

WINNIPEG RECREATION & PARKS STRATEGIES

Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary

October 2021

Background

The Winnipeg Recreation & Parks Strategies will provide long-term vision and 25-year frameworks to help guide recreation and parks programs, services, policies, standards and procedures, and future investment in existing and new infrastructure.

This long-term vision is important, as the City faces some difficult challenges in maintaining its aging infrastructure and making new investments to meet future needs. Much of Winnipeg's existing recreation and parks infrastructure is at or near the end of its useful lifecycle, and we need to find out where Winnipeggers want to see future investment.

Engagement

Phase 1 public engagement occurred in 2018 to gain insight into how residents currently use Winnipeg's recreation and parks services, what barriers prevent them from participating in activities, and what their vision is for the future of recreation and parks in Winnipeg.

After hearing from Winnipeggers, a draft Recreation Strategy and draft Parks Strategy were developed. In 2021, Phase 2 public engagement gathered feedback on the draft strategies to confirm they reflect Winnipeggers' values and priorities and to identify any concerns with the draft documents.

A summary of the Phase 2 public and stakeholder engagement opportunities are included in Table 1 below.

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- News release – March 10, 2021
- Coverage on CTV News and in the Winnipeg Free Press – March 10 and March 24, 2021
- Facebook posts with over 30,500 followers - March 10 to April 22, 2021
- Twitter posts with over 103,000 followers - March 10 to April 22, 2021
- Online ad on Facebook and Instagram - March 10 to April 22, 2021
- Email to 1,217 project subscribers – March 11, 2021
- Email to 9,016 LeisureNews subscribers – March 11, 2021
- Email to approximately 60,000 ActiveNET subscribers – March 11, 2021
- Email to 358 stakeholder organizations – March 11, 2021
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter with over 2,700 recipients – April 12 and 22, 2021
- Newspaper ads in the Sou'Wester, Time, Metro, Herald, Lance, and La Liberté – March 17, 2021

Table 1: Phase 2 Public Engagement Opportunities

Date	Activity	Details
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Webpage	6,369 unique visitors
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Recreation Survey	5,018 respondents
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Parks Survey	4,624 respondents
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Stakeholder Conversation Guide	9 submissions
March 24, 2021	Public Workshop – evening	95 participants
March 25, 2021	Public Workshop - afternoon	72 participants
April, 2021	Stakeholder Interviews	15 interviews

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What we heard

Overall, survey respondents want recreation and parks that provide local and regional access, are equitably distributed across the city, and are accessible to people of all ages and abilities. The majority of survey respondents agree that recreation and parks are ‘must-have’ City services that contribute to health and well-being of communities (99% agree in parks survey).

The following bullets summarize key themes heard during the engagement:

- **Regional and local service:** Respondents felt there was value in both local and regional parks and recreation facilities. Respondents wanted to see existing recreation facilities maintained to provide local recreation opportunities and investment in multi-use centres to meet the broader needs of many people and activities (1,112 respondents). Similarly, respondents wanted to see local parks maintained (60% opposed reducing local parks standard), highlighting their importance for mental, social, and physical health of communities. There was also support for prioritizing regional park maintenance, as the City’s signature parks and amenities (52% support); however, only 12% of respondents want it at the cost of local parks. Winnipeggers want a careful balance of both local parks and facilities with multi-use centres and regional parks.
- **Improve access and transportation:** Overall, respondents wanted to see equitable access to parks and recreation opportunities. Respondents indicated their preference for distributing recreation facilities, parks, and natural areas across the city to ensure each community has local access to recreation and nature (84% agree that all Winnipeggers should have access to at least one park within a 10-minute walking distance). Respondents noted the need to consider trails and bike paths as recreation opportunities that also serve as connection paths to facilities and parks (88% said this was a medium or high priority in the parks survey). Several also noted the need to consider future transit connections to parks and recreation facilities (78% said this was a medium or high priority in the parks survey).
- **Protect natural areas:** Winnipeggers highly value their connections to nature. Respondents wanted to ensure that existing natural areas remain protected (62% selected this as their top priority natural features action in the parks survey). Some wanted to see the City prioritize the acquisition of additional natural areas and re-naturalization, particularly for grasslands and riverfront/riparian areas (15% put acquisition and 10% put restoration as their top priority natural features action).
- **Enhance inclusivity:** Respondents indicated they want recreation facilities (5,425 respondents), park amenities (3,742 respondents), and programs that are accessible for people of different ages, needs, and abilities. They want to ensure facilities consider universal design standards and provide programs that are safe and welcoming for everyone throughout all seasons.
- **Suggestion for budgets:** When it comes to funding priorities for recreation, respondents felt the highest budget priority should be focused on maintaining existing recreation facilities and amenities (1,999 respondents). Most felt that more funding is required for parks (60% disagree with the statement ‘parks don’t need more funding’).
- **Enhance amenities and programming:** Respondents felt recreation programming could be enhanced by providing more diverse program options, offering alternative time slots, improving registration processes, while maintaining low costs. Special consideration should be given to certain groups of people, like seniors, low-income residents, and children who may require special

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pricing or targeted programming options. For parks, most respondents agreed with the core amenity prioritization (86%) and emphasized the need for individual neighbourhoods to be involved in determining their local needs for other amenities.

- **Volunteer enhancements:** Winnipeggers recognize the value volunteering has on their community. Respondents would be more inclined to volunteer if promotion of available opportunities increased, more incentives were offered, and flexible, short-term volunteer commitments were introduced (1,130 respondents).

How input is being considered

Public feedback is being used to further inform and refine the draft Recreation & Parks Strategies. The tables below provide a sample of how input is being considered. Please see the full Public Engagement Report for more information.

Recreation

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
Requests for an easy to navigate, integrated, single-source of information that includes programs offered by the City and the community centres. It can be very difficult and confusing to find recreation opportunities for seniors, newcomers, or anyone unfamiliar with the community centre model.	A recommendation to develop a more user-friendly and integrated method of sharing program information was added to the Recreation Strategy
Concern that although investment and improvements have occurred, Pan Am Pool is over 50 years old, increasingly obsolete, and will soon be unable to meet the needs of competitive aquatic sports.	A recommendation that the City initiates a planning process, working with interested stakeholders, to explore options for redevelopment or replacement of Pan Am Pool was added to the Recreation Strategy.
Current approaches to volunteerism, including the community centre model, should be reviewed and updated.	The Recreation Strategy currently highlights changing trends with volunteerism. It also includes a recommendation that the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres Plan 2025 (the strategic plan for community centres) should be revisited and updated. Additional direction on reviewing the volunteer aspects of the community centre model will be added to the recommendation.
Requests to include opportunities for recreation facilities and programs to encourage healthy food systems that support positive physical and mental health outcomes and community well-being.	A recommendation was added to the Recreation Strategy to support health and wellbeing through the provision and promotion of healthy food choices at City recreation facilities.

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	The description of community centres and neighbourhood recreation and leisure centres was expanded to prioritize the addition of community kitchens. A recommendation to continue to work with partners, including the Food Council, to encourage the development of garden and gardening programs that can support recreational, cultural, or even smaller-scale food production needs of the community was added. As important community amenities, recreation facilities may offer a key means of accessing water for gardening initiatives.
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Parks

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
Concerns that Winnipeg is below other Canadian cities in terms of parkland per person and we should be prioritizing acquisition of more parks.	The overall provision target was updated to 50 m² per person in alignment with the Canadian average and the World Health Organization recommendations. The graphics about city-wide provisioning comparisons with other municipalities and Winnipeg-specific assessments of park and amenity distribution within the city were clarified.
Concerns that the Parks Strategy does not provide an overall biodiversity strategy for the City.	The Parks Strategy now includes a recommendation to develop a Master Greenspace and Natural Corridor Plan bylaw that includes a Biodiversity Policy.
The Strategy is long and contains a lot of information, which can be overwhelming to a public audience.	The Parks Strategy's executive summary was simplified to improve ease of reading.
Concerns that golf courses and Assiniboine Park were not included in the strategy.	Further clarification was provided on why Assiniboine Park was not included in the strategy, and a recommendation was added to develop a Master Greenspace and Natural Corridor Plan by-law that considers the full publicly accessible open space network (including non-City parks).
Track and field is an important introductory sports amenity and should be prioritized.	Track and field has been updated from a specialty amenity to a tertiary amenity, meaning that the City will provide these on an opportunity basis when there is a partnership with another organization.

Next Steps

This input is being used to inform the final Recreation & Parks Strategies. The recommended strategies will be presented to Council for consideration in early 2022. The full Winnipeg Recreation & Parks Strategies Phase 2 public engagement report, including appendices and verbatim comments can be found at winnipeg.ca/recandparks.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Promotional & Communications Materials
Appendix B – Online Survey: Feedback by Question
Appendix C – Stakeholder Interview Notes

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