

# What We Heard

## Ottewell Neighbourhood Renewal

Building a Project Vision Together  
Exploring Opportunities  
April 2021

**CREATE  
REFINE**

BUILDING GREAT  
NEIGHBOURHOODS

**Edmonton**

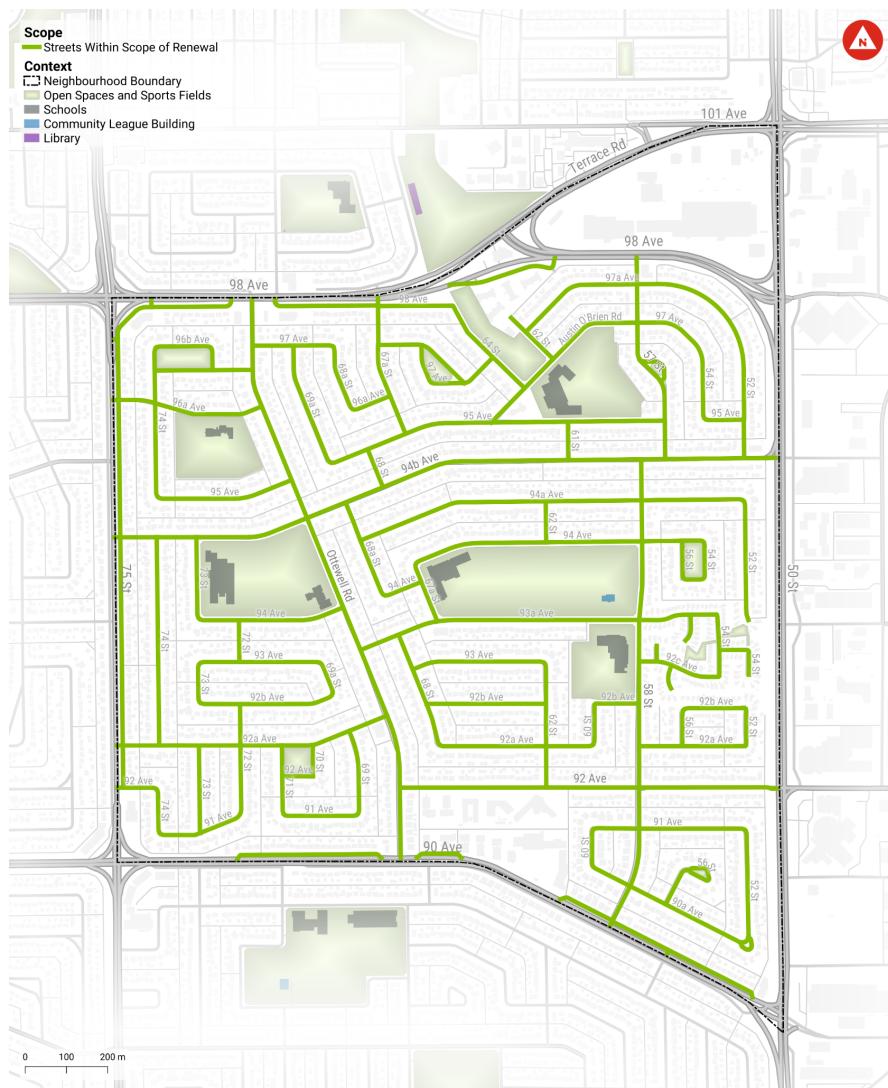
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background	PG 2
2. Where we are in the decision making process	PG 3
3. What we asked and what we did	PG 5
4. Draft vision and principles	PG 9
5. Exploring opportunities	PG 11
6. Next steps	PG 17

## BACKGROUND

**Neighbourhood Renewal in Ottewell will begin in spring 2023.** Through the City of Edmonton's Neighbourhood Renewal program, we will rehabilitate roads, replace streetlights, curb and gutters, repair sidewalks and connect missing sidewalk links where possible in Ottewell. The Neighbourhood Renewal Program is a cost effective, long-term plan to address the needs of renewing Edmonton's aging neighbourhood infrastructure. Enhancements will also be made to City-owned open spaces, traffic safety and other improvements identified through public engagement with residents of the neighbourhood and other stakeholders.

### Ottewell Neighbourhood Renewal Scope Map



*The Ottewell Neighbourhood Renewal Project team members are genuinely interested guests, stepping into the Ottewell neighbourhood as visitors.*

## WHERE WE ARE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The City has created a road map to help people understand the stages of public engagement where residents can provide feedback and actively participate in the process. At each step, the team will tell people what the purpose is and how their input will inform the decisions being made. The team commits to reporting back on how we used public input.



## Public Engagement for the Ottewell Neighbourhood Renewal

The Building Great Neighbourhoods Project team are genuinely interested guests, stepping into the Ottewell neighbourhood as visitors. The team wants to learn and appreciate how people live and what they value and need in their neighbourhood. The team seeks to involve local residents and business owners in decision making to shape the vision for engagement and neighbourhood improvements.

## Public Engagement Spectrum

The City of Edmonton seeks input from citizens to help guide the project. The City's public engagement spectrum below, shows the four distinct levels of influence that the public can have on decisions made by the City throughout the project.

The public were invited to provide input that would help

- + **CREATE** a Vision and Guiding Principles
- + **REFINE** the project team's knowledge of neighbourhood assets, opportunities, and priorities

We commit to telling you how public input influences decisions according to the public engagement spectrum.

*The City of  
Edmonton seeks  
input from citizens  
to help guide the  
project.*



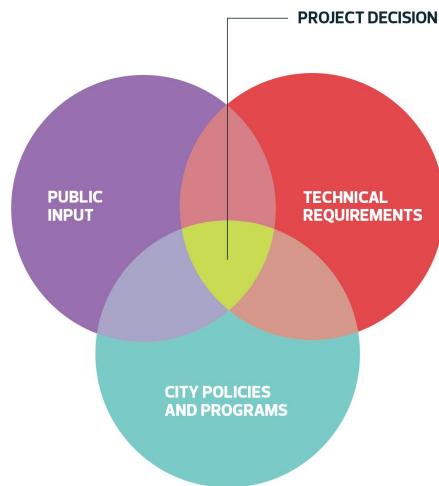
## How decisions are made

The City makes decisions using a combination of policy and program information, public engagement input, technical requirements and available funding. This process helps to ensure that the decisions we make are fiscally responsible, align with best practices, consider the existing public and private infrastructure, land

uses and activities in the neighbourhood and result in the best outcomes for our city.

City policies and programs such as the Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards, Safe Mobility Strategy and Winter City Strategy provide the overall direction for Neighbourhood Renewal designs. As each neighbourhood is unique, the Project Team asks for input from residents who live, work and play in the neighbourhood and considers technical aspects such as roadway widths and conflicts with utilities and trees to determine what will fit in the neighbourhood.

*The Project team asked participants questions about what they liked in their communities, what challenges they faced and what changes they would like to see.*



## WHAT WE ASKED AND WHAT WE DID

The City of Edmonton values the input of its citizens into programs such as Neighbourhood Renewal. In compliance with public health guidelines, the City made the decision to cancel all in-person Public Engagement Events. For the first phase of this project, three methods were used to reach out to residents of Ottewell: survey, phone interviews and video interviews.

### What We Asked

In each instance, the Project team asked participants questions about what they liked in their communities, what challenges they faced and what changes they would like to see. These questions were used not only to guide the Project team, but also to contribute to the creation of a Vision and Guiding Principles for Ottewell's Neighbourhood Renewal.

## What We Did



### Pre-Engagement Dialogue

- + Connected with 19 randomly-selected community members and leaders to gain insight into the community and how people wish to communicate with the Project team. Individuals included representatives of a local church, community league, seniors' residences, daycares and local businesses.
- + Preferred methods of communication include: newsletter or print material delivered to households, Facebook, advertising in Southeast Voice newspaper, and road signs.

**19 participants**



### Create Vision and Guiding Principles

- + A survey was conducted online, via telephone/video and hard copy to understand the key factors that make Ottewell a great place to live, work and play.
- + Nearly 260 people participated.
- + Individuals identified what aspects of the community they like and dislike, and what opportunities exist. Insights provided by respondents helped CREATE a vision and guiding principles for Ottewell's Neighbourhood Renewal.

**260 participants**



*ANVIL Coffee House*



*"It feels like a small community...and it feels like a good place to raise a family."*

Ottewell resident Graeme Emmerzael biking around the community

## WHAT WE HEARD

### What residents like or value in their community

When asked what people like about Ottewell, the praise poured in. Friendly neighbours, that include a range of family types, help to make Ottewell a vibrant community. People also expressed that "neighbours look out for each other," helping to cement the bonds that exist within this tight neighbourhood.

### Community Pride

Most people really love living in Ottewell. Their community pride and spirit were evident throughout all interactions.

*"It feels like a small town in the middle of the city"*

### Green Spaces and Community

Other reasons people love the Ottewell community include plenty of green spaces, great local amenities (such as Ottewell Plaza, playgrounds), and an active community league.

*"Everyone is super friendly...I am a part of a couple of different neighbourhood groups...everyone is very welcoming."*

## Access

People love Ottewell's proximity to main transportation corridors and to downtown.

### Challenges are evident in the community

Survey respondents were asked to list up to three places or features they found challenging in terms of living in and moving around Ottewell, providing a total of 612 statements. When asked what could be improved, most respondents identified transportation-related issues, such as: repaired or replaced sidewalks with curb cuts, desire for protected bike lanes, improvements to back alleys, and traffic safety concerns. More on this in the section entitled "Exploring Opportunities."



*Vanessa and Sheldon Pierce at their Ottewell shop, Frame of Mind*

## DRAFT VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*"Everyone is super friendly...  
I am a part of a couple of different neighbourhood groups...  
everyone is very welcoming."*



### Vision Statement

Those who were interviewed, or who responded to the survey, provided lots of wonderful ideas to form the draft vision statement for the neighbourhood. Residents expressed a strong sense of community, friendliness and neighbourly help as key attributes of the area.

*"It feels like a small community...and it feels like a good place to raise a family."*

Based on the input gathered through surveys and interviews, the draft vision for Ottewell and guiding principles were developed. These reflect the major themes that were noted by Ottewell residents and business owners.



## Vision for Ottewell

**"A small town in the heart of the city."**

## Guiding Principles

Our community:

- + Enjoys safe sidewalks that encourage people of all ages to take advantage of good connections through a walkable neighbourhood
- + Celebrates the neighbourhood's splendid character, with mature trees and parks.
- + Delights in its green spaces, with activities and amenities for all ages and abilities
- + Values its family-friendly, multi-generational neighbourhood where all are welcomed
- + Appreciates safe streets where everyone respects speed limits and traffic laws
- + Invites and encourages all kinds of mobility options for people walking, cycling, driving, and other forms of active transportation
- + Nurtures a strong sense of community, where people feel safe and look out for each other



## EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES

The following section includes a summary of what we heard were opportunities for the neighbourhood. The summary has been developed to reflect the relevancy, frequency and diversity of the responses we received based on questions that we asked.

### Sidewalks and Walkability

The most frequently mentioned issue was the state of the sidewalks and their disrepair. Many respondents commented on trip hazards, cracks, crumbling concrete and general lack of navigability; especially for those who use mobility devices or strollers.

*"Upgrades supporting [a] walkable neighborhood with improved bus service and complete renewal (replacement) of sidewalks and roads which are universally in bad condition."*

*"I would like to see a more walkable neighbourhood. More corner shops, so we can support local business...I would also like it if it was easier to walk or bike out of Ottewell into surrounding neighbourhoods."*

*The sidewalks are very narrow; it is difficult for people to walk side-by-side, particularly when using a walker or stroller. A number of crosswalks feel unsafe partly due to wide streets and increasing vehicle traffic, although the new crosswalk with flashing lights is appreciated.*

## Neighbourhoods

*"Sidewalks are in poor repair and need upgrades/maintenance; especially difficult for those in wheelchairs or using strollers; also applies to some alleys for pavement and lighting."*

*"I envy planned walking paths in newer communities."*

### Traffic Issues

The greatest number of concerns appear to have been identified at intersections along **Ottewell Road** (at 98 Avenue, 94B Avenue, 90 Avenue), and where **94B Avenue** meets both 50 Street and 75 Street. Respondents were concerned about cars failing to come to a full stop, or speeding on the roads, particularly during morning and afternoon rush hours. This is a particular concern for the children walking or cycling to school. One participant noted:

*"I envy planned walking paths in newer communities."*

*"Also at the crosswalk to Clara Tyner (school) cars are parking too close and can't see pedestrians coming along with people creating two lanes to do left turns or go straight through at crosswalk."*

### Speed Limits

With respect to speed limits, many respondents noted that there are too many/confusing speed limit signs, especially along 58 Street, between 92A and 94 Avenues. Ottewell is 40 km/hr on all roads, and as such, requires additional speed limit signs. The main concern comes near school zones when the speed limit drops to 30km/hr. The result is that, within the space of a block, drivers will encounter numerous 40 km/hr and 30 km/hr signs as they travel past school zones.

*"High vehicle speeds on Ottewell Road; the area around Clara Tyner School is very congested, especially around school hours, and is unsafe."*

*"The intersection of 57 Street and 94B Avenue has a TON of young and in a hurry drivers in the mornings and often people don't stop well for kids waiting to cross."*

### Traffic Back-ups and Need for Improved Signals

Many people weighed in on the desire for improved traffic management through better signals and left-turn opportunities. People identified numerous pinch points causing congestion and preventing left turns, or rerouting to avoid problem areas,

## Neighbourhoods

which in turn, results in cutting through Ottewell, especially via 94B Avenue. Some specific references included:

- + Traffic volume issues were identified at Ottewell Road at 98 Avenue, 94B Avenue and 90 Avenue, and 98 Avenue and 75 Street. 57 Street and 96B Avenue needs lights.
- + People said it is difficult to make right or left turns out of 98 Avenue and 67A Street to get to the library, and Any access points to 75 Street south of Ottewell Road

## Bike Lanes

Protected bike lanes were mentioned as an important feature that's missing in Ottewell, including increased connectivity within the neighbourhood.

*"It would be nice to have the roads be for people, not just cars."*



*Some expressed the desire for more cycling infrastructure*

## Back Alleys

Several people mentioned the poor condition of the area's back alleys and noted the need for repairs and/or repaving. Back alley lighting was also mentioned as being inadequate. Alley Renewal is a separate program form Neighbourhood Renewal and input received will be shared for future alley renewal work.

## Neighbourhoods

*"The back alleys are terrible. I am happy we have them, but they probably have not been paved in 50 years."*

### Green Spaces and Amenities

Residents had suggestions to make better use of the green spaces within Ottewell. Open fields for passive recreation could be replaced in some areas with more activities for all ages. In particular, respondents identified the need for more adult-oriented green spaces, including walking paths, benches and gathering spaces that are not solely focused on children (playgrounds).

*"Numerous school parks can only be used for large sports, but have no value beyond that for residential use."*

Residents said that there are a lot of seniors in the area who use the sidewalks for daily strolls. Pleasant paths through some of the green spaces would be beneficial. One respondent also suggested:

*"Community gardens in cul de sac islands."*

Some respondents indicated a desire for a central gathering place and more trees.

*"I think it would be nice if a few trees were added, and a bit of shrubbery and benches, perhaps a few little 'hills' like in the small park just west of 54 Street and north of 92C Avenue.*

### Crime Prevention and Safety

Lastly, with respect to (real or perceived) increases in crime, residents identified thefts from properties and vehicles, especially via back alleys, as problems. While crime prevention is outside the scope of the Building Great Neighbourhoods project, these concerns have been passed onto the appropriate department.

### Homelessness

Residents also mentioned increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness in the neighbourhood and green spaces.

## Other

Other challenges identified include the desire for removal of overhead power lines, better shopping options, and improved street lighting. Changes to Edmonton Transit routes were also identified as a concern, mostly due to the uncertainty that the Bus Network Redesign changes will bring.

## NEXT STEPS

The Project Team will test and validate the draft vision and principle statements as well as the opportunities and gaps during the next round of public and stakeholder engagement. Once a final statement is created, it will be posted to the Project website.

The next public engagement activity is to identify and discuss "**Options and Tradeoffs**." Input that has been outlined in this report was used by the engineering design team to develop the options. We will invite Ottewell residents and stakeholders to provide feedback on the design options and to gather insights to help refine them. Information will also be provided during upcoming project phases about cost-sharing opportunities for decorative street lights and sidewalk reconstruction through the Local Improvement process.

For more information regarding the Ottewell Neighbourhood Renewal, upcoming public engagement activities and to subscribe for project updates, please visit [edmonton.ca/BuildingOttewell](http://edmonton.ca/BuildingOttewell).

## **Working together to make the most out of your neighbourhood.**

This is your city and your neighbourhood. We want to understand how you experience your neighbourhood and ask for your input on what we might do to make it better.

We will engage and work with you on the renewal of roads, sidewalks, street lights, and park spaces, and promote other community opportunities to enhance how people live and interact in your neighbourhood. We commit to being open and transparent about how your input is used. Let's make the most out of your neighbourhood.



[edmonton.ca/BuildingOttewell](http://edmonton.ca/BuildingOttewell)

**SHARE YOUR VOICE  
SHAPE OUR CITY**

**Edmonton**