

What We Heard Report

Tipton Park Playground Renewal

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Project overview

Tipton Park, located in the Queen Alexandra neighbourhood at 10849 81 Avenue NW, is undergoing a playground equipment replacement project. The objective of this project is to use input from the public and align with the City's strategic objectives, plans and policies to replace the playground. A renewed playground will better serve the needs of existing community groups and partners, residents of adjacent neighbourhoods and City residents at large. The project is fully funded by the City of Edmonton.

The scope of this playground renewal project includes:

- Removing existing playground equipment and timber curbs
- Removing three pods north of the asphalt walk and replacing these with grass to alleviate accessibility and grading constraints
- Replacing sand from remaining pods, adding weeping tile to improve drainage and engineered wood fiber play surface added for accessibility
- Adding new play equipment
- Installing new concrete curbing to define the playground area
- Renewal of asphalt walk with drainage improvements
- Removal of one dead Poplar tree
- Adding new accessible picnic tables
- Refurbishing and retaining existing bench and waste bin
- Keeping mature trees

The project does not include:

- Improvements to
 - Tipton Arena parking lot or access road
 - Splash pad
 - Baseball diamond
 - Green space

What we heard

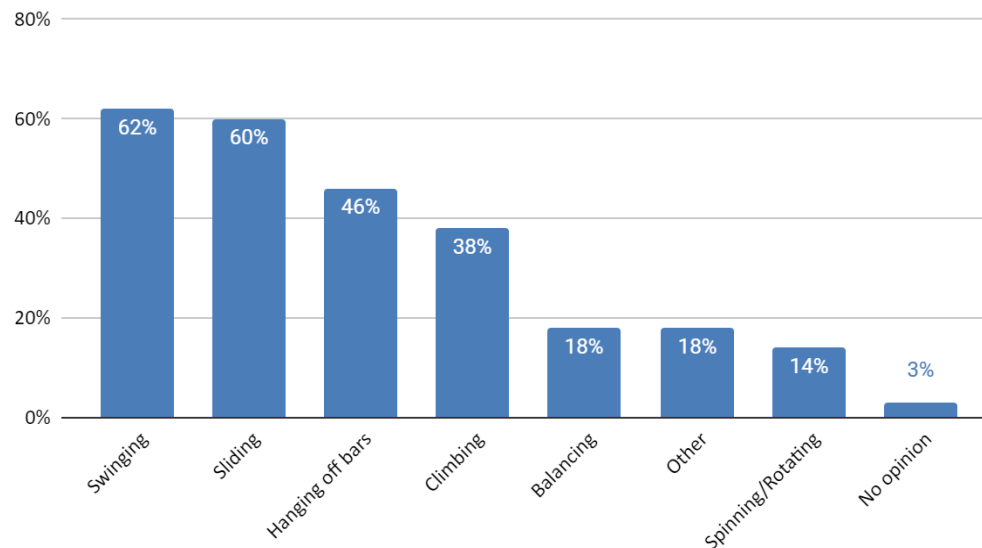
Engagement participants were enthusiastic about the playground renewal project and look forward to the planned improvements. Some initial findings from the online survey included:

- Thirty per cent of respondents usually go to Tipton Park several times a year, while 28.6 per cent of respondents go to Tipton Park weekly.
- 84 per cent of respondents walk or run to Tipton Park, while 7.8 per cent of respondents roll to the park.
- Of the eight per cent of respondents who roll to the park, 6.5 per cent of respondents use strollers for children.
- Sixty-four per cent of respondents go to Tipton Park to use the play equipment.

Play activities and experiences

Participants supported all play experiences. Equipment that would allow park users to swing, slide, hang off bars and climb was the most favoured.

Top Three Play Activities/ Experiences Selected



Participants emphasized the need for play equipment to meet the needs of all ages and abilities. Several participants suggested adding play equipment for toddlers and children, as well as exercise equipment that adults can use. Additionally, resting areas and walking paths suitable for seniors were also mentioned.

Many participants suggested adding equipment that encourages adventure, risk-taking, confidence-building play (eg. rock climbing) and pretend play (eg. pretend coffee shops). A few participants expressed concerns about metal benches as they conduct heat in the summer and are cold in the winter months.

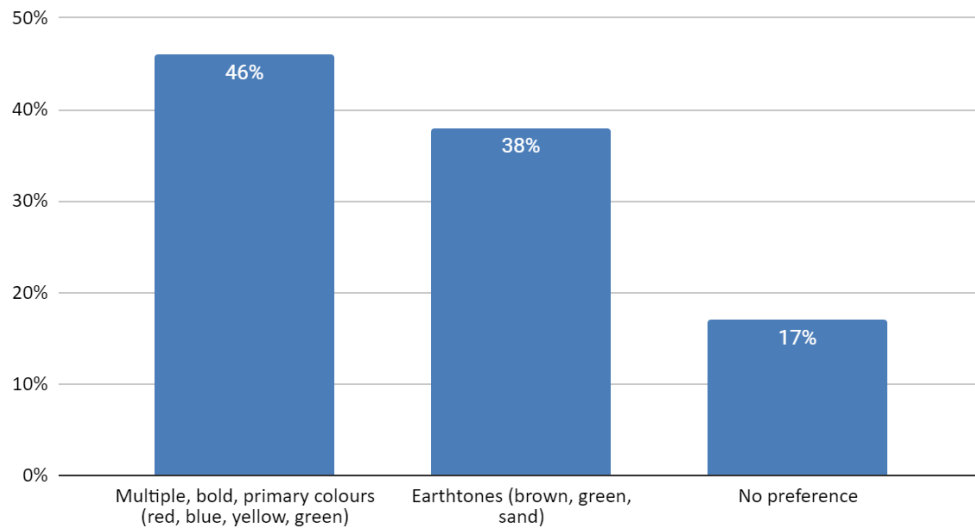
Several responses suggested including gathering spaces with more landscaping and plantings around picnic tables, not removing trees, and adding bird baths and squirrel feeders for residents to maintain.

Other play equipment requests in order of most frequent to least frequently asked include: Glider/zipline, tall slides, disc swings, seesaws and monkey bars. A few participants emphasized maintaining the heritage of the park and suggested the big swing, red slide and merry-go-round be returned to the park.

Playground colour

Participants did not express strong opinions about colours for the playground. Survey results demonstrated a small preference for earth tone colours (brown, green, sand), while slightly more on-site participants stated a preference for bold, bright primary colours. Unique colour ideas from on-site participants included: light and dark purple and light blue, preference for calmer colours, light colours, and pink and white.

Colour Preference Selected



Accessibility

The majority of engagement participants walk/run (84 per cent), use a vehicle (14 per cent) or roll (eight per cent) to Tipton Park. Those who roll to the park use strollers, bicycles, wheelchairs and mobility aids. Public transit is the least frequent way to get to the park (one per cent).

To improve park and playground accessibility, better playground and walking surfaces, increased seating and play structures for all ages and abilities were recommended.

Many participants suggested accessible swings, slides and play structures without stairs. It was noted by participants that the Ronald McDonald House uses the park often. Accommodations for the visually impaired and Autism - friendly structures were recommended. Some of the recommendations included lots of sensory activities, larger swings and spinners and a sight-word board.

Several respondents supported the removal of sand in the playground. There were recommendations to connect the picnic pods to the play structures so they would be accessible with strollers. Pathways to the gazebo were noted as "textured" and "rocky" for seniors using the park. There was an emphasis on increased seating for people to rest, and the widening of sidewalks and connection paths to encourage diverse users (cyclists, roller skaters, strollers, etc.). As noted earlier, public restrooms and a water fountain were recommended. Additionally, the metal benches were noted as being too cold and too hot for individuals using the park.

Other feedback

Park safety

Many participants noted that people experiencing homelessness use Tipton Park as a place to rest and this impacts park users' sense of safety.

Participants said unsafe and discarded items such as broken glass, needles and mattresses are attributed to the park's use as a rest area. Several participants recommended increasing visibility in the park and improving park lighting. Additional recommendations included adding a chain link fence, reducing the places for people to hide and sleep and better maintaining the hedges and bushes to increase visibility.

Green space and trees

Many people indicated the trees were important to Tipton Park. Suggestions for natural shade in play areas, landscaping around picnic tables and the addition of fruit trees, berry bushes and flower beds were also recommended.

Additional suggestions

Other suggestions for Tipton Park included:

- Maintaining the historical heritage of the park
- Accommodating dogs at the playground or green space
- Consider a community garden
- Adding a basketball court
- Consider options to prevent vehicle parking on the lawn area during winter hockey games

How the engagement results will be used

Results from this public engagement phase will be considered by the project team in developing design options for the playground. The engagement results will also be used to inform discussions with playground equipment suppliers. Design and construction standards, costs and operational considerations are also key decision-making factors.

The project team will re-engage with the community in fall 2024 to seek feedback on design options.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

What, when, how and who we engaged

The public was asked for their views on:

- Preferred play activities and experiences
- Playground equipment colour preferences
- Accessibility within and around the park and playground
- What they currently value about the park
- Park use and local knowledge that could inform the project

This first engagement period occurred from June 10 to 23, 2024.

The public was informed of the engagement opportunity through postcards delivered to postal codes surrounding Tipton Park. The postcard informed recipients about the project, the opportunity to complete the online survey and to learn more about the project at edmonton.ca/PlaygroundRenewal.

The engagement opportunity was also promoted through a social media ad on Facebook and Instagram, the City of Edmonton Public Service Announcement and Public Engagement Calendar.

The online survey was available from June 10 to 23, 2024 and the project team visited Tipton Park on June 15 and June 20 to hear directly from park users.

A total of 77 people completed the online survey. The majority of survey respondents were from Queen Alexandra (73 per cent) and other neighbourhoods near the park. A few survey respondents chose not to indicate their Edmonton neighbourhood (one per cent).

A total of 27 children and adults spoke with the project team while at the park in June.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The project team will develop playground design options to present to the community in fall 2024. For more information on the City's playground renewal program and this project, please visit edmonton.ca/PlaygroundRenewal.