

Task Force News

This is the fourth in a series of updates from the Task Force on Community Sustainability. For more information on the Task Force, please visit our web site at: www.CommunitySustainability.ca



Development of recommendations underway

While the Task Force is not holding regular meetings over the summer, working groups are hard at work finalizing their input and draft recommendations. The Task Force will be putting its overall recommendations together by fall and they will be part of the report that will be submitted to City Council by November.

Profile on Local Businesses in Communities Working Group



The Task Force on Community Sustainability's three working groups have been researching and exploring the opportunities and challenges related to sustainability within the City's mature neighbourhoods.

In this issue we are profiling the **Local Businesses in Communities Working Group** which is co-chaired by Teresa Spinelli, Vice Chair of the Task Force and President of Edmonton's Italian Centre Shop, and Simon O'Byrne, Practice Leader for Urban Planning with Stantec. The Working Group consists of members from the Task Force and the community at large, including community partners and experts in the field. The mandate of the working group is to address community sustainability by examining the links and benefits between local businesses and local communities.

Spinelli says the working group has heard two main themes in its consultation with business stakeholders and community representatives. "We are hearing about the need for more municipal support for local businesses on things like bylaw enforcement and safety, and the need to better educate people about the importance of local businesses to communities and the significant contributions they make to the local economy," says Spinelli.

The working group is exploring these and a number of other issues as it develops its recommendations for the task force, issues such as the impact of transportation on businesses in mature neighbourhoods, increasing local business prosperity and urban design/aesthetics.

The working group is facing the challenge of condensing a large amount of information related to local businesses into workable and meaningful recommendations. "We have a lot of great information and some really good input to work with. Our challenge is prioritizing the needs and developing recommendations that will make a difference," adds Spinelli.



Help us develop solutions

If you have suggested solutions that will help ensure mature neighbourhoods remain viable and sustainable, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us through our web site and watch the site for future updates on our progress.

Social Policy and Community Building Expert visits Edmonton



A Washington-based expert on social policy and community building visited Edmonton on June 29 to provide input to the Task Force on Community Sustainability. Lisbeth Schorr is a Senior Fellow and Lecturer at Harvard University. Her current work is related to how complex community initiatives can be assessed, held accountable and spread without reducing their effectiveness.

While in Edmonton, Schorr toured the Alberta Avenue, Central McDougall and McCauley neighbourhood revitalization areas. She also gave a presentation to the Task Force and highlighted three things she has learned from her work, including the importance of: working in a results framework, connecting activities to results and a deep collaboration of people who can make substantive changes.

Schorr explained that achieving community sustainability is a lifelong learning process that thrives in opportunity-rich environments and that all organizations need to work together to ensure sustainability. Such collaboration needs to be consistent and it's important to involve all stakeholders when it comes to making substantive decisions that impact communities. Schorr also stressed the importance of continually evaluating initiatives and not waiting to do an assessment years later.

Recent or upcoming meetings and presentations



EFCL hosts further consultation on community sustainability

On July 13, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) held a second consultation on community sustainability. The first consultation was held in May. About 40 people attended the session to discuss solutions to four key issues related to the sustainability of mature neighbourhoods, which were identified at the May meeting. Those four issues are: demographic imbalances and housing, public safety and street vibrancy, schools, and the need for collaboration.

The EFCL will be using the input from the two sessions to form recommendations for the Task Force this summer. The Task Force will consider the input from the EFCL as it develops its own recommendations for City Council.

Update to City Council

On July 19, task force members had an informal lunch meeting with Edmonton City Council to update council members on the work of the task force to date.