

I would like to start by acknowledging that I live, and this work was produced, in the territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, Stó:lō, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

This project is based on a site located in Treaty 6 territory and used by many Indigenous peoples, including nehiyawak, Nakota, Dene, Métis, Saulteaux, Niitsitapi, and others.

PEHONAN | FORT-DES-PRAIRIES | THE FLATS | ROSSDALE

by

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B.Sc., University of Alberta, 2014

A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE (PLANNING)

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

School of Community and Regional Planning

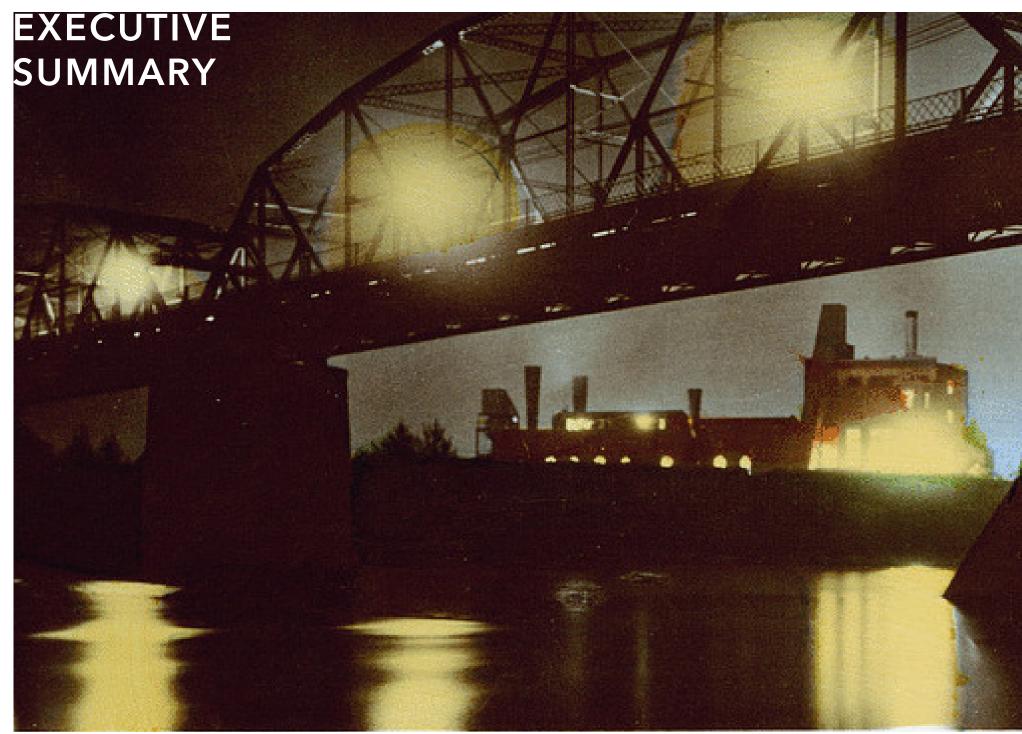
We accept this project as conforming to the required standard

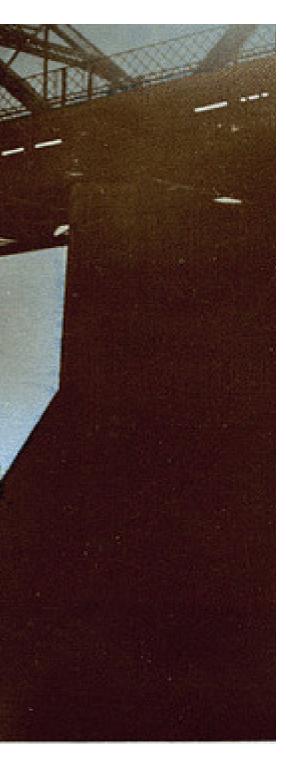
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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2017

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Pehonan/Fort-des-Prairies/The Flats/Rossdale is an area located on the northern bank of the North Saskatchewan River in central Edmonton, within the area covered by Treaty 6.

The Flats are a site symbolically important to the birth of Edmonton and Alberta, and are an important gathering and ceremonial site in the Indigenous heritage of the prairies. However, in the current time, there is little there to recognize and honour the important history of the Flats. It is perhaps the most significant site in Alberta - yet most locals know nothing about it. To make things worse, there is little physically remaining in the area that speaks to its unique stories.

This report engages the fundamental question: "How can we integrate the heritage of the Flats into the planning and urban design of the area?" It presents several concepts intended to foster critical reflection on relevant issues and speculate on possible futures.

New modes of relations are required

With a movement towards reconciliation, and recognition that most Indigenous people in Canada live in cities, one of the fundamental questions that planning in cities should address is the coexistence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in cities and the governance of cities (Porter, 2013).

This is a profound challenge to planning as different cultures have varying conceptualizations of space and place and of human environment relations.

Much of the actual impact from a city's governance

is in the nuts and bolts - the policy, the budgeting, the implementation, yet many gestures from municipalities remain largely symbolic – such as territory acknowledgements or celebrations.

It is common for Indigenous people and nations to be seen as "stakeholders" in consultation processes, rather than people and nations who have long-standing knowledge and right to the land and rights to sovereignty and self-determination (Porter, 2013).

So, what does this mean for urban planning and how we should engage Indigenous people in the future?

First, we must consciously decentre "Western" authority over procedural and substantive knowledge. Planning and policy-making are not value neutral.

Second, attempting to create meaningful measures of autonomy it is essential to be "guided by mutual respect and recognition, the spirit of historic and contemporary treaty relationships, constitutional arrangements, and continuing group rights" (Walker & Belanger, 2013, p. 198).

As Walker and Belanger (2013) details, five ways to move forward are:

- Ensuring a full partnership with a strong standard of mutual recognition,
- Creating protocol agreements on specific subjects,
- Moving towards joint governance in specific ways,
- Creating services and compatibility, agreements for urban reserves, and
- Better Aboriginal citizen participation and engagement.

The Flats are a symbolic centre

The Flats are symbolically important to the birth of Edmonton and Alberta, and are an important gathering and ceremonial site in the Indigenous heritage of the prairies.

The Flats is and has always been a gathering and trading place. First, it has been used by Indigenous people (including nehiyawak (Cree), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and many others) as a gathering and ceremony place. One of the reasons the forts were placed in this location was this significance as a trading and gathering place. It continued to gather people together, as the place of the Edmonton Exhibition for several years and as a regional centre for recreation.

The Flats are a symbolic centre: from being a gathering and sacred place for Indigenous peoples, to the location of the forts as trading and distribution centres of the region, to the place where the inauguration of Alberta took place, and the current location of the Alberta legislature.

Since Edmonton has been founded, the Flats have been considered in service of "the real city"-that is, the city on the high grounds. It has served, and still serves, as a connector between the high ground on the south and north sides of the North Saskatchewan River, as well as a provider of services and utilities. It has provided industrial land, electricity, sewage treatment, traffic arteries, and regional recreational facilities.

The Flats lack identity

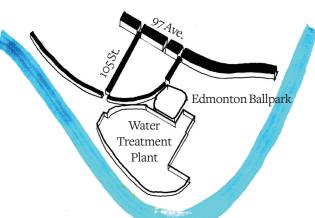
Today, the Flats is mostly void of identity with little memory of the significance of the site. Large vacancies dominate and barriers partition the neighbourhood.

Large vacancies dominate: most of the central area of the Flats consists of vacant lots and empty space. Some are used as parking lots while others simply sit empty.

Barriers partition the neighbourhood: major traffic arteries cross through the Flats, and large sites for utilities create effective blockades.

Topographically it is a floodplain, sitting below the level of most of Edmonton, and is used in service of the rest of the city for traffic and utilities.

A few historical buildings remain, including the Ortona Armoury, Ross Flats Apartments, Rossdale School, and most significantly, the Rossdale Power Plant.





Top diagram shows majorbarriers in the Flats. Bottom diagram is a figure ground, showing amount of vacancy in central Flats area.

Design Concepts

Four design concepts are presented: two overall plans, one pragmatic, one provocative; street design; and engagement process and programming. Each design concept includes precedents which inspired the design, the overall intent, and further details. These designs are by no means complete, but meant to speculate on possible futures and provoke further ideas.

The first concept is a pragmatic overall plan, retaining existing roads and alignments while creating distinct districts that use public space design and materiality to emphasize different stories of the history of the Flats. Past uses provide patterns, textures, and identity.

The second concept is a provocative overall plan based on the relationship to the river and the conceptualization of the Flats as a gathering spot. It reorients the roads and lots to a diagonal alignment and brings the river valley through the Flats.

The third concept focuses on the design of the streetscape, particularly the street section, including dimensions of streets and guidelines around materiality. Past uses provide patterns, textures, and identity.

The fourth concept proposes an engagement process, using the design of the trails adjacent to the river at the Flats as a pilot project to test processes and governance models of a new relationship between the City of Edmonton and Indigenous peoples.



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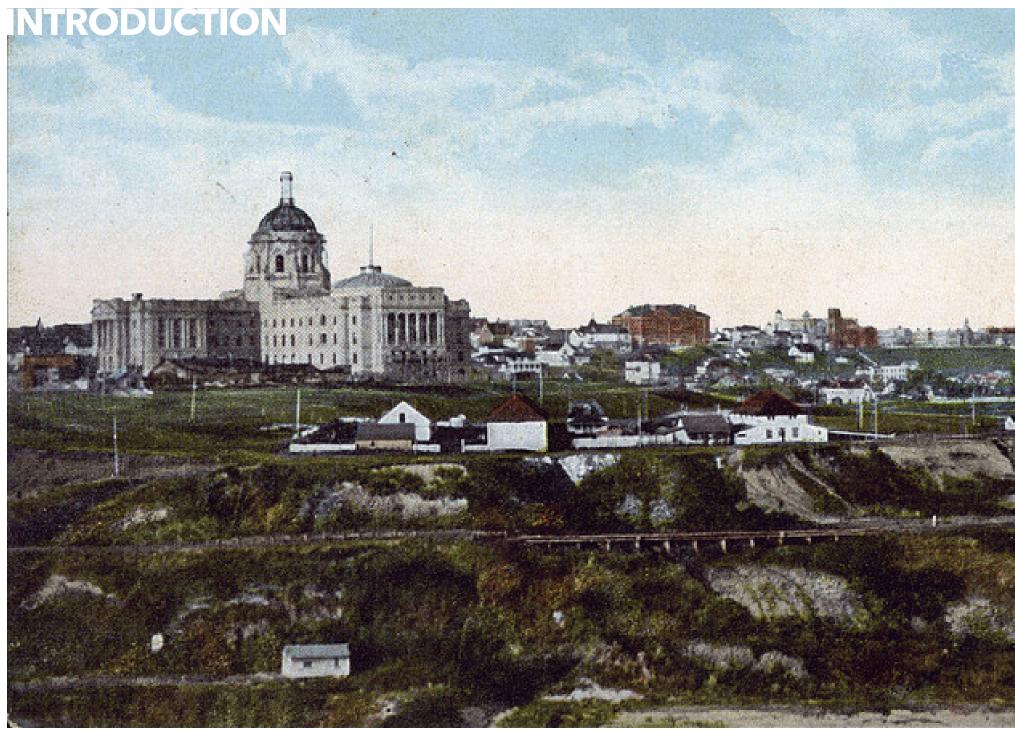
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The neighbourhood now called Rossdale has been known by many names: Pehonan, Fort-des-Prairies, the Flats, Rossdale.

These names question a solitary history of narrative of this space – there are conflicting and complex narratives and histories here.

The Flats are symbolically important to the birth of Edmonton and Alberta, and are an important gathering and ceremonial site in the Indigenous heritage of the prairies.

Before and after first contact between European settlers and Indigenous peoples, it was an important gathering and ceremonial place for Indigenous peoples in the area, including nehiyawak (Cree), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and many others.

Since contact and colonization, the Flats have been home to several iterations of trading forts (Edmonton House and Fort Augustus), hosted the inauguration of the Province of Alberta, and accommodated many initial industries and utilities supplying Edmonton.

However, in the current time, there is little there to recognize and honour the important history of the Flats. It is perhaps the most significant site in Alberta - yet most locals know nothing about it. To make things worse, there is little physically remaining in the area that speaks to its unique stories.

The City of Edmonton is currently preparing a Heritage Interpretive Plan, including extensive consultation, on what heritage means on this site and what narratives of history are important to include. This will lead to the Business Plan, detailing how the City will approach the development of this area.

This report engages the fundamental question: "How can we integrate the heritage of the

Flats into the planning and urban design of the area?" It presents several concepts intended to foster critical reflection on relevant issues and speculate on possible futures. As such, it is important to state that the design strategies included are not "complete" design, but are included with the idea of exploring the potential of the site.

The groundwork to contexualize the rest of the report is the first section. I argue for the requirement for new modes of relations between Canada, including municipalities, and Indigenous peoples. My methodology is laid out, as are notes on nomenclature. The Flats are shown in their geographic context.

A brief history of a few of the narratives of the Flats are outlined, including a timeline, maps with land use post contact, and historic traffic plans.

Current conditions of the Flats are then analysed, including significant features such as topography, existing roads, lots, and buildings, and overall conceptualizations of the area.

Four design concepts are presented: two overall plans, one pragmatic, one provocative; street design; and engagement process and programming. Each design concept includes precedents which inspired the design, the overall intent, and further details. These designs are by no means complete, but meant to speculate on possible futures and provoke further ideas.

Finally, a few conclusions are discussed.

NEW MODES OF RELATIONS ARE REQUIRED

The Government of Canada is "working to advance reconciliation and renew a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership" (2017).

In Canada, Indigenous people are a rapidly increasing population, with over 50% living off reserve (Statistics Canada, 2015) and most living in cities. Canada has developed most of its cities on land understood to be ceded through treaty, but many view these treaties as coerced initially and breached many times since.

With a movement towards reconciliation, and recognition that most Indigenous people in Canada live in cities, one of the fundamental questions that planning in cities should address is the coexistence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in cities and the

governance of cities. Porter asks, "What effect do the kinds of changes that are reconstituting the relationship between states and Indigenous people have in cities?" (2013).

This is a profound challenge to planning as different cultures have varying conceptualizations of space and place and of human environment relations. This, in turn, require sometime conflicting processes and protocols (Porter, 2013).

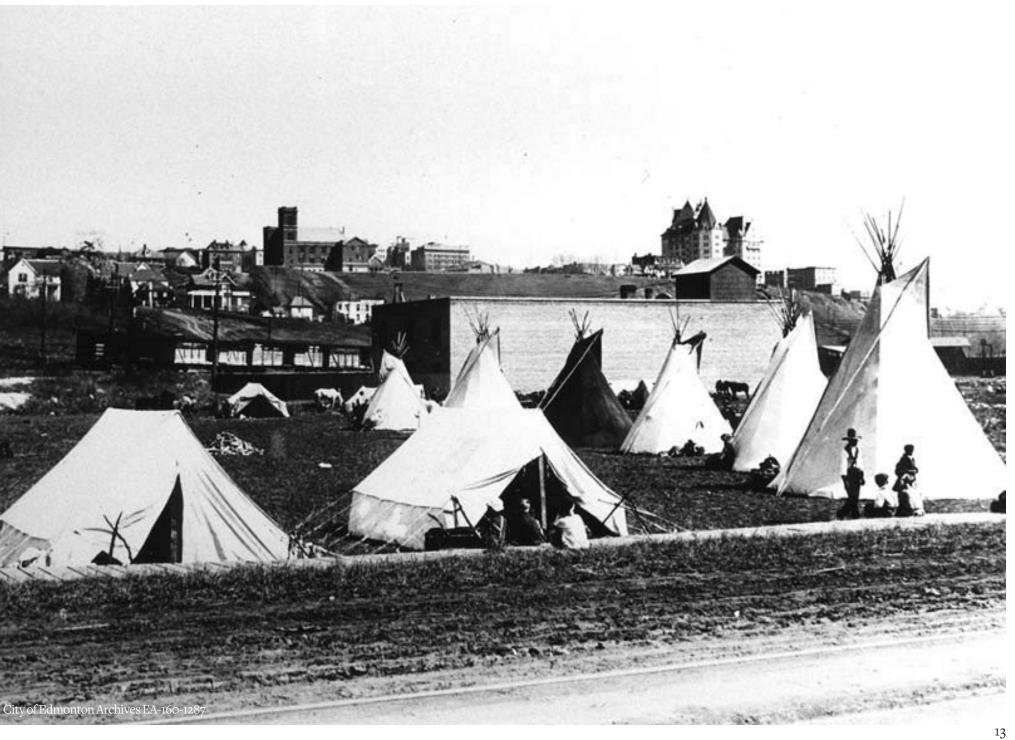
Currently, urban "Indigenous planning" is formulated around difference and inclusion: Indigenous people have cultural and socioeconomic *differences*, and should be *included* in planning processes.

Indigenous people and nations are seen as "stakeholders" to be included, rather than people and nations who have with long-

standing knowledge and right to the land, and rights to sovereignty and self-determination (Porter, 2013).

Such gestures from municipalities remain largely symbolic, however, and include territory acknowledgments, recognition days, and celebrations (Walker & Belanger, 2013). Yet, much of the actual impact from a city's governance is in the nuts and bolts - the policy, the budgeting, the implementation.

In addition, Indigenous people are conceptualized as being different than non-Indigenous settler people – a difference in culture, a difference in social outcomes. Indigenous difference has usually been seen as negative – something to overcome – but has recently seen reframing as a positive – something deserving of accommodation that should be considered a municipal asset.





However, using this framing of Indigenous difference does little justice to the larger complexity of modern Indigenous peoples.

However, self-determination should not be predicated on proving difference. As Denis (1997) notes, "wanting to self-govern expresses a will to be separate, autonomous, whether or not you want to do things differently than your neighbour". Indigenous separateness does not require "reliance on demonstrating how our lived experiences differed/differ from those of the non-Aboriginal communities we lived alongside" (Andersen, 2013, p. 269).

In addition, reframing to Indigenous separateness allows a greater complexity of modern Indigenous experiences to be understood and studied, as it is no longer restricted to those suitably "different".

A framing of Indigenous difference is rooted in cultural terms; a framing of Indigenous separateness is rooted in political terms. Indigenous people have a distinct relationship to the land and government, due to prior presence on this land, regardless of whether or not they "prove" this difference.

Moving towards truly respecting sovereignty requires moving towards "strange multiplicities" - away from consensus and towards planning that is comfortable with conflict and the possibility of divergent views (Porter, 2013).

So, what does this mean for urban planning and how we should engage Indigenous people in the future?

First, we must consciously decentre "Western" authority over procedural and substantive knowledge.

Planning and policy-making are not value neutral (Davidoff, 1965). Planning and policy-making are political, and, although they may be situated as technical and value-neutral, are imbued with values at every step of the process: prescribed actions work towards objectives, which are set using specific values. There is no single public interest to work towards, but many different interests – which are often competing.

Planning currently "privileges ... Western place conceptions and processes over those of Aboriginal people" (Walker & Belanger, 2013, p. 200). In order for transformative planning to occur, this worldview must be shifted away from the centre of planning processes to open the processes to alternative worldviews and values.



Second, attempting to create meaningful measures of autonomy is essential "guided by mutual respect and recognition, the spirit of historic and contemporary treaty relationships, constitutional arrangements, and continuing group rights" (Walker & Belanger, 2013, p. 198).

As Walker and Belanger (2013) details, five ways to move forward are:

- Ensuring a full partnership with a strongstandard of mutual recognition,
- Creating protocol agreements on specificsubjects,
- \bullet Moving towards joint governance in specific ways, and
- \bullet Better Aboriginal citizen participation and engagement.

All of these steps are simply a beginning, rather than a definitive end in themselves. The process of urban Indigenous planning must continually adapt and move towards a model of self-determination of Indigenous peoples in cities.

METHODOLOGY

To write this report, I researched three areas:

- 1. History of the Flats, including archival research, photographs, land use and oral history reports;
- 2. Precedents of integrating heritage, including Indigenous heritage, in urban design;
- 3. Literature of Indigenous planning, and urban design.

I then brainstormed and developed distinct design concepts, including two large scale plans and two small scale concepts. I sought feedback from urban design professionals, and then refined the concepts.

I worked with the City of Edmonton throughout initial stages, and was provided with their historical resources and research.

Limitations

There are two major limitations to this project.

First is the limitation in the ideas. As I did not want to duplicate current planning efforts in the area, I did not undertake any public engagement, and hence all ideas are coming from one person and perspective. It is important to note that I am not Indigenous, and as such cannot provide this perspective on the area - which is absolutely integral in the planning and design of the area. This project is intended only to spark ideas as to what is possible from a planning and design perspective - the concepts must be seen as incomplete.

The second major limitation is the limitations of the research of the heritage of the area.

The historical research is largely based on archival photographs, the Rossdale Land Use History Report, and the Aboriginal Oral History Report. These materials are limited and from specific perspectives. The Land Use History Report, in particular, is missing many non-mainstream histories and narratives, including (but not limited to) people of colour, Indigenous peoples, women, workers, residents, and more. The Aboriginal Oral History Report is also incomplete, as noted in the report itself. It is likely that much memory of the place has been lost, and that the history of the Flats is more contested than shown in the reports.



Terminology

Edmonton is the settler colonial name for the City the Flats are in, and is named for a neighbourhood in London, England.

Amiskwaciwâskahikan

 $(\Box \Gamma \cap b \cdot \Gamma \cap \Box \dot{\Box} \cdot \cap b \Box \Delta b^{3})$, is the nehiyawak (Cree) name for the area around Edmonton, and translates to "Beaver Mountain House".

Rossdale is the modern settler colonial name for the neighbourhood in the Flats, and is named after Donald Ross, a settler prospector, coal miner, farmer, and hotelier who lived in Rossdale.

Ross Flats is an earlier settler colonial name for the Flats.

Pehonan is the nehiyawak name for the Flats,

and translates to "Waiting Place", signifying its use as a gathering place for Indigenous people in the area.

In this report, the Flats is generally used to refer to the Pehonan/Rossdale area. Amisk-waciwâskahikan is used to refer to the general area. Edmonton and Rossdale are used when referring to the specific regulated boundaries of the City and neighbourhood, respectively.

LOCATION

The Flats are located on the northern bank of the North Saskatchewan River in the City of Edmonton. The river was once a major connector to lands to the east, including Hudson's Bay, the Pacific Ocean, and what is now Ontario and Quebec. The forts located here were some of the last canoe-accessible forts before the Rocky Mountains (Morse, 1969).

The Flats are in the approximate geographic center of Alberta, and are within the area covered by Treaty 6 (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2013).

Edmonton is the Capital of Alberta with a population of 1.3 million (Statistics Canada, 2017). Edmonton has the second largest population of Indigenous people of a city in Canada (City of Edmonton, n.d.).

The Flats are geographically central to Edmonton, adjacent and downhill from

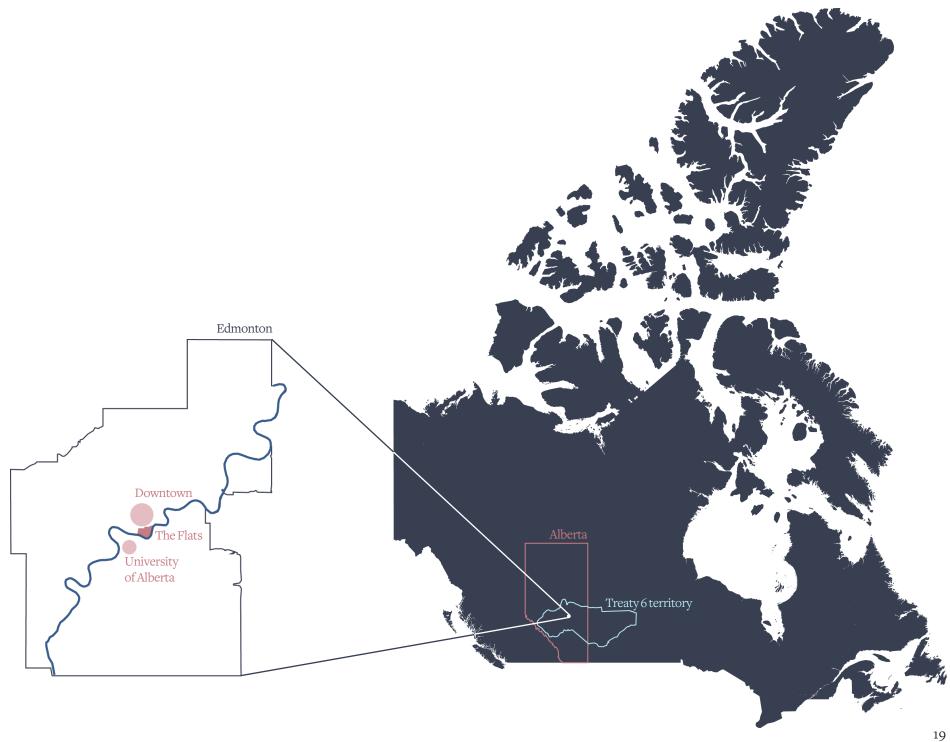
downtown and across the river from the University of Alberta and the Garneau and Old Strathcona neighbourhoods. It is one of the River Valley communities, situated within the River Valley below the topographic level of most of Edmonton.

Throughout the Flats are several major roads connecting much of the rest of Edmonton, including downtown, Northeast, South, and West Edmonton.

Edmonton has a prairie-steppe climate, sunny year-round. It has very cold winters, with an average minimum of –14.8 °C in January, and a long snow season. Summers are warm, with an average maximum of 23.1 °C in July. (Environment Canada, 2010).

Weather can be unpredictable, and include major thunderstorms in the summer and winter snowstorms.

Figures right show the geographic context of the Flats. Right shows
Canada with the outlines of Alberta and
Treaty 6 territory. Left shows the legal outline of Edmonton, the Flats, and the location of the University of Alberta and downtown.







The Flats are the symbolic birthplace of Edmonton and Alberta, with a huge number of histories and stories tangled in this place. It has been a gathering and sacred place for Indigenous people long before the arrival of European settlers, and transformed by ideas of what the Flats should be in service to Edmonton.

This chapter includes a timeline, snapshots of land use at specific points in time, and an overview of historic traffic plans which shaped the road system through the Flats.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

The following timeline is sorted into four themes: people and use, land, transportation, and larger regional events. Within these histories emerge key concepts about the role and function of the Flats.

First, the Flats is and has always been a gathering and trading place. It has been used by Indigenous people as a gathering and ceremony place. One of the reasons the forts were placed in this location was this significance as a trading and gathering place. It continued to gather people together, as the place of the Edmonton Exhibition for several years and as a regional centre for recreation.

The Flats are a symbolic centre: from being a gathering and sacred place for Indigenous peoples, to the location of the forts as trading and distribution centres of the region, to the place where the inauguration of Alberta took

place, and the current location of the Alberta legislature.

Since Edmonton has been founded, the Flats have been considered in service of "the real city" - that is, the city on the high grounds. It has served, and still serves, as a connector between the high ground on the south and north sides of the North Saskatchewan River, as well as a provider of services and utilities. It has provided electricity, sewage treatment, traffic arteries, and regional recreational facilities.

Limitations

The narratives and histories of the Flats are numerous and deep. This project, however, is not a history project and is not done by a historian; it is primarily based off of the Rossdale Historical Land Use Study (2004), with some supplemental information from the Aboriginal Oral History Project (2004). The history of Rossdale is, like all histories, inexact and disputed - especially early histories.

As such, this project is likely missing large amounts of the history of the Flats. In most previous histories, oral history and Indigenous perspectives are often discounted or missing. Accounts of daily usage of the Flats, and mentions of the people who lived there - especially women, working and lower class, and people of colour - is rare.

In addition, precise locations are difficult to place. Archaelogical findings are disparate and scattered, influenced by the large amount of (re)development of the area and soil disturbance, as well as the limited areas in which it can occur.



Flats are a major gathering and ceremonial place^{1,2}.

ROLE IN REGION

LAND

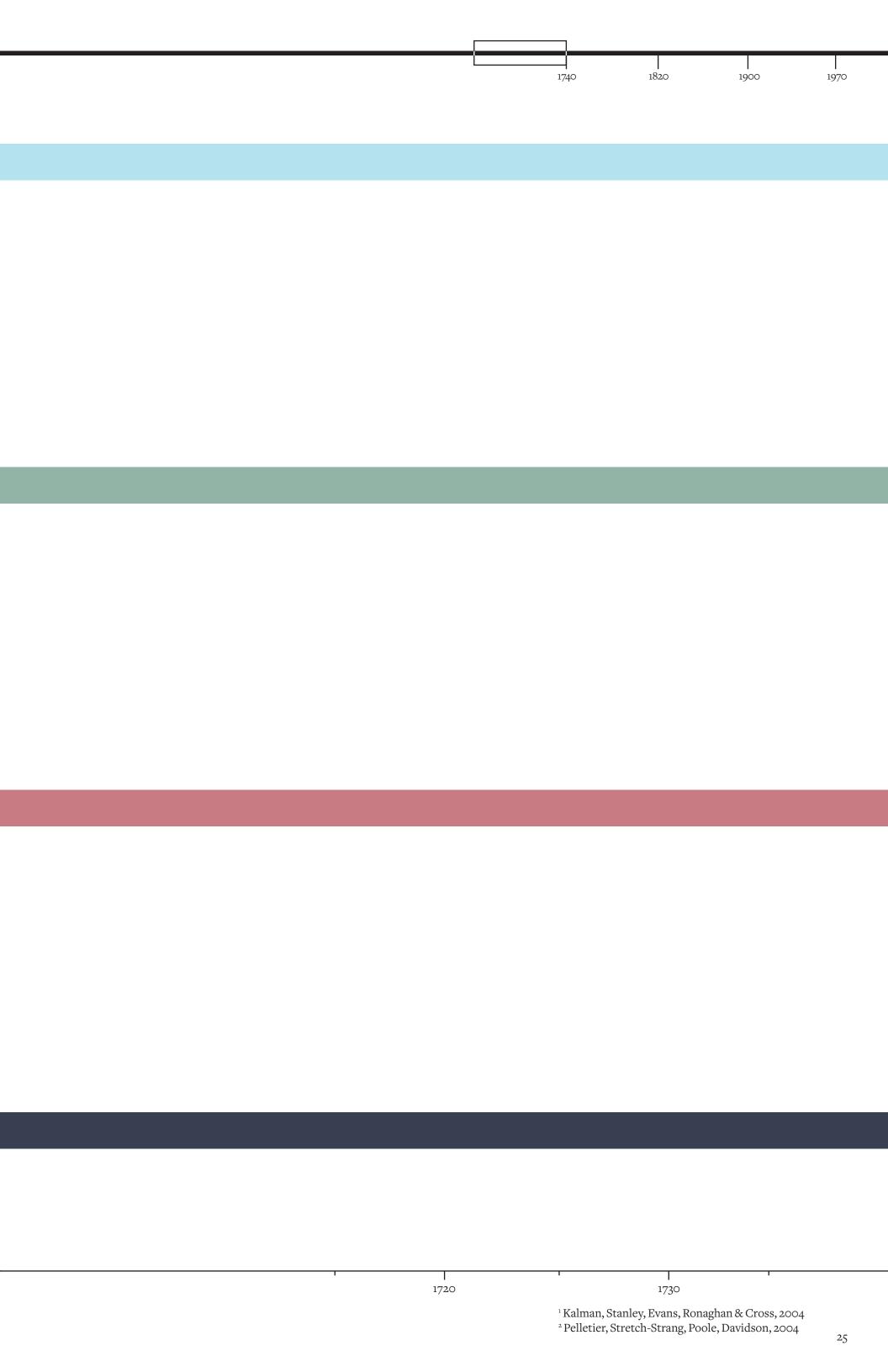
Flats used as ceremonial and gathering place for Indigenous peoples, including nehiyawak (Cree), including for Sun Dances, Goose Dances, Pow-Wows, and treaties².

PEOPLE + USE

8000 years ago: Oldest found archaelogical remains are from this time¹.

Flats are part of major north-south trail and river crossing².

TRANSPORTATION

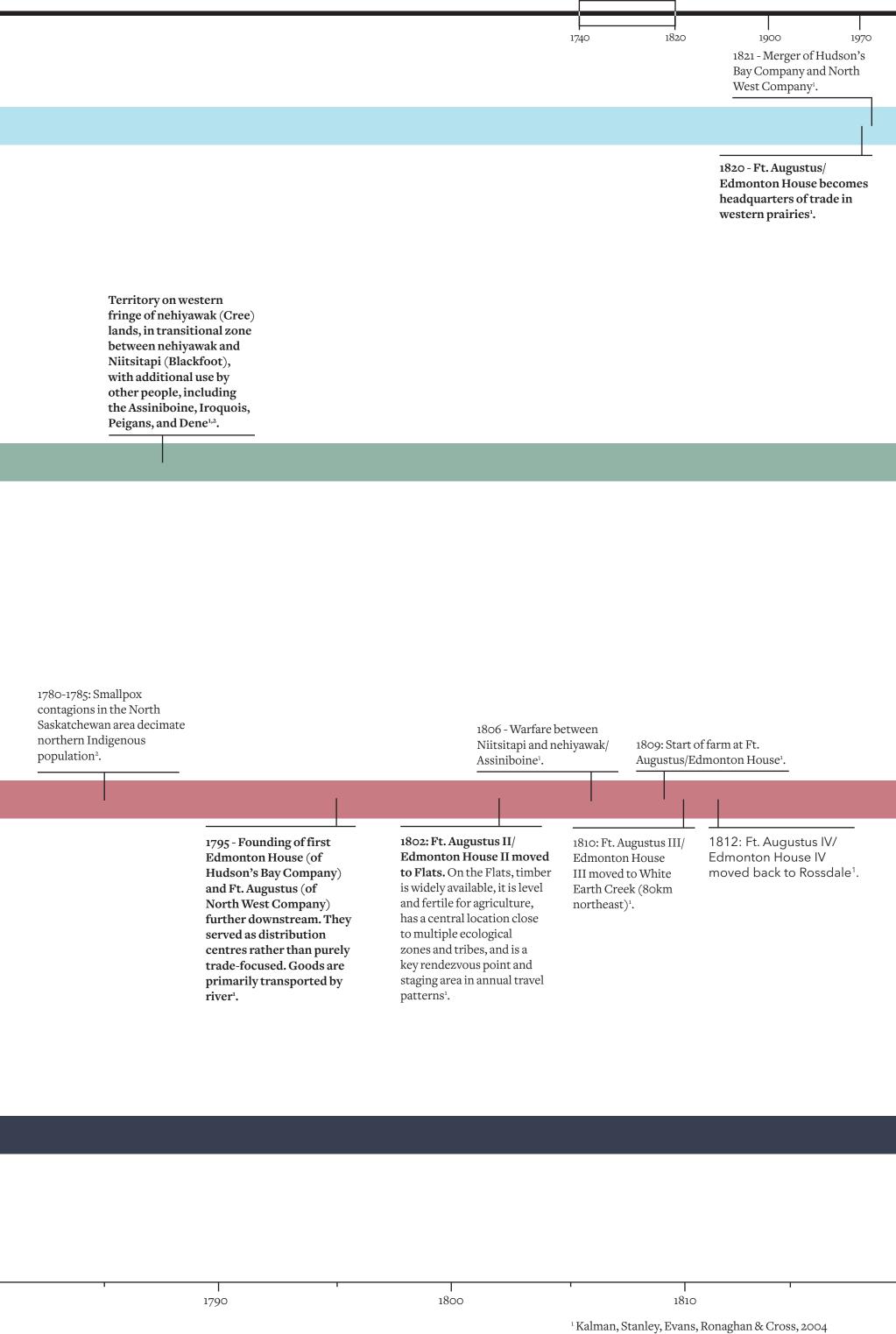


ROLE IN REGION LAND 1754 - Anthony Henday first European to visit Edmonton area1. PEOPLE + USE **TRANSPORTATION**

1760

1770

1750



² Pelletier, Stretch-Strang, Poole, Davidson, 2004

ROLE IN REGION

1840s-1850s - Outside knowledge of region increasing, importance of Edmonton House in region decreasing due to American competition, direct routes to west coast, and decline in fur trade¹.

LAND

1840s: Catholic and Protestant missionaries active in Ft. Edmonton area. Created churches and schools, including school inside of Ft. Edmonton¹. 1861 - St. Albert formed, consisting primarily of Métis¹.

1850s: Travellers not associated with Hudson's Bay Company began to increase¹.

used at Ft. Edmonton¹.

1820s-1860s: Burial ground

1820s-1840s - Development of large Métis population in area. Often contract workers to Hudson's Bay Company'.

PEOPLE + USE

1830: Edmonton House V moves to its final location, at bluffs above river, just below current location of Legislature¹.

1844-1845: Scarlet fever epidemic occurs at Ft. Edmonton².

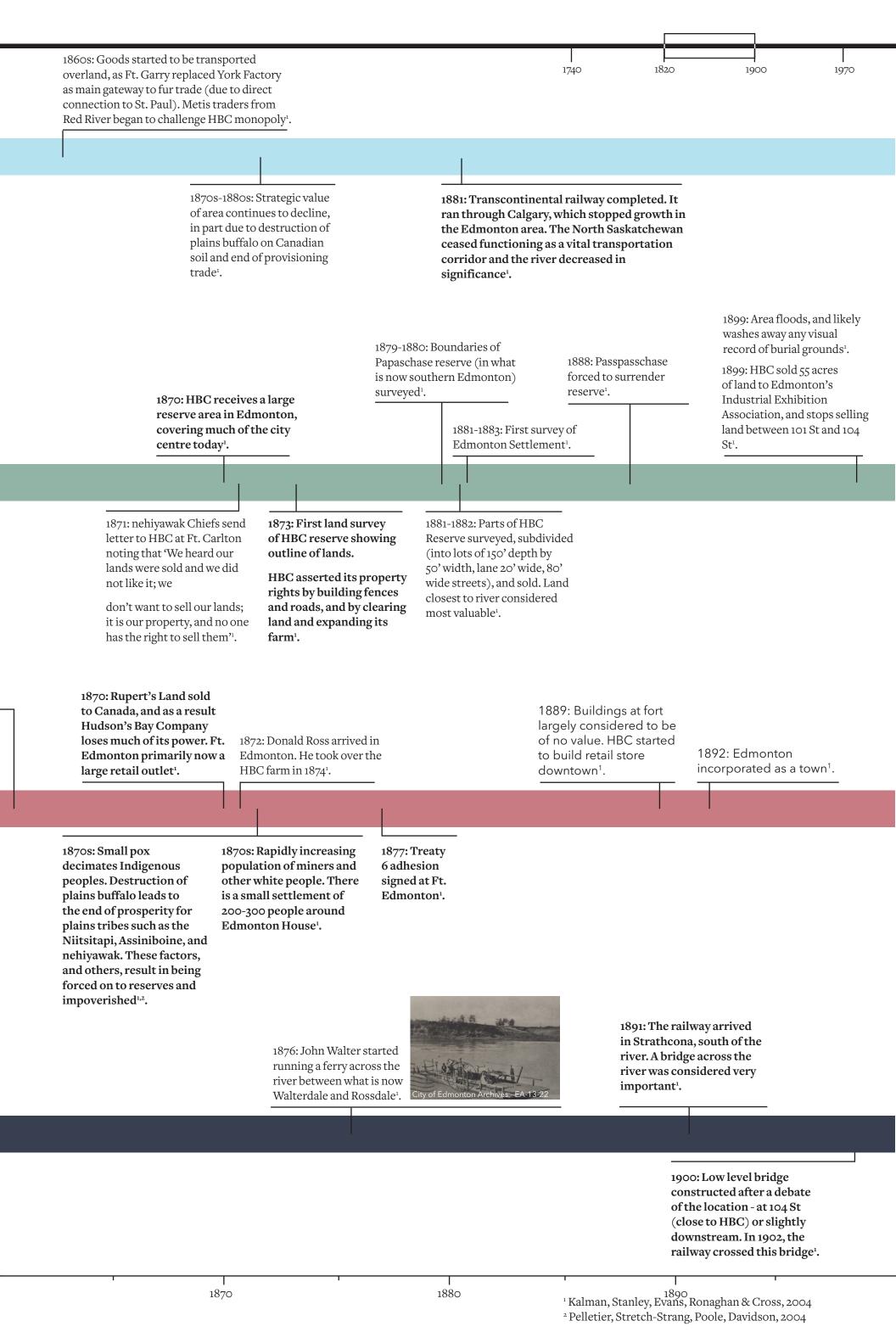
1846-1847 - Visit of Paul

Kane to Edmonton area¹.

Indigenous peoples camp next to Ft. Edmonton, including for trade, work, and other activities^{1,2}.

TRANSPORTATION

1830 1840 1850



ROLE IN REGION

1905: Inaugration of Alberta as a province held at the Exhibition grounds. Guests included the prime minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier, the Governor General, and the Earl Grey. Edmonton is decided to be the capital of Alberta1.



1890s: City began aquiring land for parks as opportunities arose1.

1906: Province of Alberta bought lands from City for Legislature grounds¹. 1908: Site of final Ft. Edmonton sold to the Legislature grounds1.

Province of Alberta for the 1912: Edmonton annexed Strathcona¹.

LAND

1904: Edmonton incorporated as a city1.



1902: Electrical generating station and water treatment facility constructed. This site was chosen due to the proximity of the centre of the distribution network. These established the utilarian role of Rossdale in Edmonton¹.



Railway attracted industry, including Dowling Grist Mill, Edmonton Brewing and Malting Company¹

1919: Between 96 Ave and 97 Ave is developed into an Athletic Ground by the Amusement Association of the employees of HBC's retail store. It is eventually developed to include a baseball diamond, hockey rink, tennis courts, and more1.



1913: City began developing recreational facilities called the Ross Flats Athletic Field on former Exhibition Grounds1.

1923: Ross Flats Athletic Field becomes the Renfrew soccerfootball field¹.

PEOPLE + USE

1899-1909: Edmonton Exhibition held on Rossdale Flats, including horse racing, games and sports, and fairgrounds. Annual Exhibition was an important event and attraction. Indigenous peoples participated in the fair and camped nearby.



1900s: Frequent Indigenous use of Flats for large gatherings and ceremonies likely ends1.



Indigenous peoples would come to Flats for treaty payments, gatherings, and celebrations, including the Edmonton Exhibition¹.



Flooding, in conjunction with a weak economy, drives out most industrial1. 1915: Fort buildings used for storage and workshops, until

they were torn down in 19151.

communities in Edmonton,

1915: Major flood

throughout low-lying

including Rossdale.

1915: High level bridge constructed1.

TRANSPORTATION

1908: Rail spur line connecting to Ft. Edmonton opened. Spur line to powerplant constructed to transport coal. Railway overlaid diagonal line over grid pattern of HBC survey, continuing perception of area as a transportation link between the "real cities" on high ground1.

1905: Temporary rail station

built in Rossdale

at 98 Ave and 102 St1.

1913: 105 St (Walterdale) bridge constructed, ceasing ferry service at this location. A water main was run accross it to distribute filtered water¹.

1910 1900 1920 1930: City purchases three blocks from HBC adjacent to the river, including site of burial grounds1.

1960s-: City of Edmonton became primary landowner in area because of land aquisition for roadways1.

> 1970s-1980s: Capital City Parks Project suggests that entire river valley should be park land1.

1933: Renfrew Baseball Park created on former Ross Flats Athletic Field site¹.



Protests and ceremonies are held to ensure recognition of burial grounds2.

1930s-1940s: City begins to take active role in developing facilities at the HBC recreation ground1.

1930: City's Town Planning Commission created a major street plan, including the creation of Rossdale Rd. Attitudes of Rossdale continue to view it as a utilitarian place serving the needs of the larger city1.

1952: Mawhinney house, part of residential area in the Flats.



1957-1958: Significant road and infrastructure construction1.

1963: Metropolitan Edmonton Transportation Study recommended construction of a network of freeways and bridges in the river vallley. Portions, including the James MacDonald Bridge, were constructed; others elsewhere in the city were halted after strong community opposition. Rossdale may have been seen as a poor community that could not mount effective opposition1.

1954: Rail tracks removed1.

1971: James MacDonald bridge opens, 97 Ave is widened. This work almost destroys Rossdale, requiring the demolition of 80 homes and subdividing the neighbourhood1.

1940 1950 1960

¹ Kalman, Stanley, Evans, Ronaghan & Cross, 2004

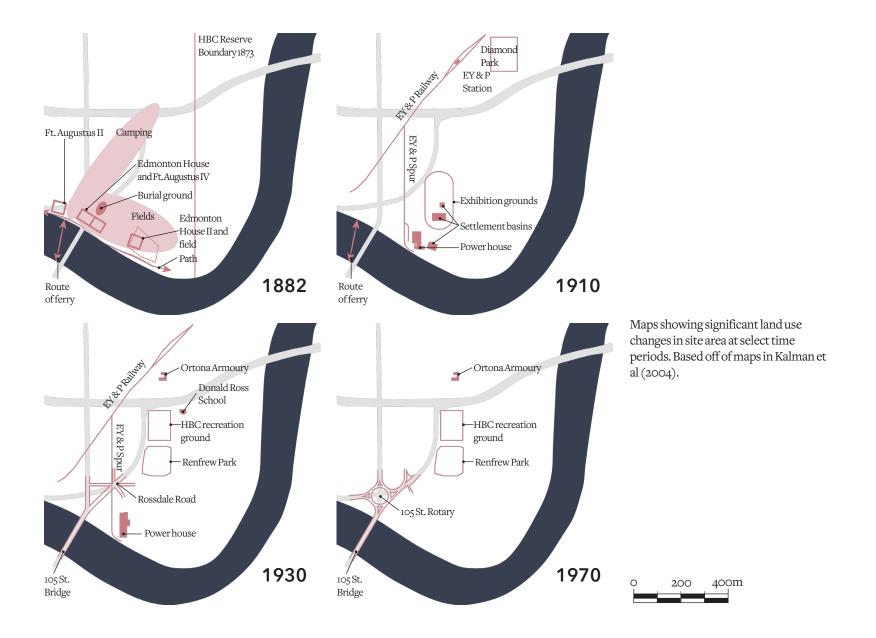
² Pelletier, Stretch-Strang, Poole, Davidson, 2004

HISTORIC LAND USE

The use of the flats has changed dramatically since the time of contact, as it transformed from an Indigenous gathering and ceremonial space to one also used for exhibitions, recreation, transportation, and utility.

Exhibition and recreation sites have been prominent, including the Edmonton Exhibition grounds, the HBC recreation ground, Renfrew Park, and Diamond Park. Utilities have long existed at the Flats, including a power plant and water treatment facilities, due to its location next to the river and close to downtown.

Many of these changes have impacted a graveyard located close to the northern landing of the bridge at 105 Street, of which the total extent is unknown.



HISTORIC TRAFFIC PLANS

The Flats have always been a convenient location to cross the North Saskatchewan River, with low ground on both banks. Fording the river was traditionally done just to the west of the area, and the first ferry in Edmonton ran here from 1876-1913. However, the Flats themselves are commonly conceptualized as a barrier – along with the river – to getting through the rest of Edmonton, and have been subjected to many large transportation projects (Kalman et al, 2004).

The 105 Street Bridge was constructed in 1913, with the replacement set to open in 2017. In 1958, a rotary at the north end of the 105 Street Bridge, River Valley Road, and a new road connecting Bellamy Hill Road with 104 Street were built.

The 1963 Metropolitan Edmonton Transportation Study had a profound and lasting impact on the Flats, calling for a system of freeways throughout Edmonton – with an enormous branch cutting through the river valley, including the Flats. Although much of the freeway development was stalled elsewhere, a portion of the network was built in the Flats including the construction of the James MacDonald Bridge and the widening of 97 Avenue – possibly because Rossdale was a poor community and could not effectively oppose the construction. Eighty homes were demolished, with Rossdale effectively divided into three subareas bound by roads.

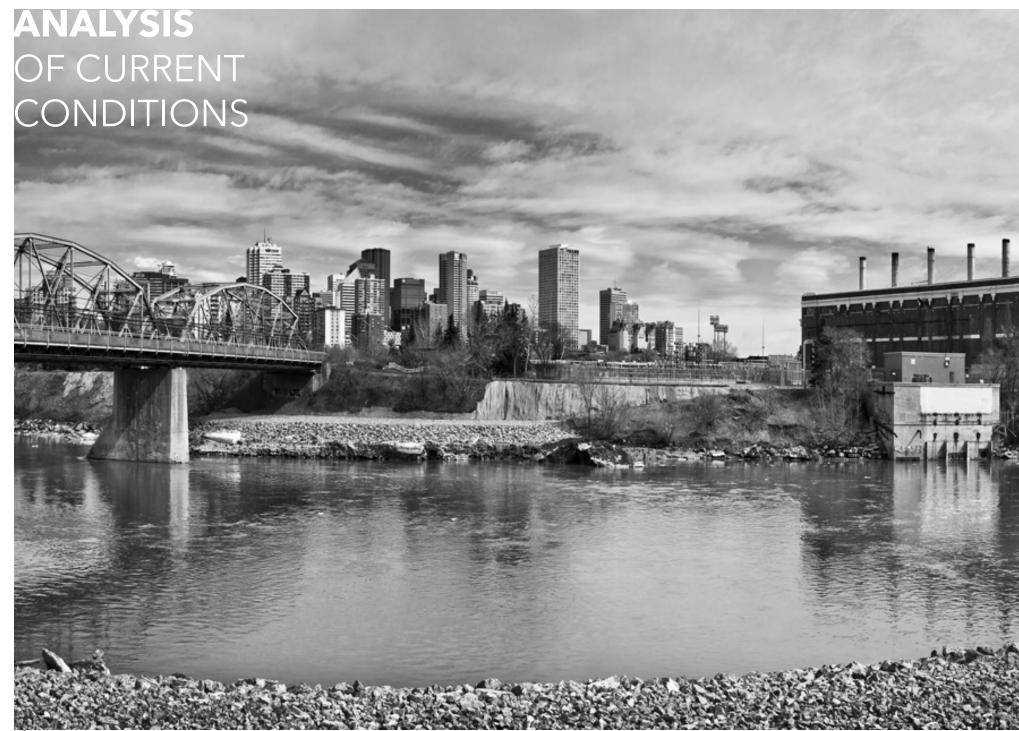
Proposals to replace the 105 Street Bridge and build elevated approaches and interchanges were abandoned due to engineering difficulties. However, due to the planning for the freeway system, the City became the primary landowner in the site.

In 1979-92, Project UNI created the one-way system, making the 105 Street Bridge traffic north-bound only, and removing the traffic circle built in 1958. (The High Level Bridge is the complementary south-bound bridge.)



Freeway plans for the 1963 Metropolitan Edmonton Transportation Study. Right, plans overlaid on current aerial photo.







There are many histories and narratives tangled in the Flats. It is the symbolic birthplace of Edmonton and Alberta. It has been a gathering and sacred place for Indigenous people long before the arrival of European settlers.

Yet today, it is mostly void of identity, with large vacancies and barriers throughout the neighbourhood. It is used in service of the rest of the city, for traffic and utilities.

There is very little memory of what has been and the symbolic importance of the Flats.

This section includes analyses of the existing conditions, including topography, existing lots, roads, buildings, and significant barriers.

OVERVIEW

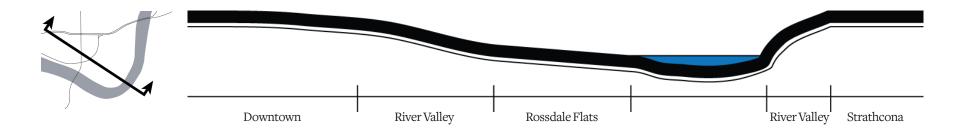
The highlighted area shows the working area for the City of Edmonton Heritage Interpretive Plan, and is also known as West Rossdale.

Much of this area is vacant and used as park or parking lot. Several major roads cut through the area, including 97 Ave, River Valley Road, Rossdale Road, 104 St, and 105 St.

The following analysis also includes adjacent areas, including the water treatment facility and residential area to the east.



TOPOGRAPHY, FLOODING + VIEWS



Topography has been a key consideration in the Flats role throughout history (Kalman et al, 2004).

Situated on a floodplain of the North
Saskatchewan River, the Flats have been
flooded periodically. This has resulted in a
very fertile, very flat area close to the river – a
perfect location of agriculture. The woodland
river valley is a key wintering area for many
animals – one of the draws to the area for
Indigenous peoples pre-colonization. The
Flats are in a good location for crossing the

river, with low-lying ground on both banks. These traits made it a prime location for gathering and trade. Industry and utilities were once required to be adjacent to a water source, making the Flats, which are also adjacent to downtown, ideal.

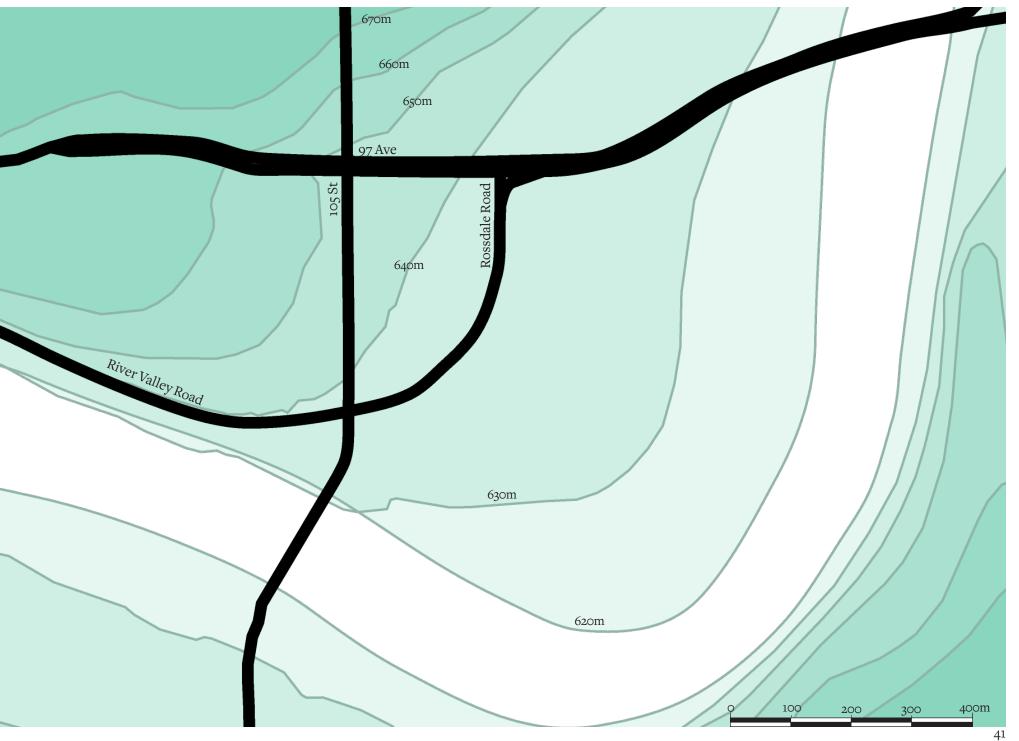
However, this topography and adjacency to the river have also limited redevelopment. Major flooding has driven out industry, particularly in the 1915 flood. The risk of flooding still exists today in the lowest areas of the flats, and must be considered in any development (City of

Edmonton Drainage Services, 2015).

The Flats are one of the few communities in Edmonton within the river valley, below the level of most of the rest of the city.

The Flats are bordered on two sides by the hill leading up to downtown Edmonton - a sense of enclosure contributed to by the taller buildings surrounding the area.

With far more dramatic topography than the rest of Edmonton, views can and should be considered during development.



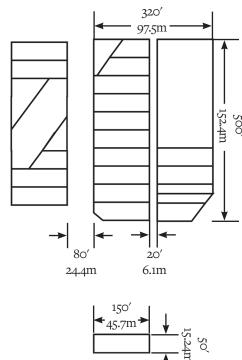
ROADS + LOTS

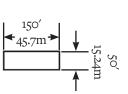
Major connectors for Edmonton cross the Flats. The 105 Street bridge is a major northbound connector to downtown, dispersing to 105 St and Rossdale Road. James MacDonald Bridge and the expansion of 97 Ave are the only implemented pieces of the 1963 Metropolitan Transportation Study, and are a major eastwest connection through central Edmonton.

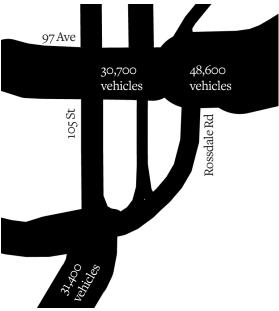
What remain of the original residential lots are small-grain: 50' wide by 150' deep.

Utilities, parks, and city-owned buildings remain on large lots - the largest of which contains the Rossdale Water Treatment Plant and Edmonton Ballpark.

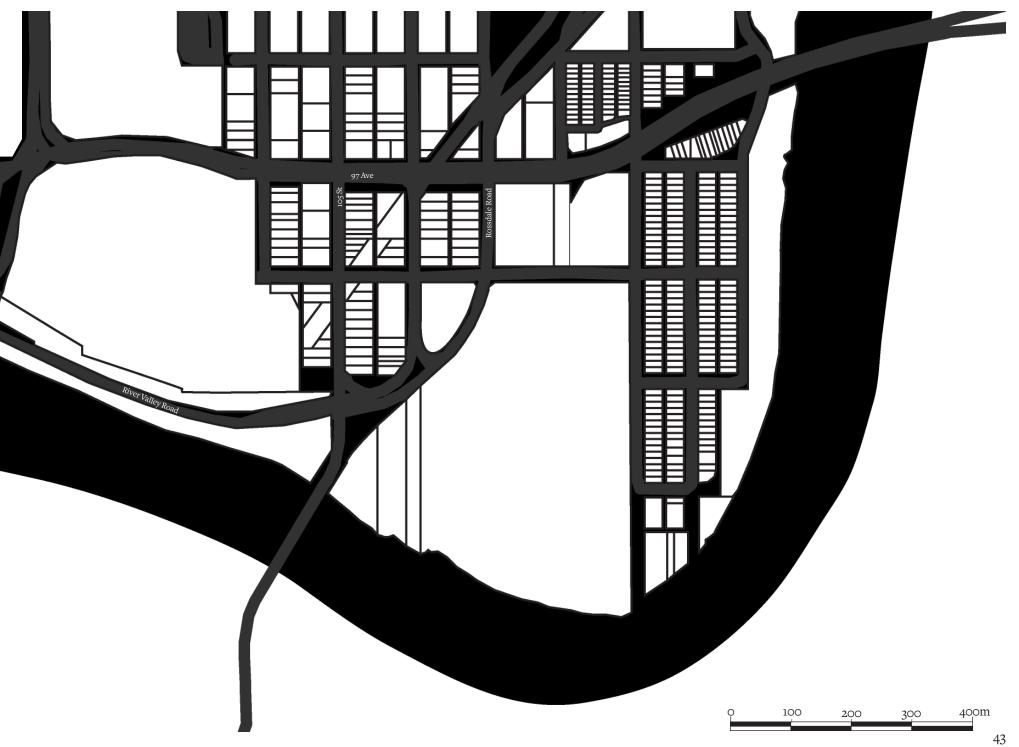
The remnants of the EY&P Railway alignment can be seen in the diagonal lot easements







Left: Typical lot and block dimensions. Above: average weekday traffic volumes (2015) on major roads in the Flats (City of Edmonton Transportation Department, 2016). Right: roads and lots.



LAND USE

The Ross Flats area consists primarily of residential (single family homes and sparse multi-family), public utility, recreation, and small amounts of office/arts space.

A number of major connecting roads cross through the Flats, including connecting to downtown and east/west Edmonton.



SIGNIFICANT EXISTING BUILDINGS

In the study area, few buildings, significant or otherwise, remain. The notable historic and other important buildings in the Flats are detailed below.



The Ortona Armory (built 1914) was a stable for the Hudson's Bay Company until 1924. It was used by the Edmonton Pure Butter Company, as a military training facility during World War II, as a navy base (during which it was named Nonsuch), and as the home for the Loyal Edmonton Regiment 3rd Battalion (City of Edmonton, n.d.).



The two-storey
Rossdale School
(opened 1913) and
closed in 1974, serving
Rossdale as an
elementary school.



The Ross Flats
Apartments (built
1911-1912) was first
a children's shelter.
It was later the
Salvation Army Grace
Hospital (19251942) and as a hotel
stopping point for
American servicemen
during World War II
(City of Edmonton
Sustainable
Development, n.d.).



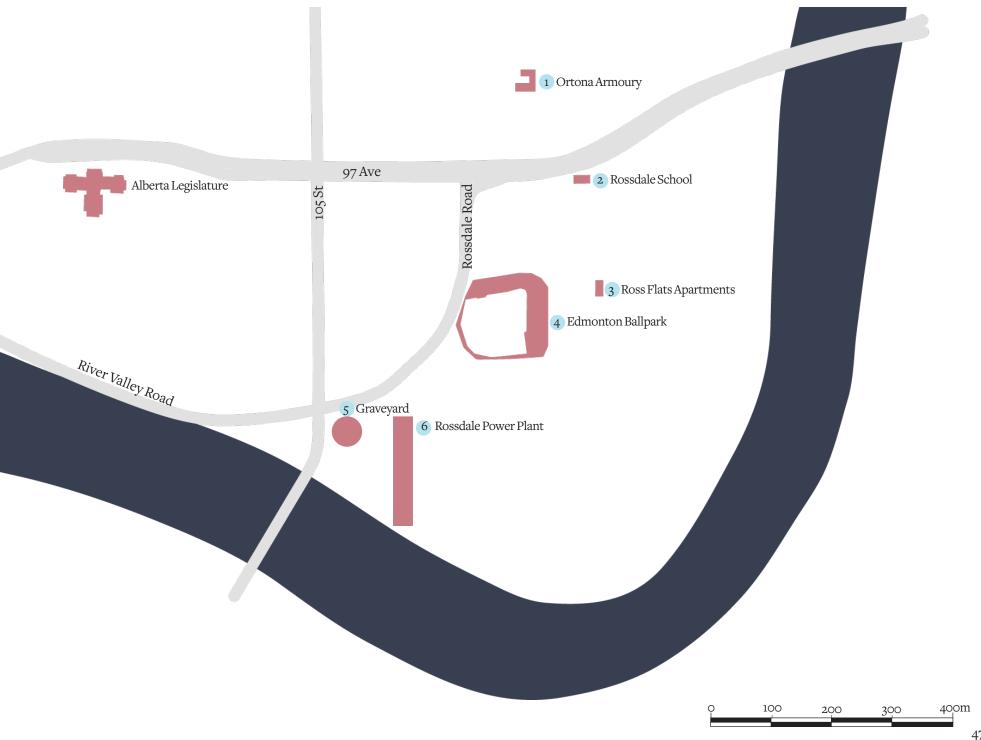
The Edmonton
Ballpark (opened
1995) is the latest in
recreation on this
site. Prior to this, the
block was Renfrew
Park (built 1933),
and the Ross Flats
Athletic FIeld, (used
from 1913). In 1899 to
1909, the Edmonton
Exhibition grounds
were on this site
(Kalman et al, 2004).



A graveyard, with monument, was in this location (and possibly extending further east), including significant burials of Indigenous peoples. It was in use at least during the years the forts were located in the Flats, and possibly prior and post these years (Kalman et al, 2004).



The Rossdale Power Plant (built 1931-1954) is a distinctive landmark, operating until 1989. No other steel and brick buildings of this size and period remain in Edmonton. The Plant underwent six additions, evolving to incorporate technological advances (Kalman et al, 2004).



ROSSDALE HAS A LACK OF IDENTITY

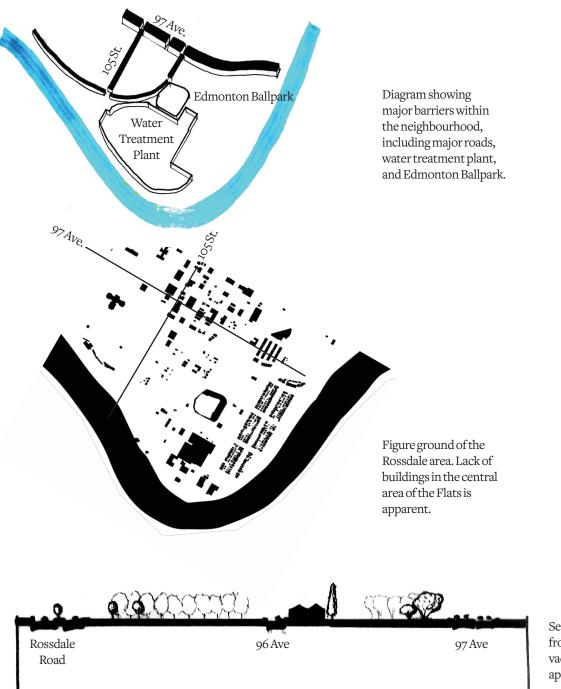
The urban form indicates little identity and little memory of the significance of the Flats.

Two features of the urban form create this "placelessness":

- Most of the central area of the Flats consists of vacant lots and empty space.
 Some are used as parking lots while others simply sit empty.
- Major traffic arteries cross through the Flats, including the 105 St Bridge, Rossdale Road, the James MccDonald Bridge, Low Level Bridge, and 97 Ave. One of the first noticeable features of the site is the sheer volume of traffic.

These arteries, with the Rossdale Water Treatment Plant, split the Rossdale neighbourhood into three smaller subneighbourhoods. The vacancy of the Flats has been partially created through planning decisions, including two notable policies (Kalman et al, 2004):

- The City of Edmonton planned for river valley communities, including Rossdale, to be turned into parkland, and bought large amounts of property for this goal. However, Rossdale remained residential, and many City-owned lots have not been developed.
- The 1963 Metropolitan Transportation Study recommended freeways throughout the river valley, including the James McDonald Bridge, which cut a large swath through the Flats.



Section looking west from 104 St. Most land is vacant - only two houses appear.

RIVER AS A CONNECTOR

The river and river valley are essential components to the Flats

The Flats owes much of its history to its location adjacent to the North Saskatchewan River.

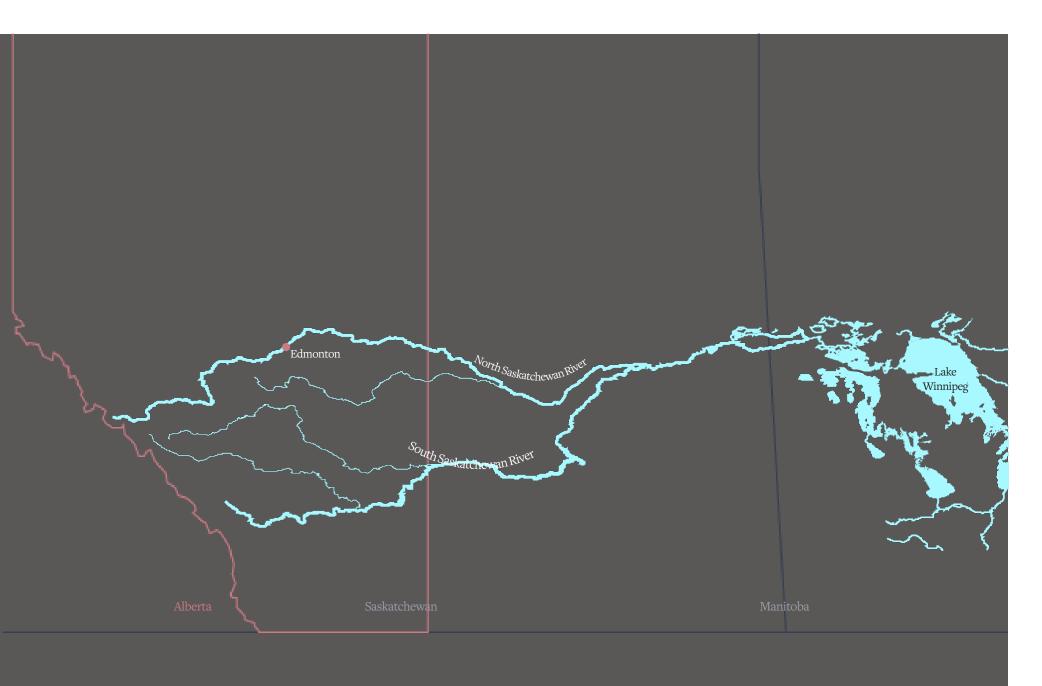
The relationship to the river has been conceptualized in three ways, shifting through time: as connector, as barrier, and as supplier.

The river has always been a connector. It connected Indigenous peoples, particularly

facilitating connection and migration of nehiyawak (Cree) people east to west.

The river system was vital for the fur trade. The North Saskatchewan River was a major artery west and north. Edmonton House and Ft. Augustus were points of major distribution to further forts.

Today, the North Saskatchewan River is a major vein through Edmonton, metaphorically connecting neighbourhoods throughout the city.



Map showing major fur trade routes from Lake Winnipeg west. The Flats in Edmonton were one of most west and north forts.

RIVER AS A BARRIER

In contrast, the river is also a barrier.

Other forms, including red river carts and trains, took over as the primary method of transportation (Kalman et al, 2004), transforming rivers from connectors to barriers to cross. This shift contributed to the declining role of the Flats in the fur trade.

The North Saskatchewan River was the division between the Cities of Edmonton and Strathcona prior to annexation, and was previously one of the rivers dividing nehiyawak (Cree) and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) territory.

Bridges across the river began to be built in 1900. The Flats have been conceptualized

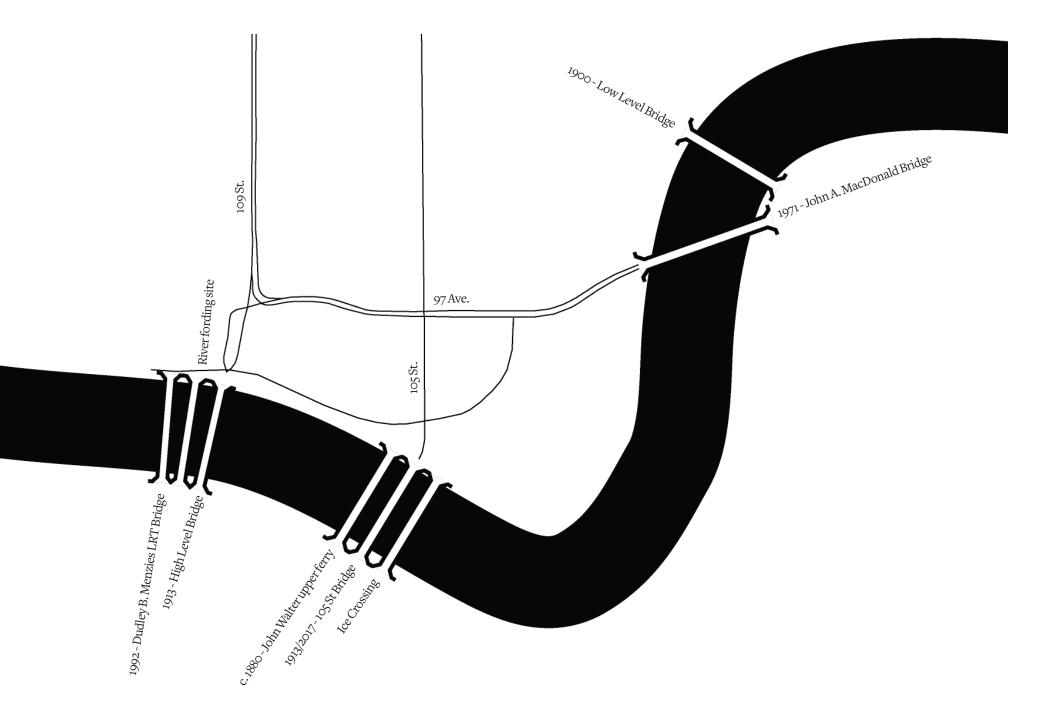
as part of the barrier between the "real destinations" on either side of the river.

The river is also a (largely hidden) supplier and enabler of the surrounding area.

For nehiyawak, the river and river valley provided food and resources. The river valley was a wintering spot for animals, and the river provided many fish.

The regular flooding of the Flats created fertile and well-drained ground for agriculture.

Early industry required water and power from the river, and power, water treatment, and sewage are all utilities tied to the river.







The design of the neighbourhood was investigated at different scales.

Two concepts address overall layout and land use - one pragmatic, retaining overall street layout, and one provocative, with changes in orientation.

One concept investigates the streetscape, including enclosure and materiality.

One concept details a community engagement process through taking a pilot project in the design of a trail along the river.

Each concept starts with an overview, continues with precedents, and finishes with futher details.

OVERALL PLAN:

DISTRICT IDENTITIES

This overall plan is pragmatic, retaining existing roads and alignment while creating distinct districts that use public space design and materiality to emphasize different stories of the history of the Flats.

Past uses provide patterns, textures, and identity. Each district is adjacent to or is the location of these past uses.



PRECEDENT: SOUTHEAST FALSE CREEK

Southeast False Creek in Vancouver is a recent master-planned neighbourhood, focusing on sustainability with a strong heritage component (Bayley, 2010). It was decided that the community would be "recognized as only the most recent of many layers of history" (Bayley, 2010), recognizing:

- The strong ecological heritage of the site as a rich estuarial hunting ground and trade route for Coast Salish people, and
- Recent industrial heritage, including shipbuildings, metal fabrication, and salt refining.

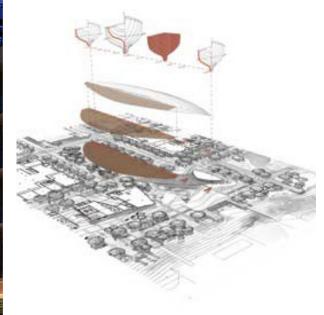
There are three distinct areas within Southeast False Creek, each retaining an industrial identity - the City Worksyard, the Shipyard, and the Railyard (the Shipyard is the only area currently built). To reinforce these identities, "character-defining elements" were found

and used in the design of the neighbourhood - from overall layout down to materials used, and from very tangible to less tangible parts of heritage. A few examples include:

- Integrating remaining industrial buildings;
- Zig-zag shoreline, which used to be made of boat slips and storage sheds;
- Retaining open space behind the Salt Building, recognizing that a boat landing once ensured a stream of traffic at that spot;
- Plaza design utilizes the processes of shipbuilding, reinterpreting "lofting" (the process of laying out a full-size working drawing of a ship to begin shaping its parts). There are lines on the pavement outlining various sections of a ship's hull, with some lines rising three-dimensionally

- as site grade changes. Lighting takes the form of the ribs of a ship;
- "Gritty" and naturalistic materials to "[reflect] a working place ... it's heavy and substantial" (Bayley, 2010);
- Detailing, including sidewalk medallions and inset lines in paving to mark the changing shoreline of False Creek;
- Use of industrial remnants (some real, some not from the area but meant to reinforce the identity), including an old gantry crane and a sewer pipe bridge;
- Use of shapes in new infrastructure, including a bridge built in the shape of a canoe.









PRECEDENT: UPPER FORT GARRY

Upper Fort Garry is a park in the heart of Winnipeg's downtown, and is one of western Canada's most significant historic assets. Its stories are rich, complex, and controversial (HTFC, 2016).

Actual and estimated building locations of the fort were overlaid on the site, creating the pattern of development. Limestone plinths were constructed at building locations and support installations. Gardens inspired by building functions outline their estimated footprints. A steel wall inscribed with graphics can showcase programming and content using speakers and a digital light array.







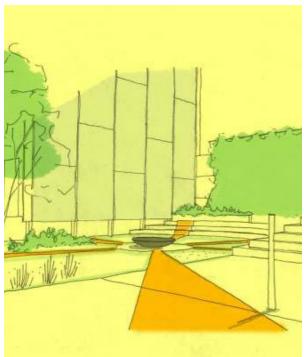
PRECEDENT: NGARA PLACE

Ngara Place is in the heart of RMIT University, Australia, aiming to "build a visible presence and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples...with particular deference to the cultural continuity of the custodians of the land especially the Wurundjeri and the Boon Wurrung". The landscape "[infuses] Indigenous sensibilities ... and begins to broaden the frame of reference in which people can connect to place" (Greenaway Architects, 2016). Four strategies were used:

 Connection to Country: The space is divided into seven sections based off of the six/seven seasons of Kulin Nation, demarcating distinct zones, including space fo tiered planting, traditional dancing/ceremony, amphitheatre seating, and a sculptural smoke pit.

- Cultural Motifs: Radiating arms are infused with cultural motifs specific to the southeast of Australia, including carving practices and body paint.
- Contemporary Aboriginal Art: A very large piece of artwork is a distinct and very visible marker of the space, "evok[ing] nature, place and connections to Country" (Greenaway Architects, 2016).
- Knowledge Exchange: All plantings are Indigenous species, including plants traditionally used for edible, medicinal, and practical purposes. Interpretive panels are used to provide cultural context.







CONCEPT INTENT

The Flats is organized around one primary axis east-west on 96 Ave, connecting from the Legislature grounds in the west to existing Rossdale residential in the east. A secondary axis north-south on 105 St connects from the river valley trail system north through the neighbourhood.

Two urban gathering spaces created: one in the centre of the development at 105 St and 96 Ave, providing a view over the neighbourhood and river valley; the second at the edge of the river adjoining the heritage power plant building.

It is important in this concept to focus on entry points and connecting across major arteries, particularly Rossdale Road and 97 Ave.

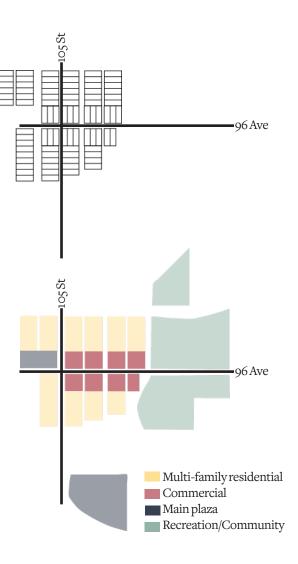
Lots:

• Lots are the historic size (50' by 150') used for the area by the first European land

surveyors. The lots along 96 Ave, the main east-west axis, are rotated to face this main street.

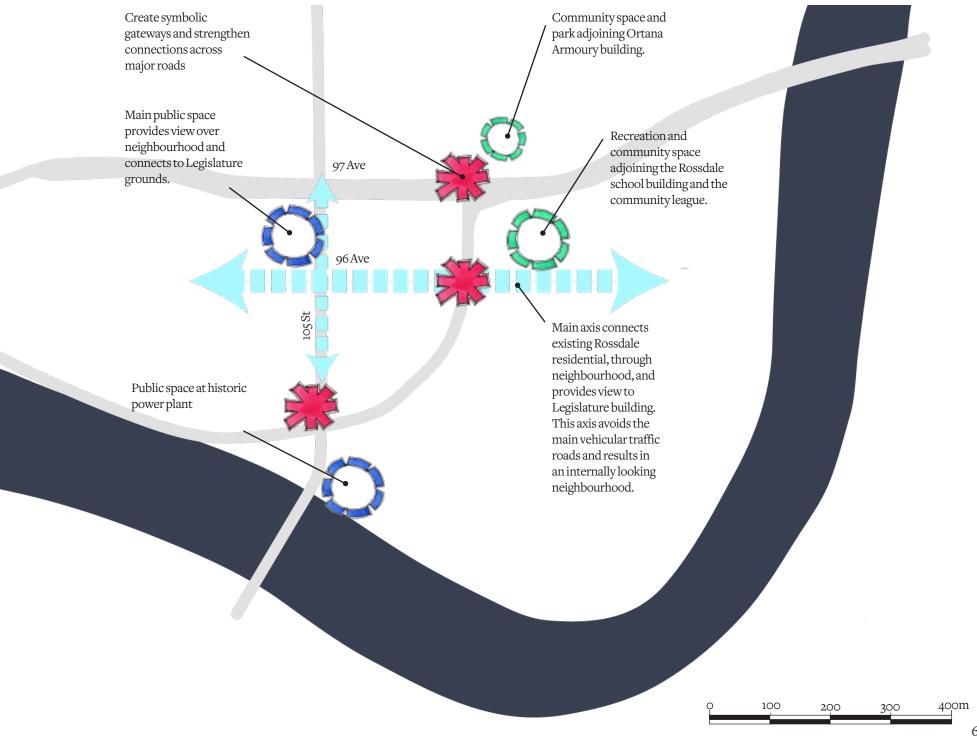
Land use:

- Retail and community uses on the ground floor are concentrated along 106 Ave, with major public spaces at 96 Ave and 105 St and along the river at the power plant building.
- Recreation sites are located on lower ground and possible floodplain. Historic recreation uses occurred on these sites.

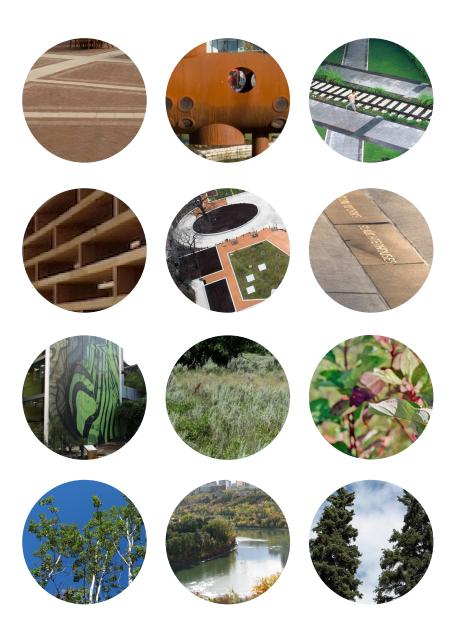


Diagrams showing lots (top) and land use (bottom). Right: concept diagram.





CONCEPT DETAILS



Industrial

Use brick materials, steel, and industrial remnants in public spaces. Emphasize existing buildings, and integrate it into the natural landscape.

Fort

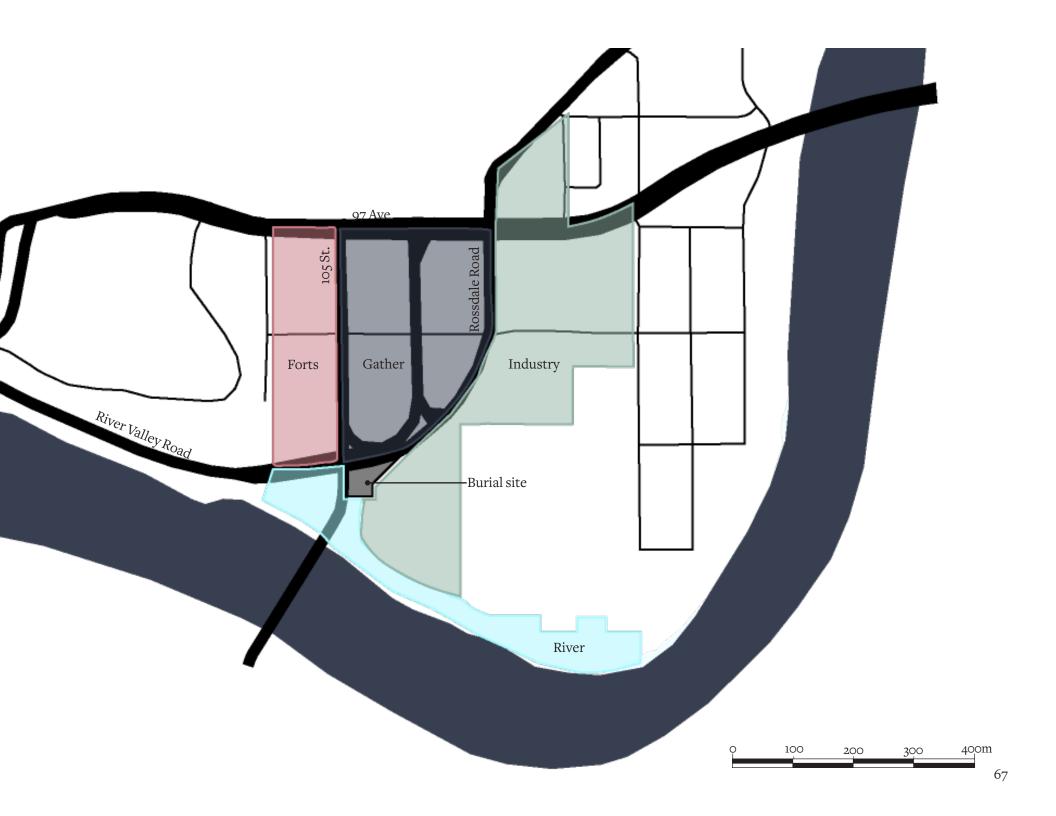
Use locally-sourced wood materials with natural stone. Use water and gardens in public space. Design plazas to be reminiscent of fort layout.

Gathering

Focus on local materials, including wood and stone, whever possible. Hire contemporary Indigenous artists to create public art, and use native and endemic plants for boulevards, including planting prairie grasses and small trees. Use colours found in river valley.

River

Maintain natural forests and trails in area.



OVERALL PLAN: NEW ORIENTATION

This overall plan is based on the relationship to the river and the conceptualization of the Flats as a gathering spot - and attempts to return to these relationships.

It is meant to provoke rather than be pragmatic, and is certainly not the easiest plan to implement. This lens, however, allows for different possibilities.

This plan focuses on land use, transportation, road, and lot layout.

As this concept considers a long-term vision, many current buildings, including Edmonton Baseball Field, are removed.



PRECEDENT: PROMENADE DU PAILLON

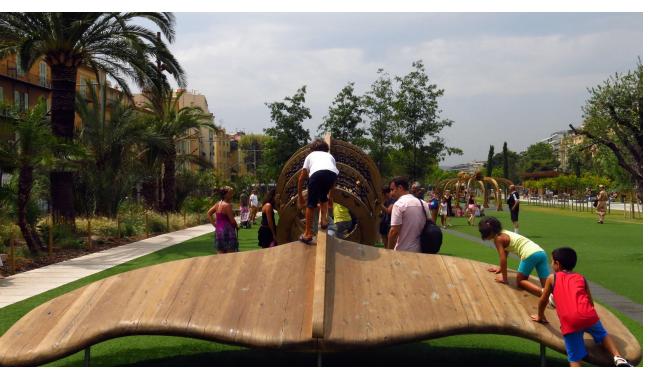
The Promenade du Paillon is a major linear park in Nice, France built on the path of the (now covered) Paillon River (Paysages, 2015).

It uses deliberate decisions to evoke the sensuality of the river (Paysages, 2015), including:

- Plantings: symbolic creation of two riparian forests on the edges of the park (Paysages, 2015);
- Interactive water features: Water mirror (large, shallow pool) with fountains, misters (Paysages, 2015);
- Symbols and imagery used: Aquatic animal shapes used in playgrounds (McKerral,

- 2015), long stone ribbon to evoke the flow of the river (Paysages, 2015);
- Enclosure of the space: Buildings are oriented towards the park, the sense of the river is enforced through the low height/ scale in the middle of the park (McKerral, 2015).







PRECEDENT: ZHONGSHAN SHIPYARD PARK

Zhongshan Shipyard Park is on the former site of a shipyard (active from the 1950s to 1999) in Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province, China (Turenscape, 2012). Through this history, it reflects 50 years of socialist history in China, including the cultural revolution. Its design as a park addresses this history, and functions as "a space to remember and tell stories to those who did not experience this period of history". Its location on a tidally influenced river also present challenges.

- Preserving, modifying, and using new forms to echo the industrial history (Turenscape, 2012). This includes a network of straight paths, new artistic forms and structures, and preserving some old forms and machinery. This is a significant departure from traditional Chinese parks and gardens.
- Constructing a network of bridges at

various elevations and using terraced planting beds with native salt marsh plants (Turenscape, 2012). The park changes through the day such that visitors can "feel the breath of the ocean".







CONCEPT INTENT

Rossdale lacks obvious physical remnants of its history, including any remains of the forts and little obvious markers of thousands of years of Indigenous use.

This concept conceptualizes heritage as the relationship to the river and to the Flats as a gathering spot and attempts to bring back some of these relationships.

- Ecology and the river: the natural elements of Rossdale are integral to the history of settlement in this location, including the use of the river as a connector, suitable fording locations of the river, and use of the river and the valley for resources.
- Gathering: the Flats has been used by Indigenous peoples as a gathering place for thousands of years, which is one key

reason for locating the trading forts in this location. This concept creates spaces and opportunities for gathering through public space.

Rossdale is organized into four districts. They are roughly aligned with the contours of the area, with the urban area above the area flooded in the 1915 flood and 100 year floodlines.

- Current Rossdale Residential
- Parkland and Recreation
- Urban
- Current City



Current City

 Re-align roads, with traffic redirected to 105 St and 97 Ave. Narrow 97 Ave, which is considerably over-engineered. These major roads do not disrupt and disconnect the neighbourhood.

Urban:

- Development is centered around main public square. Major axes of development are along historic rail alignment.
- Residential and other buildings are centered along smaller useable outdoor spaces.
- Diagonal grid allows all units winter sunlight, and creates more shelter from winter winds, which facilitates outside use in winter.

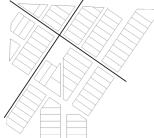
Parkland and Recreation:

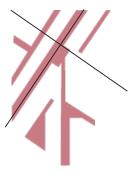
- Center useable field space and parks around existing heritage buildings.
- Integrate Indigenous ecology and plants into parks, extending river valley experience through Rossdale.
- As a major utility, the Rossdale water treatment center remains.
- Create new trails through the area, connecting field space and parks, in addition to existing trails along river.

100 200 300 400m

CONCEPT DETAILS

97 Ave





Above: three diagrams show roads, lots, and gathering spaces. Right: diagram showing main axes and public spaces in urban area.

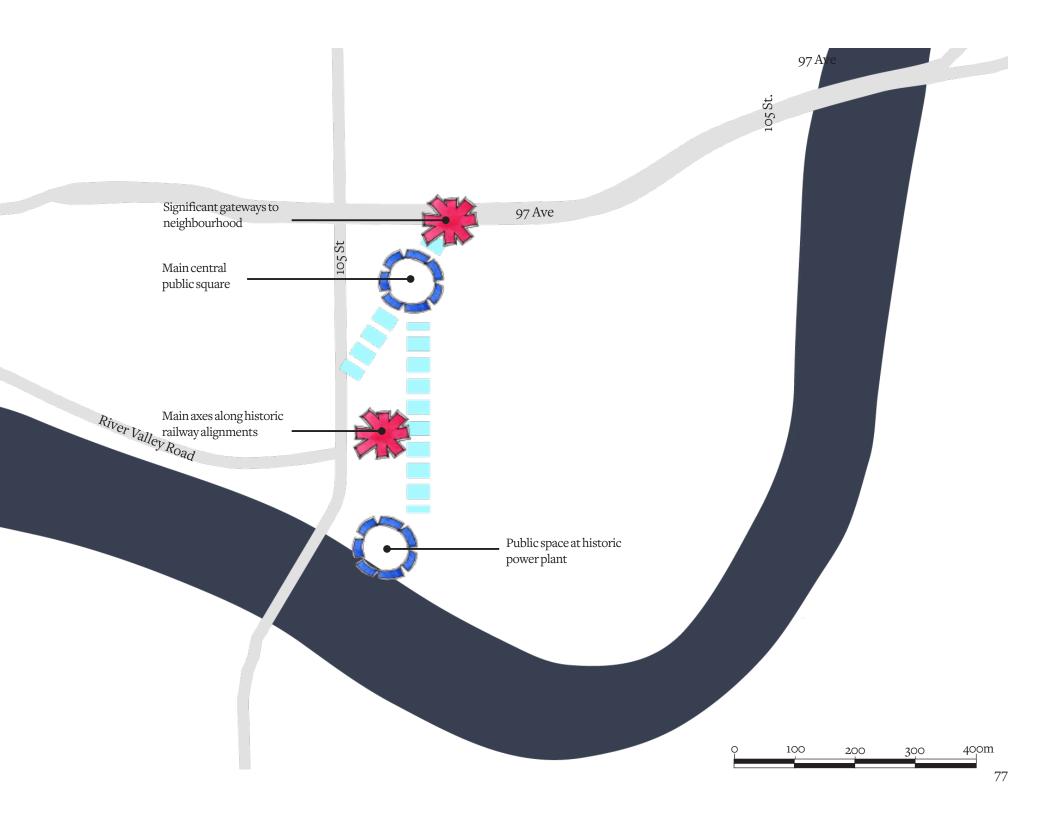


The urban district is organized along two main axes:

- Northeast to southwest axis, aligned with the historical Edmonton Yukon and Pacific Railway alignment (Kalman et al, 2004). This may be approximately aligned with the traditional "Wolf Trail", a trading route used by Indigenous peoples (Pelletier et al, 2004).
- North to south axis, aligned with a rail spur to the Edmonton Power Plant. This provides a direct connection south to the river, the power plant heritage river, and functions as a major gateway.

The urban district is then also organized with major gathering areas:

- The central space is at the convergence of the historic alignments of the EY&P Railway and the rail spur connecting to the power plant.
- Another major space is at the edge of the river, adjoining the historic building of the Edmonton Power Plant.
- The space of the graveyard should be extended, with the memorial space remaining.



The parkland and recreation district includes several public spaces connected through trails. They adjoin the existing heritage buildings in the area, and use is typically based off of historical use, including keeping the current site of the Edmonton Baseball Field (past site of Renfrew Park) as a recreational and baseball field.

Roads are aligned to historic railway alignements, as well as approximating one traditional Indigenous path. This alignment is roughly parallel to contour lines in the area.

Diagonal alignment provides climacte benefits, including more sun during the winter months

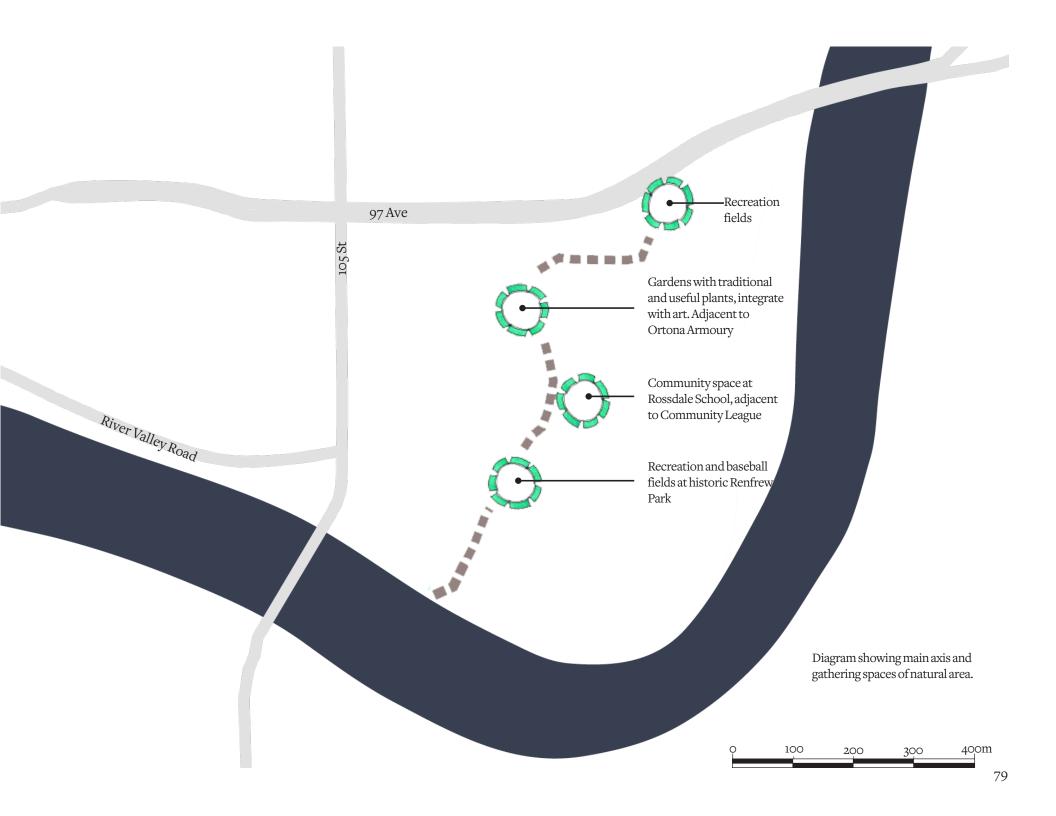
for a greater number of buildings and streets.

Lots are typically the historic size (50' by 150') used for the area by the first European land surveyors. This also provides a fairly small grain for the area.

Lots first face onto the main public square, then are aligned to the two major axes of the concept.

Smaller public spaces are scattered through the area.

Laneways should be designed and utilized as semi-public/semi-private spaces in conjunction with courtyards and extra space at the rear of lots.



STREET DESIGN

This concept focuses on the design of the streetscape, particularly the street section, including dimensions of streets and guidelines around materiality.

Materiality and the design of streets can be used to remind and emphasize the heritage of the area, with past uses providing patterns, textures, and identity.



PRECEDENT: RIVER LANDING TREE GRATES

Eight tree grate designs were created for the River Landing site in Saskatoon. They, as part of broader urban design goals, were meant to "tell the stories of the River Landing location, and most importantly, to express the genius loci or spirit of place" (Walker & Belanger, 2013).

The City of Saskatoon created a community group made of five elders from Cree and Dakota First Nations in the Saskatoon area. This community group worked with designers, with elders providing stories about what activities would have occurred in the area prior

to settlement by European settlers (beginning in the 1880s). This knowledge and the stories inspired the visual elements in the tree grate designs.

Together, they bring a tangible connection to the heritage and Indigenous presence in the site through urban design.







PRECEDENT: WAVE HILL BOUGH SHELTERS

In 1966, Aboriginal (Gurindji) stockmen and farm workers were denied their proper wages by Lord Vesty, who had stolen the land. In response, the workers and their families went on strike, which lasted for more than eight years. Eventually, the Australian government accepted the Gurindji's claims for equal wages and allocated a portion of their land back in the first successful land rights case for Australia's First People. Fifty years later, three "bough shelters" were created to help commemorate the anniversary and annual celebration (Bower Studio, 2016).

The shelter designs were driven in part by the stories told by the community elders and traditional owners as well as a series of remnant artifacts from the West Hill Station held in esteem by the elders. Each shelter is unique to its specific site and the stories belonging to that site.







DESIGN DETAILS

Urban

In the urban area, building heights should vary, and should not be higher than the tallest trees in the river valley (approximately six storeys). The enclosure of street should aim to mimic the multiple storeys/levels of the river valley forest.

Facade heights should be varied. On southern sides of the street, some buildings should be of a height and setback to allow winter sun on the street.

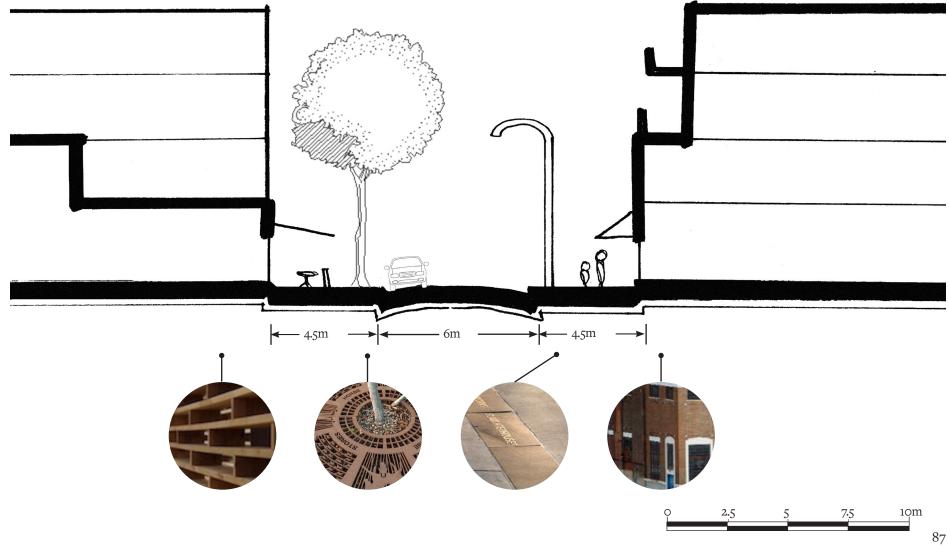
Use natural and historic materials, including brick and wood.

Include street art referencing heritage, including on utilities and street furniture.

Engrave provoking stories and words in paving.



Section of street in urban area with material details noted.

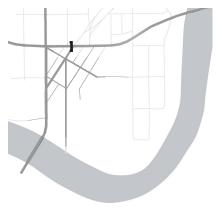


Existing city

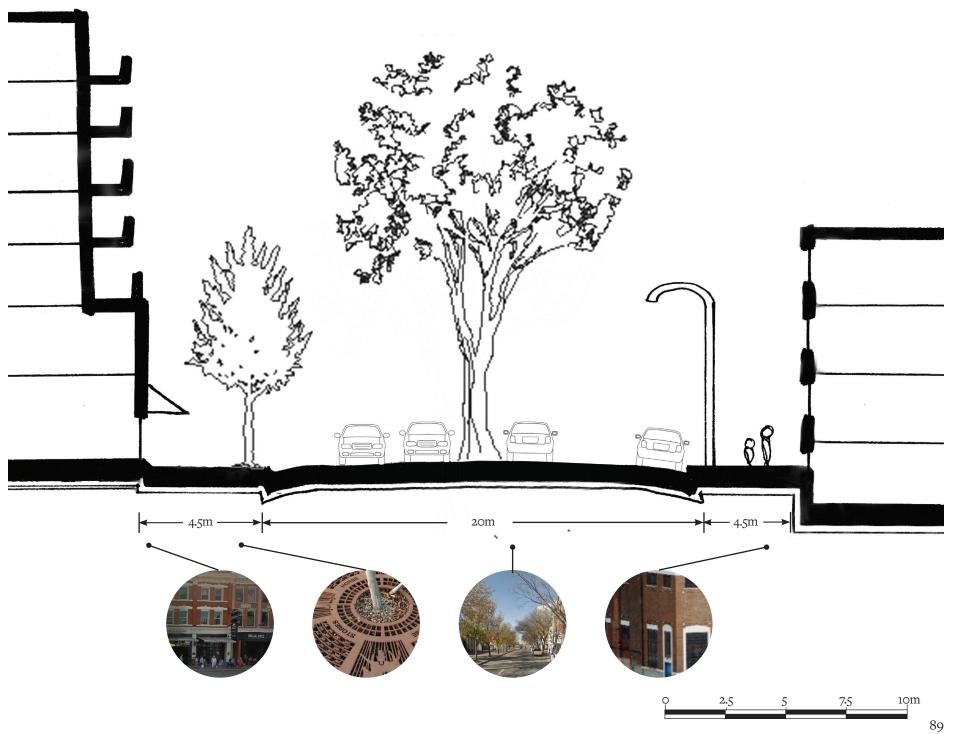
The main interface to the existing city is along 97 Ave. This artery, currently overbuilt to seven lanes, should be reduced in width to minimize its effect as a barrier.

Increase enclosure on streets using trees and reducing setbacks to bring buildings to the sidewalk.

Create gateways to the Flats using building form and trees.



Section of 97 Ave showing transition to existing city.



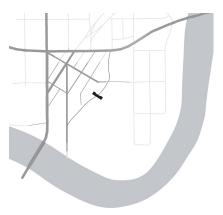
Nature

Plant endemic forest to the area, including balsam poplar, white spruce, red-osier dogwood, willow, and natural grasses.

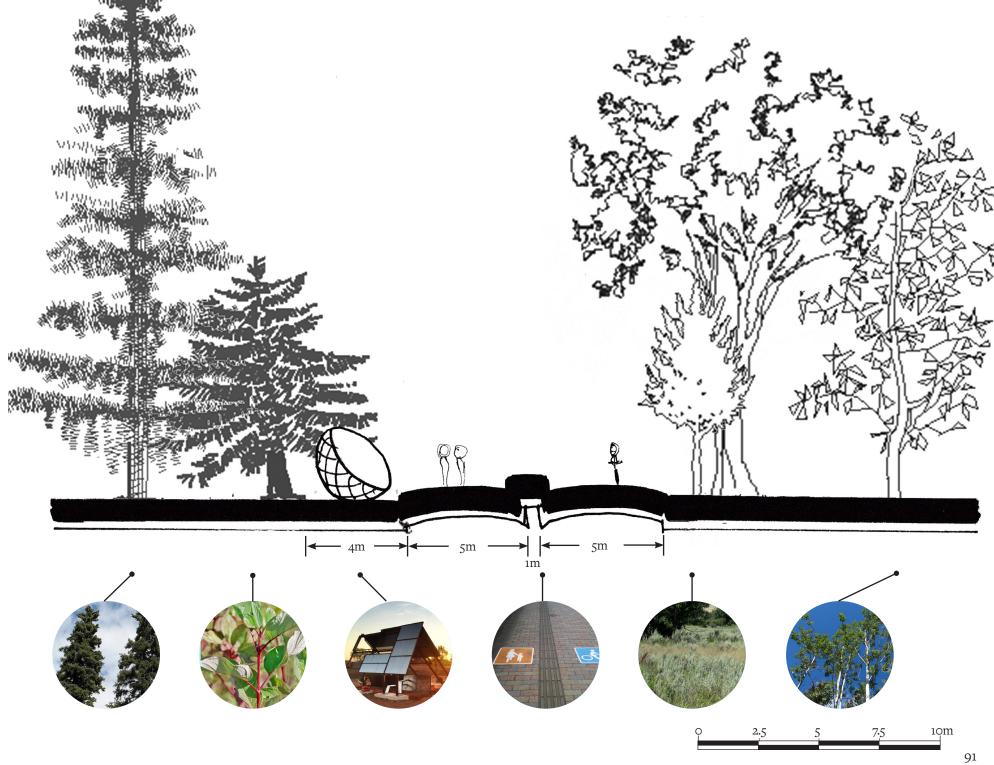
Provide separated space for people walking and cycling.

Use art pieces and sculptures to showcase parts of the heritage, especially past Indigenous usage.

Incorporate small and large gathering spaces, including picnic sites, fields, and recreation areas, especially next to existing historical buildings.



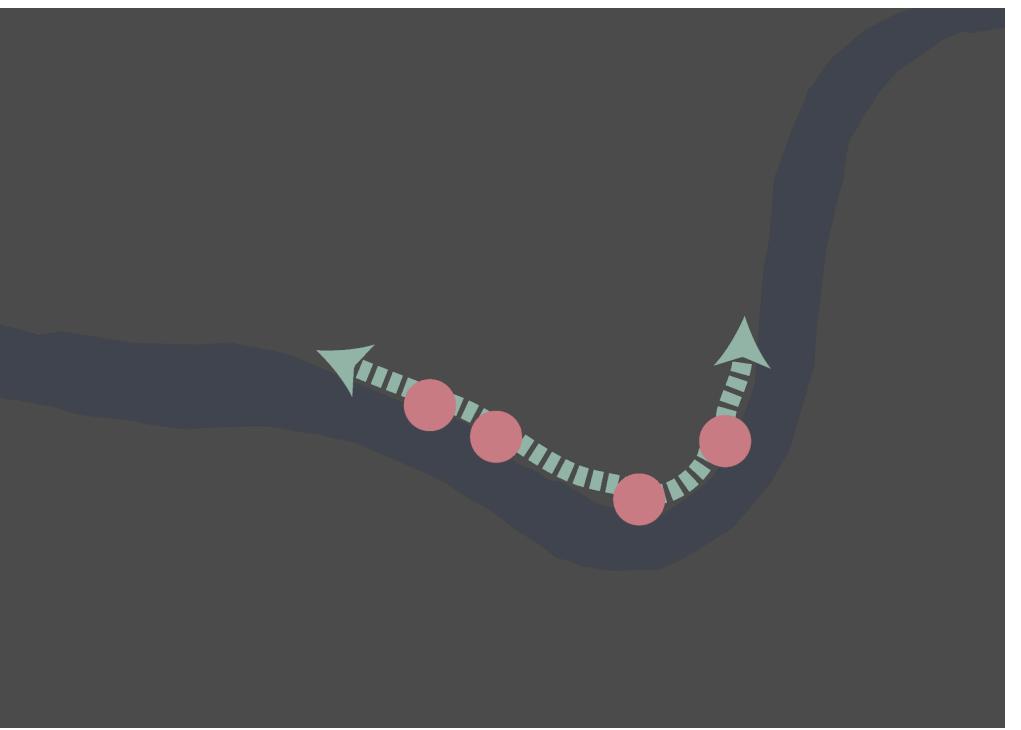
Section of street in urban area with material details noted.



RIVER + ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The North Saskatchewan River is an important piece of Edmonton's formation and identity, with the Flats at the heart.

This section proposes an engagement process, using the design of the trails adjacent to the river at the Flats as a pilot project to test processes and governance models of a new relationship between the City of Edmonton and Indigenous peoples.



ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This process must begin with good intentions. I propose two core values and intentions to begin with:

- Consider the engagement process as a full partnership, co-designing the process.
- The process as a whole is a tool for reconciliation and a new approach to working together.
- Consider the entire process as a pilot project - experimenting with governance models and methods on a relatively small project in order to work out the process before implementing on a larger scale. Use this project as an entry point to get people in the room and working together.
- The process must include education on history, including the specific history of the site.

Three phases are included:

Phase 1: Negotiating upward

This includes finding major participants, getting buy-in and a budget from the City. It sets the terms of the entire process.

Phase 2: Setting trajectory

This phase is based on building relationships and setting context. It should include developing an advisory council with City officials and Indigenous people who currently live in Edmonton as well as those who have historic ties to the site. This advisory council should co-design the participatory process used in the third phase and set the major heritage narratives used.

Phase 3: Participatory planning

This phase is the bulk of the participatory process, and includes engaging a further variety of current and previous users and stakeholders, including residents of Rossdale, EPCOR (owners of the Rossdale Water Treatment Plant), users of recreation facilities, urban agriculture users and the Chinese community (ties to Chinese market gardens in the area). Most importantly, the process must include a variety of Indigenous people and groups, including bands who have ties to the area and urban residents in Edmonton.

This phase should include the setting of the most important historical narratives to utilize, ideation and brainstorming, and budgeting for and prioritizing specific projects.



CONCEPT INTENT

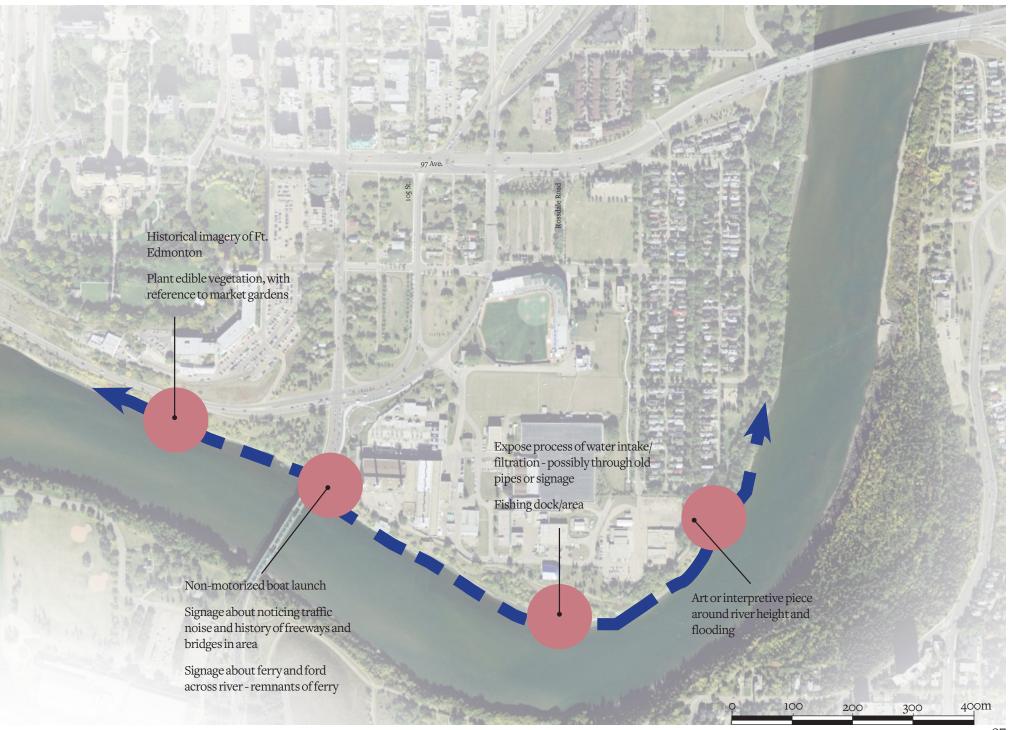
The North Saskatchewan River is, in many ways, an ideal site to pilot a new protocol and engagement process. It is core to the history and identity of Edmonton. It has had multiple conceptions of its function throughout time. It is rich with historical and current importance.

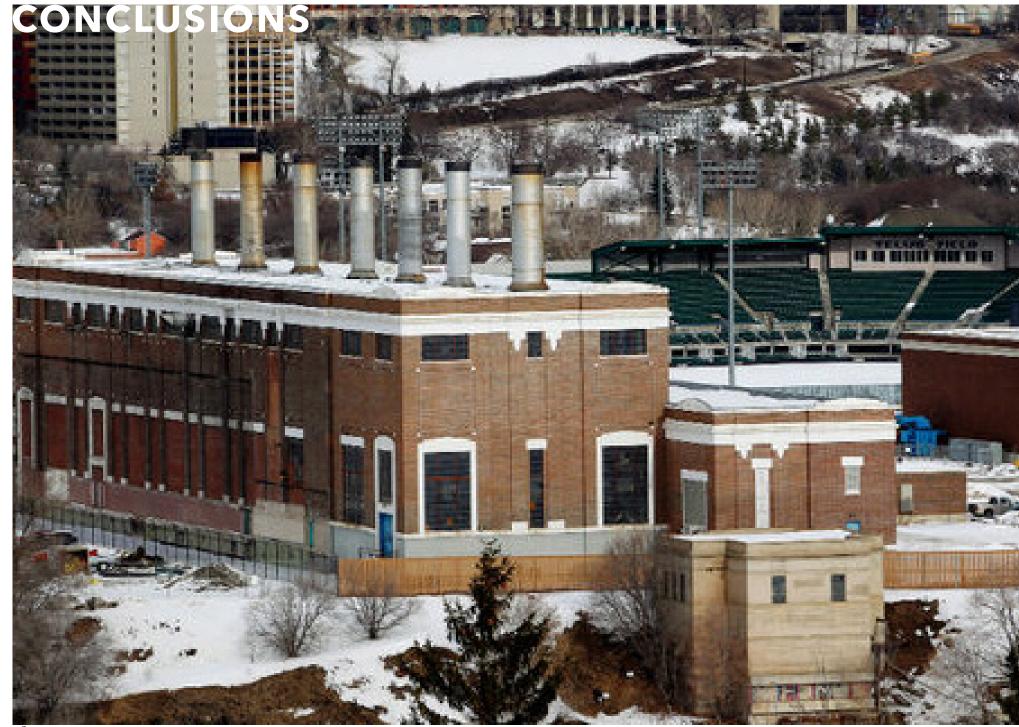
Even more, it is a relatively small project to work on that can be given a specified budget and timeline. It lends itself well to both larger planning projects and smaller tangible projects, and is an excellent opportunity to imbue a trail already heavily used with heritage through modern day uses, remnants, and exposing uses.

This site has interfaces with recreation, planning for the Flats, new public spaces and re-use of heritage buildings (e.x. Rossdale Power Plant), current utility operations (Rossdale Water Treatment Plant), and the ecology and use of the North Saskatchewan River.

It is one of the most direct possible interfaces to the river from downtown Edmonton, and provides an opportunity to strengthen this connection.

One possible concept is shown at right, where four sites are chosen to showcase specific histories and current uses, connected by a trail adjacent to the river.







Heritage can and should be a starting point for urban design in order to recognize the shared (and conflicting) stories and experiences of a place. Heritage must include not just the current built form and mainstream history, but should include and use conceptualizations of the function of a space - which can be a starting point for the urban design of a space.

As planners and designers, we should recognize both the mainstream and other histories - especially the uncomfortable ones! We must accept and utilize multiple narratives of spaces.

In the Flats, it is particularly important to recognize Indigenous uses and conceptualizations of the area, as this area has been an important gathering and ceremony spot for thousands of years. Indigenous communities in and around Edmonton are key partners to the planning and design process.

The Flats have historically been a gathering, ceremony, and trade spot - from Indigenous uses, to the location of the inaugration of the Province of Alberta. It has been utilized in the last century primarily in service to the "real city" (on higher ground), and has provided recreation, utilities, industry, and transportation. Its location and relationship to the river and the river valley is of utmost importance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first want to acknowledge my presence, working and living as an uninvited guest on Coast Salish territories, particularly those of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. This work is about land in Treaty Six territory.

Thank you to Maged Senbel, my supervisor, for supporting my work and providing support and feedback.

Thank you to the River Crossing team at the City of Edmonton, particularly Hailley

Honcharik, for supporting my work, providing feedback, and providing many resources.

Thank you to others who have volunteered their time and provided me with inspiration, thoughts, and feedback, including Erick Villagomez and Britney Quail.

Finally, thank you to Fraser Mah, my partner through it all.

Photograph Credits

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