

## Public and Indigenous Engagement Summary

Two parallel engagement processes were followed for the River Crossing Heritage Interpretive Plan: a public engagement and Indigenous engagement process. These processes were vital given the historical and contemporary connections of many Edmontonians and Indigenous communities to the River Crossing (West Rossdale) area.

The objectives of engagement were to:

- Discuss perspectives and stories that have been addressed in previous documents, research and interpretation, and encourage people to share stories and perspectives that have been missed previously.
- Gauge what stories and topics are most important for future visitors and users of the River Crossing area to understand.
- Present and test draft interpretive themes.
- Gather ideas for future interpretation.
- Collect feedback on the draft Heritage Interpretive Plan for the purpose of refining the plan.
- Begin to identify and develop relationships with potential partners for future interpretation.

### Public Engagement

The public engagement process was informed by the Council Initiative on Public Engagement. Administration engaged stakeholders and the public early in the process and at key stages of the development of the plan. Over the 5 stages described below, approximately 2,200 people were engaged.

#### Stage 1: initial data collection (spring 2016)

Preliminary engagement was initiated with knowledge holders, subject matter experts, the Rossdale Community League and heritage organizations to gain a better understanding of the stories about the River Crossing area and resources. Engagement consisted of individual and small group conversations.

#### Stage 2: building public awareness (spring-fall 2016)

A series of activities were carried out to raise awareness about the Heritage Interpretive Plan, share some historical information about the area and collect stories and perspectives from the public. Activities included:

- 2 walking tours as part of Jane's Walk and Historic Festival and Doors Open.

- Pop Up Museums in Rossdale and at the Prince of Wales Armouries Heritage Centre in collaboration with the City as Museum Project.
- Attendance at existing events in and around the city.
- Let's Talk Heritage public panel event in collaboration with the City-Region Studies Center and Edmonton Heritage Council.

These events were used to sign interested people up for our project newsletter.

### Stage 3: detailed data collection (early fall 2016)

More focused public and stakeholder engagement began in the fall and asked the following questions:

- What is important about the heritage of the River Crossing area?
- What do we want future visitors to the area to understand?
- How do we want future visitors to the area to feel?
- What do we want future visitors to do?

Responses to the question about what is most important helped to prioritize stories and build draft interpretive themes. Responses to questions about what visitors should understand, feel and do provided input into the draft interpretive goals.

Engagement opportunities included:

- A survey
- 2 visioning workshops

### Stage 4: thematic framework validation (late fall 2016)

A draft thematic framework was shared with the public for input. At several events, the five interconnected themes were presented and the public was invited to test the themes and provide feedback. Engagement sessions were also used to ask the public and stakeholders for ideas of ways to interpret the themes and stories. Feedback from these sessions was compiled and used to refine the draft thematic framework and to help build out ideas for interpretation and guiding principles.

Engagement opportunities included:

- 3 validation workshops
- 1 public open house

Stage 5: public review of the draft Heritage Interpretive Plan (spring 2017)

Once drafts of the Heritage Interpretive Plan and Executive Summary were complete, the public and stakeholders were invited to review the documents and provide feedback. Administration asked:

- (For those who participated previously) Do you feel the input you previously provided was understood?
- Are the revised themes appropriate? Why or why not?
- Are there other stories you'd like to share? What are they?
- What are your ideas for interpreting the themes through programming or the built environment?
- Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Engagement opportunities included:

- A survey
- 1 public open house

Feedback received at this stage was used to help refine and finalize the plan.

A Survey Brief and What We Heard reports for stages 3, 4 and 5 of public engagement are available online at [Edmonton.ca/heritageinterpretiveplan](http://Edmonton.ca/heritageinterpretiveplan).

A comprehensive communications program (online, print, social and news media, posters and road signs) supported and promoted the various engagement activities. Reporting back on engagement activities was supported through a project website and newsletter, with a subscriber list of over 200 people.

### **Indigenous Engagement**

The River Crossing project was one of the first City Planning projects to engage Indigenous communities and related organizations on a planning project. Engagement with Indigenous communities and related organizations began early in the project. The City Planning Branch worked with the Indigenous Relations Office to design and carry out an extensive Indigenous engagement process that reached out to 29 Indigenous communities with connections to Edmonton, including First Nations communities in Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8, the Métis Nation of Alberta, Indigenous communities with traditional territories in the Edmonton region and Indigenous organizations.

The Indigenous Engagement process included several stages. At all stages, Indigenous communities and related organizations were invited to participate in upcoming opportunities. Engagement activities were also supported by communication through emails and phone calls.

Stage 1: letter mail-out (late fall 2015)

A letter was mailed to 29 Indigenous communities and related organizations, informing them of the River Crossing project and inviting them to participate. These letters also informed communities and organizations of the Touch the Water Promenade and invited them to participate in engagement for that project as well. These letters were followed by calls to the consultation coordinators of these communities and organizations.

Stage 2: introduction meetings (winter 2016)

Introduction meetings were held with consultation coordinators of interested Indigenous communities and related organizations for the purpose of building relationships, providing project information, and gathering input to inform the Indigenous engagement process. These meetings were held in the communities or in Edmonton, depending on the preference and availability of the coordinator. Once the engagement process was developed, Indigenous communities and organizations were invited to meet to discuss the proposed process.

Stage 3: site visits (spring-summer 2016)

From May to August, meetings and site visits were held in the River Crossing and Touch the Water Promenade areas with First Nation consultation staff, Elders and/or traditional knowledge technical staff. After visiting sites of interest in the project area, debrief discussions were held to talk about the heritage of the area, the community's connection to it and any concerns. Engagement reports were produced for each site visit and circulated back to individual communities for validation. Site visits were conducted with 12 Indigenous communities and related organizations.

Stage 4: workshops (fall 2016)

From September to December, workshops were held with Elders and knowledge holders from interested First Nations and Métis communities. Workshops were held in the communities and Edmonton. The purpose of the workshops was to validate information shared at the site visit and to delve deeper into the heritage of the River Crossing area and the communities' connections to it. Questions asked included:

- What is important about the heritage of the River Crossing area?
- What do we want future visitors to the area to understand?
- How do we want future visitors to the area to feel?
- What do we want future visitors to do?

Engagement reports were produced for each workshop and circulated back to individual communities for validation. Workshops were held with Indigenous communities and related organizations.

#### Stage 5: project bulletins (fall 2016 - spring 2017)

Over the course of the fall, project bulletins were shared with all Indigenous communities and related organizations. These bulletins provided a summary of the types of information shared during site visits; presented the draft thematic framework; and presented an overview of the draft Heritage Interpretive Plan. Follow-up with the consultation coordinators of all Indigenous communities and related organizations was done by telephone or email after each bulletin was circulated. The purpose of follow-up was to gather input on the information presented.

#### **Key Input and How it Was Used**

Input shared during Public and Indigenous Engagement was instrumental in understanding the heritage of the River Crossing area, what people value about this heritage, and how they want the stories of this place to be told. This input was used at every stage of the development of the Heritage Interpretive Plan. Table 1 summarizes key input that was received and where it is reflected in the plan.

Table 1

What we heard	How it is reflected in the Heritage Interpretive Plan
Water is life. Water is sacred and must be respected and protected. The river has played an important role in the heritage of this place. People's survival, use, and enjoyment have depended on it since time immemorial.	<p>The North Saskatchewan River is central to people's historical and cultural connection to the River Crossing area. Although it is not its own theme, the plan highlights the connection of the river to the themes of "Territory and Land", "Making and Trading" and "Lived Experience".</p> <p>Stewardship and respect of the natural environment is an interpretive goal of the "Territory and Land" theme.</p> <p>The river is also considered in various ways to tell the stories of this place, such as water based activities.</p> <p>The value of the river is also reflected in the guiding principles for interpretation, which include the preservation of views of the river.</p>
Many Indigenous peoples and cultures were here and continue to be here. Understanding the Indigenous (First Nations and Métis) histories, cultures and connections to the area and to the land is of critical importance to understanding the heritage of River Crossing. Indigenous	One of the main aims of the plan is to bring together both Indigenous and settler perspectives on the heritage of the area. Indigenous perspectives are represented in each theme, many of the sample topics and ideas for interpretation.

perspectives have often been overlooked or misrepresented.	The implementation approach and guiding principles for interpretation highlight the need to work with Indigenous partners moving forward and to create opportunities for people with a connection to the area, including Indigenous communities and people to tell their stories in their own voices.
The Traditional Burial Grounds and Fort Edmonton Cemetery has been disrespected in the past and many people have a personal connection to it. The site must be respected and protected.	<p>The plan explicitly acknowledges the presence and history of the cemetery in the Site Analysis chapter as well as the “Connecting and Understanding” theme.</p> <p>The need to respect the site is outlined under guiding principles, interpretive constraints.</p>
<p>Heritage interpretation in River Crossing will not succeed if we don’t acknowledge the painful stories tied to colonialism and its impacts.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Indigenous people are still here. Indigenous cultures are resilient and living cultures. We have to celebrate the contributions of Indigenous people (First Nations and Métis) to Edmonton.</p>	<p>The approach taken toward the development of the plan was shaped by the events and understandings emerging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.</p> <p>The plan acknowledges the painful stories tied to colonialism and its legacy. These stories are reflected in the Site Analysis chapter and most notably in the theme of “Connecting and Understanding”, but also in “Lived Experience” and “Territory and Land”. These themes also acknowledge the strength, distinctness, vitality, and contributions of Indigenous cultures.</p> <p>Ideas for interpretation include ways to share these stories - both good and bad - and aspects of culture.</p>
Stories about the fur trade and its importance to Edmonton and its cultural impacts.	The fur trade and the complex web of relationships it produced, altered, and impacted are discussed in Site Analysis and are reflected most prominently in the stories and ideas for interpretation associated with the “Making and Trading” theme, but also in “Territory and Land” and “Lived Experience”.
Rossdale was where Edmonton began. It was one of the first sites of settlement and held a prominent place as a key site of early business and industry.	The settlement and the early industrial heritage of the River Crossing area are discussed in the Site Analysis chapter and are reflected in the themes of “Territory and Land” and “Making and Trading”, as well as in the ideas for interpretation for these two themes. The personal experiences of people living during those times are reflected in the stories and ideas for interpretation described in the “Lived Experience” theme. Settlement at a broader scale and the impacts that had on relationships between settlers and Indigenous communities are reflected in the “Connecting and Understanding” theme.
French-Canadians have a long history in the West and were actively involved in the fur trade in the region and in the River Crossing area. The Franco-Albertan community is closely tied to the French-speaking Métis community. They represented a relatively large proportion of the population in the past and contributed to the early development of Edmonton and Alberta. This history is often undervalued or forgotten.	The roles and contributions of French-Canadians to the heritage of the River Crossing area are described in the Site Analysis chapter. The “Territory and Land” and “Making and Trading” themes provide opportunities to talk about cultures, including French-Canadians, who were involved in the fur trade and early settlement, as well as the cultural exchange that occurred during that time.

	Many distinct Indigenous and Settler cultures-including Franco-Albertans -contributed to the development of the River Crossing area and Edmonton. The “Connecting and Understanding” theme is where these rich cultures and their contributions can be brought forward through interpretation.
<p>The River Crossing area is within Treaty 6 lands. It was stated that we are all treaty people and should understand the shared obligations and rights that are defined by treaty.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The River Crossing area and Edmonton are located on the traditional territories of a number of First Nations as well as the homeland of Métis people, and the Métis Nation of Alberta’s Region 4.</p>	<p>Treaty No. 6, traditional territories and Métis homeland are described in the Site Analysis chapter.</p> <p>Territorial definitions and cultural values and understandings of land and territory are directly reflected in the “Territory and Land” theme as well as the topics to explore and ideas for interpretation. The “Connecting and Understanding” theme also discusses the more difficult stories tied to land and territory in relation to colonialism and its impacts.</p>
<p>Edmonton’s civic history has played out in the River Crossing area in different ways. Some people saw Rossdale as a place that spurred the expansion of the city through the migration of industry and successive expansions of the generating station. Topics also included the construction of bridges and roads that changed movement and connections within Edmonton and the Rossdale community. Other stories focused on controversial plans such as METS, the Canadian Space Science Center and the river valley parks plan, the threats to the existing Rossdale community that these plans posed, and community action to fight these plans.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The broader Rossdale community has undergone considerable change, but is still active and thriving.</p>	<p>Many of these stories are captured in the Site Analysis chapter. Stories about changes to the landscape, the establishment of the Rossdale community, and the ways we move through the city are discussed under the “Territory and Land” theme, and ideas for interpretation. Industry and power generation are captured in the “Making and Trading” theme.</p> <p>The “Lived Experience” theme along with goals, stories and ideas for interpretation, recognizes the social and physical changes that have occurred in the area and explores the experiences of people who have lived and continue to live in Rossdale, including the challenges faced.</p>
<p>The area has a long history as a site for recreation and sports, from horse racing to the industrial exhibition to baseball. Recreation and sports offer an entry point to the area for people who are not familiar with its heritage.</p>	<p>These aspects of the area’s heritage are discussed in the “Lived Experience” theme and the ideas for interpretation related to it.</p>
<p>Future interpretation needs to be authentic and be done the right way. Participants raised many considerations to support doing interpretation the right way.</p>	<p>Many of the considerations raised are reflected in the plan’s overall approach to interpretation, guiding principles for future interpretation and implementation strategy. Examples include: protecting viewsapes, basing interpretation on verifiable facts, research and oral history, using landscape, infrastructure and materials to tell stories, and avoiding cluttering the area with interpretation.</p> <p>The implementation strategy describes how more work and planning is needed to address</p>

	considerations for heritage interpretation, including how to work with partners and the community to implement interpretation.
A large variety of specific stories, topics and ideas were shared.	Many stories, topics and ideas we heard are included or reflected in the theme descriptions, topics to explore, and ways to tell the story. Topics to explore and ways to tell the story listed in the plan are meant as examples tied to the themes and are not exhaustive as explained in the plan.

Some input that was provided has purposefully not been captured or reflected in the Heritage Interpretive Plan. Table 2 describes concepts or ideas that were not included and provides an explanation for their non-inclusion.

Table 2

What We Heard	Rationale for not reflecting input in the Heritage Interpretive Plan
Rossdale was a sacred Indigenous gathering place for millennia, known as Pehonan.	Although Indigenous gathering on the site is referenced in the plan, the concept of Pehonan is not included because it is contested and may have many different meanings and implications. Based on what we heard from several First Nations communities, the location of Pehonan is debated and the term could apply to other places (e.g. Fort Carlton where Treaty No. 6 was negotiated, or even a train station if we take the word's meaning as a waiting place that could be applied to any location).
Request for a ceremonial site west of the Walterdale Bridge.	The plan does not decide how specific sites in the River Crossing area will be used. Land uses will be addressed during business planning at a high level and in more detail during the subsequent creation of subsequent plans.  Administration is studying demand and the availability of spaces for ceremonial sites at a city-wide scale.
Nature, the river and natural/geologic history should be elevated or be made into a theme.	Some references to nature, geology, the river, and the natural history are made in the Site Analysis chapter, as well as in themes and stories. The plan also identifies possible topics to explore and ways to interpret the themes that are related to the natural environment. These concepts are largely discussed in terms of how they influenced human activities in the area.  The River Crossing area has been highly altered through hundreds of years of use and disturbance. In-depth exploration of natural and geologic topics may be more appropriately suited to locations in the river valley that are more pristine and where



	natural features remain intact.
Sharing and interpreting sacred teachings (e.g. medicinal plants).	The plan does not identify traditional plants and medicines or sacred teachings. Although it was discussed and suggested by some during engagement, the plan does not recommend that medicines or sacred knowledge be shared as part of interpretation as this is proprietary knowledge and different First Nations may have their own protocols about how and when to share this information.
Repurposing of the Rosssdale Generating Station and Walterdale Bridge (e.g., as an Indigenous cultural center, market, brewery, shops, etc.).	<p>The Walterdale Bridge is physically located outside of the River Crossing project area and is therefore out of the scope of the plan.</p> <p>Repurposing of the Rosssdale Generating Station is outside the scope of the plan, but is within the scope of the River Crossing project and will be addressed at a high level in business planning.</p> <p>In terms of where stories about the Rosssdale Generating Station fit within the scope of the plan, it is most directly reflected in the “Making and Trading” theme and the stories and interpretation ideas tied to it. Given the scale and prominence of the Rosssdale Generating Station, future interpretation at this site would require its own interpretive plan.</p>
Concerns about protecting and repurposing existing historical buildings in the Rosssdale area.	<p>The preservation of historical buildings and sites in the River Crossing area is outside the scope of the plan. Designation and preservation are managed provincially, under the <i>Historical Resources Act</i>, and municipally under the Historic Resource Management Program.</p> <p>Although preservation is outside the project scope, the plan does highlight many of the historic buildings and sites in and around the River Crossing area. For instance, they are identified in the Site Analysis chapter. Furthermore, stories and topics tied to the buildings and sites in the project area are reflected directly in the “Lived Experience” theme, wherein buildings are connected to the stories of the people who may have used them.</p> <p>Finally, historic buildings and their integration into future interpretation is referenced as a guiding principle in the Implementation chapter.</p>
Concerns and ideas about future change/redevelopment (e.g.cafes, accessibility, specific uses for specific sites, mix of land uses, the ballpark, potential disturbance to graves, canal, river valley park, environmental restoration).	Concerns and ideas for redevelopment and future land uses are out of the scope of the plan. However, these comments will be considered during redevelopment planning.
River Crossing has a connection to the history of the province.	Provincial history is not a focus of the plan although reference is made to the inauguration event of

### Attachment 3

	1905, which occurred in the project area. Stories about the province, including the selection of Edmonton as the provincial capital, selection of the legislature site and construction of the Legislature are best interpreted at the Legislature grounds, which lie adjacent to the project area.
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