

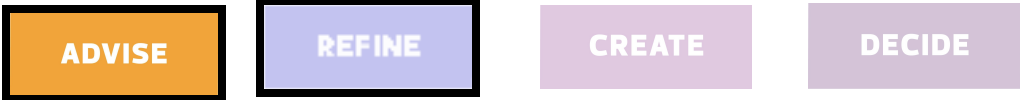
# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

SHARE YOUR VOICE SHAPE OUR CITY



## Reporting Back

### River Valley Ice Strategy Public Engagement

Background	
<b>Name</b>	River Valley Ice Strategy Public Engagement
<b>Date</b>	November and December 2018
<b>Location</b>	Online public survey and stakeholder sessions
<b>Contact information</b>	Kari Zral River Valley Coordinator, River Valley Parks and Facilities Community and Recreation Facilities, Citizen Services Kari.Zral@edmonton.ca
<b>Level of public engagement</b>	
<b>Description</b>	Public engagement took place to allow the public and stakeholder groups to refine the draft vision and areas of focus for Edmonton's River Valley ice surfaces. Then, the groups were asked to advise the City about priority objectives for River Valley ice surfaces.

## Reporting Back

### SUMMARY

Currently, there are River Valley ice surfaces located in Rundle Park, Victoria Park, and William Hawrelak Park. They include skating rinks, ponds, and, in both Victoria Park and Rundle Park, skating trails known as IceWays. These ice surfaces are used every winter by Edmontonians and visitors and are an important part of our winter experiences as they offer unique and diverse recreation opportunities for all.

To make the most of our River Valley ice surfaces, the City is developing a 20-year strategy. The strategy will include a vision that describes what we want our River Valley ice to achieve for us. It will also tell us what we need to focus on and what we need to do over the next 20 years to get the most benefit from River Valley ice.

To develop this strategy, the City of Edmonton is looking at many things. We're doing a lot of research into trends and best practices that affect our ice surfaces and how we use them. We're looking at what other winter cities, both locally and around the world, are doing to make the most of their ice surfaces. We're looking at our River Valley, and where we have opportunities to try new things and, possibly, even consider adding new ice surfaces.

In addition to this research, we're also inviting public input. We build our ice surfaces for the people who live and visit our city. We want to ensure that whatever we do, we make choices that not only benefit but allow us to work with those who use, offer programs and services, and maintain our River Valley ice surfaces.

### WHAT WE DID

#### Online Survey

The following drafts were presented to the public via an online survey available to the Edmonton Insight Community and by visiting [Edmonton.ca/icestrategy](http://Edmonton.ca/icestrategy) during the month of November of 2018. A total of 2,200 respondents filled out the online survey.

#### Draft Vision:

*"Edmonton's River Valley outdoor ice surfaces will be a choice winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities."*

Specifically, the public was asked: how much they agree or disagree with the statement, how the City can improve it and what was the most important thing for the City to achieve with its River Valley Ice over the next 20 years.

#### Draft Areas of Focus

- *River Valley ice surfaces and supporting amenities that are accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities.*
- *River Valley ice surfaces are environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible.*
- *Welcoming, vibrant, and safe spaces that attract people from all over our City and beyond to experience ice-focused recreation.*
- *Collaborative partnerships to build, operate, and maintain ice surfaces and identify and respond to the public's programming and service needs and interests.*



## Reporting Back

Specifically, the public was asked: how important each area of focus was to them and what else the City should focus on to make the most of River Valley ice.

### Stakeholder Sessions

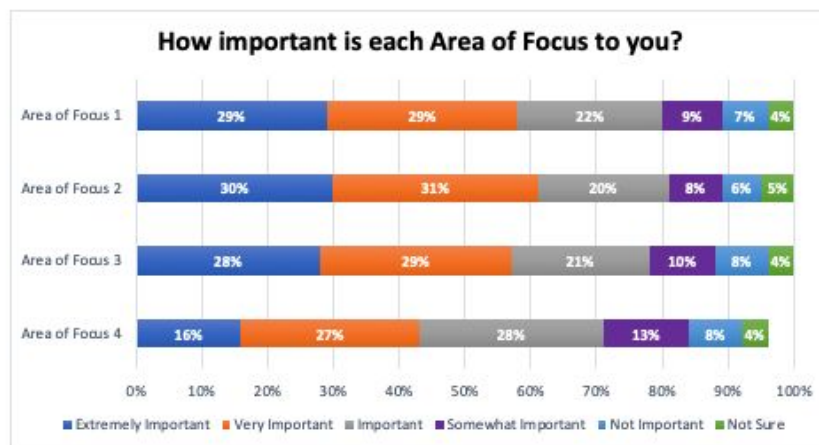
Stakeholders were invited to attend one of three in-person sessions during the month of November of 2018. The stakeholder conversations invited input on the draft areas of focus and vision, and ideas about opportunities for the City to collaborate with stakeholders to make the most of River Valley Ice surfaces. A total of 16 representatives attended the sessions.

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Areas of Focus Feedback

As part of the online survey, there was good support for three of the four City of Edmonton draft River Valley Ice Areas of Focus, with between 57 and 61 percent of survey respondents agreeing that Areas of Focus 1, 2, 3 are either very or extremely important.

There was also, in general, strong alignment between the input received through the survey and stakeholder conversations. Stakeholders participated in conversations where they were generally supportive of all four areas of Interest. The one difference between the public and stakeholders was that stakeholders had a high level of interest in collaborative partnerships, related to the fourth Area of Focus. Their interest is driven by the fact that they are City partners and want to be able to work with the City to influence and collaborate delivering opportunities for Edmonton’s River Valley ice surfaces. The topic resonated less with the public, where forty-three per cent of survey respondents agreed area of focus four was either very or extremely important.





## Reporting Back

In reviewing the open-ended survey comments and stakeholder input, there were a few themes that resonated from the input. Survey participants noted that:

- Collaborative partnerships are important; however, the public is more interested in what the City offers for River Valley Ice surfaces and experiences than how the City works to deliver them (i.e., collaborative partnerships)
- The public is also more interested in what the City offers for River Valley Ice surfaces and experiences than fiscal and environmental sustainability.
  - Some people are willing to financially contribute to support positive environmental outcomes; this is another reason that fiscal and environmental sustainability should not be lumped together.
- It is important to the public that the areas of focus are described in plain language and focus on the value that they add to the public, rather than the City’s approach to managing River Valley ice surfaces and experiences.
- It is important that the City recognizes that only a portion of Edmontonians are recreational ice users.
- One important topic missing from the areas of focus is access, with an emphasis on people having public transportation, parking, and good pathways to be able to get to River Valley ice surfaces.
- The majority of comments gave the City advice on how to make its River Valley ice surfaces easier to use and more enjoyable; the comments demonstrated that there is a lot of overlap between creating ice surfaces that people use (Area of Focus #1) and “welcoming, vibrant, and safe spaces” (Area of Focus #3).

Ideas on how to make the most of Edmonton’s River Valley Ice surfaces included eight key topics:

Topic	Key Idea
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public transit</li> <li>● Parking</li> <li>● Building new surfaces close to transportation</li> </ul>
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lighting (i.e., Rundle Park)</li> <li>● Warming shelters</li> <li>● Washrooms</li> <li>● Spectator facilities</li> </ul>
Availability of ice surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintenance</li> <li>● Seeking alternatives to ice to ensure that skating surfaces are available for use throughout the year</li> </ul>
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● City and partner-run instructional skating programs</li> <li>● Other ice-based recreation opportunities</li> <li>● Festivals and events</li> <li>● Sports tourism</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Skate and equipment availability/rentals</li> <li>● Food and beverage</li> </ul>
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ice surfaces and trails to connect to other destinations</li> </ul>



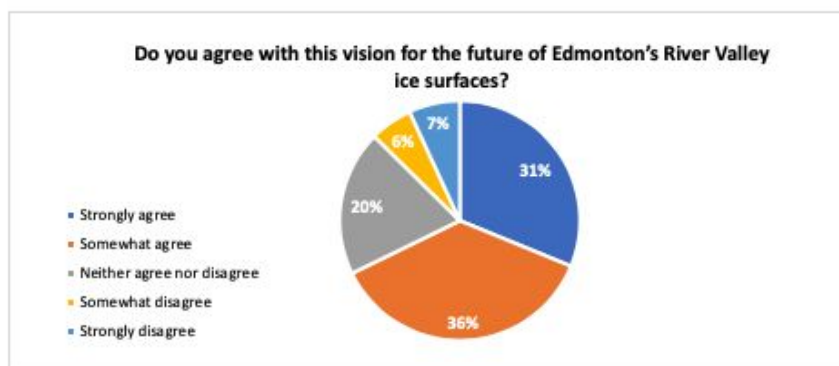
## Reporting Back

Marketing and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City website to share information on ice surface closures, on-site programs and services, and transit routes to access sites</li> <li>• Community awareness and marketing related programming and sports tourism</li> <li>• Share information about how the City is working to achieve environmentally sustainable and fiscally-responsible operations</li> </ul>
Universal Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard surface and well-maintained pathways to get to ice surfaces</li> </ul>

The main difference between the survey and stakeholder input is that the survey respondents focused more on user experience and the stakeholder input focused more on possibilities and opportunities to capitalize on, including expanding the breadth of ice-based recreation opportunities and the investments to make them possible. The stakeholders’ views on how to create more possibilities, especially in terms of them collaborating with the City to do so, will be extremely valuable in both refining the areas of focus but also developing objectives and actions to align to them.

### Vision Feedback

There was, overall, good support for the draft vision: “Edmonton’s River Valley outdoor ice surfaces will be a choice winter experience and destination for people of all ages and abilities.” Sixty-seven (67) percent of survey participants either strongly or somewhat agree with the statement. Stakeholders also generally supported with the vision.



That being said, there was some valuable input from both survey respondents and stakeholders on how to improve the Vision. These include:

- Taking a plain language approach to the Vision, including removing the term “choice winter experience and destination”
- Adopting a more public-focused Vision that clearly communicates what the public should expect from River Valley Ice surfaces
- Clearly identify who benefits from River Valley Ice (i.e., recreational ice users)

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in white text on a blue square background.

## Reporting Back

### WHAT'S NEXT

The City is reviewing the detailed input from the online survey and stakeholder sessions relative to City policy and programs and technical requirements. We will make updates to the vision and areas of focus, where required, and work to finalize them. We will also review the input to help draft objectives and actions that align with the areas of focus, and will invite input on them as part of public engagement and stakeholder sessions in February 2019.

Citizens can continue to access information about the River Valley Ice Strategy by visiting:  
**[edmonton.ca/icestrategy](http://edmonton.ca/icestrategy)**