

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Online Public Engagement Feedback Summary LDA20-0192 - Strathearn Heights

PROJECT ADDRESS: The northwest corner of 95 Avenue NW and 87 Street NW, currently known as the Strathearn Heights Apartment Complex. The application includes the following properties: 9518 and 9560 87 Street NW, 8720, 8722 and 8724 95 Avenue NW, 8728U 97 Avenue NW, and 8712U 96 Avenue NW.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Rezoning:

The application proposes to rezone the properties from a [Site-Specific Development Control Provision \(DC2.917\)](#) and the [Public Parks Zone \(AP\)](#) to a new [Site-Specific Development Control Provision \(DC2\)](#) and the following conventional residential zones:

- [Medium Density Multiple Family Zone \(RF6\)](#)
- [Low-Rise Apartment Zone \(RA7\)](#)
- [Medium-Rise Apartment Zone \(RA8\)](#),
- [High-Rise Apartment Zone \(RA9\)](#)

The proposed rezonings would allow for the development of a primarily residential transit oriented urban village with a range of housing types complemented by local, small scale commercial uses within the proposed DC2.

The intent of the application remains similar to the current DC2.917, with a full project build-out of approximately 2,000 dwellings, but proposes the use of conventional residential zoning (RF6, RA7, RA8, and RA9) throughout the majority of the site while establishing a new and smaller DC2 Provision on the southern site adjacent to the future Strathearn LRT station.

The new (DC2) Site Specific Development Control Provision seeks to develop mid and high-rise apartment buildings with the following characteristics:

- Maximum building heights ranging from 40 m to 81m (approximately 10 to 20 storeys)
- Up to 500 total residential units ;
- Up to a total of 6,505 square metres of gross floor area for commercial uses;
- A maximum Floor Area Ratio of 5.0; and
- Surface and underground parking .

A map of the rezoning proposal could be found [here](#).

Road (lane) Closure

The application also includes a proposed closure of portions of the laneway between 95 Avenue NW and 96 Avenue NW and west of 87 Street NW.

Southeast Area Plan Amendment

The application generally conforms with the intent of the [Southeast Area Plan](#), which supports the redevelopment of the Strathearn Heights Apartments site into a mixed-use urban village. Updates to the Southeast Area Plan were proposed to reflect the proposed rezoning.

Note: On June 8, 2021 City Council repealed 74 Plans including the Southeast Area Plan to reduce policy conflict and redundancy and allow for the future transition towards the establishment and use of District Plans as per the recently adopted [City Plan](#). This means that the City Plan will take precedence and alignment to the repealed Southeast Area Plan will no longer be considered in the City's review of this application and recommendation to City Council.

PROJECT WEBSITE: https://www.edmonton.ca/residential_neighbourhoods/neighbourhoods/strathearn-heights-rezoning

ENGAGEMENT Online Engagement Webpage - Engaged Edmonton:
FORMAT: <https://engaged.edmonton.ca/strathearnheights>

ENGAGEMENT DATES: June 7 - 25, 2021

NUMBER OF VISITORS:

- Engaged: 54
- Informed: 84
- Aware: 234

See “Web Page Visitor Definitions” at the end of this report for explanations of the above categories.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The information in this report includes feedback gathered through online engagement via the Engaged Edmonton platform from June 7 - June 25, 2021.

Input from Edmontonians will be used to ensure the review of the application takes local context into consideration and is as complete as possible. It will also be used to inform conversations with the applicant about potential revisions to the proposal to address concerns or opportunities raised. Feedback will also be summarized in the report to City Council when the proposed rezoning goes to a future City Council Public Hearing for a decision.

This report is shared with all web page visitors who provided their email address. This summary will also be shared with the applicant and the Ward Councillor.

ENGAGEMENT FORMAT

The Engaged Edmonton webpage included an overview of the proposed development, information on the development and rezoning process and contact information for the file planner. Two “tools” were available for participants: one to ask questions and one to leave feedback.

The comments are summarized by the main themes below, with the number of times a similar comment was made by participants recorded in brackets following that comment. The questions asked and their answers are also included in this report.

WHAT WE HEARD

Opposed: 39

Support: 11

Some support with concerns: 5

Comments

Location and relationship with surroundings

- Concerns with development not integrating well with the neighbourhood (x18). Including:
 - This development will destroy the area (x3).
 - Towers are not appropriate for this neighbourhood (x3).
 - More thought and consideration is needed when attempting to integrate a redevelopment with surrounding homes and greenspaces (x2).
 - Design should fit into the community and be developed to enhance the current neighbourhood.
 - Towers appear to be out of place in this location and a preference to see more 'missing-middle' type developments.
 - Heights are overscaled and denser than existing detached single family houses.
 - This proposal increases the number of possible towers including additional towers added to the southern portions of the site.
 - There are only large apartment building blocks, with 4 storeys facing homes on all residential streets.
 - This was pitched as a walkable development that is Integrated into the existing community with affordable housing, large amounts of greenspace and a new boulevard access through the center mitigating traffic snarls. This is no longer included with the proposal.
- The proposal deviates from the original proposal where smaller buildings are to be located in the perimeter (x5). Including:
 - Row housing has been removed from 97 Avenue for RF6 zoning.
 - The original proposal provided a good mix gradually moving inside from neighboring homes (row house along roads facing homes), plenty of green space, and won awards for LEEDS for its design.
 - Integration with the rest of the community is particularly concerning with a jump from singles, to low-rise, then towers.
- Ideal location next to the LRT Stop (x4). Including:

- Revised DC2 component is nicely refreshed and seems reasonable for the scale of the development for the area.
- The standard zones proposed are reasonable in terms of height and intensity based on the proximity to transit.
- This transit oriented development makes the Valley Line LRT viable.
- The redevelopment proposal will fit nicely along the new LRT line and create terrific vibrancy in an already desirable area of the city.
- The development supports infill initiatives, attracts young families and discourages sprawl (x3).
- The green, safe and quiet family community in this block is being subjected to an LRT line that no one in this area even needed.
- Deviates from the Southeast Area Plan seeking to maintain the single family character of the community and to ensure future redevelopment of large multi-unit family development that is compatible with community characteristics.

Density

- There is too much density proposed with this development (x5).
- Additional people in Strathearn are welcomed/supported (x4).
- Unclear how much more density will be added to this development (x3).
- Housing supply is already saturated in Edmonton (x2).
- Increased population density in the form of additional mid-rises and high-rises conflicts with Strathearn's typical setting as a quiet, tight knit community of single detached housing.
- Inappropriate way to attempt to upzone potentially thousands of new units to a neighborhood.

Traffic and parking

- Increased traffic congestion including limited access points to the development (x15).
- The lack of on-street parking in the community is already an issue (x4).
- Alleyways have seen an increase of dangerous speeding and in usage (x2).
- The congestion from the LRT construction has already increased the traffic on Strathearn Drive and increased road hazards for our community and our children. Additional concerns on safety are anticipated with the scale of construction of this development (x2).

- The removal of previously proposed 88 Street changes character and imposes new traffic impacts from the previously approved proposal which was supported to help resolve traffic congestion to the neighbourhood (x2).
- The streets are rather narrow, and the addition of so many new housing units will exasperate this issue exponentially.
- We've already been railroaded into having an LRT stop which has divided the community in half.
- Subsidized transit passes should be provided to the residents.

Greenspaces and parks

- Concerns for the loss of parks (x13). Including:
 - The green spaces now proposed are a fraction of what was originally planned (x3).
 - This development has removed all AP sites relying solely on the current community league and the River Valley to pick up the needs of approximately 5,000 more people.
 - This site should be equipped to provide recreation and green space for its own residents.
 - Concerns that this beautiful green nature area of Edmonton will just be another "downtown" cement pad.
 - Any zone that is parkland should remain so the new residents that live in these big developments have some park space and current residents can still enjoy parkland.
 - There is an insufficient amount of green spaces which is already problematic for Strathearn.
 - Greenways provide insufficient space for congregating or participating in activities.
- Concerns for the loss of mature trees (x7). Including:
 - Concerns that many of these beautiful old trees will be cut down in order to accomplish this development.
 - Destruction of nature to accommodate development
 - Strong desire to retain the beautiful trees with lots of green space
 - A significant number of trees were already removed to allow for the unneeded LRT construction.
 - Old elm trees are at risk of being removed.
- The greenways/linear parks are supported (x4).

- Strathearn's beautiful tree lined streets were/are one of the most amazing characteristics of this area.
- Insufficient park programming for children or seniors.

Socio-economics

- Concerns related to affordability and/or the relocation of existing Strathearn Heights Apartments' residences (x10). Including:
 - Redevelopment replaces the site with expensive housing that is unaffordable for these current residents (x4).
 - Fear of losing families seeking more affordable choices in the suburbs (x2).
 - The redevelopment does not help the community's concerns for people who require lower rent options.
 - This will only benefit high income individuals.
 - Strathearn Heights Apartments are ideal for small families with limited income.
 - Strathearn Heights is the last affordable and safe area to live that is close to the downtown core and Whyte Avenue.
- Previous proposals included family oriented and affordable housing which have been minimized (x2).
- The development should include a higher mix of unit types to accommodate varied demographics and income levels.
- Fear of losing a quiet, family/multicultural oriented setting.
- This development promotes a transient population.
- Most cannot afford a single family home in this area.
- Unclear about supportive housing supply with this development.
- Concerns for local small businesses and the ability to afford the rents in these new buildings.

Design/Massing

- Concerns on scale and shadow impacts to surrounding properties (x7).
- The mix use development is supported as part of transit-oriented design (x 5).
- The proposal deviates too much from the original design proposals (x4).
- The preference to renovate or replace aging buildings with something similar(x3).
- There are Insufficient details or concept drawings provided (x2).
- The comprehensive vision of the development has been removed with a phase by phase approach without details on what is expected. A comprehensive redesign should be conducted (x2).

- Additional commercial units are welcomed and will support local businesses.
- Artist renderings do not include LRT lines, conceptualized parking, and narrow roads.
- The proposal supports larger blocks which are not pedestrian friendly.
- This development will allow for replacement of dated apartments.

Engagement:

- Additional engagement in the form of in-person consultation is required for this application (x9).
- This engagement has not been adequate (x7). Including:
 - It seems like this is being quietly pushed through and many residents are not aware of this proposal.
 - This engagement appears more about communicating what is going to happen rather than actually consulting the residents.
 - Development has already been approved based on actual community feedback and discussion, not this underhanded attempt to push something through under the radar while in a pandemic.
 - Tenants were not notified about this rezoning.
- Strathearn heights has previously been an excellent example of meaningful community consultation and has been supportive of integrated development. I hope this can continue to be the case.

Opinions on the developers

- This only benefits the owner with added flexibility, lowering their expenses, increasing their profits and does nothing for the homeowners surrounding the site (x8).
- Concern with the non-activity for this development site (x3). Including:
 - Would like to see some commitment from the owner on building on the site before going through yet another rezoning as this development is falling flat of the original concept for this community.
 - It is entirely reasonable for the City to apply time-sensitive approvals here and impose an actual development timeline for the DC2 component (at a minimum), if not the entire development area.
 - We need (a lot of) shovel-ready development to hit our infill goals, not endless up-zoning and land speculation.
- The developers are asking more than what was previously granted (x2). Including:

- A significant number of developments in the area have been approved previously and are coming back with changes. This completely undermines any community input they previously had taken into consideration. Examples include Holyrood Gardens, Strathearn Apartments, and the apartment on the corner of 86 Street and 95 Avenue.

Crime and disorder

- Concerns for bar/neighbourhood pub use. The current one attracts unsightly activities (x2).
- The development will likely include the migration of our homeless population as the height of the new buildings will darken the streets, which in turn provides more places to hide.

Other

- The project will decrease surrounding property values in the area (x2).
- Concerns over impact to the drainage system (x2).
- Strathearn needs more sustainable, eco-friendly and community-oriented projects
- All changes should be appropriately modeled and a visual comparison to the previous proposal should be done.
- Eager to see more developments like this rather than additional skinny houses.
- Eager to have the construction start ASAP.
- The proposed development will bring a lot to the area and bring more private investments in the future.
- This development will complement Holyrood and Bonny Doon redevelopments also in progress.
- Strathearn is a vibrant community that embraces tranquility with effervescence.

Questions & Answers

What is the total number of units being proposed in the latest plan? Is it still 1900? or More?

According to the applicant, the intended total number of units proposed for the entire site is approximately 1900 dwellings. The absolute total number of units have yet to be determined until the permitting stage as no maximum number of residential dwellings are mandated by the RA7, RA8 and RA9 Zones. In contrast, the RF6 area proposed along the northern edge is limited to 80 dwellings/hectare which translates to approximately 98 units within this area, while 500 units are sought within the DC2 portions near the future Strathearn LRT Stop.

A summary of the maximum residential density per zone is as follows:

- RF6: 98 Dwelling Units
- RA7: No maximum number of dwellings
- RA8: No maximum number of dwellings
- RA9: No maximum number of dwellings
- DC2: 500 Dwelling Units

It's also unclear how much greenspace is provided in the plan. There are the greenways, which I'm very happy to see remain, but there seems like there is also greenspace between buildings that is not highlighted here as such. Is that just because it's not 'public' greenspace? Clarity on this would be helpful.

The currently zoned (AP) Public Parks areas are proposed for rezoning to either RA7, RA8 and RA9 Zones. Within these areas, the applicants' intent is to introduce 'publicly accessible privately owned parks spaces' scattered throughout their site so that design and maintenance are the responsibility of the developers. These greenspaces include the linear parks/greenways, pocket parks and a proposed transit plaza and mews connections as shown on the attached [open space concept](#). Implementation methods such as registration of public access easement and/or subdivision processes will ensure the public have access to these spaces. This proposal does not include the rezoning of Silver Heights Park which is to remain AP zoning.

Finally, is there more detail on the transition of buildings from the houses outside the proposal, to the buildings along the perimeter of the project?

The [proposed zones are configured](#) so that the taller buildings will be located in the central (RA8, RA9 zones) and southern (DC2 zone) portions of the site and then transition to shorter buildings along the eastern and western (RA7 zone) and northern edges (RF6 zone) of the site.

A summary maximum heights per zone is as follows:

- RF6: 16m (approximately 4 storeys)
- RA7: 16m (approximately 4 storeys)
- RA8: 23m (approximately 6 storeys)
- RA9: 60m (approximately 15 storeys)

- DC2: 81m (approximately 20 storeys)

The shadow study considered 3 cases: summer solstice, spring and autumn equinox. Why wasn't the winter solstice included? It's suspiciously absent since that is the critical case for property owners north of the proposed development. Studies of previous proposed site massing, with 27-story towers, indicated that several properties along Strathearn Drive would receive no direct sun for a dozen days around the solstice.

Thank you for your question and for identifying the incomplete sun-shadow impact assessment. A request of the applicant to include the shadow impacts during the winter solstice has been made, and an updated Urban Design Brief will be posted on this webpage upon receipt. Update (June 29, 2021): The updated urban design brief and sun shadows study has now been posted on the [Strathearn Heights TOD Engaged Edmonton Webpage](#).

Web Page Visitor Definitions

Aware

An aware visitor, or a visitor that we consider to be 'aware', has made one single visit to the page, but not clicked any further than the main page.

Informed

An informed visitor has taken the 'next step' from being aware and clicked on something. We now consider the visitor to be informed about the project. This is done because a click suggests interest in the project.

Engaged

Every visitor that contributes on the page, either by asking questions or leaving a comment, is considered to be 'engaged'.

Engaged and informed are subsets of aware. That means that every engaged visitor is also always informed AND aware. In other words, a visitor cannot be engaged without also being informed AND aware. At the same time, an informed visitor is also always aware.

Next Steps

When the applicant is ready to take the application to Council:

- Notice of Public Hearing date will be sent to surrounding property owners and applicable nearby Community Leagues and Business Associations.
- Once the Council Public Hearing Agenda is posted online, you may register to speak at Council by completing the form at edmonton.ca/meetings or calling the Office of the City Clerk at 780-496-8178.
- You may listen to the Public hearing on-line via edmonton.ca/meetings.
- You can submit written comments to the City Clerk (city.clerk@edmonton.ca) or contact the Ward Councillor, Ben Henderson directly (ben.henderson@edmonton.ca).

If you have questions about this application please contact:

Marty Vasquez, Planner

780-495-1948

marty.vasquez@edmonton.ca