What We Heard Summary

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Wildfire Risk Strategy

Phase 1 Public Engagement

ADVISE

The developing **Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Wildfire Risk Strategy** is a centralized, long-term approach to mitigating wildfire risk in alignment with the FireSmart framework to protect people, property and the environment. Successful wildfire risk management requires a whole-of-society approach to ensure all members of a community are engaged, informed and empowered to take action.

To achieve this, a Phase 1 public engagement campaign ran from May to September 2025. The purpose of Phase 1 public engagement was to understand public perception of wildfire risk, assess preparedness, identify preferred wildfire mitigation activities and pinpoint priority areas where the City should focus its wildfire risk management efforts. The feedback gathered in this phase has helped shape the first WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy draft.

Engagement Approach

The Phase 1 engagement approach focused on gathering general public and targeted partner input to inform the creation of the draft strategy.

- **What:** To gauge participants' current understanding of wildfire risk and their preparedness measures, our engagement was focused around risk mitigation measures, FireSmart knowledge, preparedness actions and key aspects of wildfire resilience prioritization.
- **Who:** We engaged the public (residents and community associations), Indigenous organizations and Nations, and targeted organizations (development industry, business community, utility companies, environmental groups, and various social support organizations).
- **How:** We engaged online and in-person, including two online surveys (on perceptions and mitigation tactics), in-person pop-up events at recreation centres and libraries, engagement with Indigenous communities, two targeted information sessions (for community and industry partners), and 10 virtual one-on-one meetings.

Learn more about this project at
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Question / Area of Inquiry	Why We Asked It	Where We Asked It	Responses/ Participants
Familiarity with City wildfire preparedness activities (website, prescribed fire, etc.).	Gauge public awareness of wildfire risk and existing frameworks	Wildfire Perceptions Survey	4,532
Concerns about wildfire risk, current prevention steps, preparedness needs.	Understand concerns, answer questions, distribute materials	Community Pop-Ups	141
Familiarity with FireSmart framework, mitigation measures and resilient practices.	Understand the perspectives of the general public in risk mitigation tactics	Wildfire Mitigation Tactics Survey	2,740
What is needed for better preparedness?	Open-ended platform for public input	Engaged Edmonton Webpage	27
Discuss the project overview and intended approach for the Strategy development	Learn their concerns and gather direct feedback on wildfire risk to inform the first draft of the Strategy	“Meet the Project Team” 1:1 Meetings	10
What should be prioritized? Innovative practices? Minimize environmental impacts?	Gather industry insights on initiatives, improvements, and approaches	Industry Info Session	11
How to prioritize inclusivity? What are community barriers? How to engage in the future?	Discuss methods to enhance the inclusivity of the strategy for community-serving organizations	Community Info Session	3
How can Indigenous knowledge and stewardship be integrated and supported?	Learn traditional approaches and explore collaboration	Indigenous Engagement Events	219

What We Heard in Phase 1

Phase 1 engagement activities highlighted the following key themes:

- **Wildfire Risk Perceptions:** There is a general concern about wildfire risk within the city, with 7 in 10 respondents expressing concern about the risk of a wildfire in Edmonton (70%).
- **Vulnerable Populations:** Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that at-risk and vulnerable populations such as seniors and people with disabilities are included in communication and education efforts.
- **Community Education and Collaboration:** We heard about the need for strong public education, continued engagement with Indigenous communities, and broader community collaboration to change behavior and reduce wildfire risk.
- **Prevention vs. Response:** Participants indicated that prevention is a more cost-effective approach than emergency response, emphasizing the value of proactive measures such as reducing dry and/or dead vegetation and providing more guidance on how to reduce wildfire risk at home.
- **Traditional Fire Stewardship:** Feedback during Indigenous engagement sessions described traditional fire stewardship practices in the Edmonton region, including Indigenous-led cultural burns, to reduce wildfire risk on the landscape and promote ecological regeneration.
- **Supported Mitigation Strategies:** Agreement was shown with various wildfire mitigation tactics in high-risk WUI areas, such as:
    - *Vegetation management:* Reducing built up fuel loads in high-risk areas
    - *Land-use planning:* Implementing wildfire-resilient landscaping and/or land-use standards
    - *Fire-resistant building materials:* Encouraging the use of fire-resilient building materials in high risk areas

Next Steps

The complete "What We Heard" report will be released after Phase 2 Public Engagement activities conclude. The final WUI Wildfire Risk Strategy is anticipated to be presented to the Community and Public Services Committee in late Q1 2026.

For inquiries, please contact us at WildfireStrategy@edmonton.ca.

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