



Heritage Places Strategy **What We Did Summary**

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SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

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Introduction

The City of Edmonton is reimagining how to identify, commemorate, and preserve the places that matter to Edmontonians through the creation of a new Heritage Places Strategy. This is about more than historic buildings -- it's also about the natural spaces, cultural landscapes, and community landmarks that tell our story.

The Heritage Places Strategy project launched in 2025 and included three phases of partner and public engagement. This **What We Did Summary** provides a brief overview of how the feedback was used to create the final draft and ensure that those who participated in the process know what decisions were made and how their input shaped decisions. To view the final Heritage Places Strategy, the What We Heard Reports and other project information, visit edmonton.ca/historicresources.

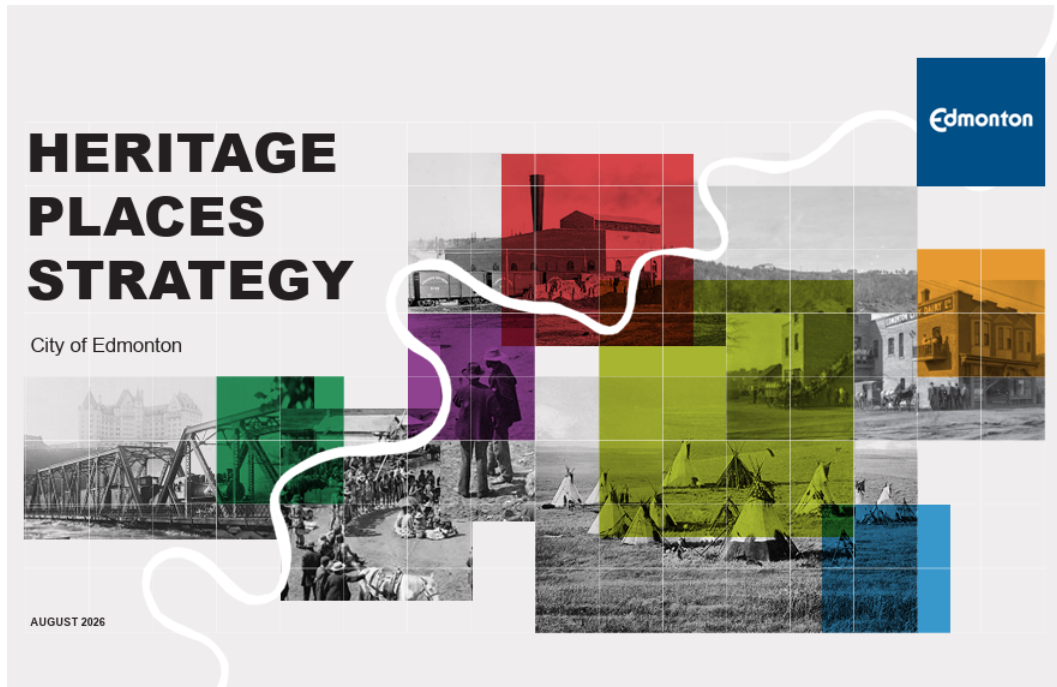
Background

The Heritage Places 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. A new Heritage Places Strategy will:

- Build on the existing heritage program to reflect diverse histories, voices, and places
- Expand the scope of the heritage program to
 - Recognize and advance the contributions of underrepresented people, places, and cultures, including Indigenous Peoples
 - Recognize, protect, and integrate cultural, natural, and built heritage
 - Consider how heritage conservation can contribute to climate resilience objectives

Heritage Places Strategy Overview

The Heritage Places Strategy provides recommendations and guidance for City Council, City Administration, Indigenous partners, heritage organizations, community groups, and residents.



Cover of the final Heritage Places Strategy (summer 2026)

The Heritage Places Strategy includes:

- **Guiding Principles** (six) that express the shared values to guide all elements of the strategy:
 - Inclusive, Integrated, Community-Led, Living and Evolving, Visible and Accessible and Collaborative
- **Pillars** (four) that serve as the updated focus areas with recommended directions:
 - Natural Heritage, Indigenous Heritage, Community and Cultural Heritage and Built Heritage
- **Implementation Priorities** (six) that will advance various directions through specific projects:
 - Indigenous Stewardship and Partnership; Community-led Storytelling; Incentives; City-owned Heritage; Awareness and Promotion; and Heritage Areas

Engagement Overview

The input gathered in Phase 1 (spring and summer 2025) and Phase 2 (fall 2025) informed the development of the draft strategy. In Phase 3 (spring 2026), partners and the public shared their input on the draft strategy. The project team engaged with Indigenous partners, heritage partners, community organizations, representatives from communities whose voices may not have been part of heritage planning before and the public.

The [Public Engagement Spectrum](#) explains the four roles the public can have when they participate in City of Edmonton public engagement activities. From **ADVISE** to **DECIDE**, there is an increasing level of public influence and commitment from the City and the public, as shown below:



Engagement opportunities were at the **ADVISE** or **REFINE** position. Members of the public, who may have a variety of views on heritage matters, were invited to participate at the **ADVISE** level, meaning they were asked to share their feedback and perspectives. The partners, such as heritage and historic organizations, Indigenous partners, developers and community organizations were invited to participate at the **REFINE** level, meaning they were asked to provide more in-depth insights. The input, together with ongoing technical analysis and alignment with policy objectives, informed the drafting and refining of the strategy.

What We Heard Reports

The Phases 1, 2 and 3 What We Heard Reports provide a full recap of the themes, insights heard, and next steps. Executive Summaries are also available and provide a quick snapshot. These reports can be found online at edmonton.ca/historicresources.



[Phase 1 What We Heard Report](#) (Full Version)



[Phase 2 What We Heard Report](#) (Full Version)



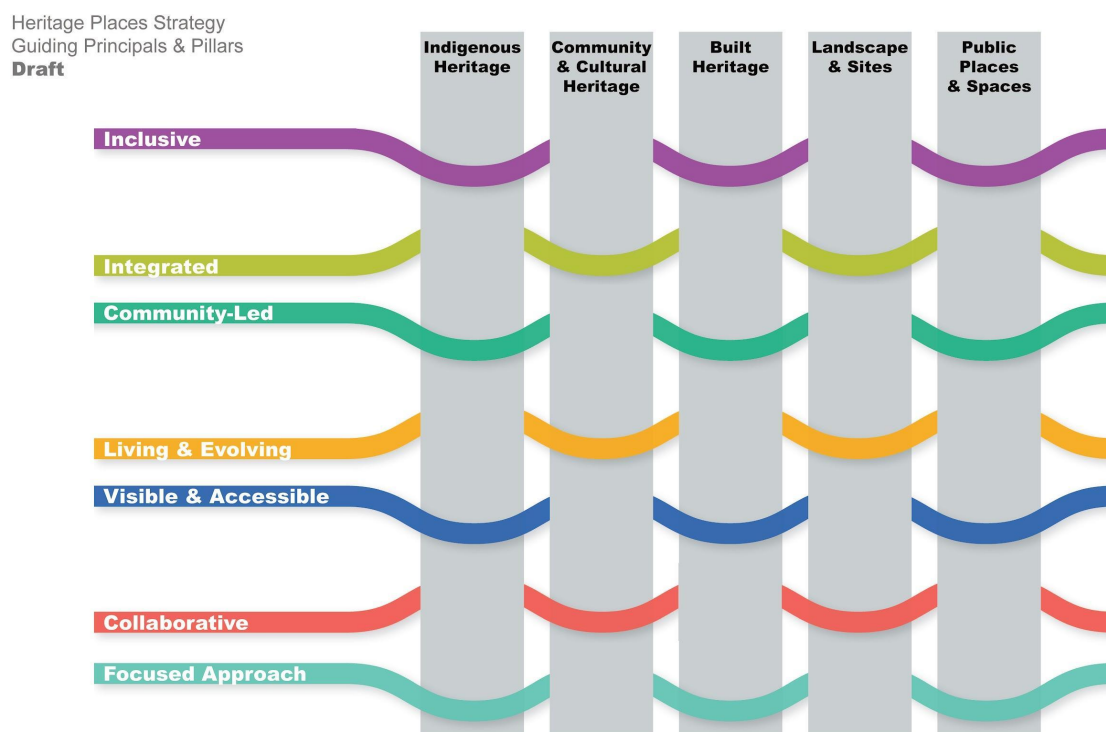
[Phase 3 What We Heard Report](#) (Full Version)

What We Heard and How We Responded

The section below describes how feedback was used from phase to phase to draft the Heritage Places Strategy and how feedback helped to inform refinements to finalize the strategy.

Input from Phase 1 used to inform Phase 2

In Phase 1, people were invited to share their ideas on what to consider for the strategy. Ideas included expanding the definition of heritage, considering inclusivity and accounting for Indigenous heritage among other themes. Based on that feedback, along with research from other municipalities and analysis of Edmonton's policies, the project team drafted Guiding Principles and Pillars that would form the foundation of the new strategy. The draft Guiding Principles and Pillars were shared for input in Phase 2.

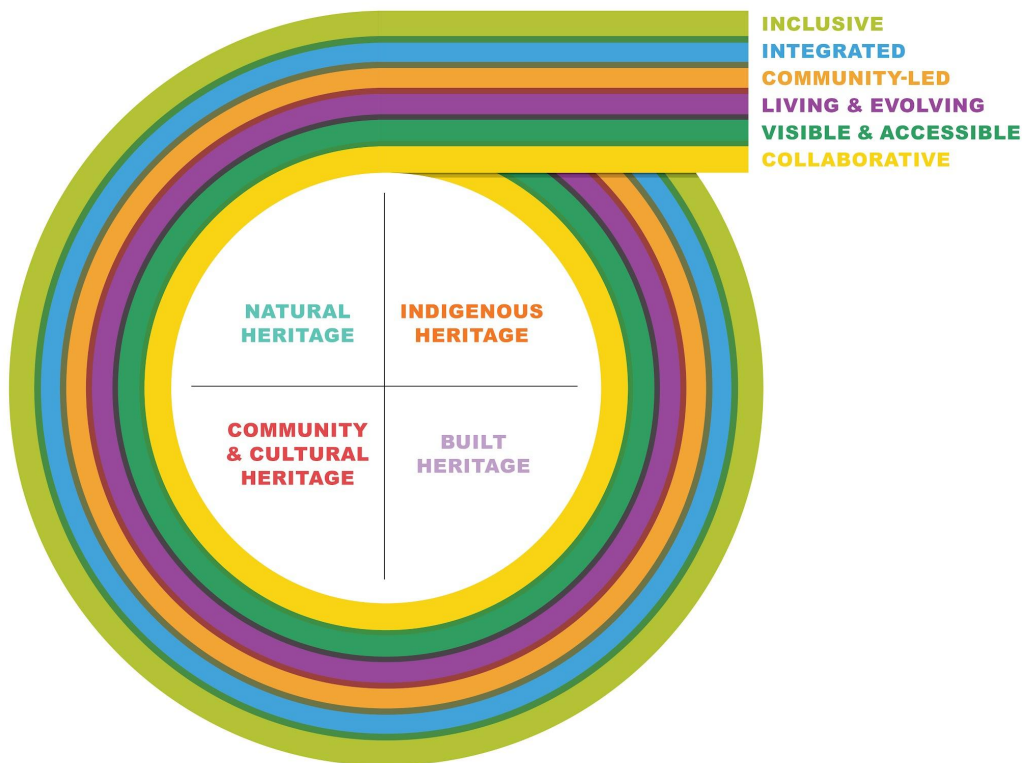


Initial graphic used during Phase 2 engagement showing the draft Guiding Principles and Pillars

Input from Phase 2 used to inform Phase 3

In Phase 2, people were invited to share their thoughts on the draft Guiding Principles and Pillars and suggest possible adjustments. Participants felt that both the draft Guiding Principles and Pillars provided strong guidance for the new strategy, shared suggestions to improve the relationship between them and emphasized the importance of strong language related to recognition, preservation, celebration, and stewardship. Based on that feedback, along with additional research and analysis from other municipalities and Edmonton's existing policies, the project team:

- updated the Guiding Principles from seven principles to six (e.g. the 'Focused Approach' was removed as people felt it sounded limiting or was already understood)
- updated the Pillars by consolidating two Pillars - the "Public Spaces and Places" and "Landscapes and Sites" Pillars - into a new 'Natural Heritage' Pillar
- revised the graphic showing the relationship between the Guiding Principles and Pillars, and
- drafted the strategy document including the recommended directions (under each pillar) and the implementation section



Revised graphic used during Phase 3 engagement showing the updated Guiding Principles and Pillars

The draft Heritage Places Strategy was presented for input in Phase 3.

Input from Phase 3 to inform the final Heritage Places Strategy

In Phase 3, people were invited to share their feedback on the draft strategy to inform possible refinements. Given that participants were able to review the completed strategy, their input was specific to or could be allocated to specific sections of the document (e.g. the Introduction, Background, Guiding Principles, Pillars and Directions and Implementation sections). The following tables summarize the significant changes made to the Heritage Places Strategy, section by section, alongside brief explanations about how engagement feedback may have informed these changes.

1. Introduction	
Revisions to the Heritage Places Strategy	Revision Rationale / What We Heard
Added “Collaboration and Partnership” subsection	Based on the engagement feedback, partners asked for clarity on who will use the strategy.
Updated the “Benefits of Heritage Planning in Edmonton” subsection	Based on the project team’s analysis, specific examples to illustrate the benefits were included.
Expanded the “History of the Heritage Program” subsection and shifted it to come after “Benefits”	This subsection was expanded to include more info on the origins of historic preservation in Edmonton, the community’s interest and the City’s response. Following the April 28, 2026 Council decision to close down the Edmonton Historical Board, details regarding their role and contribution were revised.

2. Background	
Revisions to the Heritage Places Strategy	Revision Rationale / What We Heard
Under “Communication and Engagement Activities”, added content under “Phase 3 Engagement Recap and Highlights”	This section was previously left blank and was completed now that Phase 3 engagement was done.
Under “Research From Other Cities and Review of Current Policies, Guidelines and Legislation”, added more references to City-related guidance	Following input to show how the strategy fits with broader City policies, the following were added: - Edmonton Zoning Bylaw: to show how heritage is considered by the new Zoning Bylaw - Edmonton’s Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Risk Strategy: adopted by Council in April 2026 and another climate-related strategy that overlaps with heritage - The Edmonton Cultural Infrastructure Plan: released in April 2026, it includes guidance around heritage spaces - Beyond Belonging: 2SLGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces Action Plan: includes actions specific to the Heritage Places Strategy and place-based heritage initiatives - Policy C602: Accessibility for People with Disabilities: references that accessible interventions should be encouraged alongside heritage rehabilitation

	- Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy: includes actions related to heritage buildings and interpretation
Changed the subheading “Highlights” to “Connections”	Considering the feedback, this subheading was changed to show how the Heritage Places Strategy “connects” or is integrated with other City priorities.

3. Guiding Principles, Pillars and Directions	
Revisions to the Heritage Places Strategy	Revision Rationale / What We Heard
The “Guiding Principles” section was combined with “Pillars and Directions” into one section	This helped to visually show the relationship between these components.
Under the Pillars and Directions introduction, a new paragraph was added to mention who the directions are intended to guide.	Based on the engagement feedback, partners asked for clarity on who will use the strategy.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES The following Guiding Principles express shared values intended to guide all elements of the strategy and its implementation. Inclusive: Reflect Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+ histories and settler heritage. Integrated: Connect heritage goals with broader City priorities, including climate resilience, housing, and economic development. Community-Led: Support grassroots storytelling, stewardship, and decision-making. Living and Evolving: Embrace heritage as dynamic, connecting past, present, and future. Visible and Accessible: Make heritage visible in public space, infrastructure, and everyday life. Collaborative: Enable meaningful partnerships between communities, the City, and heritage organizations. PILLARS & DIRECTIONS The pillars identify the updated focus areas for the City’s Heritage Places Program. They are informed by engagement feedback, research from other municipalities, and alignment with existing City policies and initiatives. Each pillar includes a brief description followed by a set of directions that guide how the City and its partners will advance heritage conservation, recognition, and stewardship. Each direction is intended to balance the aspirational with the actionable, recommending a way forward while still providing flexibility. The directions are intended to guide anyone involved in promoting heritage in Edmonton. While the City will take a lead, success is contingent on continued collaboration and partnerships. THE HERITAGE PLACES STRATEGY <i>Excerpt from the final Heritage Places Strategy showing the updated section</i>	
Under “Natural Heritage”, adjustments were made to the introduction, directions and the order	Based on the engagement feedback: - The introduction was updated to clarify examples of natural heritage. - Text was revised in some directions, for example: • “Consider... the inclusion of City-owned natural heritage resources in the Inventory and Register of Historic Resources” was revised to

	"1.2 Designate significant natural heritage places as Municipal Historic Resources" to be more explicit • "Encourage the identification and commemoration of a site with layered or overlapping heritage values..." was updated to "1.4 Commemorate a site's layered or overlapping heritage values..." to strengthen the intention - A direction was added related to grants to ensure consistency with the other Pillars: • "1.3 Explore new grants, incentives, or use of the City's Heritage Resources Reserve to identify and commemorate natural heritage." - Some directions were re-ordered to follow a similar pattern with the other Pillars (e.g. inventory additions, designations, grants and incentives).
Under "Indigenous Heritage", directions were revised, added and re-ordered	Based on the engagement feedback: - Three directions were added related to additions to the Inventory and Register as well as grants to ensure consistency with the other Pillars: • "2.4 Consider significant Indigenous heritage places for inclusion, if appropriate, on the Inventory of Historic Resources." • "2.5 Designate significant Indigenous heritage places, if appropriate, as Municipal Historic Resources." • "2.6 Explore new grants, incentives, or use of the City's Heritage Resources Reserve to identify and celebrate Indigenous heritages." - Text was revised in some directions, for example: • "Support appropriate measures to commemorate significant or sacred sites in ways that promote preservation and minimize harm" was updated to "2.8 Work with

	Indigenous communities to determine the appropriateness of making significant or sacred places publicly known, how to celebrate them, and measures to prevent these places from being harmed” to emphasize collaboration - Some directions were re-ordered to follow a similar pattern with the other Pillars (e.g. working with partners, inventory additions, designations, grants and incentives).
Under “Community and Cultural Heritage”, directions were revised, added and re-ordered	References to the Edmonton Historical Board were removed following City Council’s April 28, 2026 decision, as part of a governance review, to close down seven of its civic agencies including the Edmonton Historical Board. As a result, the directions mentioning other partners, such as the Edmonton Heritage Council, were updated and combined. Based on the engagement feedback: - Three directions were added related to additions to the Inventory and Register as well as grants to ensure consistency with the other Pillars • “3.7 Consider significant community and cultural heritage places for inclusion on the Inventory of Historic Resources.” • “3.8 Designate significant community and cultural heritage places as Municipal Historic Resources.” • “3.10 Explore new grants, incentives, or use of the City’s Heritage Resources Reserve fund to identify and commemorate community and cultural heritage places.” - A direction, previously listed under Built Heritage, was shifted here as it complemented the existing directions • “3.9 Ensure that broader histories and stories associated with Municipal Historic Resources are documented and shared.”

	- Another direction was added to promote the Edmonton Heritage Places Endowment Fund • “3.11 Promote awareness of and contribution to the Edmonton Heritage Places Endowment Fund.” - Some directions were re-ordered to follow a similar pattern with the other Pillars (e.g. working with partners, inventory additions, designations, grants and incentives).
Under “Built Heritage”, directions were revised, added and re-ordered	Based on the engagement feedback: - The definitions for the Inventory and Register were shifted to the strategy’s introduction to provide context earlier - Directions related to grants and incentives were updated and consolidated - text was revised in some directions, for example: • “Steward the preservation, management, and celebration of City-owned built heritage resources” was updated to “4.3 Preserve, designate, manage, and celebrate City-owned built heritage resources” to strengthen the intention • “Support work towards geographical, topical, or theme-based studies to expand the Inventory of Historic Resources where appropriate” was updated to “4.4. Complete geographical, topical, or theme-based studies to expand the Inventory of Historic Resources” to be more explicit about this future work • “Investigate areas of historical interest that could be recognized through heritage commemoration tools as opportunities arise and capacity allows” was updated to “4.5 Recognize, identify, conserve, and promote significant heritage areas in Edmonton” for clarity - A direction was added that considered accessibility • “4.8 Ensure that accessibility and

	barrier-free design are considered in rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.” - A direction was added to reference the Heritage Resources Reserve: • “4.14 Explore adjustments to the City’s Heritage Resources Reserve to meet heritage places needs and reflect evolving variables like the construction price index or inflation.” - Some directions were re-ordered to follow a similar pattern with the other Pillars (e.g. working with partners, inventory additions, designations, grants and incentives).
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4. Implementation	
Revisions to the Heritage Places Strategy	Revision Rationale / What We Heard
The “Overview” subsection was updated	Based on the engagement feedback: - The opening paragraph was updated to be more explicit about what the Implementation Priorities will do and how they will help achieve the directions. - The Implementation Priority titles were shortened. They were also labelled with letters (instead of numbers) to avoid confusion with the directions. - Under “Timeline”, the medium and long term horizons were revised to align with the City’s (four year) operating, capital and supplementary budget cycles. - Under “Resourcing and Funding”, a second paragraph was added to elaborate on which tasks (short-term) can be implemented with existing resources and those tasks (medium and long-term) that require additional resources. - A “Policy and Procedure Update” paragraph was added to describe the proposed update of the Council Policy and creation of a new Administrative Procedure. - Under “Monitoring and Reporting”, text was added to

	state when review of the strategy will be targeted i.e. four then eight years after the strategy is adopted.
Updates were made that apply to all the Implementation Priorities (A to F). Specific refinements for each priority are listed below	- Under “Timeline”, tasks were added and refined to improve specificity or intent based on feedback. - “Key Partners” were added based on engagement feedback to signal who will collaborate on each priority. - Under “Pillars Advanced”, directions were added based on the input to list more that could be achieved.
B IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITY: COMMUNITY-LED HERITAGE STORYTELLING PURPOSE The City will support diverse communities in identifying, sharing, and interpreting their place-based heritage stories across different accessible formats. Community-led heritage storytelling strengthens people's sense of place and identity, increases community and cultural visibility, attracts visitors to neighbourhoods, and can benefit the local economy. IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH The City will work with the Edmonton Heritage Council to support community groups, organizations or leagues on an opportunity basis and consider proposals or requests. Support could include (but not be limited to) brainstorming possible initiatives, connecting communities with (external) partners or City departments, providing grants, or letters of support to assist with fundraising. Formats for storytelling and interpretation could be temporary or permanent including digital, physical, or audio-based tools that are accessible and available as widely as possible. Examples could include walking tours, digital mapping, app-based products, podcasts, interactive displays, oral histories, murals, pop-up installations, and multi-language content. This approach will involve coordination across departments and with the Edmonton Heritage Council. Storytelling initiatives could be aligned with other City programs or initiatives such as Indigenous naming, cultural recognition, and land-based interpretation where appropriate. TIMELINES Short-term (0 to 2 years) - Consider place-based opportunities suggested by community and/or cultural groups Medium-term (2 to 4 years) - Collaborate on and support community-led initiatives Long-term (4+ years) / ongoing - Monitor projects started and completed KEY PARTNERS - City of Edmonton, Edmonton Heritage Council, community partners PILLARS ADVANCED Indigenous Heritage 2.1 Work with the Indigenous communities, rights holders, the City of Edmonton's Memorandum of Understanding partners, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers to support Indigenous heritage place initiatives. 2.3 Partner with Indigenous communities to identify places and landscapes of significance and commemorate the tangible and intangible heritage associated with the places. Community and Cultural Heritage 3.1 Collaborate with diverse communities to identify places of community or cultural significance and the heritage associated with them. 3.2 Support place-based, community-led heritage initiatives, including programming, mapping projects, monuments and storytelling. 3.3 Prioritize place-based, community-led heritage initiatives that reflect the histories and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC), immigrant, newcomer, cultural, disability, and other traditionally underrepresented communities. 3.4 Encourage historical and cultural commemoration within neighbourhoods in collaboration with City departments or community partners through physical interpretive infrastructure. 3.5 Work with Edmonton Heritage Council and the Edmonton Arts Council to support place-based heritage commemoration through public art and public history. 3.6 Work with the Edmonton Heritage Council, partners, and other professionals to promote the importance of heritage places, enhance place-based historical research, expand the Inventory and Register of Historic Resources, and to strengthen the City's Heritage Places Program. 3.7 Consider significant community and cultural heritage places for inclusion on the Inventory of Historic Resources. 3.8 Designate significant community and cultural heritage places as Municipal Historic Resources. 3.9 Ensure that broader histories and stories associated with Municipal Historic Resources are documented and shared. 3.10 Explore new grants, incentives, or use of the City's Heritage Resources Reserve fund to identify and commemorate community and cultural heritage places. Built Heritage 4.5 Recognize, identify, conserve, and promote significant heritage areas in Edmonton. <i>Excerpt from the final Heritage Places Strategy showing updates applied to all priorities.</i>	
A. Indigenous Stewardship and Partnership	- Under “Timelines”, tasks were refined to be more specific. Examples include initiate Indigenous heritage places pilot in the short-term and identifying initiatives to collaborate or partner on in the medium and long term.
B. Community-Led Heritage Storytelling	- Under “Implementation Approach”, a reference to the Edmonton Heritage Council was added. - Under “Timelines”, the short-term task “Meet with community or cultural groups to explore place-based opportunities” was updated to “Consider place-based opportunities suggested by community and/or cultural groups”.

C. Incentives	- Under "Timelines", tasks were added and refined to be more specific. Examples include investigating new grants tied to climate adaptation and resilience, using incentives to support economic development and adjusting grants.
D. City-Owned Heritage	- Under "Implementation Approach", considerations for operation and maintenance were added as well as references to communicate and engage with Indigenous partners regarding City-owned heritage sites that may include Indigenous heritage. - Under "Timelines", • "Make recommendations (additions, designations, retention, disposition, etc.)" was shifted from Medium-term to Short-term. • "Follow process and make recommendations on City-owned heritage assets" was shifted from Long-term to Ongoing.
E. Awareness and Promotion	- Under "Timelines", additional tasks were identified related to developing education sessions, meeting with Business Improvement Areas and improving communication to update property owners on the Inventory and Register.
F. Heritage Areas	- Under "Purpose", existing heritage areas were added. - Under "Timeslines", tasks were added and refined to be more specific. Examples include reviewing existing heritage areas and establishing criteria to inform management.

5. Moving Forward, Glossary and Appendix	
Revisions to the Heritage Places Strategy	Revision Rationale / What We Heard
Moving Forward section updated	This section was previously left blank and a paragraph mentioning next steps was added.
Glossary updated	The glossary was refined to include more definitions for terms mentioned throughout the strategy document.

Appendix refined and saved as a complementary document	- Additional examples related to Indigenous heritage were included. - The appendix served as an input to inform the strategy's development. With the strategy complete, the appendix has been saved as a separate document available on edmonton.ca/historicresources.
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Other Revisions

In addition to the specific changes described above, other edits included text or formatting adjustments as well as the addition of images with captions to improve the document's readability and visual appeal.

Closing Thoughts

Some feedback, such as suggestions to use stronger language in the directions to “require” protection or identify specific blocks or portions of neighbourhoods to protect, did not factor into revisions of the strategy. Terms such as “require” are typically used in regulatory tools (as opposed to a strategy document) while identifying specific blocks or portions of neighbourhoods to protect was not part of the project's scope (and would need extensive engagement).

Overall, the revised strategy responds to the multitude of input received during the final engagement phase. The City thanks everyone who contributed their input to help finalize the Heritage Places Strategy. Implementation of the strategy will involve continued relationship-building and engagement with partners and the public. To read the final strategy or learn more visit edmonton.ca/historicresources.