



Communities' Transition Pathways - Edmonton, Alberta

Full Report on O-day'min Session Three, September 16, 2023

Summary

This report summarizes Iron & Earth's third community conversation, hosted in Ward O-day'min on September 16th, 2023 in Edmonton, Alberta. It concluded our three session series in the ward as part of the Communities Transition Program, in partnership with David Suzuki Foundation, Alberta EcoTrust, Alberta Environmental Network, and Climate Justice Edmonton.

The conversation was structured by three discussion questions. Two of these questions were developed by gradually narrowing-in on key topics of concern in the O-day'min community over the course of our two past events: sustainable and affordable housing access, and improvements in the relationship of the community to local government. The final question on job training support in the net-zero economy was chosen in connection with I&E's partnership with Alberta EcoTrust's "Climate Innovation Grant."

As in previous sessions, participants spoke about the impacts of climate change on their everyday lives, expressing particular concerns over wildfires. These concerns were linked to broader fears of the future due to the increasing unaffordability. Despite dread driven by large-scale crises, participants expressed desires to find innovative ways to improve their lives. With regards to housing access, participants focused on the challenges experienced by renters in O-day'min, calling for lower utility bills and more mechanisms for those renting to take control of their energy use. They also highlighted the experiences of unhoused people in the community, arguing that they are often left out of conversations about sustainability. Participants discussed the barriers they encounter in reaching local government and a desire to see the public consultation model revamped to be more interactive, conversational, and action-oriented. When asked what supports they require to thrive in the net-zero economy, participants specifically requested updated curriculums to match our rapidly changing economy, further expansion of funded skills-training opportunities, and greater support for job-hunting in the digital age.





While 94% of participants indicated that they were familiar with these topics prior to the discussion, 100% left having learned something new. This report and the two that precede it will serve as the basis of continued community trust-building, advocacy, and program development in the O-day'min community. Valuable lessons learned in research, outreach, script development, and session delivery process will be applied to the next sets of sessions to be held in two Edmonton wards.

1. Introduction

About Iron & Earth

Iron & Earth (I&E) is a not-for-profit organization with roots in the fossil fuel industry. We create pathways to opportunities in the net-zero economy for fossil fuel workers, Indigenous Peoples, and their communities. Our programs lower barriers to building community-led climate solutions for the sustainable future through engagement, training programs, infrastructure projects, and career platforms.

Why this community was selected to have a conversation

This session series was made possible through funding from the David Suzuki Foundation and Alberta Ecotrust's Climate Innovation Grant, and the ongoing partnership with Alberta Environmental Network and Climate Justice Edmonton. O-day'min is the first of three Edmonton wards where I&E is hosting community conversations. O-day'min was renamed in 2021, as it is an area that gathers in the "heart" of Edmonton, with the North Saskatchewan River representing the "stem" of the heart, the waterways representing the vessels, and the people representing the veins. "O-day'min" means heart-berry or strawberry in Anishinaabe¹. O-day'min is densely populated and diverse, home to a wide array of industries, neighbourhoods, educational institutions, community organizations, and shelters that serve the community. Key concerns animating the community include the rising cost of living, particularly housing affordability, and declining economic opportunities in the area.

¹<https://www.eopcn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/O-daymin-name-meaning.pdf>





As we explored in [previous session reports](#), O-day'min was selected due to the unique set of economic, environmental and social dynamics that affect the everyday lives of people in this community and this session was held nearing the end of an intense fire season. In O-day'min, community members dealt with extreme heat and smoke as a result of the wildfires. In fact, Edmonton logged a new all-time high of 299 “smoke hours” during the summer of 2023², presenting serious health risks to everyone exposed to the air, particularly houseless community members³. Alberta’s 2023 wildfire season was 10 times more severe than average⁴, demonstrating why it is becoming increasingly important to think about how climate change will continue to have consequences for local communities.⁵

O-day'min had their first session in January of 2023. Given that this event was the first conversation in the community, the session was focused on gaining general insights into community challenges and perspectives on what a sustainable future may mean for O-day'min. For the second session, held in July 2023, we zeroed on accessibility, affordability, and social supports – three key themes that came up in the first conversation. During the third session in September 2023, we narrowed our focus further into three thematic areas. The first two – sustainable housing access and the relationship between community and local government – were both developed from prominent themes in the first two sessions. The final discussion question on job preparation support was introduced in connection with I&E’s partnership with Alberta Ecostrust’s “Climate Innovation Grant” to better understand what O-day'min workers need to thrive in the net-zero economy.

About the conversation participants

Our objective was to bring together people with diverse experiences, including members of various local organizations, industries, and government representatives of different ages and races and educational backgrounds. To achieve this, we used multiple methods to reach out to potential participants, such as social media posts, physical advertisements, and email outreach led by our team. In addition to posting on I&E's social media pages, we also shared the social

²<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/edmonton-ends-wildfire-season-with-record-high-smoke-hours>

³<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-air-quality-presents-very-high-risk-disrupts-long-weekend-plans-1.6850705>

⁴<https://globalnews.ca/news/10069300/alberta-wildfires-season-2023-record/amp/>

⁵<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/wildfire-smoke-alberta-edmonton-calgary-1.6909658>

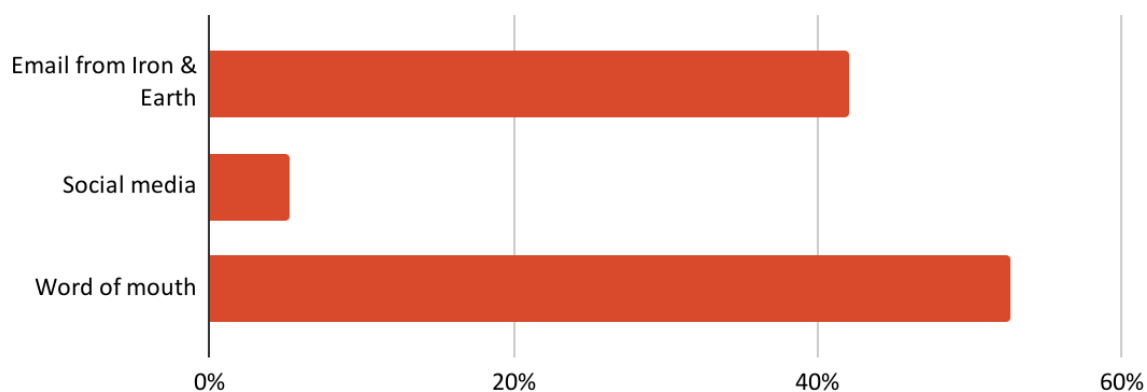




media posts on community Facebook pages that are frequently used by local residents and university students. As a result, 31 individuals registered for the session and 19 individuals attended the session. The figures below are based on the answers of the 19 attendees.

For successful outreach methods, as illustrated in **Figure 1.1 - Outreach Results** below, attendees indicated that most individuals learned about the session through word of mouth, followed by e-mail from I&E, and social media last. Of the 19, 7 had attended a Community Pathways event hosted by Iron & Earth prior to this session.

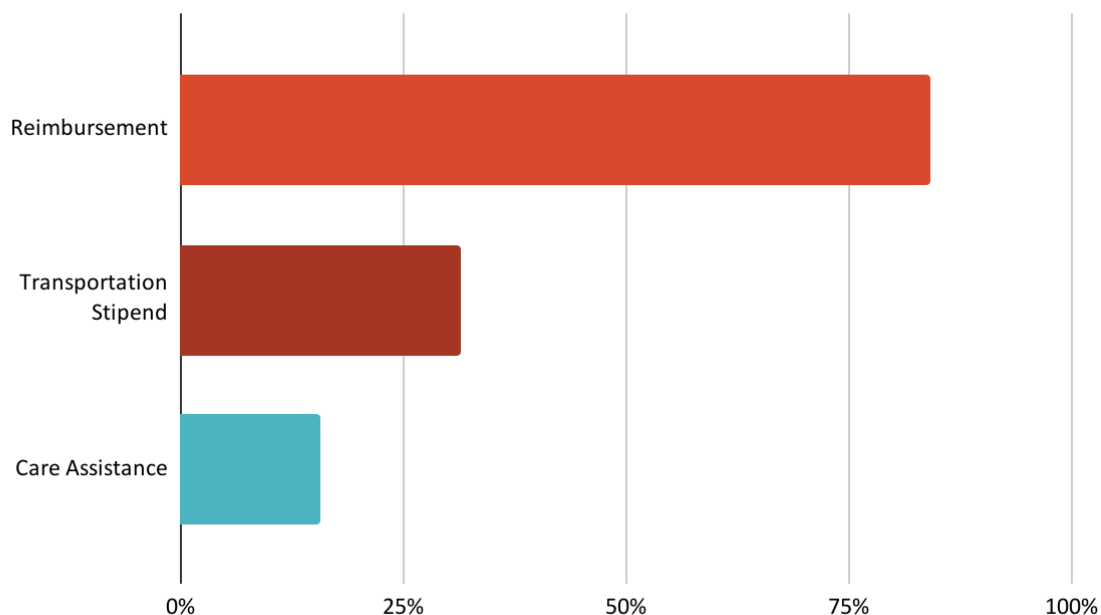
Figure 1.1 - Outreach Results



To reduce potential barriers for participants, the sign-up form included questions on accessibility information. The major accessibility supports identified during the planning phase were: competitive reimbursement, child or dependent care assistance, and transportation stipends. Participants also had the option to answer an open-ended accessibility request question, to list additional requests outside of the mentioned categories. The registration information shows that most participants received one or more kinds of accommodation offered by I&E. As outlined in **Figure 1.2 - All Accommodations**, 84% of participants received compensation for their participation, while 32% requested transportation reimbursement, and 16% received care support for children or dependents.



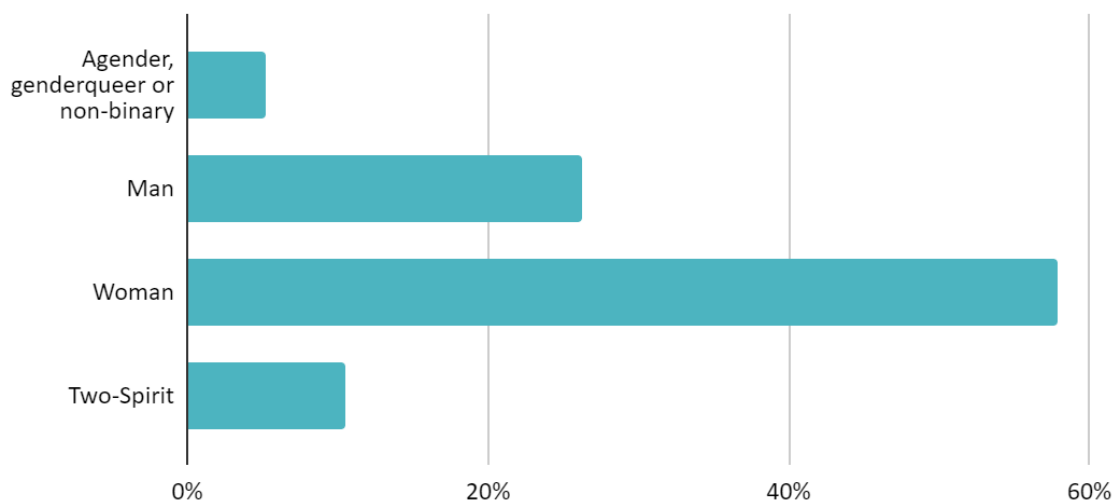
Figure 1.2 - All Accommodations



A survey of the demographic characteristics of participants showed that 16% of participants were residents of ward O-day'min, 58% were not residents, and 26% preferred not to answer. None of the participants identified as new immigrants. For first languages, 74% of participants speak English at home, 11% speak English and French, while 5% of participants speak Mandarin, another 5% speak English and Punjabi, and 5% prefer not to say. **Figure 1.3 - Gender** indicated that most participants (58%) identified as women, followed by 26% who identified as men, 11% as two-spirit, and 5% as agender, genderqueer or non-binary.



Figure 1.3 - Gender

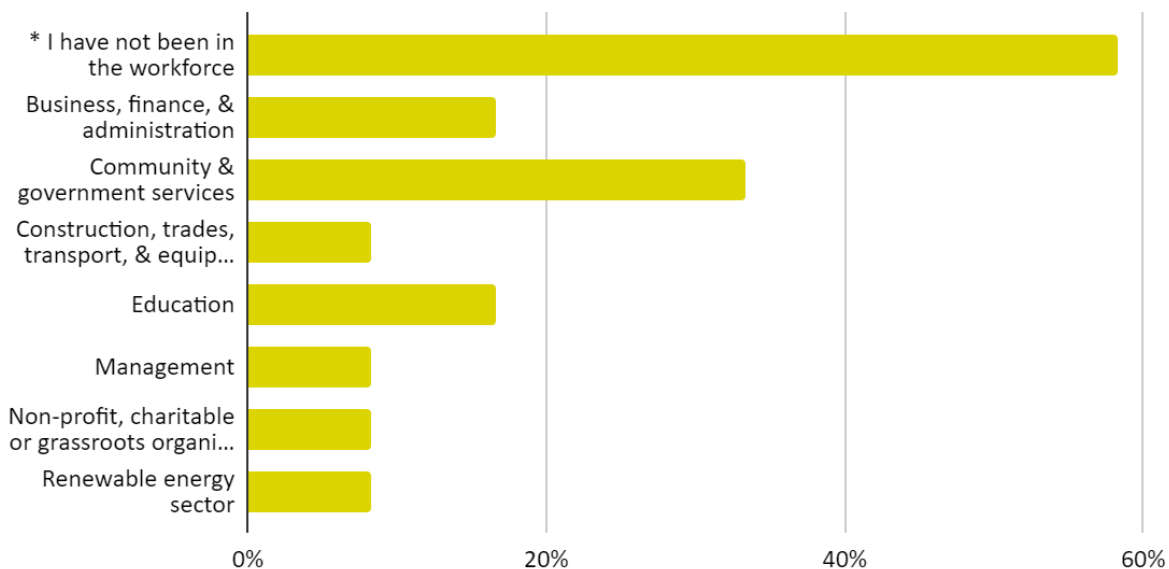


The social demographics questions revealed that while 47% of participants identified as Indigenous, none of the participants lived in Indigenous reserves. In addition, 26% identified as 2SLGBTQ+, 32% identified as people of colour, and 16% identified as persons with disabilities. Most of the participants belonged in the 15-30 age group (42%), followed by 31-54 (32%), and 55+ (26%).

In the socioeconomic demographics section, 58% of participants were of low income status (below \$53,413 per year), 21% of middle income status (\$53,413 - \$106,827), and 21% preferred not to say. In the job sector category, as outlined in **Figure 1.4 - Job Sector**, a majority of the participants (58%) had not been in the workforce. Of those who had been in the workforce, 33% were in community & government services, followed by 17% in business, finance, & administration, and another 17% in education. The rest of participants are in construction, trades, transport, & equipment operations; management; non-profit, charitable or grassroots organizing work, and renewable energy sector.



Figure 1.4 - Job Sector



In comparison to the 2021 Census of Population of Edmonton from Statistics Canada⁶, the participants' demographics are more representative of the general population in some demographic areas. The census data shows that Edmonton's population is made up of 50% men and 50% women, while the gender distribution of the attendees were overly representative of women. Additionally, the census data shows that 15-29 years old are 19.7%, 30-54 are 36.7%, and 55 and above are 25.4%. In comparison, the age groups of the attendees are overly representative of the 15-30 age group, lacking representation of the 31-54 age group, and appropriately represented those who are 55 and over. For job sectors data, the attendees' population lack the high representation of the top 2 highest job populations in Edmonton: healthcare and retail.

The census data also shows 5.8% Indigenous population, a smaller figure compared to our attendees' 47% Indigenous demographics, while the immigrant population that makes up 13.3% of Edmonton's population is not represented at all in our attendees' group.

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<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?LANG=E&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=4&DGUIDlist=2021A00054811061&HEADERlist=2,31,30,22,,10,9,8,7,11,,21,19,40,43,16,1&SearchText=edmonton>



The Community Conversation

A key aspect of our planning process is reflecting upon and adapting the language we use for each community (see our script in Appendix A). The goal of the conversation is to foster a non-polarizing environment to discuss local community issues. As such, we trained our facilitators to avoid spontaneously discussing specific political parties or politicians, and we did not use any provincial, federal, or global associations in the script. When referring to the topic of government, we used phrases like “local leaders” to ground the conversation in the O-day’min community. We also avoided introducing terms into the conversation that could be contentious such as “climate change” and instead employed neutral language like “extreme weather.” This allowed the conversation to evolve on the terms of the participants, without the burden of imposed narratives.

Our session model is built on the principle of community-informed discussions: our questions are tailored to the local context and over the course of three sessions, gradually become more specific in relation to themes of importance to each community. We followed this traditional question development format for the first two questions in this session, which focused on housing and local leaders. Given that this was the final event in O-day’min, we used this as an opportunity to expand this format to include a question about job preparation in the net-zero economy to tie this session to incentives in Alberta EcoTrust’s Climate Innovation Grant. Through this funding, we aim to support local workers, develop the skills needed for climate solution projects, and directly address the challenges employers experience in trying to recruit skilled workers. Throughout past sessions, participants have expressed interest in obtaining well-paying, future-proofed jobs. In an effort to better understand existing gaps in the clean economy skills-building process, we decided to include a specific question to gauge areas where O-day’min workers desire more support in entering the net-zero job market.

The event took place at the MacEwan Roundhouse located in Ward O-day’min in downtown Edmonton, Alberta, on September 16, 2023. As with the first two sessions, the venue was chosen for its large open room, which allowed for a comfortable space for the attendees to engage in discussions, with three tables allowing for a capacity of ten persons each. Two trained facilitators and one Community Engagement Officer were present to guide the conversation and represent I&E at a local level.





We used recording equipment to capture the conversation rather than written notes to ensure accuracy of transcription. To respect each participant's consent and data preservation preferences, all participants' names were anonymized and assigned numbers. After experimenting with virtual and in-person session formats, we have found that in-person sessions provide a space for participants to feel more comfortable sharing potentially vulnerable perspectives on topics that impact their everyday lives. Thus, despite background noise interference and overlapping speech that can potentially complicate the transcription process, we opted to continue using the in-person format for our final O-day'min session. Following the success of the first two sessions, we took precautions to avoid these recording issues, holding the conversation in a large room and dividing participants into three separate groups to reduce sound overlap between conversations.

2. What We Heard

We organized the discussion around three key questions, building upon themes identified in the first and second O-day'min Community Conversations.

- How could housing that is energy efficient, and resilient to environmental changes be made more affordable/accessible for renters and homeowners in O-day'min?
- How would you like to see local leaders engage the O-day'min community in the decision-making process and what role should the community play in defining the shift to a net-zero economy?
- What educational support (in both soft and hard skills) would better prepare your community for new opportunities presented by the net-zero economy?

Throughout the conversation participants spoke candidly about the **impacts of climate change** they are experiencing. Memories of the wildfires during the summer were particularly common, but participants also expressed concerns about future flooding events, hurricanes, tornados, extreme heat and cold, and wind storms.

They tied their fears over the looming threat of climate change to dread over the unaffordability of everyday life, and an overall emotional narrative of **fearing the future** emerged throughout the conversation: a sense that quality of life is declining and will continue to decline, "if we keep going the way we go on and we're not going to have our earth to live on. And I see it every day.





The smoke and the weather,” one person stated. Another agreed: “We’re destroying the world, and making the climate worse.” For young people, this fear is even more potent: “this generation, we are climbing over [a] mountain.” One person even framed their attendance at the event as driven by concern for younger people, saying “I’m here because I’m a parent. I’m concerned about the youth, and [I] feel very sad that they’re growing up with climate change, because I didn’t have that concern growing up.”

Throughout the conversation, people expressed that they feel exhausted and disturbed that the broader public appears to not be aware of impending dangers. Speaking of the rising cost of utilities, one person stated that “this is something I live in every day, I watch natural gas prices, the energy crisis, people don’t even talk about [it]. People don’t realize what’s going to happen in the next five years...People won’t be able to afford to heat their homes.” Another person echoed this sentiment with regards to climate change: “There are far more greater hazards in the more immediate sense than what we’re willing to recognize, because we don’t want to recognize [that] the doomsday clock is the closest to us than [ever].” One person expressed a feeling of hopelessness at the future: “We’re incapable of modifying our society enough to be able to affect the changes that are necessary or we would have affected them many years ago.”

Despite this dread and fear, people also expressed a pragmatic acceptance that we have to find ways to balance mobilizing to address large-scale crises, and managing the everyday challenges of being a human being. This sentiment is captured in the following quote by one participant, reflecting on the scale of the climate crisis:

“I guess the tough thing is even if we acknowledge that, and that’s like something that we know to be true and devote a lot of our lives to working on trying to postpone the inevitable and make things better for as many generations as possible, we still have to find ways to live day-to-day, and yeah, like find a job and get your education... like day-to-day, we just have to live and make money to buy food, to eat, to have happy times with our friends and family.”

Expressions of fear about the looming, interconnected climate and affordability crises arose throughout the conversation across all three questions. In addition to these general themes, participants expressed more specific insights in response to each question prompt.



1. How could housing that is energy efficient, and resilient to environmental changes be made more affordable/accessible for renters and homeowners in O-day'min?

As with previous sessions, participants reiterated that covering the cost of housing and utilities are two areas of profound stress in their everyday lives. They emphasized that the cost of living is simply too expensive for them to keep up with, as articulated frankly by one individual: “It's hard to like pay rent, utilities, and living and gas...Like how am I supposed to live and get to where I need to be?” Another person emphasized the bleak state of accessing housing downtown today in Edmonton: “I don't really see any affordable housing spaces, like they're offset to the suburbs, which I don't know what the logic behind that is.”

In this conversation in particular, the specific challenges that renters face in O-day'min emerged as a key concern for discussants. While we did have homeowners in attendance who highlighted barriers to accessing “green” grants for housing retrofits, the conversation overwhelmingly focused on the ways in which renting creates unique barriers to affordable and sustainable living. Put succinctly by one of our participants, “there's a lot of vulnerabilities that come with being a renter.” This focus on renting is supported by broader trends in the Canadian economy towards renting over homeownership: between 2011 and 2021, the number of families who rent grows at twice the pace as those who own their homes.⁷

A lack of control was a key aspect of the renting experience described by participants. On a basic level, participants expressed feeling like “second class citizens” due to lack of stability, and sometimes even basic safety and dignity in their space. Despite a desire to live in a more energy efficient and sustainable home, they described feeling unable to make changes to their space. “Unless you have a landlord that wants to build a house for that purpose, that's just not gonna happen,” said one person. Another elaborated further on this hesitancy to ask for anything more than the bare minimum:

“I think that some of it's either hesitation, or like they just accept that it's never gonna happen because as any kind of asks, like it's a struggle to even get things fixed when they really need to be fixed. And then your landlord kind of holds it against you like, ‘oh, I had to pay for that. And like, this is so difficult.’ And so to ask for something that is not just like an emergency fix, like your plumbing going wrong or like bugs or something, it's just like really difficult.”

⁷ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/census-housing-data-1.6589842>



Due to the already high cost of utilities in particular, participants were skeptical that they would actually see the savings of switching to solar or other renewables reflected on their bills. For example, one person said they had switched to 100% renewable power generation and their utilities bill went up \$2 per month. Thus, despite having a desire to switch towards renewable sources of power – as one person said, “everyone should go solar” – the prospect of actually making the change felt unrealistic for many. Another person emphasizes that with the cost of rent, making any decision that could potentially make life more expensive feels irresponsible: “Rent is crazy right now. I'm looking at the cheapest place I can find that I'm happy to live in. And so I think if utilities specifically were a little bit more reactive, renters might have a little bit more skin in the game when it comes to green energy and living in sustainable housing.”

In addition to discussing the challenges facing renters, participants also turned the conversation towards the experiences of unhoused people in O-day'min, highlighting that conversations about sustainability often leave out marginalized people. “This idea of energy efficient housing is so funny to me,” said one participant, “because I just think that there's so many people who are not even housed, and they bear the brunt of what's happening [which is] climate change.” Another individual illustrated the precarious line between housed/unhoused when discussing the long wait times they have experienced trying to access subsidized housing: “I've been on the waiting list for like five, maybe six years that I've been here. And they said they'll let me know and I kept calling and calling and you know, I never got it so I have to like stay at my mom's or stay at a friend's or you know, like, it's always been like that for the first four years, you know.”

2. How would you like to see local leaders engage the O-day'min community in the decision-making process and what role should the community play in defining the shift to a net-zero economy?

Dissatisfaction with government was a key theme from our previous session, with participants expressing a desire to see more ambitious action from their elected officials. In this conversation, we gained further insight into the specific ways that O-day'min community members hope to see their relationships change with local government.

Barriers to getting engaged

Throughout the conversation participants acknowledged that mobilizing people to get involved is a difficult task. One participant who had experience trying to organize community events





expressed that they had encountered serious roadblocks in getting people interested: “we've had to cancel two of these [events] in a row just because people don't sign up for them. Nobody's interested.” Another person who had experience working in government stated that they often felt as though people simply weren't interested: “If people don't bring the issues to us, we never hear about them. The community needs to take a little bit of initiative of its own, and then reach out to their councillors and reach out to their community leaders.”

However, several participants stated that the community wants more meaningful engagement, as it often feels as though politicians only care about their perspectives during election time:

“I do think there also has to be effort on governments and bureaucratic individuals, to engage our communities. Sometimes there's this issue of like, people only talk to you during times of an election, or when it's like a photo op, or when it kind of seems relevant. But when it comes to the day to day decision making, these kinds of things, it's almost - you're almost seen as a little less relevant.”

Likewise, participants highlighted that marginalized communities are less likely to have connections to avenues of power than communities with more wealth and privilege. They also noted that many communities feel abandoned by their leaders: “There's a lot of reasons why a lot of communities aren't engaged, because they have been left behind. They don't vote because they have been left behind. They know that nobody cares about them.”

Changing the public consultation model

When discussing what they disliked in their experiences conversing with leaders, participants expressed disliking the typical “town hall” format of consultation. That stated that the short time period and “speaker list” format didn't feel like a genuine conversation, but rather a lineup of individuals airing grievances. Likewise, they expressed that only a tiny sliver or extroverted community members tend to show up to these kinds of events, at times creating a polarized environment: “I don't know how leaders can get around that problem of actually finding out like the real needs of the society or the area, when it's always a very, very small representation of the people who are living there, just just by virtue of the way that this thing is set up, you know.”

Instead, participants expressed wanting a more interactive, dynamic, conversational style experience where politicians join into the conversation, rather than simply answering questions. The positive experiences they recalled were all one-on-one or small group discussions that didn't



alienate them with jargon: “Half the time I’m like, This sounds incredibly boring, the way they’re phrasing it. And second of all, I feel like I have nothing to say because no, like – I don’t know. It’s like, when they’re talking about like, economics for community development stuff.”

Additionally, participants expressed wanting to see evidence of tangible action after being consulted. One individual discussed participating in the consultation process for a proposed infrastructure project that they initially felt passionate about, but after several years of stalling, lost hope in: “Like, is this actually happening? Or is this just like a stepping stone funded thing to help you - what? Pay your bills, so you can keep putting this proposal out there for longer? Like, what’s the end goal of this?”

3. What educational support (in both soft and hard skills) would better prepare your community for new opportunities presented by the net-zero economy?

For our final session in O-day’min, we decided to expand our traditional question development format to introduce a discussion on worker preparation in the net-zero economy, as part of our partnership with Alberta EcoTrust’s Climate Innovation Grant program. This grant is focused on supporting workers to develop in-demand skills. This drove us to better understand what supports our participants desire in their journey to securing meaningful, stable employment.

Updating curriculums for our changing times

Participants expressed a sense that existing educational institutions are lagging on adequately preparing students to take advantage of the opportunities available in the net-zero economy. One participant with experience in the renewable energy sector stated that “academia and schooling and education hasn’t caught up with where the industry is” in terms of moving towards training students in renewable power generation. Another person expressed that they “wanted to kind of get into that kind of stuff” but thought that the only jobs available would be highly technical ones that weren’t suited to their interest in graphic design: “I thought I had to get a bachelor’s in one specific field, and there was only one or two routes that you could take.”

Participants expressed a desire for educational institutions to integrate conversations about the energy transition more broadly outside of specific energy and environment focused disciplines. For example, a university student conveyed disappointment that these issues weren’t being discussed in their classrooms: “We don’t have a lot of conversations about how can we ensure





that we're still taking care of our planet while we're trying to make money...that's something that really has stood out to me, as I finished my last year of university, like going into these higher level business classes and still not seeing that connection between like, taking care of the planet and taking care of your business.”

Creating funded skills-training opportunities

Participants spoke at length about the exorbitant cost of getting an education, the burden of student debt, and their desire for funded training for people at all stages of their careers. Whether it be students starting their first internship or experienced fossil fuel workers seeking to transition into new industries, they articulated that providing financial support is critical to building a well-trained workforce.

One person expressed that expanded access to work-study programs would have the dual effect of supporting students and strengthening the community: “Especially in the O’Day-min area, like [having] a school right in the middle of it...having projects or like smaller jobs or stuff like that, that students are able to take part in like, that would be pretty cool. Maybe the school could partner with the community somehow and be able to offer students credits in exchange for working on these projects.”

Participants also expressed an interest in accessing more holistic workforce preparation in addition to technical training. One individual with experience in career advising stated that “because of AI and automation, hard skills are becoming defunct at a faster and faster rate. And what is of more value is having soft skills and emotional intelligence.”

Support with job-hunting

Participants discussed the difficulties of job hunting in the digital era, which they described as a laborious, confusing, opaque, and sometimes invasive process when it comes to collection of your information online. Workers seeking jobs in new industries also struggle to reconcile their lack of experience with stringent requirements on job ads: “Most jobs, they want like experience, like one or two years experience, so it's harder, because then you know, you don't want to lie and be like yeah, I do... But you know, like some people don't have that experience to get the jobs that they want, so they're not picked.”

Likewise, participants articulated that most jobs are acquired through personal networks and word of mouth, making it difficult to break into a new field: “it's really hard to find something - like





if you wanted to work in renewable resources and find something in that kind of new field, I don't think students know where to look.” Another person reiterated that without inside knowledge of certain industries or companies, breaking in can be intimidating: “How do you actually make that over here, unless you know Tim, who knows John, who knows someone who was working over there.”

3. What We Learned

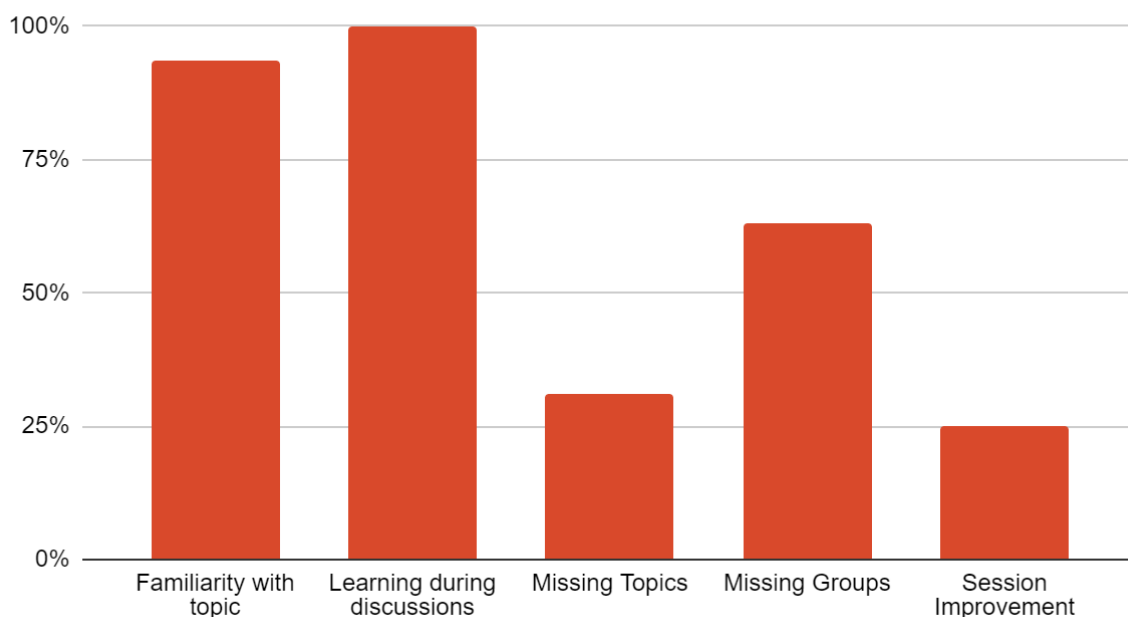
Feedback

We shared feedback forms for participants to fill out, to assess their experience with the session. All 19 participants filled out the feedback form, with the level of satisfaction averaging 4.2 out of 5 satisfaction levels. 38% of participants rated their satisfaction level as 5, while 44% rated 4, and 19% rated their satisfaction level as 3.

Figure 3.1 - Feedback Form Results summarized participants’ feedback on the session. 94% indicated that they were familiar with the topics prior to the discussion, and 100% indicated that they learned something new during the discussions. 31% of participants suggested topics that were not talked about, such as climate justice work and its impacts with equity deserving communities, affordable daycares, and the topic of social housing within the net-zero conversation. 63% of participants pointed out groups that they thought were not represented in the discussion, such as government and city officials, university students and student leaders, environmental organizations, and homeless persons. Lastly, 25% of participants suggested improvements for the session, such as opening the session with a smudge, beginning the discussion with an overview of the participants’ backgrounds and general concerns, and providing a chance for participants to talk to everyone by switching tables.



Figure 3.1 - Feedback Form Results



Overall, participants provided positive feedback for the sessions, including mentions of specific facilitators, and appreciation for the provided reimbursements. For future contacts, all participants would be interested in continuing the conversation at a later date, and to be contacted by I&E for future projects and activities.

Conclusions

The community conversation held by I&E in O-day'min on September 16th, 2023 served as an opportunity for community members to meet their neighbours and discuss large-scale crises like climate change and the cost of living crisis in a non-polarizing environment. 100% of participants left the conversation having learned something new. Reflecting on the outreach process, it's clear that word of mouth and direct email outreach remain the two most powerful tools in our mobilizing toolkit, and they will continue to serve as the foundation of our outreach efforts. Future outreach in Edmonton will focus on groups we were unable to reach as effectively, such as fossil fuel workers and students.





Participants shared their fears of the future, expressing exhaustion over the looming threat of climate change and the increasing unaffordability of everyday life. Regarding sustainable and affordable housing access, participants highlighted the experiences of renters and unhoused people as of particular concern in Ward O-day'min. They demanded that local leaders engage with the community beyond the conventional public consultation process, in a more conversational and action-oriented manner. They pointed to job preparation support, such as updated educational curriculums, funded skills-training opportunities, and assistance with the digital job hunting process as valuable tools for navigating the burgeoning net-zero economy.

These sessions were held at a pivotal moment in the O-day'min community, following several years of economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing awareness of the immediacy of climate change following the difficult 2023 wildfire season. The overwhelmingly positive feedback received from participants indicates that we succeeded in providing a non-polarizing environment to discuss the many environmental and economic changes underway in O-day'min and Edmonton at large.

4. Next Steps

I&E plans to share the knowledge gained from this community event with the community of O-day'min and other communities across Canada. The discussions sparked by this event have the potential to inspire future conversations, ideas, and community interests. This being our third session in O-day'min, we will wrap up this part of the communities program.

We will compile all final reports that summarizes the needs and desires of O-day'min residents and surrounding areas. These reports will be shared with our outreach network, key stakeholders, decision-makers, and published on our website for the benefit of all. Additionally, the communities team and other I&E programs will explore post-session opportunities resulting from these sessions. If you would like to learn more about the program's progress and the work that takes place after the sessions, please contact us at communities@ironandearth.org.





Appendix A

The following appendix contains the script that was used as a general guide by the facilitators for the first Edmonton Community Conversation conducted by Iron and Earth.

Script for Facilitating an Iron and Earth Session - Third O-Day'min Session

CONVERSATION TIME BREAKDOWN:

1. Session Introduction: 20 minutes
2. Breakout Group Setup: 5 minutes
3. Breakout Conversations: 60 minutes
4. Break: 10 minutes
5. Reporting Back: 5 minutes
6. Session Conclusion: 20 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 120 minutes

DOORS CLOSE TIME: 2:10 pm/when max capacity is reached

START TIME: 2:00 pm

END TIME: 4:00 pm

SETUP START TIME: 1:00 pm

SETUP PERSON:

- Set up presentation slides/theater screen
- Setup microphone(s) and lighting
- Have a facilitator in front doing headcount checking registered names and hand out registration forms if they haven't filled them, for those unregistered, provide registration form and letter of consent. Once we cap our numbers lead folks to fill up our sign up sheet





SESSION INTRODUCTION: 20 Minutes

Session Overview Introduction:

Greetings everyone and welcome to the third Community Conversation hosted by Iron & Earth featuring O-Day'min. This series of discussions is taking place throughout Edmonton with a focus on livelihoods, climate change, and opportunities and developments related to achieving a net-zero economy.

[primary facilitator introduce themselves]

- name
- pronouns (if desired)
- association with Iron & Earth
- Why are you facilitating today? / provide goals for session

We would like to acknowledge the Indigenous land where we are today within Treaty Six Territory and Métis Region 4 in amiskwaciy-wâskahikan, so-called Edmonton. The home of many Indigenous Peoples including the Cree, Tsuut'ina, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Haudenosaunee, Dene Suliné, Anishinaabe, and the Inuit.

Funding for this event is generously provided by the David Suzuki Foundation and Alberta EcoTrust through their Climate Innovation grant.

Iron & Earth has completed two previous sessions within the O-Day'min community with the goal of building relationships that go beyond a simple consultation process. We aim to meet communities where they are at, to understand their ideas on extreme weather events, the transition, potential solutions, and their level of preparedness on each of these issues. We shared with you a 1-page highlights report for our communities program so that you have an idea of what to expect from the session. We recognize that each community is different.





After our conversation, we'll create a brief report to serve as a resource for understanding the needs and desires of O-Day'min's residents. We'll share it with our outreach network, key stakeholders, decision-makers, and publish it on our website.

In the rest of this session, we'll talk about the O-Day'min community and its current challenges. Your breakout group will address three questions about the community, its challenges, and your vision for the future. There is also pen and paper if you prefer to share your ideas in a written or graphic form.

Each group will have a facilitator. You'll be in those breakout groups for about 60 minutes. With each question taking up to 20 minutes.

Finally, we'll come back together for a quick wrap-up and aim to be done by 4:00pm.

If you haven't filled out our registration or consent forms please fill it and give it to one of our facilitators.

IMPORTANT: This is a space that welcomes diversity of opinions, we ask that these conversations are approached with mutual respect and care. We endeavor to have a meaningful conversation with the participants who have diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experience.

Privacy Policy:

We shared a letter of consent for you to sign. In it we explained the participation, reimbursement and confidentiality processes. From it:

We would like to highlight that we will be recording today's conversation, but the transcripts and documents collected will only be shared between Iron & Earth staff. After this process ends, the notes will stay with Iron & Earth. These notes will be used to produce our reports. However, your participation will remain anonymous.

We do want to include some quotes in the community and final reports, but they will have no name attached to them.





We also want to make sure that you know that you are free to leave at any point during this session. We truly appreciate your time and respect your privacy.

Lastly, we ask that you please do not record, or photograph the conversation.

Facilitator Introductions:

We have 2 other local facilitators with us today.

[Secondary Facilitators please introduce yourselves]

- name
- pronouns (if desired)
- association with Iron & Earth
- Why are you facilitating today? / provide goals for session

Conversation Introduction:

What is this conversation about?

- **Livelihoods:** Our livelihood is our means of meeting our basic needs, such as food and shelter
- **Climate Change:** Human driven extreme weather events and increasing global temperatures, are having significant impacts and posing major challenges for communities
- **Energy Transition Opportunities:** The shift from an energy mix based on fossil fuels to one based on renewable energy sources.





What's going on in Edmonton?

- Edmonton has experienced extreme weather events like heat waves, cold snaps, extreme precipitation, and related events such as wildfires. The 2023 wildfire season has caused an increase in smoke and a reduction in air quality across the province.
- 75% of Edmonton residents are concerned about climate change and 70% want to do more to prevent it.
- The municipal government offers retrofit, grant, and engagement programs for climate change action, but there are funding and accessibility issues with some of them.

What's going on in O-Day'min?

- New LRT line into downtown is almost done but delayed due to engineering miscalculations and construction delays.
- Community gardens and Sundance Housing Co-op in O-day'min improve community wellbeing.
- Affordability is a major concern with around 3000 people homeless in Downtown Edmonton and many struggling with rising grocery and utility bills.
- Downtown has a large Chinese and immigrant population who experienced increased xenophobia during the pandemic.

BREAKOUT CONVERSATIONS: 60 Minutes

Setting-up Breakout Groups: 5 minutes

[Facilitators remember to turn on recorder in the breakout group]

[Participants should do a round table of names at the beginning of the breakout recording. This is only for reference purposes, the name will not show in any of our results]

1. Question 1 20 Minutes





What educational support (in both soft and hard skills) would better prepare your community for new opportunities presented by the net-zero economy?

(if participants ask for examples: resume development , interview preparation, skill upgrading, workplace certifications, internships, opportunity accessibility/advertisement, etc.)

2. Question 2 20 Minutes

How could housing that is energy efficient, and resilient to environmental changes be made more affordable/accessible for renters and homeowners in O-day'min?

3. Question 3 20 Minutes

How would you like to see local leaders engage the O-day'min community in the decision-making process and what role should the community play in defining the shift to a net-zero economy?

BREAK: 10 MINUTES

Reporting back to the room: 5 minutes

CONCLUSION: 20 MINUTES

Desired outcomes and impacts of this project

We conduct three sessions within each community, this being the third for O-Day'min, we will be wrapping up this part of the program in O-Day'min, completing the final reports and needs assessments. These reports will summarize the needs and desires of O-Day'min's residents and will be shared with our outreach network, key stakeholders and decision-makers, and published on our website for everyone's benefit.





If you're interested in learning more about the program's progress and post-session work, please reach out to communities@ironandearth.org and one of our team members will be happy to provide an update. We are planning to host more sessions in other areas of Edmonton in the coming months, so stay tuned!

Please share your feedback on this conversation. Let us know if there's anything important we missed, anything you learned, or anything else you want to tell us!

[Share feedback forms and give time to fill them out]

Finally, we would like to remind everyone that all reimbursements are subject to a processing time of 10 business days.

On behalf of Iron & Earth, I'd like to thank you again for joining us. Have a wonderful rest of your day!

[SESSION END]

[Collect remaining registration and consent forms and Audio Recording Devices]

