



MEETING WITH THE CITY OF CALGARY | JULY 26, 2016

In attendance: City of Calgary Project Manager (PM), City of Calgary Parks Community Strategist and two members from Friends of River Park (FRP)

FRP introduced some general concerns, opportunities and observations:

- **Communication (amount, clarity, accuracy and timeliness)**
- **As with other competing interest groups, dog people can't reach consensus about all issues but most prefer park to remain as is**
- **Predominant use is people walking dogs**
- **Throughout park, other types of use is non-existent; north end isn't used by people without dogs as they intended**

FRP will continue to connect with The City of Calgary and provide updates as soon as information is received.

A note from the PM: "I encourage park users to check www.calgary.ca/riverpark where all updates and the most current information is posted. Updates are also tweeted regularly from [@CalgaryParks](https://twitter.com/CalgaryParks). If after checking these resources you still have questions please contact 311"

Following are the questions posed and topics discussed. Only an hour was allotted to meet. In future, they are willing to meet with FRP again or answer questions by email or phone.

1. Communication: When possible give general scope of work, advance notice of closures and estimated timelines. Ensure clarity and accurateness on website and social media and with other City officials such as councillors.
A: We are posting updates regularly online at www.calgary.ca/riverpark. This is the best resource to get the most current information.
2. What is the timeline for completion?
A: Generally speaking it should be end of November 2016 (weather permitting and as long as no huge unforeseen circumstances occur).
3. Please adjust phases and zones. FRP suggests the park (from parking lot to north fence) is zoned in quarters and done one at a time.
A: We are working with the contractor to strike a balance between keeping the majority of the park open and being able to effectively complete work. We are looking at the redevelopment work in three phases and are currently working on Phase 2. Smaller areas of zone 1 remain temporarily closed for turf management practices and we appreciate your patience in respecting these closures as the seed establishes.



4. Fencing: For safety reasons regarding dog behaviour, highly suggest it be widened so that it doesn't create a narrow corridor.
A: We have opened an avenue of pedestrian circulation along the new gravel trail adjacent to 14A St SW and have widened the fencing along the spine trail. The City and contractor will do our best to keep access to the majority of the park and to avoid narrow corridors. We appreciate park users' patience during construction and ask you to respect temporary closures as they are for public and dog safety.
5. Originally, parking lot at the south end looked like it would be extended and take away green space. Please clarify.
A: Parking improvements are at Sandy Beach and are near complete and open to the public. No expansion to the current parking lot facility in River Park is planned at this time.
6. Can you fix the slough at the south end?
A: We will try planting water-loving shrubs and plants such as willow in the space.
7. Address the odour coming from the sewer at the south end. FRP wonders if it's an issue of drainage from Altadore going into the river (maybe this is the lead cause of contamination/pathogens, not the dogs or wildlife).
A: Sewer issues are not part of the development project, nor handled by this department but we will pass along to the correct department to address. We notice same strong odour present in Sandy Beach too.
8. Once new irrigation is installed/operational, does this mean zones will be mowed?
A: The majority of turf areas will be mowed, however native plantings and un-mowed natural areas will exist in strategic areas of the park. The intent is to increase biodiversity as part of a City-wide initiative and offer park users and their pets a range of textures and experiences within River Park.
9. Upgrades to amenities are mentioned in the park plan but not specified. River Park has lights, bulletin board, parking, trail, benches, stairs and waste bins. Can you elaborate?
 - a) *The fountain and surrounding area is considered a main gathering point. Plants and a gravel patch around the bulletin board is planned.*
 - b) FRP heard cement benches will be upgraded – at whose expense?
A: Bench upgrades are being done by The City in partnership with The Calgary Parks Foundation. The current concrete benches will be given a face lift and will be more comfortable.
 - c) Will lighting be upgraded/changed/cables buried? If so, which phase?
A: In future and only if funding allows, lighting will be upgraded to LED and cables buried.
FRP mentioned the majority of park users don't want the cables buried because it's too expensive. They agree it would be very expensive.
 - d) Stairs to Sandy Beach – tread sizes vary. Causes users to step awkwardly – seems unsafe.
A: Stairs were created to be as natural looking as possible and in keeping with existing topography which explains unevenness.



- e) Cement pads were poured for the north and south bins. What about the middle bin?
Currently there's no pad but it's the highest used of all three. Please do not eliminate this bin.
A: The middle bin will remain and a cement pad will be created for it too. Fencing on three sides with bushes planted around each bin is planned to create aesthetically pleasing shield.
- f) FRP members notice the hill makes it almost impossible for Waste & Recycling staff to access north bin in winter; hill is too slippery.
A: We will continue to work with Waste & Recycling to upgrade the current facilities and garbage collection in the park.
10. FRP mentioned the steep grade on the trail heading east along the north fence is a safety hazard. Definitely more steep than before.
A: PM will look into this and work with the Phase 1 project manager to address any public safety issues.
11. Why wasn't Skinny Creek (under the bridges) used as the border between off- and on-leash? It would have been cheaper and logical (less planting required and accommodates user patterns).
A: The PM admitted he understands the questioning of the placement of the North fence but can't speak to why that exact location was selected as part of the Phase 1 work.
12. Park plan says informal trail(s) will be eliminated/changed. How?
A: They recognize some people choose to walk wherever they please but hope new gravel trails will encourage use and take pressure off grass and further degradation of informal trails.
13. Is there a plan to use a different surface for the trail? There are major problems with run-off on the hill (approximately 40 Ave) – causes deep ruts.
A: City of Calgary trail mix is the standard material but the PM will work with staff to ensure public safety.
14. Are more permanent fences planned (east/west orientation).
A: No further permanent fences are planned. Living fences consist of native plantings and will require temporary black snow fencing to protect the plant material during the initial establishment phase. Black snow fencing has been selected to be less visually obtrusive within the park.