

What We Heard Report (July 2024)

Mary Burlie Park Renewal

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Edmonton

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Public Engagement Approach

How and Who We Engaged

Project information and draft park concepts were presented to the public both online and in-person at Mary Burlie Park. The in-person public engagement session was strategically scheduled to coincide with Mary Burlie Day, a celebration honoring the impactful work and activism of Mary Burlie. This alignment provided a unique opportunity to engage with the community on a day of local significance. The public engagement session took place on July 13, 2024 from noon to 5 p.m.

During the session, display boards featuring preliminary park concepts were displayed to prompt conversations around key aspects of the project. These topics included the overall vision for the park, the design of the park entrance and streetscape, considerations for the existing shade structure, potential types of uses and strategies for park access and circulation. These focal points were chosen to gather comprehensive feedback and ensure that the final design aligns with community needs and expectations.

Throughout the day, an estimated 40 people engaged with project team members and discussed the park design options. This interactive setting allowed for meaningful conversations. Participants expressed their preferences, concerns and ideas. Project team members actively captured these conversations through diligent notes to ensure feedback was documented for consideration.

To further facilitate engagement and gather additional input, each project team member was equipped with a QR code. This code directed participants to an online survey, allowing those who preferred a digital platform to provide their insights. This hybrid approach of in-person and online engagement ensured broad accessibility and encouraged diverse participation from the community.

The online survey was available July 11 - 24, 2024 and was promoted through a targeted social media post and community posters. A total of 65 people completed the survey, contributing valuable insights to the engagement process. A significant portion of survey respondents lived in nearby neighborhoods (43 percent), while a small percentage identified as downtown business owners (2 percent).

During this engagement period, the social media campaign generated a total of 96,100 impressions, reaching 21,200 unique individuals in Edmonton's McCauley, Boyle Street and Central McDougall neighbourhoods. The website received 591 link clicks, resulting in an average click-through rate (CTR) of 0.61 per cent, which surpassed the traffic campaign benchmark of 0.45 percent.



Fig. 1 - Public Engagement during Mary Burle Day

What we asked

The purpose of the second round of engagement was to receive feedback from the public on the draft park concepts, which were developed based on earlier engagement results. Questions were posed at Mary Burle Day and through the online survey, accompanied by conceptual drawings of each park option. The two park options offer distinct features: Option A emphasizes a terraced amphitheater and repurposed pavilion, while Option B includes a multi-sport court and enhanced streetscape. These variations help gather diverse community feedback to shape the final design.

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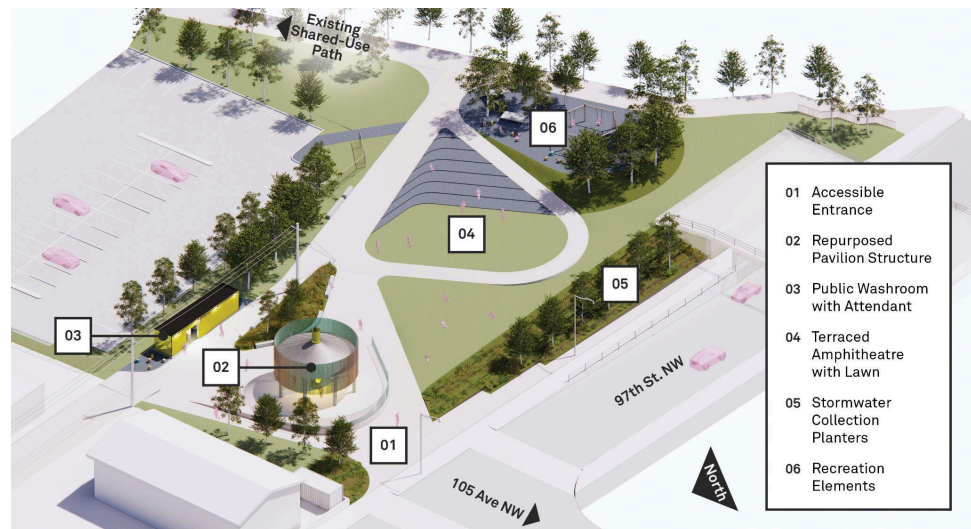


Fig. 2 - Birds-eye view of Park option A

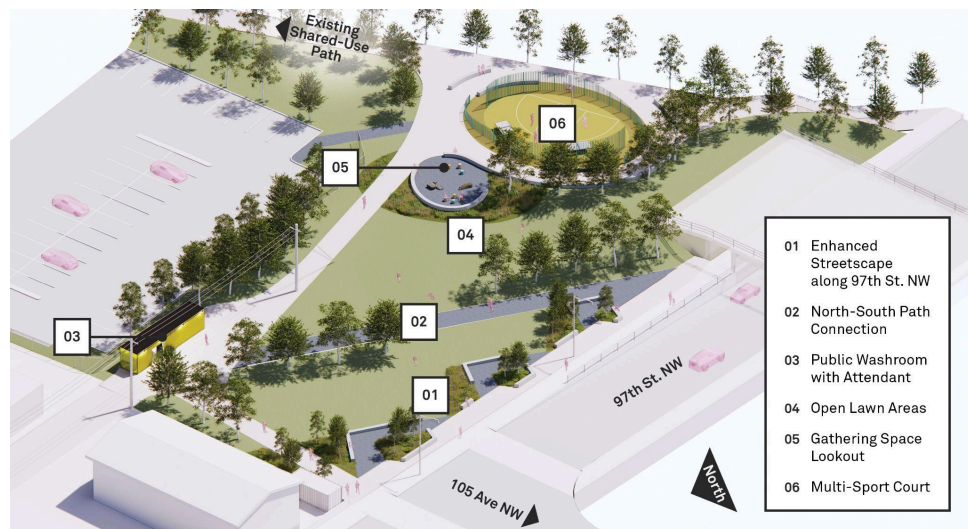


Fig. 3 - Birds-eye view of Park option B

For Questions 1 through 4, we asked four “big-picture” questions on how each park option was meeting the design goals:

- Q1) Does the park feel inviting and provide improved visibility?
- Q2) Does the park provide opportunities for a wide variety of uses?
- Q3) Does the park provide basic amenities such as drinking water, washroom, shade and seating?
- Q4) Does the park promote play and active uses for all ages and abilities?

The responses offered a range of answers from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.” This allowed participants to indicate their general attitude towards the design goals for both park options.

The survey's next section used a comparative method, asking participants to express their preferences between the two park options on specific design elements. For questions 5 to 9, respondents were presented with conceptual perspectives and diagrams, including birds-eye views and renderings of key park features. These included park entrances, the existing shade structure, types of active spaces, user movement and community gathering areas. Respondents could choose Park Option A, Park Option B, Other (please specify), or No Opinion. Question 10 allowed participants to select up to three elements they wished to see included in the final park design:

Q5) Primary park entrance and streetscape along 97 Street

Q6) Existing shade structure

Q7) Type of active use space

Q8) Park access and circulation

Q9) Types of community spaces

Engagement results

Summary

The feedback on the Mary Burlie Park design options reveal a broad spectrum of concerns and recommendations from the community. Through the public engagement process, participants were generally positive about both design options, with feedback indicating that both have merits. Many respondents emphasize the importance of designing the park to meet the needs of local residents, particularly those with limited access to other public spaces. There is a strong call for incorporating shading elements, such as the existing trees or pavilion, to provide comfort in various weather conditions. Accessible drinking fountains and a public washroom were highlighted as critical amenities, ensuring basic provisions for park users.

Safety and visibility were prominent themes, with several comments suggesting the park should be open and well-lit to deter social disruption and ensure a safe environment for all users. Some respondents mentioned

concerns about people experiencing homelessness and suggested the park should be designed to discourage encampments while still being inclusive and accessible. Participants expressed significant support for a centralized connection to the shared-use path, enhancing accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. The inclusion of a public toilet received strong support, to enhance the park's usability. Opinions on the park's functionality and aesthetics varied. Some participants favoured Option A for its improved ease of movement in and around the park and effective use of space. While there were different views about the best use of space, a few participants expressed strong support for the inclusion of the performance space, suggesting it adds value to community gatherings. Additionally, features like shaded seating and medicinal gardens were highlighted as desirable elements that could better serve the community.

Overall, the feedback underscores the importance of a balanced design that thoughtfully incorporates a public drinking fountain, washroom facilities, shaded areas, and fully accessible, barrier-free pathways and community gathering spaces. It also emphasizes the need to prioritize safety and ensure long-term community sustainability.

Design Goals

The next section of the report provides results from the online survey. This section of the survey framed questions around high-level design goals which were previously revealed and documented in the *What We Heard (January to June 2024)*. The first four tables below highlight the results from questions 1 to 4.

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Question 1: Does the park feel inviting and provide improved visibility?

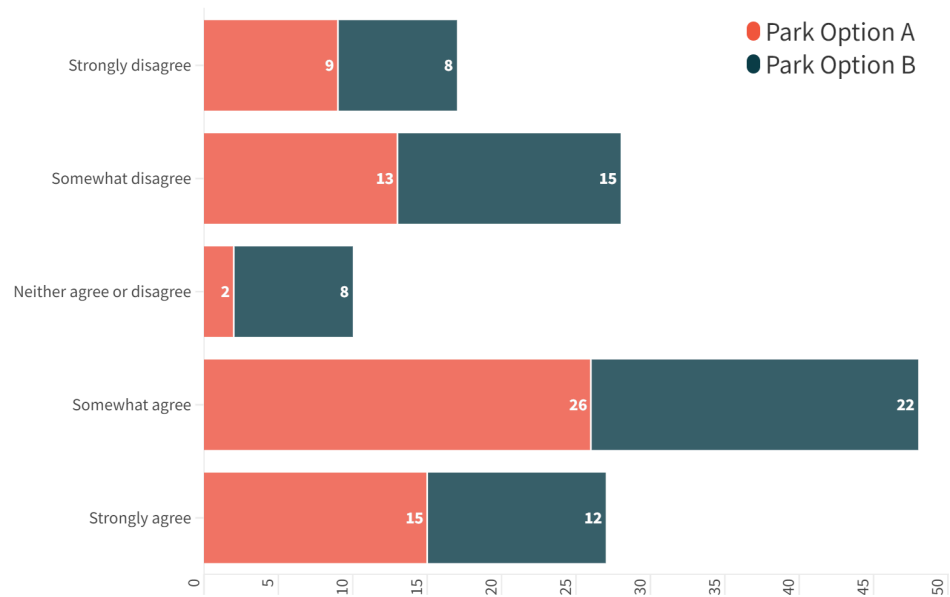


Table 1 - Online Survey Results

Question 2: Does the park provide opportunities for a wide variety of uses?

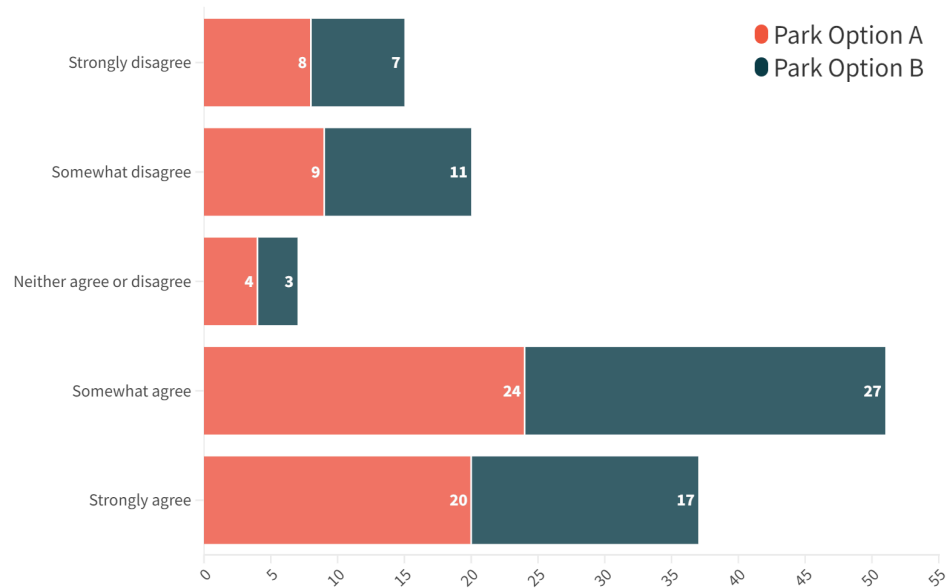


Table 2 - Online Survey Results

Question 3: Does the park provide basic amenities such as drinking water, washroom, shade and seating?

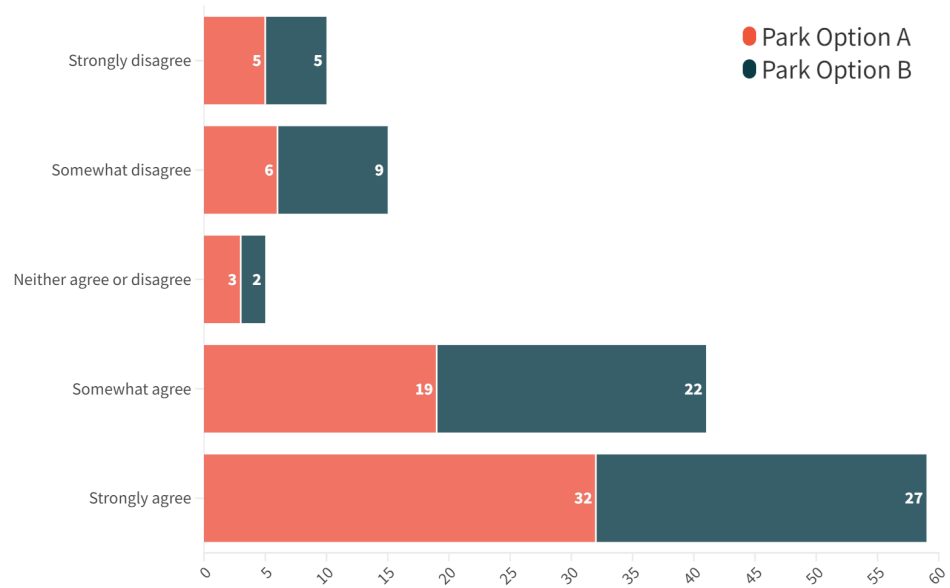


Table 3 - Online Survey Results

Question 4: Does the park promote play and active uses for all ages and abilities?

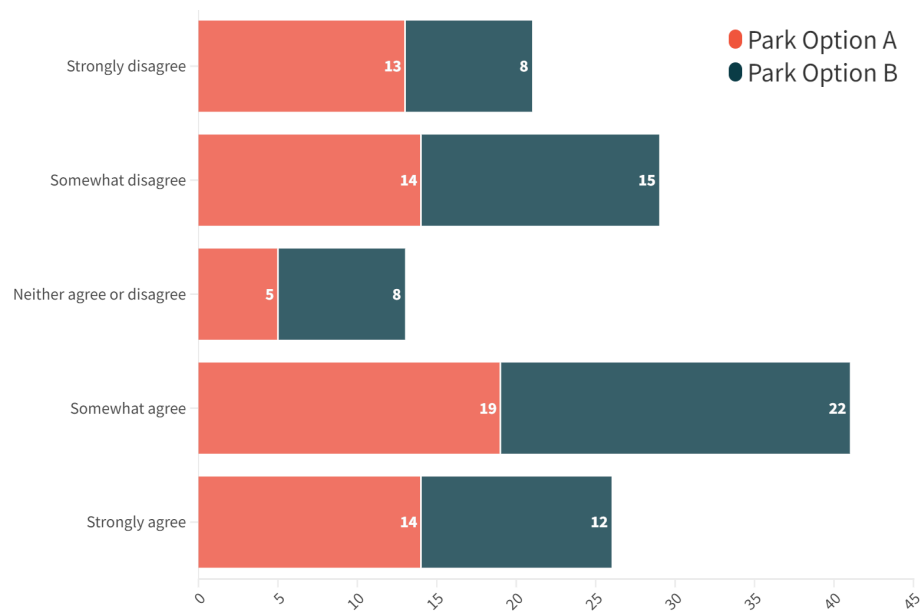


Table 4 - Online Survey Results

Design Elements

In the next section of the survey, participants were asked to compare two park options based on specific design elements like park entrances, the existing shade structure, active uses, and gathering areas. Respondents were presented with conceptual visuals, including bird's-eye views and renderings, to select between Park Option A, Park Option B, Other (please specify), or No Opinion. For Question 10, respondents could also identify up to three elements they preferred to see included in the final park design.

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Question 5: Primary park entrance and streetscape

Compare option A and B. Which park entrance and streetscape along 97 Street do you prefer?

Option A has a wide park entrance linked to future crosswalks on 97 Street.



Fig.4 - Park option A with a repurposed pavilion.

Option B has north and south entrances into the park with trees and seating along 97 Street.



Fig.5 - Park option B with parklets along 97th St.

Feedback and results

Participants showed a slight preference for Option A, with many appreciating its better circulation through diagonal desire lines and enhanced recreational opportunities, including the amphitheatre space. Feedback on the parklets along 97 Street in Option B was mixed, with both positive and negative opinions shared. Some participants also expressed a desire to preserve the existing pavilion.

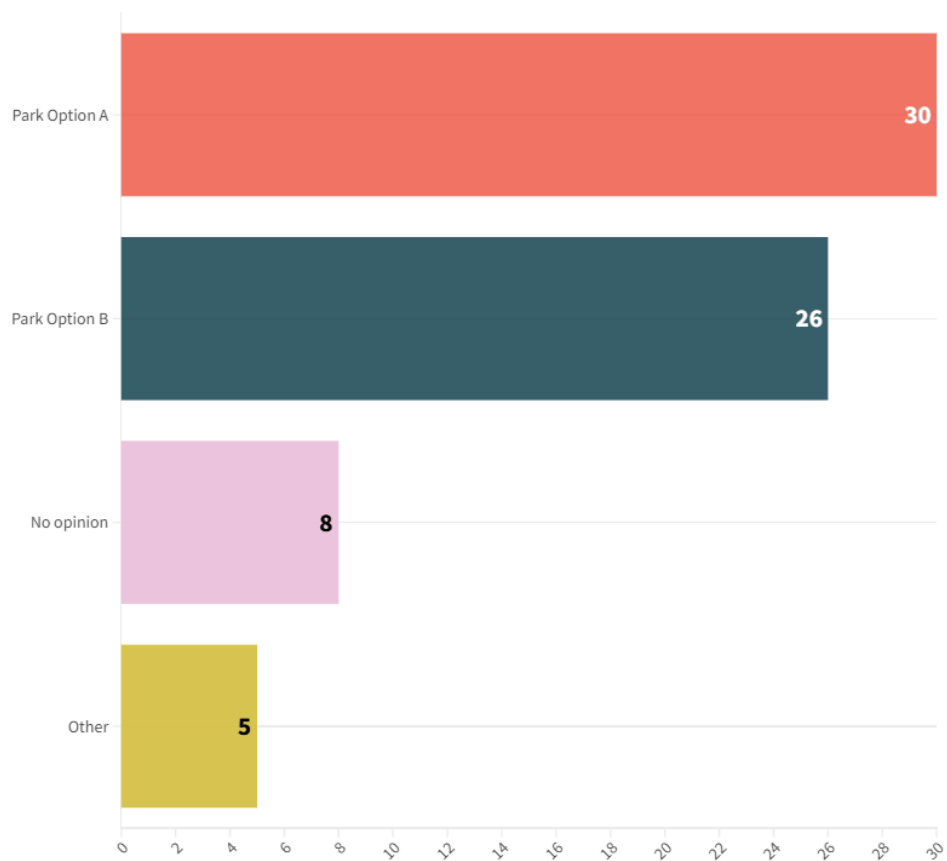


Table 5 - Online Survey Results

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Question 6: Existing shade structure

Compare park Option A and B. Which park option do you prefer?

Option A will repurpose the existing shade structure into a pavilion and keep it located in the north of the park between the widened north alley entrance.

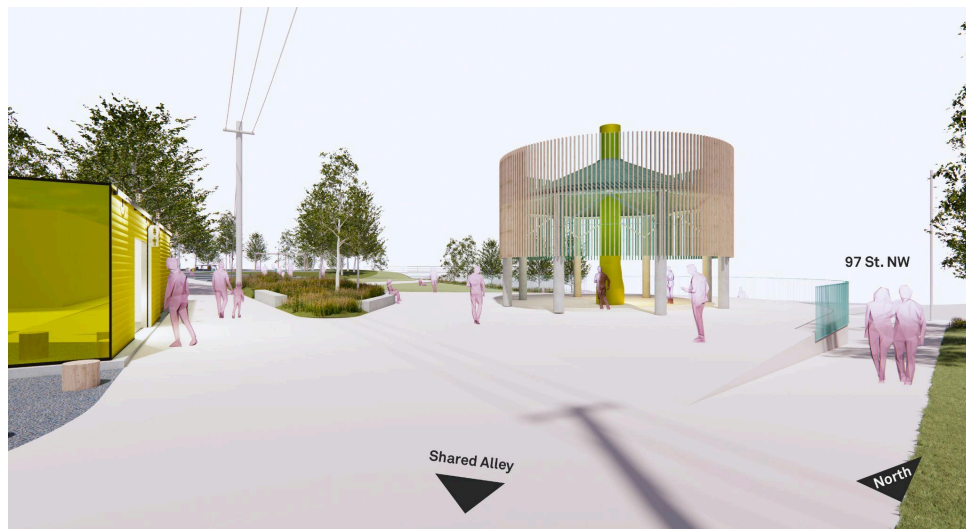


Fig.6 - Park option A with a repurposed pavilion.

Option B will remove the existing shade structure. Trees, grass, and pathways will be added in this area.



Fig.7 - Park option B with removed pavilion

Feedback and results

The survey results revealed a strong preference for Park Option A, which involves retaining and refurbishing the existing pavilion structure. While the desire to preserve the structure was evident, several concerns were raised regarding its current safety and accessibility. Respondents also suggested incorporating natural elements, such as trees or shade structures, to provide shelter and ensure additional seating is available. There was also support for improvements to the area surrounding the pavilion, such as enhanced lighting and increased greenery, to improve the usability and safety of the space. These enhancements aim to create a more welcoming and secure environment for all park users.

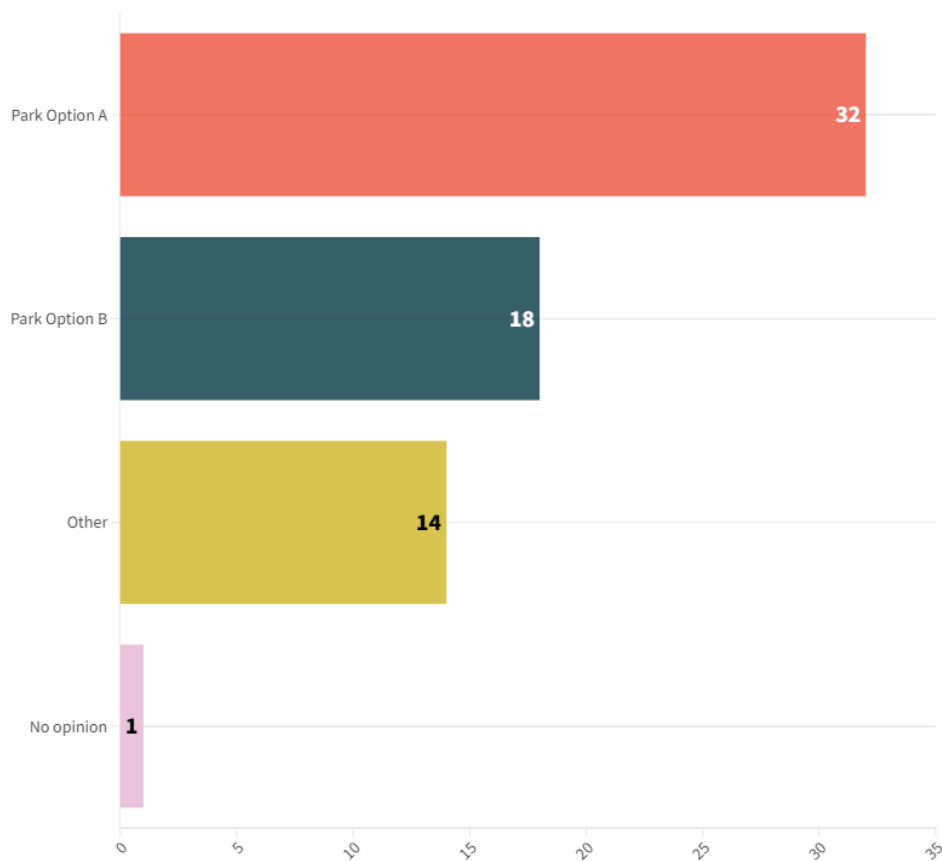


Table 6 - Online Survey Results

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**Question 7: Type of active use space - Compare park Option A and B.
Which park option do you prefer?**

Option A will have recreation elements in the southeast area of the park.

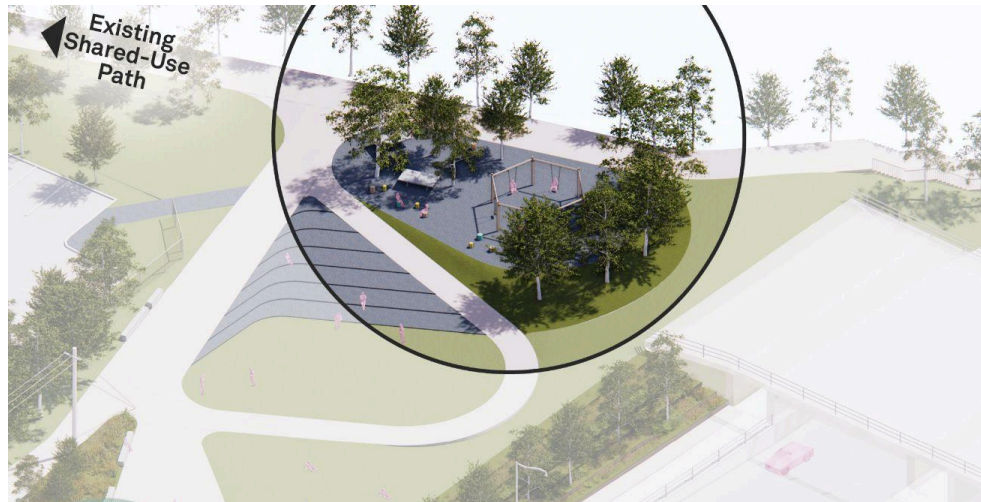


Fig.8 - Park option A

Option B Will have recreation elements in the southeast area of the park.



Fig.9 - Park option B

Feedback and results

Many participants expressed mixed feelings about the options for the active use space in the southeast area of the park. Some preferred Option A, which includes recreation elements to cater to a broader range of people, while others favoured Option B's multi-sport court. Some of those people suggested a full-size basketball court instead. Some respondents were indifferent and simply appreciated the park's improvement, while others expressed concerns about potential misuse of the space. Suggestions included incorporating elements for both adults and children, such as workout structures and recreational areas, to maximize use and appeal.

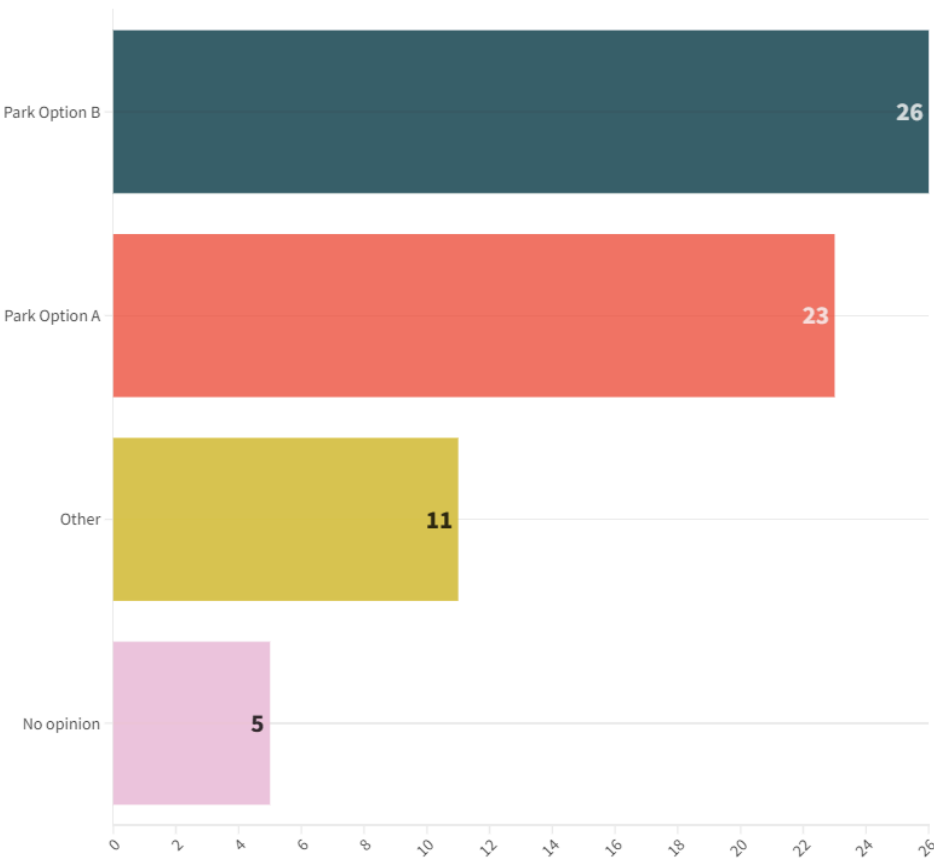


Table 7 - Online Survey Results

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Question 8: Park access - Compare park Option A and B. Which park option do you prefer?

In **Option A**, the main pathway runs diagonally through the middle of the park, connecting to the existing shared-use path to the east new shared-use path on 97 Street.

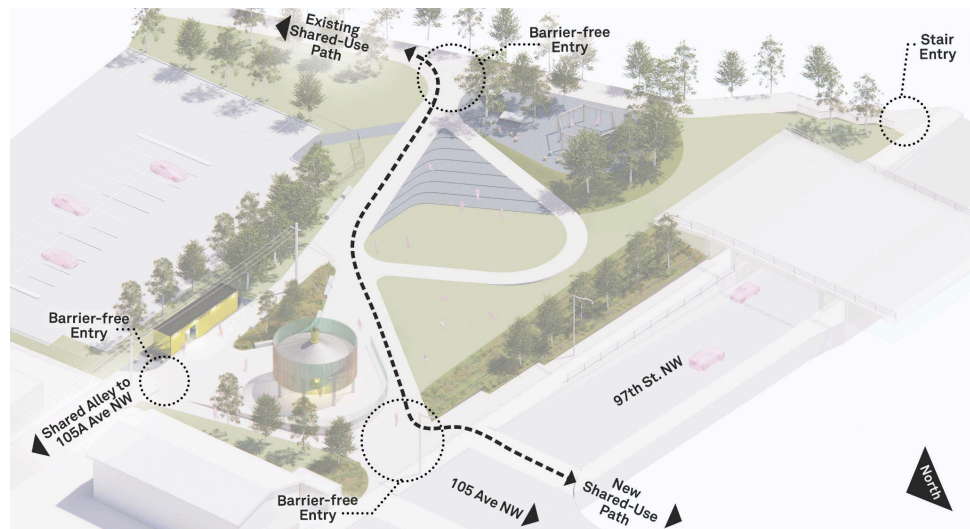


Fig.10 - Park option A

In **Option B**, the main pathway runs on the north and east edges of the park, connecting to the existing shared-use path to the east new shared-use path on 97 Street.

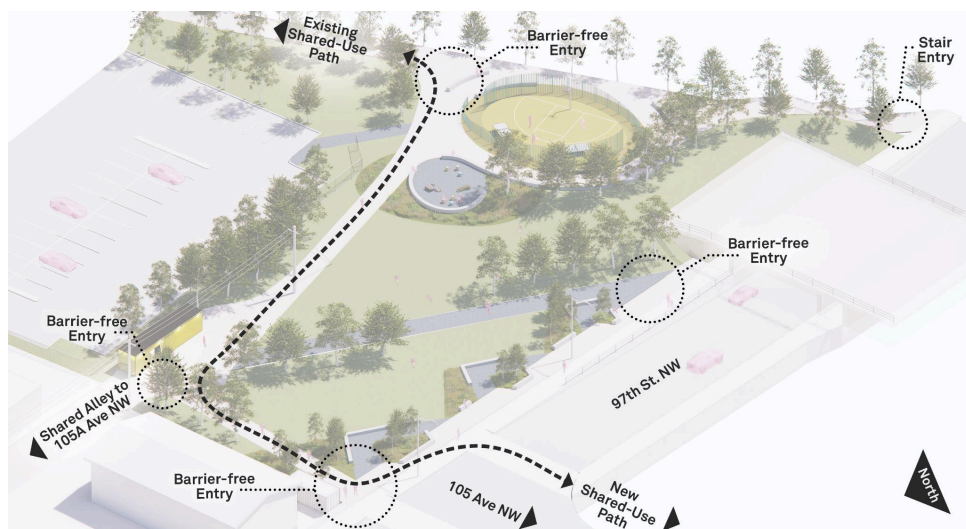


Fig.11 - Park option B

Feedback and results

Participants expressed a preference for Option A, noting that the diagonal path offers a direct route that could reduce the creation of informal paths that wear down the grass. Some participants emphasized the importance of integrating the path into the main bike network and suggested adding traffic-calming measures at crossings. Others preferred Option B's perimeter pathway for its preservation of greenery, with some suggesting the inclusion of elements like the pavilion. Concerns were raised about ensuring practical pathways that align with existing informal routes and minimizing costs.

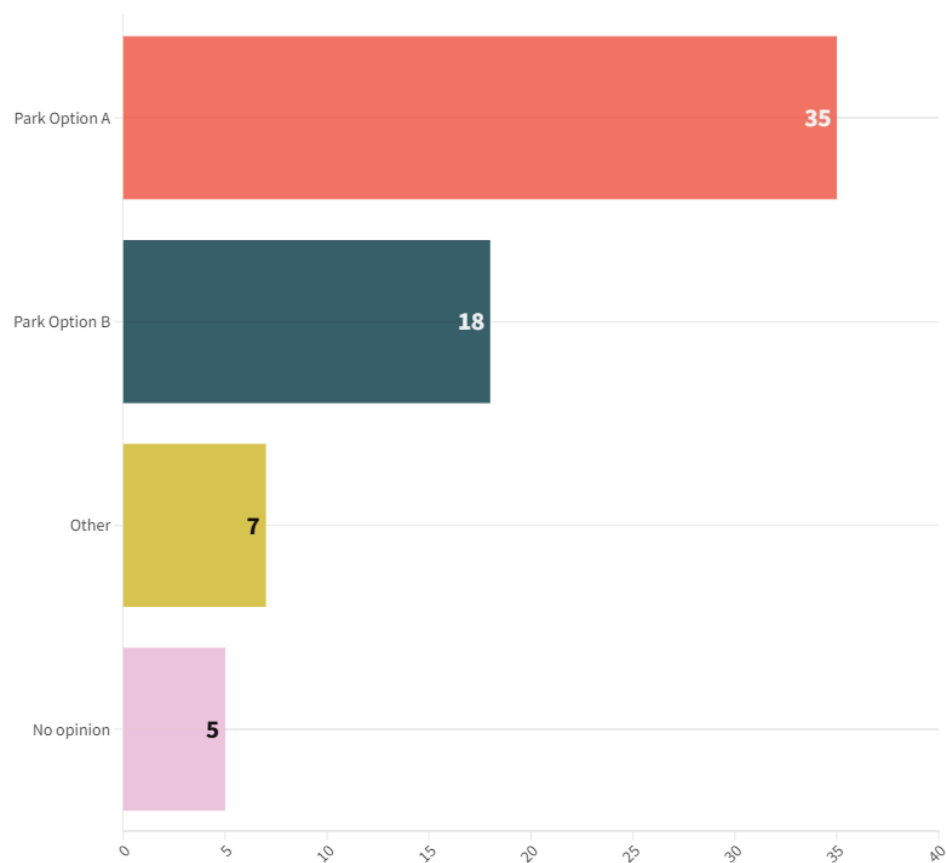


Table 8 - Online Survey Results

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Question 9: Types of community spaces - Compare park Option A and B, which park option do you prefer?

Option A includes recreation elements in the southeast area of the park, terraced amphitheatre space in the middle of the park, repurposed pavilion and a public washroom with an attendant.

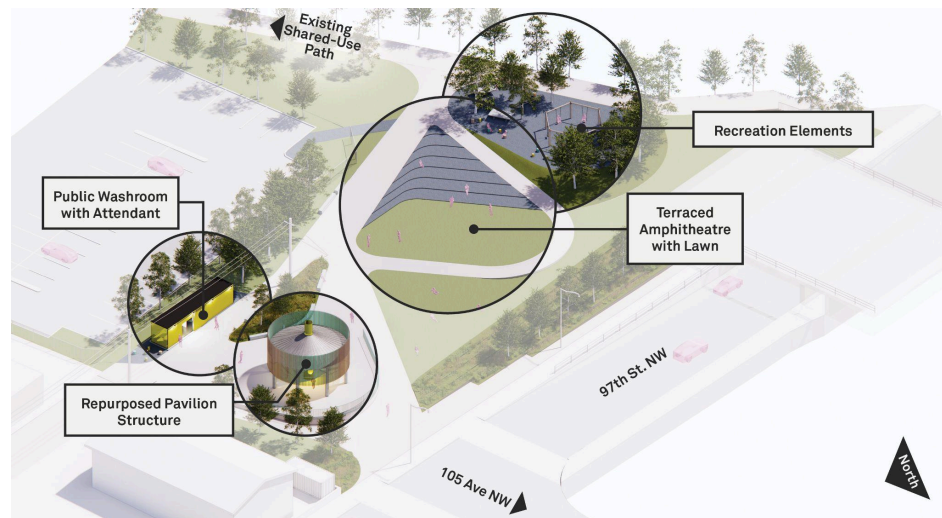


Fig.12 - Park option A

Option B includes a multi-sport court in the southeast area of the park, a gathering and ceremonial space in the middle of the park, open lawn area and a public washroom with an attendant.

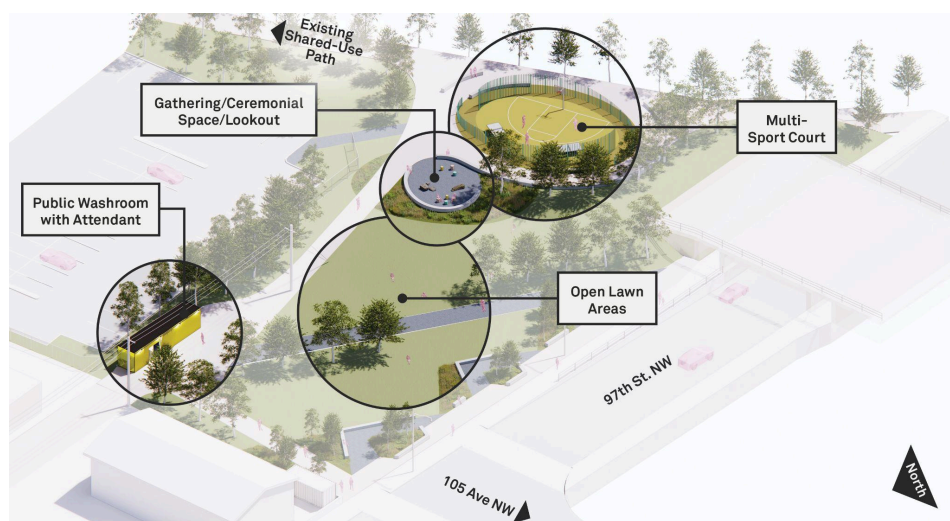


Fig.13 - Park Option B

Feedback and results

Participants expressed diverse opinions on the types of community spaces proposed. Some suggested combining elements from both options, such as integrating Option A's terraced amphitheater with Option B's multi-sport court and open lawn area. Many emphasized the importance of shaded spaces, voicing concerns that open areas without shade would be unusable during extreme heat. The need for tree canopies and shaded gathering areas was highlighted. Some participants were skeptical about the practicality of maintaining a public washroom with an attendant, considering it to be impractical. While some favored the recreation area over a sports court, others felt that both gathering and ceremonial spaces should be included.

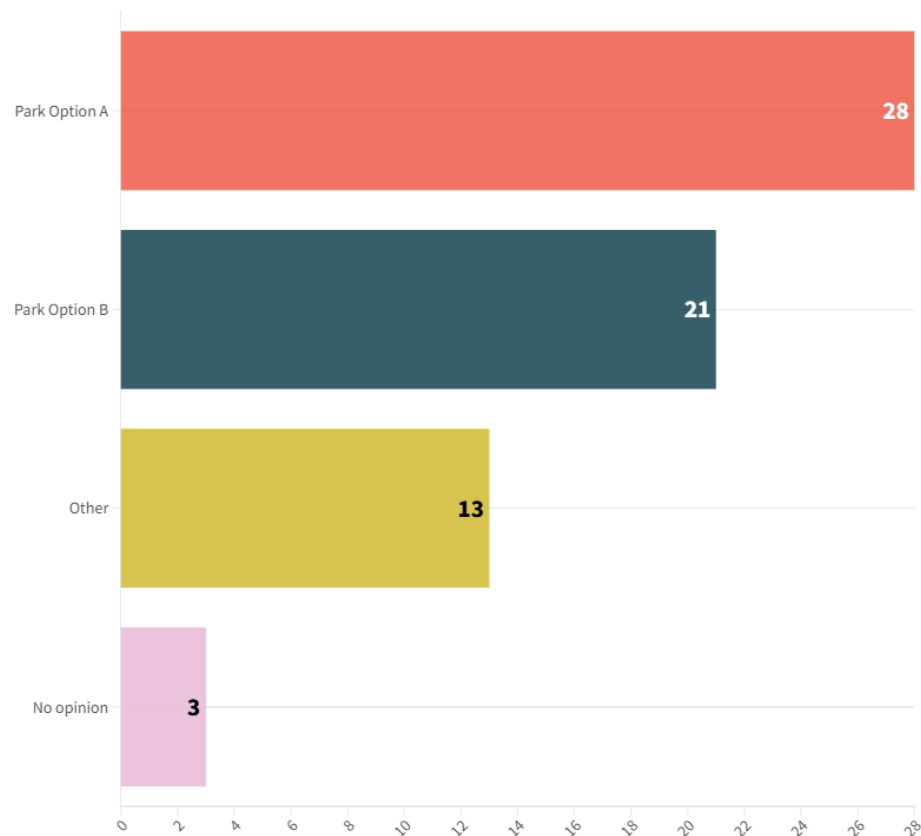


Table 9 - Online Survey Results

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Question 10: Preferred elements - Please select up to three park elements you most want included in the final design of the park.

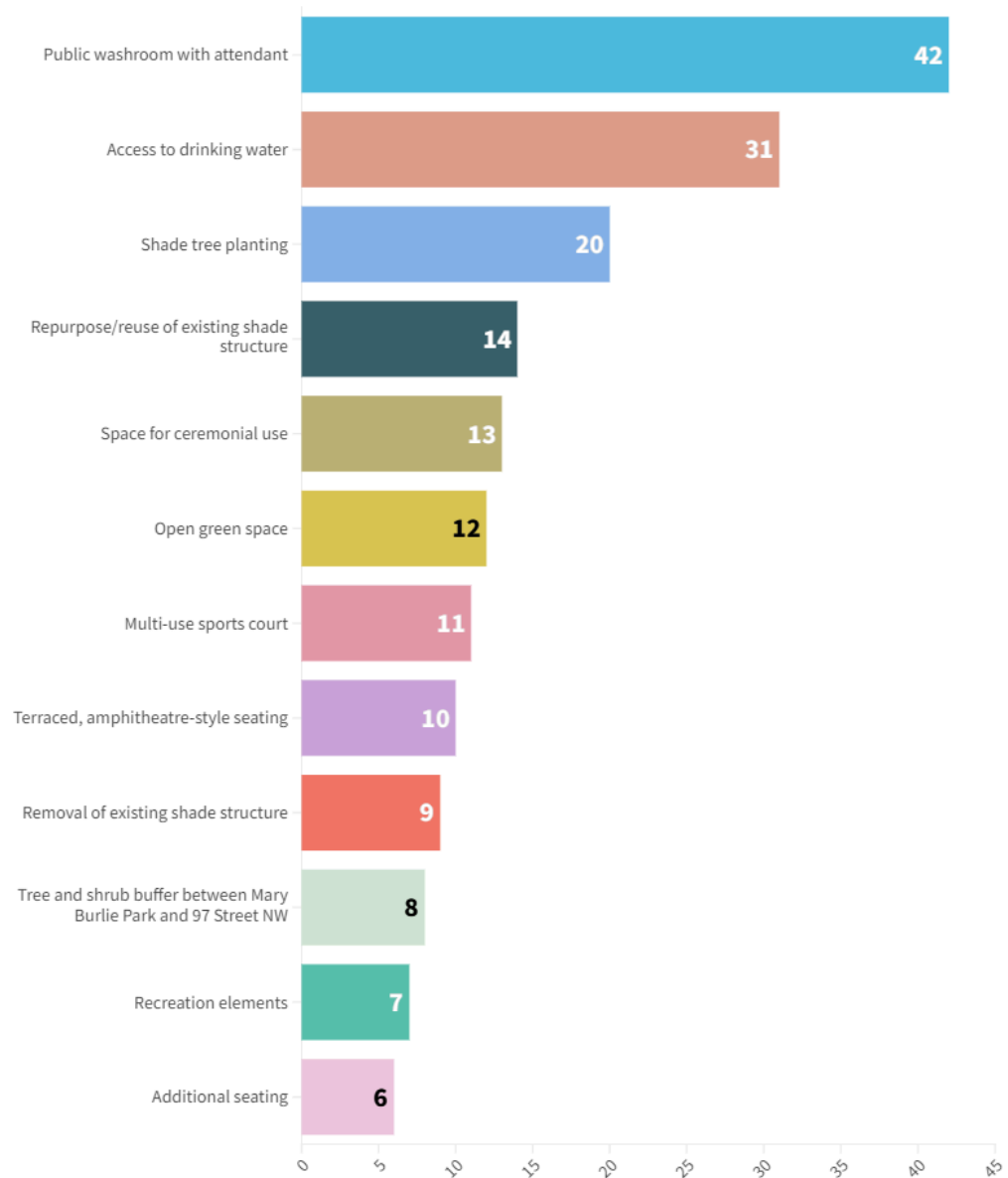


Table 10 - Online Survey Results

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What happens next

Preferred concept and next steps

The next phase of the project (preferred concept design) will consider the feedback heard from community engagement, and combine it with a comprehensive site analysis. The analysis will include assessments of wind impact, sun and shadow patterns and evaluations of surrounding transportation networks and urban programming. Design and construction standards, other City policies, costs and operational considerations will also influence the preferred design.

A washroom facility (shown in the design options) received high levels of support among engagement participants. This element will continue to be included in the preferred design for this project indicated as a future amenity. However, funding for a future washroom facility at this site will need to be identified in order to advance additional design and its construction. It is currently unknown when that funding will be confirmed.

Throughout this engagement process, the project team has strived to include the community and stakeholder groups to ensure that the final design reflects a balanced approach, incorporating both community input and technical insights. The team has also met people where they are, spending time at the park gathering thoughts and feedback.

The final design will be shared with the public in fall 2024 on the project website. For this and all project updates and background information, please visit edmonton.ca/MaryBurlieParkRenewal.