WINNIPEG RECREATION & PARKS STRATEGIES

Public Engagement Report

Prepared by The City of Winnipeg,

HTFC Planning & Design and O2 Planning & Design

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Winnipeg

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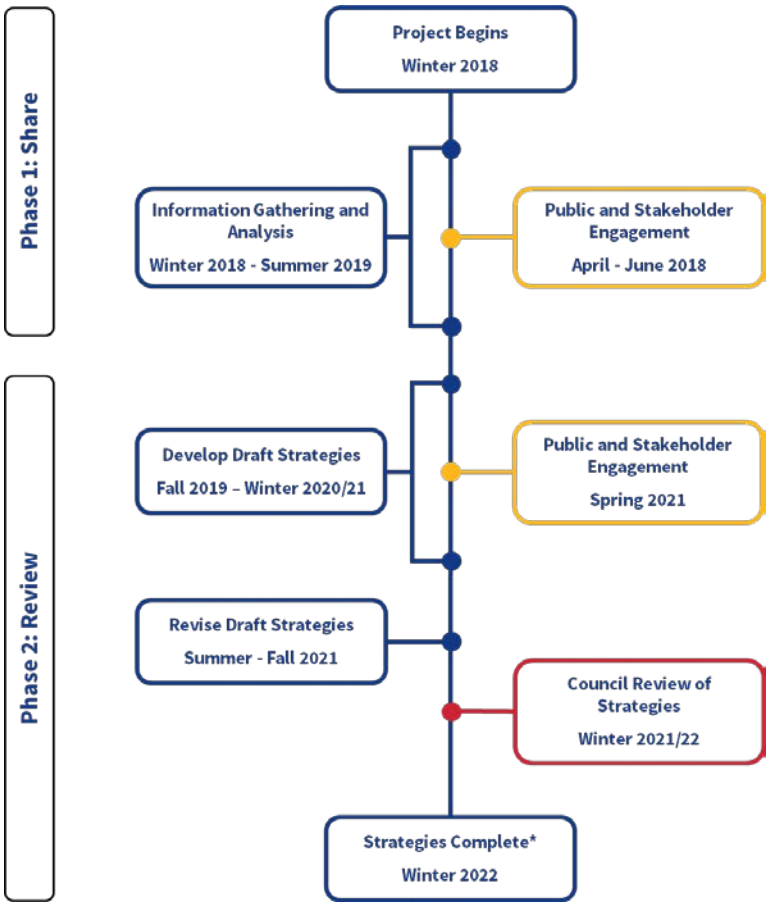
1.0 Introduction

Winnipeg's recreation and parks services and infrastructure contribute to the enjoyment and quality of life for residents and visitors. They improve our health and wellbeing, strengthen our communities, protect nature, and make our city a more attractive place to live, work and play.

The Winnipeg Recreation & Parks Strategies will provide long-term vision and present 25-year frameworks to help guide recreation and parks programs, services, policies, standards and procedures, and future investment in existing and new infrastructure.

This long-term vision is important, as the City of Winnipeg faces some difficult challenges in maintaining its aging infrastructure and making new investments to meet future needs. Much of Winnipeg's existing recreation and parks infrastructure is at or near the end of its useful lifecycle. The strategies aim to find out where Winnipeggers want to see future investments made.

As part of the strategy development process, the City undertook a comprehensive public engagement program to hear from Winnipeggers. This is a summary of that program's activities and key findings.



2.0 Strategy

Phase 1 public engagement occurred in 2018 to gain insight into how residents currently use Winnipeg's recreation and parks services, what barriers prevent them from participating in activities, and what their vision is for the future of recreation and parks in Winnipeg. The Phase 1 program included:

- Project website with informational video and an online survey (9,426 survey respondents)
- Community centre stakeholder workshops (one workshop, 50 community centres represented)
- Invited stakeholder workshops (two workshops, 44 organizations represented)
- Stakeholder outreach (five events/meetings, 50 organizations represented)
- Public open houses (two total, 62 participants)

After hearing from Winnipeggers, a draft Recreation Strategy and draft Parks Strategy were developed. In 2021, Phase 2 public engagement gathered feedback on the draft strategies to confirm they reflect Winnipeggers' values and priorities and identify any concerns with the draft documents.

Adjustments to the intended in-person techniques of the engagement plan were made as the project evolved and prevailing COVID-19 safety measures prevented the ability to host larger indoor events. The Phase 2 program included:

- Project website with informational video and surveys (6,369 unique visitors; 5,018 recreation survey respondents; 4,624 parks survey respondents)
- Stakeholder conversation guides (nine completed; five parks submissions; four recreation submissions)
- Virtual public workshops using the Zoom platform (two events - 167 participants)
- Stakeholder presentations (seven total – 65 organizations represented)
- Stakeholder interviews (15 total)

Promotions and information were shared throughout the spring of 2021 via the City of Winnipeg project website (winnipeg.ca/recandparks), social media (Facebook and Twitter), a news release, City of Winnipeg engagement newsletter, LeisureNews and ActiveNET emails, newspaper advertisements, and media coverage (CTV and the Winnipeg Free Press). Promotional materials can be viewed in *Appendix A*.

3.0 Engagement Activities

The following table summarizes each engagement activity and associated participation level.

Date	Activity	Participation
Phase 1		
April 14, 2018	Community centre stakeholders workshop	Approximately 103 people representing 50 of Winnipeg's 63 community centres participated at the workshop.
April 20 to June 30, 2018	Public survey	9,426 participants completed an online or paper survey. Participants left over 11,700 comments and 188,000 data points.
May 10 to 15, 2018	Invited stakeholder workshops	44 organizations attended two stakeholder workshops.
June 4 to 25, 2018	Stakeholder outreach	The City attended five community events throughout the summer of 2018 to reach out to stakeholders.
June 12 to 14, 2018	Public open houses	62 people attended three public open houses.
Phase 2		
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Recreation survey	5,018 respondents completed an online survey.
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Parks survey	4,624 respondents completed and online survey.
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Stakeholder conversation guide & letter/written submissions	Nine submissions
March 10 to April 23, 2021	Stakeholder presentations	7 events with 65 organizations represented
March 24, 2021	Public Workshop – evening	95 participants had the opportunity to learn about the project and provide input during one of two Zoom virtual events.
March 25, 2021	Public workshop – day	72 participants had the opportunity to learn about the project and provide input during one of two Zoom virtual events.
March - May, 2021	Stakeholder interviews	15 recreation interviews

3.1 Online engagement

In both Phase 1 and 2, online participants primarily shared their insights via a survey on the project website. Phase 2, offered two distinct surveys (one for Parks, one for Recreation) allow participants to choose what to engage with.

3.2 Public events

In Phase 1, participants were invited to attend one of three public open houses to learn about the project and speak with the project team in person. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and gathering restrictions in place during Phase 2, no in person gatherings were held. Instead, participants could register to attend one of two virtual workshops. These workshops began with a presentation overview of the strategies, followed by small breakout group discussions, fostering conversation between participants and the project team.

3.3 Stakeholder engagement

In Phase 1, participants were invited to attend stakeholder workshops. The workshops explored concepts that would help the project team draft the strategies. In Phase 2, stakeholder conversation guides provided structure to guide stakeholder groups to meet (in-person or virtually) and provide consolidated feedback on the draft strategies. While stakeholders were also invited to attend public workshops, the conversation guides provided an opportunity to share insights and ideas specific to special interests. The project team also hosted a series of invited one-on-one conversations with stakeholders identified as being particularly impacted by the strategies' implementation.

4.0 Analysis

This section outlines what we heard and learned from the many individuals and organizations who participated in the engagement events. Data collected through the various methods was analyzed in the following ways.

- Qualitative data collected through virtual workshops was collected by assigned recorders in discussion sessions. Records of discussions were created highlighting key comments and questions, which were then grouped and analyzed by theme.
- Open-ended comments in both surveys were reviewed, coded by keywords, and analyzed according to main themes and number of times referenced.

5.0 Phase 1 results

Based on the findings from the stakeholder and public engagement, there were several key issues that the strategies needed to address to ensure the future of both recreation and parks aligns with the growing needs of all Winnipeggers. A number of key questions arose from these inputs, and are listed below.

- With the limited funding available, how can the City address the public desire for more, higher quality parks and recreation amenities?
- What is the appropriate balance between providing walkable, local amenities versus the consolidation of amenities into larger, regional hubs?
- How should the City determine whether an existing facility/service requires increased maintenance, upgrades, closure, consolidation, or expansion?
- Where are the gaps in recreation and parks servicing (distance, transportation, walkability, etc.) that cause barriers to access for some residents?
- How can the City ensure that the recreation and parks system is inclusive and accessible to everyone?
- How can the City ensure that recreation and parks facilities and services are sustainable into the future?

6.0 Phase 2 results

Overall, respondents want recreation and parks that provide local and regional access, are equitably distributed across the city. and are accessible to people of all ages and abilities. The majority of respondents agree recreation and parks contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities, and are 'must-have' City services.

The following bullets summarize key themes heard during the engagement.

- **Regional and local service:** Respondents felt there was value in both local and regional parks and recreation facilities. Respondents wanted to see existing recreation facilities maintained to provide local recreation opportunities and investment in multi-use centres to meet the broader needs of many people and activities (1,112 respondents). Similarly, respondents wanted to see local parks maintained (60% opposed reducing local parks standard), highlighting their importance for mental, social, and physical health of communities. There was also support for prioritizing regional park maintenance, as the City's signature parks and amenities (52% support); however, only 12% of respondents want it at the cost of local parks. Winnipeggers want a careful balance of both local parks and facilities with multi-use centres and regional parks
- **Improve access and transportation:** Overall, respondents wanted to see equitable access to parks and recreation opportunities. Respondents indicated their preference for distributing recreation facilities, parks, and natural areas across the city to ensure each community has local access to recreation and nature (84% agree that all Winnipeggers should have access to at least one park within a 10-minute walking distance). Respondents noted the need to consider trails and bike paths as recreation opportunities that also serve as connection paths to facilities and parks (88% said this was a medium or high priority in the parks survey).

Several also noted the need to consider future transit connections to parks and recreation facilities (78% said this was a medium or high priority in the parks survey).

- **Protect natural areas:** Winnipeggers highly value their connections to nature. Respondents wanted to ensure that existing natural areas remain protected (62% selected this as their top priority natural features action in the parks survey). Some wanted to see the City prioritize the acquisition of additional natural areas and re-naturalization, particularly for grasslands and riverfront/riparian areas (15% put acquisition and 10% put restoration as their top priority natural features action).
- **Enhance inclusivity:** Respondents indicated they want recreation facilities (5,425 respondents), park amenities (3,742 respondents), and programs that are accessible for people of different ages, needs, and abilities. They want to ensure facilities consider universal design standards and provide programs that are safe and welcoming for everyone throughout all seasons.
- **Suggestion for budgets:** When it comes to funding priorities for recreation, respondents felt the highest budget priority should be focused on maintaining existing recreation facilities and amenities (1,999 respondents). Most felt that more funding is required for parks (60% disagree with the statement 'parks don't need more funding').
- **Enhance amenities and programming:** Respondents felt recreation programming could be enhanced by providing more diverse program options, offering alternative time slots, improving registration processes, while maintaining low costs. Special consideration should be given to certain groups of people, like seniors, low-income residents, and children who may require special pricing or targeted programming options. For parks, most respondents agreed with the core amenity prioritization (86%) and emphasized the need for individual neighbourhoods to be involved in determining their local needs for other amenities.
- **Volunteer enhancements:** Winnipeggers recognize the value volunteering has on their community. Respondents would be more inclined to volunteer if promotion of available opportunities increased, more incentives were offered, and flexible, short-term volunteer commitments were introduced (1,130 respondents).

6.1 Online engagement

Two online surveys collected public feedback on the draft Recreation and Parks Strategies. A total of **9,642 respondents** completed the surveys, with 5,018 completing the recreation survey and 4,624 completing the parks survey. The online surveys were available for 45 days, from March 10 to April 23, 2021 on the project webpage.

6.1.1 Recreation

Below is a listing of key feedback we heard in relation to the Recreation Strategy.

- **Importance of recreation:** 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that recreation is a 'must have' City service, while 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed recreation services benefit the community, even if services are not used directly by those respondents.

- **Facility use:** 87% of respondents have used City of Winnipeg recreational programs or facilities within the last three years, while almost 10% of respondents have not.

- **Increase participation:** Only 44% of respondents were satisfied with the availability of recreation opportunities currently offered in Winnipeg. The top three actions the City can take to increase participation in recreation opportunities and reach the active living goal include improving the condition of existing facilities (42%), providing multi-use facilities that offer more opportunities at a single location (40%), and offering more programs and activities outdoors in City parks (33%).

- **Partnerships:** Approximately 91% of people strongly agree or agree the City should continue to partner with other organizations to provide recreation opportunities and access to facilities.

- **Investment:** The top three priorities for investment in recreation facilities are indoor pools, multiuse recreation and neighbourhood centres, and community centres. Respondents noted that the top area identified for yearly budget prioritization that would make the biggest difference in the quality of recreation opportunities is maintaining the facilities and amenities we have now. When asked about how to prioritize new or enhanced facility investment, respondents identified developing multi-use facilities that would meet the needs of many different activities, programs, and users (58%), the availability of external funding (from other levels of government or private partners) that would lower the cost (56%), or supporting an area of higher-poverty that is underserved (51%) as top priorities.

- **Budget:** There is strong support for increasing the maintenance budgets at recreation facilities. Of all the options presented to achieve this, shifting existing budgets from other City services had the most support with 62% of respondents selecting this option.

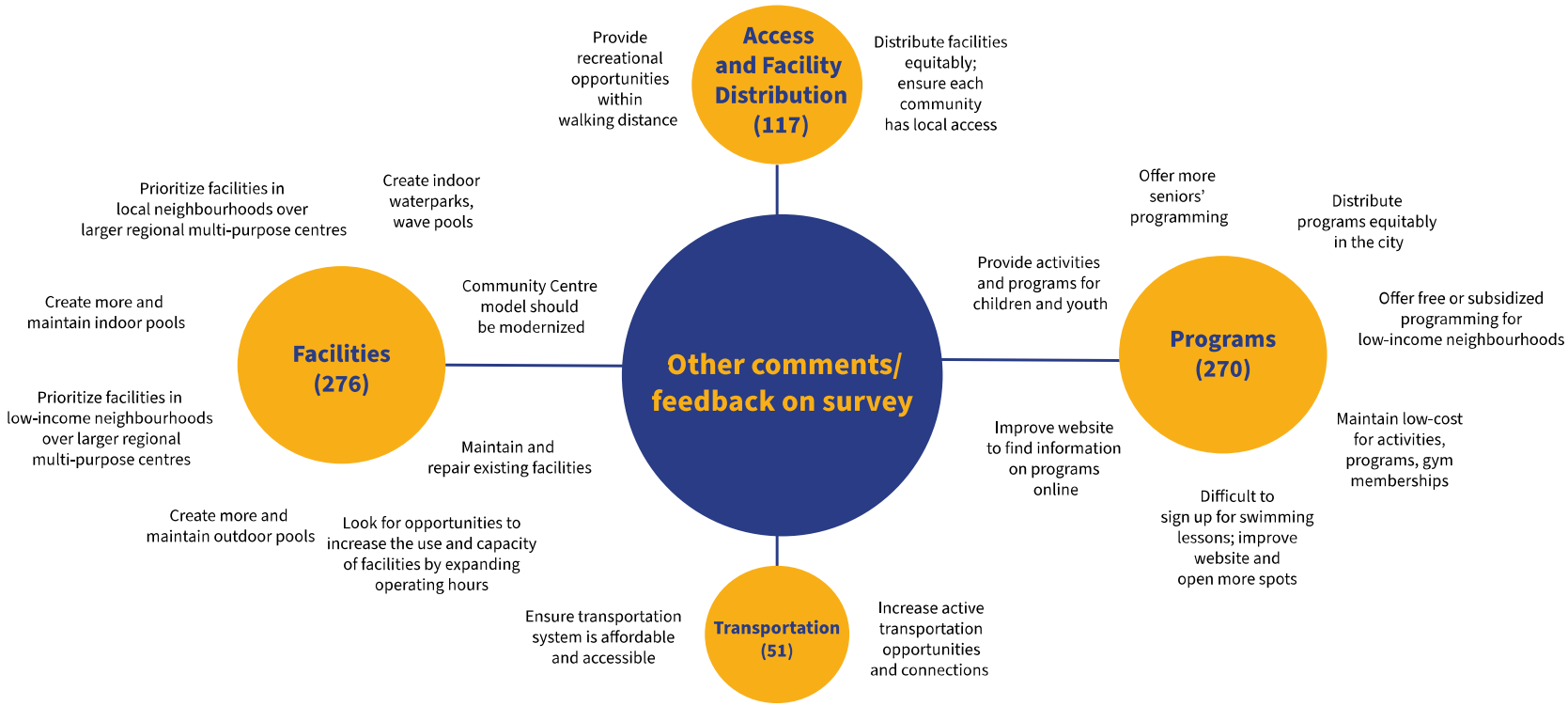
- **Volunteers:** Participants top motivations for potentially volunteering would be to support the community (82%) and to contribute to causes that are important to the individual and valuable to the community (67%); the most likely barriers to volunteering are work (59%) and family commitments (59%).

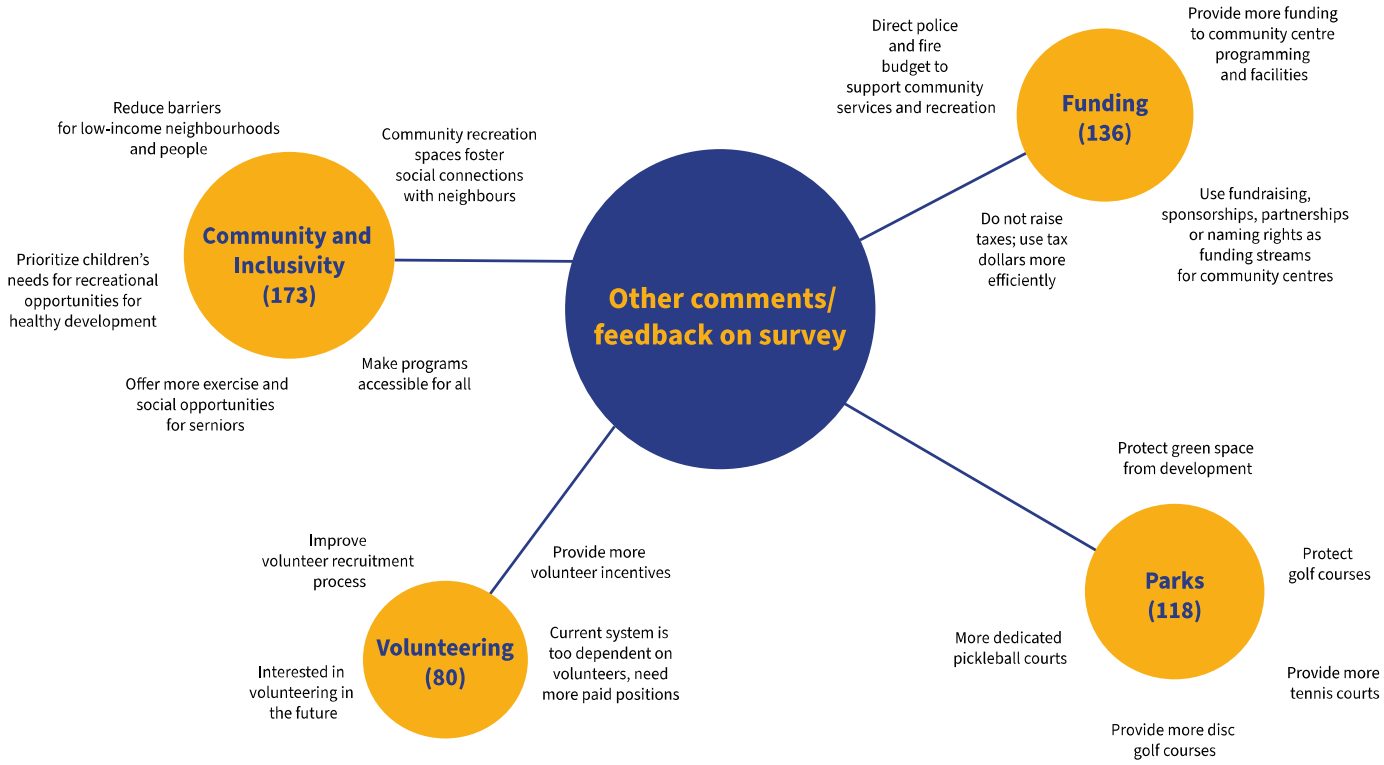
Other

When asked if they had any other thoughts to add, respondents provided a total of 1,256 open-ended comments. Comments were sorted by themes and associated keywords. Comments related to facilities and programming were the most frequent (21% each), while 13% related to community and inclusivity and 11% focused on funding. The following table outlines the themes, keywords and number of times these keywords appeared in the open comments.

Themes	Keyword(s)	Number of Mentions
Facilities	Multi-use, maintenance, maintain, quality, community centre	276
Access and facility distribution	Affordable, available, local, equitable	117
Programs	Cost, time, options, registration	270
Transportation	Paths, transit, active transportation	51
Funding	Police, budget, taxes	136
Community and inclusivity	Seniors, children, accessibility	173
Volunteering	Recruitment, incentives, dependency	80
Parks	Pickleball, golf courses, trails	118
Survey design	Varies	39
Draft strategy & engagement	Varies	31

An overview of the additional comments per theme in the following graphics:


Other comments/ feedback on survey
Access and Facility Distribution (117)
Provide recreational opportunities within walking distance
Distribute facilities equitably; ensure each community has local access
Facilities (276)
Prioritize facilities in local neighbourhoods over larger regional multi-purpose centres
Create indoor waterparks, wave pools
Community Centre model should be modernized
Create more and maintain indoor pools
Prioritize facilities in low-income neighbourhoods over larger regional multi-purpose centres
Maintain and repair existing facilities
Create more and maintain outdoor pools
Look for opportunities to increase the use and capacity of facilities by expanding operating hours
Programs (270)
Offer more seniors' programming
Distribute programs equitably in the city
Provide activities and programs for children and youth
Offer free or subsidized programming for low-income neighbourhoods
Improve website to find information on programs online
Maintain low-cost for activities, programs, gym memberships
Difficult to sign up for swimming lessons; improve website and open more spots
Transportation (51)
Ensure transportation system is affordable and accessible
Increase active transportation opportunities and connections


Other comments/ feedback on survey
Community and Inclusivity (173)
Reduce barriers for low-income neighbourhoods and people
Community recreation spaces foster social connections with neighbours
Prioritize children's needs for recreational opportunities for healthy development
Offer more exercise and social opportunities for serniors
Make programs accessible for all
Funding (136)
Direct police and fire budget to support community services and recreation
Provide more funding to community centre programming and facilities
Do not raise taxes; use tax dollars more efficiently
Use fundraising, sponsorships, partnerships or naming rights as funding streams for community centres
Volunteering (80)
Improve volunteer recruitment process
Provide more volunteer incentives
Interested in volunteering in the future
Current system is too dependent on volunteers, need more paid positions
Parks (118)
Protect green space from development
Protect golf courses
More dedicated pickleball courts
Provide more tennis courts
Provide more disc golf courses

6.1.2 Parks

Below is a listing of key feedback we heard in relation to the Parks Strategy.

Parks

- **Importance of parks:** 98% of participants agree or strongly agree that parks are a 'must have' Winnipeg service. They believe parks contribute to health, wellbeing, and sense of community (which was demonstrated even more so during this last year of the pandemic) and that parks should remain free for the public to use.
- **Funding:** 60% of survey respondents indicated that parks need more funding. Approximately 40% of survey respondents indicated that they want to see budget reallocated to parks from other city service budgets. There were mixed perspectives as to whether this should be done. The service participants most frequently recommended to reallocate is the Winnipeg Police Service.
- **Park types:** Survey participants think there should be a variety of park types and sizes to accommodate various needs (92%) and were generally not supportive of reducing existing amenities or services (16%). Survey participants would like to see better care and maintenance of existing amenities (55%).
- **Park provision:** 84% of participants agree or strongly agree that all Winnipeggers should have access to parks within a 10-minute walk. Some participants feel there needs to be greater access to parks and that the City should address areas with limited existing access (such as downtown and mature neighbourhoods).
- **Areas of need:** Though there is high support for access to parks and amenities for all (84%) and prioritizing gaps in the system first over other areas (74%), there is somewhat less support to specifically prioritize parks in areas of higher poverty (64%) or in downtown (51%). This may be influenced by the fact that only 2% of all survey participants indicated that their household made under $25,000/year.
- **Natural areas & pathways/trails:** In adding additional comments, many participants commented on the importance of natural areas and pathways/trails. Survey participants want to see more integration of parks with active transportation networks (88% said medium or high priority) and transit (78% said medium or high priority) and especially pathway snow clearance to encourage use throughout all seasons (95% said medium to high priority). Protecting, enhancing, and restoring existing natural areas was also a key priority.
- **Safety:** Though safety was not a main topic of any questions, there were numerous comments on the need to make parks safer. Some participants asked for greater bylaw enforcement in parks while others wanted to see more lighting or improvements to trails and amenities to make them safer (34%). Several expressed conflicts between different user groups, while others mentioned the need to address homelessness in the City.

Amenities

- **Core Amenities:** 86% of participants agree or strongly agree with the prioritization of the three core amenities.
- **Secondary Amenities:** Most participants want to ensure secondary amenities are provided consistently across the city (77%) and that gaps in service are filled first (74%). Outdoor skating was the highest prioritized secondary amenity (60%) followed by rectangular sports fields (39%).
- **Other Amenities:** 20% of participants added comments mentioning additional amenities they would like to see. Trails and natural areas were the most commonly added, even though these are captured as distinct from amenities in the Parks Strategy. The most highly sought after additional secondary amenities after these were pools, wading pools, and spray/splash pads as well as community gardens. Some participants commented that even if there is an overall provision target for amenities, the City needs to talk to each community to determine their actual needs.
- **Off-leash Dog Areas:** Though it was not directly included in the survey, dogs in parks were mentioned several times (180 comments). Comments ranged from user conflicts, wanting to see more areas where dogs are allowed off-leash, or wanting see more dog-free areas and bylaw enforcement. In general, 47% of survey respondents are supportive of using dog licensing fees to fund dog parks.

Regional Parks

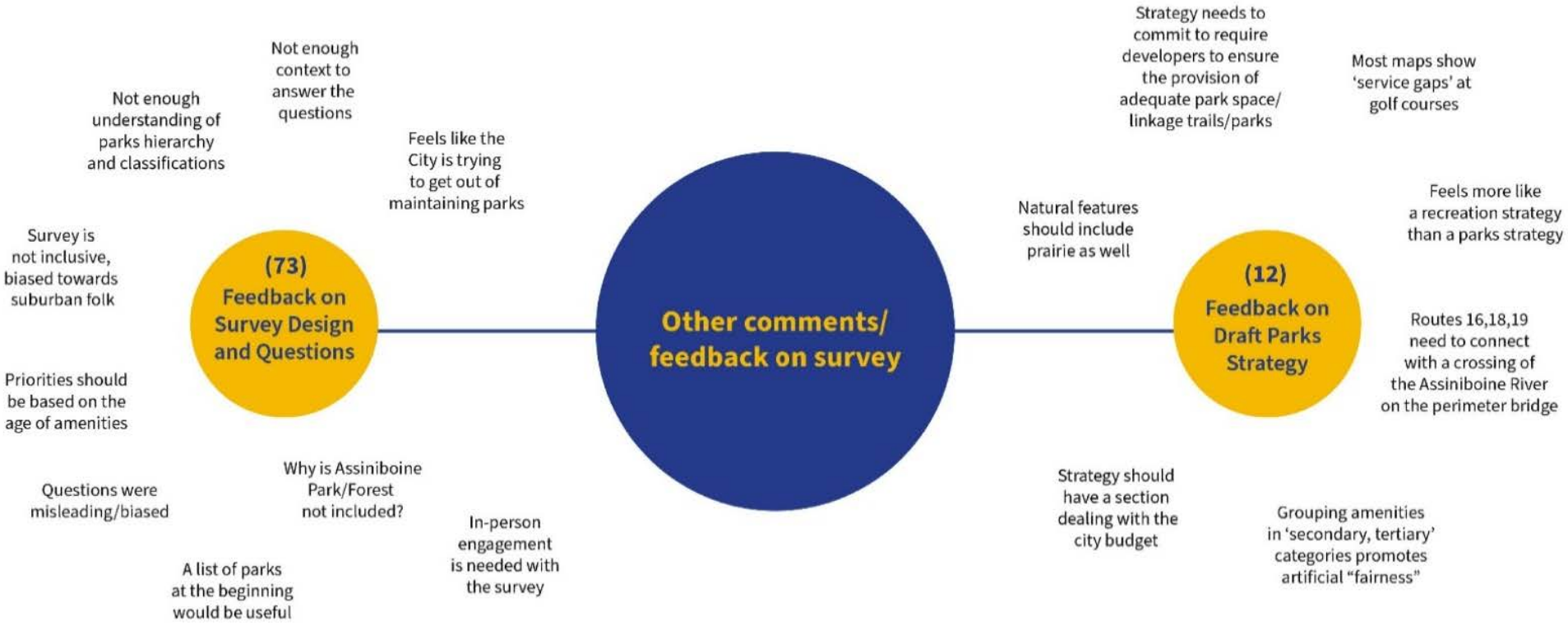
- **Regional Parks:** Participants think that prioritizing regional parks with a higher level of maintenance is important, but don't wish to see it at the expense of local parks. The main reasons people feel regional parks should have a higher standard is because these are feature parks and see the highest volume of use. The main reasons people did not agree with prioritizing regional parks was because they use their local parks more frequently (70%) and these are more accessible to those without a car.
- **Regional Parks Use:** Kildonan, St. Vital, and La Barriere Parks are the regional parks most visited by participants and are also the most cited for prioritization. Some survey participants felt this question was flawed as it would lead people to prioritize the parks they visit the most since they are not familiar with all the parks listed.

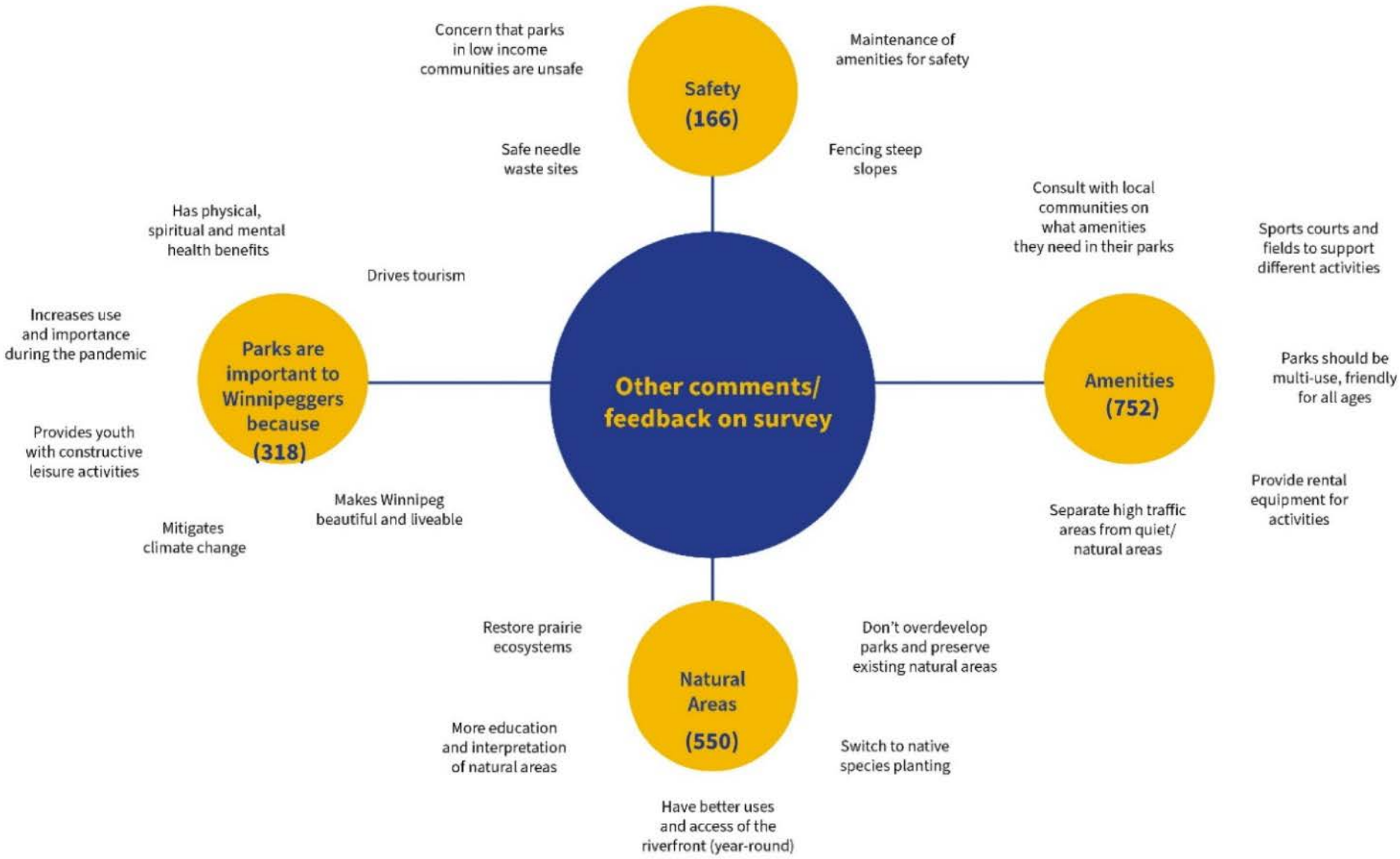
Other

When asked if they had any other thoughts to add, respondents provided a total of 1,158 open-ended comments. Comments were sorted by themes and associated keywords. Common themes included amenities, connectivity and mobility, and natural areas. The following table outlines the themes, keywords and number of times these keywords appeared in the open comments.

Themes	Keyword(s)	Number of Mentions
Survey Design & Questions	Varies	73
Draft Parks Strategy	Varies	12
Importance of Parks	Health, pandemic, climate change	318
Safety	Low income areas, maintenance	166
Amenities	Community need, all ages, activities	752
Natural Areas	River Access, over-development, education	550
Connectivity/Mobility	Accessibility, trails	700
Financial	Free, funding, taxes	185
Partnerships	Varies	16
Park Provision	High needs areas, maintenance	409

An overview of the additional comments per theme are included in the following graphics:




Other comments/ feedback on survey
Safety (166)
Concern that parks in low income communities are unsafe
Maintenance of amenities for safety
Safe needle waste sites
Fencing steep slopes
Amenities (752)
Consult with local communities on what amenities they need in their parks
Sports courts and fields to support different activities
Parks should be multi-use, friendly for all ages
Provide rental equipment for activities
Separate high traffic areas from quiet/ natural areas
Parks are important to Winnipeggers because (318)
Has physical, spiritual and mental health benefits
Drives tourism
Increases use and importance during the pandemic
Provides youth with constructive leisure activities
Makes Winnipeg beautiful and liveable
Mitigates climate change
Natural Areas (550)
Restore prairie ecosystems
Don't overdevelop parks and preserve existing natural areas
More education and interpretation of natural areas
Switch to native species planting
Have better uses and access of the riverfront (year-round)


Other comments/ feedback on survey
Connectivity/ Mobility (700)
Close roads for pedestrians vs close more roads for pedestrians
Accessible sport bookings
Reduce barriers to trail based recreation
Make parks easily accessible by bus or train and have frequent service to the parks
EV Chargers
Parks shuttle for areas not easily accessible by transit
Financial (185)
Make adult sports pay for the use of the facilities
Cut spending in other services to allow more funds for parks
Taxing different groups of people to support parks
Hold landscaping companies accountable for improper landscaping that could result in accidents
Keep parks free for everyone
Ensure parks have a budget for maintenance
Park Provision (409)
Rename parks with indigenous names
Indoor park for winter
Focus on providing more park areas in low-income/ high need areas
Less parkland in areas where people have access to their own yards
Local parks are still needed even if they're not as well maintained as regional parks
Consider the impacts on neighbours when developing amenities
Downtown needs a regional park due to the growing population in the downtown area
Suggested Partnerships (16)
Private organizations to run facilities/ save money
Community/sport groups for speciality services in the form of grants
U of M Landscape Architecture
Encourage local communities to maintain and fundraise their parks

6.2 Stakeholder conversation guides

The stakeholder conversation guides included worksheets for six topics related to recreation and five topics related to parks. Stakeholders were asked if they supported the proposed approach in the draft strategies, according to each topic area. The conversation guides also had open comments sections for stakeholders to expand on what they liked about the proposed approach, any concerns or any missing items that should be considered by the project team. Stakeholders could choose to respond only to the topic areas that interested their organization or respond to them all. A list of participating stakeholder groups is found in Appendix C.

6.3 Public workshops

The virtual public workshops were used to provide an overview of the strategies, and allow Winnipeggers to ask questions of the project team and discuss key questions in small groups.

Answers to each of the three key questions were recorded and sorted by similar responses. This feedback is outlined below (repetition of similar responses are reported by the bracketed number following the response).

Question 1: How should the City prioritize spending to make the biggest difference in supporting active and healthy lifestyles?

- Swimming and swimming lessons (it is currently difficult to get lessons) (5)
- Preserve what we have and keep natural areas healthy (5)
- Maintain and retain existing greenspaces – pandemic has showed how important they are (5)
- Lessen dependence on cars for access to large regional parks (more AT and transit connection) (5)
- Increase parkland/greenspace (4)
- Reinvest in existing greenspaces as infill/densification increases (4)
- Change vehicle traffic through St. Vital Park, the traffic is overwhelming and disruptive to park enjoyment (4)
- More dog parks (4)
- Washrooms/porta potties (4)

Question 2: The City proposes to naturalize areas of existing maintained parkland where gaps in naturalized area have been identified. How would this impact your use and enjoyment of parks?

- More focus on river corridors and ecological corridors (3)
- Exposure and access to flora fauna is important, especially for kids (3)
- Biodiversity is important (3)
- Make wetland spaces safe to visit (ie: boardwalks) for education/programming opportunities (2)
- Depends on where you are – downtown does not have many natural areas (2)

Question 3: How would your experiences with parks and recreation change if the City focused investment in regional parks and recreational complexes?

- Concern about privatization of current regional parks (4)
- Participants against a focus on investment at a regional scale if it is at the cost of filling gaps at the neighbourhood level (4)
- Rec complexes should not be in major parks, they should be their own entity (3)
- Harder to meet neighbours, the sense of community isn't there with regional parks like it is with neighbourhood parks (3)
- Concern that low-income folks won't be able to travel to regional hubs (2)
- The major facilities need to be on major transit routes (2)

6.4 Stakeholder Interviews

In April, the project team held 15 stakeholder interviews with participating agencies and organizations. Stakeholders were asked which aspects of the recreation strategy aligns with their values, goals and priorities and asked to identify areas of concern. A list of those who participated in the interviews is below.

- General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC)
- Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre (WASAC)
- Volleyball Manitoba
- Hockey Manitoba
- Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba (PACM)
- Basketball Manitoba
- Recreation Manitoba
- Manitoba Association of Senior's Centres (MASC)
- Swim Manitoba
- Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW)
- Winnipeg Trails Association
- Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg
- Broadway Neighbourhood Centre
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
- OURSWinnipeg

7.0 Conclusion and next steps

The second phase of public engagement helped the project team understand whether the draft strategies reflected the values and priorities of Winnipeggers.

7.1.1 Recreation

The following table describes the key recreation findings and how the information is being considered.

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
Concern investment in larger regional centres will lead to the loss of local facilities and community centres.	The Recreation Strategy recognizes travel distance as a key measure of accessibility and outlines four scales of facilities (neighbourhood, community, regional, and city-wide) to ensure access to recreation facilities at all geographic scales. The implementation section of the Recreation Strategy has been further developed to recommend a balanced approach to investment in facilities that serve smaller neighbourhood areas along with larger community and regional-scale facilities.
Support, particularly from stakeholder organizations, for the development of larger regional recreation complexes.	The Recreation Strategy recommends developing regional recreation complexes as one of the four scales of facilities (neighbourhood, community, regional, and city-wide) provided across Winnipeg.
Requests to maintain facilities and programs in low-income neighbourhoods.	The Recreation Strategy already uses an equity-based planning approach that considers geographic areas of higher poverty when planning and providing recreation opportunities. It also recommends focused investment in neighbourhood recreation and leisure centres that support geographic areas of higher poverty. Additionally, the implementation framework also recommends increasing funding to support the maintenance of recreation facilities and to

	address the backlog of repairs required in existing facilities.
Requests to improve diversity of programs being offered, increase capacity and selection throughout the city, and ensure all people have access to programs that interest them.	The Recreation Strategy already provides direction on the provision of welcoming and inclusive programming the reflects the diversity of the community. For each facility type, target levels of service intended to meet current and future community needs are identified. The provision of each facility type is also assessed to identify areas of the city that have gaps in service that should be addressed. A recommendation was added on the use of formal, written agreements to help ensure public access requirements are identified when the City owns or makes significant investments in recreation facilities operated by other organizations.
Water play, including spray pads, wading pools, and outdoor pools are important recreational amenities in parks.	The Recreation Strategy recognizes the value of waterplay for all ages and includes level of service targets for these amenities.
Requests for trails, bike paths and river access be considered as recreation opportunities.	The Recreation Strategy includes policy statements on promoting and supporting outdoor play, recreation, and exploring opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation programs that activate and leverage existing parks and pathways. The Recreation Strategy and the Parks Strategy are companion documents. The Recreation Strategy focuses largely on indoor recreation while the Parks Strategy includes most outdoor

	reactional activities and amenities. Trails, bike paths, and river access are considered in the Parks Strategy.
Community centres have traditionally focused on programming for younger demographics and sports programming. With increasingly diverse community needs and an aging population, there is an opportunity for community centres to become more welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environments that support the lifelong participation of all Winnipeggers.	The Recreation Strategy outlines Winnipeg's changing demographics including our aging population, that contribute to changing community needs. It also provides policy direction to address the goals of creating inclusive, supportive environments that encourage lifelong participation for people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities. Recommendations that the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres Plan 2025 (the strategic plan for community centres) should be revisited and updated to align to the goals and policy direction provided in the Recreation Strategy have been strengthened.
Requests for an easy to navigate, integrated, single-source of information that includes programs offered by the City and the community centres. It can be very difficult and confusing to find recreation opportunities for seniors, newcomers, or anyone unfamiliar with the community centre model.	A recommendation to develop a more user-friendly and integrated method of sharing program information was added to the Recreation Strategy.
Concern that although investment and improvements have occurred, Pan Am Pool is over 50 years old, increasingly obsolete, and will soon be unable to meet the needs of competitive aquatic sports.	A recommendation that the City initiates a planning process, working with interested stakeholders, to explore options for redevelopment or replacement of Pan Am Pool was added to the Recreation Strategy.
Current approaches to volunteerism, including the community centre model, should be reviewed and updated.	The Recreation Strategy currently highlights changing trends with volunteerism. It also includes a recommendation that the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres Plan 2025 (the strategic plan for community centres) should be revisited and updated. Additional

	direction on reviewing the volunteer aspects of the community centre model will be added to the recommendation.
Requests to include opportunities for recreation facilities and programs to encourage healthy food systems that support positive physical and mental health outcomes and community wellbeing.	A recommendation was added to the Recreation Strategy to support health and wellbeing through the provision and promotion of healthy food choices at City of Winnipeg recreation facilities. The description of community centres and neighbourhood recreation and leisure centres was expanded to prioritize the addition of community kitchens. A recommendation to continue to work with partners, including the Food Council, to encourage the development of garden and gardening programs that can support recreational, cultural, or even smaller-scale food production needs of the community was added. As important community amenities, recreation facilities may offer a key means of accessing water for gardening initiatives.

7.1.2 Parks

What We Heard	How It Was Considered
Concerns that Winnipeg is below other Canadian cities in terms of parkland per person and we should be prioritizing acquisition of more parks.	The overall provision target was updated to 50 m^2 per person in alignment with the Canadian average and the World Health Organization recommendations. The graphics about city-wide provisioning comparisons with other municipalities and Winnipeg-specific assessments of park and amenity distribution within the city were clarified.
Concerns that the Parks Strategy does not provide an overall biodiversity strategy for the City.	The Parks Strategy now includes a recommendation to develop a Master

	Greenspace and Natural Corridor Plan by-law that includes a Biodiversity Policy.
The Strategy is long and contains a lot of information, which can be overwhelming to a public audience.	The Parks Strategy's executive summary was simplified to improve ease of reading.
Concerns that golf courses and Assiniboine Park were not included in the strategy.	Further clarification was provided on why Assiniboine Park was not included in the strategy, and a recommendation was added to develop a Master Greenspace and Natural Corridor Plan by-law that includes the full publicly accessible open space network (including non-City parks).
Community Gardens are an important amenity that should be prioritized.	Community Gardens are considered a tertiary amenity, which means that they will be created case-by-case in partnership with other organizations. This does not mean that they are not a priority, but rather that they will need to be planned for differently from Core or Secondary amenities and will not be evenly distributed throughout the City. The City also has a separate Community Gardens Policy to guide the provision of these amenities.
Track and field is an important introductory sports amenity and should be prioritized.	Track and field has been updated from a specialty amenity to a tertiary amenity, meaning that the City will provide these on an opportunity basis when there is a partnership with another organization.
Improve year-round access to rivers and riverbanks	The Parks Strategy provides direction on acquisition priorities, which includes publicly accessible riverfront, and policies that support the protection of and greater access to riparian areas.
Additional active transportation connections should be added to the Parks Strategy.	The Connections Map in the Parks Strategy is intended to inform internal park connections but is not exhaustive. External connections between parks will be guided by the City's separate Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies which are currently being updated.
Concerns that natural areas and trails are not considered as 'core amenities'.	Though natural areas and trails (connections) are not considered as 'amenities', they have their own sections and direction within the Strategy.
Dog parks are causing various user conflicts. These should be fenced to mitigate conflicts.	The Off Leash Dog Areas Master Plan oversees these conflicts, which is supported by the Parks Strategy.

This input is being used to inform the final Recreation & Parks Strategies. The recommended strategies will be presented to Council for consideration in early 2022.

The full Winnipeg Recreation & Parks Strategies, Phase 1 public engagement report and more project details can be found at winnipeg.ca/recandparks.