

What We Heard Report: Warehouse Park

Concept Phase Engagement
May 2022

| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

What We Heard Report:

Warehouse Park

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Project background

About the project

Warehouse Park is a 1.47 hectare green space that will be constructed in Edmonton's downtown. The project includes the redevelopment of the laneways and 106 Street adjacent to the park and the closure of 107 Street, with the goal of integrating them into the park design.



When complete in 2025, Warehouse Park will be larger than two football fields and include multi-use spaces and program areas inviting people to socialize, celebrate, play, or simply recharge, in the heart of the city.

How we got here

Planning for this project began over a decade ago with initial direction provided in the **Capital City Downtown Plan** in 2010. Additional strategic direction came from other key planning documents including **Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy** (2017) and the **Downtown Public Places Plan** (2020). Assembly of the land required to create the park site began in 2017.



Park vision

Strategic plans guided the development of the Vision, Design Goals and Required Elements, providing a starting point for the park's design. Public engagement in 2019 helped to confirm the vision and the design goals for the park.

The vision for this park is an urban oasis and an inclusive, multi-use green space featuring large, open areas that invite citizens to reflect and explore.

DESIGN GOALS:

A green open space

A sustainable space

A pedestrian-focused space

A year-round space

A connected, integrated space

A timeless space

What We Heard

Generally, Edmontonians who participated in the engagement are looking for Warehouse Park to provide a destination downtown that offers an escape from city life and an inviting and relaxing experience. Through this engagement the City is urged to be bold and create a memorable design.



While there is excitement for the development, safety and security are priorities Edmontonians wish to be addressed. There are suggestions to do this through both design, for example with lighting and clear sightlines, and with plans to discourage crime and encampments, for example by having visible on-site security.

It is believed that the right features and activities will draw people to the park at all times of day and all seasons of the year. This will contribute to safety by bringing 'eyes to the street'.

Year-round activation options are desired, as well as the opportunity to provide a programmable space in the pavilion such as a bookable gathering space or meeting room.

Edmontonians feel the park should focus on the pedestrian experience while meeting the needs of all users including downtown residents, unhoused and those who are mobility challenged.

Respondents request safe and secure locations for bike parking and plenty of seating. There is a desire for greenery and trees wherever possible, with a focus on native species.

Respondents also suggest daily and routine park and facility cleaning. A commitment to ongoing maintenance of the park infrastructure is believed to be critical to the success of the park.

Park options and elements

Two park concept options were created for consideration. One formal and the other organic as illustrated in the images below. Elements used within the park can also make it feel more formal or organic, such as the pathways and tree plantings.

FORMAL



ORGANIC



The key areas engaged on and what we heard, are outlined below:

Pathways

Respondents were asked about their views on a formal pathway structure and an organic and meandering pathway structure.

STRAIGHT



MEANDERING



There is a significant preference for meandering and organic pathways over a formal structure. The organic design is felt to be more interesting and inviting, providing a greater contrast to the grid system and formality of the city and downtown, which is much desired. It is also believed less structure within the park will minimize maintenance which is seen as a benefit. In terms of safety, sightlines are noted as important and not to be overlooked in this design.

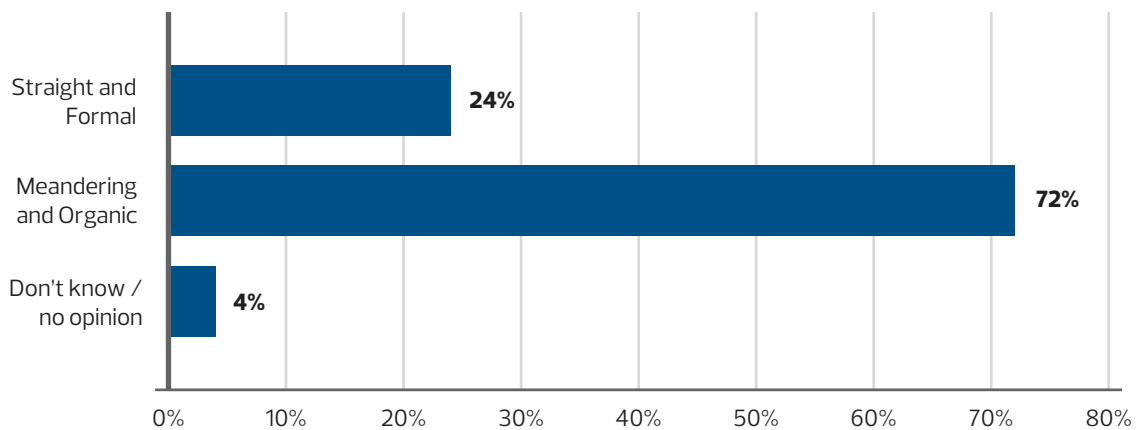
Those who favour the straight and formal pathways indicate that people generally prefer the most direct route to get where they are going and this design would minimize pedestrians forging their own paths and destroying green spaces. Supporters of this design feel it is more visually appealing and that it will be more accessible to those who are mobility challenged. Clear sightlines for improved safety is noted as a benefit.

While project stakeholders also prefer the organic layout, there were many who indicated a desire for the 107 Street Promenade to be straight to allow for the park to highlight the views of MacEwan University to the north.

Specifically from survey respondents, 72 per cent favour a meandering and organic pathway structure, while only 24 per cent favour straight and formal.

Park Pathways and 107 Street Promenade

2054 Responses



Tree layout

Respondents were asked about their views on the tree layout, either structured following path lines or unstructured.

ALIGNED WITH PATHWAYS



INDEPENDENT OF PATHWAYS



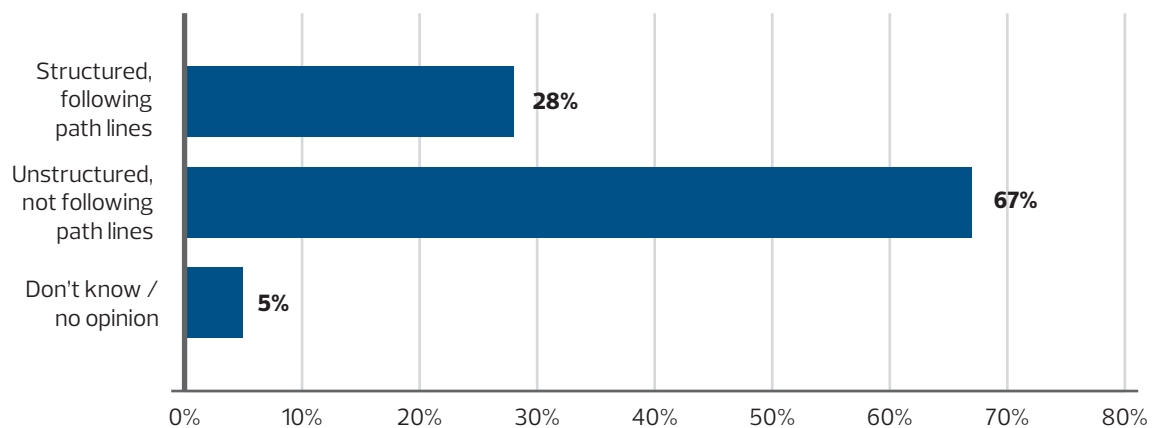
Not surprisingly, in keeping with the preference for the organic pathway layout, an unstructured pattern of tree placement which doesn't follow path lines is preferred.

It should be noted, however, that the tree layout was of less importance to respondents than the desire to ensure the vegetation is able to thrive.

Specifically from survey respondents, 67 per cent prefer the unstructured design.

Tree Layout

2054 Responses



Terrain

Respondents were asked about their views on the terrain: a flatter and more even surface or soft slopes and hills.

FLATTER



SOFT SLOPES

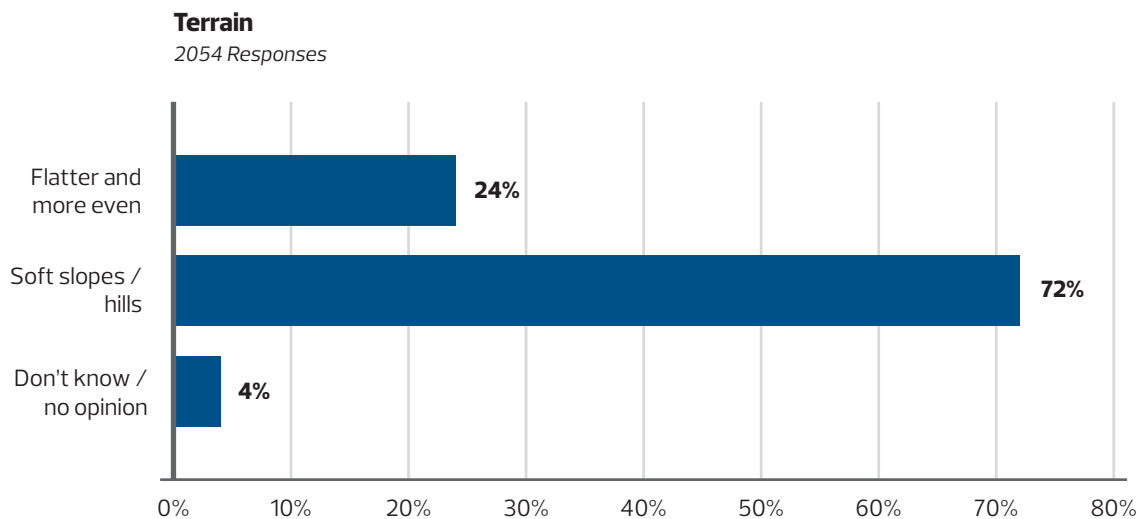


The soft slopes and hills are preferred by most respondents who note that they are more representative of a natural environment, therefore providing a more visually interesting and pleasurable experience. The hills are also thought to create more opportunities for activities and are preferred for seating for both comfort and by creating sightlines for watching activities and also pockets of privacy. The concern was also raised that flatter surfaces are more conducive to homeless encampments.

Those who prefer flatter and more even terrain feel that sitting on a flat surface is preferred. From a safety perspective, sightlines are felt to be better with flat terrain, therefore safety is enhanced and access for the mobility challenged is improved.

Some feel the park could offer a mix of both options: soft slopes/hills and flatter surfaces.

Specifically from survey respondents, 72 per cent favour soft slopes and hills, with only 24 per cent preferring a flatter terrain.



Washroom pavilion

When discussing the best location for the washroom pavilion, views were divided with similar support for both the west side of the park next to the plaza and the north side of the park facing south next to the clearing and pedestrian promenade, however slightly more people prefer the west side.

NORTH LOCATION



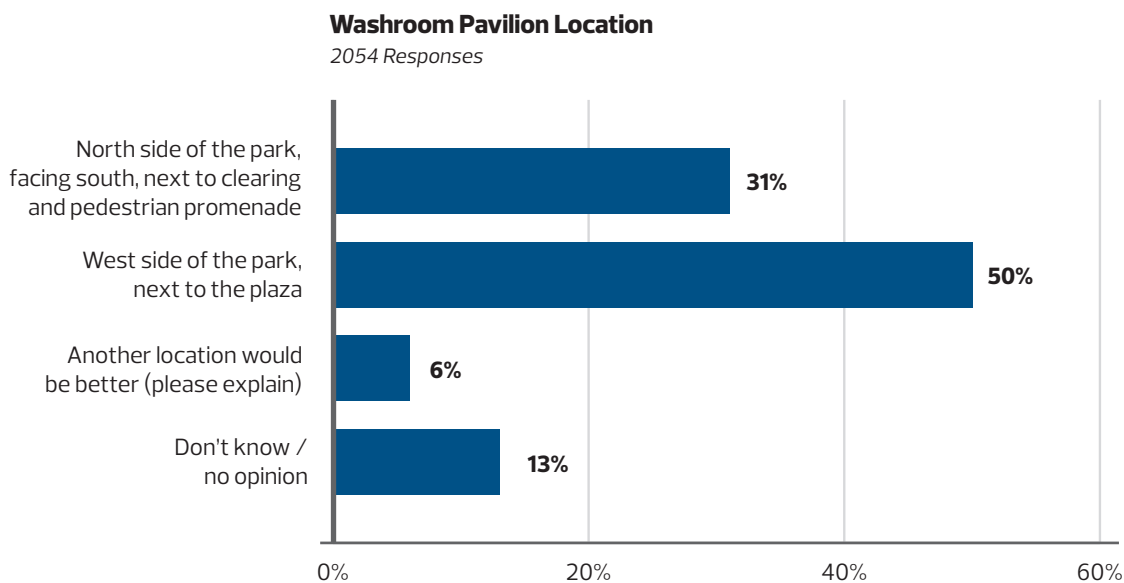
WEST LOCATION



Preference for the west location is noted for its proximity to the amenity areas and for the building to not be a key focal point within the park. It is also felt that this location offers more open, green spaces that will be less impacted by shade from surrounding buildings, for activities and enjoyment and better positioning of the park elements overall. From a safety and security perspective, it is felt that this location would allow for the washroom to be well monitored.

Those that prefer the north location indicate that this more central location is well positioned for ease of access by all park users and would be more accessible to those who are mobility challenged. Respondents suggest the washroom pavilion should be located in the most open, visible and accessible location as safety is a priority and it is felt that this location provides that.

Specifically from survey respondents, half of the respondents (50 per cent) feel the west side of the park is the best location, while 31 per cent favour the north side of the park.



Focal point

The idea of a focal point on the west side plaza was explored with examples provided of a floral garden or ornamental water feature and an invitation to offer alternate ideas. There is significantly more support for an ornamental water feature.

FLORAL GARDEN FEATURE



ORNAMENTAL WATER FEATURE



Respondents who support the water feature believe it would provide a calming and soothing focal point and a pleasant and refreshing experience in contrast to the surrounding downtown buildings and concrete, helping to mask the sounds of vehicular traffic. Respondents note that water is a draw for people which would support the plaza as both an impromptu and formal community gathering space. There is a desire for the feature to be ornamental by including a sculpture or fountain, or be interactive.

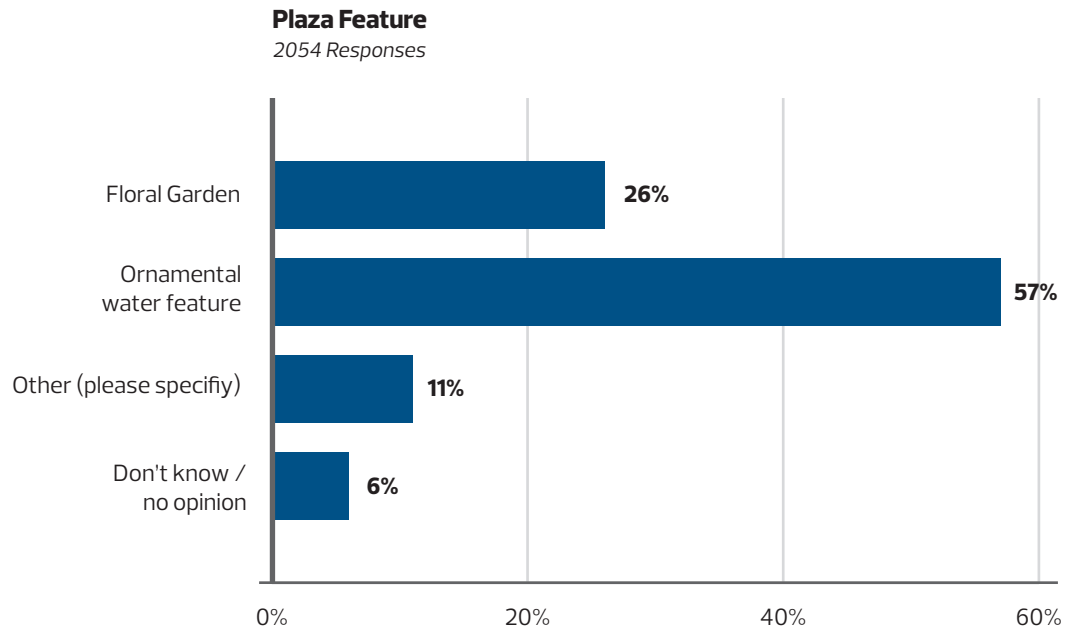
While fewer respondents prefer the floral garden, many noted the positive impacts it would have on the environment including creating a home for bees and other insects, as well as the element of beauty it would bring to the park. It was noted that natural species of plant life should be considered.

Many respondents who prefer the floral garden indicate it is due to a dislike for a water feature, noting the degree of maintenance involved with a water feature, the potential for misuse and that water features already exist in other downtown parks and across the city.

Regardless of their preference, respondents believe that any feature should be both interesting and useful in all seasons, and encourage designers to create an innovative year-round solution. Ongoing maintenance was noted as a concern, with respondents urging the City to consider upkeep and lifespan in the decision-making process.

Specifically from survey respondents, the majority of respondents (57 per cent) prefer an ornamental water feature, 26 per cent prefer a floral garden and 11 per cent suggest another option.

Of the other options suggested, a hybrid was most often noted—a combination of both water and floral, perhaps the water feature is surrounded by flowers: one should not be exclusive of the other. Other options suggest public art would make a pleasing focal point and an interactive water feature would be preferred over a static one. Also noted were a fountain and a stage for performing arts.



"I want it to be a destination, where many people want to gather and create vibrancy, a park that we are proud to have in our city."

106 Street entrance

When commenting on which 106 Street entrance design makes respondents most want to enter, use and enjoy the park, both options—a paved entry plaza and a green park entrance – received support—however, the paved entry plaza is preferred.

PAVED, ACTIVATED ENTRY PLAZA



GREEN PARK ENTRANCE

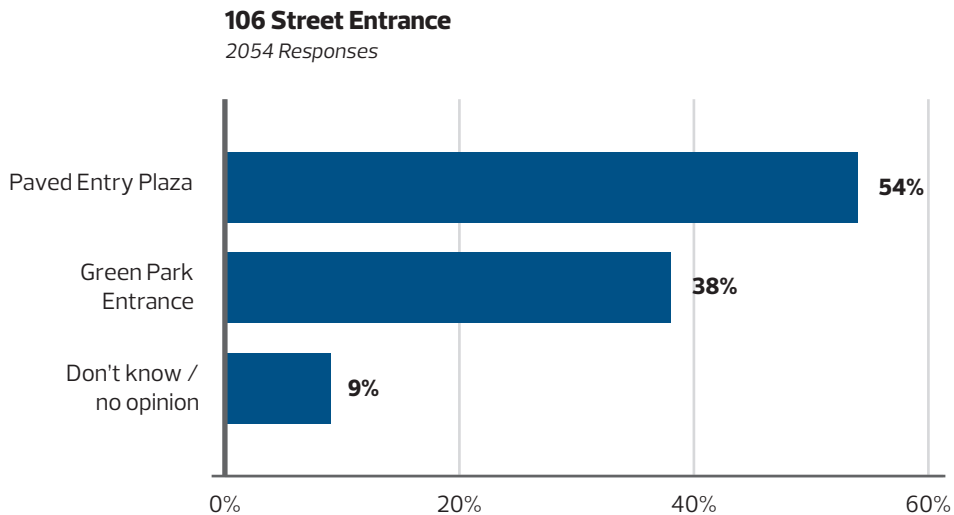


Regardless of their choice, respondents are supportive of the need for bike racks at the 106 Street entrance, as well as at other locations within the park.

Those who prefer the paved entry design are highly supportive of including picnic tables and suggest that activating this area is key to the park's success and provides many possibilities including food trucks, board games and other community building activities. It also offers those who are walking by or stopping for a quick lunch to enjoy the park without having to enter into the center of the park to find seating.

Respondents who prefer the green park entrance feel that greenery is more inviting and provides a cleaner, natural and welcoming gateway into the park. While there is support for picnic tables, some suggest these could be featured elsewhere in the park, rather than at this main entrance.

Survey respondents indicate a preference for a paved entry plaza (54 per cent) over a green park entrance (38 per cent).



Play space

There is support for both play space options—a dedicated/structured play area or play elements integrated with the landscape.

DEDICATED STRUCTURE



INTEGRATED WITH THE LANDSCAPE

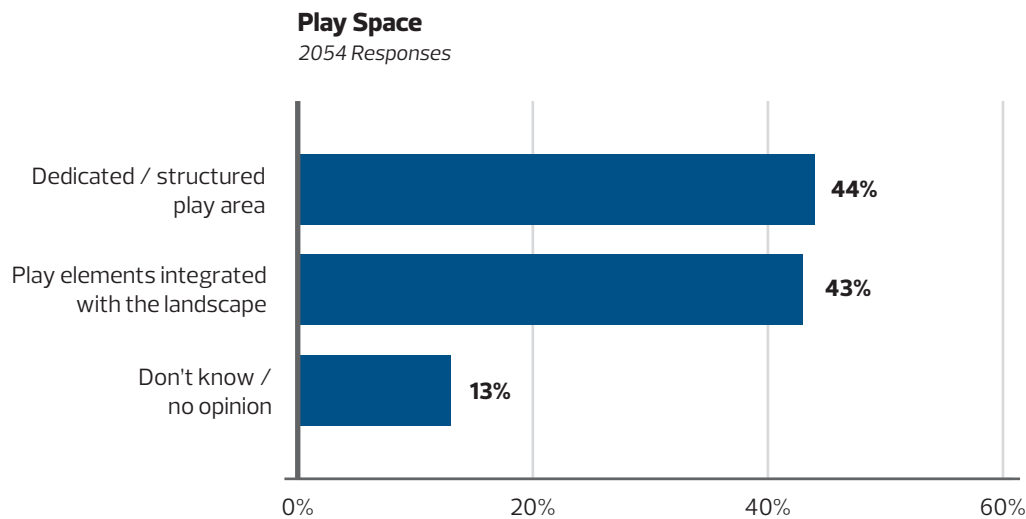


Those who prefer a dedicated/structured play space feel that a more contained area makes monitoring children easier thereby providing a safer and more enjoyable experience. Respondents feel this type of play space is preferred by children and will encourage greater interaction among users. Many suggest that centralizing the children's activity areas will ensure other areas of the park remain peaceful for those who visit without children.

Respondents who prefer the play space integrated with the landscape note that a natural execution of play elements would blend well into the park setting, be more interesting and unique and provide a different experience than other playgrounds. It is felt that this format would encourage greater exploration, creativity and imaginative play. Respondents feel integrated play areas will be more inviting to people of all ages and abilities, rather than just children.

Some respondents suggest that either type of play space is suitable and that the park should offer a combination of both.

Survey respondents are split on their preference for a dedicated, structured play area (44 per cent) and play elements that are integrated with the landscape (43 per cent). Thirteen per cent (13 per cent) do not know or have no opinion.



Potential additional park features

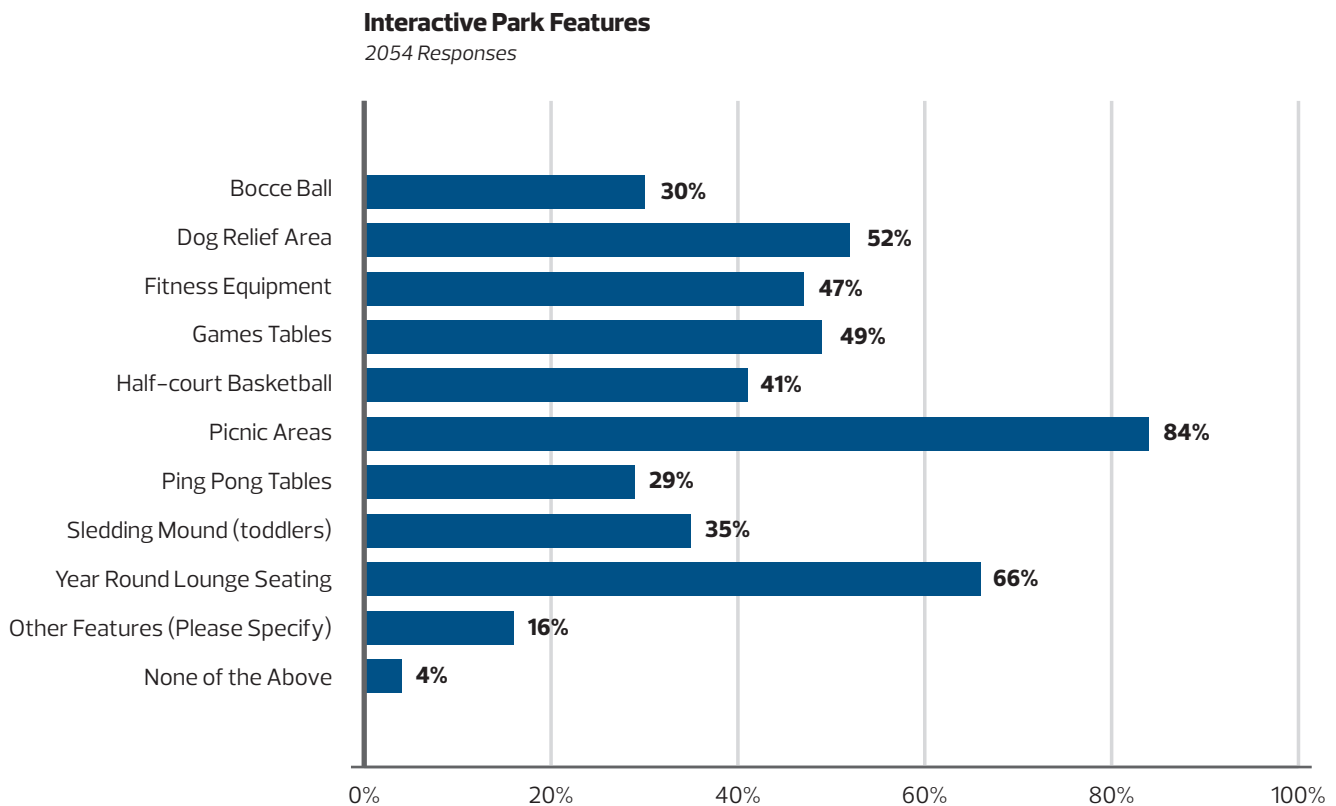
There are several interactive park features being explored to ensure there are opportunities for all ages and abilities to be active, relax, play and gather. Respondents most often noted picnic areas, seating, and a dog relief area as preferences.

Over half of survey respondents indicate they would use picnic tables (84 per cent), year round lounge seating (66 per cent) and a dog relief area (52 per cent). Slightly less than half suggest they would use games tables (49 per cent), fitness equipment (47 per cent) and half-court basketball (41 per cent).

Of the sixteen per cent that provided other suggestions, the most often noted are a skateboard park, dog off-leash area, skating rink, concession/cafe and food trucks, a stage and fire elements.

Through stakeholder engagement it was noted that dog ownership has vastly increased in the last few years, and the number of dogs living downtown is anticipated to increase through development occurring in close proximity to the park.

*“Include spaces for food trucks and/or vendors to park.
Make the park a destination that people want to go to
and not just another park.”*



106 Street streetscape

Improving the experience of active transportation users is seen as a key priority. Bike lanes and appropriate connections to the bike network are desired. Appropriate crossings and enhanced lighting are highly mentioned from a safety perspective. There is a strong desire for both wider sidewalks and additional trees and greenery to enhance the user experience and accessibility for all, including those who are mobility challenged.

There are opposing views about the need for parking with some who suggest an increase and others who suggest a decrease in parking spaces.

107 Street closure

When discussing the plan to close a portion of 107 Street and select alleyways inside the park, respondents noted general support for the road closure and the shift to pedestrian priority. There is noted concern, however, about the impact this may have on traffic flow. Respondents urge the City to consider traffic signals and timing to ensure this change does not create additional congestion in the core. Emergency vehicle access into and through the park was also mentioned as important.

Including and activating the alleys is also supported, however, respondents note the current poor condition of the alleyways and call for improvements as a part of the project. Aesthetics are important and respondents suggest the alleyways be attractive and inviting and considered as part of the park design.

Comments about safety along the promenade indicate the need for clear sightlines and appropriate lighting. Respondents also want to ensure the promenade will be supported with regular maintenance including garbage collection and snow clearing.

As the closure of 107 Street will remove currently available on-street parking, the lack of and need for parking in the core was noted.

Art

Warehouse Park will have a significant public art element, in accordance with the City's Public Art Policy. The City is working with artist Sanaz Mazinani to develop the art and include it in the park design.

When thinking about how they might like to engage with art in the park, respondents provided comments on preferences for either a single large sculpture or a series of smaller sculptures and the type of sculpture, either realistic or abstract, and if it should be static or interactive.

The greatest support is for a series of small interactive, abstract sculptures.

Those who prefer a series of sculptures feel that this type of display would provide more interest and multiple opportunities to experience art through the park space. Many feel that more art simply equals more fun.

An abstract sculpture is noted to be more inviting, of interest, and provoking greater imagination and thought.

Respondents feel an interactive sculpture would be more interesting as it would provide stimulation and encourage engagement. There is concern however, that this type of artwork may require maintenance and that should be a key consideration.

Comments in support of a single sculpture suggest it would create a focal point which could be iconic or make a strong statement, be more memorable and attract greater attention than a series of smaller sculptures.

Some who prefer a realistic sculpture suggest it could be more widely accepted and understood, but suggest a cautious approach as to who/what is depicted and why.

Those that prefer a static sculpture believe it will require less maintenance and therefore have a longer lifespan.

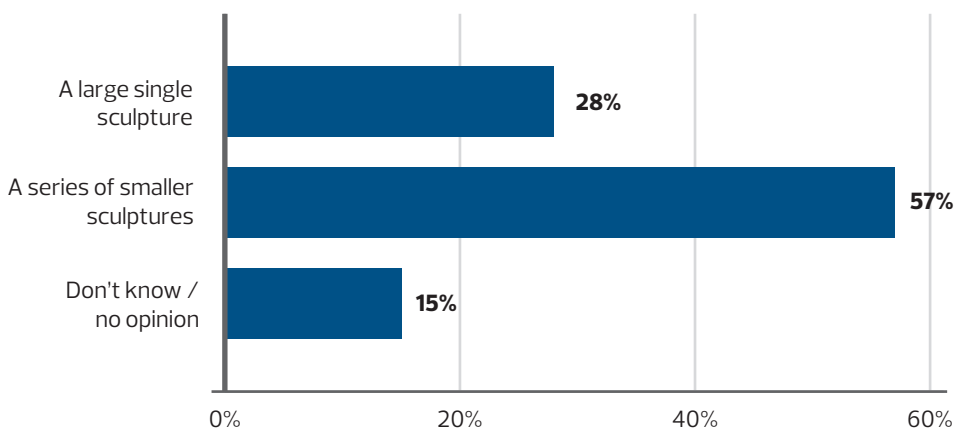
Other comments about art indicate a desire for it to be iconic, memorable and "Instagramable"—a place for photos that becomes an attraction, some referencing as an example, the Chicago Bean. There are also suggestions for a traditional or Indigenous theme.

There is concern about vandalism and graffiti.

Specifically from the survey, over half of respondents (57 per cent) prefer a series of smaller sculptures. Twenty-eight per cent prefer a large single sculpture and 15 per cent do not know or have no opinion. More respondents prefer an abstract sculpture (45 per cent) than those who prefer a realistic sculpture (32 per cent). More than half of respondents (58 per cent) prefer an interactive sculpture, 27 per cent prefer a static sculpture and fifteen per cent do not know or have no opinion.

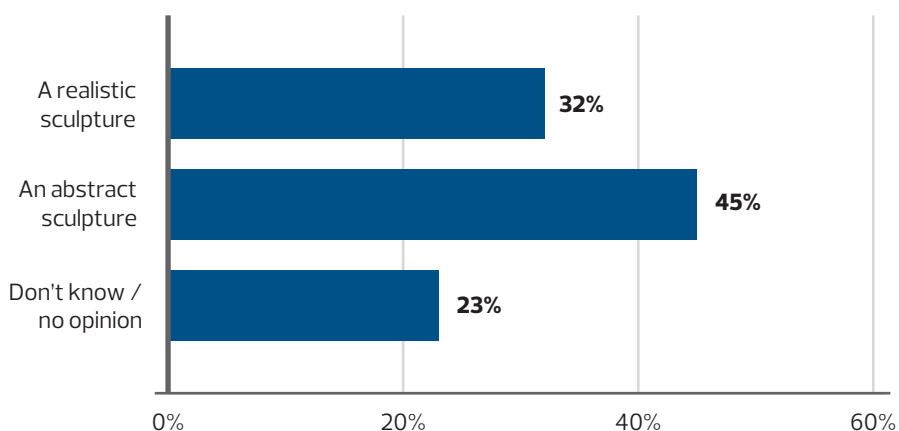
Art – Size / Quantity

2054 Responses



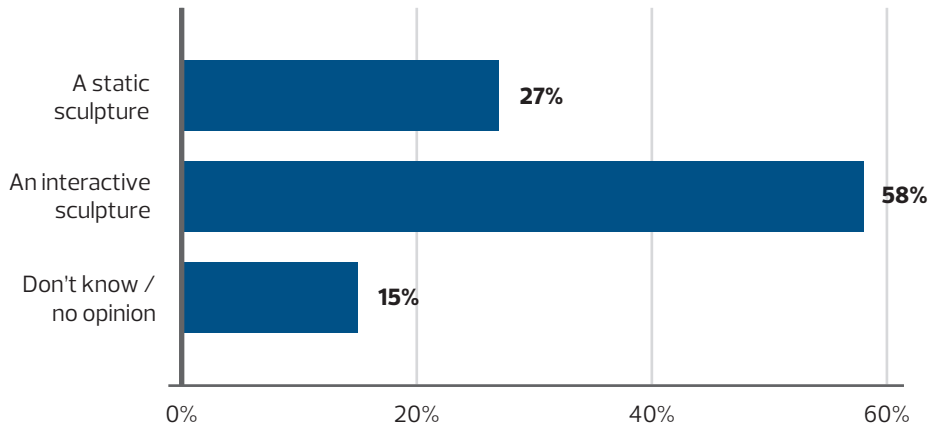
Art – Realistic/ Abstract

2054 Responses



Art – Static / Interactive

2054 Responses

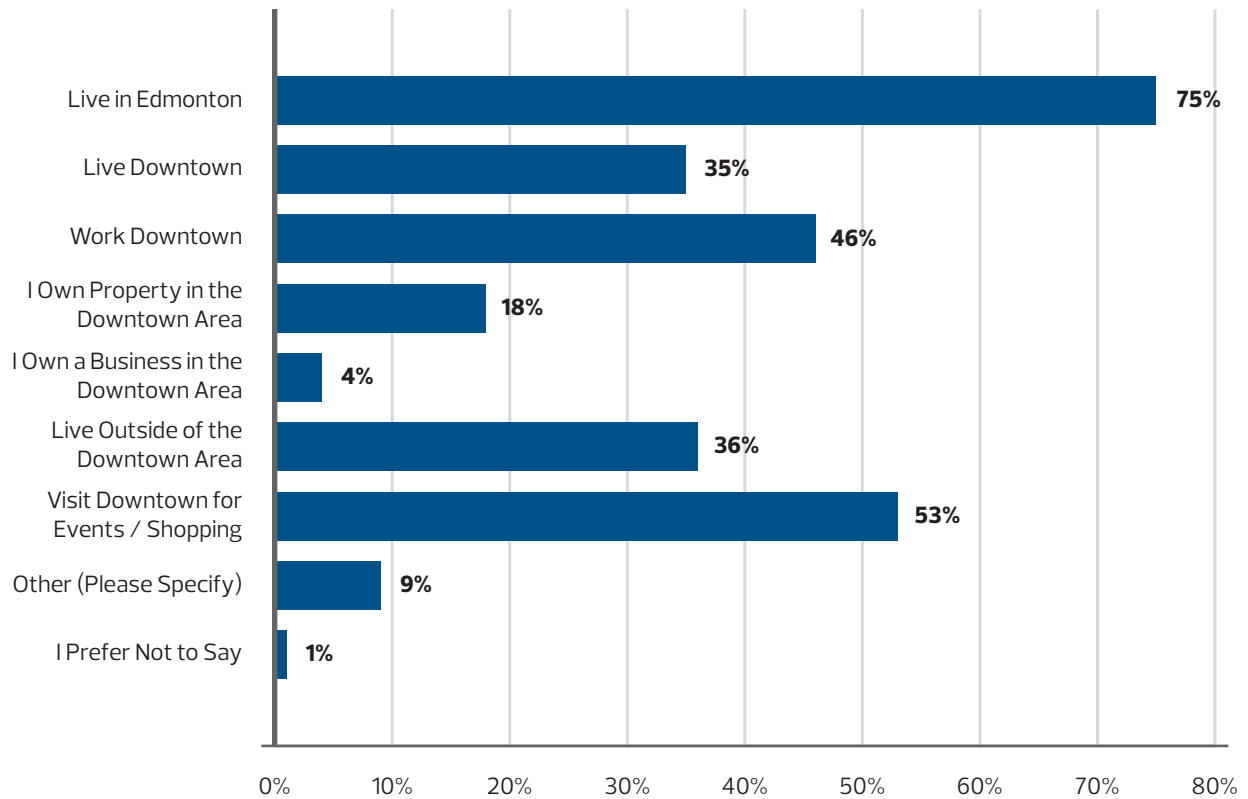


Survey respondents relationship to downtown

The following chart illustrates survey respondents' relationship to downtown.

Relationship to Downtown

2054 Responses



What we did

The engagement process created opportunities for the public and stakeholders to learn about the Warehouse Park project objectives, scope and design options, as well as provide input.

This phase of public engagement was at the REFINE level of the City's public engagement spectrum.



Communications

To create awareness for the engagement activities, the following communications tools and tactics were used:

- + Media launch
 - + An on-site media launch event was held at 11:00 a.m. on May 2, 2022.
- + Project Postcard
 - + A postcard was delivered to 21,561 residents and businesses in the downtown area and handed out at pop-up engagement activities.
- + Business flyer
 - + A flyer targeted to business owners/tenants was hand delivered to the businesses adjacent to the future park during the business door knocking campaign (see Page 23).
- + Road signs:
 - + Six road signs were placed in the downtown area.

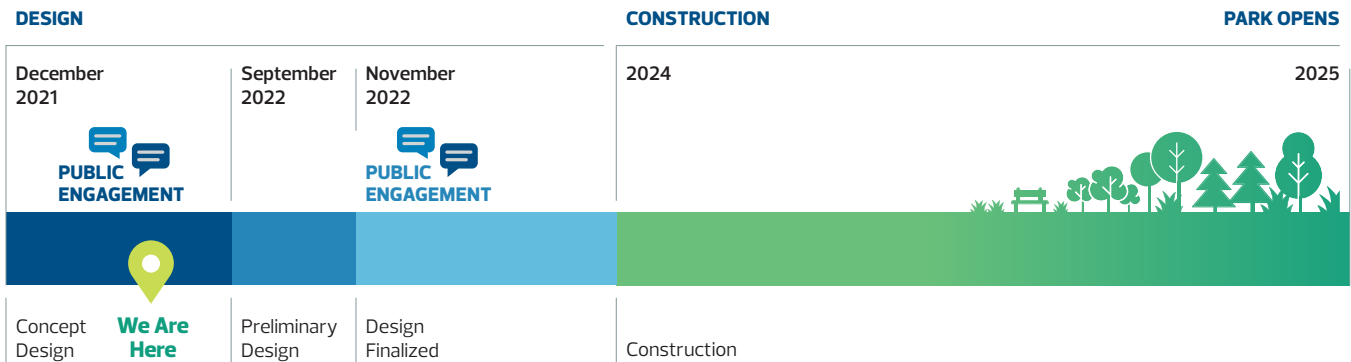
- + Digital billboards
 - + Three digital billboards on Jasper Avenue and 109 Street provided 415,952 impressions.
 - + Digital transit ads in the Corona LRT station provided 42,735 impressions.
- + Social media
 - + Advertising on Facebook and Instagram provided 796,967 impressions and 2,512 visits to the project webpage.
- + Sidewalk stickers
 - + 12 stickers were placed on the sidewalks that border the future park site.
- + eFlyer
 - + An eFlyer was delivered electronically to stakeholders and property owners.

In addition, four double-sided road signs were placed on the future park site for the month of May.

Public engagement process

The engagement process for the development of the park design includes one phase of engagement during concept planning in spring 2022 and one phase of engagement during preliminary design in fall 2022. This report provides details of the first phase of engagement.

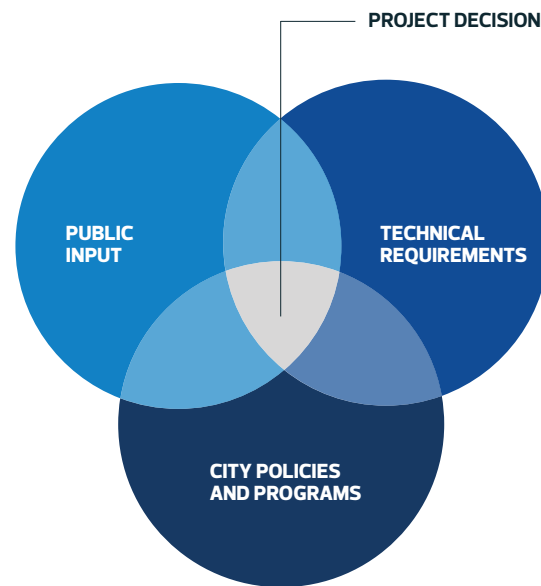
The first phase of engagement took place during May 2022. Park design and element options were presented to the public for consideration and feedback. This input will be used to further develop the park design as it moves forward.



Decision making

When making decisions, there are three considerations: City policies and programs, technical requirements and public input.

These inputs will be considered along with project constraints, including budget, to support the refinement of a preferred concept design.



Public and stakeholder engagement activities

The following engagement activities were conducted during May 2022. The intent was to share design options and gather feedback to finalize the concept design and inform the development of the park's preliminary design. In an effort to generate awareness and engage with audiences which are typically hard to reach, pop-up engagement opportunities were staged in specific and strategic locations.

+ Online public event

An online, webinar style event was held on May 10, 2022 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. A recorded presentation about the project was shared, followed by a facilitated question and answer session where members of the project team responded live to questions typed in by event participants. Twenty-five attendees participated in this event.

+ Pop-up activities

Engagement pop-ups were held at seven locations. Project team members discussed the project and answered questions in-person. Display/sounding boards shared project information and were used to gather participants' preferences for design options using sticky dots and comments written on sticky-notes. An additional pop-up engagement was planned for the Warehouse Park site, however it was canceled due to inclement weather.

Over 350 Edmontonians were engaged at the pop-up activities.

Date	Activities
May 3, 2022	+ Melcor Welcome Village 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. + YMCA Family Resource Centre 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
May 7, 2022	+ Alex Decoteau Park 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. + Dick Mather Park 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
May 12, 2022	+ Edmonton City Centre 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
May 14, 2022	+ Stanley Milner Library 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
May 17, 2022	+ Boulders Climbing Gym 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

+ Business door knocking campaign

Members of the project team visited the businesses adjacent to the park to generate awareness for the project, share information, answer questions and encourage participation in the online survey.

Approximately 30 businesses were visited.

+ Online survey

The survey was available on the project webpage edmonton.ca/WarehousePark from May 2 to May 22, 2022 and was shared with the Edmonton Insight Community downtown area on May 10, 2022.

A total of 2,054 survey responses were received.

+ Stakeholder meetings

Meetings were held with key project stakeholders. A total of six meetings were held as noted below:

Date	Stakeholder Organization
May 4, 2022	Edmonton Youth Council
May 5, 2022	Downtown Business Association
May 11, 2022	Edmonton Downtown Community League
May 16, 2022	MacEwan University
May 18, 2022	NorQuest College
May 30, 2022	WAVE (Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton)

+ **Property owner meetings**

Meetings were held with developers and property owners whose property is located adjacent to the future park site.

Information and invitations to meet were extended to 16 property owners. A total of 10 meetings were held as noted below.

In addition, a meeting was held with the owners of Boston Pizza located at 10620 Jasper Avenue and the owner of Khazana Restaurant attended the meeting with the owner of the property where it is located.

Date	Property Owner
May 3, 2022	106 Street Holdings Ltd. / Shift Development
May 11, 2022	J.K. McKenzie Holdings Ltd.
May 12, 2022	Westrich Management Ltd
May 12, 2022	Parkview Group Ltd./Pangman
May 17, 2022	Obam Properties Ltd.
May 19, 2022	WCB Realty Ltd./GPDC
May 19, 2022	Banks International Trading Corp.
May 19, 2022	Spanter Developments Inc.
June 2, 2022	Maldash Holdings
June 13, 2022	Emeric Holdings Inc.

+ **Survey for Monaco Condo Owners**

A Google Form questionnaire was created specifically for property owners in the Monaco condo building located at 10707 – 102 Avenue to gather their viewpoints as residents who live adjacent to the park.

Seven questionnaires were completed.

+ **Calls to 311**

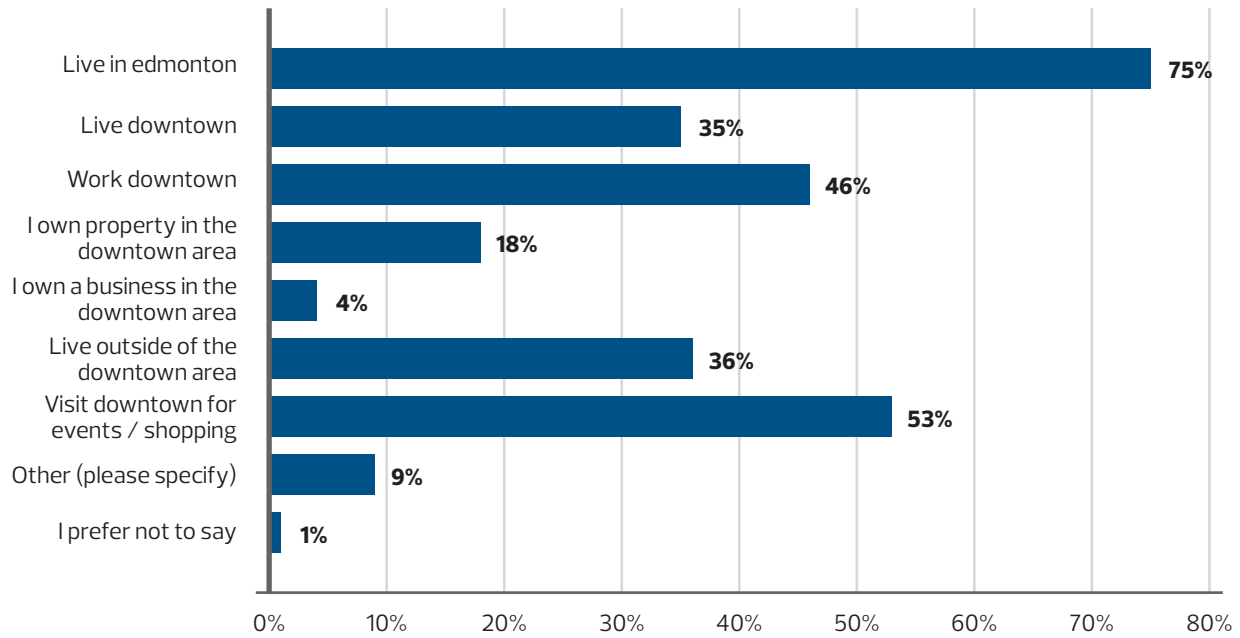
Input was received from six individuals who called the City and shared their views with 311 operators.

Survey respondents

The following provides survey respondent demographic information.

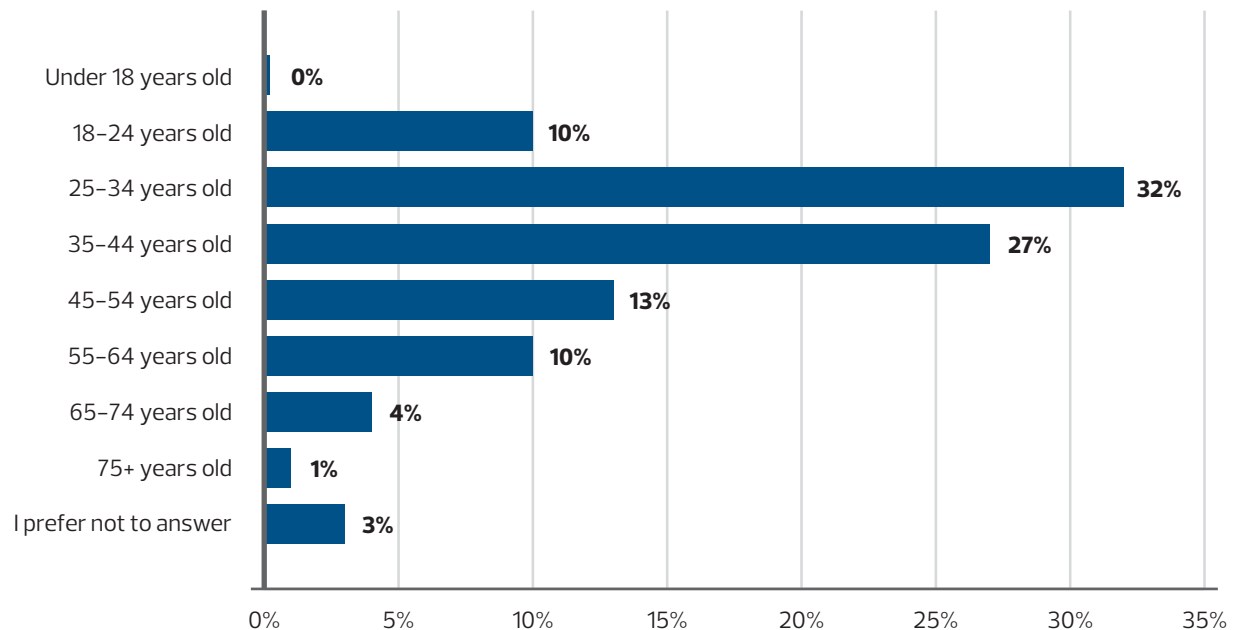
Relationship to Downtown

2054 Responses



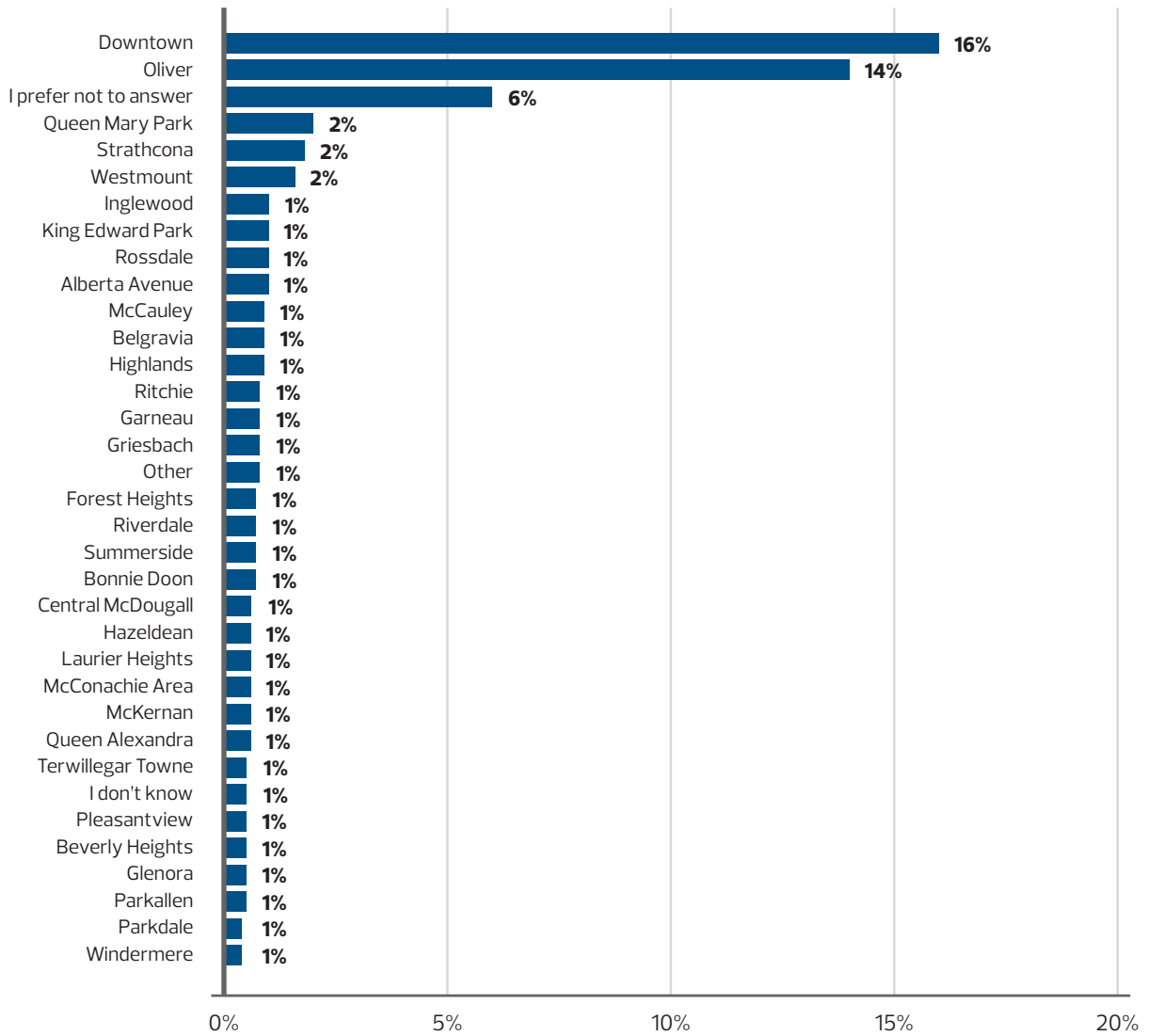
Age

2054 Responses



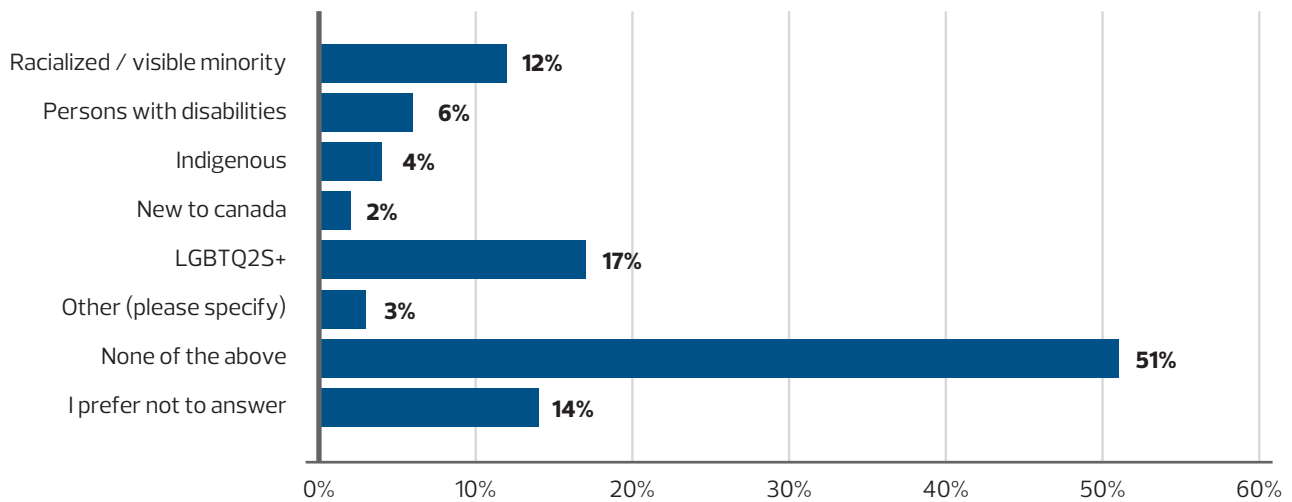
Neighbourhood

1545 Responses



Groups

2054 Responses



Next steps

The project team will consider all comments received as the project moves forward with the design for Warehouse Park. The final concept design and draft preliminary design will be shared with the public and stakeholders for feedback in fall 2022.

Watch for more information in the coming months.

Stay informed

Visit edmonton.ca/WarehousePark for more project information.

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