

The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in a white, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a lush green field in the foreground, with a dense forest of tall trees in the middle ground, and a blue sky with wispy white clouds in the upper portion.

Edmonton

OLESKIW

RIVER VALLEY PARK

MASTER PLAN

What We Heard Report
Phase 3: Concept Options
March 2018

Project Overview

The Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan project is an opportunity for Edmontonians to work with the City of Edmonton to develop a 25-year vision and guiding principles for the park. As part of the region's open space network, Oleskiw River Valley Park is an essential ecological and cultural connector.

Oleskiw River Valley Park is situated on a floodplain within the North Saskatchewan River Valley in the southwest quadrant of the City of Edmonton. The area offers visitors from surrounding neighbourhoods and the broader region a refuge from the city and an escape into nature. The park provides opportunities to walk, run and bike through the slopes, field and forest that compose the landscape, allowing visitors to connect with their neighbours and experience moments of solitude in a natural environment.

Oleskiw River Valley Park is an important link in Edmonton's River Valley park network. With the construction of a new multi-use trail and the Terwilligar Park Footbridge, the park area is expected to experience a greater intensity of use over the next few years. As a result, the City of Edmonton has identified the need for this first formal planning process for the park— a Master Plan to guide and coordinate future development and activity.

The purpose of the Master Plan is to establish a 25-year vision and management plan for the park area. As part of the 10-Year Capital Investment Agenda, The River Valley Park Renewal program identifies the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan as a key project that will direct investment for the park.

Through community consultation using a variety of engagement tools and techniques, the City is engaging a broad audience to help develop a vision and concept plan for the park. This report summarizes What We Heard during the third phase of public engagement for the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan. Input from this phase of public engagement will contribute to the refinement of the vision and concept plan.

Oleskiw River Valley Park Context



The Master Plan Process

Oleskiw River Valley Park offers visitors an escape into nature. Part of the park's success can be credited to forward-looking policy, planning and community involvement. To create a vision that protects the park while reflecting the needs of citizens, there is a need to look forward and consider the incredible growth and changing demographics that will occur in Edmonton in the coming years.

The River Valley Park Renewal Program identifies a long-term strategic approach to renewing parks located in the River Valley. The program was initiated by key drivers such as City policies, changing demographics, demand, recreational needs

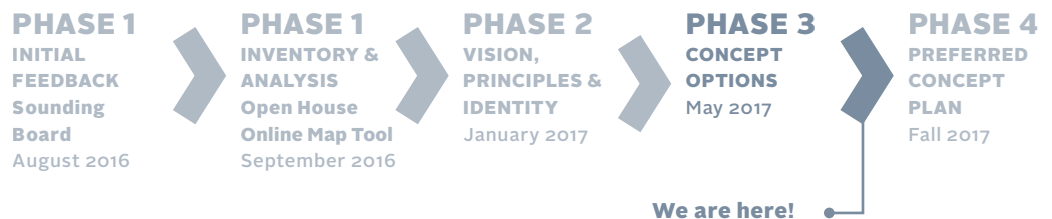
and ageing infrastructure. Park renewal within the River Valley is based on an analysis of the physical condition and functionality of park elements as well as the ability to meet existing (and future) capacity.

The Master Plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park will build on existing plans, policies and initiatives while identifying public needs and priorities. It will provide direction for environmental management as well as recommendations for civic, cultural and recreational uses that are appropriate to the park. The Master Plan will also be guided by higher-level policy, such as the Ribbon of Green (2018) Plan for Edmonton's River Valley.

City of Edmonton's Park and Facility Development Process. This project is in the CONCEPT phase.



Oleskiw River Valley Park: Engagement time line



Engagement Plan

An engagement strategy using multiple consultation techniques allows the public to provide input into the development of the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan. Four phases of public engagement will help develop a Master Plan for the park that responds to community needs and City priorities.

The public is invited to participate in four phases of engagement to help develop the Master Plan for Oleskiw River Valley Park. Each phase includes internal and external stakeholder sessions, online engagement and public open houses.

External stakeholders include interest groups, neighbourhood groups and other organizations who have expressed an interest in being more deeply involved in the Master Plan process. Internal stakeholders are City of Edmonton employees who can provide input or advice on specific aspects of the park.

Online engagement, in the form of surveys, interactive mapping and activities, gives the public an opportunity to provide their input at their convenience. These options are offered to facilitate input from those who are unable to attend in-person sessions and for those who want to provide additional comments. Material shared at public events and What We Heard Reports are also available online at edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan

Phase 1: Project Introduction, Inventory & Analysis August – September 2016

In Phase 1, the City sought initial feedback on the existing conditions of the project area. We asked the public: what do you like about the park space, why it is important to you and what do you want to see in the future?

Information presented to the public and stakeholders included the project scope and boundaries; key existing features, systems and functions of the park; and the

relationship of the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan with parallel projects such as the Ribbon of Green (2018) Plan and BREATHE: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy.

Public and stakeholder input identified key dreams, desires, issues and themes. This input informed the development of a park vision, identity and program, as well as the concept options presented in this report.

Phase 2: Vision, Principles & Identity June 2017

In Phase 2, the City looked to the public to help improve their understanding of the opportunities and constraints in the park, which helped to inform the vision. The public and stakeholders provided input on the material presented and were asked to prioritize elements of the vision statement and concept options as well as contribute to the inspiration for an official park name.

Phase 3: Concept Options November 2017

In Phase 3, the City asked for feedback on more developed concepts for the park. Two variations on proposed activities, features and elements for the park were presented within two concept plans. The public and stakeholders were asked to choose which option they preferred and to prioritize the various proposed elements in each.

Feedback from this phase of engagement will be used to develop a preferred concept plan for the Master Plan, which will be presented in Spring 2018.



We are
here

Phase 4: Preferred Concept Plan

Spring 2018

In Phase 4, the City will present a refined concept for the park that integrates the priorities and feedback received in Phase 3. The public and stakeholders will be provided with the opportunity to give feedback on the preferred concept to help fine-tune the program and its features. This will support the development of a preferred concept that responds to the needs of the community and park users.

Additional Engagement

Feedback from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of engagement has been integral to the City's understanding of programmatic and operational needs for the park. The City is also reaching out to the following communities to gain a more holistic understanding of public needs for the Master Plan:

- » Indigenous Peoples through outreach efforts associated with multiple City projects including BREATHE: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy, the River Access Strategy and the Ribbon of Green (2018) Plan
- » Multi-cultural communities through workshops aided by the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op
- » Potential partners to activate the park, focusing on nature education and ecological learning

As data from these outreach methods becomes available, the City will incorporate the findings into the Master Plan.

Public Involvement in the Master Plan Process

The City of Edmonton prioritizes public engagement as part of the Master Plan process. It is integral to decision-making.

Discover

As part of the 10-Year Capital Investment Agenda, The River Valley Park Renewal Program has identified Oleskiw River Valley Park for Master Plan development to direct investment for the park.

Develop

Along with City priorities and technical data, public input will be used at each stage in the process to develop the Master Plan.

Deliver

The goal is to fund the next stages of implementation as part of the 2019–22 budget cycle.



What We Did

Phase 3 – Concept Options

In November 2017, two draft concept options for Oleskiw River Valley Park were presented to Edmontonians through a public open house, an online survey, workshops and focused citizen engagement opportunities. Over 420 people participated in the phase 3 engagement in person and online.

In this phase, two vision statements with associated concept options for the park were presented. To facilitate the collection of balanced, comprehensive feedback, the public was invited to participate at a drop-in open house. Participants were provided with an online option that could be completed at their convenience. Internal and external stakeholders were invited to attend workshop sessions to encourage integrated feedback and problem-solving across user groups, integration with city-wide initiatives and opportunities for focused discussions. The engagement process was designed to ensure that perspectives with potentially diverging insights were heard.

What were the engagement opportunities?

Four opportunities for participation were available to stakeholders and citizens during this phase. The public open house, external stakeholder workshop and internal stakeholder open house were organized in coordination with Ribbon of Green (2018) Plan Phase 2 engagement sessions.

Public Open House

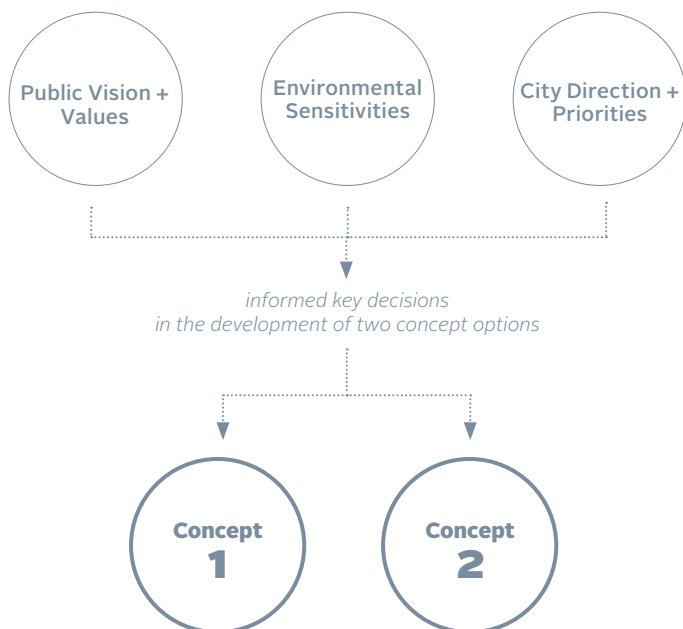
November 7, 2017 | Westridge Wolf Willow Country Club Community League, 4-8pm

79 Attendees

At the open house, participants were presented with information on the project process and two concept options. After signing in, they were given a handout that provided an agenda for the evening and instructions for how to participate in the activities. The handout also provided information about next steps and directed visitors to the website.

Four engagement stations were set up to encourage discussion and feedback, with facilitators at each station. A series of highly visual information panels offered further details on the project and the concept options presented. Engagement stations provided participants with the opportunity to review the concept plans using conceptual images and maps that explored both the big ideas and theme-based initiatives of each concept option.

Forty-one of the attendees came from adjacent neighbourhoods; the remainder of attendees came from across the city.



Online Survey + Mapping Tool

November 6 to November 26, 2017

289 survey respondents | 19 online mapping tool respondents

To provide an opportunity for citizens to provide feedback at their convenience, a version of the open-house information and activities was available online for two weeks. The survey was advertised through the City's social media, outreach materials (such as mailed flyers) and in-person events. In addition to being available on the project website (edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan), the survey was distributed through Edmonton's Insight Community.

As part of this survey, an online map tool was developed to capture spatial feedback from participants. The interface allowed the public to provide detailed comments about areas in each concept option they liked or would like to see improved.

External Stakeholder Workshop

November 4, 2017 | Edmonton Tower, 12:30 – 2pm

14 Participants

Stakeholders were invited to attend a 1.5-hour session run in conjunction with the Ribbon of Green (2018) external stakeholder workshop to discuss the proposed park concept options. Stakeholders were provided with an in-depth walk-through of the vision statements and concept options and time for small group discussions throughout the session. Stakeholders also provided input in individual surveys.

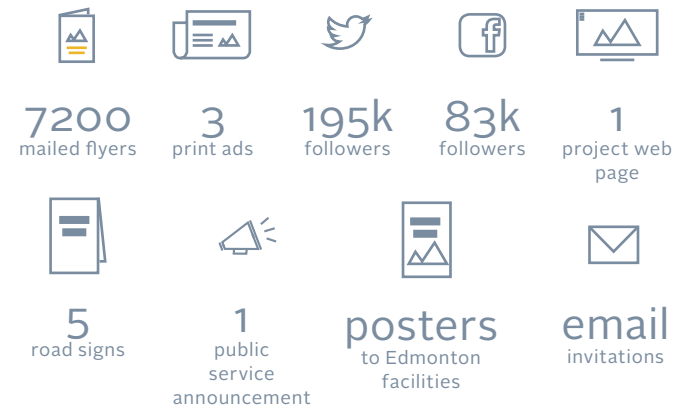
Represented organizations:

- » Alberta Association of Landscape Architects
- » Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Edmonton Branch
- » Ceyana Canoe Club
- » Canadian Federation of University Women - Environment Group
- » Dogs Off Leash Ambassador
- » Edmonton & Area Land Trust
- » Edmonton Bicycle Commuters
- » Edmonton Food Council
- » Edmonton Heritage Council
- » Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance
- » Edmonton Native Plant Group
- » Edmonton River Valley Coalition
- » Edmonton Rowing Club
- » Edmonton Tourism
- » North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society
- » River Valley Alliance
- » Sierra Club Canada
- » The Ridge Community League
- » Twin Brooks Community League
- » University of Alberta Student's Union
- » Wedgewood Ravine Community League
- » Wild Rose Ramblers

Internal Stakeholder Open House

A two-hour drop-in session for City staff to learn about the concept options was available over lunch. City staff perused the panels and provided feedback.

How were engagements advertised?



What background information was provided?

To facilitate a holistic conversation about the two concept options being presented and to obtain informed feedback grounded in a strong understanding of the context, citizens were provided with information about past work:

- » Project background, work completed to-date and engagement feedback from the past two phases
- » A summary of environmental sensitivities analysis
- » Two vision statements
- » Two concept options corresponding to the vision statements, presented as a response to the five themes that emerged as priorities from past engagements

The Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan Interim Report was produced in conjunction with Phase 3 engagement material to summarize the concept development process and provide a comprehensive description of both concept options. In this report, the City summarizes how an understanding of environmental sensitivities and other constraints in the park influenced the development of the concept options, directed the placement of elements in the park and dictated the intensity of activities suggested. The report also provides a rationale as to the integration of City policy, site analysis and public input into the development of the two park visions and concept plans. The Interim Report and other project information is available at edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan

What questions were asked?

Five main questions were presented to encourage and direct feedback:



Which vision statement represents what you would like to see in the future for this park?

Participants were presented with two vision statements and asked for their level of support for each. Participants could also provide written comments on the board if they wanted to add thoughts or ideas for the vision statements.

Feedback from this question will refine the vision into one cohesive direction that guides planning for the park over the next 25 years.



Which concept do you prefer for each theme?

To provide more detail on the differences between the two concepts, maps and images were presented under the following themes: Access & Circulation, Park Use & Amenities, Natural Asset Management and Atmosphere & Identity. Strategic decisions for each concept were highlighted and participants were asked to provide input on which concept they preferred for each theme. They were also given the opportunity to provide suggestions for improvement for each concept.

The maps for Access & Circulation, Park Use & Amenities and Natural Asset Management were available online through the online mapping tool for participants to provide spatial feedback that, in addition to the open house and online survey feedback, will be used to inform the development of the preferred concept plan.



Which concept responds best to the preferred vision, needs and priorities for this park overall?

Participants were asked to select the concept that they preferred overall. If they could see elements from each concept combined into a preferred concept option, they were asked to provide this feedback as well.



What specific park elements do you prefer?

Specific elements, features and programs from both concept options were presented on panels and the public and stakeholders were asked for their level of support for each one. The overall level of support and comments for each element, feature and program from this activity will directly influence the development of the final concept plan.



Help name this park!

To gain more feedback and support for a park name inspiration, participants were again asked to provide their input on a preferred park name inspiration the following categories: Historical, Indigenous Heritage, Natural Heritage and Political Figures.

Who participated in Phase 3?



79 attendees



14 attendees



308 participants



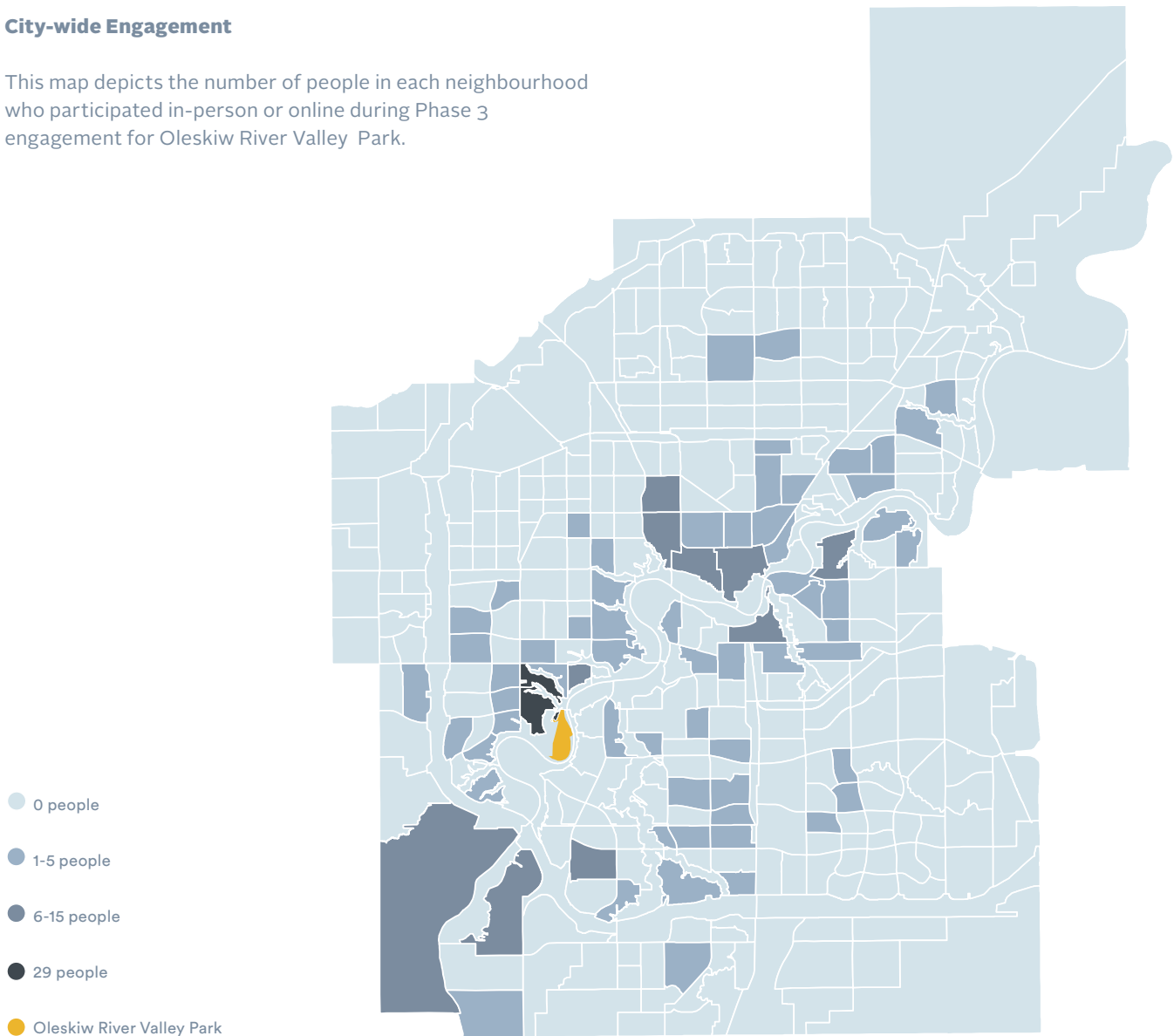
22 attendees

423

engaged citizens

City-wide Engagement

This map depicts the number of people in each neighbourhood who participated in-person or online during Phase 3 engagement for Oleskiw River Valley Park.



What We Heard

Phase 3 engagement provided a deeper understanding of the values and priorities of participants. This understanding will contribute to the decision-making process in the creation of a consolidated vision statement and concept plan.

After reviewing the feedback and comments from all activities, it is apparent that out of the two concept options presented, Concept 1 is in line with more people's values for the park.

However, taking a closer look at the subtleties in comments and suggestions provided by the public and stakeholders, there is no clear winner. The highest priority for the park for most participants is to protect and restore natural features, and to take advantage of any recreational opportunities that are compatible with a natural park. The interpretation of what this could look like in Oleskiw River Valley Park is different for each participant.

The details provided in the following sections help to shed light on the desired direction for the plan as well as the underlying values that should be represented in the Master Plan.

How did we analyze the feedback?

A rigorous process was used to analyze the engagement feedback. Comments from all sources were transcribed into a spreadsheet. Spatial comments were entered into the online map tool, and all geo-tagged comments were analyzed together. Once all the feedback was consolidated, comments were tagged for ideas, recommendations and themes. Quantitative information, such as 'votes' of support for various aspects of the plan are summarized and presented graphically in this report.

Themes Emerging from Phase 3 Feedback:

Access

Many participants appreciate the efforts to increase access into the park with new trails and activities. However, the lack of vehicle access into the park and considerations for potential parking issues remains important discussion topics. Other participants do not want to increase access into the park to keep it a natural space.

Intensity of Use

Participants shared different views on the intensity of activity that they feel should occur in the park. Some participants want to see lower activity levels than were presented in both concept options, while others think that the proposed features (i.e. for play or winter warming) would encourage more people to participate in outdoor activity.

Active Restoration

The restoration efforts proposed in both concept options are generally well supported. Participants are interested in the type of restoration that would take place and the level of intervention that would be needed from the City and partner organizations. Some participants want to see the re-generation of vegetation occur naturally.

Preservation

All participants value the natural character of the park and want to see this maintained. Some would like to see the open field maintained while others would prefer areas of the park to be re-forested. Many participants do not want human activity to impact the park's vegetation and wildlife.

Education

Both concept options presented included elements and programming to support nature education. These efforts are generally supported, but many participants want to see less infrastructure to support educational programming in the park. Some would also like to see cultural heritage interpretation in the park.

1,599

**in person + online
comments**

625
vision
preferences

48
spatially-mapped
comments

4,779
park element
preferences

“Restoring forest habitat is an ecological need and priority. I also would find it more attractive for visits, as there are few options for undeveloped, highly trafficked wooded areas.”

“It is an area where natural succession can be allowed to take place. But I think recreation needs to be mentioned. The trail network supports more than just nature interpretation, but healthy active pursuits of walking, cycling and running, among others.”

“We can learn much from our natural environments, but only if we allow them to be natural.”

“When planning for trail access it’s always important to consider wheelchairs and scooters and strollers, whether considering natural surfaces or otherwise.”

“I like the involvement of communities to take an active role in parks along the river valley.”

Question 1

Which vision statement represents what you would like to see in the future for this park?

462 online preferences
189 online comments
93 in-person preferences
53 in-person comments

The feedback from Phase 2 was used to create two unique vision statements to reflect a collective vision for the park. These vision statements provided guidance to the two concept plans. The public was asked to provide feedback on the two vision statements.

Overall, Vision Statement 1 is supported for its focus on nature and ecological restoration over recreational use and built infrastructure. Vision Statement 2 is supported for its focus on the protection and conservation of the natural environment and its emphasis on passive and health-benefiting recreational activities. Supporters of Vision Statement 2 also like the inclusion of education, interpretation and the recognition of the cultural heritage of the park. While Vision Statement 2 received a fair level of support, many participants said that they still prefer Vision Statement 1.

Those who do not support either vision statement expressed concerns over costs, conflicting priorities between human activity and restoration and the desire to focus on restoration instead of incorporating heritage and educational elements. Others do not want to see human intervention in the park.

Many people conveyed that they would like the final vision statement to contain elements of both vision statements presented in Phase 3.

Vision statement 1:

The Oleskiw River Valley Park provides essential habitat to a diversity of plants and animals and enhances ecological connectivity in the River Valley.

As a refuge from the city for Edmontonians, the park provides a setting where visitors can experience how the landscape changes over time and the restoration of ecological systems, enhanced through educational programs and nature interpretation .

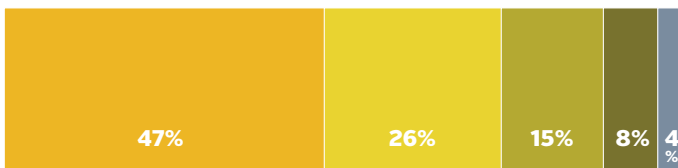
Vision statement 2

The Oleskiw River Valley Park provides an immersive experience into the natural landscape while educating visitors on the natural and cultural heritage of the site with nature interpretation and ecological learning.

The layered history of the park is celebrated through educational elements and passive recreational opportunities. Surrounded by habitat for plants and animals, visitors can learn about the landscape while creating new narratives for Edmonton's future generations.

What the public thinks about statement 1:

340 preferences



“It gives more of a message of retaining and restoring the natural habitat and...hopefully...protecting it.”

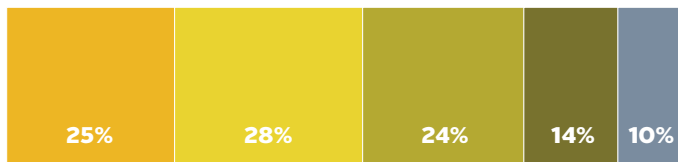
“This statement gives me hope that the city values our natural habitat.”

Vision Statement 1 was very well received, with 73% either strongly or somewhat in support of the statement. The public and stakeholders provided the following recommendations for the improvement of Vision Statement 1:

- » Mixed feedback on the use of the statement ‘refuge from the city’ (some view this as a negative comment toward the city)
- » Some want more recognition of recreational uses
- » Use simpler and more tangible language
- » Use stronger language to emphasize the importance of this ecological link in the River Valley
- » Incorporate the Indigenous heritage of the site if appropriate
- » Incorporate broader cultural heritage of the site
- » Consider how educational use and amenities could impact the natural areas and restoration efforts proposed

What the public thinks about statement 2:

285 preferences



“Both vision statements are good, but I like the inclusion of natural heritage.”

“It includes the cultural heritage of the site, and brings it into the present.”

Vision Statement 2 received fair support, with 53% either strongly or somewhat in support of the statement, however, the statement in its entirety was perceived to be too intrusive on the natural landscape. The public and stakeholders provided the following recommendations for the improvement of Vision Statement 2:

- » Use simpler and more tangible language
- » Incorporate the Indigenous heritage of the site if appropriate
- » Ensure activities do not negatively impact the natural features in the park
- » Unsure of need for focus on education or heritage
- » Consider level of development educational programming requires and what is appropriate for this site

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Neutral
- Somewhat do not support
- Do not support

What concepts were presented?

The following pages outline the two concept options presented to the public at in-person events and online for public and stakeholder feedback. More detail and information on the concept options may be found in the Interim Report, linked from the project website at edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan

Concept 1 Overview

The main objectives in Concept 1 are to restore native habitat in the park while integrating opportunities for visitors to appreciate and enjoy nature. Concept 1 integrates a staged restoration plan to expand the riparian forest, mimicking natural forms in the landscape. A learning circle at the north end of the park and a picnic, play and gathering area at the south end of the park contain the main amenity improvements proposed in this concept. New natural trails create connections across the park and rest stops are provided throughout to give visitors the opportunity to stop and enjoy nature views.

Design Strategies

- » Circulation and form are inspired by existing ephemeral streams and topographical patterns.
- » Key trail connections are created and trail experiences change through time with the evolution of re-naturalized habitat zones. Natural materials are used on new trails.
- » Wayfinding elements are integrated into the plan to improve safety and comfort.
- » Rest stops and seating are provided at regular intervals along trails.
- » Gateways and view points are enhanced with planting, signage and park amenities where appropriate.
- » Activities in the park are compatible with existing ecological sensitivities, habitat potential, surrounding land uses and the Ribbon of Green (2018).
- » Portions of the brome field are restored in stages to imitate natural succession patterns of a native riparian forest and meadow.
- » Formal viewpoints along the river increase a sense of connection to the river.
- » Interpretive elements and seasonal artwork showcase the changing landscape.
- » Opportunities are provided for educational programming, including day camps, culture camps, community groups and school groups. Programming could be provided in partnership with an environmental, Indigenous or educational group through a partnership with the City.
- » Winter activities, such as informal cross-country skiing and snow shoeing are encouraged.



Concept 1 Plan

Concept 2 Overview

In Concept 2, restoration efforts maintain open spaces in the park which, exposing traces of past uses. Educational elements and programming focus historical land uses and their effect on the landscape, as well as the restoration of native plant communities in the park. Restoration techniques, which are integrated with passive recreational and educational programming elements, enhance habitat in the park. New trails and rest stops improve accessibility throughout the park. An outdoor classroom and play area in the north and a picnic and gathering area in the south contain the main amenity improvements proposed in Concept 2.

Design Strategies

- » Circulation and form are defined by traces of past uses and ecological patterns, which are marked through the renewal of native vegetation and natural systems.
- » Key trail connections are created and trail materials are chosen to enhance the interpretive experience and accessibility where possible.
- » Wayfinding elements are integrated into the plan to improve safety and comfort.
- » Rest stops and seating are provided at regular intervals along trails.
- » Gateways and view points are enhanced with planting, signage and park amenities where appropriate.
- » Activities in the park are compatible with ecological sensitivities, habitat potential, surrounding land uses and the Ribbon of Green (2018).
- » Vegetation communities are restored to outline historic / ephemeral water bodies and create east-west connections in the park.
- » Much of the brome field is maintained. Some areas are restored with native prairie and forest vegetation.
- » Passive recreation takes place in pockets of the park, which also contain interpretive elements.
- » Formal viewpoints along the river increase a sense of connection to the river.
- » Opportunities are provided for educational programming, including day camps, culture camps, community groups and school groups. Programming could be provided in partnership with an environmental, Indigenous or educational group through a partnership with the City.
- » Winter activities, such as informal cross-country skiing and snow shoeing are encouraged.



Concept 2 Plan

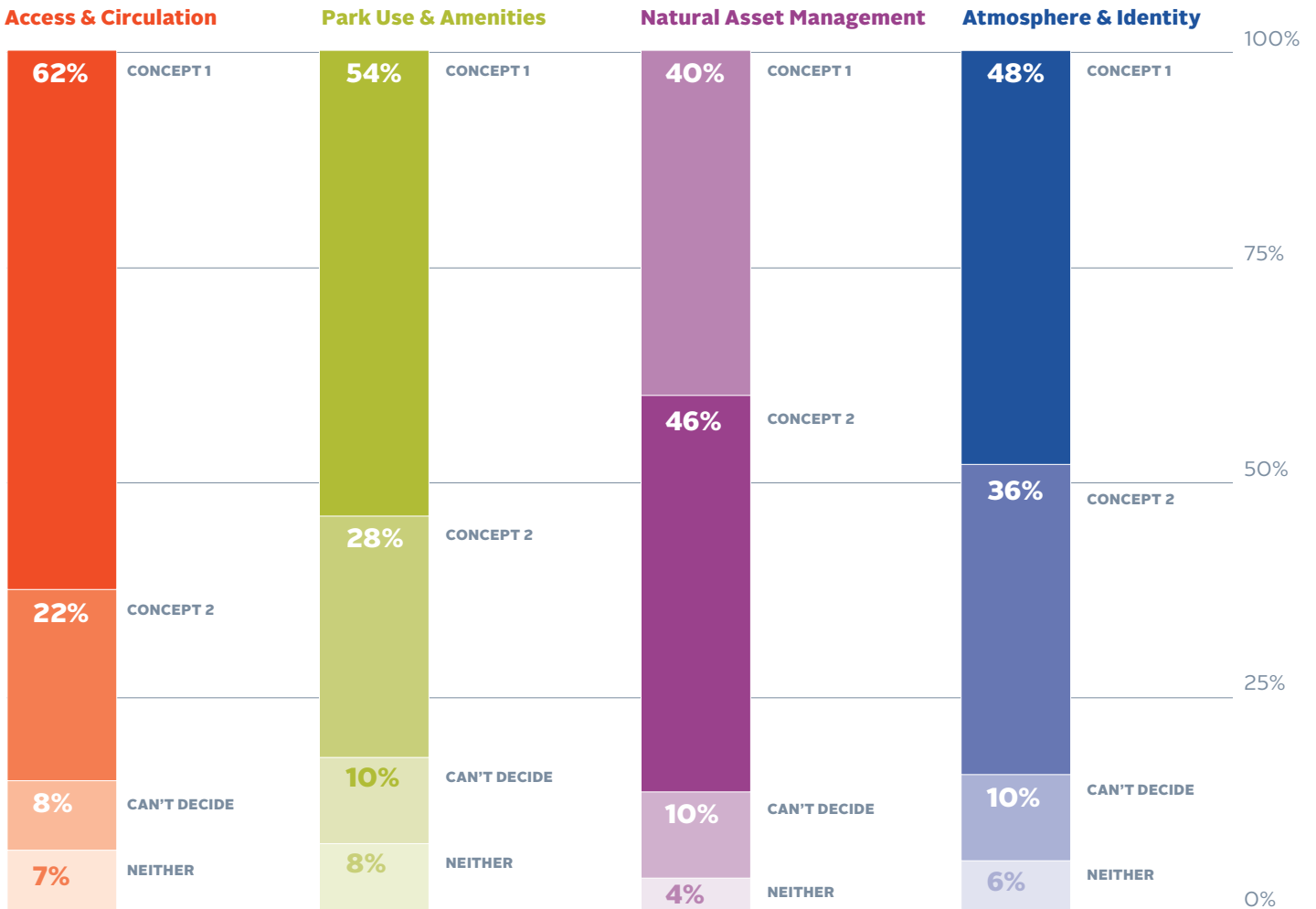
Question 2

Which concept do you prefer for each theme?

888 online preferences
762 online comments
240 in-person preferences
104 in-person comments

Feedback from this activity provides insight into the values of participants and the elements they would like to (or would not like to) see in the park. The concept plan was presented in four layers or themes: Access & Circulation, Park Use & Amenities, Natural Asset Management and Atmosphere & Identity. More detail and information on the themes (Access & Circulation, Park Use & Amenities, Natural Asset Management and Atmosphere & Identity) may be found in the Interim Report, linked from the project website at edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan

Participants selected which concept they preferred for each theme and provided comments. The following pages provide summaries of the feedback received.



Access & Circulation

289 preferences

Concept 1 is preferred over Concept 2 for features under Access & Circulation (including trails, signs and access points). Over-arching comments that relate to both concept options include:

- » Consider accessibility and mobility options (i.e. for wheelchairs)
- » Concern over removal of natural trail “Oleskiw Meadows” with proposed north-south granular trail connection in both concept options
- » Concern over conflict between cyclists and pedestrians on trails
- » Concern over existing flooding issues on trails
- » Too many trail markers on natural trails

62%

CONCEPT 1

Participants who chose Concept 1 find that the additional trails proposed provide more options for use throughout the park. Some want to see a separation between trail users (i.e. pedestrians and cyclists), and think that features in Concept 1 may help reduce conflicts between users. The new natural trail connection in the forest is popular among mountain bikers and those looking for separation between users on the natural trails. Some participants chose Concept 1 because they do not see the need for the east-west granular trail connection in Concept 2, and others said they would like Concept 1 better without the proposed north-south granular trail connection. Some chose Concept 1 because they like other features in the plan (i.e. re-forestation, less development).

22%

CONCEPT 2

Those who provided comments like Concept 2 because of the east-west granular trail connections. Overall, participants agree that only one east-west trail is necessary (instead of a loop), and the commemoration of the golf course received mixed reviews. Some participants like Concept 2 because it leaves the existing forest untouched. Others would like the concept better if it contained the new natural trail proposed in Concept 1. Some said that they do not experience conflict on the trails and see no need for a new natural trail. In some cases, participants chose Concept 2 because they like other features in the concept (i.e. educational components).

8%

CAN'T DECIDE

Participants who couldn't decide between the concepts noted that it was difficult to see a difference between the two. Others would like to leave the park the way it is and are concerned about the impacts of construction on the natural environment. Again, some couldn't decide because they disagree with the north-south granular trail that is seen to replace the existing “Oleskiw Meadows” natural trail.

7%

NEITHER

Some participants feel that both concepts propose too much development or too many trails. Costs and concerns about environmental impacts are high priorities. There were some participants who chose neither option because both concepts contain the north-south granular trail. Some people expressed that they do not want the park to change at all.



Park Use & Amenities

276 preferences

Concept 1 is seen as less intrusive and less costly by some, while Concept 2 appears lower impact to others. Many people conveyed their desire to keep the park natural with minimal (or no) development. Over-arching comments that relate to both concepts include:

- » Recognition by some of the north trail junction (near the Fort Edmonton Footbridge) as a place for wayfinding, rest area and pit washroom (which was not shown in either concept)
- » Several people would like to see washrooms at both ends of the park
- » Some people would like innovative natural play features for all ages
- » Some spoke of the sand bar as an essential part of the park and the need to recognize its use and management in the plan
- » The desire for winter activities (i.e. hiking, cross-country skiing, fat biking) was mentioned by many

54%

CONCEPT 1

Many of those who prefer Concept 1 think that amenities like washrooms, picnic areas and play features are more accessible near the Terwillegar Park Footbridge and clustered in a single location. Some people like the idea of providing winter warming structures to encourage winter use of the park, while others do not feel that winter installations would get enough use to justify their cost.

Many who chose Concept 1 support educational use in the park and like natural play features, but they do not want to see covered shelters or larger amphitheatres that might not get used frequently. The resting points proposed in Concept 1 are appreciated by some, while others see potential conflict between the resting points and cyclists on natural trails.

28%

CONCEPT 2

Many people who chose Concept 2 prefer the idea of having a washroom in the north end of the park. Concept 2 provides potential for many different groups to formally or informally make use of the proposed educational facilities. Some participants see tremendous value in having sheltered areas when bringing children into the park, while others find it unnecessary.

10%

CAN'T DECIDE

Those who couldn't decide between the concepts either find both concepts too similar, want to combine elements from both concepts or do not care for amenities in either option. Some feel that both concept options are too developed and are unsure of the feasibility of the proposed programming based on access limitations into the park.

8%

NEITHER

Many who chose neither option said that the park is enjoyed and appreciated the way it is; they want it left alone. Some do not appreciate the educational components in either concept, while others like some elements from both concepts.



Natural Asset Management

280 preferences

Out of those who participated in Phase 3, slightly more people prefer the natural asset management in Concept 2. Overall, participants want to see the highest benefit for the wildlife and ecological features in the park. Over-arching comments that relate to both concepts include:

- » Many appreciate restoration efforts but want the landscape to be allowed to transform naturally with minimal human intervention
- » Some questioned the proposed north-south granular trail and its impact on restoration efforts
- » Some considered the effects of climate change and weather patterns on the success of both options
- » A more detailed inclusion of the management of the sand bar was desired

40%

CONCEPT 1

Most people who chose Concept 1 prefer the proposed re-forestation that reflects the site's historical native habitat. Concept 1 is seen to require less maintenance than Concept 2 (which would require some level of mowing/haying). Participants feel that increased forest habitat will allow for more diversity of plants and animals. Forest habitat was preferred over the multiple habitat types proposed in Concept 2. Some who chose Concept 1 would like to include more east-west ecological connections (as in the re-naturalization of the ephemeral stream in Concept 2).

46%

CONCEPT 2

Many who chose Concept 2 did so because they want to see the open field maintained, which they feel is a unique feature in the River Valley and a link to the park's heritage. Many see the value in the concept's focus on wildlife habitats and find the variety of plant communities attractive for informal and educational use. Many also appreciate the east-west ecological connections created through the re-naturalization of the ephemeral stream.

10%

CAN'T DECIDE

In general, participants want to see the highest benefit for wildlife and the park's natural features, but feel as though they do not have enough information to make a choice between the concept options presented. Some wanted more detail on costs and requested that the City choose the most economical option. Others like both options and simply could not decide.

4%

NEITHER

Some participants who chose neither concept option like elements from both concepts. Those who did not like either concept want to see the landscape transform naturally with limited human intervention. Some also want to see the inclusion of river access / river views in the plan.



Atmosphere & Identity

283 preferences

The elements presented in the Atmosphere & Identity theme in Concept 1 are slightly more popular than those presented in Concept 2. Some participants noted the lack of Indigenous heritage presence in either concept option and suggested it be considered in the Master Plan.

48%

CONCEPT 1

Features in Concept 1 are perceived to be more natural and requiring less maintenance. The focus on winter activities is largely appreciated. Many feel that the inclusion of warming shelters will encourage more people to get outside in the winter months. However, the consensus is that warming structures should be simple and require minimal maintenance. Some participants see value in art installations and think they would add to their experience in the park.

36%

CONCEPT 2

Some who chose Concept 2 like the potential for partnerships with community organizations and educational opportunities. Some participants do not like the art or winter installations proposed in Concept 1 because they either find them unnecessary or worry about maintenance and potential loitering. Others would like to see the warming shelters from Concept 1 included in Concept 2, built for longevity. Some participants would like to see more of a focus on winter activities, such as cross-country skiing, in Concept 2.

10%

CAN'T DECIDE

Some people like elements from both concepts (i.e. educational and restoration elements from Concept 2 combined with warming structures in Concept 1). Others find the concepts too similar to choose. Overall, people want the most natural and cost-effective option.

6%

NEITHER

For some, both concepts are too developed and activities do not seem appropriate for the park based on access limitations. Some requested a clear plan for maintenance of the proposed features. Others found that neither concept recognizes the mountain biking community as a key user group of the park.



What the public thinks about Concept 1:

“ Picnic and play area would be great for my grandkids and I like the resting spots on the trails for me.

The sandbar receives a high level of use, especially in late summer, and the City should acknowledge and sustainably manage/plan for its use.

I like the idea of a winter installation and that it will encourage outdoor Edmonton in the winter.

The park can be left as it is and be loved and used if we teach people how to respect it and use it in its current form.

”

What the public thinks about Concept 2:

“ Since so much of our river valley is forested vegetation I think restoring some native prairie and keeping the brome field would be a nice change.

I would like Concept Option 2 better if it was more reconciliation focused.

The North South granular trail has a high impact and high cost. It already exists as a naturalized, dirt single track called Oleskiw Meadows , and is currently enjoyed by mountain bikers, fat bikes, and trail runners.

The option with the most preserved natural habitat and restored natural habitat is best for animal use and education.

”

Question 3

Which concept responds best to the preferred vision, needs and priorities for this park overall?

240 online preferences

77 online comments

67 in-person preferences

34 in-person comments

Overall, the results of engagement indicate that more people preferred Concept 1 over Concept 2. Participant comments reinforced the desire for a light touch on the landscape.

Concept 1

Respondents value the natural look and feel of Concept 1. They support the re-forestation of the open field with native plants and trees. They want to see less development, facilities and amenities: keep it natural. Some respondents like Concept 1 but would like to preserve the open field. Concept 1 received mixed feedback on the proposed winter installations / warming huts.

Concept 2

Respondents like the education and interpretation aspects of the plan as well as the increased access for visitors. They generally would like to preserve the open field and integrate native vegetation into the park. Overall, participants want to see minimal impact and cost in the park.

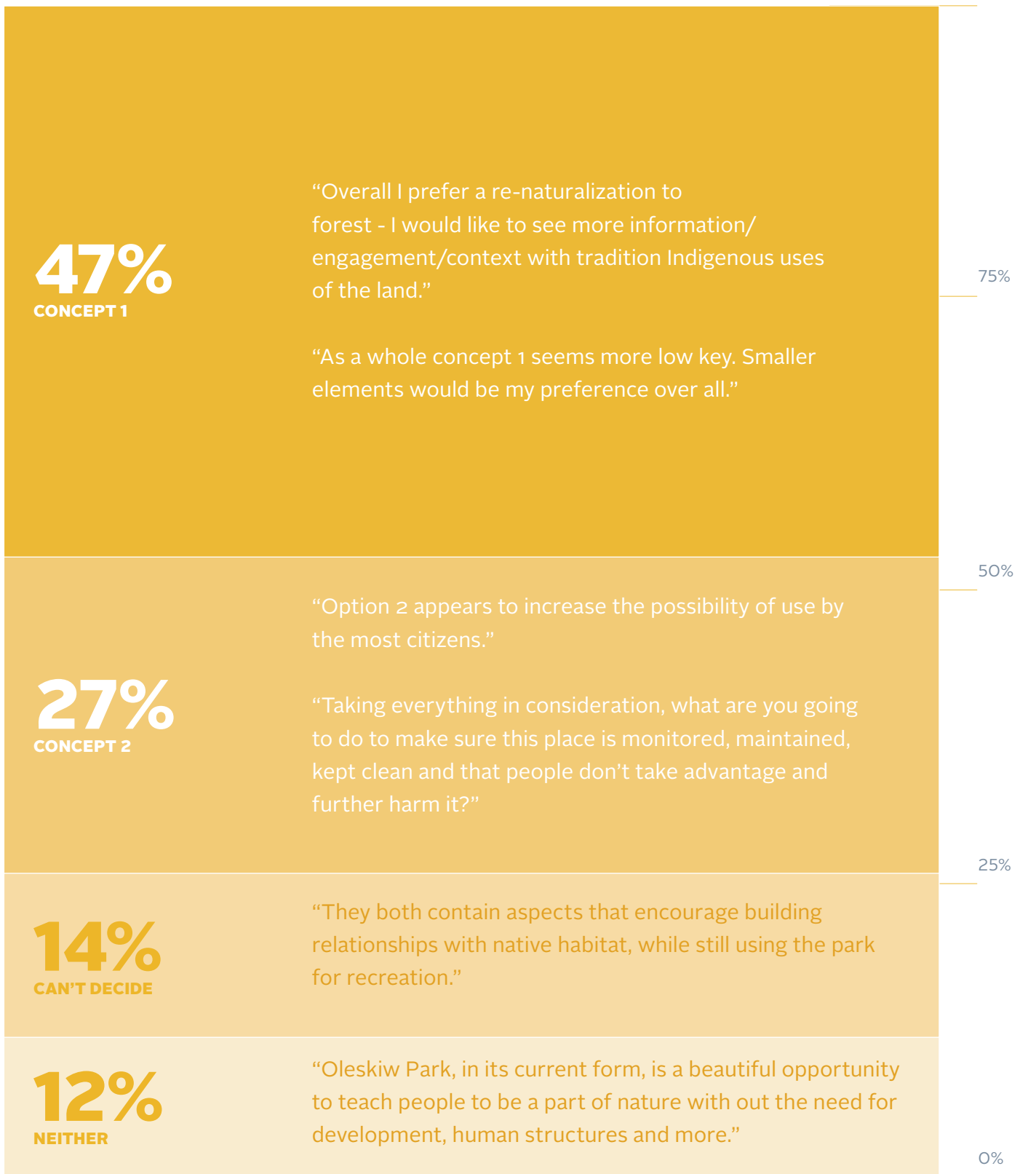
Can't Decide

Respondents who couldn't decide had a hard time choosing one concept because they like certain elements from both plans. Overall, participants indicated that native plants, forest restoration, habitat restoration, low cost and low impact improvements are important to them. Some do not like the north-south granular trail proposed in both concepts.

Neither

Respondents are generally concerned that the realization and maintenance of the park will be high in cost and that funds could be better spent on other more pressing issues in the city. They generally feel that the City should not create new amenities because they worry about maintenance requirements and costs. The north-south granular trail was not appreciated by many who chose neither option. Participants generally want to keep the park as it is and avoid impacting the natural features of the park with increased usage of the park.

Overall Concept Option Preference



Question 4

What specific park elements do you prefer?

3840 online preferences
243 online comments
939 in-person preferences
24 in-person comments

In addition to the layered themes discussed earlier, participants of the Oleskiw River Valley Park Phase 3 engagement were given the opportunity to voice their level of support for specific elements proposed in one or both concept plans. The following pages summarize that feedback.

Overall, elements related to the restoration of the site, elements considered to be low impact / low cost, elements that support a wide variety of users and winter-focused elements were the most supported.

Elements with the highest level of support include:

- » The new natural trail proposed in Concept 1 (78% support)
- » River lookouts proposed in Concept 2 (78% support)
- » Restored forest proposed in both concepts (72% support)
- » Resting points along natural trails proposed in Concept 1 (66% support)

Elements with the lowest level of support include:

- » Granular trail loop (outlining golf hole) proposed in Concept 2 (39% support)
- » Community activations / partnerships proposed in Concept 2 (38% support)
- » Gathering space proposed in Concept 2 (38% support)
- » Outdoor education area proposed in Concept 2 (26% support)



Elements with the Highest Level of Support



New Natural Trail in Concept 1

78%

SUPPORT



River Lookouts in Concept 2

78%

SUPPORT



Restored Forest in Both Concepts

72%

SUPPORT



Resting Points in Concept 1

66%

SUPPORT

Elements with the Lowest Level of Support



Granular Trail Loop in Concept 2

39%

SUPPORT



Community Activations in Concept 2

38%

SUPPORT



Gathering Space in Concept 2

38%

SUPPORT



Education Area in Concept 2

26%

SUPPORT

Access & Circulation

Overall, some people appreciate opportunities for greater access through the park in each concept, while others feel that the proposals seem too costly and intrusive, with concerns over the ecological impacts of the proposed trails. Both concepts are perceived to provide more choice for different users on the trails. The north-south granular trail is unpopular with those who do not want to see the existing natural trail replaced. Some participants are interested in increasing resting points for younger and older park visitors.

New Natural Trail

Concept 1

300 Preferences

Participants said that the new natural trail provides more choice and may help to reduce user conflict on the trails. People prefer the aesthetic, use and lower cost of natural surface trails. Some participants expressed that they do not want mountain biking on natural surface trails.

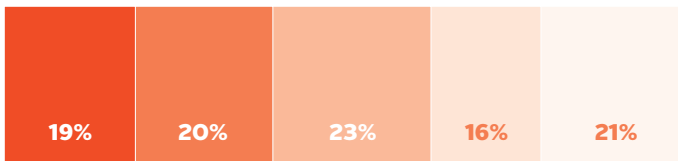


Granular Trail Loop

Concept 2

300 Preferences

Some participants like the east-west trail connection in combination with the wildlife lookout, but many feel that a single trail instead of a loop would suffice. Some think the trail connection is unnecessary, while others do not want the golf course history to be acknowledged.

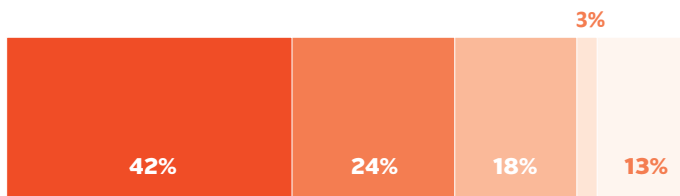


“If these concepts and additions are age-friendly, meaning it increases the access, usability and enjoyment of our senior population then it would work well.”

Resting Points Along Natural Trails

Concept 1
295 Preferences

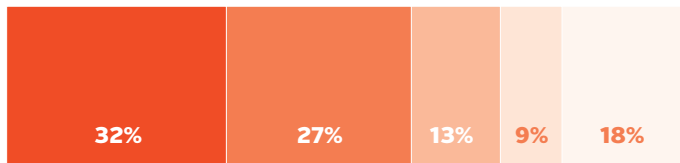
Resting points are seen as a benefit for young children and older adults visiting the park, but are also perceived to affect the character of the natural trails and potentially create conflict with cyclists. People expressed that they want the existing natural trails maintained.



North-South Granular Trail

Both Concepts
299 Preferences

Some participants think that a new north-south granular trail connection provides more choice for different park users and potentially decreases user conflict in the park. Some do not support this trail as it is perceived to replace an existing natural surface trail and is too costly or intrusive. Some simply prefer natural surface or paved trails over granular surface trails.



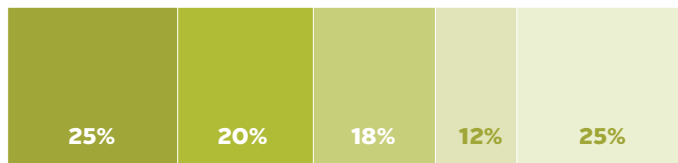
Park Use & Amenities

The Park Use & Amenities elements presented received mixed reviews from Phase 3 participants. Positive and negative comments were received about the amenities and educational components. Most participants want to keep the park natural and avoid unnecessary expenditures of tax dollars.

Picnic and Play Area

Concept 1 290 Preferences

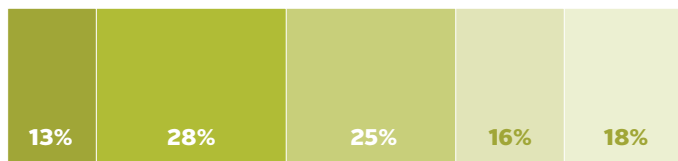
Some people like the natural features in the playground and want to see innovative natural play elements in the park. They like the opportunities for shelter from the elements and the washroom facility in the south end of the park. Others think that the picnic and play area does not reflect the natural character of the park - other parks may be more suitable. Participants are concerned about the level of use these facilities might receive compared to their cost as well as the potential for vandalism and loitering.



Smaller Picnic Area

Concept 2 291 Preferences

Participants like the smaller scale of this picnic area, but the lawn area conflicts with the desire to re-naturalize other areas of the park. Some people prefer shelters for protection from inclement weather, while others do not see the need for man-made shelter and are concerned about vandalism, loitering, costs and the under-use of structures. Some noted that washrooms are necessary if a picnic area is proposed. Others said that another park might be more suitable for this use.



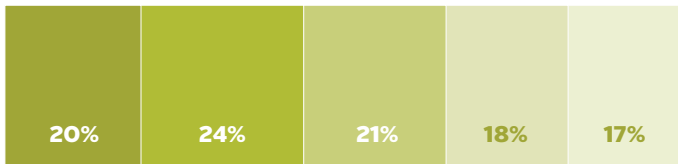
“The learning circle and outdoor education areas should be well off the main path so as not to disturb foot and bike traffic.”

Learning Circle

Concept 1

295 Preferences

Many prefer the smaller scale and natural materials of the learning circle compared to other, more constructed, elements. Some participants shared concerns that educational areas may not get used frequently enough to justify their expense, while others feel that educational components support families and children who use / will use the park. Some feel that educational areas should have shelter to protect from the elements.

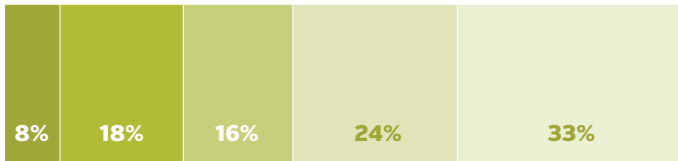


Outdoor Education Area

Concept 2

295 Preferences

Some participants see value in providing a formal educational experience and providing hands on experience in nature. However, it was recognized that a built structure may conflict with the ‘nature’ experience. Those who support this element noted that shelters are important for children to provide protection from the elements. Those who do not support it shared concerns over potential under-use, cost, vandalism and impacts to the environment.



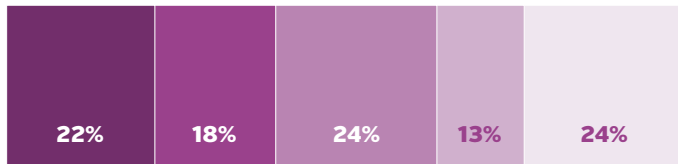
Natural Asset Management

Participants are conscious of the cost of restoring vegetation in the park, but, overall, restoration is seen as a positive element that may be worth the cost. Many people recognize the educational and interpretive opportunities that would accompany any restoration effort.

Wildlife Lookout

Concept 2
305 Preferences

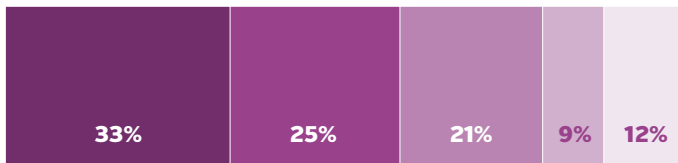
People who like the wildlife lookout think it provides a good opportunity to view wildlife in the natural environment, but only if there is wildlife to see. Both sides recognize that increased human activity may discourage wildlife from traveling through the park. People who do not support the wildlife lookout either do not want any structures in the park or find the wildlife lookout costly and unnecessary. These participants noted that there are opportunities to view wildlife from ground-level.



Established Prairie

Concept 2
306 Preferences

The established prairie is preferred by many over non-native grasses in the open field. Many do not support any mowing in the park. Those who do not support the prairie establishment find it costly or question the validity of creating a prairie in this location since it is not the historically native habitat. (The native habitat for Oleskiw River Valley Park is a riparian forest.) Many support restoration efforts but want to see nature take over in its own time with limited human intervention.



“Maintaining a large portion of the open field would give the users a better sense of the scale of the park and a more profound experience.”

Restored Forest

Both Concepts

306 Preferences

Many participants support the restoration of a riparian forest in the landscape and like the idea of bringing the site back to its natural state. Most want the restoration to be gradual and naturally occurring. People who do not support the forest find it costly and want limited human intervention in the park. Others prefer the open field experience to a forested park.

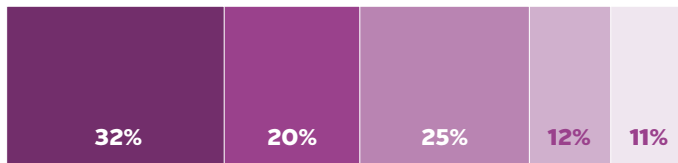


Open Field

Both Concepts

300 Preferences

Participants support the open field because it is relatively low cost and adds to the character of the park. Some who prefer the open field would still like to see restoration of native grasses, while others feel that plants should grow where they will naturally. Those who do not support the open field would like to see more re-forestation. Of those people, some want to see a balance between field and forest in the park. A common thread among most participants is that there should be no mowing in the park.



Atmosphere & Identity

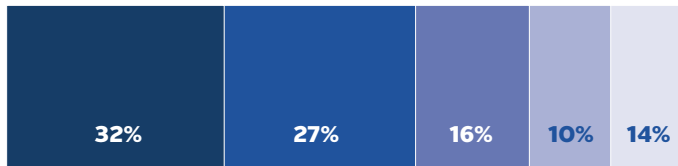
Educational opportunities in both concepts are generally seen as positive elements, but larger shelters and man-made features are not supported overall. People shared concerns over vandalism, loitering and unnecessary costs associated with shelters in parks. In contrast, small warming huts / winter installations are viewed positively by many and seen as an important element for winter use of the park. Some participants want to maintain the atmosphere of solitude in the park, while others want opportunities for groups to gather (i.e. youth groups and families).

Winter Installations

Concept 1

301 Preferences

Those who support the winter installations feel the need for some winter shelter in the park and think they might encourage people to get outside and participate in winter activities. Most people want to see costs kept low, and structures built with natural materials. If art is included in the plan, participants want the City to work with local artists. Some people expressed concerns over vandalism or loitering in structures. Others do not want to see any development.

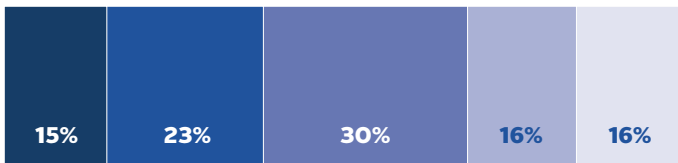


Community Activations

Concept 2

293 Preferences

Overall, educational opportunities and potential partnerships with community groups are perceived as generally positive things for the park, but most people do not see the need for constructed elements to support these opportunities. In addition, if educational activities occur, they should be easily accessible.



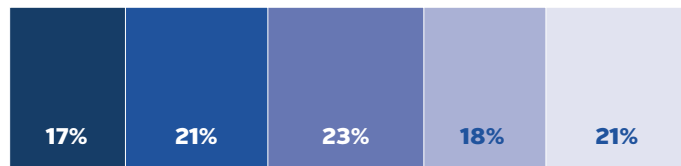
“Interpretive signs are inexpensive and add to the park experience.”

Gathering Space

Concept 2

296 Preferences

Some people find value in having places for families and small groups to gather in the park, but most people think structures are unnecessary or create potential for vandalism or loitering. Others do not want to see the park become a hub for activity.



River Lookouts

Both Concepts

307 Preferences

River lookouts are seen as an asset to many and are generally supported. Of those that do not support river lookouts, some think that they may bring too many people into the park or create too many maintenance requirements.



Question 5

Help name this park!

248 online preferences
88 online comments
262 in-person preferences
25 in-person comments

The Oleskiw River Valley Park does not currently have an official name. The Master Plan for the Oleskiw River Valley Park will bring forward a recommended name to Edmonton's Naming Committee based on input from the public engagement process. The Naming Committee will review the request in consultation with the Project Team for the Master Plan, Civic Departments and Community League and/or developers, if necessary. The Naming Committee will make the final decision for the park's official name.

In Phase 2 engagement, participants were asked to rank their preferred park name inspiration from 1 (most preferred) to 4 (least preferred). The tallied preferences resulted in the following order:

1. Natural Heritage
2. Historical
3. Indigenous Heritage
4. Political Figures

To gain more input and support for a park name inspiration, participants were again asked to provide their input on a preferred park name inspiration using the same four categories. In Phase 3, the results are as follows (where 1 is the most preferred inspiration and 4 is the least preferred):

1. **Natural Heritage** (First choice for 50% of participants)
2. **Indigenous Heritage** (First choice for 33% of participants)
3. **Historical** (First choice for 15% of participants)
4. **Political Figures** (First choice for 4% of participants)



“It’s part of the River Valley System, which is one of Edmonton’s most prized attributes and the fact that we keep the river valley undeveloped, natural and connected is so important and should be reflected in the name.”



“Let’s continue to not only respect and highlight the area’s Indigenous heritage and the fact that we are on Treaty 6 land, but also enhance it and bring it to the forefront.”



“The past history of the River Valley has many naming opportunities.”



“Stay away from people who are alive or political unless they made significant contributions.”



Next Steps

Thank you to all participants who provided their feedback during Phase 3 of engagement for the Oleskiw River Valley Park Master Plan!

Input from the open house, online survey and stakeholder workshops will inform the development of the preferred concept plan. Input from the activities presented in this report will be used in the following ways:

1. Which vision statement represents what you would like to see in the future for this park?

Concept options presented in this phase of engagement were closely guided by these vision statements. Feedback collected from this question will help develop a final vision statement. This will provide a cohesive direction not only for the final concept plan, but for planning the park over the next 25 years.

2. Which concept do you prefer for each theme?

Mapped and written feedback from this activity will be used to inform the development of the preferred concept plan in Phase 4. Spatial analysis of comments will directly support the decision-making process for the refined concept plan.

3. Which concept responds best to the preferred vision, needs and priorities for this park overall?

Comments from this activity will be used to understand and the preferred elements of Concept 1 and Concept 2, informing the final preferred concept plan.

4. What specific park elements do you prefer?

Qualitative and quantitative feedback from this activity will guide which elements will be included in the preferred concept plan, as well as their look and feel.

In Spring 2018, the preferred concept plan will be presented during Phase 4 engagements for final feedback.

For project updates: edmonton.ca/oleskiwparkmasterplan

Discover

Develop



Phase 3 Inputs and Results

The activities in Phase 3 of engagement provided us with different forms of feedback, each of which will be used to develop the preferred concept plan. We will take this feedback into account in conjunction with environmental sensitivities and City priorities as we develop a comprehensive plan that will be presented in Phase 4.

