

**Information for the Twin Brooks Community League Executive  
March 24, 2015**

*The following information was collected by the City of Edmonton for the Twin Brooks Community League executive. The document reflects questions posed to City staff by the Twin Brooks Community League executive members.*

**1. EPSB line of sight concerns**

Safety issues such as sightlines are considered during the planning and development approval stages of school site planning. There are no anticipated sightline issues associated with First Place homes on the school building site.

Concerns regarding the safety of soccer players due to soccer balls being chased into the shared parking lot at the south end of the school can be addressed by installing appropriate fencing.

**2. Concern for loss of open space**

Joint school/park sites are planned with three primary principles in mind:

- 1) to provide a location for a school building;
- 2) to provide open space to meet outdoor and physical education curriculum requirements, and to meet school activity goals and objectives; and
- 3) to provide open space and recreational opportunities for the community.

First Place homes will be built on land that was always intended to have a building on it. Development will not occur on land that was intended for open space when the site was assembled. We understand that it's a change, especially since in some instances, empty building sites have been used as temporary sports fields. The permanent sports fields will remain in the community -- they contribute to a district-wide system of play areas that combined have adequate space for the planned population.

**3. Field demands/loss of soccer fields**

Development will add only minor incremental increases in demand on existing open space. This change is offset by the lower-than-planned population and normal decline in population that has occurred as neighbourhoods age, including Twin Brooks.

In Twin Brooks, the total number of bookable soccer fields will remain the same after First Place construction. The two temporary fields lost due to construction will be replaced by two



smaller permanent soccer fields. The Twin Brooks community currently uses the open space (non-bookable) on the surplus school site as three mini-fields for U4 and U6 soccer programs. Once First Place construction begins, these fields will need to be relocated elsewhere in the park or community. Options for locating these smaller fields to other local parks can be determined with assistance from the [Community Recreation Coordinator \(CRC\)](#) or the larger bookable fields can be used.

#### **4. Drainage concerns/sewer infrastructure to support 40 residences**

The Twin Brooks neighbourhood is a minimal flood risk, and in general, it's had few reports of flooding. Developing First Place in Twin Brooks will not bear any significant challenges to local infrastructure. Current infrastructure capacity can support the approved development's drainage infrastructure, including the stormwater discharge system.

#### **5. Clarification on "mature vs established neighbourhood" definition**

Mature neighbourhoods were generally completed before 1970, and are controlled by the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay. Established neighbourhoods are neighbourhoods that are primarily residential, mostly planned and developed before 1995, and generally located within the Anthony Henday. Surplus school sites exist in both mature and established neighbourhoods. Today, the First Place program is being implemented in established neighbourhoods.

#### **6. History/context: why is the City developing surplus school sites?**

City Council's vision is to create a more compact, transit-oriented and sustainable city. To do this, the City must make use of existing infrastructure and services (such as those formerly intended to support school construction) wherever possible, especially given Council's goal of 25% housing growth in downtown and existing neighbourhoods.

The First Place Program is one of many programs and initiatives that is helping the City achieve this goal.

Edmonton is growing rapidly, and existing communities continue to age over time. Children grow up, go to school and eventually leave the family home. This affects population levels, school enrolment and many other aspects of the social fabric. The City believes that repurposing undeveloped building sites make the best and most innovative use of available land to offer greater housing choices to everyone, creating more sustainable communities and better meeting the City's changing needs.



When new neighbourhoods are planned, land is reserved to meet the anticipated future need for schools, parks, and recreation. This serviced land is typically held by the City for future development.

Over the years, many communities did not achieve the planned populations identified in neighbourhood plans. As children grew and left, populations generally peaked below planned levels and started to decline. On occasion, building sites set aside for schools were not developed and were later declared surplus by school boards.

Under the Joint Use Agreement, the school boards regularly review their need for vacant school sites. Sites the school boards don't need for future schools are declared surplus and released to the City. The City then begins a formal process for determining use of the surplus school building sites, and considers various options to repurpose the site.

Recent declarations of surplus school sites include 20 in 2006 (including the Twin Brooks site by the Edmonton Catholic School District), and another 20 in 2009. In addition, sites with school buildings can be declared surplus, with first right to purchase offered to the City.

Of the total 40 declared surplus since 2006:

- 20 are approved for First Place;
- 9 are housing sites with final use not yet determined;
- 8 are planned seniors' sites; and
- 3 are retained for civic purposes.

#### **7. Traffic concern on 12 Avenue/interest in a crosswalk**

Currently, a marked crosswalk exists to facilitate pedestrian movement across 12 Avenue at the Twin Brooks park entrance. Changes to the existing crosswalk, such as adding controls, requires an assessment based on a criteria including, but not limited to, traffic volumes, number of pedestrians, origins/destinations and overall pedestrian connectivity in the area.



## **Additional 28 Questions About First Place Project Site in Twin Brooks -- February 20, 2015**

*These questions have been gathered from the Twin Brooks community and put together by the Twin Brooks Community League Board. These questions were requested by the First Place committee with the intention of answering them at the meeting with Twin Brooks Community League's Board of Directors on March 2, 2015.*

**1. In terms of the location of the development in the park, how have the planners taken into consideration the loss of sight lines from the road way into the park space? Since this project was originally conceived, we have constructed our rink and community hall. Once FP is constructed, our remaining sports fields and usable green space will be effectively 'sealed off' from public roadways and out of sight from public view. We are very concerned this will become an access and security problem, and from what we can tell, this is unique to this particular FP project site.**

First Place development will only occur on the same approved building site originally intended for a school. Through the design engagement process, the City, builder and volunteer residents will work together to address security and sightlines concerns to ensure maximum integration of the new homes and surrounding areas.

**2. The department of Parks and Recreation has certain criteria in the design of parks in terms of sight lines for safety. Has or will that department comment on the design and loss of certain sight lines?**

All City branches and departments work together to ensure that sightline or safety issues are addressed before First Place homes are approved for construction and development.

**3. Using the 2009 Canadian Vehicle Survey Summary Report the average Alberta family owns 1.87 vehicles. With 37 units being proposed there would be potential 69 vehicles present, excluding visitors. With the road in front of FP already being the most congested section of roadway in the Twin Brooks community, how will the project address the issues of parking and pedestrian safety?**

First Place developments always contain sufficient parking for residents and visitors within the site. No street parking will be required. Further, adjacent collector roads were planned and developed to accommodate planned schools, with the associated traffic. In fact, in most



cases, the proposed change of use for the site will generate significantly less traffic than was planned for the school site.

**4. Will there be a limit to the number of vehicles each home can have? If so, what is the limit? What can be done if this limit is exceeded?**

There is no limit to the number of vehicles First Place buyers can own. First Place buyers generally have one-to-two vehicles per household.

**5. Will there be visitor parking space provided for FP? If so, how much?**

The zoning requires one visitor stall per seven homes. Typically, First Place meets or exceeds that requirement. First Place developments always contain sufficient parking for residents and visitors within the site. No street parking will be required.

**6. Currently, all parking for any event or activity in the park is along the south side of 12 Ave, exactly where the FP project location is. There is no parking on the other side of the road and almost none available in adjacent residential roads. We have seen at other FP sites that numerous vehicles are parked on the roads in front of them (visitors, extra homeowner vehicles – this is Alberta where vehicle ownership per household is among the highest in the world).**

See answer # 5 (above).

**7. Has or will the department of Transportation be consulted on the impact?**

Transportation Services will be consulted to provide input on access requirements, on-site parking requirement, pedestrian requirements and internal circulation of the site. If traffic concerns are identified at the time of development application, Transportation Services may require a traffic assessment to be provided in support of the proposed development.

Adjacent collector roads were planned and developed to accommodate planned schools, with the associated traffic. In fact, in most cases, the proposed change of use for the site will generate significantly less traffic than was planned for the school site.

**8. Will a marked crosswalk be added help with the safety concern? That intersection is site of numerous requests by the community to add a controlled crosswalk, which the city has refused. There have been several close calls of pedestrian incidents there.**



See answer # 7 (above).

**9. Where will the snow removal place the surplus snow? Will it be within the FP property? Will it be in a place with safety concerns or where it is unsightly?**

A condo board is created by the builder to ensure the new homes are looked after in the future, including responsible snow removal.

**10. One of the key concerns of residents when we built our community hall recently was where will the garbage dumpster be and how will it be safely accessed by garbage trucks. Where will the FP garbage and recycle be? How will it be accessed by large trucks? Will it be visible from the roadway?**

The location of the garbage and recycling bins will be determined through the design engagement process when the City, builder and volunteer residents work together in designing the new homes.

**11. What will be done to mitigate safety of the FP entrance location? It is already on the inside curve of a road with poor sight lines, and on the one side where vehicles can park. It is clearly a serious concern for vehicles entering 12 Ave from the FP site, which will have little to no visibility of the traffic approaching from either direction on 12 Ave, especially if any vehicles are parked on the street.**

Transportation Services will review the final design and access locations at the development application stage. Access locations must be in accordance with the current roadway standards and must take into account all safety concerns.

**12. With the increase of the population of Twin Brooks caused by this housing has the impact been considered on the capacity of GPN school?**

Between 2006 and 2014, student residency has declined. George P. Nicholson school currently has room for additional students.

**13. GPN School has been at full capacity nearly every year (the current year is one of the few it is not completely full). Where will the elementary age children of FP go to school if GPN is at or near capacity?**





Currently, thirty seven percent of students attending George P. Nicholson school reside outside of Twin Brooks. Neighbourhood students, including those from First Place homes, will have priority enrollment over students from other neighbourhoods.

**14. Who will pay the cost of the tree removal the developer or the City of Edmonton (CoE)? In Section 3.3 item e in the Twin Brooks NASP Office Consolidation October 2013 it states “secondly, the assurance that the open space standards reflect the needs of the community and conform with regulatory requirements” and “Designing the residential layout in such a way as to minimize any negative impacts from activities within the park and vice versa.” How has this been addressed and consulted with residents and regulating bodies? Can we be provided copies of these types of assessments?**

The City incurs the cost of tree removal and transplantation to alternate locations, where feasible. First Place development will only occur on the same approved building site originally intended for a school. Therefore, the provision of parkland within the community remains unchanged. Through the design engagement process, the City, builder and volunteer residents will work together to address sightlines and other design concerns to ensure maximum integration of the new homes and surrounding areas.

**15. Under section 5.3 of the aforementioned document it also states:”5.3 SUBDIVISION AND REDISTRICTING Subdivision and redistricting will occur subsequent to the adoption of the Neighbourhood Area Structure Plan bylaw in accordance with stages identified based on market conditions at that time. Each phase of subdivision and redistricting will go through the steps of notice and public hearings as required by the Planning Act and City Policy.” Can you please comment on the history of the required steps and public hearings? Will there be further notices and public hearings as the project moves ahead?**

There will be no further public hearings because the site is already zoned and development rights are in place. In 2017, the City will host an open house in Twin Brooks to answer residents’ questions, share information and gather names of volunteers to work with the City and builder in designing the new homes.

**16. Do the existing utilities present have the capacity to handle the introduction of the homes? If not what impacts in terms of construction will this have to upgrade the services? The space was designed for a small school with a couple washrooms to be used a few times a day. Now there will be 37 homes with laundry, dishes, showers, baths, etc. This is significantly more than the infrastructure was designed**



**for. Is there engineering data to prove the sewer and water system can handle this? Is this available to be presented to the community?**

There is sufficient servicing capacity in place to support the new approved or proposed residential uses.

**17. Considering that GPN was built larger than planned with a YMCA and Alberta Health Clinic attached and the recent edition of a Community Building and Rink the overall loss of green space in the park is significant. The development will cause the community to no longer have a U10 soccer. When the project was planned how was the sizing of the project considered vs. community recreation and green space? Is there still a chance the development could be scaled back to lessen the impact to the spaces mentioned?**

First Place development will only occur on the same approved building site originally intended for a school, so the amount of parkland within the community remains unchanged. The size of the development will be contained within the limits of the vacant building site, and the area for public parkland use will remain the same.

**18. It has been noted this project falls under the city definition of Infill. However, Infill was designed to address mature neighborhoods. Twin Brooks has not been deemed a Mature Neighborhood. Can you explain the definitions and how the Twin Brooks project has now gained this title?**

Over the next 30 years, we expect over 500,000 new residents to call Edmonton home. Supporting the development of new housing in established neighbourhoods is a critical part of accommodating population growth and change in our city and communities. By enabling infill in our older neighbourhoods, we can also make the best use of our existing infrastructure and amenities, support a range of housing choice for citizens and encourage ongoing community vibrancy. Infill is one of many City strategies to foster a livable and prosperous Edmonton. Surplus school sites exist in both mature and established neighbourhoods. Today, the First Place program is being implemented in established neighbourhoods.

**19. Many residents ask us if Infill is a priority for the City, then why does the Century Place project on 111 Street remain only partially developed nearly a dozen years after it's launch? We need to explain to the community why infill needs to be placed in our well-used green space when there are hundreds of acres of undeveloped infill sitting empty indefinitely in an adjacent community.**





See answer # 6 and answer # 18 (above).

**20. Numerous residents have requested documentation and history of the approval of the project. To date there has been no concise report. Twin Brooks Community League Board is requesting the CoE to provide us a narrative summary of the history of the project with all associated reports and documents.**

The City has been in communication with the Twin Brooks community league and residents through emails, phone calls and meetings. Most recently, City staff responded to an information request by Ms. Ida Richards on February 11 and 23, 2015. Further, on February 9 and March 2, 2015, City staff met with the Twin Brooks community league to share information and answer questions.

The City's website is an excellent resource for information about why the City is developing surplus school sites for First Place, seniors' housing and sites where the land use has yet to be determined. In addition to the website, residents may contact the [Office of the City Clerk](#) for specific council reports relating to surplus school sites.

As part of the First Place public engagement process in 2017, a "What We Heard" report will be compiled and shared with the Twin Brooks community league, city councillor and posted to the City's website.

**21. It has been said that the CoE will meet with residents in 2017 after soil testing. Can you comment on the reasoning of holding a meeting so far into the future? We have been asked by many residents to ask for a formally meeting with the CoE. We request that a meeting be held in the immediate future.**

The First Place program follows an implementation schedule that includes a soil test, public engagement and construction/sales phases for each site. Twin Brooks is scheduled for a public open house in 2017. Due to limited staff time and resources, the City can hold only one open house per school site. Granting Twin Brooks a request for an immediate open house date would require the sale/construction phase to commence next year.

**22. Would it be possible to move the project to the South East part of the park near the pump house? This may have far less affect on the traffic, sight lines, and other concerns the current site raises.**



Council directed development of new homes to occur on the vacant building site declared surplus by school boards. City staff will be implementing program on the approved site unless the site is technically unsuitable for the development.

**23. It is our understanding that the land costs for FP homeowners are deferred for five years. What happens if a homeowner(s) can not afford the extra cost at the end of the five years?**

The mortgage approval process ensures the homebuyer can afford the entire cost of the home. To date, no First Place buyers have been unable to pay the deferred land payment after the five-year term.

**24. Will the FP homeowners be allowed to sell their home within the five years? If so, what happens to the land cost deferral?**

Owners can sell their home before the five-year land cost deferral period is over and transfer the remaining deferral period to the new owners. Also, owners can pay the land cost in full before the five-year period is over.

**25. Will the FP homeowner be able to sell their homes to commercial homeowners who will make them rental properties? What is in place to prevent someone buying multiple FP units and turning it into rental properties, this defeating the whole purpose of the program?**

After the land value is paid, the townhome is like any other home and can be rented out. City research indicates that most buyers view purchasing a First Place townhome as a place to raise family and not to flip property. There is no evidence of home flipping since buyers began moving into First Place homes in 2009.

**26. Since this land was to be used for a Community School which would directly benefit the residence of the community in a positive way as a whole why now is a private development for profit not of any benefit to the community. The sale of the land to a for profit entity should entitle TB to share or gain all the profits of the land deal. Why is none of the profit made from this land remaining the community?**

The land was provided to the City by the developer as a condition of subdivision approval. Council has directed First Place sale proceeds be applied to the costs of implementing the program and any residual revenues be shared with respective school boards. City proceeds are used to support the [Cornerstones affordable housing initiative](#).



**27. The FP project is being done on the premise that City has a policy of infilling which overrides concerns or objections by citizens in the communities. Can you please provide some background into how this infill policy came into affect? Is infill supported by anyone other than housing developers?**

City Council's stated vision is to create a more compact, transit-oriented and sustainable city. Council has also directed City staff to use existing infrastructure and services (such as those intended to support school construction) wherever possible and to encourage at least 25% of citywide housing unit growth to take place in established neighbourhoods. Infill projects use existing infrastructure and services, which helps achieve more efficient use of City taxpayer dollars.

Support for more residential infill in our mature and established neighbourhoods is part of our Municipal Development Plan (MDP), The Way We Grow. The MDP is a 10-year plan that provides policies and guidance to chart the course for Edmonton to evolve over time into a more compact, transit-oriented and sustainable city. The Municipal Development Plan is the culmination of ongoing consultation with Edmontonians that ran from 2006 to 2008. Through a series of public and stakeholder consultation sessions on the plan, previously called Focus Edmonton, the City was able to take a wide range of views into consideration in the Plan's development.

**28. If infill is the key strategy, why does the City want to make a large annexation of land south of the city?**

The City needs to encourage a better balance of growth between the perimeter (annexation) and the core of our city (infill). Dispersing growth and allowing more of it to occur in established neighbourhoods allows the city to make better use of existing infrastructure, which increases the city's fiscal efficiency and performance. By accommodating more people within the city's established footprint, infill also reduces the overall financial, environmental and social impacts of growth.

The City's ongoing planning work to address future growth is guided by a comprehensive City Council plan (The Way We Grow) to advance the growth of the city upwards, inwards and outwards. With the projected population growth to reach over 2 million in 50 years, it is not possible to accommodate future growth by infill alone. The City is required to maintain a 30-50 year supply of land, and currently in southern Edmonton, those land supplies are between 12-17 years.



Edmonton must plan for a wide variety of future land uses, including lands for infrastructure, like roads and drainage, commercial and industrial uses, residential development, recreation and emergency services. In addition, securing opportunities to enable a wider range of inclusive housing choice is critical. Citizens demand choices and those influences the market and availability of housing options.