

Waterfront Park

ENGAGEMENT: WHAT WE HEARD REPORT



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF **WOOD BUFFALO**

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Executive Summary

OVERVIEW OF WHAT WE DID

Engagement Period: June 14 - 30 , 2021

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

We used **2 online tools** to engage the community.



567
Survey
Submissions



13
Ideas
Contributions

567

Participants Engaged

720

Participants Informed

1,123

Participants Aware

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

4

Indigenous
Partner &
Stakeholder
Workshops

2

Council Appointed
Committee
Meetings

4

Councillor
Workshops

39

Participants **attended**
and engaged directly
with the project team
via the engagement
workshops.



VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSES

 **12** Participant questions submitted

2 
Live Events

THURSDAY, JUNE 17

15 Participants

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

7 Participants

SOCIAL MEDIA

INSTAGRAM

5
POSTS

17 Likes

TWITTER

9
TWEETS

7 Likes

5 Retweets

FACEBOOK

16
POSTS

61 Comments

139 Reactions

51 Shares

62 430 Average Reach

LINKEDIN

8
POSTS

1 Comment

10 Reactions

2 Shares

37 Clicks

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

NISTAWĀYĀW: “WHERE THREE RIVERS MEET”

This project is located on traditional lands. We recognize that the Waterfront Park is located on Treaty 8 territory, the traditional land of the Cree, Dene and Métis people.

As the original caretakers of the land, we recognize that waterways, shorelines, and the land have, and continue to be, central to identities, lives, and the cultural continuity of Indigenous peoples. The waterfront continues to be an important place to gather and access the waterways in the region.

We respect the deep history and connectedness to this land.

OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

RECONCILIATION

Advance Truth and Reconciliation. Indigenous partners shared that this project is about reconciliation and requested that engagement be meaningful, authentic, and conducted with mutual trust and recognition.

Tell the stories of our shared history. The design team will explore park elements alongside Indigenous partners that foster a shared understanding of the site's history.

Ensure the park is a place for everyone. The design team will explore design elements on the land and waterways that prioritize resident and visitor accessibility, inclusion, and diverse needs.

ENVIRONMENT

Prioritize natural environment in the park design. The design team will use a "light footprint" when re-imagining design ideas and continue to prioritize, where possible, existing natural spaces and important ecological areas along the waterfront.

Preserve and enhance the view. The design team will work to preserve the natural beauty of the park and enhancing existing features such as the beautiful viewpoints surrounding the site.

Improve the ability of users to touch the water. The design team will incorporate multiple spaces and ways for visitors to get into and touch the water.

Integrate more natural features. The design team will ensure that the park features ample plant species and opportunities to enjoy nature.

Create spaces to appreciate the water. The design team will include spaces and viewpoints throughout the Waterfront Park where users can enjoy the natural beauty of the Athabasca River, the Snye, and the Clearwater River.

Improve access to the river. The design team will provide different spaces to access the water in a safe manner and enjoy its beauty.

ACTIVITIES

Incorporate spaces for recreation opportunities. The design team will create spaces in the park that facilitate different recreational opportunities both along pathways and in designated locations for people of all ages and abilities.

Enhance ability to touch and see the water. The design team will include design elements that have the potential to connect users to the water visually and physically while balancing user safety and diverse needs.

Incorporate places to rest and relax. The design team will integrate places for people of all abilities to stop, rest, and enjoy the natural beauty of the park.

Enhance safety. The design team will prioritize resident and visitor safety in the park by improving lighting, enhancing sightlines into the park, and facilitating easier access by first responders.

Celebrate natural beauty. The design team will use the existing natural features within the park to inspire the design. The Park will be a place for users to connect with nature and enjoy its tranquility and beauty all year.

Facilitate spaces for aquatic recreation. The design team will maintain and enhance, where feasible, safe access for a variety of aquatic recreational opportunities along the waterfront.

Provide opportunities for businesses. The design team will consider how to support vendor opportunities in the park year-round.

Incorporate parkour into the park. The design team will work to incorporate a parkour course that enhances play and recreation opportunities. Parkour is an activity where participants try to get from one point to another in the fastest and most unique way.

Ensure safe toboggan experience. The design team will work to incorporate a toboggan hill into the design that is safe for both users and viewers alike.

Activate the park year-round. The design team will contemplate the ways in which the design can continue to support existing uses and enhance the experience of the park in all seasons.

Provide play spaces that work for everyone. The design team will explore how to include play opportunities in the park for people of all ages and abilities.

Include many places to stop and rest. The design team will include a variety of seating options through the park that are made of appropriate materials and incorporate age-friendly design principles.

Increasing walkability throughout the park. The design team will design quality trails and pathways that are accessible, connected, and easy to navigate.

INFRASTRUCTURE + RESILIENCY

Place infrastructure outside the floodplain. The design team will work closely with the RMWB to plan infrastructure and servicing investments at higher elevations, where possible, in the park outside of the floodway.

Enhance resiliency of park. The design team will work to ensure the entire area is designed to withstand flood and ice jams as much as possible.

Protect and enhance existing forest. The design team will ensure the enhancement of the park has minimal impact on existing forest while enhancing the areas' abundance of trees and shrubs.

Balance infrastructure investments with flood resiliency. The design team will consider how best to provide utility and infrastructure servicing to the site while upholding best practices for design in flood prone areas.

PROCESS

Balance design elements from both concepts. The design team will explore how to blend design elements to create a park that meets the needs of the community, respects the past, and looks to the future.

Design with comfort in mind. The design team will provide a cohesive park with distinct spaces that connect with one another and provide opportunities for comfortable relaxation.

Work with community members experiencing homelessness. The design team understands that some members of the community currently find shelter and sleep in locations along the waterfront. The RMWB will work closely with these community members, and the Homelessness Initiatives Strategic Committee to listen and learn from people experiencing homelessness in the downtown.

SUMMARY OF PREFERRED CONCEPTS

We asked participants in the online survey and during the virtual workshops which preliminary concept they preferred (e.g., Concept 1 or Concept 2) for the overall park design “look-and-feel” and for five (5) specific areas within the Waterfront Park boundary. The table below summarizes the preliminary concepts preferred by each engagement activity.

Waterfront Park Area	Participate Wood Buffalo (Online Survey)	Virtual Workshops	Councilor Workshops
Overall Park Design	Concept 1	Concept 1	Concept 1
Athabasca Gateway	Concept 1	Tied	Concept 2
Wharf Walk	Concept 1	Concept 1	Concept 1
Boreal Bend	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 2
Great Waterways	Concept 1	Concept 1	Concept 2
Horse Pasture Park/ Oxbow Nook	Concept 2	Concept 1	Concept 2

Project Introduction

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is designing the Waterfront Park through the Waterfront Park Revitalization project. The Waterfront Park boundary includes 6 km of the waterfront from the Athabasca Bridge to Horse Pasture Park in Waterways.

Earlier this year, the RMWB conducted engagement for the Syne Point Outdoor Event Space as part of the Waterfront Park Revitalization project. Engagement for the Syne Point Outdoor Event Space started in December 2020 and was completed in three (3) stages by spring 2021. A preferred design for the Syne Point Outdoor Event Space will be shared with Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and the public in summer 2021.

In June 2021, the RMWB started engagement on the broader Waterfront Park. In the first phase of engagement the design team spoke with stakeholders and the public. Indigenous Partners were engaged in separate sessions. The purpose of engagement was for all participants to have the opportunity to share their current use of the area, have their say on proposed new activities for the park, and indicate their preference for the look and feel of specific locations within the park boundary.

The following What We Heard Report summarizes the insights collected during the June 2021 engagement period.

It is important to note that on-going and dedicated collaboration with Indigenous partners on specific details of the Waterfront Park will continue following the June 2021 engagement period.

ENGAGEMENT TACTICS

The RMWB hosted a two-and-a-half-week engagement period between June 14 – 30, 2021. During this time, three engagement tactics were used to hear from Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and the public.

1. Participate Wood Buffalo Online Engagement
2. Virtual Engagement Workshops
3. Virtual Open Houses

These three tactics were selected as the appropriate engagement methods during a time when in-person engagement activity was limited due to health and safety guidelines.

The data collected from the Participate Wood Buffalo Online Engagement, Virtual Workshops, and Virtual Open Houses will be considered alongside site analysis, cultural and historical significance of the region, and design best practices to refine the design of the Waterfront Park.

In the next phase of engagement, the RMWB will share the fine-tuned concept design for the Waterfront Park with Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and the public and outline how community input (alongside other information used to make project decisions) influenced the development of the concept design.

PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

Participate Wood Buffalo Online Engagement

The Participate Wood Buffalo project page for the Waterfront Park was the first participation opportunity for Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and the public to have their say on the design of the entire 6 km boundary of the Waterfront Park. Tools on the online engagement page were open for input between Monday, June 14 – Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

The RMWB used two tools on the Participate Wood Buffalo platform.

TOOL	PURPOSE
SURVEY	To encourage thoughtful input on current and future activities in the Waterfront Park and gather feedback to influence the concept design process.
IDEAS	To provide a space for participants to share ideas (image or text) for the future of the Waterfront Park.

Virtual Engagement Workshops

The RMWB organized five (5) Indigenous Partner and Stakeholder workshops; attended two (2) Council Appointed Committee meetings; and four (4) Councillor workshops between June 14 – 30, 2021.

A consistent format and slide deck was followed for each workshop, with adjustments made to meet the needs of workshops participants (e.g., platform, presentation time). The purpose of each virtual engagement workshop was three-fold:

1. To share the design process.
2. To share preliminary concepts for the overall park design and five (5) specific areas within the Waterfront Park.
3. To learn from participants and hear feedback on the proposed preliminary concepts for the Waterfront Park.

Virtual Open Houses

The RMWB organized and hosted two (2) Virtual Open Houses during the two-and-a-half-week engagement period for anyone interested in engaging directly with the design team for the Waterfront Park. The first Virtual Open House was hosted on Thursday, June 17; the second Virtual Open House was hosted on Thursday, June 24. In total, 22 attendees participated in the Virtual Open Houses. Pre-registration was encouraged through Participate Wood Buffalo and event links were provided prior to each event on social media and Participate Wood Buffalo.

The RMWB hosted the Virtual Open Houses using MS Teams. The design team prepared a slide deck and presented the same content at each event. Participants were encouraged to connect directly with the design team by submitting questions via the Q&A tool during the Virtual Open House Events.

In addition, the RMWB recorded the Virtual Open House events. The recordings were shared on the Participate Wood Buffalo project page for community members unable to attend either event time.

Participate Wood Buffalo

DATA APPROACH

We followed a consistent approach to review and analyze data collected through Participate Wood Buffalo.

First, the quantitative results were downloaded, reviewed, and analyzed. Next, seven (7) questions included a comment field. For these survey questions, each comment was read and tagged. It is important to note that one comment could result in multiple tags if multiple points were raised. A second reviewer read each comment and confirmed the applied tags.

To develop findings for each question, we used the quantitative data points from the survey (i.e., number of votes received). Comments, tags, and the frequency of tags were used as information that offered insights into participants' perspective and sentiment.

The design team will review and consider all suggestions shared by participants via the online survey. It is important to note that some comments are beyond the project scope for the Waterfront Park. Two key themes emerged from the out-of-scope comments and are outlined below.

- 1. Homelessness along the waterfront.** Some participants shared compassion for community members that sleep along the waterfront and expressed that they often do not feel safe in certain areas.
- 2. Not enough information.** Some participants shared that they did not prefer either concept. Often, these comments did not any additional detail and could not be used to inform the design process.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The Participate Wood Buffalo had a total of 1,737 pageviews between June 14 – 30, 2021.

567 participants engaged with content on the project page. This includes taking the Survey and contributing to the Ideas board.

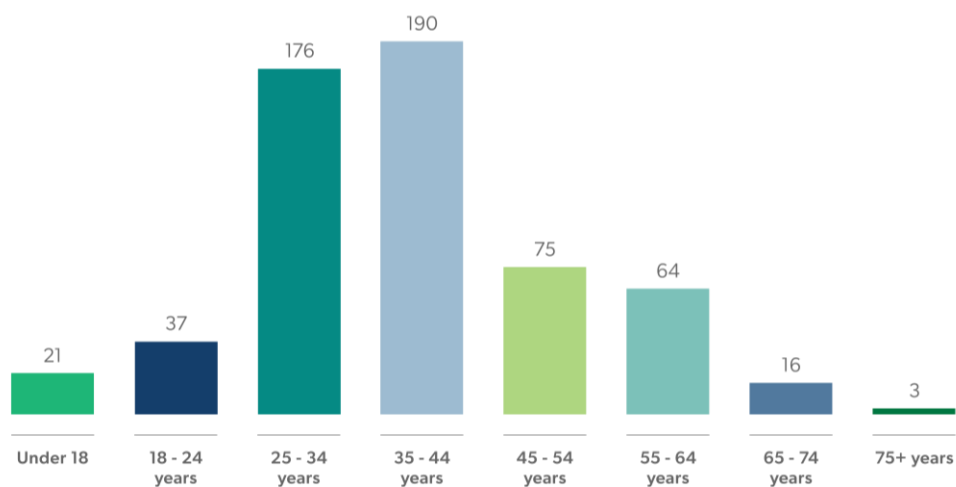
720 participants were informed by the content on the project page. This includes viewing a photo in the gallery, visiting the FAQ list, or downloading a document.

1,123 participants were categorized as aware. Participants in this category visited at least one page on the project webpage.

Demographics

QUESTION 1

Please identify your age group.



Question Type: Mandatory, Radio Button Question

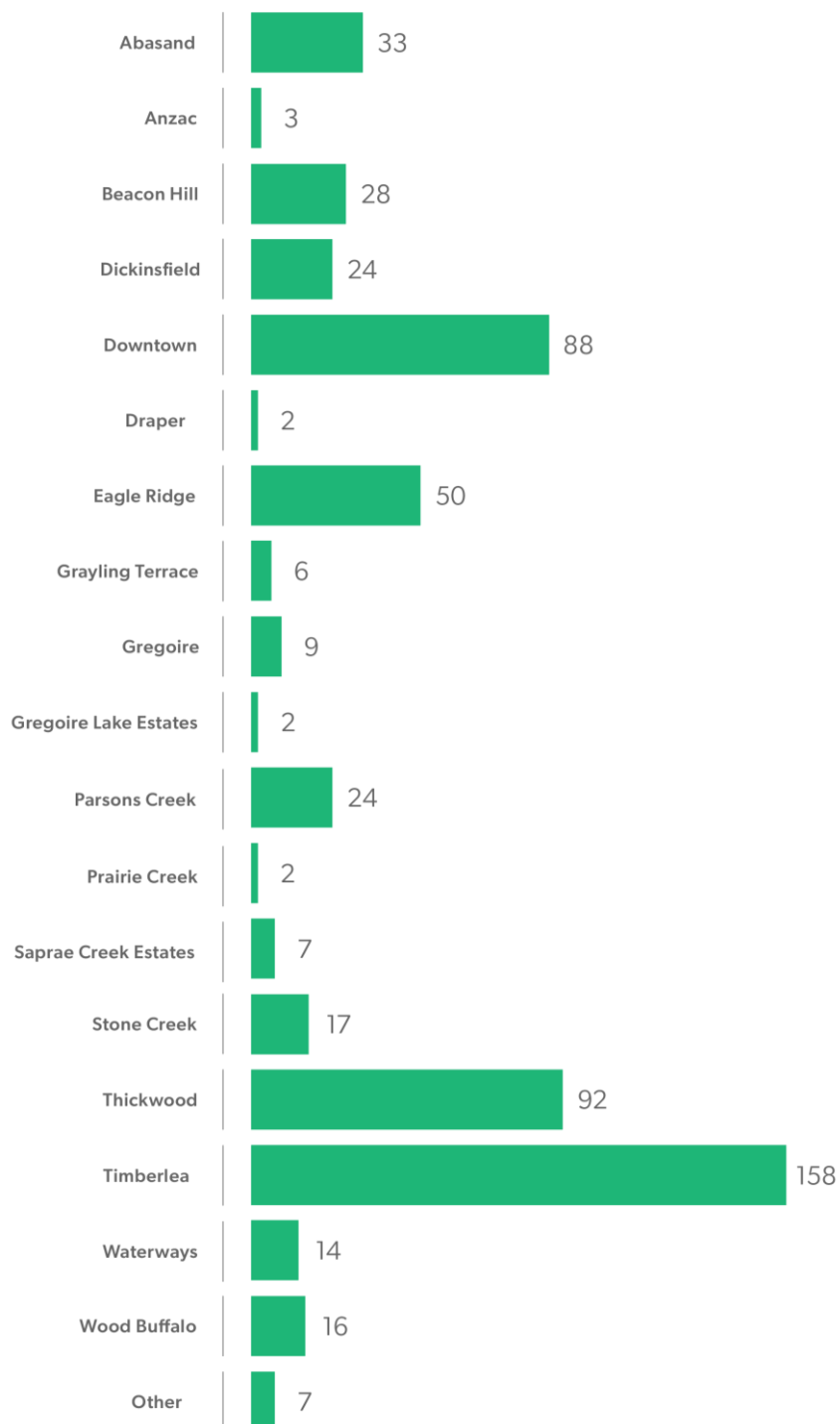
Response rate: 582 responses, 0 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

Sixty-three percent (63%) of the survey respondents (366 respondents) are between the ages of 25 – 44.

QUESTION 2

Help us understand where you live in the region. Please select the option that best represents your residential address.



Question Type: Mandatory, Dropdown

Response rate: 582 responses, 0 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

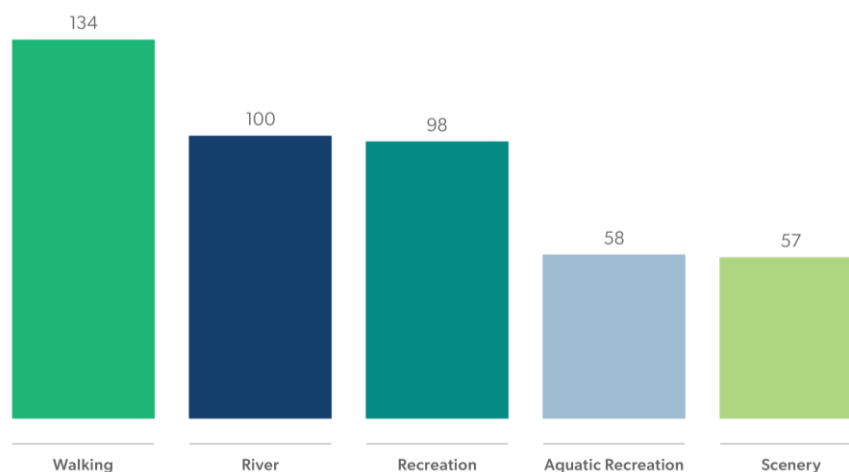
The online survey had submissions from respondents from each region listed in the dropdown menu. A total of 338 responses (58 percent) were submitted by residents from the following three areas in the region:

1. **Timberlea** (158 respondents; 27 percent)
2. **Thickwood** (92 respondents; 16 percent)
3. **Downtown** (88 respondents; 15 percent)

Current Activities

QUESTION 3

What is your favourite part of the Waterfront? Tell us in the comment box below.



Question Type: Optional, Comment Box

Response rate: 487 responses

KEY INSIGHT

Participants were eager to share their favourite part of the Waterfront and submitted a total of 487 comments.

The top five favourite parts of the waterfront from the submitted comments were:

- 1. Walking (134 responses).** Participants enjoy walking trails and the existing boardwalks in the area. A few favourite walking spots were shared by participants including pathways beside the water, connecting routes to downtown, and pathways that have spots to rest, and picnic close to the water with friends and family.
- 2. River (100 responses).** Participants visit the waterfront for views of the river and enjoy being near the water. Participants shared that the river is the main draw for them to come to the area; participants described the river as relaxing, calming, tranquil and quiet.
- 3. Recreation (98 responses).** Participants engage in recreational opportunities along the waterfront, including running (on and off trails), biking, dog-walking, picnicking, and people- and plane-watching. Participants enjoy structured recreation spaces as well, including volleyball courts, playgrounds, and splash pads.
- 4. Aquatic recreation (58 responses).** Participants partake in a variety of recreational activities on the water, including wading into the water, paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing, and using motorized boats.

- 5. Scenery (57 responses).** Participants appreciate the natural beauty and sensory experience (e.g., smell, sound, etc.) of the waterfront. Participants go to the waterfront to take in the beauty, greenery, and serenity of landscape features and the region. Participants described the waterfront as a place that feels like they were getting out of the city.

ADDITIONAL TAGS

Comment themes with 50 - 10 Tags.

50 - 25 Tags

Nature (49)
Playgrounds & Play Spaces (44)
Water Access (35)
Rest Areas (33)
Fishing (30)
Calm (28)
Vendors (28)

24 - 10 Tags

Boat Launch (19)
Events (18)
Gathering Spaces (15)
Noises (12)
Proximity (11)
Parking (10)
Water park (10)

Comment themes with 1 - 9 tags.

9 - 3 Tags.

Accessibility (9)
Historic site (8)
Beach (7)
Interconnections (7)
Paved paths (7)
Dog-friendly (6)
Durability (6)
Safety (5)
Wildlife (5)
Dock (4)
Cleaned up (3)
Inclusive (3)
People watching (3)
Storytelling (3)

1 - 2 Tags.

Cooking spaces (2)
Cost (2)
Resilience (2)
Tobogganing (2)
Tourism (2)
Vehicle access (2)
Aesthetics (1)
Amenities (1)
Berm (1)
Bridge (1)
Design (1)
Not in favour of either project (1)
Private space (1)
Respect for shared history (1)

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

Ensure walkability in the park. The design team will ensure that walking trails and paths are preserved and enhanced for everyone to enjoy and access throughout the Waterfront Park.

Create spaces to appreciate the water. The design team will include spaces and viewpoints throughout the Waterfront Park where users can enjoy the natural beauty of the Athabasca River, the Snyc, and the Clearwater River.

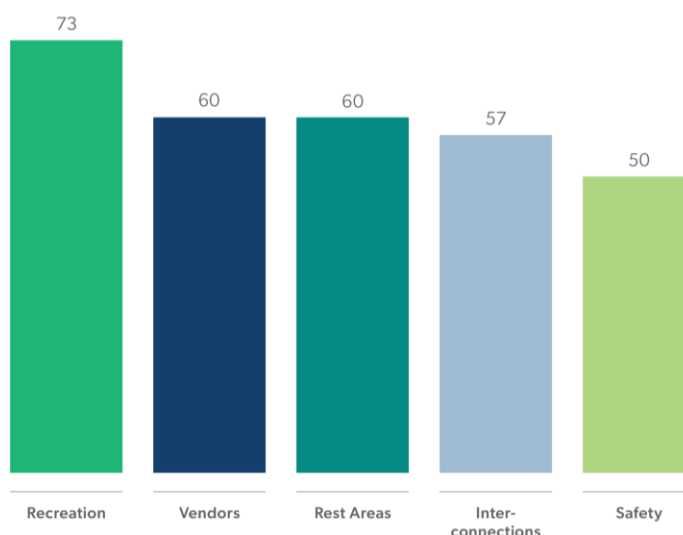
Incorporate spaces for recreation opportunities. The design team will create spaces in the park that facilitate different recreation opportunities both along pathways and in designated locations.

Facilitate spaces for aquatic recreation. The design team will maintain and enhance, where feasible, safe access for a variety of aquatic recreational opportunities along the waterfront.

Preserve and enhance the view. The design team will work to preserve the natural beauty of the park and enhancing existing features.

QUESTION 4

What is one thing you would like to change about the Waterfront area? Tell us in the comment box below.



Question Type: Optional, Comment Box

Response rate: 444 responses

KEY INSIGHT

Participants provided a variety of suggestions for changes they would like to see in the waterfront area and submitted 444 comments.

The top five priorities to change about the waterfront from the submitted comments were:

- 1. Recreation (73 responses).** Participants want more space, venues, and opportunities for recreation activities in the area, including dedicated places to walk, run, bike, and gather. Participants were supportive of the pump track, and parkour course and suggested potential additional recreational activities including skating rinks, life-sized chess boards, mini golf, a basketball court, and playground exercise equipment.
- 2. Vendors (60 responses).** Participants support having places for vendors within the Waterfront Park. Participants told us that they would like to see more opportunities for businesses along the Waterfront either in the form of permanent structures or as rotating vendors in a seasonal market set up. Participants indicated the types of vendors they would like to see, including cafés, ice cream shops, and the addition of a sporting and aquatic recreational rentals provided by nearby vendors.
- 3. Rest areas (60 responses).** Participants see a need for more rest areas and places to stop, including additional seating along pathways and additional areas for benches and picnic spots. Importantly, many participants emphasized that rest spots and seating must be accessible to community members of all ages and abilities.

4. **Interconnections (57 responses).** Participants want the park, waterways, and points of interest to be connected by quality trails and pathways. Participants want pathway connections that make the waterfront area more user-friendly, enhance the park experience, and make it easy to move from one place to another with clear signage and wayfinding.
5. **Safety (50 responses).** Participants emphasized the need to improve safety within the park boundaries. Participants suggested adding more lighting, enhancing sight lines into areas currently obscured by trees or berms, and placing more garbage cans throughout the area to improve cleanliness of the waterfront. Participants indicated that a stronger police or bylaw presence would likely enhance their sense of safety and ensure appropriate park usage.

ADDITIONAL TAGS

Comment themes with 49 - 21 Tags.

49 - 25 Tags

Water Access (49)
Cleaned up (44)
Nature (41)
Walking (40)
Aquatic Recreation (31)

24 - 21 Tags

Beach (24)
Washrooms (24)
River (23)
Accessibility (22)
Durability (22)
Events (21)

Comment themes with 20-1 Tags.

20 - 15 Tags	14 - 10 Tags	10 - 1 Tags
Improved access to the Snye (19)	Make the park more aesthetically pleasing (14)	Fishing (9)
Inclusive to all users (17)	Create more gathering spaces (13)	Tourism (6)
Improved parking (15)	Ensure the park is resilient to natural events (e.g., flooding, ice jams) (13)	Boat launch (6)
More playgrounds and play spaces (15)	Remove the berm (12)	Cost (6)
Improved access to the Snye (19)	More fire pits (11)	Cooking (6)
Inclusive to all users (17)	More amenities (10)	Historic site (6)

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

Increased opportunities for recreation. The design team will ensure there are fun and accessible spaces for both structured and unstructured recreation and sport activities.

Provide opportunities for businesses. The design team will consider how to accommodate and enable different types of vendors and businesses to locate along the waterfront throughout the year.

Add spaces for rest and relaxation. The design team will incorporate a variety of flexible spaces to ensure all park users can enjoy the space.

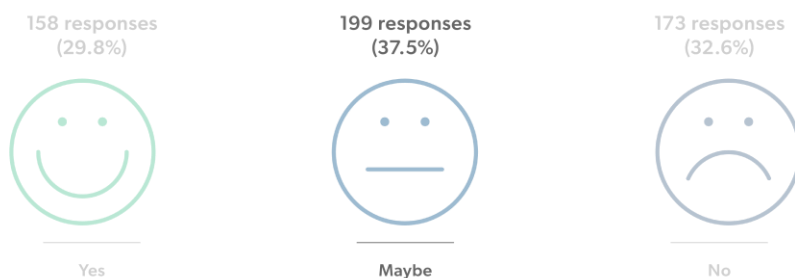
Increasing connectivity throughout the park. The design team will design quality trails and pathways that are accessible, connected, and easy to navigate.

Improved user safety and experience. The design team will integrate lighting and sight lines into the park space as top priorities in the design of the park to increase user safety and enjoyment.

Please note: The design team will review and consider all suggestions that participants shared as priorities to change along the waterfront.

New Activities in the Park

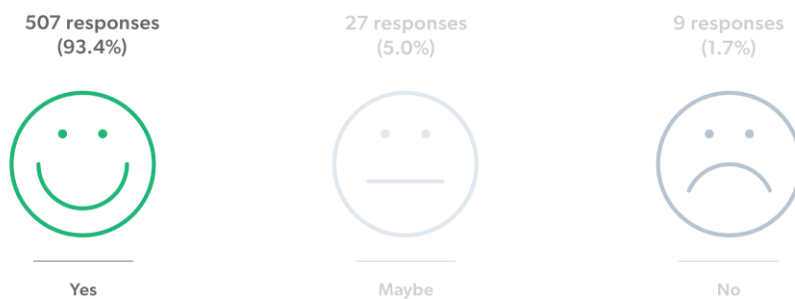
BASKETBALL COURT.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 530 responses, 52 skipped

BENCHES AND PLACES TO SIT.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 543 responses, 39 skipped

BICYCLE PUMP TRACK.

269 responses
(49.4%)



Yes

155 responses
(28.5%)



Maybe

120 responses
(22.1%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 544 responses, 38 skipped

CHILDREN'S PLAY EQUIPMENT.

398 responses
(73.0%)



Yes

91 responses
(16.7%)



Maybe

56 responses
(10.3%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 545 responses, 37 skipped

FIREPITS.

378 responses
(69.2%)



Yes

96 responses
(17.6%)



Maybe

72 responses
(13.2%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 546 responses, 36 skipped

FISHING LOCATIONS THAT YOU CAN WALK TO.

422 responses
(77.3%)



Yes

88 responses
(16.1%)



Maybe

36 responses
(6.6%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 546 responses, 36 skipped

GATHERING SPACES/PLAZAS CONNECTED TO PATHWAYS.

443 responses
(81.0%)



Yes

70 responses
(12.8%)



Maybe

34 responses
(6.2%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 547 responses, 35 skipped

LOOKOUT POINTS.

467 responses
(85.7%)



Yes

51 responses
(9.4%)



Maybe

27 responses
(5.0%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 545 responses, 37 skipped

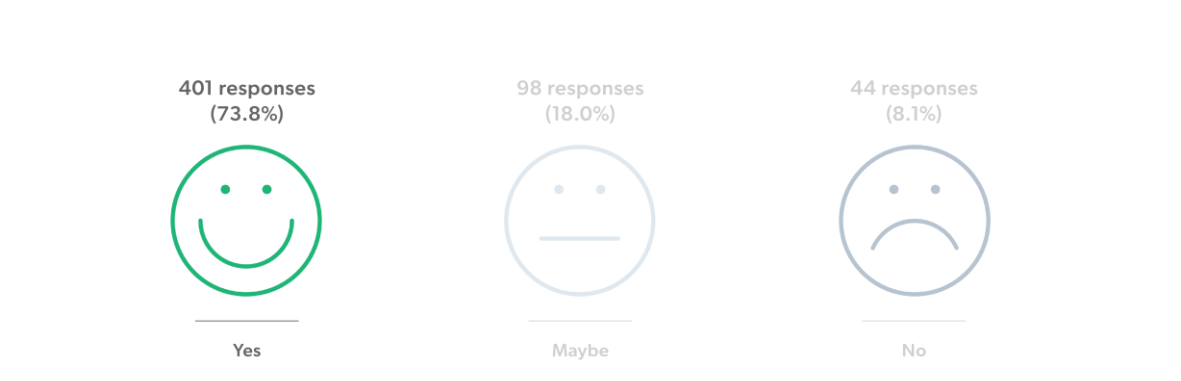
MORE ACCESSIBLE PARK PATHWAYS.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 541 responses, 41 skipped

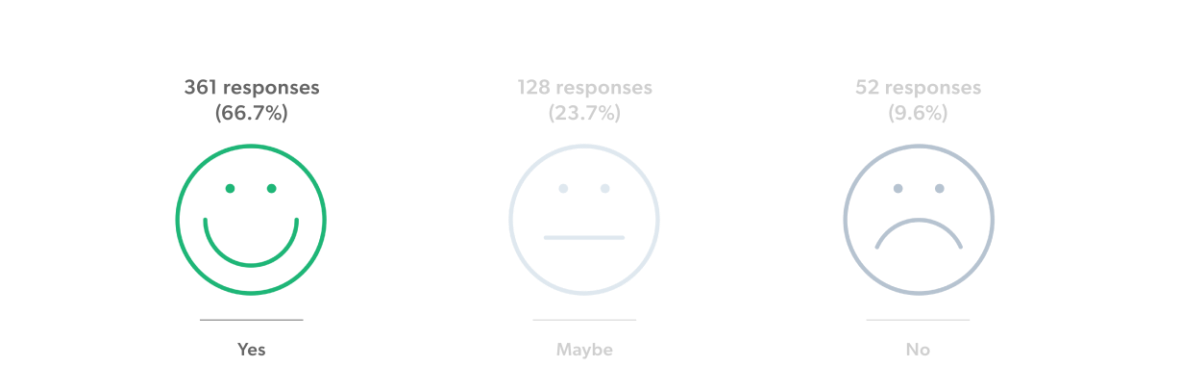
NORTHERN LIGHTS VIEWING AREA.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 543 responses, 39 skipped

OPEN FIELD OR LAWN.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 541 responses, 41 skipped

OUTDOOR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT.

201 responses
(36.9%)



Yes

154 responses
(28.3%)



Maybe

189 responses
(34.7%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Comment Box

Response rate: 544 responses, 38 skipped

PARKOUR COURSE.

220 responses
(40.4%)



Yes

153 responses
(28.1%)



Maybe

171 responses
(31.4%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 544 responses, 38 skipped

SIMPLE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AT HANGINGSTONE RIVER.

433 responses
(80.2%)



Yes

79 responses
(14.6%)



Maybe

28 responses
(5.2%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 540 responses, 42 skipped

SHADE/WINTER SHELTERS.

360 responses
(66.1%)



Yes

118 responses
(21.7%)



Maybe

67 responses
(12.3%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 545 responses, 37 skipped

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING WITH REGIONAL HISTORY AND STORYTELLING.

412 responses
(75.5%)



Yes

93 responses
(17.0%)



Maybe

41 responses
(7.5%)

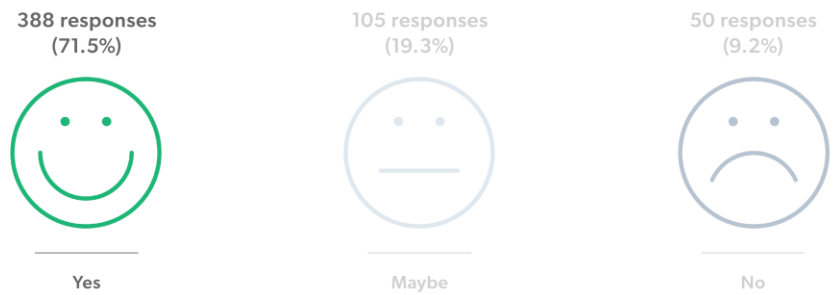


No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 546 responses, 36 skipped

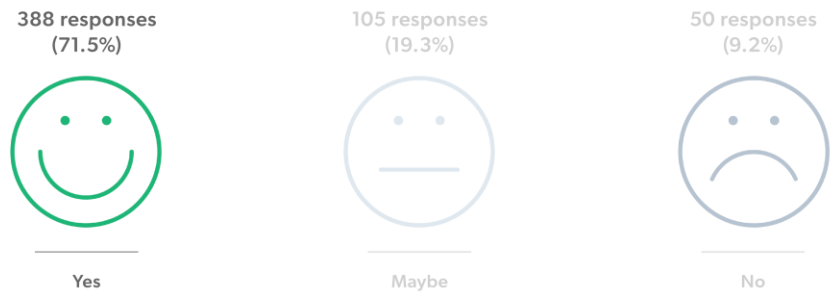
SKATING TRAIL.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 543 responses, 39 skipped

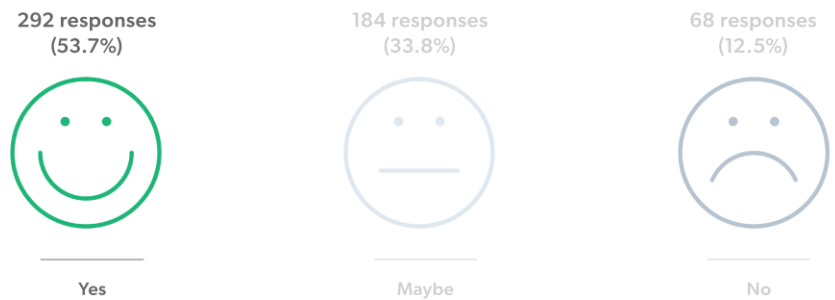
TOBOGGANING.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 546 responses, 36 skipped

TOM WEBER BOAT LAUNCH UPGRADE.



Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 544 responses, 38 skipped

VOLLEYBALL COURT.

195 responses
(35.8%)



Yes

195 responses
(35.8%)



Maybe

154 responses
(28.3%)



No

Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 544 responses, 38 skipped

WASHROOMS.

482 responses
(87.8%)



Yes

46 responses
(8.4%)



Maybe

21 responses
(3.8%)



No

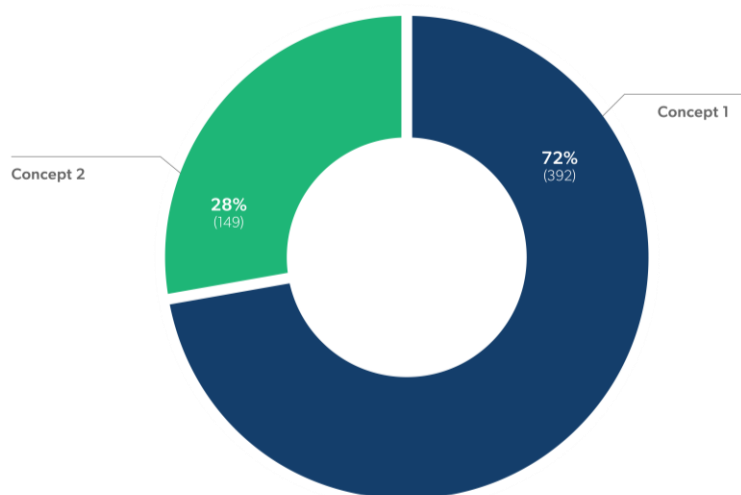
Question Type: Optional, Emoji Button

Response rate: 549 responses, 33 skipped

Overall Park Design

QUESTION 5

We have developed two concepts for the overall park design. Which one do you prefer?



Question Type: Optional, Checkbox

Response rate: 539 responses, 43 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

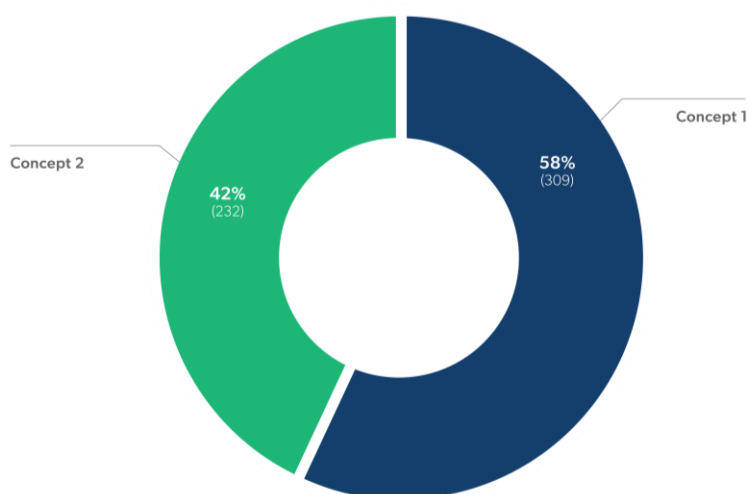
Seventy-two percent (72%) of survey participants prefer Concept 1 for the overall park design.

Specific Areas

ATHABASCA GATEWAY

Question 6

Which preliminary concept below to you prefer for Athabasca Gateway?



Question Type: Optional, Checkbox

Response rate: 534 responses, 48 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of survey participants prefer Concept 1 for Athabasca Gateway.

Most participants did not provide a comment for this question. For participants that did (54 comments), the top two tags included:

1. **Water Access.** Participants want to have more opportunities to touch the water in this location.
2. **Nature.** Participants want to see natural features in the park, including pollinator-friendly gardens, native plant species, and more trees/shrubs throughout the park.

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

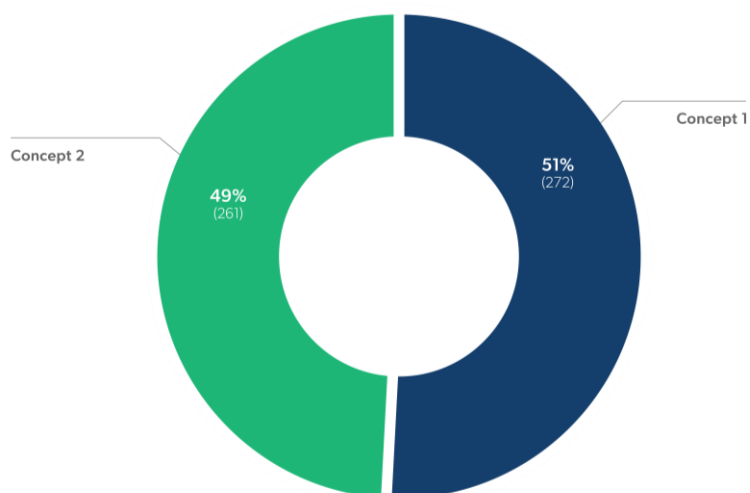
Improve the ability of users to touch the water. The design team will incorporate multiple spaces and ways for visitors to get into and touch the water.

Integrate more natural features. The design team will ensure that the park features ample plantings and opportunities to enjoy nature.

WHARF WALK

Question 7

Which preliminary concept below to you prefer for Wharf Walk?



Question Type: Optional, Checkbox

Response rate: 529 responses, 53 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

Fifty-one percent (51%) of survey participants prefer Concept 1 for the Wharf Walk.

Most participants did not provide a comment for this question. The top two tags for participants that did (80 comments) included:

1. **Water access.** Participants want more opportunities to touch the water in this location.
2. **Design.** Participants want the flow of the park to be consistent from one area to the next with comfortable design features.

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

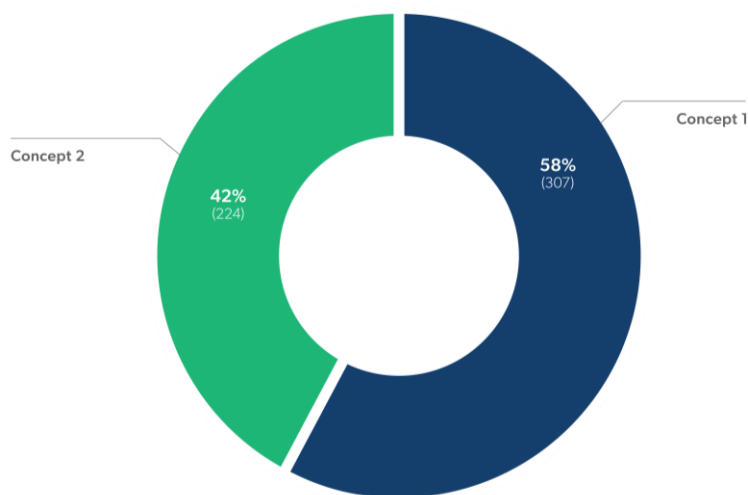
Improved access to the river. The design team will provide different spaces to access the water and enjoy its beauty.

Design with comfort in mind. The design team will provide a cohesive park with distinct spaces that connect with one another and provide opportunities for comfortable relaxation.

BOREAL BEND

Question 8

Which preliminary concept below to you prefer for Boreal Bend?



Question Type: Optional, Radial

Response rate: 527 responses, 55 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of survey participants prefer Concept 1 for the Boreal Bend.

Most participants choose not to provide a comment for this question. For participants that did (76 comments), the top two tags included:

1. **Parkour.** Many participants are in favour of the parkour course. However, participants want to ensure it is a play space that is accessible by everyone and a safe distance from calmer spots in the area.
2. **Nature.** Participants want to see trees planted and the existing forest stands protected.

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

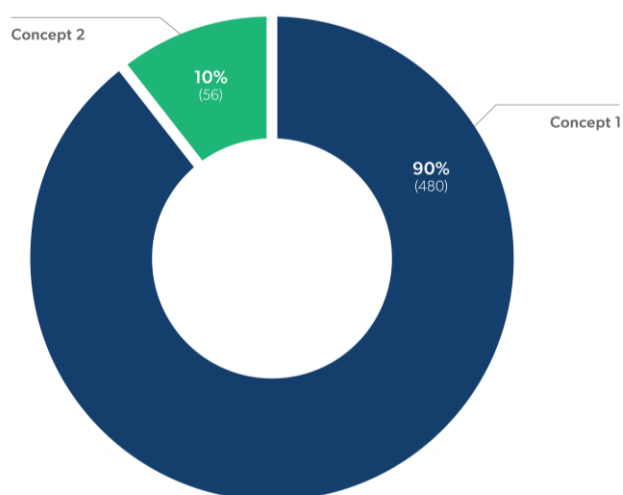
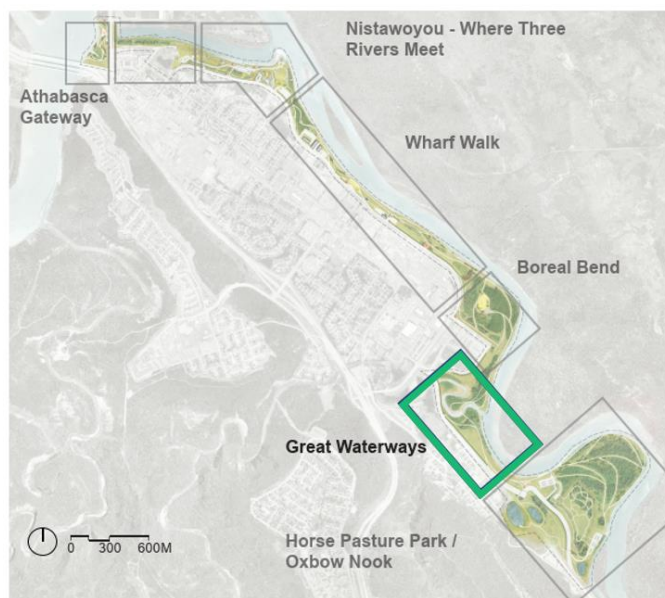
Incorporate parkour into the park. The design team will work to incorporate a parkour course that enhances play and recreation opportunities.

Protect and enhance existing forest. The design team will ensure the enhancement of the park has minimal impact on existing forest while enhancing the areas abundance of trees and shrubs.

GREAT WATERWAYS

Question 9

Which preliminary concept below to you prefer for Great Waterways?



Question Type: Optional, Checkbox

Response rate: 513 responses, 51 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

Ninety percent (90%) of survey participants prefer Concept 1 for the Great Waterways area.

Most participants choose not to provide a comment for this question. For participants that did (62 comments), the top two tags included:

1. **Bridge.** Participants are eager to have a bridge that is resilient to flood and ice jam events that enhances connectivity in the park.
2. **Storytelling.** Participants want more opportunities to learn about the history of the region through traditional knowledge and story sharing.

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

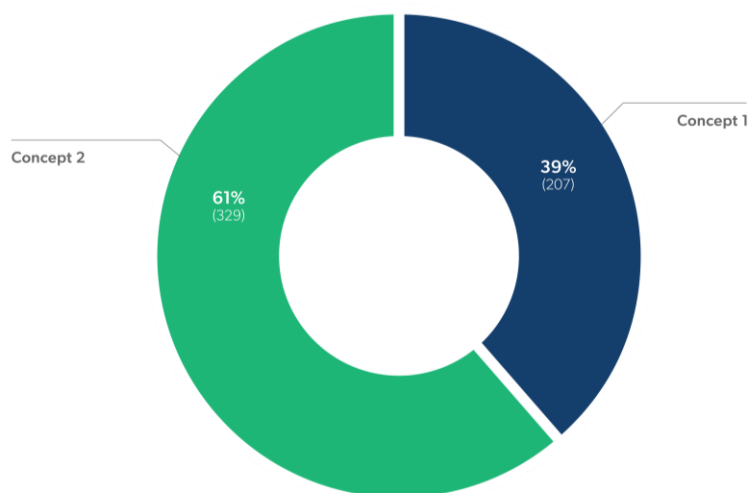
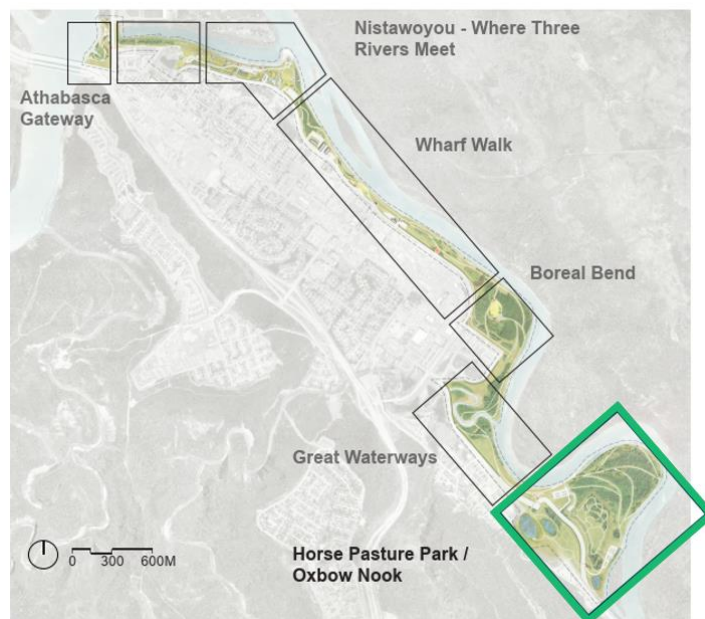
Enhance resiliency of park. The design team will work to ensure the entire area is meant to withstand flood and ice jams for years to come.

Share regional stories and history. The design team will incorporate storytelling opportunities throughout the space to provide cultural and historical information.

HORSE PASTURE PARK/OXBOW NOOK

Question 10

Which preliminary concept below do you prefer for Horse Pasture Park/Oxbow Nook?



Question Type: Optional, Checkbox

Response rate: 526 responses, 56 skipped

KEY INSIGHT

Sixty-one percent (61%) of survey participants prefer Concept 2 for the Horse Pasture Park/Oxbow Nook area.

Many participants choose not to provide a comment for this question. For participants that did (81 comments), the top two tags included:

1. **Toboggan.** Participants are excited for a new a toboggan hill in the area.
2. **Safety.** Participants want to feel safe when they visit the park.

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

Ensure safe toboggan experience. The design team will incorporate a toboggan hill into the design that is safe for both users and viewers alike.

Enhance user safety and experience. The design team will ensure safety is a top priority in the design of the space.

Virtual Workshops

DATA APPROACH

We followed a consistent approach to listen and record community insights shared with the project team during each engagement workshop.

First, during each engagement workshop, we recorded participant comments using sticky notes (for workshops conducted in MURAL), and bullet points in a Word document for workshops conducted using a slide deck. Next, we transferred each collected comment into a central inventory. Then, we reviewed, analyzed, and tagged each comment. A second reviewer read each comment and confirmed the applied tags for each comment.

To develop findings from the virtual workshops, we considered the comments, tags, and frequency of tags as information that offered key insights into participants' perspectives and sentiment.

WORKSHOP FINDINGS

The RMWB organized five (5) workshops, attended two (2) Council Appointed Committee meetings, and four (4) Councillor workshops between Monday, June 14 – Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

In total, 39 participants attended and engaged directly with the project team via the virtual engagement workshops.

Indigenous Partners (4)	Stakeholders (15)	Council Appointed Committees (11)	Councillors (9)
Athabasca Tribal Council (2)	Workshop 1 – Vendors and User Groups (7)	Waterfront Advisory Committee (9)	Workshop 1 (2)
Fort McKay Métis Nation (2)	Workshop 2 – Non-Profit and Community Organizations and Businesses (8)	Council Appointed Committees (Mayors' Advisory Committee on Youth, Advisory Committee on Aging, Regional Advisory Committee on Inclusion, Diversity and Equality) (2)	Workshop 2 (3)
			Workshop 3 (2)
			Workshop 4 (2)

Format: Audience of Workshop (Total Number of Participants)

KEY INSIGHT

In total we collected 294 comments from the virtual workshops. We read each comment, applied tags, and counted the frequency of the tags.

Nature (35)	12%	Bridge (13)	4.5%	Infrastructure (4)	1.5%
Indigenous Culture (31)	10.5%	Connectivity (13)	4.5%	Parking (4)	1.5%
Safety (25)	8.5%	Design feel (13)	4.5%	Boardwalks (2)	.5%
Water Access (21)	7%	Vendors (10)	3.5%	Educational Opportunities (2)	.5%
History (19)	6.5%	Pathways (9)	3%	Flexible (2)	.5%
Seating (19)	6.5%	Lighting (8)	2.5%	Maintenance (2)	.5%
Accessibility (18)	6%	Design element (7)	2.5%	Materials (2)	.5%
Flooding (17)	5.5%	Parkour (7)	2.5%	Dog friendly (2)	.5%
Play space (17)	5.5%	Aquatic Recreation (6)	2%	River (2)	.5%
All seasons (15)	5%	Wayfinding (6)	2%	Slope (1)	.3%
Resilience (15)	5%	Fishing (5)	2%	Durability (1)	.3%
Process (14)	5%	Next Steps (5)	2%	Naming (1)	.3%
Storytelling (14)	5%	Tobogganing (5)	2%	Signage (1)	.3%
Amenities (13)	4.5%	Cost (4)	1.5%	Ownership (1)	.3%

Format: Tag (Count) % of Responses

Response rate: 294 comments

TOP TAG INSIGHTS

Nature

Participants emphasized the importance of existing natural spaces within the Waterfront Park, including mature forest stands within the Boreal Bend and Horse Pasture Park character areas, and specific plants that grow in undisturbed areas. Participants expressed their support for a more natural, “close-to-nature” design approach that provides park amenities but does not over-develop or over-program the length of the waterfront.

Indigenous culture

Several participants noted that Indigenous culture and stories of the land are an essential component of the Waterfront Park and acknowledged that the proposed concepts demonstrated this guiding principle through design elements (e.g., marker poles, welcome circles). Additional design elements were suggested by participants to increase Indigenous representation in the park, including a Medicine Wheel, indigenization of park elements (benches, structures, gathering spaces, etc.), and a monument to recognize the site as the location where Treaty 8 was signed in 1899.

Other participants expressed concern that Indigenous culture is not accurately represented by the proposed concepts. Participants noted that the preliminary concept names are in English (except for Nistawoyou) and do not presently reflect the Dene, Cree and Michif languages appropriately. Also, participants encouraged the Waterfront Park to include spaces for Indigenous activities (e.g., hand games, travel along the rivers, etc.).

Safety

Participants shared that they have concerns about water access and aquatic recreation (e.g., tubing, stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, etc.) along the Athabasca River, the Snye, and the Clearwater River. Participants shared that the changing conditions of the water (e.g., eddies, water levels, etc.) can make the water, and access to it, dangerous. Participants suggested safety signage and wayfinding at water access locations.

Participants shared that some community members seek shelter and sleep in certain locations within the Waterfront Park boundary. Participants want to see a balance between safety and dignity for community members experiencing homelessness in the community and safety and access to the site for community members using the park amenities. The RMWB will continue to work through its Community Plan on Homelessness and work with the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada and local non-profit and social profit organizations to address homelessness in the region.

Participants highlighted that some parts of the park are dark and not inviting. In the future, they would like to see adequate lighting and new sight lines into the park that ensure the area feels safe and welcoming at any time of the day, or year.

Water access

Participants shared their excitement about being able to touch the water. Comments from participants highlighted the importance of maintaining and increasing (where possible) boat and fishing access to the water, including removable docks and lookout locations. Also, participants suggested separate water access locations for aquatic recreational users (tubing, stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, etc.) away from the boat launches to reduce conflicts between aquatic recreational users and boat launch vehicle traffic.

Indigenous partners reminded the design team that their communities used the waterways as a mode of travel and often arrived to the site by water. As a result, Indigenous partners encouraged the design team to consider how to incorporate this way of knowing into the park concepts.

History

Participants highlighted the rich and on-going history of the site, including its ties to Treaty 8, the trapping community, the shipping industry, and its link to regional transportation (i.e., float planes and boats) along the three waterways.

Indigenous partners emphasized the importance of maintaining the waterfront's connection to the water and land by maintaining natural areas and acknowledging Indigenous languages and stories through signage, wayfinding, naming, public art, and plantings.

Indigenous partners shared that this project is about reconciliation. Indigenous partners requested that engagement be meaningful, authentic, and conducted with mutual trust and recognition. Indigenous partners offered to share traditional knowledge with the design team in order to guide the design in a good way.

Seating

Participants showed support for seating opportunities within the park. Participants highlighted different elements about proposed seating opportunities. Some participants liked the potential moveable nature of the park's outdoor furniture, others shared support for seating that was made of natural materials (e.g., wooden benches), while others supported seating options that offered integrated storytelling and commemorative markers. Participants noted that site furniture should be accessible for people of all ages and abilities, and take advantage of either proximity to the water, or views of the water.

Accessibility

Participants want the park to be a place for all community members. Participants shared the importance for pathways and plazas (and the materials selected for these amenities) to be designed for all ages and abilities. Also, participants provided accessibility modifications to several proposed design elements, including bench heights and stroller inserts that align with age friendly design principles, and ensuring play spaces (e.g., parkour course, playground, etc.) are inclusive for all groups to use.

Flooding

Participants raised concerns about the resiliency of the proposed design concepts to flooding and ice jam impacts along the waterfront. Comments from participants underscored the importance of integrating flood protection and mitigation measures into the design. Participants suggested that infrastructure should be removable (seasonally, or if necessary), and easy to restore (e.g., materials, cost) if caught in a flooding and ice jam event.

Play space

Participants want to see inclusive play spaces in the Waterfront Park. Many participants shared their support for the proposed parkour course. Participants noted that the parkour course would be an inclusive and accessible play opportunity for people of all ages in the community. The bike pump track received support, but less so than the parkour course. Other play ideas for the park were suggested including a playground, an activity staging area for families (i.e., large benches), sand areas, and play equipment appropriate for younger members of the community (0 – 3 years old).

All seasons

Participants shared that the Waterfront Park must be designed as a community gathering space that can be used year-round. Participants expressed support for a new toboggan hill in the Horse Pasture Park area and liked the idea of amenity areas for snowshoeing, skiing and skating during the long winter months. Some participants encouraged the design team to include more images/perspectives in future presentations that visually communicate design ideas during the fall/winter/spring.

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

Recognize rich Indigenous cultural ties and history. The design team will develop the park spaces, materials, play elements, signage, wayfinding, and public art in partnership with Indigenous partners and community members.

Prioritize natural environment in the park design. The design team will use a “light footprint” when re-imagining design ideas and continue to prioritize, where possible, existing natural spaces and important ecological areas along the waterfront.

Balance infrastructure investments with flood resiliency. The design team will consider how best to provide utility and infrastructure servicing to the site while upholding best practices for design in flood prone areas.

Work with community members experiencing homelessness. The design team understands that some members of the community sleep in locations along the waterfront. The RMWB will work closely with these community members and partner organizations to listen and learn from people experiencing homelessness in the downtown.

Activate the park year-round. The design team will contemplate the ways in which the design can continue to support existing uses and enhance the experience of the park in all seasons.

Enhance safety. The design team will prioritize resident and visitor safety in the park by improving lighting and sight lines and adding clear signage and wayfinding throughout the park, and at water access locations.

Ensure the park is a place for everyone. The design team will explore design elements on the land and waterways that prioritize resident and visitor accessibility and inclusion.

Provide play spaces that work for everyone. The design team will explore how to include play opportunities in the park for people of all ages and abilities.

Include many places to stop and sit. The design team will include seating opportunities through the park that are made of appropriate materials and incorporate age-friendly design principles.

Virtual Open Houses

DATA APPROACH

We followed a consistent approach to listen and record community insights shared with the project team during each virtual open house.

First, following each virtual open house, we reviewed and analyzed the activity report. Next, we transferred each participant submitted question into a central inventory. Then, we reviewed, analyzed, and tagged each question. A second reviewer read each question and confirmed the applied tags.

To develop findings from the virtual open house, we considered the participant submitted questions, tags, and frequency of tags.

OPEN HOUSE FINDINGS

The RMWB organized and hosted two (2) Virtual Open Houses during the engagement period. The first Virtual Open House was hosted on Thursday, June 17; the second Virtual Open House was hosted on Thursday, June 24.

In total, 22 attendees participated in the Virtual Open Houses. Between the two Virtual Open Houses, 12 (twelve) questions were submitted by participants and 20 (twenty) comments were submitted. In total, 32 questions and comments were received via the Virtual Open Houses.

KEY INSIGHT

Regulations (8)	25%	Cost (2)	3%
Recreation (6)	19%	Berm (1)	3%
Flooding (5)	16%	Safety (1)	3%
Resilience (4)	13%	Amenities (1)	3%
Tenure (3)	9%	Site access (1)	3%
Connection to the land (3)	9%	Vendors (1)	3%
Connectivity (3)	9%	Cycling (1)	3%
Water access (2)	6%	Bridge (1)	3%
Morimoto Dr. (2)	6%	-	-

Format: Tag (Count) % of Responses

Response rate: 32 responses

TOP THEMING INSIGHTS

Regulations

Participants asked questions about the process the design team has followed to receive appropriate approvals for federal or provincial authorities (e.g., Department of Fisheries and Oceans), and regulations that apply to the waterfront area.

Recreation

Participants asked questions about whether specific amenities could be located within the park, including a disc golf course, access to existing facilities, and removable design elements (e.g., slacklines, picnic tables) that can withstand natural events.

Flooding

Participants asked how the design team is incorporating lessons learned from the flooding events in 2020, and the methods by which the design team is balancing infrastructure investment in the floodway with future costs related to flood recovery.

HOW MIGHT THIS INFORM NEXT STEPS?

The questions submitted via the Virtual Open Houses help the RMWB and the design team in two ways.

First, the questions submitted during the Virtual Open Houses align with the key findings from Participate Wood Buffalo Online Engagement responses and the virtual workshops. Alignment between the different engagement opportunities helps the design team verify themes that may influence the preferred design concept.

Second, the questions submitted from attendees at the Virtual Open Houses help the RMWB and the design team understand which elements of the proposed designs may be of particular interest to community members when sharing the preferred design concept.

Social Media Insights

APPROACH

The RMWB and the design team did not use social media as a formal channel to receive engagement input from the community. Instead, the RMWB social media channels (Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook) were used by the project team to share information and promote upcoming engagement opportunities. Other communication tactics were also employed, including media news releases, radio advertisements, and digital ads.

Social media insights are included in this engagement summary to share project reach within the RMWB. During the two-week period, the following analytics were pulled from the project campaign.

Instagram

5 posts / 17 likes / 1 comment / 698 average post reach.

Twitter

9 tweets / 0 reply / 7 likes / 5 retweets

LinkedIn

8 posts (1 video / 7 pictures) / 37 clicks / 1 comment / 10 reactions / 2 shares

Facebook

16 posts (1 link, 2 videos, 13 photos) / 2077 clicks / 61 comments / 139 reactions / 51 shares / 501 Link clicks / 36 reactions / 62 430 average post reach

Moving Forward

A preferred design for the Waterfront Park will be shared publicly and engaged on in Fall 2021. After feedback is provided and reviewed by the design team, a final preferred concept will be completed in Winter 2021, and construction will start in 2022.

The feedback from Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and the public will help fine-tune the preferred concept for the Waterfront Park. To stay informed, sign up for email project updates, or follow the Waterfront Park Revitalization project by visiting rmwb.ca/waterfront.

Thank you for participating and contributing to the future of our Waterfront!