



Grasshopper Hill Off-Leash Improvements

Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard

May 2022

Project overview

Phase 3 of the Kensington Area Improvement project brought forward proposed park upgrades at Grasshopper Hill to address ongoing erosion improve trail accessibility. Improvements at Grasshopper Hill were identified in previous phases of engagement as an open space priority. Phase 2 public feedback indicated social gathering points, landscape preservation and improved accessibility were important considerations for Grasshopper Hill.

What are our goals for Grasshopper Hill Off-Leash Improvements?

- Erosion mitigation;
- Seating area to enhance gathering potential and create a comfortable placemaking element to the park; and
- Accessibility improvements (grade not to exceed 8%) and construction of a timber staircase with handrails.

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 Grasshopper Hill Off-leash Improvements.

The project materials on the Engage Portal page included an illustration of the proposed trail, staircases, and lookout locations as well as existing natural features. The design presented was refined beyond the illustrations provided in Phase 2 (August 2021). Stakeholders were asked if they felt the design met the improvement goals and if they had any final suggestions or comments before the project potentially progressed to construction.



Grasshopper Hill Off-Leash Improvements

Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard

May 2022

What we heard

The Grasshopper Hill received a breadth of comments from engagement participants. Critical comments emphasized concerns around disruption to native plant life and detracted from the existing natural character of the park. Supportive comments indicated the proposed improvement might attract more people to the park and enhance the already well-enjoyed viewpoints. There was acknowledgment that Grasshopper Hill is a well-used open space within Calgary. The top three participant themes regarding the proposed design and its alignment to the project goals were:

- The top theme from participant comments was general support for the project. Stakeholders indicated that the park was well utilized and appreciated by citizens, residents and dog owners, and therefore was worthy of investment. Supportive comments were often tied to suggestions for additional amenities, such as increased signage or features for dogwalkers and their pets..
- The second most frequent theme from participant comments encapsulated concerns about natural area disruptions. Many participants indicated that the simple and natural feeling of the park was part of its appeal. Some respondents requested that necessary changes (e.g. erosion, drainage and accessibility) be addressed and major elements, such as the new staircase, be eliminated from the plans.
- Drainage and erosion mitigation was another frequent theme and a group of respondents wanted to better understand how proposed plans would improve site conditions. Participants acknowledged the need to address erosion, and a subset expressed a desire to have that be the only intervention implemented as part of this project to maintain the naturalized character of the park.

Overall, Grasshopper Hill received a broad range of public input for Phase 3 engagement. Critical comments tended to focus on the necessity of capital upgrades and requested changes be made minimal through the erosion and drainage work. Input reflected concerns about criminal behaviour with the installation of a new seating area. There were a group of comments expressing concern about features that are not part of these plans, such as Stakeholders who provided supportive and positive input indicated the designs met improvement goals, with an emphasis on increased accessibility, and made suggestions for additional features that might improve the user experience at Grasshopper Hill.

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. The Grasshopper Hill Off-Leash Park 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"> The second most common theme was general support for the project, with stakeholders expressing enthusiasm for investment at Grasshopper Hill. Stakeholders indicated it is a well-used park and the proposed design broadly met the improvement goals. Supportive comments were in some cases matched with suggestions for added amenities such as more garbage bins to manage waste, park signage or seating suggestions for the proposed lookout area.
Concerns about natural area disruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders expressed concerns that proposed changes had the potential to interfere with native species and plant life and wanted information about how this will be mitigated. There was a segment of participants who questioned if the changes might alter the character of the open space. A group of respondents questioned if changes and infrastructure construction might create natural disturbances at the park and detract from the existing appeal of the open space.
Drainage and erosion mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A group of respondents requested further information regarding how the proposed changes will improve drainage and erosion. A group of participants indicated erosion and drainage mitigation were acceptable interventions, but other improvements were not necessary at Grasshopper Hill.
Oppositional comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical comments cited concerns about new gathering areas attracting late-night parties and not being necessary for a park that is primarily utilized by off-leash dog owners. Stakeholders indicated that proposed features, such as the stairs, were not warranted at the site and minimal changes should be implemented.
Dog control measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing of the off-leash area was suggested by participants who wanted to see better management of dog movement within the park. A few citizens cited owners not properly controlling their pets and fencing was a proposed solution.
Design questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey participants raised questions related to parking allocation, how the stairs will be kept clear during the winter and if fencing is being considered in the park. A few participants asked how native species and plants would be protected and preserved during improvement work. Accessibility questions were raised with the improvement of the path system and a few participants suggested seating at the bottom of the hill for people with limited mobility.

Grashopper Hill Off-Leash Improvements

Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard

May 2022

Improved trail, walkway and entrance accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments in this category were generally positive and respondents indicated that the proposed changes would increase citizen access to the park and its viewpoints. A few stakeholders made suggestions for entrance improvements at 8 Ave NW.
Amenity change misunderstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were a group of stakeholders who provided critical comments about features and changes that are not proposed as part of plans for this park, such as paved pathways and firepit installation. A segment of comments indicated a belief that a firepit
Social disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens highlighted concerns pertaining to changes possibly attracting encampments, social disorder and public drinking or drug use. Participants who identified as living near the park raised concerns about invasion of privacy with the installation of a lookout point
Dog Park amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in this category encouraged the installation of dog-specific features such as waste bag disposal units, a pet water fountain, potential fencing to contain animals and responsible pet signage.
Staircase opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments regarding the staircase installation were divided between people who felt they enhanced park usability and accessibility and citizens who communicated the stairs disrupted the natural character of the park. Comments in opposition to the staircase anticipated low utilization of the staircase and investment was better targeted to the trails.

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?

- The walkways and entrances are placed perfectly, but the proposed lookout location seems to be too close to the residential area, and if it is large enough, I worry that it will take away from the natural beauty and aesthetic of the area. Otherwise good!
- No. 19 St is a designate bike route but is extremely steep. This is the City's opportunity to have a switchback MUP to allow bikes and people walking to have an easier way up this big hill.
- I have serious concerns about this design. This is a NATURAL area dog park that does not require gathering points. The gathering point may be used by people at night which will be noisy. Construction will affect our lane, be noisy, and is needless cost.
- How is the slough/mud pit in the middle of the park being addressed? Can drainage be improved? Add better fencing between park & back alley
- This dog park does NOT need "improving" save the tax dollars for safety. Lights would be nice but most dog owners already bring head lamps and glowing leashes.
- Local children use this hill for tobogganing in the winter, extending the users of the park. Will the sandstone retaining wall at the bottom create a safety hazard? What other toboggan options are within walking distance, not across a busy road?
- plans are overdeveloping it reduce area for dog park so its accessible to all people - not just dog owners no sign no stair case no paved paths
- To keep people only on the new trails, you'll need more. The park is small, so visitors on each visit crisscross and do laps of it. So you need two diagonal paths from corner to corner, and another straight up/down at western end. Also, ideally no stairs.

- I don't see any provision for parking for visitors from other neighbourhoods. Fitness stairs and off-leash areas are popular in Calgary, and draw citizens in, many who drive. Some parking should be provided.
- I assume there is no plan to remove the willow, but please don't! It's so special. I really like the plan. I live backing on the the alley and the only thing I would add is a short attractive fence along the alley. I have been chased by dogs on my bike
- Really like all that is suggested. There will be a major improvement to this popular area. Garbage cans should be at all entrances.
- Yes - accessible paths from east to west on the lower and upper areas will be a significant improvement
- Love the gathering place look outs!
- Maybe. As long as it remains natural. No concrete. No steel.
- Plant more trees so this area is more like St. Andrew's natural area. Concern that this place will bring in more trouble as 10 AVE is already a place for party cars to stop at to get high on drugs.
- This design appears far more welcoming than what exists currently
- Your proposal of development is a step backwards. Leave it as is. Its historical _ Riley was a rancher- he liked the natural wide open , its unique - non replaceable, and its a natural area that should not be developed. The ideas wont improve
- No sign no lookout no stairs and reduce the space the dogs' go. It eliminates the park to many of us that want to and use to access it
- Leave it natural - fix the erosion, protect the big tree, reduce the off leash area to half so non dog owners can enjoy a magical place. The place is over run with dogs- distracted owners , and poop. It was nice when a walk run or bike without a dog chas
- I have some concern about the upgrades interfering with the main intent of the space as being an offleash dog park - would want some reassurances for this stakeholder group
- No specific information provided on the design of the stairs. How will they be kept clear in the winter?
- Yes
- I love the idea of improving this park! I think its very underutilized and could be a great asset to the community!
- Hi There - Please respond to xxxxxxxxx so I know you have received this feedback. Preservation of the Big Tree is a must! Please do not consider any "improvements" that would impact the area around this tree. A staircase nearby would ruin it.
- Hi There - Please respond to xxxxxxxxx so I know you have received this feedback. If the City wants to improve this area they should focus on stormwater drainage along 8th Ave towards 19th St. This has been mentioned many times with no action.
- Hi There - Please respond to xxxxxxxx so I know you have received this feedback. Why so few characters? The look-out deck and benches seem okay, but are not needed. The sign is an eyesore. Please don't pave the pathways.

- Hi There - Please respond to neil.fricke@gmail.com so I know you have received this feedback. This is an unnecessary project. The justifications for development are weak. The paths are fine. There is no need for a picnic table.
- Please do not use pavement/asphalt in any pathway or trail in this park.
- I support addition of stairs as indicated, to reduce erosion on that part of hill, but design doesn't address paths that cut across the slope elsewhere. Do not support proposed lookout: there is native prairie there & I don't support a fire pit as shown
- Proposed lookout in the NE corner and the realigned trail are in native prairie, with some rare species - should consider avoidance and a restoration plan. Will the undesignated trails be treated to manage erosion as well?
- This park is a gem and worth making accessible to more visitors, while keeping it's 'free' nature. This plan strikes a good balance & is worth implementing. The lookout is unreal, and the utility of the off leash led us to buy in the area.
- Yes, the design is great. Is there any possibility of enclosing or fencing in this off leash area as the back alley and surrounding streets pose a threat to dogs if they chase cars or other animals. I have been unable to take my dog there for these reason
- This does not meet improvement. The stairs are unnecessary as there is already sidewalks on either end of the park for those who can't safely walk up it. This park is used as a dog park and overdevelopment would ruin the natural overlook.
- I thought this area was designated a nature reserve. Bring back nature! There are over use issues here. Are you allowing parking at the east end of 9 Ave? I worry about the volume and speed of dog-walking cars that use 9 ave.
- Two potential improvements: 1) for benches / gathering areas, please be mindful of the difficulty in monitoring these sites, especially overnight. Want to ensure it does not facilitate any overnight stays. 2) please avoid any fire pits; grass fire risk
- Do not have stairs up from 19St use switchbacks or trail. **DO NOT PAVE ANYTHING IN THIS PARK.** Gravel trail with good drainage only. Keep our parks NATURAL.
- Need to have better signage for people to clean up after dogs! More garbage cans with bags for dogs. Benches in middle not top area. More trees added.
- Yes but would be awesome to have some trees and bushes available as well as a water fountain or mini pond for drinking (dog)
- We would like to suggest one small section that has a path separated by fencing, for those who want to use the space but are afraid of dogs (maintaining maximum off leash space though - it is heavily used by the neighbourhood and should stay!)
- Yes
- I support this plan esp with stairs. Need to be aware of illegal activity that occurs nearby. Residents and offleash dogs love this area.
- Hello. Please spend less on industrializing the park, and more on trees and bushes to make it more of a park and reduce erosion!
- I like it. Would also suggest garbage can at the top east side of the hill

Grashopper Hill Off-Leash Improvements

Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard

May 2022

- Looks good
- Please ensure parking is taken care of and or signs for 2 hour only also plowing of 10th Street which is very very steep is needed as cars get stuck and have issues in winter. As this would greatly increase traffic
- Can this area be fenced in?
- We desperately need a dog-proof fence around the park. Dogs run into the residential areas all the time and it is a safety risk to residents. We also need much better monitoring of dogs off-leash outside of the park for the same reason. Thank you.
- YEs - I would not be thrilled to see a firepit (proposed look out 3) as grasshopper hill is dry. Please also include substantial garbage options for all the doggie bags.
- Pls do not disturb the large Willow tree and root system on the east side of park. Pavement could be slippery on trail, perhaps a stable small gravel surface for better traction for walking.
- Nice park for walking
- Garbage, loitering, late night "parties", invasion of privacy to properties, parking for people that will use this space (where will this be?) . This will become the new crescent road without the cars and you , the city , are responsible
- The trial and the benches are good but the lookout destroys the natural look of the park. With addition of the benches there is really no need to disturb the nature and add a lookout.
- Looks good to me.
- I live next door, this looks awesome! The stairs will be super helpful come winter when things get icy.
- I hike the area often and feel it is fine the way it is. It is a dog park for dogs. Why do we need a fire pit as it will be a potential hazard. If you feel improvements are essential please include seating at the bottom and the top of the hill.
- As a resident on 8th avenue, I am EXTREMELY annoyed with the idea of a lookout being placed behind my property that will look into my bedroom. We have enough problems trying to maintain privacy and this is a massive misstep.
- After dealing with security issues, loitering and garbage issues back near our old home by Crescent road, I am wondering who plans on dealing with these issues? This area could turn out to be the same as that area - a battle between residents and public
- Just leave it alone!!!! This isn't beneficial or needed.
- If you want to make it a recreational facility, better out up gates that get locked at night and guards. Otherwise parties, drugs, crime, constant police calls.
- Me no safe in park with drugs. Don't make park hangout for needles.
- Complete waste of tax money. grasshopper hill has been fine for 50 years. It'll be fine for another 50.
- Leave grasshopper hill as is. Residents don't need more crime, traffic and late night drug usage in the park.
- Better budget for a full time police presence. Drugs and parties all the time. We back onto this park and will simply have to call the police every night. Waste of money start to finish.

- Adding in benches will make this area of the city seem extremely unnatural, and will turn it into a party place with many privacy concerns, and unwanted noise for all members of the community.
- Very exciting! My only recommendation is to fence the perimeter of the off-leash area, especially being so close to busy 19th St. My dog almost got hit by a car on 19th St and it can easily happen while utilizing the off-leash area. Excited though :)
- Leave natural. Stop wasting tax money on projects that will cause more issues than it solves.
- Providing "lookout" areas and benches will only encourage additional drug and party use on top of that already ongoing. This in turn creates garbage, noise concerns for the briar crescent residents, security issues and privacy issues. Leave natural.
- 8 ave NW is a main entrance to this park from the south and is in bad shape yet there seem to be no improvements at this critical node. Also, this neighborhood needs a fenced in space for dog owners and the bottom of the hill is best location. Add a fence
- Please incorporate native grasses and pollinator-friendly plants into the landscaping design.
- The park has a black mud pit in centre- perhaps a spring- that really should be cleaned up. It's terrible when the dogs get into it
- There is a natural diagonal path in the park which would be nice to see as a formal trail.
- thank you for spending time and tax dollars on this well enjoyed space
- more shady benches
- Not sure about mixing an off leash area with a fire pit (image 3)??? Please insure ample dog waste garbages available
- Not sure picnic table on left is needed. Stairs from top down will likely not get used and people will just develop new trails as dogs and stairs don't work great which is primary use of hill. If accessibility is goal then need both.
- Pitbulls and Middle aged male cyclists: The only "people" who matter to dimwit Calgary planners. Keep wasting taxpayer money. I'm heading for small-town BC.
- this is a nice design, but why is it in an engagement called "Kensington Area" - Riley would be a nice collective for Hillhurst-Sunnyside and West Hillhurst and HounsfieldHeights-BriarHill... you bother a lot of people with the continued emphasis on H-S
- I would like to suggest to include an additional trail on the west side of the park between the lower and upper proposed trails as to create a "loop". Currently dog walkers mostly walk their dogs according to this loop.
- This is an ideal plan for this green space.
- Yes, this meets the goals. Excited to see these improvements come to life.
- Yes
- A figure eight path design riding at a soft angle would allow for an infinite walk with easier ride and less erosion (eg sandy beach trails to Britannia are all too steep)
- Yes
- Yes...how about putting your \$\$\$ into fixing and re-opening the closed pathway on the base of the bluff at the east end of Sunnyside first? AND FINISHING THE BOW TO BLUFF TRIANGLE PARKS FIRST? Both areas are completely unusable parkin the current state.

- Love it but maybe some more picnic tables? I feel the aim of public parks should be to make cool gathering spots in the summer as opposed to just another trail
- This doesn't resonate with me. I've spent a lot of time here with dog and it's just fine how it is
- Meets the goals that were stated
- ok
- No 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 dog crap park
- Love this!
- I would suggest adding an additional pathway on the west end between the 19th and 9ave as many who walk in a circle will wear this path. Additionally a path on the angle to replace the current path. Pls ensure garbage at all 4 corners, including N 19St
- The back alley behind 7th Ave gets beat up now with traffic from the park. Always rutted and potholed. Park improvements will increase traffic - alley paving and parking need to be considered in design.
- There appears to be only one way to climb/descend the hill? The majority of users walk in a circular direction. Removing this option will restrict park use. Seating at lookouts desirable. Play enhancements around the tree would be well used.
- This is a very popular dog park. Whatever you do please don't cut down the beautiful big tree. Kids love playing on it. The lookouts and picnic tables are a great idea.
- No. I do not support stairs in this park. Lookouts and seating are great. Path trail of natural materials (mulch) would be wonderful, but paved pathways would drastically change the park. This is a dog park- increased bicycle traffic is dangerous to all.
- Please keep ongoing maintenance and operating costs top of mind in the design.
- What about a switch back path instead of stairs? Being off leash many dogs won't go up the stairs so it will be hard for owners to pick up after dogs. Plus stairs don't consider strollers/wheelchairs
- I strongly suggested that the trail surface is a small gravel base and not pavement. I feel pavement would become to slippery in winter. I also feel it would be terrible if any damage were done to the large willow tree or root system during construction!
- Please add some lighting so people can take their dogs to the park after dark (especially in winter)
- More benches and dog waste disposal bins near entrances to trails.
- The stairs are a terrible idea. They rarely if ever are sized to a natural walking gait and throughout the city you can see people just walk beside them therefore accomplishing nothing but wasting taxpayers money.
- Anything here is an improvement
- Picnic table and/or benches at the bottom would encourage more neighbourhood socializing. A designated and maintained area for winter tobogganning would improve safety as kids toboggan there anyway.



Grasshopper Hill Off-Leash Improvements

Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard

May 2022

- I am not opposed to what is proposed but question the value add for the \$\$ spent. Do we need trails & stairs? Will dog owners restrict their movements to the trails... not likely given the network of other trails that will still exist.
- Please don't pave the trails. Lots of people use this park because it is in a natural state. The attraction is that the pathways are single track. The trails are used by trail runners and mountain bikers.
- I don't understand why wooden staircases are needed in that dog park. I thought that park was a remnant of the old prairies and was not to be developed. Doesn't that park belong to the federal land reserve?
- I am a resident of West Hillhurst. This plan does not meet my needs. A bike path through the park is an idiotic idea because the path will not link to any other. Wide pedestrian paths are needed because that is what the park is used for, walking dogs.
- Specific areas should be fenced off to allow for undisturbed growth of native species and support wildlife. Now that there are so many park users, these areas are being destroyed. Ultimately, a fence is needed on the west as 19th st speed too fast on hill
- Seems like a good design, usable, I like the stairs and lookouts and seating spaces
- Accessing Grasshopper Hill from east side requires a dangerous crossing of 19 St NW. Need better pedestrian crossing if 19 St NW nearby.
- I think a dog water fountain would be an amazing addition as this is mainly a dog park. Please leave a bike trail as kids love to bike here.
- I use this park daily and am in favor of the improvements. Would like to see park identification signage, an additional trash can at ne corner, and additional trees planted.
- I like the design. It is crucial we don't lose or hurt the trees beside the stairs. We must also have seating at the bottom path for seniors and disabled people who can't make it to the top. A water fountain would be nice, too. I live closely.
- I am a West Hillhurst resident. I do not support a cement trail, stairs and ruining the natural landscape of this hill. I would support benches at the bottom and top of the hill for residents to rest.
- Looks good. Need bike parking.
-