

Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Risk Strategy **What We Heard and Did Report**

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Edmonton

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Land Acknowledgement

The traditional land on which we reside is in Treaty Six Territory and the homeland of the Métis. We are grateful to the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as the Nêhiyaw, Dene, Anishinaabe, Nakota Isga, and Niitsitapi peoples. This area is also the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. Climate action efforts must recognize the interconnected relationships between all living beings and the environment. We recognize the traditional and present-day fire stewardship practices of First Nations peoples and seek to involve and respond to feedback from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit partners in the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy.



Summary

Project Overview

The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Wildfire Risk Strategy is a centralized approach to improve Edmonton's long-term wildfire resilience by aligning with the FireSmart framework to strengthen public education, interagency cooperation, cross-training, emergency planning, vegetation management, development, and legislation. The ultimate goal is to proactively minimize wildfire risk, safeguarding people, property, and the environment.

Engagement Approach

The public engagement approach for the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy was structured in two phases. **Phase 1** focused on understanding public perception of wildfire risk, awareness of wildfire preparedness, and preferences for mitigation activities through surveys, workshops, presentations, and community pop-up events. The input from this phase informed the strategy's development and future implementation. **Phase 2** involved targeted engagement on the draft strategy, gathering feedback from key partners through workshops and presentations to directly refine the final strategy version.

What We Heard

We heard that there is an overall concern of wildfire risk in Edmonton. Feedback highlighted the importance of reaching vulnerable populations, continuing Indigenous engagement, and fostering broader community education and collaboration. Prevention was seen as more cost-effective than emergency response, and strong support was shown for various wildfire resilience strategies in high-risk WUI areas, including site-specific vegetation management plans, land-use planning mechanisms, and targeted public education programs.

What We Did

Throughout this report, you will find “What We Did” callout boxes in red, showing how we took action on what we heard through the engagement opportunities. Here is a summary of how we applied feedback to the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy:

Phase 1: Developing the Strategy

- + We used feedback from community pop-ups, virtual information sessions, Engaged Edmonton, one-on-one meetings, and two surveys on wildfire to learn about public priorities, preparedness, and preferences for how the City

helps to mitigate the risk of wildfire. This helped us outline the first draft of the strategy.

- + The conversations we had at pop-ups and the feedback from surveys helped us to understand what information people were looking for. We used these insights to refine our approach for Phase 2.
- + We heard interest in more wildfire awareness, so we added emergency resources to our Engaged Edmonton page and handed out Canadian Red Cross emergency kit guides at our pop-ups. We also shared our Wildfire Perceptions Survey report with Edmonton Fire Rescue Services and the City's Emergency Operations Centre to support their ongoing public outreach and emergency communications.
- + When we received feedback through engagement that related to other teams at the City, we shared it with the relevant City departments and our cross-departmental committee.

Phase 2: Refining the Draft Strategy

- + Between Phases 1 and 2, we created a draft of the strategy with technical consultants. The goal of Phase 2 was to gather feedback on an overview of this draft strategy. Our Phase 2 workshops and follow-up Engaged Edmonton questionnaire asked participants to review the proposed action plan (covering topics like vegetation management, development rules, and interagency teamwork). We shared this feedback with our technical consultants and worked with them to refine the strategy.
- + We continued to share what we were hearing with different City departments to make sure we are coordinating with each other.

Indigenous Engagement

Indigenous engagement is an important part of this project, including conversations with urban Indigenous agencies and with First Nations and Métis governments, nations, associations and bands. We heard calls for continued engagement, governance opportunities, and relationship building. We have recommended creating a FireSmart Committee with Indigenous representation, and we are working closely with partners to bring traditional fire stewardship and cultural burning practices into Edmonton's developing prescribed burn program.

Project Overview

The *wildland-urban interface (WUI)* - the area where human development meets undeveloped wildland vegetation - is expanding as Canadian municipalities continue to grow. This expansion increases the risk and potential damage caused by wildfire in urban areas.

The **WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy** will be a centralized approach to improving the City's ability to prevent, mitigate, and respond to wildfires in the face of a changing climate. It will promote whole-of-society collaboration to address both immediate and long-term wildfire risks, ensuring sustainable development for the future. edmonton.ca/WildfireStrategy



Important Words and Definitions

Understanding what these terms mean is important when reading this report:

- + **Wildland-urban interface (WUI):** an area where human development (residential, industrial, agricultural) meets or is intermingled with wildland vegetation
- + **Wildland vegetation:** natural vegetation found in undeveloped areas, including trees, shrubs, grasses and other herbaceous (non-woody) vegetation
- + **Vegetation management:** an approach to mitigate wildfire risks by managing wildland fuels, specifically by controlling the amount and type of fuel that can sustain a fire
- + **FireSmart:** a national program to help Canadians increase neighbourhood resilience to wildfire and minimize its negative impacts. [FireSmart Alberta](#) is the provincial implementation of the national FireSmart Canada program.

Project Background

The WUI is expanding as Canadian municipalities continue to grow. This expansion increases the risk and potential damage caused by wildfire in urban areas. The City of Edmonton is known for its large urban parkland and is facing additional wildfire risks due to climate change, which is causing longer drought conditions and rising temperatures. While there are already detailed emergency response plans in place to respond to a wildfire event, these factors, along with increased fuel loads from suppressed wildfires, require a proactive Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Wildfire Risk Strategy to mitigate risk.



The WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy will address the increasing threat of wildfires by leveraging guidance documents from FireSmart Alberta and Natural Resources Canada, which emphasize the need for regular hazard assessments, vegetation management, wildfire resilient land use planning and development standards, strong emergency planning, interagency cooperation, and public outreach.

This long-term strategy will establish the foundation for wildfire risk management and outline key actions to reduce potential physical and economic losses from wildfires, ultimately protecting people, property, and the environment. It will incorporate jurisdictional scans, industry best practices, engagement with residents and Indigenous communities, and the adoption of the seven core disciplines of the FireSmart program. By aligning with the FireSmart framework and addressing the increasing wildfire risks caused by climate change, **implementation of the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy will strengthen Edmonton's readiness to minimize wildfire risk, safeguarding people while protecting the natural and built environments.**

Project Objectives

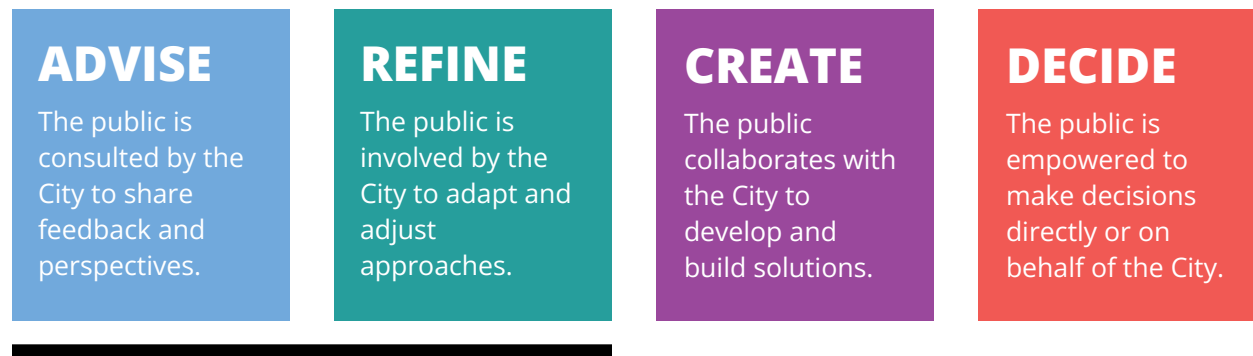
Edmonton's WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy aims to enhance the city's resilience to wildfires in changing climate conditions through the development and implementation of a centralized strategy aimed at improving wildfire prevention, mitigation, and response. The strategy will promote whole-of-society collaboration to address both immediate and long-term wildfire risks, supporting sustainable development for the future. Project objectives include:

1. Performing a jurisdictional scan of wildfire strategies in other urban municipalities to better understand how to approach managing wildfire risk in the WUI.
2. Evaluating neighborhood-level wildfire risk assessment data and developing prioritization criteria for mitigation plans.
3. Engaging with Indigenous communities to incorporate traditional knowledge of managing wildfire risk.
4. Implementing a public engagement strategy to gauge public perception of wildfire risk in Edmonton and educate residents on the upcoming WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy.
5. Developing a comprehensive WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy that integrates the seven FireSmart disciplines and outlines both short-term and long-term action plans with implementation strategies to effectively manage wildfire risk.

Engagement Approach

Engagement Goals

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:



This project falls within the **ADVISE** and **REFINE** levels of the spectrum, as shown above. A combination of City policies and programs, technical requirements, and public and targeted engagement has provided input to help develop the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy and support related City initiatives on wildfire risk management.

How We Engaged

We gathered feedback from the public and interested parties to shape the proposed WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy through two phases of engagement:

- + **Phase 1 (May-September 2025)** increased public awareness and gathered input to draft the strategy.
- + **Phase 2 (November-December 2025)** refined the proposed actions for wildfire risk management, shaping the final strategy.

The table below summarizes engagement tactics used in Phase 1 and Phase 2:

Engagement Tactics	Description	Audience	Format	Statistics
"Meet with the Project Team" Meetings (Phase 1)	A virtual 1:1 opportunity to meet the project team and discuss the proposed strategy direction	Targeted	Online	10
Community Pop-Up Events (Phase 1)	In-person engagement opportunities to discuss the project at celebrations, community recreation centres, and libraries across the City	General Public	In Person	141
Engaged Edmonton Webpage (Phase 1)	A public engagement platform to introduce the project, advertise engagement opportunities, provide additional resources, and seek direct feedback on how to be better prepared for wildfires	General Public	Online	27
Wildfire Perceptions Survey (Phase 1)	An online Survey to gauge public perception and awareness of wildfire risk and available resources	General Public	Online	4,532
Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey (Phase 1)	An online Survey to share thoughts and preferences on potential ways to mitigate wildfire risk	General Public	Online	2,740
Community Info Session (Phase 1)	Virtual Info Session to engage community-serving organizations on the proposed strategy direction	Targeted	Online	3
Industry Info Session (Phase 1)	Virtual Info Session to engage industry, business, and environmental organizations on the proposed strategy direction	Targeted	Online	11

Engagement Tactics	Description	Audience	Format	Statistics
Indigenous Engagement (Phase 1)	Indigenous organizations, non-Indigenous organizations, First Nations and Metis governments, Indigenous people	Targeted	Online and In-Person	219
WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy Workshop (Phase 2)	Targeted partners (BILD Edmonton, EPCOR, River Valley Alliance, Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance (EMBA), North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society, and University of Alberta)	Targeted	In-person	10
Engaged Edmonton Webpage (Phase 2)	A public engagement platform to introduce the proposed actions for Wildfire Risk Management in Edmonton and to gauge public support on the direction of the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy draft overview	General Public	Online	26
Committee Presentations (Phases 1 and 2)	Presentations to the Energy Transition Climate Resilience Committee (ETCRC) and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) focused on sharing project objectives, Phase 1 findings, and timelines. Both Committees were formally invited to review and provide feedback on the draft strategy	Targeted	Online	12 ETCRC members and 12 AAC members

Below is more detail on the engagement tactics:

Online Surveys (Phase 1)

Two online surveys were sent to approximately 25,000 Edmonton Insight Community members, sent to community partners through the communication channels described under “Communications Tactics” section to follow, and promoted through the Engaged Edmonton page. The first survey (Wildfire Perceptions) ran from May 13 to 19, 2025 and aimed to better understand the general public’s perception of wildfire risk in Edmonton and their awareness of wildfire preparedness materials. The second survey (Wildfire Mitigation Tactics) ran from June 23 to July 21, 2025 and was aimed at hearing the general public’s thoughts on potential wildfire mitigation tactics that the City could employ. The detailed results for both online surveys are available in the attached Appendices.

Community Pop-Up Events (Phase 1)

Community pop-up events were held in June and July 2025, engaging approximately 311 people. These events took place at various recreation centers and libraries across the city, as well as at the

Indigenous People's Festival in Borden Park. The pop-ups served as an opportunity to introduce the project, meet community members, and discuss their existing concerns and knowledge gaps regarding wildfire preparedness.

Virtual Meetings and Info Sessions (Phase 1)

Virtual meetings and targeted Info Sessions provided focused time with the project team to discuss the project overview and intended approach, gathering direct feedback that could help inform the first draft of the strategy. This tactic reached an additional 24 people, including various representatives meeting on behalf of an organization.

Indigenous Engagement Events (Phase 1)

In September, two in-person engagement events were held with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit participants, aligning with two other climate-related projects scheduled for 2025/2026. Invitations were extended to 32 First Nations and Métis organizations with ties to the Edmonton region. These events provided an opportunity to discuss wildfire risks to Indigenous communities, learn more about traditional fire stewardship, and discuss opportunities for future collaboration. The first event, a Climate Partners Roundtable, brought together 14 participants from Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations serving Indigenous communities. The second event, a Regional Climate Gathering, saw 16 participants from 8 Indigenous Nations.

Committee Presentations (Phase 2)

In November 2025, the project team provided presentations to the Energy Transition Climate Resilience Committee (ETCRC) and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) focused on sharing project objectives, Phase 1 findings, and timelines. Both committees were formally invited to review and provide feedback on the draft strategy. These presentations served to solicit feedback on making the strategy more inclusive.

WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy Workshop (Phase 2)

In December 2025, an in-person collaborative workshop was held to gather direct, actionable feedback on the proposed actions within the draft WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy. This session provided an opportunity to discuss wildfire risks with key partners from the development industry, business community, and environmental groups, including BILD Edmonton, EPCOR, River Valley Alliance, Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance (EMBA), North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society, and University of Alberta.

Engaged Edmonton Questionnaire (Phase 2)

In December 2025, the City's [Engaged Edmonton](#) platform was used to introduce proposed wildfire risk management actions and gauge public support for the draft WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy. This Phase 2 engagement was conducted at the ADVISE level of the [City's Public Engagement Spectrum](#), meaning public feedback will be considered as the project team finalizes the strategy for its presentation in April 2026 to the Community and Public Services Committee (CPSC) .

WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy Workshop

On December 8, 2025, a targeted workshop was held to share the key Phase 1 engagement results and review the draft WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy. Representatives from 33 organizations were invited, covering 9 different sectors. We presented the proposed strategy's action plans to the attendees, which were organized under four pillars of wildfire risk management: Reduce, Educate, Respond, and Coordinate. Following the presentation, feedback was gathered through an interactive activity at three stations: Vegetation Management, Legislation and Development, and Interagency Cooperation, each representing distinct FireSmart disciplines. To provide feedback on other actions related to the remaining three FireSmart disciplines (Emergency Planning, Cross-Training, and Education), participants were invited to submit additional online comments through the Engaged Edmonton website until December 22, 2025.

Communication Tactics

Communications Tactics	Description	Audience	Format	Statistics
Email to organizations	Emails sent directly to organizations in Edmonton to advertise engagement opportunities	Targeted Public	Online	367 organizations contacted
Social Media	Advertising of survey opportunities using the City's social media channels	General Public	Online	609 engagements with social media posts
Email to the Edmonton Insight Community	The Edmonton Insight Community was contacted, inviting them to participate in the online survey	Targeted Public	Online	Approx. 25,000 participants invited to engage

Communications Tactics	Description	Audience	Format	Statistics
Email to Project Update Distribution List	Advertising of Phase 2 engagement opportunities to those who signed up for project updates in Phase 1	Targeted Public	Online	1,124 people contacted

Who We Engaged

This project involved engagement with the general public, Indigenous partners and Nations, as well as targeted community and industry organizations:

- + **General public engagement** involved the general public and community partners.
- + **Indigenous engagement** involved the urban Indigenous community, Indigenous organizations or non-Indigenous organizations serving Indigenous communities, and 32 First Nations and Métis organizations with ties to the Edmonton region.
- + **Targeted engagement** involved partners from the development industry, business community, utility companies, environment and conservation groups, disability organizations, social support organizations, and seniors' organizations.

A full list of participating organizations can be found in the appendix.

What We Asked

While different audiences were reached through various engagement tactics, the questions we asked consistently focused on participants' current understanding of wildfire risk, preparedness actions they may be taking, and how to continue to work together in building wildfire resilience. A full list of the wildfire survey questions that were asked can be found in the What We Heard section.

What we asked about	Why we asked it	Where we asked it
Concerns about wildfire risk, steps taken to reduce risk, and what is needed to be better prepared	To understand the general public's current thoughts and concerns, answer questions about the project, distribute educational and emergency preparedness printed materials, and understand what is needed for improved preparedness	Community Pop-Up Events and Engaged Edmonton Webpage

What we asked about	Why we asked it	Where we asked it
How can Indigenous ways of knowing guide solutions and how can the City support Indigenous partners in traditional fire stewardship and wildfire support?	To learn more about traditional fire stewardship approaches, stories of wildfire in Indigenous communities, and potential ways to knowledge share and collaborate in building wildfire resilience in Edmonton.	Climate Partners Roundtable and Regional Climate Gathering Indigenous Engagement Events
Inclusivity in wildfire resilience, barriers faced by communities, and preferred engagement and communications	To discuss how to best include and support community-serving organizations in building wildfire resilience in Edmonton.	Community Info Session
Industry priorities in wildfire resilience, innovation in wildfire resilience, and minimizing environmental impacts of wildfire management practices	To gather insights on current wildfire resilience initiatives by industry, business, and environmental organizations, identify areas for improvement, and discuss potential approaches for the strategy draft.	Industry Info Session
Familiarity with programs, projects, and initiatives at the City on wildfire preparedness	To understand the current reach of public communications and educational tools as they relate to wildfire preparedness (the 2025 prescribed fire event, the City of Edmonton's Wildfire Prevention and Education website, etc.)	Wildfire Perceptions Survey
Familiarity with FireSmart and wildfire resilience practices		Wildfire Perceptions and Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Surveys
Educational tools to improve wildfire preparedness knowledge	To learn which educational tools the public prefers to support strategy development and implementation.	Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey
Wildfire risk factors	To explore public opinion on what most contributes to wildfire risk to inform the developing strategy.	Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey
Agreement with proposed vegetation management approaches	To assess agreement with various methods for managing vegetation on public and private lands.	Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey
Importance of fire-resistant materials	To better understand preferences and personal choices for wildfire-resilient land use and development standards in high risk WUI areas.	Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey
Barriers to implementing fire-resilient practices		Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey
Perspectives on implementing wildfire-resilient landscaping in WUI areas		Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey

What we asked about	Why we asked it	Where we asked it
Level of support for overall direction of draft strategy	To gauge public sentiment on an overview of the first full strategy draft for further refinement.	Engaged Edmonton Questionnaire
Feedback on vegetation management, interagency cooperation, legislation, and development draft action plans	To understand which parts of the plan work well and which parts need revision	Phase 2 Workshop

What We Heard and Did: Phase 1

Review of Past Engagement

Previous public engagement regarding wildfire risk management in Edmonton was limited, which highlighted the need for a comprehensive public engagement plan to develop and implement the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy. Despite limited prior engagement, valuable insights from various sources were identified that were used to inform the project.

A scientific paper from 2007 engaged 436 households residing in the WUI in Edmonton via mail to gauge support for various wildfire mitigation tactics. It was found that stronger public education, vegetation thinning in the river valley, and restricting where homes can be built garnered the highest support¹. Approximately 56.3% of respondents supported mandatory removal of vegetation on private property, and only 44.7% of respondents supported prescribed burning as a vegetation management tool at this time.

In 2016, a stakeholder sub-group workshop on climate change adaptation developed a climate hazard rating matrix. This internal sub-group included emergency and project management professionals. The matrix identified interface fires as having a high probability of occurrence with a medium potential impact in Edmonton over the next five years². The reasoning for this assessment was based on the combination of extensive trees and parkland in the city and the potential for sustained drought conditions, which could lead to a significant fire event. The workshop mentioned that as of 2016, Edmonton typically experienced over 300 grass and brush fires annually.

¹ McGee, T. K. (2007). Urban residents' approval of management measures to mitigate wildland-urban interface fire risks in Edmonton, Canada. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 82(4), 247–256.

² City of Edmonton. (2016). Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan: Climate Hazard Assessment [CR_4527 Attachment 1]. Retrieved from <https://pub-edmonton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=17910>

Participants in the Climate Resilience Planning and Development Action Plan phase 2 engagement (summer 2024) from industry and community groups also indicated that wildfire mitigation should be implemented to reduce the potential effects of wildfire in Edmonton. These participants supported zoning bylaw regulations in areas at the highest risk for wildfires³. However, they shared concerns about potential higher costs when using fire-resistant building materials with support for only using them in high-risk areas. Stronger support was expressed for vegetation management, including more frequent grass mowing and watering dry vegetation.

What We Did

- + We structured our two online surveys to build off of the survey data collected in 2007 and address existing gaps in public opinion.
- + We built off of the Climate Resilience Planning and Development Action Plan phase 2 engagement data when developing our Phase 2 Workshop activities to dive deeper into the proposed draft action plans for vegetation management, interagency cooperation, legislation, and development.

Community Pop-Ups and Meet the Project Team Meetings

Feedback received during community pop-up intercepts and “meet with the project team” meetings was compiled and analyzed to reveal key themes for consideration in the strategy draft development. The key themes and specific feedback are described as follows:

Wildfire Risk and Mitigation

- + **Hazard Reduction:** There was an emphasis on removing deadfall and built up fuels in the river valley and ravine system, as well as a concern about overall wildfire risk in the city. This feedback highlighted the importance of managing urban-wildland interfaces.
- + **Technology and Building Practices:** Participants were interested in how technology and building codes can be used to mitigate wildfire risk. This could include fire-resistant wrapping technology, landscaping standards, and fire-resistant materials used for infrastructure and buildings. There was also a desire for incentives for retrofits on existing properties.

³ City of Edmonton. (2024). *CRPD Action Plan – What We Heard Part 2 + Appendix*. City of Edmonton. <https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/CRPD-Action-Plan-What-We-Heard-Report-Part-2.pdf>

- + **Public Awareness and Education:** There were calls for increased awareness and education on wildfire risk, particularly for young people and within school curricula. There was an interest in making risk maps publicly available and in providing FireSmart information to the general public.

Community Engagement and Inclusivity

- + **Reaching Vulnerable Populations:** A common concern was the need to reach and protect vulnerable populations, including unhoused populations, seniors, and people with disabilities. This included considering accessibility needs during evacuation drills and ensuring that messaging and educational materials are accessible to all.
- + **Indigenous Engagement:** There was strong support for the continued inclusion of Indigenous-led work in climate action. The translation of resources into Indigenous languages and support for Indigenous communities to complete their own hazard assessments were also highlighted.
- + **Community Collaboration:** The feedback pointed to the need for broader collaboration, mentioning cooperation with neighboring municipalities, community leagues, businesses, and utility partners.

Collaborative Action and Policy

- + **Policy and Planning:** The feedback suggested a need for the City to integrate wildfire resilience into its regulatory mechanisms, such as land use plans. There was also a desire to have a clearer methodology for risk assessments and a framework with performance indicators to monitor long-term success.
- + **Prevention over Response:** Prevention is more cost-effective than emergency response and to continue the effort to proactively mitigate wildfire risk.
- + **Partnerships:** We heard about the importance of formal and informal partnerships with various organizations to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.



A community pop-up booth at a recreation centre discussing the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy project during Phase 1 engagement in July 2025.

What We Did

- + Insights from this public feedback helped inform the direction and messaging of the first strategy draft and the refinement of Phase 2 engagement materials.
- + Calls for increased wildfire awareness and education prompted us to include more online resources linked on our project website.
- + Specific feedback was shared with representatives from various departments to help inform their work.

Engaged Edmonton

An online Engaged Edmonton page was created to facilitate public engagement from May to July 2025. Participants were invited to share what they felt was needed to improve wildfire resilience through the use of a virtual sticky note tool, with the following themes and suggestions emerging:

Enhancing Wildfire Emergency Planning

- + **Emergency Response Considerations:** Feedback included improving road design and traffic flows in key routes, expediting the completion of planned fire stations, ensuring first responders have appropriate personal protective equipment when responding to wildfires, and ensuring that adequate resources and equipment are staged throughout the city to facilitate quick response times.

- + **Emergency Communications:** A suggestion was made to implement opt-in text notification systems to alert the public about wildfires in the city and improve upon existing early warning systems.

Public Education Considerations

- + **Awareness Campaigns:** Broadly share FireSmart materials through mail in addition to online sources, consider developing translated educational materials for beginning or English as a Second Language (ESL) users, and incorporate visitors to Edmonton who may not live here on a long-term basis but who still might recreate in wildland areas.
- + **Personal Preparedness:** Suggestions included creating detailed instructions on how to create a personal “bug out” or evacuation bag, advisories on what to have at home if instructions were to shelter in place during an emergency, and sharing evacuation route information to those who live in high-risk wildfire areas.

Proactive Mitigation Strategies

- + **Fuel Reductions:** A common suggestion was to focus on reducing the risk of built up fuel (accumulated flammable vegetation) in natural areas and LRT routes across the city, including the need to keep brush and tall grasses mowed in key areas. Providing guidance on the installation of site-appropriate vegetation was suggested to build wildfire resilience and improve ecological function as a co-benefit. Using prescribed burns in construction sites and/or large areas with dry grass and weeds was suggested to reduce wildfire risk.
- + **Incentives and Grants:** Offering incentives such as grants to businesses and homeowners for wildfire mitigation measures and retrofits was suggested.
- + **Land Use and Development:** It was suggested to implement a 100-meter setback for new developments in the river valley and ravine system and install fire breaks (areas where vegetation and/or other flammable materials are removed or modified) along fence lines.
- + **Collaboration:** It was suggested to continue to seek expert advice from wildland fire professionals and Indigenous knowledge keepers as the strategy develops.

What We Did

- + The feedback received was analyzed and assessed to determine themes and potential gaps in our current approach for refinement of the first strategy draft.

Virtual Info Sessions

Two virtual Info Sessions were held on August 13 and 20, 2025. The first session on August 13 engaged industry, business, and environmental organizations, while the second on August 20 focused on community-serving organizations. Both sessions aimed to gather direct feedback on the project overview and intended direction to inform the strategy's development.

Understanding and Assessing Wildfire Risk

- + **Hazard Identification:** Participants asked for objective data on the local wildfire risk relative to other parts of the country, as well as exact locations of the WUI in Edmonton.
- + **Contributing Risk Factors:** Participants said that the influence of the urban heat island should be recognized and included in fire risk modeling, particularly given its observed worsening trend and link to poor tree health. Concern was also raised that the natural shift toward more spruce trees in the river valley and ravines is increasing the overall wildfire risk.

Prevention and Mitigation Strategies

- + **Vegetation and Fuel Management:** Participants expressed that prevention is the top priority, particularly through adjusted forest management to remove built up debris and brush. We heard that vegetation health is key. Trees need to be well-hydrated to reduce flammability, which can be influenced by improved stormwater storage practices. The City could promote climate-resilient vegetation to in turn improve wildfire resilience.
- + **Building and Property Safety:** Participants stressed the need for better wildfire prevention measures, which included updating building standards with fire-resilient materials, replacing wooden power poles with fibreglass poles, locking dumpsters in back alleys, and implementing tighter inspection timeframes for vacant buildings and/or those in construction to minimize the fire risk.

Public Engagement and Support for Vulnerable Groups

- + **Tailored Wildfire Education:** It was communicated that newcomers to Edmonton may need tailored wildfire education, including translated FireSmart printed materials into various languages.
- + **Seniors Support:** Seniors were identified as a specific vulnerable population, as they often live in older, potentially non-FireSmart homes in established neighborhoods and require

specific attention to wildfire smoke protection and evacuation support. Printed materials, in-person events, or telephone outreach may be more successful than digital-only methods.

- + **Community-Serving Organizations:** Community-serving organizations, many of which use old buildings, need financial support to make their facilities more resilient to extreme events like wildfire smoke or heat. It was suggested that these centres could be utilized as climate resilient public spaces, or “hubs”, for people to utilize during extreme events or wildfire evacuations.

What We Did

- + The feedback received was analyzed and assessed to determine recurring or new themes and potential gaps in our current approach for refinement of the first strategy draft.
- + Specific recommended actions in the strategy were adjusted to reflect the suggestions raised during the info sessions, helping to prioritize certain wildfire risk reduction and education activities for implementation work.

Indigenous Engagement

An overview of what we heard at two Indigenous engagement events is provided in this section. A separate "What We Heard Report" for Indigenous Engagement is scheduled for release in late 2026 which will include more detailed findings. This report will outline the feedback, insights, and perspectives gathered through the Indigenous engagement process for these three climate projects.

Climate Partners Roundtable

The Climate Partners Roundtable, hosted by the City of Edmonton on September 5, 2025, brought together Indigenous organizations and those working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to discuss the City's climate and environment projects, including the Climate Resilience Planning and Development Action Plan, Climate Strategies Action Plan Update, and WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy.

Participants emphasized the importance of considering “all relations,” taking a holistic perspective on climate change, building public buy-in for climate action with an equity lens, and prioritizing regeneration over mere sustainability. Discussions also covered improving food security, protecting

natural areas, Edmonton's leadership responsibilities in climate action, the benefits of Indigenous-led solutions, and strategies for preventing and mitigating wildfires, as well as emergency response planning. The session highlighted the interconnectedness of people and the environment, the need for collaboration, and the desire for continued engagement with the City on these crucial topics.

Regional Climate Gathering

The Regional Climate Gathering, hosted by the City of Edmonton on September 15, 2025, brought together representatives from First Nations and Métis organizations to discuss the impacts of climate change, traditional knowledge, and climate action, focusing on sustainable communities, ecological preservation, and wildfire management. Participants shared concerns about development, food security, and the need for greater Indigenous involvement, emphasizing the importance of education, formalized partnerships, and respecting Mother Earth for future generations.



Roundtable introductions at the Regional Climate Gathering event in September, 2025.

What We Did

- + We recognized the importance of ongoing engagement with Indigenous partners, with a recommendation for the creation of a FireSmart Committee with Indigenous representation to advise on annual implementation planning.
- + We prioritized recommendations for ongoing collaboration with Indigenous partners on the developing prescribed burn program to incorporate cultural burning practices and traditional fire stewardship in Edmonton.

Wildfire Perceptions Survey

The survey was shared with the Edmonton Insight Community from **May 13 to 19, 2025** as one of three topics in a City Pulse survey, and also shared on the City's website. The other topics were about climate resilient homes and an infill housing research opportunity. It received **4,532 complete responses** (4,466 from Edmonton Insight Community who responded to the May 2025 email and 66 through the survey webpage).

Survey Results

- + **Wildfire Concern:** 7 in 10 respondents are concerned about the risk of a wildfire in Edmonton (70%), with women respondents demonstrating more concern than men, and 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents or those with a disability demonstrating more concern than other identity groups.
- + **Wildfire Likelihood:** Opinions are mixed on how likely specific neighbourhoods might be impacted by a wildfire in the next five years. Women respondents are more likely to believe a wildfire could impact their neighbourhood compared to men, and racialized respondents are less likely to think their neighbourhood could be impacted.
- + **Preparedness for Evacuation:** Respondents overall are unprepared for a wildfire evacuation. Just 3 in 10 (29%) said they are prepared. Older respondents feel more prepared for wildfire evacuation than younger age groups. Respondents are unlikely to have a 72-hour emergency kit, with only 1 in 4 respondents saying that they have a kit (25%), and older respondents and men respondents being more likely to own a kit.
- + **Wildfire Prevention Measures:** Most respondents practice some wildfire prevention measures on their property, and respondents living in condominiums feel they have fewer

measures they can take. There are a variety of demographic groups in the survey respondents who are less likely to practice wildfire prevention measures, detailed more in the full report.

- + **Awareness of Programs:** Survey respondents showed low awareness of all five wildfire preparedness related programs they were asked about (2025 prescribed fire, WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy, Climate Resilience Planning and Development Action Plan, the City's wildfire prevention and education website, and FireSmart Alberta).
- + **Other Feedback:** Respondents frequently wrote about vegetation management concerns, interest in education, perceived higher-risk regions, and concerns about unregulated fires or fires related to people experiencing homelessness. There were also comments about building materials, development trends, a perception that the wildfire risk is low in Edmonton, evacuation concerns particularly for seniors and people with disabilities, concern about wildfire smoke, and other topics.
- + Some are looking for more information on how to be better prepared, especially those in apartments and condominiums who feel that most mitigation measures do not apply to them.
- + There is interest in more measures to regulate or change behaviours on fire pits and cigarette disposal. The most common concerns are about deadfall and unregulated fires, especially in the River Valley.

What We Did

- + After learning that respondents were looking for emergency kit information, we shared Canadian Red Cross emergency kit handouts at all public pop-up events and posted emergency kit resources on the project's Engaged Edmonton page.
- + We shared the results with Edmonton Fire Rescue Services and the Emergency Operations Centre to help with outreach and communications efforts on wildfires.
- + We learned more about the different levels of concern and interest in communications and outreach from different groups, helping us to fine-tune our engagement efforts for Phases 1 and 2.

The complete results of the **May 2025 Wildfire Perceptions Survey** can be found in the report linked at edmonton.ca/WildfireStrategy or by contacting WildfireStrategy@edmonton.ca.

Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey

Through a survey, Edmontonians had an opportunity to share their thoughts on ways to mitigate wildfire risk, including vegetation management, public education, and land-use planning. The survey received **2,740 complete responses** from **June 23 to July 21, 2025** and was shared with

- + The Edmonton Insight Community,
- + Edmontonians at large through various communication channels and in-person pop-up opportunities in all five regions of Edmonton, and
- + Community partners by email distribution to share with their networks.

Survey Results

- + **Public Education:** When thinking about wildfire preparedness education opportunities, respondents have more interest in resources than in workshops/presentations, with both having stronger interest in online options compared to in-person options. Some groups are less likely to be familiar with FireSmart: younger people, lower income families, those in central Edmonton, renters, those new to Edmonton, and those with high school educations or less. Respondents who are younger, identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, or identify with a disability are most likely to be interested in online educational opportunities for this topic compared to other demographic groups.
- + **Wildfire Risk and Resilience:** Human activity is seen as the biggest contributor to wildfire risk, indicated by 9 in 10 respondents (89%). They also viewed weather/climate (65%) and vegetation/fuel build up on public lands (62%) as major contributors. In written feedback through several questions, they emphasized human activity and vegetation management in wildfire risk. Respondents shared strong agreement with all of the wildfire resilience strategies goals, especially reducing wildfire risk to people and property.
- + **Vegetation Management Approaches to Wildfire Resilience:** Respondents agree with all the suggested vegetation management approaches in key areas, especially reducing debris on public lands and creating strategic fire breaks. They also agree with using fire-resistant tree and shrub species on public and private lands in key areas.
- + **Land-Use and Development Approaches to Wildfire Resilience:** Respondents agree with wildfire-resilient development approaches and consider cost an important factor. They indicated that all properties in WUI areas should implement wildfire-resilient landscaping. Three-quarters (76%) of those who had indicated that cost is preventing them from implementing wildfire-resilient practices at home agreed with providing incentives to help

homeowners in WUI areas use fire-resistant building materials. Of those who indicated cost is preventing them from implementing wildfire-resilient practices at home, cost is highly likely to impact their decision to use fire-resistant materials, implement wildfire-resilient building design, and implement wildfire resilient landscaping. While women are more likely to feel it is important that their home has fire-resistant building materials, respondents who are racialized or whose primary language is not English are less likely to feel it is important, compared to other demographic groups.

- + **Other Feedback:** Respondents frequently said the City should prioritize vegetation management of City-owned land, especially areas undergoing naturalization and others with significant deadfall accumulation. They want the City to enforce or regulate high-risk human activities relating to wildfire. Respondents are concerned about financial implications and hope that there will be incentives or grants to support wildfire resilience. Many feel that development trends, like high-density housing, combustible building materials, and restrictive covenants requiring wood shake roofing, are increasing the risk of wildfire in Edmonton.

What We Did

- + These survey results were used to help shape the recommended actions in the strategy as they relate to the seven FireSmart disciplines.
- + The survey results were shared with our cross-departmental project teams to help inform their ongoing work.

The complete results of the **July 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey** can be found in the **Appendix** at edmonton.ca/WildfireStrategy.

What We Heard and Did: Phase 2

Engaged Edmonton Questionnaire

Through a short questionnaire, Edmontonians had an opportunity to share how much they support the direction of the draft Strategy and optionally share any additional thoughts using an open comment box. The questionnaire was answered by 26 respondents and it ran from December 8-22.

Overall, 54% of respondents strongly agreed with the draft Strategy direction, along with 27% of respondents somewhat supporting the direction, for a total of 81% support overall. Conversely, 8% somewhat opposed the direction, 8% strongly opposed the direction, and 4% of respondents remained neutral.

Comments included in the optional open text box included the following feedback:

- + **Deadfall Removal:** Feedback suggests the buildup of deadfall (e.g. fallen trees and branches) in the river valley could be treated as the highest priority and most immediate risk.
- + **Fire Break Strategy:** Concerns were raised regarding habitat loss; rather than large-scale clearing, the City could look at expanding existing path widths primarily for emergency access.
- + **Encampments:** To address unintentional fires in encampments, the City could implement an enforcement or educational component roving through the Urban Forest.
- + **Ecological Considerations:** Vegetation management activities could be scheduled outside of breeding bird season, and a qualified biologist could assess thinning prescriptions to balance habitat needs.
- + **Species-Specific Strategy:** Public education could highlight how native species like aspen act as "living fire breaks," and the City could model future planting after similar projects in Whitehorse.
- + **Naturalization:** The City's existing naturalization program could be more closely integrated with the wildfire strategy.
- + **Resource Delivery:** To mirror the success of the waste management rollout, the City could mail physical FireSmart checklists or ignition zone posters to all residents.
- + **Preparedness Gaps:** Education efforts could specifically target urban residents who may not feel personally at risk or prepared for an evacuation.
- + **Indigenous Stewardship:** The strategy could continue to emphasize and expand on Indigenous fire stewardship and cultural burns where safe.
- + **Developer Engagement:** The City could work more closely with developers to encourage FireSmart landscape plans during the initial design phases, rather than focusing solely on homeowners.

What We Did

- + The survey results were used to help shape the recommended actions in the strategy as they relate to the seven FireSmart disciplines.
- + The survey results were shared with our cross-departmental project teams to help inform their ongoing work.
- + We shared the feedback received with our consulting teams to help refine the first draft of the strategy.

WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy Workshop

The feedback collected from the workshop's Streetlight Activity has been organized into four key themes.

+ **Measurement, Data, and Financials**

Feedback in this theme focused on assessing and managing risk, quantifying the benefits of implementing FireSmart actions, and addressing the financial concerns of property owners.

- + **Quantify WUI Risks:** Start gathering necessary data such as number of wildland fires and their behavior in urban areas, challenges faced, and fuel levels on the ground to understand and communicate the level of wildfire risk in the WUI.
- + **Manage Risk Data:** Prioritize the development of high-resolution wildfire risk maps to share with external parties while emphasizing the benefits of mitigation to address potential concerns regarding insurance costs and property value.
- + **Risk Mitigation Priority:** Prioritize removing tree crowns (top portion of a tree) in deadfall while leaving the trunks, as this is considered a major fire risk that should be addressed now.
- + **Quantify Benefits:** Establish a homeowner wildfire risk assessment program. Develop a strategy to communicate and quantify the pre- and post-benefits of FireSmart measures, specifically demonstrating their impact on reducing homeowner insurance premiums.

- + **Explore Funding:** Communicate available provincial and federal funding opportunities and incentives for both residential and commercial properties.

+ **Implementation Strategy and Governance**

Feedback in this theme addressed the high-level planning, structural organization, and resource allocation for the implementation of the proposed actions.

- + **Accelerate/Decelerate Timelines:** Ensure action timelines reflect early progress based on importance and ensure legislative planning is realistic and foundational.
- + **Integrate Resourcing:** Explicitly tie resourcing for vegetation ground-truthing into the new City Trail Strategy work to leverage available volunteers and provide adequate field-based resources.
- + **De-Risk High-Impact Actions:** Edit the Prescribed Burn action to focus first on a Pilot Program, which will assess the challenges such as resources constraints, risk and public perception.
- + **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Collaborate with EPCOR on the use of stormwater ponds for two purposes: firefighting and drought mitigation.

+ **Policy, Regulation, and Environmental Impact**

Feedback in this theme addressed the legislative framework and the necessity of harmonizing mitigation efforts with existing environmental and naturalization policies.

- + **Clarify Regulation:** Incorporate the rationale for regulating under the Zoning Bylaw instead of the River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (RVARP)
- + **Mitigate Environmental Impact:** Commit to using vegetation treatment methods that minimize habitat fragmentation and acknowledge the sensitivity of pruning in the River Valley.
- + **Address Policy Conflict:** Clarify how the Grassland Fuel Treatment Program will be harmonized with existing naturalization trends in new developments and landscape design requirements.

+ **Engagement Gap**

Feedback in this theme focused on securing buy-in and collaboration from key external, and community partners.

- + **Engage Critical External Partners:** Explicitly list essential external partners, such as builders, developers, utility service providers, and key neighbors (e.g., Fort Sask, Devon, Leduc, Enoch), as required members of the FireSmart Committee and essential partners for engagement.
- + **Communicate Ongoing Opportunities:** Successful implementation will necessitate continuous, collaborative, and dynamic engagement with residents for education and awareness, and with implementation partners. Further opportunities for engagement should be explored and identified throughout implementation work.



Participants working through a streetlight activity to provide direct feedback on several draft strategy action plans during the Phase 2 Workshop in December, 2025.

What We Did

- + We integrated this feedback into our ongoing coordination between City departments to ensure the project maintained a collaborative and comprehensive approach through development.
- + We shared the feedback received with our consulting teams to help refine the first draft of the Strategy.

Committee Presentations

To ensure a more inclusive strategy, the project team delivered project update presentations to the Energy Transition Climate Resilience Committee (ETCRC) and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) in November 2025. The feedback received during these presentations is summarized below:

1. Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

- + Explore and adjust engagement strategies to address low turnout from community groups, such as focused, dedicated one-on-one outreach and advanced notifications.
- + Develop and implement non-audio emergency alert systems such as AlertUS to ensure critical information reaches Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deaf-blind communities.
- + Integrate visual communication methods, such as an emergency notification app and visually accessible materials, into the overall emergency communication plan, including for wildfire evacuation.
- + Secure and provide sign language interpreters for all public education and community engagement events.
- + Consider designing written materials for evacuation routes and centres using simpler language, visual elements, very short text, and larger fonts to accommodate people with cognitive disabilities, illiteracy, or non-English speakers.
- + Explore the creation and distribution of public education materials in an audiobook or recorded format.
- + Investigate how new building codes and new development plans incorporate accessibility requirements to mitigate fire risk for people with disabilities.
- + Consider incorporating disaster recovery planning and accessibility into future iterations of the Wildfire Risk Strategy.

2. Energy Transition Climate Resilience Committee (ETCRC)

- + Develop and implement a city-led, standardized mechanism for formally auditing neighborhood fire risk (risk mitigation). This should generate clear, actionable feedback and recommendations for fire prevention, potentially helping residents and neighborhoods reduce insurance premiums.

- + Assess the long-term viability of current native tree species under a shifting climate. This will help introduce climate-resilient species, mitigating the risk of tree die-off and increased ground fuel loads.
- + Analyze and propose strategies for combining existing retrofit grants/initiatives to create streamlined, multi-source funding packages specifically for wildfire risk mitigation. This will mandate the building of more resilient homes and structures to better withstand climate-related risks, including wildfire.
- + Conduct a comprehensive analysis to determine the projected scale of impact (e.g., lives saved, property protected) and the associated costs of the project. This will help effectively communicate the project's value and justify the required investment to Council.

What We Did

- + We shared the feedback we received from the Accessibility Advisory Committee with Edmonton Fire Rescue Services for consideration in emergency planning for all emergency types.
- + We shared the feedback received with our consulting teams to help refine the first draft of the strategy.

Next Steps

How Input Will Be Used

The input collected during both public engagement phases will be used to create and refine the WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy, including the recommended actions that will form the subsequent implementation work.

Appendices

The following Appendix list can be found in the Appendices document:

- **Appendix 1:** Wildfire Perceptions Survey Results
- **Appendix 2:** Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey Results
- **Appendix 3:** Engagement List of Participants