



## **Grey Nuns White Spruce Park**

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### **Engagement Summary Report**

City of St. Albert

Final Report

January 2020





## 1.0 Background and Summary

The Red Willow Park West Master Plan was updated in 2018 for the City of St. Albert. The master plan includes a vision and key guiding principles, which are to be taken into consideration when making decisions for the development of the area to guide planning and development for existing and future parks. The Master Plan update included extensive public and stakeholder engagement.

Key guiding principles for the plan are:

- Ensuring the protection and conservation of the forest while allowing appropriate use
- Ensuring a balance of environmental stewardship with low impact recreation opportunities

This aligns to the 2014 Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Management Plan that aims to preserve and maintain the White Spruce Forest while guiding park development. The Management Plan outlines three objectives:

- Management for the forest
- Management for the people
- Management for education and awareness

In 2019, the City began detailed design to develop plans for the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park (GNWSP), part of the Red Willow Park West Master Plan. The GNWSP is a unique park that includes the White Spruce Forest, which is a designated Municipal Historic Resource. The park is valued for the recreation opportunities it provides and how it connects to St. Albert's cultural and historic past. With the development of Riverside and increasing use of the GNWSP, there is a need to provide better access to the area while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the White Spruce Forest.

The proposed design for GNWSP will allow the public opportunities to enjoy and learn about the historic and cultural significance of the area while protecting the forest through an appropriate trail system and amenities. Plans include different types of trails, viewing platforms, a nature investigation space and outdoor classrooms, picnic shelter, portable toilets, interpretive areas, and landscape restoration.

In October 2019, concept plans for GNWSP were presented to stakeholders and the public for feedback at a stakeholder meeting, public open house and online. A summary of what we heard from stakeholders and the public regarding the plans is included in the following pages. Feedback received will be reviewed by the City and considered in the final design for GNWSP.

Construction for this project is subject to funding approvals.



## 2.0 Public and Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities

A stakeholder meeting and public open house was held on October 8, 2019 at the Kinsmen Banquet Centre in St. Albert. Stakeholders were invited for a presentation from the project team and were given a chance to ask questions and share their thoughts on the 30% detail design. The public were invited to a drop-in session to view the display boards of the 30% design and complete a survey. An online survey was also available on the City of St. Albert's website from October 8 to October 22, 2019.

Table 1: Engagement Activity

Event/Activity	Date and Time	Location	Participants (approximate)
<b>Key Stakeholder Meeting</b>	October 8, 2019 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Kinsmen Banquet Centre 47 Riel Drive	10
<b>Public Open House</b>	October 8, 2019 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	Kinsmen Banquet Centre 47 Riel Drive	77 30 completed surveys
<b>Online Survey</b>	October 8, 2019 to October 22, 2019	St. Albert Website	113 completed surveys

\* More than 500 comments were shared between the online and in-person surveys

## 3.0 Stakeholder and Public Feedback Summary

### 3.1 Stakeholder Feedback Summary

The key themes below highlight what was heard during the stakeholder engagement on the overall draft concept plans, the proposed trails, amenities and central investigation area for GNWSP.

- Protection and restoration of natural areas is desired
- Proposed uses, pathways and amenities in the already disturbed natural areas is supported
- Limiting the number of pathways, amenities and park uses to limit impact on natural areas and wildlife is desired
- Managing the number of park users to limit impact on natural areas and wildlife through park design is desired

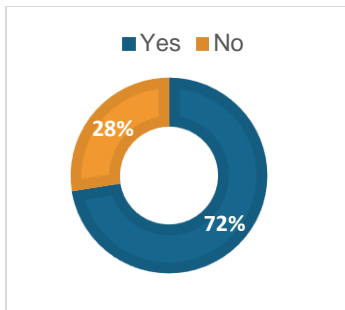
### 3.2 Public Open House and Online Survey Feedback Summary

What We Heard - High-level Themes:

- High desire to manage the increase in the number of people who may use the park due to proposed changes and neighbourhood growth
- Protection and conservation of natural areas and wildlife protection is important
- Proposed pathways and amenities in the already disturbed natural areas is supported
- Trails and amenities in undisturbed natural areas or that may significantly increase park use or negatively impact the natural environment or wildlife is not supported
- Passive recreational and nature enjoyment opportunities are important
- Proposed nature play area had mixed views. A more natural low-impact, interpretative and educational area with less footprint is desired
- Wayfinding and educational interpretive signage is desired

### 3.3 Survey Questions

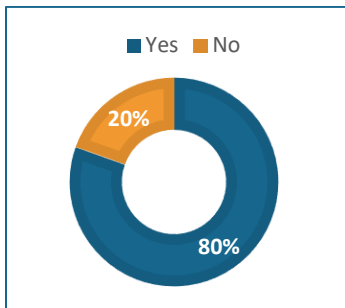
- **Q1: Do you feel the proposed park design supports the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park’s priorities of ensuring protection and conservation of the forest while allowing appropriate public use.**



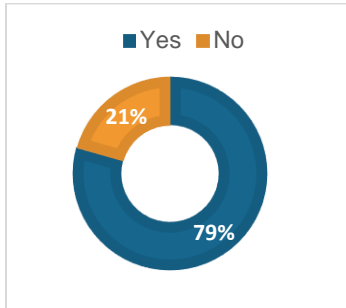
Key themes that were heard include:

- General support for the trails, including enhancing existing trails and adding new trails, although limiting park uses, number and types of pathways and amenities to protect the natural areas and wildlife is important
- Concern that the increased use and development of the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park will have a negative effect on the wildlife and their movement in the area

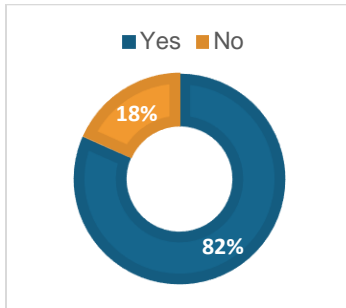
- **Q2: Do you support the location of the multi-use trails and its permitted access?**



**Q3: Do you support the location of the accessible nature trails and their permitted access?**



**Q4: Do you support the location of the forest nature trails and the permitted access?**

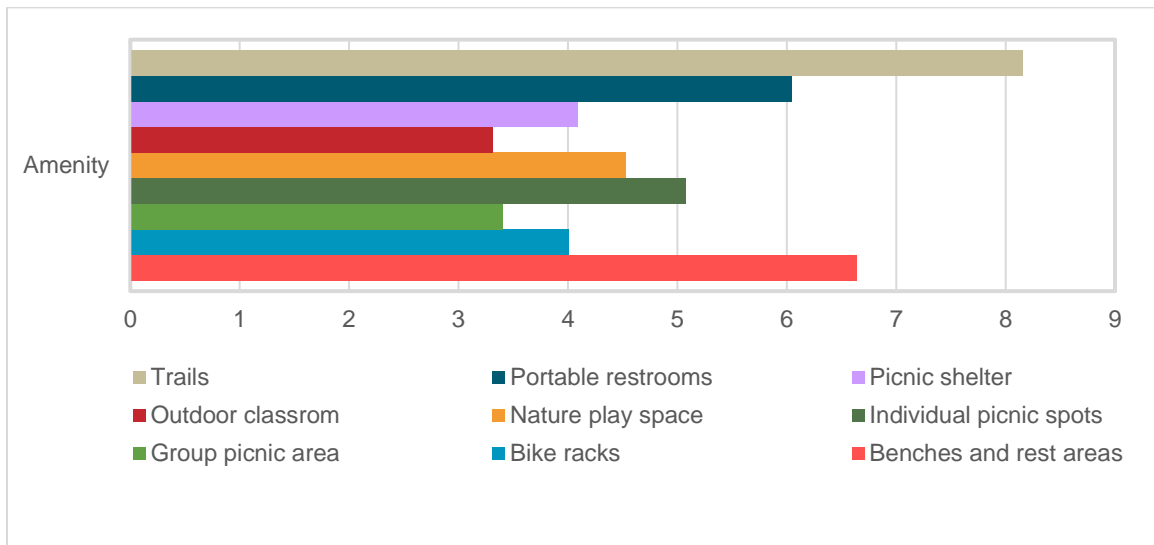


Key themes that were heard include:

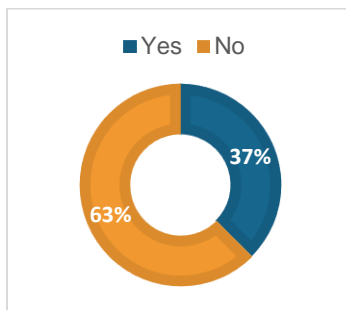
- Proposed new trails that follow existing routes within the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park is supported
- Proposed multi-use trail around the forest is supported and the use of bikes on the multi-use trail is supported
- Limiting the number and types of pathways in the final designs is preferred
- Concerned that the number and types of new trails will negatively impact the natural environment and wildlife in the area



**Q5: Please rank the following amenities you would likely use.**



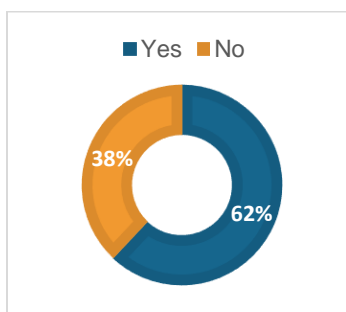
**Q6: Are there other amenities you would like to see that would be appropriate in the park?**



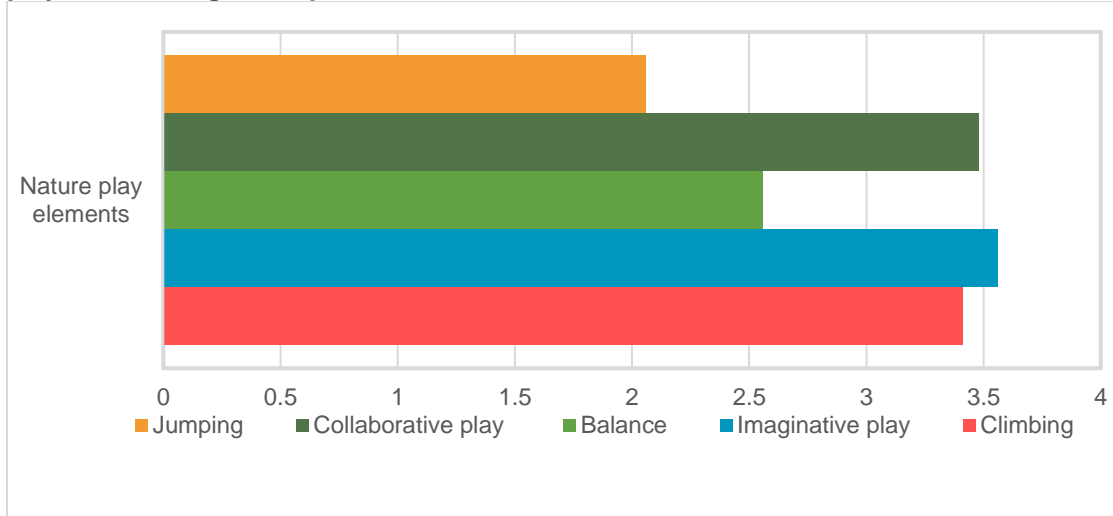
Key themes that were heard include:

- Limit the number of amenities included in the park design to keep the area more natural and protect nature and wildlife

**Q7: Do you support including a nature play and investigation space in the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park**



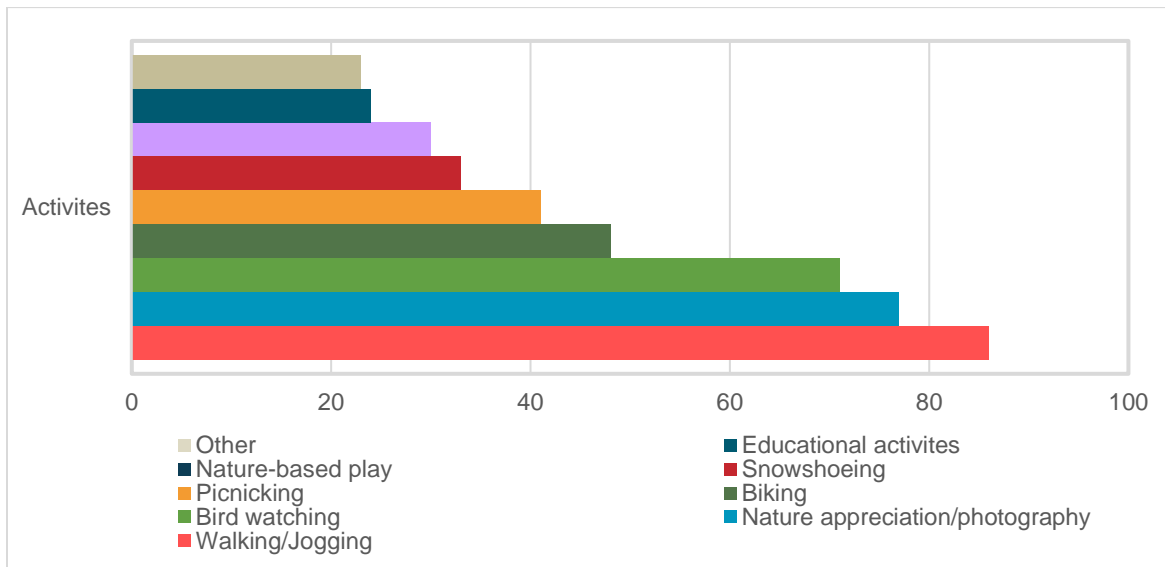
**Q8: Please rank the nature play activities you would like to see incorporated in the nature play and investigation space:**



Key themes that were heard include:

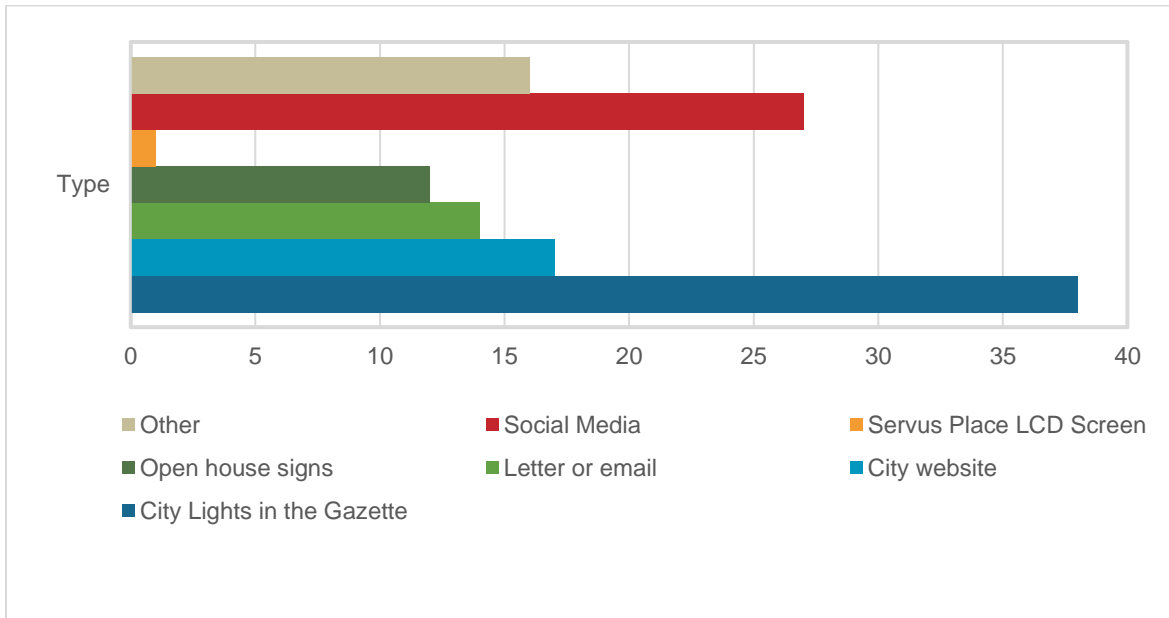
- Passive recreational and nature enjoyment opportunities is important
- Wayfinding and educational interpretive signage is desired

**Q9: Tell us what activities you would like to see you and your family doing in the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park. (check all that apply)**





**Q10: Participants were asked how they heard about the Open House or online survey**



**Q11: General comments**

General comments are captured in the high-level key themes.