



Braeside Playspace Optimization

Report Back: What We Heard

November 2022

Project overview

Calgary's [playgrounds](#) are great places for Calgarians of all ages to relax and play. The City maintains more than 1,100 playgrounds.

As playground equipment ages and safety standards change, The City aims to reimagine these green spaces to ensure they remain vibrant community hubs that encourage connection and recreation for all ages. Parks works with residents, community associations and other interested parties to discuss options for reimagining these play spaces.

Safety for park visitors is our priority, and each playground is inspected seven times a year to ensure [Canada Safety Association](#) guidelines are met. Parks works with residents, community associations and other interested parties to discuss options prior to the lifecycle replacement.

Optimization Process

When evaluating the best possible use for playground space that is up for lifecycle, the following factors are considered:

1. Available footprint in conjunction with budget - what space is available to install/replace play structure
2. Age-appropriate equipment - generally the 5-12 years range is targeted as being most widely usable (both in terms of range and functionality) but does require a larger footprint to be functional
3. Proximity of other playgrounds in the area - benchmark goal for Calgary is 5 playgrounds for every 1,000 kids under 12
4. Options for other opportunities - adult based play options, enhanced green space amenities (seating etc.), nature and naturalized options
5. Demographics of the community - are the current spaces most suited to the entirety of the community

When a space is transformed with new equipment and use options, they can become more welcoming to a broader base of community residents and become a location to be enjoyed by all. Green space is highly valued by Calgarians of all ages.



Braeside Playspace Optimization

Report Back: What We Heard

November 2022

It is key to note that the engagement process is not designed as a voting process but rather to gather collective and balanced input to gauge response to a project, it is reflective in nature. The feedback received is used to shape the project and to provide additional information that addresses that feedback.

Engagement overview

For all areas of the city, The City of Calgary has the goal of 200 kids for each playground. Braeside is currently at 120 kids per playground.

To ensure the greatest utilization of area playgrounds, The City is proposing removing two smaller playgrounds and allocating funds to make two other, more heavily used playgrounds larger and updated.

The two proposed playgrounds to be removed, as noted on the map below, are in close proximity to each other and the school playground. The two playgrounds to be upgraded (see map below) are both heavily used and will be expanded to better serve the community.

The City is asking residents to provide input about which features they would like to see in the upgraded playgrounds, with work commencing in 2023.

A portal page (<https://engage.calgary.ca/playspace-optimization>) was open for input from September 9th through October 19th, 2022. The page was designed to communicate project objectives and receive feedback on the planning process and gather comments from community. A map was also provided to show the location of the specific playground locations along with additional markers noting the location of other playgrounds in the community.

What We Asked

Based on getting a sense of how much use/awareness of the locations there was within the community: **Have you visited any of these locations?**

We also looked to gather any added “local” knowledge about the spaces: **As a resident of the area can you tell us anything we may not know about these spaces?**

A check in on if the planning process provided value: **Given the information provided can you see the value in our planning process?**



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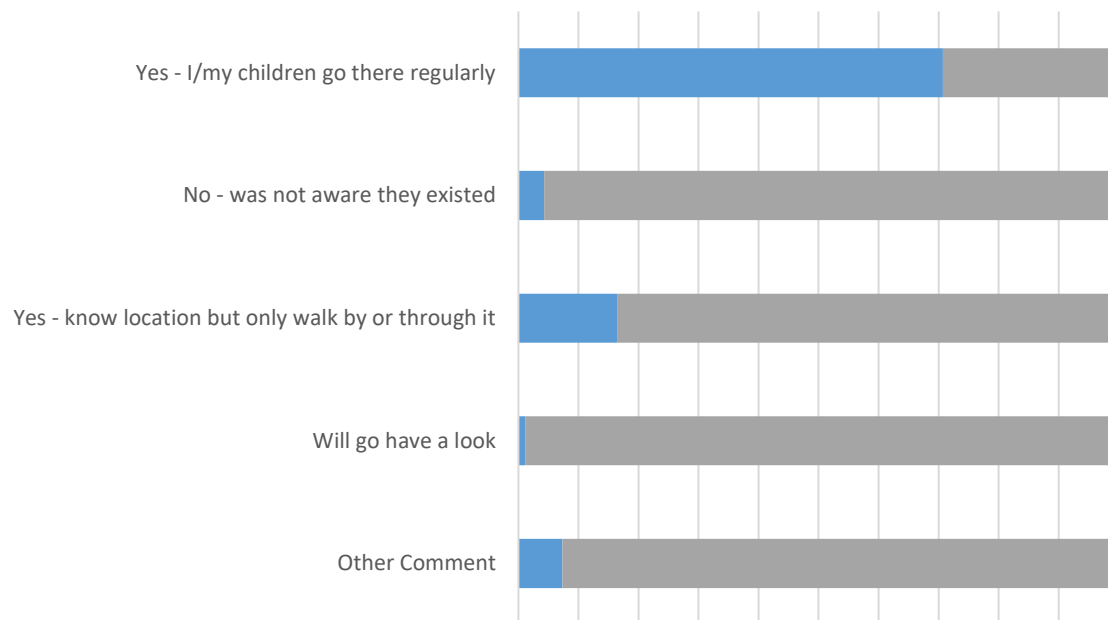
November 2022

What we heard

The following is a summary of the comments received, responses have been categorized into overarching themes to provide a summary of what we heard. Supporting verbatim comments are provided (these are not altered for spelling or grammar and presented as received). Full verbatim of responses are also provided by clicking the link, to provide full transparency of comments received.

Shows the question type and response rate. Provided to show the number of responses the report is reflective of, meant to show distribution and not to seen as voting as comments/responses received could represent a mix of feedback.

Have you visited any of these locations? [Select Box](#) | Skipped: 1 | Answered: 164 (99.4%)



Other comments reflected the following themes: (for full verbatim comments [click here](#))

Theme	Supporting Verbatim Comment
Age limited use:	My kids played at Braeside Dr playground when they were younger but it wasn't much fun for them as they got older.
Getting Current use:	I always walk through the park and see young families enjoying the sun and the park.



Braeside Playspace Optimization

Report Back: What We Heard

November 2022

Needing updgrade/update:	Visit the one on Brookpark Drive every day. Would be nice to see it update. The old playground equipment is almost dangerous it's so old
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As a resident of the area can you tell us anything we may not know about these spaces?

Long Text | Skipped: 36 | Answered: 129 (78.2%)

Comments reflected the following themes: (for full verbatim comments [click here](#))

Theme	Supporting Verbatim Comment
Community Gathering Space:	<p>Make us spaces that we can connect in as community -- for both families and kids and friends -- these smaller playgrounds are ugly and old -- take them out and update the others!</p> <p>The Brackenridge playground is popular among young families in our neighbourhood as the school playground is often too busy or too advanced for children under five. I regularly meet other parents with young children there. Furthermore, if you remove the playground from that greenspace, it has no other value to the community. I do agree you do not need this playground and the one on Bradbury. The greenspace on Bradbury is much larger and is better suited to transformation into other uses.</p> <p>I think you Need to check the demographics of the people moving into the neighborhood including rentals. The majority of these people are young families and will be using these areas. Don't close all these parks but rather renovate them or offer something different.</p>
No change:	<p>There are many young families in this community who use the playgrounds regularly even though they are old. If this was a new community you wouldn't be taking out playgrounds. Please leave them for families to enjoy</p> <p>This playground has seen a large influx of children playing in it as more families with young children move into the community. If the equipment is removed the children around this playground will no longer have the ability to go to the playground on their own, independently as they can do now.</p>



Braeside Playspace Optimization

Report Back: What We Heard

November 2022

	Our Grandchildren utilize each of the four locations in Braeside and would benefit with the four locations remaining as active playground parks.
Maintenance/Condition Concerns:	<p>Very dirty rocks with garbage, dust and cigarette butts. Would be great if it could be redone with rubber. Other popular playgrounds have lots of climbing and rope options which would be appreciated if installed here too.</p> <p>The facilities are great although definitely showing their age. Would be great if the infrastructure would be removed and replaced</p> <p>The 2 parks that have been chosen for replacement are perfect to do so with. The other 2 would be better as greenspaces if necessary until such time as they can have their playgrounds replaced.</p>
Concern over loss of park space:	<p>They add charm and character to the neighbourhood. Adding more condos or whatever the city plans to do, would definitely take away from our neighbourhood. Young families are moving in because they do want to have parks near by ... plus not living in the squishy homes the city is building in the new neighbourhoods.</p> <p>they enhance the neighbourhood, was a primary reason for buying in this area. if the parks are removed what happens to the land, subdivided for housing, that would be detrimental to the area</p> <p>The green spaces and play spaces are used very often, to remove them is shortsighted as mostly new, young families are moving in to this area to purchase an older home to update in order to grow or start their families. There is no future use land proposal either and home owners are not happy with no idea of what the future land use possibly entails.</p>
Community demographics:	These parks are used not just by resident children, but also by grandchildren when kids return visit their longterm resident parents. We live by the playground on Bradbury- it's regularly used by in this manner. These small parks are great for autistic kids and kids with anxiety...they struggle with the bigger, louder, and busier parks. What if you added some adult park equipment to Bradbury for the seniors to use for exercise?



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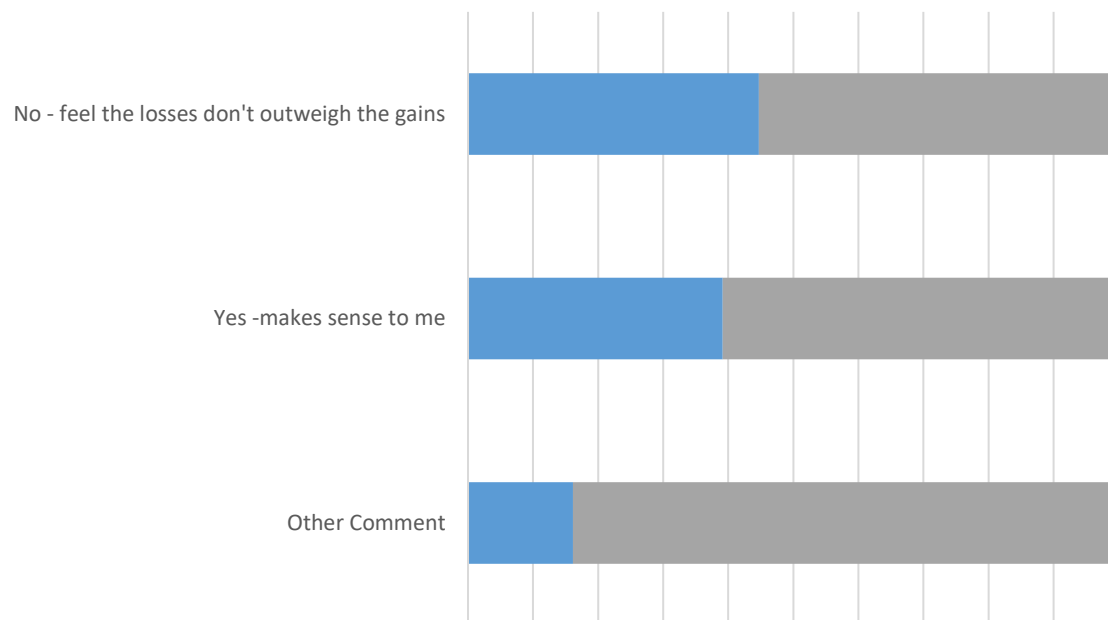
Report Back: What We Heard

November 2022

	<p>They are outdated. Many new families moved into area past 10 years so our parks are used more now.</p> <p>We are at the Bradbury drive/brazeau park almost every day as are a lot of young families in the area. It is a open and sunny park and the kids use it for tobogganing in the winter. If anything we always thought it would be a great place to ADD an outdoor rink to (think the addition at mackenzie lake) or to add/extend the playground. Maybe even tennis courts or lawn bowling.</p>
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Given the information provided can you see the value in our planning process?

Select Box | Skipped: 4 | Answered: 161 (97.6%)



Other comments reflected the following themes: (for full verbatim comments [click here](#))

Themes	Supporting Verbatim Comment
Alternate suggested use:	I support the changes and would love to see the spaces where removal is happening be enhanced as well. Bocce court? Netted soccer field? Labyrinth?



Braeside Playspace Optimization

Report Back: What We Heard

November 2022

	Play parks are extremely expensive and are very limited in usage to able bodied 0-12year olds. We prefer to see spaces that are for everyone.
Other location considerations:	<p>I feel the park worth upgrading is the one more centrally located to the school. The school's playground is 22years old....not modern. This would mean everyone would have a similar distance to walk away from busy intersections and accessible crosswalks.</p> <p>Look at the location of Bradbury drive and the field. Lots of opportunity!</p>
No loss of playground:	<p>No value in removing playgrounds. We have more and more young families moving in that will need these playgrounds. Value in updating absolutely!</p> <p>I think enhancing all of the play areas would be beneficial given the growing young population in Braeside.</p>

Engagement Summary:

In review of the overall responses received and emerging themes it would indicate that the community does highly value it's park spaces and the ability to use them. There was strong sentiment to the fact that most of the playspaces, although utilized, are in need of upgrades either in terms of overall condition or for expanded age ranges. A variance in response to the specific locations seemed to pertain to a discrepancy over large spaces vs smaller space use and closeness to their residence. One concern that did emerge which is not a part of the optimization program is comments over park spaces being lost as a result of these proposed changes which identifies the potential need for enhanced messaging that green space will not be lost, only reimaged.

As noted above the engagement process is designed to gather a balanced and collective input that can assessed and addressed in moving forward with the project. The public input is a key component in the overall equation in planning and development of public space but also must consider many factors including feasibility, needs assessment and budget in alignment with playspace optimization. We will continue to work with community building on this feedback and playspace optimization.