

Integrated Infrastructure Services  
Infrastructure Delivery

# kihciy askiy (Sacred Land) Information Session

February 22, 2022

Edmonton





## AGENDA

- Land Acknowledgement
- Project Introduction
- Project History and Importance
- Project Timeline and Engagement
- Design Development
- Project Status
- Operational Overview
- Ground Blessing Ceremony
- Questions

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## Land Acknowledgement

**The City of Edmonton acknowledges the traditional land on which we reside, is in Treaty Six Territory.**

We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as nêhiyaw (Cree), Dené, Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga (Nakota Sioux), and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Iroquois peoples.

We also acknowledge this as the Métis' homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. It is a welcoming place for all peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home. Together we call upon all of our collective, honoured traditions, and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations.



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# Project Introduction



View from the east



View from the parking



Kihciy Askiy Sacred Land Location



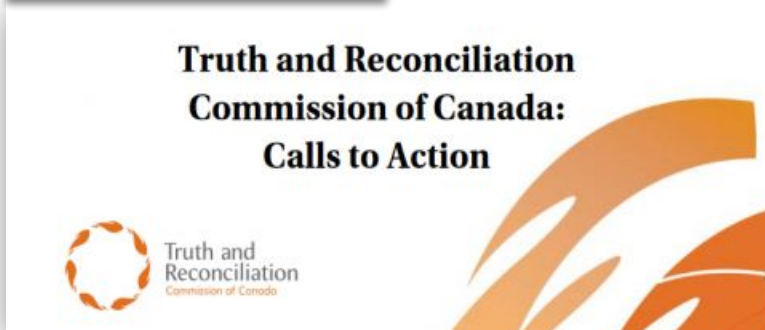
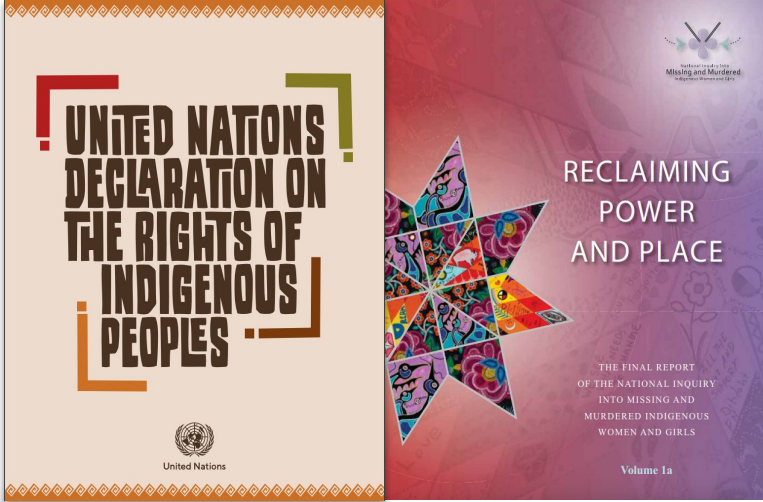
View from the sweat lodges



# Project History and Importance



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Support the journey of Reconciliation by applying the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a foundation for the Indigenous Framework.

## What is kihciy askiy (Sacred Land)?

- A joint initiative between the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre and the City of Edmonton – *“In the spirit of Peace, Friendship, and Respect”*
- An urban land area for Indigenous cultural activities within the City of Edmonton and surrounding region.
- A place where diverse Indigenous cultures can practice essential ceremonies, the transfer of teachings and knowledge, and a place of healing
- Guided by the kihciy askiy Elders Counsel



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## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM CENTRE

- The Indigenous Knowledge & Wisdom Centre (IKWC) was established to promote studies of Indigenous history, culture, language and values.
- On June 13, 2013, at a duly convened meeting of the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs, the Chiefs Resolution: #2013-06-12/R10 was passed in support of IKWC. In 2016, a Chiefs' Roundtable was held in Kananaskis, AB; the Chiefs agreed to proceed to create a federally incorporated not-for-profit entity and appointed an Interim IKWC-Board of Directors.
- The IKWC office opened its doors and began operations in the spring of 2017 where it will be a centralized location offering education, policy, language and culture. It will provide a repository of information on Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 7 and Treaty No. 8. Members, and a First Nations directed environment to learn and share information.



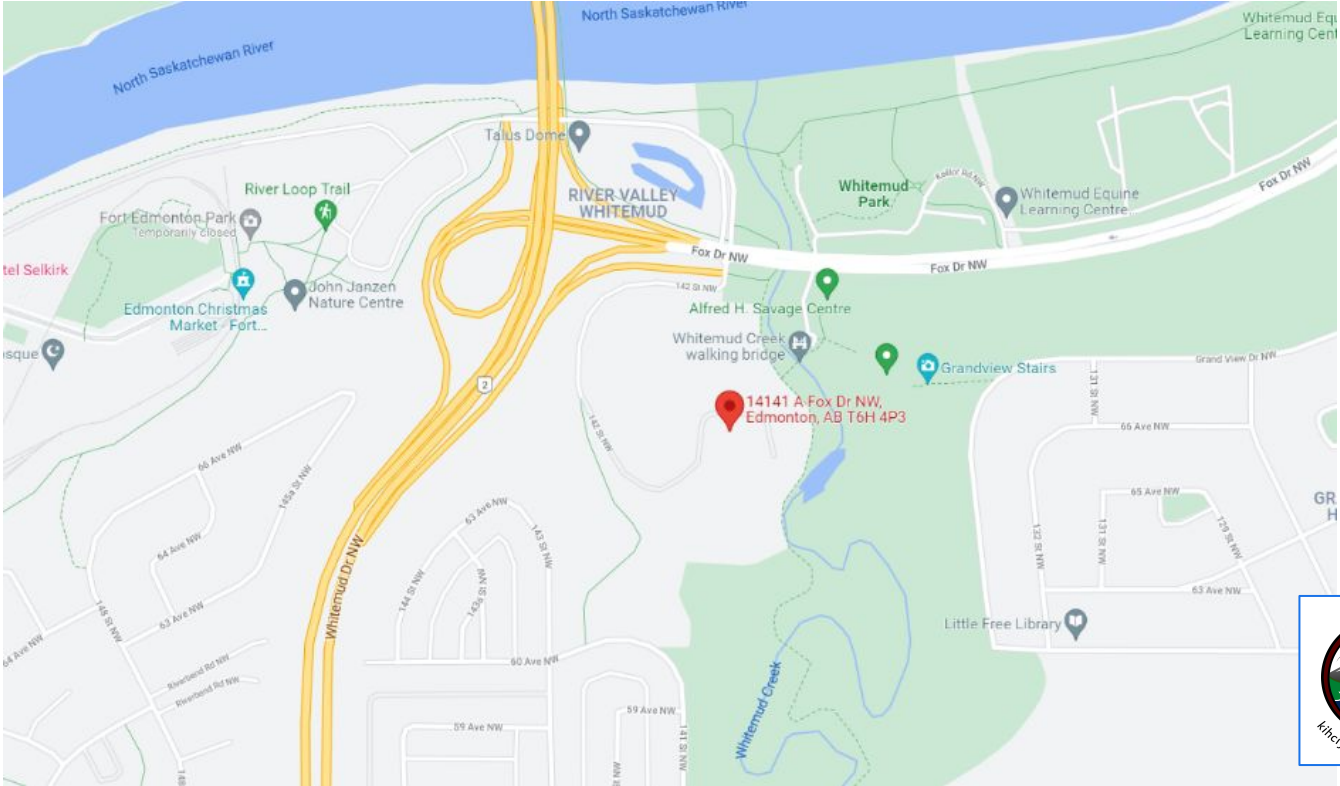


## What is kihciy askiy?

- An accessible place where urban Indigenous youth and families can access cultural resources - near heart of the city
- A place where Edmontonians can learn about the traditions and history of Indigenous people
- A place to re-establish relationship and connection to ceremony and land within the city guided by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- A location to provide a natural space for land-based education and special gatherings
- The first urban Indigenous cultural and ceremonial grounds in Canada with a hope it inspires other cities to do the same

# kihciy askiy (Sacred Land) Location

Project Address - 14141 Fox Drive NW, Edmonton AB



# kihciy askiy (Sacred Land) Location

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## Why this site was chosen

- Long before becoming farmland, the kichiy askiy site was used for many centuries by the Indigenous people
- The land was used for foraging for medicines for healing purposes
- Ochre, a rare mineral, is also found close to the site and was used in spiritual and traditional ceremonies
- Due to the significant history of the location, the site was chosen for kichiy askiy

## Importance of the Project

- kihciy askiy has been in the making for 15 years
- Right now Indigenous people are the only people who have to leave town in order to perform ceremonies
- The site will be an important place for generations to come
- When Indigenous people are connected into the cultural and spiritual tradition they do a lot better. It helps identity formation, it reinforces cultural tradition and makes the individual and community stronger
- The site will help build bridges with people who are not Indigenous and break down barriers that are created by lack of knowledge



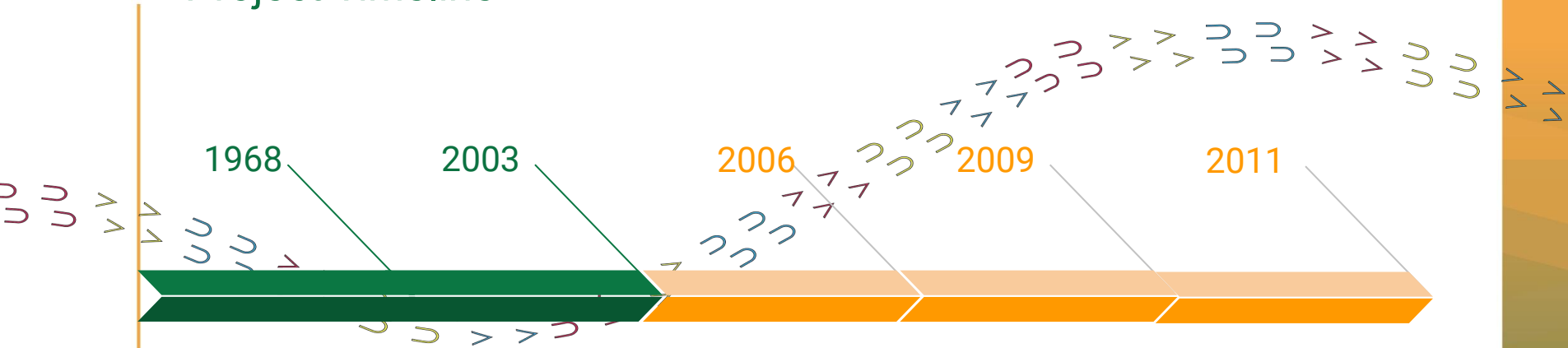
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# Project Timeline, Engagement and Consultation



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# Project Timeline



## Site Acquired

The City acquired the former Fox Farm site.

## Whitemud Integrated Plan

The Whitemud Integrated Area Concept Plan is developed and approved by City Council

## Proposal Received

The City receives a proposal from the Indigenous Elders Cultural Resource Society to create a permanent site for Indigenous cultural events and learning experiences for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

## Whitemud Integrated Plan Amendment

The Whitemud Integrated Area Concept Plan is amended to include the development of the cultural site called Kihciy Askiy  
A Public Open House was held in 2009.

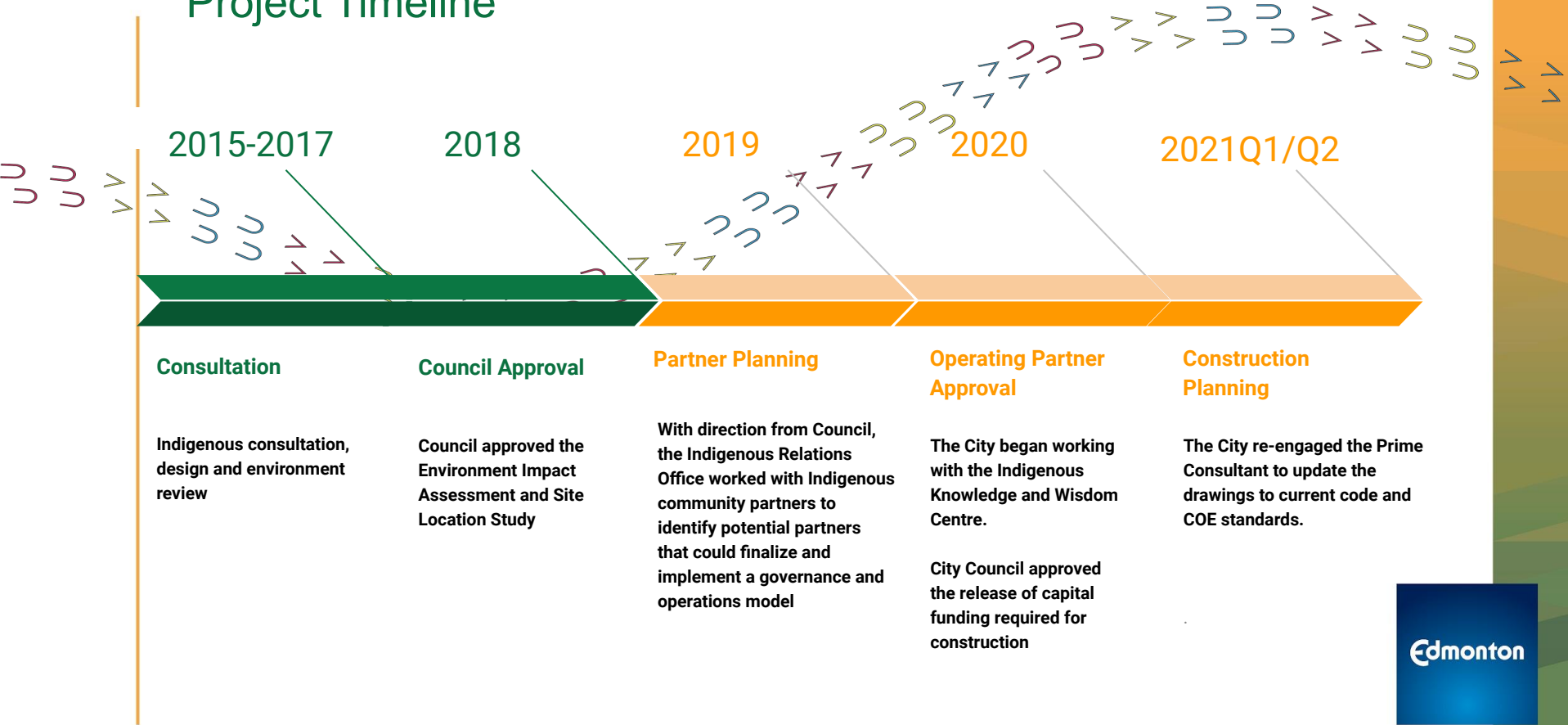
## Council Approval

City Council approves funding in the 2015-2018 Kihciy Askiy Phase 1



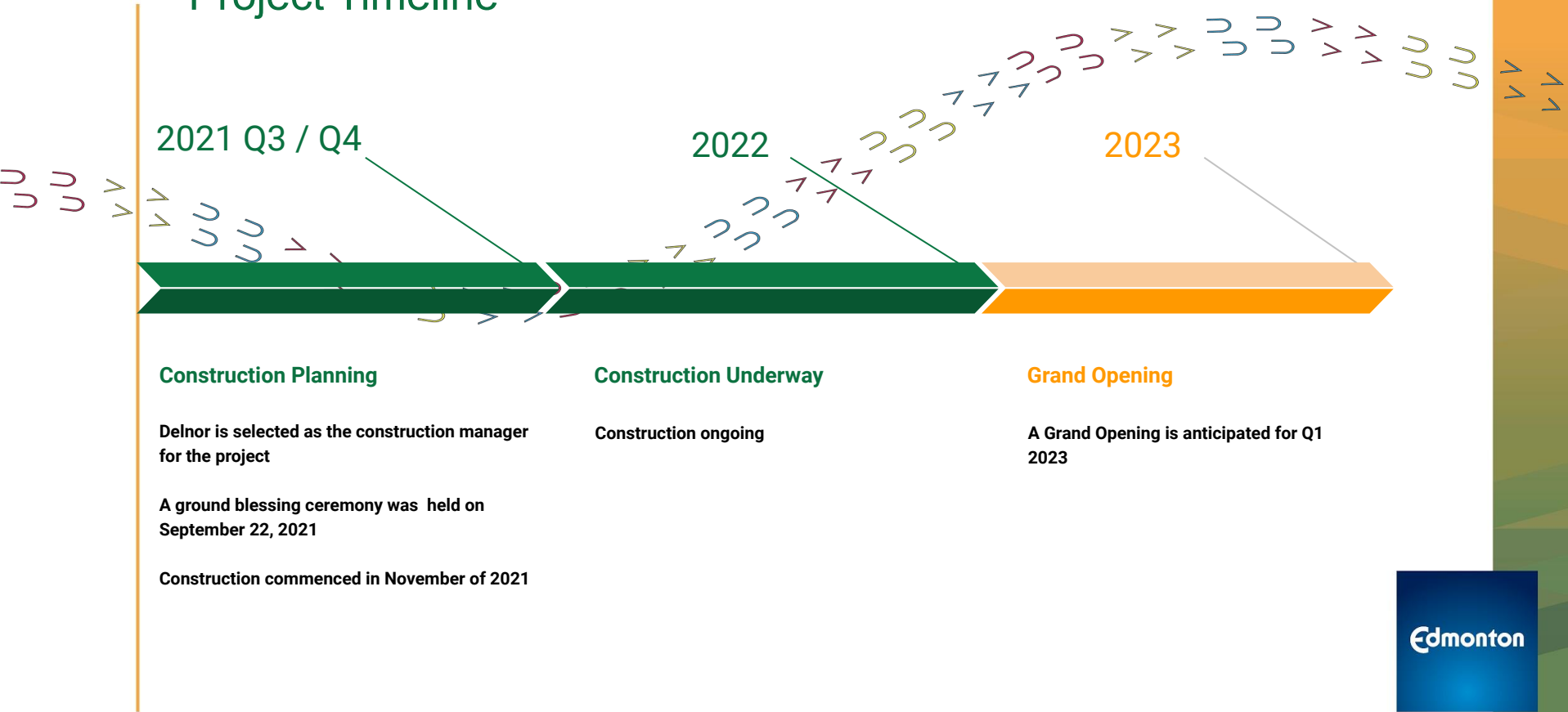
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# Project Timeline





# Project Timeline



# Public Engagement

## Whitemud Integrated Area Plan

A draft concept plan was presented to the public at open houses in June 2000 and June 2002. The plan was amended in 2009 to include the development of the cultural site called kihciy askiy for Indigenous cultural programs and ceremonies.

## Feedback from Public Consultation to the Amendment in 2009

The majority of the public would like the site to remain as natural and sustainable as possible, while also supporting the need for the Indigenous Cultural site at kihciy askiy which included cross-cultural learning opportunities.

The project received support from Indigenous Communities, and through the Grand Council Elders Gathering, the program and vision of the site were further defined.

Those who opposed the project cited concerns about noise, hours of use, future expansion, and environmental impacts. The specific environmental concerns focused primarily on potential impacts to wildlife and the environment. Environmental impact mitigation strategies were addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

# Public Engagement & Feedback

## Development Permit

Circulation and notification to the surrounding community leagues occurred with the Development Permit application in 2018, and again when the Development Permit was renewed in 2021. Notification was issued from March 30 to April 20, 2021.

## Project Website

[edmonton.ca/kihciyaskiy](https://edmonton.ca/kihciyaskiy) has been maintained throughout the project.

## Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators (NRCs) & Stewardship Committee (SC)

The City's NRCs have been members of the SC since its inception in 2012. An SC has been established among Whitemud Park area user groups and facilities.

## Public Engagement in Design

When the design of the project formally began in 2014, it was exempted from the Public Engagement policy/process due to the nature of the ceremony and programs that will take place. The engagement took place with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Native Counselling Services of Alberta and now the IKWC.

## Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The EIA examined impacts around the proposed site. The report outlines mitigation measures for impacts related to geotechnical and soils, hydrology and surface water quality, vegetation, wildlife, habitat connectivity, residential and recreational land use, traffic and parking and historic resources. Specific mitigation measures we'll implement include:

- Following City of Edmonton Erosion and Sedimentation Control Guidelines
- Developing an ECO Plan and implementing best environmental construction practices
- Reclaiming temporarily disturbed areas with native seed mix
- Replacing lost and damaged trees pursuant to the Corporate Tree Management Policy
- Marking project clearing limits with highly visible flagging
- Limiting construction working hours as per Bylaw 14600 (Community Standards Bylaw)
- Installing temporary fencing near recreation areas
- Using a paleontological monitoring program for open-cut excavations
- Suspending work and contacting Alberta Culture and Tourism if historic resources are discovered

# Indigenous Consultation in Design

The City of Edmonton engaged with Edmonton region Indigenous communities through meetings and gatherings held by its project partner organizations.

A Grand Council Gathering, hosted by Native Counselling Services of Alberta with support from the City of Edmonton, was held May 6-7, 2015 at the Alfred H. Savage Centre. Spiritual leaders from the Edmonton region Indigenous communities were invited following traditional Indigenous protocols. A total of 32 Elders participated on the first day and 36 on the second day. This feedback was integrated into the Phase 1 design.

Two Council of Elders meetings were held on October 21, 2015 and November 4, 2016 to provide feedback on the Schematic Design report and revised Site Plan. Feedback from both meetings was used to revise project documents.



## Elders Counsel

In 2015, Native Counselling Services of Alberta created the Counsel of Elders to work with the Project Team during the design and construction of kihciy askiy. The Elders Counsel continues to meet to provide spiritual and cultural leadership for the project.

- Howard Mustus, Chair
- Fred Campiou
- Wil Campbell
- Annabelle Kootenay
- Beatrice Morin
- Emil Durocher
- Wilson Bearhead
- Ron Arcand



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# Design Development



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## VISION

- Being welcoming to the general public while being a sacred space for spiritual celebrations and intimate gatherings
- a place for healing and reconciliation
- a place to share the world view of Indigenous people
- to respect and work with the existing land and creek
- successful integration of fire



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- Access for vehicles
- Access for emergency vehicles
- Access for pedestrians and cyclists
- Transit Access

## ACCESSIBILITY

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## FIRE SMART STRATEGIES

- 7m wide fire access road
- 4m wide trail for off-road fire equipment
- min. 15m distance to tree line
- deciduous tree groves

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# The Programme - The Buildings

- Located out of 100 year flood plain
- Close to parking

## KIHCIY ASKIY PAVILLION

- Washrooms (Not for public use)
- Change rooms
- Gathering Room

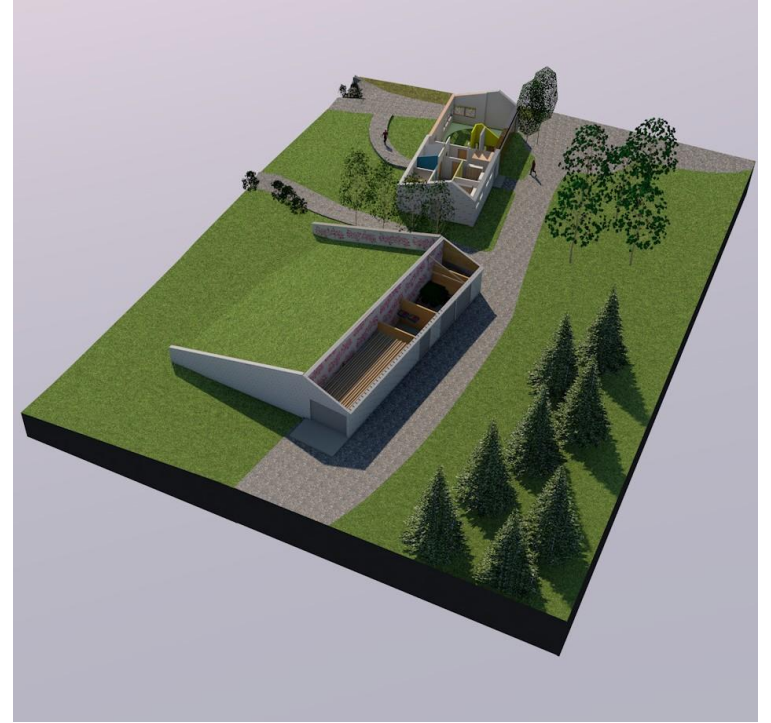
## STORAGE BUILDING

- Utility vehicle/lawn mowers
- Amphitheatre for Elders' teachings
- Tipi poles
- Tipi canvas
- Firewood & Ceremonial Stones



Architects





## AXONOMETRIC VIEWS



*View from the parking lot*



*View from the east*



## **EXTERIOR MATERIALS**

- Grey siding - metal panel
- Copper siding - metal panel
- Asphalt shingle roof
- Overall, the buildings are:
  - Low impact
  - Respectful of the bucolic setting



Architects



# Project Status



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# Project Schedule Status

## Schedule

- Construction started on the kihciy askiy project in November 2021.
- 2022 Q1/Q2: Foundational work, structures erected
- 2022 Q3 /Q4: Interior finishing, siteworks and final landscaping
- The current forecasted completion date is Winter 2022.



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# Operational Overview



## Operational Overview

The kihciy askiy site will provide a natural setting for hosting ceremonies, practicing traditional arts and sciences and facilitation of intergenerational and land-based teachings.

The site will be open daily from 9:00am to 4:30pm, and will adhere to the City of Edmonton Noise Bylaw 14600. There will be a private security company providing after hour and night time monitoring of the site and in direct connection with City park rangers and the Edmonton City Police.

kihciy askiy is intended to be a solemn site for Indigenous ceremonial gathering. Events such as pow-wows will not be held here, and the partner groups will make efforts to reach out and engage the neighbourhood and surrounding communities.



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## Operational Overview

The Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre Ltd. (IKWC) is responsible for the management, operations, and direction of the people working, using, and volunteering at the kihciy askiy site. Designated staff members will be assigned to the IKWC kihciy askiy Operations Team and will work directly with the kihciy askiy Counsel of Elders (Elders Counsel).

The City of Edmonton will be providing Facility Maintenance Support for the project, and the IKWC is responsible for Operational Supports.



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# Description of Ceremonial and Cultural Facilities

## Sweat Lodges

Sweat Lodge Ceremonies will be arranged around a central permanent fireplace for heating of stones involved in the ceremony. Required supplies, and space for their storage, will include sufficient firewood, field stones, fresh water, canvas tarps, blankets, and tools for preparing ceremonial fires and handling of heated stones. The lodges will be constructed of willow branches, covered with tarps.



## Pipe Ceremonies

Pipe Ceremonies are a foundational aspect to many Indigenous ceremonies, gatherings, and teachings. As such, Pipe Ceremonies would be expected to take place in all spaces within the kihciy askiy site (the Gathering Room, and educational space, Sweat Lodges, Tipis, amphitheater, and outdoor educational space).



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# Description of Ceremonial and Cultural Facilities

## Traditional Teachings

Land based educational programming and traditional teachings will be a central activity on the kihciy askiy site. These activities will take place in the Tipis, amphitheater, and outdoor educational space, as well as, the indoor meeting and educational space. Some programming may include accessing the Whitemud Creek, North Saskatchewan River, and/or the trail system within the Whitemud Park.

## Smudging and Ceremonial Supplies

Smudging is the ceremonial burning of small amounts of traditional medicines and is used as a cleansing and preparatory step in many gatherings and is a part of all ceremonies.



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# Description of Ceremonial and Cultural Facilities

## Tipis and Outdoor Educational Space

The site includes a dedicated area for tipis, which will be used for prayer ceremonies, group educational workshops, or other cultural purposes and, at times, for overnight use. For any events or usage exceeding regular park hours (5am-11pm, as stated in the Parkland Bylaw, Bylaw 2202), a special application will be made to the City. For any events/usage exceeding regular park hours, a special application to the City will be required.

Apart from the sweats, the tipi area will be the most frequently used event space on site. Each tipi can accommodate 16-20 people, with the largest tipi measuring about 22 feet in diameter with a height of 30 feet. Tipis will be erected on site on an as needed basis. When not in use, the poles and canvas will be stored in the storage building.



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## PUBLIC ACCESS

A number of events and programming will be made available to the general public and neighbouring communities to provide educational opportunities about Indigenous worldviews, histories, sciences, and cultural teachings in the spirit of Reconciliation.

# kihciy askiy (Sacred Land) - Ground Blessing Ceremony



[youtube.com/watch?v=fCYtpc70qtY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=fCYtpc70qtY)





# QUESTIONS



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# FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Website:** [edmonton.ca/kihciyaskiy](http://edmonton.ca/kihciyaskiy)

**Email:** [kihciyaskiy@edmonton.ca](mailto:kihciyaskiy@edmonton.ca)



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