

REPURPOSING THE ROSSDALE GENERATING STATION AND RIVERFRONT PLAZA:

VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES



TRANSFORMING | **EDMONTON**
BRINGING OUR CITY VISION TO LIFE

REPORTED BY CALDER BATEMAN COMMUNICATIONS
AND THE CITY OF EDMONTON, COMMUNITY SERVICES



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Once transferred from EPCOR to the City of Edmonton in 2012, the decommissioned generating station portion of the Rossdale site will offer a unique opportunity to create a special destination – for Edmontonians, residents of the Capital Region and visitors from beyond.

As a first step in examining potential of the Rossdale site, the City of Edmonton commissioned Carlyle & Associates, a landscape architecture and urban design firm, to develop a preliminary programme statement. This report is to further examine the potential of the Rossdale site. This included consulting with Edmontonians, including members of Aboriginal communities, to identify key issues and opportunities and help develop a vision for repurposing the Rossdale site.

The consultation process consisted of four focus groups and a quantitative survey of 400 randomly selected Edmontonians, and four consultation sessions with key stakeholders held on August 31 and September 1, 2011. Three of these sessions engaged a range of stakeholders, including members of the arts and culture, sports and recreation, Next Gen and business communities. The fourth was a dedicated session held with members of Aboriginal communities, reflecting the special historical and cultural significance of the site for Aboriginal peoples.

Participants in the consultation process were asked for input and perspectives about the future of the Rossdale site. They offered their thoughts on what makes public spaces welcoming and animated, and their ideas for uses of the site, including actions in the short term. The rich and insightful views offered by participants are remarkably consistent.

Edmontonians clearly want a repurposed Rossdale site to offer multiple uses, throughout the year. They want the site to be a place that facilitates their continued enjoyment of the river valley and offers entertainment by the river. A place where they can run, bicycle, shop and dine by and at the river's edge.

But people want the site to be much more than another mall or commercial development.

Edmontonians describe a place that acts as a vibrant, creative hub of the city. One that honours the site's ancient history while actively contributing to the city's present and future. One that fosters and showcases arts and culture in its broadest sense – from visual and performing arts, to food, fashion, architecture, design and more. A space that serves as an incubator, bringing people together from all creative industries, and provides capacity for them to collaborate, inspire and share their creations with the public. Edmontonians also feel that the building, plaza and access to the water must be considered as one large project.

The views of Edmontonians provide guidance for moving forward, offering key elements that should inform a programme statement for repurposing of the Rossdale site:

- Design the site for Edmontonians.
- Make the site accessible.
- Make the site sustainable.
- Celebrate the past while building for the future.
- Respect the sacred and special nature of the site.
- Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives and culture.
- Develop the site for year-round use.
- Connect to water.
- Allow for a multitude of uses.
- Integrate the development with its surroundings.
- Preserve and refresh existing buildings.
- Plan for the long term.
- Take action in the short term.

Overall, people are excited and energized by the prospect of repurposing the Rossdale site, and there is broad support for its redevelopment.

Most importantly, Edmontonians want the Rossdale site to continue serving as a place of generation – a new kind of power plant that produces ideas, innovation and inspiration. Edmontonians are ready bring their ideas forward to create a vibrant landmark destination in the heart of their city.



CONTENTS

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	4
ABOUT THE ROSSDALE SITE	5
GATHERING INPUT TO INFORM THE FUTURE	6
LISTENING AND LEARNING	7
THOUGHTS ABOUT PLACE MAKING	8
What Makes a Space Welcoming	9
What Makes a Space Animated	11
TOWARDS A PROGRAMME STATEMENT FOR THE ROSSDALE SITE	13
Ideas for the Site	16
Thoughts About Scale and Impact	22
What to do in the Short Term	25
A SACRED AND SPECIAL PLACE	27
THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE	32

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

For months, Edmontonians have watched it happen. Brick by brick, girder by girder, the high pressure plant of the Rossdale Generating Station has gradually come down. This activity signals the decommissioning of a longstanding power plant and the beginning of a new chapter for this historic and sacred piece of land in Edmonton's river valley.

Once transferred from EPCOR to the City of Edmonton, the decommissioned generating station portion of the Rossdale site will offer a unique opportunity to create a special destination – for Edmontonians, residents of the Capital Region and visitors from beyond. One that contributes to our city's spectacular river valley, and advances the city's growth and development plans.

As a first step in examining the tremendous potential of the Rossdale site, the City of Edmonton commissioned Carlyle & Associates, a landscape architecture and urban design firm, to develop a preliminary programme statement. In its December 2010 report, Carlyle & Associates identified eight key ways the Rossdale site could be reimagined to fit within the city's plans while creating a truly unique place that offers city, park and cultural experiences:

- Respect and emphasize the history and archeological significance of the area
- “Touch the water” – Creating a multi-modal promenade taking advantage of the river bank

- Connect and integrate Downtown, the river, the Legislature and adjacent neighbourhoods
- Developing public improvements in the form of plazas, promenades and gardens throughout the site
- Improve mobility and sustainable transportation options
- Create sustainable and complete neighbourhoods
- Create and enhance gateways
- Preserving and enhancing the prominence of visual landmarks, such as the Power Station
- Enhance parks and open spaces

In response to the Carlyle & Associates report, City Administration set out to further examine the potential of the Rossdale site. This included consulting with Edmontonians, including members of Aboriginal communities, to identify key issues and opportunities and help develop a vision for repurposing the Rossdale site.

This report summarizes the views and perspectives gathered about the Rossdale site. It offers a range of ideas for developing a place that can be visited, enjoyed and celebrated by individuals and families alike. A place where arts, culture, innovation, recreation and education intersect to generate creativity, excitement and entertainment.

A place that is uniquely Edmonton, for Edmontonians.

“The most important thing to me would be for the space to be visually stunning with lots of reference to its heritage.”

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



ABOUT THE ROSSDALE SITE

By 2012, EPCOR will finish its decommissioning work. The site available for re-development will have the following features:

- It will have an area of 2.23 hectares (5.5 acres);
- Four historic buildings will be retained on the site, available for redevelopment and repurposing, including:
 - The low pressure plant;
 - Two pumphouses; and
 - A switch house;
- Between the four buildings there will be a total usable interior floor space of approximately 94,140 square feet.

**I WISH THIS WAS
A PLACE WHERE
THERE'S SOME-
THING TO DO DAY
AND NIGHT.**

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

GATHERING INPUT TO INFORM THE FUTURE

Input regarding the Rossdale site was gathered through a number of mechanisms.

As part of the initial work for this project, Leger Marketing conducted four focus groups and a quantitative survey with 400 randomly selected Edmontonian citizens during the months of July and August 2011.

The focus groups consisted of adult residents from the City of Edmonton. One group was comprised of residents living north of the North Saskatchewan River; another was comprised of residents from south of the river; and the other two groups were comprised of residents of the Rossdale neighbourhood and surrounding area. Focus group attendees were asked about the attributes of great public spaces, and were invited to brainstorm ideas for a re-developed Rossdale site. Feedback was consistent with all focus groups including the sessions with the Rossdale residents and surrounding areas.

The quantitative survey was conducted by telephone to ensure a statistically valid representation of citizens from across the city. Respondents were asked about the elements they feel are essential for creating vibrant landmark destinations. They were also asked about the kinds of amenities they would like to see developed at the Rossdale site, and invited to suggest short term re-development priorities.

This work was followed up with a series of consultation sessions with 240 key stakeholders in Edmonton on August 31 and September 1, 2011. A number of diverse stakeholders were represented at the consultation sessions including members of:

- The Arts and Culture community;
- The Sports and Recreation community;
- Community leagues;
- The Next Gen Committee;
- The Business community; and
- The Architectural community.

A dedicated consultation session was also held for the Aboriginal communities, given the special historical and cultural significance of the Rossdale site for Aboriginal peoples.

The consultation sessions were attended by people from various age groups and backgrounds. The sessions were designed to not only gather input and ideas for repurposing the buildings and lands, but also to engage participants in “co-designing” the redeveloped site. Participants were invited to visually express their ideas through a drawing exercise. They also had the opportunity to work with community artists to bring their concepts to life in a collaborative way. Some sample products of this co-design process are presented throughout this report.

“Make it uniquely different from AGA, the Stadium, new Alberta Museum – more impromptu, more about people.”

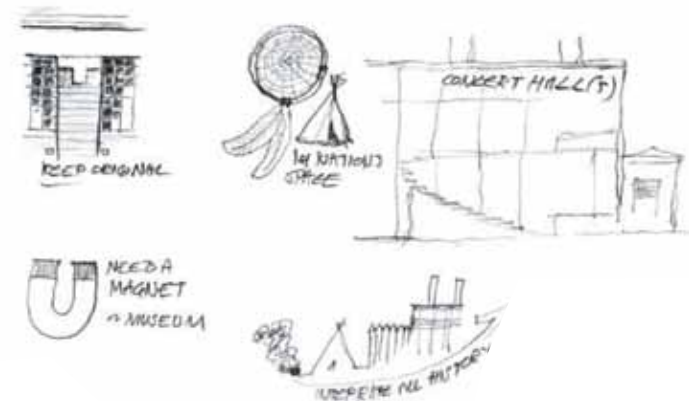
– PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

LISTENING AND LEARNING

Overall, Edmontonians express a high degree of support for re-purposing the Rossdale site. They have many interesting and diverse perspectives about new uses for the site, the kinds of experiences it could host, and the ways it could enrich the city overall.

What is striking about these perspectives is their high degree of consistency. It is clear that Edmontonians want the Rossdale site to be a place that is vibrant and lively. One that honours its past while symbolizing the confidence of our city's present and future. A place where people can learn, explore, be creative, relax, and have fun.

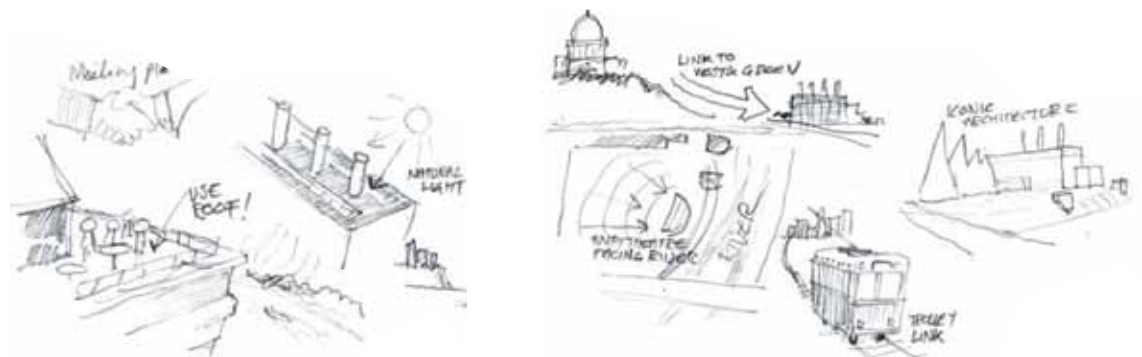
Through the focus groups and quantitative survey, Edmontonians expressed a view that there is room in the city for such a space. While a number of people pointed to downtown and Whyte Avenue as unique gathering places, many said Edmonton does not have a public space in which to showcase arts and culture. They felt the Rossdale site could play this important role.



PARTICIPANT INPUT

People also said the site should embrace the history, culture and relationship between the city and the North Saskatchewan River, and continue to serve as an important connection between the two. From a practical standpoint, people said the site should be developed with a view to traffic, accessibility and environmental impact. It should be family-friendly and draw local residents with a range of dynamic and ever-changing opportunities, including: arts and culture, public spaces, shopping and dining, and sports and recreation. Given the site's location, people also saw the opportunity to create park spaces and more closely tie the area to the rest of the river valley. Above all, people urged the creation of a site that is “uniquely Edmonton, what Edmonton is and what Edmonton wants to be.” Details of the focus group and survey results are available in Appendix A.

It is important to note that the input gathered through focus groups and the quantitative survey of the general public aligns very closely with input gathered through the consultation sessions. By and large, all Edmontonians have remarkably similar perspectives about a vision for the site, and the principles and objectives that should guide its redevelopment.



“Make it a place where I can take my kids skating in the afternoon, an affordable meal for dinner and a children’s play in the evening.”

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

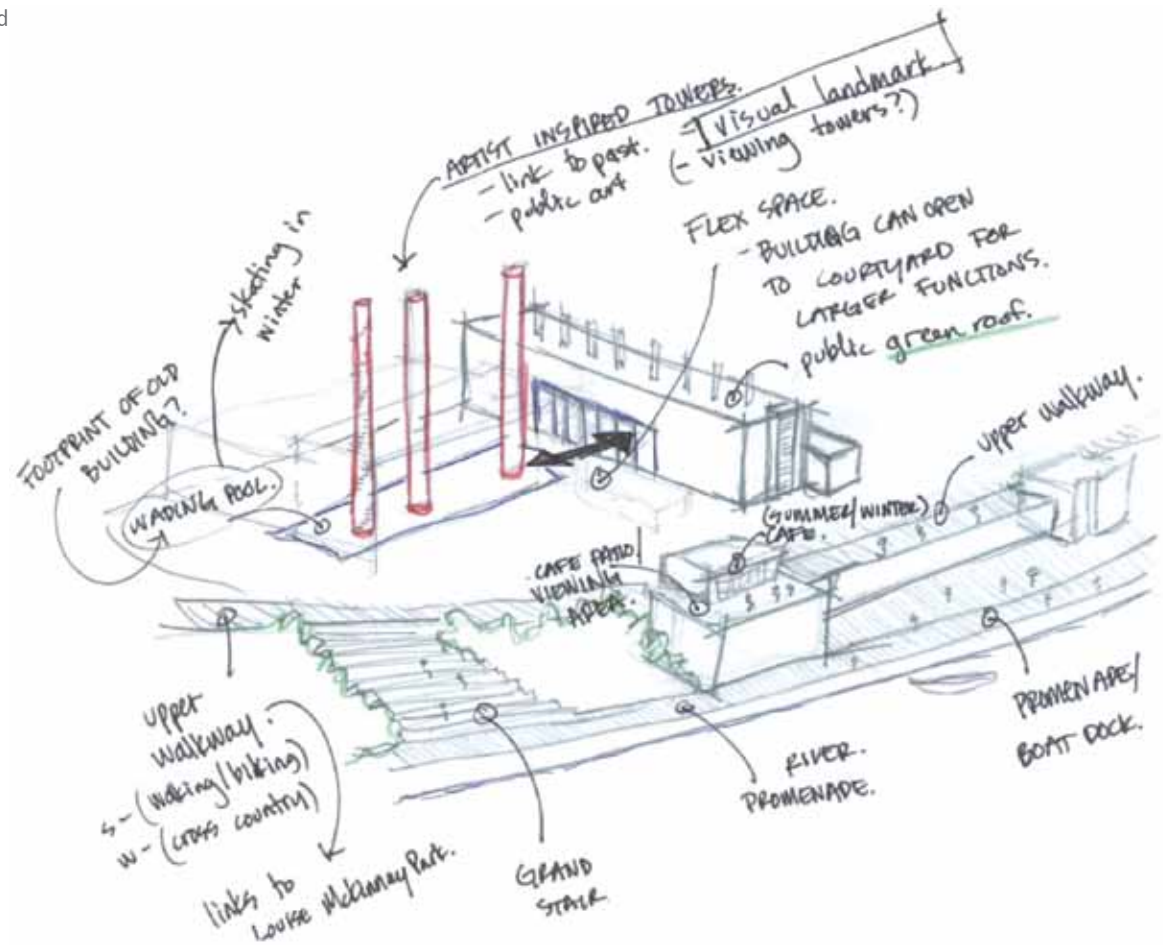
THOUGHTS ABOUT PLACE MAKING

As a starting point, participants in the consultation sessions were invited to think about great public spaces in general. They were asked for their thoughts on what kinds of elements make spaces welcoming and animated, with a view to how these might apply to the Rosedale site.

All ideas presented represent the general themes of the sessions, each were given equal weight and are not listed in any particular order.

**I WISH THIS WAS
LIGHT, OPEN,
BEAUTIFUL
AND FUN.**

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



PARTICIPANT INPUT

What Makes a Space Welcoming?

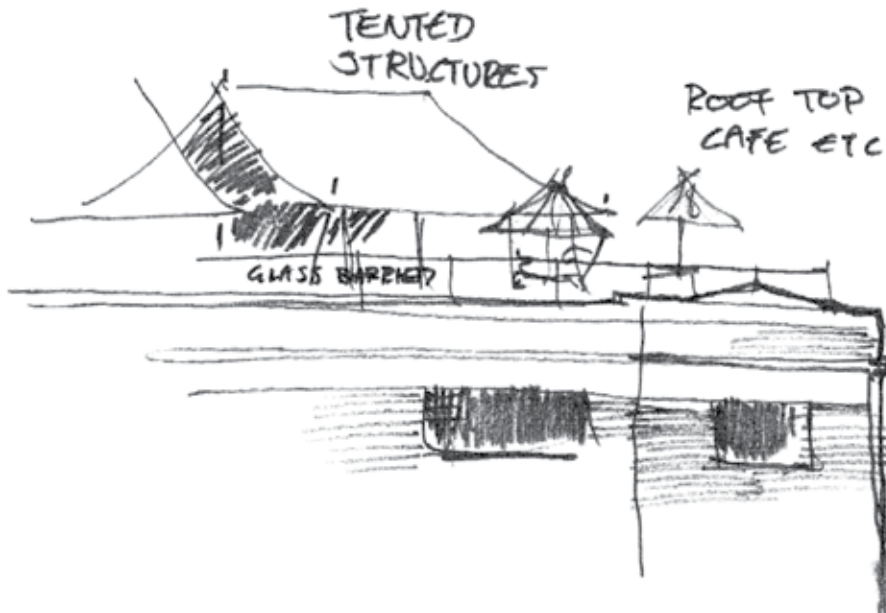
- **Accessible** – They are designed in age-friendly and barrier-free ways, so that anyone can access and enjoy them, regardless of their circumstances. Great spaces are also accessible through various methods of transport. People should be able to easily reach them using public transit, on foot, via bicycle, or other methods.
- **Comfortable** – They are comfortable for users, and have appropriate public facilities, such as rest rooms and seating areas. They are also designed to be enjoyable at all times of year, in any climate. They offer shelter from the elements, including shade from the sun and barriers from the wind and rain. They are well-maintained during inclement weather, with walking paths cleared of snow and climate control where necessary.
- **Safe** – They are places that people feel comfortable enjoying at any hour, with children or by themselves. Many aspects contribute to safety, including appropriate lighting and security.
- **Charismatic** – Rather than being “cookie cutter” or generic in their appearance, they have a uniqueness about them that often relates to their location. They are spaces that you “wouldn’t find just anywhere,” but instead express their distinct history and culture and reflect the character of their surroundings.
- **Varied** – They present an array of scales for people to enjoy. While built on a human scale overall, they provide a variety of sizes ranging from awe-inspiring to cozy and familiar. They may offer buildings or fixtures of impressive scale, while at the same time providing intimate areas allowing for private conversation or personal reflection.
- **Bright** – They are well-lit, making use of natural light, sunshine and windows to “bring the outside in.” They also make strategic use of artificial light – not only for function and safety, but also for art and aesthetics. Light is used creatively – to make a statement, to draw people in, to garner attention and contribute to the city skyline.
- **Interesting** – They have views and vistas that people can appreciate. These can be vast – like the panoramic view from a mountaintop; or they can be of more limited scale – like a well-manicured park or garden. There may be one or two signature views, along with a plethora of other little things to see. They may evoke emotion or stimulate thought. They might make people talk or take people’s breath away. Most importantly, the views of welcoming spaces are anything but boring.
- **Vibrant** – They are obvious “people places” that encourage gathering and foot traffic. They are places where people feel at home as a spectator or as a participant in activities. Their design and activity level is such that people intuitively know it is a place where interesting things happen.
- **Connected** – They are unique and stand out from the crowd, but still connect with the areas around them. For example, there is connectivity to adjacent attractions, parks, boardwalks and other public places. People feel a natural “flow” between the space and the other places to which it connects.

“The most important thing to me would be for the space to be visually stunning with lots of reference to its heritage.”

– PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

I WISH THIS WAS A LANDMARK THAT THE CITY CAN TAKE PRIDE IN.

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



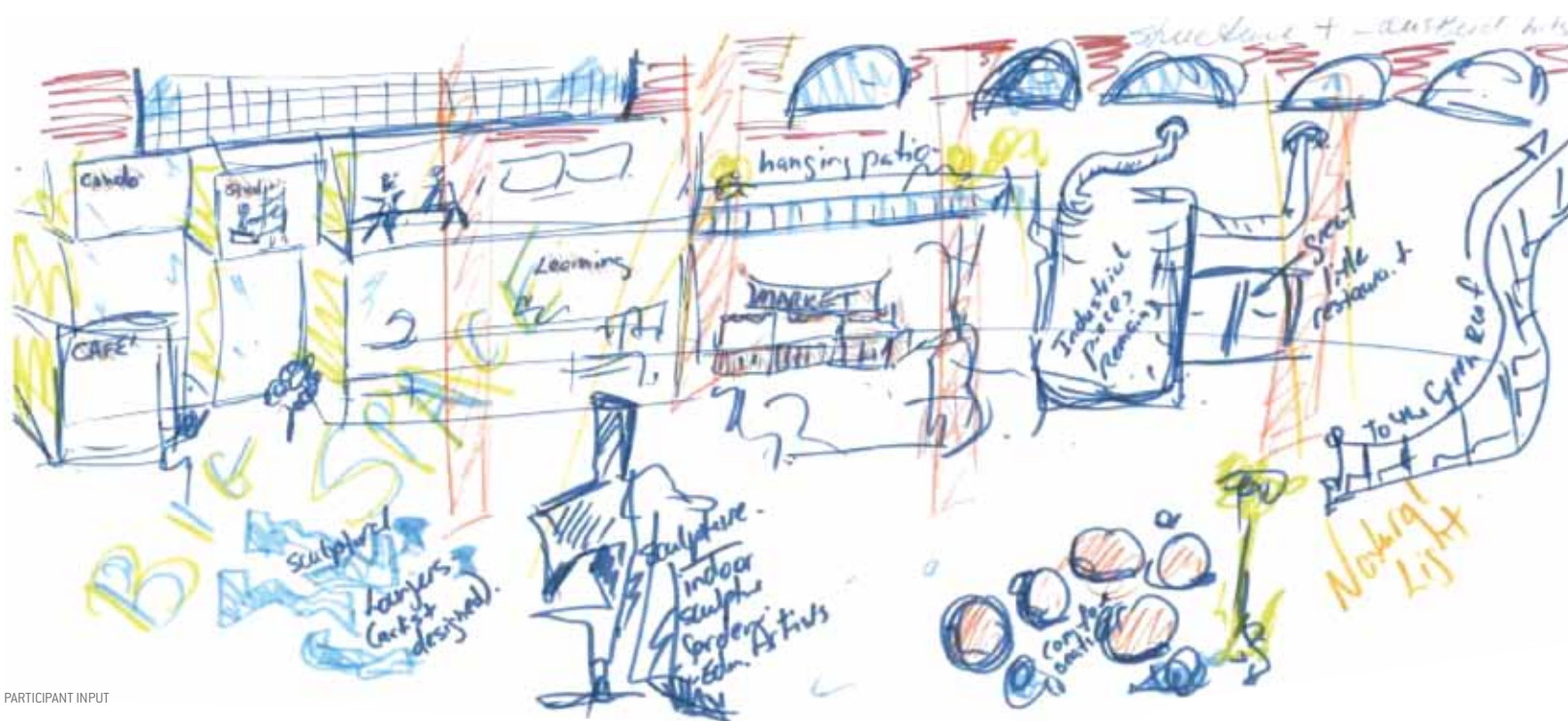
PARTICIPANT INPUT

- **Natural** – They are designed and conceived in ways that fit naturally with their surroundings. They incorporate nature, using greenery, flora and natural landscapes to provide signs of life amid man-made architecture and materials. In particular, great spaces make use of water, which people intrinsically link to life, freshness and well-being. They are designed in ways that allow people to enjoy, to experience and to feel a connectedness with water – be it an ocean, a lake or a large and impressive river. Water is made part of welcoming spaces, through fountains and waterfalls, aquariums and ponds, spray-parks and pools.
- **Navigable** – They are places that are easy to get around. Signs, directories and other forms of way-finding are clear, consistent and easy to read. Aside from these formal means of way-finding, welcoming spaces are intuitive in their design. People can find their way around with minimal or no guidance, allowing for informal exploration using their senses.
- **Affordable** – They cost little or nothing to be enjoyed. People are able to walk through and enjoy the space without feeling obligated or pressured into purchasing an item, dining at a restaurant or participating in a formal activity. The space is able to function as an experience all on its own where people can make their own free or low-cost fun.

What Makes a Space Animated?

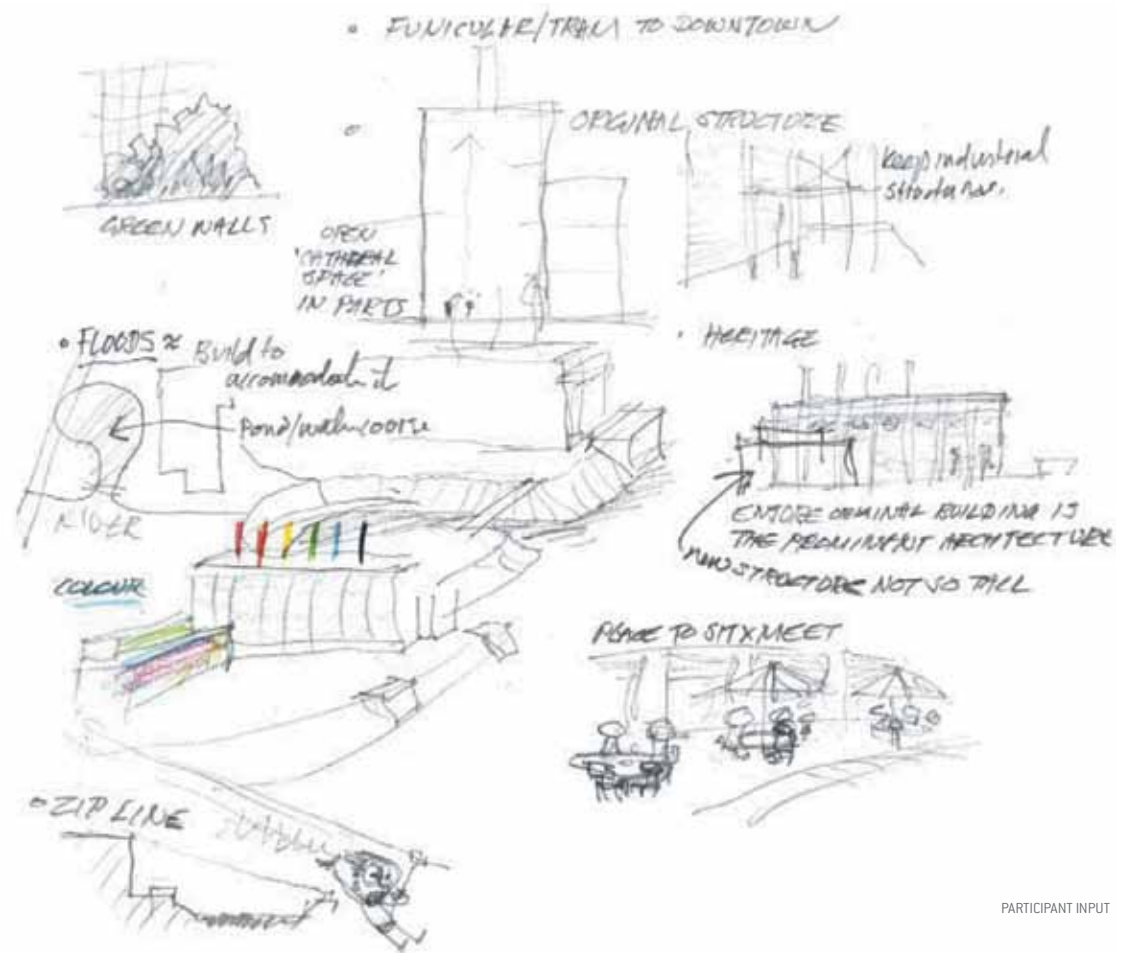
Edmontonians feel that animated spaces have....

- **Architecture** – They have interesting and engaging architecture. They can be bold, creative and modern in their presentation; or they can emphasize their historical qualities and features. Great spaces do both, contrasting the old with the new. The use of a variety of materials (e.g., brick, glass, steel, etc.) and the use of various levels (e.g., below grade and above grade) contribute to the space's animation.
- **Colors, sights and sounds** – They offer a variety of colours and sounds, stimulating people's senses and creating an engaging atmosphere. Bold and bright colours help a space make a statement and evoke feeling and emotion in visitors. Sounds signal life and activity. Around every corner of an animated space is something new to discover.



PARTICIPANT INPUT

- **Diversity** – Rather than having only one thing to do, they offer a variety of uses, events and attractions. These spaces also feature a diversity of peoples and cultures – from music, to food, to events. People can have a new and distinct experience each and every time they visit.
- **Something worth experiencing** – There is something attention-getting that anchors the space – whether a sight, a sound or a taste. It may be an art exhibit, a performance stage, a great restaurant, a marketplace, a school or a circus. It may be an impressive building, a beautiful park, or a spectacular view. It may be several of these things at once, or it may be constantly changing. Regardless, it is something people find interesting enough and worthwhile enough to make the visit.
- **People** – There must be people to interact with, to gather with, or to simply watch. People are the creators of colours, sounds and activities. These spaces can involve large numbers of people in certain areas and smaller groups in others. It can also provide areas for intimate gatherings, or for individual activity.
- **Programming** – They need not always be noisy or always be quiet, but they are always eventful, offering things to see or do. There are regular events, gatherings and other formalized programming, such as exhibits, classes, markets or performances. There may be ongoing purposes, such as places to dine or to shop. These spaces also allow for informal activities, like a picnic, a stroll, busking, painting, running, or simple relax and enjoyment.



PARTICIPANT INPUT

TOWARDS A PROGRAMME STATEMENT FOR THE ROSSDALE SITE

With a view to creating a welcoming, animated space, participants offered their perspectives on several aspects of the site's redevelopment.

Participants were invited to share ideas for the site – including the available grounds, the pump stations and the building. They also shared their thoughts about the type of scale and impact the re-purposed site should have.

Finally, recognizing that re-purposing of the site may take considerable time, participants were invited to brainstorm interim or initial uses for the site in the short term.

It is clear that Edmontonians envision a repurposed site that acts as a new kind of generator in the City of Edmonton. A space that enables residents to enjoy the river valley for recreation and entertainment, but which also actively plays a role in generating new and innovative ideas, products and experiences.

Edmontonians see the Rossdale site as an ideal location for the creation and showcasing of arts and culture – everything from paintings and performances, to food, fashion, architecture, industrial design, and more. It would act as a creative hub – a place that hosts, fosters and brings together members from a range of creative industries, providing capacity for them to collaborate and construct. It would also welcome the public – to watch, participate in and enjoy the fruits of those creative efforts.

Edmontonians describe a new kind of power plant that incubates, harnesses, and produces creative talent – always offering new things for citizens and visitors to see, feel, taste, touch, enjoy and be inspired by.







Ideas for the Site

- Recognize history

Participants stressed the importance of honouring history in the site's redevelopment. The Rossdale site has been a special place in history. For Aboriginal peoples, the site is a sacred place, serving as a burial ground and a place of ceremony and commerce. The site also served as a cradle of the City of Edmonton, and was the place where Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier made the Province of Alberta in 1905. It has also been a part of the city's industrial history, powering the city's activity, growth and evolution.

People said any redevelopment needs to pay homage to this rich history. This could be accomplished through the kinds of uses and activities hosted at the site. For example, the site could host museums and interpretive centres dedicated to Aboriginal culture, the history of Aboriginal peoples in the region; the story of Edmonton's formation and evolution; or industrial history. Participants also said history should be reflected in the architecture and design of the site. In addition to the historical buildings, the site could include Aboriginal architecture and maintain design elements that reflect the industrial use of the space over time.

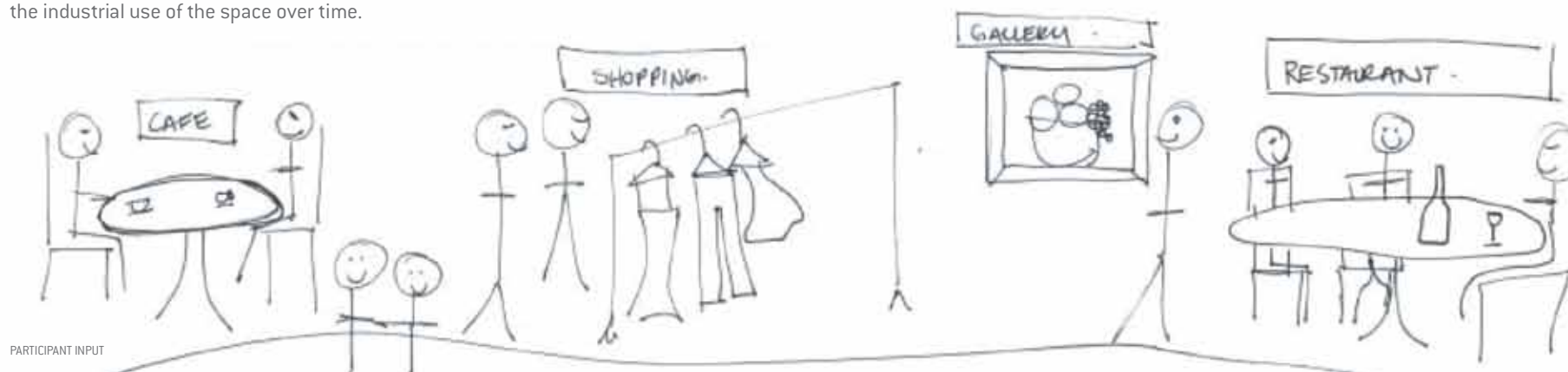
- Incorporate culture

Participants also felt the site should showcase the rich cultures that have been associated with the site over the course of history. Aboriginal culture was particularly referenced, with many people suggesting that the site should seek to incorporate Aboriginal art and artists, and objects and emblems of cultural significance to Aboriginal peoples. Properly presented, these would not only honour the Aboriginal history of the site, but also serve as leaping-off points for cross-cultural education and learning.

At the same time, participants felt the re-purposed site should be a place that is welcoming to all types of cultures. Edmonton is a multi-cultural city, and every culture can make unique contributions. People envisioned a site that hosts and offers a range of visual, performing and culinary arts from a range of cultures

“History is not static – we make it everyday as artists, engineers and shopworkers. We need to honour the past while providing a dynamic modern cultural space for all.”

– PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



PARTICIPANT INPUT

- Design it for year-round enjoyment

A view consistently stressed throughout the consultations was the need to design the re-purposed site for year-round enjoyment. A large number of participants pointed out that Edmonton is a winter city, and spends much of the year in conditions of snow, ice and cold temperatures. Proper thought needs to be put into the site's design so that it is comfortable to use during all four seasons, otherwise it will be a dead space during winter months. Many ideas were suggested including: heated outdoor patios; plenty of heated shelter spaces; water features that could be converted to skating areas in winter; and the use of covered walkways.

Participants also said the site must be designed and host activities at all times of the day and week. It should be a place that people have reason to visit during the day and the evening, whether on a weekend or weekday. For example, it should be a place where downtown workers come to spend the lunch hour or grab a meal or drink after the work day; and a place where residents come to enjoy plays, concerts, recreation and other pursuits during the evenings and weekends.

- Friendly to families, accessible to all

While the site should offer something for everyone, a great number of participants stressed the importance of creating a “family-friendly” place. The re-developed site should be a place that parents can bring their children for a day-long outing, featuring several activities that children of all ages could enjoy. Ideas included spray parks and skating rink, buskers and street performers, and programmed entertainment geared to children, such as children's plays and hands-on art activities. As a family-friendly place designed for year-round enjoyment, the Rosssdale site could give Edmontonians a space to bring their families besides a shopping mall.

- Sustainable

As a part of Edmonton's majestic river valley, the Rosssdale site should contribute to keeping the river and surrounding valley clean and healthy. Participants suggested the site be re-developed with sustainability in mind. This would not only be environmentally responsible, but if done right it could also keep utility and other operating costs minimal. Numerous ideas for environmental sustainability were provided, including: rooftop gardens; use of LED lighting; modern heating and cooling systems; the use of solar energy; and catching and recycling of water.

I WISH THIS WAS THE REASON FAMILIES MOVED DOWNTOWN.

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- Preserve historic architecture

As major structural assets of the site, the low pressure plant, switch house and pump stations drew attention from participants. While people recognized the buildings might have heritage designations, they cautioned not to let this restrict creativity in re-purposing the buildings. An almost unanimous view was to maintain the industrial character of the buildings, especially the large and spacious low pressure plant. There is nothing else quite like this building in Edmonton. The high ceilings and large volume enable the building to be put to a variety of uses and accommodate a variety of items, such as large sculptures or installations. Participants said to avoid chopping up the interior into permanently walled-off rooms and offices.

Another common view was to marry new, contemporary architecture to the buildings while letting their historic character shine through. Contrasting “old with new” has been done successfully with many historic buildings; this approach could make the buildings more interesting and more functional. People also saw similar architectural potential in the pump houses, with many noting their location makes them ideal for river-side dining spots.



PARTICIPANT INPUT

I WISH THIS WAS A NEW KIND OF POWER PLANT — OF CREATIVITY, CULTURE AND INNOVATION.

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- A place of many uses

Participants said the Rosssdale site should host a variety of uses, rather than a single use. People envisioned a re-developed site that attracts many different people for many different reasons. Some visitors might use the outside grounds to fish, jog, or relax with a coffee, while at the same time other visitors would be enjoying a musical performance inside.

The low pressure plant building was especially discussed, with people saying it should be re-developed as an open, programmable space that allows for many different transitory and modular uses. For example, the building might host a Farmer's Market, an art exhibit and a concert performance all in the same day. A multitude of uses were described for the building, and for the most part people did not see these as competing uses. Instead, they felt a properly designed building and site could accommodate all of these uses, including:

- Shopping and boutiques run by local and independent owners;
- Farmers markets;
- Meeting space for community groups;
- Office space of non-profit organizations;
- Restaurants, coffee shops and food vendors;
- Special events such as wedding receptions or fundraisers;
- Arts and culture events and performances;
- Recreational activities, workshops and events.

- A hub of creativity

Again owing to the size and versatility of the building and the desire for “something to always be happening on the site,” participants identified arts and culture as a prime purpose for a re-developed Rosssdale site. Arts and culture were seen in the broadest sense, including visual, musical, theatrical, performing and industrial arts. One creative idea was to use part of the low pressure plant building as a circus arts training and performance facility.

Importantly, the site has the potential to not only showcase arts and culture, but to serve as a broader hub of creativity. People envisioned the site as an incubator for arts and culture, providing studio space for budding artists and creatives — especially Aboriginal artisans — to explore their talents and generate new ideas and creations. However, it would not serve as a secluded retreat, but would be open to the public as a working, breathing power plant of art and culture. In addition to engaging in other activities at the site, visitors would be able to walk around and see the creative process in action. Artists and creatives could make, showcase and sell their products and even offer workshops and classes to interested visitors.

“Imagine sitting by the river, enjoying a glass of wine or hot chocolate beside the old pumphouse that’s been turned into a café.”

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- A place of recreation

The site's location along the river valley trail system naturally led participants to see it as a place for recreational pursuits. The river valley is used by Edmontonians for all kinds of informal recreation, such as running, walking, cycling, rollerblading and cross-country skiing. A re-developed site should allow for and facilitate these activities. People noted the site could also allow boaters and rafters a place to temporarily dock so they can take a break from their water activities to explore the site.

Participants said the site should also be a place that offers recreational activities. These need not be confined to the grounds of the site, but could incorporate the broader river valley. One idea was to run a zipline from the south bank of the river to the site. People also suggested climbing walls, tightropes, and other adventure activities that make use of the natural aspects of the river valley. The site is also adjacent to Telus Field. This provides an opportunity to explore linkages and collaborations that could enhance recreation in the area overall.

- A reconnection to the river

One of the most impressive and most unique aspects of the site is its proximity to the North Saskatchewan River. Participants stressed the importance of maintaining this feature, and using it to enable visitors to reconnect with the river. While Edmonton has an impressive river valley, it was noted that people do not interact a great deal with the river itself. A re-developed Rosedale site could provide many opportunities for people to enjoy the water close-up. Creating a riverfront promenade, allowing riverfront cafes and restaurants and facilitating water-based activities (both organized and informal) were among the ideas provided by participants.

Participants also said the site should enable people to enjoy the river at all times of year, and from within the building. For example, one suggestion was to install garage-like retractable walls that can open up the building to the outside on spring, summer and autumn days and nights. The use of heated seating areas and patios could enable people to sit river-side even in winter months.

I WISH THIS WAS A CREATIVE HOTSPOT OF ARTISTS, DESIGNERS.

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Thoughts about Scale and Impact

- Limited scale, large impact

A common view expressed by participants was that the scale of the re-developed Rosssdale site will be naturally limited by its size and location. The site is “only so big” and is bounded by the North Saskatchewan River, a major road, and facilities that will remain for the foreseeable future (i.e., the water treatment plant and substation). In addition, the site is not particularly accessible at the present time. It is not directly served by public transportation and does not have parking. These factors all place practical limits on the possible scale of development.

Despite this, participants felt the site could be a place that attracts and welcomes a considerable number of people on a regular basis. Rather than serving primarily as a place for special events (such as Northlands) where large numbers would gather occasionally, the site should be a place of daily, ongoing activity (such as Whyte Avenue) that people are consistently visiting for various reasons. People envisioned a vibrant “district,” “campus” or “popular neighbourhood” type of atmosphere, with waves of activity and visitors.

Participants also said that while the site's re-development might be limited in scale, it could still have a huge impact. The most significant opportunity is the site's position in the river valley. Strategically designed to complement other river valley features and attractions, albeit in a limited way, the new Rosssdale site could serve to markedly enhance river valley system overall.



PARTICIPANT INPUT

- Build for the Capital Region, welcome the world

A strong message received from participants was that the site should be re-developed first and foremost for residents of the Capital Region. While the site should welcome and engage tourists, it should not be envisioned with this as the primary goal. Instead, participants urged an organic approach. If the site is designed and built for local residents, it will be appreciated and used. Residents will visit it regularly, fostering its popularity and making it a point of local pride. This way, when local residents welcome family or friends from out of town they will be more likely to bring them to the site. Over time, the notoriety of the site may spread such that it becomes known as a “must see” place or even a primary reason for people to visit Edmonton.

On the other hand, if the site is conceived and built to be a “world class” tourist magnet, it will likely fail. Participants stressed that this development needs grassroots appeal. It must be something that will be practical, unique and enjoyable to local residents.

- Complement existing attractions and strengths

People suggested the site's purpose and ultimate design be considered in relation to existing, current and future developments. This would include developments that are immediately adjacent, nearby, across the river, and throughout the river valley. For example:

- Fort Edmonton Park;
- John Janzen Nature Centre;
- Edmonton Valley Zoo;
- Hawrelak Park;
- Government House Park;
- Victoria Golf Course and Victoria Park;
- the re-development of the Legislature grounds;
- Kinsmen Sports Centre;
- the new Walterdale Bridge;
- the University of Alberta;
- Louise McKinney Park;
- development of The Quarters;
- Muttart Conservatory; and
- development of West Rosedale.

The site could be a capstone that aims to knit together these developments to lift the overall city core and river valley, and foster greater downtown revitalization.

“Being near the water makes this a natural place for people to gather. It is a functional location that would let everyone experience the beauty of Edmonton”

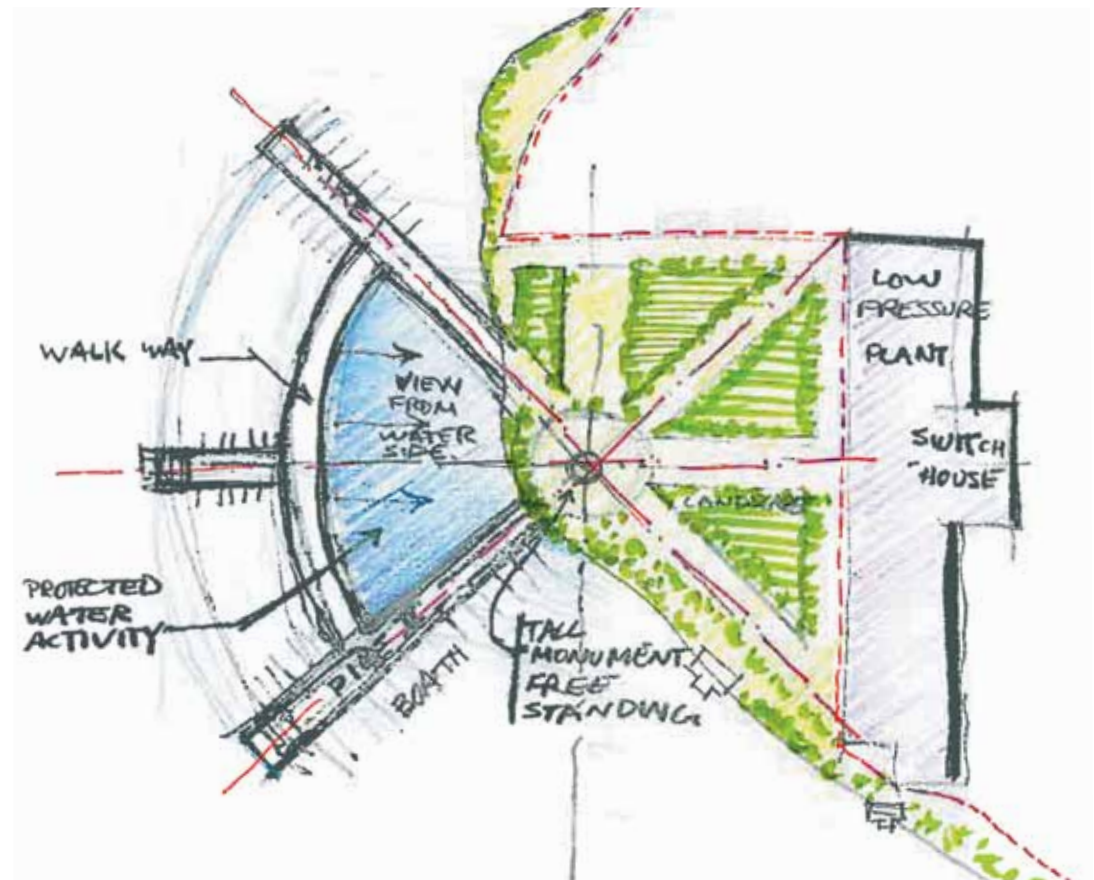
— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- Think about access

A key consideration relating to the site's scale and impact will be access to the site. Participants noted that improvements will need to be made in this regard. They envisioned a site that is accessible in numerous ways – on foot; via the river valley trail system; and by public transit. Many suggested a bus loop that would include Rosedale, the Legislative Grounds, Downtown, Louise McKinney Park and Muttart. Some suggested that the site could be designed to welcome and be accessed through other forms of transport. These included:

- water taxis;
- boats and canoes;
- a funicular, to enable ease of transport to downtown; and

The issue of parking raised divergent views. Some said that parking would be impractical at or near the site, given its location and size. Others said that the re-development should not accommodate parking in any way, thereby encouraging people to use public transportation. Still others stressed the need for parking, given the nature of the city and the probability of inclement weather during much of the year. It was suggested that people will be considerably less likely to visit the site without the convenience of parking. One idea was to make parking available somewhere off-site and establish a shuttle service to take people to the site.



PARTICIPANT INPUT

What to do in the Short Term

- Let Edmontonians explore and visit

At a minimum, participants agreed, the Rosedale site should be made accessible to the public. Currently the site is sort of an obstacle along the river valley trail system, interrupting smooth flow between the western and eastern arms of the valley. Opening up the site would capitalize on the existing public path and immediately improve the site's connectivity to the river valley. This would also give Edmontonians the opportunity to explore an area of the valley that has largely been restricted for some time. People said it is important for local residents to become acquainted with the site, so that it is no longer seen as an "off limits" place, but a space where public activities occur. The site's proximity to the river would enable Edmontonians a chance to touch and interact with the river up close. At the same time, people could see and gain a better appreciation of the rich history of the site.

The site should also be immediately available to temporary and mobile uses that give people reasons to visit the site. For example, allowing street vendors and food trucks would make the site a place to visit for lunch or a snack. Artists, buskers and street performers should also be welcome to use the site. Special events could also be allowed on the site. The site offers a place to gather and the majestic river as a backdrop, making it a possible space for weddings, receptions, parties and other events.

- Create a buzz

Opportunities should also be explored to "create a buzz" around the site. Doing creative and interesting things on and with the site would attract the attention of Edmontonians and generate conversation. The site would increasingly be regarded as a place "where neat things happen," piquing the interest of people and encouraging them to visit and explore.

Participants offered a number of ideas, including:

- Light up the site, especially during the winter months when daylight is at a premium. This could include light shows and creative illumination of the smokestacks and buildings.
- Install anchored "floating fire pits" in the river adjacent to the site, which would be visually striking and illuminate the area in a way that speaks to the site's rugged history and surroundings;
- Install an outdoor climbing wall on the side of the large building, and make it an ice climbing wall in winter;
- Hold open-air markets, even during the winter months – such as a Christmas outdoor market;
- Have artists use the space to create striking and conversation-starting art installations;
- Use shipping containers to create temporary structures on the site;
- Issue coloured smoke or steam out of the remaining chimneys;
- Have regular fireworks displays at the site – not just on holidays, but on random weekends;
- Host outdoor movie viewings, using a huge white sheet against the side of a building for a projection screen – something that could be seen from across the river.

"We have to let people use it right away for just about anything – no matter how unique or bizarre. You can't manufacture creativity – you have to let it just happen."

– PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- Use the buildings

The buildings on the site offer a range of possibilities. Participants said these buildings should be made accessible and usable in the short term, even if in a “rough, bare bones” kind of way. The important thing is that the buildings start being used for events and activities, again to bring attention and visitors to the site. People said the buildings should also remain accessible despite any further construction that might occur in or near them, such as appending new architecture or additions.

A common suggestion was to fix up the low pressure plant as a space that can be used for many different types of gatherings. People envisioned the space being very versatile and programmable. Rather than one fixed permanent use, it should accommodate modular and temporary uses. These include:

- Farmers’, artists and other markets;
- Theatrical performances;
- Art galleries;
- Artists’ studio space;
- Meeting space for community groups;
- Space for other meetings and events;
- Receptions;
- Film viewings.

Likewise, people said the pumphouses should be utilized as soon as is practical. Given their unique size and riverfront location, the most common suggestions were to use these buildings for performance venues or dining establishments. One suggestion was to actively recruit an experienced or up-and-coming professional chef to establish a restaurant in one of the pumphouses. The creation of “must-go” place would give people a reason to visit and explore the site and generate word-of-mouth promotion of the Rosedale re-development.

- Take risk and allow for innovation

A key message delivered by participants was that fostering a vibrant hub of creativity, commerce and recreation takes guts, grit and imagination. If re-development is to be successful, then the city will need to allow for risk and innovation. When someone proposes an activity or temporary use for the site or buildings in the short term, the default response should be, “Sure, what can we do to help?”

The city might also need to examine current bylaws and policies to ensure these do not inadvertently act as barriers to creative activities and uses of the site. For example, policies should enable heated outdoor patios throughout the calendar year. As a general comment, participants said that for the Rosedale site to be successful, city bylaws and policies will need to encourage, not discourage, developments in the river valley.

“Architecturally, let’s continue the signature ‘pyramid’ theme, like City Hall and Muttart Conservatory – open and airy, with glass and natural light.”

– PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

**A SACRED AND
SPECIAL PLACE**

A SACRED AND SPECIAL PLACE

Given the site's special significance for Aboriginal peoples, a dedicated consultation session was held with members of Aboriginal communities. While many of their ideas were consistent with the input received in other consultation sessions, representatives of Aboriginal communities offered additional, unique perspectives about the site.

An overall theme of this consultation was respect. Participants stressed the need to have respect around all aspects of re-development – respect for the site's history and sacred nature; respect for Aboriginal culture; respect for the environment; and respect for Aboriginal peoples of the past, present and future.

Key themes emerging from Aboriginal communities included the following:

- **Avoid Land Disturbance**

"This is a sacred place." That message was sent clearly and strongly. People said it is absolutely crucial to remember that the Rosedale site is an ancient burial ground for Aboriginal peoples. Accordingly, re-development plans for the site should seek to avoid disturbance of the land. Some expressed concern that protocols have been missed when remains have been found in the past. To rectify these errors going forward, proper protocols should be put in place before any structural re-purposing is commenced on the site. This way the site can be re-developed in a way that respects Aboriginal traditions.

- **Recognize and Acknowledge the Indigenous Historical Significance of the Site**

Re-development should also reflect the site's historical significance for Aboriginal peoples. In addition to significant archaeological finds, the dirt of the site has a significant story to tell. This was a place that served a variety of important functions, including a place for ceremonies. Any vision for the site must include a sense of context and history. People visiting the site should have the opportunity to learn and understand the history of the land for Aboriginal peoples and the significance of the site. Some suggested that the site could become a world heritage site, as it a place not only of Edmonton's history, but of human history.

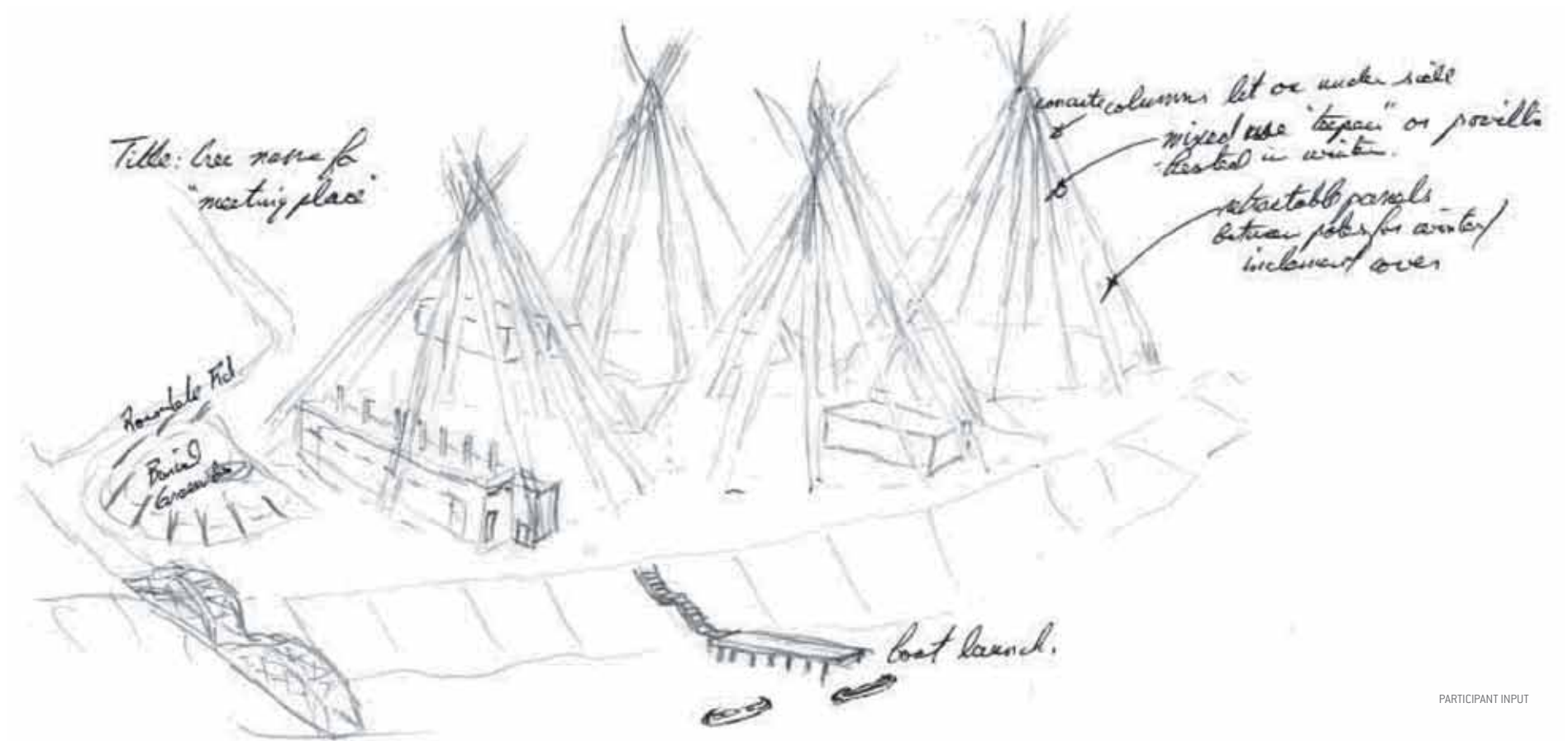
- **Reflect an Aboriginal Perspective**

Given its historical and cultural significance to Aboriginal peoples, the site should be conceived and designed with an Aboriginal perspective in mind. As one individual explained, "Aboriginal people should be able to see themselves reflected in the space." People said an excellent way to do this would be through structural and landscape architecture. The design team should be familiar with Aboriginal architecture, and Aboriginal architects should be engaged as part of that team. Numerous suggestions were made for incorporating Aboriginal influences throughout the site, including:

- the use of interpretive panels and bas-reliefs;
- incorporation of the medicine wheel entrances at the four directions;
- incorporation of important symbols, emblems and structures; and
- the use of plants and greenery of importance to Aboriginal culture.

"It's about people, the river and community – it's about water, energy and the building blocks of life."

– PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



PARTICIPANT INPUT

I WISH THIS WAS A PLACE WHERE THE HISTORY OF EDMONTON – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE – COMES ALIVE.

– PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- **Use the Site to Enhance Cultural Awareness and Understanding**

It was observed that the Rosedale site is the very heart of Edmonton's shared history between First Nations and the many European, Asian, African Nations that have come since. It has been a gathering place of numerous kinds, including a crossroads of many distinct cultures. Accordingly, the site is an ideal place for enhancing cultural awareness and understanding of Aboriginal peoples. The site has the potential to be a "living textbook" of discovery and wonder about Aboriginal history, culture and life. Some people suggested that a cultural interpretive centre could be designed, operated and maintained by Aboriginal peoples on the site. Another suggestion was to establish spaces for Aboriginal ceremonies at the site – those that are private, and those that can be shared.

Consistent with that idea, people said the site should be a place that showcases Aboriginal arts and culture, including visual arts, sculpting, handicrafts, food and other creations. The space could be used as a working arts studio for Aboriginal artists and artisans, which people could visit to watch the creative process, learn about the culture and purchase goods.

- **Involve Aboriginal Youth**

The space should also aim to engage and host programming for Aboriginal youth. People said this could become an important meeting place, and a healing place, for youth. It could also be a place where Aboriginal youth can learn, reconnect with and be immersed in their culture and traditions. Another key point was that youth should be invited to participate in envisioning and designing the site, so that they feel connected with and participate in activities on the re-developed site.

- **Make it an Inclusive Place**

Also, everyone should be able to visit the site. It should be an inclusive place that is open to different cultures and views. People of all ages, socio-economic backgrounds and circumstances should be welcome on the site.

- **Engage Aboriginal People in the Re-development Process**

Most importantly, Aboriginal peoples must be engaged in meaningful dialogue throughout the re-development process. Many suggested the establishment of a steering or advisory committee, which could provide ongoing input at all stages of the process. It was said that the wisdom and insights of elders are essential for guiding progress and ensuring the re-developed is informed by tradition and history. Establishing a relationship of trust and collaboration can help ensure the final re-development serves the needs of all.

"We love our river valley but we're so disconnected from our river. This space should change that."

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK



PARTICIPANT INPUT

**I WISH THIS WAS
A RIVERBANK
DESTINATION,
NOT JUST A PLACE
YOU RUN OR
CYCLE THROUGH.**

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

The results of the consultation process demonstrate there is strong and broad-based support to re-develop the Rossdale site into a truly unique destination in the river valley.

The rich ideas, views and perspectives offered by Edmontonians provide excellent guidance on how to envision and approach this significant undertaking. They offer a series of key elements that can be used to inform the creation of a refined programme statement for the re-purposing of the Rossdale site.

- **Design the site for Edmontonians** – A repurposed Rossdale site should meet the needs and interests of local residence, so that it is frequently used, widely appreciated and seen as a point of pride for Edmontonians.
- **Make the site accessible** – A repurposed Rossdale site should be accessible by a range of methods, including traditional and alternative forms of transport; and be designed in ways that make it age-friendly and barrier-free so that it is a truly inclusive place.
- **Make the site sustainable** – A repurposed Rossdale site should be environmentally sustainable so that it contributes to and supports a clean and healthy river valley; and it should be economically sustainable so that it can be enjoyed over the long term.
- **Celebrate the past while building for the future** – A repurposed Rossdale site should reflect and honour the rich history of the lands and peoples who lived on and interacted with the lands, while serving as a symbol of our city's dynamic present and confident future.

→ places to walk
→ places to perform (outside + inside)
→ places to sit and gather along the river
→ places to play - Skate / BSB
→ places to eat - outside + inside
→ places to see people make things
→ places to stay - Hotels
GLAMPING
→ places to see ART
→ places to see NATURE
→ places to reflect upon our City

PARTICIPANT INPUT

- **Respect the sacred and special nature of the site** – A repurposed Rossdale site must be designed in ways that respect the sacred nature and special significance of the land for Aboriginal peoples, including a protocol for respecting human remains that may be encountered.
- **Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives and culture** – A repurposed Rossdale site should reflect and incorporate Aboriginal influences, history, arts, culture and perspectives; and should be designed in ongoing consultation with Aboriginal communities.
- **Develop the site for year-round use** – A repurposed Rossdale site should be designed so that it can be used and enjoyed indoors and outdoors, during days and evenings, weekdays and weekends, and throughout all four seasons.
- **Allow for a multitude of uses** – A repurposed Rossdale site should accommodate a variety of uses and purposes, including arts and culture, recreation, shopping, dining, and learning.
- **Integrate the development with its surroundings** – A repurposed Rossdale site should be integrated with surrounding developments in the river valley, the downtown and across the river, in a way that complements existing uses and contributes to the overall enhancement of the city.

- **Preserve and refresh existing buildings** – A repurposed Rossdale site should make use of the existing buildings in ways that preserve their historic and industrial character and allowing for modern updates; with the low pressure plant maintained as a large, open, versatile, programmable space that accommodates many transitory uses.
- **Plan for the long term** – A repurposed Rossdale site should be an enduring piece of Edmonton's river valley that is accessible, useful, meaningful and enjoyable for current and future generations of Edmontonians, and evolves to meet the city's changing needs.
- **Take action in the short term** – Repurposing of the Rossdale site should begin immediately, with the site and buildings made accessible to the public as soon as practicable, so that these can be used in diverse and creative ways that attract attention, generate conversation, foster innovation and encourage Edmontonians to visit and explore the site, the adjacent river, and the significant history and meaning inherent in the land.

Throughout this process, Edmontonians brought forward imaginative, rich ideas driven by their enthusiasm for turning the Rossdale Generating Station and Riverfront Plaza into a vibrant landmark for our city.

“If it’s going to work, we’ll need to overcome our aversion to having shopping and dining establishments in the river valley.”

— PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

