

May 16, 2013

Centennial Park upgrades feedback opportunity

There's still time to share your thoughts about plans for upgrades at Centennial Park.

The City of Campbell River hosted a public open House the evening of May 16 to showcase two conceptual designs developed for the Centennial Park upgrades. Both designs include the development of a multisport court between the two tennis courts and the installation of a natural playscape in the central core of the park.

The designs and a questionnaire that asks for feedback on the two designs are available online for people who were unable to attend the open house. To view the designs and complete an online questionnaire about the park upgrades, visit www.campbellrivercentennialpark.ca. The designs and questionnaires are also available at the Sportsplex, Community Centre and City Hall.

Upgrade plans for Centennial Park are part of the City's Strategic Parks Plan, which outlines a playground renewal program. According to the plan, Centennial Park playground equipment is slated for replacement in 2013. Feedback from two focus groups was incorporated into the two conceptual designs that were presented at the open house.

"Rather than replacing the traditional equipment with more of the same, the upgrades will introduce a natural playscape, which uses natural materials and site grades to create an outdoor play environment that changes from day to day and from season to season," explains Lynn Wark, the City's parks project supervisor. *"The concept is designed to encourage natural play that reconnects kids with nature and provides opportunities for creation of their own play, enhancing social skills and motor development as well as enhancing overall physical health."*

Kathy Rae, Family Resource Coordinator at Sunrises Resources for Early Childhood Development, said that *"in over 40 years working with parents and children, I have noticed that children connecting with the outdoors and natural playspaces in particular is diminishing at an alarming rate. There is so much research that documents the multitude of benefits achieved when children play in nature. This playscape will provide wonderful opportunities for children in Campbell River."*

"Unstructured play spaces that integrate natural elements are now recognized as powerful – some research suggests critical – in assuring children's physical and mental health, and intellectual development," says Joyce McMann, Family Place Coordinator for Campbell River Family Services Society when reflecting on the natural playspace design concepts. *"As backyards get smaller and public neighbourhood spaces increasingly groomed, a trend back to natural play space is a vision to celebrate for a child-friendly community. The City's initiative to think about playgrounds in a much broader way than 'simply play equipment outside' is very exciting."*

Comments must be received by Friday, May 24.

For more information, please contact Lynn Wark, Parks Project Supervisor at 250-286-7275.

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250-286-7805