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CASEY RECREATION PARK COMMUNITY DESIGN BRIEF

Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of what features and upgrades Casey residents would like to see included in the Casey Park upgrade. The Casey Recreation Park Survey was open between 14th October 2021 and 18th January 2022 and closed with a total of 561 responses. The following recommendations have been made based on the feedback.

Recommendation 1

As part of the park design, play areas, spaces to meet with friends and picnic and BBQ facilities should be given top priority.

Recommendation 2

The park design should have a range of seating options throughout the site.

Recommendation 3

Public toilets would be valued at the site.

Recommendation 4

The park design should incorporate a nature play area including but not limited to a water feature and climbing rocks.

Recommendation 5

Features such as an amphitheatre, dirt bike track and sporting facilities should be considered for inclusion in the park design.

Recommendation 6

The park design should consider inclusion of a basketball court.

Recommendation 7

The park design should include a dedicated open space for the community to use for general recreation.

Recommendation 8

The park design should include a climbing frame/equipment and swings as part of the play features.

Recommendation 9

The park design should have a natural landscape feel, with priority given to the planting of native vegetation and retaining as many of the existing trees as possible.

Recommendation 10

Any works to the dog park should prioritise the planting of grass and increased shade cover.

Recommendation 11

The ACT Government should collaborate with the community micro forest initiative and its organisers to explore all options for including the micro forest in the park design.

Recommendation 12

Options for establishing a friends of the park group should be considered.

Recommendation 13

The park design should include accessible and adequate parking.

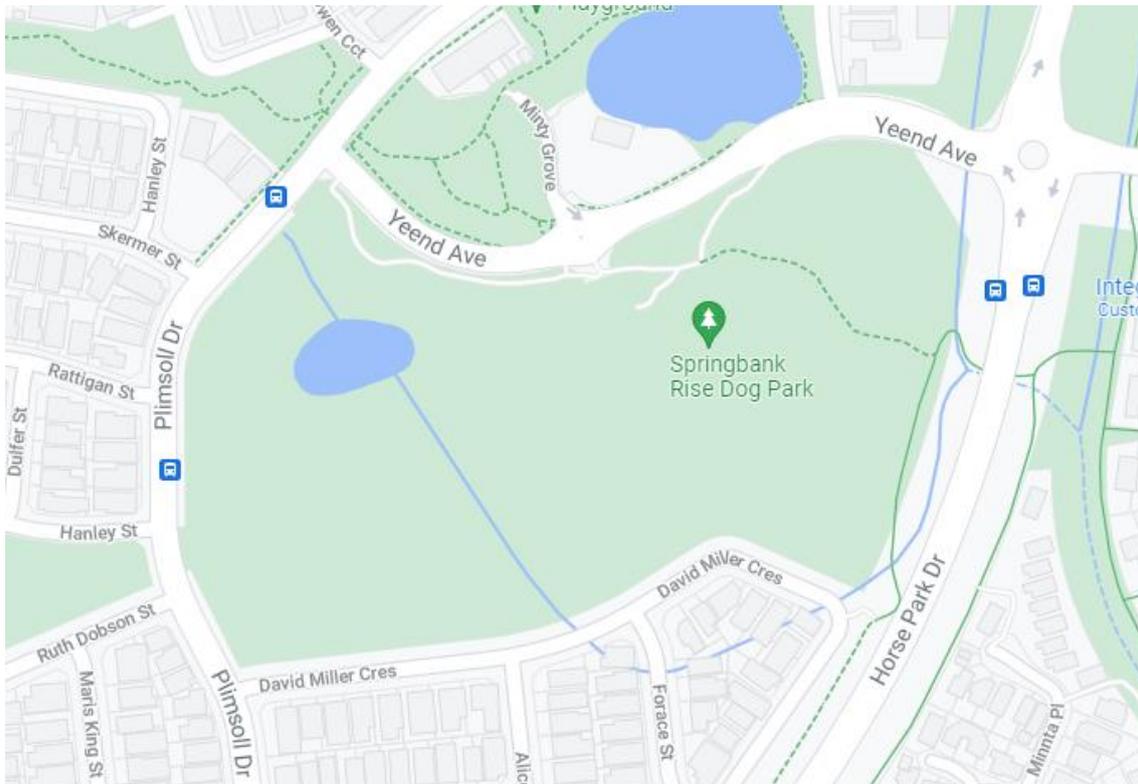


Introduction

Casey residents have expressed excitement about the funding allocation for the Casey Park upgrade (along Yeend Avenue and Plimsoll Drive). Currently the site is a large open space with many mature trees, natural landscaping and the Casey Dog Park. I share resident's excitement that funding has been allocated in the 2021-22 budget to further develop the site and improve its amenity for the community.

Between 14th October 2021 and 18th January 2022, residents of Casey were given the opportunity to respond to a survey, seeking community input about features they would like considered as part of the park upgrade design. During this time, a total of 561 responses were received from Casey residents.

The responses to the survey have been used to develop this community brief to the Minister for Transport and City Services, to help inform the initial design.



Map of Casey Park



Survey Findings

What people would most like to do at the park

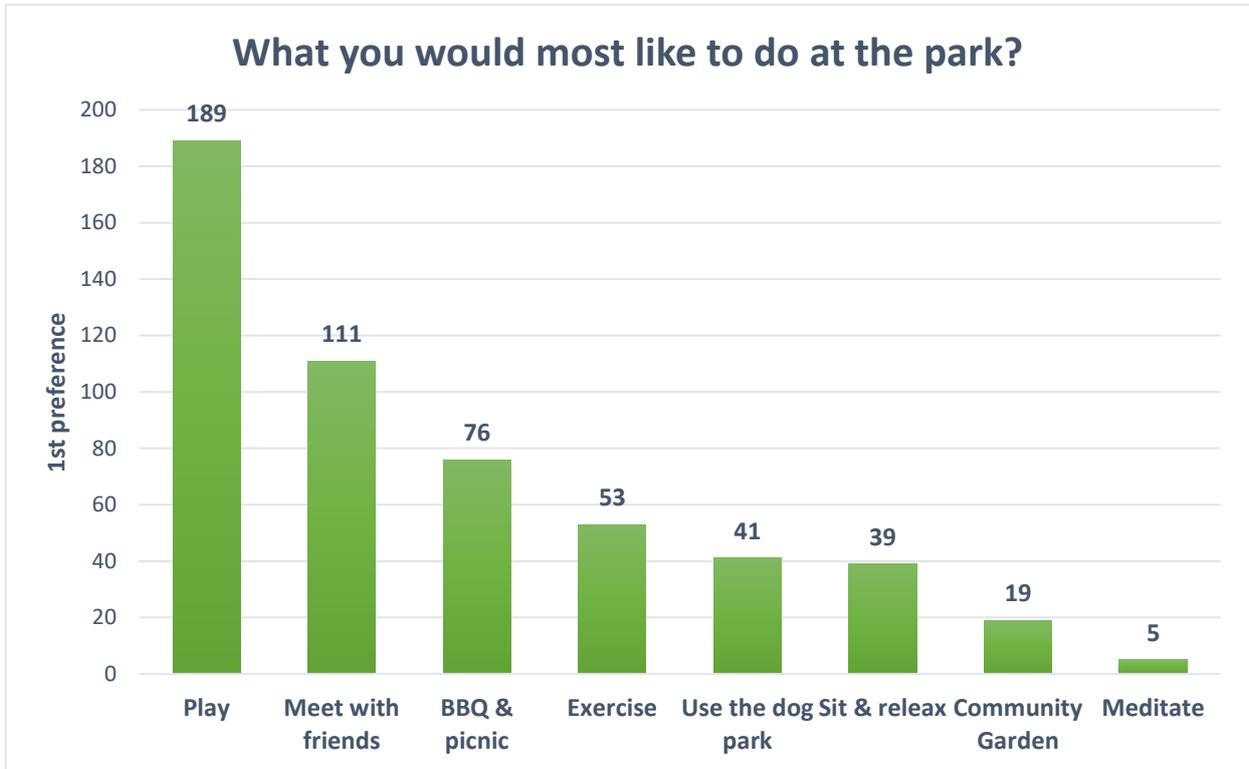


Figure One

Respondents were presented with several options regarding what they would most like to be able to do at the park and asked to rank their top choices.

The option with the highest number of 1st preferences was: “play”. This was followed by “meet with friends” in second place and “BBQ and picnic” coming in third place.

A lot of respondents indicated they would love the upgrade to ensure families of all ages were able to play. A dedicated play area and open spaces will allow a range of activities and fun to take place, while those who want to come together and relax are able to do so.

Figure One outlines how many respondents placed each option as their first preference

Recommendation 1

As part of the park design, play areas, spaces to meet with friends and picnic and BBQ facilities be given top priority.



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Features within the park

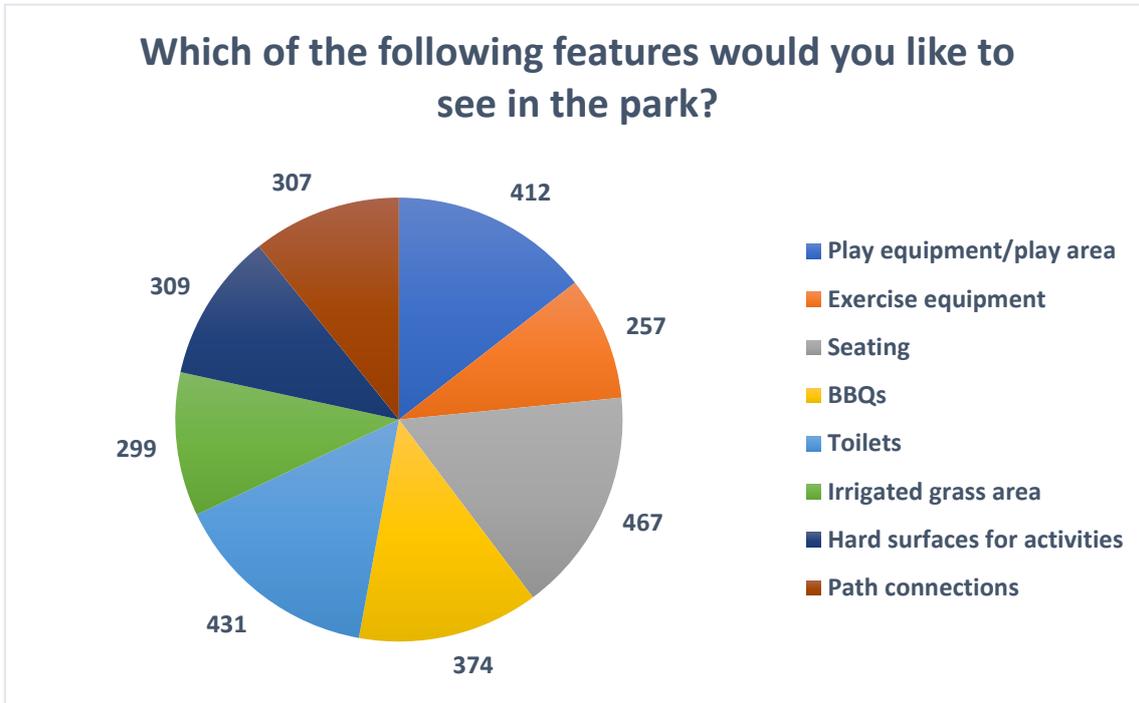


Figure Two

Respondents were presented with options on the physical features they would like to see at the park.

The option “seating” was the most popular choice with 467 votes, followed by “toilets” with 431, and “play equipment” in third with 412 votes.

It is clear that the ability to play is a high priority for respondents, the addition of seating will allow parents to watch and keep an eye on their children. Seating will allow people to relax, have picnics and socialise with friends and family.

The addition of toilets as part of the upgrade was also highly recommended by participants. Toilet facilities will allow for families to ensure a comfortable stay at the park, further compliment the ability for people to use the park to meet with friends and have picnics.

These features will help to allow the community to spend quality time at the park and enjoy all the park has to offer.

You can see a breakdown of each option’s popularity in [Figure Two](#).

Recommendation 3

Public toilets would be valued at the site.

Recommendation 2

The park design should have a range of seating options throughout the site.



Nature play within the park



Figure Three

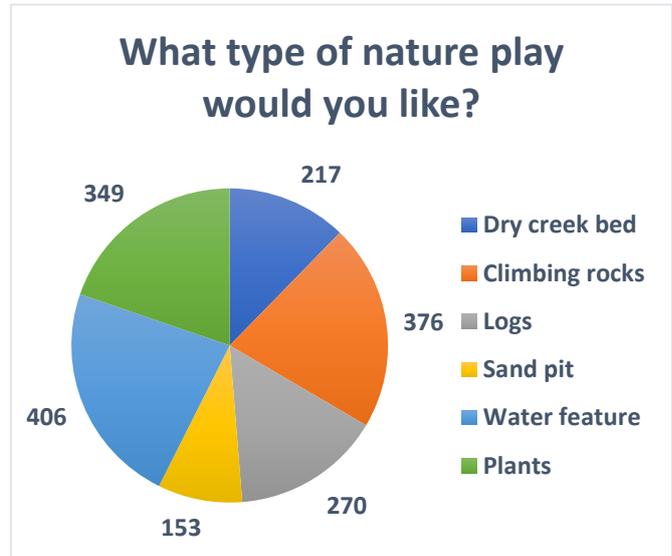


Figure Four

495 out of 543 respondents indicated they would like to see nature play incorporated into the park.

Figure Three outlines the total number of responses to each option.

When respondents were asked the type of nature play they would like, “water feature” was the top choice with 406 votes, followed by “climbing rocks” with 376, and “plants” in third with 349 votes.

These features were given a high preference, with some respondents indicating that a water feature or play would be popular with children. The inclusion of a water play feature would help to make the Casey Park unique. Respondents indicated they would love to see a water feature included, as this feature is not common in any of the parks across Canberra.

The total number of votes given to each nature play option are displayed in Figure Four.

Recommendation 4

The park design should include a nature play area including but not limited to a water feature and climbing rocks.



Additional key park features

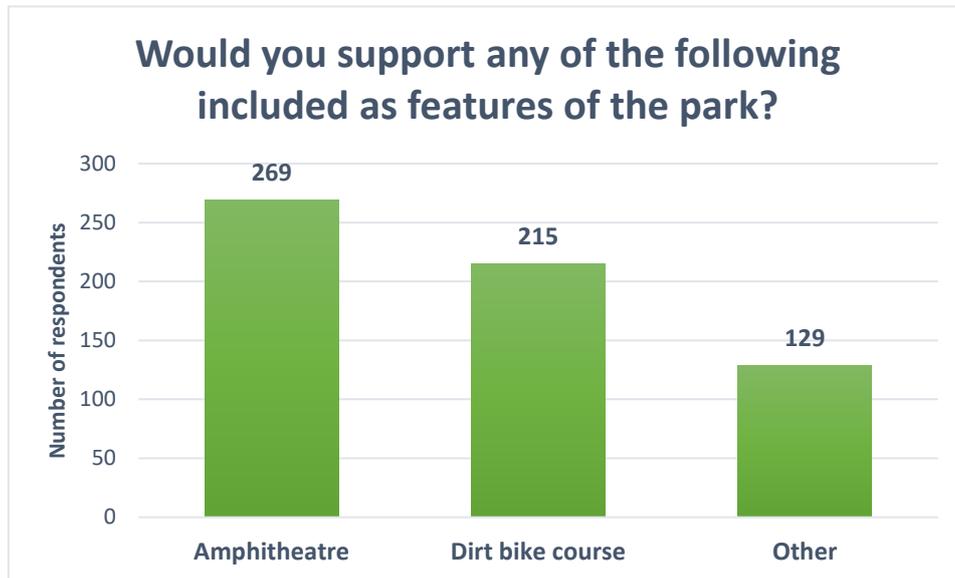


Figure Five

Respondents were presented with the idea of an amphitheatre or dirt bike course as one of the parks features.

Figure Five outlines 269 respondents agreed they would like an “amphitheatre” included, while 215 respondents indicated they would like a “dirt bike course”.

Respondents were also given an ‘Other’ option and asked to specify what they would like to see included as a feature. Based on the responses given, the top answers were:

1. Basketball court
2. Shaded area
3. A flying fox
4. Tennis court
5. Skate Park
6. Dedicated bike path

Sporting features had its own questions with findings presented in the next section. It is however worth noting the high level of support for sporting facilities within the park.

Recommendation 5

Features such as an amphitheatre, dirt bike track and sporting facilities be considered for inclusion in the park design.



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Park sporting facilities

Respondents were asked about the kinds of exercise or sport they would like to be able to do at the park. The most common answers included:

1. Basketball court (133 responses)
2. Free space in general to bring your own equipment/toys (102 responses)
3. Dedicated walking area/track (62 responses)
4. Exercise equipment (60 responses)
5. Tennis court (36 responses)
6. Soccer area (31 responses)

Respondents were very keen to see sport facilities included in the park upgrade. Many respondents indicated they wanted the park to cater for people of all ages, not just for younger children with dedicated play equipment. Sport facilities allow for not only younger kids, but older kids to be able to enjoy the facilities at the park.

The inclusion of a basketball court was highly requested from respondents. While talking to Casey residents about the survey, it was noted that many households had a portable basketball hoop in their driveways. Some resident while being surveyed, mentioned that the addition of a basketball court, would help free up space on their driveways. The addition of a basketball court would help to make the Casey Park popular and would further encourage residents of all ages to use the park.

As noted in some survey responses, the basketball court would also serve multiple uses, with the hard surface allowing for a range of activities to take place.

Following close behind in popularity, respondents also noted that the inclusion of a dedicated free open space, would allow people to make use of the area in however they would like. Respondents indicated they would love to use the space to kick a ball around, at another time throw a frisbee or fly a kite. The community can cater the area for whatever purpose they would like.

Recommendation 6

The park design should consider inclusion of a basketball court.

Recommendation 7

The park design should include a dedicated open space for the community to use as they choose.



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Play features within the park

When asked preferences for play features, respondents most common answers included:

1. Climbing frame (194 responses)
2. Swings (124 responses)
3. Flying fox (48 responses)
4. Slides (38 responses)
5. Play equipment (36 responses)
6. Trampolines (20 responses)

Over 200 respondents indicated they would like to see a climbing frame/equipment included as part of the play features, followed by swings with 126 suggestions and flying fox with 72 suggestions.

This survey revealed that many respondents would like the ability to play be considered as the primary part of the parks upgrade design. Respondents indicated that the preferred features to meet this ability would be climbing frames and swings.

Climbing frames and swings have been popular with kids for generations. Observing playgrounds around Canberra with these play features, shows how popular they are with kids. The inclusion of a climbing frame and swings will be used by kids of all ages.

Respondents made it clear that being able to play was very important. Additionally, the sporting and additional park feature sections revealed what features potentially older kids and adults would like included.

Recommendation 8

The park design should include a climbing frame/equipment and swings as part of the play features.



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Landscaping



Photo of the Casey Parks existing landscaping

Respondents were asked about landscaping preferences as part of the park upgrade. The following indicates respondent's preferences for vegetation plating, current trees and landscape feel:

- 263 respondents would like to see **native** vegetation prioritised, vs non-native with 13 votes. A mix of native/non-native received 261 votes.
- 487 respondents voted yes when asked whether they would like to **keep as many of the existing trees** as possible, vs 51 who voted no.
- When asked whether respondents would like the park to have a **natural landscape feel**, 500 voted yes and 39 voted no.

Recommendation 9

The park design should have a natural landscape feel, with priority given to the planting of native vegetation and retaining as many of the existing trees as possible.



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Springbank Rise Dog Park Upgrade

The ACT Government in the 2021-22 budget, allocated funding to upgrade to the existing Casey dog park (also known as Springbank Rise Dog Park). Currently the ACT Government anticipates undertaking scoping works before the end of this financial year, before undertaking construction in the next financial year.

Upgrades for dog parks around the ACT include improving the existing features and amenity facilities available at that location. Recently, the Duffy and Yarralumla dog park upgrades included new tree plantings, re-seeding and maintenance of the grass, water connections, and the addition of agility equipment. Similar upgrades can be expected for the Casey dog park.

Based on the survey responses, 386 respondents voted **no** to expanding the dog park vs 152 who voted yes.

While the majority of respondents indicated they felt the dog park did not need to be expanded, many left comments indicating that the dog park could do with an upgrade. The most common improvement suggestions included:

- Planting of grass to help reduce dust;
- More shade; and
- Removing the current logs and rocks.

Respondents suggested that the above improvements would encourage them to use the dog park more often. Some mentioned they no longer use the Casey dog park due to the lack of shade and the current ground causing a lot of loose dust.

Improvements to shade at the dog park will allow for dog owners to take their dog all year round and anytime throughout the day. Dog park users will be able to enjoy longer periods using the dog park without the need to worry about them or their dogs getting too much sun exposure.

Installing grass to improve the flooring will encourage more dog owners to take their dog to the Casey dog park. The grass will help to reduce the amount of dust and dirt that dogs accumulate while at the dog park. Residents who drive their dog to the dog park, will not have to worry about cleaning their dog before they get into the car.

Recommendation 10

Any works to the dog park should prioritise the planting of grass and increased shade cover.



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Micro forest

A Micro-Forest is a small dense area of vegetation, usually located in an open area within a city or suburb. They contain densely planted trees, shrubs, climbers, groundcovers to create a mini ecosystem that has a cooling effect, while improving the amenity of an area.

Micro forests are becoming increasingly popular in suburban open areas. Residents recognise their benefit to cooling the landscape, providing a habitat for wildlife and helping to reduce carbon emissions.

Recently, residents in the suburb of Watson planted a micro forest, thanks to community initiative. There is a similar community group in Casey that are working to establishing a micro forest as part of the Casey Park upgrades.

When respondents were asked, 360 voted yes to supporting the planting of a micro forest on the site, 50 voted no.

The response to the survey and community activism to date demonstrates a strong will from the community to realise a micro forest. The site of the Casey Park is large and opportunities for including a micro forest developed in conjunction with the community should be explored.

Recommendation 11

The ACT Government should collaborate with the community micro forest initiative and it's organisers to explore all options for including the micro forest in the park design.



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Friends of the park group

There are many wonderful parks and open spaces all throughout Canberra, for people to enjoy. Often these areas are taken care of a group run by volunteers who usually focus on weeding, maintenance of plantings, and any other care that is required at the area.

The survey revealed that, 291 respondents said yes to being interested in being part of a friends of the park group. 243 said no they weren't interested. While this is a large section of the community not interested, these numbers still demonstrate a strong, feasible interest in an ongoing community presence in the operation of the park

As part of the Casey Park upgrades, a 'friends of Casey park group' would provide additional care to the area and allow for the community to get together, socialise and help keep the park maintained. The establishment of this group would also be able to help care for the proposed micro forest.

The inclusion of a shed or similar infrastructure to support activities for a friends of the park would allow for quick and easy access to necessary tools in maintaining the park area. This shed can also be utilised for the installation and maintenance of the micro forest.

Recommendation 12

Options for establishing a friends of the park group should be considered.



Respondents open-ended feature suggestions

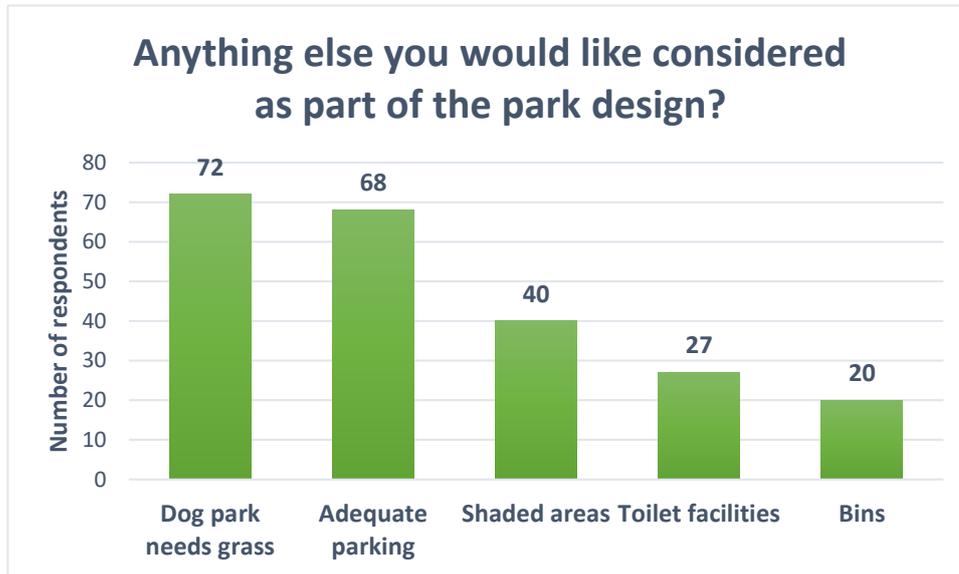


Figure Six

Respondents were asked whether there is anything else they would like considered as part of the park design.

The most popular suggestions from the respondents are outlined in [Figure Six](#).

Quite a few respondents indicated that they no longer use the dog park, due to its current state. Respondents suggested that the planting of grass and the installation of more shade, would encourage them to use the dog park. Some respondents would like to see the removal of the current rocks and logs, due to safety concerns. Please refer to recommendation 10 for further reference to the dog park.

Lastly, respondents also mentioned they would like accessible parking to be given priority. This includes a decent amount of parking, as well as disability parking. While the location of the park is in walking distance for many households, Casey residents from all around the suburb indicated they would like to visit the park. Some respondents wanted to ensure everyone in their household could access the park and mentioned they would be required to drive there. Enough parking will also allow for people outside of Casey to meet their friends and family at the park.

These upgrades would be well received by the community and help to ensure everyone in the community are able to enjoy the parks facilities.

Recommendation 13

The park design should include accessible and adequate parking.