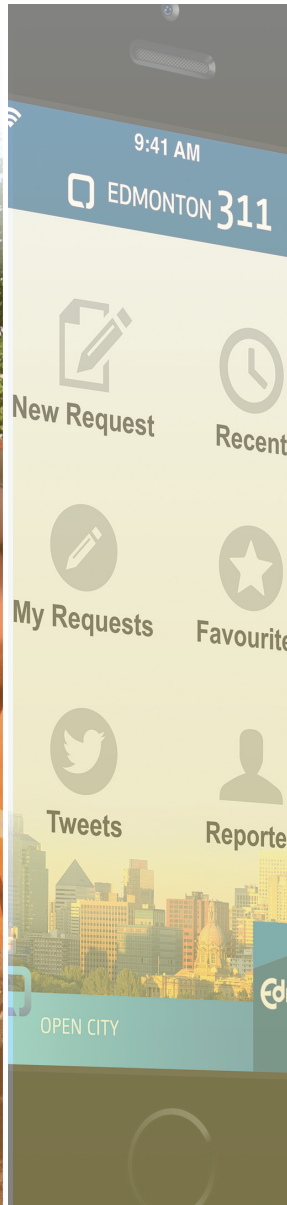
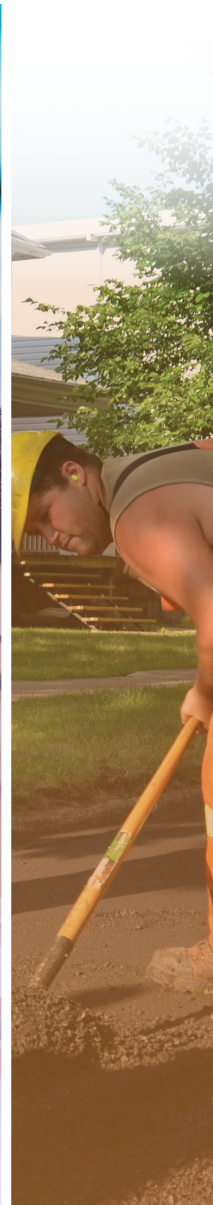




OPEN CITY Policy Consultation - What We Heard

Edmonton as an Open City



February 2015



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the comments, ideas, and suggestions regarding the development of the City of Edmonton's Open City Policy, received in the course of in-person and online consultations with a variety of stakeholders and with Edmontonians between August and November 2014.

Using the Edmonton Insight Community, the City of Edmonton asked Edmontonians to share their thoughts as to the key concepts that they believed should be included in the Open City Policy; participants were also asked for feedback regarding the proposed activities, and finally for comments on the draft policy itself.

In total, more than 826 individuals took part and collectively generated 9641 ideas, comments and questions. Participants told us why they thought Open City was important, and how we could better engage with Edmontonians in the future. In addition to citizen engagement, a number of local organizations prepared and provided detailed feedback during deliberations to prepare the Open City Policy.

Accounting for duplicates, more than 1870 comments and suggestions were organized into five themes: Transparency, Engagement & Collaboration in Decision-making, Information & Data, Communication Channels, and Accountability.

826 Participants:

General Public (87%)

Defined as Edmonton residents

Local Open Government Leaders (9%)

Defined as individuals leading activities or forums aimed at increasing citizen engagement in local government

Open Government Research Professionals (2%)

Defined as individuals who have extensive experience and knowledge in Open Government philosophies

Local Business (2%)

Defined as Edmontonians who identified themselves as part of the local business community

Several key points emerged:

- Edmontonians want more than data and information; they want to participate in creating solutions and they want to see their input reflected in the policies and decisions that affect them.
- There is strong interest for increased access to City information through improved mechanisms, such as proactive disclosure and two-way communication channels.
- Edmontonians generally believe that Open City is of interest to everyone and support the use of municipal resources, including tax dollars, to fund Open City initiatives.
- Edmontonians believe that all or most of the important elements are included in the draft Open City Policy; however, further policy refinement could enhance the clarity and readability of the Policy.
- Edmontonians want greater transparency, openness, and accountability from the City and associated personnel, including City employees and elected officials.

INTRODUCTION

Edmonton is aspiring to fulfil its role as a preeminent global city: innovative, inclusive and engaged. Building such a city takes foresight, planning and active participation by its citizens. A great city is an open city. In June 2014, the City of Edmonton published the Open City Initiative to articulate this vision for the future to Edmontonians and to the wider Open Government community. The City of Edmonton’s Executive Committee received and endorsed the Open City Initiative, and requested that the administration engage with the public on an accompanying Open City Policy which would guide the implementation of the Open City principles.

Feedback was collected from in-person sessions and the Edmonton Insight Community online survey. Participants’ comments, ideas and questions have been coded by theme to support the analysis in this report.

Open City Consultation – A Phased Approach

The consultation on Open City was conducted in two phases as illustrated in Table 1.

Phase	Open City Policy Idea Dialogue August - October	Open City Policy Discussion October 31 - November 9	
Focus	Suggest ideas that should be included in the Open City Policy	Discuss Open City goals, suggest improvements and new ideas	Comment on the draft Open City Policy
Medium	Five in-person sessions with Open Government stakeholders, including Open Government Community of Practice and the Right to Know, Edmonton Forum:	Online survey	
Participants	100+ in-person participants	660 identified participants & 66 anonymous participants online	
Feedback	42 ideas, comments and questions	8124 ideas and comments	1475 comments

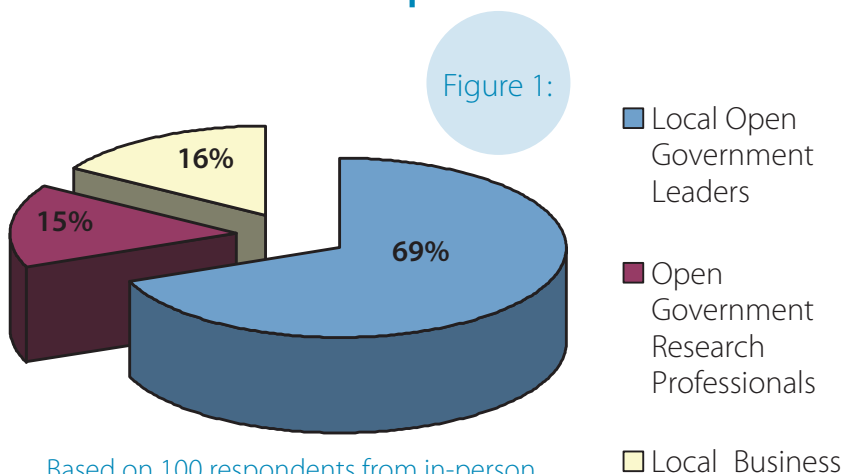
Table 1:
Overview of the 2014 Open City Policy Consultations

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

826+	31800	9641
Total number of identified participants <i>Note: (Anonymous online participation was allowed)</i>	Total number of minutes involved in the public consultations	Total number of comments, ideas and questions

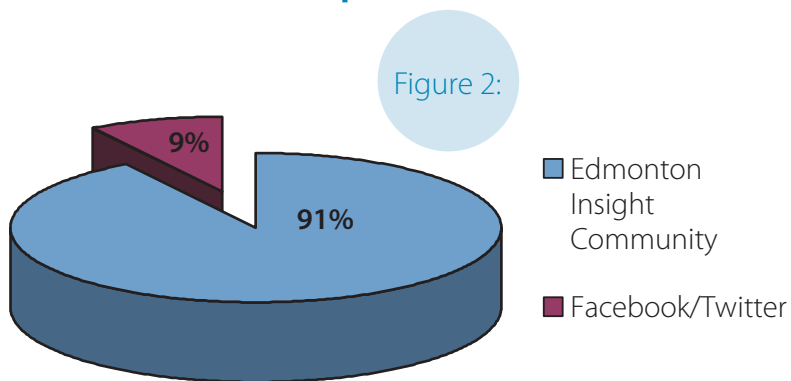
Table 2:
Highlights

In-Person Participation Recruitment



Based on 100 respondents from in-person consultations August - October, 2014

Online Participant Recruitment



Based on 726 online participants. October 31 - November 9, 2014

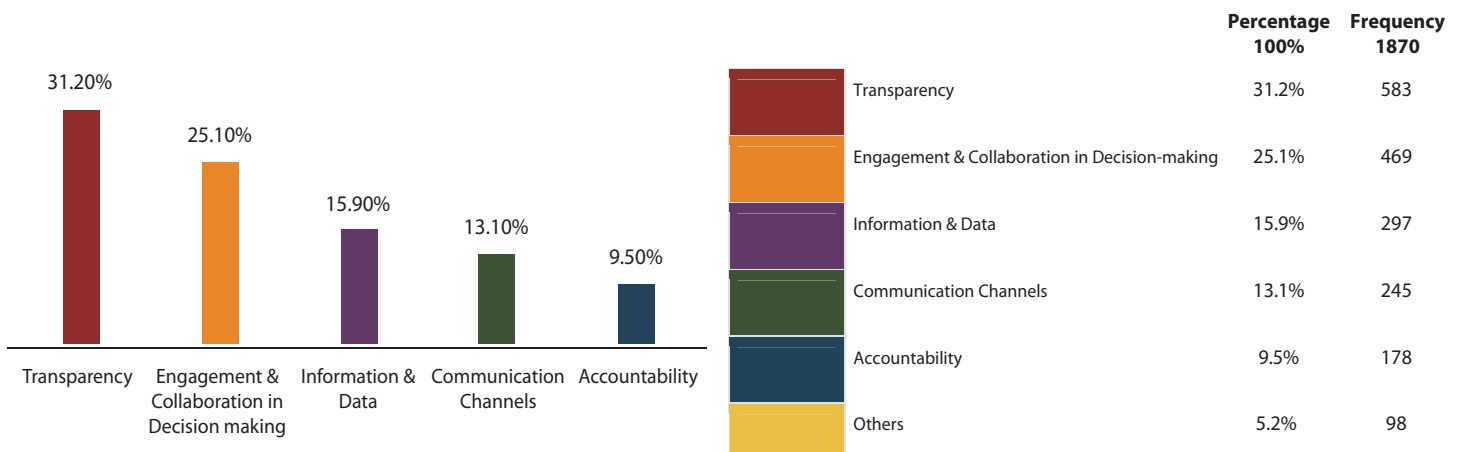
RESULTS

Consultations generated discussion around the concepts and principles of Open City, and feedback received throughout the consultation period fell into five thematic areas. Figure 3 below indicates the relative prevalence of each theme, based on 1870 unique comments, ideas and questions received between August and November 2014.

Figure 3:
A word cloud summarized what Open City should be based on 785 participants. The importance and frequency of each word was shown and organized based on font sizes.



POPULAR OPEN CITY THEMES



"[Open City] would have the city government be transparent by talking to and working with citizens about decisions via innovated methods. City government should proactively provide and promote relevant information and data so everyone, including elected officials, can utilize such information to make informed decisions."

• Edmonton Insight Community Participant

ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Participants felt public engagement was important and helped build trust between the City and its constituents. There was a clear desire for the City to improve responsiveness to citizen concerns and priorities through timely, relevant and inclusive consultation sessions. The establishment of a standard process for information sharing and the provision of prompt, comprehensive feedback following consultation efforts was also suggested.

Participants expressed a desire to be involved in decision-making beyond consultations (90% of online respondents), and indicated a willingness to partner with the City in creating solutions and providing input into the policies and practices that affect them. Ninety-two percent (92%) of online respondents indicated that technology, such as innovative forums or online voting, could aid this process.

Participants, however, reminded the City that some Edmontonians do not have Internet access, and therefore the City needs to find innovative ways to include citizens in the discussion as part of consultation processes.

Collaboration among the government sector, academia, business and local community was viewed by participants as essential for the Open City Initiative to be successful. Edmontonians strongly suggested that the City take leadership in facilitating collaboration between other government jurisdictions and stakeholder groups, to contemplate adopting Edmontonians' preferences and to reduce duplication of effort across the City organization.

Finally, respondents believed that making timely decisions (95%) was slightly more important than involving everyone in consultations (85%). Elected officials should consider citizen inputs while making final decisions.

"An Open City is where decisions are made through engagement and consultation with citizens and stakeholders. These two groups are actually given power at the outset and during the decision making process."

• Edmonton Insight Community Participant

INFORMATION & DATA

Participants noted that truly effective dialogue between citizens and the City would require more open, real-time access to City information and data. Edmontonians expressed a preference for having access to information in multiple formats. 93% of online respondents preferred to access City material electronically through computer-based websites (93%), other mobile devices (67%), and printed materials (41%). Online consultation results indicated a clear preference in receiving information electronically. The majority of participants also preferred to make all City information available to the public (89%) while keeping the cost of City information low (77%).

Edmontonians recognized the need for an organizational culture shift within the City, and were strongly in favor of the concept of data and information being "open by default". Culture shift was acknowledged as a long-term goal that might take a decade or more to achieve, requiring better collaboration across City departments and affiliated organizations such as Edmonton Police Service and Edmonton Public Library.

Respondents urged the City to focus on making a wide variety of data available at no charge and utilizing as much data and information as possible when making informed decisions. Charging a fee for City data should not be considered an option unless explicitly justified in unique circumstances. The City should protect personal privacy with the need for multiple modes for collection and delivery of data.

Participants also expressed interests in establishment of an innovation institute that entrepreneurs and members of the public could access in order to explore the potential of open data. As the current format and release of open data by the City requires a high level of skill and understanding related to the field, respondents advised that the City take appropriate actions to promote open data, and educate citizens as to the tools and methods available to access and make use of that data.

In short, respondents believed the ultimate goal for an Open City was to develop a robust open culture for longer term use of, and access to, government information and data.

"Open City means city data and information are easily available for everyone to view and use in new and innovative ways."

• Edmonton Insight Community Participant

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Edmontonians expressed the desire for multiple communication and service channels from the City, in order to maximize convenience and cost-effectiveness. The majority of Edmontonians would like to connect with the City through online services (97%) and phone services (71%) versus traditional in-person services (59%).

By systematically examining respondents' experiences with the City's information channels, it was found that:

- Over 75% of respondents have interacted with the City via printed materials, City websites, 311, or in-person in the past year.
- 1% of respondents indicated they had never used the City's web-

site to gain information and knowledge about the City; 7% indicated they had never used printed materials for this purpose.

- 70% of Edmontonians have not interacted with the City via social media (30%) or formal public engagement activities (40%).

In short, the majority of participants interacted with the City via print-material and in-person services currently, despite these being rated as the least important channels by online respondents. Based on collected responses, the City efforts should be focused on developing online services and enabling access to online services for Edmontonians. In-person services and printed material should be provided only in particular areas for unique reasons.

“Open city means communication flowing both ways - from citizens to [government] and from [government] to citizens. Multiple channels should be provided to increase citizen knowledge about all city business.”

• Edmonton Insight Community Participant

ACCOUNTABILITY

The need for metrics and reporting around the success of Open City was mentioned frequently. Participants suggested that Open City should become the formal responsibility of all City employees and elected officials, and formal measurement and enforcement mechanisms should be developed to monitor the City's progress toward becoming an open city.

In summary, the majority of respondents believe that Open City is of interest to everyone in Edmonton: businesses, the technical community, community organizations and even individual Edmontonians. Respondents expressed strong support for the City using tax dollars to pursue the principles and objectives of the Open City Initiative.

“Open city refers to accountability for actions at all levels whether it is administration or city council.”

• Edmonton Insight Community Participant

TRANSPARENCY

The vast majority of comments related to transparency centered on the need for better and timely information disclosure. Participants repeatedly stated that there was an opportunity for the City to improve citizen experience on websites as a means of enhancing transparency, by making information easier to find and use. More than 480 comments were generated relating to this theme.

Local Open Government leaders believed that, by improving funding and processes related to information management,

the City could increase government transparency and enjoy additional economic benefits. Potential benefits also include the creation of a stable operating environment for companies, and the ability to assist investors in improved analysis and risk assessment in order to further stimulate economic growth in Edmonton. In addition, participants displayed interest in increased visibility into municipal procurement processes and practices, including the release of data regarding the development, awarding, execution, performance, and completion of public contracts.

“All city business is conveyed to the public. All items on the city's agenda and city procurement information are open to the public. The public is to be brought up to date on all city business.”

• Edmonton Insight Community Participant

COMMENTS ON DRAFT OPEN CITY POLICY

From October 31 to November 9 2014, an online survey containing the draft Open City Policy was made available for public comment through the Edmonton Insight Community.

What We Heard (LIKES)

Survey respondents indicated a liking of the following aspects of the Policy Statement:

- Open by default, and the availability of information
- Convenience and ease of use
- Accountability and openness
- Technology as a means to remove barriers
- Meaningful role for residents

The City of Edmonton is interested in your opinion on the first draft of the Policy Statement. Please read the Policy Statement and provide us with your opinion. Please highlight the areas of the statement that you LIKE, if any.

DRAFT: Open City Policy Statement

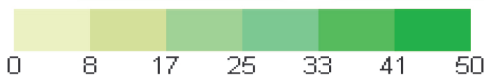
The relationship between Edmontonians and their municipal government is evolving. More and more residents want to play a meaningful role in making decisions that affect them. In order to work more collaboratively with Edmontonians, the City of Edmonton is committed to building new processes for connecting and communicating.

The City of Edmonton is dedicated to building greater openness and accountability, making information as available and accessible as possible.

The City's information is a valuable resource that can drive innovation and economic opportunity and may be used to create more cost-effective, efficient and responsive civic services and programs.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- **Make information available:** City information will be made publicly available, proactively and in response to citizen requests, through a variety of platforms such as web tools, mobile and in-person channels, based on citizen preference. Machine-readable, structured raw data will also be available for citizens, researchers and organizations to create new value and potential economic and social benefits.
- **Ensure information is open by default but private by design.** The City is very respectful of the need for privacy and security of personal information and will adhere to all relevant policy and legislation.
- **Make it convenient for Edmontonians to participate:** The City will continue to expand opportunities for citizens and their local government to work together. We will consult with Edmontonians to ensure municipal activities reflect community values and priorities.
- **Ensure government sector accountability:** City of Edmonton employees will foster transparency in their work and build trust with the people they serve through ongoing performance reporting and easily accessible information on municipal decisions, activities and programs.
- **Use technology to remove barriers and open up new possibilities for communication:** This includes making high speed internet more accessible, improving in-person and online consultation with Edmontonians for more meaningful two-way and multi-party discussion between the City, residents and stakeholders on policies and City activities.
- **Design services from the perspective of citizens' ease of use.**
- **Inspire innovation among City staff and the community.**
- Work with other public and private sector organizations for the advancement of Open City principles.



Highlight Frequency

Figure 4:
A heat map of what 479 participants LIKE about the draft Open City Policy.

What We Heard (DISLIKES)

Survey respondents indicated a dislike of the following aspects of the draft Open City Policy:

- Private by design
- Inspiring innovation among City staff
- Private sector organizations

DRAFT: Open City Policy Statement

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- Design services from the perspective of citizens' ease of use.
- Inspire innovation among City staff and the community.
- Work with other public and private sector organizations for the advancement of Open City principles.



Figure 5: A heat map of what 167 participants DISLIKE about the draft Open City Policy.

COMMENTS ON DRAFT OPEN CITY POLICY

The response to the draft Open City Policy was generally supportive (88%) from the 725 respondents. Respondents provided constructive comments for further refinement and improvement of policy coverage and language.

Ninety (90) respondents, who do not believe that all or most of the important elements were included in the draft Open City Policy, suggested the following themes be considered during refinement of the policy:

- Emphasis on citizen and community involvement in decision making
- Embrace openness in all City employees and elected officials' actions
- Clarify how privacy would be protected
- Specify how the City will ensure all practices and processes will adhere to Open City Principles.
- Use more accessible and understandable language

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Respondents repeatedly stated that unclear language could lead to misinterpretation of key concepts. The revised Open City Policy should not only emphasize the elements viewed favorably by respondents, but also eliminate or re-word unfamiliar concepts such as “private by design” in order to enhance understanding among Edmontonians and increase policy buy-in. Elaborating each policy statement with concrete descriptions was also suggested to increase policy clarity.

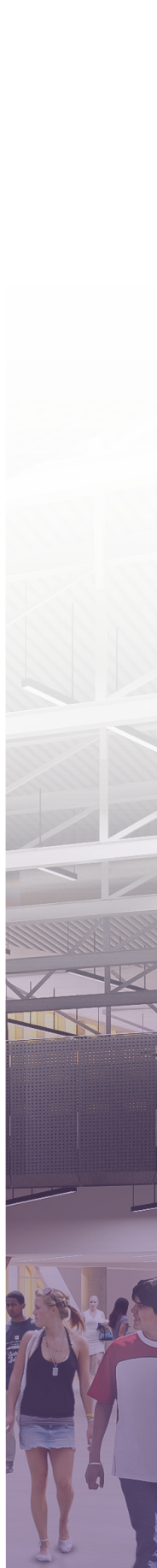


CONCLUSION

The City of Edmonton would like to thank the hundreds of passionate individuals and organizations who took the time to participate in Open City consultations. The goals and principles of the Open City Initiative have been validated through these consultations, and valuable ideas and comments have been gathered which further strengthened the development of the Open City Policy. In addition, consultations provided greater overall direction for City employees and elected officials pursuing the principles and behaviours involved in becoming an open city.

An Open City creates opportunity for diverse input and participation, inviting citizens to play a larger role in shaping their community and enabling social and economic growth. The Open City Initiative seeks to make openness, transparency, and collaboration the default in the City of Edmonton. The passion and commitment of all participants has been inspirational, and the City of Edmonton looks forward to continuing this journey with Edmontonians.





OPEN CITY

Prepared by City of Edmonton
Corporate Services Department
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