



# What We Heard Report: Westmount Architectural Heritage Area Rezoning Drop-in Workshop

August 2018

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**Edmonton**

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## Executive Summary

This report summarizes input that was received in relation to Phase 1 of the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area (WAHA) Rezoning. The public was invited to attend a drop-in workshop held on **March 13, 2018** to start the conversation and discuss what they value about the area, the opportunities and challenges related to preserving the neighbourhood's historic character, as well as what the project team should consider as we move forward in the rezoning process.

**MAR  
13  
2018**

Tuesday, 6 - 9 pm  
Westmount Community League Hall  
10970 127 Street NW Edmonton

Information boards outlining the preliminary findings of the City's character analysis of the WAHA were provided at the drop-in workshop. A total of seven City of Edmonton staff from Heritage Management, Planning Coordination, and Communications and Engagement and one representative from Green Space Alliance, the consultant providing support to the project, were in attendance and were available for one-on-one discussion.



**77**

**Drop-in** workshop participants



**48**

**Online** number of respondents

A number of key themes, which are explored in greater detail later in this report, were identified from participant feedback:

## Values

### WE ASKED...

What do you **value** about the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area? What aspects of the WAHA are important to you?

### WHAT WE HEARD...

- + **Architectural Heritage:** The unique characteristics of historic homes
- + **Community:** A shared sense of community and pride amongst neighbours
- + **Streetscape:** The "look and feel" of the WAHA
- + **History:** The WAHA as a reflection of Edmonton's past

## Challenges

### WE ASKED...

What **challenges** do you anticipate in trying to preserve the historic character of the WAHA?

### WHAT WE HEARD...

- + **Development Pressure:** Increasing development pressure and erosion of neighbourhood character
- + **Perceived Lack of City Support:** A lack of support from the City and conflicts with broader City policy direction
- + **Voluntary Guidelines:** Limited protections afforded by existing voluntary guidelines
- + **Challenges of Preserving Heritage Homes:** The challenges of rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance

## Opportunities

### WE ASKED...

What **opportunities** do you see in this exercise to preserve what you value about the WAHA?

### WHAT WE HEARD...

- + **Heritage Protection:** Celebrating the character of the WAHA
- + **Clarity:** Developing clear direction and consensus
- + **Architectural Character:** Ensuring new development is consistent with the architectural character of the WAHA

## Zoning Considerations

### WE ASKED...

What should we be considering as we develop **zoning options** for the WAHA??

### WHAT WE HEARD...

- + **Mandatory Regulations:** Mandatory regulations are necessary to preserve the heritage character of the WAHA
- + **Character Preservation:** Balancing heritage preservation with future redevelopment
- + **Redevelopment Opportunities:** Accommodating a diversity of housing options
- + **Development and Design Criteria:** Establishing clear development and design criteria
- + **Use:** Maintaining the residential nature of the WAHA



## Project Goals

The goal of the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area (WAHA) Rezoning Project is to build consensus in relation to the appropriate amendments to the West-Ingle Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) and WAHA Direct Development Control (DC1) Provision.

## Objectives:

- + Encourage the retention of and appropriate alterations to historically and architecturally significant properties
- + Implement architectural controls to guide new development
- + Ensure that, where feasible, the DC1 Provision is consistent with current zoning standards and broader City policies and objectives
- + Clarify development requirements in order to provide certainty to the community and developers and mitigate the potential for conflict

### WHAT IS A DIRECT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (DC1) PROVISION?

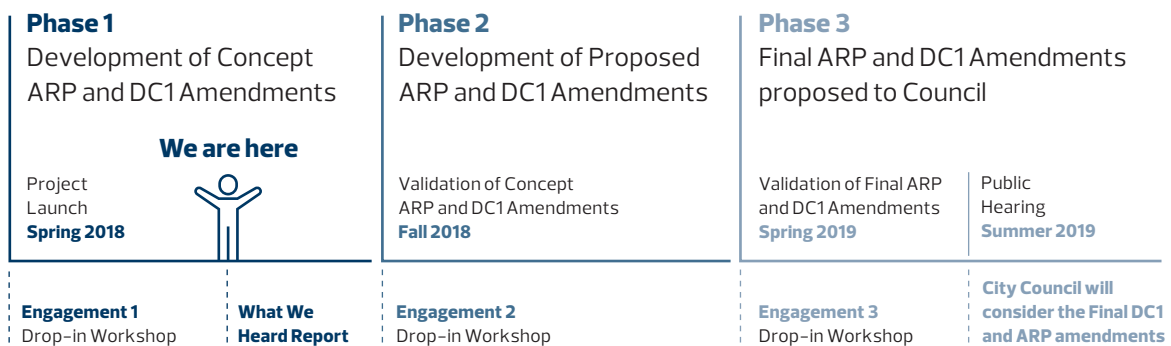
DC1 Provisions are custom zoning provisions which may be applied to sites or areas of unique architectural or historic character. DC1 Provisions are often founded on the regulations of the underlying standard land use zone and augmented by a variable mix of additional regulations and/or guidelines to ensure that development respects and enhances an area's character.



## Workshop Objectives

The objective of this drop-in workshop was to initiate a dialogue with stakeholders in order to better understand what they value about the WAHA and identify challenges and opportunities to be addressed through the proposed amendments to the West-Ingle Area Redevelopment Plan and WAHA DC1 Zone. In addition, preliminary findings from the City's character analysis of the WAHA were presented to establish a common starting point for all stakeholders involved in the rezoning exercise.

### PROJECT PHASES



## Your Feedback

Participants were asked to provide their feedback on four broad questions:

- 1 What do you **value** about the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area? What aspects of the WAHA are important to you?
- 2 What **opportunities** do you see in this exercise to preserve what you value about the WAHA?
- 3 What **challenges** do you anticipate in trying to preserve the historic character of the WAHA?
- 4 What should we be considering as we develop **zoning options** for the WAHA?

Feedback was provided by participants via post-it notes and a questionnaire that was collected at the drop-in workshop. The same questionnaire was available online from March 13, 2018 – March 27, 2018. 58 individuals in total provided feedback via the questionnaires.

All participant feedback in response to the questions was consolidated and recorded electronically. Feedback was grouped according to four categories: Values, Opportunities, Challenges, and Zoning Options. Within each category, feedback provided was reviewed in detail and key themes were identified from recurring comments from participants. These key themes are outlined for each category in this report.

# Values

Architectural Heritage | Community | Streetscape | History

The WAHA is broadly valued for its concentration of heritage homes, quiet, leafy streets and its close proximity to downtown Edmonton. Residents of the WAHA value a shared sense of community and pride for their neighbourhood. The WAHA is also valued as a way to connect Edmonton's past to its present.

## Architectural Heritage

Participants broadly valued the architectural heritage and character of the WAHA, in particular, the concentration of well preserved historic homes. In addition, participants valued a diversity of housing styles and the unique characteristics of individual homes within the neighbourhood. Finally, the consistency of historic built forms was identified as creating a unified and celebrated appearance that is distinct to the WAHA.



## In addition, participants valued:

- + A diversity of large and small homes on varied lot sizes
- + Homes with consistent rooflines, and in particular, pitched or peaked roofs
- + The diversity of bungalows, two-storey, and three-storey homes
- + Unique, character homes with minimal intrusion of "cookie-cutter homes"
- + Open front verandahs
- + Craftsman and Foursquare style homes and influences
- + High standard of construction and architectural integrity of heritage homes

““ The beautiful character of the homes and the mature streets are what make this area so special. ””

## VALUES (CONT)

### Community

Participants valued the shared sense of community within the WAHA and their connections among neighbours. Participants noted that neighbours often interact with one another as a result of historic architecture, specifically open, front verandahs. Finally, participants highlighted that the unique history of the WAHA has generated a tight-knit community with a mutual respect for the neighbourhood.

#### Participants also valued:

- + The diversity of residents in the neighborhood
- + A shared sense of pride in the WAHA
- + Residents who maintain their homes and yards
- + Neighbourhood interactions such as saying "Hello"
- + Connections between neighbours generated over preservation efforts and renovation projects

### Streetscape

Participants valued the overall "look and feel" of streetscapes within the WAHA. A number of participants identified mature boulevard trees as highly valued elements of the neighbourhood. Participants also valued that homes are situated closer to the street through consistent front yard setbacks, facilitating connections to the sidewalk.

#### In addition, participants valued:

- + The walkability of the streetscapes in the WAHA
- + Garages located at the rear
- + Rear lanes for parking
- + The absence of front driveways
- + The scale of the homes

### History

Participants valued the WAHA as a reflection of Edmonton's heritage and as a way to connect Edmonton's history to its present. Many participants viewed the WAHA as a valuable historic and architectural resource to Edmonton as a whole.

#### Participants also valued:

- + The unique history of the WAHA
- + Preservation of historic homes
- + The feeling of "stepping back in time" when within the WAHA





# Opportunities

Heritage Protection | Architectural Character | Clarity

Participants viewed this exercise as a way to protect the heritage character of the neighbourhood and ensure that the WAHA is preserved for future generations. This exercise was also viewed as an opportunity to provide clarity for builders and the community by developing a regulatory framework to ensure that redevelopment is consistent with the existing historic built forms throughout the neighborhood.

## Heritage Protection

Participants frequently noted that historic buildings should be protected, preserved, and maintained. This exercise was seen as an opportunity to preserve the unique character of the neighbourhood while celebrating and promoting Edmonton's history.

### In addition, participants identified this exercise as an opportunity to:

- + Encourage enhanced protection of heritage properties through Municipal Historic Resource designation
- + Preserve the neighbourhood as a valuable historic resource in Edmonton
- + Promote Edmonton's built heritage
- + Ensure that Edmonton's history is preserved for future generations
- + Ensure that redevelopment does not compromise the value of historic resources
- + Create more interest, awareness, and commitment to preserve heritage



*This exercise is an opportunity for the people of the WAHA and the City to work together to preserve Edmonton's history for future generations.*



## OPPORTUNITIES (CONT)

### Architectural Character

Participants recognized the need for a diversity of housing options within the neighborhood and generally expressed that they are not opposed to new development, provided that it is respectful of the existing character of the area. Participants identified this exercise as an opportunity to establish architectural criteria for infill to ensure that new development respects the historical nature of the WAHA.

#### **In addition, participants identified this exercise as an opportunity to:**

- + Preserve the “look and feel” of the WAHA
- + Allow for a diversity of old and new homes
- + Ensure that materials used for new development are reflective of existing materials in the WAHA
- + Allow for renovations of existing homes while retaining original architecture
- + Encourage new development which fits with the character of the WAHA
- + Protect and preserve the architectural character of the WAHA

### Clarity

Participants identified that existing voluntary guidelines have been ineffective in preserving the heritage character of the WAHA and viewed this exercise as an opportunity to develop a consistent regulatory framework for the area. Participants emphasized the need to develop mandatory regulations to ensure that redevelopment is reflective of the existing historic character of the neighbourhood. Participants also identified this exercise as an opportunity to reduce conflict by providing clear and specific direction for builders and the community.

#### **Participants also viewed this exercise as an opportunity to:**

- + Establish mandatory architectural regulations for features such as verandahs, windows, and housing style
- + Establish regulations which will preserve the character of the area
- + Provide regulations for redevelopment and renovations of existing homes
- + Strengthen the existing voluntary guidelines
- + Open a dialogue between neighbours about what aspects of the neighbourhood character are valued
- + Create a collaborative relationship between the community and the City



# Challenges

Development Pressure | Perceived Lack of City Support | Voluntary Guidelines  
Challenges of Preserving Heritage Homes

Participants identified a number of potential challenges in trying to preserve the historic character of the WAHA, including increasing development pressure and a lack of community consensus. One of the key challenges recognized by participants is the voluntary nature of the existing WAHA DC1, resulting in demolitions of historic homes and new development that is not consistent with the heritage character of the WAHA.

## Development Pressure

Participants identified increasing development pressure as a challenge to preserving the historic character of the WAHA. In particular, participants identified increasing demolitions of existing historic homes and redevelopment that is not sympathetic to the existing character of the WAHA as key challenges.

“If mandatory architectural regulations are not put in place, the unique character of our neighbourhood will be destroyed lot by lot.”

### Additional challenges identified by participants included:

- + Infill development
- + Development of modern homes which do not respect the character of the area
- + Homeowners undergoing renovations which are not consistent with the original features of the home
- + Subdivision of lots
- + Increasing animosity towards developers



## CHALLENGES (CONT)

### Perceived Lack of City Support

Participants identified a lack of support from the City as a challenge to preserving the historic character of the WAHA. Broader City policy direction promoting densification and infill were specifically identified as challenges to heritage preservation within the area.

#### In addition, participants identified that:

- + Demolitions and inappropriate redevelopment will continue to occur prior to the proposed amendments to West-Ingle ARP and the WAHA DC1

### Voluntary Guidelines

Participants identified the voluntary nature of guidelines within the existing WAHA DC1 as perhaps the leading challenge in preserving the historic character of the WAHA.

#### Some related challenges noted by participants included:

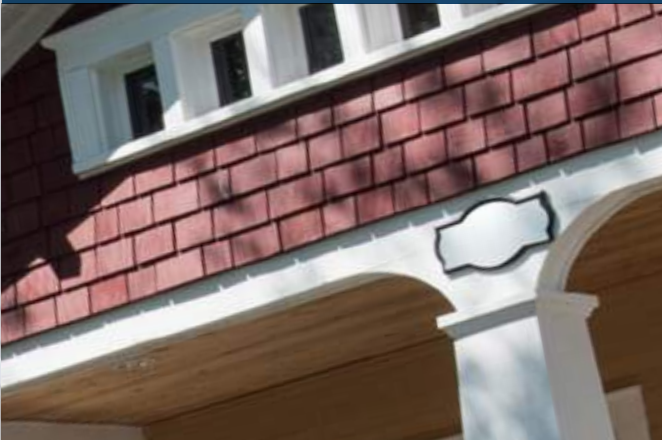
- + Inconsistent application of the existing guidelines
- + Development that does not adhere to the guidelines and is not consistent with the existing characteristics of the WAHA
- + Animosity directed towards homeowners who have already built homes that do not conform to the existing guidelines

### Challenges of Preserving Heritage Homes

Participants noted a number of challenges associated with the preservation of heritage homes, including financial commitments required for rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance.

#### Participants identified additional challenges including:

- + A lack of financial incentives to encourage homeowners to rehabilitate heritage homes
- + The high cost of upgrading heritage homes so that they are energy efficient and safe
- + The perception that it is easier to demolish and rebuild rather than to restore heritage homes





# Zoning Considerations

Character Preservation | Redevelopment Opportunities | Development and Design Criteria | Use

Participants collectively called for the new WAHA DC1 to include mandatory design and development regulations in order to protect the heritage character of the neighbourhood and provide clear and specific direction for builders and the community alike. In addition, participants recognized that new zoning must balance heritage preservation with opportunities for moderate increases in density.

## Mandatory Regulations

Participants overwhelmingly identified that the existing voluntary guidelines are largely ineffective in preserving the heritage character of the WAHA and should, therefore, be amended to mandatory regulations.

### Participants also asked us to consider:

- + Regulating only the exterior features of homes within the WAHA
- + Regulating key architectural features and elements which contribute to the character of the streetscape
- + Establishing enforceable regulations



“Diversify and densify the community without losing the feel and style of the area's heritage.”



## ZONING CONSIDERATIONS (CONT)

### Character Preservation

Participants recognized that the new WAHA DC1 will need to balance heritage preservation with future redevelopment. Participants emphasized that new WAHA DC1 must ensure that new development is sympathetic to the historic character of WAHA.

#### **In addition, participants emphasized that new WAHA DC1 should:**

- + Preserve original features of historic homes
- + Preserve the heritage character of the streetscape

### Redevelopment Opportunities

Participants identified that the new WAHA DC1 should provide opportunities for moderate densification in the neighbourhood and accommodate a diversity of compatible housing options while preserving the heritage character of the WAHA.

#### **Participants asked us to consider:**

- + Balancing development potential with heritage preservation
- + Opportunities to allow for secondary, garage, and basement suites within the WAHA
- + The perception that regulations will detract from future investment in the neighbourhood and negatively impact future sales of properties in the WAHA

### Development and Design Criteria

Participants expressed that the new WAHA DC1 should establish clear and specific development and design criteria for new development as well as renovations to existing homes within the WAHA. Participants emphasized that development and design criteria should guide development to be consistent with the heritage character of the WAHA.

#### **Participants suggested that design and development criteria should:**

- + Regulate roofs to ensure pitched or peaked roofs are mandatory
- + Regulate window size and ensure that windows reflect historic styles
- + Maintain current front and side-yard setbacks
- + Ensure that development is scaled appropriately to existing homes
- + Allow for the use of new materials as long as they are sympathetic to the character of existing homes
- + Ensure that any new materials are consistent with the appearance of traditional materials

### Use

Participants expressed that the residential nature of WAHA should be maintained and suggested that the new WAHA DC1 should reflect the underlying (RF1) Single Detached Residential Zone.

#### **Additionally, participants asked us to consider:**

- + Preventing the intrusion of commercial uses into the WAHA
- + Enhancing development criteria in relation to permitted uses in the existing WAHA DC1

# Feedback on Engagement

## HOW WILL MY FEEDBACK BE USED?

Feedback from this drop-in workshop will be used to guide the development of amendments to the West-Ingle ARP and WAHA DC1.

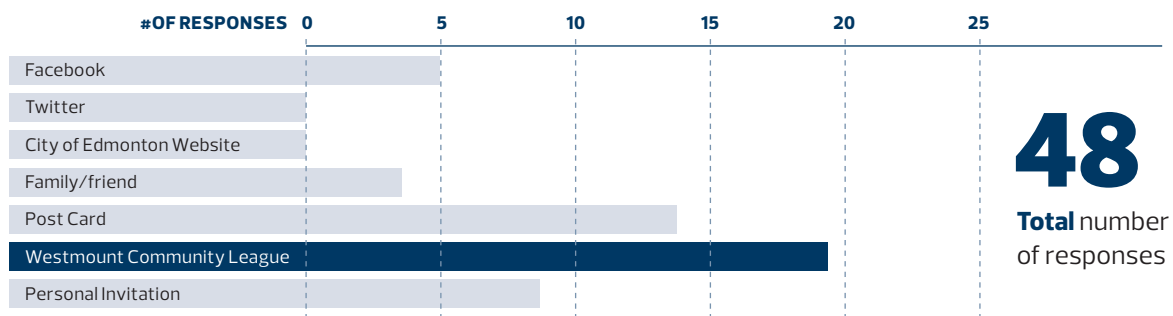




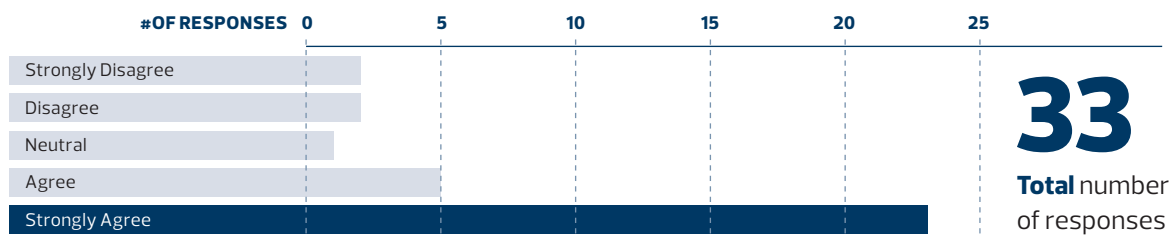
## Feedback on Engagement

A Drop-In Workshop Evaluation Survey was available at the drop-in workshop to evaluate the engagement and provide feedback as to how we may continue to improve our events and content. In total, **33 survey responses were received.**

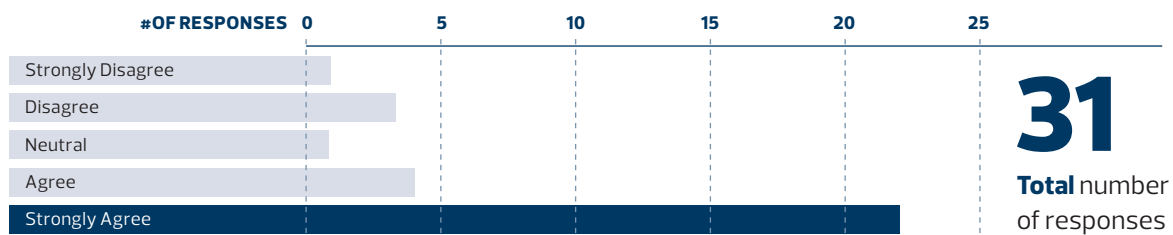
### Q.1 How did you hear about the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area rezoning Drop-in Workshop?



### Q.2 I felt welcome and respected in this space.

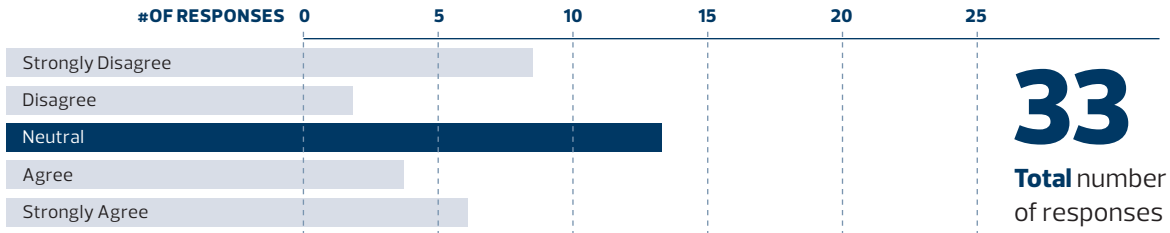


### Q.3 I felt safe sharing my input at different project tables.

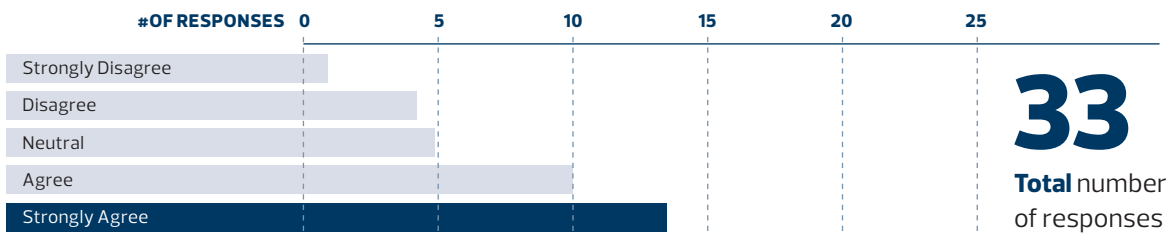


## FEEDBACK ON ENGAGEMENT (CONT)

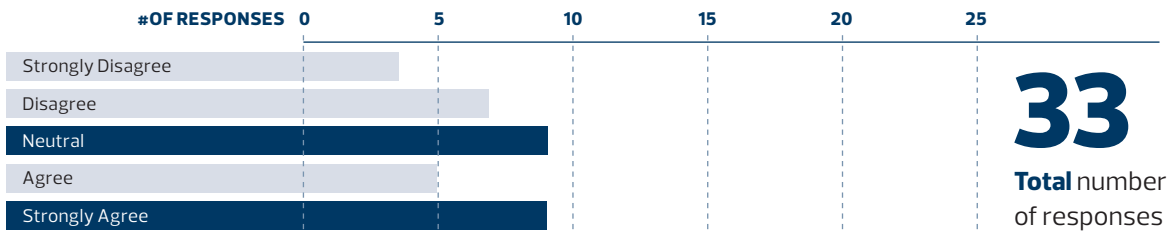
Q.4 I feel that the input provided will be used by the City.



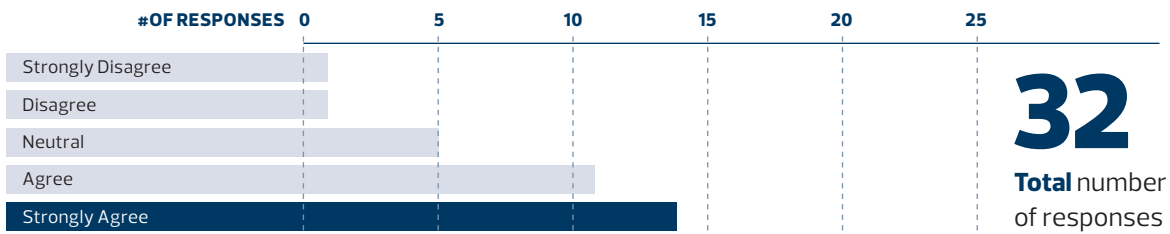
Q.5 The purpose of this Drop-in Workshop was clearly explained.



Q.6 I understand how the input from the Drop-in Workshop will be used.



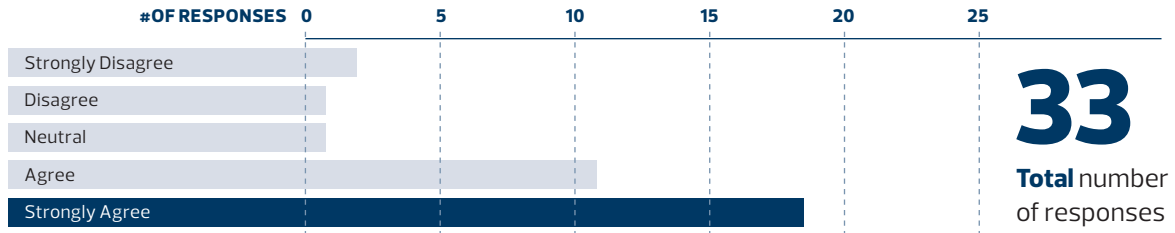
Q.7 The Drop-in Workshop was well organized.



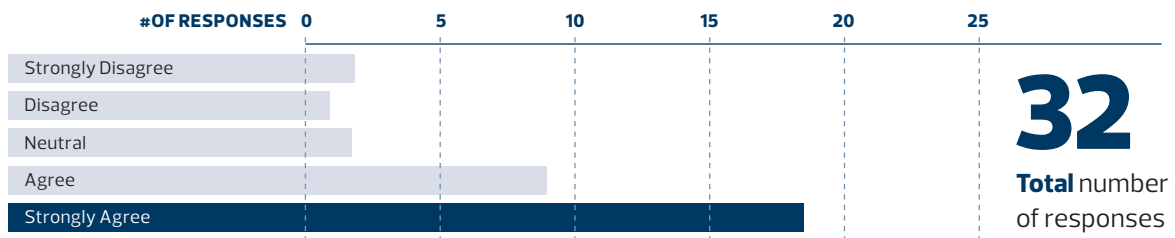


## FEEDBACK ON ENGAGEMENT (CONT)

### Q.8 The information boards were easy to understand and informative.



### Q.9 The event set-up was appropriate.



### A majority of respondents also told us:

- + The workshop was a good opportunity to speak directly with Heritage Planners and share their input
- + They were glad the event was held and that the project was happening
- + The information boards were useful as they provided detailed, clear information and were well organized
- + They liked the ability to move through the room and interact at their own pace
- + They preferred a drop-in workshop as opposed to a "town hall" style meeting
- + There were enough staff to answer questions and engage in one-on-one discussions and staff were friendly
- + They would have liked a presentation by a Heritage Planner during the drop-in workshop, as it would have been helpful to introduce the rezoning exercise
- + They would have liked to have a Q+A session with a Heritage Planner
- + They would like to know how their feedback will be used

## Next Steps

Concept ARP and DC1 amendments will be developed by Heritage Planners to respond to the values, challenges and opportunities as identified by participants in Phase 1 of the rezoning exercise. Concept ARP and DC1 amendments will be informed by feedback gathered from Phase 1 of the rezoning exercise, heritage management best practices, current zoning standards and broader City policies and objectives. You can provide your feedback on the Concept ARP and DC1 amendments at our next Drop-in Workshop on September 25, 2018 at the Westmount Community League Hall.





## **Thank You!**

The project team would like to thank everyone who participated in the drop-in workshop and the Westmount Community League for their feedback and ongoing support of this rezoning exercise.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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