



BEAUMONT WINTER CITY

Step 1: What We Heard Report

- Holiday Lights!
Tobogganing on the Library Hill
Snowball Fights Friends and Family!
Christmas cold
Sleigh rides X-country skiing
- Hot Chocolate
 - Festivals (inside)
 - Santa Turkey!!
 - Morning snow on the trees
 - Free boiler

DIALOG™

Prepared for the City of Beaumont by DIALOG
January 11, 2022

Introduction

Beaumont is preparing a Winter City Strategy to improve winter activities, infrastructure and public places. The goal of the strategy is to foster a winter environment that is more comfortable, enjoyable, and safe for all residents of Beaumont. The strategy is exploring initiatives, objectives, and ideas that are both City and community-led to transform Beaumont's relationship with winter over time. The strategy is currently under development and is expected to be complete in summer 2022.

Purpose of Engagement

This first round of public engagement is an important part of Step 1 of the Winter City Strategy. Step 1 was all about information gathering and included:

- a background review of other winter cities;
- interviews with winter city experts;
- this public engagement;
- sessions with City staff; and
- consultation with the business and cultural communities.

We engaged the public to understand residents' current experiences with winter in Beaumont, including what they enjoyed and what they found challenging, as well as residents' vision for what winter in Beaumont should be. This, along with the other information gathered in Step 1, will create the background information and foundation for the objectives, policies, and initiatives in the Winter City Strategy.

The public engagement activities for Step 1 of the Winter City Strategy included questions that will directly inform the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines, as there is significant overlap between the subject matter of both projects. A summary of what we heard in response to these questions will be presented in a separate report.

Engagement Activities

Winter Walk – November 13–21, 2021

We asked residents to take a walk through our city and respond to questions that asked for ideas for transforming Beaumont's winter experience. There were five boards, with two-to-three questions each in the locations shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Winter Walk Map

Online Survey – November 13 – 21, 2021

We also put out an online survey, which was promoted on the City of Beaumont website and social media. Respondents could also access the survey by scanning a QR code on one of the Winter Walk boards. The survey questions followed the themes of the Winter Walk boards but were designed to gather more in-depth feedback. In total, we received 122 survey responses. Paper surveys were available for pick up at the library or via mail.

City of Beaumont
WINTER WALK

1 Share your ideas on the board!

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT WINTER?

WHAT CAN MAKE WINTER MORE ENJOYABLE?

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE PUBLIC PLACES IN BEAUMONT, AT ANY TIME OF YEAR? WHY?

Visit the Ken Nichol Regional Recreation Centre bus stop for the next board →

Scan the QR code or visit
www.beaumont.ab.ca/wintercity
www.beaumont.ab.ca/cpted
for more information



**Help Transform
Beaumont's Relationship
with Winter**

beaumont.ab.ca/wintercity



**Let's Transform Beaumont's
Relationship with Winter.**

The City of Beaumont is creating a Winter City Strategy. Please share your thoughts, ideas and input on how Beaumont's winter experience can be improved for everybody. Your ideas will directly inform the vision and big ideas of the strategy. They will also help develop Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines that will promote safer public places in our city year-round.

Check it out now until November 21 at
beaumont.ab.ca/wintercity

For a paper copy of our survey, please call 780-929-8782



Business and Cultural Committee Session #1 – November 15, 2021

Recognizing that creating a great winter city culture takes the efforts of the entire community, the project team assembled a committee of representatives from local businesses and cultural groups. We held a virtual collaborative session with this committee, where we discussed their organizations' operations in winter, and opportunities to create a more friendly and fun winter for Beaumont.

Results of Engagement: Survey and Winter Walk

Beaumont's Winter – Current

We asked the public about their current winter experiences in Beaumont.

What People in Beaumont Love About Winter

Winter Beauty

Many responses pointed to the inherent beauty of the winter season. Sparkling hoar frost, the clean and bright appeal of a fresh snowfall, colourful holiday lights, crisp cold air, and dark starry nights all create a desirable winter atmosphere. The dramatic change in seasons from fall to the first snowfall was also mentioned as something some people in Beaumont love.

Snow

Many responses mentioned snow as something they love about winter. From the beauty of the first snow fall to the variety of activities snow makes possible – snowshoeing, skiing, tobogganing, sculpting, snowball fights and more – snow is something many people in Beaumont love.

Outdoor Activities

The winter season brings unique outdoor activities that many survey participants love. Cross-country skiing, winter walks, skating, sledding, snowshoeing, and hockey were all mentioned as activities people in Beaumont love to do in the winter. Some responses specifically talked about the joy and excitement they get from watching their children play outside in the snow.

Lack of Extreme Heat and Bugs

Some responses noted the lack of extreme heat and bugs as something they loved about winter. One response stated that it is typically easier to dress warmly for the cold than to cool off in the summer heat.

Cozy Gatherings

All the outdoor winter activities are even better when a crackling fire and warm drinks follow them. Many responses talked about how they love gathering with friends and family in the winter, either outdoors or indoors, and getting cozy by the fire with some hot chocolate or another warm beverage. Some responses described winter as a special time to get together with family and friends, especially with all the holidays that fall during wintertime and how people seem to embrace the spirit of giving back and kindness during this time of year.

A Time to Slow Down

Other responses talked about how they loved winter as a time to slow down, mentioning the quiet, peaceful landscapes that a winter snowfall brings.

Favorite Winter Activities in Beaumont

We asked what winter activities the community loves to do in Beaumont. What we heard is summarized below:



* Some responses indicated they still have not found winter activities they enjoy in Beaumont.

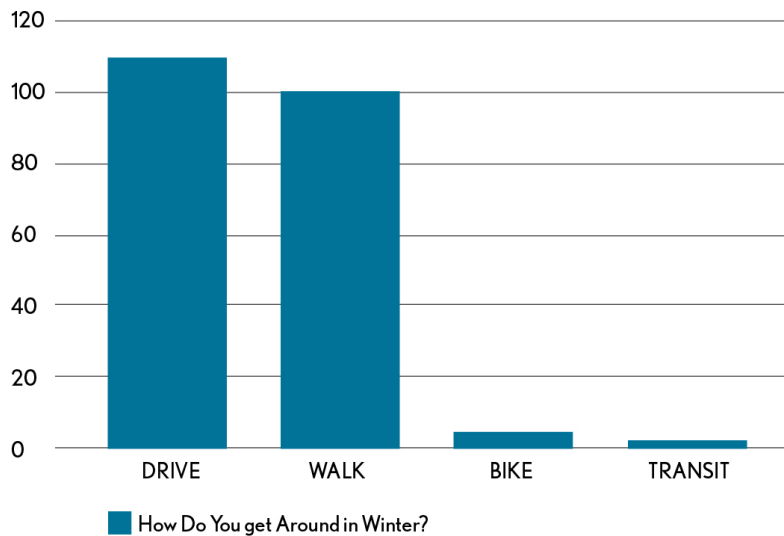
Favorite Winter Places in Beaumont

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How Beaumont Gets Around in Winter

We asked survey participants how they get around in winter. The chart below shows the results:



Most responses selected both walking (101) and driving (111). With limited cycling and transit infrastructure, few survey responses selected biking (5) and transit (2). While most Beaumont residents drive, it is important to recognize that, at some point, all of us are pedestrians, whether we walk or roll on a wheelchair or mobility device, when considering how we build a great winter city.

Later in the survey, we asked what would make residents more comfortable to bike or take transit in the winter; these results help explain the low results for biking and taking transit, and are covered later in this report.

What Concerns Do You Have About Getting Around in Winter?

Lack of Areas to Snowshoe or Cross-Country Ski

Many responses cited a desire to see more places to cross-country ski or snowshoe. These areas ideally would be snow-covered parks and open spaces, with regularly-maintained cross-country skiing tracks.

Unshovelled or Icy Residential Sidewalks

Many responses cited concern residents' sidewalks not being shoveled promptly after a snowfall, and failure to remove or mitigate ice buildup from sidewalks after a freeze-thaw cycle. Many responses also pointed out that this is a larger issue for those with mobility impairments, strollers, and the elderly. For some, the conditions on residential sidewalks are a barrier to getting out and walking.

Some responses specifically pointed out concerns over how and when snow is removed on vacant properties.

Unshovelled or Icy Public Trails

Many responses cited concerns with the current approach to clearing public sidewalks and trails, including the time between snowfall and snow removal, removal processes leaving piles in inconvenient locations, and removal processes damaging nearby grass. There were also a number of responses that cited concerns with ice buildup on the trails, expressing a desire to see a continual sanding/de-icing process. Some residents mentioned that they feel uncomfortable walking or biking on the trails unless they are cleared to bare pavement.

Inadequate Trail Lighting

Many responses indicated a desire to see increased lighting along trails and sidewalks, making walking during the long winter nights more pleasant and secure, and helping pedestrians and cyclists to see and avoid ice patches. Some responses also indicated a desire to see decorative, colourful lighting along Beaumont's trails to transform winter walks into memorable fun activities.

Windchill

Some responses mentioned their concerns with the impact of windchill on their plans to walk outside or organize outdoor events.

Local Road Snow Clearance

Some responses mentioned concerns with the frequency of residential road snow clearing, mentioning that their local roads get ruts and are increasingly unsafe over time. Some responses also mentioned that narrow local roads are difficult to navigate in the winter due to snow buildup and icy conditions.

No Internal Public Transportation

Some responses mentioned their concern with Beaumont's lack of an internal public transportation network, citing that a bus system would be a good winter alternative to walking or driving to local destinations in winter conditions.

Signage

A response mentioned that traffic controls in the form of road and parking lot lines are less effective in the winter, when they are often covered with snow, and raised the idea to rely more on signage for traffic control.

What Would Make You More Comfortable to Walk or Bike in Winter?

Lighting

Some responses mentioned that increased lighting along trails and sidewalks would make them feel more comfortable to walk/bike in the winter. Lighting would assist in making users feel more secure, and aid in spotting and avoiding ice patches. It was also mentioned that increased lighting should be done in balance with preserving the dark night sky.

Clearing Snow and Ice

Many responses mentioned that they want to see trails and sidewalks maintained to a bare pavement standard; this includes clearing ice after freeze-thaw cycles and snowdrifts after gusts of wind. Specific responses had the idea for pet-friendly ice melt products and a system that communicates when trails are cleared.

Signage and Communication

A response mentioned that having wayfinding signage to help trail users navigate to other trails and areas of interest would be valuable.

Additionally, some responses mentioned that having some way of knowing that various trails have been cleared of ice and snow would give them greater confidence in walking and biking.

Provision of Sand/Ice Melt

Some responses raised the idea of having City- or community-group-provided sand bins in convenient locations around the city for residents to use on their sidewalks.

Warm Up Stations and Washrooms

Some responses expressed the desire to see warm-up stations and public washrooms around Beaumont as amenities for those walking and cycling.

More Expansive and Convenient Trail Network

Some responses indicated they would be more likely to walk and cycle more in the winter if Beaumont's existing trail network was expanded and included additional connections to everyday destinations and areas of interest.

What Would Make You More Comfortable to Take Transit in the Winter?

More Routes to Destinations

Many of the responses expressed a desire to see increased destinations available by taking public transportation in Beaumont. Specifically-desired stops included:

- Century Park LRT Station
- Mill Woods
- Leduc
- Edmonton International Airport
- Nisku

More Frequent and Reliable Schedule

Many of the responses expressed a desire to see more frequent and reliable service in Beaumont. Some responses shared the idea of a phone app that could give live updates on estimated arrival and departure times.

Routes to Local Destinations

Some responses expressed a desire to see bus routes that connected residents to locations within Beaumont.

More Pick-Up Locations in Beaumont

Some responses expressed a desire to see bus stops closer to their homes, making it easier to walk to public transit.

Warming Shelters and Washrooms

A response expressed a desire to see transit infrastructure heated, with public washrooms available.

Other Winter Concerns

We asked survey participants if they had any other winter-related concerns.

Available Activities for Teenagers and Older Adults

Some responses mentioned a desire to see more available outdoor activities. Some responses specifically mentioned activities for teenagers and elderly people to keep the community engaged and active during the winter months.

Cross-Country Skiing Trails

Many responses expressed a desire to see more regularly maintained cross-country skiing trails in Beaumont's parks and open spaces.

Outdoor Rink Availability

Some responses expressed a desire to see more intentional programming at Beaumont's outdoor rinks, expressing difficulty in finding times to skate with young children without more active sports like hockey and ringette being played.

Seating and Amenities at Outdoor Activity Areas

Some responses expressed a desire to see better amenities at Beaumont's sledding hills and outdoor rinks, including seating, fire pits, shelters, and change rooms.

Indoor Activities

A response indicated the importance of providing fun and engaging indoor activities during the winter months.

Community Engagement

A response expressed concern with residents' observed tendency to stay indoors and not engage with their community during the winter.

Beaumont's Winter – Future

We asked the public what they would like to see during the winter in Beaumont.

What Would Help You Fall in Love with Winter in Beaumont?

More Snowshoeing and Cross-Country Skiing

Some responses expressed a desire to see more snowshoeing and cross-country skiing opportunities in Beaumont's open spaces.

Make Centre-Ville a Winter Destination

Many responses expressed a desire to see Centre-Ville further enhanced as a winter destination. Some of the ideas included:

- More decorative lighting during the winter
- Outdoor heated patios
- Events with food, warm beverages, and music
- A more pronounced entrance to Centre-Ville

More Community-led Activities

A response expressed a desire to see more opportunities for community-led winter events and activities.

Winter Festivals and Destinations

Many responses expressed a desire to see more winter events and destinations, increasing the number of things to do and explore in Beaumont during the winter months. Some of the specific ideas included:

- Winter light festivals
- Snow sculpture competitions
- Local vendor markets
- Winter art walks
- Bonfire/hot chocolate/ fireworks at the agricultural grounds
- Indoor gathering opportunities

Prioritize Vulnerable People

A response indicated a desire to see Beaumont deliberately prioritize the needs of those most vulnerable during the winter months. Some specific ideas related to this that we heard included:

- Fast and reliable snow clearing on sidewalks and trails
- Providing public equipment for winter activities
- Providing more low-cost/free activities
- Providing warming shelters and public washrooms

Utilize Parks and Public Places for Winter

Some responses expressed a desire to see Beaumont's parks and open spaces more deliberately designed and operated for the winter months.

More Lighting

Many responses expressed a desire to see more lighting around the parks, trails, and Centre-Ville in Beaumont. These responses included both functional lighting and decorative lighting.

How Can Beaumont Make Winter Safe and Fun for Everybody?

Lighting on Trails

As in other question responses, providing adequate lighting on trails was identified as a way to make winter safe and fun for everybody.

Enhanced Trail Network

Some responses suggested creating more trails with connections to destinations in Beaumont and allowing more forms of active transportation than just walking.

Snow Clearing on Trails

As in other question responses, clearing Beaumont's trails of snow and ice was identified as a way to make winter safe and fun for everybody.

More Activities for Seniors and Adults

Some responses suggested more activities for seniors and adults to enjoy and keep active during the winter months.

Heated Amenities in Open Spaces

Providing heated washrooms and shelters in open spaces was suggested by some responses.

Results of Engagement: Business and Cultural Committee Collaborative Session

The Winter City Strategy project team held a virtual collaboration session with business owners and cultural organization representatives in the community. The objectives of this session were:

- To provide an opportunity for business and cultural leaders in the community to collaborate on ways to improve Beaumont's winter experience
- To discuss how the City can best support these businesses and cultural organizations during the winter

This committee will meet again in the new year to discuss and refine the contents of the emerging Winter City Strategy. The following is a summary of key discussion themes from the first session:

Balancing Large Events with Continuous Attractions

The committee expressed the need for Beaumont to create a wide range of attractions in the winter that bring a consistent level of visitors and residents to public places and businesses. Significant, one-off events like Brighten Up Beaumont are great to draw people in and introduce visitors to the community but do not result in sustained traffic. Destinations and activities that are offered continuously throughout the winter are needed to bring a sustained amount of visitors and customers. Some ideas for sustained attractions were specified:

- Pathways with decorative, multi-coloured lanterns that turn a winter walk into a memorable experience
- Supporting skating rinks and sledding hills with fire pits, benches, washrooms and warming huts to create areas where people can gather, sit, eat and drink while watching skaters or people sledding.

Lowering the Barriers to Going Out

Business owners talked about how winter months are more difficult to attract customers, as the winter season provides some real and perceived barriers to making spontaneous decisions to go out to a restaurant or go shopping. As a result, businesses have found that customers visiting from Edmonton are reduced significantly in the winter months. Therefore, it is key for businesses in Beaumont to have a strong communications approach that helps customers plan their trip and promotes their business as a warm and cozy escape from the winter.

At the same time, the committee talked about the importance for the City to have a strong marketing campaign in the winter that communicates to other communities how convenient the trip to Beaumont is and what exciting opportunities are in store for visitors.

Utilizing Centre-Ville Park

Committee members talked about the opportunity to create an activated winter gathering space in the open space on the southwest corner of 50 Street and 52 Avenue. Winter patios have been difficult for businesses along 50 Street due to wind and sunlight conditions, but creating a desirable place for customers to bring takeout and sit down would be an attractive draw to the area.

Centre-Ville Car Snow Clearing Program

One of the major barriers to going out in Beaumont to shop and participate in activities is scraping the snow and ice off a vehicle. The committee had the idea of creating a community car snow clearing program, with members from the business community or volunteers, who would clear the snow off of customers' cars as they shop or participate in an event.

Using Businesses as Introductions to the City

Many businesses get visitors from Edmonton and surrounding communities in their doors. Distributing materials that promote Beaumont's parks, destinations, and activities would be an opportunity to introduce new people to all Beaumont has to offer, encouraging people who visit for one shop or restaurant to come more frequently for other activities.

For example, Chartier developed postcards with their five favourite parks in Beaumont to include in people's takeout orders, as a way to promote areas in Beaumont to eat outside.

Recurring Events

Alongside more significant winter events, the committee talked about the value of having smaller, recurring events. Knowing that a smaller event was happening at a regular schedule gives residents something to look forward to and builds a following of regulars – promoting community building and creating a highlight for people's winter season. Some ideas for recurring events included:

- Community sledding/skating nights with hot chocolate and food
- Outdoor and indoor winter markets
- Sport tournaments/intramural leagues

Creating a Winter Destination at the District Agricultural Society Lands

The committee talked about the Beaumont and District Agricultural Society Lands opportunities. Through partnership with the City and other organizations, the lands could be utilized as a fun winter recreation area. Potential activities included:

- Skating
- Cross-country skiing
- Bonfires
- Warm drinks
- Sleigh rides
- Using the barn for programming and as a warming shelter

Creating a Winter Destination at the Heritage Society House

The committee discussed the opportunity of making the Heritage Society House at 50 Street and 32 Avenue a winter destination in Beaumont. Adding holiday lighting year-round and holiday decorations into the visible interior will help brighten up the street and provide a photo opportunity.

Creating Winter Events that are Unique to Beaumont

The committee discussed that between the months of January and March there is an opportunity to develop more festivals and events, as winter is more difficult for businesses and the community during this period. With the holiday season over, people are less inclined to go shopping and eat at restaurants, and the community doesn't have as much to look forward to in terms of winter events.

It was also discussed that rather than attempting to replicate existing events in other cities, Beaumont should create an event that celebrates the City's unique character. Beaumont's history as a significant site for Indigenous and Francophone people can be drawn on for inspiration, as well as Beaumont's identity as a community that enjoys helping one another.

Summary

Residents of Beaumont are fond of their winters! From the first snowfall, to sparkling frost and cold dark starry nights, people love the inherent beauty of the winter season in Beaumont. Winter represents an exciting opportunity to engage in a range of seasonal outdoor activities, followed by cozy indoor gatherings by the fire with a warm beverage. The season is also associated with a chance to slow down, give back and enjoy the peacefulness of the snow-covered landscape. The following captures some of the most common themes in what we heard during the latest public engagement:

Winter Activities and Places in Beaumont

Beaumont residents enjoy a long list of winter activities, from tobogganing, cross-country skiing and hockey, to quieter pursuits like reading by the fireplace, crafting at the library, or enjoying the holiday lights. Both active/ passive and indoor/ outdoor activities are important to the community's enjoyment of the winter season. Suggestions for improving winter activities in Beaumont included offering activities targeted specifically to teenagers and older adults and providing seating and amenities in outdoor activity areas. This allows people of different ages, life stages and abilities to come together and enjoy the same area, providing a continuous community-building opportunity.

There was also a desire to see more community-led/ indoor winter activities, and more accessible low-cost/ free events. Respondents also acknowledged that there is a need to balance between annual events and regularly occurring activities that residents can participate in, making the everyday Beaumont winter experience more enjoyable.

Favorite winter places in Beaumont were as varied as the winter activities. Respondents listed several sites for walking, skating and skiing, as well as outdoor rinks and hills. The library, restaurants, cafes, and heated bus stop were also places people sought out to escape the cold temperatures. There is also a desire to enhance Centre-Ville during the winter with decorative lighting, a more prominent entrance, events and outdoor heated patios.

Snow Removal on Walkways

The most common winter concern was the timely and effective removal of snow and ice on private and public walkways. This includes a reliable and effective snow removal system on the City's public paths and sidewalks, with sanding and de-icing after freeze-thaw cycles. Many responses pointed out the importance of this to people with reduced mobility.

Lighting on Pathways

Lighting on Beaumont's sidewalks and pathways was also commonly brought up. Many responses talked about their desire to see more functional lighting for these areas, especially during the long winter nights, to improve visibility, safety and allow people to identify patches of ice. Many responses also talked about the opportunity to utilize decorative lighting on Beaumont's many trails. Lanterns, tree lighting and projections could turn a winter walk in Beaumont into a memorable and significant winter activity.

A Balance of Events and Regular Activities

Many responses talked about the importance and need for fun, individual winter events to attract visitors and make meaningful residents for events. However, responses often acknowledged that these need to be balanced with regularly occurring activities that residents can participate in and make the everyday Beaumont winter experience more enjoyable.

Providing Activities for Everyone

Many responses talked about the importance of making various winter activities available that cater to different demographics. For example, some answers spoke to the importance of having more passive activities like warming shelters, fire pits and benches, next to active activities like skating rinks and sledding hills. This allows people of different ages, life stages and abilities to come together and enjoy the same area, providing a continuous community-building opportunity.

Winter Modes of Transit

There is a fairly even split between walking and driving as the primary mode of transportation in Beaumont during the winter, while biking and transit had the lowest number of responses. Barriers to traveling in the winter included issues with snow clearing, sanding and de-icing on public and private walkways, trails and local roads, as well as traffic controls obscured by snow. Many respondents also pointed out the importance of timely and effective snow and ice removal for people with reduced mobility. Respondents were also deterred by the windchill factor, inadequate lighting and lack of an internal public transportation network.

Suggestions to improve transit included adding more routes to desired destinations, both in Beaumont and the Greater Edmonton Area, and improving the frequency, reliability and accessibility of transit. Strong interest was also expressed in expanding Beaumont's trail network and providing more regularly maintained/ groomed locations to cross-country ski or snowshoe in parks and open spaces. Improvements to snow and ice clearance, as well as updates on which trails have been cleared were also recommended. In addition to better lighting for safety along sidewalks and trails, respondents also suggested providing warming stations and public washrooms as well as public sand bins around the city for use by residents to maintain their sidewalk.

Next Steps

This first round of public engagement and consultation sought to understand current winter experiences in Beaumont, as well as resident's vision for what winter in Beaumont could be. The responses in this first stage of engagement will contribute to the development of the draft Winter City Strategy and help to foster a more comfortable, enjoyable and safe winter environment for all residents of Beaumont.

