



# Riley Area Café Project

## Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard

May 2022

### Project overview

Phase 3 of the Kensington Area Improvement project presented a proposed café structure that will be mobile within the community. Feedback from previous phases of engagement indicated that Riley Park might not be the only appropriate location in the area. As a result, we are looking at other possible locations within the community in addition to Riley Park where the café might be located.

What are our goals for this café concept?

- Create a safe and comfortable space for people to gather.
- Activate public spaces and offer a service people will use to potentially extend stays in the area.
- Provide an amenity that is privately operated.

### Engagement overview

This phase of engagement was conducted entirely online through The City's Engage Portal (<https://engage.calgary.ca/kensingtonarea>). Public feedback was accepted from April 18 – to May 6, 2022. Residents of Sunnyside, Hillhurst, West Hillhurst and Hounsfield Heights/Briar Hill were sent a postcard, notifying them of Phase 3 engagement for the project. In addition, residents and people transiting through the Riley Area were made aware of the project through sounding boards and sandwich boards as well as a social media campaign. The project team met with community association representatives from the above listed communities in advance of the Phase 3 launch. A project email address was set up to field citizen questions and concerns regarding the project and engagement opportunity.

### What we asked

Phase 3 engagement for the Kensington Area Improvements project built upon previous phases of engagement as well as subsequent technical analysis and cost considerations to provide updated proposed designs for a short list of area projects, including the Riley Area Café.

Public input for Phase 3 focused on citizens' qualitative responses to example illustrations of potential mobile café structures. The design presented was refined beyond the illustrations provided in Phase 2 (August 2021). Stakeholders were then asked the following question:

- Do you feel this design meets the improvement goals? Do you have any suggestions or final comments before we progress to construction?

### What we heard

The mobile café concept in Riley Area received supportive comments from many participants. There were inquiries from participants as to how the mobile concept is managed and how vendor selection would be



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facilitated. The top three participant impression themes regarding the proposed design and its alignment to the project goals were:

- General support for a mobile concept in the Riley Area with stakeholders providing suggestions for café features they think might be well utilized by citizens and recommendations for prospective locations.
- The café location and sentiments that the café belonged in a parks space where it would meet the goal of extending area stay while also not competing with existing Kensington area businesses.
- Participants asked questions related to the operations of a mobile café concept, how long the structure would be positioned in one place and how operator/vendor selection would be facilitated.

The most common theme in public feedback was general support for seeing a mobile café amenity implemented in the Riley Area. Participants referenced other areas of Calgary and other municipalities where similar mobile models were employed with success. There were suggestions for the addition of public bathrooms, shaded seated and vendors that could sell alcohol. Oppositional comments related to the needs assessment or justification for the café amenity, beliefs that the design was aesthetically unpleasing, concern with the potential competition with existing bricks and mortar café locations throughout Kensington and the broader Riley Area. A small group of participants felt the investment dollars should be redirected toward traffic calming projects in Riley Area.

For a detailed summary of the input that was provided, please see the [Summary of Input](#) section.

For a verbatim listing of all the input that was provided, please see the [Verbatim Responses](#) section.

## Next steps

The public feedback received during this phase of engagement will be used in conjunction with technical analysis and cost considerations to select which projects will be carried forward to construction. 2 Avenue N.W. streetscape improvements is one of seven projects brought forward in Phase 3. All projects are dependent on funding availability and technical feasibility. The public can expect construction on prioritized projects to begin during the summer of 2022 and carry on into 2023.

### Summary of Input

Category	Response Summary
General support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most common response theme was support for the mobile café concept. Supportive comments were often linked to supplementary suggestions such as the addition of public bathrooms and shaded seating areas.</li> </ul>
Park focused amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders in this category emphasized that the mobile café concept was best implemented in park spaces rather than on urban streetscapes in the Riley Area.</li> </ul>
Mobile concept questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders asked questions related to how this concept might operate. For example, would the location change every season and operate throughout winter?</li> <li>A small group of participants inquired as to how the vendor selection process was facilitated and emphasized the importance of a local operator (versus a corporate entity like Tim Hortons or Starbucks).</li> </ul>
Added amenity suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizens brought forward suggestions for ways to enhance the benefit of a mobile café such as public bathrooms, alcohol sales, seating options and a stage for performances.</li> </ul>
Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders presented critical comments which related to competition with local businesses, the concept was unattractive and might produce litter, and sentiments that other projects were more meaningful and worthy of public investment.</li> </ul>
Competition with existing area businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments in this category expressed concern that a mobile café might take business away from brick-and-mortar cafes in the Riley Area. Some respondents suggested the café only be located in park spaces to mitigate potential rivalry.</li> </ul>
Needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants in this category inquired how the need for this roaming facility was determined.</li> </ul>
Esthetic comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments in this category expressed dislike of the industrial concept presented in the engagement illustrations and that the vernacular did not align with the character of Riley Area.</li> </ul>



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## Verbatim Comments

Verbatim comments presented here include all feedback, suggestions, comments and messages that were collected online and in-person through the engagement described in this report. All input has been reviewed and provided to Project Teams to be considered in decision making for the project.

Any personal identifying information has been removed from the verbatim comments presented here. Comments or portions of comments that contain profanity, or that are not in compliance with the [City's Respectful Workplace Policy](#) or [Online Tool Moderation Practice](#), have also been removed from participant submissions.

Wherever possible the remainder of the submissions remains. No other edits to the feedback have been made, and the verbatim comments are as received. As a result, some of the content in this verbatim record may still be considered offensive or distasteful to some readers.

### **Do you feel this design meets the improvement goals? Do you have any suggestions or final comments before we progress to construction?**

- I'm not sure why this is needed. Why not make a designated area for food trucks to use instead? That way you could see different offerings.
- Would be great to have this as an option in many parks around the city. See <https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/Parks/Explore/Beer-Gardens> for inspiration.
- Fantastic idea!
- Would prefer permanent. Ensure that there is indoor & outdoor seating, open winter & summer, with washroom access
- Don't we have enough coffee shops in the area??? Pictures are hard to see.
- The illustrated container box designs are truly an eyesore. Please do not proceed with it.
- I think Riley Park is the best location for this structure. Positioning too close to Kensington Road or 10th Street creates competition with established local businesses.
- Potential partnership with Calgary Arts Development and/or the Music Performance Trust Fund to integrate musical performances to draw people to the cafe.
- Really great. Install at every playground for the parents :) Riley park is a definite standout for this. Possible also WHCA.
- Yes
- hard to tell from postage stamp sized pictures - are you looking for rubber stamps? Where is this located? Basic stuff missing, hard to comment.
- Amazing!! Love that this is happening.

- Maybe. Parks should be reserved as parks with commercial activities in commercial areas. Parks are meant for all, and not just for the enjoyment of those that can afford a \$5 cup of coffee.
- Opening up permits for companies to experiment with potential cafe locations may allow other parks around Calgary to develop "River Cafe" like spaces. I can imagine families visiting Riley Park benefiting from food/beverage service.
- Yes, it does!
- Yes
- It is a good idea to have this be a mobile site. As someone who lives next to Riley Park, I am concerned about the smells/garbage that may occur with a cafe. Also, I do not think it's necessary for the park. The park is very popular as is.
- If a private operator wants to fund this, let them. I don't think the city should be funding private retailers.
- Kinda cool!
- I like this design and think it would be a good addition to the community.
- Great idea to bring into Riley Park and other areas. Unsure of profitability/ viability for those private entities involved, so feel like it'd be paired well with special events and social media marketing from some cool places.
- Please ensure this goes to a good quality food establishment that has experience with this type of set up
- Provide seating availability and open air study spaces/patio
- I really like the idea of a cafe in the park. Especially if it's near the playground
- This should be located in the park. Perhaps in conjunction with the wading pool so there are also washrooms nearby. A small shop used to operate within the wading pool area (20 years ago). There are plenty of other businesses elsewhere.
- Yes, I love the idea of a container cafe in Riley Park. It would be great for park users!
- Good idea. Thank you
- Yes - we think this will be a great addition to Riley Park
- I have no issue with this design. It beautifies the area and doesn't affect traffic. Only issue is there's little to no parking available in this area already
- Yes
- About time! We need a lot more of this in Calgary, particularly in the winter when it's too cold to walk without a hot drink
- I like the idea that it's a mobile Café.
- I am supportive of this concept. It would be great to see in Riley Park.
- Yes, hopefully some seating around
- With a mobile cafe, will you be including a mobile toilet? There aren't any public washroom facilities in Kensington except at the community association.
- Yes. What happens to it in winter?
- Cool idea; but not an efficient use of tax dollars.

- Great idea. However, no public space is complete without public washrooms. If you want to activate public spaces and hope people will extend their stay in the area, you must figure out public toilets. This is an equity issue that will only grow.
- A few more trees
- Love this idea. It would be good to have a routine schedule so we know when it would be there. Ideally on a day separate from the farmer's market days in terms of crowding and redundancy.
- Please not a container. The sunny side park is not attractive, learn from this
- The third world comes to Calgary! Maybe you can make extra money using this eyesore in the winter by leasing for overseas shipping where it belongs!
- I believe Riley Park needs a permanent installation. I love the area and grew up here but feel uncomfortable taking my kids alone due to the number of drug users. To reclaim this space for family and community use it needs to have a permanent presence.
- Yes. More outdoor seating in the area will add to a sense of vibrancy. Bridgeland and Marde Loop have been doing this well lately.
- Yes but it needs to be aesthetically pleasing, even though it is not a permanent structure.
- I feel like the kensington area has lots of options for cafes. Maybe food trucks could serve a similar purpose (IDK how permitting for driving in a park works, but I am not suggesting adding roads, they could use the paths).
- Very cool and should be implemented in more places across the city.
- Yes, this meets the goals. Really great idea!
- Yes
- Yes it meets the goals
- I love it! Near or in the park is Won't compete with established cafés in the neighborhood.
- Yes
- Yes
- Looks great, more of these designs all over the city!
- Yes - nice!
- Although this adds an element of convenience to the immediate area it cannibalizes the local business that have true brick and mortar locations. This should be avoided
- This is great! It meets the goals. Is there a way to attach items that would help create more shade?
- I like cafes and this meets the goals
- I feel this design meets the improvement goals. As a neighbourhood owner, thank you. Please ensure a good maintenance budget is included for upkeep. A main brand would attract clients ie., Tim Hortons/Good Earth Cafe etc..
- Please make this permanent and licenced. We need more permanent and multi-use outdoor spaces to gather and connect. I'd also really like to see a small stage added.
- Love it

- As a neighborhood resident, I like the idea of the cafe, and like the idea of it being mobile, perhaps seasonal. However, I think it would be idea for it to have a semi-permanent location (e.g. Riley Park near the playground) to reduce environment impact.
- Gladstone Road NW has been asking for traffic control measures for 10 years. Residents are still waiting but money is being spend on this? The City of Calgary turned Gladstone Road into a dangerous drag strip and instead we're getting a container cafe WTF
- What a great idea! If they sold alcohol... that would be amazing.
- Great idea! By New Edinborough rink in winter!
- Design is fine for mobile, key will be uses/vendors allowed.
- yes, like the mobile moveable pop-up cafe idea
- I am glad that it will not be a permanent structure.
- This is something that is currently done in European cities like Lisbon, the city provides a structure with water/sewer/power connections and they lease out the space to private businesses. This provides an opportunity for local businesses
- This is a good idea as it will generate revenue. Please keep ongoing maintenance and operating costs top of mind in the design.
- Yes. I suspect this would get a lot of use. Especially with coffees and soft serve ice cream. It would from me anyway as I use the park often.
- Nice, well done
- Is this really needed? How many coffee and tea cafés exist in the neighborhood? Already competitive enough for businesses in the area I would think.
- Why not just provide good truck parking
- If it has year round open public bathrooms I'm all for it!
- Personally i am not in favor of this project at all. I see increased litter and not much benefit. There are lots of coffee shops in the area. Why do we need on in Riley Park. How about having a green space for activities not sitting around with food.
- Seems like a cool concept.
- Not interested in this project. Redirect focus to safer streets.