



Richmond Green

Design Development Plan - Final Report

Fall 2023

02

Table of Contents

Project Overview	3
Concept Development	4
Engagement Summary	5
Final Park Design Plan	10
Park Access & Circulation	
Park Uses & Programming	
Green Infrastructure & Vegetation	
Winter / Seasonal Uses	
Next Steps	18

Project Overview

Introduction

On behalf of The City of Calgary (The City), O2 Planning and Design embarked on a Park Design Plan for Richmond Green Park to guide the expansion and improvements for the park over the next few years. A Park Design Plan was intended to give The City direction on the type of park amenities, programming, and other opportunities to enhance recreation, nature, and sustainability within the park.

Background

In November 2020, Council directed The City's real estate division to submit a land use application to enable the redevelopment of 5 acres of land on the north-west portion of the park site. At the same time, Council directed the assessment of the remaining 48 acres.

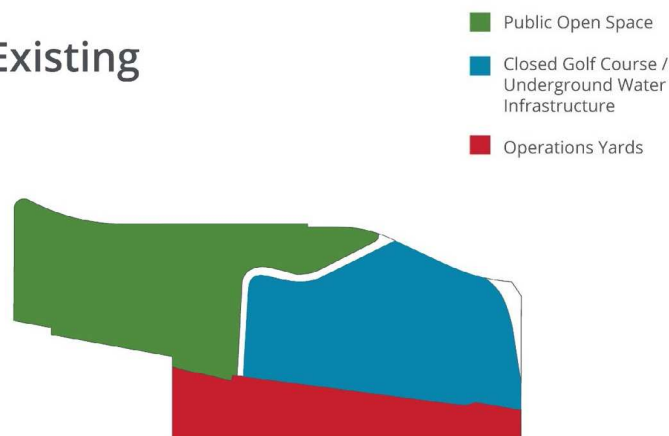
In July 2021, the Richmond Green Needs Assessment was conducted to determine current issues and concerns within the park and note potential areas for improvement in the short, medium and long term. In 2021, the former golf course was converted to a disc

golf course for interim use; much of this area overlays critical drinking water reservoirs. The two small ball diamonds on the development parcel will be relocated off site and the existing access road will be enhanced to provide vehicle and transit connections with the Currie community to the south.

With the re-purposing and incorporation of the former golf course (+17.5 acres) and operations depot (+10 acres), an increase of approximately 22 acres will become open park space available for public use, despite the loss of the development parcel (-5.5 acres). A total of 48.5 acres will become a publicly accessible park that will exist in conjunction with drinking water infrastructure. Pedestrian safety, connectivity and the park experience are important aspects for park development.

In May 2022, Council directed City Administration to market and sell a 5.5-acre parcel of land at Richmond Green Park. The purchaser application process opened on October 3, 2022. The entire proceeds of sale will be reinvested into improving the park.

Existing



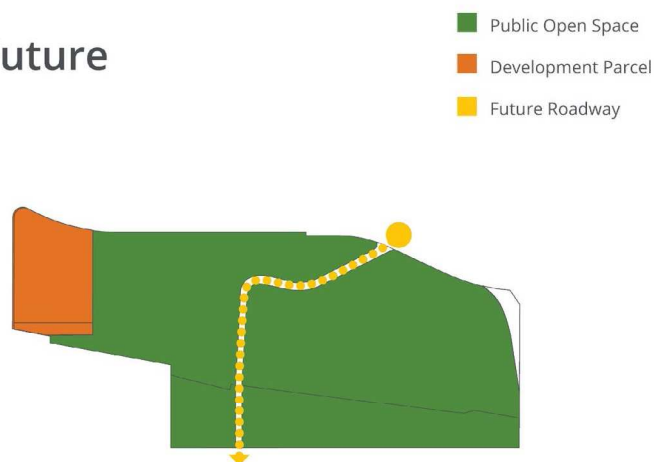
Total Open Space

38.25 acres

Total OWC Yard

9.96 acres

Future



Total Open Space

42.73 acres

Total Development Application

5.45 acres

+ 4.48 acres

Needs Assessment - Future Space Designation

Concept Development

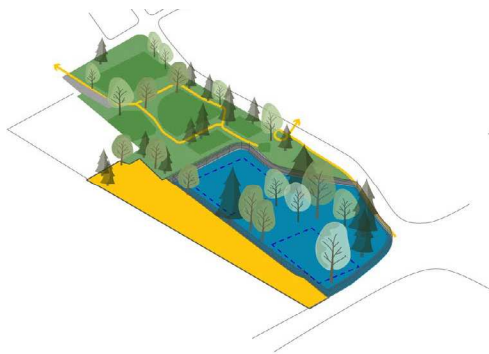
Concept Visioning

In July 2021, the Richmond Green Needs Assessment was conducted to determine current issues and concerns within the park and note potential areas for improvement in the short, medium and long term.

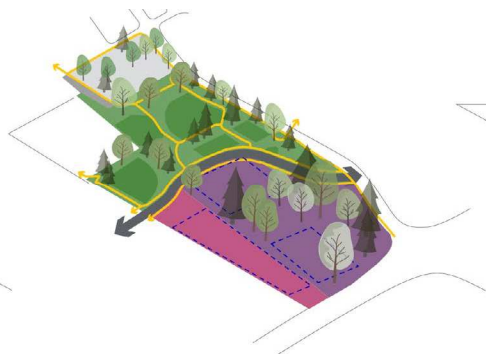
Emerging themes

Key elements for consideration that emerged during concept generation included:

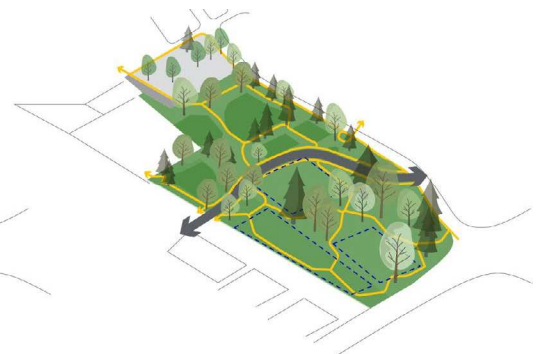
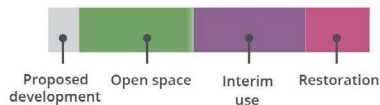
1. **Nature**
2. **Culture**
3. **Recreation**



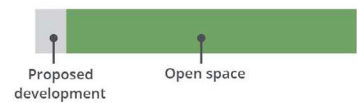
Existing



Short-medium Term



Medium-long Term



From the 2021 survey, these key values were identified by survey respondents...



NATURE



More trees
More planting
Nature education



CULTURE



More event spaces
Community building
Placemaking



RECREATION



Enhanced play
Diverse sports
Winter uses

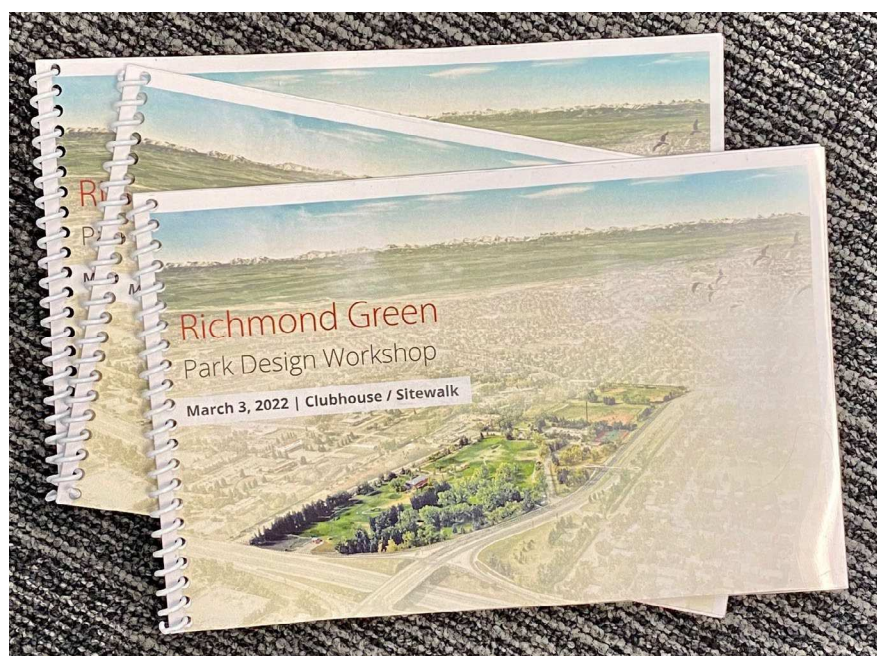
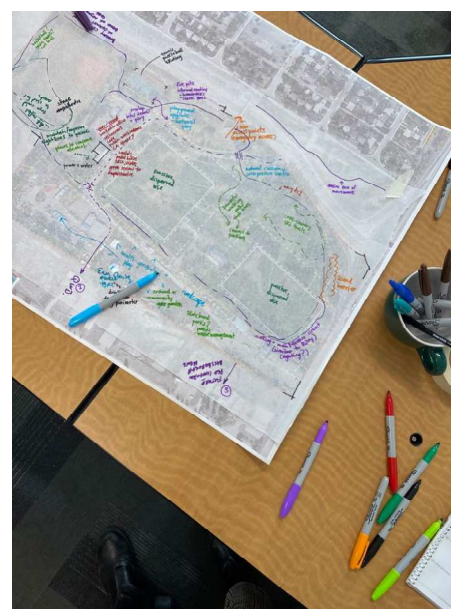
Engagement Summary

Phase 1 Visioning - Internal Engagement (March 2022)

During this initial Visioning phase, an in-person internal engagement “walkshop” was conducted at Richmond Green Park to walk through and experience park features, identify needs and opportunities and generate new ideas for the park.

The outcome helped the project team to confirm the project parameters and key themes to explore in further phases. It aided in understanding the implications to park operations and long-term sustinment of its facilities.

The O2 led walk was done to assess site opportunities and constraints based on six themes that included:



Phase 1 Visioning - External & Public Engagement (May-June 2022)

As part of the Phase 1 Visioning Engagement, a variety of online and in-person sessions were held with external parties as well as the public in order to obtain feedback on the park's current features and note any potential areas for improvement. Key values identified were to develop nature, culture and recreation amenities.

External Engagement

A variety of online and in-person external engagement sessions occurred that used engagement and communication tools like online surveys, paper surveys, in-person engagement and online sessions.

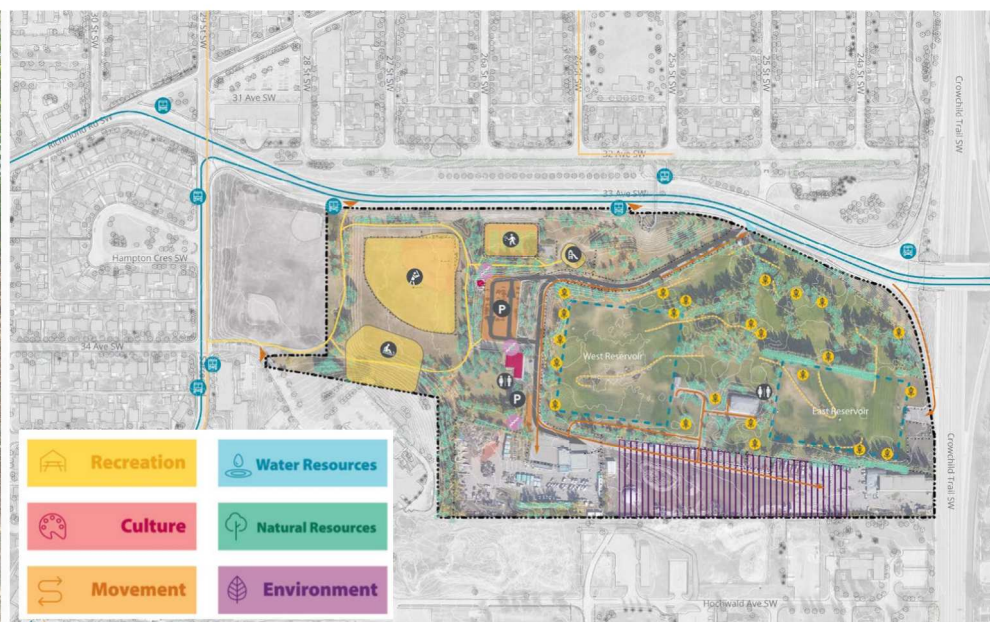
Two online engagements and one in person engagement were held to discuss the following topics:

1. Accessibility
2. Safety
3. Public Amenities
4. Development Parcel
5. Nature
6. Recreation
7. Culture

Public Engagement

Engagement opportunities were open for all Calgarians to ensure that a wide range of perspectives were represented in the process. Feedback from 941 participants was collected and common themes concerned the following:

1. Flexible open spaces
2. Park uses
3. Access
4. Road
5. Connectivity
6. Top Concerns
7. Opportunities
8. Nature, Culture & Recreation
9. Recreation Amenities
10. All-season Amenities



Link here:

Phase 2 Concepts - Internal (September 2022)

As part of the Phase 2 Concepts Engagement, online sessions were held to gather feedback on initial project concepts.

During the engagement sessions, the main tools employed included the project webpage and storymap to disseminate project information, along with a MURAL board to collect valuable feedback. Participants shared insights on concept preferences and specific topics, contributing essential information to the discussions.

The sessions focused on the following main topics:

1. Park access and circulation
2. Park uses and programming
3. Green infrastructure and vegetation
4. Winter uses



Phase 2 Concepts - Public (October- Nov 2022)

As part of the Phase 2 Concepts Engagement, online and paper surveys were used to provide feedback on two park concepts. The survey received a response from 575 participants. One in-person elementary school session was also hosted by The City.

Useful information on the following topics were gathered from participants :

1. Park access and circulation
2. Recreation amenities
3. Additional recreation amenities
4. Green infrastructure and vegetation
5. Winter uses
6. Concept preference
7. Comments



Park Access & Circulation

Park Uses & Programming

Green Infrastructure & Vegetation

Winter Uses

Q. What are your priorities for Park Access & Circulation?

Access from the parking lot to upper areas	Carries from the parking lot to upper areas	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park
Access from the parking lot to upper areas	Carries from the parking lot to upper areas	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park	Art installation in the park

Q. What are your priorities for Park Uses & Programming?

Education and Nature	Where will the program be located in the park?	Like the use of the park for community events	Trail continuity	In concept 2, what would be the number of pickball courts be - 500	It would be a great idea to have a pickball court in the park	Natural space	Connected pathways
Education and Nature	Where will the program be located in the park?	Like the use of the park for community events	Trail continuity	In concept 2, what would be the number of pickball courts be - 500	It would be a great idea to have a pickball court in the park	Natural space	Connected pathways

Q. What are your priorities for Green Infrastructure & Vegetation?

Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park
Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park	Reduce the number of trees in the park

Q. What are your priorities for Winter Uses?

Cross-Country Skiing	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe
Cross-Country Skiing	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe	Year round cafe

Final Park Design Plan

Introduction

Informed Park Design

The park design plan has been developed through an extensive and informed process. Three rounds of public engagement, two rounds of internal engagement and continual dialogue with the core City team and its partners has been influential in refining the function and impact of the design.

The final plan can be broken down into the following themes, which are described in the next pages:

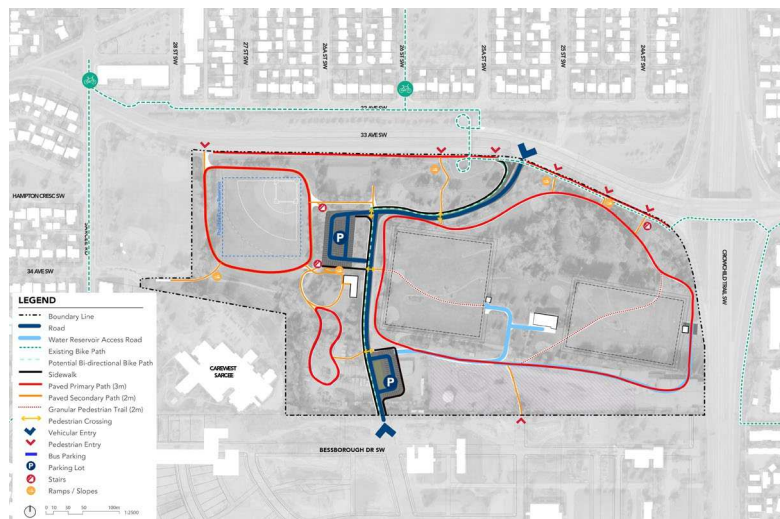
- + Park Access & Circulation
- + Park Uses & Programming
- + Green Infrastructure & Vegetation
- + Winter or Seasonal Uses



Site Plan

Park Access & Circulation

The park design plan provides improved circulation for pedestrians, cyclists as well as vehicles. The layout of entrances and pathways ensures that the park is accessible to all, promotes walkability and enhances the overall park experience in all seasons. It is a well connected circulation system designed for multiple types of travel.



Park Access & Circulation Plan

Park Access

For Pedestrians: As heard many times through the public engagement process, users desired additional entrances to the park from adjacent neighbourhoods. In the final design, additional pedestrian access routes are provided at the park edges, namely at the north-west corner of 33rd Ave and Crowchild Trail (from Marda Loop), at the north pedestrian overpass on 33rd Ave (from Killarney Glengarry), improved access from the west (from Rutland Park) and on the south side (from Currie Barracks). These additional pedestrian entrances are a mix of pathways, stairs and ramps, due to challenging grades along some of the park edges.

The park design also attempts to improve access to the park from key facilities at the south-west corner (ie. Carewest and Grace Lutheran Manor). Due to the existing vegetation, grading challenges and property boundaries, further discussions with those community partners will be required prior to the park design implementation.

For Cyclists: Cyclists are provided with improved access to the park through the new park design. From the north

overpass on 33rd Ave a new continuous cycling route is provided into the park. A continuous connection is also provided from the north-east corner, anticipating the future improved cycling route from Marda Loop.

For Transit: The design plan anticipates a local bus route through the park. However no bus stops within the park are currently planned. The BRT bus connection is not anticipated through the park, though the project team is reviewing the routing of the BRT into Currie Barracks around Richmond Green Park.

For Vehicles: The current vehicle route from 33rd Ave into the park will be maintained. However improvements to the intersection are anticipated at a future phase of the project in conjunction with project partners such as Canada Lands Company (CLC). The vehicular route from 33rd Ave will connect to Quesnay Wood Drive SW from the south. Similarly, the roadway alignment will be finalized at a future phase of the project in conjunction with project partners such as Canada Lands Company (CLC).



Quesnay Wood Road extension

Park Access & Circulation

Internal Park Circulation

For Pedestrians: As heard during the engagement process, pedestrians desired continuous circuits or loops within the park as well as improved access to amenities within the new design. In the west side of the park, the 3-metre wide pedestrian pathway loop around the existing baseball diamond is modified slightly on the south to prevent conflicts with pathway clearing and toboggan hill use. In the east side of the park, a larger continuous 3-metre wide pathway loop (approximately 1km in length) extends around the park amenities. The pathway is located specifically to avoid excess removal of trees, to avoid conflicts with recreational amenities and to respect the buffers around existing water reservoirs. Another shorter pedestrian circuit, south of the existing building (and former clubhouse), is positioned on the south-west side of the park as an artwalk loop. Smaller pedestrian trails also link between park access points and amenities. Different paving materials like asphalt, gravel, concrete and unit pavers create a hierarchy between pathway types.

Regional pathways are designated along the north edge along 33rd Ave to connect into the regional network of pathways that surround the site. The two larger circuits within the park could also be designated as a regional pathways, due to their width and materials. A concrete sidewalk runs along the entire length of the internal road. Three pedestrian crosswalks occur in select locations to ensure safe crossing of Quesnay Wood Drive.

For Cyclists: Cyclists are provided with a continuous and bi-directional elevated cycle route on the west side of the existing Quesnay Wood Drive. This will ensure continuous

movement from north to south into the Currie Barracks. Bike racks will be incorporated into the park design.

For Transit: The design plan anticipates a local bus route through the park. However no bus stops within the park are currently planned.

For Vehicles: The current vehicle route from 33rd Ave into the park will be maintained. However, the roadway alignment will be finalized at a future phase of the project in conjunction with project partners such as Canada Lands Company (CLC). The route is proposed as 3.3-metre wide lanes in both directions with a 30 km/h speed limit.

The park design plan includes two parking lots. The existing north parking lot is to be optimized to provide accessible parking with a safer pedestrian connections. The two access routes into the parking lot are to be maintained and the modified lot will provide parking for 76 vehicles. Proposed is another parking lot in the south to allow an additional capacity of 40 vehicles.

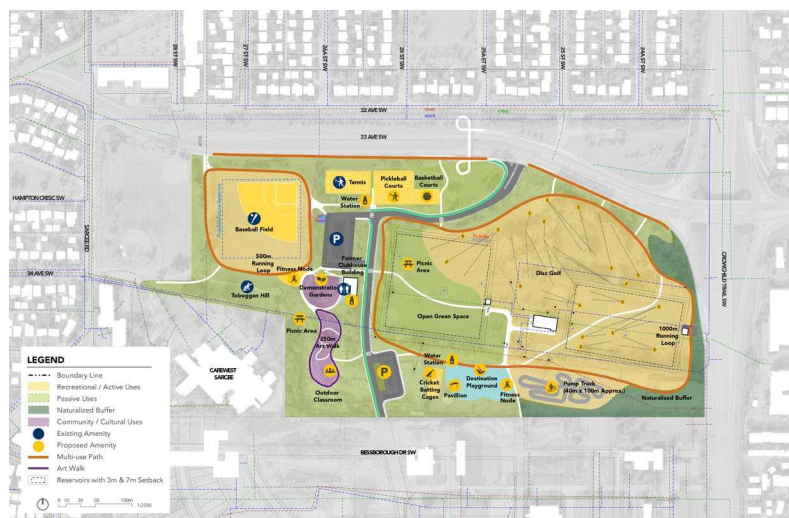
For Water Service Vehicles: Vehicular access is also required to the water services buildings in order to maintain continual 24-hour access to existing reservoirs and water infrastructure. The designated vehicular access route will be shared with the pedestrian pathway on the east side of the park. Access to the east water building (off Crowchild Trail) has been eliminated to allow for a continuous pathway loop and to ensure safety of personnel servicing the water infrastructure. A combination of boulders and gates will prevent unwanted vehicular access onto reservoirs and water buildings.



Internal Park Circulation - 3-metre Pathway Loop

Park Uses & Programming

One goal of the park is to create a dynamic hub of recreation and community life, offering a wide range of active and passive uses that cater to the diverse needs and interests of park users.



Park Uses & Programming Plan

Active Programming

Richmond Green Park in its current state has a number of active programming elements such as recreation activities. Public engagement during the design process indicated that recreation uses should be maintained and expanded with new active programming. Active uses include field sports, court sports and play elements.

Field Sports: The existing full-size baseball diamond will remain. The two smaller baseball diamonds will be relocated to another site and construction is currently underway. The existing temporary disc golf course will be converted to a permanent facility. The basket layout may change however, as the course is reconfigured further east and south to allow for more open green space on the west as well as the proposed pathway. The 1000-metre circuit around the west side of the park will have periodic distance markers to allow users to track their progress. The project team will work with its recreation partners to ensure a satisfactory arrangement of all field sports.

Court Sports: Extensive public feedback was received during the design process advocated for additional court sports. As a result, the existing tennis courts in the north will remain. A total of ten (10) pickleball courts will be added just east of the existing tennis courts. A full-size basketball court is also provided in this area. The configuration of court sports was designed to minimize impacts to the existing topography and trees to the extent possible. A water refill station is proposed in this location.

Play Elements: The existing playground in the north of the park will be removed due to its condition and proximity to the sports courts. A “destination” playground will be located at the south of the park with an expanded play features for a wide range of ages. It is intended that the play area will include adequate shade and/or a shelter with seating for use throughout the seasons. A water refill station is also proposed in this location.

The project team explored the possibility of including a full cricket pitch, but the spatial requirements exceeded the capacity of the site without extensive tree removal and reconfiguration of permanent features. Instead, a cricket batting cage is proposed at the south end of the park. Adult exercise equipment will also be provided alongside each of the east and west pathway circuits.

A pump track is proposed adjacent to the destination playground at the south-east side of the park. The exact size and configuration of the pump track needs to be refined by the project team and its recreation partners.

The recreation elements along the south edge of park will be built up in order to minimize excavation of existing salt-impacted soils in this area. Further, these elements will be buffered by vegetated berms and plant material in order to block views and noise from Crowchild Trail and Currie Barracks.



Active Programming - Basketball Courts

Park Uses & Programming

Passive Programming

Public engagement during the design process indicated that active recreation uses need to be balanced against passive uses such as open lawns for picnics or casual play as well as opportunities for learning and education. Passive uses proposed in the park design plan include demonstration gardens, an outdoor classroom, an artwalk trail and picnic areas.

Demonstration Gardens: The existing building (and former clubhouse) is currently occupied by the Calgary Horticultural Society. With this community partner, the project team has explored high-level complementary uses for the site including demonstration or community gardens adjacent to the building. Opportunities for public education on naturalization and biodiversity, native plant use, reduced-water consumption gardens or salt-tolerant plant species have been explored as initial ideas for demonstration gardens. There also exists the potential to pair community garden programming with adjacent facilities such as Carewest or Grace Lutheran Manor.

Learning Environments: Connected to themes of demonstration and education, an outdoor classroom is proposed at the south-west corner of the site. An amphitheatre and stage is provided to allow for school or

community groups to offer outdoor learning opportunities, small events or festivals.

Artwalk: A small 250-metre pedestrian circuit is proposed around the outdoor amphitheatre which connects to the demonstration garden area. Working with a community partner, temporary or permanent public artworks can be provided along the artwalk loop to add interest and cultural programming. This area of the park has the potential to look and feel distinct through textured materials, unique vegetation and grassroots art programming.

Park Signage & Story-Telling: Richmond Green Park has a long history as a water-orientated site that could be incorporated into creative park signage and story-telling opportunities throughout the park.

Picnic Areas: Provisions for additional picnic areas have been incorporated as a result of public feedback. On the east side of the park, existing recreation uses such as the disc golf course have shifted further east to allow for casual play or picnic activities. On the west side of the park, new picnic areas are provided with fire pits adjacent to the demonstration gardens.



Passive Programming - Seasonal Gathering Areas

Green Infrastructure & Vegetation

One goal of the park is to maintain and enhance the mature vegetation and green infrastructure of the site to create a sustainable park design for the future.

Vegetation Strategy

Public engagement during the design process indicated the existing tree canopy should be maintained and the park should feel “green” or natural. Factors like the site surroundings, topography, salt-impacted soils and the presence of underground reservoirs played an important role in planning the vegetation of the site.

Existing Trees: The park design plan intends to minimize the amount of tree removals. The project team has carefully considered the impacts to trees when introducing new programming elements and pathway alignment. Currently, the site has over 900 trees. Approximately 100 trees would be removed and nearly 350 trees are proposed.

Proposed Trees: The proposed tree canopy is mostly along the new pathways, the naturalized buffer areas in the south and around the artwalk and outdoor classroom area in the south-west. The proposed trees also help fill in the gaps within the existing canopy or replace select tree removal due to active programming. The new trees will create sheltered outdoor spaces, break down the scale of large spaces or act as a visual barrier.

Naturalized Buffers: Vegetated berms, new trees and plantings beds are positioned specifically to act as a visual barrier to surrounding developments and alleviate the impact of traffic noise from Crowchild Trail. The buffer helps provide the park users with a green experience.

Demonstration Gardens: As described in the previous section, demonstration gardens are planned adjacent to the existing building in order to explore avenues for naturalization and biodiversity, native plant use or reduced-water consumption gardens.



Green Infrastructure & Vegetation Plan

Enhanced Understory: The artwalk at the south-west corner of the park is designed to be a no-mow zone and planted with naturalized species or enhanced understory plantings.

Low-Mow Grass: The disc golf course will have low-mow grass to reduce mowing and maintenance.

Bioswales: Water runoff from the sports courts in the north and the certain sections of the 1km pathway loop on the east are directed to bioswales before entering the storm sewer. This will help reduce peak discharge rates and volumes in the event of a storm and improve the quality of water entering the storm system. These bioswales are proposed in locations where the topography favoured their creation (eg. existing low spots or sloped areas).

Irrigation: As a remnant of the former golf course, there exists an irrigation system that no longer functions. The park design does not intend to have an irrigation system on the disc golf course, but will maintain an irrigation system on the current baseball diamond, per City standards. No additional irrigation for the site is proposed.

Salt-impacted Soils: The existing City Operations Workplace Centre (OWC) contains salt-impacted soils which will impact the development of the south side of the park. While not harmful to human-health, the presence of salt within this soil will have negative effects on future vegetation growth. After careful review and adherence to provincial guidelines and best practices, the project team has decided to cap the existing soil and place play elements on top of the existing soil in order to minimize excavation. This area will be regraded and berms will be created to visually buffer the park to the Currie Barracks development on the south.



Winter / Seasonal Uses

The park is designed to be enjoyable and accessible during all seasons. A variety of winter programming and supportive services have been incorporate to strengthen park uses through the year.



Winter Plan

Winter Programming

Winter activations and programming including a toboggan run, cross-country ski loops and firepits have been included in order to facility all-season use.

Toboggan Run: The existing toboggan run in the west end of the site is retained due to its topography and popularity. The pedestrian pathway loop around the existing baseball diamond is relocated slightly to the north to prevent conflicts with pathway clearing and toboggan hill use. As a result, the toboggan run is now extended as compared to existing.

Firepits: Adjacent to the toboggan hill and within the picnic area, firepits are provided to facility all-season and winter use. Paired with the artwalk and outdoor classroom, the park could support winter festivals or seasonal markets.

Cross-Country Ski Loop: The proposed pathway circuits are conducive to convert to cross-country ski loops. While not intended to replace the pathways, cross-country skiing can

occur adjacent to the continuous circuits. Informal track-setting can occur at a community level.

Skating: The existing baseball diamond could be converted to a skating rink allowing casual or free-skating.

Lighting: Dependant on funding, the west side of the park (ie pathway circuit) could be provided with lights in order to extend park use through the seasons.

Snow Clearing: The project team needs to refine the capacity of the City to provide designated routes that will be maintained and cleared of snow during the winter.

Building Use: Feedback from public engagement confirmed the desire for all-season washrooms. This is dependent on funding and capacity of the City to maintain and service this facility.



Next Steps

What Happens Next?

This Final Design Report represents the final stage of the park development plan.

The City will now take the plan into detail design and regulatory approval review.

Depending on funding, construction is expected to begin in 2024 and conclude in 2025.

Updates will be provided on the engage.calgary.ca/richmondgreen

