

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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Edmonton

Reporting Back

2018 William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Plan

Project/Initiative Background

William Hawrelak Park is the most intensively used park in Edmonton. A wide variety of festivals, events, performances and casual users visit the Park annually from across the City as well as visitors to Edmonton. This 68-hectare manicured park in the river valley features a five -hectare lake and open grassy areas. The park supports five bookable picnic sites, a playground and access to walking and bike trails. A pavilion adjacent to the lake provides year-round access to washrooms, food service and in winter skate rentals. An outdoor patio provides seating, viewing areas, and a gas fire feature for those enjoying outdoor activities. In summer another building supports paddle boat operation. The park is also home to the Heritage Amphitheatre, Western Canada's largest outdoor amphitheatre. The park opened in 1967 and much of the infrastructure is original to the park and now in need of replacement. The 10-year William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Plan will guide the future capital investment of the park.

Name

2018 William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Plan Public Engagement

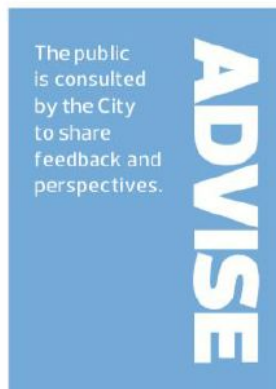
Date

A series of public engagements took place from June to October 2018.

Location

The engagements were held online through www.edmonton.ca, at William Hawrelak Park through Intercept and Drop Box surveys, at a Neighbourhood In-Person Session, and through Festival and Event Organizer Group sessions.

Level of public engagement



Description	The public engagement was held to advise on the rehabilitation of William Hawrelak Park.
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1. Executive Summary

The **10-year William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Plan** will guide the future capital investment of the park; addressing renewal of park infrastructure and improving the functionality of infrastructure to better support the existing programs and services of the park. The intent of the rehabilitation plan is aligned with the Community and Recreation Facility Branch Mandate to extend the life of William Hawrelak Park so that it continues to enhance the liveability and vibrancy of our city by providing places and opportunities for all Edmontonians to gather, connect, create and celebrate.



The **2018 William Hawrelak Park Rehabilitation Public Engagement Plan** supports the development of the Rehabilitation Plan by contributing to the understanding of how the park is currently functioning. Engagement of various audiences on the **rehabilitation** of William Hawrelak Park was completed in June and July of 2018.

Audiences

A broad audience was invited to engage with the City through an online survey, intercept and drop-box surveys at the park, and a neighbourhood in-person event. Targeted festival and event organizers were invited to engage through a focus group session. A communications plan that supported the public engagement plan ensured that these audiences were invited to the engagement events.

Key findings

In general, respondents in the engagements are proud of William Hawrelak Park, are passionate that the green space is not compromised, and the main features of the park remain the same. They believe the park is “getting old” and needs a shape-up to get it back to more modern standards. This shape-up consists mainly of aesthetic upgrades to the aspects of the park that already exist with the

washrooms being the main aspect requiring attention.

Overall improvements

The **washrooms** in the park were clearly identified as the priority rehabilitation aspect for respondents. Other areas pinpointed for improvement (not in priority order):

- More seating areas
- Better picnic sites
- Better walking pathways
- Better signage inside the park
- Better trails for walking
- Parking
- Improved playground

How does your input impact the decision or next steps?

Your input will be used to help develop the rehabilitation plan and eventual implementation plans for the rehabilitation of William Hawrelak Park. The plan will be implemented over 10 years to extend the life of the park.

2. Engagement Techniques

The public engagement was held to advise on the rehabilitation of William Hawrelak Park.

The following public engagements were held:

Online

The **broad and open audience** was invited to engage through an **open link online survey** and through the **City of Edmonton's Online Insight Community**. A comprehensive set of questions and input opportunities were designed to cover the various aspects of the park to be considered for rehabilitation. A total of 1194 respondents started the survey process.

Intercept Surveys (William Hawrelak Park)

A team of City of Edmonton-affiliated survey takers approached users at William Hawrelak Park on the dates of July 15, 16, and 17. The locations were the Buena Vista footbridge/Hawrelak Park entrance, main entrance, playground/trail area towards the south pavilion, the main pavilion, open spaces, parking lot, picnic sites, and amphitheatre.

The intercept survey team completed 850 short surveys in-person with park users asking users to provide input on a short list of questions related to park rehabilitation. The questions are covered further in this report.

The 850 surveys were culled to 236 surveys for the purpose of this report. The criteria: a singular neighbourhood identified and 50% of each neighbourhood randomly selected as a sample of the audience.

Drop-Box Surveys (William Hawrelak Park)

Two drop boxes were also placed at William Hawrelak Park during the dates of July 11 – 20, 2018. The locations were the Main Pavilion and the picnic shelter at the Buena Vista Footbridge/Hawrelak Park entrance.

Park users completed 250 short surveys answering the same questions used with the Intercept Survey. The questions are covered further in this report.

Neighbourhood In-Person Event

An open public engagement session for all audiences was held July 11, 2018 at the Windsor Park Community League. An open invitation was available to all audiences through various communications channels and a targeted, mailed invitation was delivered to Windsor Park community residents. Twenty-one (21) Edmontonians attended this session.

Targeted Festival and Event Organizers Focus Group

Focus group sessions were held in June 2018 with two main Festival and Event Organizer Groups. The groups and representatives invited to the focus groups were identified by the City of Edmonton project team, based on historical interactions. Eleven people participated.

3. What was said?

In general, respondents in the engagements are **proud of William Hawrelak Park, are passionate that the green space is not compromised, and the main features of the park remain the same**. People stated that they believe the park is "getting old" and needs a shape-up to get it back to more modern standards. This shape-up consists mainly of aesthetic upgrades to the aspects of the park that already exist with the washrooms being the main aspect requiring attention.

The **online audiences** were asked a number of questions regarding the specific aspects of the park resulting in a wide range of responses to level of satisfaction with the park.

The **intercept survey and drop box survey participants** answered a much shorter survey focussing on pinpointing areas requiring the most attention.

The **neighbourhood in-person session** resulted in many general conversations regarding possible improvements for the park. One common theme was the surrounding neighbours desire to have access to a safe and convenient access point to the park by foot.

The **festival and event organizer groups** participated in detailed discussions around what could be improved at the park to help them stage their events. The group consisting of organizers whose events use a wide area of the park focussed on multiple aspects of the park. The group consisting of organizers who use the Heritage Amphitheatre focussed on possible improvements to that venue.

4. What did we hear?

Overall Improvements

The **washrooms** in the park were clearly identified as the priority rehabilitation aspect for respondents. Other areas pinpointed for improvement (not in priority order):

- More seating areas
- Better picnic sites
- Better walking pathways
- Better signage inside the park
- Better trails for walking
- Parking
- Improved playground

Getting around the Park

The majority of respondents **walk or run** to get around the park. **The majority of responders had no issues moving through the park.** The main issues the respondents had with moving through the park are: Need for a paved, multi-use pathway around the park that would support moving pedestrians and bikes from the road where traffic congestion and safety were a concern due to the variety of users. The majority of respondents **use the pathways in the park.**

Safety

In general, people feel safe in the park. There is some consensus in comments that the lighting could be updated throughout the park to increase safety. Users felt that there needs to be **better separation between competing users of the roadway.**

Washrooms

Clearly identified as the priority rehabilitation aspect for respondents. **Having more washrooms** was the most repeated comment online. Secondly, survey participants felt that the **washrooms were outdated and could be updated to a more modern aesthetic.**

Pavilion

Respondents **felt like the concession was the part of the pavilion that was lacking.** Respondents also stated that an **aesthetic update to modernize the facility was a priority** and **seating is limited and uncomfortable.**

Heritage Amphitheatre

Online respondents agree that the **seating meets their needs.** The Festival and Event Organizers provided detailed feedback on many aspects of the amphitheatre which are being considered in the development of the rehabilitation plan.

Bookable Picnic Shelters

The data would suggest that little rehabilitation is required for the picnic shelters except for the washrooms attached to specific shelters.

Bookable Picnic Sites

Most of the data in respect to bookable picnic sites was inconclusive. The data would suggest that little rehabilitation is required for the picnic sites.

Playground

Most respondents agreed that the **playgrounds in the park could be updated.**

Winter Use

Respondents asked to see **winterized washrooms, various locations to warm up** and **service providers** that could assist with rentals and healthy, regular access to concession items.

5. How did citizen input affect the project/initiative with this engagement?

Citizen input helped provide a greater understanding of how the park is currently used and how it could better support programs and services, safety and security and access and circulation. The input was consistent with the findings from the functional and physical assessments completed by the project team and supports the development of the rehabilitation plan in identifying projects to address the aging infrastructure. Prioritization of projects will be completed using a set of principles with a focus on addressing major infrastructure items like the utilities in the park but also enhancing aging facilities with the washrooms being the main focus. How people get around and move through the park is another area of focus with plans being developed to enhance user experience.

6. What's next?

The next step in the development of the plan is the establishment of priorities for the renewal of the park and development of an implementation plan including phasing options, costing and a schedule.

Citizens can continue to stay informed on this project: <https://www.edmonton.ca/HawrelakParkRehabilitation>

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

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