

*The following information was collected by the City of Edmonton to support the Seniors' Housing open house in Wedgewood Heights on December 3, 2014. Questions in the document reflect questions posed to City staff by the Wedgewood Heights Community League and Homeowners' Association in previous meetings.*

## 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 mature neighbourhoods.

The Seniors' Housing Program is one of many programs and initiatives that is helping the City achieve this goal.

There is an imminent need for more seniors housing in Edmonton. Recent reports have indicated the number of seniors aged 80 and over will increase by 266% over the next 30 years, while the number of those aged 55 to 64 will more than double. Using these sites for seniors' housing will help increase housing options available to seniors throughout Edmonton. With a mix of market and affordable units within the building, this development will allow local residents to stay in the community they have contributed to building.

By enabling seniors to downsize to smaller homes within communities they know, existing housing stock becomes available to younger families with children. This helps to diversify neighbourhood demographics, making existing housing stock flexible for the changing needs of community members (i.e. seniors don't need to move away, and housing becomes available for younger families to move in). This makes a neighbourhood more stable and sustainable over the long term.

The City followed the normal land use change process prior to Council approving new seniors' housing in October 2012. In addition to the standard land use change process, in June 2012 the City reached out to inform the community league representatives of planned public meetings and Council hearing.

On September 5, 2012, City staff presented their recommendation to build new seniors' housing on eight vacant building sites, including a site in Wedgewood Heights, to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. On September 12 and 13, 2012, public

meeting were held to inform the public of the proposed changes. Residents from Wedgewood Heights were in attendance. Following the public meetings, a public meeting was held on October 9, 2012, to specifically discuss the Wedgewood Heights building site.

At the October 15 and 16, 2012, Council public hearings, Council received 15 hours of presentation from groups and individuals speaking to the proposed change in zoning in support of seniors' housing. Following the close of presentations, Council asked City staff questions, discussed the recommendations and approved the changes in support of new seniors' housing.

**What were the City Council decisions directing surplus school site development for seniors' homes in Wedgewood Heights?**

In 2009, the City acquired an additional 20 undeveloped school building sites declared surplus by local school boards. Following a public hearing in October 2012, City Council approved eight undeveloped building sites to support future seniors' housing. City Council also directed staff to review potentially relocating the undeveloped building envelope to an alternate location within the Wedgewood Heights joint park and school area.

On October 15, 2012, City Council directed City staff to work with the community and future builders to find an agreeable building design; ensure the development will remain seniors' housing indefinitely; include caveats on title that are similar to the architectural restrictions and the yearly Homeowners' Association fee in the community; and include, as a condition of sale, other negotiated agreements between the City and the residents.

After this community consultation, City staff will provide a report to City Council about the results of consultations with the affected property owners, Wedgewood Homeowners' Association and the Wedgewood Community League, to determine the feasibility of moving the building site from its current location on Wedgewood Boulevard to better integrate the location of the proposed seniors' housing development into the community.

City Council also requested that the report include an outline of the steps required to move the building site, and a summary of any relevant implications for water, sewer and electrical utilities, transportation, planning and legal requirements.

## Why Seniors' Housing?

### What was the City's process for determining market interest in developing school sites?

On October 28, 2011, community leagues were informed that the City was interested in developing the undeveloped school site in their neighbourhood for residential purposes.

Communities were informed that a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) would be advertised to generate ideas for residential uses that complemented the individual neighbourhoods and fit within the City's strategic directions. This RFEI process allowed private, public, not-for-profit and community groups to submit ideas for creative residential uses on these sites.

Each of the communities included in the RFEI, as well as four key stakeholder groups (Edmonton Urban Development Institute, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, the EFCL, and the Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton), were made aware of the RFEI.

The City received 30 submissions suggesting various types of residential uses, such as secondary suites and low-rise apartments, but the greatest interest was in developments involving seniors' housing. There was also interest in a range of ownership options that included rental, cooperatives and owner-occupied dwellings.

The City reviewed each submission, and on April 20, 2012, a summary of the review was shared with the 13 communities.

As a result of the RFEI, Administration recommended to City Council that, in addition to the 5 original sites recommended for seniors' housing, three more sites be considered for seniors' housing: in Miller, Overland and Wedgewood Heights. In October, 2012, following public information meetings and a public hearing, City Council approved seniors' housing on the eight undeveloped sites.

## Transportation

Wedgewood Boulevard were planned and developed to accommodate planned future schools, with the associated traffic. The proposed use for the site will generate significantly less traffic than was planned for the school site.

Traffic data from 2011 to 2013 show that the intersection of 184 Street and Lessard Road, the primary access to the neighbourhood, is operating efficiently and without significant delays.

Traffic volumes on 184 Street, south of Lessard Road, and on Wedgewood Boulevard in the vicinity of Weber Gate are also within the capacity of the roads.

The zoning for each building site requires parking for employees, residents and visitors be provided on-site (i.e. not on the street). The design for the seniors' developments must meet these zoning parking requirements.

Vehicle access is possible from either 184 Street or Wedgewood Boulevard. On Wedgewood Boulevard, the preferred location is across from Weber Gate. Vehicle access from 184 Street is more challenging due to restricted sight lines and grading. The 184 Street access also requires upgrading the road to the two-lane urban roadway standard and removal of many of the existing trees.

### **Will emergency access be impacted by the seniors' homes?**

According to the City of Edmonton's Transportation and Emergency Services, there are no issues relating to emergency response access to the approved nor the alternate site.

In general, access to and within Wedgewood is limited due to geographic and jurisdictional borders (ravines and the Transportation Utility Corridor). The limited access has been alleviated to some degree by the continued maintenance of the emergency access on 184 Street, and ample road width of Wedgewood Boulevard. Although the proposed development would increase the number of residents slightly, the City does not foresee an impact from the future seniors' housing with respect to emergency planning because of the site placement and the capacity of the local roads.

### **How many ambulance visits will go to the seniors' homes?**

For a 150 unit seniors' residence, the average number of ambulance visits per year is approximately 29, or around two per month. It is unknown how often the siren would be active either arriving or departing. (This estimate is based on data published by the Centre for Disease Control in the United States (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db130.html>)).

### **What traffic studies have been conducted in Wedgewood Heights?**

There has been traffic analysis in Wedgewood Heights in 2010, 2011 and 2013. In 2010, the stop signs at Wedgewood Boulevard and 184 Street were modified to make access from Wedgewood Boulevard easier. This included painting lane lines to ensure drivers do not accidentally turn into oncoming traffic in the southbound lane on 184 Street. Traffic counts

were taken in 2011 and 2013; the analysis of the traffic counts indicates that the intersection of 184 Street and Lessard is operating with no congestion or delays. The seniors' development is not expected to exacerbate the left turn off of Wedgewood Boulevard issue nor warrant additional traffic control at this intersection.

### Property Values

#### How will the seniors' homes impact our property values?

The Realtors Association of Edmonton states: "There are frequent claims from local residents that the addition of various facilities, amenities, businesses, or alternative housing types in their community will have a negative effect on the value of property in the community. Overwhelming evidence from studies in Canada and the U.S. indicates that the assumption that house prices will fall is false."

The City's Assessment and Taxation branch have reviewed sales data from across the City for the last five years. They have advised that seniors' homes will not have any significantly different impact on adjacent property value than that of the school originally planned for the building site.

### Condition of Sale

#### What assurance can the City provide that only the building site will be developed?

The City can provide assurance that only the building site will be developed as a result of sales conditions that will be placed on any developer/housing provider. Another option that is being explored in the first seniors' housing locations is to lease instead of sell the land. By retaining ultimate ownership, the City can ensure the site remains as its intended use.

### Homeowners' Association Fees

#### Will each of the seniors' units contribute to local Homeowners' Association annual fee?

The Homeowners' Association fees are enabled through a clause added to the land title (an encumbrance), which is on a per-lot basis. The surplus school building site is not included in the properties listed in the HOA's encumbrance.



At this time, the encumbrance (Homeowners' Association fee) does not apply to this development. However, the City will work with the builder to ensure new residents share equitably with existing residents in the costs of enhanced maintenance funded by the Homeowners' Association.

Since the amenities provided by the Homeowners' Association will create benefits for residents of this development, the City will need to work out what is an appropriate fee once a service provider has been selected.

### **Building Appearance**

#### **What will seniors' development look like (floors, scale, design, number of units)?**

Major seniors' residence operators aim for over 100 units in a seniors' residence to responsibly balance costs with providing high quality service. This location can support approximately 150-175 units within the approved zoning.

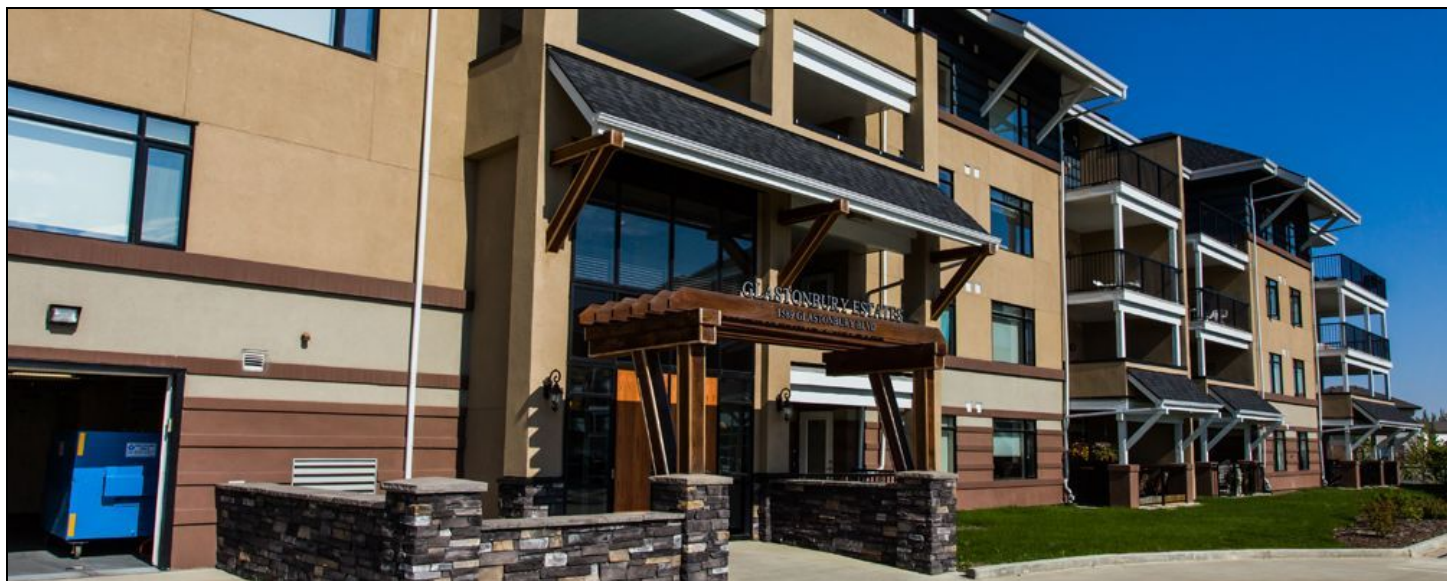
The building will be approximately 4 metres (12 feet) taller than other homes in the community, which are approximately forty metres away from the building site. The building can be a maximum of 4 storeys and 14 metres tall. Also, just as a home does not cover 100 percent of its lot, this building will cover between 25-40% of the site, depending on design.

At this time, there are no architectural renderings for the future seniors' homes, since neither the builder nor the building site location have been finalized. Pictures of two similarly-sized buildings are provided below. The City will require the builder to engage community residents in the design of new homes to ensure their fit within the existing community.

#### **What assurance can the City provide that the new seniors' homes will fit within the community's existing architectural standards?**

Though the architectural standards would have to be reinterpreted to be applicable to this larger building, the colors and finishings are appropriate for this type of development. The builder for this development will work with residents as part of a committee to make sure the building is a good fit in the neighbourhood.

Examples of completed seniors' homes in Edmonton (next page):



*Glastonbury in Edmonton by Christensen Communities*



*Ottewell Terrace in Edmonton by Greater Edmonton Foundation (GEF Seniors Housing)*

**Level of Care****What type of seniors' homes with they be (level of care)?**

The common categories for level of care are: independent living, supported living (home care), supportive living (lodge), and long-term care (nursing home). The intention is to have a range of care provided within the development, and the mix of levels of care will depend on which service provider wins the competition for the site. It is unlikely that long-term care will be part of the development because this level of care is not a permitted use in the building site's current zoning, RA7, and could only be provided through rezoning.

**EPCOR Power Line****Is EPCOR planning to bury the power lines at 184 Street as part of their capital cost?**

*Response provided from EPCOR:*

EPCOR does not currently have any plans to upgrade or underground the existing power line located along 184th Street south of Wedgewood Boulevard.