

# What We Heard Report Supportive Housing Engagement

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Inglewood  
King Edward Park  
Terrace Heights  
McArthur Industrial/Wellington

November 2020

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SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton



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## Introduction

Since 2009, more than 11,000 homeless individuals have been successfully housed because of the efforts of dozens of community partners, coordination and resources provided by Homeward Trust, and committed funding agreements from the City of Edmonton, the Government of Alberta, and the Government of Canada. Despite this remarkable progress, today Edmonton continues to see nearly 2,000 people experiencing homelessness, including approximately 600 people sleeping outside on any given night.

In response, Edmonton's City Council has prioritized the development of supportive housing as a cost effective, human-rights focused way to deliver housing to individuals experiencing homelessness. The supportive housing model addresses homelessness by focusing primarily on housing — a person experiencing homelessness is moved off the streets and into a safe, appropriate housing option. Residents receive wraparound services (such as medical services and life skills) embedded in the housing, which limits the extent to which they need to go off-site to receive essential support services.

### Prioritization of Supportive Housing by City of Edmonton City Council

While Edmonton's original *10-year plan to End Homelessness* (created in 2009) forecasted a need for 1,000 supportive housing units, funding only allowed 200 supportive housing units to be built. The persistent gap has limited Edmonton's ability to effectively reduce chronic homelessness.

Edmonton's *Updated Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* (released in 2017) identifies the need for 900 supportive housing units by 2024. The City of Edmonton has established an *Updated Affordable Housing Investment Plan* to develop **600 of those supportive housing units by 2022**, and an **additional 300 units by 2024**. The development of supportive housing is key to achieving the goals established in *A Place to Call Home: Edmonton's Updated Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*.

### Purpose of the Report

To build approximately 150 units of supportive housing, the City of Edmonton proposed four new sites for supportive housing in partnership with Homeward Trust. The sites are located in the communities of Inglewood, Terrace Heights, Wellington/McArthur Industrial and King Edward Park.

On June 29th, 2020 City Council approved the land sale of sites in Inglewood, King Edward Park, Terrace Heights and Wellington/McArthur Industrial to Homeward Trust. As a condition of the land sale, public engagement with all four communities was required, as well as rezonings for three of the sites.

The following report is a summary of the engagement process for the four proposed supportive housing sites. The report was prepared by Y Station, with support from the City of Edmonton's Affordable Housing and Homelessness Section.

The report describes how neighborhoods connected into the engagement, the questions community members had and summarizes the major themes and considerations arising from their input.

The report also provides two other long-term purposes.

First, this report provides **advice to service providers** that operate these proposed developments. Each neighbourhood provided clear feedback, what their concerns were, what it means to them that this would be part of their community and how (and sometimes even if) they believed supportive housing could be a part of their community. They also described what is important to them in a Good Neighbour Plan for the development. These neighbourhoods deliberately and diligently provided this input — what is synthesized here gives service providers a starting point and a frame of reference to build a rich relationship with their neighbours.

Second, the input summarized here, in aggregate, provides **advice for the City of Edmonton** on the things they should consider as other neighbourhoods are assessed and engaged for supportive housing in the future. Generally speaking, the importance of affordable housing and the need to provide housing for those experiencing homelessness is understood by Edmontonians, even those who oppose supportive housing in their community. The findings of this report should provide additional nuance in regard to supportive housing engagement and development over the course of the next set of engagements.



## Executive Summary

On June 29th, 2020 City Council approved the land sale of sites in Inglewood, King Edward Park, Terrace Heights and Wellington/McArthur Industrial to Homeward Trust. As a condition of the land sale, public engagement with all four communities was required, as well as rezonings for three of the sites.

This report summarizes the public engagement process between mid-June to late September 2020 with these neighbourhoods on three specific areas:

- General feedback from the community;
- What the neighbourhood values in a potential Good Neighbour Plan;
- Advice and considerations from each community around the design and physical form of the potential development.

A separate engagement process was also held by the Planning Coordination section of the City of Edmonton specifically for proposed changes to the zoning on three out of four of the proposed sites (those findings are in separate reports for [King Edward Park](#), [Terrace Heights](#) and [McArthur Industrial/Wellington](#).)

## Engagement Process

Thousands of Edmontonians across the four proposed neighbourhoods, and from across the city as a whole, participated in the engagement process for these projects, many of them several times, to provide thousands of written comments, emails or statements at meetings.

The engagement process was designed with not only multiple phases, which included updates to information and educational material based on the feedback from the community, but also provided multiple different ways participants could approach the engagements so they could do so at their own comfort level.

Opportunities to participate spanned three phases and included the following activities:

- Surveys
- Digital roundtables
- Email feedback
- Direct phone interviews
- Digital Question and Answer sessions
- Social media comments
- Feedback to City Councillors

This process was designed to be guided by engagement participants in both the way the engagement evolved over its phases and in the information it provided. In one such example, many participants in the roundtables wanted to know more about what life in supportive housing in Edmonton was like - as a result, the project team was able to find lived-experience stories on the basis of interviews with current residents of supportive housing (you can read these in [Appendix A](#)), and share them with participants ahead of the final engagement phase.

The ability for the engagement process to be nimble and reactive was important, as this was one of the early engagements the City of Edmonton entered into after public health guidelines were put in place due to COVID 19. Much of the planned engagement had to be adjusted to meet these new conditions while giving the proposed communities meaningful opportunities to contribute to the engagement process.

The methodology of this process, including its outcomes, is broken down in detail starting on page 11. It is worth noting that this process generated input from between 1,354 to 2,010 separate participants, providing thousands of qualitative and quantitative data points for analysis (including 5,373 open-ended answers written and submitted by participants in the surveys alone).

## Engagement Feedback

The summarized feedback from each neighbourhood begins on page 30. There you will find general thoughts on supportive housing, as well as commentary and prioritization around two specific decision points:

- What communities want to see in a Good Neighbour Plan for the proposed developments
- Building design recommendations for Homeward Trust's consideration

The feedback from each specific community is as varied as the communities themselves. While many communities brought up similar themes, such as crime and safety, it is important not to reduce the issues and the solutions they brought up to a single, city-wide phenomenon. Each community has nuances and preferences in how they view supportive housing, how they would like to be a good neighbour and how they might want to address any issues they identified. As will be identified in the community summary section of the report, each community will have a nuanced local approach to making the proposed developments a part of their community,

A summary of feedback for each community (presented in alphabetical order) is presented here. It is highly encouraged that the fully detailed summaries for each community be reviewed in addition to these short overviews.

## Inglewood

*(full summary begins on page 29)*

Generally speaking, Inglewood participants were largely supportive of the development. While they had some concerns about crime and safety issues, many Inglewood participants demonstrated a keen interest in developing a strong relationship with potential new supportive housing residents; signaled a desire to learn more about the development as it proceeded and wanted to know how green space in the neighbourhood would be affected.

**Good Neighbour Plan Feedback** - Inglewood's top three priorities for a Good Neighbour Plan include attention to property management standards, strong feedback loops and a solid issues resolution process with the service provider, and opportunities for ongoing engagement.

**Building Design Considerations** - Inglewood participants were generally positive about the massing model as a potential final design for the building, but wanted to see the trees and green space on the site be maintained to the fullest extent possible and suggested that there is opportunity for a community garden on the site.

## King Edward Park

*(full summary begins on page 35)*

King Edward Park participants were generally supportive of the potential development, but there were also some participants who had concerns or were opposed. The main prioritized concern for the community was, unlike other communities, questions around how stable the funding would be over the long term. Consistent and recurrent engagement themes included crime and safety issues, particularly given the site's proximity to Whyte Avenue and Mill Creek, a request for clarity around how this development would relate to other similar organizations like YESS and the Mustard Seed, and how the community would be able to collaborate with and welcome the supportive housing development.

**Good Neighbour Plan Priorities** - King Edward Park participants' top three priorities for a Good Neighbour Plan were setting property management standards, the creation of solid community commitments between the development and the community, and a clear and effective feedback loop and issues resolution process.

**Building Design Considerations** - King Edward Park participants generally found the presented design appealing, but felt that there were some height concerns in the context of the site. As the space has been used as a community garden before, the potential for green space and a community garden were common suggestions.

## Terrace Heights

*(full summary begins on page 41)*

Terrace Heights participants had the distinction of providing the most diverse feedback, as well as providing the most input of any of the proposed neighbourhoods. Most of the concerns in Terrace Heights revolved around looking for more information. Participants in the community wanted to understand the impact the development would have on crime and safety in the community, how they would learn more about the development during construction and while it was operating, and how surrounding amenities such as the library and skateboard park would be affected. Participants were also keen to know more about the typical resident in supportive housing.

**Good Neighbour Plan Priorities** - The three major priorities for a potential Terrace Heights Good Neighbour Plan were an emphasis on property management standards, that a strong feedback loop and issues resolution process would be in place and that the community would be able to help shape the community commitments between the development and the neighbourhood.

**Building Design Considerations** - Terrace Heights participants provided feedback less on the building itself and more about the site around the building. They mentioned the importance of designed green space around the building, as well as a potential community garden as a welcoming element, and wondered about whether the building could be more set back from the road.

## **Wellington/McArthur Industrial**

*(full summary begins on page 48)*

It is important to note that Wellington/McArthur Industrial participants broadly, but not universally, had concerns about the potential development within this community. Concerns about the development were most pronounced in the digital round table sessions, but tended to moderate in the surveys, describing a potential to show neighbourhood unity to welcome supportive housing residents. Of those that did not see the development as a fit for the community, they largely cited issues around the building exacerbating existing crime and safety issues in the community, the potential impact on property values, as well as a reduction in green space. Participants also felt there were issues with the engagement process, describing that they felt decisions around the development had already been made.

**Good Neighbour Plan Priorities** - Accordingly, the major priorities Wellington participants wanted to emphasize in the development of any Good Neighbour Plan were the community commitments made between the development and the Wellington community, including the Community League; a focus on developing property management standards around the building; and that appropriate feedback loops and an issues resolution process were in place if any issues with the development or its residents should arise.

**Building Design Considerations** - In keeping with the surrounding area, participants in Wellington wanted to explore the possibility of the building being lower and wanted the building to reduce the overall impact on green space in the community.

## City-Wide Feedback

*(fully summary begins on page 24)*

To be as inclusive and accessible as possible, the engagement process provided an opportunity for community members to share their thoughts, even if they did not reside in one of the four neighbourhoods proposed for supportive housing. Questions for these Edmontonians were more limited, essentially asking to provide their impressions, concerns or suggestions around supportive housing in Edmonton.

Overall, these participants (which made up close to 25% of all feedback collected in this process) stated they feel there is a need for non-market housing, particularly to those experiencing homelessness. The vast majority of individuals from outside of the four proposed communities were vocally supportive of the approach and the initiative to build additional supportive housing. It is very clear when reviewing these responses that Edmontonians from all walks of life have been listening to discussions around housing and homelessness in the last decade and view addressing these issues as a key priority.

## Next Steps

Feedback from the engagement process will be considered by Homeward Trust and the proposed site operator and used to inform the development of a Good Neighbour Plan and certain design elements for each of the four proposed sites.

City Council will also consider feedback shared through the separate Planning Coordination engagement process as part of their decision making on the proposed zoning changes in December 2020.

Going forward, this report will serve to provide direct and publicly available advice and neighbourhood-specific context to Homeward Trust (the proposed developer), the service providers who will work with supportive housing residents, and to City Administration as they move forward with supportive housing initiatives in the future.



## Methodology

Those living in the proposed neighbourhoods have significant experience and local wisdom to provide to this process.

The methodology for these engagements was designed to be as comprehensive and thorough as possible. As a general rule this was a process of multiples — each proposed neighbourhood was provided with multiple opportunities to engage, on multiple questions, in multiple ways, and at multiple stages. This process was also committed to capturing the nuance of community input, understanding that how a participant might feel about supportive housing would be complicated and often contain caveats. As a result, thousands of open-ended responses were recorded over the course of this engagement.

### *A Note on COVID-19 Adaptations*

*This process was originally designed and prepared to launch as early as the third week of March 2020. When public health guidelines were put into place, large portions of the engagement approach needed to be revised.*

*The adapted process was based on the same principles described below, and ultimately met many of the same aims and managed to engage many of the same people. In fact, it is the analysis of the project team that by adapting to the “new normal” imposed by COVID 19, this process likely received more input than it may have under more conventional circumstances.*

*While the engagement was adapted to be largely digital in nature, changes were made to allow for certain participants to provide input through other means, such as connecting directly to the project team through 311. In that specific instance, several interviews were conducted with participants in proposed neighbourhoods, most of them senior citizens.*

## General Approach

The approach to planning the communications and engagement for the supportive housing sites was focused on creating effective and constructive dialogue between the City and the communities. The engagement took a human-rights informed approach, one which protected the dignity and safety of individuals currently living in supportive housing and those who may come to live in the proposed sites.

The engagement on these four sites was structured to follow a three-phase plan:

- **Phase 1 (Mid-Late June 2020):** Small one-on-one conversations with Community Leagues, local leaders and city staff with neighbourhood knowledge to provide feedback on our planned engagement approach and begin information-sharing about the development. As Phase 1 started in the midst of the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings were held over the phone or video call, aside from a single Community League meeting that was held in person at the community hall while observing physical distancing. The logistics required in that instance and the subsequent worsening of the pandemic precluded any future in-person engagements after that point.
- **Phase 2 (June 29 - August 26, 2020):** A series of community roundtables that community members could sign up for online, as well as an online survey. The roundtables and survey were advertised through social media, a mailing list, on the supportive housing website, through the Community Leagues, as well as a mailed flyer to homes and businesses within a 200m radius of the proposed developments, which is more than three times the requirement for development permit notifications. A central hub of information on supportive housing, including early FAQs and information about how to be involved in engagement activities, was set up and advertised.

The original design intended to hold these roundtables in the homes of community members or in local destinations to give community members the opportunity to come together to discuss and ask questions in a more comfortable environment. This plan was obviously pre-empted by the COVID-19 pandemic, so the roundtables were held over Google Meets. Participants had the options to either participate through Google Meets or phone in to the roundtables. All roundtables had a moderator, a member of the City's planning team and a member of the Homeward Trust executive team in order to answer questions from participants and record any concerns to be addressed at a later date.

Following Phase 2, a one-page summary of feedback was developed for each proposed neighbourhood, capturing the major themes heard in all input. These summaries were posted publicly and shared with participants.

- **Phase 3 (August 26th - September 24th, 2020):** This phase was originally envisioned as two larger-scale public, in-person events in each of the four communities. As this was determined to be unsafe and inadvisable in the current health conditions, the third phase was converted to be hosted on Engaged Edmonton, which allowed participants to access surveys, ask specific questions, and connect into the separate zoning change engagement process. The Engaged Edmonton platform was advertised through the Engaged Edmonton page, community stakeholders, social media ads, as well as through multiple reminders through the participant email list.

Phase three also included two comprehensive livestream information sessions featuring representatives from Homeward Trust, the Edmonton Police Service, and a supportive housing service provider. The panelists answered questions from viewers that were submitted in advance, as well as questions that were received through the supportive housing email during the livestream. Each livestream lasted approximately two hours, covering more than 65 separate questions, all of which were linked and time code for easy access and sorting from participants that did not attend the live session. The live sessions were recorded and posted on the City of Edmonton's Youtube channel and the [supportive housing website](#).

The livestream sessions provided information to support a survey through Engaged Edmonton which asked respondents to share their opinions on the development generally, as well as features of the design and the proposed Good Neighbour Plan.

This phase also included a large update to the City of Edmonton supportive housing resource websites based on information that participants had specifically requested in Phase II. This included additional FAQs and anonymized stories from people living in supportive housing.

## City of Edmonton Engagement Spectrum



Communities were asked to participate in the engagement process in an **advisory** capacity - inviting participants to share feedback and perspectives considered for policies, programs, projects, or services.

### Principles of Engagement

The principles of this engagement were set in early in the process.

The project team talked to community resources, reviewed similar engagements, reports on supportive housing in Edmonton and other communities and talked to team members at Homeward Trust. As well, the project team visited several supportive housing facilities throughout Edmonton and met with current residents, heard their stories and learned about what supportive housing has meant for their lives. Those interviews and all research provided vital insights that informed our communications approach to communities. The anonymized stories of four of the residents are included in [Appendix A](#).

Those interviews, balanced with the anticipated needs of community members in the engagement phase, led our team to approach this engagement with the following principles in mind:

- Community members should have the opportunity to participate in an inclusive, accessible, timely and meaningful dialogue about these developments, sharing their perspectives and having their questions answered.
- Community members should be given the opportunity to express their perspectives - whether that is opposition, support or some other position - for these developments through multiple communication modes.

- Community members should be given the opportunity to consider these developments as more than physical infrastructure, to understand, to the extent possible, the impact the programming of supportive housing will have for future residents.

These principles manifested throughout our process, including our communications messaging, the communication methods utilized, and the nature of the questions asked in our engagement sessions.

## Communication Methods

The project team employed the following techniques to contact community members and collect input throughout this project:

### PHASE 1

- Targeted emails
- Targeted phone calls/meetings

### PHASE 2

- Mailed flyer to homes and businesses within a 200m radius of the site (this is more than three times the required development permit notice radius)
- Geo-targeted social media advertising
- Advertising through Community League social media
- Information sharing with Community Leagues and other community associations
- Online mailing list sign-up
- [Supportivehousing@edmonton.ca](mailto:Supportivehousing@edmonton.ca) email responses
- Direct telephone interviews when requested

### PHASE 3

- On-site signage
- Community feature videos
- Mailed letter to homes and businesses within a 200m radius of the site (three times the required development permit notice radius)
- Additional letters sent to homes directly adjacent to the development site
- Advertising through Community League social media and newsletters
- Targeted social media advertising
- Online mailing list sign-up
- [Supportivehousing@edmonton.ca](mailto:Supportivehousing@edmonton.ca) email responses and Engaged Edmonton responses

## What The Engagement Asked

Each engagement phase had its own questions and purposes as part of the overall engagement plan. However, the overall goal of the entire engagement design was to understand general feedback on supportive housing within each community; listen to specific input around what communities expected in a Good Neighbour Plan; and ideas around potential building design for development.

### PHASE 1: STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

- What are your thoughts about the proposal generally?
- What are your thoughts about the site selection?
- How do you think your community will react to this proposal?
- Who specifically in the community do you think we should talk to about this proposal (including those who are opposed that we should speak with)?
- Are there any formal or informal groups in the community that we might not be aware of that you feel we should connect with?

### PHASE 2: ROUNDTABLES

Roundtables tended to follow a loose format defined largely by participants' answers to the first question (How do you feel about this proposal generally?). Following that, the roundtables would use the following questions as prompts for input:

- In order to create and maintain a positive and productive relationship between the residents and staff of the supportive housing and the community, what needs to be in a Good Neighbour Plan?
- What are your initial thoughts on the building and the design?
- Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

### PHASE 2: SURVEY

- What is your postal code?
- New supportive housing developments are being proposed in four different communities: Inglewood, King Edward Park, Terrace Heights and Wellington. Which of those communities do you currently reside or operate a business within?
- Do you feel you understand what supportive housing is?
- How can this development be successfully integrated into your community?
- Are there any potential impacts that concern you about this development?
- What additional information would you like the City to provide to you around this specific development or supportive housing in general?
- Do you have any concerns or questions that you would like the City to answer about the proposed development?

- Do you have any additional questions or comments that you'd like to share?
- Demographic questions (age range, gender, relationship to community)

### PHASE 3: ENGAGED EDMONTON SURVEY

- Sorting Questions:
  - Which supportive housing development do you want to comment on?
  - How would you describe your relationship to this neighbourhood?
- Ranking Community Themes:
  - Based on the summary of Phase 2 for your community please rank the following themes from most important to not important.
  - Tell us more about your selections. Is there anything important that we need to know about your selections or your perspective on one of the themes?
  - Is there anything you believe needs to be added to the list of themes? Tell us why they are important to you.
- Input for a Potential Good Neighbour Plan:
  - Please review the following elements of a Good Neighbour Plan, and think about them in the context of your community. How important it is to include the following elements in the Good Neighbour Plan for your community?
  - Tell us more about your selections above [Good Neighbour Plan elements]. Is there anything important that we need to know about your selections?
  - Are there any elements of the Good Neighbour Plan that you do not have confidence in? If not, please explain.
  - Is there anything else you would want the operator of the potential supportive housing site to know about your community?
- Building Design Considerations:
  - From your perspective as a community member, what should the designer/architect keep in mind when finalizing the look and feel of the building?
- Final Question:
  - Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Demographic Questions

## Engagement Participation

### PHASE 1 - OUTCOMES

A total of 9 meetings across all four communities, including three with Community Leagues, one with a Community League association, and four with community stakeholders throughout three of the four communities.

### PHASE 2 - OUTCOMES

The project team held 16 small roundtable sessions, with 123 discrete participants total, though 24 individuals also attended multiple sessions. Sessions ran for roughly an hour and a half based on the number of questions and participants, with an average nine community participants per session.

Participation in roundtables roughly breaks down by community as follows:

- Inglewood: 26 participants
- King Edward Park: 26 participants
- Terrace Heights: 75 participants
- Wellington/McArthur Industrial: 61 participants.

In survey responses, there were a total of 1,620 responses to the Phase 2 survey. Those broke down by community as follows:

- Inglewood: 246 responses
- King Edward Park: 264 responses
- Terrace Heights: 309 responses
- Wellington/McArthur Industrial: 231 responses
- Responses from outside proposed neighbourhoods: 570 responses

### PHASE 3 OUTCOMES

In the adapted Phase 3 plan, the engagement had:

- A steady 25-30 active viewers per livestream panel
- 674 passive views (watching after the stream ended) on the first panel session; 236 passive views on the second panel session (as of the end of engagement).
- 390 responses to the Engaged Edmonton survey

These numbers cannot be presented as a combined total of impressions or engagements, as there is no assurance that there is no duplication between viewership of the livestreams and survey participants. There is also no way to break the views on the livestream or subsequent video viewing down by community.

However, looking at livestream views alone, there were a total of 970 views by the end of the engagement period. Assuming roughly equal viewership from each of the four communities, that would mean roughly 240 individuals in each community watched the livestream either live or after the stream had ended.

The number of Engaged Edmonton survey responses, shared in more detail in the What We Heard report, broke down as follows by community:

- Inglewood: 90 responses
- King Edward Park: 92 responses
- Terrace Heights: 130 responses
- Wellington/McArthur Industrial: 41 responses
- Other: 37 responses

The overall engagement design was developed to allow participants to provide their initial gut reaction to the responses to the proposals first, then review information about supportive housing built around those responses, and then provide another round of feedback. Reviewing the content of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 responses, the Phase 3 responses tended to be more focused on implementation and detail around the potential development.

#### OVERALL ENGAGEMENT METRICS

There were a number of elements supporting all three phases of engagement that reflect participant engagement and provided additional input, including:

- **5,373 responses to open-ended questions** written by participants and reviewed by the project team
- At least **1,354 separate participants** (derived from submitted postal code data)
- An overall engagement **mailing list of 1,014 separate participants** built throughout the engagements (many participants, however, did not include their email address at any point in the engagement)
- Social media statistics
  - Number of comments: 1,056
  - Reactions: 1,048 total ad reactions, including 866 likes/hearts and 122 angry/sad
  - Ads placed: 69 (4 types: "Take the Survey" "Share Your Perspective" "Attend Info Session" "Video" "Digital Engagement")
  - Click throughs on social media ads: 10,938
  - Views on community videos: 1,802 (full video)

**ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION BY AGE CATEGORY:**

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
<b>In engagement</b>	3%	24%	29%	18%	18%
<b>2019 Census</b>	6%	14%	14%	11%	11%

**ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION BY GENDER:**

	Woman/Girl	Man/Boy	Non-Binary	Gender Not Listed	Trans
<b>In Engagement</b>	69%	30%	0.06%	0.05%	0.04%
<b>2019 Census</b>	45%	45%	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%



## Engagement Input Summary

After collecting the input of thousands of participants over the course of two surveys that included thousands of entries, nearly 20 roundtable focus groups, more than two dozen interviews, 4 hours of recorded information sessions, and many emails and a review of social media comments, a summary of themes for these engagements are presented here.

### SECTION 1 - General Reflections

In addition to the specific community input that was gathered, there are a number of general reflections from the engagement process that are worth noting. The purpose of these reflections is to contextualize feedback and support future supportive housing engagement processes.

#### INFORMATION AROUND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Ongoing information about supportive housing is important. While a significant amount of the communication effort in these engagements went into defining supportive housing and answering questions posed by the community, there is still a need to persistently communicate what supportive housing is and is not, and what its intended impacts are. There is significant discussion in the public sphere around issues of housing and homelessness, and the spectrum of solutions can sometimes be unclear for residents and citizens who are not deeply embedded in these issues. Supportive housing is also defined differently in different cities, which adds to the confusion when trying to understand how it has worked in other jurisdictions.

Most participants, through no fault of their own, do not have access to a practical frame of reference for a properly run supportive housing development. It will be incumbent on the City of Edmonton to ensure that practical and evidence-based information about supportive housing be collected and synthesized as future developments are proposed across the City of Edmonton in future years.

### ATTENTION TO ADDRESSING PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME AND SAFETY

Generally, the most prevalent concern about the proposed developments expressed by community members was an impact on crime and safety. In some cases, this stemmed from long standing concerns about safety and crime in their community, which they feared would worsen as a result of the building. In other cases, concerns related to fear of the unknown or were derived from prolonged previous experience with an unrelated privately-owned problem property.

In response to these concerns, the City of Edmonton stated that it does not have evidence to suggest that supportive housing increases crime and, in fact, supportive housing has proven to reduce residents' interactions with police. The City has also studied the impact of non-market housing on the safety of five core neighbourhoods and found there was no correlation between crime and non-market housing.

Despite this, some remained concern about this issue for the following reasons:

- Some participants wanted very specific details about the individual service and support needs of residents who have not yet been identified. While the Edmonton Police Service and Homeward Trust were both able to speak to the general needs of residents during sessions, and information was provided on the websites, much of that still felt theoretical in the minds of community participants.
- Assumptions can influence perceptions about the behaviour of people experiencing homelessness and how they came to experience that condition. In some cases, individuals continue to view people living in supportive housing as "homeless people" even once they have been housed.
- A need for a more thorough understanding of what these sites are and are not. Early in the engagements, some of the pre-discussion information provided to roundtables and in surveys talked about where supportive housing fit into the spectrum of housing solutions. It was typically made very clear that supportive housing is not a halfway house, overnight shelter, medical safe injection site, drop-in service or bridge housing. These concerns were frequently embedded in the objections around crime and safety. Information was required to clarify the nature of supportive housing as a place where stabilized people go to receive wraparound services within or directly connected to their residence.

## ENGAGEMENT CONCERNS

One concern that arose from some community members across all four sites was around the timeline of approvals and engagement on these supportive housing projects. In order to provide the most comprehensive information to communities as possible, including information about operational standards, it was the City's intent to have the developer of the projects directly participate in the engagement process. The City planned for Homeward Trust's involvement in public engagement to commence once Council approved the sale of the project lands to Homeward Trust. This approval confirmed Homeward Trust's position as the proponent/developer for the four projects.

However, for many people in the community, the approval of the land sale prior to the developments being presented to the community for engagement and feedback gave the impression that the decisions on these developments were already made. While this engagement process worked to emphasize that City Council required public engagement for each of the developments as a condition of the land sale and has decision making authority when it comes to the rezoning of three of the four lots, some community members continue to feel that the process as it stands does not create the engagement and community involvement opportunities they expect.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD EQUITY

A piece of feedback that emerged in the public engagement was regarding a sense of inequity between communities in terms of the placement of non-market housing. This manifested in different ways throughout the process; some felt there was an over-concentration of non-market housing in the north side of Edmonton, while some felt the same about the south side. Others felt that non-market housing should be more concentrated in core neighbourhoods, while others felt that the City should be looking to newer communities or concentrated properties on the edges of Edmonton. The suggestion of concentrating non-market housing in Blatchford was raised regularly. There was also an expressed sense from a number of participants that there were some communities in Edmonton that would not be considered for this type of development.

Our team made an effort to share information about the ratio of non-market housing in these four communities, and to describe Council's intention to create more supportive housing units in communities throughout the city. For future supportive housing developments, City Council and Administration may want to consider how best to communicate with communities around the intention to build supportive housing throughout the city.

## SECTION 2 - City-Wide Feedback (Outside of Proposed Neighbourhoods)

Both the initial survey and Engaged Edmonton survey offered participants the opportunity to respond to the surveys if they lived in adjacent neighbourhoods or did not reside in or around the four specific sites under consideration for development. The engagement received 570 responses from participants from external communities in the first survey, and 37 responses from external communities in the Engaged Edmonton survey.

The majority of respondents expressed support for the developments. Of particular note in many of these responses was a reflection of much of the affordable housing messaging that has been put forward by the last two City Councils. For respondents that did not necessarily support these specific developments, many still felt housing is important and needed.

“I love these proposals. I think the city needs to take drastic action to address the needs of the unhoused population. With COVID happening, it will be impossible for those folks to be able to self-isolate and make the best decisions for their health because they will have nowhere to go. When people have homes, they can start to participate in the economy and their community in ways they cannot do when unhoused. Edmonton has the opportunity to be a leader with regards to housing-first initiatives.”

— External community respondent

“I think it is a great idea. Humans can get the support they need, holistic approach.”

— External community respondent

A small but notable portion of the initial survey responses expressed opposition to these specific proposals or to supportive housing as a general concept.

“I am against this proposed project. I have researched ‘issues’ like homelessness and housing (...) Supportive housing houses drug addicts, criminals, and the mentally ill. Currently this is a safe neighbourhood (...) I live in Forest Heights and shop at Capilano mall all the time. If you want to build a facility, build a seniors facility!!!! They have access to the shops and services they require and will not bring crime into the neighbourhood! Stop amalgamating such people into decent neighbourhoods— take your blinders off!”

— External community respondent

“I live in a neighbourhood where supportive housing has been introduced and it is not conducive to a safe and healthy neighbourhood.”

— External community respondent

Respondents were also asked how they felt supportive housing could be developed to successfully integrate into communities. Respondents emphasized developing community relationships, good access to services in the neighbourhood, and excellent on-site programming as elements that would contribute to successful integration.

“Churches, community leagues and the city councillor and team plus the social agency can build relationships through potlucks, and getting to know the members of the community housing project. The neighbours and organizations could be proactive to build bridges and create a sense of being neighbours. By inviting and encouraging people to belong to the neighborhood people will be more caring towards each other and the community. Everyone wants to belong.”

— External community respondent

Some respondents were not in favour of supportive housing, either in reference to one specific development, or of the concept more broadly. In the responses that were skeptical or in opposition to supportive housing, the leading theme was around the potential financial impacts of these developments on existing property values.

### **SECTION 3 - Community Summaries**

This third section is a What We Heard summary from each of the communities where supportive housing is proposed (in alphabetical order), each with three parts:

#### **PART I: Overall Reactions and Input from the Community**

The general themes and reflections arising from all the consolidated input, in order of priority, as dictated by the community.

#### **PART II: Good Neighbour Plan Priorities**

The Good Neighbour Plan builds and sustains a neighbourly relationship with the supportive housing site in a community. It is a public, written document, accessible to members of the community. The Good Neighbour Plan outlines the shared responsibility between Homeward Trust, the contracted community service agencies that will run the sites, and the community to have positive neighborhood relationships.

Respondents to the Engaged Edmonton survey were given information about the purpose and contents of a Good Neighbour Plan, and were subsequently asked to evaluate the importance of different elements of the Good Neighbour Plan. These insights helped the project team, and Homeward Trust as the developer, better understand the concerns and feedback of the community as it relates to creating a collaborative relationship with the housing provider.

Respondents were also asked to provide rankings and comments about the elements of a Good Neighbour Plan they felt they would not have confidence in, and to provide comments on what they would like the operator to know about the community prior to the development of housing at the site.

### *Good Neighbour Plan Components*

Respondents were provided with the following background information about the Good Neighbour Plans for context:

A Good Neighbour Plan is built on the following elements:

- **Program Description** - This will describe how support will be provided to the residents of this supportive housing site as well as information about the service operator.
- **Stakeholders & Engagement Channels** - This will be the supportive housing site's documented plan for proactive communication and relationship building within the community. A basic, but not exhaustive list, of stakeholders in a community will include:
  - Community league(s)
  - Business associations and/or collaborative community groups
  - Edmonton Police Service and emergency services
  - Neighbours and community residents
  - Key partner agencies or services that will regularly visit the site
- **Reporting** - The specific way and frequency that the site will report to the community on the progress of the Good Neighbour Plan.
- **Community Commitments** - These are the specific commitments that the site operator and the community make to be good neighbours.
  - **Residents** know what is in a Good Neighbour Plan and understand what it means to be a good neighbour.
  - The **supportive housing service operator's** commitment to being a good neighbour includes:
    - Providing support to residents to be part of the community.
    - Providing simple and direct access to resident grievance processes.
  - **Community members, businesses, and local organizations' commitment** to being a good neighbour involves:
  - Recognizing that the supportive housing site is a permanent home to its residents, and that they have the same rights to housing, safety, security and participation in community life as all other residents.

- **Property Management Standards** - A Good Neighbour Plan sets out standards for the cleanliness and aesthetics of the site and to ensure safety and security at the supportive housing site, as well as a process to ensure these standards are maintained.
- **Issue Resolution and Grievance Processes** - An established and clear process by which the community and the supportive housing site can work together to resolve urgent and non-urgent concerns, and escalate to formal grievances if required.

### **PART III: Building Design Considerations**

In the Engaged Edmonton survey and the roundtable meetings, participants had the opportunity to review the massing models and early artistic renderings to provide their feedback on the building design, with the caveat that these images are artistic renderings only, were not considered final and might be altered before construction.

We asked respondents:

“From your perspective as a community member, what should the designer/architect keep in mind when finalizing the look and feel of the building?”

The development team indicated early in the engagement planning process that they were interested in hearing feedback from the communities on design. A well-designed building will help the community and the future residents feel at home and comfortable with the new space.

For the sake of simplicity, there were a few universal themes around building design that are worth noting:

#### *Design Considerations Across All Communities*

Across all four neighbourhoods, there were concerns about the ‘institutional’ look and feel of the buildings shown in the renderings. The nature of these concerns varied; some described the buildings as cold, too grey, or inconsistent with the style of the neighbourhood.

Inglewood and King Edward Park respondents in particular felt that their neighbourhoods had distinct architectural styles that should be incorporated into the design of the building.

“Make it look like a home, not an institutional health facility. There is a huge range of housing designs in Inglewood so the designer will have a lot of different precedents to pull from.”  
— Inglewood respondent

“Complement Mill Creek and the quartier francophone.”

— King Edward Park respondent

Residents of Terrace Heights were, on average, the least concerned with the perception of the building as institutional — opinions in favour of the current design or a modern design were roughly even with those who wanted to see a more traditional or less institutional design.

“Look to the Capilano Library. Look to some of the new infill homes being built. Incorporate that more modern look to add some oomph to the community.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

“Ensure it fits with the overall traditional and family oriented architecture so it blends in well rather than some overly modern or futuristic building that does nothing more than stand out like a sore thumb.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

Residents in the community of Wellington also gave feedback about the institutional design of the renderings.

“It definitely looks like an institution as opposed to an apartment complex. It doesn't give off a warm and inviting energy.”

— Wellington/McArthur Industrial respondent



## Community Summaries

### Inglewood

The City of Edmonton held three community roundtables with people from Inglewood and received 336 online survey responses over two surveys.

#### **PART I: Overall Reactions and Input from the Community**

Throughout the engagement, Inglewood residents have expressed general support for the proposed development, citing a support for diversity in their community and the need for supportive housing to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness. In particular within this community, there is a strong appetite for opportunities for collaboration between the Community League and the supportive housing site, and to see partnerships with the nearby social services agencies. Many participants provided unqualified support for the development, or simply wanted to let the project team know they supported it and provided little other feedback. However, there are concerns within this community, particularly around crime and safety, with many respondents hoping to get more information about safety, as well as a few other specific concerns.

The most prominent general themes summarized from all the engagement within Inglewood, in order of priority, were:

**Attention to Crime and Safety** - Crime and safety, as with all the communities, was a major part of any discussion and many survey responses. There are general questions about possible impacts to community safety from a number of different lenses, including loitering, property crime, and drug use. Many participants also wanted to understand what mitigation efforts would be in place to ensure disorder would not rise within the community. Suggestions

included additional proactive policing, as well as questions about what in-house programs would be in place to support residents to ensure their continued success in supportive housing.

**Strong Relationship with the Community** - A large portion of Inglewood residents who voiced support for the development also included suggestions with how the residents could be integrated into the community, viewing that as an important aspect of the success of both the residents of the building and the growth of the community as a whole. Suggestions included creating a sense of neighbourliness, including a community garden on the site, working with the selected service provider to connect residents to volunteer opportunities, collaboration with the Community League, as well as connection with other community-based organizations in the area.

**Requests for More Information** - Participants in the early stages of the engagement process felt that the process was short on definitive detail and felt that sometimes limited their ability to provide adequate feedback. As a key pillar of our approach, the engagement process, on the basis of that feedback, developed and provided as much detail as possible in response to these requests, particularly in the Phase 2 roundtables and ahead of all Phase 3 engagements. Participants typically requested more information about the development, including but not limited to: construction timelines, the likely service provider that would run the site (and the specific supports they would provide), what the nature of the commercial enterprise on the main floor facing 124th street might be, to hear stories of other supportive housing developments, and the type of supports provided on site.

**Replacement of Green Space** - There is concern about the loss of green space at this site, and a general perception that the site was designated as green space at some point, and that green space is at a premium within a community that has seen a lot of development in recent years. Some participants expressed interest in the City developing "brownfield" sites in the area to ensure the neighbourhood has access to usable green space.

**Relationship to other City initiatives** - The community has been through a number of recent development, planning and community strategy processes, and they want to know more about how this development will fit with those plans. There is a sense among some participants that there is a lot of specialized service and low-income housing within the community; that the community has a lot of density within it already; and that a development like this may not fit with current revitalization efforts underway, particularly along 124th street.

**Parking Impacts** - Residents are concerned about the amount of parking already available on the 124 St corridor and how this development might affect parking in the area. Existing residents felt that this was something that would need to be addressed given the City's new reduction on parking requirements, and wanted more information about how much parking staff would need and if many residents would need parking at all.

**Potential Impact on Property Value** - A number of participants were concerned about the potential impact that the development might have on the property values in Inglewood, particularly dwellings directly adjacent to the development. Part of these concerns dealt with a perceived sense that the development would create additional disorder, some dealt with the aesthetic concerns around the building's design (addressed in a section below), while some discussed the physical impact of a building on sun and alley access. *Note: This theme was added after reviewing the feedback in the second survey.*

## **PART II: Good Neighbour Plan Priorities**

Inglewood is a historic community in the midst of transformation. The neighbourhood is growing - the population of Inglewood increased by 23% from the 2016 census to the 2019 census. The demographics of Inglewood are also shifting, with more children and young adults moving into the neighbourhood.

Inglewood's Good Neighbour Plan priorities, in order of importance are:

1. Property Management Standards
2. Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes
3. Stakeholders and Engagement Channels
4. Reporting
5. Community Commitments
6. Program Description

### *Property Management Standards*

Residents of Inglewood placed the highest level of priority on Property Management Standards in the Engaged Edmonton survey - 71% of respondents ranked Property Management Standards as very important, and a further 19% ranked them as important.

### *Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes*

Feedback loops and Grievance Processes were also a high priority of respondents - 65% of Engaged Edmonton respondents in Inglewood rated those as very important, with a further 17% of respondents selecting important.

### *Stakeholders and Engagement Channels*

Compared to other neighbourhoods, Inglewood respondents placed a slightly lower priority on Stakeholders and Engagement Channels, with 45% ranking that area as very important, and a further 34% as important.

The other three themes for the Good Neighbour Plan were also valued by Inglewood respondents, but not to the same levels as the Property Management Standards, Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes, and the Stakeholders and Engagement Channels.

In their comments on the Engaged Edmonton survey, Inglewood respondents did not indicate significant interest in seeing additional elements considered for the Good Neighbour Plan. When asked what elements of the Good Neighbour Plan they did not have confidence in, some community members indicated they were concerned about the accountability models for the development.

“Again, I have full confidence that the plans will be excellent, it’s the implementation that is trickier to have pre-confidence in. I would like to see more information on who is implementing the plans and who they are accountable to.”

— Inglewood respondent

### Issues for the Operator to Consider

When asked what they want the operator to know should this development move forward in Inglewood, the most significant theme that arose in the comments was that residents want the operator and residents of future supportive housing to know that the community supports them.

“Inglewood is diverse and anyone is welcome here, as long as they believe in Inglewood the way that we do. Inglewood’s diversity is what makes it so great and we can all benefit if this project is a success.”

— Inglewood respondent

There was also a slightly smaller subset of responses expressing outright opposition to the development moving forward in Inglewood, including those who felt this development would have a negative effect on neighbourhood revitalization efforts.

“The neighborhood is now home to many infill developments with young working professionals and young families moving to the neighborhood which assists in the revitalization. Having this will absolutely deter and put a hold on future developments as it WILL drop in market value.”

— Inglewood respondent

The other comments in this feedback section touched on a variety of themes, including opportunities for community involvement in the development, emphasizing community respect and transparency from the operator, and encouraging cleanliness and maintenance of the property.

### PART III: Building Design Considerations

The leading feedback from residents of Inglewood in the design survey was in favour of the building concept as presented to them in the survey. Positive feedback about the proposed design was often accompanied by suggestions for improvements that could be made to the design, like celebrating the history of the site, adding fencing, or incorporating public art into the design.

That said, there were a number of comments from participants that expressed concern that the conceptual building design looked too institutional.



Note: This is an artistic rendering. The design is not final and may be altered prior to construction.

“This is a very welcoming design and it blends well with the surrounding buildings. The location is also very open and inviting for residents and visitors alike.”

— Inglewood respondent

The second most frequently mentioned suggestion for the design of the building by Inglewood respondents was to create a community garden/vegetable plot space on the site. This was suggested as either an activity for residents of supportive housing, or as a potential opportunity for community collaboration between the residents of the housing and the surrounding neighbourhood.

“It should look like a home and not an institution. I like the idea of a community garden. Perhaps there could be a designated outdoor visiting space that is still usable in the winter where residents could mingle with each other and the friends they hopefully make in the neighborhood.”

— Inglewood respondent

Another leading comment regarding the design of the building was requests to keep as many trees, and as much green space, on the land as possible. Respondents emphasized their preference for retaining the mature trees on the lot where possible rather than planting new trees after construction.

“The building looks fine. It should be moved to the south and west edges of the property to preserve the trees and create a semi private park for the residents, as many of them may be smokers and would appreciate a sheltered, more private area.”

— Inglewood respondent

“I would like to see at least one of the beautiful, mature trees saved.”

— Inglewood respondent

Other design considerations that emerged from the Engaged Edmonton survey included:

- Proposed design is too large or too tall;
- Move the building footprint closer to 124 Street on the site;
- General opposition to constructing supportive housing at this site;
- Activate the street frontage on 124 Street;
- Add more windows;
- Use high quality materials for construction;
- Follow Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design standards;
- Add benches at the front entrance;
- Add bike racks or bike parking for residents;
- Choose a different location for the building;
- Add more colour to the exterior design;
- Celebrate the history of the trolley on site;
- Incorporate public art;
- Build fencing around the site;
- Keep the building well-maintained;
- Make the building more institutional in structure;
- Orient staff offices and communal spaces on the main floor so their windows face the street;
- Create a screen for the parking lot, either through fencing or trees;
- Add a DATs loading zone;
- Create a larger setback on the east side of the building;
- Add extra lighting;
- Ensure the building is energy efficient;
- Ensure the design is practical for the intended use.

## King Edward Park

The City of Edmonton held four community roundtables with people from King Edward Park and received 356 online survey responses over two surveys.

### **PART I: Overall Reactions and Input from the Community**

Engagement participants in King Edward Park, through surveys, roundtables, emails and phone calls, were generally more supportive than not about this proposed development, although there were also some community members that did not feel the development should move forward. Among many participants, there was a common theme of concerns they would like the City of Edmonton and Homeward Trust to address on an on-going basis while the building is operational, including potential safety issues. That said, among the different communities engaged in this process, King Edward Park tended to be the most proactive and specific about how they see supportive housing residents being supported by the community.

The most prominent general themes summarized from all the engagement within King Edward Park, in order of priority, were:

**Ensuring Stable Funding Over Time** - Participants expressed concern and asked questions about the operating funding for the site, and what plans were in place to ensure that funding was maintained over time. There is a general sense that while the City has made a commitment to supportive housing, the ability for the site to live up to its potential as an effective housing solution for those with complex needs is dependent on a long-term operational funding commitment. Some participants even seemed to tie their support for the development to an understanding that it would be funded for the long term.

**Attention to Crime and Safety** - Considerations around crime and safety yielded many comments around the potential development in King Edward Park, whether for or against. Participants felt there were a number of existing crime and safety issues within King Edward Park, particularly around the Mill Creek Ravine and other social disorder associated with Whyte Avenue, and voiced a perception that supportive housing would add to that issue, both directly and indirectly. A smaller number of participants, particularly in the later survey, argued against that specific perception and felt supportive housing would help to lessen social disorder. In the middle ground, many residents were supportive of the development, but wanted more information about how Homeward Trust and the site operator would manage the site safely, and how the City of Edmonton and police would mitigate any issues. A number of discussions during live sessions and answers in the survey specifically referenced the Good Neighbour Plans as a potential area to explore to find assurances in this area.

**Opportunities for Community Collaboration** - Respondents to the survey and in the roundtable sessions are very interested in opportunities for connection between the residents and staff of the building and the wider community. Many participants felt that a good connection with the Community League and a proactive relationship both from the service provider and community organizations would play an important role in the success of the potential development. Establishing a relationship with the development and any willing residents would help unify the community and bridge a gap of understanding. Some of the specific suggestions included a shared community garden, involvement in Community League activities, or mutual volunteer opportunities.

**Relationship to Similar Organizations** - There were some concerns expressed about how this development would interact with the neighbouring Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS), and whether it might have a negative effect on the vulnerable youth who access YESS. During the engagements, some participants felt that the supportive housing residents may not interact favourably with the youth at YESS, or may create issues for the organization. In the course of the engagements, YESS was interviewed directly and expressed support for the supportive housing development, and their team also participated in a round table session.

**Traffic and Parking** - Some respondents were concerned about possible increases to local traffic or street parking, and wanted to see that addressed by the City of Edmonton or Homeward Trust. While some residents felt too much of the potential development was dedicated to parking, others felt that given the City of Edmonton's parking restriction relaxation, that vehicles from staff, visitors and residents may end up parking on already crowded streets within King Edward Park.

**Impact on Property Values** - As a community where the proposed development is directly adjacent to single-family dwellings, many participants wanted more clarity around how their property values may be affected. The City provided data that when supportive housing is well designed and well run, negative impacts on property values generally do not occur according to available research. *Note: This theme was added after reviewing the feedback in the second survey.*

## **PART II: Good Neighbour Plan Priorities**

King Edward Park is a growing community nestled on the eastern side of the Mill Creek Ravine, just adjacent to Whyte Avenue and the Quartier Francophone. King Edward Park has grown in population over the past four years as the neighbourhood has densified.

King Edward Park's Good Neighbour Plan priorities, in order of importance, are:

1. Property Management Standards
2. Community Commitments
3. Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes
4. Program Description
5. Reporting
6. Stakeholders and Engagement Channels

### *Property Management Standards*

King Edward Park respondents to the Engaged Edmonton survey on the Good Neighbour Plan indicated Property Management Standards were their highest priority for the Good Neighbour Plan, with 70% selecting Property Management Standards as very important, and a further 22% selected somewhat important.

### *Community Commitments*

The second highest area of priority for King Edward Park respondents was the concept of Community Commitments, which 65% of respondents indicated was very important, and 24% as somewhat important.

### *Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes*

The third area of priority for King Edward Park respondents within the Good Neighbour Plan was the inclusion of Feedback Loops and a Grievance Process, with 56% indicating this was very important, and 25% indicating it was somewhat important.

The other three themes offered in the Engaged Edmonton survey on the Good Neighbour Plan were also selected as generally of high priority to King Edward Park respondents, with Program Description leading, followed by Reporting and Stakeholders and Engagement Channels.

When asked to contextualize their selections for features of the Good Neighbour Plan, several respondents emphasized that consistent communication from the site service provider to the community would help the Good Neighbour Plan to succeed.

“I would like to know if the operator will keep in touch with neighbours and how they plan to engage with them. Specifically, will there be something like a newsletter, website or possibly an event as time passes, beyond the report.”

— King Edward Park respondent

When asked what elements of the Good Neighbour Plan they do not have confidence in, a group of respondents shared concerns about the longevity of funding availability for the development, citing concerns that without long term funding, the building would devolve away from the intended purpose and programming.

“The on-going ability to find funding. The ability to keep the surrounding businesses and houses from feeling a negative impact.”

— King Edward Park respondent

### ISSUES FOR THE OPERATOR TO CONSIDER

Within the question of what the site operator should know about the community, a commonly mentioned theme was that the site operator should work to cultivate a respectful relationship with the surrounding community, and that concerns raised by the community should be taken seriously.

“I think this is a diverse and welcoming community, and we are comfortable interacting with all types of people. Because of this, I would like the operator to be aware that this neighbourhood is more tolerant than others, and that when concerns are raised they are considered seriously.”

— King Edward Park respondent

Another commonly mentioned theme was around crime and safety. These comments broke out into three different categories: generalized concern, safety for children, and safety of the nearby Mill Creek ravine. Respondents in this category sometimes expressed opposition to the development moving forward on the grounds of a perceived potential for increases to crime in the area, while others were more supportive of the development but wanted the operator to be aware of pre-existing concerns about safety in the community.

“The operator of the supportive housing must be able to control the behavior or movement of the residents in the supporting housing. The safety and well being of the residents in King Edward Park must have the utmost highest priority.”

— King Edward Park respondent

“We have a lot of young kids very near the site, and there are a lot of kids playing on bikes in the alleys and yards and sidewalks. We hope the residents will be a part of the community by being respectful of bed time with respect to noise, and making sure the alleys and park are clean and safe.”

— King Edward Park respondent

Other repeated comments in this section expressed generalized opposition to the development and expressed concerns about the proximity of Youth Empowerment and Support Services to the site. Others offered expressions of community support for the development.

### PART III: Building Design Considerations

Once again, discussion of the institutional look and feel of the building was the prevailing theme in discussions of the proposed building design. Aside from that topic, there were a number of other themes that arose frequently among participants.



Note: This is an artistic rendering. The design is not final and may be altered prior to construction.

Many respondents in King Edward Park **liked the design of the building**. Several offered suggestions for potential improvements along with their general approbation of the design.

“It’s bright and engaging.”

— King Edward Park respondent

“It’s a nice looking building. My only question is, maybe residents would like bigger windows?”

— King Edward Park respondent

Many community members expressed an interest in seeing a **community garden** incorporated into the supportive housing design in some way, or the creation of some **protected green spaces** in the design.

“I hope there will be space for a community garden there like there was before, how wonderful for residents to be able to grow their own vegetables.”

— King Edward Park respondent

“Green space that is safe and accessible for residents.”

— King Edward Park respondent

Several participants also expressed concerns about the height of the building, and felt the design would be improved by removing one or more storey from the proposed design.

“Building is too tall. Should blend in with residential housing height.”

— King Edward Park respondent

Other design considerations that emerged in the Engaged Edmonton feedback from King Edward Park community members included:

- Add more windows;
- Opposition to the construction of supportive housing on this site;
- Ensure the building is designed with ease of maintenance in mind;
- Minimize impacts on nearby residents;
- Feeling that the proposed size is appropriate;
- Ensure the building is kept clean and there are adequate garbage facilities;
- Avoid wood frame construction;
- Use sustainable building practices;
- Add a sidewalk along 93 Street;
- Use high quality materials;
- Add a rooftop patio;
- Add balconies;
- Avoid impeding views or access to the ravine;
- Create fencing or a natural barrier around the site;
- Add more outdoor seating for supportive housing residents;
- Orient the entrance towards Whyte Avenue;
- Move the parking to the front of the building;
- Ensure the building design follows Crime Prevention through Environmental design standards;
- Create a greater setback from the shared use path;
- Make the building family friendly;
- Allow future residents of the supportive housing to have a say in the design;
- Add more parking;
- Add bike storage;
- Design should discourage non-residents from congregating on-site;
- and
- Incorporate a commercial space into the design

## Terrace Heights

The City of Edmonton held five community roundtables with people from Terrace Heights and received 439 online survey responses over two surveys.

### **PART I: Overall Reactions and Input from the Community**

Terrace Heights had a diverse set of feedback from the community, between those who felt supportive, undecided or had concerns about the proposed development. While many participants supported the concept on the basis of the purpose of supportive housing, participants in Terrace Heights had questions about the exact location of the development, the nature of the programming within the development, the general background of the residents, and the plan for sustained support for the service provided as well as the day-to-day support for the residents.

The most prominent general themes summarized from all the engagement within Terrace Heights, in order of priority, were:

**Attention to Crime and Safety** - A relatively common concern was that there will be petty crime or even drug use near the development and that the development will add to existing concerns about crime within the area. Other participants felt that in recent years there was progress on the crime and safety front within the community, and that this development may set back what some residents felt was a turning point on this issue. In any case, many respondents in Terrace Heights who were concerned about crime and safety often did so with a caveat. For instance, participants felt that physical building design, targeted resident programming, proactive communication with support services that residents rely on and a strong relationship with the Edmonton Police Service would adequately address many of the perceived safety issues. In other cases, participants wanted to know there was a proactive plan for mitigating these concerns, a portion of which will be included in the Good Neighbour Plan developed by the eventual service provider.

**Communication and Ongoing Education for the Community** - Residents are interested in learning more about the development and having more opportunities for information sharing. Participants voiced a strong desire for the development to be open and transparent around the operations and provide abundant clarity around the kind of services the building is providing and how they are supporting residents. In most cases, this was in the spirit of creating and maintaining a connection with the people within the building and giving them a path to be part of the community. Participants wanted to learn more about the proposed development and understand how to see residents for who they are as individuals, not as “homeless people.” Some residents saw this a growth opportunity for both the potential supportive housing residents and for the community.

The communication, however, flowed both ways, with some emphasis being put on ensuring that tenants understand the community they would be living in, what the expectations of being a community member might be and how they can be a part of it.

**Impacts on the Nearby Library or Skatepark** - This is a subset of the crime and safety discussion, but was mentioned frequently. The neighbourhood takes pride in the new library and the skatepark, and there is concern about both concrete safety impacts and perceived loss of safety being a deterrent for those who might visit the library or skatepark. Most of these concerns surrounded the proximity of the development to the skatepark and some of the activity already taking place there.

**Who Will Live Here** - Many respondents in Terrace Heights had questions about the profile of the average resident at this development and the services the development will provide. A reasonably high proportion of participants identified this particular information as being a sticking point - they sometimes did not know what to think about supportive housing without knowing the specific individuals and their needs. There was also a challenge among some participants to flip this question - that the circumstances of the people who live there are people who deserve dignity and privacy like everyone else.

**Programming Details** - Community members had a desire to know more about the programming details that service providers would be executing in the proposed development. They wanted to know more about how supportive housing works, the application process, on-site supervision, similar projects in the City, and the maintenance of both the property and the funding model over time. In particular, there were two particular recurring comments in this area - whether the funding would be in place for the long term and whether participants would have ongoing, on-site support - with many residents feeling that they would be supportive of the development if they knew that sustained supports would be in place for residents. A few participants in Terrace Heights specifically mentioned that the information sessions and the written material helped them get a practical understanding of what life is like within supportive housing.

**Whether It Ties In With The Changing Community** - Many engagement participants from Terrace Heights mentioned how proud they were of the community and that they had enjoyed recent changes to the community. There is a sense of momentum around the community as a whole, with demographics shifting - with many people within the community aging in place (providing for a growing seniors population), while many new families have started to settle into the area. There is a strong sense that the community is growing in the right direction, as evidenced by enthusiasm for a 101A Avenue vision.

## **PART II: Good Neighbour Plan Priorities**

Terrace Heights is an established neighbourhood in Edmonton that was largely built up in the post-war period. The demographics of Terrace Heights are shifting - according to census data, the demographics of the neighbourhood are shifting significantly as more families move into the neighbourhood.

This is an active neighbourhood - part of the Greater Hardisty Coalition and SouthEast Community League Association (SECLA), Terrace Heights collaborates with its neighbour, Forest Heights, to form the Forest Terrace Heights Community league.

Terrace Heights' Good Neighbour Plan priorities, in order of importance, are:

1. Property Management Standards
2. Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes
3. Community Commitments
4. Stakeholders and Engagement Channels
5. Reporting
6. Program Description

### *Property Management Standards*

Terrace Heights respondents to the Engaged Edmonton survey placed the highest priority on Property Management Standards as part of the Good Neighbour Plan. 77% of respondents selected Property Management Standards as very important, with a further 11% indicating that it was somewhat important to them.

### *Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes*

The second highest priority of Terrace Heights respondents was Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes, with 69% of respondents selecting very important and 21% selecting somewhat important.

### *Community Commitments*

Community Commitments were the third highest priority for Terrace Heights respondents in the Good Neighbour Plan, with 64% selecting important and 18% selecting somewhat important.

The other three provided themes were all ranked as fairly similar in importance, with Stakeholders and Engagement Channels taking a slightly higher ranking of priority.

When asked to provide context for their rankings regarding items of priority for the Good Neighbour Plan between the prospective operator and the community, a portion of respondents provided comments indicating that they did not support the development moving forward in the community.

This feedback theme was also present in the comments in the section asking Terrace Heights community members what elements of the Good Neighbour Plan they would not have confidence in.

“Basically I do not agree with supportive housing in residential areas. I just want to make sure that there are some procedures in place to keep the surrounding neighborhood safe from ex-unhoused persons with mental and drug or alcohol addiction issues.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

“I do not want this project next to the skatepark and library. There has been a giant increase in crime already.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

There was also a group of respondents who highlighted the importance of communication between the operator and the community should the development move forward.

“I think the most important thing is communication. Making sure that everyone knows who they can talk to if they are concerned about something and that concerns are dealt with efficiently. I think this will create more confidence between the neighborhood and the site.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

Outside of expressions of non-support for the proposal, the leading theme in feedback about elements of the plan that respondents do not have confidence in was around the safety measures that would be in place on site - respondents were concerned about drug use and crime escalating with the presence of supportive housing.

“I have zero confidence in your statements regarding the lack of definitive proof that crime rates will not rise if this project goes ahead. there is no way in the world that crime will not increase.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

“You are bringing a higher chance of crime in our neighborhood which is full of children and seniors. Keep the homeless to downtown or outskirts of the city, there is enough damage in our area.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

### **ISSUES FOR THE OPERATOR TO CONSIDER**

When asked what they want the operator to know should this development move forward in Terrace Heights, the most significant themes that came out in the comments was opposition to the development moving forward, followed closely by support for the development of supportive housing on this site.

Other comments included a request for the operator to participate in maintaining the area around the building, and that the operator understand that safety for the nearby library and skatepark is a high priority for the community, and that future residents should understand the value of those amenities to Terrace Heights.

### PART III: Building Design Considerations

As mentioned above, Terrace Heights respondents to the Engaged Edmonton survey were more conflicted about the traditional vs. modern design of the building than respondents in the other communities. Outside of that question, there were a number of leading themes that emerged in the feedback.



Note: This is an artistic rendering. The design is not final and may be altered prior to construction.

Several respondents shared feedback in the design section of the survey to express their **general opposition to the development of supportive housing** moving forward on this site.

*"It's ugly and unneeded in our area."*

— Terrace Heights respondent

*"We don't want this in our community."*

— Terrace Heights respondent

Another common feedback theme was suggestions around **adding more trees or designed green space around the building**. Some felt this was important to provide a privacy barrier between the roadway and the proposed building, while others felt the addition of more green space would provide an added amenity for the community and the residents of the supportive housing.

“Based on the design, it looks like most of the views will be of roads, or the strip mall, rather than the adjacent green space. It would be nice if the design better integrated open, green outdoor space, or at least views of it.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

“Well integrated with surrounding community. Greenery adds a welcoming and inviting touch... A private fenced garden or green area for the residents to allow time to enjoy outdoor space of their own.”

— Terrace Heights respondent

In keeping with the other communities, respondents in Terrace Heights were also fairly interested in seeing a **community garden** developed as part of the building design.

“Is there a community building garden on the roof where residents can gain a sense of satisfaction in growing?”

— Terrace Heights respondent

Participants in the engagement also wanted to see a **larger setback from Terrace Road**.

“I hope that the setback is increased!! If possible, I would much prefer to have the parking for staff put between the building and Terrace Road so the building isn't sitting practically on the street.”

— Terrace Height respondent

Other themes that emerged in the Engaged Edmonton feedback included:

- Add benches outside;
- Develop low maintenance landscaping and building design;
- Incorporate wood, stone, or natural elements;
- Reposition the parking entrance away from the skatepark;
- Make the building blend with the landscape in the area;
- Consider a different site;
- Use existing buildings for supportive housing rather than constructing a new one;
- Add more windows to the design;
- Concerned about the loss of parkland;
- Concerns about the consultation process;
- Build fewer units or remove one storey from the proposed building;
- Ensure the building is well-lit;
- Install security cameras;
- Concerns about increased traffic;
- Use high quality materials;
- Orient the windows away from the skatepark;
- Add more garbage receptacles to the site;
- Remove the open balconies from the design;
- Incorporate a mural;

- Consider adding community space that can be used by other residents of Terrace Heights
- Focus on cost-effective design;
- Consider the building's shadow impacts;
- Plan for winter snow clearing;
- Build pathways within the site to access points like the nearby commercial area;
- High quality soundproofing;
- Focus on durability;
- Orient the building entrance away from the commercial centre;
- Build only one entrance and exit for regular purposes, excepting fire exits;
- Tint the windows;
- Add bike parking;
- Make the eastern corner less angular;
- Avoid wood frame construction;
- Reorient the building balconies away from the bank drive-thru; and
- Position the building further away from the skatepark.

## Wellington/McArthur Industrial

In Wellington/McArthur Industrial, the City of Edmonton held four community roundtables, a Q&A session with their City Councillor, received 272 online responses over two surveys.

### **PART I: Overall Reactions and Input from the Community**

Many residents of Wellington were concerned about and opposed to the proposed supportive housing development, while a smaller number of community members expressed support. Participants within Wellington had significant concerns with the development largely from a crime and safety perspective, from the idea that they would lose greenspace, and whether the proposed development is congruent with the look and feel of the community. Based on the initial input received, those who have participated in the Wellington survey and roundtables are concerned about the safety of their neighbourhood, and worry about how this development will affect them. Many are supportive of the concept of supportive housing and support measures to end homelessness generally, but raised a variety of concerns about this development being nearby, given existing concerns about safety in the community over the last number of years. There is also a contingent within the neighbourhood that believe the residents of the development can be integrated into the community.

The most prominent general themes summarized from all the engagement within Wellington/McArthur, in order of priority, were:

**Attention to Crime and Safety** - Issues around crime and safety represented a significant portion of the input from respondents, particularly in the roundtables, Q&A with Councillor Esslinger, and the questions sent directly to the project team. It was a prevalent theme in the surveys, but not to the same extent as in the direct engagement. There is concern about existing crime in the area, and significant worry that criminal activity would be exacerbated by the addition of supportive housing. Respondents were concerned about the potential for criminal activity, drugs and loitering within the community and at the site itself. Much of this was driven by a sense among many residents in Wellington that they are underserved in general. The community generally noted what they saw as an increase in disorder, but they believe there are material safety issues that will come with this development and feel as though they are being asked to simply cope with those issues, and will not be supported if there are any adverse effects as a result.

**Neighbourhood Unity** - Among the participants who spoke in favour of the proposed development, many of them saw it as an opportunity to demonstrate what kind of neighbourhood Wellington is and demonstrate the values of the community. They described feeling that the development would benefit the City as a whole, but also that this was a chance to help change the lives of people who needed a welcoming community to help them maintain a new and productive part of their life.

This was a strongly held belief by a number of participants who believed that a well-managed building could represent a productive addition to the community.

**Engagement Process Concerns** - While this was mentioned to some extent in all communities, Wellington residents were very clear that they had wanted to be engaged on the location of supportive housing in their community. They felt they were engaged on the proposal too late in the overall process, and expressed that they should've been engaged prior to the land sale moving forward. As well, they wanted an expanded notification area in addition to the notification that was sent to a 200 meter mailing radius of the development advertisements, signs at the sites and connection with the Community League. Some participants also wanted adjacent communities to be a part of the engagement.

**Property Values** - Residents are concerned that supportive housing would negatively impact their property values. They viewed the proposed development, as a multi-story building, as incongruent to the rest of the community. Combined with other elements such as perceived potential crime and safety issues, residents see the proposed development as a potential risk on their property values.

**Cost to the Taxpayer** - There are questions about the costs of this project to the City, and if there will be an impact on residents' property taxes. Some participants felt the costs associated with supportive housing were too high on a per-resident basis, and may not realize savings on costs like justice, health care and certain social supports.

**Transit and Traffic** - Some respondents are concerned the site does not have strong enough transit connections to service the needs of future residents such as grocery stores or that either increased foot or vehicle traffic from the site will have an undesirable impact on the community.

**Other Uses for The Site** - The community has come to know this site as a dog park and green space, both of which participants saw as being at a premium in Wellington. As well, some participants noted that there have been other conversations about how else the space and the lots nearby could be used by the community.

## **PART II: Good Neighbour Plan Priorities**

Wellington is an established, post-war neighbourhood in Edmonton's northwest, home to an active Community League and several schools. The neighbourhood's population has remained relatively steady over the past four years, though according to census data the demographics of the neighbourhood are shifting as more young people move in.

Wellington's Good Neighbour Plan priorities, in order of importance, are:

1. Community Commitments
2. Property Management Standards
3. Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes
4. Program Description
5. Reporting
6. Stakeholders and Engagement Channels

While there was strong engagement with Wellington community members in the first survey and the community roundtables, Wellington had a lower rate of engagement with the Engaged Edmonton survey compared to the other communities engaged in this process, so the data sample available to measure community opinion is smaller than other neighborhoods.

### *Community Commitments*

When asked to rank the value of components of the Good Neighbour Plan, Wellington respondents placed the highest priority on the Community Commitments section of the Good Neighbour Plan, with 60% selecting the Community Commitments as very important, and a further 18% of respondents selecting somewhat important.

### *Property Management Standards & Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes*

The second and third areas of priority were tied in point value; more respondents selected Feedback Loops and Grievance Processes as very important, but a proportional number of respondents selected Property Management Standards as important, so the cumulative value assigned to both these areas by respondents was the same.

The other three elements of the Good Neighbour Plan were also rated as priorities for the community, albeit not as strongly as the themes mentioned above.

When asked to contextualize their responses to different elements of the Good Neighbour Plan, respondents shared their general opposition to the construction of supportive housing. Others emphasized that they placed a value on clear and open communication from Homeward Trust and the site operator.

"I don't believe the good neighbour plan is good for the people already living in Wellington. We don't want supportive housing in our neighbourhood. The building does not fit into our neighbourhood. We don't have any buildings over 2 storeys. We don't trust that "good" homeless people will be placed in the supportive housing."

— Wellington respondent

"I think that communication and consistency are super important in any relationship (and this will be a relationship between the community, residents, and staff)."

— Wellington respondent

When asked what elements of the Good Neighbour Plan they did not have confidence in, several respondents reiterated their general opposition to the development.

"I have no faith or confidence in any part of your good neighbor plan. For once off site it is clear they have no responsibility for their clients. They babysit addicts. They too have no responsibility to our community, they get to drive home to their safe neighborhood and get a good night's sleep whereas we will not."

— Wellington respondent

Others commented that they were interested in hearing more from the site operator about safety.

"The people living there have experienced trauma, addiction and mental health issues. We need reassurance that our children and community are safe."

— Wellington respondent

### ISSUES FOR THE OPERATOR TO CONSIDER

Finally, when asked what they would like the operator of the supportive housing to keep in mind should the development move forward, respondents once again expressed opposition to the concept of supportive housing and to this specific development.

"Just abandon the project. Build in a lower income area or in a new area. Not acceptable."

— Wellington respondent

Some respondents did express support for the development, and some requested that the site operator ensure there is clear and open communication with the community if the rezoning moves forward.

“It is a great neighbourhood and I believe having open communication with community is important so that any issues can be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible”

— Wellington respondent

“There are a lot of NIMBYs in the neighborhood - it would be prudent for Homeward Trust and the "operator" to stay on top of issues and keep responses timely. Be as proactive as possible in the care of your residents. If appropriate seek out opportunities for them to help in the community. Look after the building exterior and surrounding grounds.”

— Wellington respondent

### PART III: Building Design Considerations

Outside of concerns about the institutional look and feel of the building, the leading concern about participants from Wellington in the Engaged Edmonton survey was around the height of the proposed building. Several engagement participants expressed a **desire to see some height taken off the proposed building** - some respondents expressed a preference for a different footprint rather than the proposed six-storey height.



Note: This is an artistic rendering. The design is not final and may be altered prior to construction.

“This building is the tallest of all projects - would like to know if the same number of units could be accommodated with less height and different footprint on the site.”

— Wellington respondent

In the Engaged Edmonton survey, there were several comments from Wellington participants who approved of the design of the building.

“Looks wonderful! Very modern, would definitely add to the neighbourhood aesthetic!”

— Wellington respondent

Other prevailing concerns about design included a desire to see a garden or outdoor space for either the residents or the broader community, and a desire to see the building moved away from or insulated from the nearby railway tracks.

“The chosen area is right by the train tracks. Is this the best place?”

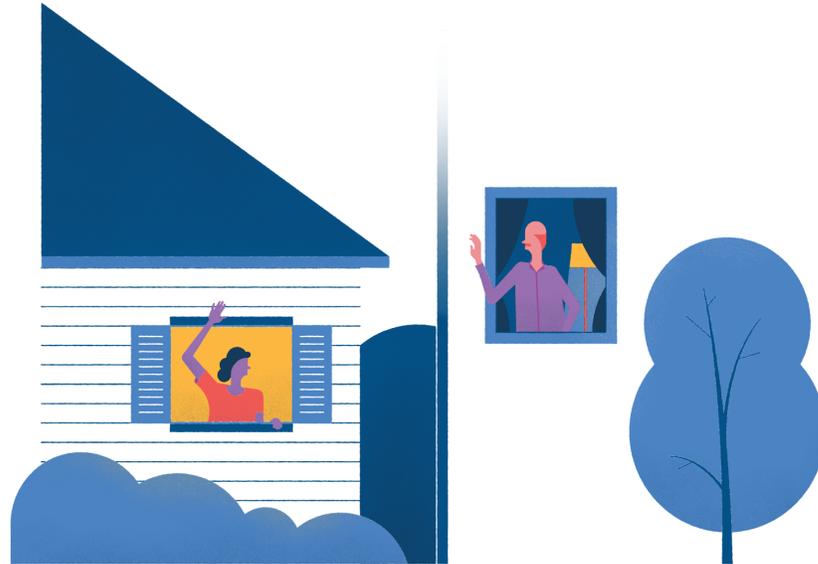
— Wellington respondent

“Give them some balconies so they can get fresh air without leaving the building. Have a nice green space with a garden for residents to grow their own vegetables and flowers.”

— Wellington respondent

Other feedback themes that emerged in the responses but were not as frequently mentioned included:

- General opposition to the building supportive housing on this site;
- Create a gathering space within the building;
- Add bike racks; and
- Incorporate a smudging space into the building.



## Next Steps

With the engagement process complete in all four neighbourhoods, this report now serves as advice and input to City Council, City Administration, Homeward Trust and the service providers of any potential resulting development.

## Proposed Zoning Changes

This report has been provided to the City of Edmonton's Affordable Housing and Homelessness section and to Homeward Trust as a record of these engagements. Separate reports have been developed by the City's Planning Coordination team for consideration as rezoning on the three of the four sites (Inglewood already meets the zoning requirements) goes forward to City Council on December 8, 2020.

## Development of a Good Neighbour Plan & Building Design

Following any potential rezoning decisions, this report will act as an important input into the development of the Good Neighbour Plan for the community, as well as strong advice for the architect and design teams when developing the proposed building itself. This report will also act as active advice for any service providers serving the potential four developments, helping to guide their proactive communication and outreach with the community, as well as understanding the most important issues within the community— something that will be essential for building the foundation of a great relationship.

### **Providing the Report to the Public**

As well, the vital contributions of the public need to be recognized in this report. Community members and Edmontonians across the city as a whole provided thoughtful, passionate and very direct feedback in high volumes on these proposed developments, and on the broader topic of supportive housing. This report reflects a set of communities that care deeply about the evolution of their neighbourhood as well as their neighbours. As a public document, this report will be made available to all Edmontonians, the four communities the engagement took place in, will be directly distributed to participants who requested updates, as well as to the relevant Community Leagues.

On behalf of the supportive housing project team, thank you for participating and thank you for reading.

## Appendix A

### Resident Stories

#### *What is it like to live in supportive housing?*

Throughout our engagements, many people wanted to know more about the experiences of people who have lived in supportive housing. We have collected some stories from a group of people living in four different supportive housing developments. Names have been changed to protect people's privacy, but no other details have been changed.

#### *Harris*

Harris grew up in New Brunswick, but moved to Alberta to work in a machine shop around 30 years ago. In 2001, he lost his job, and with few connections and resources, he found himself homeless shortly thereafter. He spent almost 7 years living in encampments in the river valley and struggling with addiction.

In 2014, Pathways to Housing program staff met Harris and helped him access a place in supportive housing. He has experienced significant health challenges in recent years and has lost much of his mobility, but the supports and access to medical care available in supportive housing keep him comfortable.

It took awhile for Harris to adjust to living in housing. After so many years sleeping outside and being constantly on alert, he struggled to feel secure in his apartment, and for the first year he always kept his things in a backpack by the door, afraid he'd be forced to leave. But in the five years he's lived in supportive housing, he's become adjusted, and likes the security of knowing he'll have a safe place to sleep at night.

Harris describes himself as a private person, but he enjoys the camaraderie of supportive housing, and having a place where he can put his things and enjoy some privacy. Because of his disability, he doesn't go out much, but he likes to drink coffee from his favourite mug and watch black and white movies with other residents during the day, particularly Westerns. He's also developed an interest in gardening and is looking after many plants in his apartment.

In terms of services, Harris gets help with accessing disability-friendly transportation when he needs to travel, grocery shopping, managing his AISH cheques, and taking his medication. He is still in recovery from drug use, but he is able to access weekly group therapy sessions to talk about addictions and recovery, and he makes use of the treatment programs that are available through the housing and medical staff.

When asked what he wishes people outside of supportive housing knew about this type of facility, Harris said he would want people to understand that residents are just trying to get help, and that the dignity and safety they get from being housed is really important. For the future, he plans to continue living in supportive housing and getting treatment for his health issues and addiction.

### *Darren*

Darren is 24 years old. He lives with Fetal-Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), but he didn't get an FASD diagnosis until he was an adult. In the past, he had a hard time maintaining independent housing or living with family. He became connected with supportive housing through his social worker. While he has never been homeless, his worker felt he would benefit from the structure, support and community of supportive housing. His rent in supportive housing is paid through his AISH payments.

Darren has been living in supportive housing for three years. For most of that time, he's lived with his roommate Eric, who has become a good friend, and together they have a cat. On a regular day, Darren likes to visit the gym and the nearby library, and volunteers with a local community youth organization, where he is working with the staff to develop an anti-bullying program. He has previously worked part-time in retail positions when seasonal work was available; now he is working on building his resume with the help of the supportive housing staff.

Darren said that moving into supportive housing has been "liberating" for him. He has people to help him manage his emotions and day to day tasks when he needs support. He has found a small community of people who understand his experience with FASD. Darren said that in his life, he's found that "there are times in life when yourself isn't enough, and sometimes it's as simple as having someone there to help." That help has allowed him to maintain housing and develop independence.

For the future, Darren is hoping to get his anti-bullying program off the ground. He would like to enroll in school to finish his GED through Norquest and eventually hopes to become a social worker so he can give back the support he has received. While he doesn't see himself moving out of supportive housing soon, he is hopeful that eventually he will feel secure and prepared enough to manage living on his own when he is ready.

### *Leslie*

Leslie left home in northern Saskatchewan when he was 13 years old — more than 50 years ago now. He had 50 cents in his pocket when he left, but he also took with him a knowledge of Cree and a strong respect for Indigenous ceremony. He struggled with addiction over the next several decades, travelling across Canada and falling in and out of sobriety.

Around four years ago, he was diagnosed with cancer and received treatment in Red Deer. He lost the ability to walk, and was not expected to live, but he worked every day to walk again and reconnect with Indigenous ceremony. In the midst of his cancer recovery, he was invited by an Indigenous elder to come live in a supportive housing facility in Edmonton that is centered around Indigenous culture and traditions.

For Leslie, the biggest impact of supportive housing has been that it has given him hope. He told us that “a little bit of hope can break a cycle”, and that the feeling of safety and stability he’s found in housing has been critical to his health recovery. The staff and residents participate in ceremony together, and that process has helped Leslie to gain a stronger sense of hope and self-worth, to ground himself in the community, and to take on a leadership role within the housing facility. Today, he has regained his mobility and is cancer-free.

As he ages, and after experiencing significant health challenges, one of the things that Leslie thinks about in his supportive housing is death with dignity. In supportive housing, he’s seen other residents pass away, from old age or from illness, but they’ve been surrounded by staff and friends who help them pass comfortably and with dignity, and in some cases have helped them to reconnect with family before passing. Leslie said that this kind of dignity and respect isn’t available for people who pass away while living on the streets.

Today, Leslie is an active part of his community. He goes to garage sales and community events, and sells his painting, rattles and drums at craft sales in the area. He wants to continue staying in supportive housing and building the connections he has made with staff, other residents, and with his family.

### *Steven*

Years ago, Steven was working in Halifax for the federal government. He had a family and a job, but he was also living with undiagnosed and untreated schizophrenia and depression. When he started to struggle, he lost his job, and things progressively fell apart. For years afterwards, Steven was homeless and worked as a general labourer on construction sites across Canada, including in Edmonton.

Steven said it was particularly difficult to be homeless in Edmonton. He got into trouble with police for loitering in transit shelters to stay warm, and once got gangrene from untreated frostbite. Throughout all of this, Steven’s schizophrenia went undiagnosed, making it difficult for him to access the services he would need to get on his feet.

Eventually, the police who picked Steven up for loitering asked for a psychiatric evaluation, at which point he received a diagnosis and was placed in a medical facility, where he received treatment for a year and a half.

Steven was then referred to a supportive housing facility focused on individuals living with schizophrenia. Steven described supportive housing as “a stable, predictable environment,” which has been important for his mental wellbeing over the past four years. The community provides him with a good balance between socialization and privacy — he can go to his apartment when he feels overwhelmed or spend time with other residents in the common areas when he wants the company.

Steven likes the concerts and events that the staff sometimes host in the building for residents and the surrounding community, but other than that he doesn't like to go out very much. He told us he doesn't like to draw attention to himself. Sometimes he likes to go for walks or even occasionally make interesting purchases at Value Village.

For the future, Steven is hoping to stay in supportive housing. The help he receives in supportive housing, like medication management, assistance in managing his finances, and social support is important to him, and to maintaining a good quality of life.

When asked what he would like people outside of supportive housing to know about his experience, Steven said that while he knows his life story and day-to-day life might not be the same as a typical person, he feels safe and comfortable after many years of struggle, and is happy where he is.