



WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT ABASAND SKATEPARK

*Project Management Office
January 18 – February 8, 2024*

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We humbly acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional and ancestral lands of the Cree, Dene, and unceded territory of the Métis.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2023, the Abasand Skatepark was removed to support construction for the **Saunderson Pressure Reducing Station** project. The project installed new underground infrastructure (watermain pipes), improving water distribution capabilities for Abasand, Downtown and communities south of the Urban Service Area.

The Abasand Skatepark is an important recreational amenity that encourages play, health and wellness, contributing to a positive quality of life. Before being rebuilt, public engagement was necessary to understand community demographics and needs, ensuring a sustainable park will be made for years to come.

On January 18, 2024, two design concepts were shared to gain community perspective to prioritize design elements, community perspective and prioritize elements (i.e. Rails, stairs). Residents in Abasand were targeted, however youth and residents from the entire region were encouraged to participate. Building relationships with residents was an important priority to identify community needs, a goal of **Council's Strategic Plan**.

Funding for the skatepark has already been approved as part of the Saunderson Pressure Reducing Station project. Feedback will be reviewed and considered by Administration to help define a final design. Once the design is complete, it will be shared publicly along with construction timelines.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Abasand Skatepark engagement took place January 18 to February 8, 2024. The main objectives were to gain community demographics, usability, skill levels, and prioritize design elements. Prior to finalizing a design, further understanding was required to ensure the design wasn't too advanced or technical. Youth and riders from Abasand were targeted throughout engagement, however all residents were encouraged to participate. Marketing efforts to promote the engagement opportunity included social media, community signs, electronic signs, and sharing information with community partners (I.e., school districts, schools) to promote the survey and open house.

Numerous engagement tools were used, allowing residents to choose their preferred method to participate. This included online tools (I.e., survey, question & answer forum, quick poll) open house, targeted workshop, neighbourhood engagements and youth sessions. Overall feedback included excitement about the project, users preferred the flowing streetstyle, and combining elements from each design.

ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

The following groups were invited to participate:

1. Father Beaugard School
2. Ecole Boreal
3. School Districts
4. Mayor's Advisory Committee on Youth (MACOY)
5. Youth/non-profit organizations
6. Sport businesses
7. Golden Years Society
8. The public

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- ✓ Participate Wood Buffalo project page (RMWB's engagement portal)
- ✓ Community poster and signs
- ✓ Electronic traffic signs
- ✓ Direct contact with stakeholders
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Mac calendar
- ✓ MacDonald Island Park interior screens



ENGAGEMENT TACTICS



- Survey
- Quick poll
- Question & answer forum
- Open house
- Targeted workshop
- Neighbourhood engagement sessions
- Interactive youth book
- Local school sessions

ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS



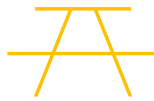
KEY THEMES



RAMPS



ACCESSIBILITY



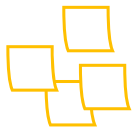
BENCHES



**NATURAL
FLOW**



***BOWL**



**COMBINING
DESIGN
ELEMENTS**



**BEGINNER/
ADVANCED
SKILL LEVEL**



**SCOOTER
RIDERS**



**6-18 YEARS
OLD**



MINIRAMP

**The request for a bowl was consistent throughout engagement tools. Due to the existing topography and infrastructure required to support this feature, a bowl is not a viable feature.*





INTRODUCTION

Findings from the Abasand Skatepark engagement are provided in detail below. The information includes feedback from two neighbourhood engagement sessions, a MACOY meeting, school sessions, an open house, a stakeholder workshop along with the survey, quick poll, and the question-and-answer forum. Feedback will be reviewed and considered by Administration as part of the decision-making process to finalize the design.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

DOWNTOWN

Neighbourhood Engagement Sessions are a creative and respectful space to support two-way conversations capturing community feedback. The Public engagement branch visits urban neighbourhoods throughout the year to gain feedback and discuss related topics and projects through these sessions.

On January 16, the Neighbourhood engagement series visited Downtown discussing the Abasand Skatepark, Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program, and municipal priorities. Throughout the three-hour engagement 65 residents joined in conversations at the Golden Year Society. Most participants were older adults, however residents from other neighbourhoods and Keyano College students joined. Residents were asked about user demographic and how their experience could be elevated when visiting the park. Overall, many residents weren't active riders, however provided demographics of riders they knew of.

Some elements identified are outside of the project scope (i.e., benches, shelter). The feedback will be shared with the appropriate department for awareness for future opportunities.

- The overall demographic identified was 6-15 years old and skateboarders.
- Themes included benches, shelter, picnic tables, and parking.

LITERACY MONTH

On January 27, the Neighbourhood engagement series went to the Wood Buffalo Regional Library as part of their literacy month event. Over 200 community members visited the Municipality's booth including children, youth, parents, and grandparents. Residents had the opportunity to provide demographics on a board, scan the QR for the survey, or fill out the survey on an iPad. The overall sentiment was excitement about progress on the project.

- The overall demographic identified was 6-10 years old, scooter riders, and beginner skill level.
- Additional feedback included fencing along the street and positive feedback on the mini ramp was separate.



MACOY MEETING

On January 26, the public engagement team met with 11 members of MACOY. The committee is responsible for advising Council on services, programs and issues as they relate to youth in the region. Youth that didn't identify as riders were able to provide perspectives from friends or family who were or provided feedback as a spectator of the space. An electronic engagement tool was used to ask "What's important to include when building a skatepark?." Responses are below.



They were asked if they had a preferred riding style, responses are below.

Open spaces for
technical tricks at low
speed.



Movement on ramps for
tricks on features.



Committee members visited three separate stations to provide additional feedback. They were given ten minutes to rotate to all stations, these included demographics and feedback on the concepts. Overall youth were excited for the project and enjoyed being a part of the engagement process.

- The overall demographic identified was 11-15 years old, scooter riders, at an intermediate skill level.
- Reoccurring themes participants liked in concept 1 include the mini ramp, ledges, drops, variety, and the spacious layout. The identified missing items include picnic tables, shade, benches, and rails.
- Reoccurring themes participants liked in concept 1 include the movement/fluid, variety, space, and drops. The identified missing items include benches, picnic tables, shade, and landscape.



SCHOOL VISITS

On January 31, members of the project team visited grades five and six at Father Beauregard School and grades six to nine at Ecole Boreale. In total 94 students provided feedback by visiting multiple interactive stations. The stations included Lego demographics, building a skatepark or rail by using colors associated to their skill level and preferred equipment. Students prioritized design elements (i.e., rails, quarterpipes) by ranking elements of most to least importance. Students also reviewed the concepts with the designer providing their opinions and perspectives.

Students learned the importance of public engagement and how their feedback supports the decision-making process. The survey QR code was provided as a handout to share with parents encouraging their participation. An interactive youth book was shared for younger grades to be a part of the process. The book educated students about the project background, importance of public engagement and an exercise on how easy it is to provide feedback. Overall students were very invested and eager to provide feedback, many students were avid users of the space and had diversified skill levels.

- The overall demographics identified bikes and scooters as preferred equipment, however many students explained they use multiple equipment at the skatepark. The skill levels students identified were mostly in the beginner and intermediate levels.
- Reoccurring themes participants liked in concept 1 include the rails and ride on terrace. The identified missing items include combining elements from concept 2 and adding more ramps.
- Reoccurring themes participants liked in concept 2 include ramps, a quarterpipe, and the flowing design. The identified missing items include adding bigger/steeper ramps.
- Design priorities identified as most important include a quarterpipe, miniramp, and a funbox. With the least important identified as flat ledges and rails.

OPEN HOUSE

On January 31, residents were invited to attend an open house at the Abasand Outdoor Rink. A heated tent along with hot chocolate kept residents warm to provide feedback about demographics and their opinions on the two design concepts. The designer was on hand, along with the project team to respond to questions.

Students, youth, and adults from Abasand provided feedback along with residents from other neighbourhoods. The survey was also available on iPads easily accessible for residents to provide further feedback. Overall residents were thankful for the opportunity with suggestions to combine both designs.

- The overall user demographic identified was 6-10 years old, mostly scooter riders in the beginner skill level.
- Reoccurring themes participants liked in concept 1 include a manual pad, and ramps. The identified missing items include bigger drops and a half pipe.
- Reoccurring themes participants liked in concept 2 include a ramp, and wedge to wedge. The identified missing items included chairs and sitting areas.



WORKSHOP

On February 1, a targeted group of youth associated businesses and organizations were engaged. A formal presentation went into details about the site location and design concepts followed by an interactive engagement.

Participants were positioned at multiple stations that discussed demographics and both design concepts. They provided feedback at each station based on their experiences with local youth and rotated until they completed all stations. Participants provided their recommendations on inclusiveness, pathways, and advanced riders.

- The overall user demographic identified was ages 6-18 years old with comments that many older teens participate at current skateparks. Majority of users prefer scooters, but also wheelchairs, and three-wheel bikes. Skill levels ranging from beginner to advanced were identified, with many advanced riders using the Casselman Lush Memorial Skate Park located at 10017 Morimoto Drive.
- The reoccurring theme participants liked in concept 1 include the overall layout of the park. The identified missing items include a sitting area, and the exclusiveness (participants would prefer a park that is accessible to users of all abilities).
- Reoccurring themes participants liked in concept 2 include the natural flow, visibility, and the diverse elements able to accommodate multiple skill levels. The identified missing items include rest areas for users, concrete color for better visibility of hazards, concrete level to the grass, establishing a path to the miniramp, and width at the top of slopes to support accessibility needs.

QUESTION & ANSWER FORUM

Residents were able to ask questions and receive answers from subject matter experts in the online public forum. Below are the questions and answers submitted.

Question 1: Is there a committee or group?

Answer: There is no organized committee or group, all residents are encouraged to share feedback to help Administration decide on the final design. To talk more about this with us directly email participate@rmwb.ca.

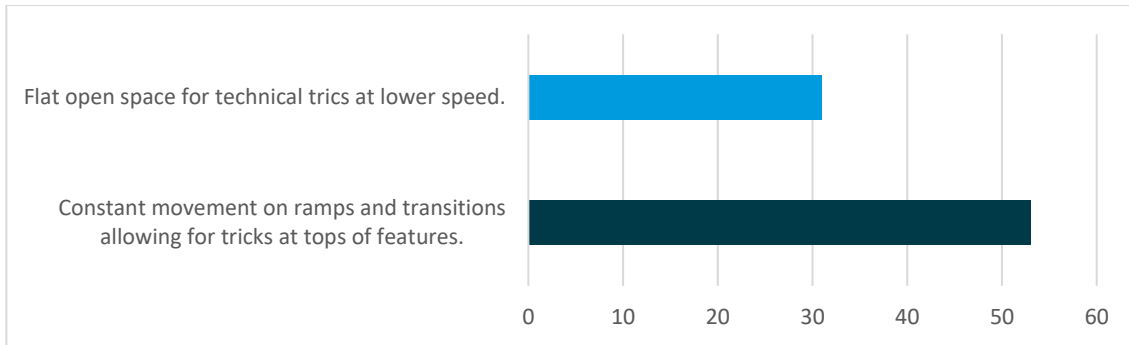
Question 2: Basketball hoop/ court replacement? It would be nice to see the basketball hoop replacement also being planned. Everything in the concept drawings looks great but also looks like plenty of space for a hoop and small court.

Answer: As part of the development of the concept designs the basketball hoop was removed to better improve overall space and prioritize safety. Gaining residents feedback will help determine if a basketball hoop should be included in the final design. We encourage you to provide your feedback on the topic in the survey or by contacting participate@rmwb.ca.



QUICK POLL

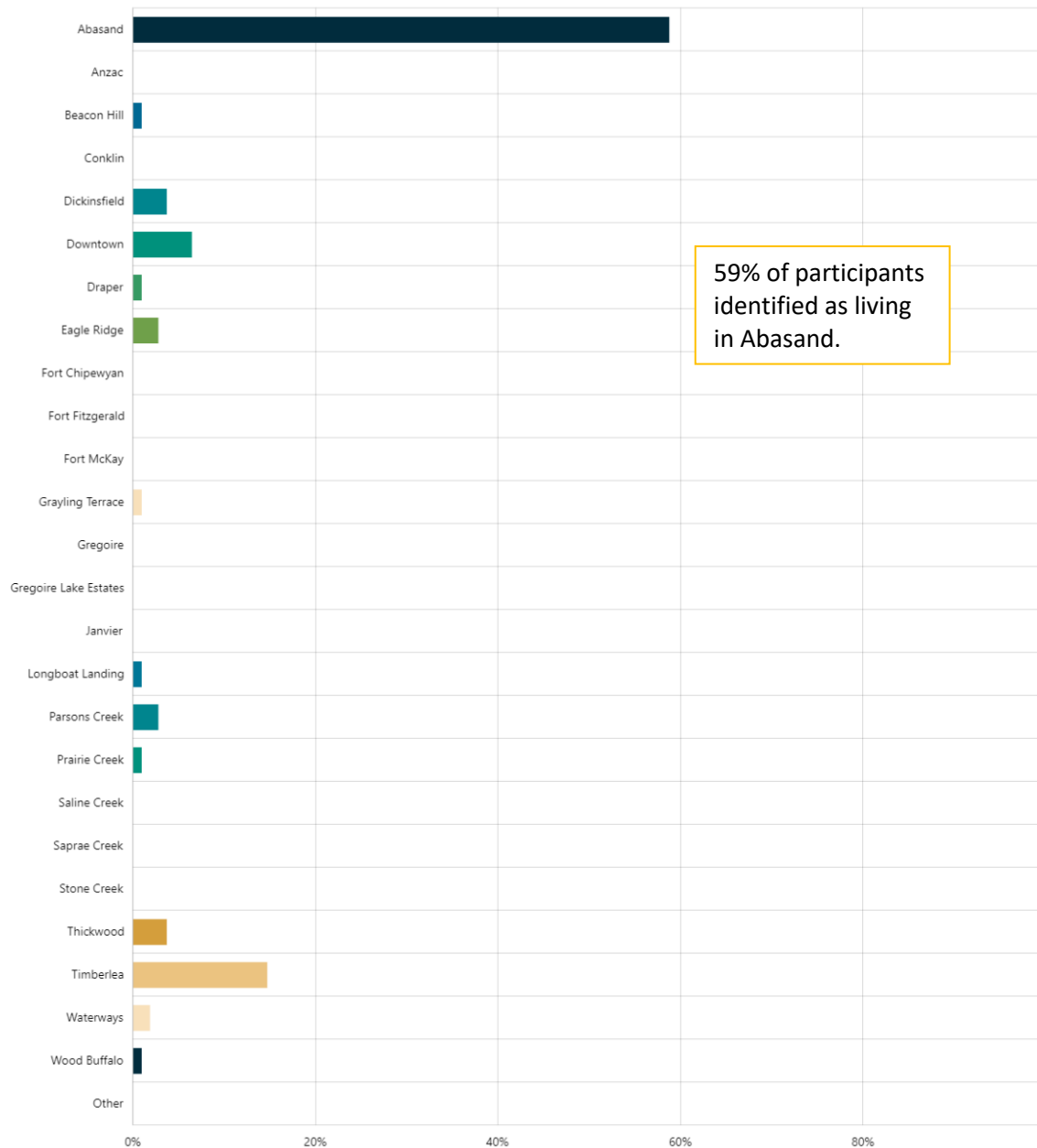
Participants could answer an online “Quick Poll” about their preferred street style. The following question was answered by 84 participants, “Which type of riding style do you identify with?”



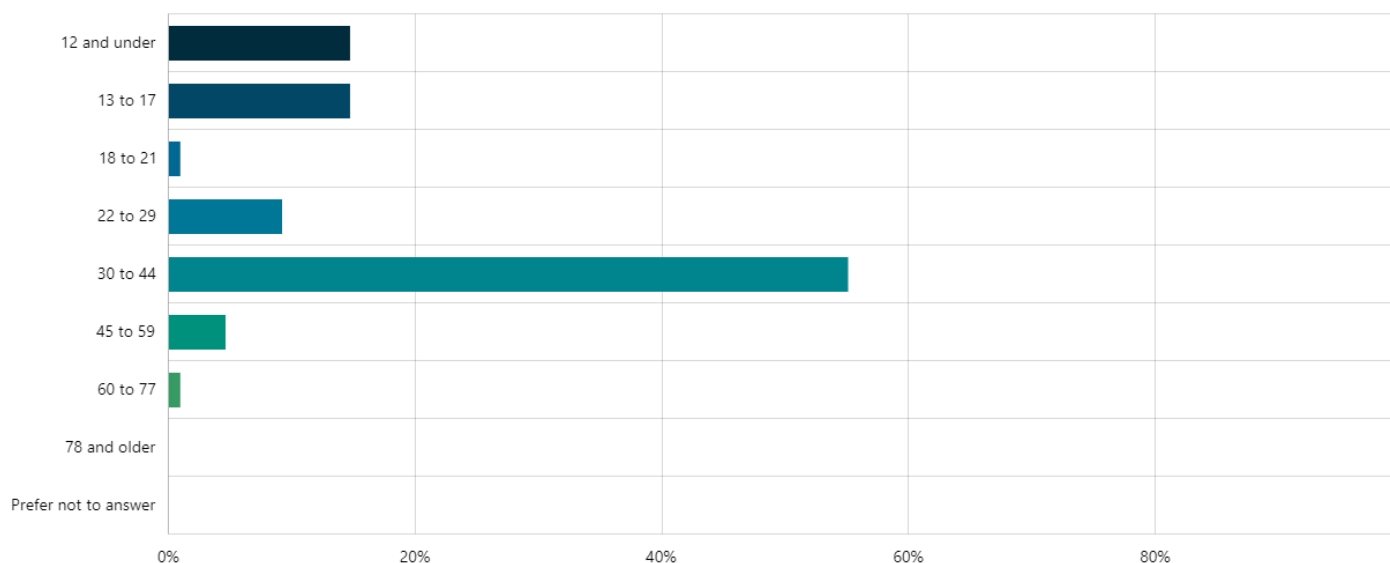
SURVEY

Participants provided demographics, usability, design priorities, and concept opinions through the survey. The questions were developed to help define a final design that would support community needs and recreational skillsets. The survey was available for the public from January 18- February 8, 2024, with 109 responses. Where applicable, the overall sentiment of open-ended questions is captured in this report.

Q1: What neighbourhood do you live in?

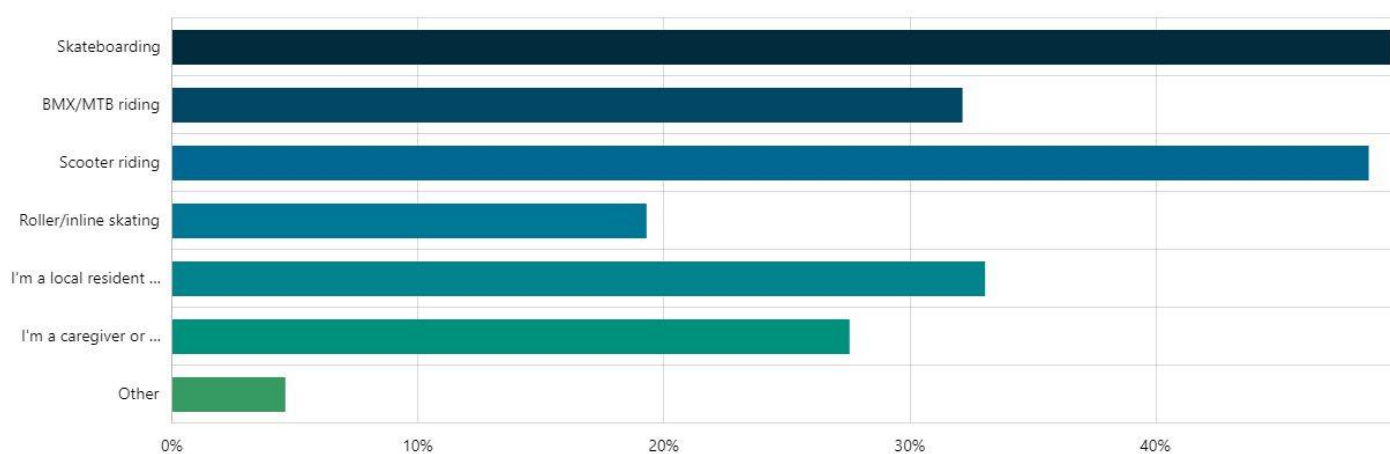


Q2: How old are you?

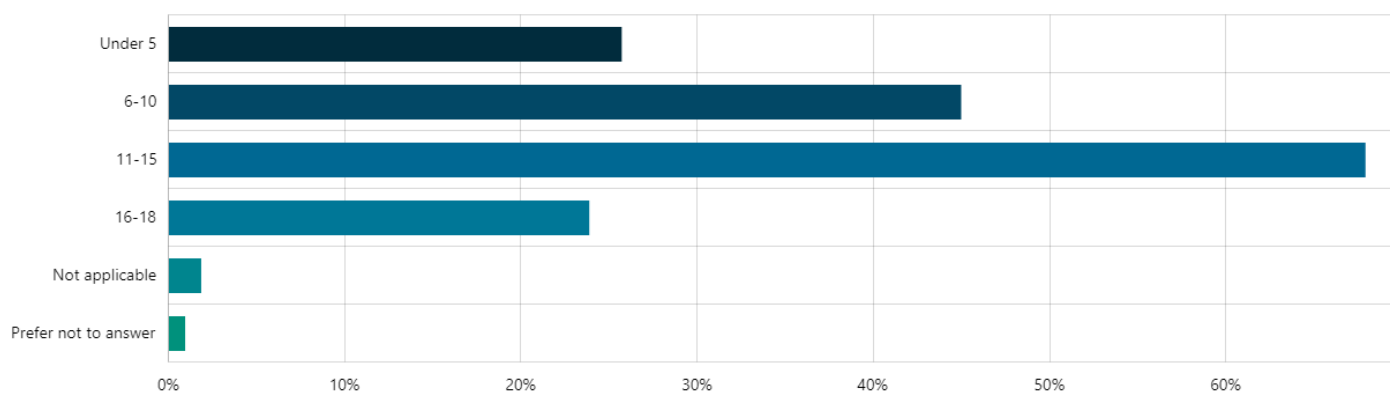


Q3: What is your primary interest in this project?

Participants that choose “other” indicated basketball court, skating, and splash park as other forms of primary interest for the project.

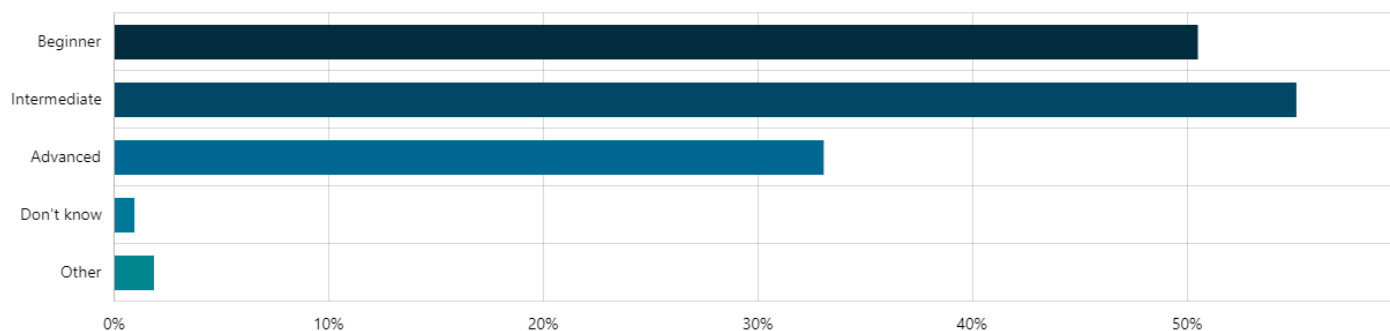


Q4: If you know youth that would use the skatepark, how old are they?



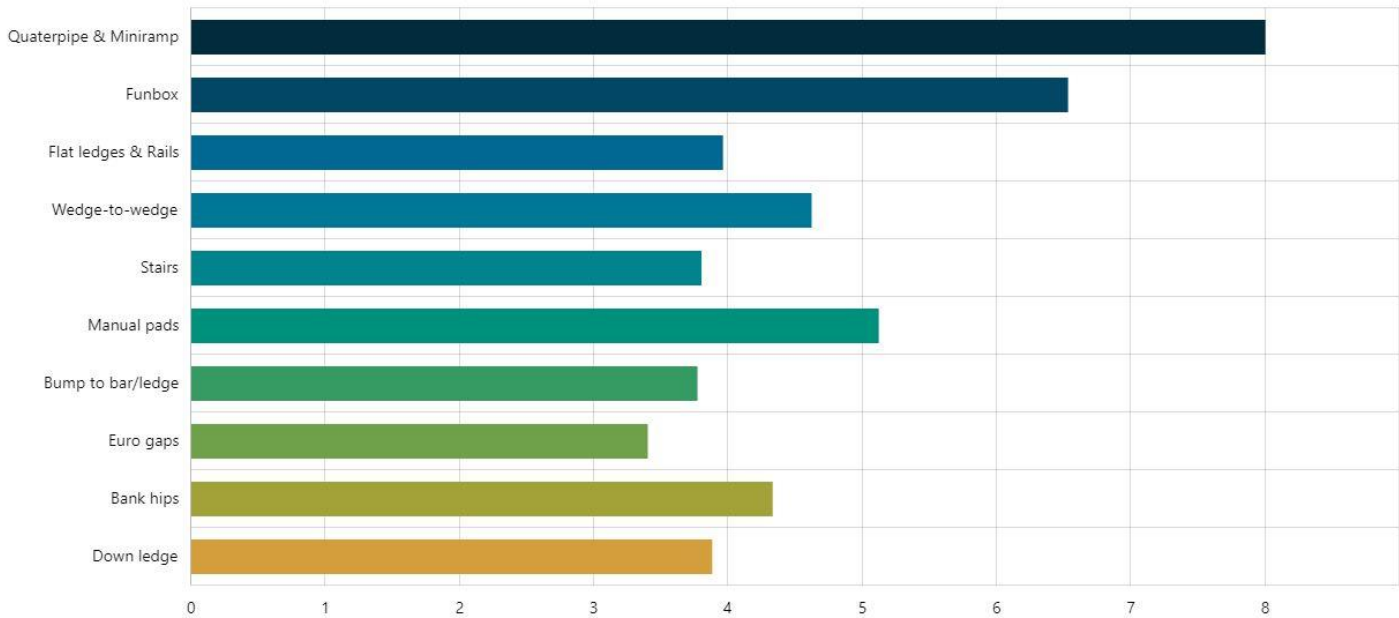
Q5: What is your skill level or the child(ren) you know?

Participants that choose “other” indicated being between beginner and intermediate levels.



Q6: What type of design elements are important to you? Rank the features, with most importance to least importance.

The elements are ranked at most importance by a higher value, and least important by a lower value. Participants identified quarterpipe and miniramp the most important and euro gap as the least important.



Q7: Are there features you see in Concept 1 that you like?

Participants could provide elements they liked through this open-ended question. Several elements were consistently provided, these include but are not limited to:

- Rails
- Miniramp
- Manual pads
- Wedge-to-wedge
- Quarterpipe

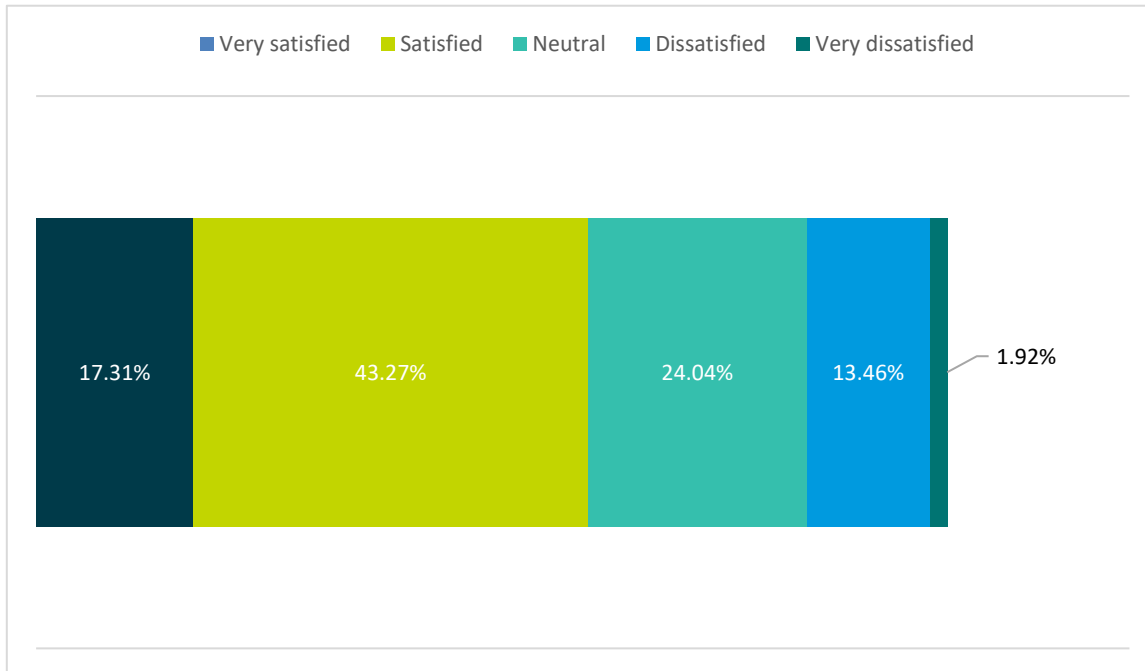
Q8: Are there features you see in Concept 1 that are missing?

Participants could provide missing elements through this open-ended question. Several elements were consistently provided, these include but not limited to:

- Flowing elements
- Quarterpipes
- Benches
- Basketball net



Q9: What's your opinion on Concept 1?



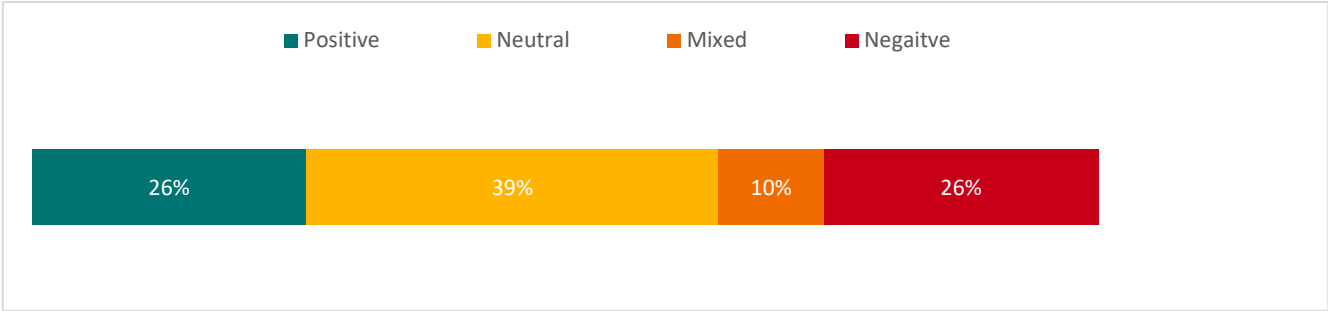
Q10: Do you have any additional comments on Concept 1?

Participants could provide additional comments through this open-ended question. Several elements were consistently provided, these include but are not limited to:

- Pathway to ramp
- Quaterpipe
- More fluid
- Basketball hoop
- Benches



Survey reporting can compile sentiment analysis to determine overall feeling from the feedback (positive, negative, neutral and mixed). This approach uses text analysis and natural language processing to gain a deep insight into open-ended responses. Results that capture sentiment from this question are below with examples of each.



Q10 – Examples of long answers received organized by sentiment.

Positive	Neutral	Mixed	Negative
I am so happy that you are not putting back the old, tired equipment. This is such a large area, and the community was really hoping it would get some attention.	It should be like the one downtown by the syne. We load up the kids’ bikes and go down there all the time during summer.	They’re both beginner designs that would leave my 4-year-old bored in a week, my 8-year-old bored in a day, and I wouldn’t even bring my bike. We have enough entry level parks in town, we need more big quarters, box jumps, and wall rides.	the half is a bit small, and I feel like there is not much for the bikers. I think it could also use a jump with landing.
Love it! It’s a very busy park so bigger than the concept would be even better but it looks fantastic. Benches and trees for kids to get out of the sun will be great. Also, the old park was prone to flooding because of improper drainage so please keep in mind.	Add in an MTB/BMX section, pump track or jump lines. Look possibly into a new development for something similar to Chestermere Bike Park near Calgary. Most cities are now getting pump tracks and skill zones for MTB.	Most obstacles are featured, however that larger multi-tiered manual pad in the middle kind of takes up space and will most likely become a bench instead of being used for its intended purposes.	Very little flow to this design. If the long skinny area is what we have to work with I think it could be improved by reducing the size of the manual pad in the middle and add to the size of the upper area. Would be nice to fit a bowl in up there. Please make the mini ramp a bowl.



Q11: Are there features you see in Concept 2 that you like?

Participants could specify elements they liked through this open-ended question. Several elements were consistently provided, these include but are not limited to:

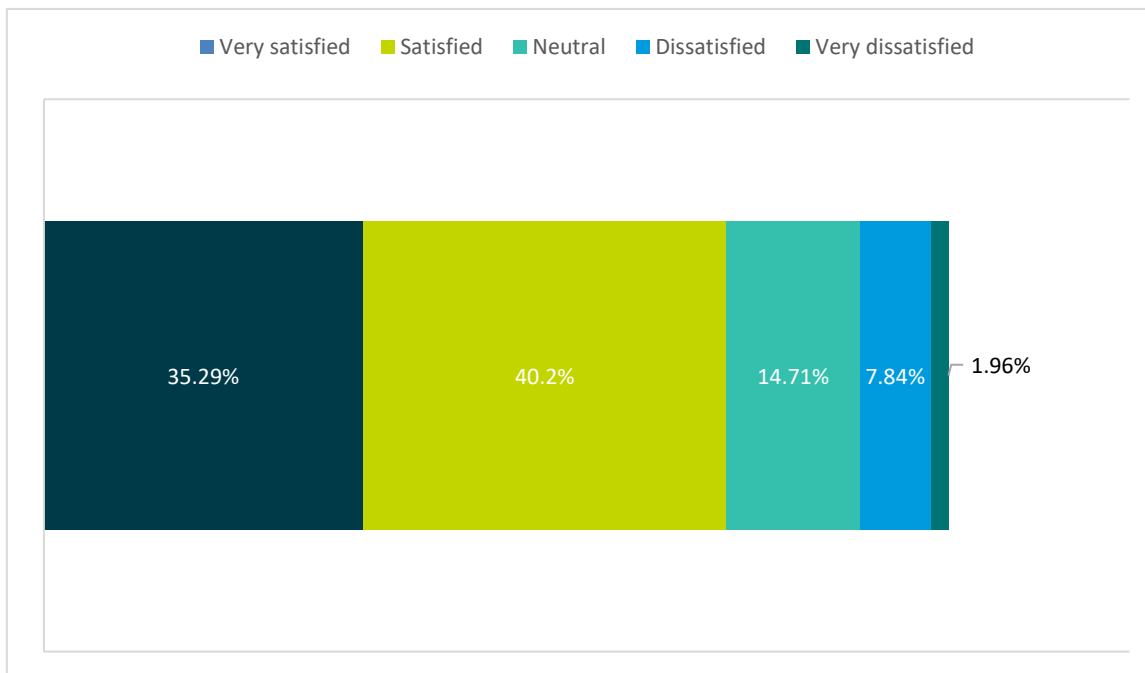
- Rail
- Miniramp
- Wedge-to-wedge
- Flow
- Quaterpipes
- Space

Q12: Are there features you see in Concept 2 that are missing?

Participants could provide missing elements through this open-ended question. Several elements were consistently provided, these include but not limited to:

- Half pipes
- Seating
- Basketball net

Q13: What's your opinion on concept 2?

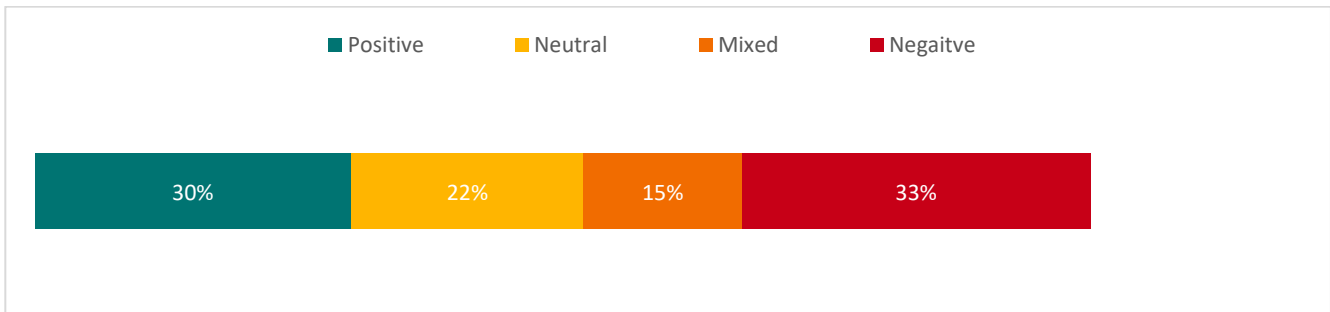


Q14: Do you have any additional comments on Concept 2?

Participants could provide additional comments through this open-ended question. Several elements were consistently provided, these include but are not limited to:

- Bowl
- Ramps
- Steeper
- Pathway to miniramp

Results that capture sentiment from this question are below.



Q14 – Examples of long answers received organized by sentiment.

Positive	Neutral	Mixed	Negative
Concept two is awesome! Do this yeah!! Bathroom would be great if possible, for the younger families.	Picnic tables, washroom and a place with shade.	The park has a good setup with lots of space. If I had a choice, I would stagger the two angled rails so if people were to come off them at the same time, they'd be less likely to collide.	You'll end up making it much smaller than the image shows making it impossible for people to ride around.
Coming from a good skateboarder, this is the best concept. Just make sure the surface is good.	Stairs?	I love it but I think it's similar to concept 1. I think you should do a beginner area and then a more advanced area. It would bring more people from all over Fort McMurray. Adding in a drop bowl, extra ramps/ bigger drop in areas would be awesome.	I would like more ramps and less grinding bars please.



Q15: Is there anything you can think of that would make this skatepark unique to Abasand? (I.e. Community history, culture, color)

Participants could provide their own ideas and thoughts through this open-ended question. Several elements were consistently provided, these include but are not limited to:

- Color
- Graffiti
- Hills
- Trees
- Water

NEXT STEPS

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) thanks participants for their time and valuable input. Engagement findings will be reviewed and considered for the final design completed by Administration. Funding for this skatepark has already been approved as part of the Saunderson Pressure Reducing Station project.

Residents who subscribe to Participate Wood Buffalo will receive an email update when the final design is complete. Visit rmwb.ca/participate to subscribe.





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