



River Valley ICE STRATEGY





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Edmonton's River Valley provides citizens with a wide variety of experiences and activities throughout the year. Even during the cold winter months, it is common to see Edmontonians bundled up and getting outside to enjoy the City's signature and serene natural spaces.

One of the most valued winter activities that the River Valley provides the public with is outdoor ice skating. The development and maintenance of skating trails, shinny hockey rinks and pond skating allow for family-friendly outdoor, active experiences. While various ice surfaces have been tested over the years and have been well received by the public, it is now time to complete a comprehensive review of these amenities and create a plan to govern the future use, management, development and animation of ice surfaces in the River Valley.

The vision, as developed through internal and external consultation, is for

Edmonton's River Valley outdoor ice surfaces to provide a unique winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities to be active.





This 20-year plan includes information and input from City strategies, policies and programs, including budget; technical information, including research, trend analysis, and best practice reviews; and public input regarding values, needs, gaps, perceptions and uses. Through the compilation of this input the following Areas of Focus and Priority Objectives emerged for River Valley ice surfaces:

Services and Programs

Objectives:

- Develop and deliver a range of programs, services and events that align with user interests
- Establish community partnerships to increase and enhance programs and services at ice surfaces
- Explore vendor relationships to increase and enhance programs, amenities and services at ice surfaces

Facilities and Operations

Objectives:

- Provide safe and accessible surfaces and facilities
- Establish community partnerships for the development and maintenance of ice surfaces
- Create an inviting and unique environment at each ice surface
- Critically assess operations to support high quality surfaces and associated amenities

Sustainability

Objectives:

- Monitor weather patterns and climate trends to maximize the season and mitigate impacts to surfaces
- Assess the River Valley to explore the feasibility of future ice surface locations
- Ensure that the implementation of the River Valley Ice Strategy is fiscally responsible
- Review, evaluate and adjust the River Valley Ice strategy as needed



Public Information

Objectives:

- Increase citizen awareness by ensuring easy access to information and providing education
- Ensure new River Valley ice surface opportunities are promoted to create awareness
- Develop processes to receive and analyze public input to assist in the creation of innovative ice surfaces, services and programming ideas

From these objectives, 50 detailed actions were developed and categorized into three timeframes that indicate when implementation of each action should begin: Years 0-5, Years 5-10 and Years 10-20. The actions can be found on pages 31-38 of this report. The City will develop a detailed and sequenced implementation plan that will identify the required budget and resources needed to successfully execute the recommended actions.



1. INTRODUCTION

Edmonton's River Valley provides citizens with a wide variety of experiences and activities throughout the year. Each season presents unique opportunities for the public to enjoy. Even during the cold winter months, it is common to see Edmontonians bundled up and getting outside. One of the most valued winter activities is skating outdoors in the River Valley, the City's signature and serene natural resource.

With the development of the WinterCity Strategy and Implementation Plan, it is evident that Edmontonians are looking for new ways to embrace our northern climate. Aligning with the Winter Life Pillar, various new ice surfaces have been trialed in the River Valley and have been well received by the public. Skating trails, pond skating, and shinny hockey rinks all allow for family-friendly, skating experiences. The River Valley Ice Strategy includes a comprehensive review of the current ice surfaces and management practices, provides recommendations, and creates a plan for future ice surfaces in the River Valley.

1.1. Project Goals and Objectives

Goal 1:

Identify a vision for recreational, outdoor ice surfaces in the River Valley.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Identify the purpose of ice surfaces within the River Valley.
- 1.2 Identify appropriate types of use for ice surfaces in alignment with the developed vision.

Goal 2:

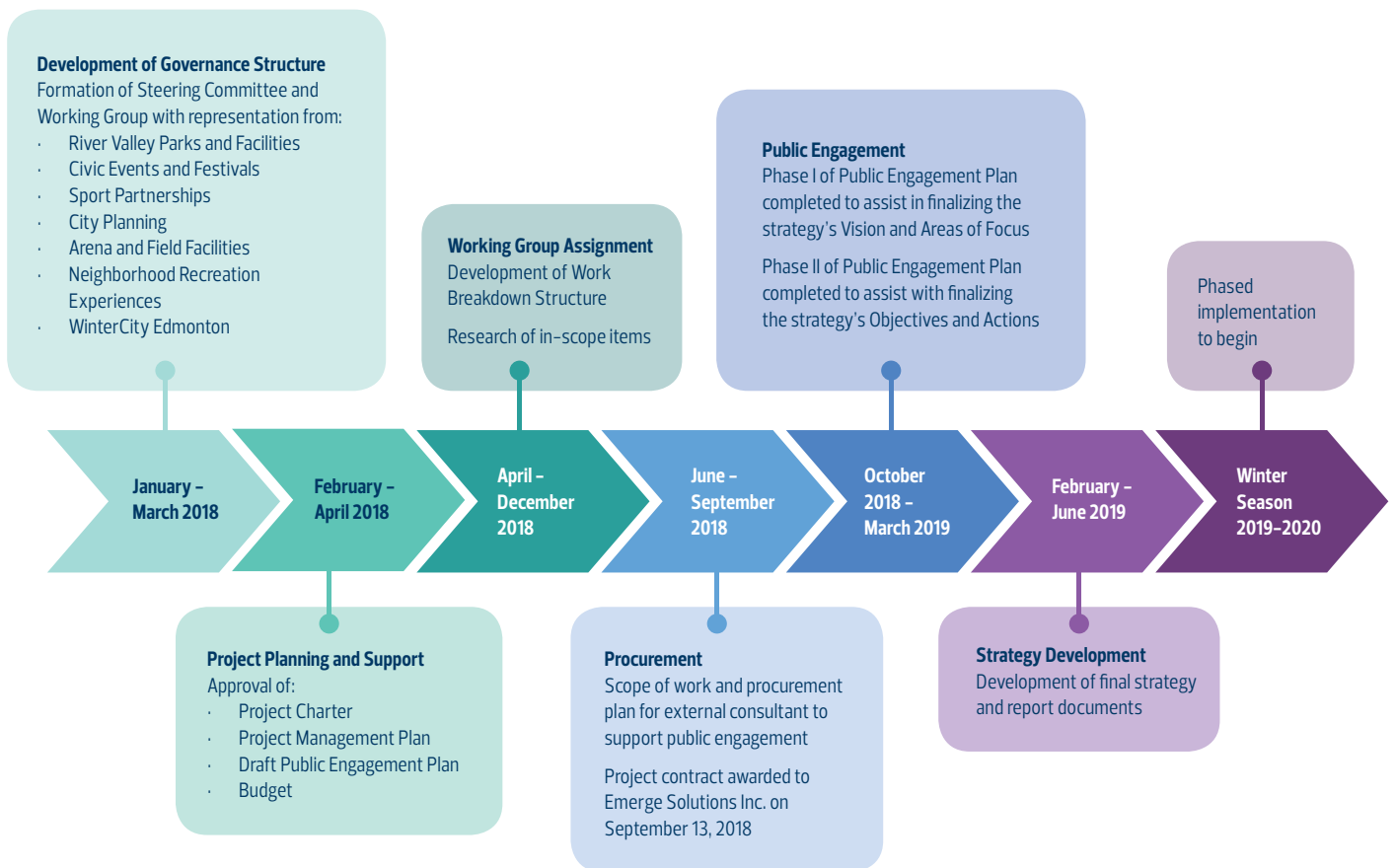
Develop a comprehensive 20-year strategic plan for recreational skating surfaces in the River Valley that will create sustainable, vibrant, and accessible recreational opportunities for the public in the winter. This includes undertaking a comprehensive review of the strategy in year 10.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Create standardized operational procedures that effectively and efficiently allow for high-quality, outdoor ice surfaces.
- 2.2 Analyze ice surface usage including activities, hours of operation, rental opportunities, etiquette, public safety, sponsorship opportunities, and bylaw alignment.
- 2.3 Evaluate all River Valley parks for ice surface suitability, and identify feasible options through a service gap analysis as well as site opportunities and constraints.
- 2.4 Develop a phased implementation plan including:
 - 4.1 Resource and budget requirements.
 - 4.2 Prioritization of recommendations and sequencing of implementation.
 - 4.3 Identification of performance measures to monitor and evaluate the success of ice surfaces.
- 2.5 Explore partner opportunities that may allow for shared service models for development and programming.
- 2.6 Complete the strategy by Q2 of 2019 and be ready to implement recommendations starting in Q4 of 2019.

1.2. Project Process Overview

To achieve the project's goals and objectives and ensure a successful strategy, the following approach was taken:



1.3. Public Involvement Plan

To ensure feedback was gathered from key stakeholders, user groups, and the public, a Public Engagement Plan was developed and executed. By engaging Edmontonians as part of the decision-making process, we:

- Developed a 20-year vision for River Valley ice surfaces that was shaped by Edmontonians' input
- Gained a clear understanding of how Edmontonians enjoy and are interested in experiencing River Valley ice surfaces, including how they want to use them, as well as their expectations for amenities, service levels, maintenance, programming, etiquette, and other elements that affect usability
- Ensured that the strategy and supporting implementation plan align with the interests and expectations of Edmontonians
- Explored how stakeholders can be part of the City's approach to implementing and operationalizing any proposed changes to River Valley ice surfaces

To establish the greatest levels of stakeholder and public engagement participation, the City:

- Leveraged its long-standing relationships with stakeholders who use and provide programming on River Valley ice surfaces by inviting them to engagement opportunities. Stakeholders were also encouraged to share information with their networks to encourage participation in public engagement activities
- Sent out public surveys using Edmonton Insight Community to reach as many people as possible, including those currently unfamiliar with or interested in, but not using River Valley ice surfaces
- Created a project webpage where information was posted regarding the strategy's development and public engagement opportunities
- Hosted public engagement events on-site at existing River Valley ice surfaces in order to ensure that the City reached people who were both interested in and using River Valley ice surfaces

Please see *Section 4. Public Engagement* for more detailed information about the two phases of engagement.

1.4. Relevant Policies and Initiatives

The following City of Edmonton plans and strategies were considered in the context of the River Valley Ice Strategy to ensure the strategy's recommendations and implementation plans are consistent with higher-level planning initiatives.

ConnectEdmonton

ConnectEdmonton is the City's strategic plan for 2019–2028 that sets direction for Edmonton's future. The plan, built by Edmontonians, features four strategic goals that are the areas of focus requiring change in the next 10 years: Healthy City, Urban Places, Regional Prosperity and Climate Resilience. The River Valley Ice Strategy has the ability to support each of these goals in its recommendations.

Ribbon of Green (1990, 1992, 2019)

The 1990 and 1992 Ribbon of Green Concept and Master Plans created the foundation for planning, management, use, and prioritization of park development within the North Saskatchewan River Valley and ravine system. The Ribbon of Green SW+NE (2019) builds on the previous plans, providing guidance for the conservation and use of the southwest and northeast reaches of the River Valley. The Ribbon of Green SW+NE (2019) provides land management classification and spatial direction, including program statements, design ideas, and circulation direction for areas of activity within the SW and NE River Valley. As the Ribbon of Green is the primary strategic policy that guides the use and management of the River Valley, it is the fundamental backbone for the River Valley Ice Strategy.

WinterCity Strategy and Implementation Plan

Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy was developed to create a city that's inviting, vibrant and exciting for residents and tourists throughout the winter months. The River Valley Ice Strategy aligns closely with WinterCity Goal 1 - *Make it easier to 'Go Play Outside': Provide more opportunities for outdoor activity.* There are many actions in the WinterCity Implementation Plan that are applicable to the River Valley Ice Strategy with themes around new ice surface locations, vendors, equipment rentals, program/lesson opportunities, accessibility, and creating welcoming, vibrant, outdoor spaces.



Live Active Strategy

The Live Active Strategy seeks to shift attitudes and behaviours about active living, active recreation, and sport in our community, encouraging and supporting people of all ages, abilities, and interests to become more physically active. It presents a framework to encourage more Edmontonians to be more active, a framework for change, and to create and grow collaborative partnerships. Themes and goals that are applicable to the River Valley Ice Strategy include:

- *Active Story* – Goal S1: Advance an active community by purposefully utilizing a physical activity lens when making decisions from policy to service provision (Action S1.1)
- *Active Environments* – Goal E1.1: Improve access to Edmonton's active recreation and sport infrastructure
- *Active Opportunities* – Goal O1.2: Increase participation in active recreation and sport, by targeted populations

Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy

Breathe is a transformative strategy to ensure our growing city will be supported by a network of open space. Breathe frames the green network into three themes: Ecology, Wellness, and Celebration. When developing the implementation plan and recommendations for the River Valley Ice Strategy, it was important to consider and align with Breathe's three themes.

Municipal Bylaws and Provincial/Federal Legislation

Implementation of the strategy will require compliance with a variety of regulatory bylaws and legislation such as:

- Parkland Bylaw 2202: Regulates the conduct and activities of people on Parkland
- North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan Bylaw 7188: protects the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System
- A variety of provincial and federal regulatory and permitting processes

River Valley Alliance Capital Plan of Action

This comprehensive plan looks to integrate the 88 kms of North Saskatchewan River Valley from Devon through Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan as the Capital Region's River Valley Park, and identifies opportunities for achieving specific environmental, social, and economic objectives. Future project plans should be taken into consideration as they arise to look for alignment and partnership opportunities.

Approach to Community Recreation Facility Planning in Edmonton

The Approach outlines specific actions related to existing or future community recreation facilities and amenities, and it provides an overall direction to providing recreation opportunities in the city. It includes principles, a planning method, and recommendations to help guide decisions on recreation facility development in Edmonton and the surrounding region. As outdoor ice is in scope for the Approach, this was an applicable plan to reference and align with when developing the recommendations for River Valley ice surfaces.

2. ICE SURFACE SUPPLY AND DEMAND

2.1. Inventory of Outdoor Ice Surfaces

River Valley Ice Surfaces

Ice skating has been a popular activity in Edmonton since settlement times. City archival records provide evidence that outdoor ice surfaces, whether a constructed rink or a frozen lake, river, or creek, were well used by citizens.

To this day, ice skating outdoors amongst nature is still a beloved experience. Currently, there are five ice surfaces located in three River Valley Parks that are built and maintained each season.

Making use of existing ponds in the parks was an ideal starting point for ice surface creation; however, challenges over the years have ultimately called into question the long-term practicality and sustainability of these surfaces and has changed the thinking of what kind of ice surfaces are possible in the River Valley. The following is detailed information on each ice surface.

William Hawrelak Park

Since its official opening in 1967, Hawrelak Park's lake has provided Edmontonians with a picturesque, outdoor skating experience. The addition of the park pavilion in 1968 provided beneficial amenities such as washrooms and a warm place to gather and change into skates. In 2013/2014, necessary modifications to the lake required the closure of the lake ice surface for that season. To support continued winter recreation and the Silver Skate Festival, which relied on the lake for programming, the Hawrelak Park skating rink was built. After the lake ice reopened, this additional ice surface continued to be built and maintained as an alternative surface for the public to skate on prior to the opening of the lake. Once the lake ice surface is open for skating, this rink is then permitted for shinny hockey use, allowing for nets, sticks, and pucks.





WILLIAM HAWRELAK PARK ICE SURFACES

	LAKE ICE	SKATING RINK
Size	5 Hectares	1 Hectare
Parking	Large parking lot located NE of pavilion	Directly across the road from skating rink
Amenities	Pavilion located on the east shore of lake includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Washrooms · Food vendor · Skate rentals · Lockers · Skate change area · Warming area Picnic tables around perimeter of ice surface for resting or skate change area	Washroom building and picnic shelter located across the road and parking lot from the rink Temporary warming hut beside rink Picnic tables for resting or skate change area next to rink Shiny is permitted on this surface once lake ice is open
Daily Hours	11 a.m. – 10 p.m.	10 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Lighting	Permanent lighting around perimeter of lake	Temporary lighting around perimeter of rink

Victoria Park

In Victoria Park, two ice surfaces exist, both built on the park's turf. The Victoria Skating Oval was initiated in 1975 through a partnership with the Edmonton Speed Skating Association (ESSA). Previous outdoor locations did not support a large enough track for training and competition purposes, and the large open space in Victoria Park was deemed an ideal location for a new track. The City and ESSA work together via an agreement that specifies joint maintenance responsibilities and gives ESSA exclusive use of the ice surface at specified times.

The second surface, the Victoria IceWay, was first piloted in 2015 as a result of a local landscape architect's idea of creating a downtown "skate-to-work" Freezeway. Due to equipment and resources already at the park, Victoria Park was chosen as a suitable location to pilot a skating trail. Even though the pilot project did not result in a commuting ice surface, the recreational IceWay skating trail has become a very popular destination and unique skating experience for users.





VICTORIA PARK ICE SURFACES

	SKATING OVAL	ICEWAY
Size	Olympic-sized long track oval	700 m skating trail
Parking	Parking lot off of River Valley Road, south of skating oval	Parking lot off of River Valley Road or small lot east of Picnic Shelter #6
Amenities	Pavilion located NW of the surface includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Washrooms · Lockers · Skate change area · Warming area · ESSA Training Room Timing shack adjacent to oval to support speed skating races	Picnic shelter located at the east end of IceWay provides a skate change area Porta-potties located near Picnic Shelter #6
Daily Hours	10 a.m. - 10 p.m. (except during ESSA hours)	10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Lighting	Permanent flood lights around perimeter of oval	Temporary lights along length of the surface



Rundle Park

Rundle Park's significant transformation from a landfill to a park began in the early 1970s. Part of the plan included the construction of the Rundle Family Centre and the ponds at the south end of the park. Completed for the park's official opening in 1978, the Rundle Family Centre and ponds were designed to be used year-round by including skate-safe flooring and deck material. The ponds quickly became a favorite skating destination during the winter season.

In recent years, minor leaks have developed in the ponds' liner, resulting in an inconsistent water level and corresponding unsafe skating surface. To ensure ongoing skating opportunities in Rundle Park, and building on the success of the IceWay in Victoria Park, the Rundle IceWay was piloted in the 2016/2017 season. In its first year, the trail connected the Rundle Family Centre to a skating rink built on the park's turf. Expansions have been made in subsequent years to include connections to picnic sites and the addition of a shiny surface. This 2 km IceWay provides a variety of experiences for family-friendly skating at Rundle Park.



RUNDLE PARK ICE SURFACE

ICEWAY	
Size	2 km skating trail connected to a skating rink, shinny surface and small auxiliary surfaces next to picnic sites
Parking	Parking lot located NW of the Rundle Family Centre
Amenities	Rundle Family Centre located on the west end of the IceWay includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Washrooms· Food vending (occasional)· Lockers· Skate change area· Warming area
Daily Hours	10 a.m. - dusk
Lighting	Temporary lighting to be installed for 2019/2020 season to light portions of the IceWay



Other Ice Surfaces in Edmonton

In addition to the River Valley ice surfaces, there are a large number of outdoor ice surfaces, well-distributed throughout Edmonton. Between City and community surfaces, Edmontonians have over 100 outdoor ice surfaces to choose from during the winter season. While above-bank ice surfaces (outside of the River Valley) as well as community ice surfaces within the River Valley are out of scope for this strategy, it is important to capture them in the total supply of outdoor ice surfaces.

CITY OF EDMONTON-OWNED AND OPERATED

River Valley Ice Surfaces (5)

- Located in Hawrelak (2), Victoria (2) and Rundle (1) Parks
- Built and maintained by River Valley Parks and Facilities
- Use is a mix of family skating and shinny
- Free to use
- Amenities and services noted in previous pages

Other Ice Surfaces (7)

- Located in:
 - Castle Downs Park – Skating oval and two surfaces for shinny built on turf
 - Jackie Parker Park – Surface built on turf, west of the pond
 - The Meadows Community Recreation Centre outdoor leisure ice – Refrigerated surface outside of the recreation centre built on concrete
 - City Hall – Ice surface built on City Hall fountain
- Built and maintained by Specialized Snow and Arena and Field Facilities
- Use is a mix of family skating and shinny
- Free to use
- Amenities provided differ at each location but can include washrooms and/or a skate change area

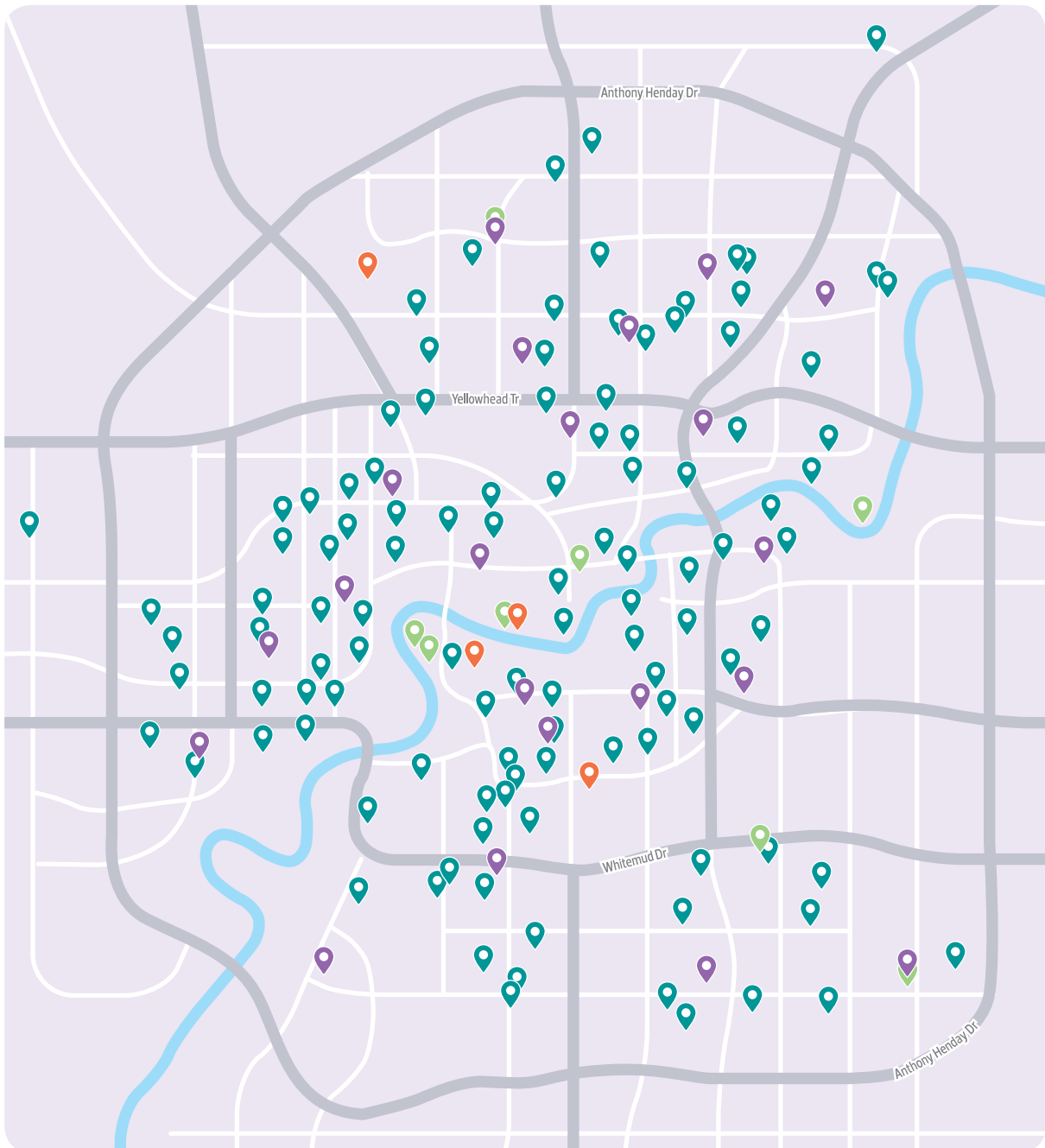
COMMUNITY SURFACES (102)

- Located throughout the city
- Built and maintained by the community
- Use is a mix of family skating and shinny
- Rinks are a mix of snow bank, boarded and no boards, and some have added ice trails
- Costs range from free for public, free to community members and/or a minimal fee for non-community members (\$2-\$3)
- Amenities provided differ at each location but can include washrooms, skate change area, concession, and equipment rentals
- The Alberta Legislature also operates one public use, outdoor ice surface on their south grounds



ICE SURFACE DISTRIBUTION

- City of Edmonton Outdoor Ice Surface
- City of Edmonton Indoor Ice Surface
- Community Outdoor Ice Surface
- Privately Owned Indoor Ice Surface



2.2. Demand for River Valley Ice Surfaces

Recreational Use

The demand for outdoor ice surfaces can be difficult to assess due to the spontaneous nature of their use and the lack of historical attendance data. However, from public consultation conducted through a variety of City initiatives and preliminary pedestrian counting technology, we are able to provide some insight into its demand and use.

From the *Live Active Edmonton*, Physical Activity Survey 2018:

- Among active Edmontonians, ice skating is rated in the top 15 active recreation activities, at 10% participation. Previously at 4% participation in 2016, it would appear that ice skating is trending upwards. The survey also notes that winter is the second highest season for adults to participate in sport activities.

From *The Approach to Community Recreation Facility Planning* in Edmonton:

- Edmontonians were asked about the need to upgrade current and develop additional outdoor recreational facilities. Of the top ten priorities, the need to enhance/upgrade outdoor ice rinks was ranked number one and skating ovals at number seven. They also prioritized the development of new or additional facilities in which outdoor ice rinks ranked number three and skating ovals at number six.

From the March 2018 Edmonton Insight Survey regarding River Valley skating surfaces:

- 68% of participants agreed that River Valley ice surfaces provide an outdoor recreational option for Edmontonians to stay active.

From the March 2017 Edmonton Insight Survey from Winter City Edmonton:

- Skating on an outdoor rink in a major public park ranked second in outdoor activity participation during the wintertime (walking was ranked first).

During the 2018/2019 season, base level counts were conducted in various locations at each River Valley outdoor ice surface to gather initial usage information. This preliminary data confirms that ice surfaces are popular destinations for Edmontonians. Peak times at the

surfaces were weekend afternoons and weekday evenings, with some hours of the day showing hundreds of counts. Above-average warm weather in both December and January supported higher visitation rates, while extremely cold temperatures in February were correlated with substantially lower use.

Specialized Use

River Valley ice surfaces can also be booked for non-exclusive festival and event use. Current demand is relatively low with approximately 12 to 15 permitted events on River Valley ice surfaces per winter season. Permits are required when a gathering has 50 people or more.

Most events are produced by independent community organizations and are open to the general public. Events included various corporate winter festivals where ice skating was offered as an activity, community activation for major events like Red Bull Crashed Ice, recreation hockey tournament and drop-in events for employees and their families. For a listing of previous festivals and events that have booked River Valley Ice Surfaces, please see the Appendix A.

Major Stakeholder Use

There are two major stakeholders that use River Valley ice surfaces annually. The Silver Skate Festival, draws over 100,000 people over a 10-day period to William Hawrelak Park, many of whom also use its ice surfaces. This is the largest event that is permitted to use the lake ice surface at the park. The organization uses it both for competitions related to the festival and for public enjoyment. This festival is a major catalyst for new visitors to the park and provides increased exposure of the ice surfaces.

The Edmonton Speed Skating Association (ESSA) heavily uses the skating oval and pavilion at Victoria Park. Currently, ESSA is the only outdoor ice surface partner organization that has a long-standing agreement with the City. Not only does ESSA contribute towards the maintenance of the skating oval, but they also provide consistent programming at the surface by offering weekday training and hosting competitions.



3. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR RIVER VALLEY ICE SURFACES

3.1. Operations

Building and maintaining outdoor ice surfaces is no easy task. Environmental factors not only impact opening and closing dates, but also increase the time and resources required for building and maintenance. The following table shows the different surfaces and their operational and financial information.

	WILLIAM HAWRELAK PARK LAKE ICE	WILLIAM HAWRELAK PARK SKATING RINK	RUNDLE PARK ICEWAY	VICTORIA PARK SKATING OVAL	VICTORIA PARK ICEWAY
Size	5 Hectares	1 Hectare	2km trail+ 1 Hectare skating surfaces	1 Hectare	700m
Subsurface and location	Lake surface	Turf across from Picnic Shelter #2	Park's turf connects Rundle Family Centre to various picnic sites and skating surfaces	Park's turf, SE of Pavilion	Park's turf, connects to skating oval and extends east to Picnic Shelter #6
Opening Conditions	Ice thickness must be 17"	Ice thickness must be 3"	Ice thickness must be 3"	Ice thickness must be 3"	Ice thickness must be 3"
Labour (for build)	-	\$4,500	\$6,052	\$4,500	\$1,198
Labour (includes daily maintenance)	\$38,336	\$49,500	\$61,430	\$49,500	\$14,376
Equipment (for build)	-	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$1,000	\$250
Equipment (includes daily maintenance)	\$7,560	\$9,950	\$15,340	\$9,950	\$2,835
Water (cubic meters)	650 m ³	1050 m ³	1400 m ³	1050 m ³	600 m ³
Fuel	\$2,700	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$3,000	\$840
Lighting	Permanent flood lights around perimeter of lake	\$22,500 for rental lights. Lights were purchased in 2018	Currently no lighting	Permanent flood lights around perimeter of oval	Temporary lights along length of surface
Total Cost	~ \$50,000 for a 2.5-month season	~ \$90,000 for a 4-month season	~ \$90,000 for a 4-month season	~ \$70,000 for a 4-month season	~ \$20,000 for a 4-month season (not including temporary lights)

*Important Note: Costs in this table are approximate and based on 2018 costs. Labour, equipment and resources are projections based on a 2.5 month season for lake ice and a 4 month season for ice built on turf. Values may change due to various conditions that impact staff hours (snow days, sick days, events, wage changes) as well as variables that impact water costs, fuel costs and equipment costs.

SWOT Analysis Summary

A Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis was undertaken for all existing River Valley parks to assess the potential for future ice surfaces, including lake/pond ice, parkland ice, and IceWays. Parks included were: Buena Vista, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Whitemud, Terwillegar, Emily Murphy, Government House, Kinsmen, Queen Elizabeth, Gallagher, Louise McKinney, Dawson, Capilano, Gold Bar, Gold Stick, Hermitage, Klondike Campground (Blackmud Ravine), Woodbend Natural Area, Rundle, William Hawrelak, and Victoria.

The factors considered include:

- Operational requirements – equipment storage, adjacent space for snow storage, vehicle access and water supply
- Amenities – temporary or permanent facilities including pavilion, washrooms, changing area, warming space; proximity to transit stops; and opportunities for fire pits, food/cafe facilities, and equipment rentals
- Infrastructure – existing parking facilities, power, lighting
- Programming – potential alignment or incompatibility with existing uses; opportunities for additional ice-based activities (curling, ice crokinole, etc.)
- Environmental conditions/considerations – slope, solar load, ecological sensitivity, potential environmental impacts, existing lakes/ponds
- Planning – direction in park master plan/Ribbon of Green plan for ice surface

The results of the SWOT are summarized in Appendix B. Important limitations to the creation of new ice surfaces exist at a number River Valley parks. Some could be overcome with capital investment, while others have inherent site conditions that make it much more difficult, or in some cases, not possible.

Limitations that could be addressed with capital investment:

- Lack of existing water truck storage and water facilities, which are important considerations in establishing economically-viable ice surfaces
- Lack of nearby facilities, such as washrooms and warming/changing areas
- Existing uses which could either be in direct conflict with an ice surface, such as dog off-leash areas or tobogganing hills, or which could be delayed or indirectly impacted by an ice surface, such as sports fields

More fundamental barriers to use of the site for ice surfaces:

- Slope and/or proximity to the river (e.g. Emily Murphy, Government House, Dawson, and Queen Elizabeth Parks)
- Limited access by public transit, which was identified through public engagement as an important factor

By contrast, a number of River Valley parks have conditions, facilities, or amenities that could be favourable to new ice surfaces:

- Rundle and Gold Bar Parks have existing ponds that could potentially be maintained for skating
- Terwillegar, Capilano, Buena Vista, and Laurier Parks have large, flat areas set back from the river with good access for equipment
- Buena Vista and Laurier Parks have good parking supply and existing or planned four-season washroom facilities and other amenities nearby (eg. Valley Zoo cafe, Yorath House, sheltered picnic sites)

Existing ice surfaces at Rundle, Victoria, and Hawrelak Parks were also assessed, with the following findings:

- More extensive marketing of skating opportunities and development of programs at Rundle Iceway are needed
- Solar glare impacts ice quality at the northwest end of Victoria Oval
- The decorative lighting that was installed for one season at Victoria IceWay was very popular and could be replicated elsewhere
- Climate variability has resulted in challenges with opening and sustaining Hawrelak Park's lake surface in recent winters, which has led to some public frustration. The additional Skating Rink at the southeast end of the park has been constructed to alleviate concerns, but it is uncertain how effective this has been.



Climate Trends and Impacts

Due to the significant impacts that weather has on outdoor ice surfaces, an in-depth review of climate trends was undertaken. The information in this section is taken mostly from the 2019 document, *Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan*. For more information, please see the full report.

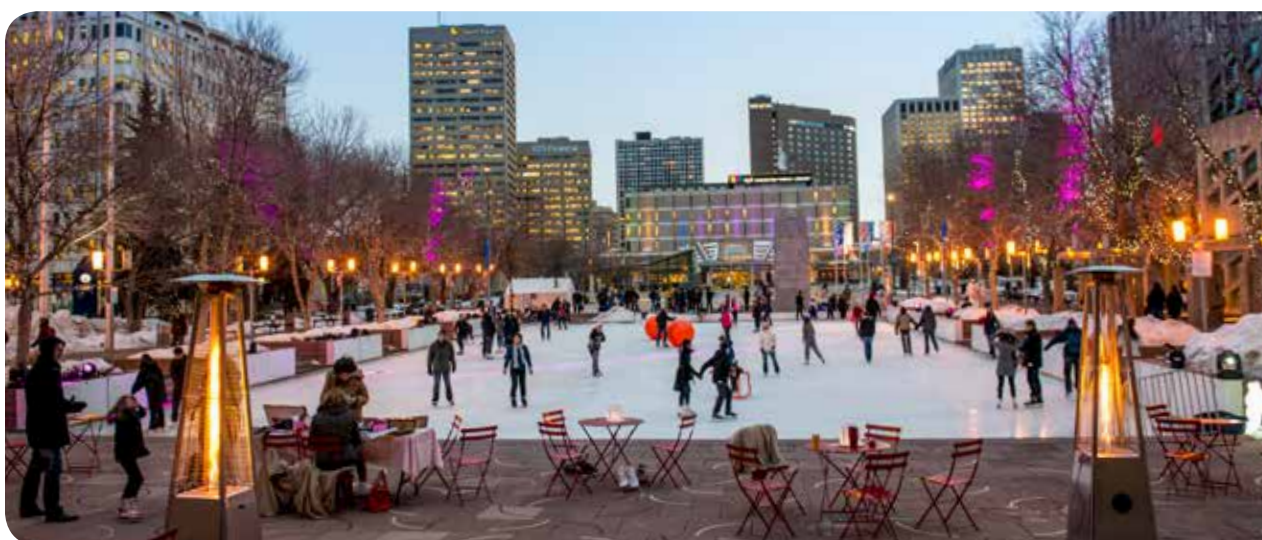
In the future, it is anticipated that Edmonton's winters will be warmer and wetter. Climate change modelling predicts that temperatures will be higher and the amount of precipitation through rain and snow will increase. Edmonton's winters are already warming more rapidly than any other season and will continue to do so over the coming decades.

Historically, the average winter seasonal temperatures have been -13°C , with 96 days below 0°C . Climate change models predict a rise in the average seasonal temperatures to -8.5°C by the 2050s, and a decrease of days below 0°C to 77. As a result, Edmonton will experience fewer nights where temperatures dip below -20°C . Snow will melt earlier in the spring due to warmer temperatures and increased springtime precipitation, and the first snowfall in autumn will be delayed by warmer

temperatures. However, it is important to note that Edmonton will continue to experience periods of cold weather. The shorter winter season, though, will adversely impact natural, outdoor ice.

Edmonton's precipitation patterns are also expected to change in the coming years. The biggest seasonal increase in precipitation is anticipated in the spring, but winters are also expected to be wetter. The frequency of freezing rain and rain-on-snow is predicted to increase, which will impact maintenance and quality of ice surfaces.

Historically, Edmonton's ecosystem has been part of the boreal/parkland transition zone made up of different types of trees and woody shrubs as well as a rich forest floor. In the future, temperatures and moisture levels are expected to change, resulting in a shift in Edmonton's ecosystem to grasslands, like much of Southern Alberta. This change will have an impact on the types of plants and animals we currently see in Edmonton, including in the River Valley. The shift to a grassland ecosystem could see a decrease in the number of trees in the River Valley, which would allow more sunlight to reach skating surfaces, warming and softening unrefrigerated ice.



Alternative Production and Materials for Outdoor Ice Surfaces

Given that new technology, systems or materials may be available to support outdoor skating, a high level assessment was conducted to understand potential options.

Synthetic Ice

Gaining popularity worldwide, synthetic ice can provide a variety of benefits and opportunities. Requiring zero water, minimal low-cost equipment for construction and maintenance, and the ability to be used in all four seasons are just a few of the advantages. The product involves weatherproof, interlocking floor panels that provide a reduced friction surface for skating. The surface of the panels are covered in a polyethylene material that imitates the experience of skating on real ice.



Installation is relatively simple, starting with level ground for the lightweight panels to be placed on. Equipment for building and maintenance include hammer, rubber mallet and tools for cleaning. A skating area border such as rink boards or boundary edging would require a separate installation. The product lifespan is 10–20 years, depending on the quality. Maintenance is minimal and typically includes daily vacuuming, quarterly application of silicone, and annual scrubbing with cleaning chemicals. Estimated prices for an NHL-size rink (1,500m²) is between \$360,000 and \$450,000 for the panels only. Border panels would be an additional cost and would vary depending on what style is chosen. Companies currently producing and selling synthetic ice include: Glice (www.glicerink.com), Hockey Shot (www.hockeyshot.ca), and Viking Ice (<https://plasticsplusltd.com/>).

Refrigeration

Refrigerated ice surfaces are kept cold with tubes embedded in the ice and a refrigeration unit that keeps the tubes cold. The benefits of these systems, including the examples from Custom Ice Inc. are that ice surfaces are less weather-dependent and will stay frozen in full sun and in air temperatures up to 10°C. Annual maintenance costs depend on the weather, as the chilling system will not be required when temperatures are cold enough to freeze the ice naturally (Moving Towards a Williamstown Winter Commons: A Skating Rink Feasibility Study). Permanent and temporary refrigeration systems are both available.

Permanent systems can either be used as skating rinks year-round or, more commonly, they have concrete bases that are converted to other recreational uses in the summer, such as tennis or basketball courts. These systems could also be utilized to create skating trails, such as Colonel Sam Smith Skating Trail in Toronto. The product is made of rows of evenly spaced tubes that can be run along a level open surface in various configurations and sizes. The tubes are permanently set into a concrete pad/footprint, connected to the refrigeration unit and filled with glycol when operational. To build ice, the cement slab is cooled and water is then sprayed on the surface. Floods of water then can be applied building into a completely uniform ice sheet that can be painted. Many companies are producing and selling permanently refrigerated systems such as Cimco, Custom Ice Inc., and Gateway Mechanical Services. The lifespan of these products can last up to 25 years depending on use and maintenance. For a permanent, refrigerated NHL size rink (1500m²), estimated costs can vary from \$500,000–800,000 depending on specs and supplier. For a permanent rink, a refrigeration system in a building structure is required to cool the concrete slab. These can be estimated to cost \$125,000 – \$300,000 depending on the size of the refrigeration system, type of refrigerant used, and the type of structure.



Temporary systems are available in various sizes and layouts and can be installed on any suitable flat site. The system provides the ability to maintain optimal outdoor ice conditions and extend the outdoor ice skating season while allowing the versatility for the rink to be moved from one location to another from season to season. The product is made of evenly spaced tubes that are uniformly raised over the rink floor by preinstalled, rigid, plastic spacer strips. These tubes are aligned in sections of matting 7ft wide and 200 ft long and filled with glycol when operational. These mats can be rolled up and stored during the summer months, indoors, on pallets (13 pallets for a standard NHL size rink). For installation, mats are arranged in alignment, unrolled, then connected to the refrigeration unit. As the mats cool, water is then sprayed on the rink in mist form. As more water freezes, water is released in a progressively larger flow. Within hours, ice completely covers the mats to form a perfectly uniform ice sheet, which can be painted. There are a variety of companies currently producing and selling temporary refrigerated systems such as SynergIace, CALMAC, and Custom Ice Inc.. The lifespan of the product ranges 10–15 years depending on use and regular maintenance schedule. For an NHL size ice rink (1,500m²), estimated costs can vary from \$160,000 – \$310,000 for the mats depending on supplier and product. Similar to a permanent system, it also requires a refrigeration system in a structure which may cost \$125,000 – \$300,000 depending on the size of the refrigeration system, type of refrigerant used, and the type of structure.

Shading

Blocking direct sun from an ice surface will help to prevent early softening and/or thawing. Shade can be added to a rink using vegetation, screening, or coverings.

Vegetation

Tall coniferous trees on the south side of a rink will provide some protection from the midday sun. As trees take a long time to mature, this is most effective when a tree stand is already naturally occurring. It is important to consider that people are drawn to sunny spaces in winter, not shady ones.

Screening

Providing shade with screens or tarps is faster and cheaper than planting new trees. Screen/tarps can be installed permanently or temporarily, and can even be targeted to specific problem areas.

Covering

A more permanent solution is covering ice surfaces although some portable structure options are also available. Many communities in North America are beginning to cover their rinks to shelter them from the sun, snow, and, increasingly, from rain. The skating season is extended at both ends by helping to cool the ground in autumn and preventing early melt in the spring.



Fabric canopies, such as the ones supplied by Cobra Structures, can be configured to any size or layout, are lightweight, easy to install, and are relatively inexpensive. One of the benefits of these structures is that diffused light passes through the fabric during the day, so daytime lighting is not needed. More robust options include wood and metal roof structures. Most ice surface covers do not have enclosed walls and are not heated, so maintenance is minimal. They can also be kept in place during the summer to provide shaded event spaces.



3.2. Programs and Services

Programs and services have a direct impact on the quality of a user's experience with an ability to transform a good activity into a great one by aligning with user wants and needs.

City-Led Programs

The City does not currently offer programming on River Valley ice surfaces. However, the City does offer community-based programming in partnership with community leagues. These programs consist of free drop-in skating lessons at community/neighbourhood outdoor rinks and snowbank rinks in January and February (weekday evenings, weekend mornings, and weekend afternoons).

Community- and Partner-Led Programs

Community leagues provide programming on their outdoor ice surfaces by hosting winter festivals, ice surface-related sports tournaments, and other skating parties for their community members. The Edmonton Speed Skating Association and Marathon Speed Skating clubs offer membership-based training programs on outdoor River Valley ice surfaces. In addition, registered CanSkate and membership-based (e.g., Royal Glenora Club) lessons are held at indoor facilities.

Services/Amenities

Currently River Valley ice surfaces offer basic amenities and limited services which include:

WILLIAM HAWRELAK PARK

Amenities: Washrooms, lockers, skate change area, warming area, outdoor gas fireplace, and picnic tables

Services: Food vendor, skate rentals including sharpening services

VICTORIA PARK

Amenities: Washrooms, lockers, skate change area and warming area, picnic tables, fire pits

Services: None

RUNDLE PARK

Amenities: Washrooms, lockers, skate change area, warming area, picnic tables, fire pits

Services: Food vendor

Future Programs and Services

Through public engagement, many citizens indicated that increased programs and services would be valuable additions to River Valley ice surfaces. Some suggestions included:

- Expand the types of activities offered on ice surfaces (e.g. curling, crokinole)
- Offer programs and services for those who are at ice surfaces but not using the ice (e.g. a parent whose children are skating)
- Host themed public skating events (e.g. date night, teen skate)
- Offer programs and services that help to create a full-day experience for users
- Work with external partners who can supplement programs and services – don't necessarily need to be provided by City staff



Borrowing from other municipalities, possible programs and services that could be offered at River Valley ice surfaces to enhance users' experiences and interests include:

- Registered lessons (e.g. CanSkate, learn to speed skate)
- Drop-in shinny for all age groups (e.g. preschool, child, youth, adult, senior, and family)
- Bookable outdoor skating times on Saturdays and Sundays
- Outdoor experiences
- Hot chocolate stations
- Licensed bars
- Broomball
- Outdoor curling
- Drop in ice-skating exercise classes
- Ice bumper cars
- Outdoor concerts
- Holiday experiences (e.g. Christmas tree lightings, holiday pop-up shops, Santa's Corner, skate with Santa)
- 3-on-3 pond hockey tournaments
- Winter festivals

When determining which programs and services should be piloted or offered at ice surfaces in the future, further engagement with both internal and external stakeholders will be required to understand interests.

- Developing some evaluation criteria would be beneficial to understand costs, resources and feasibility for implementing and monitoring new programs and services
- Looking at existing space and infrastructure in the parks to assist with program and service success (e.g. indoor and outdoor space at facilities)
- Consideration that weather and ice conditions can make outdoor ice surfaces unpredictable, impacting programs and services, unlike at indoor ice surfaces
- Staffing and budget allocation
- Ensuring that community ideas are reviewed and taken into consideration

3.3. Revenue Opportunities

Outdoor ice surfaces require substantial resources and budget to build and maintain. While programs and services could assist with offsetting some of the operational costs associated, the primary revenue sources are booking fees and sponsorship opportunities.

Bookings

Currently, booking and event requests for River Valley ice surfaces are managed by the City and are considered on a case by case basis. Variables such as timing, location, and other activities taking place within the park are reviewed before approval. Most events do not have exclusive use of the ice surface when booking.

Ice surface booking fees were implemented in 2015/2016 and were based on comparable and historical amounts and in consultation with River Valley Parks and Facilities and Civic Events and Festivals. Since implemented, these rates have not changed and are as follows:

- \$50/hr for Hawrelak Park Skating Rink/Victoria Park Skating Oval
- \$80/hr Victoria Park pavilion rental

External groups also have the option of booking winter picnic shelter spaces for exclusive use at a rate of \$39.95/hour. This offers groups the opportunity to use shelter spaces and fire pits (no wood provided) for a set amount of time (minimum two hours); however, it does not grant exclusive ice access. Groups such as birthday parties, picnics, and work functions often take advantage of this opportunity.

In the future, both evaluating the booking fees and designating specific ice surfaces for exclusive use could have positive impacts on revenue opportunities. By offering exclusive use, booking fees could be increased and may also have positive impacts on the overall quantity of bookings for surfaces.

Sponsorship

The City does not have a protocol for sponsorship of outdoor ice surfaces and associated amenities.

Future sponsorship proposals would require coordination with internal business areas to ensure alignment the potential sponsorship reflects the Community and Recreational Facilities guidelines. Developing criteria for sponsorship recognition would also be necessary due to the temporary nature of the outdoor ice surface spaces as well as policy and bylaws regarding the use and placement of corporate logos in the River Valley. Possibilities of recognition could include:

- Event or programs days
- Markings in the ice surface (logos painted into ice)
- Temporary rink boards (Hawrelak Park Skating Rink or Rundle Shiny surface)
- Entire oval ice area
- Temporary branded signage

Usage/Operational Impacts

As with seasonal events in the River Valley, there is a balance between festival and event use of space and availability of spaces for public enjoyment. If exclusive bookings were to be further explored, consideration would have to be given to the time of week and current special event programs to minimize any negative usage impacts to the public.

Increases in general or exclusive use at River Valley ice surfaces may also impact operations and maintenance of the surfaces. Currently, ice surfaces are cleared of snow and are flooded in the morning at all three parks. This required work impacts the opening time of the ice surfaces. Ice surfaces in both Victoria and Rundle Park open at 10 a.m., and the ice surfaces in Hawrelak open at 10 a.m. (skating rink) and 11 a.m. (lake ice).

Bookings that require alterations to the current maintenance program may incur additional costs associated with rescheduling staff to accommodate the changes. However, options may be available for groups to perform this work with approval from the City.

3.4. Outdoor Ice Surfaces in Other Municipalities

To gain an understanding of best practices from other municipalities that build and maintain outdoor ice surfaces, an external survey was produced and distributed. Many municipalities, such as Red Deer, Winnipeg, and Toronto, were excited to participate and were willing to share detailed information. Below are some key findings from the survey.

Building and Maintaining Ice Surfaces

- The most popular type of surface being built is a skating rink on turf or on another hard, level surface. Lake/pond surfaces are also used and a few communities are building ice trails/pathways, again, on turf or hard surfaces.
- Length of season varies between one to five months, depending on surface and location, with the average being around three months.
- The staff hours required to build the surface was much higher than the hours for ongoing maintenance and varied greatly based on the type of surface.
- Maintenance ranged from multiple times a day to being dependent on weather and usage.
- A wide variety of equipment is used to clear snow, lay water, or maintain ice, including shovels, ice resurfacers, toolcats, brooms, and blowers.
- Ice thickness required for users on a lake/pond and for equipment differs due to provincial guidelines.
- Hardwired and portable floodlights are highly used, with a few noting decorative lights.
- Safety signage is present at most surfaces as well as some type of rules and/or regulations. Some surfaces have no signage at all.

- Other miscellaneous information provided includes:
 - It is important to have a weights and measures list for equipment as well as setting a travel speed limit.
 - For lake/pond ice, staff are required to work in pairs at the start of the season when ice is thinner and risk for incidents may be higher.
 - Some outdoor boarded rinks are used as dog off-leash areas in summer and are grass based.
 - Community/neighborhood-maintained rinks are very common and can help meet demand for outdoor ice.

Services and Amenities

- A wide range of services and amenities are provided at ice surfaces, with most offering washrooms, a place to warm up, and parking.
- Some municipalities offer rentals, such as skates, skate aids and helmets, food/beverage vendors, and lockers.

Daily Operations, Programs and/or Events

- Public hours of use vary in terms of opening times, from dawn until 10 a.m., while the majority close at 10 p.m.
- Ice surface usage is only tracked in some communities, either manually by an attendant at the surface, or by using a counter tool attached to an access point
- The top three activities allowed on surfaces include skating, shinny, and learn to skate programs. Because of the popularity of each activity, most said that it can be a challenge trying to accommodate these different uses on the same ice surface.
- Events and programs at surfaces are mainly provided by the municipality; however, quite a few municipalities said that partnerships, not-for-profit organizations, or private businesses/associations also host activities on their surfaces.
- Almost all communities allow groups to exclusively book the surfaces for either festivals, events, programs, lessons, etc., and some sort of fee was collected.



Partnerships/Sponsorships

Only a few municipalities responded that they have developed agreements with external businesses, organization, vendors, etc. to support activities offered at ice surfaces such as events, programs and services. The partnership was recognized mainly through signage and social media.

One community has an agreement with a local high school to use their sports field to create an ice surface in the winter due to its central location in town. The school, in return, is provided exclusive use during school hours (Monday–Friday from 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.), and the field is maintained by the Town during the summer months (irrigation, mowing, etc.).

Challenges and Successes

The most common challenge noted by participants was the weather and the impacts it has on ice quality and length of the season for users. Other challenges include:

- Staffing/volunteers for surfaces
- Standardizing operations and equipment breakdowns
- Parking
- Usability for people with mobility constraints

In terms of success, the top response was the popularity and high usage of the ice surfaces by the community. It was obvious that communities that provide ice surfaces take great pride in being able to provide this experience to users. Other successes noted were:

- Providing a means of physical activity in the winter in the parks
- Creating new programs and events for the community
- Community/volunteer involvement at the ice surfaces

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

4.1. Phase 1

Purpose

Phase I Public Engagement focused on REFINING the Areas of Focus and Vision, and invited input to ADVISE the City on what objectives it should consider to help people make the most of River Valley Ice surfaces over the next 20 years.

Activities and Timelines

Public Online Survey

The online survey was accessible through the Edmonton Insight Community or by visiting Edmonton.ca. It launched on November 13, 2018 and remained open for input until November 20, 2018. Survey questions invited participants to provide input on the strategy's draft Areas of Focus and Vision. A total of 2,200 respondents filled out the online survey.

Stakeholder Sessions

Stakeholders were invited to attend one of three, in-person sessions that took place on November 28–29, 2018. The stakeholder conversations invited input on the draft Areas of Focus and Vision, and ideas about opportunities for the City to collaborate with stakeholders to make the most of River Valley ice surfaces. A total of 16 representatives attended the sessions including two long-standing partners: Edmonton Speed Skating Association and SilverSkate Festival.

Summary of Findings

Areas of Focus Feedback

The following four draft Areas of Focus that were reviewed by the public:

1. River Valley ice surfaces and supporting amenities that are accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities.
2. River Valley ice surfaces are environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible.

3. Welcoming, vibrant, and safe spaces that attract people from all over our City and beyond to experience ice-focused recreation.
4. Collaborative partnerships to build, operate, and maintain ice surfaces and identify and respond to the public's programming and service needs and interests.

In general, there was strong alignment between the input received through the survey and stakeholder conversations. Online survey responses showed good support for three of the four draft Areas of Focus, with the fourth topic regarding collaborative partnerships resonating less. Stakeholders generally supported all four Areas of Focus. The main difference between the survey and stakeholder input was that the survey respondents focused more on user experience and the stakeholder input focused more on possibilities and opportunities to capitalize on, including expanding the breadth of ice-based recreation opportunities and the investments to make them possible.

Vision Feedback

The draft vision that was presented to the public for review was

Edmonton's River Valley outdoor ice surfaces will be a choice winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities.

Overall there was good support for the draft vision by both survey participants and stakeholders. Input on how to improve the vision included:

- Taking a plain language approach to the vision, including removing the term "choice winter experience and destination"
- Adopting a more public-focused vision that clearly communicates what the public should expect from River Valley Ice surfaces
- Clearly identify who benefits from River Valley ice (i.e., recreational ice users)

For the complete What We Heard Report for Phase 1 please see Appendix C.



4.2. Phase 2

Purpose

Phase II Public Engagement focused on REFINING the Priority Objectives and invited input to ADVISE the City on what Actions it should consider to help people make the most of River Valley ice surfaces over the next 20 years. In addition, the City asked stakeholder representatives to ADVISE on potential opportunities to work together to help advance Priority Objectives.

Activities and Timelines

Public Drop-in Sessions

The drop-in sessions were held at Victoria Park Skating Oval, Hawrelak Park Lake Ice and Rundle Park IceWay during the dates of Feb 22–23, 2019. Each session was approximately two hours in length and invited the public to provide input by answering questions on large display boards. A total of 73 participants provided input over the six hours.

Stakeholder Workshop

Stakeholders were invited to attend a final, in-person session that took place on March 6, 2019. The stakeholder conversations invited input on the draft Objectives and Actions, and ideas about opportunities for the City to collaborate with stakeholders to make the most of River Valley ice surfaces. A total of 11 representatives attended the session, including two long-standing partners: Edmonton Speed Skating Association and SilverSkate Festival.

Summary of Findings

Priority Objectives/Actions

There was clear support for the draft Priority Objectives that were presented, with 74%–100% of participants indicating support. Suggested improvements included emphasizing the City's responsibilities, evaluating the River Valley Ice Strategy with more frequency, and focusing on providing unique experiences at ice surfaces.

Participants also provided a number of suggestions for actions that could help to achieve each Priority Objective. Some of the highlights include collaborating with community partners to provide more services, programs and amenities at ice surfaces, ensuring adequate signage, transportation and maintenance, considering ice surfaces in new locations in the River Valley, and ensuring people can easily access information on River Valley ice surfaces.

Collaboration Opportunities

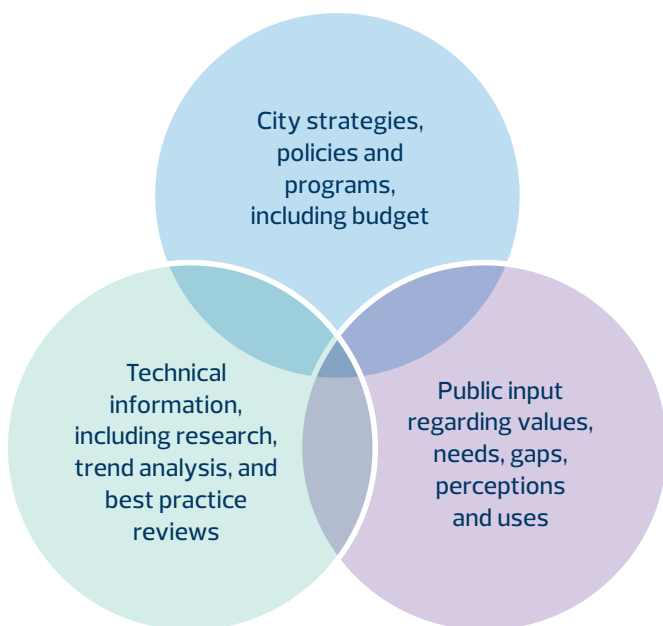
During the stakeholder workshop, participants were asked, as potential collaborators and partners for the City, to identify and share opportunities to help advance the Priority Objectives. Many of the suggested actions implied that there are partners, organizations and subject matter experts that already exist that could help achieve actions but aren't being utilized. Building new relationships and strengthening current ones could have many benefits for the ice surfaces from programs and services to ice quality and resources.

For complete What We Heard Report for Phase 2 please see Appendix D.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN

5.1. Approach

To develop Edmonton's River Valley Ice Strategy, the Project Team considered three areas of input:



5.2. Vision

The Vision describes the future aspirations to be achieved by enhancing River Valley ice surfaces and related experiences. The public felt it was important that the vision should be simple to understand, identify benefits and state what can be expected from ice surfaces in the future. Some important themes and words that resonated included:

- Ice surfaces should be a preferred destination
- Accessible to all / Inclusive
- Opportunities / Experiences should be excellent, unique, fun, memorable, diverse
- Provide a means of recreation

The River Valley Ice Strategy's vision, as developed through internal and external consultation is:

Edmonton's River Valley outdoor ice surfaces provide a unique winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities to be active.

5.3. Areas of Focus and Objectives

Four thematic Areas of Focus were developed to achieve the Vision and outline key elements that will enhance the River Valley ice surfaces. Objectives within each focus area were developed through internal and external consultation, and will guide where we will take action and what we will achieve in the future. Section 5.4 outlines the detailed Actions to be undertaken to achieve the Objectives.

Services and Programs

Objective 1: Develop and deliver a range of programs, services and events that align with user interests

Objective 2: Establish community partnerships to increase and enhance programs and services at ice surfaces

Objective 3: Explore vendor relationships to increase and enhance programs, amenities and services at ice surfaces

Facilities and Operations

Objective 1: Provide safe and accessible surfaces and facilities

Objective 2: Establish community partnerships for the development and maintenance of ice surfaces

Objective 3: Create an inviting and unique environment at each ice surface

Objective 4: Critically assess operations to support high quality surfaces and associated amenities

Sustainability

Objective 1: Monitor weather patterns and climate trends to maximize the season and mitigate impacts to surfaces

Objective 2: Assess the river valley to explore the feasibility of future ice surface locations

Objective 3: Ensure that the implementation of the River Valley Ice Strategy is fiscally responsible

Objective 4: Review, evaluate and adjust the River Valley Ice strategy as needed

Public Information

Objective 1: Increase citizen awareness by ensuring easy access to information and providing education

Objective 2: Ensure new River Valley ice surface opportunities are promoted to create awareness

Objective 3: Develop processes to receive and analyze public input to assist in the creation of innovative ice surfaces, services and programming ideas

5.4. Recommended Actions

Services and Programs

Objective 1: Develop and deliver a range of programs, services and events that align with user interests

Action	Budget	Rationale
1.1 Develop criteria to evaluate programs, site locations, events and services, and track related requests from the public.	\$	To measure feasibility, success and demand and assist in determining public's needs/wants at ice surfaces
1.2 Investigate barriers to participation and the impact on demand.	\$	Active Edmonton, Physical Activity Survey 2018, ranked time/distance as the top barrier, with participants only willing to travel up to 30 minutes to ice skate. Identify if other barriers exist and how to mitigate.
1.3 Conduct public engagement to determine what programs, events, equipment and services are wanted	\$\$	Public strongly voiced the desire for more programs and services but further investigation is required on the details of these.
1.4 Test a variety of new ice surface activities/programs, and evaluate the success and demand	\$\$	Piloting activities/programs provides a less formal way of offering new experiences to the public while also being able to evaluate successes and potential demands
1.5 Designate specific ice surfaces for exclusive event use (Hawrelak Park Skating Rink / Rundle surfaces)	\$	Ensure balance of public and exclusive use opportunities are available. Designating specific surfaces will allow for consistent messaging and promotion.
1.6 Have a representative stationed at ice surfaces during peak times/days to provide customer service to attendees	\$ - \$\$	Provide general customer service, programming and undertake data collection to support quality experiences



Objective 2: Establish community partnerships to increase and enhance programs and services at ice surface

Action	Budget	Rationale
2.1 Develop standard conditions and evaluation criteria to be included in agreements for ice surface partnerships	\$	Partnerships can have operational and usage impacts, therefore standards for agreements would create consistency, especially on non-negotiable items
2.2 Explore partnerships for ice related activities with associations/groups that require ice surfaces	\$	Increase usage, create new relationships with the community and promote surfaces to new users/groups
2.3 Analyze options for program and service providers (i.e. City and/or partner) to support activities identified through public engagement	\$	External stakeholders may be better suited to deliver some programs as compared to the City (expertise, cost of delivery), and may also alleviate/share costs and resources for ice surfaces.

Objective 3: Develop and deliver a range of programs, services and events that align with user interests

Action	Budget	Rationale
3.1 Research innovative and mobile vending opportunities	\$	Allow for a variety of vending options to meet demand and provide vendors flexibility on location in park
3.2 Ensure facilities at ice surfaces are suitable and usable for vendors	\$	To ensure there is a suitable space for vendors to be successful
3.3 Establish equipment rental services at all existing surfaces	\$	Vendor at Hawrelak park is well utilized. This would have positive impacts for usage, especially for new users who might want to "try" skating or those not wanting to purchase and store equipment at home.
3.4 Establish food/beverage service at Victoria Park	\$	During public engagement at this surface, it was observed that this would be well utilized service for users.
3.5 Assess viability of commercial opportunities during the planning process for future surfaces	\$	When planning for future surfaces, think beyond the ice to the infrastructure and services that would benefit users

Facilities and Operations

Objective 1: Provide safe and accessible surfaces and facilities

Action	Budget	Rationale
1.1 Add lighting to Rundle IceWay	\$\$	For safety and to extend the operational hours of the Rundle Park ice surfaces
1.2 Conduct an audit on ice surfaces and parks utilizing the accessibility design guidelines	\$	To understand the current state of existing park infrastructure/ assets and inform solutions that would make them more universally accessible and safe for users
1.3 Create an action plan to address accessibility audit results	\$ - \$\$	To reduce barriers of accessibility
1.4 Conduct a safety audit on ice surfaces and parks referencing City and Provincial OH&S standards	\$	To understand the current state of existing park infrastructure/ assets and inform solutions to increase safe use for both patrons and COE staff
1.5 Create an action plan to address safety audit results	\$ - \$\$	To reduce hazards and prevent incidents

Objective 2: Establish community partnerships for the development and maintenance of ice surfaces

Action	Budget	Rationale
2.1 Develop standard conditions and evaluation criteria to be included in agreements for ice surface maintenance	\$	Create consistency, especially around non-negotiable items, and acknowledge the impacts partnerships may have on public usage and City operations
2.2 Explore new partnerships as opportunities arise for maintenance of ice surfaces	\$	There may be an association, organization or group that has the knowledge and expertise to build/maintain a surface or wants to work in collaboration with the City which could alleviate/share costs and resources
2.3 Develop standard requirements for community led projects related to capital development/ improvements of ice surfaces and amenities.	\$	Ensure consistency with projects so that all phases of the project can be developed and implemented with success.



Objective 3: Create an inviting and unique environment at each ice surface

Action	Budget	Rationale
3.1 Explore layout options for IceWays that maximize citizen experience.	\$ - \$\$	Create unique experiences in areas where a large skating rink may not be feasible
3.2 Research creative lighting options for IceWays	\$	Public feedback indicates a high level of support for decorative lighting.
3.3 Provide firepits at the surfaces in the 3 parks and promote use	\$\$	While some of the IceWays pass by firepits, this would be a simple addition that would enhance people's experience. TBD if wood would be provided, if COE staff manage, etc.
3.4 Implement notable skating environments that increase attendance, create revenue generation and provide memorable experiences.	\$ - \$\$	Instead of just thinking about the ice, think beyond to what would create a memorable and fun experience for attendees. What would make people stay for a whole afternoon/day? promote to their friends/family?

Objective 4: Critically assess operations to support high quality surfaces and associated amenities

Action	Budget	Rationale
4.1 Develop comprehensive list of base level operational requirements for ice surfaces	\$	When a new surface is proposed, necessary costs and resources to successfully build and maintain an ice surface are known and understood
4.2 Test alternative methods to remove snow from lake/pond ice surfaces	\$ - \$\$	To determine long term feasibility on resources and assess impacts. Seek options to extend ice season
4.3 Analyze operations annually and identify opportunities for continuous improvement	\$	Identify where resources or budget could be modified for positive impacts
4.4 Create relationships/mechanisms to share best practices for operations (e.g., workshops, conferences, meetings with other municipalities or industry experts)	\$ - \$\$	Ensure we are utilizing the best methods, equipment and resources to create ice surfaces that will be successful and financially responsible

Sustainability

Objective 1: Monitor weather patterns and climate trends to maximize the season and mitigate impacts to surfaces

Action	Budget	Rationale
1.1 Create a mechanism/process to monitor seasonal weather patterns and longer term climate trends to build data/information on impacts to surfaces	\$	Climate trends are impacting the winter season but there is insufficient details on impacts to our ice surfaces
1.2 Create a proactive action plan for impacts to ice surfaces, associated amenities, resources and budget	\$ - \$\$	Plan to try and mitigate impacts before they occur or have a plan in place to effectively make decisions when impacts occur
1.3 Pilot alternative surfaces and other mitigation technologies	\$\$-\$\$\$	Environmental trends are reducing the length of the season for ice in the River Valley. Artificial, plastic ice would have no limit to the season. A pilot project to understand public opinion and operations would be useful.

Objective 2: Assess the river valley to explore the feasibility of future ice surface locations

Action	Budget	Rationale
2.1 Ensure feasibility of ice surface development is explored during park and/or neighbourhood planning phase	\$	Due to the budget and resources required for an ice surface, looking at feasibility during the initial planning phases instead of trying to implement at the end of the project may reduce costs, impacts, and ensure operational needs are met.
2.2 Conduct public engagement to understand demand for a new surface in the River Valley	\$\$	The Approach to Community Recreation Facility Planning in Edmonton report states the current level of service for this amenity is appropriate and the City should maintain the current level of service for outdoor ice surfaces. But, as the city grows, new neighborhoods develop and visitor numbers increase, additional outdoor River Valley surfaces may be considered.
2.3 Consider public engagement input, policy guidance (e.g. Ribbon of Green) and River Valley Ice Strategy SWOT analysis findings, to create a business plan and build a new ice surface in the River Valley	\$\$\$	If supported through Public Engagement and can be fiscally and sustainably implemented



Objective 3: Ensure that the implementation of the River Valley Ice Strategy is fiscally responsible

Action	Budget	Rationale
3.1 Complete a comprehensive ROI for ice surfaces (build, maintenance, amenities, services, programs, etc.)	\$	To understand if the budget and resources to build/operate is efficient and providing a positive "return"
3.2 Create a phased action plan for the ROI results	\$ - \$\$	To determine solutions and mitigate issues with minimal impact to resources and budget
3.3 Complete a formal market analysis to determine appropriate fee structure for ice surface bookings.	\$	To assist in operational costs/impacts that bookings may have on ice surfaces

Objective 4: Review, evaluate and adjust the River Valley Ice strategy as needed

Action	Budget	Rationale
4.1 Conduct a review at year 7	\$	To ensure that actions are being completed and if there are any major operational, budget, climate, etc. changes the strategy's remaining actions can be adjusted
4.2 Conduct a review at year 15	\$	To ensure that actions are being completed and if there are any major operational, budget, climate, etc. changes the strategy's remaining actions can be adjusted

Public Information

Objective 1: Increase citizen awareness by ensuring easy access to information and providing education

Action	Budget	Rationale
1.1 Develop and implement a detailed, multi-year communication plan for ice surfaces	\$ - \$\$	Communications plan does not currently exist and would assist in determining who requires information, when and what channels to be used.
1.2 Develop and implement an education campaign for ice surfaces	\$ - \$\$	Many citizens do not have basic "ice knowledge" and many questions/complaints could be mitigated by having an education plan about winter, ice, climate, etc.
1.3 Ensure that COE website is up-to-date each season with information and photos of the surfaces	\$	People visiting the COE website can easily find accurate information on the ice surfaces.

Objective 2: Ensure new River Valley ice surface opportunities are promoted to create awareness

Action	Budget	Rationale
2.1 Partner with well-known organizations/ social media influencers to help promote and create awareness	\$	Increase exposure to new groups and or a broader audience that we might not be currently reaching
2.2 Develop a marketing plan for ice surfaces including the creation of a visual identity/ brand	\$ - \$\$	Increase exposure and awareness of not only where the ice surfaces are but the amenities and services that are offered to increase usage and provide enjoyable experiences to patrons
2.3 Promote specific ice surfaces for exclusive event use (Hawrelak Park Skating Rink / Rundle surfaces)	\$	Ensure a balance of public use and exclusive use surfaces are available. Designating specific surfaces will allow for consistent messaging and promotion.



Objective 3: Develop processes to receive and analyze public input to assist in the creation of innovative ice surfaces, services and programming ideas

Action	Budget	Rationale
3.1 Determine and implement an approach for collecting public feedback annually.	\$	Currently obtaining feedback from the public on River Valley facilities and amenities does not exist. A process/tool needs to be developed and monitored
3.2 Host an outdoor ice surface workshop or conference with both public and industry experts (link to Live Active as well)	\$\$	Gain a wider range of knowledge, experience, ideas on outdoor ice surfaces. A way to share best practices and learn about tools/technology that could have positive impacts on ice surfaces
3.3 Host an ice surface competition(s) to get the public involved (could be the design of an ice surface, unique services and/or programs, creative design elements for amenities, etc.)	\$	Create an outlet that could produce unique results from a wide range of stakeholders



5.5. Approach and Timeline for Implementation

While River Valley Parks and Facilities will take the lead in developing and executing a detailed implementation plan for the River Valley Ice Strategy, there will be collaboration required from both internal and external stakeholders to successfully accomplish the recommended actions.

The above actions are categorized into their respective Area of Focus but further work will be required to:

- Prioritize the sequencing of actions within each timeframe (0–5, 5–10 and 10–20 years)
- Identify which department/business areas can either lead or support actions
- Define budget requirements/constraints for actions
- Ensure prerequisites/contingencies for actions can be addressed
- Report on progress of implementation



Actions for Years 0–5

The recommended actions for this timeframe can be themed as the building blocks that are necessary for the success of future year's actions. Many include research, data collection, assessment of current assets and the development of criteria and processes. There are also some "quick wins" that will provide positive results with minimum resources or operational impacts.

Actions for Years 5–10

In this second timeframe, actions may be a response or secondary step from results that came from achieving actions in years 0–5. They also start to encourage the exploration of relationships that can assist with accomplishing the recommended actions. Some actions will require substantial budget and resources to complete and the impacts of implementation to both internal and external stakeholders will need to be considered.

Actions for Years 10–20

Actions in this final timeframe, while few, are significant in time, resources and budget. As there is a good probability that many actions from the previous two timeframes will flow into these years, it is appropriate that this phase has capacity for completing actions and an overall strategic review.



	Years 0-5	Years 5-10	Years 10-20
Services & Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop criteria to evaluate programs, site locations, events and services, and track related requests from public · Investigate barriers to participation and the impact on demand · Conduct public engagement to determine what programs, events, equipment and services are wanted · Test a variety of new ice surface activities/ programs at River Valley surfaces, and evaluate the success and demand · Develop standard conditions and evaluation criteria to be included in agreements for ice surface partnerships · Research innovative and mobile vending opportunities for ice surfaces in River Valley parks · Ensure facilities at ice surfaces are suitable and usable for vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Designate specific ice surfaces for exclusive event use (Hawrelak Park Skating Rink / Rundle surfaces) · Have a CoE representative stationed at ice surfaces during peak times/days to provide customer service to attendees · Explore partnerships for ice related activities with associations/groups that require ice surfaces · Analyze options for program and service providers (i.e. City and/or partner) to support activities identified through public engagement · Establish equipment rental services at all existing surfaces · Establish food/beverage service at Victoria Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assess viability of commercial opportunities during the planning process for future surfaces
Facilities & Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Add lighting to Rundle IceWay · Conduct an audit on ice surfaces and parks utilizing the accessibility design guidelines · Conduct a safety audit on ice surfaces and parks ensuring to reference City and Provincial OH&S standards · Develop standard conditions and evaluation criteria to be included in agreements for ice surface maintenance · Explore layout options for IceWays that maximize citizen experience. · Research creative lighting options for IceWays · Provide firepits at the surfaces in the 3 parks and promote use · Develop a comprehensive list of base level operational requirements for ice surfaces · Test alternative methods to remove snow from lake/pond ice surfaces · Analyze operations annually and identify opportunities for continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Create an action plan to address accessibility audit results · Create an action plan to address safety audit results · Explore new partnerships as opportunities arise for maintenance of ice surfaces · Implement notable skating environments that increase attendance, create revenue generation and provide memorable experiences. · Create relationships or mechanisms to share best practices for operations (e.g. workshops, conferences, meetings with other municipalities or industry experts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop standard requirements for community led projects related to capital development or improvements of ice surfaces and amenities.



	Years 0-5	Years 5-10	Years 10-20
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Create a mechanism/process to monitor seasonal weather patterns and longer term climate trends to build data/information on impacts to surfaces · Ensure feasibility of ice surface development is explored during park and/or neighborhood planning phase · Complete a comprehensive ROI for ice surfaces (build, maintenance, amenities, services, programs, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Create a proactive action plan for impacts to ice surfaces, associated amenities, resources and budget · Pilot alternative surfaces and other mitigation technologies · Create a phased action plan for the ROI results · Complete a formal market analysis to determine appropriate fee structure for ice surface bookings. · Conduct a review at year 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Conduct public engagement to understand demand for a new surface in the River Valley · Considering public engagement input, policy guidance and River Valley Ice Strategy SWOT findings, create a business plan and build a new ice surface in the River Valley · Conduct a review at year 15
Public Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop and implement a detailed, multi-year communication plan for ice surfaces · Develop and implement an education campaign for ice surfaces (e.g. why a surface might be closed, why we can't skate on the river) · Ensure that COE website is up-to-date each season with information and photos of the surfaces · Partner with well-known organizations/social media influencers to help promote and create awareness · Develop a marketing plan for ice surfaces including the creation of a visual identity/brand · Determine and implement an approach for collecting public feedback annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Promote specific ice surfaces for exclusive event use · Host an outdoor ice surface workshop or conference with both public and industry experts (link to Live Active as well) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Host an ice surface competition(s) to get the public involved (could be the design of an ice surface, unique services and/or programs, creative design elements for amenities, etc.)



6. APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A
FESTIVALS AND EVENTS
ON RIVER VALLEY ICE



Appendix A – Festivals and Events on River Valley Ice Surfaces

Event Name	Organization	Ice Surface Utilized	Exclusive or Non Exclusive	Notes	Hours
2017/2018 Events					
ESSA Winter Classic outdoor Long Track meet and camp	Victoria	Victoria Oval	Exclusive	ESSA members only	16
Winter Soulstice	The Rec Room West Edmonton	Victoria Oval / IceWay	Non exclusive	Event for general public	4
University of Alberta Pond Hockey Tournament	U of A Recreation	Hawrelak Skating Rink	Exclusive	U of A students only	16
Kids Run Wild Winter program at Rundle	Kids Run Wild	Rundle Ice	Non exclusive	Schools/invited registrants.	4
NorQuest College LINC Winter Festival	NorQuest College	Rundle Ice	Non exclusive	New Canadians - Invite	4
Sugga Skillz	Red bull Canada	Hawrelak, Rundle Ice, Victoria IceWay	Non exclusive	RBCI Activations	4
Red Bull Crashed Ice Pop Up Obstacle Course	Red bull Canada	Victoria IceWay	Non exclusive	RBCI Activation	4
FMS Winter Carnival	FMS Social Club	Rundle Ice	Non exclusive	COE staff	4
Silver Skate Festival	Silver Skate Festival Society	Hawrelak Lake Ice	Non exclusive	General public	80
Red Bull Crashed Ice Athlete Spill and Chill	Red bull Canada	Rundle Ice	Non exclusive	RBCI Activation	4
Community Service Active Winter day	City of Edmonton	Rundle Ice	Non exclusive	COE Staff and Families	4
2018/2019 Events					
University of Alberta Pond Hockey Tournament	U of A Recreation	Hawrelak Skating Rink	Exclusive	U of A students only	16
Skate Orienteering	Edmonton Overlanders Orienteering Club / Kids Run Wild	Rundle Ice	Non Exclusive	General Public	2
LINC Winter Festival	NorQuest College	Rundle Ice	Non Exclusive	New Canadians - Invite	4
We Bring The Heat!	1540955 Alberta Ltd.	Victoria IceWay	Non Exclusive	General Public	2
Silver Skate Festival	Silver Skate Festival Society	Hawrelak Lake Ice	Non exclusive	General Public	80
1926 Skate	Alzhmer Society	*Jackie Parker Park	Non exclusive	This event requested to use Victoria Park but was declined.	19



APPENDIX B
SWOT ANALYSIS

Appendix B – SWOT Analysis

EXISTING RIVER VALLEY PARKS																
Evaluation Criteria	Buena Vista	Laurier	Whitemud	Terwillegar	Emily Murphy	Government House	Kinsmen	Queen Elizabeth	Gallagher	Louise McKinney	Dawson	Caplano	Goldbar	Goldstick	Heritage	Rundle Ponds
<p>Evaluation Criteria</p> <p>Excellent (5)</p> <p>Good (4)</p> <p>Neutral (3)</p> <p>Poor (2)</p> <p>Very poor (1)</p>																
OPERATIONS																
EXCELLENT = space/access currently exists very nearby																
GOOD = space/access currently exists somewhat nearby																
NEUTRAL = space/access does not exist but could be included easily																
POOR = space/access does not exist and would be somewhat challenging to include at this location																
VERY POOR = space/access does not exist and would be extremely challenging to include at this location																
Space for snow storage	Good	Good	Neutral	Neutral	Poor	Poor	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent
Storage space for equipment (e.g. water trucks)	Neutral	Good	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent
Access/fill location for water trucks	Good	Good	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent
PROGRAMMING																
EXCELLENT = existing uses are highly compatible																
GOOD = existing uses are somewhat compatible																
NEUTRAL = no/neutral existing uses																
POOR = existing uses are somewhat incompatible																
VERY POOR = existing uses are highly incompatible																
Existing uses	Very Poor	Good	Good	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
AMENITIES																
EXCELLENT = amenity is available or is planned for very near the potential surface																
GOOD = amenity is available somewhat nearby																
NEUTRAL = no amenity but could be included with minimal difficulty/expense																
POOR = amenity does not exist and would be somewhat challenging/expensive to include at this location																
VERY POOR = amenity does not exist and would be extremely challenging to include at this location																
Access to pavilion	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Access to washrooms	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good
Access to changing area/warming hut	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Excellent	Excellent	Neutral	Good
Access to transit	Very Poor	Very Poor	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Access to food/cafe	Good	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Access to equipment rentals	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral



EXISTING RIVER VALLEY PARKS

Evaluation Criteria	Buena Vista	Laurier	Whitemud	Terwillegar	Emily Murphy	Government House	Kinsmen	Queen Elizabeth	Gallagher	Louise McKinney	Dawson	Capilano	Goldbar	Goldstick	Heritage	Rundle Ponds
Excellent (5)																
Good (4)																
Neutral (3)																
Poor (2)																
Very poor (1)																

INFRASTRUCTURE
 EXCELLENT = infrastructure exists very nearby
 VERY GOOD = infrastructure exists somewhat nearby
 NEUTRAL = infrastructure does not exist but could be added with minimal difficulty/expense
 POOR = infrastructure does not exist and would be somewhat difficult/expensive to add
 VERY POOR = infrastructure does not exist and would be very difficult/expensive to add

Access to power																
Access to parking																
Lighting																

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS
 EXCELLENT = existing conditions are highly favourable
 VERY GOOD = existing conditions are somewhat favourable
 NEUTRAL = N/A
 POOR = existing conditions are somewhat unfavourable
 VERY POOR = existing conditions are highly unfavourable

Solar load																
Slope																
Ecological sensitivity																
Existing pond																

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	Buena Vista	Laurier	Whitemud	Terwillegar	Emily Murphy	Government House	Kinsmen	Queen Elizabeth	Gallagher	Louise McKinney	Dawson	Capilano	Goldbar	Goldstick	Heritage	Rundle Ponds
Existing planning direction supports ice surface																
Upcoming planning opportunity (next 5 years)																
Total Score	53	60	57	59	44	39	62	41	57	60	49	58	71	67	55	76
Average	2.8	3.2	3.0	3.1	2.3	2.1	3.3	2.2	3.0	3.2	2.6	3.1	3.7	3.5	2.9	4.0

Rundle = 4.0
 Goldbar = 3.7
 Goldstick = 3.5
 Kinsmen = 3.3
 Laurier/Louise McKinney = 3.2
 Terwillegar/Capilano = 3.1



APPENDIX C
PHASE 1 WHAT WE HEARD REPORT


PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

Reporting Back

River Valley Ice Strategy Public Engagement

Background	
Name	River Valley Ice Strategy Public Engagement
Date	November and December 2018
Location	Online public survey and stakeholder sessions
Contact information	Kari Zral River Valley Coordinator, River Valley Parks and Facilities Community and Recreation Facilities, Citizen Services Kari.Zral@edmonton.ca
Level of public engagement	
Description	Public engagement took place to allow the public and stakeholder groups to refine the draft vision and areas of focus for Edmonton's River Valley ice surfaces. Then, the groups were asked to advise the City about priority objectives for River Valley ice surfaces.

Reporting Back

SUMMARY

Currently, there are River Valley ice surfaces located in Rundle Park, Victoria Park, and William Hawrelak Park. They include skating rinks, ponds, and, in both Victoria Park and Rundle Park, skating trails known as IceWays. These ice surfaces are used every winter by Edmontonians and visitors and are an important part of our winter experiences as they offer unique and diverse recreation opportunities for all.

To make the most of our River Valley ice surfaces, the City is developing a 20-year strategy. The strategy will include a vision that describes what we want our River Valley ice to achieve for us. It will also tell us what we need to focus on and what we need to do over the next 20 years to get the most benefit from River Valley ice.

To develop this strategy, the City of Edmonton is looking at many things. We're doing a lot of research into trends and best practices that affect our ice surfaces and how we use them. We're looking at what other winter cities, both locally and around the world, are doing to make the most of their ice surfaces. We're looking at our River Valley, and where we have opportunities to try new things and, possibly, even consider adding new ice surfaces.

In addition to this research, we're also inviting public input. We build our ice surfaces for the people who live and visit our city. We want to ensure that whatever we do, we make choices that not only benefit but allow us to work with those who use, offer programs and services, and maintain our River Valley ice surfaces.

WHAT WE DID

Online Survey

The following drafts were presented to the public via an online survey available to the Edmonton Insight Community and by visiting Edmonton.ca/icestrategy during the month of November of 2018. A total of 2,200 respondents filled out the online survey.

Draft Vision:

"Edmonton's River Valley outdoor ice surfaces will be a choice winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities."

Specifically, the public was asked: how much they agree or disagree with the statement, how the City can improve it and what was the most important thing for the City to achieve with its River Valley Ice over the next 20 years.

Draft Areas of Focus

- *River Valley ice surfaces and supporting amenities that are accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities.*
- *River Valley ice surfaces are environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible.*
- *Welcoming, vibrant, and safe spaces that attract people from all over our City and beyond to experience ice-focused recreation.*
- *Collaborative partnerships to build, operate, and maintain ice surfaces and identify and respond to the public's programming and service needs and interests.*

Reporting Back

Specifically, the public was asked: how important each area of focus was to them and what else the City should focus on to make the most of River Valley ice.

Stakeholder Sessions

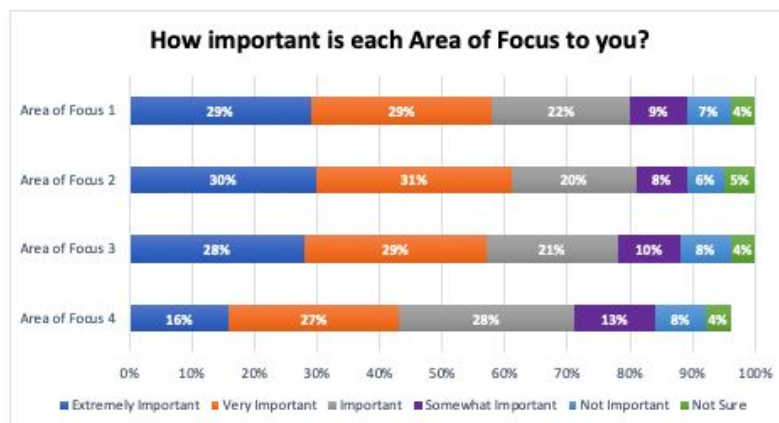
Stakeholders were invited to attend one of three in-person sessions during the month of November of 2018. The stakeholder conversations invited input on the draft areas of focus and vision, and ideas about opportunities for the City to collaborate with stakeholders to make the most of River Valley Ice surfaces. A total of 16 representatives attended the sessions.

WHAT WE HEARD

Areas of Focus Feedback

As part of the online survey, there was good support for three of the four City of Edmonton draft River Valley Ice Areas of Focus, with between 57 and 61 percent of survey respondents agreeing that Areas of Focus 1, 2, 3 are either very or extremely important.

There was also, in general, strong alignment between the input received through the survey and stakeholder conversations. Stakeholders participated in conversations where they were generally supportive of all four areas of Interest. The one difference between the public and stakeholders was that stakeholders had a high level of interest in collaborative partnerships, related to the fourth Area of Focus. Their interest is driven by the fact that they are City partners and want to be able to work with the City to influence and collaborate delivering opportunities for Edmonton's River Valley ice surfaces. The topic resonated less with the public, where forty-three per cent of survey respondents agreed area of focus four was either very or extremely important.





Reporting Back

In reviewing the open-ended survey comments and stakeholder input, there were a few themes that resonated from the input. Survey participants noted that:

- Collaborative partnerships are important; however, the public is more interested in what the City offers for River Valley Ice surfaces and experiences than how the City works to deliver them (i.e., collaborative partnerships)
- The public is also more interested in what the City offers for River Valley Ice surfaces and experiences than fiscal and environmental sustainability.
 - Some people are willing to financially contribute to support positive environmental outcomes; this is another reason that fiscal and environmental sustainability should not be lumped together.
- It is important to the public that the areas of focus are described in plain language and focus on the value that they add to the public, rather than the City's approach to managing River Valley ice surfaces and experiences.
- It is important that the City recognizes that only a portion of Edmontonians are recreational ice users.
- One important topic missing from the areas of focus is access, with an emphasis on people having public transportation, parking, and good pathways to be able to get to River Valley ice surfaces.
- The majority of comments gave the City advice on how to make its River Valley ice surfaces easier to use and more enjoyable; the comments demonstrated that there is a lot of overlap between creating ice surfaces that people use (Area of Focus #1) and “welcoming, vibrant, and safe spaces” (Area of Focus #3).

Ideas on how to make the most of Edmonton's River Valley Ice surfaces included eight key topics:

Topic	Key Idea
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public transit ● Parking ● Building new surfaces close to transportation
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lighting (i.e., Rundle Park) ● Warming shelters ● Washrooms ● Spectator facilities
Availability of ice surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintenance ● Seeking alternatives to ice to ensure that skating surfaces are available for use throughout the year
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City and partner-run instructional skating programs ● Other ice-based recreation opportunities ● Festivals and events ● Sports tourism
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skate and equipment availability/rentals ● Food and beverage
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ice surfaces and trails to connect to other destinations



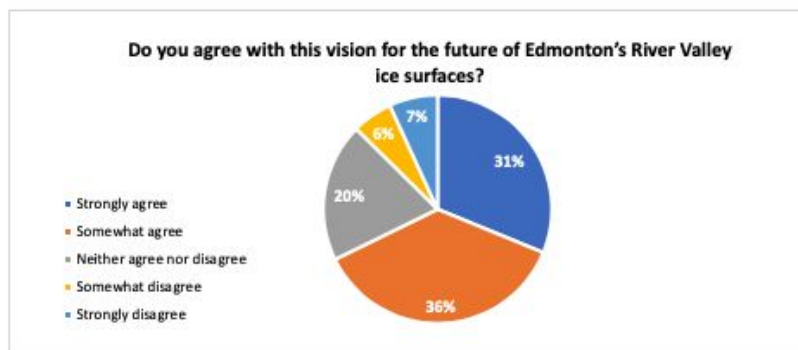
Reporting Back

Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City website to share information on ice surface closures, on-site programs and services, and transit routes to access sites • Community awareness and marketing related programming and sports tourism • Share information about how the City is working to achieve environmentally sustainable and fiscally-responsible operations
Universal Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard surface and well-maintained pathways to get to ice surfaces

The main difference between the survey and stakeholder input is that the survey respondents focused more on user experience and the stakeholder input focused more on possibilities and opportunities to capitalize on, including expanding the breadth of ice-based recreation opportunities and the investments to make them possible. The stakeholders’ views on how to create more possibilities, especially in terms of them collaborating with the City to do so, will be extremely valuable in both refining the areas of focus but also developing objectives and actions to align to them.

Vision Feedback

There was, overall, good support for the draft vision: “Edmonton’s River Valley outdoor ice surfaces will be a choice winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities.” Sixty-seven (67) percent of survey participants either strongly or somewhat agree with the statement. Stakeholders also generally supported with the vision.



That being said, there was some valuable input from both survey respondents and stakeholders on how to improve the Vision. These include:

- Taking a plain language approach to the Vision, including removing the term “choice winter experience and destination”
- Adopting a more public-focused Vision that clearly communicates what the public should expect from River Valley Ice surfaces
- Clearly identify who benefits from River Valley Ice (i.e., recreational ice users)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY

The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in white text on a blue square background.

Reporting Back

WHAT'S NEXT

The City is reviewing the detailed input from the online survey and stakeholder sessions relative to City policy and programs and technical requirements. We will make updates to the vision and areas of focus, where required, and work to finalize them. We will also review the input to help draft objectives and actions that align with the areas of focus, and will invite input on them as part of public engagement and stakeholder sessions in February 2019.

Citizens can continue to access information about the River Valley Ice Strategy by visiting:
edmonton.ca/icestrategy



APPENDIX D
PHASE 2 WHAT WE HEARD REPORT


PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

Reporting Back

River Valley Ice Strategy Public Engagement

Background	
Name	River Valley Ice Strategy Public Engagement
Dates	Public drop-in sessions: February 22 and 23, 2019 Stakeholder workshop: March 6, 2019
Location	Public drop-in sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victoria Park Pavilion• Hawrelak Park Pavilion• Rundle Park Family Centre
Contact information	Kari Zral River Valley Coordinator, River Valley Parks and Facilities Community and Recreation Facilities, Citizen Services Kari.Zral@edmonton.ca
Level of public engagement	
Description	The City invited the public and stakeholders to REFINE priority objectives for River Valley Ice Surfaces and ADVISE on actions to help achieve each priority objective. In addition, the City asked stakeholder representatives to ADVISE on opportunities to work together on the priority objectives.

Reporting Back

SUMMARY

In November 2018, the City of Edmonton invited the public to help REFINE:

- A 20-year vision for how Edmonton can make the most of its River Valley ice surfaces
- Areas of Focus (i.e., the type of work that we need to focus on) to help achieve our vision

Public input also helped the City develop draft Priority Objectives for each Area of Focus.

In January 2019 a [What We Heard summary](#) was created for Phase 1 of Public Engagement and the input was used to finalize the following Vision and Areas of Focus for the River Valley Ice Strategy:

Vision

Edmonton's River Valley outdoor ice surfaces provide a unique winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities to be active.

Areas of Focus

- Services and Programs
- Facilities and Operations
- Sustainability
- Public Information

In February and March 2019, the City presented the draft Priority Objectives to the public and invited them to help REFINE them by indicating support and/or ideas to improve them. The public was also invited to ADVISE on actions to help achieve each Priority Objective. In addition, the City asked a group of key stakeholder representatives to ADVISE on opportunities to work together on the Priority Objectives.

Public feedback showed there is clear support for the draft Priority Objectives with 74% - 100% of participants indicating support. Suggested improvements included emphasizing the City's responsibilities, evaluating the River Valley Ice Strategy with more frequency, and focusing on providing unique experiences at ice surfaces.

Participants provided a number of suggestions for actions that could help to achieve each Priority Objective. Some of the highlights include collaborating with community partners to provide more services, programs and amenities at ice surfaces, ensuring adequate signage, transportation and maintenance, considering ice surfaces in new locations in the River Valley, and ensuring people can easily access information on River Valley ice surfaces.

To review the River Valley Ice Strategy project background please visit: www.edmonton.ca/icestrategy

WHAT WE DID

Drop-in Public Engagement Sessions

Drop-in public engagement sessions were held during three different public skate times and at each of the current River Valley ice surfaces.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY



Reporting Back

Location	Date and time	Number of participants
Victoria Park Pavilion	Friday, February 22 • 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.	46
Hawrelak Park Pavilion	Saturday, February 23 • 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	19
Rundle Park Family Centre	Saturday, February 23 • 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.	8

The public were asked to review information on River Valley ice surfaces and the strategy's Priority Objectives for each of its four Areas of Focus. They were invited to vote on whether they support each Priority Objective, share any ideas to improve the objective, and ideas for action to achieve them.

Stakeholder Workshop

Stakeholders were invited to attend a workshop with the goal of exploring how they, individually and as a collective, could work with the City to support the use and enjoyment of River Valley ice surfaces.

Location	Date and time	Number of participants
Muttart Conservatory	Wednesday, March 6 • 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.	11

The stakeholders were also invited to provide input on the same questions that were presented during the drop-in public engagement sessions, and then, as potential collaborators and partners for the City, to identify and share potential opportunities to help advance the priority objectives.

WHAT WE HEARD

Level of support for the draft priority objectives is an aggregation of public and stakeholder input.

Area of Focus: Services and Programs		
Draft Priority Objective	Percentage of people who support it	Proposed Actions to help achieve this Priority Objective
Develop and deliver a range of programs and events that align with user interests	95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct public engagement to learn more about what people want for programs and events • Focus on programs and events for people who might not otherwise use the ice surfaces • Make adjustments to the existing programs so that the ice surfaces are available for public use in the morning

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY



Reporting Back

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (before work) and late afternoon (right after work) Expand the types of activities conducted on the ice surfaces (e.g., curling) and supported by current and future infrastructure Offer themed public skating and events to attract different audiences (e.g., popular music for teen skate, “date night” skate)
Establish community partnerships to increase and enhance programs and services at ice surfaces	98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an inventory of community groups and their interests Work with specialized organizations (e.g., culinary arts, disability sports groups, schools) to identify unique events, services and programs to engage people who might not otherwise use the ice Work with established ice users (e.g., hockey organizations) to increase their use of and support (e.g., maintenance) for River Valley ice surfaces Capitalize on partnerships to meet people’s needs (e.g., vending machines with healthy snacks, jukebox for music, hot beverages at Victoria Park)
Explore vendor relationships to increase and enhance programs and services at ice surfaces	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an inventory of vendor opportunities Create opportunities (e.g., winter-friendly playground, places to cook and eat) to attract people to and keep them at the surfaces Provide programs and services that facilitate “day excursions” (e.g., firewood sales, equipment rentals)

Ideas to Improve Priority Objectives

- There is a strong emphasis on programs within Services and Programs. At least one of the objectives should focus on services. Services, such as skate rentals and skate sharpening, make it possible for people to use the ice surfaces. Programs can be high cost and, if there is too much programming, restrict the number of people who have access to skate on River Valley ice surfaces.

Area of Focus: Facilities and Operations

Draft Priority Objective	Percentage of people who support it	Proposed Actions to help achieve this Priority Objective
Ensure surfaces and facilities are accessible and safe for all users	94%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide public transportation where possible to reach River Valley ice surfaces and effective parking solutions (i.e., to ensure availability of parking for participants) Provide hard surface, well-maintained and well-lit



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		<p>pathways between public transportation and parking locations to the on-site facilities, from the facilities to the ice surfaces and from facilities to local amenities (e.g., fire pits, picnic tables)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define “accessible” (i.e., access to transportation to reach the sites or providing universal access to people of all ages and abilities) and invite people with “lived experience” to provide input on how to improve accessibility • Employ on-site volunteers and establish emergency phones at ice surfaces to increase safety and security • Add safety and etiquette signage at locations • Provide skating assists and adaptive equipment on-site for people of all ages and abilities
Establish community partnerships for the development and maintenance of ice surfaces	92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with partners (e.g., Edmonton Speed Skating Association) on collaborative efforts to develop facilities, procure equipment and maintain the ice • Crowdsource solutions that bring out volunteers to clear the ice • Hire private contractors to clear the ice
Create an inviting and unique environment at each ice surface	85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider universal design principles to reimagine ice surfaces and how to use them • Add games rooms, more lockers and air conditioning in the pavilions • Provide better lighting and more warming shelters and fire pits at all locations • Use Victoria Park as the standard to achieve at Hawrelak Park and Rundle Park • Add more ice paths at Victoria Park • Separate hockey (i.e., stick and puck) activities from public skating and family activities
Critically assess operations to support high-quality ice surfaces and amenities	98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure and use lighter equipment at Hawrelak Park to ensure that the lake ice can be cleared and maintained earlier in the skating season • Use the expertise of the people conducting maintenance at Victoria Park to open the ice earlier and get better quality ice at other ice surface locations • Procure a Zamboni for all three ice locations to support better quality ice • Review and adopt historical best practices for maintenance (i.e., before heavy equipment was used) • Begin ice clearing and flooding earlier in the season



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the return on investment for the ice paths • Adopt priorities and performance measures specifically focused on extending the amount of time that people can use the ice
Ideas to Improve Priority Objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For priority objective two (i.e., Establish community partnerships), there is mixed support for “community partnerships.” Some people believe the City should be fully responsible for ice and facility maintenance, and other people support this objective and want the City to engage private contractors, community groups or public volunteers. • In priority objective three (i.e., Creating an inviting and unique environment), separate “inviting environment” from “unique environment.” An inviting location with high-quality amenities and services will attract people to use River Valley ice surfaces ongoing. The City can offer unique experiences rather than unique environments. • In priority objective four (i.e., Critically assess operations), emphasize cost-effective operations that achieve high-quality ice surfaces and amenities. 		

Area of Focus: Sustainability		
Draft Priority Objective	Percentage of people who support it	Proposed Actions to help achieve this Priority Objective
Analyze environmental trends to mitigate impacts to ice surfaces	86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the opening and closing dates for River Valley ice surfaces, as well as the number of operational days and the seasonal temperatures
Assess the River Valley to explore the feasibility of future ice surface locations	88%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider new River Valley surfaces in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Millcreek, near the Argyll Velodrome and new LRT station ○ Gold Bar Park, near the duck pond ○ Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park, near Edmonton Valley Zoo ○ Gallagher Park, as part of the Gallagher Park Master Plan and near the new Muttart LRT station • Allow open skating on the North Saskatchewan River • Create more Olympic-sized ice surfaces to support speed skating and figure skating
Ensure that the implementation of the River Valley Ice Strategy is fiscally responsible	98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement paid parking in the three parks* <p><i>*This idea came from two participants; six participants responded to this input indicating preference for free parking</i></p>

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Review, evaluate and adjust, as needed, the strategy at year 10	84%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the review every five years and make it a priority objective to keep the plan current, relevant and focused on the vision
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Ideas to Improve Priority Objectives

- Replace the first priority objective (i.e., Analyze environment trends...) with an objective to establish the City as a leader by adopting artificial ice surfaces.
- Adjust the second objective (i.e., Assess the River Valley...) to focus on improving the quality of existing ice surfaces, ensuring they are available and reliable for people to use.
- Adjust the second objective to focus on moving or developing River Valley ice surfaces outside of the downtown core.
- Adjust the third objective (i.e., Ensure the implementation...) to reflect the City's investment in a healthy population (i.e., supporting healthy lifestyles is fiscally responsible).
- Adjust the fourth objective (i.e., Review, evaluate, and adjust...) so that the City will update the River Valley Ice Strategy every five years.
- Add an objective to connect the existing ice surfaces to create a River Valley transportation corridor, and tie this into the City's River Access Strategy.
- Refocus the objectives on environmental sustainability and add actions to adopt environmentally-friendly practices and amenities (e.g., compostable toilets).

Area of Focus: Public Information

Draft Priority Objective	Percentage of people who support it	Proposed Actions to help achieve this Priority Objective
Increase citizen awareness by ensuring easy access to information and providing education	92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide online and social media information and on-site wayfinding signage about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice locations Ice conditions (i.e., quality of ice, including if an ice surface is closed due to poor conditions) Hours of operation for ice surfaces, on-site amenities and on-site services Schedule of programs Available services, including where to find them and pricing On-site amenities Rules of use On-site and nearby parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transportation options Ensure City website/311 have up-to-date information

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communication materials in highly visual and plain language formats that consider people with visual impairments • Adopt a City of Edmonton recreation-focused mobile app
Market River Valley ice surfaces to entice new users and create a wider (i.e., national and international) awareness	86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively promote speed skating events • Partner with hockey and sledge hockey organizations to promote the use of and events at ice surfaces • Market the surfaces locally and internationally as a “unique, outdoor experience in an urban centre” to actively position Edmonton as a premier winter destination • Promote the surfaces to local populations (e.g., newcomers, children at schools, disability community), and align programs to meet their needs • Continue to use design competitions to build awareness and interest in River Valley ice surfaces • Use social media to reach new users
Establish community partnerships to communicate and market ice surfaces to a larger audience	74%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host sponsored events that actively promote local businesses while attracting people to River Valley ice surfaces
Develop processes to receive and analyze public input to assist in the creation of innovative ice surfaces ideas	92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post information about public engagement activities at River Valley ice surfaces
Ideas to Improve Priority Objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the second objective (i.e., Market River Valley ice surfaces...); the ice surfaces are already very busy and funding can be allocated elsewhere. • Rewrite the third objective (i.e., Establish community partnerships...) to keep the intent and make it easier to understand. • Adjust the third objective to establish the City as a leader in promoting its River Valley ice surfaces; other organizations will follow suit. • Adjust the third objective to focus on community and business partnerships; business can build brand awareness by sponsoring local events. 		



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Collaboration Opportunities

As part of the stakeholder workshop, representatives recommended actions to help the City achieve its priority objectives. These actions fit into four themes:

Themes	Recommended Actions
Ancillary support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt sustainable and green utilities (e.g., water and sewer, electrical, heating) • Develop public transportation and active transportation (e.g., snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, winter biking) strategies to support access to the River Valley ice surfaces
Collaborative marketing, communication, and special events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with local organizations (e.g., Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Edmonton Sports Council) to create highly visible, community-endorsed signature events • Partner with organizations with a mandate to promote Edmonton (e.g., Edmonton Tourism) • Engage credible, community partners (e.g., River Valley Alliance) to help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share information about River Valley ice surfaces and related programs, services and events through their established communications channels ○ Tell and promote stories about Edmontonians and their achievements
Funding models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with community organizations (e.g., Edmonton Speed Skating Association) to access grant funding • Create cooperatives to increase equipment buying power and options for easily accessible storage • Adopt all-season partnerships and facilities • Use business cases to evaluate options for programs and services
Subject matter expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult and involve experts to provide input into achieving quality ice, accessible locations and well-used facilities and ice surfaces

WHAT'S NEXT

The City is reviewing the detailed input from the public drop-in sessions and stakeholder workshop. The River Valley Ice Strategy project team will make updates to the priority objectives, where required, and identify multi-year actions to help achieve them. Public input, as well as, City policy, procedures, and technical requirements will become the foundation of the River Valley Ice Strategy. The Project Team will draft the strategy and once approved by the Project Sponsor it will be posted on the project's website for public access.

Citizens can access information about the River Valley Ice Strategy by visiting: edmonton.ca/icestrategy

