

# BUILDING GREAT NEIGHBOURHOODS

## HANDBOOK

The first program of its kind in Canada, Building Great Neighbourhoods is a cost-effective, long-term, strategic approach to address infrastructure needs in Edmonton neighbourhoods. This handbook will help explain the neighbourhood renewal process and how you can get involved in decisions affecting your neighbourhood.

**Building Great Neighbourhoods is a collaboration between three City of Edmonton programs to:**

- Renew and replace sewers
- Coordinate utility repairs (EPCOR and ATCO)
- Rehabilitate roads, curbs and sidewalks on City-owned property
- Replace streetlights
- Work with residents to identify local concerns (e.g. pedestrian, cycling, traffic)
- Add to your neighbourhood's livability







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# BUILDING GREAT NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMS



## BUILDING GREAT NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

### 1. Drainage Neighbourhood Renewal

Drainage renews and replaces sewers. This work is typically done 1–2 years before road reconstruction, and its timing is determined by City staff.

### 2. Neighbourhood Renewal

The City's Neighbourhood Renewal involves rehabilitating roads, replacing streetlights, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and connecting missing sidewalk links in mature neighbourhoods. It also includes the opportunity for two local improvements, sidewalk renewal and decorative streetlights. The Neighbourhood Renewal Program includes neighbourhood reconstruction, preventive maintenance and road work such as repairing collector roads. The program doesn't include arterial roads or alleys.

### 3. Great Neighbourhoods Capital Program

This program uses residents' input to make improvements on City-owned property that enhance neighbourhood livability and connectivity. These investments are unique to each neighbourhood (e.g. trail improvements, trees, sidewalk connections and more).

#### How are neighbourhoods chosen?

Of Edmonton's 300 neighbourhoods, more than 100 need full reconstruction.

Every year the City inspects and rates 25% of the City's local roads, curbs and sidewalks. Each neighbourhood is given a rating from A (very good) to F (very poor). This helps the City identify what renewal work is needed.

Other decision factors include:

- Budget considerations;
- Maintenance history;
- Coordination with other City projects like parks and arterial road renewal; and,
- Coordination with other infrastructure work and utilities.





Local improvements, which may be made as part of your neighbourhood's renewal, are construction projects undertaken near or adjacent to your property that City Council considers of greater benefit to your area than to the municipality as a whole. Since you and your neighbours receive the most benefit from these local improvements, the City shares the cost with you.

Local improvements are paid for in whole or in part by property owners in one of two ways:

1. **Lump sum payment:** One-time full cost payment.
2. **Amortized payment:** The cost is paid for gradually on your yearly property taxes (includes interest charges). The tax stays with the property; if you sell, the next owner will continue to pay the balance.

## LOCAL IMPROVEMENT TYPES

The City includes two kinds of local improvements in Neighbourhood Renewal: sidewalk renewal (which the city initiates) and decorative streetlights (which your community initiates). There are other types of local improvements, such as alley renewal, which are not included as part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Program. These local improvements are initiated by property owners.

Learn more at [edmonton.ca/localimprovements](http://edmonton.ca/localimprovements).

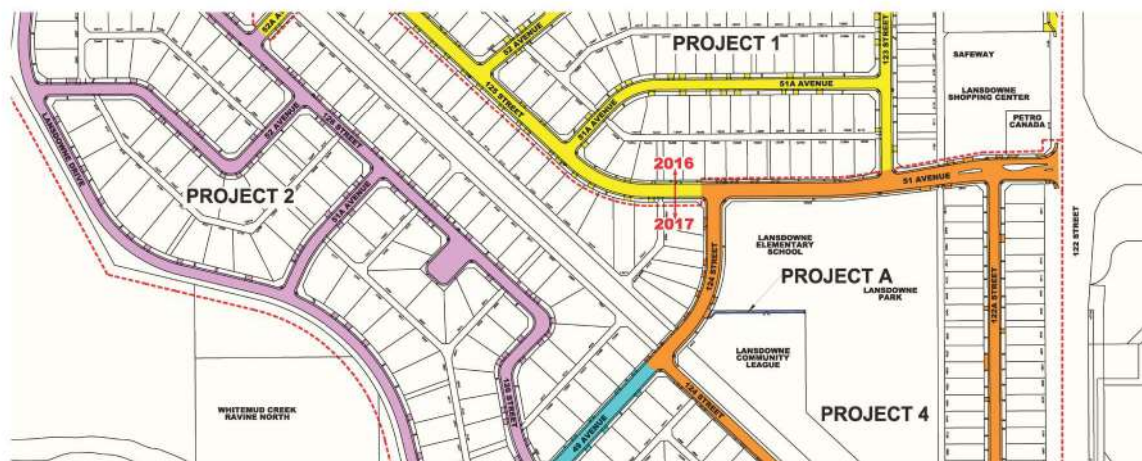


▲ Removing old sidewalk for sidewalk renewal.

## Local Improvement Tax Notices & Petitions

Property owners receive a local improvement notice in the mail about 4–6 months before neighbourhood reconstruction begins. A petition form is included. Property owners have **30 days to petition against** the local improvement. The petition process is guided by the *Provincial Municipal Government Act* as well as City policies and procedures.

Neighbourhoods are divided into project areas for the sidewalk renewal. For the **petition against** sidewalk renewal to be successful, the petition must receive support from 50% +1 of the property owners within the project area.



▲ Example of project areas for sidewalk renewal in Lansdowne



SIDEWALK RENEWAL LOCAL IMPROVEMENT

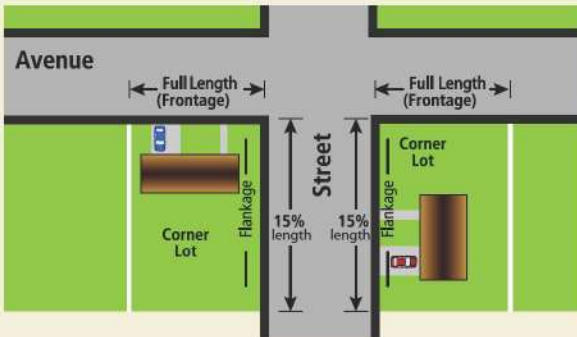
- City-initiated.
- Cost-shared **50-50** between the City at large and property owners (when done during neighbourhood renewal).
- Neighbourhoods are divided into project areas. You may petition against sidewalks in your project area.
- There is a two-year construction warranty. After the warranty period, the City maintains the sidewalks.
- Note, there is no cost to property owners for brand new sidewalks that may be added to the neighbourhood as part of the Neighbourhood Renewal process. The addition of new sidewalks is not a local improvement and cannot be petitioned against.

What's Included:

- Removal of existing concrete;
- Excavation;
- Laying of gravel base;
- Pouring new concrete with reinforcing steel;
- Connecting sidewalk to property owners' sidewalk and driveway; and,
- Re-landscaping disturbed areas to City specifications.

Corner Lots Length Assessment

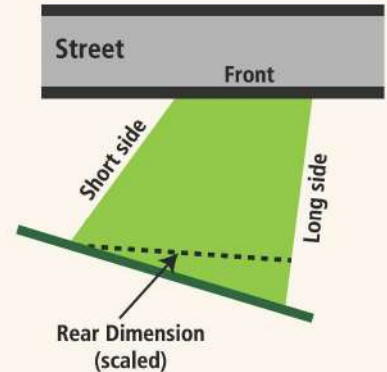
Corner lots that have proposed local improvement renewal on both the front and the side of the property are assessed the full length of the frontage (short side) and 15% of the flankage length (long side). House orientation does not affect frontage/flankage.



Pie or Odd-Shaped Lots Length Assessment

Pie or odd-shaped lot frontage is determined by adding the front and rear lot dimensions and dividing the total in half.

The rear dimension of a pie-shaped lot is scaled off the corner at the shortest side and is projected at a right angle to the longest side.



Cost

Property owners pay 50% of the cost of sidewalk renewal based on their lot length assessment.

The 2016 rate (50% of the cost) is **\$204.21/m**

e.g. a typical 50 ft. (15.24m) lot would cost about \$3,112.16, or \$217.78/year over 20 years.

*The exact cost for the local improvement will be included on your tax notice the year following the sidewalk construction.*

Petitioning against sidewalk renewal

- Once property owners receive the local improvement tax notices in the mail they have **30 days to petition against** the local improvement.
- The petition against must receive 50% +1 support from property owners within the **project area** to succeed. If the petition succeeds, the City will instead do sidewalk maintenance. Sidewalk maintenance may include grinding, mudjacking or asphalt patching of existing sidewalks.
- If the petition against fails, City Council will pass a Local Improvement Bylaw and the sidewalk renewal local improvement will proceed.
- A valid petition against must include the signature of all titled owners. The titled owners' signatures must be witnessed and the witness must swear an affidavit before a Commissioner of Oaths.



## DECORATIVE STREETLIGHT LOCAL IMPROVEMENT

The City covers the full cost to replace all streetlights with standard galvanized steel poles, LED lights and street address blades.

### Decorative streetlights

- Communities can elect to pay for decorative streetlights as a local improvement.
- This process is the responsibility of your community (usually led by the community league.) Find your community league contact info at [www.efcl.org](http://www.efcl.org).
- The community selects **one** design option for an Expression of Interest (EOI).
- Property owners pay the additional cost of the decorative streetlights, while the City will contribute the equivalent of the cost of the standard streetlights.



Decorative streetlight      Standard streetlight

## HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL WITH AN EOI

1. Form a neighbourhood committee to help choose a streetlight design and gather support for the local improvement
2. Have a central hub of information and contact person/s where your neighbours can seek information (e.g. website, office in community league)
3. Organize a community meeting to share information
4. Have a local place within the community for documentation drop-off
5. In condominiums, ask permission to post information
6. Ensure your community contact person's voicemail is updated and checked regularly

### Expression of Interest (EOI) Process

- The community league or property owners send **one** streetlight design to the City no later than **July 2** of the year prior to construction.
- The City sends an EOI package containing estimated costs to registered property owners on **September 1**.
- Property owners must return the EOI to the City by **November 15** to show their support.
- The City validates the signatures. If 50% +1 of property owners sign in support, the City initiates a Decorative Streetlight Local Improvement Bylaw.

### Petitioning Against Decorative Streetlights

- Once property owners receive the local improvement tax notices in the mail, they have **30 days to petition against** the local improvement.
- The petition against must be signed by 50%+1 of property owners within the **entire neighbourhood** to defeat the local improvement.
- A valid petition against must include the signature of all titled owners. The titled owners' signatures must be witnessed and the witness must swear an affidavit before a Commissioner of Oaths.
- If the petition against fails, City Council will pass a Local Improvement Bylaw, and the decorative streetlights will be installed.

### Deadlines

**July 2:** Send decorative streetlight option to City.

**September 1:** City sends EOI package to registered property owners.

**November 15:** Property owners return signed EOI to City.

*These deadlines are firm. If the date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be on the following business day.*

# DECORATIVE POLE OPTIONS

Colour (powder coated)



Decorative Arm – Newport, Scroll or Heritage



Newport



Scroll



Heritage

Pole – Octagonal (eight-sided) or fluted (multi-sided)



Octagonal



Fluted

## Cost of Decorative Streetlights

The cost depends on the option selected, the borrowing finance rate, the number of streetlights, and the number of property owners sharing the expense.

Property owners may pay a one-time, lump sum payment or a property tax levy amortized over 15 years.

*The exact cost for the local improvement will be included on your tax notice the year following the installation of the decorative streetlights.*

## Estimated Cost Chart

	Colour	Octagonal	Fluted
% Cost of decorative over standard poles	5%	15%	20%
One-time cash payment per metre of frontage	\$6	\$18	\$24
Yearly rate per metre of frontage for 15 years	\$.56	\$1.68	\$2.24
One-time cash payment for typical lot (50 ft)	\$90	\$270	\$360
Yearly rate for 15 years for typical lot (50 ft)	\$9	\$27	\$36



## Decorative Street Address Blade Options

Decorative street address blades are an option if the decorative streetlights local improvement is successful. The City will cover the full cost of the street blades. A decorative blade options package will be forwarded to your neighbourhood's Decorative Streetlight Committee. Please contact them for more information.



# TREES



▲ An area around each tree is maintained during construction to protect it and its roots.

Neighbourhood Renewal works closely with the City's Urban Foresters to ensure tree health remains a top priority before, during and after the construction process. Innovative practices such as sidewalk diversion and reduced excavation methods have been in use since the mid-2000s to preserve and sustain

our aging trees. Whenever possible, the City designs and constructs in ways to make sure trees are protected. In the rare case a tree must be removed, the City will consult with adjacent property owners and invest the dollar value of the tree back into the neighbourhood.



▲ Extra deep cuts and rebar are added to the sidewalk to control where the sidewalk will crack and to keep the sidewalk intact as the tree's roots grow.



▲ Sidewalks are constructed around trees to protect their roots.



# HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?



The City will come to your community three times – once to discuss the concept plan with the community league executive; once to discuss the design plans with residents; and once to inform the community about the finalized plan and construction process shortly before construction begins.

MEETING	PHASE	TIMELINE	WHO'S INVITED?	DISCUSSION/FEEDBACK	FEEDBACK DEADLINE
#1	Concept	Approximately 18 months before construction	Community League	<p><b>Sharing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Outline Neighbourhood Renewal process and timing.</li> <li>· Advise community league about decorative streetlight local improvement process and timelines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Community-led projects that may affect City investments in the neighbourhood.</li> <li>· Suggestions to improve pedestrian/cyclist /traffic access and overall livability.</li> </ul> <p><i>Comments will be considered for preliminary design.</i></p>	2-3 months after the meeting (by December 15 of the year of the meeting).
#2	Design	Approximately 12 months before construction	Residents, property owners	<p><b>Sharing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Outline Neighbourhood Renewal process and timing.</li> <li>· Advise community about sidewalk and decorative streetlight local improvement process and timelines.</li> <li>· Share preliminary designs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Pedestrian and cycling accessibility, traffic accessibility, and overall neighbourhood livability.</li> <li>· Input on preliminary designs.</li> </ul> <p><i>Comments will be considered for final design.</i></p>	6 weeks after the meeting.
#3	Build	Approximately 3-6 months before construction	Residents, property owners	<p><b>Sharing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Final neighbourhood design and construction process.</li> <li>· Review local improvements and petition process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback:</b></p> <p><i>Comments are welcome. Few changes can be made at this stage of the project.</i></p>	2 weeks after the meeting.

## Stay Informed

- Each neighbourhood has its own project page at [edmonton.ca/BuildingGreatNeighbourhoods](http://edmonton.ca/BuildingGreatNeighbourhoods).
- All presentations and displays will be available online.
- Your questions will be reviewed and responses provided in the weeks following each meeting.
- A "What We Heard" summary will be available online at your neighbourhood's project page



# WHAT TO EXPECT DURING CONSTRUCTION

## CONSTRUCTION

- The contract is awarded to the lowest priced qualified bidder.
- Depending on the size of the neighbourhood, construction is staged over 2–4 years.
- You can anticipate 3–4 months of disruption for work in front of your property.
- There is a **two-year contractor warranty** to fix deficiencies after construction is completed.
- After the warranty period, the City maintains the new infrastructure.

### How will I know when construction will start?

- A neighbourhood-wide notice will go out at the beginning of construction.
- Construction bulletins will be distributed 7–10 days before the start of construction adjacent to your property.
- The construction project manager's contact information will be shared at the pre-construction public meeting (meeting #3) and included in the construction bulletins. Their contact information will also be available online and by calling 311.
- Contact them if you have specific needs, concerns about construction deficiencies or need scheduling information.
- Visit [edmonton.ca/BuildingGreatNeighbourhoods](http://edmonton.ca/BuildingGreatNeighbourhoods).

### Once construction begins, crews will:

1. Install new streetlights (standard or decorative) throughout the neighbourhood.
2. Remove curbs/gutters and sidewalks (if the sidewalk renewal local improvement was successful), lay a new base and pour concrete. Note: landscaping will be removed along the property to accommodate work and will be replaced at the end of construction.
3. Build sidewalks around obstacles (e.g. trees) as necessary.
4. Replace sidewalk links to the existing walk on your property.
5. Do any required landscaping (including new sod).
6. Complete road rehabilitation and paving.







### Will Building Great Neighbourhoods address infill, redevelopment, arterial roads, bylaw concerns, etc.?

We coordinate our work with other ongoing or planned City projects. However, our project focuses on renewing neighbourhood infrastructure, promoting active transportation and investing in neighbourhood livability. We will direct any other concerns to the appropriate City department.

## QUESTIONS?

Visit us online at [edmonton.ca/BuildingGreatNeighbourhoods](https://edmonton.ca/BuildingGreatNeighbourhoods) or email us at [buildinggreatneighbourhoods@edmonton.ca](mailto:buildinggreatneighbourhoods@edmonton.ca) or call us at **311**.



A large empty rectangular box with a thin gold border, intended for taking notes.

