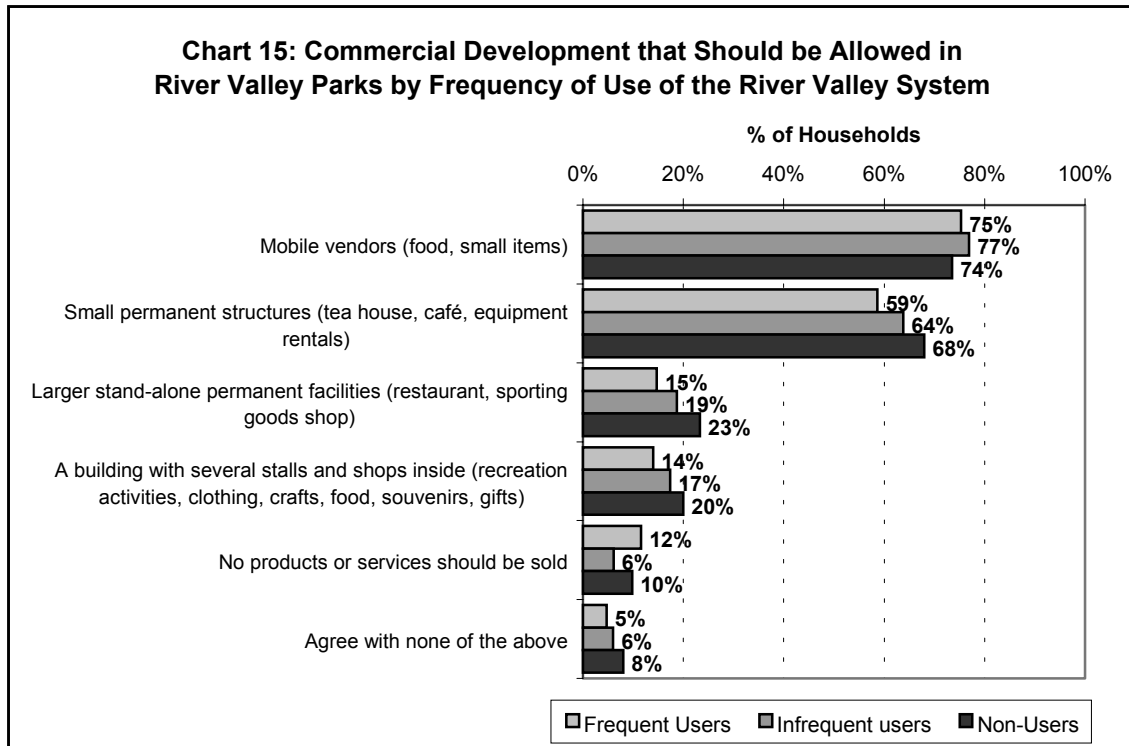
** Low income defined as under \$40,000 in 2003 for a married/couple household, and under \$30,000 for a single, separated, divorced, or widowed household head.

*** Mid-point of category assumed for calculation of mean.

Non-users of the river valley system tended to be older (55+), empty nesters or older singles, to have a health limitation that affected outdoor activities, to be widowed and have a lower education level. They were also more likely to have been born outside Canada.

This segment expressed greater concern about admission or user fees, wanted to preserve the river valley system for future generations and not reduce the amount of land in the system. They were interested in seeing greater accessibility for older and disabled people and in games such as croquet, horseshoes and lawn bowling. They, more than users, viewed the river valley system as a place to relax and were less likely to see improved health, fitness or an opportunity to exercise as benefits.

These differences may help explain why non-users rated the river valley system lower than users for its amenities. In addition, when probed, the non-user group was more likely to agree that permanent structures that offered products and services in the parks should be allowed. This included small structures like tea houses/cafes or equipment rental facilities, larger stand-alone structures like a restaurant or sporting goods shop and a building with services, stalls and shops selling a variety of products. The results are shown in Chart 15.



Frequency Of Use Of Neighbourhood Parks

A key factor in neighbourhood park use proved to be the presence of children in the household, particularly where the youngest child was a pre-schooler (under age 6) or elementary school age (6-12 years). Parents in these households tended to be aged 25-44 years and SE quadrant residents were more frequent users of this type of park too.

Higher frequency of neighbourhood park use was associated with higher than average desirability of the following attributes:

- Open daily, year round;
- Are inviting and beautify the community;
- Feel safe, do not have gang or drug activity or homeless people;
- Provide opportunities for exercise and include supervised activities for children, playground equipment, rollerblading, skateboard and water play areas.

Frequent users were particularly likely to feel that neighbourhood parks should be located at a maximum distance of 5 minutes walk from one's home, again suggesting that proximity may be linked to use. This group was also more supportive than average of the concept of a trail system linking them to destinations for daily activities.

Rating scores for neighbourhood parks management increased with increasing frequency of use for the amount of parkland available in the community and surrounding neighbourhoods and for the amenities they provided.

Users and non-users of neighbourhood parks are profiled in Table 25.

Table 25: Profile of Frequency of Use of Neighbourhood Parks

	Total (n=606) %	Neighbourhood Parks		
		Frequent (n=284) %	Infrequent (n=231) %	Non-User (n=86) %
Household Life Stage*				
Young Couple/Single	20	17	22	23
Pre-School Family	14	20	8	9
Young Family	16	23	12	6
Older Family	19	20	22	8
Empty Nester	16	8	22	25
Older Single	12	7	13	28
Average Household Size	2.9	3.2	2.7	2.3
Respondent Age				
Under 18 years	3	3	2	1
18 to 24	11	9	15	9
25 to 34	19	23	16	14
35 to 44	22	28	17	15
45 to 54	19	17	20	21
55 to 64	11	9	11	17
65 and over	16	10	19	22
Activity Limitation				
Household member has a long term physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity that can be done	19	18	18	21
Marital Status				
Single (never married)	24	22	27	25
Married/living together as a couple	60	63	58	53
Widowed	6	4	6	11
Separated	2	3	1	2
Divorced	7	6	8	9
Gender				
Male	50	50	49	51
Female	50	50	51	49
Quadrant				
NW	24	23	25	26
NE	37	35	38	43
SW	17	16	18	19
SE	22	27	19	12

	Total (n=606) %	Neighbourhood Parks		
		Frequent (n=284) %	Infrequent (n=231) %	Non-User (n=86) %
Distance to River Valley				
Close to RV (within 10 minutes walk)	29	31	29	22
Not close (longer)	69	67	68	76
Home Ownership				
Own	74	76	74	66
Rent	26	23	26	34
Household Income				
Low Income**	18	17	17	20
Under \$40,000	23	21	24	24
\$40,000 - \$70,000	31	31	31	30
\$70,000 - \$100,000	21	25	18	17
Over \$100,000	14	15	15	12
Average Income***	\$62K	\$65K	\$61K	\$59K
Ethnicity				
Non-Canadian born	18	18	16	20
Aboriginal	7	7	7	6
Canadian born	82	82	84	80
Respondent's Highest Level of Education				
High school	31	28	36	30
Post-secondary	25	27	21	24
University	42	42	42	43

Frequent= Once a week or more often in any season; Infrequent=Less often than once a week; Non-User=Did not visit in either season.

* Age of youngest child in: Pre-school families = under 6; Young families = 6-12; Older families = 13+.

** Low income defined as under \$40,000 in 2003 for a married/couple household, and under \$30,000 for a single, separated, divorced, or widowed household head.

*** Mid-point of category assumed for calculation of mean.

Non-users of neighbourhood parks were from smaller households without children, and were overrepresented in the empty nester and older single life stages, in households where the head was over 55 years old, widowed (and not married/a couple) and living in rental accommodation. This segment was more likely than average to live in the NE quadrant of the City.

Non-users, more so than users, viewed neighbourhood parks as an attractive place for all types of people (including older and disabled people) to enjoy, where they can find fresh air and take part in recreation and physical activities. They mentioned the need for safe walking trails that are separate from bicycles and other activities on wheels, for more adult fitness activities, for fires/bonfires/fires in winter and a place to walk dogs. They were less likely than users to identify cleanliness as a need. This set of differentiating amenities suggests that non-user needs may not currently be met in neighbourhood parks; that these parks may be too focused on amenities for younger people.

Non-users were also more likely than average to prefer to have a few large natural spaces outside the river valley, though the dominant choice was the same as for the rest of the population (a combination of some large and some small natural spaces).

SPECIAL INTEREST POPULATION SUB-GROUP DIFFERENCES

Commonalities Between Special Interest Sub-Groups

There were five population sub-groups that were thought to be "underserved" by the City's parks: seniors, low income households, people with a multi-cultural background (identified for survey purposes as not being born in Canada), Aboriginals and people with health problems that limit outdoor activities. The five sub-groups of special interest to the Community Services Department are profiled in this section (see Table 26).

Table 26: Profile of Special Interest Sub-Groups

	Total (n=606) %	Seniors 65+ (n=95) %	Activity Limitation (n=114) %	Low Income (n=110) %	Non-Cdn Born (n=106) %	Abor- iginal (n=40) %
Household Life Stage*						
Young Couple/Single	20	0	10	19	10	16
Pre-School Family	14	0	12	14	15	23
Young Family	16	0	8	16	14	20
Older Family	19	11	21	13	22	14
Empty Nester	16	44	24	15	22	13
Older Single	12	43	24	23	14	5
Average Household Size	2.9	1.8	2.9	2.7	2.9	3.4
Respondent Age						
Under 18 years	3	0	3	4	2	5
18 to 24	11	0	9	14	6	20
25 to 34	19	0	11	19	19	23
35 to 44	22	0	13	16	17	15
45 to 54	19	0	15	7	19	13
55 to 64	11	0	14	9	12	16
65 and over	16	100	35	30	24	8
Activity Limitation						
Household member has a long term physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity that can be done	19	42	100	33	22	27

	Total (n=606) %	Seniors 65+ (n=95) %	Activity Limitation (n=114) %	Low Income (n=110) %	Non-Cdn Born (n=106) %	Abor- iginal (n=40) %
Marital Status						
Single (never married)	24	4	18	30	16	23
Married/living together as a couple	60	57	54	46	67	65
Widowed	6	28	14	8	6	2
Separated	2	2	3	4	3	5
Divorced	7	8	12	13	7	4
Gender						
Male	50	53	48	41	53	44
Female	50	47	52	59	47	56
Quadrant						
NW	24	30	23	20	24	31
NE	37	26	40	44	33	46
SW	17	23	16	19	18	8
SE	22	21	21	17	26	15
Distance to River Valley						
Close to RV (within 10 minutes walk)	29	23	24	18	28	20
Not close (longer)	69	73	73	79	70	80
Home Ownership						
Own	74	79	70	53	81	51
Rent	26	21	30	46	18	49
Household Income						
Low Income**	18	35	32	100	20	27
Under \$40,000	23	39	36	100	23	28
\$40,000 - \$70,000	31	25	31	0	31	43
\$70,000 - \$100,000	21	10	13	0	20	10
Over \$100,000	14	5	6	0	12	5
Average Income***	\$62K	\$45K	\$49K	\$20K	\$60K	\$51K
Ethnicity						
Non-Canadian born	18	26	20	20	100	10
Aboriginal	7	4	10	10	4	100
Canadian born	82	74	80	80	0	90
Respondent's Highest Level of Education						
High school	31	40	37	44	26	55
Post-secondary	25	24	28	26	19	15
University	42	30	31	29	51	30

* Age of youngest child in: Pre-school families = under 6; Young families = 6-12; Older families = 13+.

** Low income defined as under \$40,000 in 2003 for a married/couple household, and under \$30,000 for a single, separated, divorced, or widowed household head.

*** Mid-point of category assumed for calculation of mean.

From Table 26 it may be seen that many of the sub-groups of interest were not independent of one another. For example, a disproportionate number of low income households were also headed by a senior, had a member with activity limitations and/or were Aboriginal households.

There were other similarities between them too, including the following:

- Seniors' households had a high level of activity limitations;
- A lower than average proportion of seniors, households with activity limitations, low income and Aboriginal households were located close to the river valley or a ravine;
- Low income and Aboriginal households were much more likely to rent accommodation;
- Seniors, households with activity limitations and Aboriginals had a predominantly lower level of education (high school or less).

Taken together, these links suggest that all but the non-Canadian born group were economically disadvantaged. Non-Canadian born respondents were different from the general population in being more highly educated (some or completed university), somewhat older, married, empty nesters who were home owners.

Seniors' Needs

Seniors were generally infrequent park visitors and were the group with the highest proportion of non-visitors in both seasons. They were more likely to use neighbourhood parks, and to use them more often, than the river valley system.

Consistent with their lesser use of parkland, they were less enthused than average about a trail system to connect parks and other open spaces to each other or to connect to places of daily living activities. They were also more likely to feel that communities should wait their turn for park development/redevelopment.

Along with a somewhat stronger desire for preservation of the river valley system for future generations and concern about reduction in its size or the incursion of commercial development, seniors were most adamant about not allowing *any* development that would block public visual or physical access to the river valley and ravines. They were less supportive than the population in general of having a combination of small and large natural spaces outside the river valley, preferring to extend the natural experience more broadly into small natural spaces throughout the City (probably because they would find them easier to access).

Seniors were predominantly in favour of local residents being able to choose non-standard activities, amenities and designs for neighbourhood parks, suggesting an interest in things other than are already there, which would be more tailored to their age group. This was further emphasized by low levels of mention of any activities, amenities or benefits for children or families in the perfect park of the future, and an expressed desire for parks that can be used by older people, seniors and people with disabilities.

Seniors were less likely to view parks as providing an opportunity to exercise, gain fitness, de-stress or become physically or mentally healthier. They saw parks as beautifying the community, particularly

through displays of colourful flowers and varied vegetation and as contributing to an increased quality of life in the City.

Activities and amenities which were of interest in this age group, or which were of increasing interest with increase in age, included:

- Parks offer an opportunity to enjoy fresh air, nature and outdoor activities;
- Desire for games such as croquet, horseshoes and lawn bowling;
- Need for easier access (wheelchair, down to the river valley and trails from the top of the bank), more benches, walking areas/paths/trails, boating and river-based activities, and cross-country ski trails in the river valley system.
- More benches and trees, picnic areas/BBQ pits, a place to purchase food and beverages, and more space for dogs to run and play off-leash in neighbourhood parks.

However, seniors were less likely than average to say that if their suggestions were implemented, they would use parks more, or more often.

Households With Outdoor Activity Limitations

There appeared to be very distinct needs from the river valley system and neighbourhood parks in households where there were outdoor activity limitations,

In the river valley system, which was viewed as a tourist attraction, there was a stronger desire for open space and not reducing the amount of parkland available. Particularly appreciated were the opportunities to enjoy nature and outdoor activities and fresh air, but amenities were rated significantly below average. The types of activities that this sub-group were more likely to mention included boating and river activities, cross-country skiing and outdoor games (croquet, horseshoes and lawn bowling).

Concerns about a need for greater presence of security personnel or devices, vandalism and crime, drunks and rowdy youth interfering with other visitors in the river valley system were more prevalent in this group.

Access issues were of importance in neighbourhood parks. These households wanted easier access into parks (e.g., wheelchair access), with no fences or fenced off areas and a location close to their homes. As neighbourhood parks provide an opportunity to get out of the house into the outdoors and increase their quality of life, there was a higher level of concern about the introduction of user or admission fees. Concern was also expressed about gangs and drugs, vandalism and crime, and this group favoured banning bicycles.

Neighbourhood parks of the future were envisioned to offer a relaxing, peaceful, multi-user friendly location rather than a place for families. This would be achieved in part by the provision of benches, shady trees, flower and shrubs and wildlife to view and enjoy, extended paths and walkways, more (adult-oriented) recreational activities and water play features.

Low Income Households

Low income households were characterized by a high level of concern about safety in neighbourhood parks, most notably the presence of homeless people, drunks, gangs and drugs; in the river valley system there were additional concerns about vandalism and youth.

In general, parks of the future were envisioned as peaceful places to relax, with activities for kids. These households were much less concerned than average about development in, and residential development around, the parks.

The river valley system was predominantly viewed as a kid-oriented place for children to play safely. Low income households felt they would get out of the house and use the river valley system more if it was more inviting for multiple users, seniors and people with impairments, and if there were more picnic areas, BBQ pits and picnic tables and walking trails. They viewed free admission as being important and were also more likely to say that enough was being spent on the river valley.

This sub-group felt that neighbourhood parks should not be reduced in size, allowed to fall into disrepair or have garbage, dirt and debris lying around. They should be easy to access and include a skating rink.

Aboriginal Needs

Households with at least one member who was of Aboriginal descent were less likely to see parks as a place to enjoy nature and outdoor activities and more likely to view them as a place for families to visit together and strengthen their bonds.

Nevertheless, they were particularly interested in having more natural spaces outside the river valley and ravines. They wanted more trees and wildlife in both types of parks, less pavement and concrete and prevention of commercial development – but did want more drinking water fountains. Their concerns for both park types centred around the presence of drunks and homeless people, nor did they want to see dirty parks with garbage everywhere.

The river valley system was viewed as a low cost, fun, kid-oriented area, which should have more, better and more varied and exciting playground equipment. Other desirable activities and amenities included: washrooms, picnic/BBQ areas, a place to make fires/bonfires and cross-country ski trails. Cleanliness, vandalism and control over dogs/dog poop were an issue.

In neighbourhood parks, Aboriginals wanted a safe, fun area for children to play, with supervised programs, open space, basketball, volleyball or other courts and a water play area.

Non-Canadian Born Needs

Representing the multi-cultural segment of the Edmonton population, this sub-group was not distinguished by having a particular set of special needs, but by the many things that were of less interest to them. For example, in the river valley system, they were less likely to mention a need for more or better trails, for biking trails, for open spaces, for better security, washrooms, water fountains, picnic sites, garbage cans or cleanliness in general.

They did not view the river valley system as a place for exercise, yet were more likely to want to see equipment or programs for adult fitness activities. Their image of the river valley system was of an easy to reach, uncrowded space to enjoy fresh air without interference from motor vehicles and roadways and a place for children to have fun playing in a safe environment.

Neighbourhood parks of the future were not seen as a place for kids or families to the same degree as in other population groups, but were viewed as a peaceful place to go to get out of the house, to relax and escape from the pressures of urban life. Perhaps most notably, neighbourhood parks were seen to offer the opportunity to connect to other residents of the community – a place to gather and meet new people in a social atmosphere.

DIFFERENCES BY HOUSEHOLD LIFE STAGE

One of the defining reasons for using the City's parks has been shown to be household life stage. In this section, the needs of different life stage segments are summarized.

Young Singles And Couples

Households with heads under the age of 45 years who live alone, in a group sharing accommodation or with a spouse/significant other, had relatively few distinctive characteristics. They were twice as likely as the population in general to rent their accommodation and to be single (never married).

Since there were no children in the household, and since they were more often frequent users of the river valley system in both seasons, it is not surprising that they were less likely to see the river valley system as a place for children to play. Their own needs were for improved signage, more drinking water fountains and a place to make fires/bonfires/fires in winter.

Neighbourhood parks were viewed as a destination when wanting to get out of the house and as a place to relax and recover from the stress of daily urban life. They were less likely to see them as a venue for socializing with one's neighbours.

Pre-School Families

Families where the youngest child was under 6 years old were very likely to be married and lived in larger than average size households, often in rental accommodation.

Pre-school families were often frequent year-round users of neighbourhood parks. They were enthusiastic about having more natural space outside the river valley and strongly preferred an equal amount of natural and landscaped space; they also supported the concept of linking trails to activities of daily life at a higher than average rate.

In this life stage, both types of parks were expected to be generally well maintained and to have a playground. Parks provide a gathering spot which help one connect to other community members and generate pride in the community.

In the river valley system, improved security and control over youth hassling visitors was mentioned, along with a desire for not having garbage lying around. The river valley and ravines were seen as places for family oriented activities which offer an opportunity for exercise; more activities were desired.

Neighbourhood parks should be inviting, provide a low or no cost outing, be kid-oriented places to play, with more playground equipment for small children. They were expected to be safe and clean and equipment should be made of safe modern materials. Outings to neighbourhood parks were seen as strengthening family ties. Other desirable features included drinking water fountains and water play activities. With these improvements, the parks were expected to be used more extensively by this segment.

Young Families

Young families lived in larger than average size households with children in the household, where the youngest was between 6 and 12 years old. They were also more likely to own their own homes.

Like pre-school families, young families were often frequent year-round users of neighbourhood parks.

Parks were generally seen as a place for families to enjoy leisure time together and strengthen family ties and values. More parks or bigger parks, drinking water fountains and water play amenities were mentioned more often than average in this population segment for both types of parks. Concerns expressed included bullying of children and harassment by youth, and a desire for better lawn maintenance.

Neighbourhood parks were specifically seen as being kid-oriented, offering a safe fun environment for them to play or take part in outdoor activities. There was a desire for:

- More year round recreational activities, for supervised programs and activities, for playground equipment and for more interesting, challenging and imaginative equipment;
- For skating rinks, skateboard parks/areas, soccer/football fields and baseball diamonds, basketball/volleyball/tennis; and
- Picnic tables, but no vandalism or crime, drugs or gangs.

With these improvements, young families thought they might use neighbourhood parks more extensively.

Improvements to the river valley system for this life stage included: more, longer or better biking trails or more levels of difficulty, washrooms along the trails and community events. This segment would prefer to see no or fewer off-leash unmuzzled dogs. The benefits were particularly likely to be seen as an opportunity to be in the fresh air and become healthier.

Older Families

Older families, with teenage or adult children, were the highest income group of all life stages. They were frequent users of the river valley system in both seasons and average users of neighbourhood parks.

The attraction of the river valley system included a peaceful, tranquil atmosphere in which to enjoy picnicking or various types of physical activities. This segment saw the ability to work out as a benefit and wanted more, wider, longer or more varied trails, cross-country skiing, resting areas and benches, more boating activities and the opportunity to rent equipment (boats, canoes, kayaks, bikes, rollerblades).

Neighbourhood parks were less likely than average to be viewed as a kid-oriented venue and more as a place to relax and revitalize. Older families wanted more and more varied flowers, bushes and shrubs and less concrete and paving. A greater variety of year-round recreational activities including skateboarding, more garbage bins or better garbage removal and prevention of vandalism were also mentioned at an above average rate.

Empty Nester Households

Empty nester households were in many ways similar to the seniors sub-group described earlier. However, this segment also includes younger individuals. By definition it consists of older (45 years and over) two-person households without children in the home. Homes were generally owned in this life stage.

Empty nesters tended to be infrequent or non-users of both types of parks in both seasons.

They saw the river valley system as beautifying the City, attracting tourists and as a place for families. Needs included walking or hiking trails, cross-country skiing, games such as croquet, horseshoes or lawn bowling, boating and equipment rentals. They wanted the river valley system to be larger or at least not reduced in size, to be accessible year-round, to be well maintained overall, and not dirty or garbage strewn.

Empty nesters elaborated even more on the amenities they wanted in an easy to access neighbourhood park, which, by catering to all types of people - including older people - will contribute to their quality of life, beautify the area and add to property values in their community. Amenities that were mentioned more frequently than average included: easy access (including for wheelchairs), fresh air, flowers, lots of leafy trees and wildlife, a place to walk and space for dogs to run off-leash, picnic/BBQ areas and a place to purchase refreshments. Empty nesters did not want to see motorized vehicles (motorbikes, ATVs, snowmobiles), concrete and paving, entrance fees or commercialization of neighbourhood parks. Cleanliness was not an issue.

Older Singles

Older singles include solitary survivors, people aged 45 years and older living alone, who were frequently widowed or divorced, and older group households with three or more people, none of them children.

This segment had the highest rate of outdoor mobility impairment, the lowest household income and a high proportion living in rental accommodation.

Older singles were the life stage most often categorized as non-users of any type of park in either season. They were less likely than average to identify the opportunity to exercise or be more active as a benefit of visiting a park (of either type), or as a gathering place for socializing with other community residents. Rather, they saw the advantages as being a place to enjoy nature, good weather and the outdoors at no or low cost.

This segment want parks that are easy to get to and offer non-standard amenities for older people and people with mobility restrictions. In particular, they would like to see parks that are natural and unspoiled, that are not commercialized, but have more benches and picnic/BBQ areas to enjoy in the fresh air. Cleanliness was not an issue.

Older singles, more so than the population in general, would like a river valley system that offers wildlife, flowers and interesting greenery to view and that feels and is safe, particularly from youth who harass seniors and gangs/drug activity. They object to motor vehicles and roadways in the parks, to motorized recreational vehicles and to the idea of fees being charged for admission.

Neighbourhood parks offer older singles an opportunity to get away from their televisions and out of the house to a place that is peaceful. This segment would like neighbourhood parks to serve a broad range of users in the community, including families. Amenities that were mentioned more often than average included: more adult recreational activities and games such as croquet, lawn bowling and horseshoes; drinking water fountains, shelters from inclement weather and a place to purchase refreshments; and better fire prevention (e.g., removal of dead trees and vegetation). Some people in this segment were in favour of barring dogs and other domestic animals from neighbourhood parks, others wanted more space for dogs to run off-leash.

Conclusion

This survey of households resident in the City of Edmonton addressed many specific issues of interest to the Parkland Services Branch and identified where the general public stood on ideas which could have a significant impact on the development of portions of the Urban Parks Management Plan.

Use and users of the river valley system and neighbourhood parks were profiled. The survey explored their needs and wishes on a wide diversity of topics that covered the functions, features and outcomes of having and using the parks.

Household life stage was identified as an important predictor of park use and a useful way of defining which segments of the population favoured different amenities and activities in each type of park. However, while there were differences between different population segments that help to define the nuances of their needs, there was more agreement than disagreement between the various sectors examined, on most topics.

Appendix I: Disposition of Attempted and Successful Calls

Disposition of Attempted and Successful Calls At Last Call Made To Each Number

TOTAL ATTEMPTED	A (1-14)	4,379
Not In Service	1	640
Fax/modem/blocked	2	301
Invalid / wrong number (business)	3	483
TOTAL ELIGIBLE	B (4-14)	2,955
Busy	4	6
No answer / Answering Machine	5-6	678
Language barrier / Ill, incapable	7-8	113
Respondent not available	9	164
TOTAL ASKED	C (10-14)	1,994
Household / Respondent refusal	10-11	1,088
Qualified termination	12	22
CO-OPERATIVE CONTACT	D (13-14)	884
Not qualified	13	281
Completed interview	14	603
REFUSAL RATE		55.7%
10+11+12/C		
RESPONSE RATE		29.9%
D (13-14)/B (4-14) =D/B		

Appendix II: Comparison Of Respondent Profiles With Population Profiles

Comparison Of Respondent And Population Profiles

	Census 2001 %	Survey Distribution %
Gender		
Male	49	50
Female	51	50
Age		
Under 18 years	3*	2
18 to 24	14	11
25 to 34	19	19
35 to 44	20	22
45 to 54	18	19
55 to 64	11	11
65 and over	15	15
Refused	-	1
Marital Status		
Single (never married)	36	24
Married/living together as a couple	46	60
Widowed	6	6
Separated	3	2
Divorced	9	7
Refused	-	1
Ethnicity		
Non-Canadian born	22	18
Aboriginal	5	7
Activity Limitation		
Household member has a long term physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity that can be done	15 (total pop. aged 15+)**	19 (total households)
	11 (persons aged 15-64)**	14 (h/hold head aged <65)
	44 (persons aged 65+)**	42 (h/hold head aged 65+)

*Source: City of Edmonton Planning and Development Department, 2003 projections age 16+.

**Alberta rates.

Appendix III: Questionnaire

URBAN PARKS MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION: Hello. My name is ... and I am conducting a research project for the City of Edmonton about Edmonton's parks, playgrounds, fields and river valley and how they could be developed and managed in the future. Your household has been randomly chosen to participate in this survey, which should take about 15 minutes. We are interested in hearing YOUR opinions as a resident of Edmonton, whether you use parks or not. Your responses will be kept totally confidential. I can assure you that we are not selling or promoting anything.

[IF ASKED: For any questions about the survey, or about its legitimacy, you can call Bob Priebe, City of Edmonton, at 496-4780]

I need to get the opinion of the ... (male/female - ALTERNATE) head of the household. May I speak to him/her please.

REINTRODUCE IF NECESSARY

ARRANGE TO CALL BACK AT A CONVENIENT TIME IF NECESSARY

1. RECORD GENDER (50:50 QUOTA IN EACH REGION)

Male..... 1 **CHECK**
 Female..... 2 **QUOTAS**

2. To ensure that we have accurate geographic representation from across the entire City, could you please tell me the first three digits of your postal code?

___ ___ ___ **IF DK: TERMINATE CHECK QUOTAS**

READ: Throughout the survey, we would like you to think both about yourself AND the other members of your household.

READ: The next few questions will be asked first about the river valley and ravine system, including the parks, trails, natural areas and other amenities available in them. Then we will ask you to answer the same question for parks and school grounds outside the river valley that are located in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods, including playgrounds, sliding hills, community league sites and sports fields.

a.	Exce- llent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/ Ref	b. Why did you say that?
3. Would you say the amount of parkland in the river valley and ravine system is: READ	5	4	3	2 ➔ b.	1 ➔ b.	9	
4. Overall, are the amenities, such as trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches and others available in the river valley and ravine system: READ	5	4	3	2 ➔ b.	1 ➔ b.	9	
5. Overall, is the quality of parkland maintenance in the river valley and ravine system: READ	5	4	3	2 ➔ b.	1 ➔ b.	9	
6. Would you say the amount of parkland in your community and surrounding neighbourhoods is: READ	5	4	3	2 ➔ b.	1 ➔ b.	9	
7. Overall, are the amenities, such as playgrounds, sliding hills, community league sites, skating rinks, sports fields and others available in parks in your community and surrounding neighbourhoods: READ	5	4	3	2 ➔ b.	1 ➔ b.	9	
8. Overall, is the quality of park and field maintenance in your community and surrounding neighbourhoods: READ	5	4	3	2 ➔ b.	1 ➔ b.	9	

9. Approximately how often did you and other members of your household visit the river valley and ravine system during the spring, summer and fall of 2003, for any purpose. Did you visit: **READ (IF NECESSARY, SELECT MOST FREQUENT)**

- Daily 1
 - 4 or more times a month [but less than daily]..... 2
 - 1 to 3 times a month 3
 - Less often..... 4
 - or Not at all..... 5
-
- DO NOT READ** Don't know/Refused 9

10. And last winter, did you visit the river valley and ravine system: **READ (IF NECESSARY, SELECT MOST FREQUENT)**

- Daily 1
 - 4 or more times a month [but less than daily]..... 2
 - 1 to 3 times a month 3
 - Less often..... 4
 - or Not at all..... 5
-
- DO NOT READ** Don't know/Refused 9

11. How often did you and other members of your household visit a park in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods in spring, summer or fall of 2003. Did you visit: **READ (IF NECESSARY, SELECT MOST FREQUENT)**

- Daily 1
 - 4 or more times a month [but less than daily]..... 2
 - 1 to 3 times a month 3
 - Less often..... 4
 - or Not at all..... 5
-
- DO NOT READ** Don't know/Refused 9

12. And last winter, did you visit a park in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods: **READ (IF NECESSARY, SELECT MOST FREQUENT)**

- Daily 1
 - 4 or more times a month [but less than daily]..... 2
 - 1 to 3 times a month 3
 - Less often..... 4
 - or Not at all..... 5
-
- DO NOT READ** Don't know/Refused 9

READ: For the next few questions, I'd like you to look to the future and think about what Edmonton's parks **COULD** be like in summer and winter, even if they are not like that now.

13. a. What should the perfect river valley and ravine park system **BE LIKE** in the future? ... What should the **MOOD** or **ATMOSPHERE** be within the river valley and ravine park system? **PROBE**

b. What would you like the perfect river valley and ravine park system to **HAVE** in it in the future? **PROBE**

c. What should be the **BENEFITS** to you and your household, and to Edmonton, of having the perfect river valley and ravine park system of the future? **PROBE**

d. What would you **NOT** want to see in the perfect river valley and ravine park system of the future? **PROBE**

Now please think about parks in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods in summer and winter.

14. a. What should the perfect park in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods BE LIKE in the future? ... What should the MOOD or ATMOSPHERE be within parks in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods? **PROBE**

b. What would you like the perfect park in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods to HAVE in it in the future? **PROBE**

c. What should be the BENEFITS to you and your household, and to Edmonton, of having the perfect park of the future in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods? **PROBE**

d. What would you NOT want to see in the perfect park of the future in your community or surrounding neighbourhoods? **PROBE**

15. Thinking now about parks in neighbourhoods throughout the city, do you feel: **READ**

That they should all offer standard activities, amenities and designs, ensuring that all neighbourhoods have the same services 1

That local residents should be able to choose from a selection of standard activities, amenities and designs 2

That local residents should be able to choose non-standard activities, amenities and designs if they like 3

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

16. What is the most time people SHOULD have to spend walking from their homes to a park in their neighbourhood? **DO NOT READ**

Up to 5 minutes 1

6 to 10 minutes 2

11 to 15 minutes 3

Longer (sp) 4

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

17. If you were to walk to the viewpoint of the river valley or ravine that is nearest to your home, would it take you: **READ**

Up to 5 minutes 1

6 to 10 minutes 2

11 to 15 minutes 3

Longer 4

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

18. a. People like to live in houses, condominiums and apartments where they will have a great view of the river valley or ravines. However, for anyone who doesn't live in these homes, the buildings could block views and access to trails, walkways and roads alongside and down to the river valley or ravine. Do you think:

People should be able to build where they like, even if it means blocking public access or views 1 **SKIP TO 19**

Homes should not block any views or access points to the river valley or ravines 2 **SKIP TO 19**

There should be a reasonable number of view and access points available to the general public 3 **GO TO 18b**

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9 **SKIP TO 19**

18. b. **IF REASONABLE NUMBER:** Would a reasonable number mean that the public should be able to use one quarter, one-half or three-quarters of available view and access points to the river valley and ravines?

One-quarter 1

One-half 2

Three-quarters 3

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

19. **ASK ALL:** There have been discussions over the years about offering visitors to river valley parks the chance to purchase a variety of products and services that would complement the things people do in the parks. These would be allowed in designated locations and would have to meet design guidelines. Do you agree or disagree that:

	Agree	Dis-agree	DK
a. Mobile vendors, selling fruit and vegetables, ice cream, sandwiches or other small items should be allowed	1	2	9
b. Small permanent structures like tea houses or cafes, or rental and servicing of sports equipment like bikes, rowboats or snowshoes, should be allowed	1	2	9
c. Larger stand-alone permanent facilities like a full service restaurant or a sporting goods shop should be allowed	1	2	9
d. A building with several stalls and shops inside, where one could purchase a variety of goods and services, such as indoor recreation activities, sports and casual clothing, crafts, food, souvenirs or gifts should be allowed	1	2	9
e. READ IF ALL NO: No products or services should be sold in river valley parks	1	2	9

20. Keeping in mind all members of your household, do you think that the City's neighbourhood parks, other parks, walkways and open spaces, should be linked to each other by a network of trails or pathways. Do you: **READ**

- Strongly agree..... 5
- Somewhat agree..... 4
- Neither agree nor disagree..... 3
- Somewhat disagree..... 2
- Or, Strongly disagree with the idea?..... 1

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

21. Do you think a trail system should be linked with places for other day to day activities, like shopping areas, libraries, schools, transit centres or places of employment. Do you: **READ**

- Strongly agree..... 5
- Somewhat agree..... 4
- Neither agree nor disagree..... 3
- Somewhat disagree..... 2
- Or, Strongly disagree with the idea?..... 1

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

READ: I'd like you to think now about natural spaces OUTSIDE the river valley and ravines. By this I mean places with tree stands, wildflowers, grasses or open water marshland, with birds and wildlife, that are pretty much left to grow as they please. There is some management of natural spaces to limit damage from people visiting these areas.

22. Do you think there should be more, about the same, or less natural space in areas of the city outside the river valley and ravines?

- More..... 1
- About the same..... 2
- Less..... 3

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused..... 9

23. When preserving natural spaces outside the river valley and ravines, choices must be made about their size, location and natural features. Do you think there should be: **READ**

- A large number of small natural spaces distributed throughout the city, in walking distance from people's homes 1
- A few large natural spaces, with more varied vegetation, wildlife and natural features, within a 30 minute driving distance..... 2
- or A combination of some large and some small natural spaces..... 3

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

24. When developing new parks outside the river valley and ravine system, park planners often need to make a choice between preserving natural spaces, and providing land for park amenities like sports fields, playgrounds and sliding hills. Should new parkland outside the river valley and ravine system be used: **READ**

- All for landscaped parks and fields, none for preservation of natural space 1
- Most for landscaped parks and fields..... 2
- Most for preservation of natural space..... 3
- or An equal amount for landscaped parks and fields and for natural space preservation..... 4

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused 9

25. The City is responsible for the construction and renovation of a wide range of infrastructure, such as roads, sewers and other facilities. Capital funding demands are high. As a result, park development in new areas, and the replacement of aging or out of date park facilities in older areas, is usually delayed several years. To reduce the delay, should the City: **READ**

Apply a fee to property owners in the area where the park construction or renovations will occur..... 1

Apply a small property tax increase to all city property owners, regardless of where the park development or renovation occurs2

Re-direct funds from other municipal infrastructure programs such as roads, sewers or other facilities3

Require volunteers in the community to raise funds to contribute to park development or redevelopment4

Continue the current practice, that communities have to wait until funds are available.....5

DO NOT READ: Don't know/Refused.....9

READ: Finally, I have a few questions about you and your household that will be used for statistical classification purposes only.

26. How many people, including yourself and any babies, live in your household?

_____ Total in Household (IF "1" SKIP TO Q28)

27. What is the age of the youngest child in your household?

Under 6 years..... 1

6 to 12 years 2

13 to 17 years 3

18 and over 4

No children in household..... 5

DO NOT READ: Refused..... 9

28. Do you own or rent your home?

Own..... 1

Rent..... 2

DO NOT READ: Refused..... 9

29. **ASK ALL:** Do you or does anyone in your household have a long-term physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of outdoor leisure activity he or she can do?

Yes 1

No 2

DO NOT READ: Refused..... 9

30. Please tell me when I read out your age group: **READ**

Under 18 years..... 1

18 to 24 2

25 to 34 3

35 to 44 4

45 to 54 5

55 to 64 6

65 years and over..... 7

DO NOT READ: Refused..... 9

31. What is the highest level of education you have completed to date: **READ**

Less than high school..... 1

Graduated high school.....2

Some commercial, technical or vocational college or trade certificate..... 3

Graduated commercial, technical or vocational college or trade certificate4

Some university.....5

Completed university6

Post-graduate7

DO NOT READ: Refused.....9

32. **ASK ALL:** Were you born in Canada?

Yes..... 1

No2

DO NOT READ: Refused.....9

33. Which of the following best describes your marital status? Are you: **READ**

Single, that is, never married..... 1*

Married or living together as a couple..... 2

Widowed3*

Separated4*

Divorced5*

DO NOT READ: Refused.....9

34. a. Was your TOTAL household income, before taxes and other deductions, under or over \$70,000 in 2003? **READ**

Under \$70,000.....X → b. Was it under or over \$40,000?

Under \$40,000 1 ****

Over \$40,000..... 2

Don't know Q34b..... 3

Refused Q34b..... 4

Over \$70,000.....Y → c. Was it under or over \$100,000?

Under \$100,000 5

Over \$100,000..... 6

Don't know Q34c 7

Refused Q34c..... 8

Don't know Q34a.....9

Refused Q34a..... 10

****INSTRUCTION: IF SINGLE/SEPARATED/DIVORCED/WIDOWED AND UNDER \$40,000, ASK Q34b; ELSE SKIP TO Q35

34. b. Was it under or over \$30,000?

Under \$30,000..... 1

Over \$30,000 2

DO NOT READ: Refused.....9

35. The City of Edmonton is committed to obtaining Aboriginal input into this needs assessment. In order to assist the process, we are asking all respondents if anyone in your household is of Aboriginal descent, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit?

Yes 1
No 2

DO NOT READ: Refused..... 9

READ: This interview may be verified at a later date by my supervisor. May I have your name and phone number so that my supervisor can verify our interview?

NAME: _____

PHONE (780)_____ DATE: _____

Thank you very much for your help. Your answers will be combined with others in your area and across the City, and used as information for managing park services.

I hereby verify that this interview was conducted asking questions as phrased on the questionnaire and following the instructions for this study. All answers recorded are those given to me by the respondent.

I understand that a portion of my work will be checked back with the respondent for verification.

INTERVIEWER NAME (print): _____

SIGNATURE: _____
