

Knox Mountain Park Management Plan Update

Engagement Summary 2022





Background

Knox Mountain Park is a popular destination for both residents and visitors to Kelowna seeing ~260,000 visits per year, and its popularity and use continues to grow. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the park’s usage alongside Kelowna’s rapid population growth. Every ten years, the management plan for Knox Mountain gets updated and the last one was endorsed by City Council in November 2011.

The update looks at what has been done in the past 10 years, and what focus areas will be to advance the vision of the park for the next 10 years. Much of the 2011 plan is brought forward, including the vision and strategic goals that state Knox Mountain is for nature, people, and stewardship. The focus of this update will be managing the explosive growth in use and addressing operational concerns including mitigating wildfire risks.

In May 2021, a survey seeking resident input on road access, who’s using it, and next steps for Knox Mountain Drive was conducted for five weeks. The objectives of the survey helped inform the 2-year pilot Knox Mountain Drive Strategy adopted by Council in November 2021, which focuses on safety, accessibility, and operational considerations.

Below are the numbers of the Knox Mountain Drive engagement, which helped pave the way for staff consideration when creating the updated plan.

2021 Survey Information



817
Survey
Respondents



39
Stakeholders
Engaged



4035
Comments
Submitted

Work continued on the management plan through 2021 into 2022. A comprehensive review of biophysical conditions, park use, and current issues facing the park was undertaken. The plan now focuses on how to manage the increased use the park is receiving and is expected over the next ten years.

In Spring 2022, based on earlier engagement results, the updated management plan was presented for public review and feedback. Poll questions were asked to ensure alignment with the park’s 2011 vision and strategic goals and were available on the project page along with the draft document.



The Engagement

Purpose: To inform residents of the updated management plan and consult with both the public and park stakeholders on the draft.

Timeline: April 21 – May 15, 2022

Engagement Goals:

- Inform residents and stakeholders to participate in poll questions and discussion forum on GetInvolved
- Consult with residents if plan updates align with the park's vision and strategic goals
- Consult with stakeholder groups regarding the 10-year plan

Stakeholders: Staff included various stakeholders in the process to guide key focuses in the draft. Stakeholders included:

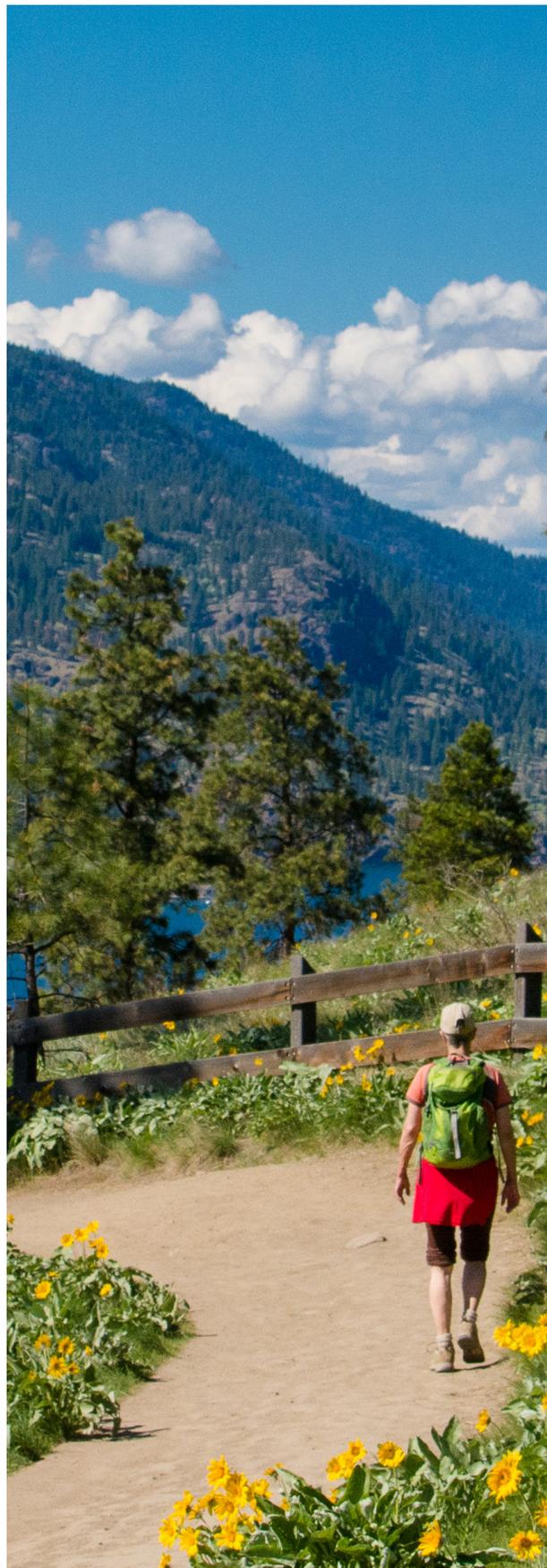
- Friends of KMP Society
- Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan
- Accessibility groups
- West Bank First Nation

Communications Goal

The updated plan incorporates environmental considerations, provides updated analysis on the ecological needs of the park, and gives guidance to decision-making on capital improvements and how we maintain the park through the next decade.

Residents were encouraged to read the updated plan and answer five poll questions to ensure the updated management plan aligned with the park's vision and strategic goals.

"I really enjoy Knox Mountain for hiking and biking."
- Survey respondent



Engagement Overview

The updated plan was presented online through GetInvolved encouraging residents to read it, answer five poll questions, and participate in the discussion forum alongside other community members and stakeholders. Feedback was collected to ensure the updated plan aligned with the park's vision and strategic goals through the poll questions. To ensure online visibility, two media releases, two City in Action ads, and an ad on Castanet were issued alongside social media postings and an e-newsletter to over 6,000 Get Involved registrants. Park visitors were greeted with a poster at each the Base and First Lookout parking lots where a digital construction sign also encouraged visitors to participate in the project.

Poll numbers



Discussion Forum



What We Heard

Poll Questions

Polls are an effective way to gauge broad public sentiment on a topic where participants can engage and see community opinion immediately. It allows for quick responses on the project compared to a typical survey which tend to dive deeper into a specific subject(s). The poll questions were developed to garner public opinion on the work and goals for Knox Mountain management still aligning with the goals and vision of 2011.

The results show respondents concur the updated Knox Mountain Park 10-year Management Plan is on a path forward.

As typical response rates go in polling questions, there is approximately half the respondents from question one onward.

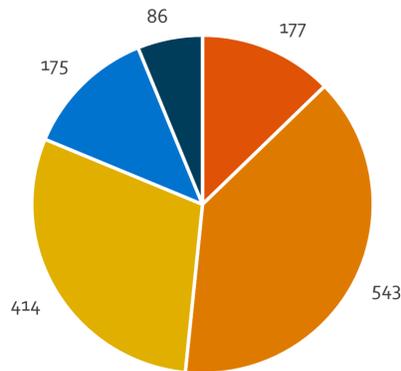
Discussion Forum

Residents were welcomed to participate in a discussion forum with other community members. The sentiment through the discussion forum was fairly positive with mentions of improvements to the dog park such as trees for shade, water for dogs, lighting, and more off leash areas. Further, there is resident concern over the disc golf course being removed, and overall pedestrian safety on Knox Mountain Drive. Lastly, there were quite a number of comments applauding the City for the work it has done to the park over the last decade.





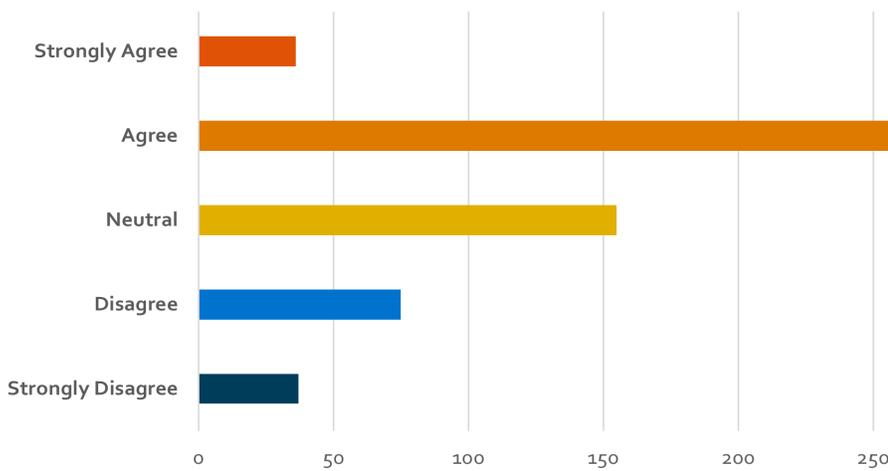
1,134 of 1,391 (85%) respondents agreed, strongly agreed, or were neutral when asked if the vision and strategic goals guiding the updated plan still hold true in 2022 as they did in 2011.



720
Agree or Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

+450 of 566 (80%) agreed, strongly agreed, or felt neutral toward the investment areas advancing the vision and strategic goals through the updated plan.

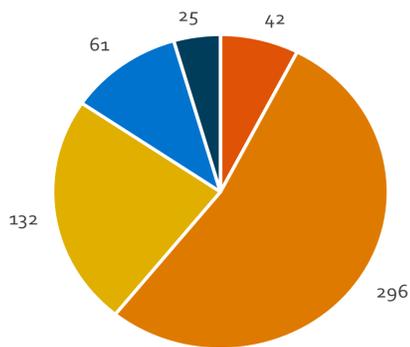


299
Agree or Strongly Agree





When asked if the work done at Knox in the last 10 years aligned with the vision and strategic goals, 470 respondents agreed, strongly agreed, or felt neutral.



Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

338
Agree or Strongly Agree

Accessibility and amenities like benches, washrooms, and signage are important investment areas for respondents. **482** of 581 (83%) agreed, strongly agreed, or felt neutral towards these investment areas.

396
Agree or Strongly Agree

Improving parking and trail connections at Knox Mountain East is a focal point for the next 10 years. **469** of 539 (87%) agree, strongly agree, or felt neutral on improvements to Knox East.

403
Agree or Strongly Agree





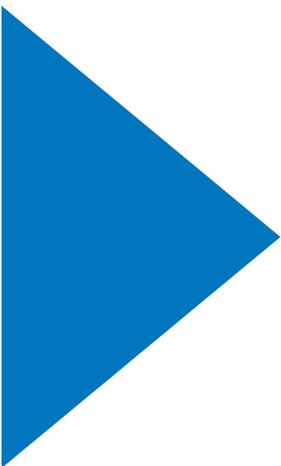
Knox Mountain

- ▶ Nature
- ▶ People
- ▶ Stewardship

Conclusion

Through this final phase of public engagement, it remains clear that the residents continue to care about Knox Mountain Park and support the work the City is doing to advance and protect it for years to come. Investment into areas such as trail access and amenities are supported by residents and more importantly, consensus proves the 2022 management plan holds true to the 2011 vision and strategic goals. That vision continues to be a guiding path for the management of the park as we work together to create a place for nature, people, and stewardship.

Through the Imagine Kelowna process, the community expressed that the Kelowna of tomorrow should be inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. This means protecting our natural environment and parks within, so everybody who lives in and visits Kelowna can enjoy now and into the future. The updated Knox Mountain Park 10-year management plan ensures protection, advancement, and investment in the areas most needed.



"... Thank you for all the improvements to trails, parking, etc. that have been made so far... I want to mention is to please put more signs reminding people not to pick the wildflowers... There has been a massive increase in the arrowhead balsamroot being picked over the last few years and it's super sad to see."
- Survey respondent

"I enjoy spending time on Knox, and appreciate all of the work that goes into making it an even better place for residents..."
- Survey respondent

