

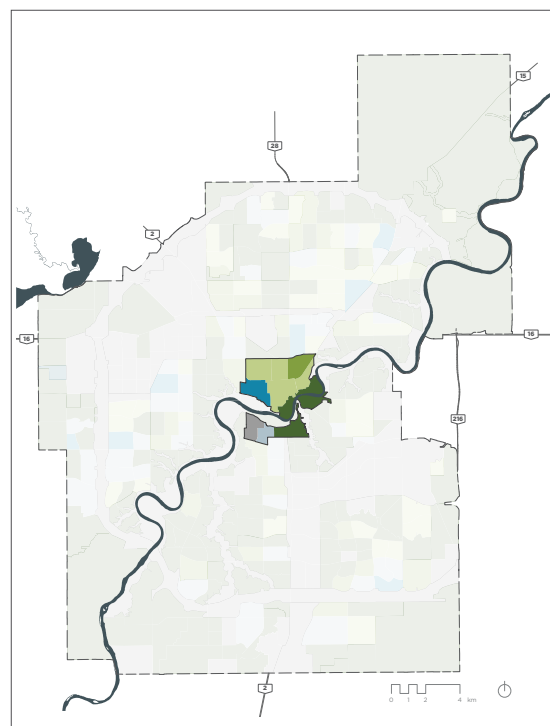
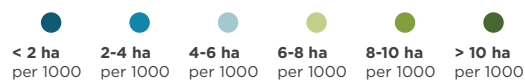
3.2.3 CENTRAL CORE

3.2.3.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD OVERVIEW

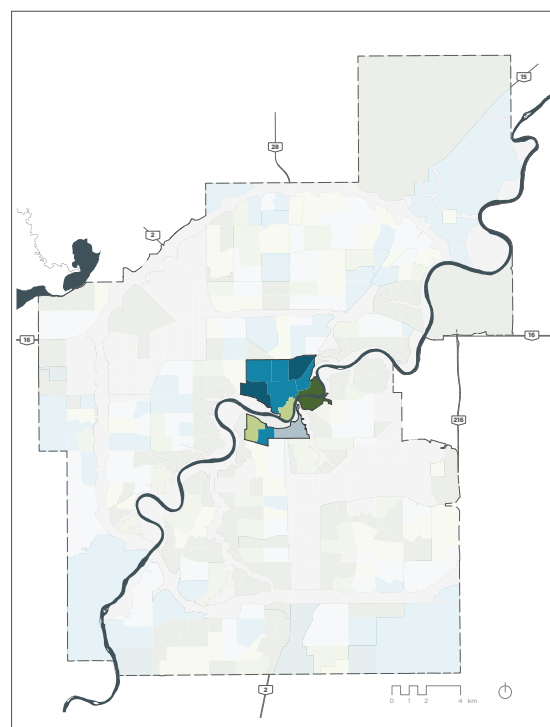
The Central Core has a wide diversity of open spaces including municipal parks, plazas, promenades, streetscapes and the Provincial Legislature grounds. The adjacent River Valley is easily accessible to those living near its access points, which provides connections to extensive green space and multiple amenities. Walking trails and sidewalks, combined with the street grid structure, contribute to the high walkability and ease of access to existing open space. However, the total amount of both municipal parks and other publicly-accessible open space within the Central Core is limited. Residential populations will rise considerably in the future, making improvements in amount, quality and functionality of open space increasingly important. Access to private open space is also limited within higher-density areas. This, combined with the expected substantial increase in the residential population, supports the need to provide increased high-quality, multifunctional and publicly accessible open space.

While the figures supplied in approved Area Redevelopment Plans indicate that the general population of the Central Core is expected to more than double, a 2016 report to the Edmonton Public School Board shows that projected growth among school-aged children and youth is more modest. This growth accounts for a small fraction (under 1%) of the growth in school-aged population citywide. With the City of Edmonton's goal to provide a more family-friendly Central Core, additional recreational opportunities will be required in the medium and long-term to address deficits in child-oriented amenities (e.g. minor sports fields, playgrounds, nature-based play) and attract families.

The current supply of open space in the Central Core provides limited Wellness functions in terms of active spaces, trails and areas for passive relaxation.



MAP 11: Central Core: Current Conditions
(All Open Spaces)



MAP 12: Central Core: Future Developments
(All Open Spaces)

3.2.3.2 ISSUES

Amount and Access to Open Space

- 1 Population in the Central Core is expected to more than double in the future. Currently, there are 157 open spaces within the Core itself, providing 7.0 hectares of open space (within and accessible to the Core) per 1,000 people. If no additional open spaces are provided, 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people will be available in the future.
- 2 Over 84% of the current population is within walking distance of a municipal park of some kind. However, some of the projected population growth will occur in areas that have limited open space access. Additional parks will be needed in those areas.
- 3 Additional accessible parkland in the adjacent River Valley is available to those living within 400 metres of River Valley access points. Currently, if accessible parkland adjacent to the Core is included, 4.5 hectares of municipal parkland per 1,000 people (1.4 ha/1,000 in the future) is available to those living in the Core. However, this is disproportionately distributed, favouring those living near the River Valley.
- 4 Access to the River Valley from Downtown, Strathcona and Garneau should be improved.
- 5 Civic space for those living in the Core is reasonably distributed and provides approximately 0.4 hectares of civic space per 1,000 people.
- 6 Pedestrian connectivity of parks, greenways, enhanced streetscapes and plazas is incomplete in many areas.
- 7 The Legislature grounds are a highly used and recently refurbished destination space that would benefit from better pedestrian connection to the river; however, 105 St. and River Valley Rd. pose significant barriers.

METRIC	2017 Baseline*	Future**
Total Population	76,800	247,700
Provision — All Open Space		
Total number	157	—
Hectares (accessible) per 1,000 people	7.0	2.2
Provision — Municipal Parkland		
Total number	105	—
Hectares (accessible) per 1,000 people	4.5	1.4
High Function Open Spaces		
% of open spaces providing high Ecology function	28.9%	—
% of open spaces providing high Celebration function	48.1%	—
% of open spaces providing high Wellness function	6.4%	—
Access to High Function Open Spaces		
% of population within walking distance to high function Ecology spaces	55.3	—
% of population within walking distance to high function Celebration spaces	81.9	—
% of population within walking distance to high function Wellness spaces	30.2	—
Multifunctionality		
Total number providing high functionality for 3 themes	2	—
Total number providing high functionality for 2 themes	26	—
Total number providing high functionality for 1 theme	72	—

* 2017 baseline population from Edmonton Municipal Census 2016

** Approximated from approved (re)development plans and citywide projections

FIG. 11: Open Space Provision (Central Core)



Quality and Functionality of Open Space

- 8** Among all open spaces, 6.4% provide a high level of Wellness function. Conversely, 48.1% of open spaces provide high Celebration function and 28.9% provide high Ecology function.
- 9** While 107 St., 104 St. and 96 St. have undergone significant streetscape improvements, other streetscapes would benefit from refurbishment.
- 10** Some parks in the Central Core require full redesign while many others require additional maintenance to mitigate infrastructure deterioration and to improve user satisfaction.
- 11** Open spaces that promote active living and relaxation are limited in the central core. With changing lifestyles and a diversifying population, this deficiency must be addressed.
- 12** Some open spaces are not designed for multifunction or year-round use and require additional or retrofitted amenities.
- 13** Seventy-three per cent of open spaces in the Central Core provide high function for either Ecology, Celebration or Wellness. Nearly 27% of open spaces do not provide high functionality for any theme. Just over 1% have high functionality for all three themes, emphasizing the need for multifunctionality as a means to support residential intensification.

Acquisition of Open Space

- 14** Open space acquisition in the Central Core is limited by land availability and high cost. In addition:
 - › Smaller parcels with diverse ownership make land assembly difficult.
 - › Reserve funds for land acquisition in the downtown are financed through cash in lieu collected in other parts of the city. The amount collected is based on the market value of land throughout the city, making it difficult to acquire an equivalent area of land in the downtown.
 - › Land values in the Central Core are appreciating faster than the accumulated value of reserve funds.
 - › The City must compete with other parties to acquire land in the Central Core.

3.2.3.3 PROVISION STRATEGIES

Amount and Access to Open Space

- a)** Provide increased delivery of currently undersupplied open space functions, particularly wellness, recreation, active living, and child friendly spaces, by providing new multifunctional parks, plazas, promenades, pathways and complete streets.
- b)** Increase the supply of open space in undersupplied areas of the Central Core by expanding existing open spaces when suitable opportunities arise (e.g. expand into adjacent available lands and street or lane rights-of-way). When valuable open spaces are privately owned, acquire land through opportunity purchase mechanisms.
- c)** Negotiate improvements and additions to publicly-owned open space and public access to privately-owned open space through:
 - › Cash in lieu of open space provision and density bonusing directed to Central Core open space improvements.



- › For publicly accessible, but privately-owned open space, ensure design, functionality and connections are complementary to the public open space system.
 - › Build capacity to encourage public-private collaboration to co-create or co-produce publicly accessible open space.
 - › Explore creative means to cluster or combine the contributions of multiple landowners (as land or cash in lieu) to supply larger, higher quality or more functional spaces that can either be physically connected or functionally connected.
- d)** Design buildings, streets and alleyways to provide additional public, pedestrian-oriented open space and commercial frontage. In addition, alleyways in the Central Core should provide multiple functions for emergency, servicing, residential and commercial vehicular access, stormwater management and safe non-motorized movement.
- e)** Create new multifunctional open spaces through the following means:
- › Convert appropriate, strategically located, vacant public parcels into parkland or civic spaces.
 - › Close select public roads and alleys to traffic seasonally to create temporary open spaces.
 - › Redesign and convert strategically located public road or lane right-of-ways to shared vehicular/pedestrian oriented open space accompanied by investment in landscape, public art and creatively-designed amenities.
 - › Consider creating elevated open space above laneways, rail corridors and roadways where other options are unavailable or have been exhausted.
 - › Encourage the use of publicly-accessible green roofs. Consider a linked system of public green roofs.
- f)** Connecting new and existing spaces through complete streets and strategic land acquisition or conversion of adjacent lands.
- g)** Enhance the Central Core's network of promenades, greenways and pedestrian-oriented streets.
- h)** Improve physical access to, and activation of, the River Valley and Ravine System. Expand Victoria Promenade and consider a continuous top-of-bank promenade along the River Valley edge, including the south bank in the Strathcona neighbourhood.
- i)** Expand and enhance the Ribbon of Steel/Railtown Greenway.
- j)** Use laneways, on-street bikeways and dedicated cycle routes to enhance non-motorized circulation.
- Quality and Functionality of Open Space**
- k)** Improve existing spaces by increasing design quality and providing greater multifunctionality.
- l)** Improve existing asset condition, through replacement, refurbishment and improved maintenance regimes.
- m)** Create new designed ecological space(s) in the Central Core. This may be achieved by:
- › Daylighting buried watercourses (e.g. Mill Creek).
 - › Conversion of all, or part of, select existing parks to more ecologically-supportive species.
 - › Establishment of a community based "Green Streets" program to provide enhanced ecological plantings in roadway greens.
- n)** Maintain and enhance the urban forest of the Central Core.
- o)** Retrofit or upgrade aging stormwater infrastructure with more multifunctional open space amenities, where appropriate.