

Task Force News

This is the third 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



Recent or upcoming meetings and presentations for the Task Force

Centre for Public Involvement
Citizen Planning Circle meetings
June 18 & 25

On June 29, Lisbeth Schorr, a Senior Fellow with the Centre for the Study of Social Policy and Lecturer in Social Medicine at Harvard University, will visit Edmonton. She will be touring neighbourhoods that are part of the city's Neighbourhood Revitalization Program, including Alberta Avenue, and presenting to the Task Force. Schorr's current work is focused on how complex community initiatives can be assessed, held accountable and spread without diluting their effectiveness.

Working Group Update – Achieving Mature Neighbourhoods Sustainability



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 **Achieving Mature Neighbourhoods Sustainability Working Group** which is co-chaired by Nancy MacDonald, a Senior Associate and Urban Planner with Stantec, and Cassandra Haraba, a lawyer and member of the Grovenor community with a special interest in municipal planning. The Working Group consists of members drawn from the Task Force and the community at large.

The Achieving Mature Neighbourhoods Sustainability working group has a broad mandate and the significant challenge of focusing the large number of sustainability issues and information, and determining how to develop viable solutions for mature neighbourhoods. The working group has split its work into social and built environments.

MacDonald says while the social and physical needs of mature neighbourhoods may be different, addressing the two sets of issues must ultimately be done jointly. "You can build all you want in a community, but unless the social programs and networks are in place to support residents, you won't be successful in achieving sustainability".

MacDonald adds that the consultation her group has done and the input they've had from developers, planners and community representatives has been insightful and emphasizes the need for all partners to work closely together. "We need to empower community members and make it easier for them to work with all levels of government," says MacDonald. "This kind of collaboration is essential as we work to determine how to implement and fund initiatives aimed at achieving sustainability in mature neighbourhoods".



A feature story on McKoy and Vincent's visit and the work of the Task Force ran in the Edmonton Journal's Sunday Reader section on June 19.

Check it out at: <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/news/ABCs+saving+city+neighbourhoods/4971000/story.html>

There will only be one issue of the Task Force newsletter produced in the summer as members will be working on recommendations for City Council. It will be issued in late July.

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.

UC Berkeley experts bring Edmonton ideas on helping mature neighbourhoods thrive



Deborah McKoy and Jeff Vincent from the [Centre for Cities and Schools at University of California, Berkeley](#) were in Edmonton June 9 and 10 to meet with the Task Force and city and school district staff on the extensive research the Centre has conducted on sustainable communities and how schools and high-quality education fit within mature neighbourhoods. They also did a public presentation to representatives from community leagues and school parent councils on highlights from their most recent report, *"Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities: Seven Steps to Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development"*.

McKoy and Vincent's presentation was well-received by those in attendance. They emphasized the importance of municipalities and schools working together in a pro-active manner rather than waiting for a crisis. "Responsibility for achieving community sustainability doesn't lie with just one level of government," McKoy said. She added that it's important for community partners and governments to communicate with each other and plan together in an environment that allows some risks to be taken, even if mistakes are made.

Vincent gave examples from the U.S. of innovation and collaboration between schools and communities, including a successful system of over 60 community schools in Oregon, a joint high school and seniors centre in Massachusetts, and the rapidly growing Safe Routes to School initiative that has been developed in a number of States.

NextGen Survey



At its June 1 meeting, the Task Force on Community Sustainability received an overview of the results of a recent survey conducted by Edmonton's Next Gen. The organization is represented on the Task Force by Next Gen Community Co-Chair, Tegan Martin-Drysdale.

There were 469 responses received to the Next Gen Vibrant Communities survey from neighbourhoods across Edmonton. The results brought to light numerous aspects Edmontonians feel make their communities liveable, vibrant and sustainable, including: accessibility/amenities, character/beauty, people/community, parks/recreation, infrastructure, activities, and walkability.

For more details on the survey results, visit Next Gen's website at: www.edmontonnextgen.ca