



River Crossing **Heritage** **Interpretive** **Plan**



Visioning Workshop **What We Heard Report**

Visioning Workshop

What We Heard Report

The purpose of the Visioning Workshop on September 7, 2016, was to understand what topics participants thought should be reflected in the interpretation of the River Crossing area (Rossdale). Participants at the workshop were asked one central question:

“What topics would you like to see represented in River Crossing?”

Once topics were identified, participants worked together to group the topics under headings or categories.

The following report summarizes key discussions from the workshop:

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RIVER CROSSING

Participants acknowledged the importance of River Crossing to the heritage of Edmonton. There was a widespread belief that the area was significant for reasons, including:

- its role as a **meeting place** since before settlement by non-Indigenous groups.
- its position as the location of many of the **forts**, which established settler presence.
- its location as the site of the **inauguration of the province of Alberta**.
- its proximity of the place to where **Treaty Six adhesions were signed**.
- it's use as a site of **early commerce and industrial development, and later, recreation**.
- the fact that **many cultures** have contributed to the evolution of the area, including First Nations, francophones, Métis, Scots, English and more.

“A coming together place.”

- comments provided in table group discussions -



Examples of topics/categories from individual table groups.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRST NATIONS and MÉTIS HISTORY

Understanding and acknowledging the thousands of years of use and inhabitation of the area by First Nations and Métis peoples was seen as vital by many participants.

Participants also noted a lack of emphasis on Indigenous heritage in other locations where heritage is discussed within the city, as well as a lack of opportunities for Indigenous communities to tell their own stories in the ways and languages of their choosing.

“The river is the reason we are all here.”

- comment provided in table group discussions -

THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER

The importance of the North Saskatchewan River was a thread that ran through many conversations. The river was referenced as:

- a mode of transportation
- a boundary
- a resource
- an ecosystem
- a place for recreation

There were a number of thoughts that supported the idea of the river as a driving force for the area's heritage. Participants expressed that **access to the river** for recreation, **protection of the ecosystem**, and **recognition of the river as the defining element of Edmonton's landscape** were all important.

RIVER CROSSING HAS HAD MANY USES

Rossdale has been used for many purposes over time, and the workshop participants were able to easily summon many different human uses of the area that could be interpreted, including:

- industry (and the fur trade)
- residential uses and camps
- transportation
- traditional uses
- burials
- recreation
- buildings

While participants often had a single topic that most interested them, no single topic emerged as dominant.

***“Many beginnings
and firsts”***

- comment provided in table group discussions -

RIVER CROSSING EVOKES MANY FEELINGS

Participants were asked: “What feelings visitors should experience when they come to River Crossing?” In response, they talked about feelings of:

- acknowledgement
- belonging
- connection
- challenge



Categories that were identified by grouping individual topics.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS

Discussions were marked by a desire to use the River Crossing project as an opportunity to do things right. Though opinions were varied as to what to do on the site, Rossdale was generally seen as having great potential as a site for heritage interpretation, and many participants noted that it needed to be planned and executed with care.

Participants noted that in past projects, the area's heritage has not always been well documented, specifically in relation and potential location of archaeological sites, burial sites, forts and river fords.

“The name Rossdale only tells one story.”

- comment provided in table group discussions -

While the workshop itself was primarily focused on probing for topics rather than tactics for interpretation, participants shared many ideas about the narratives which should be told in River Crossing, and the ways in which to tell them.