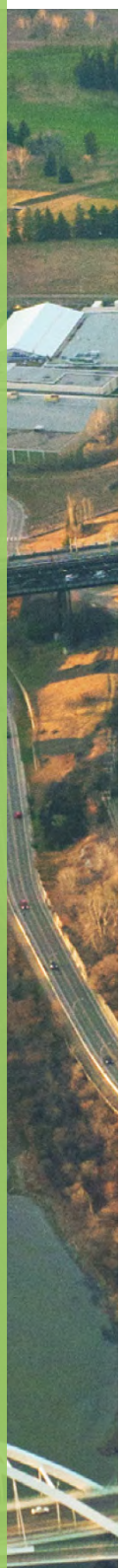
What We Did & What We Heard Report: Touch the Water Promenade Stage Two



SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

April 2021

edmonton.ca/**touchthewater**

Background

Project at a glance	
Name	Touch the Water Promenade project Engagement Stage Two: Draft Vision & Concept Design Options Review
Engagement opportunity and information shared	The Engaged Edmonton online platform was live from November 9 – November 30, 2020 and included project information and feedback opportunities: + Project Video and Information Booklet (after November 9, 2020) + Quick Polls (November 9 to 30, 2020) + Online Survey (November 9 to 30, 2020) + Ideas Board and Question Form (November 9 to 30, 2020) + Frequently Asked Questions Document (after November 9, 2020) + Video Flyover of Project Area (after November 9, 2020) Virtual stakeholder meetings and workshops were held with 35 groups in November and December 2020. A newsletter was mailed to residents in surrounding communities, including Rossdale, Glenora and Oliver, the week of November 9. From November 9 – November 30, 2020 notification included: + Project announcements on the City's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts + Five road signs at major arterial roadways and bridges in and around the project area + Twenty yard signs along River Valley Road and the adjacent shared use path, within the project area

Territorial Acknowledgement

The City of Edmonton acknowledges the traditional land on which we reside is in Treaty Six Territory. We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as nêhiyaw (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga (Nakota Sioux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Dené Peoples. We also acknowledge this as the Métis' homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel.

It is a welcoming place for all Peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home. Together we call upon all of our collective, honoured traditions and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations

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What We Heard & What We Did Report: Touch the Water Promenade

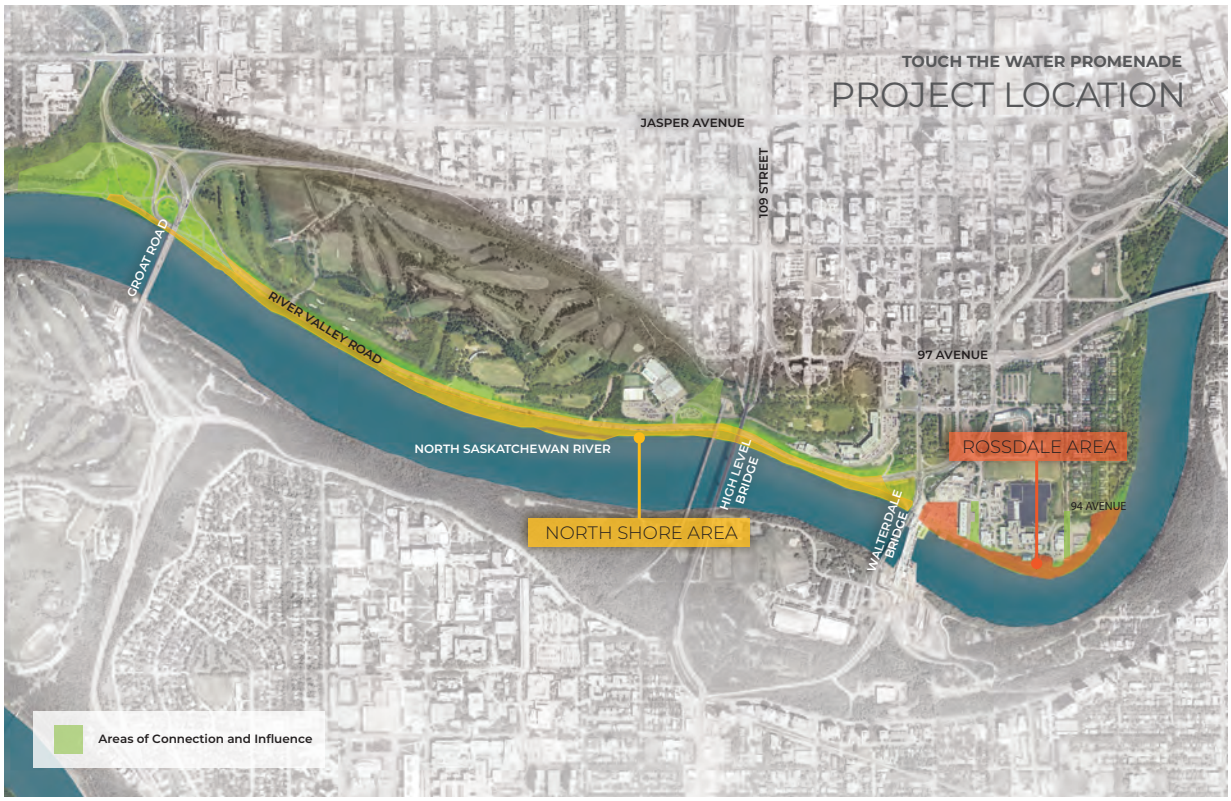
Introduction

Between 2012 and 2017, the City explored opportunities for a promenade along the North Saskatchewan River with some initial public and regional Indigenous engagement. In the winter of 2018 City Council combined two projects, Touch the Water in the Rossdale neighbourhood and the North Shore Promenade between Government House Park and the Walterdale Bridge for engagement and design efficiencies. The combined project area now spans a four kilometre stretch of downtown river valley from the Groat Road Bridge up to and including the Rossdale neighbourhood near the Walterdale Bridge.

The river valley is a place people have been drawn to and gathered at since time immemorial. The City of Edmonton is looking to improve access to and within the central river valley with the Touch the Water Promenade project, creating enhanced opportunities for ecological connections, recreation, celebration and heritage interpretation. Through this work, the project team is looking to define what a signature promenade experience would look like as directed by Council. There is interest from Council and Administration for the promenade to serve as a regional destination.

Together, Council direction, the supporting strategy documents and the river valley site, create a unique placemaking opportunity that will celebrate and build upon the relationship that many Edmontonians have with the river and the diverse heritage that this section of river valley contains. It is in this space that engagement is needed to build the conversation around possibilities for a new riverfront promenade in the heart of our city.

Project location

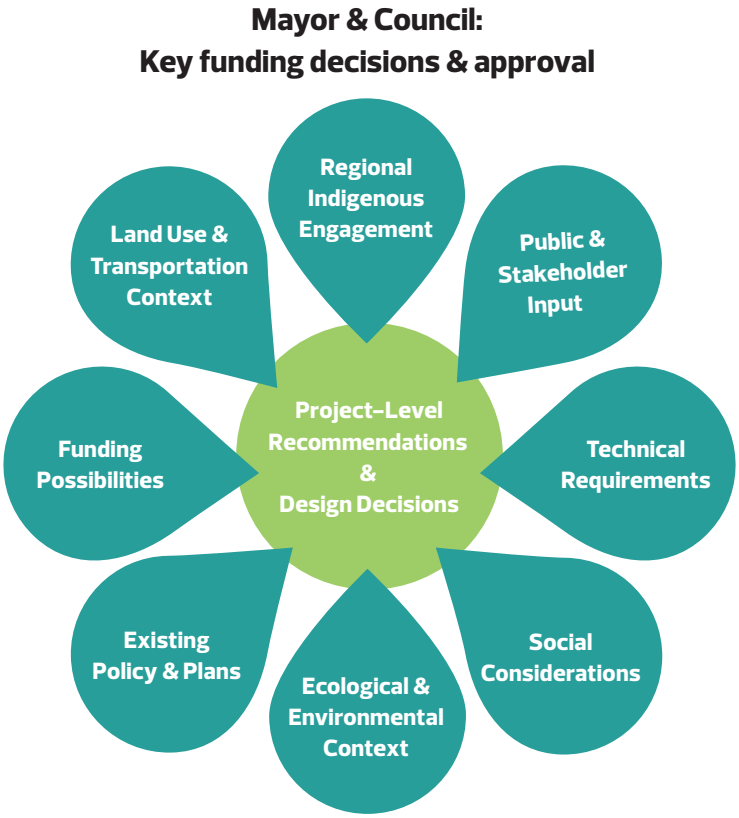


Decision making

The City of Edmonton values public engagement processes and activities that contribute to project decisions by providing City Council and the project team with the best possible information to support decision making. Public and stakeholder engagement is one factor in the decision making process.

Description:
Engagement Stage Two for the Touch the Water Promenade project provided opportunities for the public to react to the project's draft vision, design principles and two concept design options: Gateways and Threads. Through engagement, the City requested feedback on elements of the two options to help **REFINE** the project.

There are many factors involved in creating draft concept design options. City plans and policies, outcomes of technical and environmental studies along with public and stakeholder engagement and regional Indigenous engagement will shape the final concept plan.



The project is aligned with the City of Edmonton's Breathe Strategy, which seeks to enhance Edmontonians' connection to open park spaces within our city. In addition, the project is influenced by many other City of Edmonton plans and policies including but not limited to:

- **Ribbon of Green:** Provides strategic direction to guide the protection and responsible use of Edmonton's river valley and the ravine system over the next 20 years.
- **ConnectEdmonton and City Plan:** The City of Edmonton's 10 year strategic plan, as well as the guiding values, intentions, and directions, provide the foundation for how our city will grow.
- **River Crossing Business Plan:** Provides a business case and implementation plan for integrated urban places investment and economically-sound development in the Rossdale neighbourhood.
- **River Crossing Heritage Interpretive Plan:** Provides an approach to reflect the rich Indigenous and settler history of the site with a dynamic urban future.
- **River Access Strategy:** Provides direction to address increasing demands for river recreation while protecting the river valley as the City's signature natural, cultural and recreational resource.
- **River Access Guiding Principles:** The City of Edmonton will ensure environmental stewardship while encouraging a broader appreciation for activities on or alongside the river, and will provide direction regarding the safe use, programming, partnerships, operations, design and location of infrastructure that supports access to the river and activities associated with the river.
- **North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 7188):** Provides the environmental review framework and principles for future implementation plans and programmes for parks protection and development within the river valley & ravines.
- **Downtown Public Places Plan:** Guides public space improvements to create a greener, healthier and more family friendly Downtown.
- **Open Spaces Policy and Breathe — Edmonton's Green Network Strategy:** As Edmonton's population grows and diversifies, neighbourhoods evolve and environmental conditions change, the City commits to maintaining a sustainable, inclusive, connected, multifunctional open space network that supports other city building objectives and responds to diverse needs. Key themes for open space function include Wellness, Ecology and Celebration.
- **Capital Project Governance Policy:** Provides overall framework to guide the management of the City's capital projects, including phased approach to project development and delivery.
- **Capital City Recreation Park Development Plan (1974):** Provides direction for the development of 16 kilometres of connected trails, pathways, and amenities in the central river valley. The trails and amenities here are among the most valued places in Edmonton to this day.

In the fall 2019 the project team initiated Stage One of public engagement with the goal of understanding use priorities and creating a vision and design principles to guide the development of concept design options. Using information gathered from Stage One, two draft concepts for the Touch the Water Promenade were presented to Edmontonians in Stage Two of public and stakeholder engagement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting public health measures, all engagement was completed online.

Online public engagement ran from November 9 to November 30, 2020 using the Engaged Edmonton website. The public had the opportunity to review the draft project vision, design principles and two draft concept design options through a video and a flipbook. Opportunities to provide feedback included quick polls, a virtual feedback board and an online survey. Feedback was also collected through emails to the project team, social media engagement and stakeholder meetings.

At a high level we heard that Edmontonians are proud of the river valley and want to experience it in different ways. Respondents agreed on the beauty of the natural environment of the river valley but feedback varied significantly on the project itself. Some respondents suggested the area should be left natural, with a smaller group suggesting we remove access to River Valley Road all together, while others were excited about the potential and supported the project being completed sooner than later.

Many comments fell into the three principles that are the foundation of the project namely Ecology, Wellness and Celebration.

+ **Ecology** – Many participants commented on their appreciation of the environmental aspects of the area and chose the elements that they felt limited environmental disturbance. Wildlife corridors, riparian areas, vegetation, daylighting the Groat Creek, river bank erosion, flooding, climate change and protection of the environment in general were all mentioned several times. Several respondents felt that the amount of concrete proposed in both concepts was excessive.

+ **Wellness** – Many participants envision enjoying the area to escape from the urban setting and stroll, walk and/or meditate. Others are interested in the recreational opportunities available in the project area including running, biking, boating, kayaking and fishing. Many talked about wanting to be able to get down into the water, as well as to sit and look at the river, as currently the view is obscured from the path by vegetation including trees. Support for separation of users such as cyclists and pedestrians was frequently raised as was separation of cars and people. Many participants shared support for improving access to the river, and through the central river valley, especially for all ages and abilities. Participants liked opportunities to safely cross River Valley Road and have more lighting along the pathways. Quite a few respondents commented on the potential dangers of accessing the North Saskatchewan River.

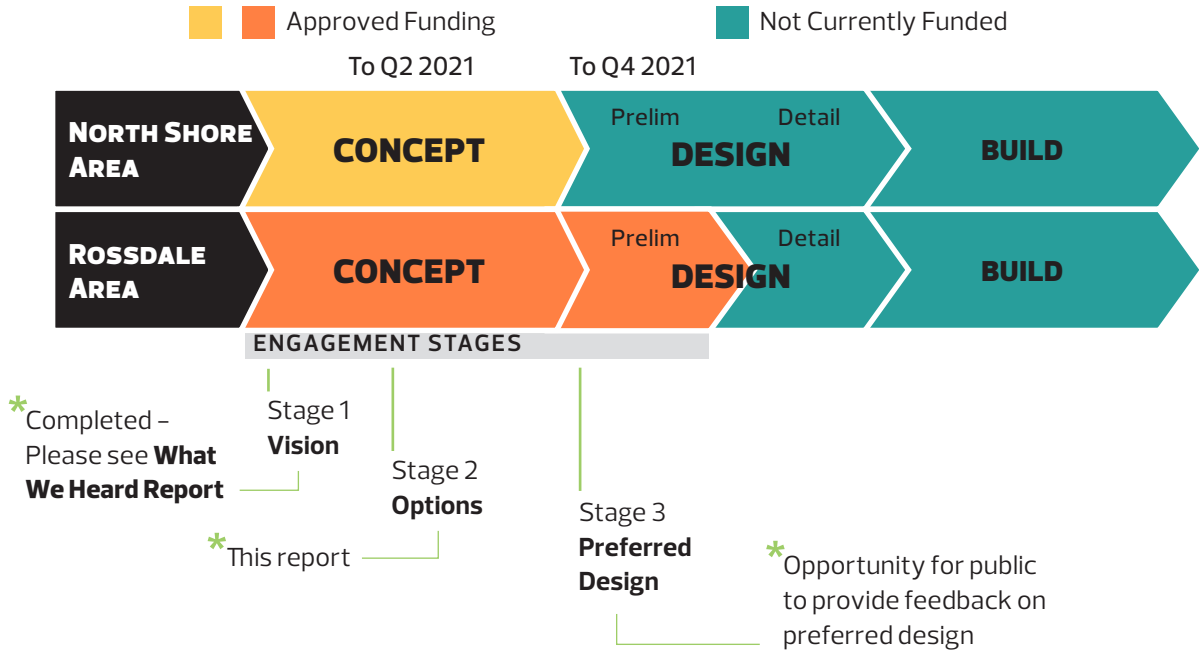
+ **Celebration** – Many participants wanted to see the area used for different types and sizes of gatherings, including for picnics, events, festivals and music. They wanted to celebrate or learn about Indigenous culture and the overall, multi-layered heritage of the area. Some participants stated they want to be able to enjoy the area while having a coffee or a glass of wine. Food services were suggested by many, especially in the area of the Rossdale Power Plant near the Walterale Bridge and Victoria Park.

Comments that did not specifically fit into one of the three principles but that were frequently raised included references to access to the area and the cost of the project. The cost to fund the project was a reoccurring theme raised by some participants who felt the City either lacked the funding for the project or that it was not a priority for the City given other economic challenges including those resulting from the pandemic.

Timeline

This project is currently in the Concept Phase, and funding has not been approved for construction. In the Concept Phase we are completing Indigenous, public and stakeholder engagement on the draft concept design options.

Following this phase, only the Rossdale Area has been approved for additional design work. Design for the North Shore Area will conclude at the Concept Phase. Completing this planning and design work now will prepare us to provide recommendations to City Council and to move the project forward when the time is right.



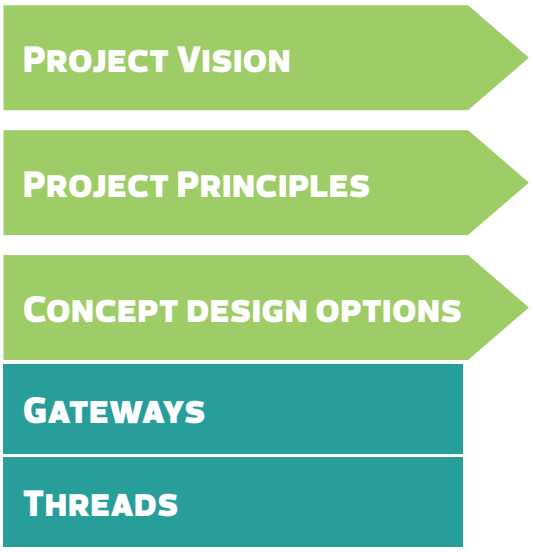
Regional Indigenous Engagement

The City of Edmonton acknowledges the project area has deep historical and cultural connections to many Indigenous Nations and Communities. Following the site visits that occurred in October 2019 with 21 Indigenous Nations and Communities, the project team invited 29 Nations and Communities, and completed remote engagement with 16 Nations and Communities, to review and provide input on the draft project vision, design principles, and concept design options. Their ongoing input will help guide the project as it moves forward.

What was done

Two draft concept design options were developed and feedback was gathered through the Engaged Edmonton site, which is an online portal. Respondents could review the concept design options, ask questions and provide comments and feedback. Stakeholder meetings and workshops were also conducted to present and discuss the draft concept design options.

The two draft concept design options of Gateways and Threads as well as the project vision and themes are described on the following pages. This information is intended to provide context to the engagement that was conducted in November and December 2020.



PROJECT VISION

The following project vision was developed following feedback from Stage One engagement in fall 2019:

Instantly recognizable as Edmonton's premiere riverfront destination, this incredibly vibrant public space evokes a unique sense of place in Canada's northern-most major city.

The Touch the Water Promenade **celebrates** the central river valley's multi-layered history and special significance to Indigenous Nations & Communities, **restores** its natural systems and resiliency and **re-connects** the central city to the river.

By improving **access** into and within the river valley network, the Promenade provides diverse opportunities for riverfront **gathering** and **recreation** not found anywhere else in the region.

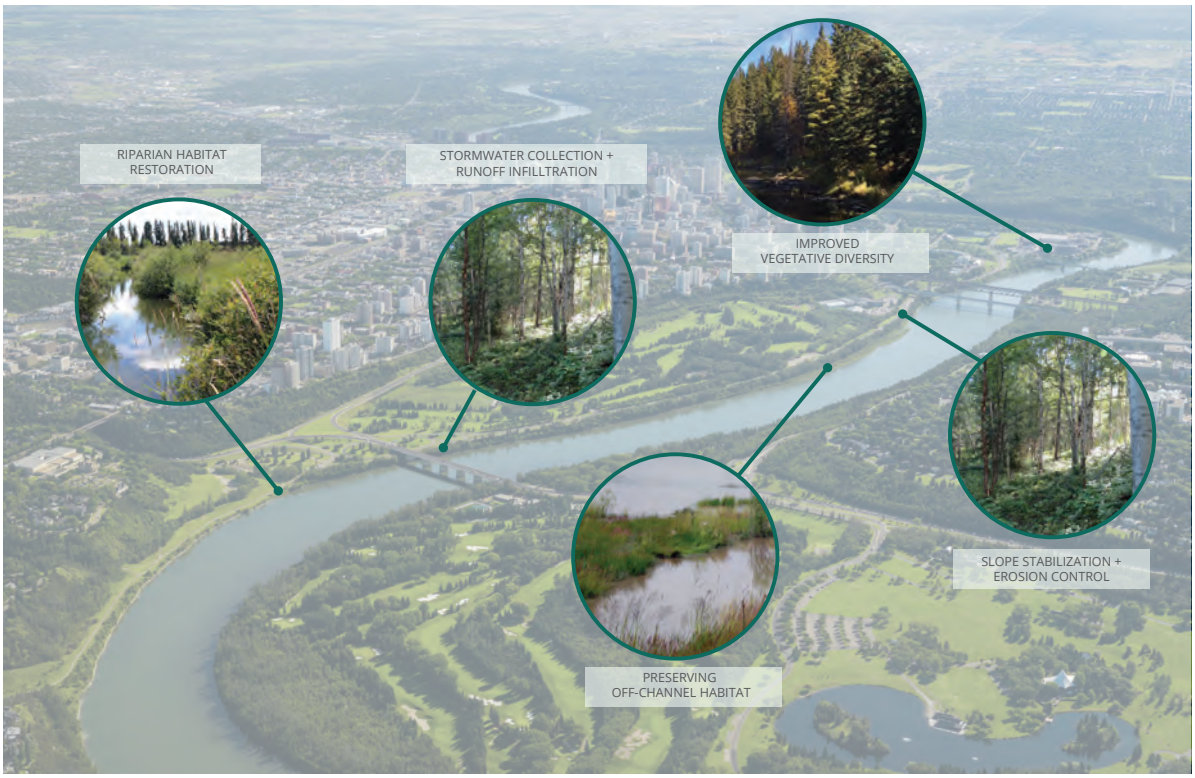
PROJECT PRINCIPLES

Touch the Water Promenade project has been guided by Breathe, the City of Edmonton's strategy for parks and open spaces planning and design. The main goal of Breathe is to plan and sustain a healthy city by encouraging connection and integration of open space at the site, neighbourhood, city and regional levels. As a central riverfront public space, Touch the Water Promenade has incorporated the three themes from Breathe into the concept design options design: **Ecology**, **Wellness** and **Celebration**.

To learn more about Breathe visit: **edmonton.ca/breathe**

ECOLOGY

Ecology protects, restores and enhances the ecological network, wildlife corridor, natural habitats and urban forest of the river valley. This principle aims to connect communities to nature by promoting ecological stewardship through education and amenities.



Project Principles: Ecology

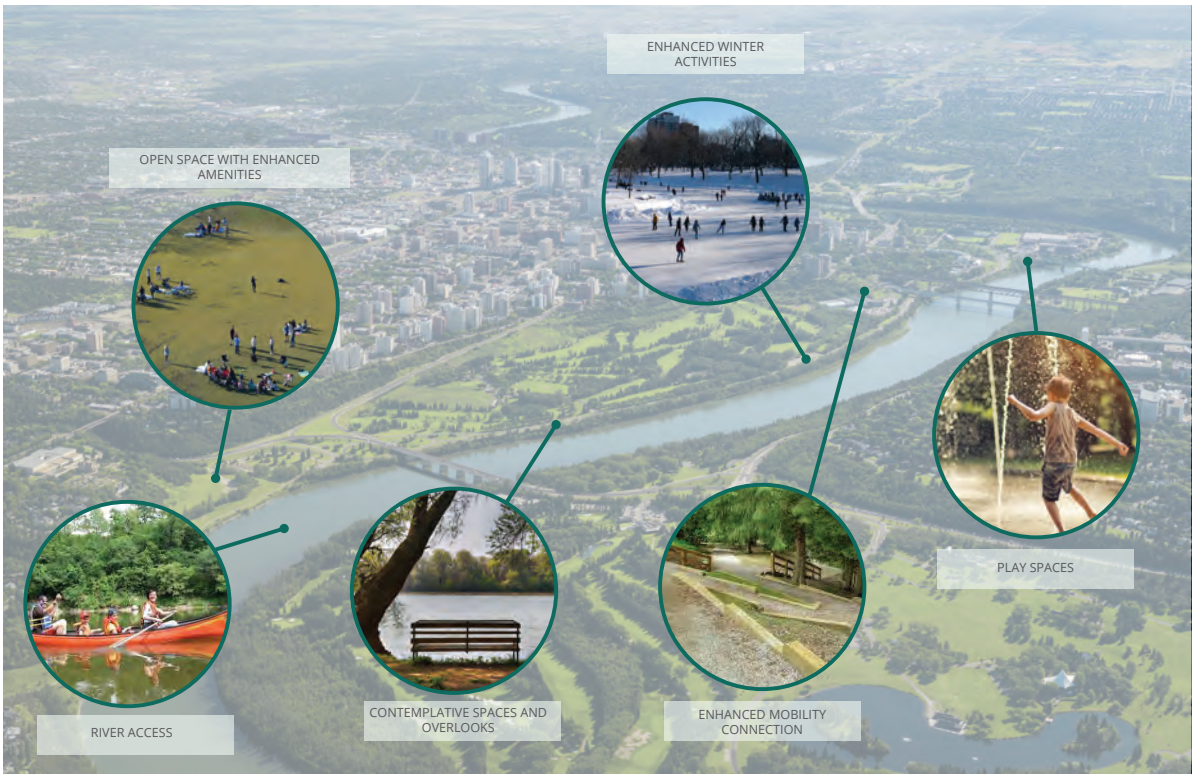
1. To restore and enhance the central river valley as an ecological network and wildlife corridor within a wider, interconnected network.

2. To expand, enhance and diversify the urban forest, improve the river shoreline and restore natural ecosystems and habitats within the project area.

3. To connect communities to nature by promoting ecological stewardship through amenities which promote and educate on positive ecological practices, such as watershed quality and naturalization.

WELLNESS

Wellness encourages healthy and active living and provides opportunities for recreation in safe ways that appeal to a diverse audience by separating pathways between active and passive.



Project Principles: Wellness

1. To provide varied and unique spaces that allow for a more diverse range of recreation and mobility activities.

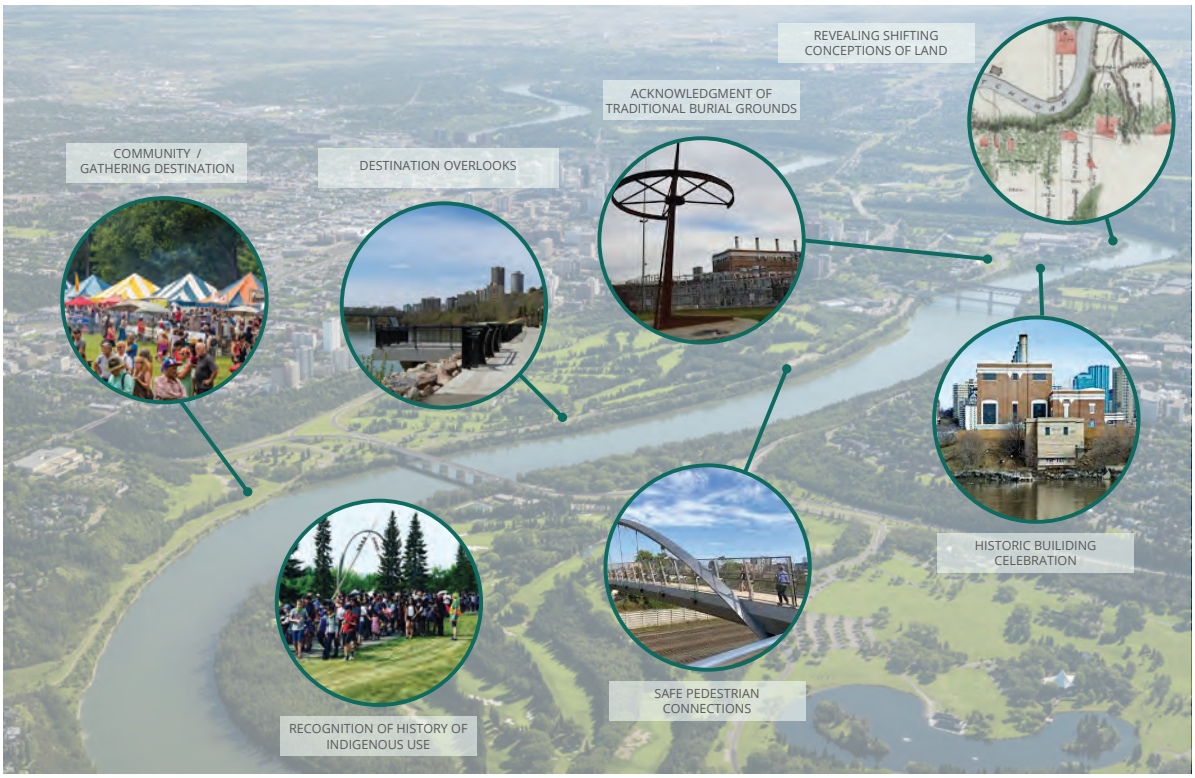
2. To encourage healthy and active living by further activating and improving the central river valley multi-use path network.

3. To provide more direct and accessible connections between the promenade, central river valley destinations like Victoria and Government House Parks, and city centre neighbourhoods.

4. To increase diversity of use, safety and appeal by providing options for users through active and passive pathway separation.

CELEBRATION

Celebration will promote community interactions through vibrant, welcoming, accessible, inclusive and playful gathering spaces for all seasons and strengthen the cultural identity and heritage of Edmonton.



Project Principles: Celebration

1. To promote community interaction through the development of vibrant, welcoming, accessible, inclusive and playful gathering spaces along the river's edge, in all seasons.

2. To respectfully commemorate the diverse Indigenous history, use, and contributions to the area, and provide gathering spaces to celebrate, teach and promote culture.

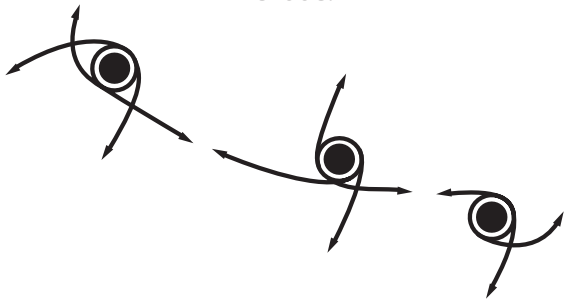
3. To strengthen Edmonton's identity by telling the story of this place's diverse cultural significance and rich, multi-layered history, as envisioned by the River Crossing Heritage Interpretive Plan.

4. To provide more inclusive access and connection to the river itself for social, cultural and recreational use as a water corridor and for restorative contemplation.

CONCEPT DESIGN OPTIONS GATEWAYS + THREADS

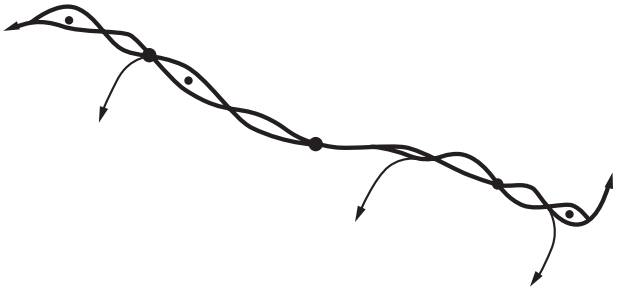
OPTION 1: **GATEWAYS**

This option focuses new enhancement and activity into three larger gathering spaces. These "Gateways" are located next to Groat Bridge, High Level Bridge and Walterdale Bridge and are connected by an enhanced riverfront promenade.



OPTION 2: **THREADS**

This option distributes the new enhancements into many smaller gathering spaces along the river edge. These smaller "Threads" are more integrated into the enhanced riverfront promenade.

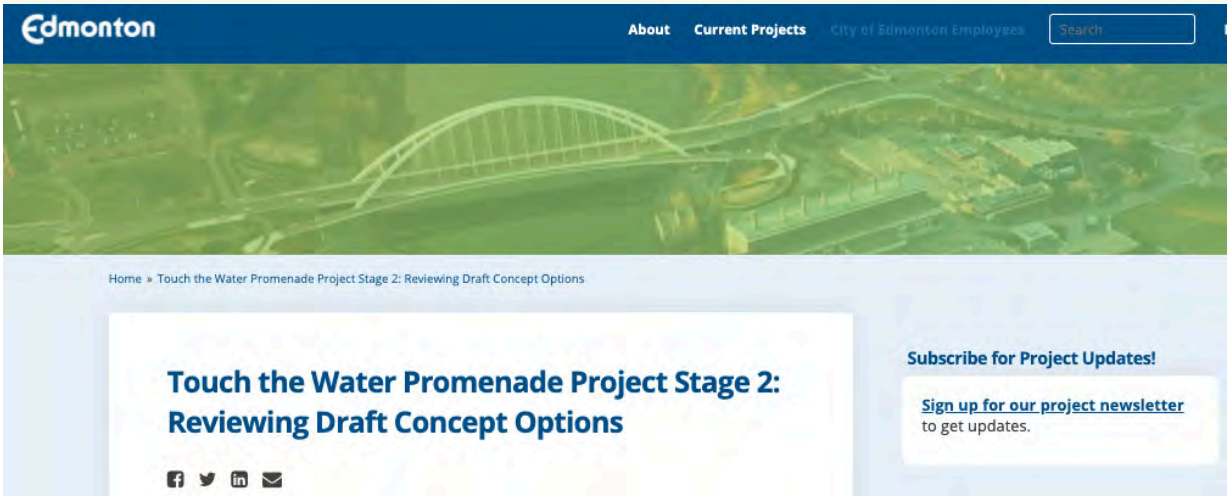


A project video was developed that summarizes the concept design options:

+ **youtube.com/watch?v=RrG2X7mj2pY&feature=youtu.be**

To learn more about the concept design options that were presented visit:

+ **edmonton.ca/documents/TTW_Stage2_Flipbook.pdf**
+ **edmonton.ca/documents/TTW_Draft_Concept_Options_Design.pdf**



Engaged Edmonton site

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting public health measures, Stage Two engagement used online opportunities to share information and gather feedback. The Engaged Edmonton site for the project, https://engaged.edmonton.ca/touch-the-water-promenade, contained several different opportunities for engagement. Approximately 2,400 people visited the Engaged Edmonton site (with over 4,000 views of the project video) during the engagement which ran from November 9 – November 30, 2020. Information was shared and exchanged through different tools on the site including a project flyover, video, flipbook, quick polls, Ideas Board and online survey.

Project flyover, video and flipbook

Information about the project included a:

+ Video flyover of the project area
+ Flipbook describing the draft concept design options
+ Project video (youtube.com/watch?v=RrG2X7mj2pY&feature=youtu.be)
+ Project FAQ
+ Stage One I Project Information Booklet
+ Stage One I What We Heard Report

The flipbook focused on the concept design options, including renderings to demonstrate what was possible.

Quick polls

Four quick polls were present on the site with over 450 people providing more than 1,000 responses. The quick polls asked the following questions:

+ Gathering Areas – Which concept option best shows how you'd like to use the area?
+ Access – Safety was identified as an area of concern, which concept option provides the safest access to travel within the project area?
+ River Access – Which concept option best provides the right amount of access to the river?
+ River Views – Which concept option best provides the right amount of views to the river?

Each poll had between 177 and 469 responses.

Ideas board

Nearly 80 participants shared their thoughts in written posts that were shown publicly on the Ideas Board. Posted questions, which were intended to inspire ideas, included:

+ What do you think might be missing from the concept design options?
+ What do you like most about the concept design options?
+ What could be improved in the concept design options?

52 ideas were provided by participants.

Online survey

The online survey was available on the Engaged Edmonton site, as well as through the Insight Community.

Almost 1,400 participants responded to the comprehensive survey, which asked questions about the vision and principles guiding the project and the proposed draft concept design otions.

Advertising

SOCIAL MEDIA

Stage Two engagement for Touch the Water was advertised on the City's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts. Facebook posts reached 41,906 people, while Tweets reached 45,619 impressions. The project video posted on YouTube was viewed over 4,000 times. Details on social media outreach are illustrated below.

Twitter
6 tweets
45,619 impressions
621 engagements

Facebook
1 post
41,906 impressions
1,056 engagements

You Tube
4,197 views

Emails to project team

on the Engaged Edmonton site and in advertising materials, contact information for the project team was provided. As a result, there were 28 emails received by the project team with input on Touch the Water.

Stakeholder meetings

Through online meetings and workshops, over 40 stakeholders from 35 organizations were engaged.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

A governmental stakeholder meeting in July 2020 included representatives from the following organizations:

+ Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Government of Canada
+ Alberta Environment and Parks, Government of Alberta
+ EPCOR Water and Drainage

Virtual stakeholder meetings were held with representatives of the following groups in November and December, 2020:

+ Accessibility Advisory Committee
+ Alberta Infrastructure, Government of Alberta
+ Rossdale Community League
+ Prairie Sky Gondola
+ EPCOR Water and Drainage

ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Online workshops were held on November 18 and 20, 2020, and included representatives from the following organizations:

- Ceyana Canoe Club
- Paddle Alberta
- Baseball Edmonton / ReMAX Field Operator
- Paths for People
- Alberta Association of Landscape Architects
- EPCOR Water, Public and Governmental Affairs
- North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society
- Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition
- Royal Glenora Club
- EPCOR Water, Flood Protection Program
- November Project
- Explore Edmonton
- Travel Alberta
- Media Architecture Design Edmonton
- Indigenous Tourism Alberta
- Edmonton Nature Centres Foundation
- North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
- Terry Fox Run Edmonton
- River Valley Alliance
- Edmonton Native Plant Society
- Edmonton Nature Club
- Alberta Professional Planners Institute
- Bike Edmonton
- Inclusion Alberta – Edmonton Region
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's Northern Alberta Chapter
- Edmonton Speed Skating Association
- Silver Skate Festival
- Stantec (Consultant for Rossdale Water Treatment Plant Project)

Email submissions were received from the following stakeholder organizations:

- The Oliver Community League
- The Sierra Club
- Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition
- Alberta Infrastructure, Government of Alberta

Print and email newsletters

A newsletter was directly mailed to residents of Rossdale, Glenora and Oliver the week of November 9. There were 19,276 mail pieces sent. They introduced the project and outlined opportunities for engagement and input.

An email newsletter was sent out to 55 subscribers. The number of subscribers to the project updates newsletter increased to 208 by the end of the year.

Engagement opportunities for Touch the Water were also featured in the newsletters of Paths for People and the North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society.

Road and yard signs

Five road signs were put up between November 9 and 30 at major arterial roadways and bridges in and around the project area:

+ In Glenora
+ In Oliver
+ Entrance to the Walterdale Bridge
+ Along River Valley Road
+ At an entrance to downtown

There were 20 yard signs put up between November 9 and 30 along River Valley Road and the adjacent shared use path, within the project area.

November 9—30, 2020, Yard Signs

What we heard

Many respondents participated in the engagement by providing comments on the draft concepts and the project in general. The feedback has been summarized and themed based on the principles of the project and the method of collection.

Vision

The majority of participants supported the project vision presented. Edmontonians love the river valley and want to enjoy it either by walking, strolling, biking or running through it, contemplating the river and the natural environment, acknowledging those who came before us, or stopping and having a coffee while watching the river. Respondents expressed a desire for it to be a destination and they liked the proposed activities and spaces illustrated by the concepts but some expressed caution on the amount of development and the level of change and disturbance that would be required to build the project in the future.

Ecology

The natural beauty of the river valley attracts people to the area. Participants expressed love for Edmonton's river valley and some described it as a treasure. Many comments supported the daylighting of Groat Creek at Government House Park in the Gateways concept and encouraged further protection of wildlife corridors, riparian areas, trees and the environment in general.

Many raised concerns regarding flooding and ice levels in the area and that the concepts did not appear to consider the potential for significant erosion of the river bank. Although some wanted no development, most participants whose focus was ecology preferred the concept elements displaying less or more context appropriate development of the area.

There were a number of comments specifically unhappy with the amount of concrete in the draft concepts with some supporting gravel paths over concrete. Threads was often chosen as the preferred concept because of the smaller gathering areas and a sense that it would have less of an impact on the environment.

However, other participants and stakeholders preferred Gateways from an ecological perspective because of this option's use of existing infrastructure and areas of disturbance, as well as a single mid and top of bank pathway.

Wellness

Overall, survey and Quick Poll respondents preferred the concept design option at each area of the project with more opportunities to recreate, gather and play. Participants discussed enjoying cycling, running and walking through the area as well as their appreciation for nature brought by the river valley. They recognized benefits of separate pathways proposed in Threads to allow for people to use the space at different speeds and with different modes but also to separate people from traffic in order to buffer noise and pollution. Participants talked about being able to escape the city and connect with nature in the area. Some were keen to connect with the water either directly through kayaks, boats or fishing — or through better views that are not obstructed by bushes and trees.

Many comments described the importance of access to and within the area to maximize opportunities for people to enjoy the area. Based on the feedback, there is a need to accommodate mobility issues using Universal Accessibility standards. Some explained their connection to the area went back decades when they would bike, walk or jog to and through the river valley but now mobility issues limited their access to the area and public transit and parking was required for them to enjoy the area. Many liked the proposed path in the Gateways concept at the High Level Bridge Hill, which supplemented the existing stairs with an accessible pathway down the hill to the river.

Several people highlighted the importance of connecting the river valley with other parts of the city, including downtown, while some simply pointed out the challenge of accessing the river valley given the steepness of the banks.

Safety was raised many times. Separation between cyclists and pedestrians was frequently commented on as a requirement, as was separation between cars and pedestrians not just from a safety stand point, but also to buffer noise and make the area quieter and more enjoyable. Many liked the designs accommodating safer crossings of River Valley Road, while some questioned whether the proposed pedestrian and cyclist overpasses were safer or cost-effective as compared to improved at-grade street crossings. Others raised concerns around the need for more lighting in the area. The issue of safety was also raised in regards to river access with participants noting how dangerous the water can be.

Celebration

Some saw the potential of a tourist destination in the area and wanted to see food services, four-season designs (e.g. warming areas) and washrooms. The Rossdale Power Plant was frequently mentioned as an area for development of retail and food services. People expressed interest in continuing to use the area for biking, running, strolling and stopping to view the river. Respondents expressed excitement for the gathering areas at Government House, High Level Bridge Hill and Rossdale Power Plant, and envisioned festivals and musical performances in the plazas suggested in the Gateways concept.

Many supported the idea of educating and celebrating the heritage and Indigenous culture of those whose footsteps travelled the area long before.

Other Feedback

Many expressed their excitement of the draft concept design options and wanted the development to occur sooner rather than later. A few preferred the Gateways concept because they saw it as a bold design that was needed and more attractive.

Of interest were people who preferred the Threads concept and described the area as one you move through as opposed to go to. Others preferred the Gateways that provided destinations.

Many people raised concerns regarding the cost of the project and questioned the City's ability to finance the development. Some felt that there were other priorities for the City to consider especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some were concerned that other parks in the City had maintenance issues and that this should be considered when planning such a project.

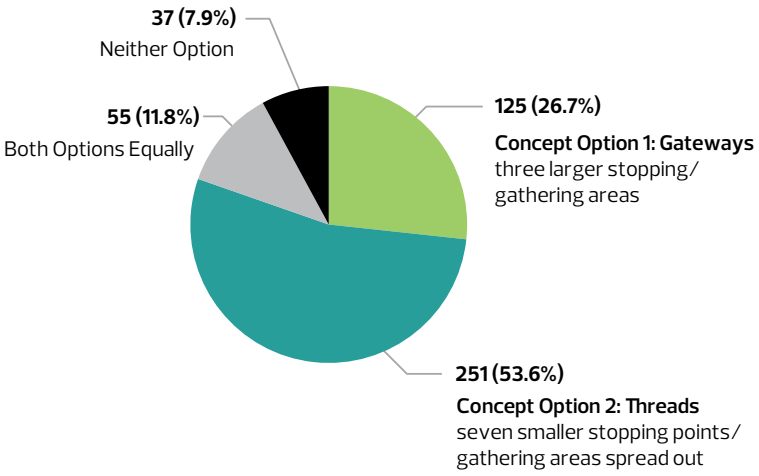
Other participants shared that open space projects and City initiatives in other parts of the City outside of the central core should take priority over this project.

QUICK POLLS

Four quick polls were posted on the Engaged Edmonton site allowing people to provide their feedback on the two concept design options. The polls were multiple choice and respondents did not provide explanations for their choices.

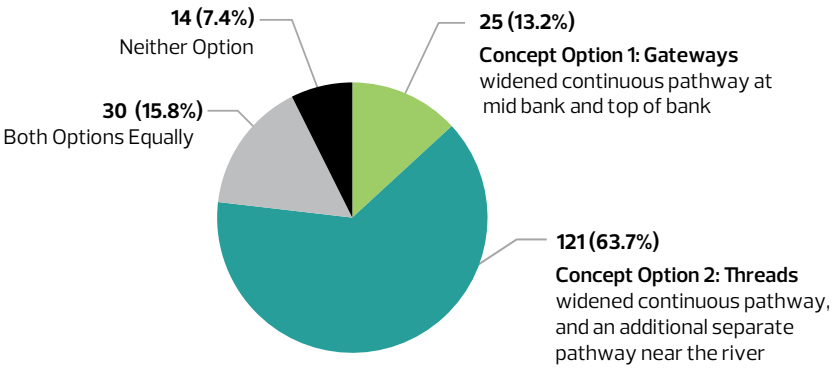
Of the 468 respondents to the question on gathering areas, over half (54 percent) chose Threads as the concept that best shows how they would like to use the area while roughly 27 percent chose Gateways, 12 percent thought both worked and eight percent thought neither.

Gathering Areas – Which concept option best shows how you'd like to use the area?



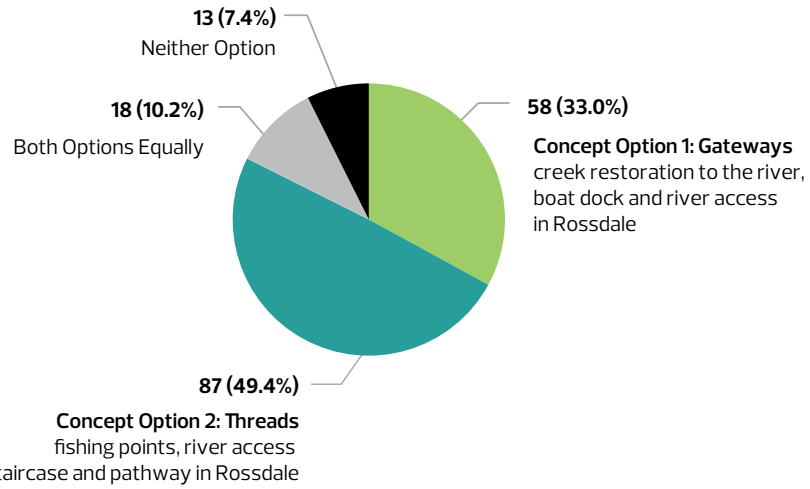
The majority of the 190 respondents to the question regarding safety chose Threads (64 percent) or thought both options were equally safe (16 percent).

Access – Safety was identified as an area of concern, which concept option provides the safest access?



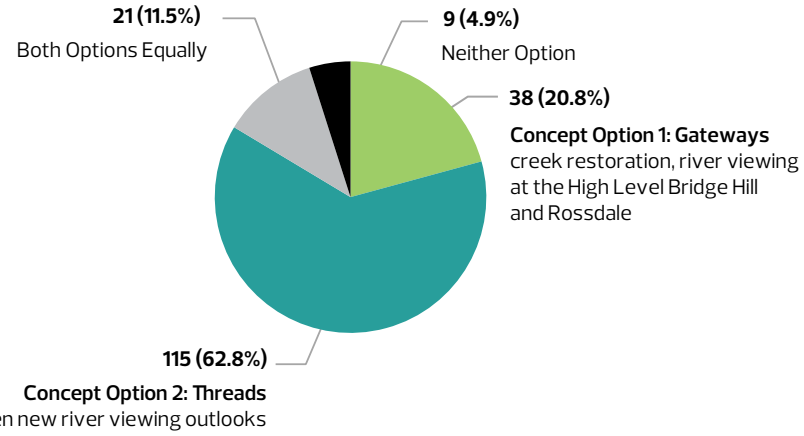
There were 176 respondents to the quick poll on river access. Forty-nine percent of participants preferred Threads for proposing the right amount of access to the river, while 33 percent chose Gateways and 10 percent felt both options provided the right amount of river access.

River Access – Which concept option best provides the right amount of access to the river?



There were 183 respondents to the question regarding river views. The majority (63 percent) chose Threads as the option that provides the best views of the river with 21 percent choosing Gateways, 12 percent thinking both were equal, and five percent said neither provided the best view of the river.

River Views – Which concept option best provides the right amount of views to the river?



IDEAS BOARD, EMAILS AND STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The 52 comments from the Ideas Board on Engaged Edmonton, 28 emails received by the project team and comments from stakeholder meetings were combined and reviewed. The majority of the conversations and comments focused on elements of Wellness, Ecology and Celebration.

Ecology – Some people expressed concern about any development in the area and others requested that less intrusive designs were preferred. There was praise for the daylighting, or restoration, of Groat Creek and the Gateways concept design at Government House Park. Restoring a marsh delta and fish habitat was supported at Government House, which was identified as a pinch point for ecological connectivity in the Ribbon of Green. The proposed increased planting of native species throughout the project area was supported, particularly on the east side of MacKinnon Ravine. Other participants raised concerns about erosion of the river bank and damage to the riparian area.

Some stakeholders noted their preference for the Gateways option because of its reduced impact on the river bank with only one wider pathway. However, other participants preferred the Threads option from an ecological perspective because of the smaller gathering and look-out spaces that were seen to be better integrated within the river valley.

Some sample comments include:

"the Threads proposal has the potential to be something world-class if the city makes in interesting and adds services like cafes and food places into the mix"

"A Rossdale Plaza would create a destination for all the paths that lead there already and another gathering point for festivals, tourism, and everyday use"

"I want to comment that I like the idea of the boat launch, especially for wheelchair users who paddle."

> *"People love the river valley because it feels like you are escaping from the city"*

Wellness – Many respondents were interested in using the area for recreational purposes such as biking, cross-country skiing, golfing, running or walking with additional options being considered for boating. The proposed play areas for children were supported as well. Separation of path users was mentioned several times as well as lighting to make the area safer for users. Access was mentioned several times in different contexts including access to the water for viewing and boating, improving universal accessibility, connectivity to other neighbourhoods and transit, as well as parking requirements.

> *This area has huge potential to be the premier Edmonton destination.*

In particular, participants from multiple accessibility and inclusivity stakeholder organizations shared their support for the proposed accessible pathways to the river valley as well as the proposed accessible boat launch included in the Gateways option. These participants noted the current barriers and challenges faced by many different types of people with different abilities to get to and enjoy the central river valley.

Some respondents shared their support for the private gondola proposal, and how it might work well with this project to provide another means to access the site.

One respondent pointed out the challenge to get to Government House Park due to the current infrastructure layout, and recommended considering more direct access from downtown and the Oliver neighbourhood. It was noted that access could be improved through stairs up to the old museum lands from both MacKinnon Ravine and from Groat Road to 102 Ave bridge.

Celebration – Raising awareness and respect for Indigenous culture in the area was highlighted by some. Others liked the gathering spaces that supported family outings and suggested food services, cafés and washrooms be introduced.

Several participants noted how the Gateways proposed concept design option at Rossdale would be a unique destination in the region for locals and tourists alike, and could support a wide range of gatherings, festivals and events. However, balancing this development was a concern and respondents cautioned against using too much concrete.

Feedback regarding a potential building in Government House Park was mixed, with more support for the proposed permanent washroom and space to warm up in the winter. Those respondents who expressed they did not support a building as shown identified the inadequate size of the parking lot, or felt the building was too large or intrusive.

Detailed online survey results

The project team invited participants to provide their input to help refine, adjust and improve the two concept design options (Option 1: Gateways and Option 2: Threads). The online survey was divided into four sections: (1) the vision, (2) pathways and access, (3) gathering areas and (4) overall impressions. The survey was designed to allow respondents to quickly move through each section or spend extra time providing more information on the sections of more interest.

The survey provided a detailed opportunity to go in-depth with the draft concept design options and to provide comprehensive feedback and input to the project team. Given the amount of content shared with the public in order to provide as much feedback and input as participants would like, the survey took respondents roughly 15 to 45 minutes to complete, depending on the sections completed. Given that the survey was complex, the project team encouraged participants to complete any and all sections of the survey that were of interest.

Nearly 1,400 people responded to the survey.

To follow along with the concept design content referenced in the survey questions visit:
edmonton.ca/documents/TTW_Stage2_Flipbook.pdf

Part 1 – vision

1. Please review the draft project vision and design principles and answer the question below. From your perspective, is anything missing from the vision and principles? Does anything need to be changed?

Close to 800 people responded to this question with many simply answering "no". Some people expressed excitement about the project while others wanted greater emphasis on the environmental aspects of the area such as corridor and habitat for wildlife that they see should be protected from commercial development. A few said the principles contradicted themselves. Others thought safety and cost considerations should be added. Several comments suggested they would welcome development such as washrooms, food and drink services. Enhancing the area with education and information to celebrate Indigenous culture was suggested. Separating cyclists and pedestrians was mentioned several times. The need for access to the area including parking and universal access was raised. Several comments raised concern about concrete replacing natural areas.

> *"I think that the creation of safe and welcoming spaces for physical activity, contemplation and access to natural environments is a priority that should drive the development of the river valley."*

Some sample comments include:

"Accessibility is important, so that people who are not as able bodied as I am can be there too."

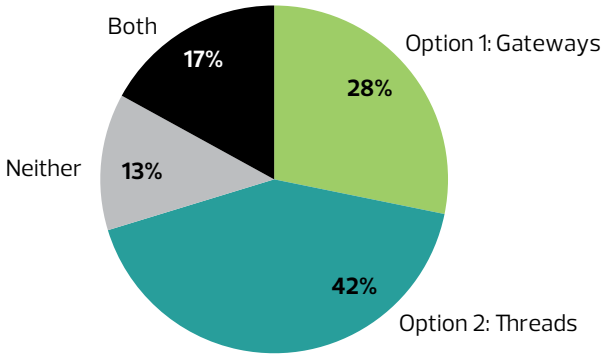
"I like the ideas of walking/biking paths over the roads to increase safety."

"I honestly can't believe that the city would even consider this project, given the current state of the world and our finances."

> *"Seems to me that you will be covering a lot of ground with concrete. not my idea of natural space."*

There were 1,393 responses to this question. The preferred concept when thinking about trail and pathway connections was Threads, with 42 percent. Gateways followed with 28 percent, while 17 percent of participants indicated that both could be preferred and 13 percent indicated neither.

2. Thinking about connections you need to the city and to other river valley trail and pathway networks, which option do you prefer?

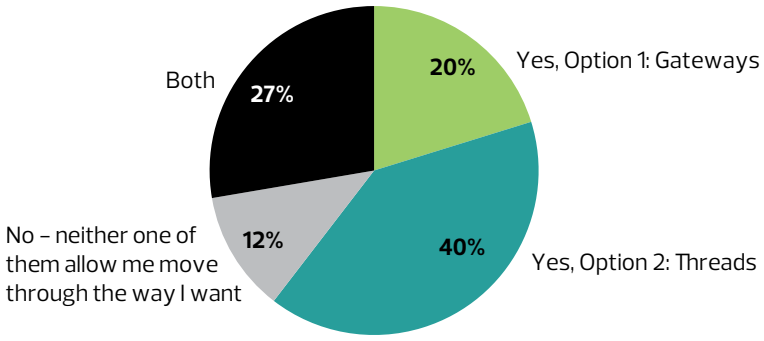


1,393 responses

1% Did not answer this question

Out of the 1,393 responses to this question. Forty percent indicated that Threads was preferred to allow movement through the area in the way participants want to. Twenty-seven percent indicated that both would satisfy their movement preferences, while 20 percent preferred Gateways. Twelve percent indicated that neither option would allow them to move through the area in the way they want to.

3. Do these options allow you to move through the area the way you want to?



1,393 responses

1% Did not answer this question

Part 2 – pathways & access

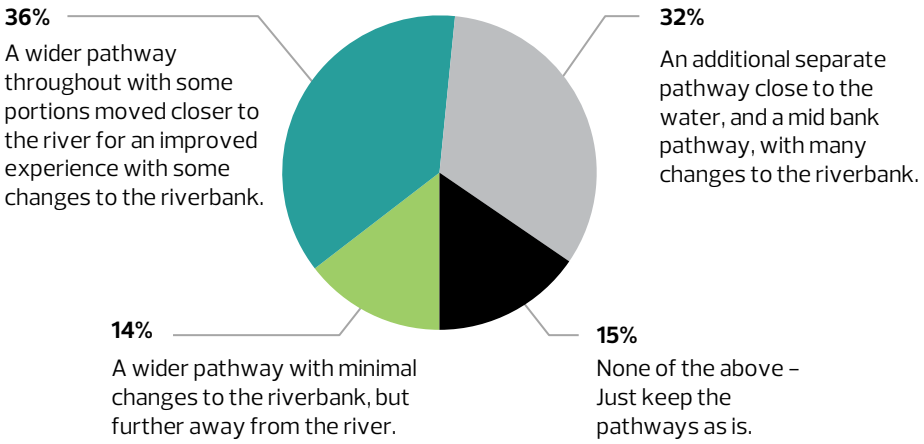
4. In thinking about how you move through and experience the river valley currently, please tell us more about your thoughts on how the concept options provide new connections to the city and other trails, and access to the project area; why do you prefer one option over another, both, or none at all?

Approximately 1,100 respondents left comments to Question 4 and discussion of Option 2, Threads dominated the responses. Many respondents left comments on the separation of pedestrians and cyclists, separation of people and cars and the smaller gathering areas that Threads accommodated along the promenade. The majority of responses reflected a preference for the Threads option because they perceived the area as one you moved through to commute, to exercise, to stroll or to be active rather than a destination. Others preferred Gateways because they saw the area as one intended for socializing, attending a festival, music event or enjoying food and drink.

Many liked the proposed daylighting of Groat Creek at Government House in the Gateways Option and the subsequent improvements to fish and fish habitat. Accessibility was applauded in the enhanced accessible pathway depicted in the Gateways option at the High Level Bridge Hill. Some loved the stairs to the river at the Rossdale plaza in Threads, while others thought it used too much concrete for the area. Regardless of preference, interest in washrooms was high.

Respondents who did not favour either option, commented that it was due to cost or environmental concerns. Others noted they wanted to see more development.

5. In some areas, the proposed pathways are moved from existing locations into the riverbank to get closer to the water, reducing road noise and creating a safer and more comfortable pathway experience. While the proposed concepts would replant trees and vegetation, it does mean the riverbank would be changed and existing trees would be removed, with more changes and replanting required, as pathways move closer to the river. In this context, which of the following approaches to pathways do you prefer?



1,393 responses

2% Did not answer this question

6. Please tell us more about your pathway preferences.

Over 750 respondents provided comments to this question. Increased separation of pedestrians and cyclists as well as people and motorized vehicles was mentioned as a preference for safety but also as a buffer for noise and improved enjoyment of the area. To minimize disruption to the environment, respondents who wanted safer paths thought this could be accomplished with a wider pathway rather than separate paths. Many expressed a desire to be closer to the water, which is currently obscured along the trail due to trees and bushes. Others raised concerns around flooding and erosion. Some respondents did not want trees removed or the natural area disturbed for greater river viewing or improved pathways.

Some sample comments include:

"I think the second option [Threads] would involve less changes to the riverbank and thus less interruption to the nature"

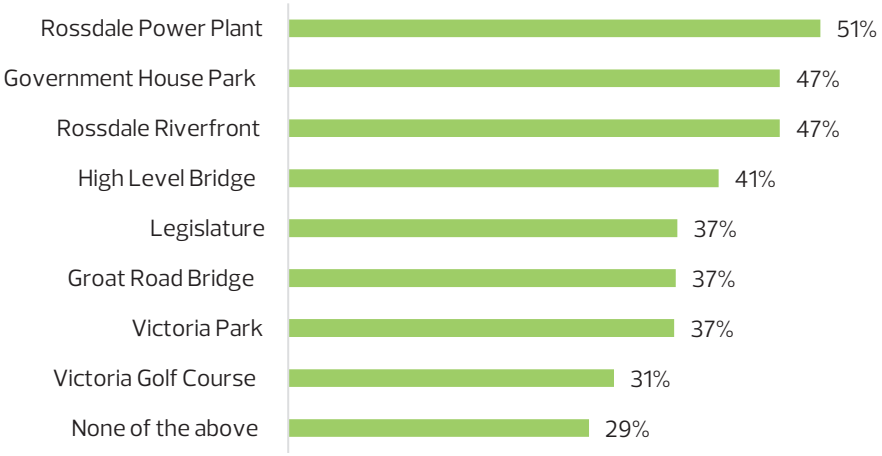
"It'll all get washed out if it's too close"

> *For pedestrian safety, I prefer a separated walkway provided the intent is for foot traffic (slow moving people) on the lower trail and cyclists on the higher path.*

> *enhance the views where possible, taking care not to create erosion problems, coupled with pathway offshoots to accesss the waterfront for wading, fishing and canoe access*

Part 3 – gathering areas

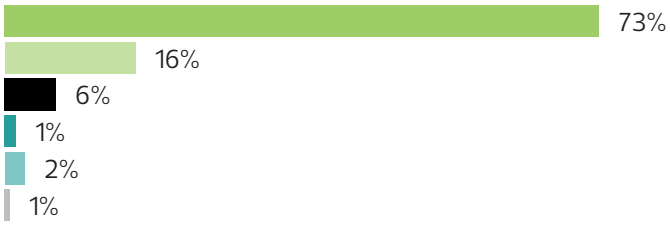
7.a Please select the areas that you would like to provide feedback on:



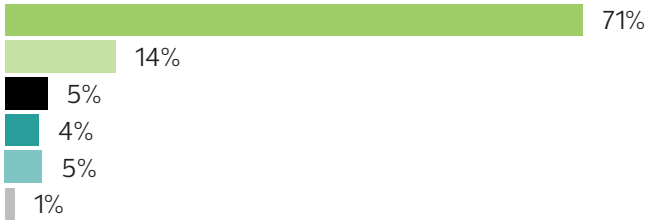
1,393 responses

7. Please tell us which ecological changes do you support or oppose for Government House Park.

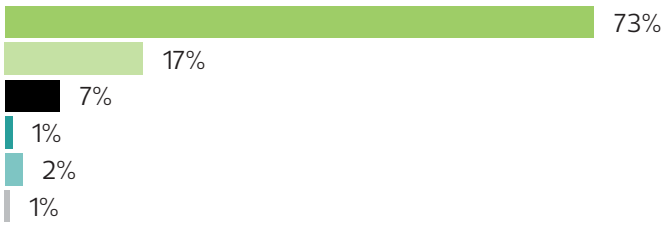
More plants to improve fish and wildlife habitat along the shoreline

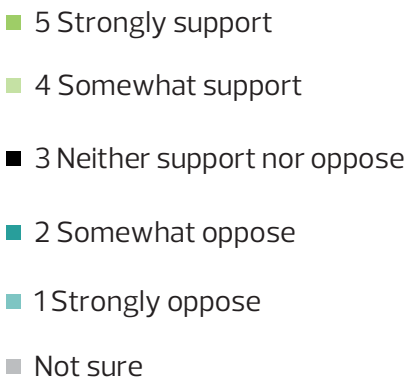


Restore or daylight the creek that is currently buried to above ground to provide new fish habitat and naturalize stormwater management



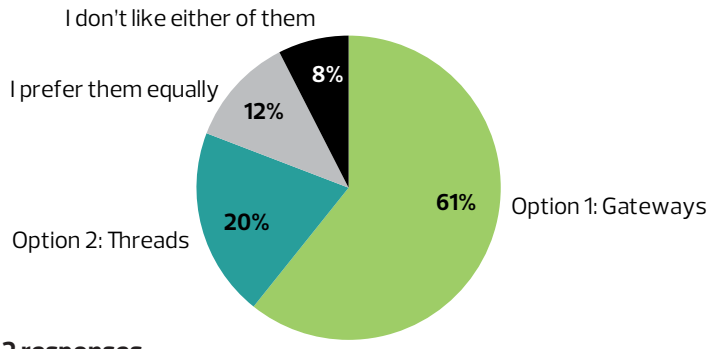
New planting of native species and trees along the riverbank





652 responses

8. Based on the activities and experience you would like to do in this area, which gathering area do you prefer at Government House Park?



652 responses

> *I oppose because of cost, the city is not and will not be in a position to spend huge dollars are this type of project when we have so many other pieces of infrastructure to renew.*

9. Is there something that you'd like to do here that is not reflected in the options?

329 responses were received from the public.

The majority of responses focused on cost, access, amenities and experiencing nature. Overall responses supported daylighting the creek, suggested this area as a location suitable for water access and expressed a desire to for basic park amenities.

Many comments explained that they felt the cost of building, operating and maintaining the scale of infrastructure proposed in the options was too high.

While permanent washrooms and water bottle filling stations were generally supported, other participants did not support the pavilion building as proposed. Rather, some comments indicated a desire for grassed park space with picnic tables and fire pits, where they could experience the tranquillity of nature along the riverbank. Others indicated that they felt the City had adequate pavilions at nearby areas and therefore one was not needed here.

Multiple participants expressed concern for the apparent amount of paved area in both proposed concept design options. In addition, some people felt the daylighting option overcomplicated the creek and pathways. Suggestions were received to keep it simple, and not build so many bridges. There were several suggestions to include a hand launch location for kayaks and canoes, as well as rental options. Other suggestions included electrical outlets, Wi-Fi connections, seasonal vendors, a café and a bike repair facility/store.

Parking and access were identified as issues. Participants did not see adequate parking for the infrastructure proposed. Improved access from Oliver across Groat Road was requested, as were connections up to Government House and the old Royal Alberta museum. Comments identified the shared-use path up to Groat Road could be widened, resurfaced and have the lighting improved up to 107 Ave.

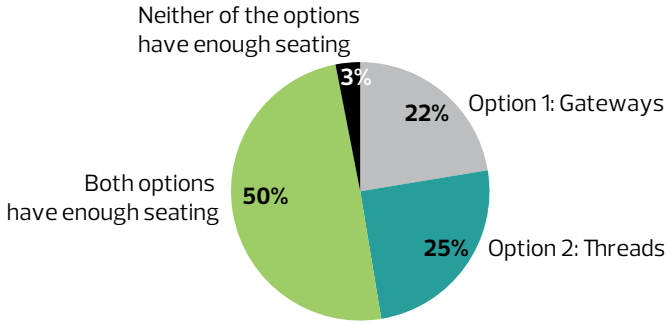
Some sample comments include:

"I'm in love with the look of a Groat gateway. So beautiful. The idea of restoring the creek is quite appealing, also it will decentralize the gathering places (in my opinion)."

"One of the things that makes this park so special is that it is so quiet and undeveloped. The city has existing facilities at nearby Victoria and Hawrelak parks, and I don't believe further extensive development is required here."

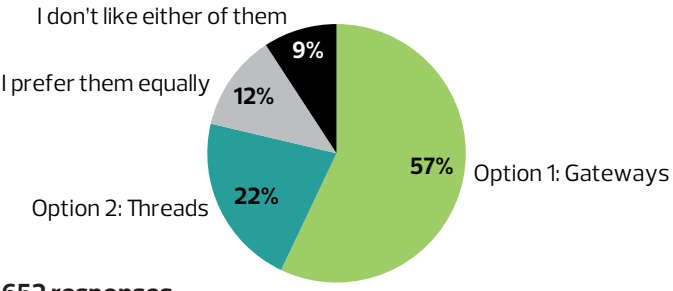
"Both options lack hand launch areas for canoes/kayaks/ sups. River users want to use the facilities too. Add connections to the water and provide storage racks for small watercraft."

10. Thinking about seating options, which concept option do you think has enough accessible seating?



652 responses

11. Thinking about the level of change, (i.e. new amenities, plaza and pathways and viewing areas) for the Government House gathering area, which of the two options seem right for you?



652 responses

12. Tell us more about your preferences for Government House Park.

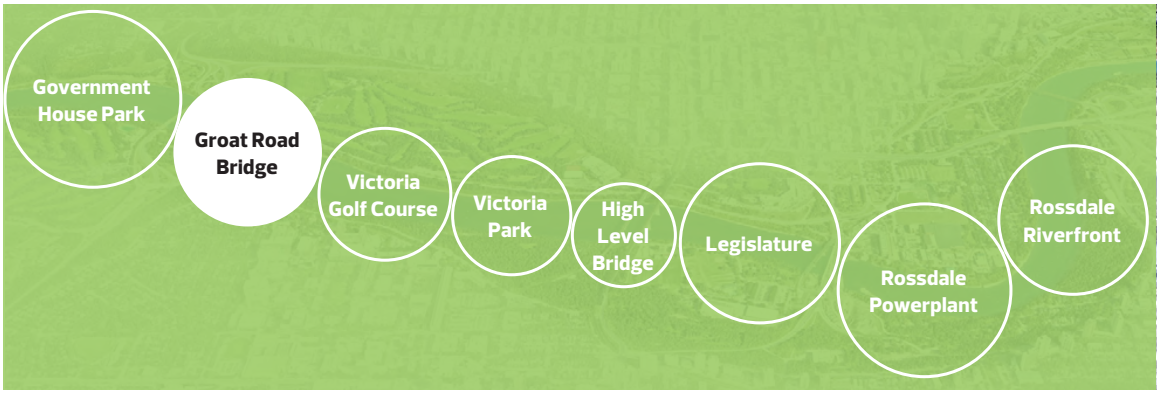
364 Responses

Responses indicated strong support for daylighting. Respondents explained their support by adding that habitat restoration is important to them, or that they felt daylighting would make an attractive destination and interpretive opportunity.

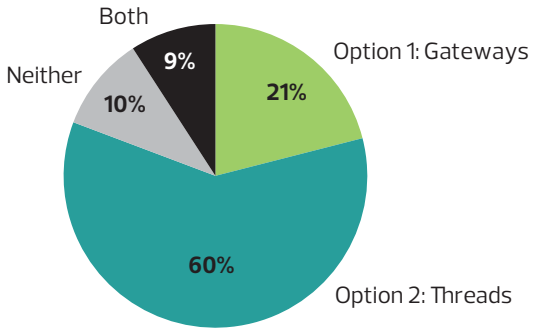
Many comments reiterated a need for washrooms, and the preference to maintain a natural park space. Some comments expressed a desire for a café, beverage kiosk or restaurant.

An idea for improving access to the park articulated that parking could be redirected to the old museum. An accessible path and staircase could be built down the hill, and the park could be a hub for active transportation.

> *"I think Gateways would create a new destination at this location and the daylighting slows the river experience down and make it feel more interactive and safe to get close."*



13. Based on the experience and activities you would like to do in this area, which option do you prefer?



514 responses

14. Please tell us more about the reasons for your preference.

301 respondents commented on the Groat Road Bridge area. Two key themes were discussed regarding the proposed concepts for this segment: universal accessibility and safety for all road/path users.

Many respondents emphasized the importance of universal accessibility from the pathway to Groat Road Bridge, with general support for a new ramp that would improve access for cyclists and people using wheelchairs/strollers. There was also frequent support for a wider pathway under the bridge, as well as separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists to improve the comfort of all users. Many also discussed the importance of fostering easy connections to surrounding areas via the bridge, such as the south bank of the river valley and Hawrelak Park.

Regarding safety, a common theme was the importance of separating active modes from vehicles, particularly in allowing people to cross River Valley Road safely. This could be achieved either by a flyover ramp, or a raised and lighted pedestrian crossing. There was also support for lighting under the bridge deck to improve safety.

Other themes brought up multiple times included support for seating areas, environmental preservation, the fishing area and greater access to the water.

Some respondents were concerned with the higher cost and over-building of infrastructure in the Threads concept.

Some sample comments include:

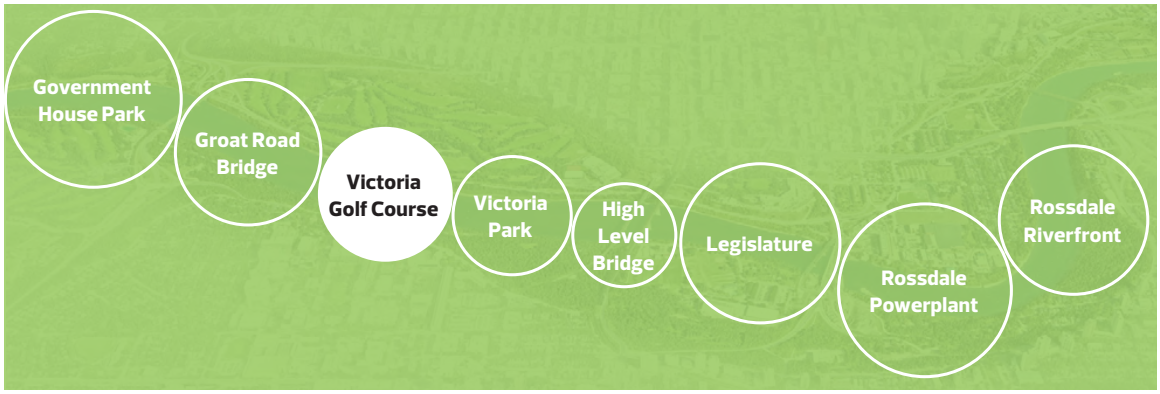
"No contest, Threads is better. This is a really challenging space as a cyclist and as a pedestrian."

"Am a senior. Just want to be able to go for a walk along the river without getting runover by cycleists."

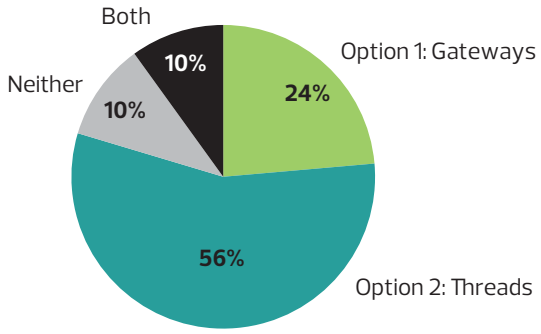
"The separate pathways at the bridge would be ideal but I question the cost of the pathway ramp to Groat bridge"

"I like the under bridge lighting, additional seating, fishing spot, ramps are easier than stairs for some people."

"Better connection with Groat Bridge hugely important, especially now that the bridge has been upgraded. It would greatly improve connection between north bank and the heavily used parks (Emily Murphy, Hawrelak) south."



15. Based on the experience and activities you would like to do in this area, which option do you prefer?



432 responses

16. Please tell us more about the reasons for your preference.

There were 229 respondents who commented on the Victoria Park Golf Course area. There was a mix of support for both Gateways and Threads in the comments as compared to the multiple choice preference, where the majority of participants preferred the Threads option. Some liked the viewpoints and pathway options of Threads, while others felt that this section should not be a priority for building significant new infrastructure. Gateways was also supported by some for its separated pathway and lower impact on the natural environment.

Key themes in responses on this section of the design were a desire for access to the water, support for separating vehicles and different active modes, and the importance of environmental protection of the vegetation and wildlife corridor.

Other common topics discussed erosion protection, potential for safety issues with a trail close to the water, a need for public washrooms, and support for the removal of the existing concrete debris along the bank regardless of the concept pursued.

Some sample comments include:

"Threads takes away too much natural space. Ideally one could maintain a single wide path with belvedere look outs along the way, acting as nodes along the corridor for activities and gatherings closer to the water."

"Gateway is more natural. Threads looks complex and expensive."

"I like the opportunity for people to linger and enjoy the river."

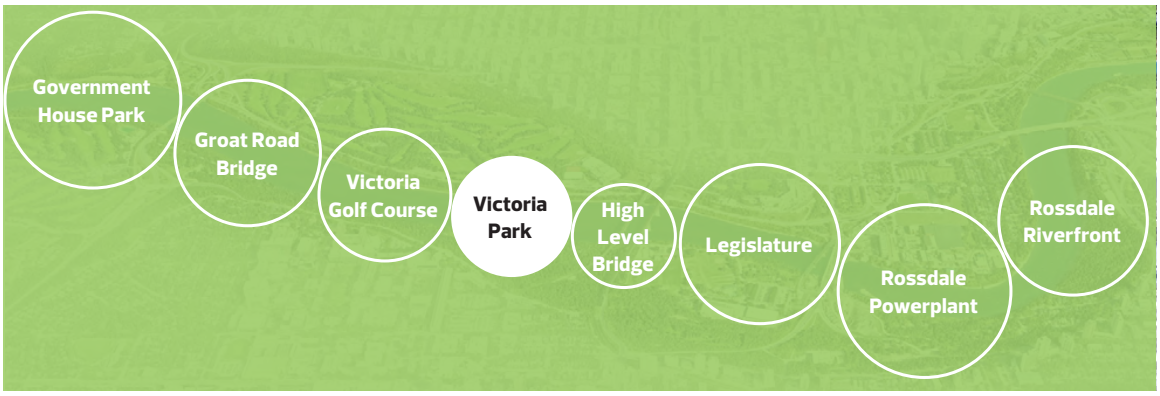
"I like the separation of the pathway from the road proposed in the Gateways option. While the Threads option is very interesting, I am concerned of the impact to the river valley with this much infrastructure development."

"New lower path for pedestrians with a soft surface. NO CONCRETE!"

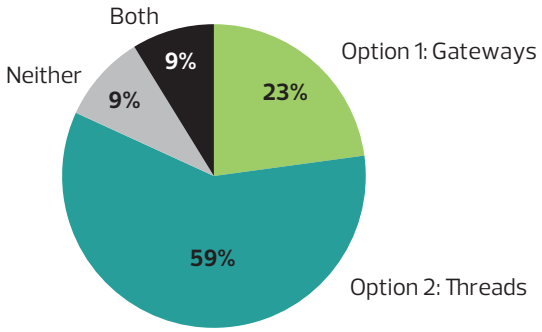
"Threads gives the people that balance of inner nature and casual gathering. Gateway is more dry and less inviting more like a pass through only. We need to really define and go all out with the promenade as it is a defining factor."

Another comment that should be noted was this suggestion to improve accessibility:

"Please provide stairs to connect areas that are designed for accessibility. This should reduce "social" paths created by people who don't want to go the long way around."



17. Based on the experience and activities you would like to do in this area, which option do you prefer?



512 responses

> *Overpass in Threads option looks cool, but I just don't see the justification based on current or future traffic.*

> *Overpasses for shared use is the way to go. It is safe, it speeds mobility for all users, it is aesthetic and will welcome more users."*

18. Please tell us more about the reasons for your preference.

319 respondents commented on the Victoria Park (overpass) area. Comments primarily focused on the pedestrian overpass and were divided between those who supported it and those who did not. While some emphasized the way that it would improve safety, views and traffic flows, others expressed that it was unnecessarily costly and a safer crossing at street level would be better to prioritize active transportation modes.

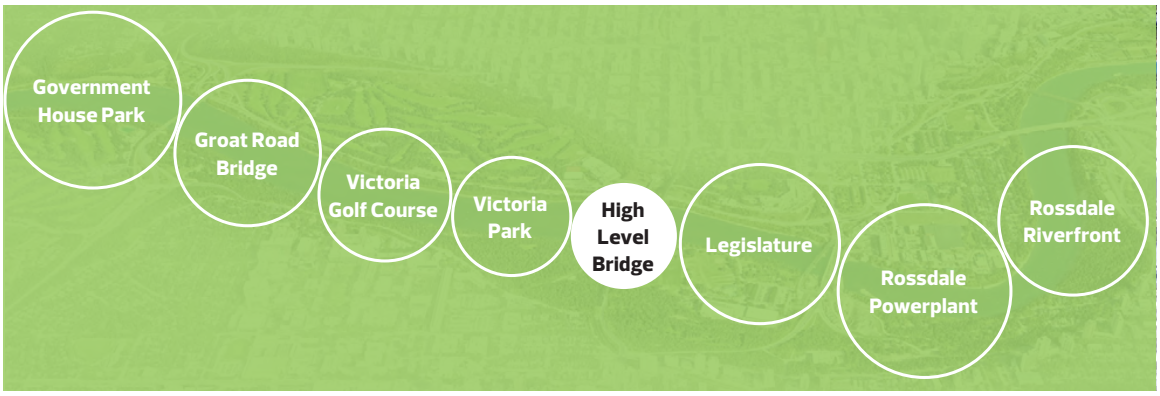
Other themes that emerged included support for additional viewpoints of the river and golf course, an emphasis on universal accessibility, and the need for safety in crossing River Valley Road (whether through an overpass or improved crosswalk at ground).

Some sample comments include:

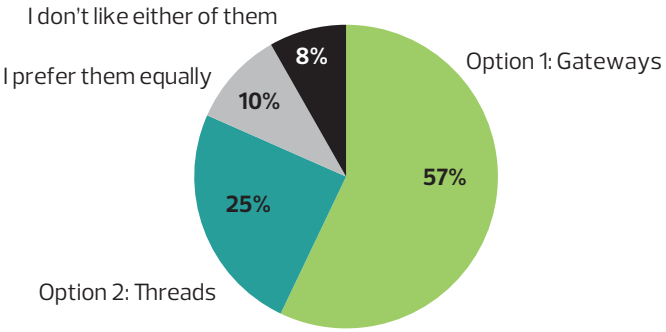
"A bridge for pedestrians prioritizes cars and not active transport. If you want this to be a destination, either the speed limit along here needs to drop or you need to push the road under to improve the pedestrian experience."

"I think it is pretty obvious why Threads is better for Victoria Park. The connections from the main grassy area/skating rink to the riverbank are amazing. I really love this design."

"Crossing victoria park road [River Valley Road] sometimes feels like playing frogger."



19. Based on the activities and experience you would like to do in this area, which gathering area do you prefer at the High Level Bridge area?



571 responses

20. Is there something that you'd like to do here that is not reflected in the options?

250 survey respondents answered this question. The majority of comments supported having an accessible pathway down the hill and improving safety for crossing River Valley Road. There were differing opinions on how to best do this. Many felt the two options needed to be merged, simplified or cleaned up. One respondent summarized, "Perhaps some middle ground between the two options. Improving accessibility between top and bottom of bank is good but the path in Gateways is excessively complicated."

Comments noted the existing conditions were dangerous and congested and shared concerns regarding safety at the crosswalk due to user conflict and inadequate lighting. Others felt the Gateways option included too much unnecessary new development, while the Threads option did not address the crosswalk concerns.

Other responses included suggestions to achieve this middle ground. Ideas included extending the LRT pedestrian bridge all the way to the hill, realigning the roads so that an overpass is not needed, considering a funicular or other mechanized access, and turning Fortway Drive into a pedestrian priority street.

Some people expressed that a connection below the High Level Bridge, between Enzio Farone Park and the Legislature Grounds would be an improvement to crossing at the 97 Avenue intersection.

Many commented that some parking should remain at the bottom of the hill, and that the parking lot itself should be improved. Different ideas suggested that parking could be designated as accessible parking only, public art could still be included, as could some grass space for stretching.

A few people expressed hope that the Royal Glenora Club or pathside vendors would offer food and beverage service.

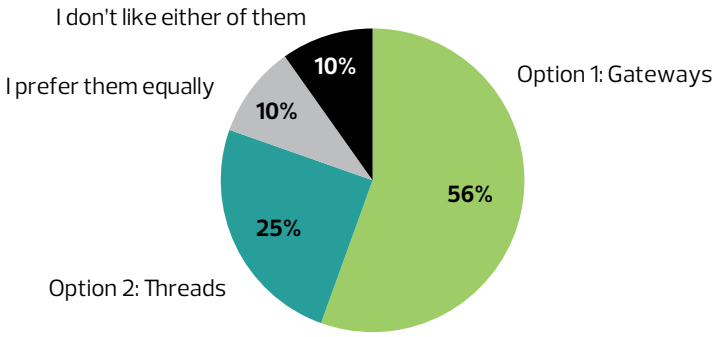
There were some comments opposed to both options, and instead suggested lowering taxes, or simply widening the stairs so that there could be separation between 'fitness' and 'walking.'

Those who spoke about ecology supported re-vegetating the parking lot area and identified they would like to see erosion protections put in place for the slope. It was noted again that too much hard surfacing was proposed.

> *"Stop the whole idea. It is expensive and not required. Lower my taxes."*

Due to a formatting error, there was no Question 21 in the online survey.

22. Thinking about the level of change, (i.e. new amenities, plaza and pathways and viewing areas) for the High Level Bridge Hill gathering area which of the two options seem right for you.



571 responses

23. Tell us more about your preferences for the High Level Bridge Hill.

288 people responded when asked to explain their preferences for the area. The majority of responses identified their value for accessibility and safety. Many comments supported keeping the parking lot, building stronger connections to the Legislature grounds, and increasing landscape plantings for slope stabilization and beautification.

Some people felt the area should be left 'as is,' typically stating they wanted the fitness stairs to stay, the stairs are a well-used asset, or that money could be better used elsewhere.

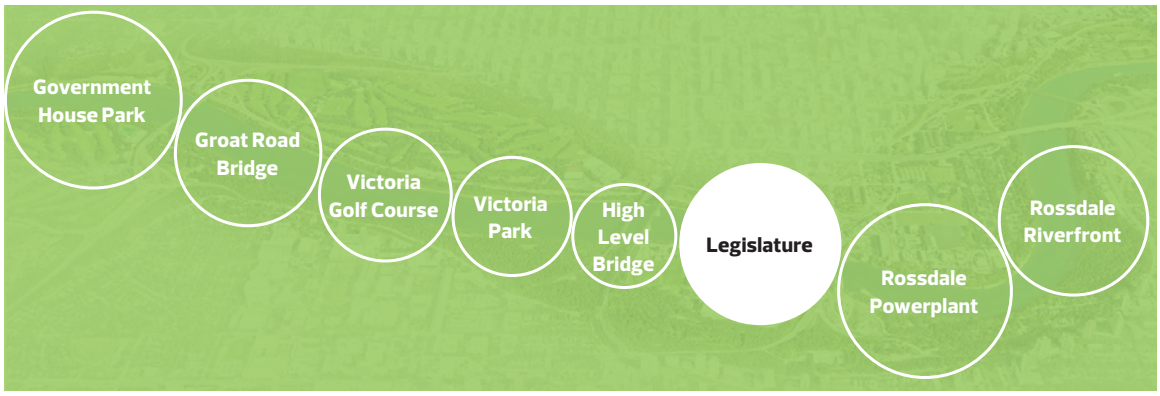
Some sample comments include:

"Washrooms and garbage cans"

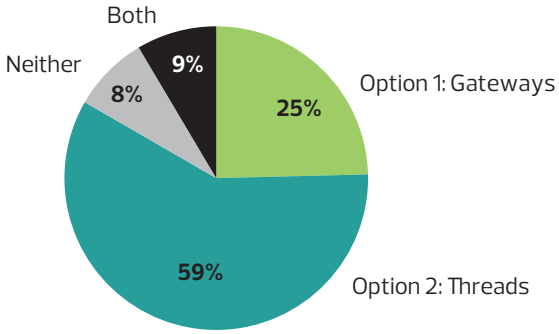
"Seating, particularly for resting and watching the fireworks"

"Off leash area"

"Leave this area "as is". It's great now."



24. Based on the experience and activities you would like to do in this area, which option do you prefer?



516 responses

25. Please tell us more about the reasons for your preference.

281 respondents provided comments to share more details on their Concept Options preferences near the Legislature Grounds.

They provided the following reasoning for their preferences: to better view the river, to access the river and for opportunities for art and music. Several respondents considered it a good place to view the Walterdale Bridge. Some said they do not like the Threads option because it is too intrusive and/or has too much concrete.

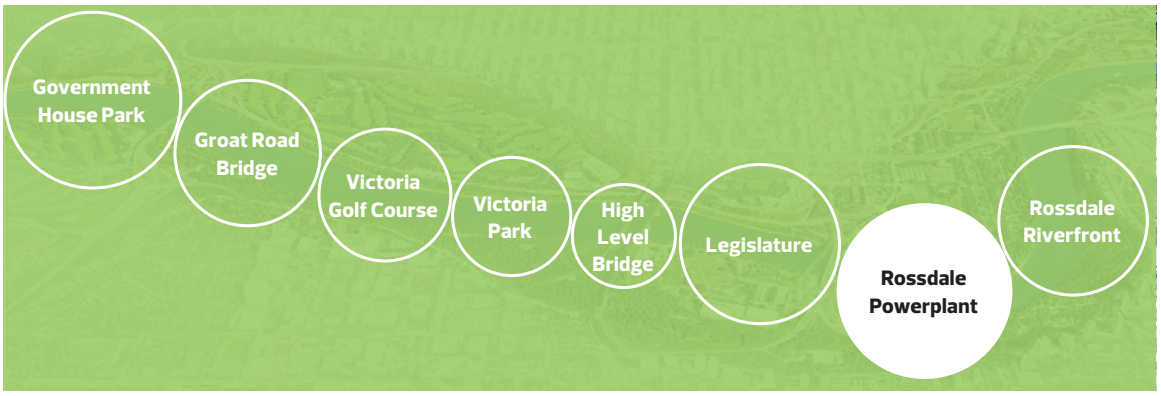
Some sample comments include:

"While I found the seating design in the Thread option for Groat (I think) too industrial, I like the similar design here, as it seems to fit better here."

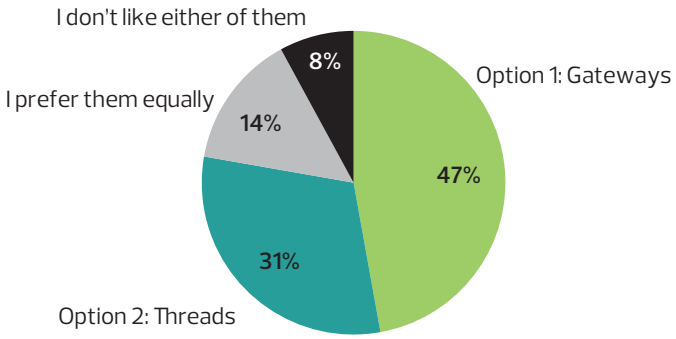
"This highlights the river and gives a place to go down from the legislature."

"wooden infrastructure such as benches and table but no concrete or metal because it's ugly and doesn't respect the natural environment"

> *I can imagine walking and relaxing in this area. I especially like the path to the river bank.*



26. Based on the activities and experience you would like to do in this area, which gathering area do you prefer at the Rossdale area?



706 responses

27. Is there something that you'd like to do here that is not reflected in the options?

The 358 responses received on this question spoke about the Traditional Burial Grounds, activating the Power Plant, blending the best of both options and preferring less hard surfacing.

Indigenous heritage and the importance of developing this site in a culturally appropriate manner were of critical importance to a large number of respondents. Many felt Indigenous heritage recognition should extend beyond the current location of the Burial Grounds and be meaningfully expressed throughout the entire Rossdale location.

Some participants said they would love to see full scale commercial development of a tourist attraction, festival and market plaza, shops and restaurants. Others would support more modest development consisting of washrooms, a café and seating.

Many comments asked to have both the plaza from Gateways and the riverfront seating from Threads. This was usually accompanied by stating that more greenery needs to be included, and less concrete. Many other comments did not reference either option and focused solely on the need to keep the area green and natural, without disturbing the riverbank.

Access to and through the area was often mentioned in the comments received. Some participants pointed out that this area is not currently a destination, and will not be a destination unless the Power Plant and Pump House are activated in some way such as a community event space or commercial space. Comments suggested a gondola from Whyte Ave and downtown would be an ideal way to access Rossdale.

Cyclists expressed concerns regarding the Gateways option over the number of pedestrians that could meander across the commuter bike path causing conflict. They requested some separation for safety.

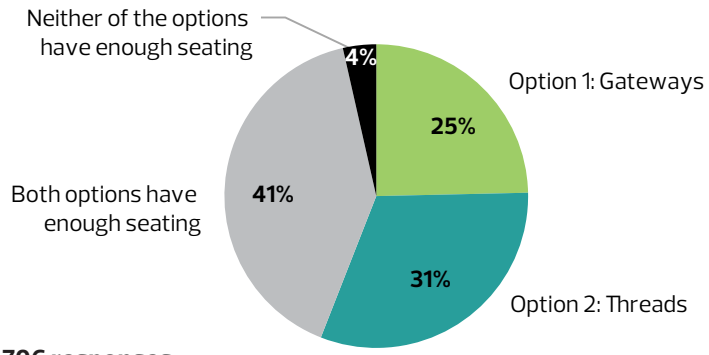
Some sample comments include:

"I think there should be outdoor Powwow grounds with seating instead of a plaza. I also think gateways has more potential for diversity of use, but I think the lower bank seating would be more widely and safely used than a dock."

"Prefer the Gateways features and amenities, but prefer the Threads waterfront. Let people touch the river safely."

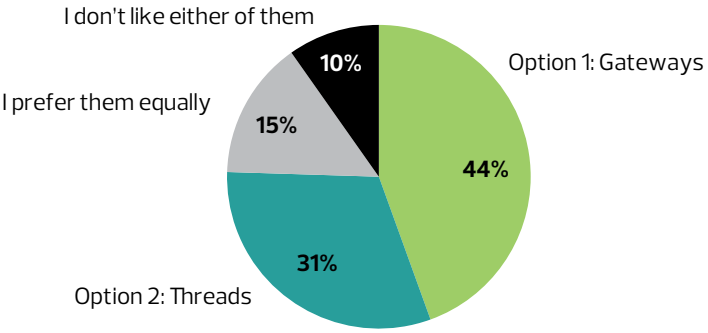
"Again, my decision is based on how austere and cold the stairs look in the Thread option. I would also prefer more green space in the Gateway option."

28. Thinking about seating options , which concept option do you think has accessible and enough seating?



706 responses

29. Thinking about the level of change, (i.e. new amenities, plaza and pathways and viewing areas) for the Rossdale area which of the two options seem right for you?



706 responses

30. Tell us more about your preferences for the Rossdale area.

361 respondents provided comments on their preferences for the Rossdale area. Many of the respondents who said they preferred the Gateways option for Rossdale did so because of the importance of honouring the Indigenous Burial Grounds, and the opportunity associated with the power plant redevelopment. The opportunity for commercial development such as shops, markets and restaurants in a future re-developed Power Plant as well as plaza spaces resonated for this area.

Some participants provided caveats to their preference of Gateways. These typically included a preference towards the terraced seating that the Threads option provided over the boat dock. Comments explained that they felt the terraced seating would be better for events and make a better use of the shade and space underneath the Walterdale Bridge.

Of those who preferred the Threads option, the seating was appreciated, and they felt that Indigenous heritage should be incorporated in this option as well.

Comments regarding both options stated that they felt overall there was too much hard surfacing or paving, and that the options needed to be naturalized and include more trees and vegetation. A few people stated they preferred Gateways because it was set back and had a vegetated river bank, and they felt that option would provide less disturbance of the riverbank and more ecological connectivity.

When it came specifically to the boat dock some participants celebrated the idea and noted the need for universal access to the water, while others felt it did not provide valuable access to the water. One paddler explained that a dock is not ideal for hand launching because you are already in the current. A resident of Rossdale stated that they did not support the boat dock because they did not want to hear noisy jet boats.

An item that participants wanted more information on was the seating proposed in each concept.

Comments expressed a desire for a variety of benches with arm rests, terraced seating and permanent picnic tables to eat at.

There were respondents who opposed both options. Some explained their opposition was due to inadequate parking for the scale of development. One resident stated that people park illegally as it is in the area and expects that would get worse should development occur. Others opposed due to the amount of concrete and disturbance that would occur to the river valley. A few participants commented that the landscape and paths around the Walterdale Bridge was recently renewed and does not need to be revisited.

In this question, many respondents also mentioned concerns regarding water safety and ice damage. People expressed concerns about having people so close to the water and safety concerns. A few respondents also shared concerns about damage to infrastructure due to ice flows, and cautioned against building too close to the water.

> *"I think threads really captures the spirit of touch the water. It blends natural features with the right level of development, with an open and inviting connection to the power plant. It provides a large area for people walk down to the river (and to touch the water!) as opposed to river access being limited to dock users."*

Some sample comments include:

"The Rossdale plant itself should be brought into Threads should incorporate burial grounds too,"

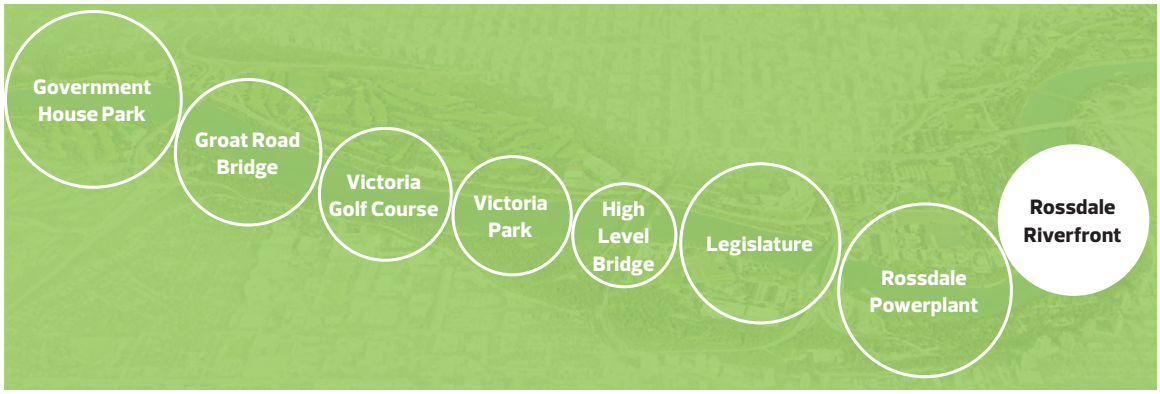
"Overall I like the gateway plan here but I would like to see riverfront event stairs leading down to the water to replace the riprap underneath the bridge. The shaded area under the road doesn't provide much opportunity for plants but it could give people a place to access the water and sit without disturbing the current greenspace by the pump house."

"This is an iconic building and valued area. This is where development belongs. Somewhere to collectively celebrate the building, the heritage and the space. It would be multi functional and bring a lot of life to this area – cafés, restaurants, events, farmers markets etc. This area deserves to have life injected into it."

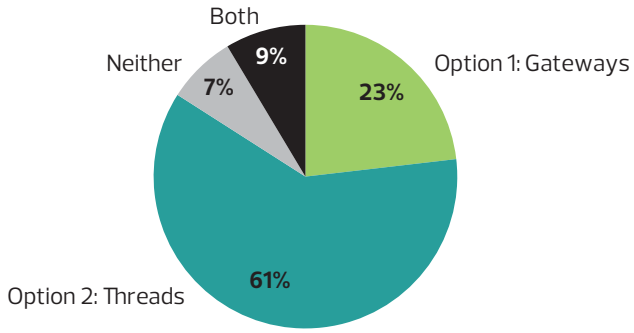
"The Gateways option with the boat launch is absolutely tremendous. Combined with the bridge and the former power plant activated with a boat launch and signature restaurant in the pumphouse, this area has potential to be a world class attraction for the city and perhaps the most desirable area of the entire downtown."

"keep the river bank as natural as possible. "gateways" get people much closer without disrupting the bank and river further. The stairs right on the water will be difficult to maintain with the constantly chaining water levels and ice pack that moves and can be destructive in fall and spring. The gateways plan is beautiful and friendly."

"I feel that either option will diminish the natural area. I do not believe that excessive seating is required. Both options have too much concrete."



31. Based on the experience and activities you would like to do in this area, which option do you prefer?



652 responses

32. Please tell us more about the reasons for your preference.

335 respondents provided comments to this question. Respondents generally liked the decks and their opportunity to view the river, the recognition and acknowledgement of heritage and traditional territory, ability to commute through the area, access to water to fish, to enjoy green space and natural areas and to exercise.

Some sample comments include:

"I like the vibrancy of gathering spaces"

"Feel more connected to the river"

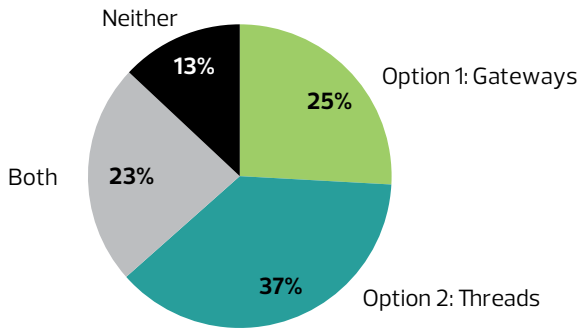
"I think this does a better job of using the land in multiple ways while still paying respects to the indigenous inheritance."

"Appreciate the heritage recognition being incorporated as well as access to the actual riverbank"

"Looks like a lovely place to relax mid-bike ride."

Overall concept

33. Which concept do you think best aligns with the vision and guiding principles?



1,393 responses

34. Please explain if there are any parts of the vision or principles you do not see in the concept options, or if there are options which do not align with the vision and principles.

489 comments were received to this question with many reiterating interest in a better connection to the water, a desire for more washrooms and encouragement of the daylighting of Groat Creek at Government House Park. Many could not choose one option over the other and instead proposed the project do both or develop a concept that is a mixture of both Gateways and Threads. Some voiced their opposition to the project based on cost and/or potential environmental effects. Removal of vegetation and disturbance of the environment was perceived by some to contradict the principles stated. However, with respect to environmental issues, there appeared to be more support for Threads overall with the exception of restoring Groat Creek in the Gateways concept option at Government House Park.

> *"I think that the threads proposal provides for more diversity of use and experiencing the river bank. the additional promenades will provide a lot more variety for constant and casual use."*

Some sample comments include:

"Would like to see capacity for landing of canoes/kayaks at the three nodes in the Gateway option."

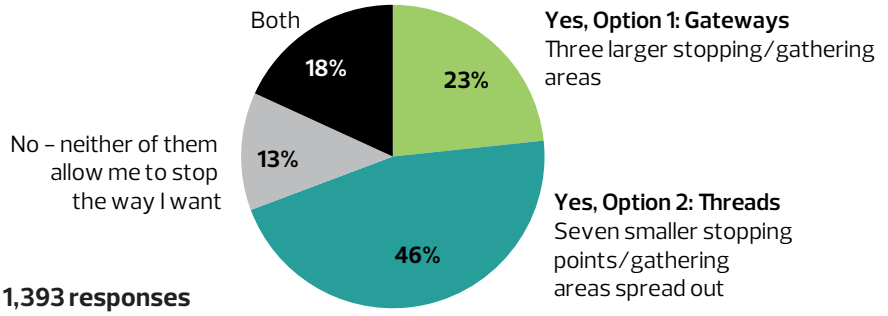
"there should be indigenous art on the whole length of the path to honour the First Nations people that have used this land as a Gathering Place for thousands of years."

"The gateways (although I did not agree with all of the specifics of each of the designs) build on the places people are already gathering and enhances them to make them more accessible and able to gather in new ways. It offers a massive improvement for active commuters and recreators by widening the paths and adding a buffer between the road and also seems to maintain the ecology along the river by maintaining a wildlife corridor."

"Overall I prefer the notion of threads due to the more continuous connections, I prefer the idea of many smaller opportunities rather than fewer large spots. That being said I think the opportunities for connections to central city neighbourhoods in the Gateways proposal to be beneficial (sorry!)."

"would really like it if we could consider naturalizing the mid and lower banks from Government House to Rossdale then work all concepts from the upper bank where people can overlook the river valley from a higher vantage point."

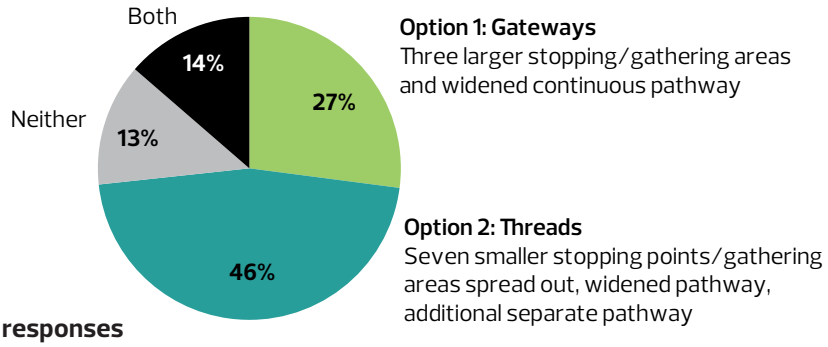
35. Which of these options allow you to stop where you like in the area?



1,393 responses

There were 1,393 responses to this question. Threads, with its seven smaller stopping points spread out, was preferred by 46 percent of participants. Gateways, with its three larger stopping areas, was preferred by 23 percent. Eighteen percent indicated that both would allow them to stop where they like, while 13 percent indicated that neither would.

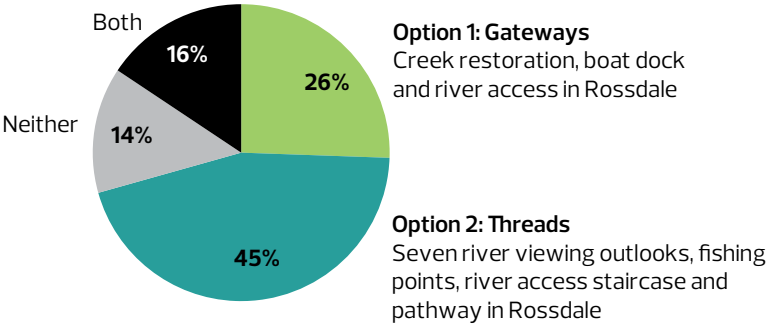
36. Thinking about the activities you are interested in participating in the project area, which option best meets your expectations?



1,393 responses

There were 1,393 responses to this question. Threads, with its seven smaller stopping points/ gathering areas spread out, widened pathway, additional separate pathway, was preferred by 46 percent of participants. Gateways, with its three larger stopping/gathering areas and widened continuous pathway was preferred by 27 percent. Fourteen percent indicated that both meet their expectations in regards to the activities they want to participate in, in the project area, while 13 percent indicated that neither would.

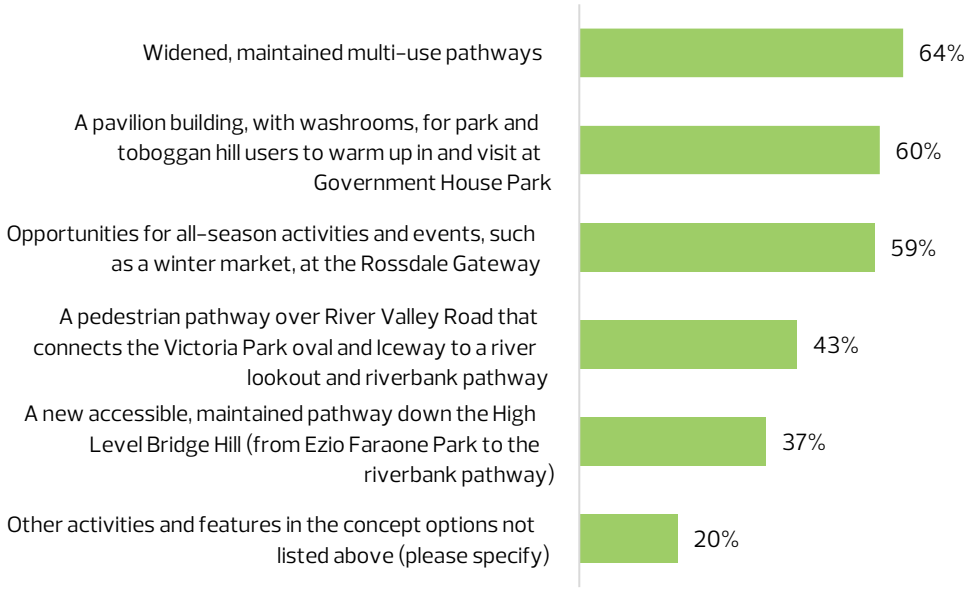
37. Overall, which option allows you to connect with the river better?



1,393 responses

There were 1,393 responses to this question. Threads, with its seven river viewing outlooks, fishing points, river access staircase and pathway in Rossdale, was preferred by 45 percent of participants. Gateways, with its creek restoration, boat dock and river access in Rossdale, was preferred by 26 percent. Sixteen percent indicated that both would allow them to better connect with the river, while 14 percent indicated that neither would.

38. Edmonton is a winter city, and both concept options propose opportunities for the project area to be welcoming in all seasons. Which winter city activities and features do you want to see in the project area?

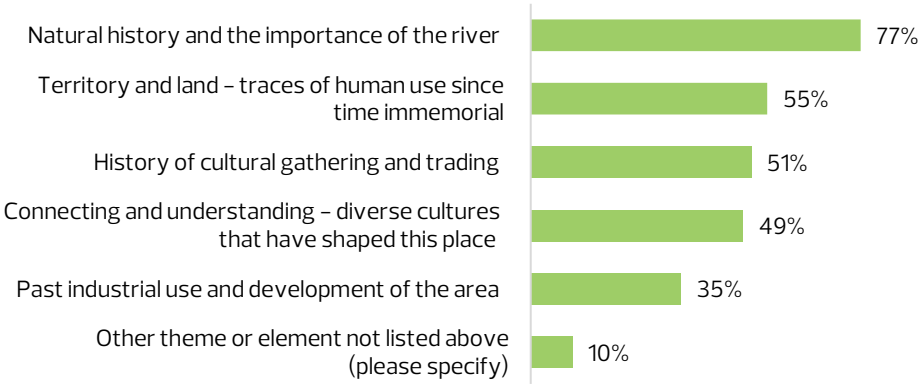


272 participants provided ideas for other activities and features not listed. The two most common responses were cross country ski tracks and cafés/patios. Other ideas mentioned multiple times included skateways, washroom facilities, heating areas, ski and snowshoe rental and spaces for Indigenous art and celebration.

1,393 responses

5% Did not answer this question

39. Which historical themes and elements do you think are most important for this project to celebrate and recognize?



135 participants added comments on other themes or elements not listed. Indigenous history and celebration were frequently highlighted, as well as ecological elements and climate change. Other ideas included political history, womens history, sports, and festivals.

1,393 responses
4% Did not answer this question

40. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the concept options?

525 respondents provided comments to Question 40. Final thoughts encouraged completion of the project, better access to the area and to the water, as well as the incorporation of food services and washrooms. Interest in fishing was raised, as was creating places to relax and making the area safer for pedestrians. Other comments raised concerns regarding the cost of the project given the current economic situation and concerns around disturbing the environment.

> *Create a draw to make all citizens want to come to that area of the river valley.*

Some sample comments include:

"Let's get moving. I want to have a glass of wine next to the river before I die (age 76)."

"The area needs improvement, but do not do it at the sacrifice of nature"

As a result, what has changed in the project

Thank you to everyone who engaged with us virtually as we adjusted our engagement practices as a result of COVID-19. We appreciate you helping us to refine, adjust and improve the concept design options in order to develop one preferred concept design.

Your feedback, along with wisdom and input shared by regional Indigenous Nations and Communities, the results from initial technical studies, and direction from City Council and approved City policies is being used to develop one preferred concept design. Based on these inputs, the preferred concept design will take a hybrid approach that uses and builds on parts of both draft concept options, including revisions and new ideas based on what you shared with us. The development of the preferred concept design will:

+ Balance retaining the 'natural' and 'wild' character of the river with improved access to provide opportunities to better experience the river.
+ Reduce hardscaping along the river, and minimize impacts to existing vegetation and habitat corridors.
+ Improve access to and within the river valley, for different types of people with different abilities, with a focus on universal accessibility.
+ Provide more opportunities to celebrate the Indigenous, industrial and natural heritage and culture of the project area.
+ Improve safety in the project area, which was shared as a major concern for people travelling at different speeds and modes through the river valley, as well as along the water's edge.

The concept will guide future phases of design for the rest of the project, and will serve as a long term plan that could be built through phases over many years, as funding is available.

We will provide a summary of how the Touch the Water Project Team arrived at the final concept once the concept design is done. The Project Team will describe how we used policy and planning information, Indigenous, public and stakeholder input and technical requirements to make concept design decisions.

What's next

The final preferred concept design for both the North Shoreand Rossdale Areas will be shared in summer 2021.

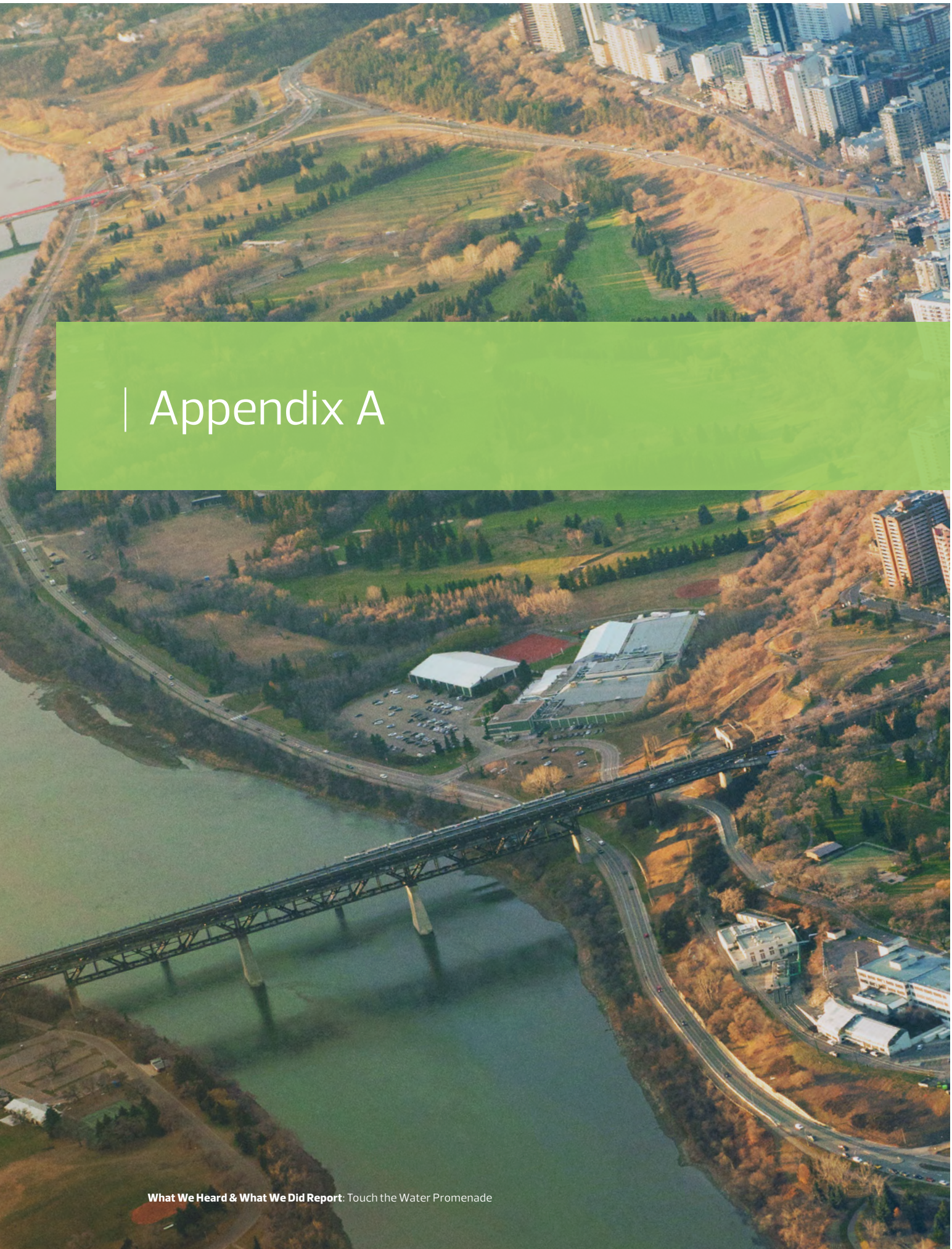
Please note that only the Rossdale project area is funded to continue to this next phase of design, and no funding is currently approved for construction, which may occur in phases over many years. At this time, design for the North Shore Area will conclude at the Concept phase.

The next engagement opportunity will occur in summer 2021, where you'll be invited to review the preferred concept and tell us what you think in order to inform the development of the next phase of design for the Rossdale Area.

Thank you for participating in sharing your voice and shaping our city.

The City of Edmonton is committed to transparent communication and engagement and our project team looks forward to connecting with you.

We appreciate your support and hope you will be able to participate in our upcoming online engagement. For any questions related to the Touch the Water Promenade project, please contact **touchthewaterpromenadeproject@edmonton.ca**

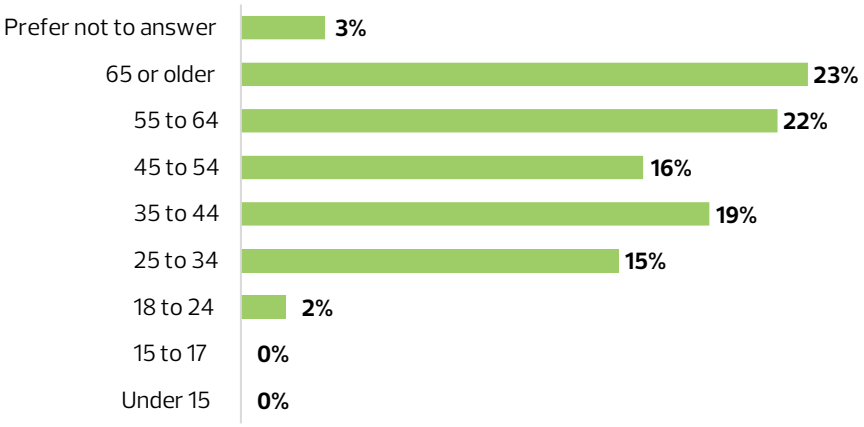


Appendix A

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

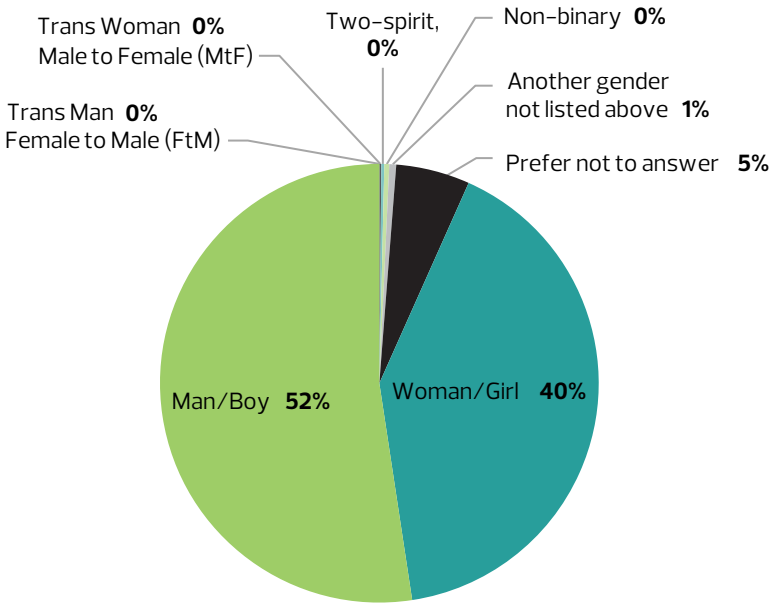
Which of the following age groups are you in?

1,393 responses



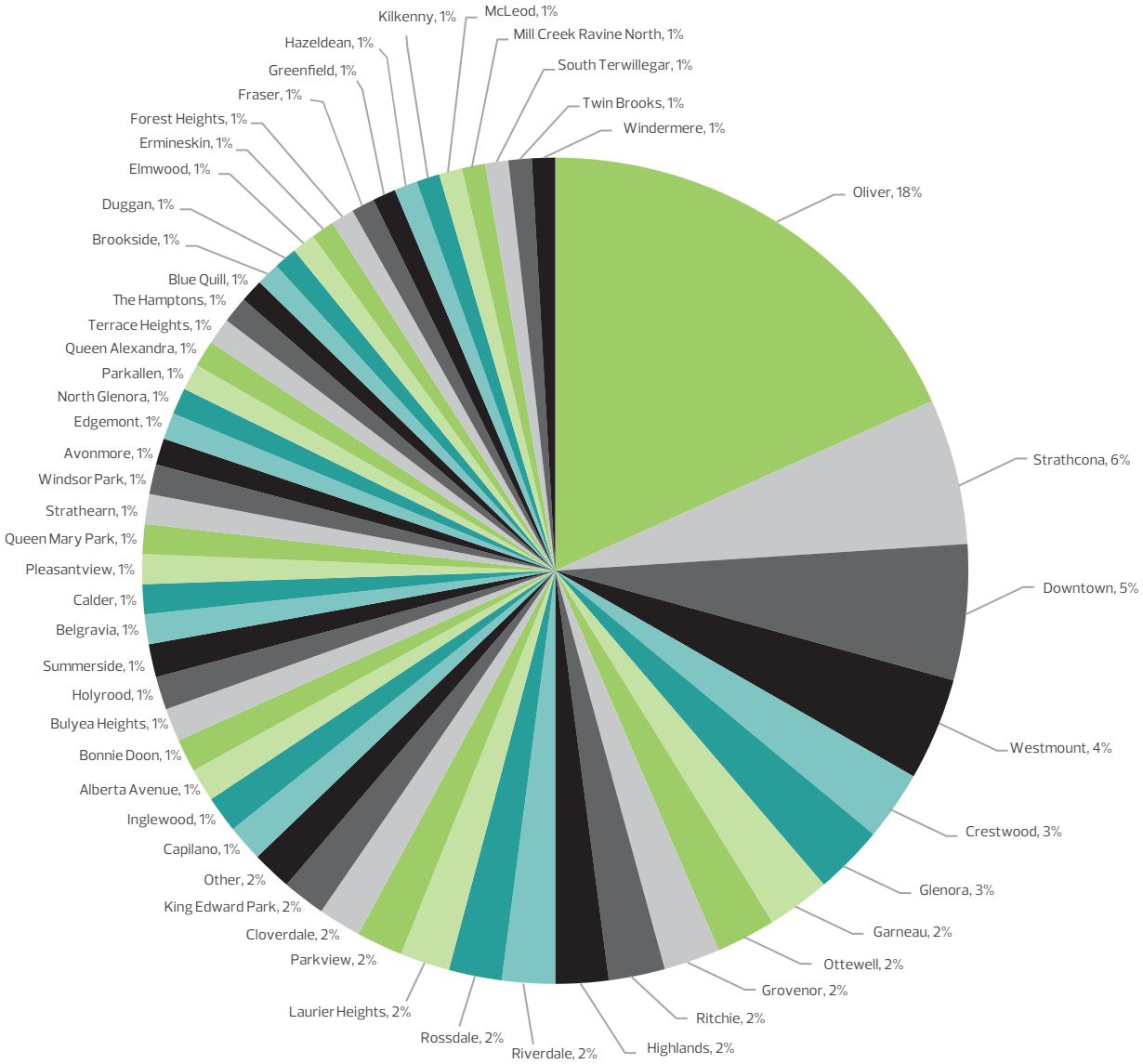
What gender do you identify as?

1,393 responses



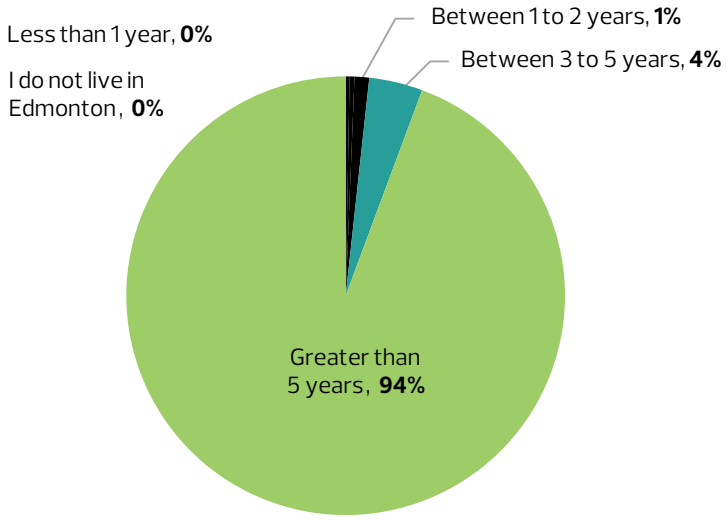
In what Edmonton neighbourhood do you reside?

1,393 responses



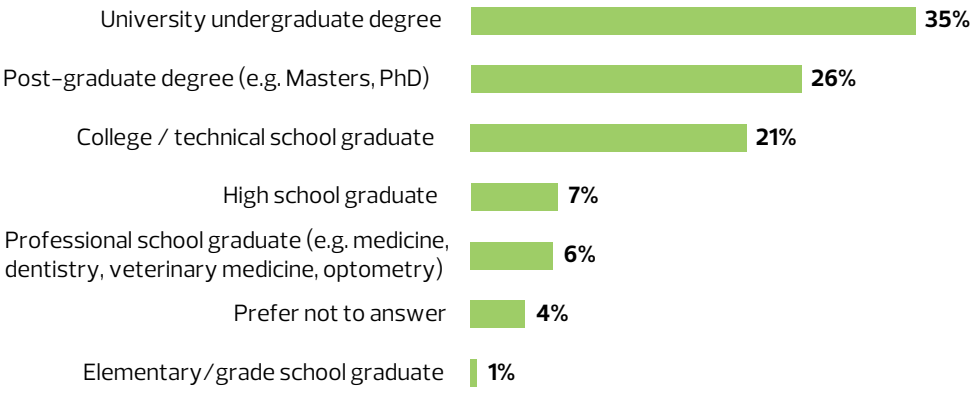
How long have you lived in Edmonton?

1,393 responses



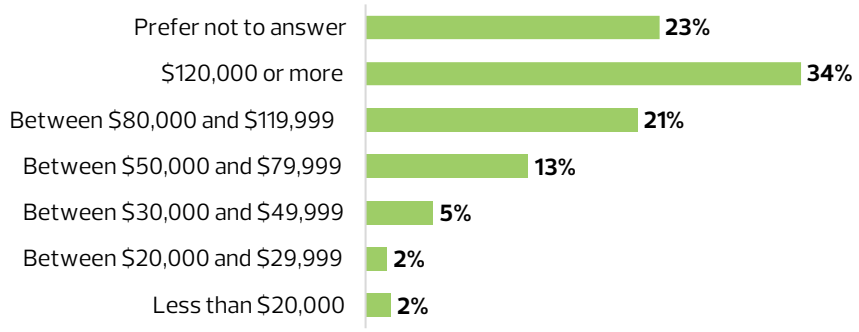
What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1,393 responses



Which of the following best describes your total annual household income before taxes?

1,393 responses



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Outside Edmonton: 780-442-5311

Please visit edmonton.ca/**touchthewater**