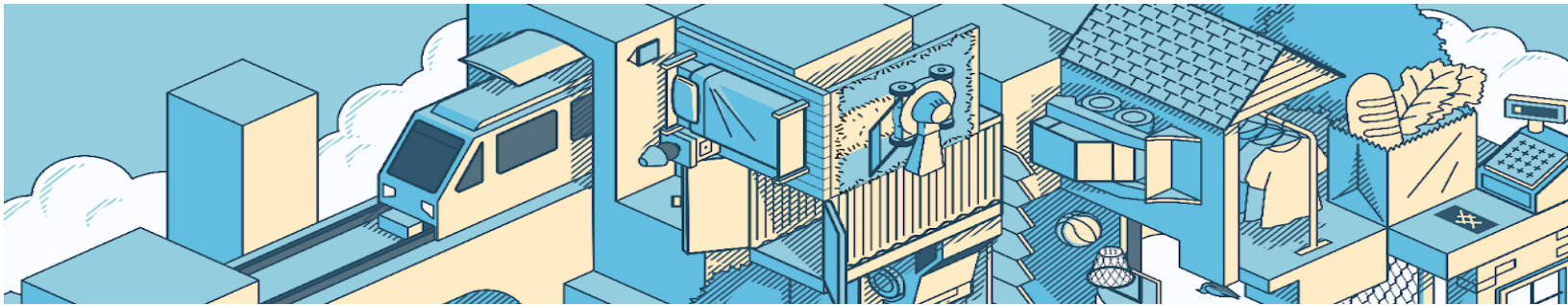


District Planning

Edmonton

What We Are Hearing Report
District General Policy

August 2022



INTRODUCTION

Districts are collections of neighbourhoods that together offer vibrant and diverse places for people to live, work and play.

The City Plan sets the strategic direction for how Edmonton will change to accommodate two million residents by looking far into the future and providing guidance for land use, mobility and growth management at a high level.

The District Planning project is about guiding growth and redevelopment for the 15 districts identified in [The City Plan](#) in order to welcome the next 250,000 people to Edmonton. The project is preparing two main components to help Edmonton reach 1.25 million people:

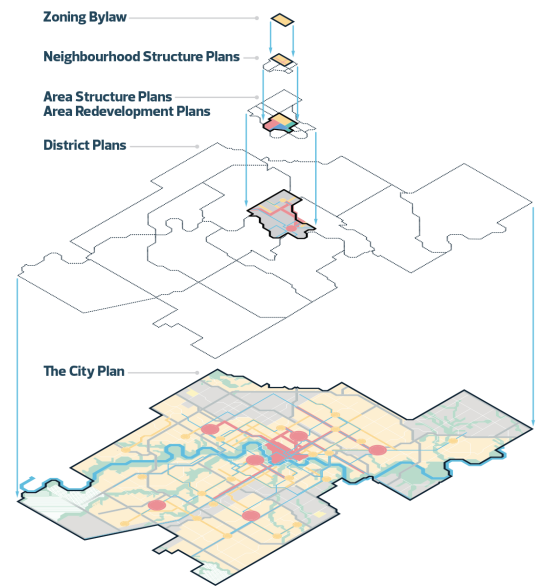
1. District General Policy - general policies that apply in all districts
2. Fifteen (15) District Plans - show where policies apply and include the specific ideas for each of the 15 districts

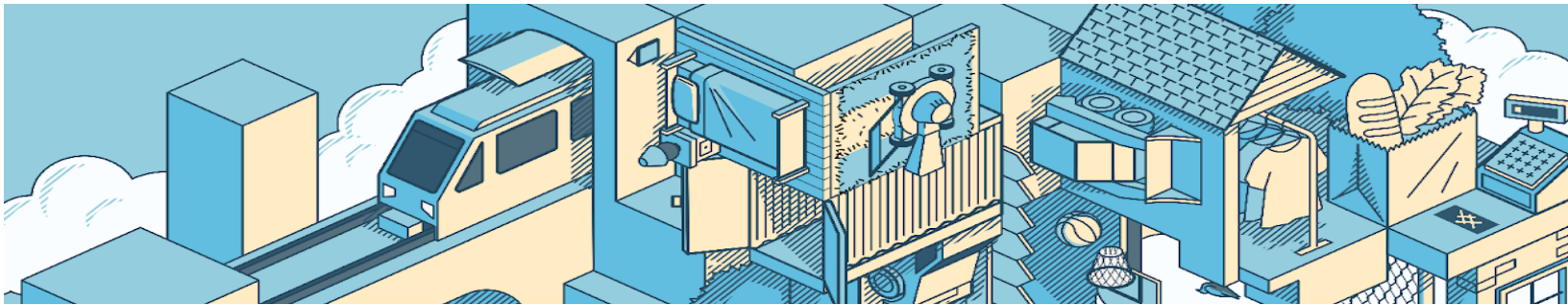
These new planning documents will help us make decisions about how land is used, how people will be able to move around more efficiently and ensure growth happens in the best places.

Public engagement on the District General Policy began in June 2022 and included:

- 6 Learn & Share events about the District General Policy
- 1 Deep Dive event on the District General Policy
- Engaged Edmonton webpage and survey
- 8 Pop-ups

This *What We are Hearing Report* provides an interim summary of how we collected feedback on the District General Policy during public engagement and the common feedback themes heard from Edmontonians. We are grateful for everyone who shared their input and are looking forward to hearing more as the project continues.





Background on the District General Policy

The District General Policy will help us achieve the outcomes in The City Plan at the district level. As a result, the District General Policy only contains content reflected in The City Plan and other approved policies and plans.

The District General Policy and district plans will be used to guide change to help Edmonton achieve The City Plan’s vision. Together, they determine what planning and design, mobility and growth management outcomes the City expects from projects and what decisions need to be made on:

- + What can be built and where
- + How we move and grow
- + Where and what type of future planning work is required
- + Where the City needs to spend money to support our goals

The District General Policy informs the same decisions in similar parts of the city in a phased approach to ensure change happens in the way The City Plan envisions. This means you can reference the District General Policy to know what The City Plan expects from development and new infrastructure projects as we reach 1.25 million people.

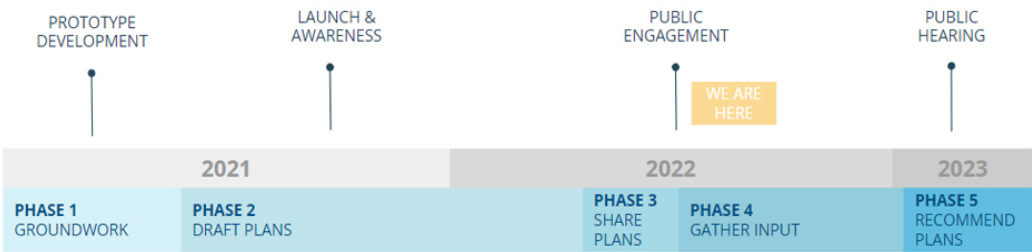
Check out **Conversation Starter #2: What are the District General Policy and the District Plans?** to learn more about the district plans.

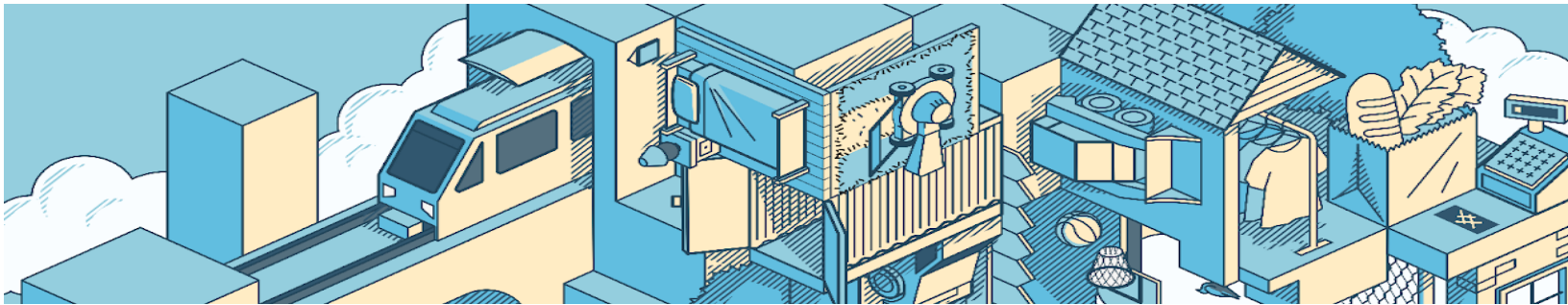
COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The project includes a three-part communication and engagement approach, each with various ways for you to learn and to tell us what you think.

- + **Part 1: Communication and Awareness** – we focus on creating awareness of what district planning is, why it's important and how it's integrated with The City Plan.
- + **Part 2: REFINE Engagement** – engagement seeks refine-level feedback starting with the District General Policy, followed by the district plans.
- + **Part 3: ADVISE Engagement** – we will share the revised drafts and let you know how we used your input from Part 2.

The timeline to complete work on the district planning project and seek City Council approval is 2023.





HOW WE ARE SHARING INFORMATION

Part 1 is about making sure people know about the project and informing them of ways they can share their voices.

The project team used lots of different ways to tell people about the project and engagement on the District General Policy:

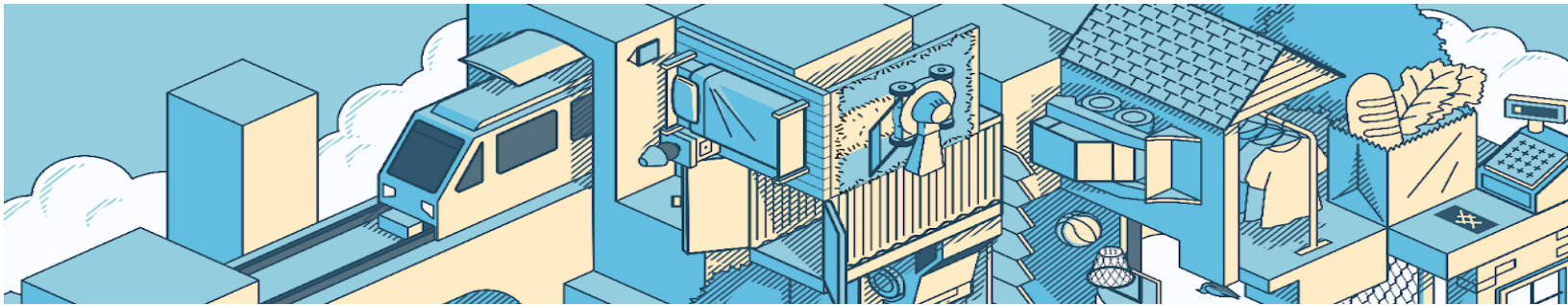


Project Webpage – the draft District General Policy was released publicly on the project website in early June 2022.



Conversation Starters – mini information booklets and videos introducing key District Planning topics were published on the District Planning website prior to engagement in May.

- + What is District Planning? | Video
- + What are the District General Policy and the district plans? | Video
- + How are the District General Policy and the district plans being drafted? | Video
- + How will Edmontonians provide input? | Video
- + How are the District General Policy and District Plans intended to be used? | Video
- + How will the District General Policy and District Plans be monitored and updated? | Video



Making Space Podcast – a five-episode podcast series was created by the City to help educate Edmontonians about the impacts of zoning, planning and land use so they can meaningfully engage in conversations about the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative and District Planning.



City Plan Implementation Newsletter – a monthly newsletter that provides integrated information on projects related to The City Plan’s implementation: the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative and District Planning.



Direct Emails - the team shared information and updates about the project and upcoming engagement sessions through direct emails to various stakeholders, including GBA+ organisations and every community league in Edmonton.



Social Media - information about the project, upcoming engagement events and the release of the Conversation Starters and Making Space podcast were shared through the [City of Edmonton Facebook](#) account and [@PlanEdmonton](#) Twitter account using the hashtag #yegplan.



Presentations and meetings – Various sessions were hosted with civil society groups, including Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, community leagues, industry organizations, Business Improvement Associations and others.

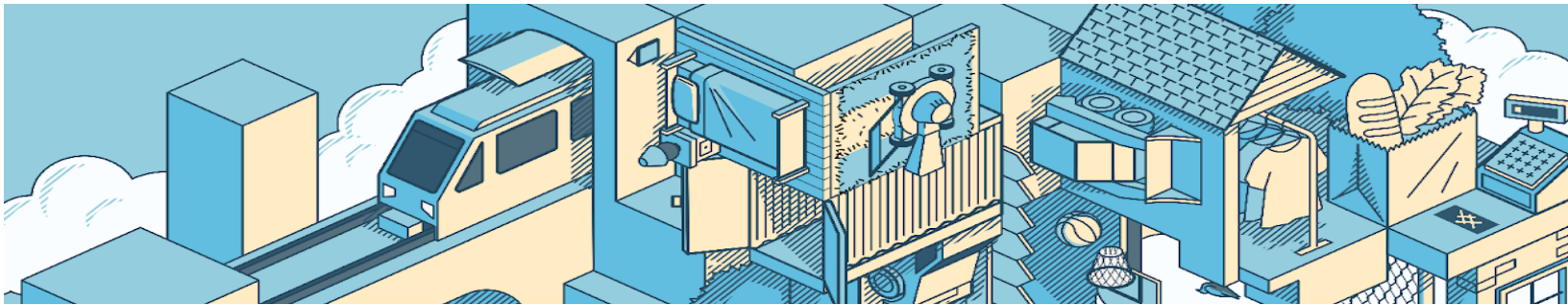


Taxation Letter Insert - a notice was also sent to every property owner that provided general overviews for both the Zoning Bylaw Initiative and District Planning projects.

HOW WE ARE LISTENING

The City uses an “Engagement Spectrum” to share the level of influence the public has on a project’s decisions. The engagement approach for the District Planning project focuses on two roles for Edmontonians: Refine and Advise.

The District General Policy was created using existing information in The City Plan and approved plans (i.e. Residential Infill Guidelines and Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines). The project team is not creating new thoughts, ideas or visions, so participants were invited to provide feedback (“advise” on the spectrum) and also to adapt the content in the District General Policy (“refine.”)



HOW WE ENGAGED

The District Planning project is new to many Edmontonians and consists of technical, long-term policies. To ease into the engagement process, the first focus was creating awareness and educating the public on the District General Policy. Different engagement methods were used to encourage participation from a diverse group of Edmontonians, keeping various levels of accessibility and abilities in mind.

Pop-up Events

District Planning and Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative project teams attended local Edmonton events and venues to build awareness for the two projects and promote engagement and participation. The purpose was to bring project information to Edmontonians in high-traffic areas who may not otherwise hear about it.



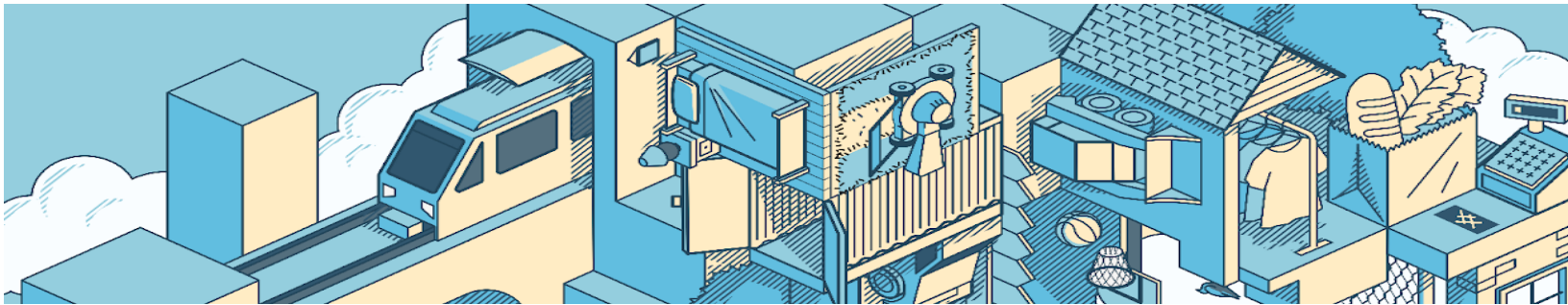
Pop-up Comment Highlights:

"A community of communities is a good idea."

"Balance how we plan/develop across districts"

"Love this! -15 minutes from food/services - no more urban sprawl!"

The project team visited four farmers' markets, three recreation centres and the Edmonton Heritage Festival between May 2022 and August 2022. These venues were identified as high-traffic and low-cost opportunities that would enable discussion with diverse Edmontonians across the city. Visitors were offered a postcard with information about both projects and QR codes to each project's website.



Engaged Edmonton

The District Planning Engaged Edmonton web page was open from June 21 to July 29, 2022 and provided an accessible online space for Edmontonians to ask the project team questions, submit ideas on the District General Policy and access project documents. Information was also provided about engagement events and how to participate.

Engaged Edmonton collects information on how visitors interact with the site and its engagement tools. Visitors are classified into one of three categories:

- + Aware Visitors - A visitor is considered to be 'aware' after they have made one single visit to the site or project page.
- + Informed Visitors - An informed visitor has taken the 'next step' from being aware to clicking on any of the Engaged Edmonton content about the project.
- + Engaged visitors - Every visitor that contributes to an engagement tool is considered to be aware, informed and is now 'engaged.'

The project's Engaged Edmonton page registered:

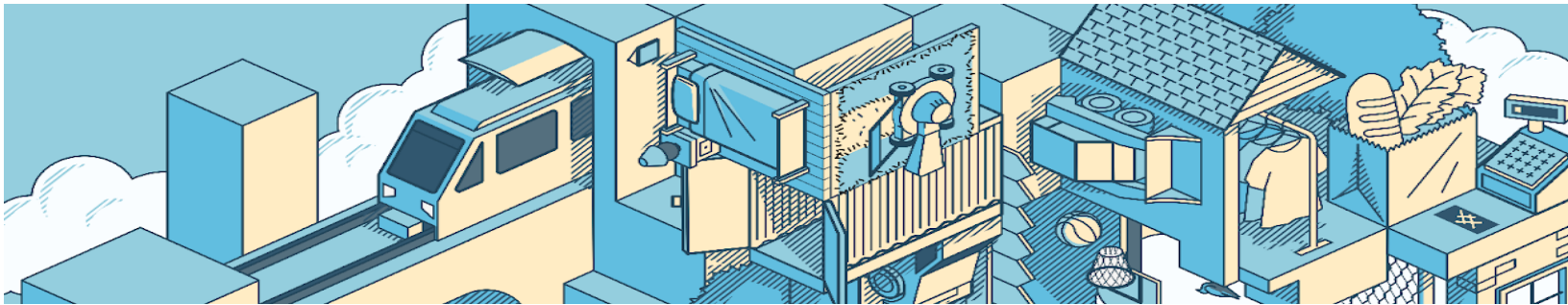
- + 404 Aware Visitors
- + 94 Informed Visitors
- + 27 Engaged Visitors

Online Survey

Edmontonians were invited to provide input on the District General Policy through an online survey from June 21 until July 29, 2022. Initial feedback on policy ideas and concerns, content clarity and educational resources will support more fulsome discussions with residents from August to October 2022 on both the District General Policy and District Plans.

Public Engagement Events - Learn & Share about the District General Policy

The purpose of the 'Learn & Share' events were to introduce the project, provide accessible information on the District General Policy, highlight its connection to The City Plan and gather initial input on the District General Policy.



The project team hosted six online hour-and-a-half sessions between June 16 and July 12, 2022. The sessions were promoted on the project's webpage, through targeted stakeholder emails, The City Plan Implementation newsletter and Twitter (@PlanEdmonton).

The format included a brief presentation from the project team followed by small group discussions in breakout rooms. Mural, an online interactive tool similar to a virtual whiteboard, was used to collect the participants' comments and questions.

Participants were asked to colour code their input or ideas using the Stoplight activity. Each colour corresponded to one guiding question. A facilitator was available to assist in each breakout room and record participant feedback and questions. Participants that were unable to attend the events or had to leave early were invited to chat virtually with a team member following the event.

What are you liking?

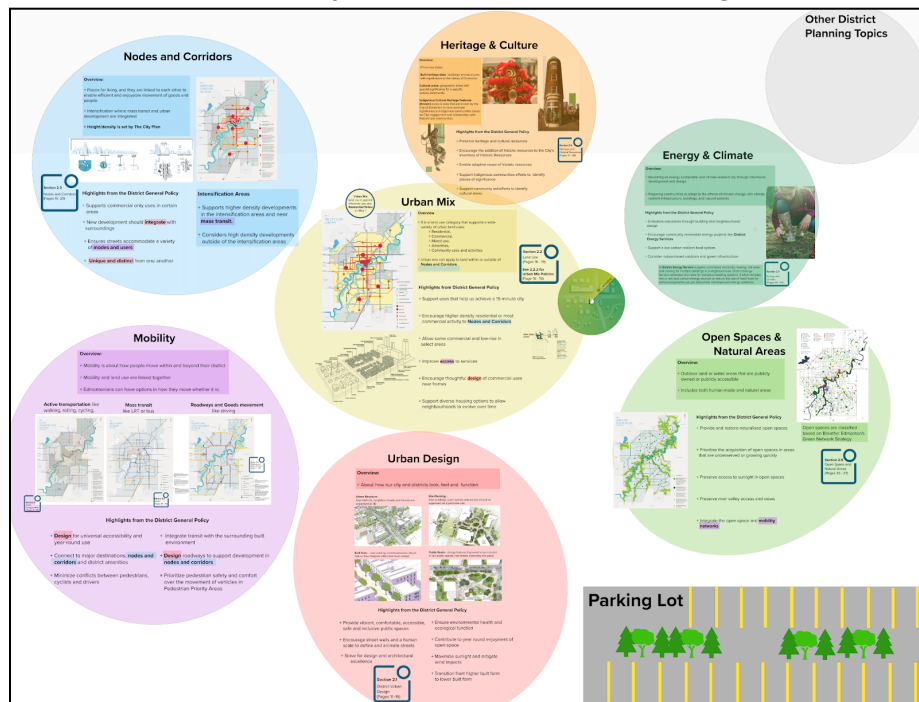
What are you unsure about or what is unclear?

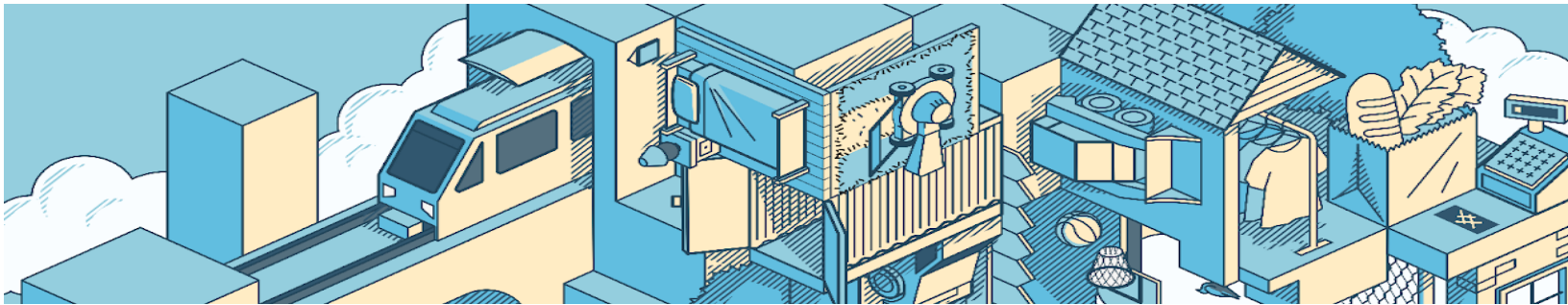
Is there anything you dislike or are concerned about?

Do you have any ideas on how to improve it?

Participants led themselves through the activity to learn and provide feedback on seven District Planning topics:

1. Urban Mix
2. Nodes and Corridors
3. Urban Design
4. Open Space and Natural Areas
5. Mobility
6. Energy and Climate
7. Heritage and Culture





Facilitated Discussions with Stakeholders - Deep Dive into the District General Policy

Following the six Learn & Share events, an online facilitated discussion was offered to all participants who attended. The Deep Dive event provided interested participants with an opportunity to continue the Learn & Share conversations, raise specific policies/sections in the District General Policy for discussion and comment on the feedback collected through the Learn & Share events.

The format used for participation was Jamboard, an interactive slide deck where participants could post their comments. Jamboard was chosen because it is an accessible digital tool and encourages group discussion by focusing on one District Planning topic at a time.

Participants unable to attend the event or participants who left early were invited to chat virtually with a team member following the event.

1. What additional comments or questions do you have about this theme?


2. What, if any, comments or questions do you have about the input highlights?

Urban Design


Overview:

→ About how our city and districts look, feel and function


Urban Structure:
How districts, neighbourhoods and blocks are organised in the city




Site Planning:
How buildings, open spaces and access should be organised on a particular site



Built Form: The building and its structure should suit its place and its local context



Public Realm: Design features that need to be included in our public spaces, like streets, squares and parks



Highlights from the District General Policy

- Provide vibrant, comfortable, accessible, safe and inclusive public spaces
- Encourage street walls and a human scale to define and animate streets
- Strive for design and architectural excellence

- Ensure environmental health and ecological function
- Contribute to year round enjoyment of open space
- Maximize sunlight and mitigate wind impacts
- Transition from higher built form to lower built form

Section 2.1
District Urban Design
(Pages 11 -16)

Add your input

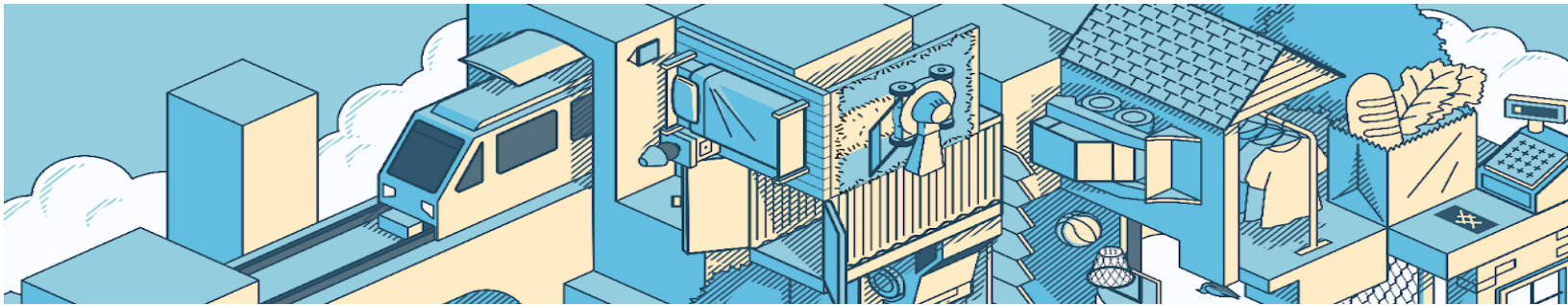
Urban Design

Most mentioned: 2.1.3 Built form

Positives: integration of green space, year-round use, climate-focused, flexibility of policies

Concerns: height transitions, accessible design, uniqueness of districts, policy application

More detail needed: wind/shadow /noise impacts, height transitions



WHO ARE WE HEARING FROM

The Learn & Share and Deep Dive events provided an opportunity for people with general to specific knowledge to provide input on the District General Policy.

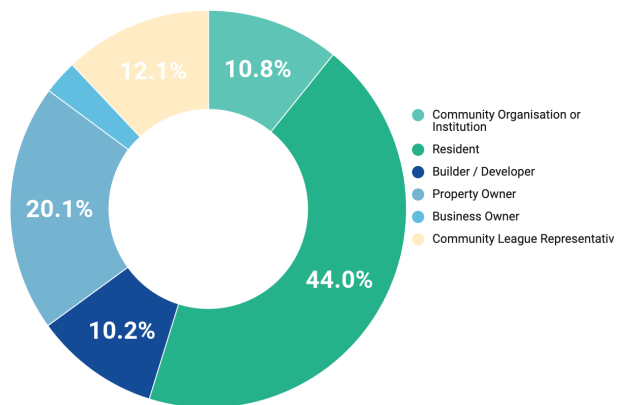
The project team heard from a diverse group of Edmontonians who identify across multiple identity sectors:

27 Edmontonians
reported on
Engaged Edmonton

63 Survey
participants

97 Edmontonians
Attended the Learn
& Share Events

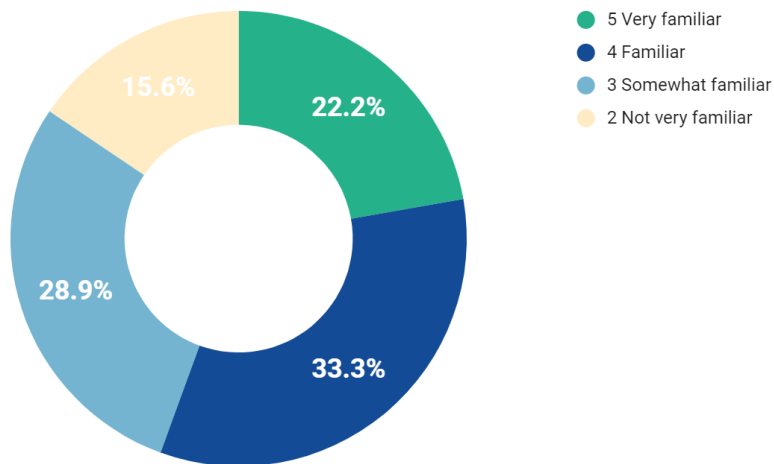
11 Stakeholders
Attended a
Deep Dive Event

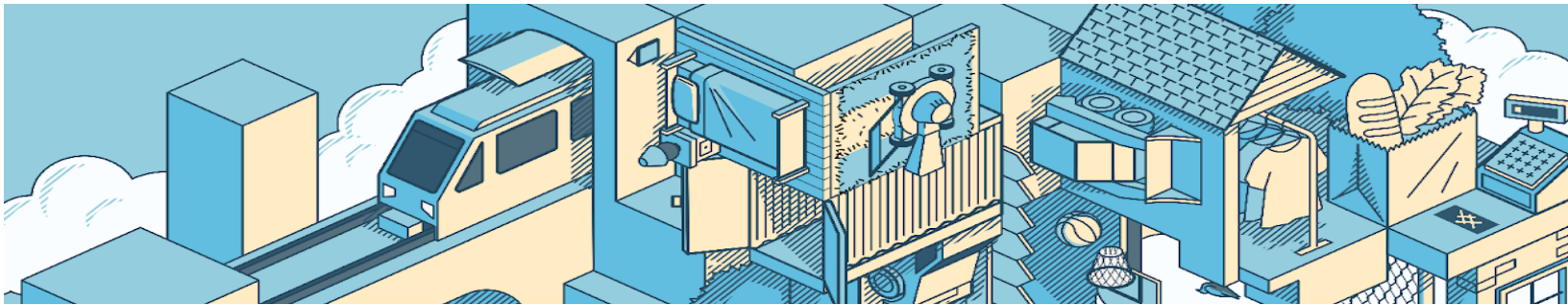


Survey Participant Project Awareness

Survey participants were asked their level of familiarity with the project and all of the 63 survey participants had some familiarity or more familiarity about the project.

Please indicate your level of familiarity with District Planning.





WHAT WE ARE HEARING

The project team gathered 905 comments and ideas on the District General Policy and the project generally.

The Learn & Share and Deep Dive comments were themed and analyzed to gauge participant understanding and sentiments about the draft District General Policy and the District Planning project. The themes and analysis are presented in this section. Survey responses will be analyzed and themed further following additional engagement on the District General Policy and the district plans.

353 Pop Up Conversations
380 ideas from Learn & Share sessions
406 ideas from the survey
119 ideas from Deep Dive Session
380 Engaged Edmonton visits
27 engaged through Engaged Edmonton
5 one-on-one Meetings

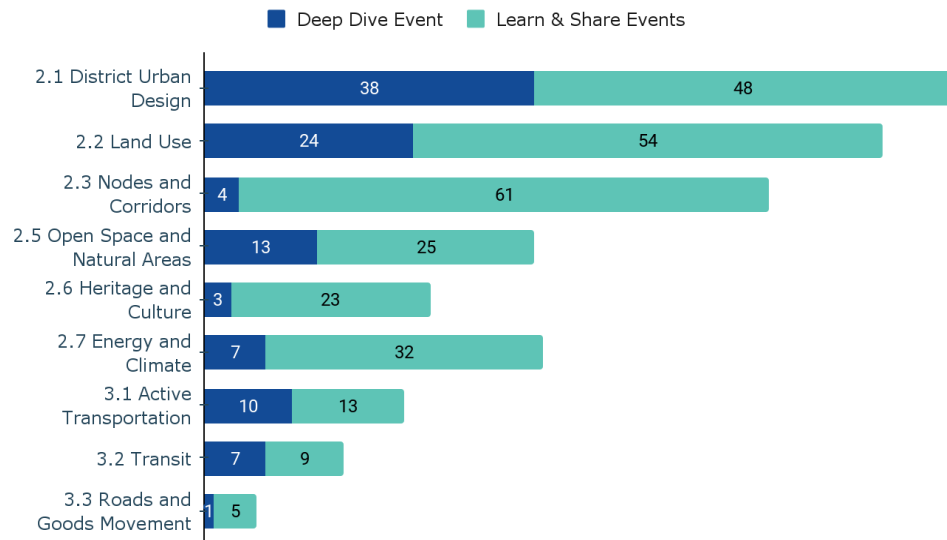
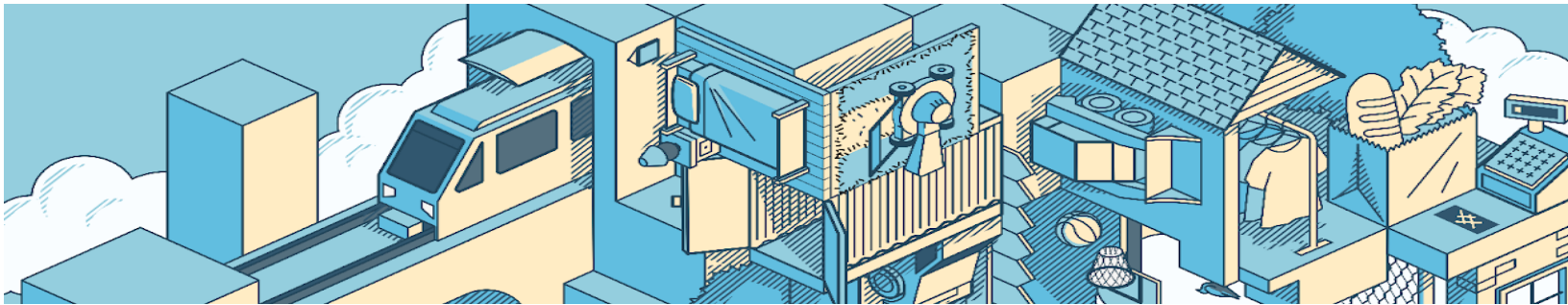
Feedback on the Engagement Approach

Participants also provided feedback on the District General Policy engagement events and activities. These comments are summarized below:

- + Excited about more engagement opportunities.
- + Spend less time explaining how to use the engagement tools (e.g., Mural or Jamboard) and more time diving into the activity.
- + Educate participants about WHY the project is important.
- + Send participants engagement materials and draft District Planning material well before the session so people have time to prepare.
- + Technology tools used (e.g. Mural and Jamboard) are a barrier to some.
- + In-person sessions are preferred.

Learn & Share and Deep Dive Feedback Summary

The most discussed District Planning topics in the Learn & Share and Deep Dive events were urban design, land use, node and corridor and open space and natural areas:



Participant feedback most often repeated or shared across multiple Learn & Share Events and the Deep Dive Event was focused on three main themes:

More Clarity	More Direction	Citywide Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Meaning of the policy verbs + Define height/density "transition" + Define "underserved areas" or "areas growing quickly" + Low-scale residential development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Mitigate wind, sun shadow or noise impacts + Urban Mix land uses + Green Innovations + Edible trees and vegetation options + Recognizing cultural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Policy translation at a zoning level + Intensification Areas + Unique look and feel of areas + Pedestrian Priority Areas + Node and Corridor decisions

Participant feedback from the Learn & Share and Deep Dive events for each of the most discussed District General Policy sections are summarized below:



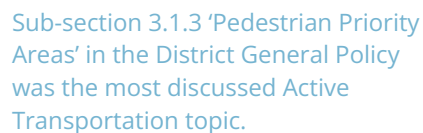
Built form was the most discussed urban design section.

Urban Mix is a land use category that supports a wide variety of residential, commercial uses and community uses and activities that support local access within the district. See District General Policy: Section 2.2

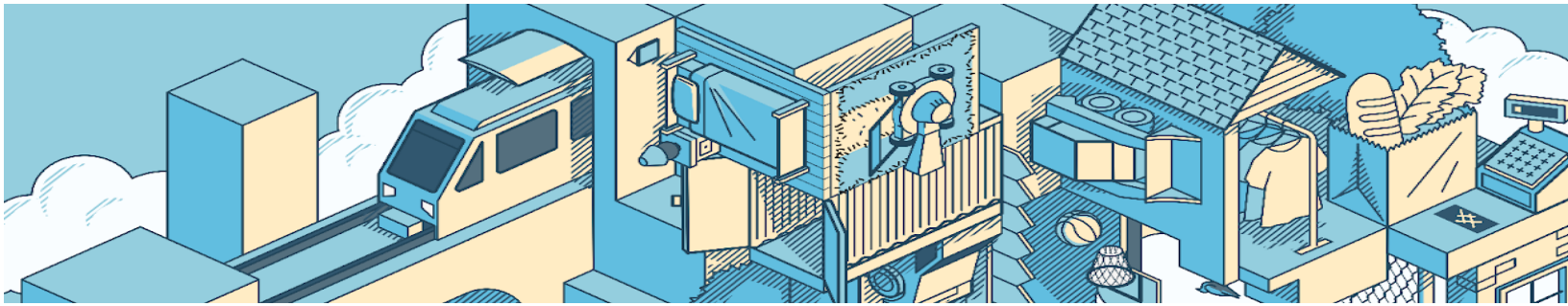
Height transitions were the most discussed topic exclusively at the Learn & Share events.

Participants generally identified open space as an important resource that requires protection.

District Planning Topic	Summary of Participant Feedback
Urban Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Unsure if the policy verbs will effectively guide the built form and promote unique areas across the city. + Curiosity in why the policy verbs are written in permissive language like “encourage” or “support” rather than more prescriptive language like “ensure” or “require.” + Define what height/density “transition” means. + More direction to mitigate any wind, sun shadow or noise impacts in public spaces is needed.
Urban Mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Likes to see policies that enable Edmontonians to live locally. + Requests that the policies reference all land uses that allow Edmontonians to live locally. + Observations that there are more policies about mid and high rise buildings than low-scale residential.
Nodes and Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Feel the policies aligned with The City Plan direction. + Suggestions that a more incremental step in terms of height and density is needed. + It is unclear how the node and corridor policies will be applied at the zoning level. + It is unclear how decisions will be made when two districts or neighbourhoods share a node or corridor.
Open Space and Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Acquiring more open space is important as Edmonton densifies. + Define what “underserved areas” or “areas growing quickly” mean. + More direction on preserving open space and sunlight is needed. + Requests that policies allow edible trees and vegetation.



District Planning What We Are Hearing: District General Policy



NEXT STEPS

All 15 draft district plans will be released for public review in August 2022. The project team will be engaging with Edmontonians in fall 2022 as part of public engagement Part 2B to begin collecting feedback on the district plans while continuing to collect feedback on the District General Policy.

Analysis of feedback has been ongoing and will be reflected in a final *What We Heard Report*. The project team will return to engage with the public in 2023 as part of public engagement Part 3. In Part 3, the team will advise as to how the feedback collected in Part 2 was used to refine the project's components.

GET INVOLVED

- + Register for an [Engaged Edmonton Account](#) to share your voice on the district plans starting August 23, 2022!
- + Sign up for [The City Plan Implementation Newsletter](#) to receive monthly updates about the District Planning project and Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative.
- + Visit edmonton.ca/districtplanning to learn more about the project.
- + Contact the project team at districtplanning@edmonton.ca or through 311.