

What We Heard: a new park in Belvedere

Right At Home
April 2022 - June 2022

The Right At Home Housing Society and NiGiNan Housing Ventures are working with the City of Edmonton and the Belvedere Community League to create a new public park at 12923 64 St.

The goal of this project is to beautify the lot and create a place where local residents feel welcome to spend time and where they can connect with their neighbours. The lot is currently vacant, owned by the City, and zoned for park use.

Overview of What We Heard

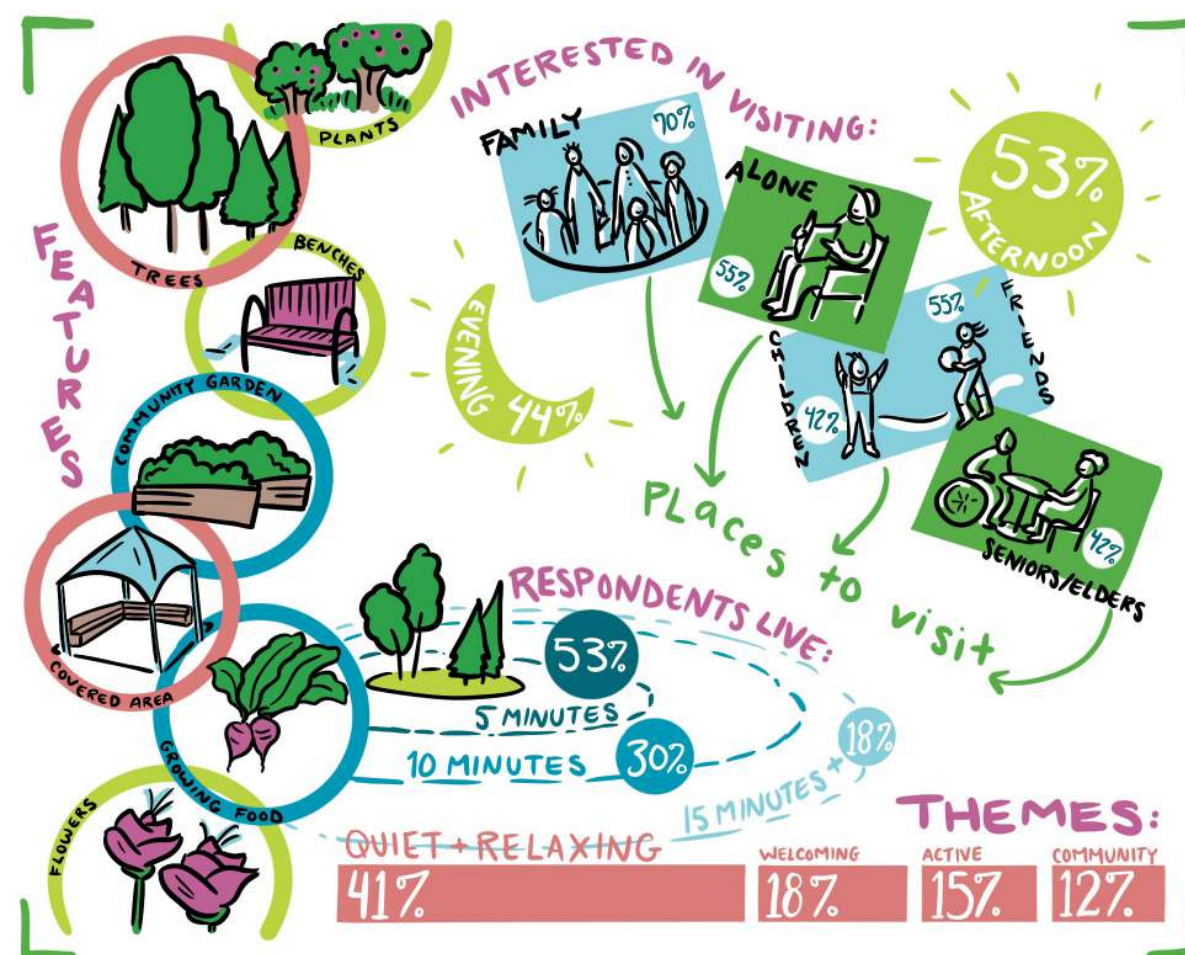
In the spring of 2022 we hosted a community survey. The purpose was to find out about local priorities, interests and needs to help guide the design of the future park. We also met with residents of Omamoo wango gamik to understand these things. (Omamoo wango gamik is the apartment building that we manage next to the park site, at the corner of 64 St and 129 Ave).

Overall, the neighbourhood residents we heard from would like to see and use features that allow them to sit and relax, gather and spend time with other people, and that provide spaces for gardening and for kids to play.

People are most likely to use the park in the afternoon and evening, and are likely to visit the park alone and with many different relations, including friends, family, children, seniors and Elders.

Community members that we heard from are largely supportive of a new park at this location, in particular those that live very close to it. Concerns related to a new park include safety, drug use, encampments, and proper maintenance.





Highlights of what we heard from the survey

Overview of Community Survey Results

The survey was available online and was advertised through the Belvedere Community League newsletter, on its website and Facebook page. It was also mailed to 1489 homes and businesses in the neighbourhood. Thirty six people filled it out. Most of them live within a 5 minute walk (53%) of the park site. 30% live a 10 minute walk away. 18% live a 15 minute walk or more away. No one indicated that they work at or own a business in the area.

The majority of survey respondents (71%) indicated that they'd love to see plants, trees and flowers at the park. The next most selected features were benches (49%) and community garden (49%), places to sit with others (46%), and a gazebo or covered area (37%).

Respondents told us they are likely to use the park with a diversity of different people. Family (70%) was the most popular answer, followed by alone (55%) and with friends (55%), with children (42%) and with seniors/Elders (42%).

Most respondents (41%) chose 'Quiet and relaxing' as their preferred theme for the park. 'Welcoming and accessible to all' was the second most popular (18%), followed by 'Active and playful' (15%), and 'Community gathering' (12%).

People indicated they'd be most likely to use the park in the afternoon (53%) and evening (44%).

Overall respondents are pleased about a new park at this location. 50% noted they are supportive of a new park and 35% said they are very supportive. 12% noted they are neutral and 8% indicated they are not supportive. Those who provided reasons for not wanting a park cited neighbourhood-wide concerns with cleanliness and safety, and fears that a park will attract negative activities such as drug use.

We heard a variety of answers in response to the question 'Is there anything else we should know about a future park at this location?'. These included suggestions about the importance of including features that provide a purpose for adults and children who visit the park, notes about the importance of trees at the park, and using the space for activities that grow food such as a garden or orchard. Responses also outlined concerns related to drug use at the park, use of the park by people experiencing homelessness, safety, and maintenance (garbage/litter and plant watering).

Overview of What We Heard from Direct Neighbours

We spoke with approximately 15 residents and 5 onsite staff of Omamoo wango gamik about the future park. Here are the key features and themes that these neighbours told us they would like to see at the park:

- Spaces and features for kids to play, including soft surfaces and accessibility for strollers
- Places to sit, spend time and chat with other people, and to watch the community go by
- Features that are natural, grounding and that encourage healthy living and a connection to nature
- Space for land based teachings, activities and programming
- Multi-purpose circle shaped patio where people can gather and talk
- Representation of Indigenous cultures and teachings at the park, including a tipi structure, use of Indigenous languages, medicinal plants, space for ceremony, a fire circle or fire pit, and art
- Spaces for growing food and medicinal plants, such as garden plots and edible landscaping (perennial trees and shrubs)
- A sign with the name of Ward Dene

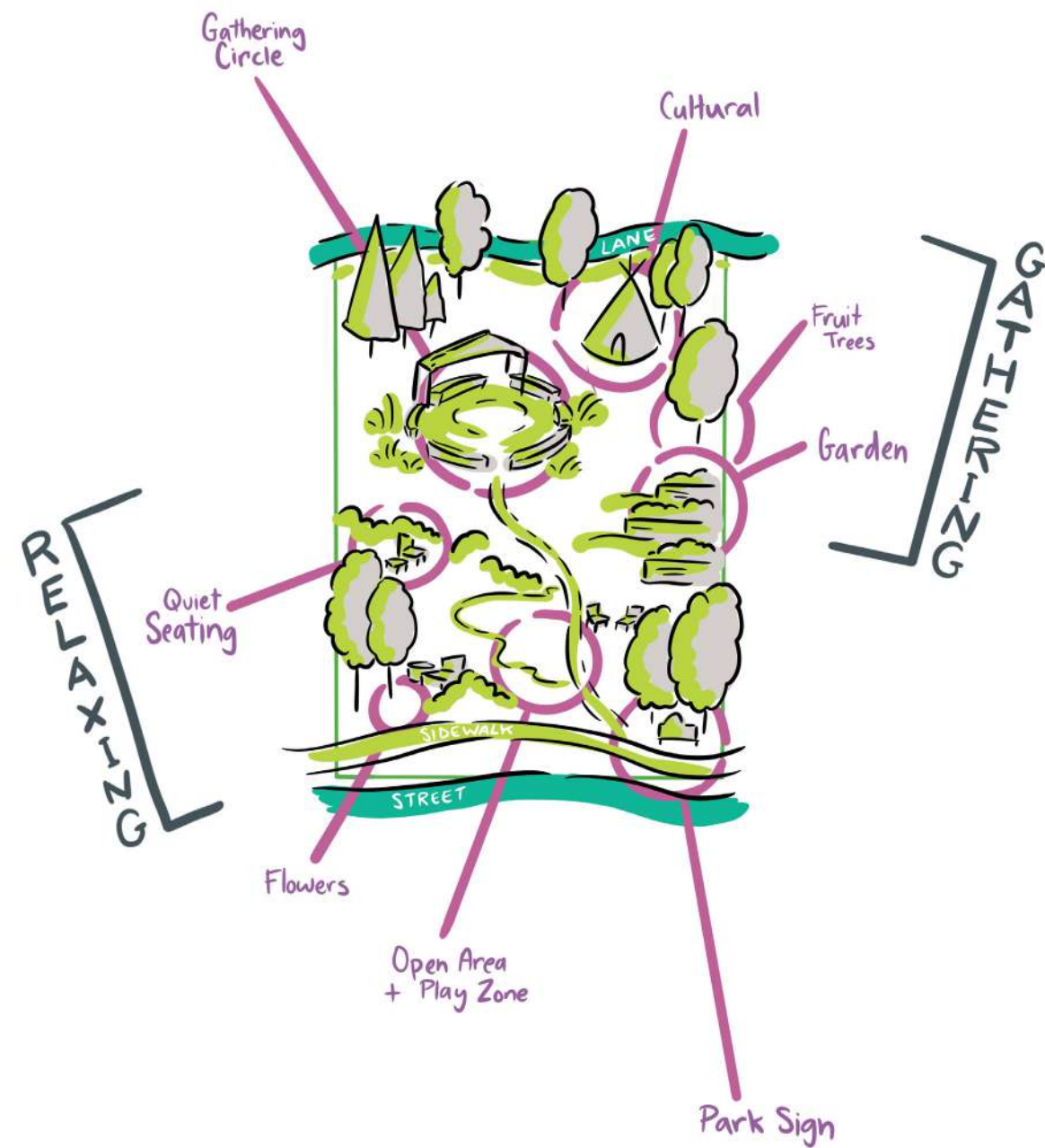
They also told us they are concerned about:

- Safety and people using the park in inappropriate ways, including for encampments
- Drug use and use of the park after dark
- People not treating the park with respect
- Maintenance of the park and durability of any structures within it, along with sanitation



Highlights of what we heard from meeting with Omamoo wango gamik residents

Ideas for the Park



This preliminary park design shows how the space might be organized to include the features that we heard were most important to local residents. There is still work to do to understand what will be possible to build, and this will include looking at other potential designs. These activities will happen in the next stage of the project.



What Happens Next

Our next step is to work with the City of Edmonton to understand what resources and funding will be available to improve the park site. Steps after that include developing a concept plan for the park based on this information and on what we've heard, and community engagement to review the proposed plan. Watch for updates on the Belvedere Community League website.

Thank you to everyone who shared their ideas and views this spring. We look forward to hearing from you again in the future.