

Edmonton City Centre Airport Lands Public Involvement Project
Understanding the Issues
Stakeholder Interviews & Email Submissions
January 9-19, 2009

Executive Summary of Responses

This Executive Summary of the interviews and email submissions provides a very brief, high level overview of the information provided to us. For a more in depth analysis of the issues, please refer to the report entitled "ECCA Lands Public Involvement Issue Analysis".

Interview Process

In order to develop a comprehensive public involvement plan that will guide community discussion from March to July 2009, we undertook a series of interviews with a broad group of stakeholders. These interviews were conducted so that we could better understand the issues, concerns and perspectives of interested and affected residents, and we wanted to hear from people directly, expressing their own views, in their own words.

We want to thank everyone who took the time to participate in an interview, or who sent an email submission. We are grateful for your thoughts and input, and appreciate how interested people are in this project.

Noted below are the steps we took in the interview process:

- We developed a targeted list of people to interview, based on our own research and review that provided us with a wide cross section of people, organizations and perspectives.
- Invitations to participate in an interview were sent to the people on our list, and the interview questions and information were also posted on the City website to allow anyone who wanted their voice heard on this important issue to provide input
- We asked people to identify others they thought we should speak with, and within time constraints, we contacted some of these additional residents. All of these helpful suggestions will be included in our contact list for the next phase of the project.
- We designed our questions to be intentionally broad and open-ended to draw out multi-faceted answers and experiences, and to allow us to hear and learn about everything impacting this project in an unfiltered way. In addition, as the questions progressed, we were looking for people to offer their own personal experiences and needs, consider the perspectives, experiences and needs of others, and identify and prioritize what is most important to them. We also used the questions to identify potential participants for the Citizen's Advisory Group that will provide input and advice over the course of the public involvement project.
- We heard clearly that many people were interested and wanted a chance to provide their views, so we will continue to receive email submissions until February 27, 2009, and will prepare a supplemental report at that time.

Who We Heard From

Within the timeframe, we scheduled and conducted 53 interviews with a wide variety of stakeholders and received an additional 55 email submissions, for a total of 108 respondents providing input in this report. We should note that not every respondent replied to every question.

What We Heard

We have compiled all the responses (interview notes plus email submissions) into a “What Was Said” report that has been slightly modified to remove any identifiable information about the people who responded so we can protect their privacy. Noted below is a brief, high level summary of what we heard in response to each question. For a more detailed analysis, please refer to the report entitled “ECCA Lands Public Involvement Issue Analysis”.

Question 1 – What is the history of your involvement with the Edmonton City Centre Airport?

Of the responses received, more than half of respondents indicated that they have a long history of involvement with the ECCA – as a user or through employment (past or present) or proximity (past or present). Responses reflected a variety of perspectives both positive and negative on that history of involvement.

With a fairly equal distribution, the remaining respondents can be broken down into three other groupings: those who were aware of the airport and/or indirectly involved with it; those who are directly involved but the length and history of that involvement was not provided; and those who had no previous involvement at all. A very few respondents did not directly answer the question.

Question 2 – What (if any) information or knowledge do you have about the possibilities and challenges of current and future land use on the ECCA land?

Respondents identified that they had a wide variety of information and knowledge about the possibilities and challenges of current and future land use. Available information or knowledge was shared about: noise; safety; development possibilities and/or airport closure; air service issues; costs; environmental impact; health; infrastructure, transportation and LRT issues; access to and from northern communities; business interests; and housing.

Accurate, factual and transparent sources of information were raised as an issue by some, and a few respondents identified an awareness of conflict and distrust about the current and future use of the ECCA lands. Information sources included the media, the City and various community, business and governmental organizations.

Question 3 – Have you been involved with an organization or group related to current and future land use and development of the ECCA lands? If so, to what extent and what has been your role?

Respondents indicated involvement at some point in time with the following organizations:

- Alberta Aviation Museum
- Commuter Air Access Network of Alberta (CAANA)
- Connect2Edmonton
- Edmonton Airport Authority
- Indy Car
- NAIT Student Association
- Kingsway Business Association
- Urban Development Institute
- Economic Development Edmonton
- Another municipality
- Spruce Avenue Community League
- Canadian Association of Retired People
- As an employee of an ECCA tenant
- As a representative of their business

- As a citizen

A little over one quarter of respondents indicated “No”, “None” or “N/A” to this question.

Question 4 – What do you think are the possibilities and/or challenges relating to CURRENT land use and development on the ECCA lands? Which of those are most important to you?

From the perspective of both CURRENT possibilities and/or challenges, depending on their viewpoint, respondents identified the following: costs; access to health and emergency services; heritage and historic value; employment; nature of land use and density; transportation and traffic; development, land value and building height restrictions; educational institutions; link to northern communities; safety; noise; environmental impacts; economic development; political pressure, required decision making and uncertainty; air service and activity; and the Indy.

Not all respondents answered part 2 of this question – *which of those are most important to you?* For those that did answer that question, the following answers were provided: recognizing and respecting the historical significance of the airport (including the importance of the Aviation Museum); ongoing operation of Amiskawciy Academy; resistance to change; NAIT expansion; Safety issues; land use (both clarity and best use); costs and value of the land and existing / future use; impact on other uses in area; improve the airport and increase air service; NAIT avionics training programs; Air Medevac and organ transplant services; coordinated inter-modal transportation network; desirable location for development; need for decision making; environmental impact; link to the north; open space, sports fields and parks; noise and fumes.

Question 5 – What do you think are the possibilities and/or challenges relating to FUTURE land use and the development on the ECCA lands? Which of those are most important to you?

From the perspective of both FUTURE possibilities and/or challenges, depending on their viewpoint, respondents identified the following:
leave the airport as is and/or expand the airport; create a thriving aviation industry in the area; mixed density and affordable housing; arts and cultural development that is supportive of diversity; development and building height restrictions; economic impacts; environmental impacts and cost of cleanup; infrastructure and servicing costs; traffic, LRT and transportation; heritage and historic recognition; health and medevac services; “dream big” development; learn from the experience of other cities.

Not all respondents answered part 2 of this question – *which of those are most important to you?* For those that did answer that question, the following answers were provided:
expand the airport and air service; mixed density and affordable housing; vibrant arts & cultural centre; transportation hub; responsible development that also respects history; political pressure and making tough decisions; development and restrictions on building height; NAIT expansion; properly plan the area; create an up to date and cutting edge development that showcases Edmonton.

Question 6 – What are some of the things you would like to see happen in the consideration of possible development ideas for land use in this area? (CURRENT configuration)

There were many interesting and thoughtful responses to this question, from many perspectives, offering ideas, suggestions and concerns. After reviewing the answers, we think they can be grouped into 3 general themes.

- ***Theme 1 – Keep the airport and make it viable / improve and increase air service.*** This included recognition of the historical value of the airport, link to northern communities, medevac services and economic sustainability.
- ***Theme 2 – Create an Aviation & Business Centre of Excellence with modified airport / no airport and transportation hub.*** This included suggestions about encouraging and promoting aviation industry and sector into this area, possibly reducing the runways and developing a vibrant commercial and business area, and making the area part of a transportation hub, with air, LRT, rail, bus and road.
- ***Theme 3 – Develop a sustainable, smart growth community on the lands.*** This included suggestions of high and mixed density and use, arts & culture, green space, gardens and recreation facilities and areas, a life long learning centre of expertise with programs and institutions for adults and children, health and wellness centers, and comments about market value and adequate planning.

Question 7 – What are some of the things you would like to see happen in the consideration of possible development ideas for land use in this area? (FUTURE configuration)

There were many interesting and thoughtful responses to this question, from many perspectives, offering ideas, suggestions and concerns, and answers were very similar to those offered in Question 6. After reviewing the answers, we think they can again be grouped into 3 general themes.

- ***Theme 1 – Keep the airport and make it viable / improve and increase air service.*** This included recognition of the historical value of the airport, link to northern communities, medevac services and economic sustainability / employment.
- ***Theme 2 – Create an Aviation & Business Centre of Excellence with modified airport / no airport and transportation hub.*** This included suggestions about encouraging and promoting aviation industry and sector into this area, possibly reducing the runways and developing a vibrant commercial and business area, and making the area part of a transportation hub, with air, LRT, rail, bus and road. Also noted was a suggestion to create a high technology business park.
- ***Theme 3 – Develop a sustainable, smart growth community on the lands.*** This included suggestions of high and mixed density and use, arts & culture, green space, gardens and recreation facilities and areas, a life long learning centre of expertise with programs and institutions for adults and children, health and wellness centers, and comments about market value and adequate planning. Also noted was the need for green and environmentally responsible development that is integrated into the surrounding communities, the expansion of the NAIT campus, and a vibrant and healthy community including child care and sports complexes. Also noted were issues related to infrastructure and servicing of the land, and the capacity of the land to add productive value to the Edmonton economy.

In response to this question, there were also a few comments about the need for decisive action, fair and transparent public process and improved information.

Question 8 – What other organizations or individuals do you think might be interested or have a stake in the future land use of Edmonton City Centre Airport lands?

Respondents provided many helpful suggestions of individuals, organizations, sectors, perspectives and stakeholder groups who need to be involved and have a stake in the future land use. Many of these suggestions were already on our contact lists, and all of the new ones have been added for the next phase of the project. We will consider everything that has been provided as we develop the public involvement plan.

Question 9 – What are the interests or concerns of those individuals or organizations, as you see them?

We have identified 12 specific “interests” from the responses provided to this question. They include:

- heritage;
- financial viability / cost;
- employment & livelihood;
- environment;
- tourism;
- noise / safety;
- growth & development;
- healthcare issues;
- accessibility;
- transportation;
- sports, recreation & leisure;
- diversity;

It should be noted that many of these interests were presented from different sides – for example “financial viability” was presented as a concern about the ongoing viability of business interests presently on the ECCA site if the airport were to close, and also about the possible sale and redevelopment of the land as a responsible action on behalf of ratepayers by the City.

As another example, “accessibility” was noted as a concern about access to northern communities through air service and medevac operations at the ECCA, and also as a suggestion to reduce or remove runways to place an LRT line through the site to connect communities and increase accessibility. Other “interests” related more to the public involvement process have been noted below.

Question 10 – Who else do you think the consulting team should be sure to speak with about the ECCA lands?

Similar to Question 8, we asked this question to gather specific information from respondents about other stakeholders, interests and concerns. Many names and ideas were provided, and will be included in the next steps.

Question 11 – We will be creating a Citizen’s Advisory Group to provide input and advice on the public involvement process over the course of the project (January – July 2009). Would you be interested and/or willing to participate in this advisory group? The group will generally meet once per month, and the first meeting will be on February 2nd, 2009.

Prior to asking this question, we developed a Terms of Reference and membership for the Citizen’s Advisory Group. We reviewed responses and issued invitations to participate for the 25 positions on the committee based on those criteria.

14 respondents to this question indicated they would NOT be interested in participating, 6 respondents indicated that time or availability would preclude them for participating, 5 respondents noted that they would be precluded because of their role or employer, but suggested alternate names.

8 respondents responded “Maybe” or “Possibly” or “Unsure”. 43 respondents indicated that they were interested and willing to serve on the Advisory Group, if chosen.

Question 12 – Do you have specific suggestions for the public involvement process on the ECCA lands that will be implemented between March and July 2009?

Respondents had many suggestions for the public involvement process and public involvement plan that is being developed. They included:

- *Accessible, Factual, Unbiased Information, Education and Awareness Raising*
- *Lots of Opportunity* – for discussion, participation and input
- *Let People Identify the Options*
- *Be Inclusive and Do Lots of Outreach* – offer honorariums and support for participation. Provide translation in multiple languages. Contact all stakeholders – business, residents, ethno cultural communities, First Nations, youth & school age children, northern communities, and people from all over the province.
- *Let all Voices Be Heard and Engage in Dialogue* – focus discussions on what is best for the City, not best for each person, encourage dialogue rather than confrontation
- *Be Open, Transparent and Unbiased* – and provide feedback
- *Use multiple techniques* – social media, online consultation, town hall meetings, polling, tours, round table discussions, surveys, voting, focus groups etc.
- *Show leadership* – in developing next steps, and in decision making

Question 13 – Do you have other comments, ideas, suggestions you would like to make?

We offered this question as a final opportunity for respondents to let us know about anything else that had occurred to them, they wanted us to know about, and to be sure we captured all of their ideas, suggestions and concerns. , These additional responses are included in the analysis in the Issues Assessment report.