

The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in a white, sans-serif font on a blue rectangular background.

OLESKIW RIVER VALLEY PARK MASTER PLAN

What We Heard Report
Phase 4: Preferred Concept Option
November 2018

Project Overview

The Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan project is an opportunity for Edmontonians to work with the City of Edmonton to develop a 25-year vision and guiding principles for the park. As part of the region’s open space network, Oleskiw River Valley Park is an essential ecological and cultural connector.

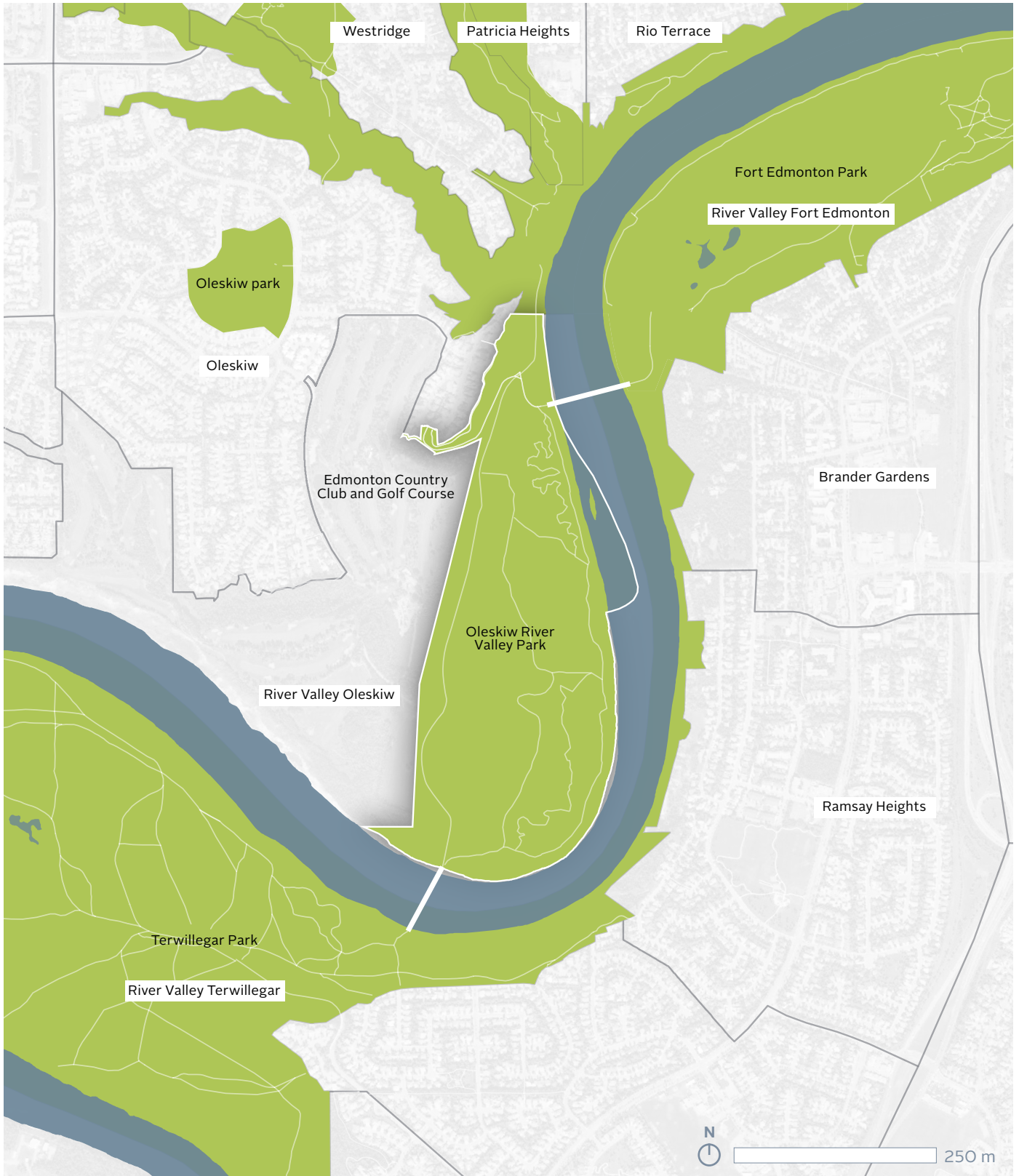
Oleskiw River Valley Park is situated on a floodplain within the North Saskatchewan River Valley in the southwest quadrant of the City of Edmonton. The area offers visitors from surrounding neighbourhoods and the broader region a refuge from the city and an escape into nature. The park provides opportunities to walk, run and bike through the slopes, field and forest that compose the landscape, allowing visitors to connect with their neighbours and experience moments of solitude in a natural environment.

Oleskiw River Valley Park is an important link in Edmonton’s River Valley park network. With the construction of a new multi-use trail and the Terwilligar Park Footbridge, the park area is expected to experience a greater intensity of use over the next few years. As a result, the City of Edmonton has identified the need for this first formal planning process for the park— a Master Plan to guide and coordinate future development and activity.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to establish a 25-year vision and management plan for the park area. As part of the 10-Year Capital Investment Agenda, The River Valley Park Renewal program identifies the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan as a key project that will direct investment for the park.

Through community consultation using a variety of engagement tools and techniques, the City is engaging a broad audience to help develop a vision and concept plan for the park. This report summarizes What We Heard during the fourth phase of public engagement for the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan.

Oleskiw River Valley Park Context



The Master Plan Process

Oleskiw River Valley Park offers visitors an escape into nature. Part of the park's success can be credited to forward-looking policy, planning and community involvement. To create a vision that protects the park while reflecting the needs of citizens, there is a need to look forward and consider the incredible growth and changing demographics that will occur in Edmonton in the coming years.

The River Valley Park Renewal Program identifies a long-term strategic approach to renewing parks located in the River Valley. The program was initiated by key drivers such as City policies, changing demographics, demand, recreational needs

and ageing infrastructure. Park renewal within the River Valley is based on an analysis of the physical condition and functionality of park elements as well as the ability to meet existing (and future) capacity.

The Master Plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park will build on existing plans, policies and initiatives while identifying public needs and priorities. It will provide direction for environmental management as well as recommendations for civic, cultural and recreational uses that are appropriate to the park. The Master Plan will also be guided by higher-level policy, such as the Ribbon of Green (2018) Plan for Edmonton's River Valley.

City of Edmonton's Park and Facility Development Process. This project is in the CONCEPT phase.



Oleskiw River Valley Park: Engagement time line



Engagement Plan

An engagement strategy using multiple consultation techniques allows the public to provide input into the development of the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan. Four phases of public engagement will help develop a Master Plan for the park that responds to community needs and City priorities.

Policy C513 for Public Involvement is guided by the City of Edmonton's Public Involvement Framework which outlines the strategic approach to be used in all City hosted public involvement processes. As outlined in Policy C513, the City of Edmonton is committed to involving stakeholders and the public in the Master Planning process. During the engagement, Edmontonians were asked to identify key uses, needs and strategies for the park and participate in an ongoing dialogue about what Oleskiw River Valley Park might look like in the future.

The public is invited to participate in four phases of engagement to help develop the Master Plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park. Each phase included internal and external stakeholder sessions, online engagement and public open houses.

External stakeholders include interest groups, neighbourhood groups and other organizations who have expressed an interest in being more deeply involved in the Master Plan process. Internal stakeholders are City of Edmonton employees who can provide input or advice on specific aspects of the park.

Online engagement, in the form of surveys, interactive mapping and activities, gave the public an opportunity to provide their input at their convenience. These options were offered to facilitate input from those who were unable to attend in-person sessions and for those who wanted to provide additional comments. Material shared at public events and What We Heard Reports are available online at edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan

Phase 1: Project Introduction, Inventory & Analysis

August – September 2016

In Phase 1, the City sought initial feedback on the existing conditions of the project area. We asked the public: what do you like about the park space, why it is important to you and what do you want to see in the future?

Information presented to the public and stakeholders included the project scope and boundaries; key existing features, systems and functions of the park; and the relationship of the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan with parallel projects such as the Ribbon of Green (2018) Plan and BREATHE: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy.

Public and stakeholder input identified key dreams, desires, issues and themes. This input informed the development of a park vision, identity and program.

Phase 2: Vision, Principles & Identity

June 2017

In Phase 2, the City looked to the public to help improve their understanding of the opportunities and constraints in the park, which helped to inform the vision. The public and stakeholders provided input on the material presented and were asked to prioritize elements of the vision statement and concept options. They were also asked to contribute to the inspiration for an official park name.

Phase 3: Concept Options

November 2017

In Phase 3, the City asked for feedback on more developed concepts for the park. Two variations on proposed activities, features and elements for the park were presented within two concept plans. The public and stakeholders were asked to choose which option they preferred and to prioritize the various proposed elements in each.

Feedback from this phase of engagement was used to develop a preferred concept plan, presented in Phase 4.

Phase 4: Preferred Concept Plan

July 2018

In Phase 4, the City presented a refined concept for the park that integrates the priorities and feedback received in Phase 3. The public and stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the preferred concept to help fine-tune the program and its features. This feedback will support the development of a preferred concept that responds to the needs of the community and park users.

Additional Engagement

Feedback from all phases of engagement has been integral to the City's understanding of programmatic and operational needs for the park. The City has also reached out to the following communities to gain a more holistic understanding of public needs for the Master Plan:

- » Indigenous Peoples through outreach efforts associated with multiple City projects including BREATHE: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy, the River Access Strategy and the Ribbon of Green (2018) Plan
- » Potential partners to activate the park, focusing on nature education and ecological learning

The City will incorporate the findings from these outreach methods into the Master Plan.

Discover

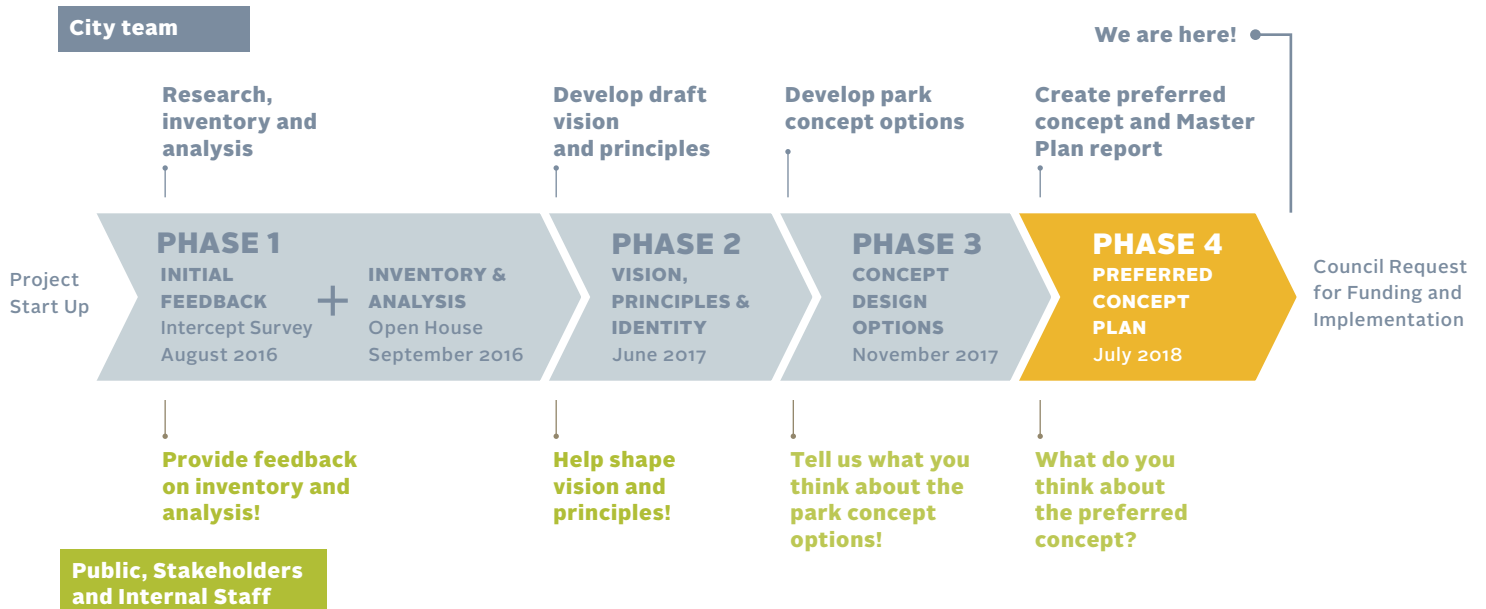
As part of the 10-Year Capital Investment Agenda, The River Valley Park Renewal Program has identified Oleskiw River Valley Park for Master Plan development to direct investment for the park.

Develop

Along with City priorities and technical data, public input will be used at each stage in the process to develop the Master Plan.

Deliver

The goal is to fund the next stages of implementation as part of the 2019–22 budget cycle.



Public Involvement in the Master Plan Process

The City of Edmonton prioritizes public engagement as part of the Master Plan process. It is integral to decision-making.

What We Did

In July 2018, the City presented a consolidated vision and concept plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park for public and stakeholder input. The City wanted to understand the level of public and stakeholder support for the concept plan and its various components.

In this phase, a consolidated vision and concept plan was presented to the public and stakeholders for feedback. The engagement process was designed to ensure that perspectives with potentially diverging insights were heard and engaged.

What were the engagement opportunities?

Four opportunities for participation were available to stakeholders and citizens during this phase:

Public Engagement Session

July 9, 2018 | Westridge Wolf Willow Country Club Community League, 5-8pm | 69 Attendees

Visitors to the Oleskiw River Valley Park Phase 4 open house were welcomed at the door and provided with an overview of the event setup. Participants had the opportunity to read background information on the project, including the City's decision-making process and the various inputs that guided the plan. The vision and concept plan for the park was presented in a series of five key areas: Slopes and Mobility Corridor; Top-of-Bank; Valley Field; Forest Corridor; River Edge; and Sand Bar.

Participants were asked to comment on the phasing approach, the proposed park elements and their overall support for the Master Plan.

Feedback from the event survey reported mixed feedback on the event advertising. Participants enjoyed the clarity of the presentation material, the progression of the plan in response to public input, and the ability to speak to staff with their questions and concerns.

Online Survey

July 10-31, 2018 | 322 survey respondents

The presentation material from the open house was provided on the project website for the public to view on their own time. Participants of the online survey were encouraged to read the open house material prior to beginning the survey.

The survey outlined the main features in the Concept Plan as well as some of the management practices proposed in the Master Plan. Participants were asked to provide their level of support for the concept plan and management practices and were given the opportunity to leave open-ended comments.

External Stakeholder Workshop

July 10, 2018 | Westridge Wolf Willow Country Club Community League
13 Participants

Participants of the external stakeholder workshop were welcomed to the event and given some time to peruse the open house presentation material. Participants were split into two groups and asked to contribute to small group discussions on the following themes:

- » Park Use and Amenities
- » Access and Circulation
- » Natural Asset Management
- » Overall Concept Plan

Stakeholders confirmed elements of the plan that they supported and provided suggestions for areas they felt could be improved through facilitated group conversations. Participants were also provided with surveys with the same questions from the open house and online survey in which they could provide comments during the evening or to be mailed in at a later date.

The following organizations were represented at the stakeholder workshop:

- » Edmonton & Area Land Trust
- » Edmonton Country Club
- » Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance
- » Edmonton Native Plant Society
- » Edmonton Nature Club
- » Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition
- » Friends of Terwillegar
- » Wedgewood Community League

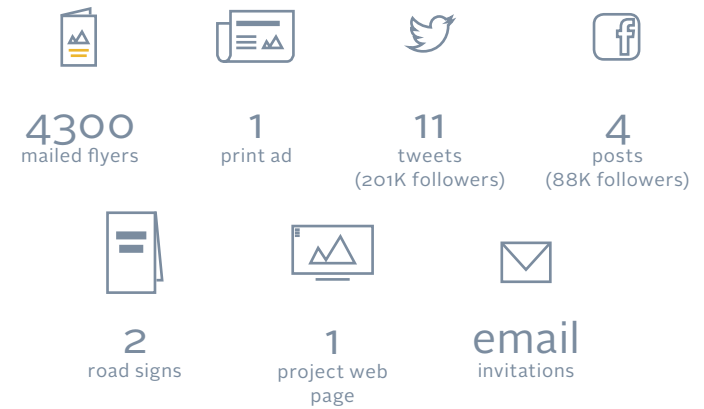
Internal Engagement Session

A three-hour open house on the morning of July 10, 2018 allowed city staff to provide their input on the consolidated vision and concept plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park. The staff who attended provided their overall support for the plan as well as recommendations for implementation and connections with other City initiatives.

Additional Public Outreach Methods

In addition to the City's needs assessment for the park, which involves understanding the park's existing use and activities, the City reached out to Indigenous Nations through outreach efforts associated with multiple City projects including BREATHE: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy, the River Access Strategy and the Ribbon of Green Master Plan (2018).

How were engagements advertised?



What background information was provided?

Participants of all engagement opportunities in Phase 4 were provided with information on the project process and approach to decision-making. Public input received during previous phases of engagement was summarized, including its influence on the consolidated concept plan presented in Phase 4. An overview of the park history and the evolution of the landscape was presented, as was a brief explanation of invasive species located in the park and potential methods for invasive species management.

What questions were asked?

Five main questions were presented to encourage and direct feedback:



To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed Park Use & Amenities elements?

Participants were presented with a map of the proposed park use and amenities in the concept plan and were asked to provide their level of support. They were also asked which specific elements they supported or opposed.



To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed Access & Circulation elements?

Participants were presented with a map of the proposed trail network, entrances and wayfinding signs. Participants were asked to provide their level of support as well as which specific elements they supported or opposed.



To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed Natural Asset Management elements?

Participants were presented with a map of the proposed vegetation cover and natural area management in each area of the concept plan. They were asked to provide their level of support for the proposed natural asset management and which aspects they supported or opposed.



After reviewing the details for two naturalization options, which option do you prefer?

Participants were presented with two different proposals for re-naturalizing areas of the park and managing invasive species. They were asked to provide feedback on which option they preferred and why.



To what extent do you support or oppose the draft Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan?

After reviewing all the presentation material, participants were asked if they supported the Master Plan in its entirety. Participants were provided with opportunities to share a rationale for their decision during in-person events as well as online.

How did we analyze the feedback?

Quantitative information, such as 'votes' of support for various aspects of the plan are summarized and presented graphically in this report. Both types of information helped to inform decisions for the Master Plan.

Who participated in Phase 4?

69
participants

public open
house

13
participants

stakeholder
workshop

322
participants

online
survey

89
attendees

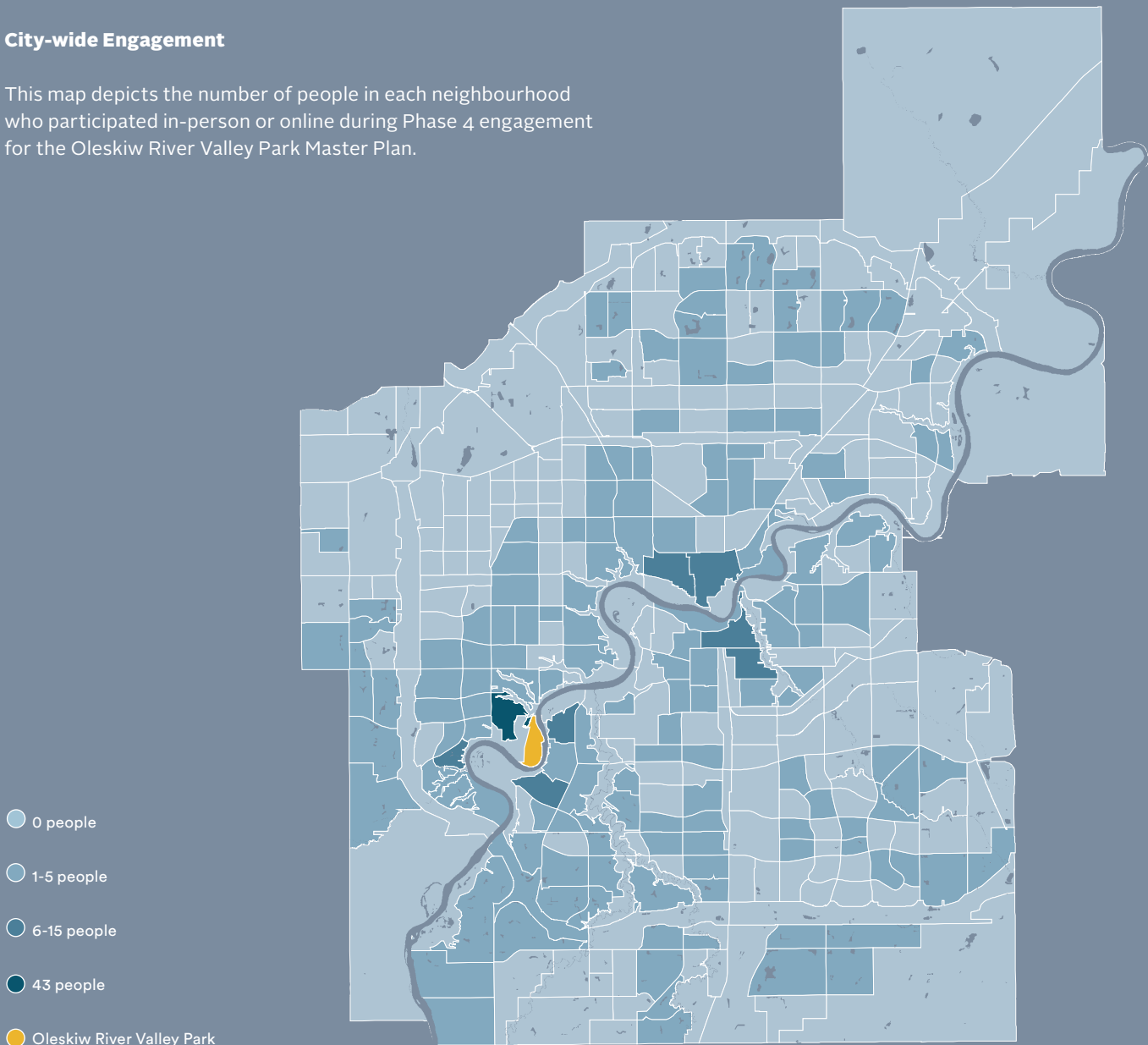
internal
engagement

493

engaged citizens

City-wide Engagement

This map depicts the number of people in each neighbourhood who participated in-person or online during Phase 4 engagement for the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan.



What We Heard

Phase 4 of engagement allowed participants to share their thoughts on the consolidated park vision and concept plan. Below is a summary of themes that emerged through open-ended responses during in-person and online engagement events. Many comments related to items that participants want to see addressed in the Master Plan.

Themes Emerging from Phase 4 Feedback:

Staying Informed

Participants were interested in learning more about the phasing options and re-naturalization process presented. Some requested that the City make efforts to maintain transparency in their process and decisions, keeping the public informed along the way.

Circulation

In general, participants liked that the existing trail network was maintained. Some appreciated the trail additions, as they felt they would help more people experience different areas of the park. Others felt that new trail connections were unnecessary and duplicated experiences already provided by existing trails.

Low-Impact

Participants appreciated the efforts made to include low-impact and low-maintenance elements in the concept plan. However, some participants felt that the plan could go even further in reducing the number of built features in the park, reducing the plan's impact on natural elements.

Cost & Timeline

Public feedback pointed to a concern over the cost of infrastructure and re-naturalization efforts. In general, participants wanted the project to have lower costs and a shorter timeline for implementation.

Implementation

Some participants had questions about the feasibility of certain aspects of the plan, such as the removal of invasive plant species. They wanted to ensure the proper research and planning goes into the implementation of the plan to achieve the best results possible.

River Access

Participants want to have access to the river from Oleskiw River Valley Park. While the lack of vehicle access limits the use of the park for formal river access and boating, many participants noted that the park is used for informal river access and will likely continue to be used this way.

Partnerships

Partnerships were seen by some as important tools for innovative and community-driven solutions related to the re-naturalization and management of certain areas of the park. Partnerships may help to increase the public stewardship and provide opportunities for community learning.

Restoration

The restoration and re-naturalization components of the plan were very popular during the engagement. Participants could see benefits to biodiversity in the park. The potential for community participation and public education were seen as added benefits.

493

engaged citizens

2,021
open-ended
comments

1,722
preferences

3,743
in-person and online
interactions

“Framing the vision with certain ecological goals for example to increase the number of native plant species and animals and birds would be an improvement over the current one.”

“If your intent is to create a park, then say so, while maintaining the proposition that it should remain relatively natural in order to maintain ecological connectivity and, with future restoration, possibly enhance it.”

“Need for closer access for vehicles so people with limited mobility can still enjoy the amenities and natural surrounds.”

“Interpretation is likely overdone. Trend now is to more experiential teachings and less built infrastructure. I see no plans to include programing..”

“I’m not a fan of the picnic shelter. I could see having picnic benches, but I’m not sure a shelter is necessary at a park like this... I could see it being useful if educational/research groups were utilizing it, but I still think it needs to be pretty minimal.”

“I love our River valley and parks even if I’m not able to physically use them, they’re important to keep up with the changes in our society and uses.”

What concept was presented?

Those who participated in Phase 4 of engagement in-person or online were presented with a comprehensive vision and concept plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park. The following pages provide a summary of the key features proposed in the concept plan and the level of support from participants.

The following vision statement was presented in Phase 4:

The Oleskiw River Valley Park is a crucial link in Edmonton's open space network, providing essential habitat and contributing to ecological connectivity in the River Valley.

Low-impact trails and amenities will provide access to restored natural areas for passive recreation, nature interpretation and cultural learning, while the serene environment will invite visitors to linger in the River Valley and witness the active renewal of the landscape.

The guiding principles under Access & Circulation, Park Use & Amenities and Natural Asset Management are presented on the following pages with accompanying illustrative maps and detailed descriptions of elements of the proposed plan.

A more detailed description of proposed features can be found in the Phase 4 engagement presentation material online at edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan



Figure 1. Proposed Concept Plan

Park Use & Amenities

The following material was presented at the open house and online to inform participants of components in the Master Plan related to Park Use & Amenities.

Based on public input and the requirements of limited access, the amenities proposed for the park are minimal. They support trail-based activities and nature interpretation.

Guiding Principles:

- » Amenities should be designed to accommodate a wide range of abilities.
- » Site furniture and built features should integrate with the park's natural character, be flexible and low-maintenance.
- » Viewpoints should be enhanced where possible.
- » Activities in the park should be low-impact and mainly trail-based.
- » There should be opportunities to stop and rest in the park.
- » Activities and amenities in the park should be compatible with access and maintenance limitations.
- » Construction activities should not cause damage to established natural areas.

Proposed Design and Management Guidelines:

- » Two pit washrooms are added to the park (one near the Terwillegar Park Footbridge and one near the Fort Edmonton Footbridge).
- » A small picnic shelter and gathering space is located near the south end of the park to provide shelter and flexible use for various groups and visitors. This area can be a resting place for school/community groups, individuals conducting research in the park or passive visitors.
- » Partnerships will be explored (i.e. educational groups, community groups, ecological/research groups, etc.) for the use of the proposed gathering space.
- » Resting points, including benches shaded by trees, are located along paved and granular trails.
- » Select areas with existing views are formalized into viewpoints with seating and interpretive signage.

Participants were provided the opportunity to voice their level of support for the Park Use & Amenities elements presented and to share which specific elements they supported or opposed. The results are presented on the following pages.



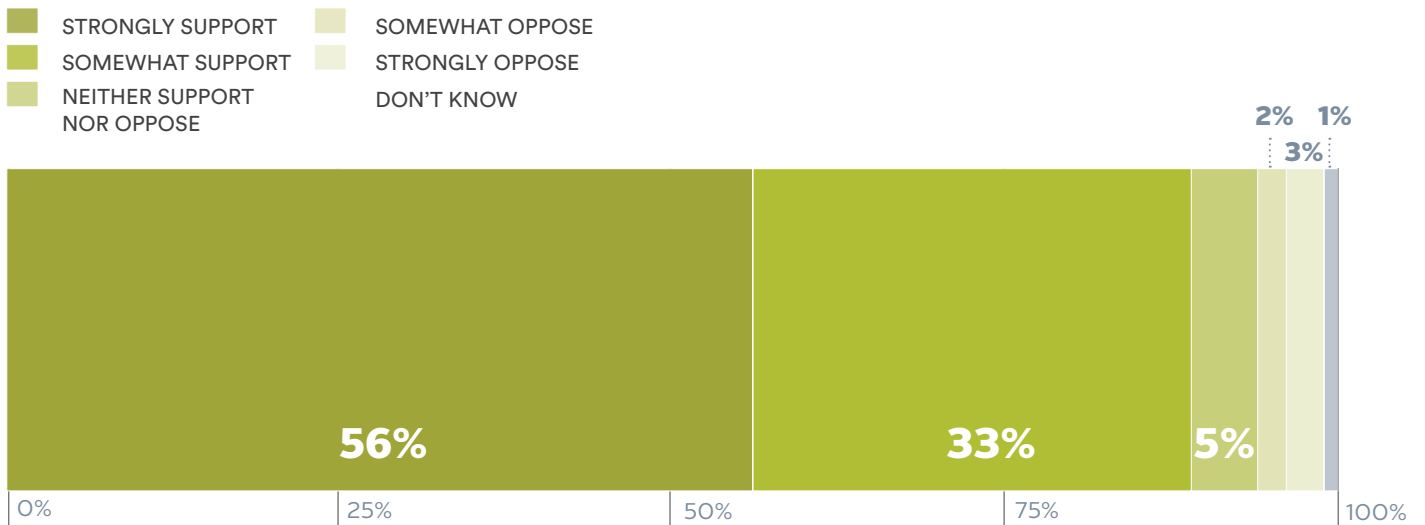
Figure 2. Proposed Park Use & Amenities Plan

Park Use & Amenities

322 online preferences
393 online comments
50 in-person preferences and comments

After reviewing the presentation material and concept plans, participants were asked if they supported the Park Use & Amenities elements of the plan and to provide a rationale for their response.

To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed Park Use & Amenities elements?



“I love the lookouts and the benches. It indicates a theme of quiet respite from the busy city and is therefore highly beneficial to both personal well-being and nature at the same time.”

“I would like to maintain and protect the natural feel and serenity of this area, but recognize that washrooms for example are necessary. Would want all to be built in a manner that complements/blends with the existing nature and landscape as much as possible.”

Participants support:

...minimal amenities.

Some participants appreciated that proposed infrastructure in the concept plan was scaled back from previous presentations. There was support for resting points (benches), waste receptacles, river lookouts and winter installations (warming huts).

...pit washrooms.

The public liked the inclusion of pit washrooms in the concept plan to support future use of the park and River Valley trails.

...various trail uses.

Participants generally supported the plan's inclusion of cycling, mountain biking, walking and winter trail uses (including fat biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing). Some users said they want to continue using the trails for horseback riding.

...on-leash dog walking.

In general, participants supported the decision to maintain the park as an on-leash park. They suggested increasing levels of enforcement and signage in the park. Other suggestions included signage welcoming on-leash dogs and providing dog waste bag dispensers along trails. There were some participants who wanted the off-leash dog use in Terwillegar Park to continue into Oleskiw River Valley Park.

Participants want:

...less built infrastructure.

Some participants would like the plan to include less built infrastructure. Some opposed the inclusion of a shelter, winter installations (warming huts), a picnic area and other built infrastructure they felt would increase the level of vandalism, loitering and litter in the park.

...fewer pit washrooms.

Some participants did not see the need to include two pit washrooms in the park or felt that another park (with higher visitor traffic) would benefit more from the inclusion of a washroom. Others wanted the washrooms to have plumbing and running water.

...access to drinking water.

Some participants wanted access to drinking water.

...fewer winter installations.

Some participants liked the idea of including winter warming huts in the park to encourage winter use of the trails but felt that there were too many in the proposed concept plan.

...lighting.

Some participants felt that lighting along trails would increase the potential evening and winter use of the park.

Access & Circulation

The following material was presented at the open house and online to inform participants of components in the Master Plan related to Access & Circulation.

In previous rounds of engagement, we heard that participants want improved access into and throughout the park. Park entrances, trails and directional signs are key components of the access and circulation in the park.

Guiding Principles:

- » Trails should be designed for a wide variety of park visitors, and the park should provide a variety of trail experiences.
- » A formal natural trail network should be established to prohibit the creation of new informal trails through environmentally sensitive areas.
- » Use of the formal natural trail network should be regulated through public education efforts and partnerships with the City.
- » Existing entrance points should be advertised and enhanced where possible to increase accessibility.
- » Visitors should be informed of trail grades and distances to amenities at all park entrances.
- » Wayfinding and information signs should be available at entrances, trail intersections and other key locations in the park.

Proposed Design and Management Guidelines:

- » Proposed trails increase access into and through the park for visitors of varying abilities.
- » Amenities are placed near the north and south bridge entrances for easier access and maintenance.
- » Resting points are located at regular intervals.
- » Connections across the park are improved through the introduction of new trails, providing access to re-naturalized areas and opportunities for nature interpretation.
- » Trail loops give visitors different options for distances and use.
- » Parking for the park will be located at Fort Edmonton Park, Wanyandi Way (Fort Edmonton Footbridge marked street parking) and Terwillegar Park (all existing).

Participants were provided the opportunity to voice their level of support for the Access & Circulation elements presented and to share which specific elements they supported or opposed. The results are presented on the following pages.

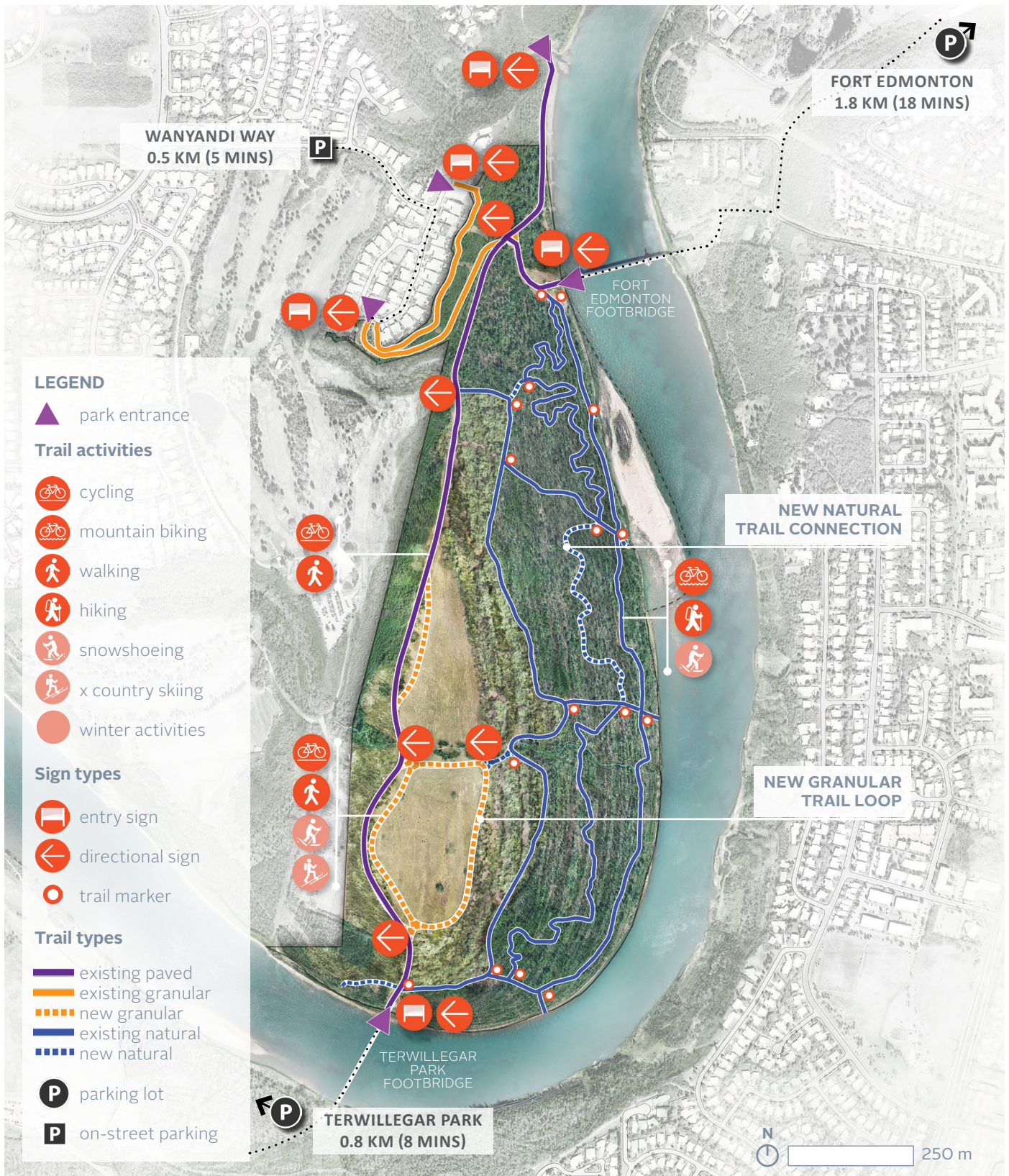


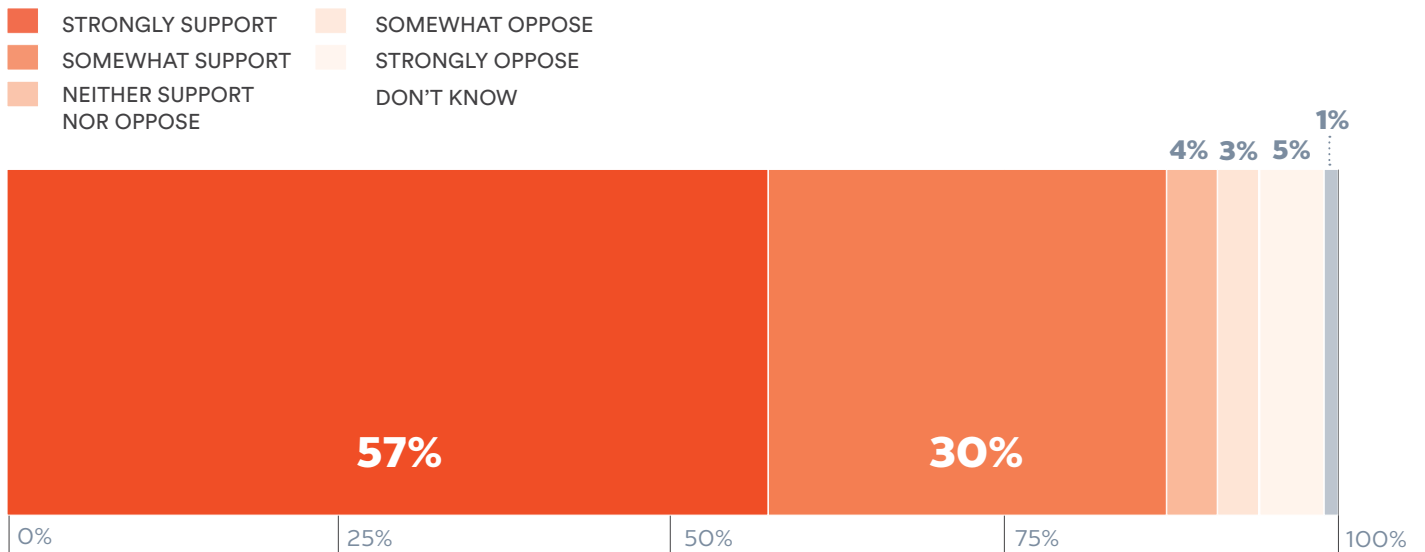
Figure 3. Proposed Access & Circulation Plan

Access & Circulation

322 online preferences
303 online comments
28 in-person comments and preferences

After reviewing the presentation material and concept plans, participants were asked if they supported the Access & Circulation elements of the plan and to provide a rationale for their response.

To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed Access & Circulation elements?



“The natural trail experience that is offered in this park, and throughout Edmonton, is second to none in a City of this size. The natural trails offer year-round recreational opportunities... Trail runners and mountain bikers rely on this system of natural trails (single track) to train and have developed a community around these trails.”

“I cannot support this plan unless the Woodward Crescent access path is paved.”

“I do hope that there are provisions to ensure there are ETS public transit services to the park entrance as well as across the river where there are footbridges which many people want to use to enter the park from the south side.”

Participants support:

...increasing accessibility throughout the park.

The addition of trails and wayfinding is seen by some to increase the accessibility of the park for a variety of visitors. Paved surfaces are preferred for those with limited mobility.

...no vehicular access.

Participants appreciate that the park will be accessed by foot and by bike, leaving a smaller footprint on the park. However, it was noted that vehicle access would make the park more accessible for people with limited mobility.

...wayfinding improvements.

Participants liked the proposed wayfinding signage (including clear park maps and indications of trail length and difficulty). They thought that improved wayfinding would help people feel more comfortable exploring the park.

...existing trail network.

Participants appreciated that the existing trail network (particularly the natural trail network) was maintained.

...options provided for different experiences.

Some participants felt that the new trail connections provided more options for park visitors and different experiences in the park (e.g. the natural trails vs. the granular trail loop vs. the paved multi-use trail).

Participants want:

...closer parking and access points.

The parking locations presented seemed too far away to be accessible for some participants. Participants were also concerned about creating additional parking pressures in adjacent neighbourhoods and Terwillegar Park.

...transit access to the park.

Some participants would like to see the City fund transit improvements that would help them get to the park.

...Woodward Crescent trail to be repaired.

Participants want the City to repair or pave the Woodward Crescent trail to make getting to the park easier for people using wheeled devices (e.g. wheelchairs, strollers, etc.)

...to maintain the character of natural surface trails.

Participants do not want natural trails to be widened or blocked by signage.

...more cross-country ski trails.

To some, the cross-country ski options were limited.

...fewer trails.

Some participants felt that the new trail connections (particularly the proposed granular trail loop) replicated existing trails and were, therefore, excessive.

Natural Asset Management

The following material was presented at the open house and online to inform participants of components in the Master Plan related to Natural Asset Management. Natural asset management describes the ways the natural areas in the park are maintained or restored.

Oleskiw River Valley Park is an important green space connection in Edmonton's River Valley, with essential wildlife habitat and opportunities to increase biodiversity. The proposed concept plan focuses on maintaining existing resources while re-naturalizing areas that have been historically disturbed.

Guiding Principles:

- » Vegetation should be managed to encourage the proliferation of native plant communities.
- » The presence of invasive plant species should be reduced.
- » The landscape should be resilient to natural and human disturbances.
- » Fire prevention and management techniques should be explored.
- » Opportunities to increase ecological connectivity within the park and to adjacent green spaces should be explored whenever possible.
- » High-impact activity near the sand bar should be dissuaded through public education.
- » Opportunities for partnerships with academic institutions or NGO's should be explored for restoration and research.

Proposed Design and Management Guidelines:

- » The forest along the river edge is restored, particularly near the southern shore of the park where possible, to improve wildlife connectivity and maintain a riparian buffer.
- » The area west of the multi-use trail is re-forested to create shade and a visual buffer between the park and the golf course.
- » No activity or formal access to the sand bar, located on the eastern shore of the park, is proposed.
- » The valley field and intermittent stream that runs through the site are re-naturalized, maintaining much of the open field. (See the Invasive Species Management panel for more information.)
- » The existing wetland in the north end of the site is protected.

Participants were provided the opportunity to voice their level of support for the Natural Asset Management elements presented and to share which specific elements they supported or opposed. The results are presented on the following pages.

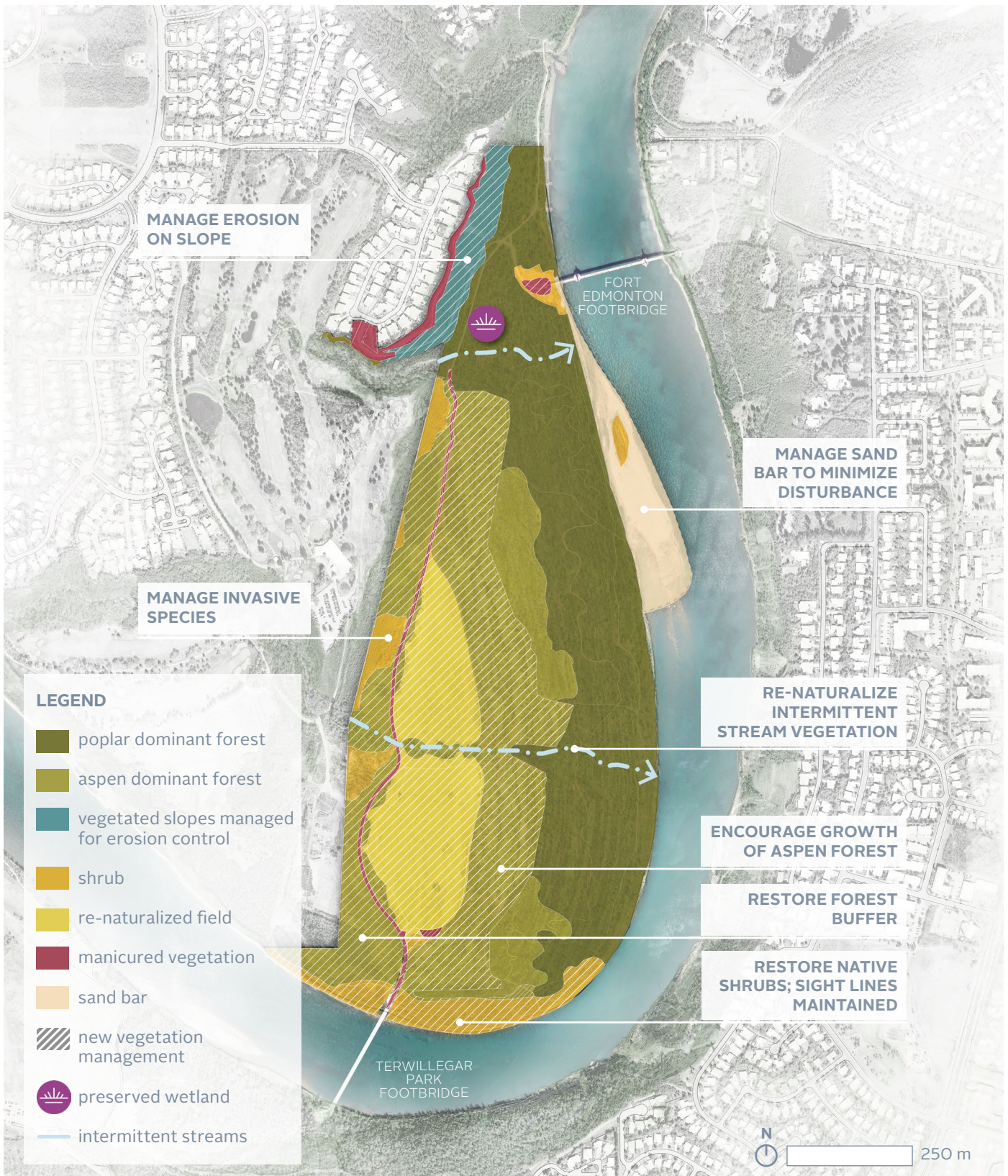


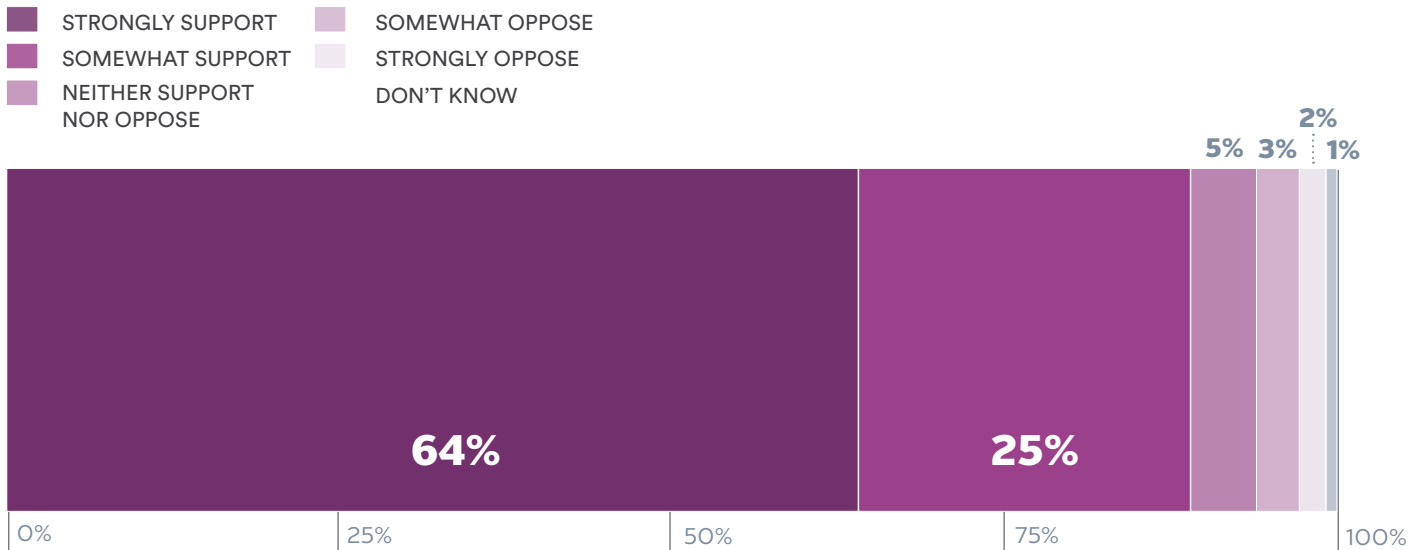
Figure 4. Proposed Natural Asset Management Plan

Natural Asset Management

322 online preferences
244 online comments
12 in-person preferences and comments

After reviewing the presentation material and concept plans, participants were asked if they supported the Natural Asset Management elements of the plan and to provide a rationale for their response.

To what extent do you support or oppose the proposed Natural Asset Management elements?



“Strongly support all recommendations. As proposed they support the existing elements of the park but also enhance (and restore) them. Love that the open field will be maintained.”

“The valley needs some firm benchmarks and a commitment to monitoring. Will you pick a scientifically informed benchmark by which to monitor effects on enhancement of this area for wildlife?”

Participants support:

...re-naturalization.

One of the elements with the highest levels of support was the re-naturalization and re-forestation of portions of the open field. Participants also supported the re-naturalization of the ephemeral stream and the protection of the existing wetland in the park.

...low-impact, natural approach.

Participants felt that the concept plan took a low-impact, natural approach to park development. They felt that this was the right direction for Oleskiw River Valley Park and provided an opportunity to protect and increase wildlife habitat and biodiversity in the River Valley.

...limited access to the sand bar.

Some participants appreciated that the concept plan did not include formalized access to the sand bar.

...managing erosion on slopes.

Some participants supported the management of erosion on the steep slopes on the western edge of the park.

Participants want:

...lower costs and faster timelines.

One of the greatest concerns expressed in relation to the proposed re-naturalization efforts was the cost and the level of on-going maintenance required.

...greater diversity.

Some participants wanted the plan to include a greater diversity of plants in the re-naturalizations scheme, such as more mixed wood forest species planted to out-compete invasive plants and weeds.

...management of the sand bar.

Some participants wanted improved access to the river and sand bar for boating or for use as a beach. Others who supported informal use and limited access to the sand bar wanted greater recognition of potential negative impacts of increased use in the Master Plan.

Phasing Options

The City is considering two options for phasing naturalization. These options have implications for the use of the park during construction and naturalization.

Because Oleskiw River Valley Park was used as a golf course and a farm in the past, the native plant life in the park has been disturbed. Smooth brome (a non-native, invasive grass) and other invasive species (such as Burnet Saxifrage and Yellow Lady's Bedstraw) have infested areas of the park where native plants were disturbed or removed, limiting the ability of the site to restore through natural succession.

Proposed Re-naturalization

Re-naturalization provides the opportunity to help bring parts of the park back to a pre-disturbance condition, and may include the removal of listed weed species, management of invasive species throughout the park and planting/encouragement of native species. Native plants that may be part of the re-naturalization efforts include: balsam poplar, white spruce, aspen, prickly rose, red-osier dogwood, wild sarsaparilla, bluejoint grass and purple oat grass, among others.

Two phasing options were presented to the public in person and online, each with different costs and timelines. The phasing options are summarized in the chart below and expanded with more detail on the following pages.

	Option 1	Option 2
Pros	Shorter timeline for rehabilitation of the landscape	Trails and amenities can be constructed before naturalization efforts are complete
	Visitors can make full use of the park sooner	Greater opportunity for community involvement in small-scale naturalization projects
	Ongoing maintenance is potentially limited	
	Removal of all smooth brome limits spread to adjacent parks and green spaces	
Cons	Greater short-term cost with one-time smooth brome removal	Invasive species will not be fully removed; ongoing smooth brome management may disrupt access to various areas of the park for years
	Large area of the park closed to the public for a minimum of 3 years	It will be difficult to manage the smooth brome that remains and prevent it from spreading to adjacent parks, natural areas and the newly naturalized areas
	Some trails and amenities can only be constructed after smooth brome removal is complete	Greater long-term cost due to continued management (not included in cost estimates)

Phasing Option 1: Large-Scale Rehabilitation



Phase 1

- ① Soil on steep slopes is stabilized to mitigate the effects of erosion.
- ② Areas to the west of the multi-use trail are re-forested.
- ③ The valley field and intermittent stream is completely cleared of invasive vegetation (i.e. smooth brome) and re-planted with native species. Field is closed for a minimum of 3 years.

Estimated timeline: at least 3 yrs
Estimated cost: \$11.4M



Phase 2

- ④ Slopes are monitored for erosion.
- ⑤ Areas along new trails are planted and naturalized.
- ⑥ The picnic and learning area, with a pit washroom, is built after naturalization of the valley field.

Estimated timeline: 1 yr
Estimated cost: \$775,000



Figure 5. Proposed Phasing Plan - Option 1

Phasing Option 2: Phased Naturalization



Phase 1

- 1 Soil on steep slopes is stabilized to mitigate the effects of erosion.
- 2 Areas to the west of the multi-use trail are re-forested.
- 3 The picnic and learning area, with second pit washroom, is built before naturalization is complete.

Estimated timeline: 1 yr
Estimated cost: \$2.4M



Phase 2

- 4 Slopes are monitored for erosion.
- 5 Small areas of the valley field are naturalized in stages.
- 6 The intermittent stream is naturalized alongside development of trail loop with opportunities for interpretation.
- 7 Areas along new trails are planted and naturalized.

Estimated timeline: 1 yr
Estimated cost: \$6.2M

Ongoing costs and timeline of invasive species control: Unknown



Figure 6. Proposed Phasing Plan - Option 2

Phasing Feedback

322 online preferences
190 online comments
27 in-person preferences and comments

Participants were asked to consider the details presented in both options and to provide their feedback, which will be considered in the City's decision on how to approach naturalization in the park.

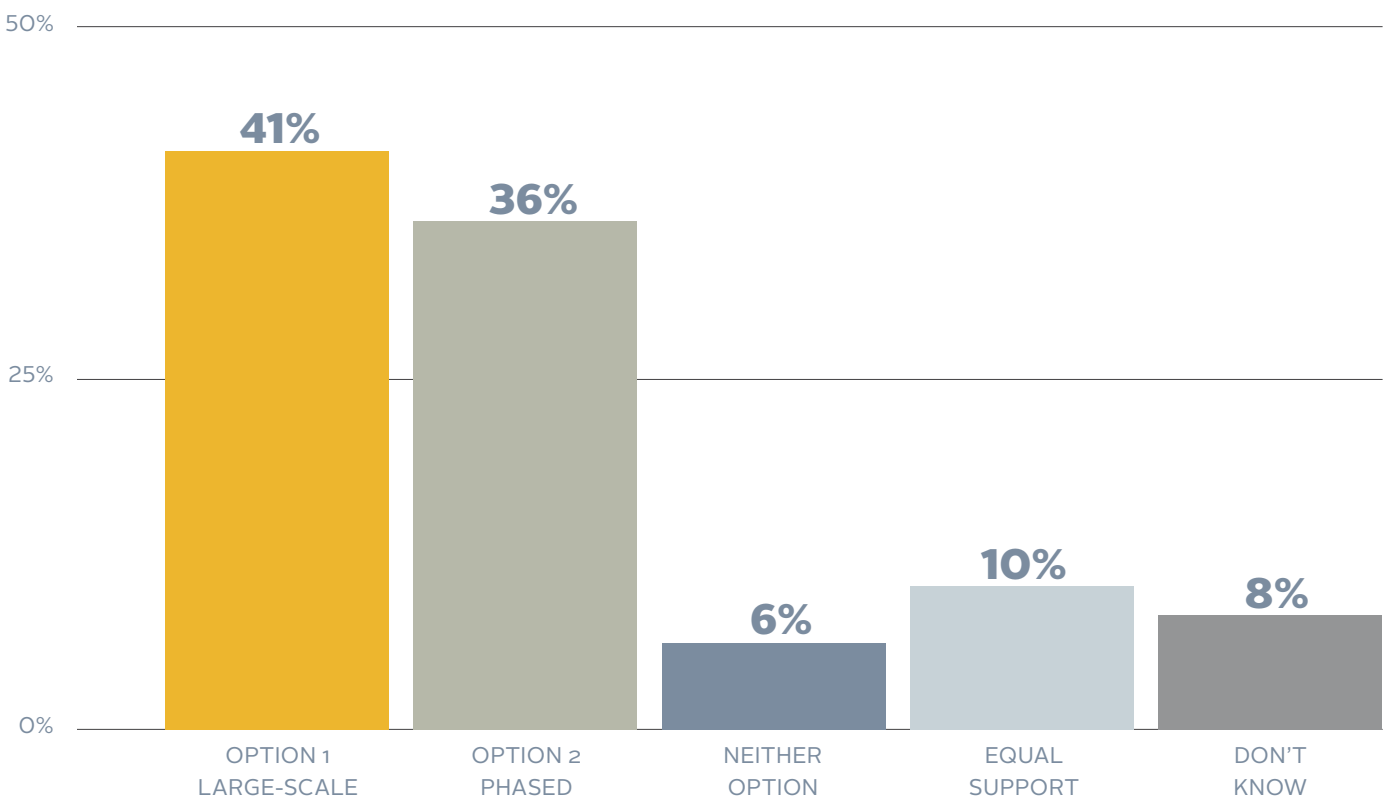
The chart below illustrates the feedback received from public and stakeholder engagement. The feedback will be considered in the City's decision on how to approach naturalization and phasing in the park.

In general, participants agreed that controlling the spread of smooth brome and other invasive plants/weeds in the River Valley is important. Major concerns voiced by participants, particularly those who chose neither option, related to the costs and feasibility of invasive species removal. Participants wanted to reduce the costs and timeline of both options.

Participants who chose Option 1 (large-scale removal) wanted the City to tackle the problem of invasive species in a shorter timeline and at a lower overall cost. They felt that a one-time removal may be more effective than smaller-scale efforts.

Participants who chose Option 2 thought that a slower, phased approach would provide more time for planning and research, would be lower risk and would provide more opportunities for community involvement. They felt that on-going maintenance is necessary for the effective management of invasive species.

Some participants commented that they did not have the background knowledge to provide an informed response. In general, they supported the re-naturalization efforts but wanted to ensure the City chooses methods that are backed by scientific and empirical evidence.



Do you support the Master Plan?

322 online preferences

644 online comments

30 in-person preferences and comments

After reviewing all of the presentation material, participants were asked to state their level of support for the Master Plan on a scale of 5-1 (5 being strongly support and 1 being strongly oppose). They were then asked which areas of the plan they supported and what changes would increase their level of support for the Master Plan. The results are summarized on the following page.

Participants support the following elements of the Master Plan:

- » A natural approach to park planning while providing amenities to support low-impact use of the park.
- » Re-naturalization and re-forestation efforts, including the management of invasive species.
- » Low-impact and minimal amenities that support being outside in nature (such as the pit washrooms and benches).
- » Improved trail connections, seen to improve the park experience for many different users.
- » Maintenance of the natural trail network and the addition of a new natural trail connector.

Participants would support the plan more if:

- » The implementation had a shorter timeline and lower costs.
- » The number and scale of built amenities was reduced.
- » The City maintained clear and consistent communication with the public on the implementation of the project (including technical details, budgets and timelines).
- » Access was improved for people of all abilities. This includes improving the Woodward Crescent trail, providing parking close to the park and improving transit/shuttle service to the park.
- » Opportunities for public education and community stewardship were more obvious in the plan.
- » Safety and maintenance concerns are addressed in the long-term management of the park. This includes monitoring of re-naturalization efforts, enforcement of on-leash dog walking and monitoring for unwanted activity in the park.

“Strongly support because the River Valley is precious and it gives us a place to connect.”

“I like it. A nice addition to the existing Terwilligar and Fort Edmonton. Looks to be calm, quiet and peaceful.”

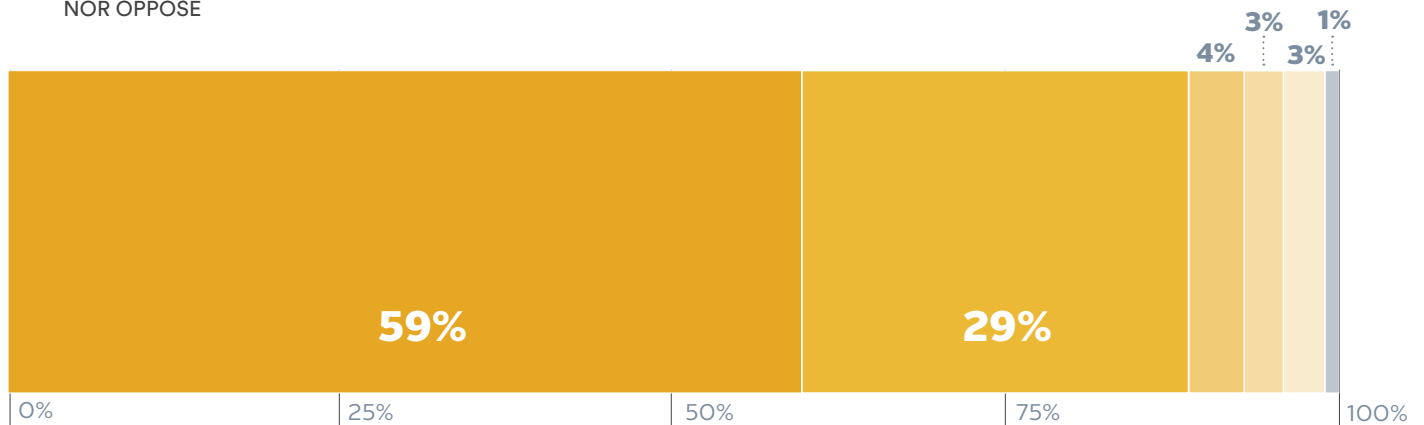
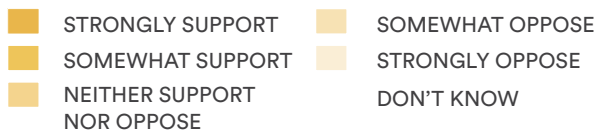
“I am for the building of amenities that would encourage Edmontonians to be outside.”

“I support this plan because it seems to be focused on minimal work, keeping the area natural and cost effectiveness... Nice to see support for keeping costs low.”

“I would like to see lower-impact decisions. For our own good, not every space in the river valley should be taken over by joggers, strollers, mountain bikes, and other intense activities. Some spaces need to be left largely alone.”

“I would feel more confident in the plan knowing who is directing the naturalization process. Botanists and other environmental scientists need to be leading this part of the project.”

“The inclusion of more cross-country skiing trails would increase my level of support.”



Next Steps

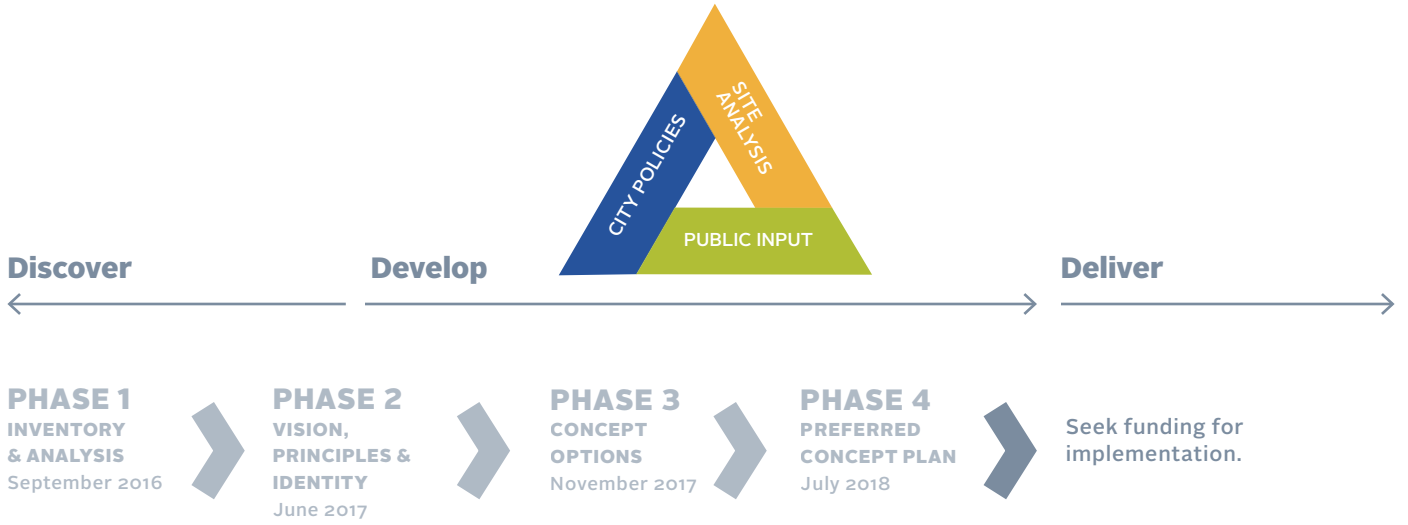
Thank you to all participants who provided their feedback during all phases of engagement for the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan!

Input from the open house, the online survey, and stakeholder workshops will give the City direction in the preparation of the Master Plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park.

The Master Plan is currently in the CONCEPT Phase of the Park and Facility Development Process. In this phase, public consultation will be critical to informing the Master Plan from now until its completion in the winter of 2018. Existing policy, City Administration and public input will inform the process and outcome of the CONCEPT Phase.

Council will review the Environmental Impact Assessment and Site Location Study associated with the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan. When these are approved, the City will prepare a request for funding and implementation of the Master Plan using a phased approach.

If you would like to stay updated on the progress of the project, updates will be available on the project website at edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan



Engagement Inputs and Results

Feedback from each phase of engagement has been incorporated into the Master Plan along with input from City policies and site analysis. The resulting concept plan will be presented to Council for funding as part of the 2019-22 budget cycle.

