

What We Heard Report

Edmonton - Strathcona County Footbridge

Online Engagement
Event 3 - Preliminary Design
March 2022



Edmonton

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A. Project Overview

A proposed new footbridge will be designed and constructed across the North Saskatchewan River.

The North Saskatchewan River Valley (NSRV) is one of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region's most cherished amenities, renowned for its ecological, recreational and cultural values. The River Valley Alliance's guiding strategic plan, [A Plan of Action for the Capital Region River Valley Park](#), articulates a vision for a continuous, connected park system in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, with emphasis on building a continuous trail system within the NSRV. Currently, northeast Edmonton and western Strathcona County are underserved by active transportation infrastructure and opportunities for recreation and celebration within the NSRV. While the recently constructed East End Trails in the City of Edmonton and new segments of the Strathcona County Regional Trail in Strathcona County have improved access and connectivity, the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) remains a significant barrier towards the vision of a continuous, connected park system.

To support the enhancement of local and regional connectivity and access to the NSRV, provide enhanced opportunities for recreation and celebration, as well as advance other policy priorities, the River Valley Alliance (RVA), the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County have identified an opportunity to build an active mode connection between the two municipalities across the NSR at approximately the location of 167 Avenue in Edmonton/Twp. Rd. 540 in Strathcona County.

The RVA, City of Edmonton, and Strathcona County have agreed to the planning and design of a new proposed footbridge over the NSR. Shared-use path connections and supporting open space/recreational upgrades on both sides of the river will also be included.

The proposed footbridge will meet the goals outlined in a variety of plans and policies.

The primary goals for this proposed footbridge are to:

- o enhance access and connectivity and contribute to building a continuous trail system between Devon and Fort Saskatchewan
- o help incrementally achieve Edmonton's four strategic goals of Healthy City, Urban Places, Regional Prosperity and Climate Resilience
- o meet additional goals found in Edmonton's [Ribbon of Green](#), the [Strathcona County Trail Strategy](#), the [RVA Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024](#), and other related Edmonton and Strathcona County plans and policies.

B. Public Engagement

Many project decisions will be made by the technical design team and will be based primarily on engineering/technical factors such as, but not limited to: design and construction standards, technical requirements, environmental considerations, regulatory requirements, and to meet the guiding plans and policies of the project partners.

Stakeholders and the general public will be engaged regarding local knowledge of the site, the aesthetic of the proposed footbridge, potential connection requirements, potential recreational amenities, site furnishings, and other site amenities at the **ADVISE** level of the City of Edmonton Public Engagement Spectrum.

*Engagement will
 be at the ADVISE
 level.*

The City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Spectrum.

Increasing influence of the public



The third phase of engagement was designed to provide the preliminary designs of the footbridge and the two riverside sites for public and stakeholder feedback. In addition, a survey was used to capture information about the level of support for the preliminary designs. An opportunity to provide an explanation for the level of support was also provided.

C. How We Engaged

*An online survey
was used to
capture
comments at the
ADVISE level.*

In advance of the March 24, 2022 online public event, the project team met with stakeholder groups to discuss the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and other items of interest.

Two weeks before the event, ten road signs advertising the event and survey were placed at a variety of locations in northeast Edmonton and in Strathcona County, including both riverside sites.

Postcards were sent out approximately two weeks in advance of the event to residents and businesses within the area. These provided information about the event and the survey. Registration for the event was required through the project web page.

Both the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County used social media (Twitter and Facebook) as the main method to promote the event and survey to the public.

Ads in the Sherwood Park News were placed a week in advance of the event.

External stakeholder groups, such as recreation organizations, community leagues and environmental groups, were sent an email on March 8, 2022 about the upcoming event and survey.

Information was posted on the Strathcona County, City of Fort Saskatchewan and River Valley Alliance websites with a link to the City of Edmonton project web page.

At the March 24, 2022 public event, an online presentation provided information about the project, what we heard from the Event 2 survey, and the preliminary designs. The event was followed by an online survey to capture information regarding the level of support for the preliminary designs.

The survey was created through the City of Edmonton's Sparq platform and was open from March 24, 2022 to April 8, 2022. One question each was asked about the preliminary design for the footbridge, the City of Edmonton East End Trail site and the Strathcona County Riverside Nature Trail site. Each question had an open ended text box where the respondent could provide the reason for their level of support.

Demographic information from the respondents such as age, primary language, where they live, transportation modes, and gender were gathered as part of this survey. This information was collected to support the GBA+ (Gender Based Analysis Plus) initiative and improve City of Edmonton design and engagement practices.

D. Who Was Engaged

*90 people attended
the online public
presentation.*

*366 people responded
to the online survey.*

The online presentation and survey were open to all residents of Edmonton, Strathcona County, City of Fort Saskatchewan, Sturgeon County, and any other interested parties. Identified stakeholders (immediately adjacent landowners, recreational, community and environmental groups) were also engaged. 90 people attended the event.

The online presentation and survey were available after the event through the [project web page](#).

A link to the project web page was provided on the Strathcona County, River Valley Alliance, City of Fort Saskatchewan, and various stakeholder groups websites.

There were 366 survey respondents. 83% were from Edmonton, 13% were from Strathcona County and 1% were from Fort Saskatchewan. The remainder were from Leduc, Sturgeon County, Parkland County, Edson, and Smoky Lake.

A number of respondents identified their membership with a recreational or community group. Seven groups were identified in the survey results with five groups related to cycling, one to canoeing and one to running.

52% of respondents heard about the event through social media. 25% of respondents heard about the event from the City of Edmonton web page, while 14% heard about the event from the RVA website and 8% from the Strathcona County website. Approximately 15% heard about the event by word of mouth. The remainder were notified of the event via group web pages, newspaper ads, road signs, television news, and postcards. More than one method of notification was identified by some respondents.

E. What We Asked and What We Heard Summary



Aerial View of Project Site

The online survey sought information about the preliminary designs developed for the footbridge and the two riverside sites.

The level of support was high for all three components of the project with comments about:

- A footbridge that fits into the site
- Minimized impacts to the natural environment
- Possible trail refinements to better suit the sites and users
- The need for washrooms
- Parking concerns regarding size of parking areas for both sides of the river (support and non-support)

Most survey respondents supported the proposed preliminary designs.

There were some people opposed to the development of the footbridge and/or the two riverside sites. Their concerns focused on the spending of taxpayer funds for what were considered non-essential amenities (the footbridge and riverside sites).

Details about levels of support and opposition are provided below for each survey question.

F. Summary of Results and Findings by Question

All responses are a summary of information provided by the survey respondents for the footbridge and riverside sites questions.

There were 366 survey respondents who accessed the survey through the project web page or the City of Edmonton surveys web page.

Demographic questions/responses are covered in Section D: Who We Engaged.

THE PROPOSED FOOTBRIDGE PRELIMINARY DESIGN



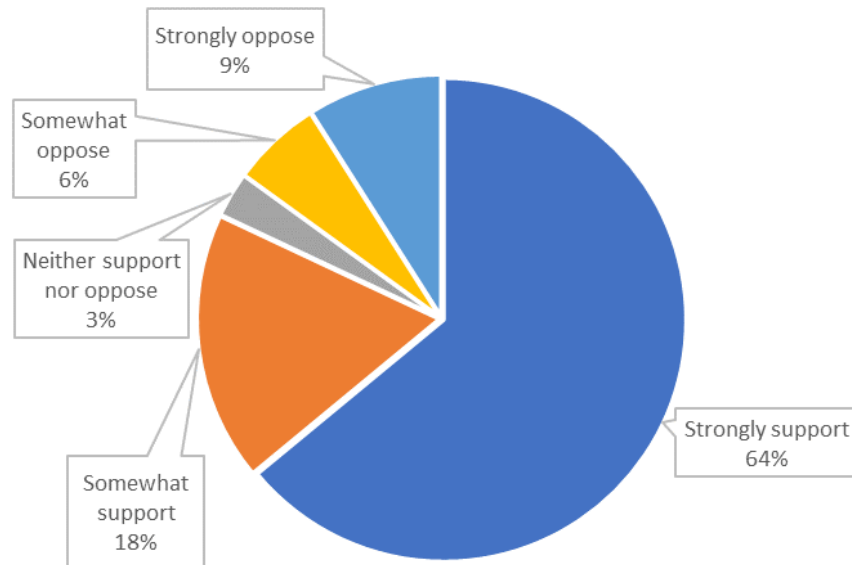
Proposed Footbridge Preliminary Design Plan



View of Proposed Footbridge Preliminary Design Looking West

Q1: The proposed footbridge is designed to fit the site and will provide a year round accessible connection across the North Saskatchewan River. Two viewing areas are proposed on the bridge.

What is your level of support for the footbridge preliminary design?



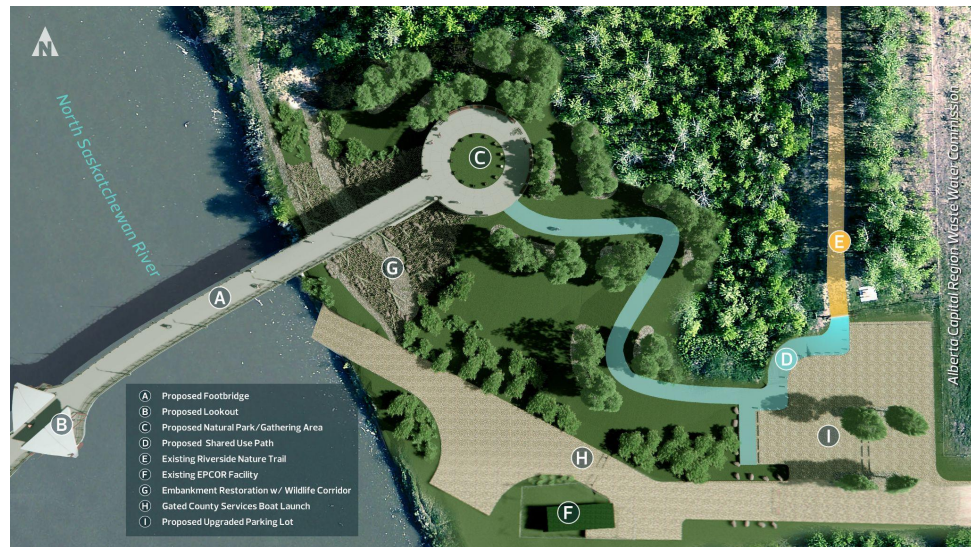
Those who supported the footbridge preliminary design indicated that it provided a much needed and accessible connection in the river valley for cyclists and pedestrians. Some believed the footbridge was aesthetically pleasing and fit the site, while others thought it should be more iconic. The footbridge canopies generated comments of support and non-support. More furniture, such as benches, was suggested.

There were concerns about the curve of the footbridge with regards to sight lines and conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists due to lack of separation. A painted line for separation was requested at a minimum. The gathering area circle at the landing also generated concerns regarding conflicts between users, and modifications were suggested.

A non-motorized boat launch was desired.

Those who did not support the footbridge preliminary design were mainly concerned about the prioritization and the spending of tax dollars on the footbridge rather than on issues such as potholes, homelessness and crime.

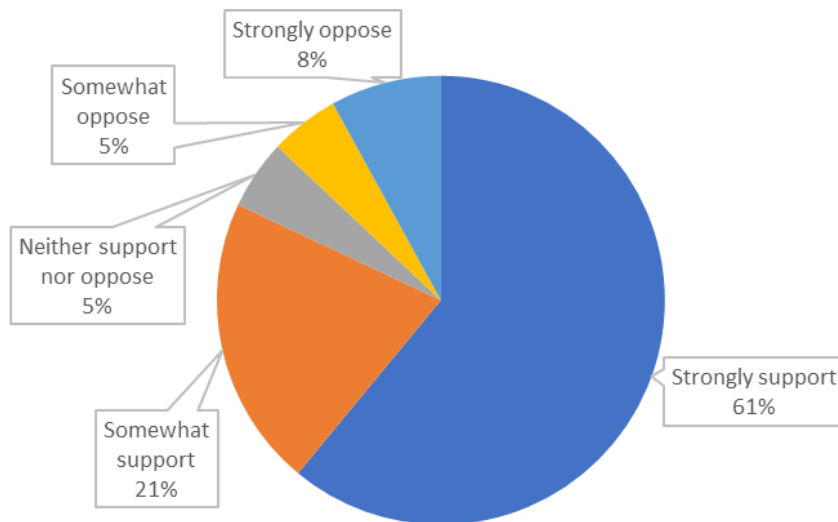
STRATHCONA COUNTY RIVERSIDE NATURE TRAIL SITE PRELIMINARY DESIGN



Strathcona County Riverside Nature Trail Preliminary Design Plan

Q2: The preliminary design for the Riverside Nature Trail site minimizes the impacts to the natural vegetation while providing amenities to support the footbridge. The plan allows for other proposed amenities identified in the concept plan to occur in the future.

What is your level of support for the Riverside Nature Trail site preliminary design?



Supporters of the preliminary design indicated that the proposed site design generally worked well, and the impacts to the natural environment were minimized.

Additional consideration for signage and seating was requested and the inclusion of washrooms was considered important. Both support and non-support for an improved parking area were provided.

Concerns over accommodating cyclists and pedestrians on the same trail system and footbridge without separation were voiced. The layout of the trail (in particular the curves) needs to consider cyclists as well as pedestrians. A paved trail connection to Fort Saskatchewan (outside of the project area) was considered important.

Non-supporters were concerned about the spending of taxpayers dollars on non-essential amenities.

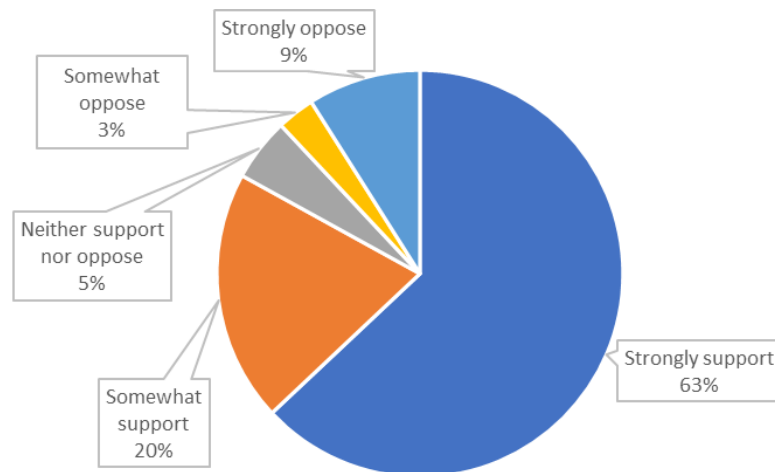
CITY OF EDMONTON EAST END TRAIL SITE PRELIMINARY DESIGN



City of Edmonton East End Trail Preliminary Design Plan

Q3: The preliminary design for the East End Trail site minimizes the impacts to the natural vegetation while providing amenities to support the footbridge. The plan allows for other proposed amenities identified in the concept plan to occur in the future.

What is your level of support for the East End Trail site preliminary design?



Generally, those who supported the preliminary design indicated that trail connections and amenities worked well. Suggestions for trail modifications for cyclists and pedestrians were also provided, in particular at the circular gathering area at the west end of the footbridge.

There were concerns about the lack of consideration for parking and the lack of washrooms for this side of the river. Access to the river was also requested.

Non-supporters of the East End Trail site preliminary design were mainly concerned about the prioritization of the footbridge over amenities and/or services such as road/pothole repairs.

G. What Happens Next?

All comments will be considered in the detailed design of the Edmonton-Strathcona County Footbridge and adjacent sites, along with other criteria, such as technical requirements, standards, plans, policies and regulatory requirements.

The detailed design of the proposed footbridge and the two riverside sites will be presented in summer 2022 as information. A 'What We Did' response to 'What We Heard' comments from this survey will also be provided.

Construction of the footbridge and riverside sites is anticipated to start in summer 2022 and is expected to be completed in late 2024 or in 2025.

For more information and to stay up to date on the project, please visit edmonton.ca/EdmontonStrathconaFootbridge.