

Century Gardens Redevelopment: 2014 Survey Results Summary

BACKGROUND

Located at 826 8th Ave between Seventh and Eighth Avenues and Seventh and Eighth Streets in the southwest quadrant of the city, Century Gardens is a highly valued urban park in the centre of Calgary's bustling downtown. Originally built in 1975, Century Gardens is due for lifecycle maintenance and a review of the ways in which Calgarians prefer to use the park now and in the future.

The park was originally designed and built as an artistic expression of a landscape style now referred to as Brutalist architecture; the fountains and water are symbolic of the region's mountains and rivers. The City recognizes this park and its unique features listing it in Calgary's inventory of evaluated historic resources.


Key stakeholder discussions have been ongoing since 2010 when a design development planning project was launched to explore ways to improve and upgrade the park to meet the needs of Calgarians in a rapidly changing downtown core.

Initial feedback from park users and key stakeholders was gathered using a [PDF Park Use Assessment](#) (2010 survey). Through this survey, The City was able to observe how, when and why people used the park, as well as what perceptions and preferences citizens had concerning park features and opportunities. From there, four different concepts were developed by landscape architect consultants, [PFS](#), and presented to stakeholders for their input. We gathered feedback that revealed a strong preference for heritage preservation. The preferred concept focuses on creating a space for Calgarians where they feel comfortable using the park any time of day year round.



Preferred concept model

2014 SURVEY

Subsequent to the Park Use Assessment, originally conducted in July 2010, a follow up online survey was developed (September 3 – October 15) to confirm general public preferences and perceptions from Calgarians in response to the preferred concept. **We received 258 responses.** View the  [survey results](#).

The responses were used to gauge stakeholder support for key features as well as reconfirm findings from the original 2010 survey to determine if preferences expressed were reflected in the preferred concept. In-park signage, website updates, and stakeholder email distribution lists were the main communication channels used to raise awareness of the survey.

Parks identified several preferred themes in the 2014 online feedback survey. These themes were also identified earlier in the process and are included in the preferred concept.

- Historic significance
- Landscape design
- Safe, well lit park with good sight lines and strong streetscape connections.
- Programmable spaces
- Food services
- Event space/entertainment
- Eating establishments & food trucks
- Desirable features and elements, such as water
- Nature
- Integration of the public park space with the adjacent private commercial space.

The above themes will be further reflected in detail design.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue collaborating with developer to confirm interface between the private and public spaces.
- Document existing park structures (surveying, scanning, construction drawings, utility inspection and mapping).
- Council approval will be part of the process. A date is not set for presentation to Council.
- Detail design will be followed up with construction specifications.

CONCLUSION

The four year DDP (Design Development Plan) process, revealed broad support for the preferred concept which favours retention of heritage elements where possible, respecting the original artistic composition and site layout, modernizing and improving key features (such as lighting, seating and infrastructure) and addressing safety concerns. Respondents emphasized the importance of creating a well designed and well managed downtown urban space, with careful consideration on how best to maximize limited space, which is reflected in the preferred concept.