

An aerial photograph of the Rossdale area in Edmonton, Alberta, featuring a large bridge and surrounding urban development. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

Touch the Water Promenade Project

Rossdale Area Refined Design

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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 acknowledge this as the Métis' homeland, and also 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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Indigenous Engagement Process

The City is committed to engaging with Indigenous Nations and Peoples on projects that may be of traditional, cultural, historical and/or environmental interest. The City acknowledges that projects within the North Saskatchewan River Valley in particular are of significant interest to regional Indigenous Nations and Communities. It is important that Indigenous Peoples are part of conversations about the past, present and future of Edmonton's river valley.

In fall 2019, 29 regional Indigenous Nations and Communities were invited to begin engagement on the project. Elders, Community members, Knowledge Keepers and Technicians from 24 Nations and Communities have participated over the 2 phases of engagement that have been completed so far.

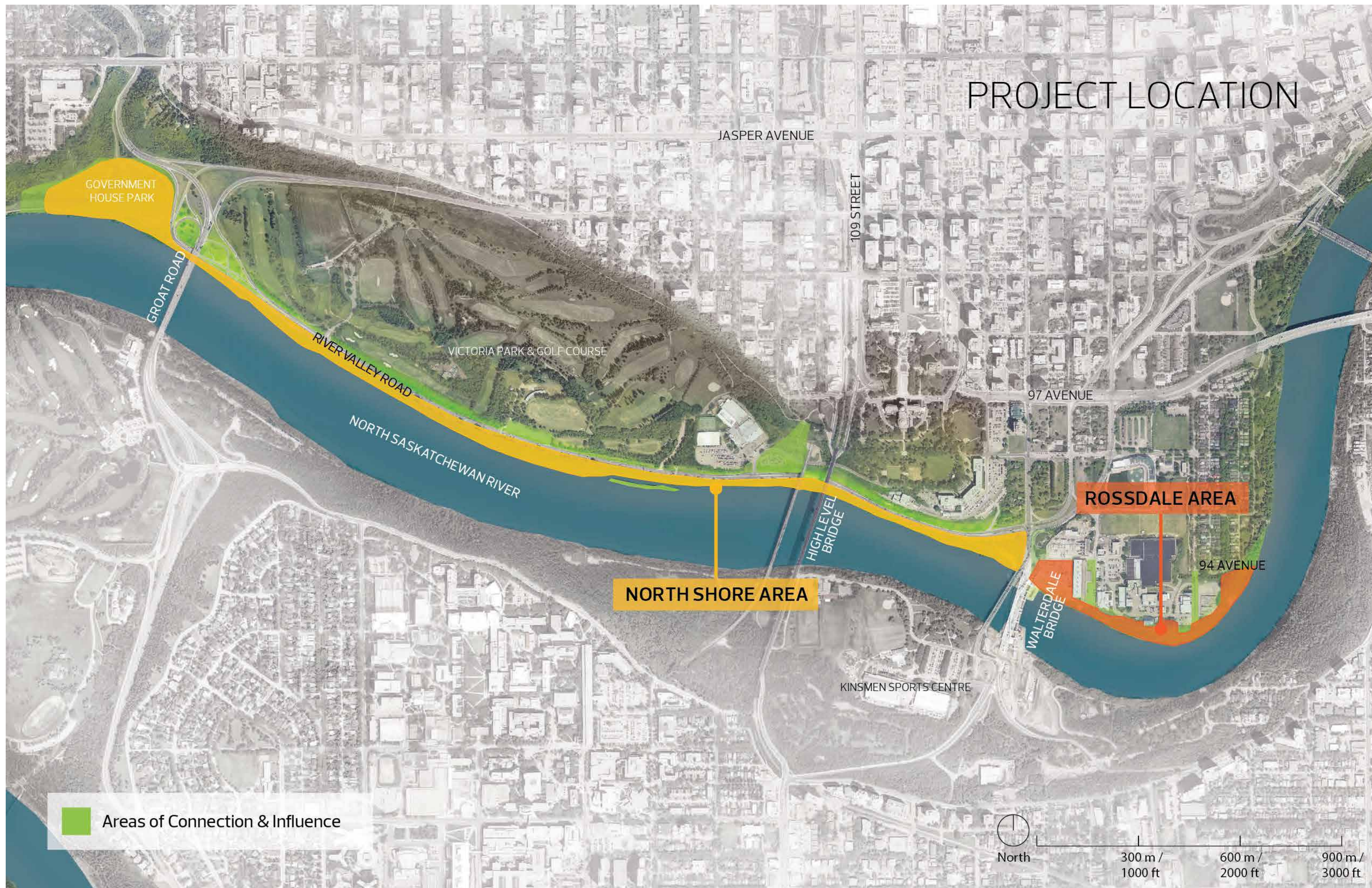
Cultural protocol was offered at the engagement sessions and the input shared has been summarized in reports for Indigenous Nations and Communities to review. Ongoing advice, wisdom, and input from Indigenous Nations and Communities will continue to help guide the project as it moves forward.

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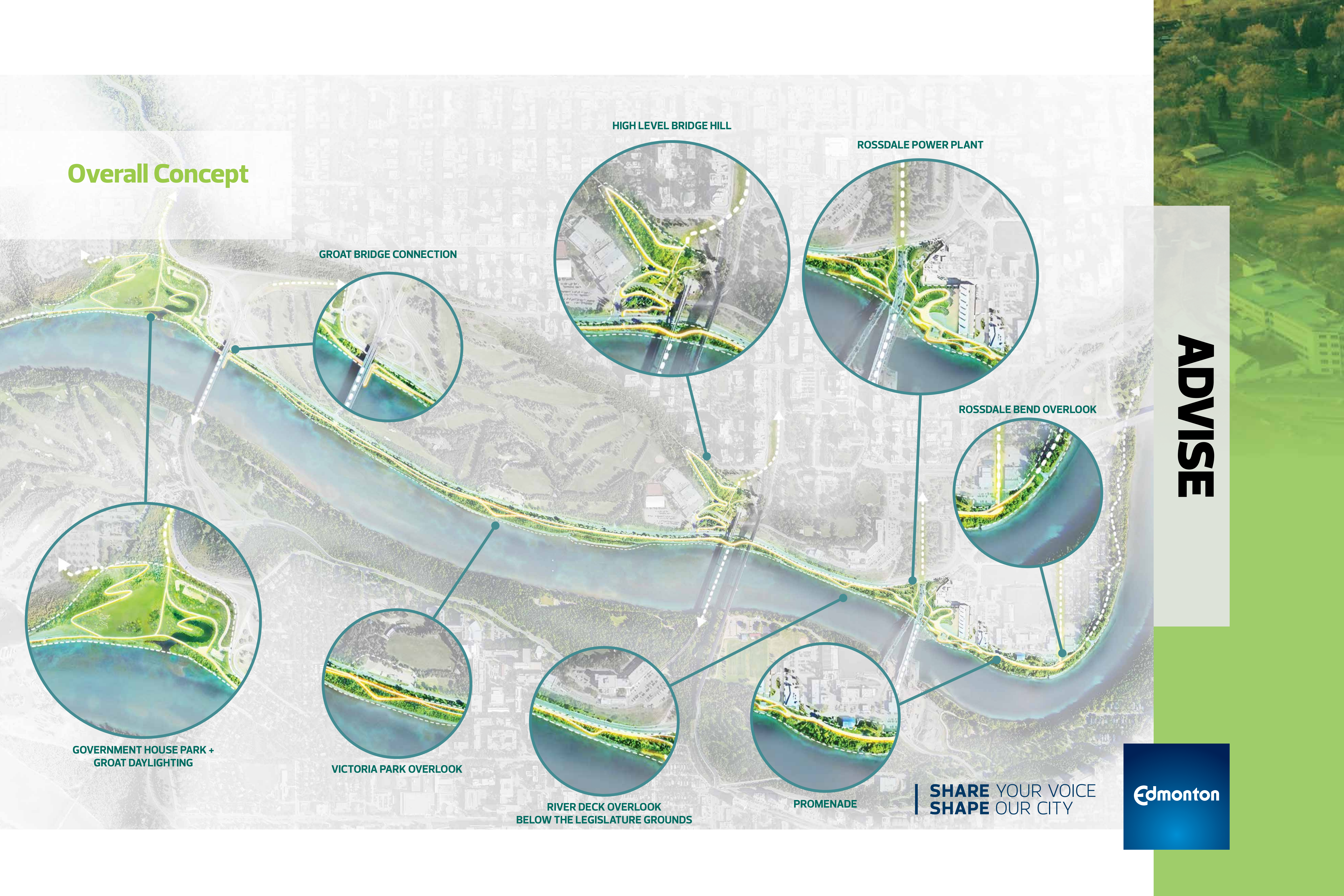
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Overall Concept



GROAT BRIDGE CONNECTION

HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE HILL

ROSSDALE POWER PLANT

ROSSDALE BEND OVERLOOK

GOVERNMENT HOUSE PARK +
GROAT DAYLIGHTING

VICTORIA PARK OVERLOOK

RIVER DECK OVERLOOK
BELOW THE LEGISLATURE GROUNDS

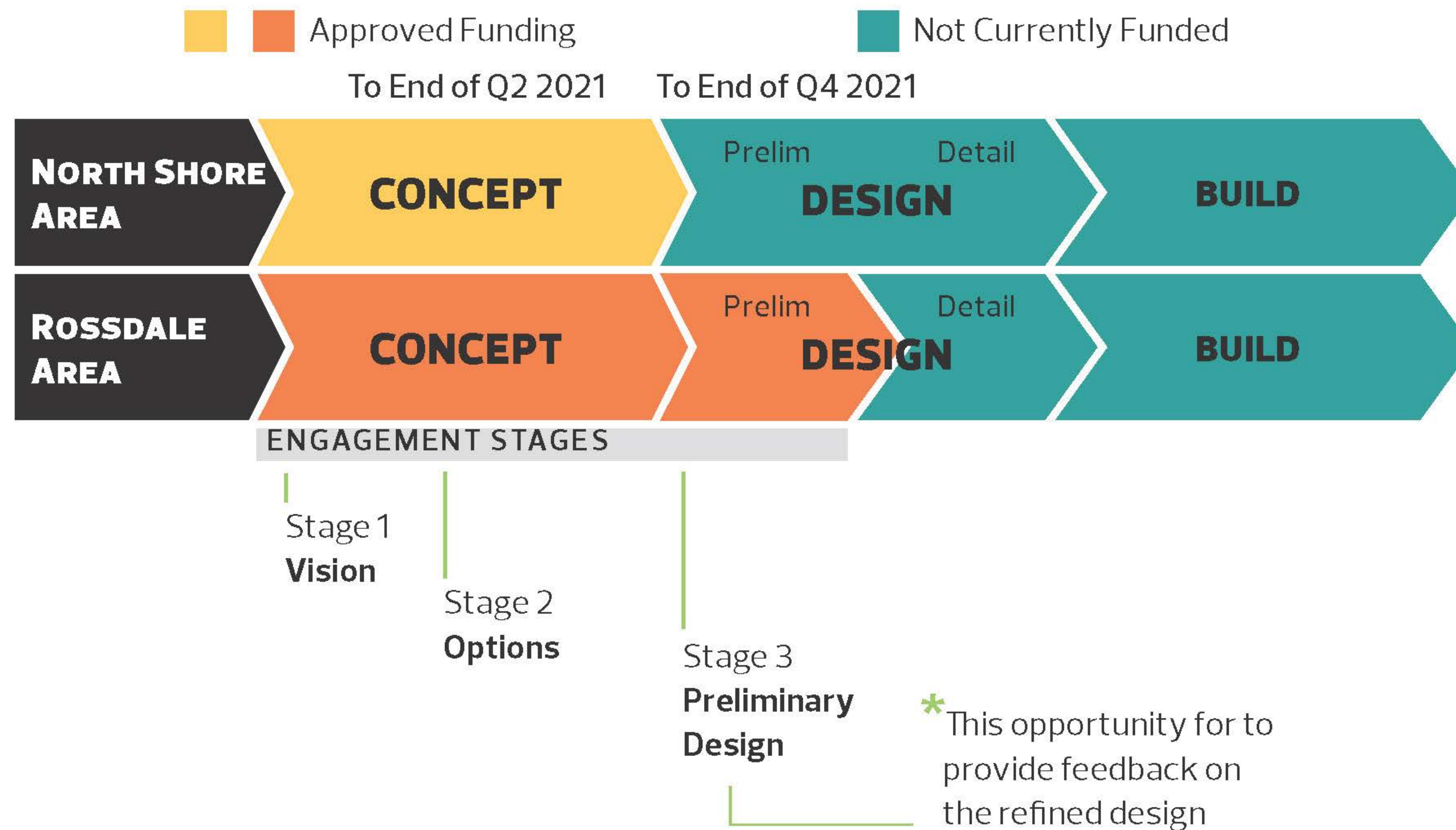
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Project Timeline



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Vision

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

The Touch the Water Promenade **celebrates** the central river valley's multi-layered history and special significance to Indigenous Nations and 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.

Design Principles

The design principles are based on the themes from Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy. These themes are:

+ Ecology

+ Celebration

+ Wellness

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What We Heard – Overall

Based on the previous stages of Indigenous, public and stakeholder engagement and review of the previous draft concept options, we've heard the following main themes:

Overall

- + Keep the 'natural' and 'wild' character of the river while adding elements that improve access and opportunities to touch the water
- + Reduce amount of paved areas along the river
- + Minimize impact to existing vegetation
- + Improve access to the river valley, for all modes of transportation and for users of all abilities
- + Celebrate heritage and culture
- + Safety is an important consideration, regarding both the travel speeds of users on the shared-use pathways and for people accessing the water's edge

Rossdale Power Plant

- + Provide varied and unique spaces
- + Allow access to the water's edge while minimizing disturbance to existing vegetation
- + Celebrate heritage and gathering
- + Increase accessibility to the site and to the water's edge

Rossdale Bend Overlook

- + Celebrate the heritage of the site
- + Improve connections to the Rossdale neighbourhood and to the local trails
- + Work with other projects in the area to manage flood risks

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Touch the Water
ROSSDALE

ROSSDALE POWER PLANT

ROSSDALE BEND OVERLOOK

PROMENADE

WALTERDALE LANDING

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Overall Concept

Since Stage II engagement, we've moved from two distinct draft concepts to a single refined design, by bringing together and integrating elements from both in light of Indigenous, stakeholder and public input, technical requirements and considerations and the overall project vision and principles.

The refined concept:

- + Provides access to the river valley and river
- + Creates gathering places around important sites and areas of previous disturbance
- + Improves connectivity and access to active fitness and wellness throughout the river valley
- + Enhances ecological functions and conditions, especially around site of existing disturbance and wildlife pinch points
- + Proposes different ways in which users can interact with water, while respecting the river's power and cultural significance

Within the Rossdale area, the project is defined by four primary elements:

- + Walterdale Landing
- + Rossdale Power Plant
- + Rossdale Bend Overlook
- + Promenades

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Walterdale Landing



Rossdale Power Plant



Rossdale Bend Overlook



Promenade



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Walterdale Landing



In the refined design the Walterdale Landing area, west of the Walterdale Bridge, has been designed to accommodate a range of passive uses and more intimate gathering spaces to minimize impact on existing high quality vegetation. This includes:

- + A new accessible path to a small overlook with seating close to the water's edge
- + A kayak tie-up at the water's edge connected to the overlook by a scramble
- + An overlook that uses existing grade to provide views to the river and seating
- + A meadow and grasslands with seating opportunities for small gatherings and ceremonies
- + Connections to the North Shore Promenade

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Rossdale Power Plant Area



In the refined design the Rossdale Power Plant area, east of the Walterdale Bridge and west of the Power Plant, has been designed as a lively everyday space that reconnects the city to the river in a variety of ways, while maintaining and celebrating the diverse and multi-layered heritage and culture of the land. This site has seen the most extensive ecological disturbance through human use in the past. The design includes:

- + flexible space to be adapted to various kinds of users and uses
- + enough structure to feel comfortable and welcoming
- + restoration of natural environment, while bringing new users and uses to the river

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Rossdale Bend



In the refined design the Rossdale Bend area, south of Rossdale at the bend in the North Saskatchewan River, has been designed to:

- + serve as a gateway to the Touch the Water Promenade
- + celebrate the important historical significance of this site
- + connects to the natural beauty of the river
- + safely manage various connections to the shared-use pathways and trail system

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Promenade and Pathway



The refined design includes:

- + improved promenade that has four meters of shared-use pathways and three meters of pathway for slower moving users marked with different material treatments
- + improved promenade integrated with the existing pathways
- + enough room to restore plantings along the river's edge and preserve existing vegetation

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What We Heard

Access

Universal Access

- + Pathways and access points throughout the site accessible for people of all ages and abilities

Improved access + connection to the River Valley

- + Improve access to the river valley
- + Improved arrival and connections should be provided

Multiple ways to access/touch the water

- + Ability to accessing the water in multiple ways, allowing different users to interact with the water in different ways

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Access to Site and the River Valley

Access to the River Valley

- + Improved access to the river valley for users of all abilities

Access to the Site

- + Connections to the river valley trail network
- + Connections to the south side of the river across the Walterdale Bridge
- + A kayak tie-up location is provided for those accessing the site from the river

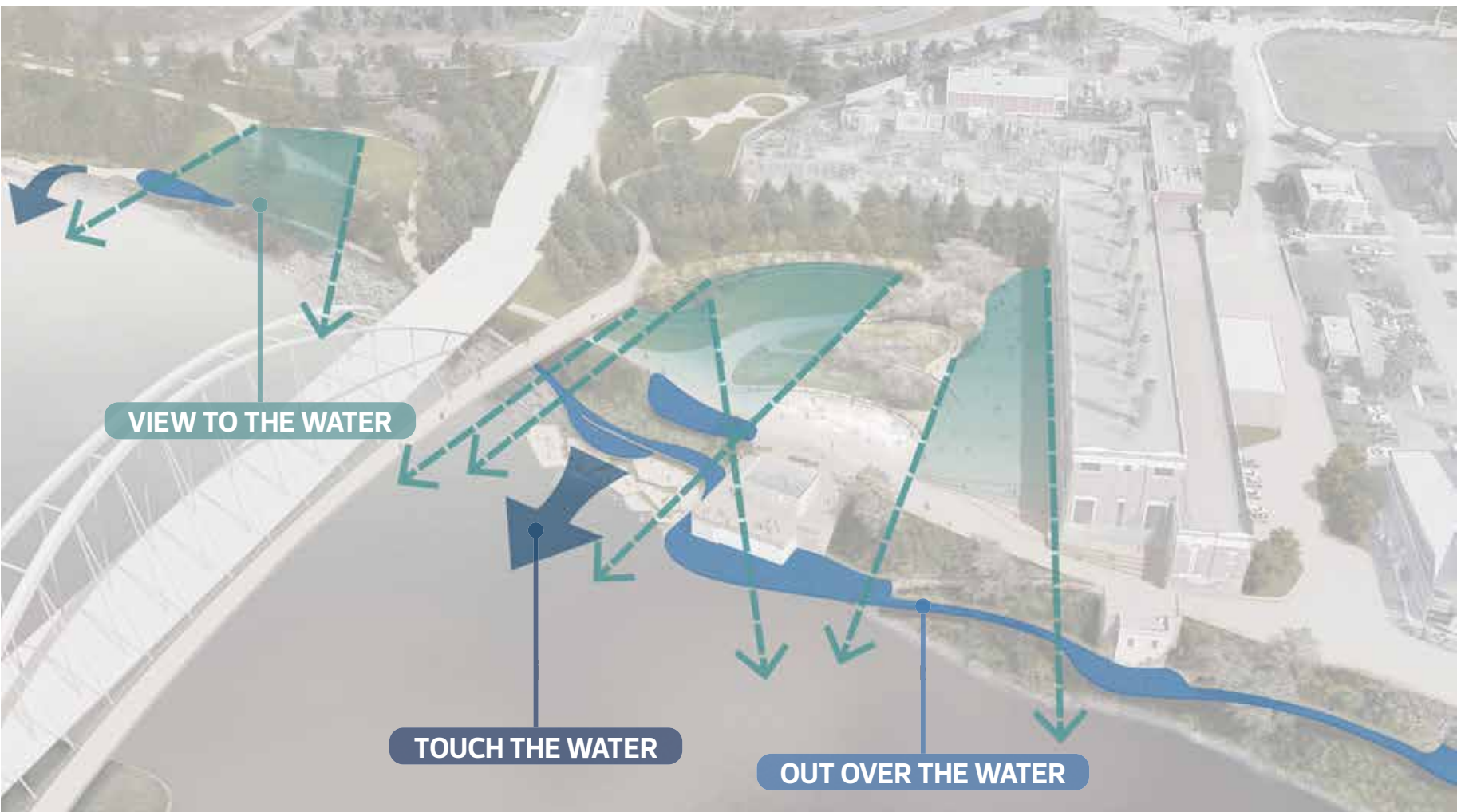
Access within the Site

- + Design accommodates a number of ways of interacting and connecting to the river and river valley including river views, getting out and over the river, down to the edge, water feature, restored river's edge plantings, and kayak tie-up

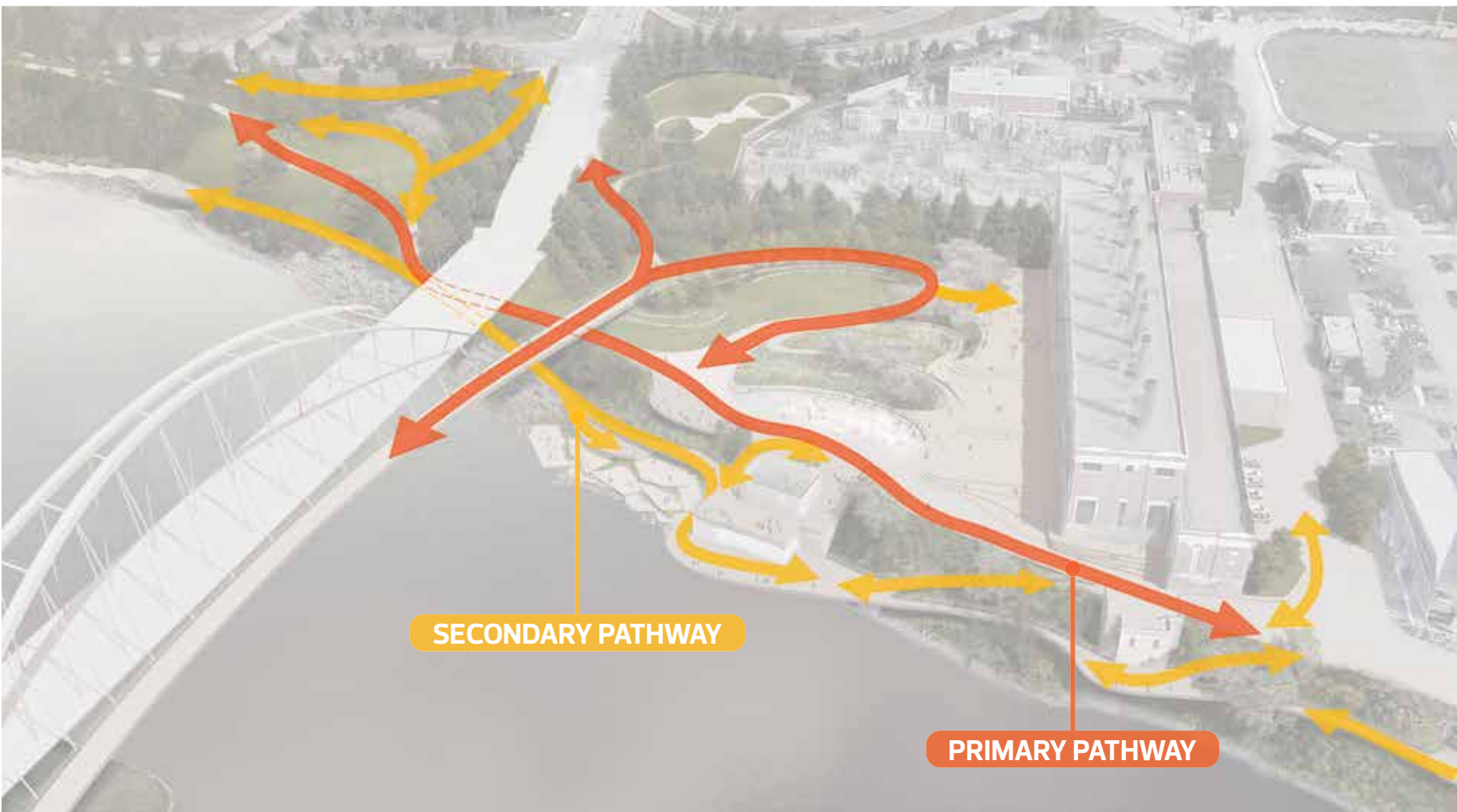
Access to the River Valley



Water Access



Pedestrian + Bike Connections



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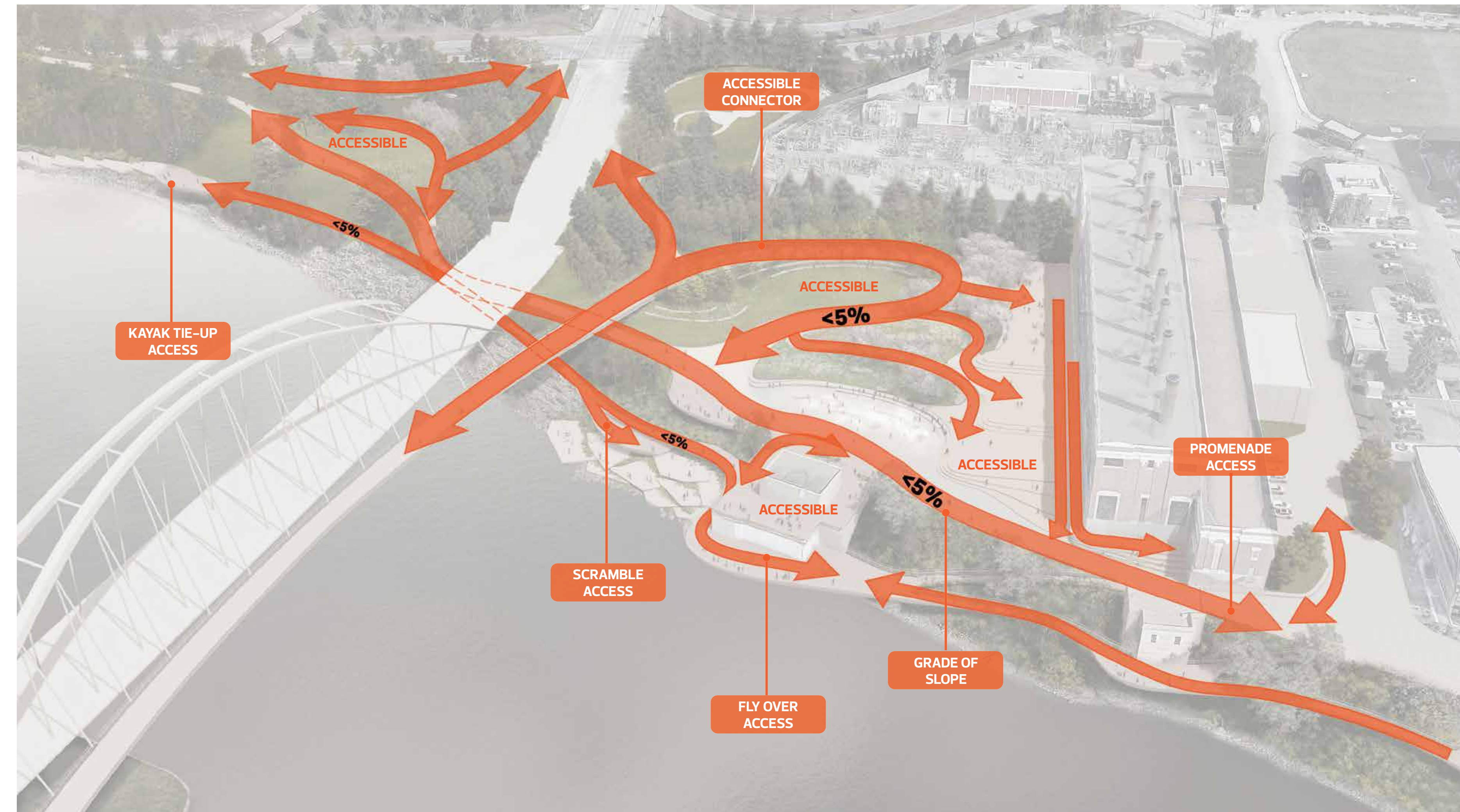
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Accessible for All Users

Highlights

- + The site is accessible to users of all ages and abilities through a network of pathways and access points
- + The majority of the pathways are less than 5% grade, which meet the accessibility standards from the City of Edmonton's Access Design Guide
- + Users of all ages and abilities are able to get close to, or out over the water
- + Safe access to the water's edge is provided by large stepped slabs at the scramble



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Access to Water

Highlights

- + The refined designs provide lots of opportunities to sit and watch the river and enjoy the natural beauty
- + Users can walk out and over the river on a series of overlooks
- + More adventurous users can scramble down to the water's edge and dip their toes in the river
- + A tie-up for kayaks or other hand-powered watercrafts is provided for those arriving to site from the river

Sit and Watch the River



Walk Over the River



Scramble Down to the River



Tie-up a Kayak



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What We Heard

Program + Uses

- + A flexible space for informal gatherings of different sizes, not a place for very large, city-wide festivals or other big events
- + Gives priority to everyday uses
- + Incorporate and connect to landmarks and existing infrastructure, such as the Power Plant and Pump Houses
- + Incorporate the area's heritage and the river
- + Providing a variety of winter uses
- + Promote active modes of transportation, such as walking and biking

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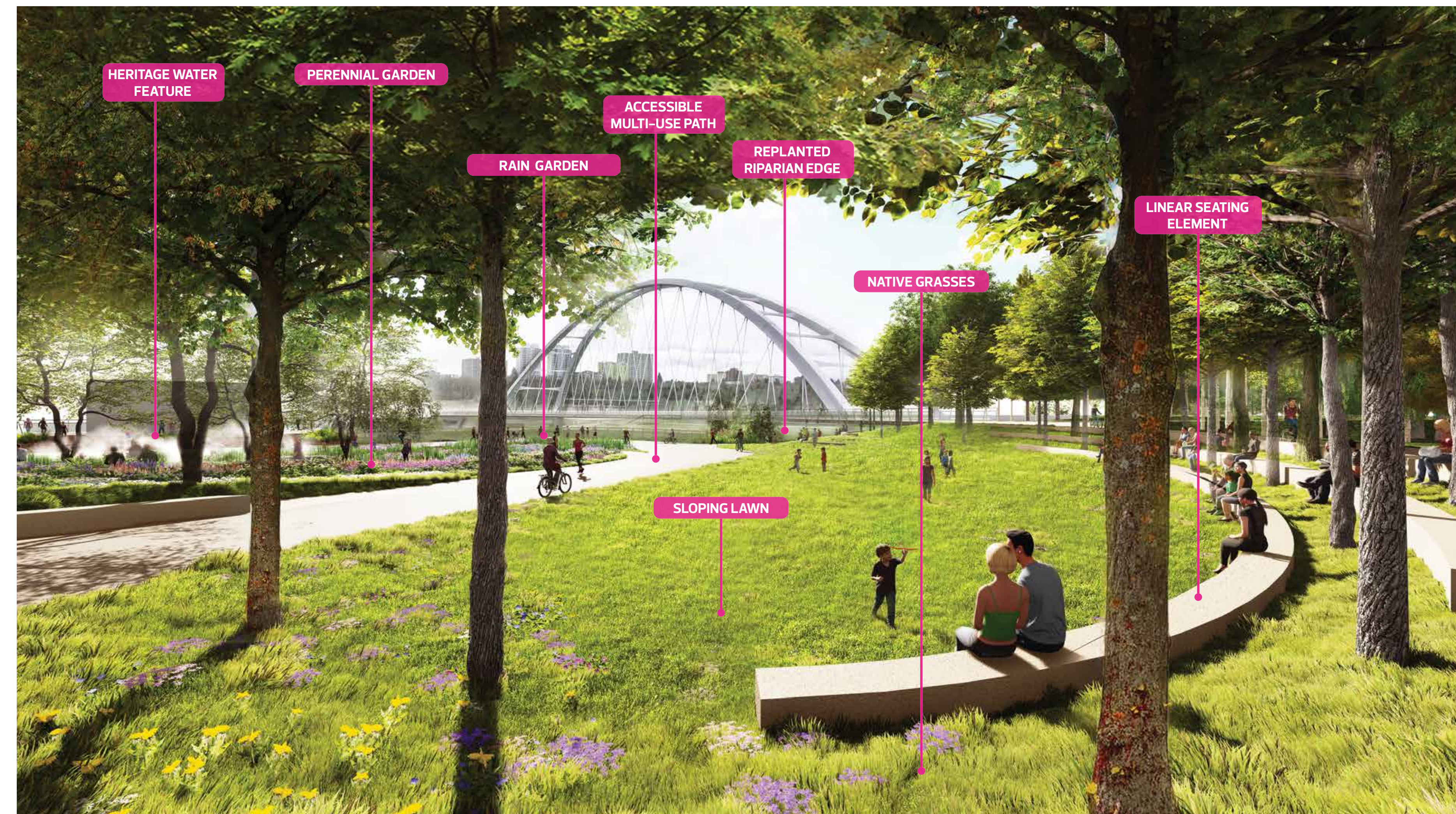
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Everyday Uses

Highlights

- + A range of spaces that offers a variety of experiences and uses
- + Open space in a waterfront plaza and on the deck next to the Power Plant
- + Shared-use paths throughout the area and along the waterfront, including a variety of ways to get down to and over the water
- + Seating and additional plantings of native grasses
- + Multiple garden spaces
- + Trees and bushes to create wind barriers for protection for seasonal comfort

Flexible Spaces



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Everyday Uses

Highlights

- + Different spaces flexible for everyday activities as well as adaptable for events and future uses at the Power Plant and Pump Houses

A Variety of Spaces



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Flexibility

Program Sizing

Highlights

- + Different spaces flexible for everyday activities as well as adaptable for events and future uses at the Power Plant and Pump Houses

Lawns/meadows
(100–150 people)



Pocket Gardens
(80–100 people)



Power Plant Deck
(150–200 people)



Top of Bank
(200–250 people)



Water's Edge
(75–125 people)



Westside Overlooks
(50–75 people)



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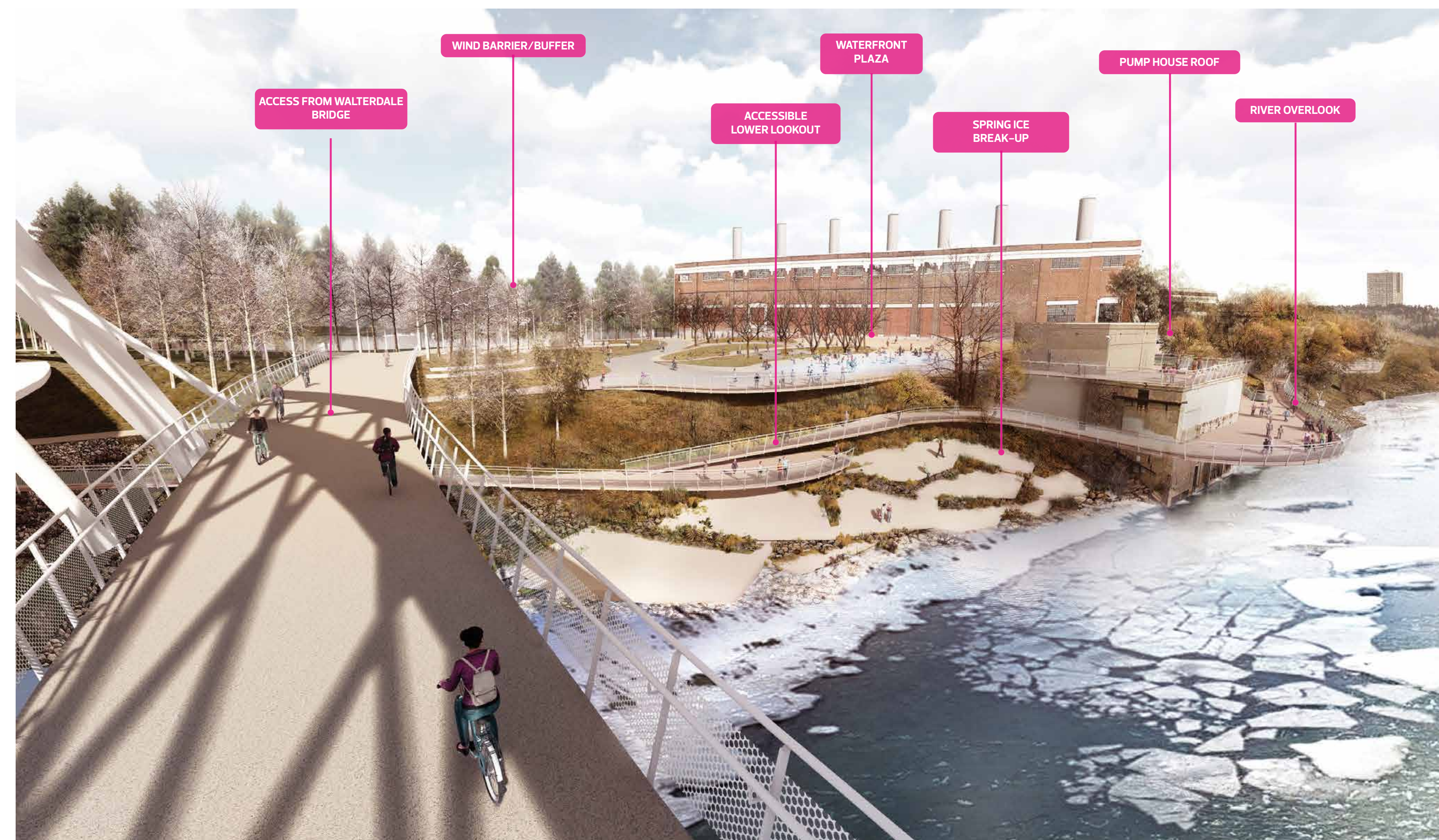
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Seasonal Uses

Highlights

- + Edmonton is a winter city and the refined designs for the Rossdale Area considered how the area will be used in all seasons
- + Wind barriers, additional tree plantings and other measures for seasonal comfort
- + Materials used will be durable to withstand winter conditions

Rossdale Area in Spring



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What We Heard

Heritage + Culture

- + This is really a special and unique place, with the natural beauty and multi-layered history of the area
- + Reflect and celebrate traditional and current Indigenous use of this land, and the importance of the river to many cultures
- + Heritage recognition and understanding needs to go beyond placards, making elements living and accessible to all ages for engagement and enjoyment
- + Provide places for gathering for a variety of uses, including small gatherings, events and future uses of the Power Plant and the Pump Houses
- + Re-use and connect to existing infrastructure
- + Interpretation of archaeology/cultural resources where appropriate

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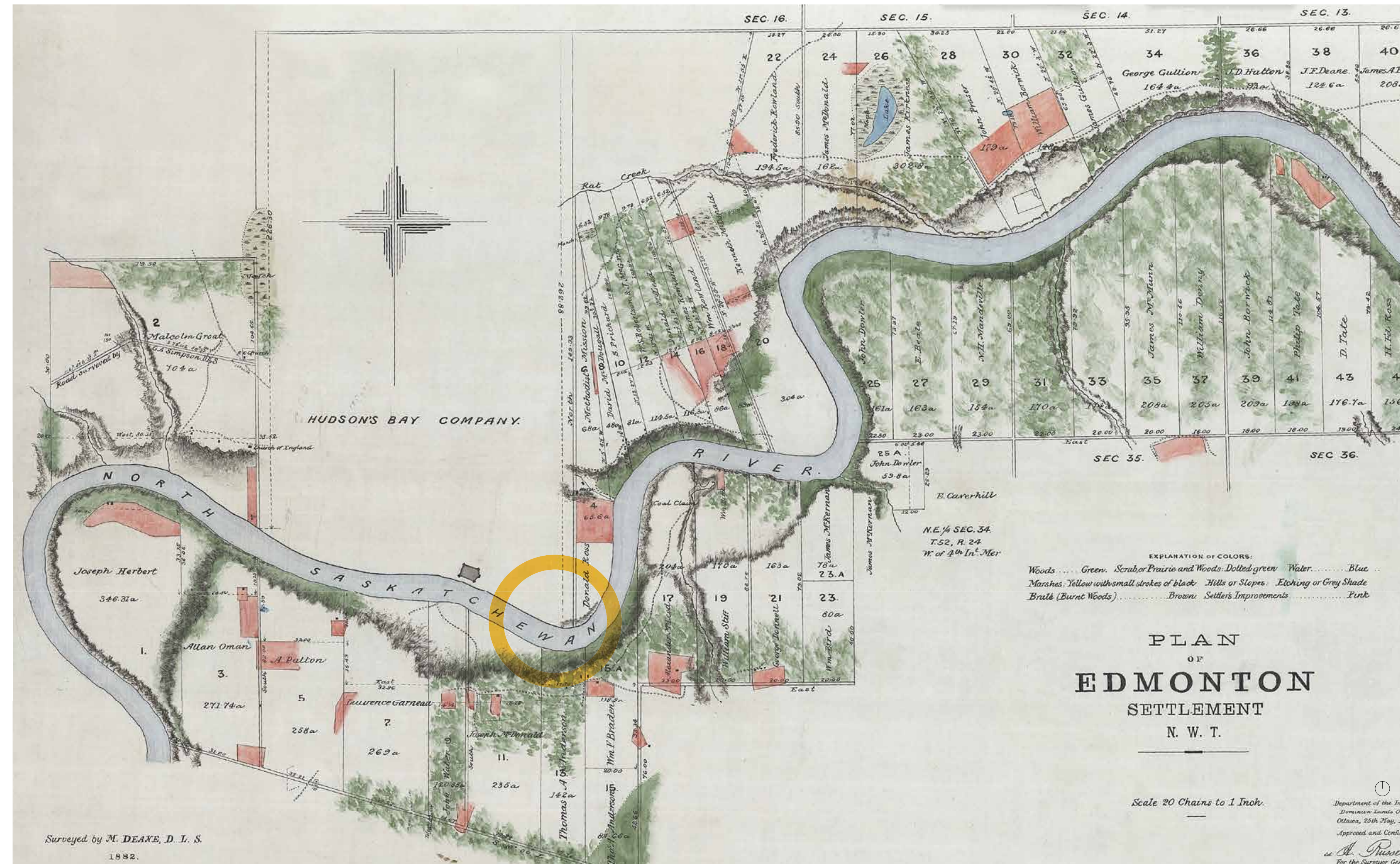
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Rossdale Bend

This area has a complex and multi-layered history, including traditional Indigenous use of the area for gathering and travel since the time immemorial, as well as the more recent start to settler development of Edmonton.

Highlights

- + This space was shaped by the historic boundary of the Hudson's Bay Company lands, and river lots which are an important part of Métis culture and history
- + The east property line of the Hudson's Bay Company Lands and start of the historic river lot pattern is defined by the new path connecting to 101 Street



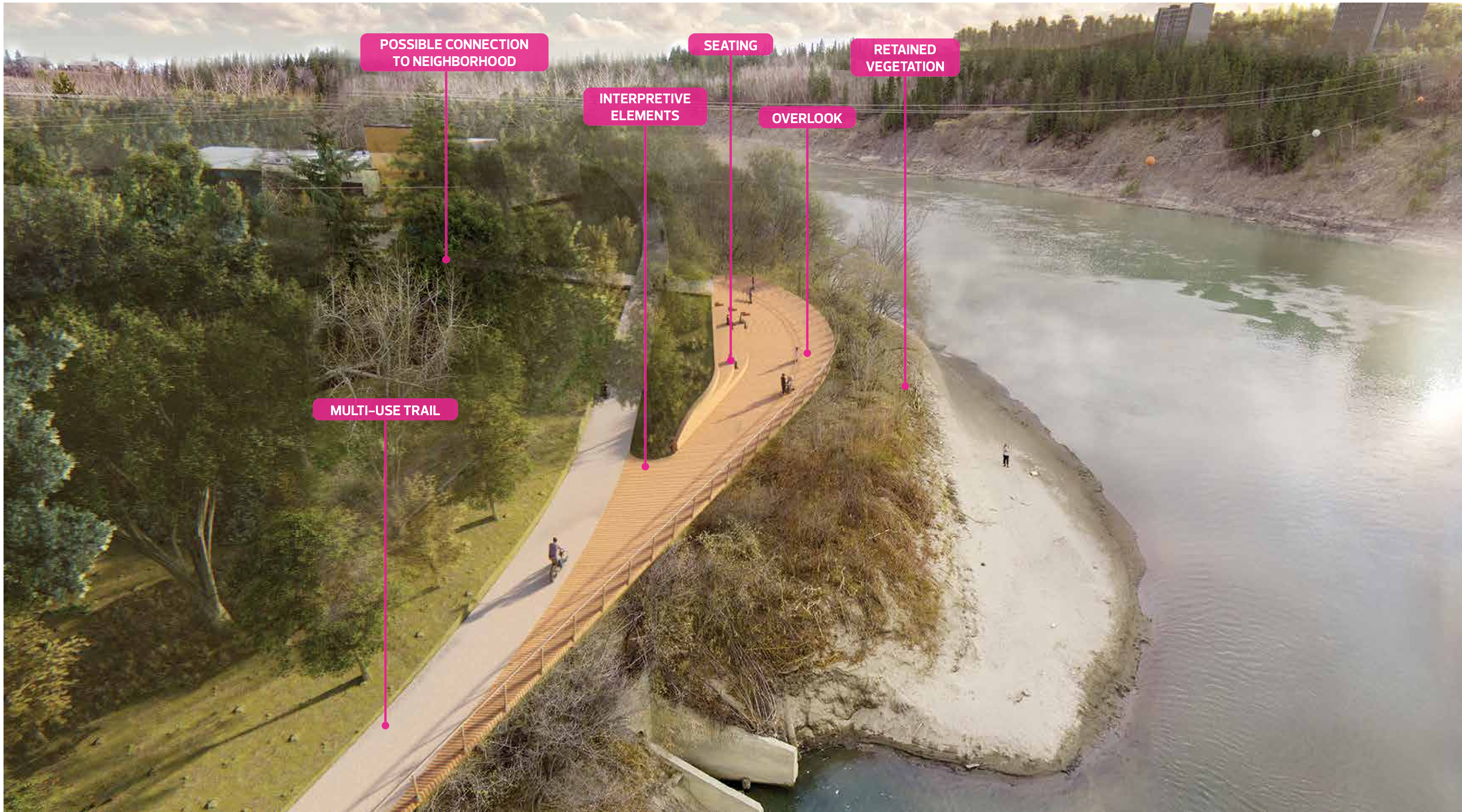
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Rossdale Bend



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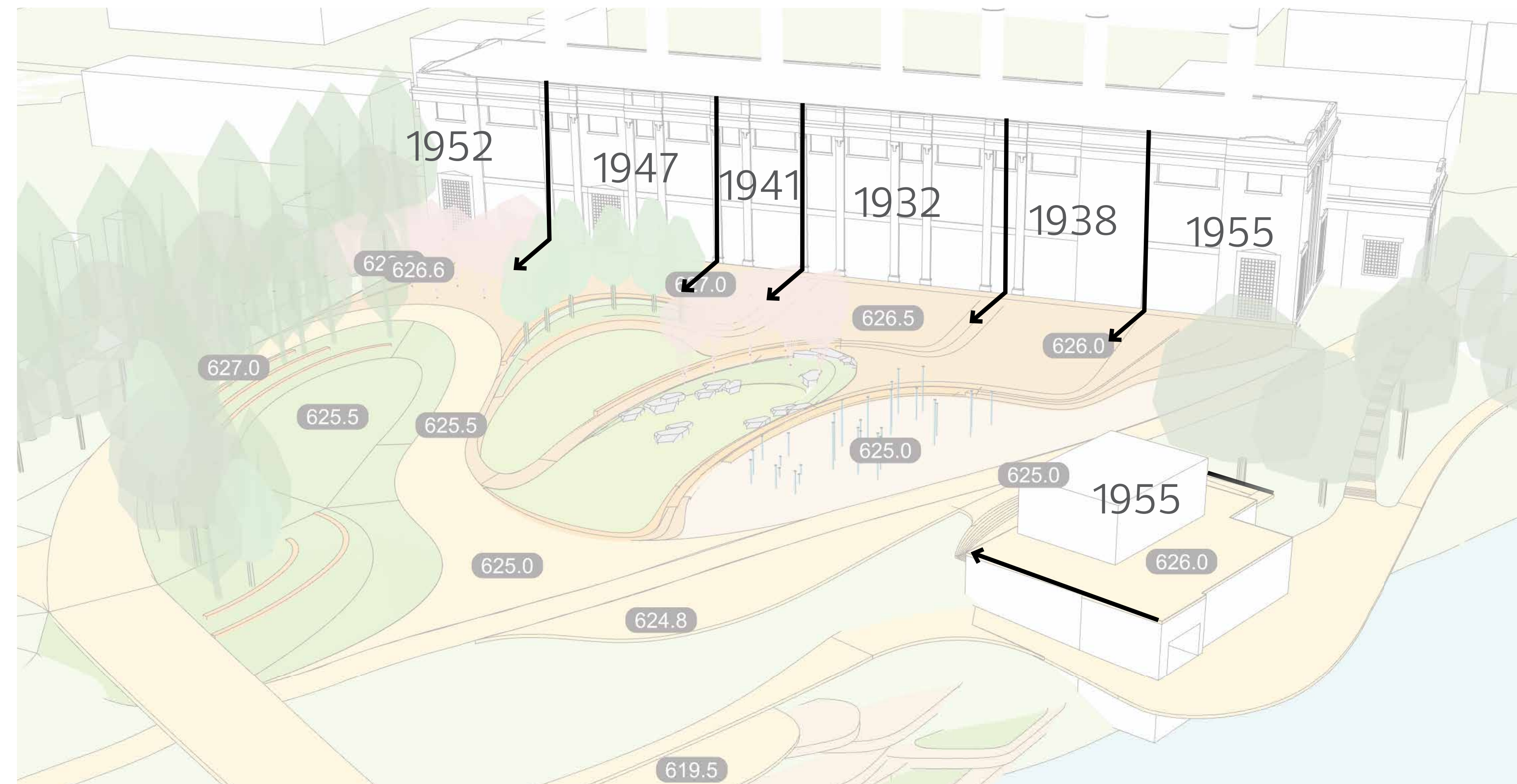
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Power Plant and Pump House

The Power Plant and Pump Houses have a large presence on site. And while this project does not include the future uses of these buildings, the refined designs reflects the history of the site and the buildings which frame the public space.

- + The Power Plant was built over many years, the refined design reflects the history of the building and improves connection and access to the Power Plant and Pump Houses
- + Flexible/programmable deck that celebrates the historical elements of the building and use local material
- + A waterfront plaza in front of the Pump House provides a space for future art or interpretive water feature
- + New kinds of views of the river to and from the Pump House
- + Views of the Power Plant throughout the area



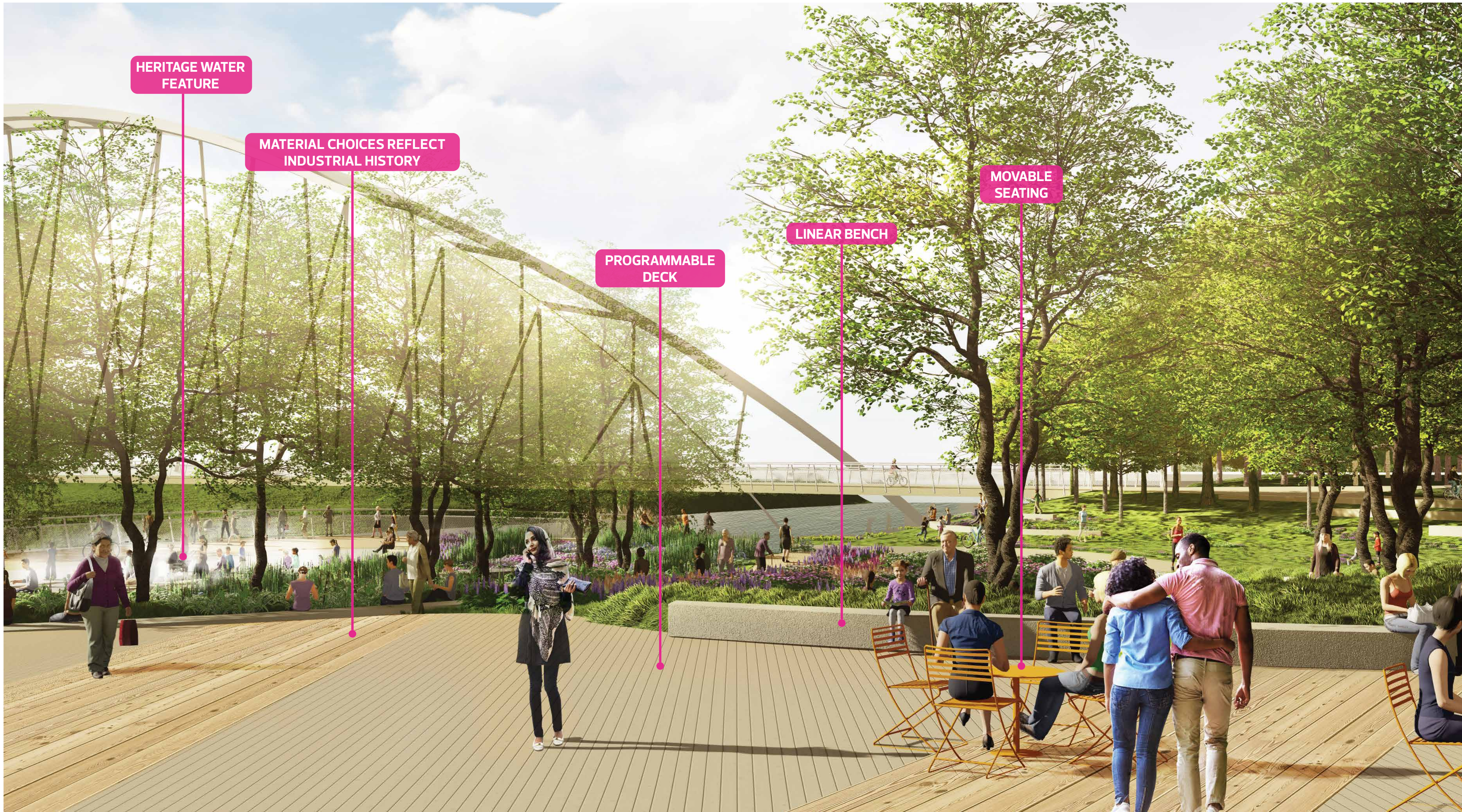
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Power Plant Deck



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Pump House Wrap Around



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Potential Art or Interpretive Water Feature

Public Art Example (Chapel Hill, NC, USA)



Example of Water Feature that References Industrial History



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What We Heard

Ecology

Highlights

- + In areas of existing disturbance, minimize ecological impact and re-naturalize where possible, restoring waterways and native vegetations
- + Stabilize the river banks, using more naturalized means to improve the river's edges and add erosion controls
- + Minimize flood risk, where possible
- + Enhance and protect the wildlife corridor
- + Protect ecologically sensitive areas

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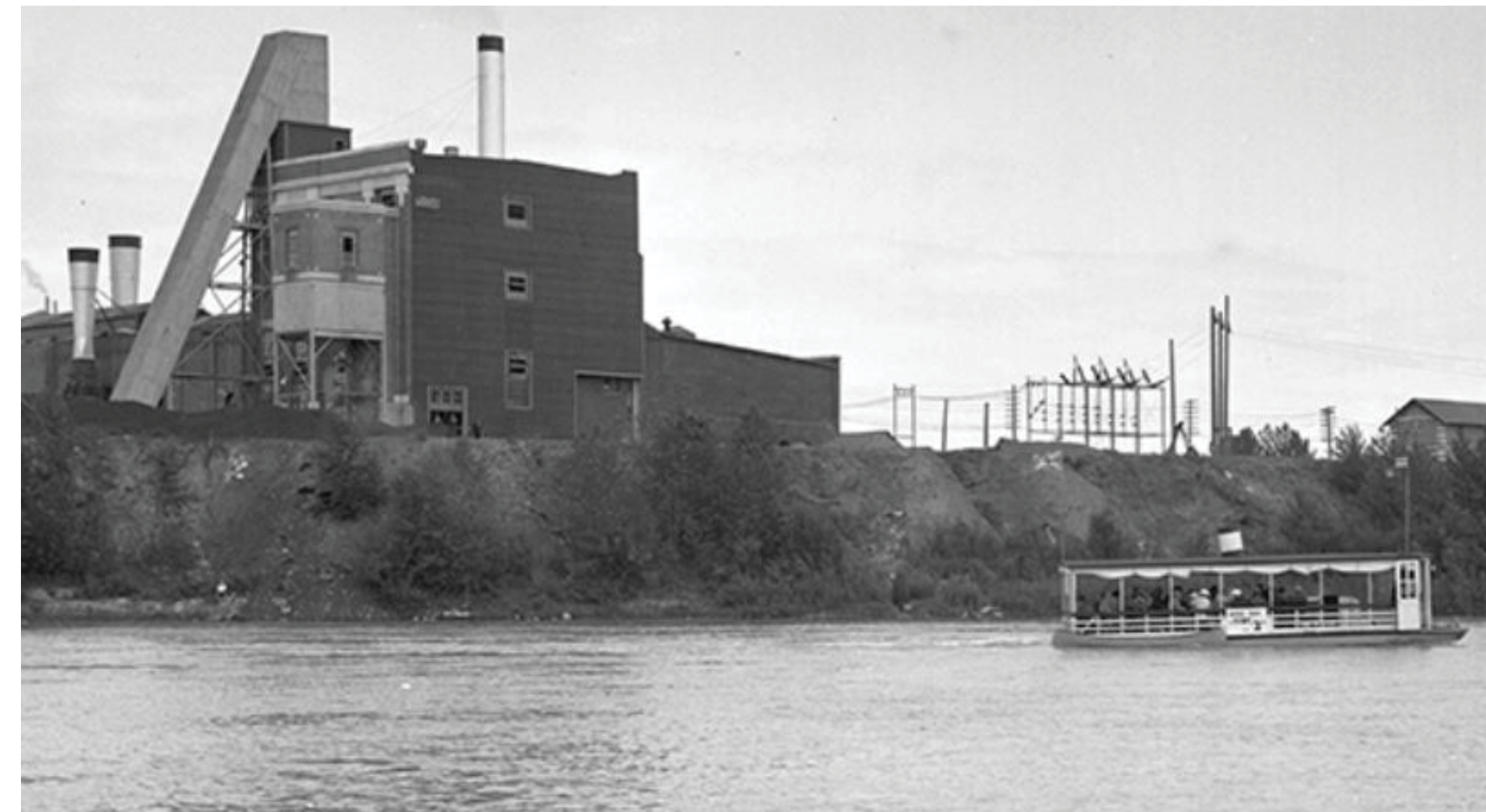
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Historical Impacts to the Environment

Highlights

- + Multiple layers of history have impacted the river's edge environment in a number of ways
- + Existing vegetation in many places are in poor or declining condition
- + River bank face erosion
- + The refined design balances the 'natural' and 'wild' character of the river with improved access to experience the river

Industrial Uses in Rossdale



Damaged Banks at Fort Edmonton



Existing Conditions (Power Plant)



Existing Conditions (Rossdale Bend)



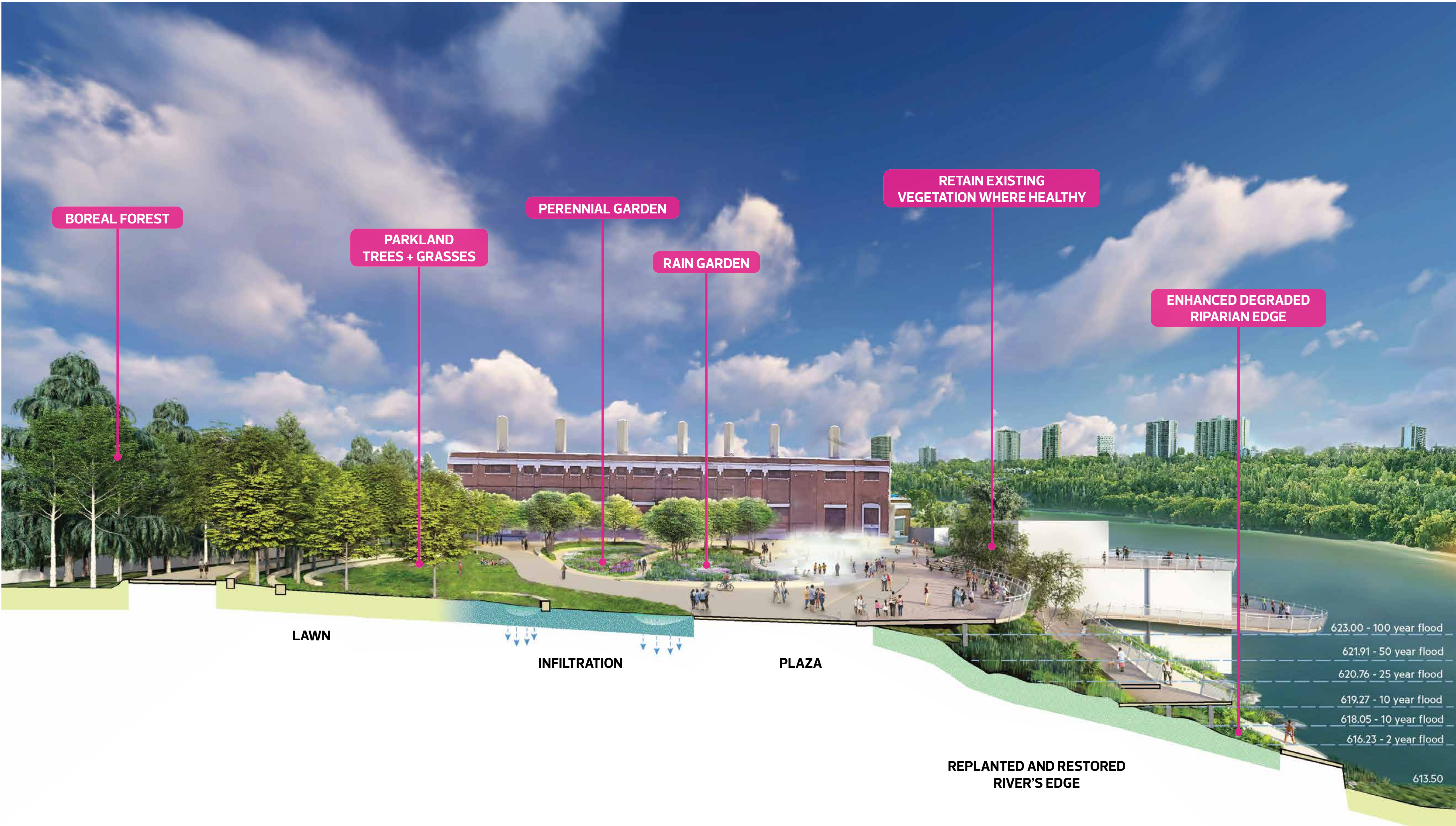
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Section Perspective Through Site



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Planting Areas

Planting areas reflect Alberta's ecological zones



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Proposed Plant Communities

Aspen Parkland + Grasses



Trees

Trembling Aspen
White Spruce
Balsam Poplar
Paper Birch
Jack Pine

Shrubs

Prickly Rose
Wild Rose
Green Alder
Red Osier Dogwood
Beaked Hazelnut

Grasses

Plains Rough Fescue
Green Needle Grass
Western Porcupine Grass
Dryland Sedge
June Grass
Sweet Grass
Rocky Mountain Fescue
Needle & Thread Grass
Blue Grama Grass
Fringed Brome
Mountain Rice Grass
Tufted Hair Grass

Boreal Forest



Trees

Engelmann Spruce
Lodgepole Pine
Douglas Fir

Shrubs

Common Juniper
Canada Buffalo-Berry
Tall Billberry
Bearberry
Rhodedendron

Rain Garden



Grasses + Emergents

Tickle grass
Prairie cordgrass
Reed Grass
Sedge (variety)
Sloughgrass
Tufted hairgrass
Rush (variety)
Hemlock water parsnip
Spike rush
Manna grass
Wool-grass
Small-fruited bulrush

Shrubs

Willow (variety)
Dwarf Birch
Green Alder

Trees

Black Spruce
Tamarack
Birch

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What We Heard

Safety

- + Ensure safe access at the water's edge
- + Improve safety for people walking, biking and rolling especially at crossings and other pinch points
- + Ensure the safety and access for the multiple modes and speeds of travel that will use the shared-use pathways and public spaces
- + Flooding and ice is a concern in this area

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River Water Levels

Highlights

- + The refined design considers the changing levels of river water and ice
- + The refined design allows opportunities to get close to the water safely
- + Durable materials used to access the water
- + In some places the pathway will be further from the river and restoring the river's edge



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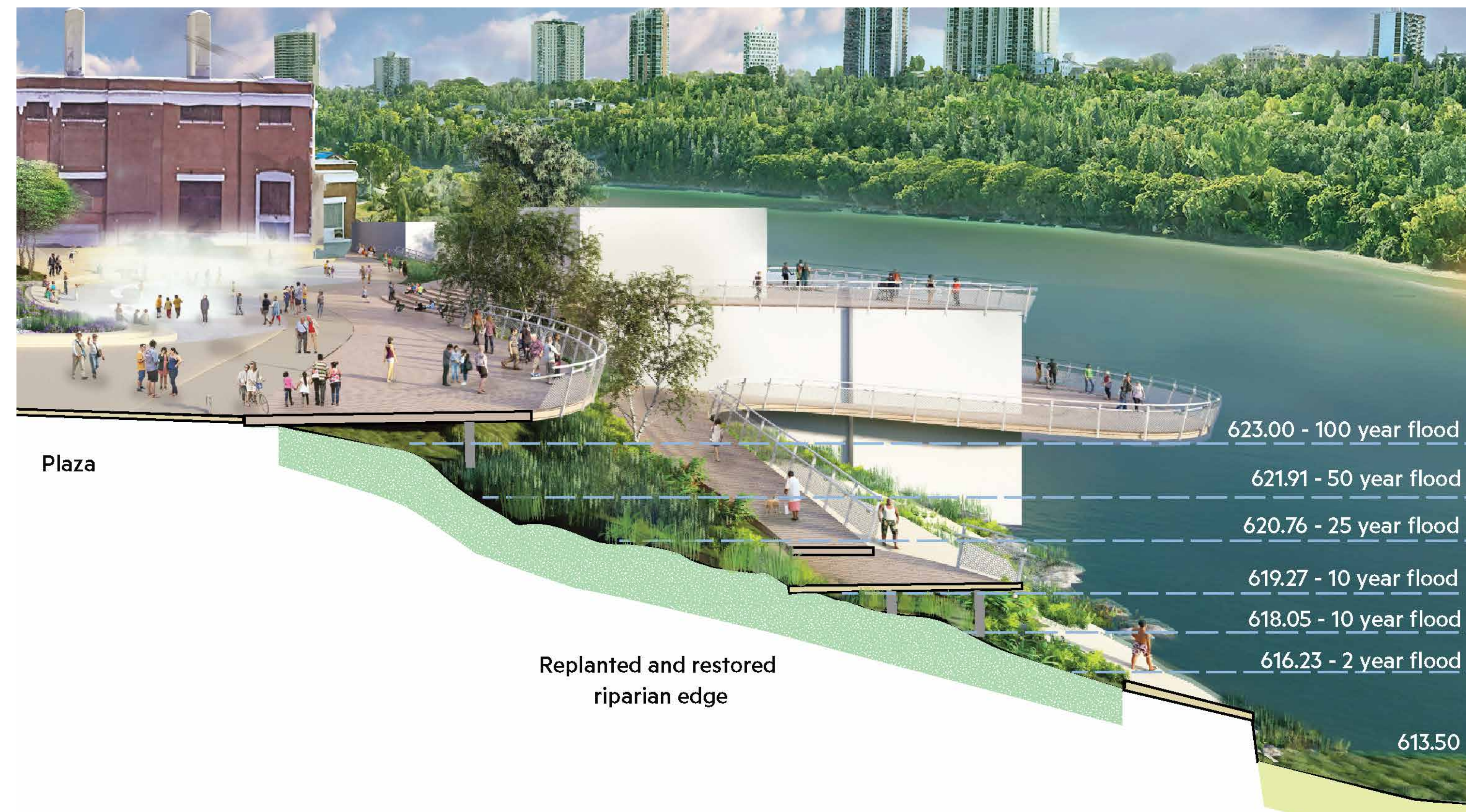
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River Water Levels

Highlights

- + The refined design considers the changing levels of river water and ice
- + The refined design allows opportunities to get close to the water safely and include handrails and lighting
- + Durable materials used to access the water
- + Opportunities to access the river and touch the water



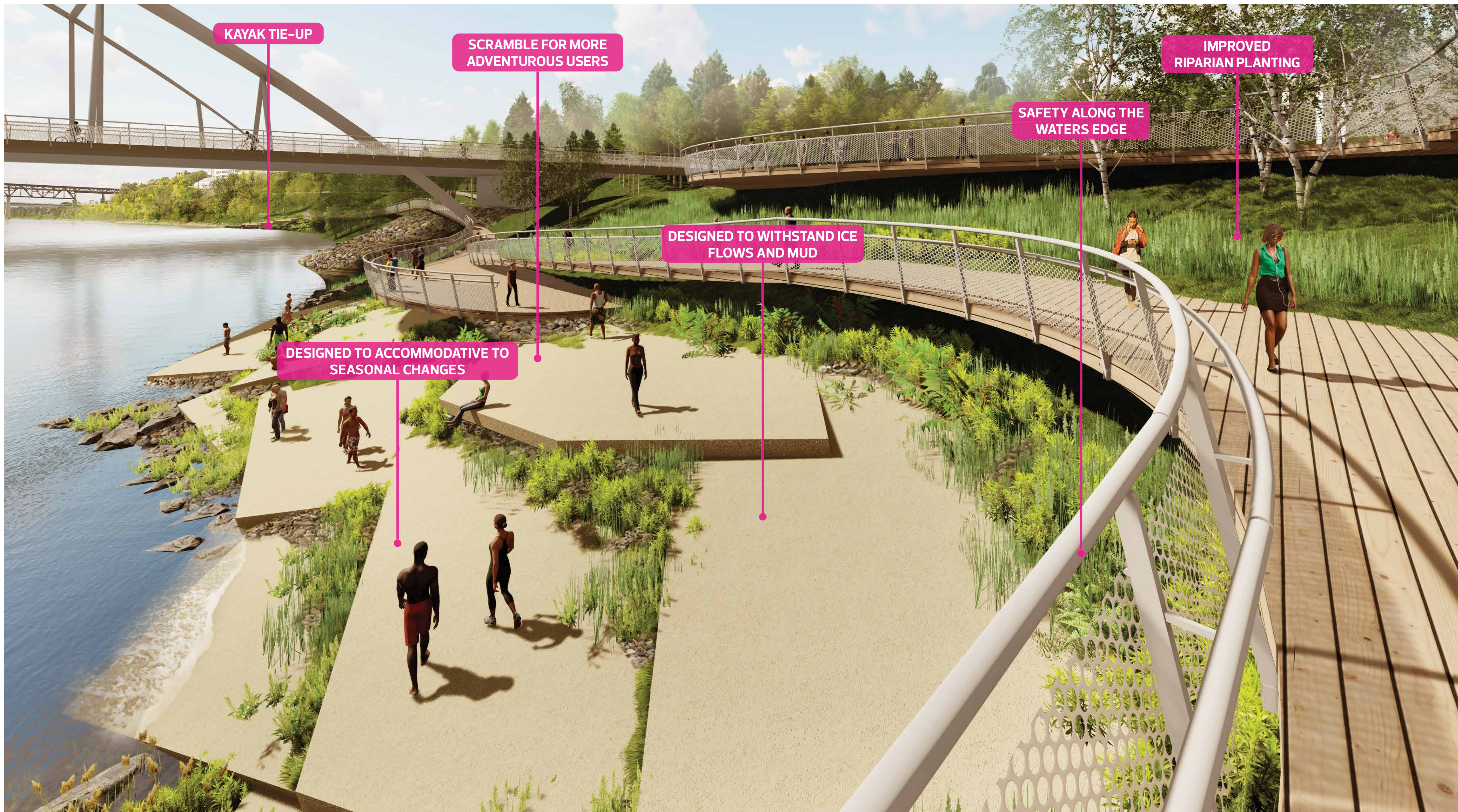
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Access to the River



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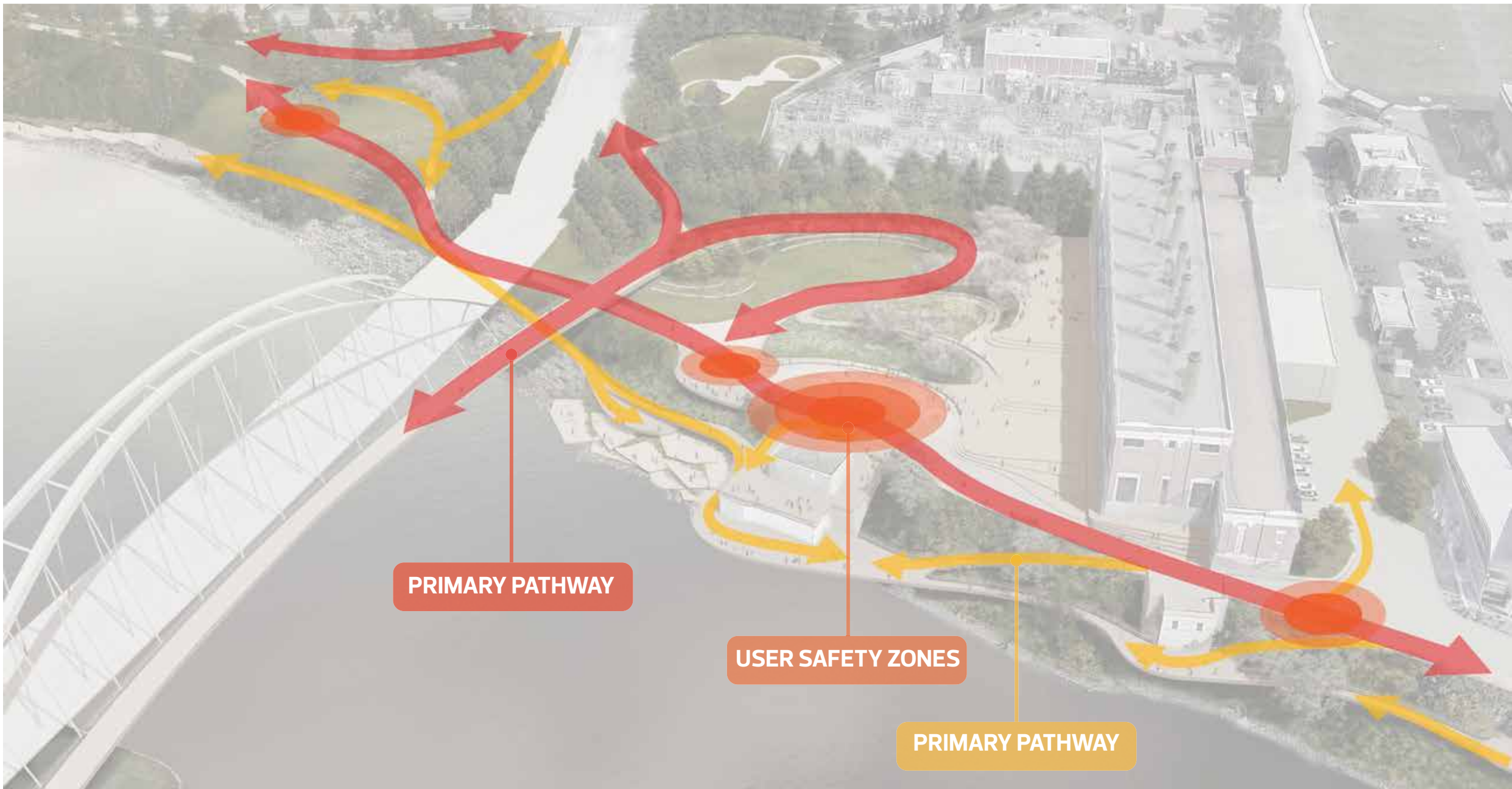
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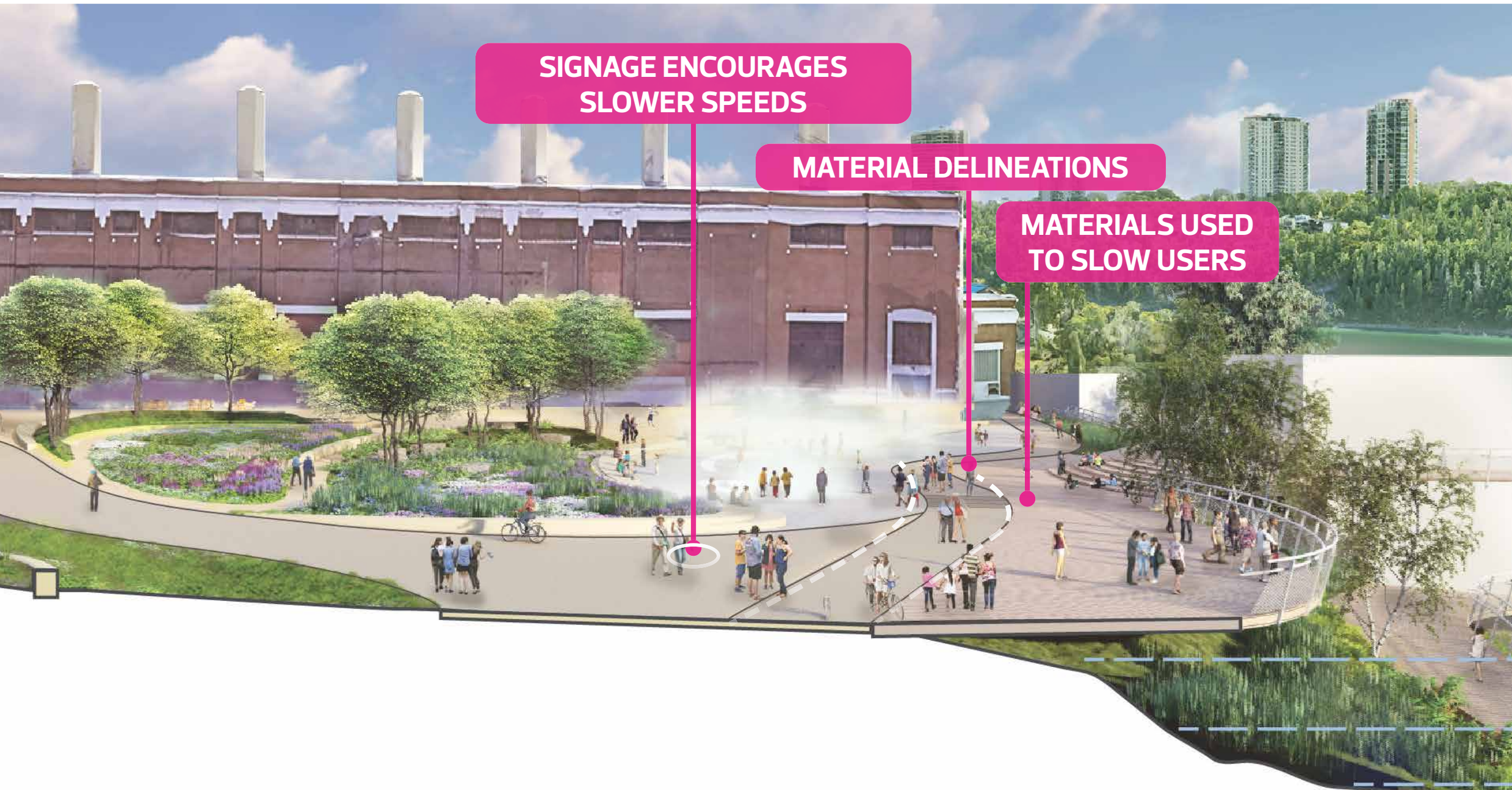


Improved Shared-use Pathway Safety

Designing for user safety



Safety area details



Example of Signage



Example of Material Separation



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Thank You and Next Steps

Decision making

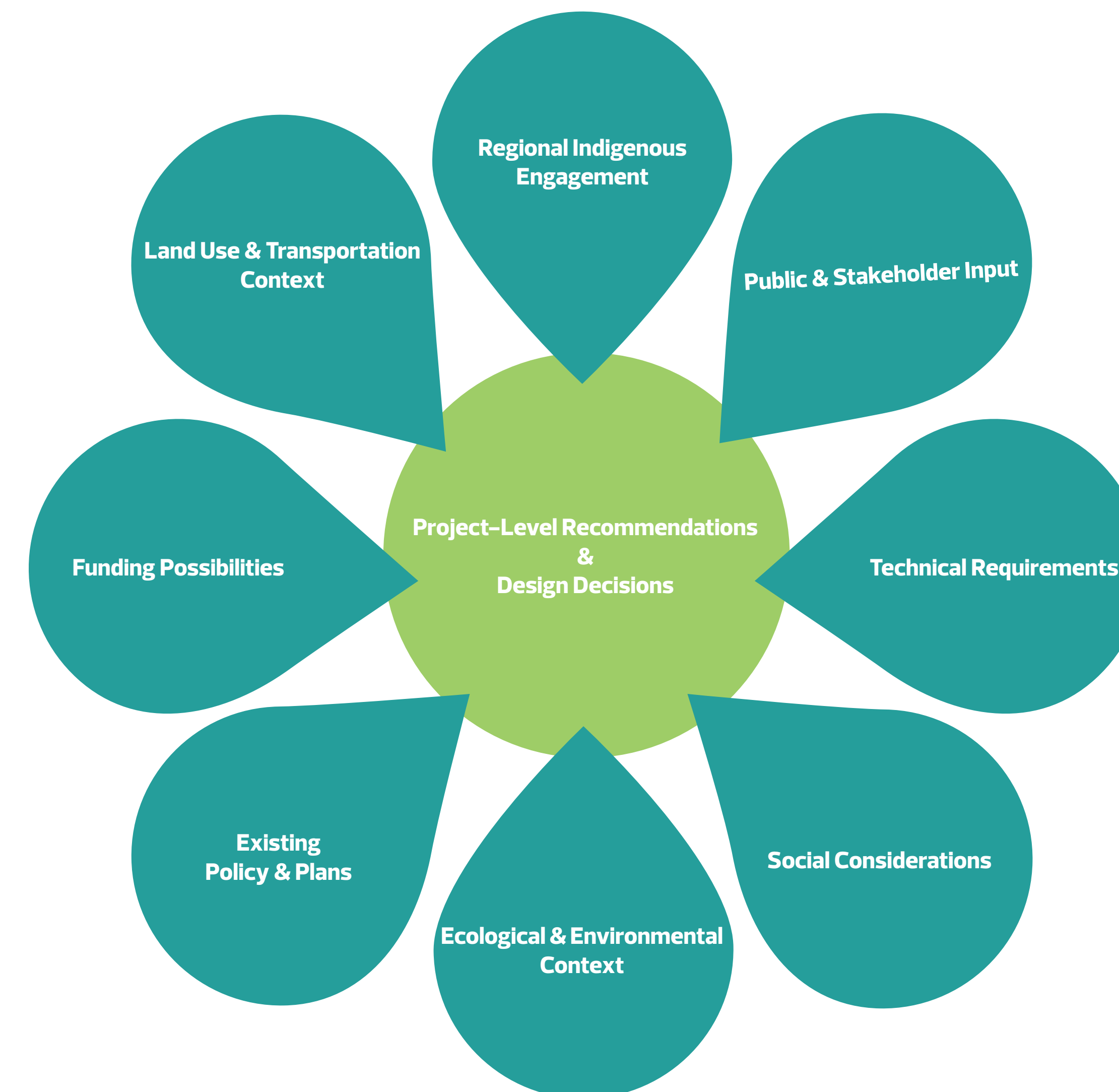
The City of Edmonton values public engagement processes and activities that contribute to project decisions by providing City Council and the project team with the best possible information to support decision making. Public and stakeholder engagement is one factor in the decision making process.

Your feedback will be reviewed and used by the project team to help further develop the project design through the preliminary design phase. This stage of the project is focused on the Rossdale Area only. At this time, design work for the North Shore Area has concluded with the completion of the concept phase.

Completing this planning and design work now will prepare us to provide recommendations to Council to move the project forward when the time is right. If the project moves forward, it would include opportunities to celebrate heritage, encourage recreation and connect people with nature.

For any questions related to the Touch the Water Promenade project, please contact **touchthewaterpromenadeproject@edmonton.ca**

Mayor & Council:
Key funding decisions & approval



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