

# **Let's Talk about North End Parks**

## **Community Consultation Summary Report**

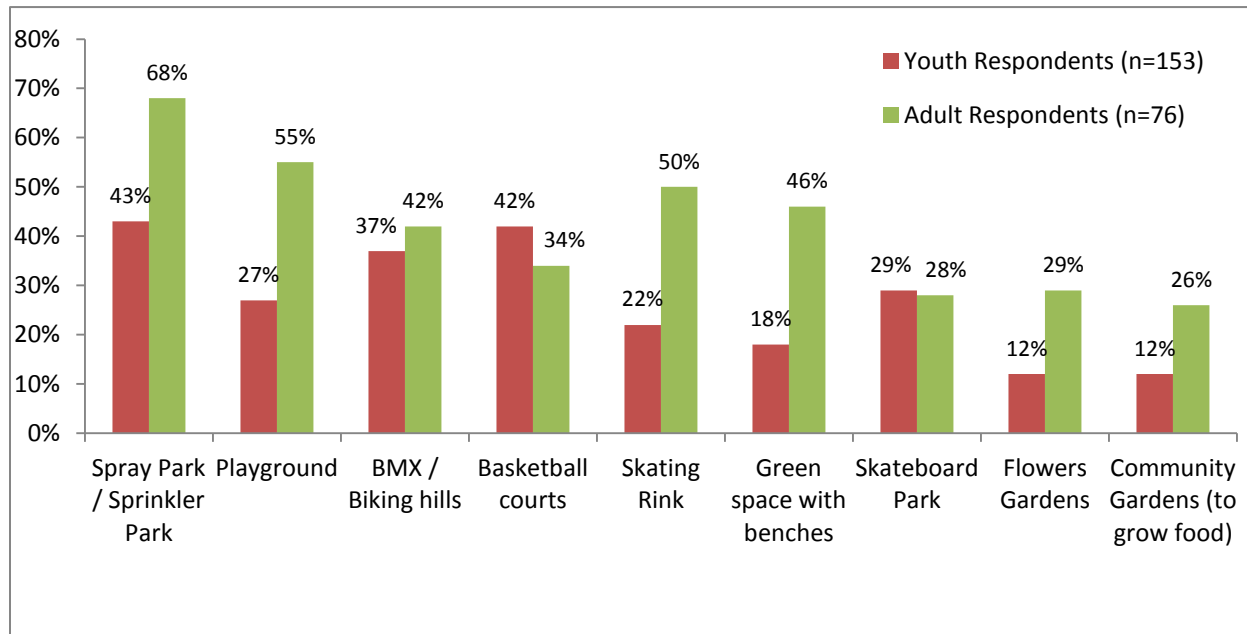
In June 2012, the City of Portage la Prairie and the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation partnered to bring residents of the north end of Portage la Prairie together to discuss parks in their neighbourhoods.

Approximately 135 people attended the public community consultations held at North Memorial School and the BDO Centre for the Community. In addition to round table discussions at the community consultations, 229 surveys were completed. The survey was distributed to Grade 7 and 8 students at LaVerendrye School as well as high school students through a school councilor and teacher at PCI. The survey was also completed at the community consultations at North Memorial School and BDO Centre for the Community, after the guided conversations. The following is a summary of the information shared with us through these consultations.

### **Highlights:**

- Parks are seen as more than just recreation, they are seen as a tool in building the sense of community. Residents talked about the importance of parks in getting to know people in the area, building positive relationships with your own children and how having more people outside contributes to safer neighbourhoods. Residents also noted that having nice facilities could contribute to improving the perception of the north end neighbourhoods.
- Residents are using the parks in the area, and suggest the upgrading and maintenance of these parks to further meet the needs of families and youth.
- Most common upgrades suggested to existing parks were the addition of shade and benches or picnic tables. Bathrooms were also suggested.
- A gap was identified in the north east, where a large number of children lived but only a school playground was available.
- A spray park / sprinkler park was the most popular suggestion for a new park, with 68% of adults and 43% of youth favoring this suggestion.
- Youth would also like to see the addition of basketball courts (42%) and BMX or biking hills (37%).
- Additional playgrounds (55%) and skating rinks (50%) were the next top choices for adult respondents.
- Toddler-friendly equipment, swings, slides and monkey bars were the most popular suggestions for playground equipment.
- Youth had suggestions on improving the existing skate park, including adding equipment to allow for both inexperienced and experienced skateboarders, adding more options throughout the community and locating a playground or green space near the skate park to provide a family outing experience.
- Safety was a key concern in the discussion of parks, including vandalism and violence at existing parks. Suggestions in the development or upgrading of parks were ensuring adequate lighting, designing for clear sightlines, elimination of hiding spots, locating parks in neighbourhoods to allow more parental supervision, and adding security cameras or supervision.
- Residents indicated that they would use bike and walking paths if added to the area, both for recreation and to get to places such as medical clinics, shopping, parks and schools.

### Type of New Park Preference (by age group)



- Participants were divided on whether several small parks or one large park would be a better option. Small parks were preferred to provide every neighbourhood with options, keep parks closer to home, allow neighbours to get to know each other better and avoid overcrowded large parks. Large parks were preferred to provide more variety for users, bring more people to the north end, and provide activities for many age groups at the same place.
- Distance was a key consideration in the addition of a park, with many people indicating that walking was their primary form of transportation. Parents wanted parks for their younger children to be located closer to their homes, while they were willing to let their older children travel further.
- Crossing busy streets was a safety concern of participants, who indicated 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NE, Tupper Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW were natural dividers of the North End. Parents did not like their children crossing these roads.
- Most participants wished for parks to be within a 5 to 15 minute walk of their home, although they were willing to travel further for larger or specialized parks.

### Distance Preference (by age group)

