

Attachment "B" Queen's Park Farm Engagement Summary Report



What We Heard: Reimagining the Queen's Park Farm – Community Engagement

November 2021



We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.



Reimagining the Queen's Park Farm Engagement Summary Report

November 13, 2021

Introduction

The Queen's Park Farm has been a well-used and loved component of Queen's Park. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the farm was closed to the public for the 2020 season.

Before the pandemic, New Westminster Parks and Recreation started reconsidering the long-standing use of the space as a petting farm. With current animal welfare practices, and growing numbers of visitors to the farm, it has become clear that the farm space is not large enough to comfortably house the type of livestock farm-goers have enjoyed. The comfort and care of the animals has always been the City's top priority. Farm staff have always provided the best possible care to the animals, but the City knows going forward that the current space has become insufficient.

The pause in farm operations due to COVID-19 provided an opportunity to try out alternative, COVID-19-friendly programming in the space during summer 2021, such as an outdoor art gallery, summer concert series and educational programming for youth.

Summer 2021 also provided an opportune time to start a community conversation about what this space could be in the future. The City began gathering initial input in July through an online discussion forum on Be Heard New West, short in-person surveys in Queen's Park, and a brainstorming wall on site at the farm. Further engagement took place later in the summer and early fall with an online survey and community workshop.

This report provides a summary and results from the community engagement, and provides a snapshot of the themes and messages the city received by email and on social media.

The purpose of this summary report is to share with City Council, engagement participants, and the New Westminster community:

- 1. What engagement activities were completed
- 2. A summary of what we heard
- 3. <u>Demographic information about participants & representation analysis</u>
- 4. Next steps

Engagement Process

The Reimagining the Queen's Park Farm Engagement process started in July 2021 with a variety of engagement options such as a discussion forum and idea jam wall. In August, an online community survey was launched on <u>Be Heard New West</u>, and intercept surveys were conducted by City staff on site at Queen's Park. Following the launch of the online survey, all community members were invited to join a workshop on September 23 or 25. Due to low registration, the workshop on September 25 was cancelled and registered participants were instead invited to join on September 23.

Opportunities to Engage

- Be Heard New West Project Webpage
 - o Launched July 5, 2021
 - o 950 unique visitors as of November 13, 2021

Online Discussion Forum

- July 5 October 6
- o 92 unique participants, over two discussion threads

Ask a Question Tool

- o July 5 October 6
- o 2 participants

Virtual Community Workshop

- o September 23
- o 6 participants

Idea Jam Wall inside the farm space

- July 13 August 29
- 6 comments

Intercept Surveys at Queen's Park

- Various days and times between August 19 –30
- o 141 responses

• Online Survey

- September 7 through October 6
- o 103 responses

• Facilities, Infrastructure and Public Realm Advisory Committee

October 21 meeting

The opportunities to engage were communicated through the following methods:

- Email notification to various City email databases:
 - o Be Heard New West subscribers
 - Parks & Recreation newsletter subscribers
 - CityPage online newsletter subscribers
- Social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Notices in CityPage in the Record newspaper
- Promotion in public meetings and events, such as community programming in the farm space and at RiverFest booth on September 25

Important Note: this summary of engagement input does not reflect a representative sample of the New Westminster community. The input captured here reflects the views of those who self-selected to participate, and may not be representative of the views of other community members and stakeholders. Please see section four – About Participants, starting on Page 20 – for some demographic information and representation analysis.

What We Heard

Online Discussion Forums

As part of this engagement, participants were invited to collaborate and share their thoughts with fellow community members through two online discussion forums on Be Heard New West.

The first forum was launched on July 5, 2021 and the community was invited to "Share a memory of the farm, and the feeling or experience that could carry forward into a new use for the space." This thread received 53 submissions from 42 unique users.

The second discussion forum opened on July 29 and received 44 submissions by 29 unique users. This prompt invited participants to expand on their contributions to the first thread, asking, "The long-term future use of this unique space is open for new ideas! Aside from a petting farm, what specific activities / programming would you like to see brought to the space?"

Both discussion threads remained open until October 6, 2021.

Below is a summary of the key themes that arose across both discussion threads. The themes below are presented in no particular order, and comments have been summarized such that they are not attributed to any one individual, unless quoted. Please see the supplementary Verbatim Report, or the Be Heard New West <u>project page</u>, to access all of the discussion forum comments.

Nostalgia: A large number of comments on the discussion forum focused on the memories and nostalgia community members felt towards the petting farm. Commenters shared their memories of visiting the farm themselves, and their hopes to share the same experience with their children and grandchildren. The memories highlighted that "the farm was an asset to the community and loved by so many."

Keep the Farm: Some commenters were in opposition to any changes to the space, requesting the City to "just keep the farm the way it is."

Other comments suggested ways in which the City could pivot its approach for the space, while still maintaining an essence of the farm:

Increasing the size of the space, or reducing the number of animals: Some comments suggested expanding the farm or reducing the number of animals in the space as a way to address animal welfare concerns.

Incorporate animals in other ways: Comments included that "some type of animal programming should still be available." Many suggestions were made for ways in which animals could be included in the space for purposes other than petting. Some ideas included: animal rehabilitation centre, chicken coops, kitten adoption, and an apiary.

Continue with a farm theme, without animals: Comments suggested focusing on edible crops, cultivation, harvesting, education and food security. One participant commented "the farming theme could be continued - not with animals, but with food."

Maintain a children-friendly space: Commenters emphasized the importance of the reenvisioned space to continue to cater to toddlers and young children, supporting "some alternative that's still appropriate for that young age group is important."

Some comments included **other unique ideas** and ways in which the space could be reimagined in the future. A sample of ideas include:

- A group meeting space that is inclusive to everyone;
- A garden highlighting traditional Indigenous knowledge;
- A covered play area.

Additionally, a handful of comments in the discussion threads focused on **concerns** surrounding **animal welfare** in the farm space and the **engagement process/focus** for this project.

Idea Jam Wall

As a passive engagement option for those visiting the farm space during summer programming, the City installed an Idea Jam brainstorming poster where visitors were encouraged to add their ideas. The Idea Jam wall was on display and open for input from July 13 to August 29 for the duration of summer programs and events at the farm.

In response to the prompt "We want to know how the Queen's Park Farm space can be positioned in the future to better support broader community priorities and interests. Help us brainstorm what NEW exciting activities, programming and uses can be brought to this space! Draw or write your ideas on the mural below.

Remember to be kind and respectful to help create a safe space for everyone," the Idea Jam received six contributions from community members.

Ideas shared included: Barbeque pits, picnic areas, concerts, sleepover or birthday parties, outdoor movie nights, and campfires.

Virtual Community Workshop

Workshop Background & Format

In addition to various other engagement activities related to identifying a possible new future for the Queen's Park Farm, workshops were offered in order to provide an opportunity for community members to brainstorm and discuss the farm's future together. The purpose of these sessions were to briefly share the context for reimagining the farm, and then offer a respectful, facilitated space where participants were able to discuss their values, priorities and ideas for the future of this part of Queen's Park.

In an effort to better meet the needs of the community and increase the accessibility of the sessions, the City planned and was prepared to offer two workshop sessions. The first workshop was an evening session scheduled on Thursday September 23 on Zoom, and the second offering was scheduled for the morning of Saturday September 25, on site at the Farm space at Queen's Park. Despite the efforts made to spread the word about the Saturday (Sept. 25) session, registration remained very low. Due to the low registration, as well as experience with not all registered participants attending engagement events, the project team made the difficult decision to cancel the Saturday workshop. Registered participants were notified in advance via email, and were instead invited to join the Thursday evening session.

In total, 25 individuals registered to participate in the community workshop, and six community members attended.

The workshop was hosted by the City's Public Engagement team with support from the Parks and Recreation department. Public Engagement staff led and facilitated the session while the Park and Recreation team offered a brief presentation and subject matter expertise when needed. The workshop also included a staff note taker to capture the conversation and participant input.

What We Heard: Key Themes

Below is a summary of the key themes that arose in the community workshop in response to the discussion questions. In some cases, an individual response may have been applied to several themes, based on the context. The themes below are presented in no particular order, and comments have been summarized such that they are not attributed to any one individual, unless quoted. For fulsome notes from the workshop, please see the supplementary Verbatim Report.

Discussion Question 1: What did you value most about the petting farm?

Question 1 Themes:

- Accessible / low-barrier: No-cost, family activity that didn't need to be prescheduled. Easy to bring children and combine it with other park amenities like the spray park, etc. Low-stress for parents because space is enclosed (kids can't run off).
- **Intergenerational experience:** Participants went when they were kids, then took their kids, who took their kids. All ages could enjoy it.
- **Unique destination / asset:** Brought families from across Lower Mainland, and provided city kids with an experience they couldn't get elsewhere.
- **Concerns for animal welfare:** Experienced many animals moving to the "quiet area" during busy times at the farm; animals can't speak for themselves so we need to consider their experience may not have been positive. Excited for future uses that don't exploit animals.

Discussion Question 2: Thinking about what everyone shared, what themes or priorities did you hear? What are the common threads?

Question 2 Themes:

- **Education:** Learning and sharing about agriculture and animals; teaching kids. Foster an interest in nature; curiosity.
 - o Concerns that an urban garden won't have the same draw.
 - Vegetables, plants and bugs still have value.
 - o Opportunity for creative programming in the space.
- **Connection:** Between generations and families, and connection with nature; an activity that brings people together; a place where people can gather.
- **Low-barrier:** An accessible activity that can be done spontaneously and at no-cost.
- **Unique destination:** Opportunity to offer something unique, be innovative and forward-thinking with the future of the farm space. Create an attraction.

Discussion Question 3: How could these priorities or themes carry forward into new activities or focus for this space in the park?

Question 3 Themes:

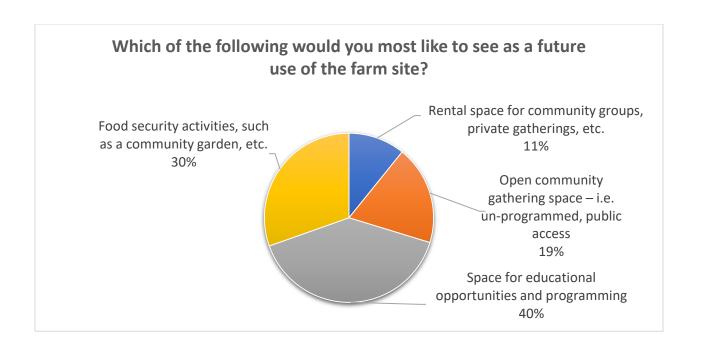
- Create a different kind of farm: Feature insects instead of animals (compost bin with worms, ant farm, etc.). Offer education components about life cycles, seasons and inter-connectedness of a farm (i.e. chicken manure fertilizes the garden). Offer wildlife rescue presentations. Consider a "virtual farm", along with information about history of farming in the area.
- Incorporate Indigenous voices / focus: Indigenous plants, music, traditional foods art, etc.
- **Connections through food:** Community oven. Cultural exchange through food; community connection.
- Consider unique programming: Special events such as campfires and s'mores. Offer art and connection to artists – nature-inspired art, Indigenous art.
- Offer covered/sheltered play space: COVID-friendly, accessible, covered play area for kids.

Intercept Survey

The intercept survey was conducted by City staff around Queen's Park with the objective to meet people where they are at, and to engage with community members who may not participate in more traditional engagement methods. The three-question survey was conducted towards the end of the summer at various times of day on August 19 -22 and 24, 25, and 30, and received responses from approximately 140 groups. Below is a summary of the results.

Question 1: Which of the following would you most like to see as a future use of the farm site? (choose one only)

Choice	Percentage	Count
Total Responses: 148		
Rental space for community groups, private gatherings, etc.	11%	16
Open community gathering space – i.e. un- programmed, public access	19%	28
Space for educational opportunities and programming	40%	59
Food security activities, such as a community garden, etc.	30%	45



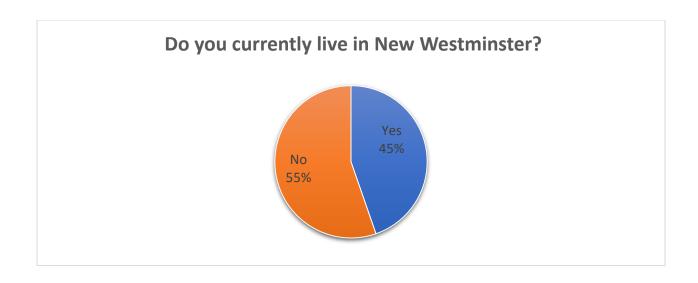
Question 2: In your opinion, what is missing in the park or in New West that could potentially be added here? (open answer: staff write participant's response; use their words – i.e. don't paraphrase)

In response to this question, participants provided a wide range of creative and thoughtful ideas. Some of the top responses included: a swimming pool, covered play area, climbing wall and a big kid's playground. Other unique ideas proposed were archery, a miniature train, gardening plots, and an outdoor classroom.

For a full list of ideas proposed, please see the Verbatim Engagement Report.

Question 3: Do you currently live in New Westminster?

Choice	Percentage	Count
Total Responses: 141		
Yes	45%	63
No	55%	78

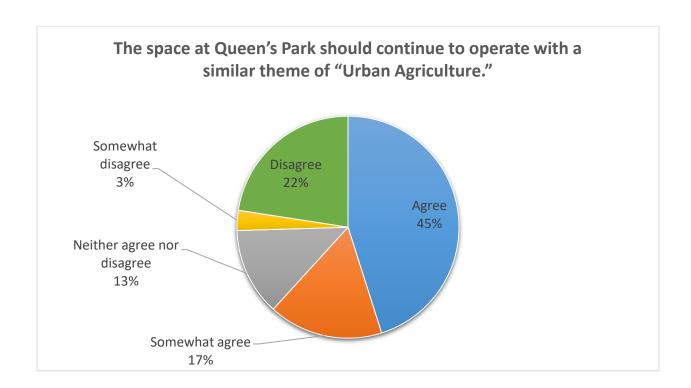


Online Community Survey

The online survey was open on Be Heard New West from September 7 through October 6, 2021 and received 103 responses. Below is a summary of the results.

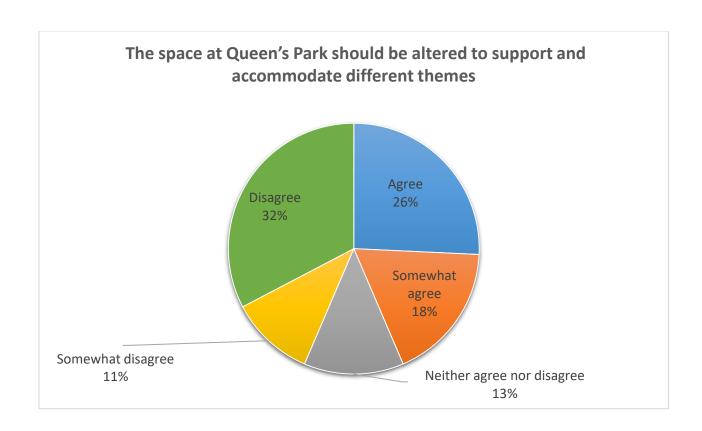
Question 1: City staff and Council are committed to moving away from the traditional petting farm use and no longer keeping livestock in the park. However, there is opportunity for the space to continue to operate with a similar theme, inspiring cultivation and farming in an urban space. **Please select your level of agreement with the following statement:**The space at Queen's Park should continue to operate with a similar theme of "Urban Agriculture."

Choice	Percentage	Count
Total Responses: 102		
Agree	45%	46
Somewhat agree	17%	17
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	13
Somewhat disagree	3%	3
Disagree	22%	23



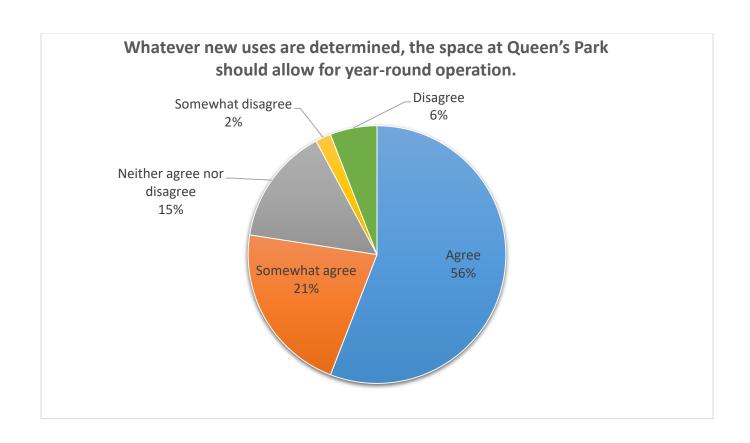
Question 2: As seen over the summer with the temporary Filling the Farm programming, there is opportunity for the space at Queen's Park to operate with completely new themes other than agriculture, animals, farming. **Please select your level of agreement with the following statement:** The long term future of the space at Queen's Park should be altered to support and accommodate different themes (e.g. arts and culture, sports and recreation, education etc.)

Choice	Percentage	Count
Total Responses: 101		
Agree	26%	26
Somewhat agree	18%	18
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	13
Somewhat disagree	11%	11
Disagree	32%	33



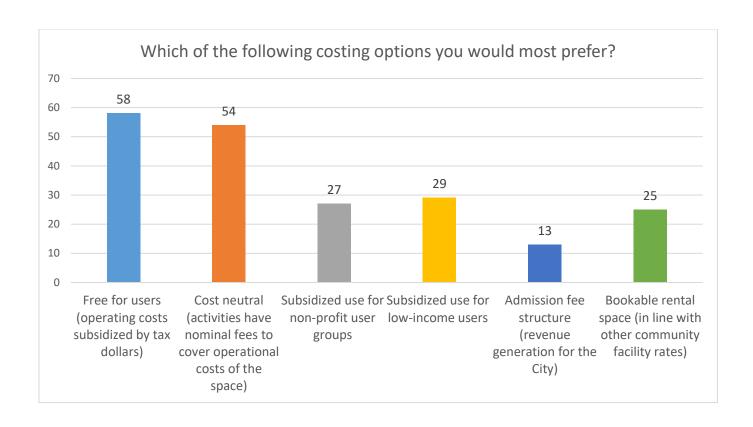
Question 3: Please select your level of agreement with the following statement: Whatever new uses are determined, the space at Queen's Park should allow for year-round operation.

Choice	Percentage	Count
Total Responses: 102		
Agree	56%	57
Somewhat agree	21%	22
Neither agree nor disagree	15%	15
Somewhat disagree	2%	2
Disagree	6%	6



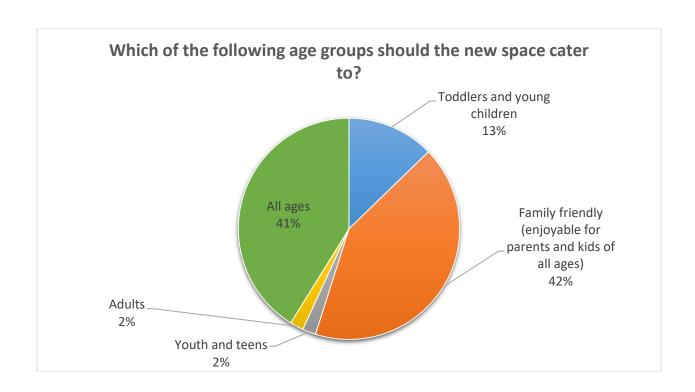
Question 4: The Queen's Park petting farm traditionally operated without admission fees or upfront costs to users, but was instead operated through use of general City funds (i.e. taxes). In the future, the fee structure of the space could be altered. **Please select which of the following costing options you would most prefer: (select all that apply)**

Fee Structure	Count
Total responses: 206	
Free for users (operating costs subsidized by tax dollars)	58
Cost neutral (activities have nominal fees to cover operational costs of the space)	54
Subsidized use for non-profit user groups	27
Subsidized use for low-income users	29
Admission fee structure (revenue generation for the City)	13
Bookable rental space (in line with other community facility rates)	25



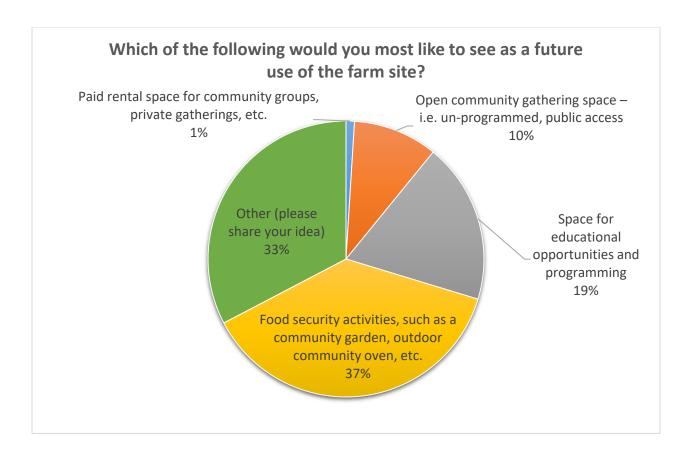
Question 5: Which of the following age groups should the new space cater to? (choose one only)

Choice	Percentage	Count
Total Responses: 102		
Toddlers and young children	13%	13
Family friendly (enjoyable for parents and kids of all ages)	42%	43
Youth and teens	2%	2
Adults	2%	2
All ages	41%	42



Question 6: Which of the following would you most like to see as a future use of the farm site? (choose one only)

Choice	Percentage	Count
Total Responses: 102		
Paid rental space for community groups, private gatherings, etc.	1%	1
Open community gathering space – i.e. un-programmed, public access	10%	10
Space for educational opportunities and programming	19%	19
Food security activities, such as a community garden, outdoor community oven, etc.	37%	38
Other (please share your idea)	33%	33



A total of 33 comments were provided by those who chose "other, please specify."

Below is a summary of the themes that across from the comments. In some cases, several themes have been applied to one individual response, based on the content; this means that a single response can be counted multiple times. For a full list of comments, please see the verbatim summary report.

Theme	# of Mentions	Sample Comments
Keep the petting farm	18	- "Please keep it as a petting zoo." - "Petting farm was great and would like to see it stay. Great opportunity for kids volunteering and seeing animals that we don't normally get to see if our urban environment. It was one of the best things in new west." - "The space isn't really set up for other activities, it's hard to imagine investing into something different there that would be fully utilized or worth tax payer's funds."
Educational opportunities	6	- "Space for nature and environmental based educational opportunities and programming"

		- "An outdoor classroom space for parks and rec programming of all kinds." - "Education on farm (agriculture AND animal) to table."
Children's play area	4	- "Expanded play spaces for toddlers, young children and their care givers." - "Expanded play/educational area for young children. As the farm site is adjacent to the existing play areas for young children, I think it will be best to use the farm site area in some capacity for young children to enjoy."
Agriculture-related uses	2	 "Foraging, growing, cooking and preserving activities around food and textiles." "teach farming and sustainability without showing kids animals are for 'use"
Other	6	 "Installed outdoor fitness equipment. An outdoor covered sitting area or picnic area." "Public market" "An off leash dog park and maybe a spray park."

Online Feedback and Commentary

Email and Letter Correspondence

In addition to the engagement opportunities offered online and in person, community members were able to share their feedback with the City via email. Eight emails were received by project staff and an additional two letters were written to Mayor and Council on the topic of the future of Queen's Park Farm.

Many of these submissions expressed sentiments and themes that have been common across other engagement activities for this project. Below is a summary of some of the themes from community correspondence. These themes are presented in no particular order.

Correspondence Themes: Continue to operate a petting farm with fewer animals; enhance animal welfare; keep the petting farm as-is; offer this space to Indigenous groups; recognize the nostalgia and importance the farm had to families; recognize the value in learning about and connecting with animals; consider the physical needs of children;

maintain the inclusive, low-barrier access; and consider other ideas such as: adding new community experiences, including sheltered areas for year round access, a structured maze, an urban farm, and repurposing old streetcar rails into the design of the new space.

Social Media Commentary

As part of the promotions for this engagement, the City published several social media posts inviting the community to share their thoughts and engage with us on Be Heard New West. Two posts were made on each of the City's official Facebook, Instagram and Twitter channels. Across platforms, a total of 182 comments were received, generating diverse and valuable conversations between community members.

Several key themes emerged from the comments, and are presented below in the order they were mentioned. In some cases, an individual response may have been applied to several themes, based on the context.

- 1. **Ideas for the future of the farm (39 mentions):** The comment sections on the City's social media posts were filled with a wide range of unique ideas for the future of the farm space. A sample of some suggested ideas include: a large fountain, a toddler playground/ 'tot lot', outdoor childcare, community/education garden, a pump track, enclosed play area, an outdoor movie theater, and a dog park. For a full list of ideas suggested through the comments on social media, please see the Verbatim Engagement Report for links.
- 2. **Animal welfare (18 mentions):** Commenters were largely in support of the decision to move away from keeping livestock in the farm, sharing information, resources, and educating others on the concerns with using animals for entertainment.
- 3. **Expand the farm (15 mentions):** Other commenters suggested expanding the farm space, or reducing the number/size of animals, as a way to address some of the animal welfare concerns, while still maintaining this community asset.
- 4. **Value the space had for children (10 mentions):** Some comments identified the petting farm as a way to educate and expose young children to animals. Other comments noted the loss this attraction would be to city children in New West.
- 5. **Nostalgia (8 mentions):** Comments mentioned the positive memories individuals had visiting the farm, and the sadness they would feel by its removal.

- 6. **The engagement process (8 mentions):** Some commenters feel the community should have been involved prior to the decision to transition the farm. Other comments questioned if their input would be considered in the process.
- 7. **Keep the farm (7 mentions):** Comments suggested keeping the petting farm in its original state with its original purpose.

Presentation to Facilities, Infrastructure and Public Realm Advisory Committee

On October 21, 2021 City staff presented an overview of the Queen's Park Farm transition project and preliminary engagement results to the City's Facilities, Infrastructure and Public Realm Advisory Committee. After a short presentation, committee members had a chance to put forward their own ideas and suggestions for the future direction of the farm space. Below is a summary of the themes that emerged from the discussion with the advisory committee.

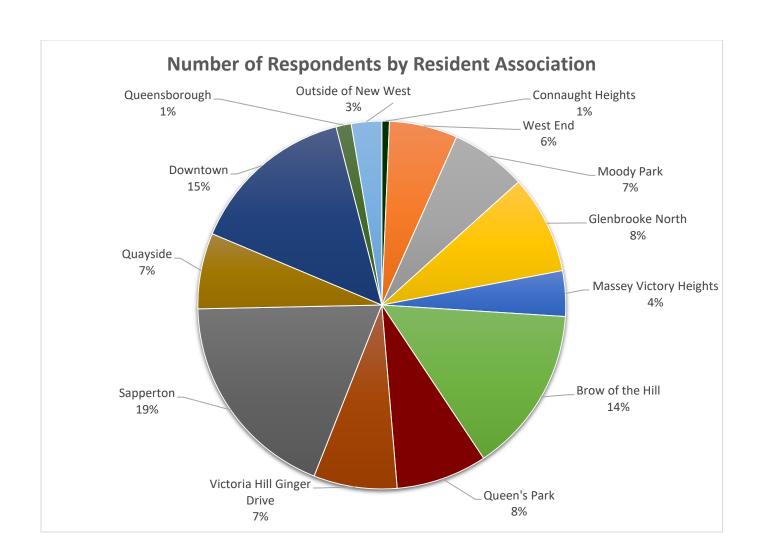
Advisory Committee discussion themes: Cater to all age groups; integrate Indigenous knowledge; offer a variety of experiences; incorporate animals in other ways; offer gardening experiences for those without access to greenspace; include a 'community table' for sharing of food.

<u>About Participants</u>

Neighbourhood Representation

<u>Unique Be Heard Participants: includes discussion forum and survey participants (149 participants)</u>

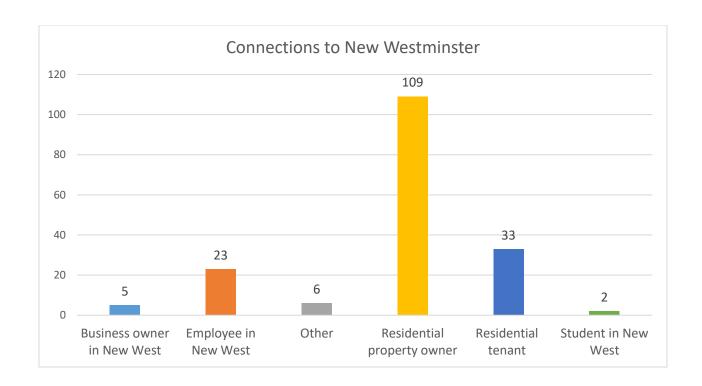
Neighbourhood	Percentage	Count		
Total Responses: 149				
Connaught Heights	1%	1		
West End	6%	8		
Moody Park	7%	10		
Glenbrooke North	9%	13		
Massey Victory Heights	4%	6		
Brow of the Hill	15%	22		
Queen's Park	8%	12		
Victoria Hill Ginger Drive	7%	10		
Sapperton	19%	27		
Quayside	7%	10		
Downtown	15%	22		
Queensborough	1%	2		
Outside of New Westminster	3%	4		



Connections to the City (select all that apply)

Be Heard Participants: (178 responses from 149 participants)

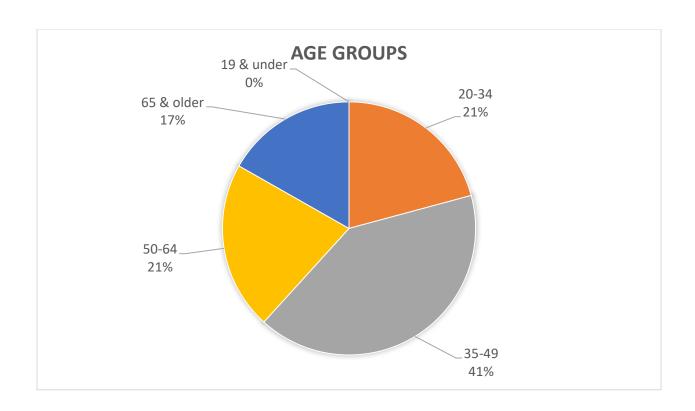
Choice	Percentage	Count
Business owner in New West	3%	5
Employee in New West	13%	23
Other	3%	6
Residential property owner (condo, townhouse, house, etc.) in New West	61%	109
Residential tenant (renter) in New West	19%	33
Student in New West	1%	2



Age Groups

Be Heard Participants: (149 responses)

Age Group	Percentage	Count
19 & under	0%	0
20-34	21%	31
35-49	41%	61
50-64	22%	32
65 & older	17%	25

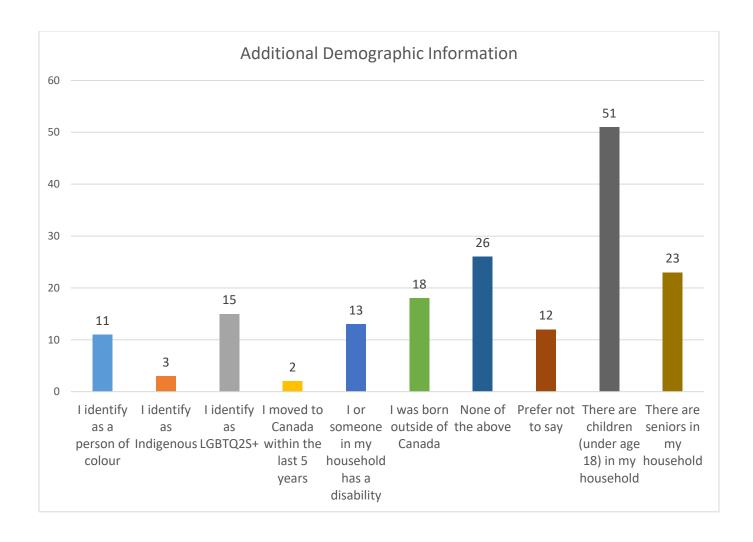


Additional Demographic Information

(select any / all that apply)

Be Heard Participants: (174 responses from 149 participants)

Choice	Percentage	Count
I identify as a person of colour	6%	11
I identify as Indigenous	2%	3
I identify as LGBTQ2S+	9%	15
I moved to Canada within the last 5 years	1%	2
I or someone in my household has a disability	8%	13
I was born outside of Canada	10%	18
None of the above	15%	26
Prefer not to say	7%	12
There are children (under age 18) in my household	29%	51
There are seniors in my household	13%	23



Demographic Analysis

Demographic analysis has been completed for 149 Be Heard New West participants only. Compared to the demographic profile of New Westminster from the 2016 Census, most neighbourhood participation rates were proportional (less than 5% +/- Census). There were a few exceptions: Queensborough and Brow of the Hill residents were underrepresented among Be Heard participants and Sapperton residents were overrepresented.

As we see in most City of New Westminster engagements, residential tenants were highly underrepresented (22% of participants; 44% of residents according to Census), and property owners were over represented (73% of participants; 56% of residents according to Census).

For age ranges of survey participants, there were no responses from residents age 19 or younger, so this age group was highly underrepresented. Conversely, the 35-49 year old

age group was overrepresented (41% of participants; 19% of residents according to Census). Other age groups (20-34, 50-64 and 65+) were similar to Census representation.

In terms of other demographic information provided by survey participants, we can compare with Census data on Indigenous, immigrant, new immigrant (arrived within past five years) and visible minority proportions of the New Westminster community. Based on this comparison, immigrants and visible minorities were underrepresented among Be Heard participants. Indigenous people and new immigrants were similar to Census representation.

Next Steps

This engagement summary report will be provided to Council at its December 13, 2021 regular meeting, and shared on the Be Heard New West project page. The verbatim written comments from this engagement will also be made public and shared with Council.

City staff will be considering and applying the community input as they begin to develop concepts for the future of the Queen's Park Farm in early 2022, and will re-engage with the community as a proposed concept for the future of the farm is developed.