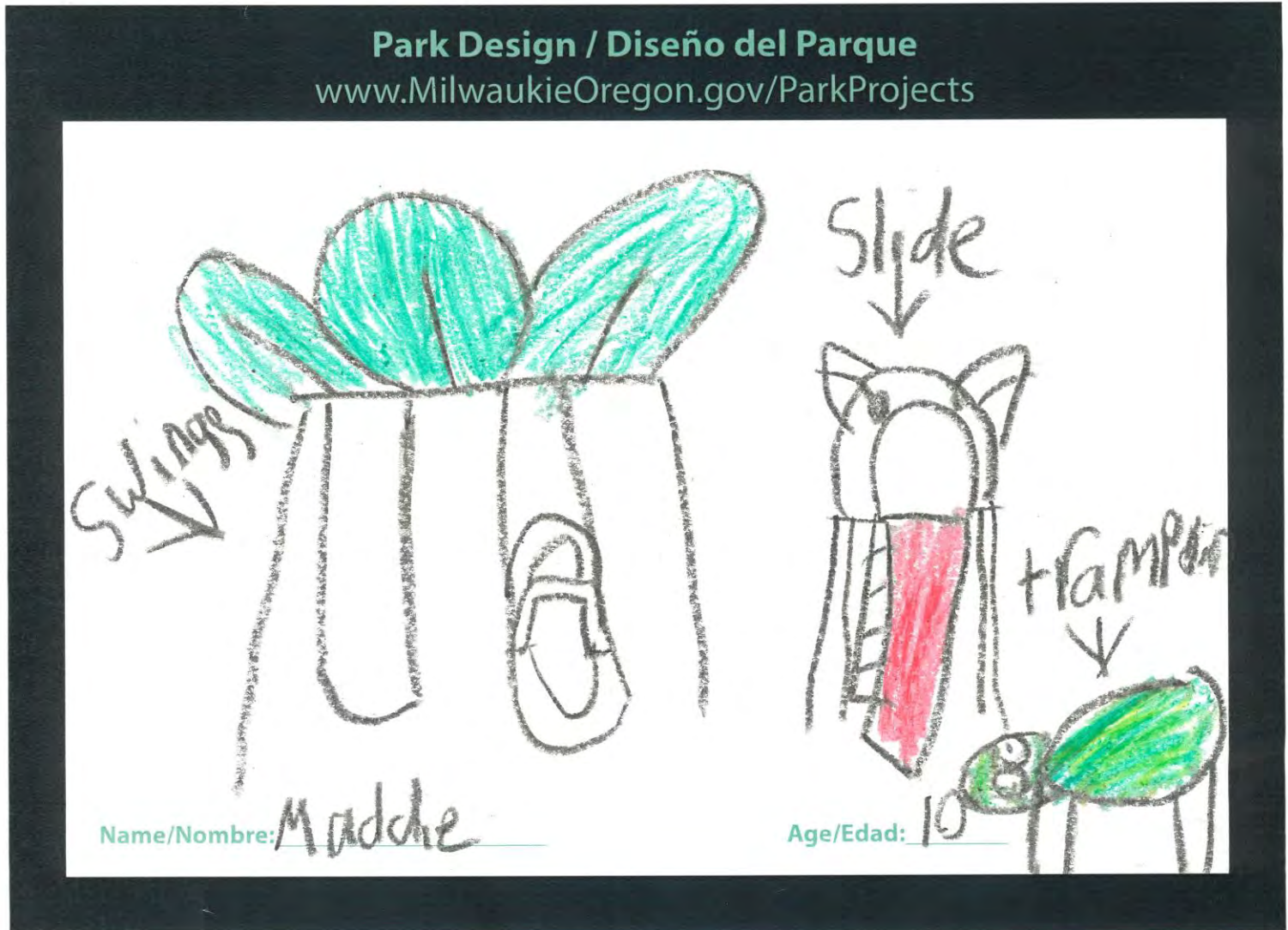


MILWAUKIE PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT: DRAFT PLAYGROUND DESIGNS

SUMMER 2023 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



Prepared by

City of Milwaukie



Introduction

For the fourth phase of engagement of the City of Milwaukie's Parks Development Project, the City conducted three focus groups and conducted in-person engagement at the community events for Juneteenth (June 17) and Pride (June 24). Participants could view draft playground designs for Scott, Balfour, and Bowman-Brae Parks, provide input on the draft designs, and give feedback on what they would like to see in the final playground. The events and graphics were bilingual in English and Spanish.

Participation Breakdown

Across all events and engagement opportunities city staff received feedback in the form of **2,738** sticker "votes" from approximately **304 participants** who indicated their preferred equipment and completed **238 written surveys**. In many cases groups of people or families participated in the pop-up engagement together making the total number of participation difficult to determine. Below is a look at some select information on who participated in this round:

- **48%** of surveys came from people who answered that they were new to the Milwaukie planning process.
- **23%** of the surveys came from people who self-identified as being more than one race or ethnicity or from a non-white race or ethnicity.
- **47%** of surveys came from people who stated that they live within a city of Milwaukie neighborhood.
- **39%** of surveys came from people who stated that they are living with a disability.
- **21%** of surveys came from households with incomes near or below the area median (\$75,000 or below).
- **3** people requested follow up conversations in Spanish.

Pop-Up Participation and Notification

City staff developed surveys and hosted pop-up engagement at two community events: Juneteenth and Pride.

At **Juneteenth** there were **126 sticker** "vote" participants with **92 written survey responses** completed. Several responses were conducted by families or groups with multiple people of different age groups working together to provide responses. Juneteenth was held at Water Tower Park on June 17 from 11am to 3pm. Participants of the playground engagement received t-shirts as a thank you for their time and children who participated received "play expert" t-shirts. **One comment card** was also received, and **27 new people** signed up for the project email list.

At **Pride** there were **138 sticker** "vote" participants with **79 written survey responses** completed. Similar to Juneteenth, several responses were conducted by families or groups with multiple people of different ages working together to provide responses. Pride was held at Scott Park on June 24 from 10am to 12pm. Participants of the playground engagement received t-shirts as a thank you for their time and children who

participated received “play expert” t-shirts. **Two comment cards** were also received, and **14 new people** signed up for the project email list.

In addition to the advertising for the overall events conducted by the community groups who organized both events, the City also advertised separately for the pop-up engagement. Community members were informed about the engagement at the two events through the following:

- Flyers were distributed at the Ledding Library, City Hall, the Public Safety building, and Community Development building. A total of 250 flyers in both English and Spanish were distributed in this manner.
- A written invitation and digital flyer in both English and Spanish were emailed to 325 people on the project email list.
- Digital flyers in both English and Spanish were sent to Ardenwald, Linwood, Lot Whitcomb, Milwaukie El Puente, Oak Grove, and Seth Lewelling Elementary Schools through the Peachjar service. As of June 16, the bilingual flyer was delivered to 1,691 people and was read by 113.
- Posts on the city calendar.

Focus Groups & Design Charrettes

The City, with support from **GreenWorks** and graphics from **NWPlaygrounds**, conducted three focus groups: the Oak Grove Club of the Boys and Girls Club of Metropolitan Portland, representatives from Milwaukie stakeholder groups, and Fact Oregon staff and participants.

Boys and Girls Club

On May 17, **32 children** from four Milwaukie area schools met with city staff and GreenWorks at the **Oak Grove Boys & Girls Club** to review seven playground designs. The children (aka “**Play Experts**”) reviewed three designs for Scott Park, two designs for Bowman-Brae Park, and two designs for Balfour Park and indicated with stickers their three preferred pieces of equipment for each park and their overall favorite designs for each park. Children then participated in a discussion with questions and answers. The **hour and half** session wrapped up with the children drawing their dream playgrounds. Participants received t-shirts, gift crayons, pizza, cupcakes, and juice boxes at the event. Below are a few of the take aways from the engagement event:

- Overall staff and the project team were impressed by the level of seriousness that the children put into their feedback on the parks and playground designs. One child remarked that “I go to Ardenwald (Elementary) now and will be going to Rowe (Middle School) next year. You said these parks are near there. Even though I don’t really play on playgrounds – I like sports better – I’m glad I’m here for the other kids.”
- In general, children preferred the larger equipment and designs that appeared to provide more equipment. An example of this can be seen in their preference for the Timber Tower in Scott Park Design G over the Jr. Tower in Scott Park Design B.
- The children did understand and advocate for designs that provided something for everyone and a variety of play options. This was heard in the discussion with staff and the project team.
- Swings, spinners, and objects that move were preferred by the children. This was witnessed in their sticker “votes” and heard in the discussion. The hexy wobbles at Bowman-Brae Park were preferred by this group.

- Students advocated for more sports fields, basketball courts, and bathrooms in parks.

Stakeholders

On June 12, **18 adults and one teenager** joined city staff and GreenWorks at the Ledding Library for an **hour and half** presentation and discussion of the seven playground designs. Similar to the Boys and Girls Club, the participants indicated with stickers their three preferred pieces of equipment for each of the three parks and then their overall preferred design for each park. Participants also filled out surveys and participated in a questions and answer portion. The focus group was made up of three members each of the **Parks and Recreation Board (PARB)**, the **Equity Steering Committee (ESC)**, **Lake Road Neighborhood District Association (NDA)**, **Historic Milwaukie NDA**, two representatives each from the **Ledding Library Staff**, **Ledding Library Board**, a single representative **North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District (NCPRD)**, the **Ardenwald-Johnson Creek NDA**, **City of Milwaukie Staff**, and **FACT Oregon** also participated. **Three online surveys** were completed by invited participants from the above groups who could not attend the focus group in person. Participants received t-shirts and a box lunch for their participation. Below are some take aways and common feedback from the engagement event:

- A common point that was made by the participants was the difficulty in selecting equipment and providing playground designs that provide fun options for all age groups and abilities. Inclusiveness in design was advocated for in all three park designs. An example of this was seen in the overwhelming preference for the unity dome and sensory panels in Scott Park Design A, which provides activities for multiple age groups, is accessible for those with mobility challenges, and provides for sensory play.
- Participants appreciated that all seven designs shown included the more accessible rubber tile safety surface over engineered wood fiber (aka playground mulch) safety surface.
- Some participants questioned the need for musical instruments at Scott Park if the unity dome and sensory panels were in the final design. Others did express some concern over noise at Scott Park given the proximity to the library and adjacent residences.
- Participants were concerned that some of the designs seemed to be geared toward younger age groups and wanted to make sure there were options for older kids.
- Participants wanted to ensure that nature-based play and unstructured play options were still going to be offered in the parks outside of playgrounds.
- Questions about final colors did come up. Staff will put together color options for PARB to review and select at a latter date.

FACT Oregon

Between June 6 and June 26, people with disabilities and families raising children with disabilities who work with **FACT Oregon** were invited to fill out an online survey that mimicked the two above focus groups. Participants were also asked if the featured playground designs met their or their family's needs. Participants who filled out the survey were provided with a t-shirt and invited to a follow up discussion of the park concept plans and playground designs. **16 surveys** were received with **2 people** joined city staff for a **two-hour** online discussion on June 26. Participants of the follow up meeting received a DoorDash gift card in lieu of refreshments and as a thank you for their time. Below are staff take aways from the follow up meeting:

- Much of the discussion focused on the park concept plans and areas around the playgrounds. Participants stressed the need for parks that use fencing, landscaping, or designs that enclose play spaces to protect children with disabilities who may run away from playgrounds or caretakers when overstimulated, or children that are prone to wander or explore. Concerns were raised about parking lots, streets, and water features as some people with disabilities may not recognize the danger that exists with these features.
- Participants appreciated the concept plans and playground designs focus on physical accessibility, however, wanted to make sure that people with all forms of disabilities, not just mobility challenges or physical disabilities were considered.
- Participants suggested that a ‘talk tube’ as a great piece of sensory equipment because it has a “call and response” type of play. Concerns were also raised about the fragility of some of the musical instruments shown in the designs.
- Participants understand that our budget and space limits much of what we can do in these parks. Staff explained that many playgrounds that are seen as the most inclusive are those that with much higher budgets in much larger parks. Given the limited budget and space in each individual park, staff suggested that we try to provide something for everyone in all three parks combined instead of in each park.

Feedback Themes

Several themes emerged from the online and in-person feedback, with feedback being generally positive. In general, families with a child with a disability are looking for secure and enclosed parks & playgrounds. Participants asked to adjust designs to older age groups. This was particularly the case at Bowman-Brae Park. Many people also commented that they felt Bowman-Brae Park lacked a “wow” factor. Generally speaking participants valued the equipment made of wood and indicated that they want the city to provide both structured play and nature-based play. The city did receive comments that suggested that we redesign our surveys and revise the way we collect demographic data.

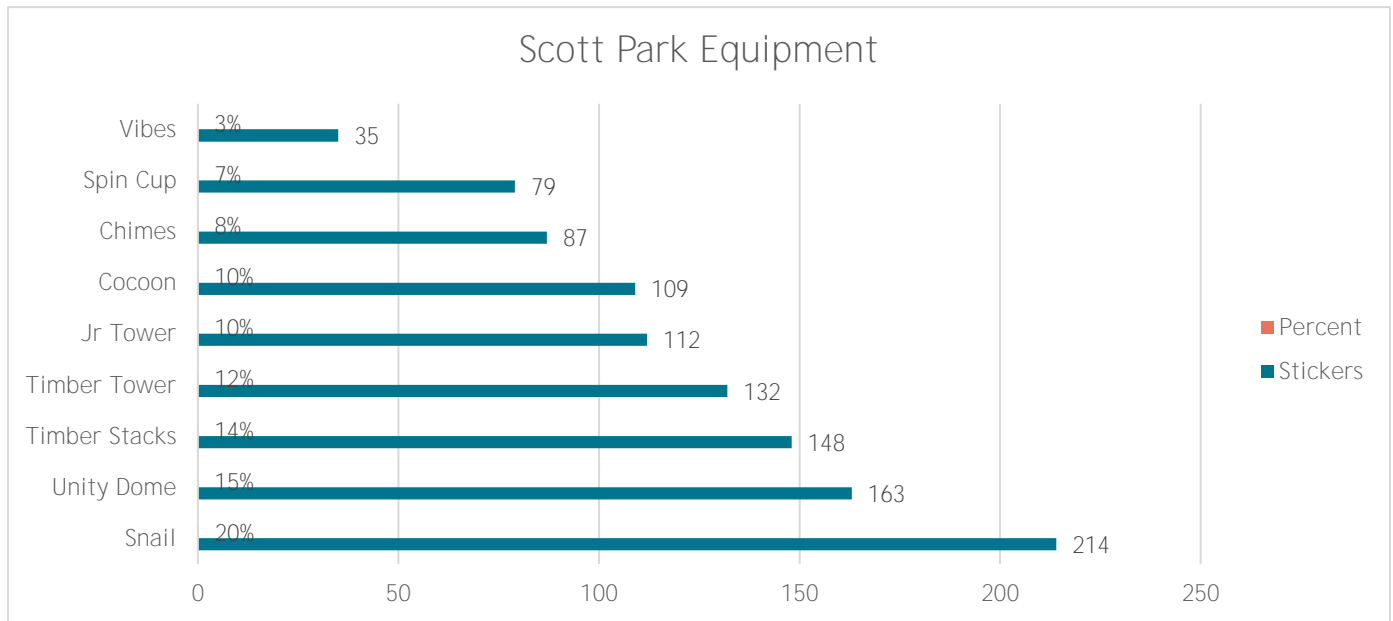
In some cases, the equipment preferences did not match overall all design preferences. For example, the Hexy Wobbles of Design F were the most preferred piece of equipment for Bowman-Brae Park by a wide margin, however, Design E for Bowman-Brae was the more favorable overall design.

Combined Sticker and Survey Responses to Select Questions

Participants were given the opportunity to answer a series of questions related to what they like about the current Bowman-Brae Park master plan, challenges they have when visiting the park, and desired improvements. Feedback from both the online survey and in-person event (which included a survey and interactive activities) has been combined and is summarized below.

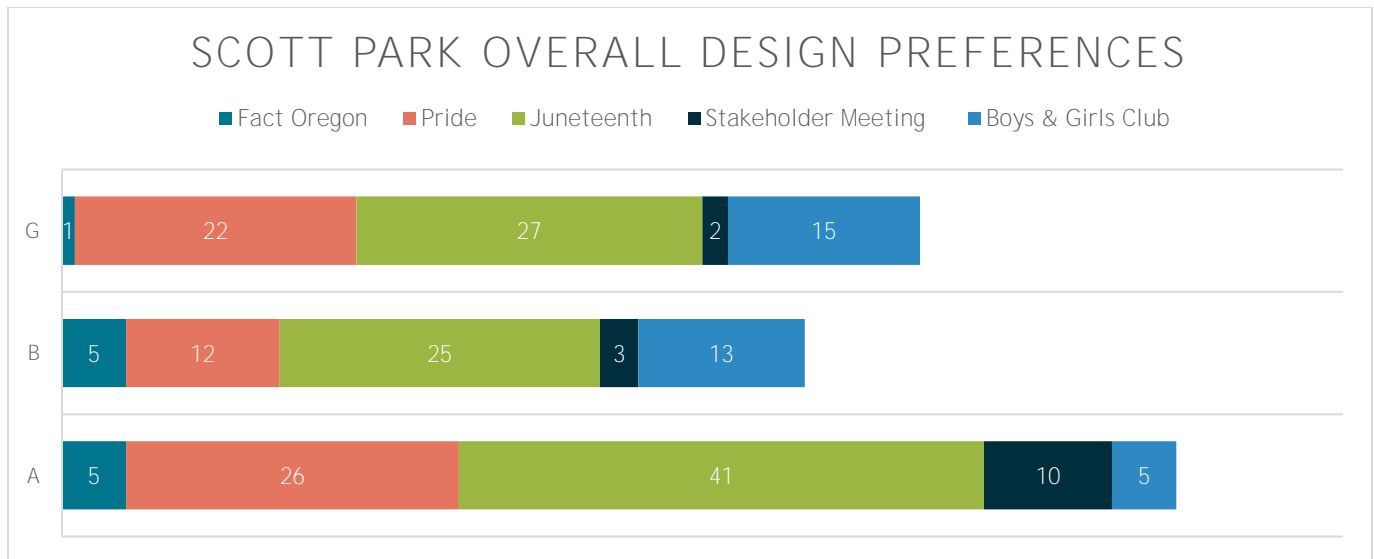
1. Which equipment in Scott Park (Designs A, B, G) do you prefer?

The most common preferred elements for Scott Park included the **Snail Critter (214)**, the **Unity Dome with Sensory Panels (163)**, and **Timber stacks (148)**. Many commenters appreciated the accessibility of the Unity Dome and felt it appealed to a wide range of age groups.



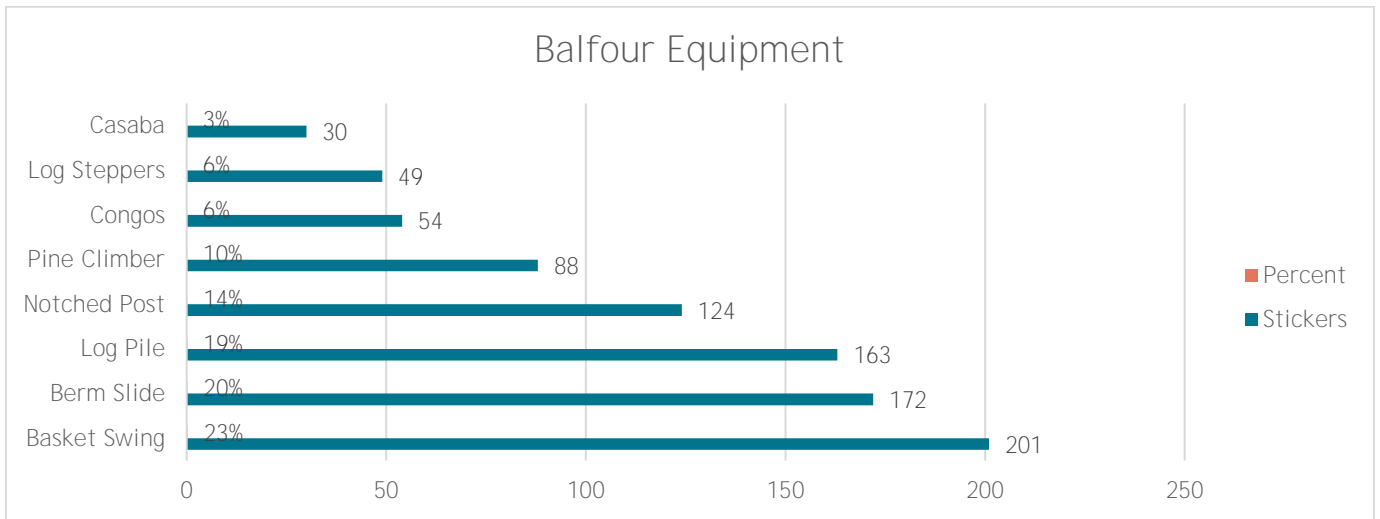
2. Which overall design do you prefer for Scott Park (Designs A, B, or G)?

Design A was the more preferred design for Scott Park, however, many commenters indicated that they liked the Snail Critter.



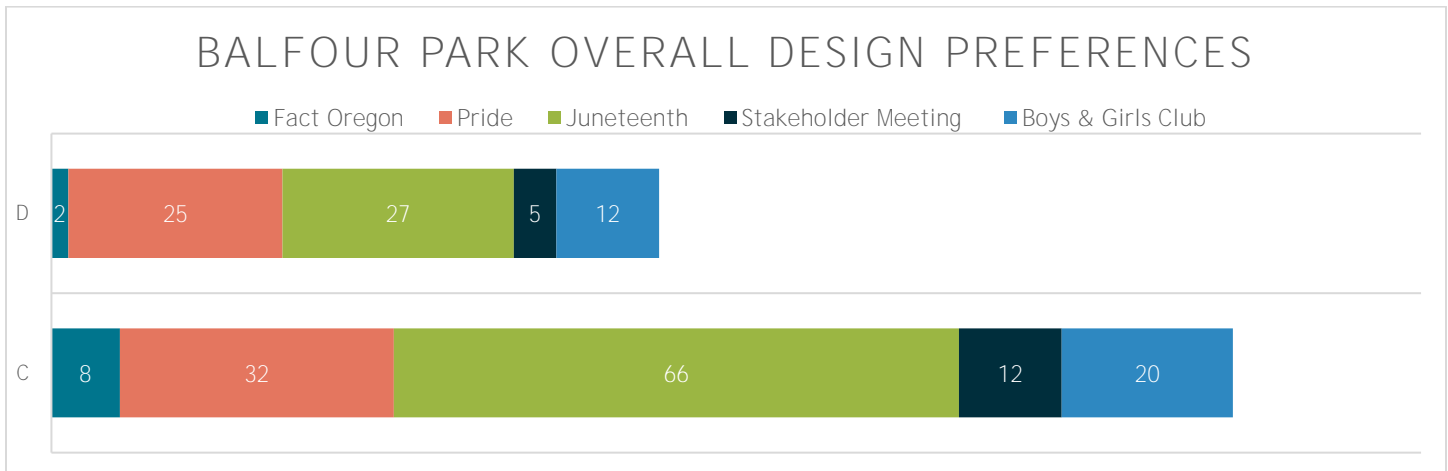
3. Which equipment in Balfour Park (Designs C and D) do you prefer?

The most common preferred elements for Balfour Park included the **Basket Swing (201)**, the **Berm Slide (172)**, and the **Log Pile (163)**.



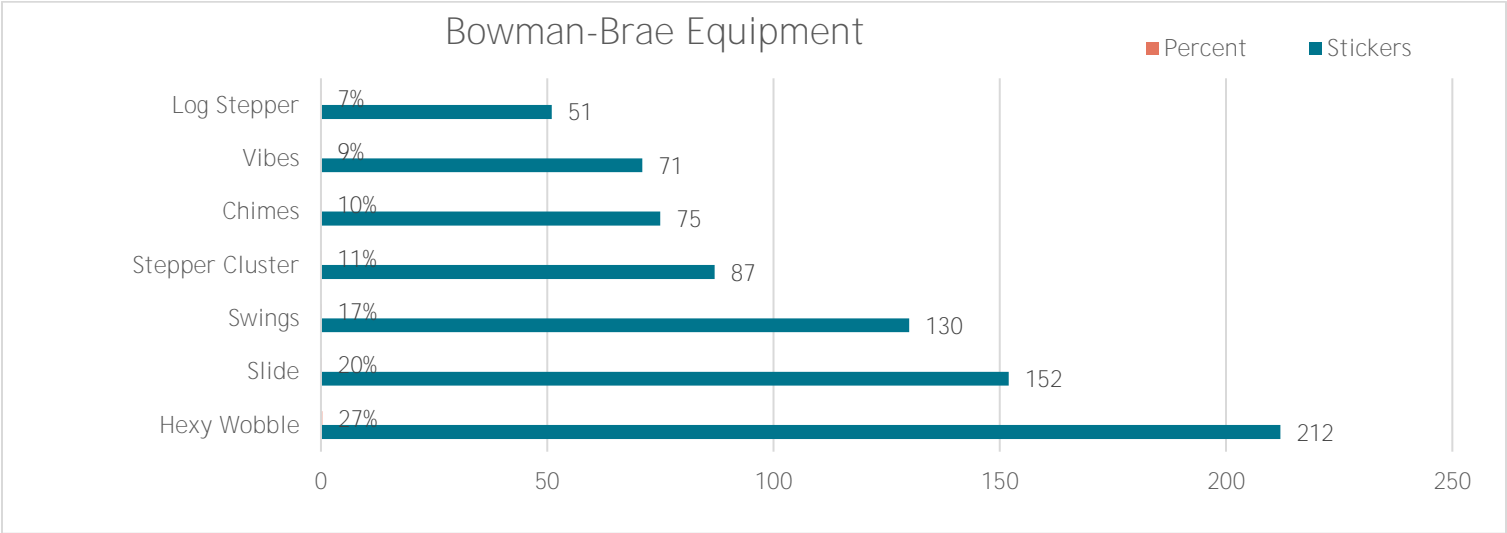
4. Which overall design do you prefer for Balfour Park (Designs C or D)?

Design C was the more preferred design for Balfour Park, however, many commenters indicated that they liked the basket swing and Congo drums. Many commenters mentioned that they liked the natural elements in both Balfour designs.



5. Which equipment in Bowman-Brae Park (Designs E and F) do you prefer?

The most common preferred elements for Bowman-Brae Park included the **Hexy Wobble (212)**, the **Slide and Log Tangle (152)**, and the **Accessible Swings (130)**.



6. Which overall design do you prefer for Bowman-Brae Park (Designs C or D)?

Design E was preferred for Bowman-Brae Park, though the preferred equipment was in Design F. Many commenters were concerned that the designs seemed too focused on younger children and did not offer a wide variety of activities. Similar to feedback received during the planning process for the Concept Plan, many commenters thought the Bowman-Brae Park lacked the “wow” factor.

