



# South Bow Pathway and Pumphouse Park

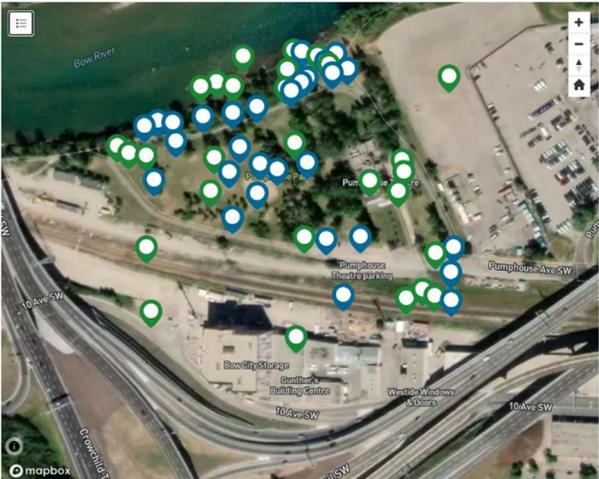
Report Back: What We Heard  
October 2021

## Project overview

On May 25, 2020, Council approved the [Established Area Growth and Change Strategy](#) and committed funding for public realm improvement projects within established areas seeing the pressures of redevelopment to the greatest degree. This work identified the South Bow Pathway and Pumphouse Park as an opportunity to increase activity and mobility in the area and create a comfortable park to host everything from intimate private gatherings to larger community events. It will also provide new connections to the Bow River Pathway system for the inner-city communities of Sunalta, Hillhurst and Scarboro, and cycle track users.

## Engagement overview

Engagement took place between August 25, 2021 and September 13, 2021. Due to COVID-19-related conditions, public engagement was done online. Two pages were created on the Engage Portal for this project: (1) a page with simplified questions and information that could be accessed using a QR code on signage within Pumphouse Park and (2) a webpage with more information about the project with the opportunity to provide input through a “social map” as well as through questions about use and ideas for the park.



The social mapping allowed participants to drop annotated pins on an ariel map of the Pumphouse Park area and provide their input through comments directly on the map. Apart from comments that contained personal information or offensive language, all comments were visible to all visitors to the page.

The opportunity to participate was promoted using social media advertising and local news coverage. There were 657 visits to the engage portals for this project; 65 pins were dropped on the map and 88 provided input though questions about the park.

## What we asked

### Primary Portal Page Questions and Social Map

As described above, the public was asked drop pins on a satellite image of Pumphouse Park; the pins were colour coded for two different comment categories:

- Blue - Recent experiences. A spot used for a past event or activity you've enjoyed in Pumphouse Park
- Green - Potential new uses. A spot you would like to see used for new activities or events



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1. Have you been to Pumphouse Park for an activity or an event before today?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not sure
  
2. What activities were you doing in Pumphouse Park last time you were there?
  - Picnic
  - Biking
  - Dog walking
  - Volleyball
  - Cross-country skiing
  - Kite flying
  - Reading, art
  - Wheeling (wheelchair, scooter)
  - Frisbee
  - Group or class (Scouts, boot camp)
  - Meditating, yoga
  - Party or private event
  - Casual game (ball, soccer, hackysack)
  - Relaxing, enjoying nature
  - Jogging
  - Going for a walk
  - Playing in the snow
  - A rest stop when using the pathway
  - Public event
  - City of Calgary festival or event
  - Something else
  
3. What programs or activities would you like to see in this park?
  - Fitness/play equipment
  - Open space
  - Festivals and events
  - Picnic areas
  - Something else
  
4. What do you like about the Pumphouse Park space?
5. What would you like to change about the Pumphouse Park space?



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## Onsite engagement questions access by QR Code

1. How did you get to Pumphouse Park today?

(Choose all that apply.)

- Bike
- Car
- Ride Share
- e-scooter
- Walk
- Bus
- C-Train
- Something else

2. Who are you with today?

- Self only
- Partner
- Family, children
- Friends
- Someone else

3. Have you been to Pumphouse Park for an event/activity before today?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

4. What was the event/activity?

5. What activities are you doing in Pumphouse Park right now?

- Picnic
- Biking
- Dog walking
- Volleyball
- Kite flying
- Reading, art
- Wheeling (wheelchair, scooter)
- Frisbee
- Party or private event
- Relaxing, enjoying nature
- Jogging
- Going for a walk
- Public event
- City of Calgary festival or event
- Something else



6. What programs or activities would you like to see in this park? (Choose all that apply)
- Fitness/play equipment
  - Open space
  - Festivals and events
  - Picnic areas
  - Something else
7. Do you feel comfortable in this park?
8. Do you like the furniture in the park?
9. What do you like about the Pumphouse Park space?

## What we heard

Response to the engagement was overwhelmingly positive, showing a personal investment in the park as well as the surrounding areas. Users ranged from recreational walkers and joggers, nature lovers, commuting cyclists, picnickers, and event attendees. In terms of future uses for the park, there was a slight division between athletics and performances, and open greenspace. A few participants had concerns about overnight campers and vagrants. All comments are included verbatim at the end of this report.

### Social Map: Recent Experiences, Potential New Uses Locations of Recent Experiences

As shown, the largest cluster of pins appears along the river pathway. While many used this engagement activity to point out pressure points, repairs and dangers, a number shared a memory or detail about their experience and the meaning it had for them.

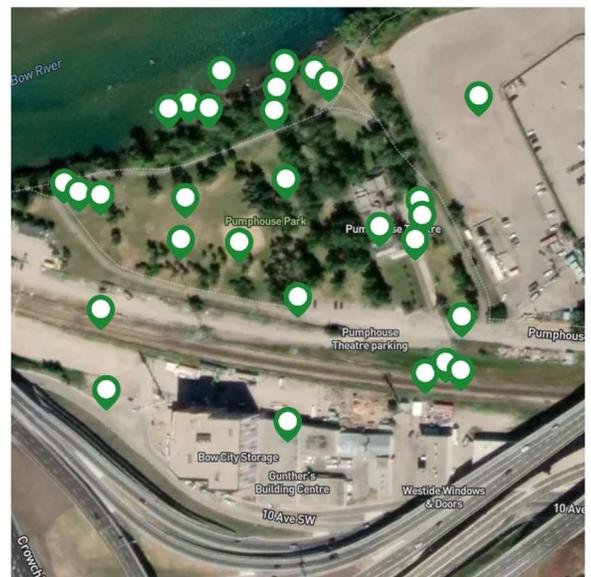
The project team is reviewing the location-specific concerns reported by park users



Clusters	Sample Comments
Along the paths and shortcuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coming from the west the paved bike path turns to gravel with potholes, please pave this section.</li> <li>– The interseciton at crowchild bridge underpass needs improvements also. The path is narrow and the turns to tight.</li> </ul>
Along the river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Used to spend a lot of time at this location (when the cement remains of the old pumphouse were still here). The cement wall extended into the river and provided a great view of the sunset (and was a fun place to people watch and have quick conversations with anyone rafting). There was also a pretty awesome swimming hole here (the water was deep!) :)</li> <li>– We live within walking distance and often use this park and pathway system as a spot to rest, play and explore. We spend a lot of time west of the Crowchild bridge with our children, playing by the river and in the forest.</li> </ul>
In the open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Like using this field for outdoor activities like dancing, frisbee</li> <li>– I've been to 2 amazing festivals in this park: Circle the Wagons (2015) and Brewery and the Beast (a few years in a row) (...)</li> </ul>
Near the parking and entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recently saw theatre outside at Pumphouse. Train noise made it challenging. Adding a sound barrier along the tracks would make it more usable for outdoor events at Pumphouse Theatre.</li> <li>– Access to the rest of Sunalta and the future cycle track extension is poor.</li> </ul>

### Locations for Potential New Uses

As shown, the largest cluster of pins identified locations for potential river access, access points and improvement to the areas around the theater, with a scattering for park amenities.



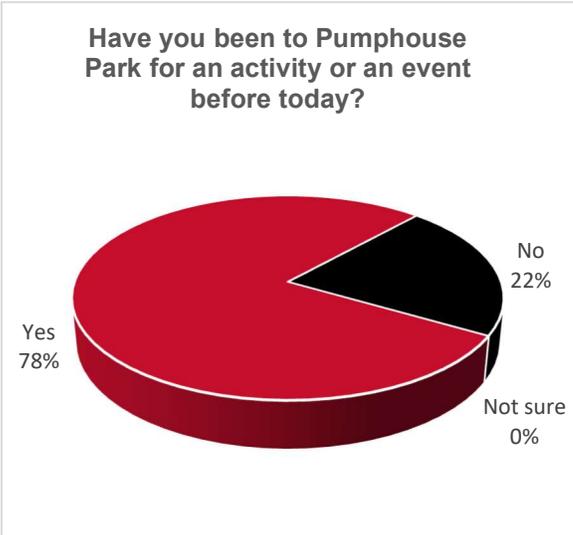
Clusters	Sample Comments
River access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A landscaped boat launch, as well viewpoint would be awesome here. Great spot to view sunsets or those on the river floating.</li> <li>– Water access could be transformative for activating this park. While new infrastructure in this area would be amazing, even a simple, accessible rock beach would be a welcome addition.</li> </ul>

Points of access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Please consider extending this pathway through the Pumphouse parking lot and along the southern side of the road (abutting the rail fence line) as a</li> </ul>
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	<p>pedestrian/cyclist connection to Sunalta, ideally connecting to the 12th Avenue Cycle Track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We need a safer cycle/pedestrian connection to the Sunalta c-train station. Right now the narrow sidewalk can barely support two people, anybody on a bike is doomed. Focusing on active connections to train stations needs to be more of a city priority</li> </ul>
Activities around Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At one point in the past 10 years there was discussion about adding a licensed patio here. What happened. And why not.</li> <li>- Consider adding signage that explains the historical significance of the pumphouse.</li> </ul>
Park amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to rehabilitate a corridor of the trails with native species that will improve the health of the river.</li> <li>- More seating all over this park. Picnic tables, benches etc to enjoy the beautiful view</li> </ul>

### Questionnaires

For ease of reading, input collected using the page accessed through a QR code onsite in the park and input collected through the more extensive Engage Portal page have been consolidated unless noted.



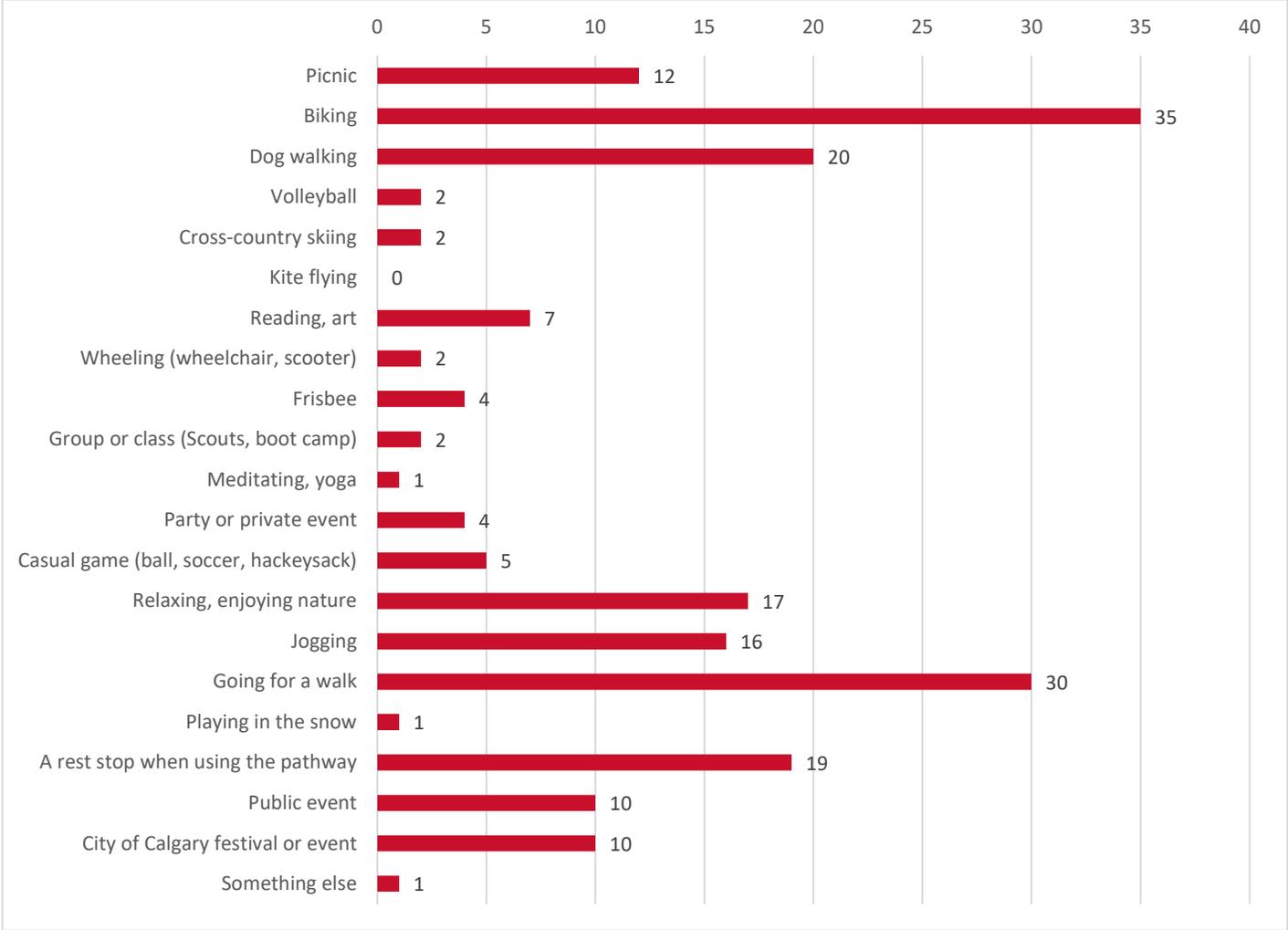


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## What activities were you doing in Pumphouse Park last time you were there? (Choose all that apply)

A total of 65 participants responded in the portal engagement and 2 responded to the onsite opportunity:



As shown, the question above allowed participants to add activities if there was Something Else; the activity offered was "Attending the theatre".

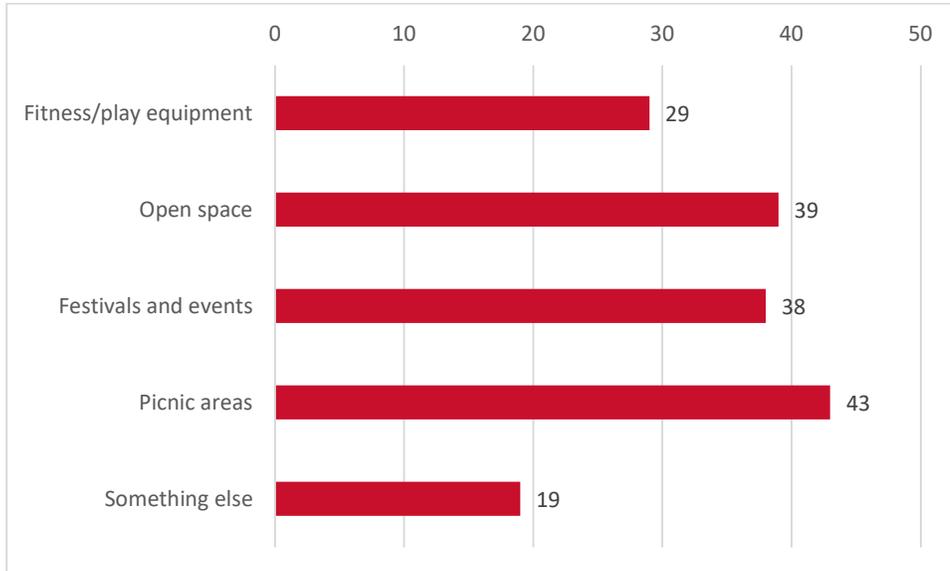
Two additional questions were asked of participants who provided input in the park, specifically how they got to the park and who they were with; two people in the park responded and indicated they had walked or driven, and were on their own or with their partner.



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## What programs or activities would you like to see in this park?



Themes for “something else”: using the park for river access for boats, canoes, kayaks, or rafts; enhancing it as a natural area for native plants, flowers, and pollinators; using the park for disc golf or a bike park

## What do you like about the Pumphouse Park space?

This question produced three major themes: connectivity, hidden gem, and variety of users.

What do you like?	Comment
The park is connection to the pathway along the river for neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– River access walking distance from home. We like walking our dog here since it's not too busy. River pathway (biking, jogging). Sunsets!</li> <li>– Its accessible to the river pathway, secluded away from houses, beautiful setting</li> <li>– I like the connection to the river - I live in Sunalta so it's much nicer than connecting by 14th street</li> </ul>
It is a hidden gem in the city, an oasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– It's like a little hidden gem in the middle of the city.</li> <li>– The hills, sculptures, location beside the river and my kids like the beach volleyball sand. Downtown oasis.</li> <li>– Beautiful natural green area with lovely trees and quiet away from the noise in many places along the river. Just a great natural space!</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is close to home (Sunalta) yet gives the feeling of openness and nature with the greenery and river.</li> </ul>
<p>The park meets the needs of different kinds of users and uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inner city location - accessible to cyclists, walkers and joggers - near a historic theatre. Near the river.</li> <li>- It is a beautiful area that is uniquely positioned to hold events and not bother anyone. Great connectivity to transit and residential</li> <li>- It's beautiful and a quiet space. The off leash dog park area that allows for water access for the dogs.</li> <li>- Rest stop along trail, good destination for biking or walking after work</li> <li>- Old trees, new fire pits, picnic tables, off leash area and access to river</li> </ul>

## What would you like to change about the Pumphouse Park space?

This question produced four major themes that centre around pathways, amenities, events, and environment. Some comments with multiple points have been shortened with ellipses to highlight a theme; the full comment appears in the verbatim section.

Theme	Comment
<p>Improvements and attention to the pathways, wayfinding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I would update the pathways, add more art, and create more wayfinding with directional art and signage.</li> <li>- Add more pathway capacity and separate out the pedestrians from the cyclists. Busy area for active transportation because of popularity of river pathway and Crowchild bridge right there.</li> <li>- The Bow River pathway is too narrow and dangerous with cyclists going too fast and not warning pedestrians when they pass, often too closely.</li> </ul>
<p>More park amenities to attract users and enrich their experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More seating, public bathrooms, accessibility for mobility impaired people plus wayfinding for blind and visually impaired</li> <li>- Improved lighting, parking, seating and washrooms</li> <li>- (...) Picnic tables, fire pits, add info/displays about history of site, past remediation efforts and current groundwater monitoring (...)</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We'd love to be able to access the river here so tgsf my kids can throw rocks in the river.</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities to attend events and performances in the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Let's capitalize on the fact that this park is located next door to Calgary's historic Pumphouse Theatre. Embrace the arts and add an outdoor amphitheatre. This space can be used for concerts, live theatre performances, movies in the park and more.</li> <li>- Make this event space. Lots of space and few neighbours</li> <li>- It would be lovely if it was a little more known and used - especially since it may draw some attention to the hard work of the theatre companies that work in the theatres. Balanced use, of course, so the green space stays green and beautiful.</li> </ul>
<p>See more care of the park and preserve opportunities to enjoy natural elements and habitats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More frequent garbage cleanup.</li> <li>- There is sufficient space here to re-naturalize the area. Get rid of the grass and plant some native species. Good education opportunity.</li> <li>- NOTHING! Please just leave it as it is other than maybe placing some more adirondack chairs there. We do not need to make it an active, noisy area. I love sitting there listening to the birds and the osprey during summer. No more festival space!!!!</li> </ul>

## Next steps

The input gathered from this engagement will be used to identify preferences and patterns to help the project team create a park space that meets the needs of current and future users. Over the next few months, the project team will continue to study the site and observe how people use the park. As part of Phase 2 of the engagement process, we will share the developed concepts and gather input from citizens on the preferred design elements for the park.