

## Popular skating path returns to Victoria Park

November 21, 2016

A popular skating path that opened in Victoria Park last winter as a pilot project is back for a second year and will be expanded. The Freezeway will reopen as the IceWay.

In 2016, the City of Edmonton is bringing the skating path back to Victoria Park under the new name to better reflect the recreational nature of the ice surface and to honour the original intent of the "Freezeway" being an ice path for commuters.



The idea of a Freezeway originated with Matt Gibbs, a landscape architect and former Edmontonian who envisioned a downtown "skate to work" ice path for commuters. Gibb's design, which was also his Master's thesis, won the top prize in the 2013 COLDSCAPES International Urban Design competition.

In 2015, the City of Edmonton, with Gibb's input, piloted the idea of the "Freezeway" at Victoria Park with a twist of being a recreational ice surface rather than a commuting ice surface. The resulting Freezeway pilot project, in Victoria Park, was a busy and popular spot in late 2015 and early 2016.

This year the ice surface will be expanded at the Victoria Park location, and the City is looking at the possibility of having a second site in the river valley as well.

The IceWay path starts off the existing Victoria Skating Oval, and there will be direct access between the Oval and the IceWay. Rubber mats will be placed between the two ice surfaces to encourage skaters to stop and look before moving through.

At times when the Victoria Skating Oval is closed to the public, for maintenance or use by the Edmonton Speed Skating Association, the IceWay will remain open but will not be accessible from the Oval.

Admission is free, and parking will be available in the Victoria Park main parking lot, Victoria Park east lot, and at the Victoria Golf Course.

Weather permitting, the City hopes to have the IceWay open early December 2016. Once the skating surface is ready, the IceWay will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

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