Touch the Water Promenade

Stage 2: Draft Vision & Concept Options Review

Click through these pages to learn about the concept options, or high-level designs, that show what might be possible or feasible for the project area.







Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this project takes place on Treaty 6 Territory, a traditional meeting ground, gathering place and travelling route for the Nêhiyawak (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Sioux, Dene (Denesuline), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and Métis. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit, whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

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.



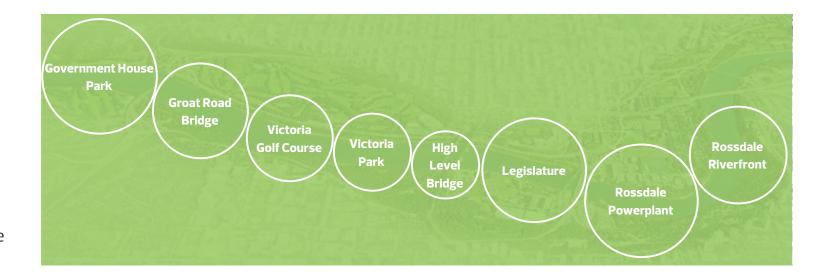


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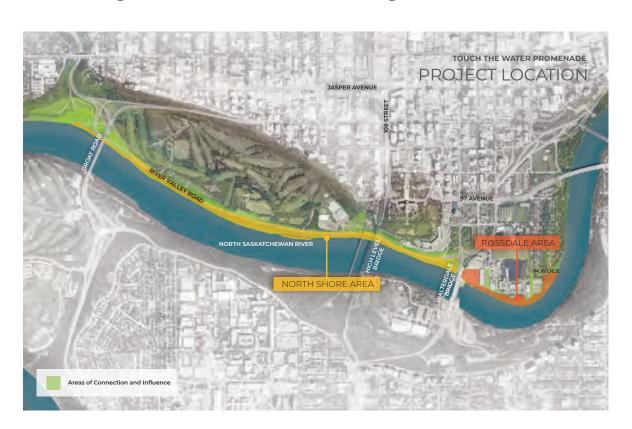
Want to skip to specific content? Click on a section in the graphic, or a title in the table of contents to jump ahead.



Project Description

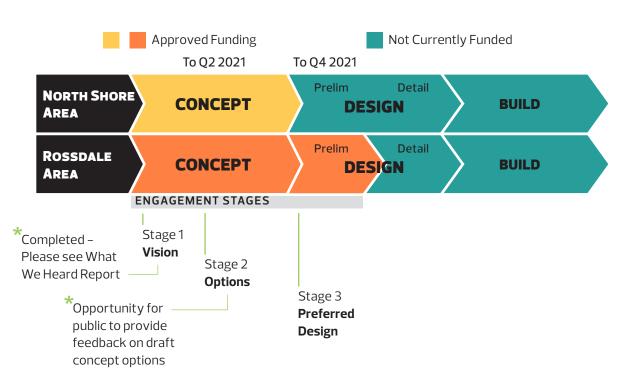
The river valley is a place people have been drawn to and gathered at since time immemorial. The City of Edmonton is looking to improve access to and within the central river valley with the Touch the Water Promenade project, creating enhanced opportunities for ecological connections, recreation, celebration and heritage interpretation.

The Touch the Water Promenade project area spans a 4 km stretch of downtown river valley from the Groat Road Bridge up to and including the Rossdale neighbourhood near the Walterdale Bridge.



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 proposed Concept Options, detailed in the following pages.

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.





We invite you to provide your input to help us refine, adjust and improve the draft vision, project principles and concept options. We would appreciate your feedback on:

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

PROJECT VISION

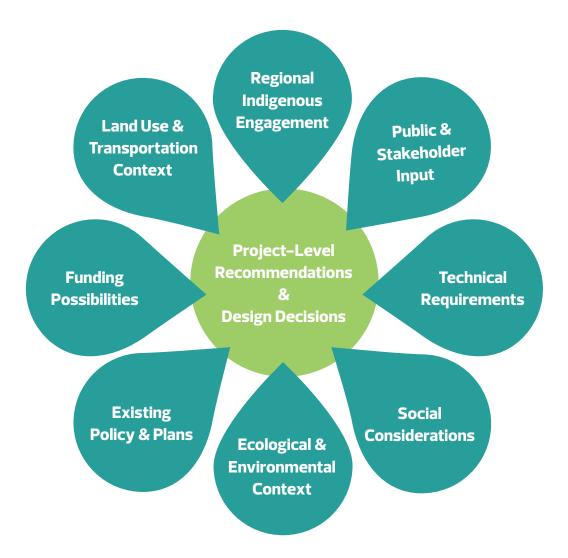
PROJECT PRINCIPLES

CONCEPT OPTIONS

PATHWAYS

GATHERING AREAS

Mayor & Council: **Key Funding Decisions & Approval**





Engagement History

The City engaged with Indigenous Nations & Communities, the public, and stakeholders in the Fall of 2019 to understand how people currently use the area, and to collect ideas for future opportunities and possibilities.

The feedback received was used to create the project vision, and concept options in the pages that follow. To see the complete What We Heard report visit https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/Touch_the_Water_WWH_March2020.pdf

What We Heard	What We Did
Edmontonians love the North Saskatchewan River Valley	This project will draw from the strengths of the existing river valley and give Edmontonians more reasons to love it.
Protecting and acknowledging history – Concern for respecting the burial grounds, historical and archaeological significance of this territory and land.	Opportunities to reflect and acknowledge Indigenous and settler histories as well as our shared lived experiences are proposed in the concept options. Traditional burial grounds and other potential cultural resources will be honoured and respected.
Trees are cherished in the river valley.	Options presented would require some tree removal, however, the options propose significantly more planting than what currently exists along the riverbank, and at the top-of-bank. Where trees are removed, they will be replaced with native tree species that promote a more naturalized and bio-diverse habitat.
People use and want to continue to use the area for a wide range of activities.	Increase the diversity of use, allowing for more activities to occur simultaneously, and for spaces where the river valley can be quietly enjoyed.

What We Heard	What We Did
Those who don't use this area of the river valley prefer to use the natural areas closer to their home or explained they did not have a reason to go to the area.	Options have been designed to be enjoyed by regular users, occasional visitors, and may draw new visitors to this area of the river valley.
Safety concerns could be improved through enhanced pedestrian lighting and trail separation.	Wider pathways have increased separation of users to accommodate varying speeds and create a more inclusive environment. Night lighting will help to foster safe use into later hours.
Access to the water, as well as access into and out of the river valley is challenging considering the steep banks.	Options include more places to stroll, rest and sit. The designs also create accessible connections to the neighbourhoods next to the river, and dropoff locations so more people are able to get to the river.
Development interests were diverse and ranged from do not touch the river valley to interest in retail development in certain areas.	Concepts have been developed on the assumption that the majority of the area remains non-commercial. Options allow for improved access to support potential future commercial use at the Rossdale powerplant and pump houses.
Park infrastructure enhancements such as garbage cans, washrooms, and lighting were generally supported.	These enhancements have been included in the concept options.
City budget should be used responsibly.	The cost will be consistently monitored to ensure alignment with budget. This project is in the concept phase and Council will review and make funding decisions for more detailed design and construction. If approved the project will be phased.





Project Themes Touch the Water Promendate project has been guided.

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.

Project Vision

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.

Touch the Water Promendate 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 Promendade has incorporated the three themes from Breathe into the concept options design: **Ecology, Wellness**, and **Celebration**.







Project Principles:

ECOLOGY

- 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.

CELEBRATION

- 1. To promote community interaction through the development of vibrant, welcoming, accessible, inclusive and playful gathering spaces along the River 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.

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.

Please follow this link to review the full design package, developed by Dub Architects, Stoss Landscape Urbanism, and ISL, which includes the historical context, design intent and inspiration behind the concept options: **edmonton.ca/touchthewater**.

The following pages describe how these project principles have been reflected in the design of the project.



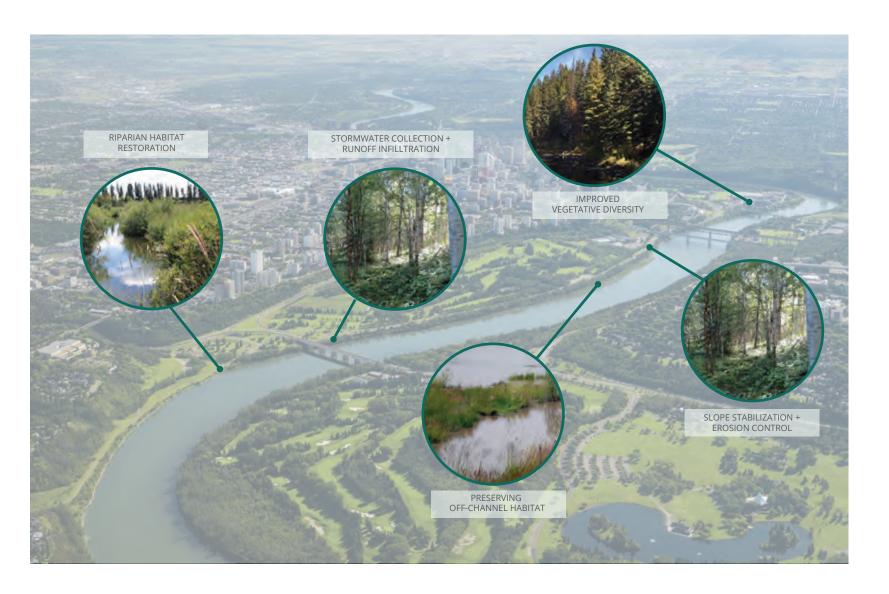


Ecology

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.

Highlights

- + Additional trees and native planting throughout
- + More ecological diversity
- + Maintaining and improving habitat and movement corridors for animals
- Preserving and protecting the existing high-quality fish habitat (island in river off of Victoria Park) while adding new fish habitat
- + Removing existing concrete debris and improving bank condition and stability
- + Preventing erosion
- + Stormwater collection and runoff infiltration



Supports and enhances the environment by sustaining healthy and resilient ecosystems. The urban ecosystem supports biodiversity, climate regulation, food production, risk mitigation and waste and water management.



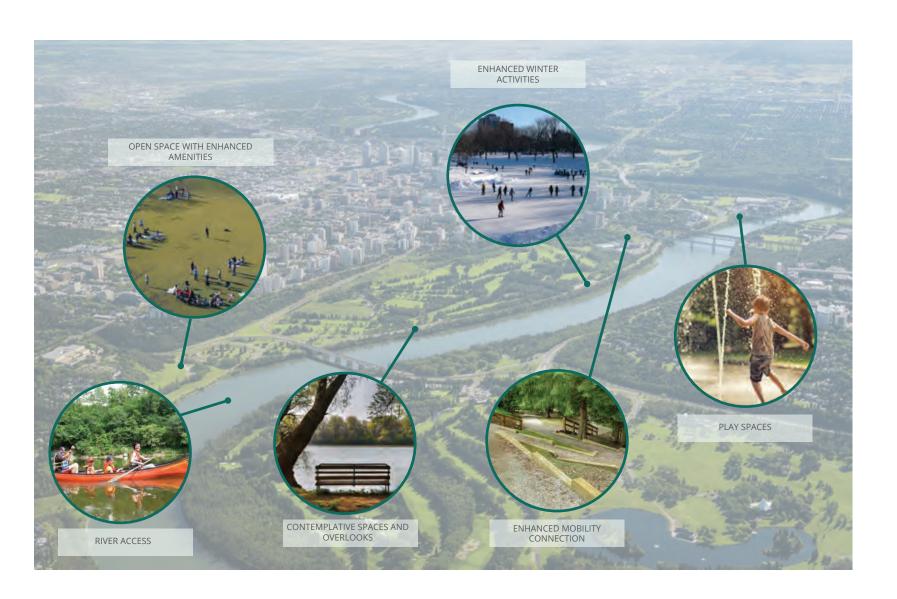


Wellness

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.

Highlights

- + Wider pathways and public spaces that allow for active living with plenty of room to be outside in all seasons
- + Enhanced cycling and pedestrian paths that are safe and accessible
- + Paths designed for all speeds and separation of activities
- + Separate paths that provide alternative routes and play
- + Informal exercise and play areas for all ages
- + Stretching and rest areas
- Water and active play areas for children and for all ages
- + Tobogganing slopes for all ages
- + Connected and safe winter running and cycling
- + Safe and seasonal water play at the river's edge
- + Boat launch areas



Promotes healthy living and fosters wellbeing through an array of environmental, mobility and recreational options. Open spaces promote wellness by supporting active transportation, mental health and wellbeing, and opportunities to learn, play and recreate.



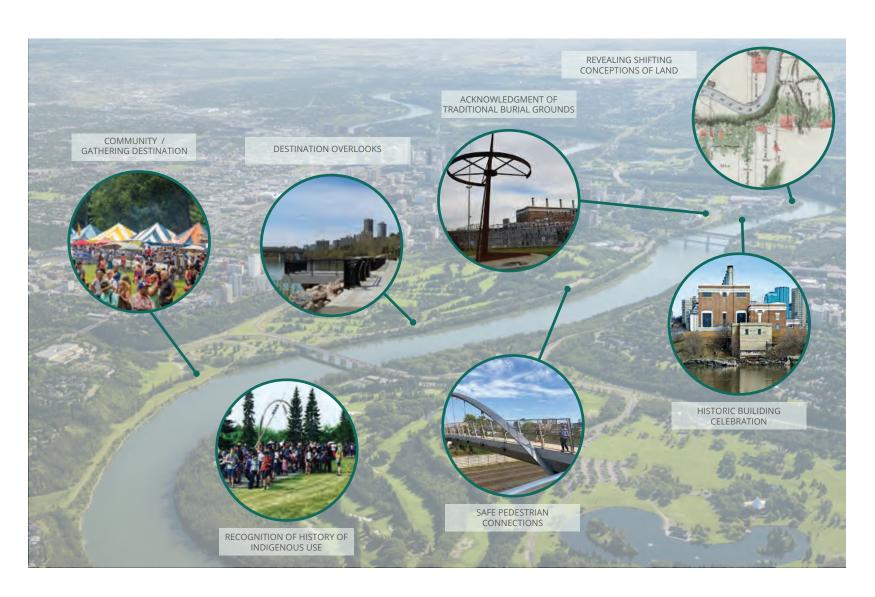


Celebration

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.

Highlights

- + Amphitheaters and plazas for community events
- + Terraced edges to access the water
- + Fishing from the bank or docks
- New outlooks and access to view, celebrate, and get closer to the river
- New and improved access to existing park destinations and gathering areas
- + Different types of spaces for community interaction
- + Improved public safety through new pathways and connections
- + Recognition and interpretation of the multi-layered cultural and natural history of the area
- Respectful recognition of the sacredness of the Traditional Burial Ground / Fort Edmonton Cemetery



Connects people by providing places for communities to gather and thrive. Open spaces support community activities through aesthetic value, community building, appealing destination and tourism spaces, heritage elements and public safety.



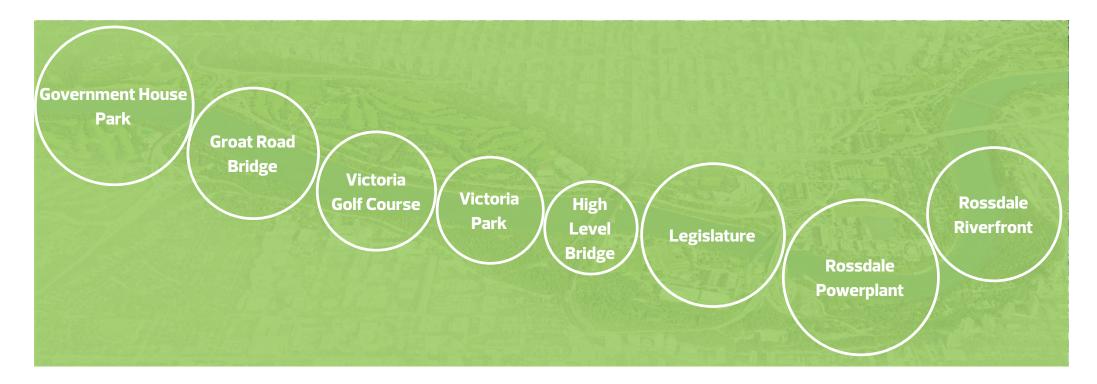


Concept Options of gathering areas, moments and stopping points

Two concept options have been developed to reflect the vision and project principles. Each concept proposes options for pathway types, gathering areas, and stopping points along the riverfront. We need your help to determine which options and elements to select, what refinements or changes are required to improve the options, and which options or elements should not be advanced.

Your feedback will be used to help determine and develop a single preferred concept. The final concept design will serve as a long term plan that could be built through phases over many years as directed by Council, and as funding is available.

Throughout this flipbook options will be compared for 8 areas along the riverfront.







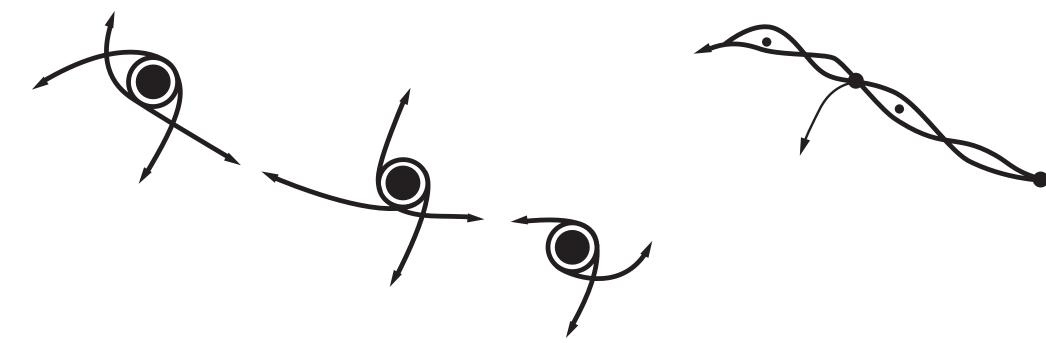
Concept Options Gateways + Threads

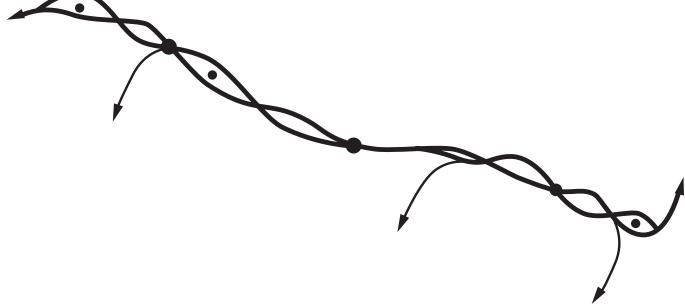
OPTION 1: GATEWAYS

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.











Promenade and Pathways

Current Conditions: Pathways in the project area are currently 3 meters wide in some locations, and 4 meters wide in others. All the current pathways are on top of the riverbank.

Proposed Conditions: In the options you will see different types of promenades and pathways proposed. In some areas 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.

There are 4 types of promenades and pathways proposed, each is described below in more detail.

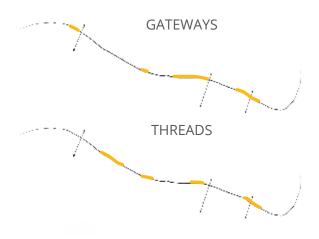
Realigned Pathway



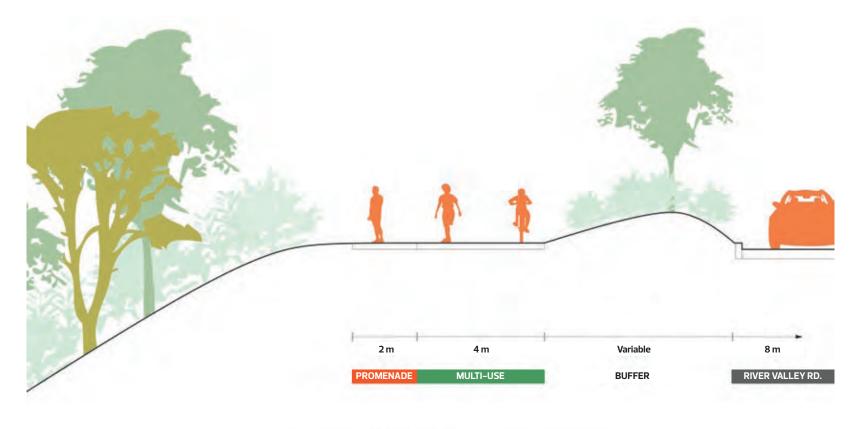




Combined Pathway and Promenade on **Top of the Riverbank**



Moved farther away from the road, but still on top of the riverbank, with plantings added in between road and pathway. Pathway is widened to 6 meters and includes 2 meters for a a slower promenade pace pathway for pedestrians, strollers, etc., and 4 meters of faster multi-use pathway

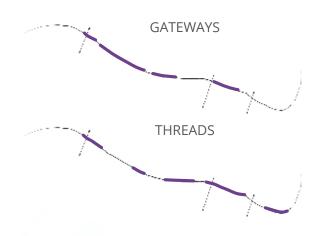




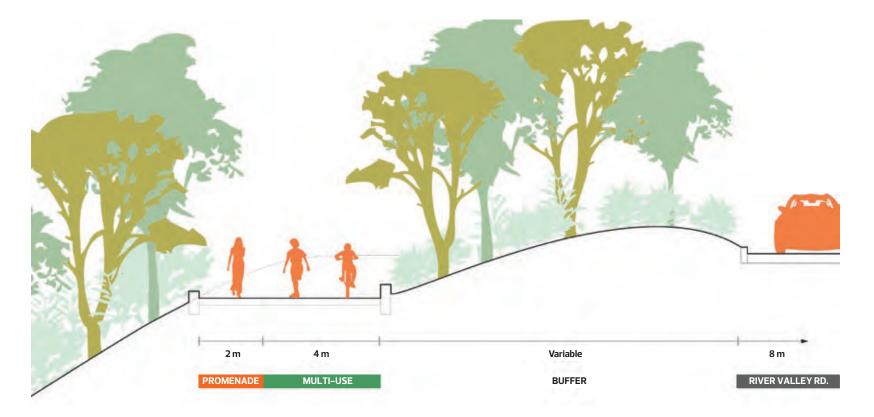




Combined Promenade and Pathway in the **Middle of the Riverbank**



Pathway is relocated to the middle of the riverbank. Farther away from road and closer to the river. Pathway is widened to 6 meters and includes 2 meters for slower promenade pedestrians, and 4 meters for faster multi-use pathway.

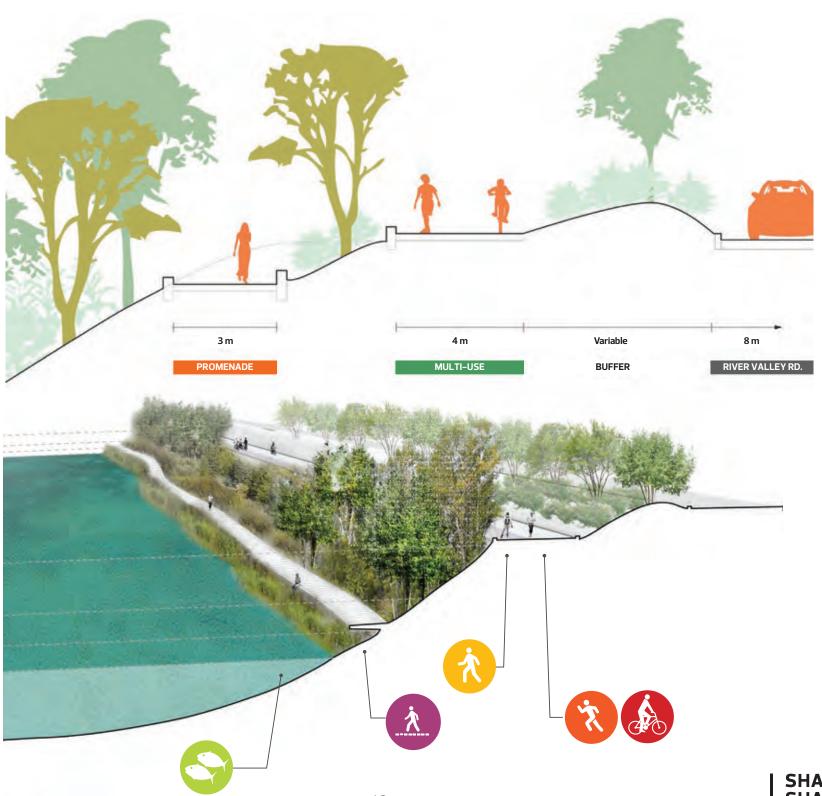




Separated Promenade and Pathway at the River's Edge



Pathways move closer to the river and separate. The 3 meter promenade is at the river's edge, while the 4 meter multi-use pathway remains in the middle of the riverbank.

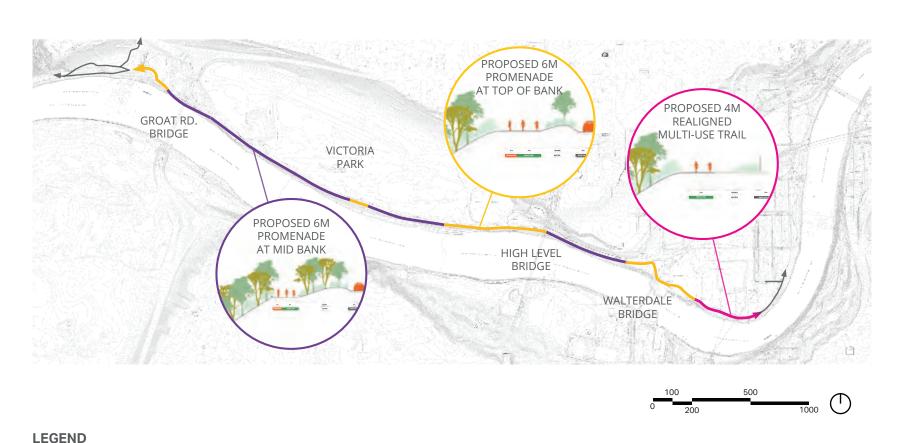


SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY



Option 1: **Gateways**

Proposed Promenades



PROPOSED 6M PROMENADE

PROPOSED 6M PROMENADE

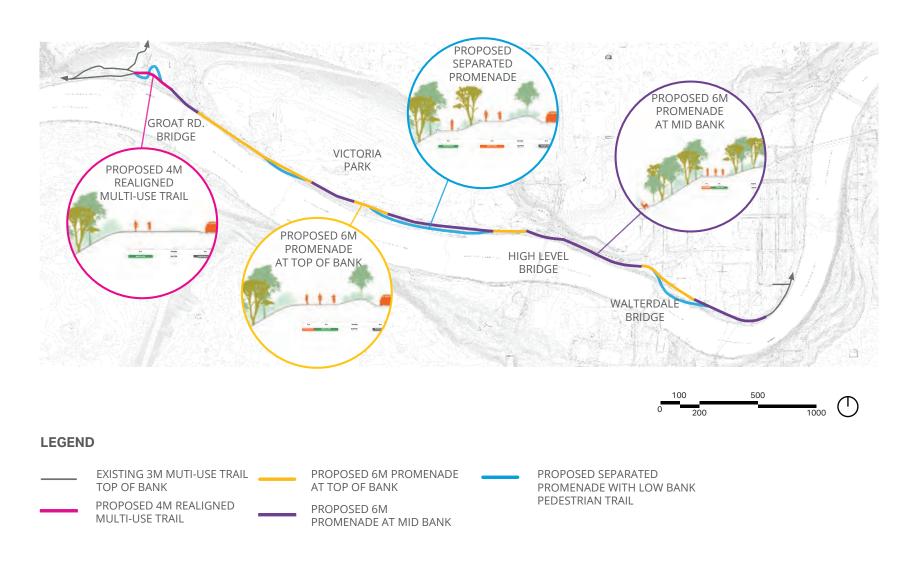
Highlights

- + Widened pathway along entire project area for greater safety and room for cyclists, pedestrians, strollers, wheelchairs, etc.
 - No separated pathways in this option
- + Large portions of the pathway are moved away from River Valley Road to mid bank
 - Greater disturbance to what exists, but opportunity to plant more diverse and native tree and other species
 - Noise buffer from traffic
- Improved and more diverse planting at top and mid bank along pathway, allowing for stormwater runoff to collect and improved habitat for animals to pass through

EXISTING 3M MUTI-USE TRAIL

PROPOSED 4M REALIGNED

Proposed Promenades



Highlights

- + Widened pathway along entire project area for greater safety and room for cyclists, pedestrians, strollers, wheelchairs, etc.
- Portions of project area, where space allows, for separated pathways to allow for greater user separation and safety, allowing an active commuter corridor and a slower, more pedestrian pathway to allow for enjoyment of the river and contemplation/relaxation
- Mid and low bank separated pathways will require additional changes to the existing bank
- Improved and more diverse planting at top and mid bank along pathway, allowing for stormwater runoff to collect and improved habitat for animals to pass through

REFINE

Government House Park

Government House Park Groat Road Bridge Victoria Golf Course Victoria Park High Level Bridge Rossdale Riverfront Rossdale Powerplant

Current Conditions



- Top of bank 3m wide multi-use path
- Grassed picnic areas
- + Broken concrete debris along riverbank
- + Small wooden platform overlook
- + Stormwater outfall
- + Steep pathway incline exceeds accessibility standards
- + Shelter for seasonal portable toilets
- Two parking lots
- Stormwater treatment facility
- + Vegetated river bank
- + Government Hill Tobogganing



Option 1: Gateways





- Daylights or restores the Groat Ravine creek that was buried with the development of Groat Road in the mid 20th century
- + By daylighting the creek, the project is able to provide new fish habitat
- + Improved and more naturalized management of stormwater runoff entering the river, and water quality that is improved from the existing infrastructure on site.
 - From one of the largest drainage catchments in the city.
- A pavilion with permanent washrooms and potential bookable rooms is proposed (similar to Victoria Park Pavilion)
- Educational opportunities are envisioned for children and adults alike to learn about the river, fish, and wetlands
 - Rare to find in the centre of the city
- New opportunities to play, view the river, and meet friends
- Tobogganing hill is preserved
- + Existing concrete debris is removed and lots of new plantings to improve habitat and erosion control









- Improvements to existing wood river outlook, better access to the river and views
- Permanent washroom building instead of current port-a-potty
- + Accessibility down to the lookout and river currently it is quite steep, does not meet current standards
- Removal of existing concrete debris along riverbank better environmental condition
- + Room to fish
- + A lot more seating
- + Added trees and native species planting to riverbank and in park



REFIZE

Groat Road Bridge

Current Conditions



+ Top of bank 3m wide multi-use path

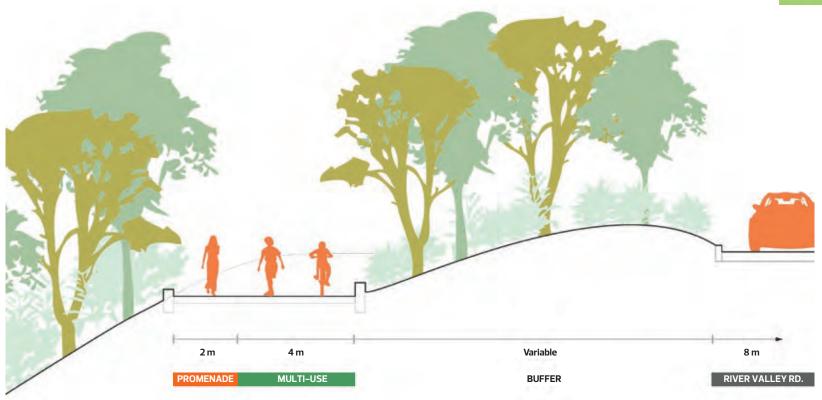
Groat Road

- Pathway is next to roadway, separated by a concrete road barrier
- Tight pedestrian road crossing with poor visibility
- + Steep bank with sparse trees
- Broken concrete debris along bank
- Steep pedestrian connection to Groat Road

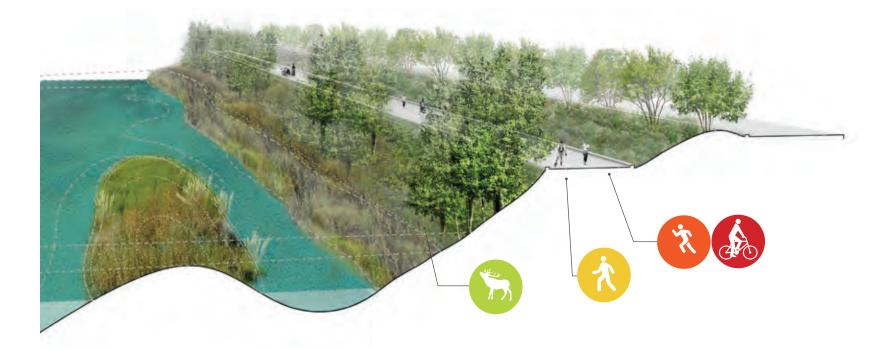


Option 1: Gateways





- + New wider 6m mid-bank promenade and pathway
- + Increased separation from the roadway to buffer car noise and pollution











- New and more direct connection to existing Groat Bridge pathway
- Accessible pathway ramp to Groat
 Bridge
- + Added waterfront seating and spot to fish
- + Pedestrian Lighting underneath the bridge deck
- + Removal of existing concrete debris along river bank, additional native planting
- Preservation of fish and animal/ wildlife habitat along bank
- Pathway moved closer to river, greater buffer from vehicles and noise/pollution
- + Enhanced riverbank planting



REFINE

Victoria Golf Course

Current Conditions



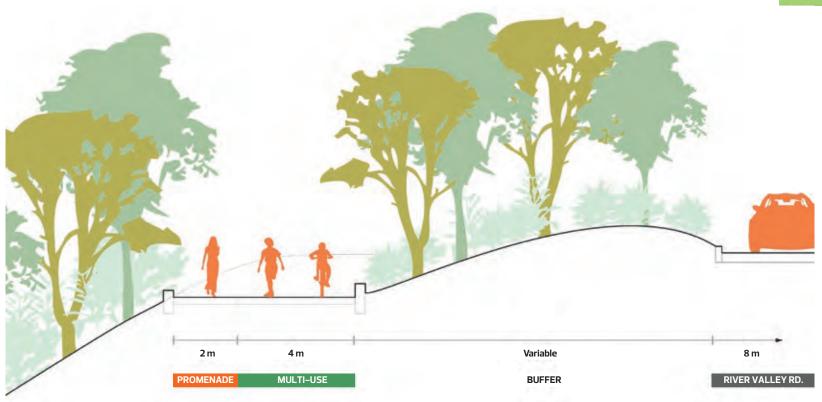
- + Top of bank 4m wide multi-use path
- Pathway next to roadway
- + Existing overlook platform
- Steep bank with few trees
- Broken concrete debris along riverbank
- Pedestrian crossing and access to Victoria Golf Course





Option 1: Gateways

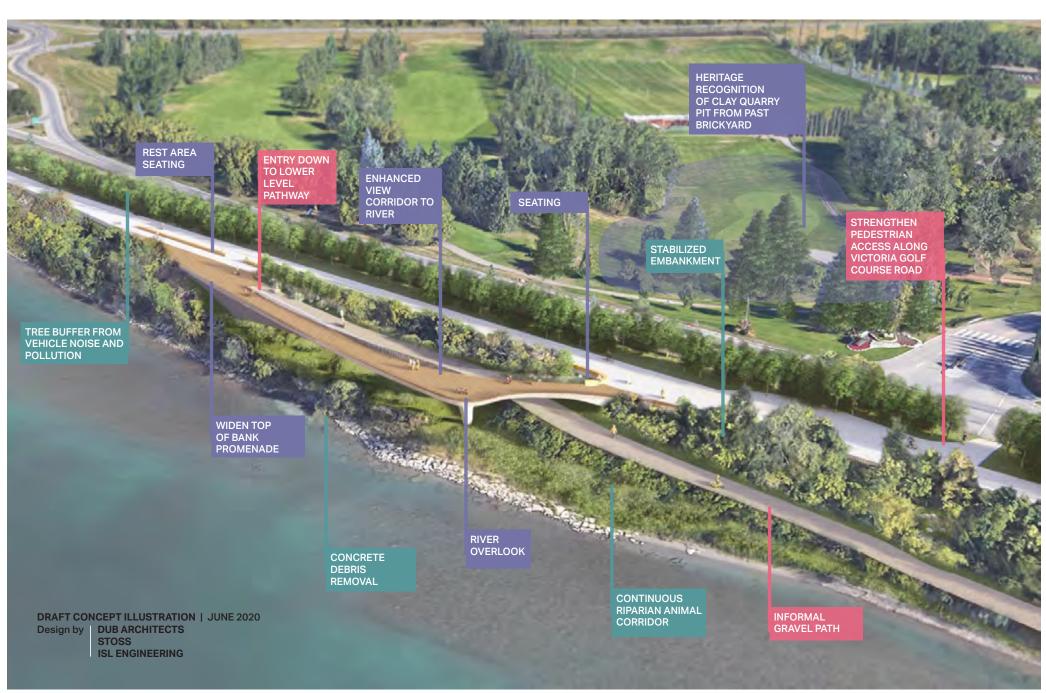




- + New wider 6m mid-bank promenade and pathway
- + Increased separation from the roadway to buffer car noise and pollution







- + Opportunity to rest and relax away from the pathway
- + New and enhanced views of the river
- Preservation of animal/wildlife habitat and corridor
- + Removal of existing concrete debris along river bank
- + Low bank informal gravel pathway access close to the river
- Enhanced erosion protection and stabilization
- Connection to Victoria Park and heritage interpretation





Victoria Park

Current Conditions



Top of bank 4m wide multi-use path

Victoria Park

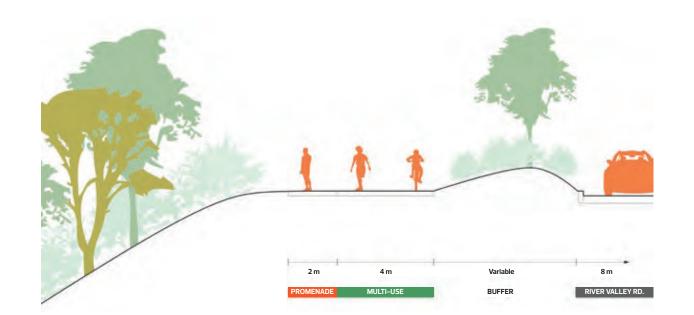
- + Road crossing to gravel parking lot
- Victoria park pavilion with washrooms and skate change room
- + Victoria skating oval and open space
- + Iceway skate paths and picnic area
- + Victoria park picnic sites and golf course

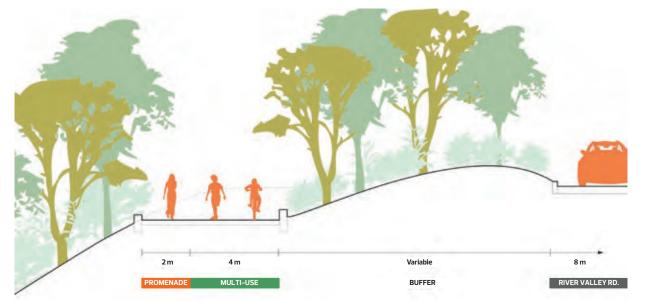




Option 1: Gateways



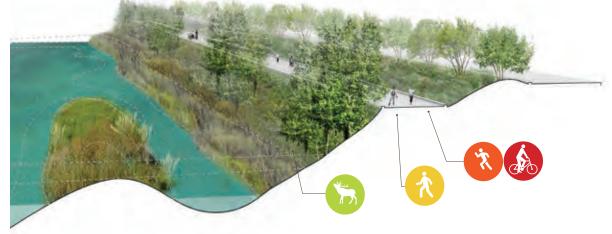






- t
- + Increased separation from the roadway to buffer car noise and pollution

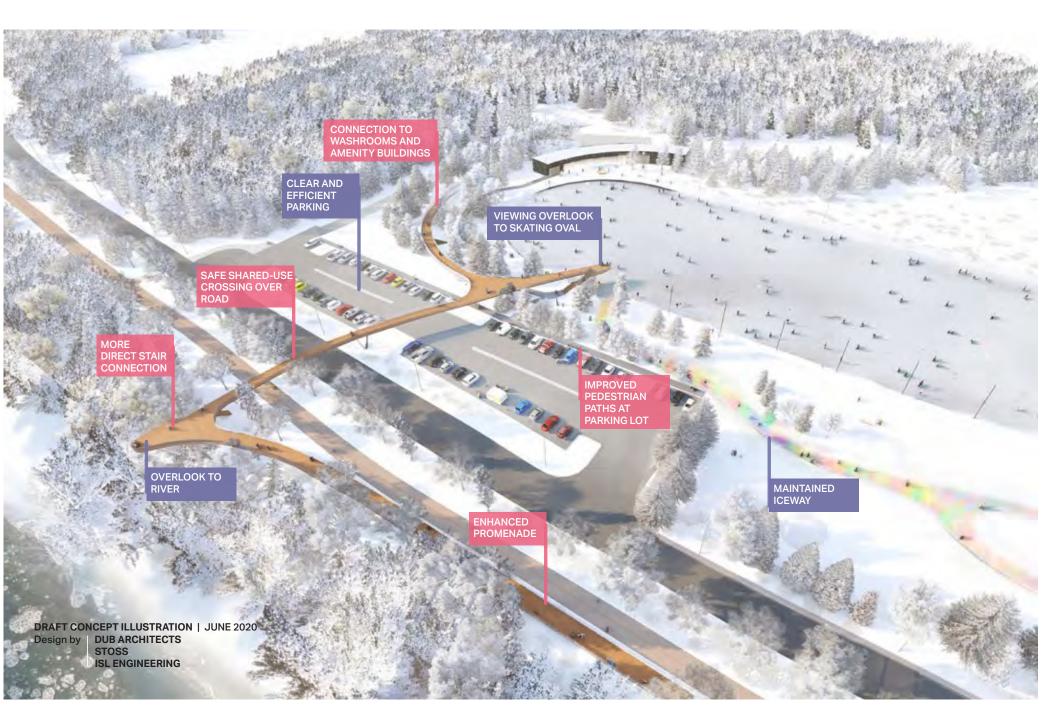
top of bank and mid-bank











- New and safer shared use crossing over River Valley Road to connect the promenade to Victoria Park
- Viewing overlooks to both the river and the oval
- + Improved and paved parking lot at Victoria park
- Better connection to Victoria Park pavilion
- Preservation of existing Victoria
 Park elements (i.e no change to
 Iceway, Oval)





High Level Bridge Hill

Current Conditions



+ Steep path to Victoria Park

High Level Bridge

- + Informal hillside path
- + Fitness stairs
- City owned gravel parking lot
- + Road crossing
- + Walkway to legislature grounds
- + LRT tunnel
- + Pedestrian access to bridge sidewalks
- + Constable Ezio Farone Park at top of hill
- + Top of bank 4m wide multi-use path



Option 1: Gateways

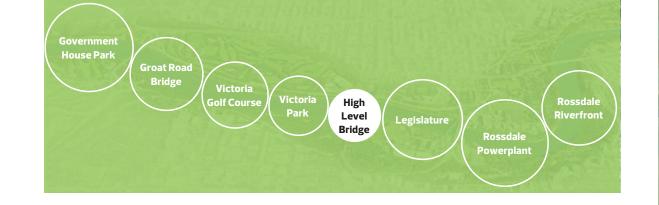


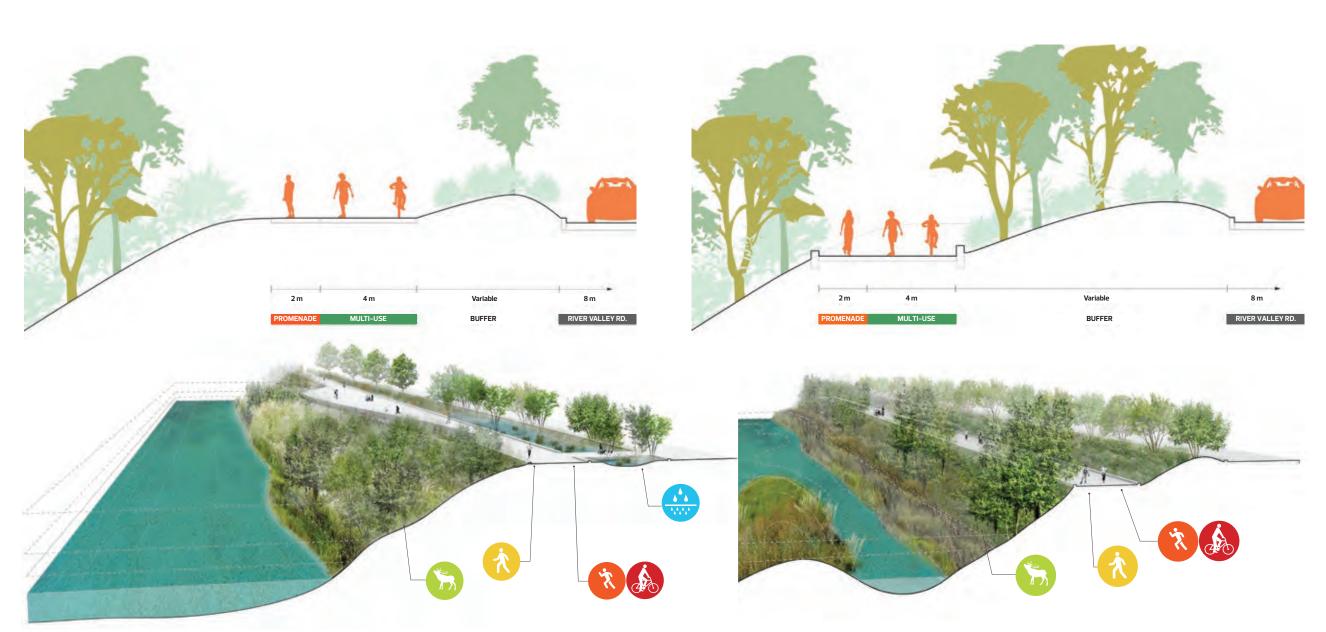


- + Existing fitness stairs are maintained and untouched
- A new accessible pathway is provided that connects to High Level Bridge pathway and downtown/central city neighbourhoods
- A new way to get to the river for all types of abilities
- Meets existing accessibility standards, where stairs do not
- + Heritage recognition and interpretation of former rail line
- New direct pathway connection to Victoria Park on north side of River valley road (currently does not exist)
- Safer access across River Valley
 Road to pathway and LRT bridge
 (Menzies Bridge) pathway across
 the river
- Existing city parking lot is reimagined as flexible open space and public art
- + Connection and signage to Legislature Grounds









- + New 6m wide promenade and pathway at top of bank and mid-bank
- + Existing fitness stairs are maintained and untouched
- + City parking lot remains





カドマス

Legislature

Current Conditions



+ Top of bank 3m wide multi-use path

Legislature

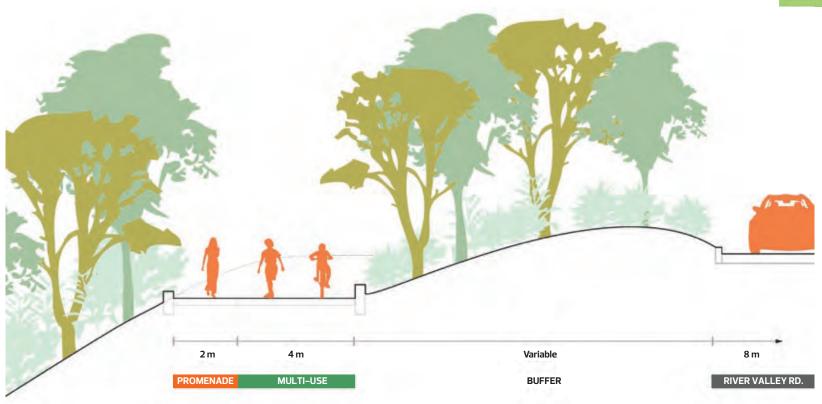
- Pathway along road separated by concrete retaining wall
- Broken concrete debris along river bank





Option 1: Gateways



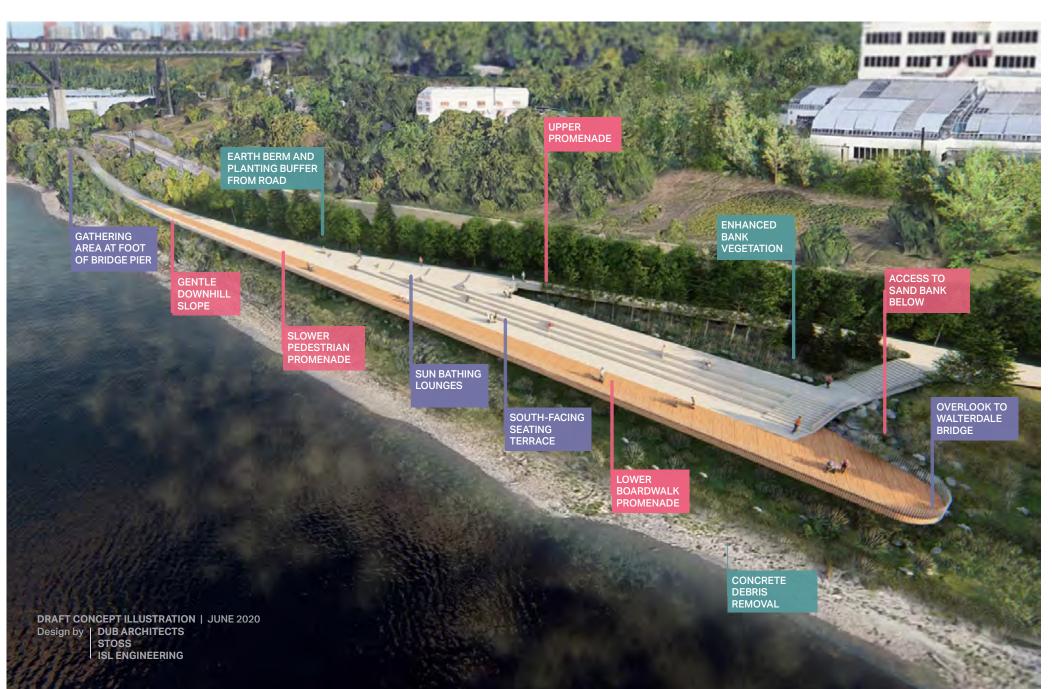


- + New 6m wide mid-bank promenade and pathway
- + Increased separation from the roadway to buffer car noise and pollution









- Proposed 6m mid-bank pathway is moved farther away from the road
- + Slower pedestrian promenade along the deck
- More trees planted as a buffer from the road noise and pollution
- Deck provides a new opportunity to view and experience the river and Walterdale Bridge
- Rest and relaxation
- Access to sand riverbank below, concrete debris removal
- + Riverbank is stabilized and enhanced with more planting





Rossdale Powerplant

Current Conditions



+ 4m wide multi-use trail at top of

Rossdale

Vegetated river bank

bank

- + Pedestrian walkways
- + Open lawn surrounding powerplant
- + Two pump houses on the riverbank
- + Neighbouring EPCOR property
- + Traditional Burial Ground
- + Parking lot





Option 1: Gateways

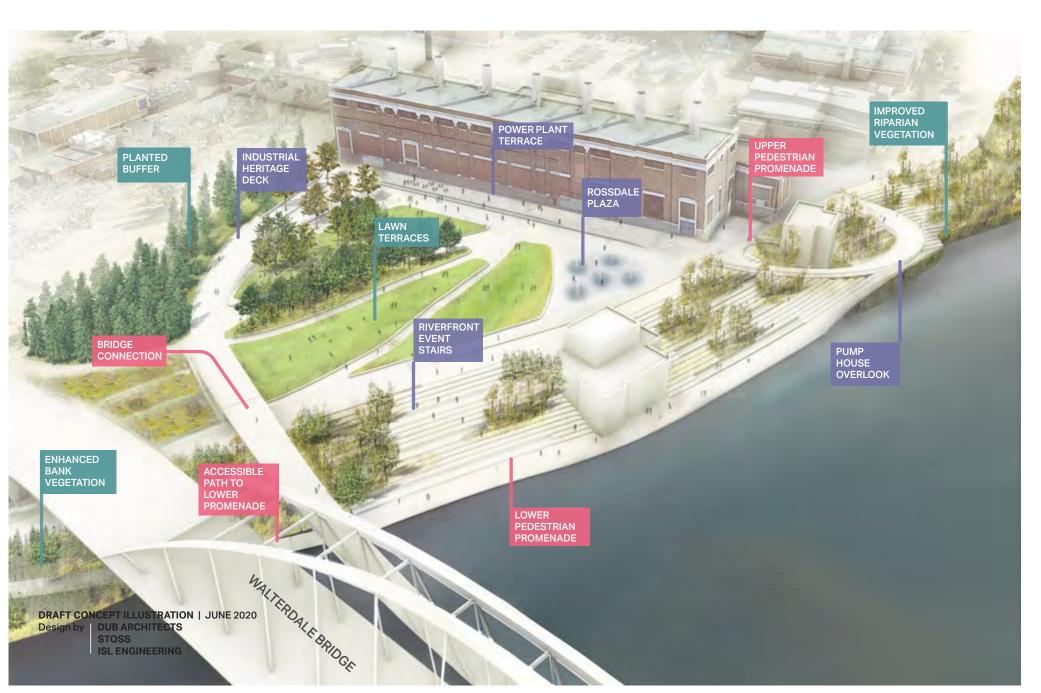




- + Traditional Burial Ground/Cemetery is acknowledged, and sacredness is respected by adding more trees around the perimeter, protecting from the road and allowing peaceful visits for visitors
- The plaza and water access proposed responds directly to River Valley Alliance Plan of Action proposal for boat dock at this location
- Overlook and pathway floats over the bank, allowing for water access
- Diverse and increased tree and native planting to improve the bank and environmental conditions
- + Flexible plaza space for spontaneous use, recreation, and celebrations
- + Able to host restaurants, markets
- Opportunities for various types and sizes of celebrations and gatherings
- + Active play areas are envisioned water in summer, skating in winter







- Existing pathway connection across river and bridge remains
- Plaza allows for different activities and sizes of gatherings, from water play to markets
- Stairs stabilize the bank and provide an opportunity to touch the water
- + Connection to pumphouses and power plant buildings which are envisioned to be reused one day
- Added trees and native vegetation along bank, next to stairs, and along north boundary to provide a buffer and improve the current environmental conditions
- + New heritage feature to celebrate the industrial heritage of Rossdale
- Pathways allow for fluid movement through the area



RET Z

Rossdale Riverfront

Rossdale Riverfront

Current Conditions



- + 3m wide multi-use path runs along property fenceline
- + Sandy deposits along river edge
- Two stormwater outfalls





アドフト

Option 1: Gateways



4 m Variable

MULTI-USE BUFFER

+ Wider 4m multi-use pathway





- Heritage recognition of a riverlot boundary and the boundary of the former Hudson's Bay Lands to highlight the complex and multilayered history of the area, including traditional Indigenous use of the area since time immemorial, as well as the more recent start to settler development of Edmonton.
- Interpretation and reflection
 of challenging history of
 development of Edmonton from
 multiple perspectives
- Pathways moved away from existing fenceline
- + Waterfront seating for quiet contemplation
- + Opportunities for fishing
- Access to the sandbar below to touch the water
- Posssible connection to 101 st Street in Rossdale







Now that you have reviewed the proposed options we would appreciate if you would share your thoughts with us. Here's how you can join the conversation:

Ideas Board

Share what you like, ideas for refinement, and anything you noticed was missing.

engaged.edmonton.ca/touch-thewater-promenade

Survey

Answer questions from the project team to help decide which options are selected, and make suggestions to refine options for the next stage.

engaged.edmonton.ca/touch-thewater-promenade

Quick Polls

Don't have a lot of time? Answer a few questions to let us know your preferences.

engaged.edmonton.ca/touch-thewater-promenade

Project Team

Contact the Project Team directly to provide your feedback.

edmonton.ca/touchthewater

touchthewaterpromenadeproject@edmonton.ca

If you prefer to have a paper copy of the quick poll and/or survey, please contact **touchthewaterpromenadeproject@edmonton.ca** to arrange for a copy to be delivered to you.

Next Steps

We will share the preferred concept design in 2021 with Regional Indigenous Nations and Communities and the public, and will ask for feedback.

Your feedback will be used to develop a single preferred concept, which will guide design for the rest of the project. The final concept design will serve as a long term plan that could be built through phases over many years, as funding is available.

This project is currently in the Concept Phase, and funding has not been approved for construction. The Rossdale Area has been approved for additional design work. At this time, 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.

Thank You!

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



