

Heritage Places Strategy **What We Heard Report**

PHASE 3 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

edmonton.ca/**HistoricResources**
heritagestrategy@edmonton.ca
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Edmonton

June 2026

Executive Summary

Project Overview

The City of Edmonton is reimagining how to identify, commemorate and preserve the places that matter most to Edmontonians through the creation of a new **Heritage Places Strategy**. This is about more than historic buildings -- it's about the natural spaces, cultural landscapes and community landmarks that tell our collective story. The strategy will replace Edmonton's current [Historic Resource Management Plan](#) (2009) to create a new strategy that includes diverse histories, voices and places. The strategy will consider [The City Plan](#), the [City of Edmonton's Indigenous Framework](#), reconciliation, climate resilience, economic development and other Council priorities.

The third and final phase of engagement took place in spring 2026, at the ADVISE and REFINE levels of the City's Public Engagement Spectrum. The project team shared the draft strategy with partners and the public showing how their contributions were used from the [Phase 2 engagement results](#). The project team engaged with Indigenous partners, heritage partners, community organizations, representatives from communities whose voices may not have been part of heritage planning previously, and the public through a variety of activities.

What We Heard Highlights

Key themes gathered through Phase 3 engagement are summarized below. A complete summary is available in the Phase 3 What We Heard - Full Version.

- **General Positivity and Appreciation** - Partners and the public were generally positive about the draft Heritage Places Strategy, including the updates to the Guiding Principles and the Pillars. A majority of the 1,609 who participated in the Phase 3 survey agreed (somewhat and strongly) with the directions under the Pillars ranging from 83 per cent agreement for Natural Heritage, 64 per cent agreement for Indigenous Heritage, 66 per cent agreement for Community and Cultural Heritage and 80 per cent agreement for Built Heritage. Regarding the Implementation Activities, 61 per cent of respondents somewhat or strongly agree that they will complement and achieve the directions under the Pillars. Many expressed appreciation for the work completed and how previous feedback was used.
- **Continuous Partner Involvement** - Representatives from the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government emphasized the importance of relationships and continued engagement. Opportunities to involve Elders, Knowledge Keepers as well as youth will be essential for future heritage initiatives. Community partners

highlighted the importance of supporting community-informed and community-led efforts to commemorate or celebrate heritage places.

- **Pressures on Heritage** - Participants worried about the strategy's "teeth" to preserve heritage. Partners were concerned that the strategy and heritage initiatives would be overshadowed by other City objectives such as increased density in mature neighbourhoods. Partners suggested improving the document's language to better empower and support heritage and include more specificity around who would be responsible for which directions and implementation activities. There was also concern around the potential loss of C450B Council Policy to Encourage the Designation and Rehabilitation of Municipal Historic Resources in Edmonton and the perceived lack of Council connection to heritage-related work.
- **City-owned Heritage** - Partners were supportive of the City's responsibility to designate and maintain City-owned resources with heritage value. Whether resources are retained long term by the City or sold with conditions for designation, more attention is required to continue to manage these historical assets.
- **Additional Considerations, Tools and Incentives** - Existing heritage tools and incentives were discussed by partners. Improvements to grants, revised criteria, new tools, new heritage areas, or zoning could support heritage preservation within neighbourhoods and encourage designations. Accessibility and inclusiveness were also flagged for heritage buildings and places that could be more challenging to visit and navigate.
- **Funding** - The Heritage Resources Reserve and future budget requests also came up. Partners were concerned with the expansion of the heritage team's scope without increasing funding and available resources. Gaps will need to be filled with the "sunsetting" of the Edmonton Historical Board and the tasks they supported.

Next Steps

Thank you again for your participation! The feedback received from Phase 3 engagement, along with the research and alignment with policies, will refine the Heritage Places Strategy. Once the strategy is revised it will be posted to the project web page and shared with partners and the public. The strategy will be presented to Council in September 2026. Visit edmonton.ca/historicresources for the full **Phase 3 What We Heard Report** and for project updates.