

SETTING PRIORITIES FOR RECREATION INVESTMENT

City of
Fort Saskatchewan

May 2021





Executive Summary

As Council looks to the 2021 update of the Capital Plan, its members decided to seek input from the community. Specifically Council wanted to learn what the community deemed as recreation project priorities.

Towards that end the City commissioned the completion of a program of community engagement. This report includes the findings from a household survey and a community group survey fielded in the spring of 2021.

Household Survey

Over eight hundred households (n=806) participated¹ in the coded access survey. This participation equates to a margin of error of $\pm 3.3\%$ 19 times out of 20². The findings are statistically representative of Fort Saskatchewan households.

Amenity Ranking

Respondents were asked to rank all the amenity projects. As illustrated below, the top ranked project is the West River's Edge Trails project followed by Fort Centre Park - Phase 1. A New Aquatics Facility rounded out the top three.

1. West River's Edge Trails
2. Fort Centre Park - Phase 1
3. New Aquatics Facility
4. West River's Edge Family Play Area
5. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
6. Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
7. Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
8. Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements
9. New Arena
10. Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio

Group Survey

An invitation to participate was sent to 139 groups with twenty-seven (27) groups providing a response. Participating groups did represent a range of recreation interests and pursuits including ice organizations, arts & culture groups, and social organizations.

Amenity Ranking

Respondents were asked to rank all the amenity projects. As illustrated below, the top ranked project is the Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization followed by the Additional West River's Edge Community Facility. The Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance rounded out the top three.

1. Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
2. Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
3. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
4. Fort Centre Park - Phase 1
5. New Arena
6. West River's Edge Family Play Area
7. West River's Edge Trails
8. New Aquatics Facility
9. Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements
10. Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio

¹ Postcards with unique access codes were sent to 11,659 households; the participation rate was 6.9%.

² This means that if the survey was to be fielded twenty times using the same methodology, the responses would be within 3.3% nineteen times.

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1

Introduction

Though close to major centres, residents in Fort Saskatchewan expect a high level of services, including recreation facilities. As evidenced by the inventory of indoor and outdoor facilities, residents are provided with ample spaces in which to recreate. These facilities require maintenance and reinvestment to ensure their ability to serve residents. At the same time residents look for enhancements to the existing opportunities and even additional amenities. With the sizeable growth experienced by Fort Saskatchewan, there are pressures on accommodating new residents in the existing spaces and calls for new and improved spaces to accommodate the demand from both new residents and current residents.

To assist Council in making strategic decisions on how to best allocate City resources to build and maintain infrastructure, City Administration prepares a ten-year Capital Plan. The plan identifies significant capital projects, estimated costs, as well as the timing associated with each project. This Capital Plan includes all municipal capital projects ranging from sizeable equipment to the array of municipal infrastructure including recreation projects. The “10 Year Capital Plan” is updated annually by Council to reflect emerging needs as well as changes to financial circumstances.

As Council looks to the 2021 update of the Capital Plan, its members decided to seek input from the community. A program of community engagement was implemented to gather the opinions of residents and community groups. This report includes the findings from two surveys fielded in the spring of 2021.





2

Community Engagement

The program of community engagement consisted of two main tactics.

- **Household Survey.** A survey was fielded with households in Fort Saskatchewan. Each household was provided with a unique access code and invited to participate in a survey using the code. The code prevented multiple responses from a single household. The findings from the household survey are considered statistically representative of the entire city's population of households.
- **Community Group Survey.** A survey was fielded with community group users of recreation facilities. The findings from the community group survey is not representative of the opinions of all groups; it represents the opinions of the groups who participated.

Tactic	Participation
Household Survey – coded access	806 households participated • The findings are statistically representative of the entire community. • The findings have a margin of error of $\pm 3.3\%$ 19 times out of 20
Community Group Survey	27 groups participated

The findings from each of the surveys follow.

2.1 Household Survey

2.1.1 Survey Process

Each household in Fort Saskatchewan was invited to participate in the survey. A multi-pronged approach to the promotion of the survey was implemented in order to maximize the awareness of the survey amongst residents and therefore the participation rate. Promotional efforts included the following.

- An animated **short video** was produced introducing the survey and its importance and encouraging participation. The video was posted on the City's webpage and was shared using the City's social media accounts.
- A **radio advertisement** was developed and broadcast from April 5 – 16.
- A news release was developed and was “published” through the City's **Twitter** account (March 22, 25, April, 1, 8, and 15).
- The **City Page** promoted the survey (March 25 and April 1, 8, 15)
- The **Dow Centennial Centre electronic sign** as well as the screens in City Hall promoted the survey from April 1-16.
- **Facebook** was utilized as well. An “event” was created on March 25.
- On the City's website, the household survey was added to the **Community and Public Engagement Calendars**.
- **A postcard was sent to each household** in Fort Saskatchewan using Canada Post's neighbourhood mail. Each postcard included a unique code enabling that household access to the online survey (hosted on the City's webpage). See Appendix A for the postcard.

In total 11,659 postcards were sent out to households in Fort Saskatchewan³.

Sample Size	Postcards Sent	Participation Rate	Margin of Error
806 households participated*	11,659	6.9%	±3.3% 19 times out of 20 ⁴

*It should be noted that less than 10 households from outside of Fort Saskatchewan participated in the survey. These responses were removed from the analysis which included the 806 households from Fort Saskatchewan.

The questionnaire was made available for input from March 19 through to April 16 (Refer to Appendix B to see the questionnaire). Respondents were able to enter their name into a draw for one \$100 grocery certificate upon completion of the questionnaire⁵. The findings presented herein include only those from respondents identifying their household as being in Fort Saskatchewan⁶. The questions were to be answered considering the opinions of all household members. An examination of the findings according to household composition is presented alongside the overall findings.

³ Canada Post’s Neighbourhood Mail process was utilized; unaddressed mail is placed in each mailbox. Because the postcard was sent on behalf of the City of Fort Saskatchewan requesting participation in a survey, the postcard was inserted in all mailboxes. People who have opted out of receiving flyers would still receive the postcard. Some households outside of Fort Saskatchewan receive their mail at a post office box in the city or the postal route of some city addresses also included some mailboxes outside of city boundaries. In these instances the postcard may have been received by households in neighbouring municipalities. The prevalence of this was relatively small.

⁴ If the survey was to be fielded twenty times, the findings presented herein would be accurate to within 3.3% on nineteen occasions. This is a very good margin of error.

⁵ Approximately two-thirds of respondents entered the draw.

⁶ Not all respondents answered all questions. The findings to each question are based on the numbers of answers to that particular question.



2.1.2 Survey Findings

Prior to questions being asked, information was shared that was intended to help the respondents answer the questions. An overview of capital and operating costs was presented along with a summary chart of those costs. A summary chart identified capital cost estimates for each amenity project as well as operating cost estimates. The chart also showed the annual tax increase that would accompany both the capital and operating cost estimates. Additional detail about each amenity project was also available for respondents to review. This additional detail is included in the hard copy version of the questionnaire (shown in the appendix). On the website this information about costing and about the individual projects was included in a separate document that could be viewed in a separate window.

Amenity Ranking

To begin, respondents were asked to rank all the amenity projects. As illustrated below, the top ranked project is the West River's Edge Trails project followed by Fort Centre Park – Phase 1. The New Aquatics Facility rounded out the top three.

1. West River's Edge Trails
2. Fort Centre Park - Phase 1
3. New Aquatics Facility
4. West River's Edge Family Play Area
5. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
6. Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
7. Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
8. Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements
9. New Arena
10. Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio

Respondents were then able to provide some explanation for their rankings. The majority did provide some rationale, often citing more than one reason for ranking projects as they did. The responses were examined and grouped into themes. Six themes emerged from the analysis and are noted below with specific groupings of comments noted within each theme. The most frequently mentioned comments are noted starting on the following page.

Subsegment Analysis

Respondents with children 0-14 years in the home

1. New Aquatics Facility
2. West River's Edge Family Play Area
3. West River's Edge Trails
4. Fort Centre Park – Phase 1
5. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
6. Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
7. Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
8. New Arena
9. Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements
10. Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio

Respondents with someone aged 60 years and older

1. West River's Edge Trails
2. Fort Centre Park – Phase 1
3. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
4. Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
5. Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
6. West River's Edge Family Play Area
7. New Aquatics Facility
8. Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements
9. New Arena
10. Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio

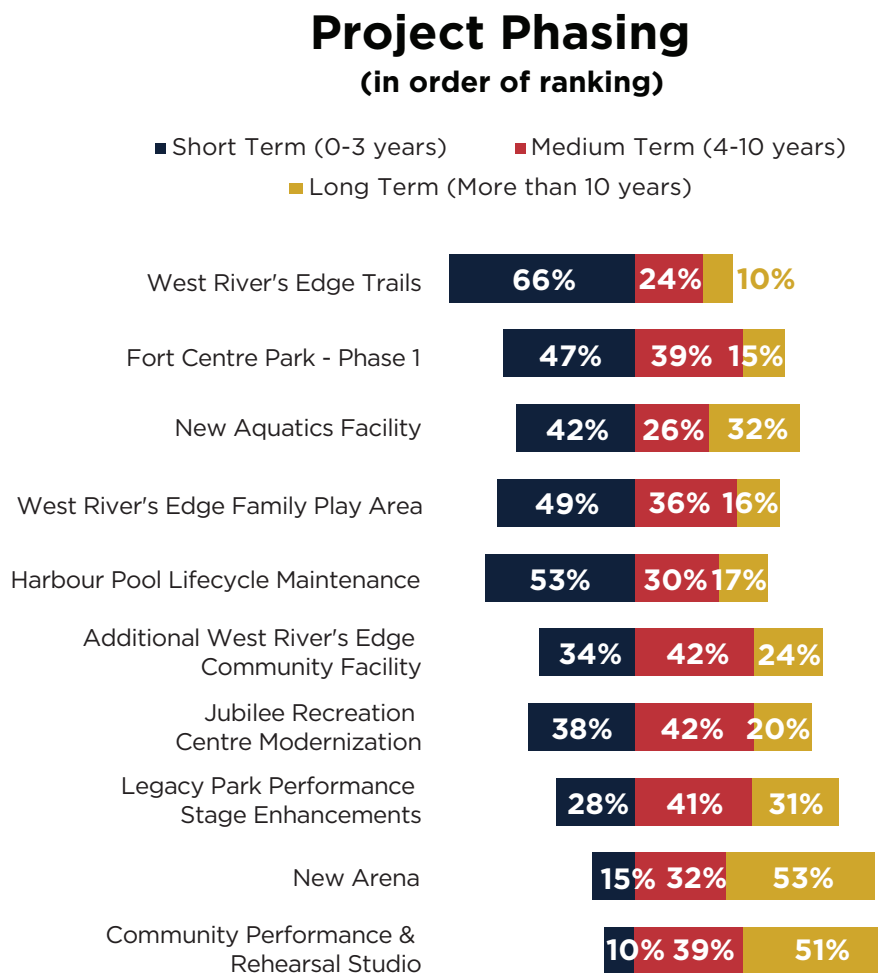
1. **Financial/Economic** – One of the key determining factors for respondents' ranking was economics and costs. There were comments that related directly to their position on taxation impacts and suggestions, strategies or approaches that could be used in the decision-making process.
 - a. **Economic Strategies & Considerations**
 Respondents provided a number of different approaches and suggestions for determining the priorities. They framed the majority of these comments to decision-makers and did not identify these comments as the rationale they applied in their ranking of the identified projects. These included the following in order of highest number of comments received.
 - Maintain existing infrastructure first (65 comments)
 - Invest in facilities to support economic activity and growth (63)
 - Cost-Benefit - invest in facilities that are lowest cost for the largest population use/impact (58)
 - Upgrade existing facilities before building new facilities (49)
 - Build new before investing in old facilities (22)
 - Adjust the timing – Delay everything to recover/ see post Covid/Economic reality (19)
 - b. **Overall Costs & Taxation Impacts** – Some comments were general noting that respondents had cost concerns at a time where there should be reduced spending and that they prioritized projects with the lowest costs (49 comments). Other comments (30) noted that they would support no tax increase at all for the projects listed.
2. **Personal Needs** – The respondents' personal or family needs and interests were also a key driver in their ranking of the various projects. The majority of these comments (109) clearly identified that their family or personal use or interests were key drivers in their ranking selections.
3. **Need or demand for the project** – Any rationale provided that reflected on the capacity of the current infrastructure and facilities was grouped into this theme area. Rationale for and against (re) investment into facilities was provided.
 - a. **Facility deficits** – seventy-seven (77) respondents noted rationale related to the need for repair, upgrades, replacements, or (re)development of facilities because of facility condition, accessibility issues, or its inability for a facility to meet user needs or current standards.
 - b. **Cannot meet user demand** – forty-six (46) respondents noted that their rationale considered those facilities where access was limited due to facility size and capacity not able to support the number of participants or users, both now and into the future.
 - c. **Facility is underutilized** – Conversely, twenty (20) overall comments related to the respondents' perspective that the facility(ies) were not being used to their capacity were received.
4. **Community & social benefits** – Comments that noted considerations related to the community needs in general, including specific groups such as family, children and youth, seniors, and those with more specialized needs, were grouped into this theme. Additionally, comments that reflected the idea of community identity, pride and belonging were also included.
 - a. **Child and family friendly spaces** – fifty-seven (57) respondents noted the importance of investing in facilities that support healthy, safe places for children, teens and families could be active and together. Having places where individuals can meet others, various age groups can (re)connect was important in their choice considerations.
 - b. **Community demographics** – twenty-one (21) respondents suggested that using current and projected demographic information to determine the need for future (re)investments and locations was important in their ranking.
 - c. **Community identity** – seventeen (17) respondents noted that they compared Fort Saskatchewan's current facility infrastructure to other neighbouring communities.

5. **Value & benefits of outdoor spaces** – The comments related to the value, benefits and accessibility of outdoor spaces such as trails, playgrounds and natural green spaces were grouped into this theme. Many of those citing ‘cost/benefit’ as a part of their rationale, also noted their support of (re)investment of outdoor spaces. The recent pandemic, where the value and need for outdoor spaces was highlighted, was often noted as further justification for this priority for investments.
 - a. **Accessible (low cost)** – forty (40) respondents noted that trails and outdoor facilities are a good investment due to their ability to provide wide-range of users access to recreation and physical activity at a low or no cost.
 - b. **Benefits of outdoor/nature** – twenty-three (23) respondents noted that the importance and benefits of being outdoors and experiencing nature was key factor for their choices.
6. **Balanced approach to facility investment** – thirty-one (31) comments received noted that a balanced approach to (re)investment should be considered. How they defined a ‘balanced’ approach did vary slightly however. Some (24) considered a balanced approach to the types of facilities.



Project Phasing

Next, respondents were asked to indicate phasing, when the project should be addressed by the City. As can be seen in the graph, two-thirds (66%) of respondents identified the top ranked project (West River's Edge Trails) to be addressed in the short term (within the next three years).



Respondents were able to provide some explanation for their responses on phasing. The majority did provide some

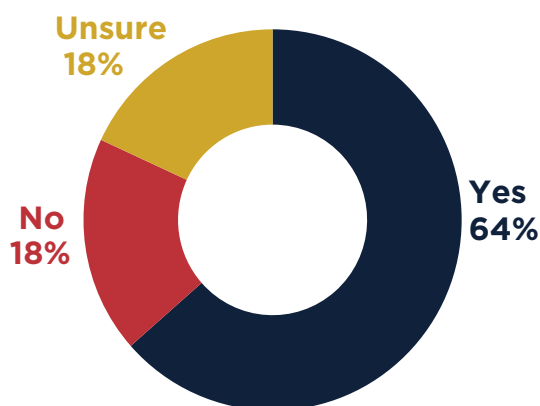
rationale, often citing more than one reason. The responses were examined and six themes emerged from the analysis and are noted below along with the most frequently mentioned comments.

1. **Financial/Economic** – Once again, one of the key determining factors for respondents' preferred project phasing was economics and costs. There were comments that related directly to their position on taxation impacts and those that provided suggestions, strategies or approaches that could be used in the decision-making process.
 - a. **Economic Strategies & Considerations** (333 comments) - The largest group of comments were related to possible strategies on how expenditures and related projects should be approached. The majority of these comments were directed to decision-makers. Below is the list of the theme areas related to project phasing, in order of highest number of comments received:
 - Cost-Benefit; invest in facilities that are lowest cost for the largest population use/impact (52 comments)
 - Adjust the timing – Delay everything to recover/ see post Covid/Economic reality (50)
 - Invest in smaller facilities first – more benefit across more facilities (37)
 - Spread costs over time and save for the bigger projects (31)
 - Maintain existing infrastructure first (31)
 - Invest in facilities to support economic activity and growth (31)
 - b. **Overall Costs & Taxation Impacts** (71 comments) – some respondents simply noted that their preferred phasing of projects was based on the cost of the projects, while others were more specific and noted that they would support no tax increase at all for the projects listed. Other comments were more general noting that they had cost concerns at a time where there should be reduced spending and should be funding these projects within existing budgets.
2. **Personal Needs** (46 comments) – The respondents' personal or family needs and interests were again a key driver in their rankings related to the phasing of the various projects.
3. **Need or demand for the project** – Any rationale for the respondents' choice for phasing preferences that reflected on the capacity of the current infrastructure and facilities was grouped into this theme area. Thirty-one (31) respondents noted that their rationale to shorten the timelines for repair, upgrades or replacements were based on facility condition, accessibility issues, inability for a facility to meet user needs or current standards.
4. **Community & social benefits** – Comments that were related to the community needs in general, including specific groups such as family, children and youth, seniors, and those with more specialized needs, were grouped into this theme. Additionally, comments that reflected the idea of community identity, pride and belonging were also included.
 - a. **Community demographics** – thirty-eight (38) respondents suggested that using current and projected demographic information to determine the timing of future (re)investments and locations was important in their ranking.
 - b. **Child and family friendly spaces** – twenty-two (22) respondents noted that their choice in the timing of (re)developing facilities that support healthy, safe places for children, teens and families could be active and together. Having places where individuals can meet others, various age groups can (re)connect was important in their choice considerations.
 - c. **Community identity** – eighteen (18) comments noted that phasing priorities were related to factors of community identity and pride.
5. **Value & benefits of outdoor spaces** – forty (40) respondents noted that trails and outdoor facilities should receive priority in the timing of facility (re) development due to their ability to provide wide-range of user's access to recreation and physical activity at a low or no cost. Comments noting that everyone can participate, regardless of skills and that they can be used in all seasons, were also included here.
6. **General comments** – general comments reflecting on the respondents' rational and opinion of the timing and intention of the City to (re)invest in the community's recreation, parks and culture facilities were also received. A high number of respondents (52) noted that their preferred phasing of the projects was based on their initial priorities and ranking in the first question of the survey.

Willingness to Pay

Approximately two-thirds (64%) of respondents are willing to pay additional property taxes to support the development of the new amenities and the enhancement of existing amenities. See the graph.

Are You Willing to Pay Additional Property Taxes?



Subsegment Analysis

Respondents with children 0-14 years in the home

- Yes 74%
- No 11%
- Unsure 15%

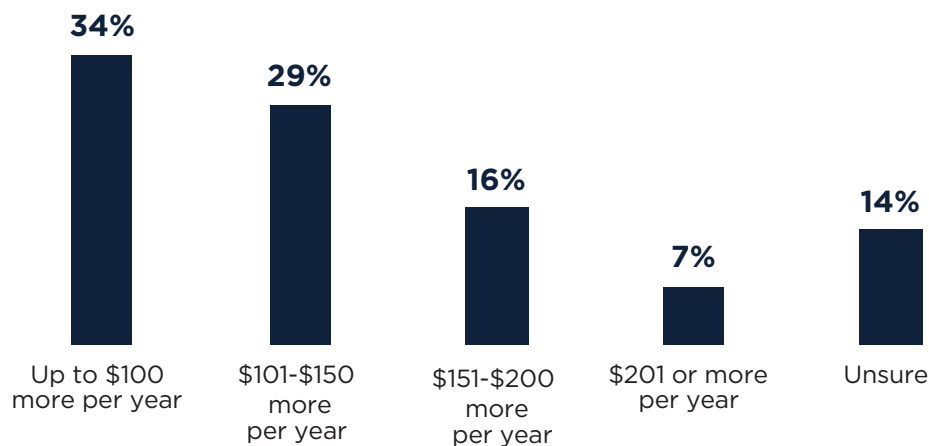
Respondents with someone aged 60 years and older in the home

- Yes 61%
- No 19%
- Unsure 20%

Those willing to pay additional property taxes and those who are "Unsure" were then asked to identify the amount of additional annual property taxes they would be willing to pay. As illustrated in the following graph approximately one-third (34%) are willing to pay up to \$100 extra per year. Approximately half (52%) are willing to pay more than \$100 annually.

Amount of Additional Annual Property Taxes

(Subset: Those Who Said "Yes" or "Unsure")



Other Comments

Respondents were able to provide some explanation for their phasing. The responses were examined and grouped into four themes. The most frequently stated comments are presented.

1. **Financial/Economic** –The comments identified here represent those that focused their perspectives and suggestions related to their support for levels of taxation and strategies or perspectives on how expenditures should be approached.
 - a. Economic Strategies & Considerations (169 comments) – the largest group of comments were related to possible strategies on how expenditures and related projects should or could be approached.
 - Due to cost concerns and current tax levels, there is a need to consider tighter budgets; decisions should be based on lowest possible tax increase. (32)
 - Invest in facilities to support economic activity and growth (24)
 - Maintain existing infrastructure first (19)
 - Adjust the timing – Delay everything to recover/ see post Covid/Economic reality (17)
 - b. Fifty-three (53) respondents noted that some level of tax increase would be acceptable, pending on the project(s).
 - c. Non-support of tax increase – sixty-four (64) respondents noted that they would not support any kind of tax increase and that projects should be supported within existing budgets. Twenty (20) respondents stated that they are on a fixed income or hurting financially and would not be able to support an increase in taxation levels.
2. **Need or demand for the project** – Any rationale for the respondents' choice for taxation level preferences that reflected on the capacity of the current infrastructure and facilities are included in this theme area. Comments were grouped to reflect comments that supported tax increases to address needs and those that did not.
 - a. Rational for no or low tax increases - a total of twenty-nine (29) comments were made suggesting that the demand or need for facilities is being used to build the case for a potential tax increase. These included the perspective that there are sufficient facilities in the community; and that current facilities are not fully utilized.
 - b. Rational for tax increases – a total of twenty-eight (28) comments related to the need or demand for facilities. They stated that there is existing demand for new facilities; that existing facilities require reinvestment and / or cannot meet user demand; and that it is timely to get the new facilities.
3. **Community & social benefits** (26 comments) – Comments included the need to invest to meet the needs of the community's demographics (families, youth, seniors); investment in facilities is important for a health, vibrant community; and that investment keeps people active and engaged in their community.
4. **Suggestions and comments to Council and Administration** – several comments were received that offered suggestions or comments to Council and Administration regarding this exercise as well as the overall planning for facilities. The twenty (20) overall comments included the following: community groups are not supported equitably and that some groups are seen as receiving more favourable treatment from the City than others; other areas of service require investment; concerns about City planning processes; more clarity on the City's financial decision making.

Respondent Profile

The following table describes the survey respondents.

How long have you lived in the Fort Saskatchewan area?		
Less than 5 years	12%	
5 to 10 years	21%	
11 to 20 years	20%	
21 years or longer	46%	
I prefer not to answer	1%	
Household Composition		
	Survey	(2019 Census)
0-4 years	9.3%	(7.1%)
5-9 years	7.4%	(6.6%)
10-14 years	6.6%	(6.0%)
15-19 years	5.1%	(5.0%)
20-29 years	8.2%	(12.3%)
30-39 years	17.7%	(16.4%)
40-49 years	11.4%	(11.8%)
50-59 years	12.7%	(10.5%)
60-69 years	12.2%	(8.2%)
70 years and older	7.3%	(7.2%)
Prefer not to answer	2.0%	(8.5%)



2.2 Community Group Survey

2.2.1 Survey Process

Community groups who use recreation facilities were invited to participate in the survey. Using its contact lists, the City of Fort Saskatchewan invited community organizations to participate in the survey. In the invitation, the groups were informed of the survey's purpose and were encouraged to participate.

The invitations were first sent on March 29th with a reminder sent out on April 8th. The survey was closed on April 30th. The invitation was sent to one hundred thirty-nine (139) groups with twenty-seven (27) groups providing a response. The findings cannot be generalized to all community organizations operating in Fort Saskatchewan; the results represent the perspectives of those groups who participated. Participating groups did represent a range of recreation interests and pursuits including ice organizations, arts & culture groups, and social organizations. Please refer to Appendix C for the list of survey respondents.

2.2.2 Survey Findings

Prior to questions being asked, information was shared that was intended to help the respondents answer the questions. This was the same information as was provided to households and included an overview of capital and operating costs along with a summary chart of those costs. The summary chart identified capital cost estimates for each amenity project as well as operating cost estimates. Additional detail about each amenity project was also available for respondents to review.

Amenity Ranking

To begin, respondents were asked to rank all the amenity projects. As noted below, the top ranked project is the Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization followed by the Additional West River's Edge Community Facility. The Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance rounded out the top three.

1. Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
2. Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
3. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
4. Fort Centre Park - Phase 1
5. New Arena
6. West River's Edge Family Play Area
7. West River's Edge Trails
8. New Aquatics Facility
9. Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements
10. Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio

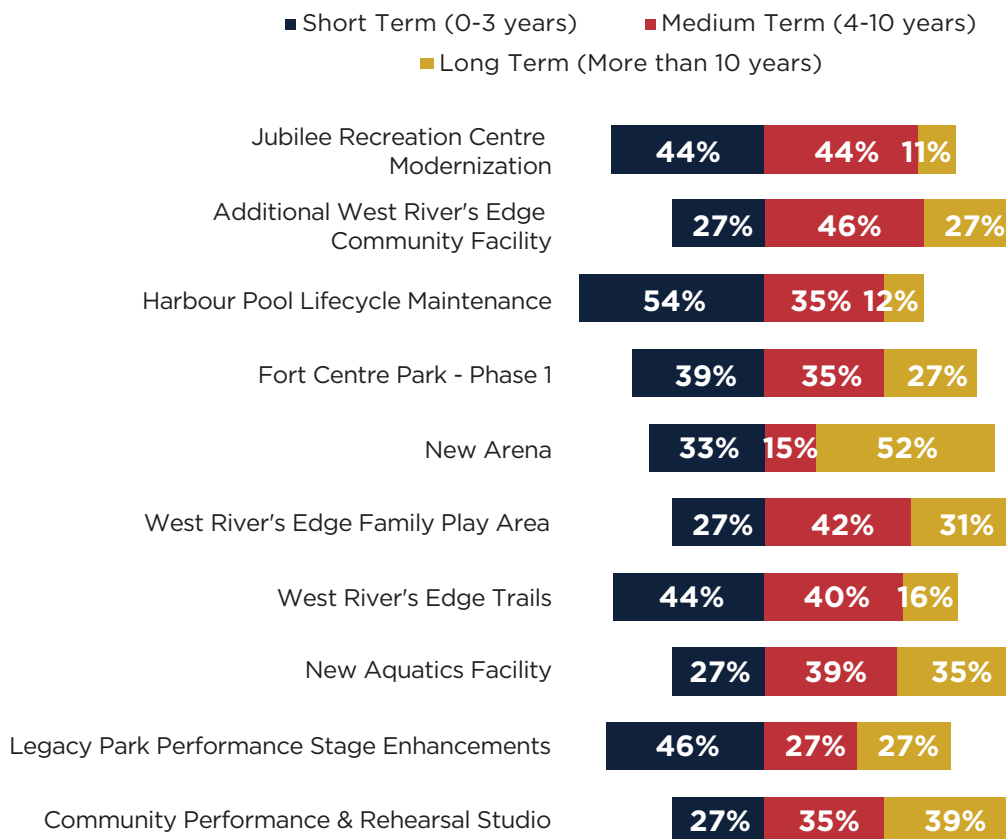
Respondents were then able to provide some explanation for their rankings. While the rankings were made with the groups' programming in mind (**seven respondents ranked the projects based on what supported their programming needs**), there were other considerations. Those receiving multiple mentions are noted below.

- Older and existing facilities should receive investment to keep them operational (5 comments)
- Projects that accommodate the needs of children, youth, and families were ranked higher (4 comments)
- Comparisons to other communities informed some groups' ranking of the projects (2).
- Access and affordability were also considerations; some projects are more easily accessible from a cost perspective than others (2).
- Revenue potential as a consideration. This included the ability to charge user fees but also the ability to attract in events. (2)

Project Phasing

Next, respondents were asked to indicate some timing - when the project should be addressed by the City. As can be seen in the graph, less than half (44%) of respondents identified that the top ranked project (Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization) be addressed in the short term (within the next three years). The Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance was identified as needing to be addressed in the short term by approximately half (54%) even though it is the third ranked project. The phasing does not closely align with the overall project ranking.

Project Phasing (in order of ranking)

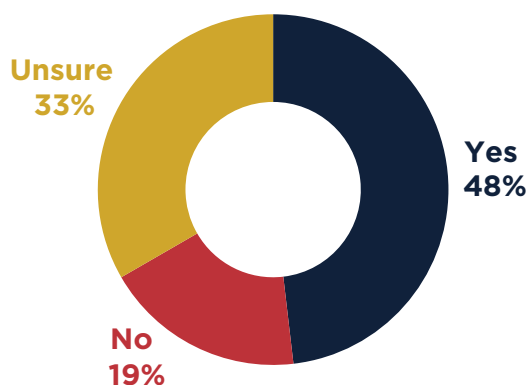


Respondents were able to provide some explanation for their phasing. While **many (6 groups) aligned the phasing with the project ranking** there were two other main explanations offered: the less expensive projects should be in the earlier phasing to accomplish something and show progress (5 groups); and that existing facilities should be addressed earlier before taking on new ones (3 groups).

Willingness to Pay

Approximately half (48%) of respondents are willing to pay additional user fees to support the development of the new amenities and the enhancement of existing amenities.

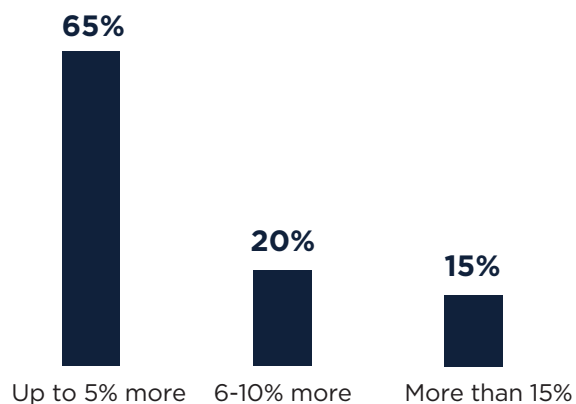
Are You Willing to Pay Additional User Fees?



Those willing to pay additional user fees and those who are “Unsure” were then asked to identify the amount extra they would be willing to pay. As illustrated in the following graph approximately two-thirds (65%) are willing to pay up to 5% in additional user fees.

Amount of Additional User Fees

(Subset: Those Who Said “Yes” or “Unsure”)



Other Comments

Finally, respondents were able to provide any other comments. Several reiterated that they are unable to contribute financially and are experiencing difficult times (2 comments). Others implored the City to start making progress on the projects (2). A couple of others suggested looking at other sources of financial help beyond user fees: the community broadly benefits so all should contribute including neighbouring communities; and revenue from non-local spending as people visit the community and attend events is important to think about.

Organization Profile

As can be seen from the following table, the survey respondents provide services to all ages of people.

Age Groups of Primary Participants / Members	
Children (0-5 years)	27%
Youth (6-12 years)	46%
Teens (13-17 years)	65%
Adult (18-39 years)	50%
Adult (40-64 years)	42%
Seniors (65 years and older)	31%

The majority of groups (70%) indicated that over three-quarters of their participants and members are residents of Fort Saskatchewan.





3

Conclusion

In its quest to inform decisions related to the upcoming Capital Plan, City Council sought to gather the opinions of residents and community organizations related to potential capital projects. Two surveys were fielded with good participation in each.

Household Survey

A household survey was fielded in which 806 responses were gathered. This level of participation is strong and the findings from this survey are statistically representative of Fort Saskatchewan households. The margin of error is $\pm 3.3\%$ 19 times out of 20; this is indicative of the quality of the data.

The top five (5) priorities from households in Fort Saskatchewan are:

1. West River's Edge Trails
2. Fort Centre Park - Phase 1
3. New Aquatics Facility
4. West River's Edge Family Play Area
5. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance

Approximately two-thirds (64%) of households are willing to pay additional taxes to support the development of the new amenities and the enhancement of existing amenities.

Community Group Survey

Community organizations were invited to participate in a survey. Of the one hundred thirty-nine (139) organizations invited to participate twenty-seven (27) provided a response. The responses came from nine (9) ice user groups and five (5) art / performing groups.

The top five (5) priorities from group respondents are:

1. Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
2. Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
3. Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
4. Fort Centre Park - Phase 1
5. New Arena

Approximately half (48%) of the groups are willing to pay additional user fees to support the development of the new amenities and the enhancement of existing amenities.

The information collected through this engagement provides City Council with significant insight into the opinions of the community and is a valuable input to consider as decisions are made related to the Capital Plan.



Appendices

Appendix A: Postcard



Illustration of three people (a woman, an older man, and a young man) sitting around a table, discussing recreation priorities. Speech bubbles indicate the topics: "New facility?", "Renovate an existing facility?", "In what order?", "Outdoor recreation spaces?", and "At what cost?".

City Council is asking your household to prioritize recreation facility projects based on your thoughts.

Use this unique access code (other side) and go online to fill out a quick questionnaire on your priorities.

If you would rather complete a paper copy of the questionnaire please contact recinfo@fortsask.ca. You will need your ACCESS CODE for the paper copy.



CITY OF
FORT SASKATCHEWAN
ALBERTA

Setting Priorities for Recreation Investment

myFORT

MY CITY. MY SAY.

Visit www.fortsask.ca/RecSurvey/ and click on the link. You will need to have your ACCESS CODE to participate in the survey.

ACCESS CODE

The deadline to share your thoughts is April 16, 2021.



Three photographs showing recreation facilities: an indoor sports hall, a theater, and the Jubilee Recreation Centre.

Appendix B: Household Questionnaire



SETTING PRIORITIES FOR RECREATION FACILITY SPENDING

ACCESS CODE: _____

ABOUT THE SURVEY

A broad range of services are provided by the City of Fort Saskatchewan to meet the needs of its 26,942 residents. At the same time the City has to consider future needs - all within the context of its budget. To help with budgeting, the City develops a 10 Year Capital Plan as a planning and guiding document. This Plan identifies significant projects along with their estimated costs and timing. This 10 year Capital Plan includes local road rehabilitation, new road infrastructure, vehicles and equipment, new facilities and amenities, and land improvements.

City Council is interested in learning from the community its priorities related specifically to recreation amenity projects. This survey will tell us what residents are thinking. The information will be used by City Council as it updates and develops the next 10 Year Capital Plan.

Please have an adult complete this survey considering the thoughts of every member of the household. All responses will be compiled and presented to City Council later in spring. Please complete the questions by **April 16** it should take you about 15 minutes. Thank you!

A1. Where do you live?

☐ Fort Saskatchewan

☐ Other (please specify) _____

A2. What is your postal code?

DRAW ENTRY FORM

As a token of thanks for taking the time to complete the survey, we are giving away one \$100 grocery certificate. To participate in this optional draw please provide your first name and phone number in the form.

Name (First Name Only): _____

Phone Number: _____

We respect your privacy

Your personal information is being collected for the purpose of awarding a draw prize. It will not be used for any other purpose and it will not be associated with the answers you provide to the survey questions. This draw is part of a survey by the City of Fort Saskatchewan related to recreation amenity prioritization.

Any personal information received is being collected and used pursuant to section 33(c) and section 39(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and your personal information will be managed in accordance with the FOIP Act. If you have questions about the collection, use and disclosure of information, please contact the City of Fort Saskatchewan at 780.992.6200.

You will be asked to prioritize a list of recreation amenity projects, recommend when these projects could be considered, and indicate your household willingness to pay for these amenities. At the end of the survey, specific details are shared about each recreation amenity.

RECREATION AMENITY COST EXPLANATIONS:

Amounts are subject to change due to market and economic conditions.

There are two types of costs that make up the overall cost for each recreation amenity, capital and operating costs. The capital and operating costs are estimates. Amounts are subject to change due to market and economic conditions.

CAPITAL COSTS

- The estimated cost to design and construct a new amenity.
- For existing amenities, this is the cost to complete the enhancements or improvements.
- These are one-time costs.
- Sources of funds are typically City reserves, borrowing, provincial or federal grants, or City tax revenue. Fundraising can be a source of funds but it generally only raises a small portion of the costs.
 - » All estimated capital costs over \$1,000,000 are assumed to be funded through borrowing with a tax increase required to pay back the loan over a 20-year period. At the time of construction other revenue sources will be evaluated to determine actual funding sources.
 - » For each of the amenity capital costs, an estimate of the annual increase in residential taxes will be presented assuming the entire cost is supported through a tax increase.

OPERATING COSTS

- The estimated costs to operate the amenity include staffing, building maintenance, and utilities. These are annual, ongoing expenses.
- These amenities are supported by the City and even with user fees and other revenues, they cost money every year to operate.
- These costs are typically paid for through City tax revenue. Sponsorships can help pay some of the costs.
 - » For each of the operating costs, an estimate of the annual increase in residential taxes will be presented assuming the entire cost is supported through a tax increase.
 - » Tax increases can be paid in one lump sum or through monthly instalments.

SUMMARY TABLE

Amenity	Capital Cost	Annual Tax Increase to Pay Capital Cost	Annual Operating Cost*	Annual Tax Increase to Pay Operating Cost	Total Annual Tax Increase
New Aquatics Facility	\$44,000,000	\$123.00	\$3,250,000	\$57.00	\$180.00
Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance	\$7,000,000	\$18.50	\$1,950,000	\$0	\$18.50
New Arena**	\$20,000,000	\$55.50	\$370,000	\$15.50	\$71.00
Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio	\$6,000,000	\$16.00	\$160,000	\$6.00	\$22.00
Fort Centre Park – Phase I	\$1,627,500	\$3.34	\$60,000	\$1.50	\$4.84
Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization	\$13,200,000	\$36.00	\$316,000	\$0	\$36.00
Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements	\$1,000,000	\$44.00 (paid in one year)	\$15,000	\$1.00	\$45.00 (year 1) \$1.00 (after year 1)
West River's Edge Community Facility	\$2,800,000	\$7.00	\$100,000	\$3.50	\$10.50
West River's Edge Family Play Area	\$4,300,000	\$11.00	\$300,000	\$12.50	\$23.50
West River's Edge Trails	\$1,000,000	\$44.00 (paid in one year)	\$17,500	\$1.00	\$45.00 (year 1) \$1.00 (after year 1)

*Operating costs are for every year the amenity is open and operational. This is an ongoing cost. Capital costs, on the other hand, are in effect to payback the loan for the development of the facility over 20 years.

** Ice Arena capital and operating costs are based on a Performance Arena.

These capital and operating costs are estimates. Amounts are subject to change due to market and economic conditions.

QUESTIONS

- Rank the following projects in the order of priority.

A rank of 1 means you think that project should be the top priority, a rank of 2 means you think the project should be the second priority, and so on. A rank of 10 means you have the project rated as the last priority.

Please rank ALL projects.

_____	New Aquatics Facility
_____	Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance
_____	New Arena
_____	Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio
_____	Fort Centre Park – Phase I
_____	Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization
_____	Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements
_____	Additional West River's Edge Community Facility
_____	West River's Edge Family Play Area
_____	West River's Edge Trails

- Please explain the reason for your ranking of amenities.

- Consider the project phasing. For each of the projects please indicate when you think the project should be addressed by the City. (It is assumed that amenities identified as being in the short term are of higher priority than amenities identified in the medium or long term and that those identified as long term have a lower ranking than the others.)

Amenity	Short Term (0-3 years)	Medium Term (4-10 years)	Long Term (More than 10 years)
New Aquatics Facility	☐	☐	☐
Harbour Pool Lifecycle Maintenance	☐	☐	☐
New Arena*	☐	☐	☐
Community Performance & Rehearsal Studio	☐	☐	☐
Fort Centre Park – Phase I	☐	☐	☐
Jubilee Recreation Centre Modernization	☐	☐	☐
Legacy Park Performance Stage Enhancements	☐	☐	☐
Additional West River's Edge Community Facility	☐	☐	☐
West River's Edge Family Play Area	☐	☐	☐
West River's Edge Trails	☐	☐	☐

* Ice Arena capital and operating costs are based on a Performance Arena.

- Please explain your answer.

3. Are you willing to pay additional property taxes to support the development of the new amenities and the enhancement of existing amenities?

- ☐ Yes
☒ No
☐ Unsure

4. If so, how much are you willing to pay annually?

- ☐ Up to \$100 per year
☒ \$101 - \$150 per year
☐ \$151 - \$200 per year
☒ \$201 or more
☐ Unsure

5. Any other comments:

HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

6. How long have you lived in the Fort Saskatchewan area?

- ☐ Less than 5 years
☒ 5 to 10 years
☐ 11 to 20 years
☒ 21 year or longer
☐ I prefer not to answer

7. Please describe your household by identifying the number of members in each of the following age groups – don't forget yourself!

_____ 0 - 4 yrs	_____ 5 - 9 yrs	_____ 10 - 14 yrs	_____ 15 - 19 yrs
_____ 20 - 29 yrs	_____ 30 - 39 yrs	_____ 40 - 49 yrs	_____ 50 - 59 yrs
_____ 60 - 69 yrs	_____ 70 years and older	☐ I prefer not to answer	

CLOSING

Thank you for providing your responses on behalf of your household. It is very much appreciated!

DETAILS ABOUT THE AMENITIES

These capital and operating costs are estimates. Amounts are subject to change due to market and economic conditions.

A. AQUATICS FACILITIES

There are two options for aquatics described in the survey. The first option is to build a brand new aquatics facility as described in A1. The second option is to do the necessary Harbour Pool lifecycle maintenance to keep it operational for another 15 – 20 years as described in A2.

A1. NEW AQUATICS FACILITY

Description: The proposed aquatics space is based on the 2015 Recreation Facilities and Parks Master Plan Update. The new aquatics facility is to be built at the Dow Centennial Centre and designed to accommodate multiple scheduled activities including drop in usage throughout the day. The amenity would include major water features such as slides, a large play area, and a dedicated program/lesson pool and viewing area.

Rationale: Harbour Pool is nearly 40 years old. The existing facility is in good condition and structurally sound but will need some major lifecycle maintenance in the short term to keep it operational to current service levels. Harbour Pool's operation is challenged by its inability to provide or expand programs and services due to the lack of a leisure pool.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually* per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$44,000,000	\$123.00

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$3,250,000	\$57.00

* The tax impact is based on one aquatics facility being operational. Harbour Pool would be decommissioned.

A2. HARBOUR POOL LIFECYCLE MAINTENANCE

Description: Harbour Pool Lifecycle maintenance of the major systems and facility components are required to the swimming pool operations. The maintenance would include replacement of the pool basin and deck tiles that are past lifecycle replacement. The replacement of the tile would include repairs to the concrete pool structure if required. Also included would be lifecycle replacement of pool mechanical equipment, air handling units, and above ground circulation piping. The maintenance does not allow for expanded programs or services offered at the facility.

Rationale: Harbour Pool is approaching 40 years old. Maintenance to the basin is required to ensure Harbour Pool is operational in the long term. This work needs to be completed in the short term if a new aquatics facility is not built.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually* per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$7,000,000	\$18.50

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$1,950,000	\$0*

* Harbour Pool annual operating costs are included in the current property tax.

These capital and operating costs are estimates. Amounts are subject to change due to market and economic conditions.

B. NEW ARENA

Description: An additional ice surface for use by minor hockey, minor ringette, figure skating, adult ice users and City programming. Costs are based on a performance arena with 1,500 seats.

Rationale: As the City grows and the use of the facilities gets closer to maximization, a new ice surface may need to be considered.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$20,000,000	\$55.50

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$370,000	\$15.50

C. COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE & REHEARSAL STUDIO

Description: A space that is configured as a square room with black walls and a flat floor – commonly referred to as a Black Box Theatre. The design of the space can accommodate multiple set ups and audience interaction. The space can host rehearsals, performances, and registered programs. Flexible layout configurations including cabaret style allow for a different theatrical experience every time the patron visits the venue.

Rationale: To provide a lower cost option for rehearsals and smaller performances. Also provides studio space for recreation programming such as yoga and dance programming.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$6,000,000	\$16.00

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$160,000	\$6.00

D. FORT CENTRE PARK – PHASE I

Description: The development of a 40 hectare (75 football fields) park located along the North Saskatchewan River and close to the downtown core. The initial phase of development focuses on trail development, establishing a strong interpretive program and naturalizing the site and establishing new constructed natural areas. The ponds are now being completed as part of the Highway 15 bridge construction.

Rationale: The development of Fort Centre Park was included in 1997, 2008 and 2020 Master plans. This project would provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities for the community.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually* per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$1,627,500	\$3.50

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$60,000*	\$1.50

* This does not include costs for additional programming and events.

These capital and operating costs are estimates. Amounts are subject to change due to market and economic conditions.

E. JUBILEE RECREATION CENTRE MODERNIZATION

Description: The Jubilee Recreation Centre (JRC) is 56 years old and is Fort Saskatchewan's largest arena with a capacity of 1,000 spectators. Elements of the facility are beginning to reflect their age. Deficiencies include main entrance, public lobby, offices, change room size, ventilation, energy efficiencies and elements relating to the Alberta Building Code such as barrier free access, and washroom facilities.

Rationale: In order to keep the JRC operational long term, the facility requires modernization to meet the needs of the user groups, and meet current building code standards. This project needs to be completed in the short term.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually* per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$13,200,000	\$36.00

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$316,000	\$0*

* Jubilee Recreation Centre annual operating costs are included in the current property tax.

F. LEGACY PARK PERFORMANCE STAGE

Description: Upgrade of the Legacy Park Band Shell to be more user friendly for various community events. The addition of basic equipment and a screen would allow for more variety in community events.

Rationale: To encourage use of the Legacy Park for events, festivals, music concerts, and drama performances throughout the summer season. Provide a better experience for the participants and make it easier for community groups to use the space.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$1,000,000	\$44.00 (paid in one year)

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$15,000	\$1.00

G. WEST RIVER'S EDGE (WRE) COMMUNITY FACILITY

Description: A new building at the south end of West River's Edge would be added to provide washrooms, seasonal food and beverage services, spaces to host small meetings and serve as a headquarters for events, and/or a storage facility for Park maintenance.

Rationale: In anticipation of an increase in activities and users at West River's Edge Park, a building is required to provide services and allow for additional maintenance of the area.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$2,800,000	\$7.00

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$100,000	\$3.50

These capital and operating costs are estimates. Amounts are subject to change due to market and economic conditions.

H. WEST RIVER'S EDGE (WRE) FAMILY PLAY AREA

Description: A family fun play area added to the site to make West River's Edge a destination for families. The site could include a play area, picnic area, and additional outdoor recreation activities.

Rationale: To create a popular recreation area with inexpensive activities for families in our community and to encourage people in the capital region to explore our river valley gem.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$4,300,000	\$11.00

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$300,000	\$12.50

I. WEST RIVER'S EDGE (WRE) TRAILS

Description: The addition of new trails and scattered picnic areas to West River's Edge to enhance the existing outdoor recreational activities.

Rationale: To connect existing trail systems to all areas within West River's Edge.

Estimated Capital Cost:

Estimated Capital Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$1,000,000	\$44.00 (paid in one year)

Estimated Operating Cost:

Estimated Annual Operating Cost	Tax Increase Annually per average household assessment (subject to change)
\$17,500	\$1.00

Appendix C: Community Groups Survey Participants

1. The Society of Fort Saskatchewan Artists
2. Fort Gymnastics
3. Fort Saskatchewan Major Lacrosse Club
4. NTD hockey (hockey skills and development)
5. Youth Action Committee
6. Dance at Brijets
7. Rare Form Theatre Association
8. Bianca's Dance Company
9. Families First Society
10. Spinners Dyers and Handweavers Guild of Fort Saskatchewan
11. Northern Alberta female hockey association
12. Hockey Development Group
13. Next Level Hockey
14. Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society
15. Fort Saskatchewan Senior Chiefs
16. Fort Saskatchewan Minor Hockey
17. Fort Saskatchewan Pickleball Association
18. Kabisig Society of Fort Saskatchewan
19. Bach to Pop
20. Fort Saskatchewan Ringette Association
21. Fort Saskatchewan Piranhas Swim Club
22. MSA - Judo
23. Fort Saskatchewan High School
24. Blizzard Cloggers
25. Fort Saskatchewan Adult Hockey League
26. Fort Saskatchewan Quilting Guild
27. Fort Saskatchewan JR.A Fury

