



Civic Precinct Surface Renewal - Concept Phase

November 2016

What We Heard

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OVERVIEW

THE SURFACING AROUND City Hall is in need of repair and City Council requested rehabilitation work to be completed in the Civic Precinct. In 2015 & 2016, we embarked on sharing ideas and determining the functional uses of the surfaces around City Hall to develop a concept plan.

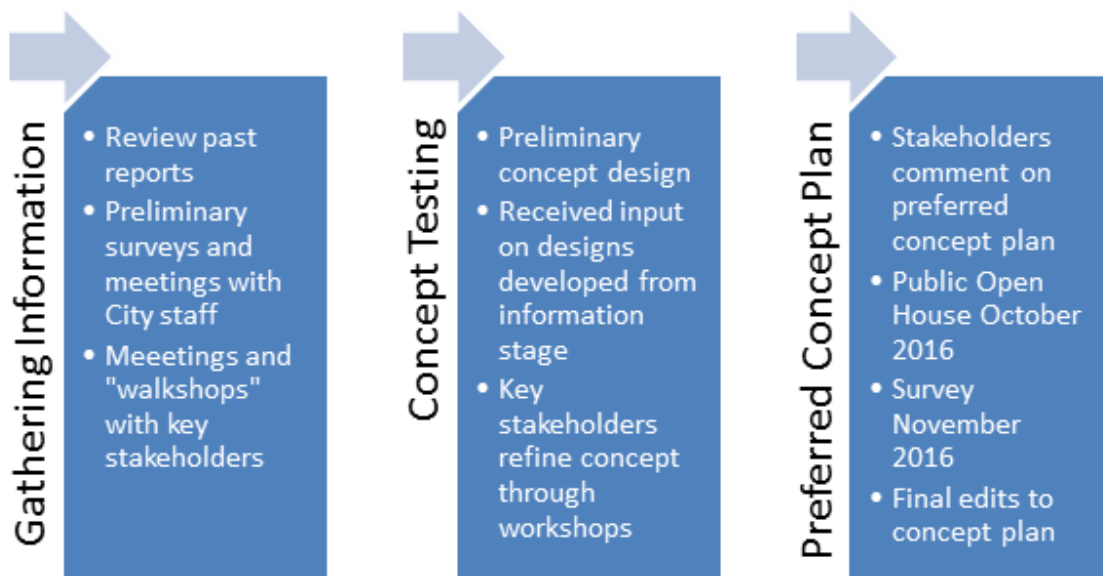
Edmonton's Civic Precinct encompasses Sir Winston Churchill Square, Centennial Plaza south of the Stanley A. Milner Library, and the City Hall Plaza. A Civic Precinct Master Plan was presented to the Community Services Committee of Council in April 2013. In 2015, City Council deferred the creation of a Civic Precinct Master Plan until after the Valley Line LRT is operational.

The Citizen Services Department committed to continue development of the Civic Precinct by focusing on three priorities: programming; operations and governance structure; and renewal projects. Council supported the rehabilitation of three areas to improve the accessibility and sustainability of the area.

Scope of work:

- Replacement of tiles and sub base around City Hall which have reached the end of the lifecycle, the sub base and structural integrity is starting to fail.
- Integration of the 102A Avenue road closure (between 100 Street and 99 Street) to improve integration and accessibility of City Hall Plaza with Sir Winston Churchill Square.
- Renewal of the East Garden turf (on the east side of Churchill Square) with a durable surface treatment to accommodate festivals and public activity.

WHAT WE DID -Concept Phase



WHO WE SPOKE TO

The Civic Precinct is an area within the City of Edmonton that is important to many people both general public and City of Edmonton staff. We needed to consider a wide range of stakeholders who are impacted by changes to this site and work on this site on a daily basis.

City of Edmonton Stakeholders

The staff consulted in this project ranged from management to daily operators. Staff who participated in this process provide the services including:

- Snow removal
- Maintenance
- Programs
- City of Edmonton initiatives
- City Planning
- Parks operations
- Forestry
- Security
- City Council
- City Architects and Landscape Architects
- Multicultural advisors
- City Engineers
- Aquatics
- Accessibility

The second Key Stakeholder group was the Community Key Stakeholder group. This group included representatives from major festival and event groups and business owners who are situated either on or directly adjacent to the Civic Precinct/Churchill Square.

This list included:

- Cariwest
- Downtown Business Association
- Downtown Community League
- Edmonton Arts Council
- Edmonton International Street Performers Festival
- Kids in the Hall Bistro
- L'Espresso Cafe
- Taste of Edmonton
- The Works International Visual Arts Society
- Three Bananas Cafe

- Tix on the Square
- Tour of Alberta
- Winspear Centre

HOW DID WE ENGAGE?

Gathering Ideas

Fall 2015/Winter 2016 - Functional Program requirements were gathered from City of Edmonton staff who operate, maintain and program within the three areas within the Civic Precinct. These requirements were gathered through a survey of City of Edmonton staff who work in the Civic Precinct and through smaller stakeholder meetings.

A follow up survey was provided to the Community Stakeholders who to gather further information on the current activities and criteria to consider in surface renewal of the three scope areas; City Hall block, 102 A avenue and the East Garden. (Appendix A - What we heard March 2016)

In **Spring 2016**, Community stakeholders and City Stakeholders were invited to participate in a “Walkshop” and Visioning Charrette with the project consultant, Dialog.

The purpose of the Walkshop and Visioning Charrette was to confirm priorities and develop a shared vision related to surfacing within the identified three Civic Precinct areas.

The session included an assessment of the current site conditions, analysis of the site strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints and provided a forum for information sharing.

Gathering Ideas Key Requirement Areas to consider for surface renewal:

Criteria	Uses
Safety- non slip & no trip	Pedestrian movement
Ensure tree health	Maintenance and equipment vehicle driving on the surfaces
Durable and load bearing	Improve electrical access and soil preservation
Sustainable maintenance	Snow clearing and surface cleaning
All season	Ensure there are passive areas
Accessibility for both Vehicles and pedestrians	Festival & events need to be accommodated as well as daily public use
Aesthetically pleasing	Programs need to stay including skating, wading, basketball, christmas tree etc.

Although festivals and events priorities continue to be the focus of the Key Stakeholders in all three deliverable areas, passive activities are also recognized as a key activity on site.

The main criteria for all three focus areas is to ensure barrier free access and focusing on the safety of the new surface.

Alternate ideas and comments were provided and ideas within scope will help inform the concept plan move forward with the surfacing suggestions. Ideas out of scope will still be collected and included in the final concept report.

Preliminary Concept Design - Development and testing

Summer/Fall 2016 - A concept drawing was completed taking into consideration the information that was received in the gathering information phase. This concept was tested through a variety of stakeholder meetings including City of Edmonton maintenance and operation units, and Festival and Event organizations. Through a series of two large presentation and many smaller review meetings, stakeholders had the opportunity to comment, question and collaborate on possible options to ensure that the surfacing ideas considered a wide range of requirements.

Preferred Concept Plan - Consultation

Fall 2016 - A preferred concept plan was prepared for review from public.

Through an open house and on-line survey, comments and questions were received on the proposed plan.

Public Input

October 24, 2016 - Open House at City Hall to review the proposed concept plans. 30 attendees came to discuss the proposals.

Survey - 691 Respondents

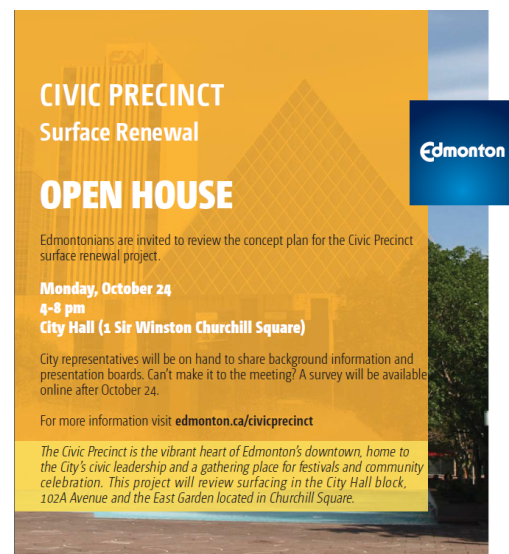
- Open from October 25 - November 24, 2016
- Surveys were available :
 - at the Open house
 - On the City of Edmonton survey page and project page
 - Sent through the Edmonton Insight Community Survey by email

These opportunities for input were advertized through:

- The City of Edmonton web site, facebook and twitter
- Ads in the Metro Newspaper
- Interview and news clips on Global, CTV and CHED radio
- Elevator displays in 15 buildings around the downtown centre.
- Distributed through the Community League and Festival & Event groups network

Key Themes from survey

- Concerns with cost of the project and questioning capital investment



- Need to consider safety when finally choosing material
- Prioritize long term sustainability and maintenance for choosing material
- Comments support concept
 - Increase accessibility
 - Remove grass
 - Eager to see smooth connection between plaza and square
 - Like the trees
- Comments that do not support concept
 - Do not reduce green space - need more green space
 - Reconsider timber option
 - No trees on 102 a avenue
 - Would like to include more scope into project

Report back

A follow up meeting with Community Key stakeholders was held in December 2016, to review the changes made to the concept design. It was determined that the final concept plan reflected the comments that were provided and further detail will be discussed in detailed design.

The final concept plan was also circulated through City of Edmonton stakeholders and all comments will be brought forward into the design phase.

Conclusion

A concept plan will be reviewed by Senior management (January 2017) and direction will be provided prior to moving into the design phase.

There continues to be conflicting responses to some of the concept options, but at this time the current concept plan meets all the original requirements that were set out in this project.

The final concept plan will inform the Design Phase for surface renewal. Stakeholder engagement will continue through detailed design and consideration for integration with the variety of capital projects proposed for the Civic Precinct will be paramount.

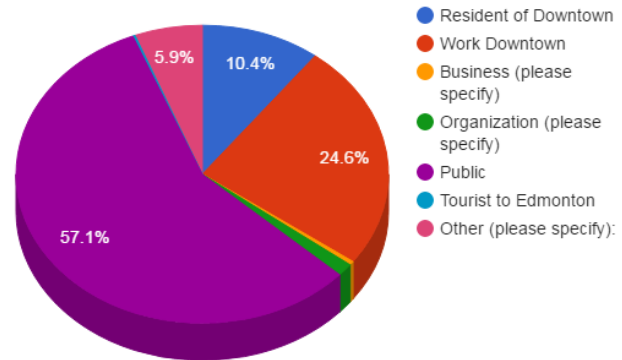
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Survey November 2016

Who did we hear from?

Questions #1

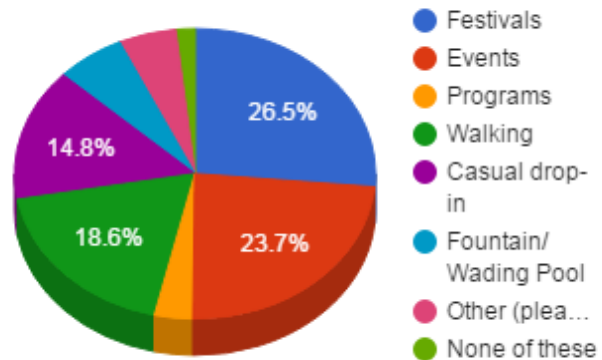
The majority of respondents were general public, but 24 % of the respondents worked downtown and 10% were residents of downtown.



#2 - Fifty four percent of 691

respondents visit the Civic Precinct area at least once a month with 12 % of these respondents more than once a week.

#3- The majority of the respondents participate in Festival and events in the Civic Precinct, but many also use the area for walking and casual drop-in.



Question #4- Confirming Project Goals

Throughout the Concept Phase, The City of Edmonton has gathered information from key stakeholders to develop the following project goals.

We asked you that while considering surface renewal in the Civic Precinct, indicate your level of support for each project goal.

The majority of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the goals:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	I am not sure
Support a vibrant, four-season space that animates the civic centre.	66%	25%	6%	2%	2%	0%
The space must accommodate large events while remaining Edmonton's most vibrant and relevant public open space for all users.	49%	36%	8%	4%	2%	1%
Porosity and permeability are key to providing a flexible and functional civic precinct that prioritizes pedestrian activity	30%	32%	18%	2%	2%	1%
Enable all Edmontonians to enjoy the space by creating an accessible and barrier-free public space.	61%	31%	6%	1%	1%	0%
The materiality and execution of the improvements must be befitting of a dignified civic facility - durable, timeless and beautiful.	53%	34%	8%	3%	1%	1%
Integrate 102A avenue to create one contiguous public open space. Utilize landscaping, surfacing, furnishings and architectural elements to knit the space toget	57%	29%	7%	2%	4%	1%
Provide minor utility improvements within the scope areas to improve the functionality of the space for large events.	36%	42%	15%	2%	2%	2%
Protect the long-term health and well-being of the existing mature trees on site. Provide high-quality growing conditions for new trees to facilitate rapid grow	73%	21%	4%	1%	1%	0%
Focus on making a sustainable site by providing infrastructure that requires less frequent maintenance and repair.	58%	31%	7%	2%	2%	0%

Question 5: Any general comments on the City Hall and Integration of 102 A avenue concept?

- Pavers need to handle vehicle traffic
- Focus more on public and less on big events. You can't have it both ways
- Leave road as is
- So glad this is happening, but make sure east west bike/pedestrian access is not restricted
- Make is green - should feel more like a park
- Need it to be more interesting, pretty, colorful

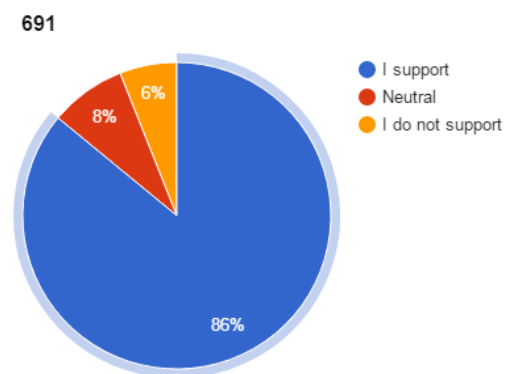
Questions 6

Do you support or oppose increasing landscaping (trees) along 102 A avenue to integrate the Square to the Plaza?

86% of respondents supported landscaping

Comments on Landscaping:

- Waste of money
- Very important to have green
- Like the idea of more shade in the square
- Trees are awesome
- Ensure space for basketball hoops
- Make sure the trees can survive in middle of hard surfacing
- Trees will block off current access for supplies and stage.
- Consider something portable



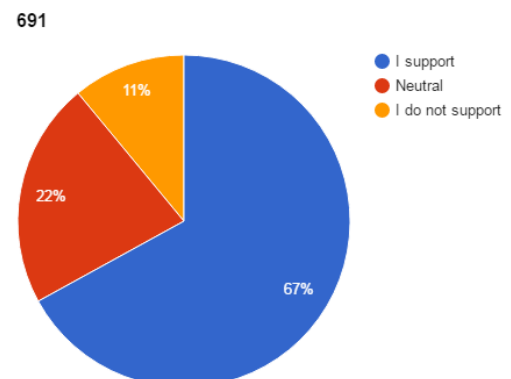
Question 7

Renewal of the East Garden, located on the east side of Churchill Square, with a durable surface treatment to accommodate festival, events, and public activity.

Recommending a raised timber deck in the east gardens. In a review of possible materials, each product was assessed on aesthetics, durability, ongoing maintenance, cost, replaceability and adaptability. Timber provided a softer feel to the space while meeting many of these criteria.

Do you support or oppose this option within the east garden?

67% of 691 respondents support the option of timber in the east garden.



Comments: (262 respondents)

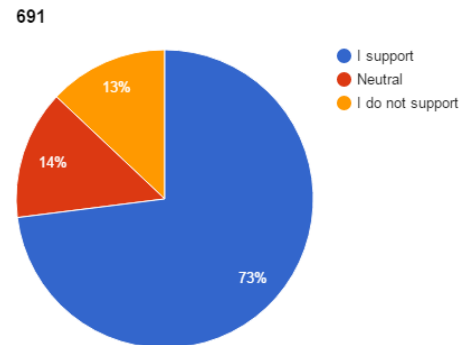
- Concern with maintenance and durability of timber
- Consider composite timber product
- Keep the grass
- Ensure the trees stay
- Move the festivals so they stop damaging the grass
- Ensure that the surface chosen is safe (slip resistant) and accessible

Question 8

To support tree health and to provide an opportunity for green landscaping, our concept includes “marigold petal” planters that surround the tree and provide fixed seating.

Do you support or oppose installation of fixed seating in the East Gardens?

73% of 691 respondents supported fixed seating in the East Gardens.



Comments: (252 respondents)

- If trees are left in place, this would be a significant improvement. Sitting areas with shade are functional and beautiful.
- Do not want to remove grass for planters or “frivolous” design
- Right now space is muddy
- No sod in planters - difficult to survive. Will attract dogs and sleeping people
- Fixed seating is good, decking is not
- Love the design
- Rethink design of planters so it is timeless
- Need some seating with backs and armrests for accessibility
- Need more seating in all of Churchill with less open space

Question 9

With the information provided on the proposed surface materials for the paving and the east garden, **do you have any comments on the proposed surface materials?**

Key themes (413 respondents)

- Too expensive
- Support ideas presented
- Timber and red granite are warm, neutral and inviting. No more concrete
- Composite decking
- Investment now to reduce long term maintenance
- Precast pavers are more cost effective than granite

What We Heard - Civic Precinct Surface Renewal

- Good thing about timber is it is simple to install and get replacement material
- Need to consider how slippery timber and granite become in winter - safety