



URBAN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT
PHASE 1: VISIONING | MARCH - JULY 2023



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1.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Launched in March 2023, the Urban Centre Redevelopment Plan (UCRP) will plan for and enable growth and transformation of a strong downtown area for our residents and businesses. The UCRP plan area consists of Downtown Leduc, Alexandra Park neighbourhood and the Telford House area.

The purpose of this project is to develop a long-range, statutory land use plan (that is: a bylaw approved by City Council) that guides revitalization and redevelopment of the Urban Centre, as required by the 2020 Municipal Development Plan (MDP). In addition to the City's MDP which provides direction to complete the plan, the recent changes to the Edmonton Airport Vicinity Protection Area Regulation (AVPA) have removed key growth restrictions, providing significant redevelopment opportunities in the plan area. As such, this project will have widespread influence on many stakeholders including interest groups, subject matter experts within the organization, City of Leduc residents, and users of the Urban Centre and its many amenities. Due to this influence, an important component of the project is public engagement.

As part of the UCRP Public Engagement Plan, the approach is to gain insight and feedback from the stakeholders in the community and within the organization. Public and stakeholder inputs are key to the development of this plan. Engagement has been, and will continue to be led by the Project Team (Planning and Development Staff) and supported by Communications and Marketing Services (CMS).

Public Engagement Goals

- Provide opportunities for the public and other stakeholders to be well-informed, making participants aware of all the various interests, points of view and how this plan will impact them;
- Ensure information is available to help participants understand the plan-making process, the public engagement process, and how their input will be used;
- Ensure public engagement is inclusive and accessible to all ages, abilities, and underrepresented groups in order to gain input from all members representing the community;
- Report back to the public and other stakeholders on how input has been considered and/or used as a key input; and
- Provide decision makers, such as Leduc City Council, with the information they need to make informed decisions on the project.

This What We Heard Report is a summary of the results from Phase 1: Visioning.

1.1 ENGAGEMENT PHASES AND TIMELINES

The UCRP project has three phases of engagement opportunities. This approach was launched in March 2023 with the proposed completion timeline of early 2025. In summary, the three phases of engagement are:



1.2 PHASE 1: VISIONING

The objectives of the first phase of engagement are to:

Increase awareness about the plan by explaining why it is needed and being developed, and why it matters.

Help develop a vision for the area and its future built form.



Learn, gain insight, and context from the public to better understand the study area and its needs.

Ensure existing and future users of the area are provided with an opportunity to influence the outcome of the plan.

2.0 WHO WE ENGAGED, WHEN AND HOW

The UCRP project kicked-off in March 2023, however, internal stakeholder meetings commenced prior to this as early as January 2023. The following engagement tools were used during the first phase of engagement:

- Interviews with key staff and subject matter experts, internal to the organization (January - March 2023);
- Online survey (March 2023);
- Two community workshops (March 2023); and
- Meetings with external stakeholders and key interest groups (March - June 2023).

The Project Team offered different opportunities for engagement to ensure public engagement is inclusive and accessible to all ages, abilities, and underrepresented groups. Some examples of this included:

- Providing two options for the open house at different times of the week and day.
- Offering interviews and/or meetings to stakeholders based on their schedule and in some cases engaged on one or more topics to be more efficient with time.
- Offering physical copies of the online survey for those who may not have internet access.
- Advertising public engagement through social media platforms, on the City's website, through flyers (sent out to residents within the study area) as well as in the newspaper.
- Reaching out to different groups for specific discussions and to provide information about the project.
- Emailing the Project Team with direct questions and providing feedback via email. The email provided via the project's website is available for the entirety of the project.
- Subscribing to the UCRP mailing list to get project updates.



1533 views on the UCRP Project website



27 Open house participants



3,125 postcards mailouts



various 1-1 stakeholder meetings



153 survey respondents



29 email subscribers

3.0 WHAT WE ASKED

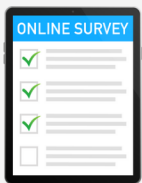
Engagement first consisted of informing the public about the project as well as getting input and feedback on baseline conditions of the community, vision for the future of the community and goals and objectives.

Community Workshops



Participants were able to view information about the project, what an ARP is in the context of the Alberta planning hierarchy, how the project will unfold, and how they will be engaged throughout the entire project. Participants were then asked questions about their vision for this area and what their priorities are, and were able to comment on strengths and weaknesses they currently observe in plan area. This was a chance to talk directly with the Project Team and to share local knowledge of the area.

Online Survey



Similar to the public workshop, the survey provided some information about the project and asked similar questions about respondent's local knowledge of the area, vision for the future and priorities. The survey was organized into four main sections: Your Experience; High-Level Issues; Vision and Goals; and Demographics; and consisted of a mix of open-ended questions and ranking questions. While designed like the community workshop in terms of questions and issues raised, the survey ensured stakeholders had an alternative way to contribute to the process.

One-on-One Meetings



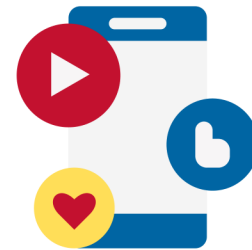
Some one-on-one meetings were held with stakeholders and key interest groups identified in the engagement plan. These meetings were tailored to the audience but focused on similar topics as in the public engagement events. This was a chance for the Project Team to speak with stakeholders, interest groups, and subject matter experts about the challenges and opportunities in the area, to learn more about their future and priorities, their vision for the area as well as a chance for these groups to learn about the project and how they might like to be involved going forward.



4.0 WHAT WE HEARD

4.1 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

At the community workshop, there were a series of feedback boards for participants to write down their thoughts. The Project Team was also available to discuss the questions with participants.



Vision

When asked about what participants imagined as their ideal future Urban Centre, the main takeaways were more amenities such as restaurants, event space, arts and cultural spaces, more activities, and other spaces such as a permanent farmers market location. Additionally, participants identified that they would prefer more mixed-use housing and opportunities to age in place. There were also comments around preserving heritage in the area.

Priorities

Participants were asked to identify their top 3 priorities for the future of the Urban Centre. The top five priorities that were identified included: Transportation and Transit, Public Art and Culture, Support for Local Businesses, Diversity of Daily Goods and Services and Housing Affordability.

SWOT Analysis

Participants were asked to identify any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats they currently observe in the Urban Centre. The following were identified:

Strengths: walkable, abundance of amenities, proximity to Telford Lake and boardwalk existing community events.

Weaknesses: lack of housing variety - especially for seniors, mobility options, low population, parking, more landmarks and amenities needed.

Opportunities: engage and partner with property owners on redevelopments, more support for disadvantaged people, indoor recreation, gathering and event facilities (unique), winter activities around Telford, a beautiful art centre, a better housing mix, and public art.

Threats: vulnerable populations, property values and redevelopment, development competition (commercial).

Other

Other activities including marking locations on a map where participants felt there needed to be more attention, places they loved, places they would like to see more of, etc. The key takeaways from this exercise was that there are a lot of great places in the Urban Centre already, but work could be done to ensure better connectivity for pedestrians (i.e., more multiway and crosswalks at intersections). There were also conversations with the Project Team around homelessness and vulnerable populations within the Urban Centre, and better ways to support them and the community.

4.2 ONLINE SURVEY

The Project Team provided an online survey that was open to the public to obtain public input on the vision, goals, and objectives. Some of the key takeaways are highlighted below.



The word clouds above illustrate a word used by the public to describe the current impressions (left) and ideal future (right) of the Urban Centre. The size of each word indicates its frequency or importance.

KEY THEMES

Mainstreet, services, & amenities

Although there are many unique and locally owned businesses in the area, variation is needed to attract youth and patrons outside of business hours. Consider more event spaces for music, farmers' market, festivals. There is potential as the area is centralized, walkable with unique architecture.

Park space and public facilities

Amenities are highly valued as they are great places to meet people in the community. Trails connections can be improved but overall, there is easy access to Telford Lake, and to the Alexandra Park civic area.

Public/Road safety

Increase concerns about theft, vandalism and homelessness in the area, however, there is a general feeling that people in the community do make the area safer. The high traffic along 50th Ave can be unsafe for pedestrians.

Sense of place and community

The area seems adequate and sufficient for residents with a charming, vibrant, cozy, and community-focused and a family-like atmosphere. The historical downtown adds charm and personality to the area and would like this to be maintained.

Traffic and connectivity

Walkability could be improved with better connections to the downtown. The area can be noisy with increased traffic congestion during peak hours. Reduced traffic congestion would benefit patrons, visitors, and businesses. Traffic impact should be considered before allowing more density and businesses in the area, and more parking is needed.

Unattractive and uninviting atmosphere

Building/storefront improvements are needed on some apartment buildings and commercial units. Empty storefronts and abandoned lots create uninviting spaces. New buildings should be designed with the neighbourhood in mind.

4.3 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The Project Team hosted a variety of one-on-one meetings with various stakeholders. Some of the key takeaways from them were:



Business Community

- Parking issues still exists especially for larger events.
- Downtown is walkable but could use some improvement in some areas such as more paths and better access to transit.
- Mainstreet aesthetic should be implemented further out and further along 50th street.
- Concern for lack of safety, especially around Mainstreet.
- A lot of concerns around homelessness and shelters in the area.
- Expand the storefront program and continue the patio program and any other programs that will support the business community.
- Desire for more events in the Urban Centre.



Developers and Property Owners

- Parking is still an issue, difficult to compete with Leduc Common (for parking and rental rates).
- Considerations for density bonusing as a tool may or may not work and should be reviewed.
- Storefront improvements may result in high rent for tenants.
- There seems to be a trend for more commercial franchisee.
- Increased cost and material shortage continues to be a concern for development.



Canadian National Institute for the Blind

- Transit could be more accessible and designated bus stops are much more preferred and accessible. Signs at stops should be more tactile and face level.
- Crosswalks- zigzagged or zebra crosswalks easier to navigate, as well as raised crosswalks.
- Bump outs provide good traffic calming making it safer and more accessible.
- APS crosswalks preferred over just auditory, its more helpful to be able to hear engines stop before crossing.

5.0 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Now that the Phase 1 engagement has wrapped up and the project is moving forward into Phase 2 - Planning, the Project Team will be focused on drafting policies for bridging the existing conditions and recognizing the strengths and opportunities in the Urban Centre all with the intent to create a desired plan for the community.

The input received in Phase 1 will be used as one of the key inputs to this process. Feedback and information collected will be used to set the baseline conditions and will help guide the focus around drafting policies to put in the final plan.

Phase 2 will also include more public engagement starting sometime in 2024. This public engagement will focus on reviewing draft policies and land use concepts. Similar to Phase 1, there will be lots of opportunities to engage with the Project Team and provide an opportunity to influence the outcome of the plan.



APPENDIX

Why [Re]development matters?

The Urban Centre Redevelopment Plan (UCRP) project will provide a long-term vision for the future of the Urban Centre including guidance on future land use and form in the area, phasing of redevelopment, urban design and character, and will include an implementation plan to direct this work.

Given recent changes to the Edmonton Airport Vicinity Protection Area Regulation in 2022, significantly more residential redevelopment is now permitted within the Urban Centre and surrounding residential neighbourhoods and it is important to put a plan in place to guide the inevitable change in these areas.



Urban Centre [Re]development Process

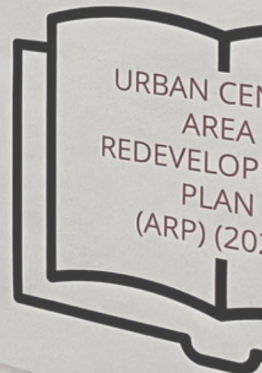
Public Engagement

- Open House:
 - ✓ 1st Community Workshop (Visioning)
 - 2nd Community Workshop (Planning)
 - 3rd Community Workshop (Confirming)
- Youth Engagement
- Online Survey
- Newsletter
- Website
- Public Hearing (2025)



Research, Data Expertise

- Housing Study
- Engineering Studies
- Mature Neighbourhood Infill Study
- Market and Economic Development Study



City of Leduc

Community Workshops (March 8th and 9th)

March 8th Participants: 11

March 9th Participants: 10 and an additional 6 youth from Youth Council

Mostly people from the Urban Centre.

What could be better:

- Terminology-open house vs. workshop.
- We should post the advertisements on the bulletin board.
- Advertising on the digital sign.
- Advertising on community bulletin boards.
- Maybe do the events further apart, different times, different days but a week apart.
- Target a younger crowd.
- Targeting a different demographic at places like the LRC with pared down information.
- Being more careful with imagery around the urban centre.

What worked:

- The mailouts- reached a lot of people in the Urban Centre.
- Map exercise helped but need more information with the dots. Helpful to have the maps there for the conversation and for setting context.



ACTIVITY 1: VISION EXERCISE

What do you envision for the future of the Urban Centre (Downtown, Alexandra Park and Telford House)? What would you add or change about the current vision?

- Replace Alex Arena for a beautiful much needed arts centre.
- Healthy community.
- Keep historic (Grain elevator, etc.).
- More multi-unit in place of old single dwellings.
- Notification for local events (non-social media).
- Aging in place.
- Art foundry building.
- Restaurants.
- Event rental space.
- Multifaceted arts and culture space.
- Have destinations that attract the youth.
- Attract younger people.
- Mini golf.
- Indigo bookstore.
- Feature local businesses on a regular basis.
- Incubator space.
- A place for young adults.
- Cocoboba.
- More trees/protection of canopy.
- Seasonal facilities.
- Year-round city activities (winter).
- Solar for lighting.
- Space for farmers' market.
- Mixed use buildings (residential and commercial).
- More walking paths.



ACTIVITY 2: SWOT ANALYSIS

Identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats in the Urban Centre (Downtown, Alexandra Park, and Telford House).

Strengths

- Amenities are here (mall, services)
- Walkable amenities (parks, pool, etc.)
- Community events on Mainstreet
- Leduc art walk on Mainstreet
- Mainstreet (heritage, flowers, artwork)
- Telford House and boardwalk
- Variety
- Art Walk



Weaknesses

- Lack of rentals (variety of density)
- Not enough senior housing
- Housing for seniors
- Not enough parking near city centre mall
- No live music
- Mainstreet angled parking (sightline issues)
- Mobility options
- Landmarks, sense of place
- Places to sit
- Sidewalk cleanliness
- More restaurants needed
- Low population density
- Telford house not utilized fully



Opportunities

- Talk to homeowners about their options for redevelopment
- More support for disadvantaged people needed
- Indoor recreation facilities (unique)
- Winter activities around Telford
- Year round farmers' market
- Building a positive reputation
- Indoor/sheltered gathering spaces
- Beautiful art centre
- Better housing mix
- Public Art
- AVPA restrictions removed



Threats

- Homeless
- Property values w/ redevelopment
- Development competition (commercial)

Other

- Homeless- need to consider them and their needs

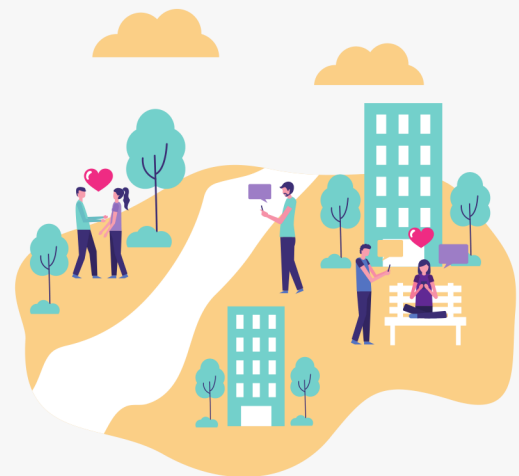
ACTIVITY 3: PRIORITIES

We want to know more about your priorities for the Urban Centre. Place a dot in the box next to any of the images you feel are priorities. If there are others, please let us know!

PRIORITY	VOTES	PRIORITY	VOTES	PRIORITY	VOTES
Public Art and Culture	8	Urban Design and Landscaping	3	Support for Local Businesses	8
Maintenance of Public Space	2	Diversity of Daily Goods and Services	7	Public Space Improvements	4
Increased Housing Options	5	Connectivity and Accessibility	3	Housing Affordability	6
Transportation And Transit	9	Heritage Preservation	4	Event and Gathering Space	4
Community Safety	5	Recreation	4	Other	0

Order of Priority:

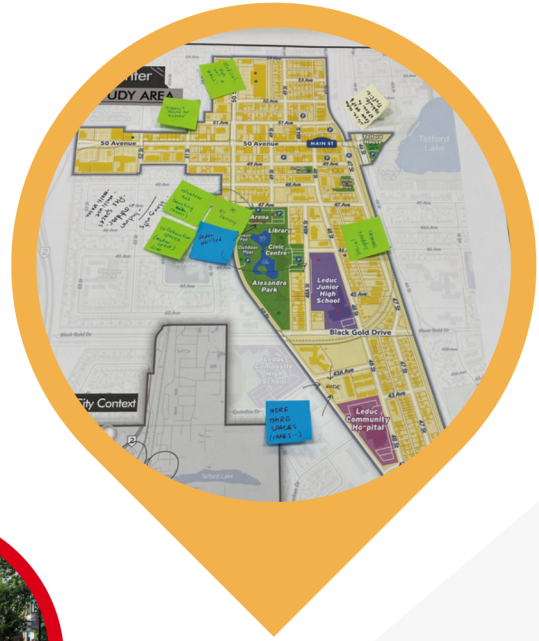
- Transportation and Transit
- Public Art and Culture
- Support for Local Businesses
- Diversity of Daily Goods and Services
- Housing Affordability
- Increased Housing Options
- Community Safety
- Heritage Presentation
- Recreation
- Event and Gathering Space
- Public Space Improvements
- Urban Design and Landscaping
- Connectivity and Accessibility
- Maintenance of Public Space
- Other



ACTIVITY 4: MAPPING EXERCISE:

Places that need help:

- Black Gold Plaza- better pedestrian access.
- George Liggins Park- not aware that its there, doesn't seem like a public place.
- Better connection east-west through the Urban Centre and into other neighbourhoods.



ACTIVITY 5: PARKING LOT:

The Parking Lot is meant to capture off-agenda conversation topics or ideas that arise during a workshop. The following items were identified:

- How do we achieve a good level of design.
- Rail buffer.
- Mail outs- good way of notifying residents in the area.

ONLINE SURVEY (MARCH 12 TO 26, 2023)

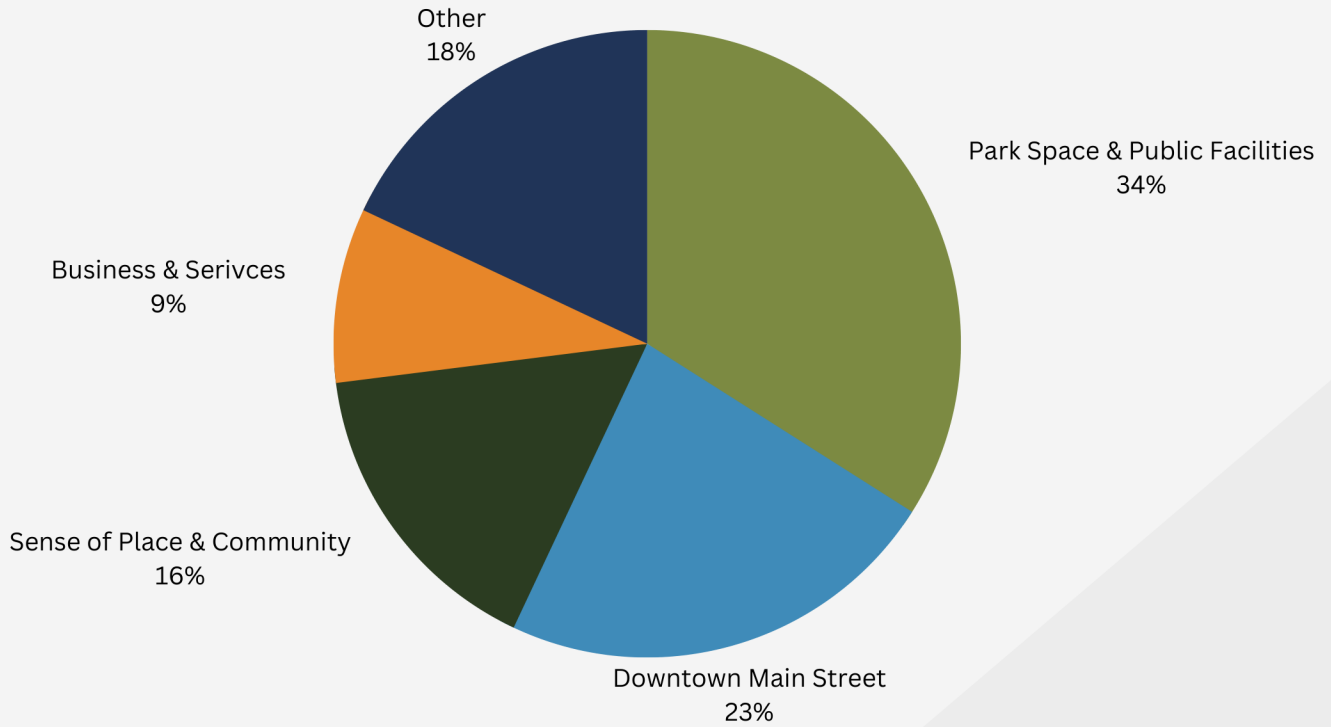
The Project Team received a total of 153 survey respondents with over 750 comments. Responses from the survey results were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet and presented in a series of tables. A high-level analysis of the database was then undertaken to identify distinct issues and ideas that could be grouped into broad categories through qualitative analysis.

Codes were used to identify key themes, ideas, concerns, and patterns for each comment. The frequency of comments was less important than the identification of unique sets of issues or ideas. These codes were then used to organize into categories and ranked in order of most frequently to less frequently heard. This allowed the team to have a snapshot of major issues and ideas being brought forward by the participants and a general understanding of which categories received the most attention. Below is a summary of the survey results including the eleven major themes identified through the high-level analysis of the survey results.

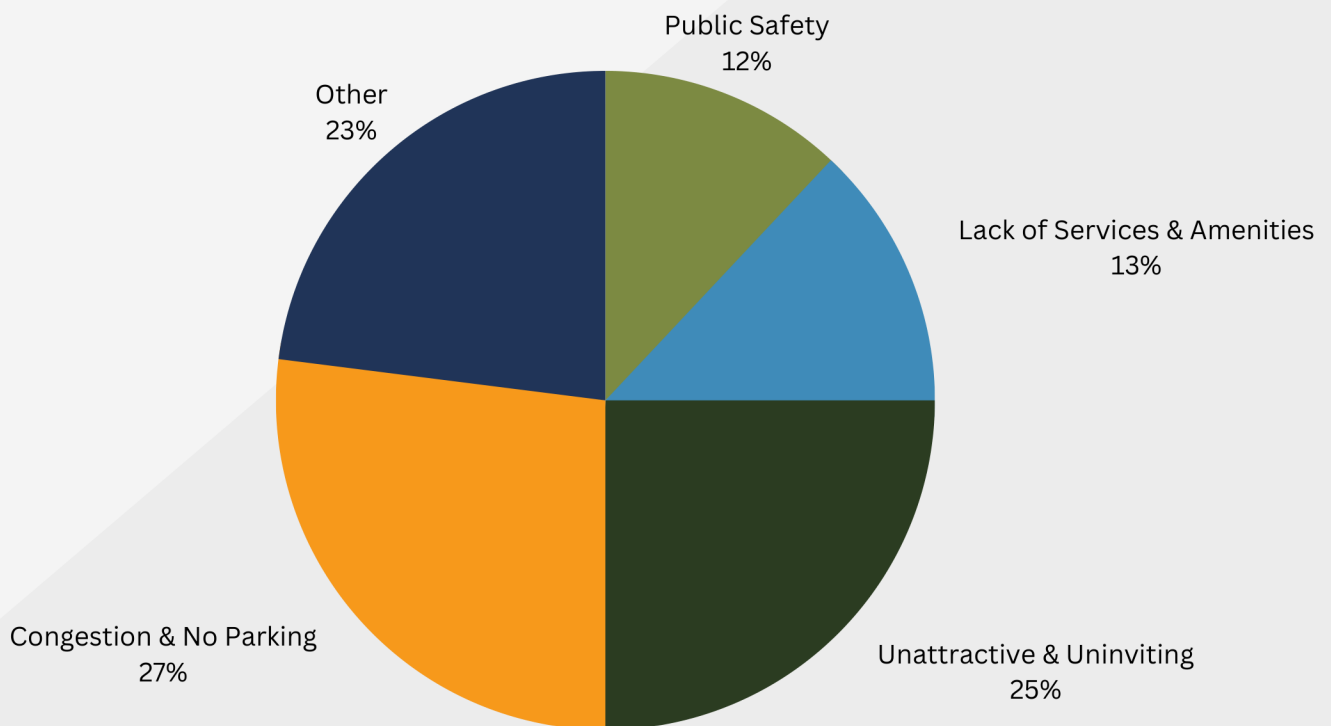
THEME	DESCRIPTION
Active Transportation / Traffic Congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traffic, noisy and not walkable • not enough parking • some areas are difficult to access • “Reduced traffic congestion with the growing city would be very beneficial for patrons, visitors, and businesses” • support for bicycles and walkability
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high rent in the downtown and difficulty for small businesses to succeed • apartments are no longer affordable
Housing Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "stop pushing higher density housing options" • “more condensed modern housing” • support for mixed use, variety of housing types • population density supports more services, housing and dining options
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theft, vandalism, homelessness • “unsafe to walk around especially when alone” • crossing the street on 50th Ave can be dangerous • people in the community makes the area safe
Urban Design / Unattractive and Uninviting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deteriorating and vacant buildings affecting the overall look and feel of main street • area outside of downtown needs some improvement • “fruiting trees and bushes wherever possible for beauty and food access for people struggling”

THEME	DESCRIPTION
Downtown Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “historical downtown adds charm and personality” • “good area for markets and parades” • centralized, walkable, unique architecture but some vacant and older storefronts need to be improved • attract more people downtown, more foot traffic
Heritage, Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important to recognize the important history of the area • history should be “valued more and displayed” • “a forgotten part of history”
Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more opportunities for youth to gather • “more opportunities for all members within our community, such as but not limited to; green shack initiatives for youth, mobility friendly community gardening for the community for seniors, more splash parks for families, etc.” • provide more adequate housing, and social services
Local Business Community / Diversity in goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “variety of local businesses, many of which are community and sustainability-focused” • walkable to certain shops • “high quality locally owned small business” • need night life and extended business hours; diversity in businesses and family events
Park Space and Public Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexandra Park, splash park, and the library are great activities for families • more trees (fruity trees) and green spaces should be considered • beautiful and connected trails • easy access to all including Telford but can be improved
Sense of Place and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charming, vibrant, cozy • “small town and family-like atmosphere” • community focused • new design of new developments need to consider the overall neighbourhood size and scale • no change is needed as the area is adequate

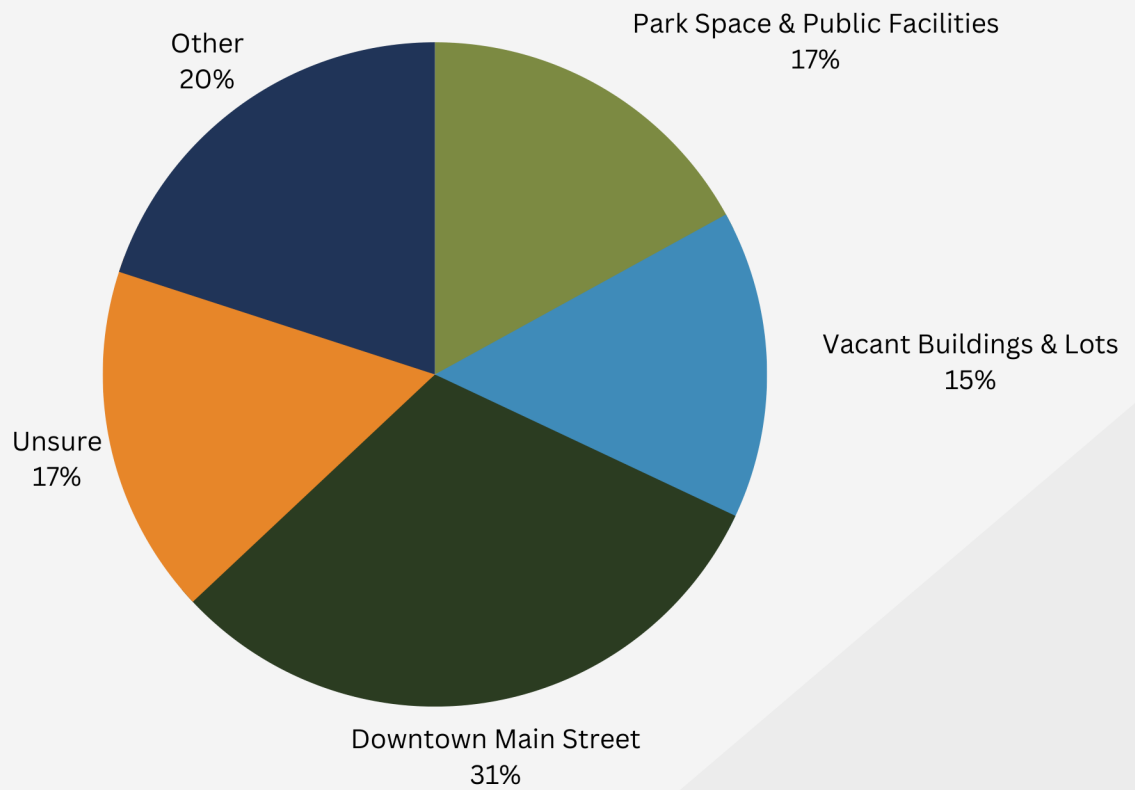
WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF THE URBAN CENTRE?



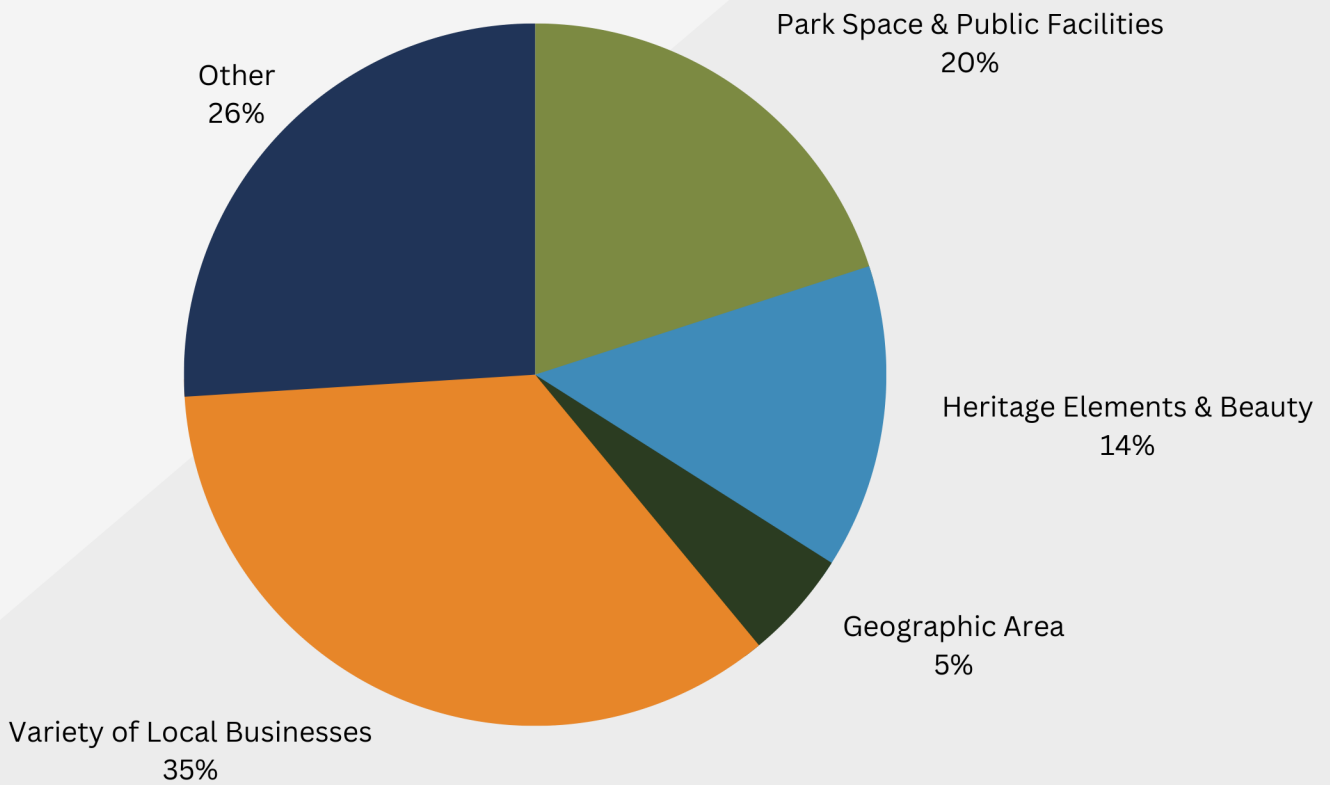
WHAT IS THE WORST PART OF THE URBAN CENTRE?



WHAT IS THE MOST-UNDERVALUED & UNDER-USED PLACED IN URBAN CENTRE?








WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WISH PEOPLE KNEW MORE IN THE URBAN CENTRE?



Top priorities selected from a list of 16 for the Urban Centre to help achieve long-term success for the area (ranked with 1 being the highest and 16 being the lowest):

1. Community safety (44%)
2. Urban design and landscaping (42%)
3. Support for local businesses (38%)
4. Infrastructure improvements (34%)
5. Events space/more opportunities to celebrate and/or showcase arts and culture (32%)
6. More recreational amenities (31%)
7. Connectivity and accessibility (29%)
8. Diversity of daily goods and services (25%)
9. Development and maintenance of public spaces (22%)
10. Housing affordability (20%)
11. Transportation (20%)
12. Heritage preservation (20%)
13. Commercial rental rates and opportunities (19%)
14. Housing options (17%)
15. Road safety (13%)
16. Higher density developments (10%)

TOP 5 STRENGTHS OF THE URBAN CENTRE

-  CENTRAL LOCATION IN THE CITY
-  MAINSTREET LEDUC (E.G., RETAIL, STREET FURNITURE)
-  ACCESS TO CIVIC AMENITIES (E.G., LIBRARY, CIVIC CENTRE)
-  ACCESS TO TELFORD LAKE
-  WALKABILITY, SMALLER BLOCKS, HUMAN SCALED DESIGN

TOP 5 CHALLENGES CURRENTLY FACED IN THE URBAN CENTRE

-  COMMUNITY SAFETY (E.G., CRIME, THEFT)
-  LACK OF RECREATION AMENITIES (E.G., PARK SPACES, YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES)
-  DEMAND ON INFRASTRUCTURE (E.G., POOR DRAINAGE, POTHOLES)
-  AGING NEIGHBOURHOODS
-  TRAFFIC CONGESTION (E.G. TOO LITTLE PARKING, MORE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS)

Survey Demographics



- Where do you live? 83% in other areas of Leduc, 10% from within the Urban Centre, 5% from the Edmonton Region, 2% other.
- Do you own a business or work in the Urban Centre? 82% do not work in the Urban Centre, 18% work or own a business in the Urban centre.
- What is your age? 7% were 18-29 years old, 56% were 30-45 years old, 25% were 46-64 years old and 12% were 65+.
- Where did you hear about the survey? 70% social media; 13% City of Leduc website; 9% mailout, 1% newspaper, 7% other.