



Background information:

New housing options on surplus school sites

Edmonton is growing rapidly. In 2014, our population reached almost 878,000 and is forecast to rise to one million within a decade and two million in 30 years. The City's long-term vision and strategy anticipates this growth, with a focus on developing public infrastructure that allows all citizens to thrive.

Housing choice, diversity and affordability are also important parts of this strategy, which is why the City uses school sites no longer required by school boards to build brand-new housing.

A number of these surplus sites will be used to increase residential housing options such as low-rise apartments, townhouses and secondary suites. These create affordable ownership and rental options, both of which are important because of Edmonton's low rental vacancy rate (in April 2014, it was just 1.4%). Decisions on the housing form and the affordable component will be made with input from residents to ensure appropriate integration with the community.

Building more housing opportunities in established neighbourhoods decreases the pressure to build on agricultural land and also makes use of existing infrastructure paid for by taxpayers, such as roads, sewers, drainage, parks and transit. It also helps bring new life and diversity to existing neighbourhoods.

The nine neighbourhoods where new housing opportunities will be planned are Belmont, Dunluce, Henderson Estates, Keheewin, Kiniski Gardens, La Perle, Lymburn, Ogilvie Ridge and Summerlea. Consultation with the communities will inform the rezoning recommendations that are presented to Council.



New housing options and your community

- There is no firm timeline yet for redeveloping these sites. More details will be known as community engagement gets under way.
- A community liaison group has been formed to improve communication and understanding of the program. The group also helps the City understand local context, which will influence recommendations for each community.
- Signs are being placed on all surplus school sites to distinguish school building sites from adjacent open space.
- The city's project team will have ongoing communication and consultation with the community as the development unfolds, including public meetings to share information and answer questions.



- Each site will achieve an affordable housing outcome in some manner, to ensure that a civic benefit is realized from these City assets.

What's ahead?

- At the moment, there are no timelines for building new housing on these sites. The next steps are consultation on the type of residential development, then taking a rezoning recommendation to Council.
- The first sites being considered by the City for this engagement process are Keheewin and Ogilvie Ridge.
- Community engagement will allow residents to play a role in determining future housing forms on these nine sites.

Why and how we have surplus sites

- When land for school and park sites was assembled decades ago, parts of each parcel of land were allocated for future buildings as well as open space for school and municipal needs.
- A [Joint Use Agreement](#) supports collaboration between the City and school boards, and the planning and assembly of shared sites.
- Over the years, many communities did not achieve the planned populations identified in neighbourhood plans. Populations generally peaked below planned levels and eventually 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 board regularly reviews its need for vacant school sites. Sites it does not require for future schools are declared surplus and returned to the City.

- The City has a process for determining use of the surplus school building sites. All sports fields planned for the school will remain.
- Recent declarations of surplus school sites include 20 in 2006, 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
 - 3 are retained for civic purposes

For more information

- Web: Edmonton.ca/surplusschools
- E-mail: surplusschoolsites@edmonton.ca
- Ph: 780-442-090

