

Engagement Summary

NATURAL AREAS ENGAGEMENT

From June 2021 to February 2022, Administration engaged with the community on development of [Green Pathways](#). The [Final Engagement Report](#) found that, overall, the community strongly supports (>80%) of all Green Pathways initiatives, with the strongest support received for Pathway 1: Healthy and Thriving Natural Areas (96%).

Respondents also provided the following comments related to natural areas:

- Protect natural areas in new neighbourhoods and decide on the level of protection that is needed.
- Continue to partner with Meewasin to conserve natural areas and natural storm water management.
- The City should be more aggressive in conserving green spaces through new policies and regulations.
- Revitalize green spaces along major roadways and within ditches.
- Unused areas, such as freeway rights-of-way, should be converted to naturalized spaces with native species to help reduce the cost of maintenance.
- Naturalize areas around stormwater ponds instead of using mowed vegetation and rocks.
- Educate homeowners bordering naturalized spaces.
- Improve current green spaces prior to any further expansion since this infrastructure already exists within our city and may become neglected.
- Existing natural areas should be maintained better.
- Build natural playgrounds and naturalize areas around playgrounds.
- Maintain connections between green spaces.
- Increase funding dedicated to the protection of natural areas.
- Incorporate Indigenous perspectives into natural area management plans (the work should be led by Indigenous community members).
- Balance neighbourhood usability with naturalization.
- Balance density targets and the protection of natural areas within new development areas.
- Clearly communicate the public use of green spaces and their potential value to the community to developers.
- Include environmental considerations/requirements of a site at the onset of neighbourhood planning to support efficient planning.
- Apply smart growth principles and efficiently design neighbourhoods to properly mitigate environmental impacts, improve the efficiency of infrastructure, and minimize the tax burden on future residents.

NATURALIZED AREAS ENGAGEMENT

The Green Pathways [Final Engagement Report](#) found that Pathway 2: Connecting and Regenerating Green Spaces received 92% support from respondents, and respondents ranked “Naturalize: use more native species in parks, storm ponds, and City landscaping” as the top priority within Pathway 2.

Respondents also provided the following comments related to naturalization:

- Respondents indicated there is a need to balance neighbourhood usability with naturalization.
- Some respondents suggested revitalizing green spaces along major roadways and within ditches, which are viewed as barren or wasted spaces; some respondents commended the City for naturalizing unused spaces.
- It was proposed that areas around stormwater ponds need to be naturalized instead of using mowed vegetation and rocks.
- Some respondents requested education to homeowners bordering naturalized spaces.
- Numerous respondents suggested that improving on current green spaces should be done prior to any further expansion since this infrastructure already exists within our city and they may become neglected; they also recommended existing natural areas should be maintained better and unused areas, such as freeway rights-of-way, should be converted to naturalized spaces with native species which may reduce the cost of maintenance.
- It was proposed that natural playgrounds / naturalizing areas around playgrounds be explored.

Additionally, public engagement was conducted from February 2020 to June 2021 seeking feedback on initiatives to improve water conservation. The [Final Engagement Report](#) found that “Increase naturalized areas in parks” received 88% support and was ranked as one of the top five priorities by the community. Comments related to naturalization are summarized below:

- There is strong support for more naturalized parks consisting of native plants
- More nature is always better
- [The City] should focus on new parks rather than pre-existing
- [The City] should still provide areas for families to use freely
- Parks should not get weedy though