

Parks & Open Spaces

Led by: Calgary Parks

Description:

Our service plans, builds, maintains and stewards an accessible parks system. We conserve and promote biodiverse ecosystems and cultural landscapes. We provide Calgarians with nature in the city and safe, inclusive, social and active opportunities. The park system includes regional and neighbourhood parks and the river valleys. Park amenities include playgrounds, picnic sites, spray parks, outdoor skating, toboggan hills, off-leash areas and year-round activities at Devonian Gardens. We support park volunteers and deliver environmental education programs. Neighbourhood sport opportunities include soccer, baseball, cricket, tennis, basketball and skateboarding.

Customers:

Our customers include: children, teens, adults and seniors; sport, nature and recreational groups; festival/event attendees and organizers; tourists; and the natural environment (for future generations).

What is delivered to customers:

Parks, nature and amenities for leisure activities.

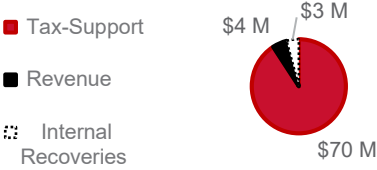

Partners:

Our service partners with: Parks Foundation Calgary, sponsors/donors and developers who invest in new parks; City services, the Province and school boards on shared policy and interests; community, sport and nature groups and festival organizations; horticulture/education institutions on best practices; and lastly, onsite vendors including food services and equipment rentals.

Service need (value proposition):

Citizen well-being in urban environments partly relies on having access to space where they can relax, recreate and experience nature and culture. Studies show proximity to parks and nature is beneficial to mental and physical health. Citizens receive free and low-cost access to nature, recreation, culture and environmental education opportunities. Environmental stewardship benefits current and future generations, and is key to our city's resiliency and quality of urban life. The parks system should be fun, safe, inclusive and sustainable, and within a walkable distance for citizens. A variety in park types and amenities is supplied to meet the needs of a wide range of citizen ages, abilities and interests.

Current state service value

<p>99.5% Residents within a 5-min. walk to a park</p> <p>70,000 Parks' program participants per year</p>	<p>94% Citizens satisfied with Calgary's parks</p> <p>18% Efficiencies realized since 2008 (\$)</p>	<p>2018 Budgeted Gross Operating Expenditures Funding Breakdown (\$ Millions)*</p>  <p>\$60 Annual operating cost per resident to operate city parks</p> <p>* Gross operating budget and the service cost ratio may include internal recoveries that are also included in other services gross operating budget.</p>
<p>Connections to Citizen Priorities</p> 		<p>What the service includes This service has no sub-services.</p> <p>Key Capital Investments Our parks include \$2.5B worth of park infrastructure. Capital funding is required for lifecycle maintenance of aging parks and new infrastructure to meet evolving community needs. Capital funding is also required to restore and naturalize landscapes.</p>



What we've heard and service outlook

What we heard: Research & Engagement Results

Ninety-four per cent of citizens are satisfied with this service according to the 2017 Citizen Satisfaction Survey. We have had stable satisfaction rates for a decade. Citizen feedback from the 2018 One Calgary engagement included desires to protect the natural environment, green spaces and urban wildlife. Other comments included the importance of parks to support physical/mental health and overall wellbeing.

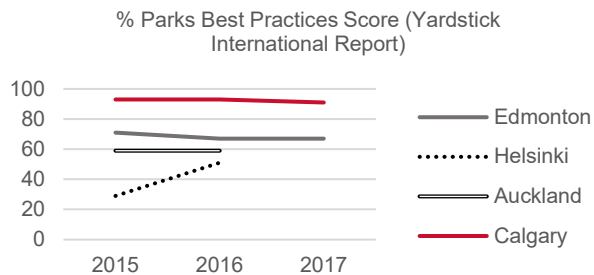
What Council has directed

Key long-term plans guiding our service are the Municipal Development Plan and imagineParks. Parks and Open Spaces is leading Council Directive H6 to "make parks and green spaces a priority and proactively seek to increase green space in neighbourhoods." We also strongly support themes in H4 and H5 of providing public meeting spaces, healthy lifestyles and active living through a wide range of accessible and affordable recreation opportunities in every community. We will contribute to Calgary's climate change resilience strategies (H1) as well as watershed protection and water conservation initiatives (H3). Protection and enhancement of First Nations (W5) and heritage sites (N3) is delivered with the implementation of our cultural landscapes strategy. Finally, we ensure both new and established communities are complete communities through parks planning, operations and capital investment (N4).

What are we watching?

Key trends include: Calgary's aging population and the need for more accessibility in public park features. There is growing research showing: the importance of proximity to parks to a person's level of physical activity and health; the link between access to nature, trees and parks to improved mental and physical health; research on the importance of creative and adventurous "play" in child development; the environmental significance of healthy biodiversity and wildlife corridors to the urban environment; technology applications for mapping and optimizing service delivery; and, green infrastructure. Risks impacting consistent service delivery include: severe weather events (flooding, windstorms, etc.); aging park infrastructure and stress on parks in high-density neighbourhoods; and, environmental resiliency (invasive weeds, human-wildlife conflicts and water conservation).

Benchmarking



Yardstick is an international parks and recreation benchmarking organization operated as a partnership between private sector and industry groups. An overall best practice percentage is an aggregate score of a city's parks operations, asset management, planning, environmental sustainability and social benefits best practices. Note: No comparative data for 2014. Helsinki and Auckland did not participate in the audit in 2017.

Source: Yardstick International Report

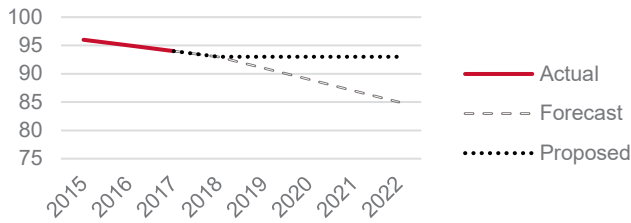
What matters to Calgarians

VALUE DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
Wellbeing	Year-round opportunities for social interaction, community vitality, nature appreciation and leisure activities.
Availability	Neighbourhood parks are readily accessible to all communities.
Safety	Parks and open spaces are safe.
Sustainability	Our natural environment is conserved through stewardship, planning and management contributing to urban resilience.
Environmental	We recognize that healthy ecosystems are essential to our personal, community, and economic well-being.

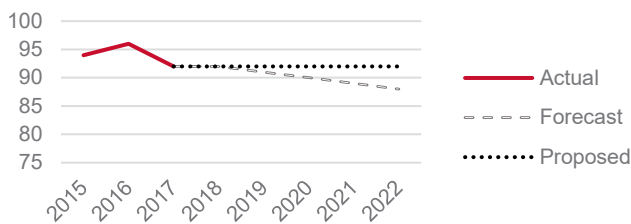


How is the Service performing? Where we are headed and where do we want to go?

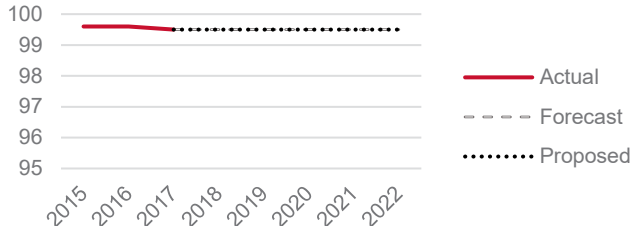
Citizen Satisfaction (% of citizens satisfied with parks, playgrounds and other open spaces)



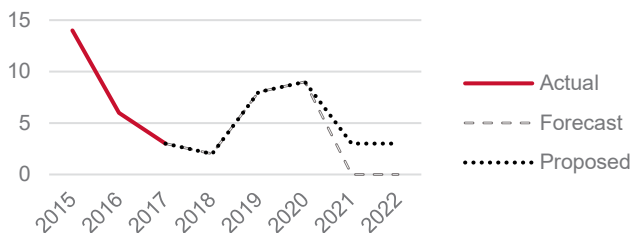
Parks Asset Condition Ratings (% of Calgary parks infrastructure in acceptable condition)



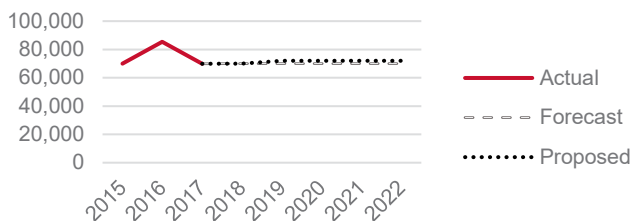
Proximity to Parks (% of citizens that have access to parks within a five-minute walk or 400 metres)



Naturalization (# of park hectares per year under naturalization)



Parks Program Participants (# of Parks education or volunteer program participants)



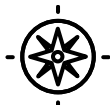
Story behind the curve

Citizen Satisfaction and Asset Condition Ratings: In the first two graphs, we are forecasting a decline in citizen satisfaction due to a lack of capital funding for lifecycle maintenance. Within parks, the condition of features such as natural landscapes, spray parks, sports fields and picnic sites is monitored. Citizen satisfaction is forecasted to drop as park features age, fall into disrepair or don't meet evolving needs (such as providing shaded seating areas for aging citizens or a range of accessible play opportunities). Maintaining citizen satisfaction is largely linked with how well we maintain our parks. For example, the quality of a community sports field will decrease over time without adequate turf maintenance. Without acceptable turf conditions, satisfaction declines as the grass condition worsens over time. Turning the Curve strategies will include identifying further efficiencies and alternative revenue (sponsors, donors, etc.).

Proximity to Parks: Parks are gathering places that build strong communities and healthy citizens. Quick access to parks, trees and greenery is good for our physical and mental health. The Municipal Development Plan requires us to provide parks within a five-minute walk of residents. Insuring a balance between maintaining existing parks and developing new parks is important to citizens.

Naturalization: This work improves the health and resiliency of Calgary's landscapes, reducing long-term maintenance, sequestering carbon and improving biodiversity by controlling weeds and planting native plants. The measures show planned completion of previously funded capital projects. There is no new capital funding for this work in 2019-22. New projects in 2021-22 will be funded through internal efficiencies or partnership opportunities. By 2022, we will be at six per cent of our biodiversity goal to restore 832 hectares of open space by 2025.

Environmental Education: We want to inspire citizens to be active, knowledgeable park stewards. Parks currently offers a range of popular environmental education programs such as school and volunteer programs. One-time funding to provide public tree care education led to an increase in participation levels in 2015-16. Ongoing volunteer programs such as the annual Pathway and River Clean-Up continue to be well attended more than 50 years after its launch. The new Haskayne Park facility will provide another location and indoor space that will lead to education and program participant increases.



What do we propose to do?

What we propose to continue doing

STRATEGY
Provide citizens with safe, fun and accessible parks within both new and established communities.
Evaluate, protect and manage Calgary's ecological corridors to support biodiversity and environmental resilience.
Provide parks maintenance in developing communities without impacting current standards in established communities (\$5.1M).
Provide volunteer and public education programs to encourage citizens to be stewards of our parks.
Evaluate and maintain parks as well as engage park users on their satisfaction with park features.
Use a balanced approach to managing prohibited weeds, mosquitos and other threats to our environment and quality of life.
Implement the Cultural Landscapes Strategic Plan to manage and cherish our heritage and historic park sites.

Why?

Our service is guided by key long-term strategies such as the Municipal Development Plan and imagineParks. Our strategies support the mental and physical wellbeing of citizens and reflect our role as environmental stewards of municipal park land. A major challenge heading into the next decade will be maintaining our diverse parks system. As the city continues to grow, future capital lifecycle funding will be needed for maintaining (as well naturalizing or restoring) our parks.

What we propose to do less of

STRATEGY
Fleet and garbage collection (to reduce operational costs through efficiencies and staff attrition).
Naturalization of existing manicured park land and restoration of natural areas.
Grass trimming in low-use areas of parks.
Community flowers and banners pilot project.

Why?

Parks identified \$2.4 million in operational efficiencies over the next four years with minimum impact to citizens. These reductions are in addition to the \$4.3 million in efficiencies realized through Parks ZBR and approximately \$12 million absorbed in growth over the last decade. There is currently no capital funding for new naturalization or restoration work. Flower and banner program dollars must be redirected to core operations.

What we propose to do more of or include as a new offering

STRATEGY
Repurpose low-use sport fields to reflect community needs through the Community Park Initiative.
Enhance accessibility on existing playgrounds where feasible.
Leverage partnership and sponsorship opportunities.
Transition to self-watering flower pots.
Support climate change mitigation initiatives (\$100K) and implement a public river access strategy (\$170K).

Why?

Our strategies respond to key trends in inclusive play, water conservation and corporate giving. They focus on low-cost yet effective initiatives and address Council and community interests. None of the above initiatives require additional operational funding.



What Operating Budget do we need to achieve these results and strategies?

For Council Approval

SERVICE PERFORMANCE RESULTS FOR 2019-2022	CURRENT	TREND
Citizen Satisfaction (% of citizens satisfied with parks, playgrounds and other open spaces)	93	↔
Parks Asset Condition Ratings (% of Calgary parks infrastructure in acceptable condition)	92	↔
Proximity to Parks (% of citizens that have access to parks within a five-minute walk or 400 metres)	99.5	↔
Naturalization (# of park hectares per year under naturalization)	2	↓
Parks Program Participants (# of Parks education or volunteer program participants)	70,000	↔

Breakdown of net operating budget (\$000s)

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Previous Year's Budget	69,532	71,716	72,530	74,560
Less Previous Year one Time	-	(1,040)	(1,040)	(1,040)
Base	69,532	70,676	71,490	73,520
Revenue Changes	(29)	(35)	(36)	(33)
Internal Recovery Changes	-	-	-	-
Inflation	601	696	655	689
Operating Impact of Previously Approved Capital	460	285	310	-
Operating Impact of New Capital (Incremental)	-	-	-	-
Efficiencies	(520)	(540)	(355)	-
Service Reductions	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)
Service Increases	2,532	658	1,706	709
One Time	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,040
Realignments	(1,650)	-	-	-
Total	71,716	72,530	74,560	75,675

Operating Grants to Civic Partners (\$000s)

Civic Partner	2018 Budget at Mar 31	2019	2020	2021	2022
Parks Foundation, Calgary	-	200	200	200	200

Total Operating Budget (\$000s) for Approval

	2018 Budget	2019			2020			2021			2022		
	At Mar 31	Base	One-Time	Total	Base	One-Time	Total	Base	One-Time	Total	Base	One-Time	Total
Expenditure	76,562	77,594	1,040	78,634	78,443	1,040	79,483	80,509	1,040	81,549	81,657	1,040	82,697
Recoveries	(3,211)	(3,070)	-	(3,070)	(3,070)	-	(3,070)	(3,070)	-	(3,070)	(3,070)	-	(3,070)
Revenue	(3,819)	(3,848)	-	(3,848)	(3,883)	-	(3,883)	(3,919)	-	(3,919)	(3,952)	-	(3,952)
Net	69,532	70,676	1,040	71,716	71,490	1,040	72,530	73,520	1,040	74,560	74,635	1,040	75,675



Recommended Capital Investment to Support Service Delivery

For Council Approval

Capital Budget for Council Approval

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	2019 REQUEST (\$000s)	2020 REQUEST (\$000s)	2021 REQUEST (\$000s)	2022 REQUEST (\$000s)	2023+ REQUEST (\$000s)	Total REQUEST (\$000s)
Annual Investment Program(s)		3,574	4,000	6,500	4,000	-	18,074
423440	Park Lifecycle	3,574	4,000	6,500	4,000	-	18,074
Project(s)		-	-	-	-	-	-
Program(s)		2,546	5,961	5,999	5,328	-	19,834
420300	Park Upgrades	2,546	5,961	5,999	5,328	-	19,834
Sub-Total (New Budget Requests)		6,120	9,961	12,499	9,328	-	37,908
Previously Approved Budget Remaining		34,740	15,000	19,300	-	-	69,040
Total Capital Investment		40,860	24,961	31,799	9,328	0	106,948

Explanation of Capital Budget Requests

Annual Investment Program(s)

Activity 423440: Park Lifecycle

New Budget Request of \$18,074 thousand for the Infrastructure Lifecycle Program which annually addresses the removal and replacement of a variety of different assets in existing parks throughout Calgary. Also includes replacement of Parks Asset Management systems. Specifically Oracle Work & Asset Management (WAM) System and ParcMap lifecycle/replacement.

Funding from Pay-As-You-Go (\$2,000 thousand) and Lifecycle Maintenance & Upgrade Reserve (\$16,074 thousand)

Operating Impact of Capital: None

Program(s)

Activity 420300: Park Upgrades

New Budget Request of \$19,834 thousand for the redevelopment of Eau Claire Plaza & Promenade that is required due to the flood mitigation impacts to the park and promenade. Also includes projects under the Leveraged Partners Program.

Funding from Pay-As-You-Go (\$4,396 thousand), Lifecycle Maintenance & Upgrade Reserve (\$2,000 thousand) and Reserve for Future Capital (\$13,438 thousand)

Operating Impact of Capital: None