



Evolving Infill Public Engagement Summary

September 2013 - August 2014

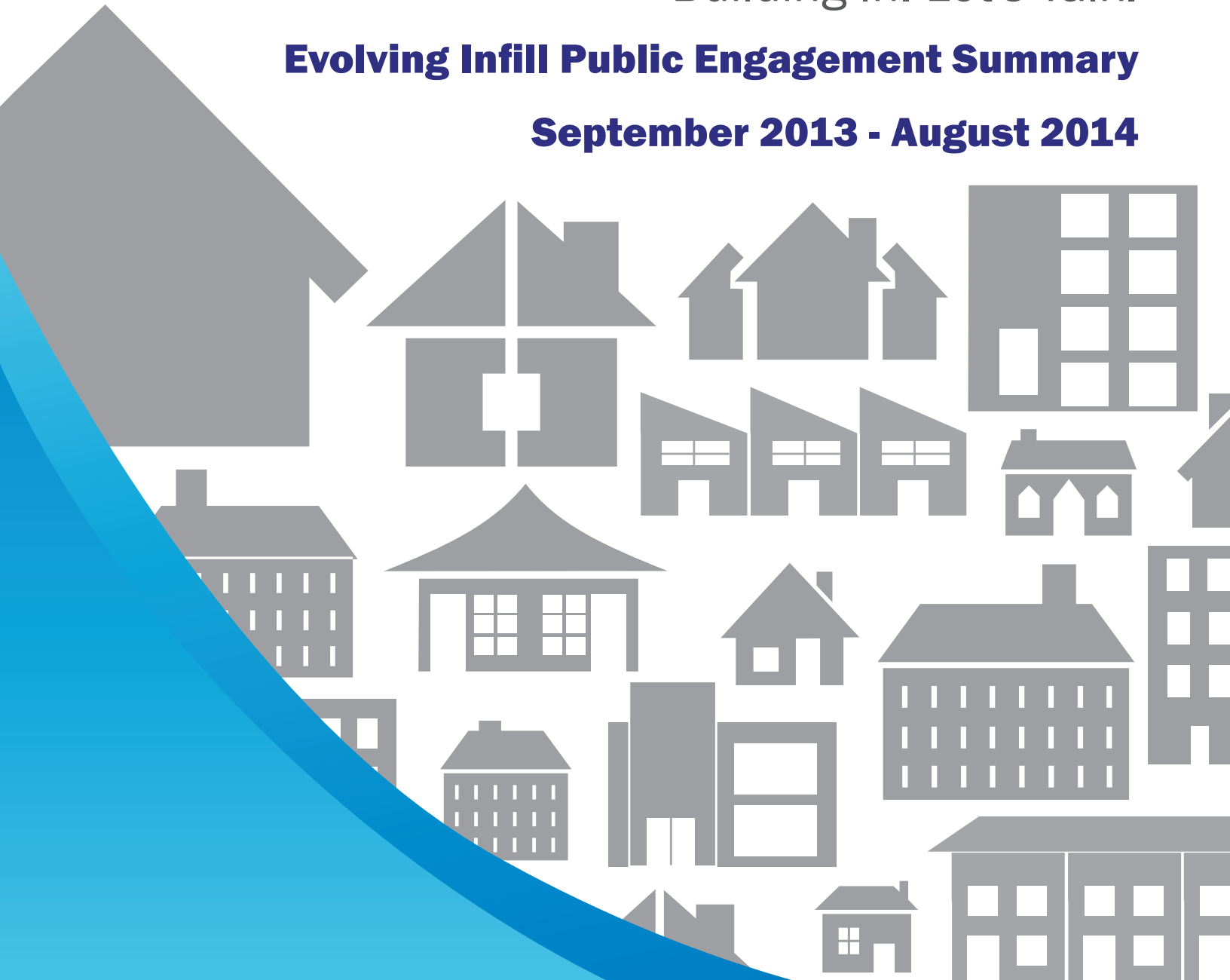


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Note to Readers:

The Evolving Infill Project Team would like to thank everyone who contributed their stories, ideas and thoughts as part of Evolving Infill. We appreciate the passion and time that were shared with us.

As a City, we are committed to engaging with citizens and stakeholders on city-building issues, and we look forward to continuing to talk about residential infill and neighbourhood change.



The Public Engagement Summary: An Introduction

The Evolving Infill Public Engagement Summary is an overview of the evaluation of the public engagement events, activities and outreach that the City undertook as part of the Evolving Infill project. It aims to answer two key questions:

1. What did we do to engage the public in a city-wide conversation about infill and neighbourhood change, and
2. How well did the public engagement activities achieve the engagement goals identified at the beginning of the project?

Key Purpose of Engagement

The Evolving Infill project aimed to bring all interested stakeholders together to collaboratively identify and prioritize actions to create positive change through new housing in established neighbourhoods, share information and build Edmonton's infill story. The key deliverable of the project, Edmonton's Infill Roadmap, aims to provide certainty and clarity related to what the City can and will do with its citizens and city-building partners to support infill growth.

The motivation for incorporating a public engagement process into Evolving Infill was to set the stage for making infill easier to do, easier to understand and easier to talk about. The success of the project was intrinsically linked to the public engagement process, as increased trust, relationships and buy-in are necessary to move infill ahead.



We heard from over 1,000 participants in a variety of ways over the course of Evolving Infill: in-person forums, online, through workshops and submitted discussion guides. The feedback we received regarding our engagement process was positive, with 73% of the people who filled out engagement evaluations agreeing that there was the opportunity for meaningful conversation. For more information, please see Part 3 of this report.

Desired Results of Engagement

To create a commitment and shared understanding between city-builders, residents, the City and other stakeholders around creating strategies for positive change and plans for new housing in established neighbourhoods.

Public Engagement Goals:

The engagement process was committed to:

- » Raising awareness and understanding of growth in the city, neighbourhood change and how that can be supported or impacted by infill development;
- » Providing relevant information so that everyone can participate in a meaningful way;
- » Gathering input from all participants to use and consider in decision-making;
- » Providing opportunities for meaningful and appropriate engagement of citizens and a wide diversity of stakeholders;
- » Delivering a transparent, accountable and inclusive engagement process that builds relationships, trust and credibility with organizations, stakeholders and citizens; and
- » Building internal and external capacity, skills and knowledge for full participation and future public engagement.

Part 1 | What is Evolving Infill?

This section of the Public Engagement Summary provides an overview of the Evolving Infill project, conversation, background and timelines.

→ Evolving Infill was both a conversation and a project designed to embrace and harness change.

Evolving Infill: The Project

Over the next 30 years we expect over 500,000 new residents to call Edmonton home. Supporting new housing in established neighbourhoods is a key element of finding homes for a growing population, and infill is therefore one of a number of strategies to support growth and change in our city.

Evolving Infill: The Conversation

This project was framed as a conversation between residents, builders and the City. This was a new approach that intended to build a shared understanding about infill in Edmonton and identify what we can do to collectively to make choices that support the evolution of established neighbourhoods through infill development.

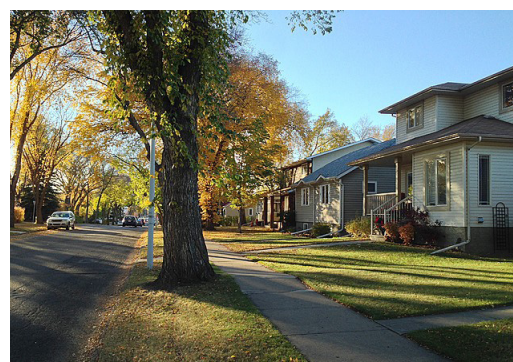
How We Got Here

Edmonton's strategic plans support residential infill as part of building a sustainable city, providing choice in housing, and supporting vibrant communities. Residential infill has been occurring in many neighbourhoods in Edmonton for decades. Recent steps to encourage and allow more residential infill that have been taken over the last few years includes:

- » Development of Residential Infill Guidelines;
- » Development of Transit Oriented Development Guidelines; and
- » Changing development regulations to permit new and different forms of housing in more locations.



“This has been really great – I’m really pleased that the City is doing this.” -Participant



When it's all said and done we wanted to:

1. Involve Edmontonians in helping to identify key actions to enable more infill opportunities, share information and create an ongoing dialogue about urban transformation, and to build a story about infill in our city.
2. Build and continually enhance trust and relationships between the City and stakeholders in this process and future engagements.

Project Timeline



Where are we going?

The outcome of Evolving Infill is Edmonton's Infill Roadmap. This roadmap contains 23 short-term actions outlining what the City and its city-building partners will do over the next two years to support more and better infill in our established neighbourhoods. The actions were identified based on what we heard and learned from Edmontonians over the course of Evolving Infill.

Part 2 | Who We Heard From & How We Communicated

This section of the Public Engagement Summary provides a high level synopsis of who participated and how they participated in the Evolving Infill process.

who we heard from &
how we communicated

Participation in Step 1:

Explore & Understand: Gathering All Our Stories



TIMELINES

11/15/2013

Step One launched

01/31/2014

Step One closed



PARTICIPANTS

↑ = 50

ONLINE

Unique visitors who accessed engagingedmonton.ca



Participants who responded to 4 key questions



FACE-TO-FACE

Infill Talks Public Forum attendance on December 7, 2013



Infill Talks Public Forum attendance on January 9, 2014



Host Your Own Infill Talks training session attendance



Host Your Own Infill Talks attendance at 35 unique sessions



WRITTEN

Submitted Discussion Guides



Participation in Step 2: Identify, Refine & Prioritize



PARTICIPANTS

1 person = 50



TIMELINES

02/01/2014

Step Two launched

04/30/2014

Step Two closed

FACE-TO-FACE

Infill Action Collaborative members



Infill Action Review attendance on March 22, 2014



Participation in Step 3: Moving Towards Implementation



PARTICIPANTS

1 person = 50



TIMELINES

05/01/2014

Step Three launched

06/31/2014

Step Three closed

ONLINE

Unique visitors who accessed engagingedmonton.ca



Participants who left feedback on the draft Infill Action Plan



FACE-TO-FACE

Open House attendance on June 11, 2014



Open House attendance on June 21, 2014



Pop-up planners in Churchill Square June 16, 2014

n/a • participants not recorded

**For a detailed summary of what we heard at the Steps 1 - 3 public engagement events, please see the "What Was Said" reports online at www.edmonton.ca/evolvinginfill*

How We Communicated

Project Website



12,447 Unique visitors to the project website

Infill Stories



5 Unique infill stories filmed and shared to a YouTube channel accessible via the project website

884 Views of these five “Infill Stories” video clips

Project Newsletters



13 Newsletters were sent out between November 2013 and July 2014



675 Participants subscribed to the newsletter by the end of the project

The bi-weekly newsletter was used to update subscribers about upcoming activities, and when analysis or summaries of events became available online

Advertising



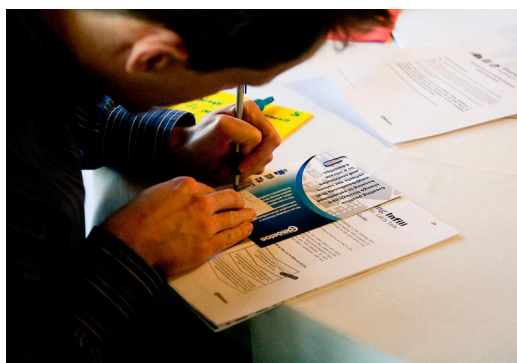
19 Print ads were placed in the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Examiner, and Metro over the course of the project to advertise face-to-face events



1 Online banner for the project ran on CBC.ca/Edmonton from January 4 to 31, 2014



20 Roadsigns to advertise face-to-face events



*“This is a
great city and
thanks for
driving these
conversations.”
-Participant*



Radio



7 Radio interviews were aired on a variety of radio programs

Twitter



57 Tweets about Evolving Infill tagged #yeginfill were sent to @CityofEdmonton's approximately 60,700 followers. These 57 tweets were retweeted 206 times

Facebook



8 Facebook posts were posted to the City of Edmonton's facebook page, and were viewed by a total of 7,021 people

What Was Said Reports

What Was Said reports containing all the comments and feedback received at public events was prepared and posted online after every event. There are four in total.

Infill Action Collaborative Workshop Reports

A report summarizing each Infill Action Collaborative workshop was prepared and posted on the City website after each event. There are four in total, summarizing five events.



Part 3 | What did we ask? What did we hear?

STEP 1 — Explore & Understand: Gathering All Our Stories

Summary of Engagement Activities

The following chart illustrates what events and activities were held, and when, in Step 1 of Evolving Infill.

Engagement Activity	Dates	Description of Activity
Evolving Infill Discussion Guide	November 15, 2013 to January 31, 2014	The discussion guide was an informational toolkit with discussion questions aimed at supporting meaningful conversations about infill and neighbourhood change. It could be completed individually or as part of a group.
Engaging Edmonton Online Discussion Forum	November 15, 2013 to January 31, 2014	An online discussion forum was available for participants to share their stories and thoughts outside of formal face-to-face events. The same questions were asked online as in the discussion guide and at the Infill Talks Forums.
Infill Talks Forums	» December 7, 2013 » January 9, 2014	The two City-hosted Infill Talks Forums were used to bring participants together to identify and share ideas, experiences, thoughts, values and stories about neighbourhood change and infill development.
Host Your Own Conversation	3 Training Sessions » November 27 & 30, 2013 » December 11, 2013 35 Host Your Own Infill Talks » Held independently by groups of participants	Participants were trained to “host their own” Infill Talks using the key project questions. Those who completed this training then held their own sessions with others who were interested. The data was compiled and returned to the project team.

what did we ask? what did we hear?

“First of all, I want to thank the CoE for the opportunity to engage citizens in this discussion. My husband and I are starting to think about downsizing from our suburban community and would love to be closer to the core and to our work places.” -Step 1 Participant

Key Discussion Questions

- » Q: Think about yourself as well as your friends, family, neighbours or colleagues and identify the top 5 elements that you think should be considered so that infill development contributes to great established neighbourhoods and serves the needs of many.
- » Q: In regards to residential infill in Edmonton's established neighbourhoods, what do you think is working well now? What do you see as the opportunities associated with infill development?
- » Q: Alternatively... what could be improved? What do you see as the challenges, concerns or issues associated with infill development occurring in established neighbourhoods?
- » Q: The City may try new approaches for advancing infill as they are identified through this project. What are your ideas, suggestions or recommendations for maximizing opportunities and addressing challenges in order to move infill ahead?
- » Q: We know that this is a complex issue. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about residential infill in Edmonton's established neighbourhoods?
- » Q: What advice or guidance would you give to the group noted above regarding what to consider as they work through identifying, refining and prioritizing actions to advance infill development in Edmonton?

Key Response Themes

The results from the thousands of comments received in response to the Step 1 discussion questions were grouped into six key themes:

Liveability - Participants talked about walkability, creating an urban lifestyle, transit accessibility, maintaining neighbourhood safety and security, the need for green space and community gathering areas, and encouraging mixed use and mixed housing types.

Design - Participants talked about the quality of infill, how infill aligns with a neighbourhood's look and feel, and the importance of balancing design standards and creativity. They also talked about how important careful consideration of specific design elements such as garages, light & shade, parking, and setbacks are when developing great infill.

Perspectives & Needs - Participants talked about the impacts of infill and how infill development can be supported. Some specific issues included the pros and cons of increasing density, a focus on family oriented housing, maintaining a critical mass of single-family homes, and incentives to support developers.

Relationships - Participants talked about the need for residents, developers and the City to work together as partners, as well as the need for better community consultation.

Resources & Costs - Participants talked about considering the impact of infill on existing infrastructure, as well as the need for more affordable infill and improving the overall accessibility of infill development.

Rules & Process - Participants talked about the need for long range planning to simplify infill building processes and procedures, and for ensuring consistency in decision-making.

**For a detailed summary and analysis of what we heard, please see "Evolving Infill Steps 1 - 3 Findings" available at www.edmonton.ca/evolvinginfill*

Part 3 | What did we ask? What did we hear?

STEP 2 — Identify, Refine & Prioritize

Summary of Engagement Activities

Engagement Activity	Dates	Description of Activity
Infill Action Collaborative (IAC)	» February 21 & 22, 2014 » March 10, 2014 » April 8 & 26, 2014	In Step 2 of Evolving Infill, the City brought together a diverse group of 30 Edmontonians with a range of backgrounds to form the Infill Action Collaborative. The IAC consisted of residents, members of the building and development industry, community and civic groups, and City staff. Their task was to help the City use what we heard in Step 1 to develop potential actions for the City to consider to support infill in our established neighbourhoods. Many of these actions are included in Edmonton's Infill Roadmap.
Infill Action Review	» March 22, 2014	The Infill Action Review was a mid-point public review of the high-level draft strategies produced by the Infill Action Collaborative. The goal of the event was to provide a look into the Collaborative's process, and to gather insight, feedback and guidance as the Collaborative continued their work to develop actions.

what did we ask? what did we hear?

How was the Infill Action Collaborative formed?

The Collaborative was formed using a formal application and selection process for members external to the City's Administration. Over 60 Edmontonians applied for the 21 available seats. The process to narrow this field was challenging given the quality and diversity of applications.

Members were selected based on a combination of application scoring, consideration for securing representation from a diversity of Edmontonians (with different backgrounds, ages, interest areas, and from different parts of the city), and their availability to commit the time required for the Collaborative's work.

**Please see the "Evolving Infill Step 2 Workshop Reports" for information about the work of the Infill Action Collaborative.*



*"Another challenge, which the City has a great opportunity to address through this project, is to begin to institute changes in attitudes towards infill."
-Step 2 Participant*

Key Discussion Questions & Key Response Themes

The Infill Action Review

The Infill Action Review provided the public with the opportunity to view and provide comments on the draft strategies to support infill that were developed by the Infill Action Collaborative.

Key Discussion Questions

- » Q: From your perspective, what is working well with this group of draft strategies?
- » Q: From your perspective, what might be missing? What could be changed or modified in a particular strategy or in a group of strategies?
- » Q: What needs to be considered when developing action plans associated with this group of strategies?
- » Q: What other thoughts, comments or feedback would you like to leave with us regarding the draft strategies?

Key Response Themes

The results received from the Infill Action Review on March 22, 2014 and subsequent emailed comments were collected and used to support the identification of potential actions by the Infill Action Collaborative. The following is a high-level summary of what we heard.

Categories of the Draft Strategies Under Discussion at the Infill Action Review

Leadership and Partnerships	These strategies related to decision making and partnerships between stakeholders	Participants talked about understanding and more critically defining what “a champion” means, suggesting the City needs to consider how to effectively manage competing interests, and how to maintain and encourage community involvement.
Rules and Processes	These strategies related to processes and regulations (like zoning) associated with infill development	Participants talked about adapting approvals and compliance processes as well as how to make rules and processes easily understandable by all. They also noted the importance of considering the tension between the need for consistency and flexibility in rules and processes.
Design	These strategies related to infill building quality and design	Participants talked about considerations for building an effective process to determine design guidelines that meet a variety of needs. They also talked about balancing affordability, creativity, profitability and aesthetics as well as considering change and reflecting neighbourhood impacts in future design guidelines.
Information sharing and Learning	These strategies related to learning about infill, and to sharing information and communication between stakeholders	Participants talked about the need for information that is clear, transparent and up to date, as well as creating an environment and opportunities to share lessons learned among all those involved.
Engagement and Outreach	These strategies related to the ways that stakeholders are engaged in the infill system	Participants talked about the need for multiple methods and avenues of communication, the need to focus engagement and communication at the local neighbourhood level, consideration of who’s missing from the conversation, focus on “asking” vs “telling” and considerations for how the City will evaluate and assess engagement and outreach initiatives.

Part 3 | What did we ask? What did we hear?

STEP 3 — Moving Towards Implementation

Summary of Engagement Activities

Engagement Activity	Dates	Description of Activity
Draft Infill Action Plan Open House	» June 11, 2014 » June 21, 2014	Two City-hosted open houses were held to provide the public with a look at the draft Plan, and to gather input and feedback on the draft to support the Plan's finalization and implementation.
Engaging Edmonton Online Discussion Forum	» June 2, 2014 to June 23, 2014	An online forum with three key questions was available for participants to share their thoughts on the draft Infill Action Plan.
Pop-up Planners in Churchill Square	» June 16, 2014	The Evolving Infill Team spent an hour in Churchill Square to hand-out and discuss the draft Plan with the public.

what did we ask?
what did we hear?



*“Very interesting to see
what other Edmontonians
are concerned about!”
-Step 3 Participant*



Key Discussion Questions & Key Response Themes

The Draft Infill Action Plan

The draft Infill Action Plan was developed based on what we heard and learned in Step 1 and 2 of Evolving Infill. There were 24 proposed actions in the draft Plan. The actions were grouped into five broad categories: communication, collaboration, knowledge, rules, and process.

Key Discussion Questions

- » Q: Considering your needs and the needs of others, what benefits and challenges do you see associated with this group of actions?
- » Q: What are the most important or effective aspects of this group of actions that will create positive change for infill development in Edmonton?
- » Q: What needs to be considered as we implement the Infill Action Plan?
- » Q: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

What we heard

Public feedback was positive overall. A significant majority of the comments were either in support of the draft Plan, or provided advice on how to finalize the document and move toward implementation.

Key Response Themes

Communication	» The actions related to communication were most often identified as a priority, and there was a high level of support for improved communication between citizens, builders and the City. The communications strategy generated a lot of interest, but there were some questions about how to reach people without internet access, or for whom English was a second language.
Collaboration	» The actions related to collaboration had the second highest level of support. This reflects Edmontonian's interest in participating in more city-building decisions, which was identified as a desired outcome for Evolving Infill in Step 1 of the project. Pilot projects were of particular interest, and Edmontonians identified cottage clusters, tiny homes, micro-condos, and sustainable building technologies as new housing forms they'd especially like to see in the city.
Knowledge	» The actions related to knowledge received the most implementation advice and seemed to require the most clarification. The impact of infill on existing properties and current city infrastructure remains a priority for many.
Rules	» The actions related to rules received the most comments, and over half the comments were in support of the actions. However, the rules section also received the greatest number of implementation questions. Most comments of this nature were related to potential changes in neighbourhood character, increased on-street parking, and an increase in rental properties.
Process	» Comments about process-related actions were equally divided between support and advice for implementation. Step 3 participants expressed a lot of enthusiasm for improving notification letters and creating a City Infill Team.

Part 4 | Evaluation of the Public Engagement Process

Overall, the Evolving Infill engagement process was successful as determined by the feedback received from participants evaluating the process. This was determined through voluntary event reviews collected at all public events, and online. As a City, we are committed to evaluating and learning from this process in order to continue to improve our approach to public engagement.

Indicators of Engagement Success

The following indicators and measures were determined at the outset of the project. They were used by the project team throughout the engagement process to evaluate engagement success.

1. Participants have increased understanding and are more aware about the complexity of issues, values, perspectives and facts related to neighbourhood change and the need for infill development resulting from City growth.
2. Participant satisfaction that the project goals and objectives and the role of stakeholders in the process have been clearly defined and understood.
3. A transparent and accountable public engagement process that allows easy access to information and material by interested parties.
4. An open and accessible public engagement process that allows for equitable participation in constructive dialogue by stakeholders through a variety of appropriate methods.
5. Participants are satisfied that the process allowed for values based discussion and weighing of values, needs and interests.
6. A broad and diverse range of stakeholders representing the demographics of The City are engaged in an inclusive process.
7. Participants believe that their input is valued and will be considered by decision-makers.

**The following indicators are long-term indicators that will be influenced by both Edmonton's Infill Roadmap and its implementation. As this is just the beginning of the conversation, these indicators will become measurable as the project continues.

8. Participant input is considered and/or used by decision-makers in recommendations, decisions and implementation.
9. Council has adequate input from citizens to make stronger, better and more sustainable decisions.



“Seeing this infill conversation as a positive opportunity for change.” -Participant



Highlights from Evaluation Results

*These results are compiled from the evaluation forms voluntarily filled out and submitted by participants following public engagement events.

83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that sessions provided an opportunity to gather information about the project and understand different perspectives on infill development.

“Ongoing communication with identified stakeholder groups is essential. We applaud the City for their willingness to collaborate and share the data that helps us all better understand our current state, what has worked well and what hasn’t.”

“Without an introduction and little structure this event is too loose, although that may be comfortable for some”

“Thank you! I am just starting this journey. I am very interested and am committed to learning more.”

90% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that questions and conversation activities were appropriate for the engagement events.

“Also would have been nice to have a summary of what all was said presented to the whole group at once.”

“We feel that there has been a marked improvement in recent years with respect to the City of Edmonton’s policy and regulatory environment. The City has also become much more proactive with respect to their engagement on infill issues. The Engaging Infill process is just the most recent example of this positive shift.”

75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had the opportunity to hear and understand what is important to others.

“The challenge is to satisfy the needs of many in the neighbourhood. The Evolving Infill project is a step in the right direction as to getting the message to Edmontonians of the desire to revitalize mature neighbourhoods.”

“I spoke to a couple of facilitators and a few participants but it wasn’t easy or natural.”

“Allows time for reflection and time to fine tune my opinion, rather than the typical time-limited knee-jerk reactions most public consultation formats impose.”

73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that engagement sessions provided an opportunity for meaningful discussion.

“Proper consultation must be enforced, so I welcome this forum.”

“Good discussions - non confrontational but clear - even when disagreements occurred.”

“Varied on the facilitator - some needed to get/keep group on topic”

90% of respondents enjoyed using engagingedmonton.ca.

Part 5 | Lessons Learned

This engagement process is the start of a conversation.

The Evolving Infill engagement process attempted a different approach for engaging and involving citizens and staff in this discussion. For some people it felt different, surprising and even a little uncomfortable in not knowing what to expect. It was not meant to achieve everything and provide all possible information for decision-making. Rather it was meant to start a conversation that was thoughtful, constructive and meaningful, and to support people in that conversation. The conversation shouldn't end with the development of Edmonton's Infill Roadmap but rather be used as the foundation for an ongoing conversation that supports "evolving infill" in Edmonton.

People like to have their own conversations.

As demonstrated by the success and willingness of participants to host their own Infill Talks, many stakeholders are interested in not only actively participating in City-led talks, but in becoming champions and expanding the conversation beyond the usual venues.

There is significant diversity in experience with infill.

There is a wide range of both positive and negative experiences with infill development in Edmonton. These experiences led to conversations with differing perspectives on what's working well and what's not working well, with some noting a specific topic or issue as an opportunity while others noting it as a challenge. These tensions are important to recognize and work through in developing long term sustainable solutions.

Continue the use of online discussion tools.

The engagingedmonton.ca online discussion forum was a successful tool for gathering input and data from those participants unable to attend face-to-face sessions but still looking for an interactive experience. For some this was a new way to participate. Future conversations should continue to refine the use of online tools to support an accessible engagement experience.

Personal experience and storytelling are valuable tools.

Storytelling is an effective way to generate interest, encourage participation and make residential infill and neighbourhood change relatable and relevant for Edmontonians. It allowed participants to explore their own experiences and bring their own personal wisdom to the discussion. Additionally, stories and experiences were helpful in turning a conceptual discussion about policy and process into something that was meaningful in everyday life for all our stakeholders.

"I think this project can propose and implement some solutions to improve the quality of life in the core of the city." -Participant

