

Bowmont Park Frequently Asked Questions

What is the updated Bowmont Park Management Plan?

The [Bowmont Natural Environment Park Management Plan](#) was approved by Council in 2003 to balance the protection of environmentally sensitive and significant areas with meaningful opportunities for Calgarians to enjoy this highly valued natural area park.

The plan's recommendations have been implemented, and updates were made in 2016 to reflect a number of changes such as:

- acquisition of new land within the park and creation of a Design Development Plan for the newly acquired portion;
- construction of a new stormwater outfall in the park;
- management of river bank/riparian erosion and impact on wildlife habitat due to flooding (2005, 2013);
- alignment with the Council approved [PDF Off-leash Area Management Plan](#) guidelines (2010); and
- damage to vegetation and river banks from the creation of informal trails.

What are some of the recommendations and construction timelines?

The recommendations in the updated 2016 Plan will be implemented as budget allows. Starting in November 2016, Calgary Parks will be working in the park to implement improvements outlined in the plan. These include:

- A [PDF new fenced off-leash area](#) at the park entrance off Silver Springs Gate N.W. that will feature:
 - New benches
 - Natural area restoration
 - Trail improvements
 - Weed control in preparation for more extensive [Naturalization](#) work planned for 2017.
- Revised off-leash area boundaries throughout the park that provide a continuous corridor from the west to the east.
- Installation of additional signage throughout the park to clarify the on and off-leash area boundaries.
- New interpretive signage will also be installed in 2017.

How much public engagement was involved in creating the updated plan?

Public engagement was an important component in the development of the park's  [updated management plan](#).

Stakeholder and public engagement in 2015 was implemented in a phased approach, with the first phase (May – July 2015) focused on understanding park visitors' experiences, desired changes and long term vision. Key areas of interest were identified, including, but are not limited to, protecting wildlife and habitat, improving accessibility, reducing or increasing the amount of off-leash areas and reducing conflict on the pathway system. The second phase of engagement (September – October 2015) focused solely on off-leash areas.

Through the engagement process, we heard Calgarians' support of the natural environment and the importance of maintaining recreational opportunities in the park. Details are available in the  [What We Heard Report](#).

Were residents asked for input about the new fenced off-leash area?

No, prior to construction of the new fenced off-leash area, residents were informed of this work. Calgary Parks engaged stakeholders and the community extensively in 2015 on a variety of park issues including off-leash boundaries, park use preferences, and natural environment protection. Use of this off-leash area in particular remains unchanged, and Calgary Parks identified an opportunity to provide an additional amenity for park visitors to enjoy without disrupting existing use of the space.

The City has over 150 public off-leash areas, but few are fenced; and the location of this site aligns with the requirements outlined in the [Off-leash Area Management Plan](#). The City will now have 6 fenced [off-leash areas](#), two of which are in Bowmont Park.

Why is Calgary Parks adding a new fenced off-leash area in Bowmont Park?

Many Calgarians enjoy walking their dog in Bowmont Park, either on-leash or off-leash. Calgarians have indicated that fenced off-leash areas are a valued amenity, and with five fenced off-leash areas in the city (not counting the new Bowmont Park fenced off-leash area), their availability is limited.

Based on the Council-approved  [Off-leash Area Management Plan](#), there is particular criteria that must be met when constructing these areas. For example, they must be located away from sensitive natural areas and close to a parking lot. This site fulfills many of the criteria required for installing a fenced off-leash area.

Are any changes planned for vehicle and pedestrian access to the Silver Springs Gate entrance?

Safety is top priority and The City of Calgary is investigating options for vehicle access to the parking lot. Pedestrians are asked to use marked cross-walks when crossing from the north side of Silver Springs Gate N.W.

Will parking demand increase due to the new fenced off-leash area?

This entrance is a minor entry point into the park, and is not widely used. If there is an increase in the number of cars accessing the park, there is capacity to accommodate additional vehicles.

Will wildlife be impacted by the new fenced off-leash area?

Wildlife impacts from the new fenced off-leash area will be minimal. The site is located away from sensitive natural areas, away from areas that we know wildlife actively use, and is near major roadways, which deters wildlife activity. Additionally, wildlife is more active at dawn, dusk and at nighttime when the park is closed.

I've heard the strip of land parallel to Silverview Way was re-designated. What does that mean?

The vast majority of Bowmont Park is designated as Special Purpose - Urban Nature (S-UN), which is a land designation protecting significant natural environment area. Until recently, this particular strip of land was a Special Purpose – Future Urban Development designation (S-FUD), which is a classification reserved for future urban development. In September 2016, Council approved the re-designation of this land from S-FUD to S-UN, bringing the designation in alignment with the intended use of the land as a significant natural area park.

When was off-leash designation implemented in Bowmont Park?

Bowmont Park has offered off-leash areas for the public to enjoy since 2003, and possibly earlier. The location of the new fenced off-leash area is within an already established off-leash area which is identified in both the 2003 and 2016 Plans.

Based on stakeholder and public feedback, as well as park management planning processes, this off-leash area designation will remain unchanged.