

Bear Creek Park Master Plan

Denver, Colorado

Public Engagement Phase II Summary

December 8, 2022



Bear Creek Park Master Plan

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PHASE II

The second phase of community engagement for the Bear Creek Park Master Plan sought input on three alternative master plan concepts for the park. The community touch points included: two (2) meetings of the Bear Creek Park Steering Committee; three (3) focus group meetings; a virtual community meeting; and an online community survey.

The Bear Creek Park Master Plan **Steering Committee** held its second and third meetings on May 3, 2022, and June 29, 2022. This committee is comprised of 19 key stakeholders within the local community including leaders from City Council District 2, registered neighborhood associations, schools, the Southwest YMCA, Mile High Flood District, and local youth and environmental organizations. At these meetings, the Steering Committee members reviewed the results of the public survey, the guiding principles for the planning process and commented on the three master plan alternatives concepts for the Bear Creek Park Master Plan that were presented by the Planning Team.

The planning team also undertook three **Focus Group meetings** of subject matter experts both from internal Denver Parks & Recreation staff as well as external stakeholders. Twenty-two participants in these meetings assisted the Planning Team in shaping alternative master plan concepts for consideration in the master planning process. The focus of these meetings included **Trails & Bikeways** on April 21, **Recreation** on May 3, and **Ecology & Natural Resources** on May 9, 2022.

The **second virtual community meeting** was held on July 21, 2022. Over the course of the 90-minute meeting, participants received an overview of the three master plan alternative concepts under consideration and provided many comments about their impressions and preferences within each alternative. The meeting included several polling questions.

Finally, an **online community survey** was advertised and made available from July 29, 2022 through August 18, 2022. Community members were asked to comment on what elements they liked best among the alternative concepts being considered for the park master plan. It was advertised via fliers, emails, social media, and newsletters sent to the community and on the City and County of Denver website. The survey received 163 responses.

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Key Themes and Take-Ways from the Second Phase of Public Input:

Preserve and celebrate the wild nature of the south side of the park

- Approach “activation” in a balanced manner to preserve the wild experience.
- Preserve a truly unique wilderness escape in the City
- Celebrate the peaceful nature of the south side of the park
- Minimize disturbance to wildlife
- Minimize hardscape on the south side of the park
- Keep soft surface trails
- Make sure the trails connect and loop
- Create some wayfinding on the southside trails by naming the loops
- Don’t over-engineer or create too many multi-use trails that might disturb wildlife
- Plant and maintain native plant species
- Address non-native plant populations
- Fix the ponds to create interest, habitat, and visitor access to water
- Introduce educational/interpretive signage on the south side of the park (ecology and history)
- Nature play nodes are in keeping with the natural feel of the south side of the park

Relocate the regional bike trail

- Create separation between bikers and walkers/the playground/picnic areas by moving the Regional Trail to the south side of Bear Creek
- Install clear signage that bikers must yield to pedestrians
- Enforce speed control for bikes on the regional trail
- Keep the regional trail out of the high-water zone next to the creek
- Design the regional trail to be 12 ft wide, with a center line, and a crusher fine path for pedestrians

Improve and enhance amenities on the north side of the park

- More picnic spaces
- Year-round bathrooms
- Upgrade the playground but preserve current location
- An inclusive playground with universal access
- Preserve the Sombrero slide
- Splash pad upgrades
- Bike skills/pump track

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Key Themes and Take-Ways from the Second Phase of Public Input Continued:

Improve and enhance amenities on the north side of the park (cont.)

- Maintain/enhance the playing fields
- Nature fitness stations
- Public Art
- Basketball court
- Outdoor learning/gathering space
- Noise barrier between Hampden/ HWY 285 and the park
- More shade opportunities on the north side of the park
- Dog Park
- Pickle Ball courts
- 9-hole disc golf course
- Archery

Make the park safe for all visitors

- Address encampments of people experiencing homelessness through good design on the south side of the park and in the parking lots
- Keep the park clean and trash free
- Make the park inviting for people visiting alone and for families with small children
- Increase safety through better lighting in the parking lots and at the playground
- Trim undergrowth/overgrowth to create clear sight lines
- Have a plan to re-purpose the old stone structure in the southwest corner of the park to discourage illegal camping
- Increase the presence of park rangers

Make the park easier to get to and more inviting

- Make the Raleigh Street entrance safer
- Improve the underpass under Hampden/HWY 285, especially bike and ped. access + lighting
- Improve parking on the Kenyon Street side of the park
- Keep Kenyon Street mowed, trimmed and free of trash with clear pedestrian access/a sidewalk to the park
- Improve the asphalt trail from the YMCA into the park
- Improve the trail access to the park from Westbridge neighborhood
- Create a safe crossing of Hampden/285 from Knox Street and the Harvey Park neighborhood

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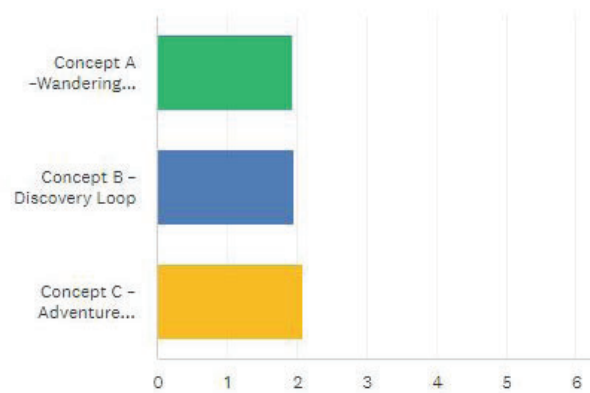
Public Survey No.2 Questions & Detailed Results :

In Public Survey No.2 community members were asked to weigh in on the (3) alternative concepts being considered for the park master plan. The following survey questions were accompanied by master plan alternative plan graphics and/or precedent image graphics for responders to reference as they considered each question. **The specific graphics/images that each question references can be found attached to the end of this summary document, noted with the question number(s) to which they apply.*

Question #1

Please rank the three concept plans (above) from your most favorite (1) to least favorite (3)

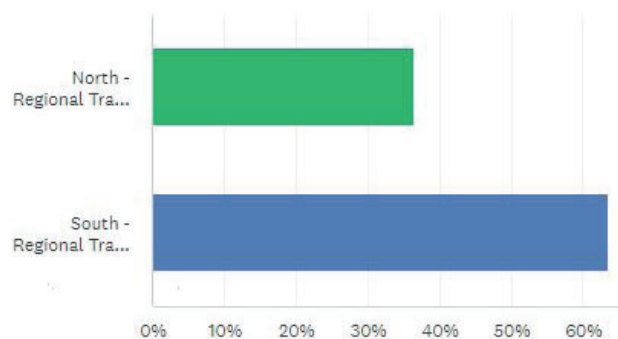
Concept A - Wandering Trails	#1 - 33.13%
	#2 - 26.25%
	#3 - 40.63%
Concept B - Discovery Loop	#1 - 28.48%
	#2 - 40.51%
	#3 - 31.01%
Concept C - Adventure Skills	#1 - 38.75%
	#2 - 31.87%
	#3 - 29.38%



Question #2

Which of the two proposed Bear Creek Regional Trail alignment alternatives do you prefer?

North - Regional Trail Alignment (keep current alignment)	32.64%
South - Regional Trail Alignment (relocate to south of Bear Creek)	63.58%



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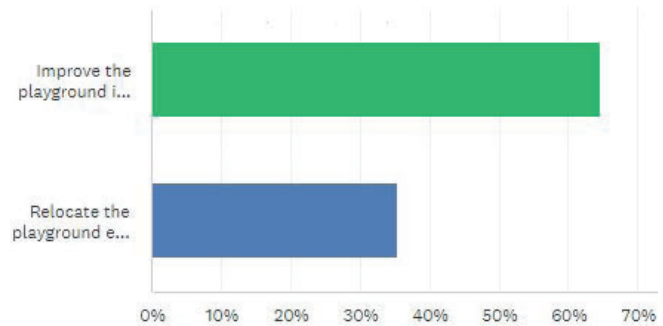
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Public Survey No.2 Questions & Detailed Results :

Question #3

Would you rather see the playground improved in its current location or be relocated to the east side of the multi-use field?

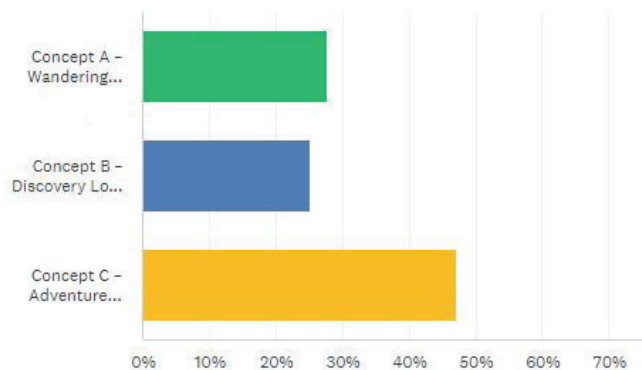
Improve the playground in its current location	64.67%
Relocate the playground east of the multi-purpose field (closer to the Raleigh Street park entrance)	35.33%



Question #4

Concepts A, B, and C propose varying levels of 'activation' within the open space areas south of Bear Creek. Which level of activation do you think is most appropriate?

Concept A - Wandering Trails	27.74%
Concept B - Discovery Loop	25.16%
Concept C - Adventure Skills	47.10%



* 'Activation' refers to the overall number of activity zones/nodes proposed within the area that will encourage people to use the space. (i.e. nature play, gathering spaces, trail segments, art, etc.)

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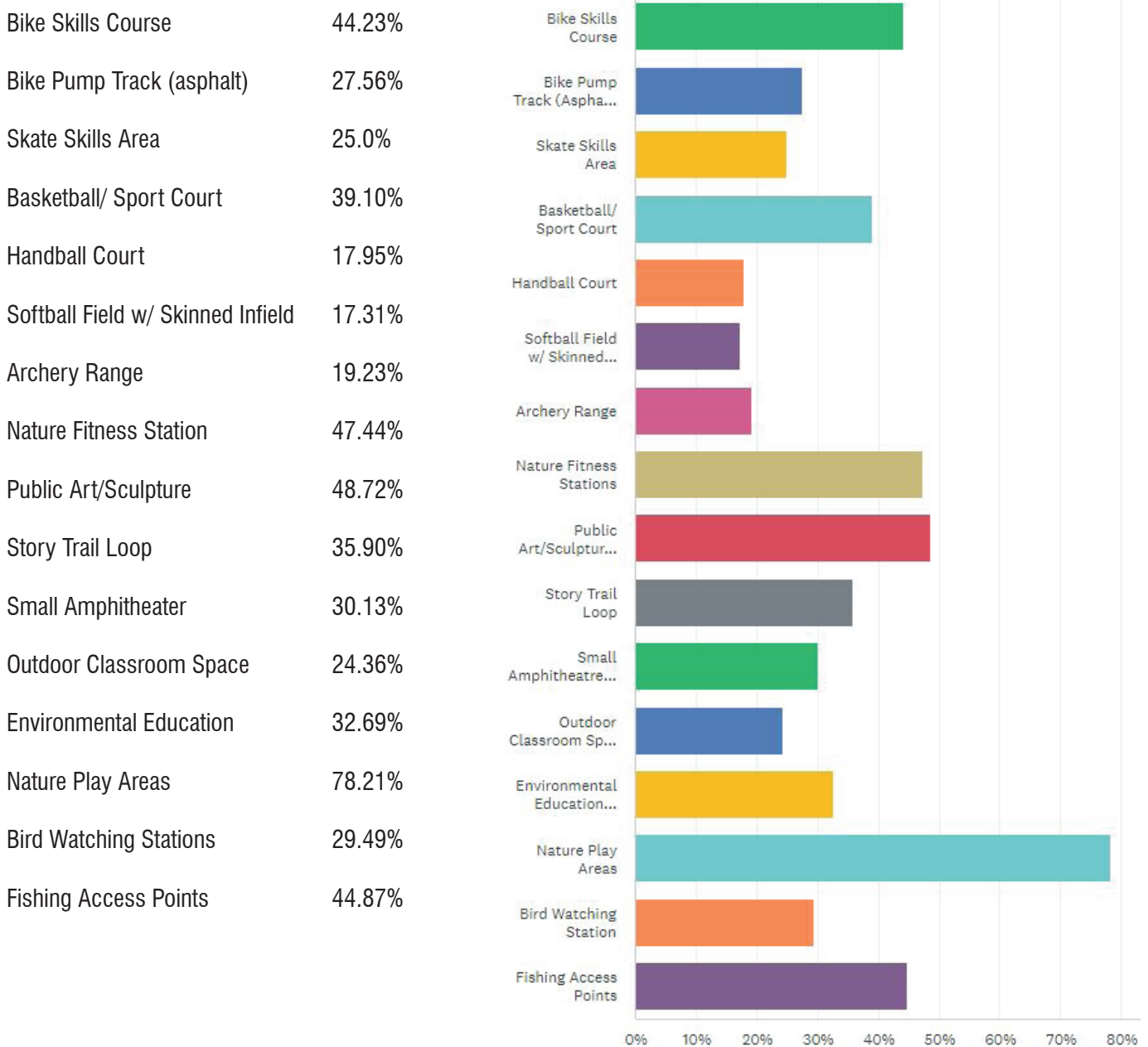
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Public Survey No.2 Questions & Detailed Results :

Question #4

There are many different features and uses that can be used to ‘activate’ a public park space. Based on feedback we received from the first phase of community and stakeholder outreach, the design team has assembled the following list of potential features/uses to consider for Bear Creek Park.

**Please select your 6 favorite potential features/uses from the list below.*



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Public Survey No.2 Questions & Detailed Results :

Question #6

Do you have any other feedback/ comments/ thoughts about these master plan concept alternatives that you would like for us to know?

In response to the question of what else the community wanted the project team to know about the three concept alternatives there continued to be many comments emphasizing the need to **preserve the uniquely wild nature of the south side of the park** and find a balance between activation, access, and wilderness.

Another set of comments continued to point to the need to **make the park safe and clean for all visitors** by addressing trash accumulation and camping by people experiencing homelessness. A desire for increased safety also extends to a well-maintained trail system with clear visibility and tended vegetation.

Respondents asked for **more and upgraded picnic and gathering space** to support how the park is currently used by the surrounding community, with respondents citing heavy use by large family groups on Sundays. Access to shade was cited as important for park goers, along with protection from nearby traffic noise.

There were a number of comments in support of a **clear separation between bikers and pedestrians** and especially between the bike path and the playground area. Managing bike speeds through design, signage, and enforcement was also requested among the comments.

With regards to the playground, respondents continue to be attached to the **Sombrero Slide and playground in its current location** and wish to see those features carried forward in the new park design. A universally accessible playground was also requested along with an upgraded splash pad.

Built improvements are desired in order to better access and enjoy the water both in Bear Creek itself and in the ponds in the south side of the park.

Commenters asked for **upgraded, improved, and safer access to the park** coming from all sides whether approaching from a neighborhood street, under Hampden/ HWY285, Kenyon Ave, or the YMCA.

Some commenters continue to request a dog park, disc golf, and pickleball courts.