



Draft Redevelopment Objectives

Draft Redevelopment Objectives What We Heard Report

Overview

This report provides a summary of public feedback on the first phase of the River Crossing Business Plan project, which occurred in late 2017.

As the launch of the River Crossing Business Plan, the City's project team invited members of the public to provide input on seven draft redevelopment objectives, or themes, and objectives designed to guide the creation of a redevelopment concept for the River Crossing area in West Rosedale.

Input was collected through a public drop-in workshop at the Old Timers' Cabin (November 29, 2017) and an online survey (November 29 - December 31, 2017).

How did we get the word out?

- Edmonton.ca/RiverCrossingPlan
- City of Edmonton social media
- Community networks
- Road signs
- Print and online media
- Posters
- Insight Community November Mixed Topic

Public Drop-In Workshop

Approximately 70 people attended the public drop-in workshop. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about the project through short presentations, conversations with staff and by reading project boards. Participants provided input on the seven draft objectives (connectivity, destination, economics, community, environmental stewardship, heritage, urbanity) and associated outcomes through facilitated table conversations using stickies to record comments. Input was also received through survey responses collected on-site. Following the workshop, the presentation slides and information boards were made available online on the project website.

Online Survey

A total of 658 people responded to the survey between November 29 and December 31, 2017. The survey combined multiple choice and open-ended questions to collect feedback on the seven draft objectives and associated outcomes.



Draft Themes

Rating the Importance of Objectives

At the drop-in workshop, participants were asked to vote for the three objectives most important to them. While all seven objectives were identified as important by participants, Heritage emerged as an important objective most often, followed by Environmental Stewardship. The Economics and Destination objectives received the fewest votes (see Figure 1).

Participants could also identify any objectives they felt should be removed or added. While no additional objectives were proposed, some participants said they disagreed with the Urbanity objective because of concerns about increasing density, environmental impacts, or disturbing potential unmarked grave sites. Overall, participants were mixed in their position on redevelopment, being either for or against or being comfortable with a certain level of development.

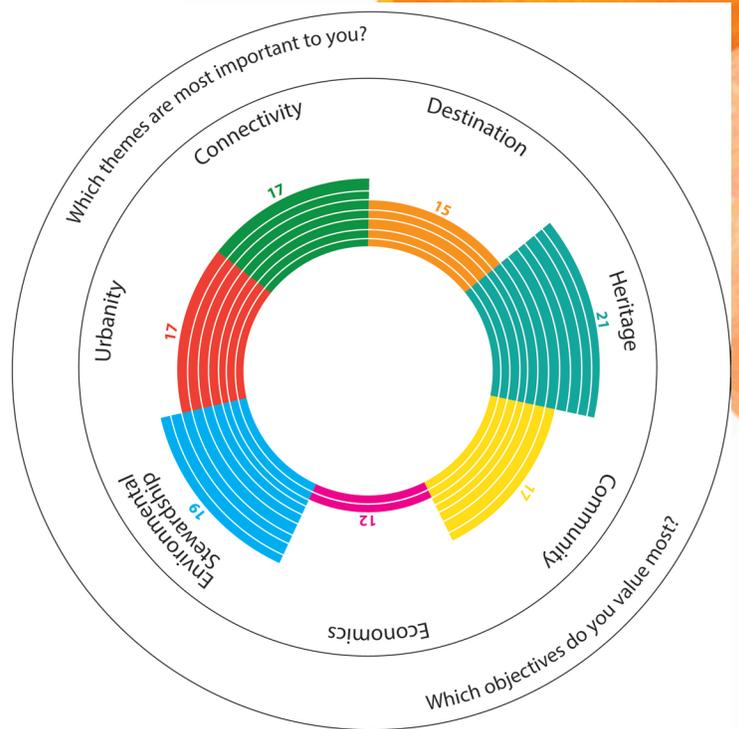


Figure 1: Importance of themes as rated by workshop participants

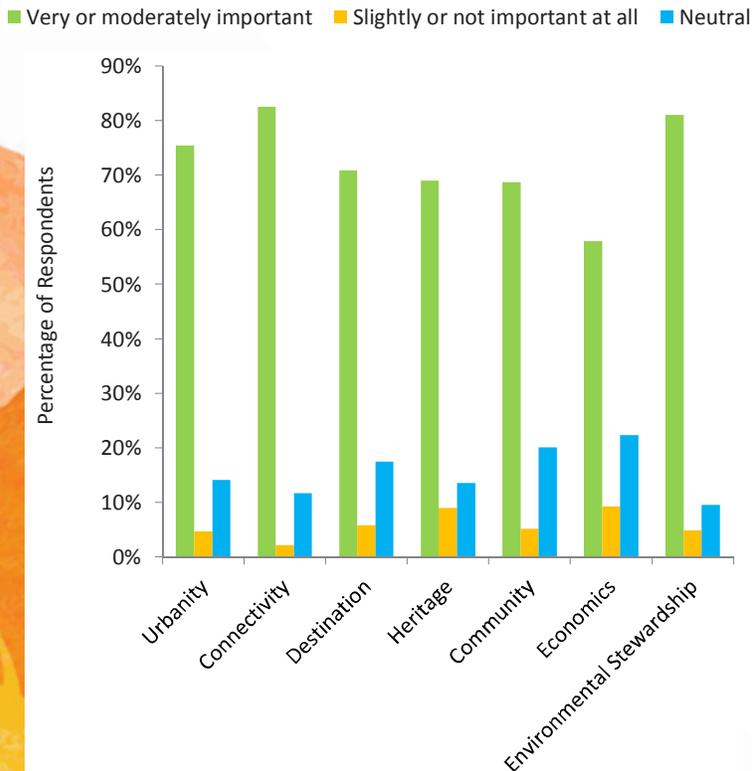


Figure 2: Importance of themes as rated by survey participants

In the online survey, participants were asked to rate each objective as very important, moderately important, slightly important, not important at all or neutral. All seven objectives received strong support overall despite some variation in support levels among objectives. Some highlights include:

- Connectivity was ranked as very important or important by the largest number of respondents (83%), followed by Environmental Stewardship (81%) and Urbanity (75%).
- Less than 60% of respondents thought that Economics was very important or important.
- Relative to other objectives, a greater proportion of respondents ranked Economics as neutral (22%) or slightly important (10%) or not important at all (9%).
- Nine percent of respondents also ranked Heritage as not at all important, which differs considerably from the results of the drop-in workshop.

Feedback

In addition to rating the importance of objectives, participants shared their thoughts on the project overall and highlighted the following questions, suggestions and issues related to approaches to planning and implementation:

- Scepticism as to area's capacity to accommodate all objectives/suggestion that objectives will need to be prioritized
- Support for the project
- Frustration that nothing has happened yet
- Disagreement with the overall purpose or intent of the project, specifically related to development in the river valley and at this site specifically
- Questions about the extent of the floodplain and implications of future flooding on development
- Suggestions of project precedents to follow, including: Granville Island, The Forks, Whyte Avenue, San Antonio canal, Griesbach neighbourhood
- Identification of the need for more specific, measurable targets for each outcome
- Observations around the tensions between different objectives (e.g. Community VS Environmental Stewardship or Destination), complementarities between objectives (e.g. Environmental Stewardship and Heritage) and a need to find the right balance
- Concerns and ideas about engagement processes, their level of inclusivity, and how input will be used
- Suggestions that the City prioritize competing redevelopment initiatives at a city-wide scale and coordinate public projects to avoid duplication (e.g. festival spaces, heritage interpretation)
- Identification of potential opportunities and risks related to implementing the vision and objectives

Feedback related to objectives and outcomes included a diversity of divergent and convergent opinions. This input is summarized in the following pages.

Urbanity Theme

Objective: Establish River Crossing as a mixed-use neighbourhood with high-quality design.

Draft Outcome	Feedback
Thoughtful urban design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architectural controls/high-quality design • Friendly architecture and gathering spaces • Concerns about implications of “high quality design” on affordability • Must consider physical accessibility for all • Consider sustainable design • Integrate EPCOR site
Appropriate mix of land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed use/commercial uses should be provided • Grocery store for residents • Mixed use and retail: galleries, market, food trucks, restaurants, pub, cafes, food trucks • Small-scale businesses and community atmosphere (e.g. Granville Island and Ritchie Market) • Consider scale and complementarity of future business on the site • Mixed use should include recreation • Build a hotel and dense urban housing to support range of destination elements
Quality public realm (streets and spaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain views/limit building heights • Include year-round amenities • Provide public realm amenities: shade, seating, washrooms, waste bins • Improve public space, making it more usable and accessible
Increased density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional density is necessary • Density should be limited, maintain open space • Additional density should be low or mid-rise
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Donald Ross School building and yard • Flood risk implications for the area • Do not develop the area, keep it green or natural • Build to make things “floodable” • Need benchmarks and process to ensure high quality design objectives are met

Connectivity Theme

Objective: Integrate River Crossing with Rossdale, the river and the wider city.

Draft Outcome	Feedback
Network of livable streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address vehicle volumes and road alignments, noise and mitigating traffic impacts to achieve a livable, viable mixed use community • Improve streetscaping (boulevard trees, separated sidewalks) • Reduce land dedicated to cars
Effective transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize walkability and bikeability • Address road alignments, block sizes, facilities, bike share • Prioritize and improve transit access and service • Fix road network and existing intersections by addressing congestion, safety and efficiency issues • Consider long-term growth and changes in north-south movement • Support all-season movement • Make this area car-free, focusing on transit and active transportation only
Connections with downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connections to downtown, river, and Legislature • Address need for two-way link between the north and south banks
River access and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a riverside path with café/patio/restaurant and public amenities (quality public spaces, seating, lighting, water fountain, gardens) • Improve access to river and river valley • Maintain and enhance river valley trail system • Add to multi-use trail system connecting to open space network • Limit river access to limit pollution • Build a boat dock and launch • Boat access will require more parking • Build a major river port
Safety and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical solutions to access for mobility challenged (trail-riders, parking) • Separate vehicles from other modes • Increase and improve crossings • Increase pedestrian visibility with lighting and other safety measures • Move fire station/river rescue to beside the Walterdale Bridge • Need to maintain parking/build parkade • Get rid of parking
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous street names • Do not change roads if done for the purpose of increasing density • Residential and commercial development will impact transportation

Destination Theme

Objective: Make River Crossing a destination for people across Edmonton and visitors to the city.

Draft Outcome	Feedback
Gathering spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public spaces should include both active and passive uses Focus on mix of retail to create destination rather than festival spaces Gathering spaces should be free and public Create more public, open green space Make the whole area a park Playgrounds
Facilities for events and celebrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract festivals/create spaces for them Not an appropriate location for festivals Beware creating festival spaces that rely on programming to be active Concentrate activities in the Power Plant to avoid overdevelopment Focus on the Rossdale Power Plant as a destination hub Include open area for festivals, K-Days midway if needed Venues/amphitheater A major destination site may increase noise, traffic, pollution Creating a major destination could drive up demand for parking lots Large events would require improved access to transit and other modes
Innovative, unique experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about what makes the area unique/why would attract visitors? Focus on nature as the destination Create quality open space/parks identity, access to river Create a market Light the new Walterdale Bridge Indigenous art and history - museum Use Indigenous history to create destination (art and events) First Nation events centres Alberta Aquarium Restaurant in nature Outdoor hot tubs Create a beach/do not create a beach Facilities for experimental urban agriculture Consular and trade offices Focus on quality of urban fabric, architecture, cafes near the river Galleries and artist spaces Build a canal/do not build a canal Build an amusement park or Ferris wheel
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect to Legislature as destination Edmonton does not need another destination area Avoid duplicating destination spaces in the city Mixed use development and architecture Year-round destination is important for success Install weather station and air quality monitor to support trip planning

Heritage Theme

Objective: Honour the area’s significance for Indigenous peoples and settlers.

Draft Outcome	Feedback
Heritage interpretation and placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install interpretive signage/integrate signage into open spaces • Do not rely on plaques for interpretation: interpret in artistic ways • Use heritage for placemaking • Create heritage feel by building with brick • Hold festivals and celebrations for Indigenous history and seasons • Think holistically about opportunities for heritage education • Avoid historical recreation • Indigenous art • Avoid interpreting difficult history in Indigenous-settler relations • Focus on the present and exciting future • Keep it simple, do not overbuild • Area should be all about First Nations and settler heritage • Represent/include all cultures and current population • Aim for gender parity in representation • Interpret history of transportation, industry, power generation, water treatment and baseball • Museum, interpretive centre or public archive
Places and support for programming, reflection and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support engaging/interactive learning • Make the area a park with heritage elements
Cultural accessibility, meaning and authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honour traditional land use and rights to land • Create inclusive and accessible spaces • Need to work directly with First Nations on heritage • Include Indigenous place names • Honour heritage through real actions (e.g. housing) • Space for traditional ceremonies and growing ceremonial/medicinal plants
Protection of historic and cultural sites and views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect/improve or further investigate burial grounds • Respect/do not disturb unidentified burial grounds • Involve First Nations in an investigation of additional burial sites
Adaptive reuse of historic buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve historic buildings • Reuse heritage buildings for community space • Reuse old Walterdale as footbridge with entertainment, coffee shops • Repurpose existing buildings (Rossdale Power Plant, Ortona Armoury, Donald Ross School) into community spaces

Community Theme

Objective: Create an inclusive, complete community that meets the needs of its diverse residents.

Draft Outcome	Feedback
Sense of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more density, but do it carefully • Residential development will undermine existing community • Integrate new development with existing Rossdale community/respect existing residents • A destination focus would hurt the sense of community
Housing types for different ages and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and services for seniors • Improve access to the area for people with limited mobility
Affordable and supportive housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider affordability for a wide range of new residents • Build a range of housing for mixed incomes • Connect with Indigenous communities to address housing crisis • Land values in the river valley do not support affordable housing • Subsidizing housing in this high value area will cost the taxpayer • A concentration of social services and affordable housing will conflict with community and destination goals • Mixing socio-economic groups will limit higher end development
Local shops and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial services for daily needs of residents • Limit commercial development • Commercial development conflicts with the idea of community • The area already has access to downtown retail
Proximity to open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural space/parks for all residents • Design programmable open spaces for wide variety of users • Keep housing developments out of river valley • Housing development will privatize access to the river valley • Create connected open space network • Retain open and green spaces (e.g. Donald Ross School) • Keep all space open space • Create an off-leash dog park (Donald Ross School or river trail) • Establish urban food gardens
Health and wellness emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider health and wellness for non-humans

Economics

Objective: Attract private development in River Crossing through public investment and partnerships in city-building.

Draft Outcome	Feedback
Strategic City investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City should not lead the redevelopment due to lack of market knowledge or history of cost overruns, delays, bland results due to cost concerns • City's role should be building infrastructure and keeping costs affordable to invite investment • City needs to fully own infrastructure • Development should involve public and private investment • Repurpose Power Plant • Limit public investment on floodplain • Public investment will benefit privileged few who will be able to afford to live in the area • Tax dollars should be used for public good • Avoid P3s so that City does not carry unfair risk burden • Need for public oversight of private developers • City needs to have a strong vision and not be afraid to invest in it
Viability for private development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to understand barriers to private development in the area • Subsidize servicing costs • Do not provide incentives/subsidies/special deals to private developers; use tax rate and zoning • Coordinate revitalization projects city-wide to channel limited private investment capital • Work with small businesses to understand their needs • Need to ensure private development meets timelines • Private developers should lead in order to achieve goals quickly • Private developers should not lead due to concerns about pursuit of short-term profit over upholding public good, bland results • Development agency should lead
Partnerships with public bodies and institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with schools/institutions to develop education hub
Economic development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve Indigenous communities in implementation • Opportunity for Indigenous to participate as landowners • Local, diverse commercial spaces (Ritchie Market, Granville Island) • Establish Indigenous market
Responsible, staged financial approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City needs to stop delaying development as it tries to figure out how to spur activity using public investment

Environmental Stewardship

Objective: Incorporate ecological practices into the area’s design and contribute to sustainability across generations.

Draft Outcome	Feedback
Protection of water quality and river habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the river/water quality • Openly monitor air and water quality at this site and publicly track conditions
Transition to clean energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagree with clean energy/not the right time to focus on clean energy • Need to learn what works and what doesn’t from Blatchford before investing in clean energy/low energy/etc. • Use natural gas, cleaner burning, abundant and we know it works (concerns about clean energy)
Resilience and climate change adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade stormwater management for existing and new properties • Address resiliency and flooding concerns • Need to see ideas for addressing climate change
Reduced consumption of energy and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy consumption • Build composting facilities • Community-level eco-station
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance/preserve wildlife corridors connectivity • Naturalize landscaping • Maintain natural vegetation/habitat • Sustainable design is costly and will price out all but the wealthy • Prioritize transit and active transportation • Development is contrary to environmental health • Need to consider environmental externalities of other goals • Develop brownfields throughout city instead of river valley • Connect with Indigenous traditional knowledge and uses • Include environmental/sustainability education facilities • Establish specific objectives/regulations (carbon neutrality, pesticide free zone by-law, fertilizer free bylaw, sustainable building design) • Environmental regulations/guidelines will deter developers • We do not need to pursue a gold standard; keep it simple • Do not invest to make area a model of environmental sustainability (e.g. district utility) • Cost concerns of pursuing environmental sustainability gold standard and implications for equity and affordability • Base decision on science/evidence/lessons from Blatchford

Ideas About Specific Facilities

Re/Max Field

- Remove ballpark
- Convert ballpark to other uses
- Use ballpark as skating rink in winter
- Keep baseball and add uses to the ballpark
- Open up ballpark to community use
- Integrate ballpark within new urban fabric
- Increase focus on ballpark/attract a professional team
- Enhance and expand the ballpark into a multifunctional stadium



Rossdale Power Plant

- Tear down the power plant
- Need sensitive/tested approaches to repurposing this and other heritage buildings
- Refurbish power plant through P3
- Move City Artifacts Centre into the power plant
- Make it into an education hub focused on heritage, environment and nature, sustainability, green building, energy generation



Thank You

The project team wishes to thank everyone who has been involved to date and all those who contributed their feedback on the draft redevelopment objectives.

Next Steps

Input from the drop-in workshop and survey will be used in the preparation of redevelopment concepts and will inform the business plan.