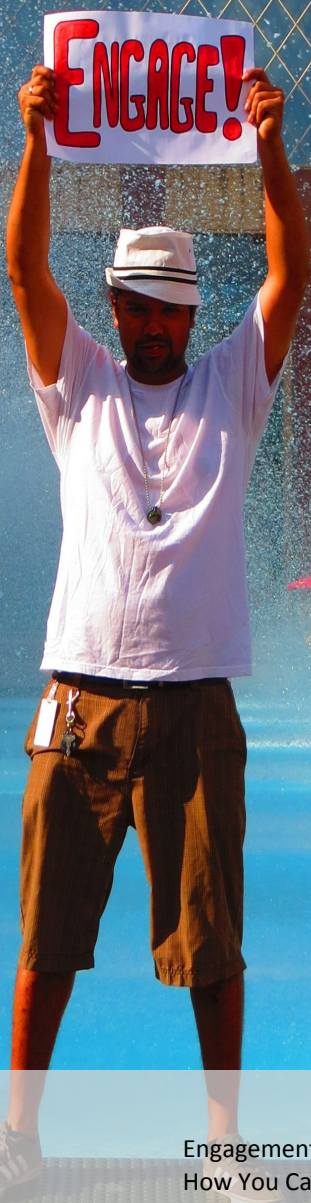


the fACTivist



In This Edition:

Municipal Government Basics - p. 2
Edmonton's 10 Year Plan - p. 5
Edmonton Gets Fresh - p. 7
Getting Involved with The Quarters - p. 9
Mentoring Women in Politics - p. 12

Engagement Across Canada - p. 14
How You Can Get Involved - p. 16
NextGen and Civic Engagement - p. 17
Staff Member Profile - p. 23
Board Member Profile - p. 23



The City of Edmonton's Administration is divided into five departments:



Photo by City of Edmonton

Community Services

Front-line delivery of a number of key community services including:

- Fire rescue services
- Parks & recreation facilities and programming
- Community & social development
- Community standards (bylaw enforcement)

Corporate Services

Supports business operations of the city organization including:

- Human resources
- Information Technology
- Law
- Contract procurement
- Fleet services
- Office of the City Clerk
- Customer Information Services

Municipal Politics: The Basics

By Anne Stevenson, Volunteer Writer

Navigating the City

Municipalities are responsible for shaping some of the most basic aspects of our day-to-day lives, from the water we use, the buses we ride or the emergency services we rely on. Understanding how a city works is an important first step in understanding how to get the most out of your municipality.

How are municipalities formed?

Municipal governments exist because of provincial powers. The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) of Alberta provides the governance model for all Albertan cities, towns, villages and other municipalities, setting out how “municipalities operate, how municipal councils function, and how citizens can work with their municipalities” (Government of Alberta, Municipal Affairs).

What are municipalities meant to do?

The MGA highlights three core purposes of a municipality:

- To provide good government
- To provide services, facilities or other things necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality
- To develop and maintain safe and viable communities

The City of Edmonton has provided a more detailed vision of what it hopes to achieve in its strategic plan, *The Way Ahead*. This document “sets the foundation for the work of the City and guides [its] continued commitment to enhance the quality of life for residents” (City of Edmonton, 2011).

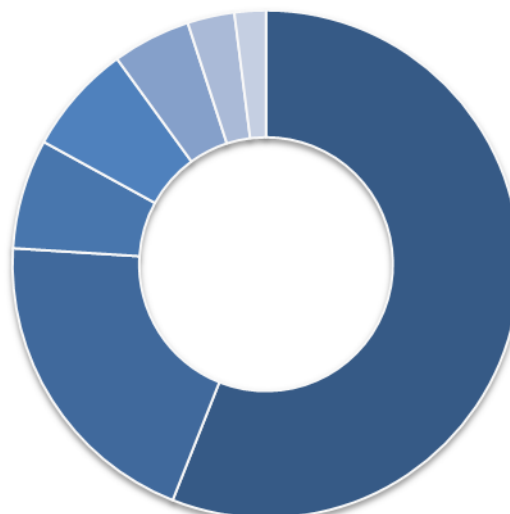
How are municipalities organized?

Municipalities have two distinct parts that make up an integrated whole: Council and Administration. City Council is a publicly elected body that includes one councillor from each of Edmonton’s 12 wards, plus the mayor. Council is where major decisions on strategic priorities are made. Council sets policy direction and approves the budget to realize these goals.

Administration is headed by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the only City employee directly hired by Council. The CAO, known in Edmonton as the City Manager, is responsible for ensuring Council’s strategic priorities are implemented through the day-to-day running of the city.

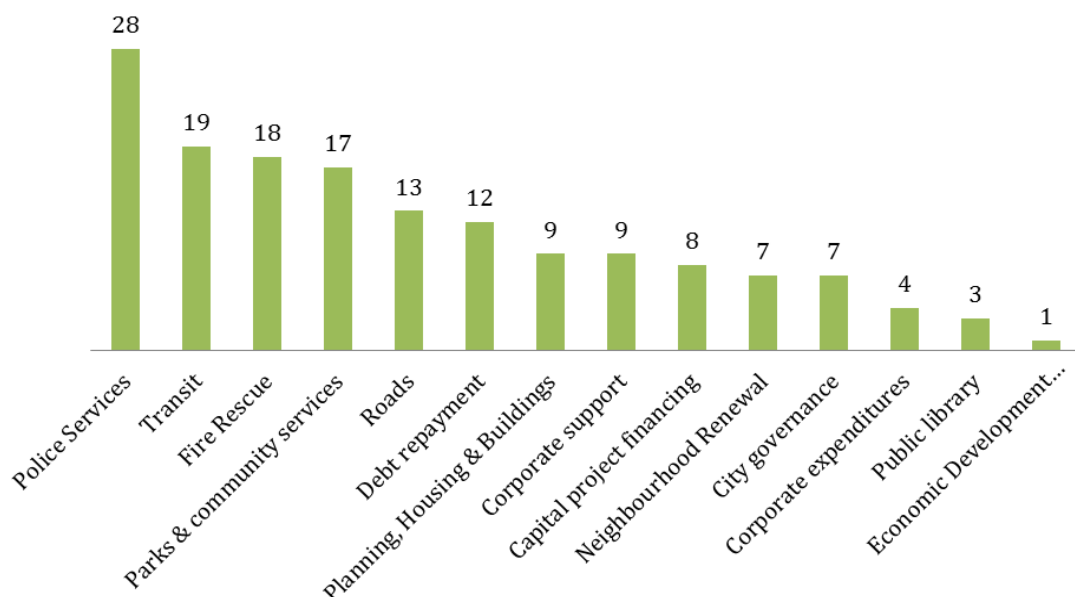
The City of Edmonton’s Administration is divided into five Departments, each with its own set of key functions (see sidebar). While responsibilities are clearly delineated between the different departments, in practice the delivery of City projects and

Operation revenue sources



- Property taxes
- Fines, permits & user fees
- EPCOR dividends
- Utility franchise fees
- Federal & provincial grants
- Investment earnings & dividends

Allocation of monthly tax contributions (\$)



services requires considerable collaboration between the various departments. For example, a supportive housing project may receive funding from Sustainable Development's housing program, get support through Community Service outreach workers and use Transportation Service's DATS program.

What are municipal agencies, boards and commissions?

The City also delivers services through a number of arms-length agencies, boards and commissions that are essential in Edmonton's civic life, such as the Police Commission, the Capital Region Housing Commission and the Community Services Advisory Board. One or two Councillors will typically sit on these boards and Council as a whole is responsible for choosing and appointing citizen representatives to the other seats of the governing boards. Council also allocates funding to these agencies to support their work.

Where does the city get its money from?

The City of Edmonton has a number of revenue streams, with the operating budget coming from:

- Property and neighbourhood renewal taxes (56%)
- Fines, permits and user fees (20%)
- EPCOR dividends (7%)

- Utility franchise fees (7%)
- Federal and provincial grants (5%)
- Investment earnings and dividends (3%)
- Other levies, taxes and late fees (2%)

What does the City spend its money on?

There are a wide range of programs and services that the City spends its operating budget on. A glance at how municipal funds are allocated in Edmonton gives some idea of where the City's greatest priorities are. The graph above shows how an average household's monthly municipal tax contribution, typically about \$155, is allocated amongst the different operating budget requirements. The top five spending areas are police services, transit, fire rescue, parks & community services and roads.

The City also has a 2012-2014 capital budget, which is specifically for infrastructure projects. It is divided between \$1.3 billion for renewal of existing projects and \$1.5 billion for new projects. It is funded primarily through grants from the provincial and federal governments, and supported by the city's investment/dividend income, developer contributions and local improvement levies. Taxes also help pay the debt servicing on some of these projects and other elements that are not funded by the provincial or federal governments.



Finance and utilities

Ensures financial soundness and transparency, responsible for:

- Assessment and taxation
- Corporate accounting and treasury
- Chief Financial Officer and budget strategy
- Drainage services
- Waste Management Services

Sustainable Development

Guides and manages development and growth through:

- Strategic policy
- Development applications and permits
- Housing and economic development
- Managing city-owned land

Transportation Services

Provides a safe and integrated transportation network including:

- Strategic transportation planning
- Edmonton Transit System (ETS)
- LRT design & construction
- Road design, construction and maintenance
- Road signals, traffic control and safety

Source: City of Edmonton, Departments and Branches



Additional Resource



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT

Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000
Chapter M-26

Current as of June 17, 2013

Office Consolidation
© Published by Queen's Printer
Edmonton, Alberta
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Printed by the
Government of Alberta

Province of Alberta. (2013). *Municipal Government Act*. Edmonton, Canada: Alberta Queen's Printer. Retrieved from <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/acts/m26.pdf>

The Municipal Government Act sets out the governance model for all municipal governments in Alberta.

Who can be involved in municipal elections?

Councillors and the Mayor come from a range of backgrounds. To run in an election, candidates must be Canadian citizens that are 18 years of age or over and have lived in Edmonton for the past 6 months.

Individuals who are in debt to a municipality and other rare circumstances may be ineligible to run for office, and any city employees who wish to run in the election must take a leave of absence from work during their campaign. If all of these qualifications are met, a candidate running for Councillor must complete a nomination form with the signatures of 25 eligible voters and submit this to the City Clerk along with a \$100 fee. If running for Mayor, the candidate must get 100 signatures and pay a \$500 fee. After submitting nomination forms on Nomination Day – this year it's September 23, 2013 – candidates must follow the rules that regulate financing and conduct throughout their campaign (City of Edmonton, 2013).

All Canadian citizens who have lived in Edmonton for more than 6 months and are over 18 years of age are eligible to vote in municipal elections. Voters do not need to be pre-registered and can vote at their local polling station on election day by bringing proof of identification. In addition to government issued ID, other forms of acceptable identification include statements of government benefits, a utility bill or a letter from a housing shelter or soup kitchen. Voting is an important way to ensure the City best represents the needs of all its residents – be sure to take part on October 21!

References

City of Edmonton. (2013). Nomination requirements and forms. Retrieved from http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/municipal_elections/nomination-requirements.aspx

City of Edmonton. (2012). *2013 Approved Operating Budget*. Retrieved from [http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/2013_Approved_Operating_](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/2013_Approved_Operating_Budget_Complete.pdf)

[Budget_Complete.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/2013_Approved_Operating_Budget_Complete.pdf)



Source: City of Edmonton Photo Gallery

City of Edmonton. (2011). *City of Edmonton Strategic Plan: The Way Ahead 2009-2018* (Updated in 2011).

City of Edmonton, Departments and Branches. Retrieved from http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_organization/departments-branches.aspx

Government of Alberta. *Municipal Government Act*. Retrieved from the Municipal Affairs website: http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/mga_review.cfm

The Edmonton Homeless Commission and Municipal Involvement in the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

By Kayla Atkey, Volunteer Writer

Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness was adopted in January 2009. The plan is based on the Housing First Model and includes five measurable goals for ending chronic homelessness in Edmonton within 10 years. Since its implementation, over 1664 permanent homes have been provided for over 2,300 previously homeless individuals (City of Edmonton, 2013).

Key actors involved in the implementation of the Plan include the Edmonton Homeless Commission, Homeward Trust and 11 Housing First Support Teams (Edmonton Homeless Commission, 2013). The Commission is the steward of the Plan and acts as an important link to municipal government. Homeward Trust and the support teams, in turn, are responsible for direct operations related to the Plan's implementation.

For this addition of the FACTivist, I spoke with Jay Freeman, Executive Director of the Edmonton Homeless Commission, to learn about the municipal government's involvement in the Plan.

The following interview has been edited and condensed.

The Edmonton Homeless Commission is the steward of Edmonton's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. Can you tell me about the Commission?

The commission is a committee of [city] council under the *Municipal Government Act*. Councils, in addition to their administration, can have authorities, boards or commissions. We were established as a commission in February 2009.

All the members of the commission are appointed by council upon the recommendation of the commission. We tried to select a broad cross section of leaders from the community. We have representatives from the business, non-profit, philanthropic, aboriginal and faith communities among others.

One of the reasons we decided it ought to be a committee of Council was that we wanted to signify the city's continued leadership in overseeing the Plan. When we looked at plans elsewhere, one thing that stood out was political leadership. If you didn't have political leadership, chances of it succeeding were much less. So that's sort of the genesis of the commission.

What does the Commission's role as steward entail?

Our job is to oversee implementation of the Plan. When we say steward, you can summarize our job in three words: educate, advocate and collaborate:

Educate is about educating the public on why it's important to end homelessness and the fact that it's doable. As we put it, ending homelessness isn't just the right thing to do. It's also the smart thing to do. It costs way more to manage homelessness through emergency services than it does to end it by getting a person housed.

Advocate is about keeping government feet to the fire. The challenge with a ten year plan is that 10 years is a long time. We try to keep the Plan front and centre and make sure the required funding and programs are in place to make it happen.

Collaborate is about collaborating both within the homelessness serving community and within the business, non-profit, philanthropic, aboriginal and faith communities. You know there is that old adage: it takes a village to raise a child; well, it's truly going to take the whole community to end homelessness.

The other aspect that doesn't quite fit into those three categories would be monitoring the progress of the plan. This includes having benchmarks, developing a sound business plan, and publishing an annual report to council and the community.



Additional Resource



A Place to Call Home
Edmonton's 10 Year Plan
to End Homelessness

PREPARED BY THE
Edmonton Committee to End Homelessness
JANUARY 2009

Edmonton Committee to End Homelessness. (2009). *A place to call home: Edmonton's 10 year plan to end homelessness*. Retrieved from www.edmonton.ca/10-YearPlanToEndHomelessness-jan26-2009.pdf

A Place to Call Home: Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness details the vision of the Edmonton Committee to End Homelessness. It advocates use of the Housing First approach, and places particular emphasis on those who are chronically homeless.

The ESPC plays a key role in preparing annual updates on the plan's progress. These updates can be found online at homelesscommission.org/index.php/progress



Additional Resource



A PLAN FOR ALBERTA

ENDING HOMELESSNESS
IN 10 YEARS

PREPARED BY:
The Alberta Secretariat
For the City of Edmonton
October 2009

Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness. (2008). *A plan for Alberta: Ending homelessness in 10 years*. Retrieved from <http://alberta.ca/albertacode/images/AlbertaPlanToEndHomelessness.pdf>

“The Plan sets out a series of actions aimed at shifting the work of homeless-serving agencies, communities and governments away from simply managing homelessness, and towards ending homelessness through a housing first philosophy.” [From the Executive Summary, p. 2]

How has the municipal government been involved in the Plan?

The Commission is very much the central point. When City Council established the Commission, it also established the Office of the Executive Director. I am a city employee, so the city provides resources in that way. The budget for the commission also goes towards the activities I talked about: educate, advocate and collaborate.

There are other ways the city has been involved. Part of our job is to identify barriers and then try to remove those barriers. For example, zoning is an issue the city is responsible for and has some control. They also fund programs such as the Relentless Street Outreach Program.

I think the most critical thing is the political leadership. Homelessness fundamentally is not a municipal responsibility. Having said that, where does the problem present itself? Typically at a city-level. So it's important that the city stand up and say this is something that we need to attend to.

What was the impetus for the plan? Was there a key champion within government?

Undoubtedly, the champion was Mayor Mandel. If I could say what the trigger was, it was tent city in 2007. When Edmontonians, and Canadians, really because it was national news, saw a prosperous city in a prosperous province in a prosperous country like Canada, and we've got people sleeping in tents. I think people thought something had to be done.

When the Mayor established the committee, there had been a recent election. He said when he was going around door to door during elections, people said to him, “We cannot have this happen. We have to do something.” So there was public will also.

Is the Plan's collaborative approach a unique way of working for Edmonton agencies?

I don't think it's unique. There are certainly many examples of collaboration in the social services sector. I think one of the differences was that in establishing the committee and the commission, we looked

beyond the usual suspects. We looked outside the non-profit sector to include representatives from other sectors, such as the business, philanthropic and faith community.

Collaboration is one thing, but I think the big difference was approaching things on a systemic basis. That's really where we are moving – saying, what we need to do is look at this from a systems point of view.

What kinds of actions can Edmontonians take to help ensure the success of Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness?

They can go to our website (homelesscommission.org) and sign the declaration of support. That's a tangible way of saying, yes, I agree with what you are doing. It's also important to speak up when housing projects come forward, such as the proposed supportive housing complex in Terwilliger Towne.

Additional volunteer opportunities are available at <http://homelesscommission.org/index.php/what-you-can-do>

References:

- City of Edmonton. (2013). *Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness On Track*. Edmonton. Retrieved from http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/news/2013/edmontons-10-year-plan-to-end-homelessness-on-track.aspx
- Edmonton Homeless Commission. (2013). *Who's Involved*. Edmonton. Retrieved from <http://homelesscommission.org/index.php/10-year-plan/who-s-involved>

Fresh: Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy

By Elise Broughton, Volunteer Writer



Source: City of Edmonton Photo Gallery

'Fresh' is the strategy developed by the Food and Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee - composed of fourteen Edmontonians with various involvement and interest in Edmonton's food and agriculture sector - in order to improve economic and environmental sustainability of the local food system. In addition to the Advisory Committee, input from 3000 Edmontonians was collected in a thorough public consultation that included workshops, surveys, panels, feedback via social media, and open houses. The focus of the strategy is Edmonton's local food system; the larger commercial food industry was not explored. This article provides an overview of the objectives and recommendations of the Food and Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee as set out in their document *Fresh: Edmonton's Food & Urban Agriculture Strategy*, which provides a framework for long term food system design and implementation in the Capital Region.

Although some definitions of 'local' include all of Alberta and some parts of British Columbia, for the purposes of the report it was defined as the area within 600 km of the Capital Region (page 7).

As the city grows, there is increased pressure on local resources and land; therefore, the strategy takes into account different needs and values surrounding land use and integrates them with existing city priorities. Production, processing, distribution and storage, buying and selling,

consumption, waste management, and education/governance are all components of food systems that relate to other urban planning issues such as transportation, land use, waste management, environmental and public health, urban planning, and cost of living. These relationships were factored into the strategic plan to improve local food production capacity.

Based on the common themes that emerged from public consultation, Advisory Committee consultations with various city departments, and discussion within the Committee itself, five overarching goals were established (page 20):

- a stronger local economy
- improved health and food security within the community
- a healthier ecosystem
- reduced energy, emissions and waste
- increased vibrancy and uniqueness of the city

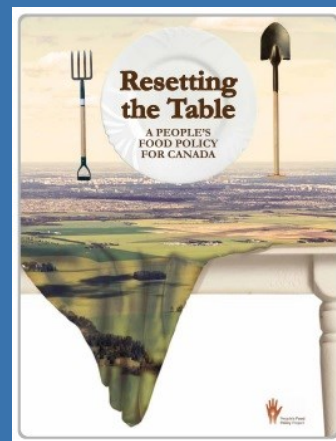
Further defined objectives of the five goals include: generation of community wealth; adequate capacity for processing, storage and distribution; improved job opportunities within the local food system; production of a wide variety of food types; improved nutrition and access to local food for Edmontonians; creating an interesting food culture in Edmonton that is easy to connect with; decreased energy and food waste by food system; reduced reliance on agrochemicals to produce food; and enhancement of the local ecosystem.

In turn, nine strategic directions to accomplish the objectives defined by the overarching goals, including recommendations for implementation, were identified (pages 26-64):

- **Establish the Edmonton Food Council**, the purpose of which is to bring together stakeholders with varied interest in the food and agricultural sector in order to network with city



Additional Resource



Food Secure Canada (2011)
Resetting the table: A people's food policy for Canada. Retrieved from

<http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/FSC-resetting2012-8half11-lowresEN.pdf>

Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada is the result of a collaborative process in which hundreds of people devoted thousands of volunteer hours to create a food policy that genuinely reflects the perspectives of people across the country.



Additional Resource



PROOF. (2013). Report on Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/annual-report/>

The Annual Report on Household Food Insecurity is designed to provide a tool, using Statistics Canada data, to monitor trends and identify priorities for interventions to address this major public health issue. It builds on the extensive work of the Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion at Health Canada in monitoring household food insecurity in Canada.

departments and community partners, host forums to engage and educate the community about food related topics, and to advise the city on improvements to the food system.

- ♦ **Provide education regarding food skills for consumers, facilitated by a central educational resource.** This includes any activity that increases knowledge of health and food preparation by the community, such as cooking lessons, gardening workshops, and online information regarding food growing, preparing and preserving skills.
- ♦ **Expand urban agriculture.** Approaches the City could use to facilitate an increase in garden space within the city itself include: regulations/permits, public awareness campaigns, and support for organizations to become involved.
- ♦ **Develop local food infrastructure capacity,** as the ability of small and medium sized businesses to access food distribution channels is limited. This necessitates the creation of 'food hubs', which include facilities for storage and distribution, food-related event venues, spaces for educational programs, and retail spaces such as farmer's markets.
- ♦ **Grow local food supply and demand.** In order to increase demand for local foods, the supply must be conveniently available to consumers. This can be accomplished through support and improvement of farmer's markets, a labeling system for local products, and a local food purchasing policy established by the City.
- ♦ **Improve diversity of food activities,** which in turn draws people into public spaces and enlivens food culture in the city, making it a more vibrant place to live.
- ♦ **Treat food waste as a resource.** Although food waste can occur anywhere along the supply chain, the majority occurs in households due to poor food skills and can be addressed by increasing education and awareness. 'Gleaning', or diverting quality food

from the landfill to those in need, as well as improvements in waste management are additional strategies in the reduction of food waste.

- ♦ **Support ecological approaches to farming.** This includes bolstering supports available for urban farming training and removing regulatory barriers. Promotion and proper management of urban farming can improve the ecosystem.
- ♦ **Integrate prime agricultural land in the Edmonton Region by balancing development and protection of the land, and increasing utilization of prime agricultural soil within the urban center.** A key aspect of this recommendation is identification and preservation of priority areas in conjunction with a plan for 'smart' development of housing options. Due to the complexity of this proposal, the Advisory Committee developed a framework to aid in the decision making process.

Although the strategic directions do not constitute a detailed plan, they set the city on course; further plans are to be established by the Edmonton Food Council. Thus, the strategy is considered a starting point for long term change that will require extensive research, monitoring and planning well into the future.

The Advisory Committee concluded that success of many of the recommendations will be defined both quantitatively and qualitatively by good access to local food, protection of prime farmland, success of people working in the local food sector, vibrant farmer's markets, and diversity in food purchased.

References

City of Edmonton. (2012, October). *Fresh: Food and urban agriculture strategy*. Edmonton, Canada: City of Edmonton. Retrieved from http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/FRESH_October_2012.pdf

Civic Engagement in “The Quarters”: The Boyle Renaissance Project

By Chris Rudge, Volunteer Writer

Introduction: The Quarters Downtown

The Quarters Downtown (“the Quarters”) is an ambitious, long-term redevelopment of the oft-ignored east side of Edmonton’s core. The vision, put forth by the City of Edmonton, is of a vibrant, mixed-use, transit-oriented community that provides opportunity for a diverse range of cultures and incomes. Urban design guidelines for the Quarters promote interaction, pedestrianism and “eyes on the street” with an emphasis on open, public space. This redevelopment project included an initial \$56 million in infrastructure upgrades to aid in promoting investment from the greater community.

Within the Quarters, demographics diverge from many communities throughout the City. The area is young, with one-third of residents between 20 and 30 years old; households are overwhelmingly single-individual; and home ownership is not common, with approximately 90% of residents renting. Incomes within the Quarters are disproportionately low at approximately half the Edmonton average, while unemployment is almost double (City of Edmonton, 2009).

If realized, the vision of the Quarters set forth by the City of Edmonton will develop healthier, community-oriented neighbourhoods where services and amenities are available for all income levels.

The Boyle Renaissance Project

One of the initial cornerstone projects of the Quarters is the Boyle Renaissance Project (BRP). Situated between 95th and 96th Street, north of 103a Avenue, on two and a half city blocks in a largely residential area, the BRP is designed to bring together a host of community services and housing opportunities. Currently in its second phase of construction, the BRP will provide affordable housing opportunities, including units for Aboriginals, seniors and people with disabilities. Additional community services will include a child care and family

resource centre, and physical activity and programming space for the Boyle Street Community League.



Source: City of Edmonton Photo Gallery

BRP Consultation Process

Planning of the Boyle Renaissance Project began in 2006. Civic engagement during the planning process of the BRP took several forms; however, the most significant of those was the development of the Boyle Renaissance Advisory Council (BRAC). The BRAC was a multi-stakeholder forum to discuss and review planning considerations and provide input. The BRAC constituted 45 members which included project proponents, local community members, and the various levels of government involved with the project.

Ensuring accurate representation of a local community in a civic engagement process is no easy task. Individuals must be motivated and physically able to attend such processes, which is not always possible. Research by Bery (2005) noted that “the poor, disabled, non-English speakers, homeless, mentally ill, unemployed and frail elderly all participate at alarmingly low levels.”

Development of the BRAC took such issues into consideration, with local organizations taking part in the council to advocate and provide a “voice for the unheard”. While not direct representation, this did ensure that the opinions of those potentially impacted by decisions of the BRAC were brought forth (McKay Finnigan and Associates, 2008).



Join us for our next Lunch and Learn

“Exploring the Early Cultural and Economic Adaptation Process of Newcomers in Michener Park, Edmonton, Alberta “

DATE: September 11, 2013

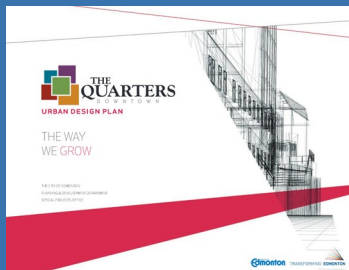


The ESPC's Social Justice Intern, HM Ashraf Ali, will discuss the findings and potential policy outcomes from his research project on understanding the social, cultural and economic constraints faced by immigrants in the Michener Park area in Edmonton.

The Lunch and Learn will be held at 12pm in the back left-hand corner on the main level of the Stanley Milner Library.



Additional Resource



Edmonton. (2013) The Quarters Downtown: Urban design plan. Retrieved from: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/09371COE_Urban_Design_Plan_Revision_LowRes_for_Download.pdf

This report discusses the design plan for the Quarters development in Edmonton.

Other civic engagement tools utilized during the planning of the BRC included two public open houses, an information session and a mandatory public hearing in support of re-zoning. Communication tools included the development of an e-newsletter available on the City of Edmonton website.

The BRAC also developed a separate Public Involvement/Communications Working Group whose purpose was to spearhead public consultation and community awareness surrounding the planning of the BRP. This group formed as a result of serious concerns raised during the initial public open houses for the project. These concerns were related to the forced relocation of residents displaced by, and to the historic value of structures to be demolished for, the BRP. In response, subsequent work undertaken by BRAC included the development of a residential relocation program, a written history of the local area and an analysis of local buildings for heritage value.

Analysis for Consultation Process

Civic engagement for planning and land development proposals in Edmonton is guided by the City of Edmonton's Public Involvement Policy C513 (City of Edmonton, 2006). This policy includes a "Continuum of Public Involvement," which displays forms of engagement that can be considered to range from passive (where participants share information and are informed) to active (where participants share in the decision making authority).

When comparing the BRP planning process to this continuum, there appears to be a

split between these active and passive forms of civic engagement. The active forms of civic engagement were largely contained within the BRAC itself. Its decision making process focused on developing consensus among its stakeholders. These stakeholders yielded real power and influenced the development of the BRP. The more passive forms of engagement for the BRP appear to have occurred outside the framework of the BRAC. Civic engagement here focused on providing information to interested parties and requesting feedback for consideration. Table 1 displays the split roles of the broader public and the BRAC in relation to the City of Edmonton Policy C513.

There is certainly value in incorporating a variety of civic engagement strategies in a consultation process. Not all individuals potentially affected by a proposed project wish to take an active role in decision making. However, the active forms of civic engagement undertaken in support of the BRP appear to have been insulated from the wider community. Such a strategy could prevent other interested individuals within the community from playing a more active role in the planning process, potentially leading to the "serious concerns" raised during the open house. Greater engagement of the wider public may also serve to identify such issues earlier in the planning process.

The work of the BRAC concluded in 2009 with a City Council recommendation that the planning concepts for the BRP be continued. This led to the second iteration of the council in 2010, the BRAC II, who

Table 1. Civic Engagement and the Boyle Renaissance Project¹

<i>Broader Public</i>		<i>Boyle Renaissance Advisory Council</i>
Sharing Information	Consultation	Active Participation
The sharing of information. Builds awareness and informs the public.	Tests ideas and permits feedback from participants to develop solutions/inform decisions.	Multi-stakeholder initiative. Focuses on delegated responsibility and consensus building.

¹Table adapted from the City of Edmonton's Continuum of Public Involvement from Policy C513

provided analysis for the previous efforts of the BRAC. This analysis included the previous civic engagement processes, concluding that “more was needed to invite the broader public to become involved with planning and development” (McKay Finnigan and Associates, 2010). Despite its shortcoming, recommendations put forth by the BRAC II included utilizing the previous multi-stakeholder framework to continue public consultation in the future. This recommendation also noted that past members of the BRAC should be involved.

Conclusion

The civic engagement process for the Boyle Renaissance Project presented both innovative and status quo strategies. While development of the council took the form of a multi-stakeholder initiative with active participation, involvement of the broader public was relegated to a more passive role. Future engagement in support of the Boyle Renaissance Project and the Quarters

redevelopment would be served well to learn from the experiences of the BRAC to ensure that this potentially transformative project is fully realized.

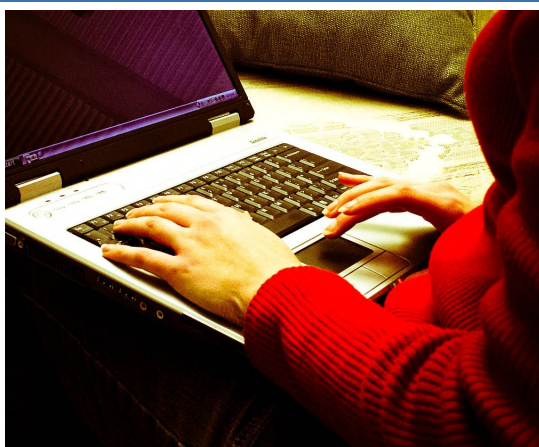
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- Bery, J. M. (2005). Nonprofits and civic engagement. *Public Administration Review*, 65 (5), 568-578.
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- McKay Finnigan and Associates. (2008). *Final report of the Boyle Renaissance Advisory Committee*. Edmonton, Canada: Author.
- McKay Finnigan and Associates. (2010). *Final report of the Boyle Renaissance Advisory Committee II*. Edmonton, Canada: Author.



Looking for research assistance?

The Edmonton Social Planning Council provides **FREE** research services to social advocacy organizations in Edmonton! Are you seeking publications or statistics in social policy areas such as:



Housing	Transportation	Health
Education	Food Security	Income Security Programs
Urban Issues	Social Services	Women
Disabilities	Poverty	Immigration
Families	Children and Child Care	... and more!
Seniors	Indigenous Peoples	
Labour Force	Crime and Safety	

If you or your organization needs a hand finding information about local social issues or related topics, feel free to contact our Resource Coordinator, Stephen MacDonald, by phone at 780.423.2031 ext. 354 or by email at stephenm@edmontonsocialplanning.ca.

Or, submit a research question to us using our Research Inquiries form. To access the form, please visit <http://goo.gl/7b6VH>.



Want to check out more community events?

Visit our website at edmontonsocialplanning.ca and navigate our **Community Calendar** to see future events in the Edmonton community:

- Awareness Events
- Conferences
- Fundraisers
- ESPC Board Meetings
- ESPC Events



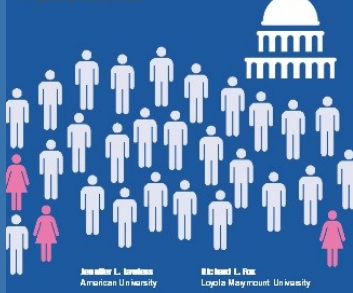


Additional Resource

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
EDMONTON UNIVERSITY

Girls Just Wanna Not Run

The Gender Gap in Young Americans' Political Ambition



Lawless, J.L. and Fox, R.L. (2013) Girls just wanna not run: The gender gap in young Americans' political ambition. Retrieved from http://www.american.edu/spa/wpi/upload/Girls-Just-Wanna-Not-Run_PolicyReport.pdf

The results of a 2013 survey "of more than 2,100 [American] college students between the ages of 18 and 25 in the United States" found that "young women are less likely than young men ever to have considered running for office, to express interest in a candidacy at some point in the future, or to consider elective office a desirable profession."

Opening the Potential for Women in Politics

By Stephanie Kowal, Volunteer Writer

On June 10th, 2013, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford removed Councillor Jay Robinson, from Toronto's executive committee. Robinson was the only woman seated on the committee. She was replaced with a white male councillor after she publicly asked Ford to take a leave of absence during a string of scandals in which the mayor was involved (National Post, 2013). After firing Robinson, the executive committee comprised thirteen males, mostly from the outer boroughs of the city, and twelve of which were white. The resulting homogeneity of the committee has prompted criticisms of Ford's deliberate intentions to misrepresent one of Canada's most diverse cities.

Mayor Ford may be responsible for the situation in his executive committee but, unfortunately, gender is poorly represented nation-wide in Canadian municipal governments. For government to represent women's concerns, 30% of elected officials need to be women (UN, 2005, p.9). Today women hold 16% of mayoral and 25% of councillor positions in Canada. The average 24% female representation in municipal politics means that only 5,807 of 24,197 elected officials are female; consequently, we need almost 1,500 more elected women to reach the required 30% and achieve adequate representation of women's issues in government (FCM, 2013).

Addressing Gender Underrepresentation

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) recognized Canada's chronic underrepresentation of women in municipal politics; in turn, FCM created the Standing Committee on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government to create initiatives and projects that encourage women to join municipal politics (FCM, 2013a). One such initiative was the Protégé Program, which organized mentorship relationships between city councillors and women between the ages of 18 and 28 in a cross-section of various Canadian cities (FCM, 2013b).

The City of Edmonton fully embraced the Protégé Program, even after FCM

discontinued financial support for the program due to funding cuts. Edmonton has currently completed its second year running the mentorship program for women, under the new name Opening the Potential Mentoring. The program pairs interested applicants with willing councillors who share common views or goals. The overarching vision of the program is to "support and encourage more women to consider running for municipal government [by] provid[ing] the mentee with a first-hand look at what it takes to be a City Council member" (City of Edmonton, 2012, p. 6).

Edmonton supplements the mentorship experience with regular capacity-building workshops on such topics as formal media and campaigning training, as well as with structured panel conversations by leaders in city administration about strategic planning or city management. Between these workshops and the mentorship relationships, Opening the Potential Mentoring gives women insight and skills required to work in municipal government. In addition, the program helps the mentees forge relationships with local leaders and



Source: City of Edmonton Photo Gallery

build professional networks.

Impact of Opening the Potential Mentoring

As a former mentee in Opening the Potential, I can attest to the success of the initiative's goals. Mentees in the program were offered incredible career development training opportunities as well as various insights into public service. My experience with the program included opportunities to take part in various council activities and to discuss my ideal government position (whether in an elected position or in administration) given my goals, temperament, and professional strengths. Furthermore, the program enriched my professional network with government, community members and organizations, as well as the other mentees.

The eight other civically engaged and highly motivated women in the program are sources of inspiration, information, and collaboration. One of the nine program mentees has formally announced her campaign for city councillor in the upcoming municipal election this October. Other women in the program express intention to run for elected positions either in the next or subsequent city elections. The program helped inspire us to consider employment as public servants and to become more effective in our current civil engagement activities. These tangible outcomes demonstrate the success of Opening the Potential in: 1) promoting gender equality in municipal political representation; and 2) facilitating high quality civic engagement through relationship building between women and leaders in City Hall.

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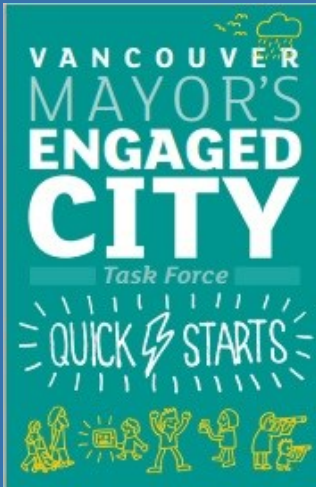


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Additional Resource



Vancouver. (2013) Mayor's Engaged City Task Force: Quick starts. Retrieved from: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Engaged-City-Task-Force-Quick-Starts-Report.pdf>

The Engaged City Task Force released their first report that contains a set of 16 recommendations that the City can take to enhance public consultation, improve the effectiveness of civic communications, and foster collaboration and connection within neighbourhoods. These quick starts are recommendations that the taskforce believes could be accomplished by the City within a six-month time frame [Taken from publisher's website].

Engagement Across Canada

By Stephen MacDonald, ESPC Resource Coordinator

How do Canadian municipal governments engage their citizens?

Municipalities provide many of the essential services that we rely on, including policing, firefighting, water maintenance, and waste management. Unfortunately, it seems that many Canadians are not interested in electing the individuals who represent their interests and concerns at town and city halls. In 2008, only 58.8% of Canadians said they cast a ballot in the last municipal election in their region (Statistics Canada, 2008). More recent statistics in some major municipalities across Canada suggest that low voter turnout in municipal elections is an ongoing problem. During the 2010 municipal election in Edmonton, only 33.4% of eligible voters showed up to vote (Edmonton, 2010). These lackluster statistics suggest that, while they do provide essential services, municipalities must improve the way they engage and communicate with the communities they serve.

What is the City of Edmonton Doing to Engage its Citizens?

The City of Edmonton currently has a Public Engagement Framework, which ensures that the city takes appropriate measures at the right time to understand the public's views and concerns about policies and projects that they are working on. The feedback is used to inform the decision making process. The framework is supported by the City's public involvement policy, "which outlines the strategic approach to be used in all City hosted public involvement processes" (Edmonton, 2006).

In addition to Edmonton, other western Canadian cities recognize the importance of municipal engagement and have implemented strategies for engaging citizens in the municipal governance process.

Vancouver

In 2012, the Vancouver Foundation released a report containing the results of a survey completed by citizens. The report

documented that residents felt they lacked a connection with their municipal government. This was evident in the 2011 municipal election, where only 35% of eligible voters cast a ballot (Hansen, 2013). The report also found that, for a variety of reasons, many Vancouverites feel detached from their community and are not building close relationships with fellow residents (Vancouver Foundation, 2012, p. 7).

Earlier this year, the Mayor's Engaged City Task Force's first report was released, identifying a series of 'quick recommendations' that they hope will improve relationships between Vancouverites and increase engagement between citizens and the city government, over a six-month time span. Some of the activities outlined in this report include the following:

- Giving residents the opportunity to determine how municipal tax dollars are spent in their neighborhood through a "participatory budgeting process".
- Creating a day for neighborhood block parties that encourage neighbors to socialize with one another and build stronger communities.
- "City Hall to Go" trucks or mobile information centres that provide municipal services to citizens.
- Creating an "online engagement panel" that allows citizens to improve engagement with the local government. (Hansen, 2013b)

Innovative approaches to civic engagement are not new to Vancouver City Council. In the 1970s, the city's mayor, Art Phillips, scheduled municipal meetings for the evenings and brought city council meetings into public spaces across the city, making it easier for citizens to attend them and participate in discussions (Hansen, 2013a; Mickleburgh, 2013).

Saskatoon

In 2004, the City of Saskatoon adopted its own community engagement strategy. It

was developed because the city did not have a formal process for engaging with the public (Municipal Capacity Development Program, n.d.). According to the city's website, the strategy is used "when the Administration or City Council want to gather input or inform the public on specific initiatives, projects, new bylaws, bylaw amendments or other civic responsibilities during early design stages and/or prior to final recommendations, approval or endorsement" (Saskatoon, 2012).

Since its introduction, the plan has led to a significant reduction in the number of complaints from the public that they are not being consulted before council makes decisions that affect them. The process has also helped municipal employees become more informed about the work they do and has improved public access to information produced by the municipality (Municipal Capacity Development Program, n.d.).

Nanaimo

Nanaimo has recently experimented with social media and video broadcast software to engage citizens in the business of Council. During the municipality's 2013-14 budget consultations, citizens were given the opportunity to share their opinions with councilors as they held budget discussions, using the city's Facebook and Twitter feeds. The entire budget consultation was also streamed live to an audience (Cleverley, 2013).

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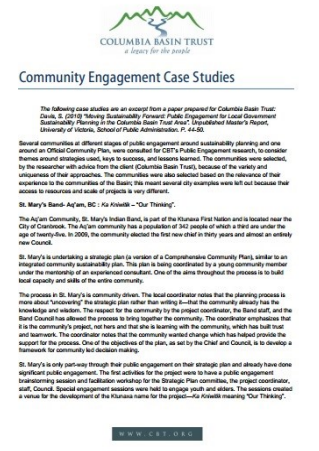
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Additional Resource



Columbia Basin Trust. (2010) Community Engagement Case Studies- Columbia Basin Trust. Retrieved from http://www.cbt.org/uploads/pdf/Case_studies_from_Public_Engagement_paper.pdf

Several communities at different stages of public engagement around sustainability planning and one around an Official Community Plan, were consulted for CBT's Public Engagement research, to consider themes around strategies used, keys to success, and lessons learned. The communities were selected, by the researcher with advice from the client (Columbia Basin Trust), because of the variety and uniqueness of their approaches. The communities were also selected based on the relevance of their experience to the communities of the Basin.



Additional Resource



Smith, A. (2013) Civic engagement in the digital age. Pew Internet and American Life Project. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Civic-Engagement.aspx>

This study examines online and offline political engagement and pays special attention to the role of social networking sites in people's political activities. [Taken from report]

Getting Involved: Your How-To Guide

By Michelle Neilson, ESPC Summer Staff

Measuring Civic Engagement

On October 21, 2013, Edmonton will be having a municipal election. If history is any guide, it is likely that less than half of city residents will cast a vote. Since 1980, voter turnout for municipal elections in Edmonton has averaged 37% (City of Edmonton, 2013). This is markedly lower than election turnouts at the national or provincial level. Why do municipal elections experience such low voter turnout, and what does this trend tell us about public involvement at the local level?

One explanation for lower turnout may be that voters do not feel municipal elections are as important as national ones (Morlan, 1984). This may result from a lack of awareness surrounding local issues. Unlike local elections, national elections mobilize participation through political parties and receive more media coverage (Morlan, 1984). Municipal elections could benefit from more publicity, civic education campaigns, and voter outreach to boost public interest in local issues (Hajnal and Lewis, 2003).

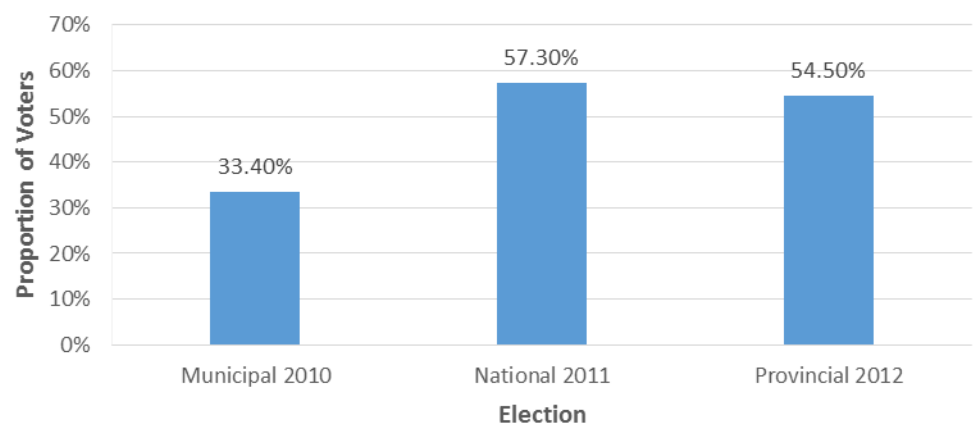
Demographic factors such as age, income, education and ethnicity also influence public participation. Fewer young Canadians are heading to the polls, political processes are often inaccessible to people struggling to

make ends meet, and feelings of social exclusion have contributed to lower voting rates among marginalized groups (O'Neill, 2007; Silver, Keeper, and MacKenzie, 2005). It is important that governments and citizens be mindful of the barriers to public involvement in political processes. Lack of participation raises concerns about the under-representation of vulnerable members of society in local politics (Hajnal and Lewis, 2003).

While voter turnout is an important indicator of the health of a democratic society, it is not the only measure of civic involvement. O'Neill (2007) argues that a distinction should be made between political engagement and civic engagement. Political engagement refers to voting participation, knowledge of political issues and processes, and membership with political parties. Civic engagement includes a broader spectrum of public involvement such as volunteering, joining local organizations, signing petitions, and participating in demonstrations. O'Neill highlights that while young Canadians tend to display lower than average political engagement, they display an equal and often greater than average interest in civic engagement (O'Neill, 2007).

How you can get involved

Voter Turnout for Edmonton in the Municipal, National and Provincial Elections



Source: City of Edmonton, 2013; Elections Alberta, 2012; Community Foundations of Canada, 2013.



Source: City of Edmonton Photo Gallery

Citizens have a responsibility to be informed, make themselves heard, and get involved in issues that matter to them. In turn, governments have a responsibility to ensure that citizens have access to information and opportunities to participate in a meaningful way. The following is a list of just a few of the ways you can get involved and influence decision-making in your community (see the side bar for more information).

Be informed

The key to effective public engagement is an informed citizenry. Being informed makes it possible for people to understand the issues that affect them, get involved early in the decision-making process, and prepare strong arguments to influence outcomes.

- Read/watch the news
- Attend Council and Committee meetings, or watch them online through the City's video feed.
- Follow the City of Edmonton on Facebook or Twitter and check out the Transforming Edmonton Blog.
- Attend Open Houses
- Enroll in a City of Edmonton Planning Academy Course to learn more about urban planning and how you can influence planning decisions.

Be heard

Citizen engagement is about making yourself heard.

- Call, write, email, or meet with your ward Councilor to discuss issues that matter to you.
- Register to speak at a City Council public

hearing or committee meeting. Research your case and make strong, informed arguments.

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Vote. Your vote matters!

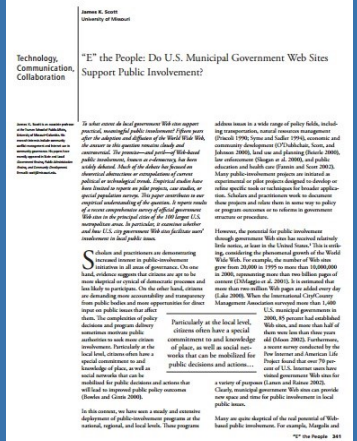
Be active

Being active is about making a commitment to your community. This type of engagement is generally longer-term, and includes both government and citizen-led initiatives.

- Browse through the City of Edmonton Public Engagement Calendar for a list of upcoming public involvement opportunities.
- Participate in public workshops, open houses, and town hall meetings.
- Sit on a City of Edmonton advisory board. A list of boards and instructions on how to apply is available on the City of Edmonton website.
- Join or create an initiative for local change. Light the Bridge is a good example of a campaign currently running in Edmonton - visit www.lightthebridge.ca for more information.
- Create or sign a petition. Many kinds of petitions can be made to the City of Edmonton. Learn more by visiting the city of Edmonton website, or check out the free online petition website Change.org. Thousands of petitions from Change.org have influenced decision-making processes around the world.
- Join your community league or a local organization or activist group.
- Organize or take part in a peaceful protest.
- Fundraise for a local charity.
- Volunteer! Donate some of your time to a cause that is close to your heart. Your community will thank you.



Additional Resource



Scott, J.K (2006) "E" the people: Do U.S. municipal government web sites support public involvement? Public Administration Review. May-June 2006. Retrieved from: <http://www.library.eiu.edu/ersvdocs/4373.pdf>

This paper reports results of a recent comprehensive survey of official government Web sites in the principal cities of the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas. In particular, it examines whether and how U.S. city government Web sites facilitate users' involvement in local public issues. [Taken from report]



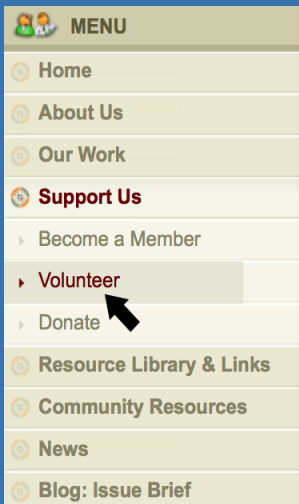
Want to volunteer for the ESPC?

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- serve on the board
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tracking the TRENDS 2013

The Edmonton Social Planning Council's Flagship Publication
A Finger on the Pulse of Edmonton's:

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Coming October 1st!



Your Role in City Council

By Michelle Neilson, ESPC Summer Staff

(Note: The following definitions are for descriptive purposes only, and are not those used by the City of Edmonton.)

What does Edmonton's City Council Do?

Edmonton City Council is made up of one Mayor who is elected city wide, and twelve Councilors, one elected in each of the city's twelve wards. The Council is elected to make political decisions on behalf of the community and fulfill the statutory roles and obligations of a municipal government. Council members listen to the concerns, opinions and suggestions of their constituents when considering policy decisions and balance these perspectives against available budgets, legislation and other stakeholder viewpoints. Decisions in Council are made by passing bylaws or making resolutions.

What is a public hearing?

The City of Edmonton is required by the *Municipal Government Act* to hold a statutory public hearing before passing a bylaw that proposes a change of land-use. Statutory public hearings are advertised in the Edmonton Journal and on the City of Edmonton website three weeks prior to the hearing date. A person may register to speak at the hearing to argue in favour or against a proposed bylaw. Each registered speaker is given 5 minutes to make their presentation.

What is a public meeting?

Sometimes the city will also hold non-statutory public hearings on matters that are of significant public interest, but where legislation does not require a statutory public hearing be held. The format of these public meetings depends upon the meeting objective, which can range from information sharing, to consultation, to active participation. The following are just a few examples of the types of public meetings governments use to invite citizen participation. Often one or more of these formats is combined in one meeting.



Source: Sage Ross, 2009, Wikipedia

Town Hall Meeting

These formal meetings are structured to provide citizens with an update on the progress of a planning application, development project, or other project or proposal, as well as to gather feedback from those who both support and oppose the issue.



Source: City of Edmonton, 2013

Public Workshop

Public workshops allow stakeholders, such as councilors, city administration, residents, business owners, and community organizations, to actively share knowledge, define problems, and develop creative solutions. These sessions include hands-on activities that prompt discussion and encourage creativity.



Source: City of Edmonton, 2013

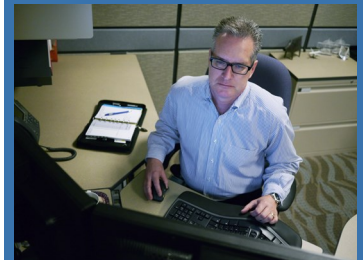
Open House

Open houses are information sessions where citizens can learn more about upcoming projects, plans or developments. Visual displays and informal one-on-one discussion with city staff allow residents a unique opportunity to ask questions, and often enable citizens to give input through interactive exhibits and surveys.



Visit the City of Edmonton Website at www.edmonton.ca for more information on how you can get involved:

- Learn about the 2013 Municipal Election,



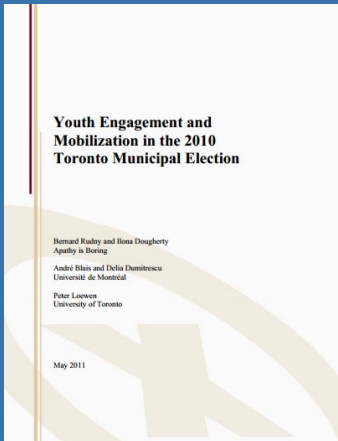
Source: City of Edmonton

including your ward councilor and ward map

- Learn the dates and times of council meetings, register to speak at a public hearing, or learn about the City of Edmonton petition process
- Find Planning Academy course descriptions, dates and times
- View the City's public engagement calendar and volunteer opportunities
- Access the City's social media
- And more!



Additional Resource



Rudny, B., Dougherty, I., Blais, A., Dumitrescu, D., and Loewen, P. (2011) Youth engagement and mobilization in the 2010 Toronto municipal election. Retrieved online from <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rec/part/youth&document=index&lang=e>

This report presents the findings of a mixed-methods research project undertaken by Apathy is Boring during the 2010 Toronto municipal election. The report focuses on the electoral engagement patterns of youth in Toronto, as well as the nature and impact of youth mobilization initiatives [Taken from report].

The Role of Civic Engagement in Creating a Cohesive City

By Manuel Francisco Escoto, Volunteer Writer

A central component of a modern democratic state is civic engagement, a term used to describe citizens actively participating in the social and political life of their community (Policy Research Initiative, 2005). In Edmonton there are a large number of associations that passionately work as mediators to break the barrier between individuals and their broader social environment. As Wyman, Shulman, and Ham (2000) argue, voluntary civic engagement is important for three reasons: first, it generates “a strong state and a strong civil society;” second, it develops and entrenches “democracy and democratic culture;” and third, engagement creates an “enlarged role for citizens.”

In today’s democratic state, democracy is about citizen participation and creating a public forum where citizens can engage, debate, and celebrate their community—especially during an era where there is a growing sense of disconnect between government and citizens. Former Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, Jocelyne Bourgon, reinforced this sentiment when she stated “Research tells us that citizens are increasingly concerned that their democratic institutions are out of sync with their values and interests” (Wyman et al., 2000).

In Canada, where the values associated with democracy are respected, there is a push from the populace to be actively involved in the lives of their neighbours. It is argued that “Canada’s experience with citizen engagement is a tradition of universal franchise, a strong belief in civic responsibility, community-based solutions, social action and, more recently, the grounding of fundamental rights and freedoms in law” (Stroick, 1997).

Civic engagement, public discourse, and volunteering can be seen as vital to good citizenship, which then creates a knowledgeable community in regards to civic issues and responsibilities. This, then,

builds a tolerant and close-knit community (Theiss-Morse and Hibbing, 2005). A local group that strives to educate its community and promote civic engagement is NextGen. NextGen describe themselves as “a group of young, passionate, community-minded individuals who are taking the future into our own hands by creating a city that attracts and gives voice to the next generation of Edmontonians” (NextGen, 2013). Their efforts are important in shaping municipal affairs.

Their mandate has three tenets: First, “...to engage Edmontonians aged 18-40 in their community by organizing, partnering on and raising awareness of cool events happening around the city;” second, to inform Edmontonians by “...creating opportunities for all Edmontonians to share their feedback, opinions, and ideas, and have them influence the decisions and actions of Edmonton City Council and other municipal decision-making bodies;” third, NextGen seeks to “...empower all Edmontonians 18-40 to get involved in their communities as a way to move Edmonton towards being a vibrant, hip, and future-focused city” (Next Gen, 2013). Taken as a whole, this local organization prides itself on being a “hub for connecting people, places, community, and ideas together” (NextGen, 2013) and providing an environment that develops leaders who want to make Edmonton a more vibrant city for our current and next generation.



Source: City of Edmonton Photo Gallery

The origins of Edmonton's NextGen date to 2005 when Edmonton City Council created a task force under the leadership of Councilor Kim Krushell and former councilor Michael Phair. Their assignment was to determine what young Edmontonians wanted the city to improve on in the areas of "arts and culture, business opportunities, sports and recreation, education, and employment" (NextGen, 2013). This task was accomplished by public consultations with young community members and since 2006, NextGen has been connecting with Edmontonians.

NextGen, in partnership with the Information Technology Branch of the City of Edmonton, established the Wireless Edmonton initiative. Under this initiative, the City of Edmonton, has partnered with various businesses to set up eZones where people can access the internet through their mobile devices using free Wi-Fi (Wireless Edmonton).

The group provided input into Edmonton's *The Art of Living* plan which seeks to promote Edmonton as an arts and cultural centre. The plan encourages "recreational, cultural, artistic, and entertainment opportunities for all residents" based on the understanding that Edmonton has a unique perspective toward the arts (The Art of Living, 2012).

Likewise, NextGen has been proactive with *The Way We Live*, a ten year plan aimed at redefining municipal leadership. Its mandate is to create a community that builds citizen engagement to create an environment where people of various social and economic backgrounds can succeed. With an effective political leadership in place, local government will be able to create an inclusive city and cohesive communities with the arts being the medium for this change (The Way We Live, 2012).

In addition, they presented a report to City Council at the Capital City Downtown Plan Public Hearing called *Your City Your Voice: Life in the Urban Core* which was a collection of opinions on urban core issues. Likewise, they broadcasted their views on how to create a cohesive city when they held a

workshop, in collaboration with the United Nations Global Youth Assembly, discussing the dynamics between urban design and creating a city of peace.

NextGen has also developed, coordinated and implemented the Edmonton Community Challenge, a volunteer based program which encouraged community interaction, civic spirit and friendly competition through fun events held throughout the city.

Finally, at the core of NextGen's mission are their Pecha Kucha events, which showcase the diverse interests, talent and knowledge that Edmontonians possess. Specifically, the event is a venue for young designers to meet, network, and exchange ideas while broadcasting their work to Edmontonians using the Pecha Kucha presentation style.

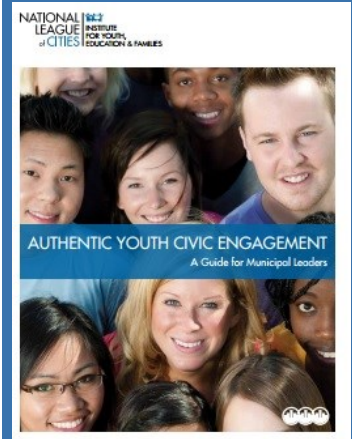
Since its inception, NextGen has ventured along various avenues to both promote the bountifulness that Edmonton offers while also encouraging the community to voice their opinions. They foster an environment of leadership, dedication, and civil spirit, which are essential qualities for the proper development of civic engagement. As has been mentioned, civic engagement is an increasingly important component for social cohesion, acceptance of diversity, and strengthening of municipal and democratic affairs. After all, if an individual is invested in their city's issues, they will engage with other individuals by creating a forum for discourse. This will produce a more politically educated community that will want to shape municipal affairs.

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Additional Resource



National League of Cities. Institute for Youth, Education & Families (2013) *Authentic youth civic engagement: A guide for municipal leaders*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/IYEF/Youth%20Civic%20Engagement/authentic-youth-engagement-gidjul10.pdf>

This guide will help local elected officials and other city leaders address each of the critical elements of this AYCE framework. Like any other new initiative in local government, there is no magic recipe or one-size-fits-all approach. Success comes from blending the unique assets of a city with the collective knowledge and best practice from across the country. Local officials can use this framework to find workable solutions for their own community.



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LEGER MARKETING

Staff Member Profile: Virginia Dowdell



Virginia has moved around a lot. She grew up in rural Alberta, in a small town down the Yellowhead from Edmonton. When

she was sixteen her father was transferred to work in the “big city,” which is where she finished high school and then began attending the University of Alberta. By the time she completed her degree she had lived in both Regina, SK, and Guelph, ON.

She started out with aspirations to become a medical doctor, but soon decided the arts were more her thing and switched to studying French and psychology. In the end, she completed her B.A. in sociology with a minor in creative writing. She is grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in a graduate level qualitative methods research course, where she learned about ethnography and worked closely with a local Aboriginal organization.

She moved to Vancouver the fall after she finished university, and lived there for the next two and a half years. Employment opportunities in the expensive city were

limited, however, and she paid the rent by working at an organic coffee and juice bar (how Vancouver!). To keep her professional skills sharp, she volunteered as Assistant Editor of a multiculturalism/art magazine and carried out qualitative research for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. She also did reception at a community acupuncture clinic. She moved back to Edmonton at the end of last year.

Virginia is interested in holistic health, and she swims, practices yoga, and walks a lot. She adores music and going to live shows, sitting down with a good book, and writing. She enjoys time spent with her Edmonton family and friends, and is glad for the ability to positively impact the community while developing her skills through her work at the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

Board Member Profile: Oliver Kamau



Oliver moved from Kenya to Canada sixteen years ago, to pursue graduate studies at the University of Alberta. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology/Literature,

a diploma in Education, and a Master's degree in Drama. After graduating, he joined the Centre for Race and Culture (CRC), then known as the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, as a program coordinator. During those years, he developed education and youth programs that focused on addressing racism, discrimination, diversity, and multicultural issues. Currently, he is based at the

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA), where he is the Regional Program Coordinator for school-based settlement programs offered in Fort McMurray and Edmonton.

Oliver is currently a member of Council of Canadians of African and Caribbean Heritage (CCACH) and the Edmonton Social Planning Council. He is proud to be associated with the ESPC and strongly believes in their vision.



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About the Edmonton Social Planning Council

The ESPC is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization. Our focus is social research – particularly in the areas of low income and poverty.

We are dedicated to encouraging the adoption of equitable social policy, supporting the work of other organizations who are striving to improve the lives of Edmontonians, and educating the public regarding the social issues that impact them on a daily basis.

Our Vision

A healthy, just and inclusive community.

Our Mission

The Edmonton Social Planning Council provides leadership to the community and its organizations in addressing social issues and effecting changes to social policy.

As a Member

- support our efforts to remain on the forefront in dealing with social issues
- make it possible for us to distribute our materials freely and widely to all
- receive our newsletters, fact sheets, and other publications
- be eligible to vote at ESPC AGMs and have a say in the direction of the organization
- be eligible to serve on the board of directors
- advertise your non-profit events in the *fACTivist*


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The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu on the left with 'Become a Member' highlighted. The main content area displays the 'Individual Membership Form' with fields for Member Type, Name, Organization, Position, Address, City/Town, and Province.



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