

Balwin/Belvedere Community-Led Initiatives to Expand and Mobilize Neighbourhood Leadership in 2020 and 2021

The community vision for revitalization in Balwin and Belvedere is a commitment to creating proud, safe and diverse communities that support and value their people and businesses. The initiatives outlined below were identified and led by community stakeholders. The City supported these initiatives by mobilizing, coaching and supporting individuals to lead the change they want to see in their neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Leadership

- A revitalization guiding team composed of residents, non-profit representatives including community leagues, and business representatives was established to champion and provide direction for the implementation of the Balwin/Belvedere Revitalization Strategy.
- Community members attended a number of sessions and workshops:
 - A Conversation with Cormac Russell - to revisit the roles of public service-citizen collaboration and uncover how an asset-based approach can revive neighbourliness and local caring to improve community health, safety, and economic and environmental well-being.
 - Creating a Neighbourly Vibe - began the work of building block- and neighbourhood-level capacity to get to know their neighbours, feel a stronger sense of belonging in their neighbourhood and/or be a leader in helping to build a safe, connected and vibrant community where they live.
 - Foundations of Community Engagement - to learn community engagement techniques, how to overcome challenges, and how to evaluate engagement activities.
- Members of the capital investment project team volunteered their time and skills to collaborate on public engagement, data analysis, and development of recommendations through a prioritization process for capital investments.
- Community members participated in a cross-revitalization area peer networking session to learn and share information.

Goal One: Individuals who live, work and play in Balwin and Belvedere are more connected with each other and engaged in community activities.

- A revitalization newsletter published and distributed by the community included an introduction to revitalization and the participating members, and descriptions of revitalization projects and upcoming events.
- In partnership with Abundant Community Edmonton, community members convened monthly virtual coffee chats for neighbours to regularly connect during the pandemic.
- Community members launched a website for revitalization initiatives, balwinbelvederehub.com, and a Facebook page to build awareness of and engagement in revitalization projects and events.

- Balwin and Belvedere Partners (social services inter-agency) met with community members.
- A community-led grant writing workshop supported six local organizations with professional development training.
- Packingtown Growers Community Garden & Micro Orchard completed the City's pop-up garden pilot in 2021; they have since completed a strategy business plan to initiate the City of Edmonton's parkland development process for a permanent community-led project.

Goal Two: Local businesses in Balwin and Belvedere are welcomed, celebrated and supported by local residents as part of the community

- Community members completed a social enterprise bootcamp through the Edmonton Community Development Corporation to test the financial, operational, and market viability of social enterprise concepts.

Goal Three: Homes, businesses, sidewalks, parks and other places in Balwin and Belvedere are kept clean, tidy and well-lit.

- A mobile Big Bin event organized by the community removed 175 mattresses/box springs, 65 appliances, and 75 truckloads of bulk waste from the neighbourhoods.
- Community leaders supported the park redevelopment at Princeton School.
- Shine A Light project helped increase residential street and back alley lighting to increase safety and security by delivering 800 free LED light bulbs to homes with poor outdoor lighting.

Goal Four: Residents and businesses in Balwin and Belvedere take deliberate actions to help make the neighbourhoods feel safer for all community members.

- The safety project team is made up of residents, community leagues, business representatives, Edmonton Police Services, City staff, and REACH Edmonton.
- An interdenominational blessing & smudging (prayer walk) in partnership with community members included five local pastors, chaplains, and Elders from NiGiNan Housing (Omamoowango-Gamik).