

Leif Erickson Irrigation and Naturalization

Feedback Report - Engagement Summary



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1 Engagement Summary

Leif Erickson Park was initially identified in 2023 as a location for the installation of a Food Forest Demonstration Site. After more detailed review and consideration through the Park Irrigation & Naturalization Improvements Project and the Park Department's Park Upgrade Program, Leif Erickson Park was also identified to receive additional park upgrades including irrigation and naturalization and other improvements to the park.

In 2024, Leif Erickson Park will receive upgrades as part of the City's Green Network Project, funded in part by the Government of Canada's Natural Infrastructure Fund. The upgrade work will include the installation of a food forest demonstration site, irrigation system improvements and naturalized plantings.

This work is being done as a part of the work being done through the Natural Infrastructure Fund (NIF) Green Network Project, and the coordination of these projects will reduce construction impacts, save time and money by reducing the number of contracts and consolidating design/installation work, and optimize the use of the NIF grant funding.

Plans for the park include:

- Installation of Food Forest Demonstration Site
- Irrigation improvements
- Planting beds / pollinator gardens
- Tree plantings
- Pathways
- Site furniture
- Educational Signage

Portions of the park will be closed throughout construction and the establishment of newly planted areas. More detailed closure information will be confirmed after the tender is awarded and the contractor develops a construction schedule.

To address any impending concerns regarding the upgrade, as well as to update the community about the broader scope of the project, the City engaged with the community to present the park upgrade plans and address any concerns they might have. As a part of the engagement, initial discussions were held with the Westmount Community Association members, also representing the Community Garden.

The community and identified stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed park upgrade were invited to provide feedback during the in-person open house meeting on February 8, 2024.

1.1 City Project Team

Shannon Dyck	Sustainability Specialist, Green Network
Cate Francis	Parks Superintendent
Genevieve Russell	Sustainability Specialist, Water Conservation
Aisha Rafique	Public Engagement Consultant
Jennifer Pesenti	Senior Communications Business Partner

2 Summary of Engagement Activities

The objective of this engagement was to **inform** and **consult with the** local impacted community about the proposed park upgrade at the Leif Erickson Park. Specific engagement goals included:

- Gather feedback on the expanded scope of work planned for the park.
- Provide clear and transparent communication about project timelines, how the process may impact stakeholders and partners, and how input was used to influence the project.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with the community and stakeholder groups.
- Follow the City of Saskatoon's Public Engagement Principles.

Engagement activities for Leif Erickson Park Upgrade project included an Engage webpage that hosted project information and updates, and an in-person public open house event. Flyers were delivered to residents living in the Westmount neighbourhood with information about the open house event held on February 7, 2024, informing about the project and a link to the online survey. Overall, feedback was received from more than 20 residents through emails, discussions, and conversations with the project team as well as the public drop-in session.

2.1 Public Drop-in Session

An in-person public open house session was held on February 8, 2024 from 7p.m. to 8 p.m. at Westmount School (Library), 411 Avenue J N. The intended audience for the open house were residents who would likely be most impacted by proposed park upgrade project. The open house details and flyer were posted on the project's Engage webpage, so interested members of the public outside of the local neighbourhood could access the invitation.

This come-and-go session enabled residents to talk with City staff to ask questions and provide feedback on the proposed measures. 14 community members attended the public information session. Feedback during the open house ranged from requesting further understanding of the proposed park upgrade, food forest designs, community garden, funds, providing recommendations for consideration, questions regarding the next steps for the project, accessing alternative methods to provide feedback and the overall project scope.

2.2 Email and Phone Correspondence

The project's Engage webpage includes contact information for site visitors to send comments or ask questions directly with the project team. There were no major concerns received from the community via emails or phone correspondence. Communications received were generally positive, expressing interest towards the park upgrade.

2.3 Marketing Techniques

The survey was promoted through neighbourhood flyers, the City's social media, as well as the project's Engage webpage.

3 Summary of Feedback

14 members of the community attended the Open House.

Engagement Highlights:

- Overall, the community were positive and appreciative of the expanded scope of work for the park.
- Community members were interested to learn more about the design of the food forest demonstration site and how the project will progress.
- Members of the Westmount Community were interested to learn more about the irrigation facilities that would be provided for them to manage the community garden. Currently they have been facing a challenge with the water supply to manage the community gardens but appreciated the initiative of providing an upgraded irrigation system to the park.
- Some enquired about accessibility to the park while some wanted to know more about the pathways that will be constructed in the park.

4 Limitations

This engagement was focused on the residents in and surrounding Westmount neighbourhood.

Only in-person option was offered as part of this engagement process to try and accommodate participation. Some residents may not have been comfortable or available to attend the in-person engagement session. While an engage page is provided for community members to reach out to the project team, some may have limited access to internet or technology that presented challenges in communicating via the engage page.

5 Next Steps

A summary of engagement results was shared with the Project Team for the way forward and proceed with tendering for the park upgrade. Construction is expected to start in the summer of 2024.