



What We Heard Report #2

Round Two of the Public Engagement for the Rehab Lands Park Planning

November 2021

Policy & Planning | Parks & Recreation

HALIFAX

What We Heard

Overview of the Park Concepts Survey

The intent for Round Two of the public engagement for the Rehab lands park planning was to share three concept scenarios for public feedback. The scenarios were developed around popular themes and ideas that emerged during Round One of engagement. Public input from Round Two will help inform the development of a final concept plan for the park.

In October 2021, an online survey questionnaire was posted to the Shape Your City website. Participation in the survey did not require registration with Shape Your City and there was no intent to obtain a statistically representative sample. The responses were received from September 29, 2021 through November 1, 2021. Results showed that 638 people were aware of the project and visited at least one page online, 465 people were informed and viewed multiple project pages or downloaded information, and 321 people participated in the online survey.

Park Concepts

During Round One we asked people how they use parks, their outdoor recreation interests, and thoughts on what should be considered for the new park on the Rehab lands. From this input, three park concept scenarios were designed around popular themes and ideas that came out during the initial engagement.

The public was invited to read the Park Concepts Presentation then participate in the online survey. The presentation gave an overview of the project and walked through the three different concepts highlighting different options for developing the various park amenities.

The three concept scenarios illustrate how the park might be developed with each scenario building on a different theme. The intention was to explore possibilities and see how different ideas could fit on the site.

Each concept looks at different options for:

- Dog off-leash facilities
- Location of a parking lot
- Trail development
- Access to the lake shoreline
- Development of a pier
- Winter activities
- Other features and amenities.



Concept One - A Place to Play

This scenario focuses on developing the park as a destination, tying in with other nearby recreation attractions of the Provincial Coastal Heritage Park and Rainbow Haven Beach. It focuses on day use activities such as picnicking, disc golf, and access to the lake for boating. Features of the park emphasize social outings and having fun.

Dog Off-Leash Provisions

- Fully enclosed open mowed lawn area located over the capped remediation area.

Parking Lot Location

- Central location close to park activity areas
- Access driveway crosses AT trail

Trail Development

- Single-track trails for hiking and mountain biking
- Dogs would be on-leash on all trails

Access down Bank

- Staircase with ramps built in existing clearing
- Minimal disturbance to trees and sloped bank

Development of Pier

- Floating docks for kayaks and paddleboards

Winter Activities

- Reshape land for sledding hill

Other Features

- Trail rest stop
- Spiral ramp look-off
- Picnic areas
- Disc golf course



Figure 1: Illustration Plan of Concept One - A Place To Play

Concept Two - A Place to Learn:

This scenario looks at opportunities to learn more about the natural environment and strategies for adapting open space for climate change. The park development focuses on rehabilitating the former institutional site with naturalization projects. Site features include nature interpretation, and an outdoor classroom for childrens day camp programming.

Dog Off-Leash Provisions

- Open lawn with trees and meadows
- No fencing
- Some trails designated as off-leash

Parking Lot Location

- Close to Bissett Road
- Driveway doesn't cross AT trail
- Drop-off loop with accessible parking

Trail Development

- Accessible walking trails with gravel paving

Access down Bank

- From the north where grades are gentler

Development of Pier

- Shoreline and lake ecology interpretation

Winter Activities

- Winter hiking and snowshoeing

Other Features

- Ecology and nature interpretation
- Outdoor classroom
- Weather observation equipment
- Pollinator gardens



Figure 2: Illustration Plan of Concept Two - A Place To Learn

Concept Three - A Place to Unplug:

This scenario explores the connections between access to nature, relaxation, and well-being. It builds on the Rehabilitation Center's former use of the site for mental health by developing therapeutic park features. There are opportunities for commemoration to bring awareness to mental health issues.

Dog Off-Leash Provisions

- Enclosed area with mix of trees and meadows
- Outer trails designated as off-leash

Parking Lot Location

- Terraced, built into hill
- Driveway access crosses AT trail

Trail Development

- Wider trail around perimeter
- Narrower internal trails with meditation spots

Access down Bank

- Accessible 5% grade switchback
- More tree cutting and alterations to the bank

Development of Pier

- Fishing

Winter Activities

- Skating on lake when ice conditions are safe
- Some trails maintained for year round use

Other Features

- Meditation labyrinth
- Commemorative garden
- Yoga lawn
- Landscaped sundial



Figure 3: Illustration Plan of Concept Three - A Place To Unplug

Survey Questions

For the first six sections of the survey, participants were asked to rank in order of preference, various options for the different program elements for the park. For each section, participants had an opportunity to provide additional comments.

1. Dog Off-leash Provisions

Q1. Please rank in order of preference, the following options for a dedicated dog off-leash area in the park: (319 responses)

RANK	OPTION
1.97	Dedicated area with a mix of natural areas and mowed lawn that is fenced off from the rest of the park. (Concept 3)
2.29	A large, mowed lawn area located on the remediated, capped area of the site. Fully enclosed by a fence or stone wall. Shade trees planted around the edges. (Concept 1)
2.69	Dedicated area with a mix of forest and meadow areas; no fencing but defined with signs and planting. Lawn mowing is kept to a minimum. (Concept 2)
2.84	Developing a dedicated dog off-leash area is not important to me.

Q2. Please rank in order of preference, the following options for dogs on trails in the park: (317 responses)

RANK	OPTION
1.75	Dogs are on-leash on all trails except for in the dedicated off-leash area. (Concept 1)
2.45	Dogs can be off-leash on the trails on the eastern side of the park. Dogs are on-leash on the Bissett Trail and trails on the western side of the park. (Concept 2)
2.6	Dogs can be off-leash on the perimeter trail. Dogs are on-leash on the Bissett Trail and interior trails. (Concept 3)
2.98	Having dog off-leash trails is not important to me.

Q3. Do you have any other ideas to share or comments about the dog off-leash options? (88 responses)

The common themes for feedback on the dog off-leash options were about responsible dog ownership and safety, having dedicated and fenced areas for off-leash dogs, and ensuring that the off-leash activities are in harmony with the park design and other activities.

2. Parking Lot Location

Q4. Please rank in order of preference, the following options for the location of the main parking lot: (309 responses)

RANK	OPTION
2.0	Outer location close to Bissett Road. Near the Bissett Trail but further away from other park activities. Uses second driveway. Vehicles don't cross Bissett Trail. Does not occupy flat area of the site. (Concept 2)
2.18	Central location close to park activities. Driveway is less steep. Terraced parking built into the slope of the hill to be hidden from view from the hilltop. Vehicles cross the Bissett Trail. Does not occupy flat area of the site. (Concept 3)
2.29	Central location on top of hill close to other park activities. Uses existing driveway. Vehicle access crosses the Bissett Trail. Occupies flat area of the site that could be used for other park activities. (Concept 1)
3.27	Developing a parking lot is not important to me.

Q5. Do you have any other ideas to share or comments about the parking lot options? (48 responses)

The additional feedback provided was about the location of the parking lot within the park, accessibility considerations, maintenance, and other amenities. Concerns about safety along Bissett Road were also raised.

3. Trail Development

Q6. Please rank in order of preference, the following options for trail development: (314 responses)

RANK	OPTION
1.68	Gravel trails developed for walking, jogging and mobility devices. (Concept 2)
1.94	Natural trails developed for strolling and meandering through varying landscapes. (Concept 3)
2.41	Single-track trails developed for hiking and mountain biking. (Concept 1)
3.88	Developing trails is not important to me.

Q7. Do you have any other ideas to share or comments about the trail development options? (48 responses)

The majority of the comments for trails were about the desire to have a variety of types within the park that compliment what is existing and offer different activity and experiences which include accessible walking paths, natural hiking trails, and mountain biking facilities that can take advantage of the terrain. There was also feedback on protection of the natural shoreline and bank, and design consideration for the increase of e-bikes on the trails.

4. Access to Lakeshore

Q8. Please rank in order of preference, the following options for access down the steep bank to the lakeshore: (306 responses)

RANK	OPTION
1.67	Connection to Bissett Trail at the north end of the site where the bank is less steep and the grades are flatter. This option has less impact to existing trees and less alterations to the bank. (Concept 2)
2.3	Switchback ramp with staircase. This option is located in a cleared area with less impact to existing trees but has more built infrastructure. ("Colossal Climber" shown in Concept 1)
3.13	Reinstatement of the original service driveway built for the former Rehabilitation Centre. This option has less impact to existing trees, but the grade is steeper and greater than 10%. (All Concepts)
3.17	Accessible trails built at 5% grade (20:1) cut diagonally through bank. This option has more tree cutting and alterations to the bank. (Concept 3)
4.46	Developing access down to the lakeshore is not important to me.

Q9. Do you have any other ideas to share or comments about the options to access the lakeshore? (28 responses)

Accessibility was a common theme among respondents' comments about accessing the steep bank. Additional feedback was provided around the type of infrastructure and protection of the vegetation and natural shoreline. Being able to access the lake was also an important consideration raised.

5. Water Access

Q10. Please rank in order of preference, the following options for developing the existing concrete structure at the lake's edge: (311 responses)

RANK	OPTION
2.28	Pier with floating docks for tying up small water craft such as kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards. Boats would be launched at existing facilities in Bissett Park across the lake. (Concept 1)
2.7	Pier with a shade structure and seating. (Concept 3)
3.15	Pier with interpretive signage and activity station for learning about the ecology of the lake. (Concept 2)
3.22	Pier with access to lake in winter for skating.
3.9	Pier for fishing.
5.38	Developing a pier is not important to me.

Q.11 Do you have any other ideas to share or comments about the options for accessing the lake? (27 responses)

Multi-use was a common theme with many respondents indicating that the pier could be used for more than one of the activity options. Opportunities for swimming or boat rentals were also mentioned. There were also some concerns raised about the pier being a popular evening spot with potential nuisance around noise and litter.

6. Winter Facilities

Q12. Please rank in order of preference, the following options for winter facilities: (312 responses)

RANK	OPTION
2.4	Some trails maintained for winter use.
2.42	The land reshaped for sledding and snowboarding. (Concept 1)
2.59	Lake access developed for skating when winter ice conditions are safe. (Concept 3)
2.61	Trails developed for snowshoeing. (Concept 2)
4.64	Winter activities are not important to me.

Q13. Do you have any other ideas to share or comments about the options for winter facilities? (27 responses)

Many respondents commented that year-round activities, such as disc golf and hiking, can also be considered for activities that people can participate in the winter. There were also comments about warmer winters and the impact this will have on winter activities that rely on favourable snow or ice conditions.

7. Park Amenities

Q14. Please select your top 7 preferred park amenities. You may choose any combination from all three of the options presented: (321 responses)

ORDER	AMENITY	COUNT	
1	Washroom	266	82%
2	Picnic Tables - Lakeshore	183	56%
3	Picnic Area - Hilltop	169	52%
4	Hilltop Lookoff	162	50%
5	Pollinator gardens, meadows	148	46%
6	Trail Rest Stop	146	45%
7	Disc Golf	118	36%
8	Quiet Seating/ Meditation Spots	114	35%
9	Spiral Ramp Lookoff	112	35%
10	Forest regeneration/ naturalization	97	30%
11	Rehab Center Interpretation	74	23%
12	Nature Interpretation	73	23%
13	Fitness Stations	66	20%
14	Outdoor Classroom	59	18%
15	Programmable Lawn	55	17%
16	Weather Observation Equipment	49	15%
17	Landscaped Sun Dial	42	13%
18	Meditation Labyrinth	34	10%
19	Commemorative Garden	29	9%
20	TV Shows Interpretation	26	8%

Having a washroom in the park was the most preferred park amenity with over 80% of respondents selecting it for one of their top 7 choices. The two picnic areas, hilltop lookoff, pollinator meadows, and the trail rest stop were also popular choices with about half the respondents (45% to 56%).

Disc golf, quiet seating areas, the spiral ramp lookoff and forest regeneration and naturalization were popular choices for about a third of respondents (30% to 36%)

A small percentage of respondents specified other amenities, of which playgrounds were the most commonly noted, followed by a variety of other active recreation facilities, and expansion of the disc golf course to 18 holes. Commemorative features of the former Rehabilitation Centre were also noted.

Preferred Park Amenities

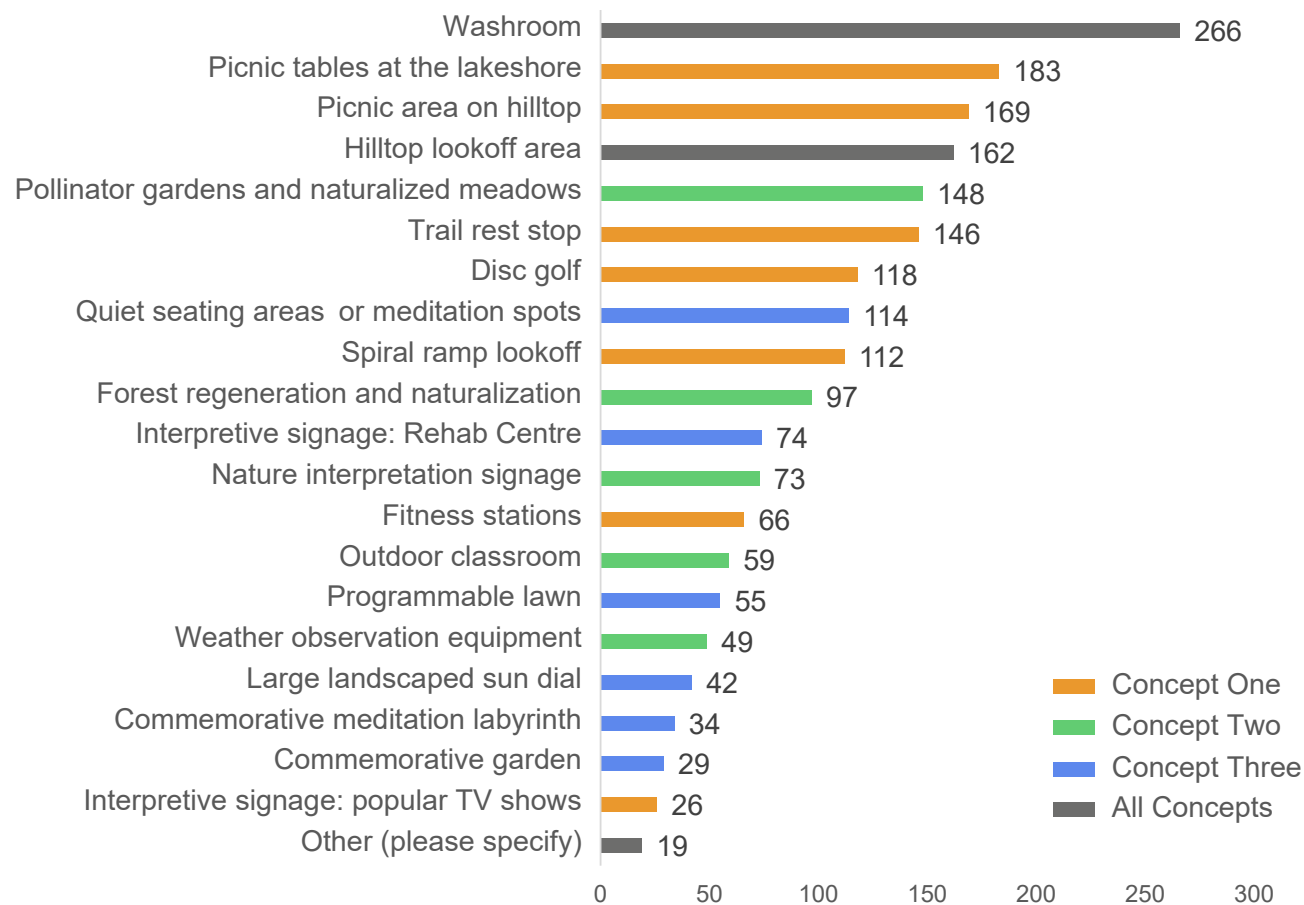


Figure 4: Preferred Park Amenities Graph

7. Concluding Questions

Q15 In general, is there one of the park concepts you prefer more than the others? (319 responses)

Of the three concepts presented, Concept One: A Place to Play was the most preferred with 46% of respondents selecting this park scenario. Concept Three: A Place to Unplug was the second preferred scenario with 35%. Although Concept Two: A Place to Learn was selected by 10% of respondents, many provided feedback that they would like to see the final plan have learning opportunities incorporated with one of the other themes.

Q16 Do you have any final comments about the park planning for the Rehab lands? (73 responses)

Many people commented that they would like to see some combination of the three scenarios in the final plan and that the approach should be to create a multi-generational park that has a variety of experiences and activities.

Other common topics included comments about off-leash dog provisions, advocacy for disc golf or mountain biking, and the value of retaining much of the natural beauty and greenspace of the site.

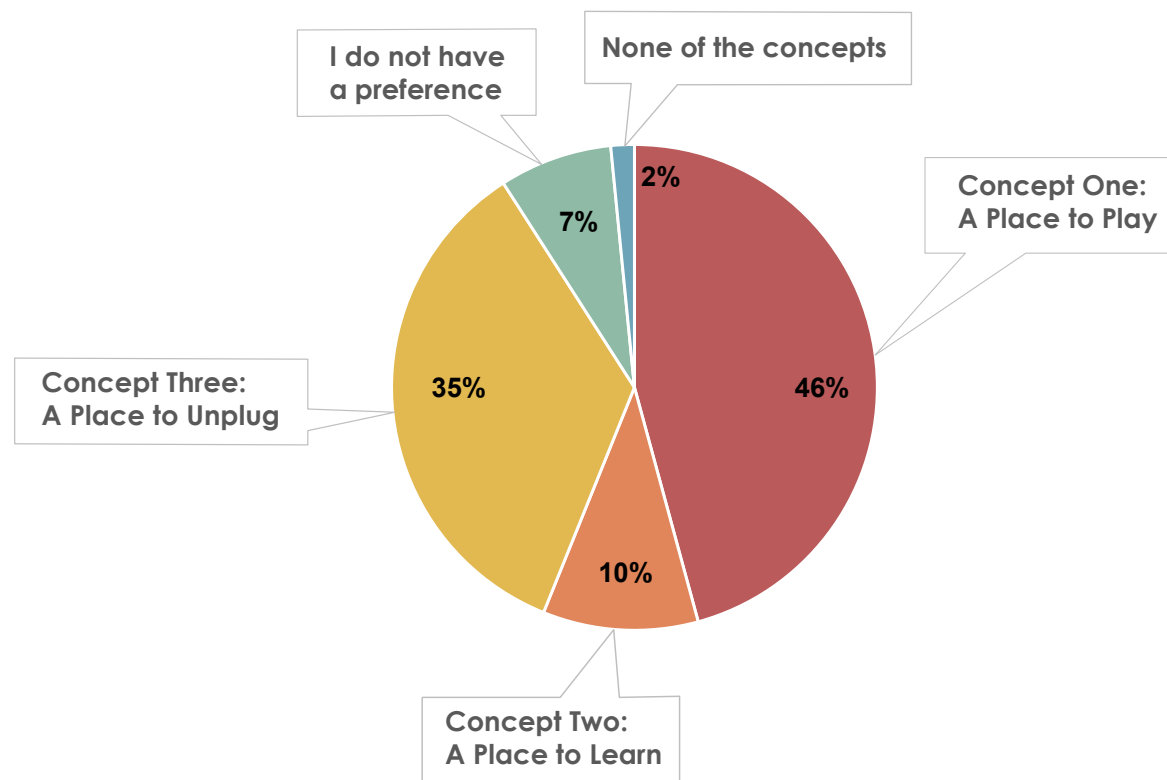


Figure 5: Preferred Park Concept Graph