

BRIEFING

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Item # 5.2.2

Community Services Briefing to

SPC on Community and Protective Services
2020 March 11

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPS2020-0303

NE Regional Park and Cemetery Engagement Update

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Motion Arising regarding Report UCS2018-1139 directing Calgary Parks to engage with affected communities and report back to the SPC on Community and Protective Services on the outcome of those discussions. This briefing contains a summary of the engagement process and results, as well as discussion of next steps. Included as an Attachment to this briefing is the full What We Heard report that contains a detailed summary of the engagement process.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

On 2018 November 19 Council passed UCS2018-1139 approving the purchase of property to meet the need for a future regional park in the north central area and support further cemetery development in the northern region of the City as recognized in the "Cemeteries Strategic Plan 2010-2020".

Report UCS2018-1139 outlines the needs and challenges to secure lands to develop a much needed new regional park to service the north central area. The future regional park will respond to the recreation and parks needs of the regional population and will have a catchment area that is not currently served by a regional park. The report further outlines the need to meet cemetery capacity requirements as the city's population continues to grow and The City's only remaining active cemetery in the north area of Calgary is nearing capacity. The acquisition of this property, combined with the newly developed Southeast Cemetery, will help the City meet its cemetery needs for the next 60-80 years.

Engagement Summary

The engagement for the NE Regional Park and Cemetery was held from October 29th to November 15th, 2019. The City of Calgary held five in-person events and had one online opportunity for input through [Calgary.ca/engage](https://calgary.ca/engage).

In total, over 350 people participated in the engagement events, both in person and online. In person attendees were mostly from Wards 3, 2 and 5, and online participants came from all fourteen wards.

Engagement Results

The full What We Heard report and detailed summary is provided in Attachment 1.

Input collected during the engagement was carefully coded and put into themes, and is not reflective of all Calgarians, but of those who self-selected to participate in our engagement events.

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Those stakeholders who participated in the engagement opportunities told us that they would like to see the following as their top three amenities in the park: pathways, washrooms and picnic areas. When asked why, participants indicated the park and cemetery spaces need to be family friendly spaces, appropriate for all generations. They also took this opportunity to express the importance of a new park in the area.

Participants expressed a desire for the transition space between the park and cemetery to reflect more passive uses, with many respondents indicating a preference for this transition to include natural park features. When asked if amenities or planned events should be allowed in the cemetery, participants expressed support for this as a good use of space and commented that, if done respectfully, it could support the grieving process and be a catalyst for community-building. On the other hand, those participants who were opposed to the inclusion of amenities and planned events expressed their desire for cemeteries to be “quiet, sacred and traditional” spaces.

Overall, input collected indicates there is no substantial opposition to combining the park and cemetery spaces, if activities and events are planned respectfully.

Partnerships

Community partners played an important role in our engagement process. Calgary Parks collaborated with Vivo for Healthier Generations (a not-for-profit group) in the development of our engagement strategy and for support on our process through access to their stakeholder list, media channels and use of their venue for hosting.

Next Steps

Calgary Parks will proceed with engaging a design consultant to develop a conceptual master plan (Plan) for the park and cemetery which will be shared with stakeholders and citizens in Q4 2020. The Plan will consider input collected during the public engagement as well as other factors that may influence design decisions such as the preliminary geotechnical results and area structure planning.

Development of the Plan will help determine how much of the area is required to support the regional park and cemetery space needs. This information will also be used to inform future funding and budget requirements to support development and implementation as there is currently no capital funding in place for development of this regional park and cemetery.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Northeast Calgary Regional Park and Cemetery – Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard