



NORTHEAST RIVER CROSSING

FUNCTIONAL PLANNING STUDY

WHAT WE HEARD

November 21 and 22, 2017

Stage 2 Public Meetings

Background

Planning is continuing for a potential new river crossing over the North Saskatchewan River, in the northeast part of the Edmonton region. The City of Edmonton, The City of Fort Saskatchewan, Strathcona County, Sturgeon County and Alberta Transportation are partners in this project.

Several feasible options for the location of the potential future river crossing and connecting roads have been developed and were presented to the public for feedback in November 2017.

A final recommended plan will be presented to the public in May/June 2018. It will identify the approximate bridge and road locations, and the right-of-way requirements, so they can be protected until funding is allocated and construction occurs. The study will also identify the need to update land development plans in the study area. Future development in the study area will be influenced by the study recommendations. Construction is not expected for another 25 to 35 years.

Study Stages

Stage 1 (March to July 2017) introduced the project and the study area to stakeholders and the public. Specific alignments were not developed at this time. The objective of Stage 1 was to receive feedback to improve the project teams understanding of the study area, and to identify concerns and opportunities in advance of developing potential alignments. The study team used public input, along with other criteria such as technical requirements, the environment, and safety, to develop feasible alignments in Stage 2.

Stage 2 (July to November 2017), for which this What We Heard Report is written, focused on developing feasible alignment options. The options were presented for public discussion and comment on November 21 and 22, 2017.

Stage 3 (December 2017 to spring 2018) will involve further defining the feasible alignments to decide on a final, recommended alignment. This will be presented to the public for feedback in May/June 2018.

Study Completion (December 2018) with recommended alignment approval by the five project partners.

Public Engagement Activities - Stage 2

In Stage 2 of the public engagement process, stakeholders and the public provided their input and feedback on each feasible alignment. This feedback was provided through a group stakeholder meeting on November 20, 2017, two public meetings (November 21 and 22, 2017) and a survey available at the public meetings and on the project web page for two weeks following the public meetings.

Public and Stakeholder Communications

| Date | Communication |
|--|---|
| Promotion of Public Meetings November 2017 | Promotion of the Public Meetings through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder and landowner letters • Emails to project contact list • Project postcard (unaddressed mail) to approximately 3500 residences in and near the study area • Newspaper advertisements • Social media • Public service announcements. |
| Identified stakeholder group meeting November 20, 2017 | Horse Hill School - to present the feasible alignment options to all stakeholders at the same time. Group format allowed all participants to hear the same information, at the same time, and to hear each other's input, discussion and questions. These identified stakeholders met with the project team individually in Stage 1. |
| Public Meetings November 21 and 22, 2017 | November 21 - Bethel Lutheran Church, Sherwood Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance 65 people November 22 - Horse Hill School, rural City of Edmonton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance 83 people Feedback was received through discussions, surveys, and at map tables where feedback/input was given for specific alignments. |
| Online Survey November 21 to December 8, 2017 | Comment Form/Online Survey available at public meetings and on project web page. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 78 surveys were received |

SURVEY SUMMARY - What We Heard

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria Background:

Five criteria have been developed to evaluate the alignment options shown at the public meetings. These preliminary criteria are a result of your comments/concerns from Phase 1 and also include technical criteria that are crucial to identifying the preferred option.

Community - considers the impacts on future agricultural lands as determined in land use plans, the potential development of remnant parcels, and future connections to land uses as designated by the land use plans.

Driver Experience - considers how easy it is for a driver to find their way along road, intersections and bridge.

Economic - considers how the options will improve connections to the region and link employment areas with residential areas.

Environment - considers the impacts to environmentally sensitive areas including wildlife habitat, river system, natural areas and historic resources, and whether these impacts can be mitigated to meet the requirements of regulatory agencies.

Financial - considers the costs to construct the project.

The evaluation criteria have been listed in alphabetical order below. Please rank these (1 to 5) in order of importance to you. 1 is most important to you and 5 is least important.

| Criteria | 1 - Most important | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 - Least important |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|
| Community | 41% | 35% | 8% | 6% | 11% |
| Driver experience | 6% | 6% | 20% | 21% | 47% |
| Economic | 8% | 18% | 29% | 29% | 17% |
| Environmental | 36% | 26% | 18% | 12% | 8% |
| Financial | 9% | 15% | 26% | 32% | 18% |

Comments on the Evaluation Criteria

(Verbatim comments from surveys and from roll maps)

- These criteria are not independent of one another and it is impossible to try to rank them from most to least. The process and outcome should satisfy all important criteria.
- In terms of community, the affect on agricultural lands and agricultural practice is of greatest importance
- Definition of "community" doesn't consider the non-agricultural members of the community - we should all be considered and protected equally
- Environmental - ensuring that future development protects the eco-systems along the river is the most important.

Feasible Alignments

Feasible Alignment Options Background:

There are 3 options on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River that are named N1 through N3. There are 2 options on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River that are named S1 and S2. Maps that were provided showed how a south option could connect with a north option. The south option is indicated first, followed by the north option, e.g. S1/N1. *(See alignment option maps at end of this section for reference)*

Comments on individual feasible alignment options

(Verbatim comments from surveys and from roll maps)

S1 specific comments (with no reference to an alignment north of the North Saskatchewan River):

- S1 is the most direct connection
- Township Road 542 makes more sense as a connector than Township Road 540
- Works as a bypass for Fort Saskatchewan and provides an expansion limit
- Less disruption of the community
- Cuts through farm land
- Too close to Fort Saskatchewan may impede their growth

S2 specific comments (with no reference to an alignment north of the North Saskatchewan River):

- S2 is preferred since it is further away from houses in Pointe Aux Pins Estates
- Better river crossing over industrial site
- Avoids Fort Saskatchewan
- Too intrusive
- Requires the Area Structure Plan to be redone
- Most impact to river valley
- Fragments Strathcona land owners

N1 specific comments (with no reference to an alignment south of the North Saskatchewan River):

- Would wipe out many homes/landowners/Horse Hill community

N2 specific comments (with no reference to an alignment south of the North Saskatchewan River):

- Direct, least obtrusive to impacting acreages
- Impacts the tree nursery

N3 specific comments (with no reference to an alignment south of the North Saskatchewan River):

- Further away from the river valley than N2
- Too far south
- Impacts too many residents/homeowners

Comments on specific feasible alignment options

(Verbatim comments from surveys and from roll maps)

Option S1/N1 comments:

- S1 allows for connection to 542 to the east
- Close to Fort Saskatchewan and would be a good link to the east industrial area
- Affects too many land owners (estimate more than 19 homes on old Fort Road)
- River crossing is too far north
- May impede future growth plans of Fort Saskatchewan
- Goes through valuable natural space and farms
- This option fragments a lot of agricultural land

Option S1/N2 comments:

- Impacts the least land east of the proposed highway
- Best option with the least number of homes destroyed
- Least fragmentation of land since it runs along existing roads
- Best connection to Fort Saskatchewan
- Least disruption to current development plan for Strathcona County
- Runs too close to existing farms
- River crossing too far north
- Does not align well with 28A
- Too much impact on the south side to existing and future communities

Option S1/N3 comments:

- Appears to have smoothest transition of north section to south section
- Most closely aligned with Highway 28A
- Affects the least amount of farmland
- Takes out a whole acreage subdivision
- Too close to farms
- Fragments farms
- Too close to Horse Hill homes and school

Option S2/N1 comments:

- Less impact on number of farms
- Fewer environmental impacts
- Fairly direct
- Cuts directly through farms and greenhouse
- Aligns with Township Road 540 not 542
- Too many people/homes affected - estimate that it would destroy at least 16 homes
- Not a direct route at all
- Cuts through potential future Ribbon of Green park
- Highly impacts environmental sites on the South side of the river.
- Too far away from Fort Saskatchewan and the industrial area corridor
- Splits Horse Hill community in half

Option S2/N2 comments:

Protects some of the agricultural land

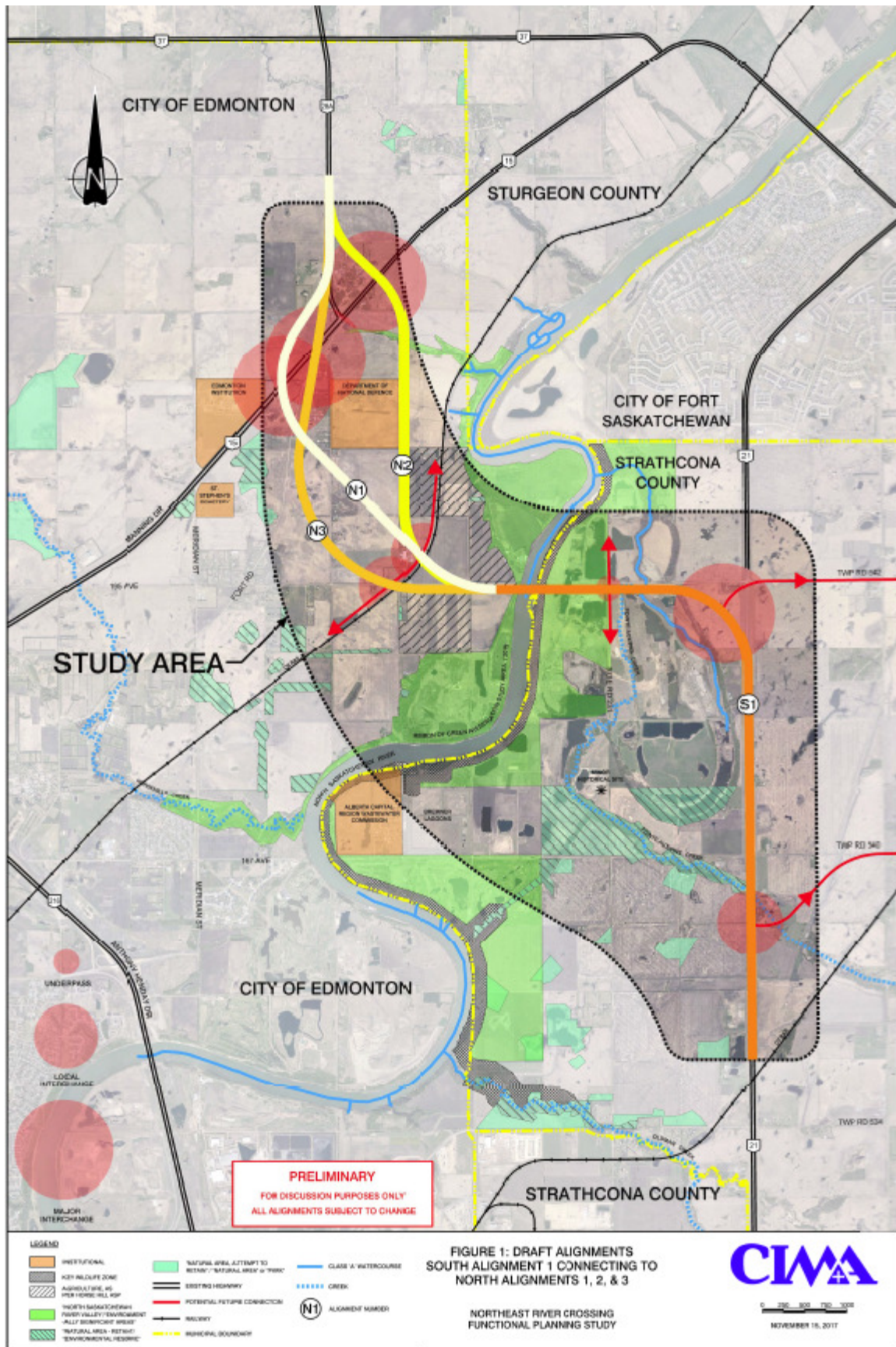
- Cuts through potential future Ribbon of Green park
- Affects too many people/homes - estimate it would destroy at least 8 homes
- Angular crossing over railroad tracks
- Too far from Fort Saskatchewan
- Cuts through farm land and green house

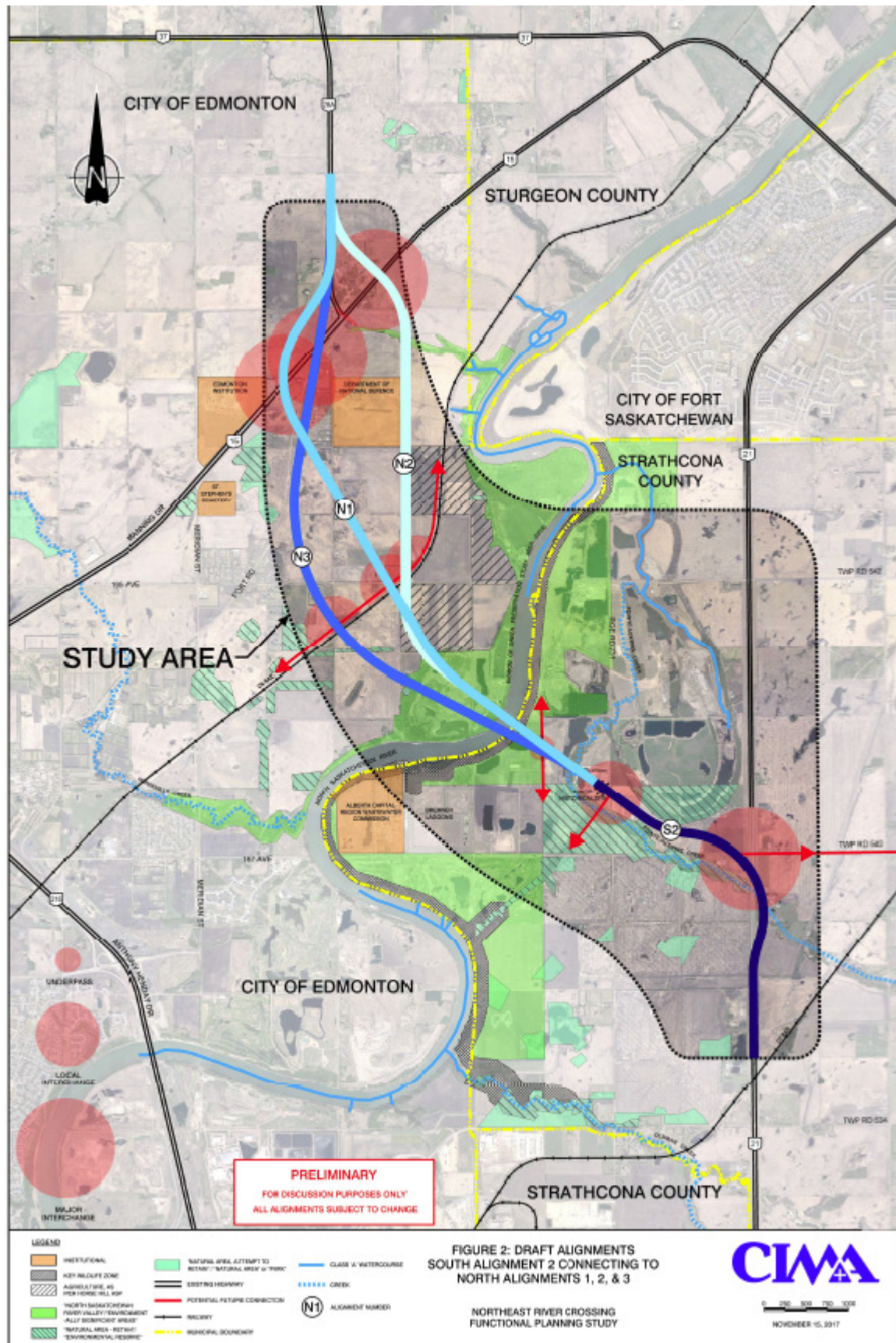
Option S2/N3 comments:

- Avoids the most farm land and natural areas
- In my opinion, this is the winner - saves farmland and forest in this unique area.
- In my opinion, this is the best option from an environmental, agricultural, and community standpoint
- Wipes out an entire acreage subdivision by Highway 15
- Too many people/homes impacted - estimate it would destroy at least 27 homes
- Cuts community in half
- Cuts through potential future Ribbon of Green park
- Too close to Horse Hill homes and school
- Runs through environmentally sensitive areas on both sides of the river

Comments not specific to a particular alignment:

- Wildlife corridors need to be maintained or improved in all impacted areas
- Question the need for the Northeast River Crossing





About the Survey Respondents

Municipality respondents live in

- City of Edmonton - 53%
- City of Fort Saskatchewan - 1%
- Strathcona County - 44 %
- Sturgeon County - 1%
- Other - 1% (Sherwood Park)

Where respondents live

- A farm - 14%
- An acreage in a rural subdivision - 10%
- An acreage not in a rural subdivision - 9%
- An urban area - 59%
- Other - 8% (a hamlet, river valley area, trailer park, acreage zoned as agricultural)

Respondents who live and/or work in the NERC Study area

- Yes - 44%
- No - 55%
- Don't know - 1%

Responses about the Public Meetings

What did you like the most about this public engagement event?

- Lots of good information provided
- Opportunity to look at and discuss potential options and voice our concerns and give feedback
- Opportunity to ask questions
- Good people at each of the "option" tables for explanations
- Well organized and transparent
- Large display boards and project area maps for comments that all can see and discuss

Was the time/location/date of this public engagement event convenient and accessible for you?

- Yes - 95%
- No - 5%

Comments: Easy to find, evenings are good, location was central and convenient

How did you find out about this public engagement event?

(More than one source may have been indicated)

- Addressed letter to landowners in the mail - 33%
- Email notification - 43%
- Newspaper advertisement - 14%
- Road signs - 29%
- Social media (Facebook, etc.) - 0%

- Unaddressed postcard in the mail - 19%
- Website of a project partner - 5%
- Word of mouth (friend, colleague, etc.) - 24%
- Other - 10% (radio, email)

How would you prefer to hear about future public engagement events?

(In order of preference - more than one method may have been indicated)

- Email notification
- Addressed letter to landowners in the mail
- Roadside signs
- Same as before - *included roadside signs, newspaper ads, social media, emails, postcards, and letters*
- Unaddressed postcard in the mail
- Email to community league
- Newspaper advertisement
- Social media
- Word of mouth

Have you participated in previous engagement activities for this project?

(More than one activity may have been indicated)

- Previous stakeholder meeting - 48%
- Previous public meeting April 19, 2017 - 43%
- Previous public meeting April 20, 2017 - 33%
- Have not previously participated - 29%

Please share your thoughts on the following:

(Responses are from the 27% of respondents who attended one of the November 2017 public meetings. 73% of respondents did not attend one of the November public meetings, so did not respond to this question.)

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Applicable |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| The purpose of this meeting was clearly explained | 52% | 33% | 5% | 5% | 0% | 5% |
| I understand how the input from this meeting will be used | 33% | 57% | 0% | 0% | 5% | 5% |
| I had enough information to contribute to the topic being discussed | 57% | 24% | 10% | 5% | 0% | 5% |
| I felt respected during the meeting | 62% | 14% | 10% | 10% | 0% | 5% |
| I felt safe during the meeting | 71% | 19% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 10% |

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Applicable |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| I feel my views were heard during the meeting | 43% | 24% | 14% | 5% | 10% | 5% |
| I feel my input was adequately captured and recorded during the meeting | 38% | 24% | 10% | 19% | 5% | 5% |
| I feel that the input provided through this meeting will be considered by the Project Partners. | 29% | 19% | 38% | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| This meeting was a good use of my time | 43% | 29% | 14% | 0% | 10% | 5% |
| This activity was well organized | 52% | 38% | 0% | 0% | 5% | 5% |
| The displays were easy to understand and informative. | 52% | 29% | 10% | 5% | 0% | 5% |
| The event set-up was appropriate | 48% | 38% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 10% |

Do you have any additional suggestions on how the Project Partners could improve future events?

Summary of comments related to question:

- This setup worked well for me
- Would have liked to have the stakeholders facilitated meeting a week ahead of the public engagement
- Provide wifi and tablets on site in order to complete the survey at the open house

Summary of other comments:

- NERC should be built sooner than 25 to 35 years
- The number of people affected should be top priority when choosing the alignment
- This has already been looked at in the past

How Your Feedback Will Be Considered

Feedback received during Stage 2 (July to November 2017) will be reviewed, along with other factors that the project team must consider, in further refining the feasible options.

Next Steps

Stage 3 (December 2017 to spring 2018)

- The NERC project team will further define the feasible alignment options, considering public input received in Stage 2. One alignment will be put forward as the recommended alignment.
- Spring 2018 - Presentation of the recommended NERC alignment for public discussion and comment

Study completion (December 2018) - Recommended alignment approval by the five project partners