What We Heard Report:
Community Sandbox Program

April 2023

SAND BOX

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

Table of Contents

Project Overview
Community Sandbox Program

The purpose of the Community Sandbox Program is to provide a source of sand for community use to help keep sidewalks safe and less slippery during the icy winter months. This program has been in operation for over 30 years. Since 2016, the number of sandboxes has grown by over 400%. Currently, there are over 700 sandboxes throughout Edmonton. In comparison with other Canadian winter cities with public sandbox programs, such as Calgary and St. Albert, Edmonton was found to have the largest number of sandboxes. Many of the 24 municipalities in Canada and the United States that were included in a jurisdictional scan of winter cities have less than 20 sandboxes. Cities in other provinces may have anywhere from zero public sandboxes, such as Winnipeg and Toronto, to 266 sandboxes, such as Kitchener.

Edmonton's community sandboxes can be found at various locations, including City facilities and Community Leagues.
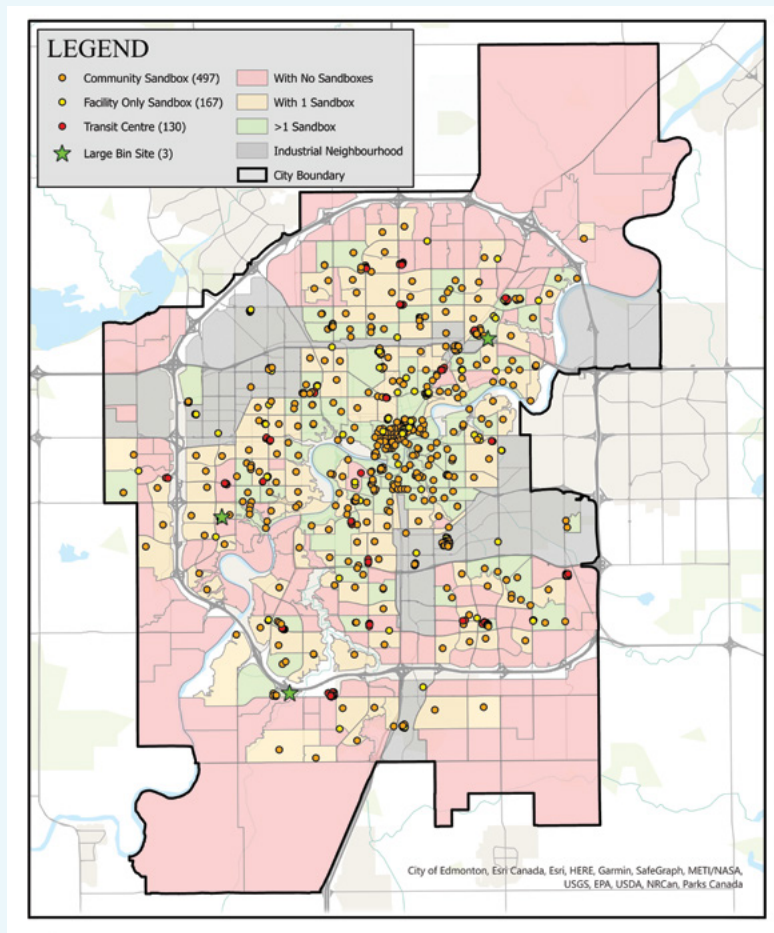
Keeping sidewalks clear of ice and snow is a shared responsibility. Property owners are responsible for keeping sidewalks adjacent to their properties clear of ice and snow. City crews are responsible for manually refilling sandboxes, which is a labour-intensive and time-consuming process. If sandboxes are empty, Edmontonians can submit sandbox refill requests through 311. When sidewalks are icy, there is a lot of public demand for sand, and small boxes may empty faster than City crews are able to refill them.

The City is conducting a review of the Community Sandbox Program to explore options that could make the program more effective and efficient but also to make sure the program is still accessible to those who rely on the sandboxes to help keep their walkways safe and accessible for everyone.

The City is exploring four possible options for future program changes. As part of the program review, a public and stakeholder engagement process was conducted in Q1 2023. Residents, stakeholders, community partners and businesses were invited to provide feedback on the current program and the possible options being considered for future program changes.

What will inform the Community Sandbox Program?

The Community Sandbox Program Review takes into consideration a variety of inputs, including relevant background information and analyses of the current program, City policies and procedures, and thoughts and perspectives from public engagement participants. This feedback will be presented in a Council report in Q2 2023 and will be used to inform recommendations and decisions made by City Council regarding any future program changes.
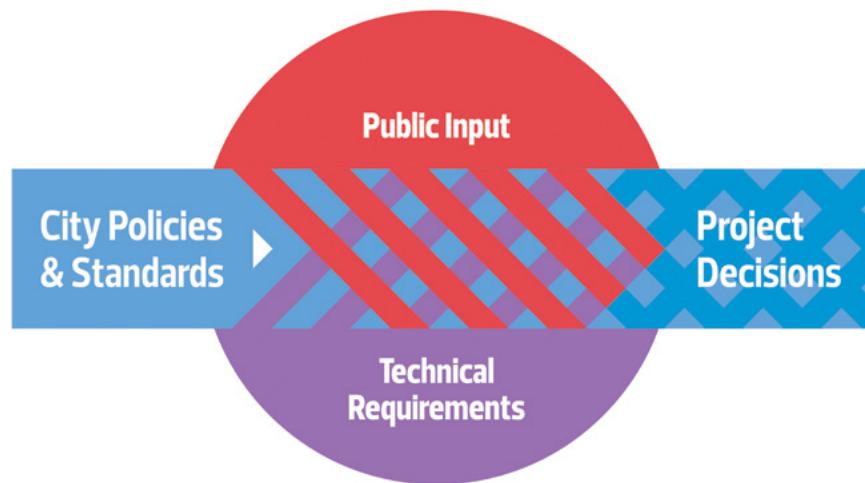
City of Edmonton Policies

There are a few City of Edmonton policies, bylaws and procedures that will be considered when making a decision regarding the Community Sandbox Program. These include:

+ The Snow and Ice Control Policy C409K
+ Snow and Ice Control Procedure
+ Traffic Bylaw 5590
+ Community Standards Bylaw 14600

Each of these may influence or may be influenced by the Community Sandbox Program.
The Safe Mobility Strategy also applies to and influences the Snow and Ice Control program.

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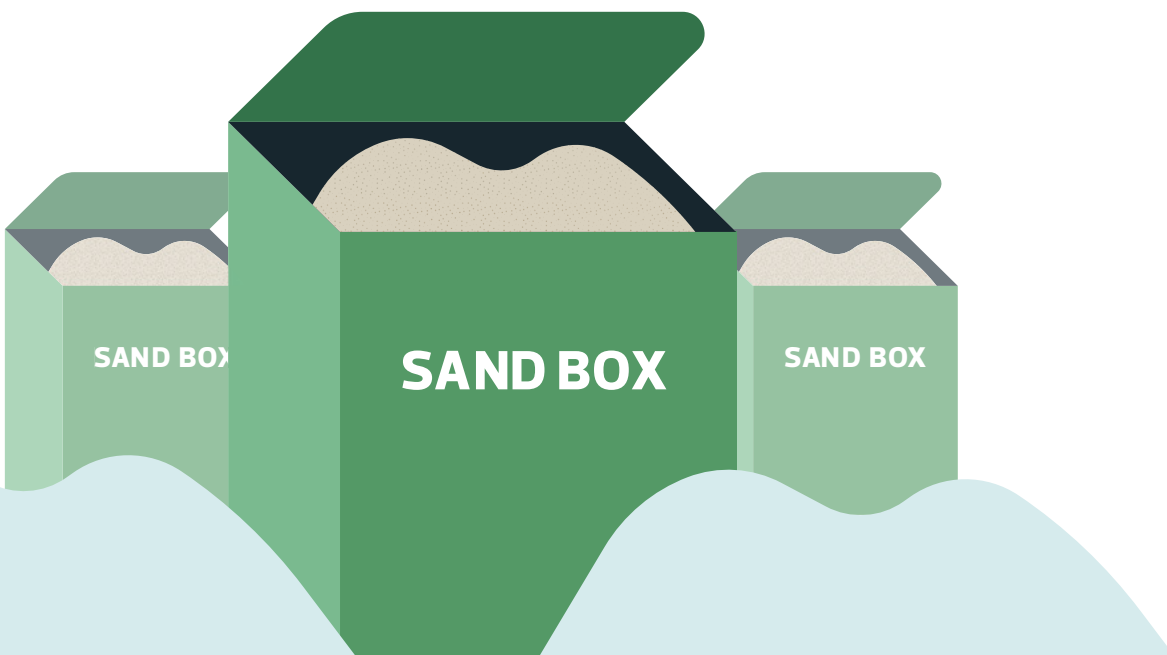
Public Engagement

The City's Public Engagement Spectrum defines the public's level of influence in engagement processes. The role of the participants during public engagement was at the ADVISE level on the City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Spectrum, meaning Administration invited everyone to share their feedback and perspectives on the Community Sandbox Program. Administration asked the public and various internal and external stakeholders to share their views, perspectives and experiences.

The public engagement activities described in this What We Heard Report were designed to gather Edmontonians' opinions about community sandboxes. It is important to understand these perspectives to review needs, concerns, level of satisfaction with the current program and opportunities for improvement. As well, Administration used these engagement opportunities to get feedback on options for possible future changes to the Community Sandbox Program.

Visit **edmonton.ca/PublicEngagement** for more information on the City's public engagement process.

The public is consulted by the City to share feedback and perspectives that are considered for policies, programs, projects, or services. **ADVISE**

The public is involved by the City to adapt and adjust approaches to policies, programs, projects, or services. **REFINE**

The public collaborates with the City to develop and build solutions regarding policies, programs, projects, or services. This can include community initiated engagement. **CREATE**

The public is empowered to make decisions directly or on behalf of the City about policies, programs, projects, or services. **DECIDE**

Focus on Equitable and Inclusive
Public Engagement Planning

GBA+ Considerations

A Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) process was used to forego, prioritize, or proactively consider the many identity and intersectional factors relevant to the Community Sandbox Program and its users. This analysis was used to plan public engagement processes that are equitable and inclusive. These factors were also used to analyze results and inform proposed program changes to help ensure equality of outcomes for all of the communities the City serves.

Community sandboxes are closely tied to the topics of accessibility and safe mobility. As demonstrated in the Who We Engaged and How We Engaged sections below, we made a substantial effort to engage with the public and a variety of different stakeholders throughout this process. A key component of our outreach tactics was to consider those who may largely rely on community sandboxes and may be disproportionately impacted by any future program changes. Communicating and engaging with stakeholders that have sandboxes on site, including those who may serve socially vulnerable populations, seniors and residents with accessibility or mobility concerns, was an important part of the process.

A key consideration of the public engagement planning and implementation process was to ensure that conversations were including seldom-heard voices within communities with higher socially vulnerable populations. In order to provide equitable access to engagement opportunities, in person pop-up engagement events and information display tables were prioritized within walking distance of those communities to public facilities (such as libraries, recreation centres and seniors centres). Through proactive, intentional planning, engagement opportunities were available for those who may have been unable to access engagement sessions in previous citywide engagement campaigns, or through digital engagement. The City welcomes all voices and honours different ways of knowing, learning and sharing.

It is also important to recognize that socially vulnerable individuals and populations not only face greater barriers to accessing programs and services due to factors such as language or cost, but also that their voices are often underrepresented in conversations about reducing barriers to access and meeting community needs. For example, socially vulnerable persons may have difficulty finding options for making their icy sidewalks safer in winter. It is important to understand how populations can best be served in terms of services so that planning can be strategic, and ultimately, successful. Demographics can influence knowledge, awareness and usage of community sandboxes, usage patterns, as well as current program needs and potential impacts of future program changes.

The City of Edmonton developed a Social Vulnerability Index[1] (SVI) which takes into consideration 11 socioeconomic and demographic metrics to proactively identify areas of Edmonton with the highest needs for services and programs. The SVI can be used to inform projects, services and programs to ensure equity[2] and inclusion for all. The SVI tool was developed and used by the proposed Sidewalk Maintenance Strategy. Metrics considered in the SVI include populations and percentages of: seniors, young children, low income households, unemployment, home ownership, lone parents, minority ethnic groups, linguistic isolation, mobility of residence, and level of education. This SVI tool was also applied to some aspects of the data analysis to determine if the engagement captured thoughts and perspectives across diverse populations and groups and if program and service needs differed by group or area.

[1]Social vulnerability relates to the circumstances of a person or community that affects their capacity to demand or use a service or program or adapt to the effects of a change.

[2]Equity: Where everyone is treated according to their diverse needs in a way that enables all people to participate, perform, engage to the same extent. This is different from equality, where everyone is treated the same regardless of individual diversity needs (Canadian Centre for Diversity Inclusion, 2022.) Minority ethnocultural racial groups, immigrants/newcomers, women, seniors, children, as well as persons with disabilities, are among those who have been identified as particularly vulnerable to the impacts of inequity.

Who We Engaged

From January 27 – March 10, 2023 the City of Edmonton engaged with

+ The general public, including residents and businesses
+ Stakeholder groups[3], which included both internal (City of Edmonton business areas and staff) and external stakeholders, such as community groups and organizations

We consulted with the following stakeholder groups during planning, communication, and engagement activities:

+ Advisory and advocacy committees (such as the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton)
+ Businesses and Business Improvement Areas
+ City of Edmonton Branches and Departments, including operational areas and staff
+ City of Edmonton facilities and staff (such as libraries and recreation centres) that have on–site sandboxes
+ Community Leagues
+ Community organizations (including, but not limited to senior and youth related groups, disability and/or accessibility related organizations)
+ Schools and school boards

[3]Those with an interest in or who may potentially be or perceived to be impacted by the outcomes of the Community Sandbox Program. Stakeholder engagement mainly focused on organizations, community partners and groups that are representing underrepresented voices, equity–deserved communities, certain needs and perspectives.

How We Engaged

A variety of tools and tactics were used to reach as many Edmontonians as possible, to provide their thoughts and perspectives. The overall engagement approach sought to be inclusive using a GBA+ approach and seek perspectives of all relevant stakeholders, including:

+ In-person pop-up sessions and table displays offered in key locations that could be easily accessed by the public at City facilities, such as libraries and recreation centres,

+ Pop-up locations selected to ensure equitable access to public engagement opportunities for greater inclusion of socially vulnerable populations (as described in the social equity consideration section of this report), and

+ Engagement tools and tactics designed to make sure interested participants were informed and captured feedback from diverse voices, especially communities who have traditionally not been heard and under-represented in engagement processes (online, in person and in print).

SAND BOX

How we communicated and connected with Edmontonians:

Digital and Print Information

Summary sheets and handouts provided to all audiences at events, by email to stakeholders and on the project web page.

Distributed handouts by the numbers:

3,183 Colouring pages

785 Info booklets and handouts

578 Postcards

769 Posters with QR code on all community sandboxes

Road signs
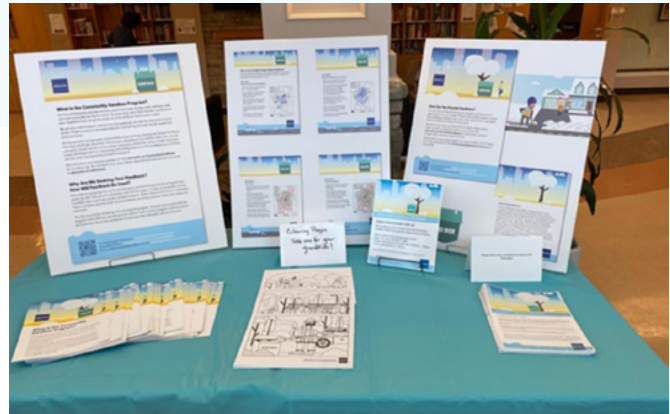**16M** Impressions

Digital billboards
17M Impressions

Digital ad campaign
6M Impressions

23,000 Clicks

Online

16,000
Unique visits
edmonton.ca/communitysandboxes

599
Views
Project video on web page
and City YouTube channel

Emails and e–News

13,690
Subscribers/accounts

Promoted engagement opportunities
in e–bulletins and e–newsletters (such
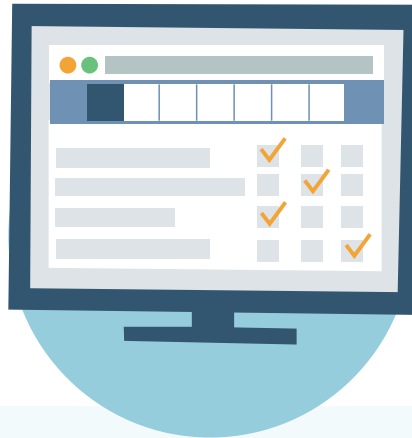as Link Letter for Edmonton seniors).

465+
Emails sent to
stakeholders

10
Feedback and comments from the
public and stakeholders through
communitysandboxes@edmonton.ca

Social Media

Twitter

4
Tweets

1,800
Impressions

Winter City @WinterCityYeg

10
Tweets

41,740
Impressions

209
Engagements

City of Edmonton #YEG #YEGWinter

Facebook

5
Posts

9,323
Impressions

327
Engagements

City of Edmonton #YEG #YEGWinter

Instagram stories

4
Posts

10,458
Accounts reached

21
Engagements

City of Edmonton #YEG #YEGWinter

Phone and in Person

8
Pop-ups[4]

155+
Conversations

62
Intercept surveys[5]

29
Info table displays[6]

13
Stakeholder phone calls

Other

Stakeholders were invited to engage with the project team through the project email.

Pre-written social media and e-news content were provided to stakeholders with emails.

[4]Pop-ups were events at specific times and locations with members of the project team to provide information.
[5]Intercept surveys were in-person surveys available at pop-up events.
[6]See above image on page 12 for what an information table looks like.

These tools were used to engage with Edmontonians and collect feedback

Digital

Engaged Edmonton – IDEAS[7]

4,600+
Site visitors to engaged.edmonton.ca/communitysandboxes

581
Participants

52
Comments on Ideas tool

Balancing Act – Prioritize[8]

370
Submissions

46
Comments
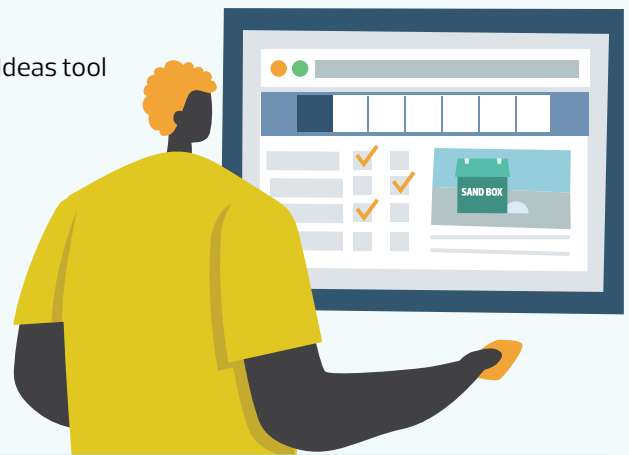
Meetings
Virtual and in person

8
Stakeholder meetings

45
Attendees

22
Staff working group attendees

Surveys

62
Completed stakeholder online survey

42
Completed staff survey

Additional Tools[*]
Surveys

2,877
Online survey for residents

810
General Population Random Sample survey for residents with recruitment by phone

1
Online survey for businesses

4
Focus groups

*Refer to Public Opinion Research Summary Report for methodology and results.

[7]IDEAS tool is a digital feedback–sharing comment board that encourages Edmontonians to share ideas and experiences. Participants can interact with others by commenting and liking others' ideas. This tool can be found on Engaged Edmonton (City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Platform)

[8]Balancing Act – Prioritize tool is an online platform. Participants interactively reviewed each of the four Community Sandbox Program options, shared their feedback on each of their selections and then ranked (prioritized) the options based on their preferences.

Map of in-person pop-up events and info table displays:

Legend:
- Info Table Location
- Pop-up Event Location

Map labels:
Namao
Trestle Ridge
Edmonton Energy and Technology Park
Skyglen Airpark
Glenview Acres
Lancaster Park
Horse Hill
Castle Downs
Lake District
Pilot Sound
Casselm... Steele Heights
Clareview
The Palisades
Northwest Industrial
Northern Mature Area
Hermitage
Clover Bar
District
Beverly
Western Mature Area
Great Highlands
Greater Hardisty
Central Core
Jasper Place
Edmonton
West Jasper Place
Greater Strathcona
South Industrial District
Lewis Farms
The Grange
Riverbend
The Meadows
Terwillegar Heights
MillWoods
Big Island
Kaskitayo
Woodbend
Windermere
Haritage Valley
Ellerslie
Southeast
Decoteau
Edmonton South Central East
Edmonton South East

What We Asked

The goal of engaging with Edmontonians was to understand the diversity of thoughts and perspectives of the current Community Sandbox Program, as well as to gather feedback on the four proposed options being considered for future program changes. Several aspects of the Community Sandbox Program were of interest:

+ Sandbox usage, including the need (demand), benefits and challenges experienced by users

+ User attitudes and perceptions regarding the program

+ Benefits and challenges for buildings and facilities with on-site sandboxes

+ Possible opportunities for program improvements, from accessibility to sandboxes, effective communications and operational considerations and operational considerations

+ Feedback and levels of support on the four proposed options

Presentation of the four proposed options

Respondents and engagement participants were all provided with similar information about the proposed future program options, including the benefits and tradeoffs of each. The methods and order for presenting these differed slightly depending on engagement method used. Below is the main information provided to respondents regarding the four options:

OPTION 1
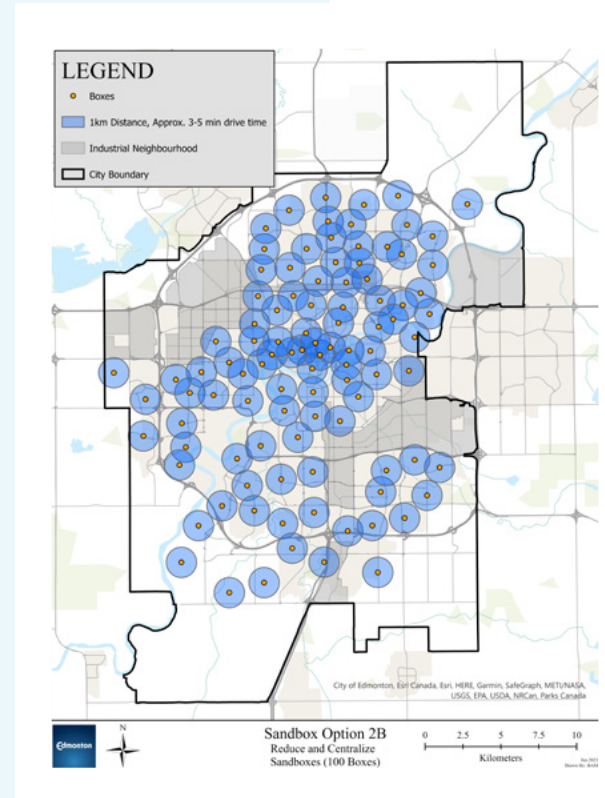### Discontinue Community Sandboxes

- Phase out removal of most boxes over 1–2 seasons

- Sand will be available in larger boxes or bins at Eco Stations and Roadway Maintenance Yards for pick up

- Up to 8 sandbox locations

- **Benefits:** Fewer, larger boxes means better monitoring and faster refilling. Fewer refills would be needed for large bins

- **Tradeoff**: Need to travel further to get free sand or would need to purchase sand

- **Program Cost Impacts:** $900K savings, which would be used to support and improve other Snow and Ice Control services

- No direct cost impacts to residents
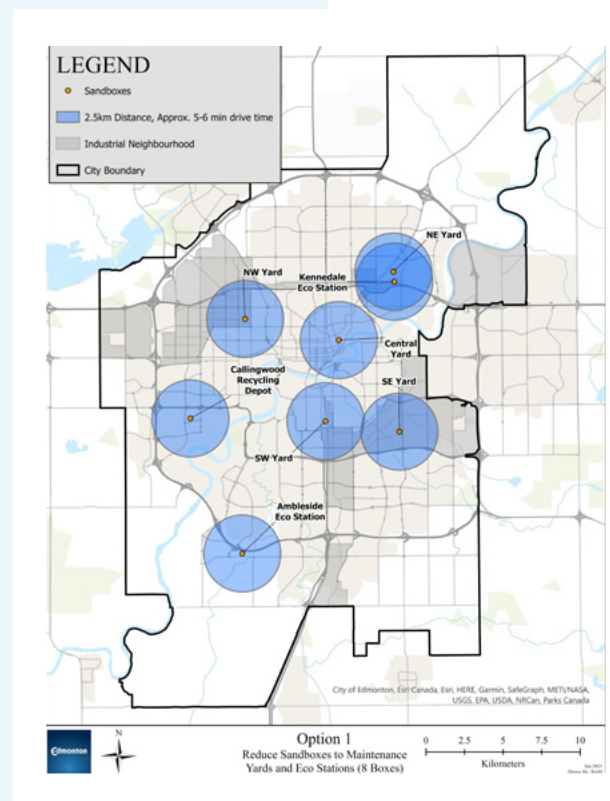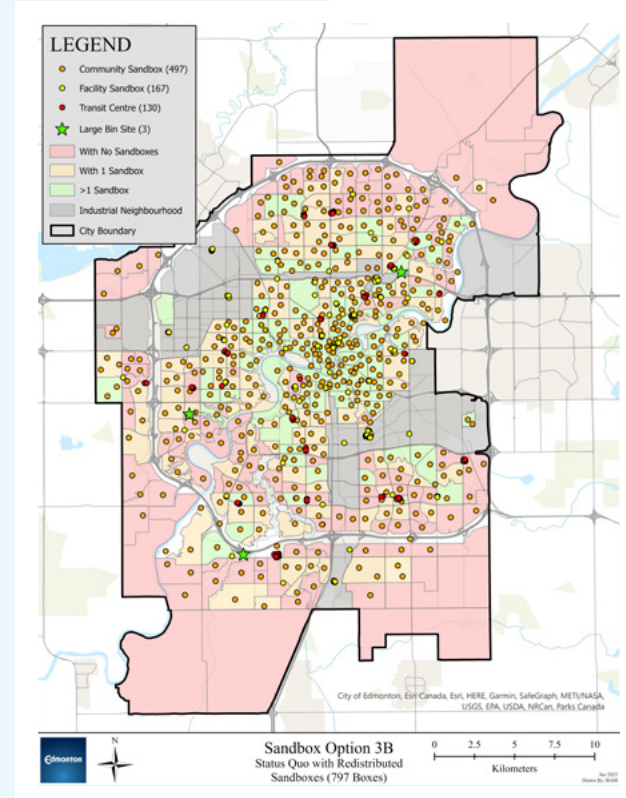
OPTION 2
Reduce and Centralize Sandboxes

· Reduce the number of boxes

· Redistribute boxes more evenly to provide better city coverage *(approx 5–10 minute drive to a box for most residents.)*

· Between 30–100 sandboxes

· **Benefits:** Fewer and larger boxes means better monitoring and faster refilling. Sandboxes would be moved closer to areas currently without a nearby box

· **Tradeoff:** Fewer boxes within walking/driving distance for areas that currently have a large number of boxes. Need to travel further to get sand or would need to purchase sand

· **Program Cost Impacts:** $800K savings, which would be used to support and improve other Snow and Ice Control services

· No direct cost impacts to residents

LEGEND
· Boxes
1km Distance, Approx. 3-5 min drive time
Industrial Neighbourhood
City Boundary

City of Edmonton, Esri Canada, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, MET/NASA, USGS, EPA, USDA, NRCan, Parks Canada

Sandbox Option 2B
Reduce and Centralize
Sandboxes (100 Boxes)

0   2.5   5   7.5   10
Kilometers

OPTION 3
Status Quo (Maintain Sandboxes)

· Keep the current number of boxes

· Redistribute some boxes more evenly to provide better city coverage *(approx 3–5 minute drive to a box for most residents.)*

· Approximately 700 sandboxes

· **Benefits:** Better and more even distribution of boxes. Option could include faster refilling if service levels change

· **Tradeoff:** Current concerns with boxes not being refilled quickly may continue

· **Program Cost Impacts:** No savings. Shorter refill timelines would add to program cost (eg, up to $58K for 3 fewer days.)

· Cost impacts to residents: Up to $0.09/year increase in property taxes[9]

[9]This is only an estimate based on 2023 property tax assessment and median current property values (Average of $2,900 on a $400K residential property)

OPTION 4
Increase Sandboxes

· Retain current box numbers and locations

· Add more boxes over 1–2 seasons to ensure newer neighbourhoods have at least one box nearby *(approx 3–5 minute drive to a box for most residents.)*

· Approximately 900 sandboxes

· **Benefits:** Better and more even distribution of boxes. Option could include faster refilling if service levels change

· **Tradeoff:** Current concerns with boxes not being refilled quickly may continue or increase with the increased number of boxes

· **Program Costs Impacts:** Increase of $235K for 200 more boxes. Shorter refill timelines would further increase program cost (eg, up to $308K for 3 fewer days.)

· Cost impacts to residents: Up to $0.50/year increase in property taxes[10]

[10] This is only an estimate based on 2023 property tax assessment and median current property values (Average of $2,900 on a $400K residential property)
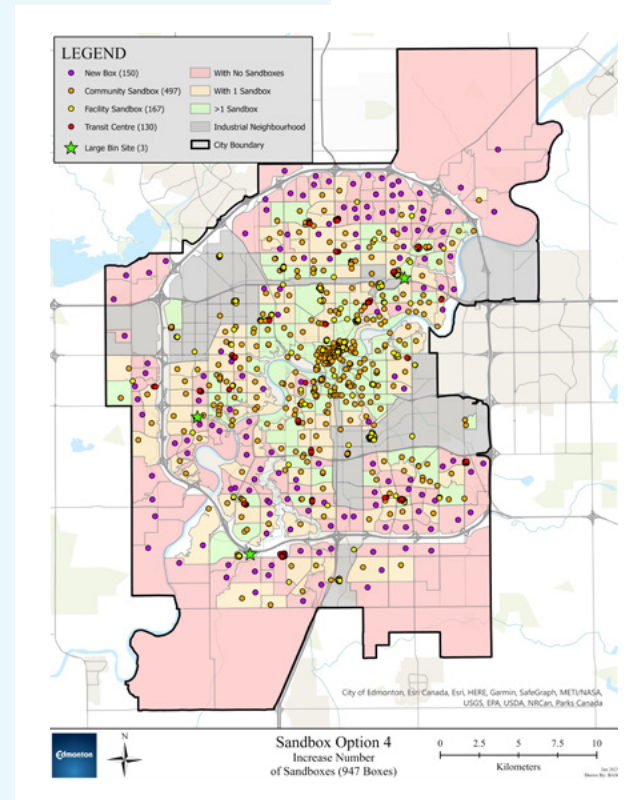
Who We Heard From

Engagement participants represented a variety of audiences and diverse groups of Edmontonians.

Pop-up Events: Intercept Surveys (n=62)

+ **24%** seniors

+ **29%** newcomers

+ **10%** challenges with mobility

+ **5%** Indigenous

+ Respondents were from a broad range of neighbourhoods across Edmonton
  · **6%** Downtown (largest category)

+ Broad distribution across age groups.
  · **23%** 25-34 years
  (largest category)
  · **6%** 18-24 years
  (smallest category)

+ Fairly even distribution of respondents across all income groups, from those who provided this information

Stakeholder Surveys (n=62)

+ **34%** have an on-site sandbox at their facility

+ **44%** on the board of a Community League

+ **31%** identified as a City employee

+ **52%** are part of an organization that serves those with accessibility and mobility challenges and diverse abilities

Balancing Act (Prioritize) (n=370)

+ Participation from
  160+ neighbourhoods

+ The most represented neighbourhoods
  9 responses, Old Strathcona
  9 responses, North Glenora
  8 responses, Westmount

Snow and Ice Control Staff Survey (n=42)

+ Responses from staff in the following
  units:
  · Active Pathways (**42%**),
  · Roadways (**35%**), and
  · Other (**23%**)

+ Even distribution among all five
  Snow and Ice Operations Districts
  (**17–25%** each)

+ **54%** of staff have worked in Snow
  and Ice for 5 or more winter seasons

Stakeholder Meetings (45 Attendees)

+ We had 8 meetings with representatives
  from the following groups:

  · Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

  · Business Improvement Areas
    (Executive Directors Meeting)

  · EPCOR

  · Edmonton Public Libraries

  · Edmonton Public School Board

  · Safe Mobility

  · Winter City

  · Bylaw Enforcement Officers
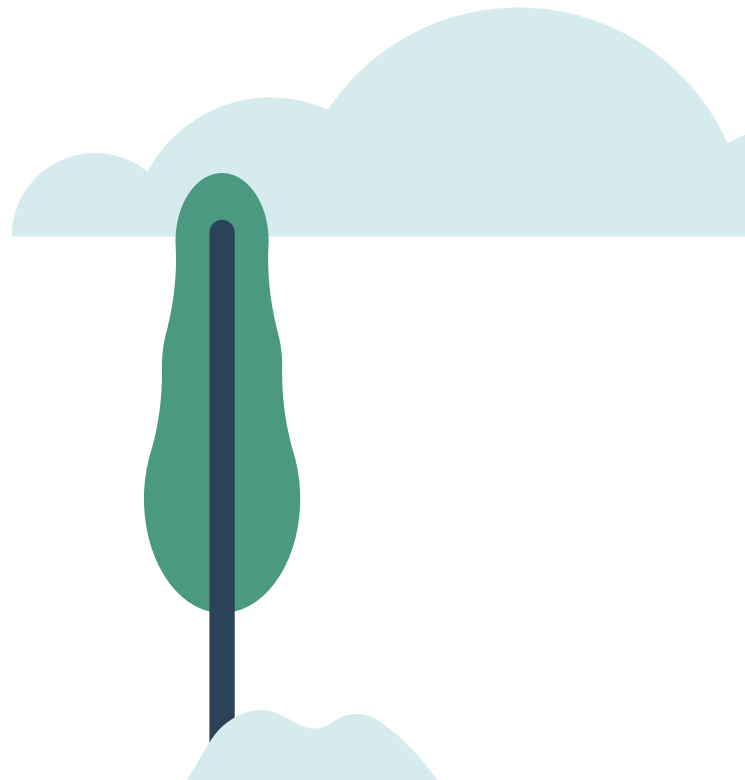
What We Heard

Feedback was gathered and analyzed across all methods of data collection.
This What We Heard section is organized into three parts:

+ A summary of how participants felt about the current program

+ Data and figures summarizing perspectives on the four program options, along with
an overview of the key themes and comments we heard for each program option

+ Specific feedback gathered from those with on-site sandboxes

How to read this section:

Public feedback – Input provided via intercept surveys, Balancing Act tool,
and Engaged Edmonton

Stakeholder feedback – Input collected via stakeholder surveys and meetings.
Stakeholders included: Community Leagues, community groups or organizations
(including organizations who serve those with accessibility issues), City staff outside
of Snow and Ice Control or who have an on-site sandbox at their organization.

Snow and Ice Control Staff – Input provided via staff survey and the working group meeting.

Comments or themes that have no indication were frequently heard across multiple feedback
methods and are not tied to any specific group.

Thoughts and Perspectives: Current Community Sandbox Program

There was a mix of responses regarding the current program. We heard from a variety of respondents who had different levels of awareness and usage.

+ One-third (32%) of participants from the intercept survey currently use community sandboxes. Of this:
  - Approximately 50% identified themselves as being regular/frequent users of sandbox sand for most or all of their needs
  - Approximately 50% identified themselves as a casual user who uses sandboxes occasionally or as a secondary source of traction material
+ 29% of intercept survey respondents were unaware of the program. In comparison, 26% were aware but had never used the service and 13% were aware but no longer use it
+ Nearly three-quarters (70%) of respondents from Balancing Act identified themselves as being users of the program

+ 65% of stakeholders felt they were knowledgeable about the program, with the rest having low (13%) or some (21%) knowledge

+ Many stakeholders indicated they thought that awareness and understanding of the program and its purpose is low and/or unclear among members of the public and businesses

+ Stakeholders had strong opinions about which groups should have access to the free sand from community sandboxes:

Group/Organization	Level of agreement (% of stakeholders that agree or strongly agree)
City of Edmonton facilities	85% agreement
Socially vulnerable residents	82% agreement
All residents	81% agreement
All facilities	73% agreement
Businesses	39% agreement
Contractors	19% agreement
Non–Edmonton residents	13% agreement

+ Certain sandbox sites empty faster and refills are needed more often at those locations
  · Community Leagues/halls and roadway yard locations were specifically mentioned

+ City of Edmonton residents and contractors were two groups most frequently seen using the sandboxes

Positive feedback about the current program

Some of these comments included:

+ Sandboxes provide an invaluable source of traction for those who need the sand

+ Some residents and stakeholders indicated specific locations for sandboxes that are working well for their needs and would like to keep these locations if possible

+ It provides "critical support", is regularly used, and meets individual, community, and/or organization needs

+ The cost associated with the program is worth the return of increased safety

+ The sandboxes offer a non-chemical traction alternative

+ Stakeholders suggested that having sandboxes greatly reduces the number of injuries related to slips and falls during the winter season

+ Those who have on-site sandboxes commented that dry sand or sandboxes increase safety, reduce their organization's snow and ice control expenses, and provide convenient access to traction materials for members of the community

+ City and non-City facility employees often used the sand for increased safety

+ The program is important, especially during freezing rain events

+ As to whether the current program is meeting stakeholder needs and those they serve:
  · **71%** provided a high agreement rating
  · **15%** provided a neutral rating
  · **13%** provided a low rating

+ For stakeholders that provide services to those with mobility concerns:
  · **63%** indicated the sandboxes are accessible for those with diverse abilities or accessibility issues
  · **16%** and **19%** considered these to be neutral or less accessible, respectively

+ The current program increases safety
+ The current number of boxes offers good access to most, and reduces travel distance for residents

Current sandbox program concerns

Concerns we heard about the current sandbox program include:

+ Participants expressed concerns with contractors taking large amounts of sand

+ Concerns about safety and security were also mentioned, including vandalism of boxes, sandboxes accumulating garbage and needles that require cleanup/disposal, and other related concerns

+ Users mentioned boxes were often empty and were slow to be refilled
  · 18% of intercept survey respondents indicated this to be one of the main reasons why they don't use sandboxes and/or don't use them more often

+ Certain sandboxes can be hard to find or difficult to access

+ There are concerns and issues around sand spillage and property maintenance, including sand being tracked into buildings and adversely impacting nearby vegetation

+ There are difficulties in keeping up with high public demand for boxes in certain locations
+ Staff also acknowledged that refilling boxes is currently inefficient and labour intensive, largely resulting from the location and small size and not being able to access some locations by sand delivery vehicle

Overall comments and feedback suggested that users can misinterpret who owns the sandboxes and who is responsible if there is an issue. Sandbox users tend to direct issues with the boxes to the facility representatives, rather than the City who is responsible for maintaining the sandboxes. This results in increased administrative burdens on these non–City facilities and organizations. Some stakeholders indicated that they promptly redirect complaints or refill requests to 311.
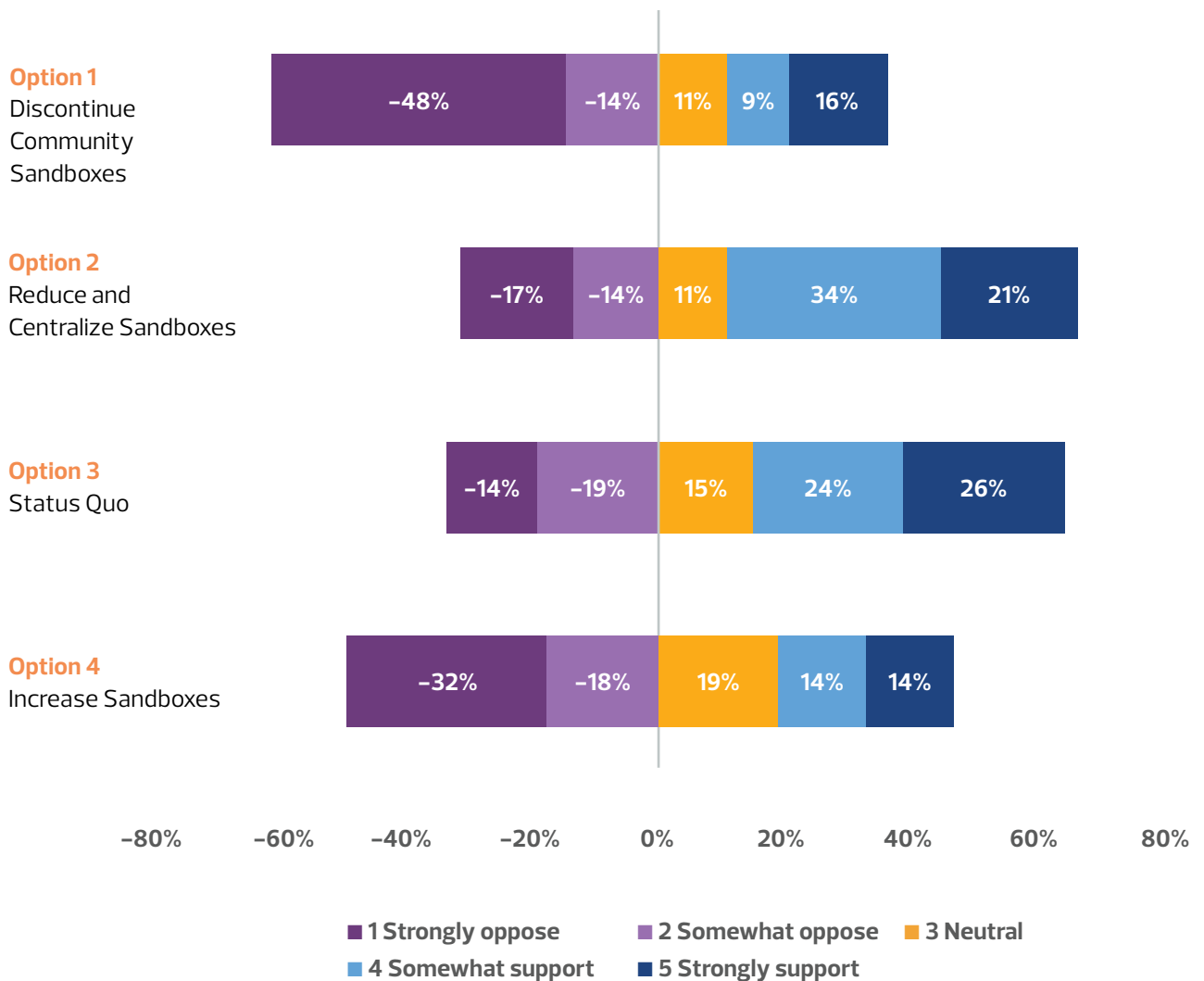
Additional comments

+ Some stakeholders noted that not every facility with an on-site sandbox is used by the facility itself for maintenance of walkways, as some facilities use contracted services to perform snow and ice control activities on their properties. Facility managers were not always aware if contractors were using sand from the on-site community sandboxes.

+ The Community Sandbox Program has the potential to play a bigger role in improving walkability in the city and to help encourage people to use active transportation. Municipal Enforcement Officers respond to approximately 10,000 complaints per year related to snow and ice on walkways, and sandboxes are viewed as a valuable resource to help support residents in maintaining sidewalks.
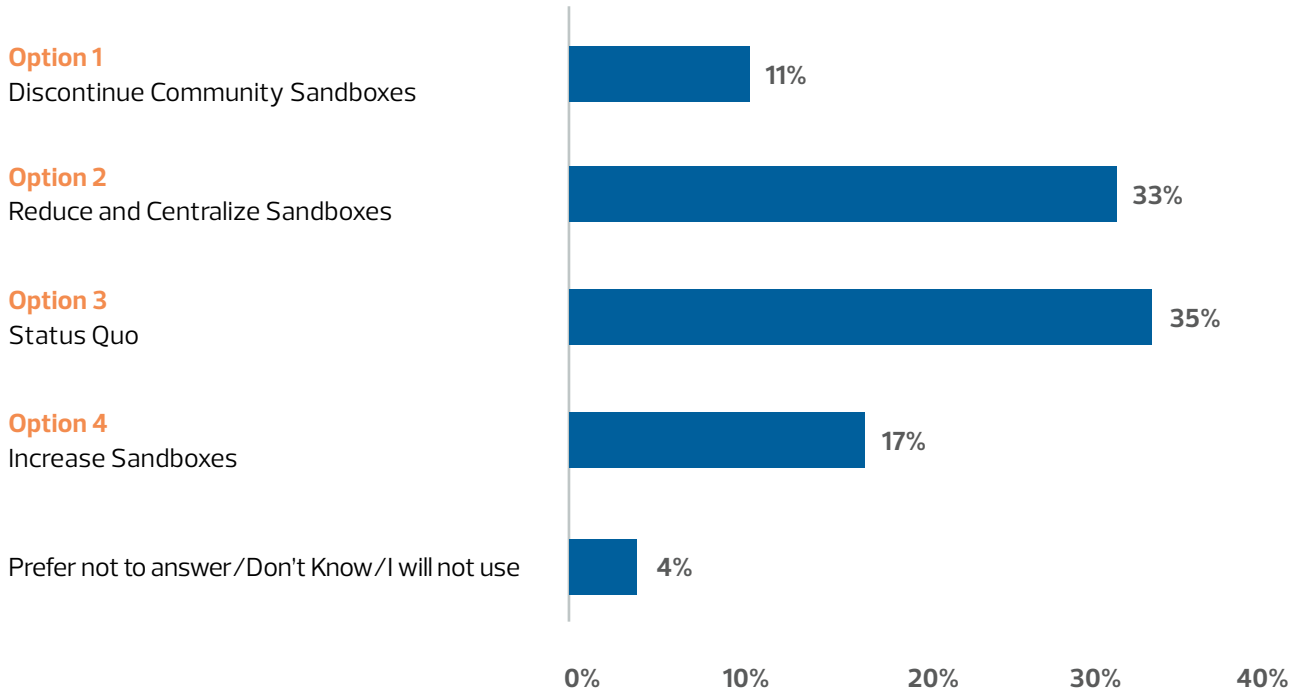
Thoughts on the Four Proposed Program Options

Respondents showed the greatest support for either Option 2 or Option 3. Some respondents felt that an additional option between Options 2 and 3 would be the optimum choice. Refer to the What We Asked section for information about the options.

To what extent would you support each option

Option 1
Discontinue
Community
Sandboxes
−48% | −14% | 11% | 9% | 16%

Option 2
Reduce and
Centralize Sandboxes
−17% | −14% | 11% | 34% | 21%

Option 3
Status Quo
−14% | −19% | 15% | 24% | 26%

Option 4
Increase Sandboxes
−32% | −18% | 19% | 14% | 14%

−80% −60% −40% −20% 0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

■ 1 Strongly oppose   ■ 2 Somewhat oppose   ■ 3 Neutral
■ 4 Somewhat support   ■ 5 Strongly support

Level of support for each option. Data sources: combined intercept, stakeholder, and staff survey (n=172). Don't know/not stated responses not shown.

What is your most preferred choice

Option 1
Discontinue Community Sandboxes — 11%

Option 2
Reduce and Centralize Sandboxes — 33%

Option 3
Status Quo — 35%

Option 4
Increase Sandboxes — 17%

Prefer not to answer/Don't Know/I will not use — 4%

Preferred choice of sandbox program option. Data sources: combined intercept, stakeholder, and Snow and Ice Control staff surveys (n=172).

Use the Balancing Act tool to prioritize each of the four potential options

	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Fourth Choice	Not Ranked
Option 1 Discontinue Community Sandboxes	10%	6%	9%	36%	40%
Option 2 Reduce and Centralize Sandboxes	26%	15%	25%	1%	33%
Option 3 Status Quo	43%	24%	11%	1%	22%
Option 4 Increase Sandboxes	20%	20%	11%	16%	32%

Respondents (n=370) preferred Option 3, followed closely by Option 2 and then Option 4. Option 1 was the lowest ranked option for respondents. Some of the respondents did not include all the options in their ranking, as indicated in the Not Ranked column.

SAND BOX

Key Themes and Comments by Option

The below themes and comments were received for each of the four proposed program options. This section summarizes the feedback that was heard across all qualitative methods of engagement and open-end survey results.

OPTION 1 (Discontinue Community Sandboxes)

This option proposed discontinuing community sandboxes, leaving up to 8 sandboxes at central locations.

Positive Comments	Concerns
+ Would reduce costs, but would like to know exactly what the cost savings would go towards	+ Concerns that this option reduces accessibility for all Edmontonians, especially for the elderly and those with mobility concerns
+ Some respondents already drive to central locations and mentioned this option would not impact them significantly	+ This option excludes those who do not drive
+ Some respondents think that leaving up to 8 sandboxes would respond to the current need for free dry sand	+ There could be high traffic congestion or longer wait times in the areas where sandboxes would possibly remain
	+ Greater reliance on obtaining sand or other materials elsewhere
	+ Respondents thought this option would reduce safe mobility
	+ Would cause numerous complaints to facilities with on-site sandboxes as well as 311 calls
	+ Bigger, fewer boxes would be favoured by contractors
	+ Does not align with other City policies or initiatives

OPTION 2 (Reduce and Centralize Sandboxes)

This option proposed reducing and centralizing the number of sandboxes to have approximately 30–100 boxes distributed evenly across Edmonton.

Positive Comments	Concerns
+ The best compromise for balancing costs and accessibility concerns	+ Concerns and questions about which specific sandboxes would remain or be maintained, especially for locations around Community Leagues, City facilities, and other high traffic areas
+ Improved service by being able to refill sandboxes more quickly	
+ It would meet current public demand for sand	+ Make access to sand more challenging and potentially not meet demand
+ By adding bigger boxes and centralizing the boxes this option would meet demand and accessibility concerns	+ Would negatively impact access to those who walk, bike, or roll
+ Would improve operational efficiency, while still maintaining access and safety (response from Snow and Ice Control staff)	+ Prefer an option somewhere between Option 2 and Option 3
+ Cost savings from this option can go towards Active Pathways Snow and Ice Clearing	+ Caution around implementing this option as it could lead to more slips and falls (with reduced access to sand for those who need it)
+ Would better evenly distribute the boxes	

OPTION 3 (Status Quo)

This option would involve maintaining the current number of community sandboxes (approximately 700 boxes) with some redistribution to provide more even coverage across Edmonton. Many of the themes and comments for this option have already been included under the Thoughts and Perspectives: Current Community Sandbox Program section (pg.25).

Positive Comments

+ The current program is working well and therefore want to maintain the status quo

+ Do not want to see changes to the current program, albeit possibly rethinking some sandbox locations

+ The current program helps keep sidewalks safe

+ Value being able to walk to their local sandbox with their family as a social activity

+ The other options would potentially further confuse people about where sandboxes are located (if locations change)

Concerns

+ The current program has low utilization and/or awareness

+ Does not provide any cost savings

## OPTION 4 (Increase Sandboxes)

This option would result in the addition of approximately 200 more sandboxes to provide additional coverage in newer neighbourhoods (approximately 900 boxes total).

Positive Comments	Concerns
+ Newly developed or growing communities, and/or high density areas need more boxes **+** Would further reduce travel time to sandboxes	**+** The current number of sandboxes meets public demand and more boxes would be unnecessary, especially if the other options redistribute the boxes **+** Increasing the number of boxes would not be worth the tradeoff of reduced quality of service (slower refills) **+** Current sandbox usage would not be worth the cost of expanding the program **+** The cost of implementing this option outweighs the marginal gains in accessibility
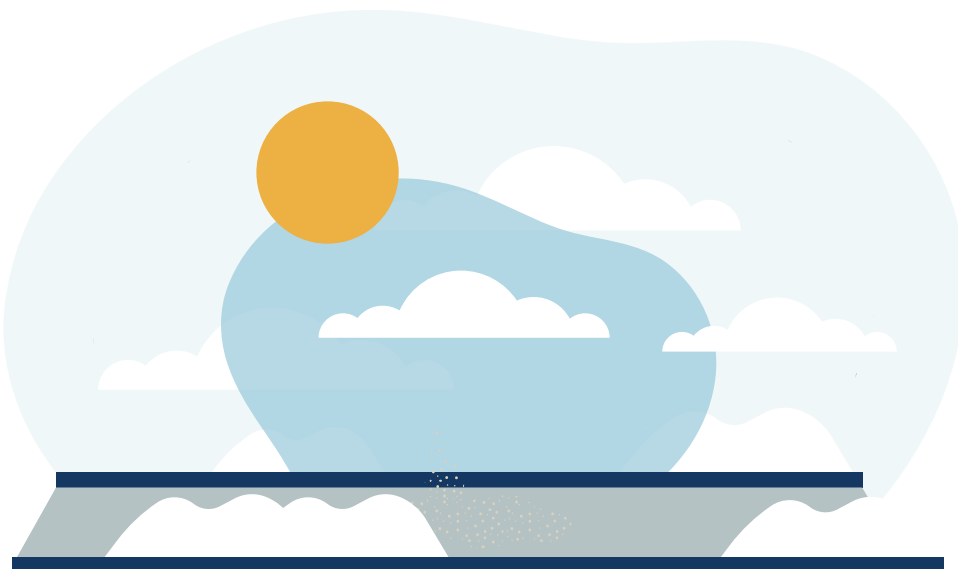
Thoughts and Perspectives: Suggestions for Improvements

Respondents provided additional suggestions for program improvements and opportunities to provide better service. These suggestions included a combination of direct program improvements, possible changes in combination with one of the program options, operational and communications improvements and program supports. The following are a summary of suggestions:

+ Bigger boxes or placing current boxes side by side in heavily used locations

+ Moving some boxes to alternate locations for improved distribution, access, or visibility

+ Finding alternatives to manually refilling boxes

+ Opportunities for collaboration and program communications with facilities that have on–site sandboxes, such as libraries

+ Possibly changing refilling timelines around freeze thaw events rather than snow events

+ Changes to sandbox shape, size and materials, including making boxes more visible, improvements to lid design, and better labeling. This may reduce vandalism and/or other issues such as rotting or broken wooden sandboxes

+ Better communication and education with the program overall, including improved signage on sandboxes to increase awareness of the program, clear instructions for notifying the City of issues and who can use the sand

+ Better monitoring and tracking of sandbox use, such as which sandboxes are used or refilled more often, and which sandboxes are due to be refilled and when

+ An online reporting system and direct line of contact for users and facilities to indicate when boxes are empty

+ Pursue opportunities to generate revenues to help fund the program, possibly allocating a portion of sidewalk bylaw fines for the sandbox program

Thoughts on Options and Future Improvements: Facilities with On-Site Sandboxes

We also specifically asked facilities with on-site sandboxes about a few of these potential program options, but opinions were split and there was no consensus.

Additional program changes	Percentage of sandbox hosts willing to consider the change
Replacing several small boxes with fewer but larger bins	50%
Clustering smaller boxes closer together	36%
Moving boxes to a staff-only area if the box(es) were for facility-only use	56%
Putting locks on facility-only boxes	39%

Percentages exclude not applicable or don't know responses.

Community Leagues with on-site sandboxes were asked if they would be interested in keeping them, if the boxes were no longer maintained by City staff in the future. From those who responded:

+ **11%** identified they would be interested
+ **39%** indicated they would not be interested
+ **46%** indicated that "it depends"
+ **4%** replied they did not know

Respondents mentioned two factors that would determine whether or not they would want to keep their boxes:

+ Sandbox maintenance costs, and
+ Having sufficient volunteers to maintain the boxes

Next Steps

City staff are reviewing and considering collected feedback and perspectives. This feedback will be presented in a report to City Council for further direction and decisions about future program changes. Future engagement opportunities may be available based on project decisions and pending any potential changes to the program.

Visit **edmonton.ca/communitysandboxes** for more information and to stay up-to-date on the Community Sandbox Program.