

# Lower Kananaskis River Facility Redevelopment Proposal

## What We Heard

With significant input received through 100 responses, the feedback has been analyzed and grouped by theme.

A strong majority of comments were overall positive, and most of the respondents identified themselves as being users of the Lower Kananaskis River with good familiarity of the planning area and issues. Many comments indicated overall support for the concept, highlighted features of the plan that were liked, and made recommendations for specific layout and design changes to the redevelopment proposal.

Less than 15 per cent of respondents did not support the redevelopment proposal, and indicated a desire to see the planning area and Kananaskis Country in general to remain as natural as possible.

What We Heard	Response
<p>This is a great plan, well-needed and long overdue. The area needs more camping and recreational opportunities.</p>	<p>Many of the recreational facilities in Kananaskis Country were planned and built in the 1970s and 1980s when the population of Alberta was much smaller, and Albertans engaged in different recreational activities than they do today. The recreational facilities that were built over thirty years ago are now often at, or over capacity, and are out-of-date.</p> <p>The <i>Plan for Parks</i> and the <i>Bow Valley Protected Areas Management Plan</i> acknowledged the need to increase recreational opportunities within Alberta's parks, and provided guidance for the drafting of the redevelopment proposal. Although it may take several years to fully implement, when complete the facilities in the Lower Kananaskis River area will begin to address the needs and expectations of Albertans today.</p>
<p>The plan effectively addresses overcrowding, access and user conflict issues. Formalization of facilities and separation of uses will greatly</p>	<p>There is a growing number and diversity of river users on the Lower Kananaskis River, which includes kayakers, canoeists and surfers, as well as companies offering rafting and a variety of river recreational activities.</p> <p>The redevelopment plan will designate and separate the</p>

<p>improve the experience for river users and visitors alike.</p>	<p>multiple activities, and will delineate areas and movement patterns for each of sport training, camping, and river day use visitors. The redevelopment plan will also improve accessibility to the river, allowing the site to become more inclusive to Albertans.</p>
<p>The development plan, and specifically the plans for Canoe Meadows, will highlight the area as a world-class paddling facility.</p>	<p>Canoe Meadows is considered to be the provincial training facility for the sport of kayaking, and a permanent gate system for a slalom kayaking has hosted provincial and national white-water championships, as well as the Pan American championships.</p> <p>The redevelopment plan includes an area designated for sport training and a two-level Training and Meeting Centre which would provide year round meeting facilities, warm-up and change rooms, boat storage and a view of the course. This new training and meeting centre, along with the upgrades to the group camp, event field and parking area, will enhance the site's ability to accommodate special events.</p> <p>Due to the importance of Canoe Meadows to the paddling community, the Canoe Meadows node is a first priority for implementation.</p>
<p>This area shouldn't be developed, and the land, wildlife habitat/corridors and watershed need to be protected.</p>	<p>The Bow Valley Protected Areas Management Plan, which was approved in 2002, designates the planning area as a facility zone with potential for future expansion.</p> <p>Archaeological and environmental studies were completed in 2010 to inform the planning process, and results from these studies were a key input during the planning of the proposed redevelopments to minimize impacts to environmental and archaeological features.</p>
<p>The plan contains too many campsites, and will increase crowding and traffic for river users.</p>	<p>The redevelopment plan aims to strike a balance between meeting the high demand for campsites in Kananaskis Country and addressing the changing needs of Albertans, while minimizing impacts on the Lower Kananaskis River watershed, area wildlife and recreational users.</p> <p>The Bow Valley Protected Areas Management Plan identifies this area as an appropriate location for campground development to address capacity issues. Campgrounds will be at a similar density to existing Kananaskis Country campgrounds, and sites will be adequately spaced to allow for privacy.</p> <p>Implementation of the redevelopment plan will be phased in over several years, during which time TPR will monitor user patterns and visitor demands.</p>

<p>Further environmental studies are needed prior to moving forward.</p>	<p>The approved redevelopment plan is a conceptual design, which is just the first phase of the planning process of any development. Further engineering studies will be required during development of detailed design drawings, and along with ongoing environmental assessments will be completed prior to final project approval and any construction.</p> <p>Environmental research is ongoing to determine the importance of the area for habitat and as a wildlife movement corridor. Although there is some ecological data for this area, additional wildlife movement and habitat-use data is being collected over the course of the next year during all four seasons to evaluate how the development may impact wildlife movement patterns and the potential for human-wildlife conflict. This data will inform final design.</p> <p>The redevelopments for the Canoe Meadows site have also been redesigned to minimize the impact to areas of historical importance, and some mitigation will be required prior to construction. The remainder of the redevelopment plan has received Historic Resources Act clearance to proceed.</p>
<p>Upgrades to the area should be focused on improving the experience for river users. E.g., consider bike cages, watercraft loading zones, and change rooms.</p>	<p>The redevelopment plan for Canoe Meadows has undergone several changes based on feedback received from river users. A shower building with change-rooms has been added, and the parking lot has been scaled back to reflect the river's capacity for recreational use and to minimize impact to the treed area. A pedestrian-friendly paved sidewalk system with marked crosswalks has been added around the perimeter and through the center of the parking lot to increase safety for users carrying watercraft. Drop-off zones have been added, and parking stalls will be built at a larger standard to facilitate ease of watercraft loading/off-loading. In addition, bike cages have been added at both Canoe Meadows and Widowmaker nodes to assist in shuttling watercraft from put-in to take-out.</p> <p>Change shelters have also been added at the Barrier Lake Visitor Information Centre and Widowmaker nodes to facilitate river day users.</p>
<p>Ensure that the tree-line along the river and the natural river experience are maintained. River users do not want to see or hear noise from the proposed campground.</p>	<p>The planning area contains steep banks between the proposed campsites and the river. The tree-line along these banks will remain undisturbed, and no campsites will be built any closer to the river than the existing terrace trail.</p> <p>These steep banks, along with the existing tree-line will help to dissipate any potential noise from the campsites, and campsites will be set-back so as to not be visible from the river.</p>

Concern that new users and campers will not be aware of the dangers that the river poses.	Once the redevelopment plan has been implemented, interpretive and educational programming will be used to address any public safety concerns.
Upgrade and expand the river features for paddling.	The Lower Kananaskis River Users Association (LKRUA) is the lead organization responsible for establishing, maintaining and enhancing water features on the Lower Kananaskis River. Any proposals for additional water features should be directed to LKRUA.
Ensure that access to the river for paddlers is not restricted during construction.	Public safety is of the utmost concern during construction, however TPR will strive to maintain access to the river for paddlers. If access is required to be temporarily restricted to ensure public safety, notice will be posted in advance, and if possible, an alternative means of river access will be provided during the length of temporary closure.
Upgrade or expand the Barrier Lake Visitor Information Centre	The current facility is recognized as needing additional study; however, addressing the possible redevelopment of the centre was outside the scope of the LKR facility redevelopment plan. A further assessment of the future of the Barrier Lake Visitor Information Centre within the vision of the overall Kananaskis Region will be completed, and will include direction on the types of information, education and commercial services necessary to meet the needs of Albertans and the travelling public.
The majority of comments supported the proposed disc golf course, however some concerns were heard about environmental damage and whether there was enough demand to warrant a course.	<p>The proposed disc golf course is intended to align with a future four-season multi-purpose trail system in the area. Once the trail system has been developed, staff will monitor use patterns on the trail network. If warranted, disc golf fairways will be integrated into the trail network, built to be low-impact with minimal disturbance.</p> <p>A separate planning exercise will be required to determine the alignment of the multi-purpose trails. Alignment of trails is considered to be out-of-scope of the redevelopment proposal, as it is too detailed for the conceptual planning phase.</p>