

# RIVER ACCESS STRATEGY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES SURVEY  
SUMMARY REPORT

AUGUST 2014





# BACKGROUND

*The North Saskatchewan River Valley is one of North America's largest urban parks, and stewardship of this resource is vitally important to Edmonton. Access to the river and its valley is key to fully experiencing Edmonton's quality of life. Within Edmonton's city limits, the banks of the North Saskatchewan River include many parks, natural areas, trails and infrastructure, including boating facilities, launches and docks. In order to enhance the enjoyment of the river by existing and future users, the City is developing a ten-year River Access Strategy. This strategy will balance environmental stewardship with encouraging a broader appreciation for activities on the river. The strategy will define locations, regulations and design guidelines for waterside infrastructure and amenities for use by the public and our partner groups.*

Guiding principles are a set of established criteria that will guide decision-making for the City of Edmonton's River Access Strategy. Five principles were drafted to guide the City's decision-making process for new and refurbished river recreation infrastructure. River recreation includes everything from fishing and dog swimming to boating, which would include boat launches and docks, and related amenities like washrooms or parking for boat trailers or boat storage. The principles were developed in part based on the insight provided by Edmontonians from the River Usage and Attitudes Baseline Online Survey. The project team also considered the results from stakeholder discussions and focus groups with existing users and organizations that assist with river programs, stewardship and water quality evaluation.

These draft principles were tested through this survey and at the same time were tested with external and internal stakeholders.

The River Access Strategy Principles Survey was available online on edmonton.ca from June 13 to July 25, 2014. Paper copies of the survey were also available at the River Day event on June 14, 2014.

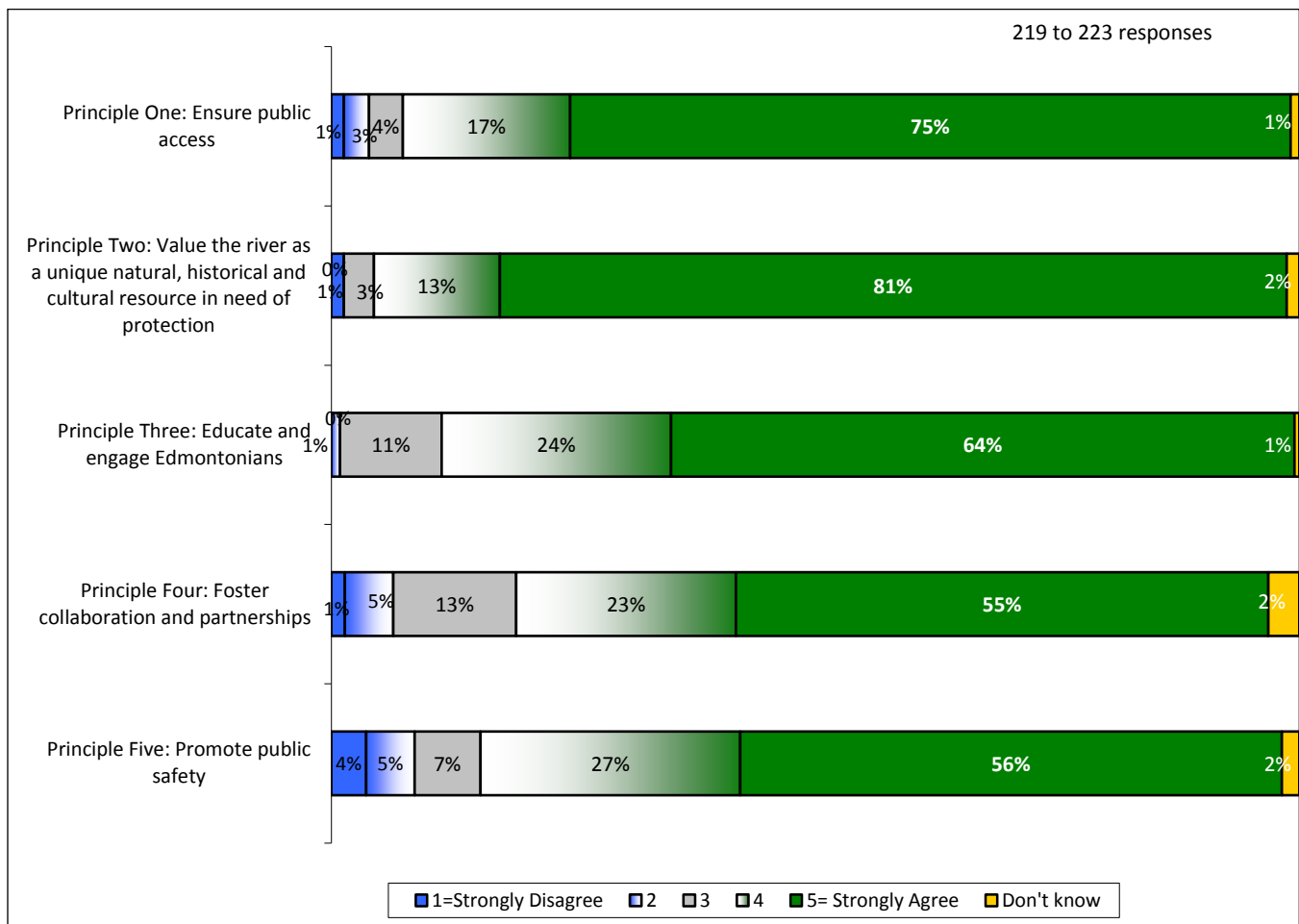
*\*Note: As online surveys are self-select and are not random samples, no margin of error can be reported. In general, you are dealing with a more engaged audience for an online survey.*

# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

There were a total of 231 responses received for the survey.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each of the draft guiding principles. The strongest levels of agreement were shown for the first two guiding principles. The five draft guiding principles were:

- **Value the river as a unique natural, historical and cultural resource in need of protection** (draft guiding principle two): 94% agreed
- **Ensure public access** (draft guiding principle one): 93% agreed
- **Educate and engage Edmontonians** (draft guiding principle three): 88% agreed
- **Promote public safety** (draft guiding principle five): 83% agreed
- **Foster collaboration and partnerships** (draft guiding principle four): 78% agreed



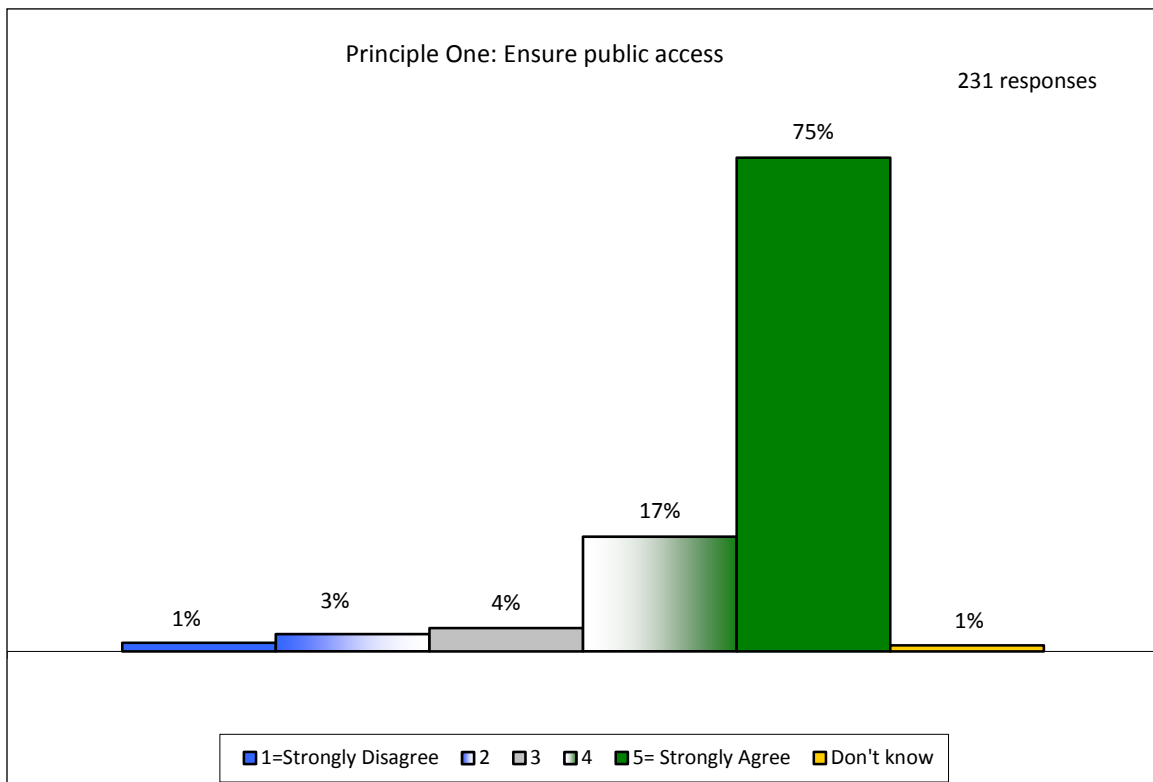
# SURVEY RESULTS

## Draft Guiding Principle One: Ensure public access

*We heard that private access should not be allowed, so this principle would mean no private or exclusive docks or launches, these must be shared or accessible by the public for public use.*

This guiding principle will ensure that any new or refurbished infrastructure development is available for public use.

Over nine in ten respondents (93%) agreed with this principle (75% gave a rating of “5=Strongly Agree” and 17% gave a rating of “4”).

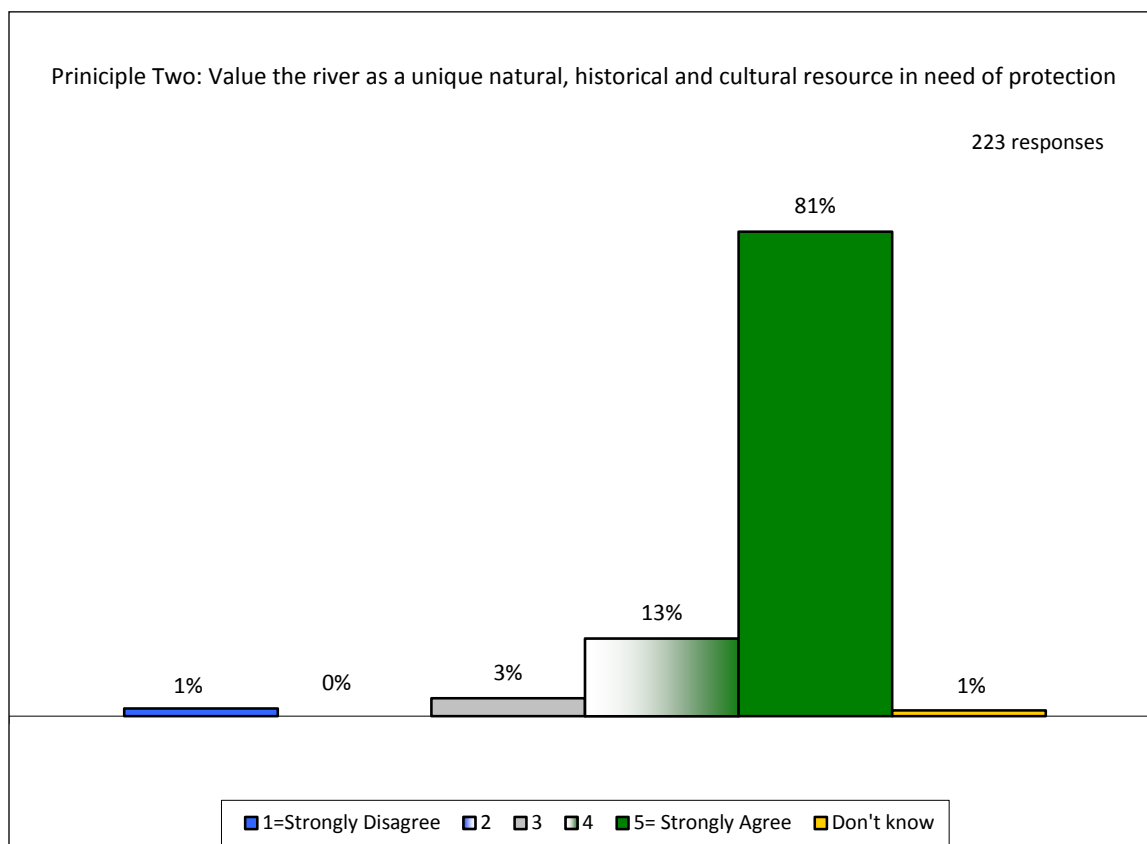


## Draft Guiding Principle Two: Value the river as a unique natural, historical and cultural resource in need of protection

*We heard that the river and its valley must be protected from adverse environmental impacts and continue to be protected as a key to enjoying Edmonton's quality of life.*

This guiding principle would emphasize that the river environment is to be valued and the choices to be made about river infrastructure will proceed with caution and consultation.

The majority of respondents (94%) agreed with this principle (81% gave a rating of "5=Strongly Agree" and 13% gave a rating of "4").

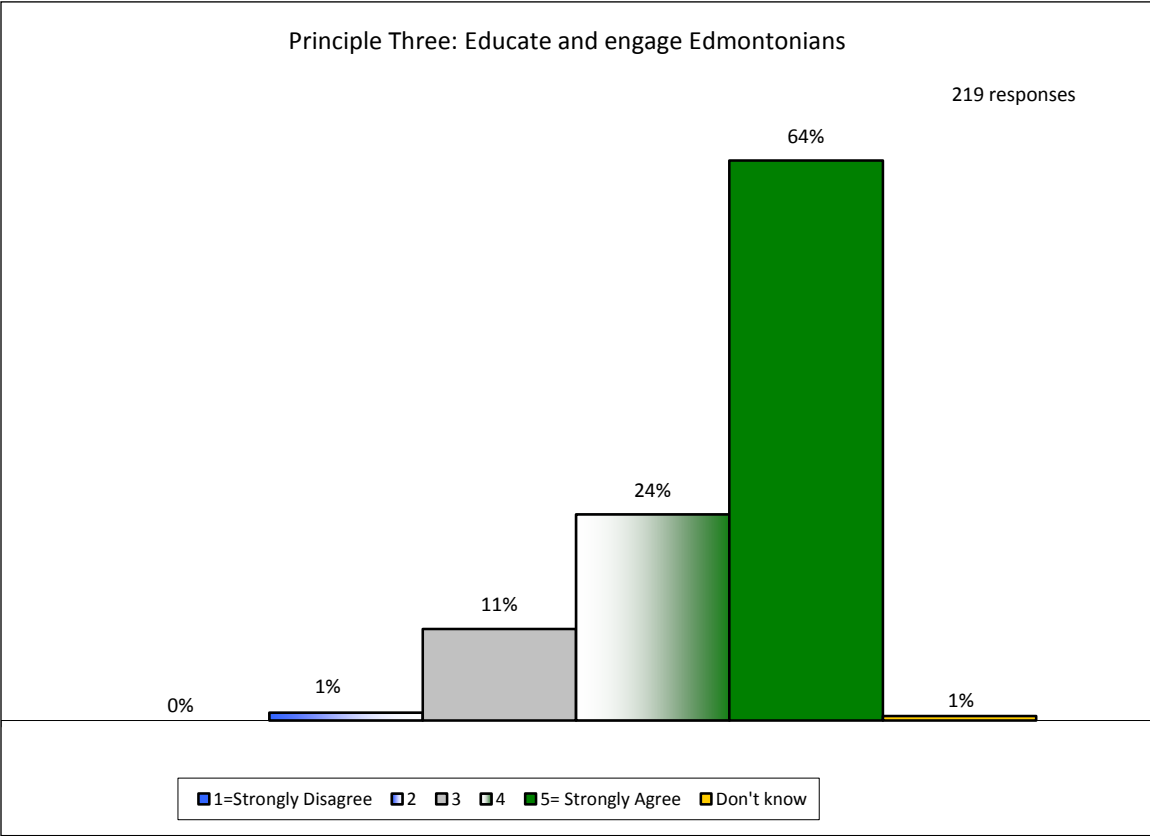


# Draft Guiding Principle Three: Educate and engage Edmontonians

*We heard that Edmontonians are already keen users of the river and the valley, and that opportunities to build awareness, appreciation and nurture stewardship should be enhanced.*

This guiding principle would ensure that the City will support stewardship and educational programs (e.g., learn to canoe) and will undertake focused communications to support awareness and appreciation of the river.

Nearly nine in ten respondents (88%) agreed with this principle (64% gave a rating of "5=Strongly Agree" and 24% gave a rating of "4").

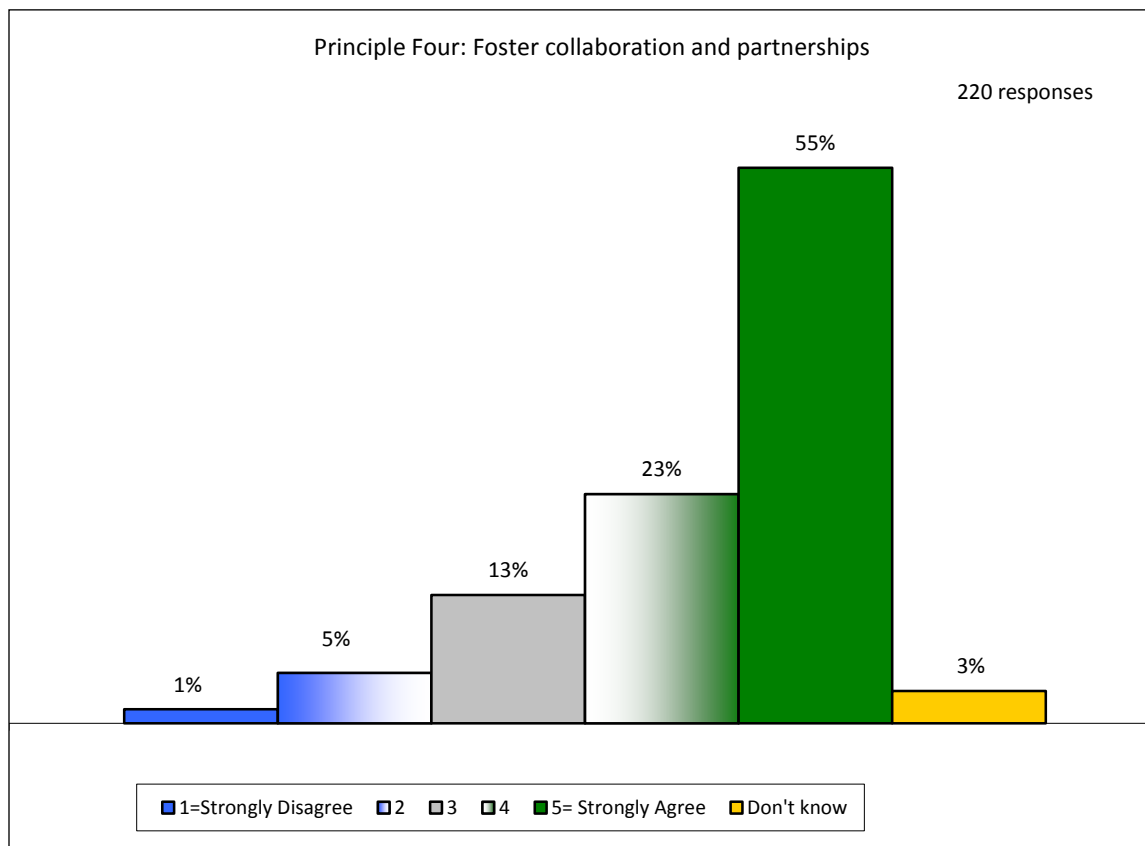


## Draft Guiding Principle Four: Foster collaboration and partnerships

*We heard that Edmontonians may make more use of the river if more opportunities for engagement and access were provided, and that access to river-based activities should be a priority for Edmonton.*

This guiding principle would ensure that the City will work to collaborate with not-for-profit partners, commercial enterprises, and programmers to create more opportunities for Edmontonians to enjoy the river and to develop shared infrastructure.

Almost eight in ten respondents (78%) agreed with this principle (55% gave a rating of "5=Strongly Agree" and 23% gave a rating of "4").

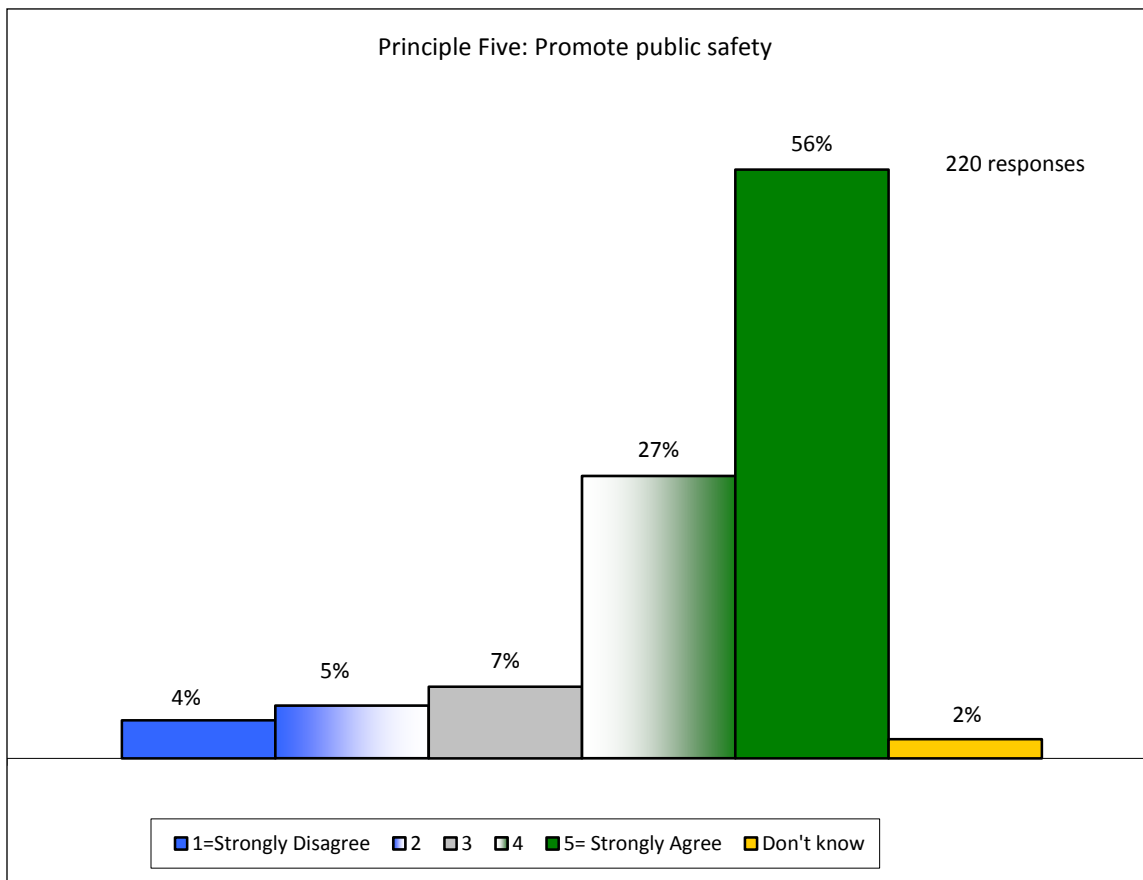


## Draft Guiding Principle Five: Promote public safety

*We heard that users felt that the river is safe to use, but that there should be limits on the types of activities allowed on the river.*

This guiding principle would ensure that measures would be taken to protect water quality and enhance public safety, including promoting safety awareness and expanding bylaw enforcement and the roles of Park Rangers.

Over eight in ten respondents (83%) agreed with this principle (56% gave a rating of "5=Strongly Agree" and 27% gave a rating of "4").





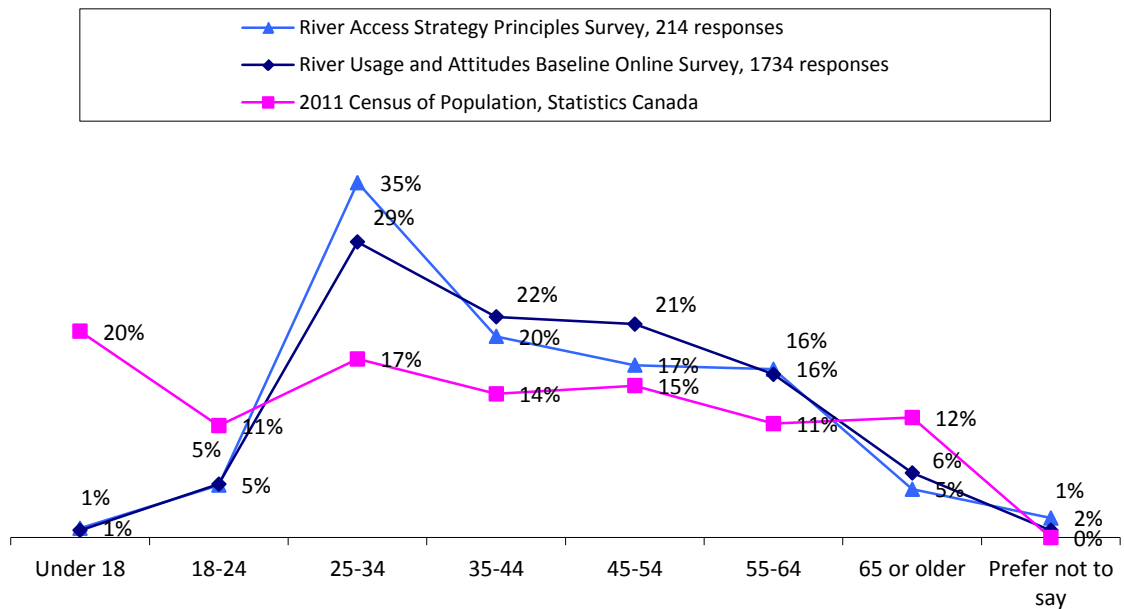
Respondents were asked whether anything is missing from the five guiding principles. Of the 55 responses received for this question, the top mentions were for:

- Accessibility needed for all: all ages, cultures, disabilities, kids, families, diversity, low-income
- Recreational opportunities: increased pedestrian/bike access but without increased roads, parking lots and vehicles; increased river use with goal of "Active for Life"; outdoor gyms for free fitness; principles must consider enjoyment and recreational opportunities
- Creativity in the river valley: opportunities for growth and responsibility; connection/integration with design aesthetics of facilities sympathetic to context and natural features; new ideas/innovation; world-class green pedestrian bridge for a water experience
- Balanced commercial development: businesses, activities (e.g., restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, bike/canoe/kayak/rollerblade rental shops, etc.)
- Keep river valley as natural as possible except for limited development areas
- Clean water: water quality improvements, water quality monitoring, restoration of Mill Creek water

# DEMOGRAPHICS

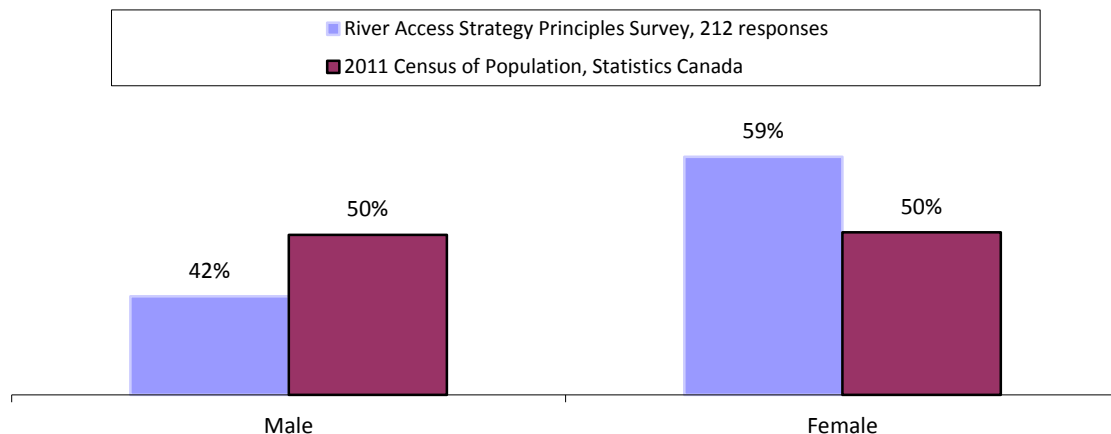
## Age

From the River Access Strategy Principles Survey, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 to 54 years old (35% were 25-34, 20% were 35-44, and 17% were 45-54). This was comparable to the age demographics of the River Access Strategy River Usage and Attitudes Baseline Online Survey.



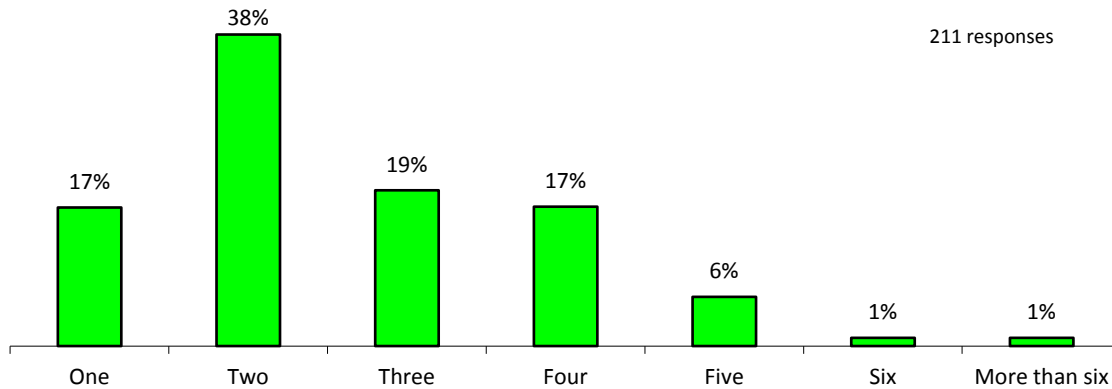
## Gender

There were more females (59%) than males (42%) that responded to the survey.



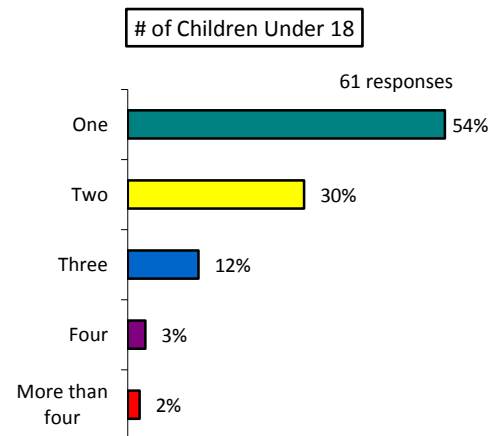
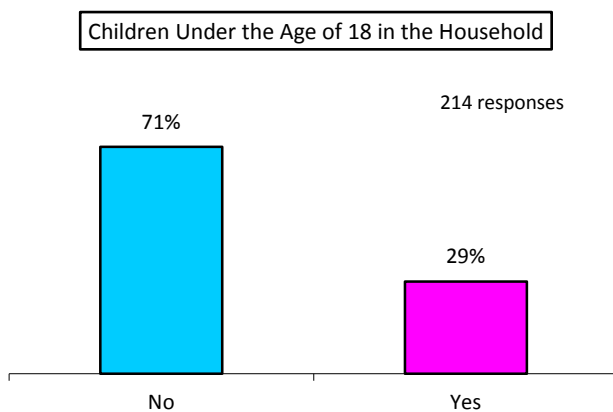
## Number of People in the Household

The most frequently mentioned number of people in the household was two people (38%).



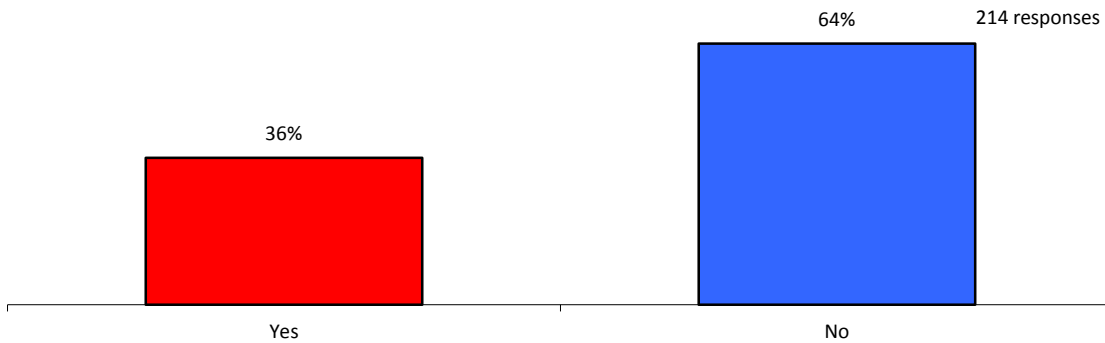
## Children Under the Age of 18 in the Household

The majority (71%) did not have children under the age of 18 in the household. Of those that did, over half (54%) had one child under 18, and an additional 30% had two children under age 18.



## Dog Ownership

The majority of respondents (64%) did not own a dog.



## Residents of Edmonton

The majority of the survey respondents (91%) were residents of Edmonton.



## Proximity to the River Valley

Over three-quarters of the respondents (77%) lived less than 5km away from the river valley (43% lived under 1km away, and 34% lived between 1 and 5km away).

