



Permanent Outdoor Festival Site

Final Comprehensive Engagement Report
January 11, 2021



Engagement Summary

The Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Feasibility Study identifies both the location(s) and design plan for a permanent centrally located festival site within the downtown core of Saskatoon. The study also takes into account infrastructure requirements for such a festival site to ensure protection and long-term sustainability of any associated green infrastructure

Project consultants HTFC Planning & Design engaged stakeholders on behalf of the City of Saskatoon on the Permanent Outdoor Festival site location and design criteria through two phases:

Phase 1: Options Identification

The engagement goals for this phase were to identify options for the location of the festival site based on stakeholder feedback and determine preferences for the site location and criteria.

Phase 2: Close the Loop

This phase included sharing the validated findings and site preferences with stakeholders to determine the associated support and identify red flags.

This engagement summary includes the activities and results that informed Phase 1: Options Identification and Phase 2: Close the Loop engagement goals. A total of 672 participants took part in the engagement activities, including stakeholder meetings, workshops and public surveys held from May 2020 – December 2020.

Engagement goals, intended audience, activities, dates, participation rates and detailed engagement results are provided in the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Comprehensive Engagement Report that follows this summary. Engagement results from all activities that informed each goal are summarized below.

Options Identification

This phase of engagement was informed using input from 619 residents, key stakeholders, industry professionals, and internal stakeholders during the following activities which were designed to specifically inform this goal:

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Stakeholder Poll
- Public Survey

Engagement results, summarized below, informed the identification of potential and preferred site location(s) as well as their corresponding criteria.

Refining Proposed Sites

Stakeholders were invited to examine the nine potential sites by assessing their suitability using maps and assessment tools. Out of the nine proposed sites, the top sites identified through this process included:

1. Kiwanis Memorial Park South
2. River Landing Phase 1 (East)
3. River Landing Phase 2 (West)
4. Friendship Park

Further ranking of the top sites was conducted using the most important criteria and project considerations identified by stakeholders. Following further analysis of the results, a clear geographic preference for sites within the River Central zone was evident. Therefore, a more blended approach was taken to combine the top sites into geographic areas in order to fully capture the diversity of options and locations in the three geographical areas represented in the River Central zone. These areas were further reviewed for ease of access to the following amenities and conditions within a ten-minute walk:

- Links to the future Bus Rapid Transit lines, as well as existing and future transit stops
- Connection to the Meewasin trails
- Bridge crossings
- Public parking (on-street parking and pay lots)
- Accommodations, including the number of hotel rooms and commercial short-term units

Following further analysis and refinement the top three sites were identified as:


1. **River Central:** this site extends from River Landing 1 Park Amphitheatre, all the way through Friendship Park and into Kiwanis Memorial Park (South)
2. **River North:** this site extends from Kiwanis Memorial Park (North), from north of The Bessborough to the intersection of 24th Street and Spadina Crescent East
3. **River South:** this site extends through from the Avenue B south entrance into River Landing 2 Park, south into Victoria Park, and ending south of the intersection of 17th Street West and Spadina Crescent West

Final Site Selection

Overall, survey participants favoured Site 1: River Central site (43%), followed by Site 3: River South (35%), Site 2: River North (13%) and none of the proposed sites (9%). Further analysis of support for each of the sites indicated a stronger preference for the River Central site by all demographic groups. From the comments provided by participants, the selection of the River Central site was supported by its central location within the downtown core, its accessibility by multiple forms of transportation, and its potential for future expansion.


Important Site Criteria and Amenities

From the general criteria identified by the Project Team, respondents identified the following as being of most importance:


- 
1. Ability to accommodate medium festivals (1,000 to 10,000 people per day)
 2. Have special considerations for transit, rapid transit
 3. Ability to accommodate small festivals (1,000 or less people per day)
 4. Should be usable by general public and informal events when not in use
 5. Ability to accommodate large festivals (10,000 or more people per day)
 6. Ability to accommodate multiple (2-3) small or medium festivals and events at the same time with distance and shared amenities

Numerous comments were provided by participants, including identifying the need for the site to be flexible in accommodating a variety of events, minimize environmental impacts to the area, and account for the importance of parking/transportation for the site.

Participants identified the most important festival amenities as follows:

1. Permanent utility hook-ups
 2. Zones for temporary concessions, food trucks and merchandise
 3. Permanent washrooms for use only during events
 4. Permanent location for additional temporary washrooms
 5. Temporary spectator seating around stage
 6. Large stage with cover/canopy/partial cover
 7. On-site loading
 8. Headquarters building for festival/event use (fee for service)
 9. Permanent smaller performance areas in addition to main stage area
 10. Backstage area
 11. Permanent ticket booth (fee for service)
- 

Participants identified the most important future public amenities as being:

- 
1. Pedestrian trails throughout/to the site, linking to the Meewasin trail system
 2. On-site bicycle parking (permanent or temporary)
 3. Permanent, year-round public washrooms
 4. Scenic Saskatoon views and backdrops
 5. Children's activity/play area for use during and outside events
 6. Areas for public recreation use during an event
 7. Publicly available boat docks for use during and outside of events

Close the Loop

This phase of engagement was informed using input from 53 key stakeholders, industry professionals, and internal stakeholders during the following activities which were designed to specifically inform this goal:

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Workshops

Engagement results, summarized below, identified potential operational challenges and any associated red flags with the River Central Site.

Operational Challenges

Participants provided examples of some of the most common operational challenges, including:

- Limited access to power/utilities
- Inadequate parking
- Access to public washrooms
- Damages & repairs - to greenspace, pathways, vegetation, soil & turf
- Noise & light pollution
- Garbage & recycling management
- Safety - proximity to the Light House, boat launch, crowds of people, & vehicles in pedestrian areas
- Traffic - congestion, construction, closures, detours & errant vehicles
- Accessibility - wheelchair (especially in Friendship Park), vehicle, pedestrian, cyclists
- Emergency vehicle access (fire, E.M.S. vehicles); too remote or crowded

Opportunities and Challenges with the Final Site

Participants identified numerous opportunities within the River Central site, which are summarized below by themes:

Artistic impression: for the community and festival visitors

Community programming: there are numerous opportunities for secondary community programming, as well as various festivals to share, plan and work together

Consistency: the site is consistent with existing City plans, including the City Center Plan and Bus Rapid Transit Plan

Expansion: the site connects with the potential expansion onto the Traffic Bridge and Rotary Park

Location: the site utilizes the downtown area which is supported by numerous tourism and festivals within the city, close to amenities (i.e., restaurants, hotels, shopping, businesses, trails, etc.)

Residential impacts: fewer parking impacts on residential neighbourhoods

Seasonality: the site further supports programming throughout all seasons, such as outdoor winter activities

Utilities: have numerous locations for hot & cold running water/sanitization area, eliminating generator use would help reduce noise pollution

Challenges to the River Central site were identified and are summarized below by themes:

Environmental factors: a portion of the site is located in a floodplain and within an active wildlife corridor, noise and light pollution are a major concern for the site especially during peak animal migratory periods

Impacts: on residents and businesses in the surrounding area, including traffic, road closures, and accessibility

Limited parking: a major concern for residents attending events and surrounding homeowners

Old surrounding infrastructure: impacts to significant heritage sites warrants further examination

Road closures: such as the closing of Spadina Crescent West during festival events

Space: limited space available within the area, due to the amount of development and distance from the river

Topography: narrow space, pinch points, steep slopes, limited ramps/stair access

Consideration of Results

Engagement throughout the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Feasibility Study led to determining River Central as the preferred chosen site location and the criteria to be considered in the functional concept plan and business case recommendations.

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1 Background

The Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Feasibility Study identifies both the location(s) and concept plan for a permanent centrally located festival site, which takes into consideration all the typical needs of outdoor events, including access to water, power, staging, parking, and accessibility needs. The study also takes into account infrastructure requirements for such a festival site to ensure protection and long-term sustainability of any associated green infrastructure.

The goal of this study was to identify a preferred site location following the criteria, program elements and features for an ideal festival site, including being:

- Centrally located and easily accessible
- A reflection of inclusive civic values
- Respectful of community, strategic goals, and growth planning
- Hospitable for a wide range of festivals/gatherings and everyday urban living

The Permanent Outdoor Festival Site project was approved in principle by City Council on March 26, 2018 through the [Recreation and Parks Master Plan - Facilities Game Plan - Proposed Funding Plan](#), subject to budget approval. 81% of households surveyed in the [2015 City of Saskatoon Recreation and Parks Master Plan](#) supported the prioritization of a City of Saskatoon Festival Venue and the concept of an Outdoor Festival Space ranked 2nd in priority out of 23 possible Outdoor Recreation Facility Spaces. This significant ranking, combined with the mounting costs for maintaining popular parks, was the catalyst for the initiation of the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Feasibility Study. Funding for the detailed design and construction of the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site project was approved by City Council in June 2020 through allocation of funding from Saskatchewan's Municipal Economic Enhancement Program.

From May 2020 – December 2020, project consultants from the HTFC Planning & Design-led Consultant team engaged stakeholders on behalf of the City of Saskatoon on the Permanent Outdoor Festival site location and design criteria. Steering Committee members, City of Saskatoon staff, various stakeholders and the public were engaged through this process. Based on the information provided by stakeholders, in addition to further research and internal considerations, the project team developed the functional concept plan and explored potential options for governance and operational models to be presented to City Council in February 2020.

1.1 Strategic Goals

The development of a Permanent Outdoor Festival Site helps to address the strategic goals of improving the quality of life for residents by ensuring future recreational facilities meet community needs and promoting sustainable growth by establishing the City Centre as a cultural and entertainment district.

1.2 Project Team

- Marilyn Gould, HTFC Planning & Design
- Monica Giesbrecht, HTFC Planning & Design
- Maureen Krauss, HTFC Planning & Design

- Mark Bauche, HTFC Planning & Design
- Shannon Loewen, HTFC Planning & Design
- Steffi Baker, HTFC Planning & Design
- Lloyd Isaak, HTFC Planning & Design
- Alex Hanson, Colliers International
- Derek Kindrachuk, Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture
- Bertrand Bartake, Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture
- Mark Campbell, City of Saskatoon, Project Manager
- Brad Babyak, City of Saskatoon, Project Sponsor
- Lindsay Cockrum, City of Saskatoon, Open Space Consultant
- Kenton Lysak, City of Saskatoon, Public Engagement Consultant
- Susan Echlin – Marketing Consultant

1.3 Spokesperson(s)

- Mark Campbell, City of Saskatoon, Project Manager
- Brad Babyak, City of Saskatoon, Project Sponsor

1.4 Summary of Engagement Strategy

Residents and stakeholders were provided opportunities to inform the following engagement goals:

- Options Identification for Site Location and Criteria
 - Identify options for the location of the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site in Saskatoon
 - Ask participants to identify and explain their preferences for site location and criteria to determine barriers, opportunities and trends
- Close the Loop
 - Validate findings and site preferences with stakeholders
 - Determine the level of support for the final location and identify any risks

A summary of stakeholder groups, level of engagement, engagement objectives, engagement goals and engagement activities completed are provided below.

Table 1: Summary of Engagement Strategy

Intended Audience	Level of Influence	Objective	Engagement Goal	Engagement Activity
All Stakeholders	Involve	Develop site options based on stakeholder feedback and ensure concerns/priorities are understood.	Phase 1: Options Identification	Virtual Meetings Stakeholder Poll Survey
Internal Stakeholders Key Stakeholder Groups Tourism & Industry Groups	Consult	Share final site selection with stakeholders to validate findings and identify red flags.	Phase 2: Close the Loop	Virtual Meetings Workshops

A summary of engagement activities selected, activity and event dates, intended audience, and number of participants engaged for each engagement goal is provided in the table below.

Table 2: Summary of Engagement Activities

Goal	Intended Audience	Engagement Activity	Date(s)	Participants
Options Identification	Internal and Tourism Stakeholders	Stakeholder Meetings	June 17, 2020	39
	Internal and Tourism Stakeholders	Stakeholder Meetings	June 22, 2020	39
	Internal Stakeholders and Project Team	Stakeholder Poll	July 22, 2020	16
	All Stakeholders	Public Survey	July 8 to August 14, 2020	804
			Subtotal	898
Close the Loop	All Stakeholders	Workshops	October 7 to October 15, 2020	45
	Key Stakeholder Groups	Stakeholder Meetings	November 1 st to December 16th, 2020	8
			Subtotal	53
Total Participation June 2020 to December 2020				951

Engagement activities, intended audience, marketing techniques, analysis methods and results are described in this report followed by a summary of evaluation feedback and data limitations.

1.5 Stakeholder Groups

Four stakeholder groups were identified with potential to be impacted by the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site. These groups included:

1.5.1 Key Stakeholder Groups

- Gabriel Dumont Local #11
- Meewasin
- Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee
- Nutrien Wonderhub
- The Prairie Lily
- Remail Modern
- Saskatchewan Archeological Society
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society
- Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre
- Saskatoon Food Bank and Garden Patch
- Saskatoon Heritage Society
- Saskatoon Nature Society
- Saskatoon Tribal Council
- University of Saskatchewan

1.5.2 Tourism and Industry Stakeholders

- Businesses
- Business Improvement Districts
- On-purpose Leadership

- Sasktel Centre
- The Saskatchewan Jazz Festival Inc.
- Tourism Saskatoon
- Tourism Saskatchewan

1.5.3 Internal Stakeholders

- Corporate Risk
- Facilities
- Indigenous Initiatives
- Lands Branch
- Landscape Development
- Parking
- Parks
- Recreation and Community Development
- Saskatoon Fire Department
- Saskatoon Police Services
- Social Development
- Special Events
- Special Uses Facilities and Capital
- Transit
- Transportation
- Urban Design

1.5.4 Public Groups

- General public
- Homeowners in adjacent neighborhoods

2 Engagement Activities

2.1 Stakeholder Meetings

Consultations with stakeholder groups and representatives were held from June 17, 2020 to July 22, 2020 to both inform stakeholders about the program and determine preliminary site locations.

2.1.1 Intended Audience

The stakeholder groups included the following:

- Project Team
- Internal Stakeholders
- Steering Committee
- Tourism and Industry Stakeholders

2.1.2 Marketing Techniques

Representatives were contacted directly, therefore no marketing techniques were used for this engagement activity.

2.1.3 Analysis

The data received during this activity was provided in the form of options for consideration by the project team. As such, no additional analysis of the data was required

2.1.4 What We Heard

Initial Stakeholder Meetings served to introduce the project, provide an overview of the nine potential sites identified by the City of Saskatoon, present the draft project vision and future outcomes, and gather feedback regarding important criteria and considerations for the site selection. The nine potential park sites are identified in the following figure:

Figure 1: Proposed Sites for the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Location



This same group met again to examine in more detail the nine potential park sites by assessing their suitability using maps and assessment tools in order to narrow the selection process down to the top potential sites. Each site was assessed by their proximity to amenities such as transit facilities, active transportation routes and parking and hotel accommodations. Participants identified the following criteria as important for the site selection process:

Site capacity: in festival/event use

Ease of festival/event set-up: roadway access for equipment, access to stage/vendor locations, etc.

Ease of access for emergency services: multiple routes and access points to the site

Perimeter security: ability to provide effective crowd control and protection

High value for investment: feasibility of improving the site

Site expansion opportunities: potential for expansion into nearby parks or streets if needed

Possible negative neighbourhood impacts: parking conflicts, noise concerns, or lack of access to public park space during festivals/events, etc.

Possible positive neighbourhood impacts: improve the access to public park space, increase transit connectivity, increase customer traffic to local businesses, etc.

The top potential sites identified through this process included:

1. Kiwanis Memorial Park South
2. River Landing Phase 1 (East)
3. River Landing Phase 2 (West)
4. Friendship Park

2.2 Stakeholder Poll

Further site criteria development and ranking of the nine parks identified by City of Saskatoon continued with a Stakeholder Poll which took place on July 22, 2020.

2.2.1 Intended Audience

The stakeholder groups included the following:

- Project Team
- Internal Stakeholders
- Steering Committee

2.2.2 Marketing Techniques

Representatives were contacted directly, therefore no marketing techniques were used for this engagement activity.

2.2.3 Analysis

Data from the Stakeholder Poll was analyzed for the following indicators:

- Most popular proposed sites (count)
- Most popular site criteria (count)
- Thematic analysis of reasoning offered for inclusion of certain criteria over others

2.2.4 What We Heard

Through an online polling exercise, participants identified and ranked the most important criteria and project considerations, allowing each site to be assessed against:

- Centrally located
- Master plan suitability
- Site significance
- Venue capacity
- Parking availability
- Connection to active transportation & transit network
- Festival set-up & access
- Terrain
- Security/emergency access
- Site perimeter & crowd safety
- Festival amenability improvements value
- Critical utilities
- Adjacent existing or proposed infrastructure to support festival use
- Accommodation proximity
- Positive neighbourhood impacts
- Negative neighbourhood impacts

The Stakeholder Poll allowed comparative park rankings to be developed and formulated into an overall park scoring matrix. Upon compilation of the poll results and review of the comments provided, the Project Team determine the need for weighting some criteria more heavily than others. The following criteria park rankings were therefore weighted proportionally based how important the criteria were deemed to be in the scoring matrix:

- Available site area
- Potential neighbourhood impacts
- Parking availability
- Ease of site perimeter security
- Nearby supportive infrastructure for festivals

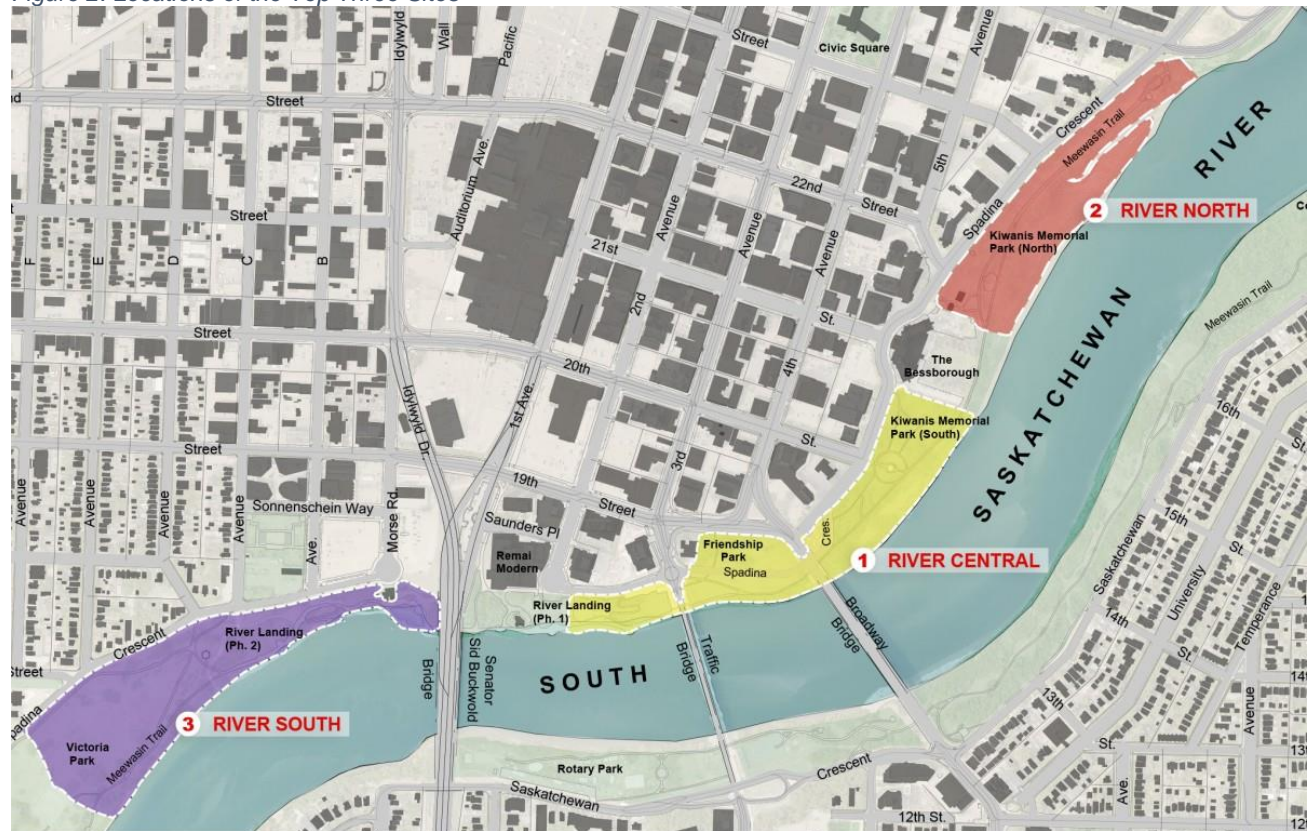
Following further analysis of the results, a clear geographic preference for sites within the River Central zone was evident. The Project Team determined the current site selection process was limiting due to the process only considering the limits/characteristics of individual sites and restricting sites to their respective boundaries. Therefore, a more blended approach was taken to combine the top sites into geographic areas in order to fully capture the diversity of options and locations in the three geographical areas represented in the River Central zone. These areas were further reviewed for ease of access to the following amenities and conditions within a ten-minute walk:

- Links to the future Bus Rapid Transit lines, as well as existing and future transit stops
- Connection to the Meewasin trails
- Bridge crossings
- Public parking (on-street parking and pay lots)
- Accommodations, including the number of hotel rooms and commercial short-term units

The final three sites consisted of:

1. **River Central:** this site extends from River Landing 1 Park Amphitheatre, all the way through Friendship Park and into Kiwanis Memorial Park (South)
2. **River North:** this site extends from Kiwanis Memorial Park (North), from north of The Bessborough to the intersection of 24th Street and Spadina Crescent East
3. **River South:** this site extends through from the Avenue B south entrance into River Landing 2 Park, south into Victoria Park, and ending south of the intersection of 17th Street West and Spadina Crescent West

Figure 2: Locations of the Top Three Sites



2.3 Public Survey

The Project Team and Administration conducted an online survey from September 17th, 2020 to September 28th, 2020. The survey comprised a total of 20 closed- and open-ended questions to seek public input on the following three topics:

1. Which of the three sites do you prefer and why?
2. What should be the criteria for an ideal permanent outdoor festival site?
3. What program elements and features would you want to see?

Respondents were able to write-in an “other” preference for numerous questions and provide explanations for their preferences.

2.3.1 Intended Audience

Participants from all stakeholder groups and the general public were invited to participate in the Public Survey.

2.3.2 Marketing Techniques

A variety of marketing techniques were employed to reach the intended audience.

1. City Website
 - a. Updates to the Engage Page were made to encourage participation
2. Social Media
 - a. The social media campaign ran from September 17th – 28th, 2020 and included Facebook and Twitter posts promoting the survey
3. Digital
 - a. Online banner and display ads were also used, targeted to Saskatoon
4. Email
 - a. Personalized emails were sent to organizations and community members asking them to share the information with their members

2.3.3 Analysis

Participant data was analyzed for the following indicators:

- Most popular proposed sites (count)
- Most popular site criteria (count)
- Most popular site amenities (count)
- Thematic analysis of reasoning offered for inclusion of certain criteria over others

Mixed methods were used to analyze the data. Qualitative methods included the thematic analysis and open coding of responses. Data was also contextualized and analyzed according to stakeholder groups.

2.3.4 What We Heard

A total of 804 respondents participated in the Public Survey. The majority of respondents were residents of Saskatoon (96%), although numerous submissions were provided by residents within

the surrounding communities (3.5%) and beyond (1%). Further to these demographics, the majority of respondents represented private residents/festival attendees (92%), followed by festival workers/volunteers (9%), donors or individuals in the tourism/hospitality sector (7.5%), festival planners (7%), and City employees (3%).


The Public Survey was designed to inform the following engagement goals for the development of the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site:

- Identify options for the location of the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site in Saskatoon
- Ask participants to identify and explain their preferences for site location and criteria to determine barriers, opportunities and trends

Site and criteria preferences that emerged from the online survey included:

Site Criteria

From the general criteria identified by the Project Team, respondents identified the following as being of most importance:

- 
1. Ability to accommodate medium festivals (1,000 to 10,000 people per day)
 2. Have special considerations for transit, rapid transit
 3. Ability to accommodate small festivals (1,000 or less people per day)
 4. Should be usable by general public and informal events when not in use
 5. Ability to accommodate large festivals (10,000 or more people per day)
 6. Ability to accommodate multiple (2-3) small or medium festivals and events at the same time with distance and shared amenities

Comments provided by participants included the following themes:

Accessibility: providing a site that is accessible for individuals with mobility issues

Ecology: the location and site should have limited environmental impact and not infringe on the ecological integrity of the riverbank

Flexible: the site should be flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of events and demands

Flow: the site should not impede on the flow of vehicular, cycling or pedestrian traffic within the downtown core and limit congestion

Limited impacts to residents: the site should have little impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhoods (i.e., noise, congestion, lighting, etc.)

Location: the central location of the site is critical to improve the downtown core and surrounding businesses

Parking: accessibility and functionality is of fundamental importance to numerous respondents

Participants ranked the proposed site-specific criteria as follows:

Table 3: Support for the Proposed Site-Specific Criteria

Site-specific criteria	Support (%)
Connection to active transportation network and pedestrian routes	55
Site capacity: the site accommodates the preferred size of event	45
Parking availability	41
Possible negative impacts	23
Festival setup and access	21
Security/emergency access	19
Access to accommodations	16
Site expansion opportunities	12
Possible positive impacts	11
High value for investment	11
Site perimeter security	8
The criteria are all the same importance	7

Other site-specific criteria identified by participants included landscape considerations, ecological impacts and maximizing developmental areas.

Site Support and Preference

Overall, site preference favored the Site 1: River Central site (43%), followed by Site 3: River South (35%), Site 2: River North (13%) and none of the proposed sites (9%).

Further analysis of support for each of the sites indicated a stronger preference for the River Central site by all demographic groups. The greatest variability existed in the River North Site, which was more favored by festival attendees. Themes from the participants that supported the River Central site are summarized below:

Central location: proximity to the downtown core, close to businesses, parks and accommodations

Ecological impacts: the area is highly congested; steps need to be taken to reduce impacts

Expansion potential: opportunities to expand and produce future upgrades to the site


Safe: the area is open and allows for quick access to emergency respondents

Space: consists of the largest area represented out of the three proposed sites


Transportation: easily accessible for bus, vehicular, bike, and pedestrian traffic

Festival Amenities

Participants identified the most important festival amenities as follows:

- 
1. Permanent utility hook-ups
 2. Zones for temporary concessions, food trucks and merchandise
 3. Permanent washrooms for use only during events
 4. Permanent location for additional temporary washrooms
 5. Temporary spectator seating around stage
 6. Large stage with cover/canopy/partial cover
 7. On-site loading
 8. Headquarters building for festival/event use (fee for service)
 9. Permanent smaller performance areas in addition to main stage area
 10. Backstage area
 11. Permanent ticket booth (fee for service)

Participants identified the most important future public amenities as being:

- 
1. Pedestrian trails throughout/to the site, linking to the Meewasin trail system
 2. On-site bicycle parking (permanent or temporary)
 3. Permanent, year-round public washrooms
 4. Scenic Saskatoon views and backdrops
 5. Children's activity/play area for use during and outside events
 6. Areas for public recreation use during an event
 7. Publicly available boat docks for use during and outside of events

Final Considerations

Numerous comments were provided as final considerations for the project, including the following themes:

Apprehension: participants identified whether this is the best time for this project and whether tax dollars are better spent on other City initiatives

Costs: respondents expressed their concern surrounding the costs associated with the project and the continual upkeep of the site

Impacts: respondents identified numerous potential impacts that warrant further exploration in order to be minimized, including greater noise, light pollution, environmental impacts, increased littering, and residential impacts

Seasonality: participants wondered whether the site will be fully utilized throughout the entire year

Support: the project has the potential to transform Saskatoon, especially the downtown core

Tourism: the site has the potential to act as a hub for the downtown core, connecting sites and surrounding City infrastructure projects

2.4 Close the Loop Workshops

From October 7th, 2020 to October 15th, 2020 a series of five virtual workshops were held with stakeholders to determine the final recommended site.

2.4.1 Intended Audience

The stakeholders that participated in the Closing the Loop Workshops included the following:

- Project Team
- Internal Stakeholders
- Steering Committee
- Select Key Stakeholders

2.4.2 Marketing Techniques

No marketing techniques were employed for these activities. Participating stakeholders were contacted individually by the project leads and meetings were organized.

2.4.3 Analysis

Meeting notes were provided by the project team, which the consultant analyzed further using mixed methods.

2.4.4 What We Heard

A total of 45 stakeholders participated in the Close the Loop Workshops. The workshops were designed to inform the following engagement goals for the development of the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site:

- Validate findings and site preferences with stakeholders
- Determine the level of support for the final location and identify any risks to the success of the project

Each workshop consisted of a summary presentation of the project and public survey results, which was followed by open discussion surrounding three questions shown below. Participants were given the opportunity to respond in open discussion and/or e-mail. Opportunities and red flags that emerged from the online survey included:

1) Does your group have any strong variances from the trends in the shared survey results?

No strong variances were found amongst the participants in regards to the trends identified in the survey results.

2) What are your group's operational challenges for festivals and events currently?

Participants provided examples of some of the most common operational challenges, including:

- Limited access to power/utilities
- Inadequate parking
- Access to public washrooms
- Damages & repairs - to greenspace, pathways, vegetation, soil & turf

- Noise & light pollution
- Garbage & recycling management
- Safety - proximity to the Light House, boat launch, crowds of people, & vehicles in pedestrian areas
- Traffic - congestion, construction, closures, detours & errant vehicles
- Accessibility - wheelchair (especially in Friendship Park), vehicle, pedestrian, cyclists
- Emergency vehicle access (fire, E.M.S. vehicles); too remote or crowded

3) What festival operational opportunities or challenges do you see with the suggested sites?

Participants identified numerous opportunities within the River Central site, which are summarized below by themes:

Artistic impression: for the community and festival visitors

Community programming: there are numerous opportunities for secondary community programming, as well as various festivals to share, plan and work together

Consistency: the site is consistent with existing City plans, including the City Center Plan and Bus Rapid Transit Plan

Expansion: the site connects with the potential expansion onto the Traffic Bridge and Rotary Park

Location: the site utilizes the downtown area which is supported by numerous tourism and festivals within the city, close to amenities (i.e., restaurants, hotels, shopping, businesses, trails, etc.)

Residential impacts: fewer parking impacts on residential neighbourhoods

Seasonality: the site further supports programming throughout all seasons, such as outdoor winter activities

Utilities: have numerous locations for hot & cold running water/sanitization area, eliminating generator use would help reduce noise pollution

Barriers to the River Central site were identified and are summarized below by themes:

Environmental factors: a portion of the site is located in a floodplain and within an active wildlife corridor, noise and light pollution are a major concern for the site especially during peak animal migratory periods

Impacts: on residents and businesses in the surrounding area, including traffic, road closures, and accessibility

Limited parking: a major concern for residents attending events and surrounding homeowners

Old surrounding infrastructure: impacts to significant heritage sites warrants further examination

Road closures: such as the closing of Spadina Crescent West during festival events

Space: limited space available within the area, due to the amount of development and distance from the river

Topography: narrow space, pinch points, steep slopes, limited ramps/stair access

2.5 Stakeholder Meetings

Final Stakeholder Meetings occurred from November 1st, 2020 to December 16th, 2020 and were held to identify any remaining red flags or potential issues with the site selection.

2.5.1 Intended Audience

Meetings were held with representatives from Gabriel Dumont Local #11, Saskatoon Heritage Society and the Kiwanis Club.

2.5.2 Marketing Techniques

No marketing techniques were employed for these activities. Participating stakeholders were contacted individually by the project leads and meetings were organized.

2.5.3 Analysis

Meeting notes were provided by the project team, which the consultant summarized and incorporated into the final report.

2.5.4 What We Heard

The meeting with Gabriel Dumont Local #11 was intended to examine the importance of the Gabriel Dumont monument situated in Friendship Park. It was noted that the statue acts as a gathering place and holds special significance to the cultural identity of Métis people that live in Saskatoon and changes to the monument's location would not be advised. The participants expressed their interest in continuing to be engaged on the project and hope to further enhance community opportunities to celebrate the importance of the Gabriel Dumont statue. It was also noted that various creative and educational opportunities exist within the group to enrich the visitor experience to the site and fulfill the City's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations.

Meetings with the Saskatoon Heritage Society and Kiwanis Club identified the importance of the Vimy Memorial bandshell monument. Along with being an important heritage site for the City, the site serves as a gathering place for demonstrations, festivals and events. It was also noted that the heritage trees located in both Kiwanis Park as well as Friendship Park (marking the historical line of Spadina Crescent West) are protected and should not be impacted by the festival site.

3 Evaluation

Due to the restrictions provided by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the provincial and civic election black out periods, timing of feedback and evaluation measures were consequently restricted. Evaluation is discussed in terms of informal feedback and opportunities for improvement.

3.1 Informal Feedback

All engagement activities for this project were conducted virtually. To mitigate challenges related to conducting inclusive engagement, the project team provided the public with multiple options for providing input (e.g., online, mail, and/or telephone) and were adaptable in regard to potential engagement methods.

Feedback about engagement activities was received informally in surveys and through stakeholder meetings where participants indicated that they appreciated the continued engagement throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants expressed there were some issues with the design of the Public Survey and the amount of time it took to complete. Numerous participants provided their contact information in order to be notified of any updates in the project.

3.2 Data Limitations

Due to the public health orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, all engagement activities for this project were conducted virtually. Online engagement has its limitations in not being as inclusive to those individuals with limited to no internet access, including low-income and some equity groups. Multiple avenues were available to the public for providing input to help mitigate potential issues of inclusivity due to the inability to conduct in-person activities; however, engagement practises and procedures were limited due to the pandemic, especially in conducting physical meetings with individual stakeholders. Additional considerations for low-income and equity groups should be considered further during the Implementation Evaluation Phase.

3.3 Opportunities for Improvement

Based on participant feedback, the following opportunities for improvement will be considered for future engagement events:

- Engagement strategies and activities that incorporate COVID-19 precautions should be developed to optimize engagement during this period
- Steps should be taken to explore virtual options for workshops, which are an important tool for engaging communities
- Considerations for engaging with low-income, Indigenous and equity groups need to be incorporated into future engagement opportunities

Engagement activities were further restricted due to the following:

- Civic and provincial election and corresponding civic blackout periods that halts engagement
- The COVID-19 pandemic and potential to generate stakeholder exhaustion
- Timelines associated with project funding

4 Next Steps

The next steps for development of a Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Feasibility Study are as follows:

- Options Identification for Site Location and Criteria
 - Identify options for the location of the Permanent Outdoor Festival Site in Saskatoon
 - Ask participants to identify and explain their preferences for site location and criteria to determine barriers, opportunities and trends
- Close the Loop
 - Validate findings and site preferences with stakeholders
 - Determine the level of support for the final location and identify any risks to the success of the project

- City Council Report

We Are Here

- Permanent Outdoor Festival Site Feasibility Report presented to City Council in February 2021.