

# Food Forests

Phase 1 Engagement Survey Feedback Report  
June 9, 2023



# BACKGROUND

The City of Saskatoon (City) is exploring the creation of food forests to establish safe and accessible edible landscapes across Saskatoon, enhance our green network, and contribute to the city-wide tree canopy.

The City is installing two food forest demonstration sites in Boughton Park and Leif Erickson Park during the 2023-2024 growing seasons.

Several sites were considered using criteria such as land availability, neighbourhood food insecurity and public accessibility. Based on the results, Leif Erickson Park and Boughton Park were selected as the highest priority sites.

The first phase of the engagement strategy for the Food Forest Demonstration Site project identified site-specific considerations and requested feedback on the levels of community support for the proposed sites. This phase incorporated site-specific engagement with impacted groups and subject matter experts. Tactics included neighbourhood group meetings, stakeholder meetings, correspondence with user groups, and online surveys.

This report offers a summary of the feedback heard through Phase 1 Food Forest online surveys.

## Phase 1 – Engagement Surveys

Administration conducted two self-administered online surveys from April 6, 2023, to May 8, 2023. Each survey focused on the Boughton Park food forest demonstration site and the Leif Erickson food forest demonstration site respectively.

### Intended audience

The purpose of the surveys was to obtain site-specific information from area residents on their perception and opinion about installing demonstration food forest sites at Boughton Park, in the Holiday Park Neighbourhood, and at Leif Erickson Park, in the Westmount neighbourhood.

### Marketing techniques

The surveys were promoted through advertisements on City's Facebook and Instagram accounts, posts on Nextdoor, direct emails to Community Associations, garden collectives and schools, and flyers delivered to the neighbourhoods surrounding each food forest demonstration site.

### Data Limitations

Online engagement is not inclusive for those with limited to no Internet access. This limitation was mitigated by also providing other opportunities to provide input.

While this type of survey is not considered statistically valid, it provides an indication of the public's perspective about food forests and general feedback on specific planting and usage opportunities for neighbourhood food forest sites.

# SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

## Demographics

246 surveys were received (109 for Boughton Park and 137 for Leif Erickson Park). Survey results included participation from neighbourhoods across the city, with a majority representing neighbourhoods localized to the demonstration site locations.

The neighbourhood with the highest participation for the Boughton Park survey was Holiday Park with 53 entries, representing about 49% of the total entries, while the highest participation for the Leif Erickson survey was Westmount with 53 entries, representing 39% of the total entries.

83% of the Boughton Park survey participants and 76% of Leif Erickson survey participants identified themselves as homeowners. 35 - 49 years were by far the most represented age cohort; at 51% and 47% they had almost three times the participation of the next highest age cohort. 24% (25 participants) of the Boughton Park survey were community gardeners and 14% (19 Leif Erickson survey participants) were community gardeners.

## Structure

The survey consisted of twelve site-specific questions with respondents asked to provide their opinion on overall support for food forests and what plants and features they prefer in their local food forest demonstration site. Additional questions asked about concerns and benefits with a food forest installed in their neighbourhood and how respondents would use a food forest site.

## Results

The survey results showed strong support (80% or higher) for installation of food forests at both demonstration sites and in public spaces overall.

When asked about potential usage of a neighbourhood food forest, 67% responded “yes” in the Boughton Park survey while 72% selected “yes” for the Leif Erickson site.

When asked about specific site use, other than for picking fruit, participants in both surveys identified gathering spaces for community/family/friends (77% and 81%) and education/learning opportunities (77% and 76%) as their top usage.

The top five plant options preferred by participants for each demonstration site were:

<b>Boughton Park Site:</b>	<b>Leif Erickson Site:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Saskatoon Berries (98%)</b></li><li>• <b>Apples (92%)</b></li><li>• <b>Plants that attract pollinators (90%)</b></li><li>• <b>Raspberries (87%)</b></li><li>• <b>Strawberries (79%)</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saskatoon Berries (93%)</li><li>• Plants that attract pollinators (92%)</li><li>• Raspberries (86%)</li><li>• Apples (83%)</li><li>• Cherries (80%)</li></ul>

Educational signage (91% and 86%) and waste bins (86% and 89%) were the top 2 selected features for each demonstration site. Compost and seating received 75% (or higher) approval for both sites.

Participants were able to provide feedback on what they liked and any concerns about installing food forests. The top mentioned benefits included:

- food security and access to food
- educational opportunities
- creating beautiful community gathering places
- supporting wildlife and enhancing biodiversity.

While many participants responded with “no concerns”, the top concerns identified included:

- theft from the nearby community garden,
- vandalism/crime
- increased traffic
- maintenance and site cleanliness
- attracting wasps