



St. John's Park Redevelopment Master Plan
Public Engagement Report



Prepared by
HTFC Planning & Design
October 2017

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1.0 Introduction

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of St. John's Park in 2018, the City of Winnipeg (the City) commissioned a redevelopment master planning exercise to ensure that the park continues to meet the needs of the community.

The study consists of a 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED) analysis to determine if there is need for improvements for public safety. An inventory of all park features and their general condition are documented and mapped. The inventory includes buildings, pathways, active transportation links, trees and gardens, play structures, sports facilities, lighting, and signage.

An interpretive feature is in design to tell the story of the early days of the City of Winnipeg's park planning and the history of St. John's Park. It will be similar to those planned for Central Park and Fort Rouge Park that are also celebrating a 125th anniversary in 2018. The interpretive feature will be a three-sided, free-standing sculptural element with graphic panels describing the evolution of the first Winnipeg parks and history specific to St. John's Park. The interpretive signage will be situated at a highly visited location within the park.

There is an interested community group looking to develop a healing forest within the park. The group has some initial funding and preliminary plans. Selecting the potential site location of the healing forest is one component being considered in the master plan.

Through the City's Parks and Recreation Enhancement Fund, \$340,000 was allocated to develop a master plan and to execute the first phase of the park's redevelopment.

The master plan will serve as a guide for future decision-making and park investment. It details current assets and future opportunities, and presents an inventory on what existing features and amenities, noting where renewal or redevelopment is required. The plan provides maintenance recommendations and improvements for key park features based on analysis and community input. Detailed design will occur in late 2017 and construction timing is anticipated to take place in spring/summer 2018.

2.0 Stakeholder and Public Notification

Project Website

A project website was developed to provide key information about the St. John's Park Redevelopment Master Plan. Web content included project scope and goals, a site map, timeline, frequently asked questions, and information on the opportunities to get involved. Content was designed in accordance to the City of Winnipeg's Office of Public Engagement's standards – considering accessibility, readability, and completeness of materials. As the project advanced, surveys, updates and presentation materials were posted on this website for public viewing and comment. All printed materials that were circulated in the community are listed and linked to the project website. Cards promoting the project website were made available at stakeholder meetings and open house events.

Project Bulletins

An information bulletin was prepared to provide insight to interested individuals on what a healing forest is, where they have been installed in other locations across Canada, and why the study site is a suitable location for one. The healing forest is a community-led initiative and the preferred location for this project will be identified in the St. John's Park Master Plan for future development.

Social media (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) was leveraged by both the City and the consultant team to broadcast announcements about public engagement opportunities and updates concerning the project.

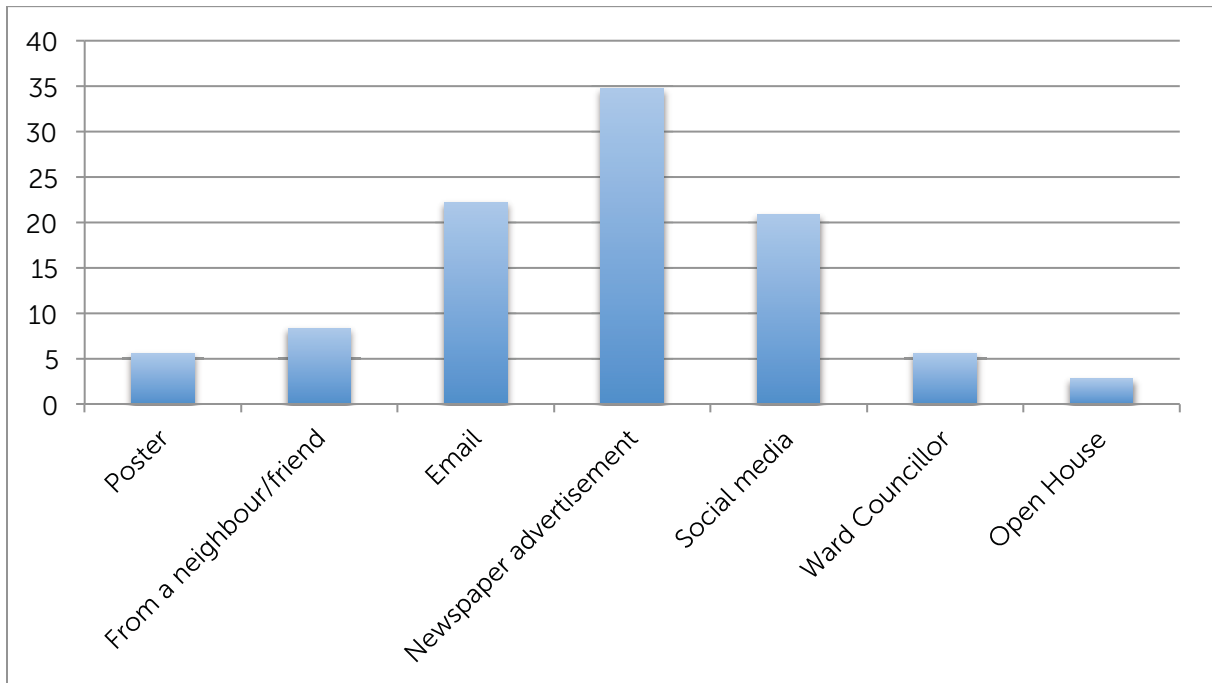
Media releases and public notices were also printed and distributed. The project was featured on CBC radio/television and in the Winnipeg Free Press.

Notification by the Numbers

- 4 emails sent to 46 stakeholder and park user groups
 - Workshop invitation sent on May 4, opened by 57.1% of stakeholders, and again on May 9, opened by 44% of stakeholders.
 - Open House invitation on June 12, 64.3% of stakeholders opened it, then again on June 21, when 51.1% of stakeholders opened it.
- 2 online surveys completed totalling 195 participant responses
 - May 1–31st, initial park use and issues survey received 110 responses
 - July 7, feedback to master plan concept received 85 responses
- 28 Open House attendees and 12 surveys completed in person
- 8 posters placed throughout the park, nearby businesses and study site
- 2 earned media stories
 - <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-st-johns-park-1.4174530>

- <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/times/Redevelopment-plan-for-St-Johns-park-starts-431620053.html>
- 4 promotional posts through the City of Winnipeg’s and consultant team’s social media accounts
- 5009 emailed subscribers of the City of Winnipeg Public Engagement Newsletter
- City of Winnipeg news release sent on June 15, 2017

Participants learned about the project primarily through a local area CanStar News ‘The Times’ newspaper advertisement, social media and direct emails.



While there was citywide participation in the open house online survey, a greater concentration of respondents was from within 1.5 kilometres of the study site. See appendix for map.

- 0.5 km = 17 respondents
- 1.0 km = 32 respondents
- 1.5 km = 40 respondents
- 2.0 km = 43 respondents

3.0 Site Visits

The consultant team visited St. John’s Park and the surrounding community to conduct an inventory of all park features and assets, as well as to document their general condition, inclusive of buildings, pathways, active transportation links, trees and gardens, play structures, sports facilities, and lighting and signage. A

representative from the Winnipeg Police Service met the consultant team in the park for a walk through to discuss improving safety and crime prevention. During the site visits, the consultant team engaged with City of Winnipeg park staff and users, informally asking them about their likes and dislikes of the park.

4.0 Stakeholder Interviews

From the outset of the study, a stakeholder list was developed by the project team, identifying the following groups:

- area stakeholders (residents associations and businesses);
- government representatives;
- community health and social agencies;
- neighbourhood school administration;
- neighbourhood churches and;
- recreation leaders
- City of Winnipeg departments.

Opportunities for engagement and notification channels were tailored for each stakeholder group and their varying level of interest and involvement, as described below.

The project team met with City staff in various departments to review the project's goals, provide feedback on future public engagement, and to share ideas for St. John's Park Redevelopment Master Plan.

A meeting with City of Winnipeg Parks staff (Park Superintendent and Area Technician), provided local knowledge and insight on existing site conditions, and helped to understand and anticipate the level of departmental support available for the maintenance and stewardship of the land – information relevant to the master plan's recommendations for future design improvements.

With enriched understanding of the study site achieved through one-on-one meetings with City staff, the consultant team contacted stakeholders and representatives from park user groups to participate in a workshop. City of Winnipeg parks, public works, community services departments and the area Councillor were also invited. This meeting provided an opportunity for stakeholders to provide commentary on how to best improve recreation and leisure options at the park, how to improve accessibility and address safety concerns, and how to embrace and celebrate cultural heritage. The meeting also helped to assess the proposed design's feasibility, to explore alignment and partnership opportunities with area stakeholders and service providers, and to identify ideas on best ways to achieve possible design. Participants also contributed additional stakeholder names and contacts to include in the initial park feedback survey. The workshop was held on May 11, 2017 in the St. John's Cathedral lower hall (located adjacent to the Park). See Appendices for a record of feedback received at the workshop.

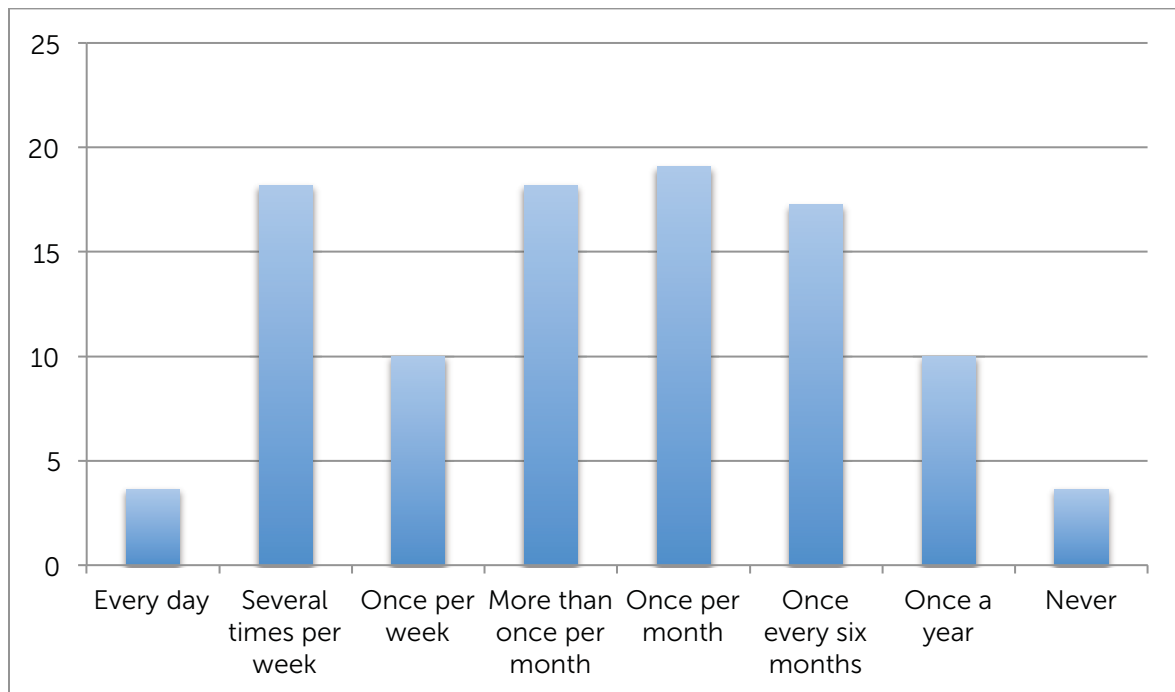
5.0 Online Survey

Two online surveys were conducted.

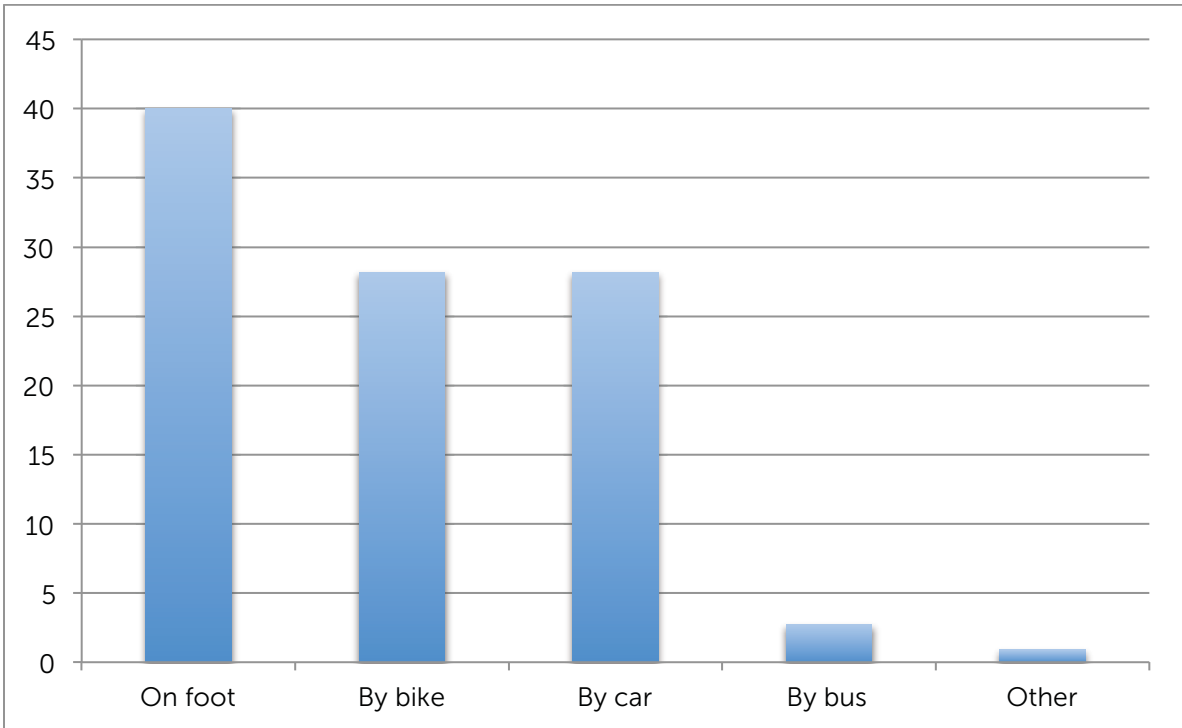
The first survey was conducted from May 18 – May 31, 2017. The purpose was to engage stakeholders and park user groups, asking for their insight before the open house. The survey asked about park utilization, transportation modes to the park and preferred activities, possible changes and improvements and participant demographics. One hundred and ten (110) individuals provided feedback. Their commentary helped provide design directions for the preliminary master plan concept.

The following is a summary of the feedback received as part of the May survey:

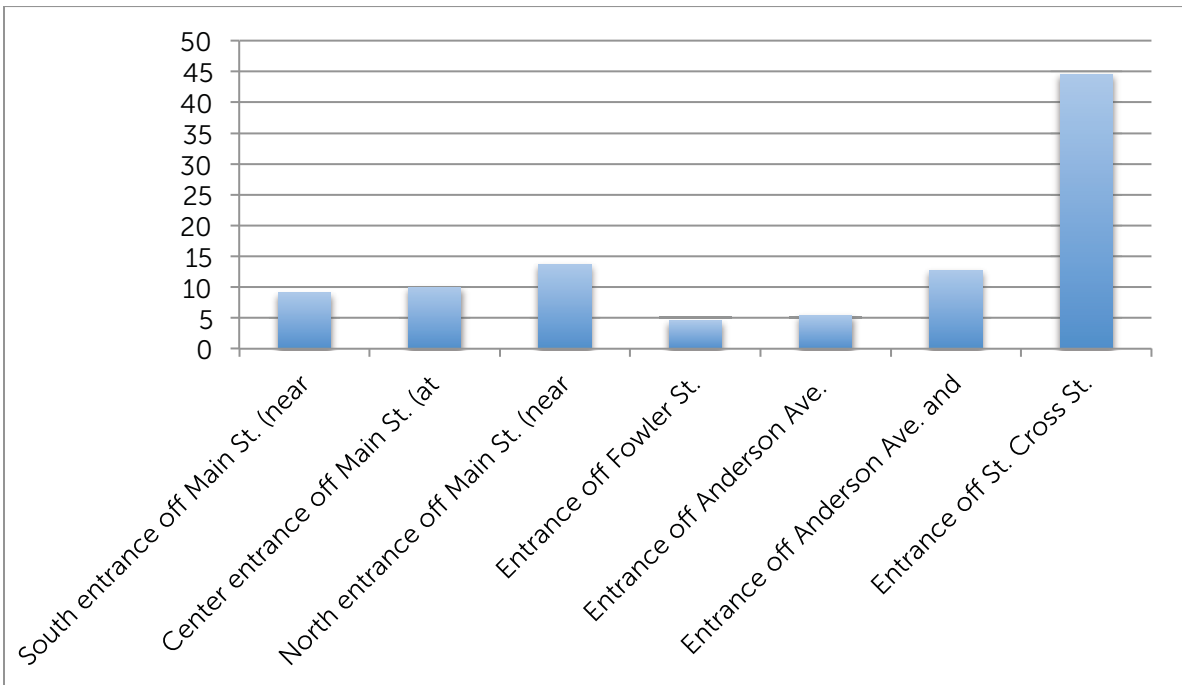
Visitation Trends:



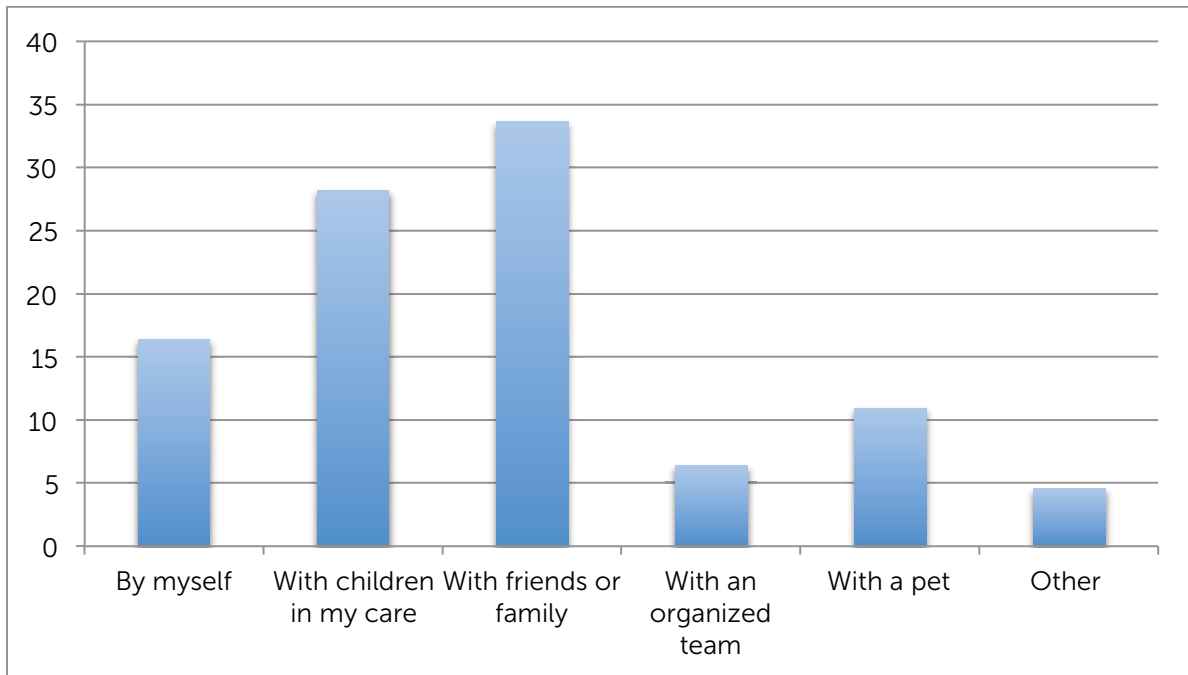
Users of St. John's Park arrive predominantly by foot, bicycle, and by car:



Visitors generally arrive through the entrance off St. Cross Street:



Participants enjoy St. John's Park with friends, family, children, and on their own:



Park Usage:

- Majority of users enjoy St. John's Park for play (e.g. playground, wading pool, open area, lawn bowling) and for fitness and passive recreation (walking, cycling through). Users also visit the park for relaxation, gathering, and as a rest stop in between destinations.
- Predominant usage patterns:
 - Playground: monthly activity
 - Gardens: monthly activity
 - Lawn bowling: annual activity
 - People watching/reading/quiet reflection: monthly activity
 - BBQ/picnic: annual activity
 - Walking for fitness or pleasure: monthly activity
 - Use washroom: once every 6 months
 - Basketball: annual activity
 - Wading pool: annual activity
 - Dog walking – on leash: monthly activity
 - Respondents also noted how they use the park for leisurely cycling

Desired Improvements at St. John's Park

- Better lighting
- Widened sidewalks
- Picnic shelter

- Playground
- Winter programming
- Riverbank access
- Off-leash dog park
- Places to sit
- Garbage receptacles
- Parking
- Washrooms
- Bike racks
- Safety improvements
- Basketball court
- Skateboard park
- Splash pad
- Native plants/grasses
- Community garden
- Active Transportation (AT) connections

Unwanted activities and issues at St. John's Park

- Negative loitering
- Organized sports
- Fences
- Parking lot
- Public intoxication
- Graffiti
- Dangerous/unsafe litter (e.g. needles, syringes)

A second feedback survey distributed to the public, was posted to the project website on June 22, 2017 to coincide with the open house event. Information about this feedback survey was also sent electronically to the complete stakeholder list. The survey remained on the project website until July 7, 2017. The purpose of this survey was to gain feedback at the open house and following, asking respondents to comment on the preliminary master plan concept and what they liked or disliked about the proposed renewed and new park features. Eighty-five (85) individuals provided feedback.

The survey results were collated with feedback provided during the Open House, and are listed in Chapter 6.0.

6.0 Open House

A public open house was held on June 22, 2017 at St. John's Park, inviting area residents, business owners, park users and visitors to provide their comments on a preliminary master plan concept.

In advance of the public open house, a series of presentation boards were distributed to the City of Winnipeg for review. These boards (see appendices) highlighted: (a) background information; (c) project timeline; (d) what we heard from the community; and (e) a preliminary master plan concept.



City of Winnipeg staff and members of the consultant team were in attendance to answer questions from the public, and to facilitate informative tours of each presentation board. Participants of the open house, after reviewing project materials, were encouraged to provide further feedback through a comment sheet (see appendices).

28 people were in attendance and 12 comment forms were completed. An article in the Winnipeg Free Press and a segment on CBC Manitoba provided a synopsis of the project study, to those who may not have been able to attend (see appendices). Postcards were handed out to give attendees the project website address if they chose to fill out the comment form online instead of in-person at the open house. Participants could also share this information with family, friends and neighbours who were unable to attend the event.

Following the conclusion of the public open house, the consultant team and City of Winnipeg staff gathered to debrief on ideas presented by the community, documenting new ideas, and grouping feedback into key themes.

The following is a summary of ideas generated during the open house and through the online comment form:

Q1 – What do you like about the preliminary master plan design concept for St. John’s Park?

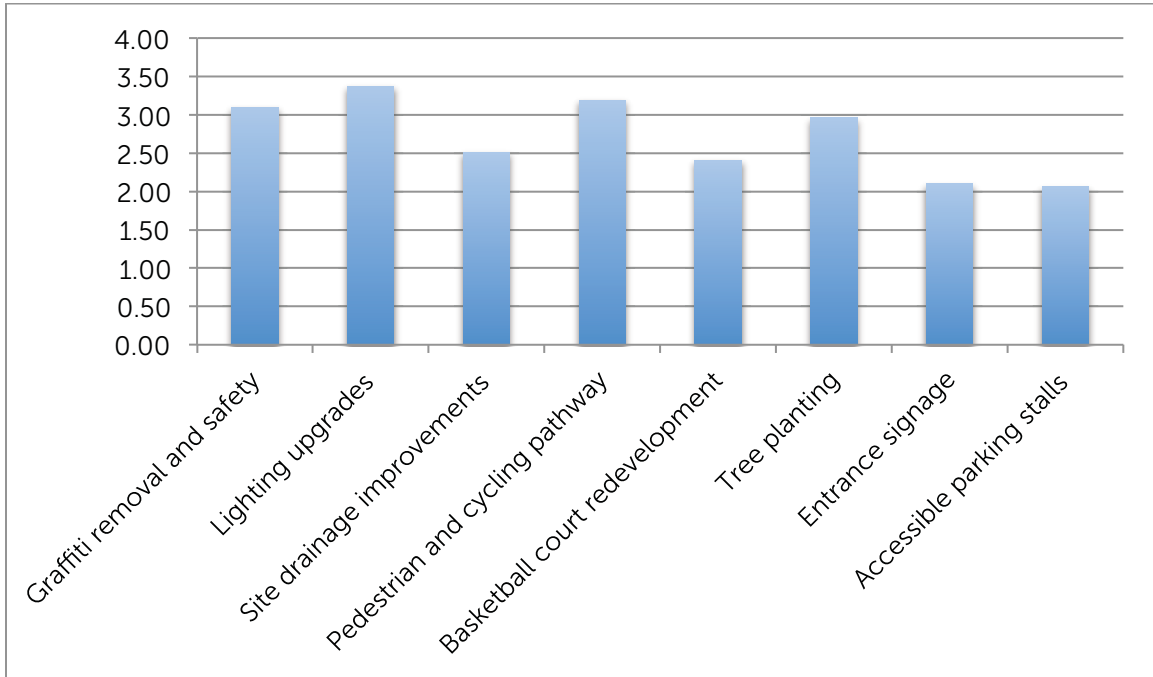
- Majority of respondents indicated good support towards the riverbank access point for recreational activities like fishing, along with the healing forest initiative, natural playground, active transportation connections and improvement, community gardens, skateboard park, and basketball park.
- Other additions with lesser support were amenities and services like: picnic shelter, native/edible plants, wading pool, music stage, and baseball field.
- There were general comments about how the master plan represents an important investment in a disenfranchised neighbourhood. These same participants noted how the design is spirited and community-driven.
- People want to see the area become more people-oriented, safe and hospitable for all types of users, especially youth.
- People want to see year-round amenities/services (e.g. tobogganing, ice rink) and year-round active transportation connections (e.g. keeping bicycle lanes clear of snow during the winter).
- Garbage collection, ongoing maintenance, and park stewardship were identified by respondents as necessary in keeping the park clean.
- Individuals offered suggestions on best places to position new amenities.

Q2 – What do you dislike about the preliminary master plan design concept for St. John’s Park?

- Participant feedback about what they disliked about the preliminary master plan design concept was varied.
- Some noted a desire to see an off-leash and enclosed area for dogs included in the master plan.
- Some individuals identified their dislike and uncertainty for the proposed healing forest, and wanted more information on what it could look like and how it would function in the future for programming.
- A few participants noted a desire for more public engagement opportunities.
- There were some concerns around the addition of the skate park and basketball court that it may bring about negative loitering.
- Some desired more preservation of nature and fewer activities as this may increase noise pollution.
- Some participants noted how maintenance and a garbage collection plan are needed.
- Some individuals noted how they would like to see the wading pool included in the redevelopment plans and possibly transformed into a splash pad.
- While individuals liked the addition of a nature playground, they argued that these opportunities for play should be extended to all ages.
- Some desired limited motor access through the park, making it more age-friendly.
- Participants would like to see a plan to address public intoxication in the area.

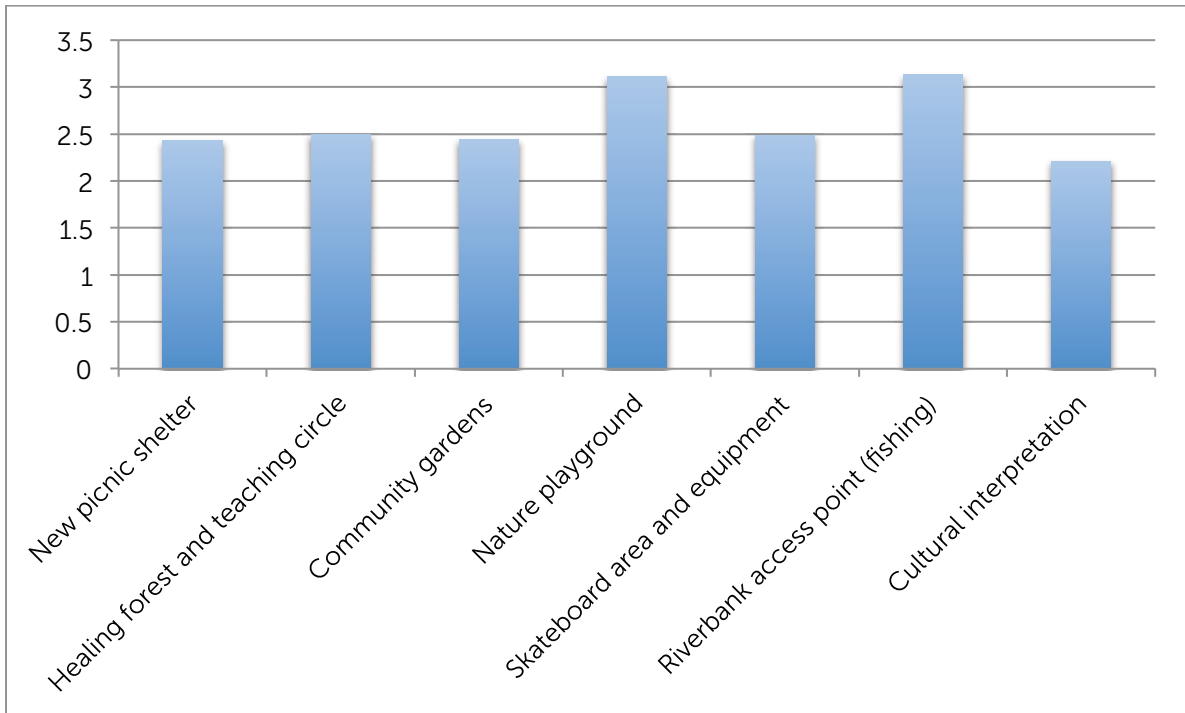
- Other amenities suggested: strategic parking, washrooms, flowers near entrance, signage to direct people to neighbouring areas like The Forks and downtown, more picnic tables, and fire pits.

Q3 – Which of the following do you feel should be the highest priorities for the City of Winnipeg in the redevelopment planning for St. John’s Park?



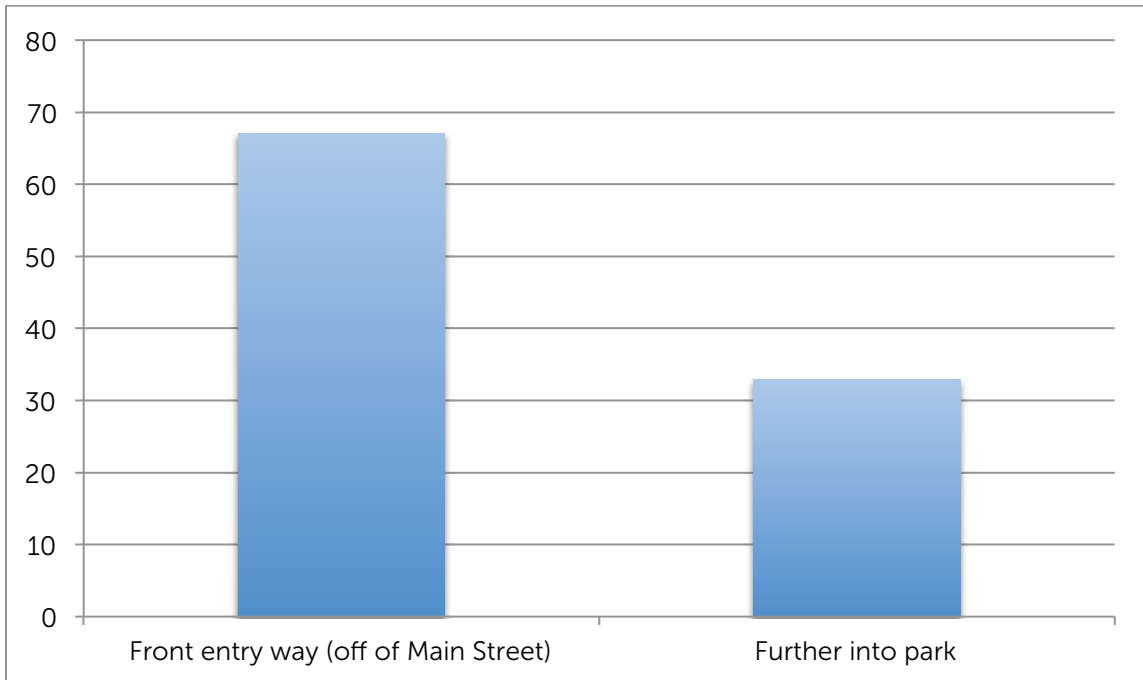
- Lighting upgrades, pedestrian and cycle pathway improvements, graffiti removal and safety improvements, and tree planting, were cited as top priorities in the redevelopment planning of St. John’s Park. Site drainage improvements, basketball court redevelopment, entrance signage, and accessible parking stalls received slightly less support.

Q4 – If additions to the park are possible, which additions do you consider most important?



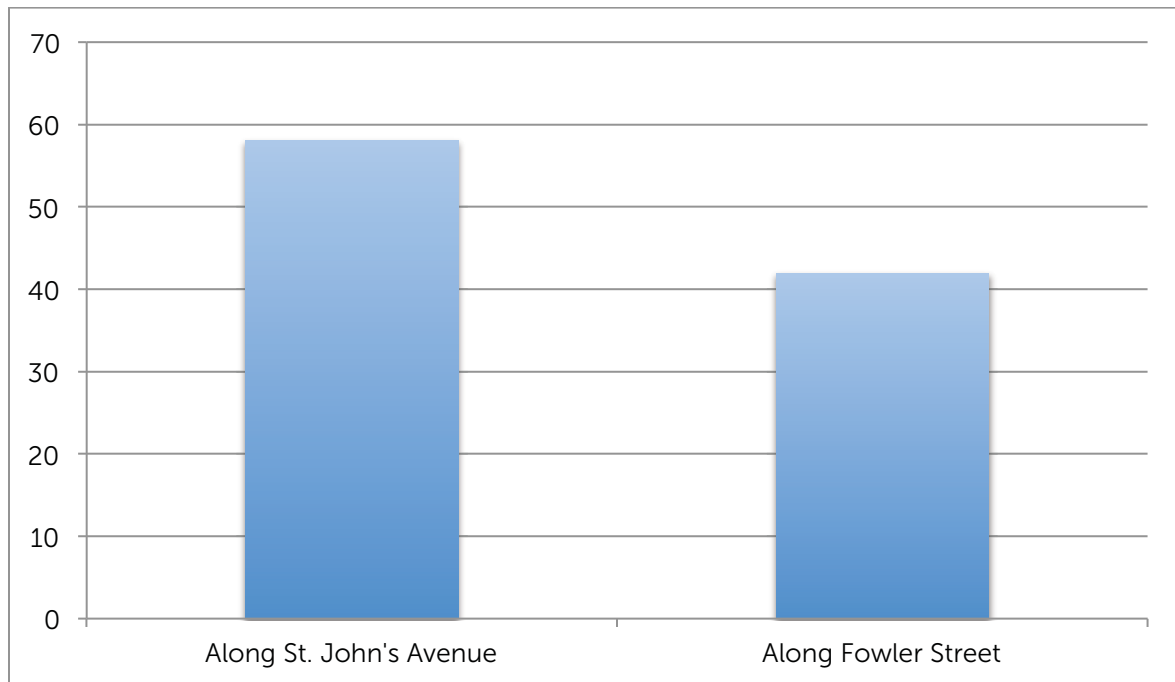
- Activities for recreation like a nature playground and riverbank access point for fishing were additions to the park most welcomed by participants of the study. A close second to these priorities were the inclusion of a healing forest and teaching circle, skateboard area and equipment, community gardens, and picnic shelter – all ranked relatively closely to one another. Cultural interpretation was the lowest ranked addition that participants saw as necessary to the park's redevelopment.

Q5 – Which location do you prefer for the Park’s 125th anniversary commemorative feature?



- The majority of respondents (67.12%) favoured the commemorative feature to be placed in front of the entryway, off of Main Street, as opposed to 32.88% who preferred placement further into the park.
- People preferred siting the commemorative feature off Main Street because:
 - The commemorative feature needs to draw people’s curiosity into the park from all directions. It has to be eye catching and visually interesting. It should also be designed in a way that ensures it is not vandalized or destroyed.
 - Participants noted how the commemorative feature presents an opportunity for more people to visit the park, improved visibility and encourage use of the park.
 - The feature, as some noted, should also be visible by passing vehicles on Main Street.

Q6 – Which location do you prefer for the Winnipeg healing forest?



- 58.06% noted they would prefer to see the healing forest along St. John's Avenue as opposed to along Fowler Street (41.94%).
- People preferred the healing forest to be located along St. John's Avenue because:
 - Closer to site amenities like the basketball court, which would create a greater feeling of safety;
 - Easier access;
 - Closer to the commemorative feature;
 - More trees in this location, better ambiance. It becomes a hidden treasure, and a place of reflection and contemplation;
 - It activates an underutilized part of the park;
 - Complements the historical markers already along St. John's Avenue;
 - Less noise in this area.

Q7 – Please share with us any additional comments or concerns you have about the park redevelopment master plan.

- Ensure active transportation is integrated throughout the plan
- Explore year-round programming opportunities
- Explore a boat launch
- Explore parking options
- People see the master plan as a welcome investment in an underserved neighbourhood
- Child-friendly
- Splash pad

- Safety and lighting should be a priority
- Healing forest is an opportunity to represent and celebrate the Indigenous community, and provide learning for all

7.0 Picnic in the Park

The annual Picnic in the Park, organized by the North End Renewal Corporation, provided an authentic-in-the-community opportunity for the project team to engage with area residents about the master plan. Working with Graffiti Art Programming, interactive drawing exercise was facilitated asking the community about ideas for the park in the future. The picnic was held on Saturday, August 19, 2017 where over 100 area residents and picnic attendees provided their input directly to the City staff and consultant team, through conversations, a feedback form and/or a colouring worksheet. Participants ranging from children, to young families, to seniors, were asked to share their ideas and what they liked and disliked about the Conceptual Park Master Plan. Overall, there was good support for the plan, with additional design detail ideas for the nature playground (e.g. ropes course, winter tobogganing, play/interactive features, swings of all sizes, slides, hills). Many park users who have spent most of their lives coming to St. John's Park felt that it was time for further investment to be made in the park. Other priorities were to improve active transportation connections, lighting, and maintenance of pedestrian and cycling paths. Multiple individuals noted a desire for the addition of a water fountain or water refilling stations. There was also good interest and support for the healing forest – which also had a display table at the picnic providing more information on this community initiative.



8.0 Other Ideas

The following is a summary of other ideas generated from the stakeholder meetings, online surveys, open houses and comment sheets.

Amenities and Services

- Dog park and off-leash area
- Fire pits
- Splash pad
- Swimming pool

Year-round Recreation

- Dual purpose basketball court (e.g. ice rink in the winter, basketball in the fall, tennis in the summer)
- Winter pathways and trails for cyclists

Places to relax

- Picnic tables and chairs, benches, shelters
- Need more green space

Infrastructure

- Better parking for visitors
- Garbage, compost and recycling receptacles
- Clean and well-maintained washrooms

Safety

- Address public intoxication and/or substance abuse
- Maintenance of pedestrian paths in the winter
- Remove graffiti and help prevent vandalism to buildings and play structures

9.0 Master Plan Next Steps

The St. John's Park Master Plan concept design is currently being refined. The intent is for the first phase of the master plan to move into detailed design (construction drawings) in early 2018. The Winnipeg Parks 125th Anniversary commemorative sign construction will begin in spring 2018.

St. John's Park Redevelopment Master Plan

APPENDIX A

Media Coverage Example



Redevelopment plan for St. John's park starts

CITY IS LOOKING FOR PUBLIC FEEDBACK UNTIL JULY 7

By: Ligia Braidotti

Posted: 06/29/2017 3:59 PM



PHOTO BY LIGIA BRAIDOTTI

Cindy Brazer looks at the St. John's Park master redevelopment plan during the public session held at St. John's Park.

The City of Winnipeg is moving forward with a redevelopment plan for St. John's Park and wants to know which changes residents would like to see.

On June 22, the City presented the redevelopment's master plan to area residents at St. John's Park.

The plan proposes a redeveloped front entry and signage, skateboarding features, new picnic shelters, nature playground for kids 12 years old and up, and community garden plots, among other features. The City hopes the redevelopment meets residents' visions and needs, Shauna Prociuk, project co-ordinator with the City, said.

"Right now we are looking at what needs to be redeveloped, what needs to be fixed up, what needs to be added and removed," she added.

Next year, St. John's Park will celebrate its 125th anniversary. The City has \$340,000 in funding available for a commemorative monument, consulting fees and the redevelopment of the park.

"A lot of our parks are just aging," she explained. "The master redevelopment plan is about what parts of the park need to be fixed up, like lighting and pathways."

Seven Oaks resident Cindy Brazer said the park has needed improvements for the last 20 years. Brazer walks her dogs at the park every day and said the redevelopment is a much-needed project. She said kids don't have a lot of options in the area to keep active and in many cases, their parents can't drive them around.

"Most of the kids being in the North End, they don't drive anywhere. Parents can't drive them," she said. "The number of kids is constantly increasing, and if kids don't keep active and have nothing to do, that's when they get in trouble."

"We live in an area where kids can't just hop on their bikes and safely ride somewhere. They can't ask their parents 'Hey drive me to such and such place.' Kids run out of options. If the City gives them options here, maybe we'll have less problems later on."

During the information session, Prociuk's team handed out forms where people could share their feedback and point out what should be the priorities for improvement.

Brazer told The Times there's a stretch of St. Cross Street where she often sees drug use and prostitution and said this is a concerning issue for parents. At the public session, she shared a suggestion that a fenced dog park could solve the problems.

"It will be used mainly by adults, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, summer and winter, and that discourages that unwanted behaviour because it's rough when the kids see that on a regular basis."

The St. John's redevelopment plan steering committee proposes that the park becomes the home to Winnipeg's first healing forest, which will create a memorial to Indigenous children lost to the residential school system, murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls and Indigenous children lost in child welfare systems.

The first healing forest opened in November 2016 in Edmonton after lawyer Patricia Stirbys and environmental and development advisor Peter Croal envisioned planting a forest to be a special place for families who lost their loved ones to reflect, heal and grow closer together as they seek strength and resilience.

"The idea is to create an intentional space for people to come and learn, reflect and pay respects. It's a potential set aside space that is there to continue the work of reconciliation. It will be a gathering spot for people to come hear stories and learn," Kyle Mason, executive director of the North End Family Centre who is part of the steering community, said.

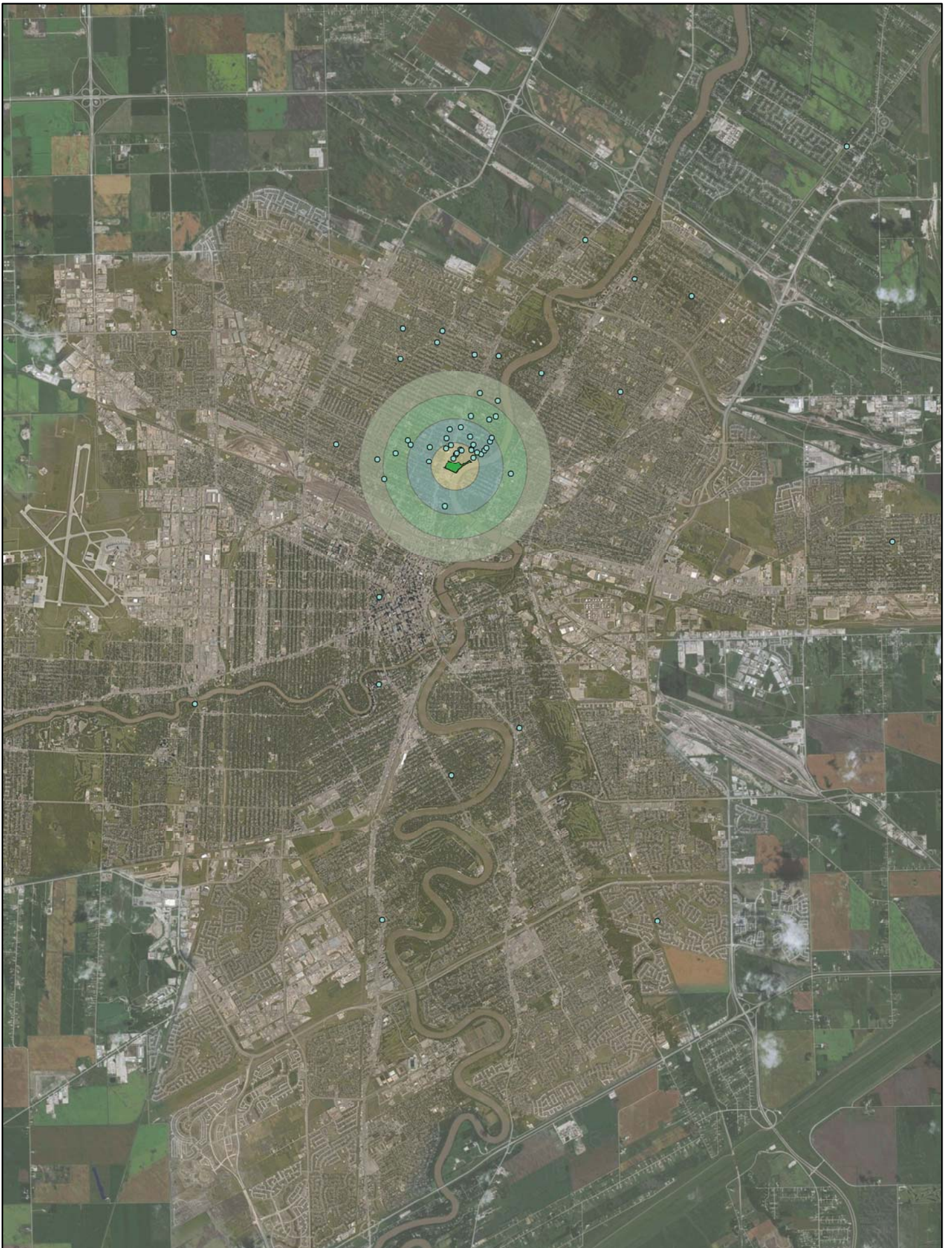
A survey is available online until July 7 for those who want to give their feedback at winnipeg.ca/stjohnspark

St. John's Park Redevelopment Master Plan

APPENDIX B

Respondent Place of Origin Map





St. John's Park Redevelopment Master Plan

APPENDIX C

Stakeholder Meeting Presentation Slides



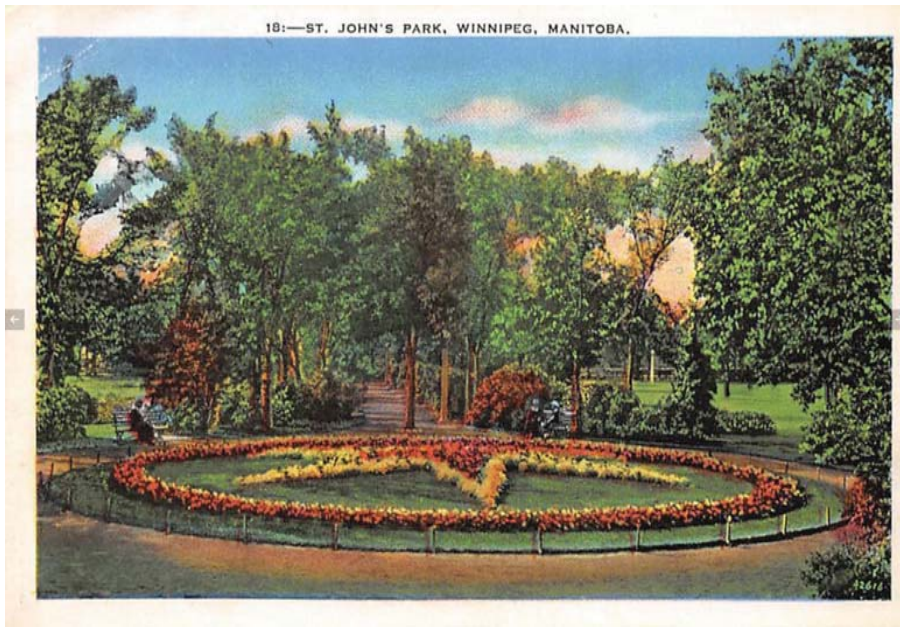
WELCOME



Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Park and Project Background
3. 125th Commemorative Feature
4. Site Analysis Review
5. Issues and Opportunities Exercise
6. Next Steps

Background

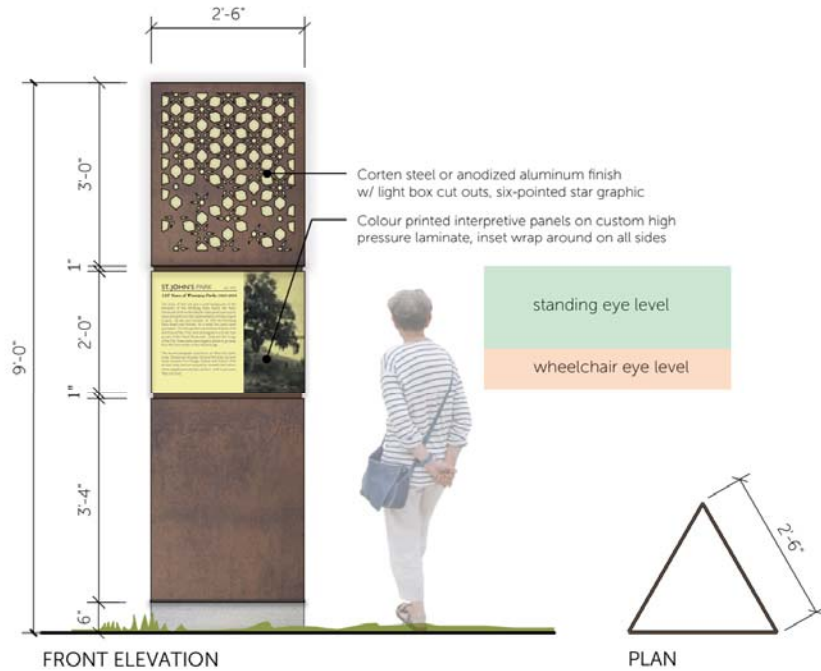


125th Commemorative Feature

2 ST. JOHN'S PARK - CONCEPT

The entryway features were inspired by a Victorian garden obelisk, popular in the era these three parks were designed. By using this traditional garden feature in a contemporary way, the entryway features embrace the history of these parks while acknowledging the present day commemoration.

Constructed of corten steel and colour printed interpretive panels, traditional materials are used in a contemporary way. The lightbox at the top of the entryway feature has a stylized motif, unique to each park. The motif for St. John's Park motif is a repeating pattern of the six-pointed star that was part of the Park's original design and is still present today.



ST. JOHN'S PARK FACTS

- Purchased from Anglican Church
- 6 pointed star flower bed early entry feature of the park
- "St. John's Park" was originally spelled out in flower beds 6' long at the park's entrance
- At time of purchase it was a tree-less prairie (over 4000 trees were planted by 1895)
- Bandsand, bowling green, wading pool (ca. 1925)
- Site of the first public school of the Red River settlement

Each entryway feature displays two paragraphs - one consistent on all three entryway features that tells of the history of the parks, the Park's movement and the formation of the Park's Board. The second paragraph is specific to each park, describing the unique features of each park with interesting facts or points of interest. All entryway features also show a map noting the locations of all four parks (Victoria Park included) as well as historical images and logos specific to this project/and or park.



125th Commemorative Feature

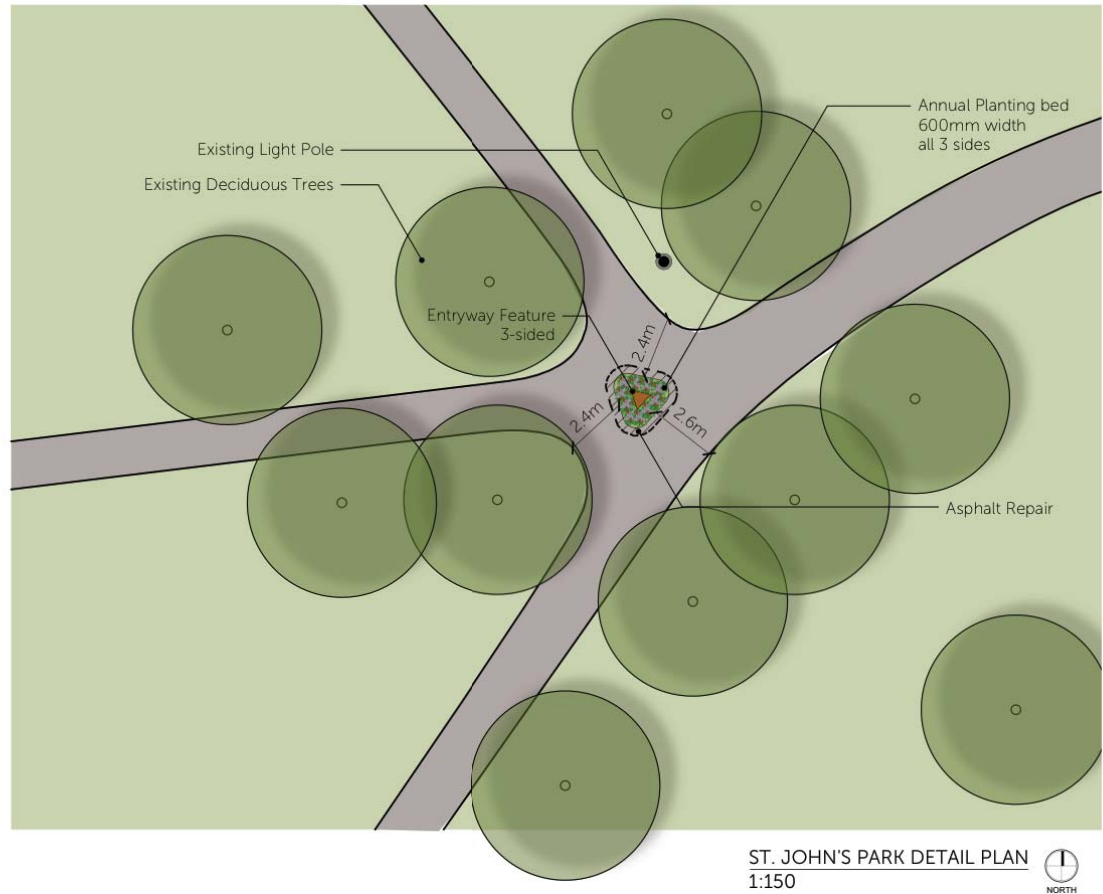
2 ST. JOHN'S PARK ENTRYWAY FEATURE LOCATION:



Entryway feature is located as a node where four asphalt pathways meet.



Entryway Feature with annual plantings



PROJECT TIMELINE

