

CITY BUILDING

District Planning Engagement and Communications Summary

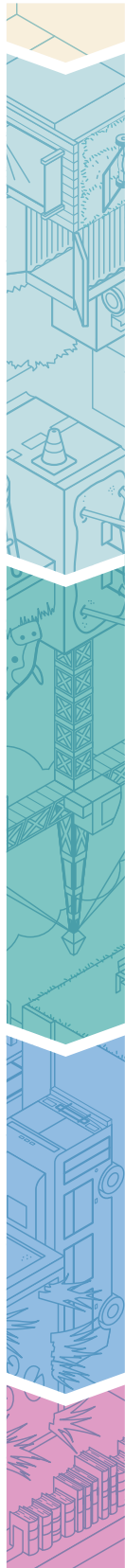
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April 2024

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

District Planning Engagement Snapshot



City Plan Engagement (2018 – 2020)

PHASE 1A: Prototype Testing (January – July 2021)

February – May 2021:

- 2 Stakeholder information sessions
 - 48 Core stakeholder representatives attended
 - 334 Comments received
- 18 Stakeholder meetings

1 Check in with Urban Planning Committee (February 2021).

June – July 2021:

- 1 Stakeholder information session
 - 16 Core stakeholder representatives attended
 - 122 Comments received
- 13 Stakeholder meetings
- 8 Online public information sessions
 - 50 Participants attended
 - 150 Comments received

PHASE 1B: Draft Plans (August 2021 – May 2022)

August – December 2021:

- 19 Stakeholder meetings

January – May 2022:

- 23 Stakeholder meetings/events

2 Check ins with Urban Planning Committee (August 2021 and April 2022)

PHASE 2A: REFINE-level Engagement (June – November 2022)

June – August 2022:

- 1 Engaged Edmonton webpage – 506 page visits
- 8 Pop-up events – 367+ interactions
- 1 Online survey – 63 responses
- 7 Online workshops – 108 participants
- 9 Stakeholder meetings
- 1,000+ Comments received

September – November 2022:

- 16 Engaged Edmonton webpages – 6,300 page visits
- 4 Pop-up events – 46+ interactions
- 1 Online survey – 1,625 responses
- 6 Online workshops with Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative – 143 participants
- 14 Open Houses with Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative – 250+ attendees
- 24 Stakeholder meetings
- 2,200+ Comments received

PHASE 2B: Revisions to Draft Plans (December 2022 – early October 2023)

- 41 Stakeholder meetings

1 Check in with Urban Planning Committee (January 2023)

PHASE 3: ADVISE-level Engagement (late October – December 2023)

- 1 Engaged Edmonton webpage – 30,000 page visits
- 3 Online surveys – 1,752 responses
- 5 In-person engagement sessions – 102 attendees
- 4 Online engagement sessions – 105 participants
- 2 Geographic plan online engagement sessions – 7 participants
- 1 Regional information session – 8 municipalities
- 16 Chat With A Planner meetings
- 19 Stakeholder meetings
- 5,200+ Comments received

1 Check in with Urban Planning Committee (December 2023)

PHASE 4: Finalize and Recommend Plans (January– May 2024)

- 2 Stakeholder meetings – January to March
- Release of final draft Policy and plans – April 2024
 - 3 Virtual Information Sessions
- City Council Public Hearing – May 28 to 30

The data is current as of March 6, 2024

Engagement Overview

Edmontonians have shaped the District Planning project over the last five years through:

- + Sharing their desire to live more locally during The City Plan's creation.
- + Providing input during the initial district plan prototype testing in 2021.
- + Helping refine the first policy drafts over a four-month period in 2022 through workshops, surveys, open houses and more.
- + Giving final feedback in November 2023 on the updated draft district plans, existing geographic plans to keep, change or retire and what the City should work on following the project.

This document provides highlights of the key public engagement activities at each phase of the District Planning project. In addition to hosting in-person and online engagement sessions, the project also collected feedback and shared information through:

- + Presentations to community groups by request.
- + One-on-one meetings with members of the public or stakeholder group representatives.
- + Project emails or scheduled phone-calls.
- + Pop-up events in the community.

Details of all engagement activities can be found within the What We Heard Reports which are available on edmonton.ca/districtplanning.

Engagement Approach

The City Plan

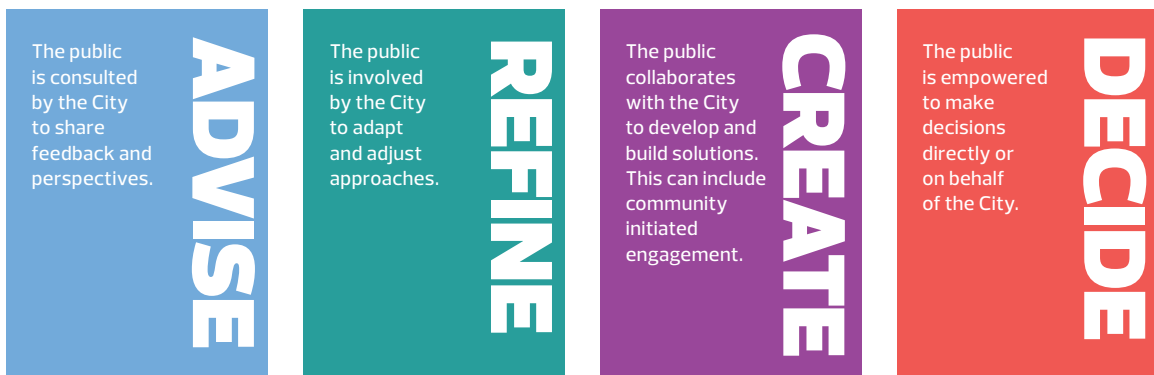
The process of engaging Edmontonians to gather input and insights for the development of Edmonton's first iteration of the District Policy and plans started with the engagement done to create The City Plan. Between 2018 and 2020, thousands of Edmontonians [engaged](#) at the Create (public collaborates with the City to develop and build solutions) and Refine (public is involved by the City to adapt and adjust approaches) level on the [City's public engagement spectrum](#) to develop a plan for Edmonton's future. The City Plan is that shared vision for Edmonton to become a healthy, urban, climate resilient city of 2 million people and will guide planning for years to come.

During this engagement, Edmontonians shared their desire to live more locally in a "Community of Communities." This is why The City Plan introduced a new planning geography called districts—collections of diverse neighbourhoods where Edmontonians can strengthen their connections and meet most of their daily needs closer to home. District plans will help implement this vision by communicating and illustrating

how each district is intended to physically change according to The City Plan. This includes where we should build, what we should build and how we move and grow within the city.

District Planning

With the direction set in The City Plan, district plans do not introduce any new strategic direction. Instead, district plans draw from existing Council-approved policy documents like The City Plan or other geographic plans, and Council decisions made at land development public hearings. The main goal of district plan engagement was not to create a new vision for each district, but rather establish a district plan for each district. This involved consolidating existing planning direction into one comprehensive plan and ensuring that all district plan maps and policies aligned with The City Plan and other relevant documents, including accurate depictions of existing features like parks, schools and rail lines. Therefore, engagement focused on gathering input on specific aspects of the plans to adapt, or adjust content, rather than creating entirely new directions.



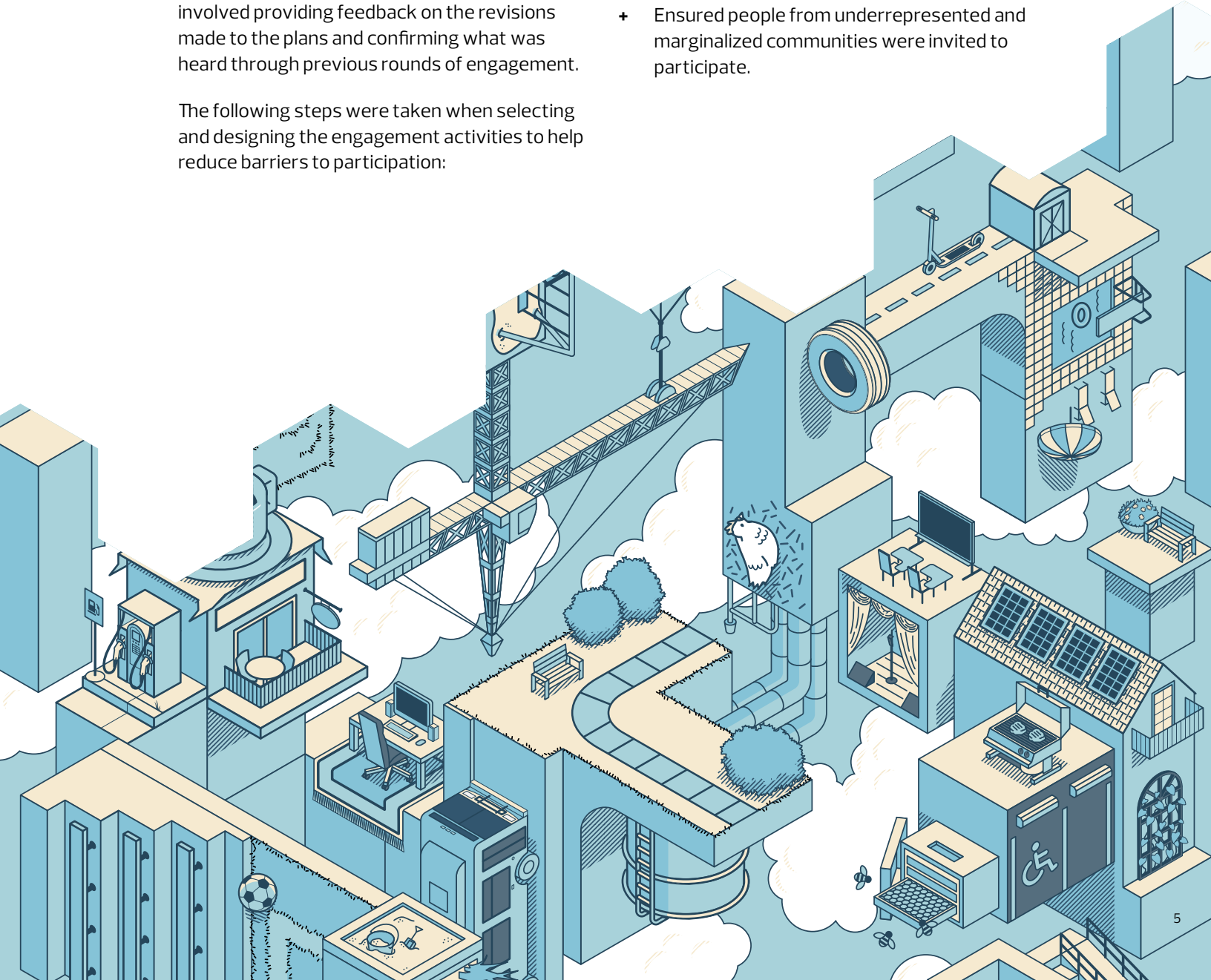
The City's Public Engagement Spectrum

District Planning Engagement Design & Public's Level of Influence

To ensure district plan alignment with The City Plan's vision and existing planning documents, Edmontonians and stakeholders were asked to participate at the Refine level (public is involved by the City to adapt and adjust approaches) of the City's Public Engagement Spectrum at the start of the project to share their thoughts and ideas on adjusting the Policy and plan content. In the later stages of the project, Edmontonians and stakeholders were asked to participate at the Advise level (public is consulted by the City to share feedback and perspectives that are considered) of the engagement spectrum. This involved providing feedback on the revisions made to the plans and confirming what was heard through previous rounds of engagement.

The following steps were taken when selecting and designing the engagement activities to help reduce barriers to participation:

- + Used simple language and avoided the technical terminology, where possible.
- + Developed resources to explain the project and how district plans are intended to be used to inform planning decisions.
- + Reached out to communities and met people where they were at (such as pop-up events).
- + Combined engagement activities with other City projects to reduce engagement fatigue.
- + Used a variety of traditional and digital marketing, and communications tactics to invite a wide range of Edmontonians to participate.
- + Ensured people from underrepresented and marginalized communities were invited to participate.



How We Engaged

PHASE 1: District Policy and Plan Prototype Testing (January to July 2021)

Purpose: Phase 1 was about introducing the District Planning project, how it contributes to The City Plan's implementation and gathering questions and initial impressions. This phase was also about testing the structure, organization, level of detail proposed and appearance of sample prototypes for the District Policy (formerly District General Policy) and three district plans.

Who we engaged:

The prototypes were shared with The City Plan's core stakeholders – a group of 100 individuals representing more than 90 organizations that represent different communities, such as residents, community leagues, business owners, advocacy groups and industry, from across Edmonton. The online public information sessions were open to all residents, community league representatives, industry members and community organizations.

Level of Influence: **REFINE**-level

Engagement Activities

- + 3 Stakeholder information sessions
- + 31 Stakeholder meetings
- + 8 Online public information sessions



The following stakeholder groups attended the public information sessions:

- Property owners and renters (22%)
- Community league representatives (30%)
- Non-profit organizations (2%)
- Post-secondary students (14%)
- Developers, builders and industry representatives (6%)
- Business operators, owners and representatives (2%)
- Other (4%)
- Prefer not to say/Did not answer (20%)

HOW FEEDBACK WAS USED

WHAT WE HEARD	WHAT WE DID
<p>Wording was too vague in some cases, while in other cases it was too prescriptive. The policy wording and verbs used need refining to provide clear-but-flexible guidance.</p>	<p>Policies were reviewed to clarify their intent and alignment with the City Plan. Verbs were adjusted to be more flexible, reducing the need for frequent plan amendments.</p>
<p>Stakeholders requested the addition of new or important terms to a Glossary at the end of the District Policy.</p>	<p>A glossary was added to define new or important terms like "Arterial Roadway" and "District Mass Transit."</p>
<p>District plan maps are hard to understand due to complicated symbols and excessive layers. Participants found it difficult to grasp the purpose of each map and requested explanations to aid their understanding.</p>	<p>Map descriptions were added to district plans, map symbols were adjusted and overly complex maps were split into two to reduce information overload. For instance, the District Context map was separated into an assets map and a development considerations map.</p>
<p>The documents lacked clarity on how the District Policy related to district plans, The City Plan, other geographic plans, the Zoning Bylaw and the implementation of the "Community of Communities" vision as Edmonton's population grows</p>	<p>Updated the introductory sections of the plans to explain the connection to The City Plan vision. Added more sections to explain how to use the district plans, the relationship between other geographic plans and the zoning bylaw.</p>

PHASE 2: REFINE–Level Engagement (June to November 2022)

Purpose: Phase 2 was about hearing Edmontonians' ideas and feedback on how the draft District Policy, district plan policy and map content should be adapted or adjusted to ensure alignment with The City Plan direction and existing planning documents. While Phase 1 was focused on first impressions of the prototype documents, Phase 2 was the first opportunity for Edmontonians to review a complete draft of all 15 district plans.

From June to August 2022, engagement focused on the early release of the draft District Policy. The District Policy was released early to allow Edmontonians ample time to review and share their feedback on the policies that would inform how change is expected to happen within their district. The 15 draft district plans were then released in August 2022, with engagement on both the plans and the Policy continuing through to November 2022. This phase provided Edmontonians the first opportunity to provide their input on the node and corridor boundaries in their district and to correct any errors or identify missing information in the maps.

This phase was also about hearing from members of the public affected by the geographic plans proposed to be kept, changed or retired. The goal was to understand any perceived impacts of the recommendation for their geographic plan (retire, change or keep) and gather feedback on whether the district plan accurately and completely incorporated the remaining relevant direction from the geographic plans proposed to be retired.

Level of Influence: **REFINE**–level

Engagement Activities

- + 17 Engaged Edmonton webpages (City's official online public engagement space)
- + 12 Pop-up events
- + 13 Online workshops
- + 2 Online surveys
- + 14 Open houses
- + 33 Stakeholder meetings



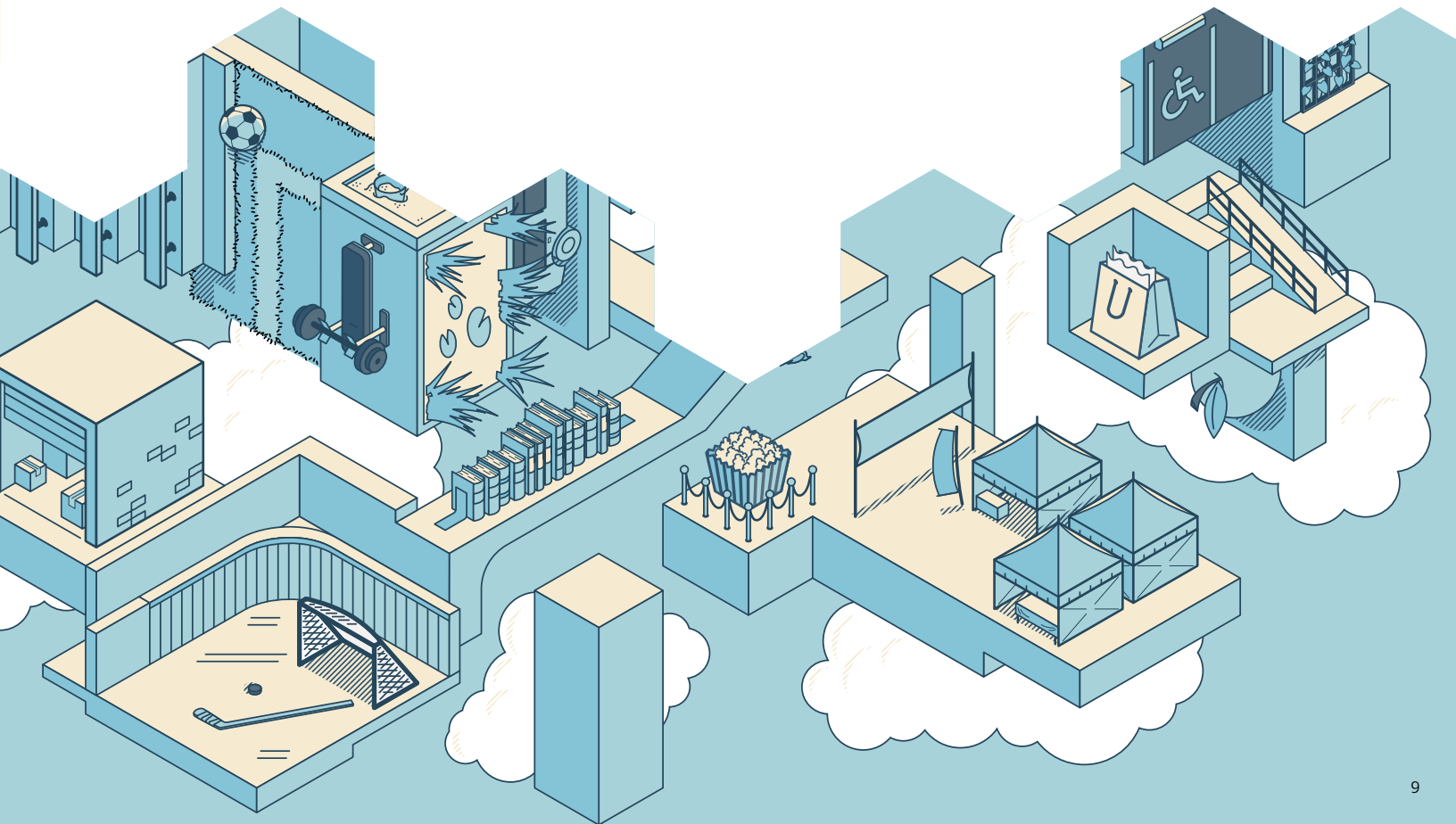
Who we engaged:

Phase 2 was about hearing from Phase 1 stakeholders and anyone affected or interested in the district plans or geographic plans proposed to be retired or amended, consisting of:

- Property owners and renters (65%)
- Community league representatives (<1%)
- Non-profit organizations (<1%)
- Public agencies and school boards (<1%)
- Post-secondary students (<2%)
- Developers, builders and industry representatives (<1%)
- Business operators, owners and representatives (<1%)
- Other (1%)
- Prefer not to say/Did not answer (31%)

The project aimed to reach diverse audiences and connected with the following equity-seeking organizations in 2022 to share information about the project:

- + Edmonton Local Immigration Partnerships
- + Enoch Cree Nation
- + Edmonton Aboriginal Seniors Centre
- + Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
- + Institute For The Advancement Of Aboriginal Women
- + Creating Hope Society
- + Edmonton Native Healing Centre
- + Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre
- + Canadian Native Friendship Centre
- + Bigstone Health Commission
- + The Red Road Healing Society
- + Edmonton Indigenous Support Network and Native Counseling Services of Alberta
- + Aboriginal Head Start
- + Ben Calf Robe Society
- + Inuit Edmontonmiut Working Group
- + NiGiNan Housing Ventures



How feedback was used:

Feedback from all Phase 2 engagement activities was collected and analyzed together by the project team. The below changes are summarized in more detail in the project's Overview of Changes document available on edmonton.ca/districtplanning.

WHAT WE HEARD	WHAT WE DID
<p>Node and corridor policies are unclear on what size of buildings are expected within boundaries. Participants wanted to see the plans focus development to specific areas.</p>	<p>Changed the level of support and direction for proposed development heights and locations within nodes and corridors to remove ambiguity and clearly support specific building sizes in specific locations throughout the nodes and corridors.</p> <p>Intensification Area policy and map content was removed from the District Policy and 15 district plans to make it clear that development will be considered throughout nodes and corridors.</p>
<p>The original High Rise category (9+ storeys) is too broad.</p>	<p>Added a new height category, Tall High Rise, defined as buildings 21 storeys or taller. This new category recognizes that areas suitable for 9-to-20 storey buildings may not be suitable for taller buildings.</p>
<p>The usability and readability of the plans is challenging to some users. Feedback requested map improvements to help readers distinguish between the district plan map features and locate specific parcels of land easier. Participants also indicated finding relevant policy information in this section was difficult.</p>	<p>Updated the How to Use section of the plans, redesigned where policies were located in the document and how they were communicated. Map symbols were changed, maps were redesigned for simplicity and more labels were added to the maps. Document formatting and organization was adjusted such that maps follow their respective supporting descriptions to improve the document functionality and narrative flow of the district plan content.</p>
<p>Requests for new policy direction or infrastructure projects in a particular area were received, such as suggesting a new bike lane or proposing new policies not in existing plans.</p>	<p>Feedback falling under the category of "new ideas," were themed and summarized as potential future projects for the City to consider after the current project and to be engaged on in Phase 3.</p>

PHASE 3: ADVISE–Level Engagement (October to Early December 2023)

Purpose: Phase 3 sought feedback and perspectives on the changes made to the draft District Policy, district plans and list of geographic plans proposed to keep, change or retire since the Phase 2 engagement in 2022. This phase was about validating the revisions made and confirming what was heard through our previous rounds of engagement before bringing the draft plans and geographic plan recommendations to a public hearing.

Feedback was also sought on the future work ideas collected in Phase 2 engagement to understand which ideas were most and least important for the City to initiate as a project. This phase was also about collecting additional ideas for future work items from the public.

Level of Influence: **ADVISE**–level

Engagement Activities

- + 1 Engaged Edmonton webpage (City's official online public engagement space)
- + 3 Online surveys
- + 5 In-person engagement sessions
- + 4 Online engagement sessions
- + 2 Geographic plan online engagement sessions
- + 1 Regional information session
- + 16 Chat With A Planner meetings
- + 18 Stakeholder meetings



Who we engaged:

Phase 3 was about hearing from the same stakeholders from Phase 2, consisting of:

- Property owners and renters (84%)
- Community league representatives (2%)
- Non-profit organizations (< 1%)
- Public agencies (< 1%)
- Developers, builders and industry representatives (< 2%)
- Business operators, owners and representatives (< 2%)
- Other (< 2 %)
- Prefer not to say / Did not answer (11%)

The project connected with the following equity-seeking organizations in 2023 to share information about the project:

- + Endpovertyedmonton
- + Youth Council
- + Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society and C5 North East Hub
- + Enoch Cree Nation
- + Women's Advisory Voice of Edmonton Committee
- + University of Alberta Black Students' Association
- + Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- + Shaama Centre
- + SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association

How feedback was used:

Feedback from all Phase 3 engagement activities was collected and analyzed together by the project team. Other feedback and changes are summarized in more detail in the project's Phase 3 What We Heard/What We Did Report available on edmonton.ca/districtplanning.

WHAT WE HEARD	WHAT WE DID
Desire to see policy prioritize placing the tallest buildings near mass transit (bus or LRT) stations.	Added proximity to mass transit as a criteria in the node policies to strengthen the connection between node development and mass transit, and increase development opportunities near mass transit stations.
Participants had varied views on the type, size and existence of nodes or corridors in their neighbourhoods. Some wanted boundaries expanded, others advocated for the project to reevaluate The City Plan's decisions.	Adjusted six node and corridor boundary changes in response to public feedback to align the boundaries with the Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines and to respond to neighbourhood context considerations.
Requests for new policy direction or infrastructure projects in a particular area were received, such as suggesting a new bike lane or proposing new policies not in existing plans.	Feedback falling under the category of "new ideas" were themed and summarized as potential future projects for the City to consider after the current project. "

How We Educated And Communicated

Throughout the District Planning project, we have made a concerted effort to bring Edmontonians along on the journey, helping them understand district plans as a new planning tool, the project's scope and how the project will streamline Edmonton's planning framework and implement The City Plan.

Note: The below data is current as of March 6, 2024.

How We Educated

- + Podcast series – award-winning* Making Space podcast (7,800+ total listens, 1,000+ listens on District Plans episode 4)
- + Podcast panel event – 1,200+ in-person and virtual participants
- + Videos – YouTube City Building video series (35,000+ views, 23,000+ views on District Plans video)
- + Public presentations – Edmontonians heard from the District Planning team at a handful of community-led and City Council-hosted events
- + Informational resources – 6 conversation starters, 4 educational documents and more

How We Communicated

- + Newsletters – 44+ newsletters, 2,700+ subscribers
- + Social media posts – 104+ posts
- + Website – 109,000+ edmonton.ca/districtplanning section visits

- + Media – 10 news releases, public service announcements and media advisories
- + Stakeholder meetings – 168+ meetings or presentations
- + Tax notice insert – mailed to ~400,000 property owners
- + Public engagement awareness campaigns – 4.4 million+ impressions
 - + Digital ads (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google)
 - + Traditional ads (newspaper, radio, postcards, road signs)
 - + Outdoor digital signage (in LRT stations and Ice District area)
 - + Road Signs (in high traffic node and corridor areas)
- + Stakeholder marketing packages – social and newsletter content to share with their communities

**The City of Edmonton's Making Space podcast won the 2023 IABC Gold Quill Award of Merit in the Communication Skills - Audio/Visual category (#24).*



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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