

Imagine Parks



2023 Monitoring report

As we continue our commitment to plan, build and maintain excellent parks and open spaces that are safe, inclusive and welcoming for all Calgarians I’m pleased to provide an update on the progress our team is making towards our Council approved Imagine Parks targets in 2023.

Connection with our environment and each other is more important than ever as Calgary and other municipalities work towards improving the physical and mental wellbeing of our communities and grapple with the impact of climate change on our urban canopies and natural areas.

I want to thank our team, partners, community members and City Council for your continued passion to improve our parks and open spaces and look forward to our ongoing collaboration in 2024 to provide equitable access to parks for all.

Kyle Ripley
Director, Parks and Open Spaces

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Central Memorial Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Imagine Parks is the 30-year vision for Parks that sets the overall strategic direction for the development and management of public parks and open spaces in Calgary. Calgary's Parks and Open Space are cherished places that connect us to nature, our heritage and one another.

It was approved by Council in 2015 and helps to align the work of Parks and Open Spaces with the 100-year imagineCALGARY urban sustainability plan and vision for Calgary. As part of the implementation for this work, nine indicators of success were created to bridge the gap between citizens' vision of the future of parks and open spaces and how staff will implement and measure the progress towards the ideal future state of the parks

system. These indicators have been created with a 10-15 year time-frame in order for progress to be made, measured, tracked and if necessary, course corrected. These indicators of success allow Parks and Open Spaces to clearly and succinctly communicate our story and the value that our work provides to citizens.



Connection

Increase the % of Calgarians that have connected with parks and open spaces to 90% by 2030.



Wellness

For months with snow, increase the % of Calgarians spending more than 20 minutes in a park or open space to 85% by 2030.



Reducing Barriers to Access

Increase the % of households within a 400m walking distance of a multifunctional park or open space.





Experiences

To achieve a Customer Level of Service (CLOS) rating of at least 2.0 for all regional/destination parks and at least 3.0 for all other park types by 2030.



Conservation and Ecosystem Resiliency

Increase the Habitat Condition Rating (HCR) category for 20% of the priority 1 and 2 Natural Environment Parks to perform at their full ecological potential by 2035.



Sustainable Management

Sustainable and resilient practices in planning and managing parks and open space are increased.



Best Practices

Maintain the 'Overall Best Practices' score of 90% in the Yardstick Report until 2030.



Valuing External Partnerships

Parks partnerships overall value to Calgarians is increased.



Parks Workplace Culture

Increase the Corporate Employee Survey score to 75% for select questions by 2030.

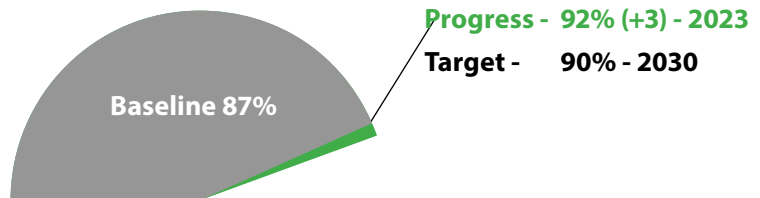
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Imagine Parks targets

Target

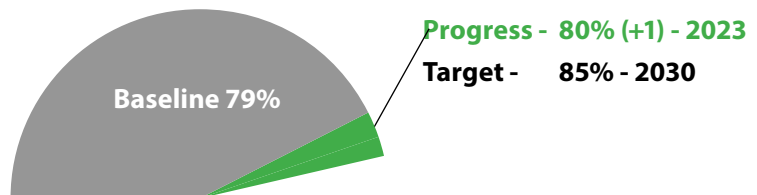
Connection - Increase the % of Calgarians that have Connected with parks and open spaces to 90% by 2030.

[For more information, please see page 5.](#)



Wellness - For months with snow, increase the % of Calgarians spending >20min in a park or open space to 85% by 2030.

[For more information, please see page 8.](#)

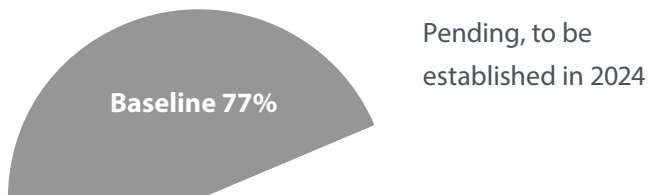


Expanding winter activations have been occurring year over year; especially since the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were in place and the establishment of this target. Operations staff will continue to expand these efforts across Parks and Open Space assets in the future. Additional emphasis will be put towards enhancing the communications of these winter opportunities

available in parks and open spaces through the Parks and Open Spaces communications efforts. In 2024, additional research will be conducted to investigate what behaviours, preference and barriers exist for potential users to visit parks and open spaces specifically in the winter months through the 2024 Pulse on Parks Survey.

Reducing Barriers to Access - increase the % of households within a 400m walking distance of a multifunctional park or open space.

[For more information, please see page 9.](#)



Experiences - To achieve a Customer Level of Service (CLOS) rating of at least 2.0 for all Regional/Destination parks and at least 3.0 for all other park types by 2030.

[For more information, please see page 13.](#)

**Regional/Destination - 100% scored >2.0*
all other park types - 100% scored >3.0*
* Rounded to closest 0.5**

Target

Conservation and Ecosystem Resiliency - Increase the Habitat Condition Rating (HCR) category for 20% of the priority 1 and 2 Natural Environment Parks to perform at their full ecological potential by 2035.

[For more information, please see page 17.](#)

2021

Fair to Moderate

- Edworthy Park
- Douglasdale NEP

Poor

- JH Woods Park

2023

Fair to Moderate

- Edworthy Park
- Douglasdale NEP

Poor

- JH Woods Park

2035

Good to Excellent

- Edworthy Park
- Douglasdale NEP

Fair to Moderate

- JH Woods Park

Sustainable Management - Sustainable and resilient practices in planning and managing parks and open space are increased.

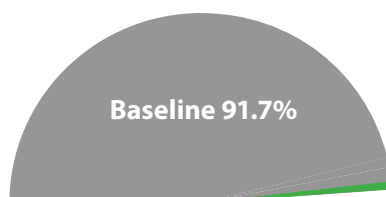
[For more information, please see page 21.](#)

Pending, to be established in 2024

Pending, to be established in 2024

Best Practices - Maintain the 'Overall Best Practices' score of 90% in the Yardstick Report until 2030.

[For more information, please see page 25.](#)



Progress - 97.1% (+0.5) - 2023
Target - 90% - 2030

Valuing External Partnerships - Parks partnerships overall value to Calgarians is increased.

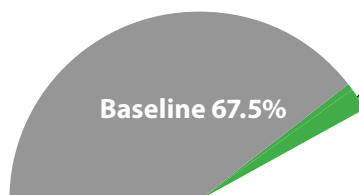
[For more information, please see page 28.](#)

Pending, to be established in 2024

Pending, to be established in 2024

Parks Workplace Culture - Increase the Corporate Employee Survey score to 75% for select questions by 2030.

[For more information, please see page 32.](#)



Progress - 70.7% (+1.2) - 2023
Target - 75% - 2030

Connection



Connection is the overarching indicator of success and directly links to the vision statement for Imagine Parks.

It is why our staff do what they do. Our top priority is build a connection between Calgarians and their parks and open spaces. For our purposes, Connection is defined as “The experience of being outdoors, enjoying

nature and socializing with friends and family in parks and open spaces”. Through public surveying this is how Calgarians have told us they understand the concept of what connecting with parks means to them.

Capital Projects Delivered in 2023 -

Baseball Diamond (1)
Sport field irrigation (1)
River Access/Riparian Repair (10)
Sport Court (2)
Storm pond (1)
Bank Stabilization/Rehabilitation (9)
Community Rink (1)
Pathway (3)
Bike Skills Park/Pump Track (4)
Community Park (7)
Naturalization (1)
Legacy Garden (1)
Haskayne Legacy Park

Community Parks - Increased by 75

Adopt-a-Rink Program - Ran at full capacity of 80 in 2023

Chinese Market Garden at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary - Historic Resources Impact Assessment and Mitigation created two opportunities for Calgarians to sign-up and learn more about the project and see archaeology in action. A private tour for the Koo Family (one of the original market garden families) was also conducted.

Downtown Parks Safety Group -

Created a more vibrant downtown with park activations, murals, and washroom attendant program to increase safety.

Installation of Upgrades and Additional Furniture in Parks -

Based on need and to facilitate a more positive visitor experience (incl. shade structures, seating, picnic tables).

Eighty Royal Canadian Air Cadets (RCAC) - Cadets expanded The City's tree canopy while honouring their upcoming centennial by creating a living memorial of 100 trees in Garrison Green's A. D. Ross Park. This site has a historical connection to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). The memorial included 25 Dwarf Spruce and 75 Autumn Blaze maple trees accompanied by tulips with a historical connection to the RCAF.

Winter Golf (aka Snowball) - Thanks to great weather and responsiveness from Golf staff, Snowball was able to take place at Maple Ridge and Shaganappi over the November 10-13 and 18-19 weekends and December 5, far past the traditional closing date of Thanksgiving. Operating these dates increased the overall rounds of golf played at City courses by 1,993 rounds and filling 86% of available tee times offered.

New Pathway Construction/ Missing Links - New pathway assets were created to connect users to green spaces, including Albert Park Schools and Huntington Hills' Nose Hill Tunnel, improving access for everyone and making sites more accessible to those who have mobility limitations.



RCAF 100 year planting A.D. Ross Park

Edworthy Park Bulb Beds -

Continued the spring bulb display initiated in 2022 to boost visual display and curb appeal to incoming/ outgoing traffic at the entrance to Edworthy Park.

Edworthy Park Amenity

Enhancements - Horseshoes were added onsite to encourage play and activate the site as well as provision of portable soccer nets and volleyball nets for casual play.

Environmental Education Booths -

Set up at events booked in parks.

Parks Staff - Greater staff presence around the gardens at Prairie Winds Park to connect and drive community awareness of planting and maintenance practices.



Bowness Park



The focus of this indicator is to contribute to community wellness in ways that are within Parks' control.

Research shows that being in a park space, regardless of the activity being engaged in provides benefits to the mental, physical and social wellbeing of an individual. Parks and Open Spaces has chosen to focus on months

with snow on the ground as it is during this time frame that our data indicates there is room to positively impact the wellbeing of Calgarians.

North Glenmore Park as a Winter Destination

- Outdoor activities; including: 1 half size curling rink, 1 hockey shinny rink, 1 ice trail (760 m long), 2 crokicurl rinks including children's curling rocks and brooms, 7 fire pits, 2 garden dome bubble tents, winter display planters, 2 cross-country ski trails (2,300m and 750m in length). Increased snow clearing around picnic areas and benches has led to more use of the trails and furniture.

West Confederation Park Ice Rink - Includes bookable firepits and shelter.

Big Marlborough Park Skating Rink

- A converted Sea-Can (Parklet) was borrowed and added a fire pit to the rink to add a sheltered seating area, warmth, and a sense of atmosphere.

Golf Course Operations Winter Enhancements

- Expanded cross-country ski and snowshoe grooming at all sites and served as the host venue for Canada Special Olympics Winter Games at Maple Ridge.

Hosted Winter City Design Competition Winner

- Event held at Barb Scott Park to encourage winter activation.

Prairie Winds Park Winter Activation

- Included expanded skating rink, installation of a new heated rink service to increase quality and reduction of vehicles needed to create the ice rink (providing environmental benefits), placement of fire pits with community bookable sites and collaboration with Mobility to utilize Sea-Can (Parklet) to provide seating and wind break.

Hosted Ward Meet-and-Greets with Councilors

- Collaborated with Recreation to visit Adopt-a-Rink locations with bins of winter activity provisions.

Snow and Ice Control (SNIC)

- Program continued with 95% of routes being cleared within 24hr of snowfall ending for pedestrian safety in collaboration with the Mobility Business Unit. Responded to 24 snow events, clearing 12,500km over 60 routes city-wide. Improvements for the 2023/2024 season included an increase of 150km to be cleared with a focus on major connections and surrounding communities. Special military sites were also placed on a weekly snow clearance schedule to facilitate park access in winter.

Prince's Island Lagoon Skating

- Work began to provide skating on the Prince's Island Lagoon in preparation of the Olympic Plaza closure for construction in 2024.

Edworthy Park Sea-Can Parklet

- Has been installed and decorated festively, utilized as seating node/ point of interest for winter patrons.

Reducing barriers to access



The intent of this indicator is to reduce barriers that people have when attempting to access our parks and open spaces to improve the inclusivity of public spaces.

Simply providing parks and open spaces does not fulfill Parks' mandate if people do not want use or see value in using our parks and open spaces.

This indicator speaks to intentionally managing our provision and design of spaces to ensure that they are accessible to all citizens.

All-Terrain Wheelchair Rentals -

Skis were purchased for all-terrain wheelchairs to allow for winter use at Nose Hill Park, which increased accessibility for users over the winter months.

Parks Tipi Project - As part of our journey towards Truth and Reconciliation, we recognized a need to include amenities in parks that are relevant to Indigenous Peoples and provide spaces for celebration of their culture. This project is also in response to the calls to action identified in the White Goose Flying Report. Tipis from Tsuut'ina Nation, Blackfoot Confederacy, Stoney Nakoda Nations and a trapper's tent from the Métis Nation of Alberta are coming to City parks. Three tipis and one trapper tent were acquired and can be booked by Indigenous-serving organizations and groups to promote cultural connection,

reconnection, ceremony, and healing. The City continues to work in partnership with Iyethka Stoney Nakoda to acquire tipis specific to the Bearspaw, Chiniki and Goodstoney Nations. The structures will be made available throughout warmer months when we are able to stake in park amenities; Parks & Open Spaces is currently working in collaboration with our cultural partners to refine processes based on learnings from our first year of program delivery.

Parks Elders Guiding Circle

- This project advanced four calls to action from the White Goose Flying Report relating to healing practices, spiritual self-determination, Treaty relationships, and public programming. This work will upgrade a Parks facility to accommodate Indigenous spirituality and ceremonies.

Tree Equity in the NE - Increased work done on soil remediation and tree planting in the NE quadrant of The City where the tree canopy coverage is inequitable.

Accessible Outdoor Rink Achieves Gold Certification from Rick Hansen Foundation & Receives 2022 City of Calgary Accessibility Award for Universal Design - With funding support from The City, the Parkdale Community Association rebuilt its rink—Alberta's first accessible outdoor community rink—which now accommodates more Calgarians of differing abilities and needs, including para ice hockey players. This project was also supported by the Calgary Parks Foundation.



Parkdale Outflow



Haskayne Legacy Park

Inclusive Playgrounds Win Parents' Choice Award

The City's inclusive playgrounds have been recognized by Calgary's Child Magazine's "2023 Parents' Choice Awards" as the Best Accessible/Inclusive Experience for Kids. Inclusive playgrounds are engaging, fun spaces where everyone can play regardless of their abilities.

Haskayne Legacy Park - Our newest 126-hectare regional park opened on Sept. 16 in northwest Calgary with over 1,500 people estimated in attendance at the event. The site includes the first net-zero energy building in the City's building portfolio. This land is a pristine ecologically important landscape with rich cultural history.

2023 Alberta Golf All Abilities

Championship - Held at McCall Lake Golf Course with a roster of 24 participants, this is the first time the event has been hosted in Alberta. It was a great chance to showcase one of our courses and learn about accessibility challenges for golf courses and how we can improve.

Pot Light Maintenance at Reader

Rock Garden - Allowed for better visibility in the park during dark periods to increase safety for park users throughout the year.

Creation of a Comprehensive GIS Parks and Open Spaces Walk

Layer - Improved geographical understanding of parks and open spaces in Calgary, including a walkability analysis to parks.

Floating Dock Expansion at Carburn

Park - Expanded the dock further into the lagoon, creating more dock space for citizens to interact with the lagoon.

Bollard Removal Program

Removed bollards on pathways where placement does not improve park function; 200 bollards were assessed this year to determine if they were necessary for site functionality/security. Of these 134 were able to be removed to improve accessibility and permeability of park spaces for active modes users.

Shaganappi Point Golf Course**Named Youth on Course Program****Location of the Year by Golf Canada**

- Shaganappi Point led the country by hosting a total of 1,832 Youth on Course rounds in 2023. Youth on Course golfers paid \$5 for their green fees - a price that was made possible by over \$13,000 in green fee subsidies.

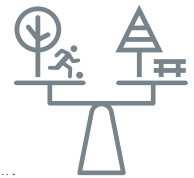
City Course Ladies' Tournament**Celebrated its 25th Anniversary**

- This tournament was created 25 years ago as a collaborative effort by the ladies' leagues from all the municipally-operated golf courses. The league golfers must qualify to attend the tournament each year. The host league and site rotates through the golf courses each year while maintaining the celebration of women's golf with every event.

Accessible Playground Map

Created - Created a public facing map identifying playgrounds city-wide, including which locations are accessible or have accessible components.

Experiences



Experiences represents how Parks' contributes to providing community members with the opportunity to have positive experiences while visiting a park or open space no matter their reason for visiting.

It is the priority of Parks and Open Spaces to provide a consistent quality of experience for all Calgarians no matter where in the city they live and that all parks of a similar typology are equitably maintained. The Customer Level of Service (CLOS) metric is a city-wide tool measuring the quality and provision of assets within park spaces. A CLOS of 2.0 means that

citizens can experience a regional park that includes specialized amenities that are available, open, and maintained at "very good" condition level. A CLOS rating of 3.0 means that citizens can enjoy a park space within their community with standard amenities that are maintained at a "good" condition level.

Customer Level of Service Model

Updated - This rating system will be used to guide zone operational work plans.

Inglewood Bird Sanctuary Nature

Centre Displays - Educating visitors on birds in the area and the history of The Sanctuary featuring Tony LePrieur, Finance Lead for Parks & Open Spaces, an avid wildlife photographer who donated the wildlife photos used in the displays.

Siksikaitstapi Public Tour at Mohksisis Nitommo (Nose Hill)

- Offered in collaboration with Recreation and Social Programs. This walk was led by Blackfoot Elder Brian Yellowhorn.

Winged Wisdom Trail Created at the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary -

This trail highlights Indigenous art and teachings featuring the birds of Treaty 7 and wisdom of the local Elders.

Echoes of the Past Trail at Nose

Hill Park - This trail will take you on a journey through time offering a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples in the area.

Olympic Plaza Washroom Mural -

The mural was organized through the Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP), which is funded through the Government of Alberta's Downtown Revitalization Fund. It was created to beautify the washrooms in an initiative focused on Downtown Parks Safety. The mural was painted by artist Fleo K6A.

Devonian Gardens Mural -

Repurposed a blank wall into a stunning conversational piece created by artist Emily Chu in collaboration with BUMP.



Climbing Boulders - Installed and are now available at Millennium Park free of charge.

Calgary's first Parkour Park - Opened in northeast Calgary.

Thursday Night Performances - Took place at the Quinterra Music Stage.

Haysboro Dog Park Improvements - Shrub beds were improved and areas leveled for easier walking, at the request of the community. Through the support of the Councillor and

community association, the land was identified as an area of great interest and use by the community members. It was previously under Transit Infrastructure due to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) construction and needed to be reintegrated into Parks' regular maintenance schedule. These efforts brought the space back up to Parks and Open Spaces maintenance expectations.

Improved Event Locations - Expanded electrical connection has reduced/eliminated the need for

generators at large events including North Glenmore Park and Prairie Winds Park.

FINN Electric Golf Scooters - Added to the golf cart fleet available for rental at McCall Lake Golf Course.

Murdoch Park Sports Field Renovation - The sports field was resurfaced and soccer nets were removed to maintain the condition of the grass for access by youth and tot soccer.



Crescent Heights Caragana Pruning

- Took place to increase visibility into the park, to discourage the vulnerable population from camping in them and to rejuvenate the plants themselves.

Memorial Drive Shrub Beds -

Improvements to ongoing maintenance to make the area more inviting and increase visibility.

Devonian Gardens Integrated

Pest Management Plan – Initiated to improve customer experiences when visiting the gardens and Core shopping mall.

Asset-based Improvements -

Completed on Parks and Open Spaces assets including playgrounds, disc golf courses, playfields, pump tracks, skate parks, off-leash areas, cricket, local community parks, etc.

Agreements Executed - Done to support community group efforts to improve their public spaces. This included Optional Amenity Agreements, Lease/License of Occupation changes and Letters of Agreement for assets including Little Libraries, art projects, skating rinks, etc.

Beaver Song and Tipi Transfer Event

- Indigenous-led events held on Paskapoo Slopes/Medicine Hill. This site is currently under renovations to serve as a centre for indigenous elder-led events.

Clearwater Camp Bookings -

Increased usage into second year under new booking system at this unique indigenous-themed day campsite.

Downtown Washroom Attendants

Project - Piloted to increase the safety for park users that need to use this amenity.

Shrub Bed Safety Pruning -

Overgrown shrub beds have been pruned to allow a clear line of sight into our garden spaces. Completing these overhauls in many beds within the Centre City zone has improved safety and security for both employees and the public.

Trail Management Strategy -

Used to inform decisions on trail improvements, including design which will improve longevity of trail assets and decrease degradation due to design deficiencies.

Second Year of Turf Rehabilitation

Projects in Thomson Family Park and Barb Scott Park - Turf converted to outdoor skating rinks in the winter have resulted in degrading of turf. Improved maintenance procedures and practices have begun to build resiliency on the turf.

Renovated Flower Beds - Beds in front of Historic City Hall were renovated by removing sod from the center of the beds and planting the plants.

Flower Pots or Flower Beds

Installed - Completed in Egerts Park in Thorncliffe and 2 locations in Taradale. This was done to improve the user experience and create consistency of attributes at regional parks across the city.

Shrub Bed Rejuvenation and

Mulching - Completed in the communities of Livingston, Carrington, Cityscape, and Martindale.

Increased in Portable Toilet

Facilities - In communities where there was a demonstrated need.

Shared Feedback with Parks

Development Inspectors - Ensuring that feedback and suggestions are considered as new parks are being created by developers. Prioritizing these new spaces to ensure they are turned over and maintained to an acceptable standard.

Created a Temporary Off-Leash

Area - Used an underutilized piece of land to create a temporary off-leash area for residents of Harvest Hills, Country Hills, Panorama, and Coventry Hills. Collaborated with Calgary Transit, who own the land.

Valour Circle - Enhanced year-round maintenance and improvements at this culturally-significant veteran's memorial in the community of Currie.

Conservation and ecosystem resiliency



Calgary Parks and Open Spaces not only provides a service to citizens but also acts as the protector and steward for the environment for present and future Calgarians.

This indicator measures the ecological health of our natural environment parks using a tool called the Habitat Condition Rating (HCR). It has been specifically built for our three dominant terrestrial habitats here in Calgary: grasslands, forests, and shrublands. Within

each of these terrestrial habitat categories, separate metrics have been created to evaluate structure, function, and composition of habitat. Together these metrics result in the HCR score for a park.

Created Mini-Forests - Creation of two more mini-forests, which will provide greater diversity in the type of open space that people will encounter in their neighbourhoods. Monitoring of three previously planted mini-forests continues. This was a collaborative effort between Urban Conservation, Urban Forestry, Calgary Climate Hub, Alberta Ecotrust, and Alberta Native Plant Council.

Extraction of Nine Elms - Elm trees located on 9th Avenue in Bridgeland were girdled by concrete vault covers. Through the collaboration of Urban Forestry & Mobility, the concrete vault covers were extracted to retain and prolong the life of the trees.

Canadian Geographic Feature Story - Twelve amazing biodiversity projects were featured in the article with a detailed write-up and pictures for each.

Tree Planting Target to Contribute to the Tree Canopy - Sustainably planted 6,335 trees in parks and streetscapes to grow the urban tree canopy. Achieved the 2023 Canopy Expansion Program target of planting 92,000 seedlings.

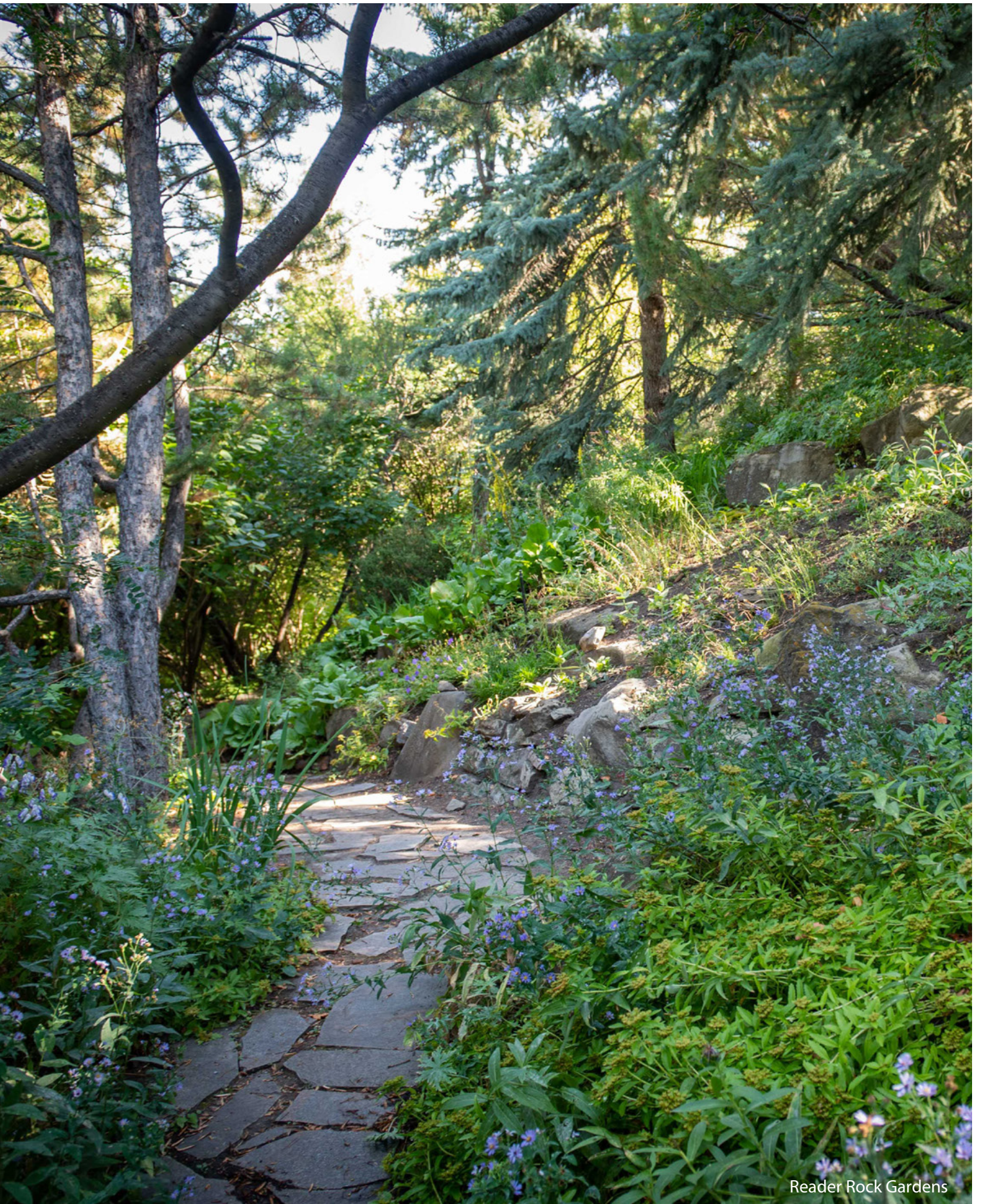
Naturalization at City of Calgary Golf Courses - Golf Course Operations expanded their naturalization efforts on all golf courses in areas of the sites that would not affect play.

Naturalization at Murdoch Park -

The bare slope at Murdoch Park was naturalized and used as a trial for Natures Turf and Bee Turf, decreasing the amount of bare soil and adding visual interest. This will not require mowing or irrigation and will benefit the pollinators. This product has also been used at several natural areas to increase the amount of flowering material for pollinators and to sod over unwanted trails and ware lines.

Queens Park Off-Leash Area

Naturalization - Naturalized the area around the large groupings of trees to tall grass. Worked with our ecologist to add native wildflowers, which enhance biodiversity and reduce the mowing maintenance required to protect woody assets from compaction and damage from maintenance equipment.





Reader Rock Garden Native Bed -

A new native bed was installed to provide visitors an opportunity to learn about native plant material. The bed will increase biodiversity in the park and once established it will not need supplemental water. Garden staff kept a dead tree standing allowing it to naturally decay to provide a home for pollinators, insects, and birds.

Reader Rock Garden Perennial Bed

Renovations - Returned them to what they would have looked like during William Reader's time. We are reintroducing 100-120 species per year to the garden and have now re-added 45% of Reader's original planting list.

Natural Area Rehabilitation - Parks teams worked on areas that have been negatively impacted by homeless camps, biking, vandalism, invasive species, etc. and supported planting pest control programs. This increased biodiversity, reduced air and noise pollution, and helped to increase wildlife habitats.

1,000 Shrubs Planted - Located in the Stoney Industrial area which include (Red Osier, Bunchberry – A type of Dogwood). These shrubs were donated from another project. As these are native plants that are found in riparian areas, Zone Ecologists suggested the best sites for them to be planted and thrive.

Prince's Island Park Expansion of Native Material Planning -

Continued planting of native material and established a new mow area. This site has had no fertilizer added to the turf in five years and mulching all the leaves in the park. A better understanding that natural compost and good water management is the key to healthy turf has helped us maintain turf quality even with the number of onsite events, and high level of daily use by citizens. The turf has maintained its quality.

Multiyear Native Grassland Habitat Conservation and Restoration Project at Elliston Park -

In partnership with City ecologists and suppliers', restoration started by overseeding with native grass seed mix.

Weaselhead Habitat Management Plan - Completed public engagement and transitioned to an internal review stage.

Thistle Mitigation in Natural Areas -

In collaboration with Parks ecologist and Integrated Pest Management, Operations identified critical massing of noxious thistle in natural areas. Thistle was cut back just prior to going to seed, those sites were then mapped and scheduled for herbicide treatment within three weeks to maximize plant kill.

Weed Control - Procedures

were executed to improve the Habitat Condition Rating of parks identified as priority 1 and 2 Natural Environment Parks for restoration activities.

Riparian Area Restoration Sites

- There are also two existing large operational funded restoration sites in the riparian area, where caragana control and native seeding and plantings have been undertaken every year since 2018. A TD Tree Day funded volunteer event has taken place in these areas for the last two years.

Ralph Klein Park Initiated a Turf

Alternative Pilot - Utilized 18 test plots to grow alternative crops. These areas included no shade, substantial hours of sun and wind, and compacted weedy soil; arguably some of the worst growing conditions in Calgary. The goal is to demonstrate that there are feasible alternatives to planting grass in some of our hard-to-maintain spots.

Sustainable management



This indicator incorporates sustainable management into Parks' work via the three-lens framework of the triple bottom line.

It includes a balanced concern for social, environmental and economic impacts on decision-making, programs, improvements, investments, etc. This will ensure that the parks system is strong now

and will remain strong in the future. The resiliency of Calgary's parks and open space is integral to a sustainable operational and development framework.

Phase One of the Sustainable management target complete -

A comparative analysis of existing sustainable management tools was completed.

Glenmore Reservoir Parks/ Weaselhead Natural Area Park

Management Plan - Public engagement occurred this year and data is being analyzed to support the update of the management plan.

Silverado Median Planting Project -

Experimented with different salt-tolerant ground covers to determine if alternatives to turf can be utilized more on challenging sites.

Urban Tree Canopy Action Plan -

Created an interdepartmental Urban Tree Canopy Action Plan to achieve the Municipal Development Plan targets.

Updated Pathway and Bikeway

Map - Created to improve information available to the public and to inform operational and capital decision making.

Archaeological Significance

Reviews - Reviewed 200 projects for archaeological significance and submitted 100 applications for provincial approval.

Dog Waste Composting Pilot -

A pilot in collaboration with Waste and Recycling was created to divert dog waste from the landfill to compost facilities instead. QR codes signs were installed on-site and educators visited locations to provide to educate the public. Infrastructure supported this work by installing posts with compostable bag dispenser to provide free compostable bags.

Reader Rock Irrigation Innovations During Water Restrictions

- Focused on finding innovative ways to reduce the amount of water that was being used for irrigation purposes when water restrictions were imposed this summer.



Ralph Klein Park



Ralph Klein Park

Turf Agronomics and Shrub Bed

Rejuvenation - Renovated several shrub beds and completed turf agronomics in various community and regional parks. This work reduces undesirable activities and makes the parks open and inviting, increases plant health and decreases the amount of weed species.

Zone 4 Depot Assignments - Zone 4 workforce was separated into four separate locations based on the communities that they are responsible for. This increased efficiency and decreased response time to 311's.

Pesticide Rotation Program - Integrated Pest Management has developed a pesticide rotation program to limit the risk of pest resistance, increase different product availability and expand the number of available vendors which in turn assisted with supply chain issues and inflation.

Reduced Turf Agronomics -

Ensuring that work is only completed as needed to maintain the quality expectations.

Keeping Naturalized Spaces

Litter Free - Ensuring Parks staff are proactively clearing litter, emphasizing areas adjacent to active developments.

Mechanical Weed Control - Deferred to mechanical weed control over chemical weed control wherever possible.

South Horticulture Club - Created subcommittees where subject matter experts can work on specific issues and report back to the larger group. The Agronomic Sub-Committee found new and innovative ways to utilize existing equipment and improved fertilizers.

No Mowing Around Trees in Prince's Island Park - Tried a decrease in mowing around trees in Prince's Island Park. This was done to decrease the amount of maintenance required and protect woody assets from being hit by machinery.

Ecofriendly, Electrical Equipment

- Purchased equipment including leaf blowers, push mowers, string trimmers.

Evaluation and Analysis of Playfield

Use - This work is being used to support the refinement of allocations for 2024 playfield bookings.

Created Mowing Schedule

Efficiencies - Through enhanced collaborations with the new Roadside Greens portfolio for turf areas previously categorized separately as Roads or Parks.

Reduced Unsustainable Planting

Beds - To minimize required labour to maintain sites.

Reduced Watering - Used terrafibre hemp squares around new plantings as well as penmulch on plantings and seeding, which retained moisture and helped support the plants and seeds from drying out.

Collaboration Between Operational

Zones - Collaboration took place on various projects including turf agronomics, seasonal arrangements, small equipment sharing, ice rink set-up, etc.

Best practices



Best Practices ensures that new innovations and best practices are embedded in all aspects of Parks' work.

Parks and Open Spaces wanted a metric to gauge our performance against other municipalities. It was determined that the Yardstick Annual Report is the most comprehensive benchmarking tool currently available for municipally operated parks

and open space operations. The report includes a comprehensive 'Overall Best Practices' assessment that measures how well each organization is performing in terms of operational excellence, asset management, and environmental sustainability.

Seasonal Employee Digital

Connection - Greater use of smart phones and iPads to allow quicker connection of supervisors with staff in the field. Digital input of forms, photos, and videos reduced travel time and confusion.

Natural Area Manhole Access

- Worked with Water Resources to develop and implement a plan to maintain access to Water Resource sites in natural areas.

Preservation of cultural landscapes located on capital project sites

- The Cultural Landscapes team supported the execution of capital projects to verify that best practices and legal requirements were met related to the protection and preservation of historical assets. This included the restoration of the Chinese Market Garden, upgrade Memorial Drive and development of Medicine Hill Park.

Purchased More Sustainable

Fertilizer - 80% slow release allowed for an even release that minimized the increased mowing requirement expected after traditional fertilizer application.

Increased the use of the Collector

App - Connected to GIS for inspections and shrub bed Asset Condition Ratings to improve our understanding and the ability to make data-informed decisions.

Improved the Use of Technology

- All staff now use smart phones to complete digital Field Level Hazard Assessment.

Conducted Mosquito Monitoring at Reader Rock Garden

- Monitored mosquito traps to determine if an invasive mosquito was present in the city.

Crisis Response Plans

- Integrated Pest Management and Urban Forestry collaborated to create crisis response plans for the potential introduction of new invasive insect species that could have a negative impact on our urban tree canopy. This also involved close communication with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Self-Watering Flowerpots

- Continued in parks including regional parks to reduce watering frequency requirement by monitoring the water levels in the reservoirs and keeping a close eye on the weather.

Supported the Calgary Fire

Department - Provided CFD (Calgary Fire Department) with spaces to conduct ongoing training exercises.



Supported The City's Joint Encampment Team - Ensuring that rough sleeping in public spaces is approached in a respectful and effective way.

Created New Water Truck Management - Created new standard operating procedures, route schedule, a full training program for staff and provided a water truck tool bag that contains all tools that may be required for trunk pump and flower maintenance.

Ralph Klein Park Living Roof - Planted perennials, pollinators, and drought-tolerant plants to provide an aesthetic and environmental improvement to the space that remains low maintenance.



Haskayne Legacy Park

Valuing external partnerships



Partnerships are essential to how Parks and Open Spaces delivers programs and services, develops strategies and constructs and manages assets.

Effective and efficient partnerships are founded on aligned objectives and on mutually agreed upon results that benefit both parties. In the case of The City of Calgary, this outcome drives value provided

to citizens. This indicator seeks to assess the holistic benefit that partnerships provide to Calgarians which includes but is not limited to the dollars leveraged through the relationship.

Operation Tee-Time - Golf Course

Operations partnered with The Calgary Police Service for Operation Tee-Time to deliver a pilot initiative to provide free golf lessons to 36 participants ages six to 18 from the South Asian community. There were 140 applicants.

Café du Parc - A small temporary vendor space was piloted at North Glenmore Park. The coffee shop has been well received by park users and staff.

Parks Guiding Circle - Established with representatives from each of the 8 Nations.

Historic Calgary Week - Cultural Landscapes participated in two events "From Campsites to Train Cars" and Siksikaitsitapi — "Stories from the Blackfoot People and Where We Come From".

Reader Rock Garden Volunteers -

Added new ways to volunteer, now up to three. (FoRRGS - Friends of Reader Rock Garden Society, Master gardeners or directly with the garden staff).

Red Pots on Zoo Road Removed -

Provided a solution to a corporate concern by installing an artistic bump barrier instead. The pots were then lent to Calgary Municipal Land Corporation.

Reader Rock Garden Caragana

Donation for the Giraffes - Cuttings of Caragana have been donated for the giraffes every two weeks.

Reader Rock Garden - Extra plant material was provided through a partnership with Silver Springs Botanic Gardens and the Dorothy Harvey Botanical Gardens at the Calgary Zoo.

Integrated Pest Management

Collaboration with Alberta Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Services

- Manage and co-exist with urban wildlife; including coyotes, bobcats, bears, and beavers.

Foxtail Barley Control Bylaw Passed

- Integrated Pest Management supported Bylaw Services in the Council approval of a bylaw to address the spread of Foxtail Barley on private property.

IndigiTrails (indigenous education

virtual art trails) - Launched at both Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and Nose Hill Park in partnership with Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY). There are now 10 trails located throughout Calgary that can be interacted with on the indigitrills app. Access the app here: <https://usay.ca/indigitrills/>

Cross-country Skiing Trails - Support to manually track set cross-country ski trails in select parks.

Skating Opportunities - Supported existing and approved new community Adopt-a-Rinks and skating opportunities including other winter activities such as snow shoeing and fire pits with various community groups.

Inclusive Playgrounds Development and Greenspace Activation - Supported community groups with the development of Inclusive Playgrounds city-wide and assisted the activations of greenspaces.

Ongoing Collaborations - Continued collaborations with multiple community associations, nonprofits, residential associations, the Government of Alberta, Parks Foundation Calgary, Tsuut'ina Nation, etc. on projects. Maintained continuous connections with Ward Offices, Calgary Multiple Land Corporation, Business Improvement Areas, etc.

Prairie Winds Park Support -

Approval and support of new cultural events and providing support to food truck vendors, assisting them with any issues they may have.

Advancing Safety and Standards -

Through ongoing collaboration with Canadian Standards Associations to ensure excellence in our infrastructure practices.

Supporting World Petroleum

Congress - Centre Operations participated in a joint effort with the Interdepartmental Events Team, Mobility and Transit to beautify downtown parks (including at Stephen Avenue, Enoch, and Olympic Plaza) and increase garbage removal in anticipation of the World Petroleum Congress.

Calgary Disc Golf Club - Expanded partnership to improve disc golf courses at Stanley Park and Lindsey Park.





North Glenmore Park



Nose Hill Park

Parks workplace culture



This theme is intended to create a vibrant and healthy workplace culture in Parks which ensures an enjoyable place to work and ensures that Parks and Open Spaces is an employer of choice.

To achieve this, Calgary Parks and Open Spaces will focus on actions based on trust, accountability, safety, role clarity, and communication.

Parks Innovation Day - Innovation Day was held in November 2023 with over 120 attending. The Keynote Speaker was Daniel Walker, who shared unique innovations that are in place at Reader Rock Garden. This session also led to 8 Parks Innovation ideas that will be further explored by various teams.

Parks School 2023 - Parks School was held in February 2023 with 252 registered attendees and 81 speakers from within Parks and Open Spaces, across the corporation, and beyond. Parks School allowed for learning and development, and more importantly for Parks staff to connect in-person for the first time since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

Summer Student Program - Parks and Open Spaces hosted 19 summer students in 2023 in areas across the Business Unit including Cultural Landscapes (1), Pathways (3), Urban Forestry (2), Community Parks Initiatives (1), Urban Conservation (2), Business and Policy Planning (1), Administration (1), Integrated Pest Management (3), and Parks Infrastructure (5).

In-Person Seasonal Orientation - Workforce Management hosted in-person, seasonal orientations for the first time since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were two session dates available that hosted 500 seasonal staff.

Health and Wellness Trainings

- Vicarious Trauma as well as psychological safety including Stress Management and Building resilience were provided to staff as part of the focus on mental health and safety.

Safety Bulletin Featured

Zone 8 - Zone 8 was featured four times this year for their ongoing efforts to health and safety, including: using PPE for mouse scat clean-up, practicing their severe weather shelter protocol, marking the parking lot at Sarcee Depot for better traffic flow and having their safety training up to date.

Standard Operating Procedures

Review - Emphasis was placed on reviewing Standard Operating Procedures with staff prior to starting the new season and/or task.

Seasonal Exit Interviews - Winter employees were offered exit interviews to see how the season went, whether good or bad, and how improvements could be made for the next season. Many suggestions are being implemented for the upcoming winter season.

Horticulture Club - North Operations created a Horticulture Club for North Operations to host monthly meetings, go on garden/educational tours, and host educational sessions. They shared small equipment inventories to help workflow and increase collaboration.

Increased Staff Appreciations

- Increased the amount of staff appreciations and started to include friendly competitions to help with team building and build morale. One example, all South Operations staff attended an appreciation event at Clearwater Park.

Increased Field Visits from

Supervisors - To improve safety and FLHA quality, and become more available to staff, supervisors have been making more frequent visits to staff in the field and reporting findings to management.

Joint Safety Meetings and Special

Guest - This year, depots connected regularly for joint safety meeting. A few different speakers who are subject matter experts came in to discuss topics they know best with staff. A Fleet Officer and Alpha House spoke this year.







Central Memorial Park

Our actions

Within the original Imagine Parks strategy there is a list of action items identified that would contribute to the success of delivery of parks and open spaces to Calgarians (P13 - 19). The Imagine Parks strategy has evolved beyond the scope of these action items, however these items will continue to be monitored until complete for reporting purposes.

Project

Status Update

Implement guidelines to determine appropriate allocation of “Wi-Fi hotspots” in parks and open space.

On Hold - Community Parks Initiatives resource limitations in 2023. This will be added as part of the Sponsorship work for 2024.

Implement a score to measure if park design and services are providing intergenerational, economic and gender equity and security and are adaptive to changing community demographics.

In Progress - Included as part of Imagine Parks implementation and the Connect Calgary’s Parks Plan continued analysis on park provision.

Develop and implement a strategy to conserve and advance land and aquatic biodiversity in Calgary.

2023 Ongoing - Implementation is complete, monitoring on a regular rotation

Implement an open space acquisition and disposition strategy to manage land and service delivery more effectively.

Not Yet Started - Scheduled to be initiated after completion of the Open Space Plan in 2024.

Identify future regional park location sectors and ensure a timely funding and acquisition process.

In Progress - Identification of lands will be completed as part of the Open Space Plan.

Monitor land and water health to better understand the impacts of development and to act accordingly.

2023 Ongoing - Implementation is complete, monitoring on a regular rotation

Implement public art and culture guidelines for parks and open space.

In Progress - Policy for public art is part of the development of the Open Space Plan referencing the existing corporate Public Art Policy.

Develop guidelines to formalize a process to seek alternative sources of funding for initiatives and programming in parks and open space.

In Progress - Initial discussion happened for the for-profit Festival fee to start in 2024. New guidelines and a framework for the Vendors were completed and shared with current vendors.

2024 Priorities

In reviewing our accomplishments from the year and analyzing the data collected from citizen surveying a few themes emerged that were identified that would inform decision making, work prioritization in the effort to support the continued progress towards the Imagine Parks vision.

Imagine Parks targets

- Prioritize the completion of the outstanding targets.
- Wellness target dropped by 3% from 2022 to 80%
 - Encourage more winter activations and amenities to be created by Parks and Open Spaces staff
 - Enhance communication of where winter activations and amenities are located for the public
 - Conduct further research on behaviours, preference and barriers that exist specific to winter use





Devonian Gardens





Carburn Park

2024 Priorities *Continued*

2023 Pulse on Parks Survey Results

- Parks and Open Spaces are doing a good job improving accessibility and inclusivity and prioritizing the natural environment. However, it is important to maintain focus on these priorities.
- A barrier for people using parks is the belief that access to parks is too far from where they live.
 - Increase the multi-function of community parks spaces; where possible.
 - Improve awareness of park locations and activities that can take place.
- Calgarians may find it difficult to make the link between climate change resilience and parks.
 - Simplify messaging to the public about how Parks and Open Spaces operations aid in Climate Change Resiliency; simplify language and focus on the immediate effect. (eg. Trees in parks make the air cooler, riparian areas help manage stormwater run off).
- Increasing parks visitation should focus on potential users that;
 - Face barriers such as those with physical disabilities. Improvements to cleanliness and maintenance and communicating that these improvements have been made.
 - Are younger and face more socio-economic challenges. They have greater concern about crime and anti-social behaviour. Taking steps to improve safety may help to some degree. This also requires that the perception that “parks are safe is improved.