

CONNECT

BONNIE  
DOON

# What We Heard Report

April 2018



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Process	2
Participation	3
Feedback + Findings	5
Next Steps	20

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Connect Bonnie Doon is an anticipated year long, four phase public outreach program to elicit ideas, comments and concerns from the immediate Bonnie Doon community and the Centre's extended trade area on the goals and objectives of a rezoning application to permit mixed use, high density development at the Centre, initiated on behalf of the Owners' of Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre by its advisor and manager, Morguard Investments Limited in 2017.

Connect Bonnie Doon is designed to provide multiple forums and opportunities for the community, key stakeholders including Tenants of the Centre and the City of Edmonton at large to collaborate on and contribute to the future planning for the redevelopment of the Centre to ensure the goals and objectives of the City and community are addressed creatively in a sustainable manner and ultimately ensure high quality, financially feasible redevelopment of the Centre over time.



# PROCESS

Phase 1 of Connect Bonnie Doon was established and ran for a two week duration from January 25 to February 3 to introduce the preliminary conceptual planning by the Bonnie Doon development team to the public with the goal to stimulate discussion and ideas from the community with the objectives to inform and improve the initial conceptual plans. The Connect Bonnie Doon team used a number of distinct conduits to disperse information and to receive feedback including a project specific storefront in Bonnie Doon itself; a phone line; an online survey; a website; an email; and an open house event with notice provided by invitation to homes in the community and through newspaper advertisements

The five key questions we asked participants to spark thinking about the future of the site included:

1. *How do you think healthy streets could shape the future of Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre?*
2. *How do you think inclusive public spaces could shape the future of Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre?*
3. *How do you think distinct and authentic design could shape the future of Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre?*
4. *How do you think sustainable development could shape the future of Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre?*
5. *How do you think evolving bonnie doon could shape the future of Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre?*

## Process Overview

**2 Weeks of engagement**

**5 Participation methods**

### Inspiration Centre

Two promotional sandwich boards

### Website

[www.connectbonniedoon.com](http://www.connectbonniedoon.com)

### E-mail

[hello@connectbonniedoon.com](mailto:hello@connectbonniedoon.com)

### Social Media

@ConnectBonnieDoon  
@BonnieDoonSC (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook)

### Phone

(780) 900-8729

### Postcards

Mailed to Adjacent Neighbourhoods and Businesses

### Open House

hosted at La Cité francophone

### Newspaper Advertisements

Metro News  
Edmonton Journal (Post Media)

# PARTICIPATION

From January 24 to February 4, 2018 there were 2352 participants who 'connected' with the Connect Bonnie Doon team. Participation was represented by members of the surrounding neighbourhoods, other Edmonton communities, and the Region.

In addition to reaching out to the general public, it should be noted that specific groups of community leaders were contacted including Vimy Ridge Academy, Campus St. Jean, French Quarter BIA, five surrounding Community Leagues as well as current mall tenants.

We wish to thank all of those who participated in the first phase of our engagement process. The input was thoughtful and provided a clear lens into the communities priorities, hopes, and desires for the redevelopment of Bonnie Doon.

The majority of feedback came via the inspiration centre sessions and the open house. Participants had access to the project team to chat one-on-one about the future of the site. In both venues many of the attendees were property adjacent neighbours.

The project team has distilled the feedback gathered from these participants, analyzed it, and reflected on the findings, which are detailed in this report.

## Participants 2352

<b>Inspiration Centre</b>	<b>1082</b>
general public	1032
mall tenant	28
community leaders	22
<b>Open House</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Online Survey</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>E-mail</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Phone</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unique Website Visitors</b>	<b>1020</b>

## Ideas Generated 2378

<b>Inspiration Centre</b>	<b>1031</b>
<b>Open House</b>	<b>578</b>
<b>Online Survey</b>	<b>769</b>





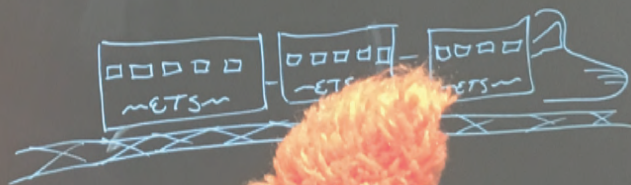


# Feedback + Findings

Bowling Alley  
Sever!

Keep grocery store, or build a better one

LRT x2



transit-oriented transportation

A pretty green space for outdoor hanging  
(maybe an owl)

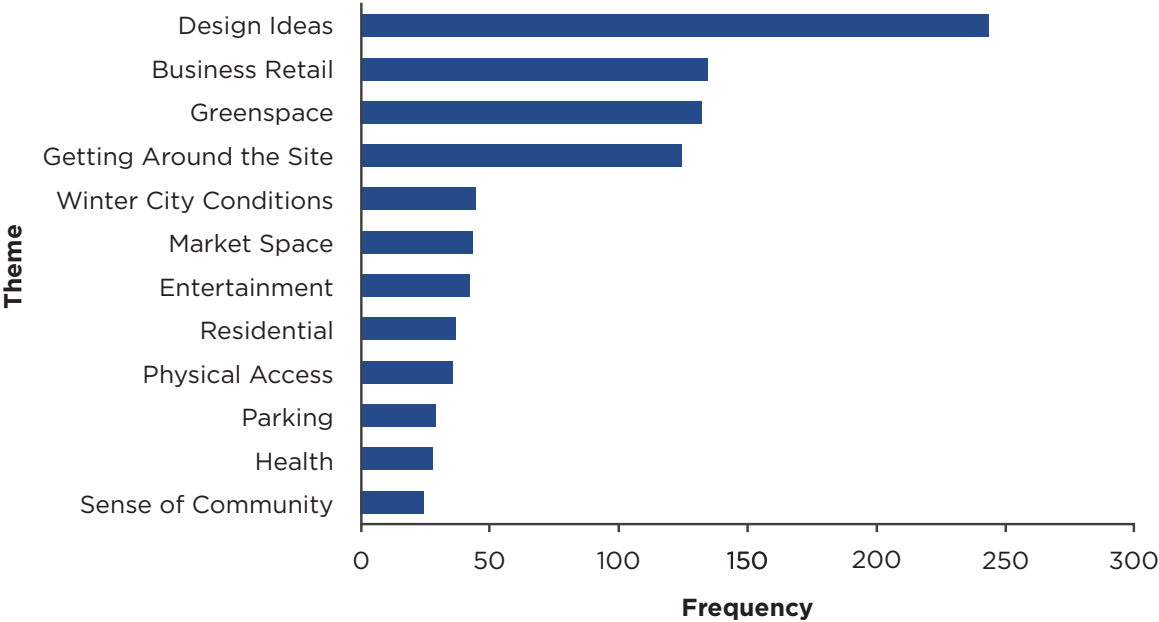
Operational  
involvement.



# THEMES

The response to our five principles-based questions uncovered eleven (11) prominent themes reflecting the participants perspective on the redevelopment of Bonnie Doon. The main themes, in order of most to least frequently heard, are found in the table below.

The high-level scan of responses indicated that participants have many design ideas to share, are eager to see a healthy mix of retail businesses, want plenty of greenspace, and they want to ensure getting around the site is seamless for all. The following pages highlight what was shared about each theme and include a list breaking down each of the most prominent sub-themes for this area. Each theme page includes a sample of verbatim quotes from those who participated.



# Design Ideas

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A number of comments received were ideas for the design of buildings and community spaces. These ideas spanned land uses and included design solutions like living roofs and walls, adaptable and flexible building units, and ensuring sufficient public spaces.

Based on the framework of our questions on distinct and authentic design and sustainable development, participants had positive ideas about the built environment and how it should function.

## Subthemes

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### Building Design

The specific input around building design varied, but the overall message was clear and consistent: do not build an auto-oriented, big box shopping centre. The renovated Capilano Mall to the north was mentioned several times as the anti-example for the site.

*“Do not be cookie cutter like other strip centres have unique offerings one of a kind”*

*“Create flexible buildings that can change with differing needs. EG small apartments for seniors and singles that can be expanded into bigger units”*

### Energy Conservation

Addressing everything from solar, geothermal and wind energy generation to LEED certification, participants care about the world around them and hope to see conservation efforts made to protect it.

*“All development must be sustainable and use conservation principles. Solar panels, improved insulation, triple pane windows etc.”*

*“Green roof. Solar. Water recovery”*

### Public Amenities

With reference to both indoor and outdoor facilities, participants want more space to meet, gather, and create together with their friends and neighbours.

*“Community meeting rooms, community kiosks”*

## Mixed Use

The objective to provide varied land uses was one that resonated with several participants. Specifics on how this can be achieved varied, but overall the approach was encouraged.

*"Making Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre a place to be with more than just shopping. It could celebrate a diverse and vibrate community."*

*"It is time to take this old mall and think outside of the box. The Safeway, bank and drug store are vital for the neighbourhood but lets get innovative with the rest of the space. Mix in office space (close enough to downtown) and some residential and we could build a cool little community."*

## Quality and Character

Participants wanted to enhance existing character, whether that be the French inspiration from the Quarter or the look and feel of the buildings. Having an aesthetically pleasing and unique community is ultimately important to the success of the development.

*"Close to Edmonton's french quarter; incorporate community cultures in artwork and signage."*

*"Intelligent orientation of buildings."*

## Welcoming

One of the more straight-forward comment areas was around ideas for making both private and public spaces enjoyable and inviting to broad demographics.

*"More attractive destination so increased viability for tenants and convenience for visitors."*

## Height and Form

Height, density and architectural form did elicit a mix of responses both in favour of mixed use, higher density development and others who expressed concern over too tall high rises.

*"The buildings in your pictures are too tall and monolithic"*

*"Density in the near centre of the city allows for interesting and diverse people and events."*

*"don't like towers"*

## Indoor Retail

A prominent conversation among many stakeholders was the idea of maintaining some form of enclosed, indoor retail shopping space. For seniors, having a safe, warm walking space in the winter months is a priority.

*"Enclosed shopping for winter months"*

# Business Retail

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Not surprising the future of retail at Bonnie Doon was prominent in the context of conversations about the shopping centre's future. Bonnie Doon Centre is a crucial commercial resource for five neighbourhoods and a regional hub to many more, the prospect of losing stores is of grave concern. Alternatively, the hopes for gaining new stores were at the forefront of participants' wish lists.

## Subthemes

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### Diversity of Shops

Making sure that there is suitable shopping for a variety of demographics, while also providing core services to all was a key input. The premise of Bonnie Doon being a retail hub resonated for many participants.

*"One stop shop"*

*"Good variety of stores"*

### Grocery

The community brought up Safeway and the need to operate a grocery store as a must for the new development, but also for today and in transition.

*"More restaurants and grocery store in addition to Safeway..."*

*"Groceries, food market"*

### Types of Use

Participants listed many examples for preferred uses including - restaurants, cafes/bakeries, small independent businesses, specific stores (e.g. Canadian Tire), pharmacy, hardware, patios, department store shopping, and more.

*"Indoor mall corridors, easy access, parks/green life space, grocery's department store, cafes/casual coffee"*



To the question on inclusive public spaces, participants responded with a desire for more greenspace. Honing in on more trees, gardens, seating and benches, water features and filtration, playgrounds, and general open space for activity to take place.

## Subthemes

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### Trees, Vegetation, and Gardens

Comments in this sub theme mostly spoke to the desire for mature trees, grass and garden spaces.

*"Once again I really like the idea of a little park or incorporating some green space. I really do believe that to make the area user friendly there must be some separation from the busy roads and the centre. Would love to see some plantings, trees etc provide that separation."*

*"native plants with low maintenance to keep it neat and clean all year round."*

*"More green, less concrete spaces."*

*"fruit trees, community garden."*

*"Natural landscaping."*

### Adequate Seating

From benches and chairs to stylized steps that act as seating opportunities, participants were clear that people need a place to stop and rest if you want to keep them in your parks and open spaces.

*"urban stairs/seats."*

*"Lots of interactive public art. And maybe some seniors fitness machines and seating."*

*"Aesthetically pleasing places to walk + sit."*

# Getting Around the Site

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Prompted by questions around healthy streets and sustainable development a real emphasis on pedestrian-friendly design emerged. Orienting the site to alternative and active modes of transportation is encouraged.

Although some participants were concerned about the alignment, station location, or potential service delays of the new light rail transit (LRT), the majority were satisfied with the addition of a transit station on the site and wanted to see Bonnie Doon maximize the benefits that the LRT can bring.

## Subthemes

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### Pedestrian Friendly

Putting pedestrians first resonated with many participants. Having safe, inviting, and integrated sidewalks and pathways was one of the most emphasized ideas shared.

*"Create easy ways to walk to the area from surrounding communities. Right now one takes ones life in hand to cross 83 or 85 street. Then it's a grim slog across the barren parking lot to get to the shops."*

### Transit

Beyond drawbacks and benefits of the LRT, transit talks mainly touched on maintaining connector bus services and providing good public amenities around the station and stops.

*"I favour as long as the public transit system is as flexible as it is now from the mall."*

### Limit Vehicles

Limiting the speed and overall number of vehicles as well as providing pedestrian-friendly streets came up as a means for better addressing mobility on site. From vehicle restrictions to pedestrian connectivity, there was a clear message that this should not be only an auto-oriented commuter neighbourhood.

*"Traffic calming to mitigate increased traffic"*

### Bike Infrastructure

Bike lanes, bike parking, and bike share were all good with participants.

*"East-west cycling connection please!"*

*"Safe access for bicycles and pedestrians"*

# Winter City Conditions

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Participants clearly prioritized concerns to address winter city conditions. From shelters and warmth to indoor shopping and walking, most participants asked for extra sensitivity about the winter experience of Edmonton in the site design.

## Subthemes

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### Sheltered From Elements

Making the public realm suitable for all seasons included comments around covered and sheltered public spaces like parks, paths, transit stations, and squares.

*"Create strong integration w/ LRT, have enclosed for winter."*

*"Sheltered gathering spaces i.e.: warming huts."*

*"Having a distinct and well designed space is really important to developing an identity for an area. But for god's sake make it sensible for winter. understand that it will be covered in snow, which will definitely melt, and that huge sheets of glass are not good insulation."*

### Warmth and Indoors

This winter-based conversation also addressed specific methods for providing warmer public spaces in the colder seasons and again, the desire for indoor shopping was reinforced.

*"Indoor walk ways for winter."*

*"Winter city - heat canopies."*

*"Semi- enclosed shopping (weather protected)."*

# Market Place

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Beyond improving access and the aesthetics of the public realm, many participants expressed the view that a market place or square would contribute to true vibrancy for Bonnie Doon Centre.

In response to the question around inclusive public spaces, participants got creative suggesting places for meeting and gathering as well as providing temporary retail and entertainment activities.

## Subthemes

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### Meeting and Gathering Space

It was recognized that planned and impromptu gatherings cannot happen without the physical space to assemble. Most participants would be happy to see plenty of well-designed public spaces, large or small.

*"If this mall is interesting for reasons beyond consumerism, that lends authenticity to the amenities there."*

*"There is room to keep indoor mall, but balance it out with attractive, pedestrian friendly outdoor space."*

*"Food court is a community hub."*

### Farmer's Markets

Many people spoke to farmer's and food markets as being core to the site's potential for vibrancy.

*"A space that could be used for gatherings (farmer's markets, small festivals) would be a fantastic addition to the community."*

*"Farmer's Market Space (Old Strathcona is very busy)"*

### Vendor Space for Local Artisans

Providing ad hoc space for local artists and artisans to sell their craft goods was recommended.

*"Market for local products, artisans, local furniture builder, etc."*



# Entertainment

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Ensuring there are draws to the site beyond housing, services and shopping, entertainment came up as a way to attract visitors to the site in off-peak hours of the day.

The first three sub themes were ideas for new entertainment venues for the community, however, the bowling alley is a staple for many participants and Edmontonians city-wide.

## Subthemes

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### Event and Festival Spaces

Relating closely to the idea of meeting and gathering places, events were cited by many for their potential positive impact. Having the means to host large-scale events was specifically mentioned for encouraging people to visit, shop, and stay in the neighbourhood.

*"This has great potential. Space for Fringe participation and live performances would be amazing."*

### Movie Theatre

A split of opinions led participants to either suggest the Cineplex style movie experience or smaller more independent film-oriented theatre.

*"Movie Theatres."*

*"More Canadian content and documentary."*

### Outdoor Stage

Participants requested space for music, theatre, and arts to take place both planned and spontaneously.

*"Theatre, live theatre, music in open space, busking area."*

*"Space for public lectures/ presentations."*

### Bowling Alley

The bowling alley is a popular and cherished resource. This helped it rise to the top of participant's minds when thinking about the Bonnie Doon Centre of tomorrow.

*"keep the bowling centre in business."*

# Residential

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Seniors housing was a dominant part of the discussion on residential development opportunities citing downsizing and access to housing concerns. Many see this increasingly less mobile group as highly benefiting from living closer to their daily amenities.

## Subthemes

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### Seniors Housing

Providing adequate seniors housing was a top priority for many participants. The aging demographic of the neighbourhood results in many couples and singles are looking to age in place.

*"Seniors will move from homes in neighbourhood to seniors building on site."*

*"Seniors housing attached to enclosed retail."*

### Family-Friendly Housing

Participants requested family-friendly housing to suit the needs of families of all sizes in order to attract this desirable demographic to urban format living.

*"It needs to be more attractive to the younger families."*

### Diverse Housing Options

Understanding and respond to the needs of all demographics was noted as important to ensure a healthy mix of residents.

*"multi generational living is very important. Space and amenities for seniors but also space for families (townhomes? Bottom floor units...) is very important."*

### High rise / High density

Comments from participants demonstrated their pro- height and density perspectives.

*"Businesses/offices/apartment above the shops. Live/work opportunity. No need to drive daily. Need to change individual behaviour/habits."*

# Physical Access

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Most people who referenced a pedestrian-friendly community also spoke to access and the need to be inclusive to accommodate the varying degrees of mobility individuals have.

## Subthemes

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### **Inclusive Access for All**

The emphasis for inclusive access came from participants hoping for a place where all people can visit despite age, mobility, or disability.

*"Consider the seniors, people with disabilities, teens"*

*"Access to people of different abilities"*

*"Consider visually impaired - i.e. San Francisco: bumps on sidewalks, scented bushes."*

### **Mobility**

Most participants cited mobility for seniors as a key consideration.

*"No steps large door for those with mobility challenges."*

*"elderly accessible."*

# Parking

Having a well-designed and intuitive parking system was top-of-mind for those concerned about accessing the site by vehicle.

Specific suggestions around parking included the provision of underground parking, free parking, and for some - less parking.

## Quotes

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*"Please make sure there is enough space for parking (don't forget seniors who can not walk to the mall)."*

*"more parking."*

*"push for minimum or reduced parking."*

*"Easy parking is a must but also make it easy for pedestrians by having mall access on parts of the perimeter."*



# Health

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In conjunction with retail business insights participants requested medical, health, and wellness offices to facilitate more professionals operating in the community.

The desire was to see most medical services available in a one-stop shop format is also reflective of the aging population.

Others suggested more general wellness oriented spaces as well as integrating a variety of health, recreation, and cultural uses.

## Quotes

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*"Doctor's offices/ medical services."*

*"lots of medical facilities."*

*"integrate library and health unit, library is vital - big draw."*

*"fitness facilities."*

# Sense of Community

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With the question about evolving Bonnie Doon, participants leaned toward the idea that people are what makes the place vibrant. Their strategy for achieving the vibrancy and security that gives people piece of mind in their community was to provide a community hub.

From more formal bricks and mortar approaches, to informal public space, the main feedback was that people need a place to come together to build relationships.

## Quotes

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*"Include residential; include resources for young people (another big segment of the mall's current users). Meeting places that connect with ongoing community projects, e.g. YESS. Set up projects linking elderly and young folk - to help the wider community, not just Bonnie Doon."*

*"a strong sense of place is essential for wayfinding and a feeling of community. make BD a place that invites."*

*"I think this is an important aspect - creating a place people can go just to hang out will be good for everyone."*

# NEXT STEPS

The Bonnie Doon team looks forward to re-engaging during the concept design phase in spring 2018. Information on opportunities to take part will be provided.

Your input is invaluable. Thank you.

## 1: Vision & Principles January - February 2018

- Review design principles
- Identify the strengths of Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre
- Discuss community-enhancing improvements

## 2: Concept Design April - May 2018

- Review initial concepts
- Provide feedback on proposed amenities
- Discuss potential refinements

## Review Findings and Integrate into Conceptual Design February - April 2018

- Work with team to articulate how feedback was used
- Prepare communication and engagement materials for Phase 2 engagement
- Launch Connect Bonnie Doon Phase 2 (Conceptual Design Engagement)

## 3: Zoning Regulations May - September 2018

- Review final concept
- Provide feedback on zoning regulations

## 4: Public Hearing Target Date: Early Fall 2018

At the conclusion of the process, a Public Hearing will be held at Edmonton Council in early fall 2018