

# BELLE PARK MASTER PLAN

## Belle Park Master Plan - Engagement Summary

After a year of consultation on potential uses for Belle Park, the first initial master plan concepts for Belle Park were presented on May 22, 2018 from 5 to 7pm at Belle Park. The open house was followed by a survey that ran from May 24 to June 8 and a pop-up event at Belle Park on June 6 to review the two draft concepts. Approximately 80 members of the public attended the open house in May, followed by approximately 350 responses through the online survey.

On May 25, a talking circle held at Belle Park was hosted by Inclusive Voices Incorporated on behalf of the City to engage the local indigenous residents with respect to the proposed draft concepts.



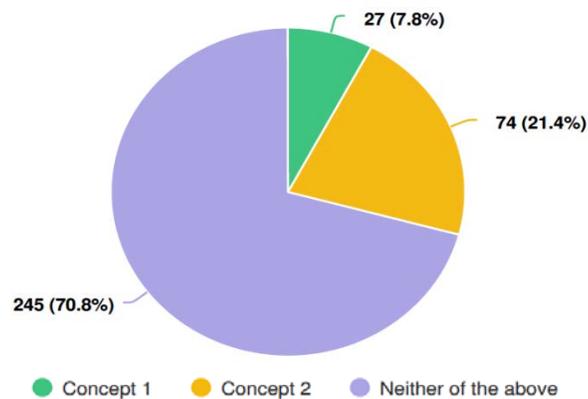
In these public engagements, a presentation was presented on the history of the site, past public consultation and Council direction as a result of the 2017 consultation, two concepts of the proposed amenities and how naturalized areas would be increased and the manicured areas decreased as a result of the proposed concepts.



## What the City heard?

The following general topics were noted:

- Based on the survey data, neither of the proposed concepts was preferred. It was felt that the concepts did not provide enough variation nor represent the values of the general public.



- The balance between active recreation and naturalized area created the greatest reaction from the proposed concepts presented. Some sports users were satisfied with the balance of sports activities proposed. Some felt there were not enough recreational amenities provided, while others felt the recreational activity should have been smaller and more compact.
- Many respondents thought the plan needed to focus more on naturalization, the natural environment, protection of the shorelines and nature trails. There was concern raised about the effect of sports activities, any potential sports lighting and traffic related to sports on the natural environment, in particular, on the wildlife. Wider buffers between different types of park uses were suggested.
- Some residents did not like the sports fields and golf activities in centre of the park and some didn't want the sports fields to take away from the unique character of the waterfront park.
- It was felt that there was a need for indigenous culture to be incorporated into the park design, such as adding native plant species or signage along trails.
- Other suggested amenities included a dog park, lawn bowling, indoor tennis courts, natural style playground, community garden, splash pad, pump track for mountain biking or amenities for the art community such as a small amphitheater.
- There were mixed views on the required amount of parking for the park and its impact on the appearance of the park frontage. Many sports users felt there was

not enough parking, while others felt too much parking, along the street frontage of the park would be counter-intuitive to the walkability of the area to the downtown and take away the much needed beautification of the park frontage.

- It was suggested that the building could be repurposed for sports use, a cultural or education centre for First Nations and Belle Island or an interpretive centre for the natural environment. The accessibility of the current washrooms was raised as a concern.
- The idea of a new playground and picnic area were positively received. However, there were competing opinions on the location of these amenities near the street and abutting sports fields. Some residents felt playground and picnic areas could be larger and be set back from Montreal Street for children safety yet some respondents felt that these neighbourhood type uses shouldn't be located too far from the street so to still allow for public surveillance and visibility. Locating playgrounds near sports fields also drew conflicting feedback. People who were interested in sports activities felt it would be good to have the playground visible from the sports location for parental surveillance while some parents thought children should not be located close to sports fields due to the potential for inappropriate behavior and language associated with some types of adult sports use.
- Sport users suggested that pickleball courts be located away from resident's backyards due to the potential noise that this type of sport can create.
- Some local indigenous people felt there is a need to reduce the number of connections to Belle Island to reduce potential traffic to their sacred land, but at the same time consideration of public safety should be taken into account, such as maintenance of the bridge, and providing better visibility to reduce antisocial activities in both Belle Island and Belle Park.
- A talking circle was hosted for the Belle Park master plan and many local indigenous community representatives attended the talking circle. It was felt that not one person could speak for everyone in that community. More communication with local indigenous people was recommended considering Belle Park's proximity to Belle Island and the Cataraqui River which was historically an important trading route.
- As there has not been much partnership discussion prior to the open house, despite council's direction to discuss partnership with the rugby club, the rugby club members could not provide an opinion on the concepts. Discussions on the perceived service level, needs and long term implications still needed to be discussed prior to considering the location and potential partnerships with the rugby club at Belle Park.

## Next Steps

Further consultation with residents, sports stakeholders and the various indigenous communities on the approaches for the operations and long term improvement plan of Belle Park are planned for next year. A series of public consultations are proposed for winter and spring 2019.

For ongoing and additional information on this project or to provide written comments, please view the City's website <https://www.cityofkingston.ca/city-hall/projects-construction/belle-park-master-plan> or contact:

Neal Unsworth  
Manager, Parks Development  
Nunsworth@cityofkingston.ca  
Phone: 613-546-4291, ext. 1811

### WHAT WE HEARD THE MOST

- More focus on naturalization and natural environment (75)
- Would like to see more variation between the options (16)
- Less golf facilities / amenities (16)
- Too much sports field area (12)

### OTHER FREQUENTLY MADE COMMENTS

- Would like an off-leash dog park (10)
- Create a concept concentrating on natural areas (8)
- Make it a "conservation" area (6)
- Provide opportunities for outdoor education (6)
- More indigenous culture incorporated into the design (6)

### OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Opportunities for community Gardening (4)
- Amenities for the art community (3)
- Splash pad (3)
- Baseball diamonds (2)
- Natural playground (2)
- Tennis facilities (2)
- Lawn bowling (1)

(#) = approximate number of responses on survey.

Please note: There are respondents that did not provide detail comments.

## **Sample of comments provided through the survey**

### **Naturalized / Conservation**

- Keep as much of the site naturalized as possible, with other supporting facilities clustered close to Montreal Road.
- We need quiet spot to view the Inner Harbour and nature.
- Less sport focus and more natural space.
- Rugby, pickleball, and pitch and putt would disrupt the serenity of the park.
- Concern with the park turning into a more naturalized area, the K&P trail was naturalized and it is ugly.
- Ensure animals have a safe space to travel and connect with other travel ways.
- Current conservation areas are located on outskirts of City, which make getting to them difficult for people who do not have a car.
- Belle Park could be a small Lemoine Point that is accessible by transit and within walking distance to downtown.

### **Sports and Recreational Amenities**

- This a brownfield site in the city that should be used for sports, this is a poor neighbourhood so this would give the kids something to do and a chance in life by being in a club that builds team spirit.
- Sports fields are limiting and exclusive to certain income bracket and to a larger extent gender.
- There are four apartment buildings around here and many children have no place to play. A naturalize play area within the park would be amazing.
- The new K&P trail is a golden opportunity to bolster additional cycling and walking trails on this property.
- I oppose the new sports fields and the pitch and putt and would prefer to see it somewhere else.
- There should be multiple sports fields and a dedicated clubhouse for the rugby team.
- Increase the size of the pitch and putt.
- Increase the number of pickleball courts

## **Other amenities**

- It's a perfect gathering place and would be great to be able to easily host community events, concerts, etc.
- Off leash dog park would be great here as Memorial Centre offers no shade or area to walk your dog on a trail.
- The current Belle Park plan would not offer enough parking for sports teams and games.
- Development should be limited to public transit station, covered bicycle storage, washrooms and sheltered picnic area(s).
- There is nothing for the art community.
- The current clubhouse could be an interpretive centre explaining the history of the land and explaining the remediation measures that have been successful there.

## **Consideration of Indigenous culture**

- An Indigenous cultural centre is greatly needed.
- Maybe a spot where people can gather outside to do drumming or a fire.
- A system of trails through wild space would be a more appropriate as an entrance to Belle Island, to honour Indigenous sacred land.
- Out of respect for association of this land has with indigenous people and the environment I believe we should maintain its natural state.
- Bringing the public to Belle Island will disrupt our scared land. Too much traffic already.