

FAQ

Exhibition Lands Transformation

1. Process

What is the difference between the Exhibition Lands site versus the study area?

The study area being examined is called Exhibition Lands, which encompasses over 200 acres of land. The study area contains 160 acres of city-owned lands both north and south of 118 Avenue. Privately held land which surrounds the Exhibition Lands site is included, as one goal of the plan is to reconnect the community together as a whole. This provides context and makes sense to have the same vision and consider how redevelopment may spread into these adjacent areas. The Planning Framework will be applied to the whole study area and change the edges of surrounding Area Redevelopment Plans as necessary. Where the new planning framework overlaps with older plans, the older plans would be amended (where applicable) and the new plan would take their place.

Is the City expecting to maintain ownership of all the land and develop it directly, or will parts be sold for development?

There is no current plan for the City to act as primary developer in this area. Part of the planning process is to determine the right balance between public and private land ownership. Once this is determined with the new vision, City Council can decide how to proceed with potential land sales to development partners.

Is there a budget for redevelopment at this time?

There is no current budget for implementation at Exhibition Lands. The business case for the plan will identify capital costs to support development. An implementation strategy will help identify recommended timelines for different investments to be considered within City Council budget conversations.

If we want something to be transformative, will it require a lot of money? Why is the City not actively recruiting investors?

The City is open to discussing partnership opportunities to support change in this location. City Council has directed Administration to come up with a strong vision for the area before we begin entering into agreements to develop or invest in the site in other ways.

How are other city projects in the area being considered within this expanded process (e.g. neighbourhood renewal, LRT facility, LRT station rehab, Borden Park revitalization, river valley projects, other corridor and area plans, etc)?

As included in the original Terms of Reference for the Area Redevelopment Plan (now called a Planning Framework), we are reviewing the existing bylaws, policies, guidelines and reports that are in place for the area which includes all of the aforementioned projects.

Administration has identified staff across all departments with connections to capital and operating programs in this area and is holding regular project meetings and sharing information to ensure alignment of initiatives happens wherever possible.

The consolidated strategy will ensure that the findings from these projects inform the planning framework and other work related to the Exhibition Lands. This includes the EXPO Centre, the future of the Coliseum and the City's relationship with Northlands through their five year licence.

Are there land reclamation plans?

If the planning process identifies areas for reclamation, details of how that will be addressed will be developed in the implementation phase. Resourcing and working through environmental remediation or reclamation are out of scope for this first planning phase. This high level planning does not require a full environmental impact assessment.

What are the major tools the City can use to control the land, especially if it is sold for development? Are ARPs followed closely by developers?

The Municipal Government Act allows the City to adopt statutory Plans which are used to guide development decisions over time. The Exhibition Lands development is a unique opportunity for the City to use an innovative approach for the Plan. What we are proposing is a *Planning Framework* which will describe the Vision and Guiding Principles for the land, along with a flexible development concept. The Framework will also require that interested developers provide more detailed Master Plans for their proposals. This ensures that the community is engaged through the approval process and allows for better and more detailed information about a specific development.

The goal of this planning process is to determine community and citywide values and identify shared city-building objectives to lay out a long term vision for the future of the area. The implementation strategy will guide the long term review of private sector proposals to develop the land. If the City sells some of the land to private developers, conditions can be placed on the land sale that lay out development expectations for the new landowner. Through development of an implementation strategy, the long term vision of

Landowners always have the right to apply to rezone their land. When this happens, Administration will review the application to ensure it aligns with the existing new plan and any other relevant policies and guidelines. If the proposed rezoning is significantly different than the existing ARP, the plan may be amended to allow for the development. Amending the plan requires the developer to undertake public consultation and present the proposal at a Public Hearing with City Council.

What is the current “default” path forward? If a proposal was on its way to City Council for a vote, what would it most likely say?

There is no “default” path at this stage. The Exhibition Lands requires proactive stewardship from the City in order to realize positive change. Many unsolicited proposals have been received and direction from City Council is for Administration to take the time to plan the whole area well before allowing individual developments to proceed.

What portion of this process will be dedicated to development ideas?

The planning process is set up into multiple phases:

1. Idea Generation
2. Due Diligence
3. Develop Scenarios
4. Refine a Preferred Concept and Policy Directions

Each of these phases includes consideration of development ideas. The Idea Generation phase consisted of collecting ideas, big or small, for how the site can change from Edmontonians and other stakeholders. Development ideas that were submitted were analyzed to determine (a) if they aligned with the Guiding Principles for the project and (b) if are feasible. During the Develop and Refine phases, different future visions are being explored, along with technical analysis, to understand the costs and benefits. As we move into the finalization of the Exhibition Lands Planning Framework, focus will begin to turn toward implementation and what actions will be necessary to support delivering on the specific development ideas.

Will there be more public open houses?

There will be additional outreach with the public during final phases of planning work in 2019. The City will be connecting with the public, local and regional stakeholders, business interests, and industry to gather feedback on the preferred working concept and policy directions in mid-2019. This will be followed by engagement on the complete Exhibition Lands Planning Framework before it goes to public hearing in late 2019. There will be a combination of public open houses, speaking events, committee meetings, stakeholder meetings, and online engagement opportunities to include as many Edmontonians as possible in this big conversation.

2. Housing and Development

What population density can the existing infrastructure (sewage, drainage) support? At what point will there need to be upgrades?

The potable water, wastewater and stormwater systems in and around the study area have been developed and upgraded in stages since the early 20th century. As a result, these systems represent a patchwork of infrastructure that only partially satisfies current engineering standards. Servicing in the study area may require further upgrading to enable redevelopment.

As different development concepts are explored, further study will be done to understand the costs and other implications of different types of development. This analysis is part of the business case for the project.

Once the development is completed, what is the life expectancy?

Life expectancy of development depends on the nature of the development. Housing has a different life cycle than a recreation centre or a transit station. This redevelopment opportunity will lay down a new foundation that will serve northeast Edmonton for decades to come.

Is a percent for affordable housing policy being considered? What about transitional housing for newcomer populations?

Current City policy directs Administration to partner with housing providers to increase access to affordable housing options for Edmontonians, with a specific focus on increasing this housing mix near LRT stations and bus transit centres. City Council has directed Administration to look to spread affordable housing developments across all neighbourhoods in the City and this location will be considered like all others.

Is there potential to work with the Capital Region Housing Board for the provision of subsidized or affordable housing? Is there a Habitat for Humanity option?

The planning process is underway to determine a new vision and policy objectives for new developments in the area. Once the new vision is approved, there will be a chance for individual organizations and development groups to participate in the implementation phases. Housing providers have an opportunity to participate in the creation of the vision, but decisions have yet to be made around development partners or the nature of development partnerships.

What sort of businesses (if any) are interested in the site?

While the City has received unsolicited proposals from potential development partners, there are no significant business interests pursuing projects within the Exhibition Lands study area at this time. EEDC is operating the EXPO Centre and will continue to explore opportunities to leverage this conference and trade show facility to support local and regional economic development.

Will there be any incentives to support or encourage development?

At this stage in the planning process, recommendations for land use and City investments are being developed as part of the vision for Exhibition Lands. These are intended to catalyze investment and the type of transformative development we want to see. These decisions include designating sites for public anchor developments and identifying necessary investments in transit, improved street connections, parks and amenities. An [economic analysis report](#) for Exhibition Lands provides insight into the types of catalytic investments and land uses most likely to encourage the type of development the City is seeking by improving the area and creating certainty for investors.

As the project moves towards an implementation strategy in late 2019, there will be opportunities to explore the appropriateness of other types of incentives to encourage development.

3. Transportation and Accessibility

How is accessibility for people who walk, cycle or have mobility challenges being considered?

One of the core objectives in this planning work is to consider all mobility needs within the area. Edmonton's [Complete Streets Policy C573A](#) states the purpose is to "Acknowledge that the design of all streets will reflect the characteristics of the area and all users (cyclists, pedestrians, truck drivers, auto drivers, young and old citizens and people who have mobility challenges) of the roadway and that an integrated, connected network approach is needed to serve all modes."

The project team is also connecting with different stakeholder groups to ensure accessibility and multi-modal needs are understood and fully considered. The expanded engagement strategy includes an expectation that all stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide input into the details of this new vision.

Are renovations/upgrades to the LRT station and bus transit centre going to take place? Is there a realistic budget?

Coliseum LRT station is considered for rehabilitation work within the LRT capital program. As the planning process progresses, there is an opportunity to ensure any renovations to the transit infrastructure will work well with new developments in the area. Detailed station design work will follow to determine accurate capital costs and timelines to include in budget prioritization conversations with City Council. This work will align with the area redevelopment plan and ensure it fits within the context of the adjacent land uses and future redevelopment.

Will there be growth of bus service in the area? What about quick/rapid bus options and feeder routes?

Planning transit service is not in scope for this project. Consideration of how buses move to and through the study area will influence outcomes, but decisions on bus service levels and location of routes is part of the city-wide [Transit Strategy](#) conversation.

What value does the City see in the Capital Line LRT in the northeast?

The LRT serving northeast Edmonton has been a key piece of the transit network since it was first brought into service in 1978. The popularity of the LRT in the study area can be seen in the higher than average transit ridership compared to the rest of the city. LRT will continue to serve a strong role in providing high quality transportation choices for people as Edmonton grows to over 1 million residents. The new plan at Exhibition Lands will build upon this existing transit asset.

4. Borden Park

Is there an opportunity to expand Borden Park? How can we revitalize Borden Park in the spirit of the 1920-30s with activities, concerts, etc?

Borden Park is a place in the study area many Edmontonians love. As different alternative futures are considered for the area, there will be a discussion about the appropriate amount, and design of, parks and open spaces. This could include expanding the park.

A comprehensive revitalization planning and capital program has been underway in Borden Park since [2006](#). With this work [nearing completion](#), it is not anticipated that the new vision will focus on the existing park, but will focus on how the edges of the park integrate with new development.

New policy documents, such as the Breathe Open Space Master Plan, provide direction to increase the amount of open space around the Exhibition Lands study area.

5. Existing Buildings and Events

What uses are available for Rexall Place (Coliseum) under the Master agreement? Is there a way to repurpose it effectively?

The [Master Agreement](#) states that the Coliseum building cannot be repurposed for sports or entertainment and that the City cannot provide material financial support or investment in the building. The City also came to an agreement with the Oilers Entertainment group to terminate the [Sponsorship Agreement](#) in exchange for permanent closure of the Coliseum. The Coliseum is now owned by the City and, as of January 1, 2018, has been permanently closed. Permanent closure means that the building cannot be repurposed or reused for any use. This presents an opportunity to re-imagine this site, and the entire Exhibition Lands study area, with new development that integrates with the LRT station and neighbouring communities.

Did City Council already decide to demolish the Coliseum? Is demolition of the Coliseum inevitable? If so, why work through this planning process after that decision is made?

At this point in time, no decision about demolition has been made, however the Coliseum building is permanently closed and cannot be repurposed. Administration has undertaken a demolition investigation to better understand estimated costing for decommissioning and demolition of the Coliseum, and managing all materials through recycling, etc. The planning process will help identify a future vision for these lands. Once the project moves from the visioning stage into implementation, a detailed conversation can happen about how to manage or demolish existing structures.

What is going on with the EXPO Centre? Is it being considered as part of this plan? Will the EXPO Centre remain on site?

On January 1, 2018, the EXPO Centre operations were transferred to Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC). The building will remain on the site for the foreseeable future. EEDC is working to coordinate events between EXPO Centre and the Edmonton Convention Centre to explore expanded conference and tourism opportunities.

What is going to happen to the racetrack?

In March 2019, the existing Northlands Park racetrack and casino transitioned back to the City of Edmonton. How this area will change in the future is part of this ongoing planning conversation and site redevelopment. A new racetrack and casino has been built in southwest Edmonton.

What is happening with K-Days? If it is still happening, is there something we can do with the other 50 weeks of the year?

Northlands has signed an agreement with the City to deliver K-Days and Farm Fair at this location for up to five years. Depending on the decisions made for the future of these lands, and Northlands business operations, that timeline could be extended or reduced. Northlands will work with EEDC to coordinate the delivery of these events.

There will be ongoing events in the study area connected to the EXPO Centre and Borden Park. The City is exploring interim use opportunities to bring activity to underused areas before significant redevelopment occurs.

Are there structures that need to remain in the study area? Are there portions of the land we expect to remain as-is?

At this stage, Borden Park will remain. The EXPO Centre building will also remain, unless there is a strong business case to suggest a different approach. The LRT tracks and station will continue to serve the area but will be invested in the future to improve safety and accessibility for transit travellers.

Is there anything internal to the site beyond the scope of the project?

Current planning work at the Exhibition Lands is focused on developing a long-term land use vision and implementation strategy for the area. Specific details around site operations and event programming are out of scope for the planning work. Land use plans will consider current and future activities that may occur and work to develop a vision that provides space for a range of operational and programming outcomes.

Where are the closest grocery stores, recreation centres, and library?

There are businesses of different varieties in the area already but the planning process will include an evaluation of the surrounding local assets to understand if there are any significant gaps to be addressed. Current assets in proximity to Exhibition Lands include:

- Commonwealth Community Recreation

- Russ Barnes Arena
- Eastglen Leisure Centre
- Thistle Curling Club
- Highlands Library
- Safeway
- Save-On Foods

6. Identity

What about all of the work and investment that went into 118 Avenue Revitalization?

A new vision for Exhibition Lands will build upon other City projects in the area, including 118 Avenue Revitalization that has been occurring just outside of the study area to the west. The Exhibition Lands planning work will consider existing policies and programs that are in place today or have been recently completed.

Are the Exhibition Lands part of a particular neighbourhood?

Portions of the lands within the study area for this project are part of Eastwood, Parkdale, Montrose, and Bellevue. Existing neighbourhood plans for these areas were created in the 1980s. The City-owned lands in the centre of the study area are currently covered under the 1990 Northlands Area Redevelopment Plan. The Exhibition Lands Planning Framework is an opportunity to redefine the identity of this area.

How can we ensure we make it feel like a district but connect it to other landmarks in the area?

The planning process provides an opportunity to think about the similarities and differences between the future identity of the Exhibition Lands and those of the surrounding areas. Through conversation with communities and stakeholders, the new vision will provide direction for how these lands will change and how that change will respond to existing landmarks and communities.

7. Safety

How will safety concerns for minorities, women, and other vulnerable people who use the site, and live around it, be addressed?

Safety is a complex issue and there is a wide range of reasons why a person may not feel safe in an area. The new vision at Exhibition Lands is focused on land use and there is an opportunity to address safety by creating a neighbourhood where there is regular activity connected to a variety of different land uses. When there are things to do, places to go, and safe ways to arrive there whether on foot, bicycle, bus, or car, the community benefits and safety increases from having more people out in the neighbourhood.

8. People

Will there be skills development opportunities such as gardening, community kitchens, trades, tool library or other community sharing, urban farming, and language and literacy programming?

Current planning work at Exhibition Lands is focused on developing a long-term land use vision for the area and an implementation strategy for redevelopment. Specific details around site operations and event programming are out of scope for the planning work. Land use scenarios will consider current and future activities that may occur. These scenarios are a tool to develop the final vision that will provide space for a range of operational and programming outcomes.

How can we ensure we create living spaces for all different demographics (i.e. singles, pairs, families, single parents, aging population)?

The planning process will look at how to best serve Edmontonians with a range of different housing choices. The City's goals for urban infill consists of a range of outcomes, including development of various types of homes to support different personal needs of residents. The business case that will be developed for the project will include market analysis to support a recommended housing mix.

What demographics are we expecting to attract with this development?

Today, the neighbourhoods around the study area are very diverse and include a wide distribution of age ranges, family types, and ethnic diversity. The criteria used to evaluate future development concepts and options will include providing a number of housing choices and amenities inclusively for all Edmontonians. A key city-building goal of the City is to ensure residential, commercial, and recreational districts are designed to support all ages and abilities, giving people choices and options to fully participate in daily city life.

9. Food

Are there any thoughts on addressing our food desert? What about community gardens and urban agriculture? Will there be new grocery stores?

fresh: Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy identifies a range of actions to improve access to food and increase urban food literacy. This project will consider ways to incorporate local food policies that will support improved access to healthy food for residents. This direction may emerge through the planning process, just as it may in other neighbourhoods in Edmonton.

10. Timing

What is the expected timeline for delivering the completed Exhibition Lands Planning Framework?

We anticipate delivering the plan to City Council in the third quarter (Fall) of 2019, following that, a public hearing will be held.

What is the estimated timeline for development and repurposing the site?

A new long-term vision to support change is being developed. The redevelopment of large areas can take anywhere from 20-30 years to complete. Timing of redevelopment will vary depending on market readiness to participate in the area. An implementation strategy will be developed to identify short, medium, and long-term phasing actions to support private development activity. This will include identifying public investments needed.

For the portions of the study area that are privately owned, there is no guarantee of any specific development timeline. Individual landowners who wish to make changes to their property will need to adhere to the new plan.

Why is this process happening now and not 10 years ago when the decision to build a new arena happened? When does the City plan to make a development decision about these lands?

While the decision to build a new hockey arena happened years ago, the City has only been able to direct activity in this area as recently as January 1, 2018. Prior to this time, the majority of the land in the study area was under a long-term lease with Northlands to operate and maintain. Now that there is more clarity around operations of the existing buildings, the City can begin thinking about the future. The Exhibition Lands Planning Framework will be brought before City Council at a public hearing in Q3 2019, at which point Council will make a decision about the future of the lands. Implementation will begin once the vision is approved. Detailed development decisions will begin to take place during the implementation phase, which will extend over 20-30 years.

11. Engagement

What opportunities will there be to engage with the project? What about the voices of people who don't have the means or time to participate in the process?

In December 2017, Council approved an expanded approach for planning the redevelopment of the Exhibition Lands. The expanded scope includes significant resources to support broad engagement in an effort to connect with as many Edmontonians as possible. The engagement strategy will involve open, inclusive public events as well as smaller workshops with targeted groups. In-person and online opportunities to participate will be provided so people can choose the format that works best for them. The City will reach out to the community at major milestones, and future engagement opportunities will be designed to learn from and build on the

previous phases of work. The City will communicate about upcoming engagement opportunities online through our project newsletter and webpage, through the Insight Community, in local news media outlets, and using road signs

What is being done to work with Indigenous communities regarding the use of the site?

The engagement plan includes resources to support dialogues with Indigenous communities and Indigenous Edmontonians. These ongoing conversations are part of the Council-approved expanded engagement approach for the project. Engagement has included outreach at local events, collaboration with the City's Memorandum of Understanding partners and discussions with local Indigenous service agencies and their clients.

How has the Province been involved in this project?

The Province has not actively participated in conversations to-date. As ideas are developed and the City has a better sense of the nature of investments and/or partnerships that could support the evolution of the area, the City will be better equipped to engage with the Province.

Can there be an ongoing neighbourhood advisory committee following planning to support implementation?

Discussions about implementation will occur later in the planning process to align with the actions identified in the plan. The community expressed a desire for this opportunity to be ongoing through the process.