

Prepared by

City of Edmonton

O2 Planning + Design Inc.

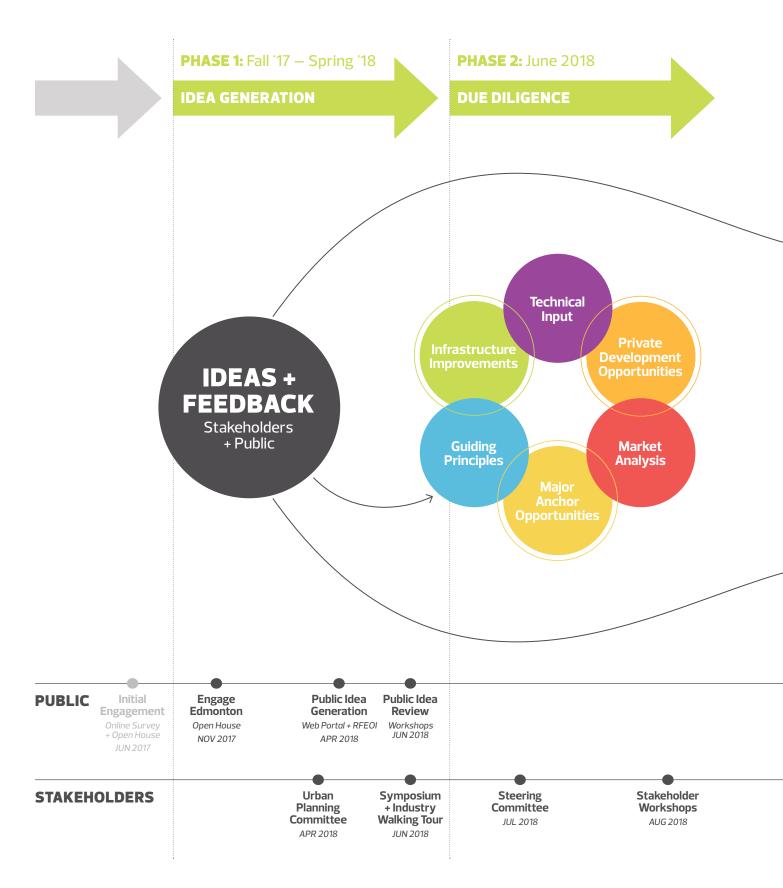
INTRODUCTION

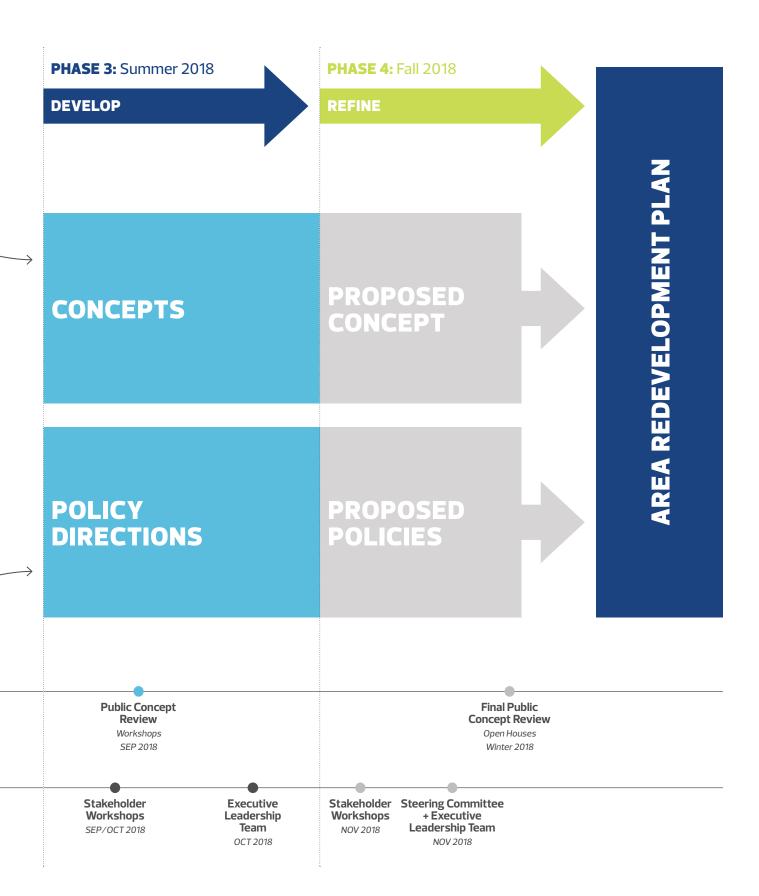
The Exhibition Lands project will create a new vision for a community at the heart of Edmonton and offers an unprecedented city-building opportunity. Public and stakeholder engagement has been an integral part of the process to create and test the building blocks of this vision.

This What We Heard Report is the third in a series and reflects engagement activities carried out during Phase 3: Concept Development, which occurred from late August through mid October, 2018. During this phase, the Exhibition Lands project team shared a series of redevelopment concepts and invited Edmontonians and stakeholders to provide feedback. This report summarizes engagement activities with Edmontonians and specific stakeholder groups as well as feedback on the proposed redevelopment concepts collected through in–person and online engagement.



PROJECT PROCESS





THE CONCEPTS

From the results of the analyses and engagement conducted in phases 1 and 2, the project team developed preliminary concepts for the redevelopment of the Exhibition Lands.

Each concept shows different types of infrastructure upgrades, anchor developments (i.e. large features that spark redevelopment), and public amenities, resulting in different levels of public investment and returns on investment. The following provides a brief overview of each concept. The full display boards for each of the concepts are available on the City's website (edmonton.ca/exhibitionlands).

CONCEPT A: BASELINE

This concept proposes that the City of Edmonton sell the bulk of the site for private development. Also included are minor public investments to improve connections of the Exhibition Lands to surrounding communities. Of all the concepts, it requires the lowest level of public investment and would result in low to medium return on investment in terms of financial returns from the sale of land and associated property tax revenues. This concept sees City land sold with the expectation that it would likely be developed at lower densities than the other concepts. This concept contains no anchors, but does involve some infrastructure investments, including:



- + New roadway LRT crossing at 115 Avenue
- + Coliseum LRT Station rennovation
- + Borden Park consolidated (22 ha)
- + LRT facility in Parkdale
- + Public corridor through Expo Centre



21/40





68% / 32%



2,250



6,000



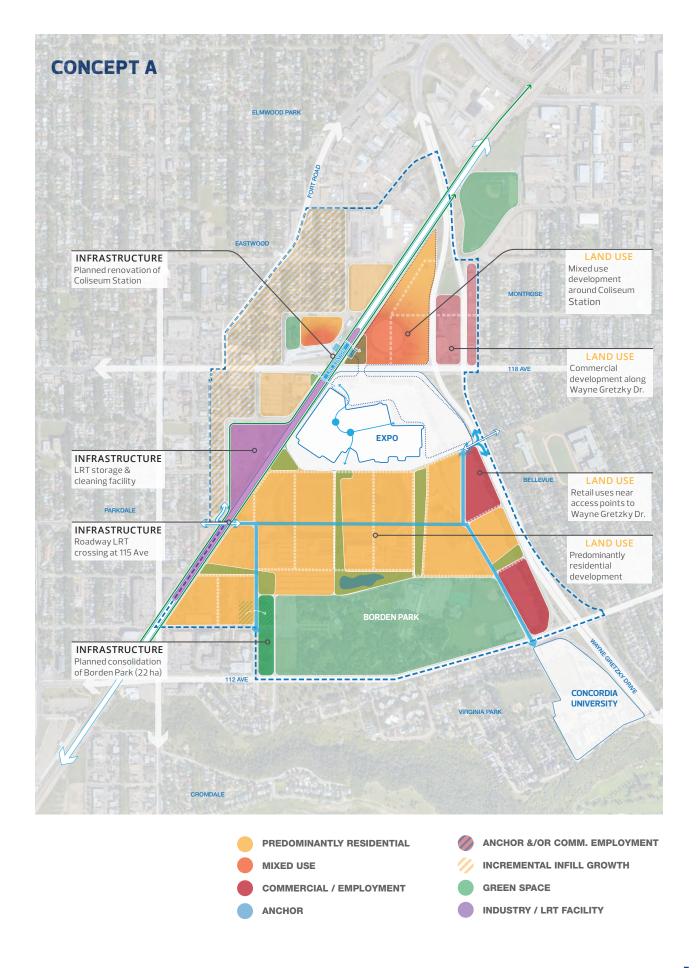
1,500



15-25 years



50 ha (45 ha City)



CONCEPT B: CONNECTED COMMUNITY

The Connected Community concept uses strategic improvements to develop a more integrated community. The concept calls for a low-mid level of public investment and results in a mid-high return on investment. The concept incorporates anchors and infrastructure improvements, including:

- + New LRT station and roadway LRT crossing at 115 Avenue
- + Coliseum LRT Station rennovated with at-grade access
- Borden Park repositioned with improved features (22 ha) + area storm pond
- + LRT facility in Montrose
- + Wayne Gretzky Drive transformed into urban boulevard
- + Local connections improved to neighbouring communities + river valley
- + Education, recreation, + community anchor
- + Amenity anchor in Expo Centre hall A-C
- + Potential employment anchors (two sites)
- + Public corridor through Expo Centre













35/40



45% / 55%



4,000



9,000



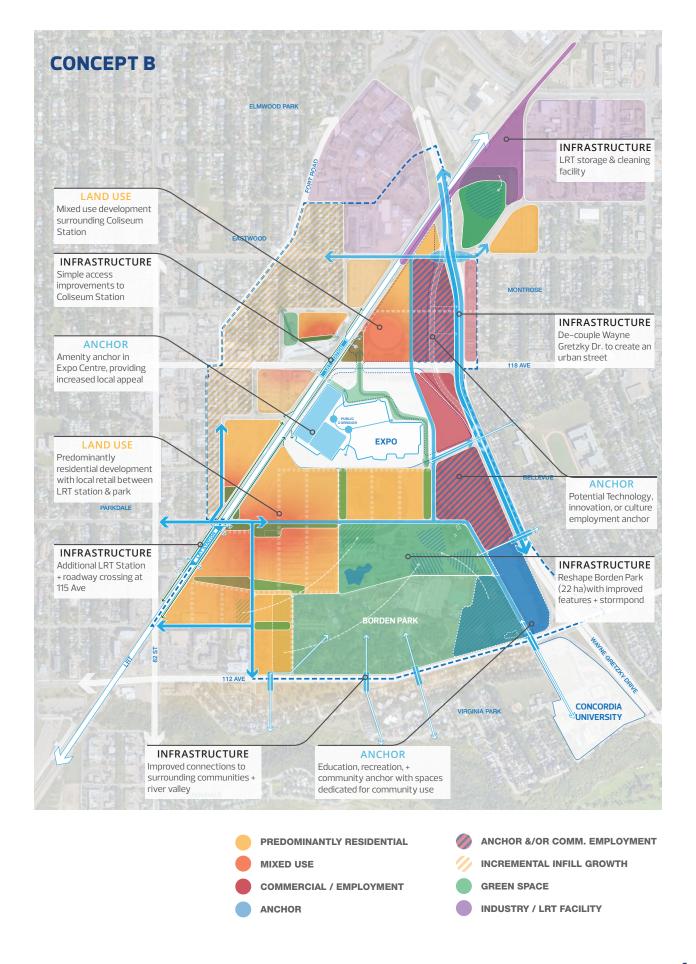
2,800



20-30 years



53 ha (48 ha City)



CONCEPT C1: ALL-IN (CIVIC ANCHOR)

The All-In (Civic Anchor) concept involves significant investment to improve the area's connectivity. It also dedicates a large area for a civic anchor and includes a substantial expansion of Borden Park. Cumulatively, these investments allow for the creation of a new urban community while also creating ample space for amenities and events with regional appeal. The infrastructure investments and anchors in the concept include:

- + Coliseum LRT station moved to 117 Ave
- + New Roadway LRT crossing at 115 Avenue
- Borden Park expanded with sports fields, urban agriculture + area stormpond (30 ha)
- + Wayne Gretzky Drive transformed into urban boulevard
- + 118 Ave raised to be at-grade
- + LRT facility in Montrose
- + Local connections improved to neighbouring communities + river valley
- + Education anchor
- + Large-scale civic anchor
- + Potential employment anchor







32/40



45% / 55%



3,600



8,000



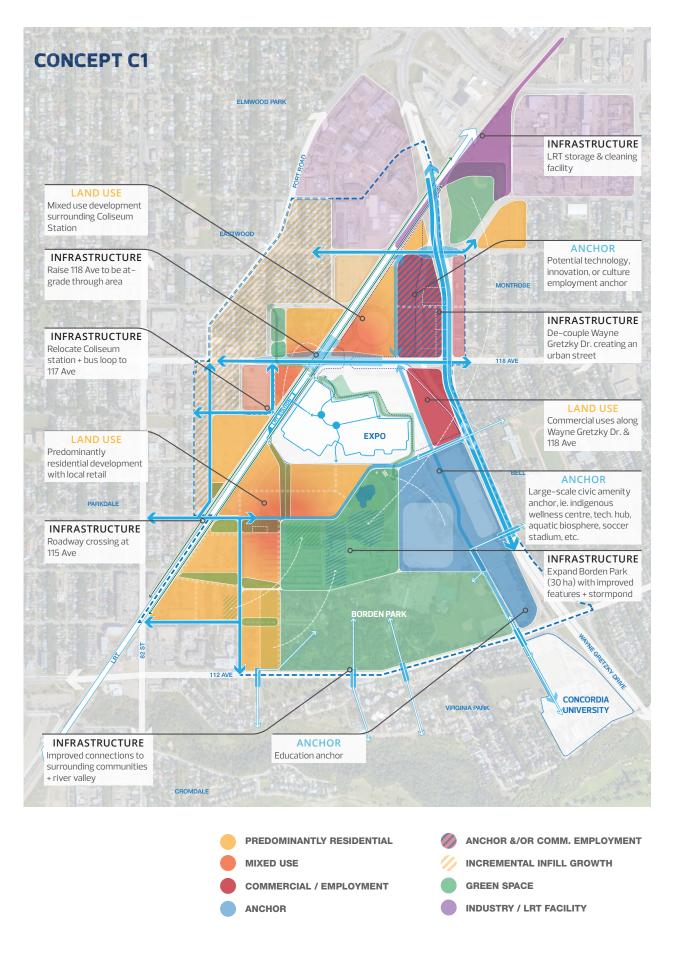
2,300



15-25 years



40 ha (36 ha City)



CONCEPT C2: ALL-IN (REGIONAL PARK)

The All-In (Regional Park) concept is about significant investment in improving the area's connectivity, and expanding its open space. Through these investments, the space for a new urban community surrounded by an expanded Borden Park is created, and the communities along 118 Avenue are reconnected through major transformations to the urban fabric. Concept C2 has the same infrastructure investments as Concept C1, the only difference being the addition of a potential amenity anchor in the Expo Centre:



- + Coliseum LRT station moved to 117 Ave
- + New Roadway LRT crossing at 115 Avenue
- + Expand Borden Park with sports fields, urban agriculture + area stormpond (30 ha)
- + Transform Wayne Gretzky Drive into urban boulevard
- + 118 Ave raised to be at-grade
- + LRT facility in Montrose
- + Local connections improved to neighbouring communities + river valley
- + Education anchor
- + Amenity anchor in the Expo Centre
- + Large-scale civic anchor





32/40



45% / 55%



4,250



9,500



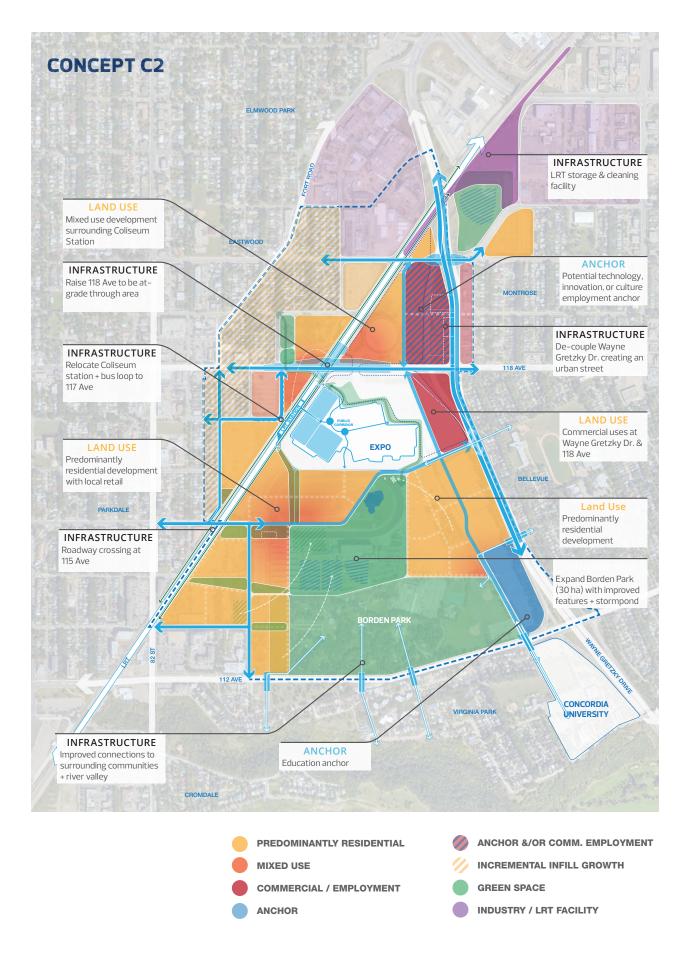
2.000



20-30 years



51ha (46 ha City)



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The project team met with several external and internal stakeholder groups throughout the Concept Development Phase and presented four preliminary concepts for feedback.

External Stakeholders

The four concepts were shared at the following stakeholder meetings and events:

- + August 15 Urban Development Institute
- + August 29 Industry
- August 30 Community Stakeholder Committee & District G
- September 10 EndPoverty Edmonton Indigenous Circle
- + October 1 Confederacy of Treaty 6 Elders
- + October 4 Chamber of Commerce
- + October 9 NextGen
- + October 12 Bent Arrow Soup and Bannock
- + October 16 Edmonton Design Committee
- + October 19 Energy Transition Advisory Committee

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public Concept Review | September 18

Two public engagement sessions were hosted on September 18 at Bellevue Community League Hall — one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Draft concepts and policy directions were presented for public feedback. The project team heard from 181 people who attended the sessions.

Online Survey | September 18-30

An online Insight Survey was launched the same day as the Public Concept Review workshops. The survey provided information about the concepts and asked a series of questions similar to those discussed at the public event. A total of 1,450 responses were received.

Highlands Renewal Open House | September 27

The project team attended the urban renewal open house with boards and concepts to share information and collect feedback on the concepts.



ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS Fall 2018 181
Public Event Attendees

21 Community Groups Engaged With 1,450 Survey Participants

FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Meetings with stakeholders involved a presentation from the project team about the concepts followed by a discussion and question period. The following presents a summary of the likes, concerns, and suggestions provided by the various stakeholder groups.

COMMUNITY

Community stakeholders include the Community Stakeholder Committee, District G, and participants in the Highlands Neighbourhood Renewal Open House.
Community stakeholders generally preferred Concept B: Connected Community.

Likes

- + Enhancements and additions to Borden Park
- Improved connections to neighbourhoods and pedestrian and cycle routes
- Location of LRT Storage and Cleaning Facility in northern site
- Addition of an LRT Station, and focus on transitoriented development (TOD)
- Providing a Civic Anchor

Concerns

- + City needs to find a home for K-Days
- + Impacts of events in Borden Park on residents
- + Future of Bellevue Community League Hall
- Traffic impacts of infrastructure changes to Wayne Gretzky Drive and 118 Avenue

Suggestions

- + Increase residential frontage on Borden Park
- + Include affordable housing in the development
- + Provide ability to "age in place"

INDIGENOUS

Indigenous stakeholders include EndPoverty Edmonton Indigenous Circle, Confederacy of Treaty 6 Elders, and participants of Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society's Soup and Bannock Event. Generally, Indigenous stakeholders preferred Concept C1: All-In (Civic Anchor).

Likes

- Potential site for an Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre and healing gardens
- + Enhancements and additions to Borden Park

Concerns

- Conflicting views on providing affordable housing: some worried it will become "ghetto", others saw an opportunity to house those in need
- City needs to find a home for K-Days, or if it stays mitigate noise impacts
- + Some safety concerns with housing around the park

Suggestions

- + Naturalize more of the site/park space
- + Reduce environmental impacts of development
- + Add more food and educational spaces
- + Incorporate Indigenous placemaking
- + Save land for development by Indigenous people
- + Conduct more engagement with the rest of the city
- + Look into repurposing the Coliseum

DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS

Development industry and business stakeholders include the Urban Development Institute, general Development Industry meeting participants, Chamber of Commerce, and Edmonton Design Committee. Some of the development industry and business stakeholders expressed a preference for Concept A: Baseline.

Likes

+ Integrating the site with existing communities

Concerns

- Differing opinions on whether the concepts were too optimistic or not ambitious enough
- + Too much uncertainty with lengthy timelines
- Finding the right mix of density and building types, with limited demand for high density in the area
- + Cost vs. return on investment of infrastructure moves
- + Impacts of redevelopment on the Expo Centre
- + Size of development parcels to be sold

Suggestions

- + Promote an overall theme for the redevelopment
- + Factor in traffic and utility studies
- + Start with retail, then address housing markets
- + Address stormwater management in the concepts
- + Demonstrate need for additional public facilities
- + Engage with institutional investors
- Determine a weighted scoring against the Guiding Principles
- + Open discussion of repurposing the Coliseum
- Explore adding green space north of 118 Avenue

SPECIAL INTEREST

Special interst stakeholders include NextGen and the Energy Transition Advisory Committee (ETAC). Neither group indicated a preference for one concept.

Likes

- + Emphasis on transit-oriented development (TOD)
- Aspirations for the redevelopment to do something special with the site, recognizing its history of celebration

Concerns

- Uncertain if the site should continue to support citywide gathering functions
- How the economics behind the concepts were developed

Suggestions

- Attract a broad spectrum of residents to the new community
- Ensure the redevelopment demonstrates climate change leadership

PUBLIC CONCEPT REVIEW

On September 18, 181 people attended a drop-in workshop at Bellevue Community Hall to review four preliminary concepts for the Exhibition Lands site.

Two public sessions were hosted in Bellevue Community League Hall on September 18, 2018 — an afternoon session from 1–3 pm and an evening session from 5–8 pm. Attendees were invited to view a series of introductory panels describing the project and process to date.

At both sessions, the project team presented an overview of the process and thorough overview of the concepts.

Participants were invited to view panels of each of the concepts, discuss them with the project team, and provide comments on their likes and concerns using sticky notes. In total, the team received 526 comments on the concepts.

Participants were invited to review preliminary policy directions tied to each of the project's Guiding Principles and asked to provide feedback and identify their top policy priorities. Over the two sessions, 499 dots were added to the boards.





526 499

Concept Policy Direction Dots Placed

PUBLIC WORKSHOP RESULTS: CONCEPTS

In general, the results indicated that Concept A: Baseline was the least favoured by the attendees, having the least positive comments. Concept C1: All–In (Civic Anchor) received the most positive comments, though it also had some of the most concerns.

Concepts B: Connected Community and C2: All-In (Regional Park) had an equal number of positive comments, however Concept B had more concerns.

Concept A: Baseline

Though some people liked the amount of housing provided in Concept A and the low public investment, there were concerns with the lack of community benefit in this concept. Participants said that the concept was not innovative enough and was too tailored to private development.

Concept B: Connected Community

In this concept, positive comments focused around the addition of a second LRT station and moving the LRT Cleaning and Storage Facility. People also liked the larger Borden Park and the potential expansion of Concordia University. Concerns were expressed about Expo parking, as well as fear that Borden Park would shrink or be used for

large disruptive events. Opinions differed on whether to unite the north and southbound lanes of Wayne Gretzky Drive north of 118 Ave. Some people supported the idea of an urban boulevard, while others felt this would negatively impact traffic flow.

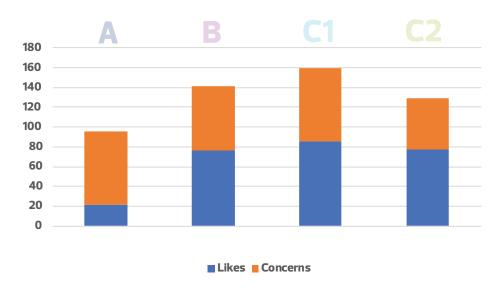
Concept C1: All-In (Civic Anchor)

Related to Concept C1, participants liked the location of the LRT Cleaning and Storage Facility and the expansion of Borden Park. They also supported bringing 118 Avenue to grade. Many people liked the idea of having space on the site reserved for a major civic amenity or anchor, though several people disagreed with potentially using the anchor site for a soccer stadium. Some suggested that the civic anchor could be smaller or more campus-like and better integrated into the surroundings, rather than a large building with parking. There were some concerns around having at-grade LRT crossings and the traffic issues this could cause.

Concept C2: All-In (Regional Park)

Very similar to the responses to Concept C1, people liked the location of the LRT Cleaning and Storage Facility and the expansion of Borden Park in Concept C2. People also liked the university expansion, though many also expressed a concern that access to shared recreation facilities would need to be guaranteed for the public. The raising of 118 Avenue to grade in this scenario was contentious: some believed this was a great idea while others thought it would be too costly and the at-grade LRT station would impede traffic.

Public Concept Review Comments



PUBLIC WORKSHOP RESULTS: POLICY

For the policy direction activity, participants were given six dots and asked to choose their top six from the list of 33 policy topics that are most important to them. The following table shows the 11 top priorities expressed by those who participated in the activity.

In addition to the 499 policy direction dots placed on the panels throughout the two sessions, there were 22 comments provided.

People expressed their concerns for where K-Days will go with the redevelopment of the site and how the area's legacy of being a gathering and events space for Edmontonians will be honoured in the new redevelopment. Several comments also referred to Borden Park and the need to increase the amount of green space and do a better job of programming those spaces for public use.

Policy Direction	Number of Dots
Pedestrian Connectivity & Walkability	34
Connected Parks & Open Spaces	32
Gathering & Event Spaces	30
Training Centre / Educational Facilities	27
Recreation Opportunities	23
Mixed Use Development	21
Heritage Preservation	21
Food Security & Urban Agriculture	21
Pedestrian Scale Design	20
Indigenous Representation	20
Multi-purpose Spaces	20



ONLINE SURVEY

From September 18–30, 1,450 people responded to the City's online survey on the four preliminary concepts.

The online survey provided an opportunity for people who could not attend the public event on September 18 to review the four concepts and provide their input.

OVERALL RESULTS

The results of the survey were relatively consistent with the results from the public event. In the survey, people were asked two questions.

The first questions asked respondents to indicate their level of support for all four of the concepts.

Concept A: Baseline received the lowest amount of support from respondents (41%), while

Concept B: Connected Community received the highest support (60%). Concept C1: All-In (Civic Anchor) and C2: All-In (Regional Park) received almost equal support (50%

and 49%).

Online Survey Level of Support

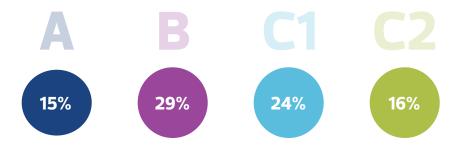
A B C1 C2

100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

Support Neutral Oppose Unsure

The second question asked respondents to identify which of the four concepts they liked the most. The results were similar again, with **Concept B: Connected Community** being most people's top choice.

Which concept do you prefer?



CONCEPT RESULTS

The survey asked participants to identify their favourite elements of each concept and their most pressing concerns from a list. Survey respondents were also invited to submit other comments through open ended questions for each concept.

Concept A: Baseline

Top Likes:

- + Small addition to Borden Park
- + Renovated/updated Coliseum LRT Station
- + Cost of development
- + Amount of housing
- + Amount of green space

Top Concerns:

- + Lack of anchor investments/major developments
- + Amount of housing
- + Timeline of development
- + The location of the LRT Storage and Cleaning Facility

Survey respondents wrote that Concept C1 provided very little improvement for the area and was not innovative enough. Opinions varied about the amount of housing in this concept: some people wanted to see greater density, while others believed that too much of the site was residential development. Some suggested that there be a greater mix of uses.

Concept B: Connected Community

Top Likes:

- Education/recreation/community anchor north of Concordia University
- + Public amenity in the Expo Centre
- + Amount of green space
- Space for two major cultural/employment developments
- Improved local connections to the surrounding communities

Top Concerns:

- + The timeline for the development
- + The new LRT station south of 115 Ave
- Unification of north and south lanes of Wayne Gretzky Drive

- + Cost of the development
- Reposition of Borden Park and addition of sports fiields, a pond, and other amenities

Multiple comments for this concept related to housing. Some respondents believed that there should be a greater mix of uses and higher density of housing provided. There were also concerns about changes to Borden Park, with several comments calling for more green space in the concept.

Concept C1: All-In (Civic Anchor)

Top Likes:

- + Expansion of Borden Park
- + Amount of green space
- + Large sport and leisure centre/attraction
- + Education campus north of Concordia
- Improved connections between Kinnaird Ravine and Borden Park

Top Concerns:

- + Cost of development
- + Raising 118 Avenue to grade
- + Timeline of development
- Relocation of Coliseum LRT Station and bus loop south to the Expo Centre

Respondents expressed concerns about the timeline and cost of this concept, as well as the limited return on investment compared to the cost.

Concept C2: All-In (Regional Park)

Top Likes:

- + Expanding Borden Park
- + Amount of green space
- + Large sport and leisure centre/attraction
- + Amount of housing
- + Education campus north of Concordia University
- Relocation of Coliseum LRT Station and bus loop south to Expo Centre
- Improved connections between Kinnnaird Ravine and Borden Park
- + Improved connections to neighbouring communities

Top Concerns:

- + Cost of development
- + Timeline of development
- + Raising 118 Ave to grade
- Relocating Coliseum LRT Station and bus loop south to the Expo Centre
- Unification of north and south lanes of Wayne Gretzky Drive

Several comments indicated concern over the timeline for redevelopment and cost of the concept to taxpayers. There were mixed opinions about incorporating an additional use into the older halls of the Expo Centre: some believed this would take up valuable event space, while others saw an opportunity to provide an amenity for residents.

SURVEY PRIORITIES

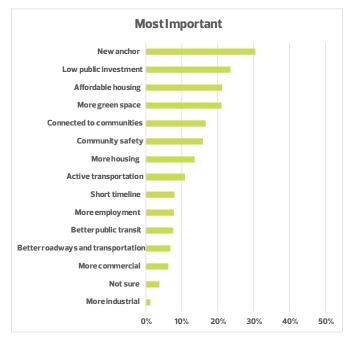
In the survey, respondents were presented with a list of 15 potential priorities and were asked to identify the two that were most and least important to them.

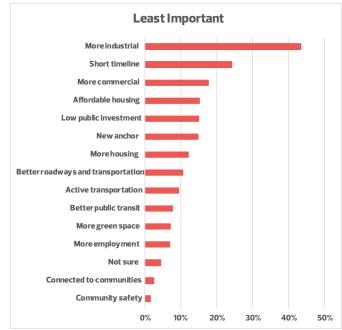
Overall, the most important priority selected was a creating a new anchor use on the site. The second most important priority was limiting the degree of public investment.

The least important priority from the list was providing more industrial land, followed by having a short timeline for completion.

In addition to selecting from the list, survey respondents were provided the opportunity to add priorities that they felt were missing. These additions included:

- + Densifying the site
- + Transit oriented development
- Repurposing the Coliseum and other buildings on the site
- + Finding a home for K-Days and other events
- Honouring the history of the site and legacy of being a gathering place for the city
- Incorporating programs and spaces to serve
 Edmonton's Indigenous communities, such as a Culture
 Wellness Centre or housing for Elders
- + Ensuring the site hosts some form of attraction/reason for people to visit
- Honouring the agricultural history of the site and providing more food spaces
- Providing more recreation opportunities for the surrounding communities
- Ensuring the redevelopment helps achieve the City's sustainability goals





SUMMARY

Public and stakeholder engagement in Phase 3 yielded a range of perspectives on the priorities for the redevelopment of the Exhibition Lands. From the results, a series of key themes were identified relating to issues that showed overwhelming support, strong opposition, or a clear divergence of views.

Cost vs. Community Benefit

In general, keeping the level of public investment low is an priority for most people. Multiple people expressed concerns about the increased tax burden they felt they would have to face if a higher investment option was selected; however, there was a significant number of people that feel that the City still needs to push beyond Concept A: Baseline concept and invest enough in the redevelopment to ensure meaningful benefits for local communities, as well as the city. These benefits included green spaces, recreation, wellness, ceremonial spaces, and education spaces.

Green Space

Overall, most people liked the idea of increasing the size of Borden Park and adding green space connections. There were some conflicting opinions about the programming of the park. Some felt that incorporating gathering space for events would be an excellent use for the park, while others were concerned that the impacts of major events would be too great on new and existing neighbourhoods.

City Role in Redevelopment

One of the recurring themes was how involved the City should be in the redevelopment of the Exhibition Lands. Some feel that selling more of the land for private development will increase the likelihood of the project's success, while others feel that the City should be highly involved to ensure that the site is developed more comprehensively and with public interest in mind. Several groups also indicated a desire for the City to reserve and allocate land for Indigenous development. There was

distrust expressed for both the private and public sector interests in the site.

Connected Communities

The desire for connectivity and integration with surrounding communities was a theme throughout the engagement. Many people appreciated the improvements to public transportation in the concepts and the identification of clear walking and cycling connections to Borden Park and the Expo Centre. Many also expressed a desire for the site to become a "complete community", with a balance of uses to support additional residents to the area.

Timeline

Though not as frequently mentioned as the cost of development, the amount of time to complete redevelopment of the Exhibition Lands was stated as a concern for several people. Some believed that with such a long timeframe there was a lack of certainty in the plans and a risk that plans would be changed or watered down over time. Others were unhappy that they would likely never see the completion of the redevelopment in their lifetimes.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing was flagged as an important issue for many. People expressed that there is a need for housing types to support lower to middle–income families. Some comments specifically mentioned a need for more assisted living and seniors housing options, affordable housing for Indigenous people, as well as shelters for those experiencing homelessness. Others expressed concerns that the City would concentrate too much low–income housing in one area, feeling that this would not help to reinvigorate the site or allow low–income families to improve their living situation.

The 'Exhibition' in Exhibition Lands

A key theme that arose was how the concepts might honour the site's history of hosting exhibitions. Some individuals were disappointed that the K-Days festival was not incorporated into the concepts and were concerned that it might be relocated. Others identified a need for the site to honour this heritage in the redevelopment somehow, even if the festival is moved to an alternate location.

Transit and Traffic

Concerns around impacts to transportation centered primarily on the potential addition of at–grade LRT crossings. Several individuals expressed concern for the impacts this would have on traffic flow in the area. Additionally, there were mixed opinions on the unification of the north and southbound lanes of Wayne Gretzky Drive, with some liking the improved pedestrian experience this would offer and others concerned that this would stall traffic and be too costly.

Sustainable Development

Several people said redevelopment must improve the sustainability and resilience of Edmonton. One of the key sustainability issues was the desire for the Coliseum to be re-purposed, rather than demolished.

NEXT STEPS

Concept Refinement

Phase 4 will involve continued economic and strategic analysis to refine the four preliminary concepts into one preferred concept. The results of the Phase 3 Engagement summarized in this What We Heard Report will be considered alongside the Guiding Principles, market analysis, and technical input in the creation of the preferred concept.

The preferred concept will be shared with the project's external and Internal stakeholders, as well as the City's Urban Planning Committee for comment. The preferred concept will then be further refined and presented to the public for review.



We would like to thank everyone who has participated in the engagement for this project so far and welcome you to join us for the final phase of engagement in the new year!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sign up for the project newsletter and learn about future engagement opportunities at **edmonton.ca/exhibitionlands**