

# URBAN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT  
PHASE 2: PLANNING | MARCH - MAY 2024



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## 1.0 Project Overview

The Urban Centre Redevelopment Plan (UCRP) is an important project for the City of Leduc and the success of the Urban Centre.

The UCRP is a project which will develop a long-range, statutory land use plan (that is: a bylaw approved by Council) that guides revitalization and redevelopment of the Urban Centre, as required by the 2020 Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The Urban Centre Redevelopment Plan will provide a long-term vision for the future of the Urban Centre. The Plan will provide guidance on future land use and form in the area, phasing of redevelopment, urban design, and character, and will include an implementation plan to direct this work. Initially, this includes considerations for infrastructure upgrading, capital improvements and any required changes to the Land Use Bylaw that will help direct future development.

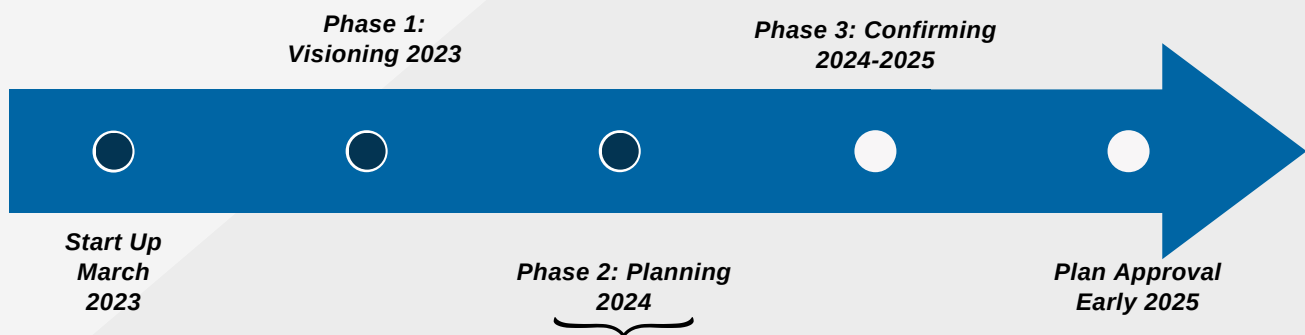
This project has widespread influence on many stakeholders including interest groups, subject matter experts within the organization, City of Leduc residents and users of the Urban Centre and its amenities. Due to this influence, a key component of the project is public engagement. The approach for this project is to build and gain insight and feedback from these stakeholders in the community and within the organization.

## 1.1 Engagement Summary and Findings

As part of the UCRP Public Engagement Plan, a thorough engagement process was identified as important to offer the community and other stakeholders' opportunities to provide input and learn about the UCRP project.

This project includes three phases. The first phase occurred from March to July 2023 and focused on the visioning for the area. The following engagement activities were completed in Phase 1:

- Engaged with internal and external stakeholders through one-on-one meetings;
- Hosted two in-person public open houses to engage in discussion with the Project Team, learn about the UCRP, and provide feedback at the onset of the project;
- Offered an online survey to gather the participant's experience, high-level issues, visions, and goals for the Urban Centre; and
- Updated Council on Phase 1 of public engagement on June 12, 2023, following the What We Heard Report on August 21, 2023.



**This What We Heard Report is a summary of the results from Phase 2: Planning.**



## 1.2 PHASE 2: PLANNING

The objectives of the second phase of engagement are to:

**Confirm the vision, goals and objectives guided by the Visioning Phase and create policies that will help achieve these goals and objectives.**

**Identify and evaluate feedback and alternatives on major themes that will influence policy direction.**



**Gather input on draft plan components including the draft policy framework.**

**Ensure existing and future users of the area are provided with an opportunity to influence the outcome of the plan.**



## 2.0 Who We Engaged, When and How

The Project Team conducted engagement activities from March to May 2024, including the following:

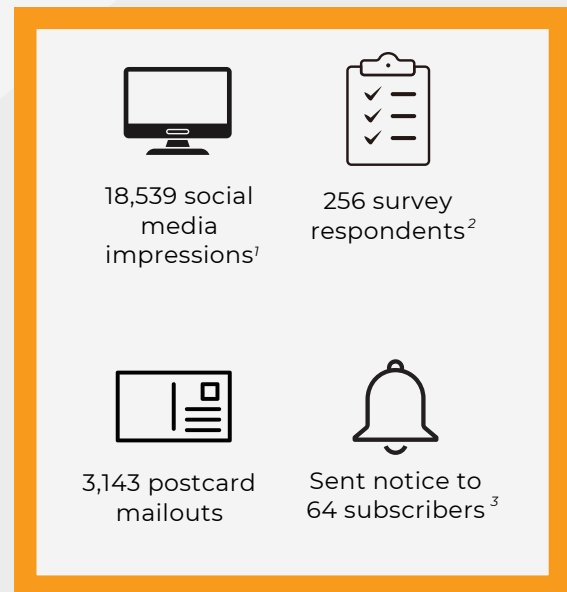
- **Online public survey** from March 4 to April 1 including social media posts from March 5 to 26.
- **External stakeholder circulation** of the draft policy framework including a targeted survey to business operators, business owners, commercial property owners, land developers and commercial realtor from April to May 2024.

Public engagement was advertised through the City of Leduc social media platforms, on the City's website, postcards, and newspaper ads.

Given the level of content needed to be shared in Phase 2, a public open house was deemed not as effective compared to a public survey for collecting and compiling the necessary input. Instead, the Project Team were available for one-on-one meetings at the request of any members of the public to address any questions; however, no in-person meetings were requested.

The Project Team used different methods and activities to advertise and engage the public to ensure it is inclusive and accessible to all ages, abilities, and underrepresented groups. Some examples of this include:

- Providing project updates and public survey link to the email subscribers;
- Emailing external stakeholders (e.g., business associations, developers, non-profit organizations, Youth Council, etc.);
- Offering physical copies of the online survey for those who may not have internet access;
- Available for one-on-one meetings at the request of any public member or stakeholder;
- Advertising public engagement through social media platforms, on the City's website, through postcards (sent out to residents within the study area), as well as in the newspaper;
- Responding to direct questions and emails sent to the Project Team and providing feedback via email. The email provided via the project's website is available for the entire of project; and
- Opportunity to subscribe to the UCRP mailing list to receive project updates.



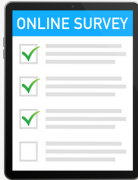
*1- Impressions is an estimated calculation of the post's frequency displayed in the feed or search results that may have been seen by a user.*

*2- Increase in 103 respondents from phase 1 survey.*

*3- Increase in 35 subscribers from phase 1.*

### 3.0 What We Asked

The engagement first informed stakeholders on what we heard through the first phase of engagement including components of the draft plan developed based on previous feedback.



#### 3.1 Online Survey

The online survey was open to the public from March 4 to April 1, 2024, consisting of multiple choice, prioritization, and short answer questions. The survey presented the following three components of the draft plan developed based on previous feedback from Phase 1.

Survey Components	What We Asked
<p><b>Vision:</b> an aspirational statement that describes what we want the Urban Centre to be like in 20 years.</p>	<p>State the level of agreement with the revised vision statement to capture what you want the Urban Centre to become in 20 years.</p>
<p><b>Guiding principles:</b> overarching concepts with objectives stating how they will be achieved.</p>	<p>Prioritize each guiding principles and objective in order of importance from where (1) is most important to you and each number thereafter is less important than the one before.</p>
<p><b>Themes:</b> topics that will influence policy direction.</p>	<p>Choose the option that best describes the changes you want to see considering the trade-offs involved.</p>

#### 3.2 External Stakeholder Engagement

An external stakeholder survey was included in the external referral for business operators, business owners, commercial property owners, land developers and commercial realtors. The survey consisted of multiple choice and short answer questions with the following questions asked:



- Do you have a business in the Urban Centre?
- What are the reasons for choosing or not choosing to locate within the Urban Centre?
- What factors would best support your current business needs?
- What types of businesses would be successful and bring pedestrian traffic and vitality to the Urban Centre?
- What types of commercial spaces and tenant needs do you expect considering emerging trends and evolving consumer preferences?
- What factors would support or incentivize development/redevelopment?

## 4.0 What We Heard

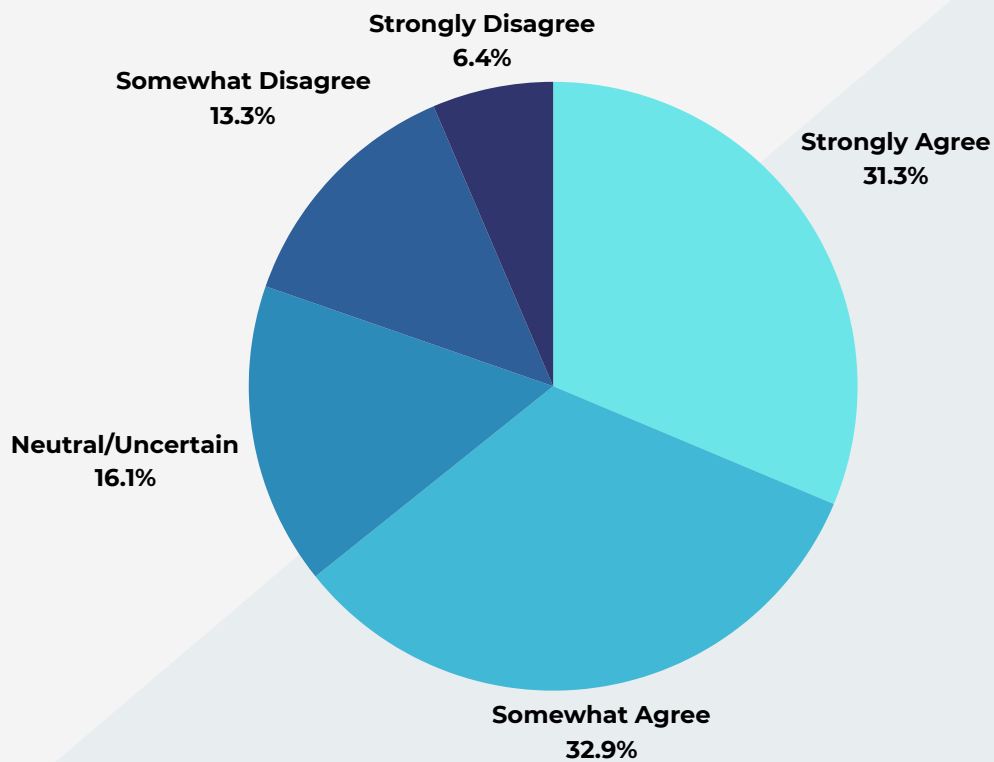
### 4.1 ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey consisted of three main components developed based on previous engagement feedback. Some of the key takeaways from each of the components of the survey are summarized below. A detailed summary is provided in the Appendix.

#### Vision

The first component asked the public to rate the level of agreement with the following draft vision statement:

*“Leduc’s Urban Centre is an accessible, safe, and inclusive space. It offers diverse housing and business opportunities, celebrates local heritage, facilitates gatherings, and provides access to natural, cultural, and recreational amenities. Showcasing high quality urban design and multi-modal transportation connections, the Urban Centre welcomes residents and visitors to experience this vibrant locale that is designed for all.”*



#### Summary

The majority of respondents believe the draft vision captures what they want the future of the Urban Centre to look like. These results confirm that the draft vision is on track to continue to guide the plan. Some respondents suggested clarification on some of the terminology used in the vision statement, therefore, we will ensure some plain language or definitions are provided.



## Guiding Principles

The second component presented the eight (8) guiding principles that establish the framework to guide the development of policies for achieving the vision. Each guiding principle has underlying objectives to specify how we expect to achieve these principles.

These guiding principles have been ranked below from most important (1) to less important for each number thereafter. A full list of the guiding principles with the underlying objectives prioritized can be found in Appendix.

- 1. RECOGNIZE, RESPECT, AND PRIORITIZE CHARACTER, CULTURE, AND HISTORY.**
- 2. ATTRACT A VARIETY OF BUSINESSES, SERVICES, AND USES.**
- 3. PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPROPRIATE REDEVELOPMENT AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT.**
- 4. DIVERSIFY HOUSING OPTIONS.**
- 5. ACTIVATE THE PUBLIC REALM.**
- 6. PROMOTE AND INGRAIN LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY.**
- 7. STRENGTHEN THE IDENTITY AND SENSE OF PLACE.**
- 8. ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY WITHIN AND BETWEEN POLICY AREAS.**



### Summary

The prioritization of the guiding principles helps us identify what is important to residents when considering redevelopment and its policies. These results reflect the need to recognize the uniqueness of the Urban Centre such as Main Street and its history; identify ways to attract more diverse businesses; and recognize that redevelopment and density are needed to support the viability and vitality of the Urban Centre in the long term. These guiding principles are not mutually exclusive and should support one another.

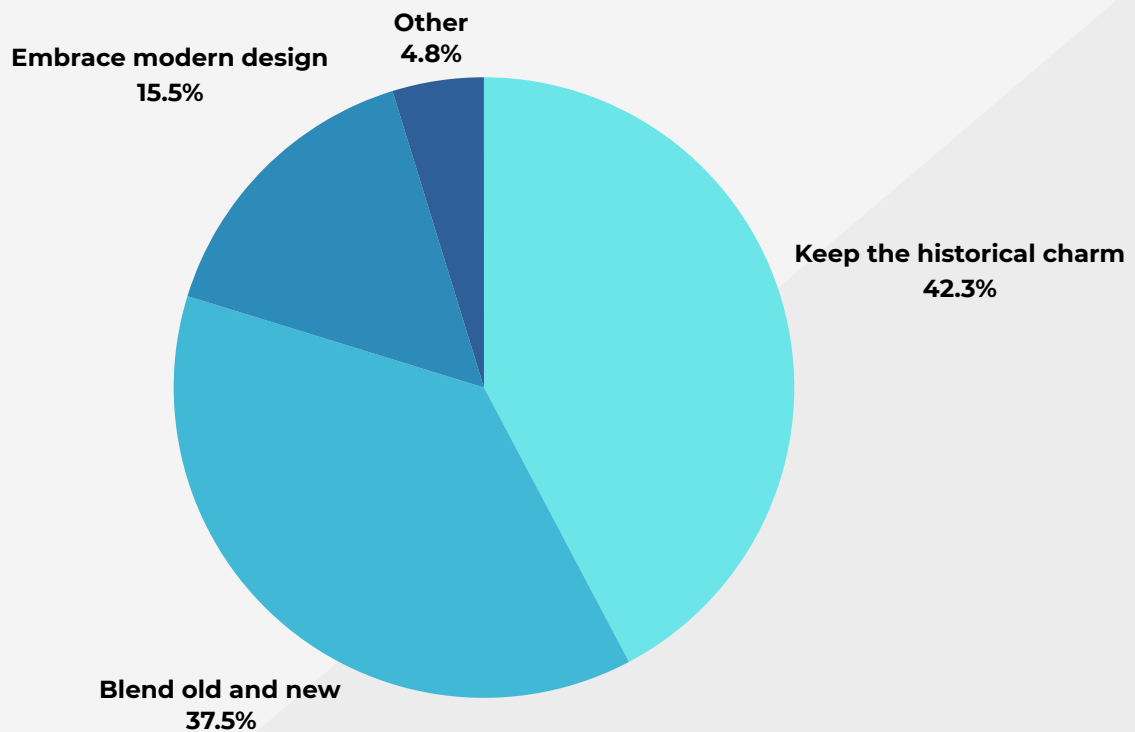
## Themes

The last component was to share four key themes the Project Team identified, to influence policy direction and guide the future redevelopment of the Urban Centre. Options were provided to best describe the level of comfort and changes the public wished to see while considering the trade-offs involved. The description of each option is detailed in Appendix.

### Theme #1: Urban Design for Main Street (50 Avenue east of 52 Street)

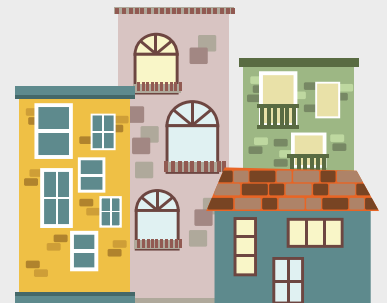
Survey question: We heard that the Urban Centre has a history that needs to be recognized, “valued and displayed more”. The “historical downtown adds charm and personality” and there needs to be a “higher quality of architecture used for future development”.

When thinking about the appearance of future buildings and redevelopment along Main Street, what would you most like to see (select one):



### Summary

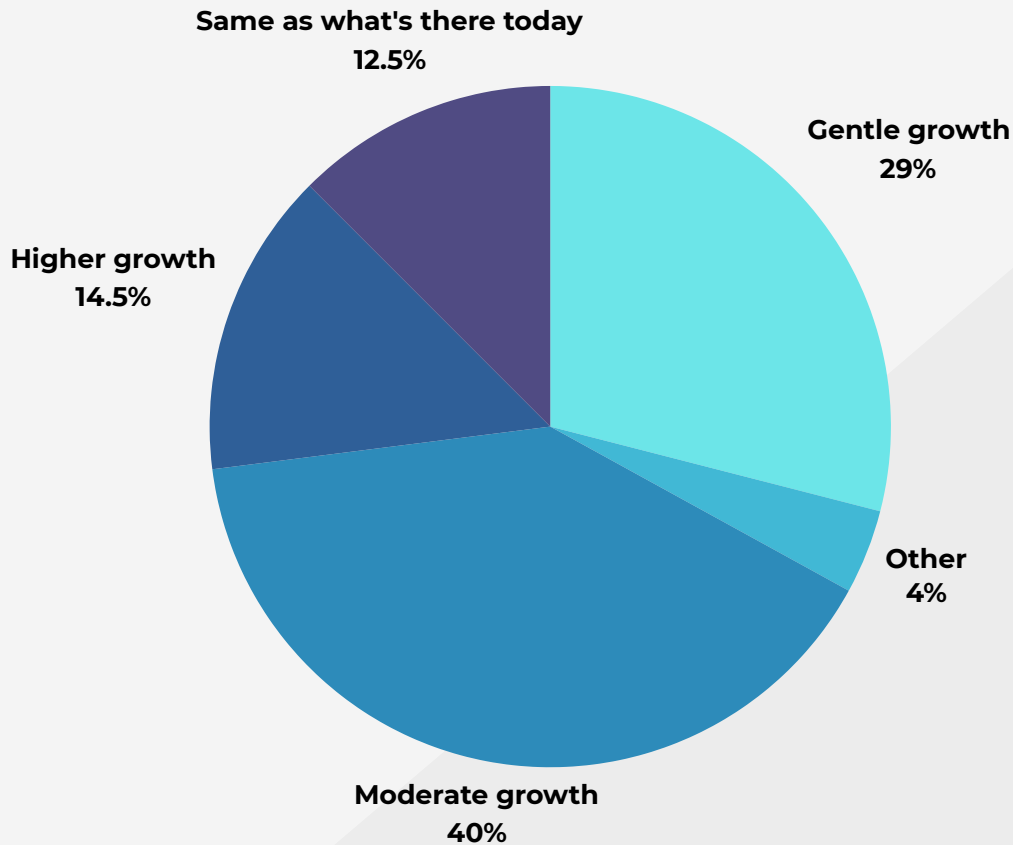
We know there could be challenges and additional costs to preserving older buildings but these results show a desire to keep the historical charm along Main Street. Policies for redevelopment along and surrounding Main Street will need to consider the context of the area and be appropriate in design, size and scale. It will be equally important to support flexibility and innovation through design to support redevelopment. However, there may be other means to recognize the history of the area rather than preserving the built form.



## Theme #2 Housing Options and Affordability

Survey question: We heard that the Urban Centre has a low population density, and we need “opportunities for better housing mix”, to “provide more adequate housing and social services” and that the “design of new developments needs to consider overall neighbourhood size and scale”. Increasing residential density is one way to provide a wider variety of housing types, while increasing overall affordability.

As redevelopment occurs, what housing types do you want to see in the Urban Centre (select all that apply):



### Summary

Moderate growth with varied housing mix from secondary suites to low-rise apartments up to 4 storeys, and rentals to seniors housing are desired and would lead to an increase in population and activity in the Urban Centre. Some respondents support gentle growth, while some support higher growth, therefore, there should be a spectrum of density based on appropriate locations for consideration.

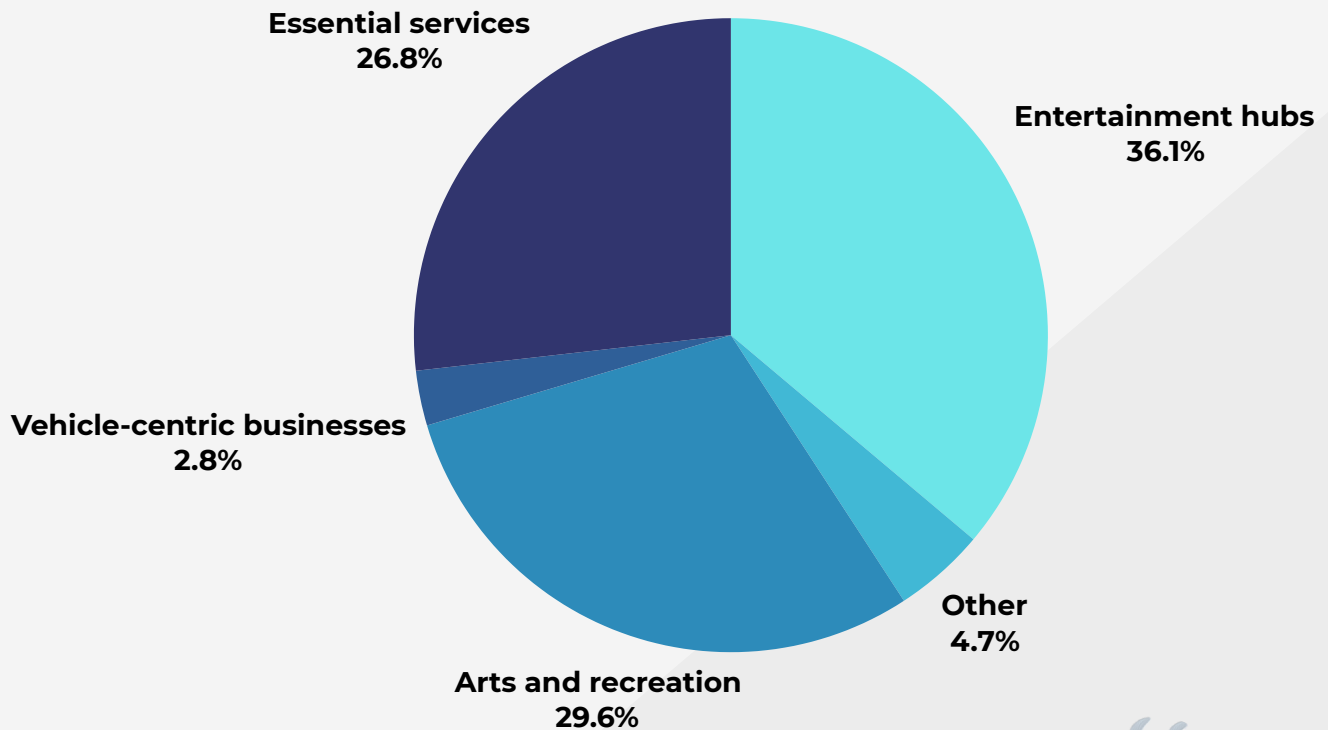




### Theme #3: Diversity of Businesses, Goods and Services

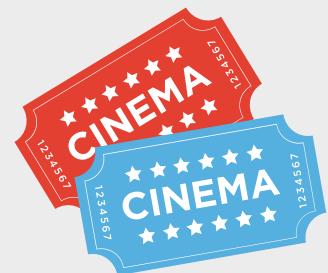
Survey question: We heard that the Urban Centre needs to support local businesses and offer a diversity of goods and services including “nightlife and extended business hours”, “more restaurants”, and “opportunities for the youth to have places to shop and have fun”.

What types of businesses and services would you prioritize in the Urban Centre (select all that apply)?



#### Summary

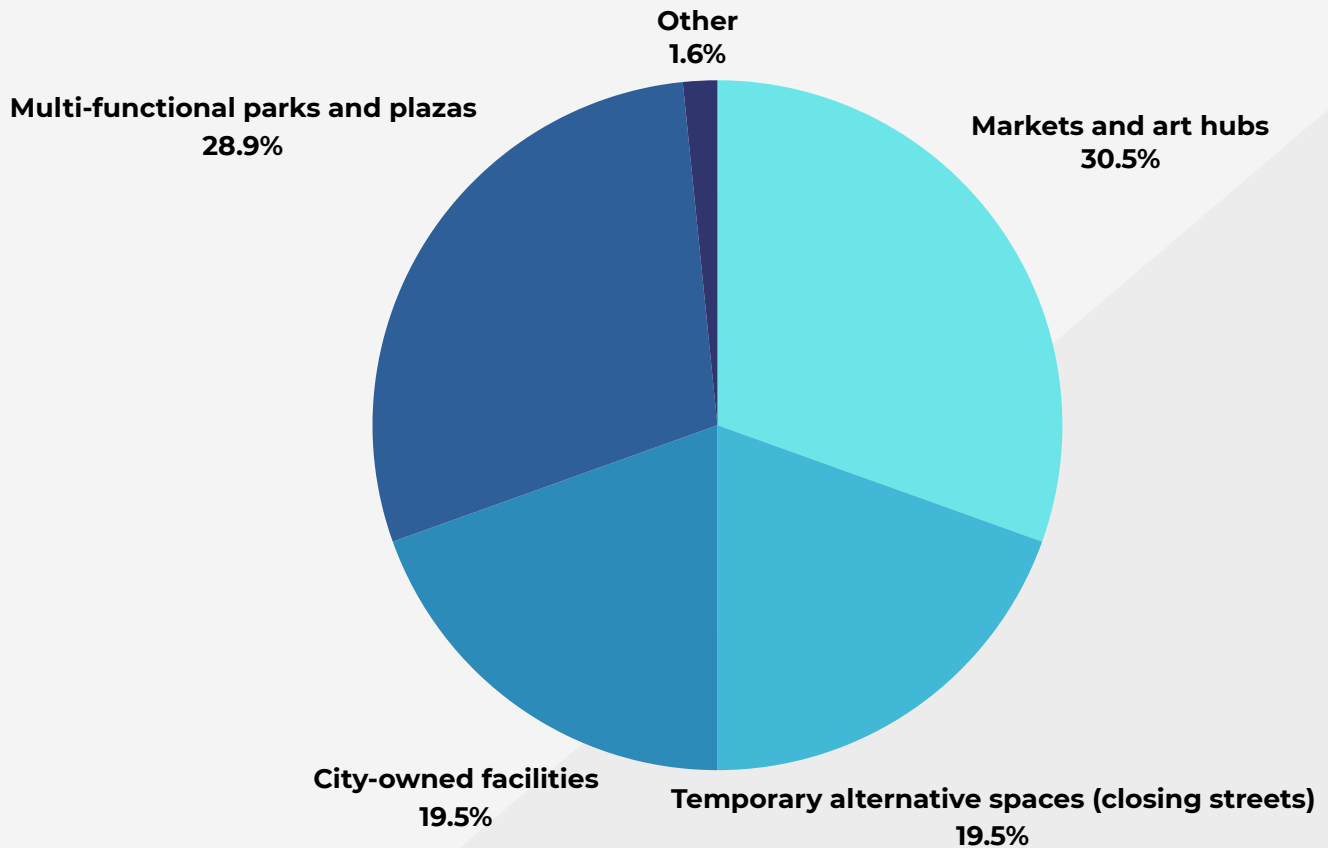
Existing commercial areas in the Urban Centre were designed to have a large footprint for big box stores or strip malls designed around parking. Respondents show less desire for this style of development and desire for more diverse businesses including entertainment hubs and arts and recreation that support community connections in close proximity. We can look at identifying areas and policies to support these desired commercial nodes and uses.



## Theme #4: Events and Gathering Spaces

Survey question: We heard that the Urban Centre should provide places that “give the feeling of ‘I want to be here’”, “need more opportunities for youth to gather”, and “more indoor/sheltered gathering spaces”.

What types of events and gathering spaces would you prioritize in the Urban Centre (select all the apply):



### Summary

There is a moderate balance between the types of events and gathering spaces that people desire. However, these options vary in cost to the municipality and will need to be taken into consideration for implementation. We should look to encourage multi-functional parks and plazas to ensure multiple groups and users are able to equally enjoy these recreational and public amenities.

## 4.2 External Stakeholder Engagement

During the email circulation of the draft policy framework and policy map, the Project Team received general support for the plan given the policies as written appear to be aspirational and high-level. However, specific comments were provided and have been summarized below:

- When referring to the screening of surface parking lots, suggest using “encourage” rather than “require” avoiding generalization or misinterpretation of policy.
- When referring to the burying of overhead powerlines, clarity is needed to outline how the policy will be encouraged and who would initiate and pay for these relocations (e.g. cost-sharing model).
- Clearly define planning terminology used in the plan to ensure understanding, and clarity and avoid misinterpretation, including but not limited to these terms: servicing studies, open space, green space, historic character and the various land uses identified on the future land use concept map.

An external stakeholder survey was included in the referral package sent to business owners/operators, commercial property owners, landowners and commercial realtors. Only two completed surveys were received. A general summary of the responses is provided below, and the details are in Appendix:

- Urban Centre is a desired location for businesses as it provides a central location, convenience, sense of community and high visibility for vehicles and pedestrian traffic.
- The following factors would best support current business needs:
  - Internal factors (e.g., more capital) and external factors (e.g., favourable economic conditions, governments grants/programs).
- The following factors would best support development/redevelopment in the Urban Centre:
  - Internal factors (e.g., more capital, understanding of land development process) and external factors (e.g., favourable economic conditions, low interest rates, market certainty, government grants/programs).
  - Reduced regulatory barriers (e.g., flexible development regulations, faster approval timelines).
- The following types of businesses would be successful in the Urban Centre: tourism, destination, specifically niche businesses, medical, service and retail.
- The future of commercial real estate and evolving consumer preferences may include the following: less demand for larger retail space with more businesses co-locating together and sharing storefronts; more remote work and co-working space; and repurposing of existing buildings to attract different commercial uses.



## 5.0 What Happens Next

Now that the Phase 2 engagement has wrapped up and the project is moving forward to the final phase - Phase 3: Confirming. The Project Team will be focused on incorporating the input - and where relevant – include them in the plan, and finalizing the policies and implementation sections.

Phase 3 will include more public engagement starting in Q3 of 2024. This will include gathering input from the public and stakeholders on the final draft plan as a whole, completing legislated plan referrals and presenting to City Council for a decision anticipated in Q2 of 2025. Once adopted, City staff will start implementing the plan.





# APPENDIX





## Survey

### Vision

General comments received included clarification on some of the terminology used in the vision statement, and more emphasis on safety, green space, community amenities, and quality of services.

### Guiding Principles

Survey respondents were asked to rank the eight guiding principles and each objective within them from most important (1) to less important for each number thereafter. The ranking results are shown below:

#### **1. Recognize, respect, and prioritize character, culture, and history**

- a. Preserve and enhance sites with cultural or historical significance.
- b. Recognize, represent, and celebrate Leduc's culture and history.
- c. Encourage development and adaptive reuse that respects, integrates, and complements existing and emerging character, culture, and historical significance.
- d. Prioritize opportunities for diverse cultural representation and reconciliation.

#### **2. Attract a variety of businesses, services, and uses**

- a. Support a diversity of businesses, services, and uses that meet the daily, social, and experiential needs of residents and visitors.
- b. Explore opportunities for events, recreation, arts, and entertainment.
- c. Encourage opportunities for businesses to activate open spaces and enhance interaction with the public realm.

#### **3. Provide opportunities for appropriate redevelopment and infill development**

- a. Encourage innovative urban design that prioritizes quality, safety, accessibility, and inclusivity.
- b. Ensure redevelopment and infill is sensitive to the size and scale of the neighbourhood.
- c. Support compatible uses along edges of policy areas to ensure a smooth transition of uses.

#### **4. Diversify housing options**

- a. Increase availability of adequate, affordable, and suitable housing units.
- b. Encourage a variety of housing options for both renters and owners.
- c. Create opportunities for a range of housing types, sizes, and densities.

#### **5. Activate the public realm**

- a. Increase pedestrian traffic within the Urban Centre.
- b. Encourage a mix of active and passive recreational uses, including options for year-round recreation.
- c. Enhance accessibility and functionality of parks and open spaces.
- d. Create opportunities to install functional or interactive public art.

#### **6. Promote and ingrain long-term sustainability**

- a. Protect and enhance natural environmental features.
- b. Encourage a range of commercial uses to increase and broaden economic investment opportunities.
- c. Prioritize sustainable design elements and processes.
- d. Encourage a range of residential opportunities for accessible and equitable housing options across the housing continuum.

## 7. Strengthen the identity and sense of place

- a. Encourage the Urban Centre to be celebrated as a welcoming, inclusive, and safe space.
- b. Support and enhance the community-focused atmosphere through elements of urban design and communication tools, marketing, and advertising.
- c. Emphasize appeal and attraction of significant landmarks.
- d. Create destinations that draw residents and visitors regionally and globally.

## 8. Enhance connectivity within and between policy areas

- a. Ensure key destinations are accessible by and connected to a variety of transportation options.
- b. Prioritize opportunities to improve existing and create new transit, pedestrian, and bicycle linkages.
- c. Prioritize active transportation options throughout the Urban Centre.

General comments received about the guiding principles included the need for consideration for the environment and emergency preparedness in light of global climate change, tax minimization, increase in public transportation availability, increase in public safety and cleanliness, and reduction in traffic congestion.

## Themes

These are the detailed descriptions of each option for the public survey are outlined below:

### Urban Design for Main Street (50 Ave east of 52 St)

1. **Keep the historical charm:** Maintain the 2-storey building height for new and existing developments. Focus on the historical look and prioritize renovation over demolition. Potential barriers for growth and redevelopment due to inflexibility, lack of expertise in heritage design and restoration, and increased building cost to retrofit existing buildings.
2. **Blend old and new:** Allow up to 4-storey buildings with pedestrian-scale design, a mix of historical and modern elements that support flexibility and innovation. Consider how the building fits within the context of the area.
3. **Embrace modern design:** Explore other ways to display the history of Leduc instead of preserving physical structures. Support growth and focus on new, modern buildings with unique architecture, including sustainable building design. Allow a mix of commercial and residential uses that would provide a wider variety of commercial and residential opportunities and diversified tax base.
4. **Other:** Comment from survey respondents:
  - Blend old and new but limited to 3 stories
  - Research 1881 district in Chilliwack
  - Agree with #3 but cap on height
  - Maintain current ambience, cleaning sidewalks and painting of the exterior are needed
  - Some buildings not recognizable as historic. Favour new builds having architectural interest more than just a square box.

## Housing Options and Affordability

1. **The same as what's there today:** Maintain the current low-density housing without any new housing additions. Potential for fewer people in the core, more development on the edges of Leduc, less economic activity downtown, and high property maintenance costs.
2. **Gentle growth:** Maintain the character and feel but allow small additions like suites and duplexes that respect and complement existing residential neighbourhoods.
3. **Moderate growth:** Introduce varied housing forms like suites, duplexes, townhomes, and low-rise apartments up to 4 storeys. This would create a moderate housing mix and provide more rental options, affordable housing, and seniors housing, all leading to increased population and activity in the Urban Centre.
4. **Higher growth:** Support various building heights and housing forms including suites, duplexes, multi-unit housing, and apartments over 5 storeys. This would significantly increase the housing mix and provide a variety of rental and ownership options, affordable housing, and seniors housing, in addition to mixed-use buildings with commercial on the ground floor. Growth at this scale would draw more people, provide residential options for people of varying ages and abilities, and increase the level of activity in the Urban Centre.
5. **Other:** Comment from survey respondents:
  - Create safer downtown before considering redevelopment
  - Build beautiful buildings
  - Consider housing options for low-income or temporary housing options for homeless/addicts
  - Need to develop housing that is attractive to higher income households to bring positive impact on businesses and foster new ones
  - Apartments above business spaces, townhouses with lots of amenities within walking distance

## Diversity of Businesses, Goods and Services

1. **Essential services:** Health and personal services (massage, nail and hair salons), daycares, and professional offices (banks, accountants, law firms, co-working space).
2. **Entertainment hubs:** Sports pubs, local bars and restaurants, amusement arcades, pool halls, and theatres to liven up the area and create a destination but might bring increased noise and traffic to the area.
3. **Arts and recreation:** Music and arts classes, art galleries, fitness and yoga studios that foster social connections for all ages and abilities.
4. **Vehicle-centric businesses:** Big box stores with large parking lots, gas stations, and drive-through service. May result in less efficient use of land and construction of surface parking lots.
5. **Other:** Comment from survey respondents:
  - Homeowners do not want extended hours of alcohol consumption next door
  - Create safer downtown before considering any redevelopment
  - Cafes with patios, shops, book stores, boutiques, health markets, arts and recreation
  - Mix of arts and entertainment. Internet café or similar.
  - Quality retail – unique, artisanal, true boutique, small scale locally owner and operated businesses
  - Downtown to stay open later and more advertisement needed
  - No bars, pool hall, or new vehicle centric businesses



## Events and Gathering Spaces

1. **City-owned facilities:** Public libraries, rental venues for special events, with options to expand or renovate existing facilities like Telford House or the Grain Elevator.
2. **Temporary alternative spaces:** Temporarily closing streets for events and activating underutilized public-private parking lots or alleyways for different uses.
3. **Markets and art hubs:** Formal spaces for farmers markets, food halls, event space, or art hubs, potentially redeveloping existing spaces to activate them as gathering spaces (e.g., Alex Arena).
4. **Multi-functional parks and plazas:** Casual outdoor gathering spaces with amenities like benches, picnic tables and shelters, amphitheatres, dog parks, and playgrounds for year-round public use.
5. **Other:** Comment from survey respondents:
  - Telford house needs massive update and inclusive to people who aren't retired
  - Treasure Telford Lake and create gardens, parks of beauty. Telford House area is home to many non-human species and various of insects.
  - Gatherings can prove to be noisy for long periods of time therefore affect residents quality of life.
  - Multiple uses for public spaces is important and fosters pride in public domain creating appreciation for its size and ability to accommodate diverse uses.
  - Nice to have more outdoor café/coffee shops/restaurants in downtown Leduc in the summer.

## Survey Demographics

### New and recurring participants:

- 73 survey respondents completed the first survey.
- 5 attended the first public open house.
- 94 survey respondents participated for the first time.

**Where do you live?** Urban Centre (11%); Leduc but outside the Urban Centre (83%); Edmonton Region (2%); Other (4%).

**Do you own a business or work in the Urban Centre?** Yes (14%); No (86%).

**What is your age?** 18-29 (8%); 30-45 (37%); 46-64 (32%); 65+ (23%).

**How did you learn about the survey?** Social media (64%); City of Leduc website (8%); UCRP email list (8%); Postcard mail out (10%); Word of mouth (2%); Other (7%).