



ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

WHAT WE HEARD
REPORT (PHASE ONE)
An overview of the
project, engagement
activities, range of input
received and the themes
that were raised in phase
one.



Environment Strategy

Stakeholder Report Back: What we Heard (Phase 1)

July 9, 2019

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Project overview

Council was presented with a Notice of Motion related to an Environment Strategy and action plan with the goal of establishing a long-term vision for the environment in Calgary. Recommendations included assessing current and future environmental risks, providing citizens with a higher quality products and services, and ensuring Calgary remains an economically competitive and attractive Smart City.

The project was soft launched at the 2019 Mayor's Environment Expo to allow for the timely engagement of youth.

Engagement overview

Engagement with students attending the 2019 Mayor's Environment Expo (The Expo) focused on developing a vision for Calgary's environmental future. It was intended for this engagement to set the tone for the Environment Strategy and provide a foundation for the next phase of engagement with other groups.

Students attending The Expo signed up for one of nine scheduled workshops or three drop-in workshops. For each workshop, a facilitator led the engagement while a graphic recorder visually captured the outpouring of ideas onto canvas so that students could see their ideas come to life right in front of their eyes. Over 250 students participated in the engagement workshops.

An email was sent to teachers attending The Expo with their students inviting them to register their students for one of the nine Environment Strategy workshops. A schedule was also provided at The Expo explaining the drop-in workshop schedule for students who were unable to register.

The Expo occurred June 4, 5 and 6, 2019. The workshop schedule for each day was:

- Workshop #1, 10 AM – 10:45 AM
- Workshop #2, 11 AM – 11:45 AM
- Drop-in, 12:15 PM – 12:45 PM
- Workshop #3, 1 PM – 1:45 PM

What we asked

Questions focused on understanding students' views of Calgary's current environmental state (likes and dislikes), their dreams/wishes for the future of our environment and their ideas of who could help achieve their dreams and how they would feel if their dreams were realized.

For a full list of questions asked at the workshops, refer to [Appendix A](#).

For a list of the *aspects of the environment* that were referenced during the workshops, refer to [Appendix B](#).



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What we heard

Each workshop was facilitated, with two scribes transcribing students' comments. The comments were reviewed to generate themes. Written notes of the comments were supplementary to the graphic recordings from each workshop. Graphic recordings are visuals that capture the conversation from each workshop. These are included in [Appendix C](#).

Themes in detail focused on:

- The environment is an important resource for other things in our lives, including food, water, shelter, sources of energy, and medical remedies.
- We are depleting environmental resources and should take action to replenish what we have used.
- We are rooted in the environment. It is our source of life, and sense of place and belonging.
- We have a symbiotic relationship with the environment and should continue to respect and honour our interconnectedness. The environment needs and takes from us as much as we need and take from it.
- There is beauty in our environment, including the smells, sounds, colors and textures.
- Make thoughtful, creative and proactive changes to improve the health of the environment because the decisions we make today affect our future.
- While we all have a responsibility to improve the health of the environment, government should lead by working with people, creating policies/rules and supporting environmental initiatives.
- Achieving the dream for a healthier environment would elicit feelings of pride, joy and a sense of peace.

For a detailed summary of the input that was provided, please see the [Summary of Input](#) section.

Next steps

Themes and graphic recordings from this engagement will be shared with the project team to be incorporated into the visioning for Calgary's Environment Strategy and action plan. These themes are being used to set the tone for the next phase of engagement which is still in development as the project team further refines the project charter.

Summary of Input

The chart below outlines eight themes. Each theme is supported by an explanation and supporting comments. Supporting comments are scribed notes of the comments shared by students at the various workshops. City staff attempted to capture verbatim comments from students where possible. Comments captured by scribes were supplementary to graphic recordings drawn on each day of The Expo.

Category	Theme	Explanation and supporting comments
Why the environment is important	Environment is a resource for other things	<p>This theme focused on how the environment is an important resource for other things in our lives, including food, water, shelter, sources of energy, and medical remedies.</p> <p><i>'It creates food – seeds to make food and plants for medicine can be found in nature.'</i></p> <p><i>'trees because they give oxygen, give paper, give shade'</i></p> <p><i>'Gives us energy to have light...'</i></p>
	Environment is a source of life	<p>This theme focused on how people are rooted in the environment. It speaks to how it is our source of life, and how the environment gives us a sense of place and belonging.</p> <p><i>'it's our whole existence - it if dies - we die too'</i></p> <p><i>'I love myself' (because I am part of the environment)</i></p> <p><i>'We need it to live and if we destroy it we destroy our place to live.'</i></p>
	Value enjoyment and beauty in the environment	<p>Beauty in our environment, including the smells, sounds, colors and textures was another theme that was noted.</p> <p><i>'Plants make things smell nice. I like blue flowers'</i></p> <p><i>'All the forest fire smoke blacks out the sun and affects how flowers grow in the garden.'</i></p> <p><i>'Watching animals is nice and they depend on nature to survive and are different.'</i></p> <p><i>'different scents - after it rains'</i></p>
Wish for the future	Replenish resources	<p>This theme focused on the depletion of environmental resources and how we should take action to replenish what we have used. It noted that we are sometimes</p>



		<p>wasteful and should be more mindful of how we use these resources.</p> <p><i>'man made environments grow faster than natural environment'</i></p> <p><i>'We are being unresourceful with our natural resources - not putting things in the right place for waste and using too many natural resources'</i></p>
	<p>Respect mutually beneficial relationship between people and the environment</p>	<p>This theme noted how we have a symbiotic relationship with the environment and should continue to respect and honour how people and the environment are connected. It relayed how the environment needs and takes from us as much as we need and take from it.</p> <p><i>'we're not the only ones using it - we have to share it'</i></p> <p><i>'WE are ALL from the environment'</i></p> <p><i>'A balance with nature'</i></p> <p><i>'Interconnected system – if we don't have the environment we don't have animals and if we don't have animals then we go "kaboom".'</i></p>
	<p>Make thoughtful changes</p>	<p>This theme focused on the desire to make thoughtful, creative and proactive changes to improve the health of the environment because the decisions that are made today greatly affect our future.</p> <p><i>'We are not leaving enough undisturbed land for plants and animals and preserving biodiversity'</i></p> <p><i>'The decisions we make will affect our future'</i></p> <p><i>'people should listen and put thought into changes'</i></p> <p><i>'We don't help the environment as much as we talk about it!'</i></p>
<p>Who can help</p>	<p>Government is a leader</p>	<p>This theme noted that while we all have a responsibility to improve the health of the environment, government should lead by working with people, creating policies/rules and supporting environmental initiatives.</p> <p><i>'government can help by making rules for people to follow - make new laws'</i></p> <p><i>'the government funding environmental initiatives'</i></p> <p><i>'The government to put in place policy to make it happen'</i></p>

		<i>'Government should ask people what they think.'</i>
Feelings of achievement	Feel pride and peace if the dream comes true	<p>This theme addressed how achieving the dream for a healthier environment would elicit feelings of pride, joy and a sense of peace.</p> <p><i>'proud, for what I've done to make it happen'</i> <i>'people should be aware - the littlest things will make the biggest difference'</i> <i>'weight off my shoulders'</i></p>



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Appendix A

Engagement Questions (kindergarten to grade 3)

- When you think about the planet and the air we breathe, the land around us, the water in our rivers and streams, the plants and animals, etc. what do you love most about the environment?
 - **Why do you love this?**
- When you think about the planet and the air we breathe, land, water, etc. what don't you love about the environment? Why?
- If you think about the things you didn't like about the environment, what do you think we can do to fix that?
 - **If you could make any wish for the environment, what would it be?**

Who do you think could help make your wishes for the environment come true?

Engagement Questions (grade 4 – 9)

- Why is the environment important?
- When you think about the aspects of the environment (the air we breathe, the land around us, the water in our rivers and streams, the plants and animals, etc.) what do you like? Tell us more about that. How does that aspect make you feel?
- When you think about the environment what concerns you? Tell us more about that. How does that aspect make you feel?
- **What aspect of the environment do you wish was different (for you, your family, your community, your city)?**
 - Why is it important to you that this be different?
- **What is your ultimate dream for the future of the environment?**
 - Who needs to be involved for your ultimate dream to come true?

Appendix B

Aspects of Environment (and definitions)

Natural Environment – everything on earth that is not made by a person. It includes plants, animals, rivers, ponds, hills, mountains and prairies. It does not include buildings, bridges, roads, pathways, and playgrounds.

Biodiversity – all the different kinds of animals and plants, and all the different places they live on land and in water.

Land – all of the earth's surface that is not covered by water. It includes open spaces and parks, roads and pathways, as well as natural areas, like forests and open spaces where lots of animals and plants live and grow.

Air – is all around us. We breathe it in, but we can't see it.

Climate – is the weather conditions for a large area over a long time. It is different from today's weather, which is what is happening outside right now.

Energy – the ability to do work. We use it to power things like moving cars, and heating and lighting systems in our homes and buildings.

Waste – is all the items that we no longer need or want and dispose of either by putting it in the garbage, in the recycling bin or the compost bin.

Water – the liquid we drink and that we find in our rivers and lakes. It is what falls from the sky when it rains and is what makes up snow.

In Calgary, we have three different water systems.

1. **Drinking water** - flows from the Bow and Elbow Rivers to one of two water treatment plants. Once treated, the water flows underground and comes out of your tap safe to drink.
2. **Stormwater** - is the water that comes from rain and melting snow. Stormwater goes into the drains in the roads and through an underground pipe system to our rivers.
3. **Wastewater** - When water runs down a sink, drain or toilet, it becomes wastewater. Calgary has a system just for wastewater that moves it by gravity and pumps it to one of three treatment plants. Waste is removed before sending the water back to the river.

Graphic Recording – Day 1

[illegible]

Graphic Recording – Day 3

