

# What We Heard Report

## Edmonton - Strathcona County Footbridge

Online Engagement  
Event 2 - Concept Design  
June 2021



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 Regional's most cherished amenities, renowned for its ecological, recreational and cultural value. 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 towards building a continuous trail system between Devon and Fort Saskatchewan
- o help to 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, public art locations 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 second phase of engagement was designed to provide the concept designs of the footbridge and the two riverside sites for public and stakeholder feedback. In addition, a survey was utilized to capture information about the level of support for the concept designs as well as potential locations for a fishing pier/platform on the east side of the NSR. 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 June 24, 2021 online public event, the project team met with one stakeholder to discuss specific impacts to their immediately adjacent property.

Two weeks before the event, ten road signs advertising the event and survey were placed at a variety of locations in NE 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. Social media was used by both the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County (Twitter and Facebook).

Ads in the Edmonton Journal and 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 emailed on June 14, 2021 about the upcoming online presentation and survey. They were provided information for posting on their webpages, if desired. Registration for the event was required.

Information was posted by the City of Fort Saskatchewan on their website.

At the June 24, 2021 public event, an online presentation provided information about the concept designs. This was followed by an online survey to capture information regarding the level of support for the concept designs.

The survey was created through the City of Edmonton's Sparq platform and was open from June 24, 2021 to midnight, July 11, 2021. One question each was asked about the footbridge and the City of Edmonton East End Trail site and were asked about the Strathcona County Riverside Nature Trail site concept, including preferences for a potential fishing pier/platform location. Each question had an open ended text box where the respondent could provide the reason for their level of support or preference. Three questions gathered demographic information from the respondents.

## D. Who Was Engaged

*55 people attended  
the online public  
presentation.*

*80 people responded  
to the online survey.*

The online presentation and survey were open to all residents of Edmonton, Strathcona County, City of Fort Saskatchewan and Sturgeon County and any other interested parties. Identified stakeholders (immediately adjacent landowners, recreational, community and environmental groups) were also engaged. There were 55 attendees at the online presentation.

The online presentation and survey were available after the event through the project webpage:

[www.edmonton.ca/edmontonstrathconafootbridge](http://www.edmonton.ca/edmontonstrathconafootbridge)

A link to the project webpage was provided by Strathcona County, the River Valley Alliance, City of Fort Saskatchewan, and various stakeholder groups on their websites. Ads were placed in the Sherwood Park News and the Edmonton Journal.

There were 80 survey respondents. Seventy eight (78%) were from Edmonton, 20% resided in Strathcona County and 2% were from Fort Saskatchewan. A number of respondents identified their membership with a recreational or community group. Six groups were identified in the survey results.

Thirty six (36%) of respondents heard about the event from the City of Edmonton webpage, while 33% heard about the event from the RVA website and 14% from the Strathcona County website. Approximately 24% heard about the event by word of mouth. The remainder were notified of the event via group webpages, newspaper ads, road signs, social media and postcards. More than one method of notification was identified by some respondents.



## E. What We Asked and What We Heard Summary



Aerial of Project Site

The online survey sought information about the concept 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:

*Most survey respondents supported the proposed concepts.*

- A successful balance between the proposed development and the environment
- The proposed footbridge location meets many user needs
- Possible trail refinements to better suit the sites and users
- The need for washrooms and drinking water fountains
- Parking concerns regarding size of parking areas and proximity of parking to residents on the west side

There were some opposed to the location of the footbridge and/or development of the two riverside sites. Their concerns included:

- Inappropriate location for a footbridge due to proximity of a residential neighbourhood on west side
- Lack of parking for users
- Location of proposed parking on west side
- Lack of washrooms
- Increased traffic along 167 Avenue
- Potential increase in noise and inappropriate activities in the park spaces

## 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 80 survey respondents who accessed the survey through social media, the project webpage, or the City of Edmonton surveys webpage.

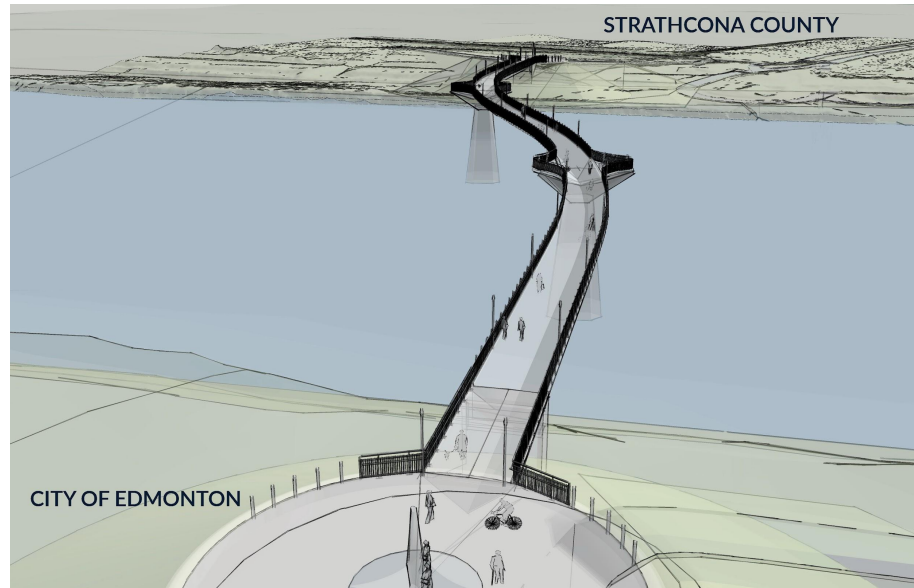
Demographic questions/responses are covered in Section D, Who We Engaged.

### THE PROPOSED FOOTBRIDGE CONCEPT



**Proposed Footbridge Plan**

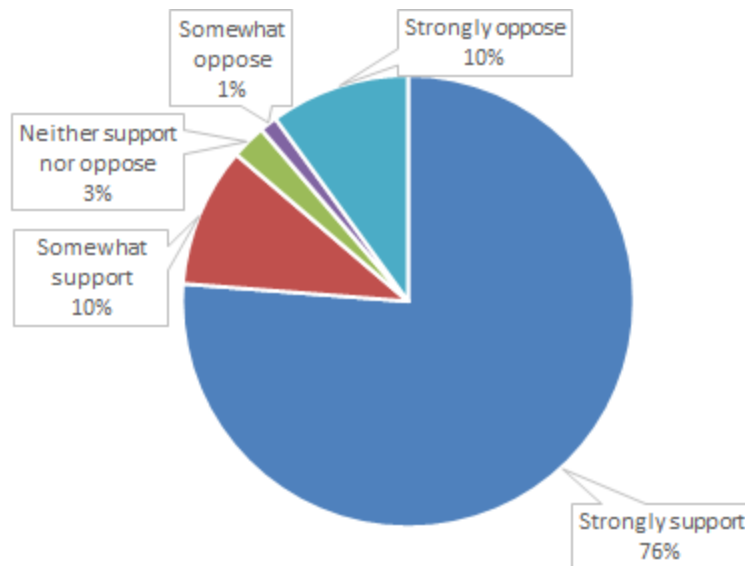




Footbridge Concept - View looking east

**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 concept?**



Those who supported the footbridge concept indicated that it provided a much needed, accessible connection in the river valley for cyclists and pedestrians. However, there were concerns about potential parking issues, providing separation of cyclists and pedestrians, and the 'urbanization' of the river valley.

Those who were neutral had suggestions/concerns about the curve of the footbridge with regards to additional costs and sight lines.

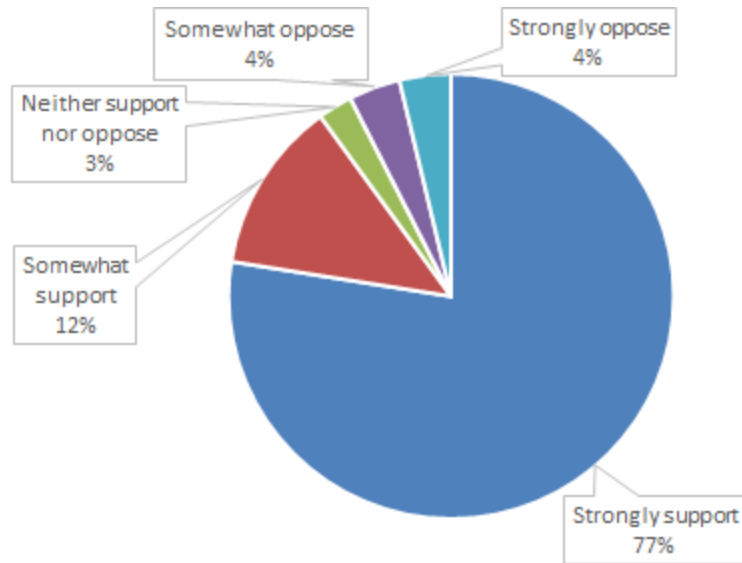
Those who did not support the footbridge concept design were concerned about the location, the proximity of the footbridge to the existing residential neighbourhoods on the west side and the impacts of increased park/open space use, i.e. noise and parking. They were also concerned about the potential disruption for wildlife.

## **STRATHCONA COUNTY RIVERSIDE NATURE TRAIL SITE CONCEPT**



**Q2 The Riverside Nature Trail site concept minimizes the impacts to the natural vegetation while providing amenities to support the footbridge, recreation activities, and opportunities to celebrate nature, culture, and the history of the area.**

**What is your level of support for the Riverside Nature Trail site concept?**



Supporters of the concept design indicated that the proposed site development enhanced the recreational opportunities within the natural environment and benefited the community overall. The addition of washrooms was considered important. Improved trail accessibility for all users throughout the site was requested.

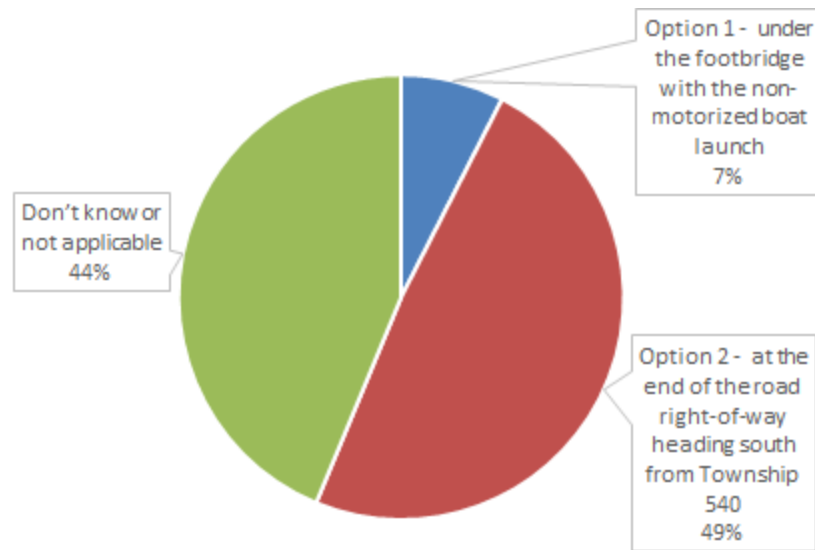
Non-supporters were concerned about the impacts to the natural setting and environment.

**Q3 There are two options for the potential location of a fishing pier/platform at the Riverside Nature Trail site.**



**Fishing Pier/Platform Options Plan**

**Which fishing pier/platform location do you think will best meet the access needs of anglers?**



Option 1 supporters felt that the level of accessibility for all users was better at this location.

Option 2 supporters indicated that separation of anglers from other users would provide a quieter and better site and experience for those fishing.

Those who did not know were either not anglers or not familiar with the site.

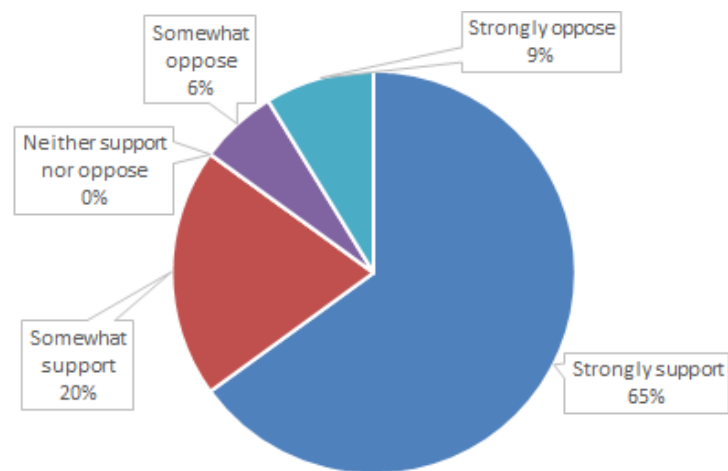


## CITY OF EDMONTON EAST END TRAIL SITE CONCEPT



**Q4 The East End Trail site concept minimizes the impacts to the natural vegetation while providing amenities to support the footbridge, recreation activities, and opportunities to celebrate nature, culture, and the history of the area.**

### What is your level of support for the East End Trail site concept?



Those who support the East End Trail site concept design indicated that pedestrian and cyclist access and connectivity to the river valley was improved. There were concerns about the lack of consideration for parking and the lack of washrooms for this side of the river. Suggestions for trail modifications for cyclists and pedestrians were also provided.

Non-supporters were concerned about the proximity of the footbridge/open space development to the existing residential neighbourhood. They also had concerns about the impacts of increased numbers of open space users, resulting in increased noise, traffic, and parking issues. Suggestions for trail alignment improvements were also requested for cyclists and pedestrians.

## G. What Happens Next?

All comments will be considered in the preliminary 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 preliminary design of the proposed footbridge and the two riverside sites will be presented in fall/winter 2021 for public feedback. A 'What We Did' response to 'What We Heard' comments from this survey will also be provided.

For more information and to stay up to date, please visit [edmonton.ca/EdmontonStrathconaFootbridge](http://edmonton.ca/EdmontonStrathconaFootbridge).