



RIBBON *of* GREEN

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Stage 1: Share Your Ideas | May 2017

Prepared for
City of Edmonton

Prepared by
O2 Planning + Design Inc.

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Ribbon of Green Plan (2018) Project Overview

The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System is the Edmonton region's greatest natural asset and a significant contributor to the quality of life of Edmontonians. Long established as a gathering place for Indigenous Nations and then fur traders, Edmontonians continue to value the conservation and celebration of the natural and cultural heritage of the River Valley.

In 1990, The Ribbon of Green Concept Plan provided a foundation for the planning, management and prioritization of park development within the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System.

In 1992, The Ribbon of Green Master Plan divided the system into three different areas based on their priority for planning and infrastructure (identified as Priority 1, Priority 2 or Priority 3 areas). It laid out a decision-making framework for Priority 1 and 2 areas and guided the completion of master plans.

Since the completion of the original 1990 and 1992 Ribbon of Green plans, the city has also dramatically grown. What was then a city of just over 600,000 is projected to service a region of 2,000,000. In response, Edmonton is building up, in and out to accommodate this growth. Situated within Treaty 6 territory, the traditional territories of many First Nations, and the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation, Edmonton celebrates the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Edmontonians in meeting the needs of a culturally diverse, rapidly growing, thriving Metro Region.

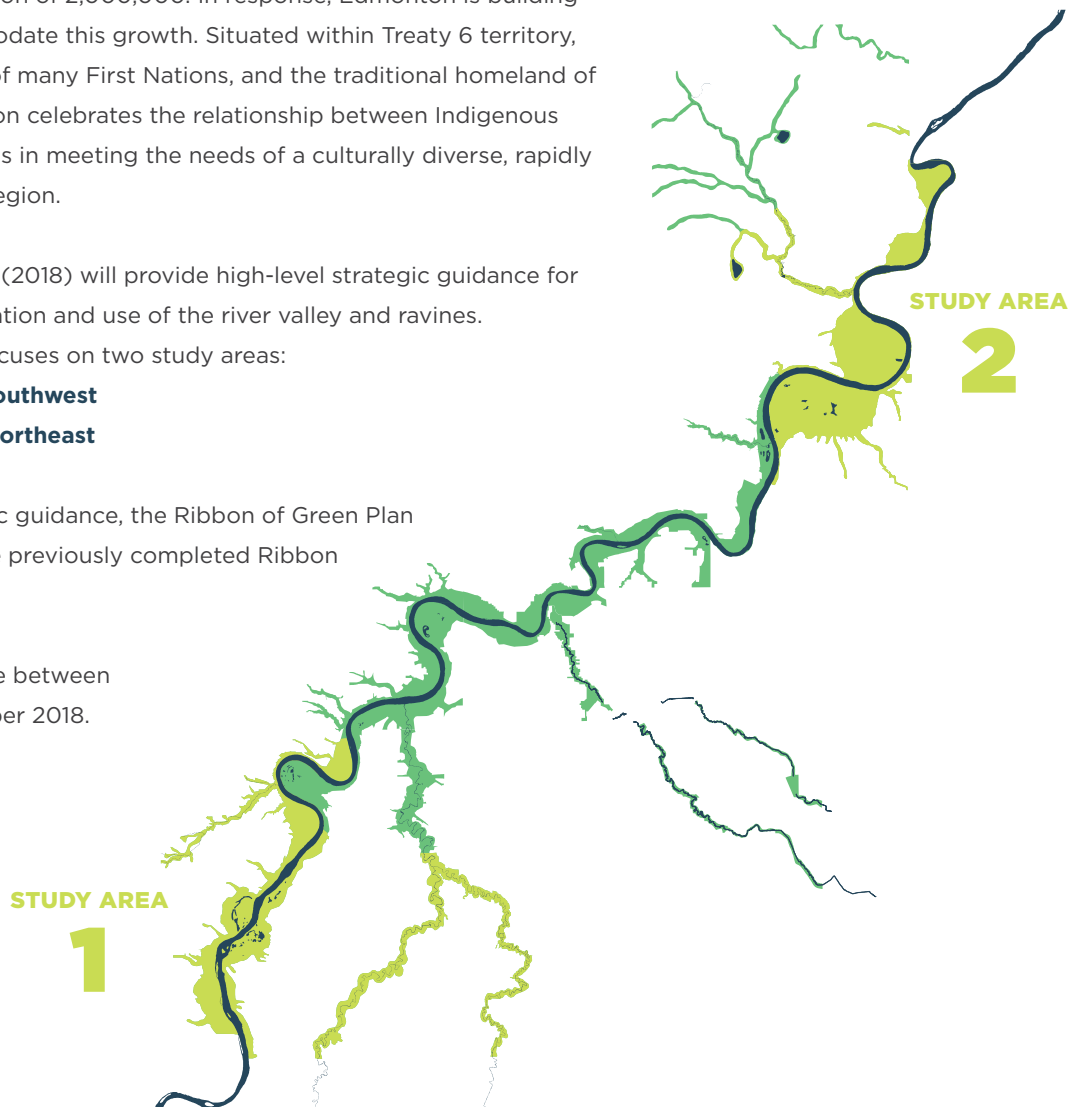
The Ribbon of Green Plan (2018) will provide high-level strategic guidance for the conservation, preservation and use of the river valley and ravines.

Specifically, the project focuses on two study areas:

- > **Study Area 1 in the Southwest**
- > **Study Area 2 in the Northeast**

In addition to this strategic guidance, the Ribbon of Green Plan (2018) will consolidate the previously completed Ribbon of Green plans.

This project is taking place between January 2017 and December 2018.



BACKGROUND



INTRODUCTION

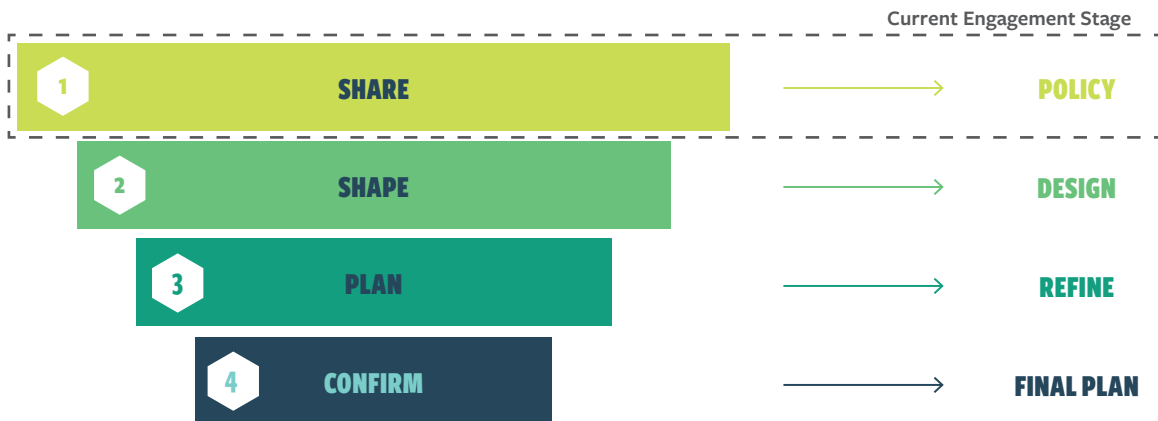
A robust public engagement results in stronger, better-informed projects and the City of Edmonton is committed to excellence in public engagement.

Due to the city-wide scale, regional impacts and timeframe of this project, setting up a network of interlinking engagement activities from the project start is fundamental to the project's success. Specifically, there are four audience streams of engagement: stakeholders, public (online and in-person) and Indigenous. These different groups will be engaged at various times throughout the four stages of active engagement of the project.

The engagement process for Ribbon of Green will take place throughout 2017 and 2018, with planned submission to Council during Fall 2018. The engagement will be implemented during four active engagement stages as shown below:

The first stage of public engagement for the Ribbon of Green (2018) project lasted from March 13 to April 7, to gain a greater understanding of the two study areas as well as recognize the opportunities and challenges facing these areas. Feedback gathered at this stage will inform the vision, program statement, priorities and policies for each study area. Public insight will also work with the ecological, cultural and recreational assessments to define areas for preservation, conservation and use.

This report is intended to be a high-level summary of the ideas and priorities that we heard during the first stage of engagement. Although not necessarily included in this document, detailed comments and meeting minutes have been recorded and will be used by the project team throughout the upcoming project stages.



ENGAGEMENT VALUES

The values below guide the engagement process for the public, stakeholders, and Indigenous Peoples.

Respect
Honesty
Openness
Inclusion
Cooperation
Learning

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

These principles will anchor our actions and thinking as we engage with the public, stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples:

- > Be open, timely and responsive
- > Listen and share stories to understand
- > Support informed engagement
- > Follow through on commitments

The Ribbon of Green Public Engagement Plan is available at edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen

Stage 1 Engagement Goals:

- > Introduce the project
- > Create awareness about the project and opportunities to engage
- > Identify any initial concerns, issues, and opportunities
- > Incorporate feedback to inform the vision, program statement and priorities
- > Learn about history, recreational opportunities, environment, cultural sites and traditional use areas

These goals were then translated into three key questions that build upon the overall theme of the first stage of engagement “Share Your Ideas”:

SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS

Where have you been? (in each study area)

What is significant in each study area?

This input will inform the recreational, cultural and ecological analyses, and the program statement for each study area – what should occur in terms of the use, management, and conservation. Input will also help define areas for preservation, conservation and use.

SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

What would you like to do/see in the two study areas?

This input will inform the policies and concept plans for each study area.

SHARE YOUR VISION

Write your vision or priority for one or both of the study areas.

What do you value?

This input will inform the vision statement and priorities for each study area. These two vision statements will guide the development of policy and conceptual designs for each study area, and act as a check for future planning and implementation.

ENGAGEMENT TACTICS



Total Participants



Ideas

OPEN HOUSES

Two open houses were held at community recreation centres in close proximity to each study area and one open house was held at Edmonton Tower for City staff.

Attendees were provided with background on the project and the opportunity to share their ideas and insights about the river valley through a series of questions: Share Your Insights, Share Your Interests, and Share Your Vision.

City Staff: March 22, 11am-1:30pm

Edmonton Tower



Public | Southwest: March 22, 4-8pm

Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre



Public | Northeast: March 23, 4-8pm

Clareview Community Recreation Centre



PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey link was posted on the Ribbon of Green project website and provided residents with an opportunity to answer questions and pin points of significance onto the project's online interactive map.

Live from March 13 - April 7, 2017



INSIGHT COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Insight Community is an online platform that allows residents to engage on City issues. Insight Community members were sent the project information, answered a short survey, and had the option to continue to the public online map to provide further feedback, if they wished.

Sent out March 13



EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

For the stakeholder workshop, representatives from multiple diverse organizations were invited, including those with a focus on: environment, recreation, heritage, accessibility, safety, active transportation, design, economy, food/agriculture/arboriculture, multicultural groups, seniors, children and youth, and adjacent community leagues. In total, representatives from 24 organizations attended. The workshop began with participants introducing themselves and their favourite thing to see or do in the river valley. This was followed by group discussions about each study area where participants highlighted opportunities, constraints and areas of significance. Lastly, each participant wrote their vision for both study areas.

See appendix for the list of organizations that attended.

March 22, 7-9pm

Alfred Savage Centre



ONGOING STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The City of Edmonton has met with 49 representatives from 10 different stakeholder groups and landowners (see appendix) over the past five months to introduce the Ribbon of Green project. The conversations at these meetings focused on the individual or group's perspective and / or interest in the study areas, as well as how they would like to be involved in the project moving forward.

Ongoing throughout the project



COMMUNICATION TACTICS

The City of Edmonton employed a number of different communication tactics and avenues, in both print and online, in order to reach and inform as many residents as possible about the Ribbon of Green engagement events and opportunities. The following summarizes the different forms of media that engagement was advertised through.



Newsletters

- › Ribbon of Green (136 subscribers)
 - › 2 notices
- › Master Naturalist Program (168 subscribers)
- › Fresh - Food in the City (1631 subscribers)
- › The Way We Green (717 subscribers)
- › BREATHE (278 subscribers)
- › The Park Bench (1100 subscribers)
- › The Beat (internal, branch wide going out to 400 City employees)
- › Great City News (internal, going out to 12,000 City employees)



Twitter

- › 12 tweets sent for the survey and open house from the @CityofEdmonton (176,000 followers) and @PlanEdmonton (9,977 followers) accounts



Facebook

- › 5 posts for the survey and open houses, including Facebook events to reach a wider audience



Ribbon of Green Project Website

- › 2,767 page views
- › 2,166 unique visitors



Road Signs

- › 7 total
 - › 3 in the SW
 - › 3 in the NE
 - › 1 Central



Media

- › 1 public service announcement
- › 2 ads in the Edmonton Journal
- › 2 ads in the Edmonton Metro



Posters

- › Posted in all City of Edmonton Recreation Centres and Public Libraries



Postcards

- › Postcards were shared at the BREATHE March 15 event, and during meetings with internal and external stakeholders and colleagues



What do you value?



CELEBRATION
Connects people to
and builds a sense of
places for



ECOLOGY
Encourages the
of healthy
systems.



Perhaps different parts of the trails could be used differently. Eg: one more towards activities of relaxation, and others for people who just want to study Area 2

I would like a peaceful, yet vibrant area where I can walk down the boat valley, ride the bike, and study for diversity Area 2

dy a
2
dy area
2

RESULTS

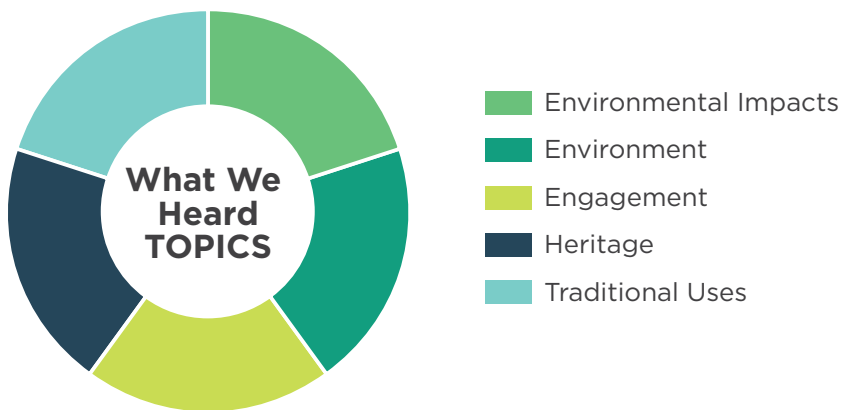
Indigenous Engagement



INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

The City of Edmonton is committed to keeping First Nation and Métis (Indigenous) communities informed and engaged when projects intersect with Indigenous interests and concerns. The project team will look for opportunities to collaborate, understand how issues and concerns can be addressed, and seek to incorporate input into a clear set of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations.

Since October 2016, the City has reached out to Indigenous communities for initial engagement and to share information on the Ribbon of Green project. The City has identified five topics based on the input gathered. Communities have been asked to review these topics for feedback and identify if additional topics should be considered.



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

There is concern over the impacts of construction, maintenance, programming, and human activities on traditional land uses in the River Valley, especially traditional plants. There is a need to implement best practices to avoid and minimize these environmental impacts.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment needs protection, naturalization, and restoration for future generations as healthy water, watersheds, habitats, and land are essential for life. There is an opportunity for Indigenous people to help steward the land and access it for traditional use.

ENGAGEMENT

A desktop mapping exercise with ample information available is a good first step to familiarize Elders and other community members with the project area. Some communities have indicated that monitoring is important during implementation phases if areas are deemed sensitive.

It is important for the City to maintain open communications throughout projects and to get the right people involved, who are credible and knowledgeable about history and culture.

HERITAGE

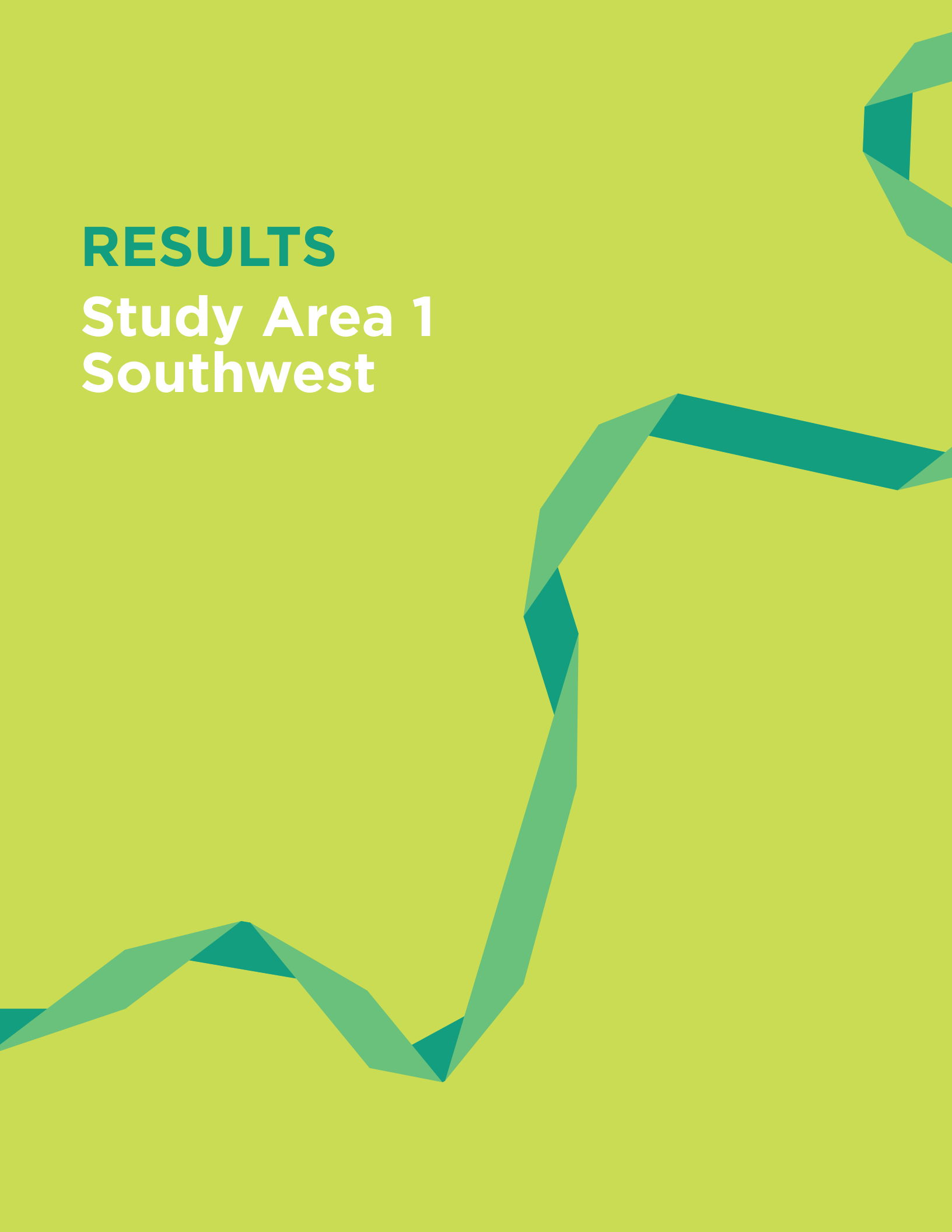
The North Saskatchewan River, its river valley, and its ravines have a long and significant history for many First Nations and Métis. There are important place names and multiple narratives about the area that should be accurately shared.

TRADITIONAL USES

The City needs to provide as much available information as possible to help Elders identify current and previous traditional uses in the study areas. The City should engage Elders to help determine next steps in managing traditional use sites that may be identified during the project.

RESULTS

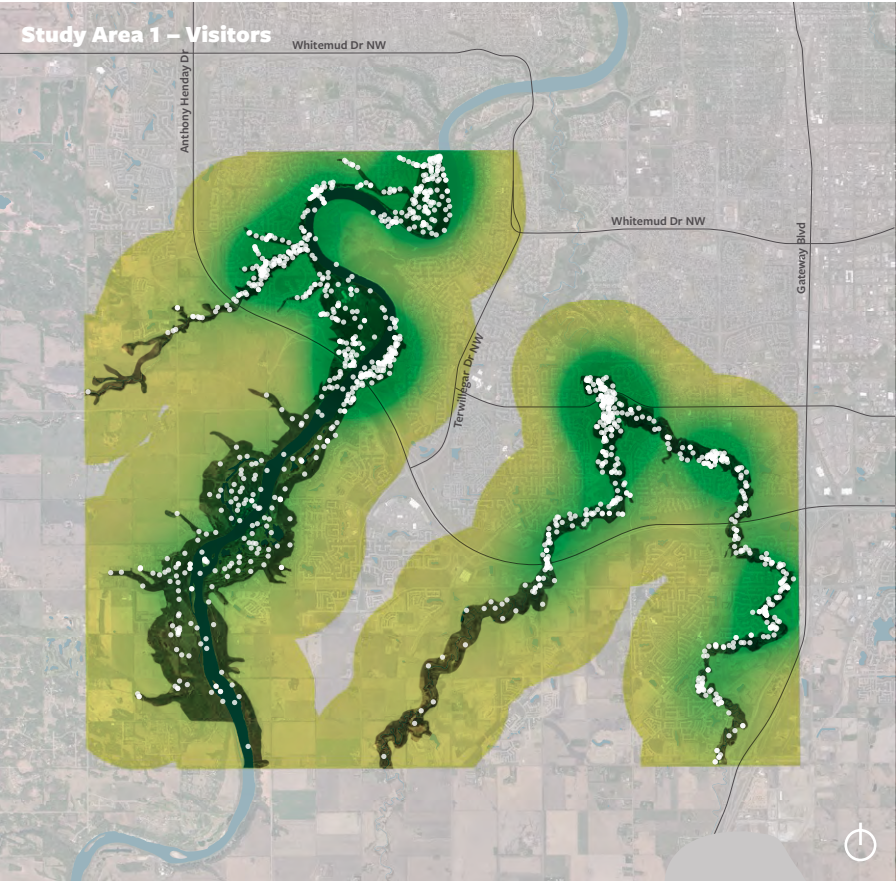
Study Area 1 Southwest






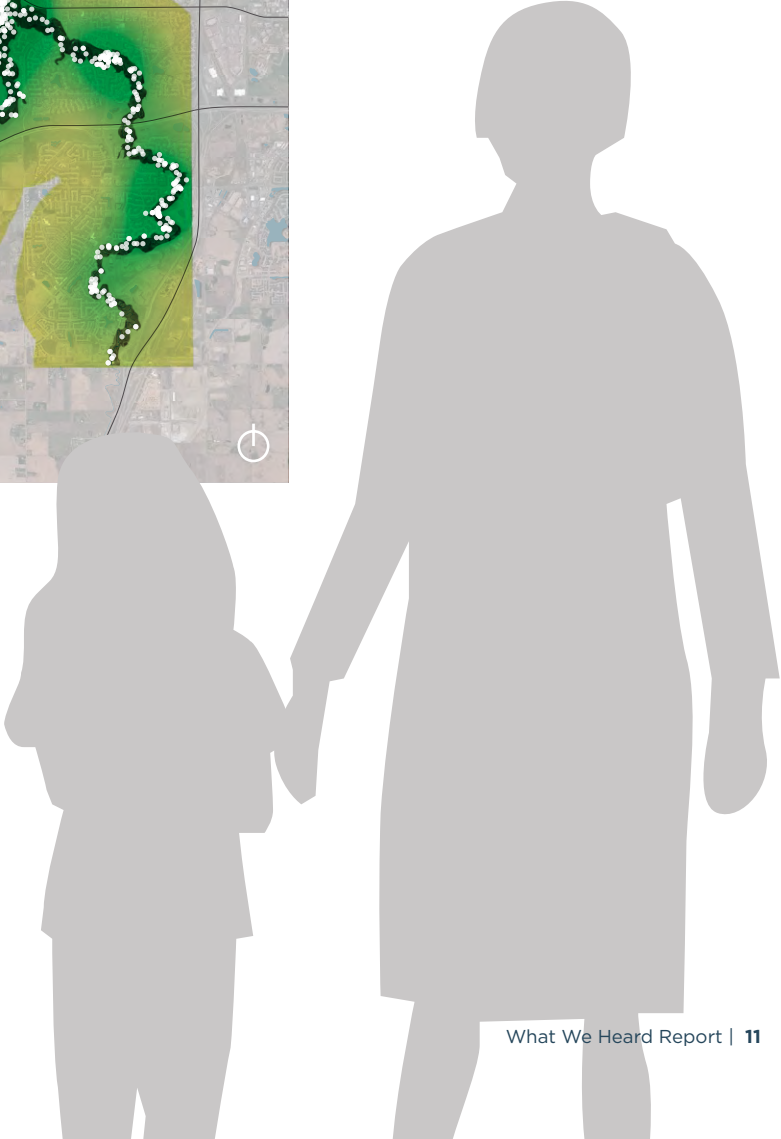
SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS

Where have you been?

Participants were asked to place dots on the map to indicate where they have been in the study area. This information will help to identify the areas of local knowledge and find locations that are underused or have a concentration of activity. The green areas on the map below indicate the most visited places in the study area.



-  High number of visitors
-  Low number of visitors
-  Individual Responses



What is significant in Study Area 1?







For this activity, participants were asked to place a post-it note (in-person at the open houses and stakeholder workshop) or mark a dot on the interactive map (online survey) to identify locations of significance in the study area. These notes range from areas of ecological importance, to historical sites, to wants and wishes for the future of the river valley.



During this first phase of engagement it was important to seek out the knowledge of individuals, in particular their knowledge of each study area to highlight significant sites, opportunities and constraints. The feedback is summarized spatially and will work with the ecological, recreational and cultural analyses to define areas for preservation, conservation and use. This detailed feedback will also be used to inform the conceptual plans for each study area.

The maps on the following pages summarize the comments heard from public and have not been verified. In addition to the feedback identified on the maps, the public also identified sites within the study area that may intersect with Indigenous interests. The City will continue to work with Indigenous communities to verify and identify historical and cultural sites and determine how they should be considered.




MAP LEGEND

- Wildlife Corridor (Ecology)
- Access / Trail Connection Required (Recreation)
- Connections into Neighbourhood Required
- Commuter Corridors
- Overall Connections

-  Biodiverse Wildlife Habitat
-  Good Fishing Spot
-  Viewpoint
-  Boat Launch
-  Great Canoeing
-  Paleontological Resource (Fossils)

-  Comment by several people
-  Comment boundary of one person

COMMENT LEGEND

-  Ecology Comments
-  Recreation Comments
-  Culture Comments

Open Houses
ECOLOGY COMMENTS

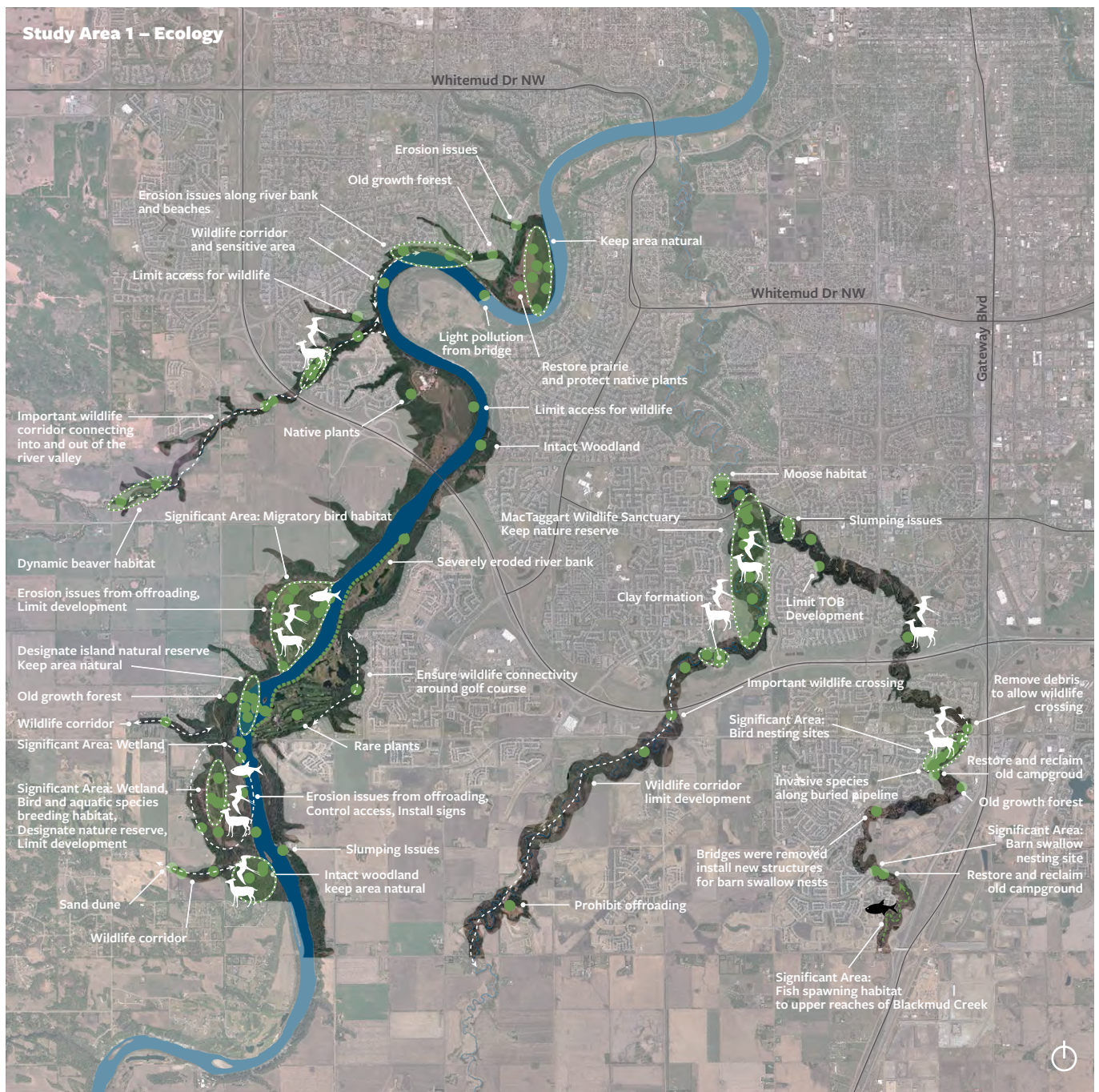
Frequent Responses: Wildlife corridors (connecting within and out of the river valley) and significant areas of habitat for wildlife, migratory birds, and fish spawning were identified. Many people also identified

areas they would like to see remain natural or protected.

Tensions: Off-road vehicles are compromising habitat in some areas. Development close to the top of bank is creating erosion and slumping. Wildlife corridor pinch points can pose a significant challenge when

accommodating trails and recreational opportunities.

Opportunities: There are unique landscapes to preserve, including a large wetland, a prairie landscape, and moose habitat.



Open Houses
RECREATION COMMENTS

Frequent Responses: Many comments related to the need for connectivity and access, both to and within the river valley and ravine system as well as linking disconnected sections of trails. Pedestrian bridges are highly valued.

Tensions: Issues with off-leash areas, party sites, and off-road activity will need to be resolved.

Opportunities: Locations were identified for activities, such as fishing spots, boat launches, and a beach area used for swimming.



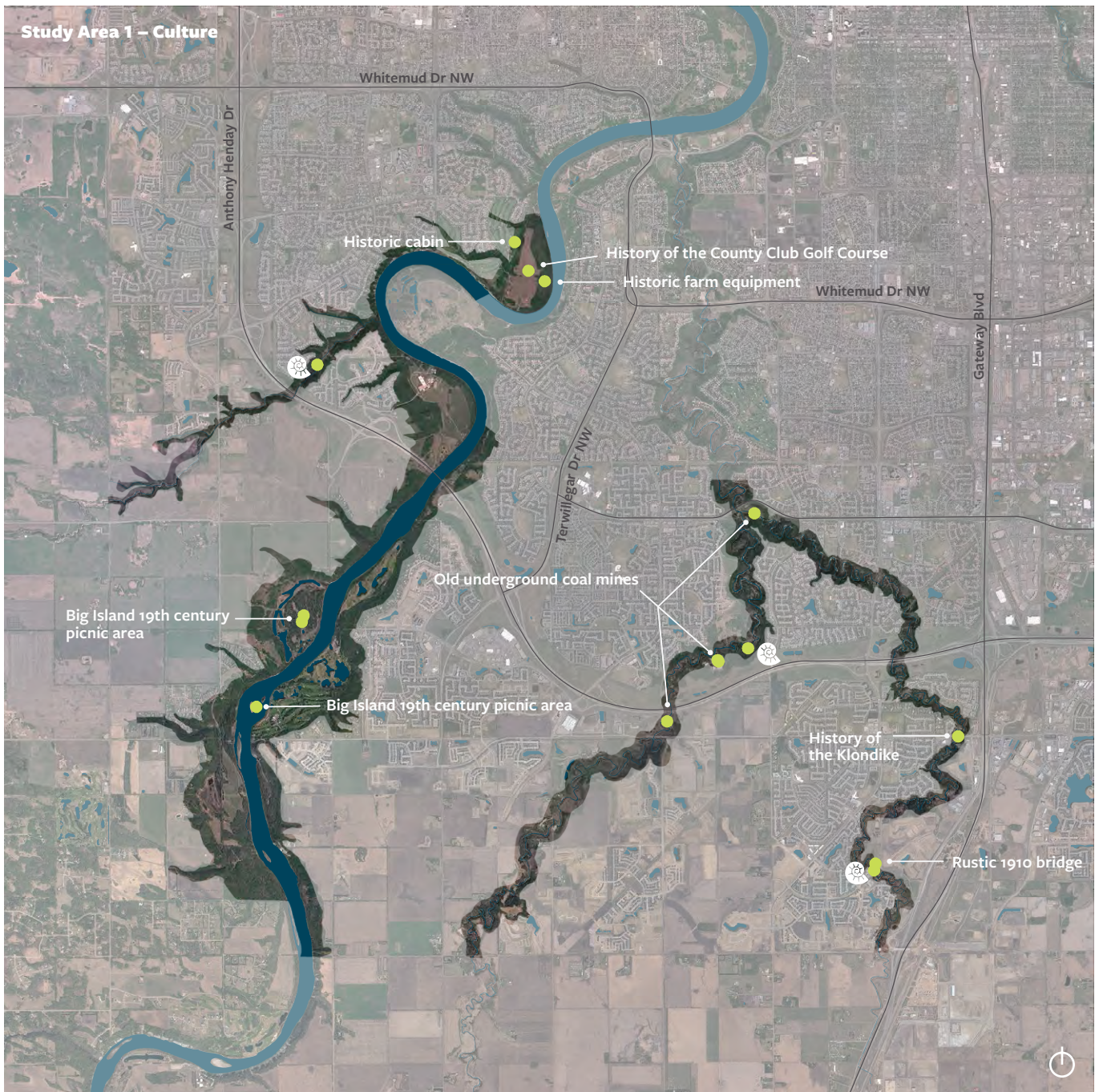
Open Houses

CULTURE COMMENTS

Frequent Responses: The locations identified mark sites of significance for First Nations, 19th century history, and paleontological findings (marked with a shell on the map).

Opportunities: Some of these sites hold a personal significance to individuals. An opportunity for Indigenous placemaking was also identified.

Note: The public has identified sites within the study areas that may intersect with Indigenous interests. The City will continue to work with Indigenous communities to verify and identify historical and cultural sites and determine how they should be considered.



Stakeholder Workshop
COMMENTS

Frequent Responses: The use and ownership of Big Island was discussed during the session. Significant areas of fish spawning and wetland protection were identified.

Opportunities: The need was identified to not forget about Indigenous history, accessibility for all abilities, and to create a space that is open and welcoming to people of all backgrounds.

Tensions: Achieving balance between ecology and recreation requirements will be a challenge in this area. It is important to make sure all voices at the table are heard.



SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

What would you like to do/see in Study Area 1?

This open house activity asked participants to think about how they currently use Edmonton's river valley and ravine system and how they would like to use the system in the future. Participants wrote their interests on a ribbon and pinned it to the wall to share with others. This input will inform the policies and concept plan for each study area.

The graphic below summarizes the common uses identified by participants in descending order, starting with the most number of comments on the left.

Open Houses



'SHARE YOUR INTERESTS' SUMMARY

Frequent Responses: The use of trails for activities such as walking, running, and cycling and the enjoyment of nature were of top interest to participants.

Tensions: The balance between natural protection and recreational use will be a key consideration to the planning and design of this study area, as there are conflicting views about whether people, bikes, and dogs should have access. River use may also become a point of conflict between motorized and non-motorized boat access.

Opportunities: Other activities participants suggested for the area include concession facilities, outdoor recreation infrastructure (ie. washrooms), photography, star gazing and space for Pow Wow dancing.

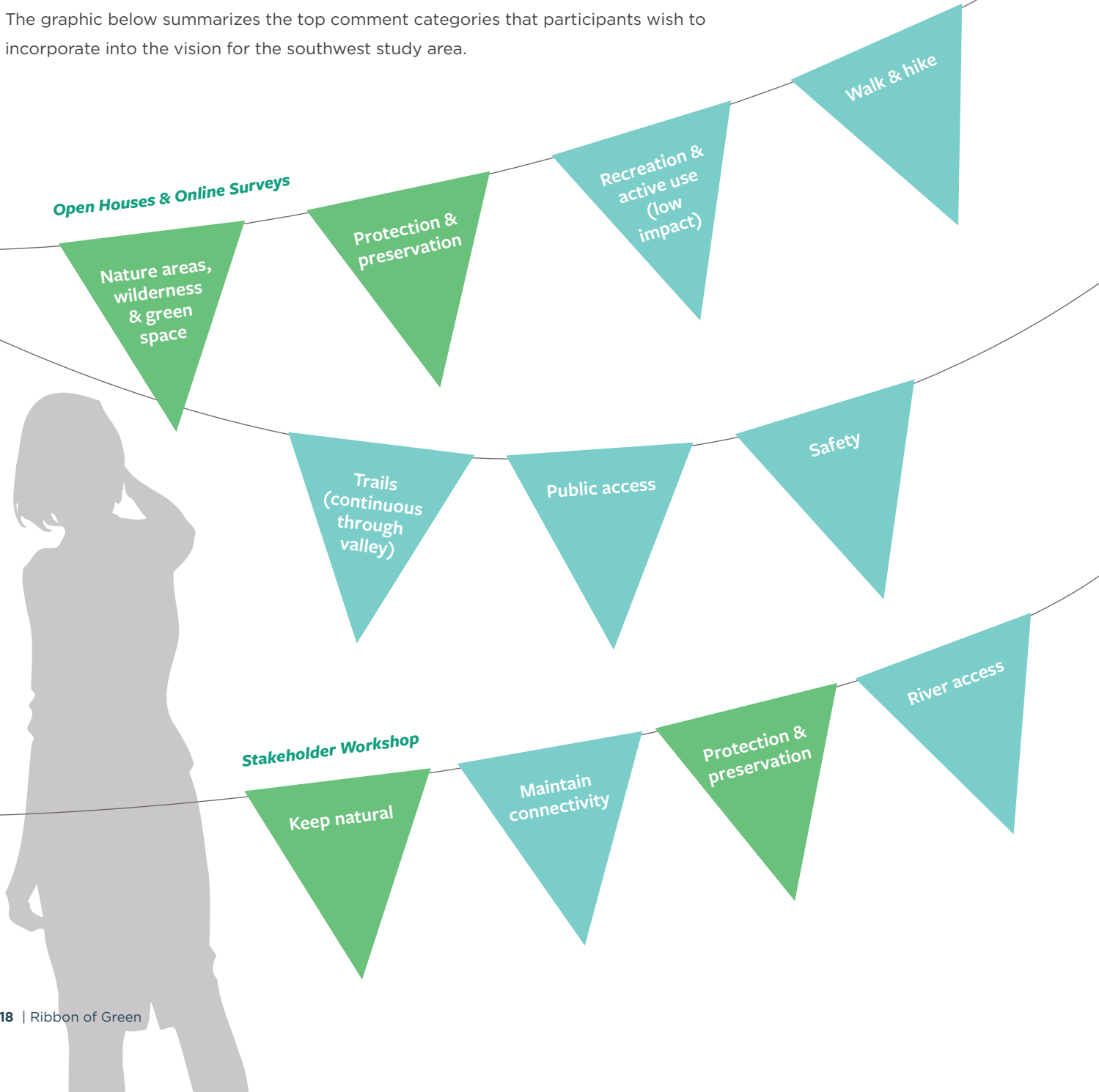
SHARE YOUR VISION

Write your vision or priority for Study Area 1.

Participants were asked to provide their vision for the study area in one sentence. At the open houses and stakeholder workshop, participants pinned their vision onto a clothesline to share their vision with others.

This input will inform the vision statement and priorities for each study area. These vision statements will guide the development of policy and conceptual designs for each study area, and act as a check for future planning and implementation.

The graphic below summarizes the top comment categories that participants wish to incorporate into the vision for the southwest study area.



What do you value in Study Area 1?

Participants at the open houses were asked to rank the values they think should be prioritized in the study area by placing gumballs into the corresponding fishbowl for **Ecology**, **Celebration (Culture)** and **Wellness (Recreation)**. These values will help to inform the balance of design and programming that will be proposed within the area.

The graphic below shows the level to which each priority was ranked by participants. In Study Area 1, Ecology was ranked the highest, followed by Wellness and Celebration.



'SHARE YOUR VISION' SUMMARY

Frequent Responses: While many comments relate to a myriad of different aspects of recreation (trails, river access, other active uses) and the desire to accommodate these uses in the river valley, ecology remains a top priority, as identified above.

Tensions: Due to these seemingly opposing values, balancing ecology and recreational use in a respectful manner will be the core challenge to navigate in the southwest study area.

Opportunities: Other visions for the study area include: limiting the encroachment of development, cleaning the environment, storytelling, and creating a place that is therapeutic and universally accessible.

Vision Quotes:

"Unequaled natural treasure."

"Improving access to respectful recreation by Edmontonians."

"A little wilderness connecting the heart of the city."

"Functioning valley system that is sustainable. Human involvement that respects this point."

"Preservation doesn't have to conflict with access."

ECOLOGY

Supports and enhances the environment by sustaining healthy and resilient ecosystems.

CELEBRATION

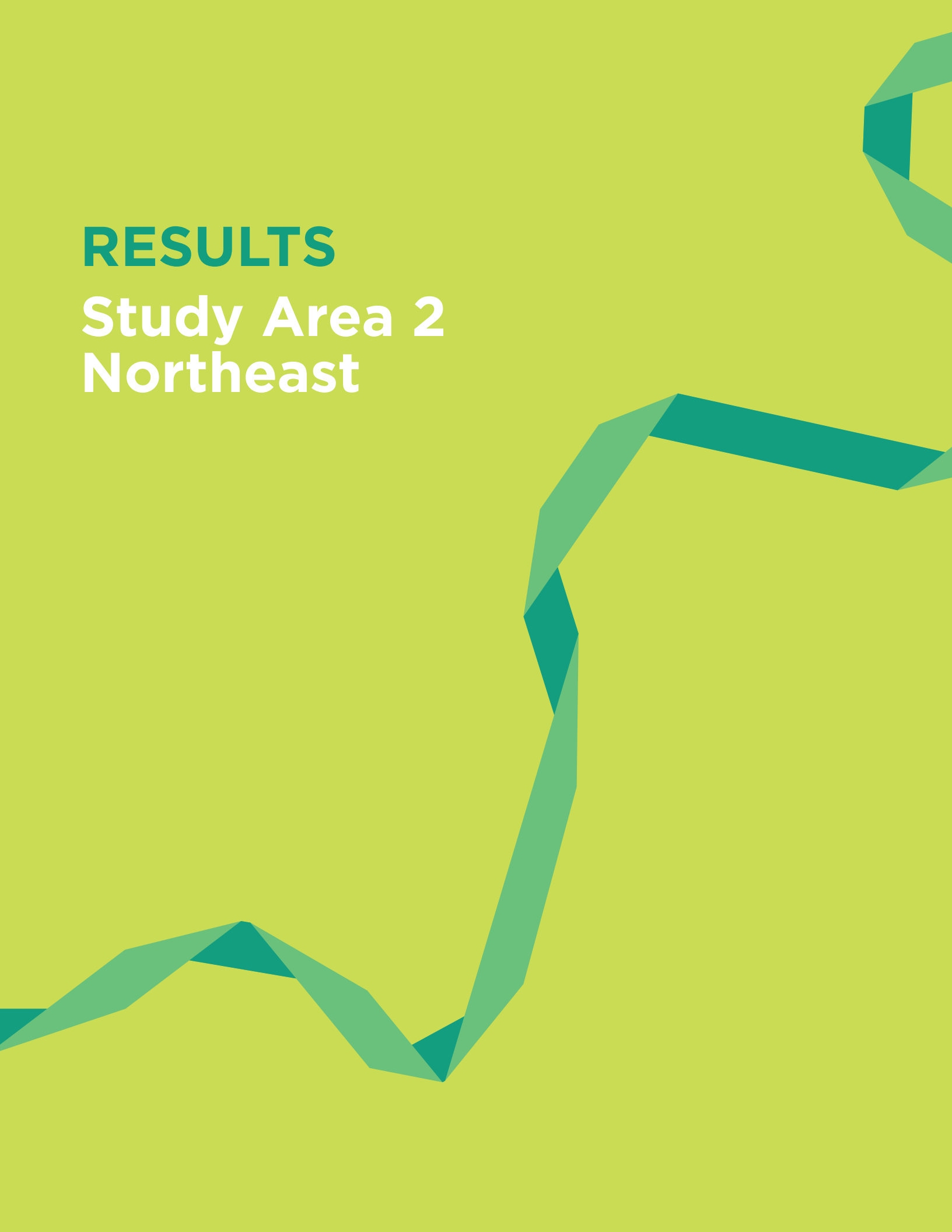
Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place by providing places for communities to thrive, gather and celebrate.

WELLNESS

Promotes healthy living and fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation, mobility and environments.

RESULTS

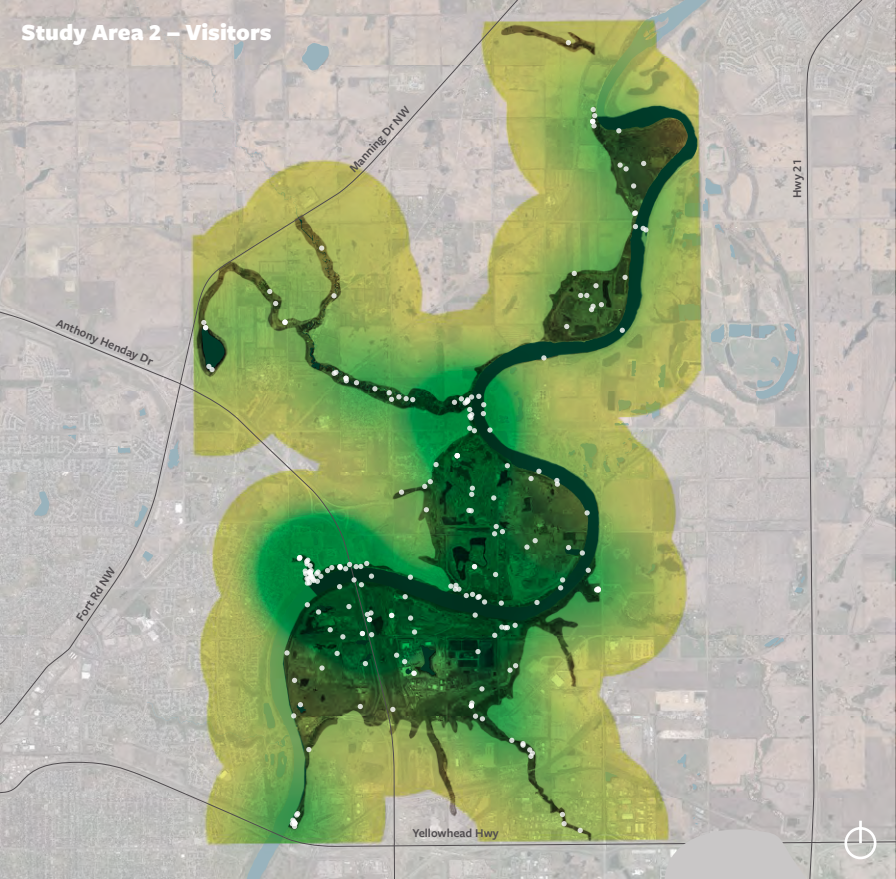
Study Area 2 Northeast






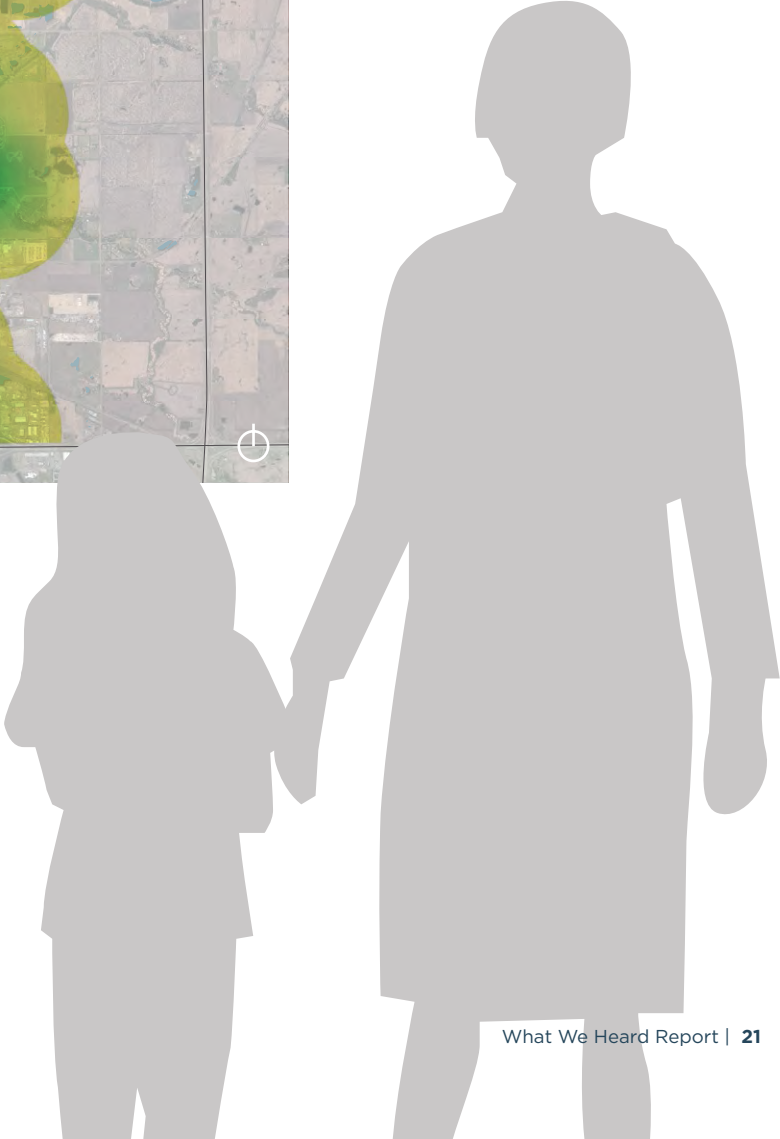
SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS

Where have you been?

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-  High number of visitors
-  Low number of visitors
-  Individual Responses



What is significant in Study Area 2?







For this activity, participants were asked to place a post-it note (in-person at the open houses and stakeholder workshop) or mark a dot on the interactive map (online survey) to identify locations of significance in the study area. These notes range from areas of ecological importance, to historical sites, to wants and wishes for the future of the river valley.



During this first phase of engagement it was important to seek out the knowledge of individuals, in particular their knowledge of each study area to highlight significant sites, opportunities and constraints. The feedback is summarized spatially and will work with the ecological, recreational and cultural analyses to define areas for preservation, conservation and use. This detailed feedback will also be used to inform the conceptual plans for each study area.

The maps on the following pages summarize the comments heard from public and have not been verified. In addition to the feedback identified on the maps, the public also identified sites within the study area that may intersect with Indigenous interests. The City will continue to work with Indigenous communities to verify and identify historical and cultural sites and determine how they should be considered.




COMMENT MAP LEGEND

- Wildlife Corridor (Ecology)
- Access / Trail Connection Required (Recreation)
- Connections into Neighbourhood Required
- Commuter Corridors
- Overall Connections

-  Biodiverse Wildlife Habitat
-  Good Fishing Spot
-  Viewpoint
-  Boat Launch
-  Great Canoeing
-  Paleontological Resource (Fossils)

-  Comment by several people
-  Comment boundary of one person

COMMENT LEGEND

-  Ecology Comments
-  Recreation Comments
-  Culture Comments

Open Houses
ECOLOGY COMMENTS

Frequent Responses: Locations were identified for migratory birds and waterfowl habitat, woodlands, and native plants, erosion and sensitive slopes.

Tensions: Water quality is a concern due to wastewater and other discharge. Trails should not hinder wildlife connectivity.

Opportunities: Numerous participants commented on the opportunity to rehabilitate and reclaim former industrial land to restore ecological functioning. Participants also noted multiple bird habitats in this area, which can be protected and expanded to offer great birding potential.

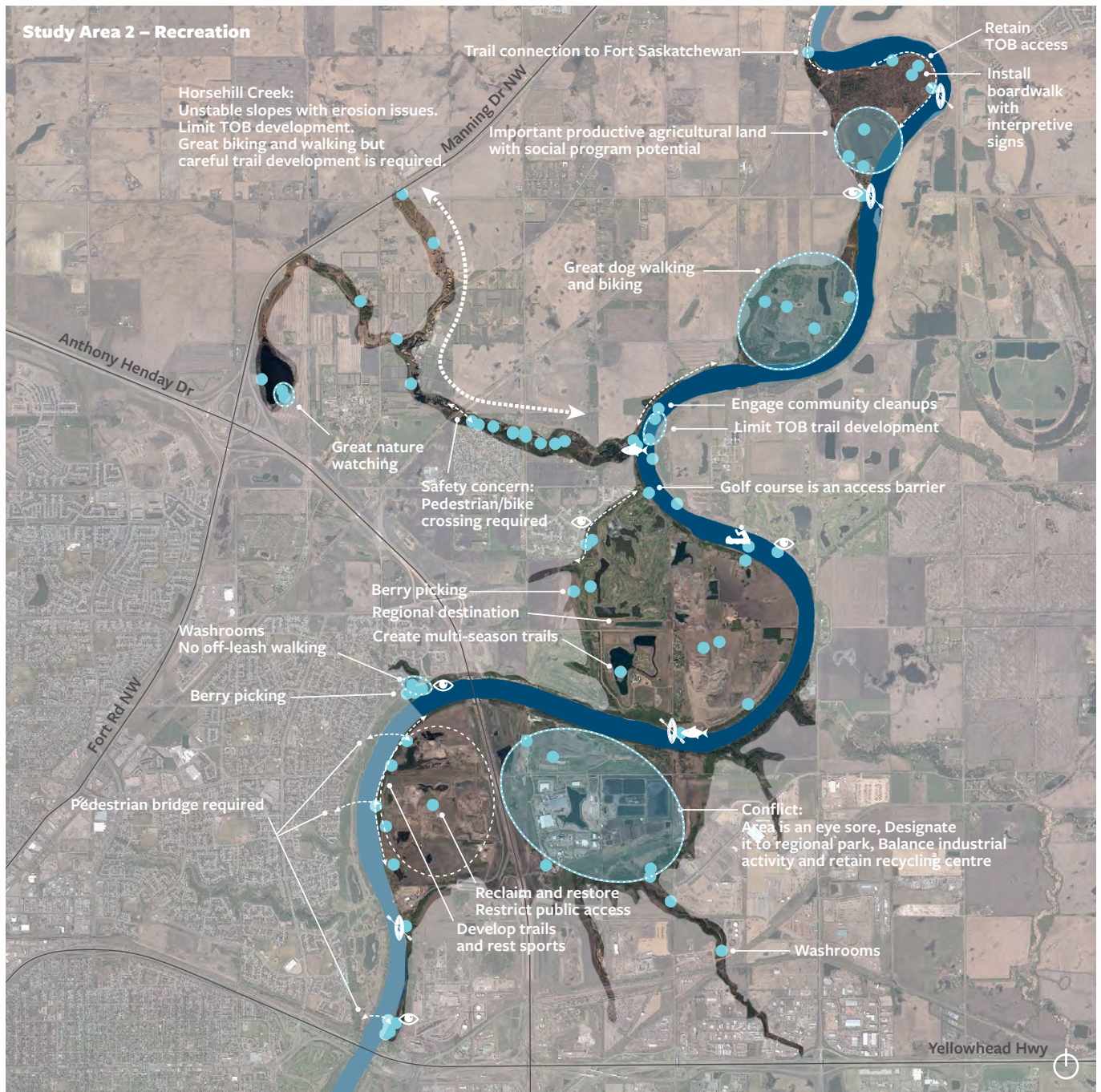


Open Houses
RECREATION COMMENTS

Frequent Responses: This is a great area to walk/bike, but unstable surfaces due to erosion will require careful trail development. Pedestrian crossings are needed to fix current unsafe situations and connect the two sides of the river.

Tensions: Many comments suggested limiting development at top of bank.

Opportunities: Locations were identified for features like viewpoints, benches, and boardwalks. There is potential for social programming in the area.



Open Houses
CULTURE COMMENTS

Frequent Responses: Many comments remarked on the need to consult First Nations in this area.

Opportunities: The surrounding agricultural lands have a farmsteading history and remain productive.

Note: The public has identified sites within the study areas that may intersect with Indigenous interests. The City will continue to work with Indigenous communities to verify and identify historical and cultural sites and determine how they should be considered.



Stakeholder Workshop
COMMENTS

Frequent Responses: Locations noted include wildlife creek crossings, woodland, and agricultural history & current cultivation. The creation of a regional recreational destination was discussed.

Tensions: The opportunity of this study area lies in balancing the different aspects, needs, and activities placed on the area.

Opportunities: The industrial lands have the potential for restoration and reclamation. There is also an opportunity to create social and recreational programs in the area.



SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

What would you like to do/see in Study Area 2?

This open house activity asked participants to think about how they currently use Edmonton's river valley and ravine system and how they would like to use the system in the future. They wrote their interest on a ribbon and pinned it to the wall to share with others. This input will inform the policies and concept plan for each study area.

The graphic below summarizes the common uses identified by participants in descending order, starting with the most number of comments on the left.

Open Houses



'SHARE YOUR INTERESTS' SUMMARY

Frequent Responses: As with the south west study area, the top activities people would like do and see are the enjoyment of nature, along with other low-impact recreational activities.

Tensions: While some people wish to have off-leash dog areas on the trails, others do not want to allow dogs at all. This may be a point of conflict to resolve in the future conceptual plans.

Opportunities: Outside of the popular recreational activities identified above, other suggestions included ice skating, local food production, berry picking, plant identification, orienteering, gardens, and quiet reflection.

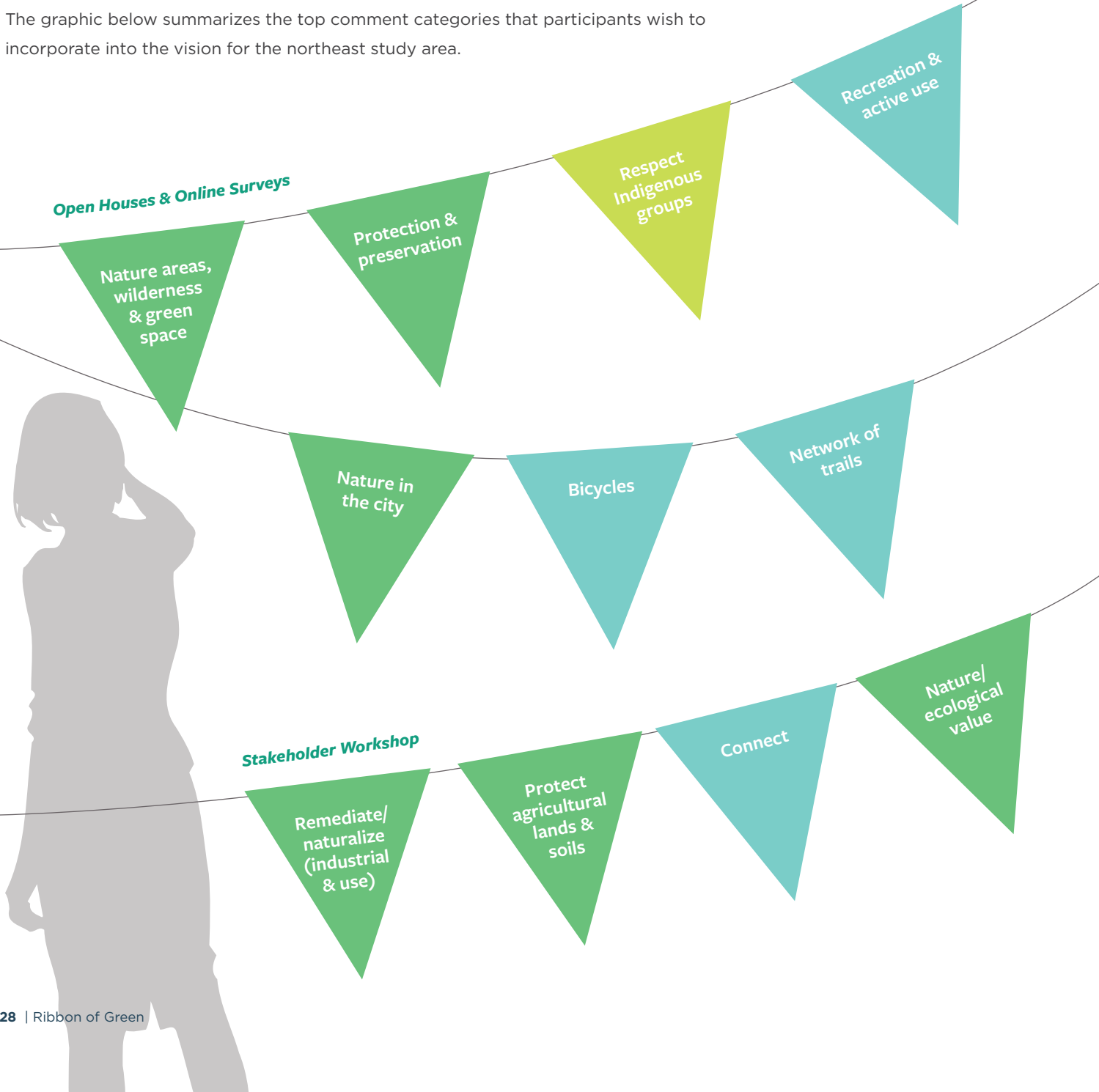
SHARE YOUR VISION

Write your vision or priority for Study Area 2.

Participants were asked to provide their vision for the study area in one sentence. At the open houses and stakeholder workshop, participants pinned their vision onto a clothesline to share their vision with others.

This input will inform the vision statement and priorities for each study area. These vision statements will guide the development of policy and conceptual designs for each study area, and act as a check for future planning and implementation.

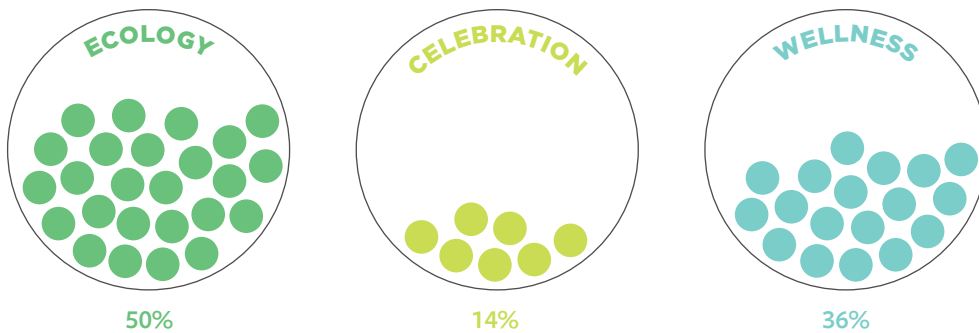
The graphic below summarizes the top comment categories that participants wish to incorporate into the vision for the northeast study area.



What do you value in Study Area 2?

Participants at the open houses were asked to rank the values they think should be prioritized in the study area by placing gumballs into the corresponding fishbowl for **Ecology**, **Celebration (Culture)** and **Wellness (Recreation)**. These values will help to inform the balance of design and programming that will be proposed within the area.

The graphic below shows the level to which each priority was ranked by participants. In Study Area 2, Ecology was ranked the highest, followed by Wellness and Celebration.



'SHARE YOUR VISION' SUMMARY

Frequent Responses: Many people envision the northeast study area as having a strong emphasis on the protection and enjoyment of nature. Respecting Indigenous relationships is also a vital cultural component identified by the public. While recreational use and trails are desired, the emphasis on active use is not quite as heavy as the southwest study area.

Tensions: Due to the proximity to industrial lands, a key challenge will be the remediation and protection of natural areas, while also providing trails and necessary connections to the area.

Opportunities: The agricultural history of the area provides a unique natural and cultural heritage to recognize and protect.

Vision Quotes:

"Respect and honour aboriginal history."

"Countryside in the city."

"Celebrate the history of the great agriculture in the area."

"Beauty maintained for future generations to enjoy."

"A community friendly area close to the river valley with easy access from the city."

ECOLOGY

Supports and enhances the environment by sustaining healthy and resilient ecosystems.

CELEBRATION

Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place by providing places for communities to thrive, gather and celebrate.

WELLNESS

Promotes healthy living and fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation, mobility and environments.

GENERAL COMMENTS

While most of the feedback provided through all the questions was associated with a specific study area, some comments pertained to the entire river valley. These comments have been separated into this General Comments section.

Many people remarked on the details of trails, noting that there is a desire for different surface materials, including natural, paved, and gravel, as well as a separation of use on some trails, such as separating bikes from pedestrians. Participants are also concerned about the impact of development and recommend a buffer to the river and ravines and to protect the top of bank. Along with ideas and insights about the river valley itself, some feedback related to the Ribbon of Green process itself, suggesting close collaboration with First Nations communities, as well as encouraging involvement from new Canadians and multi-cultural communities.



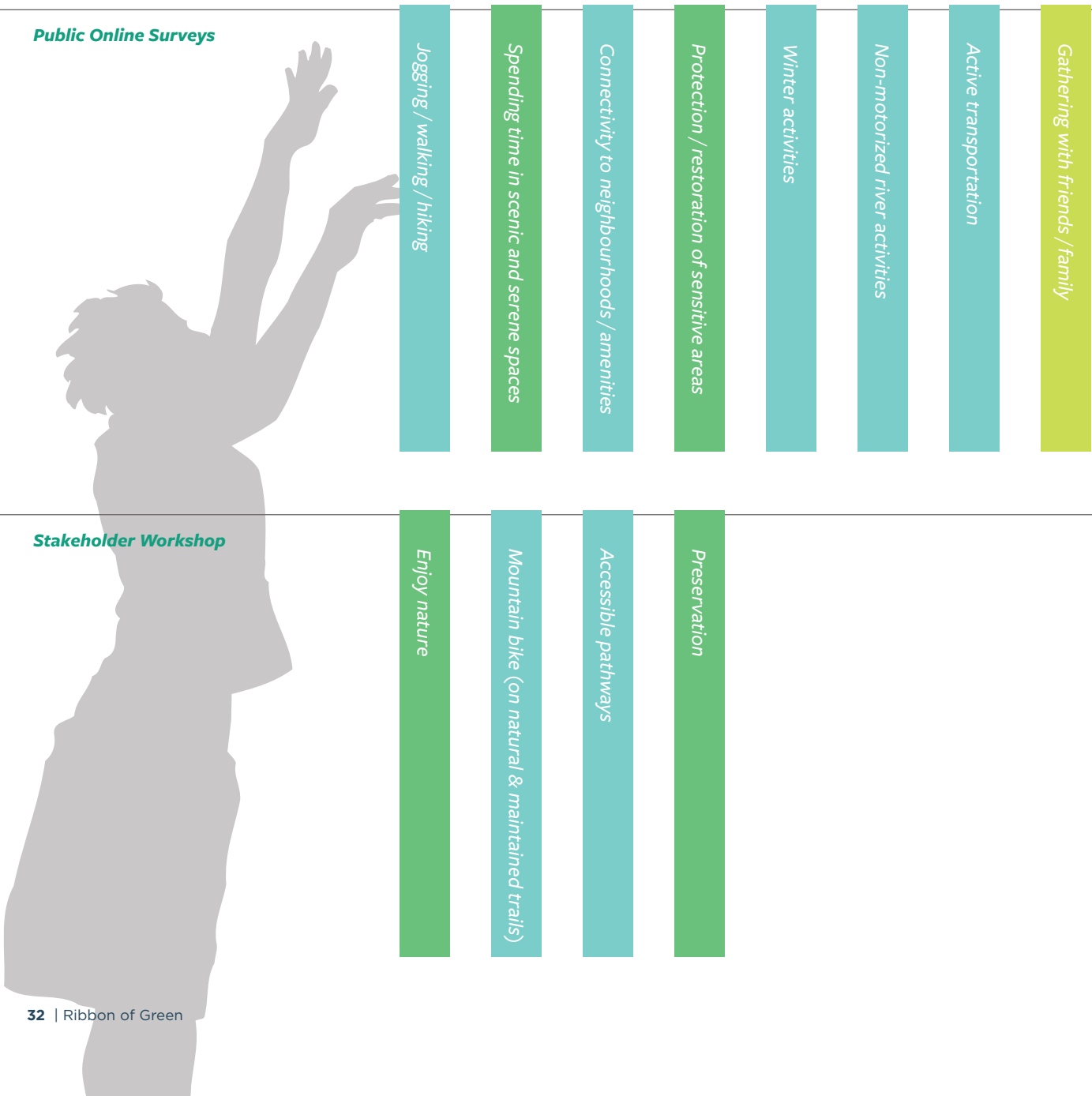
SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

What would you like to do/see in the river valley and ravine system?

The stakeholder workshop and the online surveys asked participants to provide feedback on what they like to do and see throughout the entire river valley.

For the online component, participants were asked to select from a list of popular river valley and ravine system activities. This “Share Your Interests” question was part of the public online survey and was sent to Edmonton’s Insight Community.

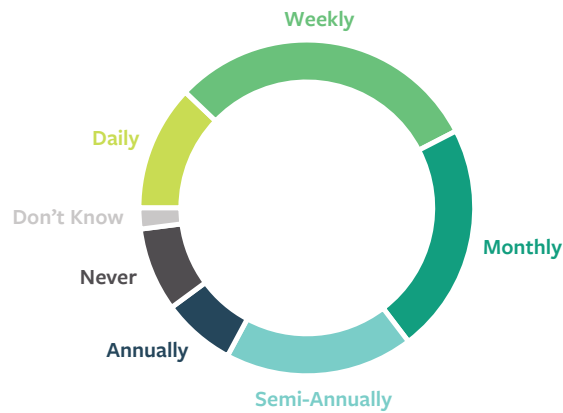
The graphic below ranks the most popular selections in order from left to right.



How frequently do you visit the river valley?

To learn more about how Edmontonians currently use the Ribbon of Green, participants of the online survey and insight survey were also asked how frequently they visit the river valley and ravine system.

When compared against the activities identified in the public online surveys, the ranking of activities was quite similar across the board, no matter how frequently someone visits the river valley. Jogging/walking/hiking was overwhelmingly the top usage by all groups (except “Never”), followed closely by connectivity and spending time and and protection of natural areas on the previous page, while gathering spaces and cultural sites are ranked slightly higher for less frequent users. Detailed results can be found in the Appendix.



2027 people

provided feedback on the “Share Your Interests” question through both the insight survey (1876 participants) and the public survey posted on the Ribbon of Green website (151 participants).

‘SHARE YOUR INTERESTS’ SUMMARY

Frequent Responses: Consistent with both Study Area 1 and Study Area 2, the frequent responses related to trail use and enjoyment and protection of nature. Connectivity to neighbourhoods and the surrounding region was also identified as top wish for the river valley.

Tensions: Within the “Other” category of comments, the desire for Cafes/Coffee Shops/Restaurants/Food Trucks was strongly stated, as was the opposite view, requesting there be no restaurants or commercial opportunities. Conflicting viewpoints around off-leash areas were also voiced.

Opportunities: Along with the idea of food/beverage stands, other opportunities include urban gardening, foraging, stair climbing, boardwalks, ecological rehabilitation, and university research sites. There was also strong support for washrooms and other park infrastructure, as well as transportation connections to transit, pedestrian bridges, and for people with low mobility.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The City of Edmonton has met with 10 different stakeholder groups and landowners over the past five months and will continue to have meetings when interests arise.

Organizations included those with a focus on ecological conservation and education, river valley trail connectivity and access, economic development and tourism, land owners, community organizations, adjacent municipalities and other orders of government (see Appendix). The conversations touched upon a wide range of topics, as highlighted below.

- › The importance of stewardship and the protection of agricultural, ecological, cultural and geological sites were stressed, as well as the need for education and interpretation at these sites. Participants also noted ideas to improve stewardship and habitat, like restoration of disturbed sites, installation of bat boxes and bee houses, and partnerships.
- › Connectivity, at both regional and neighbourhood scales, and ecological connectivity, were frequently discussed. Consideration should be given to infrastructure and amenities outside the City border and how it plays a role in the broader context of the river valley system, as well as trail networks, roadways and transit from the adjacent neighbourhoods. Ecological connectivity, and the influence that the table lands have on the river valley and ravine system, were also highlighted, as well as the importance of protecting and improving ecological corridors.
- › Human use of the river valley was also a theme, focusing on amenity provision for residents who will be living nearby, as well as growing tourism. Protecting viewscales and providing supporting infrastructure for year-round events and activities, like fishing and skating, was suggested as a way to do this, as well as the potential for cultural tourism and partnerships with First Nations. It was also noted that having a clean, healthy, and safe river valley and ravine system is critical to Edmonton's image and quality of life, and increased resources may be required to provide this.
- › The relationship between the River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw No. 7188) and the Ribbon of Green plan was also highlighted, and the suggestion to review both plans concurrently to ensure alignment.
- › Groups and individuals stated how they would be willing to support the Ribbon of Green project, with ideas ranging from communicating the project through their networks, holding focus groups, presenting to their committee and board meetings, and providing a range of best practices for the project team to consider.

Activity B: SHARE YOUR INTERESTS.

Thinking about how you currently use Edmonton's river valley and ravine system, and how you would like to use the system in the future...

What would you like to do/see in the two study areas?

Your input will inform the policies and concept plan for each study.

I would like to see mountains on the river valley.

I LIKE TO MOUNTAIN BIKE AND

I like to see natural areas protected.

CONCLUSIONS





SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The first phase of engagement for the Ribbon of Green saw a high level of participation resulting in interesting, thoughtful comments collected from both the public and stakeholders.

Overall, the comments from all engagement activities resulted in a combination of ecological preservation, access to and enjoyment of nature, other low-impact recreational use, community gathering/celebration places and connection to neighbourhoods and the greater river valley system. Supporting infrastructure and amenities, such as washrooms and access, should also be considered. The cultural elements of the river valley, particularly Indigenous use and heritage, will also be essential to respect. The balance of ecology and recreation will be a core challenge moving forward towards a connected river valley.

The rich feedback garnered over this engagement stage will inform the vision, priorities and details within the policies and concept plan for the Ribbon of Green. Feedback will also be used to develop policies and inform the cultural and recreational assessments.

Thank you for your participation!

NEXT STEPS

The feedback from 'Share your ideas' will inform the development of the following deliverables:

- › The vision, priorities and program statement for each study area
- › The cultural, recreational and ecological analyses
- › The delineation of areas for preservation, conservation and use
- › Policies to guide the development of these areas

These deliverables will be shared with stakeholders and the public in late Fall 2017 for feedback during the second stage of public engagement - 'Shape our Ribbon'. During 'Shape our Ribbon', stakeholders and the public will also provide more detailed feedback to inform the development of conceptual plans for each study area.

Stay up to date with the project and future opportunities for engagement at edmonton.ca/ribbonofgreen

APPENDIX

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS

The following organizations were formally engaged throughout the course of the first stage of engagement.

Stakeholder Workshop:

- › Edmonton Bike Commuters Society
- › Alberta Recreation and Parks Association
- › Edmonton Native Plant Group
- › Edmonton Nature Club
- › North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society
- › Sierra Club
- › Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton
- › Riverbend Gardens
- › Norbest Farms
- › Edmonton and District Historical Society
- › Edmonton Heritage Council
- › CANDORA Society of Edmonton
- › Edmonton Golf and Country Club
- › Edmonton Mountain Bike Alliance
- › Edmonton Outdoor Club
- › Paralympic Sports Association
- › TRAC (Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council)
- › Twin Brooks Community League
- › Canadian Federation of University Women Environment Group
- › Protect Edmonton's Parks
- › Studio81
- › The Ridge Community League
- › Royal Gardens Community League
- › Oak Hills Community League

Stakeholder Meetings:

- › Urban Development Institute - Edmonton Region
- › River Valley Alliance
- › Edmonton and Area Land Trust
- › Sierra Club
- › Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- › North Saskatchewan River Valley Conservation Society
- › Edmonton Economic Development Corporation
- › Regional Municipalities (Town of Devon, Town of Beaumont, City of St. Albert, City of Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc County, Strathcona County)
- › Government of Alberta, Environment and Parks Division
- › Land Owner

