

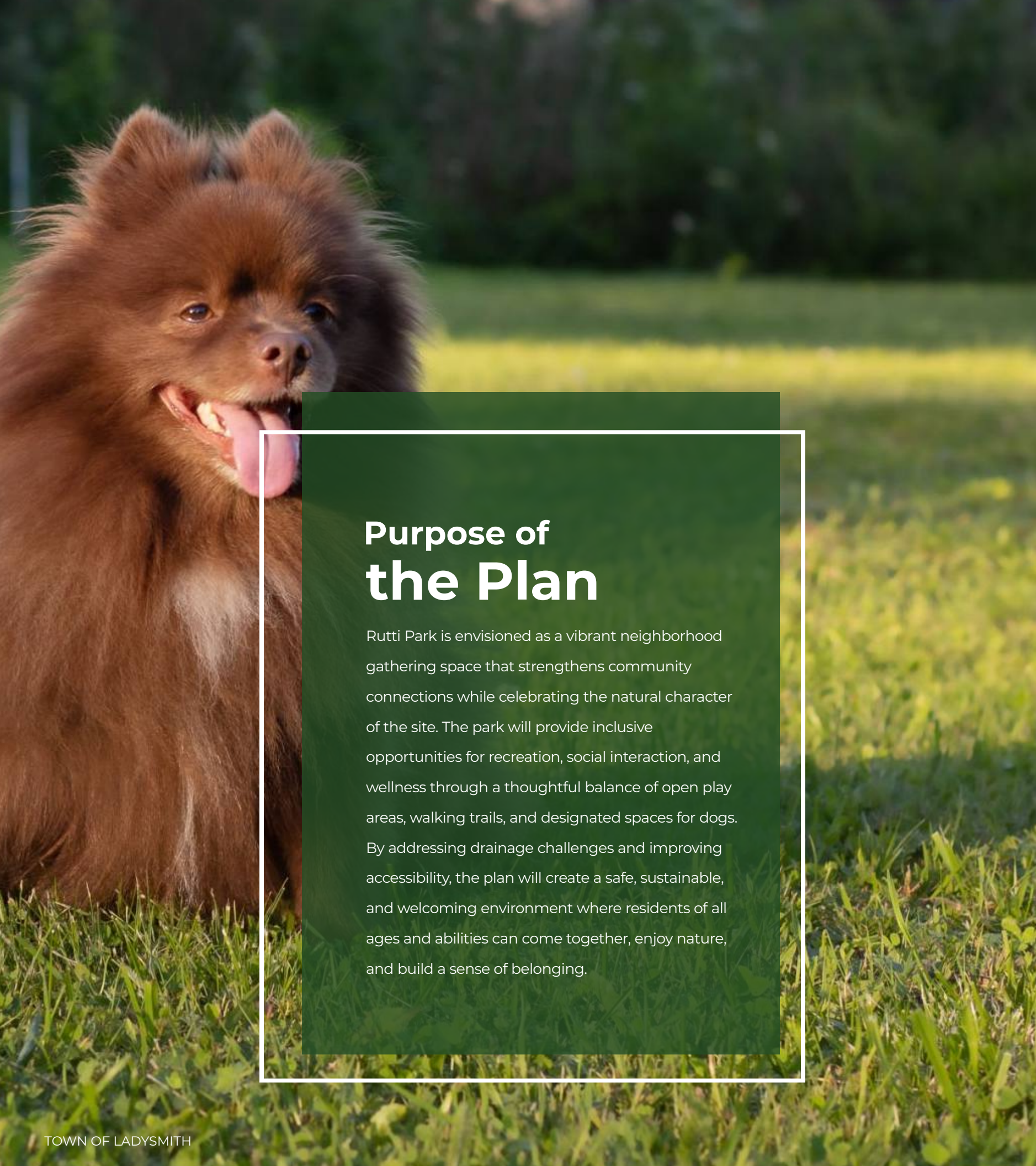


TOWN OF LADYSMITH

RUTTI PARK

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN





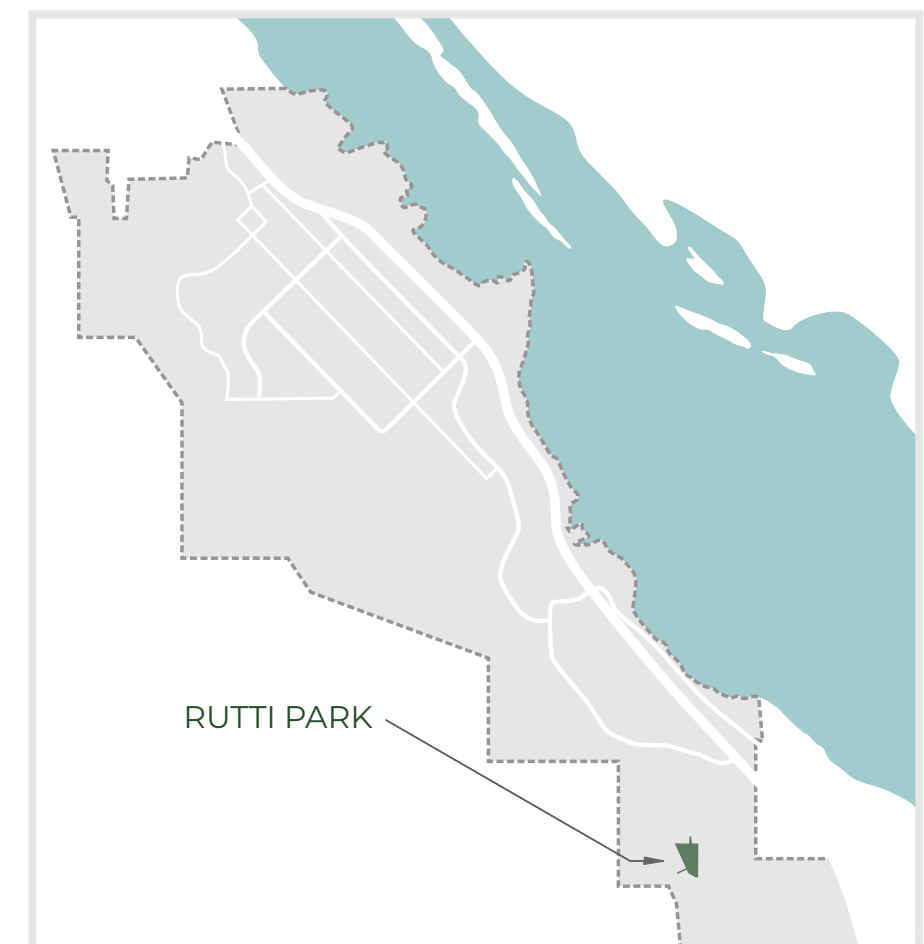
Purpose of the Plan

Rutti Park is envisioned as a vibrant neighborhood gathering space that strengthens community connections while celebrating the natural character of the site. The park will provide inclusive opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and wellness through a thoughtful balance of open play areas, walking trails, and designated spaces for dogs. By addressing drainage challenges and improving accessibility, the plan will create a safe, sustainable, and welcoming environment where residents of all ages and abilities can come together, enjoy nature, and build a sense of belonging.

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Town of Ladysmith



Overview

History

Rutti Park, located at the end of Rothdale Road in south Ladysmith, honours the legacy of Hugo Rutti and his family, who farmed the land for over five generations. Hugo Rutti arrived in Ladysmith in 1910, purchasing 10 acres from the Russell family to establish a small farm. He sold produce locally, often from a horse-drawn wagon, and expanded the property over time. The Rutti family maintained the farm until the Town of Ladysmith acquired the land in 2003.

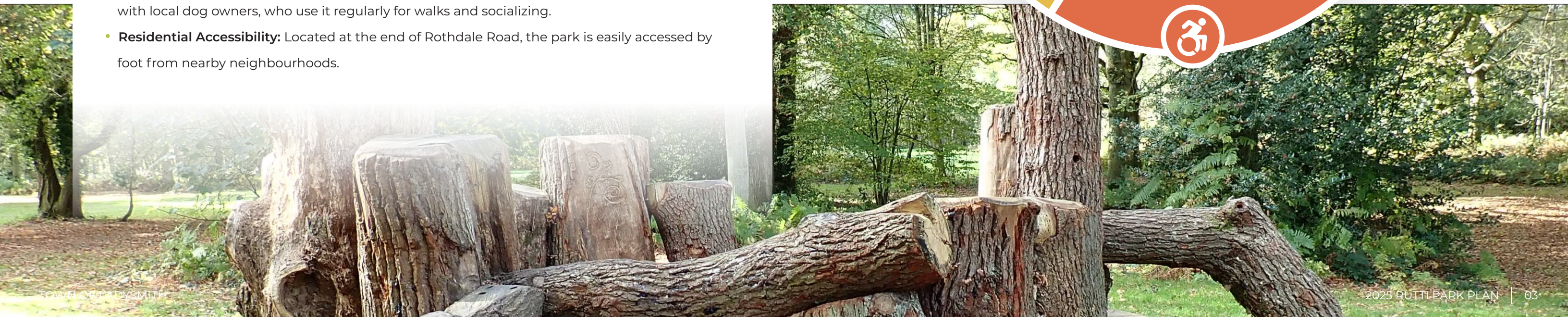
In 2022, following a community-led naming initiative, the park was officially dedicated as “Rutti Park” to recognize the family's contributions to the town's agricultural heritage. Today, the park serves as a green space that connects residents to Ladysmith's past while evolving through community engagement and future-focused planning.

Rutti Park Defining Characteristics:

- **Size:** Approximately 1.2 acres, offering a compact and walkable green space.
- **Open Green Space:** Central lawn area ideal for casual recreation, relaxation, and community gatherings and a popular space for dogs to run and play.
- **Unique Rock Formation:** A natural feature that adds visual interest and character to the landscape.
- **Fruit Trees:** Newly planted fruit trees contribute to biodiversity and community engagement.
- **Pedestrian Pathways:** Emerging trails support walking and general circulation.
- **Dog-Friendly Appeal:** The open space and pathways have made Rutti Park especially popular with local dog owners, who use it regularly for walks and socializing.
- **Residential Accessibility:** Located at the end of Rothdale Road, the park is easily accessed by foot from nearby neighbourhoods.

Emerging Themes

Considering the user experience and the overall feedback from the community, the following themes represent how Rutti Park can continue to be a safe, enjoyable, inviting and engaging space. They reflect the experiences people want to see and the practical applications to achieve this.



Community Engagement

The Town of Ladysmith undertook a multi-phase community engagement process to guide the future development of Rutti Park. In April 2024, an online survey invited residents to share their ideas and preferences for the park, regardless of their familiarity with the space. Participants were asked to rank five key themes—Natural Environment, Sustainability, Education & Play, Celebrate Culture, and Connectivity—which helped shape the direction of future planning.

Building on the survey results, the Town hosted two open houses. The first, held in June 2024, gathered in-person feedback and expanded on the survey's themes. The second open house, in May 2025, presented three concept plans developed from earlier input. Residents engaged directly with the plans by placing sticky-note comments on maps and discussing ideas with Town staff.

This inclusive and iterative process ensures that the Rutti Park Implementation Plan reflects the values and priorities of the community, with a focus on environmental stewardship, cultural recognition, and accessible design.



Key Messages

- Keep it a neighbourhood green space first. Prioritize targeted upgrades (drainage, paths, a few comfort amenities) that preserve the open character and mature trees
- Fix the drainage before anything else. Winter pooling and muddy conditions are the community's #1 issue; it limits year-round use and accessibility.
- Balance dogs and kids safely. Strong local use by off-leash dog walkers and a clear desire for kid-friendly play elements. Design must reduce conflict: consider fencing/definition, sightlines, and water access for dogs.
- Low-impact, accessible connections. Provide a simple, stable pathway loop and an improved connection from Craig Rd without over-programming the site; avoid lighting where possible.
- Right-sized amenities. Add a few benches, possibly a small shelter or picnic table(s), and an extra trash bin—no large facility build-out; most residents walk in.
- Respect nature and the neighbourhood. Retain mature trees, remove hazard/dead trees, control invasives, and use native plantings (especially on slopes and bioswales).

Implementation

EXISTING

- ① Open grassed field with winter drainage challenges
- ② High local use by dog walkers; informal off-leash behaviour
- ③ Edges of forest / naturalized areas, including fruit trees
- ④ Three entry points (incl. Craig Rd), no formal, stable path loop

PHASE 1

- ① Foundation Work ② Drainage Improvements
- ③ Dog Area ④ Split-Rail Fencing

PHASE 2

- ① Trail Surface / Pathway Improvements
- ② Native Planting ③ Boundary Definition
- ④ Children's Play Area

PHASE 3

- ① Benches ② Water Fountain (if funded)
- ③ Educational Signage

- Park Boundary
- Walking Trails
-  Bench
-  Picnic Table
-  Bird Houses
-  Trash Bin
-  Garry Oak Tree
-  Arbutus Tree
-  Fir Trees



Detailed Phase Descriptions

PHASE 1 1-2 YEARS

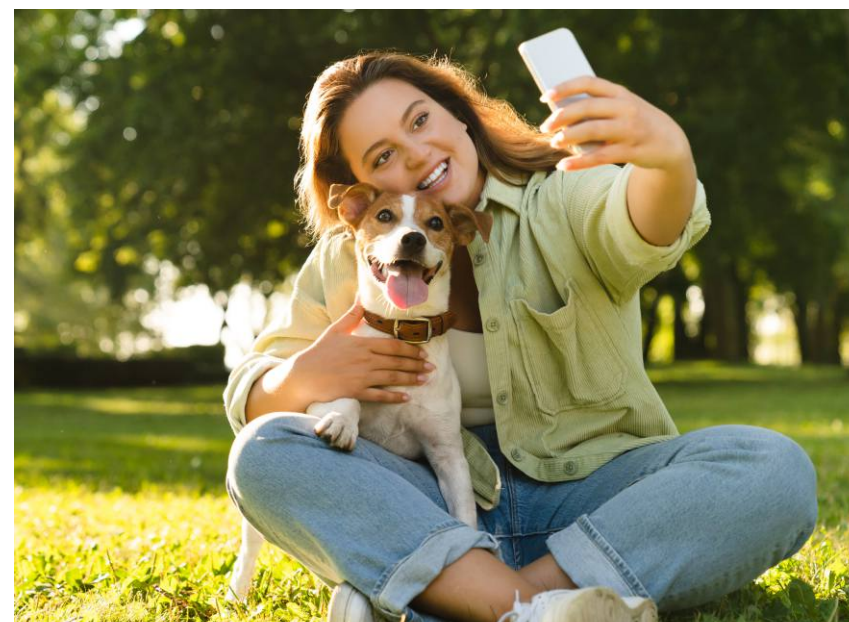
- Regrade low-lying areas to prevent winter pooling and chronic mud
- Install Drainage System to improve performance and water conveyance across the park
- Consider supplemental sub-drains if natural flow paths remain insufficient
- Add split-rail fencing for boundary clarity
- Install fencing or partial enclosure to formalize the dog area and reduce conflicts
- Add gates at key entry points for improved safety
- Include simple dog-etiquette signage to promote responsible use

PHASE 2 2-3 YEARS

- Install a stable, all-weather surface trail linking the three park entrances
- Improve the Craig Road entrance, identified as steep and challenging for accessibility, by reducing slope or adding steps/handrail as needed
- Use rock chip, hard-packed fines, or asphalt
- Plant native shrubs/grasses along bioswale and forest edges.
- Install children play node / play area features

PHASE 3 3-5 YEARS

- Install benches to complete the park's rest network
- Install a combined water station (if funding becomes available)
- Add small-scale signage highlighting native plants, water management, and ecological restoration
- Consider including Hul'q'umi'num language elements, aligning with Town values and the Brown Drive Plan approach



Park Priorities & Timeline

The following priorities and timelines reflect what the community identified as most important for improving Rutti Park. Feedback consistently emphasized drainage, children's play opportunities, safe pathways, and clear dog-area management, while larger or more intrusive amenities (e.g., washrooms, lighting) were generally not supported.

These priorities are organized into three implementation phases, with High, Medium, and Low rankings assigned based on community demand, safety needs, and feasibility.

HIGH

Items identified as a safety concern, must have through the community engagement integral to the success of the park.

MEDIUM

Lower risk items identified through the public engagement process that would enhance the park.

LOW

Park amenities that are desired but not integral to the success of the park.



Amenity	Priority	Timeline
Drainage	HIGH	PHASE 1
Dog Area	HIGH	PHASE 1
Split-Rail Fencing	MEDIUM	PHASE 1
Trail Surface	HIGH	PHASE 2
Native Planting	MEDIUM	PHASE 2
Children's Play Area	HIGH	PHASE 2
Benches	LOW	PHASE 3
Water Fountain	HIGH	PHASE 3
Educational Signage	MEDIUM	PHASE 3

Public Engagement Event

Online survey (n≈200) and in-person Open House (concept boards & sticky-note input). Predominantly nearby residents and regular dog walkers; most arrive on foot; many were previously unaware of the park online.

What We Heard (themes)

- Fix drainage first. Winter pooling is the main barrier to use.
- Keep it natural and quiet. Avoid large programmatic changes; preserve trees.
- Balance dogs & kids. Support for fencing/definition and a small play area with swings; fence or buffer the play node.
- Amenities: small and simple. Benches, a picnic table or two, and an extra garbage can; evaluate a dog/human water tap.
- Lighting & washrooms: generally not desired for this neighbourhood park.
- Access: gentle path and Craig Rd improvement (steps/grade) to make daily walking easier.

Top Issues / Requests (ranked)

- Drainage & water management (standing water, mud, flooding) — most frequent concern.
- Dog park safety & amenities (fencing, gates, water tap, etiquette; separation from kids).
- Kid-friendly play (swings incl. baby swing; small play set; fenced play area).
- No bathrooms, no lighting (costs, maintenance, wildlife, nighttime activity).
- Paths & access (stable path/loop; Craig Rd stairs/grade; accessibility).
- Trees & habitat (keep mature trees; remove dead/hazard trees; avoid over-planting).
- Basic comforts (benches, picnic table, extra garbage can).
- Keep it natural / minimal change (preserve open field; avoid heavy programming).
- Parking/maintenance (occasional concerns near Rothdale; mowing cadence).
- Other ideas (pump track, outdoor gym, micro-features).

Quantified snapshot from Open House

- Dog park / fencing / dog water: 13 mentions
- Drainage / water management: 12 mentions
- Kid play (swings, slides, fenced play): 11 mentions
- “No bathrooms / no lighting”: 9 mentions
- Pathways / accessibility / Craig Rd connection: 8 mentions
- Trees (keep/remove dead/avoid over-planting): 8 mentions
- Parking / servicing / maintenance: 6 mentions
- Shelter / picnic / seating: 6 mentions
- Keep natural / minimal change: 5 mentions
- Pump track / outdoor gym / extras: 5 mentions

Additional insights from the online survey

- Most users walk to the park; many see it as both an access point and a destination. Keep amenities small-scale and walk-in focused.
- Many respondents didn't know the park existed / hard to find online; basic wayfinding and identity will help.
- Theme ranking favours Natural Environment and Sustainability, consistent with the “keep it green” message.





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Working together to build our future!