

New Community Gardens – Courtney, Goines and Malott Park

Summary of feedback

During park redevelopment of Courtney, Goines and Malott Park (previously Dallan Park), it was identified that a community garden would benefit the neighbourhood due to current demand for more community gardens in the area. During its construction, the park was reviewed under the Community Garden Policy (section 2.4 Site Criteria) and approved for future gardening.

In 2025, community members came forward to help coordinate gardeners at this park. Community engagement is the final step in the process of developing this garden. Courtney, Goines and Malott Park will welcome a new community garden in spring 2026.

What we did

When Courtney, Goines, and Malott Park was originally designed and constructed, it was determined that this park would be a good place for a community garden. The necessary water infrastructure was included into the park design however, a community garden was not implemented at the time, rather it was contingent on community members applying for a garden to be built at this location.

City staff reviewed the community garden proposal to ensure it met minimum requirements. This process consisted of an internal screening with City departments to ensure there were no conflicts with city policy and infrastructure in the park, and to determine the best location. The screening included review by Public Works, Engineering and Transportation Services, Urban Forestry, Turf and Sports, Environmental Planning and Parks Infrastructure teams. No major concerns were identified and some minor adjustments were made to the proposal, and the garden proposal was approved. Following this step, community engagement was carried out to get feedback on the garden design and to gauge interest in participating in the new community garden.

Community members were invited to provide feedback on the Courtney, Goines and Malott Park Community Garden via a survey on HaveYourSay from February 9 to 27, 2026. The proposal applicants, along with the Guelph Community Garden Working Group, encouraged participation in the survey. The survey tool was shared across several City of Guelph social media platforms. Besides the online tool, community members were recommended to contact staff directly with comments.

What we heard

The majority of feedback indicated that the Courtney, Goines and Malott Park Community Garden will be a welcomed addition to the neighbourhood, fostering community cohesion,

diversifying the use of green spaces, and providing environmental benefits to the nearby community. Comments also highlighted important considerations for the garden’s design and its role in serving both its members and the broader community. Based on the input from the original applicants and survey feedback, there will be an engaged community ready to steward and grow the proposed community garden.

- 22 responses were received
- 64 per cent of the respondents living in the Courtney, Goines and Malott Park neighbourhood
- 55 per cent would visit the park more often should the community garden move forward
- 50 per cent (or 11 community members) plan to participate in the community garden

Proximity and use of Exhibition Park

- 64 per cent of the respondents living in the Courtney, Goines and Malott Park neighbourhood with 27 per cent backing onto the park and 36 per cent living in the neighbourhood.

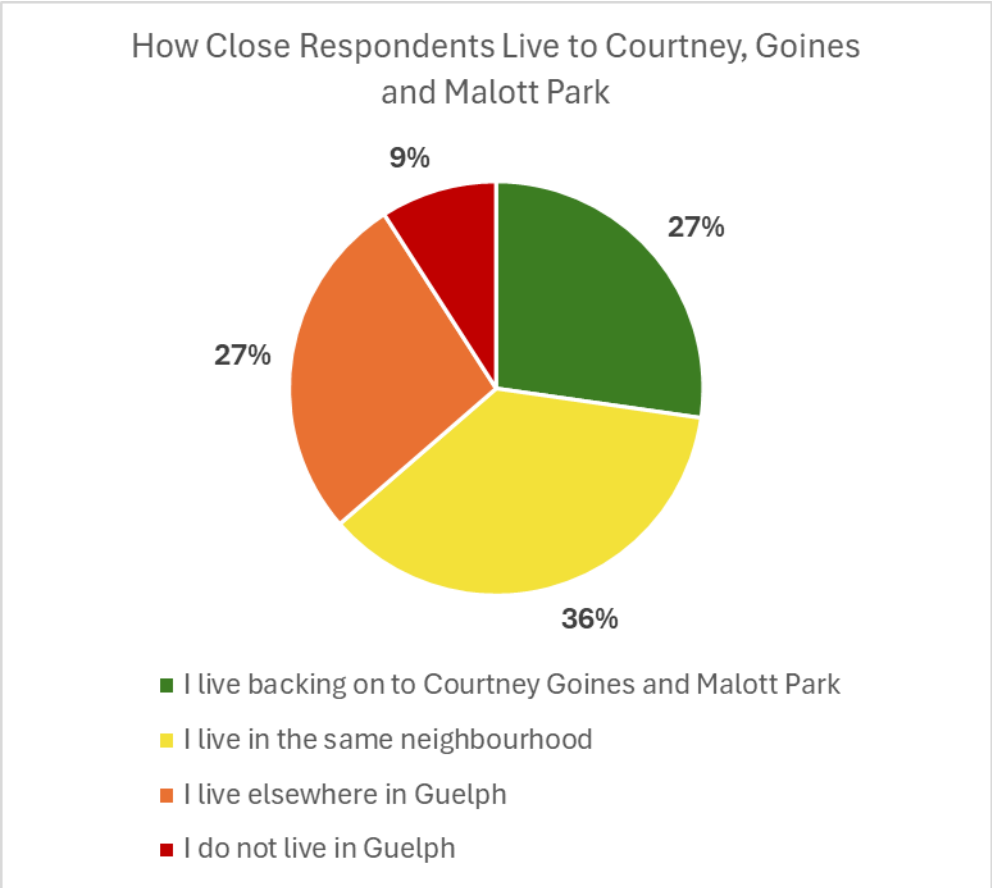


Figure 1: How Close Respondents Live to Courtney, Goines and Malott Park

- The community garden at Courtney, Goines and Malott Park has the potential to increase visitation to the park with 55 per cent of respondents indicating they would visit more often. Overall, a small number of respondents (five per cent) indicated they would visit less often.

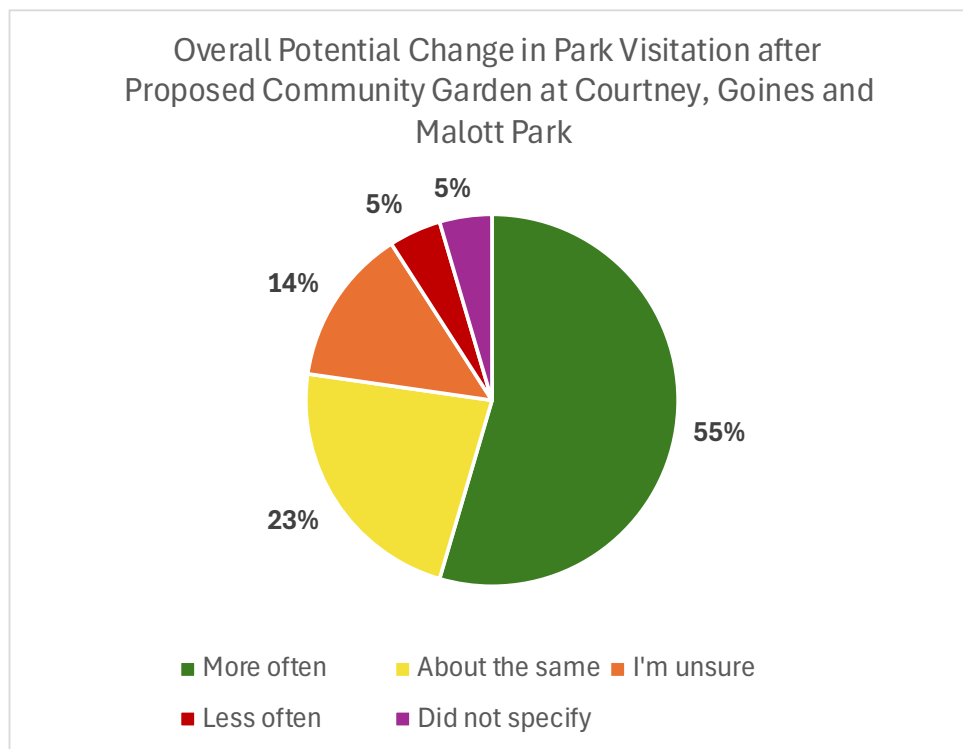


Figure 2: Overall Potential Change in Park Visitation after Proposed Community Garden at Courtney, Goines and Malott Park

- The one respondent that stated they would visit less often, identified that they currently visit the park sometimes. The reason for visiting less often was not provided in their survey responses and the respondent lives elsewhere in Guelph.
- Overall, there is a positive trend among those who identify as rarely or sometimes visiting the park indicating they would likely visit more often if the community garden is approved.

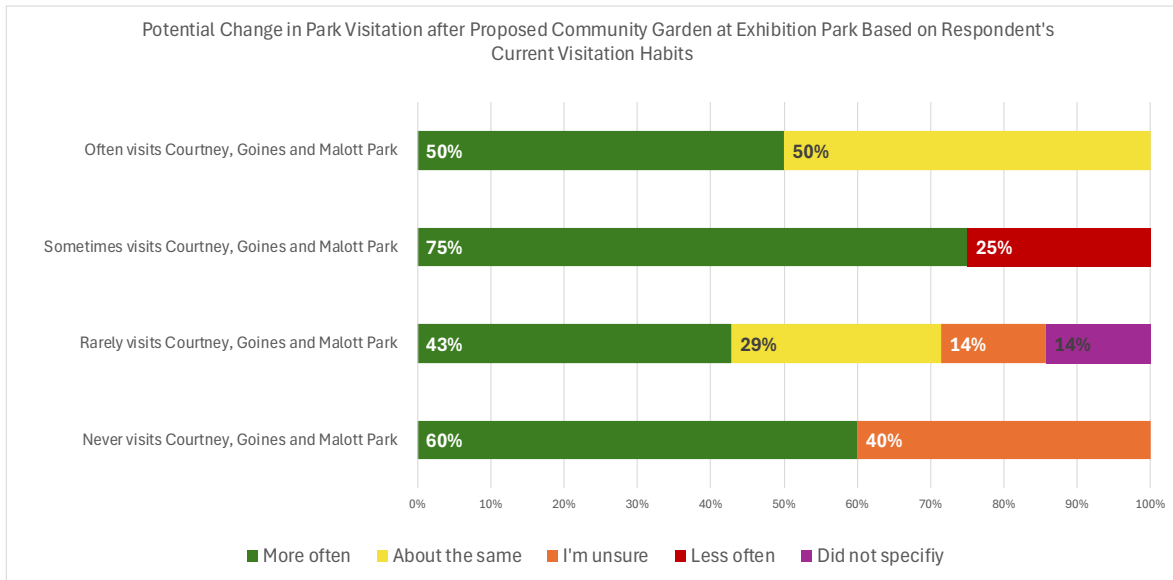


Figure 2: Potential Change in Park Visitation after Proposed Community Garden at Courtney, Goines and Malott Park Based on Respondent's Current Visitation Habits

Interest in participating

- 50 per cent of respondents (or 11 community members) are interested in participating in the garden with an additional 14 per cent (or three community members) answering 'maybe/I don't know' (see Figure 3).
 - Of the 11 respondents that indicated interest in participating, 90 per cent left a comment regarding their participation. Most comments related to growing vegetables, fruits, flowers and pollinator plants. Some comments included volunteering and tending to the garden plots, working together as a community or group, donating produce and helping coordinate the garden.
 - Of those that would not participate or unsure, only one comment was provided which indicated they would come to events, share information about community gardens and connect with the pollinator patch.
 - Some respondents asked for more details on plot size, availability, volunteer expectations and garden rules to decide how and if they would participate.

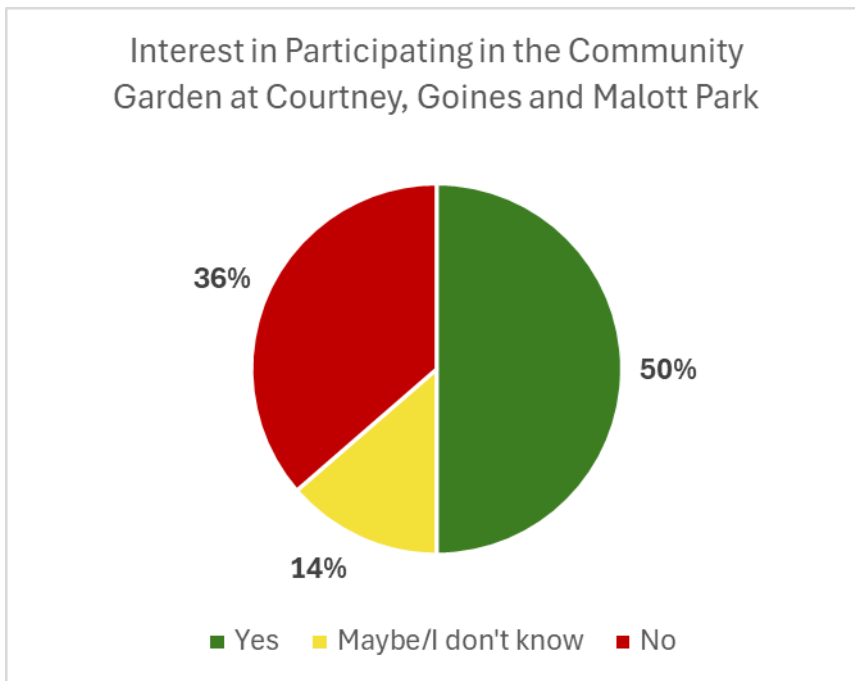


Figure 3: Interest in Participating in the Community Garden at Courtney, Goines and Malott Park

Design enhancements and other comments

- Less than half (36 per cent) provided feedback on the design. Overall, the comments included the following ideas: shared tool shed, communal areas, clearly marked plots, access to water, fencing and garden workshops. Some comments were submitted regarding the wildlife nearby and protecting both the natural habitat and the garden. One comment said that the space should not be used for a community garden.
- Other feedback included allowing for space between the garden and trees to allow for ample sunlight, ensuring pollinator patches help to create corridors for wildlife, and creating adequate protection from the animals in the adjacent wetland. Further support was provided with comments indicating their excitement for a new garden in the South End of Guelph and the desire for more garden spaces. One comment stated that park space is already limited and that community gardens are not welcome in City Parks.

Recommendation and next steps

The new community garden in Courtney, Goines and Malott Park is planned for the spring of 2026.

The City’s Community Stewardship Coordinator will work with the community garden group representatives to review and refine the garden design to ensure it aligns with the vision and addresses some of the concerns raised by community members. Many of these concerns are typical for new community gardens and can be addressed through proper planning and design.

We are formally sharing and announcing the plans through a public notice, information on HaveYourSay.guelph.ca, and an email letter to those interested in learning more. We will also connect with the applicants to setup the volunteer Garden Coordinator position for the garden. This will be followed by the final development stages of the project, including the garden design, soil testing, agreements, and site preparation.