

QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK MASTER PLAN



Approved by City Council on August 28, 2013
This plan is available online at www.edmonton.ca

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Queen Elizabeth Park has been a well-loved destination and gathering place for over a century. Over the years, however, the park's functionality has declined. With the removal of the old Queen Elizabeth Pool, and with a number of planned changes in the area (new Walterdale Bridge, developments in Rosssdale), it is timely to evaluate what this park means to Edmontonians, and to explore options for the park's future.

The vision statement that emerged through the public consultation process is that **Queen Elizabeth Park is a well-loved gathering place in the heart of Edmonton where people come to be active, connect with nature, and discover the rich cultural heritage of the river valley.**

The Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan builds on existing City plans, policies and initiatives; identifies public needs and priorities for the park; provides direction for environmental protection; and accommodates an engaging mix of civic, cultural and recreational uses appropriate to the area. Through the design process, the following ideas emerged as priorities for the development of Queen Elizabeth Park:

- **Improve access into and circulation within the park.** Currently, there are no accessible routes into the park from the south, and the park is divided by an arterial road that is difficult to cross. The master plan design provides an accessible trail from Saskatchewan Drive and a well-connected pedestrian and cyclist network throughout the park. This includes an improved at-grade street crossing and a pedestrian overpass to strengthen the connection between the two halves of the park.
- **Provide more opportunities for year-round activities.** Several previously-disturbed areas within the park are under-utilized and lack functionality. The master plan proposes to repurpose the old wastewater treatment plant into a unique bike skills park, transform Dantzer's Hill into a toboggan hill and flexible open space, and create a contemplative space at the site of the old Queen Elizabeth pool.
- **Identify important places for site stories and viewpoints.** The park currently has few opportunities to enjoy the views and learn about the site's rich cultural history. The master plan includes upgraded and new lookouts, interpretive elements to reveal the site's stories, and several public art areas that showcase the work of Aboriginal and other local artists.
- **Celebrate, protect and enhance the ecology of the park.** Large areas of the park are steep, forested slopes that are highly valued, but also somewhat degraded. The master plan strives to protect existing forest areas and habitat connectivity, focuses new development in previously-disturbed areas, minimizes clearing, and rehabilitates degraded natural areas. A sensitively designed single track trail network seeks to minimize the expansion of ad hoc forest trail development.
- **Provide opportunities to experience the river's edge.** Despite its adjacency to the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River, the opportunities to experience the river's edge are limited. The master plan incorporates a stepped pathway down to the river's edge, improved walking trails near the riverbank, and includes two new lookouts along the bank within existing clearings.

This master plan document is intended to provide the framework to guide development and management of the park over the next ten years, in order to help achieve the stated park vision in a way that integrates human and environmental objectives. Through ongoing discussions between the City and its citizens in the coming years, it is hoped that this plan will help Queen Elizabeth Park continue to be a well-loved gathering place in the heart of Edmonton for generations to come.

01 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

PROJECT GOALS

Queen Elizabeth Park has been enjoyed by Edmontonians for over a century. Recently the park has been identified for renewal. The City is undertaking a public consultation and design process to develop plans that will **enhance Queen Elizabeth Park's role as a city-wide destination park.**

The location, scale and diversity of Queen Elizabeth Park, and the increasingly significant role that this central area will have as various projects in the immediate vicinity move forward, provides **an exciting opportunity to demonstrate innovation and excellence in park planning.**



FIGURE 1.1: VIEW INTO THE PARK FROM THE ENTRY AT 105 STREET

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The **objectives of the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan**, as laid out in the Request for Proposals issued in October 2011, are to:

- 1) Create a **place-specific, memorable park** that capitalizes on the site's prominent location at the south entrance to the City's core and that reflects the unique location and diversity of the area.
- 2) **Link the historic Strathcona neighbourhood with the river valley visually and functionally** through provision of safe, aesthetic and user-friendly trails.
- 3) Capitalize on **view opportunities** of Edmonton's skyline and river valley from Saskatchewan Drive and through the provision of viewpoints within the park.
- 4) Accommodate and appropriately locate a vibrant mix of activities that draws people in **all seasons and of all ages, interests and mobility.**
- 5) Integrate best practices in order to **balance conservation, preservation and recreation.**
- 6) Build on synergies with the active components included in and surrounding the Kinsmen Sports Centre by accommodating an innovative **variety of active uses** within the park.
- 7) Ensure integration and linear trail alignment with the **River Valley Park Trail System.**
- 8) Convey to visitors the **unique natural and human history** of the area through provision of interpretive signage.
- 9) Develop a park that is an integral component of the **river-centric node** being developed around the Walterdale Bridge.

The master plan for Queen Elizabeth Park will guide development and management of the park over the next ten years. This study will include the development of an Implementation Plan that will explore options and ultimately identify a strategy for phased development of the park.

1.2 STUDY PROCESS

The project is structured around three main phases: **DISCOVER**, **DEVELOP** and **DELIVER**.

The **DISCOVER** phase includes connecting with people and collecting their stories, ideas, and concerns for the project. This phase also includes a thorough review and summary of the existing reports and data the City has acquired and commissioned. Research, observation and analysis provide a solid orientation to the Queen Elizabeth Park site and community as a starting point for the design process.

During the **DEVELOP** phase, the concrete information collected is used to initiate the process of sense-making by building frameworks, identifying opportunities and seeking connections and potential solutions. Complemented with input from public engagement, this approach enables the establishment of a clear definition of the problem, identification of the needs of the community and appropriate strategies for park development that support the City's goals and objectives.

Final consensus and approval of the master plan is achieved during the develop stage through final engagement of the public, City staff and City Council.

During the **DELIVER** phase, solutions are realized through further development of the design. This phase focuses on developing preliminary design and an environmental review report that is suitable for obtaining environmental approvals, and which allows the project to move toward detailed design and implementation.

The design process moves from a collection of concrete and factual information to abstract design explorations, and then back to concrete solutions that are built from a strong foundation of community values and input.

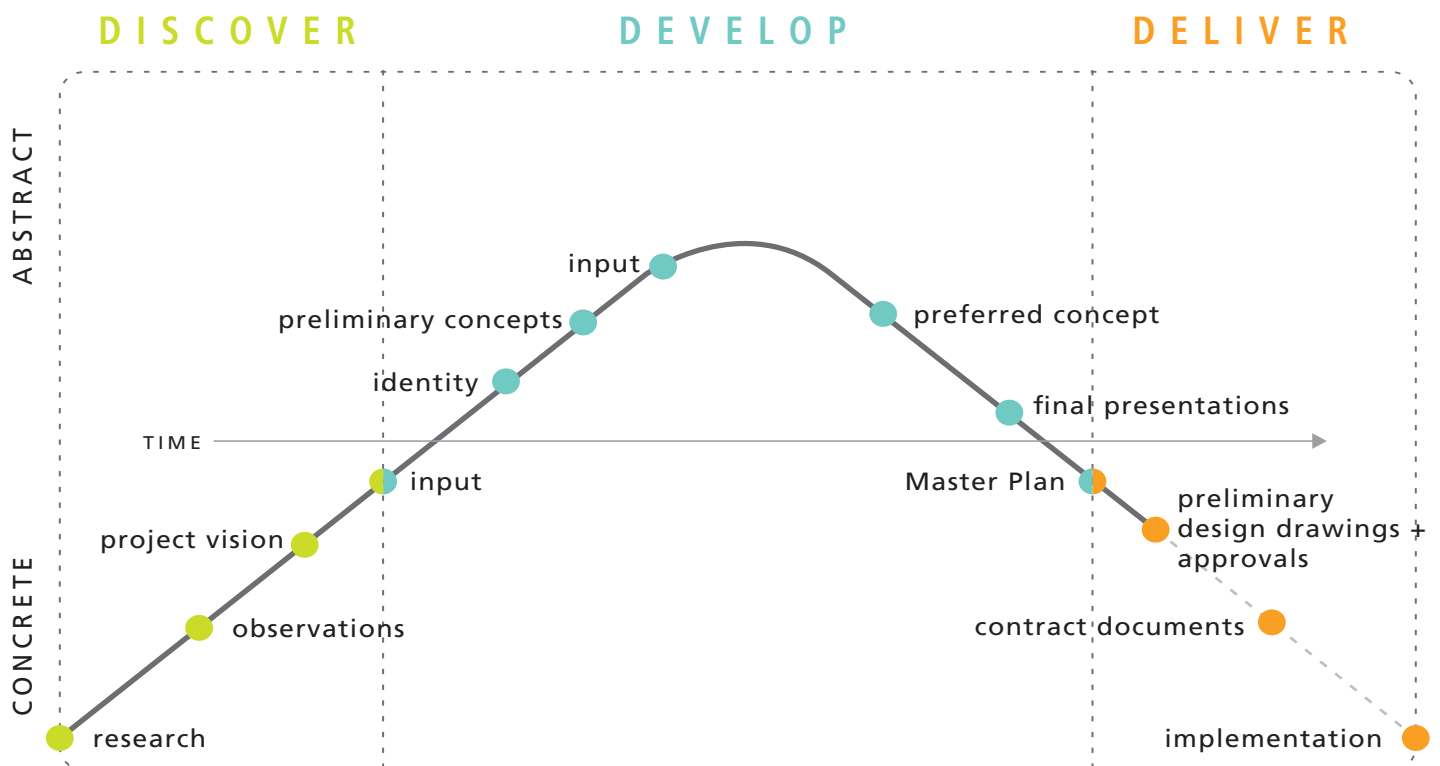


FIGURE 1.2: DESIGN PROCESS FOR THE QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK MASTER PLAN

1.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

As a key component of developing the master plan, the City is gathering input from key stakeholders, user groups and the general public using a public involvement process that is consistent with the City's Corporate Involving Edmonton Framework. (Refer to Appendix A1 for the Public Involvement Plan Summary Report.)

The City is committed to:

- Engaging key stakeholders (i.e. users across the City, park leaseholders, businesses, local communities and organizations, the general public) in a transparent public consultation process to obtain input as plans are developed.
- Providing a variety of opportunities for key stakeholders and the general public to participate in defining the vision for the Park and to provide input into planning.
- Communicating with the public during the public consultation process.

Public involvement for this process will include consultation and information sharing:

CONSULTATION

There will be opportunities for the public to be involved at a consultation level relative to:

- Helping to define the vision for the park
- Providing input regarding current and desired uses of the park
- Identifying priorities and criteria that are used to evaluate concept designs for the park
- Evaluating and providing input on draft concepts to help identify a preferred approach
- Providing input on the details of the draft master plan

INFORMATION SHARING

Information will be shared through a variety of means throughout the park planning process regarding:

- Project purpose and background
- Opportunities for involvement and project timeline
- Draft concepts, preferred concept, final master plan and 10-year phasing strategy

The following is a brief overview of the key tools being used to involve the public:

PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS

A series of three public events are planned to take place throughout the design process, including:

- Public Workshop 1 - Idea Gathering
- Public Workshop 2 - Concept Evaluation
- Public Open House - Master Plan Review

Each event builds on the information obtained in the previous session. Given the historical and cultural significance of the area, the consultation process will also include meetings with the Aboriginal community. The first round of public consultation is documented in Chapter 3, Public Consultation Series 1: Idea Gathering.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The online engagement strategy is intended to greatly enhance the effectiveness of public involvement, expanding the reach of the process to a larger community than traditional methods alone. Online engagement is fully integrated with the public events and provides more opportunities for people to participate.

The project website is the primary hub for project information online and includes project information, project updates, online surveys (to complement the public events), notifications of events and illustrations of design concepts.

EXTERNAL TIE-INS

The following external tie-ins, coordinated with the project website and public consultation events, are used to reach out to and inform the community throughout the process:

- Newspaper advertising
- Project posters
- City of Edmonton website, Facebook, Twitter
- Transforming Edmonton blog
- Signs in the park
- Distribution of information and updates to community groups and other stakeholders

02 SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

2.1 HISTORY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

EARLY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARK AREA

Prior to European settlement, the area in the vicinity of the park was extensively used by First Nations such as the Cree and Blackfoot. These groups camped and traded in the area with other First Nations and eventually with Fort Edmonton.

In the late 1800s there was substantial residential, commercial, and industrial development in the areas surrounding the present-day park. Two coal mines (I.X.L. mine and North Star Coal Mine) were dug into the river bank in the eastern area of the park, adjacent to the settlement of Lavigne (present-day Skunk Hollow).

The settlement of Walterdale was a centre of activity, with homes, a church (which later became a school), Pollards' brickyard, the Strathcona Tannery, the South Edmonton Brewing Company and the Brown Grocery Store. Residences were located in the area of present-day Queen Elizabeth Park.

The terminus of the Calgary - Edmonton railway was completed in 1891 near the intersection of Queen Elizabeth Park Road and Saskatchewan Drive. With the establishment of the railway network, the role of the North Saskatchewan River for transportation was much reduced.

Old Fort Road was the first route from Strathcona down into the Walterdale area. A different alignment of present-day Queen Elizabeth Park Road was built in 1893, and it has been re-routed twice since then.

Around 1912-1913 the High Level and Walterdale Bridges were both completed, replacing ferries that were previously used to transport people and goods between the north and south sides of the river.

In 1915 a severe flood occurred in Walterdale. In part due to the flood risk, the Province of Alberta established a policy to protect the river valley and ravines for recreational purposes.

EARLY QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

In 1907 Strathcona City Council paid \$13,500 to the C&E Railway's Edmonton townsite company for 11 hectares (27 acres) of land to form a riverside park. Queen Elizabeth Park (known variously through its history as the South Side Park, Strathcona Park, Tipton Park, and Riverside Park) was officially opened on October 1, 1909. Additional land acquisitions expanded the park area to 30 hectares (74 acres) by 1938.

The first park plan was designed by landscape architect T.B.

Morrow. Early park features included boardwalks, picnic areas, a bandstand, a pavilion, a giant checkers board, and a temporary pen for moose and deer.

In the early 1900s a brewery was built on the south side of Queen Elizabeth Park, fronting Saskatchewan Drive. It operated there until the early 1980s.

Riverside Pool (also called South Side Pool, City Bathing Pool, Queen Elizabeth Pool) opened on August 2, 1922. It is considered to have been the first outdoor pool in Western Canada.

In 1939 the park was renamed from Riverside Park to Queen Elizabeth Park in honour of a royal visit from King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

In around 1930 a wastewater treatment plant was built along the river to service the adjacent Strathcona neighbourhood. In the 1950s this was replaced with another plant that operated until 1981.

RECENT HISTORY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

In the late 1960s a large pile of fill material was deposited in the northwest area of the park, forming what became known as Dantzer's Hill. It is reported that the fill was placed there as part of a plan to build a new bridge across the North Saskatchewan river, which never came to be.

In 2003 Queen Elizabeth Pool permanently closed, and was removed in 2010. A new pool was opened in Kinsmen Park.

PRESENCE OF HISTORICAL FEATURES IN QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

The spatial organization of Queen Elizabeth Park has been largely unchanged since its design in the 1930s. In particular, the picnic areas and east-west road through the park remain. Many of the structures within the park have been removed over time, with the exception of the wastewater treatment plant from the 1950s.

The building associated with the brewery currently houses South District Park Operations and the City Archives.

Primary information sources:

City of Edmonton (2004). Naming Edmonton. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.

Monto, Tom (2011). Old Strathcona, Edmonton's Southside Roots. Edmonton: Crang Publishing.

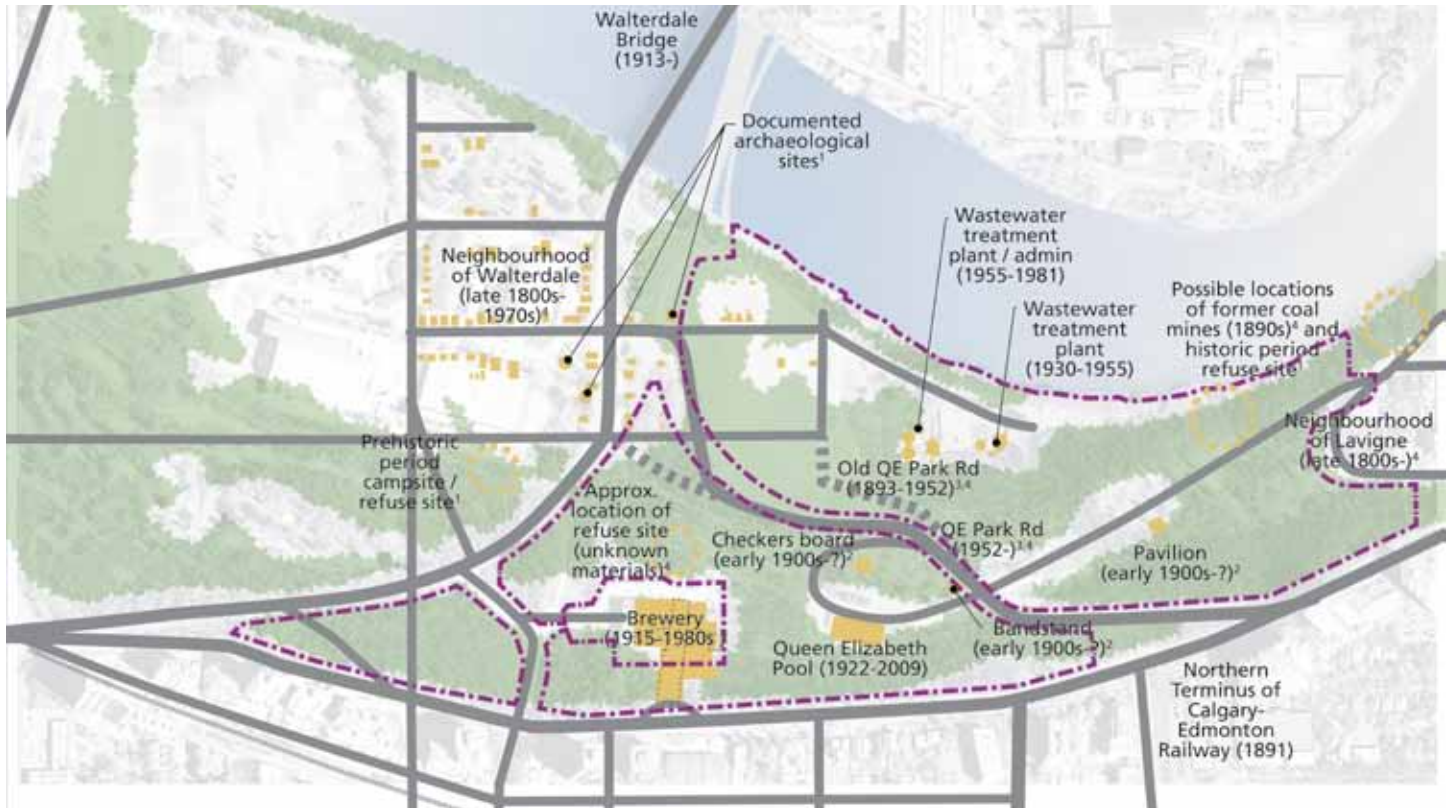


FIGURE 2.1: KEY HISTORICAL FEATURES OF QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

Information sources for historical features:

1. City of Edmonton. 2011. Historical Resources display board. Walterdale Bridge Open House.
2. Faulkner, Les. 1991. "A Stroll In The Park." Strathcona Plaindealer.
3. Klohn Crippen Berger. 2012. Queen Elizabeth Park Phase 1 ESA. Appendices.
4. Monto, Tom. 2011. Old Strathcona, Edmonton's Southside Roots. Edmonton: Crang Publishing.



- Visible features:
- 1. Walterdale Settlement
 - 2. Grid street pattern extending into park
 - 3. Old alignment of road through park
 - 4. Brewery buildings
 - 5. Old wastewater plant
 - 6. Old Queen Elizabeth Pool

FIGURE 2.2: 1952 AERIAL PHOTO (AS 04 #107, 1:11,600) WITH PROJECT BOUNDARIES



- Visible features:
- 1. New wastewater treatment plant
 - 2. New park road alignment

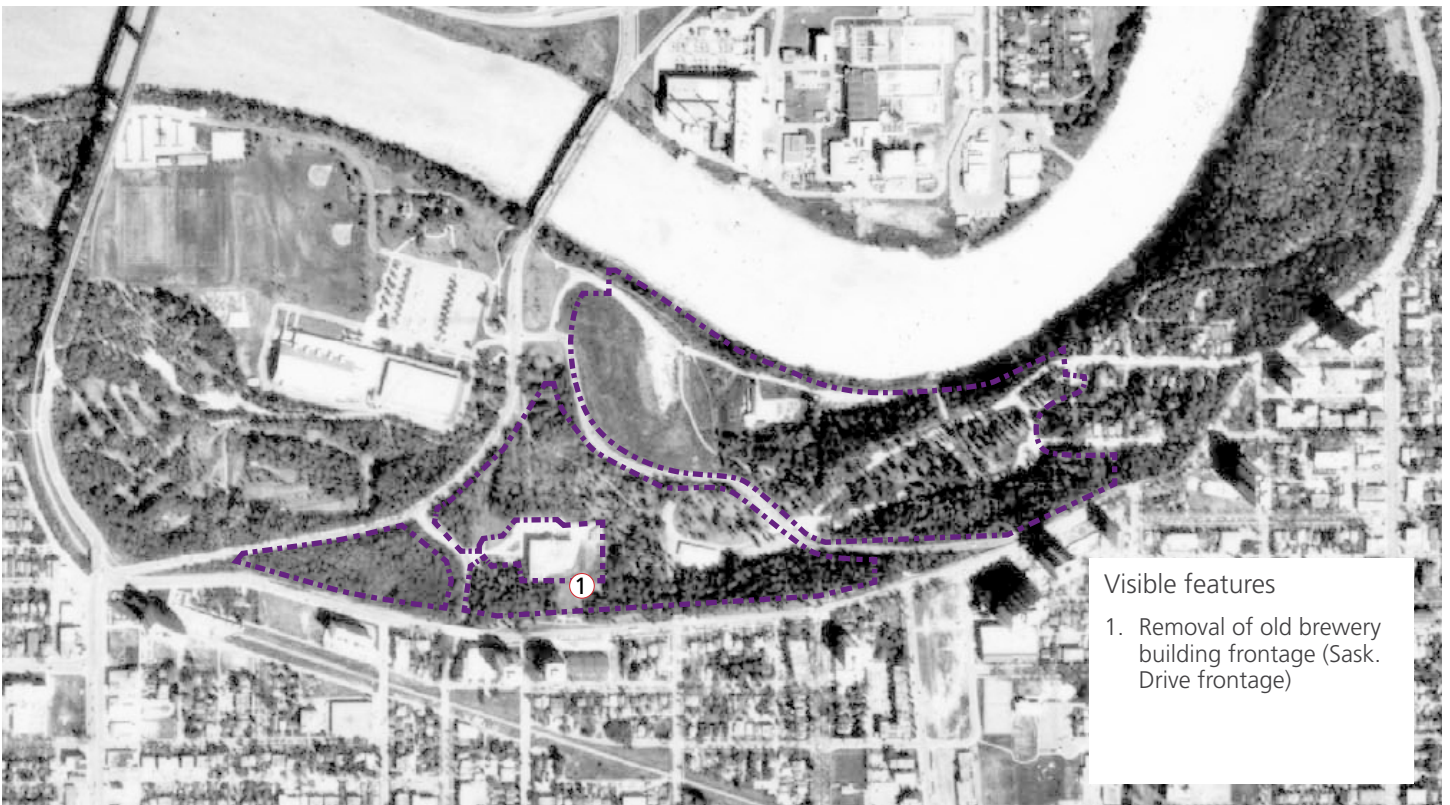
FIGURE 2.3: 1962 AERIAL PHOTO (AS 818 #81, 1:31,680) WITH PROJECT BOUNDARIES



Visible features:

1. Dantzer's Hill formed by fill material
2. Removal of buildings from Walterdale settlement
3. Development of Kinsmen Sports Centre and park

FIGURE 2.4: 1976 AERIAL PHOTO (AS 1546 #242, 1:20,000) WITH PROJECT BOUNDARIES



Visible features

1. Removal of old brewery building frontage (Sask. Drive frontage)

FIGURE 2.5: 1987 AERIAL PHOTO (AS 3606 #41, 1:30,000) WITH PROJECT BOUNDARIES

2.2 RELEVANT POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

The following policies and initiatives are important for understanding the jurisdictional context of the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan, and to ensure that the work is consistent with higher-level planning initiatives of the City of Edmonton.

EDMONTON'S URBAN PARKS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Edmonton's Urban Parks Management Plan (2006-2016) guides the acquisition, development, maintenance, preservation and use of parkland. It provides strategic direction for all river valley and ravine parkland as well as all school and park sites outside the river valley.

Site development and operations guidelines are provided for river valley and ravine parks (section 5.2.1). Relevant recommendations include: addition of support facilities (e.g. drinking fountains), protection of the river valley forest, increased four-season management, enhancement of view opportunities, increased trail accessibility, enhanced educational and heritage programming, special Aboriginal programs, and ecological park design.

NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER VALLEY AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN BYLAW 7188

The purpose of the North Saskatchewan River Valley Bylaw is "to protect the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System as part of Edmonton's valuable open space heritage and to establish the principles for future implementation plans and programmes for parks development and the retention of the designated residential areas..." Queen Elizabeth Park is classified as "(A) Metropolitan Recreation Zone," the purpose of which is "to preserve natural areas and parkland along the river, creeks, ravines and other designated areas for active and passive recreational uses and environment protection in conformance with Plan Edmonton and the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan."

Major goals of the Bylaw (Section 2.2) identify the need to preserve the natural character and environment of the river valley, while providing for recreational, aesthetic and cultural activities for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Parkland development objectives (Section 2.3) reinforce the above goals, while adding that the river valley is to have an accessible pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle (e.g. bicycle) trail network, that historic resources should be conserved, and that exemplary standards of design

(landscape, urban, and architectural) should be promoted.

Relevant plan policies (Section 3) include: conservation of significant vegetation, wildlife and waterfowl habitat as natural conservation areas where education, interpretation and low intensity recreation activities are permitted (Section 3.2.1); identification of "viewpoint parks" on sites where view potential exists (Section 3.2.5); and establishing pedestrian and non-motorized travel (e.g. bicycling, horse riding, cross-country skiing) as the primary modes of transport through the river valley (Section 3.2.10).

PARKLAND BYLAW 2202

The Parkland Bylaw sets guidelines for the conduct and activities of park users in Edmonton's parklands (including parks, natural areas, open space, recreation facilities, and major attractions). The Parkland Bylaw delineates two classes of trails: "improved" (over 1.5m wide with a durable surface) and "unimproved" (under 1.5m wide with a natural surface). Activities prohibited by the bylaw include damaging natural areas and allowing animals to be at large (i.e. off leash, unless otherwise permitted). Permits are required for gatherings of over 50 people.

RIBBON OF GREEN CONCEPT PLAN, 1990

This plan was created to establish a vision, guiding principles, common goals, and concept plans for development and management of the North Saskatchewan river valley and ravine system. The plan introduced the concepts of Preservation, Conservation, and Extensive Use Zones, which in turn, influence the type of development that is allowed in different parts of the river valley. The basic principles that emerged from this plan were: Conservation, Recreation, Development, Trails, and Education.

Queen Elizabeth Park was originally part of the Capital City Recreation Park (1970s planning initiative), and was thus not specifically addressed by the Ribbon of Green Concept Plans.

RIBBON OF GREEN MASTER PLAN, 1992

The Ribbon of Green Master Plan built on the vision of the Ribbon of Green Concept Plan, and established policy guidelines for long-term development in the river valley. Site analysis was not undertaken for Queen Elizabeth Park under this plan, nor were Resource Management Planning Units (Preservation, Conservation, and Extensive Use Zones) established for the park.

The plan outlines park development guidelines and

standards that will be applicable to planning and design at Queen Elizabeth Park. Guidelines address the design of trails, roads, park amenities, landscaping / restoration, and signage, among others.

THE WAY AHEAD (EDMONTON'S STRATEGIC PLAN), 2009-2018, 2011 UPDATE

Edmonton's Strategic Plan provides a vision for the City in 2040 and establishes six 10-year goals to move toward achieving that vision:

1. Transform Edmonton's Urban Form
2. Shift Edmonton's Transportation Mode
3. Improve Edmonton's Livability
4. Preserve and Sustain Edmonton's Environment
5. Ensure Edmonton's Financial Sustainability
6. Diversify Edmonton's Economy

These goals were the foundation for developing six related directional plans, three of which are further detailed below.

THE WAY WE GROW (EDMONTON'S MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN), 2010

Edmonton's Municipal Development Plan provides direction on land use, growth and development over a 10-year period. The policies will help the city become more compact, transit-oriented, and sustainable.

The plan promotes integration of ecological networks and biodiversity with city planning, and the protection of environmental assets, such as the river valley. The Plan recognizes the importance of having carefully designed green space in proximity to and accessible to citizens.

Section 5 of the plan addresses Urban Design, and the following are some policies that are relevant to the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan:

- Identify and preserve public views and vistas of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System as new development occurs and require public access in accordance with the Top of Bank Policy (Policy 5.6.1.7)
- Integrate park use into the everyday experience of residents by designing parks and adjacent development to complement one another and by seeking opportunities to locate City facilities adjacent to parkland (Policy 5.6.1.9)
- Implement design guidelines for major city entrance corridors to create a sense of arrival to the city (Policy 5.7.1.5)

Section 7 of the plan discusses the Natural Environment, and the following are a selection of relevant policies under key headings:

7.3. North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System

- Ensure that the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System remains primarily an area of unstructured, low intensity and passive recreation, while accommodating appropriate balance of recreation activity within park nodes as described in the Urban Parks Management Plan and the Ribbon of Green (Policy 7.3.2.1)
- Make selected areas of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System accessible to all citizens regardless of age or mobility, where feasible (Policy 7.3.2.4)
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to increase movement and accessibility (7.3.2.5)
- Provide and maintain space for multi-seasonal uses (7.3.2.6)
- New development within the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System will be planned according to, and will demonstrate that it embodies, the following priorities (Policy 7.3.3.1)
 - Conservation and protection of natural areas and the connections that link them to, from and within the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System.
 - Low intensity, passive outdoor and trail based recreation or educational opportunities and appropriate facilities to service these.
 - Facilities that provide passive recreational or educational services to the public.
 - Public utilities installations, services and facilities.

7.4 Parks and Open Space

- Enhance the habitat value of parks by incorporating native plant species into park design; implementing invasive plant removal and restoration programs as needed (Policy 7.4.1.2)
- Maintain a healthy urban forest by continuing to invest in and expand the City's tree inventory, and adopt a "no net loss" approach to the replacement of public trees (Policy 7.4.1.3)
- Public utility functions will not be considered in parks and open spaces where they significantly compromise ecological value and integrity (Policy 7.4.1.4)
- Design parks and open spaces to include and maximize

the use of ecological design best-practices (Policy 7.4.1.5)

The following are a selection of strategic objectives that may be applicable to the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan:

- Restore ecologically degraded and/or damaged ecological systems and linkages to protect, expand and enhance biodiversity (Objective 7.1.2)
- Protect, preserve and enhance the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System as Edmonton's greatest natural asset (Objective 7.3.1)
- Mitigate the impact of development upon the natural functions and character of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System (Objective 7.3.3)
- Mitigate impacts upon Edmonton's water resources by ensuring that new developments in Edmonton embody an exemplary standard of ecological design (Objective 7.5.1)
- Protect, maintain and continually enhance the water quality of the North Saskatchewan Watershed (Objective 7.5.2)

THE WAY WE LIVE (EDMONTON'S PEOPLE PLAN), 2010

The Way We Live is a 10-year strategic plan that outlines the way the City will provide "people services" to Edmontonians. People services include essential services (e.g. public transit, emergency services, water quality, waste management, roads) as well as quality of life services, such as parks, protection of natural spaces, and celebration of cultural milestones, among others.

The following are a selection of strategic objectives that may be applicable to the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan:

- Provides and encourages people to explore and enjoy their connection to the natural environment (Objective 1.2.3)
- Promotes its rich history and diverse cultural heritage (Objective 1.5.5)
- Provides infrastructure and public spaces to promote and encourage healthy and active living (Objective 2.1.3)
- Promotes the importance of recreation, play, walking, cycling and other forms of active living in all of its people services (Objective 2.1.4)
- Provides access to its parks, natural areas and green spaces for the enjoyment of Edmontonians (Objective 2.2.1)
- Builds and maintains a connected system of shared use

trails, green and natural spaces (Objective 2.2.3)

- Promotes innovative architecture and design in all areas of the city (Objective 5.1.4)
- Provides activities and events in city green spaces throughout all seasons (Objective 5.3.3)
- Protects, maintains, conserves and restores the biodiversity of Edmonton's natural environment (Objective 6.2.2)

THE WAY WE MOVE (EDMONTON'S TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN), 2010

The City's Transportation Master Plan establishes a framework for how the City will address its future transportation needs.

The following are general recommendations and strategic policy directions that may be applicable to the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan:

- A [parks] system that considers transportation infrastructure to a greater extent than the current system will be necessary to develop livable, transit-friendly communities (Section 4.3, Community Building)
- The City will create a walkable environment (Objective 6.1)
- The City will create a cycle-friendly city (Objective 6.2)
- The City will create an integrated network of multi-use trail facilities (Objective 6.3)

THE WAY WE GREEN (EDMONTON'S ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIC PLAN), 2011

The Way We Green sets out 12 long-term goals to help guide the City of Edmonton in its pursuit of environmental sustainability. Of particular relevance to the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan are the goals relating to healthy ecosystems. The document is closely linked to The Way We Grow, and many of the ecological objectives are consistent with those from that policy. Some key objectives from the Way We Green that are being addressed through this project, in addition to the policies highlighted above, include the following:

- Objective 3.9: The City mitigates the impact of development upon the natural functions and character of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System (The Way We Grow, Objective 7.3.3).
- Objective 3.10: The City utilizes parks and open spaces to complement and enhance biodiversity, linkages, habitat and the overall health of Edmonton's ecological network (The Way We Grow, Objective 7.4.1).

- Objective 3.11: The City expands and enhances Edmonton's inventory of parks and open spaces for the ecological, health, recreation and educational benefits they provide (The Way We Grow, Objective 7.4.2).
- Objective 3.12: The City promotes the responsible management of contaminated sites to protect public health and the environment (The Way We Grow, Objective 9.5.1).
- Objective 3.13: The City minimizes the impact of lighting and buildings on wildlife.

CAPITAL CITY DOWNTOWN PLAN, 2010

The Capital City Downtown Plan arose out of Edmonton's Strategic Plan, 2009-2018. The plan has six main goals related to the environment, livability, urban form, transportation modes, financial stability, and the economy.

The implementation of policies and initiatives arising from this plan (e.g. river valley promenades, bikeway system, increased population of Downtown), will likely make Queen Elizabeth Park a more popular and easily accessible destination for Downtown residents.

WINTERCITY STRATEGY, 2012

The City of Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy has been developed to help make Edmonton known world-wide as a "vibrant, fun, northern city." Many of the goals and related actions from the WinterCity strategy have applicability to the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan, including:

- Goal 1: Make It Easier to "Go Play Outside", Provide More Opportunities for Outdoor Activity
- Goal 2: Improve Winter Transportation for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Public Transit Users
- Goal 3: Design Our Communities for Winter Safety and Comfort
- Goal 4: Incorporate Urban Design Elements for Winter Fun, Activity, Beauty and Interest
- Goal 5: Increase the Capacity and Sustainability of Edmonton's Winter Festivals

WHEELED RECREATION DESTINATION STRATEGY

The vision for this strategy is as follows: "The Wheeled Recreation Destination Strategy is an integrated approach to the development, programming and maintenance of outdoor wheeled recreation destinations (places/spaces) reflecting a continuum of non-motorised active recreation and leisure opportunities for Edmontonians, where the nature of the

activity requires a destination outside the existing trails and parks system." This Strategy aims to support and engage Edmonton's youth as part of Edmonton's "The Way We Live: Edmonton's People Plan."

In this strategy, Queen Elizabeth Park is mentioned as having been previously identified through Council inquiries or community partner interest for potential future development of a mountain biking skills park. Some key recommendations from this strategy that would be applicable at Queen Elizabeth Park include:

- Develop special education / maintenance / management strategies for any facility that will be placed in the River Valley to ensure that users have a sense of stewardship, responsibility and etiquette.
- Update current standards for design of new and rehabilitated wheeled recreation amenities and review design standards as needed.
- Review and determine the specialized maintenance requirements of wheeled recreation amenities and develop an appropriate maintenance schedule, budget and operations plan.
- Create opportunity for a skill development programming dimension reflecting grassroots/beginner development for District, Neighbourhood and temporary sites is developed, sustainable and is considered central to site operation.

FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The following is a summary of federal and provincial legislation that may be applicable to developments at Queen Elizabeth Park (adapted from the Terwilliger Park Concept Study, 2009¹):

Provincial Regulatory and Permitting Processes

- Alberta Water Act (Alberta Environment) - any surface water that is permanent is claimed by the Crown, and therefore any activity that involves any proposed use or alteration of this system requires permitting. In the case of alteration or loss of such areas, compensation may be required.
- Alberta Public Lands Act (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development) - would apply to the riverbank of the North Saskatchewan River
- Alberta Wildlife Act (Alberta Environment) - prohibits

1. Terwilliger Park Concept Plan was prepared by ISL Engineering for the City of Edmonton

any disturbance to a nest or den of prescribed wildlife, including the alteration or removal of existing vegetation

- Alberta Weed Control Act (Alberta Environment) - specifies noxious and nuisance weeds which must be controlled with in both publicly and privately owned lands
- Alberta Historical Resources Act (Alberta Community Development) - any fossil or other historical resource located prior to or during site development, as well as during ongoing operations, must be properly protected and reported to proper authorities
- Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (Alberta Environment) - establishes a legislated process for environmental assessments, and ensures potential environmental impacts are identified early in the planning stages

Federal Regulatory and Permitting Processes

- Canadian Fisheries Act (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) - authorizations are required for any habitat that is or has the potential to be fish habitat; triggered when development leads to the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of this habitat
- Navigable Waters Protection Act (Canadian Coast Guard) - in this case would only apply to any alteration to the waters or shoreline of the North Saskatchewan River
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (Environment Canada) - would only apply to this development should any federal funding be obtained for development
- Migratory Birds Convention Act (Environment Canada) - prohibits any disturbance to bird species covered under the act, such as removal of vegetation or water from nesting areas
- Species At Risk Act (Environment Canada) - prohibits the disturbance to any species listed in the act that are deemed species-at-risk. This Act will only apply to endangered, extirpated or threatened migratory birds that breed, rear young, stage, winter, feed or hibernate in Queen Elizabeth Park

GREEN BUILDING POLICY C567 AND GREEN BUILDING PLAN

The City of Edmonton's Green Building Policy C567 formalizes the City's support for the design, construction, operation and retrofitting of high performance green buildings that integrate the following:

1. Energy conservation and efficiency
2. The use of low-carbon, sustainable energy sources
3. The use of non-toxic, low-carbon, recycled, regional and sustainably produced building materials
4. Preservation and restoration of biodiversity
5. Conservation and sustainable management of water resources
6. Improvements in ambient and indoor air quality
7. Durability and resiliency to disturbances that might result from climate change
8. Food and agriculture systems
9. Recycling, waste reduction and effective waste management
10. Improved comfort, aesthetics, adaptability and liveability

These objectives are to be integrated into the design of new and existing structures in Queen Elizabeth Park, including the washroom buildings (new and existing), composting toilet, and upper park shelter.

BARRIER-FREE DESIGN GUIDE, 2008

The Government of Alberta's Barrier-Free Design Guide (2008) is based on the Alberta Building Code (2006), and sets out code requirements and best practice guidelines for ensuring the accessibility of public washrooms, parking lots, and amenities, such as drinking fountains.

The Guide also provides recommendations for ensuring public telephones and signs are easily used by all people.

While the Alberta Building Code is not applicable to the design of public park space, the guidelines for barrier-free exterior walks and ramps should be considered where feasible.

2.3 SITE INVENTORY

CONTEXT

Queen Elizabeth Park is located in the central river valley between downtown Edmonton and Strathcona (Figure 2.6). The park is adjacent to an outer bend of the North Saskatchewan River. The park's street address is 10380 Queen Elizabeth Park Road NW. Several other major river valley parks are nearby, including Kinsmen Park and Emily Murphy Park to the west, Nellie McClung Park to the east, and Victoria Park to the north.

BOUNDARIES OF THE PARK

The park's boundaries extend from the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River up to Saskatchewan Drive at the top-of-bank, with Walterdale Hill Road to the west and the Lavigne neighbourhood to the east (Figure 2.7).

A NOTE ON THE NEW WALTERDALE BRIDGE

The site inventory diagrams reflect new park boundaries and new pedestrian connections associated with the Walterdale Bridge replacement project (2013 to 2015).

ADJACENT USES

The community of Strathcona, on the tablelands immediately south of the park, is an established residential neighbourhood and includes a vibrant commercial district along Whyte Avenue.

Kinsmen Park, located west of Queen Elizabeth Park, has many actively programmed amenity areas including sports fields, an outdoor pool, a spray park, a playground, tennis courts, a pitch and putt, cross-country skiing, the John Walter Museum and the Kinsmen Sports Centre. The latter has a gymnasium (field house), aquatic centre, fitness centres, and a cafeteria.

The Rossdale Power Plant is situated across the North Saskatchewan River to the north. The Power Plant is planned to be repurposed as a lively cultural centre with indoor and outdoor programmed space.

The Lavigne neighbourhood on the east edge of the park is a small enclave of single family houses within the river valley.



FIGURE 2.6: CONTEXT MAP

Map tiles by Stamen Design, under CC BY 3.0. Data by OpenStreetMap, under CC BY SA.

IMPORTANT ROADS AND VEHICLE ACCESS POINTS

The park is traversed by Queen Elizabeth Park Road which functionally divides the park into two parts: the upper (south) park and the lower (north) park. Queen Elizabeth Park Road is a two-lane, one-way, northbound arterial that is a notable part of the gateway experience leading to the Walterdale Bridge and into downtown from the south. The most prominent public access point into the upper and lower sections of the park is located approximately midway down Queen Elizabeth Park Road.

There are two additional access points into the lower park: along the east edge, and from the service road. Along the east edge of the park access is available off Lavigne Road from the Lavigne neighbourhood; however, this access route requires navigating a steep road that leads down from Saskatchewan Drive at 91 Avenue. The second access point is via a service road that branches off Queen Elizabeth Park Road east of the junction with Walterdale Hill Road. This route will no longer be available once the new Walterdale

Bridge is constructed. This access provides the only means of vehicular entry to the existing Queen Elizabeth storage compound and pump house and therefore an alternative access road will need to be integrated into the new park design.

O'KEEFE SITE

From 1915 to the early 1980s a brewery operated in Upper Queen Elizabeth Park. The brewery was last operated by Carling O'Keefe Ltd, and thus the area is now referred to as the O'Keefe site.

The O'Keefe site is currently being used as a District Yard by Parks Operations South and for the City's archival holdings. Planning for the O'Keefe Site is not included within the scope of this project with the exception of exploring landscaping and aesthetic improvements around the site.



FIGURE 2.7: PROJECT BOUNDARIES (ADJUSTED FOR WALTERDALE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT)

Bing Maps

SITE FEATURES

Key features of the park (Figure 2.8) include:

- Dantzer's Hill
- The Queen Elizabeth Park Compound, which is located east of the decommissioned wastewater treatment plant. The fenced compound includes leased areas for boat storage and also provides space for River Valley Programming activities, which include a low ropes course and archery.
- An active pump station, located to the east of the compound
- Picnic areas on the east and west sides of Queen Elizabeth Park Road, with a small playground and washroom building on the east side
- A clearing at the site of the old Queen Elizabeth Pool
- South District Park Operations and archival storage at O'Keefe Site (outside of the scope of this project)

TOPOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE

The topography of the park is generally characterized by two steep banks, and a relatively flat middle terrace area in between, where the picnic area and former pool site are

located (Figure 2.9). A lower river terrace is located at the site of the Queen Elizabeth Park Compound. Dantzer's Hill is a large pile of fill material that was placed on the site in the late 1960s. It has relatively steep side slopes and a flat area at the top, but this plateau is not readily accessible to park visitors.

A small wetland exists in the eastern end of the park. It is likely formed by groundwater seepage at the base of the upper slope. Road construction may have impeded drainage and contributed to it becoming a more permanent wetland. Water from the wetland appears to drain under the road and into a short section of swale through the picnic area.

A geotechnical study of the "Lavigne Bank" (Lavigne neighbourhood) indicated that slope stability in the eastern end of the park is affected by groundwater levels (UMA Engineering 1991).

TREE COVER

The park's steep, north-facing slopes support a mixed deciduous-coniferous forest, with species of the Central Parkland Natural Subregion including balsam poplar and white spruce (Figure 2.10). Much of the forest understory has been cleared from the flat terraced areas and replaced with turf.

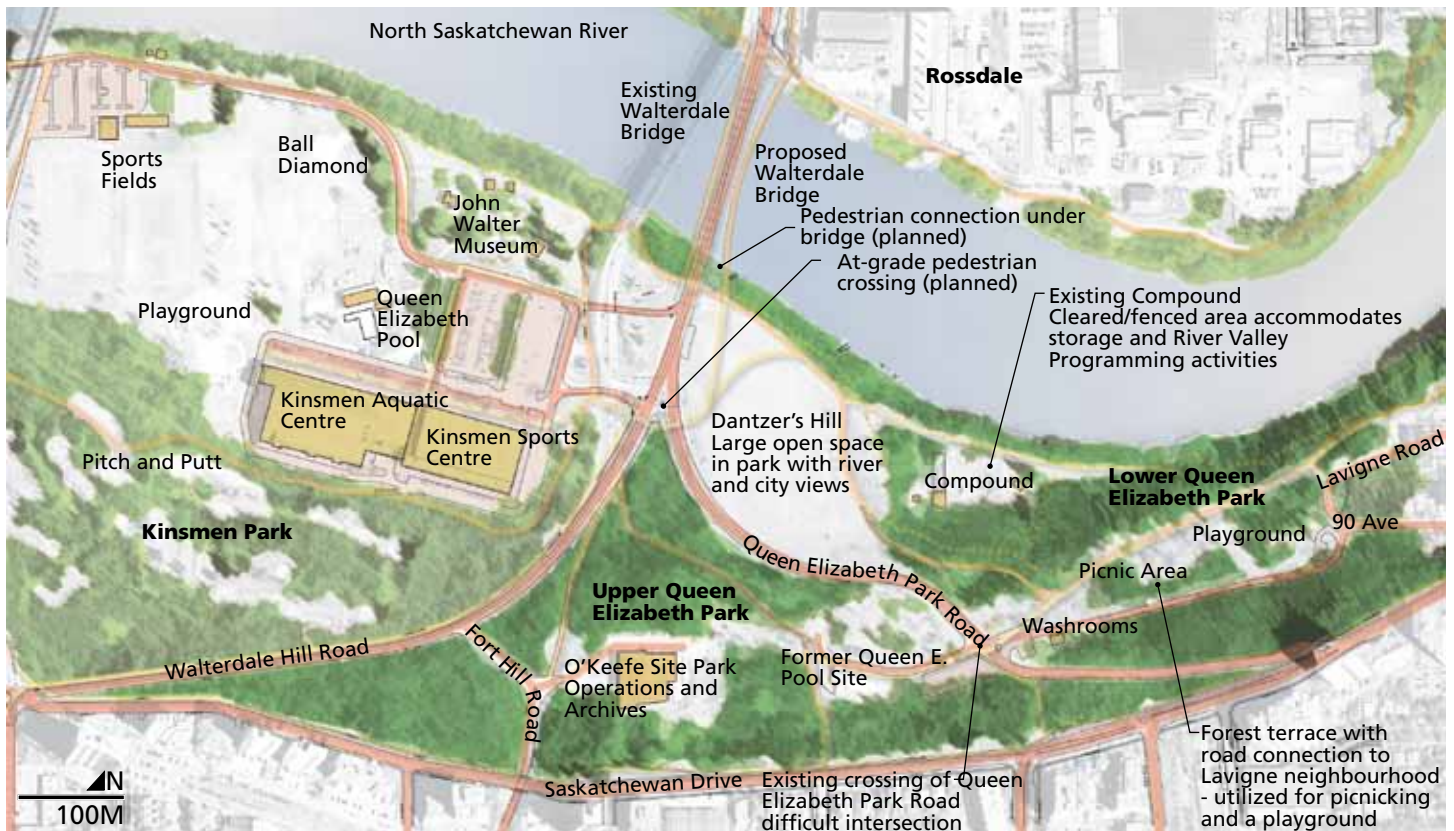


FIGURE 2.8: SITE FEATURES (SHOWING ROAD / PATH CONNECTIONS FOR NEW WALTERDALE BRIDGE)

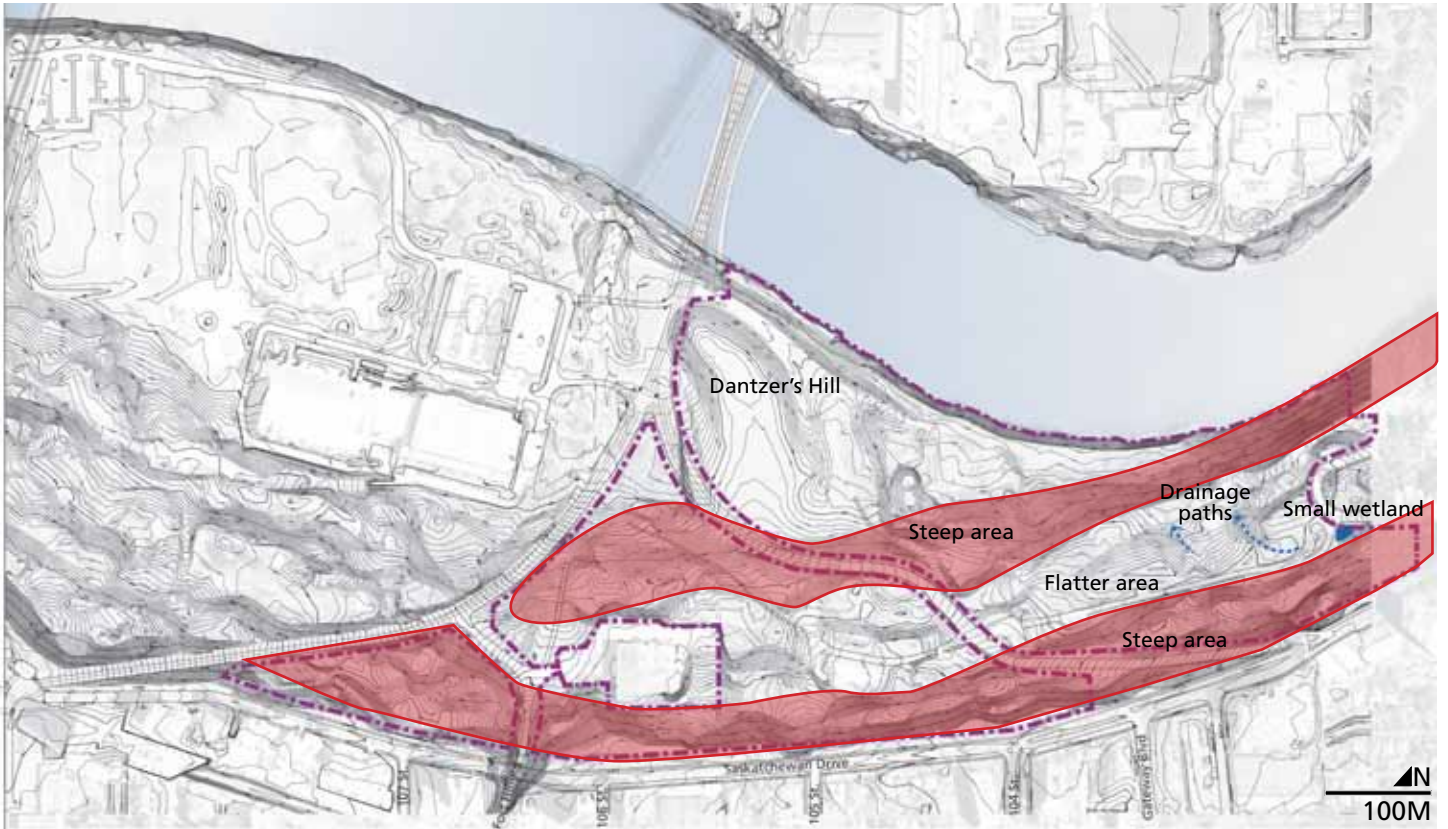


FIGURE 2.9: TOPOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE (0.5M CONTOUR LINE INTERVAL)



FIGURE 2.10: TREE COVER

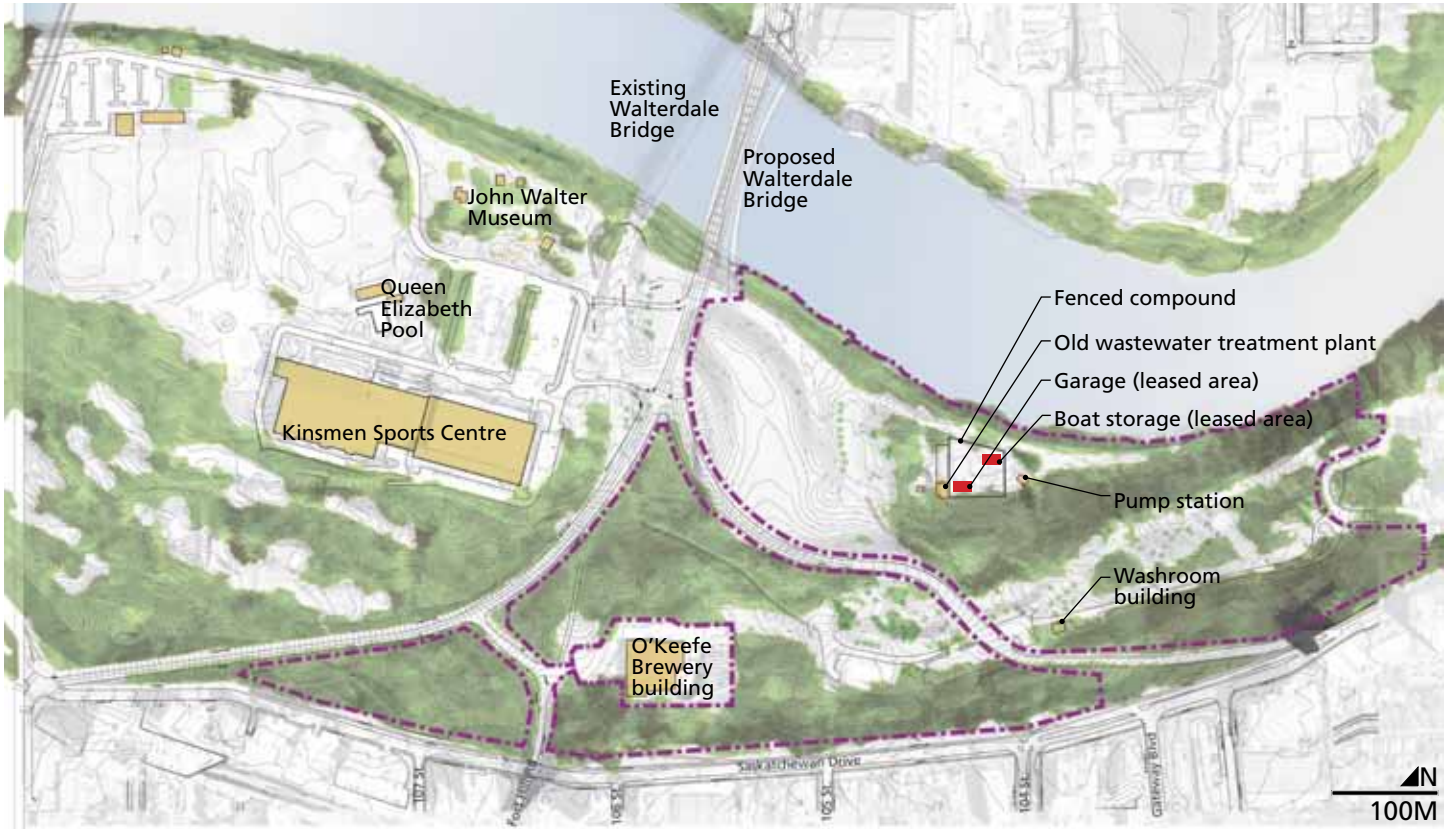


FIGURE 2.11: STRUCTURES AND LEASED AREAS

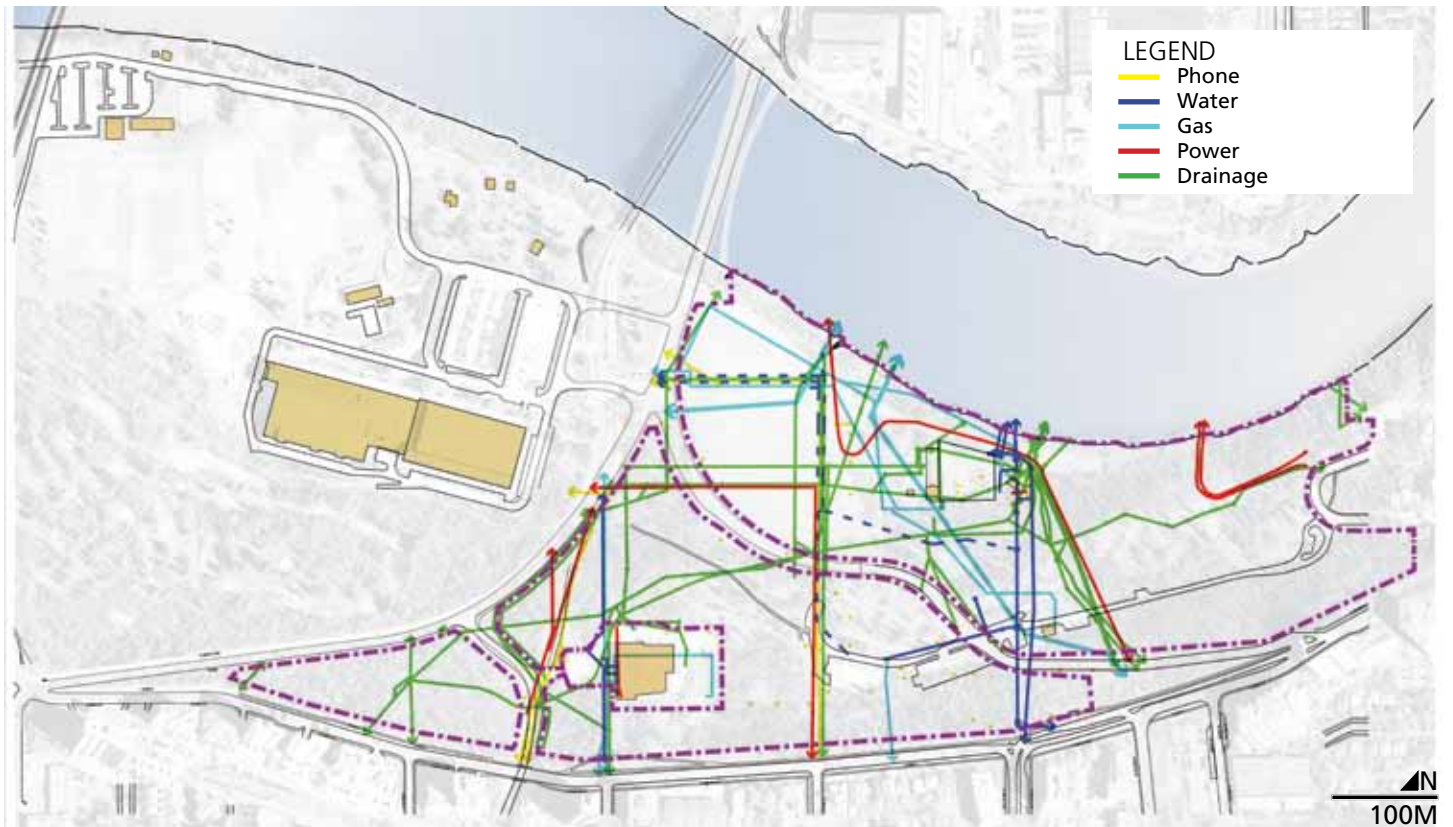


FIGURE 2.12: UTILITIES

STRUCTURES AND LEASED AREAS

Structures within the boundaries of this project include a washroom building, an operational pump station, a fenced compound containing a decommissioned wastewater treatment plant, remaining underground wastewater infrastructure, and a garage (Figure 2.11).

Nearby structures (outside of the project boundaries) include the O’Keefe site building, Kinsmen Sports Centre, John Walter Museum, new Queen Elizabeth Pool and the Walterdale Bridge.

Leaseholders in the park include the Ceyana Canoe Club and Edmonton Dragon Boat Racing Club. These groups lease land within the Queen Elizabeth Park Compound for boat storage. The Ceyana Canoe Club lease area includes the garage.

ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan was completed by Klohn Crippen Berger in June 2013. The Phase I ESA indicates that several areas within Queen Elizabeth Park have potential for metal, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) or petroleum hydrocarbon (PHC) impacts. Prior to future phases of park development in the identified areas, the report recommends that a Phase II ESA be conducted for the areas in question to delineate potential impacts related to historical activities.

UTILITIES

Underground utilities running through the park include water, gas, power (electricity) and drainage (sanitary and storm) (Figure 2.12). A concentration of utilities exists under the area of Dantzer’s Hill. The degree to which existing utilities are retained, modified or tied into will be considered through the development of the plan.

KEY VIEWPOINTS

Queen Elizabeth Park offers several excellent points to view the river valley and downtown (Figure 2.13). The lookouts and trail adjacent to Saskatchewan Drive are collectively known as the Laurence Decore Lookout.

There are currently two viewing platforms along Saskatchewan Drive: one platform is west of 105 Street, and a second platform at the north end of Gateway Blvd. The views from these points have become partially obscured by vegetation. There are several other points along Saskatchewan Drive that offer good views into the river valley, as indicated in the accompanying diagram (Figure 2.13).

Dantzer’s Hill offers unobstructed views of the river valley and downtown, and thus is a popular destination for watching the fireworks display in Kinsmen Park on Canada Day. It is anticipated that a significant portion of Dantzer’s Hill will be utilized in construction of the new Walterdale Bridge.

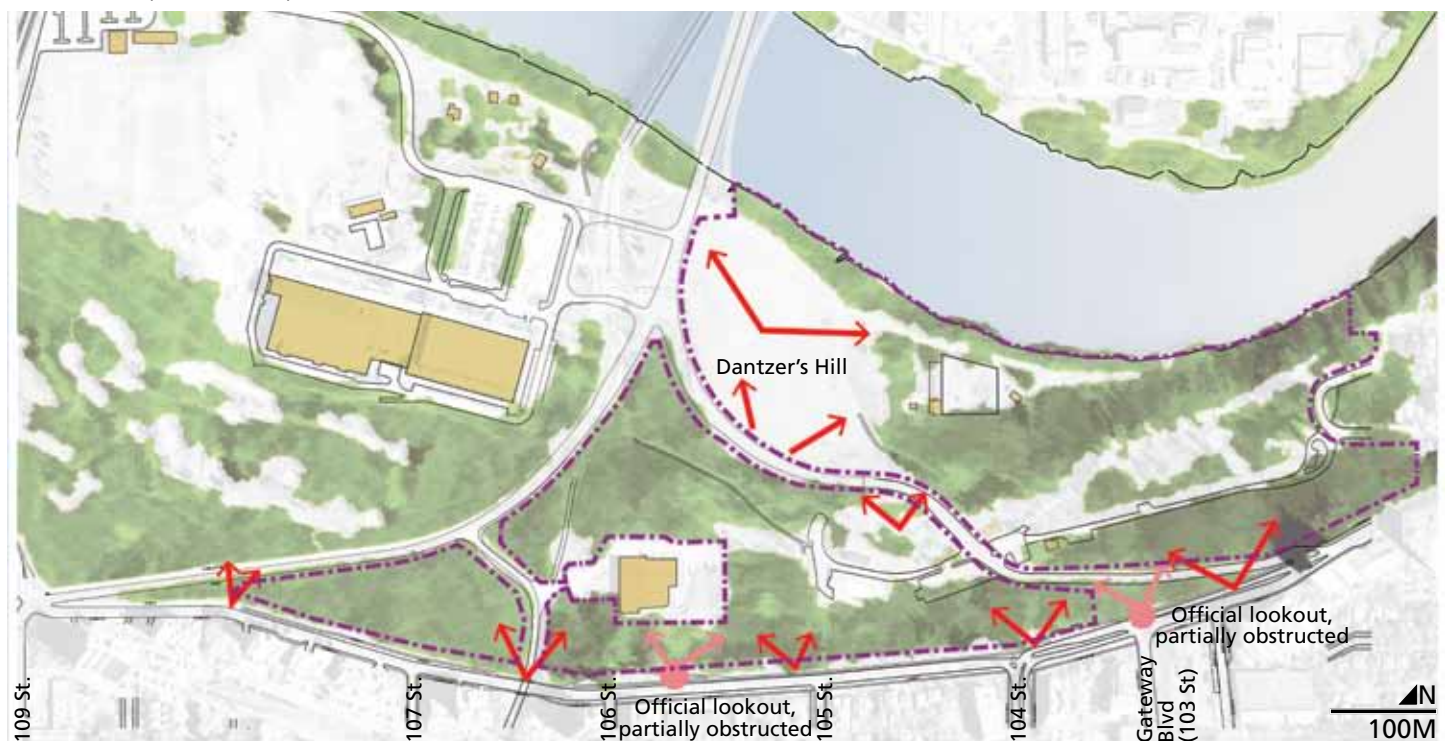


FIGURE 2.13: KEY VIEW POINTS

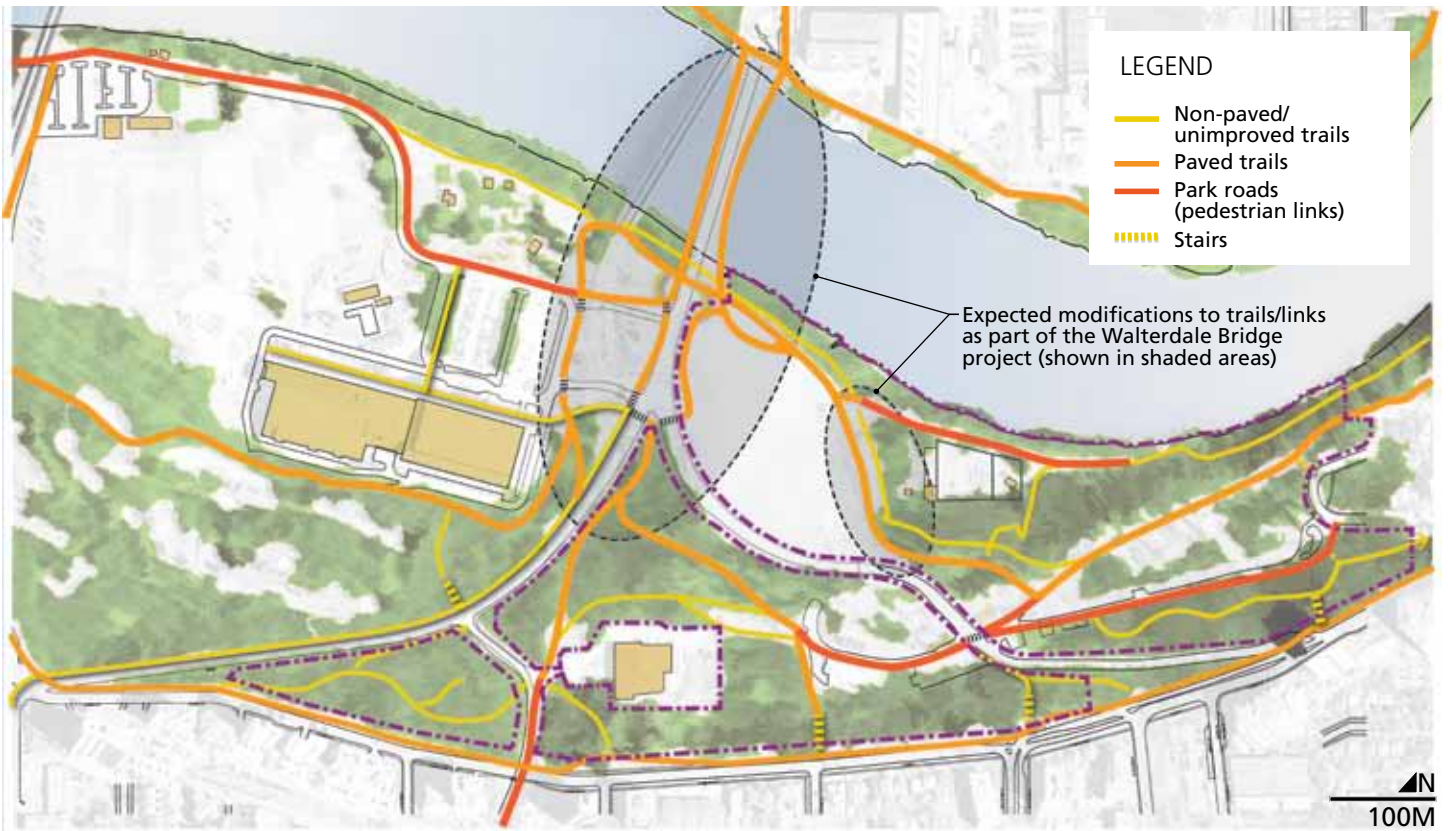


FIGURE 2.14: PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION (WITH EXPECTED CHANGES FOR WALTERDALE BRIDGE REALIGNMENT)

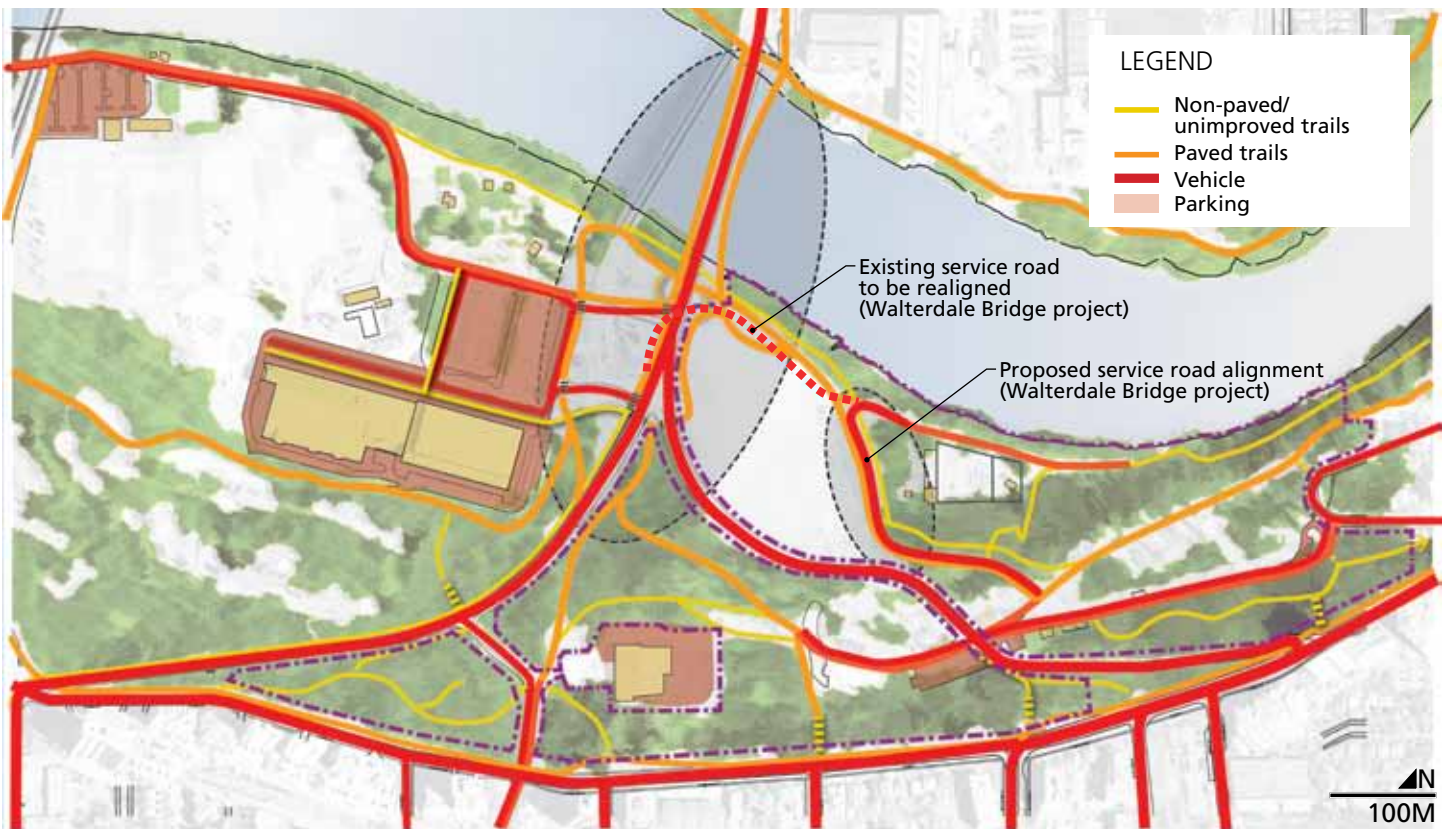


FIGURE 2.15: PEDESTRIAN + VEHICLE CIRCULATION (WITH EXPECTED CHANGES FOR NEW WALTERDALE BRIDGE)

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The primary pedestrian pathway follows an east-west route through the lower park (Figure 2.14). This multi-use paved trail connects to adjacent trails in Nellie McClung Park and Kinsmen Park.

There are additional paved trails in upper Queen Elizabeth Park that connect Fort Hill Road and the base of stairs leading down from Saskatchewan Drive to the intersection of Walterdale Hill Road and Queen Elizabeth Park Road.

There are many unimproved and unofficial foot paths that extend throughout the upper and lower park areas. These are commonly used by mountain bikers, hikers, and trail runners.

The upper and lower park areas are currently connected by an at-grade pedestrian crossing. Many workshop and survey participants have expressed concern with the safety of this crossing.

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

Walterdale Hill Road (west park boundary) and Queen Elizabeth Park Road are both two-lane, one-way streets that take vehicles to the north side of the North Saskatchewan

River (Figure 2.15). A local east-west road extends between Queen Elizabeth Park Road and 90th Ave, in the Lavigne neighbourhood.

Service vehicles access the compound in the lower park via a service road that branches off of Queen Elizabeth Park Road east of the junction with Walterdale Hill Road. The Walterdale Bridge project will require realignment of the existing service road.

There are four small official parking areas east of Queen Elizabeth Park Road: three close to Queen Elizabeth Park Road (approx. 16 spaces) and one at Lavigne Road (approx. 5 spaces).

ACTIVITY INTENSITY BY AREA

Most areas of Queen Elizabeth Park experience relatively low to moderate intensity use (Figure 2.16). The paved east-west trail through the park sees moderate to high levels of activity. The Queen Elizabeth Park Compound, where River Valley Programming carries out archery and low ropes programs, has a moderate activity intensity in the summer. Dantzer's Hill and Queen Elizabeth Park Road experience a high level of activity during Canada Day fireworks celebrations.

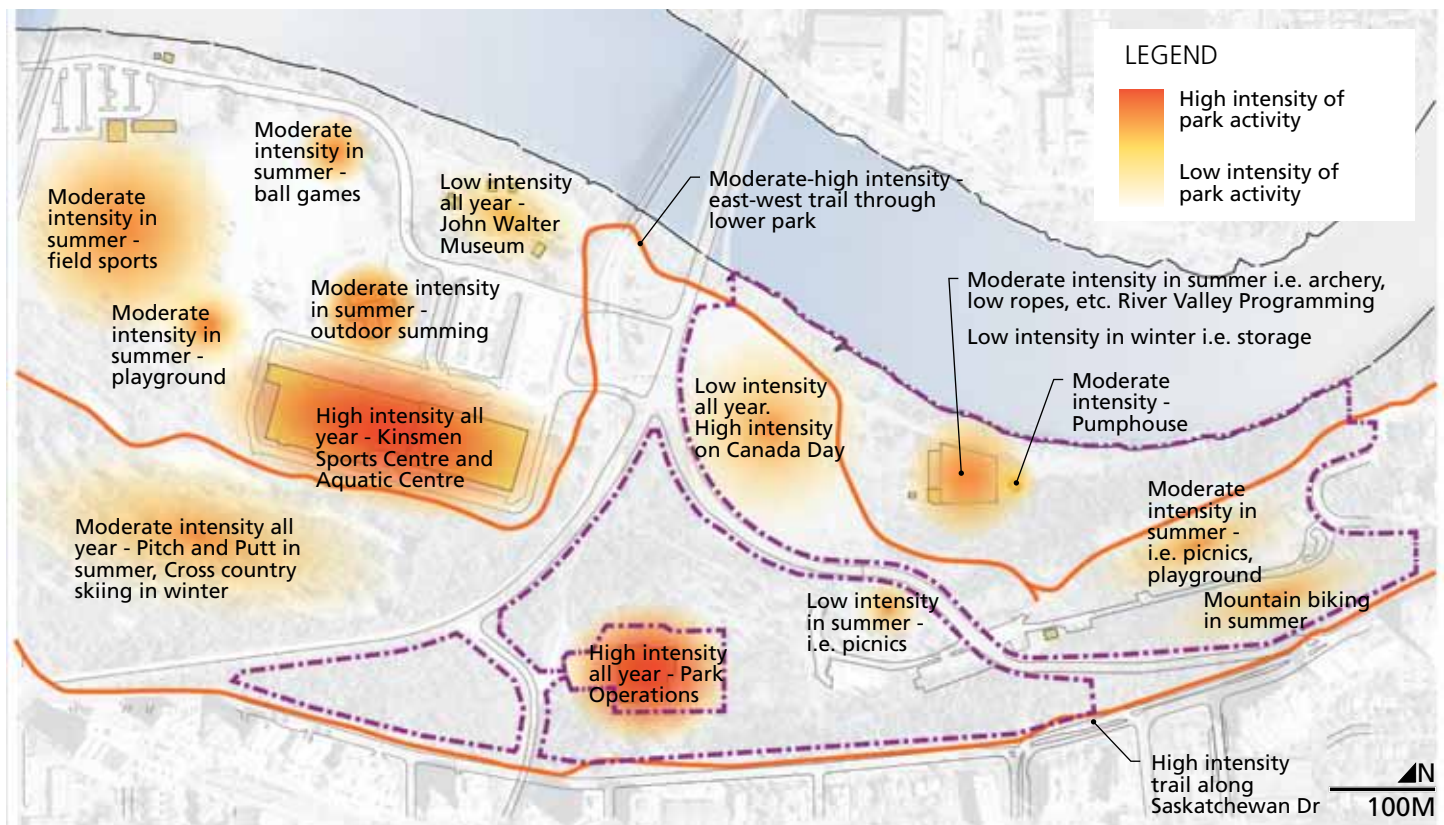


FIGURE 2.16: ACTIVITY AREAS AND RELATIVE ACTIVITY INTENSITY

2.4 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The following are some key opportunities and constraints identified based on the site inventory and analysis.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Queen Elizabeth Park is in the heart of Edmonton and is within easy walking or biking distance of a large population, the Kinsmen Sport Centre and the site of the Rossdale Power Plant (to be repurposed).
2. The park's position generally provides excellent views of the river valley, Rossdale and Downtown.
3. The park's forested and north-facing position can potentially create an extended winter recreation season, and can provide a cooler location for recreation on hot summer days.
4. The park's mature forest and understory provide wildlife habitat and offer opportunities for wildlife viewing and nature interpretation.
5. The construction of the new Walterdale Bridge creates opportunities to improve the adjacent portions of Queen Elizabeth Park, to create a downtown gateway experience along Queen Elizabeth Park Road, and to create an accessible north-south trail that connects to Saskatchewan Drive.
6. Proposed pedestrian crossings, at-grade and below the new Walterdale Bridge, present an opportunity to improve pedestrian circulation into Queen Elizabeth Park from Kinsmen Park.
7. Enhanced pedestrian routes over the new bridge may improve access to Queen Elizabeth Park from the north.
8. Dantzer's Hill is a cleared and previously-disturbed site that provides an excellent vantage point. Re-grading of Dantzer's Hill is anticipated with the development of the new Walterdale Bridge, which may present opportunities to improve the integration of this area with the rest of Queen Elizabeth Park.
9. There are several areas that are flat, relatively open, and previously disturbed, including the compound, decommissioned wastewater treatment plant, the picnic areas, and the site of the former pool. These areas would be well-suited for additional park programming.



FIGURE 2.18: KEY OPPORTUNITIES

10. Opportunities exist to define pedestrian entries at Fort Hill Road and Saskatchewan Drive and to provide entry features and wayfinding signage.
11. Connectivity within the east-west trail system may be enhanced by filling in the existing gaps and making travelling through the upper park easier.
12. Improvements to the hierarchy of spaces within the park and relationships between these spaces may greatly enhance the functionality, identity and activity in the park.
13. The site's history provides opportunities for interpretation, and can inform park design and programming (e.g. Aboriginal history).
14. Enhancements to the river bank pathway system can be made to create a unique user experience in the park.
15. A connection between the riverbank trail and existing paved multi-use trail near the northeast corner of the park is desirable to create a loop and help activate this corner of the park. The feasibility of building a trail on this embankment will require further study.



FIGURE 2.20: OPPORTUNITY 2 - EXCELLENT VIEWS OF THE VALLEY, ROSSDALE AND DOWNTOWN.



FIGURE 2.19: OPPORTUNITY 9 - EXISTING DEVELOPED OR DISTURBED AREAS ARE WELL SUITED TO ADDITIONAL PARK PROGRAMMING.



FIGURE 2.21: OPPORTUNITY 11 - FILL IN GAPS TO ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND MAKE TRAVELLING THROUGH THE UPPER PARK EASIER.

CONSTRAINTS

1. Queen Elizabeth Park Road is a one-way street that only allows direct vehicular access from the south. People wanting to drive to the park from Rossdale or downtown must access it via the High Level Bridge or Scona Road.
2. The park occupies a forested north-facing slope of the river valley, which creates a relatively cool and moist microclimate.
3. Forest cover throughout much of the park precludes good views to the river valley. Forest cover creates places for unauthorized camping in the park, giving some users the feeling of reduced safety.
4. The park is located on an outside bend of the North Saskatchewan River, which creates steep slopes, impedes access to the water, and reduces bank stability. Changes to drainage and forest cover could affect bank stability. There is a chance of flooding in the lower river terrace during high water levels.
5. The existing pedestrian crossing on Queen Elizabeth Park Road is located downhill from a blind corner, which is not conducive to creating a safe connection between the two sides of the park.
6. The retaining structure north of the O'Keefe works yard creates a dead space in the adjacent park area.
7. Steep slopes in the park make it difficult to create universally-accessible north-south trails. There is currently no accessible trail into the park from Saskatchewan Drive. The steep slopes at the east end of the park impede access to the lower river terrace.
8. Along portions of Queen Elizabeth Park Road the adjacent grades are steep, limiting the feasibility of constructing a multi-use trail that follows the edge of the road between Saskatchewan Drive and Walterdale Bridge.



FIGURE 2.22: KEY CONSTRAINTS



FIGURE 2.23: CONSTRAINT 4 - STEEP RIVER BANK IN THE PARK LIMITS THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCESS.



FIGURE 2.25: CONSTRAINT 5 - CROSSWALK BETWEEN UPPER AND LOWER PARK IS LOCATED ON A BLIND CORNER.



FIGURE 2.24: CONSTRAINT 7 - STEEP SLOPES LIMIT THE ABILITY FOR ACCESSIBLE PARK ACCESS FROM THE SOUTH.



FIGURE 2.26: CONSTRAINT 6 - RETAINING WALL AT O'KEEFE SITE CREATES A DEAD SPACE IN THE ADJACENT PARK AREA.

2.5 PROGRAMMING AND DESIGN COMPARISON

OVERVIEW

The following is a high level comparison of some successful North American parks that have a similar location and physical characteristics as Queen Elizabeth Park, and which may offer inspiration for the master plan. The following outlines a series of recommendations for the park based on this comparative analysis.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LOCATION:

Waterfront Orientation:

- The sites chosen for this analysis are all waterfront-oriented parks, either situated on rivers or on the ocean in one case (i.e. Stanley Park, Vancouver). In each example the interface with the waterfront is an valued feature of the park and a draw for people. Treatments of the shorelines range from formal to natural in character, often within the same park.
- Queen Elizabeth Park has over 600 metres of shoreline along the river, however there are few opportunities to experience the riverfront.
- **Recommendation: Provide more opportunities for people to experience being in close proximity to the water's edge and 'touch the water' in order to enhance this valuable feature of Queen Elizabeth Park.**

Accessibility:

- All of the parks studied are in central locations adjacent to a downtown core and provide a valuable opportunity to experience respite from the city.
- **Recommendation: Improve access to the park from adjacent neighbourhoods and enhance connectivity with the river valley trail system to encourage use and support Queen Elizabeth Park's role as a welcome respite from the city.**

HISTORY:

- Each of the parks selected has recognized their site's unique and rich history, including their long-standing First Nations history. The parks have sought to reveal and communicate these stories to help visitors learn, connect with and appreciate the park in a more meaningful way.
- **Recommendation: Acknowledge the site-specific history of Queen Elizabeth Park to contribute to a richer visitor experience.**

FEATURES:

Trail networks:

- All of the parks studied have trail networks comprised of paved, multi-use trails and gravel paths.
- Queen Elizabeth Park has formal multi-use trails that connect with the river valley trail system as well as informal single-track trails used primarily by mountain bikers.
- **Recommendation: Improve the trail system within the park by expanding the network, creating trail loops, and filling existing gaps to contribute to Queen Elizabeth Park being an accessible and well-connected destination in the river valley.**

Park amenities:

- Successful parks have amenities such as washrooms, drinking fountains, and places to purchase refreshments.
- **Recommendation: In order to support user comfort in Queen Elizabeth Park, add and upgrade amenities for park users in conjunction with increased programming.**

Ecological protection:

- Successful parks include ecological areas with informal planting and/or forests that provide beauty and year-round interest.
- **Recommendation: Conserve and enhance the existing forest ecology while providing new native planting for habitat value, improved access to nature, and opportunities for education and stewardship to foster visitors' appreciation of the ecosystem.**

Diverse program options:

- Each of the successful parks studied offers a wide range of programming options to appeal to visitors of all ages and abilities. In order to support a wide variety of activities and experiences a hierarchy of spaces is provided, from large and open spaces to quiet and intimate spaces. The character of park areas also vary from formal to natural.
- **Recommendation: Incorporate a wide range of different activities and experiences throughout Queen Elizabeth Park to help it become a successful destination park for all Edmontonians.**

QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

Location: Edmonton, AB

Size: 10.9 Hectares

LOCATION:

- Riverfront (North Saskatchewan River)
- Part of an extensive system of river valley parks
- Bisected by a two-lane arterial road leading into the downtown core

HISTORY:

- Traditional territory of several First Nations
- Traditional meeting grounds and industrial uses
- Park opened in 1909

FEATURES:

- Multi-use trails connected to river valley trail system
- Unsanctioned single track trails used for mountain biking, hiking and trail running
- Stair access to Strathcona
- Forest/natural character
- Year-round activity
- Washrooms
- Drinking fountains
- Picnic sites
- Playground
- Views of the river valley and downtown skyline
- Varied topography with steep slopes and rolling terraces
- Team-building programs for youth (archery, low-ropes)



Image: Space2place



Image: Space2place



Image: Space2place

PRINCE'S ISLAND PARK, CALGARY

Location: Calgary, Alberta

Size: 20 Hectares

LOCATION:

- Island in the Bow River
- Central location, bordering downtown
- Provides an escape from downtown

HISTORY:

- Developed as a park in the 1950s
- Renovation approved in 1999 (wetland construction and native plant restoration)

FEATURES:

- Manicured areas and naturalized areas
- Year-round use
- Interpretive/educational elements (wildlife, habitat and water quality)
- Host to many festivals and events
- Picnic areas
- Playground
- Canoe access to the river
- Pathway and hiking trails
- Pedestrian bridges
- Flower gardens
- Environmental education pathway
- Washrooms (seasonal)
- Water fountains (seasonal)
- Cross-country skiing (seasonal)
- Outdoor skating on the lagoon (seasonal)
- River Café (full service restaurant, closed each January)
- On-leash park (no dogs allowed on Canada Day and Heritage Day due to event participant volume)

RECENT ACCOLADES:

- Ranked #1 in a list of Calgary's most Beautiful Places (Spacing Magazine, June 2011)

INSPIRATION FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK:

A popular park for its trails and open space, high quality amenities and central location between downtown and residential neighbourhoods. It supports a diverse mix of programming, ecological habitat and education opportunities.



Image: Flickr user dmjarvey (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user vill3r (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user RogKenn (creative commons)

THE FORKS, WINNIPEG

Location: Winnipeg, Manitoba

Size: 5.5 Hectares

LOCATION:

- Riverfront (Red River and Assiniboine River)
- Downtown location

HISTORY:

- 6000 year history of First Nations settlement
- Traditionally a meeting place for Aboriginal peoples, European fur traders, Metis buffalo hunters, Scottish settlers, riverboat workers, railway pioneers and tens of thousands of immigrants.

FEATURES:

- National historic site
- Meeting place
- Green space
- Cultural landscape
- Year-round use
- River walk
- Restaurants
- Market
- Entertainment and events
- Attractions that encompass the site's natural, historic and man-made features
- Skateboard park

RECENT ACCOLADES:

- Ranked #1 in a list of Canada's top public spaces (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2012)

INSPIRATION FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK:

A traditional meeting place that has evolved into a popular and lively destination within the city through the development of a variety of amenities, high-quality spaces and diverse programming throughout the year.



Image: Flickr user Xiaohuli (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user Travy (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user Christina Matheson (creative commons)

STANLEY PARK, VANCOUVER

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia

Size: 404.9 Hectares

LOCATION:

- Waterfront (peninsula surrounded by the Pacific Ocean)
- Urban park bordering downtown / 'urban oasis'
- Three-lane causeway bisects park

HISTORY:

- Traditional territory of several First Nations groups
- Traditional location for gathering food and materials
- Park opened in 1888

FEATURES:

- Seawall
- Paved and unpaved trails for pedestrian and wheeled recreation
- Forest/natural character
- Year-round activity
- Aquarium
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Beaches
- Miniature train
- Washrooms
- Drinking fountains
- Tennis courts
- Lookouts
- Restaurants and concession stands
- Park roads with parallel parking and several parking lots

RECENT ACCOLADES:

- Designated National Historic Site of Canada
- 16th best park in the world, 6th best in North America (Project for Public Spaces, 2004)

INSPIRATION FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK:

Although it is much larger and not on a river, Stanley Park has some features in common with Queen Elizabeth Park (i.e. forest character, water's edge, multi-use and nature trails, views, green oasis next to downtown). Stanley Park is widely recognized as a great city park, and is a good example of a park that strives to protect and restore the forest ecosystem while integrating human activities (i.e. trails, selected nodes of activity). Permanent installations by Aboriginal carvers and artists are featured in prominent locations.



Image: Flickr user allyhook (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user It_paris (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user Paul Schultz (creative commons)

WATERFRONT PARK, LOUISVILLE

Location: Louisville, Kentucky

Size: 34.4 Hectares

LOCATION:

- Riverfront (Ohio River)
- Bordering downtown and the river
- Activity centre for the downtown community
- A former road within the park was re-routed to the edge of the park

HISTORY:

- Site was traditionally used by Native American cultures for 12,000 years, and colonized in the late 17th century
- Phase 1 of the park opened in 1999, Phase 2 opened in 2004, and Phase 3 opened in 2009

FEATURES:

- Lawn areas, large and small events (25 - 350,000)
- Wharf and festival plaza (used by visiting riverboats and transient boaters)
- Walking, biking and running paths,
- Promenade
- Pedestrian and bicycle bridge
- Picnic areas
- Play areas and water play areas
- Year-round activity
- Lincoln memorial
- Gardens
- Water feature
- Amphetheatre
- Crab shack
- Parking (several small, unobtrusive lots within the park)

RECENT ACCOLADES:

- Design Honour Award (American Society of Landscape Architects 2001)

INSPIRATION FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK:

- A traditional Aboriginal territory that has recently been transformed into a successful riverfront park bordering downtown. Parking is provided in several small, unobtrusive lots within the park and an extensive network of trails and paths links a series of activity nodes together. Slopes, terraces and an amphitheatre create opportunities for enjoying views and events.



Image: Flickr user flickrized (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user merfam (creative commons)



Image: Flickr user wblo (creative commons)



03 PUBLIC CONSULTATION
SERIES 1:
IDEA GATHERING

3.1 PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

DATE: April 18, 2012, 6:30 to 8:30pm

LOCATION: Old Timers' Cabin, 9430 Scona Road

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 40

MEETING PURPOSE:

The workshop was held to gather information from the community and identify important issues to consider in the park plan. The information was documented and analyzed to identify patterns and consistent threads. The results were used in combination with other sources (survey results, City policies, needs assessment) to inform the development of a park vision, mission, and guiding principles. A summary will be presented back to the public at Workshop #2 for confirmation and feedback.

MEETING OVERVIEW:

The meeting began with introductions, an overview of the planning process, and a review of opportunities for public participation. A "memory map" activity was undertaken individually to help participants begin thinking about the park and where its "heart" is located. A review of the park inventory and site analysis to date was presented. This was followed by an idea-gathering group discussion activity, whereby participants organized themselves into 10 groups and each group answered the following questions about the park:

1. **What is MEMORABLE about Queen Elizabeth Park?**
2. **What do you want to CHANGE about the Park?**
3. **What ACTIVITIES would you like to be able to do or see in Queen Elizabeth Park? (now and in the future)**

Participants voted on their own ideas and the ideas of other groups, which enabled the development of a relative ranking of the value of each idea. Answers were similar for questions 2 and 3, so they were grouped together for the analysis.

The opposing page shows "word clouds" of keywords that were mentioned in the answers to questions 1 and 2/3. The size of the word reflects how often it was cited in the written answers.



WORD CLOUD* FOR QUESTION: "WHAT IS MEMORABLE ABOUT QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK?"



WORD CLOUD* FOR QUESTION: "WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK?" "WHAT ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO OR SEE AT QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK?"



*The size of the word reflects how often it was cited in written answers during the group activity

SUMMARY OF THEMES:

The following are general themes and recommendations that emerged from the group discussion activity.

IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO AND FROM THE PARK FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

- Improve pedestrian and cyclist access to and from the park.
- Ensure universally-accessible walkways that connect to Kinsmen Park, Fort Hill Road, and Saskatchewan Drive.
- Improve transit access.

IMPROVE THE PATHWAY NETWORK WITHIN THE PARK FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

- Improve the safety of the pedestrian crosswalk across Queen Elizabeth Park Road or develop a grade-separated crossing.
- Provide a variety of clearly-marked trails including trails along the river and through the forest.
- Provide pedestrian- and cyclist-oriented activities.
- Provide better delineation of walking and biking trails.
- The park should be safe for people to use after dark (e.g. using lighting, foot patrols).

PROVIDE YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PARK

- Hiking / walking, running, and biking are the most popular activities in the park.
- Desirable new summer activities include bike trails (including biking, single-track trails, and multi-use trails), a mountain Bike Skills Park, and frisbee golf course.
- Ideas for new or enhanced winter activities include snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and skating (including skating rink, and skating "road" / path).

PROVIDE A HIERARCHY OF SPACES WITHIN THE PARK TO ALLOW FOR A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

- Provide places for festivals and events, including the possible creation of an amphitheatre on Dantzer's Hill
- Provide places for play, including a natural and/or "old fashioned" playground, and a small water-play area for children
- Provide picnicking / social spaces, some of which are connected to quiet natural areas

PROVIDE AMENITIES THAT SUPPORT COMFORT

- Improve site furnishings, including lighting, water fountains, benches, and more garbage cans.
- Upgrade washrooms with improve wayfinding signage to locate them.
- Explore providing food and refreshments.
- Explore establishment of year-round pavilion / shelter

IDENTIFY IMPORTANT POINTS WITHIN THE PARK TO TELL STORIES OF THE SITE AND APPRECIATE VIEWS

- Expand interpretation of the site's history and features, including Aboriginal history and use of the area, the old pool site, environmental history, and history of the O'Keefe site.
- Improve signage.
- Create nodes and landmarks to mark important points in the park, including places to view downtown and the river valley.

ENHANCE AND CELEBRATE THE ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF THE PARK

- Maintain the site's natural beauty and natural history, while providing more educational and interpretive opportunities to understand the site's features and ecosystems.
- Preserve significant natural areas within the park, including old trees and wetlands.
- Enhance existing vegetation and facilitate wildlife movement (e.g. wildlife overpass).
- Maintain the "sanctuary"-like qualities of the park.
- Create or enhance new gardening opportunities (e.g. urban orchard, flower gardens, community garden, etc.).

For detailed results from the Public Workshop #1, please see Appendix A3.

3.2 PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY #1

DATE: Survey period from April 19 to May 2, 2012

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 473

SURVEY PURPOSE:

The purpose of the online survey was to complement Workshop #1, whereby information was gathered to identify important issues and common themes. The survey represents a “convenience” sampling of river valley park users, and is not scientific; thus, the results do not necessarily reflect general public opinion. One of the questions was targeted to understand people’s support of a bike skills facility, so there may have been more respondents from the mountain biking community.

The results were used in combination with other sources (workshop results, City policies, needs assessment) to inform the development of a park vision, mission, and guiding principles. This summary will be presented back to the public at Workshop #2 for confirmation and feedback.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The online survey was active for a two-week period following Public Workshop #1, and the survey was answered by 473 people. The following summaries highlight the survey findings.

Survey respondents were not obliged to complete the entire survey, so the number of responses for each question was highly variable (from under 100 to over 400). The number of question responses is reported with the results.

For several questions respondents were able to select one or more answer choices; for these questions answer popularity is reported with the actual number of responses given in parentheses instead of percentages. For questions where respondents could only one answer, percentages are reported.

For complete responses to the Public Online Survey #1, please see Appendix A4.

ADVERTISING OF THE ONLINE SURVEY

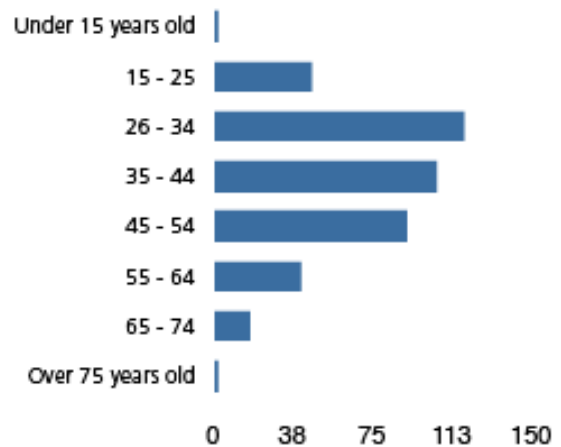
The online survey was advertised using traditional (newspaper, posters, park sign, road sign) and electronic methods (City of Edmonton website, Facebook, Twitter, email).

Most respondents reported learning about the project (and the survey in particular) through an email invitation (125 responses), followed by word of mouth (101), Facebook (99), the City of Edmonton website (90), and the road sign (71). The newspaper advertisement, posters, Twitter, and the park sign were the least effective at promoting the project.

ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS

AGE GROUP

Survey participants spanned a wide age range, with a relatively even distribution of people between 26 and 55 years of age (28% were between 26 and 34, 25% were between 35 and 45, and 22% were between 45 and 55).



NEIGHBOURHOOD OF RESIDENCE

Almost half (44%) of the respondents, who provided their neighbourhood of residence, reported being from neighbourhoods in close proximity to the park (including 22% from Strathcona/Mill Creek, 5% from Garneau, and 10% from Downtown, amongst others). The remainder of respondents were generally from neighbourhoods located on the south side of the City.

GROUP AFFILIATION

The majority of the question respondents were not affiliated with any park activity groups (185 responses). Those who were associated with a group mentioned cyclists (100), mountain bikers (100), runners (91), dog walkers (59), and nature enthusiasts (38).

CURRENT USE OF PARK

USE OF THE PARK BY SEASON AND TIME OF DAY

Most question respondents visit Queen Elizabeth Park an average of 1 to 4 times per month in the summer (41%), and many visit between 5 and 15 times per month (32%). Most respondents do not visit the park in winter (47%) or visit an average of 1 to 4 times (38%).

During the summer 50% of respondents spend more than 30 minutes in the park (per visit), while 34% just pass through (e.g. biking through). In winter 55% of respondents pass through, and 28% spend more than 30 minutes.

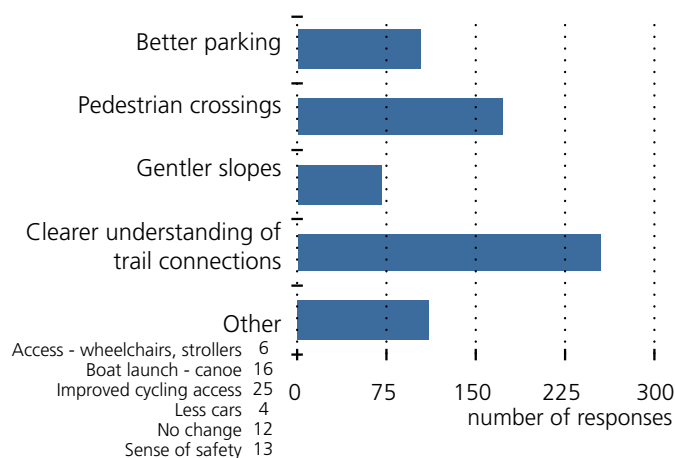
Weekend afternoons are the most popular time to use the park (326 responses), followed by weekday evenings (224 responses). The fewest respondents visit during weekday mornings (98 responses).

ACCESSING THE PARK

Respondents indicated that providing a clearer understanding of where trails connect or lead would enable them to visit the park more often (255 responses). The second-most important change would be to provide better pedestrian street crossings (173 responses).

The majority of respondents access Queen Elizabeth Park by bicycle (302 responses). This is somewhat unexpected considering that most river valley parks users access these parks by personal vehicle (River Valley Trails and Parks Satisfaction Survey, 2008). The second-most popular way of accessing the park is by foot (258 responses), followed by personal vehicle (192 responses). Eleven people reported accessing the park by canoe.

Q6. WHAT CHANGES TO PARK ACCESS MIGHT ENABLE YOU TO VISIT THE PARK MORE OFTEN?



Most respondents visit the park with 1 to 3 other people, although many visit the park by themselves.

CURRENT PARK ACTIVITIES

Walking (350 responses), hiking / trail running (250), recreational cycling (241 responses) and jogging (208 responses) are currently the most popular activities at Queen Elizabeth Park. Mountain biking (164 responses) and commuter cycling (106 responses) are also popular.

Picnicking and Canada Day events (e.g. watching fireworks) are tied in popularity (162 responses each). "People watching" (91 responses), accessing the river (73 responses), and bird watching (63 responses) are other activities reported.

Other activities that take place at the park include tobogganing, orienteering, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and using the playground.

IDEAS FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

DESIRED PARK ACTIVITIES

Most people wish to continue walking and hiking at Queen Elizabeth Park in the future (183 responses).

People are also interested in doing more picnicking, tobogganing, accessing the river, bird watching, and orienteering than they currently do in the park.

Of the list of potential activities or opportunities to be enhanced in the park, the top five of interest were: more summer activities, improved amenities (e.g. washrooms), accessible trails, winter activities, and small events. The five activities of least interest were orienteering, art installations / displays, enhancing views of the downtown skyline, more seating / viewing areas, and opportunities for sports.

NEW IDEAS FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

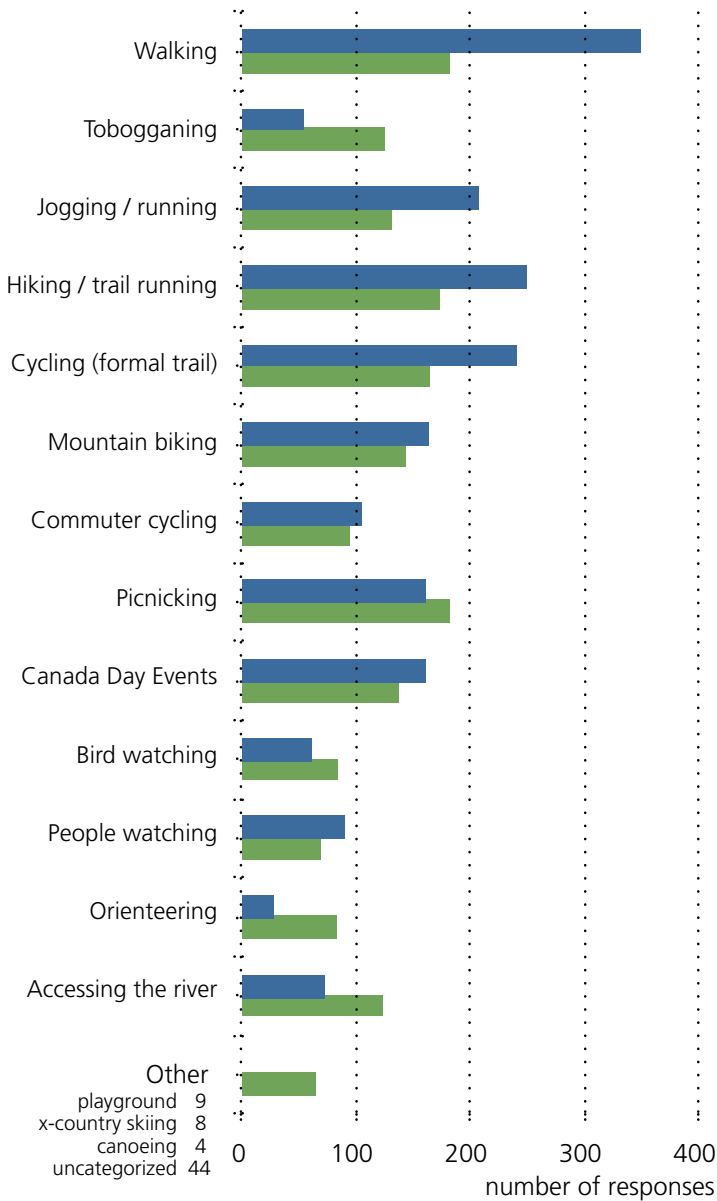
Respondents were asked to suggest new activities for Queen Elizabeth Park. Answers were assigned to one or more categories to simplify analysis of results.

As displayed in the table on the following page, the most popular ideas for new or enhanced park activities included: bike skills trails / features, trails (general), winter activities, play features, and a canoe launch / paddling activities.

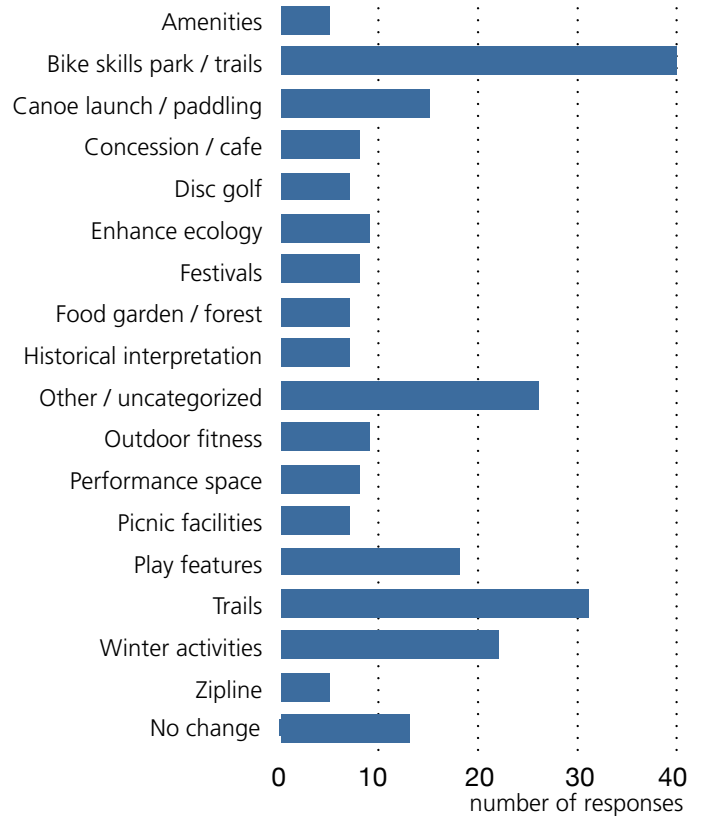
The next most popular sentiment was to not have any change in the park. People who expressed this notion want to see the park remain in its relatively natural condition with predominantly passive activities (walking, biking, picnicking).

Q11. HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN SEEING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES OR OPPORTUNITIES ENHANCED IN THE PARK?

- Currently do this in the park
- Would like to do this in the future



Q12. WE'RE LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK. ARE THERE DIFFERENT, UNIQUE, OR NEW TYPES OF ACTIVITIES THAT YOU THINK WOULD FIT WELL IN QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK?



GROUP PROGRAMMING

Queen Elizabeth Park currently offers archery and a low ropes challenge course for groups. Respondents were asked whether they were interested in other group programming opportunities or activities, and if so, what types.

The majority (76%) of respondents did not want to see other group programming or were undecided. Twenty-four percent of respondents had suggestions, and these included biking, canoeing, improved ropes facilities, cross country skiing, and nature interpretation.

INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

Of the interpretive themes listed (geography / environmental characteristics, archaeology, culture, and wildlife), geography / environmental characteristics was the most frequently selected (316 responses). Archaeology was the second most popular, and there were many respondents who suggested themes related to history as well (e.g. history of Edmonton, Aboriginal history of the area / park).

WHAT PEOPLE VALUE, FIND UNIQUE, OR FIND MEMORABLE ABOUT THE PARK

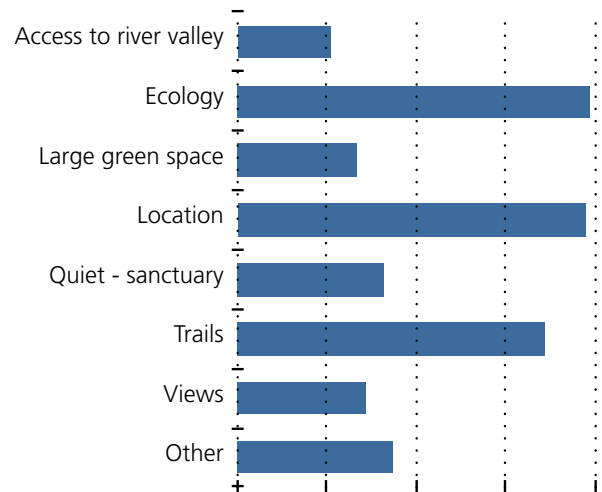
Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions about what they value about the park, what they think makes Queen Elizabeth Park unique among the other river valley parks, and what they think is memorable about Queen Elizabeth Park. Answers were assigned to one or more categories to simplify analysis of results.

Respondents have the highest VALUE for the **ecology** of the park (79 responses) and its **location** (78), followed by **trails** (69). People also value the quiet, sanctuary-like qualities of the park, the views, and that it allows them access to the river valley.

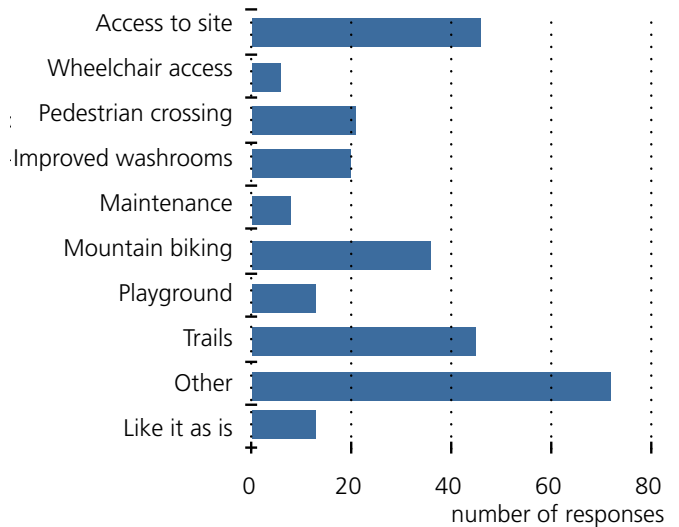
With respect to what makes Queen Elizabeth Park **UNIQUE** in comparison to other parks in the river valley, most respondents cited its **location in the heart of the city** (75 responses). Its quietness, views, and topography were also mentioned.

The three most **MEMORABLE** elements of the park include the **old pool** (60 responses), **picnicking** (44), and **mountain biking** (28). Other memorable elements include walks, views, experiencing the river valley, experiencing nature, and watching fireworks.

Q15. WHAT DO YOU VALUE (OR LIKE THE MOST) ABOUT QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK?



Q19. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE?



KEEP, ENHANCE, CHANGE, OR IMPROVE

Respondents were asked two open-ended questions about what they would like to keep / enhance about the park, and what they would like to change or improve. Again, answers were assigned to one or more categories to simplify analysis of results.

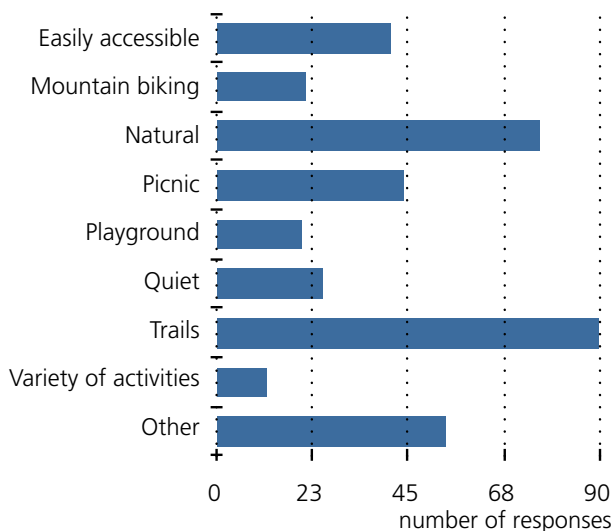
People cited **natural habitat** (93 responses) and **trails** (93) as the features they would most like to KEEP or ENHANCE in Queen Elizabeth Park. Other features listed included mountain biking, picnic areas, the park's quietness, river access, and the playground.

Three features that respondents would most like to CHANGE or IMPROVE about the park include **site access** (46 responses), **trails** (45 responses for trails in general, 36 responses for mountain biking trails), and the **pedestrian crossing** across Queen Elizabeth Park Road (21). Other desired changes are to the washrooms, playground, site maintenance, and wheelchair access.

THE IDEAL PARK

The most frequently mentioned feature of respondents' ideal park is the presence of trails (90 responses) and that it is "natural" (76 responses). An ideal park is also one that has easy access, offers picnic opportunities, and is quiet. For several respondents it is where they can go mountain biking, go to a playground, or engage in a variety of other activities.

Q20. DESCRIBE YOUR IDEAL PARK.



IDEA FOR BIKE SKILLS FACILITY IN THE PARK

The public survey asked respondents about their level of support for a bike skills facility in Queen Elizabeth Park, as the park has been identified in the City's Wheeled Recreation Destination Strategy as a potential location for such a facility.

Overall, 67% of respondents support or strongly support the development of a bike skills facility at Queen Elizabeth Park.

The level of support for a bike skills facility varied amongst mountain bikers, cyclists, and non-cyclists. Thirty-five percent of respondents mountain bike, and among this group 85% support or strongly support a bike skills facility.

Sixty-three percent of respondents do some form of cycling (including mountain biking, commuting and recreational cycling). Of this group, 77% support or strongly support a bike skills facility.

Of the 37% of respondents who do not do any form of cycling, 51% support or strongly support a bike skills facility, 24% do not support it, and the remaining 25% were undecided.

For comparison, there were slightly fewer cyclists who responded to the survey (63%) compared to the number of people who reported cycling (69%) in the river valley, based on the 2008 River Valley Satisfaction survey.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF MOUNTAIN BIKERS SURVEYED

Of the 139 people who reported mountain biking and who provided their age, the majority (64%) are between the ages of 26 and 44, with 14% under 26 and 20% over 44 years old.

Only twenty-one percent of these respondents live in nearby neighbourhoods (Strathcona, Rosedale, Cloverdale, Garneau, Mill Creek, Ritchie, Queen Alexander, Riverside, Strathearn, Bonnie Doon, McKernan, Downtown and Oliver), indicating that the majority travel to the site from some distance.

These characteristics are not reflective of the wider mountain biking community in Edmonton, as this was not a scientific survey, but they do give some suggestion of the broad popularity of mountain biking across ages.

3.3 ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY MEETING #1

DATE: May 17, 2012, 5:00 to 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Wicahitowin Offices, 10650 - 113th Street, Edmonton

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 9

Representation from:
Wicahitowin Secretariat
Wicahitowin Arts & Culture Circle
Wicahitowin Youth Circle
Papaschase First Nation
Aboriginal Relations Office, City of Edmonton
Turtle Island Cultural Resource Management

MEETING RATIONALE:

A need to engage the Aboriginal community in Edmonton as part of the planning process was determined for two reasons.

First, there is historical significance of the area around Queen Elizabeth Park for Aboriginal peoples. Queen Elizabeth Park is located across the North Saskatchewan River from Rosedale which was a gathering place for Aboriginal peoples, the site of Fort Edmonton in the early 1800s, and which includes the Fort Edmonton Cemetery & Traditional Burial Grounds. Additionally, archaeological sites have been documented on the south bank of the river within the park's boundaries.

Second, due to a history of omission from civic participation, public workshops are not usually well attended by Aboriginal citizens. As such, meaningful engagement with Aboriginal communities typically requires outreach efforts, and provides an important perspective for projects in areas of high historical and cultural significance.

The Aboriginal Community Workshop brought together members of the urban Aboriginal community interested in the history and future of Queen Elizabeth Park.

MEETING PURPOSE:

This meeting was held to gather information and identify important issues for consideration. The results from this workshop were used in combination with other sources (public workshop, online survey results, City policies, needs assessment) to inform the development of the park's vision, mission, and guiding principles.

MEETING OVERVIEW:

The meeting began with introductions, an overview of the master planning process, and a review of opportunities for public participation. A "memory map" activity was undertaken individually to help participants begin thinking about the park and where its "heart" is located. A review of the park inventory and site analysis to date was presented. This was followed by a general discussion that was framed around the following questions:

1. **What is MEMORABLE about Queen Elizabeth Park?**
2. **What do you want to CHANGE about the Park?**
3. **What ACTIVITIES would you like to be able to do or see in Queen Elizabeth Park? (now and in the future)**

MEETING SUMMARY:

Participants identified a number of **memorable qualities** about Queen Elizabeth Park and the area, including:

- Feeling of being in the country / in nature while in the heart of the city
- Former Queen Elizabeth pool
- Use of site's forest for traditional plant medicines and other ethnobotanical uses
- Presence of trees that have been culturally modified, reflecting historic First Nations activities
- Site's location near the historical boundary between the Cree and Blackfoot territories
- Possibility that ancient Aboriginal burials and other archaeological features on the site
- Documented memories of Aboriginal drumming in the park area - "There was not a time where you did not fall asleep with drums drumming" (quote from historical publication)
- Site's location within a larger Aboriginal settlement hub (in addition to the Fox Farms area, Rundle Park, and Rabbit Hill Park, among others).
- Historical importance of the adjacent North Saskatchewan River as a transportation route prior to the establishment of the railway.

Desirable new **park programs** identified by some participants included:

- Youth activities
- Activities for children
- Splash park
- Skateboarding
- Ethnobotanical garden
- Aboriginal storytelling, fire circle events
- Concerts
- Festivals
- Pow wows (possibly indoors or covered if a building / structure was established)
- Bird watching
- Photography
- Events for National Aboriginal Day

Desirable new **park amenities** identified by some participants included:

- Seating
- Lighting
- Drinking water
- Capacity for sound system
- Possible structure to accommodate events

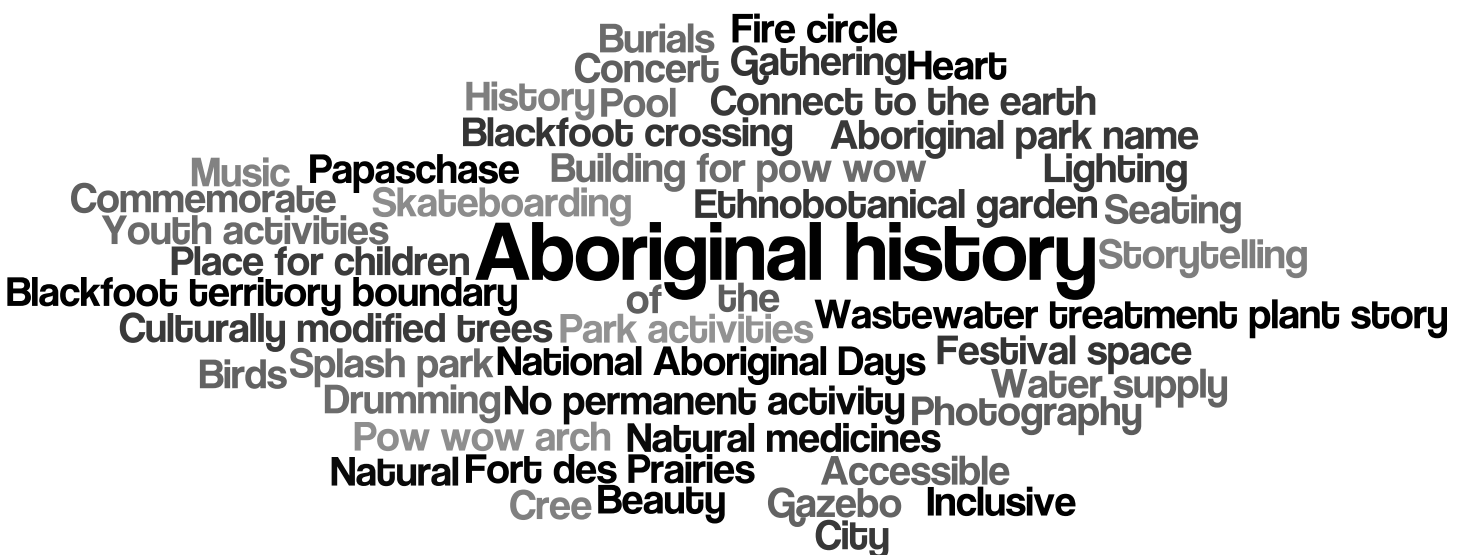
A number of themes were discussed related to **heritage interpretation** of the site and area, including the following:

- Identification of potential archaeological features within Queen Elizabeth Park
- Story of the Papaschase First Nations Band
- History related to proximity of site along territorial boundary between the Blackfoot and Cree First Nations Bands
- History of wastewater treatment plant

Other comments:

- Important for site to be inclusive and accessible
- A suggestion was made for giving this park an Aboriginal name
- Recognition that a focus on the natural elements of the park is important
- Recognition that there should be multiple places in the city to celebrate Aboriginal culture

For detailed results from the Aboriginal Community Meeting #1, please see Appendix A5.



“Word cloud” capturing the keywords and ideas expressed at the workshop

3.4 INTERNAL WORKSHOP #1

DATE:

JANUARY 18, 2012

LOCATION:

CN Tower, room 1190

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 15

MEETING PURPOSE:

To gather internal stakeholders' ideas, understand issues about the park, and assess programming requirements and other needs.

ATTENDEES:

Representatives from various City departments, including:

Jim Black - City Landscape Architect

Karina Ma - River Valley Programming

Tyler Pollock - Civic Events Office (events in river valley with outside partners)

Wayne Sager - Leader River Valley Operations (washrooms, pool, picnic sites. etc)

Allen Waddell - Leader River Valley Trail Operations

Darrell Malayko - South District Park Operations (O'Keefe Yard)

Zanette Frost - Great Neighbourhoods (Wards 6 & 8)

Darrell Nordell - CRC, Rosedale (north)

Diane Dunn - CRC, Strathcona (south)

Debbie Cashion-Kalinowski - Project Manager for Kinsmen Sports Centre Master Plan

Darren Grove - Park Ranger (Lead)

James Thomson - Facility + Partner Development

Michelle Hartlaub - Planner II, River Valley Park and Facility Development

Project consultant team:

Jeff Cutler - space2place design inc.

Mike Teed - space2place design inc.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Priority issues that emerged from the stakeholder discussion fell under the themes of connectivity, activities, experience, maintenance, and the Walterdale Bridge replacement.

CONNECTIVITY:

- Pedestrian connectivity between upper and lower Queen Elizabeth Park across Queen Elizabeth Park Road needs reworking to enhance pedestrian safety.
- Improve connections to Kinsmen Park immediately west of Queen Elizabeth Park, where there is a concentration of recreation and leisure facilities that are actively programmed.
- Fill obvious gaps in the river valley trail system.
- Improve connections into the park from the south
- Tie into multi-use paths proposed in the Walterdale Bridge project

ACTIVITIES:

- The park is primarily a passive use park that is generally considered more of a thoroughfare than a destination.
- Informal activities include walking, jogging, biking and picnicking.
- Programs run by River Valley Programming (including archery, low ropes and other team building activities) are based out of the Queen Elizabeth Park Compound. These activities attract approximately 4000 participants per year and are the primary type of organized programming in the park.
- There is a desire for more (year-round) programming and event space in Queen Elizabeth Park

EXPERIENCE:

- Queen Elizabeth Park is recognized for its unique and central location in the river valley.
- The park extends from the table lands to the river with terrain that varies from flat to steeply sloping. The hair-pin turn at the SE entry emphasizes the river valley escarpment.
- The park has large forested areas and several open areas linked by paths.
- The park has excellent views of the river valley and the downtown skyline. Viewpoints along Saskatchewan Drive are partially or wholly obscured by vegetation.
- On Canada Day each year, the park is closed to traffic and filled with spectators who watch fireworks.

MAINTENANCE:

- Park Operations is acknowledged as playing an important role in maintaining the park for year-round use and enjoyment.
- The required planning study to determine a permanent site for a river valley works yard has yet to be undertaken.
- Adequate space and convenient access are key criteria for a works yard
- The O'Keefe site is used by the City for storing archives and functions as a works yard for South District Park Operations. The O'Keefe site is currently at capacity.

WALTERDALE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT:

- The proposed replacement of the bridge and bridgehead will significantly change the northwest corner of the park.
- The bridge approach will move eastward into Queen Elizabeth Park and will be 3-4m higher than existing, requiring substantial regrading of the area including Dantzer's Hill
- The convergence of Walterdale Hill northwest and Queen Elizabeth Park Road will result in an at-grade crosswalk over each road.
- The preliminary bridge plans show consideration for improved access to the river bank.

Pedestrian Access across Queen Elizabeth park drive is poor. Bad visibility.
 East side of bridge will have a shared use path. Multiple paths on both sides Min 4m.
 - Old bridge coming out.
 - If main crossing is at grade will include lights.
 - Not a strong desire to cross Walterdale hill NW.
 - Multiple trail on North of Walterdale hill Rd.
 - intent for additional parking @ Kinsman site
 - tie in with epcor site
 - potential for water taxi to tie in city parks
 - strong community interest in Queen Park site.
 - Mountain Bikers interested @ site
 - dirt jump skills nearby.

Potential for winter experience.
 - take advantage of city skyline.
 - great atmosphere
 - also create intimate spaces for flexibility & variety of events.
 - Hair pin turn creates a unique experience.
 - Emphasize the river valley the hairpin helps you notice the valley.

For detailed results of the Internal Workshop #1, please see Appendix A2.

3.5 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION SERIES #1

	INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP	PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1	PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY #1	ABORIGINAL WORKSHOP
<p>PRINCIPLES THAT EMERGED FROM CONSULTATION EVENT</p> <p>(COMMON PRINCIPLES ARE BOLDED)</p>	<p>Connections to adjacent river valley parks, accessible entry to park from south</p> <p>Safe pedestrian crossing between upper and lower parks</p> <p>Activities - mostly passive now, opportunity for more year-round programming and event space</p> <p>Experience - park is valued for ecology (forest), central location, views</p> <p>Maintenance - currently the compound is used by River Valley Operations and O'Keefe Yard is used by District Park Operations, but other sites may be more appropriate</p> <p>Walterdale Bridge replacement - new plans show consideration for access to river</p>	<p>Accessible connections to and from the park for pedestrians and cyclists</p> <p>Safe pedestrian crossing between upper and lower parks</p> <p>Year-round activities within the park</p> <p>Enhance and celebrate the ecological character of the park</p> <p>Amenities that support comfort</p> <p>Identify important points within the park to tell stories of the site and appreciate views</p> <p>Hierarchy of spaces within the park</p> <p>Activities for children</p> <p>General support for bike park</p>	<p>Clear trail connections</p> <p>Safe pedestrian crossing between upper and lower parks</p> <p>Enhanced year-round activities, including walking, mountain biking, picnicking, play features, winter sports, and small events.</p> <p>Enhanced amenities</p> <p>Ecological character is maintained and enhanced</p> <p>Pedestrian-oriented access and activities</p> <p>Interpretation of site's environmental characteristics and human history stories</p>	<p>Park activities to include children, youth, Aboriginal community, special events</p> <p>Enhanced park amenities to support comfort and programs</p> <p>Recognize and tell stories of site's historical importance to Aboriginal community (territory boundary, ethnobotanical uses, Aboriginal settlement and burial in area)</p>