

Appendix A - Municipal Development Plan Engagement What We Heard Report

Project: Fort Saskatchewan Municipal Development Plan
Purpose: Feedback Summary on Community Direction Statement and Pillars
Date: November 4, 2019

1.0 What We Did

Building on the work completed in the My Fort. My City. My Say projects, administration began by categorizing points of pride and priorities from the community, along with those from existing City documents. Once themes of these priorities for the future, and current community strengths to build on, were identified; the themes became the draft pillars and the priorities and strengths became the pillar statements. The draft pillars and collective community values were then used to draft community direction statements. Following this work the next step was to ensure the community had been accurately heard and felt reflected in the draft content.

From September 16 to October 11, 2019 the Fort Saskatchewan Municipal Development Plan (MDP) project team gathered insights and feedback on community direction statements for the Plan. Hearing from nearly 800 participants, the engagement process sought agreement with key direction statements. The process also captured elements folks believed were missing from these statements along with actions they believe are necessary to achieve them.

The City provided opportunities for the community to share their thoughts at two Farmer's Market events, during a pop-up event at the Dow Community Centre, during the Downtown Fall Festival as well as online including a station in the front lobby of City Hall where residents could complete the survey. The process was advertised on the City website, through the Chamber of Commerce, stakeholder email lists, and via traditional and social media.

In-person engagement opportunities (356 respondents)

- September 12th and 19th at the Farmer's Market
- September 20th at the Dow Community Centre Pop-Up
- September 21st at the Downtown Fall Festival

Online Survey (398 participants)

- Live from September 16th to October 4th

Workshops (40 participants)

- September 12th session with the Building Bridges group
- October 11th session with City Administration

2.0 What We Asked

Both online and in person events, participants were invited to respond to three questions.

1. From the following Vision Statements, which makes you most excited about the future of Fort Saskatchewan?
2. Is there anything missing from the vision statements that have been presented?
3. Select the statements for each of the Foundational Pillars that you believe Fort Saskatchewan should most aspire to...

3.0 What We Heard

MDP Community Direction Statement

When asked about the community direction statements, in person participants were given the option to choose just one, where as the online participants could rate their level of satisfaction with each statement. The community direction statement with the most support from the public was the following:

In 2050, our community of Fort Saskatchewan: Provides a great quality of life for families to grow, and residents to age, within their neighbourhoods. Continues to build upon its heritage and fosters innovation. Creates great places for residents and visitors to enjoy. Supports a resilient economy for residents and businesses to thrive and achieve.

Our in person participants chose this option 109 times, 67% of all votes. Online this statement had the most agreement and least disagreement of all options. When asked “Is there anything missing from the vision statements that have been presented?” most online participants declined to answer. However, those who did mostly pointed to the need for more clarity, substance as well as punchiness. Comments included:

“They have no substance. Too broad.”

“Something about our trail systems, beautiful park areas, good outdoor spaces.”

“Fort Saskatchewan: It's an Experience!!”

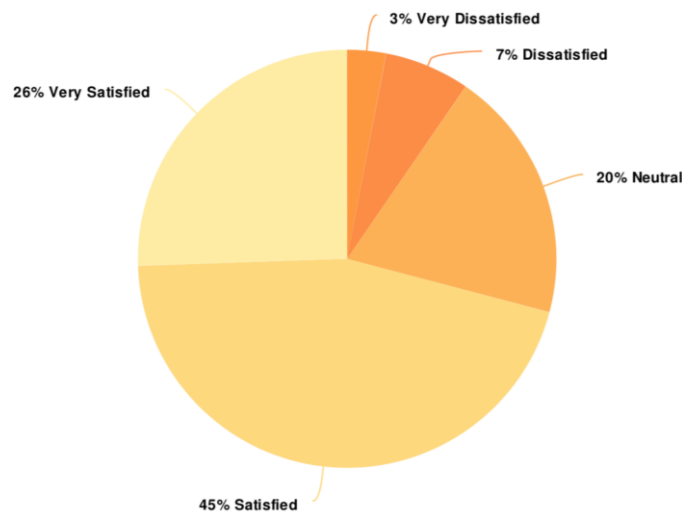
“They just don't reach out and grab me. I don't think they'd make me want to move there.”

“I feel that the more grandiose the verbiage the harder for the average employee to buy in.”

“Not sure, they are just too wordy”

Despite getting the most overall votes, the other two statements also saw support. The aforementioned statement received satisfaction from 71% of respondents. Only 10% of respondents were dissatisfied with this option. Overall satisfaction was high and dissatisfaction was low ranging from 9% to 13%.

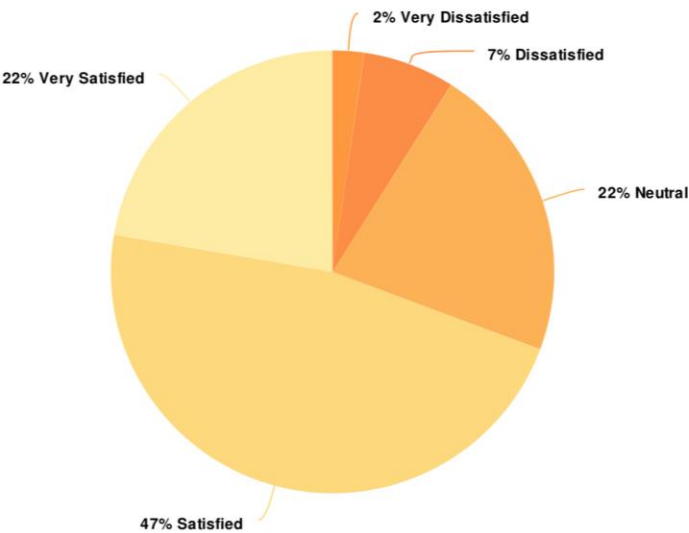
Satisfaction with Statement: “In 2050, our community of Fort Saskatchewan...”



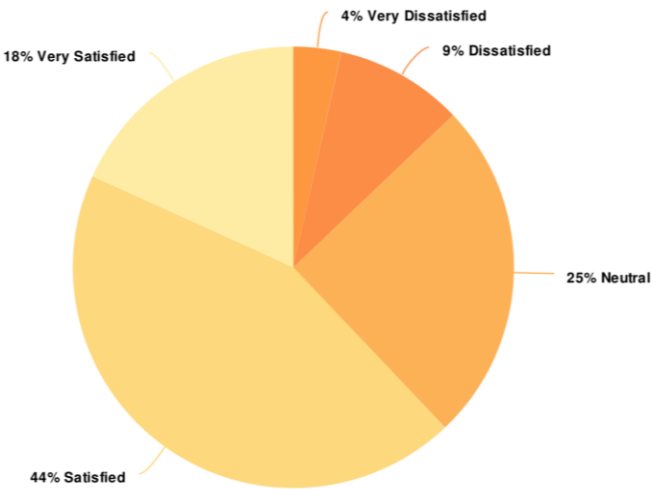
The statement ““Rooted in our rich history and place, our fort is built together on the foundation of our community connections, quality of life, appreciation of place, and sustainable future” had a 69% level of satisfaction. The statement “Connecting people through experience, building a community together. Our City is a place of celebration!” had a 62% level of satisfaction. Satisfaction was rated from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. The level of satisfaction is determined by combining those who selected ‘very satisfied’ and ‘satisfied’ in response to the statements. See graphs for full response.

The community direction statements were also shared with targeted stakeholder, such as administration, who did approve of the popular statement, but suggested it be a bit pithier. Given all feedback, the project team will continue to refine the statement, keeping the favoured elements in mind.

Satisfaction with Statement: “Rooted in our rich history...”



Satisfaction with Statement: “Connecting people through experience...”



MDP Pillars

Five Pillars with their respective pillar statements were presented to the participants. The most popular Pillar was ‘Our Connections’ with 617 respondents choosing it. The overall votes cast for each Pillar can be found in the Table 1.

Table 1: Pillars as Selected by Participants

	Our Place	Our Success	Our Connections	Our Neighbourhood	Our Resilience
In-Person Total	321	323	356	353	333
Online Total	260	261	261	260	255
Total	581	584	617	613	588

It should be noted the in-person exercise asked participants to ‘check’ all Pillar statements that resonate with them. Where as online participants ranked all statements for each Pillar.

The top ranked Pillar statements include:

- ✓ A strong sense of pride.
- ✓ Easy access to amenities.
- ✓ Community events and festivals.
- ✓ Feel safe.
- ✓ There are amenities and activities for all.
- ✓ We pursue a diverse economy that focuses on innovation, emerging trends, expanding industries and job creation.
- ✓ We are the gateway to the Alberta Industrial Heartland and industries further north.
- ✓ We celebrate and support our local businesses.
- ✓ We maximize our existing infrastructure and plan for long-term efficiency, cost and resiliency when considering new infrastructure.
- ✓ There are recreation opportunities close to home.
- ✓ Neighbourhoods are designed to be easily walkable.
- ✓ We celebrate and protect the river valley and our natural environment.

Below is the detailed summary of engagement feedback received for each Pillar and respective Pillar statements

Pillar 1: Our Success

- We seize the opportunities that come from our proximity to Edmonton’s core
- We are the gateway to the Alberta Industrial Heartland and industries further north
- We celebrate and support our local businesses
- We serve as a regional service hub for surrounding communities
- We pursue a diverse economy that focuses on innovation, emerging trends, expanding industries and job creation
- We embrace growth downtown that supports business

The ‘Success’ statements that resonated most with participants were ‘*we celebrate and support our local businesses*’ and Fort Saskatchewan is a ‘*regional hub for surrounding communities.*’ Online alone, the highest ranked statement was ‘*we pursue a diverse economy that focuses on innovation, emerging trends, expanding industries and job creation.*’ Although the other three statements ranked lower, they were still among the most chosen across all Pillar statements.

In workshop settings, stakeholders talked about the collaboration involved in seeing this success come to fruition. For these stakeholders, it’s believed that innovation and emerging industry means balancing the knowledge and expertise of existing players while also attracting new talent to the community.

‘Proximity to Edmonton’s core’ saw the most conflicting responses. Some in-person participants mentioned the value of this proximity as a driver for the Fort’s growth. Many other respondents ranked this statement lowest in the category – seeing Fort Saskatchewan as a place independent from Edmonton. In terms of barriers, key things raised

by our workshop participants included societal and political resistance to risk and change, along with having strong regional competition.

Pillar 2: Our Place

- We celebrate and protect the river valley and our natural environment
- We respect and celebrate the history of our place
- We celebrate the diverse cultures brought to Fort Saskatchewan and the heritage of cultures here before
- Downtown is a vibrant place where people come to shop, eat, learn and celebrate together

The 'Place' statements that resonated most with participants were *'we celebrate and protect the river valley and our natural environment'* and *'downtown is a vibrant place where people come to shop, eat, learn and celebrate together.'* In workshop settings, stakeholders asked – what does it mean to protect our natural environment? How does this balance with the enjoyment and recreation in our natural areas? Most stakeholders agree the river valley and trail system is hugely important to the identity of Fort Saskatchewan and the health and enjoyment of its residents.

When it comes to downtown, participants were more geared toward actions. Sharing ideas like – extending business hours, improving connections between downtown and the river valley as well as enhancing public and private gathering spaces. Downtown was a theme that surfaced across most Pillars, with an obvious link to local culture and identity.

Pillar 3: Our Connections

- A variety of transportation options
- Social connections with residents
- A strong sense of pride in our community
- Easy access to amenities
- A welcoming environment for new residents
- Community events and festivals

The 'Connections' statements that resonated most with participants were *'a strong sense of pride in the community'* and *'community events and festivals.'* Online *'easy access to amenities'* also surfaced with a high ranking. The statement *'a variety of convenient transportation options'* was ranked lowest and chosen the least for this Pillar. Interestingly, My Fort Stage 2 engagement results heard a strong voice for more balance in modes of transport. An assumption as to why this divide exists has to do with respondents interpreting these statements as being present day rather than future-oriented. It was common for workshop participants to need reminding that these are the pillars of the community's future not necessarily its present.

In the workshop settings, stakeholders shared dialogue around assets and shortcoming of achieving these statements, including: the wide variety of free community events, the strong history of Fort Saskatchewan and volunteerism. Although Fort Saskatchewan has many strong not-for-profit organizations, these organizations and the City are facing increasing challenges in filling volunteer roles. Other ideas shared by workshop participant's spanned – new grounds for cultural events and awareness, creating bike lanes and increasing the presence of front porches, along with other mechanisms to better connect neighbours.

Pillar 4: Our Neighbourhood

- There is housing to meet everyone's needs throughout their life stages
- There are amenities and activities for all residents
- They have a mix of uses to help meet daily needs close to home
- There are recreation opportunities close to home
- Neighbourhoods are designed to be easily walkable
- They feel safe throughout

The 'Neighbourhood' statements that resonated most with participants were *'they feel safe throughout'* and *'there are amenities and activities for all residents.'* Online *'There is housing to meet everyone's needs throughout their life stages'* ranked third overall, yet was one of the least chosen by in-person participants. The statement *'they have a mix of uses to help us meet daily needs close to home'* had the lowest rank/ was least chosen within this Pillar.

Again, an interesting comparison to the Stage 2 engagement results where stakeholders shared their desire for more walkable communities and neighbourhood commercial nodes. An assumption would be that the amenities and activities for all statement more specifically covered the key elements of 'mix of uses' for participants.

The most prominent barrier raised by workshop groups in regard to neighbourhoods was cost. Speaking to infrastructure costs, operation costs and market cost of homes. Where external stakeholders told us there is need to direct growth towards more compact and walkable forms, internal stakeholders see walkability as conflicting with the existing auto-dominated landscape of Fort Saskatchewan. Both groups of stakeholders recognized the efficiency and value of this growth, however internal stakeholders felt there was significant work and investment needed to shift the City's infrastructure to support the level of walking and cycling the community desires. .

Details around safety included both the people and relationships side of safety – knowing your neighbours, having eyes on the street – and design interventions – crime prevention through environmental design and the like. It was discussed that there can be a gap between how safe we feel and how safe we are but regardless both are important elements to community building to pay attention to.

Pillar 5: Our Resilience

- We work together – our businesses, citizens, organizations and government
- We are committed to emergency preparedness, ensuring we are prepared for incidents emerging from our changing climate and unforeseen incidents
- Government decisions are made considering sustainability
- We maximize our existing infrastructure and plan for long-term efficiency, cost and resiliency when considering new infrastructure

The 'Resilience' statements that resonated most with participants were '*we work together - our businesses, citizens, organizations, and government*' and '*we maximize our existing infrastructure and plan for long-term efficiency when considering new infrastructure.*' The statement '*government decisions are made considering sustainability*' was ranked lowest for this Pillar and across all statements overall. However, in engagement with City administration, the idea of sustainability and making decisions based on factors that impact people, profit and planet were elevated over others.

Workshop participants emphasized communication and coordinated planning as instrumental to resilience. Groups like Building Bridges, the Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Heartland were raised as good examples of folks already working together and/or with administration cooperatively. More mechanisms for government, private sector and not-for-profit organizations to connect were strongly encouraged.

Despite little interest from the public, targeted stakeholders from community organizations and the City had interest in the statement 'we are committed to emergency preparedness'. Two key comments from these groups were: a need to use the term climate change explicitly in the Plan and proactively fund the resources required to manage and adapt to new weather patterns.

4.0 Next Steps

Section and Objectives

The MDP project team will now use this information to guide future conversations and decision-making in the Plan drafting process. The next step in the drafting process is the sections and objectives identification. This work will then inform the policies and actions derived for the Plan. In the New Year, the project team will be further engaging with the public and targeted stakeholders on the development of the Plan.