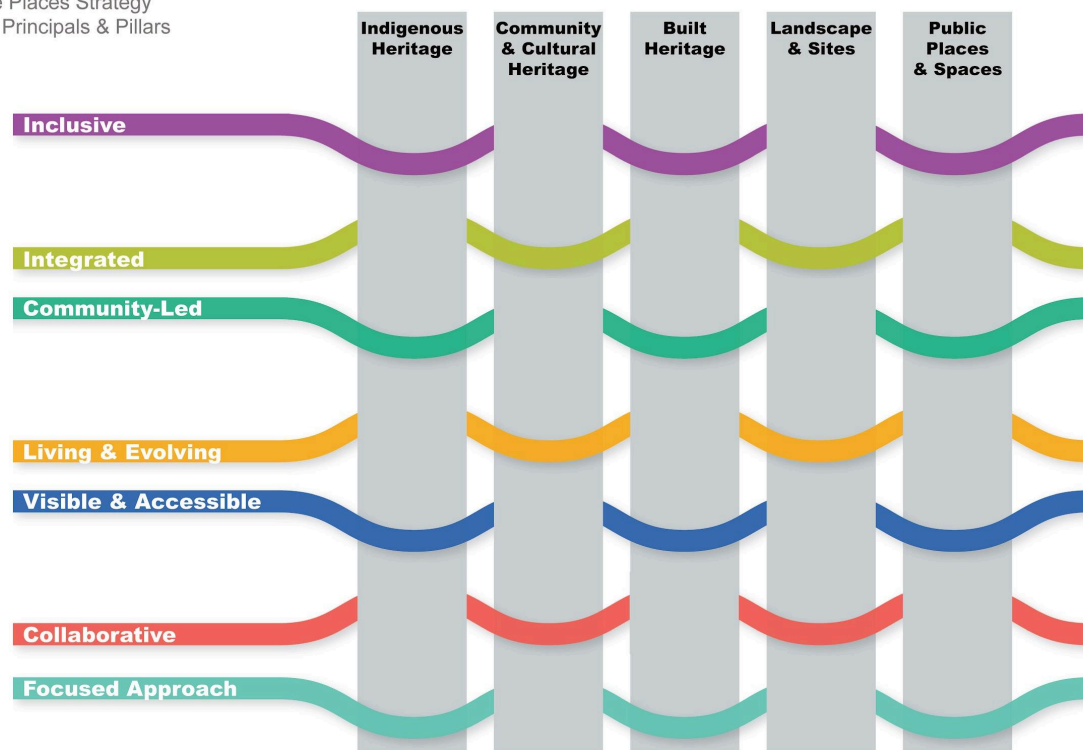


Heritage Places Strategy

Phase 2 Engagement - Guiding Principles and Pillars (draft) - November 2025

The City's new [Heritage Places Strategy](#) will reimagine how we identify, commemorate, and preserve the places that matter most to Edmontonians. Phase 1 engagement invited people to share their familiarity with the heritage program and ideas on how a more inclusive notion of heritage could be considered for the strategy. Based on [the feedback we received in Phase 1](#), along with research from other municipalities and analysis of Edmonton's policies, the team drafted **Guiding Principles** and **Pillars** to form the foundation of the new Strategy.

Heritage Places Strategy
Guiding Principles & Pillars
Draft



From **November 13th to 30th**, share your input to help refine the Guiding Principles and Pillars. Learn more below and visit engaged.edmonton.ca/heritage-places-strategy to share your feedback. A Phase 2 What We Heard Report will summarize all the input. A full draft of the strategy, with updated Guiding Principles and Pillars, will be shared in early 2026 as part of the final phase of engagement.



Guiding Principles

The following **Guiding Principles** are intended to guide all elements of the Strategy and its implementation.

- **Inclusive:** Reflect Indigenous, racialized, and 2SLGBTQIA+ histories alongside settler heritage.
- **Integrated:** Align heritage goals with broader City priorities, including climate, housing, and economic development.
- **Community-Led:** Support grassroots storytelling, stewardship, and decision-making.
- **Living & Evolving:** Embrace heritage as dynamic, connecting past, present, and future.
- **Visible & Accessible:** Make heritage legible in public space, infrastructure, and everyday life.
- **Collaborative:** Enable meaningful partnerships between communities, the City, and heritage organizations.
- **Focused Approach:** Prioritize realistic, achievable actions.



Pillars

The **Pillars** are the updated focus areas for the City's heritage program. Each Pillar will include a brief description, short and/or long-term directions to achieve the Pillar's intended outcomes, and possible considerations for the City or other partners.

1. Indigenous Heritage

Definition: Recognizes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, languages, cultural practices, and relationships to land and water. Heritage is understood as more than physical; it includes stories, living practices, and tradition.

What We Heard in Phase 1

- Elders are vital sources of knowledge about Indigenous heritage places. There is concern about tokenism; participants want meaningful, ongoing collaboration, not “one meeting and done”
- Indigenous heritage must be recognized as central, not an afterthought
- Built heritage alone is too narrow; stories, people, language, and lived experience must be part of recognition
- Participants highlighted the importance of Métis river lot histories, naming practices, and recognition of dispossession
- Engagement should be Indigenous-led where possible (e.g., Métis government engaging its own citizens)

Possible Opportunities

- **Elder Engagement:** Establish dedicated processes and resources to involve Elders Advisory Councils and knowledge keepers.
- **Ongoing Relationships:** Commit to sustained communication with Indigenous governments and representatives. Continue to build relationships with the City of Edmonton's Memoranda of Understanding partners.
- **Story-Driven Recognition:** Expand commemoration and interpretation to reflect Indigenous stories, oral histories, and community knowledge
- **Capacity & Resources:** Explore partnerships (e.g., Reconciliation initiatives) and City-supported capacity for Indigenous-led heritage initiatives.



- **Visibility:** Use translations, QR codes, and signage to highlight Indigenous heritage in public space, including Michif and First Nations languages.
- **Shared Stewardship:** Support opportunities for Indigenous governments and communities to steward or co-manage heritage places.

2. Community & Cultural Heritage

Definition: Recognizes the local histories, stories, and places of significance to Edmonton's diverse communities. Includes cultural landscapes, gathering spaces, and intangible expressions that reflect community identity and belonging.

What We Heard in Phase 1

- Communities are already doing heritage work.
- Plaque programs, walking tours, and local research are highly valued.
- Equity and inclusion remain barriers to participation.
- Recognition is often uneven, some communities feel left out.

Possible Opportunities

- **Encourage community-led initiatives:** Support and promote opportunities for communities to commemorate and share their own heritage through place-based storytelling, plaques, walking tours, and local history projects.
- **Explore partnership opportunities:** Collaborate with community leagues, cultural organizations, and partners such as the Edmonton Heritage Council to strengthen capacity, share resources, and expand recognition of diverse heritage places.



3. Built Heritage

Definition: Recognizes buildings and/or structures with historic, architectural, or cultural value.

What We Heard in Phase 1

- There is support for a broader definition of heritage resources.
- Developers and community groups want clearer policies and more incentives.
- Financial barriers and rigid criteria were cited as obstacles to designation.

Possible Opportunities

- **Expand Incentives:** Explore new financial tools, e.g., tax relief, grants for retrofit.
- **Neighbourhood-Level Celebration:** Encourage neighbourhoods to lead initiatives to commemorate their history.
- **Continued Assistance:** Build on existing practices by expanding guidance for developers and property owners and strengthen internal interdepartmental collaboration to streamline heritage-related processes and support.
- **Inventory Updates:** Broaden criteria to reflect cultural and community value. Explore non-residential, commercial and industrial places with heritage value.
- **Climate Incentives:** Encourage climate resiliency retrofitting projects when undertaking heritage rehabilitation work.
- **City-owned heritage resources:** Preserve, manage, adapt and celebrate City-owned historic sites and resources in collaboration with internal partners.



4. Landscapes & Sites

Definition: Recognizes natural landscapes, including parks, river valleys, trees, geological formations, and sacred sites.

What We Heard in Phase 1

- Heritage isn't just buildings; the land holds stories.
- Features like the river valley are central to many communities' sense of place.
- Indigenous partners emphasized land-based heritage over built form.

Possible Opportunities

- **Cultural Heritage Landscapes:** Identify, commemorate and/or protect landscapes of significance.
- **Integration with Climate Policy:** Align heritage landscapes with biodiversity and climate resilience goals.
- **Protection of Natural Assets:** Recognize and steward valued natural features (e.g., springs, trees, rock formations).

5. Public Places & Spaces

Definition: Recognizes public infrastructure, civic spaces, and community hubs.

What We Heard in Phase 1

- Heritage includes how space is used and remembered.
- Adaptive reuse connects the past with new public life.
- Public infrastructure (e.g., streetcar barns, markets) can embody local heritage.

Possible Opportunities

- **Celebrate Adaptive Reuse:** Incentivize and promote creative reuse of heritage structures.
- **Interpretation:** Encourage public storytelling elements (e.g., plaques, public art) to reimagine spaces.