

What We Heard

Child-friendly Opportunities in the Civic Precinct

December 2018

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Edmonton

What We Heard

Child-friendly Opportunities in the Civic Precinct

Project/Initiative Background

The City of Edmonton has a vision to create a vibrant, connected, safe, sustainable and welcoming city for all citizens. Edmonton recognizes that a city that supports children is better for everyone. The Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative works with children, families and community organizations to welcome and involve children and youth to promote their well-being and build a child-friendly city.

Construction started on the City Hall Fountain and Surface Rehabilitation Project in Summer 2018. As part of that project profile, City Council passed a motion to include additional child-friendly elements in the Civic Precinct (in and around Churchill Square).



SUMMARY

This initiative is to ensure a coordinated approach to include child-friendly elements in current Civic Precinct projects.

Phase 1 public engagement was held to **advise** on activities and themes regarding child-friendly opportunities in the Civic Precinct. The public engagement encouraged and included participation from various age groups. Children, childcare providers, as well as members of the general public provided input.

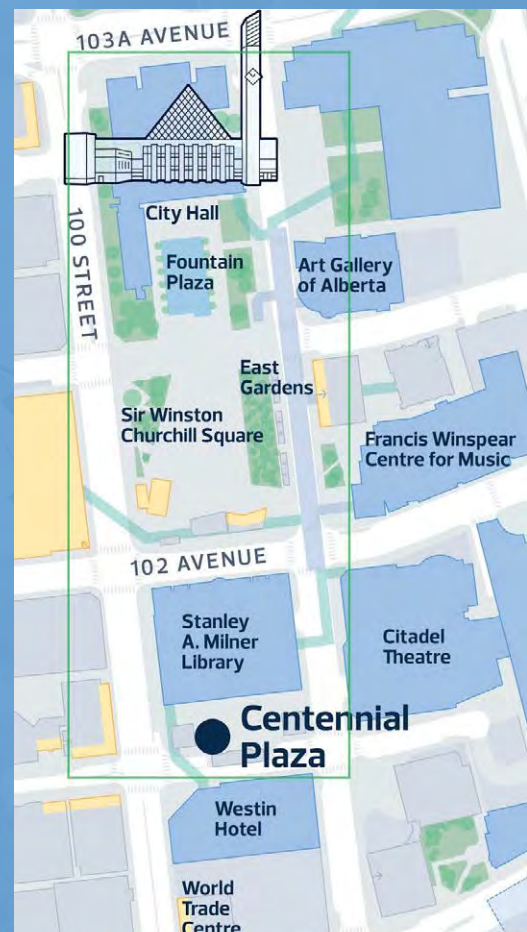
Information was gathered from August to November 2018 with an online public survey and focus groups with local child-care providers and City Hall School students. Over 500 people completed the survey and over 700 children participated in the focus groups.

The questions focused on developing child-friendly opportunities in the different areas of the Civic Precinct, and what types of activities the participants found important.

This project will focus on the Civic Precinct area as a whole, and specifically the East Garden and Centennial Plaza.

The types of activities included:

- + Active play (running, jumping, climbing, balancing)
- + Creative play (art, music, building, problem solving)
- + Imaginative play (role-playing, make-believe, playing games)
- + Passive play (resting, non-active, seating, shade, reading)
- + Nature play (rocks, trees, logs)



The engagement indicated that active and nature play were important in the Civic Precinct.

The East Garden can consider more **passive activities** and **nature activities**, while Centennial Plaza may be a location of **creative** opportunities.

From the survey, 49% of the respondents are **not satisfied** with the **existing** child-friendly opportunities in the Civic Precinct.

Of the 596 respondents, 70% either **strongly agree** or **somewhat agree** that **more** child-friendly opportunities are needed in the Civic Precinct.

City of Edmonton
September 26 · 🌐

Edmonton recognizes that a city that supports children is better for everyone. The Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative works with children, families and community organizations to welcome and involve children and youth. It aims to promote their well-being and build a **child-friendly** city.

The City is looking to add **child-friendly** elements in the downtown core, focusing on Churchill Square, City Hall Plaza and Centennial Plaza.

Let us know what you think by completing the online survey at <http://ow.ly/m0m730IXand>

A Child Friendly Civic Precinct

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Facebook

“ The feedback gathered showed all types of activities held importance, but the respondents identified that different play activities were appropriate within different areas of the Civic Precinct. ”



WHAT WAS DONE

Based on the input collected from the online public survey and children engagement sessions, the project teams within the Civic Precinct will look at possible concept options to incorporate the identified priority activities. The next step will be to develop design options and provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage with these concepts.

Methods for gathering information:

- + **August 2018** – Downtown Public Places survey
- + **August–October 2018** – Focus group sessions with childcare providers and children
- + **October 2018** – Insight Edmonton Opt-In survey
- + **October–November 2018** – City Hall School group focus questions

The **communications activities** used to raise awareness and promote the public engagement opportunities included:

- + City of Edmonton survey webpage
- + City of Edmonton public engagement calendar
- + Digital screen advertisements at City of Edmonton Recreation Facilities
- + Facebook posts/boosts
- + Twitter posts
- + Public Service Announcement to media
- + CBC radio interview
- + Paid advertising through Raising Edmonton online magazine
- + Direct contact with identified stakeholders



A Child Friendly Civic Precinct

Help us identify priorities by sharing your feedback at edmonton.ca/surveys

Online survey open until **OCT 15 2018**

The City of Edmonton is gathering citizen input on the type of child-friendly activities and services people would like to see considered in the Civic Precinct. Your input will help inform design options for child-friendly elements in current projects within the City Hall Plaza, East Gardens and Centennial Plaza.

CHILD FRIENDLY EDMONTON

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Ad



City of Edmonton @CityofEdmonton · Oct 15

Let us know what **child-friendly** activities and elements you would like to see in the **Civic** Precinct. Survey closes tonight at 11:30pm. ow.ly/m0m730IXand #yegkids

1 1 2

Twitter

The following public engagements opportunities were available:

1. City of Edmonton, Public Survey, Child-friendly opportunities in the Civic Precinct

- + This survey was to gather citizens' input regarding child-friendly opportunities and elements within the Civic Precinct.
- + Results of this survey will be used to inform design options for child-friendly elements within the City Hall Plaza, East Gardens and Centennial Plaza.
- + 596 respondents completed the survey.

2. Children focus group sessions

- + The purpose was to identify children's feedback on child-friendly opportunities within the Civic Precinct, including Churchill Square and East Garden.
- + Childcare providers and children in and around the Downtown core participated. Ten public engagement sessions were held at Churchill Square and City Hall with children from the ages of 4-12. Over 300 children participated.
 - The sessions were accomplished through interactive and participatory sessions where children indicated where they currently play, where they would want to play, and how they would like to play. Stickers were placed directly on zoned maps of the Civic Precinct by children. The session was facilitated by trusted adults (programmers, teachers, principals and parents) and all comments and ideas were recorded.

- + School Groups who visit the City Hall School
 - 18 City Hall school groups were engaged by incorporating questions into their City Hall tour groups.
 - Over 700 students ages 11-12 were involved.
 - After an overview of the Civic Precinct, the students were provided with images representing the six types of play. Using stickers, the students prioritized the most important type of play for the Civic Precinct.

3. The City of Edmonton, Downtown Public Places (Phase 2) Survey

- + One question about this project within a larger survey about multiple topics.
- + The City of Edmonton is developing a Downtown Public Places Plan that will guide and coordinate future projects that impact downtown public places.
- + There were 815 respondents to the survey.

Engagement Results and Findings

WHAT WAS SAID

1. Question within the Down Public Places (Phase 2) survey: August 2018

- + Centennial Plaza will support the Stanley Milner Library's functions and provide public opportunities for active spontaneous use for all ages. The Plaza will be better integrated with its surroundings and will improve pedestrian connectivity within the central core area.
 - + To what extent do you support or oppose the recommendations for the Centennial Plaza?
 - + 80% Support
- + the farmers market, relaxed outdoors and participated in waterplay.
 - + Of the 596 respondents, 49% of the people are not satisfied with the existing child-friendly opportunities within the Civic Precinct, while 25% were satisfied.
 - + Of these respondents, 70% either strongly agree or somewhat agree that more child-friendly opportunities are needed in the Civic Precinct, and 16% disagreed.

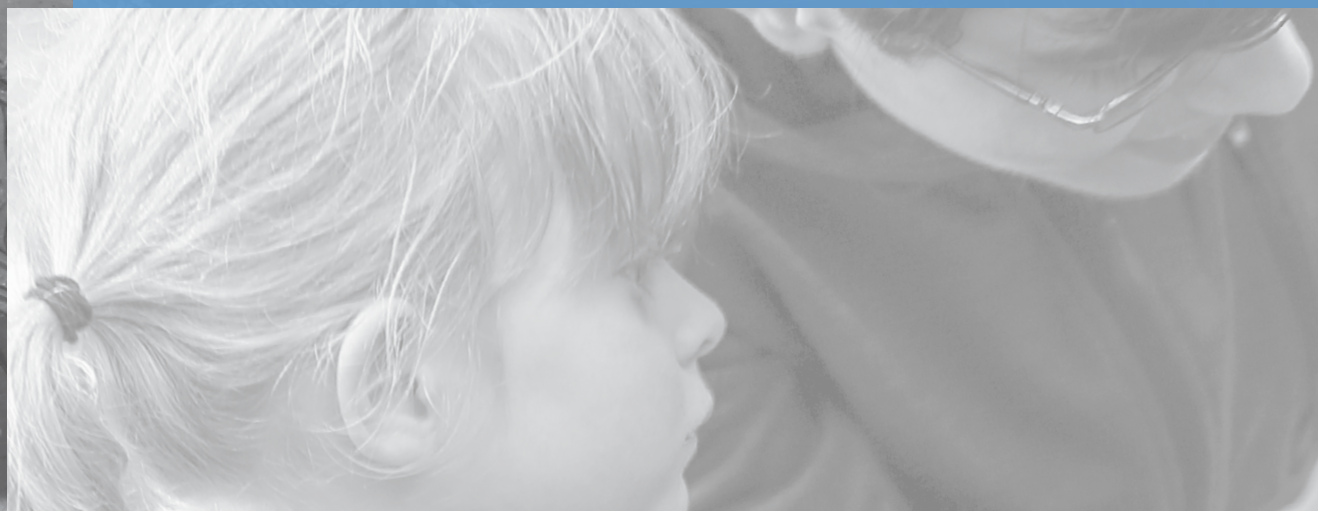
2. Public Survey results Child-friendly opportunities in the Civic Precinct Survey: September 21 – October 15, 2018

- + Who responded: There were 596 respondents who completed this survey.
 - + 41% of the respondents visited the Civic Precinct a few times in total while 40% had not visited the Civic Precinct in the last 3 years.
 - + 48% of the respondents had children under 16 years.
 - + Of those respondents with children, the majority had children between the ages of 0-12 years.
 - + The respondents were from all over the city.
 - + In the last three years, the majority of the respondents who visited the Civic Precinct attended festivals and events (88%). Many respondents also visited City Hall, went to
- + The engagement focused on the types of activities that could be included in the Civic Precinct to support child-friendly opportunities.
 - + When asked about the importance of the various types of child-friendly activities to be considered in the Civic Precinct, the activity that was considered to be very important was **Nature Play**, while both nature play and active play were considered to be the highest percentage of importance. All activities were identified as important to be considered also.
 - + In the East Garden (treed area to the east of Churchill Square), **Passive Play** (83%) and **Nature Play** (77%) were considered to be the most suitable activities to consider for the area.
 - + In Centennial Plaza, **Creative Play** (76%) was considered most suitable activity, while the other activities were also considered suitable. **Nature Play** (45%) was the least suitable.

What We Heard

Within the survey results, the main themes of input heard include:

- + Those in support of including child-friendly opportunities prioritized:
 - Safety
 - Nature play in an urban setting
 - Multi-seasonal and multi-age group opportunities
 - Increased amenities (bike stands, bathrooms, etc.)
 - More green space
 - Creative spaces that do not have to include playground
- + Those opposed to including child-friendly opportunities prioritized:
 - Safety
 - Reevaluating needs for downtown
 - Refocus the area on adult needs
 - Cost
 - Increase green space



Synopsis of general participant comments

- + Within the general comments section there were mixed levels of support for including additional child friendly elements in the Civic Precinct. There were hundreds of comments received on this topic.
- + Comments included recommendations for all-season play, safety, support for increasing the activities and opportunities for families and community. There were also comments around prioritizing other requirements such as road infrastructure and considering this area to be more about business and governance, less about play.

3. Focus Group results Child-friendly opportunities in the Civic Precinct Focus groups: August – November, 2018

WHAT WAS SAID

Summary of focus groups (City Hall tours and children focus groups)

- + The children involved in the facilitated sessions were between the ages of 4 – 12 years. The overall priorities for the Civic Precinct included **Active Play** opportunities.

Priorities by areas:

Churchill Square:

- Active Play Was the Highest Priority (89%)

Fountain Area:

- Active (28%) and Imaginative (25%)

City Hall

- Passive Play (39%) as top priority in City Hall, Imaginative Play was mentioned (1%)

East Garden

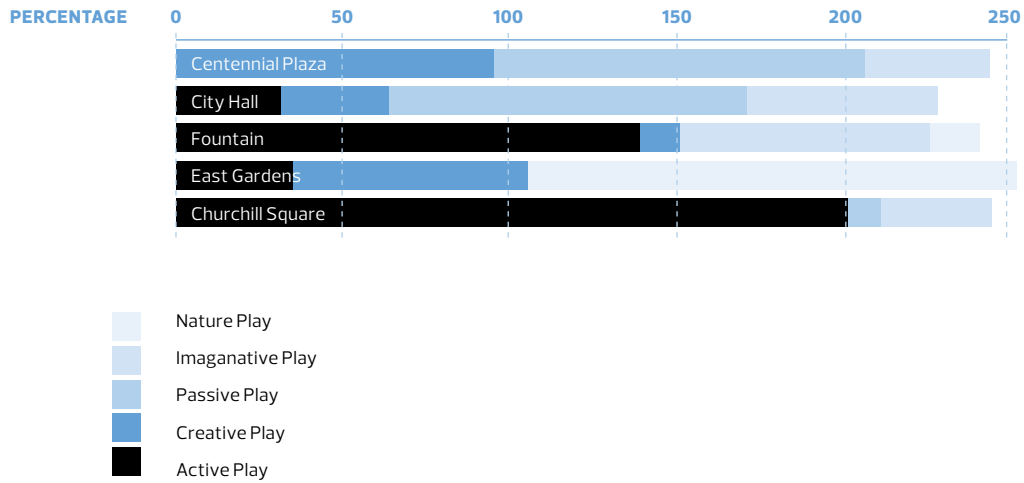
- Nature Play (90%)
- Creative (65%)
- Imaginative (58%)

Centennial Plaza/Library

- Passive Play (48%) and Creative (26%)

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS SUMMARY

Children's play priorities within Civic Precinct Zones



“[it would be cool to] use logs and stumps to jump, hop from as a mini obstacle course...”



Synopsis of general participant comments

- + Direct comments from children included things like "I just want to be able to explore...", "I need places to do the type of play I want" and "it needs to be fun, colorful and a place that all kids want to go". We heard many comments that the area needs to support multiple types of play activities and have places for families to enjoy together.

Comments included:

- "[it would be cool to] use logs and stumps to jump, hop from as a mini obstacle course..."
 - "I love to climb and I want something I can safely climb on that's different than...playground"
 - "Balancing on a log... a nature playground where I can imagine I was in a forest"
 - "What if it was more colourful and used lights at night and was all lit up?"
 - "We need things that we can play with all year... including winter activities"
- + It was observed while conducting engagement that children need a place downtown that allowed them to create their own type of play opportunities. Various comments supported creative, green and imaginative spaces to be developed.

WHAT WE HEARD

The main themes of input heard include:

- The participants of the focus groups identified that different play activities were appropriate of different areas of the Civic Precinct.
- Active play remains a priority, but nature, creative and imaginative play surfaced from children as important activities as well.

AS A RESULT, WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE PROJECT?

Based on all of the input gathered, the project teams within the Civic Precinct will look at possible design options to meet the identified priority activities. There are many elements to consider within the Civic Precinct and the introduction of additional child-friendly features will have to consider:

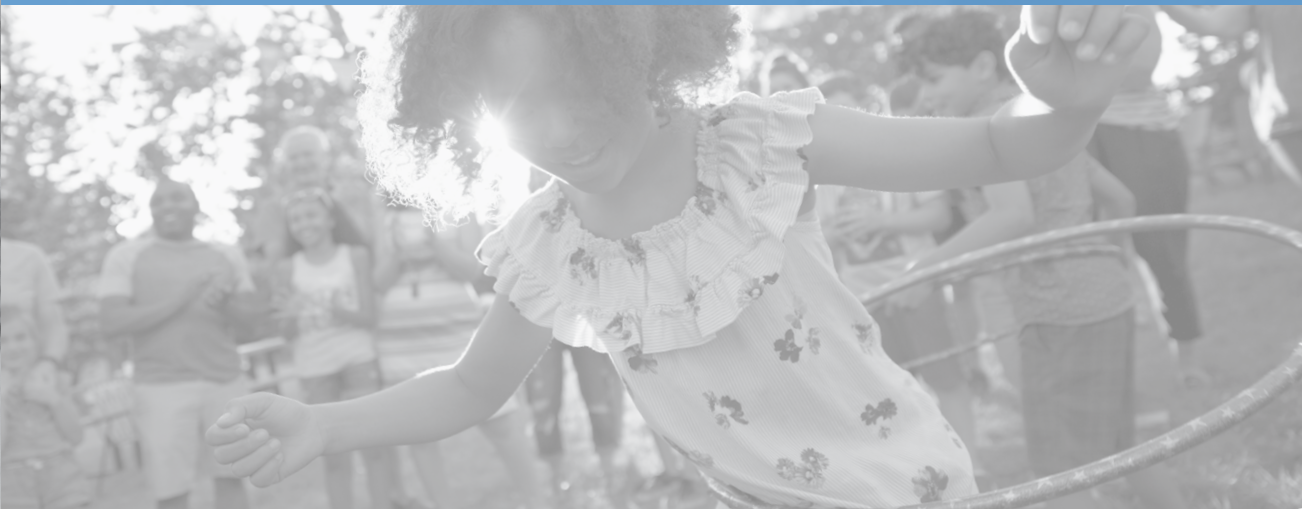
- + Safety
- + Integration into the current design of the area
- + All season requirements
- + Accessible for all
- + Cost
- + Impact to current activities on site



What's Next

In 2019, there will be engagement opportunities for both the Civic Precinct Surface and Fountain renewal project and the Centennial Plaza Redevelopment project for citizens to continue to be involved with child-friendly opportunities.

Information will be posted on the projects separate web pages on edmonton.ca.



Thank you for participating in sharing your voice and shaping our city.

For more information on City of Edmonton public engagement, please visit **edmonton.ca/publicengagement**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit **edmonton.ca/publicengagement**